



Eco Route

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY

REGISTRATION NO. 1998/031976/23

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SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION REPORT

Wilderness Sky: Erf 2003, Wilderness, George Municipal Area.

The proposed construction of 1 main dwelling house and 4 x Self-catering Guest cottages with associated infrastructure.



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Bsc.Hon Environmental Management
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(1) Introduction and Terms of Reference

As required to compliment a Basic Assessment application the national web-based screening tool was used to generate a screening report. 1 The screening report lists a variety of specialist studies to be undertaken based on the data informants of the tool at the study area. This site sensitivity verification report, following ground-truthing of the site, motivates why certain specialist studies will not be required or conducted for the proposed development application.

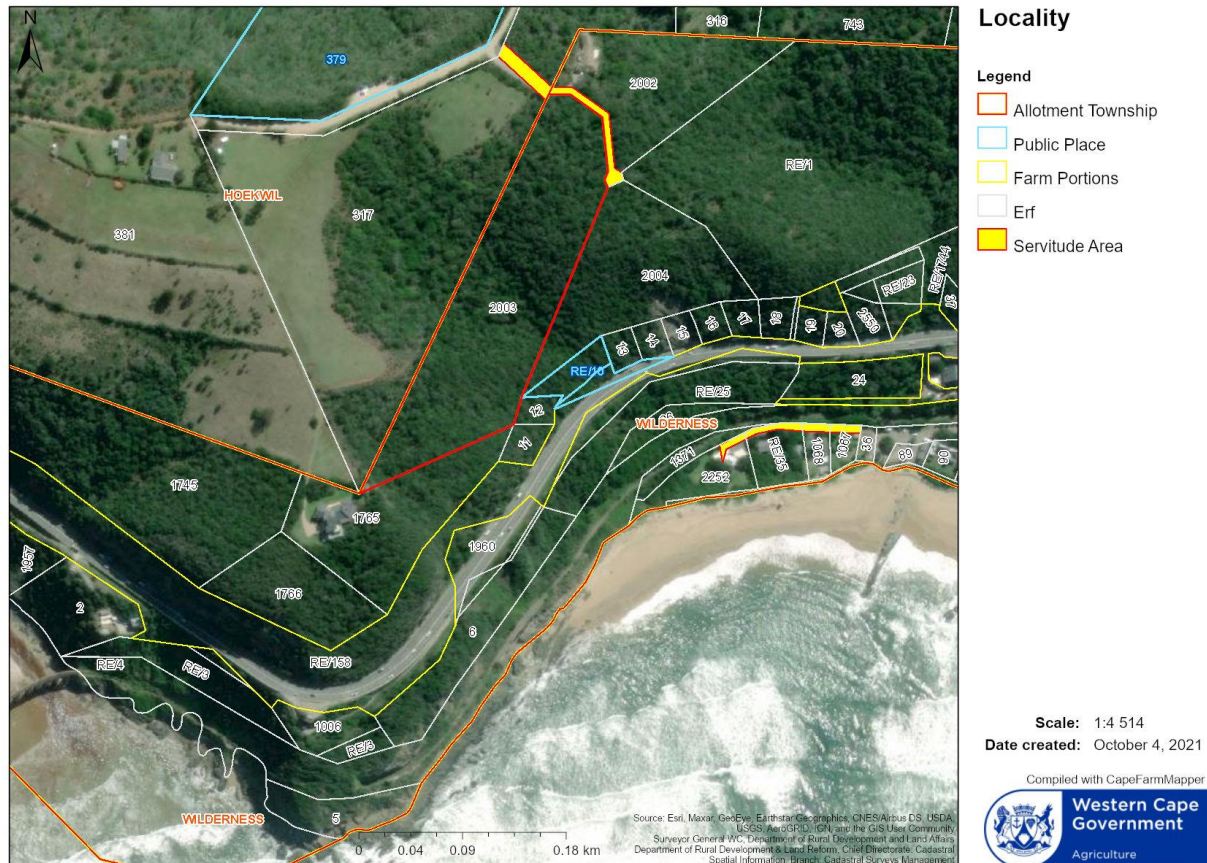


Figure 1: Locality of Erf 2003 (red polygon) image courtesy of Cape Farm mapper.

(2) The proposed development at the property

Eco Route Environmental Consultancy were appointed by the applicants Wentzel Christoffel Coetzer & Wessel Philippus Wessels as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner to conduct a Basic Assessment application process for the proposed development of Erf 2003 in Wilderness Heights.

The following identified Specialist were appointed to inform the Basic Assessment Report:

- Marike Vreken Urban and Environmental Planners.
- Dr David Hoare - Biodiversity
- Outeniqua Geotechnical Services
- Olivier Architects to Assist with the visual aspects



Wilderness Erf 2003 is currently zoned "Open Space Zone III (OSZIII)" in terms of the George Integrated Zoning Scheme by Law, 2017 and is 2,8135 Ha in extent. The property is currently vacant. Access to the application area is obtained via an access servitude road that runs over Wilderness Erf 2002.

The proposal is the construction of:

- 1x main dwelling house.
- 4x self-catering guest cottages.
- A designated parking area along the eastern boundary that makes provision for 4x vehicles.
- A designated parking area in the north western section of the property that also makes provision for 4x vehicles.
- Wooden Decking walkways raised 1.5 meters above the forest floor that will connect the main dwelling house, parking areas and the cottages.
- The remainder of the property will be preserved in its natural state.

(3) Wind & Solar developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation or applications under consideration within 30 km of the proposed area.

One Wind and Solar development, namely a Solar Photovoltaic Facility with an approved Environmental Authorisation (EIA Reference #14/12/16/3/3/1/1292)(George Airport), is 15.9 km from the proposed development area.

(4) Environmental Management Frameworks relevant to the application:

The Garden Route Environmental Management Framework (GREMF) is relevant to this application.

(5) Environmental screening results and assessment outcomes:

The following sections contain a summary of any development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions that apply to the proposed development footprint as well as the most environmental sensitive features on the footprint based on the footprint sensitivity screening results for the application classification that was selected". The application classification selected for the screening report (dated 25 September 2020) is: Transformation of land | Indigenous vegetation.

(6) Relevant Development Incentives, Restrictions, Exclusions or Prohibitions:

The proposed site is within a South African Conservation Area (SACAD).

(7) Proposed Development Area Environmental Sensitivity:

The following summary of the development site environmental sensitivities is identified. Only the highest environmental sensitivity is indicated. The footprint environmental sensitivities for the proposed development footprint as identified, are indicative only and must be verified on site by a suitably qualified person before the specialist assessments identified below can be confirmed.

**Table 1: Identified Environmental Sensitivities**

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme				X
Animal Species Theme		X		
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme				X
Civil Aviation Theme			X	
Defence Theme				X
Paleontology Theme				X
Plant Species Theme			X	
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X			

Table 1 identified environmental sensitivities**(8) Identified Specialist assessments:**

Based on the selected classification, and the environmental sensitivities of the proposed development footprint, the following list of specialist assessments have been identified for inclusion in the assessment report. It is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm this list and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist study including the provision of photographic evidence of the site situation.

Table 2: identified specialist assessments:

No:	Specialist Assessment	Assessment Protocol
1.	Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment	General
2.	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	NID to be submitted to Department Heritage Western Cape
3.	Palaeontology Impact Assessment	NID to be submitted to Department Heritage Western Cape
4.	Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Terrestrial Biodiversity
5.	Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Aquatic Biodiversity
6.	Avian Impact Assessment	Avifaunal
7.	Socio-Economic Assessment	General
8.	Plant Species Assessment	General
9.	Animal Species Assessment	General

Table 2: identified specialist assessments**(9) Results of the verification of the environmental sensitivity of the proposed area:****(9)(1) Relative Agricultural Theme Sensitivity**

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a Low Relative Agricultural Sensitivity.

The property is currently vacant. The WCBSP map for George shows that the entire site is within a CBA1 area (Figure 5). This CBA1 area continues beyond the boundaries of the site. This indicates that the remaining vegetation on site is considered to be highly important for the conservation of biodiversity in the Province as well as for maintaining ecological patterns in the landscape. The site is in a property that is within an area of



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coastal thicket / forest. It is on a relatively steep sea-facing slope with a drainage valley passing through the centre of it in a south-easterly direction.



Figure 2: Typical view within the forest on site.

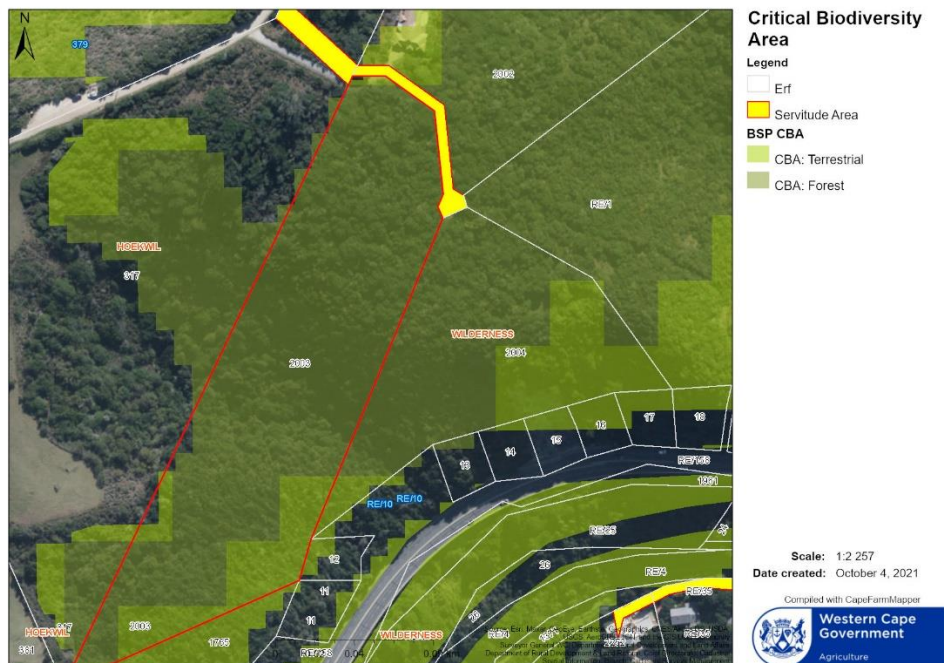


Figure 3: CBA areas

Conclusion:

No agricultural impact assessment has been identified for inclusion in the assessment process and report. The Department of Agriculture, however will be included in the I&AP register, and will be provided with an opportunity to provide comment.

(9)(2) Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment:

The screening report identified that a visual impact assessment be conducted for inclusion in the assessment process and application. Olivier Architects were approached with regards to the visual impact assessment requirements their findings are attached as appendix A to this report.

In this area and strip where the planned cottages are proposed the trees are much smaller because of the slope, the backdrop will have bush trees so the cottages will be enclosed by trees, but the front views will be open. Scaffolding was placed on the potential locations of the cottages at about 4m high.



Figure 4: Scaffolding was placed on site



Figure 5 & 6 Ocean views from scaffolding at ± 4 m high

Conclusion:

The visual impact will be insignificant. The proposed development area is relatively well hidden. The proposed house and cottages will not be seen from the "Map of Africa" road nor from the main road coming from Knysna which is



blocked by a hill in front of that section. Based on the location of the property and the visual screening afforded by the forest growth surrounding it - no visual impact assessment will be undertaken for the Basic Assessment process.

(9)(3) Relative Archaeological & Cultural Heritage Theme Sensitivity:

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a Low Relative Archaeological & Cultural Heritage Sensitivity; and indicated that specialist assessments be undertaken for Archaeological & Cultural Heritage Sensitivity as well as a Paleontological Impact Assessment; with the identified features shown in Table 2.

Conclusion:

A Notice of intent to develop (NID) will be included as a general process requirement for the Basic Assessment process and be sent to Heritage Western Cape to determine the applicability of the requirement for specialist heritage studies.

(9)(4) Relative Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme Sensitivity.

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a Very High Terrestrial Biodiversity Sensitivity; and indicated the following features for the theme in Table 1.

Table 3: identified Terrestrial Biodiversity features

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Very High	Critical biodiversity area 1
Very High	Ecological support area 2
Very High	Vulnerable ecosystem
Very High	Protected Areas Expansion Strategy
Very High	Protected Areas Expansion Strategy: Sanparks
Very High	Strategic Water Source Areas

Conclusion:

As identified for inclusion in the assessment and application process by the screening report a Terrestrial Biodiversity Sensitivity Report will be compiled.

(9)(5) Relative Aquatic Biodiversity Theme Sensitivity

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a Very High Aquatic Biodiversity Sensitivity; based on the Strategic Water Resource Area feature.

Conclusion:

As the receiving environment is located atop a plateau and there are no rivers or dams on site. It is motivated that an Aquatic Biodiversity Sensitivity Assessment will not be necessary to conduct for the Basic Assessment process.

The proposed development activities will not trigger a water use licence in terms of Section 21 (c) and (i) of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998). However the proposed development application will be submitted to the Breede Gouritz Catchment Management Agency for consideration and their input.



(9)(6) Avian Impact Assessment:

The screening report identified that an Avian Impact Assessment be conducted for inclusion in the assessment process and report.

Conclusion:

As can be seen below on the proposed SDP only 3.42% of the property will be disturbed which is minimal and should not have an impact on the birds in area. Please note that the remaining part of the property will be conserved as is and remain in a natural state. It is motivated that an Avian Impact Sensitivity Assessment will not be necessary to conduct for the Basic Assessment process.

1. Sizes and dimensions are approximate and subject to final survey
2. For Property data - Refer SG7730/95
3. Property Size = 2,8135 ha
4. Building Footprint:

Main House:	200m ²
Main House Deck	175m ²
Main House Pool:	30m ²
4x Tourist Accom (4x 98m ²)	392m ²
4x Tourist Acc Decks (4x 42m ²)	162m ²
TOTAL AREA	965m²

5. Development Parameters

Coverage	3.42%
Height:	8,5m above NGL max
Building Lines	10,8m - 17,7m
Parking Requirement	N/A
Parking Provided	8 bays



(9)(7) Socio-economic Impact Assessment:

The screening report identified that a socio-economic impact assessment be conducted for inclusion in the assessment process and report. As the proposed expansion of the resort will require permanent staff including their on-site accommodation an assessment will be conducted for the Basic Assessment process; and may not require a specialist study.

Conclusion:

As per the town planning report:



Planning Implication:

The IDP is a municipal planning tool to integrate municipal planning and allocate municipal funding to achieve strategic objectives that will contribute to the overall municipal vision. The proposal will provide new and additional economic growth prospects.

This project will start with investment into local construction companies and their workforce. All local suppliers involved. Permanent employment of staff to manage the day-to-day operations of the guest cottages. The proposal will also secure long-term investment of tourists to the area as well as temporary and permanent employment opportunities for the ward. The socio-economic impacts of the proposed development will also contribute to the municipal revenue base. The proposal can be considered to be in line with the IDP enabling an economic environment through local economic development initiatives.

It is motivated that an Socio-Economic Impact Sensitivity Assessment will not be necessary to conduct for the Basic Assessment process.

(9)(8) Relative Plant Species Theme Sensitivity

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a Medium Relative Plant Species Sensitivity and indicated the following features for the theme in Table 1. As identified for inclusion in the assessment process and application by the screening report a Terrestrial Biodiversity Sensitivity Report will be compiled that also assesses the relative plant species theme.

(9)(9) Relative Animal Species Theme Sensitivity

The screening report indicates that the receiving environment has a High Relative Animal Species Sensitivity and indicated the following features for the theme below.

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
High	Aves-Bradypterus sylvaticus
Medium	Invertebrate-Aneuryphymus montanus
Medium	Amphibia-Afrixalus knysnae
Medium	Mammalia-Chlorotalpa duthieae
Medium	Sensitive species 7

Conclusion:

Only 3.2% of the property will be disturbed and the rest of the property will remain natural very little habitat of the animals will be affected. It is motivated that an Animal Impact Sensitivity Assessment will not be necessary to conduct for the Basic Assessment process.