

**Architectural Impact Assessment for properties affected by
the proposed Tongaat Hulett uShukela Highway Project,
Tongaat, eThekweni Metropolitan Council**



Fig 1: Pergola entrance to Herrwood House

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Heritage Impact Assessment of properties affected by the proposed
uShukela Highway Project, Tongaat
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1. Introduction

Debbie Whelan of Archaic Consulting was requested by Stephanie Williams of Kerry Seppings Environmental Specialists cc to carry out a Phase II Heritage Impact Assessment on properties located on the parent farms Lot 49 862 and Klipfontein 922. These are identified as being the current Estate Manager's House (S29° 34'935 E31 °8'215) and Herrwood House (S29°35'385 E31°7'915) the latter occupied for some time by the Saunders Family. This instruction was in light of a Phase I Impact Assessment as carried out by eThembeni Cultural Heritage which noted of the two buildings that they dated to around the 1950s, and had low heritage value.

2. Methodology

Debbie Whelan visited the site on 27th March 2013 and inspected both Herrwood and the Estate Manager's House taking photographic documentation. This was supplemented by other information available in the public domain, such as the Land Registers at the Deeds Office in Pietermaritzburg, and the Provincial Archives Repository, also in Pietermaritzburg. Other published materials such as those volumes dealing with the development of the sugar industry and particularly, those volumes published by Christopher Saunders (2007) documenting the history of the Tongaat Hulett Company.

3. History of Klipfontein and Herrwood House

As a property this farmstead dates back to the first alienation of lands to European settlers. Like many similar, Klipfontein 922 was a Dutch farm granted in 1850 to Jan Isaac Meyer. After the Dutch exodus, it was transferred to speculators, in this case E Chiappini and Company. Having entered into business dealings, they sold the property to new partners RM Laffans and WPW Norsworthy in 1857 (Osborn 1964:203) and from thence it was transferred to the notorious Natal Land and Colonisation Company. Three years later, the Remainder of 1078 acres was transferred to James R Saunders who had been employed by the above syndicate as manager of their affairs. In 1896, it was registered in Saunders' own company's name, the Tongaat Sugar Company. Thus much of Klipfontein has been associated with the Saunders family for nearly 150 years.

Herrwood is located on an old subdivision D alienated from the parent farm in 1860 and sold to James Cockburn. It was on this farm that Percy Starling¹, developed the property currently known as Herrwood. He is known to have developed the farm and the homestead. Saunders describes that 'Herrwood farm had been acquired either before or shortly after the flotation of the Tongaat Sugar Company by Percy Starling from a Mr Pelly...Percy Starling was Gertrude Saunders's elder brother, and appears to have done fairly well as he developed the farm 'Herrwood'....the Herrwood farmstead was assumed to have been the home of William Wood, the Reverend Francis Owen's boy interpreter who at the age of 12, was to witness the massacre of Piet Retief...' (Saunders 2007 201).² Starling was a good but hard farmer, and certainly tough on his staff, most of which were indentured Indian labour. Indeed, most archival references to Starling involve complaints to the Protector of Indian Immigrants directed both to him and by him. The earliest mentions of Starling were in 1901, suggesting that he had already been farming for a couple of years by that time.

Saunders notes that 'In January, 1932 Edward was to acquire from his brother in law, Percy Starling, Herrwood farm and house. In regard to this acquisition no money payment was made...There is no further mention or report concerning the acquisition of Herrwood, except that it is known that the house and stables were to be occupied by the Field Manager, Theodore Watson, and an adjacent cottage was to be refurbished and become the bachelor quarters for the newly formed field section of Klipfontein' (Saunders 2007:65). Starling intended to retire in Durban, hence wanting to hand over the farm to his brother-in-law. This property transfer not only indicates that there were dwellings on the site in which Percy Starling lived, but also that it is most likely that the house and outbuildings on the site, including the stables, dated back to at least the beginning of the 20th century.

In his seminal work on Tongaat (1960), Watson, the intended inhabitant of this house, does not elaborate on its state at the time, its extent nor its condition during his tenure, had he lived there. Certainly the 1937 aerial photograph is indistinct as to its extent, but certainly the roofscape appears to differ from today's strongly linear north-west facing house.³

From this point in the research, it is suspected that, at this transaction, the majority of the new works were carried out resulting in the Herrwood House of today. Robert Gwelo Goodman was a good friend of Douglas Saunders, the latter whom assumed the reigns of the company on the death of Edward Saunders in the late 1930s. Not only was Goodman responsible for the noted Hambanathi Village, but also alterations to the house and garden at Amanzimnyama in 1937. He was strongly inspired by the work of Thibault and Anreith, creating an alternative Union Period Cape revival. Ivan Mitford-Barberton, on the other hand, is recorded in both Saunders (2007) and Watson (1960) as having completed the sculptures to the Maidstone Trading Company building, and the Tongaat Market (mid-1940s), as well as sundry other sculptures including the Tongaati Lions and the evocative Tongaat gate posts (Ibid:200 fol.). He does state that 'Vir die Tongaat-suikermaatskappy in Maidstone, Natal het ek drie groot argitetoniese panele (sement) en vyf brons fonteinfigure, asook 'n veselglas-olifant, 'gemaak (Mitford-Barberton 1962:15), suggesting that the third panel could well have been that at Herrwood. Mitford-Barberton was a noted South African Sculptor who lectured at the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town from the early 1930s. The direct and actual participation of these two artists is unverified at this point in the research.

¹ Edward Saunders married Gertrude Starling of Saffron Walden in 1894 and they moved to live at Inyaninga. Gertrude's brother Percy purchased the farm in 1895.

² The Land Registers note that after Cockburn, the property was transferred to Richard Godden (1862), then to William Berry, to Annie Studd in 1890 and then to Pelly in 1894.

³ An attempt was made at verification of this through establishing who was living in the house in the mid-1930s and the mid-1940s in absence of any clarity in this regard. Unfortunately, the Natal Directories did not provide any evidence as to where Watson or Douglas Saunders was living at the time.

3.1 Assessment of Herrwood House



Fig 2: Herrwood House entrance from south west

The contemporary Herrwood House is a simple Georgian Revival structure located in well established and designed gardens. More specifically, it could be described as 'Gwelo Colonial' after the precedent set by Robert Gwelo Goodman with his buildings built for the Tongaat Hulett Company in the 1930s.⁴ This park-like setting isolates the house from its position in the middle of the canelands north of the King Shaka International Airport. Like many properties settled at the end of the 19th century, it is situated on the top of a low hill which maximises the sea breezes. The house is accessed via a formal driveway that arrives sweeping around the house, giving glimpses of it as one moves around it. This access culminates in a processional covered pergola which ends at the formal entrance to the house. The roof is simply double pitched and covered in Marseilles tiles.

Entrance is via a formal portico to the south east, topped with a pediment which is carved with a scene of Zulu women and children. This is in the style of Ivan Mitford-Barberton, who carried out other sculptures for the Company. Flanking windows to the right are large 9/12 timber sashes, and the substantial entrance door is of a hardwood, perhaps mahogany. To the left, the windows are simple 9 pane timber windows, with the bay below them emphasised with the use of sculpture. A curved wall obscures the building to the right of the entrance, focussing the attention on the entrance portico.



Fig 3: Decorated tympanum, entrance to Herrwood in the style of Ivan Mitford-Barberton.

⁴ Watson 1960:184.

The south west façade is less dramatic, with a simple gable end which has formed into a pediment to echo the entrance using string courses and raking brickwork. Again, fenestration is simple, 9/12 timber sash windows.



Fig 4: South west façade

The northwestern façade that looks out onto the extensive grounds is similarly simply treated. A central predominant gable end collects two 12/16 timber sash windows which flank a central niche in which a sculpture is situated. Pilasters separate these elements creating a rhythm. To the left hand side is a deep, large veranda and to the right French doors opening onto a patio. The north eastern elevation is dominated by veranda and is also heavily shaded.



Fig 5: North western façade

The architectural language throughout is simple and straightforward: it is classically derived, and where pediments are not employed, simple archways are used. However, the symmetry employed in the Georgian idiom is rarely present, rather an intentional asymmetry typical of the early modernists.

The balance of the south eastern façade consists of rear entrances into the kitchen and family rooms. These are informal, compared to the other façades, and this is reinforced by the curving screen wall mentioned in the discussion of the entrance portico.

Internally, the house is restrained and has little diagnostic material to assist in verification of dates. It has most likely been subject to redecoration over the years.



Fig 6: North eastern façade from driveway pergola showing veranda space

Closely associated with the main house are a number of outbuildings. Those close to the house are constructed in the 'Gwelo Colonial' style, and, despite being pastiche in this respect, do contribute to a cohesive architectural fabric. Included in this is the office (below) which is situated in the entrance court to the main house. It is in a Georgian Revival idiom, much downscaled compared with the main house, with cottage pane casement windows and French doors. This is strongly suspected of being of recent construction.



Fig 7: Office at entrance to main house

Certainly of recent construction is a cottage overlooking the putting green to the east of the main homestead. Again, its architectural style is in sympathy, and, even though it is of recent construction, it contributes to the overall architectural and environmental fabric in the spaces created between and within the buildings themselves.

The stable block as mentioned in the property transaction between Starling and Saunders in the early 1930s is still extant, and currently used as garage space. It is of brick, painted white, with a corrugated sheeting roof and elevated ventilator at the apex. The doors are timber stable doors. The building, as with all the buildings on site, is well maintained. The south east elevation reveals that this building sits on an old stone foundation.



Fig 8: Stables gabled end wall



Fig 9: Stables from direction of house



Fig 10: Stables from south east showing stone foundations

There are varieties of staff quarters: a block adjacent to the stable block has an eastern elevation in the vernacular idiom, and a western elevation in a Georgian Revival style, in order to fit into the milieu of the house (see figs 11 and 12 below)



Fig 11: Staff quarters from Labour compound



Fig 12: Staff quarters from main drive

The gardens are well designed, very well established, and consist of a strongly indigenous framework into which selected exotic species such as *Bouganvillea sp* are found. They wrap around the main house isolating it from its surrounding environs. Axes leading to grottoes and focal points in the way of benches reinforce the planned and considered nature of the grounds. Given evidence in the 1937 aerial photographs, these gardens were already established, although perhaps with very different planting plans.



Figs 13 – 17: Front gardens of the homestead Herrwood

A series of labour cottages is found down slope from the eastern side of the house, below the stables and staff quarters. These are utilitarian structures, and form a functional part of an historically operating farmstead. They are of reasonably recent construction and fairly typical examples of a building type of which many examples still exist.



Fig 18 and 19: Labour cottages below stable block

3.2 Statement of significance: Herrwood House and surrounds

Herrwood House is a good example of a sugar cane estate farmhouse constructed in a Georgian style, termed what is loosely defined as ‘Gwelo Colonial’ after Robert Gwelo Goodman, the artist and architect that designed much of the fabric of the Tongaat village in the early 1930s. It is simple architecture, and, although its provenance is not established at this point, it is significant from a variety of aspects:

- The property is strongly associated with both Percy Starling and the Saunders family who were and are pivotal members in the establishment of the sugar industry in South Africa.
- Furthermore, there are possibilities of association with Wood, an interpreter to the Zulu and present at the killing of Piet Retief and his men.
- It is most likely associated with both Robert Gwelo Goodman (design of building) and Ivan Mitford Barberton (sculptures on the tympanum of the main entrance to the house). Both artists carried out well publicised and similar work on public buildings in Tongaat Village. If the sculptures are, indeed by Ivan Mitford-Barberton, then this places the house as an important part of the South African national historical and technical record.
- The gardens are well established
- The new buildings, although pastiche and historicist, are carefully designed to blend into the fabric of the homestead and thus create uninterrupted spatial systems that complement the whole of the homestead.

| Significance | Local | regional | national | International |
|---------------|-------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Architectural | High | Medium | Medium | Low |
| Social | High | High | Medium | Low |
| Technical | High | High | High | Low |
| Historical | High | High | Low | Low |
| Scientific | Low | Low | Low | Low |

Recommendations:

Demolition of this property together with its surrounding gardens is not an option. The author strongly recommends reuse of the entire site in the development, as prestige office space or corporate headquarters. Reuse of the house in such a format is very possible. Should alterations be required to the homestead and its outbuildings, it is strongly recommended that the services of an appropriately qualified heritage architect be retained to carry out the work. It is recommended that the outbuilding remain as extant, since they form an important part in the creation of the milieu of house and garden. Should demolition permits for the labour cottages below the stable block be sought, it is in the opinion of the author that this could be considered. Furthermore, it is also suggested that the brick paving leading from the main road to the house be retained in the new development in memory of the house in context with its landscape.



Fig 20: Brick paved access road to Herrwood

4. History of Lot 49 and Estate Manager's house

This house is situated on Subdivision 8 of lot 49 862. The parent farm was originally granted to Edward Chiappini, as was Klipfontein, in 1848. As with Klipfontein, it was also associated with Nosworthy and Laffan as well as the Natal Land and Colonisation Company, suggesting early procurement as speculative. Ultimately, after much vacillation between the above parties, Subdivision 8 was alienated in 1863 as Subdivision G to Landsberg, Hoffman and Company, still speculative. Again, it was transferred to the Natal Land and Colonisation Company until eventually, in 1886 as subdivision P found permanent tenure with Jonathan Peel. In 1896 the Natal Lands and Colonisation Company transferred the remainder to Tongaat Sugar Company. Given the generic property transfer, it is suspected that this house originates in early to mid 20th century as an estate manager's house. Even though the topocadastral maps refer to this property as 'Tongaat', it is patently not Tongaat House which from photographic evidence is much more substantial.

4.1 Assessment of Estate Manager's house

The Estate Manager's house is an example of a much altered very utilitarian cottage vernacular, with a hipped/gambrel corrugated sheeting and partly enclosed veranda. Like Herrwood, this house is situated in an established garden setting, and, as such is intricately connected to its environment. It was possibly constructed in the 1920s, but little diagnostic material still exists to assist in dating it.

The building is of masonry construction which has occasional header courses visible through the bagging and painting. Sections have been plastered in smooth plaster. The French doors have been replaced with Meranti cottage pane doors, most of the windows are standard steel casement types, or timber. The veranda has been tiled in porcelain tiles. Little forethought has gone into the ongoing maintenance of the house, resulting in a series of accretions. Internally, the ceiling is standard, gypsum boarding with timber cover strips. The floors are parquet in good condition.



Fig 21: North-west view of Estate Manager's House



Fig 21: Established garden



Fig 22: View from the north



Fig 23: Accretions facing east



Fig 24: South west corner



Fig 25: Outbuilding

| Estate Manager's House | Local | regional | national | International |
|------------------------|-------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Scientific | low | low | low | low |

The Estate Manager's House is a much altered example of a vernacular veranda cottage. It has little heritage significance on any level, and, should demolition be requested, it is the opinion of the author that this can be granted. The gardens that surround it, however, could possibly be included in the new development.

5. Conclusions

Recommendations for Herrwood House and environs:

Demolition of this property together with its surrounding gardens is NOT an option. The author strongly recommends reuse of the entire site in the development, as prestige office space or corporate headquarters. Reuse of the house in such a format is very possible. Should alterations be required to the homestead and its outbuildings, it is strongly recommended that the services of an appropriately qualified heritage architect be retained to carry out the work. It is recommended that the outbuildings remain as extant, since they form an important part in the creation of the milieu of house and garden. Should demolition permits for the labour cottages below the stable block be sought, it is in the opinion of the author that this could be considered. Furthermore, it is also suggested that the brick paving leading from the main road to the house be retained in the new development in memory of the house in context with its landscape.

Recommendations for Estate Manager's House House and environs

The Estate Manager's House is a much altered example of a vernacular veranda cottage. It has little heritage significance on any level, and, should demolition be requested, it is the opinion of the author that this can be granted. The gardens that surround it, however, could possibly be included in the new development.

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- <http://www.bowker.info/IvanMitford-Barberton.htm> (accessed 14/04/2013)

KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Archives Repository

Protector of Indian Immigrants files

- II 1/104 I2140/1901 Letter from Percy AN Starling, Herrwood Tongaat: reports that Boodhoo 66359 deserted again and asks if he could be transferred.
- II 1/108 I866/1902 PAA Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Applies for a refund of the instalment \$3-10-0 paid on Mangray 76669 who died on November 29, 1900.
- II 1/114 I2722/1902 Percy Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Reports desertion of Mary Reddy 94748.
- II 1/117 I902/1903 Percy AN Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Reports that Puran Lall 96250 (Male) and Parbati 95978 (Female) deserted.
- II 1/127 I993/1904 Percy A Starling, Herrwood Tongaat: Concerning the punishment of Kandasamy and discipline in general.
- II 1/129 I1739/1904 Percy AV Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Indians No. 83680, married and one child registered, and no. 88407, single, are willing to return to India: forwards relative form duly signed.
- II 1/140 I2766/1905 Percy AA Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Asks on behalf of Garappah 110661 and Dalamah No. 110651 if their wives Chamba Tenki and Soorama are fit to be sent out to the estate.
- II 1/140 I2778/1905 Percy AA Starling, Herrwood, Tongaat: Reports that Narraidu No. 94747, Sorriah No. 110374, Per Saib No. 110454 and Venketsamy No 110292 deserted.
- II 1/127 I1123/1904 Complaints by Ilahi No. 102089 indentured to Percy AN Starling of Tongaat. Wishes to be transferred where there is no sugar cane.

Master of the Supreme Court Estates

- MSCE 29523/1939 Saunders, Edward George Arthur. (S/S Gertrude Elizabeth; Born Starling).
- MSCE 0 2323/1953 Saunders, Gertrude Elizabeth. Born Starling. Born in Saffron Walden, England. Pr/Sp Saunders, Edward George

Principal Veterinary Surgeon

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