



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 9893

Date: Wednesday September 21, 2016

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Interim Comment

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

Attention: Mr Mark Myatt

Rietvlei Mining Company (Pty) Ltd

The proposed mining area lies within a farming area within the larger Witbank Coalfield and is bordered by private properties on all sides. The mine boundary covers an area of 2 225.30ha; of this approximately 800ha will be mined. The Proposed Project is located approximately 50km northeast of the town of eMalahleni and 22km northeast of Middelburg in the Mpumalanga Province on Farm Rietvlei 397 Remaining Extent and Portion 1, Mpumalanga.

Rietvlei Mining Company (Pty) Ltd is proposing to establish an open cast coal mine located in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality of Mpumalanga Province. The construction will consist of a coal processing plant, fuel storage area, haul road, administration buildings, stockpile area, Pollution Control Dams and other services like water pipelines and electricity power lines. They have appointed WSP Environmental (Pty) Ltd to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report in support of an Environmental Authorisation application. WSP Environmental subsequently appointed Dr Pistorius to conduct the heritage studies that form part of the EIA process.

Pistorius, J.C.C. June 2014. A Revised Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Study for the Proposed Rietvlei Open Cast Coal Mining Operation between Middelburg, Belfast and Stofberg in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

The author has conducted a survey in the proposed mine footprint on two separate occasions (2011 and 2013). It is noted that the detailed survey conducted in 2011 does not have any track logs, the survey was along informal roads between the pine trees, these roads/tracks were over grown with the trees in the second survey. The survey identified 5 cemeteries within the mine right are GY02, 04 and 05, which are located within the proposed open cast pit, and GY01 and 03, which are outside but will be impacted by the proposed overburden stockpile. There are a total of 94 graves that will be negatively impacted by the proposed development.

The author recommends that the cemeteries should be mitigated following the section 36 of NHRA process.

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SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit agrees and supports the recommendations made in the Heritage Impact Assessment report. The recommendation set in the HIA should be included in the EMPr for implementation, and following additional conditions in terms of graves should be included as well:

- GY01 and GY03 are located close to the overburden stockpile area although the distances of either cemeteries are not mentioned in the report. An impact to the grave is most likely to happen as such if they are not relocated with the other cemeteries location within the proposed pit area, then they must be fenced, and a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) should be developed and submitted to SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves unit for review.

However a Final Comment will only be issued once the following is completed:

- A field based Palaeontological Impact Assessment needs to be conducted for the proposed development. It should assess the potential sensitivity for fossiliferous bedrock that may be impacted during construction, operation and closure of the mine. This study should be conducted by a qualified professional palaeontologist.

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

Yours faithfully

Nokukhanya Khumalo
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

John Gribble
Manager: Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit / Acting Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and

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Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/367615>
(DMR-MP, Ref: MP30/5/1/2/2/10105MR)