



PUBLIC NOTICE

FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE DECLARATION OF THE GROOTE SCHUUR SPECIFICALLY DECLARED COLLECTION (Section 32 of the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999)

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) intends to amend the declaration of the Groote Schuur Specifically Declared Collection by amending the declaration of objects with Great Zimbabwe Provenance, including a Soapstone Bird in terms of Section 32 (4) (b).

The Groote Schuur Collection was declared a National Cultural Treasure on 21 November 1997 in Gazette Notice 1538/18436 and is deemed a Specifically Declared Heritage Collection under the National Heritage Resources Act. The Groote Schuur Collection consists of a wide range of cultural objects assembled by Cecil John Rhodes and his agents during his residence at Groote Schuur Estate. The historically diverse Collection includes:

- Furniture and metalware
- Carpets, textiles, books and manuscripts
- Photographs and artworks
- Ceramics, silverware, and weaponry
- Objects of historical, aesthetic, and cultural value

Among these items are 14 objects and photographs originating from Great Zimbabwe, including a Zimbabwean Soapstone Bird, removed from Great Zimbabwe in the late 19th century under unethical and unlawful circumstances. These objects constitute part of Zimbabwe's nationally significant archaeological heritage.

In line with international heritage recognition of the importance of returning cultural objects obtain under colonial and otherwise unethical circumstances, South Africa seeks to restore dignity, historical justice and cultural rights to affected communities. Therefore, the withdrawal of the declaration of these objects will allow for the ethical return of these important items back to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Your comments regarding our intention are highly appreciated. For more information and to send us your comments and opinions, please scan the QR code below and visit our website at www.sahra.org.za

Comments will close on the 14th December 2026



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