

Proposed upgrade to the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine near Hotazel in the Northern Cape

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
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CaseID: 17101

Date: Monday October 18, 2021
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Final Comment

In terms of Section 38(4), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: SLR Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd

South32 intends to upgrade the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine. The upgrade will consist of modifications to the staging rail lines and the design of a new rail balloon. The extension of the railway into the new railway balloon measures at approximately 2 500 m long and 25 m wide and would result in the clearing of indigenous vegetation (more than 1 hectare, but less than 20 hectares). Additionally, the railway would cross a section of the existing tailings dam and would thus result in the removal of approximately 15 000 – 25 000 m³ of material from the tailings area, which would then be deposited on another existing tailings dam. The new railway extension would be located within the existing Mining Right (MR) boundary at the Wessels Mine and amendments to the mine's Water Use Licence (WUL) are not required.

SLR Consulting (South Africa)(Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Hotazel Manganese Mines (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed extension of railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine, near Hotazel, Northern Cape Province (DMRE Ref: NC-00212-MR/102).

A draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR) Report has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) and the 2017 NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations for activities that trigger the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (MPRDA)(As amended). The proposed development will include the construction of a new rail balloon and the upgrade of existing rail infrastructure.

CTS Heritage was appointed to provide heritage specialist input as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

Lavin, J. 2021. Heritage Impact Assessment in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRA for the Proposed upgrade to the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine near Hotazel in the Northern Cape.

No heritage resources were identified within the proposed development footprint. A Chance Fossil Finds and Chance Finds Procedure have been recommended to be implemented.

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In an Interim Comment issued on the 08/10/2021, SAHRA requested that a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment be conducted by a qualified palaeontologist as part of the proposed development EA process. Since the issuing of the Interim Comment, a desktop PIA has been submitted for review (14/10/2021).

Bamford, M. 2021. Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the proposed extension of the railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine, near Hotazel, Northern Cape Province.

The proposed development is underlain by aeolian sands of the Kalahari Group that do not preserve fossils. A Fossil Chance Finds Protocol is recommended to be followed.

Final Comment

The following comments are made as a requirement in terms of section 3(4) of the NEMA Regulations and section 38(8) of the NHRA in the format provided in section 38(4) of the NHRA and must be included in the Final BAR and EMPr:

- 38(4)a – The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit has no objections to the proposed development;
- 38(4)b – The recommendations of the specialists are supported and must be adhered to. No further additional specific conditions are provided for the development;
- 38(4)c(i) – If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g. remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell fragments, charcoal and ash concentrations), fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, SAHRA APM Unit (Natasha Higgitt/Phillip Hine 021 462 5402) must be alerted as per section 35(3) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;
- 38(4)c(ii) – If unmarked human burials are uncovered, the SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Unit (Thingahangwi Tshivhase/Mimi Seetelo 012 320 8490), must be alerted immediately as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;
- 38(4)d – See section 51 of the NHRA for offences;
- 38(4)e – The following conditions apply with regards to the appointment of specialists:
- If heritage resources are uncovered during the course of the development, a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be contracted as soon as possible to inspect the heritage resource. If the newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological

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or palaeontological significance, a Phase 2 rescue operation may be required subject to permits issued by SAHRA;

- The Final BAR and EMPr must be submitted to SAHRA for record purposes;
- The decision regarding the EA Application must be communicated to SAHRA and uploaded to the SAHRIS Case application.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Natasha Higgitt
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Phillip Hine
Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/582468>

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.

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2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.