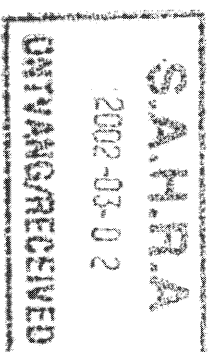


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PHASE I
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT

LOW COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
Morudu Community Development Strategies
GRAVELLOTTE
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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SYNOPSIS

From a heritage resources management point of view, the proposed development site is regarded as sensitive. The archaeological remains found on the site, however, require re-examination to determine its full significance before cultural resource management measures can be mitigated.

INTRODUCTION

The **Project Proposal** constitutes a change of land use that is listed in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989), for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required to satisfy the requirements of the List of Activities and Regulation for ELA's – Government Gazette of 5 September 1997 - provided for in terms of sections 21, 22 and 26. In terms of the above- mentioned Act, and the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999, Section 38), a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (scoping) was undertaken.

AIM

The aim was to undertake a **Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment** of the proposed site for the provision of low cost housing on the farm FARRELL 781 LT at Gravelote, in order to assess the impact of the proposed project on archaeological and historical sites and features; and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features.

METHOD

A thorough survey of the demarcated area was undertaken on foot. Standard archaeological practises for observation were followed. As most archaeological material occur in single or multiple stratified layers beneath the soil surface, special attention was given to disturbances, both man-made such as roads and clearings, as well as those made by natural agents such as burrowing animals and erosion. Locations of archaeological material were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin 12). Archaeological material and the general conditions on the terrain were photographed with a KODAK DC120 Digital camera.

The significance of heritage resources is graded according to criteria ranging *from no significance to high significance*.

No significance: sites / features that do not require mitigation.
Low to medium significance: sites / features which may require mitigation.
High significance: sites / features which should not be disturbed at all – has protection status.

The significance of an archaeological site is based on the amount of deposit, the integrity of the context, the kind or nature of the deposit, and the potential of the site to help answer present research questions. Historical structures are defined by Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, while other historical and cultural significant sites, places and features, are generally determined by community preferences.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Refer to map, South Africa 1:50 000 2330 DC.)

General co-ordinates of proposed terrain: S23° 57' 53" E30° 37' 06.5"

The proposed terrain is located approximately 2km east of Gravelotte on the R102 at the junction with the gravel road to Harmony and immediately south of the railway line.

The dominant veld type is mixed Bushveld. The topography is relatively flat and the ecologically is generally in a sound condition, with dense grass and tree cover. Some scarring had taken place where a drainage trench had been made for the Railway line and Harmony road, resulting in some erosion.



Figure 1. Note dense bush and grass coverage.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

IRON AGE REMAINS

Location: co-ordinates S23° 57' 54.3" E30° 37' 08.8"

A scattering of pottery fragments was located in an eroded trench. The pottery occurs approximately 10 – 15 cm beneath soil surface, indicating a probable pre-colonial dating. No other cultural remains or features could be identified on the surface. The pottery is unfortunately non-diagnostic and the cultural origins could therefore not be identified.



Figure 2. Pottery fragments indicated by the blue arrows.

Significance: Low – requires inspection for re-evaluation before development commences.

EVALUATION

A crucial aspect in determining the significance and protection status of a heritage resource is often whether or not the sustainable social and economic benefits of a proposed development outweigh the conservation issues at stake. There are many aspects that must be taken into consideration when determining significance, such as rarity, national significance, scientific importance, cultural and religious significance, and not least, community preferences. When, for whatever reason the protection of a heritage site is not deemed necessary or practical, its research potential must be *assessed and mitigated* in order to gain data / information which would otherwise be lost. Such sites must be adequately recorded and sampled before being destroyed.

The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the recorded archaeological site. Although the specific Iron Age tradition could not be established, this part of the eastern lowveld around Gravelotte to Phalaborwa is known for its Middle Iron Age *Kgopole* occupation dating to AD 1000 – AD 1300, as well as the early *Letaba* tradition from AD 1500 onwards. The Murchison Range with its mineral deposits was probably both a cultural barrier as well as a migratory route for Iron Age people.

The existence of the archaeological remains located during the walkover scoping survey demarcates this area as an archaeological sensitive place, especially as the archaeological deposit is beneath present soil surface and not visible for identification and evaluation. For mitigation purposes the scientific and academic significance of the Iron Age site must bear considerable weight. A phase 2 archaeological assessment may be required in order to extract sufficient and adequate data from this site. It must also be borne in mind that archaeological deposits could contain unmarked graves.

The archaeological remains do not warrant protection status. Thus, from a cultural resources management point of view, we have no objection with regard to the proposed development on condition that the recommendation mentioned below is applied.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above it is recommended that:

The Iron Age site be re-examined by test pit sampling which will enable re-evaluation to determine its significance and possible mitigation measures. Mitigation may include a phase 2 archaeological impact assessment.

Notwithstanding the above note must be taken of Sections 35 & 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act, of which an extract is given below

Extracts from:
The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Subsection 35. (3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Subsection 35. (4) 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.

Burial grounds and graves

Subsection 36. (6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and
- (b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-entombment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

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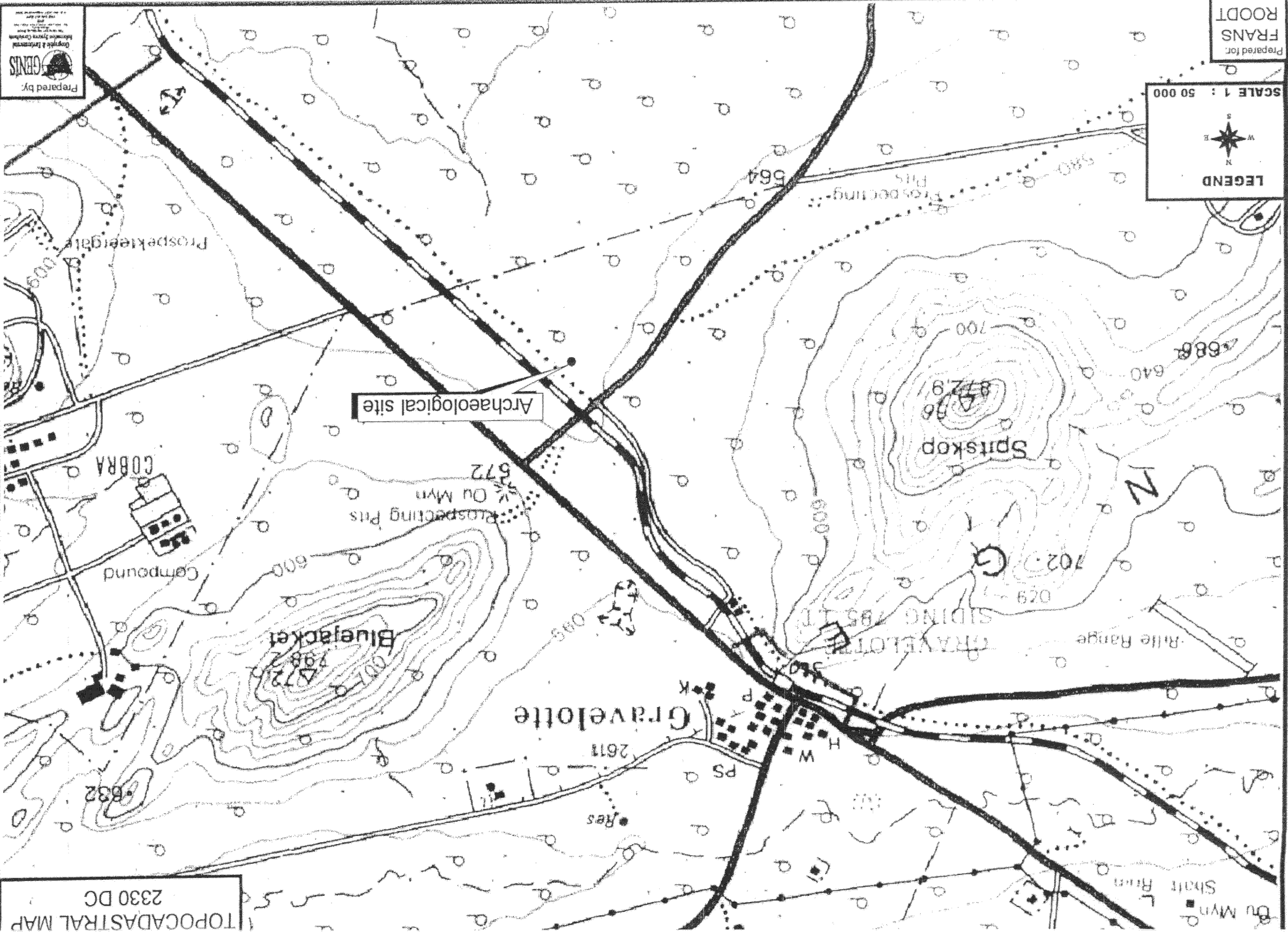
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SCALE 1 : 50 000



LEGEND



Archaeological site

TOPOCADASTRAL MAP
2330 DC