

**Approved Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Impact Assessment Committee
(IACOM)
of Heritage Western Cape (HWC) held via MS Teams
at 14H00 on Tuesday, 8 October 2024**



1. Opening and Welcome

The Chair, Mr. David Gibbs, officially opened the meeting at 14H00 and welcomed everyone present.

2. Attendance

Members

Mr. David Gibbs (DG) (Chair)
Dr. Antonia Malan (AM)
Ms. Sarah Winter (SW)
Mr. Dave Saunders (DS)
Mr. John Wilson-Harris (JWH)
Mr. Chefferino Fortuin (CF)
Ms Heidi Boise (HB) (BELCom)
Ms Helene van der Merwe (HvdM) (BELCom)
Mr Shawn Johnston (SJ) (BELCom)

Ms. Aneeqah Brown

Staff

Ms. Waseefa Dhansay (WD)
Mr. Olwethu Dlova (OD)
Ms. Stephanie Barnardt (SB)
Ms. Corne Nortje (CN)
Ms. Sneha Jhupsee (SJh)
Ms. Chane Herman (CH)
Ms. Penelope Meyer (PM) (was Penny there?)
Ms. Nosiphiwo Tafeni (NT)
Ms. Emily-Jane Vowles (EJV)
Ms Chiara Singh (CSi)
Mr Ruan Brand (RB)
Ms Xola Mlwandle (XM)

Observers

None

Visitors

Mr. Mike Scurr
Ms. Nadia Tromp
Ms. Katie Smuts
Mr. Jacques de Villiers

Mr. Deon Van Onselen
Mr. Francois Nortje

3. Apologies

Ms. Samantha Lee (SL)
Mr. Dennis Belter (DL) (BELCom)
Mr. Graham Jacobs (GJ) (BELCom)
Mr. Siphiwo Mavumengwana (SM) (BELCom)

3.1.

None

OBJ Absent

4. Approval of the Agenda

4.1 Agenda dated 8 October 2024

The Committee resolved to approve the agenda dated 8 October 2024 without changes.

5. Disclosure of Interest and acceptance of the code of conduct

- None (KS recused)

6. MATTER DISCUSSED

6.1 Erf 95165, 120 Plein Street, Parliament, Cape Town: MA HM / CAPE TOWN METROPOLITAN / GARDENS / ERF 95165

Ms. Katie Smuts recused herself and joined the applicant.

Ms. Sneha Jhupsee introduced the case.

Mr Mike Scurr (heritage consultant), Ms. Nadia Tromp (Ntsika Architects – for the New Assembly) and Mr. Deon Van Onselen (Osmond Lange Architects – for the Old Assembly) were present and took part in the discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Amongst other things, the following was discussed:

- The heritage report is well researched and comprehensive.
- Both sets of drawings are for the current submission. There are more detailed drawings (working drawings/tender drawings, etc.) which are still under development.
- Landscaping of the interface between the 'drum' and garden space of Tuynhuys will be critical to resolving awkward tangential junction and to integrate the proposal into the heritage context including views from the Company's Garden PHS and the Tuynhuys garden forecourt. Landscape plans need to be guided by heritage indicators with strong contextual informants.
- Comments on the 'drum' component insertion (New Assembly building) relate to previous concerns raised by HWC. Diagrams do not indicate how the protruding 'drum' relates to the ground level. The cross-section through the 'drum' to Tuynhuys does not make this relationship clear. The section is to include the terrace up to Tuynhuys garden forecourt. The interface is not well resolved in its current form. Detailed design development must evolve and abstract the concept into architectural resolution.
- Engagement with security requirements and SAPs is noted; the initial concept envisioned public access through the 'drum', however security protocols restrict public access to enable only visual (not physical) access into the Tuynhuys garden. A more comfortable junction must be explored; with the terraced edge of the Tuynhuys garden designed in relation to visual access. Access via the Old Assembly will be the main entrance to Parliament. (Reference diagram: Section through National Assembly and Link Courtyard pg. 28 of 57 Ntsika Annexure)
- Trees are indicated below the 'drum' but there is a further basement below implying that no tall trees can be provided. The conceptual section should be reworked in consultation with the landscape architects to ensure that viable internal landscape proposals are incorporated, given the relatively low levels of lighting internally (when compared to natural sunlight conditions externally) as well as the constricted growing medium conditions.
- There is a need for an updated section indicating what is new and what is existing and the nature of the contextual interfaces.

- There are serious concerns regarding the concept of a 'drum', as there are many ways to achieve functional and programmatic requirements, apart from a literal expression of a 'drum', which in its current expression, sits awkwardly and clumsily within the remaining portions of the New Assembly. Architecture for this purpose can also be low key; with quiet dignity and presence. There is a need for clarity on the inspiration of the form of the 'drum' and further abstraction of the concept into architecture.
- The current design lacks sufficient thought when it comes to visual impact on the heritage context. The current proposals reflect a lack of thought regarding environmental integration.
- The three-dimensional expression of the 'drum' form projects arrogance, overbearing scale and insensitivity to its spatial heritage context.
- Scale is a major issue, as the form of the 'drum' bursts upon the site.
- Further resolution of the design must address Integration of the inserted roofscape and skyline profiles with the existing roofscape of the precinct.
- Considering the ideal of a "Parliament of the People, from the People, by the People", there is a concern that the Public Participation Process (PPP) rests heavily on the Parliament website, which is a digital medium not easily available to all citizens. Therefore, there is concern regarding the lack of opportunity for meaningful public engagement apart from the digital platform and a press release. Other more meaningful PPP mechanisms should have been explored including, for example, an on-site public information display along Plein Street and Government Avenue. This is one example only.
- The Madiba statue was removed from site during construction for safekeeping, following all due protocols, as confirmed by the heritage consultants.
- The future of the Louis Botha statue needs resolution as it occupies a prominent public space within the Parliament Precinct and on a prominent axis with Parliament on Roeland Street. The significance of this statue is not 'place-bound' with its placement in this location being conceived as part of the Stal Plein upgrades in the 1980s. However, it is accepted that this is beyond the scope of the current project.

The following comments were provided by Mr. Graham Jacobs (BELCom) in absentia, noting concerns regarding the proposed 'drum' (New Assembly intervention) when previously tabled at BELCom for initial discussion, echoing the discussions in the meeting of 8th October 2024.

Main Concerns as follows:

1. Why the external expression of the 'drum' was necessary in the first place is not clear. Virtually all parliamentarians have had only positive things to say about the (existing) New Assembly Building over the years despite this building having been constructed during the old Tricameral Parliament system. Associations with apartheid have been way overshadowed by this building being the seat of our new democratic parliament. That came across very clearly during the preparation of the CMP for parliament back in 2007. The building's apartheid history is *not* the predominant narrative reflected in this building's history.
2. The imposition of this 'drum' into the external envelope of the building is spatially problematic in relation to the Tuynhuys and its garden forecourt. Surely the focus of the space with its formal rectilinear geometry should remain the Tuynhuys and not another geometry 'butting in' from the side. The latter is an intrusion which diminishes the historical integrity of the Tuynhuys and its forecourt.

3. Whereas there is no problem in principle with circular arranged seating *within* the building (if indeed it is felt that a circle is the only way to represent democracy - which is queried). However, there is a major problem with the way that this is being forced onto the external envelope of the New Assembly building as already mentioned. The geometry comes across as forced, and if anything, a symbol of misplaced hubris.
4. Agreement with the minute where it records that:
 - a. The current design lacks sufficient thought when it comes to visual impact on context. The current proposals reflect a lack of thought regarding environmental integration.
 - b. The three-dimensional expression of the 'drum' form projects arrogance, overbearing scale and insensitivity to its spatial and heritage context.
 - c. There are concerns regarding the form in relation to the Tuynhuys garden.

COMMENT:

1. General Comments

- 1.1 The heritage report is well researched and comprehensive.
- 1.2 Given the national key-point status of the precinct, certain security protocols have limited the degree of information publicly available. There is concern with respect to the perceived limitation of opportunity for public participation / engagement on design proposals and by implication limiting the process of design response to comments received.
- 1.3 Imposition of concepts onto the context is problematic with a lack of integration with the heritage context.

2. New Assembly

- 2.1 Innovation and transparency welcomed with emphasis on a new vision to challenge previous dominant apartheid narratives, hearing multiple voices while acknowledging the past.
- 2.2 The process of concept development needs further detailed narrative explanation.
- 2.3 Whereas circular geometries are acceptable in principle, the 3-dimensional expression of the form of the drum seems excessive, out of scale, overly complex and lacks integration with this specific heritage context.
- 2.4 Concern regarding the overly dominant presence of the new insertion on the skyline and how its contribution to the layered history of the Parliamentary Precinct must be resolved.
- 2.5 Specific concerns regarding inserted new form as presented towards the Tuynhuys garden. While the existing glass balcony elements achieve a successful design interface with the Tuynhuys garden the extrapolation of this recessive design element as an informant to the proposed 'drum' has not yet been properly resolved.

3. Old Assembly

- 3.1 The integration of the Old Assembly with the New Assembly is critical.
- 3.2 There is a positive opportunity to have the language of the link building, and its structure clearly defined in comparison to the existing buildings on either side.
- 3.3 There is support for the recommendations of the heritage report that the final detailing of the glazed upper-level extensions be submitted for final approval.
- 3.4 There is also support for the recommendations of the heritage report regarding interventions to inner "Block B" that ongoing detailed development must ensure the

rationalization and simplification of this area to recognize its important historical layering and key relationship between the new foyer space and flanking courtyard spaces. This aspect should also be submitted for final approval.

4. Recommendations of the HIA

The recommendations of the heritage report (Volume 4) are carefully considered and are supported:

“5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that SAHRA issue a Permit for the work in terms of Section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act, subject to the following:

5.1.1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.2 The submission of an integrated landscaping plan to SAHRA prior to the work commencing.

5.1.3 Further and ongoing developed detail design and intervention in both the National Assembly and Old Assembly projects. Such detailed design during Stage 4 must necessarily recognise the extremely high significance of the site and its component buildings, both in terms of tangible as well as intangible heritage. This developed detail design (of the areas identified in Section 3.0 below) is to be reviewed by the heritage consultant and submitted to SAHRA for endorsement prior to commencement of construction of the area/ item concerned.

5.1.4 Monthly monitoring and reporting to SAHRA by the heritage consultant.

5.1.5 The submission of a separate Section 27 application to SAHRA should any additional work be necessary or deviations to the existing work that cannot be endorsed via the monthly monitoring reports.

5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

5.2.1 Trenching to be undertaken around the buildings should be subject to occasional monitoring by archaeologists.

5.2.2 All crew should be informed of the possibility of significant archaeological material being present on site, and should be advised to report any finds to the site foreman.

5.2.3 Should any such material be encountered, work in that area should cease immediately, and the monitoring archaeologist should be alerted to allow for inspection of the find site.

5.2.4 Should significant archaeological material, or human remains, be identified anywhere on site, all work in that area should stop, and SAHRA should be notified of the finds to agree on a way forward; this course of action could include controlled excavation of the area.

5.3 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

5.3.1 Further detailed design development and refinement of key components identified below should be tabled with SAHRA for endorsement prior to construction to ensure that the detailed design development stage underway continues to take into account the surrounding context in order to realise the desired powerful public statement while at the same time sitting comfortably into the Grade I context. These elements comprise:

(i) the entrance portico

(ii) junctions of the Assembly drum with the existing building

(iii) the refinement of the detailing of the drum

5.3.2 The upper level extension detailing requires further refinement and integration with the OA design in order to present a harmonious, uncluttered and layered approach to the complex.

5.3.3 A landscaping plan, focussing on the public areas under the assembly chamber and in particular from a heritage perspective, how this interfaces with the Tuynhuys parterre garden, is to be submitted to SAHRA.

5.4 FURTHER GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 The aims of potential of the project extend beyond the borders of the sites of the National Assembly and Old Assembly projects. In particular, Stal Plein and the Roeland street entrance with the Louis Botha statue, all need to be addressed in a holistic manner. The DBSA, Parliament and DPWi should be tasked with taking this forward via the Precinct Master Plan process in order to fully realise the project's potential.

5.4.2 Public access to and engagement with the site and the Parliament buildings in particular are a key driver of the nature of the interventions and designs proposed. To realise the potential of these proposals, it is essential that public access (obviously in a controlled and secure manner) be retained and embedded in the management of the site and building.

5.4.3 Interpretative displays, documenting the place as the site of 20th century formalisation and entrenching into law of apartheid policies, the transition to democracy, and then most importantly, as the site of the first democratic parliament of the Republic of South Africa, need to be curated and integrated into the public realm of the building in a meaningful way.

5.4.4 The 2012 Conservation Management Plan was already due for review prior to the fire. The fire and this rebuild and redevelopment necessitates an urgent revision and updating of the CMP. An extensive amount of research has been undertaken for this process (not all of it utilised in the reports) and should be recorded formally. Parliament and SAHRA should take this process forward in order to revise the CMP according to current and accepted best practice.

5.5 OLD ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that SAHRA issue a Permit for the work in terms of Section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act, subject to the following:

5.5.1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.5.2 The submission of an integrated landscaping plan to SAHRA prior to the work commencing.

5.5.3 Further and ongoing developed detail design and intervention in both the National Assembly and Old Assembly projects. Such detailed design during Stage 4 must necessarily recognise the extremely high significance of the site and its component buildings, both in terms of tangible as well as intangible heritage. This developed detail design (of the areas identified in Section 3.0 below) is to be reviewed by the heritage consultant and submitted to SAHRA for endorsement prior to commencement of construction of the area/ item concerned.

5.5.4 Monthly monitoring and reporting to SAHRA by the heritage consultant.

5.5.5 The submission of a separate Section 27 application to SAHRA should any additional work be necessary or deviations to the existing work that cannot be endorsed via the monthly monitoring reports.

5.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

5.6.1 Trenching to be undertaken around the buildings should be subject to occasional monitoring by archaeologists.

5.6.2 All crew should be informed of the possibility of significant archaeological material being present on site, and should be advised to report any finds to the site foreman.

5.6.3 Should any such material be encountered, work in that area should cease immediately, and the monitoring archaeologist should be alerted to allow for inspection of the find site.

5.6.4 Should significant archaeological material, or human remains, be identified anywhere on site, all work in that area should stop, and SAHRA should be notified of the finds to agree on a way forward; this course of action could include controlled excavation of the area.

5.7 OLD ASSEMBLY

5.7.1 Interventions into the fabric, repurposing and rationalising of spaces, conservation strategies and methodologies must all be undertaken with due care and recognition of the Grade I status of the site.

5.7.2 The 1979 “Poorthuis” and 1980 Committee Room extensions to the Old Assembly are to be fully recorded and documented prior to demolition. Material is to be salvaged for potential reuse elsewhere on site.

5.7.3 The glazed upper level extensions are supported and recommended for approval given that they strip away and rework the confusing and cluttered additions that currently compromise the expression of the simple 1910 addition. The final detailing of this element is to be submitted to SAHRA for endorsement prior to construction.

5.7.4 The strategies and principles related to the integration of new services and the rationalisation of existing services, should be submitted to SAHRA for endorsement as a condition of the Permit. This includes the seismic provisions, water tanks, IT and comms and general MEP servicing.

5.7.5 The conservation (both from a scientific and philosophical perspective) of the historic Old Assembly chamber requires special care and attention, and this detailing should be subject to submission to SAHRA for endorsement as a condition of the Permit.

5.7.6 The reinstated rooflight and its detailing as part of the new layer, requires detailed design development and should be subject to submission to SAHRA for endorsement as a condition of the Permit.

5.7.7 The inner “Block B” (1927-1962), the much altered office block component, has been identified as the most suitable location to insert the additional offices and support spaces required by Parliament. Ongoing detailed development must ensure the rationalisation and simplification of this area to recognise and express the important layering evident and its key relationship between the new foyer and courtyard space on either side.

5.7.8 A landscaping plan focussing of the internal and external hard and soft landscaping, adaptation and conservation of the Parliament Street wall and new gateway must be submitted to SAHRA as a condition of the Permit.

5.8 FURTHER GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.8.1 The aims of potential of the project extend beyond the borders of the sites of the National Assembly and Old Assembly projects. In particular, Stal Plein and the Roeland street entrance with the Louis Botha statue, all need to be addressed in a holistic manner. The DBSA, Parliament and DPWi should be tasked with taking this forward via the Precinct Master Plan process in order to fully realise the project’s potential.

5.8.2 Public access to and engagement with the site and the Parliament buildings in particular are a key driver of the nature of the interventions and designs proposed. To realise the potential of these proposals, it is essential that public access (obviously in a controlled and secure manner) be retained and embedded in the management of the site and building.

5.8.3 Interpretative displays, documenting the place as the site of 20th century formalisation and entrenching into law of apartheid policies, the transition to democracy, and then most importantly,

as the site of the first democratic parliament of the Republic of South Africa, need to be curated and integrated into the public realm of the building in a meaningful way.

5.8.4 The 2012 Conservation Management Plan was already due for review prior to the fire. The fire and this rebuild and redevelopment necessitates an urgent revision and updating of the CMP. An extensive amount of research has been undertaken for this process (not all of it utilised in the reports) and should be recorded formally. Parliament and SAHRA should take this process forward in order to revise the CMP according to current and accepted best practice."

Noting that the recommendations require that further design details be submitted to SAHRA, HWC requests sight of the detailed designs and the opportunity to provide comment on the detailed designs for SAHRA's consideration.

The committee emphasizes the critical need for detailed design development to unfold to resolve the proposals seamlessly into the context, and for resolved integration between OA and NA, and between the buildings and their landscape context and into the precinct holistically. Whereas SAHRA is the decision-making authority, HWC requests sight of the detailed design work for information and comment to assist SAHRA in ensuring the detailed design is well-resolved.

The committee recommends that an Overall Masterplan / Framework Plan for the entire Parliament Precinct be required, to be developed in conjunction with a review and update of the precinct Conservation Management Plan (CMP). A periodic review and update of the CMP should be undertaken at least every **10** years.

SJ

7. Adoption of decisions and resolutions

The Committee agreed to adopt the decisions and resolutions as recorded above.

8. CLOSURE

The meeting adjourned at 18:00

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 16 October 2024

MINUTES APPROVED AND SIGNED BY:

CHAIR:

DATE:

SECRETARY:

DATE: