

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 OF A PORTION OF FARMS GANSE VALLEI 444/REMAINDER OF PORTION 7 (PORTION 191), 43 & 104 (PLETTENBERG BAY) KNYSNA DISTRICT AND BITOU MUNICIPALITY



ON BEHALF OF: ACME CAPITAL (PTY) LTD

DECEMBER 2022

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STÉFAN DE KOCK

PERCEPTION Planning

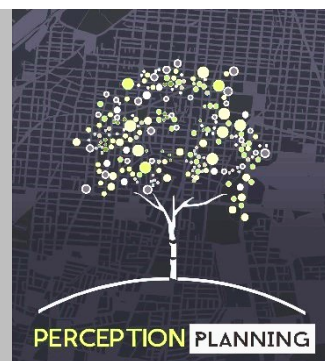
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ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

1. INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTION Planning was appointed by LJ du Preez (SA ID 59082851090871) on behalf of ACME Capital (Pty) Ltd (being the registered owner) 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 proposed development of the subject study area. Copies of the Proxy, Power of Attorney, 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 follows:

- Rem. Portion 7 (**Portion 191**) of the farm Ganse Vallei 444 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring 9.1926 ha, registered to ACME Capital (Pty) Ltd, held under title deed T 14938/2022¹.
- Portion 43 of the farm Ganse Vallei 444 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring 7.0788 ha, registered to ACME Capital (Pty) Ltd and held under title deed T 14939/2022.
- Portion 43 of the farm Ganse Vallei 444 (Plettenberg Bay), Knysna District and Bitou Municipality, measuring 15.6269 ha, registered to ACME Capital (Pty) Ltd and held under title deed T 14940/2022.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

The subject study area (±30.24 ha in extent) is situated ±4.82km north of the Plettenberg Bay town centre, ±1.24km west of the N2 National Road and ±400m south of the Bitou River valley (**Figure 1**). Vehicular access is from Rietvlei Road (off the N2 National Road) and existing land use within the direct proximity of the study area includes agriculture, rural occupation, tourism facilities and former polo fields. During recent years, a commercial/ industrial node has become established at the N2/ Rietvlei Road intersection, ±1km southeast of the study area (**Figure 2**).

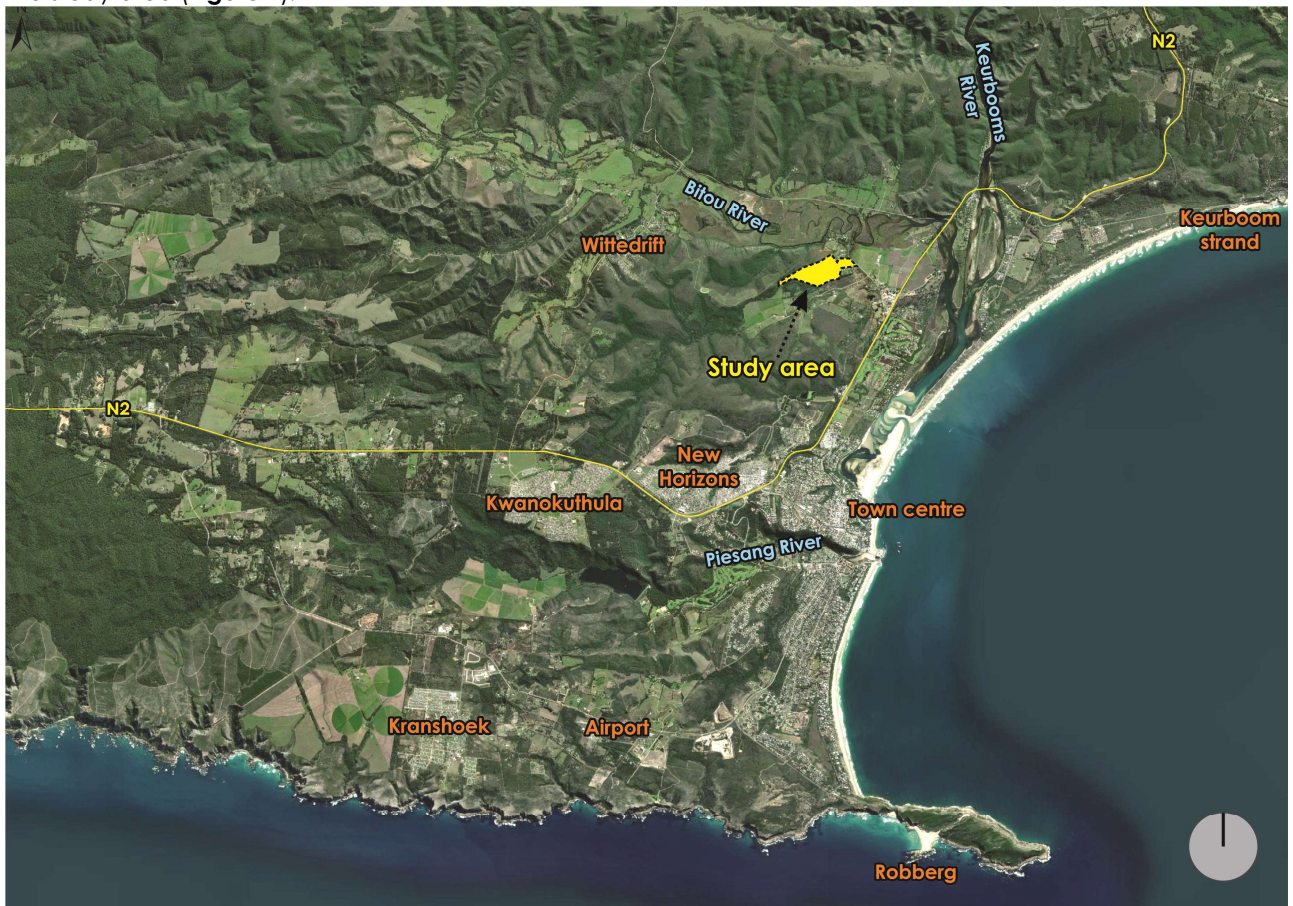


Figure 1: Study area location within broader urban context (Elsenburg.com, 2017, as edited)

The property forms part of an undulating rural landscape set between the Bitou River valley to the north and confluence of the Bitou and Keurbooms Rivers to the northeast/ east – the topography of the property is highlighted through **Figure 3**. During fieldwork undertaken on 13th September 2022 it was noted that much of the surface area of the property had previously been transformed through agriculture/ cultivation, save for steeper south-facing slopes overlooking the Diep River valley which is overgrown with a mixture of indigenous and alien invasive vegetation. The single vehicular entrance off the Rietvlei Road leads up a relatively steep hillside to a moderate northeast sloping terrace upon which two structures, the historic built envelopes of

¹ Remainder of Portion 7 new portion number (191) does not yet reflect on Cape Farm Mapper.

which are older than 60 years, were noted. Modern infrastructure includes recently constructed tennis courts and two agricultural sheds currently under construction. No other structures, ruins or graves were noted. There are three existing (off stream) dams located across the study area and several tracks traverse the site.



Figure 2: Subject property within existing landscape context (Elsenburg.com, 2017, as edited)

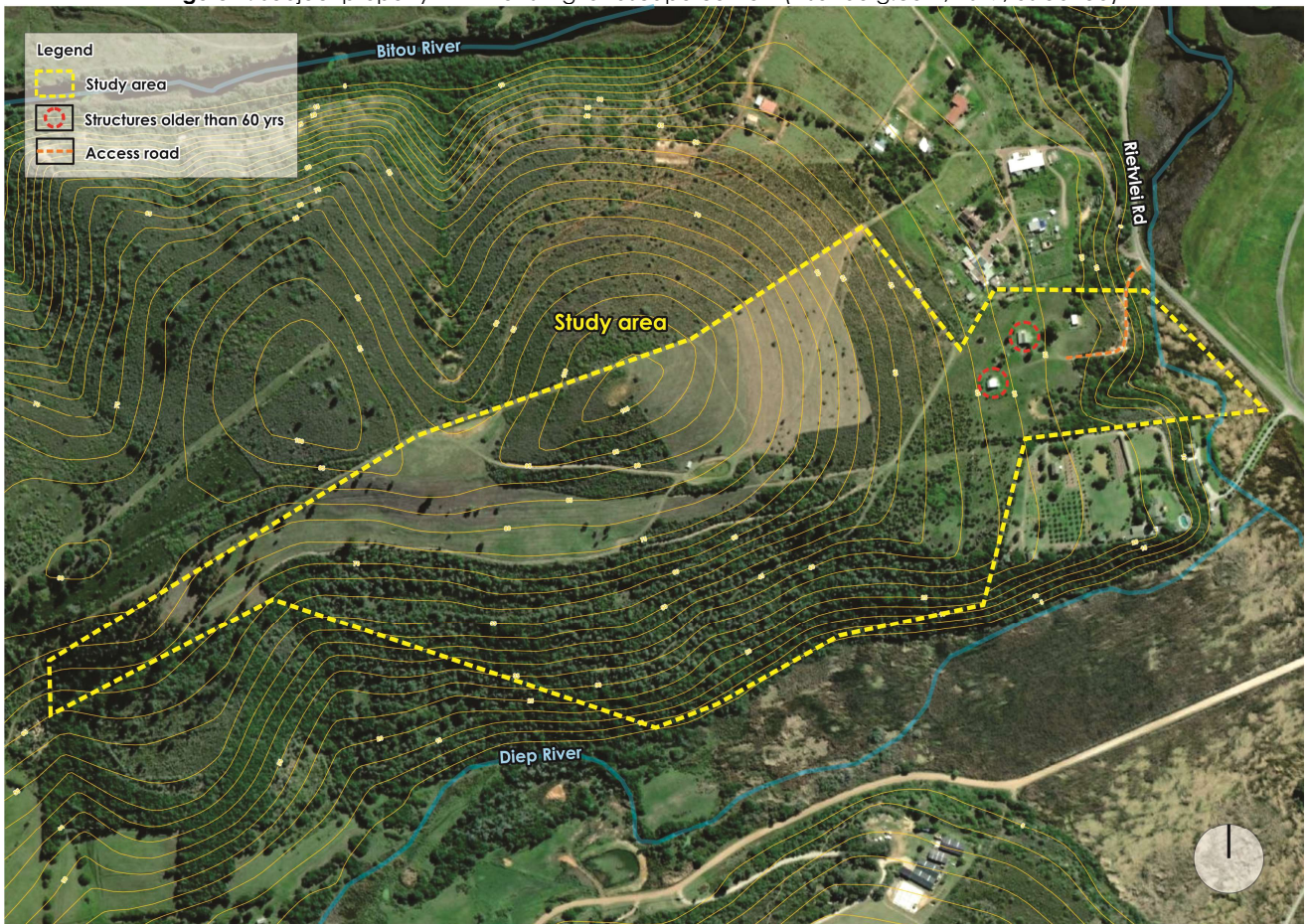


Figure 3: Existing features noted during field work (Elsenburg.com, 2017, as edited)

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

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

According to information made available the proposal is essentially for the retention of the three cadastral land units, furthering of agriculture, accompanied by tourism-orientated uses and the construction new dwellings as well as agricultural outbuildings as illustrated on the two alternative layouts attached as part of **Annexure 3**.

Alternative 1 (No Go Alternative) – This alternative implies maintaining the status quo. It would therefore mean that no vineyards or restaurant would be established and that the study area would continue to be used predominantly for agricultural purposes.

Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) – The preferred development alternative would comprise of the following components:

- Establishment of agriculture (vineyards), firebreaks
- Two new dwellings to be constructed on portions 7 and 104, respectively
- New ±100-seater restaurant and parking to be constructed on portion 104
- Natural and conservation areas
- Retain existing roads, parking and dams but construct new road to proposed restaurant
- Retain two existing (residential) structures older than 60 years

Alternative 2 – This alternative would comprise of the following components:

- New main dwelling on portion 7
- New main and second dwelling and agricultural outbuilding on portion 43
- New main and second dwelling and agricultural outbuilding on portion 104
- Establishment of agriculture (vineyards), firebreaks
- Natural and conservation areas
- Two new dwellings to be constructed on portions 7 and 104 of the farm
- New ±100-seater restaurant and parking to be constructed on portion 7 of the farm
- Retain existing roads, parking and dams but construct new road to proposed restaurant
- Retain two existing (residential) structures older than 60 years

4. SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1 Bitou Spatial Development Framework, 2017

According to this spatial planning framework the study area is situated outside the urban edge and primarily within an area designated as Core 1 Critical Biodiversity Area. This excludes the steeper east-facing slopes along its eastern boundary which is designated as Core 1B River Corridor Wetland (**Figure 4**). The study area is zoned Agricultural Zone 1 within which zoning agriculture/ cultivation as well as a primary dwelling and bona fide worker accommodation are primary rights whilst second dwellings and certain tourism facilities (e.g. restaurant, farm stalls) may be permitted as consent uses. The SDF furthermore recommends (2017:294):

- “The estuarine and coastal set back line has been based on the Coastal Management Guidelines stating that these should be 100 metres back from the high-water mark (HWM) in urban areas and 1000 metres back in rural areas (EDM CMP, 2012);
- In order to retain the scenic Garden Route character and minimize flood risks there should be no further urban development westwards of Plettenberg bay except for the land between Turtle Creek and Goose Valley estates, other than that recommended in the Rural Land Use Planning and Management Guidelines (PGWC, 2009) namely that Holiday Accommodation, Low Density Rural Housing (only permitted in Core 2 areas, and Low Impact Tourist and Recreational Facilities can be considered on a restricted basis, see Tables 2 and 3 and Annexure 1 of this document; and,
- Buildings should preferably be located in existing buildings or on disturbed footprints.”

4.2 Draft Bitou Spatial Development Framework, 2020

Spatial planning proposals contained in this draft document includes designating the eastern portion of the study area (as well as some tracks traversing the area) as “Agriculture” whilst the remainder is designated as a “Biodiversity area (Core and Buffer)”. The study area is situated outside the urban edge though land use rights implied through the current zoning scheme remain (refer Section above). The draft SDF states that, “The nature of future development in the Goose Valley area around route N2 and westwards need to be clarified as some development pressure exist in the area.” (2019:81) It furthermore recommends:

“In order to retain the scenic Garden Route character and to fit in with the existing character of the surrounds it is recommended that future development around route N2 be limited to Holiday Accommodation, Low

Impact Tourist and Recreational Facilities and Low-Density Housing which should be considered on a restricted basis and subject to road access management standards/ requirements along route N2." (2019:112,113)

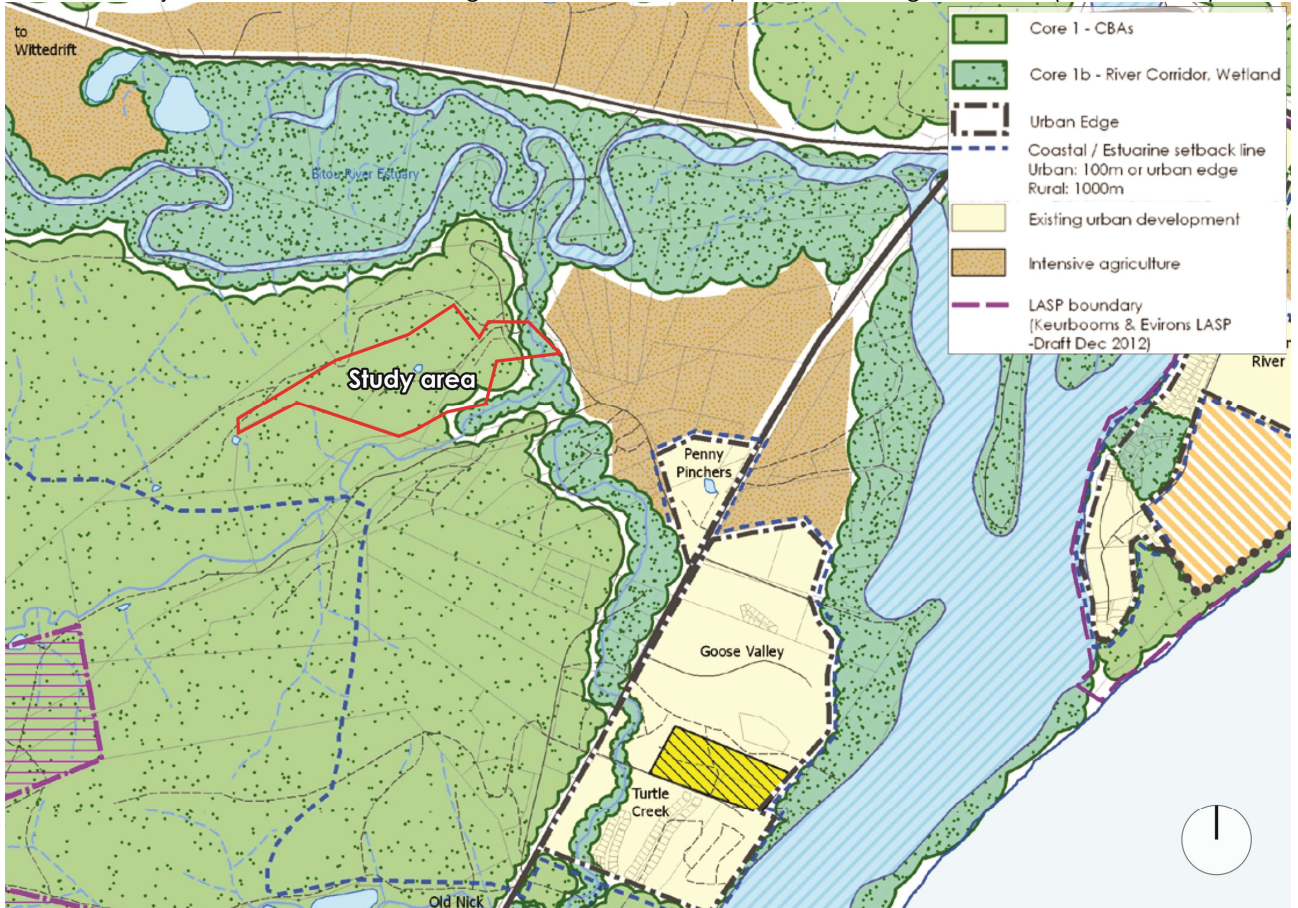


Figure 4: Study area shown within context of spatial planning proposals for Goose Valley area as reflected in the Bitou Spatial Development Framework (2017)

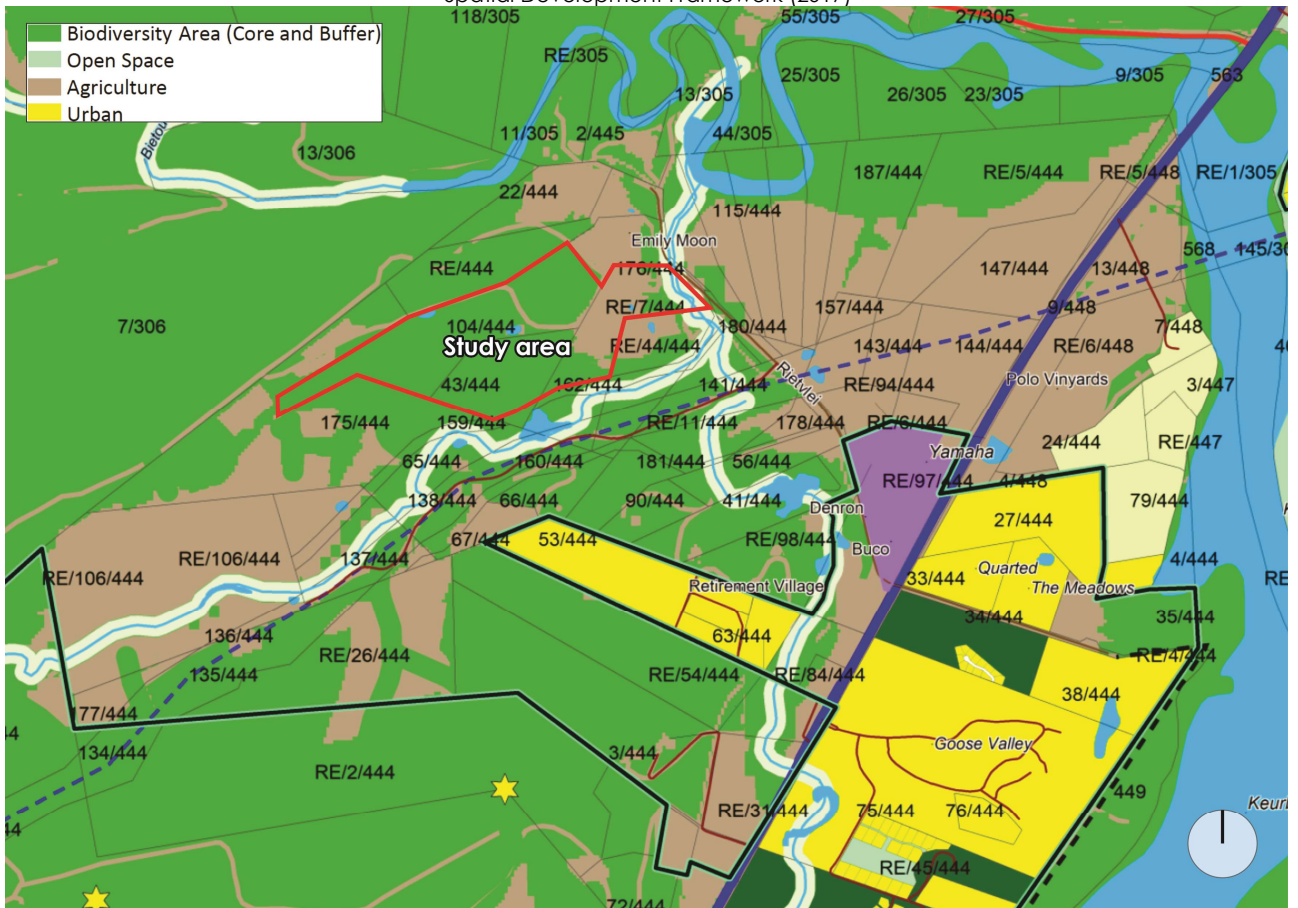


Figure 5: Study area shown within context of draft spatial planning proposals for Goose Valley area as reflected in the Bitou Draft Spatial Development Framework (2019)

5. BASIC HISTORIC BACKGROUND

From a colonial perspective the village of Plettenberg Bay (formerly known as "Formosa") was named after Governor van Plettenberg who in 1778 undertook an inspection of the bay. 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, ±3.55km south of the subject property.

The study area forms part of the original loan farm "Ganze Valley", granted to Rynier van Rooyen comprised an area of 842 Morgen (approximately 721.34 ha) and was first surveyed during 1818². The 1818 diagram denotes historic land use north of the current N2 National Road as "grazing purposes" and highlights the location of a single structure – set back from the coast and some distance south of the study area. Subsequent (1880) SG Mapping of the area shows the early loan farm in relation to the village Formosa, bound by the Keurbooms River to the east and Bitou River to the north.

The 1880 mapping shows the alignments of the early coastal roads (traversing the farm) as well as an early road diverging northwest towards the Bitou River (this latter road is now known as Rietvlei Road). No farmsteads are depicted, but two farmsteads are evident just south of the southern cadastral boundary (Figure 6).

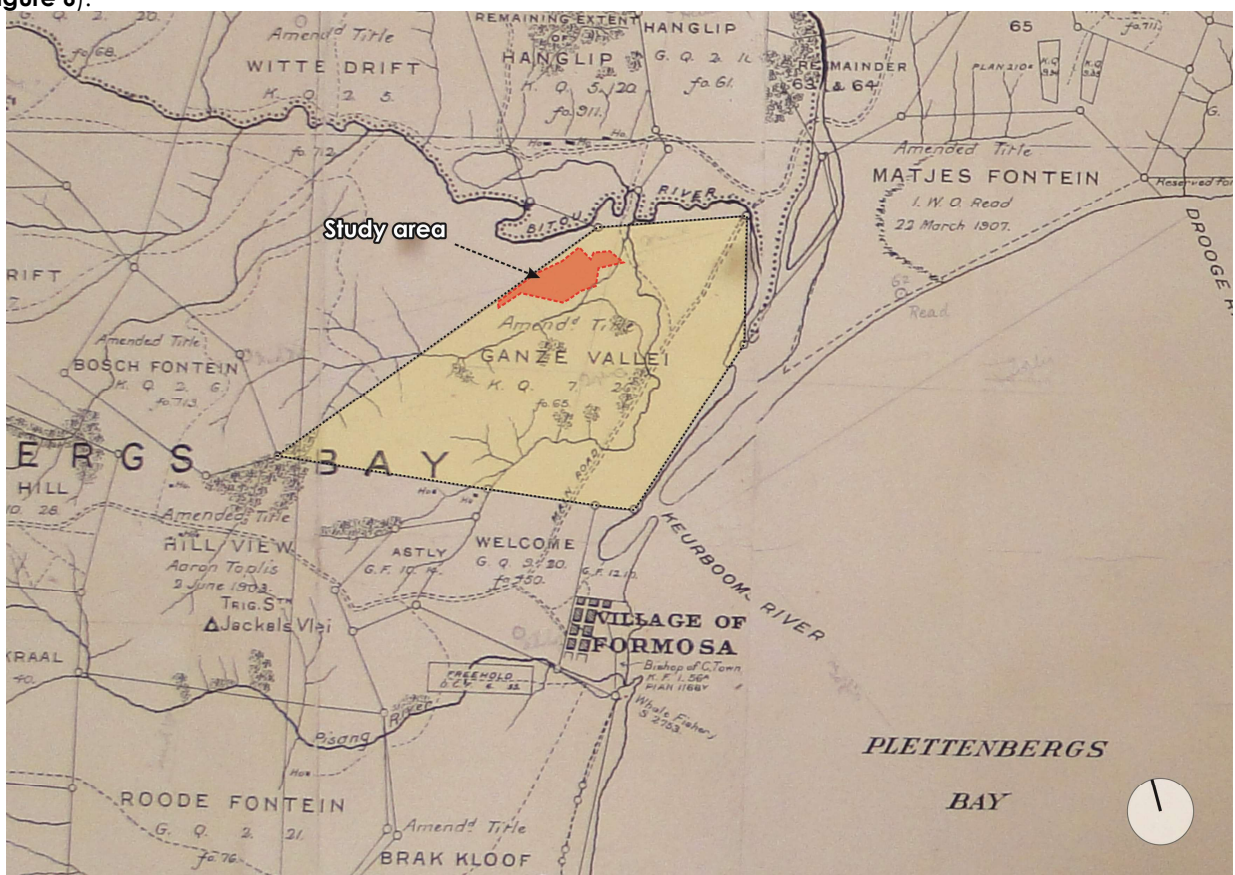


Figure 6: Approximate location of study area within context of early (1880) mapping for the area (George Museum Archives, as edited)

During 1894, the farm then referred to as "Ganse Vallei", was subdivided into a number of smaller lots and a remainder³ and "Lot P" of the farm was transferred to Aaron Toplis & other on 25th September 1895. In 1925, the farm Ganse Vallei 444/7 was subdivided from "Lot P" and transferred to HPC van Rooyen⁴. Ganse Vallei 444/43 was subdivided from "Lot Q" and framed during 1950 while Ganse Vallei 444/104 was subdivided during 2008. The 1894 diagram for Ganse Vallei allows for a remarkably accurate overlay onto present day cadastral data but do not provide much additional information other than to illustrate the occurrence of dense vegetation (Figure 7, overleaf).

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.

² S.G. Diagram 20/1818

³ SG Diagram 1055/1894

⁴ A.2538/1925

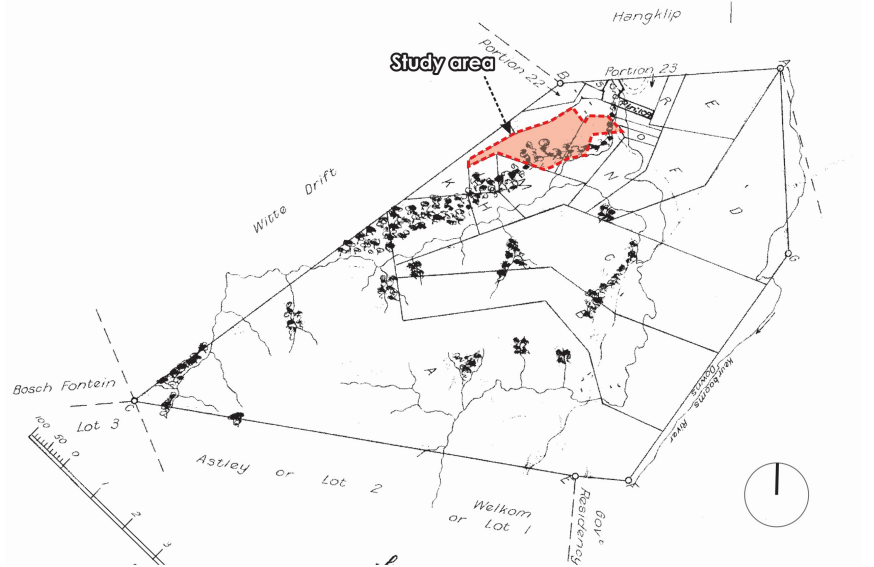


Figure 7: Extract from 1894 SG Diagram mostly describing vegetation cover. No buildings are noted (SGO, as edited).

6. HERITAGE RESOURCES AND ISSUES

Analysis of earliest available (1942) 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 (**Figure 8**):

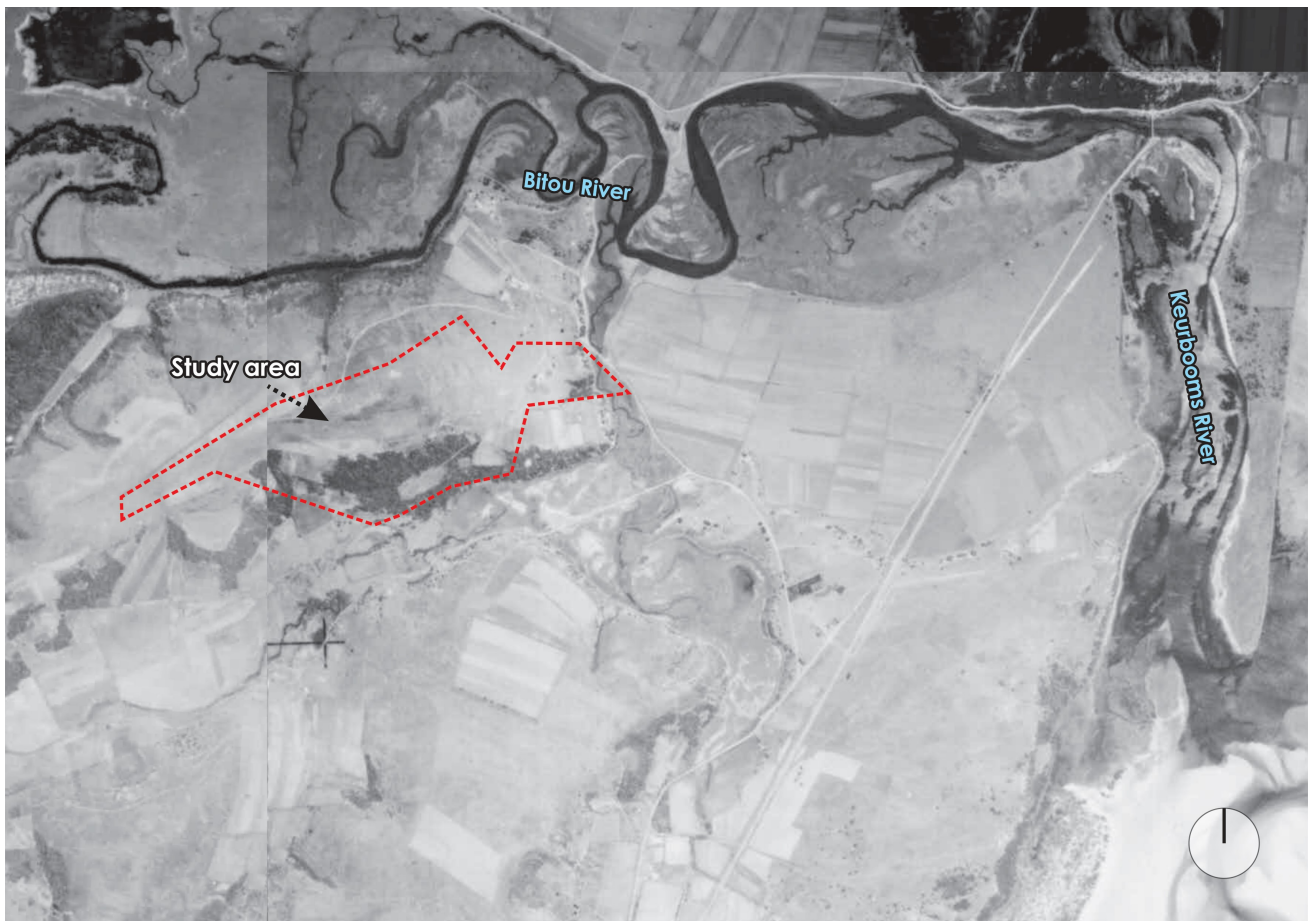


Figure 8: Study area within context of 1942 aerial imagery for the area (Flight Survey 6, Flight Strip 038, Images 11526 & 11528, NCSI as edited)

- The image predates construction of the N2 National Road; however the familiar alignment of the coastal road is noted within the landscape directly east of the study area;
- The patchwork of cultivated fields on and within the proximity of the study area points towards the predominant land use at the time, being agriculture;
- With the exception of the steeper south-facing slopes, most of the study area was transformed through agriculture;

- Two structures, the siting of which corresponds with the remaining two historic structures noted during fieldwork, are evident on the eastern portion of the study area;
- Availability of high-resolution imagery may provide further insight with relation to land use on the study area during this period.

The proposal is focussed on agriculture and limited tourism and would therefore remain consistent with the above traditional landscape patterns. The proposal would therefore not detract from a cultural landscape perspective.

From a **built environment** perspective, the two modest historic structures (older than 60 years) located on the easternmost portion of the study area will be retained. While both buildings had been altered in the past it retains historic fabric and built form of which few intact examples remain in the Plettenberg Bay area. Both these buildings are considered of low local aesthetic cultural significance (Grade 3C).

Given the location of the study area an **archaeological desktop screening** (Dr. Lita Webley) was commissioned:

"There are a number of important archaeological sites of different time periods, in the surrounds of Plettenberg Bay. These include more than 20 Middle and Later Stone Age sites, including Nelson Bay Cave (PHS), on the Robberg Peninsula, to the south of the town. There is also the rock shelter of Matjes River at Keurboomstrand (PHS), and the survivors' campsite of the wreck of the San Gonzales (1630) in Plettenberg Bay. A number of archaeological impact assessments have been undertaken in the Plettenberg Bay area.

Hart (2001) surveyed Portions 36, 37, 48, 88 and a portion of 38 of Ganse Vallei 444 (for the Turtle Creek Golf Estate), to the west of the study area, and close to the Keurbooms River Mouth. He noted that the land was previously used for agriculture. None of the structures on the property were older than 60 years. Very little archaeological material was found on site. The presence of cobble terraces indicated that the area was periodically affected by fluctuations in the height of the Keurbooms River. He 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.

A surface survey by Webley (2004) of Portions 8 and 43 of Ganse Vallei 444, on the opposite side of the N2, recorded ESA and MSA stone artefacts associated with two levels (horizons) of quartzite cobbles which appeared to represent earlier river terraces. However, the stone artefacts do not appear to represent sites (settlements) but rather to have been incorporated into natural phenomena. Webley (2004) suggested that there could be two explanations: that the artefacts were manufactured upstream and carried downstream during previous flooding events. Or that early inhabitants of the area visited the hillside at Ganse Vallei, as they were aware of the quartzite cobble deposits, and used them as a source of raw material. In other words, the hillside served as an informal quarry site over an extended period of time.

Deacon (2007) surveyed three alternative routes for a powerline across the drainage of the Bitou River and its tributaries of the Dieprivier and the Gansevallei stream. These river systems are eroding poorly consolidated Enon-type sediments from ancient river valleys. No archaeological observations were made.

Further afield, to the east of the Keurbooms River estuary, at Sanderlings, Kaplan (1999), surveyed the area but found only low-density scatter of fragmented shell, some ostrich eggshell fragments and some stone flakes and chunks. In his report, he noted that one site (a shell midden) had been mapped at the Keurbooms River Beach, while there have been historic accounts (dating to the 1940s) of an LSA and MSA sites, the latter in association with raised beaches, at the Keurbooms River Beach.

Yates (2006) reported on ESA and MSA artefacts, to the north of Plettenberg Bay and some distance from the study area. He too, has commented on the distribution of stone tools on a hill as well as on the lower slopes, and he too suggests an association with ancient river terraces. He describes the density of the tools as 'modest' and assigns it a low significance.

Comment on Potential Archaeological Impacts

*Surveys in the area have indicated an association between ESA and MSA stone tools, and ancient river gravels. However, the artefacts appear to be in secondary context and have generally been characterised of **Low** significance. Research has shown that LSA archaeological sites (shell middens) tend to concentrate close to rocky headlands, because of the greater opportunities for the exploitation of marine foods. By contrast, there are fewer sites along sand dunes associated with long sandy beaches.*

There have been a few observations on possible shell middens along the coast, around the mouth of the Keurbooms River. While LSA sites on the banks of the river are likely to have been impacted by past fluctuations in the levels of the river, there is a moderate possibility of archaeological remains closer to the coast. An archaeological field survey is recommended."

According to SAHRIS **Palaeontological sensitivity** mapping, much of the study area (with exception of the eastern portion) forms part of an area highlighted as being of very high palaeontological sensitivity (red) where “field assessment and a protocol for potential finds is required”⁵ (**Figure 9**).

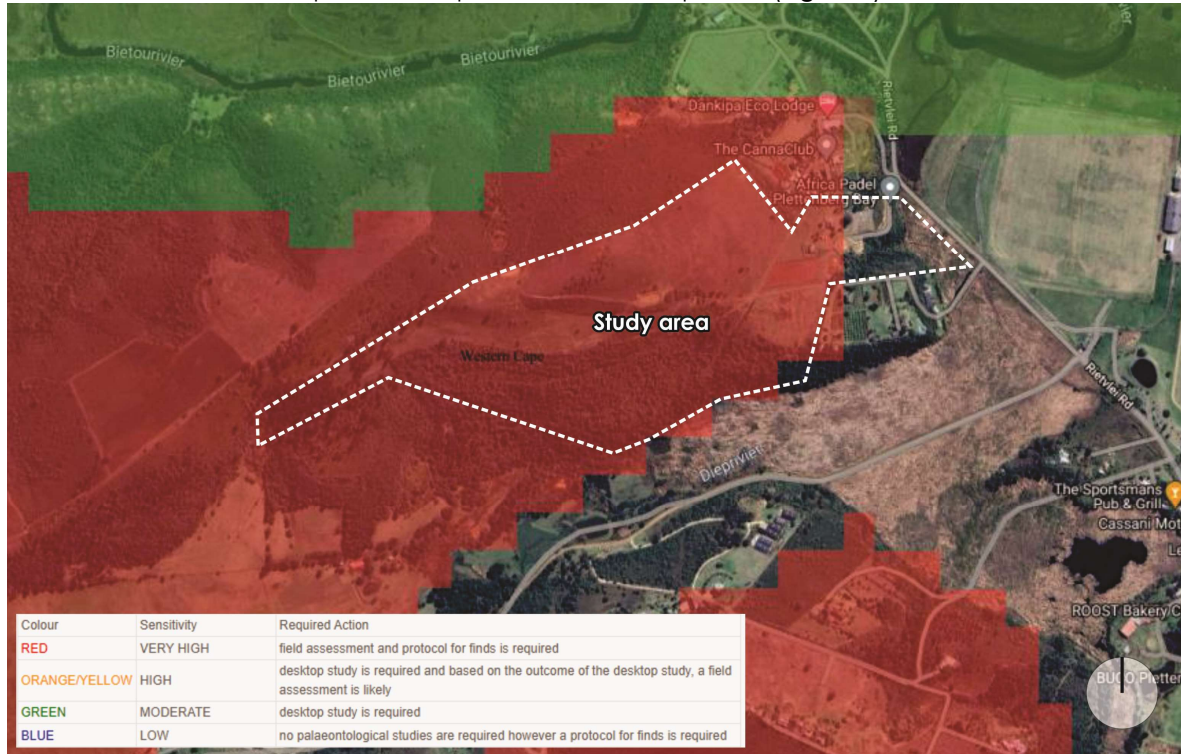


Figure 9: Paleo-sensitivity within the proximity of the study area (SAHRIS, 2022 as edited)

For this reason an independent desktop input from specialist palaeontologist Prof. Marion Bamford was commissioned. The Desktop PIA (attached to this report as **Annexure 4** concludes as follows:

“The proposed site lies on the conglomerates and sandstones of the Enon Formation (Uitenhage Group) that is indicated as being very highly sensitive but in fact has only very rare, fragmented and unidentifiable bones and charred fossil wood. 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, drilling or mining activities have commenced. Since the impact will be low, as far as the palaeontology is concerned, the project should be authorised.”

The proposal is foremost for the continuation of agriculture (vineyards) and associated residential and agricultural outbuildings on the study area all of which are primary rights permissible in terms of the relevant Section 8 Zoning Scheme Regulations, 1985 under the current zoning of the property being “Agriculture Zone I”. The proposal also includes a tourism component tourism (restaurant), which is allowable as a consent use in terms of the above regulations. Development would be focussed on areas extensively transformed through the proven long-standing pattern of agriculture. Save for a narrow road to access the restaurant, existing roads and tracks would be used.

7. RECOMMENDATION

On the balance of the findings emanating from this report it is therefore our contention that the proposal would not materially impact on heritage resources of high cultural significance; that no further heritage related studies are warranted, and that the development may therefore proceed.

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7th December 2022

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⁵ <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/map/palaeo>, accessed 25th November 2022

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