

# **DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT**

**A REPORT  
addressed to the  
SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCE AGENCY  
motivating a  
SECTION 27 APPLICATION  
(ito the National Heritage Resources Act)  
to permit the  
ALTERATION and EXTENSION  
of the  
JAMEAH MOSQUE,  
a declared  
NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE,  
at  
ERF 173650,  
cnr CHIAPPINI and CASTLE STREETS, CAPE TOWN  
for the  
JAMEAH MOSQUE JAMAAT TRUST  
by  
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Architect, Statutory Planner, Conservationist**

**7 December 2022**



## 1 BACKGROUND TO THIS APPLICATION TO SAHRA

The Jameah Mosque, also known as the Queen Victoria Mosque, was built during 1852 and is located on the mountain-side or western corner of the intersection of Chiappini and Castle Streets in the Bokaap on the edge of the city centre.

The land had been granted to the Muslim community in 1851 and a mosque measuring approximately 20m x 12m and occupying less than half the site was completed by late 1852. Soon after this (certainly before 1862) a dwelling was constructed occupying about a fifth of the site; and later, in 1915, the mosque was extended another 5m north-west into the mountainside. The mosque has had three different minarets: the first was probably built after 1884, the second in 1903 and the third, the extant minaret, was built in 1932.

In 1937 the Cape Town City Council subdivided the property, creating two erven, Erf 934 with the mosque on it and Erf 933 with the dwelling on it and it, the City Council, expropriated the portion of the site with the dwelling on it. This small property, taken out of the original grant to the community, was sold by the City Council to its long-time occupant in 2001. However, shortly before an application to HWC to extend the mosque in 2008, the Congregation of the Jameah Mosque purchased this property, re-united it with the ancient mosque site and, in 2019, formally consolidated the two erven as Erf 173650.

This site is, with the mosque-site in Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape, the first site specifically designated in South Africa for mosque-use in 1851 (although there are several mosques in Cape Town established in houses before 1851). These two sites were promised by the Colonial Government to the Muslim community on the conscription of 250 men into a “Malay Corps” and sent to the Eastern Cape in 1846 to take part in the border wars.<sup>1</sup> This mosque is, as a consequence, also sometimes known as the “Queen Victoria Mosque”.

Given the political history of the land-grant, the architectural history and phases of construction, the history of use, the place of the mosque in the history of Islam in the colony, and its singular position in the townscape opening onto a public space all contribute to its very considerable significance, now recognised to be of the highest order in its designation as a National Heritage Site.

In 2008 it was proposed to demolish the dwelling abutting the Mosque and to alter and extend the mosque to accommodate the ever-larger congregations at the mid-day prayer-services on Fridays which fill the mosque to overflowing. Indeed, as many as fifteen hundred men attend every mid-day Friday prayer-service. To this end an application was submitted to Heritage Western Cape; and, after receiving comments from SAHRA, the application was approved by HWC on 4 August 2008.

That 2008 proposal was then submitted to the City of Cape Town by the

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<sup>1</sup> This incident is described in more detail in the following section on the history of the Mosque.

architects, EHH, for approval in terms of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act; but, for a variety of reasons, that process was not completed and building plans were not ever approved.

However, during that process the dwelling was demolished and the building works were commenced leading to the serving of cease works orders by the City Council and, later, to administrative penalties being levied.

Later, in 2017, the building plan application was resuscitated, and then, because the provisions of the planning by-law had been changed in 2013, with a land-use planning motivation for 'technical' departures (by Tommy Brummer Town Planners). However, while the penalty that had been levied was paid, the works carried out were not consistent with the proposal approved by HWC in 2008 and resubmitted to the City Council in 2017 (most importantly in that the floor level of the first floor addition already constructed is not as shown on those plans and requiring significant changes to stairs and fire escapes); and so, nine years after the HWC approval, a number of changes to the proposal were necessary; but, for a number of reasons (including the death of the original architect and the closing of that practice), this 2017 application process was not completed either.

Subsequently, in January 2020 the national minister of arts and culture promulgated the declaration of the Mosque as a national heritage site.<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence, this application, which is similar in general intention and outline to that approved by HWC in 2008 but different in several details, is now being submitted to SAHRA; and this report has been commissioned by the Jameah Mosque Jamaat Trust.

While the title-page of this Report does not include reference to the City Council, the Report does also, if indirectly, motivate the Municipal Planning By-Law application for approvals of departures from the setback requirements and consent for work in a Heritage Protection Overlay Zone ("HPOZ") which is being submitted to the City Council by Tommy Brummer Town Planners.

I should note that, while EHH Architects were the architects and principle agents of the project commenced in 2008, I was responsible for the design concept. Now, given that the works have been commenced and given that several changes have been necessitated due to the incorrectly constructed floor levels, and given certain other changes in the requirements of the Congregation, the expert conservation architect, Peter Buttgens has been appointed to complete detailed design and specifications, submit the proposal to the City Council, and to supervise the construction itself.

## **2 THE MOSQUE AND ITS HISTORY**

This history is intended to describe and explain the most important events

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<sup>2</sup> Government Gazette, Vol.646, No.42429, 30 April 2019, No.622.

which have led to the construction and making/remaking of the extant buildings and its current configuration and state:<sup>3</sup>

#### *Islam at the Cape:*

Public worship and the preaching of Islam was prohibited in the Indies and other lands controlled by the VOC from 1642; and it was not until 1804 that religious freedom was granted by the Batavian government, although, at the Cape, Muslims had prayed together from as early as 1700 in prayer-houses and in quarries and there are many documented reports of these practices at least from the 1770s.<sup>4</sup>

Given the newly created freedom to worship, in 1804, the Muslim community was promised land for the erection of a mosque, first by the Dutch in 1806 (on condition that the Muslim community provide men to assist in repelling the English invaders) and then by the English in 1807. However, both the Dutch and English reneged on these promises and it was not until mid-century that land was granted.

As a consequence, the first three mosques to be constructed in South Africa were all on land bought by individual Muslims in Cape Town who then gave or left the properties to the congregations. These are the Auwal Mosque in Upper Dorp Street,<sup>5</sup> the Palm Tree Mosque<sup>6</sup> in Long Street and the Nurul Islam Mosque off Buitenkant Street.<sup>7</sup> These three mosques are all small mosques and were probably barely noticeable as mosques at the time: the Auwal Mosque was very small and was a converted house; the Palm Tree Mosque certainly was a house, the second story of which was used for prayer; and the Nurul Islam Mosque, which included residential accommodation, is up a narrow alley and would not have been visible to the passer-by. Indeed, these three mosques have been described as "house-mosques" in contradistinction to "hall-mosques" and "designed mosques".<sup>8</sup> It is necessary to mention these three mosques because the Uitenhage Mosque, constructed in 1849, was wrongly described as the oldest mosque in South Africa for many years.

#### *The Grant of Land for a Mosque:*

In early 1846 the colonial government conscripted males between sixteen and sixty to fight on the Eastern Frontier; and a "Malay Corps" of 250 men was

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<sup>3</sup> I should note that this history has not been supplemented by additional research since my earlier report of 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Bradlow, FR and Margaret Cairns, 1978, p10, *The Early Cape Muslims*, Balkema, Cape Town; see also Davids, Achmat, 1980, pp85-92, *The Mosques of Bokaap*, SA Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, Athlone

<sup>5</sup> Davids, 1980, pp93-113: the Auwal Mosque, established in 1794, is on two properties bought by a freed slave. Davids has it that only two walls remain of the original structure (p113).

<sup>6</sup> Davids, 1980, pp114-126: the Palm Tree Mosque was established in 1807 when a part of the congregation of the Auwal Mosque seceded and purchased the Long Street property. There has been some dispute as to its status as a mosque or prayer room but it appears that it has been recognised as a mosque since 1825 at least. (p116).

<sup>7</sup> Davids, 1980, pp127-137: the Nurul Islam Mosque was founded in 1844 when the land was purchased by the "Malay Community".

<sup>8</sup> le Roux, Schalk, 1997, "Presedente vir die Kaapse Moskee III: Die Geboue as Historiese Bron", pp27-47, in *South African Journal of Cultural History*, Vol. 11, No. 1, May 1997.

established in Cape Town and sent to Port Elizabeth in May 1846. Although the Corps took part in the War of the Axe (March 1846 to December 1847),<sup>9</sup> the authorities did not keep to the agreement to feed their families back in Cape Town. This led to dissatisfaction and, effectively, a mutiny; the Corps refused to march on to the Fish River and it was demobilised in September 1846.

Some of the men did not return to Cape Town and settled in the Eastern Cape and established the Uitenhage mosque in 1849 on the land granted to them by the colonial government.<sup>10</sup>

The men who returned to Cape Town immediately petitioned for the government to satisfy the second element of the agreement between the authorities and the community, namely, to give the Muslim community land for a mosque. The process of being granted land for a mosque was long and tortuous: in November 1849 the Board of Commissioners for the Municipality of Cape Town (in effect, the municipality's executive committee) recommended that a piece of land at the corner of Chiappini and Castle Streets be granted to the community; in December 1851 the Colonial Office advised that the Governor consented to the grant to the Abdol Bazier, Abdol Whahab, Daries, Salie<sup>11</sup> and their successors in trust for the "Mohomedan Community" for the construction of a "place of divine worship"; and this was confirmed to the Deeds Office by the Secretary of the Board of Commissioners in April 1852; but the Transfer was not completed until December 1857.<sup>12</sup>

I should, however, point out that, because the Mosque is set well back from Chiappini Street with an apparently deliberately created space or public square in front of the Mosque, it appears that the Municipality recognised the significance of the grant and, therefore, the necessity or appropriateness of giving the mosque importance in the townscape. This is, however, unlikely and the square is simply a happy accident: Chiappini Street has two distinct widths and two distinct beginnings: one beginning is at Somerset Road and its relatively great width was determined much earlier in the nineteenth century by the apparent need in that part of the growing town; the other beginning is off the very narrow Schotschekloof Lane at the top of at Wale Street (much widened in the 1950s) and the width of Chiappini Street there was self-evidently necessarily rather narrower. The happy accident creating the square is the result of the change in widths precisely at this point in front of the mosque. This is evident in Snow's survey of 1862 and Thom's survey of *circa* 1896 (Illustrations # 1 and 2).

#### *The Jameah Mosque, 1852- circa 1900:*

However, it is clear that the congregation had taken occupation of the property early in 1852 as the mosque was completed before the end of 1852. Although we do not have a documented date of the completion, given that the

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<sup>9</sup> en.wikipedia.org.za/war\_Xhosa

<sup>10</sup> Davids, 1980, pp137-147.

<sup>11</sup> Davids assumes that these four were survivors of the Battle of the Axe; Davids, 1980, p143.

<sup>12</sup> See the Deed of Transfer 1857-52-213 and Diagram 989/1857, Deeds Office, Cape Town.

mosque's imam, Imam Bazier, was arrested "a few weeks after inauguration of the mosque" and he had been present at the inauguration<sup>13</sup> and given that he appeared in court on 15 January 1853,<sup>14</sup> we can conclude that the inauguration of the Mosque must have taken place before the end of 1852.

The mosque was "large, substantial, but plain and unminaretted"<sup>15</sup> and several commentators have pointed out that the appearance of the mosque, given its simplicity and Neo-gothic style, was much like that of a church.<sup>16 17</sup><sup>18</sup> The undated photograph, attached as Illustration #3,<sup>19</sup> shows the mosque in its original form/extent (though the light-weight timber minaret was not built until after 1884).

A minaret had possibly been built by 1862 at the north-west end of the mosque (suggested by both Snow's survey of 1862 and by Thoms' survey of 1896). However, a number of panoramic photographs from the late-nineteenth century show the mosque without any minaret. The nineteenth century photograph of the front façade, Illustration #3, and an undated drawing<sup>20</sup> both suggest that the first minaret, built of timber, was immediately above and just behind the front façade on the roof. Davids claims that the first minaret to be built in Cape Town was a part of the Masjied Booraanol Islam Mosque in Longmarket Street, built in 1884,<sup>21</sup> so this minaret (and the photograph in Illustration #3) must presumably date from after 1884 (but before 1903).

However, a second minaret was built onto the front south-east façade in 1903 as is clear from the approved plan.<sup>22</sup> Davids contends that this minaret was added in 1914 but he is clearly mistaken. He annotates a photograph<sup>23</sup> as follows: "The Jamia Mosque as it appeared after 1914. The mosque was enlarged to accommodate the extra worshippers for the Hiempu and the minaret was added".<sup>24</sup> However, the photograph he refers to was clearly taken *before* it was extended, Illustration #4, as the photograph clearly shows only three windows in the Castle Street elevation.

This second minaret of 1903 is delicately detailed and appears to be of brick and plaster and pre-cast concrete elements,<sup>25</sup> although Louw's 'catalogue'

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<sup>13</sup> Mayson, John Schofield, 1865, p28, *The Malays of Cape Town*, Manchester

<sup>14</sup> *The Cape Town Mail*, Tuesday, 18 January, 1853. This is not the place for a discussion of Imam Bazier, but his arrest and trial for the "pretended exercise of magical arts", fraud and receiving stolen goods and his sudden death in goal on 27 April 1853 is a most interesting story. See also *The Cape Town Mail*, Saturday, 30 April, 1853.

<sup>15</sup> Mayson, 1865, p21.

<sup>16</sup> Bradlow, 1978, p50.

<sup>17</sup> Davids, 1980, p86.

<sup>18</sup> Le Roux, 1997, p38.

<sup>19</sup> Cape Archives, J9935.

<sup>20</sup> Cape Archives, E9181.

<sup>21</sup> Davids, 1980, p85 and Note 2, p196.

<sup>22</sup> City of Cape Town Approved Plans Archives, Approved Plan 791/1903; MB Torstenson for Imaum Hassim..

<sup>23</sup> Cape Archives, AG13494.

<sup>24</sup> Davids, 1980, p139.

<sup>25</sup> Torstenson's drawings clearly show the minaret to be of "brick and concrete"; the minaret depicted is, however, rather smaller and lower on the front façade than the one actually built.

says that it was made of timber;<sup>26</sup> and, while much of its weight is resting on the massive masonry façade, the two spindly cast-iron columns in the photograph seem not adequate to carry it and I presume that this led ultimately to its removal (presumably in 1932 to be replaced by the third minaret).

It is also probable that the Mosque did not initially have a gallery as Lady Duff Gordon's detailed description of the interior in 1862 does not include any reference to a gallery.<sup>27</sup> The extant gallery was clearly built in several phases, probably three, which is suggested by the differentiated columnation. These columns are solid wrought iron and are very slender (and are possibly unsafe). I should note too that the gallery is oppressively low (barely 2m) and it is clear that the original designers did not anticipate requiring a gallery or, if they did, they did not think that it would extend very far into the mosque-space which is only 4.8m high.

Lady Duff Gordon does, however, describe "the royal arms of England" over the entrance door.<sup>28</sup> Davids says that the arms were present in appreciation of Queen Victoria who, it was claimed, had allowed the grant of the land for the mosque; and also he says that the arms remained until 1914 when the building was enlarged.<sup>29</sup> [I think, though, that it is more likely that the coat of arms, above the entrance inside the mosque, was covered when the first section of the gallery was constructed.<sup>30</sup>]

Neither Mayson nor Lady Duff Gordon make any reference to the dwelling but it is shown on Snow's survey of 1862 and it clearly existed by then. Indeed, Thom's survey of 1898 suggests that it had been divided into four separate lets of just one room each used either as dwellings or workshops.<sup>31</sup> The purpose for which the building was built is uncertain as the imam after Bazier's death in 1853, Imam Abdol Whahab (Bazier's son), lived in Bree Street<sup>32</sup> until his death in 1872.

#### *The 1914 Hiempu Extensions to the Jameah Mosque:*

An enduring controversy in the Shafee community during the late-nineteenth century and into the twentieth concerned authority to conduct the communal Juma-ah Friday payers.<sup>33</sup> However, in 1913 and early 1914 endeavours to resolve this question were made and, after consulting eminent figures in Mecca, a delegation of imams from Zanzibar arrived in Cape Town in January 1914. Agreement was reached between the Cape Town imams that the

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<sup>26</sup> Louw, Teresa, Editor, 1984, p157, *The Buildings of Cape Town: Phase Two: Volume Three: Catalogue and Classification*, Cape Provincial Institute of Architects, Cape Town.

<sup>27</sup> Duff Gordon, Lady, 1927, *Letters from the Cape*, Oxford.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Davids, 1980, pp142-143.

<sup>30</sup> Indeed, this coat of arms may be rediscovered when the gallery is dismantled during the works proposed.

<sup>31</sup> Neither the first street directory in the *Cape Almanac* of 1887 and the subsequent street directory in *Juta's Directory of Cape Town, Suburbs and Simon's Town* of 1900 give any clues about the meaning of these four street numbers.

<sup>32</sup> See *Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Directory*, 1870.

<sup>33</sup> Davids, 1980, pp56-60.

Juma-ah prayers should be conducted at the Jameah Mosque and that they should alternately take turns to conduct the prayers ("hiempu" means "alternate" in Indonesian); but this agreement was broken almost immediately and remains unresolved to this day.

However, it appears, in order to accommodate the several congregations sharing the Juma-ah prayers every Friday, that the Jameah Mosque was enlarged by extending the mosque to the north-west to the property boundary, that is, by another 6½ metres or by about 30%. Although this extension was carried out in 1915,<sup>34</sup> the Hiempu agreement of January 1914 is the likely reason for the extension even if the agreement was not adhered to for very long.

*Two Significant Changes to the Jameah Mosque in the 1930s:*

Two significant changes to the mosque and its site were effected in the 1930s. These were, first, the construction of a new (third) minaret and, second, the part of the property occupied by the dwelling was subdivided and expropriated by the Municipality:

The extant minaret over the front entrance was built in 1932 (it has the date in plaster figures on its front) although we do not have documentary evidence for this. This replaced the minaret built in 1903. This third minaret is rather more conventional in construction and appearance and is probably based on one of the traditional forms of minaret found on the Swahili coast and in India. See Illustration #5 (SANL, Photographic Collection, Bokaap collection).

Also, although Davids does not say so, it is most likely that the expense of constructing this minaret was the cause of the very considerable debt that he blames the imam of the time for. This "tremendous debt" led to the congregation being declared insolvent and all its assets including the mosque being put up for auction. A group from the congregation, however, raised enough money to meet the demands of the debtors.<sup>35</sup>

The second change to the mosque was the expropriation of the dwelling by the Municipality: the 1934 Slums Act was invoked by the Municipality in the case of some 250 residential properties in the Bo-Kaap in the mid-1930s ostensibly in the interests of health but clearly with the intention of extending the commercial centre of the CBD. These intentions and endeavours of the Municipality are dealt with elsewhere (if incompletely),<sup>36</sup> but the congregation may in this case, given its financial difficulties, have been pleased to have the dwelling subdivided off and expropriated as the mosque was paid the sum of five hundred pounds for it.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> City of Cape Town Approved Plans Archives, Approved Plan 3267/1915; J Jackman for the Mosque Trustees.

<sup>35</sup> Davids, 1980, p147.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Todeschini, Fabio and Derek Japha, 2004, "Cultural Identity and Architectural Image in Bo-Kaap, Cape Town", pp187-209, in AlSayyad, Nezar, Editor, 2004, *The End of Tradition?*, Routledge, London and New York.

<sup>37</sup> Deed of Transfer No 11935 of 1937, Deeds Office.



Be that as it may, the dwelling and 160sqm were expropriated; but, notwithstanding the Municipality's intention to demolish the dwelling (and all those in the nearby vicinity), the occupant remained in the house and paid rent to the Municipality thereafter.

As a consequence of community pressure in the 1980s the Municipality did eventually decide in the late 1980s to sell all of the expropriated houses in the Bokaap to the sitting tenants (for relatively low prices); and, in the case of this dwelling, the sitting tenant purchased the property in 2001. However, the Mosque was been able to purchase the property from that party in 2008, thus re-uniting Erf 933 with Erf 934 and reconstituting the original grant.

*Other Alterations to the Mosque:*

The Mosque, now a hundred and seventy years old, has, of course, been iteratively altered in innumerable other minor ways not described above. However, the most important of these include the following:

- the stoep which lines the south-east and north-east façades (facing onto Chiappini Street and Castle Street respectively) probably dates from the original construction (it is prominent in the late nineteenth century photographs; see, for example, Illustration #3) and had an elaborate typically 1930s balustrade added, probably in 1932 when the minaret was replaced; this balustrade was removed and replaced with a low wall some time before 1957, probably in 1955 when other minor works were carried out;
- the gallery has been extended iteratively during the twentieth century so that it now extends over 76% of the interior; the first stairs to the gallery were at the back of the mosque but these were moved in 1955 to accommodate additional ablution facilities;<sup>38</sup>
- ablution facilities for ritual washing have been added within the mosque near to the main entrance door in 1955 and more recently (before 1955 the ablution facilities were all outside the mosque);
- three toilets were built in the space between the mosque and the dwelling in 1973;<sup>39</sup>
- finally, as explained earlier, the much altered dwelling was demolished and the works approved by HWC in 2008 (though not approved by the City Council) were initiated but then halted by the City Council. This application is intended to remedy the situation and to complete the concept approved by HWC in 2008.

## **2 LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK**

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<sup>38</sup> City of Cape Town Approved Plans Archives, Approved Plan 108045, approved x/x/1955 (day and month not legible).

<sup>39</sup> City of Cape Town Approved Plans Archives, Approved Plan 191702, approved 4/6/1972.

### *2.1 National Heritage Resources Act:*

The Jameah Mosque is a recently declared (2019) national heritage site (“NHS”); and Section 27(18) of the National Heritage Resources Act (“NHRA”) prohibits the alteration of or addition to any NHS without a permit issued by the national heritage resources authority, SAHRA.

Application for such a permit is to be made once comments have been received from the City Council’s heritage officials and from the local ratepayers association, the Bo-Kaap Civic.

### *2.2 Zoning Scheme:*

Erf 173650 is zoned for Community Facilities uses; and a mosque (Place of Worship) is permitted with the Council’s consent. Also, the City did finally designate the Bokaap to be a Heritage Protection Overlay Zone (“HPOZ”) in 2020 (after first proposing this in 1981). Also, the new consolidated Zoning Scheme of 2013 and its replacement, the 2015 Municipal Planning By-Law, included new requirements in respect of in respect of places of worship.

Accordingly, the City of Cape Town has land-use planning authority in this case. This report is, therefore, also intended to serve as motivation of the application to the City of Cape Town for its special consent for the proposed extension to the Mosque, for setback departures, and for the HPOZ approval.

All of these applications are included in the town planner’s motivation submitted to the City’s land-use planning department.

## **4 COMMENTS OF PARTIES CONSULTED**

The officials of the City of Cape Town’s Heritage Resources Section and the Bo-Kaap Civic are to be consulted; and their comments will be included for submission of the application and of this Report to SAHRA. Neighbours will, I presume, be advised their rights to comment during the land-use application being submitted by Tommy Brummer Town Planners.

## **6 THE ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS NOW PROPOSED**

I should note that the proposal is based on accurate and detailed measured drawings, measured and drawn in 2008.<sup>40</sup>

As described above, on the basis of the 2008 HWC approval, the dwelling was demolished and the proposed addition was commenced.

This application is for a permit to carry out the following works:

- the dismantling of the leading/front 3m of the timber gallery, reducing its size to approximately 20m by 9m, the re-erection of the balustrade,

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<sup>40</sup> These measured drawings were carried out during December 2007 – March 2008 by three young architects-in-training, Amien Paleker, Nur Omar and Marvin Daniels.

- and the repositioning of two steel columns to carry the leading front edge of the gallery;
- the removal of the sub-standard existing stairs to the gallery and the construction of safer stairs in a new position as shown;
  - the demolition of approximately 6m of the main south-western wall of the Mosque and the propping of the roof during construction;
  - the construction of columns and beams within this 6m-wide opening to support the existing roof as shown;
  - the construction of an extension to the Mosque, including ablution facilities, kitchen, meeting spaces and an enclosed garden-court giving light and ventilation to the prayer-space, with the floor level of the new gallery now some 400mm above that of the existing timber gallery within the old mosque-hall; and
  - the construction of a care-taker's dwelling above the extension.

These works are shown in the drawings shown in Illustrations 7 to 12 and in the accompanying drawings by Peter Buttgens.

Very little of this work will be visible to the street or from anywhere else in the environs. Indeed, only the front façade facing onto Chiappini Street will be visible from the public realm.

*The architectural intentions:*

These interventions respond to the existing ancient mosque building and its functions. Indeed, the intervention is, in its simplest terms, first, to increase prayer-space and, second, to improve the existing prayer-space and to enable some traditionally secular activities, that is, to accommodate pilgrims and visitors.

"In its simplest and most widespread form the ... mosque comprised a courtyard bordered by arcades adjoining a covered hall".<sup>41</sup>

In the event, the available space does not permit more than a nominally scaled courtyard, indeed, barely more than an enclosed garden which is positioned between the prayer-spaces and the more secular ancillary spaces including circulation, ablution facilities and the new entrance.

The enlarged site enables a new extension to the Mosque which abuts the double-volumed sanctuary of the extant "hall" so that both the principal level and gallery can be extended in the best possible position, that is abutting the *musalla* or sanctuary. Indeed, the significance of the sanctuary is heightened by increasing the size of the double-volumed area (by reducing the extant gallery) and by focusing the added prayer-space at both levels onto the sanctuary.

I should add that the congregation had initially wanted the improvements to include a dome, which many authorities regard as the most significant of the

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<sup>41</sup> Hillenbrand, Robert, p33, "The Mosque in the Medieval Islamic World", pp32-51, in *Architecture and Continuity*, Edited by Sherban Cantacuzino, 1985, Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2nd Cycle, Aperture.

conventional architectural elements of a mosque,<sup>42</sup> to be constructed over the sanctuary: this would, however, have led to a very radical alteration (and enormously expensive) to the existing "hall".

While conservation and restoration are often thought of as the "freezing" of the past in the present and "fetishising the aura of antiquity", in this work we intend a cultural translation or transition reliant on the "ongoing presence of the past-in-the-present rather than the polarity of tradition vs modernity".<sup>43</sup> We seek not to assert the permanence of the past, but to project its productive contribution into the future. Indeed, in this view, conservation/restoration is revisionary, emphasising the dynamic relationship between past and present. Given the building type and the client in this instance, this view is both apposite and congruent: religious communities are always traditional but religion is, at its base, hopeful and utopian; so their institutions, built and unbuilt, must be revisionary, both confirming and establishing identity *and* empowering/enabling transformation.

Given this, the current project is intended to reinforce and confirm the nature and character of the Jameah Mosque and its place in its congregation's history and identity. It is also intended to reinforce its connection and identification with a wider and contemporary sense of Islam.

Given this and given the height and character of the extant Mosque façade with its ogival Neo-Gothic fenestration and architectural character which we have been reluctant to mimic or to compete with (or vitiate in any way), the façade of the addition (in the place of the demolished dwelling) has been designed to be apprehended immediately as non-residential, as contemporary and as Muslim.

This front façade is, as a consequence, to be plastered and plain with thin almost imperceptible Scarpa-esque striations mimicking traditional rustications which disappear as they are distant from the fenestration. The necessary four window- and door-openings are organised into two vertically arranged pairs, the entrance pair headed by the old ogival-shaped window recovered from the demolished section of the mosque-wall and re-used here; the parapet-top is to be crisply articulated by a thin slate capping; and the façade as a whole is played down by painting it the same colour as the Mosque.

The internal alterations to the ancient Mosque are to be differentiated from the ancient fabric by a slight change in plaster thickness and, where possible, with slate bands and/or similar fabric 'high-lighting'; the new added building being differentiated from the ancient structure by a wider slate band where the buildings meet. This differentiation and articulation of the meetings between old and new is intended to be carried out with an under-played and Scarpa-esque subtlety.

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<sup>42</sup> Fethi, Ihsan, p61, "The Mosque Today", pp52-63, in *Architecture and Continuity*, Edited by Sherban Cantacuzino, 1985, Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2nd Cycle, Aperture.

<sup>43</sup> Bhabha, Homi, p11, "Architecture and Thought", pp6-11, in *Intervention Architecture: Building for Change*, 2007, Aga Khan Award for Architecture 10th Cycle, IB Tauris, London.

## **7 IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE MOSQUE, ON ITS SITE AND ON ITS SIGNIFICANCES**

The Jameah Mosque will undergo a number of impactful alterations, including, most particularly, the cutting back and reduction of the extent of the gallery and the opening up of a side to the additional ground and first floor level accommodation.

The cutting back of the gallery to create an almost square double-volume sanctuary which both the ancient and the new galleries will look onto, the articulation of the openings between the ancient mosque and its extension, and the creation of a garden-court which can be seen from all corners on both floors of the Mosque and which will give light and ventilation to the considerably enlarged and enclosed prayer-space, echoing the secular courtyards of the great mosques of the Middle East and referring subliminally to the Garden of Paradise.

### *The Visual Impact of the Extension on the Mosque and on the Environs:*

Given the relatively steep slope across the property and the floor level of the Mosque, the extension will be cut deeply into these lower slopes of the mountain. Indeed, the two levels of the proposed Mosque extension will be almost completely below natural ground level at the western-most corner; and only the care-taker's flat will project at that point; and, given that the existing parapet lining the south-western boundary of the site is relatively high, the two levels of the proposed Mosque extension will be barely taller than the extant parapet wall, even at the south-eastern front onto Chiappini Street.

The front façade of the new extension, although two storeys high, will not loom much higher than the existing houses lining Chiappini Street and, because it is set well back from the street with the square in between it and the street, it will not be visually oppressive. The dimensions of this front façade are 8m wide by 6,5m high; that is, it is residential in scale.

Indeed, the architectural character of the new building must subvert the natural inclination of the viewer seeing buildings of this scale in this environment as residential. In our view, this new façade will give appropriate meaning to this new intervention through its impact on both the ancient Mosque and within this environment.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the impacts of the proposals on the significance of the Mosque and on the environs described above, I recommend as follows:

- that SAHRA grant a permit in terms of Section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act to alter the Jameah Mosque, a National Heritage Site, and to erect the extension to the Mosque as described above and generally in accordance with the attached detailed architectural drawings by the expert conservation architect, Peter Buttgens.

7 December 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Townsend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

**Dr Stephen Townsend**



Illustration #1: Detail of William Barclay Snow's Survey of Cape Town, Green Point and Sea Point, 1862



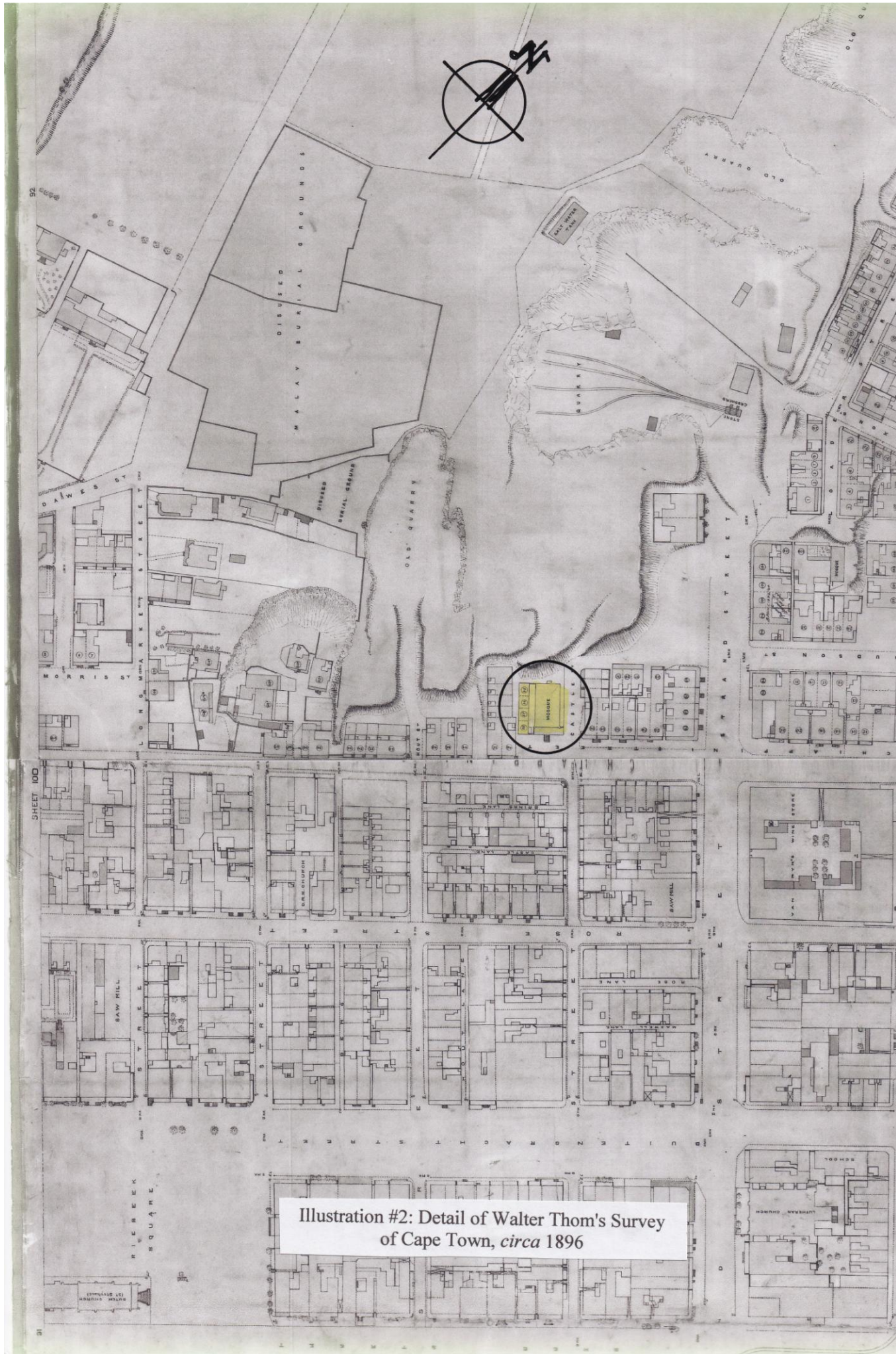


Illustration #2: Detail of Walter Thom's Survey of Cape Town, circa 1896







Illustration #3: Jameah Mosque with first minaret; after 1884 but before 1903  
(Cape Archives: J9935)



Illustration #4: Jameah Mosque with second minaret; after 1903 but before 1915  
(Cape Archives: AG 13494)



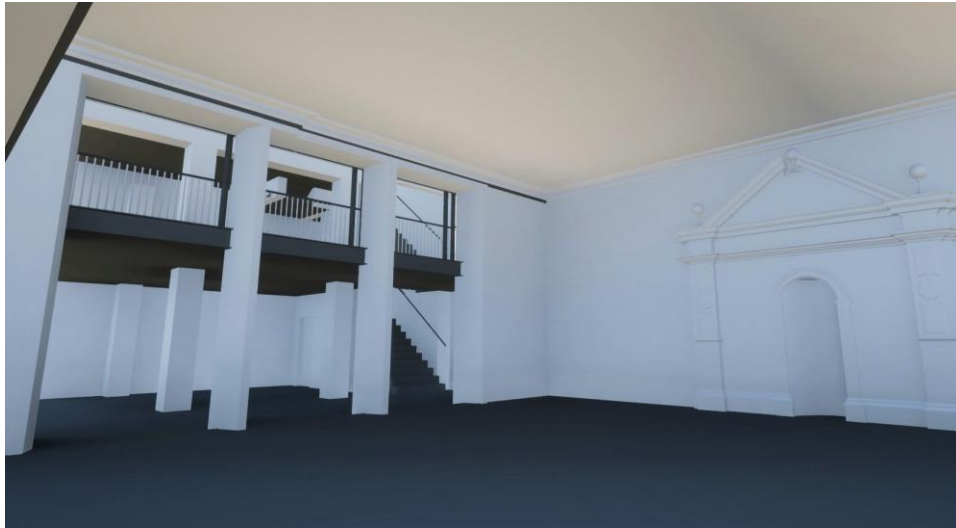


Illustration #5: Jameah Mosque with third minaret; after 1932 (circa 1937)  
South African Library: Photographic Collection



Illustration #6: Jameah Mosque today  
(Photograph: S Townsend, 21 June 2008)





**Illustration 7: Double-volume sanctuary with three-bay opening in wall between the existing and the new (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**



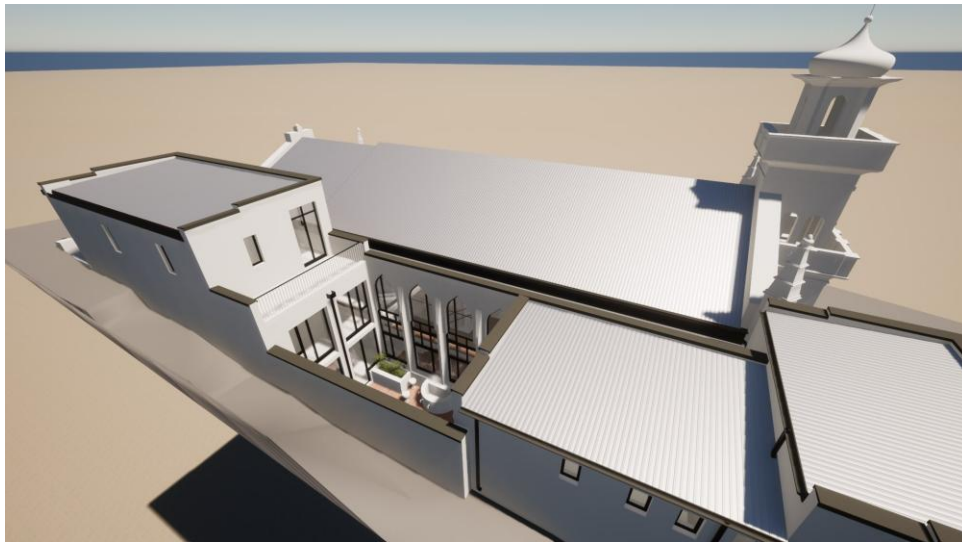
**Illustration 8: View into the double-volume sanctuary from the existing gallery showing three-bay opening in wall between the existing and the new (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**



**Illustration 9: View of the double-volume garden court (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**



**Illustration 10: View of circulation space between existing Mosque and garden court (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**



**Illustration 11: Bird's eye view of the extension and the existing Mosque (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**



**Illustration 12: View of Frontage facing onto Chiappini Street (Buttgens, Dec 2022)**