

**PROPOSED PRIVATE BURIAL PARK
PORTIONS 36, 37 AND 38 OF FARM NO 18
GOEDEMOEDSFONTEIN: PORT ELIZABETH**



Road through forest c.1866 by William Daniël van Alphen

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HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
Prepared in compliance with Section 38(8) of the National Heritage
Resources Act (NHR Act)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey and assessment that has been carried out indicates that the heritage resources of the site; the critically endangered vegetation, its landscape character and visual amenity and the historic gravesite would be conserved should the proposed development be permitted.

Sustainable social and economic benefits will be derived from the development itself at a local and regional scale. Jobs will be created.

2. BACKGROUND

Legacy Parks (Pty) Ltd. intend developing a private cemetery on Portions 36; 37 and 38 of the Farm Goedemoedsfontein No. 18, Port Elizabeth. This firm is involved in the development of a number of natural burial parks throughout South Africa. An area of 18.6 ha in extent has been selected following a careful analysis of the entire property by specialists. The park would facilitate what is referred to as “natural burial”. A natural burial ground uses trees or a flat rock which may be engraved as grave markers and in time woodland develops. Greater detail is provided in Section 8 of this report.

Eco Route Environmental Consultancy has been appointed as the independent environmental practitioner (IEP) for the preparation and submission of the application for “environmental authorisation” of the envisaged change in the use of land for consideration by the “relevant authority” in terms of the provisions of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA).

As the development will involve the consolidation of three erven and as the proposed natural burial park site is greater than 10 000m² and rezoning is required for this use, the development falls within the provisions of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHRA). Consequently application must be made to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) as at this stage an Eastern Cape provincial heritage resources authority has not yet been established. To this end this heritage impact assessment report (HIA) has been prepared.

Marike Vreken Town Planners are currently preparing an application in terms of Sections 16 and 24 of the Land Use Planning Ordinance, 1985 (15 of 1985) (LUPO) which is to be submitted to the Mandela Bay Municipality in due course. The Site Development Plan has been prepared by Rob Marneweck in association with Paul Swart Architects. These firms will be involved in detailed design.

Henry Aikman, who undertook the heritage survey and prepared this heritage assessment, is an architect and an accredited Principal member of the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners.

3. LOCALITY AND SETTING

The property is in the semi-rural Seaview coastal resort area about 25km west of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province. It is about 5km from the sea on the M9 Seaview Road, which borders the northern boundary of the property. A minor rural road borders the southern part of the property. The Island Nature Reserve, a popular tourist facility abuts the property and straddles the M9. There are a number of resort facilities in the immediate vicinity including the Seaview Lion Park and the Elephant Walk Chalets complex. The Colleen Glen township lies to the north of the site.



Figure 1: Portion of the Nelson Mandela Bay Spatial Development Framework 2009 showing the site ringed in red

4. OUTLINE HISTORY

The landscape character of the coastal area shows the marks of its evolution and human impacts over a period of about 2000 years. For millennia before then only the natural forces of wind, rain and sunshine helped to shape its form and character.

People have also lived here for at least half a million years. The earliest were small groups of hunter-gatherers who followed the seasonal round in this landscape, collecting shell fish and plants and catching wild birds and animals. They found shelter in caves and rock formations and constructed windbreaks and waterproof “skerms” in more open areas. They had little

impact on the landscape and the only evidence of their presence is found in the archaeological record in the caves, middens and fish traps along the coast. The most recent of these hunter gatherers were the San or Bushmen, who survived here into colonial times.¹



Figure 2: The site is still heavily wooded and abuts the Island Nature Reserve seen on the left. The ESKOM powerline servitude cutting along the eastern side of the property can easily be seen. The Lovemore gravesite is ringed in yellow.

It is now generally accepted that the Khoi, moved into the Cape from the northwest about 2 000 years ago with flocks of sheep. By the time the first European settlers arrived, they had extended their range up the south east coast to the Great Fish River and through barter with the Xhosas of the Eastern Cape had acquired cattle.² The Xhosa are part of the Southern African Nguni migration which slowly moved south along the east coast of Africa from the region around the Great Lakes. Their movement beyond the Fish River was largely halted as a result of their reliance on summer rainfall cereals like millet and sorghum. Raiding parties however ventured well into the

¹ BOONZAAIER, E, MALHERBE, C, SMITH, A & BERENS, P. 1996. *The Cape Herders: a history of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*. David Philip, Cape Town.

² Ibid BOONZAAIER et al

winter rainfall area and even formed alliances with the Khoi against settler expansion.

The movement of large herds across the landscape undoubtedly turned narrow game paths into broad trails. It has been suggested that these stock trails became the basis of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) trading routes and the road system that developed in the Cape and many routes are still used to this day.³ They also were known to have burned the veld to increase pasturage and this too contributed to changes in the landscape.

Unlike the San, who lived in small bands, generally fewer than 50 persons in number, the Khoi lived in village settlements of often well over 100 persons. The round hut, or “matjieshuis”, made of a frame of green branches bent over and tied together, covered by reed mats, was the basic housing structure, quick to erect and dismantle.

The principle group in the Algoa Bay area were the Gamtoos who made contact with the survivors of the *Nossa Senhora de Atalata* in the 17th Century.⁴ The first grants of land by the VOC to settler stock farmers were made in the 1750s. By then the Khoi had lost control of the area through internal wars, conflict with the colonists and diseases like small pox. They hung on as a community only at Hoogekraal close to the coast near present-day George and a mission station, Pacaltsdorp was eventually established there in 1813.

In 1799, during the first occupation of the Cape Colony by the British, a small fort was built on the hill west of the Baaken's River to guard the roadstead. It was named Fort Frederick in honour of the then Duke of York, and is still preserved. It overlooked the site of what later became Port Elizabeth. In 1820 a party of 4,000 British settlers arrived by sea. They had been encouraged by the British government to settle in the eastern Cape to strengthen the border region between the Cape Colony and the Xhosa people. At this time the seaport town was founded by Sir Rufane Shaw Donkin, the Acting Governor of the Cape Colony, who named it after his late wife, Elizabeth. In 1836 it was made a free warehousing port, and in 1837 the capital of a small adjacent district. The prosperity of the port which was followed by the construction of railways to the interior earned for the port the designation of "the Liverpool of South Africa."

³ MOSSOP, EE. 1926, *Old Cape Highways*. Maskew Miller. Cape Town

⁴ BOONZAAIER, E, MALHERBE, C, SMITH, A & BERENS, P. 1996. *The Cape Herders: a history of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*. David Philip, Cape Town. Pg 69.



Figure 3: The site on the left seen from Seaview Road (M9)

One of the 1820 settlers was H.L. Lovemore who acquired a large tract of land along the coast to the west of the growing town of Port Elizabeth. Originally known as Claaskraal, perhaps after a Khoi clan chief, he renamed it Bushy Park after one of London's royal parks. He died in 1851 and his son Charles Lovemore inherited the property. He carried on with the family's dairying and small scale stock farming enterprise. He died in 1885 and is buried in a small family gravesite on the subject property. The farm then passed to Alfred Charles Lovemore who died in 1924 and was the last member of the family to be buried there. The property was sold to the Kleinboer Gemeenskap Trust by one of his descendants in 1950 ending the family association with the property.

The early settlers exploited the hardwoods of the coastal forests, particularly yellowwood and stinkwood and attempted to farm on the poor sandy soils. Logging on the subject property only ceased about 50-60 years ago according to the botanical survey that identified coppiced tree trunks and stools. Farming has always been only marginally viable in the area and as a result it became a semi-rural residential area being so close to Port Elizabeth. The Cape Colonial Government Forestry Service attempted to develop plantations in the area from the 1890s onwards to replace the lost source of timber but by the late 1980s it was realised that forestry was not viable. Most of the old plantation areas were sold off except for an area of dense indigenous forest inland from Seaview. This land was transferred to the former Cape Department of Nature Conservation in 1987 and became the Island Nature Reserve.



Figure 4: Old pastures on the M9. These are on the western boundary of the property and are not part of the subject site



Figure 5: The road along the eastern boundary of the site showing the thick indigenous bush. The property on the right is planted with gums



Figure 6: Eastern side of the site with the Eskom line

From the beginning of the 20th Century the Bushy Park property was incrementally subdivided with the establishment of the Seaview coastal resort area and Coleen Glen residential area named after the wife of A.C. Lovemore. The area has also become an important holiday resort area with the sandy beaches and other tourist attractions like the Island Nature Reserve and the Seaview Lion Park.



Figure 7: Northern end of the servitude with invasive black wattle

5. STATUTORY AND POLICY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The property made up of the three portions is currently zoned as follows:

- Portion 36 (2,4654 ha) : Agriculture Zone I
- Portion 37 (3,2826 ha): Agriculture Zone I
- Portion 38 (30,0188 ha): Open Space Zone II

5.1 Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (March 2009)

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality approved this SDF as the applicable spatial planning policy that will guide future development in the municipal area. The detailed policies of relevance to this application are the following (Marike Vreken Town Planning's comments are highlighted):

Par 4.10: The overriding development principle entails the establishment of systems that reduce the utilisation of non-renewable natural resources. Sustainable development thus requires that natural resources be used wisely so that long-term development in ecological, social and economic terms is encouraged. Both environmental and development concerns should be integrated and balanced so that improved living conditions can be achieved without endangering sensitive natural environments or depleting natural resources;

Spatial Implication: The proposed burial park could be regarded as one of the best examples of sustainable development, since it addresses the large need of burial space, whilst simultaneously ensure conservation and protection of the environment in perpetuity;

Par 9.1.3(b): Suffice to note at this point that if the population of Port Elizabeth is to increase in the next 20 years, it will be necessary to expand the current provision of facilities and amenities if current standards are to be pursued. Moreover, additional resources are required because many existing areas are currently underprovided with facilities.

Spatial Implication: The burial park could be regarded as a much needed social facility that will address burial needs for the Metropolitan area;

Par 9.1.3(e)(i)(k): To promote and protect the environment as our common heritage with the aim of creating a pleasant environment in which to live, work, invest, and visit;

Spatial Implication: This is indeed the main aim of the burial park.

Par 9.1.3(h): At present, there is a shortage of appropriately located cemeteries with sufficient capacity to cater for longer term population growth as well as

increasing death rates due to illnesses such as HIV/Aids. To cater for this increase in demand, it is necessary to identify additional land suitable for cemetery purposes;

Spatial Implication: This paragraph confirms the need for cemetery space.

Hence the proposal addresses this need whilst also ensuring the protection of the environment in perpetuity.

6. FEATURES OF THE SITE

The features of the site are set out below:

6.1 Topography and soils

The property is located within an ancient vegetated dune field, characterized by a typically undulating Aeolian topography. A fairly prominent hill occurs in the northern part of the property from where a spur extends across the site towards the south-west. Valleys occur on either side of the spur. In the base of these valleys, drainage or erosion gullies occur. These drainage gullies are essentially conveyors of storm water after periods of heavy precipitation. Wetland Consulting Services (Pty) Ltd determined that there were no wetland characteristics in these drainage gullies.

The lowest point on the south west corner of the property is approximately 170m above mean sea level (MSL), whilst the highest part of the site is approximately 265m above MSL, the top of the centrally located spur.

Moderate gradients prevail over most of the property. There is a gradient of 1:3.8 on the steeper southern slopes and a gradient of between 1:8 and 1:12 on the higher lying portions of the site.

The soils of the property are Aeolian sands overlying clay and bedrock at a depth of more than 1.8m. Bopite Engineering Geologists was appointed to conduct a geo-hydrological study of the property and concluded that most of the property was suitable for burial purposes provided that the drainage gullies and advocated buffer zones are excluded from the burial areas.

6.2 Vegetation

A botanical and biodiversity sensitivity study was undertaken by Nature Management Services. It noted that about 80% of the property is covered with the now critically endangered vegetation type, *Alexandria Coastal Forest*. This once covered the entire coastal area from the van Stadens River to Woody Cape. Today it survives in isolated patches and in some protected areas like The Island Nature Reserve abutting the property. Alexandria forest is highly

threatened with only about 5% of the original extent of the vegetation type presently conserved under formal conservation. Woody Cape Nature Reserve represents more than 90% of the Alexandria forest vegetation type conserved.



Figure 8: Looking out over the canopy



Figure 9: Thick indigenous forest

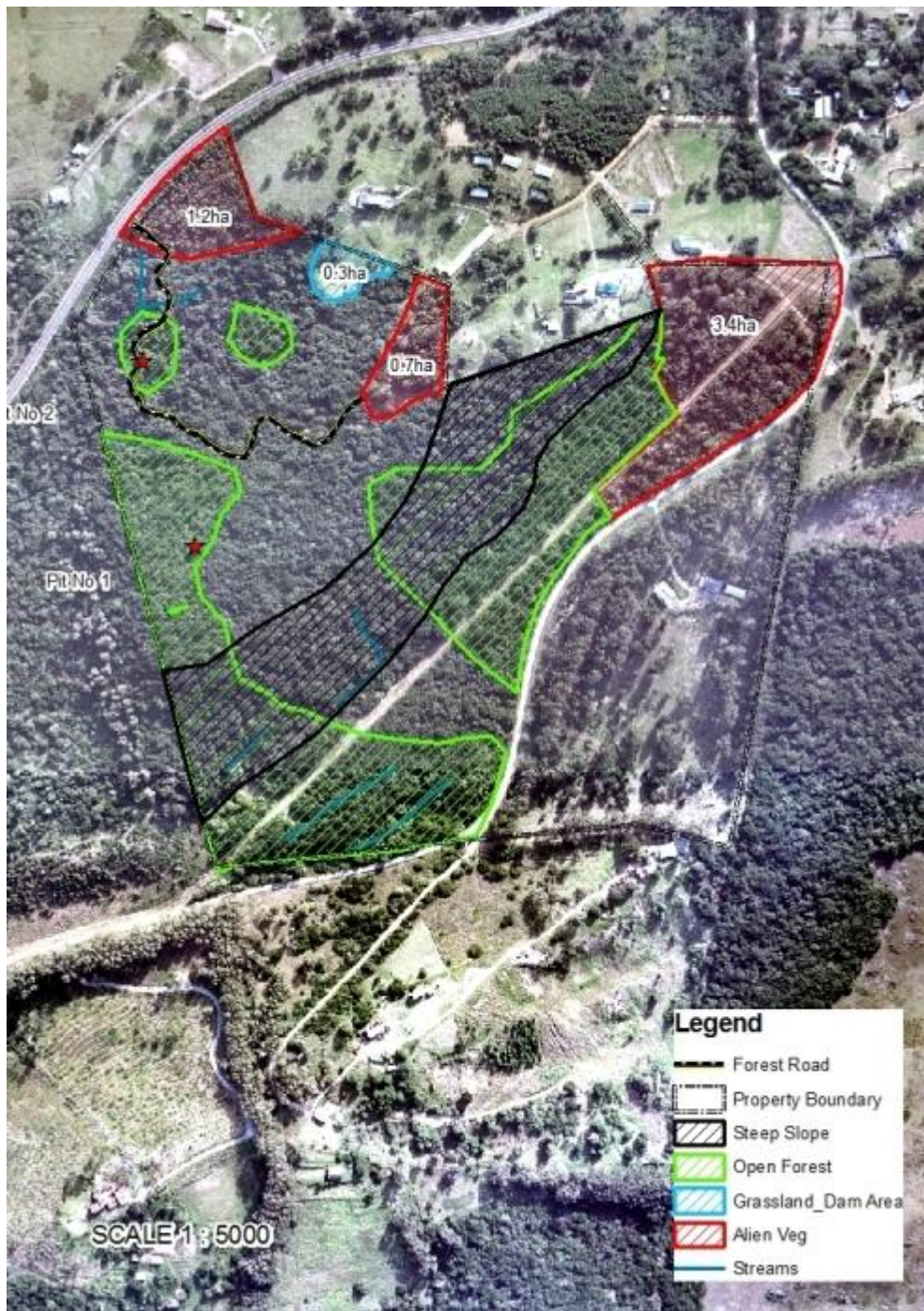


Figure 10: Analysis of the site by Nature Management Services

All of the key species of this vegetation type are present in the forest remnant on the property such as yellowwood and a dense understory of shrubs, groundcovers and vines. There are some magnificent old trees with one exceptional yellowwood in the lower part of the property. It is difficult to photograph the forest as it is very dense. The painting on the cover of this report does however provide a sense of its qualities.

The higher plateau area opposite the Colleen shopping complex contains transformed agricultural pastures with planted Kikuyu grass. Invasive alien vegetation, mostly black wattle has invaded the far eastern and western edges of the plateau bordering on the forested slopes about half of the property remains in a near pristine state

An Eskom power line more or less bisects the property and in this zone the bush has been cleared and only annual grasses survive.

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An Eskom power line more or less bisects the property and in this zone the bush has been cleared and only annual grasses survive.



Figure 11: Looking down into the dense forest canopy

6.3 Structures

There is a small gravesite of about 3m x 3m on Portion 36 of the property. A low wall of granite encloses a partly paved area with a central monument. The remains of Charles Lovemore who died in 1885 and Alfred Charles Lovemore who died in 1924 are buried there. Their descendants have had no involvement in the maintenance and protection of the structure since they sold the property in 1950.



Figure 12: Lovemore gravesite. The buildings in the background are on a separate property Portion 3 of Farm 18. It's position is shown in Figure 2

7. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The heritage or cultural attributes of a property can for convenience be grouped into four main categories: aesthetic, historical, scientific and social. The landscape character is of both aesthetic and scientific significance.

The genius locus/sense of place of this site is its agricultural character, which has a physical and narrative role in this part of Seaview. According to Lynch "sense of place" can be defined as... "*the extent to which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other places as having a vivid or unique or at least a particular character of its own.*"⁵ This property with its indigenous forest

⁵ LYNCH, K. 1992. Good City Form: The MIT Press. London.

is a remnant of this type of landscape on the coast, particularly within an area that is being urbanised. It is therefore a living example of how many coastal areas once may have looked.

The surviving forest therefore must be considered to be part of the National Estate (Section 3 of the NHRA) in terms of Sub-section (2) (d) “*landscapes and natural features of cultural significance*”.

The heritage significance of the site has been assessed in terms of HWC’s Guide to Grading. It is put forward that should be categorized as a Grade II site as the survey carried out by Nature Management Services has shown that the remnant section of Alexandria Coastal Forest is of great scientific importance and therefore must be considered to be part of the National Estate (Section 3 of the NHRA) in terms of Sub-section 3 (b) because of “*its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa’s natural heritage*”, and (d) because of “*its importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of a particular class of South Africa’s natural places*”..⁶

Any development of the property would therefore have to take the significance of the forest into consideration.

The Lovemore family gravesite is of some local historical significance and it is put forward that it should be categorised as a Grade IIIA site.

8. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

It is proposed to develop a private burial park on the property. No detailed design has been developed at this stage but the proposed development areas have been indicated. Access to the application area is currently obtained via an internal cul de sac road that services 7 rural residential properties. The proposal is to obtain a new access from the Seaview Road and to use the cul de sac road only as a temporary construction access and the existing access of Portion 37 onto the lower Seaview road will be closed.

Detailed landscaping and architectural plans are to be prepared. A Site Development Masterplan prepared by Rob Marneweck Architects is attached. The key component is the rehabilitation of the disturbed areas of the property.

⁶ A Short Guide to Grading (Version 5). 2007. Heritage Western Cape.

The natural burial park concept has been pioneered in the United States and Europe where because of environmental concerns about the impact of conventional cemeteries it is now the preferred form of burial. Bodies are prepared for burial by undertakers who use no chemical preservatives or disinfectants. This ensures that microbial decomposers are not destroyed and can break down the remains in the ground. Bodies are buried in biodegradable coffins or wrapped in shrouds. Graves are not marked by traditional headstones. Instead trees are planted or a rock is placed over the gravesite. There is usually a chapel or pavilion where visitors can sit within the emerging forest as well as sculptures and benches. The forest is often referred to as a “Forest of Memory”. As in all cemeteries, records are kept of the exact location of each interment, using survey techniques such as GIS.

Irrigation is not used, nor are pesticides and herbicides applied. The forest provides habitat for birdlife and small animals. For people who are mindful of the cyclical nature of life, a natural burial is an alternative to conventional burial methods.

It is proposed to provide new burial space of approximately 18,6ha on the consolidated application area on areas currently covered with invasive alien vegetation or on the old open pastures. These areas are to be rehabilitated through the planting of endemic shrubs and trees. To this end a nursery for the propagation of endemic species to be used for rehabilitation is to be established. Indigenous plants that can be removed from construction areas are to be stored in the nursery until they can be used. The existing forest areas are only to be used for the dispersal of ashes and as part of the park experience. Walkways would be provided.

New internal access roads will be constructed and access is proposed from the Sea View Main Road to the north of the application area. The following ancillary facilities will be provided in the burial park:

- A chapel and ancillary buildings of approximately 1000m² on the top of the spur;
- A parking area will be provided near the chapel on a portion of Portion 36;
- Ash interment areas will also be provided on the steeper parts of the application area;
- An access gate with information centre, administrative and maintenance buildings of approximately 300m² will be provided near the access gate to the north of the application area

- A new information centre of approximately 200m² is proposed in close proximity to the existing dam. This centre will be used as an environmental education centre and will be available for school groups;
- Further maintenance buildings are proposed near the existing Lovemore family gravesite on Portion 37. Detailed landscaping will screen these structures from the gravesite;
- Buffer areas of at least 50m in width are proposed along the two drainage channels on the application area.

The development proposal will involve the following applications to be made in terms of the Land Use Planning Ordinance, 1985 (Ordinance 15 of 1985):

- **Rezoning:** Application is to be made in terms of Section 16 of for the rezoning of a Portion of Portion 36 and Portions 37 of the Farm Goedemoedsfontein No. 18, Port Elizabeth from “Agricultural Zone” to “Open Space Zone II” for the purposes of a private burial park;
- **Subdivision and Consolidation:** Application is to be made in terms of Section 24 to subdivide a portion of Portion 36 (\pm 6650m²) and to consolidate this portion with Portion 38 of the Farm Goedemoedsfontein. This is a disturbed portion and will be utilised for parking for the burial park. It is proposed to use this disturbed area to avoid disturbance of the indigenous vegetation on the application area.

9. IMPACT ON HERITAGE RESOURCES

It is put forward that the proposed natural burial park could have a positive impact on the landscape identified as being of heritage significance. It can ensure the continuity and extension of the Alexandria Coastal Forest component of the landscape.

The site’s heritage, visual amenity will not be compromised if the landscape plan that is required takes these concerns into consideration.

The historic gravesite is to be protected.

10. SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The development will offer the people of the city an alternative to conventional burial. It will create jobs and will contribute to meeting a recognised shortage of burial sites in Port Elizabeth.

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The EIA and rezoning processes will allow public participation in terms of the advertising provisions of NEMA and LUPO.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is accordingly recommended that the development of the property as a natural burial park be supported subject to the following;

- The remnant indigenous forest area should be placed on the Heritage Register as a Grade II site in terms of Section 30 of the NHR Act;
- The Lovemore family gravesite should be categorised as a Grade IIIA site and interpretive material be erected to provide an understanding of the transformation of this landscape that this family initiated;
- A landscape plan should be developed that ensures that the new areas of woodland ensures the succession of the forested areas of the property and enhances its character.