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CaseID: 465

Date: Tuesday September 11, 2012

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Final Comment

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

Attention: Puseletso Ntsane
Department of Public Works
Private Bag X65
Pretoria
0001

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED UPGRADE OF THE VERGDRAG SAPS TRAINING FACILITY, SITUATED ON THE FARMS BUFFELSKLOOF 452-KQ, PORTION 1 AND THE REMAINDER BUFFELSPOORT 459-KQ AND PORTION 1 AND THE REMAINDER GROENFONTEIN 458 KQ.

Van Schalkwyk, J. January 2012. Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed new developments at the SAPS Verdrag Training Centre, Thabazimbi Region, Limpopo Province.

The Department of Public Works proposes the expansion of the South African Police Services Verdrag Training Centre, near Thabazimbi, Limpopo Province. The project will entail the renovation and construction of new facilities at the A, B, D and E Training Camps. Associated infrastructure will include a new landing strip, ammunition safe, shooting range and admin block, upgrade of existing road infrastructure, and the upgrade and maintenance of existing water supply and reticulation. The affected properties are Portion 1 of the Farm Groenfontein 458-KQ, The Remaining extent of the Farm Groenfontein 458-KQ, Portion 1 of the Farm Buffelspoort 459-KQ, The Remaining extent of the Farm Buffelspoort 459-KQ, and The Farm Buffelskloof 452-KQ.

According to the specialist report only the areas that are going to be developed were investigated for heritage resources. Please note that the report must at least indicate that size of the overall size of the property as well the size of the areas surveyed. It was also indicated that dense vegetation limited the extensiveness of the survey. Although the archaeologist indicated that no archaeological resources were identified on the property, it is entirely likely that their presence may have been obscured by the dense vegetation.

However, two farmsteads were identified on the farm Groenfontein. The one farmstead (GPS Co-ordinates S 24.55002 E 27.74781) is at least a 100 years old. However, it is still in use by SAPS staff. According to the report the house was upgraded recently. The second site (GPS co-ordinates S 24.54911 E 27.78152) is the remains of the old Groenfontein farmstead. All that remains is the foundation of an old Rondavel Structure. The site is located near the area of the proposed new E Training Camp.

A small informal cemetery is located at GPS co-ordinates S 24.54917, E 27.74169. The cemetery contains 10 graves marked with stone cairns; no headstones and the date of the burials could not be ascertained. The cemetery is fenced and SAPS is aware of its location.

A memorial to a SAPS officer who died during a swimming exercise is located just outside of the area to be



The South African Heritage Resources Agency

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developed. The memorial dates to 2004 and was erected by colleagues.

Please note that heritage resources, which are not formally declared, are protected under sections 34, 35 and 36 of the NHRA and not under s.27.

Decision:

SAHRA recommends that the fenced cemetery containing 10 graves be incorporated into the new developments since SAPS is aware of its location and it can be easily accommodated. It is however further recommended that the cemetery must be kept clean and a conservation management plan drafted and submitted to SAHRA BGG Unit for approval. The CMP must outline the measures that will be put in place for the future conservation of the cemetery. Please note that these recommendations relates specifically to graves and graveyards that are 60 years and older. Cemeteries and graves younger than 60 years are protected by other legislation.

Because the project area is large and will require the upgrade of roads, construction of a landing strip, the upgrading of the water supply and reticulation etc., it is recommended that the specialist should in future report on the total area covered during the survey. A GPS track of the area surveyed would also be very useful. It is also advisable that all heritage resources identified should, where possible, be mapped in relation to infrastructure developments.

Decisions for the farmsteads that were identified on the property must be sought from the Limpopo Provincial Heritage Authority (Mr Donald Lithole, Litholek@sac.limpopo.gov.za).

Please note that no palaeontological assessment was undertaken for this project. It is recommended that the developer consults a professional palaeontologist to conduct the necessary studies or at least a Letter of Exemption from a palaeontologist must be submitted to SAHRA APM Unit motivating that a palaeontological impact assessment is not needed.

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

Yours faithfully

Phillip Hine
Heritage Officer





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Colette Scheermeyer
SAHRA Head Archaeologist
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:
(DEA, Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/38)

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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