



# DROSTDY HOTEL, GRAAFF-REINET

ARCHITECT: **dhk**  
PHOTOS: **WIELAND GLEICH**



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GRAAFF-REINET'S Drostdy building and its courtyard garden are structures of great historic and cultural significance, as they played a central role in the civic life of the original town's burghers. This Drostdy is the second oldest in the country. It was designed by Louis Michel Thibault, built by local tradesmen between 1804 and 1805, and was used as the Magistrate's residence for several years.

During this time, the Drostdy formed one of the most important centres of power within the town, occupying a prominent position on Church Street, directly on axis with the Church and facing the Parsonage at the end of Parsonage Street.

It was subsequently sold and bought privately, changing hands several times before being converted into Kromm's Drostdy Hotel in 1876 – when it was subjected to several Victorian additions.

These were later removed when the building was restored to its original form, in 1975, by Historical Homes SA. The Hotel was declared a National Monument in 1987 and several parts of its precinct are also protected.

The historic slave cottages of Stretch's Court, located along a "mews" street, also bear great significance, serving as a significant reminder of the agricultural past of the town and its history of slavery.

The modern-day architects sought to integrate the historic fabric with new interventions throughout the property, creating a seamless experience of rich heritage, while bringing the hotel provision up to 5-star luxury country hotel standards. The project included the masterplan of the entire site, restoration of significant historic buildings and the design of discreet new insertions.

The reinvigorated Drostdy Hotel property now accommodates 48 new luxury hotel rooms with three swimming pools, a fine dining restaurant, bar and lounges, art gallery, wine shop, vinothèque and spa, as well as associated hotel amenities set within fully landscaped grounds.

The urban design approach has been to activate open spaces between the various complexes with the use of courtyards, swimming pools and terraces, and to create a sense of community and a village feel. New interventions were designed to

1. A courtyard garden connects the Drostdy's historic courtyard to the new restaurant building's pergola-covered terrace.
2. Ferreira's House accommodates hotel suites, and a new swimming pool has been added.
3. The fully restored Drostdy Hotel façade faces onto Church Street, on axis with the Dutch Reformed Church and Parsonage.





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PARLIAMENT STREET

sit sensitively within the historic fabric, and to respond in design and material to the contrasting Cape Dutch and Victorian aesthetics.

The Church Street elevation remains the most important of the hotel property.

In addition to the restoration of the Drostdy Hotel façade, the façades of the two adjacent Victorian buildings were also restored (by the dhk team) – the first, previously the Camdeboo Restaurant, to accommodate a new gallery; and the second, previously the Thibault Room, to house a wine shop showcasing the wines produced on the estates owned by the Rupert family.

The treatment of the Parliament Street elevation, which included the restoration of that side of the Drostdy Building, its verf walls and the Victorian Kromm’s Inn building, has become more important due to its location at the newly-created main entrance to the hotel, both vehicular and pedestrian.

A new reception building and *portecochere* face onto the entrance driveway court, with a parking area located at the back of the site behind the final row of Stretch’s Court cottages. Directly adjacent to the reception and entrance court lie the Drostdy building and its courtyard. The building was fully refurbished, with all original materials restored to their former glory, including its remarkable yellowwood timber flooring, stinkwood and yellowwood doors and beautiful sash windows. The building now houses a cigar lounge, a formal lounge, a ladies bar, a boardroom/dining room and





a vinotheque, as well as offices and ablution facilities, thus forming the heart of the hotel's public areas.

The existing back-of-house areas, constructed in the 1970s and linking onto the Drostdy building, were demolished and have been replaced with new kitchen facilities and a restaurant. Additional back-of-house functions have been positioned discreetly behind the adjacent municipal building.

The new restaurant is sited adjacent to the Drostdy, with its terrace opening onto the landscaped courtyard created by the Drostdy's U-shape. This courtyard, though newly landscaped, has retained its existing axial design. The existing vine-covered pergola within the Drostdy's courtyard was replaced with a new pergola of a design consistent with the restaurant pergola.

On the other side of the entrance court, along the axis that runs from the Drostdy courtyard, lies the existing Victorian Kromm's Inn building. This has been transformed into a spa, with private treatment rooms and a gym, and is fronted by a fragrant herb garden.

A green tunnel runs from the entrance to the spa courtyard, introducing the network of pedestrian routes that link the hotel rooms. Points of interest have been created along these routes, using werf walls, benches and water features, and by relocating the slave bell to provide a focal point at the end of Stretch's Court (and to distract the eye from the municipal building beyond). The majority of the hotel rooms are located within

the 15 Karoo-style flat-roofed cottages along Stretch's Court. The cottages were extensively restored on the outside, and altered internally to accommodate luxury hotel rooms. Some of them are double storey and each one contains two-to-three rooms, meaning a total of 31 hotel rooms in Stretch's Court.

The white Karoo cottages have maintained their colourful doors, window frames and shutters, for which they are renowned, and also feature terraces that are semi-private.

Stretch's Court itself has been pedestrianised, retaining the repositioned slave bell and street structure, but no longer permitting vehicular access. A new pool area has been created, located centrally off Stretch's Court, and includes a new, larger swimming pool, a pantry and WCs.

A new Kromm's Court has also been created, housing 10 new hotel suites in four buildings that are positioned around a new swimming pool. On the far end of the property, along Bourke Street, Ferreira House and the Barn have been upgraded and restored to accommodate seven luxury hotel rooms. The garden of Ferreira House has been landscaped and now showcases an additional swimming pool, for the exclusive use of the Ferreira House suites.

Pergolas, situated along the length of the new buildings, provide shaded outdoor terraces that echo the timber structures previously situated around the property, while low werf walls have also been introduced to the site to add to its character.

4. A new art gallery was designed by dhk in a building previously used as the restaurant
5. De Camdeboo fine dining restaurant is housed in a new building, with interior design by Stephen Falcke
6. Shaded rear terraces have been added to all of the Stretch's Court buildings, facing onto the landscaped gardens
7. The Stretch's Court cottages were retained and restored as a set of unified façades, each accommodating two to three luxury hotel rooms. The original colours of the doors and shutters were used to maintain the unique character of this streetscape
8. A timber-panelled vinotheque houses the wine collection for private tastings
9. Luxury hotel rooms befitting a country hotel, with interior design by Stephen Falcke
10. The Victorian Kromm's Inn has been renovated and now serves as a luxurious spa and a gym
11. Drostdy Hotel site plan

#### PROJECT TEAM

**Project Name:** Redevelopment of the Drostdy Hotel **Project Address:** 30 Church Street, Graaff-Reinet, 6280 (Eastern Cape) **Client:** De Oude Graaff-Reinette Drostdy (Pty) Ltd **Architects:** dhk **Principal Agent:** dhk **Structural Engineers:** Aurecon **Mechanical Engineers:** Aurecon **Electrical Engineers:** Aurecon **Environmental:** Moorhouse Consulting **Landscaping:** Blok Designs **Quantity Surveyor:** De Leeuw Group **Main Contractor:** GVK Siya Zama **Fire Consultant:** Aurecon **Land Surveyor:** Setzkorn & Van der Walt Professional Land Surveyors **Interior Designer:** Stephen Falcke Interior Design **Heritage Consultant:** Urban Concepts; Moffat/Whitlock Architects **Photographer:** Wieland Gleich