

# PROPOSED SUBDIVISION ERF 1063 CONSTANTIA



Figure 1: View along Groot Constantia Road with Erf 1063 seen on the right

**DRAFT**

## HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared in compliance with **Section 38(1)** of the National Heritage  
Resources Act (No 25 of 1999)

---

AIKMAN ASSOCIATES  
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT  
P O Box 140  
Tulbagh 6820  
Cell 083 306 67 68  
[aikman@wol.co.za](mailto:aikman@wol.co.za)

June 2015

Case number: 15042310

## Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	2
1. BACKGROUND .....	3
2. LOCALITY .....	3
3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SETTING.....	6
4. STATUTORY CONTEXT .....	7
4.1 Cape Town Spatial Development Framework (CTSDF) .....	7
4.2 Southern District Plan .....	7
4.3 Cape Town Zoning Scheme: Constantia/ Tokai Local Area Overlay Zone .....	8
4.4 NHR Act .....	8
5. TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION.....	9
6. STRUCTURES.....	10
7. HERITAGE RESOURCES .....	13
8. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	20
9. POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE HERITAGE RESOURCES.....	21
10. MITIGATION.....	21
10.1 Boundary treatment.....	21
10.2 Entrances .....	21
10.3 Tree planting .....	22
11. SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS.....	22
12. INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES .....	22
13. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	22

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed subdivision of the property into 15 portions with the mitigation measures set out in this report will have no adverse impact on the character of Groot Constantia Road which is suggested to be of Grade II significance. It will have no impact on the Groot Constantia Estate.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Richard Harris Family Trust, the owner of Erf 1063 Constantia wishes to subdivide the property. The Trust has appointed Headland Town & Regional Planners to make application to the City of Cape Town, Southern District for the subdivision of the property into 15 portions in terms of Section 24(1) of LUPO.

Aikman Associates: Heritage Management was appointed to prepare a Baseline Report and to complete the Notification of Intent to Develop (NID) form for submission to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) in terms of section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHR Act). This submission was triggered by the intention to subdivide the property measuring 6.313ha into more than 3 portions and the change in character of a site larger than 5000m<sup>2</sup>.

HWC then in a letter dated 15 May 2015 responded as follows:

1. HWC has discussed the proposed subdivision into residential units on the abovementioned erven (sic).
2. HWC noted the proposed residential development that is entailed with the subdivision might impact on the Groot Constantia Road scenic and cultural landscape.
3. HWC requires further studies addressing the provisions set in Section 38(3).

Response:

1. Since there is reason to believe that heritage resources will be impacted upon, HWC requires an HIA in terms of S.38(3) of the NHRA (Act 25 of 1999) assessing the impacts on the following heritage resources which it has identified; cultural and scenic landscape.
2. An HIA is required covering the provisions of Section 38(3).

This draft HIA has been prepared to meet HWC's requirements.

## **2. LOCALITY**

Erf 1063, "Constantia Rise", is a large privately owned property in this central part of Constantia. It is located within the Urban Edge and is zoned Single Residential (minimum erf size 4000m<sup>2</sup>). A portion of the Groot Constantia Estate forms the southern boundary of the roughly triangular property, its northwestern boundary by Groot Constantia Road and its northeastern boundary by another large privately owned property, Erf 2133, "Simonsvlei" also zoned Single Residential (minimum erf size 4000m<sup>2</sup>).

The area to the north of Groot Constantia Road contains a mixture of residential and institutional uses with the properties abutting the road on the north comprising developed single residential and medium density group housing.

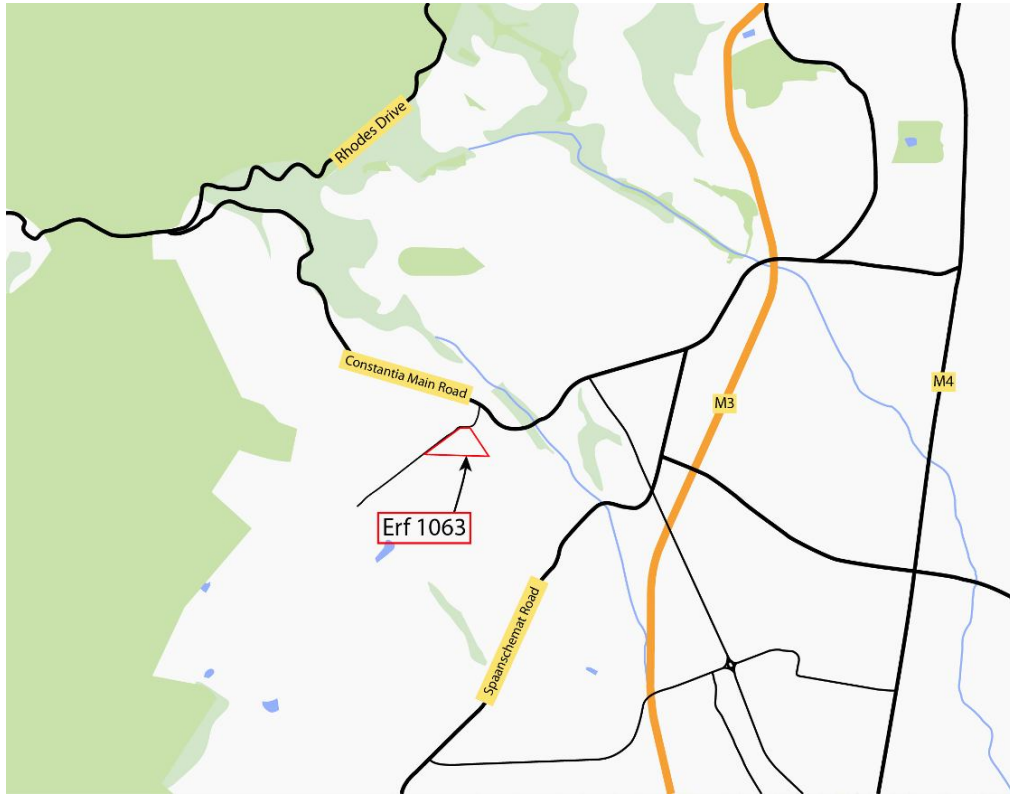


Figure 2: Locality plan



Figure 3: High Constantia Gate group housing on the north west side of Groot Constantia Road



**Figure 4: Erf 1105 (approximately 4000m<sup>2</sup> in extent) lies on the north west side of Groot Constantia Road and it's where High Constantia has its boutique wine cellar**



**Figure 5: Schoenstatt Avenue intersects with Groot Constantia Road**



**Figure 6: The driveway to the main house on Simonsvlei (Erf 2133) runs along the north east boundary of Erf 1063**

### 3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SETTING

This area was first settled in the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century when it formed part of Governor Simon van der Stel's Groot Constantia Estate. The vast estate was broken up and Erf 1063 was once part of the Van Reenen farm High Constantia. This was acquired in 1902 by RF Bertram who established a winery and distillery on the property. In 1940 Bertram ran into financial difficulties and began a process of subdivision. One of the first of these subdivisions was Erf 1063 which was sold to the late Clifford Harris, a prominent Cape civil engineering contractor in 1942. The Harris family later acquired the adjoining property Erf 2133. Harris remodelled the then Bertram's manager's house by substantially altering and enlarging it several times and created a private estate in the English tradition with ornamental gardens around the house, a kitchen vegetable garden, a small orchard and a small vineyard. Dwellings were erected for staff and stables for 4 horses for his children. A milking parlour was built for dairy cows. Paddocks were laid out for the livestock. Later, a further portion of the property was used as a garden for proteas and other indigenous plants, an interest of Harris. On his death in 1987, the property was transferred to the Richard Harris Family Trust.

In the 1960s the remaining part of High Constantia with abandoned vineyards was developed as a township leaving the historic core with its historic buildings as the Schoenstatt Roman Catholic Seminary on Erf 13753. This site is zoned for Single Residential 1 purposes.



**Figure 7: Groot Constantia Road leads to the Groot Constantia Estate. The new gates seen in the distance were erected in the late 1970s when a major refurbishment took place of the historic farmstead complex as well as the old Bertram's Winery. Erf 1063 is seen on the left with residential properties on the right**

Residential properties now line the northern side of Groot Constantia Road giving it a typical suburban character. In 1999 the then South Peninsula Municipality approved the subdivision of a 4000m<sup>2</sup> portion of Erf 1063 in the western corner of the property where a dwelling was sited.



**Figure 8: The Groot Constantia Estate common boundary with tall security fence and roads on either side**

#### **4. STATUTORY CONTEXT**

The following are applicable:

##### **4.1 Cape Town Spatial Development Framework (CTSDF)**

The property is situated inside the urban edge. New development should further the functions of the CTSDF by:

- Mitigating urban sprawl by the development of under-utilised residentially zoned land within an existing urban setting;
- Offering an opportunity for urban densification within the urban edge;
- Promoting the creation of a safe and high quality living environment.

##### **4.2 Southern District Plan**

This policy plan states that large undeveloped pockets of land “should in general be developed at slightly higher densities than their surrounding areas in support of a more compact city, but not to the detriment of the local area.”



### 4.3 Cape Town Zoning Scheme: Constantia/ Tokai Local Area Overlay Zone

The proposed subdivision is in an area zoned for Single Residential 1 purposes. In terms of the Constantia/Tokai Local Overlay Zone a minimum erf size of 4000m<sup>2</sup> is prescribed.

The local authority has already approved the subdivision of Erf 1063 into two portions, (one was portion 12 of this application and the second comprises the balance of Erf 1063). In 2011 an application to extend the validity of the subdivision until 2016 was approved.

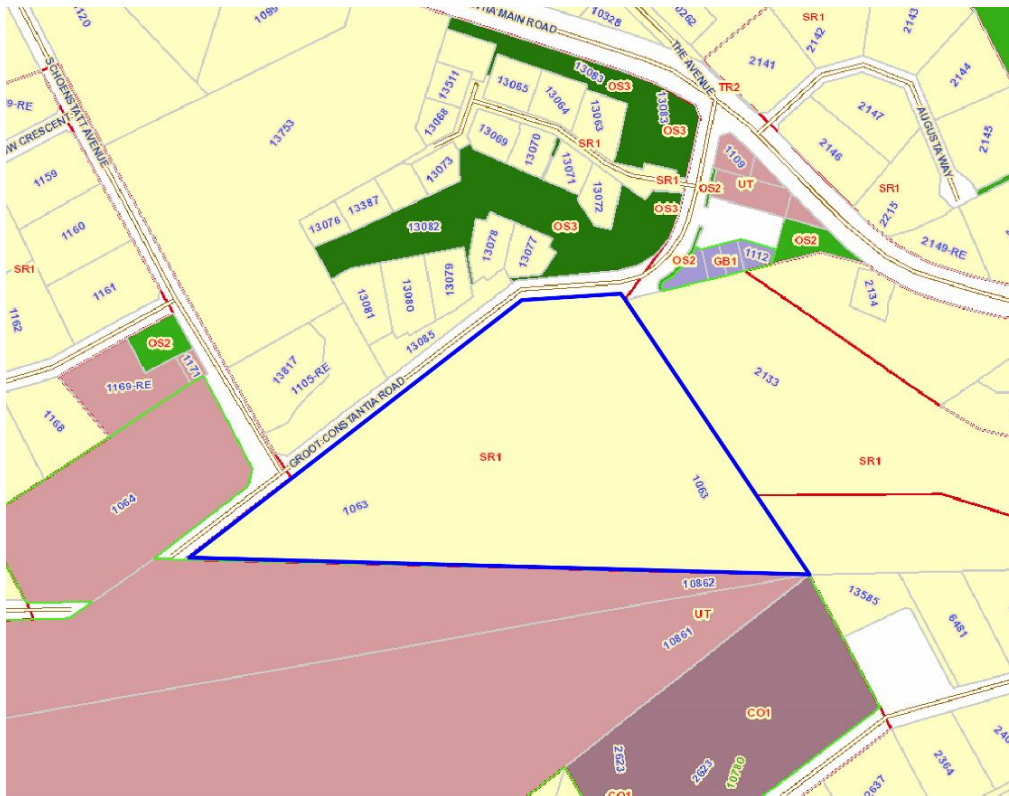


Figure 9: Extract from Zoning Scheme showing the site outlined in blue

### 4.4 NHR Act

Despite and due to the fact that Erf 1063 is within the Urban Edge and has been zoned Single Residential since 1971, the property was clearly erroneously included in the proposed Cape Winelands Serial Cultural Landscape by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). In response to a letter from SAHRA notifying the owner of Erf 1063 of the intention to proclaim the property as part of the proposed Cape Winelands Serial Cultural Landscape a detailed objection was lodged.

In this letter it was pointed out that a process of subdivision had commenced in 1999 and when the property is fully developed in terms of its zoning and development rights, it will be indistinguishable from any other part of suburban Constantia.

SAHRA has never acknowledged receipt let alone responded to the letter of objection.

It is further understood that in terms of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by SAHRA and HWC in 2013, all applications within areas identified by SAHRA as being of National Significance; Grade I, require the comment of SAHRA but HWC acts as the permitting authority. This draft HIA will therefore be submitted to SAHRA and then HWC.

## **5. TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION**

The property slopes gently from the south east Groot Constantia boundary towards Groot Constantia Road. Commencing in 1942 the property was developed as a private estate in the English tradition with ornamental gardens around the homestead, a kitchen vegetable garden, a small orchard, a small vineyard and paddocks and grazing.

A tarred road leading to the homestead bisects the property with a vineyard to the east and the houses, gardens and various outbuildings to the west.



**Figure 10: View up the main entrance driveway. This is to be retained**



**Figure 11: Vineyard to the east of the driveway. In the distance is a line of gums on the boundary with Erf 2133**

## **6. STRUCTURES**

There are 6 residential dwellings on the property and a number of outbuildings.

The core of the main house was built as a dwelling for the farm manager of the Bertram's Estate in the 1940's. Erf 1063 was originally part of the estate until it was subdivided and sold to the late Clifford Harris, a prominent Cape civil engineering contractor. He altered and enlarged the house several times. It is not architecturally distinguished. There are also four dwellings originally for staff, a flat over garaging for three cars, further garaging and car ports and stabling. These are of more recent construction.



**Figure 12: Homestead**



**Figure 13: The homestead to the left of the dwelling over garages and another dwelling to the right**



**Figure 14: Dwelling in the western corner of the property where subdivision has already been approved**



**Figure 15: Dwelling at the southeastern corner of Erf 1063**



**Figure 16: Staff dwelling**



**Figure 17: Old milking parlour**



**Figure 18: Stables**



**Figure 19: Outbuilding**



**Figure 20: Shed and workshop**

## **7. HERITAGE RESOURCES**

The setting of Erf 1063 lying between the Groot Constantia Wine Estate and Groot Constantia Road is of significance. Groot Constantia is the centrepiece of the proposed Grade 1 Cape Winelands Serial Cultural Landscape and Groot Constantia Road while not a proclaimed scenic route is a key element in the visitor experience approaching the estate. The homestead and wine museum attracts over 350 000 visitors a year. The Groot Constantia Estate Cellar is also a major attraction as are the various restaurants. While the northwest side of the road is now suburban in character, the frontage of Erf 1063 to the road is rural with a vineyard and open fields. It is put forward that the Groot Constantia Road Reserve is of Grade II significance. Any development related to this resource should be sensitive to it.

Groot Constantia Road winds around the High Constantia shopping complex then ascends a fairly steep incline and straightens out along a gently sloping route to the new late 1970s set of gates to the Groot Constantia Estate. Figures 21 to 26 below illustrate the current visitor experience.

As shown below the Groot Constantia Road boundary of Erf 1063 displays some variation. On the first section from its boundary with Erf 2133 where the vineyard flanks the route to the main entrance a low 5-strand barbed wire fence has been erected. From the main entrance of Erf 1063 running towards the new Groot Constantia Estate entrance is a high weld-mesh fence topped with razor wire. The area behind this fence was formerly used as a paddock and grazing area but is now being used to grow animal fodder and propagate plants commercially. There are two gates over this section to allow vehicular access, one to the west portion of Erf 1063 and the second to the dwelling in the western corner which has a high white painted and plastered masonry boundary wall matching and tying in with the new Groot Constantia Estate entrance gate and walls that were constructed in the late 1970's.



**Figure 21: The first part of Groot Constantia Road curves around the High Constantia shopping complex**



**Figure 22: The road then rises. The corner of Erf 1063 with a fairly steep grassy bank is seen on the left. The High Constantia Gate group housing complex is on the right**



**Figure 23: The road then straightens, crests the steepest section and heads towards the entrance gate to the Groot Constantia Estate. A low barbed wire fence has been erected at this point. The oak tree in the road reserve is at the main entrance to Erf 1063 and beyond it is the tall weld-mesh security fence topped with razor wire**





**Figure 24: The road as it approaches the new gate to Groot Constantia has an open character. The stumps of Monterey pines which once grew here within the road reserve can still be seen**



**Figure 25: A tall weld-mesh security fence topped with razor wire runs along the section of the road from the main entrance to the dwelling in the western corner where it meets the painted and plastered masonry wall**



**Figure 26: Erf 1105, a single residential property has a small vineyard flanking the north east side of the road**



**Figure 27: The wall and access gate of the dwelling at the western corner of Erf 1063 tied into the late 1970s gate to the Groot Constantia Estate**



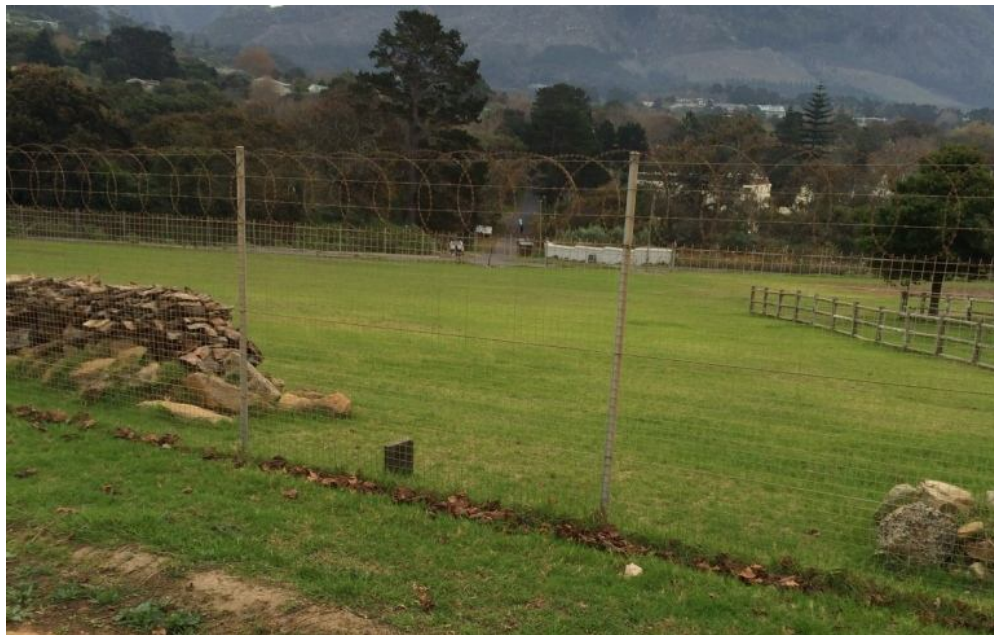
**Figure 28: Looking back down Groot Constantia Road from the new Groot Constantia Estate gate with the wall of the western corner of the dwelling on Erf 1063 on the right**

The southern boundary with the Groot Constantia Estate shows even more variation. Although the same weld-mesh and razor wire topped fencing has been used as on Groot Constantia Road for its entire length, planting on the boundary of Erf 1063 provides screening for the residential parts of the property. A section of diamond mesh razor wire fencing over the weld-mesh has been used on the boundary of the dwelling in the southeastern corner to overcome persistent breaches of security (see Figure 34).

Although this boundary is of lesser visual significance as only local residents stroll along it and horse riders use it for out rides, again development related to the estate should be sensitive to its significance.



**Figure 29: The boundary fence to the Groot Constantia Estate with the hedge providing visual screening for the dwelling in the western corner of the property**



**Figure 30: View across the paddocks from the boundary of the estate towards Schoenstatt Avenue**



**Figure 31: A line of about 50 closely spaced wild olive trees screen the central part of the property where the outbuildings are sited. Beyond is the clipped Australian cherry hedge screening the servant's quarters and homestead**



**Figure 32: Clipped Australian cherry screening the homestead**



**Figure 33: Un-screened section of the fence**



**Figure 34: Hedge screening the garden of the dwelling in the north east corner of Erf 1063**

## **8. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

It is proposed to subdivide Erf 1063 into 15 portions, all to be 4000m<sup>2</sup> or larger. Two of the erven will take new access off Groot Constantia Road, two will take access from two existing entrances with the balance of eleven erven having access from the existing main driveway via right of way servitudes.



To create the impression that this remains a single property new gates, other than the existing main gate should be identical, simple and rural in character. The existing main entrance gates should be retained.

### **10.3 Tree planting**

White stinkwood trees *Celtis africana* should be planted at 10m centres within the road reserve.

## **11. SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Investment in this development with the purchase price of the erven and the cost of building construction and landscaping taken into consideration would amount to over R1-billion. This will significantly increase the City of Cape Town's rates base when fully developed. The services levy should contribute to municipal infrastructure. Employment will be created in the construction phase and demand will be created for goods and services.

## **12. INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES**

The two registered heritage bodies; the Constantia Property Owners' Association (CPOA) and Simon van der Stel Foundation (SvdSF) SAHRA and the City of Cape Town's Heritage Resources Section are to be requested to comment on the proposed subdivision.

## **13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the implementation of the proposed mitigatory measures, the visitor experience will be enhanced and the heritage resource identified will be protected. It is accordingly recommended that the proposed subdivision be supported.