

STORM DAMAGE REPAIR AND RESTORATION OF RUSSEL HIGH SCHOOL PIETERMARITZBURG, KZN

Cnr Hoosen Hafejee St and Peter Kerchoff streets

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



15 February 2021

PREPARED FOR:
VNA Consulting

PREPARED BY:

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lindsay Napier Architect was appointed by VNA Consulting, to prepare a Heritage Assessment of Russell High School and the proposed repair and restoration of the main historical building.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report refers to KZN Amafa and Research Institute Act 5/2018, which aims to protect heritage resources in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Clause 37 : General Protection : *“Structures – No structure which is, or which may reasonably be expected to be older than 60 years, may be demolished, altered or added to without prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.”*

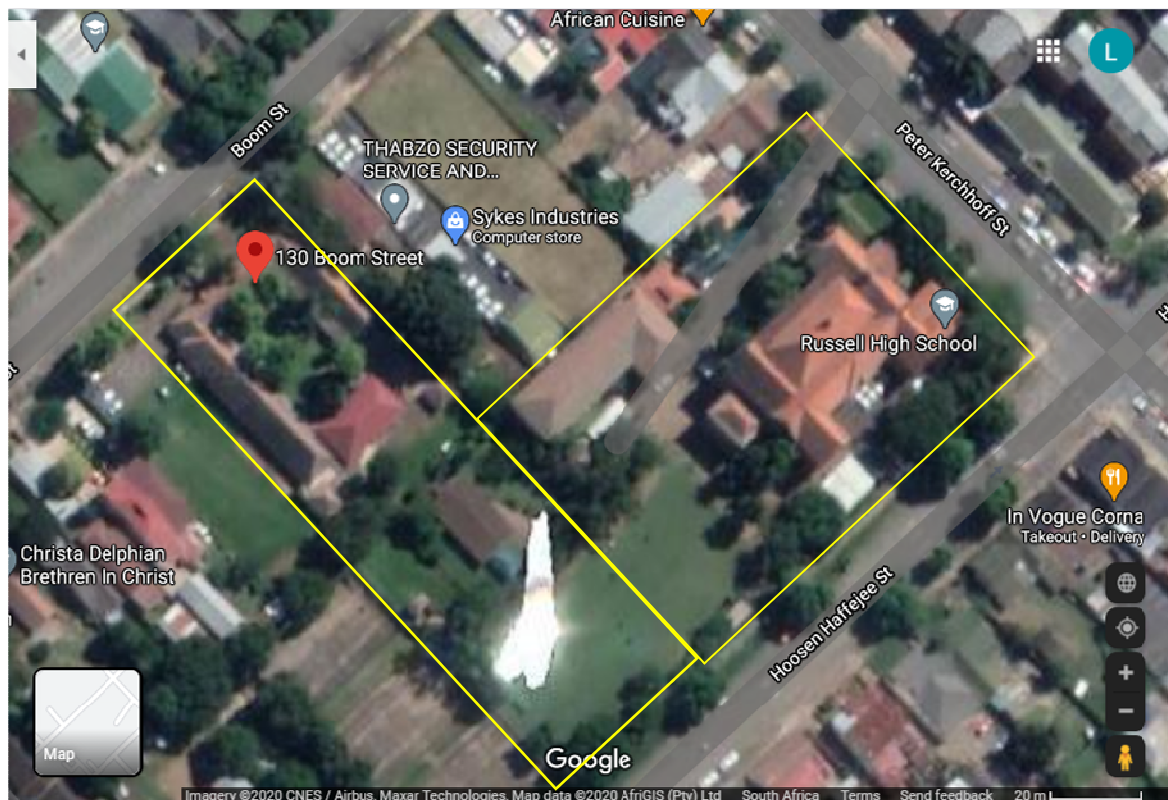
3. METHODOLOGY

Lindsay Napier is an architect experienced in assessment of protected buildings in KZN. She has previous experience in recording historic buildings, surveying townscapes and designing for protected buildings.

The building was inspected the buildings on 19 November 2020 with VNA Consultants and again on 19 January 2021.

4. SITE AND LOCALITY

The site of Russell High School is situated on the corner of Peter Kerchoff street and Hoosen Haffejee Street. The entire site and all structures on it are protected by the Heritage Act and they will require a permit from Amafa for restoration, alteration, conversion or demolition.



5. LEGISLATION :

The site was declared a “National Monument” under the NMC Act in 1979. This was replaced by the Amafa Heritage Act in 2000.

The buildings are currently “Generally protected” by clause 37 of the KZN Amafa and Research Institute Act 2018 (Act No.5 of 2018).

A Heritage Assessment of the buildings is required to inform the decisions around change of use and choices of materials in the restoration.

Amafa procedures and application process :

1. Form J application: Application for comment (by Amafa) on the proposed development of the site.
2. Heritage Impact Assessment report requirement, triggered by a development site over 5000sqm (to be determined by Amafa from the Form J application).
3. Site development plan application
4. Form H : Permit application (Msunduzi municipality requirement).
5. A restoration report to accompany the Form H application.
6. Tender : Amafa accreditation requirements for tenderers
7. Construction monitoring: compliance with conditions of the permit, monitoring of alterations/ restorations/ re-purposing of existing protected structures.

Information to accompany the assessment:

1. Field survey Photographs
2. Land survey with building footprints
3. As-built drawings
4. Proposal drawings
5. Record drawings (previously approved plans)
6. Title deeds

6. EXISTING REPORTS AND ASSESSMENTS:

A report has been prepared by Robert JW Brusse, Architect and Heritage Practitioner. The report is undated but says that assessments were undertaken during the period of 2017 and 2019.

Extensive recording and assessment of the main building was done and prepared in the form of Addendums to the report. This report and Addendums will be valuable to the project, but will need to be reviewed at a date determined by the Project Manager to form a “benchmark” before the start of any construction. There is a risk that the recorded material may have changed or been repaired since the completion of the report and addendums, new assessments will have to be made in these cases.

Included in this report is a draft specification referring to general restoration specifications, for the purpose of preparing an estimate.

Note that *all the work* will be of an investigative nature ie. the full extent of the work may only be determined when the contractor is on site.

Allowance is to be made for removal and investigation and testing of materials. In addition temporary protection of the existing structure during construction is to be allowed.

Reports are required from the **structural engineer**, a **wet-services engineer** and an **entomologist**.

Msunduzi municipality is to be consulted regarding any additional requirements for the management of stormwater on the property and to locate the existing connections.

7. HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE



*Classroom block 1910
Neo-Classical Edwardian*



The library building estimated late 1890's

Russell High School was established in 1878 as the Girls Model School in Berg street. The school was renamed in 1941 in honour of Robert Russell, the former superintendent of Education in the Colony of Natal. The earliest buildings that still exist are the (current) hospitality classrooms and library above them, it is assumed that the original Model Girls School building was replaced by the 1910 extension. The Library current building was built in the Victorian style of clay facebrick, large vertical proportioned windows and a steeply pitched roof with a lantern for ventilation. The high roof and lantern were for prominence and landmark status in the early streets of Pietermaritzburg.



1905 Classroom block and assembly hall

In 1905 a new three-storey block of classrooms and an assembly hall was built in the Edwardian style, the fashion of the period.

In 1910 a new block was added to this three-storey block between it and Berg (Hoosen Hafejee) street. It had a new entrance hall, the principals office and more classrooms. It was built in the Edwardian period, but had added Neo-classical detail to the facades.

In 1912 the ablution block was built on the West side of the classrooms as a stand-alone building.



1912 Ablution block



Assembly Hall interior

Architecturally the buildings are good examples of their periods in their form and architectural detail. Unfortunately, the functioning of the school has been compromised by not very well planned junctions of roofs, resulting in drainage and maintenance problems.

The classrooms, offices, library and hall continue to serve the school well. The building has character and presence which carries the school ethos of excellence. The school has served the Pietermaritzburg community and further and continues to do so, therefore presenting social significance.

As a corner campus the School building contributes to the streetscape and urban landscape, the high roofs and lanterns being visible from far.

The facilities are adaptable and useable and a workable solution to the drainage problems is to be sought without compromise to the architecture and character of the building.