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VELD PV NORTH AND VELD PV SOUTH EA AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF FINAL LAYOUTS: HERITAGE

Dear Genie

Introduction

This letter is compiled in support of:

1. Amendment of the EA for the Veld PV North (Pty) Ltd solar energy facility (14/12/16/3/3/1/2102) whereby the powerline and Eskom side of the substation will be separated from the original EA;
2. Amendment of the EA for the Veld PV South (Pty) Ltd solar energy facility (14/12/16/3/3/1/2103) whereby the powerline and Eskom side of the substation will be separated from the original EA;
3. Approval of the final layout of the Veld PV North (Pty) Ltd solar energy facility and revision of the EMPr; and
4. Approval of the final layout of the Veld PV South (Pty) Ltd solar energy facility and revision of the EMPr.

Methods

The PV facility footprints had already been surveyed during the EIA phase of this project but one area in PV South received a fairly low density survey. In addition, the access road running along the southern side of PV South towards PV North had not been examined. The powerline route from the two facilities to the Aggeneis Substation had not been surveyed at all. All of these areas were thus covered during the fieldwork carried out by Dr Jayso Orton and Anja Huisamen on 5th June 2021. Survey tracks were recorded on hand-held GPS receivers set to the WGS84 datum. Figure 1 shows the accumulated survey tracks from the 6th to 9th October 2016 survey and that of 5th June 2021.

Findings

The survey was aimed purely at locating any archaeological heritage resources, since all other aspects of heritage had already been dealt with during the EIA Phase of the project. No archaeological materials were seen during the brief extra survey at the PV South area or along the PV North access road. Emphasis was placed on looking at areas likely to be more sensitive, such as the place where the road passes between the two rocky hills at the southern edge of PV South (Figure 8), in deflated areas (Figure 9) and along the base of the hill at the southern edge of PV South. The lack of finds is unsurprising, since the original survey over a far

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wider area produced very little. PV North was not examined during the latest survey as its earlier coverage was deemed sufficient..


Figures 10 to 17 show the environment along the powerline route. Stone artefacts were seen in three contexts along the route. The first was on the elongated red sand dunes that are crossed in the central part of the powerline route. A milky quartz core was seen in one place (Figure 18), two ostrich eggshell fragments and a manuported quartzite rock were seen in another (Figure 19), and a single clear quartz cortical flake was seen in a third spot (Figure 20). There were no artefact concentrations and hence nothing that can be considered an archaeological site. These finds are illustrated below. The second context was on the sandy plains where a single quartz irregular core was seen (Figure 21). The last was a gravel area at the foot of a mountain where the powerline makes a slight bend. Such gravel areas often contain very low density artefact scatter (termed background scatter) and several quartz flakes were seen over several hundred meters of the line (Figure 22).

Conclusion

With respect to the two amendment applications, there are no heritage objections since these are administrative changes that will not physically affect any heritage resources.

Neither the 2016 survey nor that reported here have located any significant heritage resources within either of the PV North and PV South footprints. Likewise, no significant finds have been made along the powerline route. Therefore, with respect to the approval of the final layouts as illustrated below, there are no heritage objections and the projects may proceed to construction with no further heritage input required. In the event that minor changes to the layouts are required by other specialists then there can be no objection to such changes because it is clear that archaeological materials are very rare in this area and that artefact concentrations or sites will not be found. Nevertheless, it is always required that the EMPr include the condition that should any heritage resources of any kind be located during construction (e.g. fossils, pottery buried in a sand dune or an unmarked human burial) then construction should be halted in the immediate area, the finds should be protected in place and an archaeologist or palaeontologist (as appropriate) should be called to assess the finds and take whatever further actions may be required. Note that such further actions would need to occur under a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). Permits are issued in the name of the heritage practitioner and not that of the developer.

Yours sincerely



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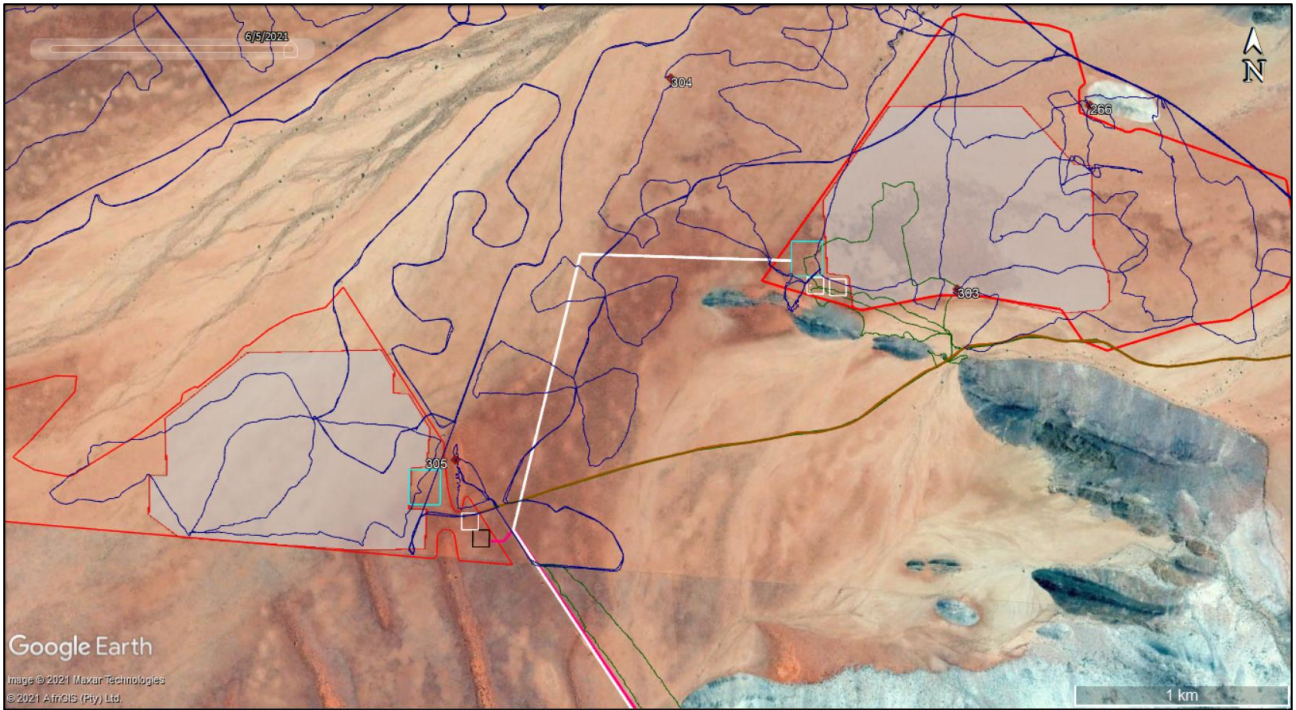
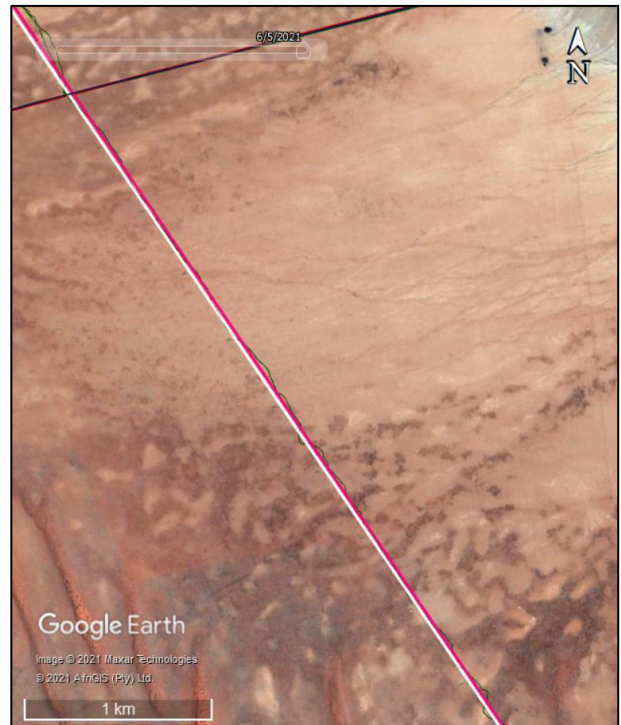
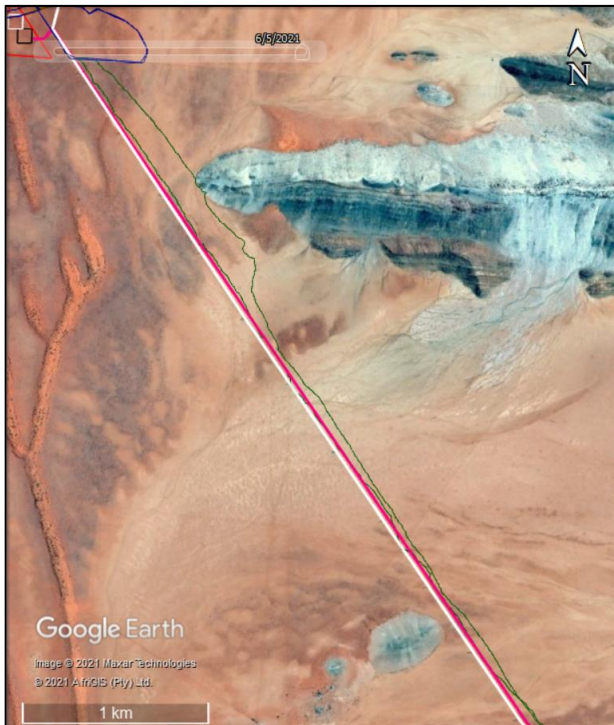
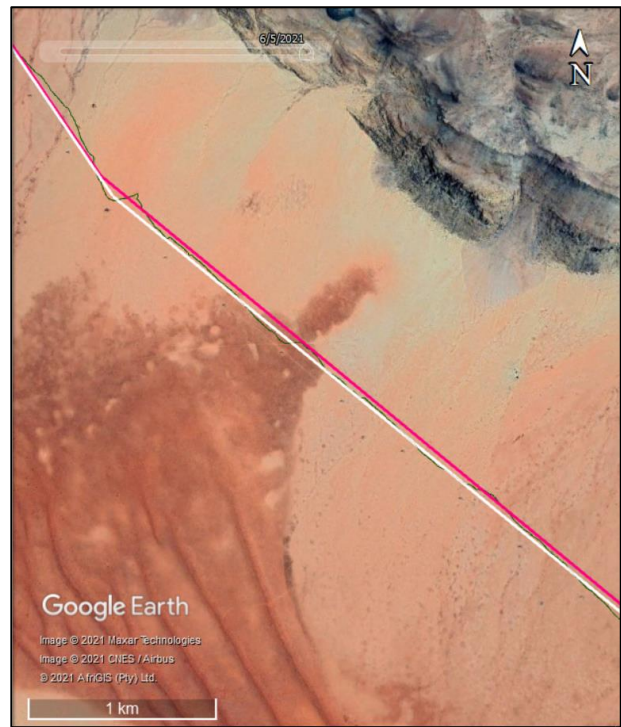
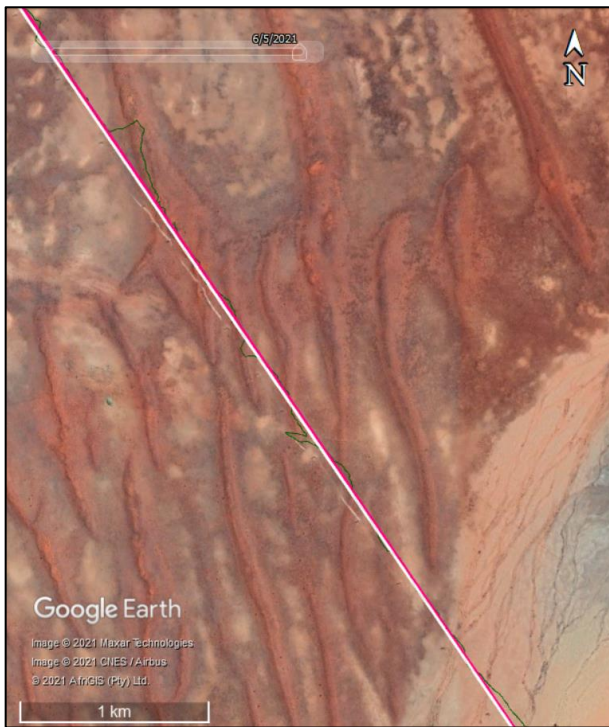


Figure 1: Aerial view of the PV study areas showing the accumulated survey tracks (2016 in blue, 2021 in green). The two waypoints were recorded during the EIA phase and neither are of any concern. Red polygons denote the project boundaries while white shaded areas are the PV footprints.





Figures 2-7: Aerial views of the powerline route (northwest to southeast) showing survey tracks (green lines).



Figure 8: The area where the PV North access road passes between two rocky hills.



Figure 9: Deflated area in PV South.



Figure 10: View towards the northwest from just south of the point where the access road to the PV sites crosses the powerline route.



Figure 11: View towards the southeast from just south of the point where the access road to the PV sites crosses the powerline route.



Figure 12: View towards the southeast across a very sandy area along the powerline route.



Figure 13: View towards the northwest along the crest of the first large red sand dune crossed by the powerline route.



Figure 14: View towards the southeast across the dune area in the central part of the powerline route.



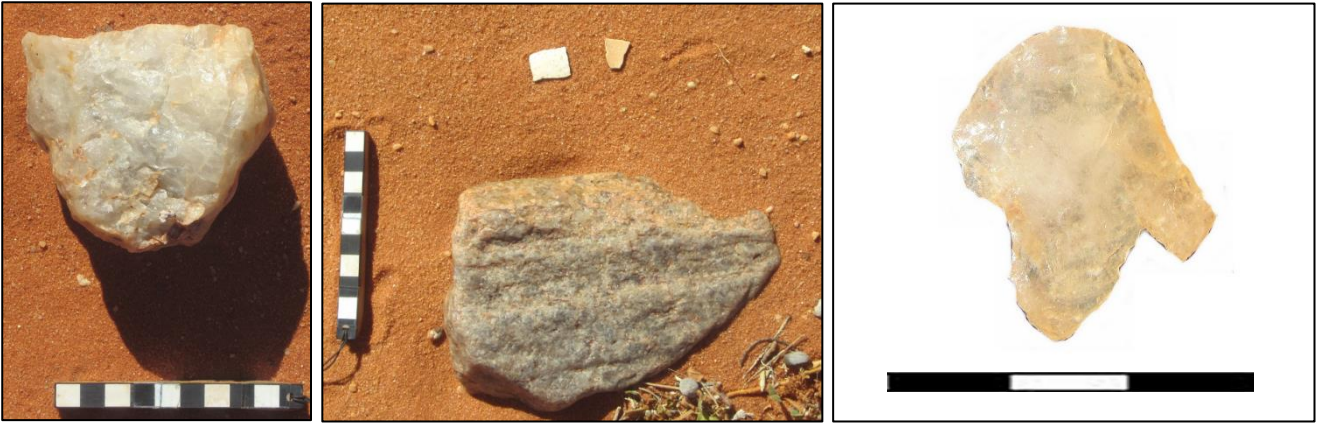
Figure 15: View towards the southeast across the dune area in the central part of the powerline route.



Figure 16: View towards the southeast across the only rocky area crossed by the powerline route.



Figure 17: View towards the southeast across the last stretch of the powerline route leading to the substation (arrowed).



Figures 18-20: Finds made on sand dunes. Quartz core, two ostrich eggshell fragments and a manuported rock and a quartz flake. Scales in cm.



Figure 21: Milky quartz core found in a sandy area.



Figure 22: Three quartz flakes from the gravel patch. Scale in cm.