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| <b>Archaeological Site Report</b> | <b>SiteNo</b>    | 9/2/033/0007   |
|                                   | <b>Site Name</b> | Owl House and Camel Yard, Erf 306 River Street,<br>Nieu Bethesda |
|                                   | <b>Date</b>      | 24/08/2018 - 12:38   |
|                                   | <b>Project</b>   |  |
|                                   | <b>CaseNID</b>   |  |
|                                   | <b>Coords</b>    | -31.867656, 24.553059  |

Page No: 1      **SiteAutoID:** 28573

Site Category: Building

**SiteComments:**

The Owl house is in Nieu Bethesda, a small town in the Eastern Cape between Middelburg and Graaff Reinet. The house is in New Street with an unobstructed view of the river and the mountains. Helen was born and died in this house. She later named it the Owl House and started to transform the house in a magical dream world of glittering glass particles, lamps and mirrors, stars, moons, spires and cement statues. Helen's world, her mecca, all created and placed according to her creative ideas to bring forward a message that was beyond the understanding of most of the people of the town. Some time after Helen Martin's death in 1976 the property was acquired by the Municipality of Graaff Reinet and the house and yard was opened to the public. Initially a small entrance fee was charged and the local town clerk escorted visitors through the Owl House. This situation changed rapidly after Athol Fugard achieved acclaim in 1985 for The Road to Mecca, a play based on the life and work of Helen Martins. The film version of The Road to Mecca was released some years later and put Nieu Bethesda in the spotlight. Growing concern about the deterioration of the house and yard led to the formation of The Friends of the Owl House. In 1996 the Friends of the Owl House and the local government established The Owl House Foundation (OHF). The OHF was established to manage and protect the The Owl House.

Damage Types: