

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT (NHRA), ACT 25 OF 1999: DEVELOPMENT ON 80 LIESBEECK WAY (ZONING CERTIFICATE)/ 2 LIESBEECK AVENUE (GOOGLE EARTH), ERF 160695, CAPE TOWN.

APRIL 2022



Source: ARUP, 2020

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

A public participation process is being undertaken to support a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for a proposed development in Observatory, Cape Town.

The intention of this Background Information Document (BID) is to **provide background information** about the proposed project and provide an opportunity for you as an Interested and Affected Party to raise any issues or comments.

WHAT IS THIS PROPOSED PROJECT ABOUT?

The proposal is to **construct a temple** for the Church of the Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The temple is intended for daily use by small groups of worshippers. In addition to the temple building, it is proposed to also construct an **administrative unit and a utility building**.

The existing mission office and a smaller structure are to be assessed through the HIA for demolition within redevelopment of the site.

WHERE IS THE PROPOSED LOCATION OF THIS PROJECT?

The proposed temple and associated buildings are located on **Erf 160695** in Observatory, Cape Town. As shown in **Figure 1**, the site is bounded by Liesbeek Avenue to the west, the remainder of Erf 26439 to the north, Valkenburg Hospital Road to the east, and the Valkenburg Manor opstal (Protea Hotel Mowbray, standing on Erven 118877 and 148700) to the south. The Liesbeek River runs to the west of the site whilst the Black River runs to the east of the site.

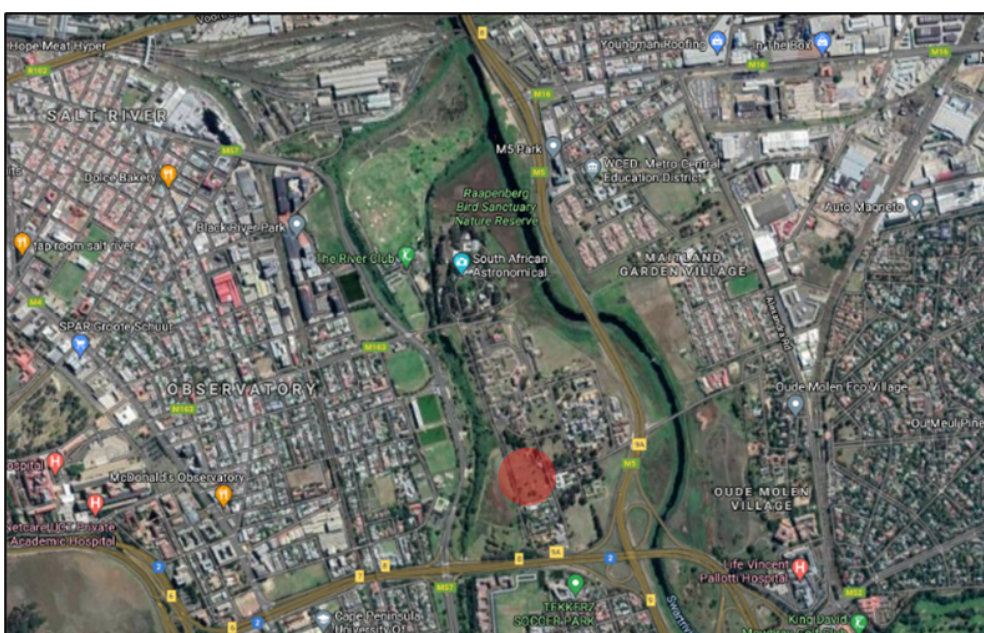


Figure 1. Locality map of proposed site. Site boundaries are demarcated in Blue (Google Earth, 2021)

The site forms what was once part of Valkenburg/Valkenberg Estate, one of the early free burgher allotments granted along the Liesbeek River. Abutting Liesbeek Avenue, the early access road to the Valkenburg opstal, it once formed part of the Porter Reformatory and subsequent Valkenburg Mental Hospital and is now owned and occupied by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Mission Office. Largely vacant, the site houses one extant pre-1891 house in the north-eastern corner occupied by the Church offices, as well as a cluster of mature trees that may have had some relation to the Valkenburg opstal, which lies to the south, and now forms part of the Protea Hotel Mowbray complex.

Various landscape/garden features as well as a few structures that stood on the property until the last half of the 20th century have since been demolished, and some of the older trees have been cut down over the past few decades.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL PROCESS THAT IS REQUIRED?

Heritage Western Cape (HWC) requires that the application be subjected to a public participation process as the proposed project triggers Section 38 of the NHRA (Act 25 of 1999). As such comment is requested from the relevant registered conservation bodies and the relevant municipality. In addition, comment will be requested from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and this background information document will be circulated to Interested and Affected Parties in the Liesbeeck / Observatory area.

Chand Environmental Consultants have been appointed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to assist in conducting the required public participation process.

Anticipated Timeline

The draft **Phase 1** Heritage Impact Assessment, as well as all supporting documentation will be made available for a commenting period that will commence **22 April 2022** and conclude at close of business on **23 May 2022**. Submissions received will be included within the interim report for submission to the heritage authorities.

The assessment of the impact on heritage resources will be the subject of the **Phase 2** Impact Assessment. Further to feedback regarding the Phase 1 HIA and the assessment of impacts of proposed intervention, Interested and Affected Parties will be afforded a further **30-day commenting period**. Submissions received during the second commenting period will be included within the final report for submission to the heritage authorities.

WHO ARE THE KEY ROLEPLAYERS?

The Applicant: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a worldwide faith of over 16 million members. The Church has over 30 000 congregations in more than 160 countries and territories.

The Authority: Heritage Western Cape

Heritage Western Cape is a provincial heritage resources authority. Their role will be to review the application made by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and make a decision on whether or not to grant permission for this proposed project.

The Project Team has been assembled to guide The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the statutory processes to establish a temple and associated structures on the proposed site.

Quahnita Samie (vidamemoria)	Heritage Consultant
Square One Landscape Architects	Visual Impact Assessment, Tree Survey and Landscape Plan
Kathy Dumbrell	Specialist Heritage Input and Design Informants
Cape Town Property Histories	Historical Background
Katie Smuts	Archaeological Input and Assessment
Dr. J. Pether	Paleontological Input
Chand Environmental Consultants	Public Participation Facilitator

WHAT ARE THE KEY HERITAGE INDICATORS?

The Heritage indicators identified by the heritage team will guide the design of the temple. The following indicators are relevant:

Layers of Development on the Site

The layers of development on the site indicate that the site has seen many changes over time with many of the layers of development no longer current on the site. While a Victorian house is present, it is not considered a physical indicator within the proposed development site.

The Relationship between Erf 160695 and its Nearest Neighbours

Remaining linkages and relationships should not be severed by future interventions and / or landscaping.

The Hierarchy of Built Form set up by the Main Building of the Valkenberg hospital

The historic core of the Valkenberg hospital (built 1907) has an iconic main building which has landmark and iconic significance. The proposal needs to consider this from a visual perspective.

Views from the River and Views from the Hospital Historic Core

The views from the river, both straight and obliquely to the northern facade of Valkenberg have significance within the landscape for their landmark qualities. This has symbolic and aesthetic significance for the site.

The Site as a Remnant of the Rural Character of the Hospital and Werf

The openness and greenness of the space is a remnant of the rural character of the area. Given the context of the site in an urban setting and the development rights, this rural character is no longer guaranteed. As an indicator, it should be used to inform ways in which to visually integrate the development with a sense of green space.

Memory and Space

An institutional landscape, as well as a landscape used in pre-colonial times by indigenous people in their transhumance patterns will have memory linked to the spaces. In the case of pre-colonial history, this is entirely intangible, which poses challenges in how to present them or use this as a design informant. As the pre-colonial period in the area's history may not have tangible heritage resources linked to it on the site, some interpretation or marking of this layer in the site's history would be appropriate.

WHAT ARE THE DESIGN INFORMANTS?

With the above heritage indicators in mind, the design team will ensure to incorporate the following design informants:

- **Conserving the layers of development on the site;**
- **Encouraging the memory, space and intangibles associated with the site; and**
- **Promoting the hierarchy of the built form through the use of landmark elements, height, scale, massing and the density of development.**

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Should you, or your organisation wish to provide comment on this BID and/or the application, please do so before **23 May 2022**. There is a comment sheet accompanying this BID. The Heritage Impact Assessment is available for download on <https://www.chand.co.za/projects-under-review-2022/>.

The following contact details on the overleaf can be used to provide your comment and/or if you wish to register another party onto our database:

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Please feel free to distribute this BID to other parties who may have an interest in this proposal.

Please note that within the context of this Public Participation, supporting the HIA process, only heritage related comments will be considered.