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CaseID: 97

Date: Thursday June 14, 2012

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Final Comment

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

Attention:

Ms Tamarin Arthur
SRK Consulting
PO Box 21842
Port Elizabeth
6000

PROPOSED BRAKPOORT KAROO PHOTO-VOLTAIC SOLAR POWER PLANT ON PORTION 3 OF FARM KLIPHOKKIES NO 173, NEAR VICTORIA WEST, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

Booth, C. March 2012. *A Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment for the Proposed 75 MW Brakfontein Photovoltaic Solar Farm, Victoria West, Northern Cape Province*

Almond, JE. March 2012. *Palaeontological Assessment: Combined Desktop and Field-based Study - Proposed Brakpoort Solar Farm on Portion 3 of Farm Kliphokkies No 173 near Victoria West, Northern Cape Province*

Af-Rom Energy has proposed the establishment of a 75 MW Photovoltaic (PV) facility on Portion 3 of Farm Kliphokkies No 173, approximately 25km northeast of Victoria West in the Northern Cape. The project will occupy between 150 and 250 ha of the 400 ha property.

Associated infrastructure will include underground cabling connecting the panels; substations; internal roads and an access road; a control room and a water reservoir. The complex will be fenced for security and surrounded by a fire break. A 1km 132kV overhead power line will connect the on site substation to the Eskom grid.

The proposed site location is largely flat, with a central koppie and no water courses. The vegetation is typical Karoo shrubs and grasses, and visibility was good except where this vegetation was thick. The site is north of the railway line and disturbed in the northeast by the Brakpoort Substation; several power lines transect the area as do farm roads.

The archaeologist conducted a background survey which revealed that significant Early, Middle and Later Stone Age finds have been recorded from the Victoria West region, although little work has been done in the immediate area of the proposal. There is also evidence of the arrival of Xhosa-speaking farmers in the mid-late nineteenth century, while European settlers arrived after the 1840s. The area was important during the South African War as a line of blockhouses ran through the region.

The field survey yielded several sites. Three of these comprised dense scatters of Middle Stone Age material, predominantly flakes, blades and cores made on hornfels. The sites (Bsite 1, Bsite 2 and Bsite 4) were all



The South African Heritage Resources Agency

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approximately 100m x 100m, with one (B Site 2) located on the slopes of the koppie. Several isolated scatters of Middle Stone Age material were identified across the study area. Some of these artefacts showed secondary retouch and edge-damage, indicating probable trampling, and were considered to be *ex situ*. A site (B Site 3) was located on the top of the koppie that consisted of Later Stone Age artefacts on hornfels, worked glass artefacts and fragments of glass and ceramic. These items were associated with four circular stone features, three of which were in an alignment up the slope of the koppie, while the fourth was some distance away. A further site was located adjacent to the railway and included the ruins of a corbelled house (BF1), a 150m section of dry-stone walling (BF2) and ceramic, metal and glass ceramics, all across a 100m² area.

The palaeontological assessment concluded that the study area is underlain by the Mid to Late Permian Abrahamskraal Formation of the Lower Beaufort Group. While these deposits are generally highly palaeontologically sensitive, here they are extensively intruded by sills and dykes of the Jurassic Karoo Dolerite Suite which serve to metamorphose the nearby sedimentary deposits. Furthermore, these potentially fossiliferous Beaufort sediments are extensively mantled by Late Quaternary to Recent Age superficial deposits – down washed gravels, soils and alluvium – which are largely unfossiliferous.

Decision:

SAHRA requires that:

- A 10 to 20m buffer zone should be observed around the ruined corbelled house (BF1) and the associated wall (BF2) to protect the structures and the spatial patterning of the associated artefacts. The exclusion zone should be fenced off before and during development and no construction activities should take place within it.
- A 20m buffer zone should be observed around the site on the koppie (B Site 3), which should be fenced off before and during construction. No construction activities should take place within the exclusion zone.
- A representative sample for site Brakpoort 1 (B Site 1) must be collected and recorded before trenching and any other earth-moving activity resulting from this proposed project begins. A photographic record must be established before and after collection. The archaeologist will require a collection permit from SAHRA in terms of s. 35 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999). On receipt of a satisfactory mitigation (Phase 2) permit report from the archaeologist, SAHRA will make further recommendations in terms of site B Site 1 such as its final destruction or additional sampling;
- If the archaeologist deems it necessary after the results of recording and collection of B Site 1, a Phase 2 archaeological mitigation may be undertaken for the site. The archaeologist will require a mitigation permit from SAHRA in terms of s. 35 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (see above).
- The Environmental Control Officer should be alerted to the possibility of fossils being uncovered during construction

Conclusion





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If the recommendations made in this comment are adhered to, the SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit has no objection to the development (in terms of the archaeological and palaeontological components of the heritage resources). If any new evidence of archaeological sites or artefacts, palaeontological fossils, graves or other heritage resources is found during development or construction, SAHRA and a professional archaeologist and/or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be alerted immediately.

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

Yours faithfully

Kathryn Smuts
Heritage Officer: Archaeology

Colette Scheermeyer
SAHRA Head Archaeologist
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:
(DEA, Ref:)

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.



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