

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
NOUPOORT MOUNTAIN RESERVE
PIKETBERG**

Prepared for

Enviro Logic

By

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Executive summary

Enviro Logic requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of the proposed Noupoot Mountain Reserve in Piketberg, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed project comprises the upgrading of existing buildings on the site, and the replacement and repositioning of existing buildings, and the rezoning of the remainder (or undeveloped area) of the property to Open Space III for conservation purposes.

The proposed project provides for the development of the following activities:

- 32 bedroom hotel and conference centre
- 17 chalets
- Chapel

The affected property (Portion 16 of the Farm Langeberg No. 91, Piketberg) is currently zoned Resort Zone II.

The extent of the proposed development, including the proposed Conservation Area (about 66 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South Africa Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites 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.

The following findings were made:

- A few Stone Age tools were located during the study, but are very thinly dispersed over the surrounding property, and occur in a disturbed context.

The archaeological remains have been graded low local significance.

No rock paintings were found on the property, despite an intensive search of all rock outcrops.

With regard to the proposed re-development of Portion 16 of the Farm Langeberg, No. 91, Piketberg, the following recommendations are made:

- No archaeological mitigation is required.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

Enviro Logic requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of the proposed Noupoot Mountain Reserve in Piketberg, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed project comprises the upgrading of existing buildings (including infrastructure) on the site, and the replacement and repositioning of existing building units, and the rezoning of the remainder (or undeveloped area) of the property, to Open Space III for conservation purposes.

The proposed project provides for the development of the following activities:

- 32 bedroom hotel and conference centre
- 17 chalets
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The affected property (Portion 16 of the Farm Langeberg No. 91, Piketberg) is currently zoned Resort Zone II¹.

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The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites 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.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the specialist 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 indicate the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites potentially affected by the proposed development;
- 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
- to propose actions for inclusion in the Construction and Operational Environmental Management Plan for the proposed project.

¹ Previously Agriculture, the affected property was rezoned for Resort Housing II in 1994.

3. THE STUDY SITE

The study site is situated on the Piketberg Mountains (above the Versveld Pass) and is located about 20 km from the town of Piketberg in the Western Cape Province (Figure 1). The property was previously known as Noupoort Farm, a private resort development, which has not been operating for several years.

The property was recently bought by a private developer, who plans to redevelop the site.

A proposed conceptual development plan is illustrated in Figure 2.

The property is located between the Perdeberg and Grootberg mountains. The property comprise a very narrow strip of land in the south (bordered by large Pine and Blue Gum trees), which widens into an area comprising old (highly disturbed) agricultural lands and fruit orchards (Figure 3). The escarpment is dominated by a number of existing buildings/chalets, labourer's/staff cottages, a conference facility (previously a fruit packing shed) and outdoor entertainment area including a swimming pool (Figures 4 & 5). A number of chalets are located immediately below the escarpment among a cluster of rocky outcrops (refer to Figure 5). None of the existing buildings on the property is older than 60 years of age. The northwestern aspect of the property is a deep valley contained by the two previously named mountains, providing a commanding view of Veldriff and the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 6). This undeveloped area – the proposed conservation area – is heavily vegetated, resulting in low archaeological visibility.

4. STUDY APPROACH

The approach used in the study entailed a foot survey of the 66 ha site.

The focus of the study was, naturally, on the rocky outcrops on the property, where the likelihood of locating pre-colonial rock art sites was determined to be high.

The remainder of the property was also searched, but not as intensively.

Archaeological sites were recorded using a Garmin Gecko 201 GPS set on map datum WGS 84.

A desk-top study was also undertaken.

The survey was undertaken on the 23 January 2006.

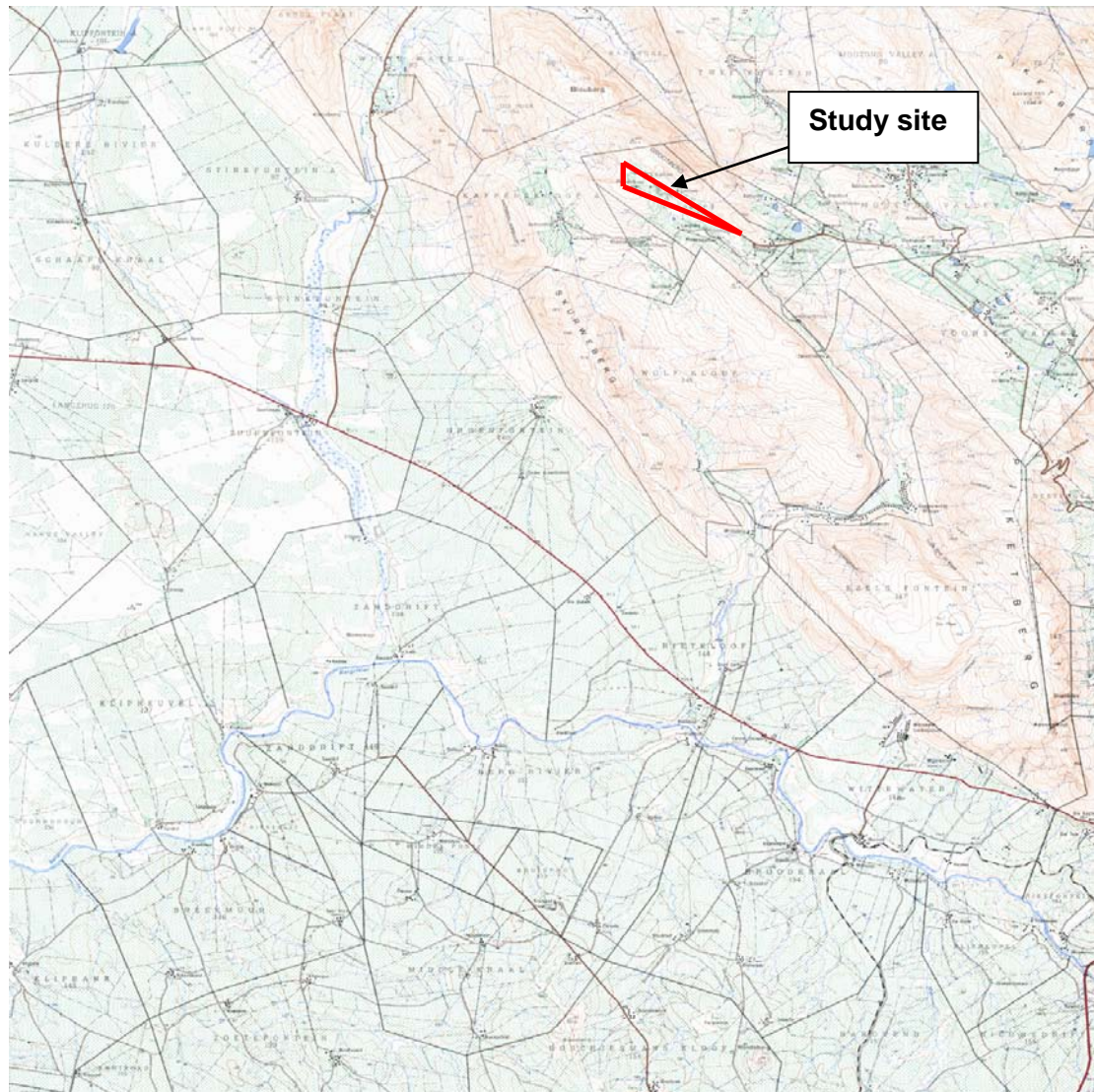


Figure 1. Locality map (3218 DC Monravia).



Figure 3. View of the site (facing north east) taken from the top of the Perdeberg Mountain. The property comprises a very thin strip of land at its extreme southern boundary, bounded by large Pine and Blue Gum trees.



Figure 4. View of the site (facing north) taken from the top of the Perdeberg Mountain. Note the disturbed agricultural lands, labourer's/staff cottages and some of the existing infrastructure. The property is bound by the large stand of Pine trees.



Figure 5. View of the site (facing north west) taken from the top of the Perdeberg Mountain. Note the existing chalets and the large conference facility at the edge of the escarpment.



Figure 6. View of the site (and the proposed conservation area) facing west, taken from the top of the escarpment.

5.1 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 Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

5.1.1 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 Heritage Western Cape (HWC), the responsible provincial resources authority.

5.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

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.

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

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. LIMITATIONS

The proposed conservation area is dominated by thick indigenous veld, resulting in low archaeological visibility.

7. RESULTS OF THE DESK TOP STUDY

According to the records of the South African Museum Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC), no rock art sites have been located or recorded on the affected property.

The Piketberg Mountains do, however, contain a number of San (or Bushman) painted sites.

Relatively well-preserved paintings were located during a recent survey of Portion 64 of the Farm Moutons Valley No. 79 (Kaplan 2005), while a single faded handprint was recorded on the property also known as Stawelklip, in the early 1940's. Two paintings sites occur at Bushman's Hollow on the farm Akerdraai, two at Rheebofsfontein, one, at Tweefontein and three on the farm Langberg (Van der Riet & Bleek 1940). The writer has also viewed painted sites on several farms surrounding the affected property, for example at Staalkrans and Langberg. The rocky, mountainous and broken terrain of the Bo-Piketberg, lends itself to the formation of sandstone overhangs and the high probability of rock art sites being located.

The Bushman's River and Bushman's Hollow, place names on the Bo-Piketberg, also suggests that San hunter-gatherers were present in the area during historic times. According to Dr Graham Avery of Iziko: SA Museum (pers. comm. 1998), Bushmen hunter-gatherers were recorded at the bottom of the Piekerneerskloof in the mid 1700s, not far from the town of Piketberg.

Bushman/San rock paintings are found throughout southern Africa. The art is closely associated with the religious activities performed by San shamans or medicine people, and records in a unique manner the history of southern Africa's indigenous people over at least the last 25 000 years. The art was still practiced as recently as a century ago in the Natal Drakensberg. These traditions were lost in the process of colonialism. The art is protected under the National Heritage Resources Act and is considered a non-renewable, priceless cultural resource.

8. FINDINGS

No rock painting sites were located on the affected property, despite an intensive search of all the rocky outcrops. Some painting sites may occur in shallow shelters near the top of the Perdeberg (outside of the study area), but access is very difficult and dangerous.

Two large Early Stone Age flakes in rough quartzite were found on a fairly wide gravel erosion scar alongside a small hiking trail near the bottom end of the valley, in the proposed conservation area.

One Middle Stone Age quartzite flake was found near a gravel patch close to some of the chalets at the top of the valley, while two more MSA flakes were found in the disturbed agricultural lands near the edge of the escarpment. This area was not so intensively searched as it is severely degraded and disturbed as a result of past agricultural activities.

The archaeological remains have been graded low local significance.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed re-development of Portion 16 of the Farm Langeberg, No. 91, Piketberg, the following recommendations are made:

- No archaeological mitigation is required.

10. REFERENCES

Kaplan, J. 2005. Archaeological study Versveld Park Rural Resort. Report prepared for EnviroAfrica. Agency for Cultural Resource Management.

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.