
Re: Structure in Verlatenkloof Pass near Sutherland, Northern Cape

From : Tim Hart <tim.hart@aco-associates.com>

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Subject : Re: Structure in Verlatenkloof Pass near Sutherland, Northern Cape**To :** Natasha Higgitt <nhiggitt@sahra.org.za>

Dear Natasha

I hope you will accept this comment by email. I don't mind if Jaco sees it. Also know James Cummins of Aced and have also done work for that company in the same area.

The house you pointed out to me is vernacular in nature and could easily be a similar age to the pass. Examining associated artifacts could provide an idea of its earliest terminus post quem, but as you know such associative dating is fraught with problems.

I have read Jaco's letter and don't not have any problem with its factual content. The deepest problem for all of us doing this work lies with assessing the impact of the proposed activity with the pass, and dare I say it, the impact on the broader cultural landscape. The **NHRA does protect the aesthetic qualities of a place**. A place that has aesthetic value for a community is a heritage resource be it linked with a physical archaeological or historic site or not. In these terms I have seldom found visual impact assessments very helpful in this regard as most of them are quantitative devices that predict if A will be visible from B, and how visible it will be, without getting to the grips of the problem of how will the presence of something affects a person aesthetically and emotionally, which I believe to be at the core of the issue, and us as a community have not yet got near to addressing this.. The term "sense of place" is equally problematic so I have resolved to borrow from the British and use the word "setting" which is rather broader and easier to conceptualize.

A lot of what people see is in the mind's eye. One does not have to see a wind farm at close quarter for a long time to experience visual impact or a sense of hurt to a setting. A fleeting glimpse will do the job (we are intelligent beings with imagination). This does not only pertain to the study in question but to all of us and that is getting to grips to aesthetic impact which is not really covered in the table of significance that is provided. Wind energy facilities are so massive (type 5 industrial structure) that whether that are setback by 3 or 1.5 km makes little difference. They can be seen from 18-20 km, the point at which they become intrusive varies from person to person.

Both Matjiesfontein (grade 1 site) and Sutherland rely on the sense of deep Karoo and wilderness for their tourism. Sutherland as a community makes a point of selling the combination of small town atmosphere, old buildings and heritage, wide open Karoo and of course the Observatory as a suite of attractions to the area. The town has numerous lodges and B&B's. The Verlatenkloofpas is part of this and does contribute to the experience of going to Sutherland.. The pass itself is in its own right not only an historic/geological/palaeontological place but it is also of high aesthetic value. On these grounds I would suggest high provincial value - that is grade 2.

The accumulative impacts of wind farms in that area is very high, and I think that Jaco's comment that the impact of the one under consideration is offset to some degree by the fact that others are there demonstrates this point. If we used the presence of one to justify another then where do we

draw the line?...write off the whole Karoo? 8 years ago this area was to all intents and purposes a wilderness of generally good aesthetic qualities. The great escarpment area has astonishing landscape qualities and is a future resource, which unfortunately may have now been sterilized by energy development.

I have no easy answer to the conundrum of questions that wind energy developments in un-transformed landscape raise, however I do think the pass is of more than medium significance but probably not national significance. High regional significance works for me.

Dont know if I have helped or confused....?

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