

**Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the
proposed alignment of a road in Fable
Smallholdings, near Mount Richmore, Salt Rock,
KwaZulu Natal
Province**

Desktop Study (Phase 1)

For

Confluence

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Expertise of Specialist

The Palaeontologist Consultant: Prof Marion Bamford
Qualifications: PhD (Wits Univ, 1990); FRSSAf, mASSAf
Experience: 33 years research and lecturing in Palaeontology
25 years PIA studies and over 300 projects completed

Declaration of Independence

This report has been compiled by Professor Marion Bamford, of the University of the Witwatersrand, sub-contracted by Confluence, Durban, South Africa. The views expressed in this report are entirely those of the author and no other interest was displayed during the decision making process for the Project.

Specialist: Prof Marion Bamford

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Bamford', with a horizontal line underneath.

Signature:

Executive Summary

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the proposed re-alignment of a road in Fable Smallholdings, near Mount Richmore, Salt Rock, KwaZulu Natal.

To comply with the regulations of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for the proposed development.

The proposed route lies on the moderately fossiliferous sands of the Umkwelane Formation (formerly Berea Formation) of the Quaternary Maputaland Group that might preserve Miocene to Pliocene marine shells and trace fossils. No fossils are likely to occur in the wetland. Therefore, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. Based on this information it is recommended that no further palaeontological impact assessment is required unless fossils are found by the developer/ environmental officer/ other designated responsible person once excavations for re-alignment, source materials and drainage have commenced. As far as the palaeontology is concerned, the project should be authorised.

Table of Contents

Expertise of Specialist	1
Declaration of Independence	1
1. Background.....	4
2. Methods and Terms of Reference	7
3. Geology and Palaeontology	8
i. Project location and geological context	8
ii. Palaeontological context	9
4. Impact assessment.....	10
5. Assumptions and uncertainties	12
6. Recommendation	12
7. References	12
8. Chance Find Protocol	13
9. Appendix A – Examples of fossils	14
10. Appendix B – Details of specialist	15
Figure 1: Google Earth map of the general area to show the relative land marks.	6
Figure 2: Google Earth Map of the proposed development	7
Figure 3: Geological map of the area around the project site.....	8
Figure 4: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map for the site	10

1. Background

The applicant, Iron Property Group (Pty) Ltd, recently purchased Portions 631 (of 2) and REM of 2 of the Farm Lot 61 No. 1521 within Ward 22 of the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, iLembe District (outlined in red in Figure 2). The properties will be subdivided into 13 subdivisions / smallholdings with no more than one dwelling house and the normal associated outbuilding constructed on each subdivision. The development is known as “Fable Smallholdings” (previously known as Foxhill Smallholdings Development). Triplo4 submitted a formal query to the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) in 2020 to confirm that Fable Smallholdings does not constitute a listed activity in terms of the national Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 as amended (NEMA). EDTEA confirmed that the project does not require environmental authorisation however the construction of a proposed future access via Mount Richmore Road network was excluded for the enquiry (DC29/Q0079/2020).

This access road is proposed in the eastern section of Fable Smallholdings and includes the construction of a gatehouse at the boundary of the site (see Figure 2). The proposed road is a 3m wide farm style concrete strip road.

Approximately 60m of road traverses wetland resulting in the infilling of material into the wetland. An existing dam wall will be expanded to allow vehicles to traverse the watercourse at the dam wall instead of the creation of another watercourse crossing downstream of the dam wall.

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the Fable Smallholding road alignment project. To comply with the regulations of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for the proposed development and is reported herein.

Table 1: National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended) - Requirements for Specialist Reports (Appendix 6).

	A specialist report prepared in terms of the Environmental Impact Regulations of 2017 must contain:	Relevant section in report
ai	Details of the specialist who prepared the report,	Appendix B
a ii	The expertise of that person to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae	Appendix B
b	A declaration that the person is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority	Page 1
c	An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared	Section 1

	A specialist report prepared in terms of the Environmental Impact Regulations of 2017 must contain:	Relevant section in report
ci	An indication of the quality and age of the base data used for the specialist report: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map accessed – date of this report	Yes
cii	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change	Section 4
d	The date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment	N/A
e	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process	Section 2
f	The specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the activity and its associated structures and infrastructure	Section 4
g	An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers	N/A
h	A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	N/A
i	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 5
j	A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives, on the environment	Section 4
k	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr	Section 8, Appendix A
l	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	N/A
m	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	Section 8, Appendix A
ni	A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised	Section 6
nii	If the opinion is that the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan	Sections 6, 8
o	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of carrying out the study	N/A
p	A summary and copies of any comments that were received during any consultation process	N/A
q	Any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A
2	Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	N/A

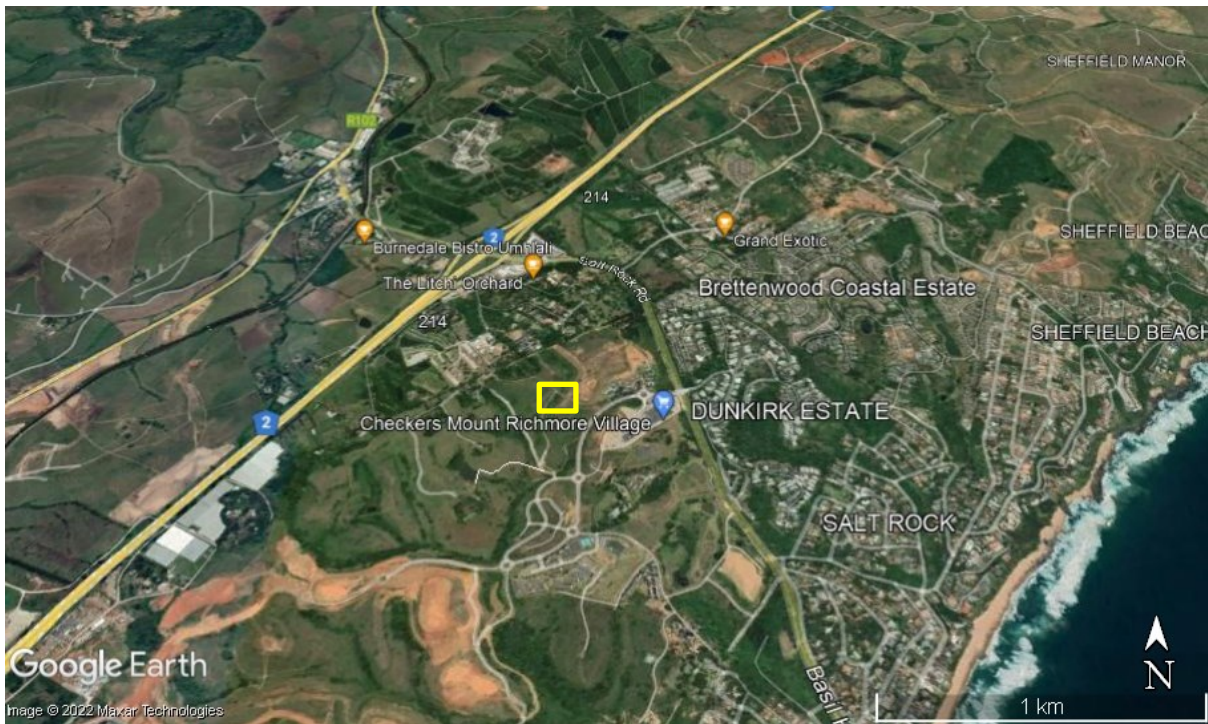


Figure 1: Google Earth map of the general area to show the relative land marks. The property is shown by the yellow outline.

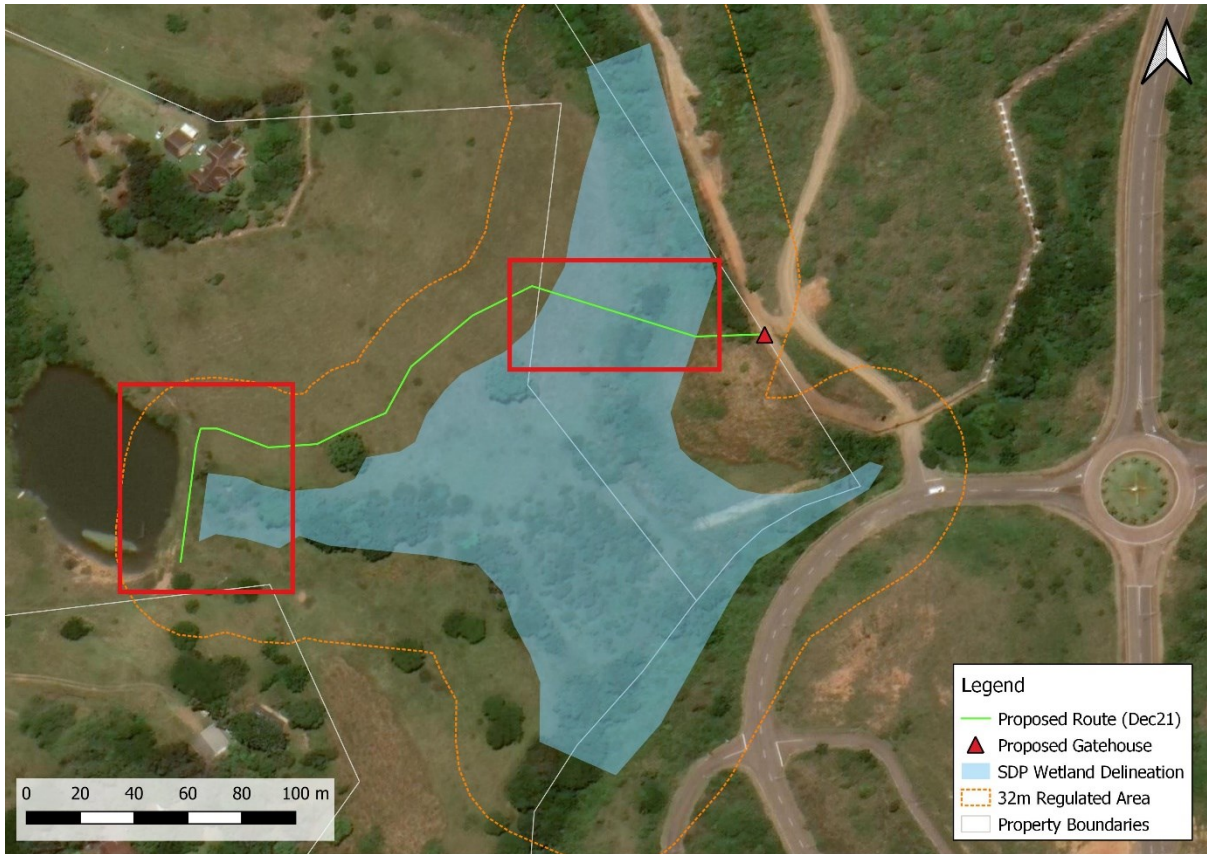


Figure 2: Google Earth Map of the proposed Fable Small Holdings rad alignment project in Salt Rock.

2. Methods and Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this study were to undertake a PIA and provide feasible management measures to comply with the requirements of SAHRA.

The methods employed to address the ToR included:

1. Consultation of geological maps, literature, palaeontological databases, published and unpublished records to determine the likelihood of fossils occurring in the affected areas. Sources included records housed at the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand and SAHRA databases;
2. Where necessary, site visits by a qualified palaeontologist to locate any fossils and assess their importance (*not applicable to this assessment*);
3. Where appropriate, collection of unique or rare fossils with the necessary permits for storage and curation at an appropriate facility (*not applicable to this assessment*); and
4. Determination of fossils' representivity or scientific importance to decide if the fossils can be destroyed or a representative sample collected (*not applicable to this assessment*).

3. Geology and Palaeontology

i. Project location and geological context

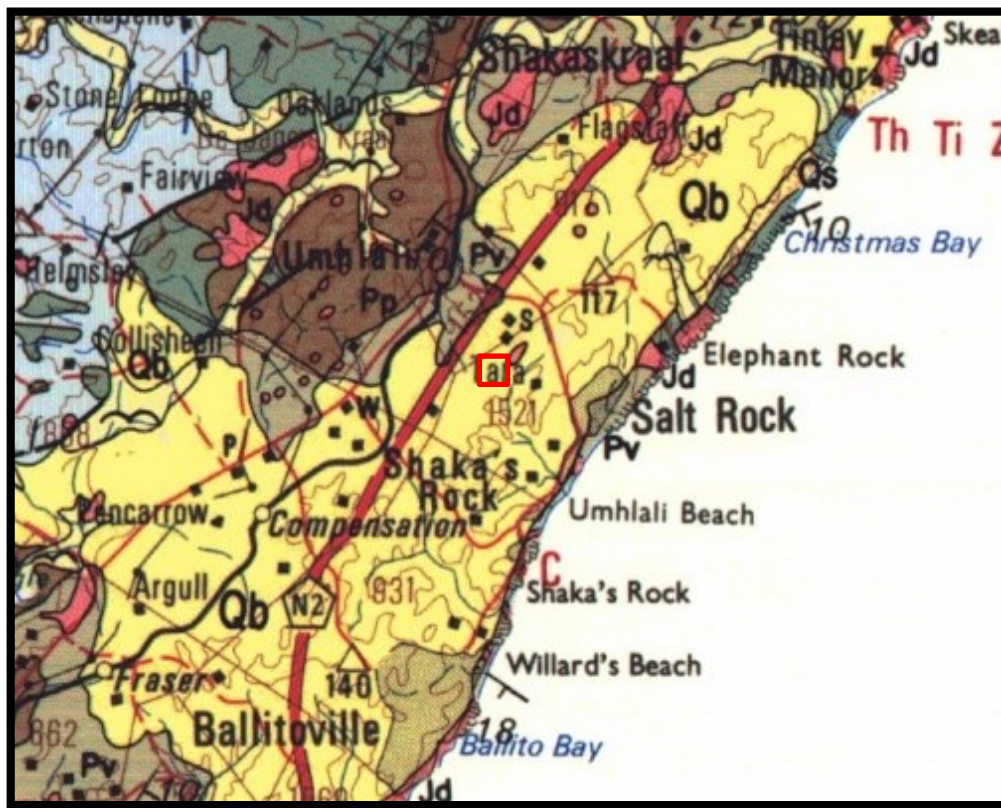


Figure 3: Geological map of the area around Slat Rock and Mt Richmond with the Fable Smallholdings project (red square). Abbreviations of the rock types are explained in Table 2. Map enlarged from the Geological Survey 1: 250 000 map 2930 Durban.

Table 2: Explanation of symbols for the geological map and approximate ages (Botha, 2018; Eriksson et al., 2006. Johnson et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2006). SG = Supergroup; Fm = Formation; Ma = million years; grey shading = formations impacted by the project.

Symbol	Group/Formation	Lithology	Approximate Age
Qs	Sibaya Fm, Mfolosi Subgroup, Maputaland Group	Dune sand	Holocene ca 10.5ka to present
Qb	Umkwelane Fm (formerly Berea Fm), Uloa Subgroup, Maputaland Group	Aeolianite, decalcified to "Berea-type" reddish-brown soil profile	Mid Miocene – Pliocene 10 – 2.5 Ma
Jd	Jurassic dykes	Dolerite	Jurassic, ca 183 Ma
Pv	Vryheid Fm, Ecca Group, Karoo SG	Shales, sandstone, coal	Early Permian, Middle Ecca
Pp	Pietermaritzburg Fm, Ecca Group, Karoo SG	Blue-grey fine grained shales	
C-Pd	Dwyka Group, Karoo SG	Tillites, shales, diamictites	Late Carboniferous to early Permian

Symbol	Group/Formation	Lithology	Approximate Age
O-Sn	Natal Group	Quartzites	Ordovician - Silurian

The project lies in the coastal margin of southern KwaZulu Natal where young Maputaland sands overlie the older Natal Group rocks and part of the eastern margin of the Karoo Supergroup sediments.

The Maputaland Group sediments are part of the early Miocene marine transgression that was followed by epeirogenic uplift, then a eustatic marine regression, starting in the middle Miocene (Botha, 2018). This marine regression deposited littoral marine sediments on the marine planed coastal platform that had incised across the entire range of rock types that were exposed along the eastern seaboard of southern Africa (ibid). Younger sands of Holocene age, the Sibaya Formation (Mfolosi Subgroup, Maputaland Group) unconformably overlie the Umkwelane Formation and are composed of modern dune and beach deposits (Botha, 2018).

ii. Palaeontological context

The site for development is in the Umkwelane Formation of the Maputaland Group and indicated as moderately sensitive (green).

Quaternary littoral and dune sands may preserve fragments of wind transported bone, wood, rhizoliths and invertebrate shells but these would be out of context and very small. Large fragments are not transported. Only under special conditions such as playa lakes and palaeo-springs or seeps would younger and more complete fossils be likely to form or be trapped. These would include Miocene-Pliocene aged marine shells, plants, wood, mammals, rodents and invertebrates (Partridge et al., 2006; Goudie and Wells, 1995). Pans do occur in the more northwestern arid region of central South Africa (Goudie and Wells, 1995, Fig. 2) but are not common in KwaZulu Natal that has a much higher rainfall. The fossils would be relatively young and fragmented so it would be very difficult to distinguish them from modern invertebrates and plants. Invertebrate burrows and root traces (rhizoliths) might occur but the area has been vegetated. The wetland is unlikely to preserve fossils of any kind because fluctuating water levels tend to destroy any fossils.

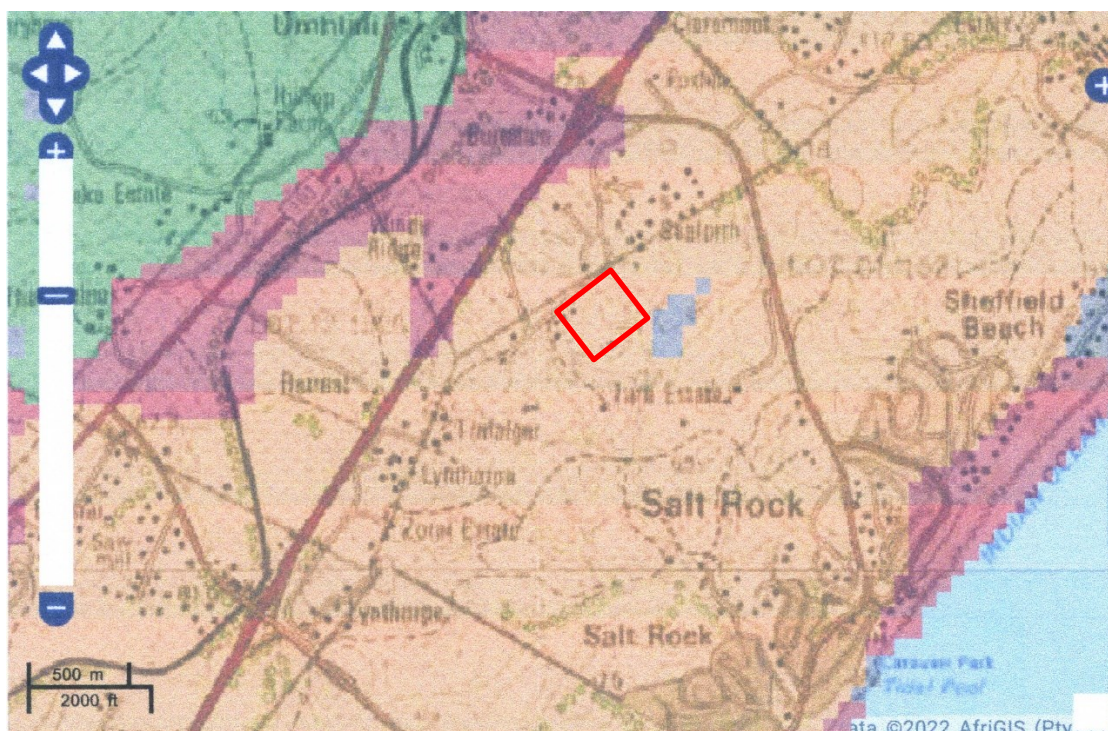


Figure 4: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map for the site for the proposed House Middle project shown within the red rectangle. Background colours indicate the following degrees of sensitivity: red = very highly sensitive; orange/yellow = high; green = moderate; blue = low; grey = insignificant/zero.

From the SAHRIS map above the area is indicated as moderately sensitive (green) and this applies to the Umkwelane Formation littoral and dune sands.

4. Impact assessment

An assessment of the potential impacts to possible palaeontological resources considers the criteria encapsulated in Table 3:

Table 3a: Criteria for assessing impacts

PART A: DEFINITION AND CRITERIA		
Criteria for ranking of the SEVERITY/NATURE of environmental impacts	H	Substantial deterioration (death, illness or injury). Recommended level will often be violated. Vigorous community action.
	M	Moderate/ measurable deterioration (discomfort). Recommended level will occasionally be violated. Widespread complaints.
	L	Minor deterioration (nuisance or minor deterioration). Change not measurable/ will remain in the current range. Recommended level will never be violated. Sporadic complaints.

	L+	Minor improvement. Change not measurable/ will remain in the current range. Recommended level will never be violated. Sporadic complaints.
	M+	Moderate improvement. Will be within or better than the recommended level. No observed reaction.
	H+	Substantial improvement. Will be within or better than the recommended level. Favourable publicity.
Criteria for ranking the DURATION of impacts	L	Quickly reversible. Less than the project life. Short term
	M	Reversible over time. Life of the project. Medium term
	H	Permanent. Beyond closure. Long term.
Criteria for ranking the SPATIAL SCALE of impacts	L	Localised - Within the site boundary.
	M	Fairly widespread – Beyond the site boundary. Local
	H	Widespread – Far beyond site boundary. Regional/ national
PROBABILITY (of exposure to impacts)	H	Definite/ Continuous
	M	Possible/ frequent
	L	Unlikely/ seldom

Table 3b: Impact Assessment

PART B: Assessment		
SEVERITY/NATURE	H	-
	M	-
	L	Dune sands and modern soils do not preserve fossils; littoral sands might preserve fossils; so far there are no records from the Umkwelane Fm of invertebrate, plant or animal fossils in this region so it is very unlikely that fossils occur on the site. The impact would be negligible
	L+	-
	M+	-
	H+	-
	DURATION	L
M		-
H		Where manifest, the impact will be permanent.
SPATIAL SCALE	L	Since the only possible fossils within the area would be fossil marine or terrestrial shells in the littoral or dune sands so the spatial scale will be localised within the site boundary.
	M	-
	H	-
PROBABILITY	H	-
	M	-
	L	It is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be found in the loose soils and sands that cover the area or in the littoral and dune sands that will be excavated. Nonetheless, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the eventual EMPr.

Based on the nature of the project, surface activities may impact upon the fossil heritage if preserved in the development footprint. The geological structures suggest that the rocks are the right age and type to contain fossils of marine or terrestrial shells. Furthermore, the material to be excavated is already disturbed by modern vegetation and roots, and this does not preserve fossils. Since there is an extremely small chance that fossils from the Holocene may be disturbed a Fossil Chance Find Protocol has been added to this report. Taking account of the defined criteria, the potential impact to fossil heritage resources is extremely low.

5. Assumptions and uncertainties

Based on the geology of the area and the palaeontological record as we know it, it can be assumed that the formation and layout of the aeolian and dune sands are typical for the country and do not contain fossil plant, insect, invertebrate and vertebrate material. The sands of the Quaternary period would not preserve fossils.

6. Recommendation

Based on experience and the lack of any previously recorded fossils from the area, it is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be preserved in the dune sands that are so young - Holocene. There is an extremely small chance that fossils may occur in the sands below the surface and modern root layer so a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. If fossils are found by the contractor, environmental officer, or other responsible person once excavations for foundations and amenities have commenced then they should be rescued and a palaeontologist called to assess and collect a representative sample. The impact on the palaeontological heritage would be extremely low so the project should be authorised.

7. References

Botha, G.A., 2018. Lithostratigraphy of the late Cenozoic Maputaland Group. *South African Journal of Geology* 121, 95-108.

Goudie, A.S., Wells, G.L., 1995. The nature, distribution and formation of pans in arid zones. *Earth Science Reviews* 38, 1-69.

Johnson, M.R., van Vuuren, C.J., Visser, J.N.J., Cole, D.I., Wickens, H.deV., Christie, A.D.M., Roberts, D.L., Brandl, G., 2006. Sedimentary rocks of the Karoo Supergroup. In: Johnson, M.R., Anhaeusser, C.R. and Thomas, R.J., (Eds). *The Geology of South Africa*. Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg / Council for Geoscience, Pretoria. Pp 461 – 499.

Partridge, T.C., Botha, G.A., Haddon, I.G., 2006. Cenozoic deposits of the interior. In: Johnson, M.R., Anhaeusser, C.R. and Thomas, R.J., (Eds). *The Geology of South Africa*.

Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg / Council for Geoscience, Pretoria. Pp 585-604.

Plumstead, E.P., 1969. Three thousand million years of plant life in Africa. Geological Society of southern Africa, Annexure to Volume LXXII. 72pp + 25 plates.

Roberts, D.L., Botha, G.A., Maud, R.R., Pether, J., 2006. Coastal Cenozoic deposits. In: Johnson, M.R., Anhaeusser, C.R. and Thomas, R.J., (Eds). The Geology of South Africa. Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg / Council for Geoscience, Pretoria. Pp 605-628.

8. Chance Find Protocol

Monitoring Programme for Palaeontology – to commence once the excavations begin.

1. The following procedure is only required if fossils are seen on the surface and when excavations commence.
2. When excavations begin the rocks and must be given a cursory inspection by the environmental officer or designated person. Any fossiliferous material (marine shells, other fragments) should be put aside in a suitably protected place. This way the project activities will not be interrupted.
3. Photographs of similar fossils must be provided to the developer to assist in recognizing the fossil plants, vertebrates, invertebrates or trace fossils in the shales and mudstones (for example see Figure 5). This information will be built into the EMP's training and awareness plan and procedures.
4. Photographs of the putative fossils can be sent to the palaeontologist for a preliminary assessment.
5. If there is any possible fossil material found by the developer/contractor then the qualified palaeontologist sub-contracted for this project, should visit the site to inspect the selected material and check the dumps where feasible.
6. Fossil plants or vertebrates that are considered to be of good quality or scientific interest by the palaeontologist must be removed, catalogued and housed in a suitable institution where they can be made available for further study. Before the fossils are removed from the site an AMAFA or SAHRA permit must be obtained. Annual reports must be submitted to AMAFA or SAHRA as required by the relevant permits.
7. If no good fossil material is recovered then no site inspections by the palaeontologist will be necessary. A final report by the palaeontologist must be sent to AMAFA and SAHRA once the project has been completed and only if there are fossils.
8. If no fossils are found and the excavations have finished then no further monitoring is required.

9. Appendix A – Examples of fossils from the Maputaland Group

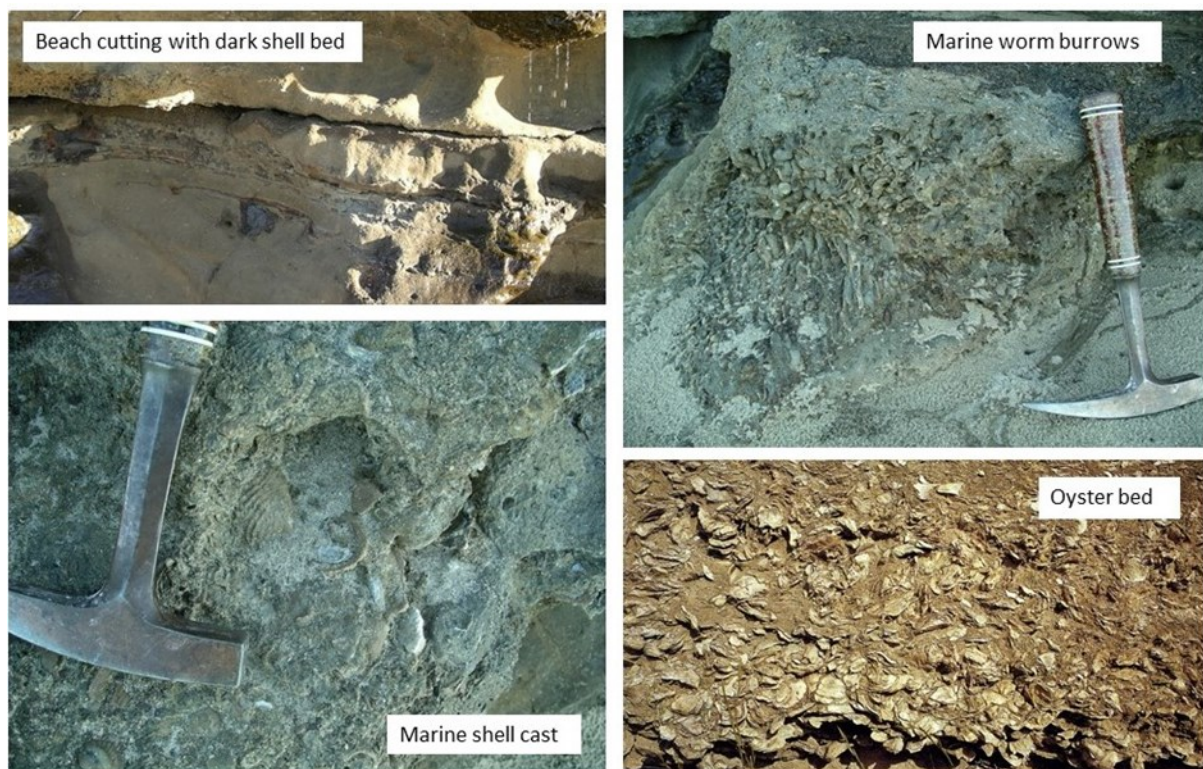


Figure 5: Photographs of trace fossils and fossils that could be trapped in the dune sand (aeolianite).

10. Appendix B – Details of specialist

Curriculum vitae (short) - Marion Bamford PhD January 2022

I) Personal details

Surname : **Bamford**
First names : **Marion Kathleen**
Present employment: Professor; Director of the Evolutionary Studies Institute.
Member Management Committee of the NRF/DST Centre of Excellence Palaeosciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
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Fax : +27 11 717 6694
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marionbamford12@gmail.com

ii) Academic qualifications

Tertiary Education: All at the University of the Witwatersrand:
1980-1982: BSc, majors in Botany and Microbiology. Graduated April 1983.
1983: BSc Honours, Botany and Palaeobotany. Graduated April 1984.
1984-1986: MSc in Palaeobotany. Graduated with Distinction, November 1986.
1986-1989: PhD in Palaeobotany. Graduated in June 1990.
NRF Rating: C-2 (1999-2004); B-3 (2005-2015); B-2 (2016-2020); B-1 (2021-2026)

iii) Professional qualifications

Wood Anatomy Training (overseas as nothing was available in South Africa):
1994 - Service d'Anatomie des Bois, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium, by Roger Dechamps
1997 - Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France, by Dr Jean-Claude Koeniguer
1997 - Université Claude Bernard, Lyon, France by Prof Georges Barale, Dr Jean-Pierre Gros, and Dr Marc Philippe

iv) Membership of professional bodies/associations

Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa
Royal Society of Southern Africa - Fellow: 2006 onwards
Academy of Sciences of South Africa - Member: Oct 2014 onwards
International Association of Wood Anatomists - First enrolled: January 1991
International Organization of Palaeobotany – 1993+
Botanical Society of South Africa
South African Committee on Stratigraphy – Biostratigraphy - 1997 - 2016
SASQUA (South African Society for Quaternary Research) – 1997+
PAGES - 2008 –onwards: South African representative

ROCEEH / WAVE – 2008+
INQUA – PALCOMM – 2011+onwards

vii) Supervision of Higher Degrees

All at Wits University

Degree	Graduated/completed	Current
Honours	13	0
Masters	11	3
PhD	11	6
Postdoctoral fellows	15	1

viii) Undergraduate teaching

Geology II – Palaeobotany GEOL2008 – average 65 students per year

Biology III – Palaeobotany APES3029 – average 45 students per year

Honours – Evolution of Terrestrial Ecosystems; African Plio-Pleistocene Palaeoecology;

Micropalaeontology – average 12-20 students per year.

ix) Editing and reviewing

Editor: *Palaeontologia africana*: 2003 to 2013; 2014 – Assistant editor

Guest Editor: *Quaternary International*: 2005 volume

Member of Board of Review: *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*: 2010 –

Associate Editor *Open Science UK*: 2021 -

Review of manuscripts for ISI-listed journals: 30 local and international journals

Reviewing of funding applications for NRF, PAST, NWO, SIDA, National Geographic, Leakey Foundation

x) Palaeontological Impact Assessments

Selected from the past five years only – list not complete:

- Mala Mala 2017 for Henwood
- Modimolle 2017 for Green Vision
- Klippoortjie and Finaalspan 2017 for Delta BEC
- Ledjadja borrow pits 2018 for Digby Wells
- Lungile poultry farm 2018 for CTS
- Olienhout Dam 2018 for JP Celliers
- Isondlo and Kwasobabili 2018 for GCS
- Kanakies Gypsum 2018 for Cabanga
- Nababeep Copper mine 2018
- Glencore-Mbali pipeline 2018 for Digby Wells
- Remhoogte PR 2019 for A&HAS
- Bospoort Agriculture 2019 for Kudzala
- Overlooked Quarry 2019 for Cabanga
- Richards Bay Powerline 2019 for NGT
- Eilandia dam 2019 for ACO
- Eastlands Residential 2019 for HCAC
- Fairview MR 2019 for Cabanga
- Graspan project 2019 for HCAC
- Lielifontein N&D 2019 for EnviroPro
- Skeerpoort Farm Mast 2020 for HCAC

- Vulindlela Eco village 2020 for 1World
- KwaZamakhule Township 2020 for Kudzala
- Sunset Copper 2020 for Digby Wells
- McCarthy-Salene 2020 for Prescali
- VLNR Lodge 2020 for HCAC
- Madadeni mixed use 2020 for EnviroPro
- Frankfort-Windfield Eskom Powerline 2020 for 1World
- Beaufort West PV Facility 2021 for ACO Associates
- Copper Sunset MR 2021 for Digby Wells
- Sannaspos PV facility 2021 for CTS Heritage
- Smithfield-Rouxville-Zastron PL 2021 for TheroServe

xi) Research Output

Publications by M K Bamford up to January 2022 peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books: over 160 articles published; 5 submitted/in press; 10 book chapters.

Scopus h-index = 30; Google scholar h-index = 35; i10-index = 92

Conferences: numerous presentations at local and international conferences.