

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

OLIFANTSPORTJIE 319KT, GOUDMYN 337KT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STEELPOORT, MPUMALANGA

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1. INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The application constitutes an activity, which may potentially be harmful to heritage resources that may occur in the demarcated area. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA - Act No. 25 of 1999) protects all structures and features older than 60 years (section 34), archaeological sites and material (section 35) and graves and burial sites (section 36). In order to comply with the legislation, the Applicant requires information on the heritage resources, and their significance that may occur in the demarcated area. This will enable the Applicant to take pro-active measures to limit the adverse effects that the development could have on such heritage resources.

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (1999) the following is of relevance:

Historical remains

Section 34(1) No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

Archaeological remains

Section 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

Section 36 (3)(a) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-

(c) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, 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

(b) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in detection or recovery of metals.

Culture resource management

Section 38(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development* ...

must at the very earliest stages of initiating such development notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature, and extent of the proposed development.

***'development'** means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of the heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including-

(a) construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;

- (b) carry out any works on or over or under a place*;
- (e) any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land, and
- (f) any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

"place means a site, area or region, a building or other structure ..."

*"structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to the ground, ..."

The author was contracted to undertake a heritage scoping survey of the farms Olifantspoortjie 319KT, portions 5, 14, 22 and 24, and Goudmyn 337KT portion 1 (Refer to map, South Africa 1:50 000 2430 CA). The aim was to determine the presence or not of heritage resources such as archaeological and historical sites and features, graves and places of religious and cultural significance, and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features.

The report thus provides an overview of the heritage resources, which may occur in the demarcated area where development is intended. The significance of the heritage resources was assessed in terms of criteria defined in the methodology section. The impact of the proposed development on these resources is indicated and the report recommends mitigation measures that should be implemented to minimize the adverse impact of the proposed development on these heritage resources.

2. METHOD

2.1 Sources of information

The major source of information was the field survey of the area, done on foot and by vehicle, using standard methods of archaeological observation.

2.2 Limitations

There were no major limitations; visibility was however hampered in some areas due to dense vegetation. Due to the subterranean nature of the archaeological deposit, there is always a small possibility that some material could have been missed.

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 that <i>may</i> require mitigation.
Medium significance: sites that require mitigation.
High significance: sites that 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 \pm 1 Myr – 250 000 yrs. before present.
Middle Stone Age:	Various lithic industries in SA dating from \pm 250 000 yrs. - 30 000 yrs. before present.
Late Stone Age:	The period from \pm 30 000 yrs. to contact period with either Iron Age farmers or European colonists.
Early Iron Age:	Most of the first millennium AD.
Middle Iron Age:	10 th to 13 th centuries AD.
Late Iron Age:	14 th century to colonial period. <i>The entire Iron Age represents the spread of Bantu speaking peoples.</i>
Historical:	Mainly cultural remains of western influence and settlement from AD 1652 onwards – mostly structures older than 60 years in terms of Section 34 of the NHRA.
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 pit excavations or auger sampling.
Sensitive:	Often refers to graves and burial sites although not necessarily a heritage place, as well as ideologically significant sites such as ritual / religious places. <i>Sensitive</i> may also refer to an entire landscape / area known for its significant heritage remains.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Archaeologists of the Iron Age use ceramic style to establish culture-history sequences. Ceramic sequences are thus the framework for all other domains of Iron Age research, be it life ways (incorporating technology, subsistence and settlement patterns), or the explanation of cultural change.

The area around Steelpoort/Burgersfort is generally rich in archaeological sites. Notably here are Early Iron Age sites from the Mzonjani / Broederstroom period dating to 6th – 7th century AD. This represents the earliest cultural expression of the first black farmers that moved into South Africa in about the 3rd – 4th century AD. They belonged to the Uruwe Tradition from East Africa and migrated southwards as part of the Kwale Branch, i.e., the eastern stream of migration and first settled in the Tzaneen area in the 3rd century AD. From the 5th century onwards, the western stream of migration, namely the Kalundu Tradition from the Congo/Angola regions reached the area. The Happy Rest Branch (also referred to as Matakoma) represents this stream and has been found in the Zoutpanberg area and Mooketsi. In the Lydenburg / Burgersfort area this developed into the Doornkop facies at about the 8th century AD, which is also found widespread in the Steelpoort and Sekhukhune area. A Later facies that developed out of the western stream named Eiland (Type site – Eiland Resort) dated to the 10th century AD also occurs in the general area.

Late Iron Age stonewalled archaeological sites belong to the early Pedi occupational period. They originated from the Kgatla in the Rustenburg/Pretoria area and migrated to the Burgersfort/Steelpoort in the mid 17th century. By that time they had already adopted a stonewalled settlement pattern, which is present in the study area. Some stonewalled sites could date into the historical period.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REMAINS

4.1 Stone Age Remains

MSA Flakes are scattered over the whole site, in low densities. There are however two areas containing slightly denser concentrations of these flakes. These two concentrations were exposed by surface erosion, removing the topsoil and concentrating the material (Fig 3).

Co-ordinates: 1. *S24° 43' 11.3" E30° 12' 40.4"*
2. *S24° 43' 23.2" E30° 12' 52.3"*

4.2 Iron Age Remains

There are a number of Iron Age sites in the area. Most of them are severely disturbed and of low significance. However two of the sites are in better condition and could be considered to be of medium significance. There appears to be four stone walled sites, two are still in relatively good condition even though all of them have been disturbed by human activities. There is also one site that does not contain any walling, which probably dates to the Early or Middle Iron Age.

1. Co-ordinates: 1. *S24° 43' 21.7" E30° 13' 20.5"*

This is a stone walled site and is located underneath one of the power lines running from the large substation on the farm. It has been heavily impacted on by the activities surrounding this power grid. No identifiable pottery material was noted, but the site probably belongs to the early Pedi occupation period.

2. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 32.5" E30° 13' 20.5"*

This site appears similar to the site above; it is also situated below power lines, but it is in a more intact position with at least one cattle enclosure clearly visible (Fig 6). No identifiable pottery material was noted, but the site probably belongs to the early Pedi occupation period.

3. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 10.1" E30° 13' 01.5"*

This site is again similar to the above sites and is also situated under the power lines.

4. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 02.4" E30° 13' 12.0"*

This site is also a stone walled complex, and appears slightly different to the other sites. There is a higher concentration of pottery and ash, but again no identifiable pieces were recovered. This site is also possibly the best preserved of the stone walled sites, even though it has also been disturbed by gravel roads and some historical structures close by (Fig 5).

5. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 23.2" E30° 12' 52.3"*

This site is located in an erosion gully, and the erosion has thus destroyed much of it (Fig 4). It was located by the presence of some pottery fragments. These fragments were also undecorated, making it difficult to identify, but due to the lack of stonewalling it probably dates to the early or Middle Iron Age. Little remained of the site and it is of low significance.

4.3 Recent Historical Remains

Historical remains were noted on the site, but little of the structures remained intact, except for some of the foundations and some walling. Sisal plants are an indicator of historical remains and were noted at all of the sites.

1. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 04.3" E30° 13' 00.3"*

Little remains of this site, and the main indicator are the sisal plants growing there. It consists of some overgrown stone foundations, not easily visible (Fig. 10).

2. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 00.5" E30° 13' 09.7"*

This site is similar to the one above, but contains some stonewalling. It is also situated close to the Iron Age site number 4.

3. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 04.3" E30° 13' 00.3"*

This site is again similar to the other sites, and contains stonewall remains.

4. Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 04.3" E30° 13' 00.3"*

This site is again similar to the other sites, and contains stonewall remains. It is completely overgrown with low visibility (Fig. 12).

4.4 Graves

A graveyard, consisting of at least three graves, but possibly four exists on the terrain. One grave contains a gravestone (Fig 13-14).

Co-ordinates: *S24° 43' 31.7" E30° 13' 24.9"*

A probability >80% exists that the Iron Age sites could contain unmarked burials.

5. EVALUATION

1. The Middle Stone Age (MSA) material is scattered in eroded areas where it accumulated over a long period. The subterranean deposit thus contains a very low concentration of material. It is not accessible and it would thus not be practical

or feasible to undertake a Phase 2 assessment of the Stone Age bearing layer. The MSA material is not regarded as significant.

2. The deposit of the Early Iron Age site is also subterranean and is only visible due to the erosion. The site is regarded as low in significance, but due to scientific considerations in order to identify the cultural tradition and to place it within the cultural sequence of the area, a Phase 2 assessment of the site must be mitigated.
3. The Later Iron Age stone walled sites are all damaged to the extent that none of them warrant conservation status. These sites are regarded as low - medium in significance, but Phase 2 assessments must be mitigated in order identify their cultural affinities and to record their layout and settlement pattern.
4. The recent historical sites are probably not older than 60 years and are not regarded as significant.
5. The graveyard will have high local significance. Due to the nature of the development, the re-location of the graves with consent from the affected families would be preferred. Alternatively, the graves must be adequately fenced off from the developed area.

6. MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

In view of the above the following management and mitigation measures are recommended:

1. That Phase 2 Assessments be mitigated for all of the recorded Iron Age sites.
2. That the recorded graves be re-located by following the correct procedures of social consultation and implementation of the legislative requirements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above it is recommended that:

A phase two survey be conducted of the site.

From a heritage resources management point of view we have no objection with regard to the development on condition that the management measures mentioned above is implemented.



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8. REFERENCES

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Fig 1. General view of area from a small hill.



Fig 2. General view of the area from close to the river.



Fig 3. MSA flakes from erosion gully.



Fig 4. Erosion where Iron Age pottery fragments was noted.



Fig 5. Some stone walling from Iron Age site 1.



Fig 6. Stone circle from Iron Age site 2.

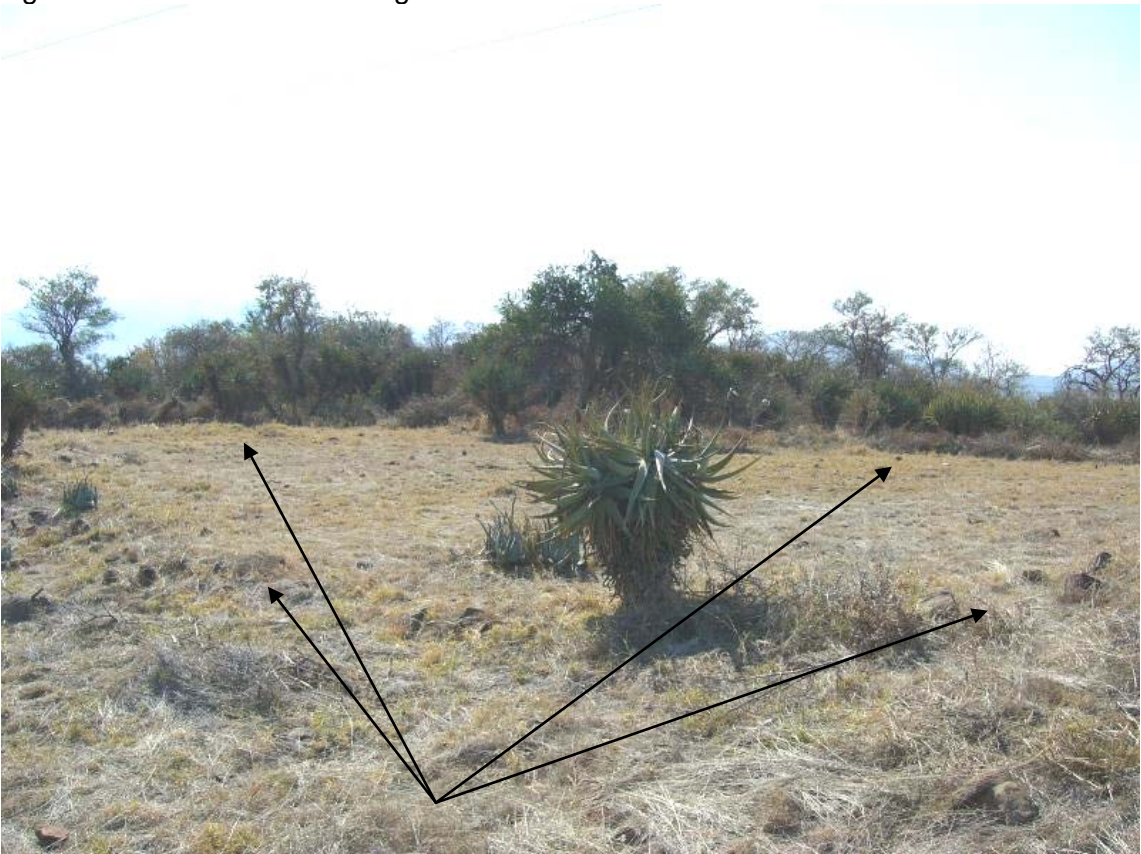


Fig 7. Cattle kraal from Iron Age site 2, note low walling.



Fig 8. Part of the stonewall Iron Age site 3, obscured by vegetation.



Fig 9. Iron Age site 4, walling obscured by vegetation.



Fig 10. Part of the historical settlement, note wall in foreground and sisal plants.



Fig 11. Detail of one of the walls.



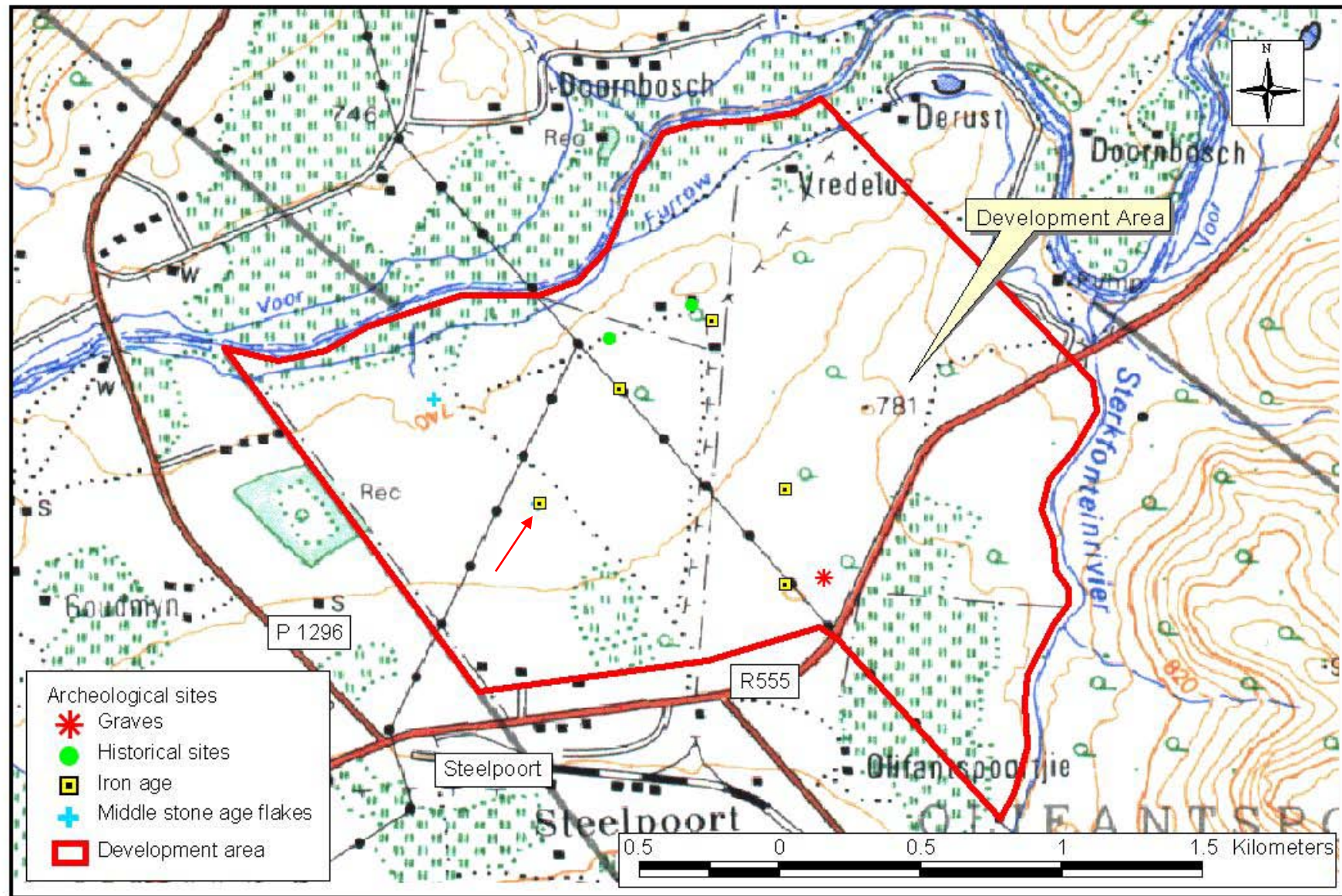
Fig 12. Historical foundations overgrown by vegetation.



Fig 13. Graveyard.



Fig 14. Gravestone.



Locality map (The arrow points to the Early Iron Age site)