

PROPOSED DEPARTURES FROM APPROVED
DESIGN INFORMANTS: PAARDEVLEI
HISTORIC SUB PRECINCTS: PORTIONS 11, 12 AND 13



Figure 1: The site lies to the south of De Beers Avenue which at this point is bordered by open space and a parking area

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared in compliance with **Section 38** of the National Heritage Resources Act

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Contents

1. BACKGROUND.....	2
2. LOCALITY AND SETTING.....	3
3. HERITAGE RESOURCES.....	7
4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	10
5. IMPACTS.....	12
5.1 Height.....	12
5.2 Architectural treatment.....	13
5.3 Façade facing Quinan House.....	13
5.4 Removal of trees.....	13
6. HEARTLAND DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE.....	16
7. CITY OF CAPE TOWN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT...	16
8. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17

1. BACKGROUND

Erf 17965, 17966 and 17967 Somerset West are erven forming part of Heartland Properties (Pty) Ltd's Paardevlei Historic Sub-precinct development area. The rezoning from Industrial to Mixed Use in 2007 followed a lengthy process undertaken in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHR Act). It had commenced with a preliminary heritage study of the industrial complex undertaken by archaeologists ACO in 1996 and subsequently by Phase 1 and Phase 2 Heritage Impact Assessment studies undertaken by Melanie Attwell & Associates; The Phase 1 in 2005 and the Phase 2 in 2006.

The central finding of the Phase 2 HIA was:

“Application for the Rezoning to Sub divisional Area of a Portion of Farm 794 (being precinct 1) and for the Subdivision and Zoning of a portion of Precinct 1”, are substantially in accordance with the Design Informants of the Initial Heritage Impact Assessment”.

HWC had endorsed the Phase 1 Design Informants in May 2005. Figure 2 below shows the key Design Informants related to the subject property (Erf 17965, 17966 and 17967). These relate to the height and massing of new development indicating a stepped development of a single story structure facing the De Beers Avenue with a two story structure behind that and a three story structure on the Gardner Williams Avenue side of the erven. The diagram also indicates the band of eucalyptus trees along De Beers Avenue and Gardner Williams Avenue.

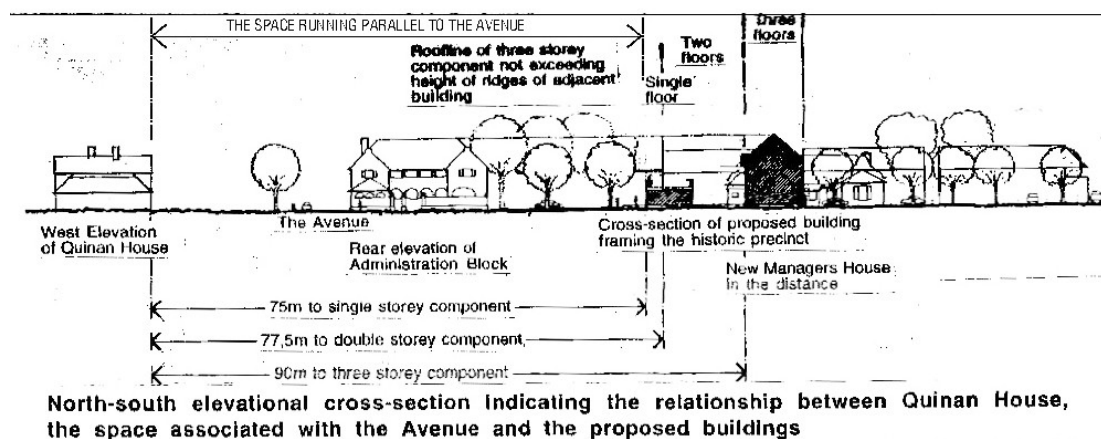


Figure 2: Extract from the relevant height and massing diagram endorsed in the Phase 2 HIA of 2006



Figure 3: The tree survey of 2005 undertaken by Planning Partners also forming part of the 2005 Phase 2 HIA assigned significance to the trees of Precinct 1 in five categories. The band of trees on the southern edge of the subject property were categorised as being of Medium Conservation Worthiness. The trees on the northern edge of the area (as indicated) were designated as Medium High Conservation Worthiness

All development in the Historic Sub-precinct is subject to conditions imposed in terms of section 42(1) of the Land Use Planning Ordinance, No 15 of 1985 (LUPO). These *inter alia* relate to height, massing and building lines. Development is also subject to compliance with the Architectural Guidelines part of the Package of Plans approach adopted.

At the beginning of 2009 the three erven were acquired by the property development company, Classic Number Trading 143 (Pty) Ltd who appointed architects Boogertman & Partners to prepare plans for a new office complex. Their design development has however led to proposed departures from the 2005 Design Informants. They propose departing from the stepped heights as originally set out and also wish to remove a number of trees. The building complex has also been sited closer to the southern boundary and therefore the design will require approval of by the CoCT for a departure from a condition in terms of LUPO. Their design philosophy and motivation for these departures is attached as Annexure 1.

Aikman Associates: Heritage Management was appointed to assess whether these departures would negatively impact on heritage resources.

2. LOCALITY AND SETTING

The De Beers explosive works was established on the Paardevlei farm Somerset West in 1899 and soon became one of South Africa's major manufacturers of explosives and chemicals. In 1902 the company came to be known as African Explosives & Chemical Industries (AECI). In 1995 when most production had been phased out, AECI's property development subsidiary Heartland Properties (Pty) Ltd commissioned a team of heritage specialists, urban designers and town planners to optimise the redevelopment

of the site with particular regard to preserving its unique architectural and landscape heritage.

In 2007 this process culminated in the rezoning and subdivision of Precinct 1. Precinct 1 was broken up into several sub precincts. The subject property is within the Historic Sub-precinct. This has at its heart the historic residential, laboratory and administrative buildings lying to the south of the Paardevlei with De Beers Avenue as its spine. De Beers Avenue has become a boulevard of pedestrian paths, grassed areas with sculptures, landscape features and parking areas. This work led to a number of Medium High Conservation Worthiness eucalyptus trees being removed.

The three erven, making up the subject property lie between a broad open space south of De Beers Avenue and north of Gardner Williams Avenue within the Historic Paardevlei Sub-precinct.

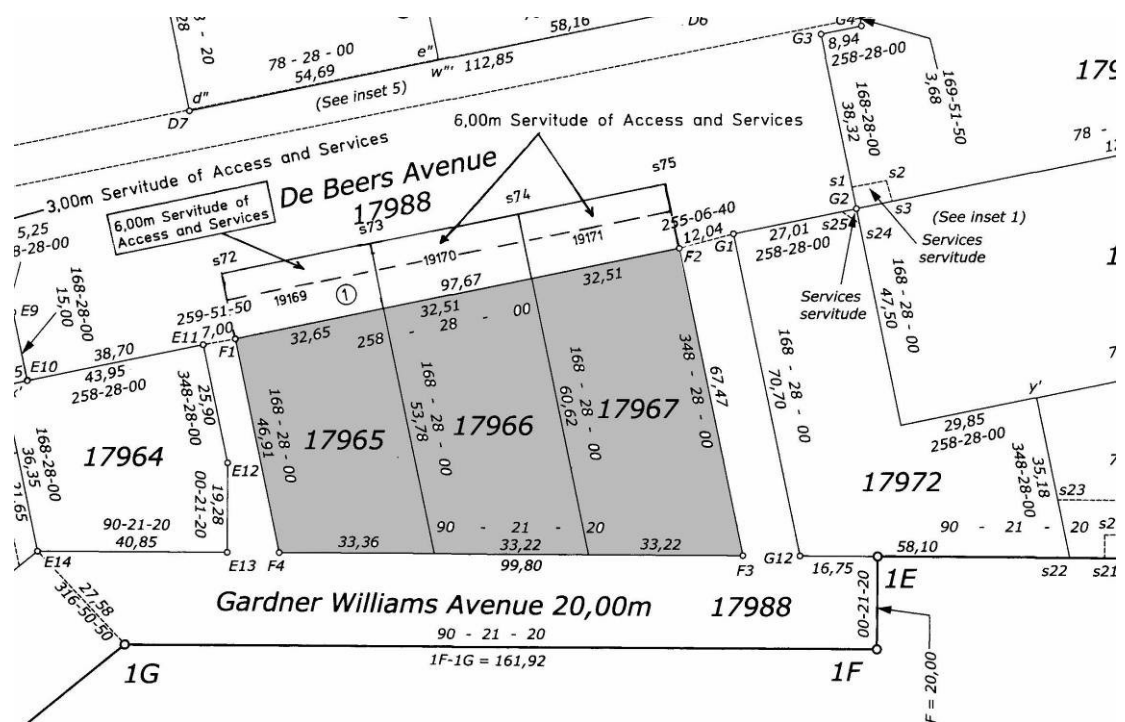


Figure 4: The property lies within a precinct of important historical buildings with the Vynide industrial complex to the south

The historic 1900 Entrance Building (now Heartland's offices) and the 1913 New Manager's House lie to the east of the property flanked in part by an undeveloped site; Erf 17972. To the north on De Beers Avenue are the historic Quinan House built in 1901 and currently the only proclaimed Provincial Heritage Site at Paardevlei and the Main Laboratory Building built in 1900. To the west is the 1902 Doctor's House, partly flanked to the east by an undeveloped site, Erf 17964. South of Gardner Williams Avenue is the Vynide industrial complex. A band of eucalyptus trees lies along the southern boundary of the property.



Figure 5: The property is within the Paardevlei Historic Sub-precinct



Figure 6: View from the western end of the subject property towards Quinan House and the Entrance Building, partly obscured by the signboard



Figure 7: Rear of the Entrance Building. An open space area directly to the west will ensure that views of this façade are preserved



Figure 8: Rear of the New Manager's House. The grassed area is part of the currently vacant abutting erf on the east boundary of the subject property, Erf 17872. When developed this building will be obscured from view from the subject property



Figure 9: View of the property from the side of De Beers Avenue looking over the open space and the site's parking area towards the Vynide complex that lies south of Gardner Williams Avenue



Figure 10: View from the property towards the Doctors House. The undeveloped Erf 19173 lies between the subject property and the historic building. Development on the site will obscure views of that building

3. HERITAGE RESOURCES

The two-phase HIA of 2005-2006 identified the historic buildings to the north, east and west of the subject property as being of Grade II heritage significance because of their spatial and architectural, historical and social significance.

The band of trees along the southern edge of the subject property was identified as a tree group contributing to a significant space/architectural group (see Figure 12 below). The 2005 HIA emphasised the importance of tree interlinked tree canopies rather than individual trees. This particular group was not given a grading but as illustrated (see Figure 3 above in Section 1 of this report) the band of trees was categorised as being of Medium Conservation Worthiness.



Figure 11: The band of trees on the southern edge of the site was identified in the 2003 HIA as a tree group contributing to a significant space/architectural group

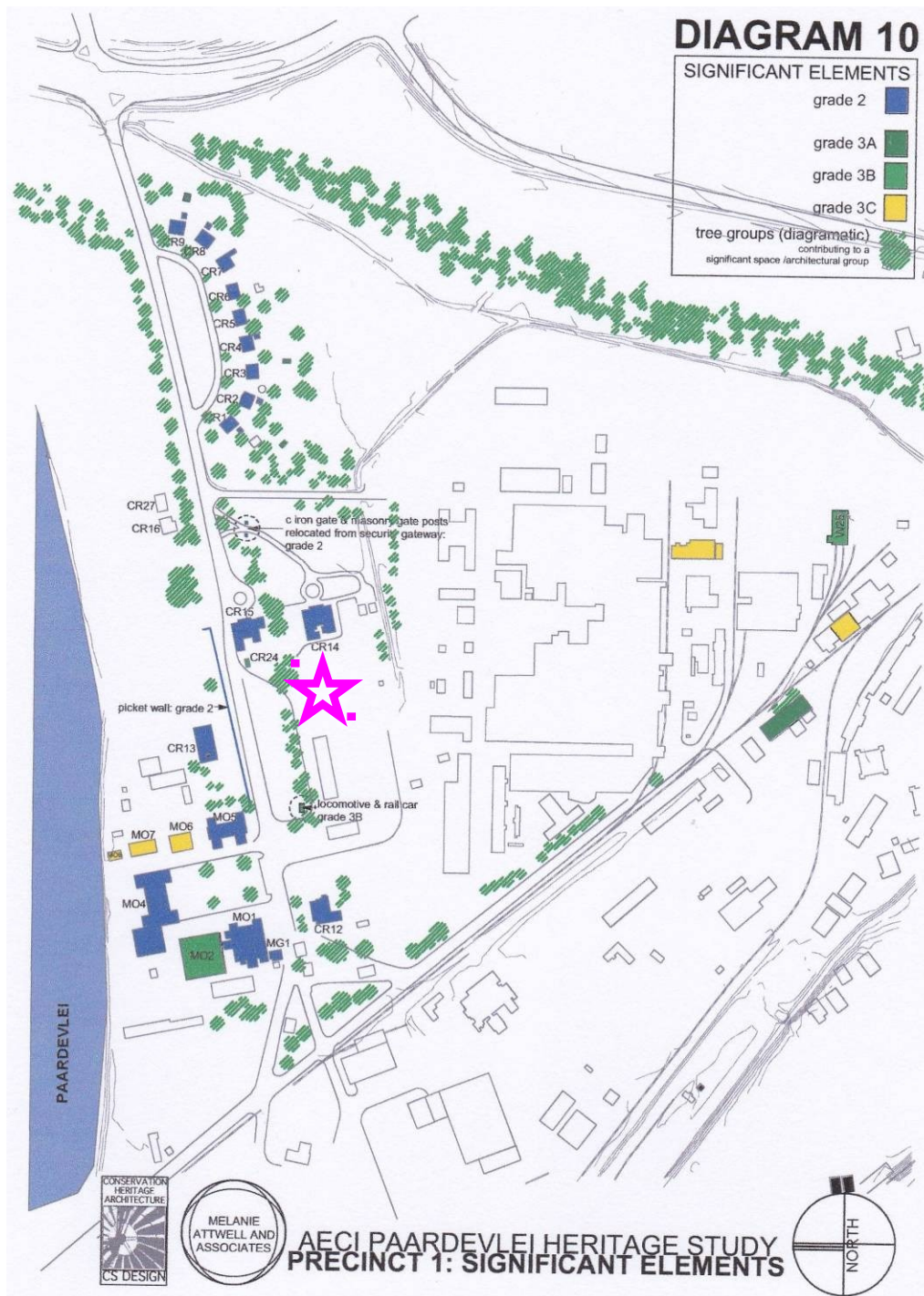


Figure 12: Diagram 10 from the 2006 HIA indicating that the subject property (star) is set within a group of heritage resources of Grade 2 significance

In the Phase 1 HIA of 2005 the following constraints to development in terms of the heritage significance of the Historic Paardevlei Precinct were identified. It was stated inter alia that...

New infill development behind the belt of trees of mature trees along the southern edge of the open air display space would be acceptable in principle subject to the following constraints¹:

- Such development should be limited to a maximum of two storeys. Main roof eave heights and roof ridges should not exceed the height of Quinan House opposite. Roof pitches should also match those of Quinan House. The eastern end of the of the development footprint should be set back a minimum 25m from the rear of the New Managers House;
- Slavish and literal copies of surrounding period architecture would be discouraged;
- The incorporation of covered verandas of minimum 2,5m deep, into symmetrical frontages facing Quinan House would be encouraged and
- The removal of mature trees within this location should be avoided at all costs.

It must be noted that in the Phase 2 HIA it was stated...“Application for the Rezoning to Sub divisional Area of a Portion of Farm 794 (being precinct 1) and for the Subdivision and Zoning of a portion of Precinct the are substantially in accordance with the Design Informants of the Initial Heritage Impact Assessment”.

This statement was not strictly true as in fact in the Phase 1 HIA it was proposed that in the area where the subject property is to be developed... “Development should be limited to a maximum of two storeys. Main roof eave heights and roof ridges should not exceed the height of Quinan House opposite”. Whereas in the Phase 2 HIA the Height and Massing diagram (Figure 2 above) indicates stepped development with a maximum height of 3 storeys; hardly “substantially in accordance with the Initial Heritage Impact Assessment”. An additional storey could make a building in the development zone as much as 6m higher than initially proposed and considerably higher than Quinan House.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Attached as Annexure 1 is the Architects’ Statement from Boogertman & Partners, where the nature and scale of the proposed development is outlined and the architectural philosophy behind the design is set out. The firm’s drawings are also attached as well as the Landscape Concept Plan prepared by CNdV landscape architects. The central thrust of the proposal is that the proposed footprint of the complex will be greater than that proposed in terms of the conditions of rezoning (see Figure 14). This is to facilitate achieving the permitted bulk in a two storey rather than in a stepped three story complex.

¹ This description is confusing as it appears to apply to the open air display space where the historic locomotive and railcar were located but clearly must also include the subject property.

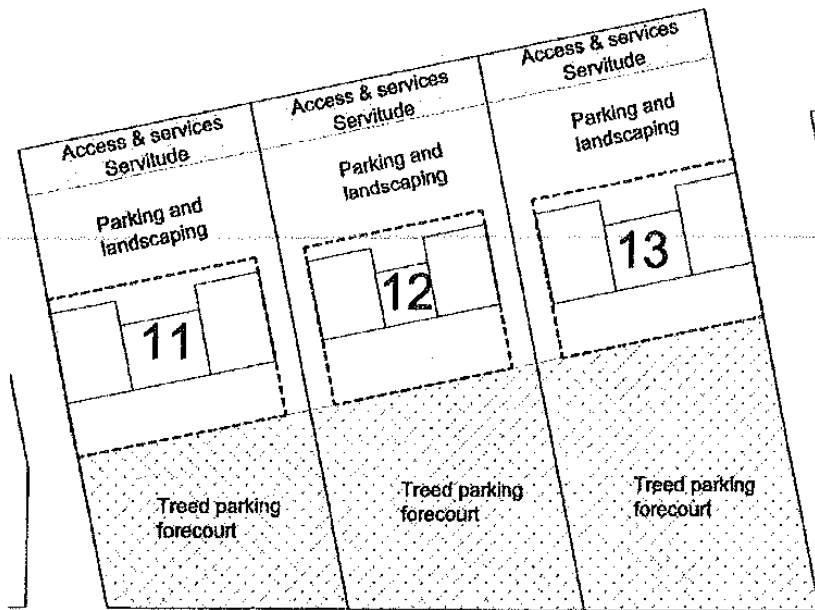


Figure 13: Extract from the approved Amendment of the General Plan and Amendment of the Historic Sub-Precinct Plan: Farm 794 Precinct 1, Somerset West dated 24 April 2013

A key feature of design are the wind protected central courts and facades that respond to both De Beers Avenue and Gardner Williams Avenue. As can be seen in Figure 13 above the proposed stepped building envelope would in a sense turn its back on Gardner Williams Avenue.

In order to achieve the bulk within a two storey complex a relaxation of the rear building line as indicated in Figure 14 below is proposed.

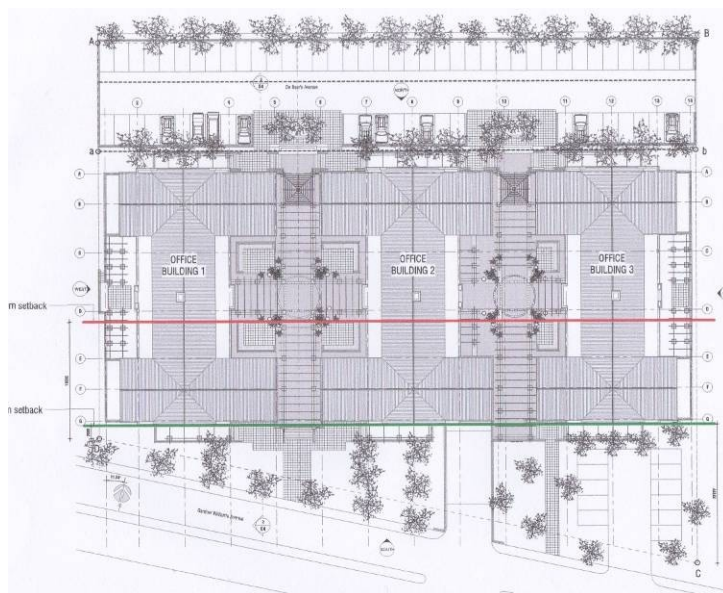


Figure 14: The red line indicates the actual setback line. The green line indicates the proposed relaxation

The proposed relaxation is to 2m from the Gardner Williams Avenue boundary on the west side and 22m on the east side.

5. IMPACTS

The design is sensitive to its setting and complies fully with the Paardevlei Architectural Guidelines. The reduction in height to 2 storeys is a positive step and will contribute more to making this new complex more of a background building in relation to the Entrance Building and Quinan House although these are both some distance away from the proposed new building. As pointed out in Section 2 above, development on vacant erven abutting both the New Manager's House and the Doctor's House will distance the proposed new building from these two sites.

The proposed new development responds to all the constraints identified in the 2005 HIA and as set out above except for the final constraint..."The removal of mature trees within this location should be avoided at all costs". This issue is dealt with in Section 5.4 below. The responses to the abovementioned constraints are discussed below:

5.1 Height

The proposed complex will be 2 storeys in height and main roof eave heights and roof ridges will not exceed the height of Quinan House. Roof pitches match those of Quinan House. The eastern end of the proposed new complex is more than 25m from the back of the New Manager' House with a currently vacant abutting erf occupying the intervening space.

5.2 Architectural treatment

While the historic buildings in the vicinity are referenced in the design of the new complex, which follows the Paardevlei Architectural Design Guidelines, it is decidedly not a "slavish and literal copy of surrounding period architecture".

5.3 Façade facing Quinan House

The 3 blocks facing Quinan House are symmetrical and each has a central gable. Stoeps are proposed but no covered verandas at first floor level are proposed. These are to be replaced by creeper covered pergolas.

5.4 Removal of trees

The proposed relaxation of the 19m building line will mean that the building will encroach onto the area designated in the conditions of the zoning scheme as the "Treed parking forecourt". A total of 7 existing trees will have to be removed. These trees are part of a band of 20 trees on the Gardner Williams Avenue boundary. The architects argue that the proposed 2 storey height of the complex will visually reinforce the height and dominance of these existing trees and the density of the crowns would still be sufficient to create a clear

mass between Gardner Williams Avenue and the buildings. The few remaining trees on the north side of the building which were identified as being of medium high conservation worthiness are integrated into the parking design.



Figure 15: The band of 20 existing eucalyptus trees on the boundary of Gardner Williams Avenue. Of these 7 on the inner edge are to be removed. The Landscape Concept Plan proposes reinforcing this band with 21 mature water berry trees

The Landscape Concept Plan indicates that to reinforce the band of trees along the south boundary, 21 waterberry *Syzygium guineense* trees are to be planted. Large 200kg specimens have been indicated. These would be 4m in height but can grow up to 30m. They are similar in form and leaf colour to the eucalypts. Another 6 new trees are proposed on the north side of the complex.



Figure 16: Westward view of the band of trees on the southern edge of the property. The tree in the centre is not on the property. The tree on the right will be removed



Figure 17: The 6 trees in the centre of the picture are to be removed. These would have had to be removed even without the building line departure



Figure 18: Eastward view of the band of trees on the southern edge. The trees on the left are part of a group of 6 that are to be removed



Figure 19: Detail from the Landscape Concept Plan indicating the densely treed southern edge of new and existing trees



Figure 20: This group of trees on the north side of the complex is to be retained except for the leaning tree which is dead

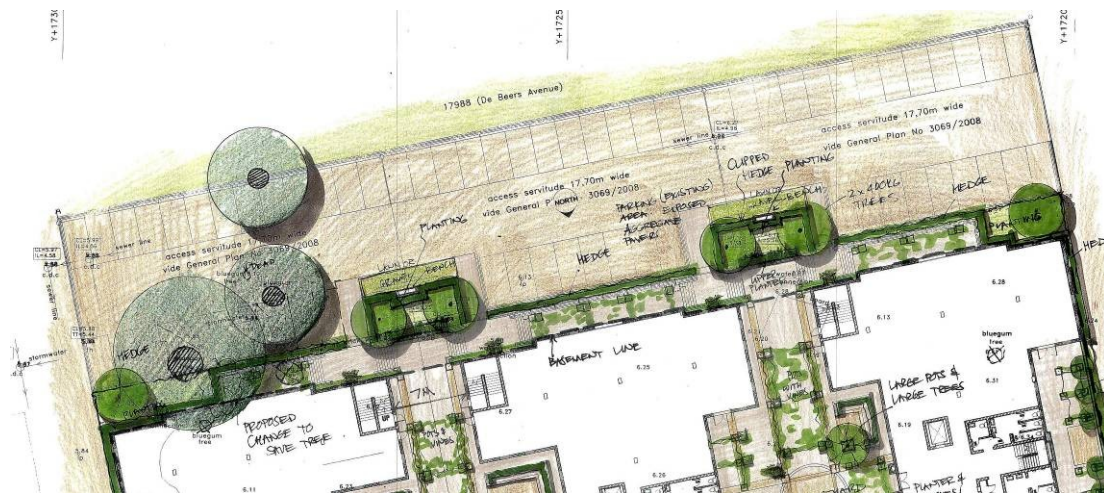


Figure 21: Detail of the Landscape Concept Plan showing the retention of important mature eucalypts on the north side of the property

The 17 trees that are to be lost as a result of this development are to be replaced by 27 waterberry trees. While 7 of the band of eucalypts on the south boundary, the most significant landscape feature of the property identified in the 2005-2006 two-phase HIA are to be lost, 21 water berry trees are to be planted to reinforce this band. In a few years will integrate and contribute to reinforcing a continuous tree canopy.

6. HEARTLAND DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

All development at Paardevlei is subject to consultation and review by the Heartland Design Review Committee. Chris Snelling serves as the heritage specialist on the committee and Nigel Burls of mlh architects & planners as the urban planning specialist. Both have had a long engagement with Paardevlei. The committee is chaired by Mark Bezencon, the Regional Manager of Paardevlei Properties.

The design team held discussions with members of the committee and a draft of this report was submitted for review. The email below was received on 4 September 2014 from the Regional Manager of Paardevlei Properties:

Dear Henry

We confirm that the Design Review Committee at Paardevlei have reviewed the report relating to portions 11/12/13 and support the recommendations therein.

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW COMPANY NAME & EMAIL ADDRESS

Kind regards

Mark Bezencon - *Regional Manager*

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7. CITY OF CAPE TOWN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A draft of this report was submitted to the CoCT for comment after the Heartland Design Review Committee had endorsed the recommendation that the proposed departures from design informants were supported. The CoCT response is attached where it is stated that the proposed departures are not supported.

Also attached is a response from the architects, Boogertman & Partners to the CoCT's comment. The main thrust of this response is that in order to achieve the allowable bulk for the site it is essential to relax the setback which will involve the removal of just 7 trees which will have very little visual effect. They also point out that there has been consultation and unqualified support from Paardevlei Properties, and their specialists throughout the design process.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The construction of a two story office complex instead of a three story stepped complex, the relaxation of the 19m building line and consequent removal of 7 trees in a group of 20 designated in the HIA of 2005 as being of Medium Conservation Worthiness will have little or no impact on heritage resources first identified in the HIA of 2005. The landscape plan makes provision for 21 large trees to replace the loss of 7.

Notwithstanding the lack of support from the CoCT it is recommended that HWC supports these departures from the Design Informants originally approved in May 2005 and the relaxation of the rear building line.