CHANGE OF NAME
1820 SETTLERS MONUMENT
INVITATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BACKGROUND
The Board of the Grahamstown Foundation has resolved to change the main focus of activities and the name of the 1820 Settlers’ Monument, and this document outlines the rationale and process for determining a new name.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
The idea of a Monument honouring the 4000 Settlers who arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1820 was first mooted by Sir George Cory in 1920, the centenary of their arrival. However, progress toward establishing one only gained momentum through the efforts of Thomas Bowker, an opposition MP, some decades later. The particular contribution of the Settlers, as it was thought of in the 1960s and 1970s, is outlined in Thelma Neville’s book “More Lasting than Bronze”

“They worked to secure municipal government and to make it work intelligently; they fought for the freedom of the press; they founded schools, libraries, museums, financial institutions and learned societies; they contributed to the development of trade, commerce and farming. They were ordinary men and women, wrote Prof [Winifred] Maxwell, “who did extraordinary things and were always willing to try and do the best things in the worst times.”

An amount of 50 000 pounds was pledged to the project by South Africa’s Parliament and, in April 1962, a fund raising campaign was launched for the project – by then Prime Minister Dr Hendrik Verwoerd.
There wasn’t unanimity around the need for a monument commemorating the 1820 Settlers from the community, or even that Grahamstown was the best site for it. Objections were raised throughout the early years of the project by various residents and bodies – some who wanted a Chapel built, others a hospital or old-age home.

But the vision of Thomas Bowker and members of his Committee prevailed and the first sod was turned by Dr Nico Malan in 1970. The building took four years to complete at a cost of R4 004 200 and was officially opened on 13 July 1974. Funding for the building was derived from a variety of sources – the government of the day, Settler families and descendants, and private donations.

What was agreed to from the outset was that the Monument was intended as a living Monument – one that would be used actively on an ongoing basis, and that would be a home for projects aimed at stimulating debate, providing educational opportunities, be a home to Festivals and celebrations, and would be a cultural and economic focus for the citizenry of the city. To fulfill that part of the mandate, a Foundation was established – the 1820 Settlers Foundation – to run a range of Festivals and projects, the highest profile of which, today, is the National Arts Festival. In the 1990s the Foundation changed its name to the Grahamstown Foundation.

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The projects of the Foundation, and of the National Arts Festival, rest on principles of inclusivity, understanding, reflecting, inspiring, growth and education. Increasingly, being housed in a building that is, for many South Africans, alienating and seen by many as monument to conquest and colonisation, is a contradiction.

On 12 October 2015 the Foundation Council at the time passed a resolution, minuted as follows:

“It was AGREED to:
- Change the name of the building which is presently not in sync with the activities which take place in the building.....”

Many have suggested that the current Constitution of South Africa, a document that couldn’t be imagined at the time of inception of the organisation or building, and which represents the collective values of post 1994 South Africa, should provide the basis for the values that Monuments wants to embody. Specifically, the articulation of the Preamble to the Constitution provides some insight into the rationale behind the Board’s thinking:

*We, the people of South Africa,*

*Recognise the injustices of our past;*  
*Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;*  
*Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and*  
*Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.*

It is Council’s view that the ethos and operations of the Monument should be based on this broader statement of commitment, rather than solely the values and ideals of the British Settlers who arrived in this area in the 1820s.
A year after the resolution, in a strategy document tabled to the Foundation Council on 24 November 2016, the following point was made about the Monument and its role:

“The imaginative concept behind the Monument is the desire to be mindful about the past, while working actively in the present to shape a just and democratic future. A sobering reminder of the past, the Monument through its projects fosters the principles and ideals of the South African constitution.”

This positioning – which is in accord with the general principle of the Foundation as a Constitution-led organisation – shifts the role of the Foundation and Monument from being a commemorative space that only honours the Settlers; to a future-looking building, aligned with our present-day Constitution, shaped by Constitutional values. It should reflect the contribution to the Eastern Cape of all communities.

**WHAT WE WANT THE MONUMENT TO BE**

The Foundation Board has had extensive discussions around the role and purpose of the Monument as we move into the future. It should, according to the Board, continue to be the home of the National Arts Festival, Scifest Africa, National Schools Festival and the multitude of projects that emanate from those flagship events. These projects are many and varied, but have as their common thread a desire to deepen understanding between South Africans, and provide opportunities for education and inspiration and, in effect, to promote reconciliation, nation-building and the development of a broader South African identity.

The Monument is also – because of its own origins – in a unique position to be able to gather and tell the stories of the many people who have contributed to our country as it is today, and preserve those stories for future generations. It can reflect the collective contribution of the Eastern Cape to the history and current reality of South Africa. Not just the contribution of the Settlers, but of all the people who have lived and interacted in these movable frontiers.

We want to tell the story of our past. And we want the Monument to play a role in building our future. We want it to be a living symbol of the hope and potential of our country. And so the Board has resolved to adopt a new name for the Monument that captures this philosophy and positions it to play a constructive role in our community and our country.

**INVITATION**

Although renaming cities, towns, and artefacts are always contentious issues, we believe we should welcome robust debate and develop a process that allows us to articulate a new vision and chart a way forward that is inclusive, culturally sensitive and inspiring to all.

*We therefore invite anyone who wishes to contribute to that debate to participate. We are requesting proposals for a new name for the Monument that captures the philosophy and vision for the future, while still recognising the diverse and complex legacy of our past.*
We invite submissions from the public on what the Monument’s new name and ethos should be, and for ideas on how to transform the building and the work it houses, or activities its hosts, into a major national and perhaps even international tourist attraction all year round.

**SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Any entity or individual is welcome to make a submission for the Board to consider. The format is not fixed and can be in the form of a presentation; position paper; or some form of creative expression. It may be presented in any of South Africa’s official languages. Submissions should articulate a clear proposal for a new name and ethos for the building, including a motivation for why such a name and ethos are presented.

Physical presentations are not required at this stage, but we may request those later should the Board feel it is appropriate. Submissions can be sent by:

- **Email** – tony@foundation.org.za; or
- **Hard copies** delivered to the Monument marked for the attention of the CEO, Tony Lankester; or
- **Couriered** to this address:
  
  Tony Lankester  
  1820 Settlers Monument  
  Fort Selwyn Drive  
  Grahamstown, 6140

They should be received no later than 26 June 2019.

Please note that there should be no expectation of confidentiality from those making submissions. The Board reserves the right to share any or all of the submissions publicly. Should the proposer have a compelling reason to request anonymity this will be considered, but please send a request for such confidentiality prior to making your submission.

Similarly, proposals shall be considered to be good faith submissions and an offer on the part of the proposer to ‘donate’ the intellectual property behind the proposal, and any associated copyrights with proposed names, to the Foundation should the proposal be accepted.