

**Prepared for:**

**LANDSCAPE DYNAMICS**

**ESKOM NORTHERN REGION**

**A PHASE I HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY  
FOR THE UPGRADING OF ESKOM'S HILLTOP SUBSTATION  
ON THE FARM HILLTOP 458 NEAR NELSPRUIT IN THE  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study as required in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) was done for the upgrading of Eskom's Hilltop Substation on the farm Hilltop 458 south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The aims with the Phase I HIA study was to establish whether any of the types and ranges of heritage resources ('national estate') as outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) do occur in or near the Hilltop Substation and, if so, what the significance of these remains are and whether they may be affected by the upgrading of the substation

The Phase I HIA study for the extension (upgrading) of the Hilltop Substation revealed the presence of remains from the recent past as well as a pile of stones which may cover a grave. The following mitigation measures are recommended for these remains if they are going to be affected by the upgrading of the Hilltop Substation:

### *Remains from the recent past*

Mitigation: Remains from the recent past need no mitigation. These remains can be destroyed without acquiring any permit from the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (Mpumalanga PHRA).

### *Possible grave*

It is possible that the stone pile may cover a grave. All graveyards and graves can be considered to be of high significance and are protected by various laws. Legislation with regard to graves includes the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) whenever graves are older than sixty years. The act also distinguishes various categories of graves and burial grounds. Other legislation with regard to graves includes those which apply when graves are exhumed and relocated, namely the Ordinance on Exhumations (No 12 of 1980) and the Human Tissues Act (No 65 of 1983 as amended).

Mitigation: Two strategies can be followed with regard to the mitigation of the grave, namely:

- The grave can be avoided if the proposed new road leading to the Hilltop Substation is constructed in such a way that it does not collide with the grave.
- The grave can also be mitigated by means of exhumation and relocation. The exhumation of human remains and the relocation of graveyards are regulated by various laws, regulations and administrative procedures. This task is undertaken by forensic archaeologists or by reputed undertakers who are acquainted with all the administrative procedures and relevant legislation that have to be adhered to whenever human remains are exhumed and relocated. This process also includes social consultation with a 60 days statutory notice period for graves older than sixty years. Permission for the exhumation and relocation of human remains have to be obtained from the descendants of the deceased (if known), the National Department of Health, the Provincial Department of Health, the Premier of the Province and the local police.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Eskom intends to expand the existing Hilltop Substation on the farm Hilltop 458 south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

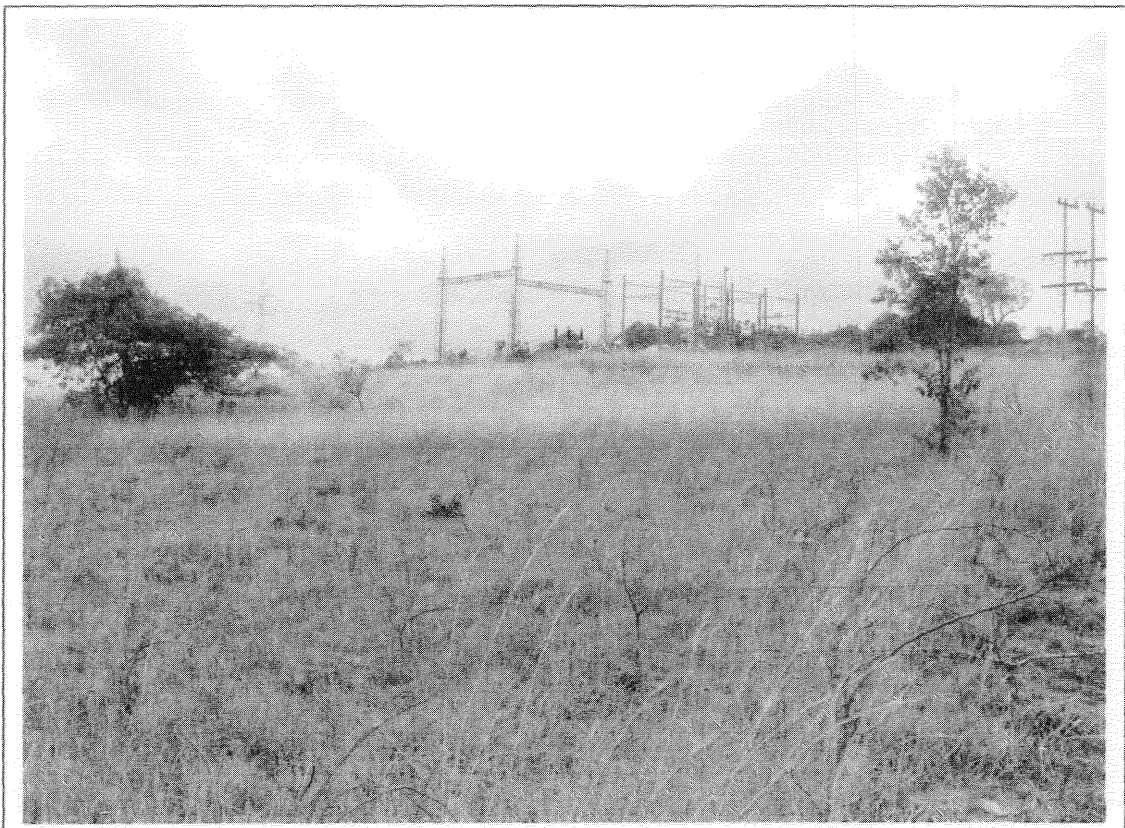
As the expansion of the substation may have an impact on heritage resources in or near the Hilltop Substation, Eskom commissioned the author to undertake a Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study for the Hilltop Substation with the following aims:

- To establish whether any of the types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) occur in or near the existing Hilltop Substation, and if so, to establish the significance of these heritage resources.
- To establish whether such heritage resources may be affected by the expansion of the Hilltop Substation, and if so, to determine possible mitigation measures that can be applied to these heritage resources.

## 2 THE PROJECT AREA

The Hilltop Substation is located on the farm Hilltop 458, south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The substation is located against the northern slope of a hill overlooking the N4 and a number of small holdings located along the southern foot slope of granite domes to the north of the Eskom Project Area (1:250 000 Nelspruit) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1- The existing Hilltop Substation on Hilltop 458 to the south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Due to higher energy demands the Hilltop Substation has to be upgraded (below).**



### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This Phase I HIA study was conducted by means of the following:

- Surveying the Hilltop Substation and surrounding areas on foot.
- Briefly surveying literature relating to the pre-historical and historical context of the Hilltop Substation.
- Consulting maps of the Hilltop Substation as well as its peripheral areas.
- Consulting archaeological (heritage) data bases such as the ones kept at the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Resources Agency as well as at Museum Africa in Pretoria (Tshwane).
- Synthesising all information obtained from the literature survey, maps and data bases with the evidence derived from the fieldwork in this report.

#### **3.1 Assumptions and limitations**

It is possible that this Phase I HIA study may have missed heritage resources as these may lie below the surface of the earth and may only be exposed once development commences.

#### **3.2 Chance finds**

If any heritage resources of significance is exposed during the upgrading of the Hilltop Substation the South African Heritage Resources Authority (ASAPA) should be notified immediately, all construction activities must be seized and an archaeologist accredited with the Association for Southern African Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA) should be notify in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the discovered finds. This may include obtaining the necessary authorisation (permits) from SAHRA to conduct the mitigation measures.

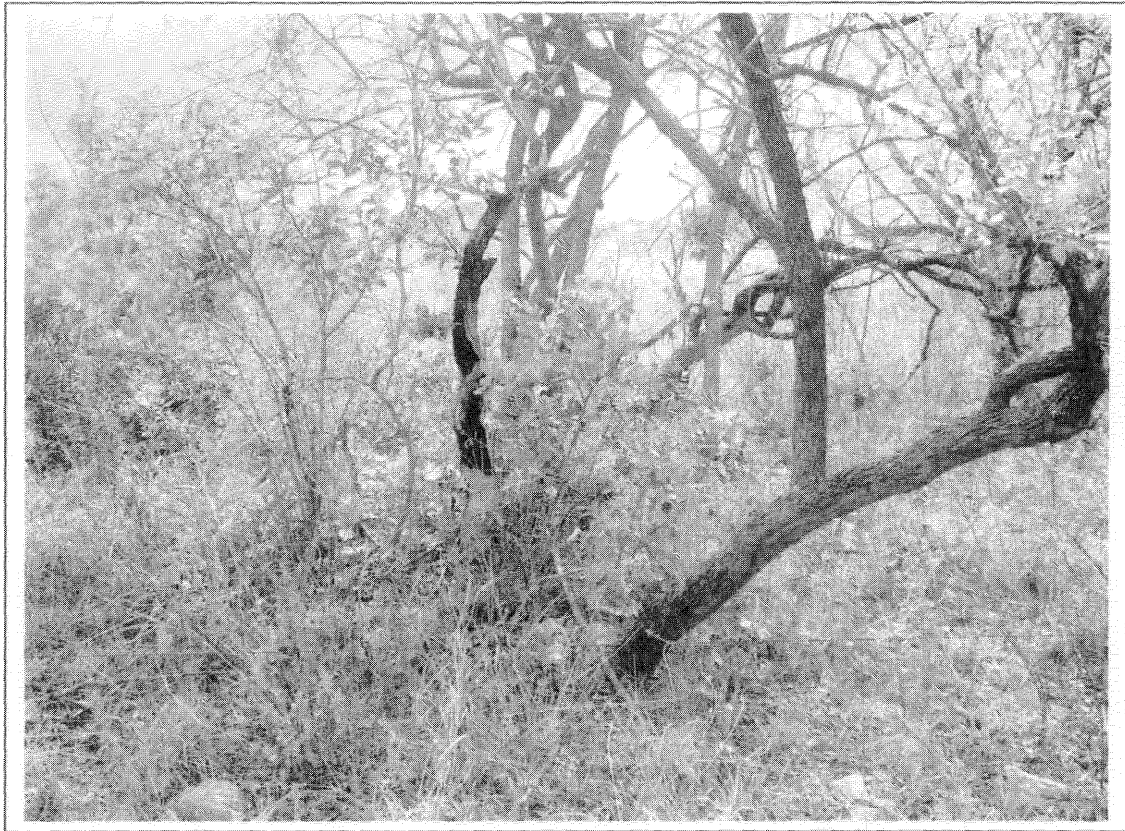
#### 4 THE PHASE I HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The Phase I HIA study for the Hilltop Substation revealed the presence of remains from the recent past as well as a heap of stones in close proximity of these remains. It is possible that this heap of stones may cover a grave.



**Figure 2- The Phase I survey for the upgrading of the Hilltop Substation revealed remains from the recent past consisting of rows of stones which may be the remains of houses (above).**





**Figure 3- The Phase I survey for the upgrading of the Hilltop Substation also revealed a heap of stones near the remains from the recent past. This stone pile may cover a grave (above).**

## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Phase I HIA study for the extension (upgrading) of the Hilltop Substation revealed the presence of remains from the recent past as well as a pile of stones which may cover a grave. The following mitigation measures are recommended for these remains if they are going to be affected by the upgrading of the Hilltop Substation:

### *Remains from the recent past*

Mitigation: Remains from the recent past need no mitigation. These remains can be destroyed without acquiring any permit from the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (Mpumalanga PHRA).

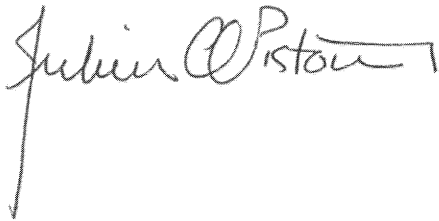
### *Possible grave*

It is possible that the stone pile may cover a grave. All graveyards and graves can be considered to be of high significance and are protected by various laws. Legislation with regard to graves includes the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) whenever graves are older than sixty years. The act also distinguishes various categories of graves and burial grounds. Other legislation with regard to graves includes those which apply when graves are exhumed and relocated, namely the Ordinance on Exhumations (No 12 of 1980) and the Human Tissues Act (No 65 of 1983 as amended).

Mitigation: Two strategies can be followed with regard to the mitigation of the grave, namely:

- The grave can be avoided if the proposed new road leading to the Hilltop Substation is constructed in such a way that it does not collide with the grave.
- The grave can also be mitigated by means of exhumation and relocation. The exhumation of human remains and the relocation of graveyards are

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julius CC Pistorius'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end.

**Dr Julius CC Pistorius**  
**Archaeologists &**  
**Heritage Management Consultant**  
**Member ASAPA**



**LANDSCAPE  
DYNAMICS**

# LOCALITY MAP: Extension of Hilltop Substation & 200m loop in loop out 132 kV line

Environmental Impact Assessment Process undertaken by:  
Landscape Dynamics Environmental Consultants



Scale 1 : 100 000

1 0 1 2 3 Kilometers

