LORNAY
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

Site Sensitivity Verification Report

Clearance of indigenous vegetation without Environmental Authorisation on Portion 1 of Farm Volmoed No. 586, Hermanus, CALEDON RD

October 2025

Consultant:

Michelle Naylor | Env. Consultant **|** M.Sc., Pr. Sci. Nat., EAPASA. 2019/698
cell: 083 245 6556 **|** fax: 086 585 2461 **|** michelle@lornay.co.za **|** www.lornay.co.za
Unit 3A, Hemel & Aarde Wine Village, Hermanus
Lornay Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd**|** Reg 2015/445417/07

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

ISSUED BY: Lornay Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd
Michelle Naylor
PO Box 1990
Hermanus
7200
Tel: 028 316 1769
Fax: 086 585 2461
www.lornay.co.za

CLIENT: The Volmoed Trust for Healing and Reconciliation

TITLE: Site Sensitivity Verification Report for the Clearance of indigenous vegetation without Environmental Authorisation on Portion 1 of Farm Volmoed 586, Hermanus

REFERENCE: SSVR/1/586

REPORT DATE: October 2025

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

Lornay Environmental Consultants nor any of the authors of this report have any material present or contingent interest in the outcome of this report, nor do they have any financial or other interest which may affect the independence of the author(s) or Lornay Environmental Consulting. The consultant fees paid to Lornay Environmental Consulting for the completion of this report is in line with standard professional fees and daily rates. The settling of the professional fee is not dependent on the outcome of the report.

DETAILS OF THE AUTHOR(S)

EAP ORGANISATION:	Lornay Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd
AUTHOR:	Michelle Naylor
EAP REG. NO.:	EAPASA. 2019/698
SACNASP REG. NO.:	400327/13
EAP QUALIFICATIONS:	Bachelor of Science (Hons); Master of Science (Rhodes University), EAPASA. 2019/698, SACNASP., IAIASA., cand. APHP

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Lornay Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by the Volmoed Trust, referred to as "the applicant," as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner to oversee the 24G Rectification Process in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), as amended, and the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (as amended). This process addresses activities that required Environmental Authorisation.

The applicant operates the existing Volmoed Farm, which offers tourist accommodation, conference and wedding facilities, family and wellness retreats. The existing development on the Volmoed Farm is clustered into an operational area of the farm of approximately 4ha with the remainder of the site being left natural (~120 ha). The applicant added two more sites to the operational area, without Environmental Authorisation, as follows

- → Site 1 - area of 133 m^2 to establish a container officer
- → Site 2 - The clearance of approximately 534 m^2 for a single residential dwelling. This area was previously comprised of indigenous vegetation (Elim Ferricrete Fynbos), which was cleared to develop the area.

Location

The site, Portion 1 of Farm Volmoed No. 586 is located approximately 7 km along the R320, in the Hemel and Aarde Valley.

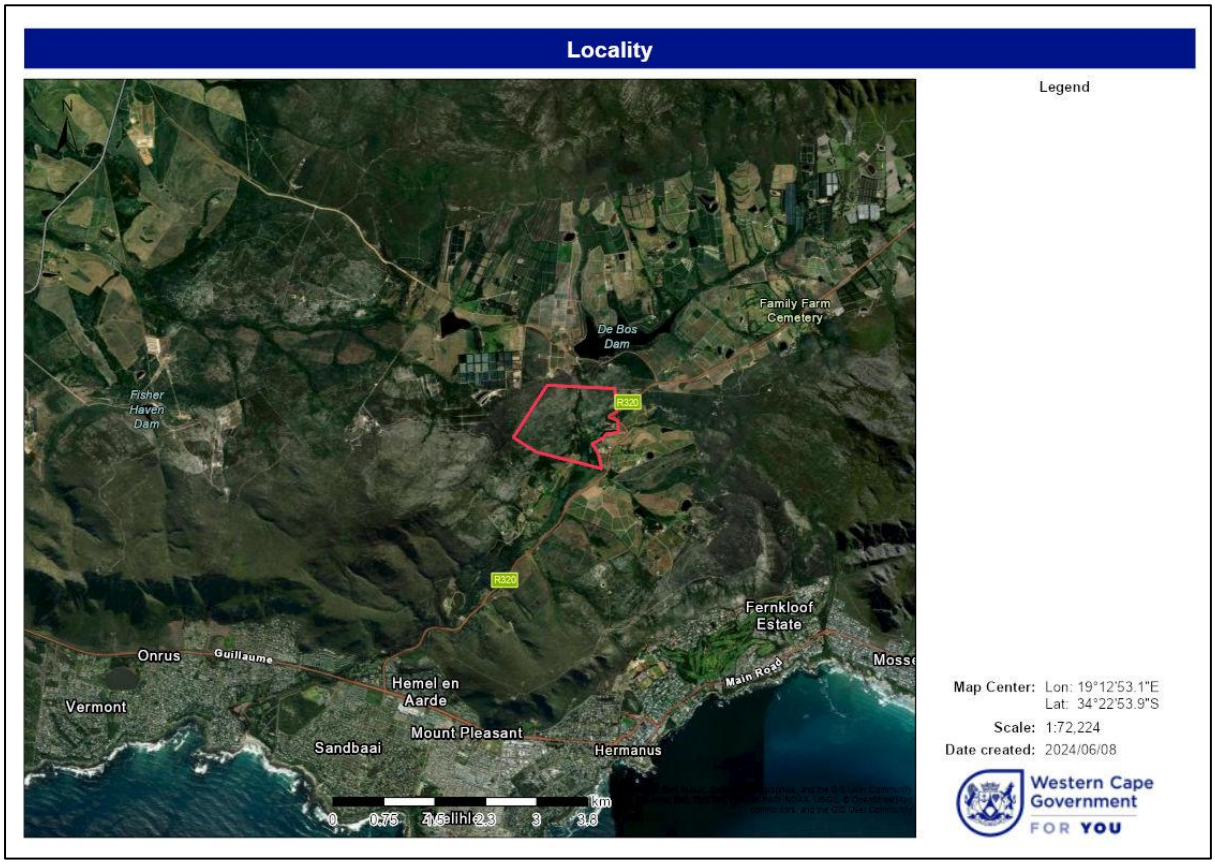


Figure 1. Locality of subject property

Vegetation

SANBI BGIS data indicated that the two sites falls within a mapped Elim Ferricrete Fynbo areas, with a small section of Overberg Sandstone Fynbos located on the north western side of Site 2.

Site 1, prior to the commencement of activities, was not covered with indigenous vegetation, but formed part of the domesticated lawn area of the Volmoed Farm.

At Site 2, the vegetation consisted of indigenous vegetation interspersed with low density patches of alien vegetation. Both sites were considered suitable for the development due to there location within the existing development cluster of Volmoed Farm and the proximity to exsitng service and access infrastructure. No new roads or service infrastructure was requried.

There are no wetlands or aquatic ecosystems mapped on the site, as confirmed by both a site visit and the Cape Farm Mapper.

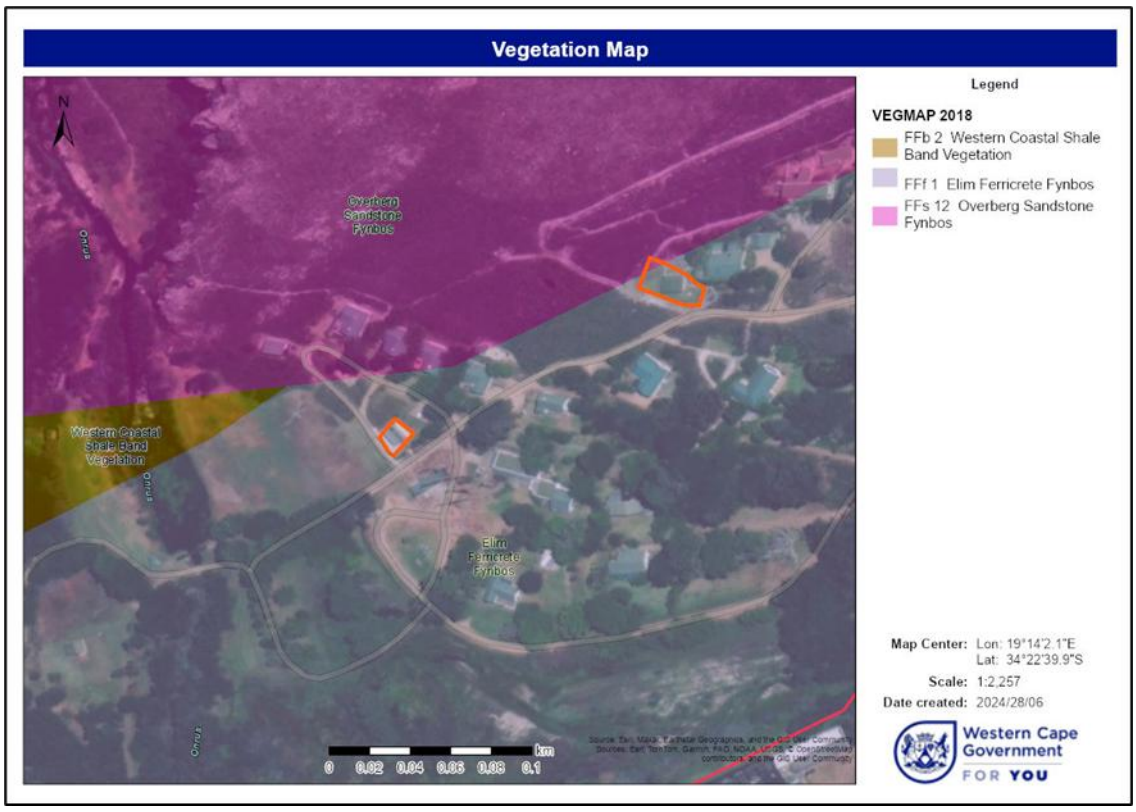


Figure 2: The subject property is charecterised by Elim Ferricrete Fynbos indigenous vegetation.

The Site Sensitivity Verification Report (SSVR) forms part of the environmental assessment process being undertaken. The 24G process seeks to rectify the commencement of the listed activity without authorisation by making application for retrospective Environmental Authorisation from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning 24G Directorate.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental ("DFFE") promulgated regulations for the compulsory submission of a report based on the National Web-based Environmental Screening Tool when undertaking and submitting an application for Environmental Authorisation (GN960 of 2019). On 20 March 2020, Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on Identified Environmental Themes in terms of Section 24 (5) (a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (107 of 1998) were published. These

procedures prescribe the requirements for undertaking Site Sensitivity Verification Report as well as describe the requirements for specialist input per environmental 'theme' in the National Web-based Environmental Screening Tool.

According to the above-mentioned notice, the Site Sensitivity Verification Report must be recorded in the form of a report that:

- → Confirms or disputes the current use of the land and the environmental sensitivity as identified by the screening tool
- → Contains motivation and evidence (e.g. photographs) of either the verified or different use of the land and environmental sensitivity.
- → Is submitted together with the relevant assessment report prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations.

This report will provide a verification for which themes will be further investigated, and motivation for the themes that will not be further investigated for the proposed development.

2. METHODOLOGY

To inform this Site Senssititvity Verification Report (SSVR), the EAP has undertaken the following:

Desktop Analysis

The protocols require that a desktop analysis be undertaken. The following resources were utilsed:

- → Google Earth Pro which includes historical aerial imagery analysis.
- → Cape Farm Mapper with the overlaid SANBI BGIS data.

Site inspection

A site inspection was undertaken on 18 June 2024, then it was followed by a site visit on 11 July 2024. This included walking the sites in question and photographic documentation.

3. HISTORY OF THE SITE

The sites (Site 1 & 2) in question, are located within the Volmoed Farm, which is situated in an agricultural zone within the Hemel and Aarde Valley, Hermanus. Before the commencement of the activities, the property served multiple purposes. The developed areas on the farm, approximately 4 ha, are used as a venue for a variety of events and gatherings, individual retreats, family holidays, weddings, conferences, and church retreats. The peaceful and natural environment of the farm made it an ideal location for such activities, offering visitors a chance to relax and reconnect with nature.

As part of the current operations on site, a need to add an additional manager's dwelling and office space was identified. The activity took place within the already developed precinct / cluster on the the Volmoed Farm, alongside existing service infrastructure and access roads.

Figure 2: 2018 Satellite imagery illustrates that Site 1 (southwest) was already lawned grass, while Site 2 (northeast corner) was covered in indigenous vegetation: **source** (*Google Earth, 2018 imagery*)

Figure 3: The historical image from 2020 shows that the disturbance at Site 1 had taken place (West). Site 2 (East) was still undeveloped.

Figure 4: Aerial view of Site 2 (East) indicates that the activity commenced in 2021.

4. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1: (Site 1) side view of the office developed on site that was cleared. The area did not contain indigenous vegetation and was characterised by lawn.

Photo 2: Image showing the front view of the development (office) located on one of the sites that were cleared.

Photo 3: Area adjacent to Site 1 – no indigenous area was cleared here as the area was already lawned, as per the above photo

Photo 4: Site 2 – indigenous vegetation was cleared in this area to create a single residential dwelling.

Photo 5: Site 2 – indigenous vegetation cleared and area terraced to develop a single residential dwelling

Photo 6: Site 2 – now established

Photo 7: Natural area adjacent to the Site 2

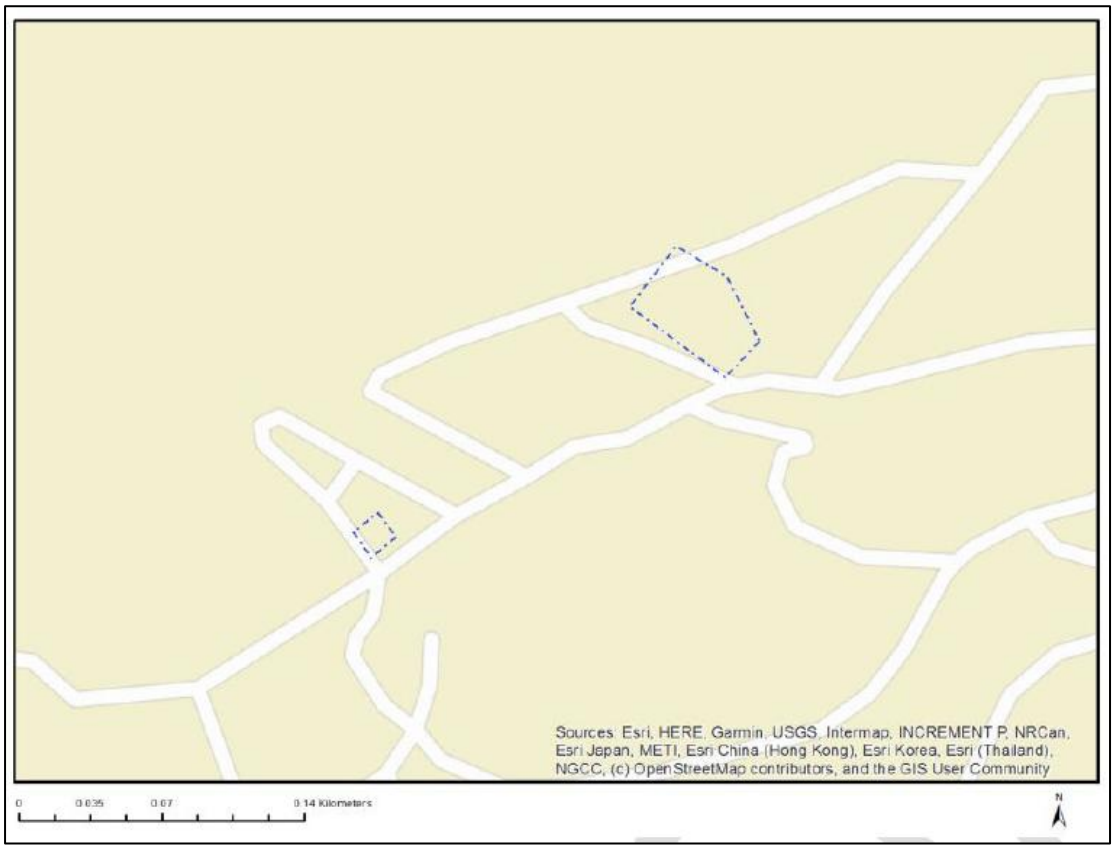
5. LAND USES

The sites in question are located on Portion 1 of Farm Volmoed No. 586, which is situated in an agricultural zone. Before the commencement of the activities, the property served multiple purposes. The developed areas on the farm (Approx. 4 ha) are used as a venue for a variety of events and gatherings, individual retreats, family holidays, weddings, conferences, and church retreats. The peaceful and natural environment of the farm made it an ideal location for such activities, offering visitors a chance to relax and reconnect with nature. As part of their offerings the management need to add an additional dwelling for management staff as well as additional office space. The unauthorised activity took place within the already developed precinct on the property, close to existing infrastructure and services.

The area is characterized by a mix of agricultural activities and tourism. The primary agricultural activity in the area is viticulture. The remainder of the Farm, of approximately 120 ha, remains natural.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES

The following sections address the sensitivity of each theme separately, confirming or disputing the site sensitivity and indicating whether an assessment, a compliance statement or no further assessment will be undertaken for the project.



The following themes and their sensitivity ratings are identified in the Screening Tool Report:

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme				X
Animal Species Theme		X		
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme				X
Civil Aviation Theme			X	
Defence Theme				X
Paleontology Theme				X
Plant Species Theme			X	
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X			

Agriculture Theme (Low Sensitivity)

According to the Web-based Screening Tool the Agricultural sensitivity of the site is Low Sensitivity. No further assessment is required.

Animal Species Theme (High Sensitivity)

The Screening Tool Report indicates that the Animal Species Theme is of High Sensitivity. The unauthorised development in question, took place within the existing cluster of development and infrastructure on the farm. There are already operational activities taking place with roads, service infrastructure, buildings, lawns and domesticated gardens, therefore not likely to provide natural habitat for local fauna. The size of the impacted area is also small scale, approximately 667 m^2. The remainder of the site, approximately 120 ha, remains natural with no built infrastructure or operational activities. No further assessment is required.

Aquatic Biodiversity Theme (Very-High Sensitivity)

The Web-based Screening Tool indicates a Very High Sensitivity for this theme. Cape Farm Mapper shows perennial and non-perennial watercourses running across the subject property, however, both development sites are situated at more than 32 m of these watercourses and wetlands. No wetlands or watercourses are indicated for any areas within developed area on Volmoed Farm. Therefore, no further assessment is required.

Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme (Low Sensitivity)

According to the Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool, the Archaeological and Cultural Heritage is considered to be Low sensitivity. No further assessment required.

Civil Aviation Theme (Medium Sensitivity)

The Screening Tool indicates a Medium Sensitivity. The subject sites are within the existing cluster of development on the farm and are in line with the existing road networks and service infrastructure on the farm. No further assessment required.

Defence Theme (Low Sensitivity)

The Screening Tool indicates a Low Sensitivity. The subject sites are within the existing cluster of housing on the farm and are in line with the existing road networks and service infrastructure on the farm. No further assessment required.

Palaeontology Theme (Low Sensitivity)

According to the Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool, the Palaeontology Theme is considered of Low sensitivity. The sites in question are within the existing cluster of housing development within the subject property and are in line with the existing roads and services on the farm.

Plant Species Theme (Medium Sensitivity)

The Screening Tool Report notes that the Plant Species is of Medium Sensitivity. The development took place within the existing development precinct of Volmoed Farm and there are already operational activities taking place within the area. The size of indigenous vegetation that was cleared on the site is in a small scale, which includes a previously lawned area on site 1 and the indigenous vegetation on site 2. The Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment also covered the Plant Species Theme. The assessment identified more than 70 plant species of Overberg Sandstone Fynbos adjacent to and west of the development site. In addition to this, about 4 species of Proteaceae of conservation concern all listed as Near Threatened were also identified in the Overberg Sandstone vegetation type.

In the Elim Ferricrete Fynbos area, fewer than 40 plant species were identified to the south of the proposed development site. This area is characterized by lush, somewhat senescent vegetation with densely packed plant species. Prominent plant species include various Erica species, bracken, and tall *Berzelia lanuginosa*. Importantly, no plant species of conservation concern were found within 30 to 40 meters of the development site in the Elim Ferricrete Fynbos.

Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme (Very-High Sensitivity)

The Screening Tool Report notes that the Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme is of Very High Sensitivity. The development took place within the existing development cluster of Volmoed. A Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment was undertaken by Hermanus Botanical Society. The assessment concluded that the development resulted to the loss of Elim Ferricrete Fynbos as well as a small portion of Overberg Sandstone Fynbos, both of which are listed as endangered. However, it was also highlighted that the vegetation on site prior disturbance was likely to be in a senescent and overgrown state, this was deduced from the vegetation adjacent to the site. However, the area on site 1 was previously lawned area prior the commencement of the activity.

7. CONCLUSION

The Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment conducted on site confirmed that the site includes two significant vegetation types—Elim Ferricrete Fynbos and Overberg Sandstone Fynbos. Elim Ferricrete Fynbos is a low-lying fynbos that thrives in fertile, nutrient-rich soils with high agricultural potential, which are not common in other fynbos soil types. As a result, much of this vegetation type has been lost to agricultural activities, leaving less than 5% of its original extent intact. It is known for its exceptional diversity of bulb species and Leucadendron (cone bush) varieties. The loss of Elim Ferricrete Fynbos is considered highly significant due to its critically endangered status and limited protection. Overberg Sandstone Fynbos is classified as endangered for conservation purposes. While this vegetation type has experienced some loss in the development footprint, the impact is minimal given the small scale of the project (680 m^2), which is largely confined to areas already disturbed by existing infrastructure such as roads and buildings.

The survey identified four species of conservation concern within the broader study area, all of which are well-represented in undisturbed sections. However, no species of conservation concern were observed within 30–40 m of the development site in the Elim Ferricrete Fynbos during the assessment. The vegetation in the immediate vicinity was characterized by dense, senescent growth, primarily comprising Ericas, bracken, and tall *Berzelia lanuginosa.* There has been a small-scale loss of Elim Ferricrete Fynbos as a result of site development activities. The affected area was likely in a senescent and overgrown state before clearance.

The sensitivity assessment across various environmental themes, including agriculture, animal species, aquatic biodiversity, and cultural heritage, concluded that no further assessments are required for these themes due to low to medium sensitivities and appropriate site management practices.

Moving forward, adherence to the prescribed mitigation measures and ongoing monitoring will ensure minimal ecological disruption and support sustainable development practices in this agricultural and tourism-oriented region of Hemel en Aarde Valley.