



NAPIER HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION BODY

(Registration no: HM/CB/28-02-2020/03)

Registered NPO no 272-966

(Email: napierheritageconservationbody@gmail.com)

<https://napierheritageconservationbody.com/>

Chairman's report on Napier Heritage and Conservation Body (NHCB).

2022/2023 has been a year of consolidation and bridgebuilding for the Napier Heritage and Conservation Body. On the issue of consolidation, the NHCB established itself as an organisation that rendered support to the Cape Agulhas Municipality on all heritage aspects relating to Napier.

In particular, the NHCB, together with the Napier Residents Association was instrumental in protecting heritage and conservation assets of the village through our input into two essential planning documents of CAM, namely its Integrated Development Plan and the Spatial Development Framework which will guide development of the village over the next few years.

The draft SDF which is currently being finalized, includes a Heritage Overlay Zone which is essential to protect the older buildings of 60 years and older and other heritage and conservation assets of Napier. The inclusion of the Heritage Overlay Zone as well as a conservation space along the Klippedrift River would not have been possible without the insistence and advocacy of members of the NHCB and our partners, the NRA. It averted a very real threat to the village's heritage and conservation assets when CAM by-laws on the zoning scheme and municipal land use planning, which were accepted by council in July last year (shortly after our previous AGM) did not include the necessary protection for our heritage and conservation assets.

In our continued engagements with CAM, we have consistently stressed the importance of heritage and conservation in the future of Napier. The preservation of our built environment as well as the natural landscape around us has tremendous potential to stimulate our local tourism industry, on which many of our current businesses depend, and to create further job opportunities.

While the NHCB has experienced some successes in stemming the tide of densification and unthinking destruction of the unique character of the village, there is still much to do going forwards.

The first and most urgent task of the NHCB is to assist CAM in doing a proper Heritage Survey. In July 2022 we took a step forward in this regard when Prof. Donaldson from Stellenbosch



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University visited Napier with his student for a preliminary survey, which is a start in the process of recording Napier's heritage and conservation assets.

A style guide that will provide property owners within the heritage overlay zone with guidance on heritage-compatible alterations, additions and renovations to buildings is in process and will be launched after the Spatial Development Framework for CAM is completed. Our aim is to include the style guide in the amended municipal by-laws on zoning and land use planning.

At our last AGM in July last year, we mentioned that we were involved with CAM's beautification project for Napier. The NHCB proposed a proper welcome sign at the cutting on the R316 towards Caledon. After a site visit with CAM's head of roads and a representative of the Western Province's roads department, it the initial site in the road reserve was not appropriate. An alternative outside the road reserve was proposed subject to ownership of the land under CAM. This has now been confirmed and a new application will be submitted to CAM by end of June this year.

As you probably aware, the two main heritage assets registered with Heritage Western Cape for Napier are the Feeshuis as well as the main church building of the Dutch Reformed Church, both of whom were previously registered as national monuments. It is therefore fitting that the first heritage and conservation project initiated by the NHCB in conjunction with the Dutch Reformed Church Napier is the refurbishment of the Dutch Reformed church building in accordance with guidelines provided by Heritage Western Cape. The project is currently under way and scheduled for completion by the end of July 2023.

The Heritage body is an integral part of the building plan processing by Cape Agulhas Municipality. We get to see and comment on plans for new buildings or alterations that are submitted to CAM. In addition, all subdivisions, departures and rezonings are also sent to the NHCB for comment or object to.

Although initially involved monthly in providing input for building plans, subdivisions and rezoning of properties older than 60 years as well as properties within the Heritage Overlay Zone, the introduction of the POPI Act had a huge impact on the free flow of information from CAM. As a result, CAM passed 17 building plans with the NHCB being able to make a meaningful contribution in the submission of only 4 of those. The NHCB therefore had to investigate how we could remove this obstacle to fulfilling our role as a watchdog of heritage and conservation matters.



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Although initially reluctant to do so, the NHCB steering committee resolved to charge a R120 per year membership fee after investigating other heritage bodies such as the heritage organisation in Stanford, Swellendam, McGregor and Greyton. The funds generated will be used amongst others to fund our contribution to the proposed Heritage Survey, administrative costs and proposed member functions, such as talks and walks with a heritage and conservation theme.

During coming year, we will embark on a membership drive and we would like to encourage all attending to collect and submit the membership form which has been made available tonight.

I would sincerely like to thank the following former steering committee members for their valuable contributions as founder members in the past year, namely Messrs. Tom Cole, Lori Hodgson and Eksteen Odendal. Finally, a special thank you to Mr Randall Fuller, our first NHCB chairperson, under whose leadership we managed to launch and register the NHCB with Heritage Western Cape as well register as an NPO – despite the challenges presented by the Covid 19 pandemic. Without his hard work, the NHCB would not exist, and we owe him a debt of gratitude. Randall stepped down in October last year and I was duly elected as acting chairperson at the steering committee meeting of 3 October 2023 – leaving me in an increasingly hot seat.

We would also like to thank the Napier Residents Association and the Napier CPF for their support of our organisation as well as the Cape Agulhas Municipality management and councillors. We are looking forward to forging an even deeper understanding and positive relationship with all these parties.

As we started to engage with heritage and conservation matters as a steering committee, we became increasingly aware that it would firstly be sensible to call in more expertise and knowledge. As a result, we have added the following portfolios represented by the following persons:



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Chairman & Beautification:	Kent Georgala
Deputy Chairman, Style Guide, SDF & Overlay Zones:	Okko de Jamaer
Secretary:	Marina Richards
Communications:	Ina Georgala
Heritage Survey & GIS:	Adre Aggenbach
Plans, subdivisions, rezoning and departures:	Megum Reyneke
Legal Governance & Compliance:	Marilyn Budow
Treasury & Finance:	Randall Fuller
Environmental issues & tree policy:	Lesley Richardson
Property Practitioners:	Sharleen Lomey

During the past year, we also finalised and adopted a Code of Ethics based on input from Heritage Western Cape and other heritage bodies. The Code of Ethics holds the members of our steering committee to a high standard of conduct and accountability when handling issues of sensitivity and confidentiality.

The NHCB is currently represented on the Ward 1 ward committee by Mr Okko De Jamaer. Chaired by our ward councillor and Deputy Mayor, Raymond Ross, the ward committee has offered us the opportunity to also advocate for heritage and conservation issues and make a positive input relating to these issues at this level.

During the past year, steering committee members attended several meetings as an interested and affected party. Amongst others, we were privileged to attend the first outreach meeting of Heritage Western Cape on February 9 this year. It was held in Bredasdorp and several issues of concern amongst the heritage bodies of Napier, Elim, Arniston, Cape Agulhas, Struisbaai, Protea and Klipdale was discussed. It indicates the growing concern



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about the erosion of the Overberg's heritage and conservation assets, partly caused by a new post-Covid wave of development.

Something that we have noticed over the past year is the influx of new, often younger, residents who have an interest in preserving the heritage of this village. A number of these are in Sarel Cilliers Street. This excites us. We are sometimes consulted by property practitioners, owners and architects to discuss these aspects even before an offer is put in on a particular property or plans submitted to the Municipality. This is very encouraging for us going forward so as avoid 'difficult' conversations at a later stage. An example of this was a recent positive meeting with an architect to discuss changes to plans presented to us to be more sympathetic to heritage in a very sensitive part of the village. We have even been able to provide a new owner with an old photograph of his property which he intends restoring. We would like to thank those property practitioners who have bought into this partnership. We hope to expand on these partnerships going forwards to ensure win-win situations.

I wish to thank my fellow Steering committee members for their time and effort during this year. I am sure that going forward, we will continue to move this very worthwhile organisation in the right direction. We are as always open to suggestions or comments from interested parties in our village.

Thank you.

Kent Georgala

For NHCB

17 May 2023