

**PROPOSED LOW COST HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT, ASKHAM,
NORTHERN CAPE**

DEA Ref No.: NC/BA/SIY/KHA/ASK1/2012



DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

January 2013

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NORTHERN CAPE
DEA REF.: NC/BA/SIY/KHA/ASK1/2012**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Activity

It is proposed that Portion 1 of Farm 139, Gordonia RD, Kameelduin, Askham, be rezoned and subdivided for the development of serviced low cost housing, including associated infrastructure

The property (Portion 1 of Farm 139, 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 off the R31, and is located north of Kameelduin, Askham, directly adjacent to the sportsgrounds. The site coordinates are as follows: S 26° 58.650', E 20° 46.180'.

The proposed development will be over 8.3ha and 107 new development stands are proposed, 102 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):

- 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

Site Description

The proposed larger site is located within a parallel dune landscape and overlaps two dunes as well as the interdune straatens (with most of the proposed site located within the interdune

straaten). The vegetation encountered can be described as open sparse woodland (larger trees scattered throughout) dominated by a grassy bottom layer.

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 107 new development stands in Askham, 102 of which are single residential erven, in response to the growing housing need in the municipality.

Conclusion

According to the Archaeological Assessment no archaeological sites or other prehistoric resources were found during a foot survey of the proposed site.

However, a total of eight graves were identified. Six of the graves are located around a central point (26°58'40.27"S; 20°46'11.62"E), whilst two individual graves (No 7 & 8) lie some distance from the main cluster.

The Heritage Impact Assessment (**Appendix D3**) concludes that there are no archaeological reasons for the proposed Low Cost Housing Development on Portion 1 of Farm 139, Askham, to be delayed.

According to the Biodiversity Assessment, significant vegetation identified includes three listed protected species that were encountered within the proposed site. These include the *Acacia erioloba*, *Boscia albitrunca* and *Acacia haematoxylon*.

It is very likely that the proposed project will have an impact protected species (especially *Acacia erioloba*). The impact is thus rated as medium (which can be reduced with mitigation).

- The proposed housing layout should be placed within the inter-dune straaaten alone, avoiding the dunes to the east and west of the straaaten. In doing this the impact on *Boscia albitrunca* is almost totally negated and possible impact of wind erosion will be reduced.
- The natural vegetation on the dunes must be protected during the construction activities (erosion control).
- All efforts must be made to protect all the protected trees within the proposed final footprint (and any other protected species that might be encountered on site). On-site micro- adjustment of the final erven must be done in order to minimise the impact on as many of the protected tree species as possible.
- 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.

- Permits must be obtained for the removal of any protected species which cannot be avoided.

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.