APPENDIX F

Impact Assessment

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1. Impact assessment must take into account the nature, scale and duration of effects on the environment whether such effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (detrimental). Each issue / impact is also assessed according to the project stages from planning, through construction and operation to the decommissioning phase. Where necessary, the proposal for mitigation or optimization of an impact is noted. A brief discussion of the impact and the rationale behind the assessment of its significance has also been included.

1.2. A rating system is applied to the potential impact on the receiving environment and includes an objective evaluation of the mitigation of the impact. In assessing the significance of each issue the following criteria (including an allocated point system) is used:

Table: Criteria for the classification of an impact		
Nature	A brief description of the environmental aspect being impacted upon by a particular action or activity is presented.	
Extent (Scale)	Considering the area over which the impact will be expressed. Typically, the severity and significance of an impact have different scales and as such bracketing ranges are often required. This is often useful during the detailed assessment phase of a project in terms of further defining the determined significance or intensity of an impact.	
	Site	Within the construction site
	Local	Within a radius of 2 km of the construction site
	Regional	Provincial (and parts of neighbouring provinces)
	National	The whole of South Africa
Duration	Indicates what the lifetime of the impact will be.	
	Short-term	The impact will either disappear with mitigation or will be mitigated through natural process in a span shorter than the construction phase
	Medium-term	The impact will last for the period of the construction phase, where after it will be entirely negated
	Long-term	The impact will continue or last for the entire operational life of the development, but will be mitigated by direct human action or by natural processes thereafter
	Permanent	The only class of impact which will be non-transitory. Mitigation either by man or natural process will not occur in such a way or in such a time span that the impact can be considered transient
Intensity	Describes whether an impact is destructive or benign.	
	Low	Impact affects the environment in such a way that natural, cultural and social functions and processes are not affected.
		It is important to note that the status of an impact is assigned based on the status quo – i.e. should the project not proceed. Therefore not all negative impacts are equally significant.

Table: Criteria for the classification of an impact		
	Medium	Effected environment is altered, but natural and social functions and processes continue albeit in a modified way.
	High	Natural, cultural and social functions and processes are altered to extent that they temporarily cease
	Very high	Natural, cultural and social functions and processes are altered to extent that they permanently cease
Probability	Describes the likelihood of an impact actually occurring.	
	Improbable	Likelihood of the impact materializing is very low
	Possible	The impact may occur
	Highly probable	Most likely that the impact will occur
	Definite	Impact will certainly occur
Significance	Significance is determined through a synthesis of impact characteristics. It is an indication of the importance of the impact in terms of both physical extent and time scale, and therefore indicates the level of mitigation required.	
	Low impact	No permanent impact of significance. Mitigatory measures are feasible and are readily instituted as part of a standing design, construction or operating procedure
	Medium impact	Mitigation is possible with additional design and construction inputs
	High impact	The design of the site may be affected. Mitigation and possible remediation are needed during the construction and/or operational phases. The effects of the impact may affect the broader environment
	Very high impact	The design of the site may be affected. Intensive remediation as needed during construction and/or operational phases. Any activity which results in a "very high impact" is likely to be a fatal flaw
Status	Denotes the perceived effect of the impact on the affected area.	
	Positive	Beneficial impact
	Negative	Deleterious or adverse impact
	Neutral	Impact is neither beneficial nor adverse

The suitability and feasibility of all proposed mitigation measures will be included in the assessment of significant impacts. This will be achieved through the comparison of the significance of the impact before and after the proposed mitigation measure is implemented.

DESCRIPTION AND ADDRESSING OF POSSIBLE IMPACTS, ISSUES AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Developments such as these do have, like many other types of developments, various direct but also indirect impacts on the environment. These impacts have to be managed in order to have the minimum environmental impact and the maximum benefit to man.

Issues identified during the Basic Assessment process are discussed and assessed below:

1. VEGETATION DESTRUCTION						
Assessment						
Mitigation Status	**Extent**	**Duration**	**Intensity**	**Probability**	**Significance**	**Status**
Without Mitigation	Local	Permanent	Very high	Definite	High	Negative
With Mitigation	Site	Long term	High	Definite	Medium	Negative
Recommendation						
Phase	**Description of recommendation**					
General	• Please refer to the Specialist Reports in Appendix D for more recommendations					
Planning Phase	• None					
Construction and operational phase	• Establishment of alien / invader vegetation will be monitored and these species will be removed by hand or by an approved chemical before gestation thereof. • Vegetation clearance will be limited to the required area. • A permit for the removal of protected plant species will be obtained before the removal of these species (if any). • Care should be taken to limit unnecessary destruction of the natural vegetation. • All human movement and activities must be contained within designated construction areas and the planned site access road in order to prevent peripheral impacts on surrounding natural habitat. • No fire-wood may be collected in the veld without permission from the landowner. • Alien control and monitoring programme must be developed. • Visual inspections should be undertaken regularly to ensure environmental compliance. • If erosion is evident, proper erosion control measures should be implemented as soon as possible.					
Post construction and rehabilitation phase	• The alien control and monitoring programme used during the construction and operational phase must be carried over into the post construction and rehabilitation phase. • Erosion should be prevented as far as possible and attended to, as serious erosion may occur at barren areas. • Return and spread topsoil cover (to original depth) over rehabilitated area. • Vegetation should be allowed to re-establish naturally over disturbed area to be rehabilitated. • Areas which show no vegetation growth nine months after completion of the rehabilitation work, must be ripped, additional topsoil spread and seeded with indigenous grass species. • Species, especially grasses, trees and shrubs occurring in the region must be used to rehabilitate disturbed areas.					

2. LOSS OF SOIL						
Assessment						
Mitigation Status	**Extent**	**Duration**	**Intensity**	**Probability**	**Significance**	**Status**
Without Mitigation	Regional	Permanent	Medium	Definite	High	Negative
With Mitigation	Local	Long-term	Medium	Definite	Medium	Negative
Recommendation						
Phase	**Description of recommendation**					
General	• Please refer to the Specialist Reports in Appendix D for more recommendations					
Planning Phase	• No environmental mitigation measures is required during the planning phase on the proposed site, as no mitigation measures are to be implemented on site during the planning phase. • However, the engineers, specialists and environmental consultants took various factors into consideration, to be implemented during the construction / operational phase.					
Construction and operational phase	• Store stripped topsoil in an approved location and in an approved manner for later re-use in the rehabilitation process, for example: - Bricks may be placed around the stockpiles, to limit the loss thereof due to rainy events. - Stockpiles should not be higher than 1.5 m. - The gradient of stockpiles should not be greater than 1:1.5. • Speed limit will be enforced on the construction vehicles and these vehicles will only make use of designated roads / pathways. • Dust control measures will be implemented if nuisance dust generation occurs during the construction period. • All human movement and activities must be contained within designated construction areas and the planned site access road in order to prevent peripheral impacts on surrounding natural habitat. • Visual inspections should be undertaken regularly to ensure environmental compliance. • Storm water measures will be implemented in order to manage storm water and this will also prevent erosion. • Visual inspections for the occurrence of erosion should be undertaken on a weekly basis during the construction phase. • If erosion is evident, proper erosion control measures should be implemented as soon as possible.					
Post construction and rehabilitation phase	• Erosion should be prevented as far as possible and attended to, as serious erosion may occur at barren areas. • Return and spread topsoil cover (to original depth) over rehabilitated area. • Vegetation should be allowed to re-establish naturally over disturbed area to be rehabilitated.					

2. LOSS OF SOIL	
	• Areas which show no vegetation growth nine months after completion of the rehabilitation work, must be ripped, additional topsoil spread and seeded with indigenous grass species.

3. POLLUTION CONTROL						
Assessment						
Mitigation Status	**Extent**	**Duration**	**Intensity**	**Probability**	**Significance**	**Status**
Without Mitigation	Regional	Permanent	High	Definite	High	Negative
With Mitigation	Local	Long-term	Medium	Definite	Medium	Negative
Recommendation						
Phase	**Description of recommendation**					
General	• Please refer to the Specialist Reports in Appendix D for more recommendations					
Planning Phase	• No environmental mitigation measures is required during the planning phase on the proposed site, as no mitigation measures are to be implemented on site during the planning phase. • However, the engineers, specialists and environmental consultants took various factors into consideration, to be implemented during the construction / operational phase.					
Construction and operational phase	• Visual inspections for the occurrence of pollution should be undertaken daily during the operational phase. • Best practices should be implemented in the case of spillages / pollution / erosion. • No waste (general / construction / potential hazardous / etc.) may be dumped in the veld / water features. • Waste classification should be undertaken. • Suitable waste bins etc. will be available on site for the temporary disposal of waste. • Waste will be removed from site and disposed of at an authorised landfill site. • DWS should be notified of any spillage / pollution within 24 hours of occurrence within water resources. • Record should be kept on site to indicate date of visual inspection, any spillages observed, and manner in which spill was treated. • Water to be disposed of from the WWTW should adhere to the DWS standards. • An emergency plan should be developed in case the water to be disposed of does not conform to the DWS standards. • Visual inspections should be undertaken at least every 6 months to investigate the occurrence of sedimentation and erosion. • Proper erosion mitigation measures should be implemented.					
Post construction and rehabilitation phase	• Maintenance and repair will be undertaken when necessary. • All temporary infrastructure related to the construction phase will be removed from site. • Temporary concrete surfaces (if any) will be removed and compacted areas ripped. • No waste will be dumped on site and any waste occurring on site will be removed and disposed of					

3. POLLUTION CONTROL	
	according to best practices.

4. LOSS OF ANIMAL LIFE						
Assessment						
Mitigation Status	**Extent**	**Duration**	**Intensity**	**Probability**	**Significance**	**Status**
Without Mitigation	Local	Permanent	Medium	Definite	High	Negative
With Mitigation	Local	Long-term	Medium	Definite	Medium	Neutral
Recommendation						
Phase	**Description of recommendation**					
General	• Please refer to the Specialist Reports in Appendix D for more recommendations					
Planning Phase	• No environmental mitigation measures is required during the planning phase on the proposed site, as no mitigation measures are to be implemented on site during the planning phase. • However, the engineers, specialists and environmental consultants took various factors into consideration, to be implemented during the construction / operational phase.					
Construction and operational phase	• No animals may be captured / harmed / killed on site. • Specialists should be appointed to remove / translocate species, if required. The necessary permits should also be obtained. • Any occurrences of harmed animals should be reported to the ECO, the required steps should be taken and should be recorded as such.					
Post construction and rehabilitation phase	• No animals may be captured / harmed / killed on site. • Specialists should be appointed to remove / translocate species, if required. The necessary permits should also be obtained. • Any occurrences of harmed animals should be reported to the ECO, the required steps should be taken and should be recorded as such.					

5. VISUAL IMPACT

The visual impact of the proposed development in the landscape is the function of several factors of which the viewing distance, visual absorption capacity and landform are measurable. Other factors are difficult to categorize because they are subjective viewpoints.

The visual impact for the proposed development is largely due to:
- The topography in terms of elevation and aspect;
- The vegetative cover in terms of its extent and height;
- The extent of the proposed development;
- Distance from point of origin; and
- The low visual absorption capacity of the surrounding landscape.

Factors of visual impact

Visual character:
The visual character of an area has different elements that provide an overall perceived ambience. In the consideration of the visual character of a site, it is important to include not only the internal land use but that of the surrounding land as well.

At this site, the visual character is mainly Northridge Mall, Residential Areas as well as the Central Media Park (OFM Radio Office Building) that are located within viewing distance of the site.

Scale of landscape:
Visual scale is the apparent size relationships between landscape components and their surroundings (Smardon, et al. 1986).

Visual analysis:
In this section the intensity of the visual impact of the development on the surrounding area is described. Aspects such as viewshed, visual absorption capacity and the appearance of the development from critical viewpoints will be used to determine this impact.

The proposed access road is situated adjacent to the Northridge Mall in Bloemfontein and is adjacent to a residential area. It is situated on Park Erf 30476, Extension 213. The extent and length of the road of the road is approximated at 200 m in length and 12 m in width. The coordinates for the site is 29.071959˚S, 26.231090˚E.

The vegetation in the study area consists of Bloemfontein Karroid Shrubland. The vegetation type is currently listed as being of Least Concern under the National List of Threatened Ecosystems (Notice 1477 of 2009) (National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004). However, according to Brown & Du Preez (2014), the vegetation type must be regarded as endemic to the Free State Province and must be afforded a high conservation status and must be included as a Threatened Ecosystem. In this area it is under pressure for residential development. The area proposed for the road is however also degraded due to its proximity to current land use surrounding it.

The topography of the site consists of a plateau / ridge of higher elevation and slopes toward the north. The vegetation on the site consists of dwarf shrubs, shrubs and grassland and forms mosaic pattern of vegetation structure. The area is disturbed and contains a dirt track utilised for servicing the powerline on the site where vegetation is largely absent. Natural vegetation still remains on the site although it is notably degraded and not of as high diversity as portions of the surrounding vegetation type in natural condition. As mentioned a powerline also occurs on the site which has also contributed to degradation of the vegetation. Soils on the site are relatively shallow as is characteristic of this vegetation type. No discernible watercourse or wetland occurs on or near the site and runoff occurs primarily as sheet-flow.

No current land use occurs on the site other than the power line and associated dirt track. No other structures or buildings occur on the site. Littering on the site is common. Grazing and browsing of the vegetation is absent due to the site being isolated by urban areas and not forming part of any farming area. The mammal populations on the site will also be diminished due to the condition of the site, isolation from surrounding natural areas and proximity of urban areas.

In conclusion, the specific site proposed for the access road has been degraded and the diversity of species is relatively low with areas of the site transformed from the natural condition. The site is isolated from surrounding natural areas and is not considered to represent a conservable portion of the vegetation type. However, the site still contains a few species which are protected. Protected succulent species should be transplanted to adjacent areas where they will not be affected by construction and permits should be obtained to remove the few specimens of Wild Olive on the site.

Site evaluation in terms of visual impact

Visual assessment ratings rates each criterion listed in the table from, high, medium to low according to specific characteristics of those criteria.

Visual assessment criteria used to determine the degree of visual impact of the proposed activities on the environment (adapted from Klapwijk 1998)			
CRITERIA	**HIGH**	**MEDIUM**	**LOW**
Visibility	Very visible from many places beyond 1km	Visible from within 1km zone but partially obscured by intervening objects	Only partially visible within the 1km zone and beyond due to screening by intervening objects
Visual quality	A very attractive setting	A setting with some aesthetic and visual merit	A setting which has little aesthetic merit
Visible man-made structures	Buildings as a dominant visual element	Buildings as a partial visual element	Buildings as a minor visual element
Surrounding landscape compatibility	Cannot accommodate proposed development without appearing totally out of place.	Can accommodate the proposed development without appearing totally out of place	Usually suits or matches the proposed development
Character of site or surrounding area	Exhibits a definite character	Exhibits some character	Little or no character
Contrast between human scale and vertical & horizontal elements in the landscape	There is high contrast	Landscape with some contrast	Limited vertical variation. Most elements are related to human and horizontal scale
Visual absorption capacity (VAC)	Inability of landscape to visually absorb a development because of a limited vegetation cover, flat slope and uniform texture	The lower ability of the landscape to visually absorb the development due to less diverse landform, vegetation & texture	The ability of landscape to easily accept visually a particular development because of its diverse landform, vegetation and texture
View distance (uninterrupted)	More than 5km	Between 5km & 1km	Between 1km & 500m

Visual assessment criteria used to determine the degree of visual impact of the proposed activities on the environment (adapted from Klapwijk 1998)			
CRITERIA	**HIGH**	**MEDIUM**	**LOW**
Critical views	Views of the development are to be seen by many people passing on road routes and from prominent areas	Some views of the development from surrounding routes and housing	Limited views to the development from roads and housing

Results and conclusions on visual impact of development assessment

Aspect	Result
Visibility	HIGH
Visual quality	MEDIUM
Visible man-made structures	MEDIUM
Surrounding landscape compatibility	MEDIUM
Character of site or surrounding area	MEDIUM
Contrast between human scale, vertical & horizontal elements in the landscape	MEDIUM
Visual absorption capacity (VAC)	MEDIUM
View distance (uninterrupted)	MEDIUM
Critical views	MEDIUM

The proposed development will have a medium visual impact. This is largely due to:

- The extent of the development
- The surrounding business, offices as well as residential areas
- The locality of the existing power line.