

# Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment of a new Borrow Pit site near Excelsior, FS Province.

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## **Summary**

A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out over a 5 ha - area designated for use as a new borrow pit near Excelsior, Free State Province. There is no aboveground evidence of historically significant building structures older than 60 years, Stone Age archaeological remains, Iron Age structures or material of cultural significance within the confines of the development footprint. The archaeological and cultural component of the proposed project footprint is assigned a site rating of General Protection C (GP.C). It is recommended that the development may proceed, provided that all excavation activities are restricted to within the boundaries of the footprint.

## Introduction

A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out over a 5 ha - area designated for use as a new borrow pit near Excelsior, Free State Province (**Fig. 1 & 2**). The extent of the affected areas (over 5000 m<sup>2</sup>) falls within the requirements for a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as required by Section 38 (Heritage Resources Management) of the South African National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). The site visit and subsequent assessment took place during May 2016. The task involved identification of possible archaeological sites or occurrences in the proposed zone, an assessment of their significance, possible impact by the proposed development and recommendations for mitigation where relevant.

### Terms of Reference

- Identify and map possible heritage sites and occurrences using published and database resources;
- Determine and assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on potential heritage resources;
- Recommend mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts associated with the proposed development.

### Approach and Methodology

The heritage significance of the affected area was based on existing field data, database information and published literature. A field assessment, using a Garmin Etrex Vista GPS hand model (set to the WGS 84 map datum) and a digital camera for recording purposes followed this. Geological maps, aerial photographs and site records were integrated with data acquired during the on-site inspection. The study area is rated according to field rating categories as prescribed by SAHRA (**Table 1**).

## Locality data

Maps: 1:50 000 scale topographical map 2827 CC Excelsior

1:250 scale geological map 2826 Winburg

Site coordinates (**Fig. 2**):

A) 28°55'42.40"S 27° 4'48.89"E

B) 28°55'52.14"S 27° 5'10.31"E

The study area lies about 2.5 km east-northeast of the Excelsior CBD on the R709 provincial road going to Winburg (**Fig. 3**).

## Background

The study area is located within the outcrop area of the late Permian Katberg Formation of the Tarkastad Subgroup ( *Trt*, Karoo Supergroup) (Nolte 1995; Johnson *et al.* 2006) (**Fig. 4**). Intrusive dykes and sills of resistant Jurassic dolerites (*Jd*) are common in the region but are not fossiliferous. The Katberg Formation sedimentary strata are assigned to the *Lystrosaurus* Assemblage Zone (AZ) (Groenewald 1991, Groenewald & Kitching 1995) (**Fig. 5**). This biozone is characterized by the abundant genus *Lystrosaurus*, which represents up to 95% of the vertebrate fossils. Other common genera include *Procolophon*, *Moschorhinus*, *Proterosuchus*, *Lydekkerina*, and *Thrinaxodon*. Given the position of the borrow pit, the likelihood of impact on potential Quaternary fossil exposures is considered very minor.

The archaeological footprint in the area are primarily represented by Stone Age archaeological localities, rock art sites and an extensive footprint related to the distribution of Iron Age settlements and early history of Sotho-speaking communities along the Caledon River Valley. Previously recorded Stone Age sites in the region are found at Bokpoort, Orange Springs Fort Savange, Leliehoek and Rose Cottage Cave. In addition to Later Stone Age levels with European and Iron Age artifacts, Rose Cottage Cave also has a long cultural sequence incorporating several MSA and LSA industries ranging from ca. 70 ka to around 10 ka ago. Rock shelters associated with more recent hunter – gatherer activities are found at Rooikrans, Mauermanshoek, Westbury and Tienfontein. Historical accounts of the middle Caledon Valley indicate that hunter-gatherers survived as communities until the end of the Basuto Wars and the establishment of European farms in 1869. Stow (1905) records traditions about the last "Bushman" inhabitants of the Korannaberg/Viervoetberg (Mequatling) situated between Excelsior and Labybrand, and the Platberg situated about 4 km south of Ladybrand.

Numerous rock art sites have been recorded in the region with over 30 farms, listed in the Ladybrand district (Van Riet Low 1941).

A number of Iron Age settlements, which resemble Maggs's Type V settlement pattern in many aspects of their material culture, are found in the Caledon Valley and surrounds, including those at Mequatling and Tihela. According to historical accounts, the southward migration of early Sotho-speaking communities led to at least one group reaching the Caledon Valley about the mid-seventeenth century and occupying most of the upper and middle parts of the valley by 1800 AD. A

major event to take place among the indigenous tribes of the interior highveld of South Africa before the coming of European settlers was the Difaqane raids and wars. Precipitated by the rise of Shaka's Zulu empire among the coastal Nguni-speaking peoples, it resulted in the creation of large-scale refugee communities that were continued and extended over the whole interior by resident Southern Sotho-speaking peoples who could not resist the advanced military and political system of the Nguni invaders, but rather led to the segmentation of the Southern Sotho into numerous antagonistic communities scattered along the Caledon River Valley. One group was the Leghoya who in 1810 or 1812, were finally conquered and completely absorbed by the Taung under their chief, Moletsane, with whom they settled at Mequatling, to the west of Ladybrand, in 1837. Although the Leghoya were subjects of Moletsane they lived as separate pockets among the Taung and actually retained their own chief. In 1869, by the Treaty of Aliwal North, Moletsane's territory, which had previously been part of Basutoland, was ceded to the Orange Free State, and Moletsane with his Taung and Leghoya followers moved into south Basutoland, between Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek, where he was granted land by Moshesh.

### **Field Assessment and Recommendations**

The footprint is located on a weather-resistant dolerite dyke considered to be of low palaeontological significance (**Fig. 6 & 7**). There is no above-ground evidence of historically significant building structures older than 60 years, Stone Age archaeological remains, Iron Age structures or material of cultural significance within the confines of the development footprint. The archaeological and cultural component of the proposed project footprint is assigned a site rating of General Protection C (GP.C). It is recommended that the development may proceed, provided that all excavation activities are restricted to within the boundaries of the footprint.

### **References**

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#### *DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE*

*I, Lloyd Rossouw, declare that I act as an independent specialist consultant. I do not have or will not have any financial interest in the undertaking of the activity other than remuneration for work as stipulated in the terms of reference and have no interest in secondary or downstream developments resulting from the authorization of this project.*

## Tables and Figures

**Table 1.** Field rating categories as prescribed by SAHRA.

<b>Field Rating</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
National Significance (NS)	Grade 1	-	Conservation; national site nomination
Provincial Significance (PS)	Grade 2	-	Conservation; provincial site nomination
Local Significance (LS)	Grade 3A	High significance	Conservation; mitigation not advised
Local Significance (LS)	Grade 3B	High significance	Mitigation (part of site should be retained)
Generally Protected A (GP.A)	-	High/medium significance	Mitigation before destruction
Generally Protected B (GP.B)	-	Medium significance	Recording before destruction
Generally Protected C (GP.C)	-	Low significance	Destruction







Figure 2. Aerial view and layout of the site.



Figure 3. General view of the site, looking north.

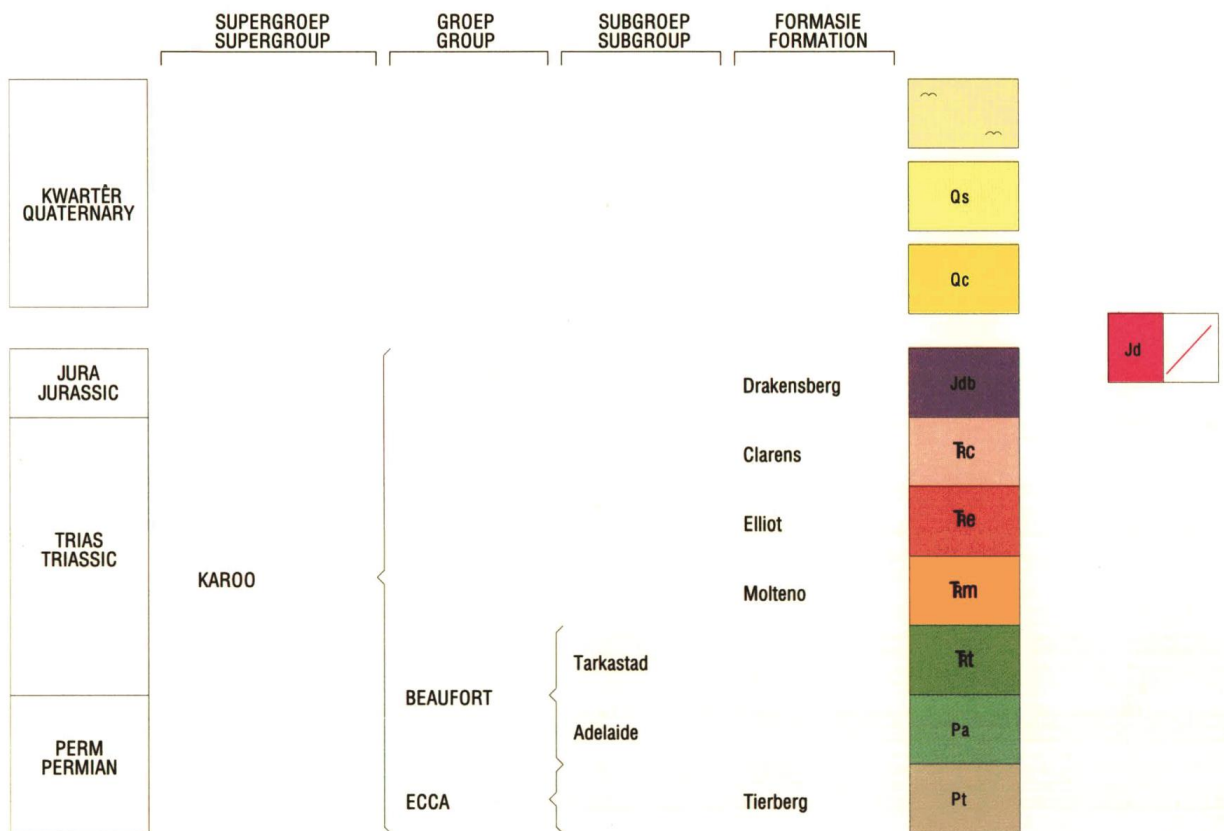
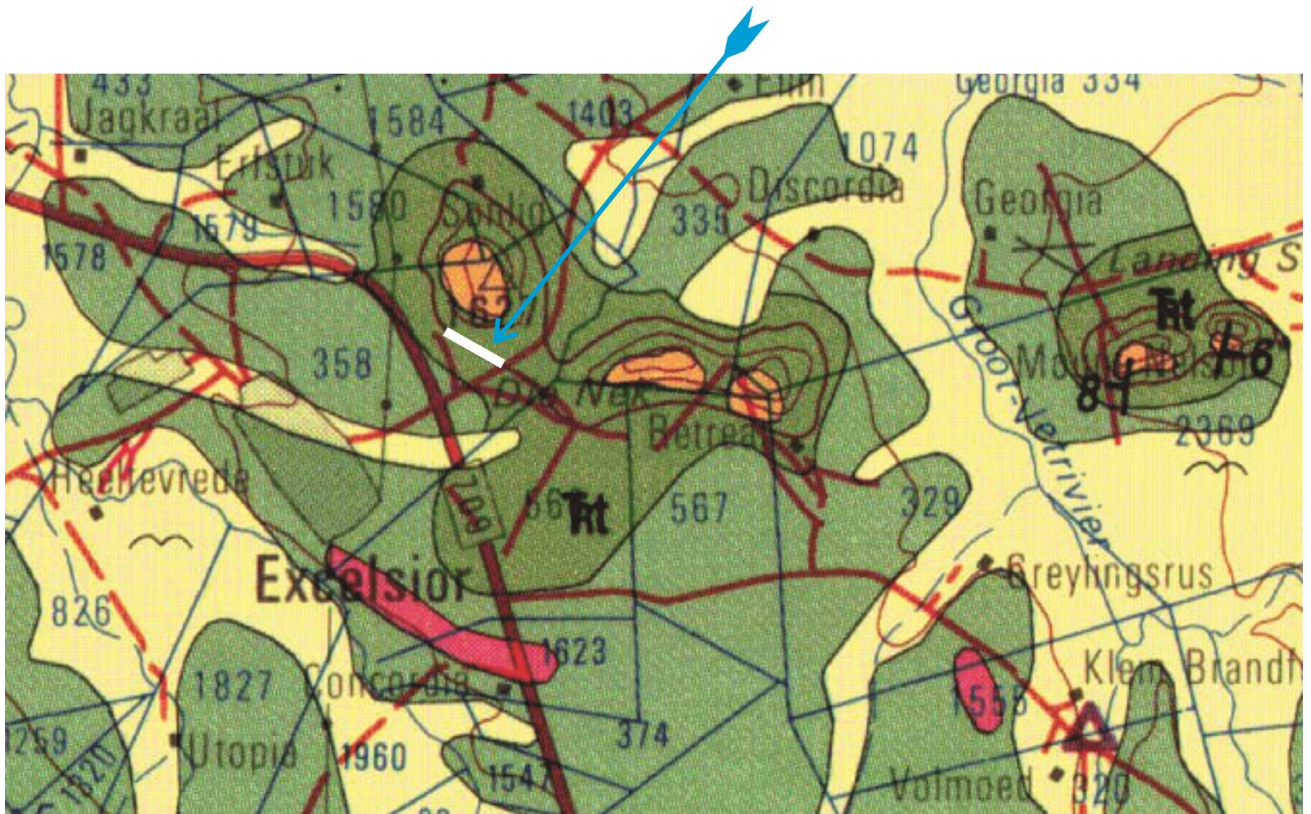


Figure 4. According to portion of 1:250 000 scale geological map 2826 Winburg, the study area is located within an outcrop area of the late Permian Katberg Formation of the Tarkastad Subgroup, *Trt* (Karoo Supergroup).

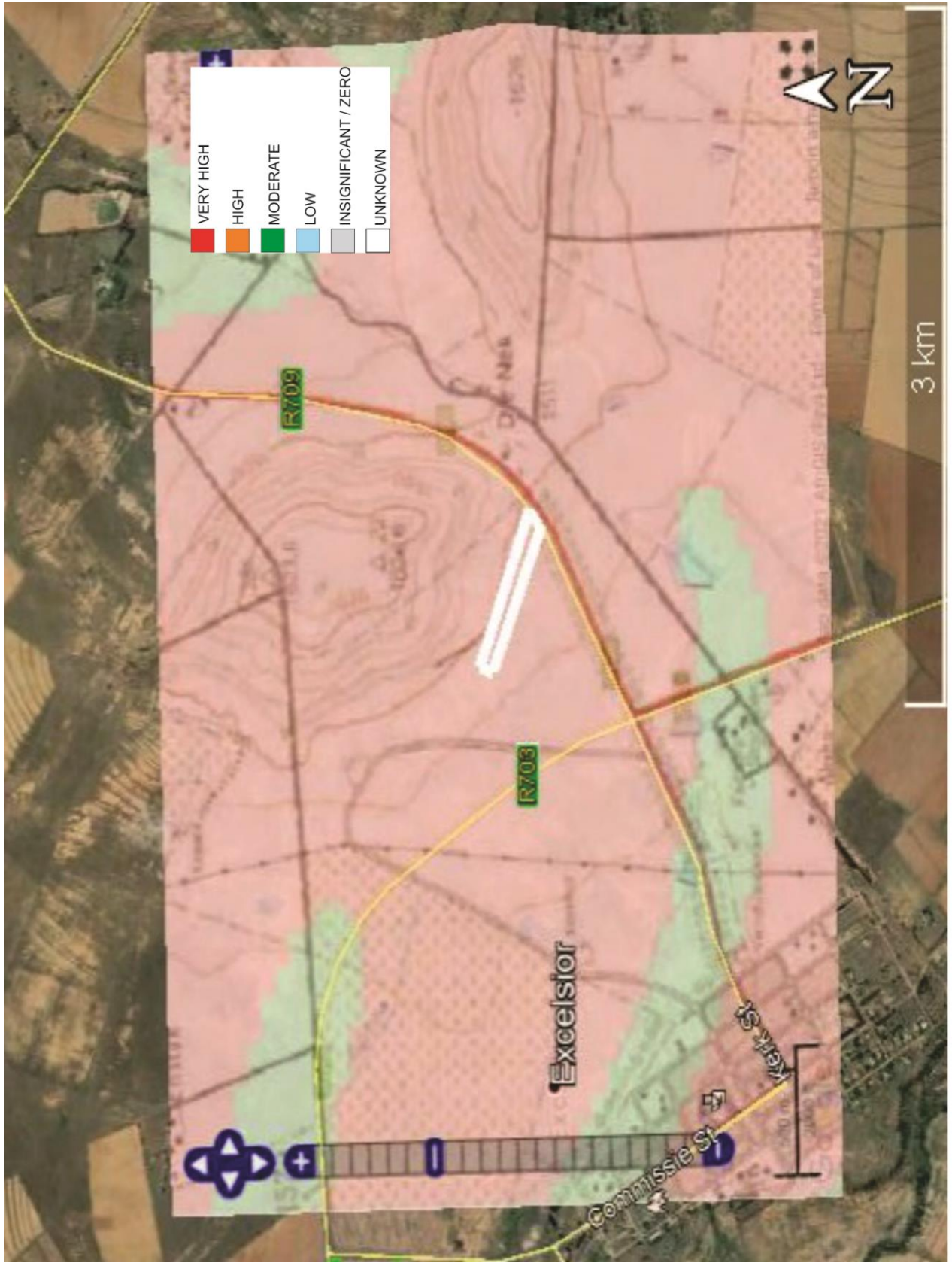


Figure 5. SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map overlay. Site marked by white polygon.



Figure 6. Aerial view of doolerite dyke (stippled line) traced out during survey.



Figure 7. Characteristic dolerite intrusive features observed within the study area.