

Heritage Survey: Stellenbosch Rural Areas

by Penny Pistorius and Stewart Harris - June 2004

Sub Area Name

Jonkershoek

Catalogue Number

02.14

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Alternative Names

Assegaaibos

Farm Number

359, 361

Linkages

Heritage Resource Name

Assegaaibosch

Type of Resource

farmstead, nature reserve

Composites

1. Werf
2. Picnic area
3. River field
4. Assegaaibosch ridge
5. Nature garden
6. West of werf
7. Assegaaibosch west



Photo Date

1980

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch, orthophoto with cadastrals . North is approximately in the top left corner. The two shapes at centre are the original land grant.



Photo Date

1938

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch Farm, 1938 aerial photo.



Photo Date **Photographer**

02/04 Stewart Harris

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch, 1755 grant diagram, OSF 3:12.



Photo Date **Photographer**

02/04 Stewart Harris

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch 1817 quitrent grant SQ2:62, increasing farm to 170 morgen. No building shown, but "wagen weg" along south bank of stream leads to the daimond of the first grant (centre).

Description

Visual Description

Assegaaibosch is situated on the dry, north-facing slopes of the valley, across the river from Jonkershoek farm. From the river in the north it runs up to the boundary with the mountain catchment area, a straight line which cuts across the lower slopes of the Simonsberg. It is bounded in the west by smallholdings and in the east by Jonkershoek. Most of the land is steep, with only a few relatively level areas near the river. The steep slopes are covered with natural bush, while development is concentrated at the previously-farmed areas, which are grassed and have a variety of indigenous and exotic trees. There is a stream in the west, two streams roughly in the centre (the eastern one running down Assegaaiboskloof), and a stream in Baviaanskloof near the eastern boundary.

It is a nature reserve run by Cape Nature Conservation -- over 1,100 species of indigenous fynbos have been identified.

"Assegaaibosch is a [nature] reserve for plants, birds and animals and has a huge variety of proteas." (TV Bulpin, in the Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Southern Africa, 4th edition).

Notes

During the course of this survey a detailed heritage study of Assegaaibosch was undertaken. Penny Pistorius and Stewart Harris: Assegaaibosch Heritage Study, for the CapeNature Board, 2004.

History

About 1693 Simon van der Stel granted "a small piece of arable land in Jan-Jonkers Hoek under the Groote Berg, named Assagaij Bush, of which only 6 morgen were good land" (Liebbrandt 257b) to Dirk Coetzee. The deed was lost, but a condition was that Coetzee was obliged to repair the road to it and when necessary sent a slave to do this (Liebbrandt 257b). Coetzee lived at his main farm, Coetzenburg, and agricultural use of Assegaaibosch was probably marginal -- perhaps spring pasturage, with kraals to protect the sheep at night and rudimentary shelter for a shepherd.

In 1725 his son Gerrit Coetzee inherited the farm (de Villiers and Pama 1981:144-150, Liebbrandt 257b). In 1755, when Coetzee wanted to sell, he had the grant of 6½ arable morgen confirmed (OSF 3:12, Liebbrandt 257b). The diagram (see photo) shows two pieces of land, both watered by streams, but no buildings. Coetzee immediately sold it to Pieter Wium who had the monopoly of meat sales in Stellenbosch for most of the period 1728-1788 (transfer deed T3147, Smuts ed 1979:209-10) and who may have wanted it as a holding ranch for cattle and sheep. Fransen and Cook (1965:60-2) speculate that Wium may have built a house, later used as an outbuilding.

During a time of economic prosperity, in 1792 the farm was sold to Paul Johan Hartog and Lambert Hendrik Fick, who soon acquired Hartog's half-share. Fick "probably built the house still standing there" (Fransen and Cook 1965:61). Wouter Eduard Wium, grandson of the prior owner, bought the farm in 1806. In 1817 he was granted all the land surrounding the old grant, increasing the size from 6½ morgen to 170 morgen. The diagram (see photo) shows the two streams in the centre, and another stream on the east boundary, all with trees in their upper reaches. Wium still owned the farm in 1825, but transfers after this are uncertain till 1874.

At some time it came into the hands of Paul Pieter Neethling (mentioned in T406/1874). In 1861 he had inherited Jonkershoek from his father PG Neethling and may have acquired Assegaaibosch at the same time. PP Neethling (and possibly his father) farmed Assegaaibosch and Jonkershoek together, living at Jonkershoek. PP Neethling sold the property shortly before he was declared insolvent.

In 1874 Andries Christoffel van der Byl Cloete bought the farm, and owned it for nearly 50 years (T406/1874).

Paul Pieter Neethling and Anna Elizabeth Neethling or van der Byl acquired the farm in 1922 (DO summary folios). According to a 1932 water court application (which lists van der Byl Cloete as the owner), 55 morgen of land was being irrigated from the tributary streams at that time. The 1938 aerial photo shows an apparently well-managed farm, with orchards and cultivated fields near the homestead and on the alluvial soils towards the west boundary. The different texture of the hills on the farm from the upper mountain slopes indicate that the farm was being grazed and/or had been burnt. Hey (1995:127) recounts that the "Neethlings practiced mixed farming, viticulture being the major activity, and also kept a large herd of goats. In later years they established a wild flower nursery selling cut flowers locally." Later the farm "slowly deteriorated; buildings and fences were neglected and alien vegetation, including cluster pine, hakea, eucalyptus and poplars were allowed to invade the veld and arable land."

In 1960 the Department of Nature Conservation purchased the farm as its third field station. Hey (1995:129-31) recounts that "the farm was cleared of aliens, derelict structures and fences demolished and the accumulated rubbish of decades removed. One of the first developments was the erection of a series of rearing pens for water-fowl and the construction of four large ponds for adult birds. . . . It was decided to move the fauna and flora section [from Jonkershoek] to Assegaaibosch and a complex of buildings to provide office accommodation, research facilities, garages and workshops and a large workshop and store for taxidermy services [and housing for resident staff] was planned . . . by Mr Chris Lochner . . . eventually erected in 1965 and the Assegaaibosch station became the centre for research on flora and fauna in the Cape."

Historical Notes

Further study needed

* outbuilding present in 1965 but now gone, which Fransen & Cooke claim was an early house possibly built by Peter Wium. Check if a house is mentioned in the transfers to and from Wium. Inspection of outbuilding fabric and werf walling needed. If Wium was regularly using the property, for example as a stock ranch, a dwelling would be necessary -- but it might have been very primitive, and likely used by an overseer rather than Wium or his sons. Wium had other property in town [check] - a more convenient place to live and do business.

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Assessment

Significance Statement

Probably used by Khoi before colonial settlement (hence the name), the first land grant was in the 1690s. Assegaaibosch was farmed until 1960, when it became Cape Nature Conservation's third field station and the centre for research on flora and fauna in the Cape. It is an integral part of the Jonkershoek valley landscape.

Significance Category

A, C, E, (G), (H)

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

2

Vulnerabilities

Possible neglect of cultural heritage in favour of natural heritage.
Possible commercial development (but this could improve maintenance).

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

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Assegaaibosch west

Catalogue Number

02.14/07

Type of Resource

landscape

Objects



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

Photo Title

Pine trees between houses 1 and 2 and the prefab housing area (3).



Photograph Date

1938

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch west, 1938 aerial.



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

Photo Title

The road in front of houses 1 and 2, looking west towards the pine trees.



Photograph Date

1980

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch west, orthophoto. Housing is numbered (see Objects)

Composite - Description

Visual Description

In the south west corner of the property, west of the western stream, the valley floor slopes gently before the steep rise of the foothills. The old road enters the property here; below it is the river, in a band of mixed forest, and above it are several clusters of dwellings, their yards neatly fenced and many with hedges of Port Jackson. A feature of this landscape is a row of tall pines between the houses numbered (3) on the photo and the other houses..

Condition

Composite - History

History

In 1938 the area was cultivated (possibly vineyards), except for the area around the stream. This was forested and house no 1 was already there.

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Composite - Assessment

Significance Statement

Since cultivatable land at Assegaaibosch is so rare due to the steepness of most of the farm, this area must have been cultivated from an early time. At present it has some heritage qualities as a cluster of rural dwellings.

Significance Category

A

Proposed Grading

3

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	

Vulnerabilities

Recommendations

Official Grading

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Assegaaibosch west

Heritage Resource Name

Staff house west 1

Catalogue Number

02.14/07.01

Type of Resource

house



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Staff house west 1



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Staff house west 1

Objects - Description

Visual Description

Simple cottage with corrugated iron roof, masonry walls. Stoep in front, , natural stone plinth, part-roofed. Projecting extension on left with monopitch roof. Steel windows; early 20th C (?) panelled door. In a neat garden with stone path, surrounded by trees and hedges.

Condition (short)

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Appears on 1938 aerial.

Construction Date

pre-1938

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

This vernacular cottage is altered but retains its proportions. With its garden setting it contributes to the cultural landscape.

Significance Category

A, E

Proposed Grading

3

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	

Vulnerabilities

NHR Act Status

> 60yrs (S. 34)

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

Recommendations

Should be retained; could be appropriately renovated.

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Assegaibosch west

Heritage Resource Name

Staff house west 2

Catalogue Number

02.14/07.02

Type of Resource

house



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Staff house west 2

Objects - Description

Visual Description

Undistinguished cottage with steel windows, low-pitched roof. Set in a garden with Port Jackson hedges, surrounded by trees.

Condition (short)

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Construction Date **Associated People**

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

No intrinsic heritage values, but the dwelling site is well-chosen and charming; contributes to landscape.

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

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Vulnerabilities

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

Recommendations

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Assegaibosch west

Heritage Resource Name

Prefabricated housing

Catalogue Number

02.14/07.03

Type of Resource

housing



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Typical prefabricated house in the Assegaibosch west group.

Objects - Description

Visual Description

A cluster of prefabricated dwellings (made of mobile homes?) occupies the north west corner of Assegaaibosch. The surroundings are neat and the "camp" is well-established despite the temporary appearance of the prefabs.

Condition (short)

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Construction Date

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

No intrinsic heritage significance, but the village setting contributes to the variety of places at Assegaaibosch.

Significance Category

Proposed Grading

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Vulnerabilities

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

Recommendations

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	

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Assegaaibosch west

Heritage Resource Name

Rondawels

Catalogue Number

02.14/07.04

Type of Resource

houses



Photograph Date

06/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Top row of rondawels, Assegaaibosch



Photograph Date

06/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Lower row of rondawels, Assegaaibosch

Objects - Description

Visual Description

Two rows of rondawels on narrow terraces cut into the slope above houses 1 and 2. The upper row of three, which are inhabited, are thatched; the lower row is not occupied and semi-derilict - two were thatched (one is part-burnt) and two have metal roofs. All have steel windows. Additional rondawels in the upper row have been demolished.

The cluster is shielded from view by trees below and to the east, where a stream runs in a steep-sided gully.

Condition (short)

poor

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Unknown.

Construction Date

Post-1938

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

No heritage significance; the site has potential for upgraded use.

Significance Category

Proposed Grading

none

Vulnerabilities

NHR Act Status

not older than 60 years

Recommendations

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

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

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

West of Assegaaibosch werf

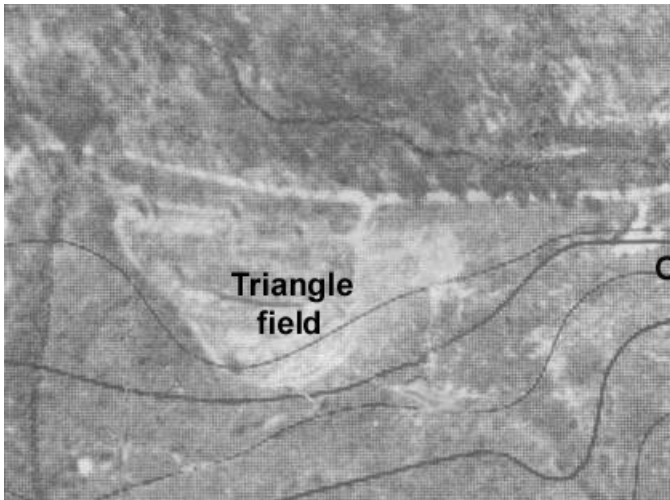
Catalogue Number

02.14/06

Type of Resource

landscape

Objects



Photograph Date

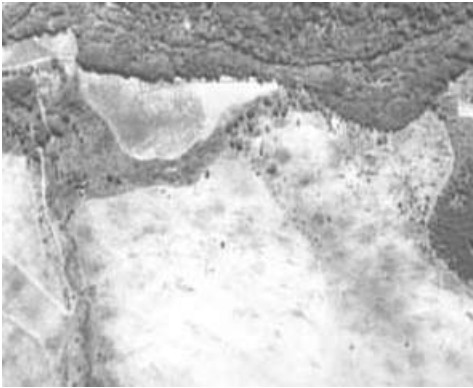
1980

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch, west of the werf. Annotated orthophoto.



Photograph Date

1938

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

1938 aerial, Assegaaibosch, west of the werf.

Composite - Description

Visual Description

The old road to Assegaaibosch runs along the south bank of the Eerste River. The present road probably follows the original route, but there is little evidence because the road has been resurfaced. West of the werf a prominent spur of the mountain pushes forward, giving the werf a strong sense of enclosure, and narrowing the valley floor along which the road runs. On the west side of the spur the valley widens, and here is a level, triangle-shaped field. West of this is a stream, cut deeply into the slope. A track parallel to the road and higher up the slope was not inspected.

Condition

Composite - History

History

In 1938 the road followed much the same route. The triangular field was cultivated, though it is impossible to tell what the crop was. The quarry is not evident. The slopes above appear denuded, probably as a result of grazing.

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Composite - Assessment

Significance Statement

The level parts of the farm close to the river have been the most intensely used through time; here agricultural activities were concentrated, and here passed the old routes (possibly originally Khoi paths).

Significance Category

A, C

Proposed Grading

Vulnerabilities

Recommendations

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	

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

West of Assegaaibosch werf

Heritage Resource Name

Old quarry

Catalogue Number

02.14/06.01

Type of Resource

quarry



Photograph Date

05/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Old Quarry, Assegaaibosch.

Objects - Description

Visual Description

Where the hill pushes forward towards the road, it has been cut away by quarrying activities, presumably for road-making and maintenance., leaving an exposed clay bank. An old concrete roller stands alongside the road.

Condition (short)

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Unknown.

Construction Date

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

A demonstration of the various productive uses to which land is put, the old quarry is a place of distinct

character, part of the varied palette of places on the nature reserve.

Significance Category

A

Proposed Grading

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Vulnerabilities

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	

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

Recommendations

Composite - Objects

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

West of Assegaaibosch werf

Heritage Resource Name

Triangle field

Catalogue Number

02.14/06.02

Type of Resource

field



Photograph Date

06/04

Photographer

Penny Pistorius

PhotoTitle

Triangle Field, Assegaaibosch

Objects - Description

Visual Description

Triangular shaped water meadow next to the old road, enclosed by the folds of the west hill. Presently lying fallow and overgrown with kikuyu; evidently used for dumping at some stage.

Condition (short)

Architectural Style

Objects - History

History

Probably farmed from an early date; cultivated in 1938.

Construction Date

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Objects - Assessment

Significance Statement

An old field of arable land, characteristic of the level water meadows of the valley.

Significance Category

A, D

Proposed Grading

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	

Vulnerabilities

NHR Act Status

Date of Gazette

Official Grading

Recommendations

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

Property Name

Assegaaibosch, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch District

Composite Name

Nature garden

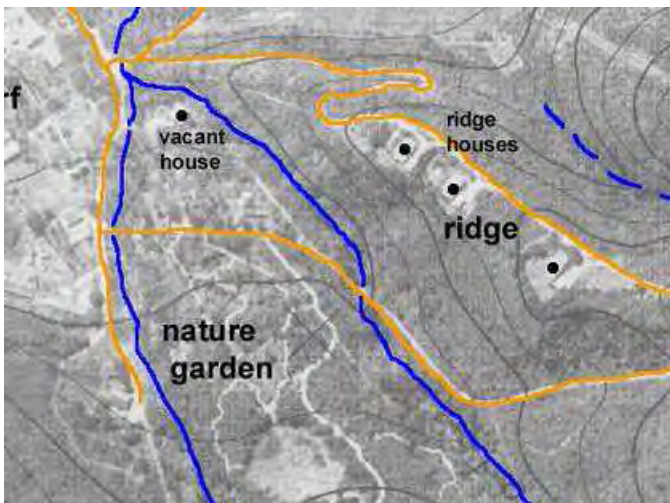
Catalogue Number

02.14/05

Type of Resource

garden

Objects



Photograph Date

1980

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

Assegaaibosch nature garden, annotated orthophoto.



Photograph Date

1938

Photographer

Chief Director: Surveys & Mapping

Photo Title

1938 aerial: area that is now the nature garden. Orchard in the lowest corner, probably grazing above.

Composite - Description

Visual Description

On the sloping land between the two main Assegaaibosch streams is a (neglected) wild flower garden. It has a network of winding paths with stone steps, water features, etc. and a rich variety of indigenous shrubs and fynbos and some trees. On the upper slope is a grassed clearing with a thatched pavilion (not inspected).

Condition

poor

Composite - History

History

Soon after the Department of Nature Conservation acquired Assegaaibosch "a large nursery for indigenous flora was established and an old orchard on the hill slope above was cleared in order to lay out a wild flower garden as a show window of Cape flora. This garden was planned and developed by our horticulturalist, Mr Rodney Baxter and during the following years some 10 000 plants of 53 species including over 1 000 proteas were established, providing a colourful spectacle in the spring, which proved very popular with the public and this garden is a fitting memorial to an outstanding man." (Hey, 1995:129)

Associated People

Associated Events

References

Composite - Assessment

Significance Statement

The garden is of aesthetic and botanical significance, and historically is associated with the establishment of Nature Conservation's third field station at Assegaaibosch and its role in public education.

Significance Category

A, C, D, E, F, G, H

Proposed Grading

3

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	

Vulnerabilities

Neglected, not maintained

Recommendations