

# **HERITAGE STATEMENT: PROPOSED NEW ELECTRICITY DEPOT FOR CITY OF CAPE TOWN, ERF 155306, WYNBERG DISTRICT, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE**

(Assessment conducted under Section 38 (1) of the  
National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) at the University of Cape Town was appointed by Sillito Environmental Consulting to undertake a baseline Heritage Statement for the construction of a new electricity depot on Erf 155306, Retreat, Wynberg District, for the City of Cape Town.

The vacant Erf is located in a commercial area of Retreat. It is situated on White Road, an extension of Tokai Road, which crosses Main Road and follows the railway line. It is bounded on the north by a retail development, to the south by a commercial building occupied by the Engedi Christian Church, to the west by the Keyser River and to the east by White Road and the railway line.

A late 19<sup>th</sup> century map of the area shows no development along this section of Retreat, but the 1934 topographical map indicates possible buildings on White Road although it is not possible to place them on Erf 155306.

The vacant erf is covered in a mix of kikuyu grass, alien vegetation (rooikrantz/Port Jackson) and Phragmites reeds adjoining the Keyser River. The property has been used for the dumping of rubble and rubbish.

A survey by Webley and Schietecatte on the 7 October 2009, revealed:

- No archaeological sites were found on the property;
- There are no buildings, graves, roads or other structures on the property;
- The construction of a 2 or 3 story electricity depot will not have a significant visual impact on the landscape as the Erf is surrounded by commercial development of a similar nature.

It is recommended that the development should be allowed to proceed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) at the University of Cape Town was appointed by Sillito Environmental Consultants to prepare a heritage statement and complete a NID for the construction of an electricity depot for the City of Cape Town on Erf 155306, White Road, Retreat.

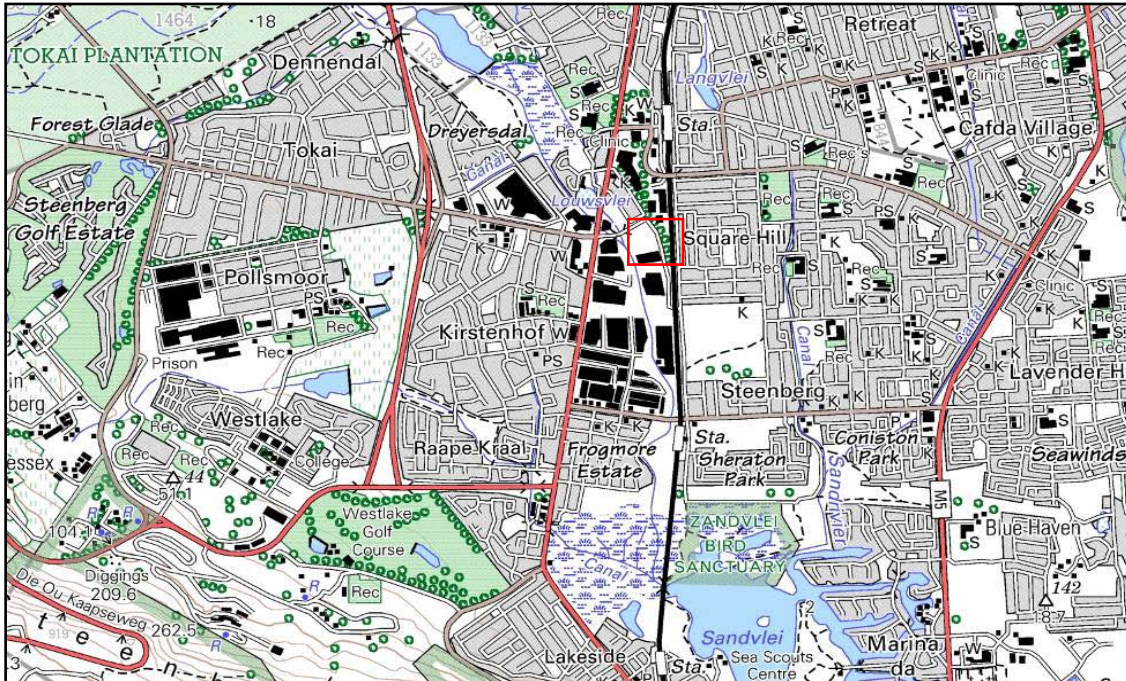


Figure 1: 1:50 000 map of 3418 AB-AD Cape Town. The position of Erf 155306 in Retreat indicated in red.



Figure 2: Design and layout of the electricity depot on Erf 155306, Retreat.



The preliminary design and layout of the development is attached. The depot will contain offices, workshops, registry, stores, cable yards, customer service facilities and parking (Figure 2). The buildings will be 2 storeys high, with the possibility of adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> storey at a later date.

## 2. HERITAGE LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) No. 25 of 1999 protects a variety of heritage resources including palaeontological, prehistoric and historical material (including ruins) more than 100 years old (Section 35), human remains (Section 36) and the built environment older than 60 years (Section 34). Landscapes with cultural significance are also protected. Under Section 38 (1) of the Act the affected properties require a heritage assessment based on their combined size of greater than 5000 m<sup>2</sup>. This report is conducted in terms of Section 38 (1) of the Act.

## 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

No archaeological remains have been reported from this general area. Retreat is located immediately north of Sandvlei (today known as Marina da Gama). The VOC apparently established a cattle post on the edge of the Vlei in 1673. In 1744 the Company established a fortified post to the west of Sandvlei. During the Battle of Muizenberg (1795), some of the Pandour troops are reported to have retreated to the Sandvlei area (de Villiers). There was apparently also an old water ditch (dug by slaves in the 1700s) which ran from Spaanschemat River all the way down to Dreyersdal vlei and joined the Keyzers River near White Road in Retreat. The purpose of the "voor" was to supply perennial running water for the vegetable farmers on the flats in the valley. Erf 155306 was surveyed in 1994 (The Surveyor General) and the land adjoining the Keyser River designated "Public Place". Early maps were consulted to determine the nature of settlement in the area (Figures 3 & 4).

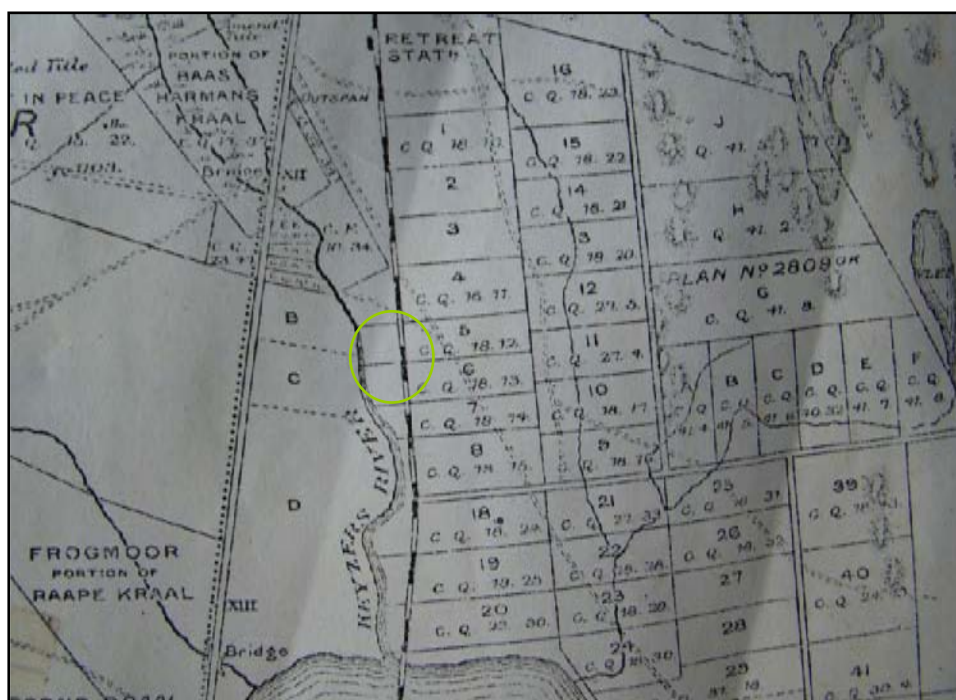


Figure 3: Late 19<sup>th</sup> century map of the Cape Peninsula, showing the position of the proposed development.



Figure 4: 1934 map of Tokai, in the Cape Peninsula. Scale 1:25 000. Commemorative reprint of the first map series issued by the Office of the Surveyor General.

#### 4. DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Erf 155306 (Figure 2) is situated between the Keyser River (west) and White Road (east) in Retreat. White Road is an extension of Tokai Road which crosses Main Road, takes a sharp southerly bend and runs parallel to the railway line. There is retail development to the north (Tafelberg Furnishers) while the large, double story commercial building to the south belongs to the Engedi Christian Church. The church acquired this building (presumably an old factory) four years ago in 2005.



Figure 5: Aerial view of the site indicating the vegetation types on the Erf. Image supplied by SEC. The kikuyu grass along the Keyser River is public access lands.



The Keyser River is a small river that flows from the Steenberg slopes of Table Mountain to False Bay near Muizenberg, about 10 kilometres away. In past times, it would have flowed through vleis and wetlands, but over the last fifty years the area has been radically changed and what remains is a managed watercourse. The land between Erf 155306 and the river is described as Public Place in the survey diagrams for the property. The Erf adjoining the Keyser River has also been significantly transformed from its original state. Large areas are covered in kikuyu grass and aliens such as rooikrantz/port Jackson. There has been a substantial amount of dumping of builder's rubble in the eastern portion of the Erf.



Plate 1: View of the property from the second floor of the Engedi Christian Church looking north-west. The old parking area in the foreground, and the builder's rubble and alien vegetation clearly visible.

## 5. METHOD

A field survey was conducted by Lita Webley and Liesbet Schietecatte on the 7 October. Two hand held Garmin GPS devices were used to record tracks and photographs were taken with a digital camera.

### 5.1 Limitations

There were a number of limitations to the survey. The eastern portion of the Erf is covered in dense kikuyu grass and alien vegetation (rooi krantz/port Jackson), while the western portion adjoining the river is covered in a thick stand of *Phragmites* sp. This prevented a close examination of the soil surface for any surface heritage remains. There was a small footpath along the southern fence of the property and it was possible to reach the banks of the Keyser's River.

## 6. FINDINGS

No archaeological remains could be identified. There are no structures on the property. There is a large amount of builder's rubble on the eastern portion (Plate 2), but it is possible that this was dumped here from elsewhere. There is no historical rubbish (i.e. older than 100 years) dumped on the property.



Plate 2: View of the dumped builder's rubble in the foreground, with commercial properties of Barlow World and Supa Quick on the western banks of the Keyser River and the Constantiaberg range in the background.  
 Plate 3: The Keyser River with the mown kikuyu grass to the right, part of the Public Place.



Plate 4: The Engedi Christian Church is located in a factory building to the south of the Erf. Plate 5: The retail store, Tafelberg Furnishers are located to the north of the Erf.



Plate 6: View of the vacant land, avenue of gum trees and the railway line to the east of the Erf, with the residential development of Square Hill (Retreat) in the background.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

The Erf was surveyed in 1994. Prior to this date it was presumably part of farmlands in the area. A map of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 3) shows no development in this area, but the 1934 topographical map (Figure 4) indicates some buildings on White Road. It is not possible to determine if they were on Erf 155306. They may have been on the adjoining properties and have subsequently been built on.

### ***7.1 Archaeological***

No pre-colonial archaeological remains were found on the Erf.

### ***7.2 Built Environment***

There are no buildings, roads, graves or other structures on the Erf. No existing historical structures older than 60 years will therefore be directly physically impacted by the development.

### ***7.3 Cultural/Natural Landscapes***

The Erf is bounded on the east by White Road, on the west by Keyser's River, on the north by a furniture supplier and on the south by Engedi Christian Church which has been housed in an old factory since 2004. The Keyser River has been transformed by urban development and there are no remnants of the original river system. There are no significant cultural or natural landscapes which will be impacted by the development.

### ***7.4 Living Heritage***

No information could be obtained on the social/cultural use of the property.

### ***7.5 Visual Impact***

The factory which houses the Engedi Christian Church (to the south of the Erf) is three stories in height, while the commercial developments to the north and to the west, are all single storied. If the electricity depot does not exceed the height of those structures on the adjoining properties, then the visual impact will not be significant.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- No archaeological sites were found on the properties;
- There no buildings, roads, graves or any structures on the property. The builder's rubble appears to relate to recent dumping;
- The properties adjacent to the Erf have no cultural and natural significance. The Keyser River system has been significantly transformed while the White Road runs parallel to the railway line;
- There are unlikely to be significant visual impacts if the electricity depot does not exceed the height of the structures on the adjoining properties.

## **9. REFERENCES**

Marina da Gama and the greater Sandvlei area: a short synopsis taken from Estuaries of the Cape Part 11.

Minutes of the Sand River Catchment Forum. May 2009.



Keyser River Restoration Project (KRRP)

Taylor, C. 2003. The site of the Battle of Muizenberg. [www.muizenberg.info](http://www.muizenberg.info)

The Surveyor General.

## **INVESTIGATION TEAM**

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