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## **PROPOSED DEVIATION TO THE ESKOM OVERBERG POWERLINE VRYHEID SUBSTATION TO RIVIERSONDEREND SUBSTATION**

### **HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

#### **Executive Summary**

This is a supplementary report to a Heritage Impact Assessment dated 05 February 2006 referring to the proposed 42 km Overberg 66 kV powerline linking the Rivieronderend and Vryheid substations. In that report the route past the historic homestead on farm 571, Diamant, was assessed as having a negative impact. A deviation is proposed to avoid the Diamant homestead. The deviation some 5 km in length is assessed in this report. Routing the powerline along the southern flank of the prominent hill on the farm Diamant will adequately address the problem of the impact on the historic homestead. The route the deviation will follow is across ploughed farmlands and borders indigenous vegetation on the flanks of the hill. Inspection of the route of the deviation failed to reveal significant archaeological or palaeontological remains. The homestead on the farm 366/7 (Agterplaas) adjacent Diamant will be in line of sight of the powerline. It is recommended that the deviation be accepted as the preferred routing with the proviso that the visual impact of the line viewed from the Agterplaas homestead receives consideration in the placement of the pylons.

#### **Background**

The original brief was to carry out a heritage impact assessment as required in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, Section 38 of the route of a proposed 42 km long 66 kV powerline linking Rivieronderend and Vryheid (near Swellendam) substations (Fig.1). The assessment dated 05 February 2006 showed that the proposed line passed directly in front of the historic homestead on the farm 571 (Diamant). It was recommended that an alternative route for the line be found. For this and ecological reasons a deviation to the original proposed route has been proposed. The deviation (Fig. 2) will take the line to the south of and out of sight of the homestead in an attempt to address those concerns. This report is a heritage impact assessment of the proposed deviation and is supplementary to the original assessment.

## **Description of Powerline Route and Area**

The originally proposed 42 km route for the powerline is mainly south of the N2 National Road between Riviersonderend in the west and the Vryheid Substation located on the R319 road, 15 km south of Swellendam, in the east (Fig.1). The proposed deviation of part of this route some 5 km in length will take the line from the boundary of the farm 571 Diamant (1:50 000 3420 AB Swellendam sheet) south rather than north of the prominent hill on this farm to link with an existing 132 kV powerline en route to the Vryheid Substation.

The deviation will run across ploughed farmlands and bordering indigenous vegetation on the side of Diamant hill. As noted in the previous report the thin surficial cover and extensive ploughing are not favourable conditions for the preservation of archaeological and palaeontological materials in the ground.

## **Methodology**

Two aspects were considered in this heritage impact assessment. Firstly, the possibility that prehistoric archaeological and palaeontological resources occurred along the route of the deviation and, secondly, that the route of the deviation may impact on historic buildings and their settings. The methods used were traverses of representative sections and examination of exposures due to natural erosion or earthworks. One day was spent in the field on the assessment.

## **Description of Heritage Resources on the Route**

The deviation (Fig. 2) starts at Point 1 on the original route and runs westwards across a deep channel made by the Freek Botha River. There is a prominent perched gravel stone-line marking the original bed below which the present channel is incised. This indicates the extensive stripping of surficial materials in the landscape. No cultural remains were seen in the stream deposits. From the river the deviation runs uphill across farmland to the foot of the Diamant hill. There is a slight change in direction at the kloof where a tributary stream cuts through the hill (Point 3). Inspection of the entrance to the kloof failed to reveal any remains. This point is in line of sight of and less than one kilometre from the Agterplaas homestead, a property adjoining Diamant. Further westwards the deviation runs along the edge of the hill and across ploughed lands to a point on the boundary of Diamant (Point 4) where it links with the original proposed route. Inspection of this section of the deviation failed to reveal any heritage resources.

## **Sources of Risk**

The risk that the erection of the pylons for the line will disturb buried archaeological or palaeontological materials is considered low. As noted in the previous report on the area there is no background scatter of stone artefacts in this landscape, the norm in many areas. With the exception of the farmstead Agterplaas the proposed deviation does not pass close to any built structures.

## **Recommended Mitigations**

A general recommendation is that in the unlikely event that any excavations in the course of erecting the pylons uncover buried palaeontological or archaeological materials it is required that Heritage Western Cape (Senior Heritage Officer for Overberg, MrNdlovu: Tel: 021 483 9687 Fax: 021 483 9842) be notified. The discovery of any human remains should be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Ms M Leslie) Tel: 021 462 4502.

Any visual impact of the proposed deviated line on the farmstead Agterplaas should be minimized.

## **Conclusions**

The survey of the 5 km deviation to the route of the powerline revealed no archaeological or palaeontological remains. The deviation will bring the line within one kilometre of the Agterplaas farmstead and that will have a visual impact that needs to be addressed. The considerable benefit of the deviation is that it will mitigate the impact on the historic Diamant farmstead.



Figure 1. Map showing the 42 km originally proposed powerline A-L with the proposed deviation.

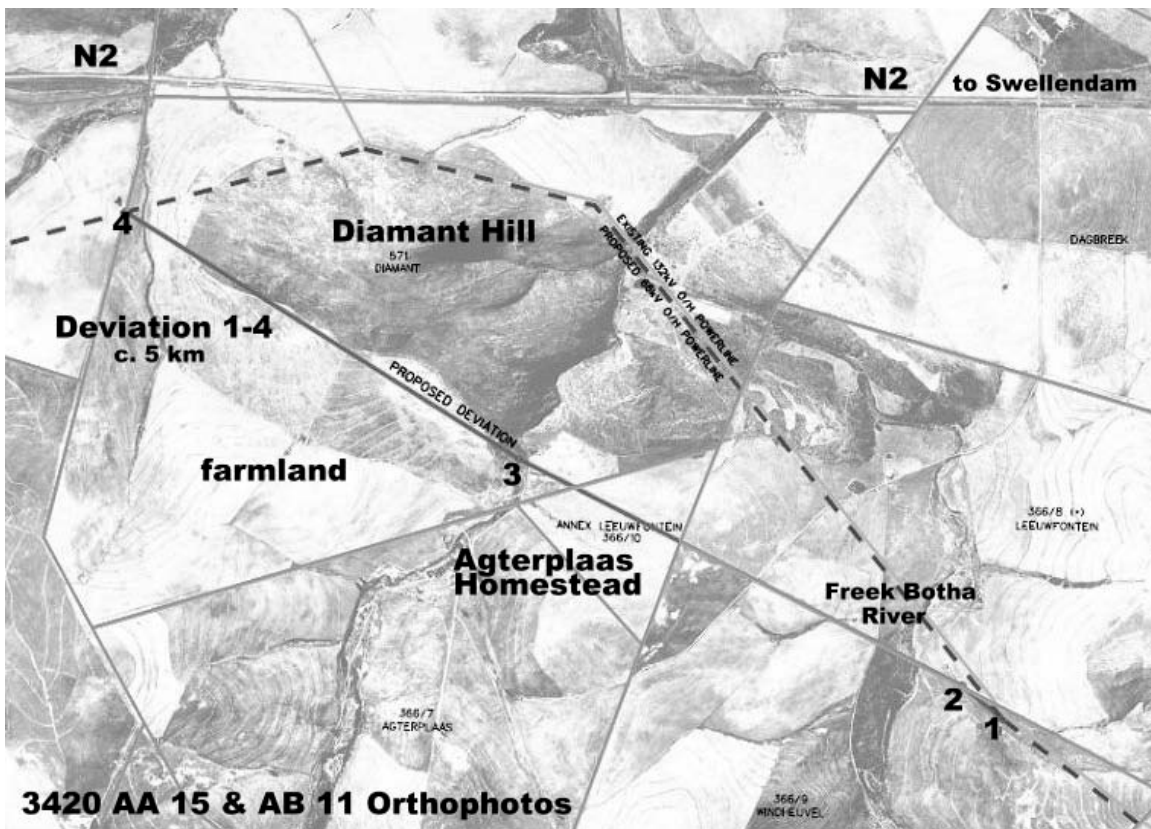


Figure 2. Detailed map of the deviation marked by Points 1-4. The originally proposed powerline route is the dashed line.