

**NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO DEVELOP (NID) &  
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPILED IN TERMS OF SECTION  
38(8) OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT, 1999 (ACT 25 OF  
1999)**

**PROPOSED URBAN FORMALISATION AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT:  
MATJESFONTEIN 148/9 & ERVEN 17, 18, 50 (MATJIESFONTEIN),  
LAINGSBURG DISTRICT**



**ON BEHALF OF: LAINGSBURG MUNICIPALITY**

**JANUARY 2011**

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**PERCEPTION**

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#### REFERENCES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- 1. Cape Town Archives
- 2. Chief Directorate: Surveys & Mapping
- 3. Deeds Office, Cape Town
- 4. Fransen, Hans: The old buildings of the Cape, Jonathan Ball Publishers. Johannesburg & Cape Town, 2004
- 5. Ninham shand (June 2008). Matjiesfontein report on services and housing. Unpublished report, Cape Town
- 6. Schulz, K, (2010). Historical background report – Matjiesfontein. Unpublished report, George
- 7. Surveyor General's Offices, Cape Town
- 8. Special thanks extended to Oerson Herder (Community Liaison Officer, PAWC) and Matjiesfontein community members who contributed greatly to fill gaps in research information obtained through archival research

#### ABBREVIATIONS:

CA – Cape Town Archives  
 CDSM – Chief Directorate: Surveys & Mapping, Mowbray  
 CTDO – Cape Town Deed's Office  
 DBSA – Development Bank of South Africa  
 NHRA – National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)  
 NID – Notice of Intent to Develop  
 HIA – Heritage Impact Assessment  
 HWC – Heritage Western Cape  
 PPP – Public Participation Process  
 PAWC – Provincial Administration: Western Cape  
 RoD – Record of Decision  
 SAR – South African Railways  
 SDF – Spatial Development Framework  
 SGO – Surveyor General's Office

**COVER PAGE:** Extract from Aerial Survey 139A of 1939, Flight Strip 45, Image 24274 (Source: CDSM)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*PERCEPTION* was appointed during September 2010 by the *Laingsburg Municipality* for the provision of professional services relating to this proposal, as required in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA). Sanction for compilation and submission of this application was provided by Laingsburg Municipality, (being the developer), by way of a formal appointment as well as “Part 5”, both of which are attached to the official NID form (Annexure 1). This submission includes the following:

- Notification of Intent to Develop (NID)
- Combined Phase One and Phase Two Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

Historical background research (Kathleen Schulz) was commissioned as a specialist input into this Heritage Impact Assessment report and focussed primarily on social history relating to the Matjiesfontein settlement community.

## 2. BACKGROUND

This submission follows after Laingsburg Municipality resolved to formalise land ownership within the Matjiesfontein settlement and to make provision for 39 new residential erven for existing residents within the settlement (i.e. infill development). It is important to note that the proposed development would have no direct and/or physical impact on the two Provincial Heritage Sites (Matjiesfontein village and railway station building) within its direct proximity but relates only to the Matjiesfontein settlement, south of the railway line.

The purpose of this assessment is not only to serve as a NID submission and HIA to Heritage Western Cape, but to also assist/ contribute to the project as follows:

- To identify heritage issues, development constraints and opportunities at an early stage;
- To avoid potential negative impacts of the proposed development on heritage – related aspects;
- To provide guidance on a way forward for planning and design of the proposed development.

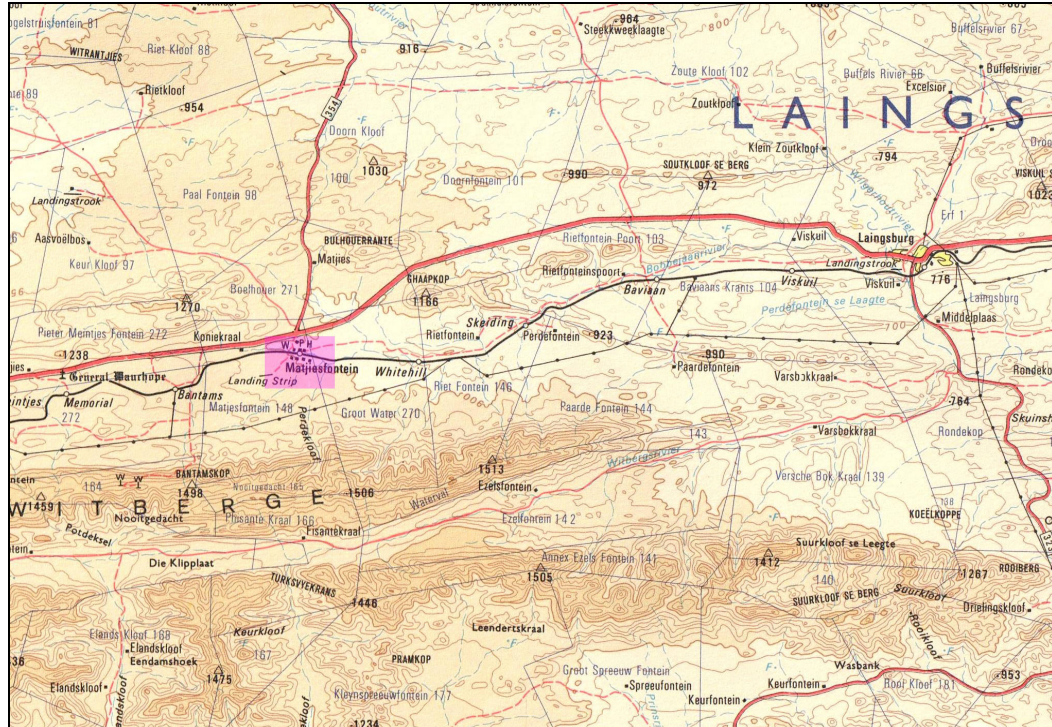
## 3. METHODOLOGY

As part of this combined NID and HIA report the author has studied, visited, photographed and assessed the study area and its environs over a period of approximately two months, which more specifically involved the following:

- Studying existing research pertaining to the Matjiesfontein historic settlement;
- Field work carried out on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010;
- Follow-up site visit on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010 to meet with community members, record oral history;
- Commission Historical background survey relating more specifically to Matjiesfontein local community (Kathleen Schulz);
- Negotiations, discussions with consultant team regarding nature and detailed design of proposed development;
- Community meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to solicit heritage-related comments from community members regarding proposed development;
- With relation to compilation of this HIA:
  - Research (site specific but also local context/ environs);
  - Identification of heritage-related issues and concerns;
  - Analysis of development site and its environs;
  - Identification of contextual spatial informants;
  - Establishing cultural significance, based on criteria set out in NHRA;
  - Identification of heritage-related design informants based on the above.

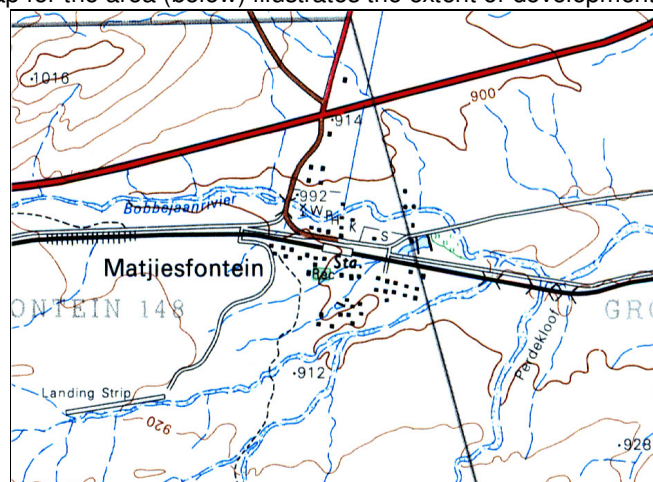
**4. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA**

According to information made available by the town-planning consultant, the proposed development site (hereafter referred to as the “site” or “study area”) includes portion 9 of the farm Matjiesfontein 148 as well as Erven 17, 18 and 50, situate in the Matjiesfontein settlement. The hamlet of Matjiesfontein is located 27km southwest of Laingsburg and 55km northeast from Touwsriver along the N1 highway between Cape Town to Johannesburg as illustrated with the insert below.



Location of Matjiesfontein settlement (Source: 3320 Ladismith, 1:250,000 Topo-cadastral series, CDSM)

It is reiterated that for the purpose of this report, reference on the one hand will be made to the Matjiesfontein (historic) village and PHS, located north of the railway line and railway station building (also a PHS) and secondly to the Matjiesfontein settlement, which is the subject of this application and is located south of the railway line. An extract from the 1987 Topo-cadastral map for the area (below) illustrates the extent of development at that stage.



1987 version of 1:50,000 Topo-cadastral mapping for Matjiesfontein (Source: 3320BA Matjiesfontein, CDSM)

The site forms part of an arid Karoo landscape and is situated within the upper reaches of the Bobbejaan River, along a gentle north-facing slope with the Witberge as natural backdrop to the south. The site is traversed by a number of non-perennial tributaries of the Bobbejaan River (including the Perdekloof tributary as illustrated with insert on the bottom of page 5).

The railway line and N1 National road is located directly to the north. The site includes three portions of undeveloped land within the existing Matjiesfontein settlement but also thirteen (one cottage now used as church) remaining corrugated iron cottages ("Silver Town"), the seven of which are proposed to be surveyed, registered and transferred to current occupants. Photographs are attached as part of Annexure 2.

## 5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

According to information provided by the consultant town and regional planning firm (*BolandPlan*), the proposal firstly includes subdivision of land on which fourteen corrugate iron cottages as well as a number of old SAR houses are located so as to formalise land ownership. The land use planning application would furthermore include rezoning and subdivision of Erven 17, 18 and 50 so as to make provision for residential infill development, i.e. 39 new residential erven, engineering infrastructure and dwellings for existing residents of Matjiesfontein settlement.

A copy of the latest Site Development Plan made available to us is attached as Annexure 3.

## 6. STATUTORY CONTEXT

### 6.1 *Matjiesfontein Area Development Plan (2007 – 2012)*

This forward planning document is a component of the Laingsburg Integrated Development Plan and was compiled during 2006 through a community based planning process with considerable involvement (up to 150 people) from the local community. While the document covers a variety of social and economic factors affecting the Matjiesfontein community, the lack of property ownership was identified as one of the current "threats".

Section 4.3.3 of the document states that, "*Many people are living in shacks in the area, and even those employed often do not own their own houses. Owning their own house was specifically raised by the employed and the disabled. There is confusion about why they can't own RDP houses, people have very little information about the options available to the community, and a major problem in the area is redlining, so that it is impossible to get loans. There is also a problem of people occupying land, houses are built on land, but they never bought the land.*"

The proposed development would therefore address this aspect and therefore be consistent with one of the key objectives identified through the compilation of this Plan.

### 6.2 *Laingsburg Spatial Development Framework, September 2007*

This policy guideline document, which is in its Final Draft does not seem to be accompanied by a detailed spatial mapping with relation to forward planning but includes land use mapping identifying Erf 17 as Educational/ Vacant; Erf 18 and 50 as Vacant and portions of the farm Matjiesfontein 148/9 as Residential/ Vacant.

The current Matjiesfontein urban edge has been amended to include the recent development of the sports facility within its boundaries and it is noted the proposed infill development site falls well within the urban edge. The SDF does not designate Matjiesfontein as a "development node" and states that, "*no further housing should occur...other than that which is currently required. Further growth of the area i.e. beyond urban edge should not be considered.*"

It is an objective of the IDP/ SDF (Key Performance Area: Social & Infrastructure Development), “*That the majority of people on our waiting list in Laingsburg and Matjiesfontein should have access to land, and own a permanent house with services and land to use for Small/ Medium Farming*”. It is furthermore an objective to consider some densification to accommodate the existing housing need. The SDF makes further detailed proposals pertaining to formalisation of public open space, outdoor lighting as well as roads and pedestrian walkways.

Given the nature of the proposed infill development, which aims to provide housing and permanent land ownership to existing residents in Matjiesfontein, it is considered that the proposal would be consistent with the overall objectives of the SDF.

## 7. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An independent historical background study was commissioned with relation to the subject site and its broader context but focussing primarily on residents of Matjiesfontein settlement. Research as presented herewith includes primary sources obtained from the Cape Archives, Cape Town Deed's Office and Surveyor General's Office.

### 7.1 Introduction

Archival material was selected with a view to providing additional insight and spatial perspective into the history and origin of the coloured community living south of the Matjiesfontein village and railway line on a portion of land known as Koenie Kraal or portion 5 Matjiesfontein measuring 2794 morgen and 309 roods. This is the portion on which an informal settlement was established for coloured families at the on-set of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899.

### 7.2 Establishment of Matjiesfontein

In 1884 Scottish entrepreneur James Logan acquired three of twelve available allotments on the Karoo farm named Matjiesfontein<sup>1</sup> (later renamed “Matjiesfontein”). The rail link had already been established between Cape Town and the Kimberly diamond fields and it was James Logan's intention to provide a place of refreshment to road and rail travellers using this route. Three years later in 1887 he acquired the farm bordering north of Matjiesfontein named Boelhouer<sup>2</sup>. The remainder of the farm Matjiesfontein named Koenie Kraal was listed as “Unregistered Crown land” in the Deeds Office at that time. Initially the Department of Lands had retained this southern section of Matjiesfontein because uncertainty existed as to whether the land would be needed for grazing and a holding station for livestock awaiting transport from Matjiesfontein railway station. Portion Koenie Kraal is situated south of the railway line and the allotments were positioned north.

James Logan established a hotel on the allotments he had acquired at Matjiesfontein, which he named after the British Governor at the Cape at the time, Lord Milner<sup>3</sup>. By the year 1891 he had acquired two more farms bordering on Matjiesfontein<sup>4</sup>. In addition he held an import export and general dealers' license with a central office situated in the Standard Bank building in Cape Town.

### 7.3 Arrival of British troupes

When the Anglo-Boer war broke out in 1899 British troupes established a military camp at Matjiesfontein utilizing the hotel and surrounding buildings as barracks. It was this event that significantly changed the lives of coloured folk who resided at Matjiesfontein. Later archival records differ in reporting, some stating that approximately forty families were affected by the Anglo-Boer war and other records state four families were affected. On arrival, military officials insisted that all coloured families living north of the railway line should be moved south of the

<sup>1</sup> Cape Town Deeds Office (CTDO) Worcester Quitrents 18 folios 14,15 and 16.

<sup>2</sup> CTDO; Worcester Quitrents 20 folio 6. Now falls under Laingsburg.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Milner arrived in the Cape as Governor in 1897.

<sup>4</sup> The farms Bestenweg, and Pietermeintjies Fontein.

railway line so as not to be in direct contact with military operations. This was deemed to be a temporary measure and consequently temporary homes were erected by affected families at their own expense.

By the year 1907 coloured families were still living in temporary shelters on the south side of the railway line. This portion of land was then still owned by the State and was administered by the Department of Lands, Pretoria, who for the most part appear to have acted on advice from the Magistrate in Laingsburg.

#### 7.4 **Matjiesfontein settlement**

In 1907, for undisclosed reasons, the Magistrate in Laingsburg issued a ten-day eviction notice on all the residents living in the Matjiesfontein settlement. At the time Mr. Logan was in Cape Town and could not defend this action. Mrs. K. Stuart, of "Villa Karoo, Matjiesfontein" wrote a letter pleading against this forced removal, stating that in the absence of Mr. Logan and Mr. Theo Schreiner<sup>5</sup>, Mrs. Stuart also put together a petition and enclosed a 'schedule' giving details of the nineteen resident families in the location, which she forwarded to Colonel Crew, Secretary for Agriculture. From the tone of the letter it would appear that Mrs. Stuart knew Colonel Crew personally as she asked him to use his influence in the matter<sup>6</sup>. See *Annexure 4 (a), Petition and names and occupations of residents.*

Mr. Theo Schreiner must have returned to Matjiesfontein shortly after the petition and appeal were submitted by Mrs. Stuart. He made his own submission of appeal to the Department of Native Affairs, making the point that no one would benefit from the forced removal, either residents of Matjiesfontein or evictees (*See Annexure 4 (b)*). It would appear that the above appeals were successful as the forced removal did not take place. Residents were hereafter charged 2 shillings 6 pence rental per month and were placed under the authority of the Matjiesfontein police officer. Tenancy agreements were also entered into.

In 1917 a Mr. Flynn applied to Government for land in Koenie Kraal in order to formalize a new proposed position of the slaughter house which apparently previously was located near the informal boundaries of the coloured location. He provided a hand drawn sketch of the position of land he wished to acquire for this purpose. The sketch was the only one found in the archives to positively identify the position of the location. The application was turned down with no supporting explanation<sup>7</sup>. The sketch is a valuable source of information, depicting an old access road and the site of a 'Boer war camp' in relation to the coloured location. The presence of a sanitary pit is also described. A hand drawn copy was made of the sketch on file (see insert on top of page 9).

Archival correspondence reveals that for the following thirty years it was Government's intent to auction off the Koenie Kraal portion of Matjiesfontein. Reasons for the sale not taking place were given as prevailing droughts during which times the land was made available to neighbouring farmers for grazing; or the price asked was never met at the auction.

In 1951 the Department of Lands transferred portion Koenie Kraal to the South African Railways and Harbours<sup>8</sup>. Along with the sale came the shifted responsibility of collecting rentals from tenants living in the location to the South African Railway administration. Rental files revealed that only seven families were resident in the settlement in 1952 and three sites were unoccupied, indicating that it now only accommodated a maximum number of ten tenant families. A table has been compiled of tenant names extracted from available rental receipt books for the years 1942, 1947 and 1953. The rental was still charged at 2 shillings 6 pence per month (*Refer Annexure 4 (c)*).

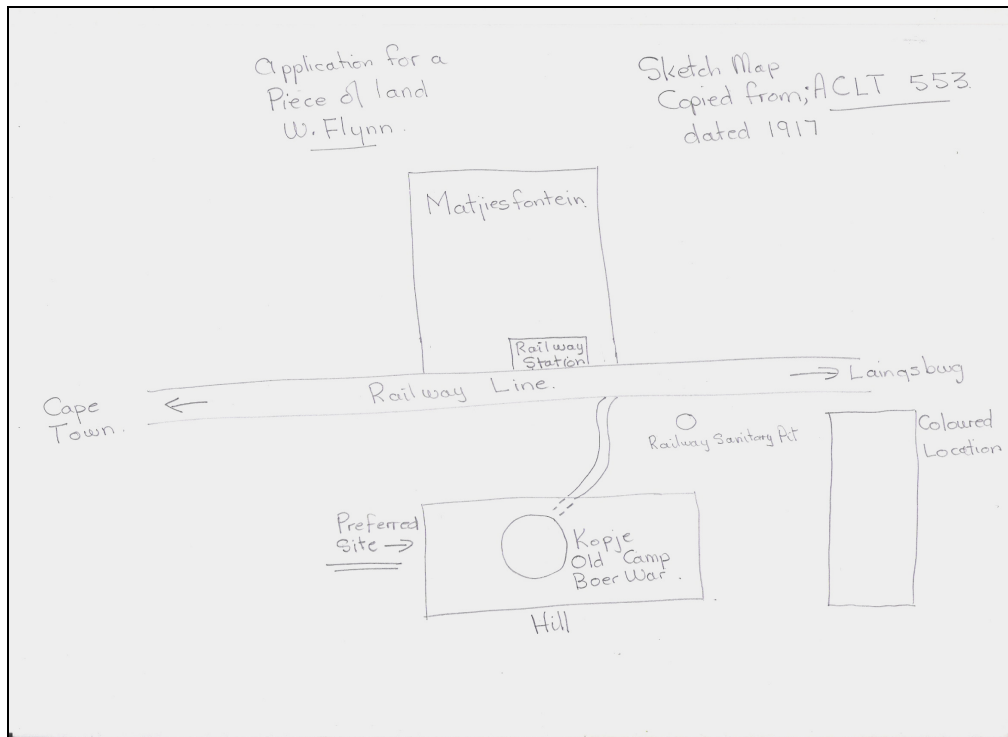
<sup>5</sup> Presumably a relation of Olive Schreiner.

<sup>6</sup> Cape Town Archives; ACLT 59

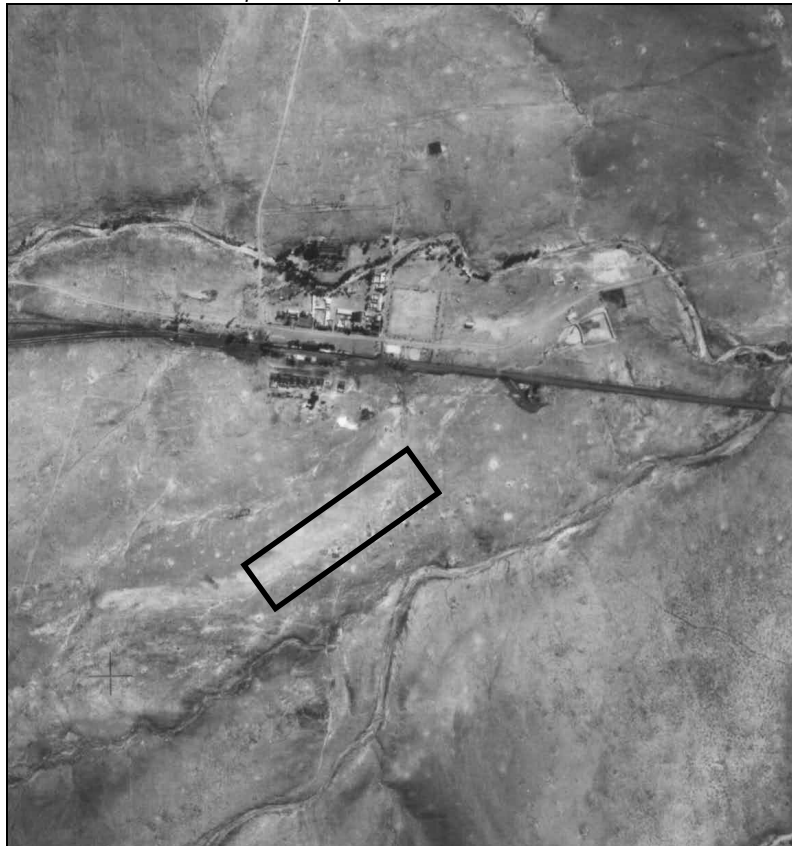
<sup>7</sup> CA; ACLT 553

<sup>8</sup> CTDO; Title Deed number 11575/1951





1917 re-drawn sketch map indicating the position of a portion of land applied for by Mr. Flynn. The map depicts the position the coloured location.



Presumed position of the ten tenant homes in Koenie Kraal, Matjiesfontein. Aerial Survey 139A of 1939, Flight Strip 45, Image 24274 (Source: CDSM)

Archival resources covering the Matjiesfontein settlement between the years 1953 and 1975 could not be located. In 1976 a report was compiled by the Department of Railways informing the Division Council of its intention to extend employees accommodation facilities. It was also stated in the report that twenty-seven families lived in the Matjiesfontein settlement. The homes were described as being built of stone, having been erected by the tenants. Further correspondence confirmed that funding was not available from the Divisional Council to upgrade facilities within this settlement. This information was ancillary to the report.

The following buildings were to be erected on railway property and were not related to upgrading the location buildings in any way. These buildings were to be erected to accommodate railway staff travelling along the line and who needed to stay overnight:

- 1-32 bedrooms (6m x 6m)
- 3 Toilets (5m x 2.5m)
- 2 Laundries (6m x 5m)
- Kitchen (2.6m x 5m)
- Store room (6m x 5m)
- 3 Mess facilities (6m x 5m)
- Coal and wood storeroom (4m x 2.5m)
- Concret slab for refuse (3m x 2.5m)
- Concrete slab (3m x 2m)
- Scullery.<sup>9</sup>

In 1982 a report appeared in the Rapport newspaper covering a story of yet another threatened eviction of Matjiesfontein settlement tenants<sup>10</sup>. This time the eviction was initiated by two farmers who were hiring portion Koenie Kraal. The farmers alleged that tenants were stock thieves and should therefore be evicted. Major Buist, owner of the land and grandson of James Logan defended the action by terminating the lease of the two farmers and offered the land free of charge to the Matroosberg Divisional Council, on condition that proper housing was provided to all tenants. Divisional Council refused this offer with no explanation. This episode highlighted the fact that no racial Group Area had been effected in Matjiesfontein.

It would appear the settlement housed both coloured and black residents, the result of which caused an administrative 'block' in the allocation of funds for housing. The Community Development files relating to designation a coloured group area to Matjiesfontein were closed in 1985, a mere six years before the final scrapping of the Group Areas Act. These files were closed without confirming whether the delimited Group Area had been applied. Deeds Office files are not endorsed to the effect that the area had been affected by the Group Areas Act. *Oral responses from residents provide more clarity on this matter (See Section 11 of this report).*

Of significance, the article appearing in the 1982 Rapport newspaper described the settlement as being divided into four portions:

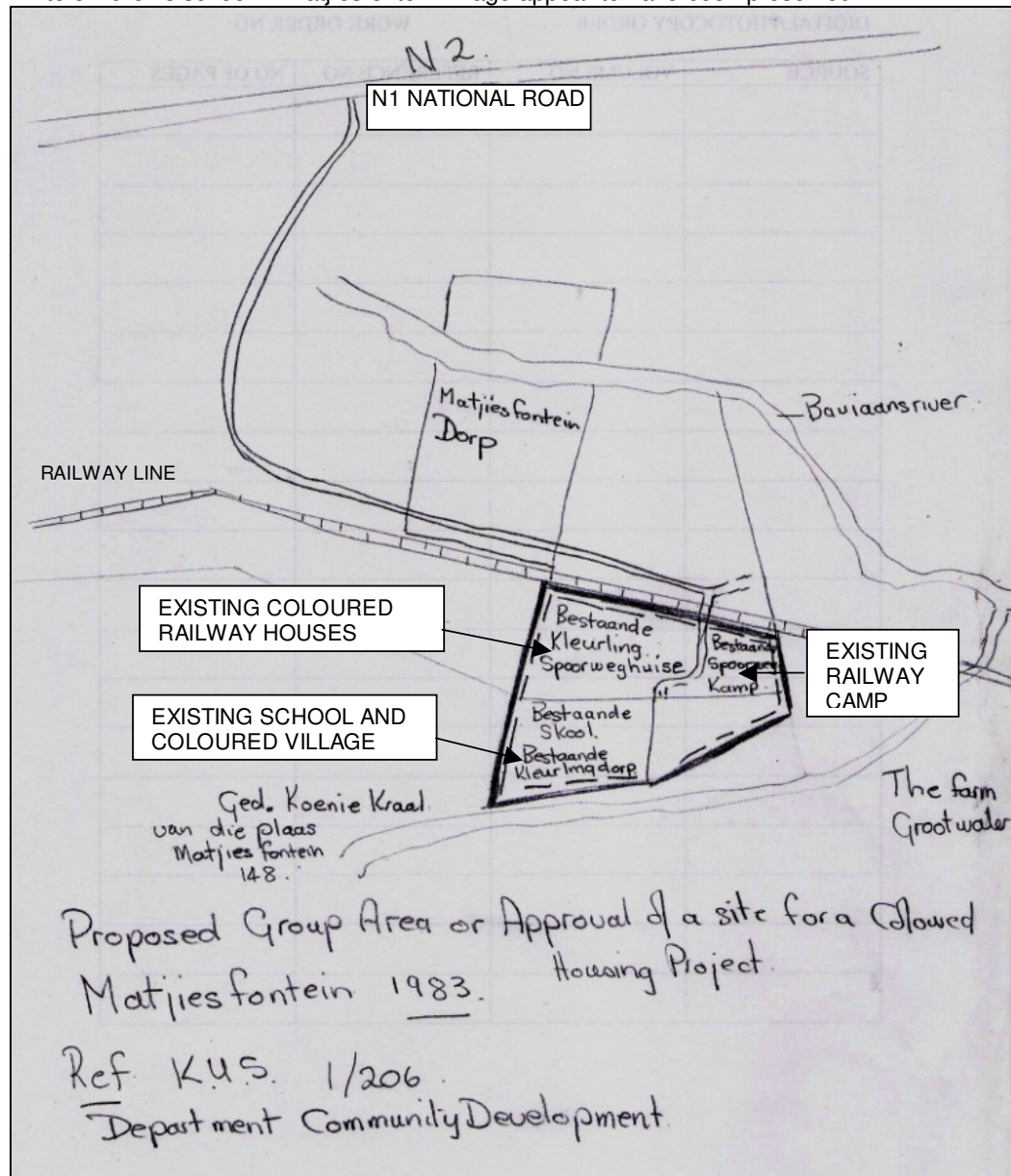
- One, measuring 7.8 hectares on which stood thirty-eight 'zinc and stone' houses. It would appear that twenty-eight additional homes must have been erected between the years 1953 and 1985, seventeen of which would have been erected by 1972;
- A second portion on which stood seven original railway houses that were occupied by coloured employees;
- A third, which was developed in 1976;
- A fourth, an undeveloped area of approximately eight hectares on which sports field had been built.

The position of the original settlement described in a diagram found in the 1983 Community Development Board file (see copy sketched below) aligns with situation of homes seen on the 1938 aerial photograph, as do the railway homes. Records relating to the Matjiesfontein

<sup>9</sup> CA; KUS 2/331

<sup>10</sup> 'Rapport' 28<sup>th</sup> February 1982

coloured school were not found in the archives education files. Only those referring to the white children's school in Matjiesfontein village appear to have been preserved.



Hand drawn copy of the diagram, which appeared in the Argus newspaper dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1983 depicting the intended Coloured Group Area boundary.

**7.5 Conclusion**

The beginnings of the informal settlement referred to above clearly appear to be associated with the Anglo Boer war during the years 1899 – 1902. Martial orders were delivered to coloured labourers living in Matjiesfontein at the time instructing them to move south of the railway line - in order to be further away from the military barracks that had been set up in the village of Matjiesfontein. From that time on a core community has resided on the portion of Matjiesfontein known as Koenie Kraal. The community grew in size during the twentieth century particularly during the years 1953 to 1972. It was recorded that ten families were resident at Koenie Kraal in 1953 and twenty-seven in 1976, thereby confirming that seventeen homes had been erected during a period of twenty-three years.

## 8. ORAL HISTORY

During archival research, which was aimed at obtaining previously unknown sourced and information regarding the Matjiesfontein settlement, a number of gaps in information were identified. As a result it was deemed necessary to interview community members and elders, which were conducted by the author at Matjiesfontein on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Community members interviewed were:

- Albertus de Bruyn
- Abie (Paulus) Appolis
- Ms. “Juffrou” Chellan
- Oerson Herder
- Mannies Kupido
- Margerite Appolis

### 8.1 *Black community at Matjiesfontein*

- Permanent residents lived at “Sakkiesbaai”
- Total number of people who resided here is unknown;
- Burial ground located adjoining river corridor (Bobbejaan River);
- Footprint of former occupation clearly legible within landscape;
- Ruins, rubbish dump, area where “coal splinters” were made as fuel for heating, cooking noted;
- Residents evicted soon after hotel was purchased by David Rawdon in 1968 when work opportunities are said to have declined;
- They were moved by trucks during c. 1970 to neighbouring farms and town such as De Doorns and Touws River, mostly as farm workers;
- Older residents remember this as a time of great sadness as communities parted;
- Temporary migrant SA Railway workers (“uit-werkers”) lived in “kampongs” east of current “Silver Town”;
- Most of these cottages demolished during c. 1980’s after the need for “uit-werkers” at Matjiesfontein station diminished;
- Twelve cottages remain after one recently burnt down, one converted to church;
- Coloured and permanent black residents in particular, lived in harmony.

### 8.2 *Schooling*

- “Pink school” served as school for children of all races until c. 1970/ 1971, when the current “coloured” school was built;
- At present, use of the former “Pink school” seems to have reverted to that of a place of worship;
- New school for “white” learners was built nearby;
- Ms. “Juffrou” Chellan started teaching at new Matjiesfontein school in 1972 with headmaster Mr. Jonker. She became headmaster in 1973;
- School taught Sub A – Standard three pupils;
- Pupils wrote on “leie” (small writing boards), which had to be wiped clean daily after school and therefore, improved pupils’ ability to remember information;
- At the time the school on average has ± 60 pupils;
- There are currently ±10 kids (crèche) and ±40-50 pupils;
- After Standard 3 (Grade 5), many pupils went to finish their schooling in Laingsburg.

### 8.3 *General references*

- “Coloured” as well as black “uit-werkers” working for the SA Railways temporarily lived in the “kampongs” until the mid-1980’s when the need for migrant workers diminished and many of the corrugated iron/ timber cottages were demolished;
- There is uncertainty about who demolished these cottages but some of the materials appears to have ended up in the settlement;
- The “Wit-blok”, located directly east of the village along the banks of the Bobbejaan River, served as living quarters for hotel staff;
- Residents affectionately refer to “Jesus’s footprint”, that is legible within fossilised rock just above the river basin;

- Building currently used as guesthouse on adjoining (Groot water) farm was used as a shop for a period of time;
- Community members identified six of the original 10 oldest remaining dwellings in the settlement as referred to in Section 7.4, page 9 of this report. The location of these oldest remaining six dwellings is highlighted on the Heritage mapping survey (Annexure 5).

The following coordinates relating to specific heritage resources in and within the proximity of the study area were recorded (also mapped on Annexure 5):

Ref.	Coordinates	Height (*)	Description
102	S33 13.767 E20 34.315	877m	Current community cemetery
103	S33 13.707 E20 34.605	892m	1 <sup>st</sup> coloured community graveyard (closed)
104	S33 14.116 E20 34.972	894m	Old dwelling - Oom Jan Theron (Ms Chellan's dad)
105	S33 14.115 E20 35.000	892m	Old dwelling - Oom Jonas Arendse
106	S33 14.109 E20 35.039	894m	Old dwelling - Oom Jan Smith
107	S33 14.112 E20 35.053	895m	Old dwelling - Oom Abraham Willemse
108	S33 14.140 E20 34.876	898m	Former location of old house
108a	S33 14.887 E20 34.537	899m	Old dwelling - Oom Kiewiets' house
109	S33 13.815 E20 34.968	901m	Former "Pink/ mixed school"
110	S33 13.752 E20 34.990	890m	Former school for adults
111	S33 13.865 E20 35.097	890m	Former "White school"
112	S33 13.820 E20 35.367	889m	2 <sup>nd</sup> coloured community graveyard (closed)
113	S33 13.758 E20 35.359	889m	Black community burial grounds
114	S33 13.748 E20 35.339	892m	Sakkiesbaai – "refuse area"
115	S33 13.756 E20 35.325	889m	Sakkiesbaai – "coal splinters"
116	S33 13.762 E20 35.324	891m	Sakkiesbaai – "ruins of stone cottage"

(\*) Barometric height measurement - accurate for comparing relative point height

## 9. HERITAGE RESOURCES & ISSUES

Heritage resources and occurrences noted on the site and its direct proximity, with particular reference to spatial- and landscape issues, the built environment as well as information obtained through oral history, have been mapped (see Annexure 5). Given the complex range of natural and cultural attributes that are applicable to the study area, it is considered to be of aesthetic, architectural, historical and social significance – in terms of its local- and provincial contexts.

### 9.1 Cultural landscape context

The term "*cultural landscape*" refers to the imprint created on a natural landscape through human habitation and cultivation over an extended period of time. While the Cape has been inhabited for many ten of thousands of years (pre-colonial history) prior to Western settlement (colonial history), the nomadic lifestyles of early inhabitants are not always as evident within the landscape than the significant imprints made by humans during the last two – three hundred years.

Unlike ancient landscapes in parts of the world where intensive cultivation over periods much longer than locally have allowed natural and cultural components of the landscape to become interwoven, climatic conditions prevailing with this Karoo landscape mostly precluded large-scale cultivation, save within the proximity of perennial rivers or places with a reliable water source. Ultimately, definition of a cultural landscape is informed by the following elements, weighed through professional opinion, public values and statutory (legal) framework:

- Natural Landscape
- Public Memory
- Social History
- Historical Architecture
- Palaeontology
- Archaeology

Due to poor legibility of the only available early aerial photography series for Matjiesfontein (Flight Series 139A of 1939), detailed analysis of same provided us with limited insight into traditional (i.e. Pre-Modern) landscape patterns within the proximity of the study area (see image on page 15). Notwithstanding, the following observations can be made:

**North of railway line:**

- Layout of Matjiesfontein village – the layout of buildings and attentive grounds appear mostly as in present day;
- Building in same location of “White school” visible;
- Three smaller structures scattered directly north of “White school” on what is also referred to by community as “Bokbult”;
- “Wit blok” hotel accommodation set amongst bluegum trees distinguishable along river bank;
- Former “black” settlement, which was northeast of the “Wit blok” not visible on this image;
- Building in same location as current guesthouse on farm Groot Water visible, as well as dam directly southeast thereof;
- Alignment of clearly-defined gravel road roughly parallel to railway line extends through the village along an east-west axis and appears to have been a frequently-used path;
- Outline of 1<sup>st</sup> “coloured” cemetery just west of the village shown.

**South of railway line:**

- There appears to have been two more structures - one on either side of the now remaining row of seven “Sporweg” houses, just south of the station building;
- There are no free-standing structures where the three current dwellings are located, west of the “Sporweg houses”;
- Image pre-dates construction of “Silver Town” cottages as well as current seven “Rooiblok” houses;
- Unconfirmed number of small structures (±8-10) are scattered along the ridgeline just north of the non perennial river’s banks;
- Footpath extends from the structures in a southwest direction, along the ridgeline;
- Number of footpaths and un-named informal roads criss-cross area between village and settlement;
- Relatively wide natural drainage line (light shaded strip) clearly visible – no structures within this area at the time, except one lower down just east of present day “Rooi blok”.

**9.2 Natural landscape context**

The study area forms part of an arid Karoo landscape and is located along a lower-lying, gentle, north-facing slope and with the Witteberg mountain range as natural backdrop to the south. The study area is traversed by more than one non-perennial tributary of the Bobbejaan River, shaping the landscape by ways of a number of shallow riverbed most of which were found to be dry. However, as illustrated with the recent aerial photograph (page 16), the area directly south of the railway line and north of the “Rooiblok” housing units clearly has a higher ground water table and reed-growth in this vicinity was apparent.

Having been transformed through human settlement and movement patterns, very little natural vegetation remains in the study area as illustrated with photographs attached as part of Annexure 2. Soils were found to be rocky and very dry. Only a few semi-mature exotic trees are scattered around the study area – mostly Eucalyptus growing amongst oldest remaining dwellings in the settlement. Occurrence of some Acacia species was also noted.

Survey drawings provided by Aurecon clearly indicate the alignment of a natural drainage line (and 1:100 year flood line) traversing the settlement. This area effectively functions as a public open space to the local community and has strong visual-spatial links with different “precincts” that shape the settlement (refer Section 9.3).



Extract from Aerial Survey 139A of 1939 clearly showing Matjiesfontein village, Station and adjoining settlement (Source: Flight Series 139A of 1939, Image 24274, CDSM)



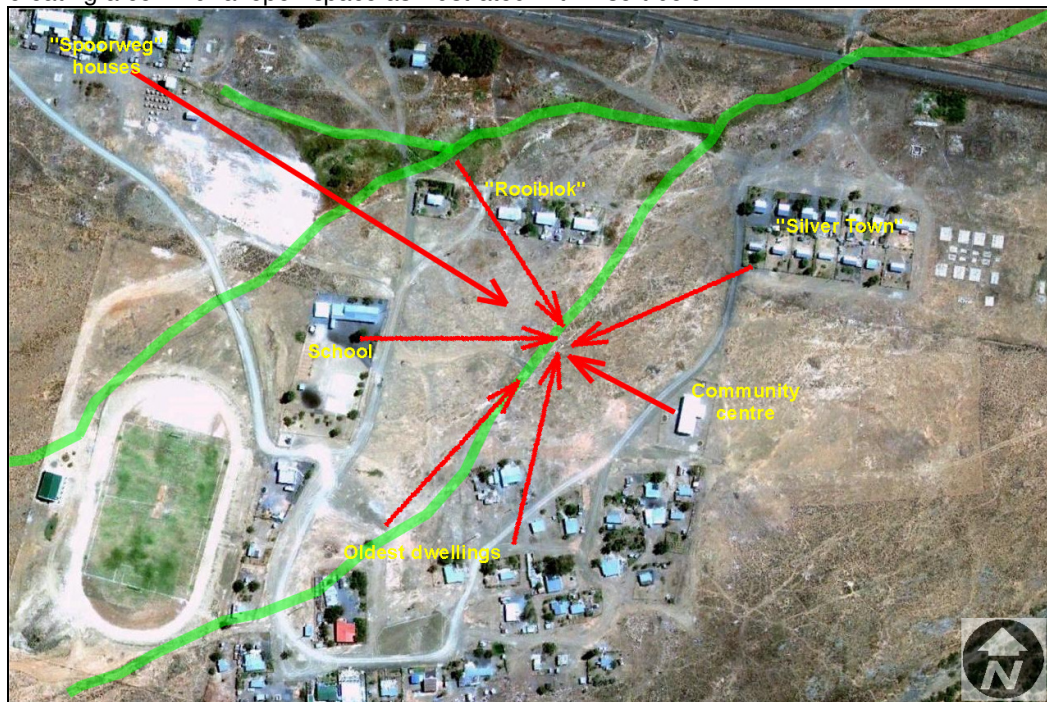
Recent aerial photography of Matjiesfontein settlement in context to adjoining village and environs. Actual proposed development footprint highlighted in yellow  
(Source: GoogleEarth)



### 9.3 Settlement morphology

In contrast with the formal layout pattern of Matjiesfontein village, the urban layout of the settlement is more loosely orientated/ organic and furthermore appears as if composed of distinct “precincts”, including the clusters referred to by the local community as “Silver Town” (not older than 60 years), the “Rooi-blok” (not older than 60 years) and “Spoorweg” houses. Historically however, the settlement originated from a few modest cottages erected in the “veld” south of the railway station. Subsequently, popularity of the Lord Milner Hotel and Matjiesfontein village expansion as well as expansion of the South African Railways, periodically requiring the employ and housing of seasonal workers (or “uit-werkers” as referred to be locals) at Matjiesfontein, all contributed to the shape and form of the settlement.

Of interest is the manner in which different “precincts” are spatially orientated with relation to the two natural drainage lines traversing the settlement, the confluence of which is directly northwest of “Silver Town” as clearly visible on the recent aerial photograph (page 16). While a few dwellings are now within the southern drainage line, it is noticeable how all the different “precincts” have visual-spatial relationships with this latter drainage line, thus effectively creating a communal open space as illustrated with insert below.



Illustrating natural drainage lines (green) traversing the settlement and visual-spatial relationships (red arrows) of different “precincts” with what effectively functions as a public open space

### 9.4 Built environment

Heritage mapping done as part of this HIA includes an array of off-site resources, which does not form part of the subject study area/ proposed development footprint as also highlighted in the recent aerial photograph (page 16). However, we are of the view that these off-site resources are intricately linked with the lives of the local community and thus needs to be acknowledged and memorialised in some form (though not necessarily through a requirement of the development proposed herewith). Heritage resources pertaining to the built environment (off site resources) includes the following:

- According to oral history sources, six of the oldest dwellings in the settlement remain and are mapped on Annexure 5. These dwellings are modest in design and have mostly been altered over decades of use but have been here since the early beginnings of Matjiesfontein and are therefore considered to be of high local historic and social cultural significance;

- “Silver Town” – These twelve remaining corrugated iron/ timber cottages are not older than 60 years and therefore not under general protection in terms of the NHRA. However, they are considered representative of an era during which SA Railway workers (all races) were required to work and live here (and other isolated locations often far from their homes and families), thus demonstrating historic characteristics concerning the SA Railways and historically significant patterns of development in the Western Cape and SA. The remaining structures are considered to be of high local historic, social and aesthetic cultural significance;
- Foundations of the former “kampong” (also not older than 60 years) are located directly east of “Silver Town”. This extensive area of former temporary accommodation structures, (of which only concrete foundations of the dwelling units, ablution facilities and ancillary structures remain), are arranged in three clusters, containing eight, twenty-one and forty-four respectively.<sup>11</sup> These are considered to be of moderate historical and social cultural significance;
- The seven remaining “Sporweg” houses (early aerial photography shows two more houses here) are older than 60 years, were originally occupied by SA Railway workers but are now occupied by tenants save for one, which is occupied by a caretaker in employ of the government. These structures are associated with “Silver Town” and are therefore considered to be of high local historic, aesthetic and architectural cultural significance;
- The six “Rooiblok” dwellings that are being incorporated into the proposal are not older than 60 years and are not considered to be of any cultural significance;
- The three freestanding dwellings (directly east of “Sporweg” houses) that are also being incorporated into the proposal are not older than 60 years and are not considered to be of cultural significance.

An assessment of existing dwellings in the settlement, compiled by Ninham Shand, June 2008 and including individual dwelling numbers, details pertaining to construction, ablution facilities and occupied are attached as part of Annexure 6.

### 9.5 **Archaeology**

All archaeological occurrences noted during fieldwork were outside the study area and its direct proximity and will not be impacted upon through the proposed development. From fieldwork undertaken as part of this assessment it is clear that the Matjiesfontein area has the potential to yield information that may broaden the understanding of natural and cultural heritage, and more specifically from pre-colonial and historic archaeological perspectives.

Given the limited scope of the proposed development (and limited funding available to the relevant planning authority) as well as the fact that the proposed development footprint is proposed within an existing settlement/ urban area, we recommend that an Archaeological Impact Assessment *not be required* in this instance.

## 10. **HERITAGE INFORMANTS AND INDICATORS**

Many residents from the Matjiesfontein settlement are descendants of former SA Railways employees, hotel staff, workers otherwise employed in the Village (also farm workers from the area) and it is therefore appropriate to say that the lives of its residents are intrinsically linked to the existence of the Matjiesfontein village and station complex (both well-known Provincial Heritage Sites). As such, we therefore submit that the complex historic layering pertinent to the village, also applies to the settlement, as both have clearly co-existed for an extended period of time and therefore forms part of a rural cultural landscape (a non-renewable heritage resource) the boundaries of which extend beyond that of what is known as the “Matjiesfontein village”.

Note that the proposed development site is within close proximity to, but outside the boundaries of these Provincial Heritage Sites:

<sup>11</sup> “Silver Town” formed part of the “kampong” and therefore represents what historically was a fourth cluster/ precinct

- *Matjiesfontein village (declared 1975-09-12);*
- *Railway Station Building, Matjiesfontein (declared 1989-12-15 and described as, "The railway station building situate on a portion of Portion 9, a portion of portion 8 of the farm Matjiesfontein, Laingsburg District.")*

According to the requirements of Section 38(3) of the NHRA it is crucial that the land use planning and EIA processes be informed by and incorporate heritage informants and indicators following from the mapping and grading of relevant heritage resources in Section 8 of this report. It is the purpose of this Section to define heritage informants and indicators pertaining to the way in which heritage resources must be incorporated into the overall design of the proposed development (see below). The way in which these aspects have been addressed in subsequent site development plan(s) are adjudicated in Section 12 of this report.

### **10.1 Cultural landscape context**

Most of the traditional landscape patterns identified (refer Section 9.1) relates to the broader rural cultural landscape, including the settlement, village and its direct environs but not specifically to the study area/ development footprint. Therefore, in this case, we do not consider it necessary to define any heritage indicators pertaining to this category, with the exception that:

- Existing prominent access roads and pedestrian movement routes must be acknowledged and incorporated in the proposed layout as far as possible;
- Exterior lighting to be installed as part of the proposed development should be aimed at minimising the overall nocturnal footprint of the proposed development within this rural Karoo landscape.

### **10.2 Natural landscape context**

- No development should be permitted within the 1:100 year floodline as indicated on survey drawings provided by Aurecon.

### **10.3 Settlement morphology**

- Existing visual-spatial relationships between the distinct "precincts" shaping the settlement and dating to different periods of the settlement's existence, (refer Section 9.3) should be retained and acknowledged in the proposed layout;
- The proposed layout must retain and incorporate the existing public open space as discussed to in Sections 9.2 and 9.3.

### **10.4 Built environment**

- While the six oldest dwellings in the settlement, identified as part of the mapping survey, are not considered to be of architectural or aesthetic cultural significance, they are of high local historic and social cultural significance and should therefore be retained as part of the proposal;
- Should it be possible to upgrade remaining "Silver Town" cottages to make provision for comfortable human habitation, these should preferably be retained. Residents should be encouraged to make possible future additions to the rear of the structures so as to preserve positive house-to-street visual-spatial relationships. Should successful upgrading not be feasible, consider retaining at least one – two cottages;
- "Sporweg" houses should be retained as part of the proposed development;
- Basic conservation objectives should be compiled for the Matjiesfontein settlement.

## **11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In addition to the Public Participation Process (PPP) to be facilitated by Andrew West environmental consultant as part of the EIA Process in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), a public open day was held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in the Matjiesfontein Community Hall. Matjiesfontein residents and relevant stakeholders were invited. A total of 35 residents as well as representatives from Laingsburg Municipality, PAWC,

project funding agent (DBSA) and members of the professional consultant team were present. An attendance list is attached as Annexure 7.

Heritage-related inputs made by members of the community included the following:

- The public open area between the school and community centre used to be children's playground; and were overgrown with bush until the municipality allegedly cleared the area many years ago;
- Community asked whether existing "Silver Town" corrugated iron structures would be replaced with modern structures or upgraded as part of the development. Community is of the view that while the corrugated iron structures are visually attractive, they are poorly insulated (hot in summer/ cold in winter) and therefore presently very uncomfortable accommodation;
- Community very interested to make use of new research material presented in this HIA (in an adapted format) for possible future tourism purposes.

## 12. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

This Section serves to assess conformity of the current site layout plan (Annexure 3) to the key heritage design informants and indicators identified in Section 10 of this report following this will be submitted to HWC's IARcom, BELcom and APM for adjudication and endorsement. Each indicator is assessed individually for ease of reference:

### 12.1 *Indicators relating to Cultural landscape issues*

#### **a.) INDICATOR CL-1:**

*Prominent access roads and pedestrian movement routes to be acknowledged and incorporated in site layout where possible.*

#### **Assessment:**

The proposed site layout adequately incorporates prominent access roads. While it is considered inevitable that the proposed development footprint would extend over some of the numerous footpaths criss-crossing the settlement, we are somewhat concerned about the fact that the proposal would cover much of the existing public open space, which from aerial photography, field work and inputs received during a community meeting also appears to function as an public open space and important pedestrian movement route. We acknowledge that space for urban expansion in the settlement in a manner that would be economically acceptable is limited. According to the project engineers, *Aurecon*, this is primarily due to the occurrence of shallow rock layers across the development site, which if built on would drastically inflate construction costs. We were therefore informed that the current layout would be most cost effective.

***It is recommended that practical solutions be found to define new pedestrian walkways through e.g. planting of indigenous/ endemic vegetation, pedestrian crossings, lighting, etc. [Refer to Section 12.3 regarding layout]***

**a.) INDICATOR CL-2:**

*Potential nocturnal footprint from exterior/ street lighting to be installed as part of proposed development should be minimised so as not to unduly detract from the overall Karoo rural landscape character.*

**Assessment:**

Section 9.3 of the Laingsburg SDF includes an objective requiring that, “*Matjiesfontein [exterior/ street] lighting should be of a sensitive nature and not adversely affect the character of the area*”. The SDF also recommends that while this is likely to be a more costly option than e.g. the installation of floodlights (as is often the practice in low-cost residential settlements), there should be a preference to lampposts or more appropriate lighting devices. Details pertaining to exterior lighting to be installed as part of the proposed development were not available at the time of writing.

***It is recommended that a condition be imposed to the effect that the overall nocturnal footprint of exterior/ street lighting to be installed as part of the proposed development be minimised as far as possible through introducing downward-orientated lighting and other appropriate measures (e.g. LED lighting) and that no flood lights be permitted.***

**12.2 Indicators relating to Natural landscape issues****a.) INDICATOR NL-1:**

*No development permitted within 1:100 year floodline.*

**Assessment:**

The current site layout includes public roads some of which encroach into the 1:100 year flood line (i.e. wrapping around eastern boundaries of proposed Erf numbers 37, 43 and also Erf 14). In addition to aerial photography, clearly highlighting two natural drainage lines (i.e. natural landscape features) traversing the site, survey drawings provided by Aurecon indicates the alignment of the 1:100 year flood line onto which development should not encroach.

***It is recommended that the site layout be amended to incorporate the said natural landscape feature and that development (including access roads) therefore be set back from the 1:100 year flood line.***

**12.3 Indicators relating to Settlement morphology****a.) INDICATOR SM-1:**

*Visual-spatial relationships between distinct “precincts” must be acknowledged in site layout.*

**Assessment:**

As illustrated with the sketch on page 17, distinct “precincts” within the settlement (i.e. “Sporweg houses”, oldest dwellings, “Silver Town”, “Rooiblok” as well as the community hall and school all have strong visual-spatial relationships with the centrally-located public open space, that is also a natural drainage line/ natural landscape feature. Furthermore, the public open space allows for visual-spatial links between the various precincts and providing a sense of community. The current site layout, but particularly the orientation of proposed Erven 54 to 67 would visually isolate “Silver Town” and, in our view detract from the cultural significance of these cottages as discussed in Section 9.4.

***It is recommended that the site layout be amended so as to be appreciative of existing visual – spatial relationships between distinct “precincts” within the development. This would also address Indicators CL-1, NL-1 and SM-2.***

**b.) INDICATOR SM-2:**

*Site layout must retain and incorporate existing public open space.*

**Assessment:**

As discussed above, the existing public open space is not only a natural landscape feature but also serves as important structural element within the settlement, strengthening visual-spatial links and a sense of community.

**See recommendation to Indicator SM-1.**

**12.4 Indicators relating to Built environment**

**a.) INDICATOR BE-1:**

*Six oldest dwellings should not be affected through proposed development.*

**Assessment:**

These dwellings are situated outside the development footprint and will not be impacted upon through the proposed development.

***It is therefore considered that this heritage indicator has been sufficiently addressed.***

**b.) INDICATOR BE-2:**

Remaining “Silver Town” cottages to be retained (should upgrading be possible), future additions to cottages should only be made to rear. “Sporweg houses” should be retained.

**Assessment:**

Part of the development proposal is for subdivision of land on which existing structures are located so as to facilitate land transfer and enable private ownership as envisaged in the Laingsburg IDP. No additions to “Silver Town” cottages are envisaged as part of the proposed development. We note however comments made by the community regarding the suitability of the corrugated iron structures for human habitation and therefore suggest that consideration be given to upgrade these units through installation of appropriate insulation in this harsh climatic environment.

***It is considered that this heritage indicator has been sufficiently addressed but that consideration be given to upgrading of existing corrugated iron structures (through appropriate insulation) so as to allow for comfortable human habitation. Should corrugated iron structures be replaced, it is recommended that at least two be retained.***

**12.5 Summary of Mitigation measures/ Recommended Conditions of approval**

The following should be incorporated into the decision (“Record of Decision”) issued by Heritage Western Cape, to be incorporated into the EIA Process adjudicated by the DEA&DP:

<b>Indicator Ref</b>	<b>Recommended HWC Condition of Approval</b>
CL-1	That practical solutions be found to define new pedestrian walkways through e.g. planting of indigenous/ endemic vegetation, pedestrian crossings, lighting, etc.
CL-2	That overall nocturnal footprint of exterior/ street lighting to be installed as part of the proposed development be minimised as far as possible through introducing downward-orientated lighting and other appropriate measures (e.g. LED lighting) and that no flood lights be permitted
NL-1	That site layout be amended to incorporate the said natural landscape feature and that development (including access roads) therefore be set back from the 1:100 year flood line
SM-1, SM-2	That site layout be amended so as to be appreciative of existing visual – spatial relationships between distinct “precincts” within the development. This would also address Indicators CL-1, NL-1 and SM-2
BE-2	That consideration be given to upgrading of existing corrugated iron structures (through appropriate insulation) so as to allow for comfortable human habitation.

	Should corrugated iron structures be replaced, it is recommended that at least two be retained.
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### 13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having regard to the above assessment, it is recommended:

- 13.1 That this report fulfils the requirements of a Notice of Intent to Develop (NID) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA);
- 13.2 That the recommendations set out in Section 12 of this HIA be incorporated into the proposed development and that that the Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning (PAWC) be informed accordingly.

**PERCEPTION Heritage Planning**  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**SE DE KOCK**

*B-Tech(TRP) MIPI TRP(IRL) EIA Mgmt (IRL) APHP*