

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
PROPOSED ROAD LINKS BETWEEN THE OUTENIQUA
PASS AND NATIONAL ROAD 2 (N2), GEORGE
(SAFCOL CORRIDOR)**

Prepared for

Gibb Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having assessed the proposed road alignments in the SAFCOL corridor, we have not identified any historical or archaeological features that require mitigation situated directly on the routes. A single, small building of the vernacular style at Bosrug lies approximately 150 meters to the west of the western alignment. This should not be damaged during construction or landscaping activities if that alignment is selected. In terms of impacts to heritage resources, either of the SAFCOL alignments would be preferred to the Blanco, Gwaing, and R404 alignments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

The Archaeology Contracts Office was commissioned to undertake a specialist study of the archaeological and historical features along the two proposed road alignments within the SAFCOL corridor near George. The location of the area is shown in Figure 1, while a composite orthophoto of the area with the alignments superimposed is shown in Figure 2. We have previously (1997) looked at five other alignments namely, Gwaing Alignments A, B, C, R404 and the Blanco Alignment..

Our brief required us to cover the following aspects:

- Identify and describe the archaeological and historical features within each of the alignments
- Determine the potential importance of the archaeological and historical features in terms of their local, regional and national importance
- Assess the potential impacts of a future road on the archaeological and historical features within the respective alignments
- Provide a comparative analysis of the suitability of the SAFCOL alignments to the Gwaing Alignments A, B, C, the R404 and the Blanco Alignments
- Recommend appropriate mitigation and/or management actions to eliminate or reduce the effects of negative impacts and enhance positive impacts of locating a future road within the SAFCOL alignments.

1.2 Study area

The focus of this study has been to identify archaeological and historical features within the alignments (40 meter wide strip).

1.3 Glossary of terms

Artefact - items made from a variety of materials for use by humans.

Early Stone Age (ESA) - In southern Africa this period extends from approximately 1.6 million years to approximately 200 000 years before present. Characteristic artefacts of this period are handaxes, cleavers, various types of cores and flakes. Items are usually made on quartzite, but quartz and other fine grained materials are also used. Sites are most frequently encountered in open contexts. Because of the age, stone artefacts are seldom accompanied by organic materials.

Middle Stone Age (MSA) - In southern Africa this period extends from approximately 200 000 years to approximately 30 000 years before present. Stone artefact technology is more refined with large blades often being retouched bifacially (on both surfaces) into delicate points. While quartzites are used extensively, fine grained siliceous materials are more common. Sites of this age are found in caves as well as in the open and can be associated with organic materials if conditions for preservation are favourable.

Late Stone age (LSA) - The period from about 30 000 years until the arrival of European settlers. The cut off varies from place to place depending on the extent of the colonial impact but generally the indigenous groups whose artefactual remains are subsumed under this heading, were either decimated or had been assimilated into other cultures by 1800 AD. A wide range of sites date to this time. Sites occur both in the open and in caves and rockshelters. Marine resources were heavily exploited to supplement the diet. Stone artefacts are very small and specific shapes recur. Ostrich eggshell and other materials were used for personal adornment. Indigenous ceramics make an appearance about 2000 years ago at the same time as the appearance of Khoekhoen herding groups in the Cape. Prior to this the landscape was inhabited by San hunter-gatherers.

in situ - in its original location or context.

vernacular architecture - style of building particular to an area, often resulting as a response to local conditions and building materials e.g. cottages in south and west Cape coast fishing settlements.

2. STUDY APPROACH

A plan of the various alignments superimposed on a composite of 1:10 000 orthophotos (CPA. Drg. No. 4564E-3 A) was supplied for use in the field. The routes were inspected largely by walking along them. Limitations were experienced where the routes crossed areas of dense black wattle growth, particularly around the Bosrug area, and indigenous forest, particularly in the uppermost parts of the study area in the

river valleys. Where we could not access the precise alignment, we looked at areas close by that could be accessed to gain a sense of whether there would be potential impacts or not.

Archaeological sites and historical features that we believed could be present included Early, Middle and Late Stone Age sites, historical buildings, bridges and graveyards. Whereas the significance and age of stone age material is determined by artefactual content, the age of buildings is based on construction style and finishings. In the case of buildings it is important to know approximate age as legislation protects any building built more than 60 years ago.

Significant sites or features were photographed and locations plotted on 1:10 000 orthophotos.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Present land use

The area is given over to two main activities, namely farming, taking place along much of the eastern alignment, and forestry, taking place along most of the western alignment. The proliferation of smallholdings in the upper part of the area is a relatively recent phenomenon. This is clearly evident in the architecture of the buildings with older styles generally located closer to the R404. The few buildings located in the forestry area seem to provide accommodation for workers and their families.

The farming areas are located on the lower slopes of the Outeniqua as this is where soils are deepest and ground relatively level. The upper part of the corridor consists of steeper topography with fairly deep incision by rivers and is more suited to forestry. Patches of indigenous forest are still to be found in the deeper valleys.

3.2 Past land use

Scattered traces of Early and Middle Stone Age material are found on the slopes of the Outeniqua mountains indicating use of the area in the distant past. Although no trace of Late Stone Age material has been found, we know that both San and Khoekhoen were in the area. Herders and hunters would probably have avoided thickly forested areas as a general rule in favour of less densely vegetated areas, particularly those along the coast as these would have been close to plentiful marine food resources. We have not yet located any caves in the area which may have acted as a focus for pre-colonial groups.

While subsistence farmers and woodcutters may have been present in the area for some time, the proliferation of farming dates to after the middle of the last century and is related to development of transport routes, and the towns of George and Blanco. The original farms were generally situated on the deeper alluvial soils on the lower slopes of the Outeniqua mountains. The architectural styles of many of the older farmhouses are reminiscent of the later part of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

3.3 Presence of archaeological material

Ploughing in the farming areas has greatly reduced the chances of finding any *in situ* stone age archaeological material in this area. Late Stone age material, particularly the remains of Khoekhoen camps, may have coincided to a large extent with areas now intensively farmed, considering that vegetation would have looked very different in the past. Dense forest would probably have been avoided by herders in favour of more open vegetation where grazing was available (probably closer to the coast). Early and Middle Stone Age artefacts will be found in or near alluvial gravels throughout the area but are only visible in isolated patches on the upper slopes where deposition has not buried them, or where they have been re-exposed by erosion.

Few old buildings are found in the area that has been assessed during this exercise. None of these lie directly on the road alignments. A single vernacular style cottage was observed at Bosrug. This lies approximately 150 meters west of the alignment and thus is not directly threatened. The location of this building is shown on Figure 2. A photograph showing the front of the building is also shown on Figure 2.

3.4 Legislation

A new body of heritage legislation is about to be implemented. This will replace the National Monuments Act of 1969. The new legislation will be known as the South African Heritage Resources Act. Of relevance to the road alignments and possible impacts is section 34(1) of the act which states: "*No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure that is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the*

relevant provincial heritage resources authority". This a change from the old act which had 50 years as its cut off.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF RISK SOURCES

Only the construction phase of the western of the two alignments in the SAFCOL corridor poses a risk to heritage resources.

5. IMPACT DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT

Impact: Potential impact on archaeological material from the western SAFCOL alignment

Stage in project life-cycle	Extent	Duration	Intensity	Probability of occurrence	Significance	Status	Confidence
Construction	local	long term	low	low	low	negative	high
Operational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1: Impacts on heritage resources without management /mitigation actions

6. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The cottage at Bosrug must be identified so that construction and related activities do not impact on it.

Impact: Potential impact on archaeological material from the western SAFCOL alignment

Stage in project life-cycle	Extent	Duration	Intensity	Probability of occurrence	Significance	Status	Confidence
Construction	local	short term	low	low	low	positive	high
Operational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Impacts on heritage resources with management /mitigation actions

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Findings of the heritage assessment

Neither of the two proposed alignments in the SAFCOL corridor pose significant threats to heritage resources. Although not lying directly on the alignment, a small vernacular style cottage at Bosrug must not be damaged by construction activities.

7.2 Comparative analysis of suitability of the SAFCOL vs Blanco, Gwaing and R404 alignments

No significant impacts on stone age material have been identified on any of the proposed routes. Some impact on historic material would occur if the Gwaing (Alt C), or the R404 alignments were used. The various routes are listed below and rated from least, to most preferred routes, in terms of impacts on heritage resources.

Alignment	Preference (5 least – 1 most)
R404	5
Gwaing Alt C	4
Blanco	3
Gwaing Alt A/B	2
SAFCOL east/west	1

Table 3: Analysis of suitability of alignments in terms of heritage resources

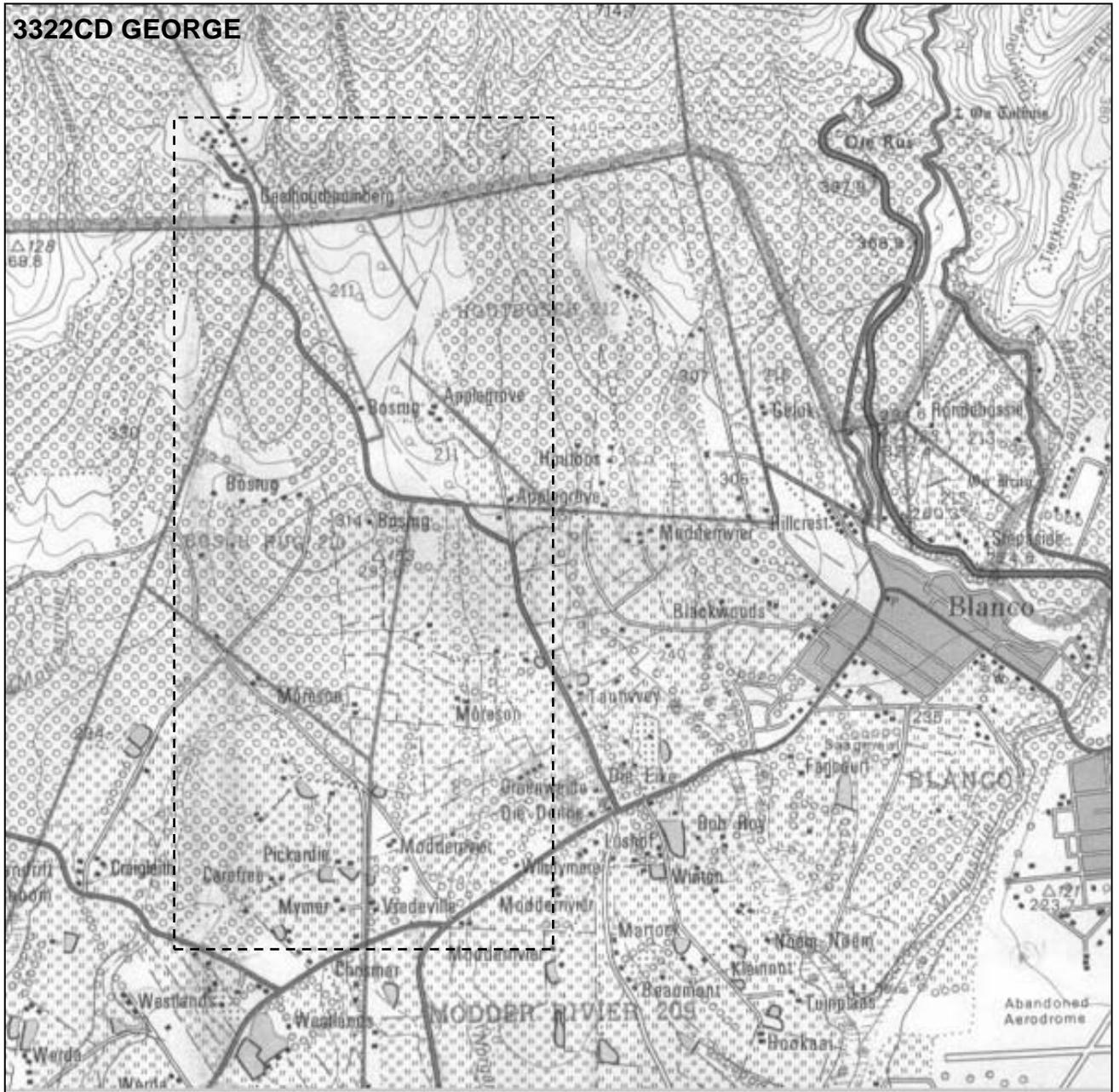
8. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Report Preparation
Fieldwork

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1

Location of the SAFCOL corridor





2

Proposed road alignments in the SAFCOL corridor

