

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

APPLICATION TO DEMOLISH EXISTING BUILDINGS

For the proposed expansion of Africanos Country Estate
on Portion 228 to a portion of Portion 74 of the farm Commando
Kraal, Estate no.113, near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Local
Municipality, Sarah Baartman District Municipality, Eastern Cape,
South Africa.

Prepared for:
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Theresa Hardman was appointed by Public Process Consultants on behalf of J.N. Venter Beleggings Trust to assess the existing buildings on Portion 74 of the farm Commando Kraal, Estate no.113, near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Local Municipality.

The aim of the assessment was to determine the heritage significance (if any) of these structures, and to provide recommendations in terms of their proposed demolition. The motivation for their demolition is the expansion of an existing Africanos Country Estate to include the construction of 12 chalets, staff housing, 12 new caravan camping sites, a double-storey hotel, a laundry, tool shed, convenience store, new multifunction hall, parking area, childrens' outdoor play area and associated infrastructure.

1.2 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

As the buildings on the site proposed for expansion are older than 60 years, the application for demolition is submitted to the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (ECPHRA) in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA) Section 34.

1.3 SCOPE OF WORK

This Heritage Assessment provides specialist heritage advice with regard to the proposed demolition of 2 buildings on Portion 74 of the farm Commando Kraal, Estate no.113, near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Local Municipality in accordance with :

- Legislation framework of National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999.
- Description of site and context

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1.4.1 Assumptions

It is assumed that all information on the site and buildings provided by Public Process Consultants is accurate.

1.4.2 Limitations

The report has not taken into account the detailed social and economic impact that the proposed demolition may have, as this is outside the scope of the brief.

1.5 SPECIALIST'S DETAILS

The Professional Heritage Practitioner is Theresa Hardman who is a registered Architect with the South African Council for the Architectural Professions (SACAP), and an accredited member of the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners (APHP). Theresa specialises in the field of the Eastern Cape and Karoo vernacular, having completed a Research Masters Degree in Architecture on the subject in 1994.

1.6 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

This is to confirm that Theresa Hardman, Architect and Professional Heritage Practitioner, is responsible for undertaking this assessment, is independent, has no vested or financial

interest in the proposed demolition of the existing buildings, nor in any future development on the sites in question.

1.7 THE SITE AND BUILDINGS

1.7.1 Location and Context:

The site in question was visited by Theresa Hardman on Thursday 13 February 2020.

It is situated just outside Addo opposite the Addo Polo Club, on the R336 road to Kirkwood and Zuurberg. It is adjoining the existing Africanos Country estate. There are no buildings of any historic architectural value around the site, and the 2 buildings on the site are relatively isolated, ie they do not form part of any architectural or heritage context. They are situated away from the road, and are accessible through gates and a driveway. They are not linked to the existing Africanos Country Estate, nor to any other group of buildings. They are therefore not part of any existing valuable group of buildings.

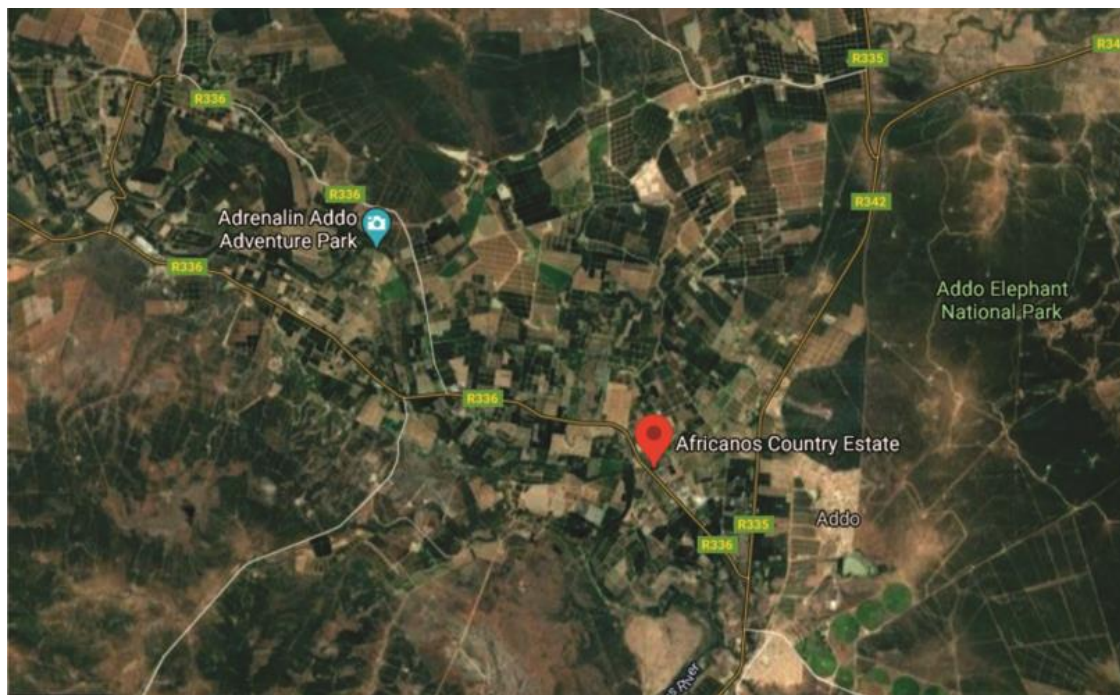


Fig 1:Aerial view showing location of the site

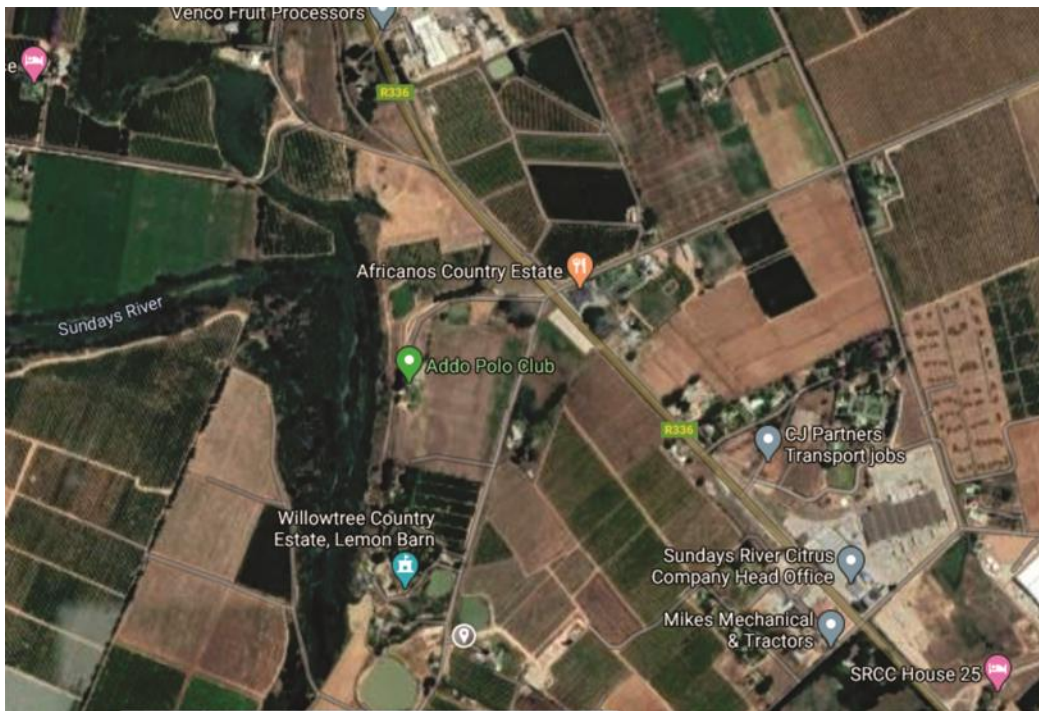


Fig. 2: Aerial view showing surrounding context



Fig. 3 Aerial view showing the position of the two buildings in question. Building 1 is an old farmhouse. Building 2 is a storage shed.

1.7.2 BUILDING 1 – THE FARMHOUSE

Building 1 is an old residential building with a pitched roof and steel window frames, possibly dating back to the 1950s. It has been substantially altered both externally and internally, with walls having been removed, bay windows added, and extensive wings added onto the original farmhouse. I estimate that at least 3 substantial additions have been made to the original farmhouse. These have been done with no concern for the historic architectural value of the original farmhouse, which was simple in form and would have had timber window frames throughout. The original farmhouse could possibly date back to the 1930s. The front facade has steel-framed windows, while others are timber-framed.

The existing building is therefore a mixture of several different architectural styles and materials, and the result is a structure which has no architectural or heritage value. In addition to this, the building is in a poor condition, with broken roof sheeting, which must lead to water leaks, as well as several cracked walls.

It is currently being used as temporary accommodation for the Chef of the Africanos Country Estate. Most of the rooms are uninhabited, with old linoleum on some of the original timber floors, while other parts of the building have concrete floors, some with tiles.

The building has not been maintained for many years, and several cracks are evident in the structural walls, and there is also evidence of leaks coming through some of the roof junctions.



Fig. 4: Front facade of the Farmhouse



Fig. 5: View from the front door of the farmhouse looking back to the road



Fig. 6: North-west view of the farmhouse showing bay windows which have been added to the original farmhouse



Fig. 7: Rear view of the farmhouse



Fig. 8: South-east side of the farmhouse showing relatively new verandah with steel-frame supports, dating back to around the 1960s



Fig. 9: View of the farmhouse showing peeling plaster, cracking walls and general state of disrepair due to lack of maintenance



Fig. 10: Closer view of verandah addition



Fig. 11: An unoccupied room inside the farmhouse, showing sagging ceilings. The door on the far right of this photograph is one of the external doors of the original farmhouse



Fig. 12: Closer view of the external doors to the original house, which are now internal due to an extension



Fig. 13: Internal facebrick fireplace in what was originally a living room



Fig. 14: Internal view of additions to the original farmhouse



Fig. 15: Internal view of kitchen which was possibly added in the 1960s, showing steel-frame windows

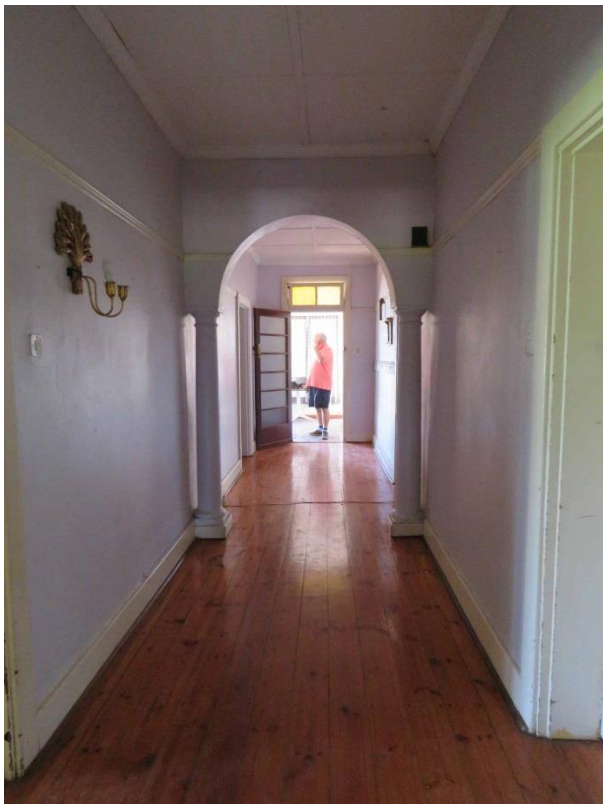


Fig. 16: View of internal passageway of original farmhouse



Fig. 17: View of recent ad-hoc alterations, showing no concern for the architectural character of the original farmhouse



Fig. 18: Internal view of additions to the front of the house, showing steel-frame windows, in contrast with original timber-framed windows and doors



Figs 19 & 20: Ceilings showing evidence of leaks from the rusted and poorly maintained corrugated iron roof sheeting

1.7.3 BUILDING 2 – STORAGE SHED

The storage shed adjacent to the farmhouse is also in a poor condition, due to lack of maintenance. It is a simple, functional rectangular building, with a pitched roof and a lean-to open area on brickwork columns, which are plastered and painted. The windows are made of various materials, including steel and timber.

Although it is relatively close to the farmhouse, the two buildings do not form a coherent group of buildings, as they do not relate to each other in any way, other than their close proximity.

Similar to the farmhouse, the shed building does not have any historical or architectural value, as it is eclectic and in a poor condition. It shows evidence of rising damp, as well as leaks from the poorly-maintained corrugated iron roof.



Fig. 21: Rear (north-east) view of the shed showing pitched roof with lean-to roof on columns



Fig. 22: View showing proximity of the farmhouse to the shed



Fig. 23: Rear view of shed building



Fig. 24: Rear view of shed building, showing new asbestos roof, as well as evidence of rising damp



Fig. 25: Side (North-west) view of the shed

3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

This Heritage assessment recommends that the demolition of the buildings on Portion 74 of the farm Commando Kraal, Estate no.113, near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Local Municipality, Sarah Baartman District Municipality, Eastern Cape, South Africa, be approved. They have already been altered to such an extent that they do not contribute significantly to the architectural heritage of the Addo area.

In addition to this, an architectural intervention in the form of a new commercial centre will most likely have a positive impact on the economy of the area.

It is, however, recommended that the existing trees on the property are preserved as they are very old and well-established. Some of them are situated in the area where the proposed parking lot will be situated, and could provide valuable shade to cars. In addition to this, they will break the monotony of the immense parking lot, which is totally inappropriate to the rural context. In this respect, it is strongly recommended that the proposed parking area be divided into smaller parking lots between the buildings and the trees. This, in addition to the presence of the trees, will visually “soften” the proposed development as the site is in a rural, not an urban context. I therefore strongly recommend that all the existing trees form part of the new development.



Fig. 26: View of property across the road from the proposed development, showing the rural context of the site



Fig. 27: View of the property, showing two of the existing trees on the site



Fig. 28: Existing fig tree which is situated in the proposed parking area



Fig 27: Existing fig tree showing its age



Fig. 28: View of the boundary between the existing Africanos Country Estate and the proposed development area, showing huge fig tree on the boundary

4. SOURCES:

National Heritage Resources Act no 25 of 1999

Photographs taken on site by the author of this Heritage Assessment