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**PHASE 1 HIA REPORT FOR THE MATWABENG TOWNSHIP EXPANSION  
IN THE SETSOTO (SENEKAL) MUNICIPALITY  
OF THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

For:

***Imvelo Environmental Consultants cc***

REPORT: **APAC021/98**

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## SUMMARY

APelser Archaeological Consulting (APAC) was appointed by Imvelo Environmental Consultants cc to conduct a Phase 1 HIA for the proposed expansion of the Matwabeng Township and housing development in the Setsoto Municipality (Senekal). The study and development area footprint is located in the Free State Province.

Background research indicates that there are some cultural heritage sites and features in the larger geographical area within which the study area falls. The assessment of the study area did not identify any sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin or significance. This report discusses the results of both the background research and physical assessment.

**From a Cultural Heritage point of view it is recommended that the proposed Township development be allowed to continue, taking into consideration the recommendations put forward at the end of the report.**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

APelser Archaeological Consulting (APAC) was appointed by Imvelo Environmental Consultants cc to conduct a Phase 1 HIA for the proposed expansion of the Matwabeng Township and housing development in the Setsoto Municipality (Senekal). The study and development area footprint is located in the Free State Province.

Background research indicates that there are some cultural heritage sites and features in the larger geographical area within which the study area falls. The assessment of the study area did not identify any sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin or significance.

The client indicated the location and boundaries of the study area and the assessment concentrated on this portion.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference for the study was to:

1. Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural heritage sites) located on the portion of land that will be impacted upon by the proposed development;
2. Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their archaeological, historical, scientific, social, religious, aesthetic and tourism value;
3. Describe the possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains, according to a standard set of conventions;
4. Propose suitable mitigation measures to minimize possible negative impacts on the cultural resources;
5. Review applicable legislative requirements;

## **3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two Acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

### **3.1. The National Heritage Resources Act**

According to the above-mentioned act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years

- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

**The National Estate includes the following:**

- a. Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance
- b. Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage
- c. Historical settlements and townscapes
- d. Landscapes and features of cultural significance
- e. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance
- f. Sites of Archaeological and paleontological importance
- g. Graves and burial grounds
- h. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery
- i. Movable objects (e.g. archaeological, paleontological, meteorites, geological specimens, military, ethnographic, books etc.)

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process to be followed in order to determine whether any heritage resources are located within the area to be developed as well as the possible impact of the proposed development thereon. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) only looks at archaeological resources. An HIA must be done under the following circumstances:

- a. The construction of a linear development (road, wall, power line, canal etc.) exceeding 300m in length
- b. The construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length
- c. Any development or other activity that will change the character of a site and exceed 5 000m<sup>2</sup> or involve three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof
- d. Re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>
- e. Any other category provided for in the regulations of SAHRA or a provincial heritage authority

**Structures**

Section 34 (1) of the Act states that no person may demolish any structure or part thereof which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

A structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith.

Alter means any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place or object, whether by way of structural or other works, by painting, plastering or the decoration or any other means.

### **Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites**

Section 35(4) of the Act deals with archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites. The act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority (National or Provincial)

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or paleontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or paleontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or paleontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or paleontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and paleontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

**The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). In order to demolish such a site or structure, a destruction permit from SAHRA will also be needed.**

### **Human remains**

Graves and burial grounds are divided into the following:

- a. ancestral graves
- b. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
- c. graves of victims of conflict
- d. graves designated by the Minister
- e. historical graves and cemeteries
- f. human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;

- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated to) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

### **3.2. The National Environmental Management Act**

This Act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation thereof are made.

Environmental management should also take the cultural and social needs of people into account. Any disturbance of landscapes and sites that constitute the nation's cultural heritage should be avoided as far as possible and where this is not possible the disturbance should be minimized and remedied.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Survey of literature**

A survey of available literature was undertaken in order to place the development area in an archaeological and historical context. The sources utilized in this regard are indicated in the bibliography.

### **4.2. Field survey**

The field assessment section of the study was conducted according to generally accepted HIA practices and aimed at locating all possible objects, sites and features of heritage significance in the area of the proposed development. The location/position of all sites, features and



objects is determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS) where possible, while detail photographs are also taken where needed.

### **4.3. Oral histories**

People from local communities are sometimes interviewed in order to obtain information relating to the surveyed area. It needs to be stated that this is not applicable under all circumstances. When applicable, the information is included in the text and referred to in the bibliography.

### **4.4. Documentation**

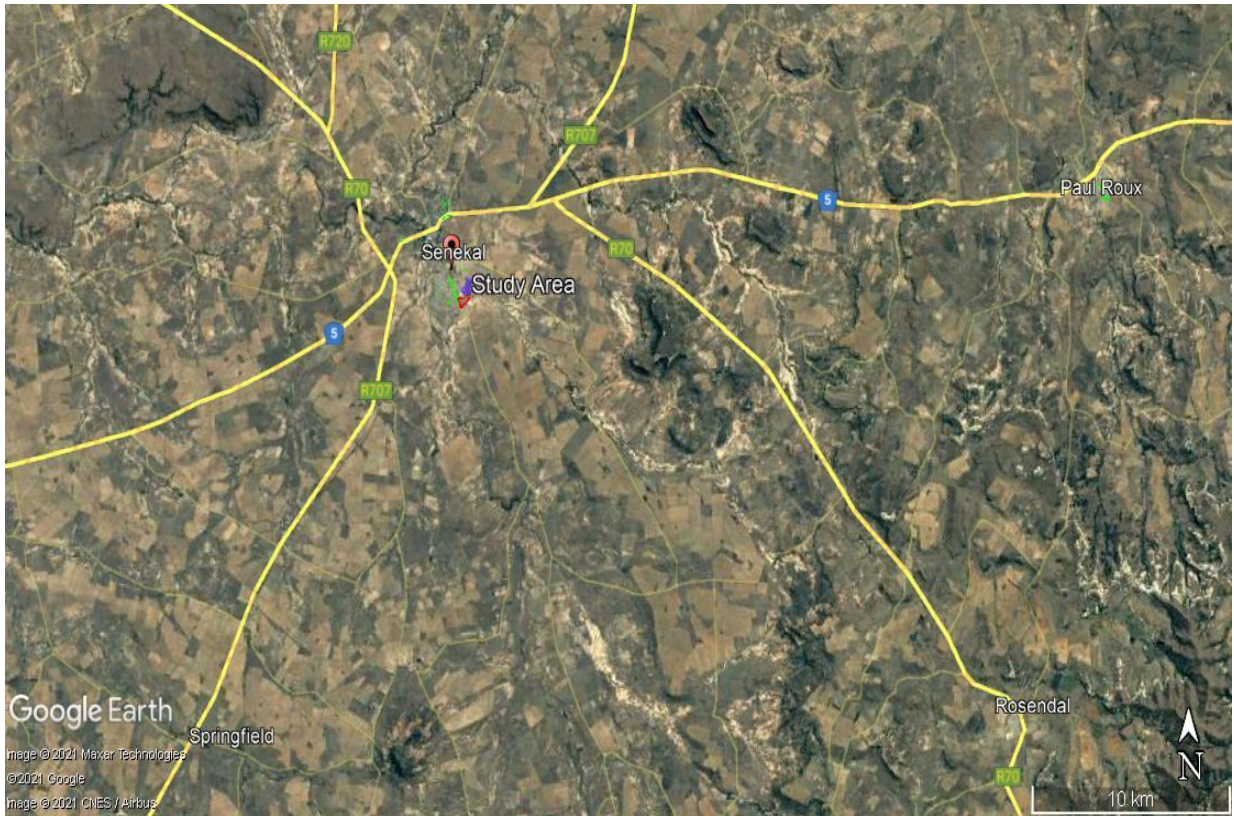
All sites, objects, features and structures identified are documented according to a general set of minimum standards. Co-ordinates of individual localities are determined by means of the Global Positioning System (GPS). The information is added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

The study & development area is situated next to the existing Matwabeng Extension 4 Residential Township in the Setsoto (Senekal) Municipality in the Free State Province. The development footprint measures approximately 36.6ha in size. The development site overlooks the Sandsloot River. The larger area consists of a highly transformed urban landscape with the central business district of Senekal nearby. The proposed development area has previously been used for illegal dumping, with much of the site being covered with building rubble and household refuse.

A total of 16 informal housing structures of corrugated iron within the proposed area were observed. The locations of these structures will not impede the proposed project as they have been scheduled to be relocated before any earth-moving activities occur on site. The structures housed individuals who had previously been allocated formal municipal housing but are still waiting to be moved. The site has served as a temporary dwelling for recipients of government housing previously. The area has also been impacted by illegal sand mining activities. Matwabeng Ext 4 is located south of the project area with formal road networks, electricity and housing structures. This existing infrastructure will also service the proposed new housing project.

The topography of the larger study area is generally flat, with short trees, shrubs and short grasses. The area has been extensively altered from its original natural and historical landscape and if any sites of archaeological and/or historical significance did occur here in the past it would have been disturbed or destroyed as a result to a large degree.



**Figure 1: General location of the study area (Google Earth 2021).**



**Figure 2: Closer view of study area location & proposed development footprint (Google Earth 2021).**

## 6. DISCUSSION

The Stone Age is the period in human history when lithic (stone) material was mainly used to produce tools. In South Africa the Stone Age can be divided basically into three periods. It is however important to note that dates are relative and only provide a broad framework for interpretation. A basic sequence for the South African Stone Age (Lombard et.al 2012) is as follows:

Earlier Stone Age (ESA) up to 2 million – more than 200 000 years ago  
Middle Stone Age (MSA) less than 300 000 – 20 000 years ago  
Later Stone Age (LSA) 40 000 years ago – 2000 years ago

It should also be noted that these dates are not a neat fit because of variability and overlapping ages between sites (Lombard et.al 2012: 125).

The Iron Age is the name given to the period of human history when metal was mainly used to produce artifacts. In South Africa it can be divided in two separate phases (Bergh 1999: 96-98), namely:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 200 – 1000 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1000 – 1850 A.D.

Huffman (2007: xiii) indicates that a Middle Iron Age should be included. His dates, which are widely accepted in archaeological circles, are:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 250 – 900 A.D.  
Middle Iron Age (MIA) 900 – 1300 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1300 – 1840 A.D.

The historical period started with the first people that were able to read and write moving into the larger area (Europeans) including the Voortrekkers during the Great Trek, farmers, hunters & travellers and missionary groups.

The Free State has a rich archaeological and historical history going back millions of years and includes significant aspects such as Later Stone Age rock art, Battlefields and Iron Age stonewalled enclosures. The information on the archaeology of the larger geographical and study area given below is from a 2019 Heritage Impact Assessment for proposed construction of a water pipeline in Senekal:

*“The South African central plateau is distinctive in that it supported Stone Age people over thousands of years, who were also prolific makers of stone tools until relatively recent times. This can be seen in the high density of Stone Age archaeological traces visible on the landscape today. The range of archaeological sites encountered in the Free State is extensive, in terms of both typology and chronology. This include Early Stone Age bifaces, and retouched blades and trimmed points from the Middle Stone Age to the microlithic Wilton and Smithfield Complexes from the Holocene. Surface scatters of Later Stone Age and Middle Stone Age artifacts are*



*frequent archaeological components along erosional gullies (dongas) of rivers and streams in the region. The incidence of surface scatters usually decreases away from localized areas such as riverine sites and dolerite-shale contact zones. Away from riverine contexts, Stone Age artifacts generally occur as contextually derived individual finds in the open veld. Several Later Stone Age sites have been identified near Bethlehem including the Saulspoort, Poortjie and Trekpad rockshelters. In addition to these shelters, several rock art localities, containing depictions of human figures, have been recorded in the Witteberge southeast of Paul Roux. A variety of stone dagga pipes have been collected in the region, including engraved sandstone and mudstone pipes, as well as a number made of baked clay.*

*The archaeological footprint in the region is primarily dominated by Late Iron Age stone wall complexes. Stone enclosures found on and around dolerite koppies along the river valley between Winburg and Bethlehem, exhibit telltale signs of basic structural units including huts, large enclosures, pieces of walling and stone circles related to Late Iron Age settlements in the area. These sites were occupied from as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and represent a system that can be broadly attributed to groups ancestral to the Sotho-speaking people of today. Extensive Iron Age settlements have been recorded previously between Paul Roux and Winburg at Three Sisters, Palmietfontein, Monte Carlo, La Rochelle, Leeukop, Vaalbank, Petra, Erfstuk, Allemanskraaldam, Fraai Uitzicht and the Allemanskraal Dam at the Willem Pretorius Nature Reserve” (Palaeo Field Services 2019: p.5).*

Senekal is named after Commandant Frederik Petrus Senekal. The town’s residents had campaigned for the establishment of a town as because Winburg was too far removed from them. From 1873 various petitions regarding this matter was addressed to the Orange Free State House of Assembly and finally on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1877 Senekal formally acknowledged as a town. Senekal was founded on the farm De Put, owned by one F. Malan ([www.senekal.biz](http://www.senekal.biz)).

### **Results of the November 2021 Field Assessment**

The physical field assessment was undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2021. The survey was done on foot, focusing on areas of interest identified digitally using topographic, aerial photography and satellite imagery. Visibility on the ground was limited due to dense vegetation (grass cover and others) in large sections, as well as a result of the large-scale illegal dumping occurring all over the area. Informal settlement in the area, as well as sand quarrying has also impacted heavily on the area, while the existing and adjacent Matwabeng Residential & related developments has completely transformed the original natural and historical landscape of the area.

The general area serves as grazing lands for cattle farmers nearby. There is an existing small-scale piggery with subsistence crop farming area fenced. The field survey observed a total of 16 informal corrugated iron housing structures in the proposed location.

No sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin or significance were identified in the study and proposed development area footprint. If any did

exist here in the past it would have been either completely destroyed or extensively disturbed as a result of recent past developments and activities.



**Figure 3: General view of part of the area with the Sandslot River visible.**



**Figure 4: Another view of part of the area.**





**Figure 5: Building rubble dumped in the area.**



**Figure 6: Evidence of quarrying in the area.**





**Figure 7: Further evidence of the impact of sand quarrying in the area.**



**Figure 8: Building rubble (sandstone blocks) dumped in the area.**



**Figure 9: Small pig farm in the area.**





**Figure 10: Further evidence of the impact of illegal dumping in the area.**



**Figure 11: Evidence of previous house foundations (structures not older than 60 years). Note the existing residential settlement bordering the study area.**



**Figure 12: Some of the informal housing structures in the area.**





**Figure 13: The remains of previous informal housing structures in the study area.**

Based on the desktop research and the physical field assessment, from a Cultural Heritage Perspective, the proposed Township development in the Matwabeng area of the Setsoto (Senekal) Local Municipality of the Free State Province should be allowed to continue.

***It should be noted that although all efforts are made to cover a total area during any assessment and therefore to identify all possible sites or features of cultural (archaeological and/or historical) heritage origin and significance, that there is always the possibility of something being missed. This will include low stone-packed or unmarked graves. This aspect should be kept in mind when development work commences and if any sites (including graves) are identified then an expert should be called in to investigate and recommend on the best way forward.***

## **7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

APelser Archaeological Consulting (APAC) was appointed by Imvelo Environmental Consultants cc to conduct a Phase 1 HIA for the proposed expansion of the Matwabeng Township and housing development in the Setsoto Municipality (Senekal). The study and development area footprint is located in the Free State Province.

Background research indicates that there are some cultural heritage sites and features in the larger geographical area within which the study area falls. The physical field assessment was undertaken on the 2nd of November 2021. Visibility on the ground was limited due to dense vegetation (grass cover and others) in large sections, as well as a result of the large-scale illegal dumping occurring all over the area. Informal settlement in the area, as well as sand quarrying has also impacted heavily on the area, while the existing and adjacent Matwabeng

Residential & related developments has completely transformed the original natural and historical landscape of the area. The general area serves as grazing lands for cattle farmers nearby. There is an existing small-scale piggery with subsistence crop farming area fenced. The field survey observed a total of 16 informal corrugated iron housing structures in the proposed location.

No sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin or significance were identified in the study and proposed development area footprint. If any did exist here in the past it would have been either completely destroyed or extensively disturbed as a result of recent past developments and activities.

**Based on the results of the desktop research and the physical field assessment, from a Cultural Heritage Perspective, the proposed Township development in the Matwabeng area of the Setsoto (Senekal) Local Municipality of the Free State Province should be allowed to continue.**

Finally, it should be noted that although all efforts are made to locate, identify and record all possible cultural heritage sites and features (including archaeological remains) there is always a possibility that some might have been missed as a result of grass cover and other factors. The subterranean nature of these resources (including low stone-packed or unmarked graves) should also be taken into consideration. Should any previously unknown or invisible sites, features or material be uncovered during any development actions then an expert should be contacted to investigate and provide recommendations on the way forward.

## **8. REFERENCES**

General and Closer Views of Study & Development Area location and footprint: Google Earth 2021.

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[www.senekal.biz](http://www.senekal.biz)

## **APPENDIX A: DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

**Site:** A large place with extensive structures and related cultural objects. It can also be a large assemblage of cultural artifacts, found on a single location.

**Structure:** A permanent building found in isolation or which forms a site in conjunction with other structures.

**Feature:** A coincidental find of movable cultural objects.

**Object:** Artifact (cultural object).

(Also see Knudson 1978: 20).

## **APPENDIX B: DEFINITION/ STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

**Historic value:** Important in the community or pattern of history or has an association with the life or work of a person, group or organization of importance in history.

**Aesthetic value:** Important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

**Scientific value:** Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of natural or cultural history or is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement of a particular period

**Social value:** Have a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

**Rarity:** Does it possess uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of natural or cultural heritage.

**Representivity:** Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of natural or cultural places or object or a range of landscapes or environments characteristic of its class or 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.

## **APPENDIX C: SIGNIFICANCE AND FIELD RATING:**

### **Cultural significance:**

- Low: A cultural object being found out of context, not being part of a site or without any related feature/structure in its surroundings.
- Medium: Any site, structure or feature being regarded less important due to a number of factors, such as date and frequency. Also any important object found out of context.
- High: Any site, structure or feature regarded as important because of its age or uniqueness. Graves are always categorized as of a high importance. Also any important object found within a specific context.

### **Heritage significance:**

- Grade I: Heritage resources with exceptional qualities to the extent that they are of national significance
- Grade II: Heritage resources with qualities giving it provincial or regional importance although it may form part of the national estate
- Grade III: Other heritage resources of local importance and therefore worthy of conservation

### **Field ratings:**

- i. National Grade I significance: should be managed as part of the national estate
- ii. Provincial Grade II significance: should be managed as part of the provincial estate
- iii. Local Grade IIIA: should be included in the heritage register and not be mitigated (high significance)
- iv. Local Grade IIIB: should be included in the heritage register and may be mitigated (high/medium significance)
- v. General protection A (IV A): site should be mitigated before destruction (high/medium significance)
- vi. General protection B (IV B): site should be recorded before destruction (medium significance)
- vii. General protection C (IV C): phase 1 is seen as sufficient recording and it may be demolished (low significance)



## **APPENDIX D: PROTECTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES:**

### **Formal protection:**

National heritage sites and Provincial heritage sites – Grade I and II

Protected areas - An area surrounding a heritage site

Provisional protection – For a maximum period of two years

Heritage registers – Listing Grades II and III

Heritage areas – Areas with more than one heritage site included

Heritage objects – e.g. Archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens, visual art, military, numismatic, books, etc.

### **General protection:**

Objects protected by the laws of foreign states

Structures – Older than 60 years

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Burial grounds and graves

Public monuments and memorials

## **APPENDIX E: HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT PHASES**

1. Pre-assessment or Scoping Phase – Establishment of the scope of the project and terms of reference.
2. Baseline Assessment – Establishment of a broad framework of the potential heritage of an area.
3. Phase I Impact Assessment – Identifying sites, assess their significance, make comments on the impact of the development and makes recommendations for mitigation or conservation.
4. Letter of recommendation for exemption – If there is no likelihood that any sites will be impacted.
5. Phase II Mitigation or Rescue – Planning for the protection of significant sites or sampling through excavation or collection (after receiving a permit) of sites that may be lost.
6. Phase III Management Plan – For rare cases where sites are so important that development cannot be allowed.