

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY RESIDENCE AND FOUR  
GUEST ACCOMMODATION UNITS ON  
ERF 301, WHITES ROAD, HOEKWIL, WILDERNESS, GEORGE MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN  
CAPE.**



3D by Eddie Da Silva and Associates Architect

**VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY**

This report is to be read in conjunction with the SDP, the Architectural Plans and 3D's, as well as the Basic Environmental Assessment Report.

**The Team:**

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### Declaration of Independence:

- Andre Vercueil, the appointed consultant for this study is a Professional Architect and an Accredited Heritage Practitioner, registered with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession as a Professional Architect since 1983, and with The Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners Western Cape, since 2009.
  - Andre Vercueil is an independent specialist in these fields of expertise.
- The information portrayed in this study is a true and correct reflection of the information gathered towards this study.
- Andre Vercueil has no financial interest in this proposed development, other than remuneration for professional services rendered.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1. Site Name

ERF 301, WILDERNESS HEIGHTS, GEORGE

#### 2. Location

The site is located on the Northern side between Waterside Road and Whites Road against the outskirts of the Wilderness hill which overlooks the ocean and the Touws River on the South.

#### 3. Locality Plan – Wilderness, between George and Sedgefield.



Fig-01 Locality Plan, George Public Viewer.

#### 4. Background

The 39,322m<sup>2</sup> site is situated North of the Touws River between Waterside Road (on the South) and Whites Road (On the North), overlooking the ocean to the South in Wilderness Heights between George and Sedgefield. The proposal is to develop a 3-bedroom primary dwelling (inclusive of a store and garage) on the property, with 6 smaller guest units (50m<sup>2</sup> tourism pods), as short term rentals in the tourism accommodation trade. The 'pods' will be in two phases, the first four with the main dwelling as Phase 1, and the remainder as Phase 2.

The proposal requires the removal of some title deed restrictions, and the approval of some consent uses, as well as the rezoning of the property to Open Space Zone III – Nature Conservation Area.

Some specialist reports for this proposed project have been prepared, and some are in the process of preparation. A Visual Impact Assessment Report has been requested by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, as well as the South African National Parks.

## 5. Description of Proposed Development

- 5.1 The proposed development is a low-key residential proposal for a main dwelling and 6 tourism pods, nestled into the indigenous slope of the hill, with approximately a quarter of the proposed development sticking out above the tree canopy.
- 5.2 The primary dwelling and tourism pods are separated but linked with timber walkways. The design is single storey, with some benching into the site, with very low pitched roofs and sensitively selected materials, textures, finishes and colours.
- 5.3 The proposed development will not be visible from the Northern side (above Whites Road) or from the East of Whites Road. It will however be partially visible from the extended Western side of Whites Road, as well as from parts of the N2 and some other viewpoints and vantage points on the Southern side of the site.

## 6. Heritage Resources Identified

According to an HIA by Dr Peter Nilssen (23/11/2021) prepared for a neighboring site, ERF 1262, a desk top study, examination of maps, photographs, surveys and a field study confirmed that there are no built heritage resources in the area. The aesthetic and cultural landscape is significant in that the property is close to a scenic route and part of a cultural landscape, which should be protected.

## 7. Anticipated Impacts on Heritage Resources

The proposed small-scale development will have no impact on the heritage resources. The visual impact of the proposed development will also have a very small impact on the Scenic Route (N2), as only a quarter of the proposed development will stick out above the tree canopy, and it will only be visible from some identified viewpoints and vantage points. Various other aspects impacting on the visual influence that the proposed development will have on the area have been considered, including viewpoints, topography, character of the area, sense of place, vegetation, environmental impact, etc.

The visual sensitivity of the site is very small.

The Visual Absorption of the proposed development is Very High, as it nestles into the landscape, with sensitively designed architectural volumes, scattered footprints, as well as appropriate materials and colour schemes to blend into the landscape. .

The Visual Intrusion of the site is very small.

Visibility from sensitive receptors is limited.

## 8. Findings of the VIA

- 8.1 There are no heritage resources in the area that may be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 8.2 Both the visual impact and the visual intrusion on the cultural landscape are very low.
- 8.3 The visual impact of the proposed development from the scenic routes, viewpoints and vantage points is very low with only vistas of the top quarter of the development visible above the tree canopy.
- 8.4 The visual absorption of the site on the proposed development is high, taking the mitigating factors into consideration.
- 8.5 The visual influence of the site is completely screened from Waterside Road, as well as from the Eastern side of Whites Road.
- 8.6 The proposed development does not influence the skyline, but it blends into the landscape.

## 9. Recommendations

### 9.1 The following Mitigation measures are recommended:

- 9.1.1 That the Architectural Design includes the natural colour schemes and materials captured in the bulk of this report. This Architectural Design has currently proposed heights, disturbance areas & maximum footprint which are to be maintained, and clear-view fencing is used with an irregular alignment around the disturbance area only.
- 9.1.2 That the necessary measures be implemented during the construction phase to protect the natural vegetation, to control erosion, noise, dust and visual intrusion.
- 9.1.3 That external lighting restrictions and guidelines (a dark sky policy) be implemented.
- 9.1.4 That a landscape consultant is appointed to prepare and implement an appropriate indigenous landscape plan and to introduce measures for the removal and/or re-location of trees and shrubs and to protect the existing indigenous vegetation during and after the construction phase.

- 9.1.5 That a storm water management plan be implemented to mitigate the possibility of storm water across the site.
- 9.1.6 That the project engineers design the entrance driveway with appropriate alignment cut & fill, as well as storm water management measures.
- 9.1.7 That the recommendations of Heritage Western Cape regarding the Notice of Intent to develop be complied with.

**It is recommend that this VIA report be endorsed by the interested and affected parties as well as the regulatory bodies considering the merits of this proposal, as the proposed development would have a very small Visual Impact on the existing landscape.**

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1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT, RELATING TO THE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (VIA).**

- a. The 39,322m<sup>2</sup> site is situated North of the Touws River between Waterside Road (on the South) and Whites Road (On the North), overlooking the ocean to the South, in Wilderness Heights between George and Sedgefield.
- b. The proposal is to develop a 3-bedroomed primary dwelling (inclusive of a store and garage) on the property, with 6 smaller guest units (50m<sup>2</sup> tourism pods), as short term rentals in the tourism accommodation trade. The 'pods' will be in two phases, the first four with the main dwelling as Phase 1, and the remainder as Phase 2.
- c. The main access to the property is via Whites Road on the Northern Boundary of the site by means of a paved driveway of approximately 75m long with a gradual slope from West to East, terminating at the disturbance area footprint for the proposed development. Part of the disturbance area will be fenced with an access gate. The fence will not be visible from Whites Road.

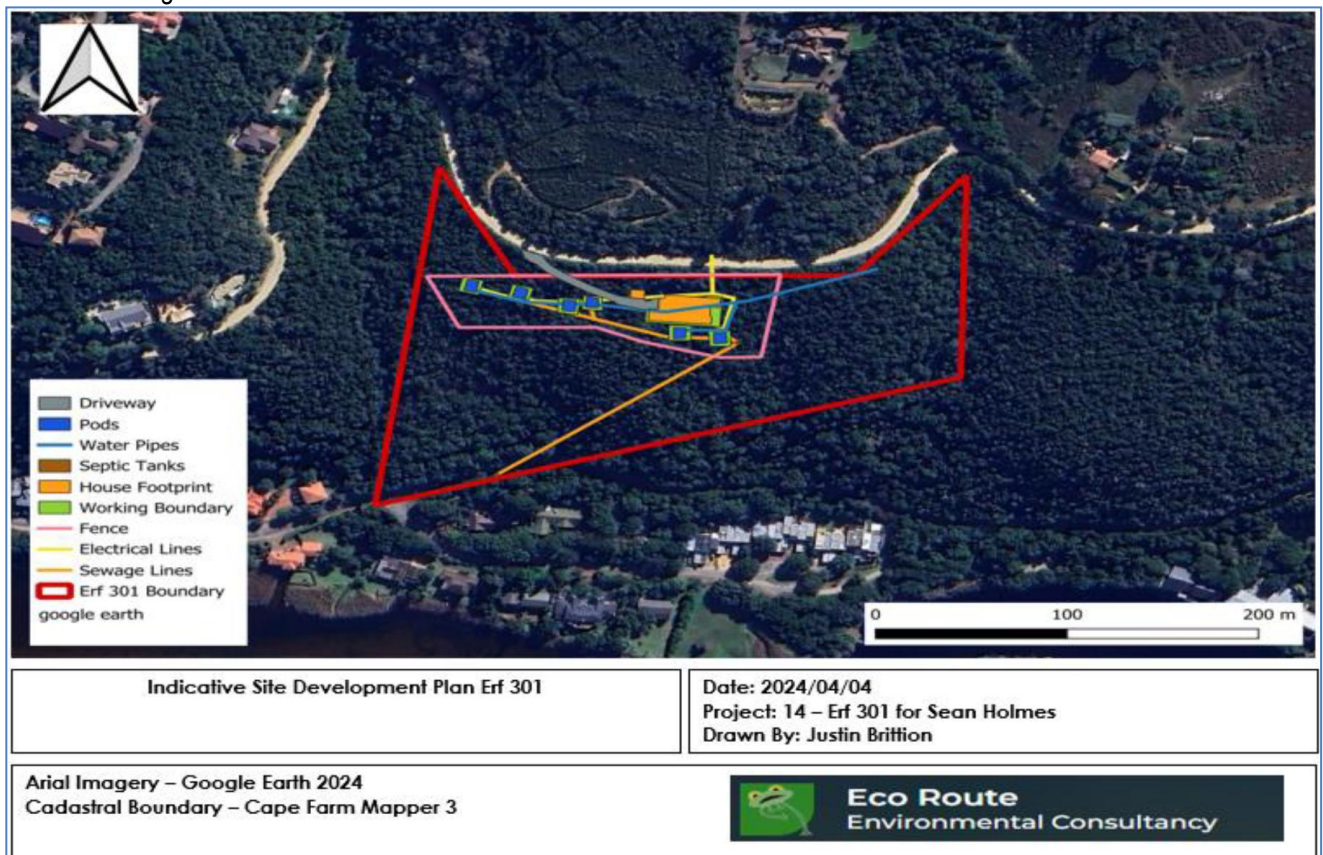


Fig-02: Site Development Plan by Eco Route with permission obtained from Eco Route Environmental Consultancy

- d. This proposal requires the removal of some restrictive Title Deed Conditions and the property is to be rezoned to an appropriate Zoning, i.e. (Open Space Zone III – Nature Conservation Area), with some associated consent use for tourist accommodation, as well as some permanent departures on the height restriction, to accommodate the restriction of the very steep topography. Towards this end, Eco Route Environmental Consultancy was appointed to prepare a Notice of Intent to Develop to Heritage Western Cape, as well as a Basic Environmental Assessment Report. Marlize de Bruyn Planning – Consulting Town & Regional Planning took care of the Land Use Application. Heritage Western Cape responded with a letter dated 04 June 2024 as follows:

*“You are hereby notified that, since there is no reason to believe that the proposed development on Erf 301, Hoekwil, Wilderness has impacted on heritage resources, no further action under Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) is required. HWC chance finds to be implements.*

*However, should any heritage resources, including evidence of graves and human burials, archaeological material and paleontological material be discovered during the execution of the activities above, all works must be stopped immediately, and Heritage Western Cape must be notified without delay.”*

- e. As the proposed development is also within the Garden Route National Park Buffer Zone and within the Coastal Protection Zone, achieving a conservation outcome on this property is vitally important.
- f. Critical Biodiversity Areas have also been identified and mapped, extending across the entire property. These areas are to be safeguarded for conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem functioning.
- g. Eco Route Environmental Consultancy was appointed to prepare and submit the Environmental Impact Assessment. They also submitted a Notice of Intent to Develop to Heritage Western Cape, who supports the proposed development as there was no reason to believe that the character of the site or the heritage resources in the area would be negatively affected.
- h. The appointed Project Architects (Eddie Da Silva and Associates Architect) designed a proposal that takes all these parameters into consideration, and came up with a very low impact proposal of a single floor level layout on stilts, with a very low mono pitch roof, blended colour scheme and textures, nestled within the existing natural landscape.

Andre Vercueil has been commissioned by the owner of the property, to prepare a **Visual Impact Assessment Report** for the above property, as required by:

- ❖ The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Directorate: Development Management (Region 3), endorsed by The Head of the Department Environmental Impact Management Services. This requirement was as a result of comments issued on the Pre-application Basic Assessment Report in terms of the National Environmental Management Act: Environmental Impact Assessment regulations, 2014 (as amended) for the proposed development. Based on the receiving environment and due consideration of proximity within the landform and to the N2 (which is identified as a scenic route, the VIA must demonstrate how the Department’s Guideline for the Management of Development on mountains, hills and ridges of the Western Cape has been considered, as well as the guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in the EIA process.
- ❖ The South African National Parks believe in their response to the EPA that visual impacts may be considerable, and may negatively affect views and the visitor experience of / from the adjacent park, which requires a Visual Impact Assessment. They require the architecture to blend in with the natural landscape, the lighting to be of a low lightdesign to prevent light pollution.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following have been considered for this study and report:

- 2.1 Reviewing the existing consultant’s reports, applications and responding comments.
- 2.2 The physical impact of the current development proposal on the site.
- 2.3 The National Government Planning Policies and Guidelines, the Local Authority By Laws, SDP, Spatial Planning & Land Use Management Act, the IDP, the Integrated Zoning Scheme By-Law, the Land Use Planning By-Law, the architect’s plans, proposed materials finishes and colour schemes.
- 2.4 The results of a Field Study undertaken to gain a better understanding of the circumstances impacted on the proposal.
- 2.5 Assessing the visual impact from the scenic routes and surrounding viewpoints
- 2.5 A Photographic Report of features within the microclimate of the site.
- 2.6 A Desk top Study reviewing:
  - 2.6.1 An assessment of scenic routes.
  - 2.6.2 An assessment of the visual character of the area.
  - 2.6.3 The Zones of Influence.
  - 2.6.4 The Viewpoints and how the micro conditions such as slope, landforms, vegetation, special features and land use influence the Visual Sensitivity.
  - 2.6.5 The Heritage Resources in the area.
  - 2.6.7 The impact of current and potential light pollution.
  - 2.6.8 The impact of current and potential noise pollution.

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- 2.6.9 The special character or sense of place.
- 2.6.10 Any areas of cultural or religious significance.
- 2.6.11 Any possible Visual Intrusion.
- 2.6.12 Any possible change of character of the area.
- 2.6.13 Any influence on the town- or streetscape.

### 3. APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

#### The following was done:

- 3.1 An analysis of the site in terms of its locality, its sub regional, local, natural and built environment context as well as its sense of place.  
**The proposal fits within the context of its locality next to Whites Road as well as the low key development's 'sense of place' already evident in the area.**
- 3.2 An assessment of the impact of the proposed development in terms of the cultural landscape.  
**The proposal will have a very small impact on the current landscape, as the visual intrusion is limited through large distances and extremely dense vegetation.**
- 3.3 An evaluation of the proposed residential development in terms of the need, the logical extension of the current urban area and streetscape according to the George Municipal SDF, Government policies, plans and guidelines.  
**The proposal is consistent with the logical extension of the urban area and streetscape in Wilderness, with access from Whites Road.**
- 3.4 An evaluation of the suitability of the architectural language, heritage principles of architecture and aesthetics on the wider landscape.  
**The current architectural language in the area is already mixed suburban, with a variety of different styles, textures, colours as well as 'look and feel'. The proposed architectural language is consistent with the expectation within a dense conservation area – the architecture is low-key with shallow roof slopes, natural materials and colours, with a scattered footprint. There are no heritage resources in the area which may have an impact on the proposal.**
- 3.5 A site inspection and photographic survey of the site and its surrounds.  
**A site inspection and survey were undertaken on 10 September 2004, to identify sensitive features and possible impacts from different viewpoints and receptors, including the Scenic route of the N2.**
- 3.6 The identification and mapping of the heritage resources in and around the site.  
**No heritage resources have been identified in the immediate or surrounding area.**
- 3.7 A desktop mapping exercise to analyze and evaluate the inherent visual sensitivity of the site.  
**A mapping exercise revealed that there are some areas where the site is visible from a fair distance, however due to the dense vegetation of the site and the large distances between the viewpoints and the site, a sensitive development nestled between the indigenous vegetation would hardly be visible. The visual sensitivity is noted as very low.**
- 3.8 A visual framework to identify opportunities and constraints for the proposed development.
  - **The colour scheme, materials and finishes of the proposed development have been chosen to blend in with the natural surrounds. Please see the material and colour schedule inserted in Fig 03 below. The chosen colours, materials and finishes will blend in with the surroundings.**
  - **The density of the proposed development is within the parameters of the applicable government and local authority policies and frameworks. A scattered footprint also reduces the visual impact of the proposal.**
  - **The proposed development is within the range of expectation of the Wilderness Heights area, as some of the surrounding properties have already been developed.**
- 3.9 An assessment of project alternatives against the visual impact criteria.  
**A higher density development of two floors with a smaller footprint would have had a marked visual impact on the surroundings. However the proposal for a low density single storey development with a very shallow roof slope and a scattered footprint, assures a much less abrasive impact with a very low influence on the visual impact.**



3.10 The consideration of mitigation measures, based on the visual impact.

**The following mitigation measures are proposed:**

- a) The use of the natural colours, natural materials, textures and finishes.
- b) The careful planning of small volume, low rise areas and a scattered footprint will assure a low visual impact.
- c) The use of discrete fencing and gates, as well as the natural finish of the driveway from Whites Road will assure low visibility along that route.
- d) All external lights to be down lighters to comply with the “Dark Sky Policy”.

No.	ITEM	MATERIAL	FINISH	COLOUR
1	Sloped Roofs	Steel-alume	Standing Seam	Charcoal
2	Roof Beams	Timber	Matt Stained or Painted	Charcoal
3	Flat Concrete Roofs	Concrete	19mm Table Mountain Chipped Stone	Grey
4	Fascias & Bargeboards	Nutec	Mat Paint	Charcoal
5	Gutters & Downpipes	Ogee Extruded Aluminium	Matt	Charcoal
6	Walls	Plaster & Paint	Vertical Scratched Plaster and Paint	Dove Grey & Dark Grey
7	Window & Door Frames	Aluminium & Glass	Matt Aluminium & Plate Glass	Matt Stone Grey
8	Balustades	Frameless Glass on Plastered Plant Box	Glass on Scratch Plastered Plant Box	See through Glass on Dark grey Plinth Wall
9	Timber Screens Decks & Pergolas	Natural Timber	Matt Varnish	Driftwood
10	Supporting Stilts/Columns	Round Concrete	Textured Paint	Charcoal
11	Driveway	Cobble Pavers	100x100 cobbles	Dark Grey with charcoal borders
12	Fencing	Clear-View	Epoxy Coated	Charcoal

Fig-03: Material List & Colour Sheme

#### 4. ASSUMPTIONS & LIMITATIONS

- 4.1 We will assume for the purpose of this report that the information supplied to us is correct.
- 4.2 The visual study acknowledges the fact that not all places on the site, viewpoints and vantage points have been accessible to us at the time of the field study.
- 4.3 The visual study will rely on information that can be extracted from appropriate topo-cadastral and other mapping, for the purpose of the interpretation of the ‘Visual Catchment’ and ‘Visual Zone of Influence’.
- 4.4 If the number of pods is reduced from 6 to 4 the influence on the anticipated visual impact will be very small.
- 4.5 The purpose of this study is to add to the other specialist reports for this proposed development in order to inform the Local and Provincial Authorities of the level of Visual Impact that this proposed development would have on the landscape.

## 5. **SITE LOCATION**

ERF 301 Hoekwil is located in Wilderness Heights near Wilderness, between Whites Road on the North, and Waterside Road on the South. The site overlooks the Touws River and the Indian Ocean. The Touws River on the South of the site is at the edge of the plateau separating the Wilderness Estuary and the secondary hill crop, following the primary dunes along the seafront.

Waterside Road is a tarred feeder road servicing the connection between Wilderness and Ward 4 (Island Lake), while Whites Road is a gravel road providing access to smallholdings in the Wilderness Heights and Hoekwil area.

The site stretches approximately 250m from East to West, and approximately 170m from North to South along Whites Road. ((Please see Fig-05 & 06 below). The Southern side of Waterside Drive opposite the site is mostly developed.

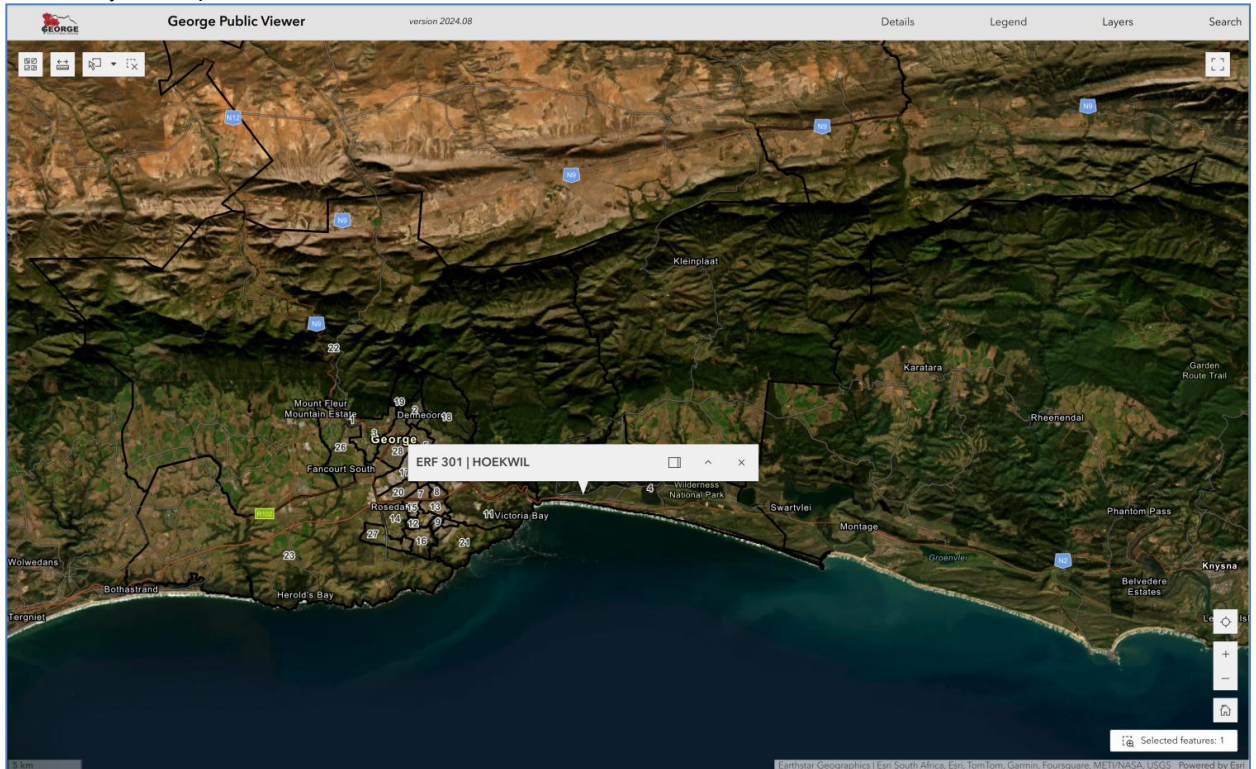


Fig-04 Locality Map 01, George Public Viewer Map

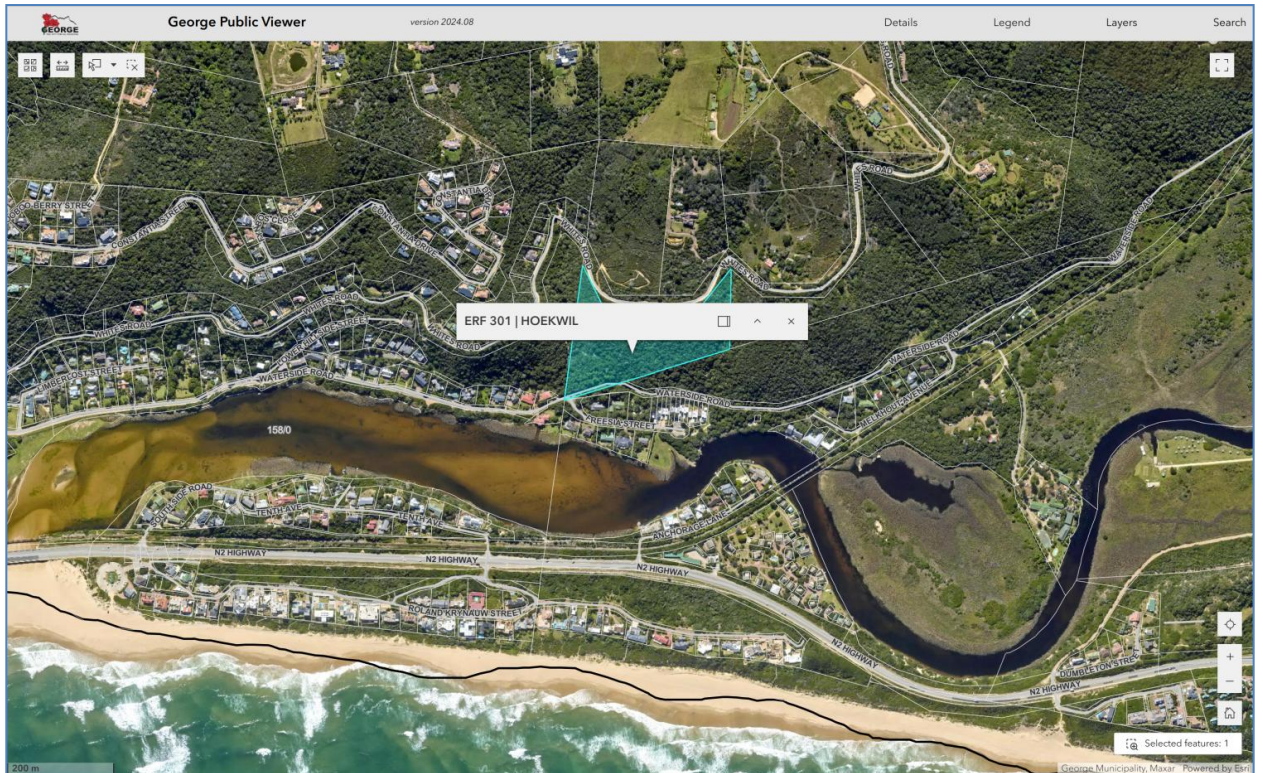


Fig-05 Locality Map 02, George Public Viewer Map

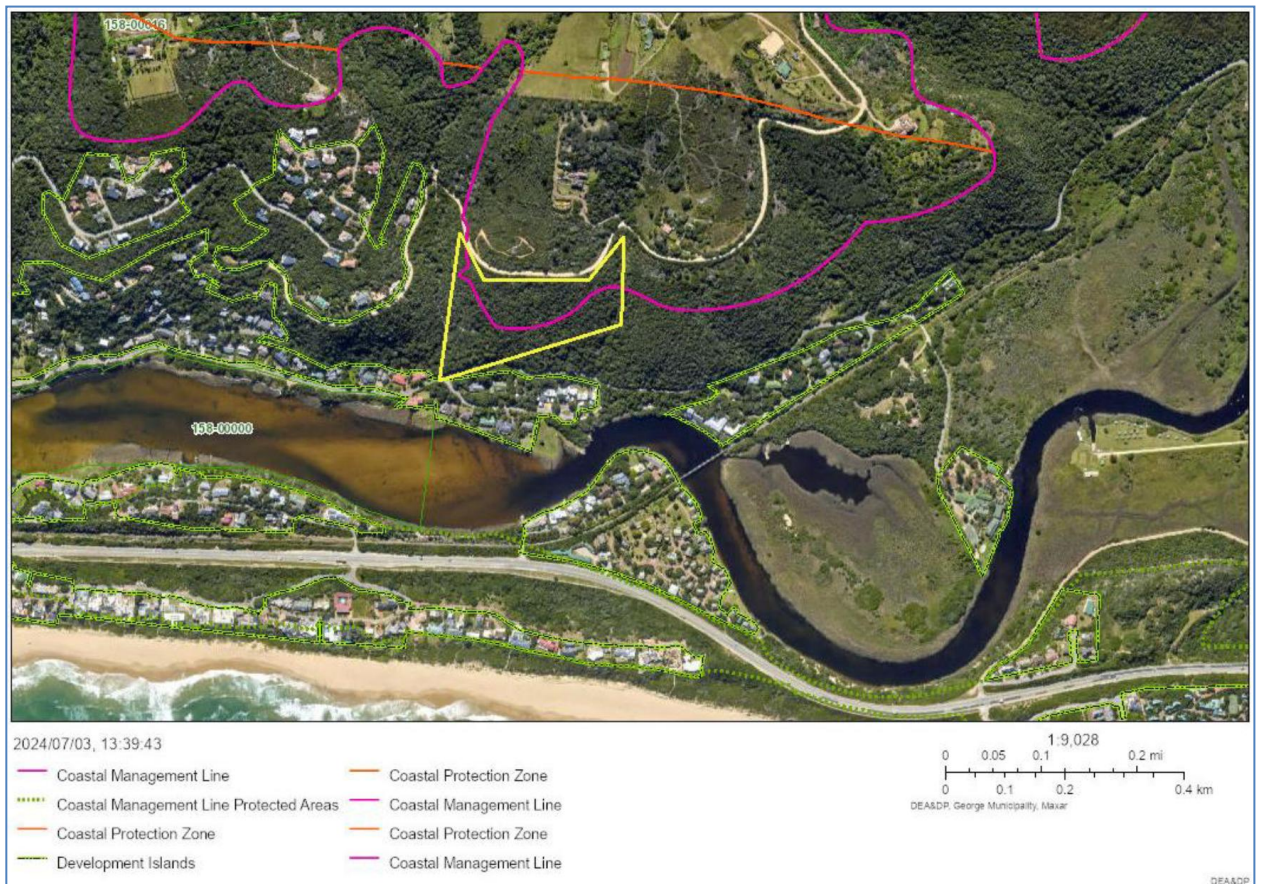


Fig-06 Coastal Management Line, Map, with permission obtained from Eco Route Environmental Consultancy

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The Character of the area is described as follows:

*“The area abutting Erf 301 Hoekwil reflects the Wilderness character with residential opportunities, the Touws River, tourist accommodation and the Wilderness National Park. The development proposal for the property reflects what is found here. It can be stated that the property is located in a transition area between ‘normal’ single residential properties of Wilderness and the small holdings of Wilderness Heights. The development potential of the property is limited due to the topography.”*

*(Extract from the Land Use Planning Report by Marlize de Bruyn Planning Consulting Town & Regional Planning).*

6. **SUB REGIONAL CONTEXT (See Fig-04 Locality Map on Page 10)**

6.1 Wilderness lies between the Kaaimans River on the West and the Touws River and Island Lake on the East, just North of the N2 (National Roadway from George to Knysna via Sedgefield).

6.2 The settlement pattern is predominantly linear along the N2 and the beachfront, as well as along the edge of the Touws River.

7. **LOCAL CONTEXT (See Fig-05 and 06 Locality Map on Page 11)**

The cultural landscape is dictated by the following topographical influences:

7.1 The coastline between the Kaaimans River mouth on the West and Kleinkrantz on the East.

7.2 The Touws River meanders through the estuary towards the river mouth at Wilderness.

7.3 Waterside Road is just North and along the edge of The Touws River and the estuary towards Island Lake.

7.4 Whites Road and Hoogte Street form a ring road providing access to the single residential properties closer to Wilderness, as well as access to the smallholdings slightly further away from Wilderness towards Wilderness Heights and Hoekwil.

8. **A DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

8.1 ERF 301 has a fairly steep fall from Whites Road down towards Waterside Road, with a slight lesser fall towards the top end. The Southern half of the site falls below the Coastal Management Line, but within the Coastal Protection Zone. Please see Fig-05 on Page 11 above.

8.2 The proposed development of a 3-bedroomed primary dwelling (inclusive of a store and garage) on the property, with 6 smaller guest units (50m<sup>2</sup> pods), as short term rentals in the tourism accommodation trade will be in two phases. The main dwelling and the first four pods will be Phase 1, and the remainder Phase 2. The proposed development is nestled between the existing indigenous vegetation with a focus on environmental best practices. Please see Fig-07 on Page 13, Site Development Plan.



Fig-07a Contour Map, Cape Farm Mapper.

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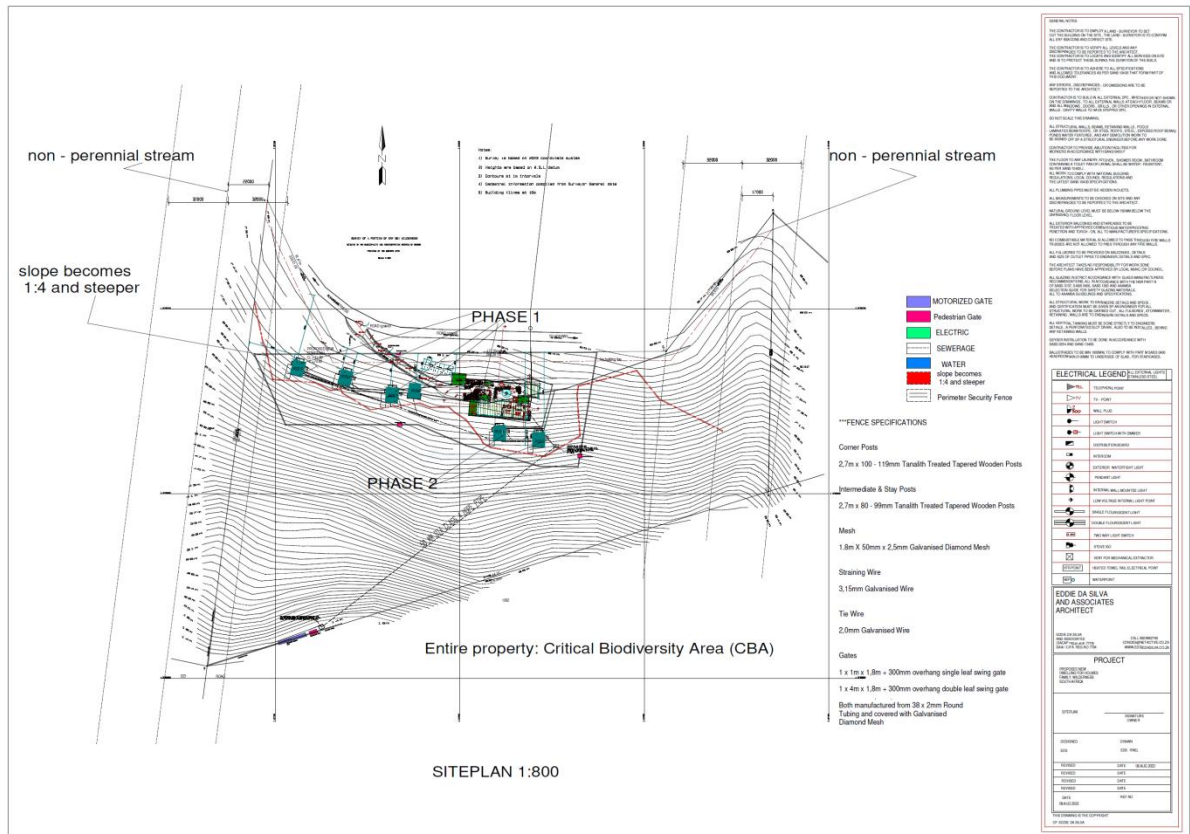


Fig-07b Site Development Plan, Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect, dated 08/08/2023 Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

8.3 The development proposal is described as follows (extracted from the report by Marlize de Bruyn):

*“The single storey primary dwelling is proposed to have a mono-pitch roof to allow light in from the north and lower the total height of the structure. The proposed building plans (with the floor plan, elevations & sections) for the primary dwelling attached hereto as Annexure 7, shows how the structure is accommodated within an 8.5m parallel line with the slope of the property. Detailed height measurements are included on the elevations attached hereto. On the northern elevation (facing Whites Road) the maximum height is ±4.61m, on the western elevation ±8.037m, the east elevation ±7.841m and the south elevation ±7.069m. These elevation heights are the height measured from natural ground level (NGL) to the wall plate height. According to the zoning by-law height from NGL to wall plate should be 6.5m. Due to the topography of the property, this is not possible. If the highest point of the proposed mono-pitch roof was turned to face south and not north as in this instance, the wall plate height would have been complied with and the highest point of the mono pitch roof would in all probability complied with the maximum parameter of 8.5m. Facing the mono pitch roof to the south, would however cause the proposed dwelling to not follow the contours of the property and be higher than viewed from the south. The proposed design ensures that the primary dwelling is lower as viewed from the south.*

*The proposed tourist accommodation units will also have mono pitched roofs, following the topography. The same principles regarding height as described above with the primary dwelling applies to the proposed tourist accommodation units. The wall plate height as measured from NGL for the proposed 6 tourist accommodation units varies between ±6.336m, 6.998m & 7.480m respectively dependent on the underlying topography.*

*The primary dwelling and proposed tourist accommodation units is positioned to consider topography, and access and vegetation. Due to the slope and existing vegetation, part of the structures will be hidden by the vegetation. The skyline cannot be broken, and the supporting pillars cannot be visible due to vegetation.*

What is further of importance is that part of the roof of the proposed primary dwelling will be a living roof. See image below.”

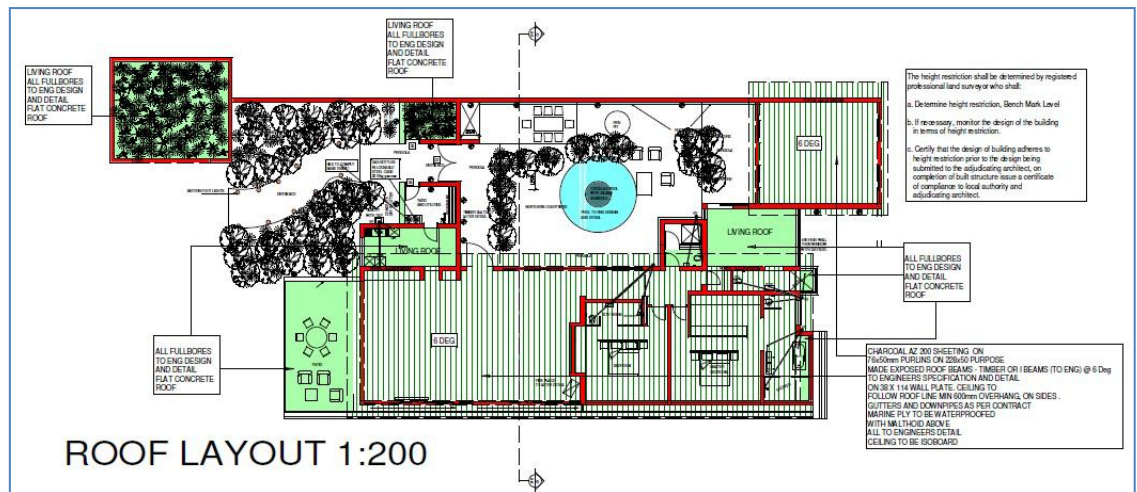


Fig-08 Living Roof Garden - Extract from the Land Use Planning Report by Marlize de Bruyn Planning Consulting Town & Regional Planning and the below also extracted from this report.

“Parking is to be provided in the area of the double garage. The tourist accommodation units will be one-bedroom units between the vegetation of ±50m<sup>2</sup> each, which includes outdoor spaces. It is also proposed to be mono-pitch, single storey structures with a maximum height of ±7.48m, as determined by the topography. The proposed building plan for the tourist accommodation units (referred to as pods by the architect) is attached hereto as Annexure 8. The units will not be identical in size, but the building materials and finishes will be the same.

As stated earlier, due to the topography and the existing vegetation found on the property, the structures will be hidden in part by the vegetation. The supporting pillars for the structures will hardly be visible, if at all...

...Whites Road and also Waterside Road are tourism routes which will be supported by this development proposal Erf 301 Hoekwil. The proposed zoning will ultimately link with the Wilderness National Park (part of the Garden Route National Park) located close by. The limited number of tourist accommodation units will provide access to the Wilderness character & sense of place. Importantly, the ridgeline and slope of the subject property will not be negatively affected as shown earlier in this motivation 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 301 Hoekwil indicated in the table to follow:

<b>How development should be treated in sensitive landscapes or along scenic routes</b>	<b>Relevance to Erf 301 Hoekwil (Wilderness Heights)</b>
Be visually unobtrusive,	This motivation report shows that the proposed development cannot be visually obtrusive due to the limited scale and specific location.
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,	This is relevant as the owner’s dwelling and 6 tourist accommodation units are grouped together along the internal access route.

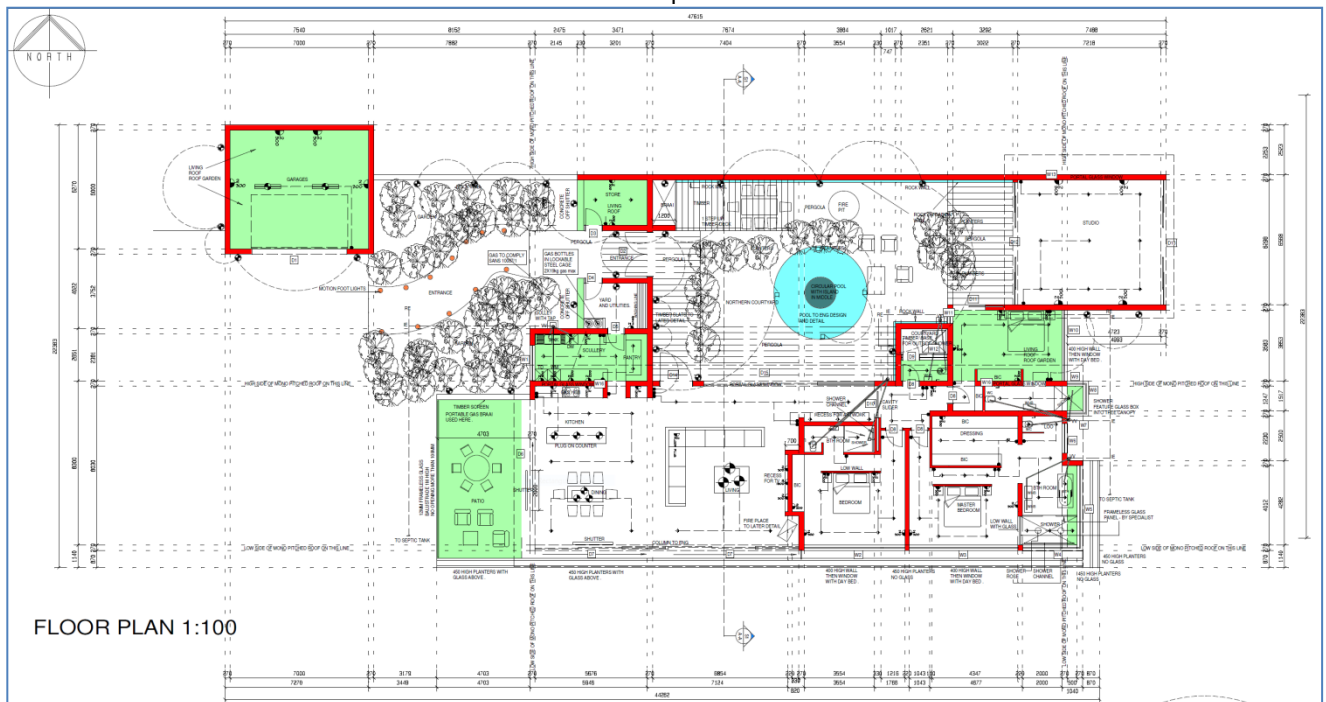
<i>Not interfere with the skyline, landmarks, major views and vistas,</i>	<i>This land use application shows that the development proposal will not interfere with the skyline, landmarks, major views and vistas</i>
<i>Not result in light, noise or effluent pollution</i>	<i>The scale and location of the development should not result in these forms of pollution.</i>
<i>Respond to the historical, architectural and landscape style of surrounding layout and buildings,</i>	<i>The development proposal responds to the potential the property offers. It will add a few structures to an area with limited structures.</i>
<i>Keep and protect a visual buffer along the N2 National Road as far as possible.</i>	<i>The N2-route and views from it is not affected by this development proposal.</i>

*(Extracts from the Land Use Planning Report by Marlize de Bruyn Planning Consulting Town & Regional Planning).*

8.4 Extracts of the Architectural proposal:

8.4.1 Plans – Main Dwelling:

The floor plan has an articulated outline, with the garage as an outbuilding. The dispersed and articulated volumes assure a lesser visual impact



*Fig-09 Floor Plan – Extract from Floor Plan of Main Dwelling, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.*

8.4.2 Elevations – Main Dwelling:

The volumes and heights are articulated and dispersed assuring a lesser visual impact. The roofs are of a very low pitch, also assuring a low visual impact. The platform is created by a 50% cut into the landscape and the remainder is raised on stilts, all within the height restriction as proposed. The stilts could resemble tree trunks from a distance, while only approximately a quarter of the height will be visible above the tree canopy.

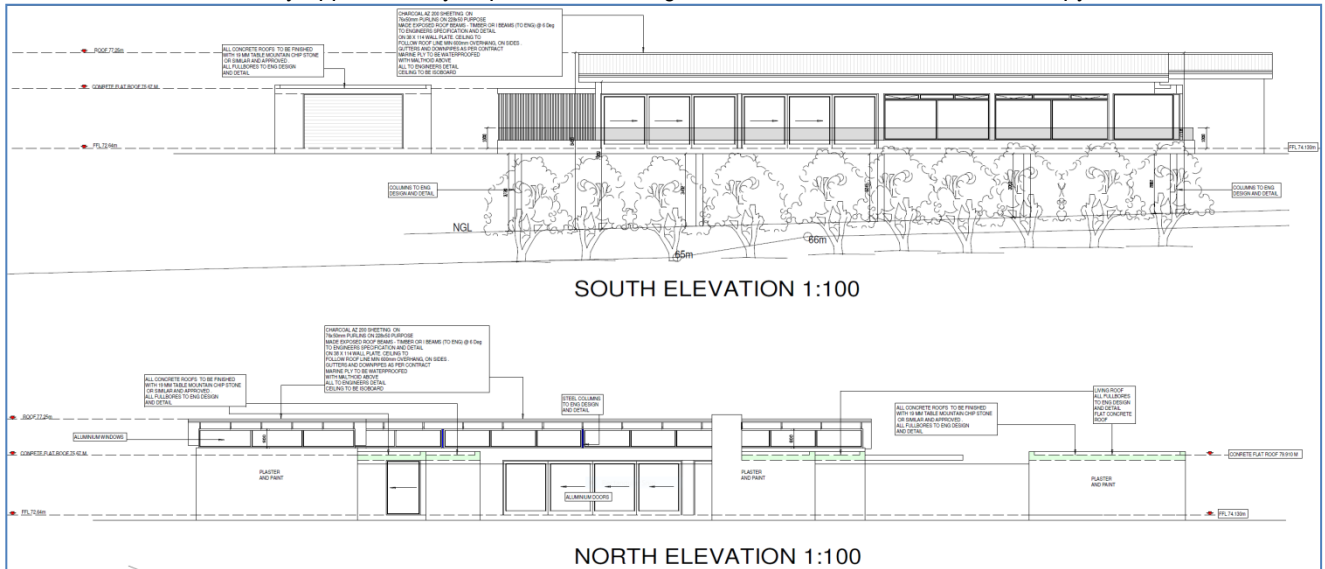


Fig-10 Floor Plan – Extract from Floor Plan of Main Dwelling, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

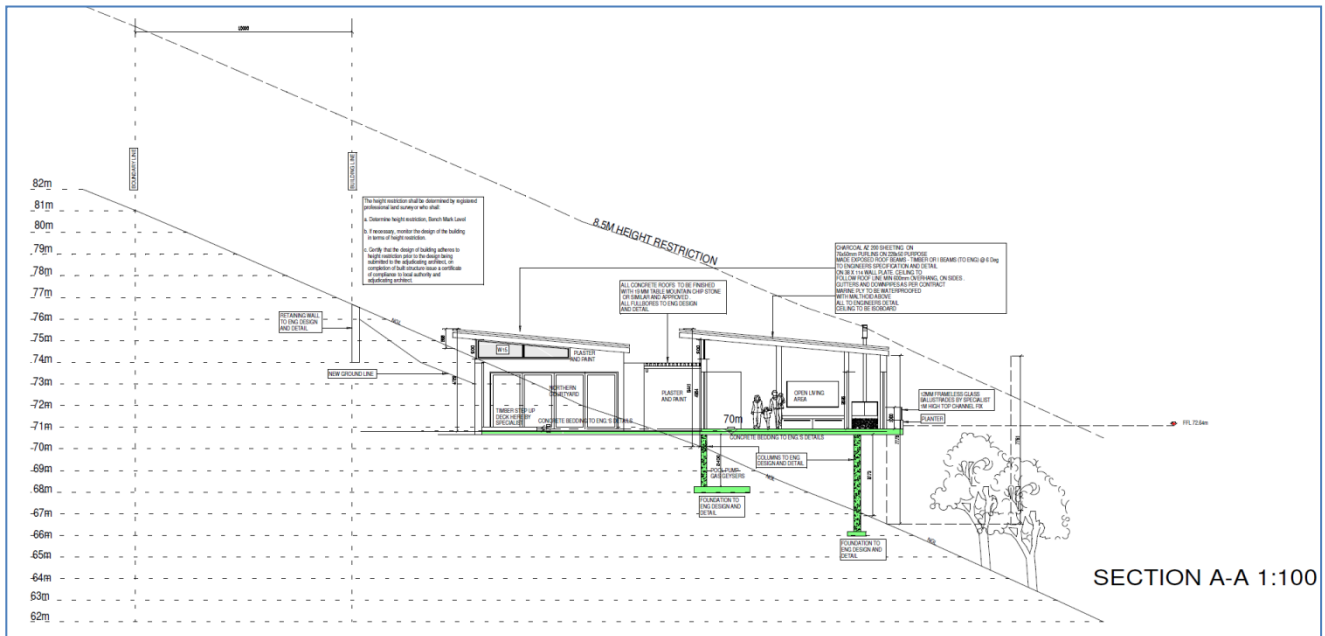


Fig-11 Section AA – Extract from Floor Plan of Main Dwelling, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.



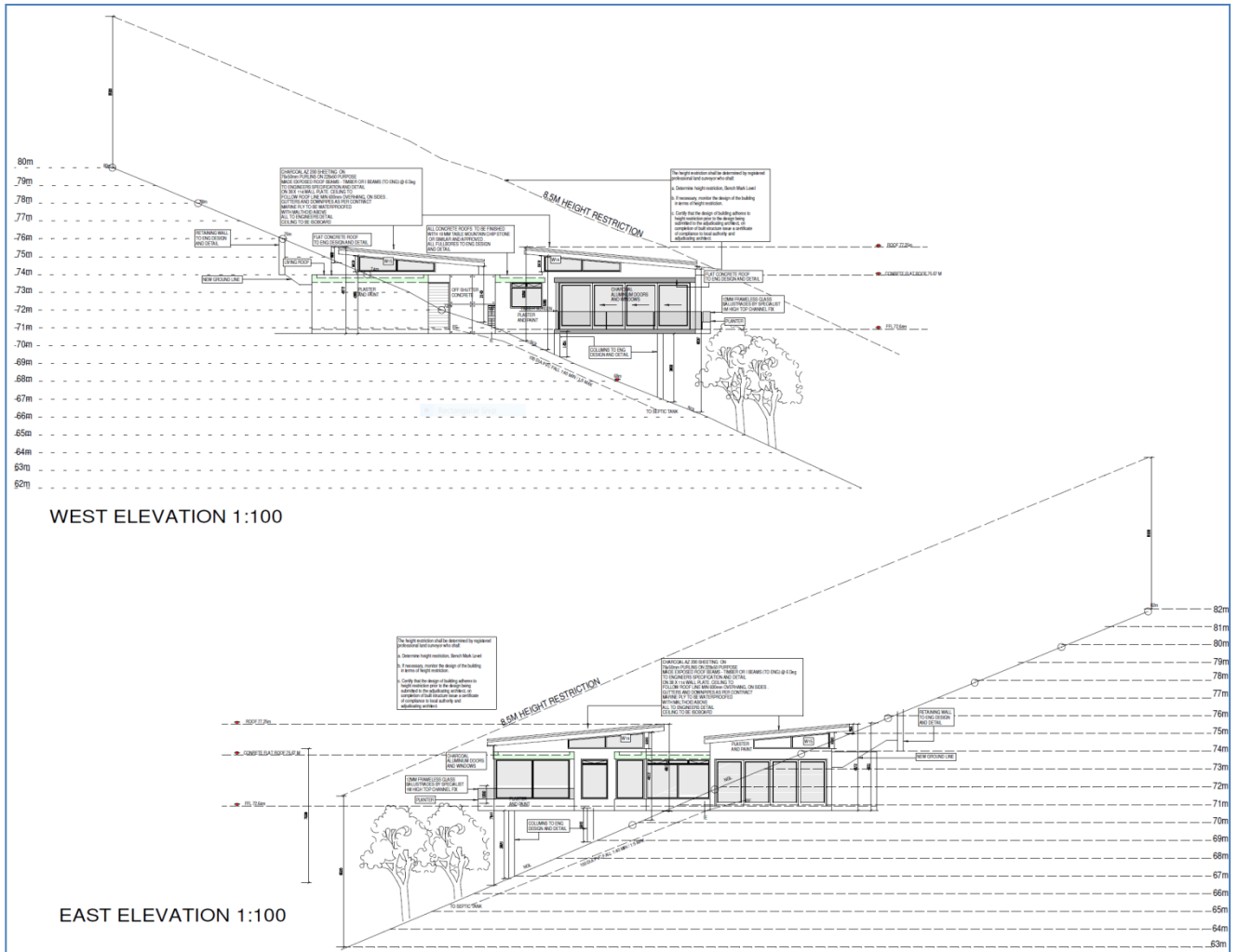


Fig-12 Elevations – Extract from Floor Plan of Main Dwelling, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

### 8.4.3 Plans – Tourism Pods:

The layout of the pods is once again dispersed over the proposed disturbance area, with linking timber walkways from the central parking area.

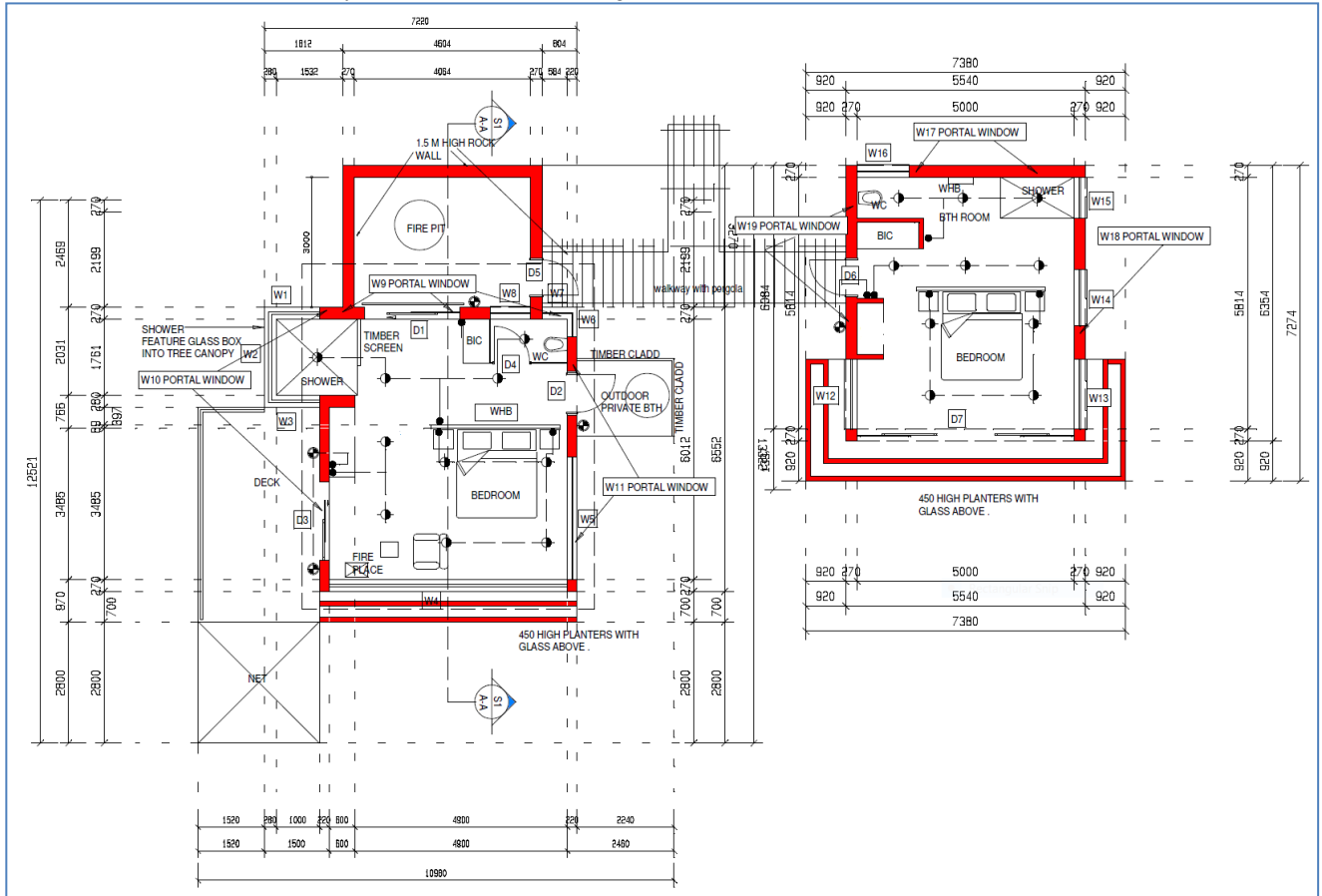


Fig-13 Plans – Extract from Floor Plan of Tourism Pods, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

### 8.4.4 Elevations – Tourism Pods:

The platforms are created by a 5% - 20% cut into the landscape and the remainder is raised on stilts, all within the height restriction as proposed. The stilts could once again resemble tree trunks from a distance, while only approximately a quarter of the height will be visible above the tree canopy.

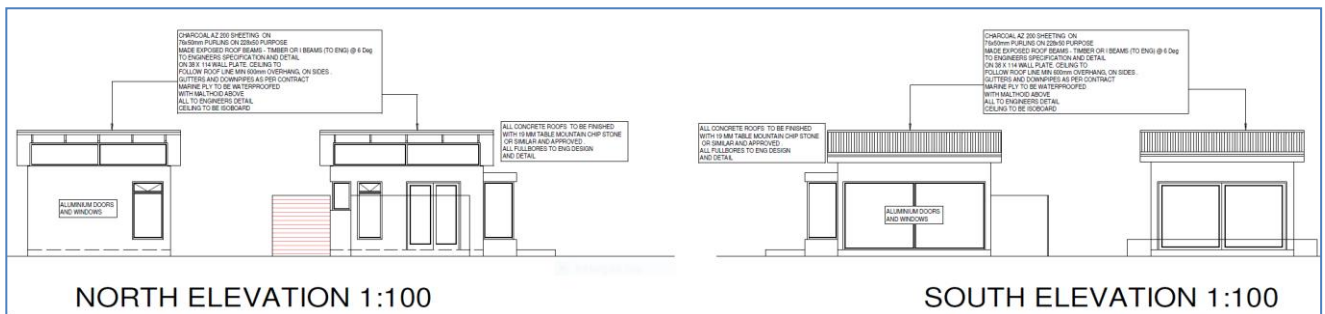


Fig-14 Elevations – Extract from Elevations of Tourism Pods, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

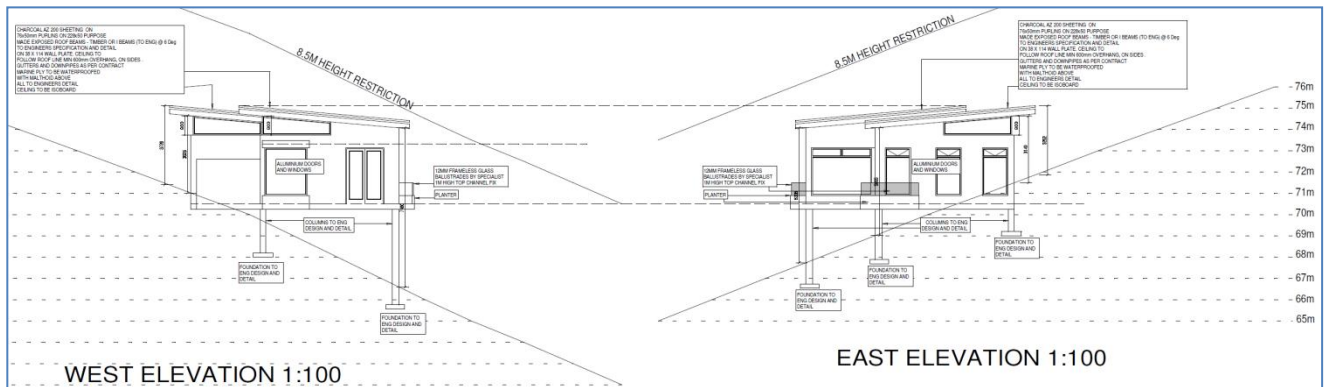


Fig-15 Sections – Extract from Elevations of Tourism Pods, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect. Please See Annexure C for the Architectural Plans.

#### 8.4.5 Concept – Main dwelling.

The proposed driveway follows the contours from the North-West to the South-East of the building platform. The driveway will only be visible from the elevated viewpoints on the North-Western side of the site.

The design is very low-key, with articulated edges and a dispersed layout, nestled into the landscape. The Northern side of the building platform is cut into the site by approximately 4m, while the Southern side's floor level is raised by approximately 4m above the natural ground level and supported on reinforced concrete columns which could resemble tree stumps in the forest.

The roofs have a very shallow 6 degree slope towards the South, making the visual impact from the South as low as possible.

The colour scheme has been chosen to blend in with the natural landscape. (Please see Fig-03 on Page 9 for the Colour Scheme and Material List).

#### 8.4.6 Concept – Tourism Pods.

The access to the tourism pods are via timber walkways from the parking area at the main dwelling.

The design as also low-key with platforms nestled into the landscape, approximately 3m above the natural ground level on the Southern Side.

The roofs also slope at a 6 degree angle towards the South, making the visual impact as low as possible.

The colour scheme matches the main house. (Please see Fig-03 on Page 9 for the Colour Scheme and Material List).

8.4.7 General 3D's:

In evaluating the project architect's 3D's, I am of the opinion that the nestling into the landscape with only approximately a quarter of the development projecting out above the tree canopy, does not come through accordingly. The 3D's shown below are meant to give the client an impression of what the architecture of the development would look like and therefore shows much more of the buildings.

For the purposes of the Visual Impact Assessment, more 3D's have been prepared with the correct orientation from the three selected viewpoints and the 3D's have been inserted into the photographs from those viewpoints showing the top quarter of the buildings sticking out through the tree canopy. Please see item 23 (Fig 24-Fig 26) on page 51-54 below for these additional 3D's.



*Fig-16a 3D's – Random Views of the proposed development from an architectural point of view, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect*



*Fig-16b 3D's – Random Views of the proposed development from an architectural point of view, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect*



*Fig-16c 3D's – Random Views of the proposed development from an architectural point of view, by Eddie Da Silva Associates Architect*

9. SITE INVESTIGATION

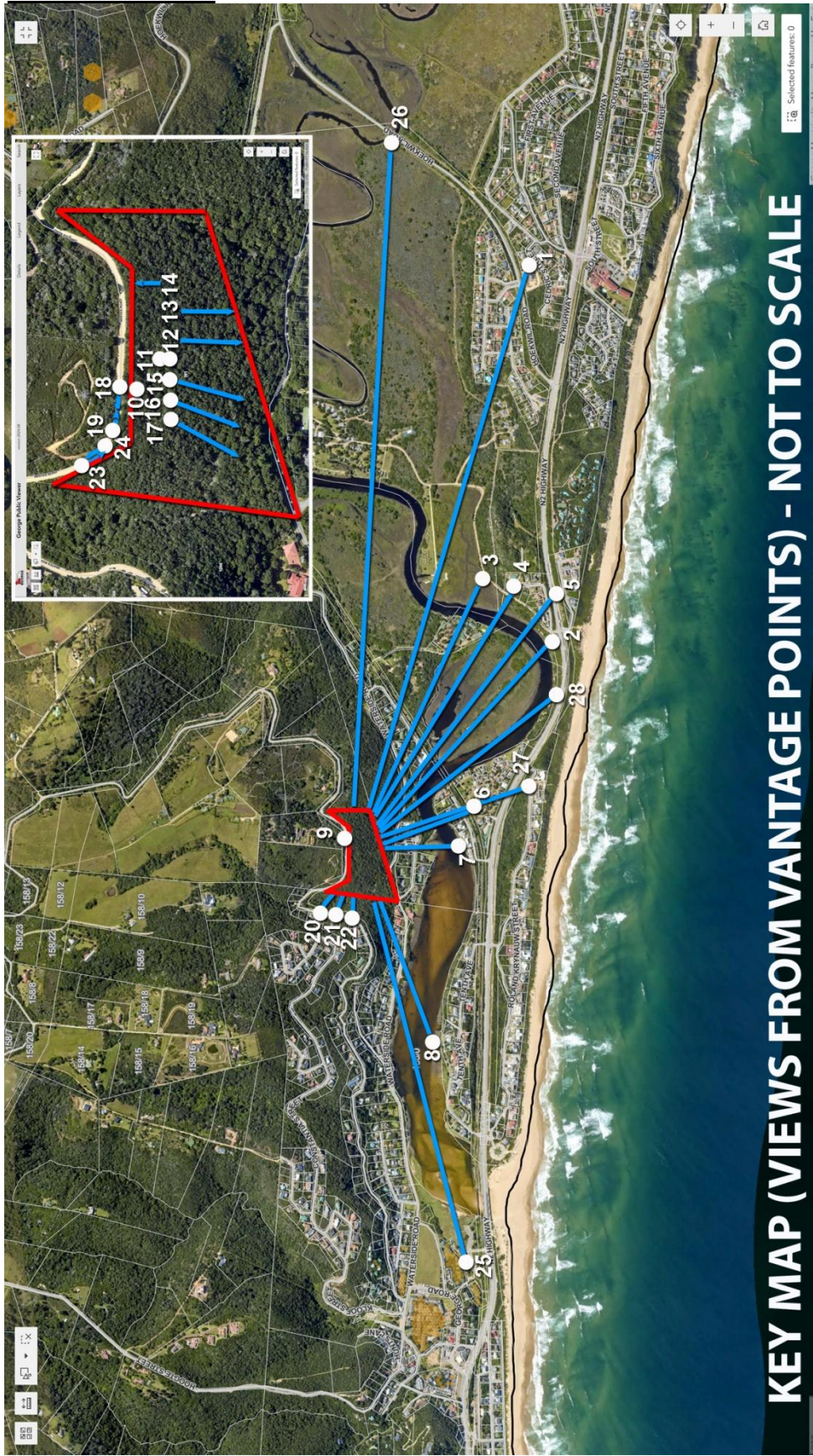


Fig-17 Key Map – Views from Scenic Routes, Vantage Points and Viewpoints

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 POSTAL ADDRESS: 'CARISBROOKE, 26 NEWTON STREET, KNYSNA, 6571, TEL:+27 44 381 0219, E-MAIL: andre@architectsetc.com, WEBSITE:www.architectsetc.com

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- 9.1 Please see Fig-17 on Page 23 for the Key Map Views from Vantage Points.
- 9.2 A field study was conducted on 10 September 2024. The site was approached from the Northern access road – Whites Road, which is a gravel road. At the approximate site of the main dwelling, a raised timber platform was constructed from where views of the ocean on the South could be enjoyed. The site was walked in the areas that are accessible and where the proposed main dwelling and tourism pods are proposed. It was not deemed necessary to investigate the rest of the property, due to the dense nature of the vegetation and the fact that it will remain undisturbed. Photo-9 shows the site on the left moving towards the West down Whites Road. It is clear that the proposed development would not be visible at all from this side of Whites Road.



*Photo-9*

- 9.3 During the field study a trail was followed into the site, following the line of the proposed driveway towards the proposed platform of the main dwelling.



*Photo-10a - Photo of the walking trail*



*Photo-10b - Photo of the walking trail*



- 9.4 The indigenous forest setting along the trail has trees that are fairly dense, between 6m and 8m tall.
- 9.5 The trail leads to the approximate platform of the proposed main dwelling, with the following panoramic Views:



*Photo-11 - View towards the South and the Ocean  
At Ground level*



*Photo-12 - View towards the South and the Ocean  
At the Raised timber View Platform Level*

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Photo-11 (at ground level), shows part of the edge of the Touws river, part of the N2, the primary Dune and the Ocean in the distance.

Photo-12, which is taken at the elevated timber platform (approximately 2,1m above the natural ground level), shows a little more of the edge of the Touws River, part of the N2, the primary dune and the Ocean in the distance.

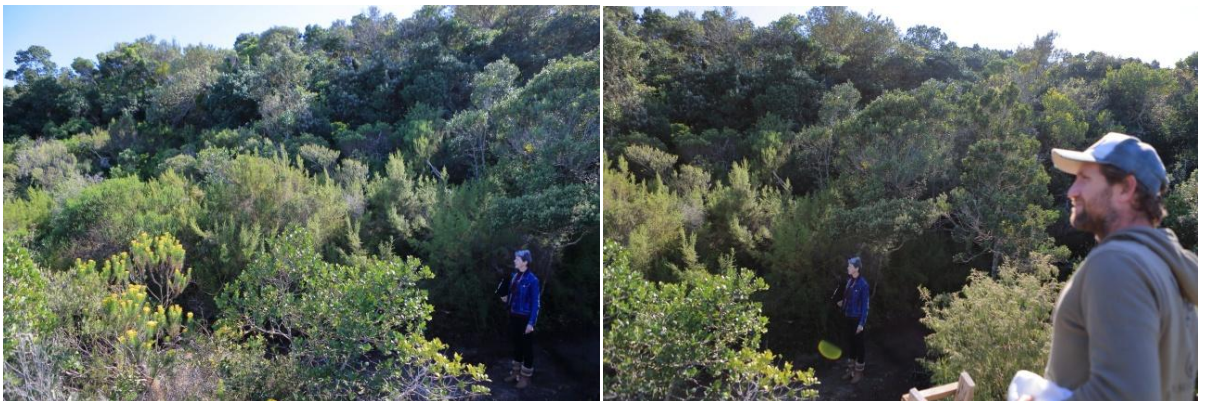
These two views are important in considering the views back towards the site from the edge of the Touws River, the N2 route and the primary dune.

- 9.6 Looking from the raised timber platform towards the West a few houses along Whites Road (bottom) and Constantia Street (top) are visible. Please consider the views back from those vantage points towards the site – See photos 20, 21 and 22 on pages 28 & 29



*Photo-18 - Looking West from the raised timber platform on the site - showing the existing houses (The extension of Whites Road at the bottom and Constantia Street at the top)*

- 9.7 Looking North from the raised timber view platform, shows that there are no views possible towards Whites Road and the properties above Whites Road.



*Photos-13a-b - looking North towards Whites Road from the raised Timber View Platform.*



*Photo-13c - looking North-North-East towards Whites Road from the raised Timber View Platform*

- 9.8 Walking back up the trail and rearing off to the left on another trail, leads to two of the sites of the proposed tourism pods. It is clear that it would be impossible to view the pods from the edge of the Touws River. However from the N2 and the Primary Dune, vistas of the top quarter of the tourism pods may be visible.



*Photo-15 - The View from one of the Tourism Pods at Ground level*



*Photo-16 - The View from the other Tourism Pod at Ground level*

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*Photo-17 - another view from the trail towards the Tourism Pods*

- 9.9 Photo-19 shows the proposed entrance of the driveway on the right (South side) of Whites Road. Travelling East down Whites Road, the entrance driveway will be visible for a second or two on the right hand side.



*Photo-19 - The proposed entrance to the driveway leading to the main dwelling is situated to the right of the tree in the middle of the photo.*

- 9.10 Photo-20-22 show vistas towards the site from further West and around a horse shoe bend in Whites Road



*Photo-22 - A view from Whites Road further towards the West*



Photo-20



Photo-21

9.11 No heritage resources have been identified in the study area.

## 10 POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The proposed development is subject to authorization in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act 1998 (NEMA). In terms of the studies required for the proposed development, the following policies and frameworks are applicable and will therefore have to be considered in the assessment and the development phases of the project:

- 10.1 Requirements and comments requested from The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning.
- 10.2 A Basic Environmental Impact Assessment – Already conducted by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy.
- 10.3 Identification and mapping of any Heritage Resources through a Notice of Intent to Develop to Heritage Western Cape – Already conducted by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy.
- 10.4 The Land Use planning By-Laws, George Integrated Zoning Scheme By Law, the Spatial Planning & Land Use Management Act, 2023 (SPLUMA), The Wilderness Lakes, Hoekwil Local Spatial Development Framework and the Western Cape Land Use Planning Guidelines: Rural Areas (2019). A

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Land Use Planning Report has already been conducted by Marlize de Bruyn Planning, Consulting Town & Regional Planning.

- 10.5 The Pre-Consultation Application Meeting with George Municipality – The meeting was held and Minutes are available.
- 10.4 An evaluation of the impact of the development relative to the sustainable social and economic benefits to be derived from the development.
- 10.5 The results of consultation with communities affected by the proposed development and other interested parties regarding the impact of the development on the area.
- 10.6 Plans for mitigation of any adverse effects during and after the completion of the proposed development.
- 10.8 Heritage and Scenic Resources – Inventory and Policy Framework for the Western Cape. This framework provides input on cultural and scenic resources and provides guidelines for the identification and conservation of these resources.
- 10.8 A Visual Impact Assessment Report – As part of this submission.

## 11 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

- 11.1 In considering the zoning map as well as the current Land Use, it is clear that the band of properties either side of Waterside Road are a good mix of Single Residential, General Residential, Undetermined and Open Space. Agricultural zonings are also evident further north of the development site, as smallholdings in the Hoekwil area.

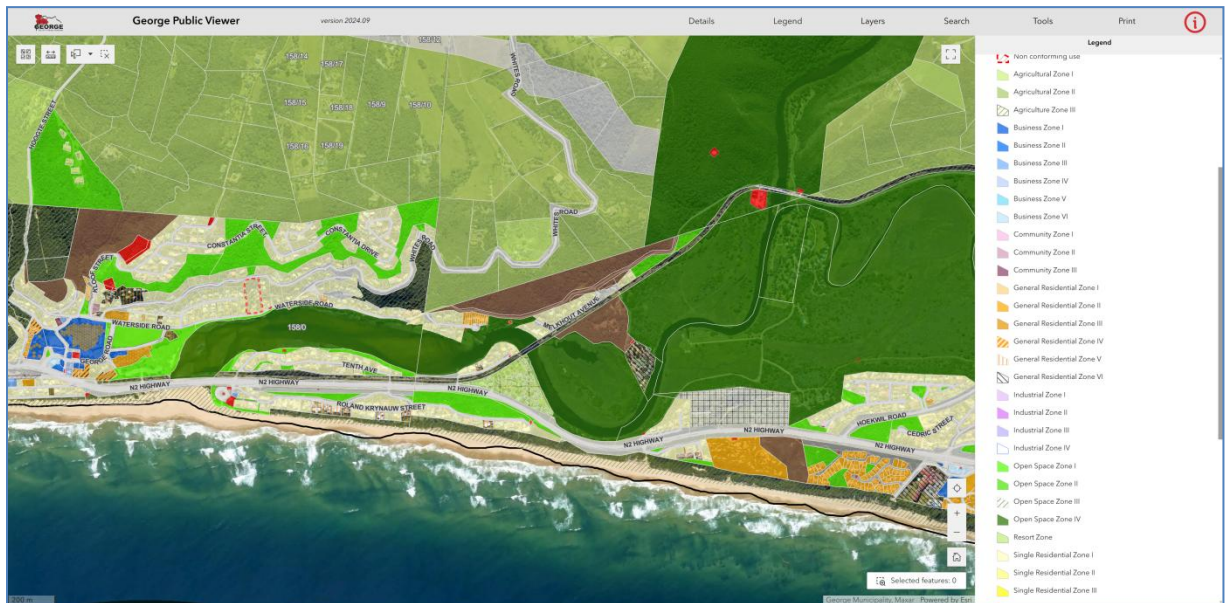


Fig-18 Zoning Map, George Public Viewer.

- 11.2 The linear settlement pattern is determined by the physical restraints of the Touws River on the Southern side of Waterside Road, as well as the hill and Whites Road on the Northern side of the site. Further to the above, the settlement pattern is also linear along the N2, with the restraints of the beach on the Southern Side and the Touws River on the Northern side.
- 11.3 The proposed development on part of this site follows the existing trend along the Touws River and North of Waterside Road.
- 11.4 The size of the proposed development is significantly restrained by the protected natural forest and the existing cultural landscape surrounding the property on the Northern, Eastern and Western sides.
- 11.5 The low-key proposed development on this property will have a low visual effect on the natural landscape, as this Visual Impact Assessment Report will show.

## 12. TRIGGERS OF VISUAL IMPACT

The following characteristics (which are probable triggers) have been considered for potential visual issues:

### 12.1 The nature of the environment.

#### 12.1.1 Areas with proclaimed heritage resources:

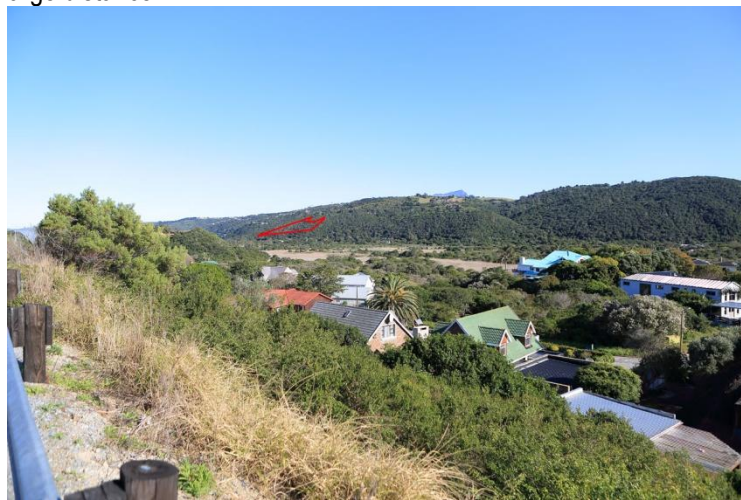
- The NID to Heritage Western Cape has already shown that there are no heritage resources evident in the area. The impact of the proposal on heritage resources is therefore not applicable.

#### 12.1.2 Areas with proclaimed scenic routes:

- The N2 that meanders through Wilderness with the settlement on either side is a renowned tourist route.
- Should the proposed development site become visible from any part of the N2 or surrounds, it will have an effect on the visual impact.
- This report will show that although the portion of the site identified for development is visible from part of the N2, the actual development site will hardly be visible due to the physical distance ranging between 4500m and 2,000m.
- The report will also show that the portion of the development sticking out above the average tree line is only 4m. The proposed development will therefore have an insignificant impact on the proclaimed scenic route.
- The service route forming a circular route (made up of Whites Road and Hoogte Street) may be regarded as a subsidiary scenic route, with significant views of the Outeniekwa Mountains on the North and the Ocean on the South. The report will show that the proposed development will not be visible from this road with the exception of a few small vistas between ERF 305 and 308 in Whites Road, as well as from the existing houses on ERF 303 & ERF 305. Please see Photos 20, 21 & 22 on Page 28 & 29.
- The last scenic route under consideration is Waterside Road, which will provide no views of the proposed development, according to the slope analysis.

#### 12.1.3 Viewpoints / Vantage Points

- Some vantage points have been identified in Constantia Drive, (which is elevated from the site) in a North-Westerly direction. Vistas may be possible from a few houses in Constantia Drive, namely ERF 2137, ERF 2039, ERF 2122, ERF 2121 & ERF 2148 (all fairly unlikely, according to the slope analysis done).
- View from (1) - Cedric Street, opposite ERF 1782:  
This viewpoint is 2400m away from the site, providing distant views of the site across the Touws River Estuary. The proposed development will not be visible from this area due to the large distance.



*Photo-01 - Cedric Street, close to the South-Western end of the Hoekwil Road – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (2) – Intersection of Dumbleton Street & the N2:  
This viewpoint is approximately 1200m from the site looking in a North-Westerly direction. It is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible from this intersection.



*Photo-02 - Intersection of Dumbleton Street & the N2 – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (3) on the Ebb-and-Flow Drive looking North-West towards the site, with Fairy Knowe Hotel in the foreground.  
This viewpoint is approximately 1200m from the site looking in a North-Westerly direction. It is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible from this area.



*Photo-03 - From Ebb-and-Flow Drive with the Fairy Knowe Hotel in the foreground – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*



- View from (4), Dumbleton Street, ERF 1253:  
This viewpoint is approximately 1200m from the site, looking in a North-Westerly direction. It is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible from this area.



*Photo-04 - From Dumbleton Street, ERF 1253 – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (5), Buxton Close, opposite ERF 1966, South of the N2:  
This view is approximately 1125m from the site, looking in a North-Westerly direction. It is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible from this area.



*Photo-05 - From Buxton Close, opposite ERF 1966, South of the N2 – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (6), ERF 2489 (Joplins and Pirates Creek)  
This view is approximately 450m from the site, looking in a Northerly direction across the Railway Line, Anchorage Lane and The Touws River. Only vistas of part of the site are possible. Due to the low angle of the viewpoints, only a small section of the main dwelling and a small section of the pods will be visible.



*Photo-06a - From ERF 2489, Joplins, next to the Railway Line – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*



*Photo-06b - From Pirates Creek, next to the Railway Line – please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*



*Photo-07 - From ERF 547 in Anchorage Lane - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (7) Erf 547 in Anchorage Lane.  
This view is approximately 450m from a site on the edge of the Touws River. Due to the low angle of the viewpoints, only a small section of the main dwelling and a small section of the Pods will be visible from this area.



*Photo-08 - from Opposite ERF 444 in Tenth Avenue - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (8) Erf 444 in Tenth Avenue.  
This view is from the edge of the tar road looking towards the site which is approximately 660m away from the site. Due to the low angle of the viewpoints, only a small section of the main dwelling and a small section of the Pods will be visible from this area.



*Photo-25 - From the Parking Lot on ERF 1096 next to the N2 and the bridge where the Touws River crosses the N2 - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.*

- View from (25) Erf 1096.  
This viewpoint is approximately 1300m from the site. The view will expose a slight profile of the top section of the proposed development's Pods and Main House.



Photo-26 - From the Intersection of the Hoekwil Road and the Touws River, looking West - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.

- View from (26)  
This Scenic Route, identified in the Desk Top Study is approximately 2400m from the site, looking West. It is clear that from this distance one would not be in a position to see the proposed development.



Photo-27 - from Roland Krynauw Street, at 'Die Duin', opposite ERF 562, looking North-West towards the site, across the N2 - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23.

- View from (27)  
This scenic viewpoint was identified through a field study and a desk top study, namely the service road to 'Die Duin' residential area. Only glimpses of the top portion of the Main Dwelling as well as the top portion of the Pods of the development proposal could be visible. These glimpses will hardly be visible with the naked eye, and will therefore have no impact on the Scenic Vantage Point.



Photo-28 - from the N2, opposite Erf 1761, looking North-North-West towards the site - please see Fig-17 The Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23

- View from (28) Erf 1761  
This viewpoint presents similar glimpses as those from 'Die Duin' (27), but even less, as the viewpoint is lower than that of 'Die Duin'.

- Views from SANParks Wilderness Ebb-and-flow Rest Camp – Wilderness National Park. The desk top study and the field study revealed that the site is not visible from the Ebb-and-flow Rest Camp – please see Fig-18a. However, as Fig-17 Key Map (Views from Vantage Points) on page 23 and Fig-19 Visual Influence Map on page 42 show, there are some areas within the Wilderness SANParks National Park, which do provide some partial views of the proposed development, namely parts of the Touws River, from viewpoints and vantage points identified from Photos 2, 3, 7, 8, 25, 26 & 28.

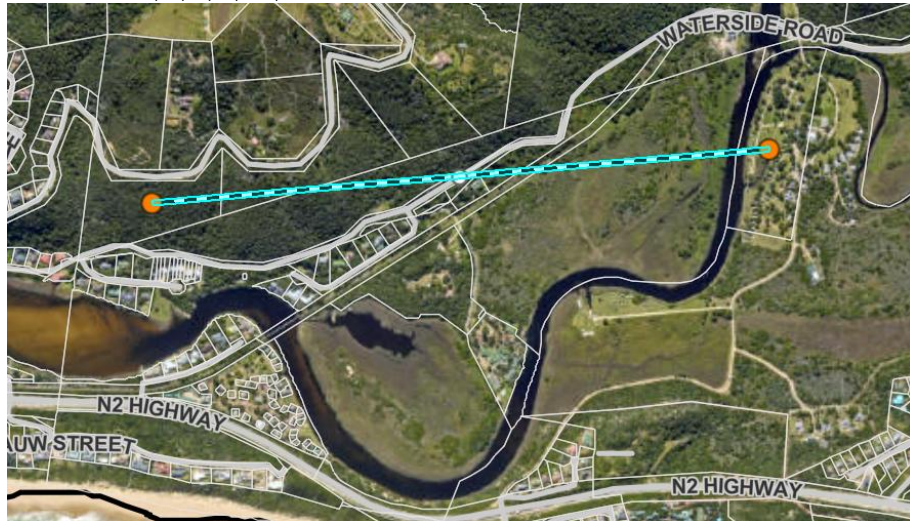


Fig-18a Section line between the SANParks Wilderness Ebb-and-Flow Rest Camp and ERF 301 Wilderness.

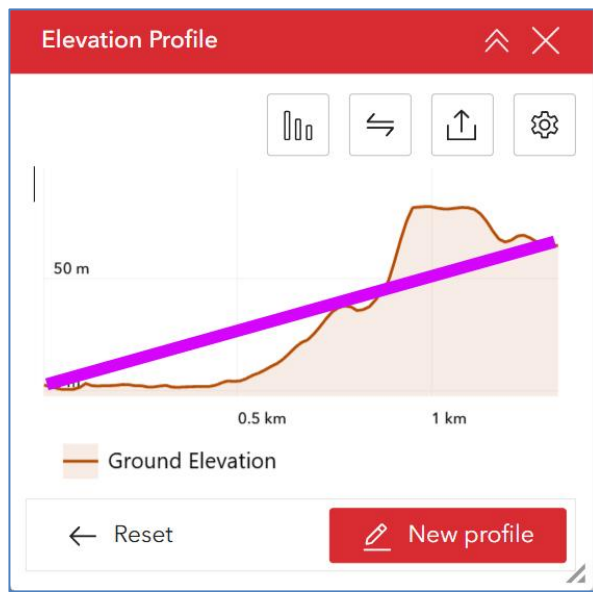


Fig-18b Section between the SANParks Wilderness Ebb-and-Flow Rest Camp

This figure shows that there is no direct line of sight between the Rest Camp and the site. Similarly views of the site are only possible from the actual Touws River between the Fairy Knowe Hotel and the outlet into the sea.

#### 12.1.4 Topography

- Although the development site is visible from some viewpoints and scenic routes, the actual development would hardly be visible. The development site is very low set in the tree canopy and the topography affording the trees and vegetation close to the site

to screen it from most of the distant views. Only the top quarter of the main dwelling and the Pods will be visible.

12.1.5 Areas with a recognized special character or sense of place:

- The whole of the coastal strip between Kaaimans River and Kleinkrantz can be regarded as part of special character area, which would be sensitive to any visual impact from developments. Fortunately the proposed development will have no impact on the special character or sense of place.

12.1.6 Scenic cultural significance:

- The current cultural significance has developed as a result of the scenic beauty of the area. This area is therefore vulnerable to visual scarring from development. The scenic beauty will not be scarred through the proposed development, as the footprint is so small in comparison to the existing landscape.

12.1.7 Areas of important tourism or recreational value.

- Tourism and recreation have gone hand in hand with the evolution of this scenic stretch of coastline, which is to be preserved for future generations. I do not believe that the proposed development will have any negative impact on tourism and recreation in the area.

12.1.8 Areas with important vistas or scenic corridors.

- In spite of the visual vistas identified, the proposed development will not have any negative impact on these vistas or scenic corridors, as only small portions of the proposed main dwelling and tourism pods will be visible, set within the landscape.

12.1.9 Visibility of the affected area.

- There are no areas of high visibility identified in this impact assessment report.
- The visibility is very low.

12.1.10 Visual exposure – The geographic area within which the development will be visible.

- The visual exposure would be defined as very low.

12.1.11 Visual sensitivity.

- The visual sensitivity would be very low.

12.1.12 Visual sensitivity of receptors influenced by topography and scenic features.

- The visual sensitivity of the receptors would be very low.

12.1.13 Visual absorption capacity - The ability of the landscape to screen the development.

- The visual absorption capacity would be fairly high as the development would not be blatantly visible from the surrounding areas, scenic routes or viewpoints.
- Sensitive architectural guidelines regarding small scale, low volume, a scattered footprint, height restrictions, shallow roof slopes, blending colours, low density of development, etc. will have a marked effect on the visual absorption capacity. These issues have been taken up in the development proposal with sensitive responses, low impact designs, low density and low ridge lines.
- Once the construction work has been concluded, the proposed development will be absorbed into the landscape.

12.1.14 Visual intrusion.

- The visual intrusion will be very low.
- The visual intrusion from Waterside Road is not applicable, as no views are possible from that road. Visual intrusion from Whites Road (Western side of the site) has been mitigated by architectural interventions as far as scale, volume, colours, height, materials, textures, finishes and density are concerned, while any other visual screening is not required.

12.1.15 Visual Character.

- The visual character of the site will not change.

## 12.2 The nature of the Heritage Resources.

There are no heritage resources to be taken into account in the study area.

## 12.3 The nature of the proposal.

- 12.3.1 High, medium or low intensity-type projects with large, medium or small-scale infrastructure.  
**The proposed development is small scale with a scattered footprint with negligible infrastructure.**
- 12.3.2 A change of land use from the prevailing land use.  
**The land use will be changed to "Open Space Zone III (nature conservation area) which aims 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. With the rezoning of the property, it is proposed to conserve the property as a nature area along a ridge. Only one of the 8 possible consent uses is included with this land use application, namely tourist accommodation (6 units)". (Extract from the Land Use Report by Marlize de Bruyn Planning) This change of land use is compatible with the area.**
- 12.3.3 A use that is in conflict with an approved SDP, SDF or vision for the area.  
**There is no conflict with the approved SDP, SDF or vision for the area.**
- 12.3.4 A significant change to the 'look and feel' of the area.  
**A very small change in the 'look and feel' of the area is envisaged from a small number of vantage points as a result of the proposed development.**
- 12.3.5 A visual intrusion in the landscape.  
**There will be a very low visual intrusion in the landscape from a few of the vantage points and scenic routes, as confirmed in this report.**
- 12.3.6 Visual exposure  
**The visual exposure has been identified and the exposure is very low.**
- 12.3.7 Obstruction of views of others in the area.  
**There will be no obstruction of views as a result of the proposed development.**
- 12.3.8 Vegetation  
**It is recommended that a landscape consultant be commissioned to prepare and manage the mitigation of trees, plants and shrubs on site to be removed and/or relocated within a landscaping management plan (to make way for the access road and the proposed development).**
- 12.3.9 View catchment  
**The view catchment has been identified and the impact of the proposed development on the view catchment will be very low.**
- 12.3.10 Zone of influence  
**The zone of influence will be limited to the view catchment and would be very low.**
- 12.3.11 Receptors (Those who will be visually influenced by the proposed development)  
**The receptors have been identified and the result is a very low influence.**
- 12.3.12 Visual absorption  
**The visual absorption of the proposed development is very high and all the mitigation proposals have been adopted as far as blending the proposed development into the landscape using appropriate colours, low density, height restrictions, etc.**

## 13 VISUAL INFLUENCE

13.1 Visual lines are influenced by topography, vegetation and other physical features. Visual sensitivity can be translated into:

- 13.1.1 High visual sensitivity - highly visible and potentially sensitive areas in the landscape.
- 13.1.2 Moderate visual sensitivity – moderately visible areas in the landscape.
- 13.1.3 Low visual sensitivity – minimally visible areas in the landscape.

**The visual sensitivity of this development is very low.**

13.2 The following aspects influence visual impact:

13.2.1 Topography – Lower lying areas or valleys may disappear in the view, while higher lying areas will be more visible. Elevated platforms, hills and mountains in the view may mask views completely. Views from higher lying areas may reveal more in the landscape.

**The topography of this proposed development is such that the scenic routes, vantage points and viewpoints will have a very low impact from the proposed development.**

13.2.2 Landforms – Mountains, hills, plateaus and plains are the four major land forms affecting visual impact.

**The site is situated between the Touws River Estuary and the crest of the hill towards the north. The proposed development on the site will not influence the skyline as viewed from the South and the N2. The top approximate 30% of the proposed development will be visible from the South, but against the already established vegetation along the hill.**

**The proposed development will not be visible from the Eastern side, due to the existing land form, valleys and hills.**

**The top approximate 30% of the proposed development would be visible from a select few sites on the Western side of the property.**

13.2.3 Slopes – Development on steep slopes are generally more visible, pending the direction of the view and the slope. Cut and fill (scarring) or terracing of properties will also have a marked effect on the visibility.

**The proposed development will take place on a mostly pre-determined terrace, so cut and fill will be limited to approximately 2m cut, with retaining walls, while the opposite side is to be supported on stilts.**

13.2.4 Surrounding Land Uses – Mountains, rivers and valleys in a wilderness area are visually very sensitive.

Rural development like farms, pastures, agriculture, vineyards, dams, farm houses and small settlements are moderately visually sensitive.

Village rural development is much less sensitive than urban development.

**The coastal residential development between Wilderness and Kleinkrantz has already set a trend. This trend also conforms to the vision of the Local Authority in their SDF and SDP. The proposed low-key rural residential development has a very low visual influence on the landscape.**

13.2.5 Special Features – Heritage resources add to the special scenic rural landscape character and a 'sense of place'

**There are no heritage resources on or around the site to be affected by the proposed development. A NID has already been submitted and responded to by Heritage Western Cape. The directive from HWC is:**

***"You are hereby notified that, since there is no reason to believe that the proposed development on Erf 301, Hoekwil, Wilderness has impacted on heritage resources, no further action under Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) is required. HWC chance finds to be implements."***



13.2.6 Scenic tourist routes and passes and scenic view sites are of importance.  
**The impact of the views towards the proposed development from scenic routes and viewpoints has been identified. The proposed development has a very low impact on those views.**

13.2.7 Lower lying valleys may be less visible from approaching roads, as landforms may visually block views.  
**Such will be the case with this proposed development next to Waterside Road, which is blocked by vegetation. Similarly, the view from the Hoekwil Road (26) will be too far away, with a hill in the way close to the site.**

13.2.8 Indigenous trees and vegetation are extremely important in providing screening and softening of development within the landscape.  
**The proposal outlines the importance of the retention of the indigenous vegetation and the restriction of the development within the defined footprint. Only a small portion of the proposed development would be visible above the tree canopy.**

13.3 The development site can be described as rural land within a nature area that has been identified in an approved Spatial Development Framework for residential purposes. The site has low visual exposure, as the topography limits the geographic area from which the project will be visible. The Southern side of the proposed development will be partially visible from the N2, which has a high scenic value. The development site will be partially visible from some identified other scenic routes, viewpoints and vantage points. The proposed development site has a very high visual absorption capacity and a very low visual impact.

13.4 Visual Influence Map – The areas from where the proposed development would be partially visible are indicated in colour purple:

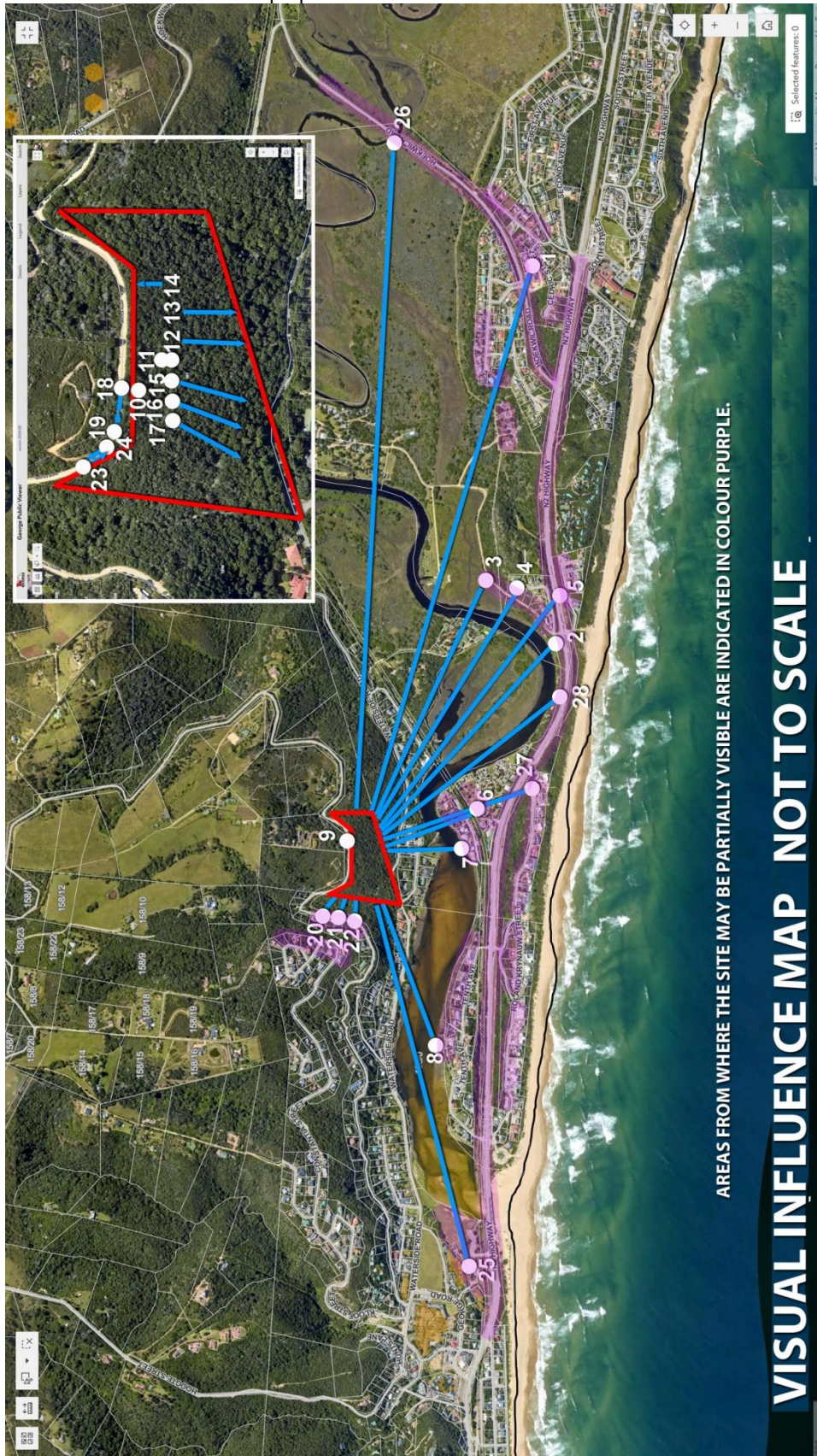


Fig-19 Visual Influence Map, George Public Viewer

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13.5 Management of Development on Mountains, Hills and Ridges of the Western Cape. Please see the EIA Guideline Series – Guideline for the management on mountains, hills and ridges of the Western Cape:

13.5.1 Preamble

- ❖ Mountains, Hills and ridges provide catchment areas for valuable surface water resources.
- ❖ They are often characterised by unique and sensitive ecosystems.
- ❖ They are of aesthetic and scenic value.
- ❖ They provide a wilderness experience which is important for the well being of people. They may also be of religious, spiritual or cultural value to people.
- ❖ Properties in these areas are generally of high value which makes them desirable for residential development.

13.5.2 Guideline / Approach / Control

- ❖ Determining in which areas development can be considered or avoided.
- ❖ What type and form of development can be considered
- ❖ The demarcation of the Urban Edge.
- ❖ The identification of development lines.
- ❖ Environmental sensitivity.

13.5.3 Existing Parameters

- ❖ There is no indication in any of the information assessed, that a small holding in this area cannot be considered for an appropriate development.
- ❖ The re-zoning Application to George Municipality for this property, is from Agriculture Zone II (Small Holding), to Open Space Zone III (Nature Conservation Area), with some consent use provisions (catered for in this zoning) to also allow tourism accommodation. This zoning is a compatible zoning for the area, considering its location, nature and the specific proposal. The proposal aims 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 to protect areas of undeveloped landscape, including woodlands, ridges, wetlands and the coastline. A range of consent uses are provided to supplement and support the main objective of this zone. With the rezoning of the property, it is proposed to conserve the property as a nature area along a ridge. Significantly ERF 1262 Wilderness, bordering on this property, has recently been rezoned to Open Space Zone III.
- ❖ The property borders on the Urban Edge for Wilderness.
- ❖ The Coastal Management Line (Please see Fig 06 on page 11) runs through this property, and the proposed development is located above this line.
- ❖ The environmental sensitivity of the site is captured in the Basic Environmental Assessment Report by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy. A public participation process is to follow, before a final opinion can be made if the proposed activity should be authorised, and what conditions would be applicable.

## 14 AESTHETIC ANALYSIS

### 14.1 Cultural significance

Cultural significance can be defined as an area with aesthetic, architectural, historic, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value. There is no clear prehistoric component to the cultural landscape of ERF 301 Hoekwil, Wilderness. Human occupation changes the cultural landscape, so the cultural significance of a particular landscape is to be determined from that point of view. As this cultural landscape is assessed from a scenic route (the N2 between George and Sedgfield), the cultural landscape is significant.

## 14.2 Cultural Landscape

Cultural Landscapes are protected under the definition of the National Estate – Section 3(2)(c), (d) and (e). As human settlement influences the visual aspect of the cultural landscape, the effect of the settlement is to be considered and mitigated to assure the least possible impact. These mitigating factors have been considered and listed for adoption to the conditions of approval.

An HIA conducted by Dr Peter Nilssen for Rem ERF 1262, Hoekwil, Wilderness, confirms that:

*“The cultural landscape of the wider Wilderness area and Garden Route is considered to be an important South African attraction for its aesthetic value, and is therefore considered to be of high significance at the local level (Grade IIIA). For reasons discussed above, the cultural landscape and scenic route value of Remainder Erf 1262, on the other hand, is considered to be of medium local significance (Grade IIIB).”*

(Please see Appendix ??)

The aesthetic value of the cultural landscape and scenic route should not be negatively impacted upon by the proposed development.

Despite the fact that the cultural landscape and scenic routes in the area have a high local significance, the proposed development site has a medium local significance. The intensity of the impact of the proposed development is regarded as local and low, provided that the proposed mitigation is adhered to.

Dr Nilssen also adds in item 6.3 on page 44:

*“The cultural landscape and scenic route of the area is under continual threat due to the popularity of coastlines and resulting coastal developments. Nevertheless, because of limited undeveloped space, the severe limitation of development on the steep slopes enveloping Wilderness, as well as the Wilderness National Park and proposed conservation of the bulk of Remainder Erf 1262, the immediate surroundings and local cultural landscape are not currently under threat from development.”*

## 15 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT INFORMANTS AND SITE VIEWS

- 15.1 The property is densely vegetated in indigenous species.
- 15.2 The property has a steep slope from the North to the South.
- 15.3 Only vistas towards the South, the N2, the primary De Duin area and the Ocean is possible from the site. Similarly only vistas of houses towards the Western side of the site are possible. The dense vegetation is responsible for the screening of the views. Due to the building platforms proposed for the main dwelling and the Pods, the Southern sides of these will provide views towards the South at a slightly elevated level, overlooking some of the vegetation above the tree canopy.
- 15.4 A temporary timber view platform has been built on site, to illustrate the level at which the high side of the main dwelling and the Tourism Pods will be developed. This platform is not visible from anywhere around the area.
- 15.5 As the existing tree canopy is approximately 6m high, the proposed main dwelling and tourism pods will stick out above this canopy in the areas shown on the plan by approximately 2,25m for the main dwelling, and approximately 1m for the tourism pods.

## 16 BUILT ENVIRONMENT INFORMANTS

There are no built informants on the site.











## 18 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 18.1 Some listed criteria are used to measure the value and sensitivity of the visual/scenic landscape as well as the associated potential impacts on those.
- 18.2 When the criteria are considered collectively, an indication of the visual sensitivity of the property and the potential visual aspects can be determined.
- 18.3 The outcome of this process will give an indication on the need for mitigation measures (if required).
- 18.4 As the category of the proposed development is low scale in its activities and infrastructure, it will be regarded as a Category 3 development within an area of high scenic, high cultural and low historic significance.
- 18.5 A very low visual impact is expected with a minimal change in the Visual Impact, comparing the 'before' to the 'after'.

## 19. VISUAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE & RATING

From the above it is clear that the visual impact that the proposed development would have on the cultural landscape, the visual receptors and the visual corridors is **very low**.

## 20 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- 20.1 That the Materials, finishes and colours are implemented according to the schedule in Item 3.10 above.
- 20.2 That the currently proposed heights, disturbance areas & scattered maximum footprint be maintained, as shown in the architectural drawings and specifications.
- 20.3 That should a security fence be required around the building footprint that this would be constructed in Clear View fencing in colour charcoal of not more than 1,8m high, following a random alignment to clear established trees and vegetation. The fence should also not be visible from Whites Road. The design is to assure a lesser visual impact on the cultural landscape as viewed from surrounding properties, scenic routes, vantage and viewpoints.
- 20.4 That the necessary measures be implemented during the construction phase to protect the natural vegetation, to control noise and dust pollution, as well as visual intrusion.
- 20.5 That a landscape consultant is appointed to prepare and implement an appropriate indigenous landscape plan and to introduce measures for the removal and/or re-location of trees and shrubs and to protect the existing indigenous vegetation during and after the construction phase.
- 20.6 That external lighting restrictions and guidelines (to conform to a dark sky policy) be implemented.
- 20.7 That a storm water management plan be implemented to mitigate the possibility of storm water erosion across the site during and after the construction phase.
- 20.8 That the project engineers design the entrance driveway with appropriate alignment cut& fill, as well as storm water management measures.
- 20.9 That the recommendations of Heritage Western Cape regarding the Notice of Intent to develop be complied with.

## 21 FINDINGS OF OTHER SPECIALIST REPORTS

- 21.1 The development proposal is compatible with the local Land Use Planning By-Laws and in accordance with the requirements of the George Municipal SDF, SPLUMA and LUPA.
- 21.2 The development proposal is prepared, submitted and considered in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Management Act and the related regulations.
- 21.4 The findings and the recommendations of Heritage Western Cape regarding the Notice of Intent to Develop confirms that there are no Heritage resources in the area that may be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 21.6 The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has been consulted and their requirements will be adopted in the Environmental Management Plan for the proposed development.
- 21.7 The VIA confirms that there will be very low visual impact as a result of this proposed development and that no heritage resources will be negatively affected by the proposed development.

- 21.8 The specialist reports available to us at this stage do not suggest any negative impact that the proposed development would have on the surrounding area.
- 21.9 It is recommended that the Architectural Design Guidelines captured in this report be inserted into the architectural drawings and specifications. These have been identified to assure a sensitive co-ordination of the proposed development into the urban landscape.
- 21.10 It is recommended that noise, storm water, erosion and dust is to be managed through the introduction of appropriate mitigation measures as spelt out in the specialist reports.

## 22 **FINDINGS OF THE VISIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

- 22.1 The proposal conforms to the George Municipal By-Laws, SDF, SPLUMA & LUPA
- 22.2 The proposal conforms to the requirements of all other legislation applicable to the environment.
- 22.3 The proposal meets the safety requirements for a safe access to the property.
- 22.4 There are no heritage resources on this portion of the site, nor in the immediate area of the site.
- 22.5 There are also therefore no heritage resources on this portion of the site that would be negatively impacted upon by this proposed development.
- 22.6 In considering the position of the primary dwelling and the tourism pods on this portion of the site, it will not cause visual intrusion from the scenic routes around the site, nor any viewpoints and vantage points around the area.
- 22.7 Mitigation measures have been prepared for implementation to soften the visual impact that the proposed development may have on the surrounding area. These measures have to be followed through to completion.
- 22.8 The report confirmed that the landscape in the area has cultural significance, and the landscape has been evaluated for possible negative impact as a result of the proposed development – no negative impact is envisaged.
- 22.9 In considering the surrounding landscape, topography, landforms, slopes, special features, scenic routes, viewpoints, visual corridors and vantage points, we have identified the scenic routes, vantage and viewpoints that may offer views of the proposed development, for further evaluating the visual influence that the proposed development may have on the landscape from those areas.  
The findings are:
  - a) The Hoekwil road bridge over the Touws River (Photo 26) is too far away to have an impact on the views.
  - b) The view from the development around Cedrick Street (Photo1) is also too far away to have an impact on the views.
  - c) Vantage points and views from Photo 2, 3, 4, & 5 are very similar, confirming that approximately a quarter of the height of the main dwelling and the tourism pods will be visible from above the tree canopy and that the visual impact would be very small.
  - d) The views from the scenic route along the N2 (Photo 2 & 28) illustrate that approximately the top quarter of the main dwelling and the tourism pods will be visible from above the tree canopy and that the associated visual impact would be very small.
  - e) The vantage point at the end of Roland Krynauw Street (Photo 27) illustrate that approximately the top quarter of the main dwelling and the tourism pods will be visible from above the tree canopy and that the associated visual impact would be very small.
  - f) The viewpoints at (Photo 06, 07 and 08) are quite low in elevation in relation to the site, resulting in diminished views of the proposed development with an even smaller visual impact.
  - g) The viewpoint from the green belt next to the N2 and the outlet of the Touws River into the sea (Photo 25) is also fairly far away and at a low elevation compared to the elevation of the site, offering a very low visual impact of the proposed development.
  - h) The Eastern side of Whites road would not provide any views of the proposed development.
  - i) The Western side of Whites road (Photos 20, 21& 22) may offer some vistas of the proposed development, but will be screened by vegetation on the Western side of the site.
  - j) The proposed development will not be visible from the scenic Waterside Road, due to the difference in elevation.

- 22.10 The photographic and desk top study revealed that the proposed development will mostly offer vistas of the top quarter of the main dwelling and the tourism pods, against the backdrop of the indigenous vegetation, which will have a very small impact on the visual character of the area.
- 22.11 This study confirms that the proposed development will have a very small impact on the cultural landscape.
- 22.12 This study also confirms that the proposed development will have a very small impact on the scenic routes viewpoints and vantage points identified in the study. This is also evident from the natural environmental informants and views from the site.

**Visual Impact**



The anticipated Visual Impact that the proposed development would have on the landscape is **Very Small/Low**.

23 **3D RENDERINGS**

*The below 3D images will attempt to illustrate the Visual Impact that the proposed development may have on the surrounding landscape from some of the scenic routes, vantage points and viewpoints. Although the 3D's are not intended to be a realistic portrayal of the proposed development, it does illustrate the principles captured in mitigating the visual impact that the proposed development would have on the surroundings.*

*The principles are:*

- a) *To blend the proposed buildings into the landscape, by the careful selection of building materials and colour schemes. The materials and colour schemes are deemed to be appropriate towards this end.*
- b) *To illustrate the development proposal against the existing dense vegetation.*
- c) *This report shows how the existing site is nestled within the existing vegetation and how the existing vegetation already screens the development proposal from distant views.*



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Fig-24 View from (2) - Please see Fig-17: Key Map from Scenic Routes, Vantage Points and Viewpoints. Please see Annexure A.



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Fig-25 View from (7) - Please see Fig-17: Key Map from Scenic Routes, Vantage Points and Viewpoints. Please see Annexure A.



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Fig-26 View from (8) - Please see Fig-17: Key Map from Scenic Routes, Vantage Points and Viewpoints. Please see Annexure A.

## 24 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In adopting the recommended mitigation measures as captured in this report, the proposed development would have a very small Visual Impact on the existing landscape.**

**I recommend that the findings of the Visual Impact Assessment Report (VIA) herewith, be endorsed by the interested and affected parties as well as the regulatory bodies considering the merits of this proposal.**

## 25 **ANNEXURES**

ANNEXURE A – Figures, Maps & Diagrams, where applicable.

ANNEXURE B – Photos.

ANNEXURE C – Architectural Plans.

**End**