

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 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ON A PORTION OF THE REMAINDER OF ERF 464, GEORGE AND ERF 324 (PACALTSORP), GEORGE DISTRICT AND MUNICIPALITY



ON BEHALF OF: GEORGE MUNICIPALITY

MARCH 2023

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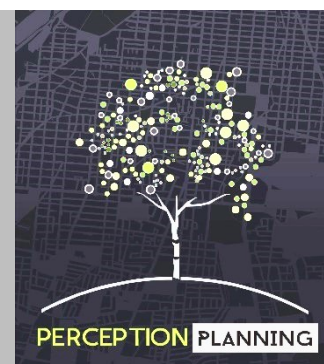
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PERCEPTION Planning

URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING- ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING- HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT- URBAN DESIGN

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. DEADP –Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning
2. DTPW – Department of Transport and Public Works, WC
3. EA – Environmental Authorization
4. HIA – Heritage Impact Assessment
5. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
6. HWC – Heritage Western Cape
7. NGSI – National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mowbray
8. NHRA - National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)
9. PHS – Provincial Heritage Site
10. SAHRIS – South African Heritage Resources Information System
11. VIA – Visual Impact Assessment
12. WCG – Western Cape Government

COVER: Collage of images of the study area, current state of the building complex (Author, 2023)

1. INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTION Planning was appointed by Lauren Waring (SA ID 681203 0219 085), on behalf of George Municipality (being the current registered landowner) 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) in relation to a proposed mixed-use development on portions of the subject properties. Copies of the Power of Attorney, Title Deeds and SG Diagrams are attached as part of **Annexure 1**.

The cadastral land units subject to this application include the following:

- Remainder of Erf 464, George, measuring 800 DUM¹, registered to George Municipality, held under Title Deed No. T39662/2001, and situated within the George District and Municipality, Western Cape.
- Erf 324 (Pacaltsdorp), measuring 105249 ha, registered to George Municipality, held under Title Deed T12043/2004, and situated within the George District and Municipality, Western Cape.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

The study area (±302 ha in extent) forms part of largely vacant municipal owned land situated along the southern periphery of the early George commonage (Remainder of Erf 464), ± 4km southwest of the George historic town centre and along the northern periphery of the early Pacaltsdorp commonage (Remainder of Erf 325). The site is ± 3km northwest of the historic Pacaltsdorp village centre and ±4km east of the George Airport is illustrated with the locality plan below (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Study area location within sub-regional context (George.gov.za, 2023, as edited)

Forming part of an undulating rural landscape, the varied topography of the site, sloping towards the Gwayang River, is best illustrated through **Figure 2**. The site is bound by the R102 (also known as the "Airport Road") to the north and the George – Mosel Bay railway line to the south. The eastern boundary is again largely defined by the George – Mossel Bay railway line with existing industrial areas and modern municipal cemetery further eastward. The western boundary is partly defined by the Gwayang River corridor (**Figures 2 and 3**).

The site has been transformed through land use activities such as agriculture/ cultivation and various municipal engineering facilities (the George municipal landfill site and effluent treatment plant). Undeveloped portions of the site are utilized by a group of ±50 small scale farmers for grazing/ keeping of cattle, pigs, goats, and poultry. Some of the farmers reside within the proximity of an old quarry, located along the southernmost

¹ Deeds.gov.za. (2023).

portion of the site, along the river corridor, as caretakers of the aforementioned livestock. A small airstrip for radio-controlled aircraft situated along the higher lying portion of the site and is leased to a local club.

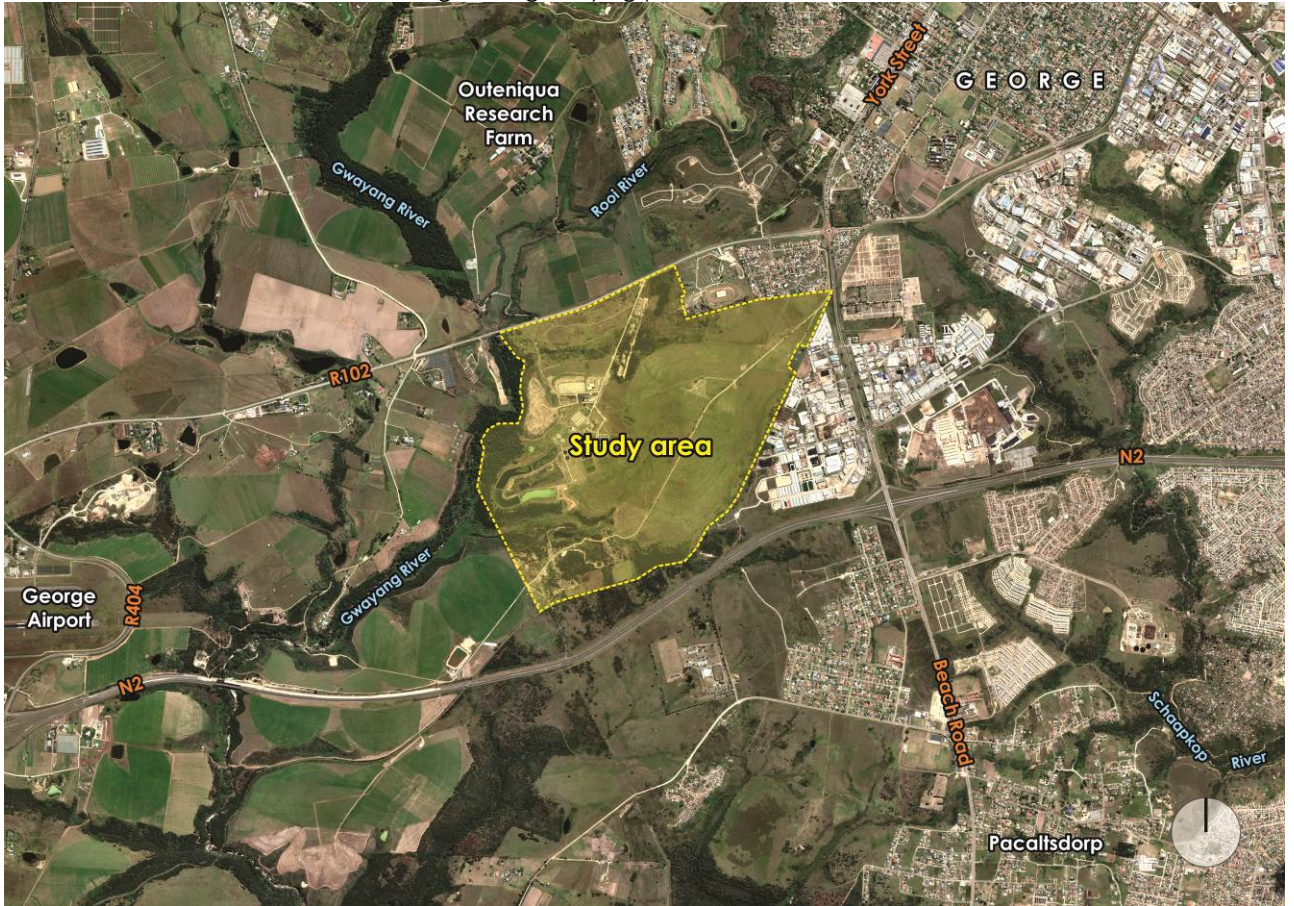


Figure 2: Topography of the study area displaying contours in 5m intervals (Eisenburg.com, 2017), as edited).

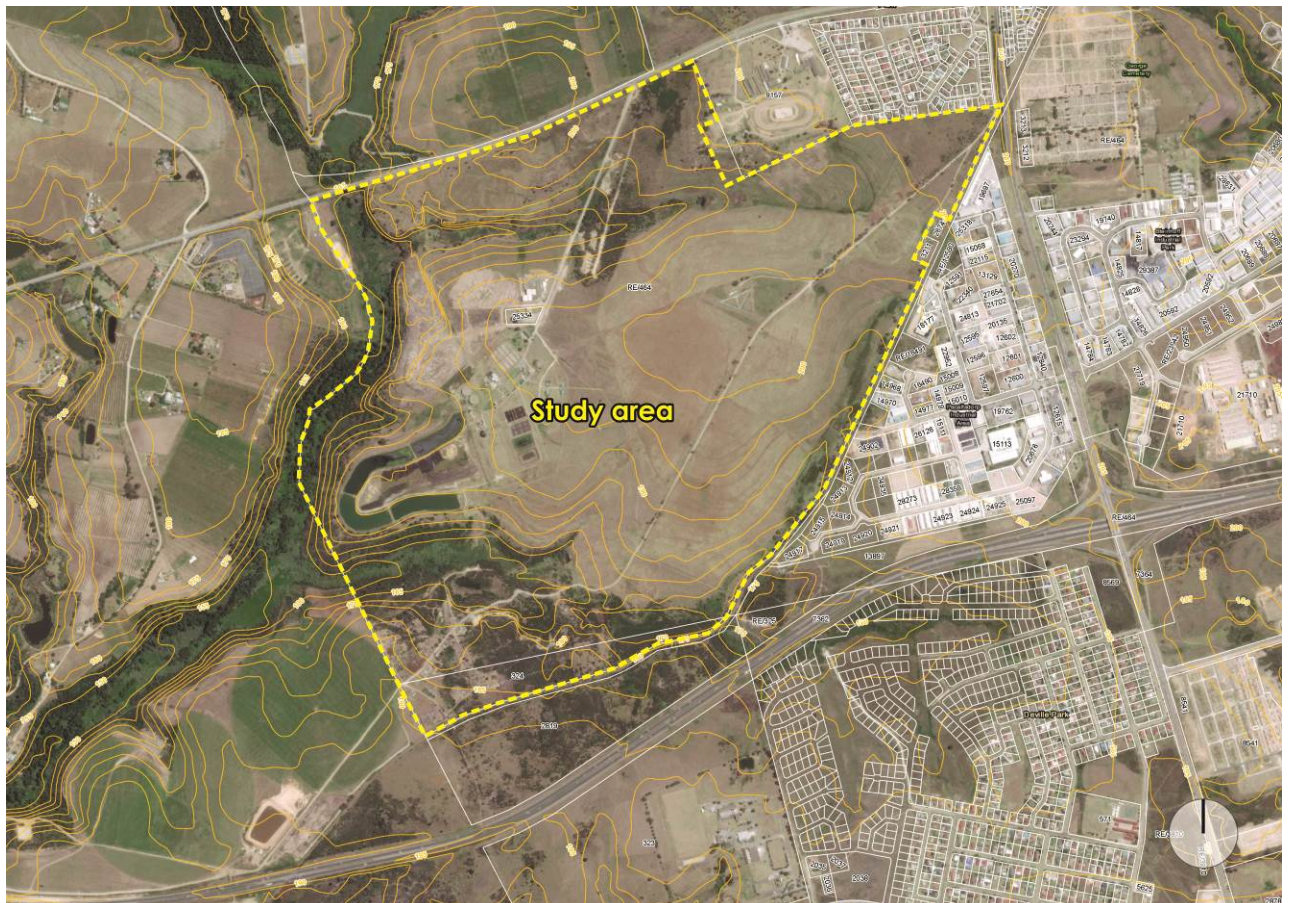


Figure 3: Recent (2022) aerial view of the study area within surrounding context (GoogleEarth 2022, as edited)

Vehicular access to the site is via the R102 (primarily used to gain entry to the municipal landfill site and/or effluent treatment plant), or alternatively from a gravel road off Formosa Drive, Groeneweide Park. No historic structures were noted on the site during fieldwork undertaken on 9th February 2023. However, two dwellings older than 60 years, once occupied by railway staff, remain on adjoining Erven 3211 and 2674, located along the railway line/ eastern site boundary (Figure 4). No historic gravesites/ burial grounds are known to occur on or within the proximity of the study area.

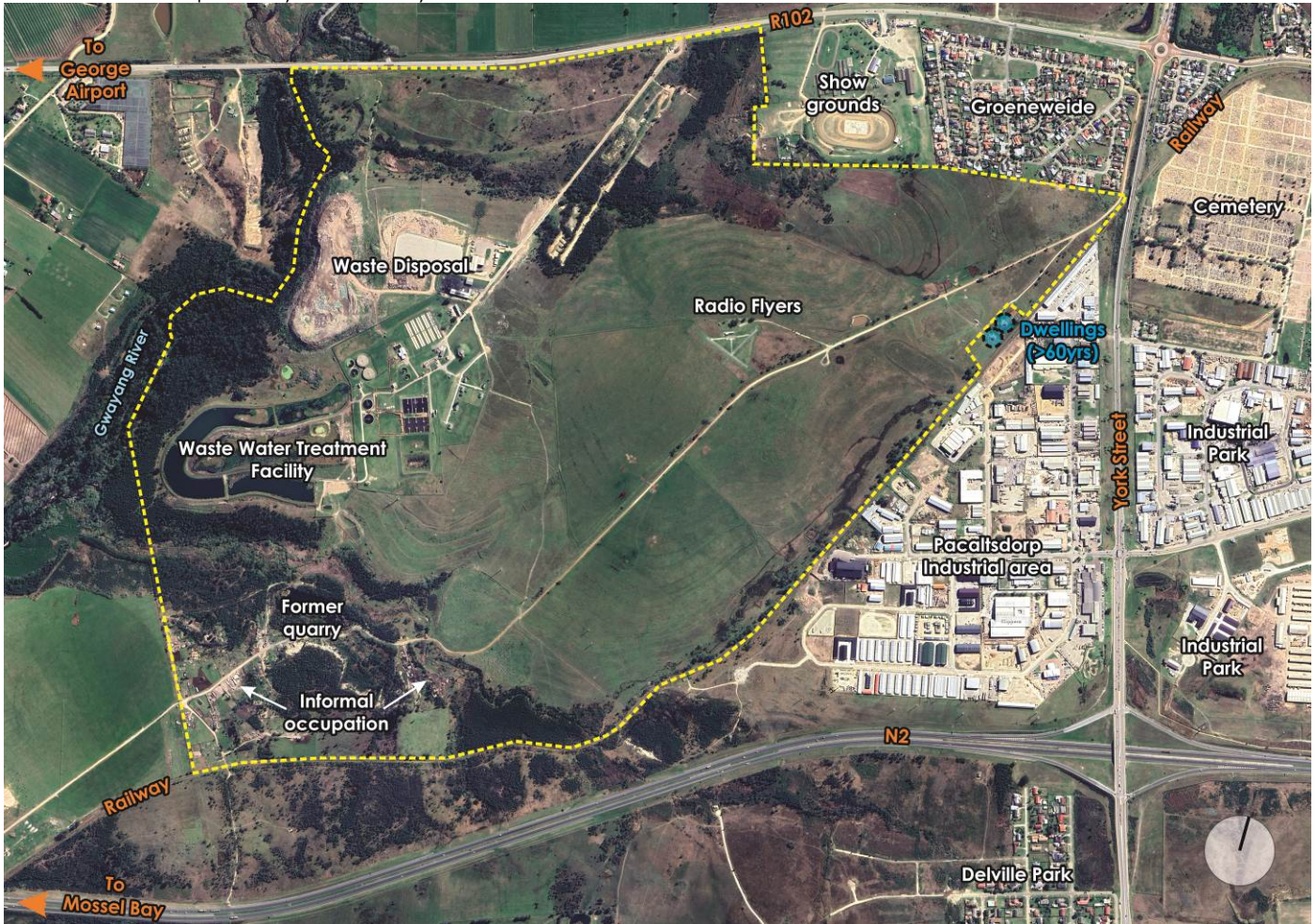


Figure 4: Site specific image - existing land use/ features on the study area and direct environs (GoogleEarth 2022, as edited)

Existing land use within the proximity of the site include the Outeniqua Research Farm (WCG) to the north, local agricultural showgrounds and Groeneweide residential suburb to the northeast and well established Pacaltsdorp Industrial area to the east with the municipal cemetery and several other established industrial areas further eastward. The pattern of land use along the "Airport Road" (R102), westwards from the site is characterised by agriculture and several nurseries, restaurants etc. A number of land use applications related to the establishment of an "Airport Support Area" on former agricultural lands directly east of the George Airport, have recently been approved or are currently under consideration.

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

3. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Zutari (Pty) Ltd was appointed by George Municipality to provide professional services with relation to the development of a conceptual layout, advised by various specialist studies, for a mixed-use development on a portion of the remainder of Erf 464, George as well as Erven 324 and 2819, Pacaltsdorp (see Figure 5).

"The subject site, has been identified as land to accommodate a mixed-use development, integrating the land use requirements of the Municipality, releasable land for residential, industrial, and urban supportive functions/uses, in a creative urban design, which makes the most of the opportunity afforded by the site attributes and context. The development must reflect a vibrant urban development which creates an integrated living environment pragmatically combined with maximum investment/economic benefit to facilitate job-creation and economic enablement." (GM, 2022:4).

The preliminary project vision, as outlined in the municipal tender documentation², is to prepare the study area for phased release/redevelopment of the site to include, inter alia, the following land use components:

- Municipal utility area;
- Heavy industry precinct;
- Light industry area;
- Residential area including various housing typologies and urban-living supportive uses;
- Continuous and sustainable conservation/ open space system which ties into a sustainable urban drainage system;
- A tourism/ trade corridor area and urban gateway uses;
- Possible renewable energy projects;
- Ancillary services and engineering infrastructure.



Figure 5: Preliminary design concept by George Municipality, to be further developed/ refined through various specialist studies.

4. SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The study area is currently zoned “Undetermined Use Zone” and “Utility Zone”, respectively, in accordance with the provisions of the George Integrated Zoning Scheme Bylaw, 2017 (GIZS). The pattern of existing zoning applicable to land with the direct proximity of the study area is depicted in **Figure 6**.



Figure 6: Existing zoning applicable to the study area and direct environs (GIZS, 2017).

² George Municipality, 2022:3

The **George Spatial Development Framework (SDF), 2019** indicates the study area as being inside the urban edge and earmarks the site for "Future Industrial" purposes. Erf 2819, the portion of land situated between the railway line and N2 is however earmarked as a "Critical Biodiversity Area & Green Corridor" (GM, 2019:113).

The **Gwayang Local Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2015** also shows the study area as situate within the urban edge and describes it as "a typical transitional area on the edge of a town with a variety of authority uses. In general the area is neglected and being misused for dumping and squatting." (GM, 2015:25) (**Figure 7**). Spatial proposals for the study area outlined in the LSDF include the following:

"The urban edge will extend towards the Gwayang River up to the western boundary of Erf 464 and the land situated to the east of this newly defined edge will become urban. This includes land that is currently vacant or under-utilised and is comprised of Erven 464, 324 and 2819. The function of the existing George show grounds will change, and this facility will need to relocate to a new rural site in course of time. This new urban area needs to reflect social and sectoral integration, through mixed use development, and incorporate the existing residential and industrial areas through effective transportation links. Portions of this urban area, bordering onto the R102 will become a new urban gateway to George and attention needs to be given to establishing buildings of suitable aesthetical quality. Likewise, some commercial uses will be visible from the N2 and also needs to meet with sound aesthetical standards.

The mixed-use area to the south of the R102, in the urban area, should consist of high density residential, providing in the need for gap housing, combined with commercial land uses and service trades. The land to the north of the R102 should provide a mix of residential and institutional land uses.

Commercial land uses along the R102 need to provide a public interface, in order to attract interest from tourist and consumers alike. Guidelines for landscaping and urban design along the R102 need to be upheld by landowners and enforced by the municipality. Section 12 of this report provides detailed guidelines for the respective development zones. This area will serve as the new western urban gateway to George and although the dominant land use will be urbanized, it must remain true to the garden city appeal of George." (GM, 2015: 55, 56).

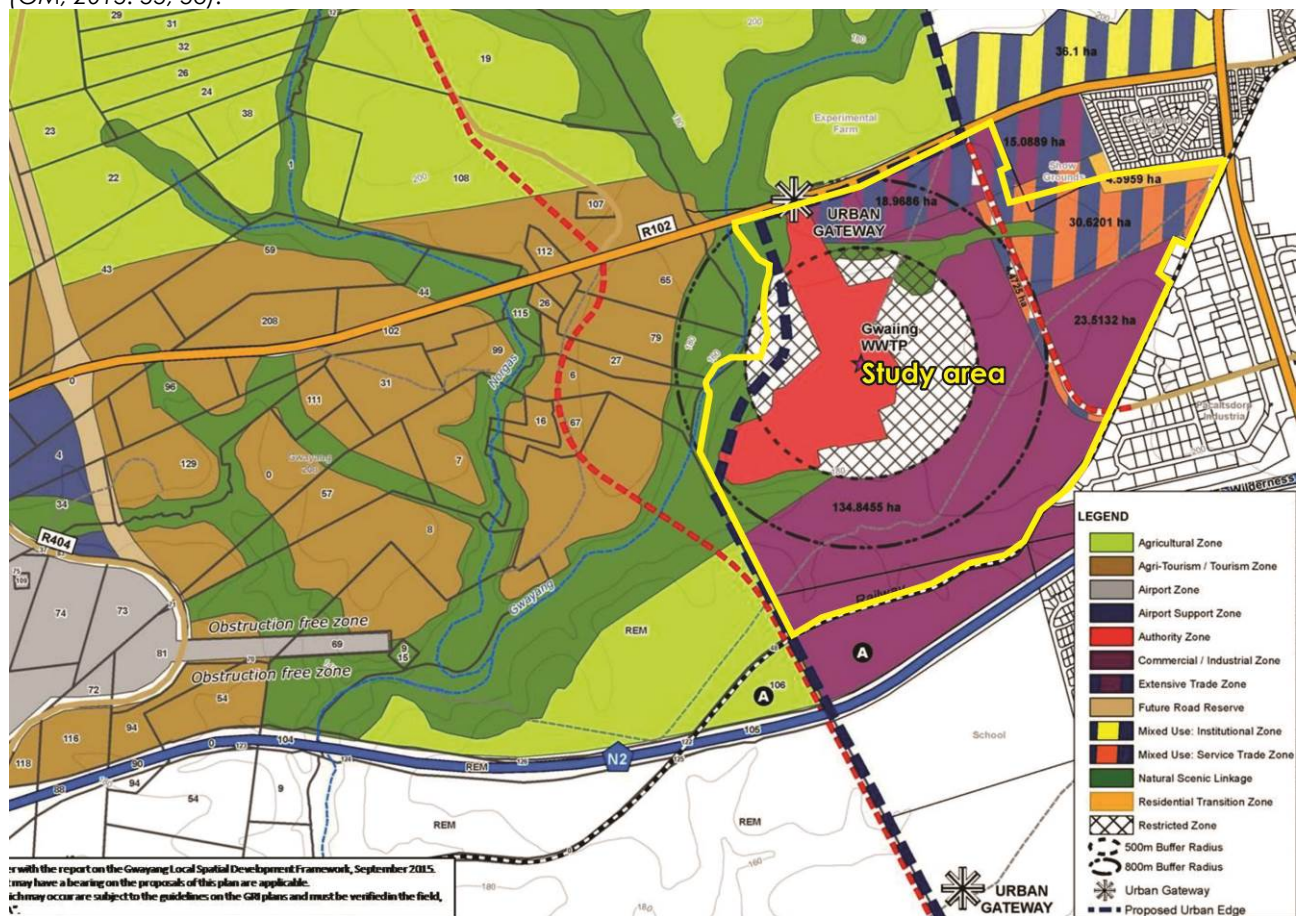


Figure 7: Study area within context of extract from the Gwayang LSDF, 2015, as edited).

The LSDF makes provision for the establishment of an Airport Support Area directly opposite the George Airport and states that "Only land uses that are supporting the airport facilities or that providing a direct service to tourists must be permitted." (2015:63). Several development proposals consistent with these provisions have been permitted within this precinct during recent years.

The LSDF refers to the George Landscape Classification Study (VRM Africa, 2009), which classifies the R102 as a view corridor with a 500m strip on either side. The report highlights the need to manage the potential impact of large-scale development on the natural landscape and recommends, *inter alia*, that "the visual impact of buildings and development along this route be reduced through the use of visual buffers and innovative design." (GM, 2015: 75).

5. FOCUSED HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Historical background research focussed on relevant primary sources obtained in the George Museum Archives as well as other primary and secondary sources.

5.1 Early establishment of George

The town of George was established on land registered as a loan farm named "Post Rivier" 1760, in favour of Koert Grobbelaar³. Jan Coetsee (Koert Grobbelaar's stepson) extended the lease until Coetsee's death in 1782⁴. In 1777 the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) had decided to establish a new Company Post to monitor the felling of indigenous woods. The DEIC annexed the farm Post Rivier in order to further establish the boundaries of the woodcutter's post. Although George was established as a town in 1811, the first freeholds were only granted in 1814 by which time the town grid had been laid out.

Formalisation of the first town layout (1812) appear to have been done by J H Voorman⁵, most likely with some input from then landrost Van Kervel. The basic layout of the town bears resemblance to that of Uitenhage although with various improvements. The layout consisted of two parallel streets namely York Street (±60m wide but increasing to ±100m width at the top end) and a second, being the narrower Meade Street. These two streets run into a cross street, being Courtenay Street in which the main public buildings dating back to the Colonial Period were situate.

5.2 Early establishment of Pacaltsdorp

Pacaltsdorp was established as a mission by the London Mission Society in 1813 with Reverend Carolus Pacalt being the first religious instructor. The area chosen for the site of the mission was known as Hoogekraal, home to members of the Outeniqua tribe⁶. Reverend Pacalt died in 1818, after which the settlement was re-named Pacaltsdorp in his honour.

George was declared a town with a designated legal administrator (landdrost) namely Mr A G van Kervel in April 1811. In April 1812, Mr van Kervel received correspondence from the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town instructing him to assess the situation at the farm Hoogekraal. It was reported by Mr Van Kervel that eight indigenous families were living on the site at that time⁷. The reason for the enquiry was given as such; the mission at Bethelsdorp could no longer support the large number of families living there. It was envisaged that an additional mission be established at Hoogekraal to which part of the Bethelsdorp community be transferred. It has not been verified whether this transfer took place, but it would appear so from the 1814 census record captured for Hoogekraal. 30 families were registered as occupants.

Hoogekraal census records are available in the Cape Town archives for the years 1814, 1816, 1823 and 1825. The number of 30 households (homes) remains constant during this time, although more children were obviously being born. The 1816 record gives the number of people living at Hoogekraal as 33 men, 30 women and 65 underage children.

Because the London Mission Society were owners and custodians of the land by agreement with British government administrators at the time, no formal land ownership was given to inhabitants of Pacaltsdorp, or other London Mission Society held properties in the South Cape, namely Dysselsdorp (near Oudtshoorn) or Zoar (near Ladismith). When in 1870 the London Mission Society re-assessed its land holding position, it was decided to transfer individual title to established mission residents. General Plans were drawn up for Pacaltsdorp in 1875.

5.3 Study area

From a colonial perspective, a substantial portion of the site (i.e. northwards of the railway line) forms part of the original George Town Commonage, surveyed and framed during August 1919⁸ by surveyor Dumbleton whilst the area south of the railway line (i.e. Erven 324 and 2819) forms part of the former Pacaltsdorp Commonage, once registered to the Pacaltsdorp Village Management Board. The Pacaltsdorp Municipality was formally incorporated into George Municipality during the c. 1950's.

Basic historical background research did not identify or highlight significant heritage-related themes pertinent to this particular portion of land. Note that a detailed deed search was not undertaken as part of this NID.

³ Cape Archives (CA)RLR 15/2 p. 511

⁴ CA MOOC8/18.49a

⁵ Cape Town Archives (CTA) CO 2576 1811, July 3rd. Letter from Landrost A van Kervel to Colonial Office requesting plan of Town layout compiled by Voorman to be returned as it was the only copy made.

⁶ The Story of Pacaltsdorp and Some Reminiscences. T A Anderson. Pub. 1960.

⁷ Cape Town Archives (CTA) CO (Colonial Office) 2831pg. 436

⁸ SG Diagram 4467/1919

6. HERITAGE RESOURCES AND ISSUES

6.1 Early aerial imagery

Basic analysis of early (1957) imagery enables us to identify various land use and traditional (i.e. Pre-Modern) cultural landscape patterns relevant to the study area and its direct environs (**Figure 8**).

- Predates construction of the N2 National Road.
- Early alignments of York Street, the R102 as well as the Beach Road are evident.
- Southward from the Y intersection with York Street, Beach Road is lined by tree lines (several rows deep) on both sides.
- The alignment of the George – Mossel Bay railway line as well as the two modest railway homes located along the eastern site boundary, as noted during fieldwork, are visible.
- Beginnings of the George municipal cemetery is evident along the eastern side of Beach Road.
- Few roads traverse the site – the southern route evident here coinciding with the alignment of the current gravel road leading from Groeneweide to the Gwayang River.
- While the landscape appears to have been transformed from a natural state by this time, little cultivation occurs north of the railway line. Predominant land use during this period is likely to have been grazing of livestock.
- Regarding lands formerly part of the Pacaltsdorp Commonage, forestry is evident directly north of the railway line, on the southern portion of the site (i.e. current Erf 324);
- Directly south of the railway line (i.e. outside the study area) a cluster cultivated agricultural fields, accessed from Pacaltsdorp/ Beach Road defined the landscape.



Figure 8: Extract from 1957 aerial imagery showing the study area in relation to the current early land use patterns within its proximity (Source: Survey 403, Flight Strip 06, Image 3257)

The two historic (railway) dwellings remain along the eastern study area boundary. Both structures appeared dilapidated and are not considered of any particular local architectural or cultural significance. Said structures are situated outside the study area and therefore unlikely to be directly impacted through the proposed development.

6.2 Visual/ Landscape context

Findings and recommendations following from an independent Visual Impact Assessment (Scoping Report), undertaken by VRM Africa (**Annexure 3**), includes that the study area is fairly degraded from a visual perspective and that there are areas suitable for industrial type development though areas within the proximity of the N2 National Road, the R102 and Groeneweide residential area are sensitive to landscape

transformation. Given the relatively degraded nature of the site, the report recommends only a Level 4 VIA focussing on the potential impact of landscape transformation from the following key observation points:

- N2 National Road (south).
- Groeneweide residential area (northeast).
- Western rural farm access.
- Deville Park residential area (southeast)

With relation to the anticipated significance of impacts the report indicates that without mitigation the visual intrusion is likely to be High, degrading the local N2 Highway and Groeneweide Suburb landscape character to some degree. As the sense of place already includes lower intensity industrial development, the visual significance is expected to be Medium to High. The report indicates that with mitigation and with retaining a wide buffer on the southern drainage line, and no industrial development adjacent to the Groeneweide Residential area, the visual significance can be reduced to Medium to Low, creating a suitable urban mixed-use area (VRMA 2022:11).

The report states that the potential for negative cumulative effects is limited mainly due to the occurrence of existing negative visual elements within the local landscape including e.g. the landfill site and effluent treatment plant and that, with mitigation, the potential for a positive utilisation of the local landscape could be implemented. Mitigation measures proposed include:

- Retention of a wide buffer along the southern drainage line so as to retain some of the existing land uses associated with community cattle grazing and retain the existing "N2 High sense of place";
- Avenue tree planting down roads to reduce the overall visual intensity of a future industrial landscape.

6.3 Archaeology

The following independent desktop specialist input was provided by Dr. Lita Webley (Archaeologist):

Pre-colonial archaeology: The closest Provincial Heritage Site (Grade II) to the study area is Herold's Bay Cave, some 6.7km to the south-west. It was gazetted in 1979 because of its palaeontological significance, anthropogenic sediments, remains of a speleothem and remnants of a Last Interglacial Beach. Various archaeologists (Kaplan 2005; Dreyer 2006 & Nilssen 2009) have commented on the steep cliffs along the coast between Mossel Bay and George and numerous caves, some with significant MSA material, have been reported. The CTS Heritage Screener (2019) repeats the importance of the coastal strip, noting the stone tools found at the Blougat River mouth. However, these caves are difficult to reach, and Kaplan (2007) has commented that the majority of significant sites occur within 300m of the high-water mark.

In general, archaeological studies which have been conducted in the interior around George, have reported scattered surface distributions of ESA artefacts as well as smaller numbers of MSA stone artefacts. No observations were made of LSA sites in the area. Kaplan (2007) commented that artefact density is very low away from the coastal margin. No artefacts were observed at the George Country Club (Kaplan 2002), or at Buffelsfontein near Herold's Bay (Kaplan 2007).

Scatters of ESA and MSA artefacts were observed on the farm Hooge Kraal and the catchment of the Maalgate River (i.e. Lagoon Lifestyle Estate) (Kaplan 2005) and at Oubaai Golf estate and the 'Brink' (a residential development) near Herold's Bay. Artefacts were made on local quartzite, included side-struck flakes, prepared flakes, large chunks, flaked cobbles, hammerstones, a cleaver and at least two bifacial flaked handaxes. They occurred in disturbed and degraded areas. Nilssen (2009) too surveyed a portion of Hooge Kraal 238 (8km to the south-west) noting the impenetrable vegetation. He noted that the remains are dominated by ESA material located in and under ancient dune sands. These included handaxes, cleavers, cores, hammerstones, choppers, etc. The steeper slopes to the south were dominated by a range of Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts on quartzite and quartz.

Dreyer (2006) surveyed Ballots Bay on the Farm Sand Kraal 197, and he reported on a collection of ESA hand axes (from the illustration there are at least 8 handaxes) and a smaller assemblage of flaked tools which resemble MSA artefacts (from the illustrations these include broken blades and flakes) from the same source. The source of the raw material is likely the locally derived quartzite from the beach. A study in the Pacaltsdorp area by Webley (2022), has confirmed the presence of caves and rock shelters in the Skaapkop River, some with rock art.

Historical Archaeology: No historical archaeology has been undertaken in the area, but Orton & Hart (2011) did develop a conservation management plan for some late 18th/early 19th century ruined buildings at Tyolora, to the south-east of George.

Graves: During an archaeological survey around Blanco for a new substation and powerlines, (ACO Associates for Vidamemoria 2015) recorded two graveyards and more are likely to occur around small settlements.

Comments on Potential Archaeological Impacts:

It seems unlikely that any significant artefact material will be identified in the study area. Scatters of ESA and/or MSA material are possible but are likely to be of low significance. Caves/rock shelters do occur in rock outcrops along the lower reaches of the Gwayang River, near the coast and it is possible that some may be found higher up the river valleys as well. However, these are not likely to be impacted.

If any human remains or significant archaeological materials are exposed during development activities, then the find should be protected from further disturbance and work in the immediate area should be halted and Heritage Western Cape must be notified immediately. These heritage resources are protected by Section 36(3)(a) and Section 35(4) of the NHRA (Act 25 of 1999) respectively and may not be damaged or disturbed in any way without a permit from the heritage authorities. Any work in mitigation, if deemed appropriate, should be commissioned, and completed before construction continues in the affected area and will be at the expense of the developer. The above recommendations should be included in the Environmental Management Program (EMPr) for the proposed residential development.

6.4 Palaeontology

According to SAHRIS **Palaeontological sensitivity** mapping, the entire study area forms part of an area highlighted as being of no palaeontological sensitivity (grey) where “no palaeontological studies are required”⁹ (Figure 9).

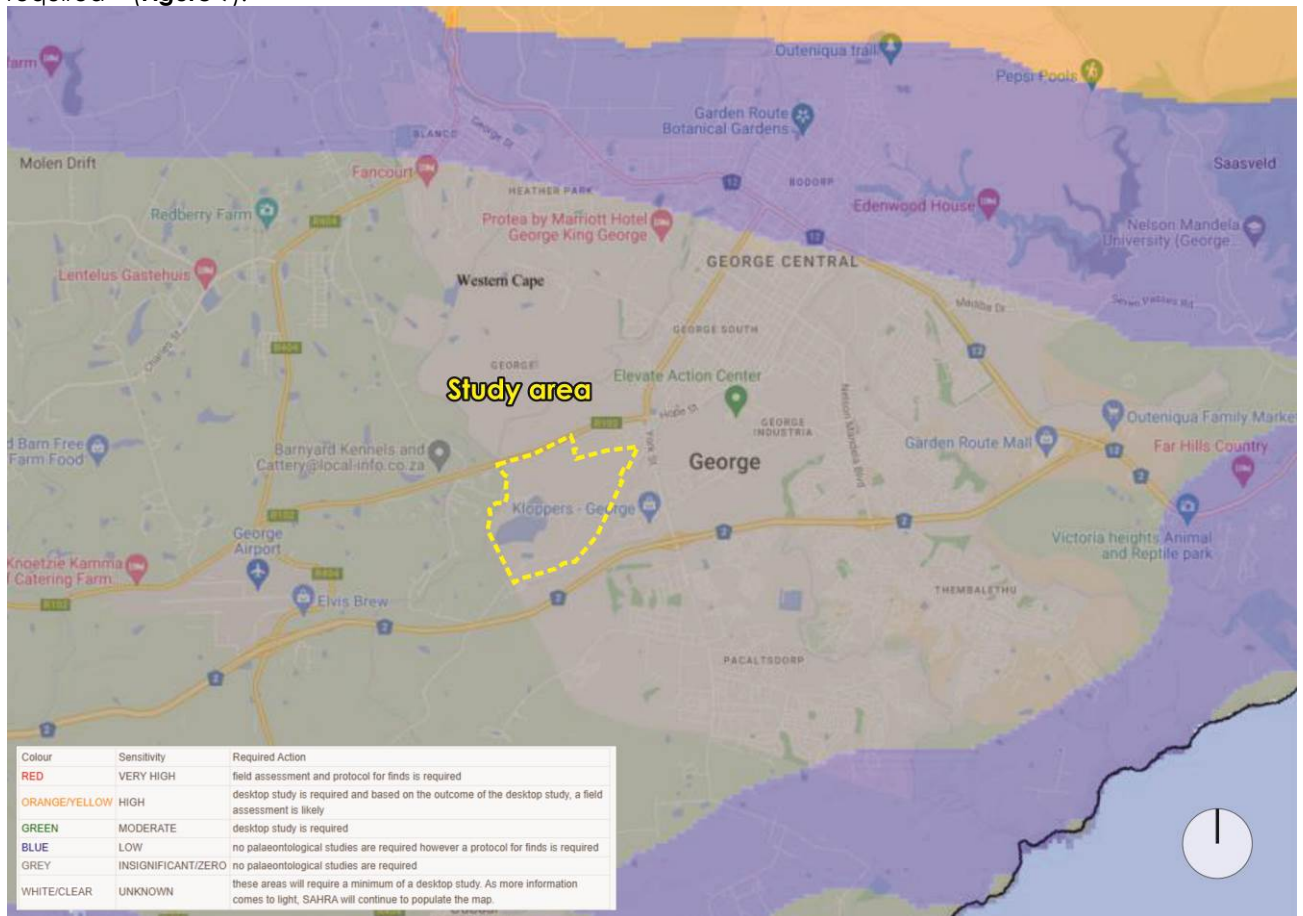


Figure 9: Paleo-sensitivity within the proximity of the study area (SAHRIS, 2023 as edited)

6.5 Conclusion

The proposed development is unlikely to negatively impact on built heritage of cultural significance. Brief analysis of the cultural landscape context did not reveal important traditional landscape patterns of cultural significance. Though outside the study area boundary, historic use of lands directly to the south, between the railway line and N2 (Erf 2819, Pacaltsdorp), as part of cultivated agricultural fields just west of the village Pacaltsdorp is of interest. However, within the present landscape context, former rural landscape qualities have already been eroded across much of the study area through land uses such as intensive feed farming along the former unrehabilitated quarry along the southern site boundary as well as municipal infrastructure installations/ land use such as the landfill site and effluent treatment plant. Undeveloped portions of the study area still used for grazing purposes, and it is uncertain where the existing ±50¹⁰ small scale farmers and their livestock would relocate to once the development is implemented.

⁹ <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/map/palaeo>, accessed 8th February 2023

¹⁰ Perscom with small-scale farmers, 9th February 2023

The VIA report considers the site to be fairly degraded from a visual perspective but caution against the impact of inappropriate development along the N2 National Road, the R102 and Groeneweide residential area as such areas are sensitive to landscape transformation. As such it is recommended that the interim mitigation measures proposed in the VIA Scoping Report (see Section 6.2) serve as a design informant during refinement of the master plan for the site.

The study area forms part of an area indicated as being of no palaeontological significance and therefore no palaeontological study is required.

Whilst the probability that archaeological occurrences within the site is considered low it cannot be discounted with absolute certainty though the latter proviso mostly pertain to potential cave/rock shelters that may occur within rocky outcrops along the lower reaches of the Gwayang River. As these areas are sensitive from an archaeological perspective it is recommended that it be excluded from the development footprint, failing which further archaeological fieldwork may be required.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having regard to the above assessment it is our view that the proposal would not impact on any heritage resource of cultural significance and that no further heritage-related studies would be warranted provided that design proposals address potential visual impacts along the N2 National Road, the R102 and Groeneweide residential area and steeper areas/ rocky outcrops along the lower reaches of the Gwayang River be excluded from development.

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15th March 2023



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