

COETZENBERG

Coetzenberg and the green swath to the south of the Eerste River is an important contributing element to the 'sense of place' of the town as a whole. It is continuous with the Eerste River corridor with its natural vegetation, including associated adjacent vineyard spaces, and the forecourt in front of the old Coetzenberg farmstead.

The mountain ranges beyond form the backdrop of any view of Stellenbosch and are entirely characteristic of its place within the cultural landscape of the Cape Winelands. In particular, the clear urban edge - with its southernmost boundary being the Eerste River, which then extends to the green fields of Coetzenberg, and to the Jonkershoek Mountains beyond - contributes significantly to the experience of the town being set against a cultivated and wilderness backdrop. This is a microcosm of the wider balance of Urban, Rural and Wilderness areas, and the interplay between these that gives the study area its unique character. The sports- and learning-related uses of this area are longstanding and form part of its character.

The encroachment of urban, suburban or high-density university- or school-related development into this area would significantly erode this relationship, to the detriment of the overall 'sense of place' of the town.

Thus, Coetzenberg is identified as a 'Special Sub-Area' to the main town, and its green, open character and aesthetic is seen to be of high enough cultural significance, and contributes important context to the Historic Core of the town, to warrant protection.

MAIN AIM: ENHANCE (MANAGE) - The main aim of the proposed Special Sub-Area for Coetzenberg is intended to preserve the "openness" and "green" qualities of the site, as well as its role as an edge to the town (on the opposite bank of the Eerste River), and a link to the mountain range beyond. The intention is to improve the area by strengthening or reinforcing these characteristic elements and features. This goes hand-in-hand with the protection of structures of historic significance within the area.

MAIN VALUE: ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL – The appropriate use, conservation and renewal of heritage features in this townscape sub-unit is critical for its preservation. The pockets of critical biodiversity, historic tree copses and treelines, open fields, sports grounds, agricultural uses, and ecological support areas around the river are all of historical and/or ecological significance. Any development that will result in the loss in the sense of openness, greenness and connection to the mountain, will threaten the heritage value of this townscape sub-unit.

DEVIATED LAND USE/USES THAT WILL LIKELY ERODE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER: Over-scaled private dwellings, dense university-related developments, cluttered properties, gated residential estates, large-scale industrial structures, large parking lot, business park, isolated shopping centres and their associated parking lots. Suburban "creep" would erode the character of this Special Area.

A ECOLOGICAL

Significance: *The Coetzenberg area is flanked to the north and south by two places of high ecological importance: Stellenboschberg to the south, and the Eerste River to the north.*

COMPONENTS: Pathways along the Eerste River, access to the Stellenboschberg Mountain range, open fields with treed corridors running through them (between mountain and river), remnant forestry.

Development Criteria:

- The high mountains in the study area are landforms vital to its overall landscape character. They enclose the valleys and settlements of heritage significance. Prevent development on visually sensitive mountain slopes and ridgelines in order to preserve their ecological function and the continuity of the mountains as a backdrop.
- Maintain ecological support areas to sites of heritage significance, specifically the Eerste River corridor and Stellenboschberg Mountain range. Only permit development that responds to the heritage sensitivity of the river corridor and mountain range areas, and that will not dominate, or irreparably damage the environments adjacent to these natural elements.

- Protect biodiversity by not allowing development in areas of ecological sensitivity such as wetlands, drainage lines, steep slopes, floodplains, areas with a high water table, areas with high biodiversity, and areas with threatened species.
- Always use existing roads and pathways, such as old forestry service roads, before any new routes are established. As much wilderness area as possible must be left intact.
- Mountain slopes have been used for traditional practices for many years, and care should be taken that any significant cultural sites, such as burials and veldkos/medicinal plant resources, or historic recreational places are not destroyed. Make sure the required provision for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the slopes used for traditional and recreational purposes is in place.
- The principle of 'tread lightly' in any activity (and associated development requirements e.g. toilets for major events) in areas of ecological sensitivity within this domain should be emphasised.

B AESTHETIC

Significance: *The open and green character of this Special Area gives it its unique character.*

COMPONENTS: Planting/Landscape Patterns, Verges/Pavements, Boundary Treatments, Parking, Security and Modern Fixes, Street Elements.

Planting/Landscape Patterns:

- Traditional planting patterns should be protected by ensuring that existing tree alignments are not needlessly destroyed, but reinforced or replaced, thereby enhancing traditional patterns with appropriate species.
- Significant avenues and treelines should be protected as a heritage component. There is evidence of avenue planting along all the roads making up the Special Area. Treelines largely run north to south, creating distinct "landscape rooms" and connecting to the remnant areas of forestry on the Stellenboschberg Mountain.
- The felling of mature exotic or indigenous trees should be avoided. Instead continuous tree canopies should be encouraged.
- Many of the strongest planting patterns that contribute to the historic character of landscape and townscape units, are within road reserves and on public land. A maintenance and re-planting plan should be developed. Trees must be regularly maintained.
- In some cases, remnant planting patterns (even single trees) uphold the historic character of an area. Interpretation of these landscape features as historic remnants should occur.
- **Verges/Pavements:** The verge areas within Coetzenberg are largely grassed or planted. Suidwal Street is the only "engineered" street: the others largely comprise either brick surfacing (around the historic Coetzenberg Homestead), a single lane of tarmac edges with brick and with "soft" verges, or simple laterite tracks. This is important to the character of the area, and the use of tarmac and other engineered road elements should be discouraged. Laterite surfacing should be the preferred road material in this area.
- The scale of roads (especially those that align with historic wagon routes) should be the minimum possible. Insensitive hard elements can compromise the rural character of a landscape as a whole.
- **Boundary Treatments:** It is recommended that visual permeability should be maintained towards mountains, valleys and across open fields. (a) Discourage the use of solid walls around areas in public view and along scenic routes. (b) Views should be framed and enhanced by development wherever possible. High and solid walls that obscure views should not be permitted, as well as pre-cast concrete fencing, exposed blockwork, and facebrick walling. Historic boundary elements must be preserved as far as possible. Where divisions are required, hedges, treelines of palisade (or visually transparent) fencing should be the preferred means of boundary treatment.
- **Parking:** Parking areas should preferably be screened with dense planting, and surfaced with laterite. The Municipality should not unreasonably withhold relief for on-site parking departures where existing requirements will likely result in a degradation of the character of the Special Area.
- **Security and Modern Fixes:** The use of unobtrusive security systems is encouraged. Satellite dishes, airconditioning condensers, roof windows and solar panels should preferably be installed where they are not visible from the surrounding open spaces.

Solar panels should be mounted flush with roofs, rather than having their own framing elements. If electric fencing must be installed, a recessive colour for the fittings must be selected. Barbed wire, spikes (except where part of the fencing) and similar are not permitted within the Special Area.

- **Street Elements:** Street lighting and street furniture (benches, bins, bollards and so on) should be understated, modern (they should not be pseudo-historical) and neutral in colour and form. Street kerbs, raised zebra-crossings, speed bumps, street signs and so on should be the minimum possible to meet safety requirements, and should again be neutral.

C HISTORIC/ARCHITECTURAL

Significance: *Coetzenberg is "anchored" by the historic Coetzenberg werf (Grade II Provincial Heritage Site) to the east as well as the Welgevallen Experimental Farm to the west (a Grade II site, which has been formally nominated as a Provincial Heritage in 1999). The wider site forms the heart of the sporting culture at Stellenbosch University, and sites like the Danie Craven Stadium, which may not be architecturally significant, have social significance. It is primarily the open fields, planting and connection to the river corridor and mountain range that are key to establishing the character of this Special Area.*

Development opportunities in Coetzenberg fall into 4 categories: (1) Opportunities for conservation of historic buildings and elements of heritage significance; (2) Opportunities for alterations and additions to historical buildings and elements of heritage significance; (3) Opportunities for new structures within environments of historical significance; and (4) Opportunities to redevelop intrusive buildings, elements and sites in order to better reflect the character-giving elements of Coetzenberg.

Development Criteria:

Opportunities for conservation of historic buildings and elements of heritage significance:

- Work on historic buildings and elements of historic significance should only be undertaken by professionals and builders/tradesmen who are sufficiently trained and experienced. Heritage expertise should be sought; it is in the interest of the property owners to have their plans prepared by advisors who have recognised experience and standing in their field of heritage conservation.
- Where the historic function or use of a building is still intact, the function has heritage value and should be protected. Where a new use is sought, every effort should be made to find a use that is compatible with the heritage significance of the element/site, and will require the minimum extent of alteration to historic fabric.
- Distinguishing original features, examples of craftsmanship and so on should not be falsified, destroyed or removed. These elements should be repaired rather than replaced as far as is possible.
- Where repair necessitates replacement, the replacement should be the minimum necessary, and the new material should match that being replaced in composition, design, colour, texture and other visual qualities, but its newness should be apparent on close inspection (its age should not be faked). Traditional materials should be used in repair work.
- Traditional and historic planting patterns should be protected by ensuring that existing tree alignments are not needlessly destroyed, but reinforced or replaced, thereby enhancing traditional patterns with appropriate species.

Opportunities for alterations and additions to historical buildings and elements of heritage significance:

- Any intervention should be the minimum necessary to meet the new requirements, reversible when possible, and designed not to prejudice future interventions and/or restoration. For instance, if the addition or alteration were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic structure would remain intact.
- Historical layering should be respected and protected – historic additions may have heritage significance in their own right. The removal of later fabric should only occur in instances where it has minimal significance or detracts from significance.
- Alterations and additions to conservation-worthy structures and elements should be sympathetic to their architectural character and period detailing, including their layout, scale, proportion, massing, alignments, access, landscaping, species and setting. Heritage expertise should be sought.

- Distinguish old from new but ensure visual harmony between historical fabric and new interventions in terms of appropriate scale, massing, form and architectural treatment, without directly copying these details.

Opportunities for new structures within environments of historical significance:

- While the opportunity for realising new structures in this setting is necessarily limited, new structures should respect and respond to traditional settlement patterns and siting by considering the entire Special Area as the component of significance. This includes the backdrop of the natural landscape against which settlement is sited, its spatial structure, layout, scale, massing, hierarchy, alignments, access, and landscaping setting. This necessitates that new development occurs where similar development already exists. Any development that departs from the inherent character of the Special Area should be discouraged.
- Designers of new structures must have an understanding of the context, traditional patterns of place-making and historical elements that are characteristic of the Special Area. New elements must respond to and interpret these character-giving aspects of the Area.
- Contemporary designs for infill buildings should not be discouraged, provided they do not destroy significant fabric and are compatible with the size, scale, material and architectural character of the property and Special Area.

Opportunities to redevelop intrusive buildings, elements and sites in order to better reflect the character-giving elements of Coetzenberg:

- Wherever possible, existing buildings that are intrusive because their scale, style, materials or siting departs from the strong character-giving patterns of the Special Area should be redeveloped in order to minimize their disruptive effect. This can be done gradually as part of general maintenance – for instance repainting in more sympathetic colours, or replacing mid-20th Century roof tiles with corrugated sheeting or “finer” roof tiles.
- Encourage mitigation measures (for instance use of vegetation) to “embed” existing intrusive elements and structures within the townscape.
- It is recommended that physical permeability to communal resources such as historic commonage areas as well as public running and walking routes are maintained and enhanced, for the enjoyment of all members of the public. This is particularly true when considering any new development proposals: restore areas of recreation, especially where the public has traditionally enjoyed rights of access. Action might include the removal of fences and walls, where it is appropriate.

D SOCIAL

Significance: *Access to the Eerste River Corridor and Stellenboschberg. Non-motorised and recreational movement routes.*

Development Criteria:

- Ensure physical permeability to communal resources such as rivers and mountains for the enjoyment of all members of the public. Existing footpaths and routes for walking, hiking, running and cycling should be reinforced and extended where possible.
- Encourage and support the establishment of local heritage conservation bodies, particularly within Special Areas, as is envisioned in the National Heritage Resources Act. Such bodies can assist with heritage resource identification, assessment and decision-making.

E ECONOMIC

Significance: *Coetzenberg comprises a rare green area within close proximity to the Historic Core of Stellenbosch, connecting the town to the mountains. It has high touristic value.*

Development Criteria:

- Prevent over-engineered and insensitive infrastructural upgrades within Special Areas.
- The backdrop of rolling hills and mountain peaks form an important component of the whole, and development in these areas that is destructive to the whole should be discouraged.
- Respect the natural landscape as the setting within which the town of Stellenbosch is embedded. Avoid insensitive ‘dominating’ developments that erode the natural-agricultural/recreational continuum found in the Special Area. Dominating developments include sprawling suburban development.