

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT TO NOTICE OF INTENT TO DEVELOP (NID) IN TERMS OF SECTION 38(8) OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT, 1999 (ACT 25 OF 1999)

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON PORTIONS OF ERF 10190 & REMAINDERS OF ERVEN 706 & 2066, (PLETTENBERG BAY) KNYSNA DISTRICT AND BITOU MUNICIPALITY



ON BEHALF OF: MORE FAMILY COLLECTION

AUGUST 2024

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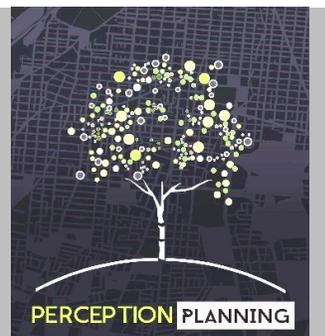
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ABBREVIATIONS

1. DEADP –Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning (WCG)
2. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
3. NHRA – National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)
4. HIA – Heritage Impact Assessment
5. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
6. PHS – Provincial Heritage Site
7. NGSI – National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mowbray
8. NEMA – National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998 as revised)

FRONT PAGE: Collage of contextual panoramic images of the study area and its direct environs (Author)

1. INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTION Planning was appointed by Nonelia Groenendijk (SA ID 590608 0822 185) on behalf of the Groenendijk Trust (being the current registered owner of Erf 10190) as well as Claude Nielton Terblanche (SA ID 850403 5263 089) as Executive Mayor of Bitou Municipality and Ralph Roland Links (SA ID 7307305181085) as Acting Municipal Manager of Bitou Municipality (being the duly authorised custodian of the Remainder of Erf 706 and the Remainder of Erf 2066), to submit to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) a Notice of Intent to Develop (NID) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) with relation to the proposed expansion of an existing tourism orientated development on the subject properties. Copies of the Proxies, Power of Attorneys, as well as copies of the relevant Title Deeds and S.G Diagrams, are attached as part of **Annexure 1**.

The cadastral land units subject to this application are as follows¹:

- Erf 10190 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring 2,852m² ha, registered to Groenendijk Trust and held under title deed T 42131/2009.
- Remainder of Erf 706 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring (unknown), registered to Bowtie Trust and held under title deed T 41544/1985 (*).
- Remainder of Erf 2066 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring (unknown), registered to Bowtie Trust and held under title deed T 41544/1985 (*).

(*) These properties form part of public open spaces created through a subdivision during 1952². Historically said public open space were not always automatically transferred to the relevant local authority as in present day though ownership, management and use of such land legally vests with said authority, in this instance with Bitou Municipality. As such the Power of Attorney with relation to the Remainder of Erven 706 and 2066 were provided by a representative of Bitou Municipality.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

The subject study area/ proposed development footprint (± _____ in extent) straddles three cadastral land units, namely Erf 10190 (privately owned) and portions of the remainder of Erven 706 and 2066, both of which form part of public open space. The study area is situated ±450m northeast of the Plettenberg Bay town centre and ±2.3km southeast of the N2 National Road (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Study area location within broader urban context (GoogleEarth, 2024, as edited)

¹ www.deedsweb.deeds.gov.za accessed 1st July 2024.

² SG Diagram A3664/52

The study area, currently occupied by the Milkwood Manor Guesthouse and adjoining public parking for visitors to Lookout Beach, overlooks the southern banks of the Keurbooms River Estuary to the north and Lookout Beach (Blue Flag status beach³) directly to the east. Access to the study area is off Salmack Road via Beacon Way (Figures 1, 2).



Figure 2: Study area within closer urban and coastal contexts (GoogleEarth, 2024, as edited)

From information available, Milkwood Manor has been operated as a guesthouse/ boutique hotel on the property presently known as Erf 10190 since c. 1997 (MM-Admin, 2013). Presently the hotel comprises of 14 (1 room is the residence of the current owner) rooms and the Lemon Grass restaurant with ± 100 seats that is open for the public. While the exact age of the primary building, a two-storeyed, flat roofed and square shaped structure, could not be determined, the building is not evident on earlier aerial series (1939, 1942 or 1985) and is therefore not older than 60 years (also refer to Section 5 below). Several additions have been made to the primary building over the years, which includes a popular restaurant on the northwestern side of Erf 10190. The establishment derived its name from its former setting within a dense milkwood forest/ indigenous coastal vegetation, which occurred along thin coastal strip separating the Keurbooms River estuary and the Indian Ocean (Image 1).

However the coastal landscape context was radically altered through an abnormal flood event on 22nd November 2007, which not only impacted the landscape but also facilities once part of the guesthouse (MM-Admin, 2013).

Image 1: East-facing oblique aerial view of Lookout Beach showing the public car parking area and Milkwood Manor set within a densely vegetated coastal strip prior to the 2007 flood event (MM-Admin, 2013).



³ Plett Tourism, 2024

Salmack Road terminates at the existing public car parking area to Lookout Beach with pedestrian accesses to the beach and Keurbooms River Estuary as shown in **Figure 3**. In addition to the adjoining beach and estuary, existing land use within the proximity of the study area includes varied densities of residential development directly to the south, west and northwest as evident from Figure 2. According to the Bitou Integrated Zoning Scheme, Erf 10190 is zoned "General Residential Zone III" while the remainder of the study area is zoned "Transport Zone II".

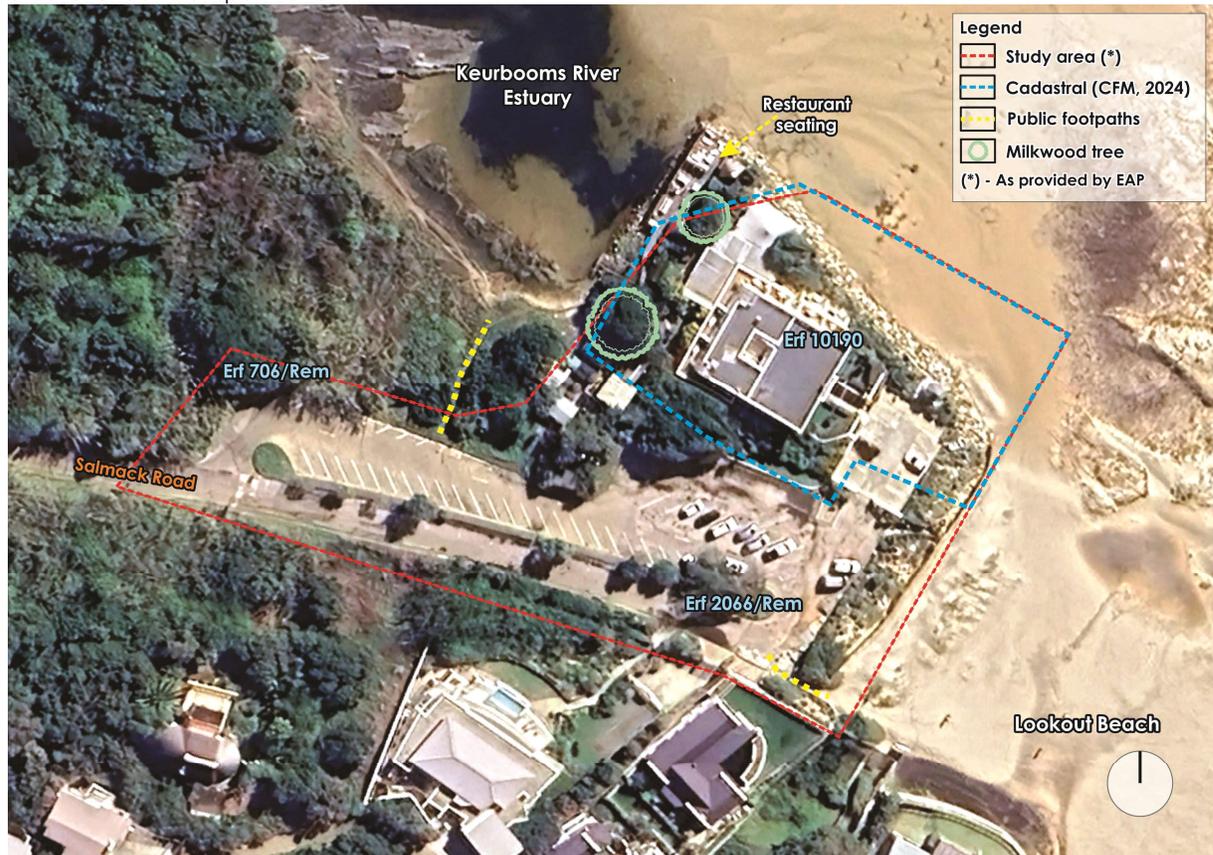


Figure 3: Milkwood Manor boutique hotel and restaurant in relation to study area and cadastral boundaries (GoogleEarth, 2024 and Elsenburg.com, 2023, as edited).

Photographs of the site and its direct environs are attached as part of **Annexure 2** to this report.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

According to information made available Erf 10190 was recently purchased by the More Family Collection (transfer underway). The existing boutique hotel currently accommodates 14 rooms (one of which is the residence of the current owner) and the Lemon Grass restaurant with ± 100 seats that is open for the public. The proposal is for the upgrading and extension of the existing boutique hotel to provide for a total of 24 rooms (i.e. 10 additional rooms) and to reduce the size of the existing restaurant to ± 60 seats that will mostly cater for the needs of resident guests but will not exclude the public.

As part of this extension, the new owners seek to reduce on-site parking requirements as stipulated in the Bitou Zoning Scheme, by utilising the adjacent public parking area and upgrading it to include 32 additional NEW public parking bays. The proposed upgrade also includes the resurfacing of the entire parking area, landscaping, upgraded lighting and the provision of public ablution and beach-shower facility.

"The extension is needed to accommodate the volume required for the type and level of hospitality service that will be provided. Most industry experts recommend that a luxury 5 boutique hotel should have at least 20 to 30 rooms to ensure financial viability, especially when accounting for the need for a luxury-experienced full-time, leadership structure which would include a General manager, Deputy General Manager, Executive Housekeeper, Food and Beverage Manager and Executive Chef and other fixed costs. This range provides a cushion for operational stability, profitability, and allows for economies of scale without diluting the personalised service that defines a boutique hotel."*
(Planning Space 2024:1,3).

The preferred alternative, which incorporates inputs from a coastal engineer, makes provision for the following components as further illustrated through the Site Development Plan and accompanying plans, elevations and 3D perspective sketches attached to this report as part of **Annexure 3**:

- Additions and alterations to all four elevations of the primary building with (ground floor) building footprint of $\pm 550\text{m}^2$.
- Total new development footprint $\pm 1,027\text{m}^2$ (total floor area $\pm 2,016\text{m}^2$)
- 55 existing parking bays to be expanded by 32 new parking bays new public parking ($\pm 496,4\text{ m}^2$) and new bus stop ($\pm 72\text{m}^2$).
- Public ablution facility ($\pm 17\text{m}^2$).
- Public beach shower facility (extent not provided).

4. BASIC HISTORIC BACKGROUND

4.1 Town of Plettenberg Bay

From a colonial perspective the history of Plettenberg Bay dates back to the 15th century when early Portuguese explorers travelled and called along what is now the South African coastline. Bartholomew Dias is recorded to have landed here in 1488, referring to the lagoons at the confluence of the Keurbooms and Bitou rivers as "Baia das Algoas" (Bay of the Lagoons). About 90 years later in 1576, Manuel da Mesquita da Perestrello renamed the bay "Baia Formosa" (Bay Beautiful) (Storror, 1988:38). During August 1630 the Portuguese ship *San Gonzales* was wrecked in the bay during a south-westerly gale. Records show that all 133 sailors on board perished but that 100 sailors, who had already made land, initially settled in the bay though eventually succeeding to return to Portugal (Storror, 1982).

In 1778 the then Governor of the Cape, Baron Joachim van Plettenberg visited the bay and renamed it after himself. As alluded to above, during 1786 it was decided to use the bay as a harbour for the shipping of timber. A local forester (Johann Friedrich Meeding) and another resident (Jan Jacob Jerling) were commissioned to construct a timber store in 1787. Being of enormous size but structurally unsound the building was replaced by a smaller during 1803 (Fransen, 2002:521). The walls of the early store (a PHS) remain and is situated within present day Meeding Street, $\pm 1,7\text{km}$ south of the subject property.

4.2 Keurbooms River Estuary

Findings emanating from research undertaken by the CSIR (1985) and Schumann (2019) describe how weather patterns (including flood events) and ecological processes have influenced sediment dynamics in and around the estuary. The impacts of human intervention and urban development can of course not be discounted. In a research paper interrogating historic change within the Keurbooms Estuary, Schumann (2019) uses early panoramic views (e.g. R J Gordon, 1778), early mapping as well as aerial imagery to analyse natural migration of the estuary mouth since the 18th century:

"Storror (1978) shows maps drawn at about the same time by JC Frederici in 1789 and Lieutenant W McPherson Rice in 1797 which both depict the mouth of the Keurbooms positioned in the middle of the barrier dune, possibly more on the north-eastern side. A later map of the region drawn by the Royal Navy Hydrographic Office in 1867 shows the Keurbooms Estuary mouth situated at the Lookout Rocks. A Divisional Map of Knysna dated 1890 confirms this mouth position, and also shows a creek from the NW discharging into the estuary near its mouth, while the Bitou River was also flowing straight into the Keurbooms Estuary opposite Stanley's Island.

A map from the Colonial Surveyor-General in 1900 is shown in [Figure 5]. At this stage the Bitou Estuary was again in its present position west of the peninsula, while the mouth of the Keurbooms Estuary is depicted nearly 1km north of the Lookout Rocks."

Given the location of the subject property in relation to the estuary and at the confluence of the Keurbooms and Bitou rivers, it is reasonable to deduce that soil conditions as well as landscape characteristics on and around the property would have been shaped over an extended period of time through these ecological processes.

4.3 Settlement morphology: Study area

The study area forms part of an early land parcel (Erf 2063) originally framed during 1852 and granted by quitrent to James Duncan Thomson and another (trading as Thomson, Watson & Co) on 11th October 1852⁴. The 1852 diagram shows at least four buildings located just west of the subject study area (**Figure 4**). The property included the southern banks of the Keurbooms River Estuary. To the north, Erf 2063 was bound by the original loan farm "Ganze Valley", granted to Rynier van Rooyen during 1818⁵.

⁴ Geo. F. 12.10

⁵ S.G. Diagram 20/1818

Subsequent (1880-1900) SG Mapping of the area shows the study area in relation to the village Formosa, early Erven 2063 and 2065 (yellow) as well as early farms Ganse Valleij (red) and Welcome (blue), the latter two properties of which were owned by Rynier van Rooyen⁶ (Figure 5).

During 1952 Erf 2063 was subdivided as part of a township development (Extension 2), which, *inter alia*, created a public place denoted as "Homer Park" and presently known as the Remainder of Erf 706⁷. Erf 10190 was formally framed and registered during 2008⁸.

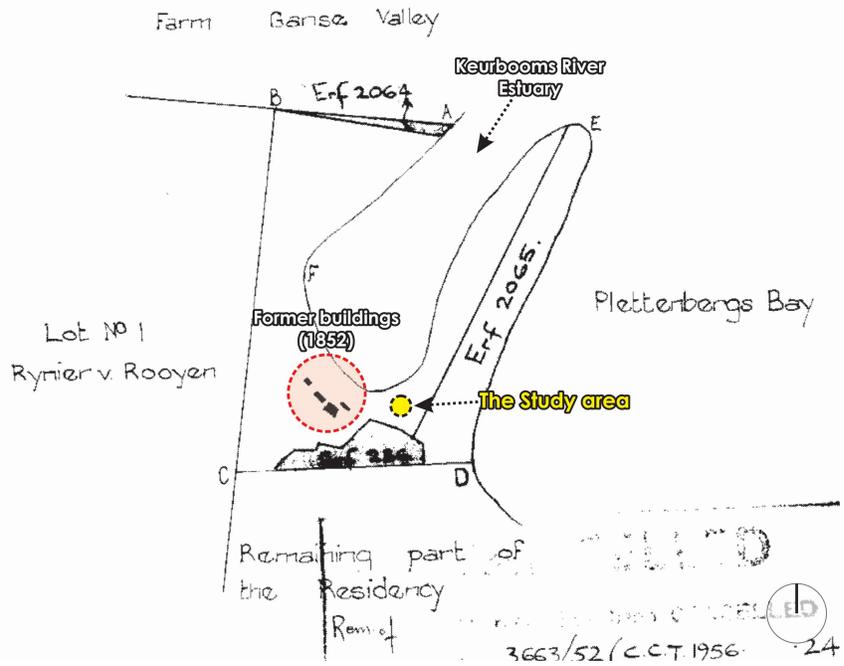


Figure 4: Study area shown within context of extract from 1852 diagram for former Erf 2063, noting a precinct of buildings directly west (SGO as edited)

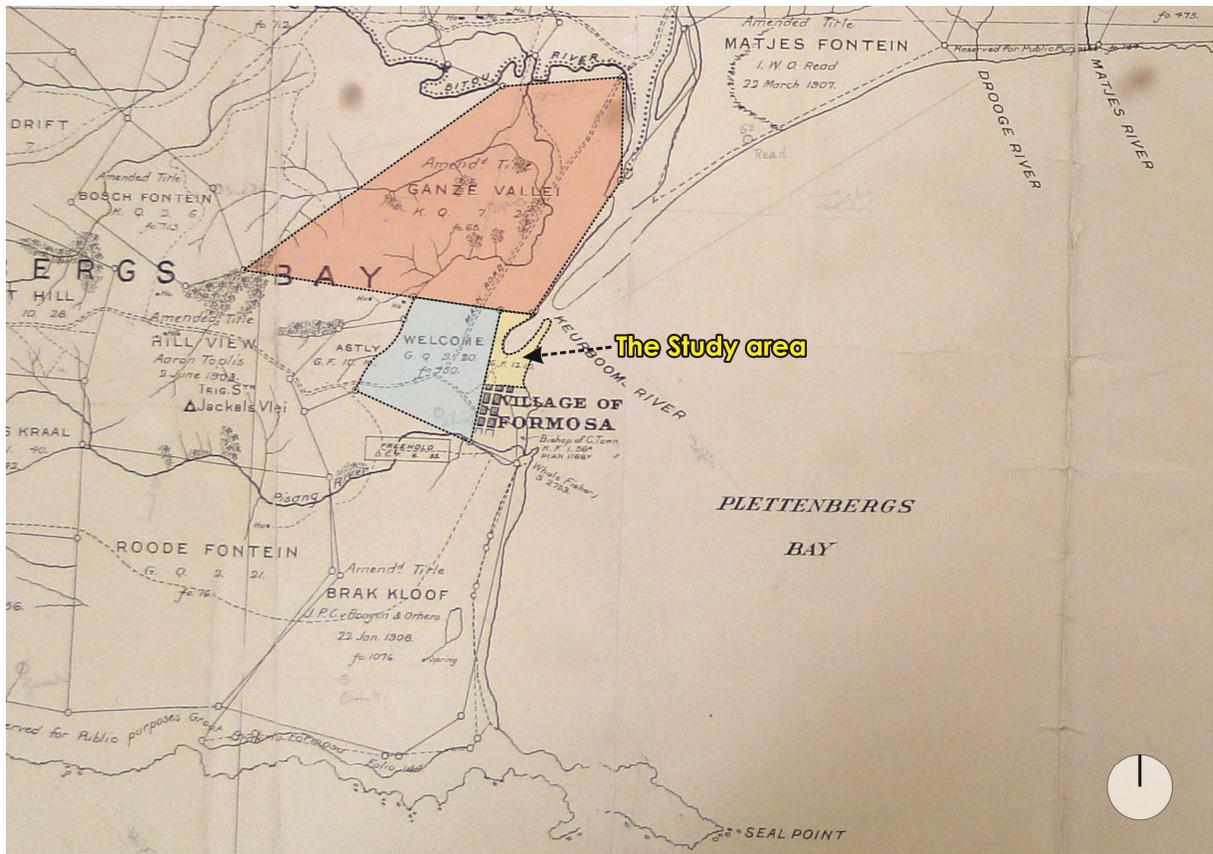


Figure 5: Location of the property within context of early mapping for the area (George Museum Archives, as edited).

Basic historical background research did not identify or highlight any other significant heritage-related aspects related to the study area specifically. It is unlikely that detailed archival research would provide further meaningful insight into former use and/or broader understanding of heritage-related themes of the area.

⁶ SG Diagram 1327/1852
⁷ General Plan A3664/52
⁸ SG Diagram 1380/2008

5. HERITAGE RESOURCES AND ISSUES

5.1 Built environment

While the exact age of the primary building forming part of the Milkwood Manor boutique hotel could not be determined, no buildings are evident on the site on 1985 aerial imagery, and it is therefore deduced that the building is not older than 60 years. During fieldwork, which included a survey of the interior and exterior of existing building, no historic built fabric was recorded. Notwithstanding, the building is not considered of architectural and/or aesthetic cultural significance. No buildings of cultural significance were noted within the proximity of the study area during fieldwork undertaken on 19th July 2024.

5.2 Cultural landscape

Analysis of earliest available (1936, 1985) aerial photography was found useful to inform our understanding of the study area from a cultural landscape perspective. From said analysis the following traditional (i.e. Pre-Modern) cultural landscape patterns emerge, as summarized below:

Aerial survey 114 of 1936 (Figure 6):

- The image predates construction of the N2 National Road. The early alignment of the main road into the town centre (current Beacon Way) is noted passing directly south of the study area.
- The early town grid together with several buildings are evident south of the study area.
- The study area is noted as forming part of a rocky premonitory overlooking the adjoining estuary and beach.
- Of interest is the fact that Erven 2063 and 2065 (refer to Figure 4) during this period was also essentially a sandbar devoid of any vegetation, much as in present day following the 2007 flood event.
- No significant buildings are evident on the study area.
- A patchwork of cultivated fields is visible along the coastal road to the west of the study area.



Figure 6: Study area within context of 1936 aerial imagery for the area (Flight Survey 114, Flight Strip 039, Image 11582, NGSi as edited).

Aerial survey 889 of 1985 (Figure 7):

- The image shows the now more established (and developed) town grid with Beacon Way as the primary road and Salmack Road leading towards Lookout Beach.
- An irregular-shaped area, cleared of vegetation and containing no significant buildings, extends between the Keurbooms River Estuary and Lookout Beach.

- The natural sandbar separating the Keurbooms River Estuary and Indian Ocean is once more densely overgrown by vegetation, confirming the dynamic nature of this area, continuous subject to natural processes.
- No buildings are evident on the study area.

From the above it is evident that the study area forms part of a dynamic coastal landscape continuously impact and transformed through natural processes. This is furthermore highlighted by the physical impacts of natural processes associated with the 2007 flood event, which altered the coastal landscape to a state comparable to that evident through the earliest available (1936) aerial imagery. The proposal, given its location and footprint will therefore not detract from a cultural landscape of high cultural significance.



Figure 7: Study area within context of 1985 aerial imagery for the area (Flight Survey 889, Flight Strip 08, Image 3969, NGSI as edited).

5.3 Archaeology

The stretch of coast from Plettenberg Bay to Keurboomstrand is a particularly sensitive archaeological landscape. To the south is Nelson Bay Cave (PHS), on the Robberg Peninsula, and to the north is the rock shelter of Matjes River (PHS) at Keurboomstrand. In between are many important archaeological sites of different time periods. These include more than 20 Middle and Later Stone Age sites, including, and the survivors' campsite of the wreck of the San Gonzales (1630) in Plettenberg Bay. A rare ESA quarry was recorded on the farm Brakkloof (Kaplan 2015) immediately to the south of Plettenberg Bay, and subsequent research has shown that the quarry was targeted by early hominins as a source of raw material for their stone tools. There have been numerous archaeological impact assessments undertaken in the Plettenberg Bay area, and the area is well researched.

Closest to the study area, some 1,4km to the northwest, is the proposed development on the remaining extent of Portion 47 (a Portion of Portion 1) of the farm Ganse Vallei 444, the so-called Sky Villa development (Kaplan 2019). During a field survey Kaplan recorded a small number of isolated Early and Middle Stone Age artefacts, including an ESA bifacial handaxe, some chunks, cores and MSA flakes. The tools were all recovered from partially transformed or severely disturbed contexts within the development footprint. They were all graded as Not Conservation Worthy. Nearby on Hill View Farm, although it is difficult to be sure because of the quality of the maps, Yates (2006) reported on ESA and MSA artefacts. He commented on the distribution of stone tools on a hill as well as on the lower slopes, and he suggested an association with ancient river terraces. He described the density of the tools as 'modest' and assigned it a LOW significance.

Hart (2001) surveyed Portions 36, 37, 48, 88 and a portion of 38 of Ganse Vallei 444 for the Turtle Creek Golf Estate. Turtle Creek is located 500m to the north of the study area, and to the east of the N2 highway. It extends all the way to the Keurbooms River estuary. Hart noted that the land was previously used for agriculture and very little archaeological material was found. The presence of cobble terraces indicated that the area was periodically affected by fluctuations in the height of the Keurbooms River. Hart recorded a scatter of ESA and MSA implements on quartzites (derived from the river cobbles), as well as a small and thinly spread area of shellfish near the labourer's cottage and which could be of recent origin.

Sensitivity

While archaeological surveys in the vicinity of the study area have indicated an association between ESA and MSA stone tools, and ancient river gravels the conclusions have been that the artefacts appear to be in secondary context, and they have been characterised of **Low** significance (i.e. Grade IIIc or NCW).

Comment on Potential Archaeological Impacts

Development of the site will involve minimal vegetation clearing and earthmoving activities. Former flood events are likely to already have impacted any archaeological resources. Surveys have identified scatters of ESA and MSA material in the area, however they are generally in disturbed areas. Research has shown that LSA archaeological sites (shell middens) tend to concentrate close to rocky headlands, and there are fewer sites along the sand dunes associated with long sandy beaches (such as the Keurbooms River estuary). Impacts are expected to be LOW.

Recommendation

No further archaeological work is recommended.

5.4 Palaeontology

According to SAHRIS Paleo-sensitivity mapping, the study area is earmarked as being of "Very High" palaeontological sensitivity (red) thus requiring a field assessment and protocol for potential finds (**Figure 8**). For this reason, Dr. Marion Bamford was commissioned to undertake a palaeontological study the full report of which is attached to this report as **Annexure 4**.

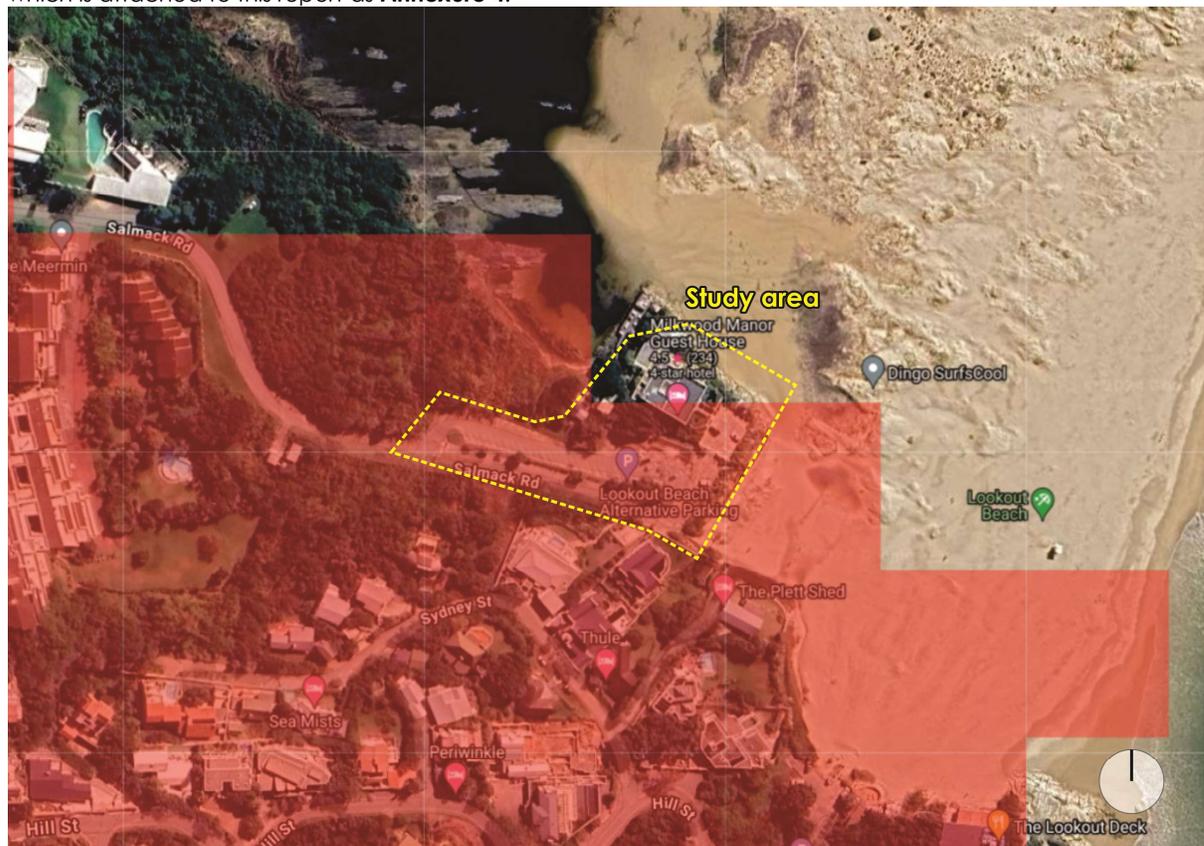


Figure 8: Study area shown within context of SAHRIS palaeontology sensitivity mapping highlighting the southern portion of very high palaeontological sensitivity (SAHRIS, 2024).

The property lies on the Enon Formation (Uitenhage Group) conglomerate and sandstones that are incorrectly indicated as very highly sensitive for palaeontology. The fossil record is based on one repeated record of abraded and poorly preserved silicified wood, bones and teeth that have been transported and deposited. Nonetheless, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. Based on this information it is

recommended that no further palaeontological impact assessment is required unless fossils are found by the contractor, environmental officer or other designated responsible person once excavations or drilling activities have commenced. Since the impact will be low, as far as the palaeontology is concerned, the project should be authorized.

Recommendation

Based on experience and the lack of any previously recorded fossils from the area, it is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be preserved in the overlying soils of the Quaternary. There is a very small chance that fossils may occur in the underlying conglomerates of the Enon Formation so a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. If fossils are found by the environmental officer, or other responsible person once excavations for amenities, infrastructure and foundations have commenced then they should be rescued, and a palaeontologist called to assess and collect a representative sample. The impact on the palaeontological heritage would be low, as far as the palaeontology is concerned, so the project should be authorized.

A Protocol for Chance Finds has been incorporated into the Desktop PIA (pg. 13, 14) attached hereto.

5.5 Synthesis

From the above assessment it is our contention that the proposal would not impact any structure(s) or landscape of cultural significance, nor is it likely to impact on archaeological or palaeontological resources of cultural significance though the implementation of Protocol for Chance (Palaeontological) Finds is recommended.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the above assessment it our view that further heritage-related studies would not be warranted in this instance. However, the implementation of Protocol for Chance (Palaeontological) Finds is recommended.

PERCEPTION Planning

1st August 2024



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