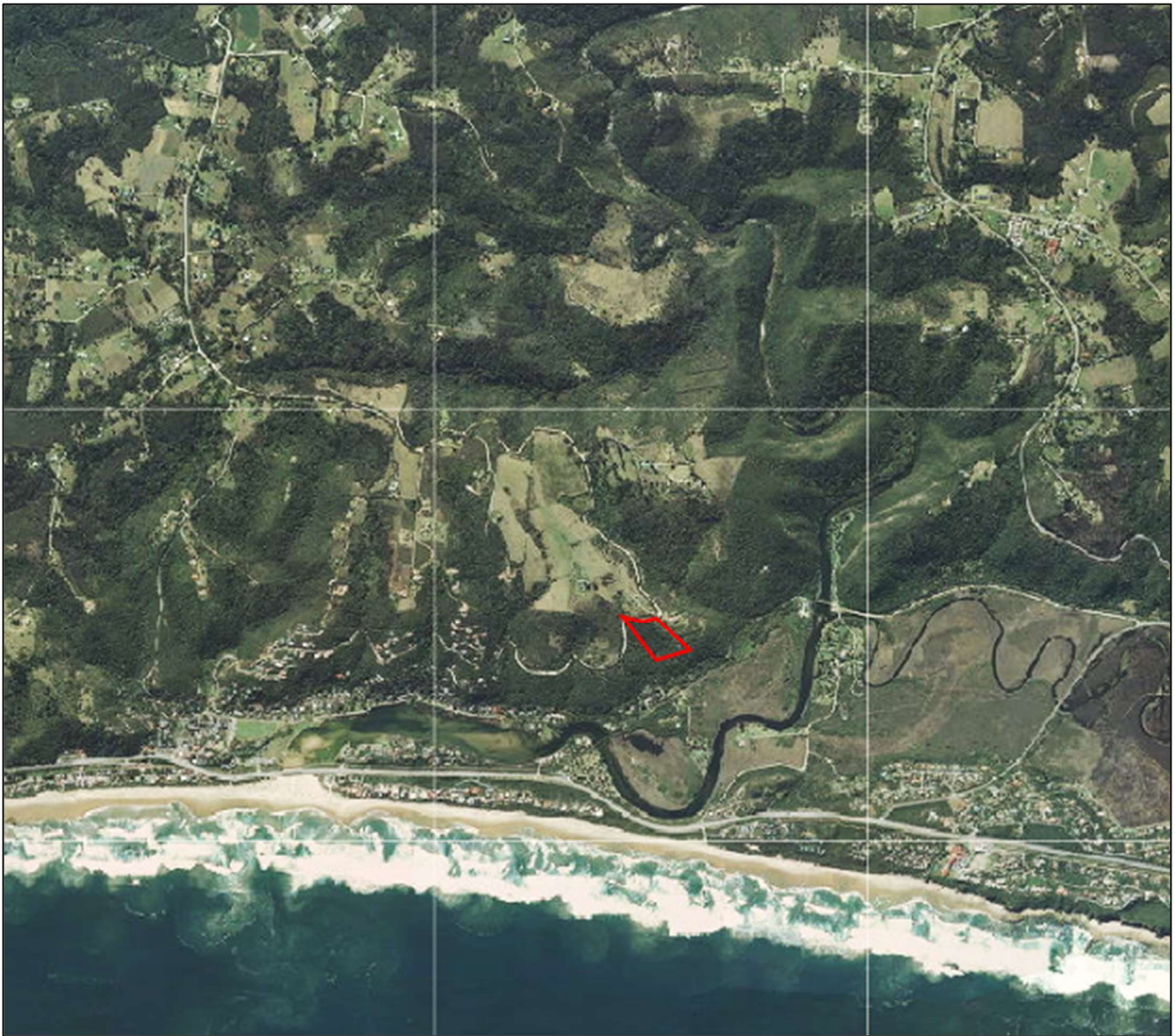




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**PLANNING STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
ERF 1058, WHITES ROAD, HOEKWIL (WILDERNESS HEIGHTS)
GEORGE MUNICIPALITY & DIVISION**



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Aerial images:

<https://gis.elsenburg.com/apps/cfm/#>

<https://gis.george.gov.za/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0283eccf869641e0a4362cb099290fca>

<https://www.google.com/earth/>

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**PLANNING STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
ERF 1058, WHITES ROAD, HOEKWIL (WILDERNESS HEIGHTS)
GEORGE MUNICIPALITY & DIVISION**

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & LOCALITY

Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) is a vacant smallholding, 3.0108ha in extent, located in Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights). The zoning of the property is therefore Agriculture Zone II in terms of the George Integrated Zoning Scheme By-law (2017).

The property overlooks the Touw River vir Ebb & Flow Rest Camp (Garden Route National Park) to the east, the Fairy Knowe-area and the Indian Ocean to the south and the Village of Wilderness to the west. A power line runs through the property while black wattles covered a large section of the property.

Access to the property is Whites Road leading from the Village around the Wilderness Heights area with a circular route from the west to east and again reaching Heights Road in the west. The section of Whites Road passing Erf 1058 Hoekwil is a provincial road, Divisional Road 1621.

The aerial image below shows the location of the subject property within its current environment.



2. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL & ZONING

It is proposed to develop Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) considering its location and the greater natural environment. For this intention, it is necessary to rezone the property from Agriculture Zone II to Open Space Zone III. The primary land use right of this proposed zoning is *nature conservation area* with the following objective:

The objective of this zone is to provide for the conservation of natural resources in areas that have not been proclaimed as nature areas (non-statutory conservation), in order to sustain flora and fauna and protect areas of undeveloped landscape including woodlands, ridges, wetlands and the coastline. A range of consent uses is provided to supplement and support the main objective of this zone.

The land use description for *nature conservation area* is:

“nature conservation area” means the use and management of land with the objective of preserving the natural biophysical characteristics of that land, such as the fauna and flora and includes:

*(a) a dwelling house on a property zoned solely Open Space Zone III;
but does not include tourist facilities, tourist accommodation or agriculture.*

The property owner’s home is proposed to be located on the northwestern side of the property closer to Whites Road. Abutting this primary dwelling an outbuilding with home office above is proposed which will also provide garaging and storage space. Then, following an existing route on the property, access is to be provided centrally for the vehicles of visitors to the proposed three tourist accommodation units which will each consist of 2 bedrooms. Tourist accommodation is a consent use for properties zoned Open Space Zone III (nature conservation area). Each tourist accommodation unit will have a small deck with a jacuzzi. The aim is to position the tourist accommodation units with their facilities to be hidden from each other between the vegetation. The preliminary 3D-image below shows how the development proposal is expected to blend within its natural environment.

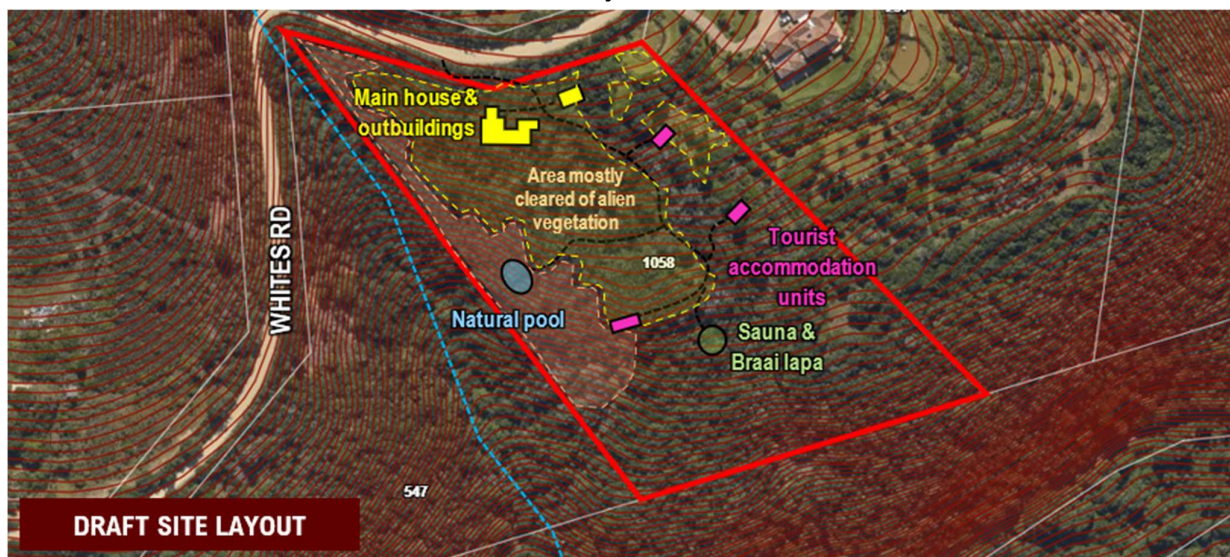


A green house is shown on the attached draft site development plan where plants are to be grown for the rehabilitation of the property.

For the visitors to the property a communal outdoor lapa and sauna room is also proposed, close to the communal parking area. On the western side of the property in a natural clearing, a natural pool is proposed to be developed. This pool will have a double purpose as a retention pond for stormwater runoff in accordance with the recommendation contained in the 'Aquatic Compliance Statement'.

An important aim of the draft site layout is to use existing disturbed spaces on the property for construction and therefore providing privacy for the visitors.

The aerial image to follow shows the draft site layout for the development of the property owners' home with the tourist accommodation units and ancillary facilities.



The land use application proposed for Erf 1058 Hoekwil in terms of Section 15(2) of the George Municipality: Land Use Planning By-law (2023) is as follows:

- **Removal** in terms of Section 15(2)(f) of the George Municipality: Land Use Planning By-law (2023) of restrictive title conditions E(a) & (b) in T4887/2023.
- **Rezoning** in terms of Section 15(2)(b) of the George Municipality: Land Use Planning By-law (2023) from Agricultural Zone II (smallholding) to Open Space Zone III (nature conservation area).
- **Consent use** in terms of Section 15(2)(o) of the George Municipality: Land Use Planning By-law (2023) for tourist accommodation.

The title deed for the property determines in Par. E(a) that it can only be used for residential and agricultural purposes. This is in conflict with the proposed change in use to nature conservation area with the zoning then being Open Space Zone III. Par. E(b) of the title deed then also states that only one dwelling unit with outbuildings for a single family is allowed on the property. For the proposed tourist accommodation units, this creates conflict. The removal of these restrictions is needed for the proposed rezoning and consent use for tourist accommodation. The removal of these restrictions is a general occurrence in Wilderness Heights.

3. GEORGE MUNICIPAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, 2023 (GMSDF)

Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) is not addressed specifically in the GMSDF (2023). It is located in Wilderness Heights, a small holding area of the greater Wilderness. The GMSDF refers to the Wilderness – Lakes – Hoekwil Local Spatial Development Framework (WLH LSDF) (2015) in which study area the subject property is located. The function of small holdings as a settlement type is described as low-density rural living, with an agricultural component with reference in the relevant LSDF. Wilderness Heights is one such small holding area.

Wilderness – Lakes – Hoekwil Local Spatial Development Framework (WLH LSDF) (2015)

The GMSDF also describes the area of the Wilderness-Lakes-Hoekwil LSDF as follows:

“Wilderness, Touwsrante, and Hoekwil Wilderness is one of the most popular tourism and residential destinations along the Garden Route, based on its unique terrestrial, aquatic and marine assets, outstanding rural and townscape qualities, and recreational amenity value. Threats to the area include the subdivision of smallholdings, expansion of poorly located and serviced informal areas, and insensitive building development.”

The GMSDF further states that the Municipality will maintain the present environmental, rural and settlement character of the WLH LSDF-area. To this end it will:

- *Not permit expansion of residential areas beyond the urban edge. - **Not relevant.***
- *Prohibit significant densification of existing residential areas (except through group/ town housing and resort development on land available within the urban edge). - **Not relevant.***
- *Upgrade the informal settlement in Kleinkrantz in an integrated manner. Extension of urban edge to incorporate the densification will only be supported if provision (and implementation funding) of supportive socio-economic infrastructure can be demonstrated. - **Not relevant.***
- *The extension of the Kleinkrantz resort is supported, within the urban edge, on the proviso that due environmental process is followed, the benefit of the resort is not provided on an exclusive manner. - **Not relevant.***
- *Public access to the beach must be protected and upgraded. - **Not relevant.***
- *Incremental/new development/division in the priority environmental area, or any environmental zone listed as a risk/sensitivity index (CML, 10m amsl, ridgeline, steep gradient, coastal protection zone, etc) is discouraged and fast tracking of zoning change of Open Space III zoning to be facilitated in the GLZSB. The adoption of environmental management plans/stewardship agreements to be encouraged. – **This consideration is relevant as it will not lead to subdivision. The proposal is for a property below the ridgeline. The gradient is steep, but the most suitable sections of the property are indicated to be used as described earlier in this report. This is also an application to rezone the property to Open Space Zone III. An environmental management plan will be part of the future of this property.***

- *Discourage further growth of the Kleinkrantz and Wilderness Heights settlements. Wilderness Heights to explore alternative upgrading and communal ownership options, given the prohibitive costs, and disadvantageous location factors of individual tenure options using government subsidy. Look at relocation of those based at Wilderness heights to a better suited areas with existing services. Current site has no services and huge financial implication to make provision for services. - **Not relevant***
- *Alternative ownership/formalization approaches to be investigated – if feasible. - **Not relevant***
- *Support further tourism development in the Village to enhance its role as the primary business node in Wilderness. – **This consideration is relevant as far as all visitors / tourists to the area visit the Village of Wilderness to enjoy the restaurants and shops it offers.***
- *Retain and extend (formalize/use/manage) all possible public access allowance to the natural areas and beach (not individual owners, but public collective). - **Not relevant***
- *Support fine grain economic opportunity in tourism precincts. - **Not directly relevant as this area is not a tourism precinct.***
- *Support nodal/economic precinct/tourism development at Hoekwil, Touwsrante, Wilderness and Kleinkrantz. - **Not directly relevant as the subject property is not located in a node or precinct. The visitors to this property will however support economic opportunities created in the nodes and precincts, e.g. restaurants and recreational facilities.***
- *Support initiatives to practically integrate the segregated settlements. - **Not relevant***
- *No development should impact negatively on the lakes area, crest skyline, coastal protection zone and green boundaries. – **This is relevant as the proposed development is especially sensitive to the area and the environmental character of the property. The development proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil cannot impact negatively on the greater Lakes area, the skyline, the coastal protection zone or green boundaries.***
- *A parking study, plan and contribution to adequate provision for the entire Wilderness settlement must be undertaken. - **Not relevant***

Spatial Vision

Considering the spatial vision directives of the GMSDF, the proposal for the subject property is found to support the 5 normative development principles of SPLUMA, namely spatial justice, spatial sustainability, efficiency, spatial resilience and good administration. It is also our view that this land use application to create a property zoned for nature conservation purposes with a primary dwelling and a few tourist accommodation units will support the spatial development vision for George, namely:

Develop George as a resilient regional development anchor of excellence for prosperity, inclusive- and smart growth.

Themes of the GMSDF

The spatial vision is also based on 6 themes, namely:

- A: Infrastructure
- B: Economic growth
- C: Manage the growth of urban settlements
- D: Integrated housing options
- E: Protect natural resources
- F: Celebrate heritage

Regarding infrastructure it can be stated that the development of Erf 1058 Hoekwil will be self-sufficient to an extent with limited needs for municipal infrastructure.

To facilitate enabling and inclusive economic growth, the objective according to the GMSDF is to *spatially facilitate economic development that is inclusive and fosters economic growth. Direct public and private fixed investment to existing settlements reinforcing their economic potential. In this way the impact of public and private investment is maximised, the majority of residents benefit, and the Municipality's natural and productive landscapes are protected.* This is not fully relevant to the proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil, but the proposal will have socio-economic benefits in maintaining the natural environment and creating employment opportunities.

Tourism and recreation are ways to achieve economic growth and adds to the sense of place of the greater George municipal area as the gateway to the Garden Route. The GMSDF states that tourism accommodation and uses in varying formats in the urban and rural environments is a generally accepted principle.

Growth management of urban settlements is focused on the urban areas. As the proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil is compatible with its location and natural environment, it has no negative impact on the urban edge. It can be stated that this proposal protects the urban edge.

Integrated Housing is not directly relevant to this land use application.

The protection of natural resources is relevant to this proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil. The GMSDF states that the use of land in the municipal area must protect natural resources, ecological functioning, ecological services and also the rural character. The rural areas are located outside the urban edge and includes agricultural and natural areas. The rural area contributes to the economy and the sense of place with systematic erosion to be prevented.

The proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil aims to acknowledge the natural potential of the property while making it accessible to visitors and tourists. The new owner is already improving the property by controlling the alien vegetation found here.

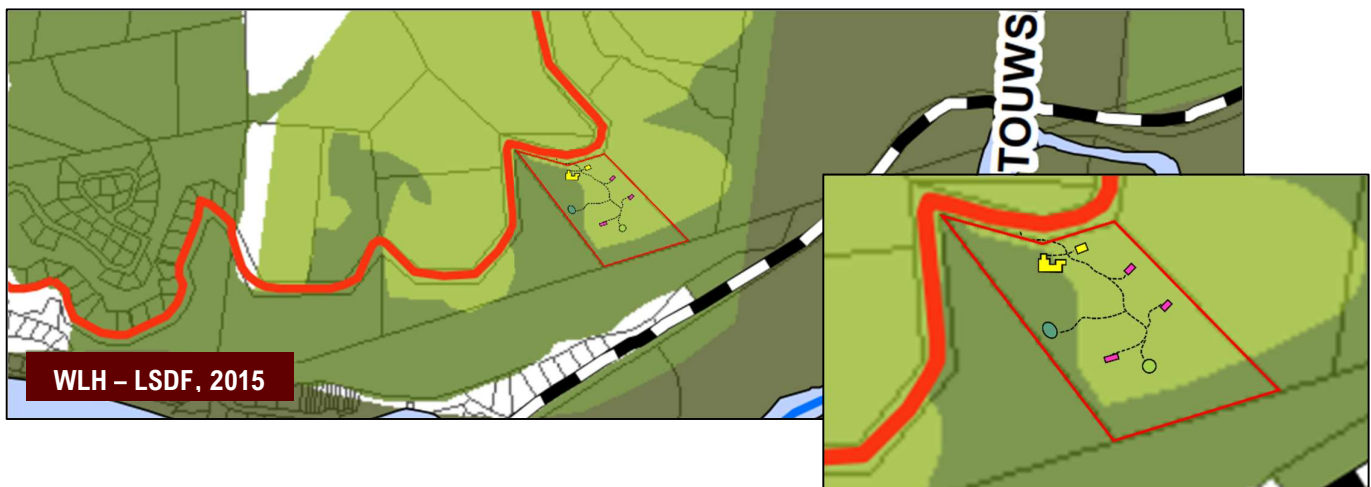
The GMSDF states that Open Space Zone III is encouraged in CBA/ESA areas and where steep slopes are found. Erf 1058 Hoekwil is also located abutting the *Wilderness Lakes Protected Area* of the Garden Route National Park. A property also bordering onto Erf 1058 Hoekwil was recently rezoned to Open Space Zone III. Properties surrounding the Garden Route National Park are slowly reflecting the character of the area and the importance of its location. Through appropriate management the natural environment of this property is being restored.

As Erf 1058 Hoekwil is not located on a ridge, the development can be 'hidden' in the surrounding natural vegetation. Visual impact is mitigated due to its location, building style and exterior finishes that will blend in the area. Sections of the property are steeper than 1:4 but primarily avoided.

No conflict was found between the GMSDF and the proposed development of this property as proposed. Therefore, this application is consistent with the GMSDF as required in terms of Section 19 of the Land Use Planning Act, 2014 (LUPA).

4. WILDERNESS – LAKES – HOEKWIL LOCAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, 2015

Erf 1058 Hoekwil is located in the small holding area of Wilderness Heights as indicated in the WLH LSDF. According to the WLH LSDF, the property is partially indicated as 'critical biodiversity area' and further as "ecological support area".



As part of the environmental authorisation process, the environmental features of the property were assessed by the required specialists. The biodiversity specialist found that Erf 1058 Hoekwil is not located in a critical biodiversity area due to historical agricultural activities which affects up to $\pm 85\%$ of the property. The demarcation of the WLH LSDF is therefore not correct.

Landscape character

The WLH LSDF states that the landscape character and view sheds along tourism routes *must be protected by appropriate guidelines and even regulations to ensure that this landscape and visual resource is protected for the generation to come*. The landscape character is not expected to be negatively affected by the development proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil.

The WLH LSDF lists the following as the *various elements that contribute to the importance of the landscape character and view sheds along tourism routes*:

- a) Wilderness qualities and pristine eco-systems – the forests and lakes and the coastline on either side of the tourism routes;

- b) Areas with formal protected status such as the Garden Route National Park;
- c) Heritage sites or Scenic routes – the views from various routes through the area includes spectacular visual experiences particular the forested south facing slopes of the steep escarpment north of the lakes;
- d) Outstanding rural and townscape qualities;
- e) Wilderness" special character and sense of place;
- f) Important tourism and recreation value;
- g) The Touw River catchment area providing the primary water source for the area;
- h) Important Vistas or scenic corridors – visually prominent ridgelines and slopes in Wilderness this is a very important component of the landscape character.

Whites Road and also Waterside Road located to the south, are tourism routes which will be supported by this development proposal Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights).

The proposed zoning complements the Wilderness National Park (part of the Garden Route National Park). This Park provides numerous tourist accommodation units in the Ebb & Flow Rest Camp located close by. The limited number of tourist accommodation units will also provide access to the Wilderness character & sense of place. Importantly, the skyline will not be negatively affected as discussed earlier in this report.

The WLH LSDF also provide guidelines for all development applications for change in land use which includes rezoning, departures, consent, subdivision and building plan approvals. It is stated that land use changes including large-scale infrastructure that may have an impact on the sensitive landscape and visual resources should be avoided as far as possible. These include the following as included in the table below with the relevance to the subject property indicated:

Guidelines pertaining to land use changes	Relevance to Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights)
A change in land use from the prevailing use;	The property is vacant at present. The addition of the owner's dwelling and 3 tourist accommodation units utilises a small percentage of the property while rezoning the property to reflect the 'use' of the property, namely conservation.
A use that is in conflict with an adopted plan or vision for the area;	The proposed development supports the vision for the greater Wilderness.
A significant change to the fabric and character of the area;	The character of the area is supported.
A significant change to the townscape or streetscape;	Not relevant due to the specific location of the owner's dwelling and 3 small tourist accommodation units. Structures are to be positioned in/between the vegetation.
Possible visual intrusion in the landscape such as developments that are proposed on skylines, are out of scale and causes light pollution during the night, etc	Not relevant as shown in this report.
Obstruction of views of others in the area.	Not relevant as shown in this report.

It is further stated that if development has to occur in these sensitive landscapes or along scenic routes due to existing rights or other circumstances, it must be sensitive to the landscape and natural visual resources. How layout, buildings, density, landscape treatment and infrastructure should be treated is listed below with the relevance to Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) indicated in the table to follow:

How development should be treated in sensitive landscapes or along scenic routes	Relevance to Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights)
Be visually unobtrusive.	This report shows that the proposed development will not be visually obtrusive due to the limited scale and specific location. The Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) supports this statement.
Utilise materials and colours that originate from or blend into the surrounding landscape.	The images included in this motivation report and architectural plans reflect these aspects.
Be grouped in clusters with open spaces between clusters.	The tourist units are proposed dispersed from each other to ensure each unit and the dwelling house has their privacy and is isolated from other guests. The positions consider topography and disturbed areas and makes the structures 'disappear'. The subject area is small and clustering will increase visibility of 'a large structure'. A dispersed proposal is supported by the Western Cape Rural Guidelines as discussed later.
Not interfere with the skyline, landmarks, major views, and vistas.	This report shows that the development proposal will not interfere with the skyline, landmarks, major views, and vistas.
Not result in light, noise, or effluent pollution.	The scale and location of the development should not result in these forms of pollution.
Not result in excessive water consumption, and should incorporate a requirement for rainwater collection as part of the building.	Rainwater harvesting is standard with any new structure. The scale of the development proposal is also limited as shown.
Respond to the historical, architectural and landscape style of surrounding layout and buildings.	The development proposal responds to the potential the property offers and importantly its character. It will add a few structures to an area with limited structures.
Incorporate existing man-made or natural landmarks and movement patterns	Not relevant
Keep and protect a visual buffer along the N2 National Road as far as possible.	The N2-route and views from it is not affected by this development proposal as the property is about 1km away and the tourist units will be small. Residential homes and other man-made features are located between the property and the N2 which is clearly visible. The subject property is also surrounded by dwellings of various sizes and exterior finishes. This will also distract the attention from the subject property.

It is our conclusion that the development proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil does not negatively impact on the landscape character of the area and will also not have a detrimental impact on the natural environment in which it is located. Considering the foregoing paragraphs and the nature of the proposed development of Erf 1058 Hoekwil, we found no conflict with the WLH LSDF.

5. WESTERN CAPE LAND USE PLANNING GUIDELINES: RURAL AREAS, 2019

Erf 1058 Hoekwil is located in a more rural setting due to its location in Wilderness Heights and proximity to the Garden Route National Park and the Touw River. The property is also located outside of the urban edge. The Western Cape Land Use Planning Guidelines: Rural Areas (2019) applies to Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights).

The objectives of the Rural Areas guideline are:

- *Promote sustainable development in appropriate rural locations throughout the Western Cape and ensure the inclusive growth of the rural economy.*
- *Safeguard priority biodiversity areas and the functionality of the province's life supporting ecological infrastructure and ecosystem services (i.e., environmental goods and services).*
- *Maintain the integrity, authenticity and accessibility of the Western Cape's significant farming, ecological, coastal, cultural, and scenic rural landscapes, and natural resources.*
- *Assist Western Cape municipalities to plan and manage their rural areas more effectively, and to inform the principles of their zoning schemes and spatial development frameworks in a pro-active manner.*
- *Provide clarity to all role players and partners (public and private) on the type of development that is appropriate beyond the current built-up areas, suitable locations where it could take place, and the desirable form and scale of such development.*

The proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil is found to be compliant with the abovementioned objectives.

The Garden Route is described as *an area of outstanding natural beauty, made up of wilderness and agricultural landscapes, estuaries, mountain backdrops and coastal settings, including the well-watered and verdant landscapes. The Southern Cape coastal belt has been identified as a significant leisure, lifestyle, holiday, and retirement economic center – which stretches from Plettenberg Bay and Nature's Valley in the east, to Mossel Bay in the west, with the George/Mossel Bay settlement concentrations being a significant emerging regional economic node of the province.*

Regarding the spatial planning categories (SPC's), the western and southern side of Erf 1058 Hoekwil is indicated as a critical biodiversity area (CBA) and therefore partly Core 1 and Core 2. No development is proposed on this part of the property, only a natural pool hidden in the natural environment. As stated earlier, the biodiversity specialist found the property not to be a critical biodiversity area.

It is stated that CBA's *should be maintained in a natural state or near-natural state with no further loss of natural habitat.* As shown the property owner is improving the property by controlling alien vegetation. This is an ongoing process. In future, with human assistance, the property can become a CBA.

The proposed zoning, Open Space Zone III (nature conservation area), is appropriate considering the location of the property, sections with indigenous vegetation and it abuts the *Wilderness Lakes Protected Area*.

The proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) aims to provide accommodation for the property owner and tourists on a section of the property which is not indicated as a specific SPC. The Rural Areas guideline further states that overnight accommodation can be provided in a CBA-area with *temporary structures preferred (e.g., wooden structures, tents, raised boardwalks, and/or tree canopy structures), with units carefully dispersed or clustered (depending on the landscape, habitat and existing infrastructure and access) to achieve least impact. The use of alternative porous materials and innovative eco-friendly design concepts are encouraged.* As stated, the accommodation is not to be provided within the demarcated CBA-area which was found to not be CBA by the biodiversity specialist.

As only 3 tourist accommodation units are proposed, the Rural Areas guideline regard it as a small resort where the floor area of a unit can be up to 120m². As indicated in this motivation report, the 3 tourist accommodation units is proposed to be ±60 / 80m² each. The development space on the property is limited as discussed earlier.

We conclude that the development proposal for Erf 1058 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights) holds no conflict with the Western Cape Land Use Planning Guidelines: Rural Areas (2019).

6. CONCLUDING

The Wilderness-Lakes-Hoekwil area is one of the most popular tourism and residential destinations along the Garden Route, based on its unique terrestrial, aquatic and marine assets, outstanding rural and townscape qualities, and recreational amenity value. The proposed development of a residential house, 3 tourist accommodation units, and recreational facilities on Erf 1058 Hoekwil is directly in line with the character of the area.

The development proposal is guided by the topography, vegetation of the property and the owner's need to create accommodation that offers guests the feeling of remoteness in nature.

The rezoning of the property to Open Space Zone III (nature conservation area) will contribute to the conservation of the property and support the abutting *Wilderness Lakes Protected Area*.

From this motivation report, it is our opinion that the proposed land use application for Erf 1058 Hoekwil is consistent with all relevant considerations as prescribed by the planning legislation. It does not create conflict with the overall spatial objectives for the area.



MARLIZE DE BRUYN Pr. Pln

July 2023