

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & MOTIVATION

FOR ERF 176383 (newly consolidated erf 130164 & erf 1614291) CAPE TOWN
(170 BUITENGRACHT & 17 JORDAAN STREET, BO-KAAP)

to accompany design proposal for erven 130164 & 161429, Bo-Kaap



17 Jordaan street, front elevation. Erf 161429 on LHS

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INTRODUCTION

This statement of significance was originally commissioned by Zöllner Architects as the site is within the proposed Grade 1 Bo-Kaap Conservation Area.

This document serves to provide the heritage authorities with sufficient background information, including deeds research and site inspection by Kathy Dumbrell Architectural Historian, for it to comment on the proposed works and decide on the appropriateness of issuing a permit in this case.

The design proposal is outlined (this section to be read with the accompanying architect's drawings), as is the history of the site. From this, the significance of the site assessed, as is the impact of the proposed works on the heritage resource and its significance. Finally, recommendations are made as to the appropriateness of the proposal and interpretation display opportunities identified.

The historical research of this document was recorded by Kathy Dumbrell but the design proposal description has been updated, following comments on the previous submission.

STUDY AREA

The two erven comprise almost all of the block bounded by Buitengracht, Bloem, Pepper and Jordaan Streets. The two of the remaining three erven of the block are residential with the house immediately adjoining 17 Jordaan street is in the process of being converted to office space. Two of the three contain the other houses of the terrace of which 17 Jordaan St is a part.

The two erven have been newly consolidated. Erf 176383 is the newly consolidated erf 130164 & erf 161429.

The study area thus includes the whole block for purposes of historical overview, but focusses on the Jordaan Street elevation of the block in assessing contextual issues.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

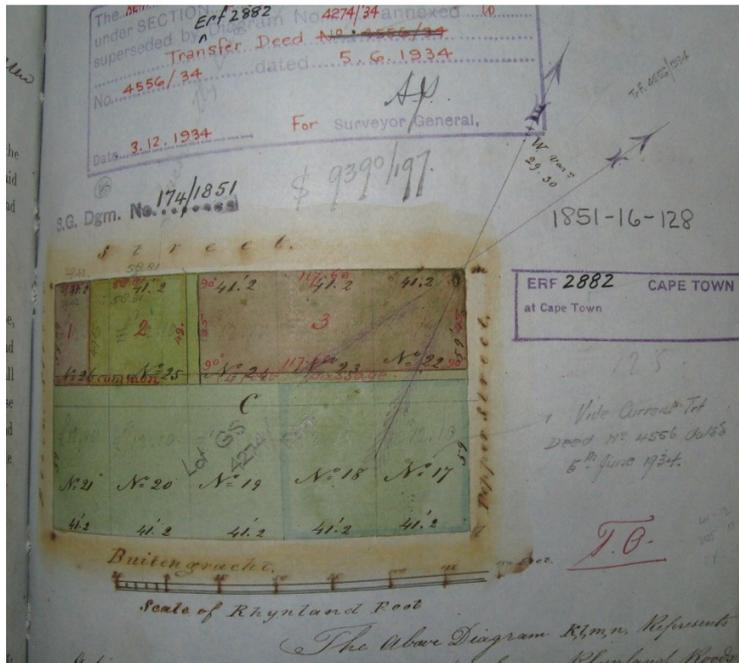
The owners of erf 161429 have bought erf 130164. Erf 161429 is L-shaped and thus is erf 130164's neighbour on 2 sides. Because of the steep slope on which the two erven lie, erf 130164 currently has a lower ground level in addition to its ground floor to Jordaan St.

The proposal is to keep the original portion of the house on erf 130164 intact, leaving its gable, steep roof, steep sidewalls, roof line, external walls and the entire lower ground floor internal walls. On the upper ground floor, a door opening is to be enlarged and a new door opening introduced into an existing dividing wall. The internal wall of the later addition of the kitchen & bathroom on the lower Ground Floor are to be demolished and the corrugated roof to be replaced by a concrete slab. The external walls are to remain. The existing passage between erf 161429 and erf 130164 is to remain and to be utilized as a fire escape.

On erf 161429, a new entrance is created off Buitengracht Street. The proposed internal alterations do not impact on the envelope of the existing buildings in any way. The new 5th and 6th storey extension to the Jordaan Street façade is within the same setback from the street and follows the existing roof height. (set back 5000mm from the Jordaan St boundary). This addition is in sympathy with the existing approximately 10-year-old Oro Africa building on erf 161429.

HISTORY OF SITE

The earliest deeds record for the block bounded by Buitengracht, Bloem, Pepper and Jordaan streets is as "Municipal Waste ground" transferred in 1851 from the City of Cape Town to Johan Andries Heyse Wicht. On the deed diagram it is described as a piece of ground and thus one must assume that the houses were only built after 1851. As the Wicht family was well-known as landlords in C19th Cape Town, it is very likely that they built the houses soon after. Thus the historical record substantiates the indication a site inspection of the terrace of three houses gives: that these were originally early to mid C19th working class houses on the typical "one door and one window" terrace plan so common in the Bo-Kaap.



The detail above is of Surveyor General Diagram 174 of 1851, which shows the whole block, with the streets already named.

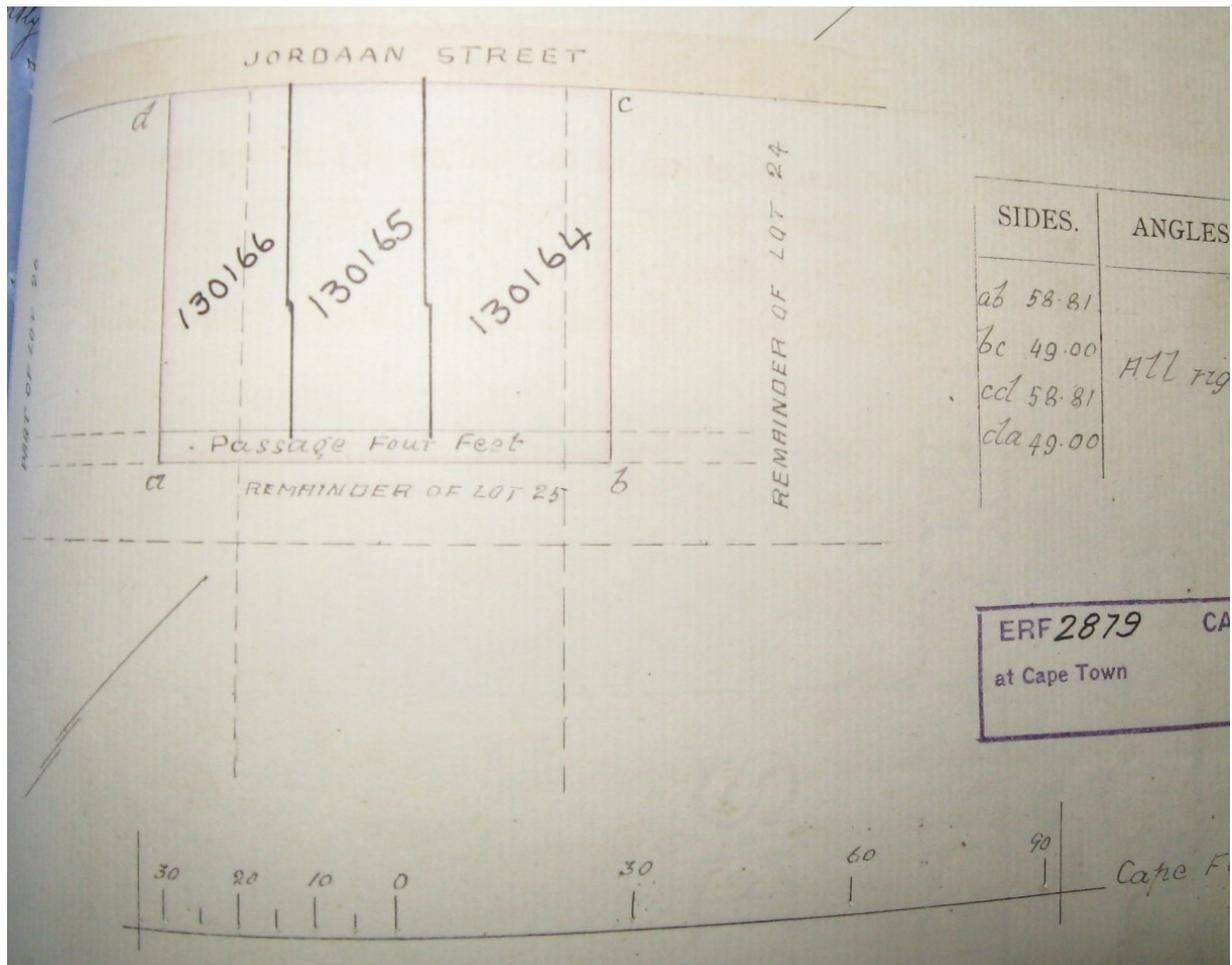
The photograph below is of the terrace of three houses today. As can be seen, gables, windows and doors have been changed in two of them, but the far right house retains a simple gable of the sort one expects in an earlier house and the one door and one window façade also typical of the earlier houses. The window is a late C19th horned sash, however. The houses would therefore seem to have seen alteration/ maintenance over time. This is not unexpected given the estimated age of the buildings.



From this block bought by Wicht in 1851, erf 2879 was deducted in 1886, erf 2878 in 1886 and erf 2880 in 1893. The remainder was only transferred again in 1924,

then resurveyed in 1934 and transferred to Galvin and Sales Ltd, who built the Art Deco industrial building on the Buitengracht elevation of the block.

Below is the 1886 diagram of erf 2879, showing the later subdivisions of the terrace of three houses onto separate erven and the L-shape of the remainder (now erf 161429). The common passage is still in existence and can be seen in the accompanying site photographs.



Between 1851 and 1886 there is a gap in the deeds records and so the 1886 transfer is from A Boyes to "adopted daughter Patience Charlotte Kirton". Then there is another gap. In 1904, a transfer from J Berman to Thomas Basson Dowling is recorded. Then Dowling sells in 1919 to Martin John Clarke. Thereafter there is another gap in the formal record.

From interviews with Mrs Samsodien (surviving spouse of the late Salie Samsodien, previous owner and sister-in-law to Mr Samsodien who owns erf 130166), the following history of the site in the latter C20th can be pieced

together: The house on erf 130164 stood vacant for a period in the 70s and 80s, during which time vagrants got into it and burned the timberwork. A fire ensued and the house was gutted, with only a few floor joists in the front room on ground floor level surviving. Mr Samsodien of erf 130166 (who at that time owned all three houses) then sold erven 130164 and 130165. Both were refurbished to some extent in the late 1980s (including replastering the front gable and, we assume, adding the gable detail now on these two houses. The new windows and doors date to this time too). Mr Samsodien then sold erf 130164 to his brother Salie, who sold it to an attorney who never took transfer. In 1995 that sale was voided and the house re-transferred to Mr Salie Samsodien by T/D 15719 of 1995. The property was bought by Oro Properties in 2010 and transfer went through in 2011.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF SITE

This section of the report is to be read in conjunction with the attached photographs.

The building formed part of the working class rental housing stock that characterized the Bo-Kaap throughout its history. It is thus part of a body of artifacts that are still typical of the area and as part of the Bo-Kaap, the site is contextually highly significant. While some have been lost, enough remain to provide individual, intact examples. The value of this building lies in the opportunity demolition offers to record it, right down to what lies below plaster and paint. This contribution to public knowledge and awareness of the construction of this type of building is itself valuable to the cause of conservation in the Bo-Kaap.

However, the intrinsic significance of 17 Jordaan St is low. The fire in the 1980s destroyed almost all original fabric. Internal details now date to post-1991. As can be seen in the photographs, existing fabric is not conservation-worthy: aluminium windows, steel internal door frames, some Swartland windows on the front façade, an entirely new staircase, albeit made from timber salvaged off a site in Constantia (Mrs Samsodien, pers. Comm.) and laminate flooring throughout.

The significance of the front façade is no longer intrinsic, but rather in its contribution to the terrace of three and the streetscape. In terms of the terrace, the rhythm set up by the gables and wing walls of the stoeps is highly significant. The transition between public and private space set up by the stoep roof is also significant.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT OF PROPOSED WORK

The demolition of portion of internal walls of 17 Jordaan St will not have an impact on the heritage resource.

The broader context and streetscape will not be affected in any way.

The existing roof shape is to be retained and the replacement of the roof on the 1990's portion is sufficiently low in scale to not necessitate replacement of any of the existing back windows. The new roof will not compete with the old fabric. For the pedestrian on Jordaan street, the new back roof will not be visible.

The 5th and 6th storey extensions will be visible from the houses across from 15 Jordaan Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the proposed works be supported and the development allowed to proceed.