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Department of Arts and Culture

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SITE INSPECTION REPORT: Kruger Chairs at Reformed Church in Pretoria Gauteng Province

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HERITAGE PROTECTION UNIT

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APP Indicator Number: 2.1

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 16th of May 2017, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Heritage Protection Unit conducted an inspection at the Reformed Church in Pretoria Gauteng Province.

Purpose of the site visit

The site visit was conducted as part of monitoring national heritage objects in Gauteng Province. This was done to ensure that the authority responsible is in compliance with section 5 of the NHRA which states that *“Heritage Resources contribute significantly to research, education and tourism and they must be developed and presented for these purposes in a way that ensures dignity and respect for cultural values”*

Background

The year 1859 marks the founding of the Reformed Church in Pretoria and its first church was built in the town in 1863. Only on 21 December 1894 did the church board decide to gather money for a new church building. Klaas van Rijse was hired as architect and in April 1896 the tender by Daanen & Dorlas was accepted. The corner stone of the church was laid by Paul Kruger on 10 October 1896 during which a lead tube, with information and documentations of the Reformed Church and others of the time, was plastered in. In 1951, with the restoration of the building, The tube was reopened and additional information added. It was again inserted into the church wall. The church was formally opened by Kruger on 25 December 1897. In May 1949 the restoration of the church building’s roof was commissioned and during this process the roof was extended by 600mm and the top two brick courses were removed. During this restoration period the roof ventilators were also removed, the roof of the vestry was replaced, and the pitched roofs of the stairwells were replaced with flat concrete roofs. Since October



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1950 a larger restoration process started which included the rebuild of the external brick shell of the church with a harder type of brick, slightly darker than the original, improvement of natural lighting with the addition of new windows, a new door to the consistory, the replacement of the lintels with new specially made bricks, and the installation of a cable system inside the church to reinforce the structure. In 1951 some of the timber window frames and eroded sandstone were replaced. The Paul Kruger hall which was located to the south-west of the church on the same site and built with face brick in 1955, was replaced in 1983 with a new church hall located to the back of the church, designed by architects Moerdyk, Holzapfel and Slabbert. Hereafter the church was again restored by Moerdyk and Holzapfel in 1979. Most recently, in 2009, attention was given to the sandstone detailing by specialist sandstone contractors.

Significance of the Site

This Reformed church owes its cultural historical significance to its association with the former president of the 'Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek', Paul Kruger. The church, together with the Kruger House Museum directly south of the church, forms a historic coherent whole in terms of cultural significance with S.J.P Kruger as binding factor. It owes its architectural value to the fact that it was one of the churches built by Kruger's 'Hollanders', as indicated by the corner stone of the church. This building was designed by Klaas van Rijse and erected by Daanen & Dorlas Contractors between 1896 and 1897. This indicates the huge influence of the Dutch on the Z.A.R.

Assessment

The Kruger Chairs are not in good condition the right arm chair rest is loose due to wear and tear. But they are still being used for special occasions of the church.



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Picture 1: The Kruger Chairs at the Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria Gauteng



Conclusion

The Kruger Chairs are still good looking as an antique. But, due to wear and tear we might lose them. They need to be fixed before totally destruction.

Manager: Nkosazana Machete

Executive Officer:

Date:

Date: