



The heritage building due for an upgrade.

Saved from demo to be lovingly restored

One of Stanford's oldest dwellings was recently saved from demolition and will now be lovingly restored.

Situated on the Okkie Smuts Primary School grounds, the Buzzy Beez building was once a 'nagmaalhuisie' – ie used by the farmers in the late 1800s and early 1900s when they came with their ox wagons to the village for church services. In the 2000s it was used as a pre-school classroom.

Owing to the lack of maintenance the building became more and more dilapidated, and was declared unfit for human occupation in 2015. This paved the way for the Department of Public Works (DPW) to decide to demolish the building (and playground in front of it) and build modern face-brick classrooms for the increasing number of Grade R learners.

Fortunately the Stanford Heritage Committee got wind of this plan and, as the building is older than 60 years and is situated on a heritage-graded site in a nationally declared heritage village, DPW and the Department of Education were informed that they would need a demolition order and prove that the building could not be restored before it could be demolished. Intense discussions followed and the result was that the building (and playground) would not be demolished, that the classrooms would be redesigned in the Stanford style, and be built in a more appropriate area on the grounds.

In return, Stanford Conservation and its Heritage Committee pledged to source funds for the most expensive part of the restoration – putting on a new thatch roof. A report was prepared detailing the work to be done, and they successfully obtained funding from the Rowland and Leta Hill Trust for this work to go ahead. The preparation process took some time, as did the approval process by both DPW and Heritage Western Cape. Once all approvals were in place, tenders were obtained from local businesses. Walker Bay Construction was last week awarded the contract to manage the re-thatching of the roof using local sub-contractors.

Being a community effort, Anton Duivestein, owner of Walker Bay Construction, has volunteered his professional time and will be donating some of the materials required. Supervision of the project will be overseen by Stanford Heritage Committee member, architect Gregg Goddard, who has also spent many pro



Liz Hochfelden (left), chairperson of the Stanford Heritage Committee, was instrumental in stopping the demolition of the +-100-year-old building and urging the Western Cape Education Department to re-design the proposed two new (face-brick) classrooms to the Stanford style (seen in the background). Anton Duivestein will oversee the re-thatching of the roof and Amelia de Villiers (right) is the secretary at Okkie Smuts Primary School. She was the first to voice her concern about the neglect and possible demolition of the building in which her mother-in-law still taught domestic science.

bono hours drawing up a measured drawing of the building, plus obtaining the necessary heritage approvals for the work to go ahead.

The roof structural repairs, waterproofing and painting on the roof flashing and ridge will be done by Stanford Builders (Pty) Ltd, a company set up by Duivestein to employ and train selected people that were born locally and grew up and lived in Stanford.

These long-standing members of the community benefit by means of a profit-sharing formula.

Elim Thatchers will do the roof, this is a family-owned business and currently run by the 5th and 6th generation.

The school itself has raised funds for the remaining structural renovation work. The intention was to use the building as a much-needed library, and a recent grant from the Grootbos Foundation will make this dream come true and the library ready for the 2020 school year.

For more information or to make donations of children's books or computers for the library, contact Amelia de Villiers at the school on 028 3410 661/660.