

PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FARM 956 SIMONDIUM



Figure 1: The farmstead with the centrally placed homestead and the flanking outbuildings

DRAFT PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Prepared in compliance with **Section 38(3)** of the National Heritage Resources Act
(No 25 of 1999)

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1. BACKGROUND

The owners of Farm 956 Simondium wish to redevelop the historic complex as an agri-tourism facility with a range of farm related activities. As the proposed activity was seen to change the character of a site larger than 5000m², a Notification of Intent to Develop (NID) submission was made to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) in terms of section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) by Aikman Associates: Heritage Management (AA:HM). A copy was also submitted to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) as the property is located within an area designated as a Grade I site by resolution of the Council of SAHRA.

HWC responded in a letter dated 14 April 2020 informing AA:HM that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that satisfies the provisions of section 38(3) of the NHRA be submitted and that this HIA must have specific reference to the following:

- *Impact on historic building;*
- *Proposed additional structures and a visual impact on a cultural landscape.*

AA:HM then prepared this draft Phase 1 HIA. In Phase 1 the broad conceptual framework is assessed which is to be followed by an assessment of a more detailed site development plan and architectural and landscape architectural proposals in Phase 2.

Open City Architects undertook an analysis of the historic farmstead and developed the conceptual framework for the tourism development. Square One Landscape Architects was commissioned to prepare the attached Visual Statement and archaeologists Hearth Heritage was appointed to prepare the attached archaeological impact assessment.¹

2. LOCALITY AND SETTING

Donkerhoek Farm is on the eastern slopes of the Simonsberg and takes access from the Klapmuts-Simondium Road close to its intersection with the R45. It is bordered on the south by the Rupert and Rothschild Estate and other wine estates to the northwest. It is linked at the northwest corner to the farm Babylonstoren. The existing road connecting Babylonstoren to Donkerhoek will link the two farms as an important element of the proposed tourism development.

¹ Hearth Heritage's principal archaeologist is Emmylou Bailey. In 2006 she analysed the homestead for the Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa: VASSA Journal No 15 July 2006: Donkerhoek homestead: Farm 956 Stellenbosch



Figure 2: The farmstead (circled) is sited towards the south western end of the farm. The Simondium church and commercial centre on the R45 can be seen on the right

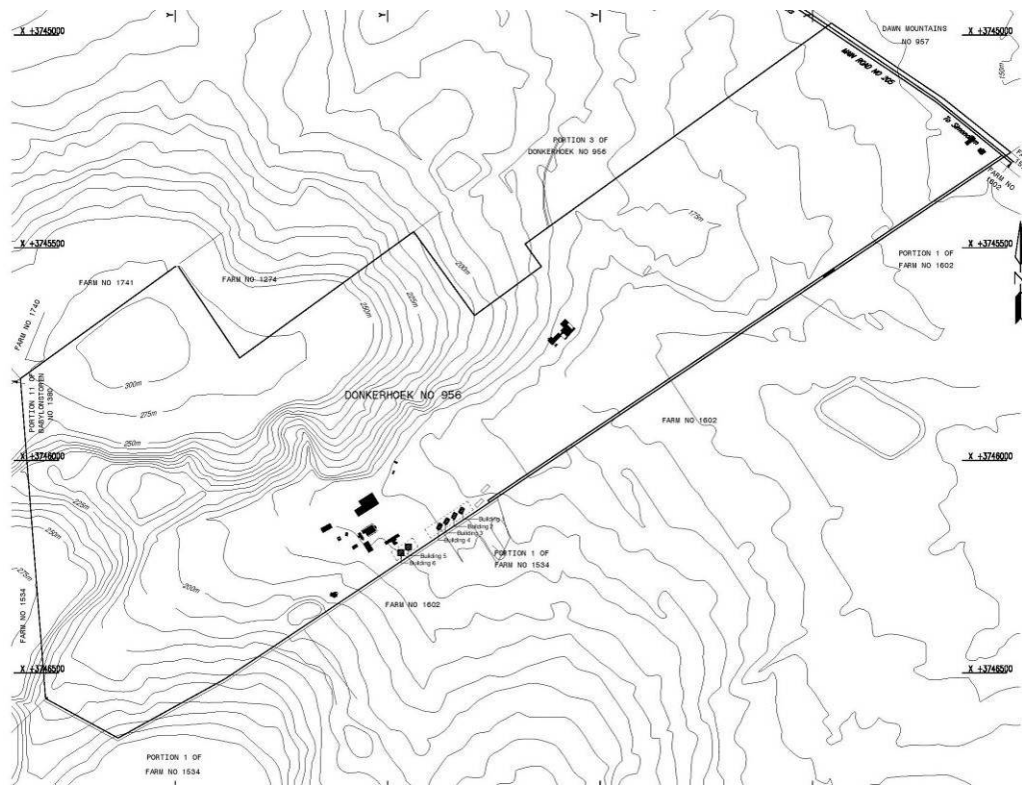


Figure 3: Site diagram showing the farmstead and outbuildings in a cluster towards the south west boundary of the farm

3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The attached paper on the Donkerhoek homestead prepared by Emmylou Rabe for VASSA provided a preliminary analysis and layering of the homestead and detailed

transfer history of the property.² The attached AIA has expanded on this and has provided a much fuller outline of the historical development that has taken place. This has been summarised below.

Hunter gatherers were gradually displaced by Khoekhoen pastoralists who moved into the area about 2000 years ago. In the late 17th Century they came into conflict with European settlers when the Cape was occupied by the Dutch. From the small Table Bay settlement settlers moved into the Boland as free burghers under the control of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The company granted freehold title to two Huguenot settlers, Jean Durand and Jean Parisel in partnership in 1694. It was 60 morgen in extent and named Bergen Henegouwen.³ In 1817, 194 morgen of land, also called Bergen Henegouwen and located in the same place was granted (in Quitrent) to Jacob de Villiers. This grant excluded the original 60 morgen grant. In 1888 the whole piece of land measuring 264 morgen was transferred to Pieter Coenraad Beyers (junior). Only eight years later the farm was sold to an American settler Robert Daniel Koch in 1896.

Given that farms in this district had suffered intensely from the phylloxera epidemic in the late 19th Century, it seems likely that Beyers was bankrupt and forced to sell like other neighbouring farmers.⁴ As at Rhodes Fruit Farms the new owner abandoned viticulture and concentrated on fruit production which continued under his descendants until 2019 when the property was sold. Its name was changed to Donkerhoek in 1915 when it was consolidated and transferred to the Donkerhoek Fruit Syndicate.

The date on the central gable of the homestead is 1851 and its plan form with a central passage and rooms on either side as well as sliding sash windows on either side of the central front door does indicate a mid-19th Century construction. Fransen speculates that it may have been built in 1831.⁵ This can be disputed as at that stage the plan form of a Cape House would have been free of the British influence.⁶

The Kochs were successful export fruit farmers but gradually abandoned farming for the production of firewood from the gum plantations and running a computer

² Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa: VASSA Journal No 15 July 2006: Donkerhoek homestead: Farm 956 Stellenbosch

³ This is the Dutch name for Mons Hinaut now part of Belgium

⁴ In the nearby Dwars River Valley from 1897 Cecil John Rhodes' banker, Lewis Lloyd Michell bought up a total of 29 bankrupt farms including Boschendal, Rhone and Good Hope to create Rhodes Fruit Farms (RFF).

⁵ FRANSEN, H. 2004. The Old Buildings Of The Cape. Jonathan Ball. Cape Town. Pg. 276

⁶ LEWCOCK, R; 1963. Early Nineteenth Architecture in South Africa. A.A. Balkema. Lewcock held that the central passage was a key element to emerge under British rule changing the form of the Cape house

business from the farm. When the farm was acquired by the new owners orchards had been abandoned and it was generally in a rundown state. The new owners are currently re-establishing fruit farming, repairing roads and dams and setting up a new complex for farming operations, with storerooms, garaging, workshops and staff facilities to the south west of the historic werf.

4. STATUTORY CONTEXT

The property is 145.45Ha in extent and is zoned Agriculture in terms of the Drakenstein Zoning Scheme By-law 2018. The tourism uses will require Technical Consent approval from the municipality.

5. TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION

Farm 956 occupies a long narrow valley that slopes steeply upwards to the western slopes of the Simonsberg. It flattens out towards the Klapmuts-Simondium Road. The valley has been historically terraced for orchard development and dams have been constructed. These are currently being repaired. There are mature oaks shading the farmstead



Figure 4: The approach road leading to the farmstead seen in the distance

The original mountain fynbos has been replaced by plantations of gums and orchards. The sugar gum *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* was planted by fruit farmers at the end of the 19th Century to support bee pollinators. It was also the source of poles and firewood.



Figure 5: Gum plantations border the farm's northwest boundary

A notable feature is the avenue of blue gums along the access road.



Figure 6: The old avenue is probably over 100 years old

6. HERITAGE RESOURCES AND DESIGN INDICATORS

The central heritage resource here is the farmstead complex and its cultural landscape setting.

As indicated in the attached analysis undertaken by Open City Architects the farmstead complex is formally arranged like many others in this district although dating from the mid 19th Century. The centrepiece is the homestead occupying the termination of the axial approach road. This is framed by the stables on the left and wine cellar on the right forming a wide sloping forecourt. There have been incremental alterations and additions since the complex was created. Each element is of heritage significance in its own right but contributes to the significance of the whole.

6.1 The landscape setting

This setting has been evolving since the area was first settled in the 17th Century to have become a rich mosaic of vineyards and orchards framed by farm roads and windbreaks of exotic trees. These blocks are interspersed with pastures for grazing livestock and historic farmsteads like the nearby Babylonstoren. A key feature of these is that they appear as treed islands in a sea of pastures, vineyards and orchards. The significance of this landscape was recognised by SAHRA who have identified Donkerhoek as part of the proposed Grade 1 National Heritage Resource.

6.2 The farmstead

The farmstead complex is greater than the sum of its parts. Its three main elements; the homestead, stables and cellar are of varying significance with the two outbuildings and even the homestead having been inappropriately altered and extended over time. In the Drakenstein Heritage Survey 2010 it was graded as either a National or Provincial Heritage Site (PHS) because of its Historical, Architectural and Contextual significance.

The following heritage related design indicators should inform the redevelopment of the farmstead:

- The homestead should retain its centrepiece role in the complex;
- The rectilinear pattern of the existing layout is to be reinforced;
- New buildings are to be neutral/background elements recessive in character and scale and massing reduced through devices such as pergolas;
- The landscaping should be robust and reflect an agricultural character. A "gardenesque" treatment with fussy flowerbeds and general cluttering should be avoided by using traditional farmstead plants such as quince hedges, pomegranates and fig and lemon trees. Arum lilies and restios could line furrows. Exposed aggregate concrete or reinforced laterite should be used for hard surfaces and brick paving which is suburban in character is to be avoided. The agricultural character should be reinforced with typical "farm"

structures like circular reservoirs, ponds, water furrows and channels, bridges, low white-washed walls. Wind pumps could also contribute to the desired character as would water tank stands;

- Domestic animals, such as geese, peafowl and pigeons, could be used to confer an agricultural quality on the place;
- Signage and lighting to be unobtrusive.

6.3 The homestead

The U-shaped thatched roof homestead has a gable dated 1851 and its plan form is typical of homesteads of the mid 19th Century. It has an entrance hall rather than a “Voorhuis”. The only natural light into the entrance hall is from the fanlight over the split front door. There are decorative pilasters on each corner of the facade and on either side of the front door. There are 12 over 12 sliding sash windows on either side of the front door. It has been altered with various additions over the life of the building. The courtyard between the two wings was roofed over fairly recently and the north west wing was lengthened. There are various minor alterations with pre-existing doors being bricked up and other openings made. A bathroom was introduced into the main front bedroom.



Figure 7: The main facade

Until further research into the layering that has taken place is complete no interventions should be undertaken. To this end an application for a permit to strategically remove plaster has been submitted to HWC.

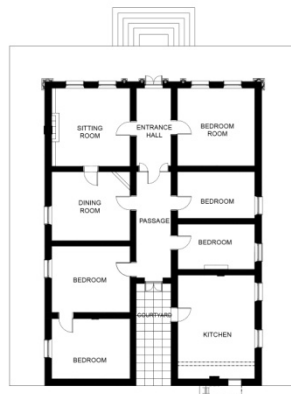
Open City Architects have provided a view of the evolution of the building and provided a possible remodelling with the removal of inappropriate additions.

1896-1905

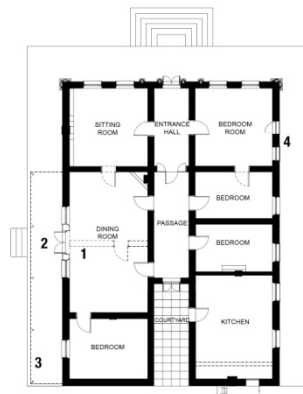
ORIGINAL HOMESTEAD

- Simple U-Shaped Plan
- Personal communication with the Koch family indicates that there was no direct access to the kitchen from inside the house.
- The original house had 4 fireplaces (see photograph on pg.3)

LATE 19TH CENTURY



EARLY 20TH CENTURY



1905-1930

ALTERATIONS

1. Wall demolished to create large dining room
2. Double door inserted in between existing windows on North Western Facade
3. Lean-to roof added on the Northern Western facade
4. Single door and window inserted on South Eastern gable (bedroom)

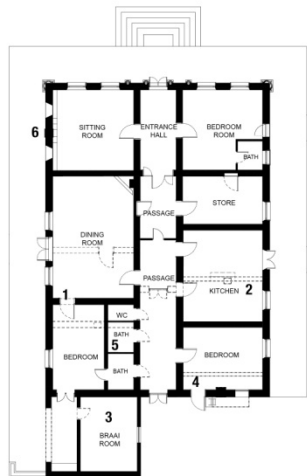
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1:250



18

LATE 20TH CENTURY



CURRENT



1930-2020

ALTERATIONS

1. Dining Room wall moved to create bigger bedroom / school room
2. Kitchen relocated
3. Braai room added on the South Western corner
4. Back door moved to the South Western end
5. Bathrooms added
6. Two windows added flanking the fire place

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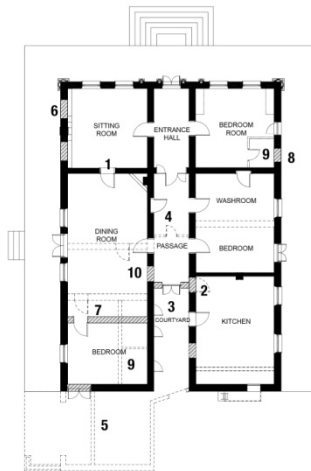
PROPOSED RESTORATION

We propose to reverse most of the changes that were made in the latter part of the 20th Century. Wall positions are determined by restoring the symmetry within the rooms. Doors and windows are to be repaired or replicas made where repair is no longer possible.

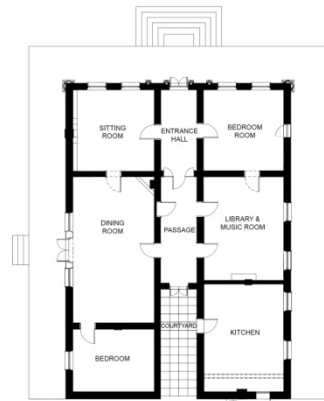
1. Reinstate door linking sitting room and dining room (reuse existing door #2)
2. Remove door and relocate to sitting room.
3. Reinstate back door and fanlight to original position (subject to archeologist fabric analysis)
4. Remove existing wall and door
5. Demolish existing braai room and restore gable.
6. Remove windows flanking fireplace.
7. Move existing wall to original position to restore symmetry in dining room
8. Remove existing window
9. Remove bathroom partition walls
10. Relocate existing door to establish symmetry in passage

20

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS



FINAL PROPOSED PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1:250



VIEWS



NORTH



EAST

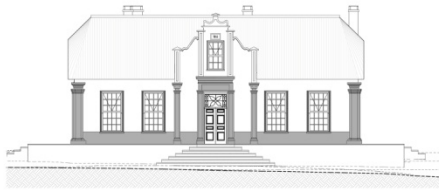
Although during the late 19th Century the homestead had at least four bedrooms, which was typical at this time, these spaces are perhaps not as interesting as part of a tourist facility. We therefore propose to introduce a larger library and music room by combining the two narrow rooms into one.

There is perhaps an opportunity to create an archive within the house and on special occasions live musical performances can be held. Alternatively, we could keep the current arrangement and show these rooms as utility spaces or use them for storage.

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ELEVATIONS

BEFORE



NORTH EAST SCALE 1:200

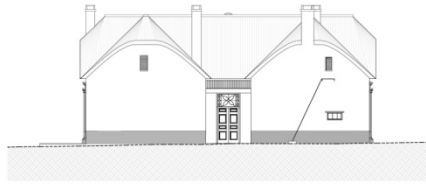


SOUTH WEST SCALE 1:200

AFTER



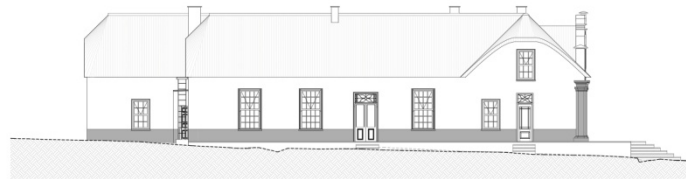
NORTH EAST SCALE 1:200



SOUTH WEST SCALE 1:200

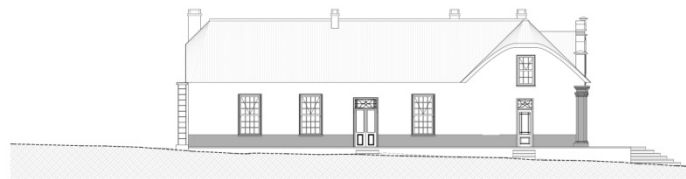
22

BEFORE



SOUTH EAST SCALE 1:200

AFTER



SOUTH EAST SCALE 1:200

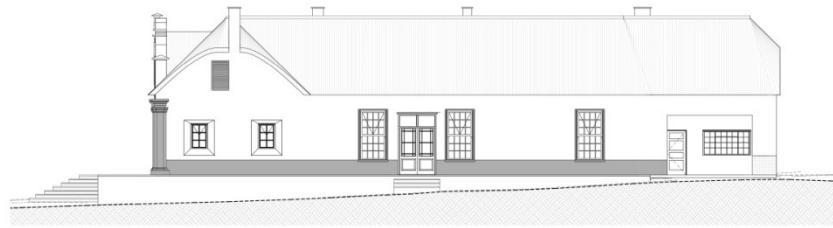
The restoration of the exterior of the house mainly consists of removing unsympathetic additions, and putting all the elements back into their original positions. We propose that the doors and windows that were added in the early days, should be kept, as they reveal the changing needs of the late 19th century household.

The sides of plinth have always been painted white. Ivy and rose bushes were planted directly in front of the wall. The top of the plinth was finished with rectangular stone or batavian tiles. These have been replaced over time, although it appears as though the level of the plinth has been raised by simply adding newer tiles over older ones. This has created a damp problem inside the house.

We propose to remove the layers to see if the original tiles are still there. There are clay tiles and klompies on the South Eastern side dating back to 1930.

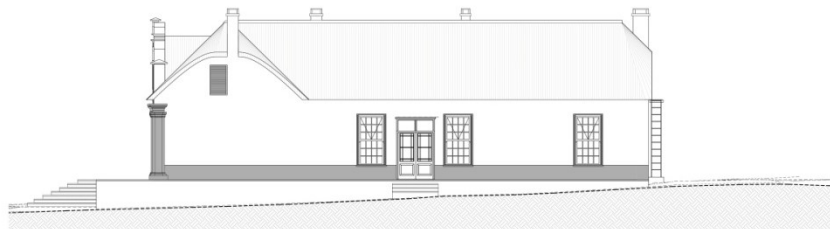
23

BEFORE



NORTH WEST SCALE 1:200

AFTER



NORTH WEST SCALE 1:200

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6.4 The stables

The T-shaped outbuilding to the northeast of the homestead with a clipped central gable and the remains of four pilasters has been converted into two separate dwellings with brick walls creating bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. Historical photographs indicate that it was indeed a stable complex probably accommodating mules, tack room and feed stores with doors along the main facade. It is now roofed with corrugated iron sheeting but must have been thatched originally. Fransen speculates that it may have been the original dwelling but there is little or no evidence of this and the ruins of a large earlier dwelling and outbuildings in the area known as Agterbos has been identified in the AIA.



Figure 8: Main facade

A permit to remove plaster to understand the layering has been submitted to HWC.

6.5 The cellar

The core of this T-shaped structure is identical in form to the stables and has a matching clipped gable, string course and also with the remains of four pilasters. Unlike the stables it has arched openings on the main facade. Given that the Koch family were fruit farmers and it seems probable that wine farming ceased in the late 19th Century, the cellar has not been used for wine making for over 100 years.



Figure 9: Main facade of the cellar

It has been extensively and unsympathetically altered and extended with lean-to roofing to accommodate storerooms, workshops and offices. The Koch computer company operated from the old core.



Figure 10: The original structure has been incrementally extended



Figure 11: Lean-to additions at the back of the structure

6.6 Staff quarters

Directly behind the homestead is a small rectangular structure which is the same width as the homestead and probably built at the same time. One of the old photographs indicates that it may have used to stable carriage horses.



Figure 12: Staff quarters

6.7 Farm workers' cottages

There are two late 19th Century cottages some distance from the farmstead. They are listed in the Drakenstein Heritage Survey 2010 as a 3C resource (Resource No 953).



Figure 13: These buildings accommodated five families before they were vacated



Figure 14: The south west side

6.8 Ruins

The AIA has identified two ruins; a large complex that may have been the original 18th Century farmstead in the area known as Agterbos and a small dwelling referred to in the AIA as the Dam Cottage. It is suggested that it may date from the late 18th Century or early 19th Century. Both complexes were graded II or 3A in the AIA.

6.9 Historic wagon track

The AIA identified the track as being of 3A significance.

6.10 Blue gum avenue

These trees *eucalyptus globulus* were probably planted by Koch soon after he acquired the farm. They were widely used in the fruit farming areas as a source of nectar for the bee pollinators. This species can live for over 200 years so we are assured that they could still be there for another 100 years. The avenue should be graded II.

6.11 Water furrows and dams

The AIA found evidence of water management that is suggested has a 19th Century origin.

7. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

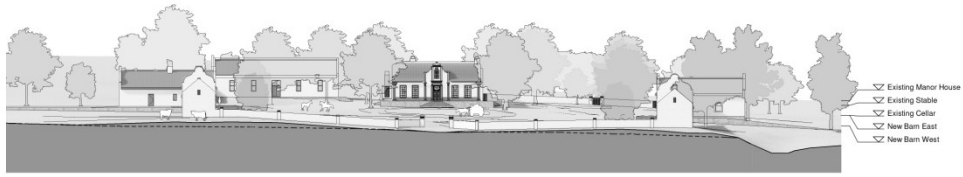
The broad concept at this stage is for the farmstead to be brought back to life as the centrepiece of a traditional mixed-use working farm with existing outbuildings and additional structures that could be introduced accommodating for example a blacksmiths shop, leatherwork, carpentry and joinery shop, bakery, kitchens, delicatessen, restaurant, wagon sheds and animal barns. These would function both as a tourist destination and as an educational facility. The central werf space would be used for family picnics and displays of farm vehicles and equipment from time to time. Access for the public to the complex would be via an old track linking Donkerhoek to Babylonstoren. Apart from staff vehicles, public parking would be at Babylonstoren. All the development would be related to the werf with nothing planned near the two ruined structures.

The attached Architect's Statement sets out the analytical process followed that led to the proposed Site Development Plan (SDP). As depicted in the drawings prepared by Open City Architects the existing homestead and outbuildings are to be repurposed and new structures are to be added to the ensemble.



Figure 14: Conceptual layout

CONTEXTUAL ELEVATIONS



NORTH EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1: 500



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1: 500



NORTH WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1: 500

CONTEXTUAL SECTIONS



4. CROSS SECTION THROUGH RESTORED BARNs
SCALE 1: 500

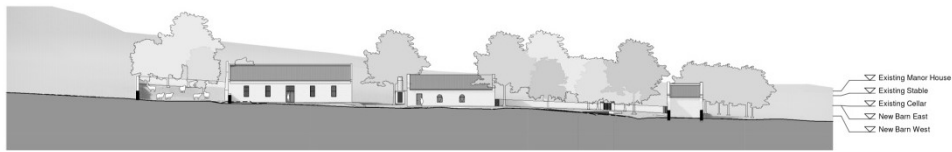


5. CROSS SECTION THROUGH FURROW
SCALE 1: 500



6. CROSS SECTION THROUGH NEW BARNs
SCALE 1: 500

CONTEXTUAL ELEVATIONS



SOUTH WESTERN BUILDINGS
SCALE 1: 500

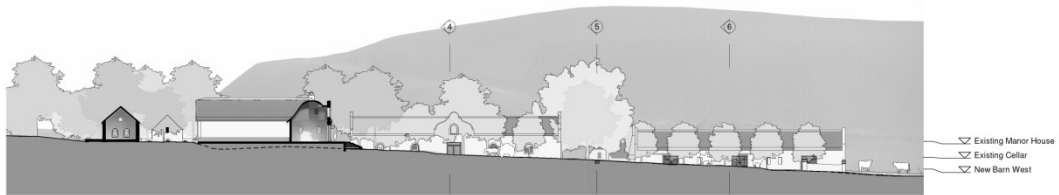


NORTH WESTERN BUILDINGS
SCALE 1: 500



SOUTH EASTERN BUILDINGS

CONTEXTUAL SECTIONS



1. LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH CENTRAL AXIS
SCALE 1: 500



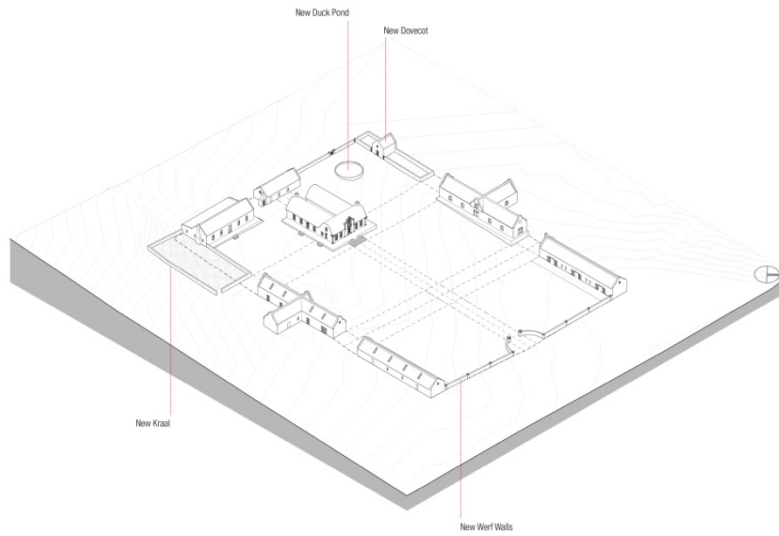
2. NORTH WESTERN LONGITUDINAL SECTION
SCALE 1: 500



3. SOUTH EASTERN LONGITUDINAL SECTION
SCALE 1: 500

WERF WALLS

Werf walls are constructed in a historically relevant manner according to studies of other Cape dutch farmsteads. Other historically relevant functions, such as a kraal, are also included in the new werf wall system that encloses the farmstead.

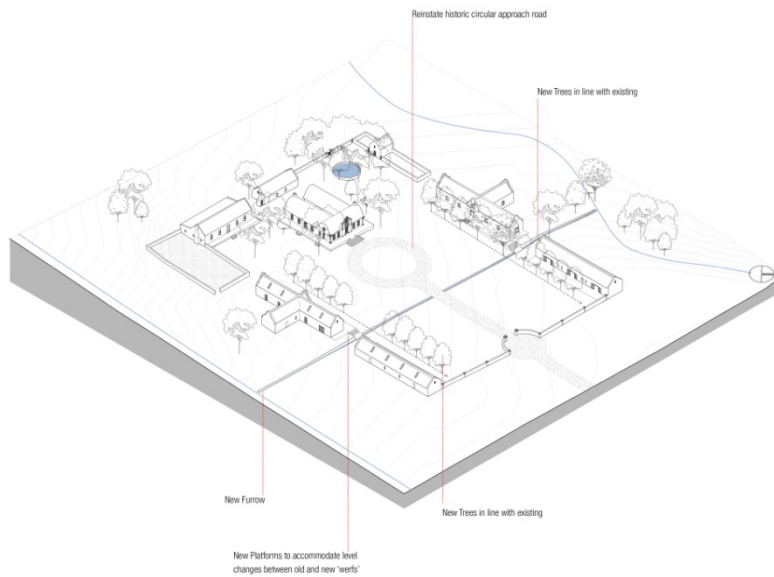


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LANDSCAPING

Most existing trees are retained, and new tree lines are established in line with the existing tree lines in front of the old Cellar and Stables. This maintains the hierarchy of the existing Homestead with the two large oak trees that flank it. A new furrow is proposed to link two existing streams on either side of the werf. The furrow forms creates a visual break between the old and new parts of the werf.

To manage the level changes between the existing and the newly proposed portions of the werf, we have introduced plinths around the existing Cellar and Stables buildings with stairs that land where the furrow cuts across the site.



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8. POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HERITAGE RESOURCES

Because the proposed redevelopment could have an impact on the landscape character of the area, the key heritage resource, Square One Landscape Architects prepared the attached Visual Statement. In Section 3.2 of the report Landscape indicators were formulated to provide a frame of reference to guide potential interventions (see page 11 of the report). The focus of the indicators is the retention

of the integrity of the historic werf space, the visual axes and associated vegetation like the mature oaks.

In Section 5 of the Visual Statement: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS on page 18, 5.1 Guidelines and Recommendations; fairly detailed principles are articulated. These are focused on measures to retain the generosity and simplicity of the werf space and can be supported.

It was concluded by Square One that *overall the configuration of the development was considered to be generally in keeping with the identified landscape indicators*. They put forward that *some finer detailing and design articulation needs to be taken into consideration to ensure that the sense of place of the historic werf is preserved as far as possible*. This detailing and design articulation will be addressed by the architects and will form part of the Phase 2 HIA submission.

In the Phase 1 AIA it was concluded that the proposed development, with some recommendations and design alterations, will not impact negatively on the archaeological heritage resources of the site and should be allowed to proceed to Phase II. It should be noted that no development is to take place near the ruins identified in the AIA. The detailed recommendations in the AIA are integrated into the recommendations of this Phase 1 HIA.

9. SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The NHRA specifically refers to social and economic development.⁷ In addition Section 38(3)(d) of the NHRA requires that the impact of the development on heritage resources relative to the sustainable social and economic benefits to be derived from the development should be evaluated.

It is common cause that tourism plays an important role in the Western Cape's economy. The proposed redevelopment of the farm will involve capital investment of R40-million and will create a significant number of permanent jobs.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This draft HIA is to be submitted to SAHRA for comment. The Drakenstein Heritage Foundation (DHF) and Paarl 300 are to be consulted as part of the section 38 NHRA process.

Submission is also to be made to the Drakenstein Municipality's Advisory Committee for Town Aesthetics and Environmental Matters (ACTAEM).

⁷ National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, Section 5(7)(d).

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that that the conceptual framework as indicated in Section 7 shown above be supported. The following detailed recommendations drawn from the AIA are set out below:

1. Fabric analysis of historic manor house, stables, wine cellar and outbuildings by qualified archaeologist to determine the phased evolution of the buildings in order to inform the proposed remodelling of these buildings (application for this work has been submitted to HWC).
2. Monitoring of all development within 50m of the identified structural complexes by a qualified archaeologist and any archaeological material uncovered should be recorded. Of specific concern is any development around the Agterbos complex where an unmarked burial ground has been identified through local interviews.
3. Monitoring of all new road infra structure by qualified archaeologist and any archaeological material uncovered should be recorded.
4. Any new development must not damage archaeological resources or impact negatively on their significance as part of the Cape farm werf evolution. As such, any new development, including roads, orchards, walls, must maintain a 20m buffer from all structural complexes outside of the homestead complex.
5. Provision must be made to protect the archaeological material, specifically the more fragile structural complexes that are being retained within the site, from damage by staff associated with the development as well as public in the future. As such, all staff on site should maintain at least a 10m distance from all archaeological structures and monitoring of staff needs to be managed by the developer.
6. A Conservation Management Plan for the site that addresses the management of archaeological resources, must be drawn up by a qualified archaeologist and heritage professional. This must be done with the aim of conserving heritage resources which are being retained within the development footprint during the development phase as well as for management of the heritage resources on site as a public space, before the site is opened up to the public.
7. If any human remains are found, work in the immediate vicinity is to stop, SAPS Accidental Finds Protocol is to be followed, and Heritage Western Cape to be notified immediately.

This assessment should be considered to have partly met the requirements of s38(3) of the NHRA and that the Phase 2 HIA will more fully comply with the legislation.