

Archaeological Impact Assessment

Title: Re-Routing Darling Hills Road (Divisional Road 1148 & Minor Road 147).

Proposal to re-route a 2.9 km section of the road linking the R27 and the R307 in the Modder River Valley, Swartland 'B' Municipality, West Coast District Municipality, Western Cape. The section crosses the farms Pampoenvlei (Farm 728) and Groote Post (Ptn. 1 of Farm 716).

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Commissioned by

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Municipal jurisdiction

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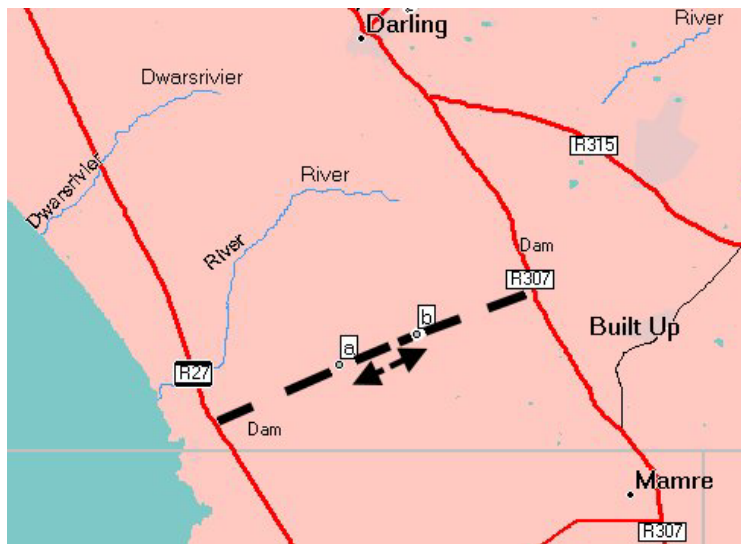


Figure 1. Section of Darling Hills Road between R27 and R307 to be upgraded where it runs through the Modder River Cloof. 1:50 000 sheet 3318 AD Darling

a = S 33 28 26.8 E 18 22 13.7 b = S 33 27 54.2 E 18 23 51.9

Executive Summary

A survey of the archaeological resources along the route of the proposed road re-alignment to a 2.9 km section of the Darling Hills Road (Divisional Road 1148 and a portion of Minor Road 147) linking the R27 to the R307, 20 km south of Darling, was carried out. The route follows an existing track and pipeline constructed for agricultural purposes on the northern slope of the Modder River Valley. These are agricultural lands and there are no structures that will be impacted. The exposures along the 6 m wide track and the kilometre long, metre deep trench for the pipeline show the substrate to be deep aeolian sands. No archaeological or palaeontological materials were recorded in these exposures. It is considered the direct impact of the development on heritage resources will be low and no mitigation is recommended.

Background Information

The purpose of the development (Figure 2) is to improve access to properties along the road. The owners of Groote Post (Starke) and Pampoenvlei (Louw) properties are sharing the costs of the re-alignment of this section because of budgetary constraints of the Provincial authorities. Environmental as well as safety considerations motivate the re-alignment.

This report is part of a Basic Assessment Activity.

Archaeological Background

There are major archaeological sites in the in the sand plain close to the coast with Duinefontein (Klein *et al.* 1999 - Duinefontein 2, an Acheulian site in the Western Cape Province of South Africa - *Journal of Human Evolution* 37: 153-190) the prime example. Pleistocene artefacts and fauna may occur below the sand cover however further inland the sands are more acid and preservation is less optimal. The possibility that the proposed road construction would intersect deeper artefact and or fossil bearing horizons below the sterile sands in this area is low.

Description of the property

The route is along the northern slopes of the valley (Figures 3-5) and crosses areas dominated by alien and indigenous vegetation. The track is some 6 m wide giving good exposures (Figure 4). There is also the pipeline trench (Figure 5), which is a metre deep and runs for a kilometre adjacent to the track, in the eastern section.

Methodology

The exposures along the track and along the trench were examined for archaeological and palaeontological materials. Exposures are good as the road has been already been cleared of vegetation and effectively completed.

Observations and Results

No archaeological or palaeontological materials were observed in exposures along the track or in the sand piles excavated from the pipeline trench. The route will cross the Modder River at the western end. Shale bedrock is exposed in places in the bed of the river but the banks at the proposed crossing point are blanketed with sands (Figure 3).

Sources of Risk and Statement of Significance

The route is over deep sands and the risks of road construction impacting directly on any heritage resources is considered to be low. However, there could be an indirect impact depending on the source of any materials used to seal the road and the Environmental Consultant is aware of this consideration. There is a quarry (Figure 2) next to the present road that is used for surfacing the Provincial road. This does not pose any risk to heritage resources but is in a botanically sensitive zone.

The significance is rated as low.

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, nndlovu@pgwc.gov.za). Features like burials for example can occur in unpredictable locations.



Figure 2. The realignment road section (black line) will be to the north of the existing road to avoid further damage to sensitive vegetation along the river.



Figure 3. The western end to the route overlooking the Modder River with sands covering the flood plain.



Figure 4. The western part of the route is through alien vegetation established on the sandy substrate.



Figure 5. Capped borehole at the beginning of the metre deep, kilometre long trench next to the proposed route.