

**PALAEONTOLOGICAL DESKTOP ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON  
PORTION 237 OF FARM HARTEBEESTPOORT 328**

**Prepared for:**

**Zitholele Consulting**

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Prepared by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banzai Environmental was appointed by Zitolele Consulting to conduct the Palaeontological Desktop Assessment Report for the proposed development on Portion 237 of Farm Hartebeestpoort 328 JR in Koedoespoort, City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. According to the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, section 38), a palaeontological impact assessment is key to detect the presence of fossil material within the proposed development footprint and study area and it is thus necessary to evaluate the impact of the construction and operation of the development site on the palaeontological resources.

The proposed footprint is completely underlain by the Silverton Formation (Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup). This formation is known to contain stromatolites and probably also microfossils. According to the SAHRIS PalaeoMap this formation has a moderate palaeontological sensitivity. The scarcity of fossil heritage at the proposed Hartebeestpoort development indicate that the impact of the housing development will be of a low significance in palaeontological terms.

It is therefore considered that the construction and operation of the Hartebeestpoort housing development and associated infrastructure is deemed appropriate and feasible and will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. Thus, the construction and operation of the facility may be authorised as the whole extent of the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological resources.

Irrespective of the uncommon occurrence of fossils a solitary fossil may be of scientific value as many fossil taxa are known from a single fossil. The recording of fossils will expand our knowledge of the Palaeontological Heritage of the area. In the event that fossil remains are uncovered during any phase of construction, either on the surface or unearthed by new excavations and vegetation clearance, the ECO in charge of these developments ought to be alerted immediately. These discoveries ought to be protected (if possible *in situ*) and the ECO must report to SAHRA so that appropriate mitigation (*e.g.* recording, collection) can be carry out by a professional paleontologist.

Preceding any collection of fossil material, the specialist would need to apply for a collection permit from SAHRA. Fossil material must be curated in an accredited collection (museum or university collection), while all fieldwork and reports should meet the minimum standards for palaeontological impact studies proposed by SAHRA.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Zitholele Consulting has been appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake an Environmental Basic Assessment for the proposed housing development on Portion 237 of Farm Hartebeestpoort 328 JR in Koedoespoort, City of Tshwane (CoT) Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province (Fig. 1-2).

The proposed development will consist of a high density residential (Fully subsidised units, Social housing and Bonded housing); Social and recreational facilities; and Commercial (retail, restaurants, coffee shops urban manufacturing, offices).



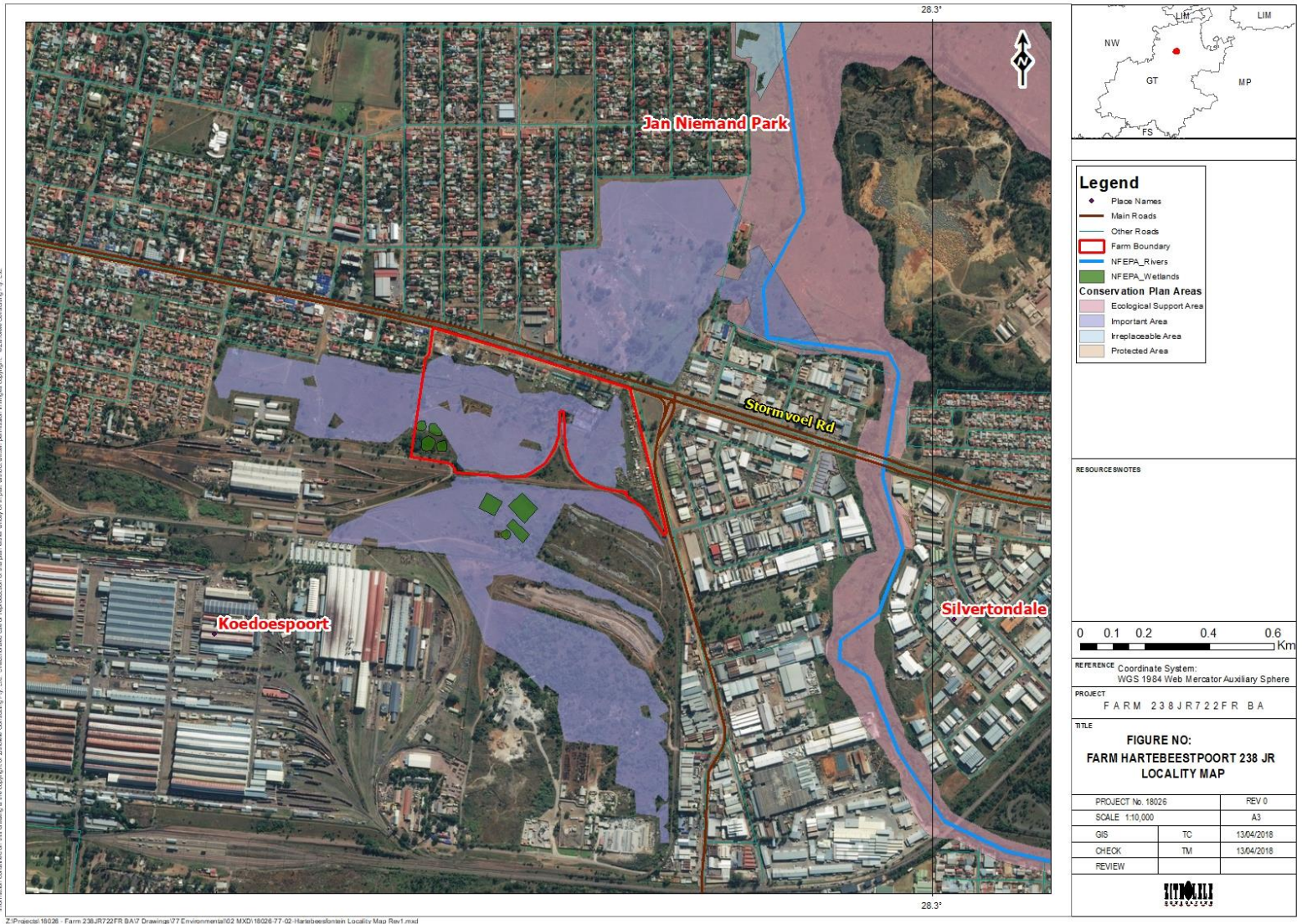


Figure 2. 1:50 000 Topographical map. Map provided by Zitholele Consulting.

## 2 LEGISLATION

Cultural Heritage in South Africa, includes all heritage resources, is protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA). Heritage resources as defined in Section 3 of the Act include **“all objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens”**.

Palaeontological heritage is unique and non-renewable and is protected by the NHRA. Palaeontological resources may not be unearthed, moved, broken or destroyed by any development without prior assessment and without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority as per section 35 of the NHRA.

This Palaeontological Desktop Assessment forms part of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and adhere to the conditions of the Act. According to **Section 38 (1)**, an HIA is required to assess any potential impacts to palaeontological heritage within the development footprint where:

- the construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length;
- the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length;
- any development or other activity which will change the character of a site—(exceeding 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or
- involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or
- involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or
- the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority;
- the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or
- any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a Provincial heritage resources authority.

## 3 OBJECTIVE

The objective of a Palaeontological Desktop Assessment is to determine the impact of the development on potential palaeontological material at the site.

According to the “SAHRA APM Guidelines: Minimum Standards for the Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports” the aims of the palaeontological

impact assessment are: 1) to identify the palaeontological importance of the exposed and subsurface rock formations in the development footprint 2) to evaluate the palaeontological importance of the formations 3) to determine the impact of the development on fossil heritage; and 4) to recommend how the developer ought to protect or mitigate damage to fossil heritage.

When a palaeontological desktop study is compiled, the potentially fossiliferous rocks (i.e. groups, formations, etc.) present within the study area are established from 1:250 000 geological maps. The topography of the development area is identified using 1:50 000 topography maps as well as Google Earth Images of the development area. Fossil heritage within each rock section is obtained from previous palaeontological impact studies in the same region, the PalaeoMap from SAHRIS; and databases of various institutions (identifying fossils found in locations specifically in areas close to the development area). The palaeontological importance of each rock unit of the development area is then calculated. The possible impact of the proposed development footprint on local fossil heritage is established on the following criteria: 1) the palaeontological importance of the rocks and 2) the type and scale of the development footprint and 3) quantity of bedrock excavated.

In the event that rocks of moderate to high palaeontological sensitivity are present within the study area, a field-based assessment by a professional palaeontologist is required. Based on both the desktop data and field examination of the rock exposures, the impact significance of the planned development is measured with recommendations for any further studies or mitigation. In general, destructive impacts on palaeontological heritage only occur during construction. The excavations will transform the current topography and may destruct or permanently seal-in fossils at or below the ground surface. Fossil Heritage will then no longer be accessible for scientific research.

Mitigation comprises the sampling, collection and recording of fossils and may precede construction or, more ideally, occur during construction when potentially fossiliferous bedrock is exposed. Preceding the excavation of any fossil heritage a permit from SAHRA must be obtained and the material will have to be housed in a permitted institution. When mitigation is applied correctly, a positive impact is possible because our knowledge of local palaeontological heritage may be increased.

#### **4 GEOLOGICAL AND PALAEOLOGICAL HISTORY**

The proposed footprint is primarily underlain by the Silverton Formation (Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup) (Fig. 3).



## 4.1 Geology and Palaeontology

### Silverton Formation

The Transvaal Supergroup (Late Archaean to Early Proterozoic) is preserved within three structural basins on the Kaapvaal Craton of southern Africa namely the Transvaal and Griqualand West Basins in South Africa and the Kanye Basin in Botswana. Rocks of the Transvaal Supergroup in the Transvaal Basin were intruded by the almost 2060 Ma Bushveld Complex, with the Magaliesberg Formation of the Pretoria Group forming the rock floor in many areas.

The Silverton Formation consists of three Members namely the Lydenburg Shale Member, Machado Volcanic Member and the Boven Shale Member. The Lydenburg Member comprises of shale, mudstone as well as carbonate layers. The Machadodorp Volcanic Member consists of pyroclastic rocks and basalt while the Boven shale Member consists of marine shale and mudrocks with tuff and minor carbonates.

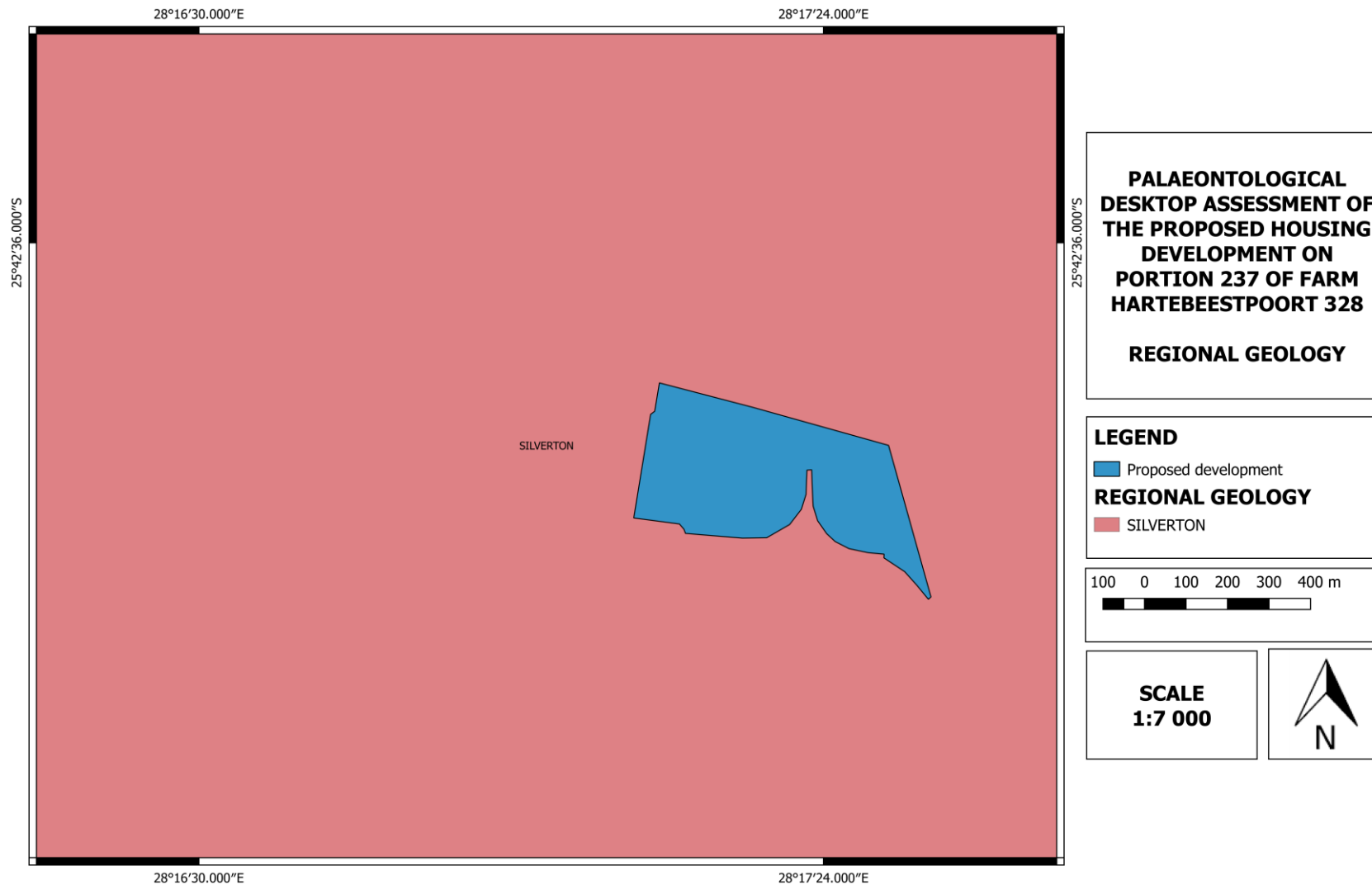
Fossil Heritage within the Silverton Formation is present in the Lydenburg Shale Member and the Boven Shale Member and consists of stromatolites and possibly microfossils. As the Machado Member consists of igneous rocks no fossils have been recorded.

Stromatolites are layered mounds, columns and sheet-like sedimentary rocks (Fig. 4). These structures were originally formed by the growth of layer upon layer of cyanobacteria, a single-celled photosynthesizing microbe. Cyanobacteria are prokaryotic cells (simplest form of modern carbon-based life). Stromatolites are first found in Precambrian rocks and are known as the earliest known fossils. The oxygen atmosphere that we depend on was generated by numerous cyanobacteria photosynthesizing during the Archaean and Proterozoic Era.

Stromatolites and oolites from the Transvaal Supergroup have been described by various authors (Eriksson and Altermann, 1998). Detailed descriptions of South African Archaean stromatolites are available in the literature (Altermann, 2001; Buick, 2001; and Schopf, 2006).



**Figure 4.** Example of a well preserved stromatolite from the Archaean Era. ([www.fossilmuseum.net/Tree\\_of\\_Life/Stromatolites.htm](http://www.fossilmuseum.net/Tree_of_Life/Stromatolites.htm)).



**Figure 3:** The surface geology of the proposed construction proposed housing development and associated infrastructure on Portion 237 of Farm Hartebeestpoort 328 JR in Koedoespoort, City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. The development is completely underlain by the Silverton Formation (Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup). Map was drawn by QGIS Desktop 2.18.14.

## 5 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE SITE

The proposed development is located on the vacant Portion 237 of Farm Hartebeestpoort 328 JR in Koedoespoort, City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. The development is situated on the corner of M8 and M15 in Lindopark. The southern margins of the site is bordered by the suburbs Kilner Park and Silvertondale and to the north Rastlyne, Eastlyne and Eersterust to the north-east. The site is also bordered by a railway tracks originating from the Koedoespoort train station. The Lindopark Primary School is approximately 500 m from the proposed development site.

The corner coordinates of the development is: 25°42.803'S; 28°17.164'E  
25°42.996'S; 28°17.127'E  
25°42.892'S; 28°17.495'E  
25°43.111'S; 28°17.552'E

## 6 METHODS

A Palaeontological Scoping study was conducted to assess the potential risk to palaeontological material (fossil and trace fossils) in the proposed area of development. The author's experience, aerial photos (using Google, 2018), topographical and geological maps and other reports from the same area were used to assess the proposed area of the development. No consultations were undertaken for this PIA.

### 6.1 Assumptions and limitations

The accurateness of Palaeontological Desktop Impact Assessments is reduced by old fossil databases that do not always include relevant locality or geological formations. The geology in various remote areas of South Africa may be less accurate because it is based entirely on aerial photographs. The accuracy of the sheet explanations for geological maps is inadequate as the focus was never intended to be on palaeontological material.

The entire South Africa has not been studied palaeontologically. Similar Assemblage Zones but in different areas, might provide information on the presence of fossil heritage in an unmapped area. Desktop studies of similar geological formations generally assume that unexposed fossil heritage is present within the development area. Thus, the accuracy of the Palaeontological Impact Assessment will be improved by a field-survey.

## 7 Impact Assessment Methodology

The impacts will be ranked according to the methodology described below. Where possible, mitigation measures will be provided to manage impacts. In order to ensure uniformity, a standard impact assessment methodology will be utilised so that a wide range of impacts can be compared with each other. The impact assessment methodology makes provision for the assessment of impacts against the following criteria, as discussed below.

### 7.1 NATURE OF THE IMPACT

Each impact should be described in terms of the features and qualities of the impact. A detailed description of the impact will allow for contextualisation of the assessment.

### 7.2 EXTENT OF THE IMPACT

Extent intends to assess the footprint of the impact. The larger the footprint, the higher the impact rating will be. The table below provides the descriptors and criteria for assessment.

**Table 1: Criteria for the assessment of the extent of the impact.**

Extent Descriptor	Definition	Rating
Site	Impact footprint remains within the boundary of the site.	1
Local	Impact footprint extends beyond the boundary of the site to the adjacent surrounding areas.	2
Regional	Impact footprint includes the greater surrounds and may include an entire municipal or provincial jurisdiction.	3
National	The scale of the impact is applicable to the Republic of South Africa.	4
Global	The impact has global implications	5

### 7.3 DURATION OF THE IMPACT

The duration of the impact is the period of time that the impact will manifest on the receiving environment. Importantly, the concept of reversibility is reflected in the duration rating. The longer the impact endures, the less likely it is to be reversible. See Table 2 for the criteria for rating duration of impacts.

**Table 2: Criteria for the rating of the duration of an impact.**

Duration Descriptor	Definition	Rating
Construction / Decommissioning phase only	The impact endures for only as long as the construction or the decommissioning period of the project activity. This implies that the impact is fully reversible.	1
Short term	The impact continues to manifest for a period of between 3 and 5 years beyond construction or decommissioning. The impact is still reversible.	2
Medium term	The impact continues between 6 and 15 years beyond the construction or decommissioning phase. The impact is still reversible with relevant and applicable mitigation and management actions.	3
Long term	The impact continues for a period in excess of 15 years	4

	beyond construction or decommissioning. The impact is only reversible with considerable effort in implementation of rigorous mitigation actions.	
Permanent	The impact will continue indefinitely and is not reversible.	5

#### 7.4 POTENTIAL INTENSITY OF THE IMPACT

The concept of the potential intensity of an impact is the acknowledgement at the outset of the project of the potential significance of the impact on the receiving environment. For example, SO<sub>2</sub> emissions have the potential to result in significant adverse human health effects, and this potential intensity must be accommodated within the significance rating. The importance of the potential intensity must be emphasised within the rating methodology to indicate that, for an adverse impact to human health, even a limited extent and duration will still yield a significant impact.

Within potential intensity, the concept of irreplaceable loss is taken into account. Irreplaceable loss may relate to losses of entire faunal or floral species at an extent greater than regional, or the permanent loss of significant environmental resources. Potential intensity provides a measure for comparing significance across different specialist assessments. This is possible by aligning specialist ratings with the potential intensity rating provided here. This allows for better integration of specialist studies into the environmental impact assessment. See Table 3 and Table 4 below.

**Table 3: Criteria for impact rating of potential intensity of a negative impact.**

Potential Intensity Descriptor	Definition of negative impact	Rating
High	Significant impact to human health linked to mortality/loss of a species/endemic habitat.	16
Moderate-High	Significant impact to faunal or floral populations/loss of livelihoods/individual economic loss.	8
Moderate	Reduction in environmental quality/loss of habitat/loss of heritage/loss of welfare amenity	4
Moderate-Low	Nuisance impact	2
Low	Negative change with no associated consequences.	1

**Table 4: Criteria for the impact rating of potential intensity of a positive impact.**

Potential Intensity Descriptor	Definition of positive impact	Rating
Moderate-High	Net improvement in human welfare	8
Moderate	Improved environmental quality/improved individual livelihoods.	4
Moderate-Low	Economic development	2
Low	Positive change with no other consequences.	1

It must be noted that there is no HIGH rating for positive impacts under potential intensity, as it must be understood that no positive spinoff of an activity can possibly raise a similar significance rating to a negative impact that affects human health or causes the irreplaceable loss of a species.

### 7.5 LIKELIHOOD OF THE IMPACT

This is the likelihood of the impact potential intensity manifesting. This is not the likelihood of the activity occurring. If an impact is unlikely to manifest then the likelihood rating will reduce the overall significance. Table 5 provides the rating methodology for likelihood.

The rating for likelihood is provided in fractions in order to provide an indication of percentage probability, although it is noted that mathematical connotation cannot be implied to numbers utilised for ratings.

**Table 5: Criteria for the rating of the likelihood of the impact occurring**

Likelihood Descriptor	Definition	Rating
Improbable	The possibility of the impact occurring is negligible and only under exceptional circumstances.	0.1
Unlikely	The possibility of the impact occurring is low with a less than 10% chance of occurring. The impact has not occurred before.	0.2
Probable	The impact has a 10% to 40% chance of occurring. Only likely to happen once in every 3 years or more.	0.5
Highly Probable	It is most likely that the impact will occur and there is a 41% to 75% chance of occurrence.	0.75
Definite	More than a 75% chance of occurrence. The impact will occur regularly.	1

### 7.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impact are reflected in the in the potential intensity of the rating system. In order to assess any impact on the environment, cumulative impacts must be considered in order to determine an accurate significance. Impacts cannot be assessed in isolation. An integrated approach requires that cumulative impacts be included in the assessment of individual impacts.

The nature of the impact should be described in such a way as to detail the potential cumulative impact of the activity.

### 7.7 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

The significance assessment assigns numbers to rate impacts in order to provide a more quantitative description of impacts for purposes of decision making. Significance is an expression of the risk of damage to the environment, should the proposed activity be authorised.

To allow for impacts to be described in a quantitative manner in addition to the qualitative description given above, a rating scale of between 1 and 5 was used for each of the assessment criteria. Thus the total value of the impact is described as the function of significance, which takes cognisance of extent, duration, potential intensity and likelihood.

**Impact Significance** = (extent(1) + duration(5) + potential intensity(4)) x likelihood(0.2)=2

Table 6 provides the resulting significance rating of the impact as defined by the equation as above.

**Table 6: Significance rating formulas.**

Score	Rating	Implications for Decision-making
< 3	Low	Project can be authorised with low risk of environmental degradation
3 - 9	Moderate	Project can be authorised but with conditions and routine inspections. Mitigation measures must be implemented.
10 - 20	High	Project can be authorised but with strict conditions and high levels of compliance and enforcement. Monitoring and mitigation are essential.
21 - 26	Fatally Flawed	Project cannot be authorised



## 8 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed footprint is completely underlain by the Silverton Formation (Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup). This formation is known to contain stromatolites and probably also microfossils. According to the SAHRIS PalaeoMap this formation has a moderate palaeontological sensitivity. The scarcity of fossil heritage at the proposed Hartebeestpoort development indicate that the impact of the housing development will be of a low significance in palaeontological terms.

It is therefore considered that the construction and operation of the Hartebeestpoort housing development and associated infrastructure is deemed appropriate and feasible and will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. Thus, the construction and operation of the facility may be authorised as the whole extent of the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological resources.

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## **10 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR**

The author (Elize Butler) has an MSc in Palaeontology from the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. She has been working in Palaeontology for more than twenty three years. She has been conducting Palaeontological Impact Assessments since 2014.

## 11 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

### Declaration of Independence

I, Elize Butler, declare that –

General declaration:

- I act as the independent palaeontological specialist in this application
- I will perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the applicant
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- I have expertise in conducting palaeontological impact assessments, including knowledge of the Act, Regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
- I will comply with the Act, Regulations and all other applicable legislation;
- I will take into account, to the extent possible, the matters listed in section 38 of the NHRA when preparing the application and any report relating to the application;
- I have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- I undertake to disclose to the applicant and the competent authority all material information in my possession that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing - any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority; and - the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by myself for submission to the competent authority;
- I will ensure that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application is distributed or made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties is facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments on documents that are produced to support the application;
- I will provide the competent authority with access to all information at my disposal regarding the application, whether such information is favourable to the applicant or not
- All the particulars furnished by me in this form are true and correct;
- I will perform all other obligations as expected a palaeontological specialist in terms of the Act and the constitutions of my affiliated professional bodies; and
- I realise that a false declaration is an offence in terms of regulation 71 of the Regulations and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the NEMA.

Disclosure of Vested Interest

- I do not have and will not have any vested interest (either business, financial, personal or other) in the proposed activity proceeding other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the Regulations;