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T: +27 12 320 8490 / +27 12 941 4960 | F: +27 12 320 8486
South African Heritage Resources Agency - Pretoria Office | 432 Paul Kruger Street | Pretoria

SITE INSPECTION REPORT: FOR NO.7 CASTLE HILL HISTORICAL MUSEUM: EASTERN CAPE

Prepared By: Nkosazana Queenie Machete (nmachete@sahra.org.za)

HERITAGE PROTECTION UNIT

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No. 7 Castle Hill Museum Parsonage House in Port Elizabeth



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Introduction

Section 5 (1)(a) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) states that “Heritage resources have lasting value in their own right and provide evidence of the origins of the South African society and as they are valuable, finite, non-renewable and irreplaceable they must be carefully managed to ensure their survival”. On the 6/12/18, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Heritage Protection Unit conducted an inspection at the No. 7 Castle Hill Historical Museum in the Eastern Cape Province.

Background

No. 7 Castle Hill Museum is a fascinating museum located in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. Built in 1827, it was once a Settlers cottage and is now a museum, famous for being one of the oldest surviving buildings of its kind.

History of the site

Port Elizabeth was the landing place of the 1820’s settlers, and as a result, the historic region displays many fine architectural attractions which date back to the period. No. 7 Castle Hill Museum is regarded as one of the finest, and oldest surviving settler cottages in Port Elizabeth.

The property was purchased for three guineas (about R6.60 in those days). The picturesque building which was originally constructed as a family dwelling, was built in 1827 by Rev McClelland who was one of four thousand British settlers that arrived in the area in 1820. The house became a folk museum in the 1960’s and was proclaimed as a historical museum on 1962.

No. 7 Castle Hill has undergone restoration to reflect the rich history and elegant lifestyle which was enjoyed by many a middle-class English family in the mid-19th century.

The old cottage is at the Castle Hill Road, and displays crisp white walls, yellowwood floors and beams, and a restored slate roof. Other interesting features include a dollhouse, lace displays and an impressive 19th century kitchen. The house attracts people from all over the world, leaving them enchanted, as the guest book proudly reflects.



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Significance of the site

No. 7 Castle Hill is one of the oldest houses in Port Elizabeth. It was completed in 1830. Following renovations, the building was opened as a museum in 1965. The interior presents a picture of domestic life enjoyed by any English middle-class family in the mid-19th century Port Elizabeth.

The house was declared a National Monument in 1962. The City Council jointly with the Cape Provincial Administration purchased it in 1963. The house was entrusted to the care of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, who restored the house and in 1965 and opened it to the public.



Picture 1: Children room and sewing room at Castel Hill

Assessment

SAHRA has visited the museum on three occasions to assess the Heritage Objects that were declared. There was no clear record of which objects had been declared. The main objective was to determine which objects that were declared and get a list of inventories. On the 6th and 7th, the HPU conducted a site visit, and the database of the heritage objects was obtained and given to national inventory and heritage objects units within SAHRA.



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Picture 2: Kitchen ware



Picture 3: Kitchen ware



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Conclusion

SAHRA need to continue monitor all national estates as they are stolen or break due to wear and tear and are not reported to SAHRA by the relevant authority. Heritage object unit need to keep record of what was declared, and national inventory unit need to feed this information on SAHRIS for future reference.

Heritage Protection Manager: Ms. Nkosazana Machete

Date: 12/12/2018

Executive Officer:

Date: