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DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

NO. 1016

25 SEPTEMBER 2020



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

DECLARATION OF THE ROCKLANDS COMMUNITY HALL; MITCHELL'S PLAIN; CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency, in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) SAHRA hereby declares The Rocklands Community Hall; Erf 11553; Mitchell's Plain; Cape Town, Western Cape as a National Heritage Site.

Statement of Significance

Rocklands Community Hall, built by the City of Cape Town Council in 1981, was the venue of an historic gathering on 20th August 1983 which saw the establishment of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and signified a turning point in the struggle against Apartheid.

The UDF was formed to unite people and organisations across South Africa despite racial, social and religious differences, and called for a united non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa. The gathering was attended by over 500 organisations from youth/student organisations, trade unions, church groups, civic, and women organisations, in response to the social economic and political changes that had been taking place since the 1976 Youth Uprisings. This included, and was in fact, spearheaded by, the introduction of the Tricameral Parliamentary system, a government system along racial lines which excluded the majority (Black) South Africans.

The gathering at Rocklands heralded a new phase in the Liberation Struggle as the UDF placed itself at the forefront of intensified and sustained mass protests that took place across South Africa between 1984 and 1986. The UDF demonstrated that a diverse coalition of groups and individuals could stand together, even in the most difficult times of suppression, despite differences in ideologies, to successfully put pressure on the Apartheid regime.

Socially, Rocklands Community Hall was built as a multi-amenities facility to provide for the social and recreational needs of the Mitchell's Plains community (many of whom were forcefully removed from District 6), a "people's place". Rocklands continues to be such a "people's place" to the residents of Mitchell's Plain, providing various social and recreational needs such as issuing of social grants, sports clubs, church services, library, creche and senior citizens meeting place.

Architecturally, Rocklands Hall was one of eight halls built by the City of Cape Town in the Cape Flats between 1970s and 1980s, based on the design by Graham Parker. Parker was awarded the Architectural Award of Merit by the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects for the design. This led to the design being used for several community halls across South Africa.

Schedule

The demarcation of the site, inclusive of the Rocklands Community Hall (both minor and main halls), the UDF Memorial and Memorial Square, Community Health Care Centre and the Library situated is as follows:

| Site Name | Erf No / Farm | Province | Nearest Town | Municipality | Survey Diagram |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Rocklands Community Hall | Erf 11553, Mitchell's Plain | Western Cape | Cape Town | City of Cape Town | 47/81 |

END