

# *Heritage Impact Assessment*

## PROPOSED NEW LECTURE THEATRE, UNIVERSITY AVENUE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN UPPER CAMPUS, RHODES ESTATE ERF 44201, RONDEBOSCH

### *1. Introduction & General Background.*

This report has been prepared on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT), and in accordance with the requirement by Heritage Western Cape for a Heritage Impact Assessment to be undertaken for a proposed new lecture theatre at the southern end of University Avenue (Figure 1). This assessment is prepared in terms of Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) 25: 1999. The call for this new facility arises from UCT's requirement for a shared lecture venue of approximately 400 seats catering to more general needs, while being more readily accessible to the student body as a whole, as well as the public. For this reason, the facility will also include a small cafeteria/social learning area and a foyer capable of accommodating small functions including exhibitions. The architects for the project are GAPP Architects & Unrban Designers.

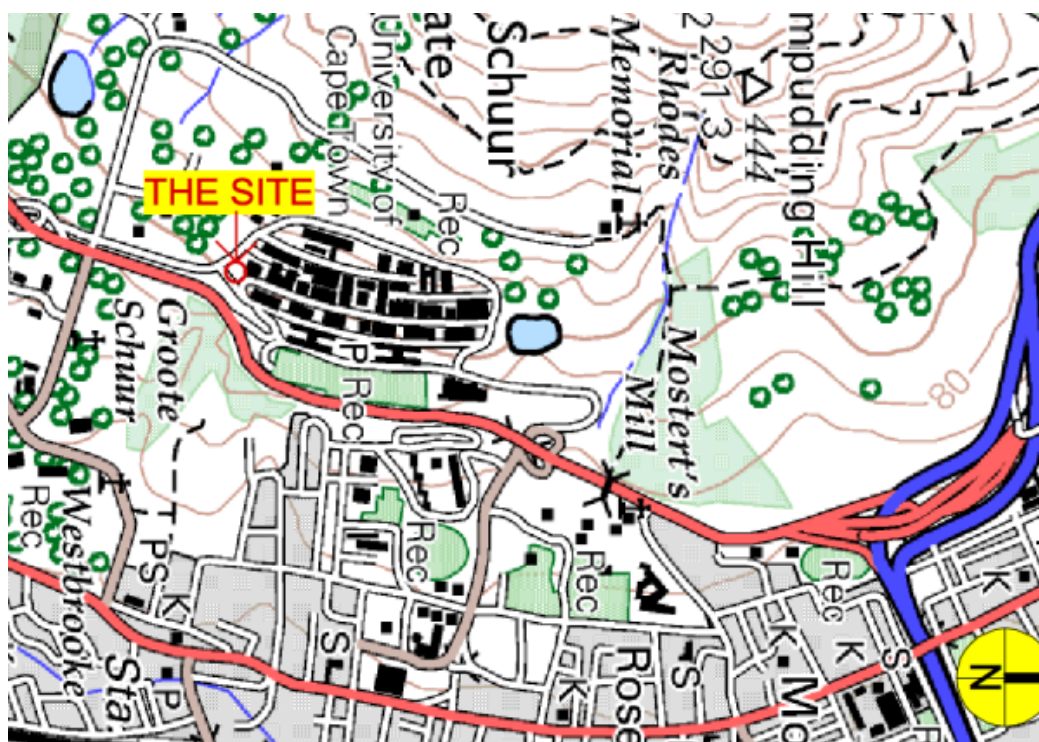


FIGURE 1: Location of the site (arrowed and circled in red) on the southern end of University Avenue on the Upper Campus of UCT.

### *2. Assumptions and Limitations.*

#### 2.1. Statement of Heritage Significance (Heritage Statement)

Because of the multi-faceted and dynamic interpretation of cultural significance with the passing of time and constantly changing values and interest groups, it is never possible to make a definitive

statement of heritage significance. The heritage statement informing this study nevertheless seeks to establish as clearly as possible the heritage significance of the spatial context within which the lecture theatre is proposed. It is informed by relevant historical documentation and published material provided by others, and the spatial analysis prepared as part of this report. It also draws significantly on the Draft Built Environment and Landscape Conservation Framework Policy for UCT dated October 2010. This latter document already sets out a heritage statement that addresses, amongst others, the broader spatial and architectural significance of the Upper Campus.

## 2.2. Study Methodology and Reference Material

The study methodology and documentary references focuses specifically on the terms of reference for this study, i.e. essentially visual impact, as stipulated in HWC's response dated 27 August 2012 to the Notice of Intent to Develop (NID) application prepared by MLH Architects & Planners. HWC's response to the NID application is addressed in more detail in the following **Section (3)** of this document. Archaeological impacts are not considered.

## 2.3. Heritage Grades for Immediately Surrounding Buildings

The historic core of the UCT Upper Campus is currently graded as a Provincial Heritage Site (Grade II) although arguably of National (Grade I) significance. There is, indeed an argument for extending this area to include possibly the entire length of University Avenue, Residence Road and Rugby Road. The site in question falls outside this currently proclaimed area. Gradings of the buildings immediately adjacent to the site are considered to assist in clarifying the nature of significance of this area and, consequently, its sensitivity to new development. The gradings recommended for the adjacent buildings, i.e. Centlivres, Humanities Graduate School and Leslie Social Sciences Buildings are based primarily on architectural and aesthetic qualities, and their responses to the landscape.

## 2.4. Input from Interested and Affected Parties

The Cape Institute for Architecture (CIFA) has been consulted as primary Interested and Affected Party (IAP) with regard to these architectural proposals. This arises partly because of CIFA's interest as a learned body in engaging with development proposals in architecturally significant (and, therefore, sensitive) parts of the City, and because of the terms of Rhodes's will governing the bequest of land upon which the Upper and Middle Campuses are situated. The responsibilities in terms of Rhodes's will are elaborated on in **Section 4** of this report.

The architectural proposals for the new lecture theatre already enjoy the support of the relevant IAP body at UCT, namely its University Building and Development Committee (UBDC). There are as yet no local community organizations in the Rondebosch/Rosebank area that are registered with HWC as conservation bodies.

# 3. *The Process to Date.*

*31 July 2012:* A NID application is submitted by MLH Architects & Planners (Frik Vermeulen) to HWC in accordance with Section 38(1) of the NHRA. This application includes conceptual design proposals by GAPP Architects as endorsed earlier by UCT's University Building and Development Committee.

8 August 2012: The NID application is considered by HWC's Impact Assessment Review Committee (IACom) (agenda item W10.1) and a brief presentation is given by GAPP Architects & Urban Designers (Andrew Flint).

27 August 2012: In its Notification of Decision addressed c/o MLH Architects & Planners, HWC confirms that an HIA is required focusing on visual impact "*....and the contribution that the proposed building will make on the UCT environment, a recognized heritage resource of considerable significance*". HWC's response goes on to state that given the significance of the site and the potential for controversy, the committee required that the Cape Institute of Architects (*sic*) be consulted in the impact assessment process.

13 September 2012: A presentation of the sketch proposals for the lecture theatre is made to a specially convened heritage impact review meeting of CIFA's Heritage Committee by GAPP Architects & Urban Designers (Andrew Flint). This is considered together with an interim heritage statement prepared by the author. The author is present at the meeting to clarify issues and answer questions.

20 September 2012: The matter is again discussed at CIFA's monthly Heritage Committee meeting. The author, being a member of this committee does not participate and recuses himself before the committee drafts its formal response.

28 September 2012: Written response from CIFA is received by the author. CIFA's comments are considered, and addressed in **Section 10.3** of this report.

#### *4. Statutory and Policy Considerations.*

##### 4.1. The National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)(NHRA)

The proposal is subject to Section 38(1)(c)(i) of the NHRA in that it will constitute a change in character to an area in excess of 5000 sq m (i.e. the southern end of University Avenue). This has triggered HWC's requirement that an HIA of the proposal be undertaken.

A strategic portion of the site is currently occupied by the old UCT Janitor's Cottage, a Grade III building that terminates the southern end of University Avenue. A demolition permit for this building has, however, already been granted by HWC in terms of Section 34 of the NHRA. It is, therefore, no longer a consideration. No other buildings occupy the site.

The site is a significant distance from the portions of the historic core declared as a Provincial Heritage Site in terms of Section 27 of the NHRA (**Figure 2**). The closest building falling within this area is Fuller Hall, i.e. 175m away. The site is 230m away from the Arts Block, the next closest building. The proposed development on the site clearly does not trigger Section 27 of the NHRA. In granting a demolition permit for the Janitor's House, HWC has acknowledged that alterations to the southern end of University Avenue would not negatively impact on the Provincial Heritage Site precinct per se.

##### 4.2. The City of Cape Town Zoning Scheme

The Upper Campus does not fall within a designated Urban Conservation Area in terms of Section 108 of the Zoning Scheme. The City of Cape Town's Consent with regard to visual impact is therefore not required.

#### 4.3. Rhodes's Will

The entire Erf 44201 which includes the site in question, is subject to the conditions of the Rhodes Trustees, giving effect to Clause 13 of the will of Cecil John Rhodes. This will made provision for the establishment of a new campus for the University of Cape Town on a portion of the Rhodes Estate and required the setting up of what became known as the Rhodes Trustees Advisory Panel. From 1954, this advisory role was delegated to the Cape Institute of Architects (now Cape Institute for Architecture [CIFA]). The requirement is that any new building on both Upper and Middle Campuses of UCT needs a letter of support from the President of CIFA, who may choose to seek advice from his/her Executive Committee. It should be noted that such comment is to be confined to the issue of dignity or public character and not to siting, scale or heritage impact<sup>1</sup>.

This means that CIFA's support for the proposals is required, even if HWC were to issue a positive decision on the proposals, provided that such support was confined to the issue of dignity and public character.

#### 4.4. UCT Draft Conservation Policy Framework (UCT CPF) (2010).

This draft document, although not yet enjoying official status, provides a built environment and landscape framework for the retention and enhancement of the core heritage assets of UCT on its various historic landholdings throughout Cape Town. A significant portion of the document understandably focuses on the Upper Campus on Rhodes's Estate. It includes a statement of heritage significance for the university as a whole and its various satellite campuses based on the assessment criteria and grading system outlined in the NHRA. Its statement of heritage significance for the Main Campus (of which Upper Campus forms a significant part) has been used to contextualize the heritage statement and design indicators for the lecture theatre site as addressed in this document.

### *5. General Site Description.*

#### 5.1. The Upper Campus Context

The UCT Upper campus comprises a landmark collection of buildings situated against the upper slopes of Rhodes's Estate, framed by the impressive crags of Devils Peak and a planted landscape made up largely of exotic pines, some oaks and other trees. (**Figure 2** overleaf).

The historic core of the layout is symmetrical and carefully ordered on a series of tiers against the mountainside with Jameson Hall as centerpiece. The result is an iconic architectural set-piece of both national and international significance, albeit less ordered around its periphery as a result of more recent extensions and the natural constraints of the topography. The morphology of the campus layout from JS Solomon's early sketches and the building work executed largely by CP Walgate after Solomon's death, to the campus layout in its current enlarged form, is addressed in **Section 6** of this document. The layout is framed and partially infiltrated by a green system of exotic tree canopies that strongly characterize large portions of the broader Rhodes's Estate.

The symmetrical layout of the Upper Campus is bi-axial in nature, comprising a central longitudinal axis generated by the historic Rustenburg Summer House on Middle Campus and terminated by Jameson Hall. At right angles to this are a series of lateral, parallel 'curved axes' closely following the contours of the mountainside. These take the form of University Avenue (the main road crossing the campus), Residence Road and Rugby Road, the latter two defining further terraces

---

<sup>1</sup> UCT CPF: Section 2.3.3, p11.

down the slope. The upper reaches of the campus are contained by Ring Road which forms an uneven loop around the western (rear end) of the campus.

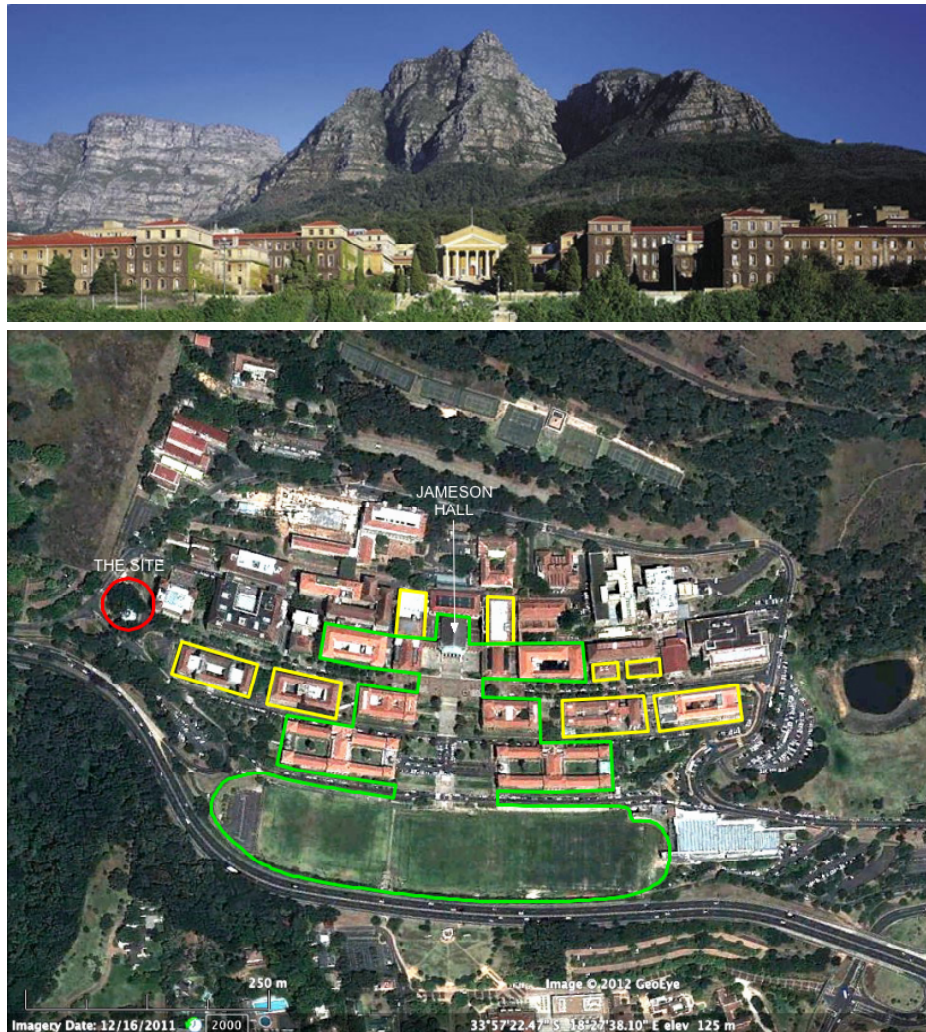


FIGURE 2: Google Earth image with the historic core of the UCT Upper Campus highlighted. The green edge outlines the current Provincial Heritage Site area while the yellow edges indicate other historic buildings recommended for grading as heritage resources. The red circle identifies the site of the proposed lecture theatre. North is to the right.

## 5.2. The Site of the Proposed Lecture Theatre

The site of the proposed lecture theatre is located at the southern end of University Avenue. Unlike all other ends of the campus's lateral roads, the southern end of University Avenue is not open-ended, but terminates in an embankment against which the former Janitor's House of the university is located. (Attached Diagrams **02 & 03**). This building therefore forms a focal point terminating the end of the avenue. The site is adjacent to the Humanities Graduate Building, and close to the Centlivres and Leslie Social Sciences Buildings, approximately 50-70m away. (Figure 3). This end of University Avenue is heavily shaded, with trees flanking both sides of the road leaving the Janitor's House in shade for a large part of the day.

The space in front of the Janitor's House is contained to a significant extent by the Humanities Graduate Building to the west, the Janitor's house itself, the embankment against which this house is



located to the south, and the end of the Centlivres Building to the north. Although the space in front of the Janitor's House “spills out” to the east and southeast, views beyond are defined by tree canopies to the east and southeast, rather than panoramic views over the Southern Suburbs. This is contrary to the condition at the Avenue's northern end, which do enjoy such panoramic views. The precinct's sense of containment is further emphasized by a substantial drop in level along University Avenue ‘bottoming out’ in front of the Janitor's House at its southern end (refer **Figure 4** with attached **Diagrams 02 & 03**).

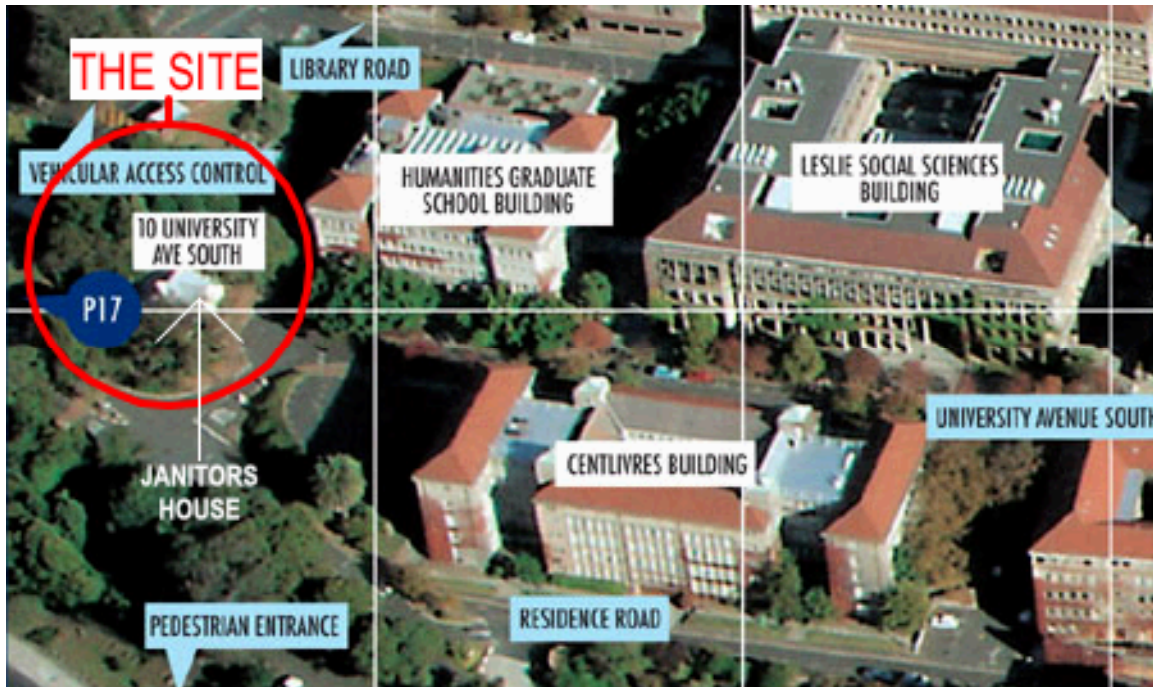


FIGURE 3: View of the site with Old Janitor's Cottage at the southern end of University Avenue. The space on the northern side of the Janitor's House is contained by the natural slope of the topography on the southern and western edges. The space ‘spills out’ to the east and southeast but views beyond are nonetheless characterized by canopies of trees to the southeast (bottom left of this image) rather than panoramic views over the southern suburbs.

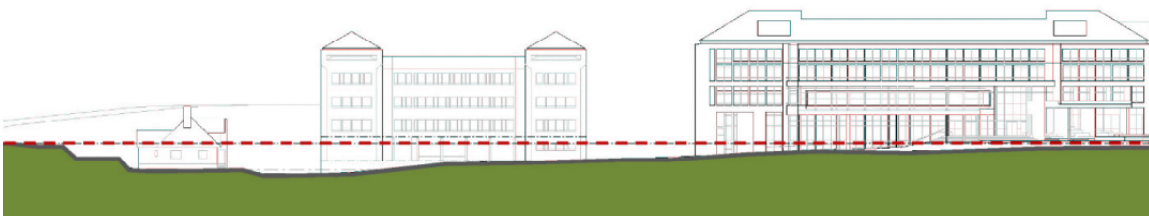


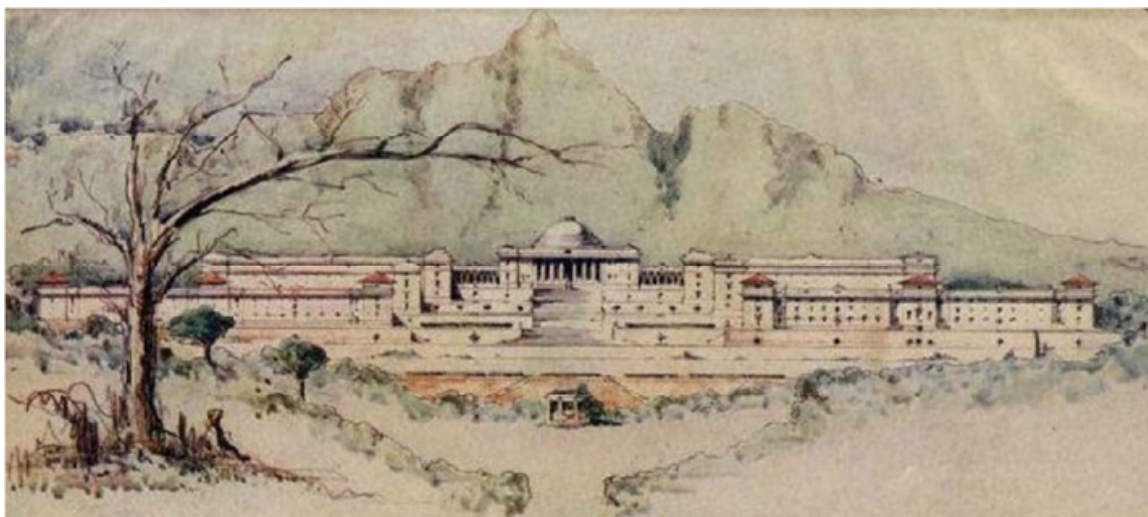
FIGURE 4: Section along University Avenue illustrating the slope southwards towards the Janitor's House on the left. (Image courtesy of GAPP Architects & Urban Designers).

## 6. Historical Background.

### 6.1. The Upper Campus in General

The original design of the UCT Upper Campus is the work of Joseph Michael Solomon, an early protegee of Sir Herbert Baker, in whose office he worked periodically up until about 1915. He was awarded the commission to design the new campus in 1917 after extensive lobbying of Sir Lionel Phillips. (Refer **Annexure 1** for summarized biography). His vision for the new university was one of

classic simplicity. He saw the center of the composition being a hall, pillared and domed, with the buildings being large, bold and symmetrical. His view was that detail, intricacy, and the fine effects of light and shade would stand no chance on the foothills of the towering Devil's Peak, and that the atmosphere would be Mediterranean<sup>2</sup>. (**Figure 5**).



*FIGURE 5: A 1918 watercolour rendering of the University of Cape Town by JS Solomon depicting his vision for the new campus. Note the great central hall's alignment on the Rustenburg summer house which is visible in the foreground below. (UCT Archives & Manuscripts).*

In accordance with his vision, Solomon's plan for the campus was a study in orthogonal symmetry generated from a principal central axis aligned on the old Rustenburg Summer House (**Figure 5** and attached **Diagram 01A**). Unfortunately, Solomon could not get his layout to accommodate the natural contours of the site without incurring considerable additional expense for the siteworks that would have required. His plan was, effectively, not viable. By 1919, Solomon was under great pressure to produce a solution, with Edwin Lutyens expressly invited by the UCT Council to report on the plans prepared by Solomon up until then. By 1920 an exhausted Solomon called Baker for assistance which led to Baker's supervising architect in Delhi, CP Walgate, arriving at the Cape to assist. Tragically, Solomon succumbed to the pressure of his workload, committing suicide within a few months of Walgate's arrival. Walgate, being by then an experienced and award winning student and practitioner in his own right<sup>3</sup> (Refer **Annexure 1** for summarized biography) took over much of the campus planning after joining the established Cape Town architectural firm Hawke & McKinlay which had previously done work for UCT.

In c1924, Walgate was largely responsible for a number of changes to Solomon's university plan. The decision to adjust Solomon's orthogonal layout by curving the lateral axes to more closely follow the natural contours of the mountainside was, in the opinion of the author, inspired. The curves not only made the scheme viable, but placed greater emphasis on the Jameson Hall/Rustenburg Summerhouse axis by concealing the eastern and western extremities of the layout from the central axis (**Diagram 01C**). The curve along University Avenue in particular also provided a more intimately scaled and unfolding spatial experience.

## 6.2. The Lecture Theatre Site

<sup>2</sup> Biography of Architects practising in the Western Cape up to 1940. Entry: Solomon, Joseph Michael.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Entry: Walgate, Charles Percival.



Apart from general landscaping and road construction, no development appears to have occurred on the southern end of University Avenue until 1930, when a house was built for the university janitor according to designs dated 1929<sup>4</sup> by Hawke McKinlay & Walgate.



FIGURE 6: *The Janitor's House soon after completion (c1930). This building's architectural symmetry and prominence in the landscape suggest that it was intended as a termination feature at the southern end of University Avenue. The vegetation covered embankment behind can clearly be seen. (UCT Archives & Manuscripts).*

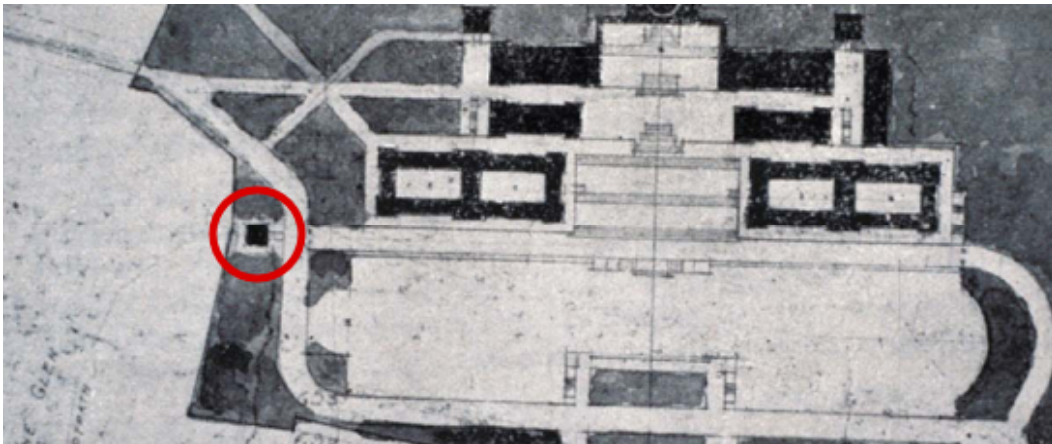


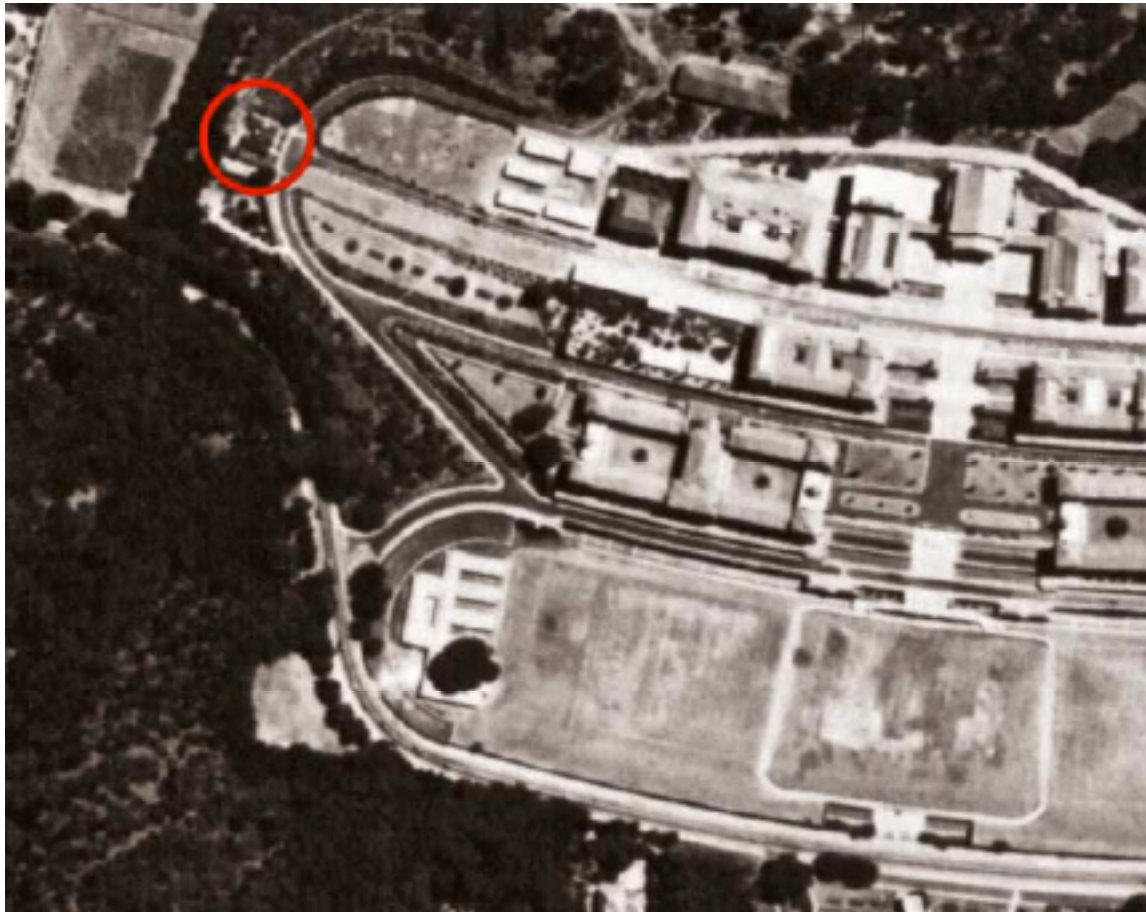
FIGURE 7: *Solomon's plan showing a building terminating the southern end of what would now be Rugby Road. This is the only building on Solomon's plan terminating a southern lateral axis. (UCT Archives & Manuscripts).*

<sup>4</sup> Vermeulen & Abrahamse: heritage statement to HWC supporting the proposed demolition of the Janitor's House, October 2011.



Although the Arts and Crafts inspired architecture of this building is stylistically at odds with the Lutyens influenced main campus buildings, its symmetrical massing and prominence in the landscape (**Figure 6**) suggest that it was the architect's intention to use the house as a focal feature, even though none of the other lateral roads have such features.

It is interesting that Solomon's layout shows a solitary building terminating the southern end of what would now be Rugby Road (**Figure 7**). It is quite possible that both Solomon and Walgate had a desire to terminate the southern end of the campus with an architectural element, given the particular nature of the topography at this end of the property.



*FIGURE 8: Detail of a 1945 aerial photograph showing the Janitor's House (circled in red) terminating the southern end of University Avenue. Note the trees flanking the southern end of the avenue adding emphasis to the building as focal point. At this stage of the campus's development, the Janitor's House is far removed from the rest of the campus. This may have justified its domestic scale in relation to the other buildings at the time. (SG Department of Surveys & Mapping courtesy of GAPP Architects & Urban Designers).*

Further development on the southern side of the campus progressed slowly, while more rapid development was occurring on the northern end. Whether or not this was due the main campus entrance being on this end is not clear. It was only in the early 1950's that the Centlivres and Beattie Buildings were constructed. The Humanities Graduate Building dates back to the 1970's, with the Leslie Social Sciences Building following in the 1980's. Substantial development on the upper slopes of the campus also dates back to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, moving beyond the bounds of the Solomon layout as modified by Walgate in 1924. These additions to the campus were of a more ad-hoc nature with the result that the general layout of the Upper Campus began to lose its overall

symmetry (attached **Diagram 04 A**). This was, in part due to the irregular nature of the natural contours (attached **Diagram 04 B**), a situation that clearly influenced the spatial character at the southern end of University Avenue as well.

## *7. Cultural Significance of the Site.*

Cultural significance is defined in the NHRA as: “....*aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance*”.

### 7.1. Significance of the Upper Campus in General

In the 2010 Draft CPF: Built Environment and Landscape for UCT, the Upper Campus is identified as having aesthetic, architectural, historical, academic and social value. Aspects of particular relevance to this report, i.e. relating essentially to visual impact and the contribution of the proposed new development to the UCT environment include the following:

#### 7.1.1. Aesthetic Value

The Upper Campus is regarded as a heritage resource of outstanding aesthetic significance by virtue of its status as:

- i) A landmark formal architectural set piece;
- ii) An internationally recognized symbol of higher learning situated in a unique natural environment;
- iii) A fine example of development displaying clarity of urban design concept and architectural response set within a green frame with dramatic mountain backdrop both distant, and yet part of the City;
- iv) Contributing to a layered cultural landscape ranging from rugged pristine mountain buttresses on the upper slopes, to indigenous forests on the mid-slopes, to the ornamental landscape associated with the Groote Schuur Estate in which the campus is situated. There have always been strong visual linkages with the latter (**Figure 9**) in keeping with Solomon’s desire that the campus should have a Mediterranean setting;
- v) Contributing to a cultural landscape that is both vivid and distinctive in national and international terms, with the Table Mountain National Park (a World Heritage Site) immediately adjacent.

#### 7.1.2. Architectural Value

The historic core of the Upper Campus is regarded as a heritage resource of outstanding architectural significance by virtue of its status as:

- i) An architectural set piece of arguably national significance, a former National Monument and currently a Provincial Heritage Site in terms of the NHRA;
- ii) Representing a highly memorable image of university campus design (arguably one of the finest in the world), given the nature of its elevated location, green context and historic architecture.

#### 7.1.3. Historical Value

The Upper Campus is regarded as a heritage resource of great historical significance by virtue of its status (amongst others not mentioned here for lack of direct relevance) as:

- i) Falling within a cultural landscape layered in response to patterns of occupation and settlement over centuries ranging from the early days of the VOC; and
- ii) Being the face of a learning institution considered Africa's premier university and rated one of the top in its field internationally, i.e. being one of the top 200 universities in the world, and the oldest in sub-Saharan Africa.



FIGURE 9: Early photograph of University Avenue taken shortly before completion of the first phase of construction. Note the remnant pine incorporated into the landscaping, and the canopies of pine trees from the surrounding Rhodes's Estate forming a prominent backdrop at the far end of the avenue. (UCT Archives & Manuscripts).

## 7.2. Significance of the Site

### 7.2.1. Aesthetic Value

The site has some aesthetic value by virtue of its strategic location within a campus layout of great national architectural and historical importance. In other words, its significance lies in its contribution to a greater whole, rather than due to any particular elements of architectural or aesthetic interest, other than a few good tree specimens. (A large mature oak on the eastern side of the Old Janitor's House is singled out in this regard – refer attached **Diagram 04C**). Indeed, the site is in many ways a 'left over' space occupied by a single building (the Janitor's House), and used as a short cut to the nearby university bus stop on Ring Road.

The site is also unique in terms of the following:

- i) It contains the only focal element (the Janitor's House) terminating a lateral road corridor within the Upper Campus;
- ii) It's special sense of place afforded by the natural embankment on its southern end and the drop in level of University Avenue in that direction. This is complemented by tree canopy backdrops further to the south, and the opening of the space towards the east and southeast afforded by the



natural contours on this portion of the hillside (attached **Diagram 04**). This sense of place currently lacks cohesion, and represents an opportunity for improvement as part of the proposed new development.

### 7.2.2. Architectural Value

The site has no architectural value. The Janitor's Cottage has already been granted a demolition permit after HWC concurred with the applicant (UCT) that the building was not of sufficient significance to be retained even though designed by Walgate. The buildings immediately adjacent to the site, i.e. the Centlivres Building (designed Professor Thornton White, first professor of architecture at UCT) and the Humanities Building (formerly Education Building – designed by Revel Fox and Partners) are not of any great architectural significance, although both do contribute to the streetscape character of the southern end of University Avenue in terms of scale, overall massing and façade articulation. Each of these buildings is, in the author's opinion, worthy of being graded IIIC. Only the Leslie Social Science Building (by Munnik Visser Black & Fish) some distance away is generally considered to be of substantial architectural significance<sup>5</sup>. This building is recommended as a Grade IIIA heritage resource.

Although the Janitor's House is architecturally anomalous within its immediate context, and has been earmarked for demolition, it does occupy a focal position at the end of University Avenue. Its symmetrical massing and prominent position on a slightly elevated plinth (refer **Figures 6-8**) suggest that this was intentional. It is interesting to speculate whether Walgate would have designed a building of this nature had University Avenue not been curved with a slope to the south. As it is, these factors result in the house being obscured from view until well away from the main Jameson Hall central axis. It is equally interesting to speculate what Solomon may have had in mind with his building footprint terminating the southern axis approximately along what is now Rugby Road.

Whatever the speculation, the southern end of University Avenue is historically associated with the only use of a focal element terminating a lateral roadway in this historic campus layout.

### 7.2.3. Historical Value

The site has some historical value in the sense that it appears to represent a unique architectural response by Walgate to the particular constraints of the landscape on this part of Upper Campus. The fact that Solomon's earlier layout also shows a building terminating the southern end of the apparent principal lateral corridor in his layout, suggests that he may too have been aware of contour anomalies in this area.

### 7.2.4 Other Aspects of Heritage Value

Neither the site, nor its immediate spatial context contain anything of scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value sensitive to development.

## *8. Heritage-Related Factors Informing New Development on the Site.*

### 8.1. Heritage Policies

---

<sup>5</sup> The building was awarded a bronze medal by the Cape Institute of Architects in the 1980's.

Section 6.3 of the UCT Built Environment Draft CPF identifies a number of policies for conserving the built environment and landscape (adjusted and edited for relevance<sup>6</sup> with regard to this project). These policies form the basis for heritage indicators used in Assessment Tables A-C. These policies are:

8.1.1. To protect, maintain and enhance the University of Cape Town as a place of outstanding cultural significance by:

- i) Maintaining the integrity and essential character of (amongst others) the historic Upper Campus, its buildings and associated spaces.
- ii) Protecting and enhancing the range of buildings identified as having heritage significance, and the structures and landscape features which mark the evolution of the university over time.
- iii) Respecting the many layers of cultural significance resulting from the university's history, including the architectural transformation associated with the establishment of the new campus in the 1920's.
- iv) Ensuring that new interventions respond positively to the cultural values of (amongst others) the historic Upper Campus by ensuring the creation of innovative, contemporary learning environments and the need to accommodate the process of growth, adaptation, transformation and re-interpretation.

8.1.2. To conserve and enhance the cultural landscape within which the university is embodied by:

- i) Ensuring that the special character of place which has evolved in response to historic processes is the primary informant with regard to development briefs.
- ii) Ensuring that plants and planting patterns reflect the cultural significance of (amongst others) the Upper Campus with specific reference to the different qualities of space ranging from the more formal open spaces such as the forecourt to Jameson Hall to the less formal and structured spaces including the site in question.
- iii) Ensuring that landscape interventions are appropriate to the historical significance of the site.

8.1.3. To establish positive interfaces with adjacent land uses by:

- i) Ensuring that new development (infill buildings, alterations and additions) is of architectural and design excellence, and appropriate to the high architectural, aesthetic, environmental and symbolic significance of the Upper Campus.
- ii) Encouraging the use of facilities where the university could play a more public role in dismantling the 'town gown' dichotomy, and by integrating the spatial dimension with a temporal dimension, i.e. times when the university accommodates a more public role through its graduation ceremonies, summer schools and continuing professional development programs.

8.1.4. To promote contemporary heritage by:

---

<sup>6</sup> As adapted from Section 6.3: Policies 1-4.

- i) Ensuring that new development (infill buildings, alterations and additions) is of architectural and design excellence, and appropriate to the high architectural, aesthetic, environmental and symbolic significance of the Upper Campus.
- ii) Ensuring ongoing quality of design excellence when adding a 21<sup>st</sup> C layer to existing layering and landscape settings.
- iii) Ensuring that new development, while reflecting a contemporary and innovative approach, does not detrimentally impact on the heritage significance of the affected site and its setting. Interventions on potential Grade I sites such as Upper Campus should consider an approach that is visually harmonious, as opposed to one that is based on contrast.
- iv) Ensuring that the height, massing and orientation of the use of materials of new buildings follows the pattern of the historical built form, and does not detract from the landmark quality of the existing development.
- v) Ensuring that the new development is consistent with the Green Campus Framework for environmental sustainability.

## 8.2. Site-related Structuring Factors

A series of site-related structuring factors to be considered for new development are identified in attached **Diagram 04**. One of the most significant factors relates to the manner in which the natural contours have historically influenced development on the property both in the wider context and in the immediate context of the site. Another is the manner in which the topography and the evolving green web both beyond and through the site have influenced the spatial experience of the southern end of University Avenue compared to its northern end. (**Figure 10**). Other structuring factors and potential design informants are indicated in **Diagram 04 C**.



FIGURE 10: The extended green web contextualizing and running through the upper campus. The different topographical conditions at opposing ends of University Ave result in differing experiences of this green matrix (indicated in orange). At the southern end, views out are contained and defined by tree canopies. At the northern end, views out are expansive, and look over tree canopies. (Image based on a drawing by OVP Landscape Architects).



### Key to Diagram 04C

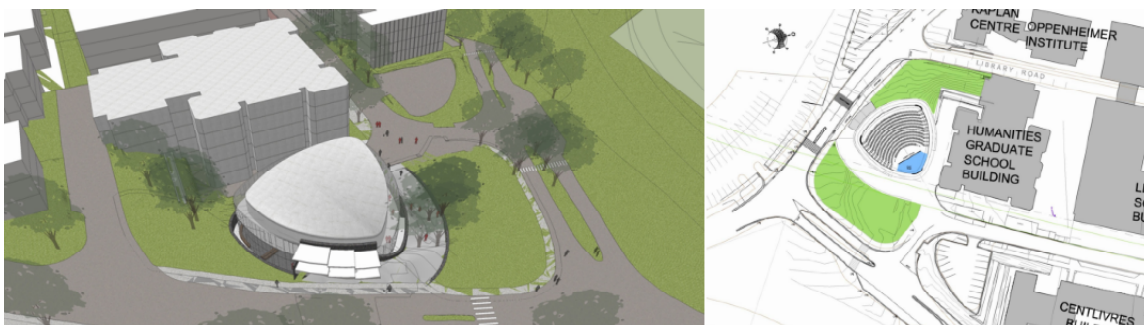
- i) *Immediate development context*: Identified as the area defined by Ring Road and the southern end of University Avenue. The 'forecourt space' to the Janitor's house is a relatively contained space given its unique arrangement of buildings influenced by the nature of the topography, and the concentrations of tree canopies in the peripheral middle distance. By comparison, the northern end of University Avenue includes expansive views over Cape Town to the northeast.
- ii) *Proposed development area*: Identifies the approximate extent of the site earmarked for development.
- iii) *Focal point (earmarked for demolition)*: Identifies Walgate's Janitor's House as a designed focal point terminating University Avenue. Although this building has been approved for demolition by HWC, it does establish precedent for a new focal point at this end of the Avenue.
- iv) *Hard edge defining the precinct space*: Highlights the role played by the front façade of the Janitor's House and the sheer sides of the Humanities and Centlivres Buildings in strengthening the definition of space and place at the southern end of University Avenue.
- v) *'Green frame' canopy backdrop defining the precinct space*: Identifies the significance of the green canopy edges in linking the precinct to the natural green framing systems of the Table Mountain National Park and adjacent mountainside.
- vi) *Suggested 'green frame' canopy backdrop extension*: Identifies areas where existing canopy backdrops could be supplemented and/or extended to improve green linkages with the precinct.
- vii) *Green spatial filters*: Highlights trees that are mediating elements between the public realm and the sheer (and in the case of the Humanities Building, severe) public frontages of the buildings at this end of the Avenue. These trees could be removed or rearranged subject to an HWC endorsed landscape plan integrated with the new development proposals.
- viii) *Trees to be removed and investigated for transplanting if necessary*: Identifies groups of trees that could be moved or removed subject to an HWC endorsed landscape plan integrated with the new development proposals.
- ix) *Mature tree to be retained if at all possible*: Identifies a particularly fine mature specimen of an oak tree within the precinct. It helps to define one edge of the 'forecourt' space and provides a focal point as one moves up Ring Road towards the Janitor's House. This tree should be retained and incorporated into the new development if at all possible.
- x) *Primary sight line*: Identifies a primary sight line with focal point potential looking south along University Avenue into the precinct.
- xi) *Secondary sight line*: Identifies sight lines with focal point potential characterizing secondary approaches to the site.

## 9. Proposed Development Alternatives for the Site

The proposed lecture theatre arises from UCT's need for a new shared 400 seat venue to cater for more general needs. The idea is to enable greater accessibility for both the general public and the university student body as a whole. The brief is for a low-visual-impact building cut into the site that would still accommodate movement across it. The building must achieve a 4 star Green Building

rating. The site was chosen, amongst others, for its close proximity to existing parking and being accessible to bus transport. The accommodation must include a small cafeteria/social learning center and a foyer capable of accommodating small functions including exhibitions. The architects have considered a range of alternatives for the site, which can be consolidated into 5 alternatives excluding the No-Go Alternative. A set of drawings of all alternatives is contained in **Annexure 4** of this report. These alternatives and the background to the design development are summarized as follows:

### 9.1. Alternative 1: The 'Pavilion' Alternative



This alternative is for a basically free-standing structure tucked away off the University Avenue behind the Humanities building.

#### *Architect's comment:*

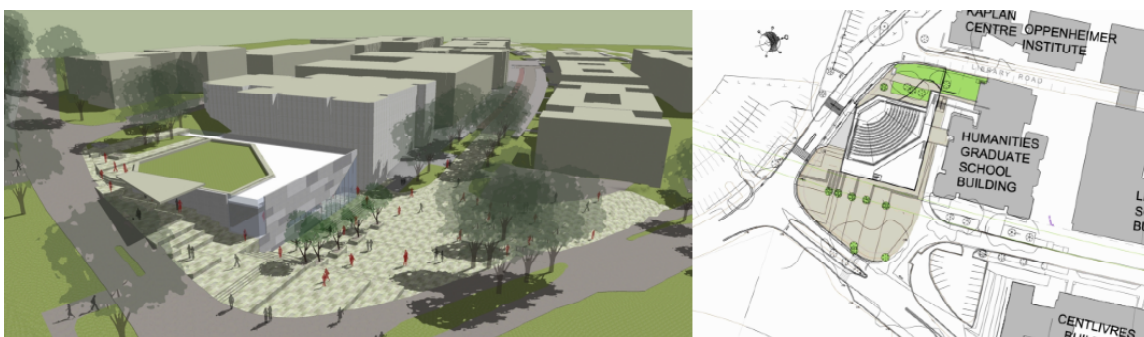
The advantage of this alternative is its compact footprint allowing more space for an extended pedestrian movement route between University Avenue and the parking and bus station facilities to the south.

The disadvantage is that it results in a tall building that is 'too iconic'.

#### *Author's comment:*

The relatively high physical profile of this alternative runs the danger of being at odds with the other buildings flanking University Avenue with regard to overall shape, massing and scale.

### 9.2. Alternative 2: The 'Terrace' Alternative



This alternative is for a rectilinear structure with roof terrace set into the embankment off the University Avenue behind the Humanities building.

#### *Architect's comment:*

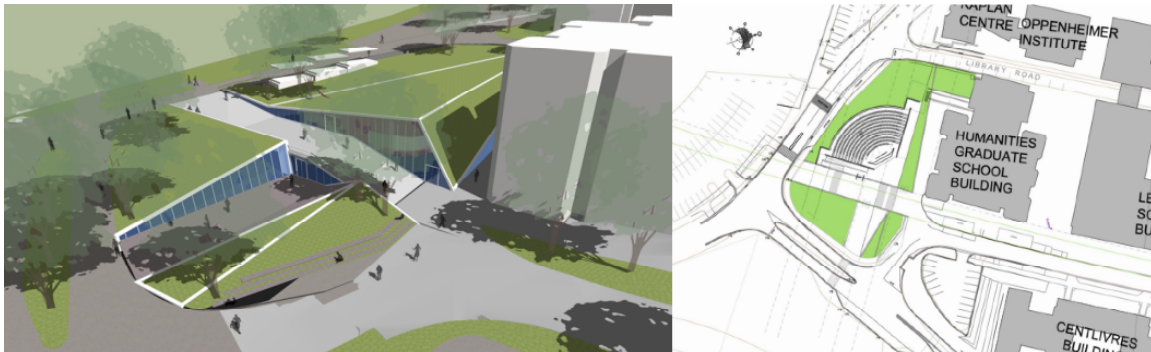
The advantage of this alternative is that it achieves the most economic footprint by 'stacking' the accommodation, with provision made for a new terraced square at the end of University Avenue.

The disadvantage is that it has a strong façade line and would be very visible.

*Author's comment:*

A strong, visible façade line would not necessarily be a negative quality. In fact, the overall shape and massing of this alternative would be 'less at-odds' with the other buildings flanking University Avenue than Alternative 1. The appropriateness of large scale stepped tiers leading from University Avenue and culminating in a bus station is questioned.

### 9.3. Alternative 3: The 'Bisected Folded Landscape (1)' Alternative



This alternative is for an angular structure covered in plant material and bisected with steps leading from University Avenue to Ring Road.

*Architect's comment:*

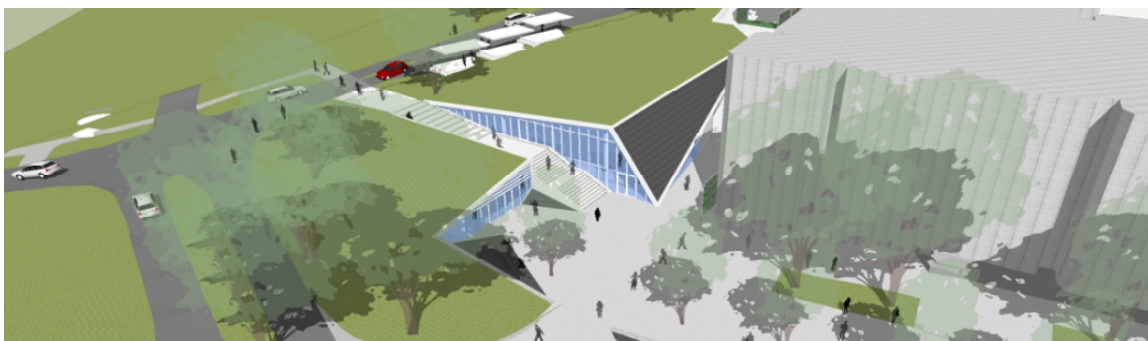
The advantage of this alternative is that the building disappears under the landscape with the introduction of strong movement routes.

The disadvantage is that the movement routes compromise the building configuration and notion of entrance, while interrupting the flow of the internal spaces.

*Author's comment:*

Although the building is covered in plant material, its angular envelope is a clear expression of itself and therefore quite evidently does not disappear under the landscape. The notion of extending the southern end of University Avenue through an embankment using a strong line of steps that effectively go nowhere other than tree shaded parking areas, is questioned.

### 9.4. Alternative 4: The 'Bisected Folded Landscape (2)' Alternative



Alternative 4 is a development of Alternative 3, designed to provide an arrival point at the end of University Avenue while allowing for pedestrian movement routes to follow the axis of the avenue. It



is the result of a presentation of Alternatives 1-3 to the UCT Physical Planning Unit (Properties and Services) where it was decided that the 'landscape over' option would be pursued. Alternative 4 is the product of that meeting and was subsequently presented to the UCT Design Review Committee for a response.

*Architect's comment:*

The advantages of this alternative are similar to Alternative 3, but with the added benefit of a strong arrival point created at the end of University Avenue.

The disadvantages are similar to Alternative 3.

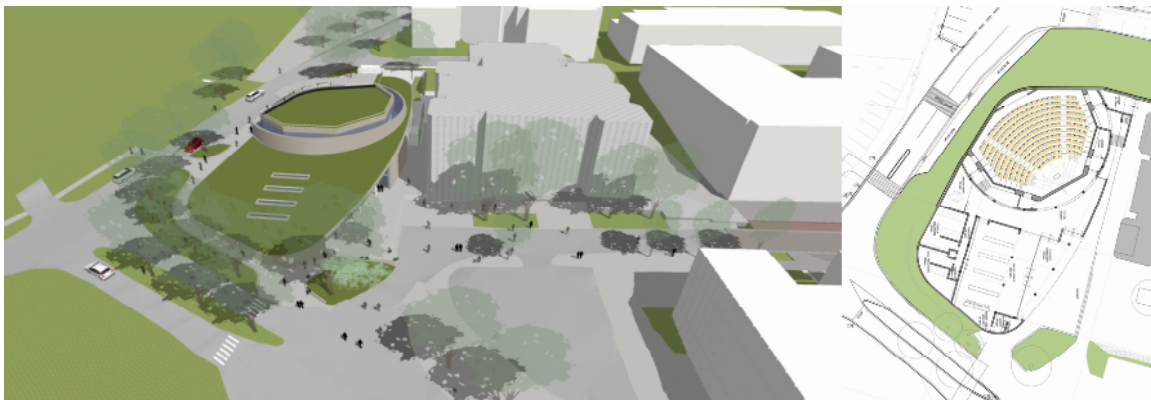
*UCT Design Review Committee's response:*

The route through the building compromises the internal planning too much. The architects were encouraged to look at routing pedestrian movement around the site. Facades were considered a 'heat load problem' and entrances considered weak.

*Author's comment:*

The strong arrival point created in this alternative is more consistent with the historical response to the natural topography at this end of University Avenue. The strong line of steps, although downplayed compared to Alternative 3, is nonetheless still questioned for similar reasons.

#### 9.5. Alternative 5: The 'Smoothed Landscape' (Client Preferred) Alternative



This is the client (UCT) and architect's preferred alternative, developed in response to the comments of the UCT Design Review Committee to Alternative 4.

*Architect's comment:*

The landform now becomes the dominant design component. There is a strong expression of entrance and a strong relationship to University Avenue that includes an elevated square. Movement routes are now around the building and a lot cleaner and more organized. Internal planning is simplified with an improved flow of spaces.

*UCT Design Review Committee's response:*

Proposals are much improved and accepted.

This alternative was then presented to the University Building and Development Committee (without budget) and accepted 'in principle'. It was then developed, compacted and value engineered to meet budget requirements before again being presented to this Committee which approved the proposals subject to UCT Finance Committees approval, which is budget based.

### 9.6. Alternative 6: The No-Go Option

Should the no-go option be exercised, the development of the site will not occur. The Janitor's House may or may not be demolished even though HWC has issued a permit for its demolition valid for 3 years. The lecture theatre will therefore have to be sited elsewhere, either on Upper Campus or alternatively on one of the other satellite campuses.

Given that the southern end of University Avenue is ideally positioned within the Upper Campus because of access to plenty of parking, particularly after hours, there is a good chance that this facility will therefore have to be moved elsewhere. This would be a great pity as there is a drive to make Upper Campus, as historic symbol of the university, less physically remote and more accessible to the public by becoming more actively engaged in public life and the student population as a whole. This objective is clearly consistent with Section 6.3 of the UCT Built Environment Draft CPF in that:

- i) the new development would constitute an innovative, contemporary learning environment accommodating the process of growth, adaptation, transformation and re-interpretation on the campus; (refer paragraph 8.1.1.iv in this report); and
- ii) the new development would be built as a facility enabling the university to play a more public role in dismantling the 'town gown' dichotomy, including through its graduation ceremonies, summer schools, and continuing professional development programs (refer paragraph 8.1.3ii in this report).

The site is far removed from the historic core buildings on the campus and will therefore not have a negative impact on that precinct, while the re-development of the southern end of University Avenue has potential to make better use of its public space by 'tidying up' what is currently underutilized land. Consequently, the author does not believe that the No-Go Option should be applied and, indeed, that such an option would be counter-productive in heritage terms.

## 10. *Assessment of Heritage Impacts*

The proposals informing this assessment are Development Alternatives 1-5 by GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, as summarized in **Section 9** of this report. Copies of these proposals are contained in **Annexure 4**. The architects have, through these proposals, indicated how the design proposals have been progressively refined to the point where they have been accepted by their client on architectural grounds and in terms of the brief. This report therefore concentrates on assessing the Preferred Alternative 5, albeit with reference to the other alternatives where necessary, given that it is reasonably clear why the other alternatives have been considered and discarded.

### 10.1. Assessment Structure and Approach

This assessment is structured to comply with Section 38 of the NHRA. It is underpinned by the Heritage Statement in this report, together with Design Indicators drawn from a basic spatial analysis of the site (**Diagram 04**) and the UCT Built Environment Draft CPF as summarised in **Section 8** of this document.

In the absence of detailed criteria for assessing heritage impacts (i.e. apart from the broad assessment criteria in Section 38 (3) of the NHRA), this assessment employs an adapted methodology based on the broadly accepted requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments.

It provides:

- An indication of the nature of conformance of the development with the heritage indicators;
- A description of the heritage impacts;
- A description of the Measurement & Duration of Impacts;
- An indication of the Significance of Impacts on heritage resources: unmitigated;
- An indication of the Significance of Impacts on heritage resources: mitigated; and
- An indication of the Confidence of Assessment.

Assessments are arranged in tabular form (Tables A-C) for brevity. A full description of the assessment criteria upon which assessment Tables A-C are based, is contained in **Annexure 2** of this report.

#### 10.2. General Observations arising from the findings in Assessment Tables A-C

Development Alternative 5 shows a high degree of conformance with the heritage Design Indicators set out in Tables A-C. Impacts are therefore regarded as largely positive, albeit with some shortcomings. These are elaborated on in Section 11 of this document.

#### 10.3. Input from Interested and Affected Parties: CIFA: Full copy of comment in **Annexure 3**.

Given its role both as a learned body, and in terms of its involvement in implementing the conditions of Rhodes's will, the Cape Institute for Architecture (CIFA) was approached for comment regarding the various development alternatives. (Obtaining CIFA's comment was also a requirement of HWC in its response to the Notice of Intent to Develop application of late July this year).

A presentation of the development alternatives was duly made to CIFA's Heritage Committee (Presentations) by the architects on 13 September this year. This was supplemented by an interim heritage statement by the author prepared and circulated to members prior to the meeting. On 20 September, the matter was again discussed at CIFA's monthly Heritage Committee meeting.

An emailed copy of the CIFA Heritage Committee's response dated 27 September 2012 and addressed to the project architects, was received by the author on 28 September 2012. This response was framed in terms of the Committee's understanding of the heritage significance of the Upper Campus. This understanding was of the bi-focal design layout of Upper Campus with its central Jameson Hall axis, open-ended curving lateral roads, elliptical outer roads and green spatial separation between 'town and gown', being the fundamental "idea construct" underpinning its significance. The Committee went on to apply its spatial interpretation of this layout to express its concerns regarding the architectural proposals for the new lecture theatre. Based on this interpretation, it found that, although intriguing and inspired, the proposed design was contradictory in its reading of the site and might undermine the symbolic meaning of the Upper Campus's historic framework. It is the author's view that this interpretation is flawed in certain aspects.

In order to clearly address the issues and concerns raised by CIFA and the validity of its assumptions and conclusions, the rest of this section is structured to deal individually with each issue raised.

##### 10.3.1. *The Committee's Point 1: Overall Spatial Character of Upper Campus*

The core university buildings along University and Residence Avenue on either side of central temple-like Jameson Hall align uniformly and in sequence with the curving roads. The pavilion typology of the academic buildings and their consistent architectural resolution

have been identified as embodying the quality and character of the Upper Campus, i.e. the similarly expressed hipped clay-tiled roofs, eaves detailing, building heights, walled architecture with stippled coloured plaster, etc. This is further enhanced by the landscaping and the movement system and steps between the sides of the buildings, which are required to overcome the height differences between the main routes along the contours. The spaces, vistas and experiences unfold as one moves around the campus itself as well as when viewed from a distance. The spatial and visual character therefore is immediate as well as remote and should be preserved.

*Author's Response:*

Agreed.

#### 10.3.2. *The Committee's Point 2: Key Spatial Framework Elements of Upper Campus*

The spatial framework of the UCT Upper Campus consists of four principal form-giving elements:

- *the dominant bi-focal axis* across the Jameson Steps (and Summer House), focussing (on the mountain side) onto the columned U-shaped Jameson Hall, Jagger Library and Students Union complex and on the other, the visually expanding views across the Cape Flats and the Cape mountains in the distance;
- *the open-ended curving road/ movement system* which follow the contours, of which the University Avenue is the most important cross axis vis-à-vis the Jameson Hall axis;
- *the elliptical outer roads* (Rugby and Ring Road) which edge and contain the Genius Loci of the campus, and
- *the spatial green separation* between town and gown created by the rugby fields.

This design layout is the fundamental “idea-construct” of the Upper Campus.

*Author's Response:*

The lateral movement system is not open-ended at the southern end of University Avenue in the same way as occurs on the northern end, particularly the northern end of University Avenue. The southern end of University Avenue is uniquely (and, as this study shows, probably deliberately) terminated by the Janitor's House. Views do, however, extend beyond this precinct into tree canopies occupying the periphery in the intermediate distance. The nature of these views and indeed this space is (and has always been) relatively contained. By comparison, views afforded from the northern end of University Avenue are panoramic. The idea construct referred to by CIFA is therefore distinctly nuanced.

#### 10.3.3. *Point 3: Understanding University Avenue and its Meaning within the 'Idea Construct' of Upper Campus.*

This project requires an understanding of University Avenue and its meaning within this “idea-construct”. This concept of an “Imperial” view over wild Africa from an elevated Arcadian temple has been noted before. (Judin and Vladislavic). Further, this spatial imposition onto the landscape with an open-ended curved cross-axis is not only present at UCT but is also evident at Rhodes Memorial (1912, Baker) as well as to some extent at the neighbouring old Zoo (1931, PWD- Department of Forestry).

This *parti* was a deliberate attitude to place-making within a particular context. In all three cases on the slopes of Devil's Peak, the curving cross-axis provided the means of moving



around and beyond the controlled set-pieces and allows access and exploration of the mountain slopes.

The architect's presentation document contains a landscape idea diagram by OVP Associates. This identifies the two main cross-axes of UCT and shows the curved cross axis extending beyond the site and indicating connections to the Zoo and Rhodes Memorial.

At UCT, the curved road system might have been purely a device to overcome the difficult site conditions. It has, as is generally accepted, also created a unique evolving spatial experience. Part of this unique character are the open-ended avenues, and in particular that of University Avenue, which provide short views of the treed mountainside beyond toward the south (notwithstanding the Janitor's Cottage) and the city and bay toward the north.

*Author's Response:*

It is agreed that Upper Campus, Rhodes Memorial and the Zoo Site constitute Imperial impositions in the landscape. However, apart from each of these sites sharing the classical commonality of symmetry, each component of this *parti* is a distinct variation on this theme. The result are *Genii Locorum* that are experienced in distinctly different ways. Rhodes's Memorial is highest up the slope enjoying landmark status and panoramic views from virtually all sides. The Upper Campus is lower down the slope, also enjoying landmark status but with a range of outward view experiences influenced by the nature of the topography and, therefore, varying from contained to panoramic. The Zoo site is lowest down the slope, virtually enclosed by canopies of trees and the remnants of symmetrical planting patterns. Consequently, the site does not enjoy landmark status and has the most contained outward views of the *parti*.

On a point of clarity, the landscape idea diagram by OVP Associates (refer **Figure 10** of this report) indicates the relationship between the Upper Campus and the flanking green systems to the north and south, and the manner in which these have infiltrated laterally across the campus road system. This diagram also indicates (via inserts by the author) the 'opposing' spatial conditions of the north and south ends of University Avenue. Unlike the northern end that stops short and overlooks the landscape, the southern end integrates into the landscape. This is a key factor to be considered in assessing new development at the southern end of University Avenue.

The author does not believe that the curved road system of Upper Campus was purely a device for overcoming difficult site conditions. For example, locating the Janitor's House at the southern end of University Avenue would have had considerably different spatial implications had the road system been straight (axial). Had this indeed been the case, the Janitor's House would have been an unsettling stylistic and scalar anomaly in this focal position. As it is, and due to the curvature of the Avenue, the Janitor's House and precinct are not perceived from the central cross axis and the view only unfolds to reveal the site once one has proceeded a considerable way down University Avenue – i.e. up to just before the Leslie Social Sciences Building, in fact.

#### 10.3.4. Point 4: Termination of University Avenue as Justification for the New Lecture Theatre.

The fact that the Janitor's Cottage terminates the southern end of University Avenue is advocated as the reason to permit the new lecture theatre to occupy the same position. This does require further analysis:

Solomon's plan only had one avenue/ road which terminated with a building – this was on the southern end of Rugby Road. No plans are shown what kind of building this was envisaged to

be, leaving it open to interpretation: it could have been a small temple-like termination building, or something else.

Walgate's changed layout extended Rugby Road to create the first Ring Road; this removed the space for this building. He designed the Janitor's House and placed it at the southern end of University Avenue. The reason for this is not known: either he had to find a new location for a brief requirement or he deliberately designed this building to terminate University Avenue. We do not know. The scale of the cottage, even with the steep gabled dormer is domestic and he would have known that it would be, and is, over-powered by the surrounding academic buildings. It has never seemed up to the task or appropriate. (The northern end of the avenue was left open-ended, just like all the other road ends.)

*Author's Response:*

While it may not be known what circumstances led to both Solomon and Walgate choosing to terminate the southern end of the principal lateral 'axis' in their respective layouts, both architects would have been acutely aware of the nature of the topography of the site. In adjusting Solomon's plan, Walgate would also have been aware of the awkward contour condition at the southern end of University Avenue, with views southward from this precinct being largely defined by a combination of natural depression and natural embankment. This unique condition would have provided a logical location for a domestically scaled building, particularly given the low visual profile of the precinct as a consequence of its depressed levels and the curvature of University Avenue.

The reason advocated for permitting the new lecture theatre is, therefore, not the precedent set by the Janitor's House per se but, rather, the combination of unique topographical conditions and curvature of University Avenue that is most likely to have resulted in the Janitor's House being sited where it is.

10.3.5. Point 5: Development Approaches to the site as Integral Part of the Upper Campus *Genius Loci*.

Without doubt, there are numerous possibilities how the proposed site should be approached as an integral part of the campus genius loci.

Looking only at two options, if the placing of the Janitor's Cottage was intentional in order to terminate University Avenue, then the historic pattern of the Upper Campus strongly suggests that the replacement building follow the building typology of the Upper Campus with either a pavilion-type structures or small "temple" akin to Jameson Hall as suggested by Solomon's map and the intention of Walgate's cottage. This seems to indicate that the intriguing proposed sloping and half-buried building is not the appropriate solution.

If on the other hand, the Janitor's Cottage at its crucial location is viewed as flawed from a historical-memory as well as contemporary reading of the Upper Campus idea-construct, the new building could be seen as an opportunity to realise other latent potential possibilities, i.e. University Avenue could extend its southern wing as an idea (and as a pedestrian route) - the proposed building with its slanting green roof could be resolved to work itself around and under this important symbolic connection.

*Author's Response:*

As stated in response to Point 4 above, it is the combination of unique topographical conditions of the precinct, and nature of the Upper Campus layout as adjusted by Walgate, that underpin the author's conclusions rather than the precedent set by the Janitor's House as focal point per se. This means that while a pavilion-type structure or small 'temple' akin to Jameson Hall can be considered a theoretical alternative, so too could a low-profile 'background' structure, provided that this was to be complemented by a focal feature either incorporated/added to the façade or, alternatively, as a free-standing feature incorporated into the forecourt landscaping fronting the building on University Avenue. Given the size of accommodation required for the lecture theatre, a new building 'tucking into' the existing slope is likely to result in less encroachment into the existing 'forecourt' space in front of the Janitor's House. Given that the facility is to be a shared one with a strong public element, the maximization of open space in front of the new building at the end of the Avenue would be considered a plus factor.

The author is therefore of the view that the historical memory and physical constraints of the site do demand a focal element of some kind, although not necessarily in the form of a domestically scaled or larger building to replace the Janitor's House.

#### 10.3.6. Point 6: Suggested Consequences of terminating the Southern End of University Avenue.

It is therefore suggested by CIFA that terminating the southern end of University Avenue will:

- undermine the historic spatial layout of the set-piece;
- weaken the historic pattern and meanings of the three similarly devised imperial set-pieces on the Rhodes Estate;
- remove a contemporary value attributed to UCT of open-endedness and exploration as expressed in its layout; and
- remove the future possibility of a physical and theoretical link between the Upper Campus and the old Zoo site at the very place where it should do so (this is not advocating sprawl but allowing as broad and generous the possibility for future connections which might not seem feasible today).
- preclude the opportunity of extending University Avenue through the site as a pedestrian link to Ring Road.
- The height and closeness of the proposed building toward the graduate Humanities and the deep cut in the slope at this point would create a narrow and dark chasm. It was felt that this requires further resolution. Similarly, an attitude toward the façade alignments along University Avenue needs to be established.

#### *Author's Response:*

Due to the unique topographical conditions and low profile nature of the architectural proposals as addressed in some detail in this HIA report and outlined in this section, the termination of University Avenue as proposed will not undermine the historic spatial layout of the set piece. In fact, the spatial layout owes much to the historical interventions of Walgate, a practitioner of considerable skill and a recognized master in his time (refer **Annexure 1**). His significant contribution to the historic development of the UCT layout therefore cannot be ignored and have legitimacy as historical artefacts in their own right. Given this factor, the historic pattern and meaning of the unique spatial conditions prevailing at the southern end of University Avenue could arguably be undermined by extending the alignment of University Avenue to meet Ring Road.

To suggest that the historic patterns and meanings of the three similarly devised set-pieces on Rhodes Estate would be weakened, is simply not true, given that their *Genii Locorum* are experienced in distinctly different ways to that of Upper Campus in general and the unique spatial conditions of the development site in particular.

The southern end of University Avenue is not open-ended as is the case with the other ends of the lateral road system on Upper Campus. Nonetheless the proposals do, in the author's view, make adequate (and improved) provision for pedestrian circulation around the proposed building to Ring Road. While it is true that extending University Avenue through the site to Ring Road would indeed cater for the possibility of future connections which might not seem feasible today, such provision runs the danger of breaching the historic integrity of the Upper Campus layout through incremental widening of such a link over time, i.e. should the Zoo site be developed by the university at some future stage.

The height and closeness of the building toward the graduate Humanities building and the resulting 'narrow dark chasm' are not regarded as heritage issues. Nonetheless, the author's architectural view is that the proximity of these two buildings is mitigated by the use of glass and curved walls which skillfully avoids the intervening space being experienced as a 'narrow dark chasm'.

#### 10.3.7. Point 7: Conclusions

The Committee is of the view that, although intriguing and inspired, the proposed design is contradictory in its reading of the site and might undermine the symbolic meaning of the Upper Campus' historic framework. The contradiction must be addressed: if the new building is to terminate the Avenue, it should do so following the historic typology patterns of the Upper Campus and match these in scale and resolution.

#### *Author's Response:*

The author does not regard the proposed design as contradictory in its reading of the site, albeit that the development proposals do currently lack a focal element. This is addressed in some detail in this HIA report and outlined in this section. Consequently, the CIFA Heritage Committee's comment is regarded as flawed in certain aspects based on a number of incorrect assumptions and premises.

## *11. Conclusions and Recommendations*

### 11.1. Conclusions

With reference to Assessment Tables A-C, Development Alternative 5 (UCT and the architect's preferred alternative) is shown as having a high degree of conformance with the Design Indicators and considered largely positive. More specifically:

- i) These proposals are found to have no significant impacts on the spatial integrity and character of the Upper Campus as a whole;
- ii) The architectural integrity and settings of the adjacent buildings on University Avenue South are not negatively impacted on or compromised. (These are buildings identified as having local significance, with the Leslie Social Sciences Building identified as a potential Grade IIIA heritage resource);



- iii) The proposed new facility responds positively to the cultural significances of the Upper Campus by creating an architecturally innovative environment that promises to be responsive to the learning needs of both student body as a whole, and the public in general;
- iv) These architectural proposals appropriately do not attempt to follow the existing patterns of built form but, rather, adopt a low-key 'landscape over' approach. The overall result will consequently detract neither from the landmark status of the Upper Campus as a whole, nor from the architectural and aesthetic qualities of the precinct in which it is to be located. This is a background building in terms of its wider spatial context.
- v) Despite this being a background building in many senses, the architectural design has clearly been carefully considered, displaying a generally high degree of conceptual refinement, sculptural quality and architectural innovation, albeit with some shortcomings.
- vi) These architectural proposals are conceived as consistent with the Green Campus Framework for environmental sustainability, and therefore constitute a positive contribution to the development of the Upper Campus in this sense, with the promise of providing an environmental exemplar for the city and the region in the broader sense.

The proposals do, however, display one particular shortcoming. More specifically;

- vii) The proposals do not appear to take fully into account the historically evolved nature of the precinct. While this development alternative (and, indeed, Alternatives 3 and 4) do acknowledge the significance of the historic green system of tree canopies and other planting that characterizes the middle distance backdrops to the east, southeast and south, the proposal (and, in fact all of the other development alternatives) does involve the removal of an historic focal point at the end of University Avenue without addressing a potential replacement.
- viii) This shortcoming would be adequately addressed by the introduction of a new focal element either incorporated into the façade of the proposed new building facing up University Avenue or, more likely, introduced as a new free-standing element either in the form of a suitably large scaled sculpture or water feature aligned with University Avenue and incorporated into the landscape design of the new precinct 'forecourt'.

It is important to reiterate that despite the abovementioned largely positive conclusions, the Cape Institute for Architecture's Heritage Committee does have concerns regarding the proposals, considering them to be contradictory in their reading of the site, even though intriguing and inspired in terms of their architecture. This view does, however, appear to be based on a number of incorrect assumptions and premises.

Notwithstanding CIFA's concerns, it is therefore concluded that heritage impacts relating to the client's Preferred Alternative 5 can not only be kept within acceptable limits, but that the development proposals (Alternative 5) constitute a creative architectural solution to a difficult site forming part of an historic layout of great heritage significance. Moreover, the proposals have potential as an award winning scheme. However, while the architectural proposals do capitalise on the unique spatial characteristics of the southern end of University Avenue, they require some amendments to ensure that a new focal element take the place of the Janitors House as recommended in viii above, once this building has been demolished.

## 11.2. Recommendations

It is accordingly recommended that the development proposal Alternative 5 for the proposed new lecture theatre in University Avenue be approved in principle, and substantially in accordance with the sketch plans by GAPP Architects and Urban Designers contained in Annexure 4 of this document, but subject to the following conditions:

- i) That the facade of the new lecture theatre fronting onto the southern end of University Avenue be configured to enable the building to become a stronger focal feature terminating the southern end of University Avenue, and that the appropriate amended elevation be re-submitted to IACom for its approval; or
- ii) That the design proposals which are essentially for a building with background or 'framing' qualities, be approved but complemented by an amended landscape design that includes a suitably scaled free-standing focal element (e.g. a large sculpture or water feature) aligned on University Avenue and defining the forecourt in front of the new lecture theatre at the southern end of the Avenue (the author's favoured alternative); and
- iii) That in the case of option ii) being endorsed, that an amended landscape design in accordance with this latter option be submitted for IACom's approval.

GRAHAM JACOBS  
28 September 2012

## *12. List of Annexures*

Annexure 1: Brief Architects Biographies: JS Solomon & CP Walgate.  
Annexure 2: Heritage-related Impact Assessment Criteria  
Annexure 3: Comment from CIFA to the Development Proposals  
Annexure 4: Copies of the Development Proposals; Alternatives 1-5.

## *13. References*

- Fransen, Hans: *A Guide to the Old Buildings of the Cape*. A survey of extant architecture from before c1910 in the area of Cape Town-Calvinia-Colesburg-Uitenhage. Jonathan Ball Publishers (PTY) Ltd, Jeppestown. 2004. ISBN 1 86842 191 0.
- Hart, David: *Biography of Architects Practising in the Western Cape up to 1940*. Produced from the SAHRA national database of Architects. Unpublished document. 4 January, 2001.
- Hart, David. *Buildings by Architects Practising in the Western Cape up to 1940*. Produced from the SAHRA national database of Architects. Unpublished document. 4 January, 2001.
- Picton Seymour, Desiree  
Historical buildings in South Africa. Struikhof Publishers. Cape Town, 1989.  
ISBN 0 947458 01 8.
- Robinson, L; N Baumann, S. Winter & C. Abrahamse

*Conservation Framework Policy: Built Environment and Landscape.* Final Draft prepared for the University of Cape Town. October 2010.

Vermeulen, Frik; and Claire Abrahamse

*Heritage Statement:* Application for a Permit to Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) for the Demolition of the Old Janitor's House at 10 University Avenue, University of Cape Town Upper Campus, Rondebosch Erf 44201 Cape Town. Unpublished document. October 2011.