



Application to KwaZulu-Natal AMAFA & Research Institute  
for the Additions & Alteration  
of existing 60 year old buildings at  
141 Florida Road on (Consolidated) Erf 913, Durban

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FRANK REITZ ARCHITECT  
2 Bill Simpson Road, Glen Ashley  
[frank.reitz.arch@gmail.com](mailto:frank.reitz.arch@gmail.com)  
071 8426 757

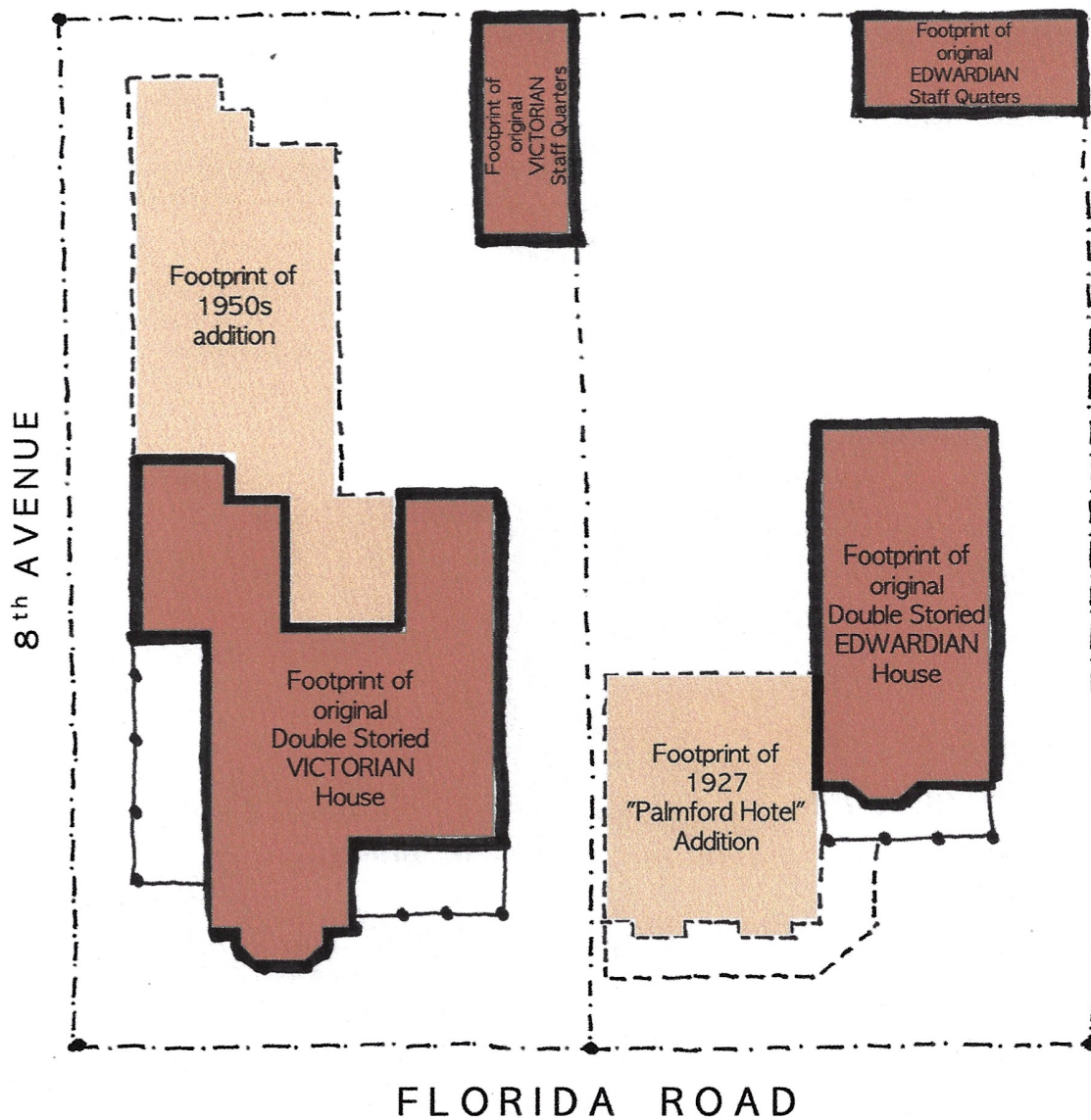
This application to AMAFA is to motivate for the redevelopment of this hotel into a commercially viable site with restaurants and other facilities to compliment the hotel. The new owners have employed one of the best firms of Architects in the country, designworkshop:SA, to explore ways to improve the amenities of this hotel, activating the public interface and stimulating the sidewalk activities to this part of Florida Road.

**SITE PLAN**



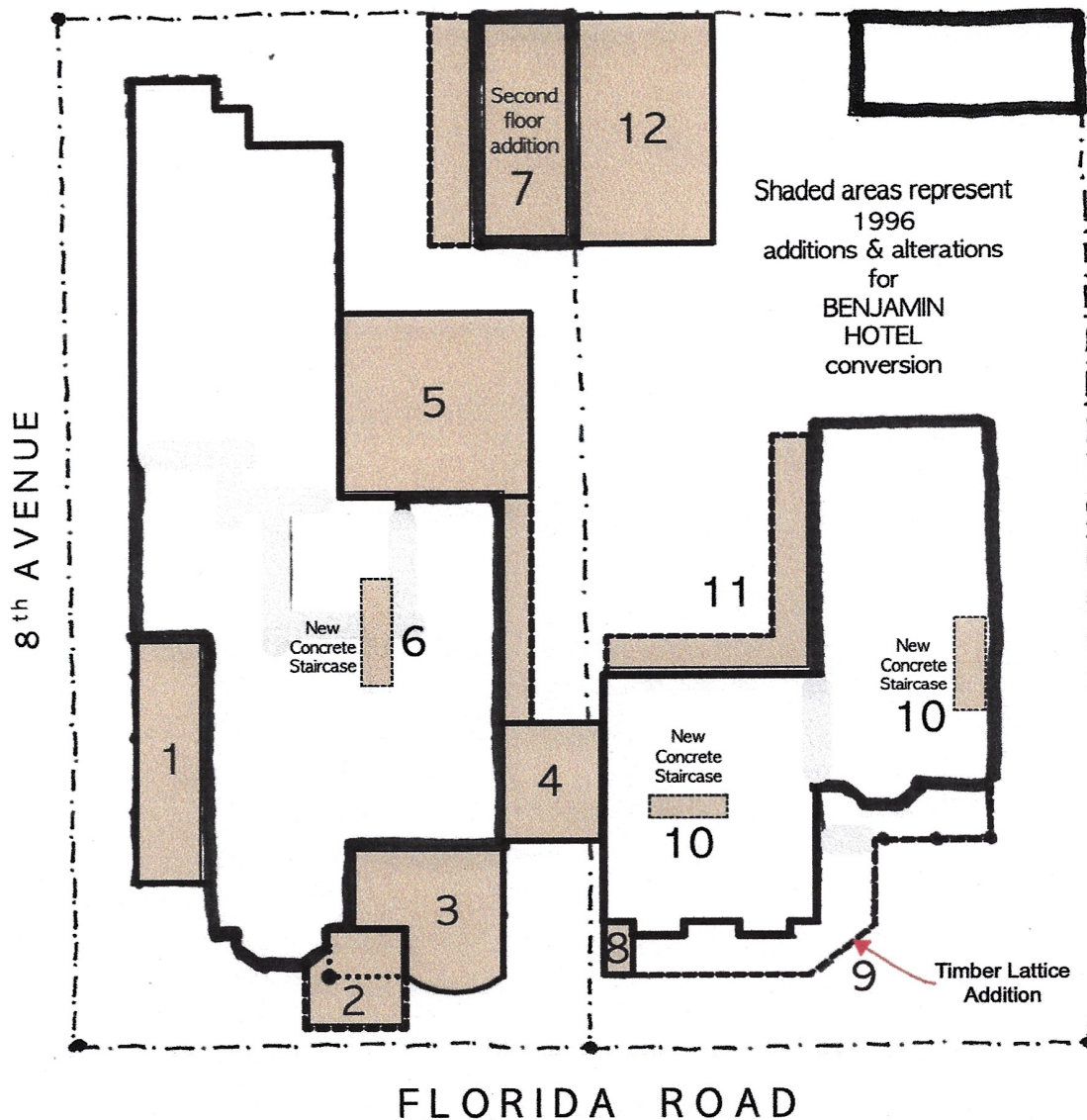
**Original Construction date of buildings.**

Original Construction date of buildings.			Status
Building 1A –	141 Florida Road – Original house	+– 1890s	Over 60 years, not listed
Building 1B –	141 Florida Road - Addition	+– 1950s	Over 60 years, not listed
Building 2A –	143 Florida Road – Original House	+– 1900s	Over 60 years, not listed
Building 2B –	143 Florida Road – Addition	1927	Over 60 years, not listed
Building 3 –	141 Florida Road - Outbuilding	+– 1890s	Over 60 years, not listed
Building 4 –	143 Florida Road - Outbuilding	+–1900s	Over 60 years, not listed



### Architectural Description of original buildings

Building 1A –	Original Double storied Victorian house with gabled-verandah Street façade and side verandah – Steeplly pitched iron roofs – Bay window.
Building 1B –	1950s Addition to rear of house – Plaster & Paint walls except face brick roof parapet, with single low pitch corrugated iron roof.
Building 2A –	Original Double storied Edwardian house hipped corrugated iron roof and front verandah – Bay Window.
Building 2B –	1920s Addition to house – "Palmford Hotel" conversion – front, double storied verandah with Tuscan Doric colonnade – Square bay windows.
Building 3 –	Original Victorian double pitch roofed outbuilding
Building 4 –	Original Edwardian hip roofed outbuilding



**Building additions & alterations completed in 1996 for The Benjamin Hotel conversion.**

Building 1 –	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enclosure of side verandah</li> <li>2. Addition of front entrance Portico</li> <li>3. Enclosure of front verandah and the addition of odd double storied bow window element.</li> <li>4. Addition of single storied "link" between the two buildings.</li> <li>5. Addition of Dining Room to rear of original building</li> <li>6. Removal of original timber staircase and replacing it with a historicist concrete stair.</li> <li>7. Additional floor added to outbuilding.</li> </ol>
Building 2 –	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Enclosure of one end of front verandah on ground floor.</li> <li>9. Timber lattice addition to verandah on ground floor.</li> <li>10. Removal of original timber staircases and replacing it with historicist concrete stairs.</li> <li>11. Addition of circulation verandah to courtyard façade.</li> <li>12. Addition of garage and storage rooms to adjacent Building's outbuilding.</li> </ol>



## Urban Setting (Context) & Adjoining Properties: -

The Florida Road has become the City of Durban's' premier activity area with its renowned historical character. This commercial activity corridor has come about by the existence of a large concentration of Listed and other historical buildings (buildings over 60 years). The "60 year old clause" of the National and Provincial Heritage Acts has protected these buildings and "Clause 6 Business" of the Municipal bylaws allowed listed buildings to be converted to business use to try ensure their longevity.

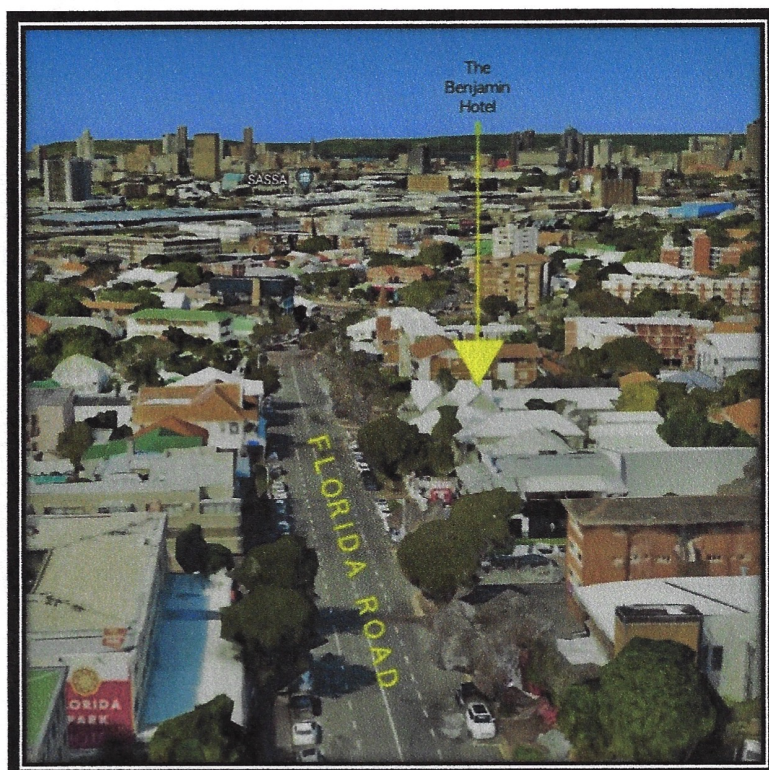
Florida Road has always had a special character, with *sort after* properties with a special address and with direct and easy access into the CBD of Durban. Large houses were built here by the affluent Victorian and Edwardian business magnets in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The streetscape is very sensitive. Respect for the Florida Road context is extremely important.

Size, Scale, Form and Rhythm are Architectural generators that has maintained Florida Road's distinct residential scale character regardless of the change of use. Trees on wide walking pavements adds to this character. These "Florida Road" assets are to be understood and respected for any and all future development in this quarter.

This new activity corridor with its contemporary South African vibrance in this road (created by the change of use of these properties) has been a major success story in Durban's recent history.

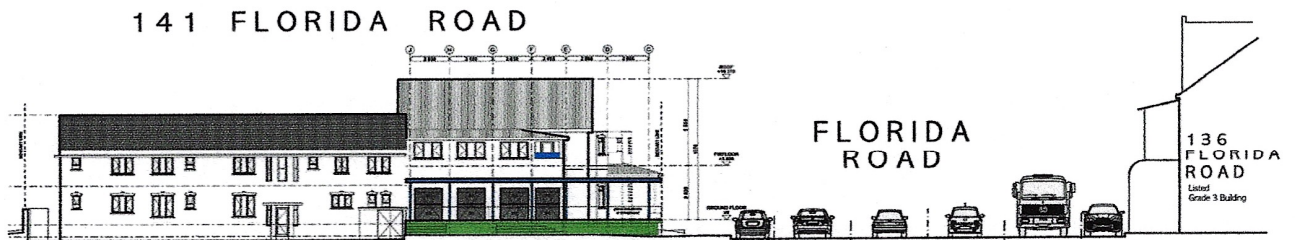
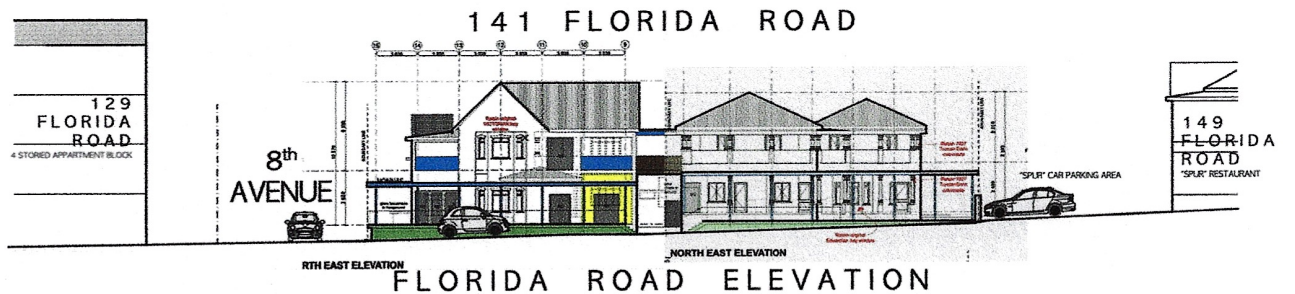
All of the above factors and considerations have been taken into account in the proposed alterations to the Benjamin Hotel.





**CONTEXT - Adjoining Neighbours or across the street: -**

1	129 Florida Road	4 storied Block of apartments, 9 apartments	Not protected
2	136 Florida Road	Built in 1910 – Superb example of this type of commercial building and an Architectural asset to Florida Road, Durban and KZN – Restaurant on ground floor with offices above.	+ Building over 60 years old + Grade 3 Listed Building BTK 11.12 + Should be considered for grade 2 listing.
3	144 Florida Road	Altered Victorian house converted to offices	Building over 60 years old, not listed
4	146 Florida Road	Altered Victorian house converted to offices	Building over 60 years old, not listed
5	149 Florida Road	Altered Edwardian house converted to restaurant	Building over 60 years old, not listed
6	11 8th Avenue	Edwardian house now used as a guest house	Building over 60 years old, not listed



The Context and streetscape of this area is of great relevance. The area is sensitive to incongruence development and all new buildings have to be carefully considered. This proposal however does not propose a new building but only the reuse of the existing buildings, thereby retaining the scale, articulation and rhythm of the streetscape.

## Motivation: -

The following alterations have been proposed by Messes. designworkshop:sa for the new owners of these buildings.

- The demolition of the Benjamin Hotel entrance portico (Built in 1996)
- The demolition of the odd bow shaped façade to the Florida Road side of Building 1 (built in 1996).
- The demolition of the boundary wall to building 2 (on Florida Road boundary, built in 1996), the boundary wall to building 1 (on Florida Road boundary, built in 1996) and part of boundary wall to building 1 (8<sup>th</sup> Avenue boundary, built in 1996).
- Demolition of link between Building 1 & 2 (built in 1996) to create new entrance to the consolidated sites, with new first floor linking the two buildings and the hotel.
- Removal of Lattice screens the ground floor of building 2's verandah.
- The demolition of the odd small room on the original verandah of building 2 (South end of building 2's verandah, built in 1996).
- Conversion of the Courtyard dining area to building 1, from enclosed to covered only (built in 1996).
- Removal of the poorly detailed, historicist mouldings to the head of all windows (added in 1996). To be replaced with a simple square reveals.
- Conversion of ground floors of both buildings into restaurants. Hotel to remain but to operate on the first floor and the ground floor of building 1.
- Internal wall removal to make restaurant use possible.
- Addition of covered dining verandah's to both buildings (to roof area between building and boundary, making usable, covered, outdoor dining space). The floor levels of these verandas are to relate to the levels of the existing floors of both buildings.
- Outbuildings of both buildings to have minor alterations.
- General layout of hotel rooms to be changed to a better, more efficient layout (see sketch).
- Addition of new external fire escape stair to external north façade of building 2.
- The retention of the areas and features noted as having Architectural merit in this report, will be respected and incorporated in the new development.

The proposed changes to the Benjamin Hotel building are designed to increase the ground floor interaction with Florida Road. This is in-keeping with the general trend and the City's policy of increasing the activity on the boundary edge and also for these activities to spill over onto the pavements to contribute to this highly successful activity corridor. This will add to an already vibrant commercial activity precinct that is in turn creating jobs, increasing property values and increasing the rates income for the City. These changes will hopefully also increase the commercial potential of this section of Florida Road and the now (very troubling) vacant Grade 3 building across the road might benefit from this activation.

The architectural language of the intervention is clean, simple and understated. It satisfies good conservation principles as prescribed in the UNESCO Burra Charter of ..... "In keeping with.....but clearly expressed as new". This proposal is a very sympathetic intervention. The spacing of the new minimalist colonnade of the verandah picks up the articulation of the existing building (Building 1) perfectly (a clear statement of understanding and respect).

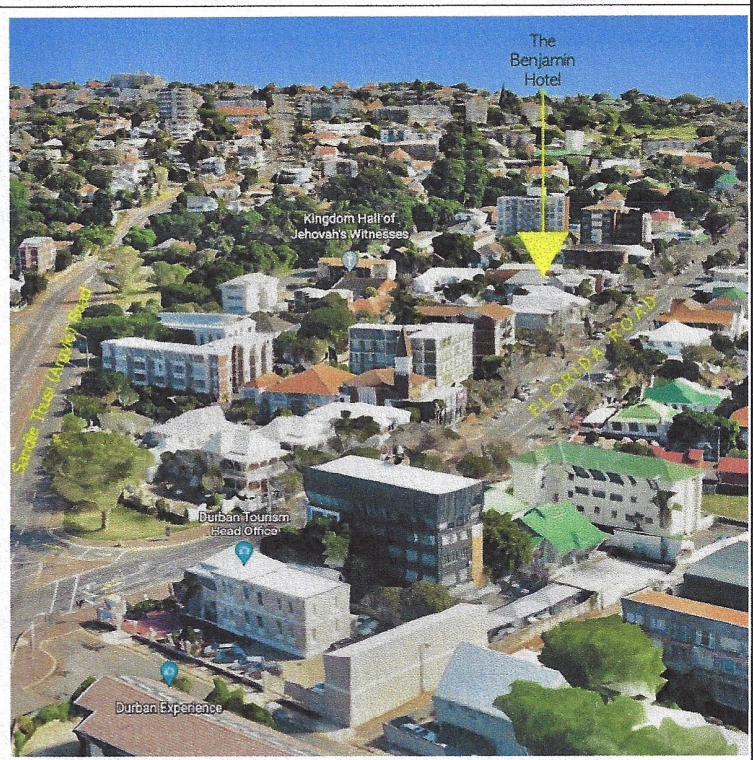
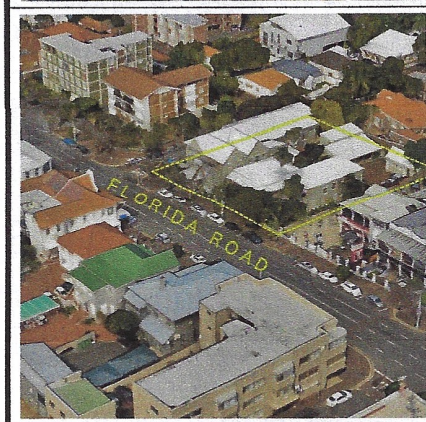
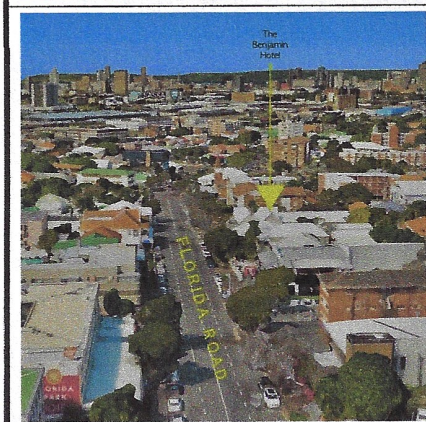
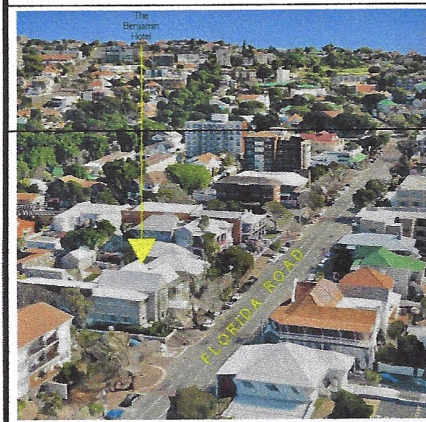
The Architectural significance of these buildings are not high, mainly because of the incongruous alterations of 1996. Very little detail of the original Victorian and Edwardian buildings remain. The scale, bulk, articulation and rhythm of these buildings make them important buildings in the Florida Road streetscape – this has been retained in the proposed development.



PHOTOGRAPHS

141 Florida Road, Durban

# LOCATION PLAN



# SITE PLAN

141 Florida Road, Durban  
Erf 913, Durban

