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PHASE 1
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DE GROOTTEBOOM TOWNSHIP
ESTABLISHMENT
MPUMALANGA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The developer plans to undertake a Township Establishment on a section of the farm De Grootboom. The heritage survey has detected archaeological material that includes Middle Stone Age remains as well as Early Iron Age pottery remains. These remains have been extensively damaged by environmental degradation and are not regarded as significant heritage resources.

The development will, in our opinion, thus not have any additional adverse effect on the archaeological remains.

From a heritage point of view, there is no objection with regard to the development on condition that the recommendations are implemented.

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Project Proposal** constitutes an activity 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 EIA's - Government Gazette of 5 September 1997 - provided for in terms of sections 21, 22 and 26. In addition, the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999), protects all archaeological, palaeontological and historical sites and graves, and requires heritage resources impact assessments in terms of Section 38. To satisfy the requirements of the above legislation, a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment (scoping & evaluation) of the proposed mining area was undertaken. In order to comply with legislation, the developer requires information on the heritage resources, and their significance that occur in the proposed development area. This will enable the implementation of pro-active measures to limit the adverse effects that the development could have on such heritage resources.

The author was contracted by *Emeritus Investments 28 (Pty) Ltd* of Pretoria to undertake a Phase 1 *Heritage Impact Assessment* of the area covered by the proposed De Grootboom Township Establishment. The aim was to determine the presence of heritage resources such as archaeological and historical sites and features, graves and places of religious and cultural significance; to assess the impact of the proposed project on such heritage resources; and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features. Due to the nature of the terrain, the focus has primarily been on archaeological remains.

The report thus provides an overview of the heritage resources that were detected on the terrain. The significance of the heritage resources was assessed in terms of criteria defined in the methodology section. It is indicated that these resources will be affected by the proposed development and the report recommends mitigation measures that should be implemented to minimise the adverse effect of the proposed activities on these heritage resources. The mitigation measures also apply to heritage resources not detected during the survey, but which will in all probability be uncovered during excavations and construction of dwelling, infrastructure and roads.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Source of information

The source of information was predominantly the field reconnaissance.

A survey of the proposed development areas was undertaken on foot. Standard archaeological practices 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. Changes in vegetation hat could indicate archaeological deposits were also noted. 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.

2.2 Limitations

This was a scoping exercise and although the foot survey was thorough, it is possible that certain archaeological sites and features may have been missed due to the dense vegetation and grass coverage in places. Archaeological sites such as Early Iron Age sites are often beneath soil surface and if undisturbed may not be detected. *The discovery of previously undetected heritage remains must be reported and may require further mitigation measures.*

2.3 Categories of significance

The significance of archaeological sites is ranked into the following categories.

No significance: sites that do not require mitigation.

Low significance: sites, which *may* require mitigation.

Medium significance: sites, which require mitigation.

High significance: sites, which must not be disturbed at all.

The significance of an archaeological site is based on the amount of deposit, the integrity of the context, the kind of deposit and the potential 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.

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. These are generally sites graded as of low or medium significance.

2.4 Terminology

Early Stone Age: Predominantly the Acheulean hand axe industry complex dating to + 1Myr yrs – 250 000 yrs BP (before present).

Middle Stone Age: Various lithic industries in SA dating from ± 250 000 yr. - 30 000 yr. before present. In this area the Pietersburg Industry is dominant.

Late Stone Age: The period from ± 30 000-yr. to contact period with either Iron Age farmers or European colonists.

Early Iron Age: Most of the first millennium AD

Middle Iron Age: 10th to 13th centuries AD

Late Iron Age: 14th century to colonial period. *The entire Iron Age represents the spread of Bantu speaking peoples.*

Phase 1 assessments: Scoping surveys to establish the presence of and to evaluate heritage resources in a given area

Phase 2 assessments: In depth culture resources management studies which could include major archaeological excavations, detailed site surveys and mapping / plans of sites, including historical / architectural structures and features. Alternatively, the sampling of sites by collecting material, small test pits excavations or augur sampling.

Sensitive: Often refers to graves and burial sites although not necessarily a heritage place as well as ideologically significant places such as ritual / religious places. *Sensitive* may also refer to an entire landscape / area known for its significant heritage remains.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Two sets of legislation are relevant for this study with regard to the protection of heritage resources and burials.

3.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999) (NHRA)

This Act established the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and makes provision for the establishment of Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRA). The Act makes provision for the undertaking of heritage resources impact assessments for various categories of development as determined by Section 38. It also provides for the grading of heritage resources and the implementation of a three tier level of responsibilities and functions for heritage resources to be undertaken by the State, Provincial authorities and Local authorities, depending on the grade of the Heritage resources. The Act defines cultural significance, archaeological and palaeontological sites and material (Section 35), historical sites and structures, and mine dumps (Section 34), graves and burial sites (Section 36) which falls under its jurisdiction. Archaeological sites and material are generally those resources older than a hundred years, while structures and cultural landscapes older than 60 years, including gravestones, are also protected by Section 34. Procedures for managing grave and burial grounds are clearly set out in Section 36 of the NHRA. Graves older than a 100 years are legislated as archaeological sites and must be dealt with accordingly

Section 38 of the NHRA makes provision for *developers to apply for a permit before any heritage resource may be damaged or destroyed.*

3.2 The Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983)

This Act protects graves younger than 60 years. These fall under the jurisdiction of the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Departments. Approval for the exhumation and re-burial must be obtained from the relevant Provincial MEC as well as the relevant Local Authorities.

Graves 60 years or older fall under the jurisdiction of the National Heritage Resources Act as well as the Human Tissues Act, 1983.

4. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Map reference South Africa 1:50 000 2430CC. The proposed Township establishment is located on the Farm De Grootboom 373. Ecologically the terrain has been degraded by ploughed fields, borrow pits and large erosions dongas. For the environmental description, refer to main EIA report.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

Four sites with archaeological remains were recorded on the proposed development terrain as listed below. These range from Middle Stone Age material in eroded drainage areas, to Early Iron Age pottery remains.

5.1 MIDDLE STONE AGE (MSA)

Middle Stone Age (MSA) material in the form of flakes and cores are found scattered throughout the demarcated terrain, especially in eroded areas. Three sites were recorded as examples of MSA remains because of the relatively high concentration of material here. The MSA layer is well below present soil surface from where it is exposed by erosion or other disturbances.

SITE 2. S24°56'24.7" E30°07'56.1"

SITE 3. S24°56'06.7" E30°07'48.8"

SITE 4. S24°56'23.5" E30°08'28.4"

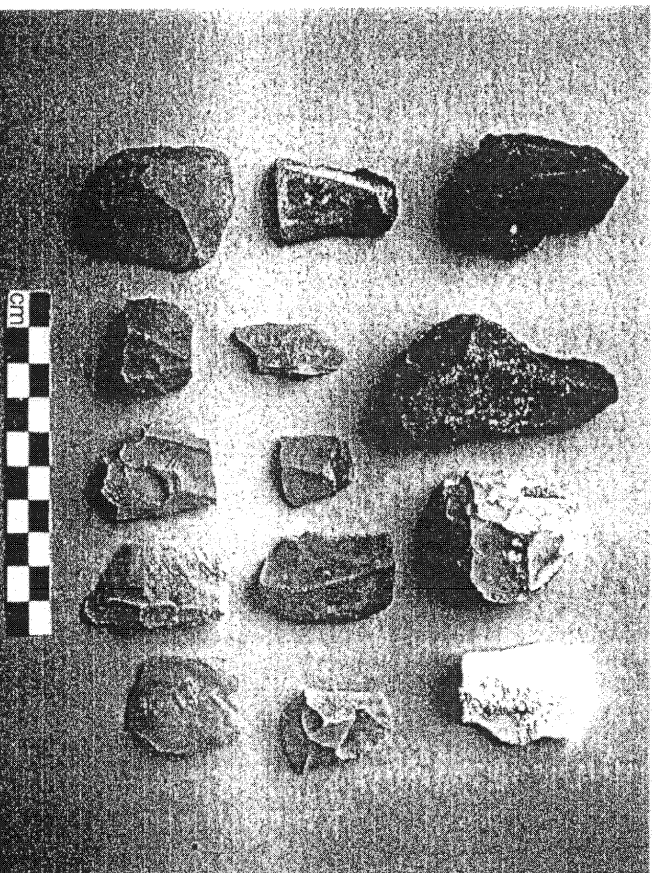


Fig 1. Middle Stone Age flakes site 2



Fig 2. MSA flakes and points site 3



Fig 3. MSA points site 4

Significance: Low, but does not require mitigation.

5.2 IRON AGE REMAINS

Only one area with a concentration of pottery fragments was noted. It is located in an eroded area, and apart from the pottery remains no other deposit or feature was found. The archaeological material has clearly eroded away. The pottery fragments, however, have diagnostic characteristics and belong to the Early Iron Age *Doornkop* Tradition dating to approximately 800 AD.

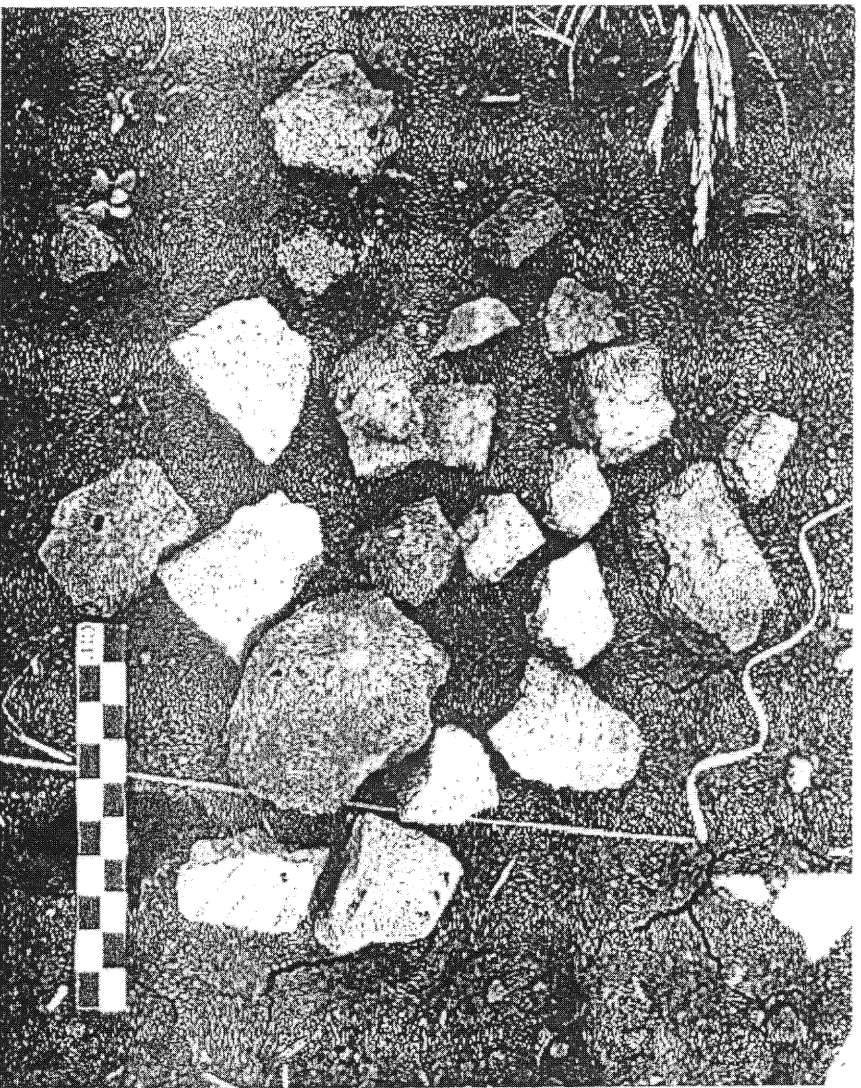


Fig. 4. Pottery fragments site 1



Figure 5. Pottery fragments from site 1 showing Early Iron Age *Doornkop* decorative style

6. EVALUATION

The archaeological remains detected in the demarcated area are not significant heritage resources worthy of protection.

The Middle Stone Age remains are not assessed as significant due to the nature of the MSA bearing layer. The layer is well beneath soil surface and only exposed by disturbances. The material is not concentrated with the result that it is not viable or practical to access this MSA layer for a phase 2 assessment. The terrain should however be inspected when initial development commences to assess the merit of collecting the exposed surface material. The systematic collecting of MSA material and statistical analysis could enable the identification of the specific MSA assemblage or industry complex.

The Iron Age site (site 1) has been completely damaged and little or no deposit of integrity exists. The site is not significant, but the remaining exposed surface material should be collected.

From a heritage resources management point of view, we have no objection with regard to the development.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above it is recommended that:

1. The terrain be re-visited when ground clearance is undertaken to assess the viability of undertaking the surface collecting of Middle Stone Age material.
2. The remaining Early Iron Age material be collected at site 1 before development commences.

8.

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-interment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

9.

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