

VBGD Town Planners

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Celebrating 35 Years service to our clients (1985 to 2020)

Date: 22 June 2025

Reference:

The Municipal Manager
Planning and Development Department
Knysna Municipality
P O Box 21
Knysna
6570

Attention: Manager : Hennie Smit

Dear Sir,

FARM UITZIGT 216 PORTION 152: AMENDMENT OF APPLICATION JUNE 2025

YOUR REFERENCE: APPLICATION 3300

We refer to the above and to our previous letter detailing an amendment to the original application, which was dated 11 March 2025.

The above letter detailed all comments and objections received, addressing the nature of the comments, and a proposal to amend the application, with the view to address the comments received through public consultation.

We do not need to repeat the points raised in the abovementioned, however for context and in brief, the following:

1. **Original application:** (See Plan 1)
 - Camping site for **105 sites** accommodating tents and caravans.
 - No limits were placed on accessories such as boats, except launching from the site itself.
 - The camping area was spread across the entire site.
2. **The Proposed First Amended Application:** (See Plan 2)
 - The number of sites was **reduced to 50**
 - No **caravans** were to be allowed into the camping site.
 - No **power boats** to be allowed to accompany campers.
 - No **recreational fishing** permitted in the man-made lagoon, which will be identified as a sanctuary and a fish breeding nursery.
 - All activities at the camping site will be in **repurposed existing buildings**, and the only new buildings will be ablution facilities and a small reception, as required.
 - The camping site will **not allow any permanent residents**.
 - No provision was made for **day visitors**.

3. Consequences of the first proposed amendment:

As a consequence of the considerable reduction **from 105 sites to 50** with the accompanying conditions above, the following concessions were noted:

- The camping sites were to be positioned with approximately **50%** (25 sites) being **behind the existing sheds** and **next to the railway line**, with the other **50%** near the existing buildings around the lagoon.
- The distance from Captain Duthie Road in Lake Brenton to where the camping sites were positioned **was approximately 500m** (ie half a kilometre). The camping sites would not be readily visible from Lake Brenton due to the flat gradients.
- **Additional vegetation** and tree planning would be added to the area immediately next to the camping sites, for wind protection and screening.
- No **additional activities** such as communal recreational/picnic areas would be developed, except in the area around the lagoon.
- Approximately **60% of the site would remain vacant** to be maintained as open space cleared of any alien or invasive vegetation. Only **approximately 15%** of the site or 1,6ha, of the 11,1ha site, was to be transformed for the camp sites. The allocated area is on previous land fill, and **not in any** areas which are **potentially sensitive**.
- The vacant part of the site is **not fenced** and therefore the traversing of the property by wildlife can continue as it does at present.
- Due to **not allowing boats or caravans**, there was no necessity to create large parking areas for these. This concession also reduced vehicles on the roads.
- **Only two small ablutions and a small reception** building were proposed and together with the reduced number of camping sites, servicing requirements for all services were reduced.
- No facilities for **day visitors** were allowed.

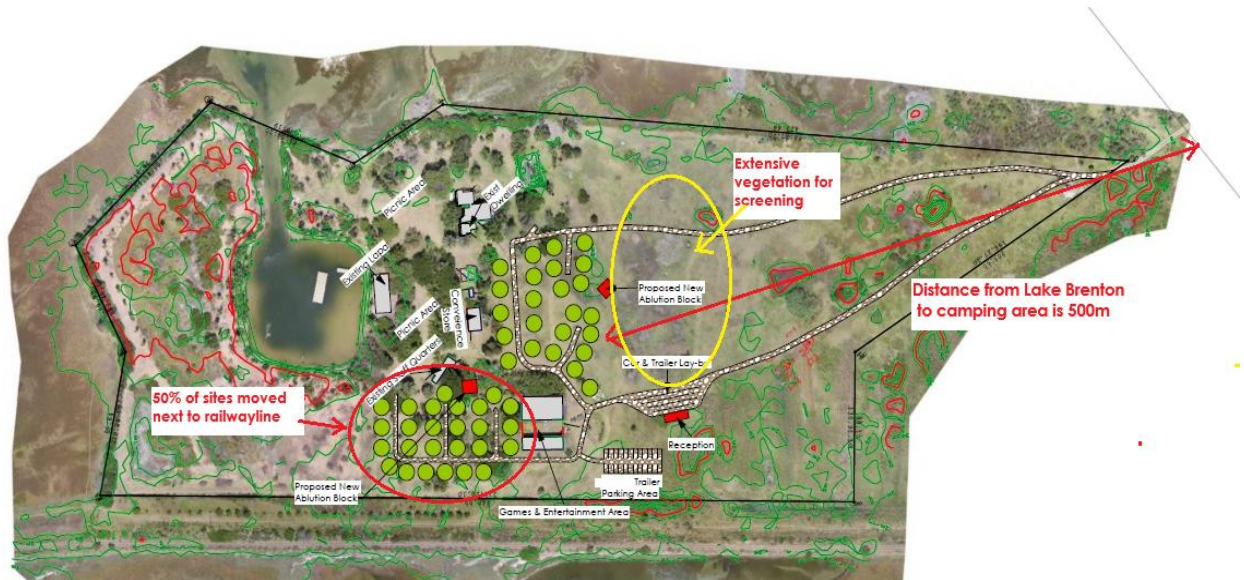
4. Comparisons with the initial application:

The original layout is shown below:

Original Site Plan: (Plan 1)



Amended Proposal: (Plan 2)



5. PROPOSED CURRENT AMENDMENT TO THE APPLICATION:

The above amended version was done with the view to addressing all relevant comments made, and to advance the application accordingly.

However, after due consideration, it is proposed to make further amendments to the application, which is now presented as the current version:

5.1. Camping accommodation types:

A consideration, even in the first amendment, was to consider more luxurious tent accommodation commonly known as "glamping".

In these types of accommodations, tented layouts are developed with permanent tents comprising of the usual accommodation facilities found in resort or hotel suites, the main difference being that the suite is within a tent. This type of resort accommodation occurs throughout the country, mainly in game reserves or locations with high tourist potential.

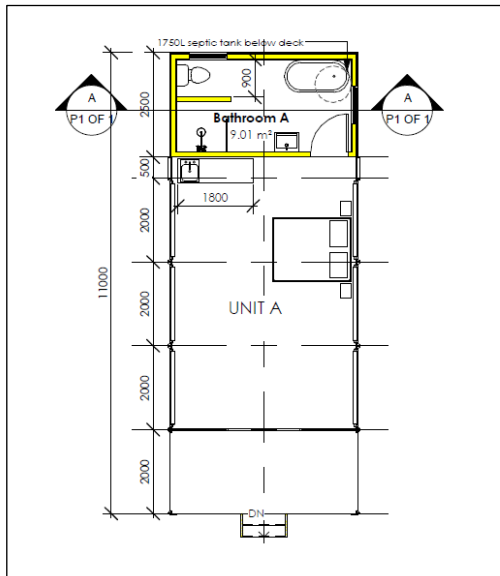
While this form of accommodation is appealing when compared with conventional camping, it is not inexpensive and requires a high initial capital investment, as the suites become permanent facilities.

Having discovered that the definition of a "camping site" in the Knysna Zoning Scheme 2020, specifically excludes permanent tented camps, it was decided to look at alternatives to the "glamping" model.

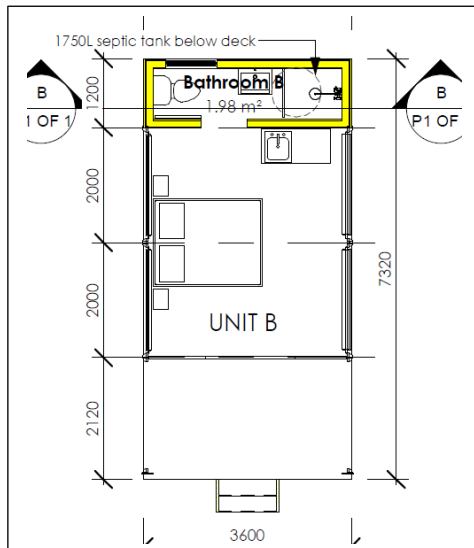
The alternative option to permanent "glamping" tents is to look at a hybrid option, whereby certain permanent pods are created mainly for ablution facilities, and where the tents are erected on demand. It was decided that this option will be pursued, in combination with regular tent sites, where patrons bring their own tents as with a regular camping site.

The hybrid versions as described above will be available in two types of units, the one being larger than the other, as shown overleaf:

Unit Type A:



Unit Type B:



The above shows the bathroom pod for each type in yellow, which is serviced by a septic tank which drains into a pump station from where the effluent is pumped to an on-site treatment plant, where waste is treated and used for irrigation of the landscaped areas.

The proposal is to accommodate 2 of the Type A units and 3 of the Type B tents, together with accommodation for 20 regular tent sites. These will have their own ablution facility, also serviced to the same treatment facility.

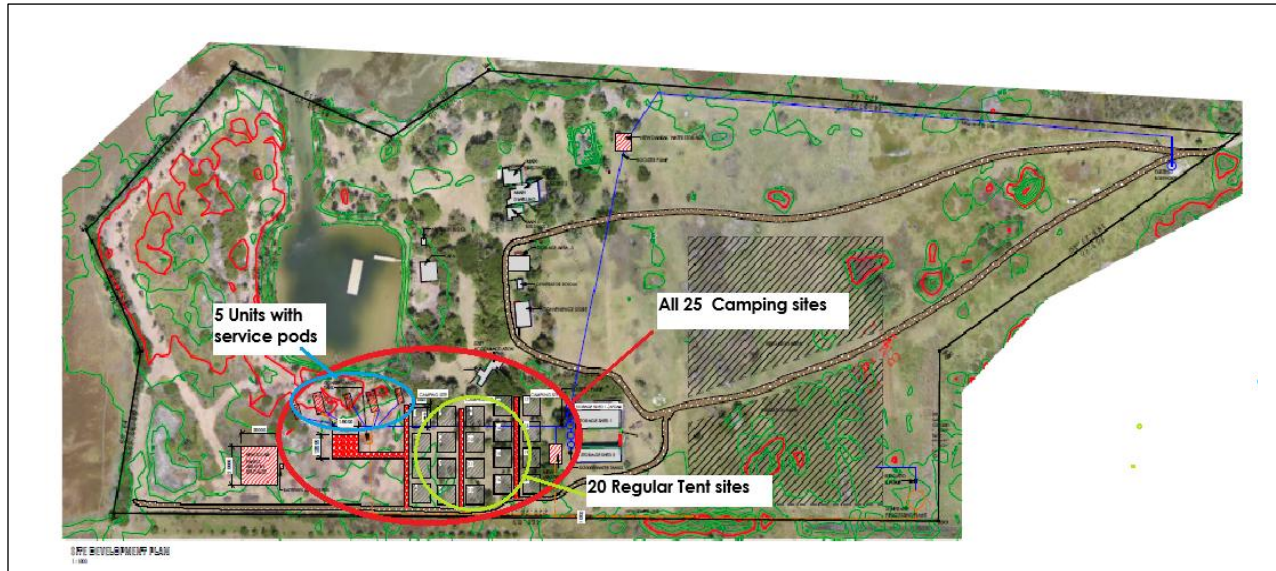
The overall layout **for the 25 sites** is as shown on the following Plan 3 and explained further in the next paragraph.

5.2. Site Layout and configuration: (Plan 3)

As indicated above, the total number of sites have been **reduced further to permit 25 sites in total**, in the form mentioned. The entire camping facilities are located on the part of the site where neither the tents or pod units will be visible from adjoining properties and notably from Lake Brenton, which will be more than 500m (half a kilometre), from the nearest point in Lake Brenton.

The overall proposed site layout is as shown below:

Revised Site layout: (Plan 3 attached):

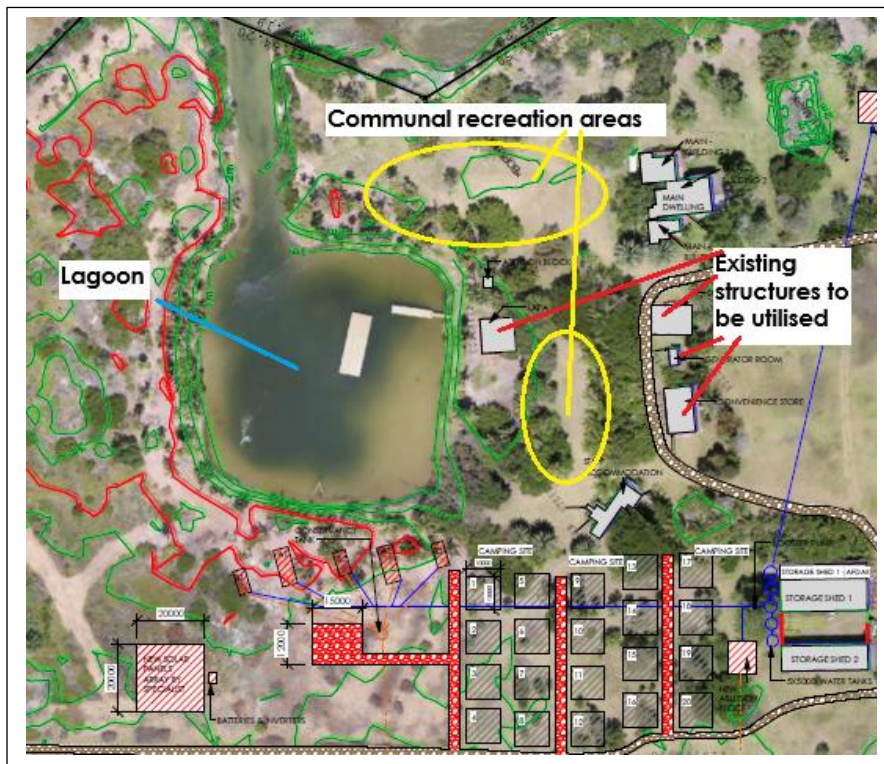


A closer look at the overall position and configuration of the camping area is shown below:



As can be seen on the diagrams overleaf, the main feature on this property is the magnificent lagoon area, which is a sanctuary for fish and other aquatic life, and is a unique feature on the site, not repeated anywhere in the Knysna area. It creates the ideal setting for the proposed camping site, which will coexist with the surrounding Knysna estuary, and without any detrimental impacts for a neighbouring suburb such as Lake Brenton.

The overall Site features:



The lagoon :



5.3. Features of the amended version:

In addition to the positive consequences of reducing the number of sites from 105 to 50 **the following are further benefits** arising from the current proposal for **a maximum of 25 sites**:

- Further reductions from the first proposed amendment, the final version has **less than 25%** of what was originally proposed. In other words, 105 sites to 25 sites.
- The site is 11,2 hectares in extent, of which **approximately 0,5 hectares** of the site will be utilised for camping, **representing less than 5%** of the total area.

- The 25 sites are positioned adjacent to the railway line and directly **associated with the most suitable part** of the site from a visual and activity point of view.
- The sites will **not be visible** from any surrounding areas.
- The **servicing requirements** are very low in this configuration.
- Any previous suggestion of disturbances or negative impacts **are completely removed** in the proposed format.
- The sites are **not positioned in any sensitive areas**.
- The inclusion of **hybrid tent accommodation** will be a desirable feature for touring visitors adding diversity for campers.
- Only **one small new building** will be erected for the general camping ablutions.

5.4. **Services:**

A services report for the previous version was prepared, however the report by the engineers will be revised to reflect the layout as it is now presented.

The services layout as shown on the attached site development plan is schematic as far as services are concerned, and which is specifically dealt with in the accompanying Services Report by Hofmeyr Engineers.

The revised report is in preparation and will be submitted in the very near future.

6. **SUMMARY AND THE WAY FORWARD:**

The suggested amended layout and limitations imposed on the site, are proposed **to mitigate** many of the concerns expressed in the public participation phase. The current version is a very significant concession, with no undesirable elements.

- The revised layout **responds directly to issues raised**, and the reconfiguration for the camping site by reducing the sites by **more than 75%** essentially answers the issues raised.
- The reduction of the activities and the utilisation of **about 5% of the site for camping**, also answers the concerns expressed by SANParks, and aligns with their indication of support if we re-purpose existing buildings. The smaller camping area will limit any potential disturbance footprints, have a low-density use, small estuary user numbers and small site servicing requirements. The proposed amended version will achieve all of these, as expressed by SANParks.
- A tourist activity and accommodation in the form of a quality camping site with diverse options will be **an asset** to the area, the Greater Knysna area and the Garden Route.
- Finally, it is to be noted that the suggested scaling down of the camping site, **does not change the principle** of what has been applied for, and does not add any new elements to the application. It is therefore simply an amendment, done with due consideration for the comments received, and is not in any way a material deviation from what was applied for.

- The requested amendment is therefore done in terms of Section 52(1) (a) and (b) of the Knysna Spatial Planning and Land Use management By-Law 2021 in that the amendment is done at the initiative of the applicant, and inter alia, as a result of the comments received during the public notice process.

We trust the above is accepted as a formal amendment of the application and look forward to acknowledgement of the above.

We would appreciate it if any additional internal comments are available in the event of these requiring our attention.

Any additional requirements and an indication of your processes to facilitate the amendment will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Lloyd Druce (*Pr Plan A/543/1987*)

VBGD Town Planners