



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



The Development of a New School Site for the Middelburg Preparatory School on Portion 362 (a Portion of Portion 27) of the Farm Middelburg Town and Townlands 287 JS, Middelburg.

Reference number assigned by Clean Stream Environmental Services: BA2015/03

## Purpose of this document

- Overview of the proposed project;
- Overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIA) to ensure that Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) understand the process;
- Invitation to I&APs to participate in the EIA process by:
  - ⇒ Indicating their view points, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
  - ⇒ Suggesting alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

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## Introduction and Legal Requirements

Middelburg Preparatory School is in need of new school premises as their current premises in West Street, Middelburg, is too small. The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality donated Portion 362 (a portion of Portion 27) of the farm Middelburg Town and Townlands 287 JS to the school for the purpose of developing the said primary school catering for Grade RR to Grade 7.

The said property is located in Springbok Avenue adjacent to Steelcrest High School, Middelburg X4. The site is 2 hectares in extent and currently vacant.

The property will be rezoned from 'Agricultural' to 'Educational' in order to develop the said primary school.

The Minister of Environmental and Water Affairs listed in terms of Sections 24(2) and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), a number of activities that require an environmental impact assessment

(either a Basic Assessment or a full Environmental Impact Assessment) before undertaking these activities.

The proposed project would involve the following listed activity (Government Notice R983 of 4 December 2014) as identified in terms of Section 24(2), 24(5), 24D and 44, read with section 47A(1)(b) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998:

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 27:** *The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for (i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.*

In order to obtain approval (authorization) for this activity, a **Basic Assessment** must be

conducted since the proposed project triggers a listed activity identified in GN R983 – Listing Notice 1 (see above).

In addition, a specific procedure must be followed as stipulated in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, which also requires specific documentation to be submitted.

Once all the required documentation has been submitted and the environmental process completed, the responsible authority must make a decision on the application.

The environmental decision making authority for this application is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA).

**Part of the above-mentioned process is to inform interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed project and to obtain any issues of concern.**

**You are hereby invited to register as an I&AP and provide input with regards to the proposed activity.**

## Environmental Consultant

Clean Stream Environmental Services was appointed as independent environmental consultant to conduct the required environmental impact assessment and compile the necessary documentation.

**Clean Stream Environmental Services**

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[www.cleanstreams.co.za](http://www.cleanstreams.co.za)



## Public Participation

### Aim of Public Participation

- To inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and Stakeholders of the proposed project.
- To allow for the registration of I&APs and thereby present I&APs with the opportunity to comment on the project, contribute ideas, raise concerns and review reports.

*In order to ensure that you are identified as an interested and/or affected party; please submit your name, contact information and interest in the matter to the contact person within 30 days of receipt of this document (i.e. no later than **8 June 2015**).*

*If you know of any other interested and affected party who should be registered as an I&AP, it would be appreciated if you could forward the relevant contact details to Clean Stream Environmental Services.*

### Public meeting

At this stage, it is not anticipated that a public meeting will be held. Should this change, the public meeting will be announced and all I&APs will be invited to attend the meeting.

### Who are interested and affected parties?

An interested and affected party (I&AP) can be defined as any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by a proposed activity or any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the activity.

The public participation process allows I&APs the opportunity to:

- Obtain clear and accurate information about the proposed activity;
- Indicate their viewpoints, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
- Suggest alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

### What are the responsibilities of an interested and affected party?

In order to participate effectively, I&APs should:

- Become involved in the process as early as possible;
- Register as I&APs;
- Advise the consultant of other I&APs who should be consulted;
- Contribute towards the design of the public participation process to ensure that it is acceptable to all I&APs;
- Follow the process once it has been accepted;
- Read the material provided and actively seek to understand the issues involved;
- Give timely responses to correspondence;
- Be respectful and courteous towards other I&APs and the environmental consultant;
- Refrain from making subjective, unfounded or ill-informed statements;
- Recognize that the process is confined to issues that are directly relevant to the application.

### Availability of Reports

The following reports will be made available to interested and affected parties for evaluation purposes-

- Background Information Document (BID);
- Draft Basic Assessment Report;
- Final Basic Assessment Report;
- Environmental Authorisation and Reasons for Decision.

A copy of the above-mentioned documents will also be provided on our website: [www.cleanstreams.co.za](http://www.cleanstreams.co.za)

### How to comment

Comments, questions, issues of concern or objections can be made in writing (by fax, e-mail or post). For your convenience, a comment sheet is attached to this document. Should you not be able to provide us with written comment, please give us a call.

If you do not wish to submit comments, please still provide us with your contact details and indicate whether you would like to remain on the mailing list.



## Project Description

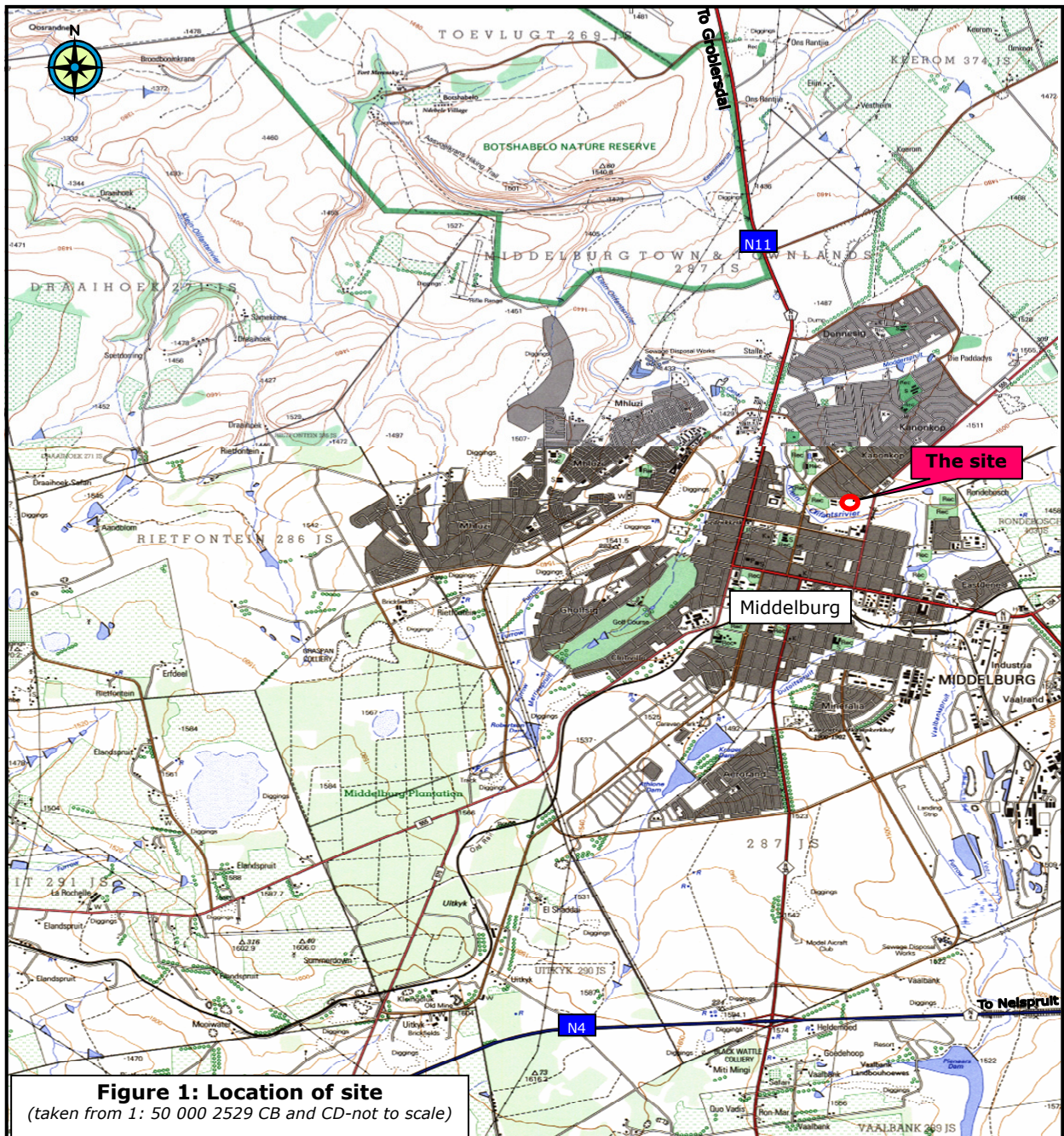
Middelburg Preparatory School is in need of new school premises as their current premises in West Street, Middelburg, is too small. The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality donated Portion 362 (a portion of Portion 27) of the farm Middelburg Town and Townlands 287 JS to the school for the purpose of developing the said primary school catering for Grade RR to Grade 7.

The said property is located in Springbok Avenue adjacent to Steelcrest High School, Middelburg X4.

Figure 1 indicates the location of the site. The site is 2 hectares in extent and currently vacant.

The property will be rezoned from 'Agricultural' to 'Educational' in order to develop the said primary school.

Figure 2 provides an indication of the proposed site development plan.



## Proposed layout plan

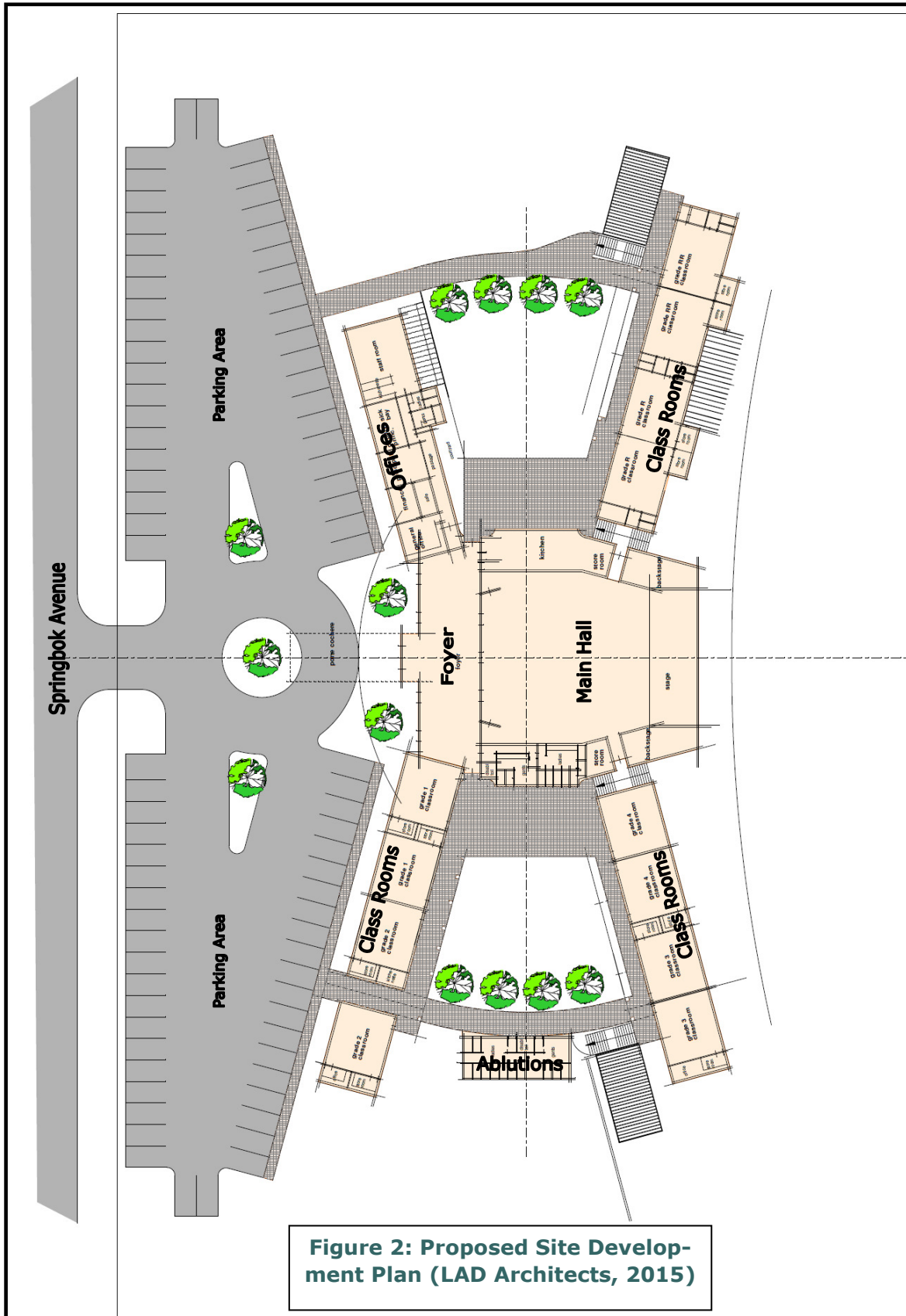


Figure 2: Proposed Site Development Plan (LAD Architects, 2015)



## Process to be followed

In order to determine whether approval can be obtained for a proposed activity, a specific procedure must be followed. Government Notice R982 regulates the procedure for the submission, processing and consideration of applications. In short, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) must apply the following:

- complete an application form (Regulation 16);
- compile a Basic Assessment Report (Regulation 19 and Appendix 1 to the Regulations);
- follow a public participation process (Regulations 39–44).

The process that will be followed by the EAP as well as the anticipated timeframes are attached for perusal. The aim of the process is to ensure that the environmental impacts are considered, the relevant I&APs are consulted and the decision making authorities are provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

Information with regards to the following environmental features of the said site will be provided in the Basic Assessment Report:

- Topography
- Geology
- Soil
- Land use
- Natural vegetation/plant life
- Animal life
- Surface water
- Groundwater
- Air quality
- Noise
- Sites of archaeological or cultural interest
- Sensitive landscapes
- Visual aspects
- Traffic
- Sense of place
- Interested and affected parties

The Basic Assessment Report will thus provide information regarding the planned activity, the environmental features of the said site and the public participation process followed. It will also provide an indication of the potential impacts that could result during the construction and operational phases of this project as well as possible mitigation/management measures to be implemented.

*It would be appreciated if you could complete the attached comment sheet indicating your issues of concern and/or objections and could forward this comment sheet to Clean Stream Environmental Services by **8 June 2015**.*

Advertise project in local newspaper (30 days for registration as I&AP)  
8 May 2015 – 8 June 2015

WE ARE HERE

Consultant to conduct basic assessment exercise (60 days) and compile Basic Assessment Report  
May–June 2015

Submission of application form with DARDLEA  
July 2015

DARDLEA to acknowledge receipt and issue reference number (10 days)  
July 2015

Submit draft Basic Assessment Report to I&APs for evaluation (30 days)  
July/August 2015

Revise Basic Assessment Report (10 days)  
August 2015

Submit Basic Assessment Report and comment from I&APs to DARDLEA for evaluation  
August 2015

Make revised Basic Assessment available to I&APs for comment (21 days)  
September–October 2015

DARDLEA to grant or refuse authorisation (107 days)  
End October–December 2015

Inform I&APs of DARDLEA's decision (within 14 days)  
December 2015

Appeal process

Public Participation

PLEASE NOTE: TIME TABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGE THROUGH PROCESS FOLLOWED

