

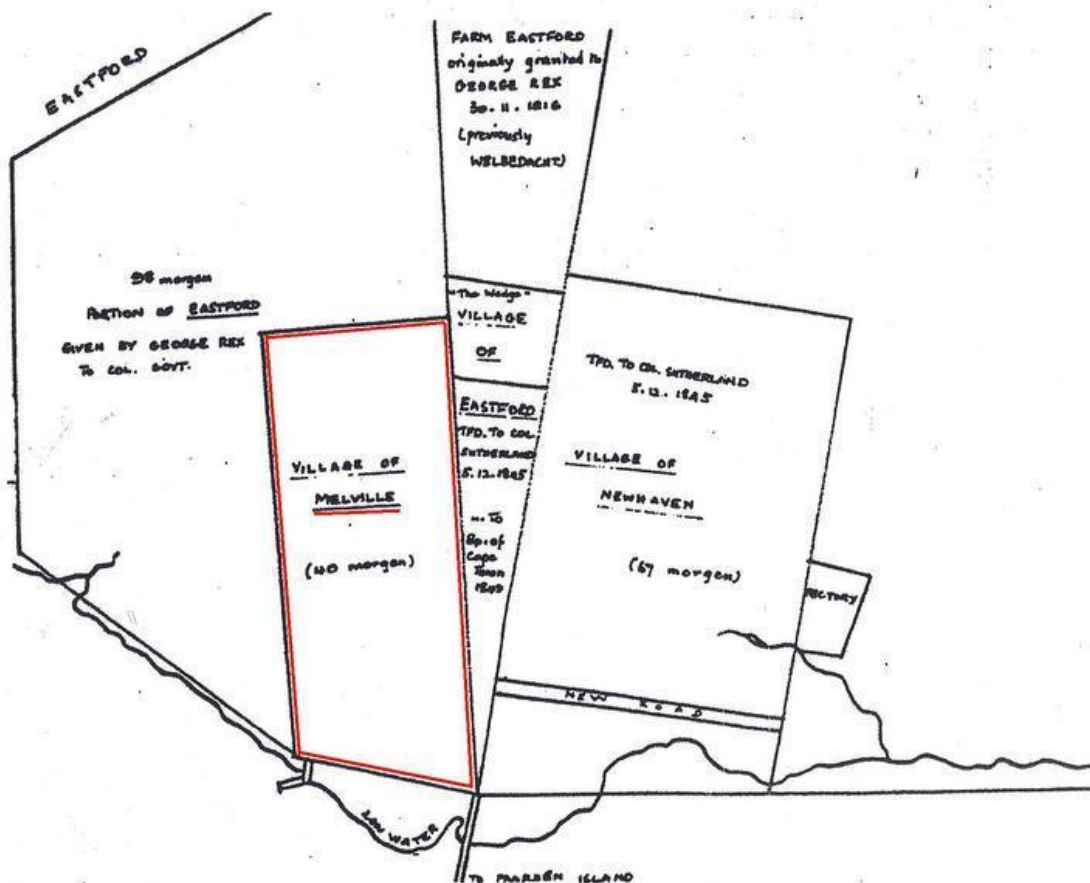
6 WEST HILL DRIVE

ERF 324 AND THE HISTORY OF WEST HILL

In 1816 George Rex acquired the farm Eastford, which was known in earlier times as Welbedacht.

In 1821, in exchange for the Cape Colonial Government's claim to 20 morgen of each of George Rex's farms which lay on the bank of the Knysna River, Rex ceded a 40 morgen (34 hectares) portion of the Eastford Farm to the Cape Colonial Government on which, in 1825, the British Royal Navy laid out the Naval village of Melville, so named after Viscount Melville, the 1st Lord of the Admiralty. This piece of land was laid out with residential erven and included a boat-building yard on the shoreline, where the Laguna Grove apartments stand today. (2016)

Associated with the village was a large adjacent area of 98 morgen (84 hectares) of pasturage set aside for common use, later to be known as the *Melville Commonage*. See the illustration below.



This area set aside as the Melville Commonage, being previously part of the farm Eastford, was granted to the Commissioners of the Municipality *for the time being* of the Village of Knysna, under the provisions of Section 6 of Act No. 6 of 1891, on the 27th of October 1894.

(Knysna Freeholds Vol. 2 No. 10)

In 1921 the Town Clerk could report that Surveyor Melvill had completed the survey of a portion of the Melville Commonage as far as the fieldwork was concerned and had left Knysna.¹ It was during this time that most of the 30 West Hill residential stands on a hill, known locally as Hospital Hill, located to the west of Knysna, were laid out.

It was the intention of the Municipality to make these 30 erven available for residential purposes supported by a Government-backed housing loan scheme promulgated in 1920. However, in 1921 the Government advised the Knysna Municipal Committee that it could make no further advances under the Housing Act due to the poor financial situation in the country, but that it would review the situation later, possibly at the end of the current year.

However, due to the shortage of housing in Knysna and in anticipation of this possibility the Knysna Municipal Committee had discussed different financial proposals and had concluded that the most suitable solution, now that housing loans were no longer available, was the outright sale of the Melville Commonage erven, but conditional on houses being promptly.

A resolution to this effect was to be passed in April 1922.²

Permission to proceed on this basis was requested from the Administrator of the Cape Province.

The payment of the survey costs to Surveyor Melvill, which amounted to £65.2.0, was approved at this time.

In July 1923 the Municipal Committee received permission from the Administrator of the Cape Province to sell the 30 West Hill erven on public auction. These lots, all of 16000 square feet (111 square rods and 16 square feet) were to be sold with an upset price (reserve) price of £50 and subject to a perpetual quitrent of 10/- (1 Rand) per lot per annum.

The dwelling on the property was to be erected within 12 months of transfer.

Added to the cost of each lot was the cost of the survey, transfer costs and advertising costs.

The Town Clerk was instructed to place advertisements in the following newspapers:

Knysna Mail,
Cape Times,
Cape Argus,
Oudtshoorn Courant,
and the
George & Knysna Herald.

¹ KM & GA 1921.05.17p4c3

² GKH 1922.04.05p4,c4,5 Erven Melville Commonage

On September 1923 this block of 30 residential lots were offered for sale by the Municipality of Knysna, advertised as *'The Pearl of the South Coast'*.³

Clearly stated was that all of the lots were 80 feet (24 metres) by 200 feet (61 metres) in size, situated to the west of the town of Knysna, and were advertised with 'uninterrupted' views of the Knysna Lagoon, River and Heads.

Public Sale at Knysna.

The Pearl of The South Coast.

The undersigned, duly instructed by the KNYSNA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, will offer for sale by Public Action,
on Saturday, the 29th September, 1923
at 10 a.m. Sharp.

AT THE MARKET HALL, KNYSNA

30 Beautiful Residential Lots
(80' x 200')

Situate to the West of the Town on the Slopes of the Knysna Lagoon, with a wonderful uninterrupted view of the broad Lagoon, River and Heads. Extensive river and rock fishing, yachting, bathing, golf, tennis, shooting, oysters, etc., etc. In view of the Construction during the coming year of the George—Knysna Railway this is a golden opportunity of securing a lot in the most picturesque sea-side resort of the South Coast. Magnificent Forest-River and Marine Scenery. A Water Scheme has been sanctioned by the ratepayers and an Electric Light Scheme is under consideration.

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME ! NOT TO BE MISSED !

The lots are to be sold at an upset price of £50 each. The Town Clerk will furnish conditions of sale and all particulars on application.

J. R. BECK,
AUCTIONEER.

Among the incentives to buy land in Knysna at this time was the coming of the wide gauge railway line from George (which was completed in 1928); the installation of a scheme to bring water to Knysna from the Glebe and Witfontein Rivers (completed in 1925); and an electric lighting scheme (which was commissioned in 1929).

The diagram overleaf shows the location of the 30 stands offered for sale:

³ GKH 1923.09.19p2c1 *Public Sale at Knysna*



MELVILLE COMMONAGE

VILLAGE OF MELVILLE

Google earth

HOSPITAL SITE

WEST HILL LOTS 1926

PARADISE FARM
A PART OF EASTFORD

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Kloof St

Fischer St

Nelson St

Hedge St

Faure St

Lipsitz St

Ibeng Rd

Short St

Rawson St

Main Rd

Händler St

Lloyd St

Syringa St

Vygie St

Loerie St

Protea St

Circular Dr

Azalea St

307

308

309

247

248

246

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243

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Lot 324 Ownership

1926 John Lacey

Lot 324, renamed later and now known as Erf 276, was transferred from the Knysna Municipality, represented by the Mayor of Knysna, George William Cearn and the Town Clerk Sampson, George Mileham, acting as Commissioners of the Village of Knysna, to John Lacey on 4 November 1926 under Deed of Transfer 11099/1926.

The conditions of sale included:

- (a) That the government reserves to itself the right of access to and egress from the land marked on the survey diagram 'Hospital reserve'.
(This is the land where the Oakhill School is today)
- (b) But subject, however, to all such duties and regulations as are either already or shall in future be established with regard to such lands.

Furthermore, that:

- (c) The purchaser of any Lot shall be bound to, within a period of one year from the day of purchase, erect a dwelling house on such Lot of no less value than £400. If the same purchaser, however, buys more than one lot, he shall be bound to erect a building of no less than 400 plus an additional value of 250 for each Lot purchased. e.g.
A purchaser of one lot shall erect a building of no less value than £400
One of two Lots £650
and one of 3 Lots £900
and so on.

The purchase price was £50.

John Lacey was successful in obtaining a housing loan to the value of £528. in order to to built the house, which was mortgaged in terms of the Housing Act of 1920 on 4 November 1926.

1945 RE Jubber

The property was transferred to RE Jubber on 29 November 1945. Deed of transfer T16864/1945 gives reference.