

PHASE 2 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In terms of section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken by Sharples Environmental Services for

MIDDELPLAAS, PORTION 9 OF FARM LA TERRA DA LUC 1075 and FARM 1070, FRANSCHHOEK

March 2013



Fig. 1: Labourer's cottage, La Terra da Luc

Prepared for:
Sharples Environmental Services CC

By

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Heritage Impact Assessments, Heritage Statements (as part of EIA's), Heritage Evaluations of historic structures & sites, Oral History studies and evaluations, Socio-historic evaluations, etc.



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- Middelplaas Design Report, J West, September 2010
- Middelplaas SDP (Rev C) – February 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Phase 2 report forms part of the final Basic Assessment Report (EIA Process) conducted by Sharples Environmental Services for Portion 9 of Farm La Terra da Luc 1075 and Farm 1070, Franschhoek. The project proposal is for the rezoning of the 10.9ha site from Agriculture 1 Zone to permit the development of the proposed Middelpaas (formerly named St Martin, and prior to that La Terra de Luc) residential and retirement village. The residential village proposes to have 129 units; 20 units will be one bedroom flats (40m²), 15 one bedroom houses (88m²), 50 two bedroom houses (115m²) and 35 three bedroom houses (150m²) and some apartments.

A frail care unit with 18 beds, kitchen, lounge, and dining hall to seat 120 people (1.5m²pp) is also proposed. Garages are envisaged for 50% of the flats. The architectural style of the retirement village is intended to compliment that of the surrounding Franschhoek environment whilst being inviting. An open park and recreation area with trees and benches is envisaged around the dam as well as in proximity to the frail care unit. The design concept can be referenced in the relevant Appendix.

This report serves to summarize the Phase 1 process, respond to the comments from SAHRA as well as those received through the Public Participation Process and to formulate consolidated recommendations, which take into account all of the above, as underpinned by the heritage indicators which were identified and discussed in the Phase 1 report.

This Phase 2 Heritage Impact Assessment report finds that there is sufficient information to conclude that the development proposals can be supported without further study needing to be undertaken, but subject to the mitigation measures and other recommendations contained in this report – all as underpinned by its heritage indicators.

Consequently, this report concludes:

That SAHRA can endorse this Phase 2 report as having satisfied the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA): Section 38(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) and (g);

That NHRA Section 38 (3)(f) is not applicable, as the preferred alternative is assessed, and will not adversely affect any heritage resources, as mitigated; and that

That in terms of section 38(8), SAHRA endorses the conclusion in this report that the proposed development is allowed to proceed subject to the following conditions:

- That the development remains substantially in accordance with the Site Development Plan (attached and presented as figure 5) as addressed and mitigated in this report;
- That the proposed development should maintain the soft edge along its northern boundary abutting the agricultural area beyond, reinforced by the row of existing mature Beefwood trees,
- That failure to observe any of the abovementioned conditions will automatically result in SAHRA's endorsement for these development proposals being withdrawn, thereby requiring a new submission to SAHRA/HWC in terms of NHRA Section 38(8).

A. INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background & Brief

The Phase 2 Heritage Impact Assessment process was necessitated by the highlighting of additional queries on heritage-related issues which were not necessarily identified as indicators in the Phase 1 process. These include the letter responding to the Phase 1 HIA from SAHRA dated 17 February 2011 as well as the comments received as a result of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (Draft BAR) by Sharples Environmental Services CC.

Consequently, Ron Martin Heritage Consultancy was appointed to conduct the Phase 2 process and compile this report, the purpose of which is to assist SAHRA in making a decision as to whether the development may proceed as proposed or whether the site has sufficient intrinsic heritage value to warrant its retention in its present state.

A.2 Scope of Phase 2 Study

A proposed scope of work for this study was determined in consultation with officials at SAHRA's Built Environmental Unit, and is outlined as follows:

- Identification and discussion of additional heritage indicators (if applicable) arising from issues and queries resulting from the Phase 1 and Public Participation Processes
- Determine a grading for the site
- Determine impacts of the latest layout plan on the heritage value (grading) of the site
- Formulate final, consolidated recommendations, as underpinned by the heritage indicators

These elements will be outlined under their appropriate headings and specific recommendations formulated in relation to each, where applicable.

A.3 Declaration of Independence

I hereby declare that I have no conflicts of interest related to the work of this project. Specifically I declare that I have no personal or financial interests in the property and/or the development being assessed in this report and that I have no personal or financial connections to the relevant property owners, developers, planners, financiers or consultants of the development.

I declare that the opinions expressed in this report are my own, and a true reflection of my professional expertise.



..... 22 March 2013

B. SITE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

B.1 Site description & locality

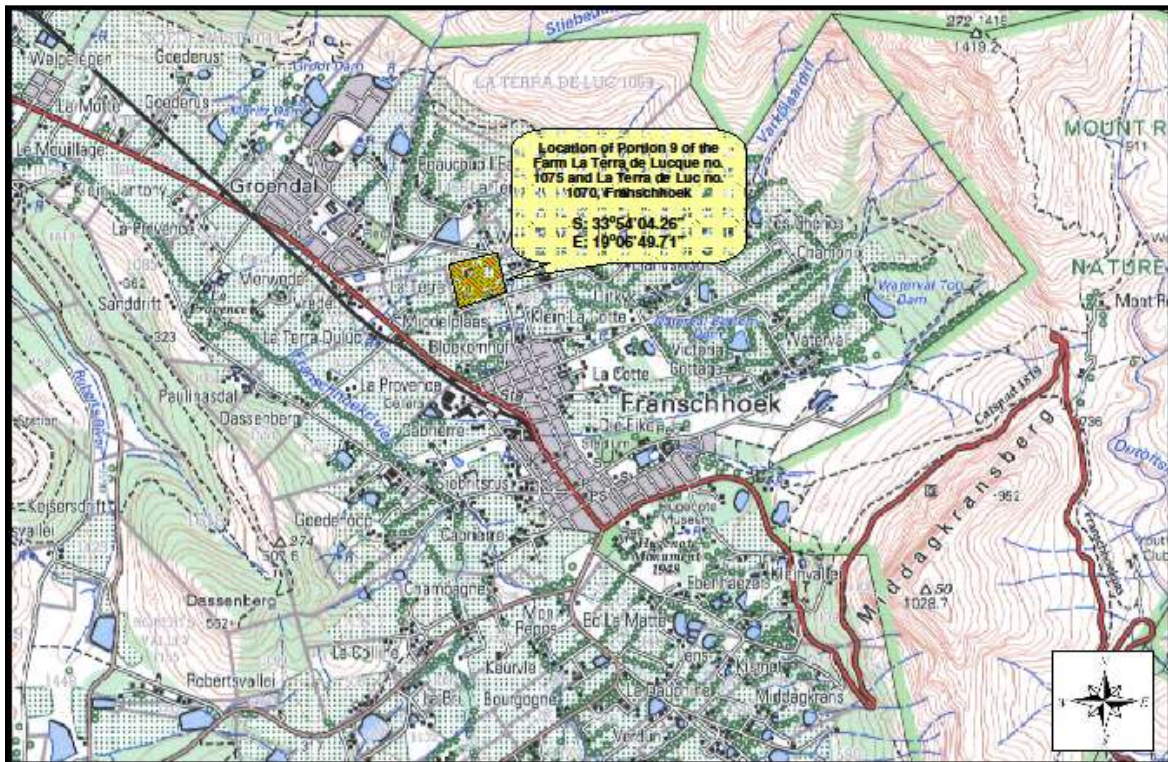


Figure 2: 1:50 000 map indicating the location of the property for the proposed development.

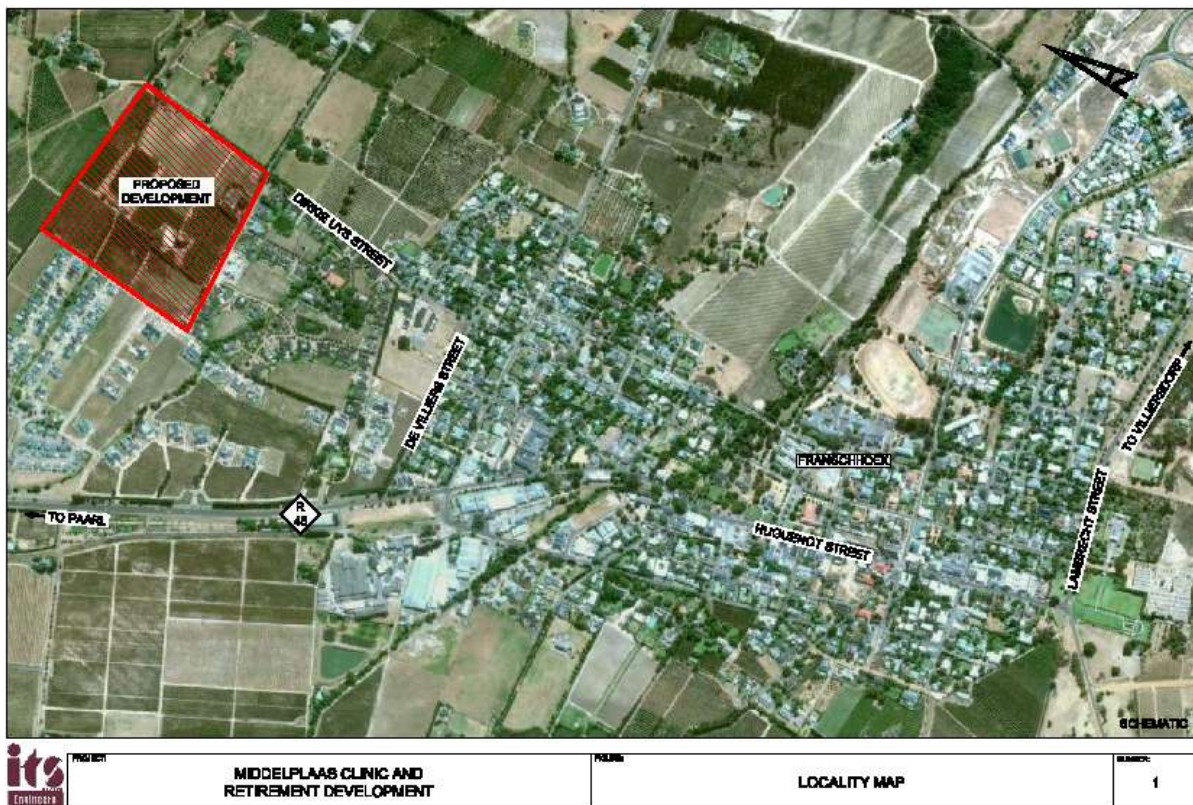


Figure 3: Locality Map

The site is located north of the R45 (which becomes Huguenot Road) between the historic core of Franschhoek and Groendal. Middelploas can be accessed from Dirkie Uys Street by means of a dirt road which will be formalized as an extension to Dirkie Uys. It abuts the urban component of Franschhoek, located east of La Petit Provence and north of Domain Des Anges, with La Ferme Chantel to the southwest. Dirkie Uys Street extension forms its eastern boundary and agricultural land its northern boundary. The properties are at present planted to vines and fruit trees.

The property falls within the jurisdiction area of the Stellenbosch Municipality. It is located in the transitional zone as determined by the Franschhoek Spatial Development Framework. It is earmarked for future town expansion, currently zoned Agriculture 1.

The buildings on the property include a modern farmhouse, the historical farmhouse with its modern accretions, various outbuildings and a historical labourer's cottage. It is proposed that these buildings will be upgraded to form part of the proposed residential development. The existing modern owner's residence will be subdivided from the main portion of the site.

The historical *werf* on the site contains a T-shaped house with an attached cellar and other associated features dating back to at least the nineteenth century. While it possesses a series of modern accretions, the historical elements of its construction are sufficiently intact and authentic to warrant its retention and rehabilitation. This building will become a focal point within the new development by retaining it in a garden setting with a reflection to its *werf* status in a past rural landscape. The large trees on the *werf* forming a dense mass and emphasising its presence, are screening the house itself from the road passing the farm.

The historical farmhouse as well as an old labourer's cottage (probably the last of a row) is to receive a detailed analysis of their historical context assessment of their different components by an architectural historian / conservation architect and be conserved as such.



Figure 4: Historic T-shaped farmhouse, to be restored and retained

B.2 Project Description

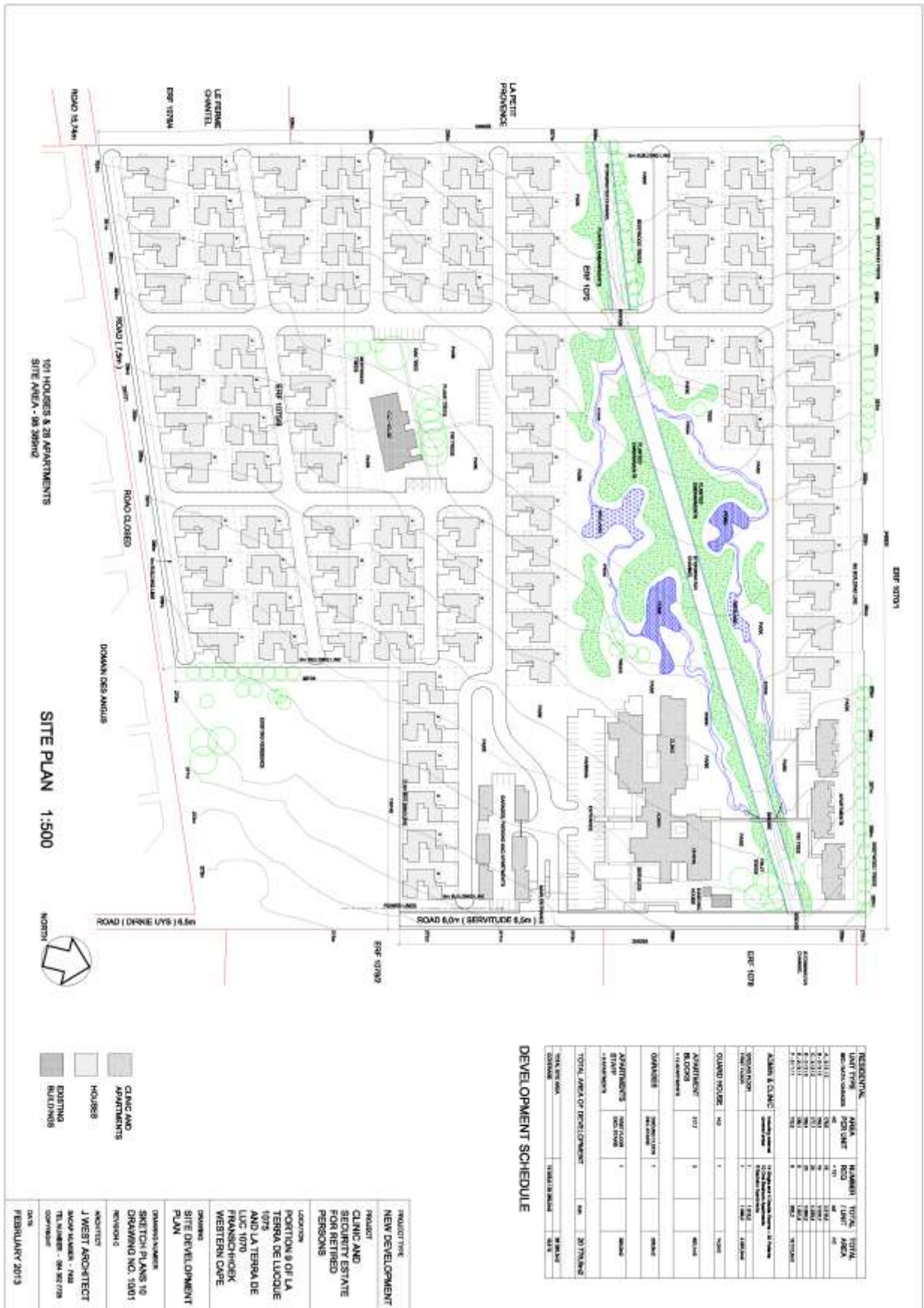


Figure 5: Present preferred layout

The project proposal is for the rezoning of the 10.9ha site from Agriculture 1 Zone to permit the development of the proposed Middelplaas (formerly named St Martin, and prior to that La Terra de Luc) residential and retirement village. The residential village proposes to have 129 units; 20 units will be one bedroom flats (40m²), 59 two bedroom houses (115m²) and 42 three bedroom houses (150m²) and 6 staff apartments (the aforementioned sizes are footprint sizes). The 101 houses will be built on plots, the smallest being 363m² and the largest 792m² in size. A frail care unit with 18 beds, kitchen, lounge, and dining hall to seat 120 people (1.5m²pp) is also proposed. Garages are envisaged for 50% of the flats. The architectural style of the retirement village is intended to compliment that of the surrounding Franschoek environment whilst being inviting. An open park and recreation area with trees and benches is envisaged around the dam as well as in proximity to the frail care unit.

The proposed zoning will be as follows:

- The retirement units will be zoned for Residential Zone II with consent for a Retirement Village.
- The units above ground level and flats will be zoned Residential zone IV.

See figure 5 for the preferred layout plan.

B.3 Alternatives

No site alternatives were assessed. The preferred layout alternative had been developed as a result of participation by members of the project team and through intense liaison with the various authorities and identified I&AP's.



Figure 6: View of the site towards the old farmhouse

C. RESULTS OF PHASE 1 & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

C.1 Responses to the Phase 1 HIA

The Phase 1 HIA was tabled at a meeting of SAHRA's Built Environment & Landscape Committee (BELCom) on 28 January 2011, and although the committee did not reject the proposal outright, some concerns were voiced in their letter of response dated 17 February 2011. These are summarised as follows:

- The proposed development did not read as an infill development. It was recommended to "breathe" the development by mediating current densities.
- Current design does not respect urban edge morphology; a buffer zone should be designed into the equation.
- Proper heritage indicators are necessary to act as design informants and guide design outcomes.
- A visual impact assessment is required.

The Phase 1 HIA was also circulated along with the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) to registered I & APs as part of the Public Participation Process (PPP) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process. Comments relating to the HIA are summarised as follows:

- At least 7 respondents expressed concerns about the density of the proposed development, in line with SAHRA's main comment. More specifically, the Franschoek Heritage Trust were concerned that there are plus/minus 22 plots of less than 600m². The Franschoek Town Planning Scheme Regulations 1985 prescribe minimum areas of 600m², 800m² and 1 000m² for erven in different Single Residential Density Zones. To be consistent with the density of the rest of Franschoek and the Franschoek Town Planning Scheme Regulations (1985) none of the Middelplaas erven should be less than 600m².

C.2 Discussion

C.2.1 Density

The developer acknowledges that the proposal is probably more dense than that of neighbouring ribbon-like developments of Dormain des Anges and La Petit Provence, but considerably less dense than the prescribed density for this transitional zone. The proposed coverage is only 19.1%, with the landscaped greenbelt (that accommodates the stream and stormwater channel) being the dominating landscape feature, complimented by the prominent old farmhouse located in a park-like setting.

A total of only 101 houses are proposed in the development, which gives a ratio of 9.3 houses per hectare and is consistent with the recommended density proposed by the Municipality in this zone, where a maximum of 15 houses per hectare is allowed.

In terms of "mediating current densities", one has to acknowledge that Franschoek itself has a mixture of densities within its town limits. Properties at the top of De Villiers Street range from 450 to 600m², while Groendal plots start at 240m² (older portion) and 160m² for the more recent low-cost residential fabric. The Franschoek Town Planning Scheme Regulations of 1985 were very applicable when they were promulgated and, to a large extent, still apply within the limits of the historic core of the town, where the protection of the scale and grain of the historic streetscapes are paramount. The transitional zone between

the town and Groendal should not be tied to this restriction, as the plot sizes proposed in the 1985 regulations were promulgated in a time when:

1. The segregationist policies of apartheid were the guiding principle in all town planning.
2. The transitional zone between the town and the apartheid-created dormitory village of Groendal was not a consideration, as it was inconceivable then that the two settlements would ever be integrated.



Figure 7: The site in context. Note the varied densities within the town. The green areas have been identified for further urban expansion in terms of the Spatial Development Plan for Franschhoek

One could possibly argue the mediation of existing densities by implementing a “transitional density scale” for the transitional zone, i.e. scaling up the densities as one moves further from the old town and closer to Groendal. It is a pity that the precedent has already been created with the establishment of exclusive “gated” developments within the transitional zone, where residents were willing (and able) to pay the asking price for larger, secure plots. True integration between the two racially-divided settlements would have been achieved far more equitably had there been sufficient foresight in the types of developments allowed in this zone, such as more affordable housing stock on reasonably-sized plots in an urban scheme designed to create communities instead of houses. That proverbial ship, however, has sailed, but the principle could still be applied to future developments within this zone.

C.2.2 Urban Edge Morphology

The new urban edge for Franschoek, as determined by the current Spatial Development Plan, is NOT along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Middelploas site (see fig 7). When the Phase 1 HIA was compiled in 2010, the old town planning scheme was still applicable, as well as the old urban edge, clearly shown as the red broken line in figure 7. The black broken line is the new urban edge, and the approved developments on farms 1078/1 and 1078/rem would now form the buffer areas between Middelploas and the rural area to the east.

The northern boundary of Middelploas borders farm 1070/1, itself entirely inside the “old” urban edge, with farm 1466/1, north of farm 1070/1, has also now been included in the current urban edge.

This begs the question: Does the principle of urban edge morphology then apply in the case of the Middelploas development? This assessor does not think so, even though the mitigation measures that were already put in place as a result of the assessment in the phase 1 study will still be implemented, particularly the buffer areas and the visual screening of the development by means of the retention of existing tree-lines (particularly on the northern boundary) and proposed further planting of the buffer zones.

The position of the site within the current urban edge, as well as approved developments on its eastern neighbours, also lends itself more to being read as an infill development as opposed to if it were bordering onto the urban edge, as previously thought.

C.2.3 Heritage Indicators

In the phase 1 HIA, it was thought that the site bordered the urban edge as, consequently, the vineyard landscape proposed to be included in the Cape Winelands Cultural Landscape. This proximity to the proposed Grade I area was consequently identified as a key heritage indicator, but does not apply in terms of this study and the updated planning context.

The significance of this indicator is therefore minimal at best.

In terms of the history of the site as an indicator, sufficient mitigation measures were proposed in the phase 1 study, as follows:

- Any memory of the history of the site has to be incorporated into intangible aspects associated with the development, such as the use of names (Middelploas is a good start) for individual buildings, facilities, spaces and internal roads.

The two historical structures were also listed as an indicator, impacts on which will serve to be positive as they will fully restored and granted sustainable uses as part of the proposed Middelploas development.

C.2.4 Visual Impact



Figure 8: View from the Franschoek Pass, the arrow indicating the old homestead

The response letter from SAHRA asked for a Visual Impact Assessment, largely due to the perceived proximity of the site to the proposed Grade 1 Cape Winelands Cultural Landscape area. It was decided that, in light of the updated planning context of the development (and the consequent “lower” heritage significance of the site) as well as its “revised” position with regard to the cultural landscape, a full visual impact assessment was not considered to be necessary. Also, the site is not visible from anywhere within the historic core of Franschoek, or from the access road to the town from Stellenbosch. It also has a limited view from the Franschoek Pass, as indicated in figure 8.

However, as part of the (attached) Design Report compiled by Jaco West, the architect for the development, a visual scoping exercise was conducted, paraphrased as follows:

- Visual-spatial qualities including its characteristic rural landscape elements have significance at the site and need to inform the siting, design and landscaping, especially with its close location and proximity to the historical core of the town. The location and bulk of buildings, with specific regard to the visual impact, must ensure a positive visual-spatial integration with the surrounding residential context.
- It is important to preserve the natural sight lines, as well as the horizontal angles of vision, from the houses to the surrounding mountains and valley. The vista up to the mountain is an important element in defining the natural environmental context of Franschoek.
- The boundary treatments of adjacent sites will ensure visual continuity with consideration of the privacy of immediate owners. Visually impermeable boundary wall treatment will be limited to the service area at the main building.



Figure 9: View (south) across Dormain des Anges



Figure 10: View to the east, across the development areas of Farm 1078/1 and 1078/rem.



View to the west



View to the north

D. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Phase 2 Heritage Impact Assessment report finds that there is sufficient information to conclude that the development proposals can be supported without further study needing to be undertaken, but subject to the mitigation measures and other recommendations contained in this report – all as underpinned by its heritage indicators.

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Ron Martin
March 2013