

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
STERKFORTEIN FARM NO. 97/0  
PIKETBERG**

Prepared for

**CAPE LOWLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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## Executive summary

Cape Lowlands Environmental Services requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for a proposed resort development on the Farm Sterkfontein No. 97/0 Piketberg, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed rezoning of the subject property provides for the development of about 25 Resort Zone units, a tented camp, a lodge (with conference facilities) and a management and education centre.

The extent of the proposed development falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South African Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological sites and remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

Heritage Consultant Mr Chris Snelling has been appointed to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed project. The archaeological assessment forms part of the wider heritage study.

HIA

Five resort development sites (A-E) were assessed by the archaeologist. WHAT ABOUT THE PROPOSED CAMP?

Site E, overlooking the floodplain of the Boesmans River is the preferred site.

Low-density scatters of mainly Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and a few Later Stone Age artefacts were documented in Site E. The archaeological heritage remains occur, however, in old agricultural lands, in a severely disturbed and transformed landscape.

**The archaeological heritage remains have been graded low local significance.**

No archaeological heritage remains were located during the assessment of the proposed alternative sites A-D, including the tented camp.

With regard to the proposed development of the Farm Sterkfontein No. 97/0, situated in the Piketberg District, the following recommendations are made

- Stone Age artefacts could be collected and used for display purposes in a proposed education centre. For such a collection to take place, a permit is required from Heritage Western Cape, the provincial heritage authority
- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during excavations and earthworks for the proposed project, these should immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie 462 4502), or Heritage Western Cape (Dr A. Jerardino 483 9692). Burial remains should not be disturbed or removed until inspected by the archaeologist.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and brief

Cape Lowlands Environmental Services, on behalf of Cream Magenta 207 (Pty) Ltd requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for a proposed resort development on the Farm Sterkfontein No. 97/0 Piketberg, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed rezoning of the subject property (currently zoned Agriculture), provides for the development of about 25 Resort Zone units, a tented camp, a lodge (with conference facilities) and a management and education centre. The proposed lodge and management and education centre will be designed and constructed around the existing farm homestead. The property will be fenced and game will be introduced for viewing. Hiking and biking trails are also envisaged. Only existing access roads will be utilised. No new roads or trails will be developed. *trails!*

The extent of the proposed development (about 1200 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South African Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

It is important to note that the proposed development footprint will occupy less than 1.0 ha of the property, while the remainder of the farm will be zoned Open Space 3 and managed strictly as a Conservation Area.

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological sites and remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

Heritage Consultant Mr Chris Snelling has been appointed to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed project. The archaeological assessment forms part of the wider heritage study.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the archaeological study were:

- to determine whether there are likely to be any archaeological sites of significance within the proposed site;
- to identify and map any sites of archaeological significance within the proposed site;
- to assess the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites within the proposed site;
- to assess the status and significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development, and
- to identify mitigatory measures to protect and maintain any valuable archaeological sites that may exist within the proposed site

### 3. THE STUDY SITE

A locality map is illustrated in Figure 1.

An aerial photograph of the study site is illustrated in Figure 2.

The subject property is located approximately 30 km west of Piketberg, on the road (R399) between Piketberg and Veldruff. Access to the farm is via the turn-off to Kapteinskloof. A large portion of the property comprises agricultural lands (wheat), with the remainder (an equally large portion) comprising natural veld (Figures 3-6). Traces of strip ploughing are also evident. Alien trees such as Rooikranz and Port Jackson are sporadic over the property. However, dense stands of Port Jackson occur in the floodplain of the Boesmans River, a tributary of the Berg River. Other than the Boesmans River, there are no significant landscape features occurring on the property. A buffer area of about 700 m links the property with the Piketberg Mountain range immediately to the north. A farm house and several outbuildings also occur on the property.

The surrounding land use comprises mainly agricultural lands (wheat and some grazing).

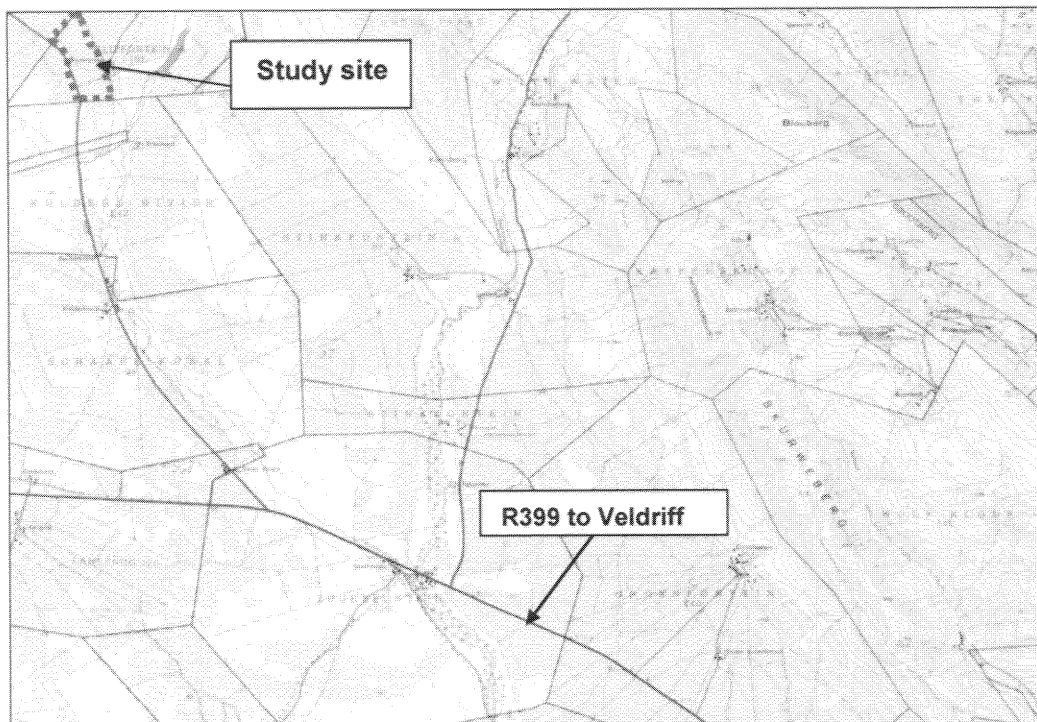
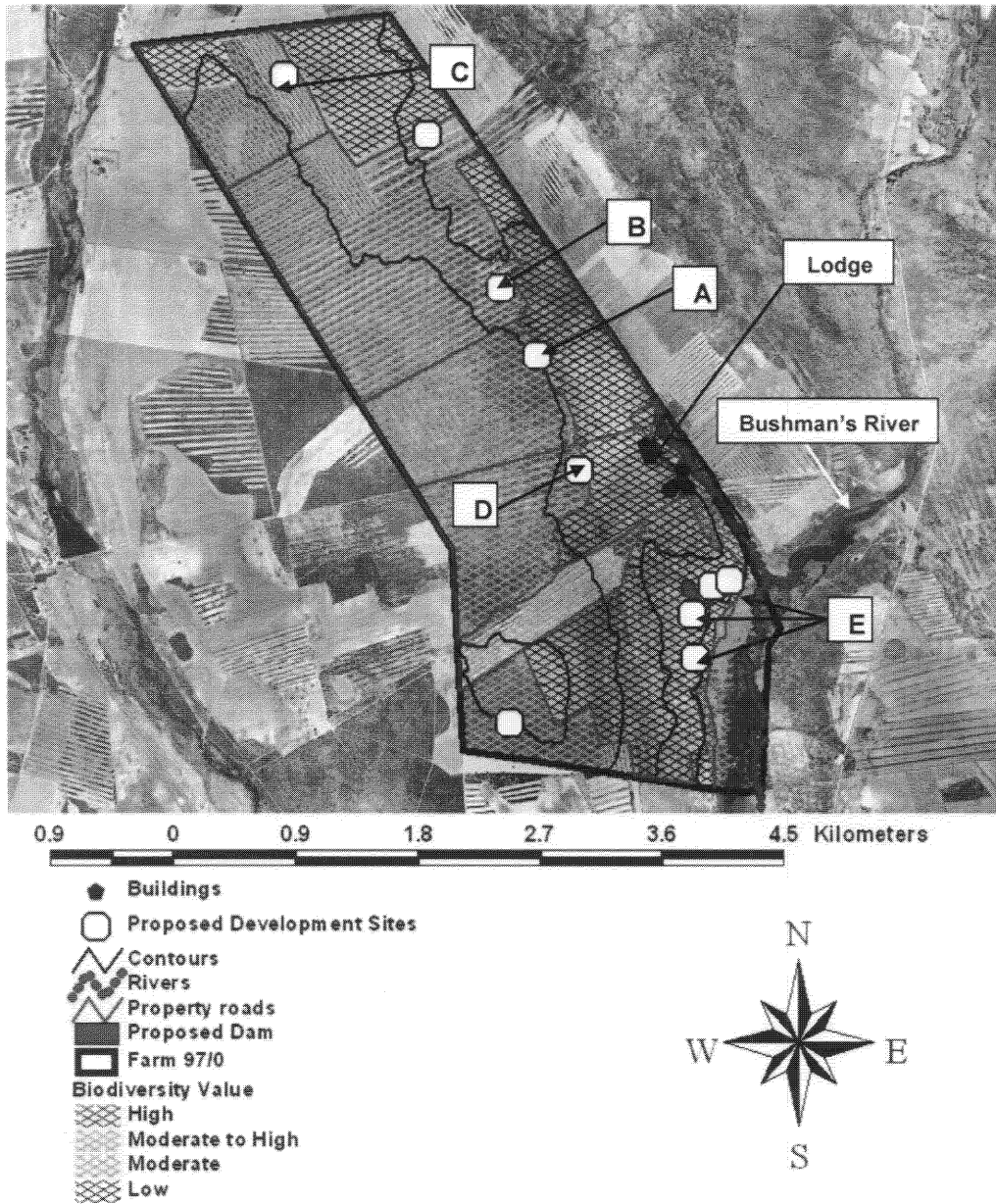


Figure 1. Site locality (3218 DC Loravia)

# Proposed Development Sites

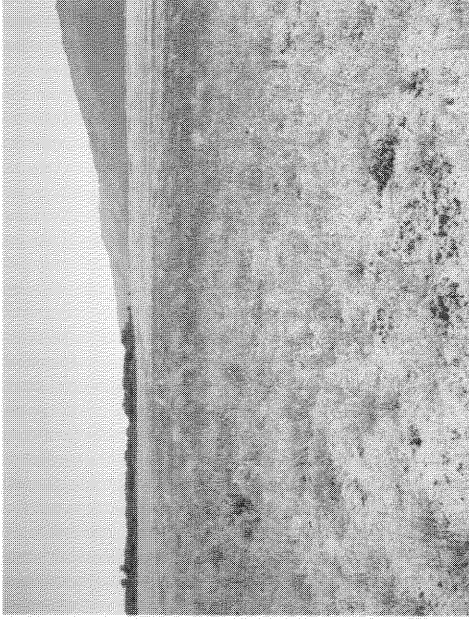


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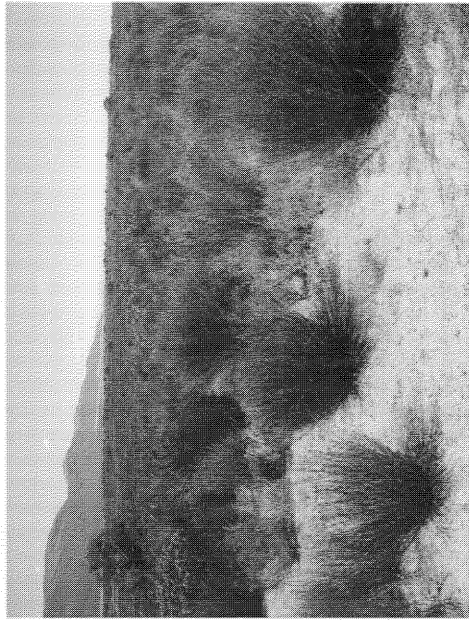
Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the proposed site



**Figure 3. View of the site facing east**



**Figure 5. View of the site facing west**



**Figure 4. View of the site facing north**



**Figure 6. View of the site facing west.**

## 4. STUDY APPROACH

### 4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a foot survey of each of the proposed and proposed alternative resort development sites A-E (refer to Figure 2).

The site visit and assessment took place on 01 October, 2006.

1 day

Archaeological heritage remains were recorded and given a co-ordinate using a Garmin Gecko 201 GPS unit set on map datum WGS 84.

A desktop study was also undertaken.

Tim Hart of the Archaeology Contracts Office, and Dr Karim Sadr, was also consulted.

### 4.2 Constraints and limitations

There were no constraints or limitations associated with the study.

### 4.3 Identification of potential risks

Unmarked human burials may be exposed or uncovered during bulk earthworks and excavations.

### 4.4 Results of the desk top study

The surrounding region is characterised by an expanse of sand, bush and scrub known as the Sandveld. Agricultural activity (mainly wheat) dominates the rural landscape. From the records of early Dutch travellers, it seems clear that much hunter-gatherer settlement was ephemeral and in the open veld. Most explorers mentioned the large numbers of abandoned windbreaks, which seem to have been occupied for very short periods of time (Parkington 1976). If these were the most 'typical' sites then their remains would not be visible in the modern Sandveld landscape of today.

Very little archaeological work has been done in the study area (Sadr pers. comm.; Hart pers. comm.). Hart's (1987) investigation of archaeological occurrences along the route of the Berg River did not extend as far as Piketberg. Rock paintings do, however, occur in the adjacent Piketberg Mountains (Kaplan 2005 & personnel observation; Van de Riet and Bleek 1940).

PROPOSED TOWN IS?

There are also historical accounts of a Khoekhoe group known as the 'Kogokwas', whose presence in the study area, along with several other groups living around the Piketberg Mountains, was recorded in the 1660's (Burger 1975). The proposed development will be known after this group (Hanekom pers. comm.).

Cochoquos

Also, the name 'Boesmans River' does suggest that San hunter-gatherers peopled the landscape at the time of the early Trekboers.



## 5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following section provides a brief overview of the relevant legislation with regard to the archaeology of Sterkfontein Farm.

### 5.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)

The National Heritage Resources (NHR) Act requires that "...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup>, or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, requires an archaeological impact assessment"

The relevant sections of the Act are briefly outlined below.

### 5.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

Section 35 (4) of the NHR stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by HWC, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

### 5.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))

Section 36 (3) of the HHR stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

## 6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTION

Five proposed resort development sites (A-E) were assessed by the archaeologist.

Site E is the preferred site (refer to Figure 2).

### 6.1 Site A

No archaeological heritage remains were located in Site A (Figure 7)

### 6.2 Site B

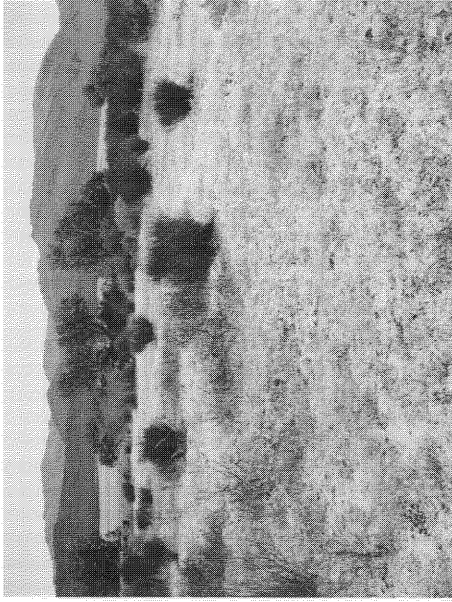
No archaeological heritage remains were located in Site B (Figure 8). Some 'Koffieklip' and one small rounded quartzite pebble was found.

### 6.3 Site C

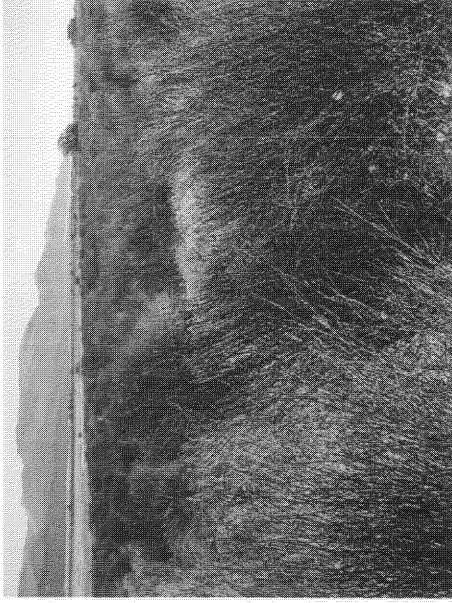
No archaeological heritage remains were located in Site C (Figure 9). One small piece of (unworked) quartz was found.

### 6.4 Site D (tenting camp)

No archaeological heritage remains were located in Site D (Figure 10)



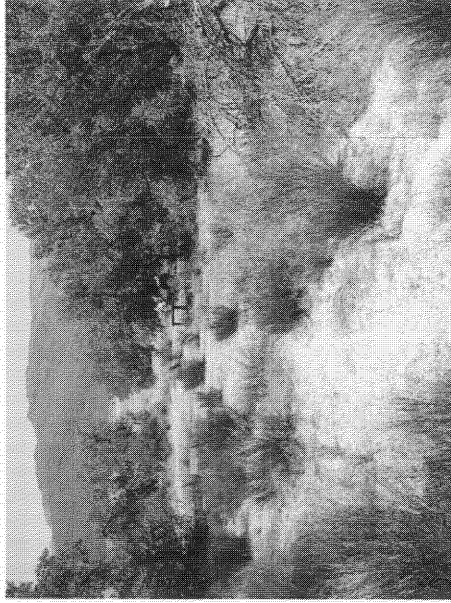
**Figure 7. Site A. View facing north. The Piketberg is in the background of the plate**



**Figure 9. Site C. View facing north east.**



**Figure 8. Site B. View facing north east**



**Figure 10. Site D. View facing north**

### **6.5 Site E (GPS reading S° 32 48 095 E 18° 34 005)**

Site E will include a cluster of units (n = 25) set around a hill overlooking the floodplain of the Boesmans River (Figures 11-13). A small dam (or watering hole) will also be constructed as a means of attracting game for viewing purposes (refer to Figure 2). The receiving environment is completely transformed, comprising extensive agricultural lands (wheat fields) which have been deep ploughed for many years. Some patches of highly endangered Renosteveld Fynbos occur on eroded slopes above the floodplain of the river (Hanekom 2006).

Low-density scatters of mainly Early Stone Age (ESA) and some Middle Stone Age (MSA) and a few Later Stone Age (LSA) artefacts were documented on the east-facing slopes of the surrounding wheat fields, which are littered in parts with large numbers of unworked quartz and limestone fragments.

A few stone tools (including one partially retouched LSA quartzite blade) were also found on the severely eroded and sheet-washed slopes on the edge of the floodplain (Figure 14) in the southern portion of the proposed site.

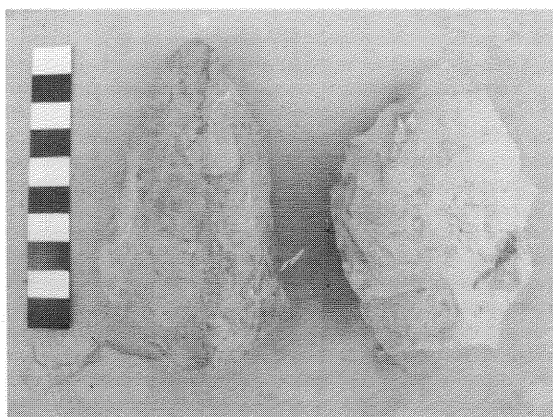
Overall, the tools mainly comprise mostly waste artefacts, such as large (ESA) side-struck flakes and a few (MSA) faceted flakes, as well as several large and medium sized cores. Some flaked/broken cobbles were also counted. Relatively large numbers of unworked rounded river cobbles also cover the site. Smaller (LSA) flakes, including one utilised flake and one retouched flake was also documented, but the numbers are very small.

Two ESA handaxes were also found, one broken bifacial handaxe in silcrete, and one incomplete unifacial handaxe in quartzite (Figure 15).

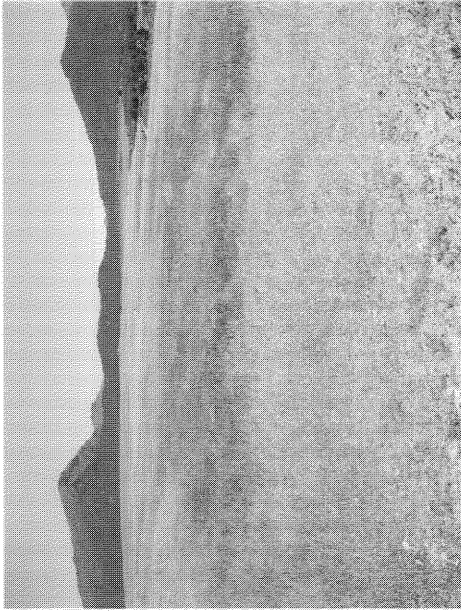
It is interesting that the tools, including the ESA implements, occur in both locally available fine and rough-grained quartzite's, as well as in very fine grained silcretes (greys and yellows). Quartz and quartzite's are locally available, but the source of the silcrete is unknown.

The proximity of the Boesmans River (with abundant fresh water and animals) must also have made the location a desirable place to visit and camp.

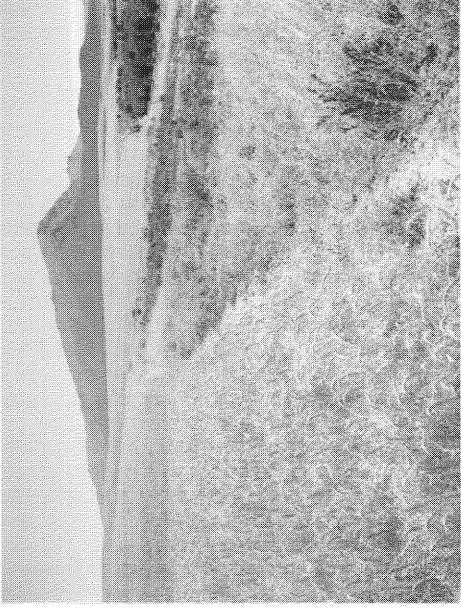
The archaeological heritage remains, have, however been graded low local significance, since they occur in a severely disturbed and degraded context.



**Figure 15. Site E. Early Stone Age Handaxes. Scale is in cm.**



**Figure 11. Site E. View facing north west**



**Figure 13. Site E. View facing north west**



**Figure 12. Site E. View facing south**



**Figure 14. Site E. Gravel banks.**

## 7. IMPACT STATEMENT

The impact of the proposed development on important archaeological heritage remains is likely to be low.

Although Stone Age tools occur in Site E (the preferred site), the remains occur in a severely disturbed and degraded context.

Unmarked human burials may also be exposed or uncovered during earthworks and excavations, but this applies more to Sites A-D, where they occur in areas dominated by soft, deep sands.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed development of the Farm Sterkfontein No. 97/0, situated in the Piketberg District, the following recommendations are made

- Stone Age artefacts could be collected and used for display purposes in a proposed educational centre. For such a collection to take place, a permit is required from Heritage Western Cape, the provincial heritage authority
- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during excavations and earthworks for the proposed project, these should immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie 462 4502), or Heritage Western Cape (Dr A. Jerardino 483 9692). Burial remains should not be disturbed or removed until inspected by the archaeologist.

- No objections.

## 9. REFERENCES

Burger, W.A. 1975. Piket Teen 'n Berg. Die geskiedenis van Piketberg 1660-1970. Printpak Bekerp, Cape Town.

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Van der Riet, J.M. & Bleek, D.F. 1940. More rock paintings in South Africa from the coastal belt between Albany and Piquitberg. Methuen & Company Limited. London.

**From:** Antonieta Jerardino  
**To:** Kaplan, Jonathan  
**Date:** 2006/12/18 03:23:48  
**Subject:** Sterkfontein Farm 97, Piketberg

Hi Jonathan,

I know you might be away on holidays, and I will be on leave as from the 23rd of December until 12th January 2006. N. Ndlovu will be presenting some of my case studies, as I won't be back in Cape Town for the 9th January, which is when the APM Committee meets.

Please reply to BOTH of us.

In Figure 2, there are several options for Site E. In the Executive Summary and Impact Statement, you say that Site E is the preferred site. I am a bit confused, as I am not sure how the distribution of facilities is proposed within the above property.

The following is proposed:

- 1) 25 Resort Zone units
- 2) a tented camp
- 3) a lodge (around existing farmstead)
- 4) a management center & education center (around existing farmstead)

Are 1) and 2) proposed at different sites, or are both of these facilities proposed to be together in one site? This is not clearly stated in your report.

Also, there are two white spots in Figure 2 ("proposed development sites") which haven't got any label. What are they?

Did you check areas around the hiking/biking trails? We have discussed the need for checking the hiking trails in connection with other cases of yours.

Regards,

Antonieta Jerardino  
(Chopi)

**CC:** Ndlovu, Ndukuyakhe