

PROPOSED LOW COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, LOUBOS, NORTHERN CAPE

DEA Ref No.: NC/BA/SIY/MIE/LOU/2012



DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

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DEVELOPMENT, LOUBOS,
NORTHERN CAPE
DEA REF.: NC/BA/SIY/MIE/LOU/2012**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Activity

It is proposed that Remainder of Farm No. 585, Gordonia Rd, Loubos, be rezoned and subdivided for the development of serviced low cost housing, including associated infrastructure

The property (Remainder of Farm No. 585, Gordonia Rd) is owned by the Mier Municipality (Applicant). No formal land use management system has been adopted by the Mier Municipality at this stage and the land use rights on the property may be described as being undetermined.

The site is located on the old road linking Rietfontein with Groot Mier, off the R31, approximately 10km north-east of Rietfontein (via the old Rietfontein Road).

The site is located over two sites, one being found in the northern parts of town between Mossie and Fink Street (infill section). The other is located in the southern sections of town, straddling the road connecting Loubos to Rietfontein. The site coordinates as follows: S 26° 42.473', E 20° 06.705', and S 26° 42.577', E 20° 07.120'

The proposed development will be over 15.5ha portion of the property is involved in this development proposal. One hundred and fifty four (154) individual land units are proposed, 140 of which are single residential erven, in response to the growing housing need in the municipality.

Environmental Requirements

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act 107 of 1998), as amended, makes provision for the identification and assessment of activities that are potentially detrimental to the environment and which require authorisation from the competent authority based on the findings of an Environmental Assessment. NEMA is a national act, which is enforced by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). In the Northern Cape, these powers are delegated to the Department of Environmental & Nature Conservation (DE&NC). According to the regulations of Section 24(5) of NEMA, authorisation is required for the following:

Government Notice R544 listed activities (Listing Notice 1):

11: The construction of:

- (i) Buildings exceeding 50 square meters in size; or**
- (ii) Infrastructure or structures covering 50 square meters or more;**

Where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 meters of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse, excluding where such construction will occur behind the development setback line.

18: The infilling or depositing of any material of more the 5 cubic meters into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock from

- (i) a watercourse;**

but excluding where such infilling, depositing, dredging, excavation, removal or moving

- (i) is for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a management plan agreed to by the relevant environmental authority; or occurs behind the development setback line.

22: The construction of a road, outside urban areas,

- (i) With a reserve wider than 13,5 meters or,
- (ii) Where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 meters, or
- (iii) For which an environmental authorization was obtained for the route determination in terms of activity 5 in Government Notice 387 of 2006 or activity 18 in Notice 545 of 2010.

23: The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land to residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, inside an urban area, and where the total area to be transformed is 5 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares

Government Notice R546 listed activities (Listing Notice 3):

13: The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetative cover constitutes indigenous vegetation.

Site Description

The site is basically transformed as a result of urban associated activities and as a result, very low species diversity was encountered. Grasses were almost absent, which can most probably be ascribed to constant grazing and very low rainfall.

There are no formal rivers on the proposed site, but the site is traversed by some drainage lines and small streams.

Need and Desirability

The Mier Local Municipality has not at this stage been party to the significant mining boom experienced in the province, but has also seen development, albeit on a smaller scale. This growth has been brought about through a focus on the tourism sector of the economy with attractions such as game farming, hospitality infrastructure and, of course, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

These mentioned aspects have not only had an economic impact, but has also contributed to population increases in the municipality, be it from immigration or natural growth. With this in mind, the Mier Municipality has felt the need to provide housing opportunity throughout its area of jurisdiction and identified the towns of Askham, Welkom, Groot Mier, Loubos and Rietfontein as areas of focus.

This application for 154 new development stands in Loubos, 140 of which are single residential erven, in response to the growing housing need in the municipality.

Conclusion

According to the Archaeological Assessment no archaeological resources were found on the north-western site, and eight Middle Stone Age (MSA) flakes and one MSA core were located on the south-eastern site. The impacts are therefore negligible, and no mitigation measures are proposed.

According to the Biodiversity Assessment, no threatened or endangered species were recorded during the site visit. However, it must be noted that the vegetation type is considered “Least Threatened”.

The proposed development will have a permanent, but localised impact on wildlife and avifauna. Many animal and bird species associate with large *Boscia albitrunca* trees and the removal of mature trees of these species will have an impact on such wildlife (even though very localised). The impact is thus rated as medium (which can be reduced with mitigation).

- Observe a 32 m corridor from the edge of the seasonal stream just north of the proposed site 3, which include almost all of the protected species encountered on this site.
- The proposed housing layout should take into account all mature indigenous tree species and should aim to minimise the impact on these. In addition it should also aim to minimise the impact on any other protected species that might be encountered on site.
- Permits must be obtained for the removal of any protected species which cannot be avoided.
- As a pre-cautionary measure all viable herb-, bulbs- and succulent plant species encountered within the footprint should be removed and replanted through a dedicated search and rescue operation.
- Only existing access roads should be used for access to the terrain.
- Access roads must be clearly demarcated and access must be tightly controlled (deviations may not be allowed).
- Indiscriminate clearing of areas must be avoided (all remaining areas to remain as natural as possible).
- All topsoil (at all excavation sites) must be removed and stored separately for re-use for rehabilitation purposes. The topsoil and vegetation should be replaced over the disturbed soil to provide a source of seed and a seed bed to encourage re-growth of the species removed during construction.
- Once the construction is completed all further movement must be confined to the access tracks to allow the vegetation to re-establish over the excavated areas.
- Rehabilitation must be done after construction.

Considering all the information, it is not envisaged that this proposed development will have a significant negative impact on the environment. The expected positive socio-economic impacts, including temporary jobs created during the construction phase, should outweigh the negative impacts

It is therefore recommended that this application be authorised with the necessary conditions of approval as described throughout this BAR.