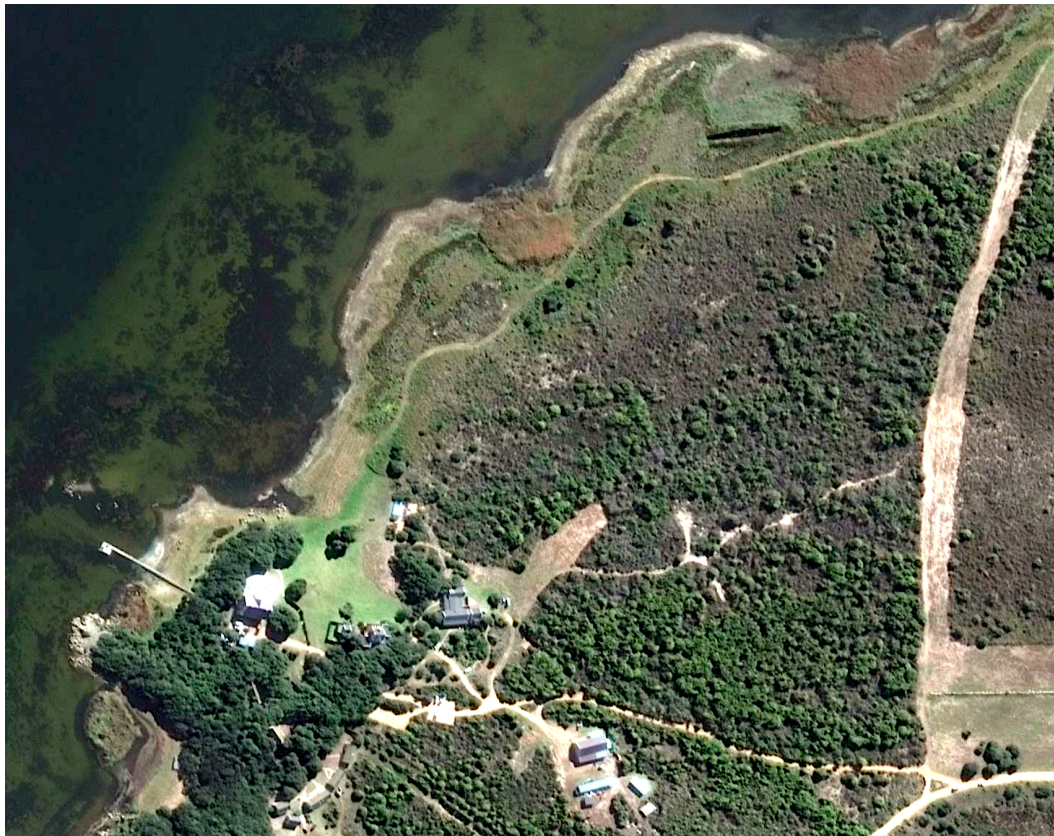


Proposed Development on Mosaic Farm
Portion 1 of Farm 723, Overstrand Municipality
Western Cape Province

Visual Assessment

September 2019
Version 2.0



Prepared by
Bernard Oberholzer, Landscape Architect

Prepared for
Hermanus Riviera Estates CC

NEMA requirements for Specialist Reports		
	Specialist Report content as required by the NEMA 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended	Section
1 (1)(a)	(i) the specialist who prepared the report; and	Section 1
	(ii) the expertise of that specialist to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae;	
(b)	a declaration that the specialist is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority;	Section 1
(c)	an indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared;	Section 2
(cA)	an indication of the quality and age of the base data used for the specialist report;	Sections 6, 8 and 9
(cB)	a description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	Section 10 and 11
(d)	the duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment;	Section 8
(e)	a description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process, inclusive of equipment and modelling used;	Section 3
(f)	details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	Sections 10 and 11
(g)	an identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Section 13
(h)	a map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Figures 5 and 6
(i)	a description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 5
(j)	a description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, or activities;	Section 14
(k)	any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr;	Sections 13
(l)	any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation;	Sections 14
(m)	any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation;	n/a
(n)	a reasoned opinion-	
	(i) whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised; and	Section 14
	(iA) regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and	Section 14
	(ii) if the opinion is that the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan;	Section 13
(o)	a description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of preparing the specialist report;	Refer to Heritage Practitioner
(p)	a summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto; and	Refer to Heritage Practitioner
(q)	any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A
2	Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	N/A

1 Visual Specialist

Bernard Oberholzer, Landscape Architect
PO Box 471, Stanford, Western Cape, 7210
Email: bernard.bola@gmail.com

Expertise

Bernard Oberholzer has a Bachelor of Architecture (UCT) and Master of Landscape Architecture (U. of Pennsylvania), and has more than 20 years experience in visual assessments. He has presented papers on Visual and Aesthetic Assessment Techniques, and is the author of Guideline for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in EIA Processes, prepared for the Dept. of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Provincial Government of the Western Cape. Bernard was involved in the Heritage Survey for the Overstrand with Baumann et al, and is a resident of the Overstrand with good working knowledge of the area.

Declaration

The author declares that he is an independent practitioner with expertise and wide experience in visual impact assessments, that the assessment has been carried out in an objective manner and complies with the relevant EIA regulations, and that all material information in his possession, which may influence a decision by the competent authority and the objectivity of the review, has been disclosed.



Bernard Oberholzer
Principal Landscape Architect
SACLAP Reg. no. 87018

2 Purpose and Scope of the Study

In the Response to the Notification of Intent to Develop (August 2019), Heritage Western Cape has indicated that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must be submitted, which must have special reference to:

- Visual impacts on the cultural landscape;
- Built environment study.

This report covers the visual assessment, which will in turn be incorporated into the HIA prepared by the heritage specialist.

The 'Guideline for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists' (Oberholzer, 2005), issued by the Provincial Government of the Western Cape, was used as a guide. In terms of this guide, it was determined that a Level 2 'visual statement' with potential visual impacts and recommended mitigations would be adequate, given the nature of the proposed development.

3 Methodology

The method used for the visual assessment includes the following:

- A site visit and photographic survey of the area and its landscape context;
- Identification of important viewpoints and view corridors, taking into account potential sensitive receptors;
- Description of the proposed project and receiving environment, together with possible visual impacts or risks associated with the project; and
- Formulation of practical mitigation measures to minimise potential adverse visual impacts.

The term 'visual' is taken in its broadest meaning to include visual, scenic, aesthetic and amenity values represented by the natural and cultural landscape, which encompasses the area's 'sense of place'.

4 Policy and Legislative Context

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) (Act No. 25 of 1999), and associated provincial regulations, provide legislative protection for natural, cultural and scenic resources, as well as for archaeological and paleontological sites within the study area. This report deals with visual and scenic considerations, while heritage issues are covered in the HIA.

5 Assumptions and Uncertainties

The visual assessment was based on the sketch plans provided by Kritzingers Architects, (August 2019), and it was assumed that the final plans would have the same building forms, materials and colours as indicated.

6 Description of the Project

Information on the project has been provided by Kritzingers Architects (2019), see Figures 1, 2 and 6.

The development consists essentially of a clubhouse and five residential-type buildings, each building articulated into a series of smaller units.

According to the description by the Architects, the intention is to use building forms that relate to the lagoon context, such as the traditional boat sheds found in the area. The new buildings would not emulate the older buildings of the site, such as the historical 'Spookhuis', but instead sit lightly on the site by using piles and raised decks and boardwalks, helping to minimise disturbance of the natural vegetation.

The design of the units will involve a light-weight timber modular structure clad with traditional Victorian profile corrugated iron in a dark grey colour. The architecture would have a nautical theme, incorporating elements such as porthole windows, decking and timber construction.

Existing milkwood trees would be retained and additional milkwoods planted. The intention is for the property to apply for Private Nature Reserve status.

A summary of the proposed accommodation is given in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Description of Project Facilities

Proposed Facilities	Area	Height	Finishes and colours
Property area	464 ha	n/a	n/a
Development area approx. 370 x 50m	approx. 1,85 ha	n/a	n/a
Proposed building footprint	approx. 3 500 m ²	n/a	n/a
Clubhouse incl. decks	approx. 655 m ²	5,9m above GL	Walls: Victorian profile corrugated iron roof sheeting, colour dark grey. Natural timber posts. Timber framed glazed doors & windows in dark grey. Roof: Victorian profile corrugated iron, colour dark grey.
Additional dwelling units incl. decks	approx. 560 m ² /unit x 5 units	4,8m above GL	Walls: Victorian profile corrugated iron roof sheeting, colour dark grey. Natural timber posts. Timber framed glazed doors & windows in dark grey. Roof: Victorian profile corrugated iron roof sheeting, colour dark grey.
Swimming pool and deck	approx. 150 m ²	n/a	Fiberglass lined pool colour light grey. Timber decking
Access roads	Existing track	n/a	Brush-cut jeep track
Parking (43 bays)	625 m ²	n/a	Gravel
Antennae/ satellite dishes	n/a	-	Unknown
External lighting	n/a	n/a	Type: Walkway lights fixed to decking
Solar panels	-	-	Unknown
Rainwater tanks	n/a	-	Unknown

7 Alternatives

Only a preferred layout is being assessed in this visual report, along with the no-go alternative. The layout has, however, been through previous alternatives and refined as a result of the visual screening exercise, resulting in the proposed clubhouse being reduced in scale, and the accommodation units reduced in height.

The small-scale architectural forms, building method and dark grey colour finishes are all aimed at mitigating the visual effect of the proposed development.

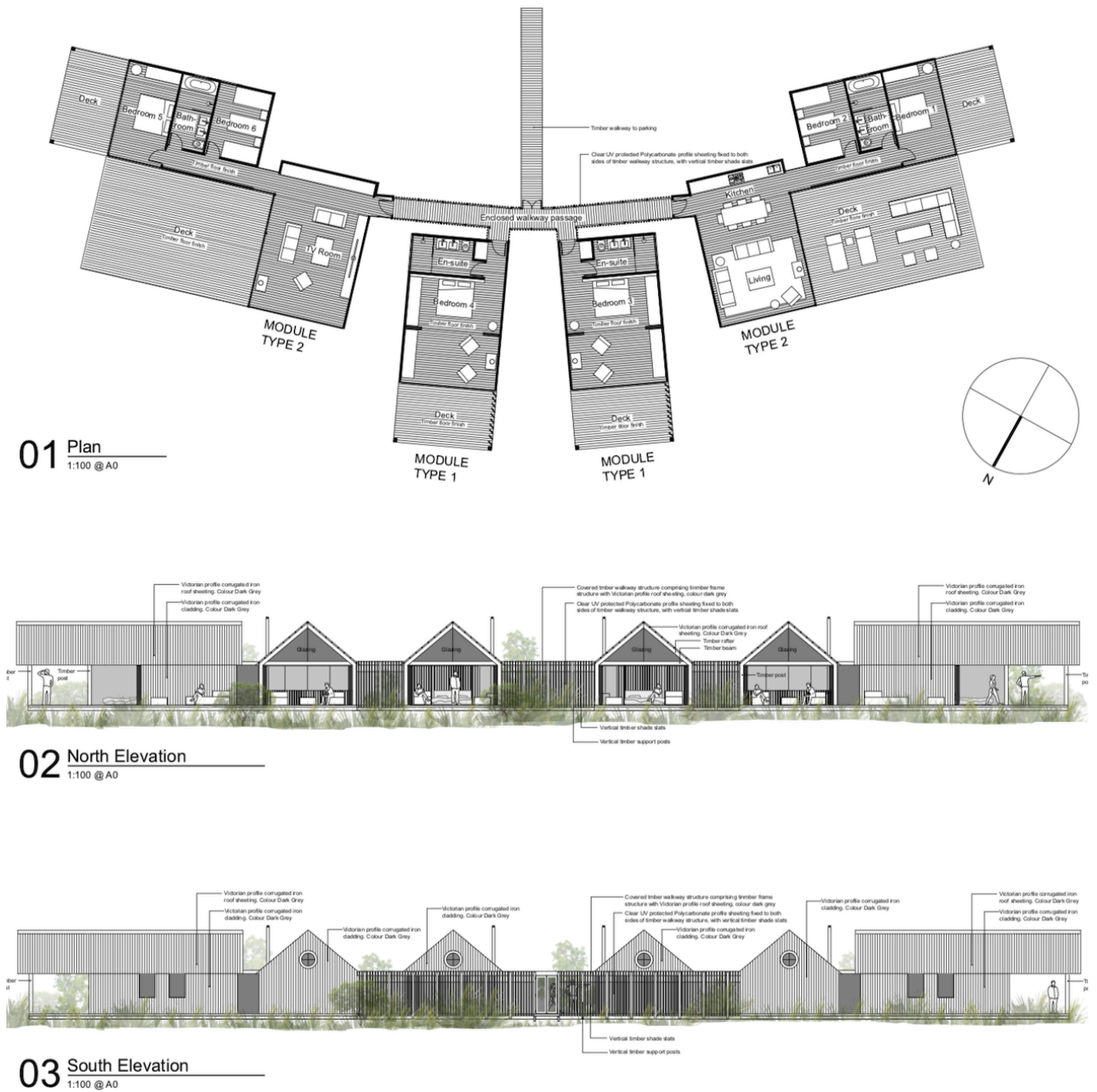


Figure 1: Proposed Additional Dwelling Unit Type A (N.T.S. Kritzing Architects)

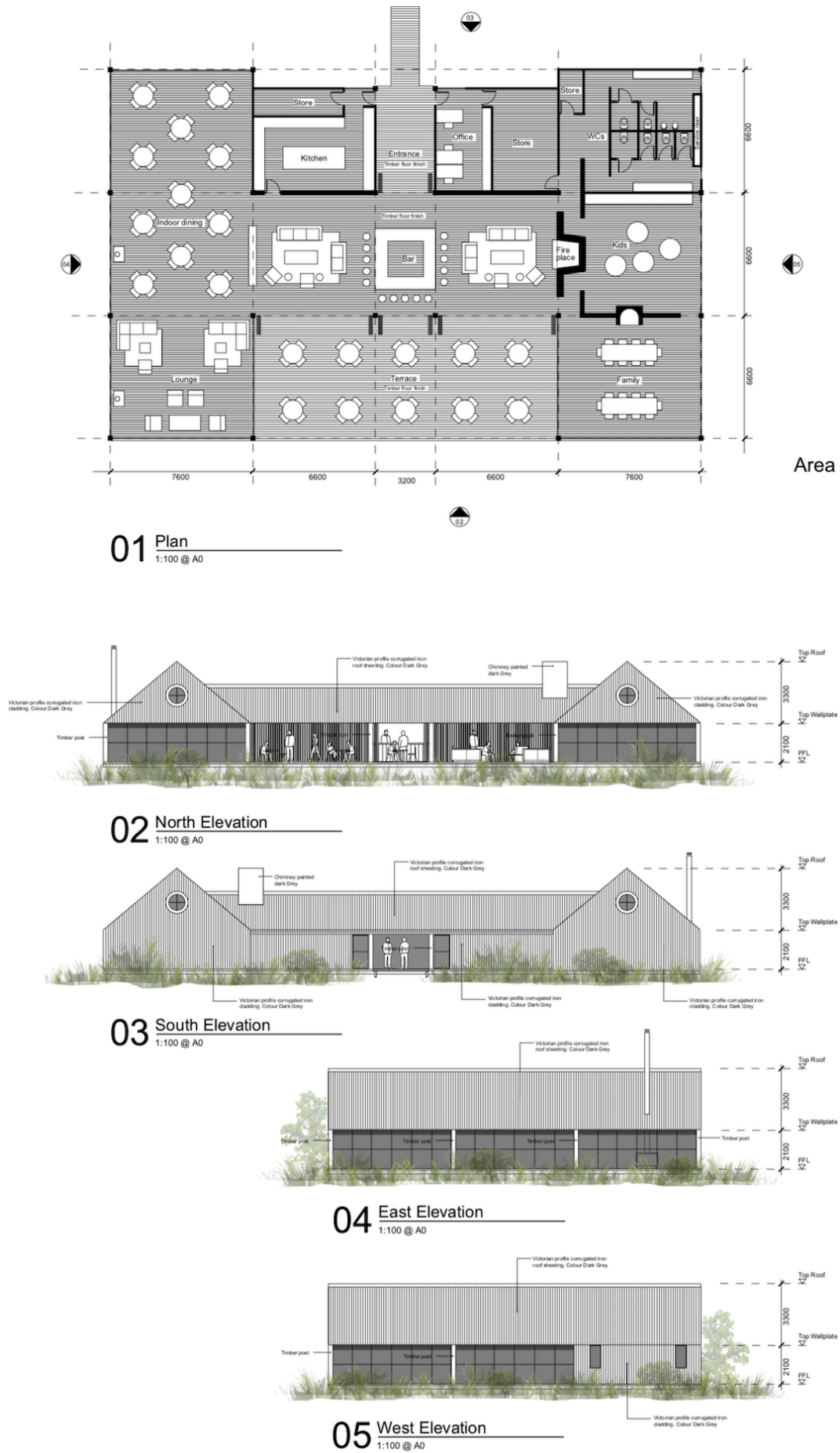


Figure 2: Proposed Clubhouse (N.T.S. Kritzing Architects)

8 Site Investigation

A visit to the project site and surroundings was carried out on 09 August 2019. Weather conditions were clear and bright for the photographic survey. The season was not a consideration for carrying out a visual assessment.

Viewpoints were selected based on potential sensitive receptors within a roughly 2 km radius of the proposed development, including road users of the R43 Route and recreational users of the lagoon. The selected viewpoints are indicated on Figure 4.

9 Description of the Study Area

The location, context and relevant landscape features of the receiving environment are indicated in Figures 3, 4 and 5. A great deal of background information is given in the Mosaic NID Supporting Document (Rennie et al, 2019), and only those aspects that have visual implications for the proposed development are included here.

Local Context:

The Mosaic site is located in a rural / natural area on the Wortelgat Road, about 8,8 km from Stanford, in the Overstrand Municipality. The property fronts onto the Kleinrivier Lagoon, being the estuary of the Klein River. The property stretches across the Wortelgat Road to the south, while the Walker Bay Nature Reserve lies immediately to the south along the coast. The land use of the property is predominantly tourism.

Natural Landscape Features:

The site for the project is relatively flat, consisting of semi-consolidated aeolian sand and calcrete lenses belonging to the Bredasdorp Group, (Council for Geoscience, Worcester Sheet, 1997). The major dunes occur to the south of the Wortelgat Road. Major scenic features are the lagoon waterfront and clumps of milkwood groves, which are an important characteristic of the lagoon shoreline. Views tend to be to the north across the lagoon, towards the scenic Kleinriviersberg mountains.

Cultural Landscape Features:

The sandy soils, having low agricultural potential, means that farming has always been marginal in this area, and apparently included some grazing in the past. Fallow areas quickly become invaded by alien vegetation, such as Australian rooikrans. In more recent times, the emphasis has been on conservation of the local flora and fauna on private land along with tourism in the form of guest accommodation.

The most important historical structure on the site is the so-called 'Spookhuis', which previously became derelict and was restored by the present owners for tourism purposes. More recent dwellings for guest accommodation have been constructed in a similar style and materials to the Spookhuis within the same precinct.

Vegetation Cover:

Existing buildings, including the Spookhuis, are set back from the lagoon and surrounded by mature milkwood tree groves, providing not only shade and wind-shelter, but also visual screening for the buildings.

The area identified for the proposed development on the lagoon front is more visually and climatically exposed, with only a few smaller milkwood trees. The general vegetation reaches only about 2m in height, except for *Leucodendron* (tolbos), which reaches 3 to 4m. The *Leucodendron* is, however, relatively short-lived and highly prone to fire.

Other typical species on the site of the proposed development include *Chrysanthemoides* (bitou), *Euclea* (gwarri), *Salvia*, *Passerina*, dekriet and several *Rhus* species. The farm manager indicated that there is a programme to keep the area on the lagoon side of Wortelgat Road free of alien vegetation. The vegetation cover provides a natural habitat for a wide range of fauna, including small antelope, porcupine and caracal.

Visual Sensitivity:

Although the lagoon-front site is visually exposed, the proposed development would not be visible from neighbouring properties, nor from the Wortelgat Road, because of topography, vegetation and distance. The development would only be partly visible between the milkwood trees from the balcony of the Spookhuis.

The only visual receptors would therefore be the boat users of the lagoon, the properties on the northern shore of the lagoon about 1,6 km away and users of the R43 Route, 1,9 km away. Boating is popular on the lagoon and includes sailing regattas from the Hermanus Yacht Club. The distance from the proposed development to properties on the northern shore and R43 Route is a mitigating factor. The R43 Route is a proposed 'scenic route' in terms of the Overstrand Heritage Survey, (Baumann et al, 2009).

Sense of Place:

From the descriptions above, it is clear that the surrounding area has a strong sense of place, contributed to by the high scenic value derived from the juxtaposition of mountains and lagoon, milkwood groves and a general absence of urban development. Development on the southern shore of the lagoon tends to consist of widely spaced homesteads, except for the camps, chalets and shareholder units on the Wortelgat property to the west, which are largely screened by the dense canopy of milkwoods. The general area tends to be used for nature-related recreation, with eco-tourism facilities.



Figure 3: Site Location Map (1:50 000 Stanford Sheet 3419AD)



Figure 4: Site Context (Cape Farm Mapper, Aug. 2019)



Figure 5: Site Context (Google Earth Aug. 2019)

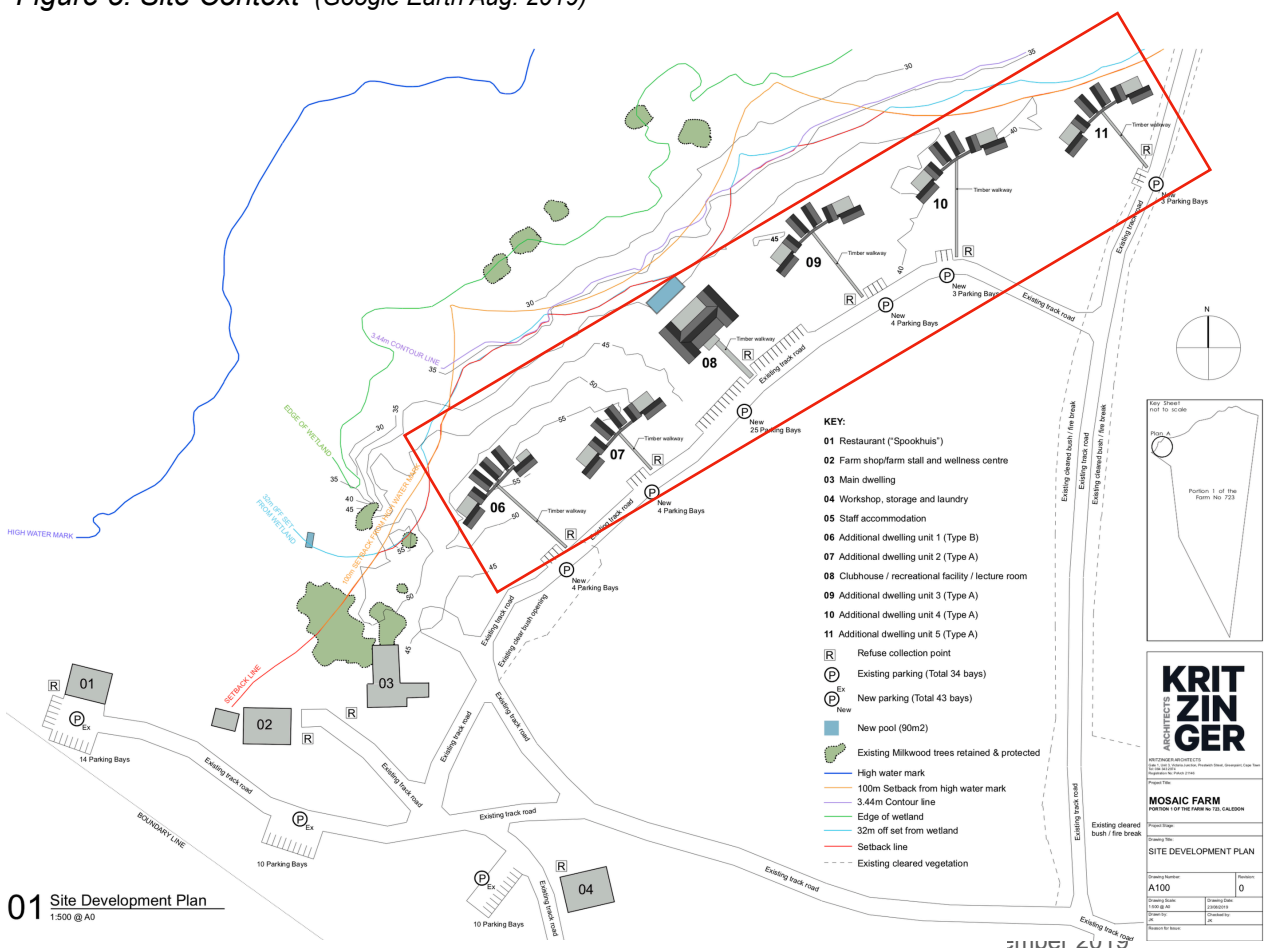


Figure 6: Site Development Plan (Kritzinger Architects, Aug. 2019)

10 Visual Issues

Public participation will take place during the commenting period, and feedback will be obtained from the various heritage committees for the area. Visual issues have already been attended to in the current layout.

11 Potential Visual Impacts

The visual assessment is based on a number of quantitative and qualitative criteria to determine potential visual impacts, as well as their relative significance, as listed below:

Visibility

Visibility is determined by distance between the proposed development and surrounding receptors. Distance radii are indicated on Figure 3 to give an indication of the degree of visibility of the proposed development. The nature of the topography and the screening effect of trees would need to be taken into consideration. Estimated visibility relating to the scale of the development is given below:

High visibility:	Prominent feature within the observer's viewframe 0-200m
Mod-high visibility:	Relatively prominent within observer's viewframe 200-400m
Moderate visibility:	Seen as part of the wider landscape 400m-600m
Marginal visibility:	Seen as a minor element in the landscape 600m +

Potential visibility of the proposed development from selected viewpoints is given in Table 2 below, and in the photographic images, (see Figure 7).

Table 2: Viewpoints and Potential Visibility

Viewpoint	Location	Distance to proposed development	Visibility of proposed development (before mitigation)
vp1	Balcony of Spookhuis	±200m	Partly visible beyond foreground milkwood trees.
vp2	Boating on the lagoon	Varies	Generally moderate visibility from the lagoon. Shallow water close to Mosaic inhibits boating to some extent.
vp3	Lagoon Rock, northern shore	1,6 km	Marginally visible in the distance.
vp4	R43 Route	1,9 km	Marginally visible in the distance. Often obscured by foreground buildings and trees.

Visual Exposure

Visual exposure is usually determined by a viewshed. However, because of the screening effect of foreground buildings and trees, a viewshed based on topography would not provide an accurate indication. The zone of visual influence of the proposed development would be fairly localised at around 2 to 3 km radius.

Visual Absorption Capacity

This is the potential of the landscape to screen the proposed development from view, the visual absorption capacity of the site being medium with respect to the exposed lagoon waterfront, but with fairly dense background vegetation.

Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is usually determined by topographic, scenic or cultural features, including scenic routes, the main route in this case being the R43 Route. The Spookhuis is a heritage feature but is orientated north toward the lagoon and therefore not significantly affected by the proposed development.

Landscape Integrity

Visual quality is enhanced by the scenic or rural quality and intactness of the landscape, as well as absence of visual intrusions. The scenic attributes of the area have been partly altered in the past

by other residential-type development on the southern shore of the lagoon. The proposed development could affect the rural quality and general 'sense of place' of the area, but is at the same time a compatible land use.

Potential visual impacts are listed in Table 3 below, and the intensity of visual impacts is assessed against generally accepted visual criteria in Table 4. Finally, the overall significance of visual impacts is assessed in Table 5.

Table 3: Potential Visual Impacts

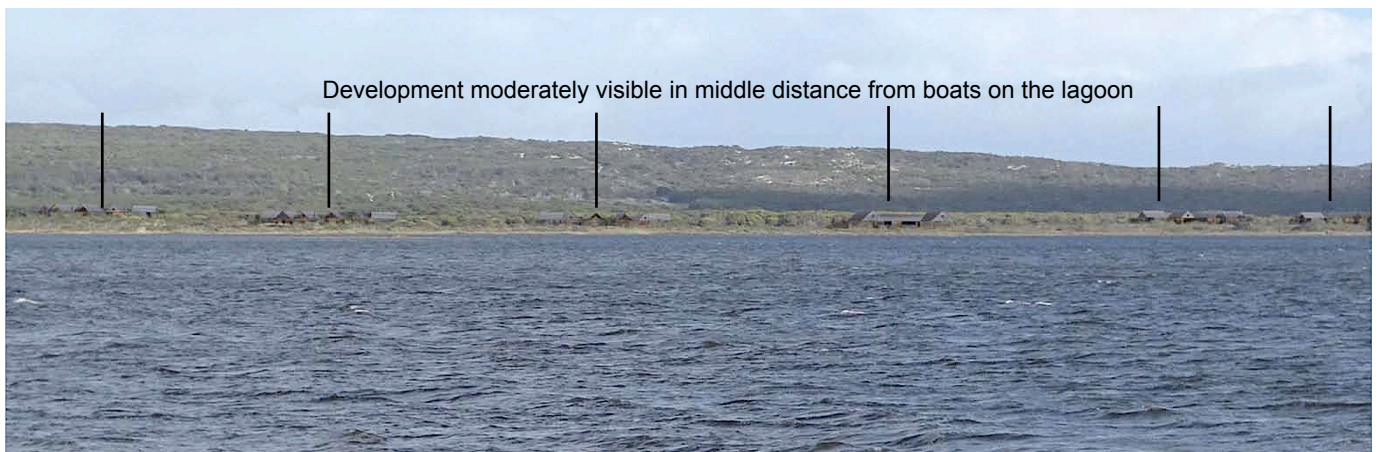
Source	Pathway	Receptor
Visual intrusion of residential type buildings on the natural lagoon landscape.	Effect on the natural landscape experience and sense of place.	Recreational boat-users of the lagoon, properties on the northern shore and road-users of the R43..
Wind-blown sand and noise created during site preparation and construction.	Potential disturbance caused by earth-moving machinery and heavy trucks using local roads.	Residents and users of the Wortelgat Road.

Table 4: Intensity of Potential Visual Impacts before Mitigation

Criteria	Comments	Proposed development	No development alternative (no-go)
Visibility of the proposed development	Development would be visible to partly visible to the surroundings and identified visual receptors. Distance would be a mitigating factor.	Low to medium	Low
Visual exposure View catchment area	The zone of visual influence, mainly across the lagoon, is fairly localised and further limited by foreground buildings and vegetation.	Low to medium	Low
Visual absorption capacity (VAC) Screening potential	Partly screened by topography and trees.	Low to medium	Low to medium
Visual sensitivity	Effect on scenic resources, protected areas and sensitive receptors.	Low to medium	Low
Landscape integrity/ character of the area	The landscape has been previously altered by other residences along the southern shore but still has a rural character.	Medium	Low
Overall intensity	Indication of severity or magnitude.	Low to medium	Low



Viewpoint 1: Spookhuis balcony, Mosaic Farm



Viewpoint 2: Boat-users on the Lagoon



Viewpoint 4: Road-users on R43 Main Road

Figure 7: Photomontages from Selected Viewpoints (source: Blanc Canvas, Aug. 2019)

Table 5: Visual Impact Significance of Development before and after Mitigation

Criteria	Rating
Nature of impact	Negative and direct.
Extent of impact	Local, only within limited zone of visual influence.
Intensity (consequence) of impact:	Low to medium. (See Table 4 above)
Duration of impact:	Long term.
Probability of occurrence:	Definite.
Confidence:	Certain.
Degree to which impact can be reversed:	Reversible by means of screen planting.
Degree to which impact may cause irreplaceable loss of resources:	Natural scenic resource partly altered. Could be replaced at the end of the life of the development.
Significance rating of impact <u>before</u> mitigation, (neutral, very low, low, medium or high)	Low to medium, (low-medium intensity with local extent and long term duration).
Significance rating of impact <u>after</u> mitigation, (neutral, very low, low, medium or high)	Low in the long term, assuming implementation of mitigation measures.

12 Cumulative Visual Impacts

Although the proposed development would have a fairly localised visual influence, it would add to the spread of development generally along the southern shore of the lagoon, contributing to the change in natural / rural character of the area, and the lagoon's particular 'sense of place'.

A potential visual concern is that this type of development leads to fragmentation of the landscape and visual intrusion on a largely natural environment. On the other hand the nature of the development is relatively low-key and the property would become a private nature reserve, helping to conserve natural and cultural resources.

Taking the above into account, the cumulative visual impact significance is considered to be **medium** before mitigation and **low** after mitigation over the long term, once screening vegetation becomes established.

13 Proposed Mitigation Measures:

The following visual mitigation measures are recommended:

- The visual setback line from the lagoon to be the same as the estuary setback line, i.e. a minimum of 100m from the HWM.
- Existing indigenous vegetation to be retained as far as possible in the vicinity of the proposed development to provide visual screening and a visual backdrop to the development. It is acknowledged that clearings for firebreaks may be necessary.
- Only areas required for the actual buildings to be cleared. The remainder of the construction site be cordoned off and the natural vegetation protected. The proliferation of construction tracks to be avoided.
- Additional milkwood trees to be planted between and partly in front of the units to provide visual screening for the proposed development. The milkwoods to be planted in close formation for mutual protection.
- Formal landscaping to be minimal, and alien plant species avoided. Preferably local buffalo grass or kweek and local strandveld plants to be used. Specifically kikuyu grass or palm trees to be avoided.

- A landscape development plan, including lists of permitted plant species, prepared by a qualified landscape architect or horticulturist to be submitted together with the Site Development Plan to the local authority.
- Small articulated building forms, with a domestic scale, to be used as already indicated in the current proposals.
- The maximum height of the proposed clubhouse to be 6,0m from average natural ground level to the top of the roof, and 4,8m for the accommodation units, as currently indicated in the proposals, irrespective of less stringent local authority building heights.
- Fenestration of the proposed buildings to be shaded by roof overhangs or other shading devices, as currently indicated for the accommodation units, the shadows helping to make the buildings visually recede into the landscape.
- No reflective glass or other reflective finishes, which could be visually intrusive, to be used on elevations facing the lagoon. Colour finishes to be dark grey or similar, as currently indicated in the proposals.
- Internal roads to be as narrow as possible, and parking areas limited in size, as currently indicated, to minimise the visual intrusion of vehicles in the landscape.
- Outdoor lighting to be restricted, and preferably bulkhead or bollard-type lights with a maximum height of 1.2m, used. All outdoor lighting to have reflectors to conceal the source of lighting to avoid light spillage, and maintain dark skies at night.
- All utility lines to be located underground. No satellite dishes or aerials to protrude above the roof line of buildings.
- No flags, banners or large signs to be erected at the entrance to the property from the Wortelgat Road, in order to minimise the proliferation of signs in a natural area.

14 Conclusion

No major features of visual or scenic significance on the site or immediate surroundings will be lost as a result of the proposed development. The visual influence of the proposed development would be fairly localised in terms of the zone of visual influence, with most of the receptors being a considerable distance away.

A limited effect on the natural lagoon landscape and sense of place can be expected, but this could be minimised to some extent by the recommended visual mitigations.

The potential visual impact significance would be **low to medium** before mitigation and **low** after mitigation, considering the the nature and localised scale of the development, its long term duration, and the potential for visual screening.

The cumulative visual impact significance could be **medium** before mitigation, because of the further fragmentation of the natural landscape. The cumulative visual impact could, however, reduce to **low** with the implementation of the visual mitigations, particularly in the long term, as the screening vegetation matures.

A possible benefit of the proposed development is the transfer of the property to nature reserve status. This would fit in with the Western Cape Government's intention to increase the Protected Area Network to reach global protected area targets, with the inclusion of private land. It would also contribute to the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy for South Africa promulgated in 2008.

The Owners have a good track record over many years of clearing alien vegetation and restoring disturbed areas with indigenous vegetation, as part of their eco-tourism ethos, and it is anticipated that this will continue with the nature reserve initiative.

Provided the visual mitigations are implemented, the development, as proposed, would not constitute a fatal flaw in visual terms, and could be approved.

15 References

Heritage Western cape, August 2019. Response to Notification of Intention to Develop: Proposed Residential Development and associated Infrastructure on Portion 1 of Farm Wortelgat 723, Stanford, Overberg. Case No. 19062714AS3107E.

Johnson, B. July, 2019. Mosaic Private Sanctuary, Coot Club: Supporting Letter to Heritage Western Cape.

Kritzinger, Architects, May and August 2019. Site Development Plan and building sketch plans.

Oberholzer, B. 2005. Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in EIA processes: Edition 1: CSIR Report no. ENV-S-C 2005 053 F. Provincial Government of the Western Cape.

Rennie, Scurr, Adendorff Architects, July 2019. The Coot Club, Mosaic Private Sanctuary: Supplementary NID Information.

Smuts, K, August 2019. Notification of Intention to Develop (NID), Submission to Heritage Western Cape.