

SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE
RESOURCES AGENCY

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Official Use
File Ref:.....
Site Ref:.....
Grade 1:.....
Committee Date:.....

National Heritage Site Nomination Form

This form precedes the submission of the 'Nomination Document' and is designed to assist with the grading of heritage resources in terms Section 3(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, as part of the process of declaration as a National Heritage Site (Section 27). Nominated heritage resources that are of special national significance will be graded as Grade 1 and considered for National Heritage Site status.

Proposed National Heritage Site: The Florisbad springmound and surrounding land.

Brief Statement of Significance:

The Florisbad fossil locality is Internationally known for producing a pre-modern human skull, Middle Pleistocene fossil vertebrates and Middle Stone Age artefacts. The fossil vertebrate collection from the Florisbad spring is the type assemblage of the Florisian Land Mammal Age (LMA) of southern Africa. This fossil assemblage postdates that of Cornelia-Uitzoek and represents an immediately pre-modern stage in the evolution of the large mammal faunas of southern Africa. This fossil assemblage is the link between the older Cornelian and the modern mammal faunas of southern Africa. The human skull, dated to around 260 000 years ago, is unique in being the only relatively complete human fossil of this time range in southern Africa. It fills the gap between the modern and post-*Homo erectus/ergaster* human fossils. In a wider geographic context the skull has meaning in that its anatomy and geological age support an African origin for modern humans. **(See Appendix A for more details.)**

Proposed By: J.S. Brink **Date Proposed:** 11 June 2003

Contact Details: Florisbad Quaternary Research, National Museum, P.O. Box 266,
Bloemfontein, 9300, jbrink@nasmus.co.za, Tel. (051) 4479609, 072 257 1717, Fax: (051)
4476273

Name of Property: Florisbad

Street Number and Street: N/A

Suburb: N/A

Town: near Soutpan/Ikgomotseng **District:** Brandfort

Cadastral Information

Erf/ Farm Number: 686, Subdivision 3

Registration Division:

Longitude: 26 04 E

Latitude: 32 46 S

Map Reference: 2826 CC **Recording Method:** 1/50 000

Type of Resource

- Place
- Structure
- Archaeological Site
- Palaeontological Site
- Geological Feature
- Grave

Do moveable objects relating to the site form part of the Nomination?
Serial nomination (Is more than one site being nominated as part of a Joint Nomination)

Sphere of Significance	High	Med	Low
International	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provincial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist group or community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What other similar sites may be compared to the site? How does the site compare to these sites?

Florisbad compares well with Baden-Baden, which is an undisturbed version of Florisbad and forms part of the present serial nomination. There are many other fossil localities from this time range in the central interior of southern Africa, but Florisbad is unique in having produced an exceptionally rich mammal fauna in association with a human skull and Middle Stone Age artefacts and for being the type locality of the Florisian LMA. Florisbad is well-studied (see references in Appendix A)

Owner:

The South African state (Dept. of Public Works)

Postal Address:...Private Bag X20605, Bloemfontein, 9300

Telephone:...051- 4008700 **Fax:** 4008878 **Cell:** N/A

E-Mail: N/A **Web Page:** N/A

Contact Person: Mr E.F. Borraine, Tel.: 4008761, cell: 083 2747811

- √*** Expanded statement of significance;
- *** Motivation for declaration as a National Heritage Site, including potential, threats and vulnerabilities;
- *** Short history of the place;
- √*** Physical description of the heritage resource;
- √*** Locality plan (map) and Site Plan;
- *** Photographs and plans;
- **** List of moveable objects relating to site that are proposed as part of nomination, or for archaeological or palaeontological site ;list of repositories where these are housed;
- √**** Bibliography of documentation relating to the heritage resource;
- **** Statement of current protections and restrictions (e.g. previous national monument; register of immovable property; conservation area; current zoning; servitudes);
- **** List any heritage organizations consulted and their comments on the proposed nomination.
- √***** Site plan (with proposed site boundaries);
- ****** Conservation or management plans (send immediately if any exist);
- ****** Heritage Agreement (if required).

Type of Significance

1. Historical Value

<i>Indicate with a tick</i>	<i>Comment where appropriate. Indicate sphere of significance: i.e. National, Provincial, Local and degree of significance: i.e. High, Medium or Low.</i>
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- a. It is important in the community, or pattern of history**
- i. Importance in the evolution of cultural landscapes and settlement patterns National, high.....
 - ii. Importance in exhibiting density, richness or diversity of cultural features illustrating the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or locality. National, high.....
 - iii. Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases that have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or community. National, high.....
 - iv. Importance as an example for technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement in a particular period N/A.....

- b. It has strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in history**
- i. Importance for close associations with individuals, groups or organisations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation, Province, region or community. N/A.....

- c. It has significance relating to the history of slavery**
- i. Importance for a direct link to the history of slavery in South Africa. N/A.....

2. Aesthetic Value

- a. It is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group**
- i. Importance to a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community. N/A.....
 - ii. Importance for its creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement. N/A.....
 - iii. Importance for its contribution to the aesthetic values of the setting demonstrated by a landmark quality or having impact on important vistas or otherwise contributing to the identified aesthetic qualities of the cultural environs or the natural landscape within which it is located. N/A.....
 - iv. In the case of an historic precinct, importance for the aesthetic character created by the individual components which collectively form a significant streetscape, townscape or cultural environment. N/A.....

3. Scientific Value

- a. It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of natural or cultural heritage**
- i. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or National, high.....

benchmark site.

- ii. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of the universe or of the development of the earth.

.....
N/A.....

- iii. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of life; the development of plant or animal species, or the biological or cultural development of hominid or human species.

.....
National, high.....

- iv. Importance for its potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of the nation, Province, region or locality.

.....
National, high.....

b. It is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

- i. Importance for its technical innovation or achievement.

.....
N/A.....

4. Social Value

a. It has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

- i. Importance as a place highly valued by a community or cultural group for reasons of social, cultural, religious, spiritual, symbolic, aesthetic or educational associations.

.....
N/A.....

- ii. Importance in contributing to a community's sense of place.

.....
National, high.....

Degrees of Significance

5. Rarity:

a. It possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of natural or cultural heritage

- i. Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon structures, landscapes or phenomena.
- ii. Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced in, or in danger of being lost from, or of exceptional interest to the nation, Province, region or locality.

.....
National, high.....

.....
N/A.....

6. Representivity:

a. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of natural or cultural places or objects

- i. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a range of landscapes or environments, the attributes of which identify it as being characteristic of its class.
- ii. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of human activities (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique) in the environment of the nation, Province, region or locality.

.....
National, high.....

.....
N/A.....

Signature:.....

Date: 17 June 2003

**APPENDIX A:
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FLORISBAD FOSSIL SITE,
FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Florisbad fossil site (32° 46' S; 26° 04' E) consists of a sequence of Quaternary deposits associated with a thermal spring situated 45 km NNW of Bloemfontein in central South Africa (Figure 1). Florisbad is primarily known for its mammalian fossil record (Dreyer & Lyle 1931; Cooke 1964; Brink 1987, 1988, 1993, 1994, 2005), which includes an archaic human skull fragment (Dreyer 1935; Clarke 1985; Grün *et al.* 1996). Additionally the site has produced an important fossil pollen record (Van Zinderen Bakker 1957, 1989; Scott & Brink 1992; Scott & Nyakale 2002) and Middle Stone Age (MSA) archaeological material (Dreyer 1938; Kuman & Clarke 1986; Kuman 1989; Henderson 2000; Brink & Henderson 2001). Most recently fossil oribatid mites have been discovered in Holocene and MSA levels (Coetzee & Brink 2003).

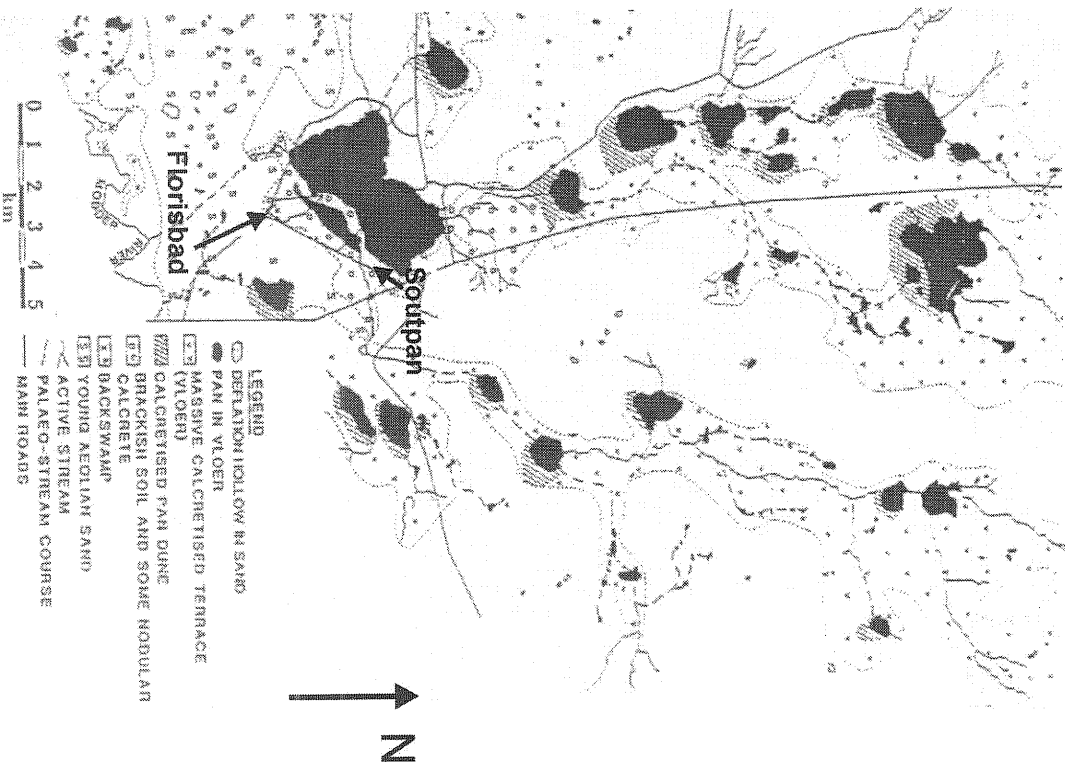


Figure 1. A map of Florisbad, showing the position of the spring mound in relation to the pans of the vicinity (after Grobler & Look 1988)

The spring erupts at the contact of an igneous intrusion of dolerite and the Permian Karoo Ecca shale. Groundwater is forced to the surface because the intrusion acts as an impervious barrier to ground water (Look & Grobler 1988). Through geological time sediments accumulated around the springs to produce fossil bearing deposits. The Florisbad Quaternary spring sedimentary sequence is one of the most extensively studied fossiliferous Quaternary deposits in the interior (Rubidge & Brink 1985; Butzer 1988; Grobler & Look 1988; Look & Grobler 1988; Visser & Joubert 1991).

The question of the geological age of Florisbad was addressed by the application of two recently-developed dating techniques, electron spin resonance (ESR) and optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) (Grün *et al.* 1996). The problem of dating fossil material older than the limit of radiocarbon dating has been a continuing limiting factor in the study of Pleistocene deposits in the interior of southern Africa. The temporal framework developed for Florisbad, which suggests that the spring fossil assemblage dates to the time bracket 100 000 – 400 000 years ago and the human skull to c. 260 000 years ago, serves as a frame of reference for other similar localities in the central interior (Brink 2005).

Significance

- The site is of international importance, since it has produced the only well-dated late archaic, or pre-modern, human skull, which is relatively complete (Clarke 1985). The age of the skull has been established by means of the ESR dating technique to c. 260 000 years ago (Grün *et al.* 1996). This provides unusual insight into the evolution of modern humans in an African and a wider geographic context. Since the skull is relatively advanced in morphology, but quite old, it fits the “Out of Africa” hypothesis of modern human evolution. In the rest of the Old World comparably aged human fossils are usually much more primitive in morphology than the Florisbad human skull. The “Out of Africa” hypothesis broadly states that all living human populations are descendants of ancestral modern African populations, of which some expanded their range into the rest of the Old World, and later the New World, after c. 70 000 years ago. In this context the Florisbad human skull may be a representation of pre-modern African human populations that are ancestral to modern humans.

- The fossil mammal fauna from the Florisbad spring is the type assemblage on which the Florisian LMA is based (Hendey 1974; Brink 1987, 1988, 1994; Brink & Lee Thorp 1992). The fauna represents a pre-modern stage in large mammal evolution in southern Africa and gives unusual insight into the appearance of modern faunas and landscapes. The mammal remains from Florisbad are intermediate between modern faunas and those of the Cornelian LMA. The

Florisbad mammal fauna parallels the human skull in reflecting an ancestral state of evolution.

- Florisbad has produced evidence for the presence of animals and prehistoric people over a time period spanning c. 400 000 to 100 000 years ago (Grün *et al.* 1996; Brink & Henderson 2001). It has early Middle Stone Age artefacts as well as an extensive Last Interglacial archaeological horizon, containing a more advanced Middle Stone Age industry. This horizon is estimated to cover more than 1600 m². In addition there is Later Stone Age human occupation both at the end of the Pleistocene (Lockshoek Industry) and at the end of the Holocene younger than 2000 years ago. Thus, there is a long, sub-continuous record of human presence at Florisbad spanning the last 400 000 years.

- The site has historic significance in being occupied by settler farmers of European descent from the around the 1850's. Many structures at Florisbad, including the bathhouse and an old corrugated iron house, are of particular historic significance.

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