

# **A STAGE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS UITZICHT, KNYSNA**

Prepared for

**Chris Mulder and Associates Incorporated**

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Prepared by

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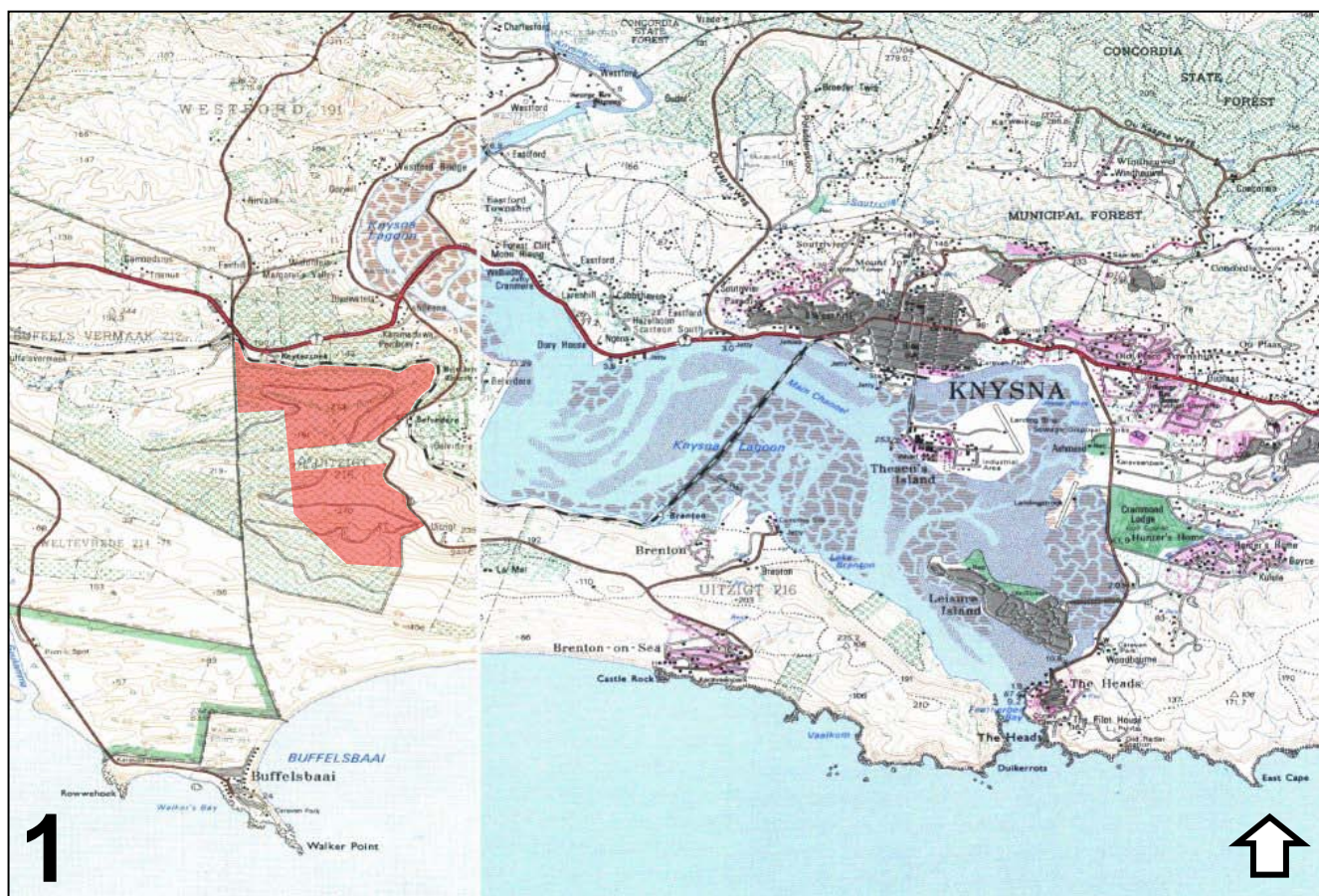
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) was approached by Mr Pieter Badenhorst<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Chris Mulder and Associates<sup>2</sup> to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of a portion of land on the western shores of the Knysna Lagoon. The land is a portion (Portion 175) of the farm known as Uitzicht, lying on the ridge above the small residential village of Belvidere as indicated in Figure 1. The size of the property is 253.79 hectare. No buildings of any sort are indicated on the map.



Extracted from: 3423AA Knysna and 3423AB Plettenbergbaai Scale: 1:50 000

## 2. METHOD

The area was accessed in a 4x4 vehicle via a network of forestry roads that provided access to most parts of the survey area. At various locations, foot surveys were undertaken away from the vehicle. A GPS was mounted in the vehicle to navigate the tracks (many of which do not appear on the map), and carried when moving away from the vehicle to determine the geographical co-ordinates of specific heritage sites or archaeological material that was located. The WGS84 datum was used.

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### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY AREA



**Plate 1:** Location of the surveyed area viewed from Knysna

The survey area consists predominantly of rounded, rolling slopes, the highest of which reaches an altitude of approximately 270 meters above sea level.

Vegetation consists mainly of mature plantation pine, while patches of afro-montane forest vegetation are visible in places where pine has either been cleared, or not maintained. Lines of bluegum trees are also observed in places particularly along the edges of the plantation. The location of the study area as seen from Knysna is shown in Plate 1.

The northern, and a portion of the eastern edge of the site, is defined by the railway line that runs between George and Knysna (Plate 2). This is the route for both goods, and passenger trains. The most well known train is the steam powered “Outeniqua Choo-Choo” that takes tourists to George and back on a daily basis.



**Plate 2:** Looking north east from the northern boundary the railway line in the immediate foreground

Most of the eastern edge is defined by the road extending from the N2 through to the small settlements of Brenton-on-Sea and Lake Brenton. The slopes here angle down steeply encountering in part the small settlement of Belvedere on the shores of the Knysna Lagoon (Plate 3).

To the south and south east, the land slopes down steeply where plantation gives way to a series of old dunes running parallel to the coast, approximately 2 km away (Plate 4).

To the west the property is bordered by additional pine plantations. A large swathe of land



**Plate 3:** Looking east down to Belvedere and the lagoon



**Plate 4:** Looking south towards the coast along the boundary



towards the centre of the surveyed area is a separate erf and is not part of the survey. This looks like it may have once been under plantation but has now being reclaimed by the natural vegetation.

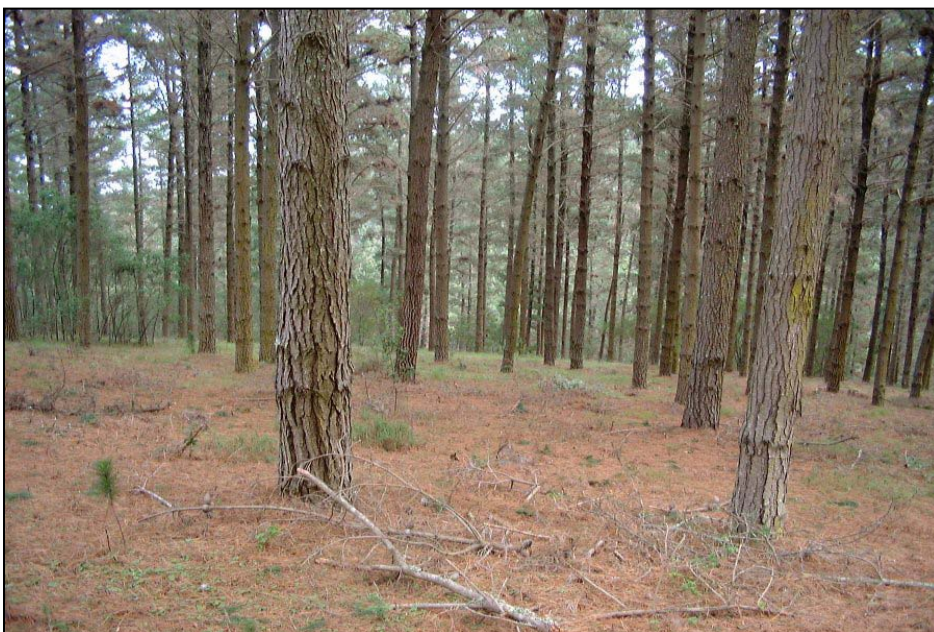
### 3.1 Limitations in conducting the survey

Preliminary development plans for the area were not provided, so it is not possible at this stage to comment on the exact nature of the kinds of impacts any form of development will cause apart from identify possible heritage issues that could result. The site is in a very prominent position which will ultimately raise concerns in terms landscape and visual impacts.

As with most pine plantations, fallen needles lie thick on the ground forming a dense mat (Plate 5). This prevents a thorough surface inspection. In addition, where pine has been cleared, natural vegetation has re-grown to form impenetrable thickets. Although this limitation exists, observations with regard to the archaeology have been made in areas that have been



**Plate 6:** Thick mat of pine needles on tracks

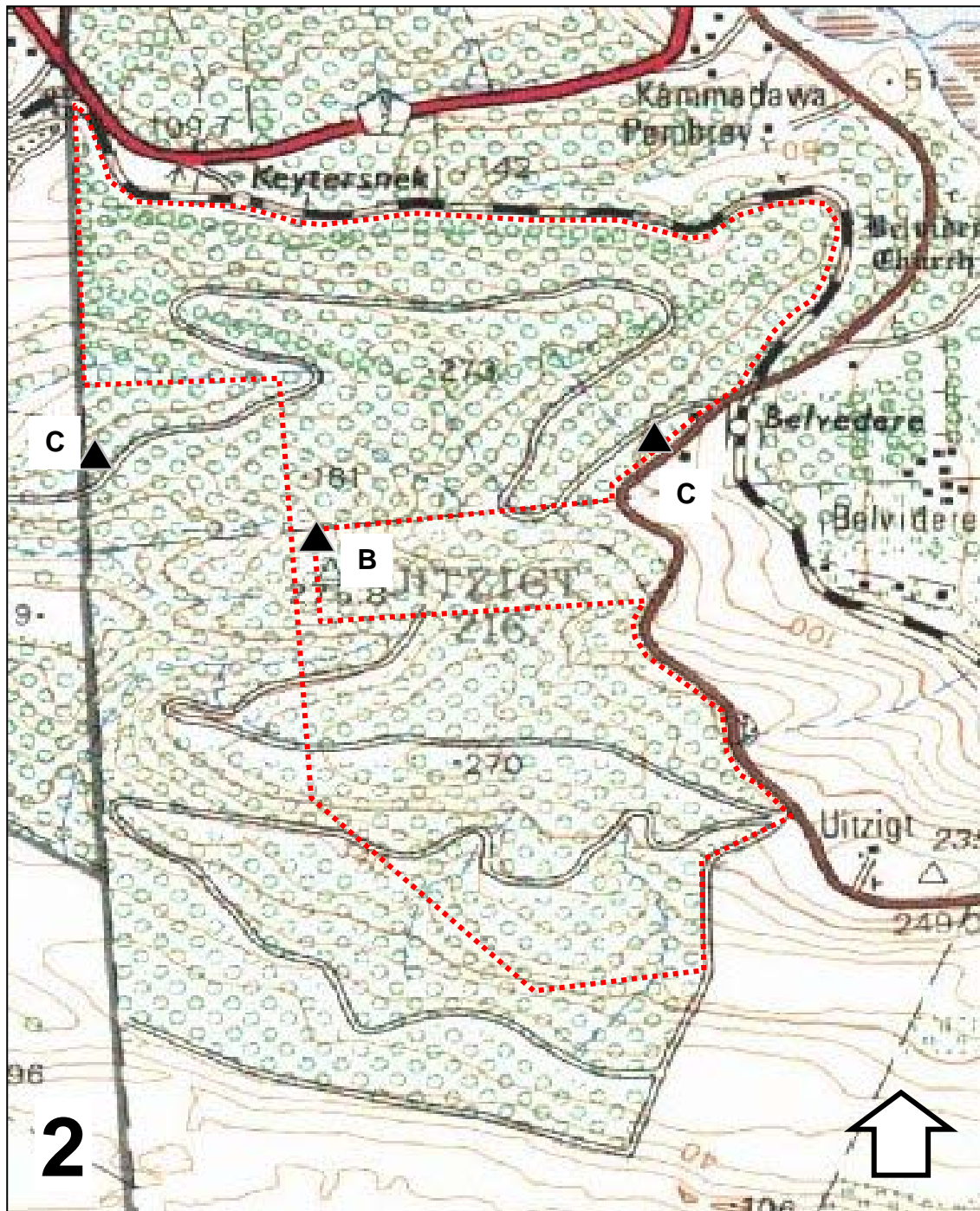


**Plate 5:** Thick mat of pine needles on steep slopes

recently cleared, as well as in cuttings along the edges of the forestry roads (Plate 6). These observations, in association with those made elsewhere in the area where similar surveys have been conducted, suggest that overall, poor surface visibility does not significantly alter our conclusions.

#### 4. FINDINGS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

Only a single archaeological occurrence (UTZ A) was found within the survey area (Figure 2). Two additional sites (UTZ B and UTZ C) were observed just outside of the area. The only structures that were observed consist of a reservoir, and a few wooden structures of relatively recent vintage. The wooden structures seem to be related to forestry activities, while the reservoir could have had a connection in the past with the supply of water to locomotives.





## 4.1 UTZ (A)

34°02'43.8"S 22°59'22.4"E

**Description:** The site lies in an erosion gully next to one of the access tracks and consists of a scatter of Early Stone Age (ESA) artefacts. While most of the material consists of flakes and chunks, a single cleaver and handaxe (type: pick) were observed and photographed (Plate 7). The material is associated with ferruginous gravels. All artefacts are made on quartzite.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation of the site is required.



**Plate 7:** A cleaver and a handaxe

## 4.2 UTZ (B) and UTZ (C)

Both of these sites lie outside of the area but have been included to indicate the types of artefacts that occur in the vicinity. At site (B), a single radial core made on quartzite was present, while at site (C), a scatter of artefacts dating to the Middle Stone Age (MSA) was observed (Plate 9). The isolated find at (B) may also be of MSA origin.



**Plate 8:** A radial core found at UTZ B



**Plate 9:** A selection of MSA artefacts from UTZ C

## 5. FINDINGS: LANDSCAPE ISSUES

While it is clear that there are no specific heritage sites within the study area that will represent significant impacts, however an area of concern is the cultural landscape of the site. Commercial forest within the context of the Knysna area has heritage significance in terms of what is now accepted as being typical of the area since most of the indigenous forest was cut down by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Landscapes such as this are protected by the provisions of section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act and will require the approval of Heritage Western Cape if deforestation is to take place and the property sub-divided.

This report is unable to comment on the kind or extent of future development of the area and the specific impacts that may be involved, however it is possible to isolate some potential landscape issues that will need to be addressed in the EIA for the site, as well as the planning stages of the development.

- *Site prominence and identity* The development area is visible from the N2, the town of Knysna, Belvedere, the heads and virtually the entire lagoon edge in one form or another. Removal or development of the green belt (albeit alien vegetation) will have a considerable impact on local character and identity. Specific expert attention will need to be paid to the spatial-visual qualities of the site with respect to its wider surroundings as the potential impacts of ill-considered densification of the study area will be very high.
- *The Outeniqua railway* The proximity of this popular tourist route on the boundary of the development area will require very specific planning treatment to eliminate any adverse effects that any development may have to the visual qualities of the route. Special attention will be needed to create suitable green corridors and buffer zones in this regards.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Our observations suggest that there is relatively little of specific heritage significance within the survey area. Early Stone Age material is the most prevalent trace of early human settlement and is likely to be encountered wherever there is surface disturbance.

Cultural landscape issues will need to be convincingly addressed as these are clearly the areas where the greatest potential for negative impacts on a broad local scale exists.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In our opinion, no significant impacts on specific heritage material within the study area have occurred as a result of forestry activities, nor are they likely to occur as a result of development. No Further intervention by heritage specialists such as archaeologists or built environment specialists is necessary, however it is recommended that:

- A stage 2 heritage study be conducted by an AHAP (Association of Heritage Assessment Professionals) accredited planner. He or she will need to work with the



development team to determine/review any design informants that would mitigate the impacts to landscape that may result from any proposed development.

- Fives copies of this report (ACO will provide a digital copy) must be sent to the Built Environment and Landscape Committee (Belcom)<sup>3</sup> of Heritage Western Cape who will review the findings of this report and recommend whether the development proposal be passed, and any conditions that may pertain. Belcom has power of veto over any proposed re-zonings or development in the Western Cape that may adversely affect heritage resources as defined by the National Heritage Resources Act.

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