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26 June 2014

Attention Niraj Naamdhe

**Conservation Interventions at the OR Tambo Homestead Legacy Project
OR Tambo Two-Roomed House at Mdikiso**

Dear Niraj

I have acquainted myself with the reporting and photographs of the interventions at the two-roomed house at Mdikiso and comment as follows:

SAHRA officials were aware of the vulnerability of the structure when endorsing the recommendations for its conservation as provided for by Iliso and IDC as submitted to the SAHRA Built Environment Committee in 2012 – 2013.

The contractor followed these conservation principles as instructed. However in the course of the interventions the contractor realised the fragility of the structure primarily due to the lack of foundations and walls that were constructed on topsoil with no concrete footing.

The underpinning of the structure, as recommended by Iliso and IDC and endorsed by SAHRA, failed to effect the required stability. Wall collapse ensued and contractor had to make an immediate decision to ensure the integrity of the remaining structure.

The encasing of the two-roomed building in a brick jacket has been determined by the structural engineer as the best option to ensure the integrity of the building in the future.

The historical significance of the building resides in a “sense of place” and its association with the legacy of OR Tambo. Consequently, I believe the conservation interventions as now carried out can still retain this “sense of place”.

This can be achieved by rendering a plaster finish to the exterior skin that mirrors the original plaster finish. The interior plaster should reflect that of the original, too.

In conclusion, I am of the opinion that no blame can be apportioned. The approved conservation interventions on the building were initiated and these revealed far greater structural defects and fragility than previously were apparent.

Working at remote distance and in isolation the contractor undertook emergency action to limit further collapse and possible loss of the entire structure.

It remains to complete the refurbishments and render the interior and exterior of the house to as close as possible to its original finish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Len van Schalkwyk". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Len van Schalkwyk

Appendix

ORT Homestead	date	km	class	rate	activity	Cost
	01.02.13	155	1600 P	4.46		R 691.30
	05.02.13	55	1600 P	4.46		R 245.30
	16.07.13	110	1600 P	4.49		R 493.90
TOTAL						1430.50