

**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR THE  
KRIEL SOUTH EMPR, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

For:

**ORYX ENVIRONMENTAL**

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## SUMMARY

### **A survey of cultural resources for the Kriel South EMPR, Mpumalanga Province**

The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of the area in which the proposed development is to take place.

Apart from the various cemeteries that usually have a high emotional significance, sites that are rated to be significant and to which mitigation has to be applied if they are to be impacted upon are indicated in Appendix 2 of this report.

Based on what was found and its evaluation, it is recommended that the proposed development can continue, but only after suitable mitigation measures for the identified sites and structures are implemented. This consist of:

- The relocation of all the graves, their contents and headstones.
- The archaeological investigation and documentation of the different Late Iron Age sites, especially those that are located in the areas where open cast mining is to take place.
- The documentation of the various farmsteads, if they are to be impacted upon by the development.
- The developers should be notified that archaeological sites might be exposed during the construction work. If anything is noticed, it should be reported immediately to a museum, preferably one at which an archaeologist is available, so that an investigation and evaluation of the finds can be made.



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## **1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY**

The National Cultural History Museum was requested by **Oryx Environmental** to survey an area in which it is proposed to mine coal by opencast as well as underground mining. The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of the area that is to be developed.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The **Terms of Reference** for the study were to:

- 2.1 Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature located in the area of the proposed development.
- 2.2 Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their historical, social, religious, aesthetic and scientific value.
- 2.3 Determine the possible impacts on the known and potential cultural resources in the area of interest.
- 2.4 Develop mitigation or control measures for impact minimization and cultural resources preservation.
- 2.5 Develop procedures to be implemented if previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered during the construction.

## **3. DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

The following aspects have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

- **Cultural resources** are all nonphysical and physical human-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences that are associated with human activity. These include

all sites, structures and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development.

- The **significance** of the sites and artifacts are determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. It must be kept in mind that the various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and that the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these.
- Sites regarded as having low significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium to high significance require further mitigation.
- The latitude and longitude of archaeological sites are to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.

#### 4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are mainly dealt within two acts. These are the South Africa Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989).

##### 4.1 South African Heritage Resources Act

###### **Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites**

Section 35(4) of this act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority:

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- (b) destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- (c) trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- (d) bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after

receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

**Human remains:**

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- (a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- (b) 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; or
- (c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations.

Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925). Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (ie where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

#### **4.2 Environmental Conservation Act**

This act states that a survey and an evaluation of cultural resources should be undertaken in areas where development, which will change the face of the environment, is to be made. The impact of the development on the cultural resources should also be determined and proposals to mitigate this impact is to be formulated.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Preliminary investigation**

#### **5.1.1 Survey of the literature**

A survey of the relevant literature was conducted with the aim of reviewing the previous research done and determining the potential of the area. In this regard, various anthropological, archaeological and historical sources were consulted - see the list of references below. Nothing pertaining to the particular area was found, although a number of survey reports from adjacent areas exist.

#### 5.1.2 Data bases

The **Archaeological Data Recording Centre** (ADRC), housed at the National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, was consulted. The **Environmental Potential Atlas** was also consulted.

#### 5.1.3 Other sources

The topocadastral and other maps were also studied - see the list of references below.

### 5.2 Field survey

The field survey was done according to generally accepted archaeological practices, and was aimed at locating all possible sites, objects and structures. As the area that had to be investigated is quite large, it was divided into different blocks, using various natural (eg. streams) and manmade (eg. fences, roads) features to facilitate this. These areas were then crossed either by walking or driving across. Special attention was given to outcrops, cliffs were inspected for rock shelters, while stream beds and unnatural topographical occurrences such as trenches, holes and clusters of trees were investigated. Most of the agricultural fields were still unharvested during the period when the field survey was undertaken, making the investigation of these areas difficult. A few cemeteries were found in isolated corners of the various fields.

### 5.3 Documentation

All sites, objects and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the **Global Positioning System** (GPS)<sup>1</sup> and plotted on a map. This information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the manufacturer a certain deviation may be expected for each reading. Care was, however, taken to obtain as accurate a reading as possible, and then correlate it with reference to the physical environment before plotting it on the map.



## **6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

The area that was investigated is located southwest of the town of Kriel and north of the town of Trichard in the Highveld Ridge district of Mpumalanga (Fig. 1). As such it covers a large, irregular section of land located on a number of different farms.