



an agency of the  
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 18255

Date: Thursday June 30, 2022

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## **Interim Comment**

### **In terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)**

Attention: SANRAL

Private Bag X 17  
Lynnwood Ridge  
0040

**SANRAL is proposing road upgrades and improvements to the existing Schoemanskloof Route (R539) in order to improve traffic flow speeds and improve safety. This will be undertaken by lengthening existing overtaking lanes, introducing new overtaking lanes, re-aligning certain sections, introducing road safety upgrades and introducing formal and safer intersections to reduce the high number of informal access roads of the R539. These activities will take place along the existing Schoemanskloof R539 road is situated between eNtokozweni (Machadodorp) and Mbombela (Nelspruit) in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.**

SANRAL (SOC) Ltd have appointed Prism Environmental Management Services (Pty) Ltd to undertake an Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment application process in support for an Environmental Authorisation (EA) application for the upgrade the Schoemanskloof Route (539) between eNtokozweni and a T-Junction between the N4 and R539.

A Basic Assessment Report has been submitted to SAHRA for commenting in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act no 107 of 1998 (NEMA) as amended, for activities that trigger the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) 2014 Regulations, as amended. The project consists of the widening of the existing R539 road and make it a two lane road, widen the intersections and improve road signage and road shoulders.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) by Beyond Heritage Cultural Resources Consultants cc has been submitted to SAHRA for commenting in terms of section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

*Van der Walt, J. March 2022. Heritage Impact Assessment required under Section 38(8) of the NHRA, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) for the Proposed Schoemanskloof Route R539 Improvement Project, Mpumalanga.*



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The author undertook a field assessment of the proposed development area and identified various disturbed stone walled sites in the road reserve. The access routes will impact on several similar Iron Age stone walled settlements and earlier

Iron Age sites as well as burial sites and ruins. Sites SCH001-SCH004 marks a cluster of packed stone walled features running along the proposed line, they are also seen on historical maps. These sites are of medium significance. Sites SCH003-SCH004, and SCH022 are a concrete bridge and concrete slab of unknown age, sites SCH025, SCH030, and SCH032 are remains of homestead buildings, they are all of low significance. Sites SCH007-SCH011, Sites SCH015-SCH017, SCH021, SCH027, SCH029 and SCH033 are ephemeral stone walled sites and pottery of low significance. Site SCH0012 is an Early Iron Age stone walled and site SCH031 is densely packed LIA stone walled site, both sites are of medium significance. Sites SCH018-SCH020, SCH024, are stone packed burials, a small cemetery with recent graves and another small cemetery in a bamboo thicket; all these sites are of high significance.

The author recommends the following:

The project can commence provided that the recommendations in this report (including the site-specific mitigation measures in Table 2) are adhered to and based on the South African Heritage Resource Authority (SAHRA) 's approval:

Preservation of recorded heritage features in-situ if this is not possible mitigation measures for these sites are outlined in Table 2;

If the recorded grave sites are to be retained in-situ without a 30 m buffer zone then a social consultation process in terms of Chapter XI of the NHRA Regulations, must be carried out to identify the descendants of the burials and to obtain permission to encroach on the identified graves;

Should final adjustments be made to the preliminary access route alignments due to heritage sensitivities already found, a final heritage walkdown must be conducted for these sections where changes are made;

Should additional heritage constraints be identified through the Public Participation Process of the BAR, these must be included in the Final EMP for implementation during and after construction;

Compilation of a Development Heritage Management Plan (DHMP) to ensure ongoing protection and management of recorded heritage resources; and

Implementation of a chance find procedure for the project.

The study area is located in a region with Very High, High and Low palaeontological sensitivity and according to the palaeo-sensitivity map policy, a Palaeontological Impact Assessment must be undertaken.

### **Interim Comment**

**Proposed Upgrade of the Schoemanskloof Route R539, Mpumalanga, South Africa**

**Our Ref: 18255**



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The SAHRA Archaeological, Palaeontological, and Meteorite (APM) Unit cannot provide further comment on this application until a PIA is undertaken by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and the report is submitted to the case for commenting.

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

Yours faithfully

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Nokukhanya Khumalo  
Heritage Officer  
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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

**ADMIN:**

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/594673>

(DEA, Ref: TBC)