



## ***Managing Heritage Resources More Effectively***

### ***Comments on Proposed Western Cape Heritage Resources Management Bill***

#### ***Introduction***

*In considering the “Proposed Western Cape Heritage Resources Management Bill” it is necessary to consider how the process can be more effectively managed at both the provincial and local levels.*

*Currently all applications for buildings old than 60 years which fall under the **National Heritage Resources Act of 1999** are processed by Heritage Western Cape at their offices in Cape Town. Not only is this administratively unwieldy but also practically inefficient, as in many cases properties throughout the Western Cape on a daily basis are being renovated, extended and demolished without any permission being requested from Heritage Western Cape.*

*It is practically impossible for the Province to manage this process centrally, any more than if all town planning and building plan decisions for the Western Cape were processed centrally in Cape Town rather than by the Municipalities. In addition, regions such as the Southern Cape with major urban centres like George and Oudtshoorn are often neglected due to the pressure on new and existing developments from within the Cape Town Metro and its surrounds.*

*Bearing the above in mind it is absolutely essential that decentralization takes place on a managed basis to allow registered Heritage organizations and the local Municipalities to take operating decisions on Grade 3 buildings. In the case of Greater Oudtshoorn there is already a Heritage Officer in place in the Municipality as well as **Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis** and the **De Rust Heritage Conservation Association**, both of which are registered heritage bodies with Heritage Western Cape.*

*Another key advantage would be to free up Heritage Western Cape to carry out its oversight role without getting tied up in basic daily administration. The role of Heritage Western Cape would then evolve into a strategic monitoring and evaluation role of selected activities at the local level of Municipal Government.*

### ***A Suggested Decentralised Heritage Structure for Greater Oudtshoorn***

*In considering how a structure of the type described above could operate it is necessary to utilize existing skills in each local area including volunteer organizations such as **Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis** and the **De Rust Heritage Conservation Association** (see full details on [www.derustheritage.org.za](http://www.derustheritage.org.za)) as a part of the overall heritage structure in Oudtshoorn.*

***Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis** have already conducted a number of Heritage Workshops with Professor Matilda Burden from the University of Stellenbosch. Delegates who attended were from Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis, De Rust Heritage and the Oudtshoorn Municipality.*

- This already provides a solid local skills base. In addition, it includes the significant background skills and knowledge of many professional volunteers who have extensive experience in the management of large and complex organizations, both locally and internationally.*
- Allowing the Oudtshoorn Municipality as the third tier of government to manage Grade 3 Level Permit Applications in conjunction with **Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis** and **De Rust Heritage** would ensure that as far as possible the process is more effectively managed than at present.*

- *There are a number of cases where remedial action has been taken by the **Joint Permit Committee in Oudtshoorn** in conjunction with Heritage Western Cape where a Stop Order has been issued with no effect and with absolutely no follow-up legal action. The chances of this taking place at the local level are far less as there are officials on the ground who would be in a position to ensure compliance.*

*In order to maintain standards it is suggested that a designated official/s from Heritage Western Cape should be designated to visit Oudtshoorn on a regular basis (we suggest quarterly) in order to audit the Permits issued by the Municipality as well as to check other matters of compliance with the Act.*

*The above proposals would go a long way to ensure better use of the current resources of Heritage Western Cape as well as a more effective on the ground application and monitoring of Heritage related issues in the Greater Oudtshoorn area.*

#### **Formation of Joint Heritage Overlay Zone Advisory Committee (HOZAC)**

*The Oudtshoorn Municipality have already allocated an amount of R 120 000 in the current budget for 2018/19 to commence with a formal process of providing a **Heritage Inventory for the Greater Oudtshoorn area.***

*In order to ensure that the initial heritage survey process is clearly managed and understood by all involved it has been agreed that a **Pilot Survey will be undertaken in De Rust** as the village has a clearly defined structure in terms of heritage properties over 60 years old. To facilitate the survey process is managed effectively a **Joint Heritage Overlay Zone Advisory Committee** is to be formed with members from **Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis, De Rust Heritage and the Oudtshoorn Municipality.***

#### **A Decentralised Heritage Management System for the Western Cape**

*In considering the above proposal it is considered possible to extend this approach on a wider basis across the Western Cape in areas where the required skills and registered volunteer “Heritage Organisations” currently exist.*

*This would free up Heritage Western Cape to concentrate on the areas where only limited resources currently exist as well as carrying out its main function of its oversight role and mandate.*

*In adopting an approach such as that described above this would allow the following:*

- ***Heritage Western Cape to monitor and evaluate Provincial Grade 2 Heritage sites as well as carrying out its oversight and monitoring role at the local level in terms of Grade 3 level approvals.***
- ***Local Municipalities and Heritage Organizations to manage and monitor compliance with the regulations at the local level under the guidance of Heritage Western Cape.***
- ***Formal Heritage Overlay Zone Advisory Committees be set up where registered heritage organisations already exist, in order to assist local municipalities in managing their existing heritage resources.***
- ***Local areas without the required level of infrastructure and skills should remain under the control of Heritage Western Cape until the required skills base can be established.***

*Consideration should also be given to the Western Cape being split into a number of “**heritage regions**” with responsible officials from Heritage Western Cape being nominated to sit on the regional boards. As an example the Southern Cape could be seen as a semi-autonomous region with quarterly board meetings to report on progress and areas of concern. Audits would also be conducted at this level to check on compliance and to rectify errors and omissions where they occurred.*

*In addition to the above, it is suggested that the various Heritage Western Cape Committees should alternate their meetings across the proposed new regions in order to allow “registered heritage organisations” to observe the type of issue raised and the way of handling these topics at both the local and provincial level. This will also help build capacity at all levels of the structure.*

*Modern organization theory and practice supports the above proposals at both the local and international level. The outdated 20th Century approach with all power being concentrated at the centre does not work in the 21st Century interconnected digital world. The above approach could easily be incorporated into the proposed approach to Heritage Resources in the Western Cape.*

### **A Southern Cape Heritage Co-ordination Body**

*In order to facilitate an initiative of the type mentioned above it is suggested that a informal co-ordinating body of registered heritage organisations in the Southern Cape will be formed early in 2019.*

***Bodies to be included are amongst others the Simon van der Stel Foundation, Heritage Oudtshoorn Erfenis, De Rust Heritage and Prince Albert Heritage.*** Other registered heritage associations in the region but not included above will also be invited to participate in order to obtain maximum effectiveness.

*The Southern Cape Heritage Co-ordination Body will meet twice or three times a year but will share relevant heritage developments on a regular basis. This will also be shared with Heritage Western Cape in order to facilitate better co-ordination between the **Southern Cape Region and HWC Head Office.***

### **Some Conclusions**

*On the ground we are seeing many Heritage properties being defaced and destroyed on a daily basis without adequate controls being in place at the local level. If this continues we will not have many of these heritage resources available to us within the next 20 years.*

*The centralized approach currently in place at the Western Cape Provincial level discourages local innovation and skills development. In addition, it will not require additional government funding as much of the necessary work currently is carried out by dedicated and committed volunteers.*

*Funding is also available from the private sector and individual donors for selected heritage projects in order to maintain and grow local capacity and skills as per the latest **Southern Cape** initiative above.*

*In terms of extensive hands-on experience we believe that it is impossible for Heritage Western Cape to manage the various levels effectively from the centre. We therefore, support the view that the above proposals would go a long way towards resolving a number of the key issues and problem areas raised above.*

*In addition to the above we believe that the type of organisation and management structure proposed for the Western Cape will allow Heritage Western Cape to become a clear leader in terms of a new and innovative approach to heritage resources not only in the Western Cape Province but also at the regional and global level.*

*Alan Tonkin*

***De Rust Heritage Conservation Association***

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