



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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Enquiries: Natasha Higgitt

Date: Friday April 29, 2016

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Email: [nhiggitt@sahra.org.za](mailto:nhiggitt@sahra.org.za)

CaseID: 9049

## Interim Comment

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

Attention: Sonbesie Solar Power Plant (Pty) Ltd

#### **Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed Sonbesie Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility near Vryburg, Ratlou Local Municipality, North West Province**

Sonbesie Solar Power Plant (Pty) Ltd has contracted Environamics to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development of the Sonbesie Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility.

*Otte, C; Griesel, M. Environamics (2016) Final Scoping Report: Proposed Sonbesie Solar Power Plant near Vryburg, North West Province.*

The proposed development is located on the remaining extent of farm Retreat o.671 IN within the Naledi Local Municipality (Vryburg Magisterial District, North West Province). The site is approximately 5km to the south-west of the town of Vryburg.

The development plan for the 264ha PV facility includes the following: A 115MW PV Solar Array; Central inverters; On-site substation; Control facility; Plus other supporting infrastructure (including: current and voltage regulators, internal road network, fencing).

*van Schalkwyk, J. 2016. Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the development of the proposed Sonbesie Solar Power Plant on a portion of the farm Retreat 671 IN, Vryburg Region, North West Province.*

A small low density scatter of Middle/Later stone Age tools was found, but due its low density the site is not significant and it is recommended that the site is considered to be fully recorded by incorporation into the assessment. The remains of an old farmstead were also identified by the visible remains of the foundations of at least two separate buildings, with associated rubbish dump and exotic trees (likely planted indicating an old garden). It is noted that the author states that it is impossible to determine what the impact on heritage resources will entail. It is assumed that this statement was made due to the fact that the layout of the facility has not been supplied as part of the HIA. Recommendations provided in the report include that the heritage resources are to be mitigated by means of a small test excavation and mapping of the farmstead and its associated features.

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*Almond, J 2016. Palaeontological Heritage Assessment: Combined Desktop & Field-Based study: Proposed Sonbesie Solar Plant on the remaining extent of Farm Retreat 671 near Vryburg, Naledi Local Municipality, North West Province.*

The area is underlain at depth by late Archaean (c. 2.6 billion years) sedimentary rocks of the Schmidtsdrif subgroup (Ghaap Group, Transvaal Supergroup). Additionally sections may also be underlain by Dwyka Group glacial rocks. These formations are overlain or mantled by late Caenozoic calcrete hardpans, sandy soils of possible aeolian origin and relict alluvial gravels related to the Droë Harts River. There were no fossil specimens found during the field survey and the area is therefore classified as having a low negative significance with regards to the palaeontology.

Recommendations provided in the report include that the responsible Environmental Control Officer (ECO) should monitor the construction work and should any fossils be encountered they should be preferably left *in-situ* and SAHRA should be notified. Appropriate mitigation should follow where a qualified palaeontologist must assess the finds and salvage them if necessary with a permit issued by SAHRA.

### Interim Comment

SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit accepts and promotes the recommendations of the HIA and PIA. The following additional conditions apply to the EIA phase of the project:

- As alluded to in the HIA, the impact of the layout of the proposed development needs to be assessed. During the EIA phase, the impacts to the identified heritage resources in relation to the proposed development footprint/layout must be assessed as part of a revised HIA that addresses the impacts and provides clear mitigation measures;
- Once the above stipulations have been complied with, SAHRA will be able to issue further comment on the case.

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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Natasha Higgitt  
Heritage Officer  
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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Phillip Hine  
SAHRA Head Archaeologist (Acting)  
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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**ADMIN:**

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/354788>

**Terms & Conditions:**

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