

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
PORTION 11 OF THE FARM VRISCHGEWAAGD NO. 401
MALMESBURY**

Prepared for

ENVIROAFRICA

By

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Executive summary

EnviroAfrica requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of a proposed housing development on Portion 11 of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, Malmesbury, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed subdivision and rezoning of a portion of portion 11 of the farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, provides for the development of 15 chalets on the west bank of the Berg River.

An access road about 900 m long through wheat fields, to the proposed housing development is also planned.

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 heritage 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.

A 'Notification to Heritage Western Cape of Intent to Develop' checklist has been completed by the archaeologist and submitted to Heritage Western Cape Built Environment and Landscape Committee (BELCOM) for comment. A copy of the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment report has been included with this submission.

A few Later Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Early Stone Age tools were located during the baseline study, but these are very thinly dispersed over the proposed housing footprint.

It is interesting to note that relatively large numbers of Early Stone Age tools were located in the surrounding wheat fields, that form a buffer alongside the proposed housing node and the Berg River. ESA tools are not uncommon in the heavily ploughed and disturbed agricultural lands of the Berg River valley.

The archaeological heritage remains located during the baseline study have been graded low local significance.

The Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment has identified no significant impacts to pre-colonial archaeological material that will need to be mitigated prior to development activities, including construction of the proposed access road.

The specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of Portion 11 of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, Malmesbury, has rated the potential impacts to archaeological material as being low provided that.

- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

EnviroAfrica requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of a proposed housing development on Portion 11 of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, Malmesbury, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed subdivision and rezoning of a portion of portion 11 of the farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, provides for the development of 15 chalets on the west bank of the Berg River.

An access road about 900 m long through wheat fields, to the proposed housing development is also planned.

The footprint for the proposed development which overlooks the Berg River, is currently zoned Agriculture.

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, identify and map archaeological remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

A 'Notification to Heritage Western Cape of Intent to Develop' checklist has been completed by the archaeologist and submitted to Heritage Western Cape Built Environment and Landscape Committee (BELCOM) for comment.

A copy of the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment report has been included with the above submission.

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 and access road;
- to identify and map any sites of archaeological significance within the proposed site and access road;
- to assess the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites within the proposed site and access road;
- 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 and access road.

3. THE STUDY SITE

A locality map is illustrated in Figure 1¹.

Access to the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401 is via a gravel road (No. 359) located between Moorreesburg and Gouda. Entrance to the farm is clearly marked alongside the road.

The proposed housing footprint is located on the high, rocky and steep, west bank overlooking the Berg River (Figures 2-4). The immediate receiving environment comprises Fynbos and some indigenous grass. Several rocky outcrops of rough quartzite occur on the site, providing commanding views of the Berg River and the surrounding landscape. A small footpath occurs on the site, more or less connecting with each of the proposed 15 chalets aligned along the high rocky bank.

The surrounding intensively farmed wheat fields forms a boundary (varying between 50 and 25 m) alongside the proposed development. The Berg River and floodplain form another boundary.

The barely visible remains of an old stone pigpen were located among the long dry grass, a few meters behind (west of) proposed Chalet No. 1. According to the owner of the farm, Mr Johan Orfer (pers. comm.), the stone enclosure was built by his father more than 60 years ago in order to safeguard wandering pigs. A few stacked rocks are all that remains of this feature (Figure 5).

No old buildings or other structures or features occur within or close to the proposed housing footprint.

The main farm homestead is located about 1.5 kms north of the proposed housing development.

¹ Unfortunately, no aerial photograph of the site is available

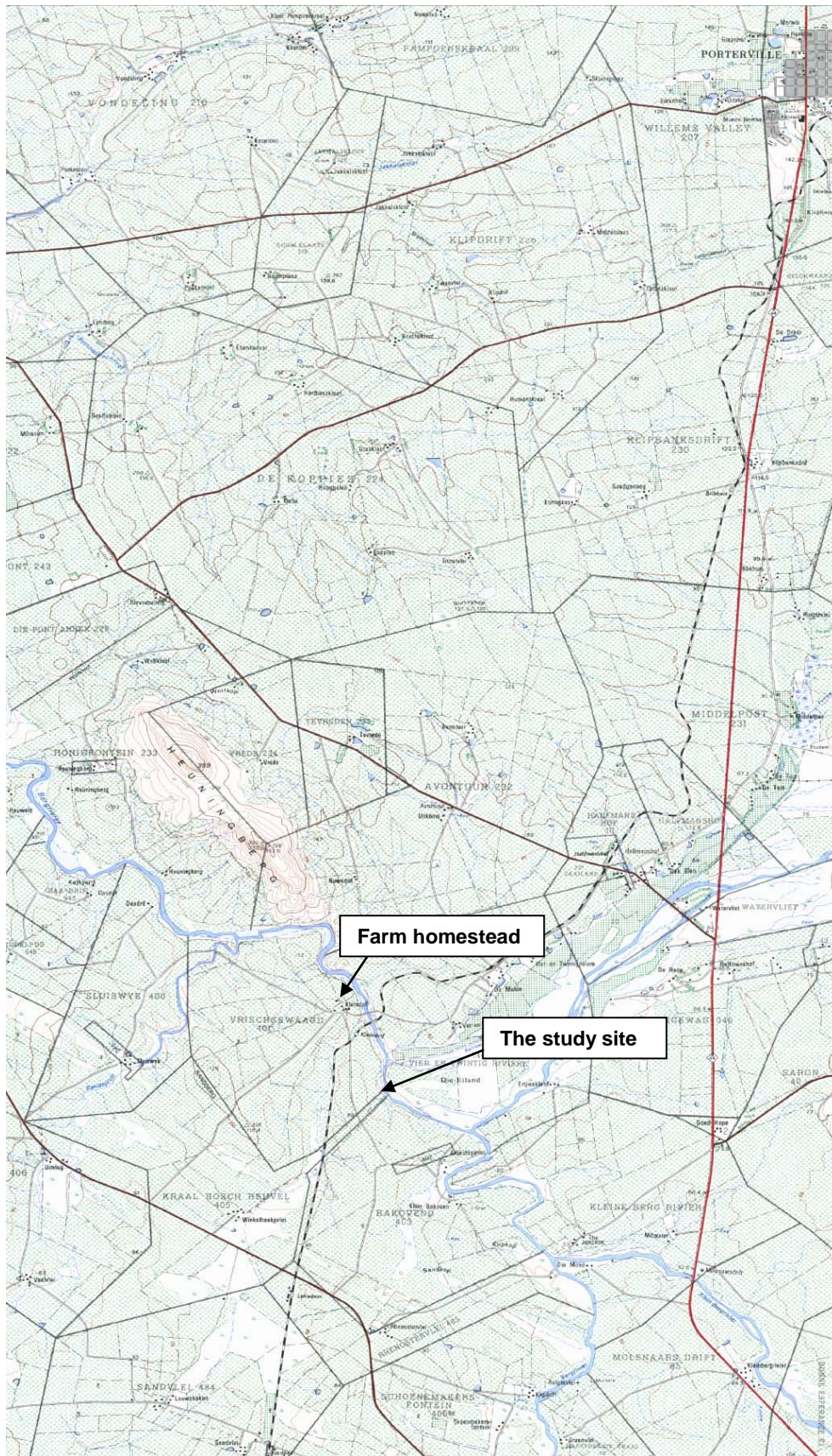


Figure 1. Locality Map (3318 BB Porterville)



Figure 2. View of the site facing north east.



Figure 3. View of the south facing south east. The development footprint is on the ridge to the right of the plate.



Figure 4. View of the site facing north-east. The development footprint is on the ridge to the left of the plate.



Figure 5. Remains of the stone walled pig pen. Arrows indicate some of the stones.

4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY

4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a detailed foot survey of the proposed housing footprint. The immediate surrounding area was also searched for archaeological heritage remains.

The proposed 900 m long road through the wheat fields was also assessed.

A desktop study was undertaken.

The site visit and assessment took place on the 11th of October 2005.

5. CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations or constraints associated with the proposed development.

6. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

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

`...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m², or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m², requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

`...the construction of a road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development exceeding 300 m in length, (also) requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

6.1.1 Structures (Section 34 (1))

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), or Heritage Western Cape.

6.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

No person may, without a permit issued by the SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

6.1.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))

No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape, 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.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTION

A few Stone Age tools were located in open spaces on the steep, gravel and rocky bank overlooking the Berg River, but are spread very thinly over the proposed housing footprint.

Three Later Stone Age (LSA) tools were found. These include one snapped utilised bladelet, one utilised and miscellaneous retouched core reduced flake, and one triangular-shaped retouched chunk. The tools are in grey silcrete.

Two Middle Stone Age (MSA) flakes in rough quartzite were also found, as well as one possible incomplete Early Stone Age (ESA) handaxe that was found partially embedded in the gravel.

The quartzite was most likely obtained locally, but the source of the silcrete is unknown.

The low-density scatter of tools has been graded low local significance.

A collection of the tools is illustrated in Figure 6.

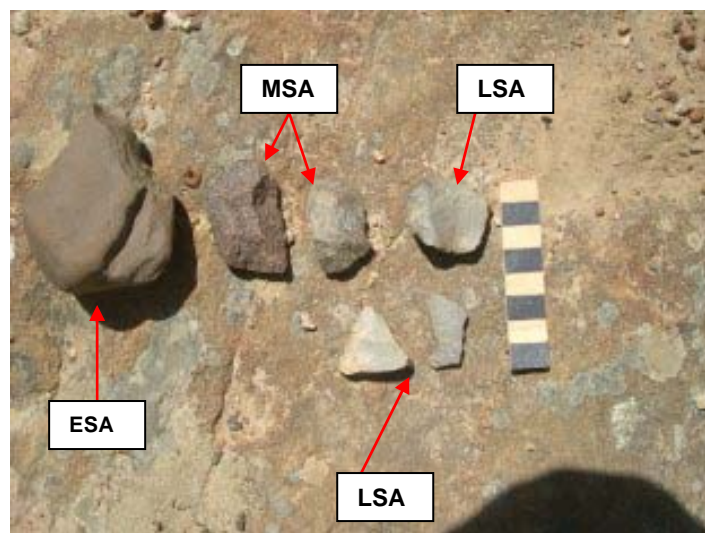


Figure 6. Collection of tools located during the study. Scale is in cm

7.1 Proposed access road

A \pm 900 m long access road to the proposed housing development is also planned. The proposed road will pass through heavily ploughed wheat fields (Figures 7 & 8). Plans of the road are not yet available, but according to Mr Johan Orfer (pers. comm.), a route is envisaged.

Large numbers of ESA tools and unworked stone was noted along the edges of the surrounding wheat fields. These include large chunks, flakes, irregular cores, retouched tools and several large bifacial hand axes (Figure 9), all made on locally available river-rolled quartzite cobbles. The tools occur in severely disturbed and modified context. According to Mr Johan Orfer (pers. comm.) such tools and much un-worked stone are usually always encountered when preparing land for ploughing. Piles of stone are also regularly removed from the surrounding lands.

ESA tools such as those described above are not uncommon in the intensively farmed agricultural lands of the Berg River valley (Hart 1987; Kaplan 2001).



Figure 7. The surrounding landuse is intensive wheat farming



Figure 8. The surrounding landuse is intensive wheat farming



Figure 9. ESA bifacial hand axe. Scale is in cm

7.2 Other finds of archaeological and historical interest on the remainder of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401.

It is interesting to note that at least one indigenous burial was recovered during ploughing on the farm by the current owners great-grandfather, more than 100 years ago (Johan Orfer pers. comm.). The skeleton was recovered from fields ploughed close to the Sandberg, which is about midway from the entrance to the farm and the main homestead. The remains of the skeleton are unknown.

And according to Mr Johan Orfer (pers. comm.), a historic wagon trail (or `wagen weg') and drift across the Berg River was also once present on the farm (also known as Kleindrif). The trail and drift were possibly destroyed (more than 80 years ago) during the construction of a railway bridge over the Berg River, or as a result of periodic flooding of the River.

8. IMPACT STATEMENT

The impact of the proposed housing development on Portion 11 of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, Malmesbury on important archaeological heritage remains is likely to be low.

The impact of the proposed access road to the proposed housing development on important archaeological heritage remains is also likely to be low, although Early Stone Age tools will likely be uncovered during construction activities. The proposed 900 m road passes through intensively farmed wheat fields.

The probability of locating significant archaeological heritage remains during implementation of the project is likely to be improbable.

Human burials may, however, be exposed or uncovered during earthworks and excavations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The archaeological heritage impact assessment of Portion 11 of the Farm Vrischgewaagd No. 401, Malmesbury, has rated the potential impacts to archaeological material as being low provided that:

- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502).

10. REFERENCES

Hart, T. 1987. Porterville survey. In Parkington, J. & Hall, M. (eds.). Papers in the prehistory of the Western Cape, South Africa. Oxford: BAR International Series 332:404-423.

Kaplan, J. 2001. Gamma-Omega 765 Kv Transmission Line. Heritage Management Plan. Report prepared for P.D. Naidoo & Associates and PBA International. Agency for Cultural Resource Management.