

28 February 2014

Our Ref: 1399

INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES
South African Heritage Resources Agency
Heritage Western Cape
AKSO Committee Drakenstein Municipality
Paarl 300 Foundation
Drakenstein Heritage Foundation

BABYLONSTOREN, FARM 1740, PAARL
IAP COMMENT REQUESTED ON SECTION 34 APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED NEW
EXTENSIONS TO BACK OF HOUSE FACILITIES OF EXISTING RESTAURANT AND DELI

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

SECTION 34 APPLICATION IN TERMS OF NHRA OF 1999

The proposal comprises two parts:

1. Back up building for the deli (the existing deli is housed in the historic stable building)

The proposed back up building for the deli is a new building addition to an existing modern building (built in 2011). This existing 2011 building is attached to a freestanding wall with remnant portions older than 60 years.

2. Back up building for the restaurant (the existing restaurant is housed in the kraal building)

The proposed restaurant back up building is a new structure proposed to abut an existing freestanding wall which is older than 60 years.

Neither of the two entail any work on buildings older than 60 years.

PROPOSED NEW ACCOMMODATIONS

1. The deli back up building will accommodate the following functions:
 - Bakery kitchen
 - Cold Room facilities (walk-in fridge and freezer)
 - Dry store
 - Guest Toilets
 - Staff Room with staff ablution facilities
 - Total footprint: 155,4m²

2. The restaurant back up building will accommodate the following functions:
 - Cold Room Facilities (walk-in fridge and freezer)
 - Stock kitchen
 - Dry store
 - Wine store
 - Total footprint: 101,2m²

GRADING AND SIGNIFICANCE

Babylonstoren has no formal gazetted grading, but is recommended as “National/Provincial” in the Drakenstein Heritage Survey. The HIA (Pentz 2009) indicates the werf as Grade 1 - exceptional significance, and the buildings vary between Grade 2 – Considerable significance and Grade 3 – Some significance. There is significant axial relationships between buildings themselves and buildings-to-landscape. The farm is significant in terms of historical, architectural and contextual value, and has landmark quality.

PREVIOUS STUDIES CONSULTED

The following studies have informed decision making w.r.t. the proposals put forward:

- **Heritage Impact Assessment** by Andre Pentz (January 2009)
- **Cultural Historic Research** by Steward Harris (‘Babylonstoren – The Story of a Drakenstein Farm’ April 2007)
- **Archaeological Impact Assessment: Stable Building** by Katie Smuts & Harriet Clift (May 2010)
- **Historical Background, Significance and Structural Analysis** by Malherbe Rust Architects (September 2010)

RECOMMENDATIONS w.r.t. ARCHAEOLOGY

Due to the proximity of the historic buildings to the site we recommend that an archaeological watch-brief be implemented for the construction of the subsurface works (foundation work). This was the method used during the construction of the 2011 building behind the stables. This recommendation is as per the previously approved recommendation in the AIA (Smuts/Clift 2010)

PERMITTING AUTHORITY

All previous building plan applications on Babylonstoren were handled by SAHRA as the permitting authority, with HWC as commenting authority. This was before the memorandum of agreement was in place between SAHRA and HWC w.r.t. Grade 2 and 3 sites that lie within the so-called Grade 1 Cape Winelands Cultural Landscape zone. For the sake of continuity we propose that this application also be dealt with in the same way with SAHRA as permitting authority. SAHRA and HWC to please comment on this if they do not agree with the reasoning.



DRAWINGS

The proposal is detailed on the attached drawings:

Site/Werf Plan	SK-111 Rev A (Date February 2014)
Existing Floor Plan	SK-201 Rev A (Date February 2014)
Proposed Floor Plan	SK-202 Rev A (Date February 2014)
Existing Elevations	SK-301 Rev A (Date February 2014)
Proposed Elevations	SK-302 Rev A (Date February 2014)

MOTIVATION

The revitalization of Babylonstoren farm has brought exposure and awareness of the shared heritage of Cape Winelands farms to the general public. The restorations and developments were done in a sensitive and considered manner both from the owner's side and the professional team. The Babylonstoren project received the 2013 Cape Institute of Architects Award for Renewal and Redevelopment for Agriculture & Tourism. The owners of Babylonstoren have succeeded in balancing heritage considerations with the requirements of long term economic viability of farming and tourist industry. This proposal has been considered with the same sensitivity.

Socio Economic Desirability

The number of visitors is such that the restaurant and deli are struggling to cope with the current facilities. Back of house facilities (especially the restaurant) has been undersized from the outset. In order to cater for the current and growing demand and grow the job opportunities it is necessary to expand these back of house facilities.

Visibility

The proposed new buildings will not be visible from the historic werf side. It will be visible from the parking lot and the produce garden. Visual impact is limited due to the screening/absorption capacity of the site and the low height and blending architectural character of the proposed buildings.

Architectural Definition/Style

The proposed buildings are designed to conform to the architectural language already established on site, which is made up of sympathetic vernacular elements (walls, roofs, openings) with contemporary detailing. The building footprints (width and length proportion of buildings) take its cue from the historic and existing structures and thereby ensure that it does not over scale.

Location

The proposal is located in an area that is currently not accessible for visitors. The flow of visitor movement is to remain as is when the new buildings are in place. The new buildings will assist in screening the back of house area from the fowl house side.

This part of the werf has a high visual absorption capacity due to the height of the existing werf walls between the stables building and the restaurant. This wall together with the mature oak trees on the outside of the wall will screen these two new low lying buildings effectively. The restaurant back up (which is the closer to the wall) is a small footprint, flat (parapet) roof structure. Existing werf walls together with the fruit tree groves also screen the proposal from the produce garden side.

We kindly request registered Interested and Affected Parties to submit their written comment to us, by no later than 30 calendar days from the date on this letter, as required by the permitting authority. We kindly request registered Interested and Affected Parties to submit their written comment to us, by no later than 30 calendar days from the date on this letter, as required by the permitting authority.

Yours faithfully

