



**SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE
RESOURCES AGENCY**

Ref. No: 9/2/018/0079
Enquiries: Greg Ontong, Acting Manager SAHRA Built Environment Unit
Date: 10 May 2012

**Re: Nomination for National Heritage Site status for Erf 9245, Cape Town,
The Lutheran Church**

COUNCIL OF SAHRA

LUTHERAN CHURCH NOMINATION FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE STATUS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To inform Council of the nomination for National Heritage site status received;
- 1.3 to obtain council decision on the grading, provisional protection and declaration of erf 9245;
- 1.4 to inform council of the investigation for the provisional protection of the adjacent VOC warehouse , and
- 1.5 to inform council of the process to incorporate the Freeworld Centre as part of the larger city block, and its inclusion in Grade 1 and provisionally protected site.

2. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

- 2.1 A consent use application to the City of Cape Town pertaining to erf 174009, corner of Strand-, Bree- and Waterkant streets, Cape Town, during 2011 opened up public awareness and specific concern to the protection of the heritage resource. Heritage Western Cape was the relevant heritage authority and issued a record of decision in this regard. As part of the consent use application process lodged at the City of Cape Town, SAHRA expressed concern and objected to the proposed intervention as it was felt that consideration has not been given to the potential national heritage significance of the 18th century block.
- 2.2 The matter was heard at the City of Cape Town Spatial Planning, Environmental & Land Use Management Committee (SPELUM) meeting on 13 April 2011 where it was resolved "That the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) be requested to address the grading of the building, the complex in question, and the City Block, in the light of its potential national significance, as a matter of urgency".

- 2.3 Subsequent to the City of Cape Town decision to not approve the consent use application, a nomination for heritage site status was submitted to SAHRA in May 2011 for Erf 9245, Cape Town, also known as the Lutheran Church site.
- 2.4 The Grading and Declarations committee conducted a site visit on 6 June 2011 and at a committee meeting on the same day discussed the nomination and requested the following additional information to be submitted before a recommendation can be made:
1. Expanded statement of significance:
 - a. elaborate on the scientific and social values, i.e. unpack religious freedom.
 - b. Elaborate on the VOC streetscape
 - c. A comparative analysis of the slaves that were baptized there
 - d. The relation to the indigenous people
 2. Research on the objects, the furniture and fittings as well as the movable objects in comparison to similar objects in other collections.

The information requested was received and a presentation done to the Grading and Declarations committee on 19 December 2011. The committee was satisfied that the significance of erf 9245 was evident from the additional information (see attached document) that was provided and herewith recommended the matter to SAHRA Council.

- 2.5 Further to the nomination received the committee were also informed of the request from the City of Cape Town to investigate the Grade 1 potential of erf 174009
- 2.6 It should be noted that the applicant appealed against the City of Cape Town decision and SAHRA provided the following comment to the provincial department of environmental affairs and development planning in this regard
- 2.7 A number of internal meetings were held during the course of 2011 to discuss the matter amongst staff members and possible conservation policies that are applicable in this regard.
- 2.8 A meeting between SAHRA and HWC was held on 26 May 2011 and HWC was informed via email of the nomination received, as well as the updated information received recently.
- 2.9 A meeting between SAHRA and the City of Cape Town was held on 23 January 2012.

3 LOCATION OF THE SITE

Erf 9245, is located on the corner of Strand- and Buitengracht Streets, Central Business District of Cape Town.



Figure 1: Photo taken of the corner of Strand- and Buitengracht Streets.

4 DESCRIPTION

Erf 9245 is one of two erven that makes up the city block bounded by Waterkant -, Buitengracht-, Strand- and Bree Street. The Sexton's House (now the Netherlands Consulate), the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the 18th century Parsonage (now the Martin Melk House) are situated on erf 9245.

It is located within the Central City Conservation Area and was designated in the local Zoning scheme regulations in the 1970's (Titlestad, S. 2011)



Source: (Titlestad,, S. 2011:1)

Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the location of the various buildings on erven 9245 and 174009.

5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“The Lutheran Church Historical Complex (the Church, Parsonage, Sexton's House and rear Courtyard of the block) constitutes a multi-layered site that is exemplary of a heritage resource with qualities so exceptional that they are of national significance. Its combination of **cultural landscape, architectural, technical, and extraordinary social and spiritual significances** makes it a unique and irreplaceable resource,

which should be protected for future generations of South Africans.” (Titlestad, S. 2011;4)

“The social history of the site reveals it as a place symbolising successful resistance to VOC domination and precursor to the advent of freedom of religious worship in South Africa. It is directly linked with the freeing of slaves and incorporation of freed slaves into the community, and the beginning of institutions of culture and social responsibility. The site is exemplary of architectural and technical achievements of its time, and has been professionally maintained and restored to high standards in order to retain authenticity. The site is the only example of the non-official VOC cultural landscape that remains free-standing and visually intact within the urban city spaces and has extraordinary significance as a landmark and heritage precinct.” (Titlestad, S. 2011;3)

6 CULTURAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cultural Landscape Significance:

“Cape Town is the national marker of the origins of the colonisation of South Africa from the 17th century and the introduction of Western hierarchical systems of governance and land transactions which ultimately changed the face of southern Africa.

The modern City Centre and CBD is framed by the (1945) harbour and Table Mountain. The VOC grid of streets and public squares and spaces form the structuring elements for the modern settlement.

Contemporary Cape Town has very few authentic sites and buildings remaining from the VOC era. There are military and government buildings. There are some (mostly 19th century) historic buildings that contribute to a sense of history within the city. There are single buildings that are externally relatively intact, and single buildings that contain VOC-era fabric within adaptive accretions but which still add to a sense of local layering.

Sites and buildings that are significant as markers of the early period of colonial settlement are extremely rare. Sites that contain intact buildings (as opposed to symbolic remnants) are extremely rare. Sites that were not government sites within that period are rarer still. The Lutheran Church site is the only site in the City Centre that contains a historically public building that was not VOC owned, flanked by VOC era residences and a set of warehouses. The ensemble was developed as such in the 1760s-80s and has retained its form, fabric and purpose (except for the residential giving way to commercial re-use) since that time.” (Titlestad, S. 2011;20)

7. MOTIVATION AND THE WAY FORWARD

From the research submitted for the nomination for Erf 9245, it is clear that it has significance on a national level. The following further information available clearly identifies a link between the adjacent VOC warehouse and the Lutheran Church.



Figure 3: Gordon Panorama 1786c. This shows the VOC Store (Referred to as 1st Pakhuis below) on Erf 174009 as the earliest building on the block and its annotation regarding its future use as a Lutheran Church.

The following is a timeline for the history of the VOC Warehouse (erf 174009) noted with the information provided by the City of Cape Town from discussions with VOC researcher Helena Scheffler:

- “**1764:** Martin Melck was granted the block of land bordered by Waterkant-, Bree- and Strand Streets by Rijk Tulbagh for the erection of warehouses. The First (existing) Pakhuis was built immediately.
A Second Pakhuis was then built, which had a small organ and lectern. This was to be used as a Lutheran Church.
Ryk Tulbagh became suspicious about the use of this Second Warehouse being used as a church. The lectern was removed, but the organ being an expensive piece of equipment was left in the Second Pakhuis.
Melck made a will that bequeathed the second pakhuis to the Lutheran Church on the death of either him or his wife, Anna Melck.
- 1776:** Anna Melck dies. The Second Pakhuis was transferred to the Lutheran congregation in 1781.
- 1779:** On 23 October 1779 it was decreed that the Lutherans can have their own church.
- 1781:** Pakhuis and Erf transferred to Lutheran Congregation in 1781.
Melck then gave a piece of land to the Lutheran Church for the pastorie.
- 1788:** First Pakhuis leased to the VOC. “

(Source: Argief Jaarboek: Suid Afrikanse Geskiedenis: 1938: Deel II)

From figure 3 and the timeline above it is evident that there exists a strong link between the VOC warehouse on erf 174009 and erf 9245. It is therefore motivated that even though erf 9245 has national significance, the warehouse on erf 174009 should be investigated to form part of this unique ensemble.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Grading and provisional protection administration to be covered by the Built Environment unit operational budget.

- 8.2 Due to the capacity constraints of the Built Environment unit, consultants fees will be required to appoint an independent, appropriated skilled and qualified heritage specialist to conduct the necessary research to the confirm the significance of the VOC warehouse as part of block to be protected.

9. RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that erf 9245 be approved and afforded **Grade 1** heritage status with provisional protection whilst the process towards National Heritage Site declaration is continued, on condition:
 - i. A Conservation Management Plan be compiled prior to NHS declaration
2. It is further recommended that the adjacent erf, 174009(VOC Warehouse / Mike's Sports Complex), be **investigated** for provisional protection together with erf 9245 whilst the investigation to its possible inclusion to the national heritage site is continued by SAHRA.
3. SAHRA continue to **investigate** whether the remainder of the city block (the Freeworld Centre on the corner of Waterkant- and Buitengracht Streets) needs to be included as to be part of the Grade 1 site with provisional protection.

Acknowledgements:

- a. Ms Sally Titlestadt for research information provided.
- b. City of Cape Town Heritage Resources Section for providing Gordon Panorama 1786c

Bibliography of documentation relating to the heritage resources:

TITLESTADT, S. & HERMANSEN, S. 2011. Motivation for Declaration of the Lutheran Church Complex, erf 9245 Cape Town, as a heritage resource with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance. Report compiled for SAHRA.

SOUTH AFRICA. 1995. National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999. Government Printers: Pretoria.

CITY OF CAPE TOWN: Extract of information from *Argief Jaarboek: Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis: 1938: Deel II* and discussions with VOC researcher Helena Scheffler:

South African Heritage Resources case files. File number: 9/2/018/0079 - Lutheran Church, Strand Street, Cape Town