



THE CAPE INSTITUTE FOR ARCHITECTURE

71 HOUT STREET CAPE TOWN 8001 PO BOX 3952 CAPE TOWN 8000
EMAIL: info@cifa.org.za FAX:+27 21 424 3620

DIE KAAPSE INSTITUUT VIR ARGITEKTUUR

HOUTSTRAAT 71 KAAPSTAD 8001 POSBUS 3952 KAAPSTAD 8000
TEL: +27 21 424 7128 WEBSITE: www.cifa.org.za

Cape Institute for Architecture- Conservation Guidelines

Members of the Cape Institute for Architecture are required to comply with the “Code of Ethics: Code of Conduct” published by the South African Institute of Architects.

Principle One of the “Code” states that “Members have a responsibility to serve and promote the public interest in a professional and responsible manner”. Rule 1.1.1 under this Principle states that Members shall “ensure that their professional actions contribute to the quality and sustainability of the natural and built environment ...”. It is explicit that the conservation of historic and architecturally significant buildings and urban conservation areas, areas of archaeological and paleontological interest and similar resources fall within the domain of public interest anticipated by this Rule.

The Cape Institute for Architecture fully aligns itself with these principles and is committed to the pursuit of architectural excellence in conservation matters.

Purpose of these Guidelines:

The primary purpose of these Guidelines is to inform conservation-orientated works and endeavours, particularly in the current context of inadequate and incomplete administration of the law by the responsible agencies of the state. It is explicit that the Guidelines are written in a particular context and that it will be amended and developed in response to changes in evolving circumstances. It is also explicit that although the Guidelines are primarily intended to guide architects in their professional actions in dealing with conservation-worthy buildings and environments, they do have an underlying educational intent.

Preamble:

Recognising that the historic cities and townscapes, the natural and cultural landscapes within and beyond the urban environs, and that historic buildings and sites are all significant components of the *national estate* (and are defined and identified as such in the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999; see Section 3); and

Recognising that South Africa is a growing and developing country with a desperate need to accommodate and improve the circumstances of its growing population; and

Recognising that the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 sets out a framework for the management of the national estate, including requirements that persons employed to make applications in relation to any component of the national estate have the appropriate “minimum qualifications and standards of practice” (Section 48) and that impact assessment reports be compiled by persons with the “relevant qualifications and experience and standing in heritage resources management” (see Section 38); and



Recognising both that architects' desires for excellence and that the special responsibilities of architects in this context demand a high degree of professionalism:

The Cape Institute for Architecture has drawn up these Conservation Guidelines for its members in their dealings with elements or aspects of the national estate.

Respect for the Law:

While it is recognised that architects have an essential responsibility to their clients, it is also necessary for architects to recognise that they are obliged to respect the law, its intentions and its spirit, because the law embodies the will of the people. Indeed, it is our presumption that the law is the mechanism through which public policy is implemented. Given that the National Heritage Resources Act specifically requires that the responsible heritage resources authority ensure that the proponents of conservation-related development have the appropriate qualifications and experience, it is evident that the failure of the members of the profession to respect or adhere to the law will bring that profession, its institutions and all of its members into disrepute.

The Identification of Cultural Significance and/or Conservation-Worthiness:

In many cases the cultural significance and/or conservation-worthiness of a building, site or environment may have been identified through previous research or study. In such cases the degree of such significance, usually signified through a *grading*, determines the nature of the scrutiny process to be followed by the appropriate authority(s). In these cases it is the responsibility of the architect to negotiate with the appropriate heritage resources agency and so to obtain the appropriate approvals.

In those cases where the cultural significance and/or the degree of such significance has not been established or is clearly inappropriately established, it is the responsibility of the architect to ensure that the appropriate research is conducted and that the degree of significance is properly established. Further, it is the responsibility of the architect to ensure that whoever is briefed to conduct such research and make such assessments is appropriately skilled and experienced.

Also, recognising that the cultural values underpinning the assessments and evaluations of cultural significance are frequently contested, architects are advised to consult specialists and, in appropriate circumstances, to consult with interested and affected parties.

The Necessity for Appropriate Expertise:

Although the project architect may believe that he/she is sufficiently qualified and skilled to undertake the necessary historical research and to assign or establish the significance of a building, site or the environs, he/she should always ensure that the applicable heritage resource authority accepts the architect's credentials as a researcher and/or designer.

This applies also to other related skills and experience, for example, those necessary in negotiating the laws, administrative and consultation processes, the skills in designing buildings in such contexts, and the knowledge and experience of the particular types of conservation-worthy buildings and environs involved.

This is in the interest of the architect, of the client and of the conservation-worthy buildings, sites and environments themselves.

General Conservation Principles:

The general principles contained in the National Heritage Resources Act and in these Guidelines should be respected at all times:

Authenticity has long been a subject of dispute in conservation-oriented endeavours: it is the responsibility of the architect to identify the authentic ancient material or fabric (original and/or layers, as the case may be) of the building, site or environment and to understand the authentic shape, form, appearance and/or character of the building, site or environment *before* definitive demolitions, works, alterations or additions are commenced with.

The building/site as a document: The culturally significant building/site has often been regarded as though it was an historical document and it should, therefore, not be altered in a way that could alter or falsify its message or testimony. This principle should be respected, although this principle should not prohibit the creation of new layers (and meaning).

Conservation and development: It is the general intention of these Guidelines to ensure that authentic conservation-worthy or culturally significant fabric and character of those properly studied buildings, sites and places are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. It is also the general intent that the conservation-worthy texture and grain of the townscape, and the people-oriented functioning of the urban environment and of the cultural landscape are, at least, conserved if not enriched and enhanced by each endeavour/intervention in and on the culturally significant components of the townscape, the city and the environment generally.

Context: Where appropriate, the physical context of the site of the proposed building should inform the approach adopted in any intervention on an identified heritage resource.

Cultural significance/conservation-worthiness and its identification: The cultural significance or conservation-worthiness of a building, site or environment is determined by its historical, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual and/or social value for past, present and/or future generations. This significance should be established through proper research, which should be confirmed or authenticated by the appropriate heritage resources authority; and its degree or extent (indicated by its *grading*) should be established by the appropriate authority. If the significance of a building or site has not already been established, it should be established through a heritage impact assessment process, conducted by an appropriately qualified and experienced person with standing in heritage resource management and monitored by the appropriate heritage resource authority.

Recording and reporting: A complete record of all research conducted and all findings made on site should be kept by the architect and, where appropriate, reported to the appropriate archive or heritage resource authority. Further, where appropriate such findings should be published in the appropriate publication.

APPENDIX: Definitions

“**Conjecture**” is an assumption, however well-informed, not based on sufficient evidence.

“**Conservation**” is the entire complex of the intellectual and other activities involved in the process of the recognition or identification of culturally significant buildings, places and environments, and all of the activities aimed at the transmission of such identified buildings, places and environments and their significance into the future in the interest of all of humankind.

“**Cultural landscapes**” are landscapes designed, improved or, at least, affected by human activity, whether self-consciously or not.

“**Maintenance**” is the *continuous protective care* of the fabric and settings of buildings and places and is distinguished from repair.

“**Preservation**” is the *maintaining of the existing fabric of a building or site in its existing state* and includes the retarding of deterioration.

“**Reconstruction**” is the *return of a building or site to an earlier known or hypothetical state*.

“**Restoration**” is the *return of a building or site to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling authentic existing components*.

“**Reversibility**” means that additions and alterations are made in such a manner that the original or current state of the fabric can be regained at some later date should this be desired.