



**SITE VERIFICATION REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED GEORGE KERRIDGE  
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON ERF NO. 8270 AND PORTION 4 OF FARM  
132, VREDENBURG, WESTERN CAPE.**

**Date: January 2026**

**SEC REFERENCE: 023089**

**DEA&DP REF: 16/3/3/6/7/1/F4/23/3220/23**

## 1. Introduction & Legislative Context

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### **BACKGROUND**

In terms of the *Protocols for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes* (referred to “the Protocols” hereafter) as per Government Notice No. 320 (published in Government Gazette No. 43110 on 20 March 2020)<sup>1</sup>, a Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV) Report must be compiled and submitted with each new application submitted after the effective date of the Protocols (9<sup>th</sup> May 2020).

The aim of the SSV Report is to (i) verify the land use and various theme sensitivities which were identified by the DEA Screening Tool (Appendix A), (ii) agree/dispute theme sensitivity ratings, and provide motivations should the theme sensitivity be challenged, and (iii) provide a motivation as to why the need for identified specialist studies are challenged.

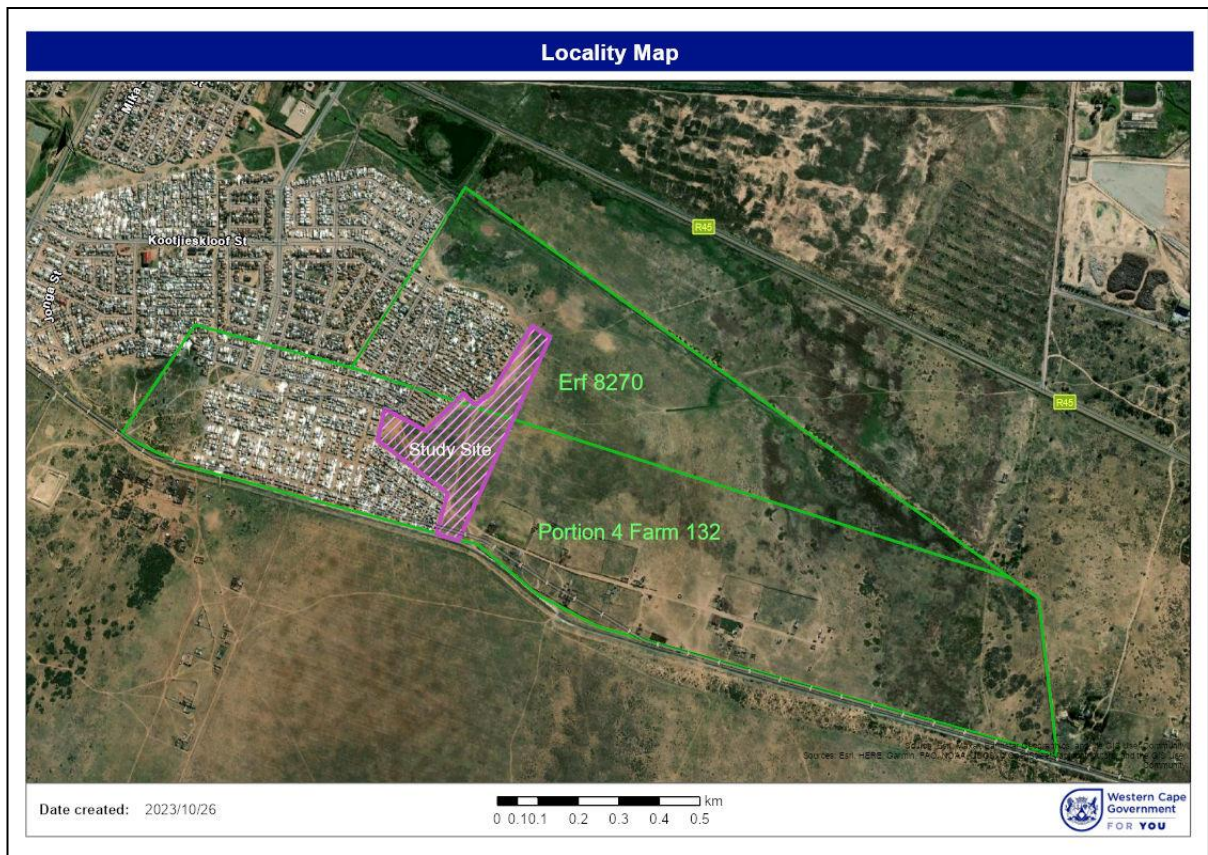
### **METHODOLOGY**

In terms of the Protocols, the EAP must verify the site's environmental sensitivity in accordance with theme sensitivities and required specialist studies as identified by the DEA Screening Tool (Appendix A). This aids in determining the applicability of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) Regulations, 2014 (as amended) in relation to the proposed application.

The SSV Report was compiled based on desktop studies and site photographs to determine the applicability of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) to the proposed application. This SSV Report was compiled by the EAP. It must be noted that this SSV Report must be read in combination with the Final Basic Assessment Report (FBAR), the DEA Screening Tool (Appendix A), and the approved specialist studies appended in support of the FBAR.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant, Saldanha Bay Municipality, proposes a low-income residential development on Portion 4 of Farm 132 and Erf no. 8270, Vredenburg, Saldanha Bay Municipality, Western Cape. The development footprint is approximately 8.2575 Ha in extent and is situated within Ward 9 of the Saldanha Bay Municipality and is located at the following co-ordinates: 32.922329°S 18.029451°E. Please refer to **Figure 1** below to view the locality of the site. The proposed developed consists of approximately 324 residential units and associated road and service infrastructure.



**Figure 1: Locality map of the study site (property boundary outlined in green).**

The access to the site is gained from Kootjeskloof Street, located to the east of the site.

The proposed low-income residential development triggers the following activities, which is listed in terms of 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, published under the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA), and therefore requires an application for Environmental Authorisation: **Activity 28 from Listing Notice 1** (2014 EIA Regulations, as amended).

Sillito Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd (SEC) has been appointed to undertake the Basic Assessment EIA Process with the aim of receiving an Environmental Authorisation in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, published under the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA).

Regulation 16(1)(v) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended, states that a Screening Report is required to accompany any application for Environmental Authorisation. In this regard the National web-based Screening Tool must be generated and submitted with every application.

The Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on Identified Environmental Themes in Terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the NEMA, dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, prescribes the general requirements for undertaking **site sensitivity verification and provides protocols for the assessment and minimum report content for environmental themes.**

These Procedures explain that prior to commencing with a specialist assessment the current use of land and the environmental sensitivity of the site identified by the National Screening Tool must be confirmed by undertaking a site sensitivity verification and the outcome of the site sensitivity verification must be recorded in the form of a report. This report therefore meets the requirements of the site sensitivity verification report outlined in the Procedures.

## **SITE VISIT**

A site visit was conducted on 29 August 2023 to verify the relevant sensitivities from screening tool report. Results from the site visit are discussed in the relevant sensitivity section in Table 1. See Images below taken during the site visit.



**Figure 1:** Image illustrating the anthropogenic disturbances present on the proposed site.



**Figure 2:** Another Image illustrating the anthropogenic disturbances present on the proposed site.



**Figure 3: Image illustrating some of the indigenous vegetation remaining on the proposed site, and the disturbance pressure be exceeding on the vegetation type.**

## 2. Themes & Environmental Sensitivity Identified by Screening Tool

The table below indicates the level of sensitivity of each of the themes identified in the National Web-based Screening Tool Report, dated 17 February 2025:

Theme	Very High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity	EAPs Opinion
Agriculture Theme				X		Dispute
Animal Species Theme					X	Agreed
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme					X	Agreed
Archaeological & Cultural Heritage					X	Agreed
Civil Aviation Theme			X			Dispute
Defense Theme				X		Dispute
Paleontology Theme	X					Dispute
Plant Species Theme				X		Dispute
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X					Dispute



**Table 1.** Site sensitivity themes as identified by the DEA Screening Tool (Appendix A).

No	Theme	DEA Sensitivity	Agree / Disagree	Proposed Sensitivity	Motivation
1	Agriculture Theme	Medium Sensitivity	Disagree	Low Sensitivity	Although previously used for agricultural purposes, the site has been acquired by the Saldanha Bay Municipality and earmarked for low-income housing in terms of the approved municipal planning framework. An Agricultural Compliance Statement confirmed that the site has low agricultural potential and that the proposed development will not result in a significant loss of agricultural resources. The appropriate sensitivity rating is therefore low.
2	Animal Species Theme	Low Sensitivity	Agree	N/A	The site has been previously transformed from its natural state for agriculture. The surrounding areas have also been transformed from their natural state and are used for low-income housing. The study site is therefore highly unlikely to contain any sensitive animal species. Therefore, based on factors outlined above, the EAP agrees with the theme sensitivity.
3	Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	Low Sensitivity	Agree	N/A	There are not any aquatic resources located within the study site. The study site is not located within 32 m of the edge of any water courses. The proposed development is therefore highly unlikely to impact on any aquatic resources. The EAP agrees with the theme sensitivity.
4	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme	Low Sensitivity	Agree	N/A	The site has been transformed from its natural state and is located within an area ear-marked for low-income housing. The surrounding areas have already been transformed for the same purpose. The site is not located in close proximity to any sensitive heritage resources. The EAP agrees with the theme sensitivity.
5	Civil Aviation Theme	High Sensitivity	Disagree	Negligible	Although the area is located within an area with a high Civil Aviation sensitivity, the proposed development will not have any impact on this. The rating should therefore be Negligible.
6	Defence Theme	Medium Sensitivity	Disagree	Negligible	Although the area is located within an area with a Medium Defence sensitivity, the proposed development will not have any impact on this. The rating should therefore be Negligible.
7	Paleontological Theme	Very High Sensitivity	Disagree	Low Sensitivity	About half of the study site is indicated to have a very high Paleontological sensitivity whilst the remaining area is located as having a low sensitivity. No Paleontological resources were found during the development of the surrounding areas. It is therefore unlikely that the study site will contain such resources. The rating should therefore be a low sensitivity.
8	Plant Species Theme	Medium Sensitivity	Disagree	Low Sensitivity	The study site is indicated to contain Saldanha Flats Strandveld, which is an Endangered vegetation type. However, as mentioned above, the site has been transformed from its natural state. Additionally, from the site visit it's evident that the site is severely degraded through previous agricultural activities and anthropogenic impacts such as illegal dumping. It's therefore unlikely that sensitive plants species, typically associated with the vegetation type will be found on site. Geophytes and annual herbaceous plants, typically associated with Saldanha Flats Strandveld were not observed during the site visit. Based on site sensitivity verification and specialist assessment, the appropriate sensitivity rating is therefore low.
9	Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	Very High Sensitivity	Disagree	Low Sensitivity	The reason for the Very High Sensitivity is because the study site is indicated to be within an Ecological Support Area (ESA) and Critical Biodiverse Area (CBA) and contains an Endangered Vegetation type (Saldanha Flats Strandveld). As discussed above the site has been previously transformed and is severely degraded through anthropogenic activities. With the site being in a degraded state, it's not

					<p>in a functional state, thereby offering little in terms of ecological support. With the study site being located within an area ear-marked for development and with current anthropogenic impacts/pressure through the surrounding low-income housing experienced on site, the site will unlikely ever be restored to a functioning state. The site is also not located near any protected area or an area containing intact indigenous vegetation. The proposed development will therefore have little impact on the Terrestrial Biodiversity in the area. The sensitivity rating should be low sensitivity.</p>
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### 3. Specialist Studies Identified by Screening Tool

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The following Specialist Assessments have been identified by the Screening Tool, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2025:

1. Agricultural Impact Assessment
2. Landscape/ Visual Impact Assessment
3. Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
4. Palaeontology Impact Assessment
5. Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment
6. Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment
7. Hydrology Assessment
8. Socio-Economic Assessment
9. Plant Species Assessment
10. Animal Species Assessment

### 4. Motivation by the EAP Agreeing or Disputing the Specialist Assessments Identified in Screening Tool Report

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#### **a) The following specialist studies, were identified by the Screening Tool Report:**

#### **Agricultural Impact Assessment**

Although previously used for agricultural purposes, the site has been acquired by the Saldanha Bay Municipality and earmarked for low-income housing in accordance with the applicable Municipal Spatial Development Framework. The site will not be used for agricultural activities in the future and the proposed development will not adversely affect surrounding agricultural activities. A full Agricultural Impact Assessment is therefore not required. An Agricultural Compliance Statement was, however, compiled by a suitably qualified specialist and confirmed that the site has low agricultural potential and that the proposed development will not result in unacceptable impacts on agricultural resources (Appendix G5).

#### **Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment**

The site has been significantly transformed from its natural state and is located within an area earmarked for low-income housing, with the surrounding areas already similarly transformed. No sensitive heritage resources were identified on or in close proximity to the site, and the site is considered to be of low heritage sensitivity. Based on this, no Archaeological or Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment is anticipated. An assessment will only be required should Heritage Western Cape specifically request such further investigation following submission and review of the required Notice of Intent (NID).

#### **Palaeontology Impact Assessment**

Palaeontological sensitivity mapping indicates that approximately half of the study area is classified as having very high palaeontological sensitivity, with the remainder classified as having low sensitivity. However, no palaeontological resources were recorded during the development of surrounding areas, which have been extensively transformed. Based on the degree of transformation and the absence of recorded palaeontological finds in the surrounding area, it is considered unlikely that the study site contains significant palaeontological resources. A Palaeontological Impact Assessment is therefore not anticipated and will only be required should Heritage Western Cape specifically request such further investigation following submission and review of the required Notice of Intent (NID).

### **Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment**

As discussed above, the site has been previously transformed and is severely degraded as a result of historical and ongoing anthropogenic activities. Due to this degraded condition, the site no longer functions as an intact ecological system and provides limited ecological support. The study area is located within an area earmarked for development and is surrounded by existing low-income housing, resulting in sustained anthropogenic pressure. As such, the site is unlikely to be restored to a functioning natural state. The site is not located within or adjacent to any protected areas or areas containing intact indigenous vegetation. The proposed development is therefore anticipated to result in a low impact on terrestrial biodiversity. A Terrestrial Biodiversity Compliance Statement was nevertheless compiled and confirmed that the proposed development will not result in negative effects on terrestrial biodiversity.

### **Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment**

No aquatic resources, including wetlands or watercourses, were identified within the study site, and the site is not located within 32 m of the edge of any aquatic feature. Site sensitivity verification confirmed that the site is of low aquatic biodiversity sensitivity. The proposed development is therefore unlikely to result in impacts on aquatic resources. An Aquatic Biodiversity Compliance Statement was nevertheless compiled by a suitably qualified and SACNASP-registered freshwater specialist and confirmed that the proposed development will not result in negative effects on aquatic biodiversity.

### **Hydrological Impact Assessment**

The proposed development is not anticipated to result in significant impacts on groundwater resources within the surrounding area. Based on the findings of the geotechnical investigation and the absence of identified groundwater constraints, a dedicated Hydrological Impact Assessment is not anticipated to be required. Should the competent authority request further investigation based on additional information or site-specific conditions, such requirements will be addressed accordingly.

### **Socio-economic Assessment**

The proposed development is being undertaken by the Saldanha Bay Municipality in response to the growing demand for low-income housing in Vredenburg. The construction phase is expected to generate temporary employment and skills development opportunities, thereby providing positive socio-economic benefits to the local community. Based on the nature and scale of the proposed development, and the anticipated positive socio-economic outcomes, a dedicated Socio-Economic Impact Assessment is not anticipated to be required. Should the competent authority request additional socio-economic information, such requirements will be addressed accordingly.

### **Plant Species Assessment / Botanical Impact Statement**

The study site falls within the mapped extent of the Saldanha Flats Strandveld vegetation type, which is classified as Endangered. However, the site has been extensively transformed from its natural state as a result of historical agricultural activities and ongoing anthropogenic impacts, including illegal dumping. Site sensitivity verification confirmed that the site is severely degraded, and no sensitive plant species typically associated with the vegetation type were recorded during the site visit. Geophytes and annual herbaceous species characteristic of Saldanha Flats Strandveld were not observed. A Plant Species Compliance Statement was nevertheless compiled and confirmed that the proposed development will not result in negative effects on indigenous plant species.

## **Animal Species Assessment**

The site has been previously transformed from its natural state as a result of historical agricultural activities, and the surrounding areas have similarly been transformed for low-income housing development. Site sensitivity verification and specialist assessment confirmed that the study site is of low terrestrial animal sensitivity and is unlikely to support sensitive animal species or Species of Conservation Concern. A full Terrestrial Animal Species Impact Assessment was therefore not required. An Animal Species Compliance Statement was nevertheless compiled by a suitably qualified specialist and was subsequently subjected to an independent peer review, after which it was updated to ensure compliance with the gazetted specialist assessment protocols. The updated and peer-reviewed compliance statement confirmed that the proposed development will not result in negative effects on local wildlife.

## **Landscape/ Visual Impact Assessment**

The proposed development has the potential to result in visual impacts on the surrounding area. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was compiled for the proposed development and is included in the submission documentation as Appendix G7. The assessment evaluated the visual receiving environment and confirmed that, with the implementation of appropriate design and mitigation measures incorporated into the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr), potential visual impacts can be effectively managed.

## **Aquatic Biodiversity Compliance Statement and DWS Risk Matrix**

Although the study site has a low sensitivity rating for aquatic biodiversity, an additional Aquatic Biodiversity Compliance Statement was compiled by EnviroSwift, a suitably qualified and SACNASP-registered freshwater specialist, following engagement with the competent authority. The assessment confirmed that no wetlands, watercourses or other aquatic features occur on site or within 32 m of the proposed development footprint. A mapped NFEPA/FEPA wetland is located approximately 100–120 m northwest of the site boundary and will not be impacted by the proposed development. Based on these findings, the proposed development is not regulated in terms of the National Water Act, Act No. 36 of 1998, and a Water Use Licence is not required. The Aquatic Biodiversity Compliance Statement and associated risk screening are included in the submission documentation as Appendix G2.

## **Animal Species Compliance Statement**

Although the study site has a low sensitivity rating for the Animal Species theme, an Animal Species Compliance Statement was compiled in accordance with the relevant legislative and protocol requirements. The compliance statement was subsequently subjected to an independent peer review by a suitably qualified SACNASP-registered faunal specialist and was updated to ensure full compliance with the gazetted specialist assessment protocols. The updated and peer-reviewed Animal Species Compliance Statement is included as Appendix G1.

## **Plant Species Compliance Statement**

Although the study site has a low sensitivity rating for the Plant Species theme, as confirmed through site sensitivity verification and specialist assessment, a Plant Species Compliance Statement was compiled in accordance with the relevant legislative and protocol requirements. The compliance statement is included as Appendix G3.

## **Terrestrial Biodiversity Compliance Statement**



*Although the study site has a low sensitivity rating for the Terrestrial Biodiversity theme, as confirmed through site sensitivity verification and specialist assessment, a Terrestrial Biodiversity Compliance Statement was*

compiled in accordance with the relevant legislative and protocol requirements. The compliance statement is included as Appendix G4.

## 6. Conclusion

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Based on the outcomes of the Screening Tool, site sensitivity verification, and the findings of the specialist studies undertaken for the proposed development, the study site is confirmed to be of predominantly low environmental sensitivity. Where higher sensitivities were initially indicated through desktop screening, site verification and specialist assessment confirmed that these sensitivities are not representative of the current ecological condition of the site due to extensive historical transformation and ongoing anthropogenic impacts. The appropriate specialist compliance statements were compiled in accordance with the relevant protocols and confirmed that the proposed development will not result in significant environmental impacts. The findings of this Site Sensitivity Verification Report are therefore consistent with, and support, the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Final Basic Assessment Report and associated Environmental Management Programme.

<p>Author of Site Verification Report:</p>  <p>Jonathan Lassen <i>Environmental Consultant</i> <i>Adv Dip. Marine Sciences</i></p>	<p>Report Reviewer:</p>  <p>Chantel Müller <i>Senior Environmental Consultant</i> <i>MPhil Environmental Management</i></p>
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**Sillito Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd**