



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

COMMITTEE MEETING

DATES:

GDRC: 06/05/2021

GRADING SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: Built Environment Unit

DATE: 03/05/2022

FILE REF: 9/2/228/177

SAHRIS SITE ID: 26849

SAHRIS SITE TYPE: Building

Significance Category (THEMES): Historical: Associated to the life and work of a person

ENQUIRIES: Heidi Weldon/Ben Mwasinga

ITEM: Proposed Nomination of Site for Grade 1 Site Status: Nelson and Winnie Mandela House (Johannesburg, Gauteng)

A1. BACKGROUND

A1.1. Nelson and Winnie Mandela House (Mandela House) was the home to Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

A1.2. Nelson Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid activist and the first democratically elected President of South Africa.

A1.3. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was an anti-apartheid activist and politician.

A1.4. The significance of the house lies not only with the individuals that inhabited it but speaks to the spirit of Soweto and South Africa as a resilient people and community that continue to fight in spite of.

A1.5. The House now forms part of the burgeoning tourist attraction that Vilakazi Street and Soweto by extension has become, Vilakazi Street is regarded as the centre of attraction compared to other streets in Soweto.¹

¹ Tjaka Segooa, 'An Exploration of the Social Production of Vilakazi Street as a Social Space,' (Honours, The University of the Witwatersrand, 2014), p. 2.

A1.6. The House has gone undergone restoration projects: Mandela House underwent a major restoration and restructuring project in 2008. The restoration goal focused on maintaining heritage preservation and conservation. Mandela House was closed for a year to source original fabrics to match the authentic structure of the space; construct a new Visitor Centre, and the design and installation of exhibitions that display as a visual storytelling element.²

A2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A2.1. The Nelson and Winnie Mandela House in Soweto, Gauteng is submitted for grading for the assessment of the physical nature of the site and structures within the site that hold the significance and legacy of Nelson and Winnie Mandela and anti-apartheid revolution legacy in South Africa.
- A2.2 The Nelson and Winnie Mandela House is recognized, by the nominators, the Gauteng Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, as a pivotal resource to South Africa and as a remembrance of the apartheid struggle, as a means of liberating the oppressed and forwarding equality of all the people in South Africa. Although great strides have been made for democracy in South Africa to date, it is through Nelson and Winnie Mandela's contribution amongst the many other freedom fighters that may have led South Africa to this point in democracy and equality.
- A2.3. Located in Orlando, Soweto in Gauteng, the site consists of the house in which Nelson Mandela and his then wife Winnie Mandela lived and the ancillary structures that consists of a ticket box structure as well as ablution facilities.
- A2.4. The condition of the site is exemplary, and although various documentation relating to the remedial and maintenance development interventions is still required to be collated for appropriate record keeping, physically the Nelson Mandela House site is in good standing.
- A2.5. The owners of the site are in full support to have the site graded and declared and are willing to cooperate in achieving this. It is also worth mentioning that the site is currently under the guardianship of court appointed liquidators up until the point that new ownership is in place.
- A2.6. Due to the Nelson Mandela House site's good standing, the empowerment that it has imposed on the surrounding community and the freedom struggle legacy it represents, it is recommended that the site is graded as a grade 1 heritage resource.

² 'Restoration Project,' Available from: <https://www.mandelahouse.com/about/#restore> accessed 5 May 2021.

1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

- 1.1. The purpose of this grading submission is to assess whether the Mandela House in Vilakazi Street, Soweto contains the appropriate heritage indicators and characteristics to be granted with the Grade 1 status.

2. LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. Mandela House is situated 8115 Orlando West, Corner of Vilakazi and Ngakane Streets, Soweto.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The history of Soweto as a township and its development pre-apartheid can be traced to three pivotal moments: the 1904 plague, the establishment of Orlando in 1930, and Mpanza's squatter movement of the mid 1940s.³
- 3.2. The establishment of Orlando in early 1930s, which was named after then chairman of the Native Affairs Committee, Edwin Orlando Leake was to address the demand for housing as well as eliminate slums. Orlando became the first township of Soweto.
- 3.3. The Mandela House is located in Vilakazi Street that is named after: Dr BW Vilakazi, an intellectual, poet and novelist who was the first black man to teach at the University of Witwatersrand (WITS).⁴
- 3.4. The Mandela House was built in 1945 in Orlando as part of a need to address the growing demand for housing in Johannesburg. In 1946, Nelson Mandela moved in with his first wife Evelyn Ntoko Mase. In 1957, after his divorce from Evelyn, Mandela was joined by his second wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.
- 3.5. Nelson Mandela became pivotal within the African National Congress (ANC) alongside Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Anton Lembede and other prominent ANC members as the new vanguard of anti-apartheid struggle when they formed the ANC Youth League.
- 3.6. Due to his growth in the ranks of the ANC and recognition as a leader in the anti-apartheid struggle, Mandela's house became a site of constant suppression, his house was placed under almost twenty-four hour surveillance and raids were carried out at all times of the day and night.⁵ The House represents a site of the extent that the apartheid regime went through to silence critics and activists against the regime. A regime that has been recognised by the United Nations (UN) as a crime against humanity.
- 3.6. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was a recipient of this attacks as well and more so after the arrest of Nelson Mandela. Madikizela-Mandela described the house: "an extension of the police station, every day they came; the children were petrified. No amount of explanation could reassure them because I had no protection."⁶

³ Noor Nieftagodien and Sally Gaule, *Orlando West, Soweto: An Illustrated History* (South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012), p. 1.

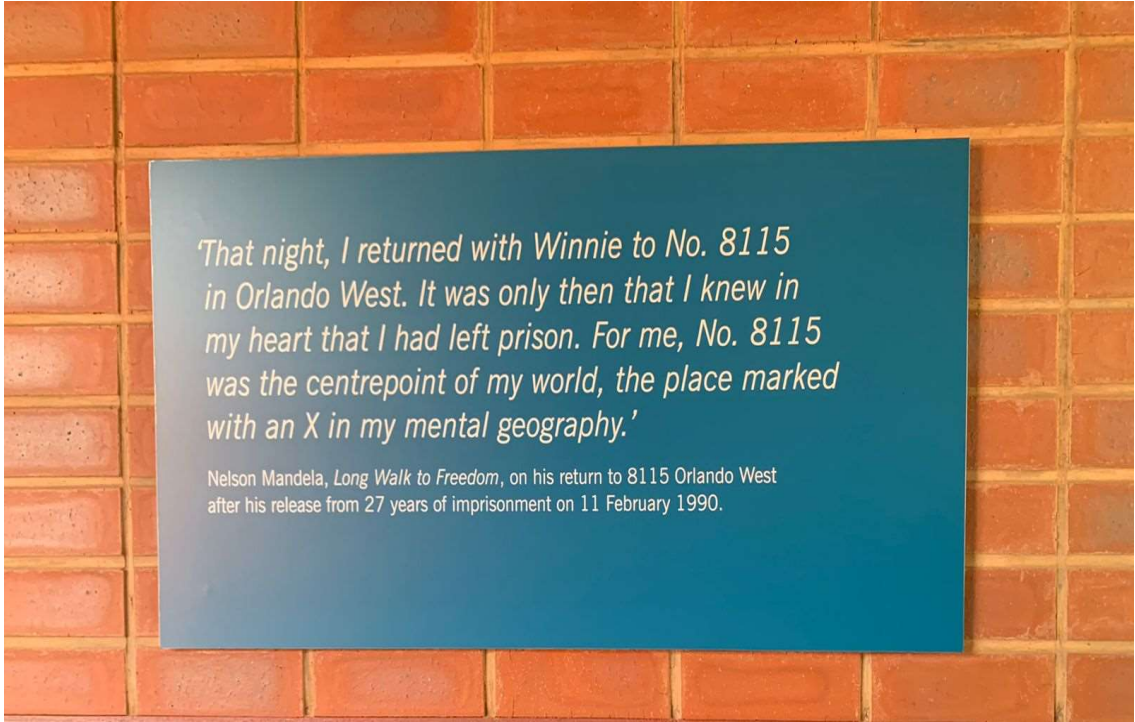
⁴ 'Vilakazi Street,' Available from: <https://www.mandelahouse.com/about/#street> accessed 5 May 2021.

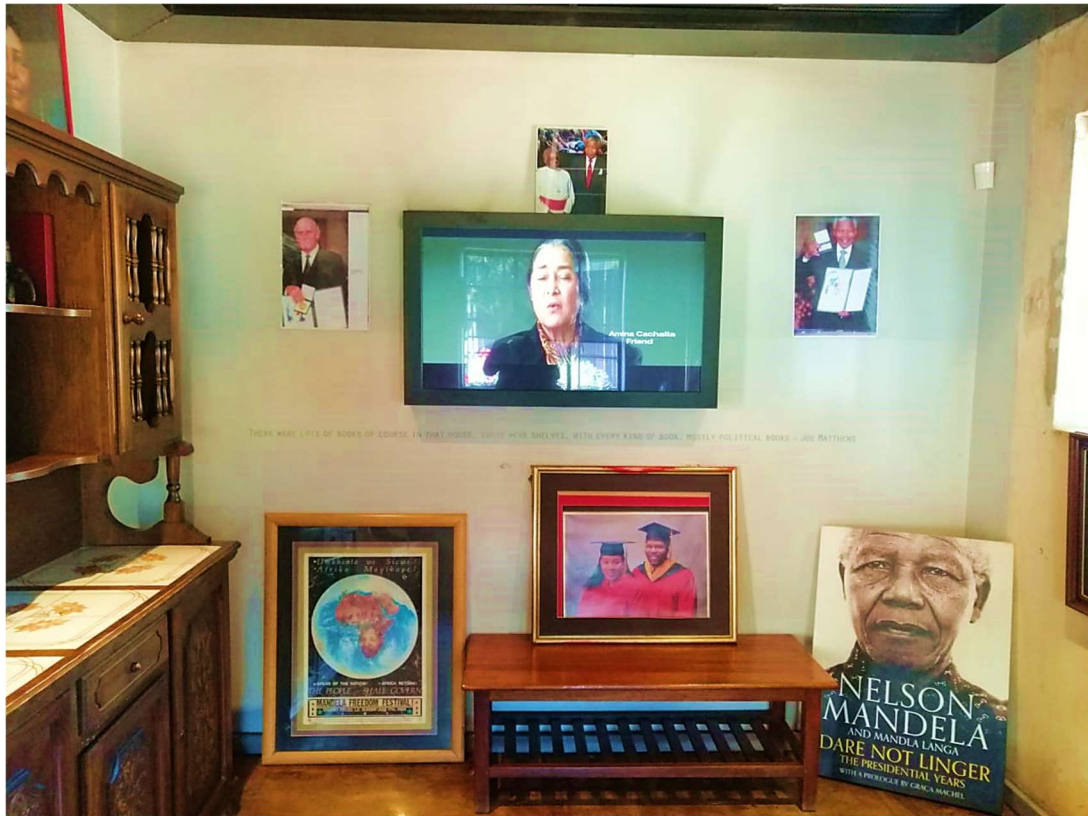
⁵ Nieftagodien and Gaule, *Orlando West*, p. 28.

⁶ Nieftagodien and Gaule, *Orlanda West*, p. 28.

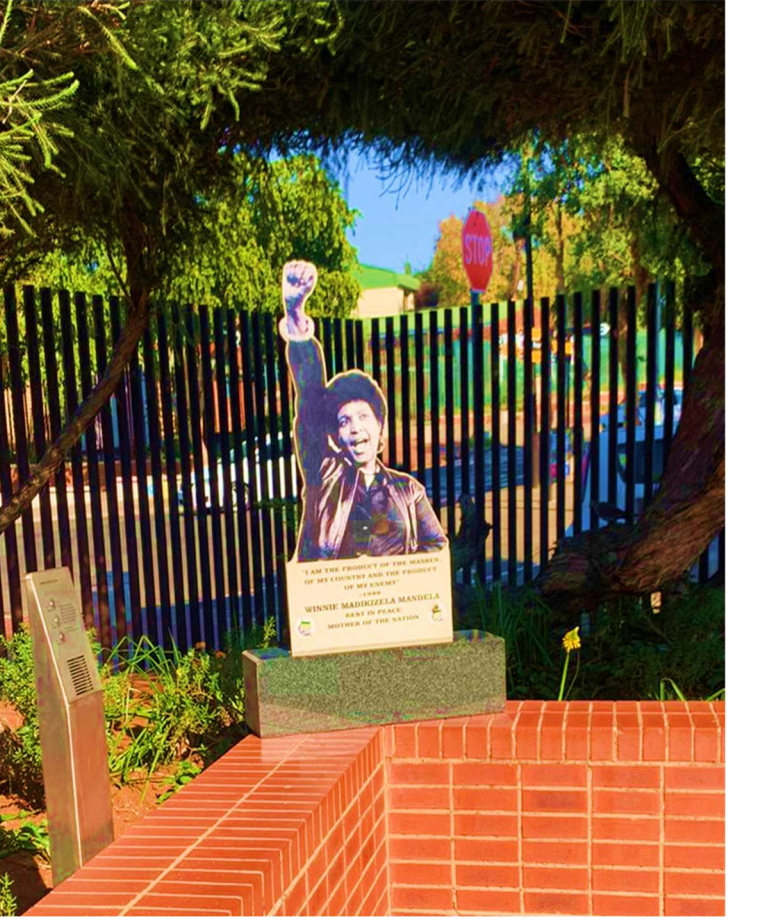
- 3.7. The township of Soweto is pivotal to South Africa's history of anti-apartheid activism as it is the site of the student uprising in 1976: The 1976 Soweto uprising made Soweto the international symbol of the fight for liberation against oppression and racial segregation during apartheid.⁷
- 3.8. The location of the Mandela House within proximity to the Hector Pieterse Museum and Memorial enhances the significance of the House as a political site and place of activism within South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. It is therefore not only a national but international site and a tourist destination that provides a history to the anti-apartheid struggle.
- 3.9. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela too became prominent in issues affecting students as along with other key figures she formed the Soweto Parents' Association to support the students. Madikizela-Mandela therefore established herself as an activist within her own right through campaigning for Mandela's release and particularly with underground activities of the ANC and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).
- 3.10. Nelson Mandela views the house as his 'first true home', highlighting the significance of the house in the narrative of one of South Africa's most well-known individuals.

⁷ Thato Joseph Moagi, Milena Ivanovic and Maisa Correia Adinolfi, 'Business Challenges of Arts and Crafts Street Vendors at Key Tourist Attractions in Soweto, South Africa,' *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (2021), 90.









4. SWOT SUMMARY

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>The Mandela House is a curated museum, and its history is a national asset.</p> <p>Recently restored and renovated (2008/2009).</p> <p>The house/property and the curated display of materials relevant to both Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela are in good condition.</p> <p>The Mandela House/ Mandela Family Museum is very well managed by on-site management and staff.</p> <p>Fairly high numbers of foot traffic due to the Mandela house, resulting in the economic development of Vilakazi street precinct, Soweto, Orlando West.</p> <p>Promotes cultural heritage and identity</p>	<p>The current owners, the Soweto Heritage Trust is under liquidation, and ownership lies with the court appointed liquidators.</p> <p>Future issues with regards to ownership are unclear, therefore there is ambiguity around the future management of the site.</p>	<p>Use the Mandela House/Mandela Family Museum successes to aid in modelling best practice guidelines for the management of heritage sites as well as leveraging heritage sites to initiate economic development of surrounding areas.</p> <p>National Heritage status has the potential stimulate even greater interest in the site (researchers, tourists, community investment, etc.), and heighten the importance of the site with regards to people’s perceptions.</p> <p>National Heritage status might aid in the public awareness of the site.</p> <p>The conservation and Management of an important historical site linked to renowned South African political activists and liberation struggle leaders (Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela) for future generations.</p> <p>Soweto/Orland West and the greater Gauteng has many sites linked to the liberation struggle and to South Africa’s very important history. The declaration of the Mandela House may act as a catalyst in connecting all these narratives together to form a more holistic and accurate picture of South African liberation struggle history, which is the cornerstone of South African heritage.</p> <p>The weaving of all the relevant narratives from connecting sites can lead to the establishment of heritage/historical tours centred around the liberation struggle and a more holistic narrative of the actual history. This will not only lead to the education and understanding of South African history, but lends itself to a better understanding of the development of the province of Gauteng, the City of Johannesburg and in a broader sense the country itself.</p>	<p>Uncertainty of future ownership status.</p> <p>Future funding to keep the site operational and in good condition.</p> <p>Possible insensitive development that might overshadow the importance of the site.</p> <p>Uncertainty of the possible effects of Covid-19 on the economic sustainability and manageability of heritage sites.</p>

5. MOTIVATION FOR NATIONAL DECLARATION

(a) Its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organization of importance in the history of South Africa.

- I. The Mandela House contains the significance of the life and recognition of two prominent anti-apartheid activists, Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela
- II. It was home to South Africa's first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela.

(b) Its importance in exhibiting aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

- I. Mandela House, located in Vilakazi Street, which has come to be described as a museum through its design of conservation as, the precinct showcases the past struggle and legacy of Soweto, and the spirit of its people.⁸

(c) Its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history.

- I. It is located in Soweto, a township that is rooted with a history of anti-apartheid activism. It is recognised as the only street in the world that in which two Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu resided.

(d) Its possession of uncommon, rare, or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage.

- I. The Mandela House captures the tangible value of the 'matchbox house', that came to exemplify the housing of the apartheid regime.

(e) Its strong or special association with a community or cultural group for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons.

- I. The Mandela House has a special association with South Africa as a whole, as the house provides a narrative of apartheid housing, which is a result of forced removals and demarcating space according to race. The House is also a site of anti-apartheid activism that expresses the struggle narrative that South Africa embodies.

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nelson and Winnie Mandela House (Mandela House) has strong ties to the anti-apartheid activists of Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela but the house in itself carries weight as a site and symbol of an issue that has continuously come to plague South Africa, the housing crisis. The creation of the township Soweto was to accommodate the growing urban community within Johannesburg. With a history of land dispossession and Acts that were established to control the movement of Black people, colonialism and apartheid created

⁸ 'Vilakazi Street: A Living Museum,' Available from: <https://www.gauteng.net/blog/vilakazi-street-a-living-museum> accessed 5 May 2021.

a problem in which populations moving to urban areas were confronted with the issue of lack of housing: At the height of the influx of African workers to the cities in 1944, the state did not build any houses for Africans, causing a severe national housing crisis that was most concentrated on the Reef, the area, stretching west and east from Johannesburg, where gold-bearing rock was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century.⁹

The houses that the State did deliver were not decent housing: It was threaded through by dusty, unpaved roads along which were erected monotonous ranks of identical, small, temporary, single storey “matchbox” houses (predominantly between 40m² and 44m² in size) lit by candles and oil lamps, where cooking was done on paraffin and coal stoves.¹⁰

South Africa has a long history of land dispossession but under apartheid, particularly the Group Areas Act and influx control, the urban landscape came to be racialized and the only group offered security were Whites. Therefore, Mandela House stands as a testament to the present day need to look at the spatial geography of apartheid that still exists in South Africa’s urban areas as well as the delivery of not only housing but decent housing that does not bring back memories of the ‘match box’ house.

The housing crisis however is not only limited to South Africa but to the world at large as it continues to come to terms with globalization and urbanization. The Mandela House therefore as a site that was built to address the need for housing in Johannesburg 1930s bring up an international question of the value of a house.

The Mandela House does also raise the opportunity and exploration of township tourism and the value that it can add back to communities.

7. INDICATION OF OWNER’S ATTITUDE

The owners of the site are in full support to have the site graded and declared and are willing to cooperate in achieving this. It is also worth mentioning that the site is currently under the guardianship of court appointed liquidators up until the point that new ownership is in place.

8. INDICATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

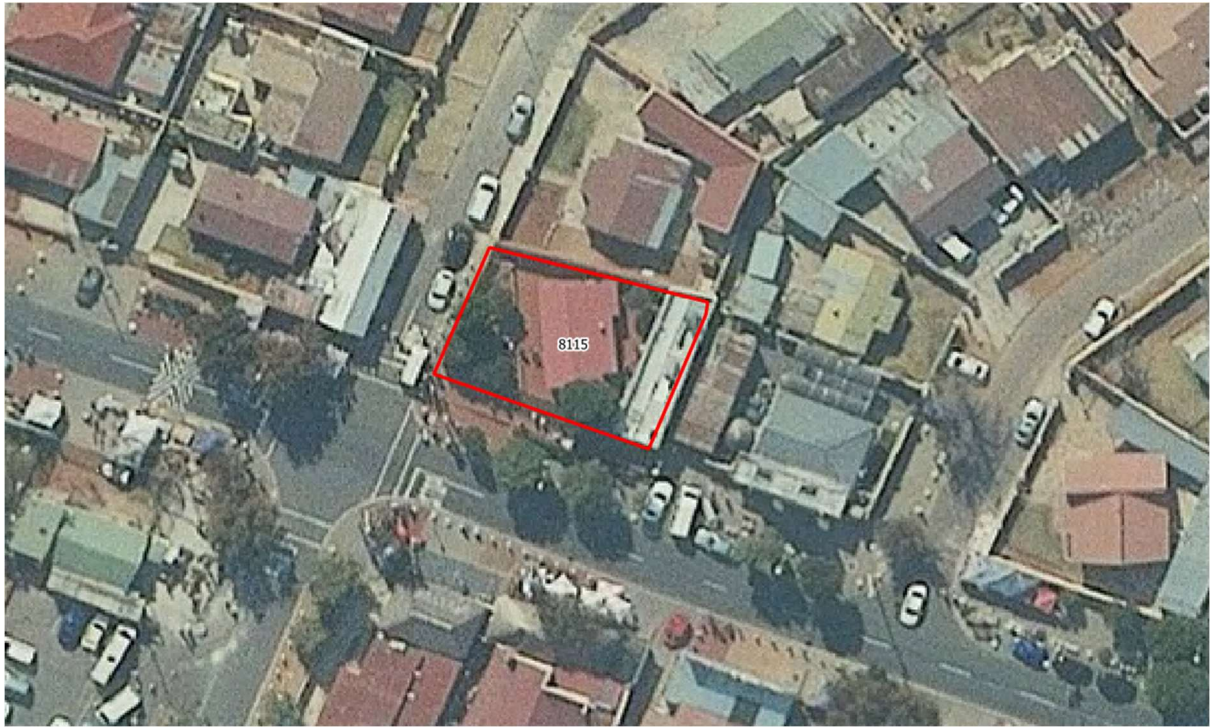
Currently Nelson and Winnie Mandela house in Orlando is under the guardianship of court appointed liquidators which manages the business of the Soweto Heritage Trust Non-profit company. The site falls under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng-PHRA as a Grade 2 Provincial Heritage Site.

9. DESCRIPTION OF SITE BOUNDARIES

The site is situated on Erf 8115 in Orlando West, Soweto as per the attached general plan. The whole erf has been nominated therefore the boundaries will follow the property boundary as below.

⁹ *Orlando West*, p. 8.

¹⁰ *Orlando West*, p. 7.



10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the Nelson and Winnie Mandela House site's good standing, the empowerment that it has imposed on the surrounding community and the freedom struggle legacy it represents, it is recommended that the site is graded as a grade 1 heritage resource.


11. REFERENCES

- 11.1. Niefertgodien, N., and Gaule, S., *Orlando West, Soweto: An Illustrated History* (South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012).
- 11.2. Moagi, T. J., Ivanovic, M., and Adinolfi, M. C., 'Business Challenges of Arts and Crafts Street Vendors at Key Tourist Attractions in Soweto, South Africa,' *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2021. pp. 85-101.
- 11.3. Segooa, T., 'An Exploration of the Social Production of Vilakazi Street as a Social Space,' (Honours, The University of the Witwatersrand, 2014).

Other Sources

- 11.4. 'Restoration Project,' Available from: <https://www.mandelahouse.com/about/#restore> accessed 5 May 2021.
- 11.5. 'Vilakazi Street,' Available from: <https://www.mandelahouse.com/about/#street> accessed 5 May 2021.

11.6. 'Vilakazi Street: A Living Museum,' Available from: <https://www.gauteng.net/blog/vilakazi-street-a-living-museum> accessed 5 May 2021.

Prepared By:		Supported By:	
Ben Mwasinga		Name & Title	Signature
Date: 05/06/2021		Date:	

Recommendation Approved by GDRC		Recommendation not Approved by GDRC	
NAME Chairperson: GDRC		Signature	
Date:			