



# WEST RAND HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

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## THE ROLE OF THE TOWN PLANNER IN HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has for many years been associated with the assessment of heritage resources (manmade heritage) that form part of the landscape. The two disciplines that were first incorporated into the assessment of development and land use and planning were anthropology and archaeology. This was as a result of the obligations carried by developers under the Environmental Conservation Act and associated EIA regulations. Other cultural resources such as the architectural heritage were protected by the former National Monuments Act (No 28 of 1969). The National Monuments Act was notoriously silent on the subject of the evaluation of the impact of development on cultural resources. Since the promulgation of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) in April 2000, it is obligatory for professionals such as architects, engineers and historians to be involved in the impact assessment of certain categories of development.

### NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT

The National Heritage Resources Act aims to promote good management of the national estate. The *"national estate"* is defined in Section 3 as *"those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations....."* A place, building or structure are of cultural significance when it have aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.

Section 34(1) of the Act stipulates that *"no person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority."*

In the management of heritage resources must any person who undertakes a development that will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup> in extent or involving three or more existing erven or sub-divisions thereof (or involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years), notify the responsible heritage resources authority of the proposed development with details regarding the locations, nature and extent of the development, etc. Section 38(1) include the rezoning of a site exceeding 10 000m<sup>2</sup> in the requirement for the submission of a heritage impact assessment (HIA) at the cost of the developer. The specifications for the content of the HIA are listed in Section 38(3)

### HERITAGE AND TOWN PLANNING

The National Heritage Resources Act follows the principle that the levels of government closest to the community should manage heritage resources. Local and Provincial authorities manage their heritage as part of their town planning schemes.

At the time of the compilation or revision of a town planning or regional planning scheme or a spatial development plan, a planning authority must compile an inventory of the heritage resources. As an interim measure a permit will be required to alter, demolish, renovate or restore any structure older than 60 years until the survey has been carried out.

A planning authority must, at the time of revision of a town or regional planning scheme, or the compilation or revision of a spatial development plan, investigate the designation of heritage areas to protect places of environmental or cultural interest. In areas where there has not yet been a systematic survey to identify conservation-worthy places, a permit is required to alter, renovate, restore or demolish any structure older than 60 years. This will apply until a survey has been done and identified heritage resources are formally protected.

Anyone who intends to undertake a development (of whatsoever nature) must obtain a permit from the heritage resources authority. A heritage impact assessment report must be completed at the developer's cost.

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*"Your heritage our concern"*

Heritage Resource Management; Section 34(1) Permit Applications; Research; Heritage and Cultural tours; Project Management

## IDENTIFICATION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES/AREAS: ABOUT THE PROCESS

Producing an inventory of heritage resources involves collecting and investigating historical information and graphic documentation, analyzing the site or structure in question, and then synthesizing these elements to provide better understanding of a site's historical importance. As much as possible, reports are based on primary sources, supported by published secondary sources.

For an architecturally significant site the process may involve chronicling the design and construction process and the roles played by architect, builder or owner. Factors that may have influenced the design range from geography and building technology, to regional or national trends in architecture, influences of its own owners. In other instances an association with important persons or events distinguishes the site.

To determine the significance of heritage areas, the sites must firstly be described in detail. A description of the area should detail its physical proportions including any available plans, photographs or land surveys. The goal of this documentation is to provide a record of the area and landscape, as it exists in the present time. A history of the area should be presented in association with the chronology that interprets the evidence of lack thereof. This history should place the area in the contest of local, South African, Africa or World history.

## WEST RAND HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

West Rand Heritage Consultants (WRHC) is your partner in the management of heritage resources. WRHC undertakes research of heritage resources addressing the historical, cultural and architectural value or significance of places, structures or buildings. In discussing the origins and subsequent development of a structure, WRHC examines the relationship to local, regional and national trends, and considers annunciations with important persons or events.

Contact WRHC at [info@wrhc.co.za](mailto:info@wrhc.co.za) fax 086 632 9455 for:

- Handling of permit applications in compliance to Section 34(1) of the Act;
- Heritage impact assessments (HIA) in compliance to Section 38(1) of the Act;
- Identification and documentation of heritage resources;
- Research on historical, cultural and architectural significance of heritage resources;
- Development of policies/strategies on the management of heritage resources;
- Project Management on the conservation and restoration of heritage



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