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SAHRIS Case ID: 2324
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Date: 19 June 2013

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FOR ATTENTION: MS HELEN MAY

Dear Ms May

RE: DROSDY HOTEL GRAAF REINET: SECTION 27 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR INTERIM COMMENT

The above application was reviewed by SAHRA Built Environment Unit on the 27 May 2013.

DISCUSSION

The following document: ***DROSDY HOTEL, GRAAF REINET: DRAFT HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR COMMENT- In accordance with sections 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999- Prepared by Helen May, Urban Concepts, April 2013*** was reviewed.

The Committee assessed the presentation by Ms May within the context of the above document and recommends that the following comments be included in the submission to ECPHRA.

OVERVIEW

The report was submitted to assist in the assessment and guidance in regard to the intention of conducting improvements and changes to buildings of significance; the demolition of buildings of low or no significance, the construction of new buildings on the properties Erf 3476 Drosdy Hotel, Erf 3477 Stretch's Court and Erf 1176 no. 5 Parliament Street, Graaf Reinet.

The report identifies a Provincial Heritage Site (PHS) on erven 3476 and 3477. In addition there are buildings on all three erven which are older than 60 years but not part of the PHS.

The objective of the project, as defined in the above draft Heritage Statement, is to retain and enhance the heritage significance and revive the property and hotel business through the maintenance and/or restoration of historical structures. This would inter alia include the removal of

outdated, inadequately placed insignificant structures to allow for better functions such as back of house/stores to areas of the property where busy functions are screened from the public.

COMMENT

The comments were as follows:

General

- The draft Heritage Statement by Urban Concepts was well presented and thorough.
- Concerns are, however, raised around the matter of how heritage indicators and mitigating measures are integrated into the Design Recommendations of the Master Plan, especially in the context of broader Urban and Cultural Landscape considerations.
- The following statement *'open spaces and vegetation a key characteristic element of the town & a vital element to retain, enhance and conserve'* as expressed in the Heritage Statement, page 58, requires the intervention by a landscape architect to see to its seamless integration into the site and the larger context.
- An Integrated Cultural Landscape Framework Plan should augment the Master Plan (p58), Item 6.1, which will integrate the various heritage resources into a whole.
- It is agreed that there are degrees of intactness in regard to Stretch's Court, Kromm's Inn, Cobbler's Shop and No. 5 Parliament Street. The degree of intactness defines the degree to which interventions can comfortably be facilitated and absorbed.
- It is recommended that the Grade II status of the Drostdy be extended to include all elements older than 60 years to protect the sense of place and to manage the site holistically.

Further to the above,

- A heritage architect and archaeologist's input proposed for appointment during construction should be engaged at the second and final drafts of the heritage study.
- The intended urban design statement should include the fabric of the surrounding streets and buildings.

Detail

Drostdy

- The Drostdy Hotel, a Provincial Heritage Site, is indicated as having landmark qualities and, it is stated, that, together with The Camdeboo and the Thibault Room adds to the streetscape qualities of Church Street. In the Conclusions and Recommendations section, page 65, the intention is expressed for the demolition of the 1975 restoration to the Drostdy. In the drawing ***Drostdy Hotel-Graaf Reinet/Conceptual Proposal/24 May 2013 A1-1:250*** the demolitions are internal and fairly minimal.
- Concern is however raised at the extensive demolitions at the Thibault Room and Camdeboo Restaurant areas together with the ancillary spaces. Caution should be exercised to avoid demolition of historical material and fabric to facilitate programmatic requirements. Where historical material will be under threat and not necessarily part of the broader programmatic requirements these should be avoided as far as possible.

Stretch's court

- Concern in regard to Stretch's Court is that of public access to the site. A key question was whether public has or had access to the site or not. The thresholds between street and/or

pedestrian path at Stretch's Court should therefore make provision for access to the site or potentially allow ingress and egress as part of integration in to the local townscape.

- Exposure of 'features of the historic wall fabric' within Stretch's Court should be considered and done sympathetically and cautiously to avoid structural damage and deterioration of fabric.
- A concern is also that the historical orchard to south- this has not been addressed and leads to concern around the matter of the intervention of a landscape architect.

Leivoor system

- The Leivoor system is still in existence in front of the cottages in Bourke Street – these are historically significant as a remnant of a more comprehensive system since most of the furrows were removed during the 1990's.
- On page 38 of the document under discussion, the heritage indicators are seen as an 'important memory of the development of the town and ingenuity of residents'.
- On page 41, in regard to the heritage indicators, the intention is expressed for the retention of the memory of the leivoor system (re-use, grid cover, storm water etc) - where feasible, it should be reinstated.

Wall (south of parking)

- A historical wall exists with an old carriage entrance is located along Parliament Street a portion of which dates before 1880.
- A second boundary wall which is defined as the last remaining memory of the 1859 site boundary (page 33) is still present. On page 41, under heritage indicators, the intention is expressed to 'conserve historic walls'.
- The proposed street and parking layout as expressed in the Master Plan is deemed not appropriate.
- Social memory of the gardens of Drostdy, courtyard, row of trees, vineyard not evident in proposed layout of gardens in front of Drostdy. A detailed plan is required in this regard.

Slave Bell

- The slave bell was identified as having social and cultural significance to locals and visitors. The plan to move it to a more focal position is supported.

Concluding remarks

- The demolition plan cannot be supported at this stage (as per the recommendations of the report), as the findings of the next draft statement is expected to better inform the nature and extent of demolitions.
- Draft sketch plans dealing with all proposed work should accompany the next heritage statement.
- A contemporary architectural approach may not necessarily be appropriate for all new work.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the SAHRA Built Environment Unit Manager, Mr. Gregory Ontong at gontong@wc.sahra.org.za, Ms Sheenagh Bruce, Cultural Officer at sbruce@wc.sahra.org.za or Mr. Gcobani Sipoyo, Cultural Officer at gsipoyo@wc.sahra.org.za

Yours sincerely



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On behalf of SAHRA BELCOM