



Final Decision

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

Attention: Mr Hein Pienaar
Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site Management Authority

Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site Mountain Bike Trails Feasibility Study Stratford, D. November 2013.

The study area comprises a 17km trail route and all areas are owned and managed by the Provincial Government. The study area has been significantly disturbed in the past by road construction and maintenance.

This project entails the first phase of the proposed Cradle of Humankind Mountain Bike Trail of approximately 17km and is intended to be a one-way traffic system starting at Gateway 1 and ending at Gateway 2. Both of these Gateway areas have large traffic circles and associated tourist and rest-stop facilities, thus negating the need for additional construction. The trails themselves are to be constructed from local gravel and will measure approximately 1-1.5m wide, to a maximum depth of 100mm. The author states that the general potential for impact on heritage material of this construction is very low. The author further notes that the remains that were found were generally isolated and associated with an intact deflated landscape cut by the road construction and located further from the road than the trail is intended to impact. However, their presence should be noted and trail construction should be aware of the limitations to route flexibility in these areas:

Area 1, a shallow south facing bank on north side of the road. A low density of isolated artefacts are eroding from this level as it is exposed on the bank, contained within a colluvium of unknown origin and age and, of very limited scientific value. Artefacts measure 20mm-60mm and are temporally inconclusive quartzite flakes and cores.

Area 2, a steep, south facing bank on the north side of the tar road. This area contains a marginally higher density of artefacts, but they are still isolated and contained within a colluvium of unknown origin and are of very limited scientific value. Artefacts measure 20mm-60mm quartzite flakes and cores. The author notes a single unifacial flaked flake that was found eroded from the colluvial level.

Area 3, a shallow, north facing slope on the northern embankment of the tar road. Artefacts share the same characteristics of Area 1 and Area 2, with the addition of several larger flaked artefacts. The author notes that all artefacts are ex situ and of limited scientific or heritage value.



Area 4, a vertical road cutting on the north side of the tar road, contains a very low density of isolated ex situ small quartzite artefacts measuring 20mm-40mm.

The author notes that in all areas surveyed rubble and debris from the construction of the tar road was evident, and the proposed trail route is situated on ground that has been significantly disturbed over time through local agriculture, cattle movement, road grading and construction. Any artefacts found in this area are ex situ, isolated. Where the original landscape is intact, more than approximately six metres away from the road surface, low densities of isolated lithic artefacts are found. The author notes that these still represent ex situ archaeological remains, and no concentrations of lithic, ceramics, stone wall features were found.

The author recommends that:

On the southern section of the proposed trail, between Gateway 1 and the Lion and Rhino Park, the trail route must avoid the original landscape surface and using the cut bank and roadside areas are preferable.

The section north of the Lion and Rhino Park is more flexible in terms of trail routing. Although there is an area of intact original landscape surface it has very low artefact density and negligible archaeological and heritage impact.

Case Decision

The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit supports the recommendations of the author and requires that, on the southern section of the proposed trail, between Gateway 1 and the Lion and Rhino Park, the trail route must avoid the original landscape surface and use the cut bank and roadside areas for the trail. For the section north of the Lion and Rhino Park, the areas of intact original landscape surface must be avoided during construction of the trail.

If the recommendations made in the specialist report and in this comment are adhered to, the SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit has no objection to the development. If any new evidence of archaeological sites or artefacts, palaeontological fossils, graves or other heritage resources is found during development, 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



Andrew Salomon
Heritage Officer: Archaeology
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Colette Scheermeyer
SAHRA Head Archaeologist
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/48768>

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.

