THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPEMNT OF FARM 205/79, KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

Visual Impact Assessment: Site Sensitivity Report

Draft V1

DATE: 24 Oct 2024

Document prepared for Eco-Route (Pty) Ltd
On behalf of Daniel Sevenster (Owner)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APHP	Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners
BLM	Bureau of Land Management (United States)
BPEO	Best Practicable Environmental Option
CALP	Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
DoC	Degree of Contrast
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMPr	Environmental Management Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (United Kingdom)
KOP	Key Observation Point
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MAMSL	Metres above mean sea level
NELPAG	New England Light Pollution Advisory Group
PNR	Private Nature Reserve
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

VAC	Visual Absorption Capacity
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
VRM	Visual Resource Management
VRMA	Visual Resource Management Africa
ZVI	Zone of Visual Influence

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Technical Terms	**Definition** (Oberholzer, 2005)
Degree of Contrast	The measure in terms of the form, line, colour and texture of the existing landscape in relation to the proposed landscape modification in relation to the defined visual resource management objectives.
Visual intrusion	Issues are concerns related to the proposed development, generally phrased as questions, taking the form of "what will the impact of some activity be on some element of the visual, aesthetic or scenic environment".
Receptors	Individuals, groups or communities who would be subject to the visual influence of a particular project.
Sense of place	The unique quality or character of a place, whether natural, rural or urban.
Scenic corridor	A linear geographic area that contains scenic resources, usually, but not necessarily, defined by a route.
Viewshed	The outer boundary defining a view catchment area, usually along crests and ridgelines. Similar to a watershed. This reflects the area, or the extent thereof, where the landscape modification would probably be seen.
Visual Absorption Capacity	The potential of the landscape to conceal the proposed project.

Technical Term	**Definition** (USDI., 2004)
Key Observation Point	Receptors refer to the people located in the most critical locations, or key observation points, surrounding the landscape modification, who make consistent use of the views associated with the site where the landscape modifications are proposed. KOPs can either be a single point of view that an observer/evaluator uses to rate an area or panorama, or a linear view along a roadway, trail, or river corridor.
Visual Resource Management	A map-based landscape and visual impact assessment method development by the Bureau of Land Management (USA).
Zone of Visual Influence	The ZVI is defined as 'the area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity.'

1 DFFE SPECIALIST REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Specialist declaration of independence

Table 1. Specialist declaration of independence

All intellectual property rights and copyright associated with VRM Africa's services are reserved, and project deliverables, including electronic copies of reports, maps, data, shape files and photographs, may not be modified or incorporated into subsequent reports in any form, or by any means, without the written consent of the author. Reference must be made to this report, should the results, recommendations or conclusions in this report be used in subsequent documentation. Any comments on the draft copy of the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) must be put in writing. Any recommendations, statements or conclusions drawn from, or based upon, this report, must refer to it.

This document was completed by Silver Solutions 887 cc trading as VRM Africa, a Visual Impact Study and Mapping organisation located in George, South Africa. VRM Africa cc was appointed as an independent professional visual impact practitioner to facilitate this VIA. I, Stephen Stead, hereby declare that VRM Africa, an independent consulting firm, has no interest or personal gains in this project whatsoever, except receiving fair payment for rendering an independent professional service.

Stephen Stead
APHP accredited VIA Specialist

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Visual Resource Management Africa CC (VRMA) was appointed to conduct a Visual Impact Assessment for the proposed development residential development and three cottages on Farm 205/79 in the Knysna Municipality.

The preliminary findings of this site sensitivity report is that the proposed development in its current layout would be a Fatal Flaw as mitigation would not be able to significantly reduce the very high levels of visual intrusion. Twelve High Risk issues were identified during the site visit as tabled in Table 10. The following reasons are provided as motivation and mapped in Figure 1:

- The proposed structures are situated in a highly prominent location on the edge of sea cliffs, an area currently devoid of man-made visual disturbances, and characterized by exceptional scenic quality. The sensitivity of receptors to man-made changes in this coastal region is likely to be very high.
- The proposed dwellings would be clearly visible from the beach, establishing a negative precedent for future structural developments along the sea cliffs. Additionally, these structures would disrupt the skyline as viewed from the beach below.
- The sites are located on steep slopes with gradients exceeding 1 in 4, necessitating significant cut and fill operations and pole foundations that would require the development platform to be raised off the ground.
- There is clear evidence of erosion affecting the sandstone cliffs, with the erosional cut-back exceeding 60 meters above ground level, coinciding with the elevation of the proposed main residential building's base. With anticipated sea level rise, this erosion is expected to worsen (subject to geotechnical specialist findings). This concern is explicitly addressed in the DEA&DP Western Cape Climate Change Response Strategy and the Garden Route District Climate Change Adaptation Response Implementation Plan. While the proposed dwellings are positioned 100 meters above the high water level (HWL), the DEA&DP is currently reviewing the HWL based on climate change risks.

  > "For instance, an erosion setback line established as safe under current coastal conditions (i.e., present seawater levels and storm intensities) cannot be assumed to remain safe under more extreme climate change scenarios (i.e., elevated seawater levels and increased storm severity). The identification of long-term safe coastal management lines requires a thorough understanding and quantification of risks, resource mobilization, solid policy guidelines, planning, and appropriate legislation (Department of Science and Technology, 2010)" (p. 67).
- The potential destabilization of the sea cliffs due to structural development could lead to slippage, resulting in visual scarring and property loss.

In conclusion, while the proposed sites present significant landscape and visual impact concerns, there exists a local precedent for residential development on the adjacent property. Utilizing a similar topographic positioning, there is potential for development with sea views; however, this opportunity is primarily restricted to the southeastern section of the property near the proposed vehicle parking area. Depending on the size of the main

residence in this area, there may also be sufficient space for two cottages to the west of the site. It is recommended that parking and garage facilities be located behind the dune.

Additionally, the straight design of the road represents a critical flaw, as a strong linear clear-cut through the Goukamma Dune Thicket (CBA rating) would set a negative precedent for development in this ecologically significant area. The final recommendation is to relocate the garage and workshop closer to the main development area, and ensuring they are situated behind the dune near the garage and parking areas to minimize landscape fragmentation.

Further requirements for the completion of the VIA are:

1. Botanical sensitivity mapping.
2. Concept architectural design and 3D block model for the main residence and the cottages.

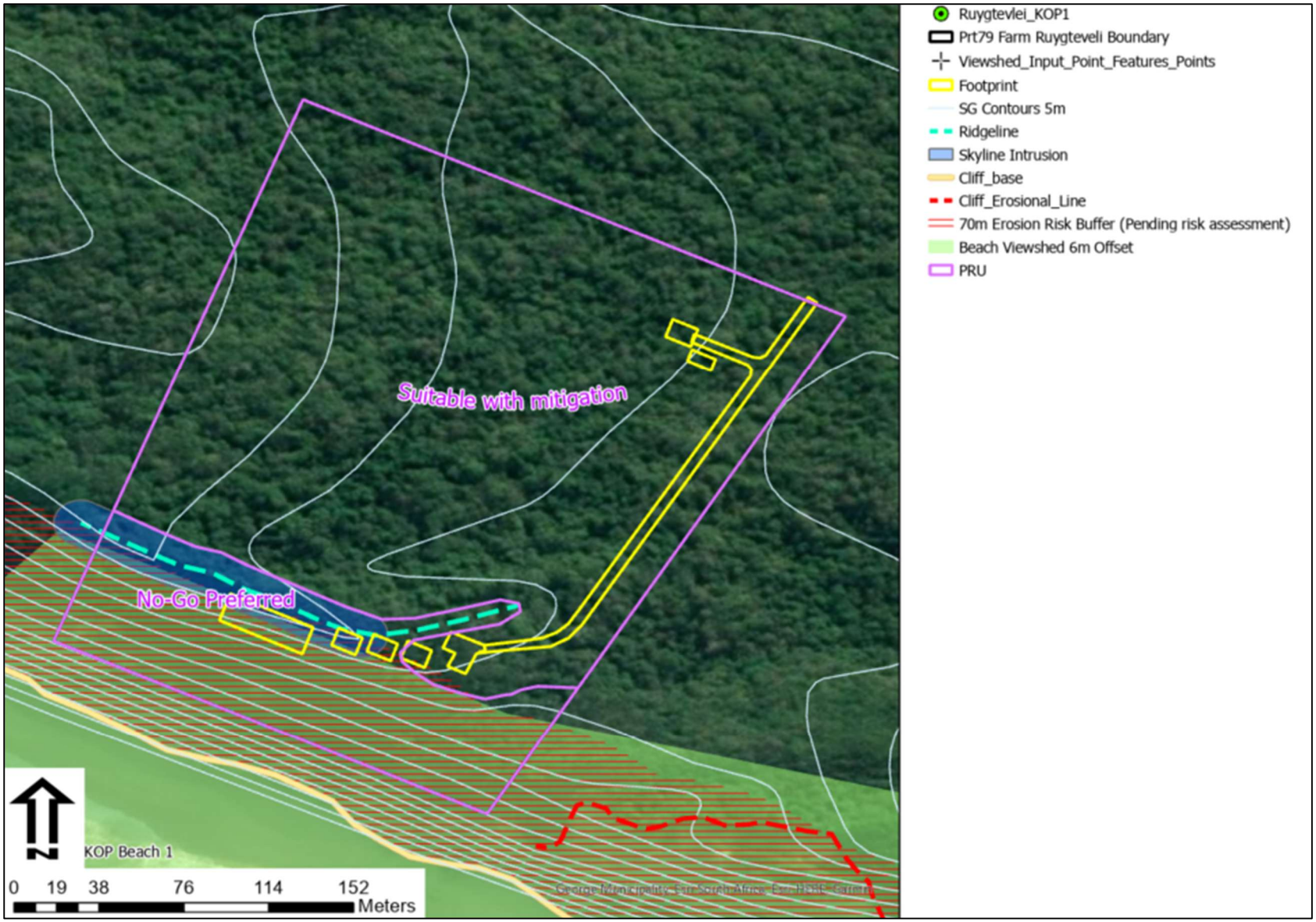

Figure 1: Landscape and visual constraints map (PRELIMINARY and excluding 30m rural boundary buffer).

Figure 2: Sea-cliff erosional locality Map 1.

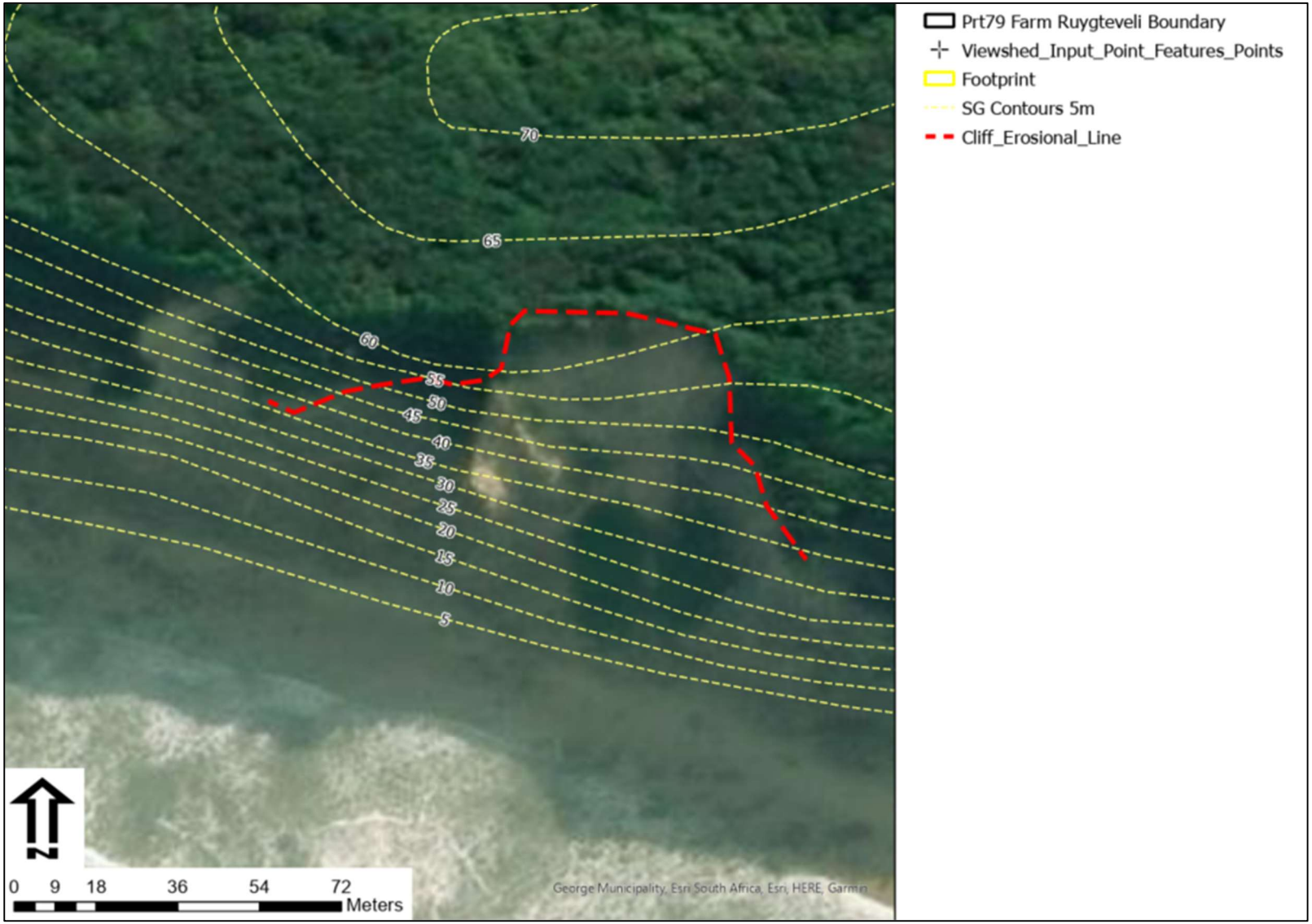

Figure 3: Sea-cliff erosional locality Map 2.

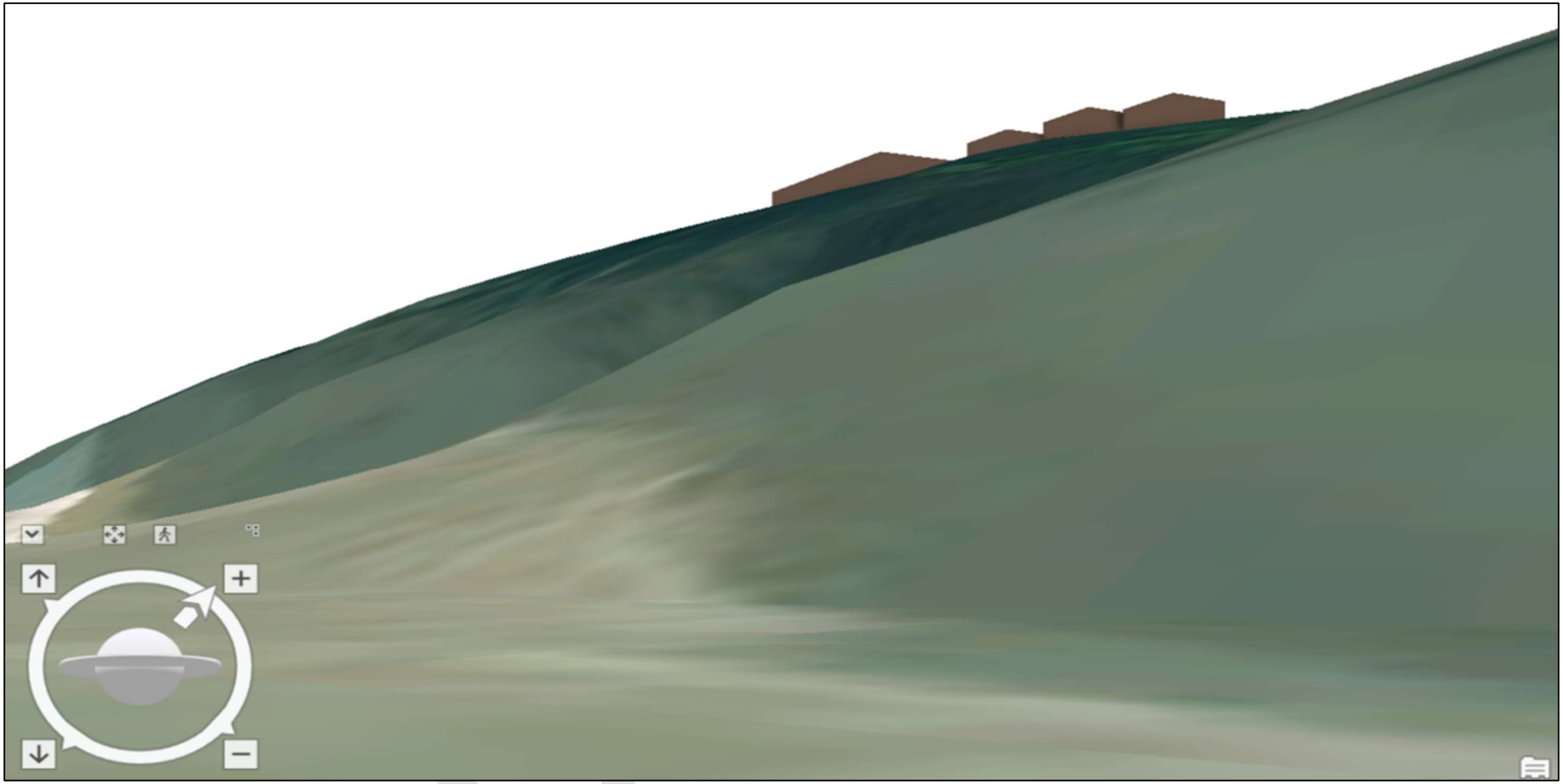

Figure 4: 3D GIS extrude model with 6m offset using minimum height (full cut).

3 INTRODUCTION

Visual Resource Management Africa CC (VRMA) was appointed by Mr Sevenster to conduct a Level 4 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the proposed development on Farm 205/79, located within the Knysna Municipality, Western Cape Province.

The Proponent intends to construct a main residence, three cottages, a vehicle parking area and a garage/ storeroom. An access road would also need to be cut through the thicket vegetation. The property is situated in Knysna Municipality Ward 1, to the east of the town of Sedgefield and is zoned as Agriculture 1.

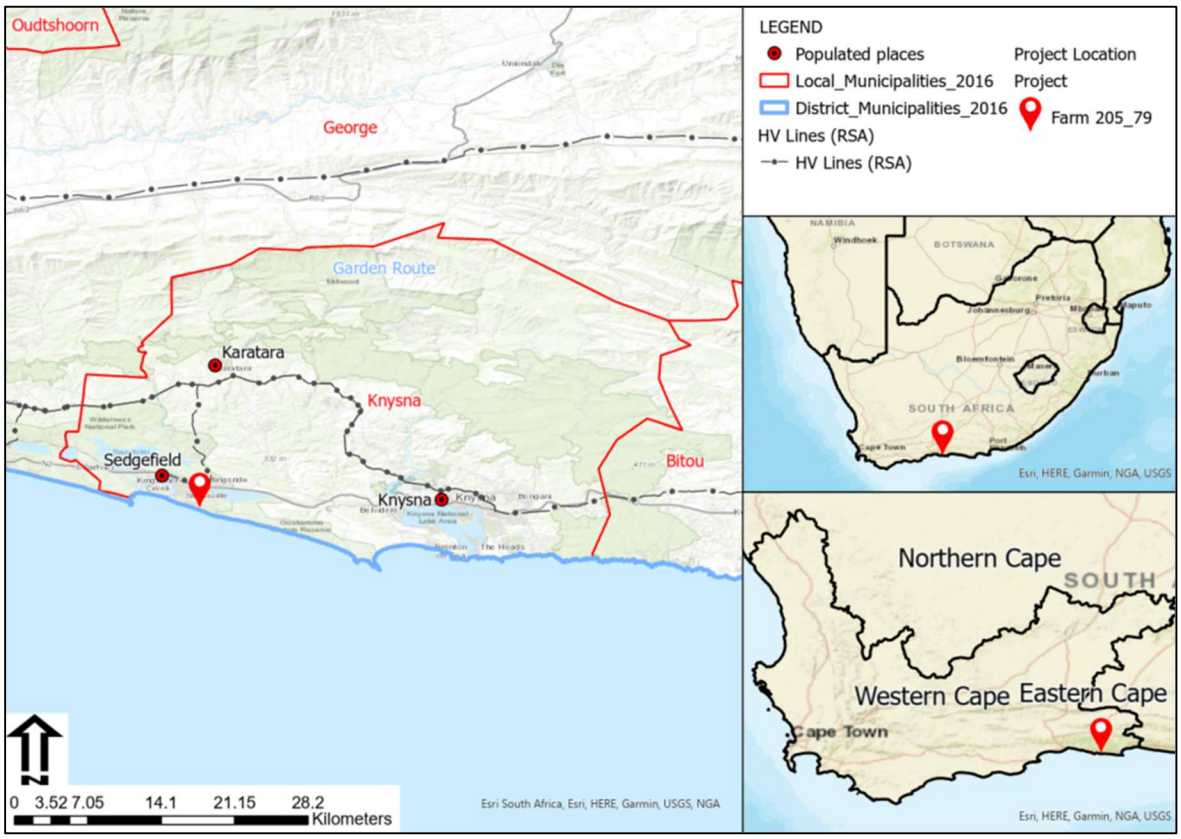

Figure 5: National and regional locality map.

3.1 Terms of Reference

The following actions informed the visual statement scope of work:

- Planning literature review to assess if any amendments to landscape based planning for the area have taken place subsequent to the previous EIAs.
- Site visit to confirm site sensitivity to landscape change.
- Generate a slopes analysis to determine slope sensitivity.
- Make preliminary recommendations as to the suitability of the proposed landscape and possible mitigation measures that could be introduced to reduce the visual intrusion if necessary.

3.2 Study Team

Contributors to this study are summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Authors and contributors to this report.

Aspect	Person	Organisation / Company	Qualifications
Landscape and Visual Assessment (author of this report)	Stephen Stead MSc Geography, 2023 (UKZN, Pietermaritzburg)	VRMA	• 20 years of experience in visual assessments including 230 large scale landscape changes in five sub-Saharan African countries. • Registered with the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners since 2014.

3.3 Visual Assessment Approach

The full methodology used in the assessment can be found in Annexure B, with this section outlining the key elements of the assessment process. The process that VRM Africa follows when undertaking a VIA is based on the United States Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Visual Resource Management method (USDI., 2004). This mapping and GIS-based method of assessing landscape modifications allows for increased objectivity and consistency by using standard assessment criteria.

- *"Different levels of scenic values require different levels of management. For example, management of an area with high scenic value might be focused on preserving the existing character of the landscape, and management of an area with little scenic value might allow for major modifications to the landscape. Determining how an area should be managed first requires an assessment of the area's scenic values".*
- *"Assessing scenic values and determining visual impacts can be a subjective process. Objectivity and consistency can be greatly increased by using the basic design elements of form, line, colour, and texture, which have often been used to describe and evaluate landscapes, to also describe proposed projects. Projects that repeat these design elements are usually in harmony with their surroundings; those that don't create contrast. By adjusting project designs so the elements are repeated, visual impacts can be minimized"* (USDI., 2004).

Baseline Phase Summary

The VRM process involves the systematic classification of the broad-brush landscape types within the receiving environment into one of four VRM Classes. Each VRM Class is associated with management objectives that serve to guide the degree of modification of the proposed site. The Classes are derived by means of a simple matrix with the three variables being the scenic quality, the expected receptor sensitivity to landscape change, and the distance of the proposed landscape modification from key receptor points. The Classes are not prescriptive and are utilised as a guideline to determine visual carrying capacity, where they represent the relative value of the visual resources of an area. Classes I and II are the most valued, Class III represents a moderate value; and Class IV is of least value. The VRM Classes are not prescriptive and are used as a guideline to determine the carrying capacity of a visually preferred landscape as a basis for assessing the suitability of the landscape change associated with the proposed project.

Table 3: VRM Class Matrix table

		VISUAL SENSITIVITY LEVELS								
		High			Medium			Low		
SCENIC QUALITY	A (High)	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	II
	B (Medium)	II	III	III/ IV *	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
	C (Low)	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
DISTANCE ZONES		Fore/middle ground	Background	Seldom seen	Fore/middle ground	Background	Seldom seen	Fore/middle ground	Background	Seldom seen

* If adjacent areas are **Class III** or lower, assign **Class III**, if higher, assign **Class IV**

The visual objectives of each of the classes are listed below:

- The Class I objective is to preserve the existing character of the landscape and the level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention. Class I is assigned when a decision is made to maintain a natural landscape.
- The Class II objective is to retain the existing character of the landscape and the level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. The proposed development may be seen but should not attract the attention of the casual observer, and should repeat the basic elements of form, line, colour and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- The Class III objective is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape, where the level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. The proposed development may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer, and changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape; and
- The Class IV objective is to provide for management activities that require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the landscape can be high, and the proposed development may dominate the view and be the major focus of the viewer's (s') attention without significantly degrading the local landscape character.

Impact Phase Summary

To determine impacts, a degree of contrast exercise is undertaken. This is an assessment of the expected change to the receiving environment in terms of the form, line, colour and texture, as seen from the surrounding Key Observation Points. This determines if the proposed project meets the visual objectives defined for each of the Classes. If the expected visual contrast is strong, mitigation recommendations are to be made to assist in meeting the visual objectives. To assist in the understanding of the proposed landscape modifications, visual representation, such as photomontages or photos depicting the impacted areas, can be generated. There is an ethical obligation in the visualisation process, as visualisation can be misleading if not undertaken ethically.

3.4 VIA Process Outline

The following approach was used in understanding the landscape processes and informing the magnitude of the impacts of the proposed landscape modification. The table below lists a number of standardised procedures recommended as a component of best international practice. The work undertaken is highlighted in red in the table below.

Table 4: Methodology Summary table

Action	***Description***
Site Survey & Site Sensitivity Verification.	The identification of existing scenic resources and sensitive receptors in and around the study area to understand the context of the proposed development within its surroundings to ensure that the intactness of the landscape and the prevailing sense of place are taken into consideration.
Project Description	Provide a description of the expected project, and the components that will make up the landscape modification.
Reviewing the Legal Framework	The legal, policy and planning framework may have implications for visual aspects of the proposed development. The heritage legislation tends to be pertinent in relation to natural and cultural landscapes, while Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) for renewable energy provide a guideline at the regional scale.
Identifying Visual Issues and Visual Resources	Visual issues are identified during the public participation process, which is being carried out by others. The visual, social or heritage specialists may also identify visual issues. The significance and proposed mitigation of the visual issues are addressed as part of the visual assessment.
Determining the Zone of Visual Influence	This includes mapping of viewsheds and view corridors in relation to the proposed project elements, in order to assess the zone of visual influence of the proposed project. Based on the topography of the landscape as represented by a Digital Elevation Model, an approximate area is defined which provides an expected area where the landscape modification has the potential to influence landscapes (or landscape processes) or receptor viewpoints.
Assessing Potential Visual Impacts	An assessment is made of the significance of potential visual impacts resulting from the proposed project for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project. The rating of visual significance is based on the methodology provided by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP).
Formulating Mitigation Measures	Possible mitigation measures are identified to avoid or minimise negative visual impacts of the proposed project. The intention is that these would be included in the project design, the Environmental Management Programme report (EMPr) and the authorisation conditions.

3.5 Impact Assessment Methodology

The following impact criteria were used to assess visual impacts. The criteria were defined by the Western Cape *DEA&DP Guideline for involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in EIA Processes* (Oberholzer, 2005).

Table 5. DEA&DP Visual and Aesthetic Guideline Impact Assessment Criteria table

Criteria	Definition
Extent	The spatial or geographic area of influence of the visual impact, i.e.: • *site-related:* extending only as far as the activity. • *local:* limited to the immediate surroundings. • *regional:* affecting a larger metropolitan or regional area. • *national:* affecting large parts of the country. • *international:* affecting areas across international boundaries.
Duration	The predicted life-span of the visual impact: • *short term,* (e.g., duration of the construction phase). • *medium term,* (e.g., duration for screening vegetation to mature). • *long term,* (e.g., lifespan of the project). • *permanent,* where time will not mitigate the visual impact.
Intensity	The magnitude of the impact on views, scenic or cultural resources. • *low,* where visual and scenic resources are not affected. • *medium,* where visual and scenic resources are affected to a limited extent. • *high,* where scenic and cultural resources are significantly affected.
Probability	The degree of possibility of the visual impact occurring: • *improbable,* where the possibility of the impact occurring is very low. • *probable,* where there is a distinct possibility that the impact will occur. • *highly probable,* where it is most likely that the impact will occur. • *definite,* where the impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures.
Significance	The significance of impacts can be determined through a synthesis of the aspects produced in terms of their nature, duration, intensity, extent and probability, and be described as: • *low,* where it will not have an influence on the decision. • *medium,* where it should have an influence on the decision unless it is mitigated. • *high,* where it would influence the decision regardless of any possible mitigation.

3.6 Assumptions and Uncertainties

- Digital Elevation Models (DEM) and viewsheds were generated using ASTER elevation data (NASA, 2009). Although every effort to maintain accuracy was undertaken, as a result of the DEM being generated from satellite imagery and not being a true representation of the earth's surface, the viewshed mapping is approximate and may not represent an exact visibility incidence. Thus, specific features identified from the DEM and derive contours (such as peaks and conical hills) would need to be verified once a detailed survey of the project area has taken place.
- The use of open-source satellite imagery was utilised for base maps in the report.
- Some of the mapping in this document was created using Bing Maps, Open-Source Map, ArcGIS Online and Google Earth Satellite imagery.
- The project deliverables, including electronic copies of reports, maps, data, shape files and photographs are based on the author's professional knowledge, as well as available information.
- VRM Africa reserves the right to modify aspects of the project deliverables if and when new/additional information may become available from research or further work in the applicable field of practice or pertaining to this study.
- As access to farms and private property is often limited due to security reasons, limiting access to private property in order that photographs from specific locations are taken. 3D modelling is used to reflect the expected landscape change area where applicable.
- Mapping makes use of the SANBI BGIS webmap (SANBI, 2018)
- As the proposed development would be constructed on an existing development footprint without requiring further cut and fills, a slopes analysis was not undertaken.

4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following project information of the proposed infrastructure relating to the project was provided by the client that will be incorporated into the assessment and. The following table outlines the scope of the project, with reference to the extent, heights, and expects landscape change depiction as provide by the proponent/ architects involved in the project design and development.

Table 6: Project Information table

PROPONENT SPECIFICATIONS	
Applicant Details	**Description**
Applicant Name:	Mr Sevenster
Property Details:	Farm 205/79

The following plans reflect the nature of the landscape change, with the architect's concept drawing on the flowing pages:

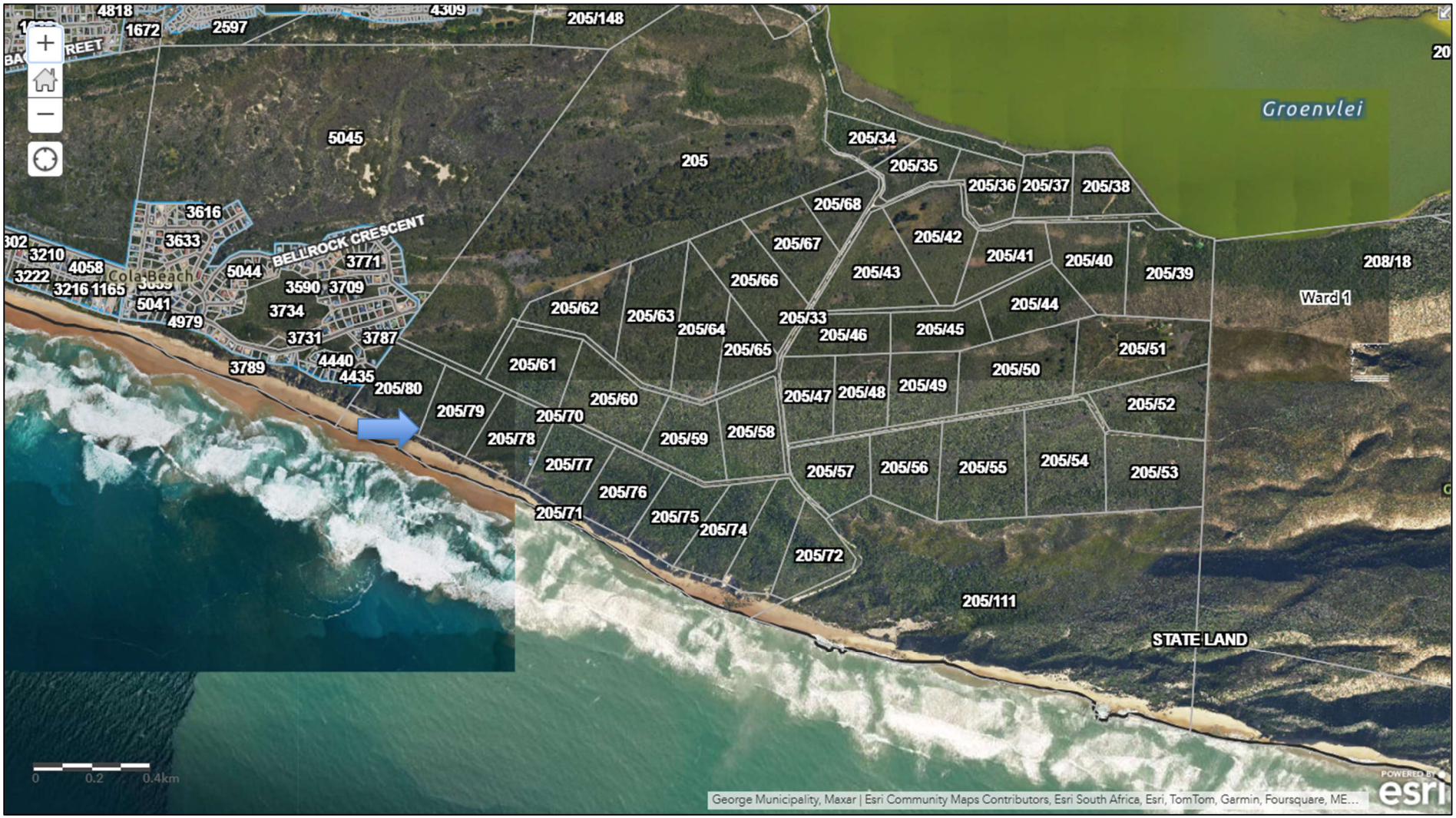

Figure 6: Property cadastral as reflected in the Knysna Municipality public viewer with the structure depicted by the arrow.

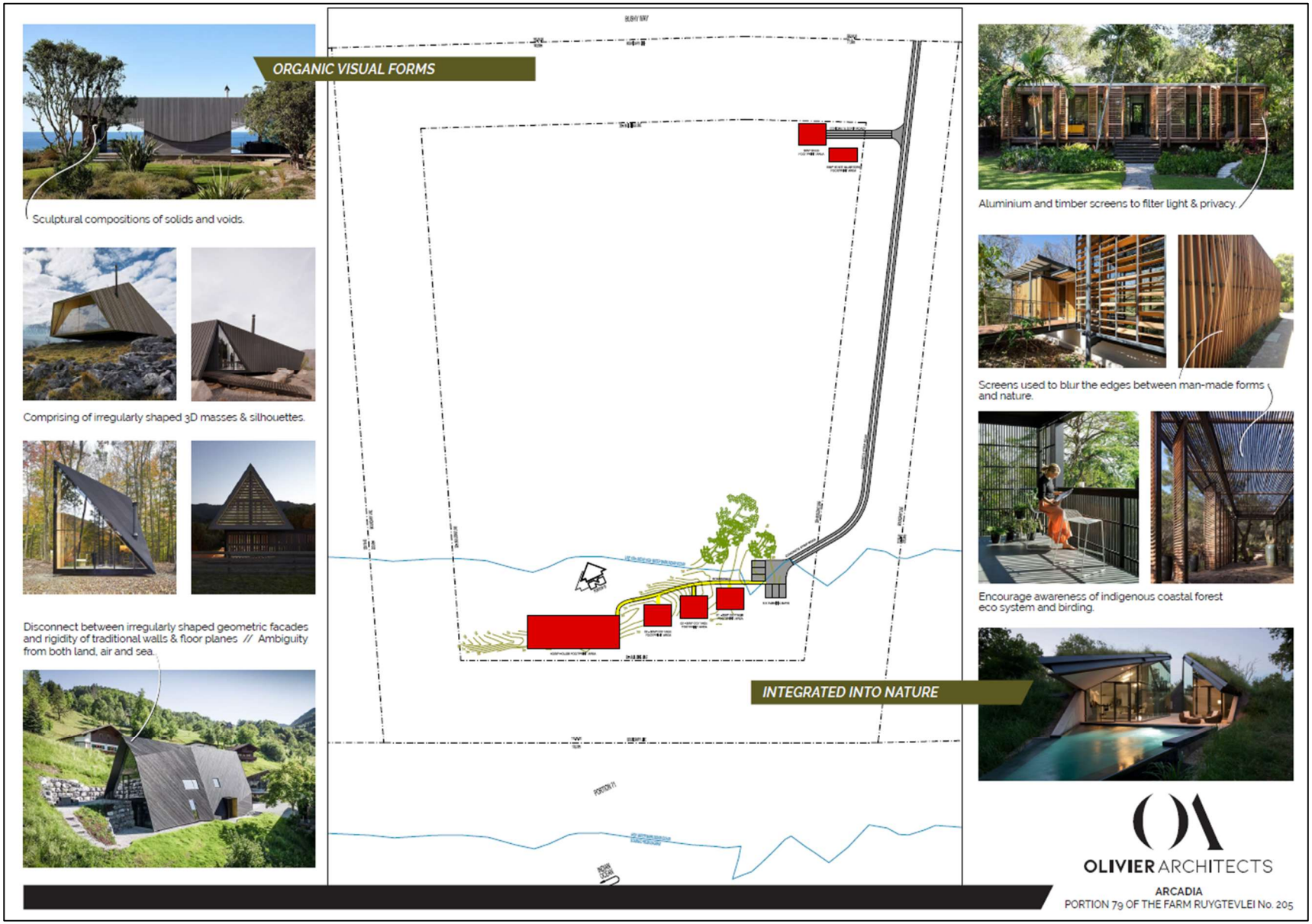

Figure 7: Site Plan and concept design provided by Olivier Architects.

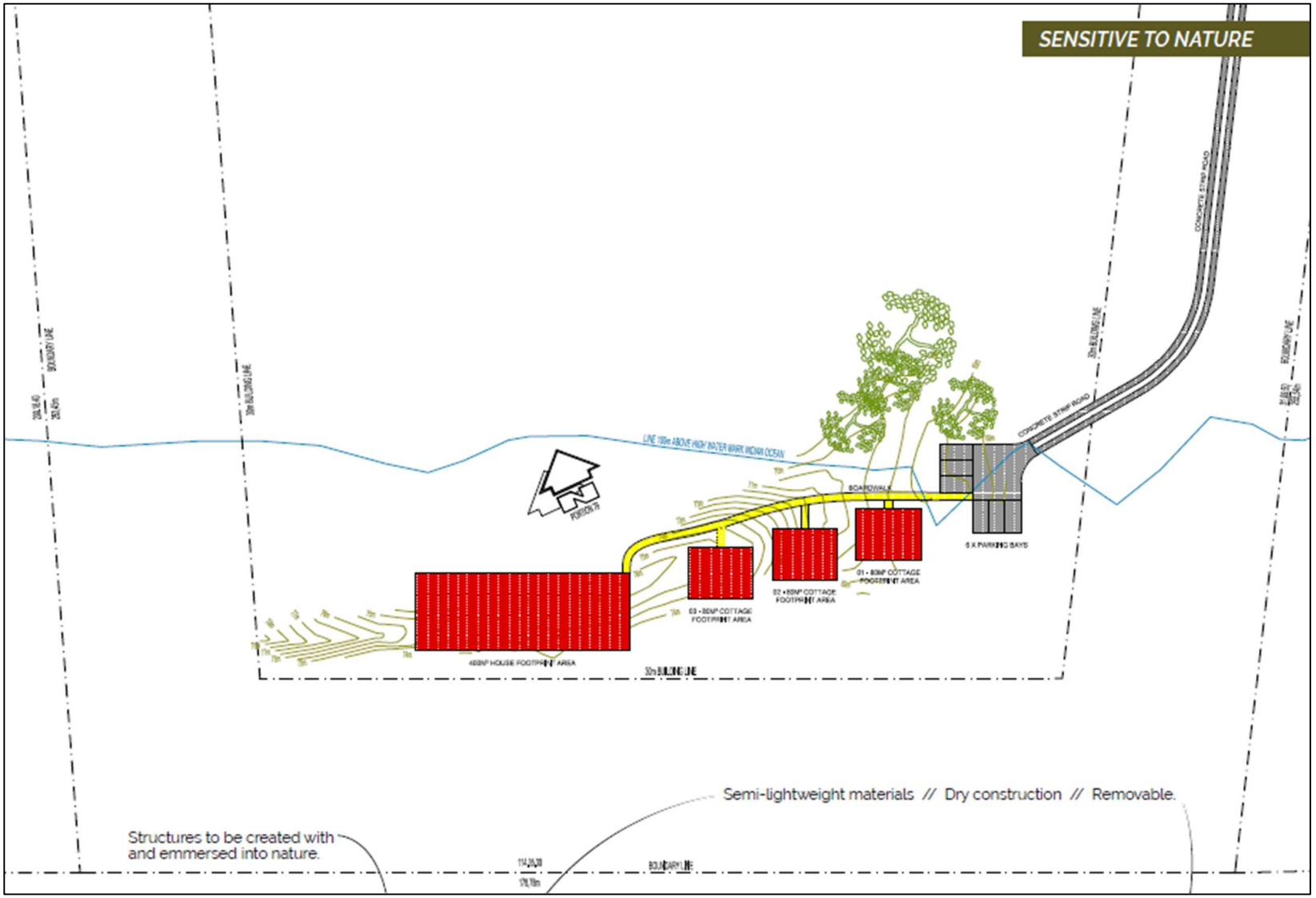

Figure 8: Zoomed view of Site Plan and concept design provided by Olivier Architects.

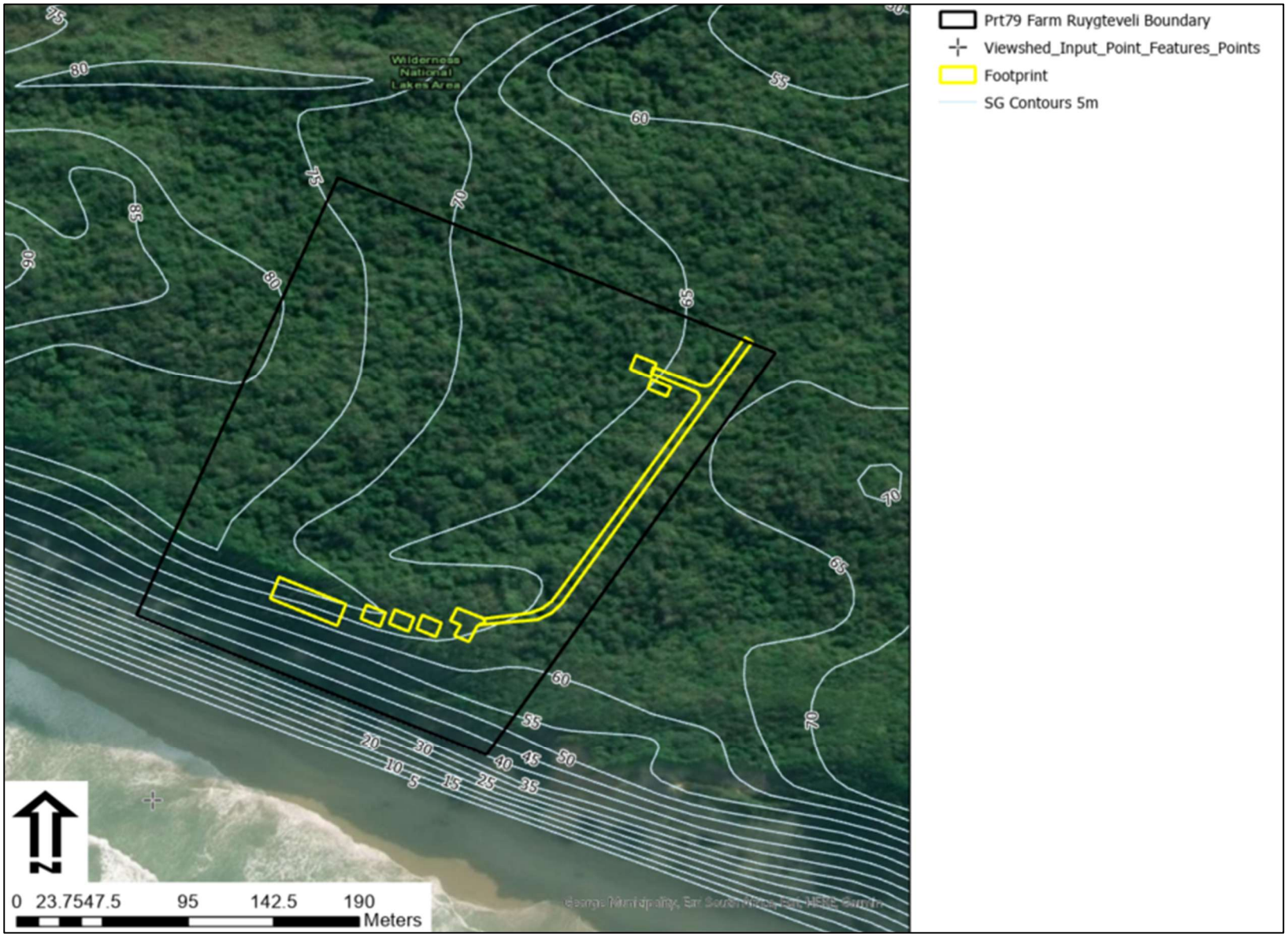

Figure 9: Overlay of proposed Site Plan on to ESRI Opensource satellite imagery.

5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In order to comply with the Visual Resource Management requirements, it is necessary to relate the proposed landscape modification in terms of international best practice in understanding landscapes and landscape processes. The proposed project also needs to be evaluated in terms of 'policy fit'. This requires a review of International, National and Regional best practice, policy and planning for the area to ensure that the scale, density and nature of activities or developments are harmonious and in keeping with the planned sense of place and character of the area.

5.1 International Good Practice

For international good practice in assessment of landscapes, the following documentation is relevant, specifically:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Second Edition.

5.1.1 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Second Edition

The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (United Kingdom) have compiled a book outlining best practice in landscape and visual impact assessment. This has become a key guideline for LVIA in the United Kingdom. "The principal aim of the guideline is to encourage high standards for the scope and context of landscape and visual impact assessments, based on the collegiate opinion and practice of the members of the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. The guidelines also seek to establish certain principles and will help to achieve consistency, credibility and effectiveness in landscape and visual impact assessment, when carried out as part of an EIA" (The Landscape Institute, 2003);

In the introduction, the guideline states that 'Landscape encompasses the whole of our external environment, whether within village, towns, cities or in the countryside. The nature and pattern of buildings, streets, open spaces and trees – and their interrelationships within the built environment – are an equally important part of our landscape heritage" (The Landscape Institute, 2003: Pg. 9). The guideline identifies the following reasons why landscape is important in both urban and rural contexts, in that it is:

- An essential part of our natural resource base.
- A reservoir of archaeological and historical evidence.
- An environment for plants and animals (including humans).
- A resource that evokes sensual, cultural and spiritual responses and contributes to our urban and rural quality of life; and
- Valuable recreation resources. (The Landscape Institute, 2003).

In terms of international best practice for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the Garden Route regional landscape should be considered an essential component of the cultural landscape that does create valuable landscape resources.

5.2 National and Regional Legislation and Policies

In order to comply with the Visual Resource Management requirements, it is necessary to clarify which National and Regional planning policies govern the proposed development area to ensure that the scale, density and nature of activities or developments are harmonious and in keeping with the sense of place and character of the area as mapped in Figure 10 below.

- DEA&DP Visual and Aesthetic Guidelines.
- Regional and Local Municipality Planning and Guidelines.

Table 7: List of key planning informants to the project

Theme	Requirements
Province	Western Cape
District Municipality	Garden Route
Local Municipality	Knysna

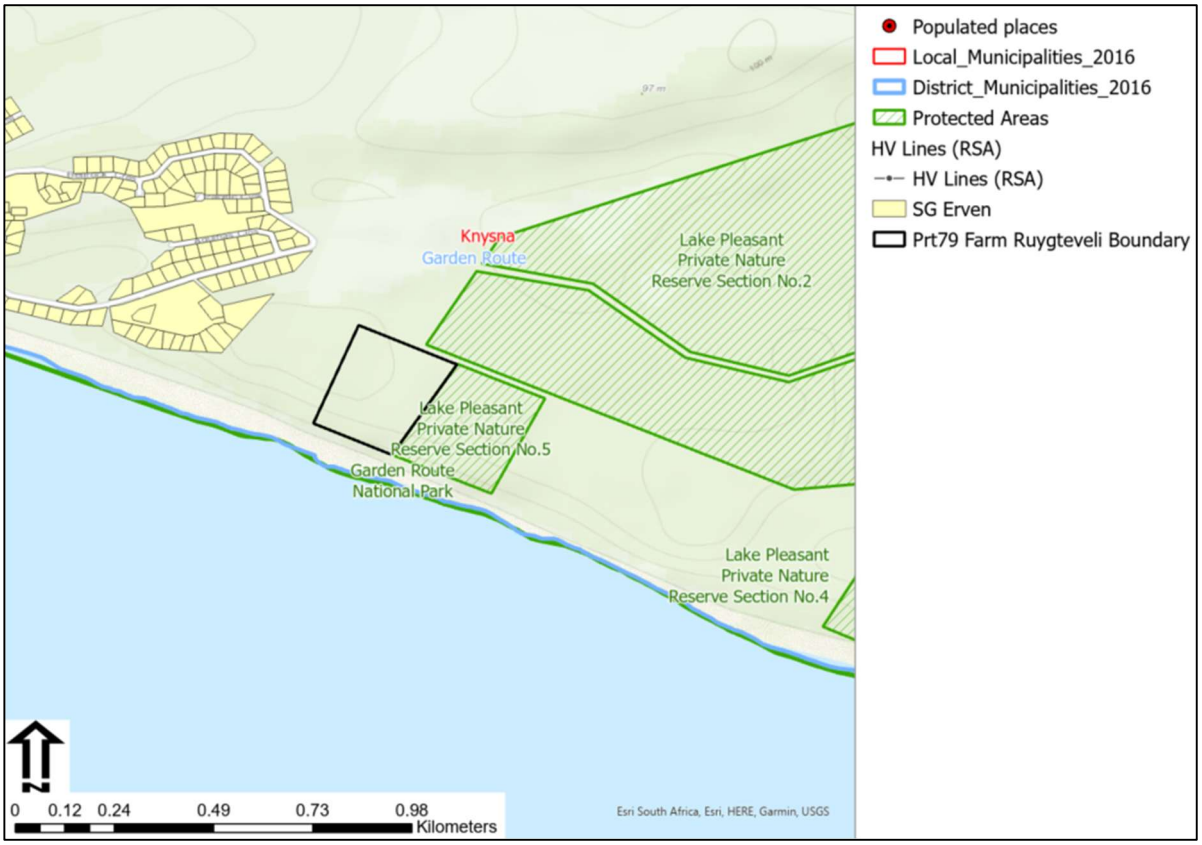

Figure 10: Planning locality map depicting the local, district and national planning zones.

5.2.1 DEA&DP Visual and Aesthetic Guidelines

Reference to the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes is provided in terms of southern African best practice in Visual Impact Assessment. The report compiled by Oberholzer states that the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) should address the following:

- Ensure that the scale, density and nature of activities or developments are harmonious and in keeping with the sense of place and character of the area. The BPEO must also ensure that development must be located to prevent structures from being a visual intrusion (i.e., to retain open views and vistas).

- Long term protection of important scenic resources and heritage sites.
- Minimisation of visual intrusion in scenic areas.
- Retention of wilderness or special areas intact as far as possible.
- Responsiveness to the area's uniqueness, or sense of place." (Oberholzer, 2005)

The proposed development is located adjacent to the Lake Pleasant Private Nature portions with the northern portion of the property located within a Critical Biodiversity Area. To the south of the property are the sand-stone sea cliffs that are above 80m high that do create a significant landscape features. Due to the sea cliffs and the critical biodiversity, the site should be considered wilderness special area, and any development would need to be in alignment with the existing unique wilderness sense of place.

5.2.2 Local and Regional Planning

The following tables list key regional and local planning that has relevance to the project pertaining to landscape-based tourism, and renewable energy projects.

Table 8: District Planning reference table relevant to the project

Garden Route District Municipality SDF (Garden Route District Municipality, 2017)		
Theme	**Requirements**	**Page**
Tourism	The Southern Cape region is identified as being a provincial leisure and tourism coastal belt and priority urban functional region, with the above-mentioned towns as regional centres (of different function and hierarchy) providing clustered facilities and services. The PSDF directs that these towns should be prioritised for growing the provincial economy through regionally planned and co-ordinated infrastructure investment.	25
Scenic Resources	The significant scenic and cultural assets that drive growth of the service sectors have been identified for protection. These include agricultural landscapes and landscape features such as mountains, valleys, passes, estuaries, rivers and plains. Important natural landscape: Knysna Lagoon	114
Garden Route District Climate Change Adaptation Response Implementation Plan (GRDM, 2024)		
Climate Change	The development of future coastal management line will demarcate safe coastal areas as well as those that are at risk of being eroded, and infrastructure or areas that are vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise. For example, an erosion setback line determined to be safe from present coastal conditions (i.e. present seawater levels and storm intensities) cannot be expected to remain safe under more extreme climate-changed conditions (i.e. raised seawater levels and/or more stormy sea conditions). The determination of coastal management lines that are safe in the long term needs an acknowledgement and quantification of risks, mobilisation of resources, solid policy guidelines and planning, as well as appropriate legislation (Department of Science and Technology, 2010).	67

Table 9: Local Planning reference table relevant to the project

Knysna Municipality SDF (Knysna Municipality, 2020)		
Environmental	• Manage land use and development along the coastline in a sustainable and precautionary manner: • Infill development of coastal settlements where there are existing land use rights should be carefully managed to ensure that roads and utility infrastructure are able to adequately meet the demand and performance standards in order not to compromise the sensitive host environment.	30 31
Sense of Place	In all of the settlements in the KMA but in particular, Knysna town, this MSDF promotes linking the public coastal recreational destinations and biodiversity corridors with the non-motorised transport network and formal and informal (active and passive), hard and soft recreation spaces, to form a public open space system that knits the surrounding natural environment with an urban green network that flows through the town linking it to its surroundings. This will contribute to Knysna town's sense of place.	55
Visual Impact	Maintain the integrity of the Garden Route landscape. View sheds over scenic landscapes and features must be safeguarded. • Valuable view corridors and vistas, undeveloped ridge lines and cultural landscapes should not be compromised by development or the cumulative impact of development that detracts from the public experience of viewing these assets • Employ the guidelines for managing visually sensitive landscapes set-out in the Garden Route Environmental Management Framework (EMF) • Scenic routes provide public access to the enjoyment of these landscapes. The routes and the land use alongside these routes should be managed in such a way as to not compromise the views offered but to mark and celebrate the landscapes and the origins or nature of their significance. Significant scenic routes in the Knysna Municipal Area are as follows: George Rex Drive	32
Economy	Attracting economic investment that creates job opportunities for existing residents should be the focus of public sector attention in these villages. Potential for tourism attractions linked to agricultural activity and surrounding natural landscape should be explored.	47

5.3 Landscape Planning Policy Fit

The finding of this SSVR is that the planning fit for landscape is rated Low Negative. The proposed structures are situated in a highly prominent location on the edge of sea cliffs, an area currently devoid of man-made visual disturbances, and characterized by exceptional scenic quality. The sensitivity of receptors to man-made changes in this coastal region is likely to be very high. The proposed dwellings would be clearly visible from the beach, establishing a negative precedent for future structural developments along the sea cliffs. Additionally, these structures would disrupt the skyline as viewed from the beach below. The sites are located on

steep slopes with gradients exceeding 1 in 4, necessitating significant cut and fill operations and pole foundations that would require the development platform to be raised off the ground.

IN terms of new climate change related legislation, coastal erosion from sea level rise is highlighted as a significant risk. There is clear evidence of erosion affecting the sandstone cliffs, with the erosional cut-back exceeding 60 meters above ground level, coinciding with the elevation of the proposed main residential building's base. With anticipated sea level rise, this erosion is expected to worsen (subject to geotechnical specialist findings). This concern is explicitly addressed in the DEA&DP Western Cape Climate Change Response Strategy and the Garden Route District Climate Change Adaptation Response Implementation Plan. While the proposed dwellings are positioned 100 meters above the high water level (HWL), the DEA&DP is currently reviewing the HWL based on climate change risks.

While the proposed sites present significant landscape and visual impact concerns, there exists a local precedent for rural residential development on the adjacent property. Utilizing a similar topographic positioning, there is potential for development with sea views; however, this opportunity is primarily restricted to the southeastern section of the property near the proposed vehicle parking area. Depending on the size of the main residence in this area, there may also be sufficient space for two cottages to the west of the site. It is recommended that parking and garage facilities be located behind the dune.

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7 ANNEXURE A: SITE VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS AND COMMENTS

The following photographs were taken during the field survey as mapped below.

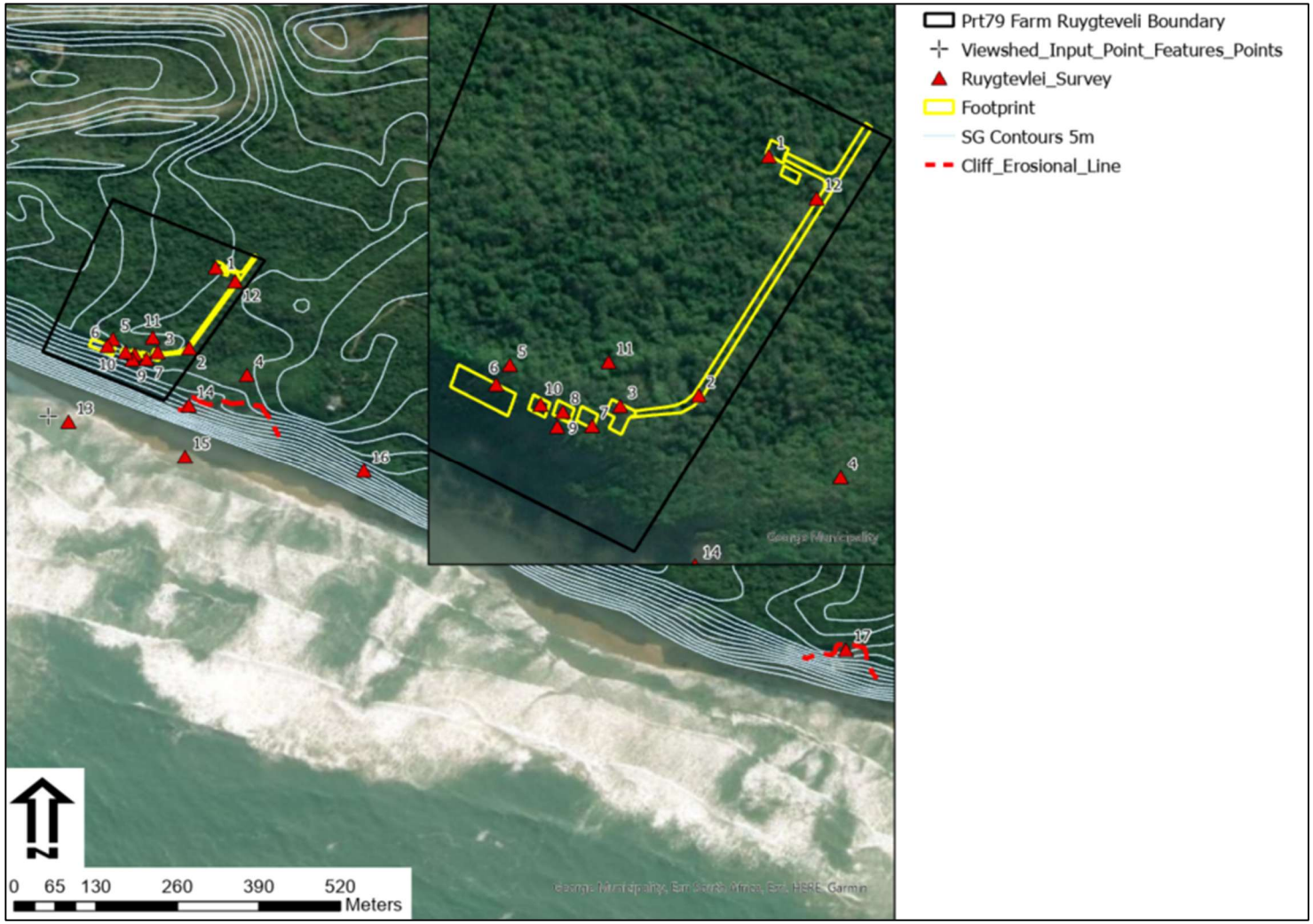

Figure 11: Survey point and project locality map.

Table 10. Landscape and visual risk table.

ID	Remarks	Context	Risk	Motivation
1	Proposed garage	Site	High	High visual impact pending botanical specialists' findings due to thicket vegetation significance. agricultural zoning does allow for garage development. Not recomm3nded as will set precedent for landscape fragmentation in current position. Visual preference is to move closer to the visual preferred vehicle parking area closer to the proposed development node.
2	Poad access	Site	High	Clear cut though High value thicket veg. Straight line of road creates dominant lines from clear cut vegetation. This should be viewed as a fatal flaw. The road needs to take terrain into account, not be in a straight line, and retain all medium to large trees (plus 4m).
3	Parking area	Site	High	Proposed parking area is located on foredune in an area directly in front of adjacent residential receptor. Fatal flaw for vehicle parking and this should be moved off high ground to north where vegetation screening can take place.
4	KOP residential receptor	Receptor	Medium	High visual exposure to parking areas where vehicles will become visually intrusive in the natural landscape. Not recommended for parking but could accommodate a low profile main residence development working on the same visual context as the KOP has set in the landscape.
5	Visual preference for car park	Site	Medium	Pref for car park behind the fore dune as can be screened by trees.
6	Proposed main residence	Site	High	Not suitable due to steep slopes, skyline intrusion and possible sea cliff collapse.
7	Site cottage 1	Site	Medium	not located on prominent terrain. existing veg provides visual screening and slopes med low. suitable with mitigation 4m above average ground level. wooden structure. no garden. fwc3 SE.
8	Site cottage 2	Site	High	Steep slope area that will require cut fill or high pole platform extending the structure above the tree line. Not recommended.
10	Site cottage 3	Site	High	Not recommended due to steep slopes and skyline intrusion.
11	Visual preferred vehicle parking and garage	Site	Low	Low prominence and well veg screened, with space for consolidation of garage (subject to botanical specialist findings). Mitigate with retaining of significant indigenous trees.

12	Site road access	Site	High	Straight line clear cut will generate high visual intrusion that should be considered a fatal flaw. The road access can be accommodated and should be redesigned to meander in alignment with the natural contours such that long linear feature is not created. Subject to botanical specialist significance findings. Retain all trees larger than 5m in height.
13	KOP Beach 1	Receptor	High	Class II with possible skyline intrusion. Not suitable due to skyline intrusion.
14	possible visual risk geological failure	Site	High	Possible evidence of geological slippage to east of site. Close proximity to the cliff face could result in local landscape degradation if rubble from structure falls to the beach (Subject to geotechnical specialists' findings)
15	KOP beach 2	Site	High	Class II. Not suitable due to skyline intrusion.
16	no skyline intrusion ls context	Landscape	High	Existing precedent for no skyline intrusion on the top of the sea cliff that should be retained.
17	evid3nce of geological slippage	Site	High	possible risk subject to Geotechnical ocean rise spec findings

ID	1
Remarks	Proposed garage
Time	10/22/2024 09:42:31.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82557105 -34,03947892 98,197)
PhotoDir	SE
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_094449265.jpg

ID	2
Remarks	Proposed road access
Time	10/22/2024 09:52:27.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82519209 -34,04063267 96,666)
PhotoDir	N
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_095520850.jpg

ID	3
Remarks	Proposed vehicle parking area.
Time	10/22/2024 09:58:05.000 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82473990 -34,04069085 104,188)
PhotoDir	E
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_100022129.jpg

ID	4
Remarks	KOP residential receptor
Time	10/22/2024 10:01:10.055 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82571808 -34,04092418 0,000)
PhotoDir	E
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_100305365.jpg

ID	5
Remarks	visual preference for car park on flatter terrain north of the fore dune (pending botanical suitability statement)
Time	10/22/2024 10:10:06.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82409860 -34,04050311 107,127)
PhotoDir	NW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_101117953.jpg

ID	6
Remarks	site proposed main residence with clear views to the beach
Time	10/22/2024 10:20:50.000 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82402167 -34,04059820 106,459)
PhotoDir	SW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_102448963.jpg

ID	7
Remarks	Site cottage 1 steep slopes and thicket vegetation
Time	10/22/2024 10:34:17.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82457953 -34,04078913 96,882)
PhotoDir	SW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_103603959.jpg

ID	8
Remarks	site cottage 2 steep slopes and thicket vegetation
Time	10/22/2024 10:47:02.597 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82440983 -34,04072331 0,000)
PhotoDir	N
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_104854563.jpg

ID	10
Remarks	site cottage 3 steep slopes and thicket vegetation
Time	10/22/2024 10:59:07.000 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82428006 -34,04069075 103,841)
PhotoDir	SW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_110135622.jpg

ID	11
Remarks	vis preference parking and garage behind fore dune (pending botanical suitability statement)
Time	10/22/2024 11:08:44.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82466857 -34,04048056 97,960)
PhotoDir	NW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_110935765.jpg

ID	12
Remarks	site road access
Time	10/22/2024 11:20:48.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82585122 -34,03967730 91,675)
Elevation	91.675
PhotoDir	W
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_112311426.jpg

ID	13
Remarks	KOP Beach 1 – Visual intrusion possible
Time	10/22/2024 12:00:43.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82318371 -34,04160241 34,806)
PhotoDir	NE
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_120107258.jpg

ID	14
Remarks	possible visual risk geological failure
Time	10/22/2024 12:04:39.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82518800 -34,04145454 36,197)
PhotoDir	S
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_120701553.jpg

ID	15
Remarks	KOP beach 2 visual intrusion highly likely
Time	10/22/2024 12:08:34.999 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82513189 -34,04219157 35,053)
PhotoDir	NW
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_120914554.jpg

ID	16
Remarks	no skyline intrusion context on the sea cliffs that should be maintained
Time	10/22/2024 12:10:28.150 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,82769453 -34,04239384 0,000)
PhotoDir	NE
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_121112759.jpg

ID	17
Remarks	evid3nce of geological slippage
Time	10/22/2024 12:23:36.576 GMT+02:00
Geometry	POINT Z (22,83459920 -34,04496223 0,000)
PhotoDir	N
Photo	Ruygtevleu_20241022_122432224.jpg

8 ANNEXURE B: SPECIALIST INFORMATION

8.1 Professional Registration Certificate

APHP

Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners

MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

Stephen Stead

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER: PHP0063

has been awarded membership as a

PROFESSIONAL MEMBER (PHP)

This membership is subject to the *Standards for Membership* and *Code of Conduct*, referred to in Sections 2 and 3 of the APHP Constitution respectively. The definition of a Professional may be found at: www.aphp.org.za/membership

Please contact us via info@aphp.org.za should further information be required.

THIS CERTIFICATE IS VALID FROM 1 JUNE 2024 – 1 JULY 2025

CHAIRPERSON

[Issued by the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners Executive Committee]

Watermark Image: *Map of land allotted at the Cape of Good Hope giving the numbers of the plots and also the names of the owners*,1660
William and Yvonne Jacobson Digital Africana Program
University of Cape Town Iball Collection
https://lball.uct.ac.za/s/jacobson-africana/item/96478

Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners
info@aphp.org.za
www.aphp.org.za

8.2 Curriculum Vitae (CV)

1. **Position**: Owner / Director

2. **Name of Firm**: Visual Resource Management Africa cc *(www.vrma.co.za)*

3. **Name of Staff**: Stephen Stead

4. **Date of Birth**: 9 June 1967

5. **Nationality:** South African

6. **Contact Details:** **Cell: +27 (0) 83 560 9911**
   Email: steve@vrma.co.za

7. **Educational qualifications**:
   - University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg):
   - Bachelor of Arts: Psychology and Geography
   - Bachelor of Arts (Hons): Human Geography and Geographic Information Management Systems
   - MSc Geography, University of KwaZulu, Natal: Land use and land-use change (2023)

8. **Professional Accreditation**
   - Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners (APHP) Western Cape
     - Accredited VIA practitioner member of the Association (2011)

9. **Association involvement:**
   - International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) South African Affiliate
     - Past President (2012 - 2013)
     - President (2012)
     - President-Elect (2011)
     - Conference Co-ordinator (2010)
     - National Executive Committee member (2009)
     - Southern Cape Chairperson (2008)

10. **Conferences Attended:**
    - International Geographical Congress, Lisbon (2017)
    - IAIAsa 2012
    - IAIAsa 2011
    - IAIA International 2011 (Mexico)
    - IAIAsa 2010
    - IAIAsa 2009
    - IAIAsa 2007

11. **Continued Professional Development:**
    - Integrating Sustainability with Environment Assessment in South Africa (IAIAsa Conference, 1 day)

- Achieving the full potential of SIA (Mexico, IAIA Conference, 2 days 2011)
- Researching and Assessing Heritage Resources Course (University of Cape Town, 5 days, 2009)

12. Countries of Work Experience:

- South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho, Kenya, and Namibia

13. Relevant Experience:

Stephen gained six years of experience in the field of Geographic Information Systems mapping and spatial analysis working as a consultant for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health and then with an Environmental Impact Assessment company based in the Western Cape. In 2004 he set up the company Visual Resource Management Africa that specializes in visual resource management and visual impact assessments in Africa. The company makes use of the well-documented Visual Resource Management methodology developed by the Bureau of Land Management (USA) for assessing the suitability of landscape modifications. Stephen has assessed of over 150 major landscape modifications throughout southern and eastern Africa. The business has been operating for eighteen years and has successfully established and retained a large client base throughout Southern Africa which include amongst other, Rio Tinto (Pty) Ltd, Bannerman (Pty) Ltd, Anglo Coal (Pty) Ltd, Eskom (Pty) Ltd, NamSolar and Vale (Pty) Ltd, Ariva (Pty) Ltd, Harmony Gold (Pty) Ltd, Millennium Challenge Account (USA), Pretoria Portland Cement (Pty) Ltd

14. Languages:

- English – First Language
- Afrikaans – fair in speaking, reading and writing.

15. Projects:

Table 11: VRM Africa Projects Assessments Table

DESCRIPTION	COUNT	DESCRIPTION	COUNT
Dam	1	UISP	8
Mari-culture	1	Structure	8
Port	1	OHPL	12
Railway	1	Industrial	12
Power Station	3	Wind Energy	22
Hydroelectric	4	Battery Storage	14
Resort	4	Mine	20
Golf/Residential	1	Residential	45
Road Infrastructure	5	Solar Energy	62
Substation	5	**TOTAL**	**237**

9 ANNEXURE C: METHODOLOGY DETAIL

9.1 Baseline Analysis Stage

In terms of VRM methodology, landscape character is derived from a combination of ***scenic quality***, ***receptor sensitivity*** to landscape change and ***distance*** from the proposed landscape change. The objective of the analysis is to compile a mapped inventory of the visual resources found in the receiving landscape, and to derive a mapped Visual Resource sensitivity layer from which to evaluate the suitability of the landscape change.

9.1.1 Scenic Quality

The scenic quality is determined making use of the VRM Scenic Quality Checklist that identifies seven scenic quality criteria which are rated with 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. The scores are totalled and assigned an A (High), B (Moderate) or C (low) based on the following split:
A= scenic quality rating of ≥19;
B = rating of 12 – 18,
C= rating of ≤11

The seven scenic quality criteria are defined below:

- **Land Form**: Topography becomes more of a factor as it becomes steeper, or more severely sculptured.
- **Vegetation**: Primary consideration given to the variety of patterns, forms, and textures created by plant life.
- **Water**: That ingredient which adds movement or serenity to a scene. The degree to which water dominates the scene is the primary consideration.
- **Colour**: The overall colour(s) of the basic components of the landscape (e.g., soil, rock, vegetation, etc.) are considered as they appear during seasons or periods of high use.
- **Scarcity**: This factor provides an opportunity to give added importance to one, or all, of the scenic features that appear to be relatively unique or rare within one physiographic region.
- **Adjacent Land Use**: Degree to which scenery and distance enhance, or start to influence, the overall impression of the scenery within the rating unit.
- **Cultural Modifications**: Cultural modifications should be considered and may detract from the scenery or complement or improve the scenic quality of an area.

9.1.2 Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor sensitivity to landscape change is determined by rating the following factors in terms of Low to High:

- **Type of Users**: Visual sensitivity will vary with the type of users, e.g. recreational sightseers may be highly sensitive to any changes in visual quality, whereas workers who pass through the area on a regular basis may not be as sensitive to change.
- **Amount of Use**: Areas seen or used by large numbers of people are potentially more sensitive.
- **Public Interest**: The visual quality of an area may be of concern to local, or regional, groups. Indicators of this concern are usually expressed via public controversy created in response to proposed activities.
- **Adjacent Land Uses**: The interrelationship with land uses in adjacent lands. For example, an area within the viewshed of a residential area may be very sensitive, whereas an area surrounded by commercially developed lands may not be as visually sensitive.

- **Special Areas**: Management objectives for special areas such as Natural Areas, Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic Areas, Scenic Roads or Trails, and Critical Biodiversity Areas frequently require special consideration for the protection of their visual values.
- **Other Factors**: Consider any other information such as research or studies that include indicators of visual sensitivity.

9.1.3 Exposure

The area where a landscape modification starts to influence the landscape character is termed the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) and is defined by the U.K. Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's (IEMA) *'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'* as 'the area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity (of the surrounding areas).'

The inverse relationship of distance and visual impact is well recognised in visual analysis literature *(Hull, R.B. and Bishop, I.E., 1988)*. According to Hull and Bishop, exposure, or visual impact, tends to diminish exponentially with distance. The areas where most landscape modifications would be visible are located within 2 km from the site of the landscape modification. Thus, the potential visual impact of an object diminishes at an exponential rate as the distance between the observer and the object increases due to atmospheric conditions prevalent at a location, which causes the air to appear greyer, thereby diminishing detail. For example, viewed from 1000 m from a landscape modification, the impact would be 25% of the impact as viewed from 500 m from a landscape modification. At 2000m it would be 10% of the impact at 500 m.

Distance from a landscape modification influences the size and clarity of the landscape modification viewing. The Bureau of Land Management defines three distance categories:

i. ***Foreground / Middle ground***, up to approximately 6km, which is where there is potential for the sense of place to change;
ii. ***Background areas***, from 6km to 24km, where there is some potential for change in the sense of place, but where change would only occur in the case of very large landscape modifications; and
iii. ***Seldom seen areas***, which fall within the Foreground / Middle ground area but, as a result of no receptors, are not viewed or are seldom viewed.

9.1.4 Key Observation Points

During the Baseline Inventory Stage, Key Observation Points (KOPs) are identified. KOPs are defined by the Bureau of Land Management as the people (receptors) located in strategic locations surrounding the property that make consistent use of the views associated with the site where the landscape modifications are proposed. These locations are important in terms of the VRM methodology, which requires that the Degree of Contrast (DoC) that the proposed landscape modifications will make to the existing landscape be measured from these most critical locations, or receptors, surrounding the property. To define the KOPs, potential receptor locations were identified in the viewshed analysis, and screened, based on the following criteria:

- Angle of observation.
- Number of viewers.
- Length of time the project is in view.
- Relative project size.

- Season of use.
- Critical viewpoints, e.g., views from communities, road crossings; and
- Distance from property.

9.2 Assessment and Impact Stage

The analysis stage involves determining whether the potential visual impacts from proposed surface-disturbing activities or developments will meet the management objectives established for the area, or whether design adjustments will be required. This requires a contrast rating to assess the expected DoC the proposed landscape modifications would generate within the receiving landscape in order to define the Magnitude of the impact.

9.2.1 Contrast Rating

The contrast rating is undertaken to determine if the VRM Class Objectives are met. The suitability of landscape modification is assessed by comparing and contrasting existing receiving landscape to the expected contrast that the proposed landscape change will generate. This is done by evaluating the level of change to the existing landscape by assessing the line, colour, texture and form, in relation to the visual objectives defined for the area. The following criteria are utilised in defining the DoC:

- **None**: The element contrast is not visible or perceived.
- **Weak**: The element contrast can be seen but does not attract attention.
- **Moderate**: The element contrast begins to attract attention and begins to dominate the characteristic landscape.
- **Strong**: The element contrast demands attention, will not be overlooked, and is dominant in the landscape.

As an example, in a Class I area, the visual objective is to preserve the existing character of the landscape, and the resultant contrast to the existing landscape should not be notable to the casual observer and cannot attract attention. In a Class IV area example, the objective is to provide for proposed landscape activities that allow for major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. Based on whether the VRM objectives are met, mitigations, if required, are defined to avoid, reduce or mitigate the proposed landscape modifications so that the visual impact does not detract from the surrounding landscape sense of place.

Based on the findings of the contrast rating, the Magnitude of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is determined.

9.2.2 Photomontages

As a component in this contrast rating process, visual representation, such as photo montages are vital in large-scale modifications, as this serves to inform Interested & Affected Parties and decision-making authorities of the nature and extent of the impact associated with the proposed project/development. There is an ethical obligation in this process, as visualisation can be misleading if not undertaken ethically. In terms of adhering to standards for ethical representation of landscape modifications, VRMA subscribes to the Proposed Interim Code of Ethics for Landscape Visualisation developed by the Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP) (Sheppard, 2000). This code states that professional presenters of realistic landscape visualisations are responsible for promoting full understanding of proposed landscape changes, providing an honest and neutral visual representation of the expected

landscape, by seeking to avoid bias in responses and demonstrating the legitimacy of the visualisation process. Presenters of landscape visualisations should adhere to the principles of:

- Access to Information
- Accuracy
- Legitimacy
- Representativeness
- Visual Clarity and Interest

The Code of Ethical Conduct states that the presenter should:

- Demonstrate an appropriate level of qualification and experience.
- Use visualisation tools and media that are appropriate to the purpose.
- Choose the appropriate level of realism.
- Identify, collect and document supporting visual data available for, or used in, the visualisation process.
- Conduct an on-site visual analysis to determine important issues and views.
- Seek community input on viewpoints and landscape issues to address in the visualisations.
- Provide the viewer with a reasonable choice of viewpoints, view directions, view angles, viewing conditions and timeframes appropriate to the area being visualised.
- Estimate and disclose the expected degree of uncertainty, indicating areas and possible visual consequences of the uncertainties.
- Use more than one appropriate presentation mode and means of access for the affected public.
- Present important non-visual information at the same time as the visual presentation, using a neutral delivery.
- Avoid the use, or the appearance of, ‘sales’ techniques or special effects.
- Avoid seeking a particular response from the audience.
- Provide information describing how the visualisation process was conducted and how key decisions were taken (Sheppard, 2000).