

**DRAFT**  
**PERMIT APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURES OLDER THAN 60**  
**YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 34 OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES**  
**ACT, 1999 (ACT 25 OF 1999)**

**ERVEN 836, 837 (CONSTANTIA), CAPE TOWN DISTRICT**



**ON BEHALF OF: H & SRB Plattner**

**February 2014**

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**PERCEPTION**

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**CONTENTS:**

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SITE DESCRIPTION
3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
4. BASIC HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
  - 4.1 *Farm Witteboomen*
  - 4.2 *Erven 836, 837*
  - 4.3 *Deed search*
  - 4.4 *Conclusion*
5. HERITAGE ISSUES AND ISSUES
  - 5.1 *Built environment*
  - 5.2 *Visual-Spatial issues*
  - 5.3 *Recommendations*
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
7. RECOMMENDATION

**ANNEXURES:**

1. Section 34 Application form
2. Power of Attorney
3. Photographs
4. Proof of public participation

**REFERENCES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

1. Brian Martin, Heritage Resource Centre, CoCT
2. Cape Town Archives
3. Cape Town Deeds Office
4. Fransen, Hans: *The Old Buildings of the Cape*, Jonathan Ball Publishers. Johannesburg & Cape Town, 2004
5. Kathleen Schulz, Historian
6. Sally Titlestad, Historian

**ABBREVIATIONS:**

1. CDSM – Chief Directorate Surveys & Mapping
2. CoCT - City of Cape Town
3. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
4. NHRA - National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)
5. HIA – Heritage Impact Assessment
6. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
7. PPP – Public Participation Process

**COVER:** Extract from “Richard’s Map of Cape Town and its Suburbs”, 1897 (Source: CoCT)



## 1. INTRODUCTION

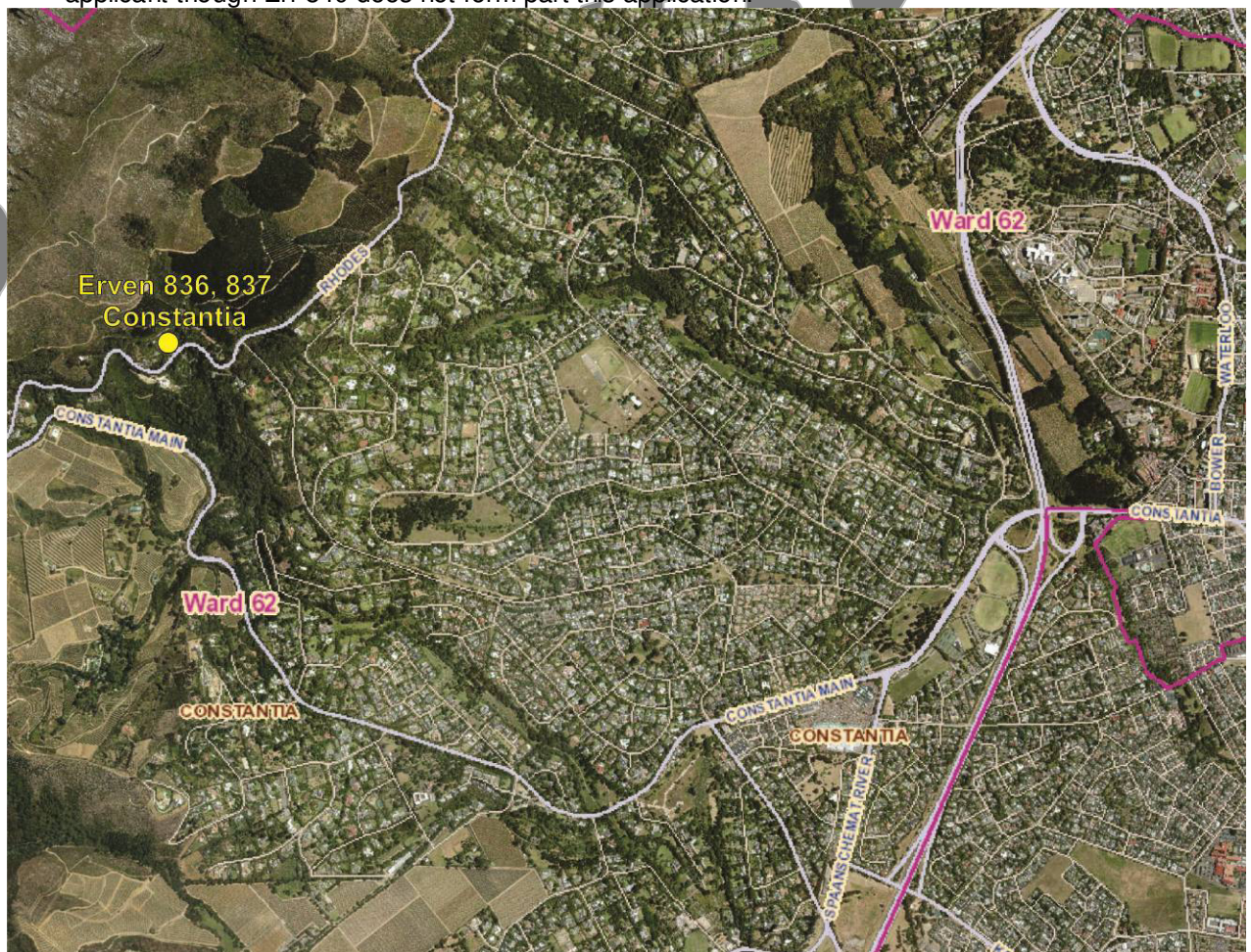
*PERCEPTION Planning* was appointed by *Dr. Hasso Plattner and Mrs. Sabine Renate Barbara Plattner* (registered property owners) to submit to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) a Permit application for demolition of structures older than 60 years in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) (hereafter referred to as the “NHRA”). An official permit application form is attached as Annexure 1. A power of attorney, issued by the representative by proxy of the registered property owners, nominating us to lodge the said application on behalf of the registered property owner, is attached as Annexure 2.

The cadastral land units subject to this application are as follows:

- Erf 836 (Constantia), Cape Town, measuring 5,220m<sup>2</sup>, registered to H & SRB Plattner, held under title deed T9358/2009;
- Erf 837 (Constantia), Cape Town, measuring 7,321m<sup>2</sup>, registered to H Plattner, held under title deed T426/1989.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The location of the subject properties (hereafter collectively referred to as, “the site”) is ±16km south of Cape Town city centre, 1km northeast of Constantia Neck and 4km west of the M3 (Edinburgh Drive) as shown with the locality plan below (Figure 1). The site forms part of a small cluster of four residential properties bound by the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) to the north (a National Heritage Site) while the southern boundary is defined by Rhodes Drive (M63), a significant scenic road. Three of these erven (836, 837 and 840) are currently owned by the applicant though Erf 840 does not form part this application.



**Figure 1:** Location of Erven 836, 837 within existing urban context (Source: CoCT)



The alignment of the old Hout Bay Road (1901<sup>1</sup>) - now Cecilia plantation footpath - follows the natural contours just north of properties and is visible on Figure 2.

The site forms part of a southeast-facing mountain slopes overgrown by established mature vegetation thus affording it a unique sylvan character whilst offering long-distance views across the surrounding urban and cultural landscapes of Constantia (refer Figure 2). Photographs of the site and existing structures are attached as part of Annexure 3 hereto.



**Figure 2:** Contextual aerial image of Erven 836, 837 illustrating sylvan setting. Note modern residence here visible on Erf 840, which had been demolished during 2013 (Source: CoCT, 2012)

**Erf 836 (also “La Deniniere”):**

This property is located along an east-facing slope, which forms part of a narrow valley draining towards the southeast. The valley has been developed as an informal garden with footpaths following contour lines and is overgrown by dense vegetation, including mature trees and shrubs all of which contributes to the sylvan landscape character prevalent along Rhodes Drive. Limited intermittent views across the surrounding urban and Cape Winelands cultural landscape are possible from exposed areas of the property.

The building complex is located on the higher-lying westernmost portion of the property and comprises a garage, entrance foyer with single-story outbuildings to the rear, while the rest of the residence is a two-storey structure. The lower storey resembles a cellar due to being partly sunken into the landscape. The core of structure is older than 60 years<sup>2</sup> though numerous inappropriate additions and alterations, made since its original construction (1950-1953), have materially compromised the integrity of its original design. Very few, if any, of the original fixtures remain (also refer Section 5.1). Existing structures are not visible from Rhodes Drive.

**Erf 837 (also “Tudor Lodge”):**

The larger of the two subject properties, Erf 837 has a well established, terraced garden with an array of informally laid-out footpaths through a variety of ornamental trees and shrubs, which in itself presents a unique sense of place. The property offers intermittent medium to long-distance views across the surrounding urban and Cape Winelands cultural landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Sally Titlestad, 2014

<sup>2</sup> From 1953 aerial imagery





**Figure 3:** Recent aerial of Erf 836 - note footprint of structure >60yrs as transposed from 1953 aerial photography (Source: CoCT, 2012)



**Figure 4:** Recent aerial of Erf 837 - note pool house structure - age uncertain (Source: CoCT, 2012)

Existing structures include a quaint, circular stonewalled cottage (pool house), located at the highest point of Erf 837 just below the northern property boundary. The structure (exact age



uncertain) is set upon a terraced platform, beside a large pine tree and swimming pool and offers spectacular views across the surrounding landscape.

The main building complex, garage and outbuilding are located lower down on the property, and set back  $\pm 40\text{m}$  from Rhodes Drive. The residence may be described a two-storey, thatched-roof structure, Tudor-styled modern structure confirm to be not older than 60 years (refer Section 5 below). Interesting design features to the dwelling include chimneys, lead glass windows and copper box gutters (refer Annexure 3). Remnants of a water furrow system, formerly channelling storm water into a fountain located in the front garden were noted. None of the structures mentioned are visible from Rhodes Drive.

A singular entrance off Rhodes Drive serves both erven and divides into two narrow, densely overgrown paths leading to the two residences as well as the adjoining Erf 838 (not owned by same owners).

### 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

We have been instructed that the nature and extent of future development of the site have not been clarified and that this will be determined through the outcome of this permit application. Consequently, it is the understanding that future development of the site may therefore require further appropriate heritage approval.

### 4. BASIC HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Basic historic background research included information obtained from primary archival sources (Cape Town Archives, Cape Town Deeds Office) and other secondary sources as indicated below.

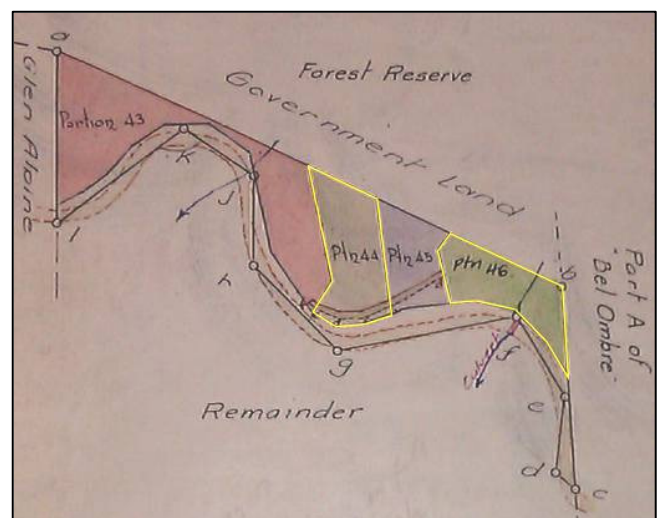
#### 4.1 Farm Witteboomen

Erven 836 and 837, Constantia are located on land once part of the early farm Witteboomen, granted to Lambert Symonsz in 1697 but transferred to Simon van der Stel only six days after the grant was signed<sup>3</sup>. Following Simon van der Stel's death, the farm changed hands several times and on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1881 was transferred to Willem Adriaan van der Byl<sup>4</sup>. After his death the farm was transferred to his son, Cecil Herbert Wayte van der Byl (held under T11649/1921) and then to Katie Gray Edwards (held under T1551/1929). The farm appears to have been used primarily for agriculture (vines). The exact location of the first homestead is presumed to have been lower in the valley<sup>5</sup>. The extent and use of the farm as in the early 1930's are illustrated through an extract from mapping during that period on the next page (Figure 5).

#### 4.2 Erven 836 and 837

Rhodes Drive effectively cut off the northernmost portion of the farm Witteboomen from its remainder and consequently, in 1924, Erf 817, also "Lot CB", was created (Figure 6). According to early maps, Erf 817 was named "The Heights"<sup>6</sup>. Erven 836 and 837 were both created during 1950<sup>7</sup>. From available early mapping and aerial photography, there were no structures on the two erven until 1953 (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6:** Erf 817, also named "The Heights"  
(Source: SG Diagram 388/1924)



<sup>3</sup> Fransen, 2004

<sup>4</sup> Cape Quitrents Volume 16/1

<sup>5</sup> Research not focussed on identifying exact location

<sup>6</sup> See Figure 5, p. 7

<sup>7</sup> SG 938/50 and SG 936/50, respectively

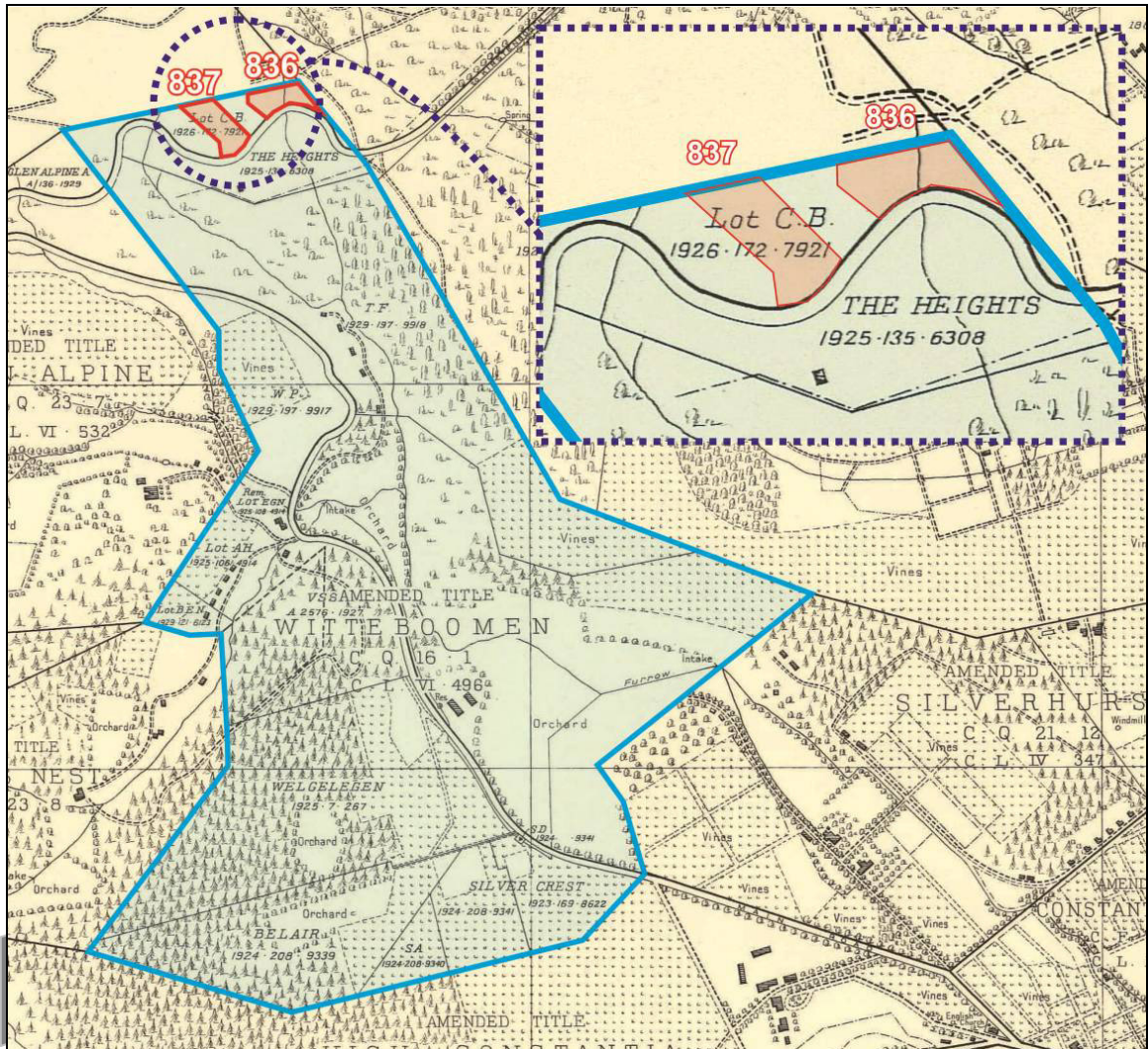


Figure 5: Location of erven in relation to early boundaries of farm Witteboomen transposed from 1931 map titled, "City of CT and Environs", Sheet 10. Map clearly shows location of primary buildings (Source: CoCT)

4.3 Deed search

Records that would enable us to determine ownership timelines from 1929-1980 could not be accessed due to maintenance. However, the following ownership timelines were obtained from the Deeds Office’s web-based enquiry system (DeedsWeb):

**Erf 836:**

Title Deed Nr.	Holder	Amount (R)
T52285/1980	E & G Kilgour	-
T11996/1983	Stephanus Adriaan Jordaan	-
T21809/1991	Ivette Maria Germaines Stevens	650,000.00
T9358/2009	Hasso & Sabine Renate Barbara Plattner	7,450,000.00

**Erf 837:**

Title Deed Nr.	Holder	Amount (R)
T4341/1981	MWC Blomkamp	-
T38672/1983	Lucien & Annie Cornelia Thomas	-
T40152/1987	DSG Trust	350,000.00
T426/1989	Hasso Plattner	1,055,000.00

4.4 Conclusion

Though the two erven are intrinsically linked to early colonial history of the Cape and therefore an array of highly significant historic themes, basic archival research done as part of this assessment does not highlight any significant heritage-related themes pertinent to Erven 836 and 837 in



particular. This does not preclude visual-spatial heritage-related aspects associated with the fact that the properties adjoin the historically significant scenic route, Rhodes Drive or its visual prominence by reason of its location along higher-lying mountain slopes (see Section 5.2).

## 5. HERITAGE RESOURCES & ISSUES

### 5.1 Built environment

Earliest (1953) aerial imagery available for the site shows only one structure located on Erf 836, the position and footprint of which coincides with that of the present residence on that property, therefore making this the only structure on the site older than 60 years (Figure 7).



**Figure 7:** Extract from 1953 aerial photography for the site highlighting the footprint of only one structure (Source: Heritage Resource Centre, CoCT)

According to building plan records obtained from South Peninsula Municipality, various alterations to the building were approved during January 1997, which included construction of the existing garage, stone-clad entrance turret, etc. With the exception of two sections of stonewalling and fenestration noted at lower floor level (south-facing elevation), virtually nothing of the original fabric remains thereby materially altering the historic integrity of its original architectural design. The nature of stonewalling (see Images 1, 2 below) as well as the internal layout and materials noted within first floor level of this structure suggests that the original building was single storey height. Due to the aspects outlined above, this heritage resource is considered to be of **very low local historic, architectural and aesthetic significance**.



**Images 1 & 2:** Sections of stonewalling remaining, fenestration (to left) suggests original structure was single storey height



While the layout, design and materials used with construction (stonewalling, timber fenestration) used for construction of the pool house situated just below the northern property boundary for Erf 837 suggest the structure to be older than 60 years, this could not be confirmed. Now fitted with timber roof shingles, it is possible that the original roof was of thatch. The structure, taken in conjunction with its location high along the mountain slope; its setting and function as centrepiece for various informal footpaths and orientation overlooking the surrounding urban and agricultural landscape, is considered to be of **moderate to high local architectural and aesthetic cultural significance** and should be retained. Also refer to photographs attached as part of Annexure 3

Mapping dated 1958 highlights a number of building footprints on the site, including what is likely to have been the original building on Erf 837 (Figure 8). The extent of the footprint of said building does not correlate with that of the current building (“Tudor Lodge”), though one can reasonably assume the construction date of the building depicted here as c. 1953-1958 - i.e. not older than 60 years. While the building on Erf 836 does display some interesting design features (refer Section 2), we are of the view that it is rather the landscape setting, and not the building itself, that is of significance in this instance.



**Figure 8:** Extract from 1958 mapping for the site highlighting the footprints of structures at the time (Source: Heritage Resource Centre, CoCT)

## 5.2 Visual-Spatial issues

Due to its location along southeast-facing mountain slopes, development of both properties occurred through the establishment of a series of terraces, which have by now become part of the established landscape setting along Rhodes Drive. Built platforms are setback from Rhodes Drive and therefore established vegetation along this “setback corridor” as well as the natural gradient adds to visually screen existing buildings from views along this scenic route. Any future development on the two properties therefore needs to maintain these established setbacks, be sensitive in terms of overall height and massing so as to minimise its visual impact onto Rhodes Drive and the surrounding environs.

The site adjoins the Table Mountains National Park (TMNP), a National Heritage Site and candidate World Heritage Site.

Both properties, individually and collectively, contributes to the overall scenic landscape qualities of its environs. In particular, the natural valley forming part of eastern portion of Erf 836 coincides with a bend along Rhodes Drive, the vertical and horizontal alignment (as well as environmental sensitivity) of which are such that the introduction of new structures should not be permitted here.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Having regard to the above assessment, we rate the landscape qualities and landscape setting of the two properties of higher overall significance than that of existing structures thereupon. The existing building complex on Erf 836, the historic core of which is older than 60 years, has been altered to such an extent that very little of its original architectural design qualities remain evident, save for two sections of stonewalling as well as timber fenestration along the southern elevation as illustrated through Images 1 & 2 above. We therefore have no objection against the proposed demolition of this building complex.

The proposal will not impact on tangible or intangible heritage resources mentioned in the report titled, “*Heritage Resources in the Constantia - Tokia Valley: Towards a Conservation Management Plan*” (Phase I report, 2006).



It is recommended that with future development of Erven 836 and 837:

- Established setbacks along Rhodes Drive be maintained;
- Be sensitive in terms of overall height and massing so as to minimise its visual impact onto Rhodes Drive and the surrounding environs;
- The natural valley and established vegetation on the eastern portion of Erf 836 not be developed;
- Further heritage-related assessment may be required to ensure adherence to the above.

## 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP's) listed below will be provided with digital copies of the report via registered mail/ e-mail and allowed a period of 30 days in order to solicit heritage related comments. These comments will be incorporated into the formal submission to be made to Heritage Western Cape.

South Peninsula Municipality Attention: Mark Bell E: <a href="mailto:Mark.Bell@capetown.gov.za">Mark.Bell@capetown.gov.za</a>	South Peninsula Municipality Attention: Andrew Greenwood E: <a href="mailto:Andrew.Greenwood@capetown.gov.za">Andrew.Greenwood@capetown.gov.za</a>
Constantia Property Owner's Association PO Box 68 Constantia 7848 T/F: 021-794 4388 E: <a href="mailto:cpoa@yebo.co.za">cpoa@yebo.co.za</a>	South African Heritage Resources Agency Submitted via SAHRIS
Owner Erf 838, Constantia	Owner Erf 819, Constantia
Owner Erf 842, Constantia	Owner Erf 13587, Constantia

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the above assessment, it is recommended that the permit application in terms of Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999), to the existing structures older than 60 years, presently positioned on Erven 836 and 837 (Constantia), Cape Town District, be **granted** by Heritage Western Cape subject to the recommendations listed in Section 5.3 of this report.

**PERCEPTION Planning**  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2014



**SE DE KOCK**  
Pr Pln PHP B-Tech (TRP) EIA Mgmt (IRL)



**GNR NARAINNE**  
BAS UCT APHP candidate