

Heritage Survey: Stellenbosch Rural Areas

by Penny Pistorius and Stewart Harris - June 2004

Sub Area Name

Jonkershoek

Catalogue Number

02.20.00

Property Name

Old Nectar historical property, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Alternative Names

Jan Lui, Weltevreden, Nektar, Glenconner, Glenconnor, Glen Vashti

Farm Number

345 (all portions), 351 (all portions)

Linkages

Catalogue nos 02.09 - 02.13, 02.16 - 02.21

Heritage Resource Name

Old Nectar historical property

Type of Resource

historical farm

Composites



Photo Date

Photographer

CAM2-409, Penny Pistorius

Photo Title

Old Nectar historical growth. 1902 map with land grants coloured: red 1692, orange 1817, yellow 1841



Photo Date

Photographer

1980

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Orthophoto with added cadastrals. Note some current boundaries do not line up with older ones.

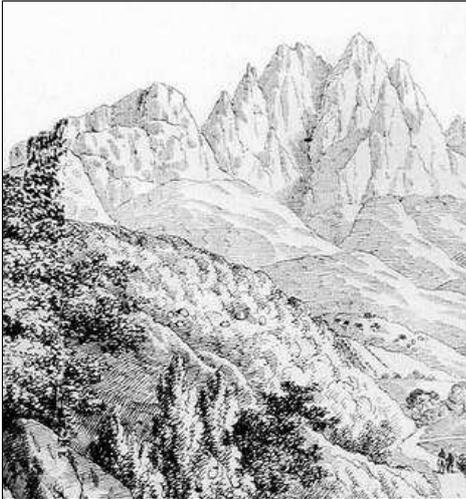


Photo Date **Photographer**

Stewart Harris

Photo Title

1832 D'Oyly drawing of the approach to Old Nectar, probably from the east end of Jan Lui field, showing the side elevation of the house.

Description

Visual Description

At its greatest extent in 1841, Old Nectar was a large farm which spanned both banks of the Eerste River from the Jonkerhoekberge to the Stellenboschberge. Like all the Valley farms it is characterised by steep slopes that descend to a narrow plain of water meadows. On the north bank there are foothills which have rounded, flattened tops but on the south the slope is abrupt. Both the water meadows and the tops of the foothills were used for agriculture. There are strong morphological edges. On the west (approach) side, one of the ridges from the Jonkershoekberge (which we call the Bult) comes down almost to the river, dividing what is beyond from what has gone before. Further east a less prominent ridge comes down which marks the far side of the old property, with Jonkershoek farm beyond.

The north side is fed by two tributaries. The west stream comes down a narrow valley east of the Bult ridge (now on Oude Nektar west, 02.16) and almost secretively feeds a distinctive and strongly defined triangular field, Jan Lui's Field (02.19). A second tributary (down the boundary of Glen Conner and Oude Nektar (east) dominates the central part of the farm. The homestead and werf is set on the steep bank between them. The flattish top of this ridge is used for agriculture.

The south side has a broad band of water meadows with a sudden steep rise southwards. It is fed by two tributaries. The smallholdings Waterhof, Watervliet etc. are in this portion --see 02.09 to 02.13.

See current Properties for further descriptions.

Notes

History

The following outline is derived from secondary sources and limited Deeds Office searches. There is a need for further study: conflicting data is found. Note that for consistency the name Old Nectar is used throughout. Originally it was called Jan Lui, later part of Weltevreden, later called Nektar, later Glenconner or Glenconnor, and since 1942 the remainder containing the werf is called Old Nectar.

When the Khoi visited the Jonkershoek Valley in January each year their herds grazed the watermeadows far up the Eerste River. Though the valley was a dead-end, the vegetation around Stellenbosch is dry at high summer, and the watermeadows were a good source of succulent grazing. This modified the indigenous landscape by keeping it pruned, and the Khoi are thought to have encouraged re-growth of delectable vegetation by selective burning. So when the settlers arrived in the 1680s they were presented with land which had already been cleared of dense bush each side of the Eerste River. There was indigenous forest astride the river banks which the Company never granted to the settlers. Lanzerac's owner, for example, was not allowed to cut river trees and he was obliged to replace any he felled on his own grant.

Marquard and Jan of Ceylon occupied this fertile land in 1685 and were granted it in 1692. They farmed the flat land both sides of the river which included the triangular field on the north bank (which we call Jan Lui's field) and extensive watermeadows on the south bank of the Eerste River. Though their grant did not officially include all this territory, farmers used it 'as by right', probably from the first. Marquard soon disappears from history but Jan of Ceylon is better known. When he sold Old Nectar in 1712 he got f33 per morgen which is a fair rate for the area. He also increased the value of the adjacent farm Jonkershoek, doubling it in three years. His nickname was Jan Lui: Lazy Jan. Perhaps 'laid-back Jan'

would be a better translation? (See People.)

By then Jan had made property improvements. The chief one would have been to modify the watercourses: firstly to tap a supply of drinking water for humans and animals and direct it to his farmyard or werf; equally importantly to irrigate the flat fields where he had planted vines and domestic vegetables. The pattern of watercourses through the fields on the south bank probably date from this time, and there may be other material remains in the hills behind the werf cluster. No census of the period has been found but adjacent owners typically had 20 cattle and 100 sheep and Jan may have owned similar numbers (further study recommended). The werf would have included a dwelling, storage outbuildings (possibly combined) and shelter for the animals, notably kraals. Whether traces of this early building episode remain is not known (further study recommended).

We can fast-forward through the next hundred years because Old Nectar entered the Groenewald property empire and was farmed alongside many other properties (see Lanzerac Property History for details). It was not till the turn of the 19th century that there is any evidence of property improvements when Christoffel Groenewald 3rd wrested control from his brothers. There had been some improvements before he acquired sole ownership in 1801, probably firming up the buildings that were there. When he sold it in 1813 its value had increased 15-fold. This implies considerable property improvements. Vineyards were certainly expanded in line with expanding British markets at a time when Napoleonic wars cut off French supplies of wine. This would have necessitated improvements at the werf and some existing structures may date from this time, such as the east outbuilding. (See 02.20 for detailed building studies.)

In 1813 Coenraad Johannes Albertyn bought the property. He had owned all the farms downstream of Old Nectar from 1790. Aged 45, he sold most of them and moved to Old Nectar. (See People below.) In 1814/15 he built the magnificent house (see 02.20/01.01). In 1817 he also consolidated the land around the original grant which he did not officially own but which had been used by his predecessors 'as of right'.

At this time English ideas of landscape were beginning to be felt. William Duckett had made the approach to High Constantia up an avenue which abruptly terminated, revealing views across a little valley of the asymmetrical werf cluster which was then approached in a sweep. The opportunities for this kind of 'revealed' landscape were abundant at Old Nectar: concealment till the last minute, then a powerful view revealed of the Jonkershoek peaks. At this time the road terminated at the house (the route to Jonkershoek was on the other side of the river). It is possible that Albertyn built the side gables but a persuasive possibility is that it was added by Charles Marais before 1832 when D'Oyly drew the picturesque scene (Photo 3).

Charles Gerhard Marais had acquired the farm in 1823 after Albertyn's death. He was a notable wine farmer who increased its size by adding the horseshoe of land around the fringes (Photo 1). Again, we can fast-forward through the next hundred years as the farm ambled from one owner to another until it was acquired in 1919 by Douglas Plewman Tennant. Elliott photographs probably date from this time. Tennant's chief activity was to sell off many parts of the farm.

By the late 1930s the farm had been subdivided into various portions. What remained of the estate around the homestead had become very run-down. Simons writes that when General Kenneth Reid van der Spuy bought it in 1942 it stood on a barren muddy slope in desperate need of attention. 'Undaunted and with her husband away 'at the war', Una van der Spuy, single-handed and single-minded, transformed the house into a place of beauty and the slope into one of South Africa's most renowned gardens . . . Una remains as Old Nectar's chief gardener and gracious hostess.'

Historical Notes

Deeds Office search partially attempted: further study essential.

Note the following conflicting data in Fransen and Cook 1980:156-8. Anna Hasselaar died c1790 not c1756. Instead, her husband Groenewald had died before 1755. Pieter Jacob du Toit's purchase of 1790 is not confirmed: there is confusion in the Deeds Office records but the brothers Groenewald still owned the property in 1801 (thus Coenraad Johannes Albertyn bought the farm from Christoffel Groenewald not PJ du Toit). The owner of Groenhof was Hendrik Albertyn not Coenraad Johannes Albertyn. The house may have been built in 1814 but the date on the gable is 1815.

Associated People

** Marquard (Marguart) of Ceylon

Freed slave of Sri Lanka descent who was granted Old Nectar (with a partner, Jan of Ceylon) in 1685 and/or 1692, sized 24 morgen and 407 square roods. He seems to have owned the property till 1712 when it was sold to Anna Hoeks. Before 1698, van der Spuy writes, 'We learn from the records that the aged and valetudinarian Marquard of Ceylon [. . .] ceded all his goods, chattels and freehold to Andriesz [Jan de Jonker, owner of Jonkershoek] and his successors, in exchange for succour and security in the domicile of Jonkershoek for the rest of his life.' There is no mention of this arrangement in Jan de Jonker's estate in 1697 so Marquard may have been dead by then, certainly before 1712 when his partner Jan sold the farm. (De Bosdari 1953:62, van der Spuy 1969:31, Smuts ed 1979:68, Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2).

** Jan of Ceylon

Freed slave of Sri Lanka descent who was granted Old Nectar (with a partner, Marquard of Ceylon) in 1685 or 1692. In 1698 he acquired Jonkershoek from Jan de Jonker. He sold Jonkershoek in 1701 and sold Old Nectar in 1712. Old Nectar was called Jan Lui which appears to have been his nickname, meaning Lazy Jan. He married a Free Black woman called Dina van Coeleran. Their son Caspar Janz married Anna Louisz, daughter of Louis of Bengal and Maria of the Cape. He was a frequent godfather between 1704 and 1712. According to Fagan 1979:1, when he sold Jonkershoek in 1701, he kept a piece for himself which 'hebbende de vorm van een krom' -- was curve shaped -- and was kept separate from the rest of the property till 1761. Van der Spuy avers that 'Many are the tales from the records which have come down through history concerning this strange, lazy, but amiable individual who, despite his many drawbacks, seems to have endeared himself to all'. However that may be, he doubled the value of the Jonkershoek farm in the three years he owned it. He was also an efficient farmer. (van der Spuy 1969:31, De Bosdari 1953:62, Smuts ed 1979:68, Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2, Hattingh 1980:13, 19, Fagan 1979:1).

Note: There are several mentions of Jan of Ceylon in the records but, since it is a common name, it is uncertain whether they refer to this man. In 1712 a slave called Jan of Ceylon (tho actually a free Black by then) shot a lion with a trap gun on Isaq Shrijver's farm (Lanzerac or Klein Gustrouw). Lions were becoming scarce by then: Jan was paid a premium of 25 guilders and was able to sell about 25 lbs of fat at a good price as well (Smuts ed 1979:46). In 1739 he stood surety for the manumission of the slaves of Nic Gockeliis, and between 1735-7 freed two of his own slaves (Liebbrandt 604-l, 605-b, 1182-j).

** Pieter Jacob du Toit

Confusing Deeds Office data suggest that he might have acquired Old Nectar and Jonkershoek in 1790 and owned them till 1813 but this seems incorrect -- see rather Groenewald ownerships. (Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2).

** Hasselaar, Hoeks, Van Coningshoven

See Lanzerac Historical Property.

** Groenewald

See also Lanzerac Historical Property

** Jacob Groenewald b1c5

Called 'den land bouwer', he was a son of Anna Hasselaar and Christoffel Groenewald 2nd. Acquired Old Nectar and Jonkershoek from his mother in 1761 and transferred them to two of his brothers in 1774. Born 1734, married three times: to Martha Susanna Conterman in 1766, to Susanna Durand in 1774, to Wilhelmina Catharina van Gent in 1783. Six children 1767-77. Probably the same J Groenewald, a church elder who argued in favour of the re-establishment of the Genadendal (Baviaansklouf) mission in 1793 and who was a member of the church group who evangelised slaves, starting religious instruction for them on Sunday afternoons and evenings and who set up a school for slave children at their own expense (Deeds Office transfer data incl T3675/1761, Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2, De Villiers and Pama 1981:268, Smuts ed 1979: 257, 273).

** Christoffel Groenewald 3rd b1c9?

Acquired a half share (with half-brother Johannes Caspar Groenewald) in Old Nectar and Jonkershoek from his brother Jacob in 1774. In 1787 he, by a private arrangement, bought Johannes Caspar's half share of both farms--confirmed in 1801 -- for f1900. In 1813 he sold Jonkershoek for f24,251 and Old Nectar for f15,000. These massive increases in price indicate considerable property improvements -- certainly in wine production and very probably either he or his brother had built a house at Old Nectar (the core of the present house) and another at Jonkershoek (now an outbuilding). There is disagreement in the genealogical records about who his father was, but his mother seems to have been Anna Hasselaar. He married his cousin Maria Groenewald in 1786, and they had four children 1787-93 (De Villiers and Pama 1981:269, Deeds Office transfer data, Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2).

** Johannes Caspar Groenewald b1c7

Son of Christoffel Groenewald 2nd and Anna Hasselaar, born 1740. No record of marriage. He acquired a half-share (with his half-brother Christoffel Groenewald 3rd) in Old Nectar and Jonkershoek from his brother Jacob in 1774. Either he or his brother possibly built a house at Old Nectar and another at Jonkershoek. In 1787 he, by a private arrangement, sold his half share of both farms to partner Christoffel Groenewald 3rd -- confirmed in 1801. In 1787 he was Lieutenant of the Stellenbosch Burgher Dragoons but, suffering from various ailments, asked for his discharge. Date of death not known (Liebbrandt 502c, Fransen and Cook 1965:60-2, de Villiers and Pama 1981:269, Deeds Office transfer data.)

** Coenraad Johannes Albertyn b1c11

Bought Old Nectar 1813. Born in 1768, he had close connections with families in the Jonkershoek Valley -- one grandmother was Anna Hasselaar [qv Lanzerac], and the other was the widow of Jan de Jonker [qv Jonkershoek]. He married Gertruida de Villiers in 1787, and they had 10 children 1788-1808. In 1790 he bought the four lower farms in the Valley, Mostersdrift, Lanzerac, Klein Gustrouw (2 parts), from the estate of Anna Hasselaar. He sold these properties in 1808. Bought Old Nectar in 1813, named it Nektar and built the house that stands today with a gable dated 1815. Regranted large area around Old Nectar in 1817. Sold the property in 1823 for f76,884. Ten years earlier he had paid f15,000 -- a five-fold increase (Albertyn c1997:28, De Villiers and Pama 1981:8, Fransen and Cook 1965:61, Simons 2000:121-2, 1902 map, van der Spuy 1969:34).

** Louis Michel Thibault

Purported designer of Old Nectar gable (de Bosdari 1953:62-3, Simons 2000:121-2).

** Charles Gerhardus Marais b2c2d4e6f3 (deVP)

Associated with attempts to improve the quality of Cape wines, he bought Old Nectar in 1823 for f76,884 (he named it Nektar) and in 1841 was granted large tracts of land on both sides of the valley at the extremities of his holding. The farm was sold in 1847. A picture of 'Mr Maret's house Jonkershoek' was drawn by D'Oyly on 18 October 1832. Marais was born 1792 and died in 1854. He was married twice: to Helena Johanna Krynauw in 1815, and to Petronella Johanna Elisabeth Nielen in 1821. Ten children 1822-43. (1902 map, Smuts ed 1979:196, illus Smuts ed 1979:30, De Villiers and Pama 1981:530, Lombard and Heese, van der Spuy 1969:34).

** Jan Christiaan Marais

Born c1822, he bought Old Nectar from his father CG Marais [qv] in 1847 for £1,875, having leased it from 1841 for 10/- per annum. He sold it in 1854. (Van der Spuy 1969:34).

[** Eugene Marais

Afrikaans poet and philosopher ('Soul of a White Ant') whose parents are said to have owned Old Nectar. He was born near Pretoria in 1872, educated at Paarl, died 1936. (Simons 2000:122, Rosenthal 1965:318).]

[** Petrus Johannes 'Lang Piet' Marais b2c2d4e6f3 (deVP) g8 (Heese)

Born 1838, he was the 8th child of CG Marais [qv], the owner of Old Nectar. 'Commonly known as Lang Piet because of his great height. The flyleaf of an old Bible records that in 1856, at the age of 18, he set off from Old Nectar in search of adventure with nothing but his horse and bridle and with five golden sovereigns in his pocket. Eventually, he reached the Transvaal where, taking good advantage of the discovery of gold, he became a well-known and successful businessman.' (Simons 2000:122, Heese and Lombard).]

** Hendrik Ludolf Neethling prob b6c9

Bought Old Nectar in 1854 for £2,750 and sold it in 1861 for £3,000. This may be b1c3d4 but is probably b6c9 -- he was born in 1801 and in 1831 married Maria van der Byl whose father owned Spier. They had six children. Maria was ten years older than him, and died in 1861 -- the year Old Nectar was sold, perhaps as a consequence. He died in 1873. (van der Spuy 1969:34, de Villiers and Pama 1981:128, 622).

** Jacobus Petrus Roux b1c2d1e6f4

Owned Old Nectar from 1861 to 1896, and his son owned it till 1917. The father Jacobus Petrus Roux was born in 1830. His father owned Vredenburg and he was closely linked to the important Cape property families. One of his sister married the 'boomkweker' van der Byl of Lanzerac, another married the owner of Klein Gustrouw, a third the owner of Jonkershoek, and other siblings were also well-connected. He bequeathed Old Nectar to his son in 1896 but lived till 1916. (De Villiers and Pama 1981:805, van der Spuy 1969:34).

** Jacobus Petrus Roux b1c2d1e6f4g?

He acquired Old Nectar as a bequest from his father of the same name in 1896, though his father did not die till 1916. He in turn bequeathed the farm to his son of the same name in 1917. (Van der Spuy 1969:34).

** Jacobus Petrus Roux b1c2d1e6f4g?h?

He acquired Old Nectar as a bequest from his father of the same name in 1917 and sold it two years later for £7.850. (Van der Spuy 1969:34).

** Douglas Pleman Tennant

Owned Old Nectar, which he named Glenconnor, from 1919 to 1937 -- probably during the period Arthur Elliott photographed it. He bought for £7,850 and sold for £7,000 at a time when property prices generally increased so few improvements seem likely. (Van der Spuy 1969:34-5, de Bosdari 1953:62).

Edward Stanley Murphy

Bought Old Nectar, which he renamed Glen Vashti, in 1937 for £7,000. It was then 100 morgen. In 1942 he sold the house and 12 acres for £3,200--a much smaller property, but also one that 'stood on a barren muddy slope in desperate need of attention'. (Van der Spuy 1969:35, Simons 2000:122.)

** General Kenneth Reid van der Spuy

Aviation pioneer who bought Old Nectar in 1942 while away 'at the war'. His wife is Una van der Spuy [qv]. His book, Old Nectar and Roses, describes the way it was converted into a notable garden. Died 1991 at the great age of 99. (Simons 2000:122, van der Spuy 1969:35).

** Una van der Spuy

Wife of man who bought old Nectar in 1942 when it stood on a barren muddy slope in desperate need of attention.

'Undaunted and with her husband away 'at the war', Una van der Spuy, single-handed and single-minded, transformed the house into a place of beauty and the slope into one of South Africa's most renowned gardens ... [In 2000] Una remains as Old Nectar's chief gardener and gracious hostess.' (Simons 2000:122).

Associated Events

References

Fransen and Cook 1980: 156-8.

Fransen, in Smuts ed 1979:142

Fransen 1993:131

De Bosdari 1953:62-3

Van der Spuy 1969:29-35

Simons 2000:122

1902 Brink Map CA M2-409 shows location of grants

1938 aerial photograph.

1980 orthophoto

2000 aerial photograph.

1986 Neil Sutherland

1950 Lockley

1832 D'Oyly

See also sources specified under 'People'.

Assessment

Significance Statement

See modern Properties.

Significance Category

A = course / pattern of history	F = creative / technical
B = rarity	G = social / cultural / spiritual
C = information potential	H = assoc. NB person / group
D = characteristic of type	I = slavery
E = aesthetic	

Proposed Grading

Vulnerabilities

Recommendations

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

SAHRA File ref.

Official Grading

Maps

Number of Ortho Photo

GPS X

Date of Ortho Photo

GPS Y

Aerial Photograph Date

GPS Model

Aerial Photo Number

GPS Setting

Composites (groups of clusters of heritage resources: sub-places and areas)

Property Name

Composite Name

Catalogue Number

Type of Resource

Objects