



H16 Roberts Valley Farm

This land unit reads with unit H15, but is different due to a slight deviation in land use and the presence of three farm complexes. Remnant plantations are located on the slopes of the Middelberg Mountains with a few evenly divided vineyard blocks on the plains below them. These are situated between the Dassenberg and Middelberg mountains and Skerp Heuvel. The vineyards correspond with the soils of high suitability for agriculture, with the remaining soils in the valley of a moderate suitability. A few irrigation dams are located within this area. The Robertsvallei Road allows access to the town of Franschhoek and the R45. This is also the point of access to the Berg River Dam. Some homes are visible on the foothills of Dassenberg as well as Middelberg Mountains, presumably part of the Robertsvallei settlement. Natural wetlands are found along the Robertsvallei. The entire Robertsvallei area (H16 and H17) is part of a critical biodiversity area. The original Roberts Valley farm is now represented by a modest early 20th century Victorian complex of farm buildings with architectural and landscape significance. On the edge of this land



unit views are found towards the Berg River Dam. This land unit displays ecological significance together with historic significance relating to the plantation remnants and the Roberts Valley Farm complex. Prestigious estates are a major intrusion within this land unit and have a degrading effect on the landscape. Large-scale infrastructure and ad hoc architectural 'themes' are contrary to the character of the Cape Winelands.



Robertsvallei Road



Berg River Dam

H16 ROBERTS VALLEY FARM

MAIN AIM: INTERVENE (CHANGE) in a deliberate, planned way to improve a land parcel. This approach may be appropriate where the landscape or townscape has declined beyond the point where enhancement is possible. Actions include: (a) To rehabilitate the site to its previous, or natural character, or (b) to accelerate change towards a new or strengthened character and resilient landscape. The resilient heritage landscapes in Stellenbosch, in which development and intervention are most desirable, are those landscapes or units that historically (and almost sporadically) underwent change, but continued to form a new typology of equal aesthetic within the landscape, strengthening existing spatial patterns.

MAIN VALUE: ECOLOGIC - This landscape unit is in a degraded state and needs to be rehabilitated. It is important to uphold the open character of this valley near the historic town of Franschhoek.

CONSERVATION SYSTEM: Foreground criteria apply around the Grade IIIa Scenic route, and has medium visibility in the area. The Foothill conservation system is triggered in this landscape unit.

THIS IS A LIMITED DEVELOPMENT ZONE, AND THE FOLLOWING DEVIATED LAND USE/USES WILL LIKELY ERODE THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: Overscaled private dwellings, cluttered properties, agricultural related practices (other than viticulture and orchards), gated residential estates, large scale industrial structures, suburban development, nursery/mixed use/garden centre, restaurant/farmstall, mining, school complex, substation, landfill or sewage plant, parking lot (without mitigation), market, business park, isolated shopping centre.

Grade IIIb	
Foothill CS	✓
Green Transition CS	
Scenic Route CS	✓

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

Please refer to the Conservation Management section of the CMP for general guidelines, explanatory text/terms, and the process behind developing the Development Criteria. The Development Criteria sheets are based on Landscape and Townscape typologies found within the Stellenbosch Municipality. The focus is on the current heritage elements and character of the landscapes, and the criteria are discussed under the five value lines (ecologic, aesthetic, historic, social and economic). They should also be read in conjunction with the Heritage Inventory (individual sites) and the Conservation Systems (Appendix 3 of the CMP).

A ECOLOGICAL

Significance:

Natural wetlands are found along the Robertsvlei. The entire Roberstvlei area (H16 and H17) is part of a critical biodiversity area.

This land unit displays ecological significance together with historic significance relating to the plantation remnants and the Roberts Valley Farm complex.

Development Criteria:

- Support protected areas and existing nature reserves, with their landforms and areas of critical biodiversity, which strongly contribute to the "wilderness domain" of the winelands cultural landscape (See the Foothills Conservation System).
- Maintain ecological support areas to sites of heritage significance (particularly river corridors). Only permit development that responds to the heritage sensitivity of the site, and that will not dominate, or irreparably damage the environments adjacent to these heritage sites. Optimize the scenic and recreational opportunities provided by water courses and larger water bodies, especially where they were enjoyed through historic right of way.
- Respect development setbacks from water resources to provide protection from flooding as well as creating scenic and ecological corridors (see legislation in place for river corridors).

B AESTHETIC

Significance:

This land unit reads with unit H15, but is different due to a slight deviation in land use and the presence of three farm complexes.

The Robertsvlei Road allows access to the town of Franschhoek and the R45. This is also the point of access to the Berg River Dam. Some homes are visible on the foothills of Dassenberg as well as Middelberg Mountains, presumably part of the Robertsvlei settlement.

On the edge of this land unit views are found towards the Berg River Dam. Prestigious estates are a major intrusion within this land unit and have a degrading effect on the landscape.

Large-scale infrastructure and ad hoc architectural 'themes' are contrary to the character of the Cape Winelands.

Development Criteria: ROAD UPGRADES

- Infrastructure improvement including new roads, and upgrades to road infrastructure need to be appropriate to their rural context (scale, material etc.). Out of scale flyovers and bridges should be avoided, as it detracts from the rural character of the Winelands. Road upgrades can include a consideration for a new simple asphalt road (avoiding over-engineered edges, including a cycle/walkway), to serve as a detour for trucks, whose diversion from the historic town core will decrease impact on historic fabric.

VIEWS

- 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 the continuity of the mountains as a backdrop.
- Within the urban edge, limit cultivation

and development on upper mountain slopes greater than 1:4 to protect scenic resources and water catchments, and to minimise visual scarring and erosion. Propose 'no-go' development areas above the 260m contour line on the edge of Middelberg, and the 280m contour line on the edge of Dassenberg, north of the Robertsvlei Road.

- Avoid development or infrastructure (such as buildings, wind turbines and power lines), on crests or ridgelines because of impact on the visual sensitivity of skylines.
- Retain view-lines and vistas focused on prominent natural features

such as mountain peaks, as these are important place-making and orientating elements for experiencing the cultural landscape. They are not only important for landscape character, but also for water security, and biodiversity.

- It is recommended that visual permeability should be maintained towards mountains, valleys and across open, and cultivated fields. (a) Discourage the use of solid walls around vineyards and agricultural areas in public view and along scenic routes. (b) Views should be framed and enhanced by development wherever possible.

C HISTORIC

Significance:

Remnant plantations are located on the slopes of the Middelberg Mountains with a few evenly divided vineyard blocks on the plains below them. These are situated between the Dassenberg and Middelberg mountains and Skerp Heuwel.

The original Roberts Valley farm is now represented by a modest early 20th century Victorian complex of farm buildings with architectural and landscape significance.

Development Criteria:

PLANTATION

- Rehabilitation of forestry areas should be applied in the same way rehabilitation is conducted in mining operations - from the onset.
- Forestry service roads are difficult to rehabilitate. Instead these roads are part of the historic layering that tells the story of forestry and could be used for another purpose such as recreation.
- Another method of rehabilitation for plantation areas, could entail the production of traditional plant resources, where indigenous knowledge of plants and foraging could be applied.

FARM WERF

- Cultural sites associated with 20th century settlement and farming practices should be protected, particularly church and farm school sites that occur at the intersection of farm roads. The displacement of farm employees to nearby townships results in the loss of integrity of their former dwellings.
- Respect traditional werf settlement patterns by considering the entire werf as the component of significance. This includes the backdrop of the natural landscape



against which it is sited, as well as its spatial structure. Any development that impacts the inherent character of the werf component should be discouraged.

- Interventions on the werf must respect the layout, scale, massing, hierarchy, alignments, access, landscaping and setting.
- Historical layering must be respected and protected. Alterations and additions to conservation-worthy structures should be sympathetic to their architectural character and period detailing. Inappropriate 'modernisation' of conservation-worthy structures and traditional werfs should be prevented. Inappropriate maintenance can compromise historic structures. Heritage expertise is required where appropriate.
- 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.
- Encourage development that prolongs the longevity of historic family farms as an increasingly rare typology.

D SOCIAL

Significance:

Secluded area in close proximity to the town of Franschhoek to be used and appreciated by its residents.

Development Criteria:

- It is recommended that physical permeability to communal resources such as rivers and mountains is maintained and enhanced, for the enjoyment of all members of the public. This is particularly true when considering any new development proposals. (a) Promote public footpaths across the cultivated landscape. (b) 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. (c) Prevent privatisation of natural places that form part of the historical public open space resource network. (d) Allow for sustainable, traditional use of natural places for recreational, spiritual and resource-collection purposes.
- Where practical, encourage managed access to wilderness areas on the higher slopes. This will allow residents and visitors to the winelands opportunities to experience the wilderness domain, which is a key component within the cultural landscape as a whole, and to experience the sense of interconnectedness of the wilderness, agricultural and urban domains through views from the upper slopes. (See the conservation systems of Green Transitions and Foothills Conservation).
- 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.

- The principle of 'tread lightly' in any activity (and associated development requirements e.g. toilets for major events) in this domain should be emphasised.
- Make sure the required provision for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the slopes used for traditional and recreational purposes is in place.
- 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, are not disturbed.

E ECONOMIC

Significance:

The vineyards correspond with the soils of high suitability for agriculture, with the remaining soils in the valley of a moderate suitability. A few irrigation dams are located within this area.

Development Criteria:

- Care should be taken that vineyards are not needlessly destroyed, and replaced by non-agricultural development. The potential agricultural use of the land should be retained for the future.
- Fruit orchards are associated with windbreak trees (see T10.3 for windbreak species) which form distinctive strong lines on the landscape. In cases where the orchard has lost its function, to retain its heritage values the windbreak trees should be kept and new development could be included within existing blocks.

