

**HERITAGE STATEMENT IN TERMS OF SECTION 38(8) OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES
ACT, 1999 (ACT 25 OF 1999)**

**PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW DAM ON A PORTION OF THE FARM RIETFONTEIN 594/1,
SARAH BAARTMAN DISTRICT AND NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY**

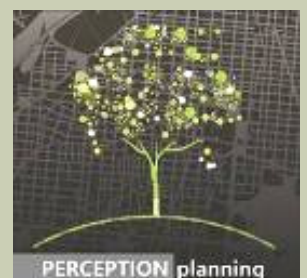


On behalf of: Calvus Properties (Pty) Ltd

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STÉFAN DE KOCK
PERCEPTION Planning
35 Marina Crescent, West Beach, 7441
PO Box 9995, George, 6530
C2 Residence Beau Sejour, Blue Lane, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius
Tel: 021 - 554 4617
Cell: 082 568 4719
Fax: 086 510 8357
E-mail: perceptionplanning@gmail.com
www.perceptionplanning.co.za



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REFERENCES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

1. Cape Town Deeds Office
2. Kaplan, J. 1993. The state of archaeological information in the coastal zone from the Orange River to Ponta do Oura. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.
3. National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (NGSI), Mowbray
4. Rudner, J. 1968. Strandloper pottery from South and South-West Africa. *Annals of the South African Museum* 49: 441-663.
5. SAB Institute for Environmental and Coastal Management, (2003). *Maitland River Mouth Strategic Environmental Assessment - Phase One Heritage Impact Assessment*. Grahamstown, pp.1 - 10.

ABBREVIATIONS:

1. NGSI - National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mowbray
2. DEA – Department of Environmental Affairs
3. EC PHRA - Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Agency
4. HIA – Heritage Impact Assessment
5. NHRA - National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)
6. SAHRA - South African Heritage Resources Agency

COVER: Extract from aerial survey 141 of 1939, Flight strip 60, Image 00091, NSGI

1. INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTION Planning was appointed by Calvus Properties (Pty) Ltd to compile a Heritage Statement (Scoping Heritage Impact Assessment) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) as part of a proposal to construct a new dam on a portion of the following cadastral land unit:

Farm Rietfontein 594/1, Sarah Baartman District and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, measuring 228 ha, registered to Calvus Properties (Pty) Ltd and held under title deed T 31184/2015.

2. STUDY AREA

The subject property is a working farm (± 228 ha in extent) that recently changed ownership and will now be incorporated into an existing private nature reserve ("Yellowwoods Estate"). The property is ± 36 km west of the Port Elizabeth city centre and ± 5 km north of the coastline as illustrated in the locality plan (Figure 1). Vehicular access to the site is directly from Van Stadens Road, which connects the N2 National Road and Blue Horizon Bay/ Van Stadens River mouth.

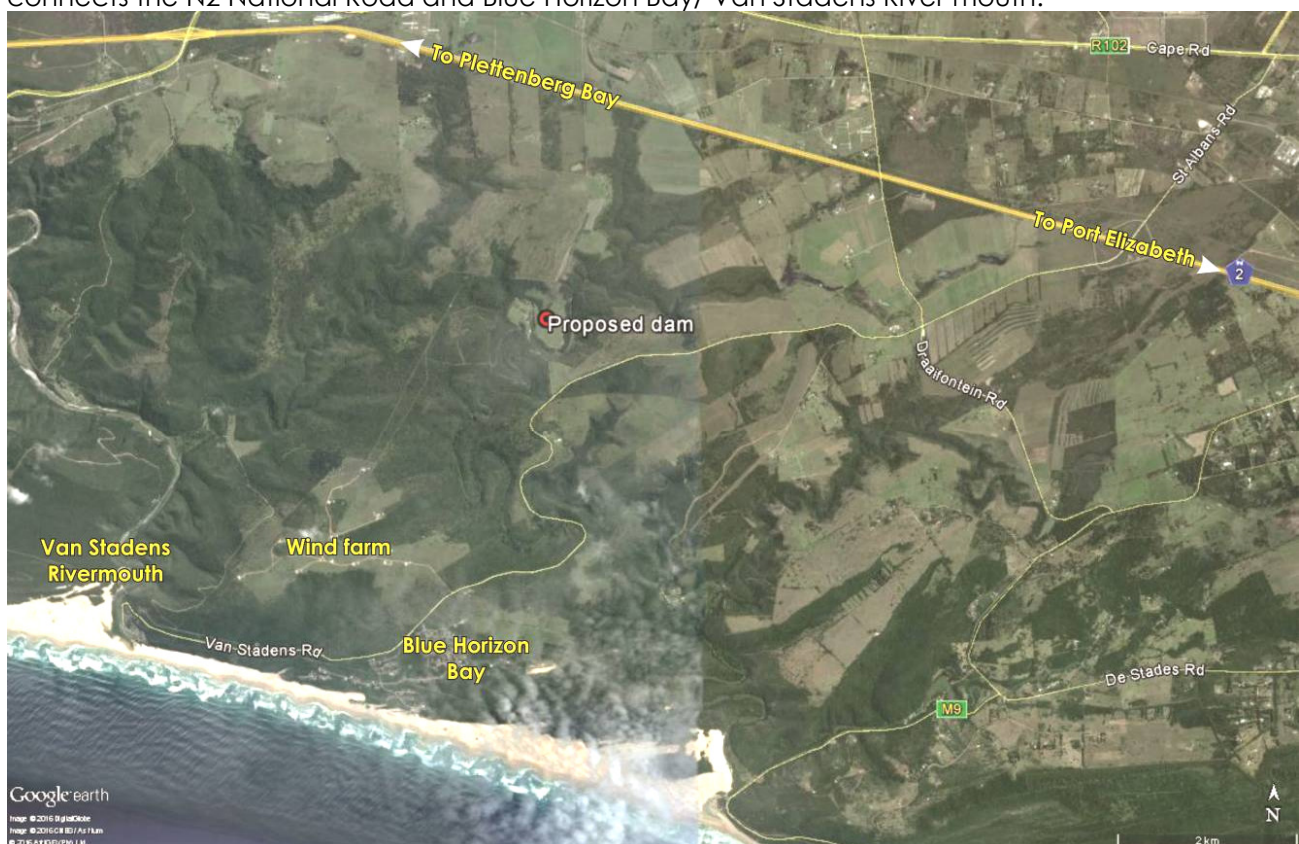


Figure 1: Location of study within present rural context (Source: Adapted from Google Earth, 2015)

The study area (i.e. proposed dam site) is situated within the river corridor and the adjoining natural floodplain area along the upper reaches of the Maitland River. The meandering nature of this river system has over time carved an intricate network of natural valleys through the rural landscape between the coastline and N2 National Road. As a result this river corridor constitutes an important natural feature that effectively defines the landscape character of the study area and its environs. Photographs of the site and its environs are attached as part of Annexure 1.

During field work undertaken on 2nd April 2016 it was found that historic settlement within the proximity of study area has clearly responded to the natural landscape the manner in which cultivation took place, siting of buildings and roads and planting of vegetation. Several structures related to early settlement (i.e. older than 60 years) were noted during field work and are recorded in Figure 2. These include what is presumed to be the historic core of the original farmstead and related outbuilding, labourer's cottages, a secondary cottage (currently set within dense vegetation) and the remains of a former causeway (also refer to Section 4).

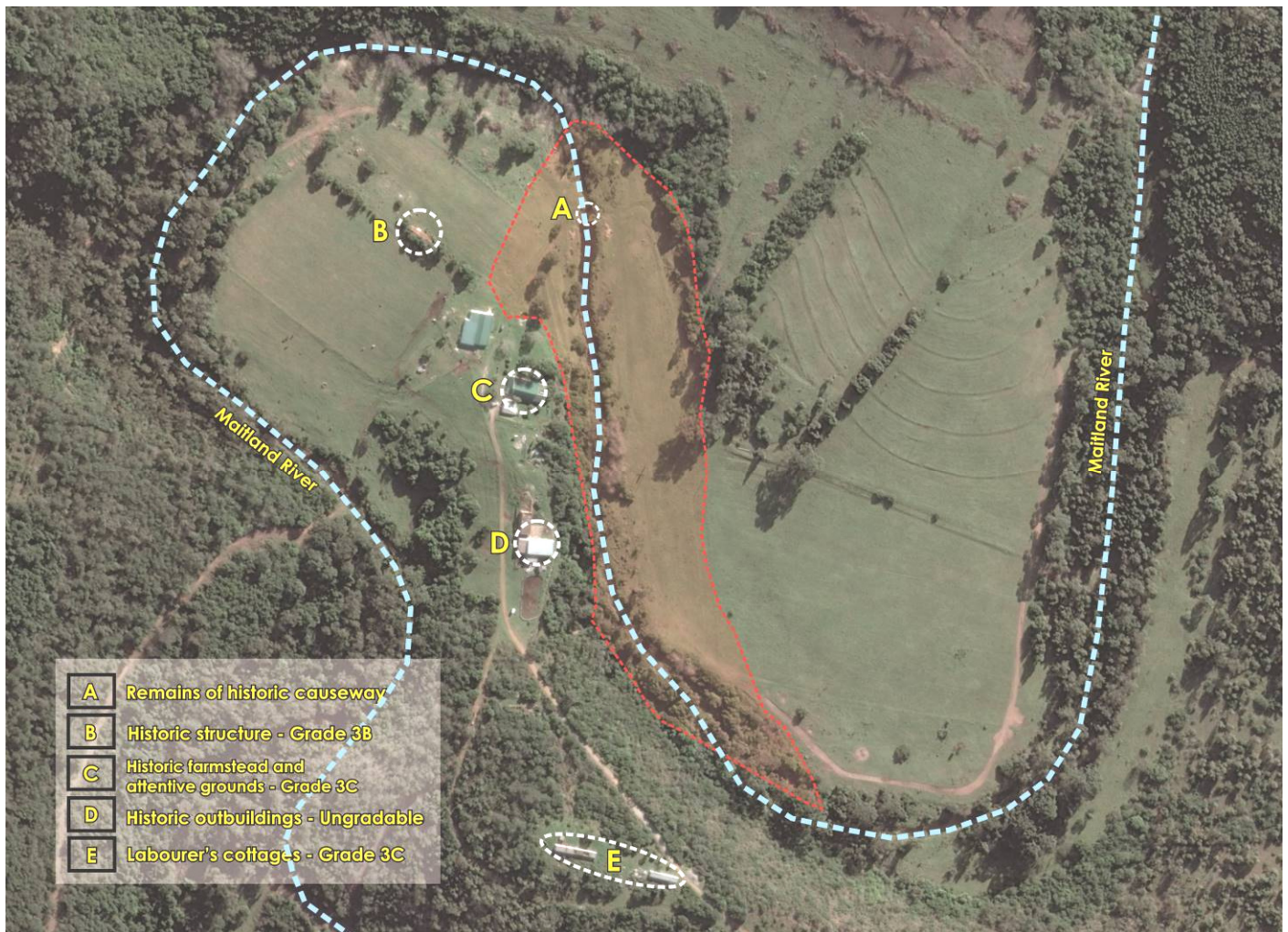


Figure 2: Approximate boundaries of proposed dam and historic structures noted during field work
(Source: Adapted from Google Earth, 2015)

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

According to information provided by Cape Environmental Assessment Practitioners (Pty) Ltd the proposal would entail the construction of a new dam within the Maitland River corridor as part of the existing "Yellowwoods Estate" private nature reserve. In addition to the subject property, the private nature reserve would include ± 26 other cadastral land units. The approximate location and extent of the proposed dam is as shown in Figure 2.

4. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following preliminary research is primarily based on primary archival sources obtained through the National Archives, Deeds Office, Surveyor General Office and National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mowbray. Other secondary sources were also accessed as referenced. Note that comprehensive archival research and deed search may unearth more detailed information pertaining to the study area.

4.1 Pre-Colonial Period

From archaeological surveys previously undertaken along the coastline between the Gamtoos River Mouth and Maitland River Mouth in excess of 55 Later Stone Age archaeological sites were recorded (SAB Institute for Environmental and Coastal Management, 2003). In an archaeological survey undertaken between Van Stadens River Mouth and Blue Horizon Bay a number of additional archaeological sites were recorded (Kaplan 1993). Older surveys also report a high number of middens along the coastline further east of the Van Stadens River Mouth, some of which included pottery (Rudner 1968). While the possibility of unearthing archaeological sites cannot be

discounted, it is noted that the subject site proposed to be developed as a dam is set back from the coastline and has been altered through agriculture/ cultivation for an extended period of time.

4.2 Colonial Period

From a colonial perspective the subject property forms part of the early loan farm Rietfontein 472, first surveyed during 1816¹. This particular survey diagram clearly shows the location of the "Rietfontein" farmstead and associated outbuildings, the river corridor and alignment of historic routes across the original farm. One of the historic routes traversed the subject property and crossed the Maitland River at what appears to be the same location of the dilapidated causeway structure noted during field work (refer to Figure 3). The location of the structure depicted on the 1816 survey drawings also correspond with that of the remaining historic structures recorded during field work (Figure 2).

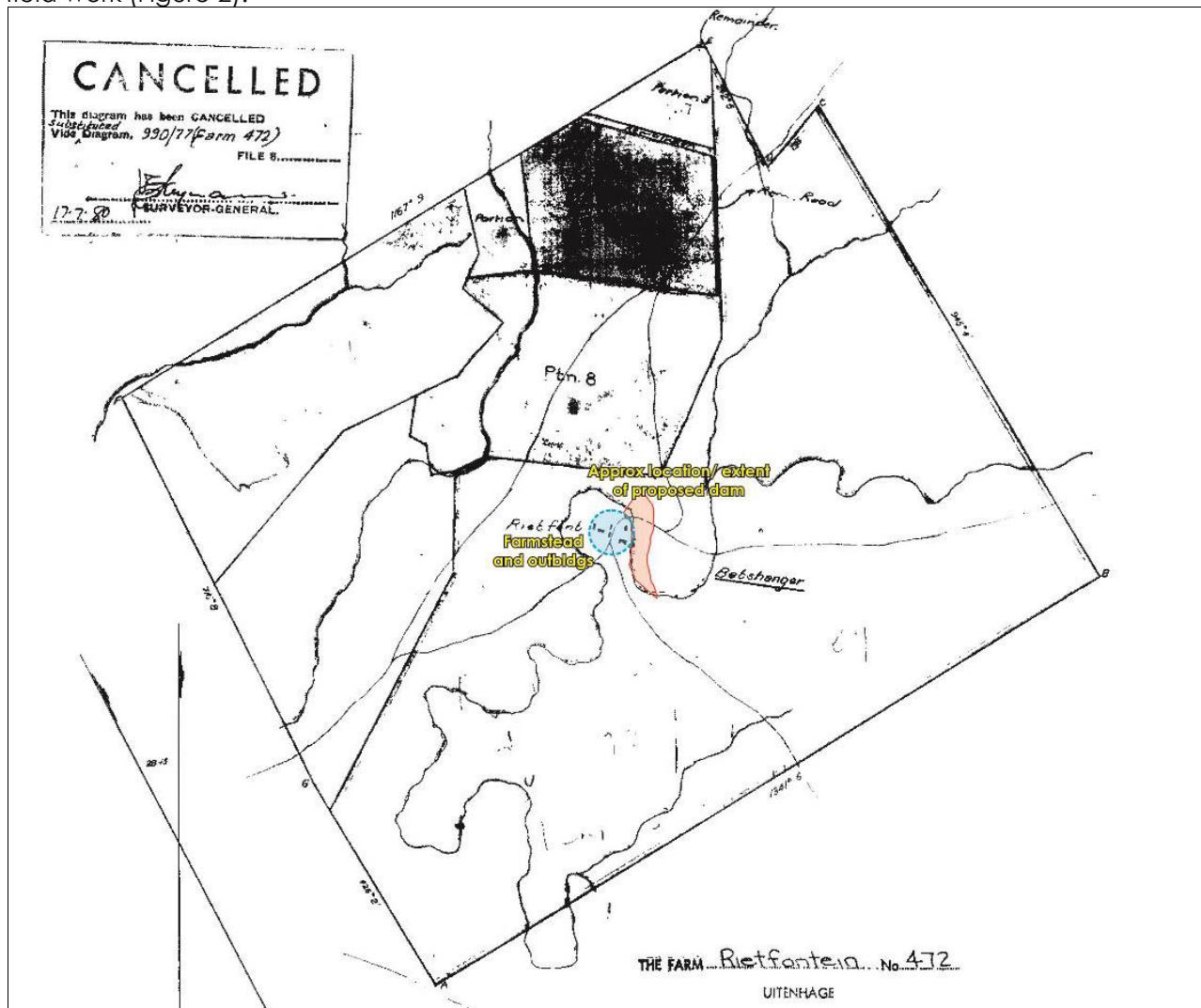


Figure 3: Early Rietfontein farmstead and approximate location of proposed dam as illustrated on 1816 survey drawing (Source: SG Diagram 444/1816)

Subsequent (1896) mapping of this area, produced prior to the construction of the coastal railway route through the area shows the location of the original Rietfontein farm boundaries in relation to Port Elizabeth, the town of Uitenhage² and routes that existed at the time (see Figure 4). The fact that the 1816 survey drawing depicts an established farmstead at Rietfontein clearly suggests that the farm was first occupied and farmed well before this period – possibly since the 18th century though the exact date would have to be confirmed through more focussed archival research. The significance of the farm within the context of the early development of this region, and its possible connection with important events or prominent early residents would need to be confirmed through detailed archival research.

¹ Survey Diagram 444/1816

² Flying Survey for proposed Railway: Port Elizabeth – Avontuur, 1896, NGS



Figure 4: Location of subject site shown in relation to early boundaries of Rietfontein farm, transposed onto early (1896) mapping produced in lieu of construction of the coastal railway line (Source: NGSI, Mowbray)

5. HERITAGE RESOURCES & ISSUES

From preliminary field work and basic archival research it is evident that, from a colonial perspective, the farm Rietfontein had been occupied for an extended period of time – most likely since the 18th century. This precinct is therefore considered of high historical, aesthetical and architectural cultural significance. Several historic structures older than 60 were noted during preliminary field work, the locations of which correspond with the location of structures highlighted on the 1816 survey drawing and 1939 aerial imagery (refer to Figures 2 and 5 respectively). Unfortunately most of the buildings have been poorly maintained and/or subject to inappropriate alterations and additions, which greatly detract from the overall significance of the individual buildings as well as the overall historic precinct.

The table below, to be read on conjunction of Figures 2 (*) and 5, represents a short description of structures older than 60 years and possible gradings applicable to each. Note that the gradings proposed below are based on the information currently available and relate to the present condition of said structures:

Structure Ref (*)	Description of Structure older than 60 years	Type of Cultural Significance	Proposed Grading
A	Remains of causeway crossing Maitland River	Historic, aesthetic	3C
B	Historic cottage set within sense vegetation (requires urgent restoration)	Historic, aesthetic, architectural	3B
C	Farmstead with prominent visual setting overlooking river (heavily-altered through inappropriate additions).	Historic, aesthetic, architectural	3C
D	Remains of old agricultural outbuildings, heavily altered through inappropriate additions	Historic, architectural	3C
E	Labourer's cottages	Social, Historical	3C

Table 1: Building reference numbers used as part of built environment survey (Source: by author)



Figure 5: Preliminary contextual analysis of the Rietfontein farmstead precinct from earliest available (1939) aerial imagery (Source: Aerial survey 141 of 1939, Flight strip 60, Image 00091, National Geo-Spatial Information, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mowbray)

Analysis of early (1939) aerial photography highlights the following traditional (Pre-Modern) land use patterns for the study area and its direct environs (Figure 4):

- Location of the Rietfontein historic farmstead precinct in relation to several other historic structures within its environs, some of which have been demolished;
- A network of early roads and track traverse the landscape, also crossing the subject property as illustrated in Figure 5;
- The alignment of existing farm tracks are much the same of historic roads evident on the 1816 survey drawing and 1939 aerial imagery;
- Study area had formed part of rural landscape characterised by established patterns of cultivation and agriculture;
- Early settlement and agricultural practices led to the implementation of landscape framing, e.g. linear planting of trees and hedges, most of which are no longer evident within the landscape;
- River corridors and steeper areas were mostly densely overgrown by indigenous vegetation while more level areas were farmed.

A historic road connecting the coastline and higher-lying plateau and adjoining areas run through the subject property and through the Rietfontein historic farmstead precinct. The remains of the old causeway once used for crossing the Maitland River is still evident. From the layout provided this structure will become permanently inundated should construction of the proposed dam continue. While no gravesite or burial grounds were noted during field work, the possibility of such heritage resource cannot be discounted. Similarly, future excavations and/or earthworks could possibly unearth archaeological material of significance.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the preliminary assessment it is evident that the study area forms part of an old (most probably a 18th century) historic farmstead precinct of high local historical, aesthetical and architectural cultural significance. The farmstead and farm clearly played an important role in early development of this region and was well connected with the coastline further southward and higher-lying plateau to the north. The farmstead precinct itself has strong spatial and visual relationships with the river corridor, which is considered of high significance.

Taken within the context of the property's recent inclusion into the Yellowwoods private nature reserve, it is our view that careful restoration and authentication of the historic farm complex (e.g. for tourism purposes) has the potential to greatly enhance the overall "sense of place" and historic context of the reserve. Such works would however require further detailed research and analysis as part of an integrated heritage impact assessment process in order to inform such restoration efforts.

With relation to the proposed construction of a dam as outlined in this report, it is our view that while the proposed the dam itself would tend to alter the character of the direct landscape (Section 38(1)(c) of the NHRA), this would not materially detract from the overall cultural significance of the historic farmstead precinct and that permanent inundation of the causeway remains would not be an unacceptable outcome. It is however suggested that appropriate steps be taken to conserve the historic structure marked "B" in Figures 2 and 5 in this report as an interim measure.

Please note that in terms of Section 34(1) of the NHRA, "*No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority*".

PERCEPTION Planning
9th January 2017

SE DE KOCK
Hons (TRP) EIA Mgmt (IRL) Pr Pln PHP