

VISUAL IMPACT STUDY

FOUNDERS' GARDEN SITE ERF 186

ROGGEBAAI CAPE TOWN

DECEMBER 2014



View to Founders' Garden from the Nelson Mandela Boulevard elevated freeway

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Western Cape Provincial Government intends to consolidate Erf 186 Roggebaai (Founders' Garden) and Erf 187 Roggebaai (The Artscape Complex) and rezone the property to allow for development on the Founders' Garden site. A Heritage Impact Assessment is required in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) as the proposals require a rezoning of a site larger than 10 000m², and the character of the site will be changed. Development proposals have been put forward for the Founders' Garden site and the HIA and this study is to address the potential impacts of these.

This visual impact study is a specialist study component to the HIA and it is therefore necessary to examine potential visual impacts in terms of heritage resources identified. The primary issue from a visual impact point of view as far as heritage resources are concerned are views from the Nelson Mandela Boulevard Scenic Drive (the elevated freeway).

Founders' Garden is situated in an area predominantly made up of large modern multi-storey office blocks and complexes located within a semi-grid street block pattern that includes open spaces and parking lots. Beyond the immediate borders of the surrounds there are further large and tall buildings (such as the Civic Centre) that form the backdrop to the site. These, together with the existing surrounding development, limit the extent of the effective visually receptive environment to a zone approximately 1/4km in radius around the site, beyond which there is limited to no potential visual impact. The boundary of the central city urban conservation area is located even further away (1/2 km).

The proposed development on the Founders' Garden site takes the form of a perimeter block development aligned with the street edges, with a podium base at the level of the elevated freeway surmounted by two tower blocks, one on the north side (DF Malan Street), and another on the south side (Jan Smuts Street). The towers step down in height on the Artscape side to form a positive relationship between the existing and new buildings. The lower height of the podium between the towers allows for existing views back to Table Mountain from the Scenic Drive and over the Artscape building to be maintained. This view is 'framed' between the two towers.

This visual impact study finds that potential visual impacts on heritage and cultural landscape including cumulative impacts are all neutral to positive. In this regard established views (including protected view corridors) are reinforced by the framing of the tower blocks, and the marginal reduction of general views to Table Mountain is offset by the positive townscape qualities and sound urban design or place-making principles being introduced through the configuration of the proposed development.

The proposals also accord with the Scenic Drive Network Management Plan Review document adopted by the City of Cape Town in 2014.

The heritage specialist is advised that there are no significant visual impacts on heritage resources and that the development may go ahead according to the current design proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Western Cape Provincial Government intends to consolidate Erf 186 Roggebaai (Founders' Garden) and Erf 187 Roggebaai (The Artscape Complex) and rezone the property to allow for development on the Founders' Garden site. A Heritage Impact Assessment is required in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) as the proposals require a rezoning of a site larger than 10 000m² and the character of the site will be changed.

1.2 Terms of Reference

In response to a NID (Notification of Intent to Develop) for the site, as submitted by Andrew Berman on behalf of the Provincial Government, HWC (Heritage Western Cape) in their ROD (Record of Decision) dated 19th February 2014 called for *“an HIA in terms of Section 38(3) of the NHRA (Act 25 of 1999) consisting of a visual impact study, design indicators and an archaeological study of the proposed Founders’ garden development.”* This document is to satisfy the requirement of a visual impact study as part of the HIA.

1.3 Statement of Independence and Expertise

Andre Pentz of Urban Design Services cc is an independent professional service provider with nearly 30 years of experience in disciplines involving the built environment. He is a registered architect and planner, a member of the Urban Design Institute of South Africa, and an accredited member of the Association of Professional Heritage Assessment Practitioners, Western Cape.

In addition to numerous visual studies prepared as part of or allied to heritage impact assessments conducted, Andre Pentz completed in 2014 a *Review of the Scenic Drive Network Management Plan* on behalf of the City of Cape Town. This study included a review of the Nelson Mandela Boulevard Scenic Drive, which adjoins the site. The scenic drive is considered a heritage / cultural landscape resource and is the primary heritage resource potentially affected by the proposed development.

1.4 Locality

The Founders' Garden Site (Erf 186) is situated in Roggebaai south of Nelson Mandela Boulevard, the elevated freeway. Together with the Artscape Complex (Erf 187) it is bounded on the north by Hertzog Boulevard. DF Malan Avenue is on the east side and Jan Smuts Drive is on the west. It is a prominent site, because of the distinctive architecture of the Opera House and the green 'openness' of the Founders' Garden.

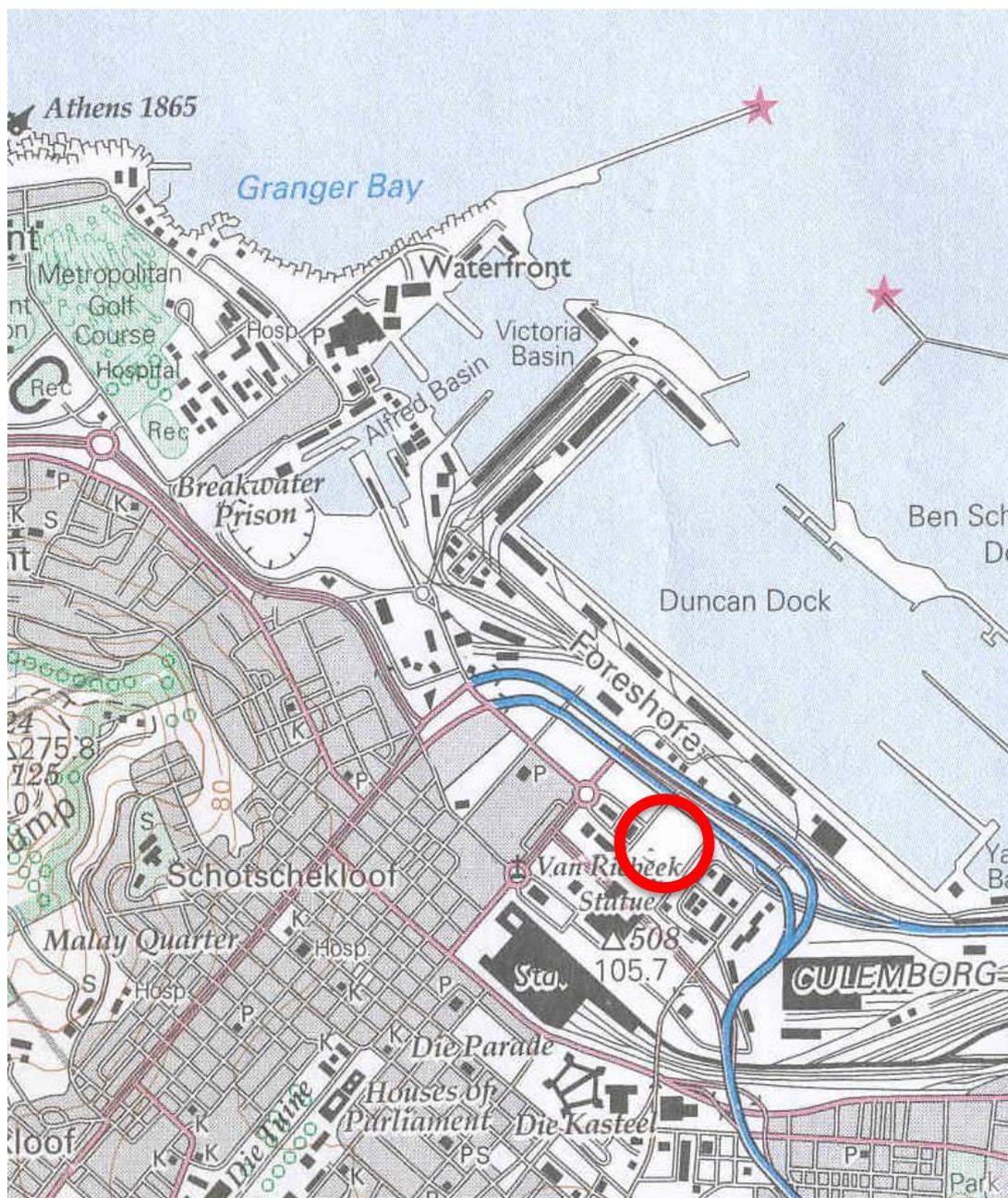


Fig 1: LOCALITY PLAN (Source: RSA 1:50000 map series)

1.5 Context

Founders' Garden is a remnant of the 1945 Foreshore Plan, which provided for a monumental gateway approach from the harbour leading up a broad open space axis to the Grand Parade and City Hall. This was abandoned in the 1960's and the elevated freeway, Civic Centre and Artscape Complex was built in its place.

The Artscape Complex backs on to the site with a parking area and the streetscape of the surroundings is limited to a few active street edges apart from motor vehicle showrooms. The elevated freeways also have a blighting effect with the space between them open parking areas.



Fig 2: CONTEXT PLAN-AERIAL PHOTO (source: COCT)

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The architects Luyanda Mphalwa- Design Space Africa have put forward proposals for the Founders' Garden site, which include a mix of uses (retail, office, hotel, residential, open space and parking). The overall development also includes additions and modifications to the Artscape precinct, but these are not part of this application as such.

Two scenarios are being explored in relation to the mix of uses with the difference between the two being the extent of residential space.

The proposed development on the Founders' Garden site takes the form of a perimeter block development aligned with the street edges, with a podium base at the level of the elevated freeway surmounted by two tower blocks, one on the north side (DF Malan Street), and another on the south side (Jan Smuts Street).

The towers step down in height on the Artscape side to form a corresponding spatial relationship between the existing and new buildings. The lower height of the podium between the towers allows for existing views back to Table Mountain from the Scenic Drive and over the Artscape building to be maintained. This view is 'framed' between the two towers.



INDICATIVE 3D- MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS



Fig 3: INDICATIVE VIEW- THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (Design Space Africa)

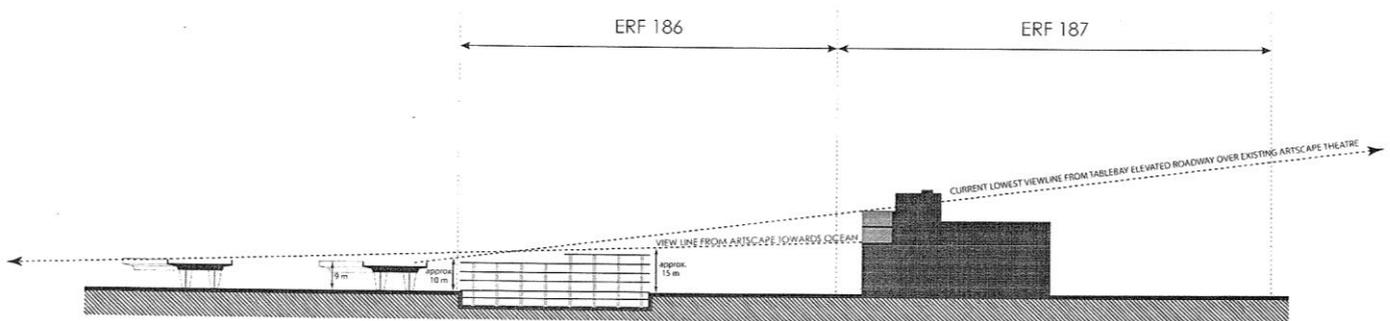
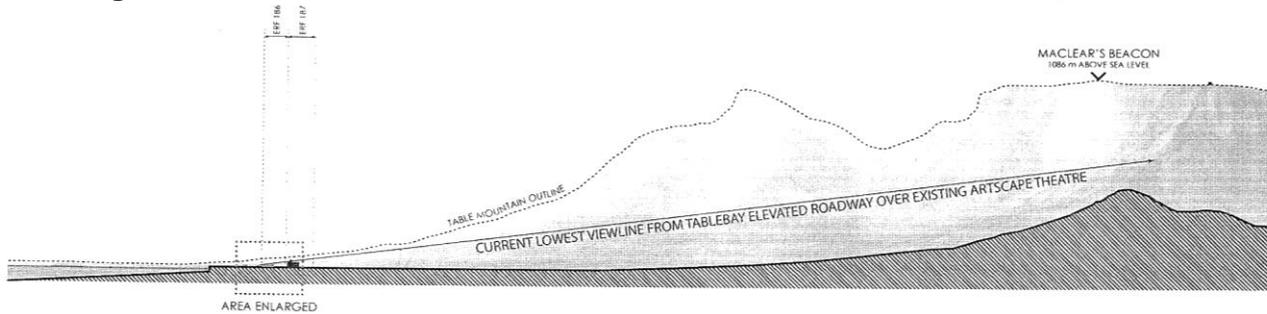


Fig 4: TRANSECT OF VIEW LINE OVER PODIUM LEVEL (Design Space Africa)

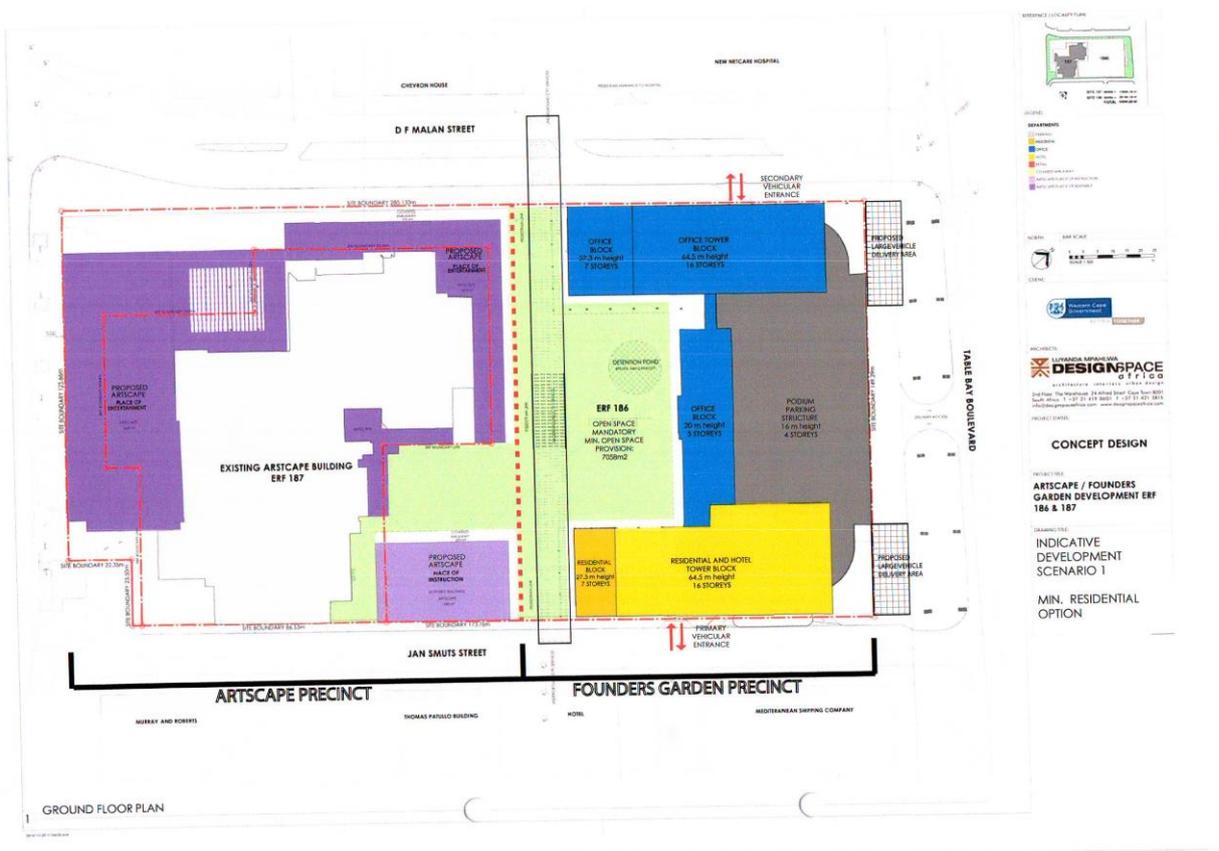


Fig 5: LAYOUT PLAN -SCENARIO 1 (Design Space Africa)



Fig 6: LAYOUT PLAN-SCENARIO 2 (Design Space Africa)

3.0 POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACTS

3.1 Approach and Methodology

In terms of the Provincial Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in EIA processes,¹ and identified category of issues as indicated in the Guideline:

- Moderate visual impact can be expected as there is potentially some effect on scenic resources. Some change in the visual character of the area can be expected with new development being added to the existing development in the area.
- The proposed development is categorised as a Category 5 development (high density township/ residential development, retail and office complexes) which requires a Level 3 assessment with a visual impact assessment report prepared by a visual specialist or competent professional.

According to the Guideline, a Level 3 assessment requires the following method:

- Identification of issues raised in scoping phase, and site visit;
- Description of the receiving environment and the proposed project;
- Establishment of view catchment area, view corridors, viewpoints and receptors;
- Indication of potential visual impacts using established criteria;
- Inclusion of potential lighting impacts at night;
- Description of alternatives, mitigation measures and monitoring programmes.

3.2 Relevant Policy Framework (visual concerns)

The SDNMP (Scenic Drive Network Management Plan) Review document adopted by the City of Cape Town in 2014 has reference. This document reviewed a number of scenic drives in the City (as identified in earlier studies) and includes the Nelson Mandela Boulevard Scenic Drive (formerly known as the Eastern Boulevard Scenic Drive). Issues that would need to be taken into account that are identified in the document and have relevance to the site include the following views and edges.

VIEWS:

Important views to protect are the existing view corridors looking towards the mountain/sea (Jan Smuts and DF Malan Streets).

EDGES:

Building frontages facing the Scenic Drive: "Building facades and frontages facing the Scenic Drive in the Foreshore area should present a homogenous and uniformly pleasing appearance to the Scenic Drive, forming an aesthetically neutral visual

¹ GUIDELINE FOR INVOLVING VISUAL AND AESTHETIC SPECIALISTS IN EIA PROCESSES: *PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WESTERN CAPE: DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING* 15 APRIL 2005

foreground to the backdrop of the mountain and the historic centre of the city, located beyond the Foreshore”.

Protect heritage and cultural landscape resources generally: “Views to natural features such as Table Mountain and Table Bay”.

Illustrations of the above policies and extracts from the report are included below.

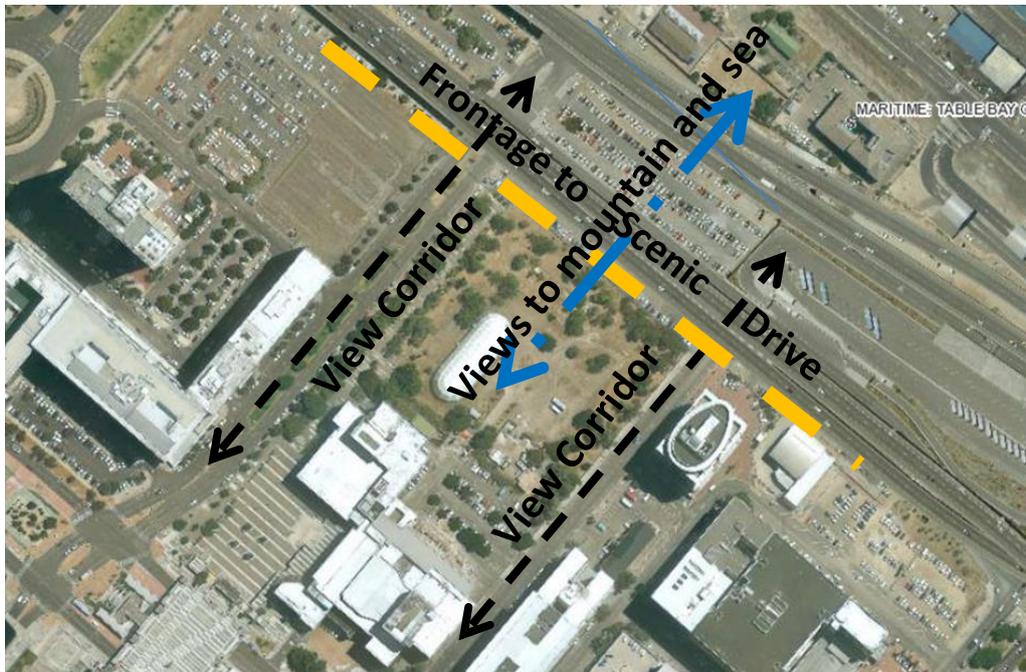


Fig 7: ILLUSTRATION OF SDNMP REVIEW DOCUMENT POLICY

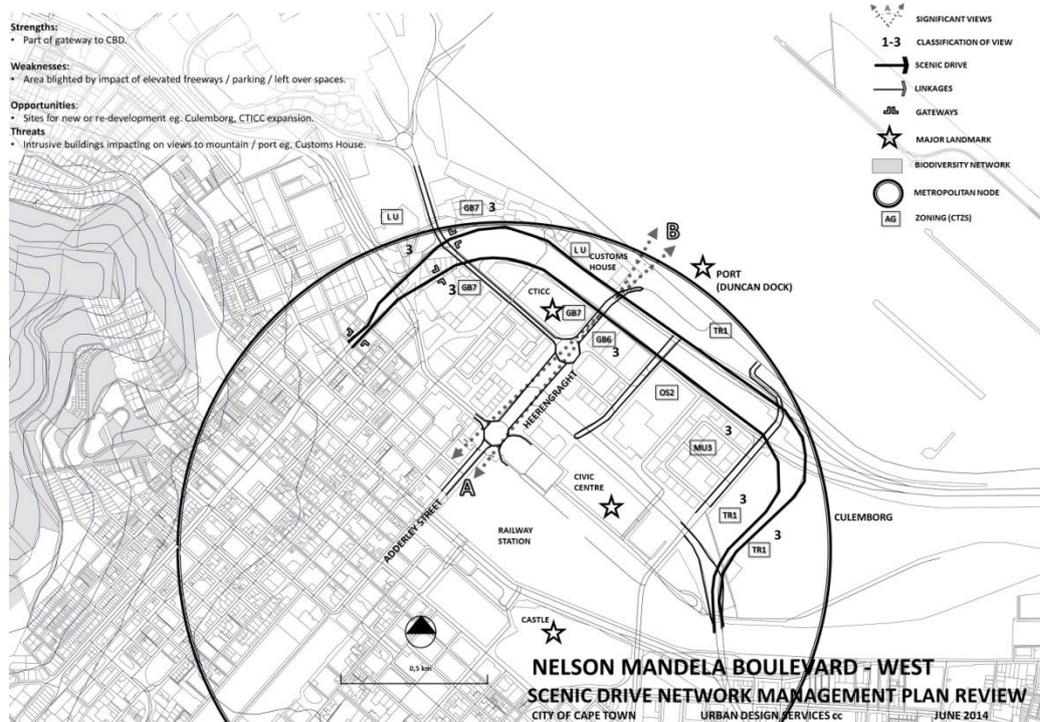


Fig 8: EXTRACT FROM SDNMP REVIEW 2014 (SOURCE UDS/COCT)

Table 5.7B: Nelson Mandela Boulevard –West Scenic Drive		
VIEWES	CLASSIFICATION OF VIEW	LOCATION SPECIFIC POLICY
View A looking up the Heerengracht and Adderley Streets towards Table Mountain.	3	a) Protect view of shaft of space from encroachment, especially with new Foreshore re-development proposals.
View B looking towards sea and port facilities	3	b) Extend protection area for Heerengracht shaft of space seawards, over port area.
Other view corridors along CBD streets, looking towards mountain/ sea.	3	c) Protect from further intrusion especially potential impact of tall buildings. Discourage relaxation of existing building line setbacks and envelopes where this may lead to the impairment of mountain or sea views.
EDGES		
Building frontages facing the Scenic Drive	Building facades and frontages facing the Scenic Drive in the Foreshore area should present a homogenous and uniformly pleasing appearance to the Scenic Drive, forming an aesthetically neutral visual foreground to the backdrop of the mountain and the historic centre of the city, located beyond the Foreshore.	
Heritage and cultural landscape resources generally	Conserve heritage and cultural landscape resources including: a) Historic routes, avenues and view lines such as the Adderley Street – Heerengracht shaft of space linking to the historic centre of the CBD and Company Gardens, and seawards to Duncan Dock, indicative of Cape Town’s historic role as a sea port. b) Views to natural features such as Table Mountain and Table Bay.	
GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES APPLICABLE	Refer also to additional Policy Guidelines in Table 2, pg. 53: No’s: 3-5. Refer also to existing Policy Guidelines in Annexure 3: No’s: 2-19.	
Key		
Classification of view	Appropriate management policy	
1 – highest level of significance	May require an actual decrease of existing building envelope rights eg reduction of height allowances, stipulation of undevelopable areas or extra setbacks on an erf. Acknowledged that this will involve a consultative process. In addition, the same controls as for category 2.	
2	No enhancement of existing building envelope rights to be approved, with particular reference to height and set back controls. Massing and location of built form, even if within existing rights, is to be subject to approval. No amendments to the CTSDf eg urban or coastal edges.	
3 – lowest level of significance	Enhancement of existing rights only if no detrimental impact on the Scenic Drive is envisaged. Massing and location of built form, even if within existing rights, is to be subject to approval. Amendments to the CTSDf eg urban or coastal edges only if no detrimental impacts on the Scenic Drive are envisaged. Focus is on edge conditions such as boundary walling and landscaping.	

Fig 9: EXTRACT OF TABLE FROM SDNMP REVIEW 2014 (SOURCE UDS/COCT)

3.3 Identification of issues

This Visual Impact Study is a specialist study component to the HIA and it is therefore necessary to examine potential visual impacts in terms of heritage resources identified. It should be noted that the primary issue from a visual impact point of view as far as heritage resources are concerned is the view from the Nelson Mandela Boulevard Scenic Drive (the elevated freeway).

3.4 Heritage Resources and indicators

Heritage resources (as extracted from the HIA report) include:

The View

The elevated highway is a Scenic Drive, (As per the City of Cape Town's Scenic Drive Network Management Plan) . The view from the highway of the City and the Table Mountain backdrop is a heritage resource. Development of the tree'd vacant Founders' Garden Site will affect the view. A visual Impact Assessment needs to be undertaken for the views from the highway.

Indicator: *Development should allow for views through to the mountain.*



Possible marine archaeology resources.

The site may contain archaeological remains.

Indicator: *A specialist marine archaeologist has been briefed to prepare a study.*

The Cultural / Public Facility Network

Founders' Garden is related physically adjacent to the rear of Artscape is part of an identifiable network or public facilities structure which consist of the Artscape precinct, plaza over Hertzog Boulevard linking to the Civic Centre Complex and to

the adjacent Railway Station Complex, the parade with The City Hall as well as Adderley Street at the important Strand Street intersection. This network of facilities has transport terminal points, 2 bus stations, the taxi terminus on the Station Deck and of course the Station itself.

Indicator: Development on the Founders' Garden site should contribute to the social role of the network, reinforce the cultural / social network as a vital part of the city.



THE CULTURAL / PUBLIC FACILITY NETWORK (Source: Google Earth)

The Artscape Complex

As an arts venue for theatre music, ballet and opera, Artscape has considerable cultural significance. It was a site of contestation because of racial segregation under apartheid. The building in its Brutalist Style has some architectural significance and is a landmark building. The building is a venue for theatre, ballet, music and opera, forms of 'high culture'.

Indicator: The development should not compete with or 'overwhelm' Artscape and should not compromise its stand-alone quality.

Founders' Garden Site

Founders' garden is a rectangle fenced or grassed open space with a largely random planting of trees (mostly on the perimeter) and a largely random arrangement of concrete planters and benches. (There is one on axis) This loose arrangement of low built structures is in line with the construction of Artscape (concrete) and underlying geometry (on orthogonal asymmetric arrangement) The space has not been well maintained over the last few years and is in an unkempt condition. (see google earth photo and drawing) . The sausage shaped Zip Zap circus tent has for the last few years occupied a part of the site (see Google earth photographs). The trees provide a green foreground when viewed from the highway.

It should be noted that Founders' Garden does not relate particularly well to the Artscape Complex. The garden lies at the rear of the building. There is a parking area between Artscape and the garden, and the service access is located on this part of the site. To some extent, Founders' Garden can be read as the remnant or left over space after the grand boulevard plan was aborted.

Indicator: *Heritage Indicators for the Founders' Garden Site would include maintaining as much open garden space as possible as well as planting. Ensure that 25% of the site be open space (Western Cape Government). The width of the original shaft of space should be acknowledged by a landscaping element. A landscaping plan should be drawn for the site. Existing valuable trees should be retained on site.*

The Founders' Garden Memorial Plaque

The damaged memorial stone is located in an space on DF Malan Street on the North West corner of the site, set back from the road. It has historical significance as it is evidence of the original Foreshore Plan of the 'Shaft of Space'.

Indicator: *It should be restored, retained and incorporated in the new development within the public space in its present position or as close to it as possible.*

3.5 The Receiving Environment and Relevant Views

Founders' Garden is situated in an area predominantly made up of large modern multi-storey office blocks and complexes located within a semi-grid street block pattern that includes open spaces and parking lots. This existing framework largely defines the character of the area which is modern late 20th century and also corresponds to the gradual and piecemeal development of the area over the past 60 years.

The Founders' Garden site is visually bounded on all sides by existing development:

- To the north east the two elevated freeways together with the open spaces below and between form a dominant visual element in the landscape, in effect subjugating views to the Founders' Garden site and beyond from ground level, in a 180 degree arc from the north-west to south-east quadrants.
- To the north west the site is bounded by DF Malan Street with the new hospital (Lakeside City Trading 55 (Pty) Ltd) and existing Chevron buildings..
- To the south west the Artscape complex, which backs onto the site.
- To the south east is Jan Smuts Street with the Mediterranean Shipping Company, Sun 1 and the Murray and Roberts buildings defining that edge.

The photographs below show the edge conditions and visual context of the immediate environment at street level and provide an indication of the limits of any potential visual impact on heritage resources. For example, the distant views to Table Mountain are largely interrupted by the elevated freeways, and the Artscape complex is not affected as the proposed development is situated well away from its main façade and entrance plaza, to the rear of the complex.



Photo 1: NORTH EAST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW FROM SPACE BETWEEN THE ELEVATED FREEWAYS LOOKING SOUTH WEST TOWARDS THE FOUNDERS' GARDEN SITE



Photo 2: NORTH WEST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW LOOKING WEST ON DF MALAN STREET TOWARDS THE NEW HOSPITAL AND CHEVRON BUILDINGS



Photo 3: NORTH WEST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW LOOKING EAST ON DF MALAN STREET TOWARDS THE FOUNDERS' GARDEN SITE WITH THE ARTSCAPE COMPLEX ON THE RIGHT



Photo 4: SOUTH WEST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST WITH THE ARTSCAPE COMPLEX AND PLAZA IN THE FOREGROUND.



Photo 5: SOUTH EAST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE FROM JAN SMUTS STREET WITH CIVIC CENTRE TOWER-BLOCK ON THE LEFT.



Photo 6: SOUTH EAST EDGE TO THE SITE: VIEW LOOKING NORTH ON JAN SMUTS STREET WITH ARTSCAPE COMPLEX ON THE LEFT

Beyond the immediate borders of the site there are further large and tall buildings such as the Civic Centre that form the backdrop to the site. These, together with the existing surrounding development, limit the extent of the effective receiving environment to a zone approximately 1/4km in radius around the site, beyond which there is limited to no potential visual impact. The boundary of the central city urban conservation area is located even further away (1/2 km).

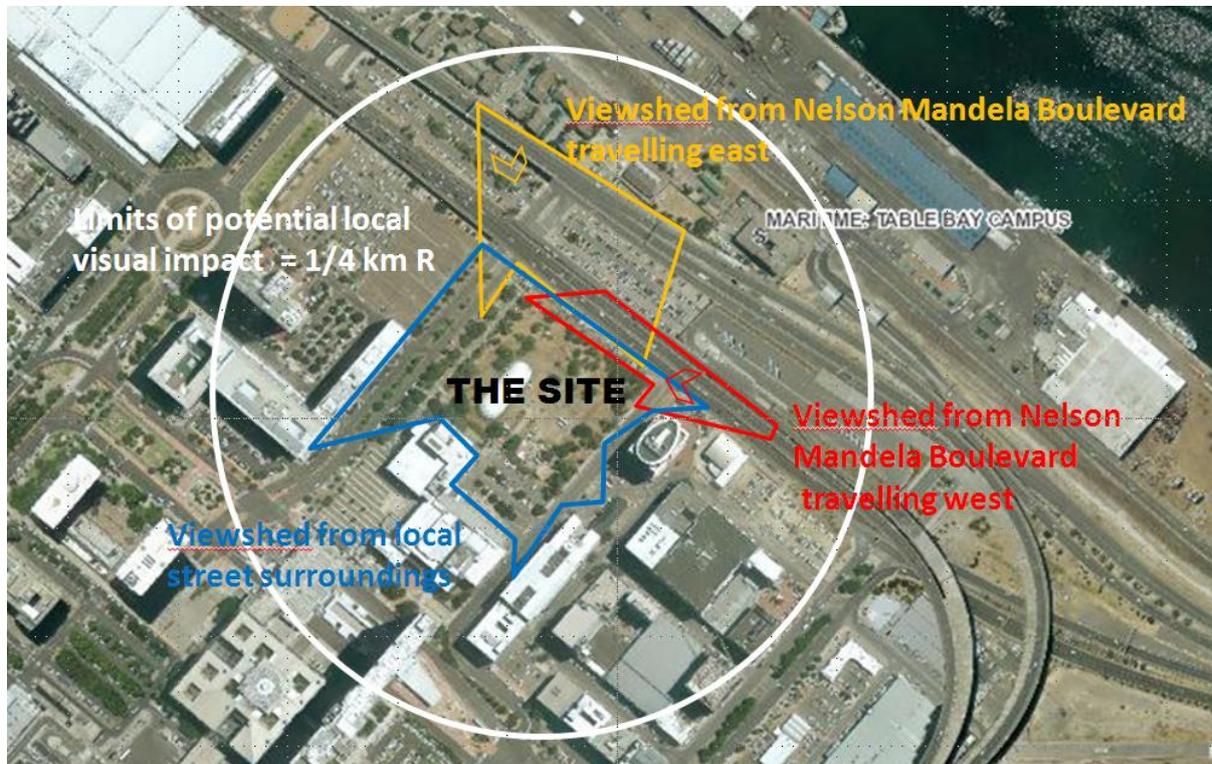


Fig 10: VIEWSHEDS PERTAINING TO THE SITE.



Fig 11: LOCATION OF THE CENTRAL CITY URBAN CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY.

3.6 Potential visual impacts

A comparison of a series of existing views towards the site from the scenic drive with photomontages prepared by the architects of the proposed development is set out below.



Photo 7. View 1: EXISTING VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST



Photo 8. View 1A; PROPOSED VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST



Photo 9. View 2: EXISTING VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST, LOOKING OBLIQUELY TOWARDS THE SITE



Photo 10. View 2A: PROPOSED VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST, LOOKING OBLIQUELY TOWARDS THE SITE



Photo 11. View 3: EXISTING VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST, LOOKING DIRECTLY TOWARDS THE SITE

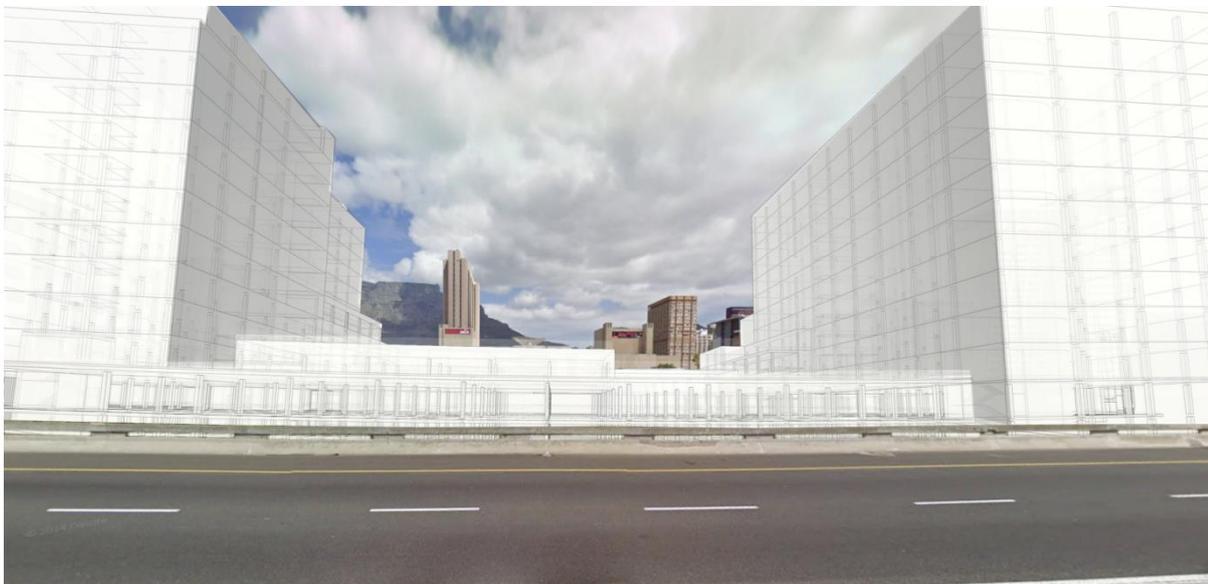


Photo 12. View 3A: PROPOSED VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING WEST, LOOKING DIRECTLY TOWARDS THE SITE

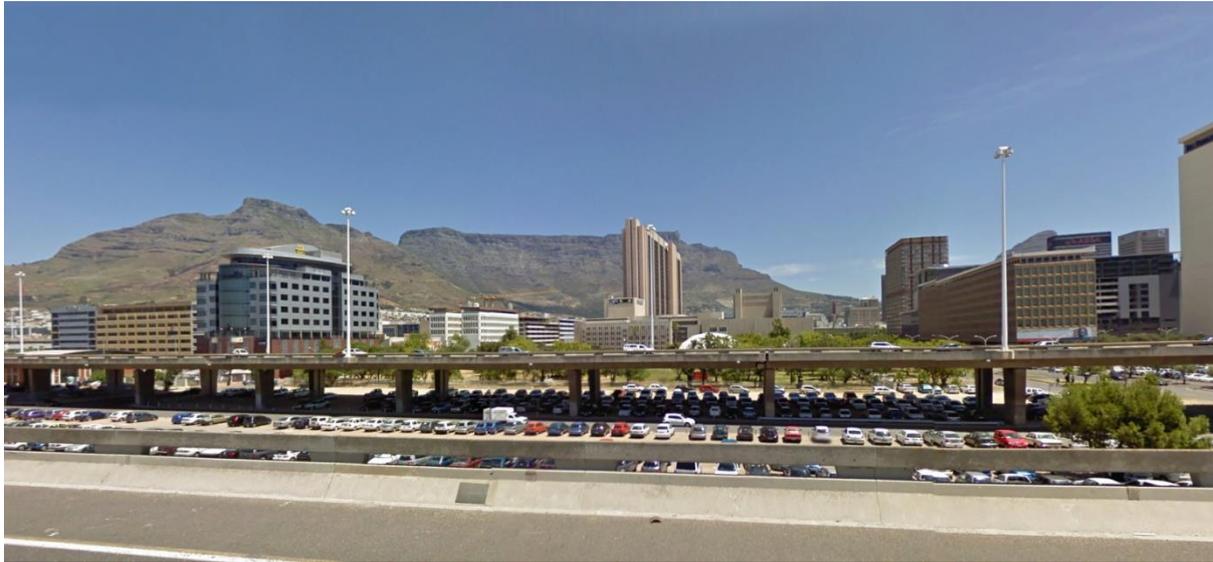


Photo 13. View 4: EXISTING VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING EAST, LOOKING DIRECTLY TOWARDS THE SITE

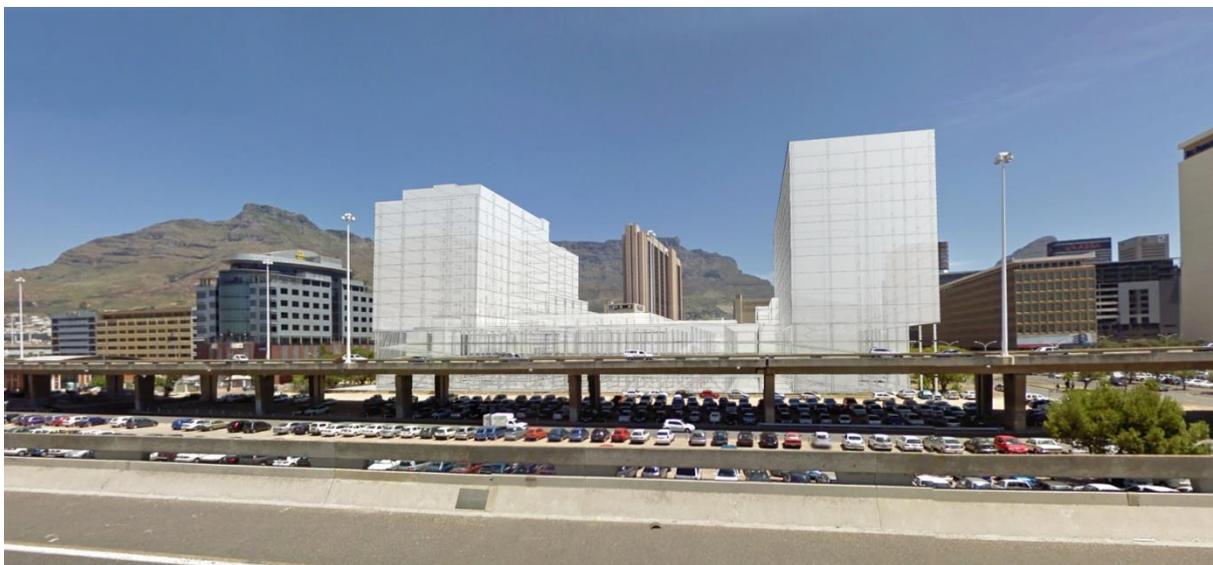


Photo 14. View 4A: PROPOSED VIEW FROM NELSON MANDELA BOULEVARD TRAVELLING EAST, LOOKING DIRECTLY TOWARDS THE SITE

3.7 Analysis of potential visual impacts

View 1: On approach towards the site from the east there are glimpse views of the tops of Signal Hill and Lion's Head appearing above the skyline of the Foreshore.

The 'front tooth-gap' frontage of the foreshore edge onto the scenic drive created by the open space void of Founders' Garden is apparent. This anomaly is aggravated by the dislocation of the elevated freeway.

View 1A: The view indicates the proposed perimeter tower blocks and podium. The scale of the tower blocks corresponds with the MSC building on the left, with a rhythm being set up of similar-scaled towers.. The scale and height of the podium serves to integrate the elevated freeway into the foreshore townscape.

View 2: As with View 1 but with views towards Table Mountain emerging.

View 2A: As with View 1A but note the framing of the view corridor up Jan Smuts Street towards Table Mountain.

View 3: View towards Table Mountain overlooking Founders' garden with the Civic Centre tower block punching the skyline in the background. The elevated freeway appears to hover over the Founders' Garden site.

View 3A: The 2 tower blocks and lower podium frame a view towards Table Mountain. The low podium assists in integrating the elevated freeway as part of the development frontage.

View 4: The elevated freeway forms a dominant element in the landscape, severing the Foreshore from the harbour.

View 4A: Similar to View 3A but distant; views to Table Mountain retained between the tower blocks, and these provide a visual foil to the strong horizontal lines of the elevated freeway, offsetting its impact.

3.8 Potential night-time (lighting) impacts

The elevated freeway (scenic drive) is lit by overhead mast lighting that creates an ambient high level of lighting at night time. The lighting of adjacent buildings is unlikely to cause any additional or negative impact.

3.9 Summary of potential visual impacts

Potential impacts including cumulative impacts are all neutral to positive:

- Established views including protected view corridors are reinforced by the additional framing of the tower blocks.
- The marginal reduction of general views to Table Mountain is offset by the positive townscape qualities and sound urban design or place-making principles being introduced by the proposed development.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES, MITIGATION & MONITORING

In addition to the two scenarios briefly outlined (for the extent and mix of different uses), other alternatives would include a no-go option (in the case of no development), or a conventional development paradigm (podium with single tower block).

The current proposal is assessed as having a neutral to positive visual impact, which obviates a no-go option. A conventional podium with a single tall tower block is likely to have a negative visual impact and is therefore undesirable.

The current proposals include mitigation in the form of the positive place-making principles being introduced into the development.

Monitoring of the development during the construction phase (from a visual impact point of view) is not envisaged; it is assumed the project management team will have sufficient oversight in this regard.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This visual impact study finds that potential visual impacts on heritage and cultural landscape including cumulative impacts are all neutral to positive, in that:

- Established / protected view corridors are reinforced by the framing of the tower blocks.
- The marginal reduction of general views to Table Mountain is offset by the positive townscape qualities and sound urban design or place-making principles being introduced by the proposed development.
- The proposals also accord with the Scenic Drive Network Management Plan Review document adopted by the City of Cape Town in 2014.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The heritage specialist is advised that there are no significant visual impacts on heritage resources and that the development can proceed as per the current design proposals.