

**HERITAGE STATEMENT for the TENNIS CLUB GROUP of BUILDINGS:
CLUB HOUSE; NETBALL CLUB: REF. 01/424**

INTRODUCTION

The document is supplementary to the application for a permit made by Robben Island Museum and the Department of Public Works to the South African Heritage Resources Agency in terms section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999.

DESCRIPTION

A square wooden klinker built structure with a small verandah facing to the south. The netball field faces east west parallel to it. A small water pressure tank is on the roof.

SATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Served as the club house for the Netball Club for the wives and daughters of the prison warders.

**EXPANDED STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND**

No known use for the space occupied by the structure and the related netball field prior to the 1920's can be determined at this time. During the 1920's a croquet court existed here. The structure and the field were, at best estimate, built after 1972 and before 1980.

The members of the netball club consisted of the wives of the warders. Membership dues of R3.00 per year were paid and funds were generated for social activities. The netball club practiced twice a week and had a large tournament on the island at least once a year during the 1980's and early 1990's. An away netball tour would be arranged at least once a year. Netball games were all friendlies as the ladies did not play in the local or provincial leagues. Most games were played on Saturdays and teams consisted of 20 players although the game itself only allows for 7 players on the field at any time. The tennis courts would often also be used for a tournament.

According to Louise Roelofse she attempted to keep the game going after the closure of the prison but gave up in 1995/ 96. She still has the Netball Club Shield. She also remembers often running after the ball to fetch it downhill after a pass by a player.

The Netball Club was affiliated, as were all the other sporting clubs, to an over arching "Moederklub", which organized social dances in the John Craig Hall twice a year. For many of the warder's wives this was their only social outlet, stuck on the island as housewives and mothers. No female warders were stationed on the island.

ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPE

A large precinct containing the tennis club and courts, the Jukskei fields, Rugby club house and fields, athletics track, bowling green, the Club House, the post office, the old power station, a single dwelling next to the post office and a number of WWII dwellings on the eastern edge of the sports fields.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION POLICY

Appropriate minimal intervention.

Appropriate and sustainable alternate use strategy. ['use it or lose it']

Appropriate, effective, efficient and sustainable maintenance.

Appropriate interpretation and presentation within the associated landscape.

CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

Weather and weathering.

The structure is well inland but subject to the south easterly winds. Rain, sun and temperature differences affect the wooden structure to varying degrees.

Plants and animals.

Plants do not pose a major threat to the structure but to the netball field itself. Birds may fly into windows that are transparent. Pigeons nest inside the structure. Rabbits are evident further away at the power station but need to be monitored. Penguins are not evident. Rodents are a problem for insulation and electrical wiring.

An urgent threat is the very large colony of seagulls that have invaded the sports fields and terraces over the last three years. Guano builds up into a very hard layer that becomes difficult to remove. It also contains chemicals such as urea and ammonia which corrode building materials.

Fire.

Fire poses a threat from activities within and outside buildings. Very little threat is evident from bush fires.

Appropriate alternative use strategy.

No alternative use strategy has been provided. This poses a major challenge as often structures that are not occupied are left to deteriorate.

Theft and vandalism.

Appropriate action to prevent theft and vandalism should be taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A permit should be issued for the necessary repairs, alterations and maintenance on the structure and its associated components as specified by the project architects. The structure has through neglect over the last decade been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that urgent work is required to save the historic fabric.
2. That the structure must not be treated in isolation but placed within its associated landscape. This will require a determined effort by Robben Island Museum and Department of Public Works to produce and implement a management plan for the entire sports and recreation precinct.
3. The seagulls need to be removed from the sports fields and terraces as a matter of urgency. The terraces and sports fields must then be cleaned up and maintained.
4. An alternate use strategy must be provided.
5. Plants and weeds must be removed from the courts and associated structures.
6. The contractor appointed to do the work must adhere to sound environmental practice for the disposal of waste and not damage culturally significant vegetation.