

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

## CLEARANCE OF INDIGENOUS VEGETATION FOR THE

### GLEDHOW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT LOCATED ON

#### AGRICULTURAL LAND AND WITHIN 32M OF A

#### WATERCOURSE.

#### KWADUKUZA MUNICIPALITY

### PROJECT BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

uShukela Milling (Pty) Ltd are the landowners of Farm Gledhow No. 1983 located within the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, iLembe District (outlined in red in Figure 1). Farm Gledhow 17461 is 168.2 hectares in extent and is in the process of being subdivided. The greater property is currently zoned Agriculture 1 with portions of the farm still being used for sugarcane farming. RSPG Dev Co. (Pty) Ltd, on behalf of the landowner, propose to construct a retail development on a 10-hectare portion of Farm Gledhow No. 1983. The new portion where the retail development is proposed is Proposed Portion 12 of Farm Gledhow No. 1983 (yellow in Figure 1).

The retail development will consist of anchor stores, smaller retail outlets, parking bays and internal road network (public and service roads). The total footprint of the development is approximately 6-hectares (pending final layout). The proposed layout is provided in Figure 2. Approximately 0.7 hectares of infrastructure falls within 32m of wetland, which is associated with a watercourse flowing along the western boundary of the site. Figure 3 shows the wetland and 32m regulated area.

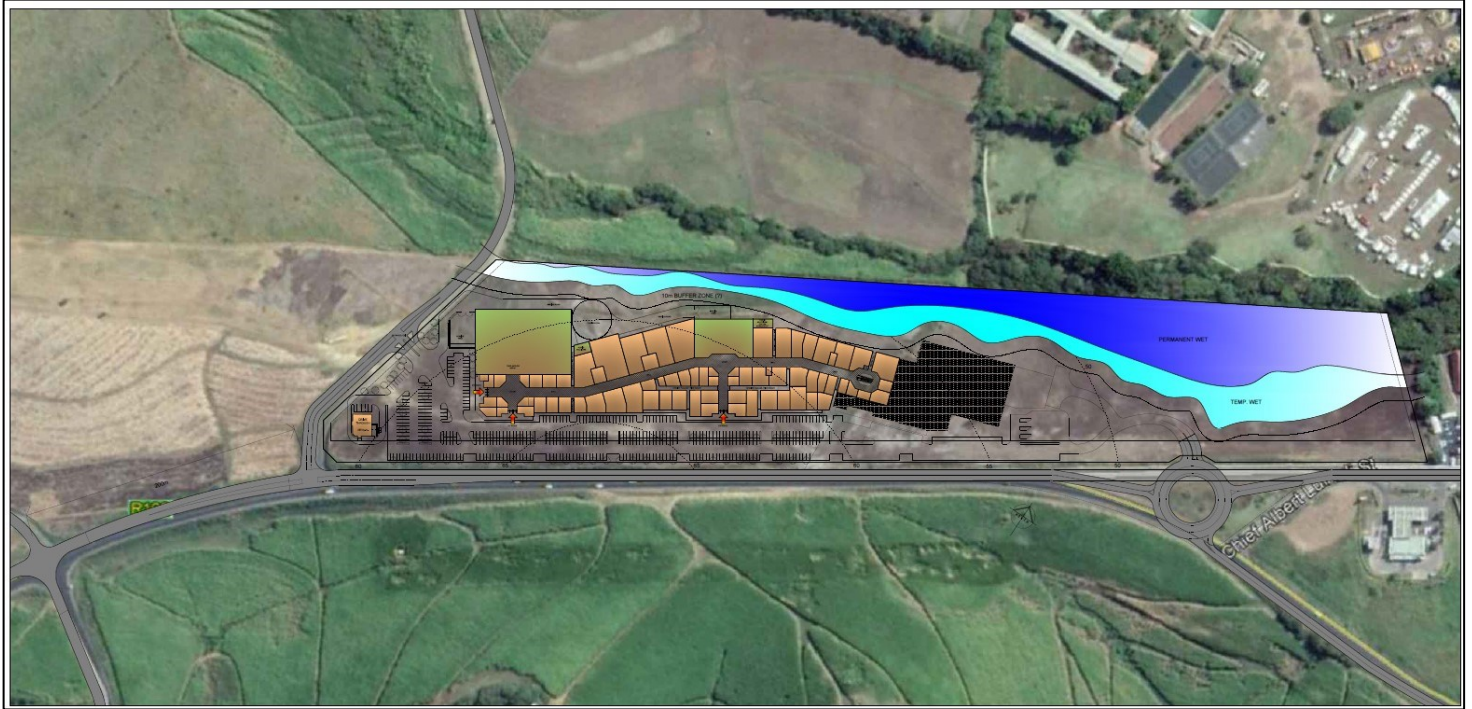
The construction of the retail development on agriculture land triggers Activity 28 of Listing Notice 1 and the development of infrastructure within 32m of the watercourse triggers Activity 12 of Listing Notice 1. Clearance of indigenous vegetation will take place triggering Activity 27 of Listing Notice 1. Environmental Authorisation through a Basic Assessment process is required.

This Background Information Document (BID) has been prepared to provide information on the process which will be followed to assess the environmental impact of the change in land use and confirm the specialist studies required.

Figure 1: Farm Gledhow No. 1983 outlined in red with Proposed Portion 12 outlined in yellow.



Figure 2: Conceptual Layout of the Retail Development (Source: Architecture, 2022).



## SITE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Vegetation

The property falls within the KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Belt (CB 3) ecosystem type which is classified as *vulnerable* by the South African National Biodiversity Institute. Sugarcane farming ceased on site in 2018 and the vegetation left to recover. The vegetation to be cleared to accommodate the retail development is comprised of degraded, secondary grassland mixed with alien invasive species.

- Watercourses

The study area is located within the U40J quaternary catchment. A tributary of the uMvoti River flows along the western boundary of the site. SDP Ecological and Environmental Services have provided a preliminary wetland delineation for the site which is in the process of being confirmed (Figure 3). Buffers between wetland and developable area are in the process of being determined.

- Heritage

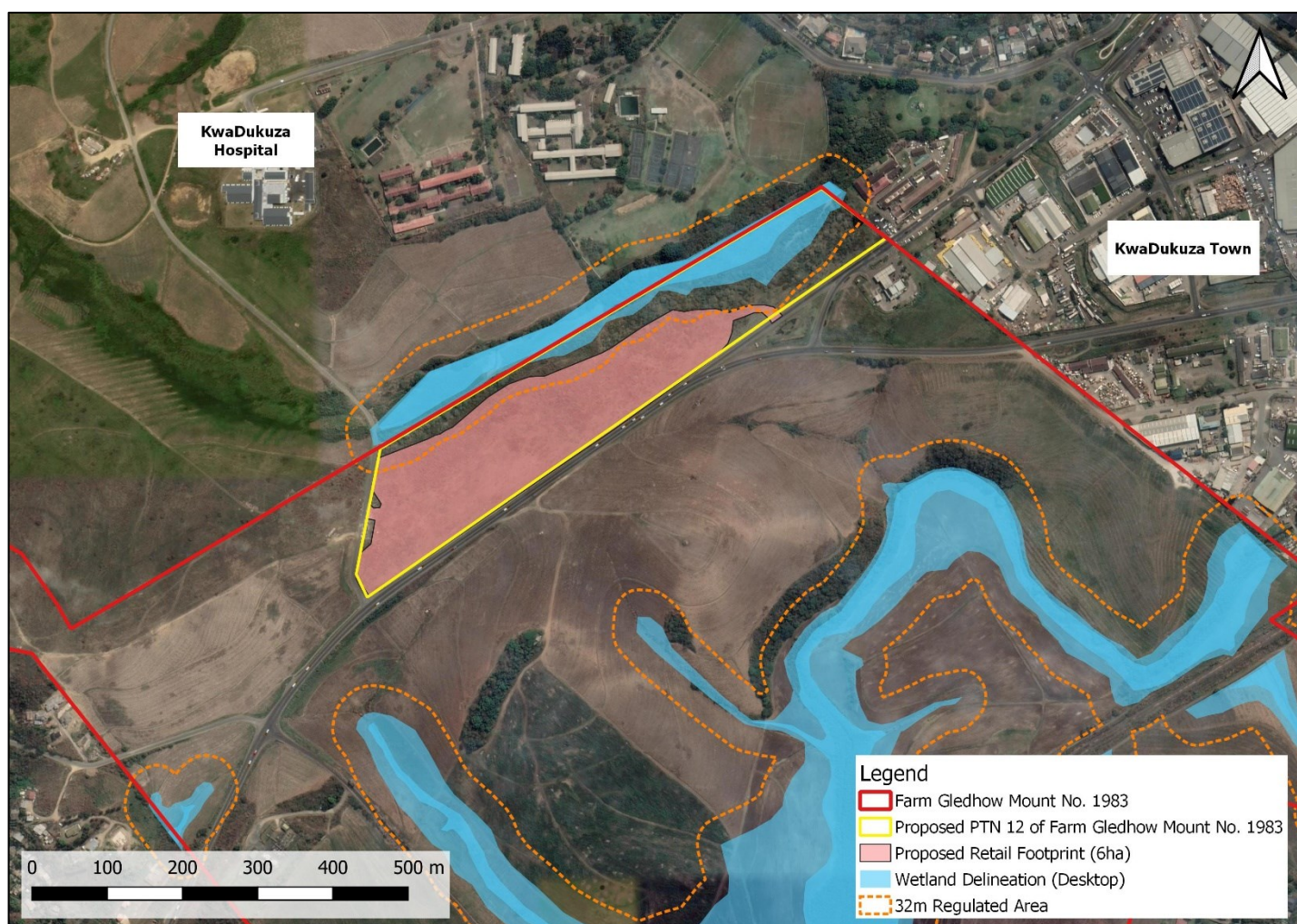
The site is undeveloped and therefore there are no known heritage or cultural features associated with the area. Any development or activity which will change the characteristics of a site exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup> in extent requires a Heritage Impact Assessment and therefore the specialist will confirm the status of the site and surrounds. The study area falls within a “moderate” palaeontological sensitive area. A Desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment will be required to confirm the likelihood of uncovering fossils during construction and the submission of a Protocol for Fossil Finds.

- Agriculture

The greater Gledhow Mount No. 1983 farm is zoned Agriculture 1 and has been used as a sugarcane farm for a number of years. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries excluded the property from the provisions of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, Act No. 70 of 1970 on the 02<sup>nd</sup> March 2018. The property will be rezoned for retail purposes through a separate town planning application.



Figure 3: Map Showing the Desktop Wetland Delineation for the Study Area.



## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SDP Ecological and Environmental Services have been commissioned to confirm the extent of wetland associated with the watercourse and recommend a buffer. The layout shown in Figure 2 may require adjusting based on input from the wetland specialist.

The key aspects which will form the focus of the assessment are:

- To assess the change in land use from agricultural to retail. This includes the loss of open space, faunal movement corridors, stormwater management with the increase in hard surfaces etc.
- To review the availability of services in the area (water, sewage and road network) to ensure the development is feasible and sustainable; and
- To provide measures in the EMP to be adhered to during construction so that the development does not result in any disturbance to the adjacent watercourses (physical and functionality).

The following specialist studies have been identified in the DFFE Screening Report:

Study	Specialist	Objective
Agricultural Impact Assessment	N/A	The property has been excluded from the provisions of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, Act No. 70 of 1970 (Act 70/70 consent). Consent was granted by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on the 02 <sup>nd</sup> March 2018. An Agricultural Impact Assessment will therefore not be conducted.
Landscape / Visual Impact Assessment	N/A	The location of the site earmarked for retail is well located in between the R102 and other urban development (KwaDukuza Private Hospital, police station and school. There are no residential areas directly adjacent to the site. A Visual Impact Assessment is therefore not considered necessary.
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	Jean Beater	The heritage specialist has confirmed that a Desktop Heritage Impact Assessment will suffice considering the historic use of the site for sugarcane farming.
Palaeontology Impact Assessment	Marion Bamford	The property falls within a “moderately” sensitive palaeontological area. A desktop assessment is therefore required by AMAFA and will be carried out.
Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	SDP	The study area was comprised of sugarcane until farming ceased in 2018. The vegetation on site is now comprised of secondary grassland that is highly invaded by exotic species. SDP to review the vegetation site and confirm this (statement on terrestrial biodiversity).
Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	SDP	A desktop wetland delineation has been provided by SDP and will be confirmed by the specialist. The impact of the proposed retail development will be assessed by SDP and recommendations provided. The impact assessment must also include the development of services associated with the development.
Hydrology Assessment	N/A	Provided that stormwater is attenuated on site, the development will therefore not change the hydrological nature of the nearby watercourses. A Hydrological Assessment was not deemed necessary for this project.
Socio-Economic Assessment	N/A	The proposed project will have a positive socio-economic impact. A Socio-Economic Assessment will not be provided unless specifically requested by EDTEA or I & APs.
Plant Species Assessment	SDP	As above, SDP to review the site and confirm if what indigenous species will be cleared.
Animal Species Assessment	SDP	SDP to include comment on faunal species that may utilise the site and assess the impact of the change in land use on these species.
Other specialist studies forming part of the Basic Assessment include:		
Engineering Services Report	SMA	SMA Group will prepare the Engineering Services Report (ESR) to identify the location of existing services and ensure there is sufficient bulk water and sewer services to supply the development. The water and sewer pipeline routes will be provided in the ESR.
Geotechnical Assessment	Drennan Maud	To identify any slope failures / unstable geological conditions and make recommendations during the earthworks phase and design of the foundations.