

9/2/259/009

Annexure:

**SUBMISSION TO SA HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY COUNCIL:
29-30 NOVEMBER 2000**

**PROPOSED PROVISIONAL PROTECTION OF 'LILLIESLEAF FARM',
RIVONIA, RANDBURG DISTRICT, GAUTENG PROVINCE**

Erf no.: Erven 51 and 52, Rivonia Extension 1, Registration Division IR, Gauteng Province

Owners: Erf 51 - Mr H.G. Schneider
Erf 52 - Mr and Mrs E.R.A. Truebody



The thatch-roofed cottage (above) and the main house (below)



INTRODUCTION

On 9 October 1963, 11 men stood in a heavily-guarded courtroom in the Palace of Justice in Pretoria, on trial for their lives. One of the accused was Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and this was the beginning of the Rivonia Trial at which he and seven others were eventually sentenced to life imprisonment. The charge against them was of them having embarked on a campaign to overthrow the government by violent revolution.

This submission deals primarily with the notorious arrest of 11 July 1963 at a place called 'Lilliesleaf Farm' which led to the Rivonia Trial and which in turn, according to Hilda Bernstein, *"became the platform from which, for the first time, the black-out of state censorship ...was broken; and for the first time since the State of Emergency of 1960 and the banning of the ANC, the whole story of black oppression and black struggle and aspirations was told through the testimony of Mandela and his fellow accused."* The arrest of 11 July 1963 became perhaps the most celebrated arrest in South African history!

The extraordinary significance of 'Lilliesleaf Farm' implies that any lesser document than this submission, would have negated the importance of the matter under consideration!

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At the time of the police raid on 'Lilliesleaf Farm', Mandela had already been in jail for a year. After returning from abroad during July of the previous year, he was arrested in Natal on 5 August 1962, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment on the charge of incitement and for leaving the country without valid travel documents.

Part of the significance of 'Lilliesleaf Farm' lies in what happened to Nelson Mandela previously, i.e. after he went underground in April 1961. In his famous statement from the dock in Pretoria on 20 April 1964 during the Rivonia Trial, he told how during October 1961, he was offered a hiding place at 'Lilliesleaf Farm' in Rivonia on the northern outskirts of Johannesburg by Arthur Goldreich. *"I" according to Nelson Mandela, "found Rivonia an ideal place for the man who lived the life of an outlaw. Up to that time I had been compelled to live indoors during the daytime and could only venture out under cover of darkness. But at Lilliesleaf... I could live differently and work far more efficiently. For obvious reasons, I had to disguise myself and I assumed the fictitious name of David. In December, Arthur Goldreich and his family moved in. I stayed there until I went abroad on 11 January 1962... Whilst staying at Lilliesleaf farm, I frequently visited Arthur Goldreich in the main house and he also paid me visits in my room."*

Nelson Mandela's association between October 1961 and January 1962 with 'Lilliesleaf Farm', i.e. one and a half years before the arrest of several leaders of the Congress Alliance at this very place, makes 'Lilliesleaf Farm' noticeably significant.

'Lilliesleaf Farm' became synonymous with the story of the Rivonia Trial in particular because of what happened here on 11 July 1963. The following apt description of the police raid on 'Lilliesleaf Farm' is quoted from "Operation Mayibuye: A review of the

Rivonia Trial” by Judge H.H.W. de Villiers - published a year after the event - :

“About ten miles north of Johannesburg, but well within its outskirts, there is a peri-urban area of somewhat exclusive small-holdings known as Rivonia.

In a secluded, wooded hollow of this Rivonia area lies a farm by the name of ‘Lilliesleaf’, an extensive farm, as small-holdings go, of some twenty-eight acres of some of the most productive land in the Transvaal.

This was a well equipped and developed farm with a large, modern, high shingle-roofed main building such as a well-to-do retired business-man might put up in a semi-rural area for his privacy and retirement. This was no run-of-the-mill farm house,, but a residence redolent of financial resources and elusiveness such as might be seen in the pattern of the quieter and more select outskirts of Africa’s most prosperous city.

Behind the main building was a considerable number of outbuildings as might be used for the housing of servants, workrooms, storerooms, fuelsheds and the like. Amongst these outbuildings was a rather commodious and imposing thatch-roofed cottage which, as events proved, housed most of the dramatis personae who figured in the South African cause célèbre to become internationally known as the Rivonia Trial.

Although within the limits of South Africa’s most heavily populated area, the farm ‘Lilliesleaf’ somehow remained off the beaten track and away from the routes which Johannesburg motorists taking customary Sunday afternoon drives would traverse...

On the afternoon of the 11th July 1963, things were quiet at the Rivonia homestead as the farm ‘Lilliesleaf’ came to be known; even the field labourers who gave ‘Lilliesleaf’ its verisimilitude of a farm minding its own business as a farm were not in evidence. July is midwinter on the Transvaal highveld where Rivonia is situated, and it was a bleak and chilly afternoon... From somewhere off the main tarred road to Johannesburg, a van bearing the name of a well-known Johannesburg laundry firm nosed its way along the Rivonia farmroads on the apparently innocent mission of picking up and delivering laundry and perhaps finding a new customer or two in that select area.

The laundry van meandered around several turnings and finally turned in to the road which brought it, unchallenged, to the ‘Lilliesleaf’ homestead. Here the driver of the van was stopped by (an)...employee who peremptorily ordered him to turn back. The driver of the van, appropriately dressed in a white dustcoat, as was his companion on the front seat, disarmingly explained that they were calling on the off-chance of contacting some new laundry customers in that area... Lieutenant W.P. J. Van Wyk of the South African Police was ... in the interior of the van, together with nine other detectives and constables, including a constable with a police dog... The driver reversed reluctantly as if to obey the order to depart, and thus brought the rear of the vehicle about mid-way between the main house and the outbuildings... ‘Ons Slaan Toe’, called Lieutenant Van Wyk...(... ‘We Close In’) and the laundry van’s unsuspected contents, including the police dog, erupted to close in on the house and outbuildings. From the police point of view, this raid provided unexpected results... In the thatch-roofed cottage which the police first entered, there were six men in a huddle examining a document... Somebody shouted a warning, when the police burst into this cottage and three of the occupants of the room jumped through a back window - and straight into the arms of the police. These three

were... Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, and... Ahmed Kathrada. Inside the cottage the police arrested... Lionel Bernstein and Bob Hepple, and... Raymond Mhlaba.

(The)...document that the people in the thatch-roofed cottage had open in front of them was a six-page document entitled 'Operation Mayibuye'. (Here it needs to be pointed out that it was argued by the defence during the subsequent trial that the document at the time of the raid, was hidden in the room in the soot box of a little heating stove!) In the main building the police arrested... Dennis Goldberg. The raiders who had arrived camouflaged as laundrymen, were joined by other members of the police force arriving openly in police cars, as pre-arranged.

The police, who were now present in force on this smallholdings farm, had given instructions to permit cars to approach the homestead, but to prevent a departure of all cars not recognised as police cars. The reputed tenant of the farm 'Liliesleaf', Arthur Goldreich, who lived there with his wife and three children, had left the farm before the police arrived, and had not returned when the raid took place. Towards dusk of the same evening he returned by car. He drove unsuspectingly along the last short leg of the winding dirt road that led to his front door. Here, spotting the police cars, he smelled disaster and hurriedly reversed to the corner he had just turned, but the police, plus the police dog, stepped out of the shadows of early dusk and arrested him.

After securing their prisoners, the police searched the premises and discovered a large number of documents and articles which afterwards figured as exhibits in the trial...Among the discoveries by the police at Rivonia was a radio transmitter in one of the outside rooms, and a buried cable leading to a radio mast."

From the information gleaned from the documents seized during the raid, James Kantor was subsequently arrested together with Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni. Harold Wolpe, Kantor's brother-in-law was arrested on 17 July 1963 near the Botswana border.

After their arrest, the accused were held for interrogation under the notorious 'no-trial' law, the 90-Day Detention Law. They were kept in solitary confinement and were forbidden to read or write or speak to anyone.

Hepple had meanwhile succeeded in fleeing the country whilst Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe had also managed to flee the country after escaping from the police cells at Marshall Square in Johannesburg.

The Rivonia Trial which started on 9 October 1963, lasted a gruelling eight months. Nelson Mandela was brought from prison to stand trial together with the others as 'Accused Number One'. At the conclusion of the trial on 11 June 1964, he together with Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Dennis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi, Govan Mbeki and Andrew Mlangeni were convicted. Nelson Mandela was found guilty on four charges of sabotage and like the others, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In a press statement issued by the ANC in London on 12 June 1964, Chief Albert Luthuli appealed "to all governments throughout the world, to people everywhere, to

organisations and institutions in every land and at every level, to act now to impose sanctions on South Africa that will bring about the vital necessary change and avert what can become the greatest African tragedy of our times."

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES

Preliminary research shows that of the 'Lilliesleaf' farmstead buildings at the time of the Rivonia raid, only two have remained. It is therefore certainly consoling to know that these two buildings are the original farmhouse and the thatch-roofed cottage, the very two buildings most closely associated with the former President Nelson Mandela's stay at 'Lilliesleaf Farm' and the arrest of 11 July 1963.

The thatch-roofed cottage has remained unaltered. The loose-standing coalbunker of brick and mortar near the kitchen of the main house where many documents were discovered by the police, has also remained intact.

Efforts to locate the original building plans of the main house (i.e. the original farmhouse) have been unsuccessful. Apart from minor subsequent alterations to this building - an additional bedroom was subsequently added to the southern wing of the house - the latter's current appearance corresponds quite favourably with its appearance at the time of the raid. The two radio masts that were installed on the distinctive pitched roof of the house prior to the raid for the purpose of radio broadcasts, are also still intact.

The Gauteng Office of SAHRA unfortunately faces a complex problem. This stems from the fact that 'Lilliesleaf Farm' subsequently became part of a residential area, i.e. a suburb in Rivonia. The original smallholding was subdivided, resulting in the fact that the main house and the thatch-roofed cottage are today situated on two separate, albeit adjoining privately-owned stands, being Erf 51 (Winston Ave. No. 8) and Erf 52 (Winston Ave. No. 6), respectively. Situated on the latter together with the cottage, is an architecturally modern dwelling (construction ca. 1988).

CURRENT SITUATION

The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture Dr Wally Serote, recently gave the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology the political mandate to facilitate an investigation into and commemoration of heritage associated with the Rivonia and Treason Trials.

The Gauteng Office of SAHRA has consequently been concentrating a great deal of its time and efforts on sites such as 'Lilliesleaf Farm, Trevallyn, No. 10 Terrace Road, Mountain View in Johannesburg, as well as the Palace of Justice in Pretoria, all of which are associated with the Rivonia Trial. Sites associated with the Treason Trial are also being investigated, e.g. the Drill Hall in Johannesburg.

The owner of Erf 51 (No. 8 Winston Ave.) in Rivonia, Mr Helmut Schneider, is presently converting the main house into an exclusive guest house. It is his intention to allow the public to visit the property as members of guided tours. He has erected a new building

near the southern wing of the main house in which it is proposed to present the history of 'Lilliesleaf Farm'. The Gauteng Office of SAHRA was not consulted with respect to any of this. It should however be noted that Mr Schneider has expressed his wish to collaborate closely with SAHRA, i.e. with a view to the meaningful presentation and future management of his property as a heritage site.

Based on the above-mentioned, it is considered of critical importance that not only Mr Schneider's property but the adjoining property, i.e. Erf 52 (Winston Ave. No. 6) on which the cottage is situated, be provisionally protected.

Provisional protection will allow SAHRA to become meaningfully involved, i.e. with sufficient *locus standi*, in further negotiations pertaining to formal protection in terms of the Act, the development of a conservation management plan, as well as the presentation and use of the site associated with the police raid of 11 July 1963.

It is planned to establish a working group for the purpose of investigating the sites associated with the Rivonia and Treason Trials and of deliberating appropriate forms of protection and management measures for these sites.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The properties known as Erven 51 and 52, Rivonia Extension 1, Rivonia, together constitute one of the most significant of sites worth commemorating in the history of the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

It is contended that their importance, i.e. in terms of the arrest of 11 July 1963 and their association with Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is justification enough for their eventual nomination for national heritage site status!

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the properties known as Erf 51 together with the buildings thereon, as well as Erf 52, together with the thatch-roofed cottage thereon, Rivonia Extension 1, Rivonia, be provisionally protected.

SOURCES

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23 November 2000