

Appendix G: Other information

Appendix G1: Site Verification Report



APPENDIX G

SITE VERIFICATION REPORT

For the

Application for Environmental Authorisation for the
clearing of vegetation to develop a residential
development on Erf 4351 (a Portion of Erf 411) in
Theescombe, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

FEATHERTON (PTY) LTD

ECm1/C/LN1/M/22-2025



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	4
Location	4
Desktop Analysis of the Site	5
Land Use and zoning.....	5
Site Inspection.....	6
Photo record of Site	6
Environmental Sensitivity Themes	7
Agricultural Theme.....	7
Animal Species Theme.....	8
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	9
Archaeological, Cultural and Heritage Theme	10
Civil Aviation Theme.....	10
Defence Theme.....	10
Palaeontological Theme.....	11
Plant Species Theme.....	11
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	11
Specialist Assessments identified.....	11
Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment.....	12
Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment & Palaeontological Impact Assessment .	12

Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment.....	13
Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment.....	13
Socio-Economic Assessment	13
Plant Species Assessment	14
Animal Species Assessment	14
Conclusion of Site Sensitivity Verification Report.....	15

BACKGROUND

Digital Soils Africa (Pty) Ltd (DSA) was tasked by Featherton (Pty) Ltd, hereinafter referred to as *the Applicant*, to conduct environmental investigations and complete the environmental application for the development of General Residential Zone 1 which will entail the development, 43 two-bedroom duplex units and 44 three-bedroom duplex units on a 4.3284 Ha on Erf 4351 (a Portion of Erf 411) in Theescombe, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

The Screening Tool Report has been generated for the proposed development. According to the screening tool report, the following specialist assessments were identified:

1. Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment;
2. Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment;
3. Palaeontological Impact Assessment;
4. Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment;
5. Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment;
6. Socio-Economic Assessment;
7. Plant Species Assessment; and
8. Animal Species Assessment.

Therefore, this site sensitivity verification report is compiled to determine whether Specialist Assessments or Compliance Statements for the abovementioned specialist studies are required for the proposed development.

LOCATION

Erf 4351 (a Portion of Erf 411), Theescombe (here-after referred to as “the site”) is located in the allotment area known as Theescombe which forms part of the greater NMBM suburbs and very popular residential and related land use area. The property measures 4.3284Ha in extent



FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION AS INDICATED AS THE RED POLYGON

A: 33°58'53.02"S	25°31'16.33"E	B: 33°58'54.65"S	25°31'8.66"E
C: 33°58'59.18"S	25°31'6.08"E	D: 33°59'1.30"S	25°31'6.93"E
E: 33°58'56.96"S	25°31'16.63"E	F: 33°58'53.47"S	25°31'16.79"E

The 21 digit Surveyor General code:

CO 0059 0037 00004351 00000

DESKTOP ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

LAND USE AND ZONING

The site is zoned Single Residential Zone 2 (previous Rural Residential as per Area A Zoning Scheme Regulations) and must be rezoned to General Residential Zone 1. It has been used for equestrian activities but is currently dormant.

SITE INSPECTION

The site was visited on 4 October 2024 and it was noted that it host limited native vegetation and host mostly alien and grass species (*Cenchrus clandestinus*), including anthropogenic activities that has substantially modified parts of the site. The site was clearly previously used for equestrian activities. A degraded wetland was also noted along the southern boundary of the site.

PHOTO RECORD OF SITE

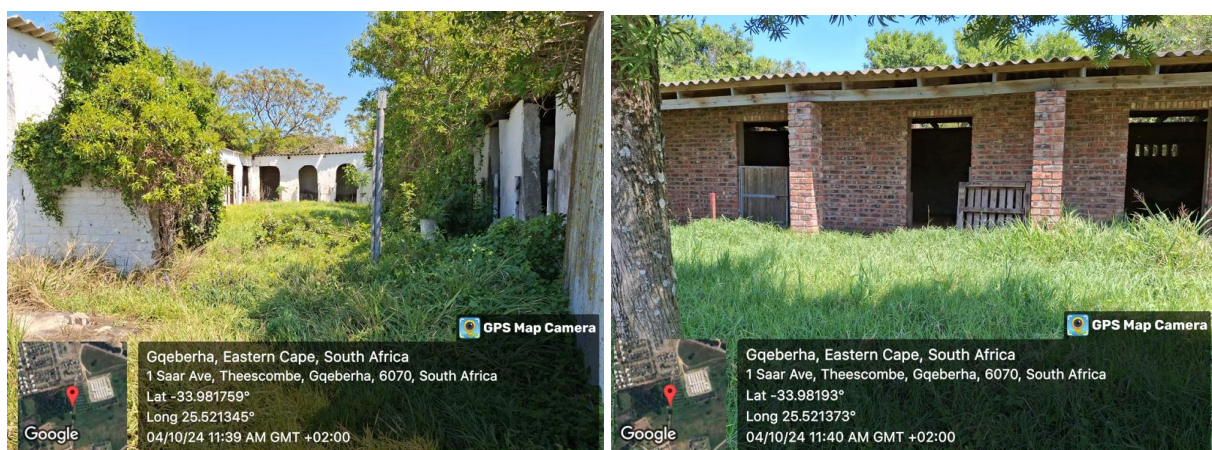


FIGURE 2: ABANDONED HORSE STABLES

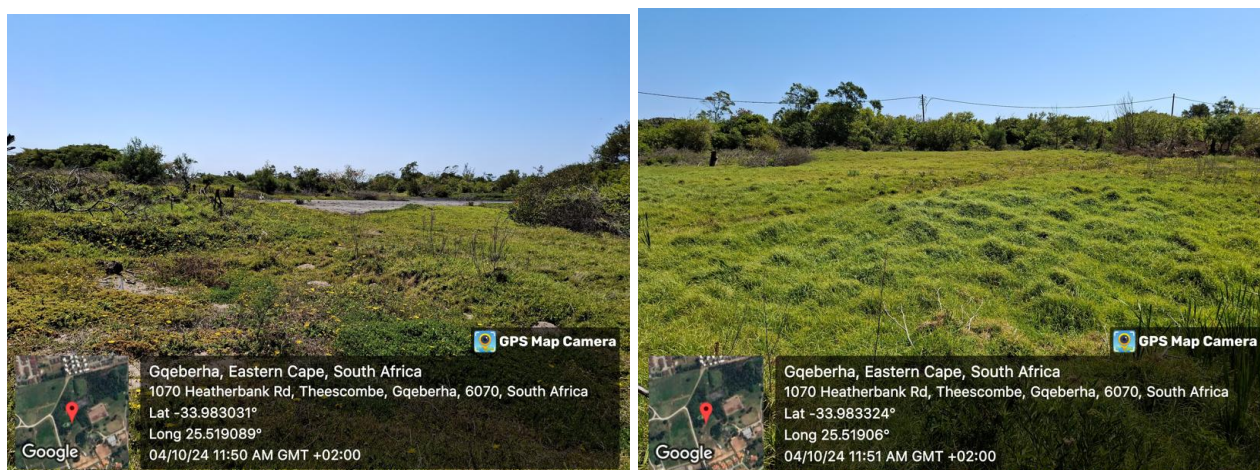


FIGURE 3: GRASS AREAS



FIGURE 4: WETLAND AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY THEMES

The Screening Tool Report identified certain environmental sensitivity themes and depending on the level of scoring (High, Medium, or Low) will determine what protocol criteria for specialist assessments and minimum report content should be provided.

TABLE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY ACCORDING TO THE SCREENING TOOL REPORT

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

AGRICULTURAL THEME

The site is not zoned agriculture, but was used as a small holding. Therefore, an Agricultural Compliance Statement was conducted by Digital Soils Africa, Dr. Bouwer (see Appendix D1 of the Basic Assessment Report).

ANIMAL SPECIES THEME

Animals play an important role in maintaining the functioning of any ecosystem, for example, pollination, spreading of seeds, removing pests, trimming vegetation, etc. The study site is meant to host Algoa Sandstone Fynbos, but has been invaded by alien species and grass due to anthropogenic activities and the site is fenced off. There is nevertheless a possibility that wild mammals might occur onsite from time to time. Wesley Black from The Biodiversity Company is a registered as an Ecological Scientist with SACNASP, and was tasked to conduct the Terrestrial Assessment. For this report, he identified and discussed the fauna.

The screening tool identified the following animal species of concern:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Medium	Mammalia- <i>Chlorotalpa duthieae</i>
Medium	Sensitive species 8
Medium	Invertebrate- <i>Aneuryphymus montanus</i>

According to the specialist, no faunal species of special conservation were identified during the site survey.

The Screening Tool identified the possible presence of the Duthie's golden mole (*Chlorotalpa duthieae*) which is endemic to South Africa and would not be restricted by the fence as it can borrow underneath and may be found within the study area, as it has been known to thrive in cultivated areas and gardens, thus there is a possibility that it may occur at the site.

The Screening Tool Report further listed Sensitive species 8 [*Small ungulate*] (IUCN: Vulnerable). As per the best practice guideline that accompanies the protocol and screening tool, the name of the sensitive species may not appear in the final Assessment report nor any of the specialist reports released into the public domain. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, it is only referred to as Sensitive Species 8.

Sensitive Species 8 is a small mammal that prefers dense understorey and coastal scrub and at the site this habitat is present. However it is very close to residential development it is unlikely that this shy and secretive species is nesting at the site.

The Screening Tool identified the possible presence of the Yellow-winged Agile grasshopper (*Aneuryphymus montanus*), which is endemic to the Cape region of South Africa. The description provided by Brown (1960) indicates that the stout-bodied insect is found locally common amongst partly burnt stands of evergreen Sclerophyll in the rocky foothills and it prefers south-facing cool slopes. It is an active geophilous insect that readily flies off when disturbed. No suitable habitat for this animal is available at the site. It will not be affected by the proposed development.

The low presence of faunal diversity on site is a clear indication of the current anthropogenic impact already experienced at the site. The Animal Species Theme was given a medium sensitivity score for the site. It should be noted that the proposed development will completely transform the vegetation and thus habitat on site. The occurrence of faunal species within the proposed area is likely, however, the current status of animal diversity at the site is fairly limited due to the anthropogenic impact of the surrounding urban activities.

The clearing of the alien vegetation on-site would be restricted to a slow clearance rate, which would provide adequate time for the migration of any animals remaining on-site to be sustained in similar adjoining habitats. Also, noise generated by vehicles will cause most animals to vacate the site temporarily. If certain species were to be affected they would simply vacate the proposed cleared areas during the day and return during the night. It is therefore not expected that the proposed development will have any impacts on sensitive animal species.

Due consideration has been given to the potential impact on the animal species and it is the EAP's professional opinion that the report submitted by Wesley Black will suffice as a specialist survey and his impact assessment, conclusion and recommendations must be included in the Basic Assessment Report. The report can be viewed in Appendix D7 of the Basic Assessment Report.

AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME

In terms of the site environmental sensitivity (Screening Tool Report) with regards to aquatic biodiversity, the report allocated a Very High sensitivity to the aquatic biodiversity theme mainly due to the site overlapping with the Tsitsikamma SWSA although it does not overlap with any threatened wetlands or rivers. In addition, a wetland was identified along the southern boundary of the site. Therefore, an Aquatic study was conducted by Dr. B. Colloty (see Appendix D2 of the Basic Assessment Report).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, CULTURAL AND HERITAGE THEME

These sites and findings are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act, (no. 25 of 1999) and according to Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, if the development of a site exceeds 5000m² the responsible heritage resources authority must be notified or application must be made. The disturbed area will be more than 5000m² therefore the responsible heritage resources authority must be notified. Therefore, a Heritage assessment was completed by Eastern Cape Heritage Consultants CC, of which Mr. K. Reichert has a B. Proc. BA (Hons) in archaeology study and the report can be viewed in Appendix D5 of the Basic Assessment Report.

CIVIL AVIATION THEME

This is an activity that does not involve the construction of wind turbines and buildings higher than the municipal height restrictions. It is a residential development. There will be no development that might cause air emissions to impair the vision of flight. None of the activities proposed for the development will restrict the airspace demarcated for aviation (commercial-, non-commercial-, instructional-, recreational flight, aerial flight work such as agriculture, surveying, photography, etc.).

According to the Screening Tool Report, the site is within 8km of other civil aviation aerodrome. Therefore it is proposed that no further assessment is made. The SACAA will be consulted.

DEFENCE THEME

There are no known army base camps or training grounds near the site. The proposed development, if approved, will entail the removal of vegetation to development mix use development. It is not proposed that any defence installations (army base, camp, post, station, or any other military activity) will be erected. The site is also not used for any military defence training or special forces activities.

Due consideration has been given to the potential impact of the proposed development on the defence force. It is the opinion of the EAP that all factors were taken into account in this sensitivity verification report. The proposed development will pose an insignificant impact on the defence force. Therefore, it is not required for a Defence specialist assessment to be appointed or impact further discussed.

PALAEONTOLOGICAL THEME

The coastline is rich in pre-colonial archaeological sites and remains. Among the palaeontological highlights are the important coastal marine fossil biotas of the Algoa Group ranging from Eocene to Recent in age (50 to 0 Ma) and the fossil heritage includes rich marine / estuarine invertebrate fauna including diverse mollusks, plus corals, bryozoans, brachiopods, echinoids, crustaceans, microfossils, sharks' teeth, trace fossils (including human & other mammal tracks), and land snails.

The Screening Tool Report identified the palaeontological theme as having very high sensitivity, therefore Dr. Ryan Nel (SACNASP registered geological scientist) conducted the palaeontology assessment. The full report can be viewed in Appendix D6 of the Basic Assessment Report.

PLANT SPECIES THEME

The Screening tool identified the plant theme to be of 'medium' sensitivity. Wesley Black from The Biodiversity Company is registered as an Ecological Scientist with SACNASP, conducted the Terrestrial survey for this report, he identified and discusses the flora and the report can be viewed in Appendix D7 of the Basic Assessment Report. The impacts and the recommendations have been captured in the BAR.

TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME

Terrestrial Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of life on land that includes the fauna, flora, and habitat connectivity of an area. High biodiversity is often used as an indication of ecosystem health.

Therefore Wesley Black registered as an Ecological Scientist with SACNASP, was tasked to conduct the Terrestrial Assessment. The report can be viewed in Appendix D7 of the Basic Assessment Report. The impacts and the recommendations have been captured in the BAR.

SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS IDENTIFIED

Based on the selected classification and the environmental sensitivities of the proposed development footprint, the following list of specialist assessments has been identified for inclusion in the assessment report,

according to the Screening Tool Report. However, it is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm the list and to motivate with reason, for not including any of the identified specialists' studies in the report.

As previously indicated, the following specialist assessments were identified:

1. Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment;
2. Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment;
3. Palaeontological Impact Assessment;
4. Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment;
5. Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment;
6. Socio-Economic Assessment;
7. Plant Species Assessment; and
8. Animal Species Assessment.

LANDSCAPE/VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed development will result in the development of residential units and will resemble urban development.

An onsite assessment of immediate landscapes revealed that the property on which the proposed site is situated is bordered by residential development (north of the site), small holdings (south of the site) and further east, west and south residential development.

The potential visual impacts should be assessed in the Basic Assessment Report, but a specialist assessment is not required.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT & PALAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As discussed in detail under the heading 'Archaeological and Heritage and Palaeontological Theme', the palaeontological theme, was given a high sensitivity rating according to the Basic Assessment Report.

The Heritage assessment will be completed by Eastern Cape Heritage Consultants CC, of which Mr. K. Reichert has a B. Proc. BA (Hons) in archaeology study, and the recommendations was captured in the BAR. The application to ECPHRA was submitted.

Dr. Ryan Nel, a palaeontologist conducted the palaeontology assessment and the recommendations was captured in the Basic Assessment Report.

TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Wesly Black from The Biodiversity Company is registered as an Ecological Scientist with SACNASP conducted the Terrestrial Assessment and the recommendations was captured in the Basic Assessment Report.

AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Dr Brian Colloty who a SACNASP registered ecologist and member of the South African Wetland Society, conducted the aquatic report. The recommendations were captured in the Basic Assessment Report.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

It should be noted that similar land uses and developments with similar land uses as proposed have been permitted throughout the NMBM area and along Montmedy Road and Bergeus Street in Theescombe area and its surrounds of which aligns to the provisions of the Heatherbank Local Spatial Development Framework Plan (precinct plan) as approved by Council.

Considering the LSDF of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the suburb of Theescombe is earmarked for development and it is expected that in the near future, housing or offices will consume the open land that remains. The future influx of population will need development, such as the proposed one, to satisfy their household and personal needs, as listed above.

South Africa has faced decades of economic volatility, influenced by global decisions, domestic policy changes, corruption, and infrastructure constraints. For Gqeberha, these challenges currently are magnified by the dependence on the automotive export industry, creating trade uncertainty due to the American administration and could reduce economic growth or halt investments until final global decisions are made.

Thus, current development carries inherent risks, as all property development involves risk. In Gqeberha's mixed economic signals (Coega SEZ growth vs export dependency), developers must weigh the macro risks against localized opportunities.

On the other hand, economic growth is supported through development, and encouraging residential development, especially on underutilized or 'brownfield' site, such as the proposed development, job creation is spurred on, urban areas are regenerated, and the local tax revenue and infrastructure investment is increased. In addition, brownfield redevelopment is regarded as a strategic opportunity for economic recovery, with less ecological disruption than greenfield expansion.

In terms of the socio-economic impact, the proposed development will have a small positive impact on the area. The development will create a mix of short-term and permanent jobs. Short-term employment will be provided by additional availability of employment in the construction industry and related fields and domestic employment during the operational phase. This project is a small positive financial investment in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, especially as previously indicated, with the market that is trying to recover.

Due consideration has been given to the potential socio-economic impact of the proposed development. It is EAP's professional opinion that most factors regarding the socio-economic impact have been taken into account in this site sensitivity verification report. Therefore, as the proposed development will have a positive socio-economic impact, a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment is thus not required, although the impact on socio-economic must still be discussed in the Basic Assessment Report.

PLANT SPECIES ASSESSMENT

As discussed in detail under the heading 'Plant Species Theme', it is not required that a specialist survey and assessment be conducted, since a SACNASP registered scientist (Wesley Black) did the identifying of flora species. The impact and recommendations were captured in the Basic Assessment Report.

ANIMAL SPECIES ASSESSMENT

As discussed in detail under the heading 'Animal Species Theme', it is not required that a specialist survey and assessment be conducted, since a SACNASP registered scientist (Wesley Black) did the identifying of faunal species. The impact and recommendations were captured in the Basic Assessment Report.

CONCLUSION OF SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION REPORT

Digital Soils Africa (Pty) Ltd (DSA) was tasked by Featherton (Pty) Ltd, to conduct environmental investigations and complete the Environmental Authorisation Application for the development of General Residential Zone 1 which will entail the development, 43 two-bedroom duplex units and 44 three-bedroom duplex units on a 4.3284 Ha on Erf 4351 (a Portion of Erf 411) in Theescombe, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

There will be environmental impacts, but all could be mitigated and reduced to limited impacts on the surroundings. The proposed development will have a positive socio-economic outcome for the surrounding community. A Screening Tool Report has been generated for the proposed development and various themes were rated and specialist studies listed.

As mentioned above aquatic, terrestrial-, archaeological and heritage- and palaeontology assessments were identified as specialist studies to be completed for the proposed development.

According to the professional opinion of the EAP and the outcome of this Site Verification Report the remaining specialist assessments identified in the Screening Tool Report do not require further specialist input. It is recommended to the Department of Economic, Environmental Affairs and Tourism that the listed specialist studies are not necessary to be conducted, rather all direct, indirect and cumulative impacts must still be discussed in the Basic Assessment Report.