

# Archaeological Impact Assessment

**Title:** Darling Flora Project

The proposal is to erect a building with a footprint of some 2000 m<sup>2</sup>, housing a herbarium, hall, and offices, that will serve as centre for environmental conservation and education on Darling Municipal Commonage, ERF 550 Darling (extension 10) (36.68 ha), Swartland 'B' Municipality, West Coast District 'C' Municipality, Western Cape.

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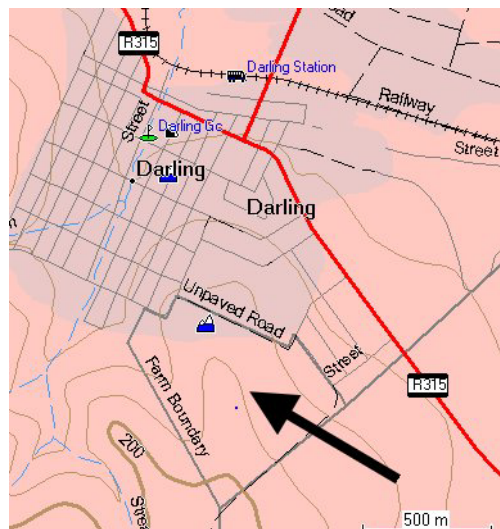
## Commissioned by Environmental Consultants

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## Developer

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## **Executive Summary**

A survey was conducted of the property, a 36.68 ha in extent and a flora reserve. Special attention was paid to the portion adjacent to the existing reservoirs where it is proposed to erect a building to house a herbarium, hall and other facilities. No archaeological or palaeontological remains were noted on the whole property. No impact on heritage resources is anticipated.

## **Background Information**

The property, a nature reserve some 36 ha in size, is one of the few remaining patches of natural vegetation in a landscape of intensive agriculture. The conservation status is high. The proposed building to be erected on a portion of the property impacted by the construction of two municipal reservoirs and will provide facilities within the reserve. These facilities will allow the hosting of the wild flower show, the conservation showpiece of the year. The herbarium will be home to the existing Flora Project supported by a number of community and national conservation bodies. The hall will be used for conferences, lectures and exhibitions in line with the educational aims of the Flora Project. In addition there will be the necessary ablution and kitchen facilities and trading kiosk. The Flora Project is a laudable community driven conservation initiative.

## **Archaeological Background**

Darling is marginal to the sandveld and swartland, areas occupied in prehistory by Stone Age hunter-gathers and more recently by Khoekhoe herders. The markers are stone artefacts and pottery. A recent survey of a lower lying property in the industrial area of Darling showed a low density of stone artefacts but no pottery. There is a possibility of finding such materials on this property. This is undeveloped land and historic artefacts are unlikely to occur.

## **Description of the property**

The triangular piece of ground (Figure 1) slopes downwards from the apex in the south. It is bounded by ploughed land on the laterals and along the base to the north by the urban edge (Figure 2). The slopes are moderate to steep.

## **Methodology**

The property (Figure 2) is vegetated in clumps with exposures along paths and along the bordering roads cut into the slope. There is also disturbed ground around the reservoirs. These exposures were routinely searched for archaeological and fossil materials.

## **Observations and Results**

No archaeological artefacts were observed. Palaeontological remains are unlikely to preserve in these substrates.

## **Sources of Risk and Statement of Significance**

The apparent absence of archaeological and palaeontological materials on the surface or associated with the cuttings along the roads suggests the risk of any development uncovering material is very low. The significance of the property in terms of the archaeology and palaeontology is rated as low.

The low position of the proposed herbarium-hall development on the north western margin of the property suggests the visual impact will be limited. The building may go some way to mitigating visual impact of the two unsightly existing cement reservoirs (Figure 3). The development will not significantly compromise the boundary between town and farmland.

## **Recommended Mitigations**

It is recommended that should any excavations by chance uncover buried palaeontological or archaeological materials including human remains that Heritage Western Cape is notified (Mr N Ndlovu, Senior Heritage Officer – Archaeologist, Private Bag X9067, Cape Town 8000, Tel: 021 483 9687, Fax: 021 483 9842, [ndlovu@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:ndlovu@pgwc.gov.za) ).

## **Conclusions**

The examination of this undeveloped property did not reveal any archaeological, palaeontological or other heritage resources that may be impacted by development.

Note: Application for rezoning is not required. The consent of the owner, the Swartland Municipality, is necessary and has been obtained by way of a Council Resolution enabling the development.

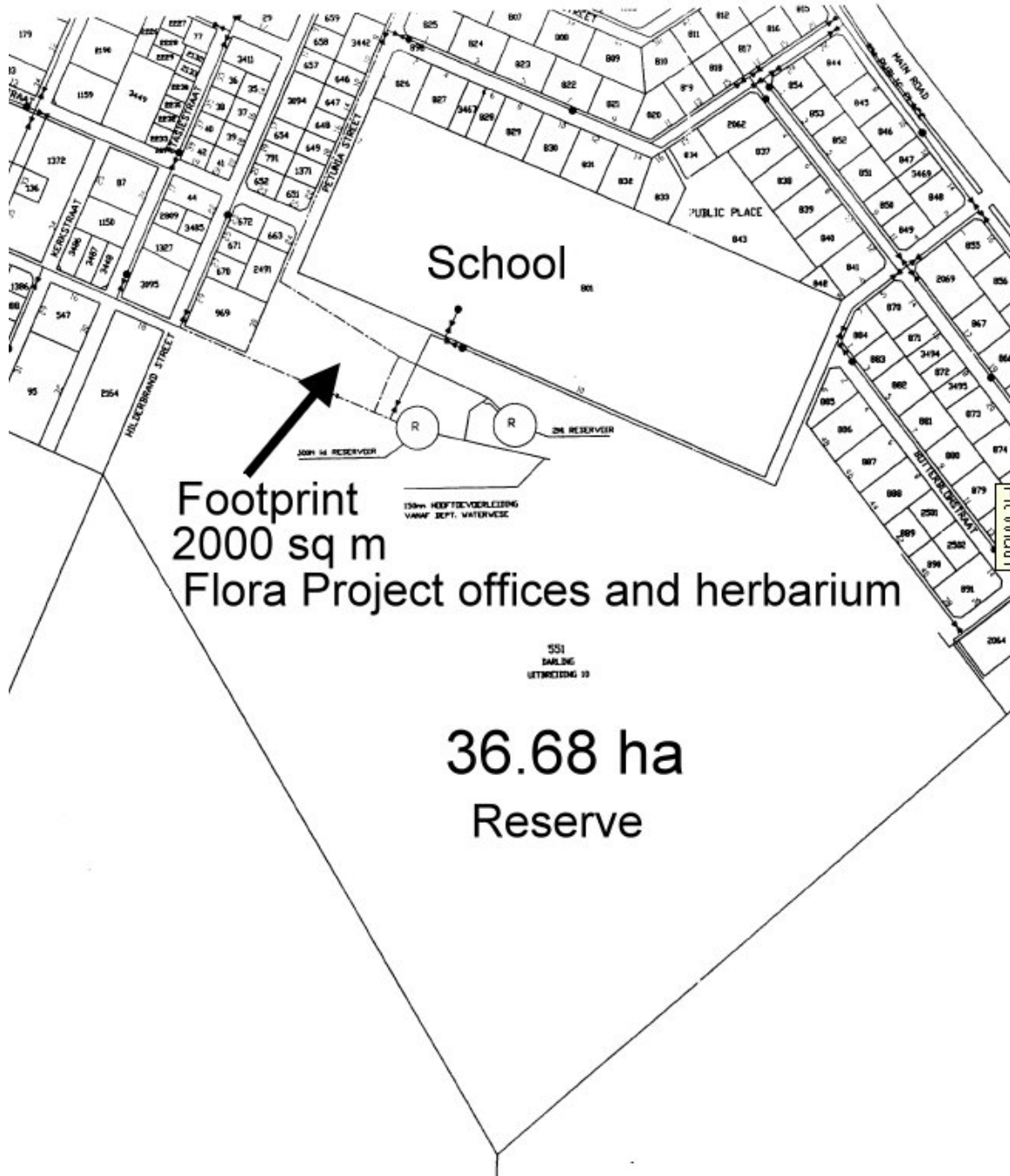


Figure 1. Architect's plan of the reserve showing the position of the Flora Project building in relation to the school and town housing. The circular structures are unsightly but prominent cement reservoirs (Figure 3).





Figure 2. Aerial view of the property surrounded by town and agricultural lands



Figure 3. The Flora Project building will be to the right of the two existing reservoirs