

**CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
OF SOUTHDOWNS FARM, FORT NOTTINGHAM,  
KWAZULU-NATAL.**



**ACTIVE HERITAGE cc.**

**For: Nature Stamp**

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

EIA	Early Iron Age
ESA	Early Stone Age
HISTORIC PERIOD	Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1820 in this part of the country
IRON AGE	Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 1000 Late Iron Age AD 1000 - AD 1830
LIA	Late Iron Age
LSA	Late Stone Age
MSA	Middle Stone Age
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998 and associated regulations (2006).
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and associated regulations (2000)
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
STONE AGE	Early Stone Age 2 000 000 - 250 000 BP Middle Stone Age 250 000 - 25 000 BP Late Stone Age 30 000 - until c. AD 200

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A cultural heritage survey Southdowns Farm, Fort Nottingham identified no heritage sites. The area is also not part of any known cultural landscape. There is no archaeological reason why development may not proceed on the property as planned. However, attention is drawn to the South African Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act no 4 of 2008) which, requires that operations that expose archaeological or historical remains should cease immediately, pending evaluation by the provincial heritage agency.

## **1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT**

The consultant was approached by Nature Stamp to conduct a heritage impact assessment (HIA) of Southdowns Farm, Fort Nottingham.

According to the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (NHRA) (Act No. 25 of 1999), the heritage resources of South Africa include:

- a. places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- b. places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- c. historical settlements and townscapes;
- d. landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- e. geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- f. archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- g. graves and burial grounds, including-
  - i. ancestral graves;
  - ii. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
  - iii. graves of victims of conflict;
  - iv. graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
  - v. historical graves and cemeteries; and
  - vi. other human remains which are not covered in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983);
- h. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;
- i. movable objects, including-

- i. objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
- ii. objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- iii. ethnographic art and objects;
- iv. military objects;
- v. objects of decorative or fine art;
- vi. objects of scientific or technological interest; and
- vii. books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).

The newly promulgated KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act No. 4 of 2008) also makes specific mention to rock art and archaeological sites.

It is furthermore stated that:

—(1) No person may destroy, damage, excavate, alter, write or draw upon, or otherwise disturb any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Council.

(2) Upon discovery of archaeological or palaeontological material or a meteorite by any person, all activity or operations in the general vicinity of such material or meteorite must cease forthwith and a person who made the discovery must submit a written report to the Council without delay.

(3) The Council may, after consultation with an owner or controlling authority, by way of written notice served on the owner or controlling authority, prohibit any activity considered by the Council to be inappropriate within 50 metres of a rock art site.

(4) No person may exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb, damage, destroy, own or collect any object or material associated with any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.

(5) No person may bring any equipment which assists in the detection of metals and archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, or excavation equipment onto any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, or meteorite impact site, or use similar detection or excavation equipment for the recovery of meteorites, without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.

(6) (a) The ownership of any object or material associated with any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site, on discovery, vest in the Provincial Government and the Council is regarded as the custodian on behalf of the Provincial Government.

(b) The Council may establish and maintain a provincial repository or repositories for the safekeeping or display of—

(i)

archaeological objects;

(ii)

palaeontological material;

(iii)

ecofacts;

(iv)

objects related to battlefield sites;

(v)

material cultural artefacts; or

(vi)

meteorites.

(7) The Council may, subject to such conditions as the Council may determine, loan any object or material referred to in subsection (6) to a national or provincial museum or institution.

(8) No person may, without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council, trade in, export or attempt to export from the Province—

(a)

any category of archaeological object;

(b)

any palaeontological material;

(c)

any ecofact;

(d)

any object which may reasonably be regarded as having been recovered from a battlefield site;

(e)

any material cultural artefact; or

(f)

any meteorite.

(9) (a) A person or institution in possession of an object or material referred to in paragraphs (a) – (f) of subsection (8), must submit full particulars of such object or material, including such information as may be prescribed, to the Council.

(b) An object or material referred to in paragraph (a) must, subject to paragraph (c) and the directives of the Council, remain under the control of the person or institution submitting the particulars thereof.

(c) The ownership of any object or material referred to in paragraph (a) vest in the Provincial Government and the Council is regarded as the custodian on behalf of the Provincial Government.

This study aims to identify and assess the significance of any heritage and archaeological resources occurring on the site. Based on the significance, the impact of the development on the heritage resources would be determined. Then appropriate actions to reduce the impact on the heritage resources would be put forward. In terms of the NHRA, a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of:

- a. its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- b. its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- c. its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- d. its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- e. its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;

- f. its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- g. its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- h. its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa; and
- i. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

**Table 1. Background information**

Consultant:	Frans Prins (Active Heritage) for Nature Stamp.
Type of development:	The proposed Southdown Farm project involves the construction of a dairy facility and effluent lagoon, and the transformation of land to cultivated pastures and crops. The farm is approximately 572 hectares in extent, with some portions having been previously transformed and other areas currently still virgin veld. There is an extensive network of wetland area, some of which may already be transformed and under pasture. It is proposed to irrigate transformed pastures with organic effluent from the dairy. Apart from the Conservation Zone and dairy site, all other areas of the farm are proposed to be cultivated (Figs 2 & 3)
Rezoning or subdivision:	rezoning
Terms of reference	To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment
Legislative requirements:	The Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and following the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, 1997 (Act No. 4 of 2008)



### **1.1. Details of the area surveyed:**

Southdowns Farm is situated approximately 5km to the east of the small village of Fort Nottingham, in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal (Fig 1). The GPS coordinates for the Farm is: 29° 26' 25.76" S 29°59'13.34"E.

The Fort Nottingham area falls within the Grassland biome, with the dominated vegetation found over the development area being Mooi River Highland Grassland and Drakensberg Foothill Moist Grassland. The area is primarily a farming district and has been since the early twentieth century. This has led to large areas utilised for farming purposes. This has impacted heavily on the natural vegetation of the area, with the most sufficient impact being the loss and decrease in pristine natural vegetation areas. However, the Fort Nottingham Nature Reserve, which is situated approximately 5km to the west of the study area, contains good examples of near pristine grassland and woodlands. Southdowns Farm specifically is approximately 572 hectares in extent, with some portions having been previously transformed and other areas currently still virgin veld. There is an extensive network of wetland area, some of which may already be transformed and under pasture (Figs 2 & 3).

## **2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA**

The greater Fort Nottingham area has never been systematically surveyed for archaeological sites. However, some sites have been recorded by cultural resource consultants who have worked in the area during the last two decades whilst archaeologists from the then Natal Museum have made sporadic visits to the area.

Most of the Stone Age sites in the near vicinity of the study area occur in shelters and in open air contexts as exposed by donga and sheet erosion. Some Middle Stone Age flakes, probably dating back to ca. 40 000 – 200 000 years ago, occur in disturbed context in dongas and road cuttings. The majority of Later Stone Age sites as well as rock art sites occur further west in the foothills of the Drakensberg.

The adjacent areas of Muden and Weenen to the east have been well surveyed for archaeological sites. These low altitude and densely wooded areas have been

intensely occupied by Iron Age farmers since the Early Iron Age around 500 AD. Some of these sites have also been excavated by Dr Tim Maggs of the Natal Museum in the 1980's (Huffman 2007). The footprint is centrally located between the Drakensberg with its abundance of Later Stone Age rock art sites to the east and the low altitude river valleys that were favoured by Iron Age farmers, to the west.

The available evidence, as captured in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum heritage site inventories, indicates that the area in the near vicinity to the footprint contains a wide spectrum of archaeological sites covering different time-periods and cultural traditions. These include one Early Stone Age site, four Middle Stone Age sites, twenty Later Stone Age sites, eight Later Iron Age sites, and numerous historical sites dating back to the colonial period. Some of the farms in the area contain graves and structures relating to early Voortrekker settlement such as those at the nearby Dargle Valley on the farm Maritzdaal and at La Lampara near Balgowan, however, the majority of older buildings on farmsteads were erected by British colonists after 1850 who occupied farms previously inhabited by Voortrekker pioneers (Bizley & McKenzie 2007). Notable is Fort Nottingham, some 5 km from the study area that was built around 1856 in order to combat the early San livestock raids in the area (Wright 1976). This Fort has recently been renovated and is presently acting as a tourism attraction to the area. Some historical buildings, such as those at Treverton College approximately 18 km to the north east of the project area, were actively used by British imperial forces during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Various graves in the area belonged to British soldiers who died during the War. The old church cemetery at Bruntville, approximately 15 km to the north east of the project area, contains the graves of numerous British soldiers who died during the Anglo-Boer War. These are also protected by heritage legislation.

The San were the owners of the land for almost 30 000 years but the local demography started to change soon after 2000 years ago when the first Bantu-speaking farmers crossed the Limpopo River and arrived in South Africa. Around 400 years ago, if not earlier, Bantu-speaking farmers also settled in the greater Mooi River area. Although the majority of sites constructed by these African farmers consisted of stone walling not all of them were made from stone. Sites located in the Dargle and Karkloof Valley areas also show that many settlements just consisted of wattle and daub structures. These Later Iron Age sites were most probably inhabited by Nguni-

speaking groups such as the Wushe, Thembu, Mncunu and related groups (Bryant 1965). The Wushe was known to be excellent metal workers and it is not surprising that some archaeological evidence for early metal working has been found in the Karkloof, Nottingham road, and Dargle areas. However, by 1820 the Wushe was dispersed from this area due to the expansionistic policies of the Zulu Kingdom of King Shaka. African refugee groups and individuals were given permission to settle in the area by the British colonial authorities after 1845 where most of them became farm labourers. After the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the Bambatha Rebellion of 1911 many of the African people in the study area adopted a Zulu ethnic identity.

European settlement of the area started soon after 1838 when the first Voortrekker settlers marked out large farms in the area. However, most of these farms were abandoned in the 1840's when Natal became a British colony only to be reoccupied again by British immigrants. The first permanent British settlement in the area occurred in 1852 at the drift in the Mooi River, the Mooi River Drift. This occurred approximately 15km to the north of the study area. Between 1854 and 1856 a small sandstone fort was built at Fort Nottingham, about 5km to the west of the study area, to act as protection against San (Bushman) livestock raids from the Drakensberg. This is the oldest remaining colonial building in the area. However, many of the farmsteads and associated church and grave yards in the larger Nottingham Road area dates back to the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These, like prehistoric archaeological sites, are also protected by national heritage legislation (Bizley & McKenzie 2007).

The English-speaking settlers who occupied the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands from the mid to late 1800's also created a cultural landscape that reminded them of their original homeland in the British Isles. This landscape is indicated by the style of colonial buildings and associated gardens (English country gardens and rose gardens being particularly popular), the creation of certain sporting facilities associated with British interests such as polo and cricket fields, the establishment of British education-style private schools in this area such as Michaelhouse and others, the building of churches and places of worship in the same architectural style as those in the homeland, the replacement of Zulu and Voortrekker placenames with English names, as well as the transformation of the natural landscape to fit the farming practices of the new settlers. The end result was the creation of a landscape more reminiscent of rural parts of

southern England and Ireland, than Africa. Cultural landscapes are also protected by heritage legislation.

### **3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. In addition, the available archaeological and historical literature covering the greater Nottingham Road area was also consulted. The SAHRIS data base of heritage sites and reports was studied. Documents reporting on previous cultural resource management studies in the area were also consulted and the relevant heritage sites were documented.

A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted.

#### **3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey**

##### **3.2.1 Visibility**

Visibility was relatively good.

##### **3.2.2 Disturbance**

No disturbance of any potential heritage features was noted.

#### **3.3 Details of equipment used in the survey**

GPS: Garmin Etrek

Digital cameras: Canon Powershot A460

All readings were taken using the GPS. Accuracy was to a level of 5 m.

### **4 DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED**

#### **4.1 Locational data**

*Province:* KwaZulu-Natal

*Towns:* Fort Nottingham, Nottingham Road

## **4.2 Description of the general area surveyed**

Various heritage sites occur within the greater Nottingham Road area. Some Later Stone Age and Later Iron Age sites have been recorded in the past but it is the colonial area sites and associated landscape features that give the area its particular “European feel” today. Most of the colonial area sites of the area date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These include historical farmsteads, the railway stations of Nottingham Road and Rosetta, historical church buildings and associated grave yards, historical hotel buildings, and various historical residential homes with characteristic Victorian and Edwardian features. The old Fort and associated buildings in the village of Fort Nottingham is perhaps the only area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal where colonial buildings that predate the Victorian area can still be seen in original natural surroundings. Large parts of the original landscape of the greater Nottingham Road, however, has been transformed by commercial farming practices and the establishment of English country gardens and old tree lanes consisting predominantly of exotic Oak, Plane, Pine, and Bluegum trees. As such the greater Nottingham road and Fort Nottingham areas can be described as a cultural landscape with a particular feel and history.

Despite the fact that the greater Nottingham Road area can be described as a cultural landscape there are no heritage sites or features on the Southdown Farm. Various tree lanes consisting of Oaks and Plane trees do occur on the footprint. However, these are all younger than 60 years (Figs 4 & 5). The farmstead contains buildings that are younger than 60 years and labour accommodation also appear to be relatively recent.

## **4.3 Description and distribution of heritage sites found**

Not applicable, as no heritage sites were located in the study area.

# **5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)**

## **5.1 Field Rating**

Not applicable, as no heritage sites or features occur on the footprint.

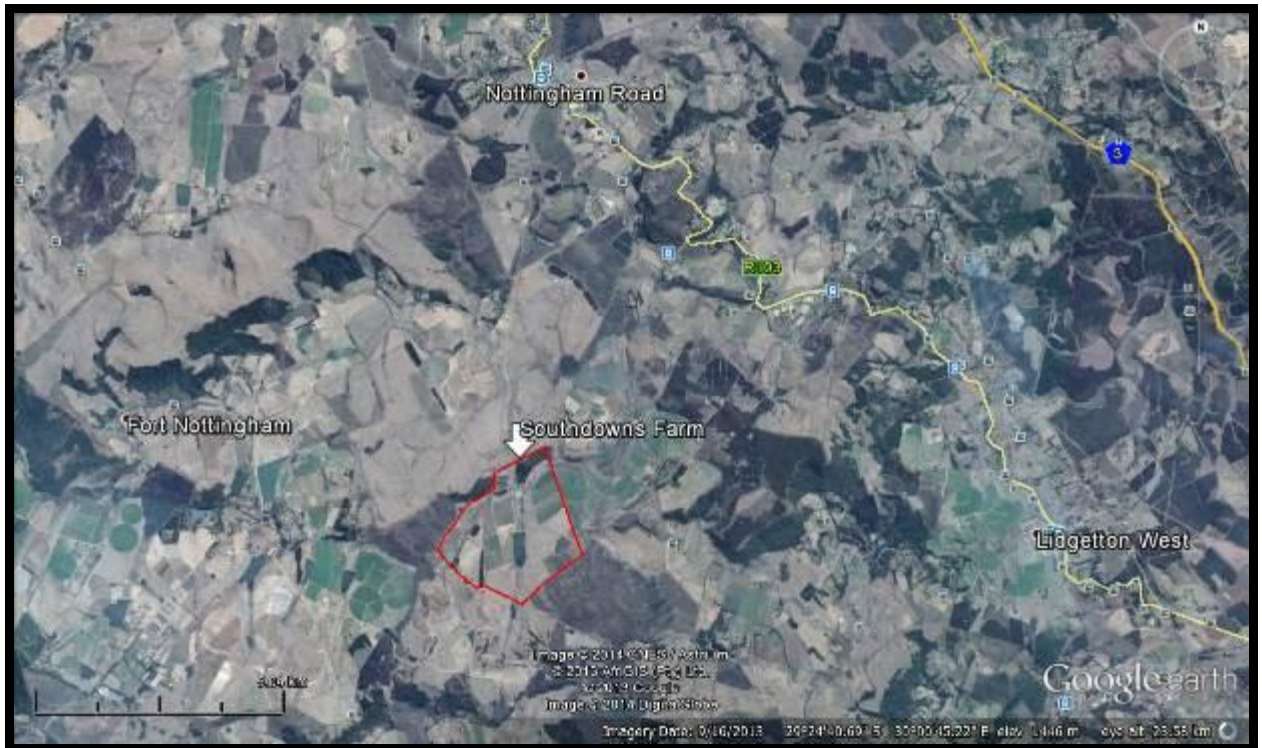
**Table 2. Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)**

Level	Details	Action
National (Grade I)	The site is considered to be of National Significance	Nominated to be declared by SAHRA
Provincial (Grade II)	This site is considered to be of Provincial significance	Nominated to be declared by Provincial Heritage Authority
Local Grade IIIA	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be retained as a heritage site
Local Grade IIIB	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be mitigated, and part retained as a heritage site
Generally Protected A	High to medium significance	Mitigation necessary before destruction
Generally Protected B	Medium significance	The site needs to be recorded before destruction
Generally Protected C	Low significance	No further recording is required before destruction

## 6 CONCLUSION

The proposed development at Southdown Farm may proceed in terms of heritage values as no heritage or archaeological sites are in any danger of being destroyed or altered. The farm is also not part of any known cultural landscape. However, it must also be noted that the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act requires that any operations exposing archaeological and historical residues should cease immediately pending an evaluation by the heritage authorities.

## 7 MAPS AND FIGURES



**Figure 1. Google aerial photograph showing the location of Southdowns Farm relative to the villages of Nottingham Road and Fort Nottingham.**



**Figure 2. Google aerial photograph showing the boundaries of Southdown Farm and proposed Conservation Zone and Dairy Site (Source: Nature Stamp).**

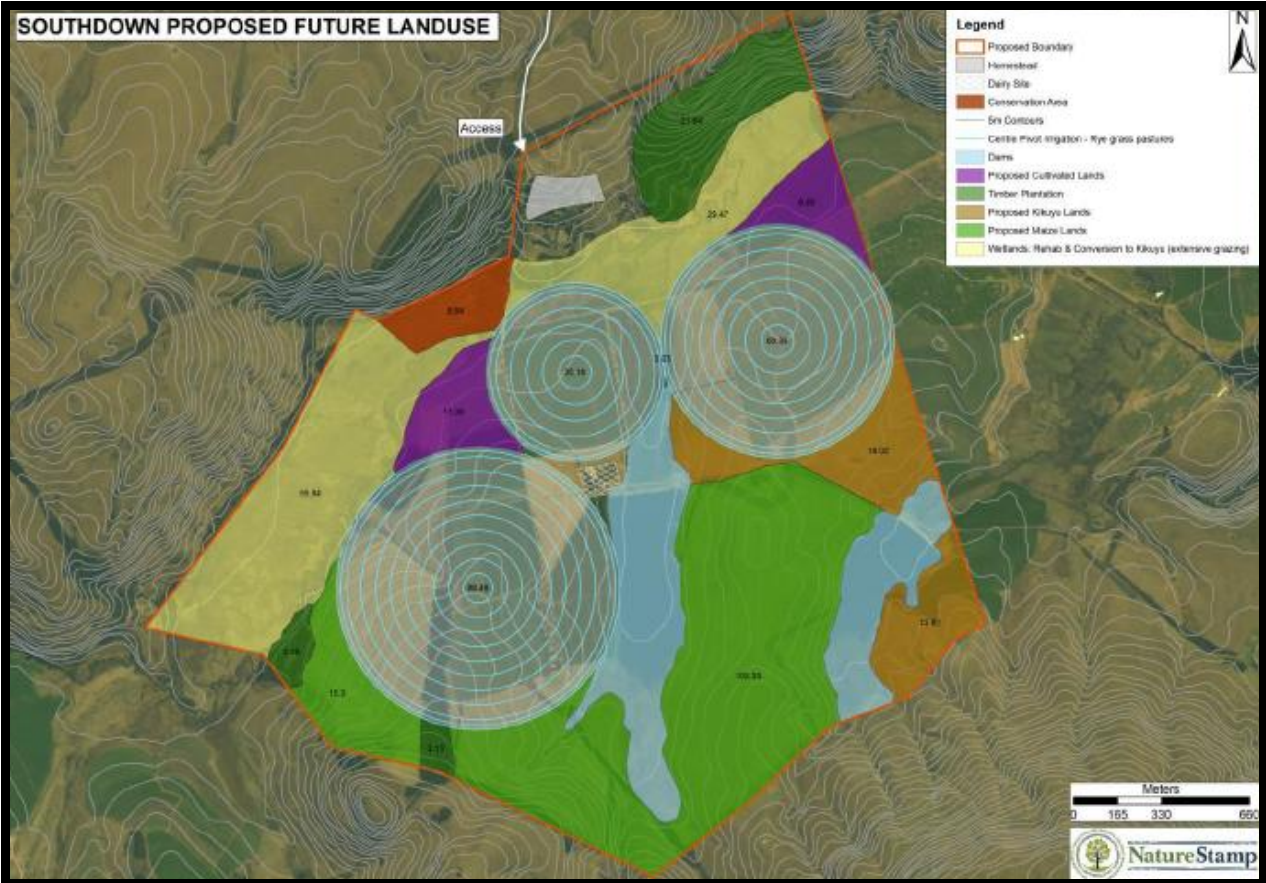


Figure 3. Proposed future land use of Southdown farm (Source: Nature Stamp)





***Figure 4. Oak Tree lane younger than 60 years***



***Figure 5. Tree lane younger than 60 years old.***

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