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Nelspruit The Rest

**PREPARED FOR:  
LANDSCAPE DYNAMICS**

**A PHASE I HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY FOR  
PORTION 12 OF THE FARM THE REST 454JT SOUTH OF  
NELSPRUIT IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE OF SOUTH  
AFRICA**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study as required in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) was done for the proposed new residential development on Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT located to the south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

The project area was divided into six zones with different vegetation types. A distinction was made between three zones with high, medium and low levels of significance. The HIA study revealed the following types and ranges of heritage resources in these three zones, namely: Graves and Graveyards (GY01 to GY10); remains dating from the Relatively Recent Past (Site RRP01 to Site RRP11); a Farm Homestead (complex) with associated outbuildings (tobacco sheds, labourer's quarters and other temporary structures) and possible Late Iron Age stone walled sites.

The graves and graveyards are undoubtedly of high significance. These remains may not be affected by the proposed development project. Legislation requires mitigation measures whenever graves are to be affected by development activities. Legislation with regard to graveyard includes the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999), the Ordinance on Exhumations, 1980 (Ordinance No 12 of 1980) and the Human Tissues Act, 1983 (Act No 65 of 1983 as amended).

The remains dating from the Relatively Recent Past (Site RRP01 to Site RRP11) have little historical or cultural significance and may be destroyed by the new development project.

The Farm Homestead (complex) with its associated outbuildings, tobacco sheds and other temporary infrastructure also date from the relatively recent past and have little or no historical significance.

Any Late Iron Age sites that may exist in the higher mountainous part of the project area (Zones 3 and 4) may have historical and cultural significance. Legislation that bears relevance on these sites is the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999).

The only remains of significance to be considered with regard to the proposed residential development on The Rest 454JT include the Graves and Graveyards (GY01 to GY10) and possible Late Iron Age sites.

Two possible mitigation measures can be followed with regard to the graves and graveyards, namely: graveyards can be exhumed and relocated or the graveyards may be preserved *in situ*. However, the latter option would not be viable as the graveyards have to be accommodated in one way or another in the residential area. These graveyards have to be secured (fenced-in or walled-in), must be accessible to family members or friends and must be maintained.

The relocation of the graveyards would be a more practical solution. The exhumation of human remains and the relocation of graveyards are done by forensic archaeologists who are acquainted with the relevant legislation, procedures to be followed and the necessary permits to obtain.

Any Late Iron Age sites in Zones 3 or 4 that may be affected by the proposed residential development have to be studied by means of Phase II investigations before they can be demolished. These studies may require that sites of significance have to be documented (mapped, surveyed, photographed and described) before they may be affected (demolished) by the development project. It is also possible that stone walled sites of outstanding significance have to be preserved and incorporated (in open or public spaces such parks) in the development project.

## CONTENTS

Executive summary	2
1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 TERMS OF REFERENCE	10
3 THE STUDY AREA	11
3.1 Location	11
3.2 Grading the study area's sensitivity	11
<u>Zone 1</u>	12
<u>Zone 2</u>	12
<u>Zone 3</u>	12
<u>Zone 4</u>	12
<u>Zone 5</u>	12
<u>Zone 6</u>	12
4 METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY	13
4.1 Method	13
4.2 Assumptions and limitations	13
4.3 Some remarks on terminology	13
5 THE HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY	16
5.1 Types and ranges of heritage resources discovered	16
5.1.1 Graves and graveyards	16
Graveyard 01 (GY01)	17

Graveyard 02 (GY02)	18
Graveyard 03 (GY03)	18
Graveyard 04 (GY04)	18
Graveyard 05 (GY05)	18
Graveyard 06 (GY06)	19
Graveyard 07 (GY07)	19
Graveyard 08 (GY08)	19
Graveyard 09 (GY09)	19
Graveyard 10 (GY10)	19

5.1.2 Sites dating from the recent past 20

Site RRP01	20
Site RRP02	20
Site RRP03	20
Site RRP04	20
Site RRP05	21
Site RRP06	21
Site RRP07	21
Site RRP08	22
Site RRP09	22
Site RRP10	23
Site RRP11	23

5.1.3 The farm homestead and associated outbuildings 23

5.1.4 Late Iron Age sites 23

<b>6</b>	<b>RATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1	The rating scheme	24
6.2	The significance of the heritage resources	25
<b>7</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>27</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Focused archaeological research has been conducted in the Mpumalanga Province for at least three decades. This research consists of surveys and of excavations of Stone Age and Iron Age sites as well as of the recording of rock art sites in this area. Ecologically speaking, the region includes parts of the Eastern Bankveld, the higher western Drakensberg escarpment and parts of the lower lying eastern Lowveld. The area has a rich cultural heritage, consisting of remains dating from both the prehistoric and the colonial periods of South Africa. These archaeological and historical remains include:

- Stone Age sites which may be associated with the San people and which date back hundreds of thousands of years;
- rock engraving sites located along rocky outcrops and dating from the last 20 000 years;
- rock painting sites in the Drakensberg which date from the last 10 000 years;
- Early Iron Age sites occupied by Bantu-Negroid agriculturists and possibly cattle herders which date back 1 500 years;
- Late Iron Age sites dating from the last 500 years;
- remains dating from the previous century when the first Immigrant Boers settled in various places to the west of the Drakensberg from the 1840's onwards;
- block houses built by British troops during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1900) on mountain ranges; and

- numerous other formal historical features (the Pelgrimrust Museum, the historically reconstructed Nederlandsch Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij (NZASM) tunnel near Waterval-Boven, the Middelburg Museum with a Ndebele *umuzi* as one of its satellite museums, the Mapoch's Caves near Roosenekal, the Merensky Missionary station near Middelburg, etc).

The heritage resources of the Mpumalanga Province therefore constitute a rich and wide diversified range (comprising the National Estate) as outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999) (see Box 1, next page).



**BOX 1: TYPES AND RANGES OF HERITAGE RESOURCES (COMPRISING THE NATIONAL ESTATE) AS OUTLINED IN THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT, 1999 (ACT NO 25 OF 1999)**

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Sec 3) outlines the following types and ranges of heritage resources that qualify as part of the national estate, namely:

- (a) places, buildings structures and equipment of cultural significance;
  - (b) places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
  - (c) historical settlements and townscapes;
  - (d) landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
  - (e) geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
  - (f) archaeological and paleontological sites;
  - (g) graves and burial grounds including:
    - (i) ancestral graves;
    - (ii) royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
    - (iii) graves of victims of conflict
    - (iv) graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
    - (v) historical graves and cemeteries; and
    - (vi) other human remains which are not covered by in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No 65 of 1983)
  - (h) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa:
    - (i) moveable objects, including -
      - (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and paleontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
      - (ii) objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
      - (iii) ethnographic art and objects;
      - (iv) military objects;
      - (v) objects of decorative or fine art;
      - (vi) objects of scientific or technological interest; and
      - (vii) books, records, documents, photographs, positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No 43 of 1996).
- The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Sec 3) also distinguishes nine criteria for places and objects to qualify as 'part of the national estate if they have cultural significance or other special value ...'. These criteria are the following:
- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
  - (b) its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
  - (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
  - (d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects
  - (e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
  - (f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
  - (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
  - (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa;
  - (i) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa

## 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Developer intends establishing a residential township on Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT located to the south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The residential development on Portion 12 will take cognisance of the presence of high, medium and low sensitivity areas with regard to the presence of vegetation and heritage resources that were distinguished on Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT (Figure 1).

The development of the residential area may affect some of the types and ranges of heritage resources (comprising the National Estate) outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999) if these should exist in the project area. Consequently, the Developer and Landscape Dynamics commissioned me to undertake a Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study to determine whether the proposed development may impact on any of the types and ranges of heritage resources that are outline in Box 1. The aims with the HIA are:

- To establish whether any of the types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999) occur within the project area and, if so
- To determine the level (or degree) of significance of the heritage resources that occur within the perimeters of the project area, and
- To make recommendations regarding possible mitigation or the conservation of these remains depending on their levels of significance.

### 3 THE STUDY AREA

#### 3.1 Location

The proposed new residential development is located on Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT located to the south of the town of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The project area is located approximately 10 km to the south of Nelspruit and 3km to the east of the R40 running between Witrivier (in the north) and Barberton (in the south) (Figure 1) (Nelspruit 2530; 1:250 000).

#### 3.2 Grading the study area's sensitivity

The project area was divided into six zones which vary in sensitivity with regard to the types of vegetation present in these zones. The most important heritage resources that were discovered in the project area, namely graves, were mapped according to their presence in these various zones. The six zones were the following:

##### Zone 1

This is a low sensitive zone with regard to vegetation and is marked by grass veldt on level plains in the central part of the project area as well as against the southern slope of the project area. The zone with the most prominent occurrence of grass veldt encircles Zone No 6 or the farm homestead.

##### Zone 2

Zone 2 is an area that includes a wider variety of vegetation than Zone 1 but which is also covered with grass veldt. This zone represents vegetation with a medium level of sensitivity and occurs in two areas, namely in the north-eastern and in the north-western corners of the project area.

### Zone 3

This is a high sensitive vegetation zone and is mainly confined to the higher mountainous areas in the southern and in the western parts of the project area.

### Zone 4

Zone 4 is marked by areas with conspicuous granite domes which occur in the southern, eastern and north-western parts of the project area. These domes are associated with the high sensitive Zone 3 areas as these domes are confined to the higher mountainous parts of the project area.

### Zone 5

Zone 5 areas refer to the vegetations types that are associated with the two dams that occur in the project area.

### Zone 6

This zone is confined to the area and vegetation that surrounds the farm homestead and which has been altered by human intervention in the past.

## 4 METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

### 4.1 Method

The survey was conducted with a vehicle where accessible routes existed while parts of all the zones were surveyed on foot.

The survey on foot was conducted with the help of a spokesperson, Mr. Michael Nkosi, who is well acquainted with the farm.

It must be emphasised that the project area is densely vegetated and that the sensitive parts in the project area (Zones 3 and 4) could not be surveyed in detail as parts of these bushy areas were inaccessible.

### 4.2 Assumptions and limitations

The HIA study did not identify all possible types and ranges of heritage resources on Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT. Some of the heritage resources may simply have been missed during the survey as they may occur in thick clumps of vegetation while others may lie below the surface of the earth and may only be exposed once development commences.

### 4.3 Some remarks on terminology

The Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) referred to in the title of this report also included a survey of all the types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999) (see Box 1).

The terms 'historical period' and 'historical remains' refer, for the Nelspruit area, to the first appearance or use of 'modern' Western writing brought to Mpumalanga by

the first Colonists who settled in this area around 1845. The historical period for Nelspruit therefore dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The term 'relatively recent past' refers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Remains from this period are not necessarily older than sixty years and therefore do not to qualify, in all instances, as archaeological or historical remains.

It is not always possible, based on Phase I observations alone, to distinguish clearly between archaeological remains and historical remains, or between historical remains and remains from the relatively recent past. Although certain criteria may help to make this distinction possible, these criteria are not always present, or, when they are present, they are not clear enough to interpret with great accuracy. Criteria such as square floor plans (a historical feature) may serve as a guideline. However, circular and square floors may occur together on the same site.

The term 'Late Iron Age' refers to the period between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup> century and can therefore include the historical period.

Phase I studies refer to surveys using various sources of data in order to establish the presence of all possible types of heritage resources in any given area.

Phase II studies include in-depth cultural heritage studies such as archaeological mapping and excavating, the documenting of rock art/engraving sites or of dwellings or other architectural features and structures, the sampling of archaeological sites or shipwrecks, etc. Phase II work requires the co-operation and approval of SAHRA.

The term 'critical area' or the 'project area' refers to the area where the Developer wants to focus its development activities namely Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT.

Figure 1: An aerial photograph of the project area on the farm The Rest 454JT which is located to the south of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

The presence of graves and sites dating from the relatively recent past were found in the project area. It is possible that Late Iron Age sites may also occur in the project area. However these sites were not found as a result of the thick vegetation cover in Zone 3 which is also a sensitive vegetation area.

The positions of graves are indicated on the aerial photograph as these remains can be considered to be of high significance. The remains (sites) dating from the recent past are not indicated as these remains have little significance.

## 5 THE HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY

### 5.1 Types and ranges of heritage resources discovered

The HIA survey of Portion 12 of the farm The Rest 454JT revealed the following types and ranges of heritage resources in the project area:

- at least ten (10) single graves and graveyards;
- at least eleven (11) sites that date from the recent past;
- farm homesteads with tobacco sheds that have been adapted to serve as residential quarters for tenants; and
- possible Late Iron Age sites that may occur in high sensitive vegetation areas (Zones 3 and 4) that could not be surveyed as a result of thick vegetation. (The vegetation in these parts will only recede to more accessible levels as the winter progresses).

The geographical locations of the grave sites are indicated on an aerial photograph of the project area (Figure 1). The coordinates for the graves and graveyards have also been tabulated in the report (Table 1). The remains dating from the recent past have not been mapped as these remains have little significance.

The various types and ranges of heritage resources that have been found in the project area are now briefly discussed while some are also illustrated with photographs. Heritage resources such as possible stone walled sites dating from the Late Iron Age are also briefly discussed in order to provide an explanation for their meaning and significance.



### 5.1.1 Graves and graveyards

At least ten single graves and graveyards were identified in the project area, namely (Figure 1; Table 1):

#### Graveyard 01 (GY01)

This graveyard contains the graves of three individuals, two of which were the original owners of the farm. This 'graveyard' is a mere spot (locality) next to a rocky outcrop. Two of the deceased were (Figure 1; Table 1):

- Roelof Jacobus Petrus van Tonder,
- Herculina van Tonder, and
- one of Roelof and Herculina's grandchildren.

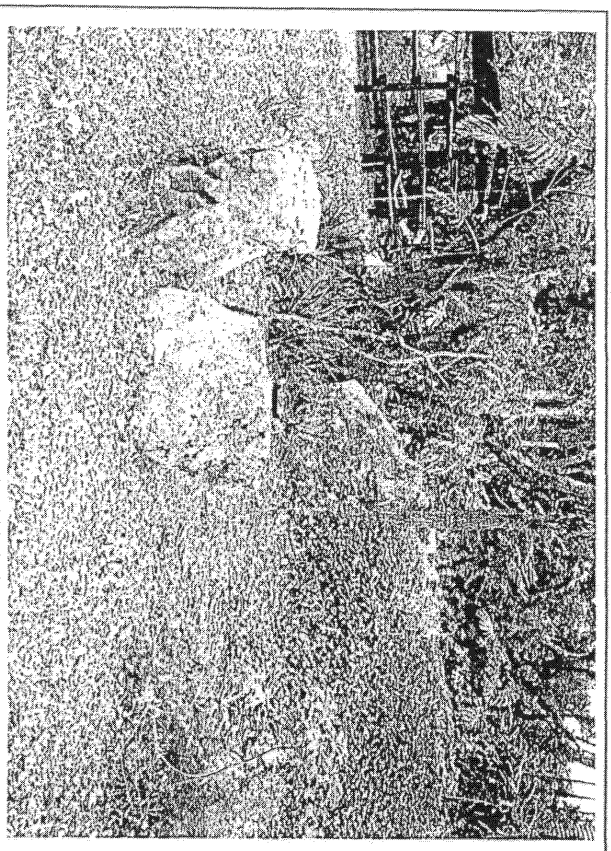


Figure 2- GY01 next to a rocky outcrop near the farm homestead on The Rest. The graves are located between large boulders and do not have any headstones.

#### Graveyard 02 (GY02)

This graveyard is associated with the remains of a dwelling dating from the recent past (Site RRP01), an avenue of coral trees that were planted by a labourer community while living on the farm and with two graves.

The graves are located in a thick bush adjacent to a granite knoll. Both graves are covered with stones and bear no headstones (Table 1). One of the deceased was Oupa Adam Bokwane.

#### Graveyard 03 (GY03)

Graveyard 03 is located in a thick impenetrable bush consisting of lantana shrubs. According to the Michael Nkosi two graves are located in the lantana bush. These graves do not have any headstones.

#### Graveyard 04 (GY04)

This graveyard consists of two graves located in open veldt near the remains of Site RRP04 and GY03. The graves are covered with stone cairns and with tall grass.

#### Graveyard 05 (GY04)

This graveyard is located to the south of the main farm homestead in thick bush. Both graves are covered with stones. One of the deceased may be George Maela (Mahela).

Graveyards 06 to Graveyards 10 are all located on a border line between Zone 1 (grass veldt) and Zone 3 (bush), but fall within the perimeters of the bush and can therefore be described as located in Zone 3. These five grave sites are all located in the south-eastern part of the study area.

#### Graveyard 06 (GY06)

This graveyard contains five graves and is located in a bush. GY06 is also associated with remains dating from the recent past (Site RRP10).

#### Grave 07 (G7)

This single grave is located in the same bush as GY06 and is covered with stones.

#### Grave 08 (G8)

This single grave is located in the same bush as GY06 and Grave7.

#### Graveyard 09 (GY09)

This graveyard contains four graves which are located in a bush consisting of lantana shrubs which is impenetrable. GY09 is also associated with remains from the recent past (Site RRP11).

#### Graveyard 10 (GY10)

This graveyard could not be approached as it is situated in the midst of a bush with lantana shrubs. According to Michael Nkosi this graveyard contains the graves of four individuals.

### 5.1.2 Site from the relatively recent past

At least eleven (11) sites dating from the relatively recent past were found in the study area. Several of these sites are associated with single graves or with the graveyards (refer to Part 5.1.1).

More remains dating from the recent past must occur in the project area. However, these remains have no historical or cultural significance and do not qualify as heritage resources. These sites were therefore not mapped on the aerial photograph. The sites that were discovered are briefly mentioned:

#### Site RRP01

This site is associated with GY02 and consists of the mud foundations of a dwelling and an avenue with coral trees.

#### Site RRP02

The remains of this site include a mud and brick foundation and a few pieces of scrap metal.

#### Site RRP03

Site RRP03 is located near a large dry (dead) blue gum tree but could not be observed as it is covered with a bush of lantana shrubs.

#### Site RRP04

This site is associated with a bush of lantana shrubs and with GY03 and GY04.

Site RRP05

Site RRP05 is associated with a bush of lantana shrubs and several exotic and indigenous trees. The remains of at least one dwelling's foundation are still visible.

Site RRP06

This site is also associated with a bush of lantana shrubs. Part of the wooden framework of this dwelling is still intact.



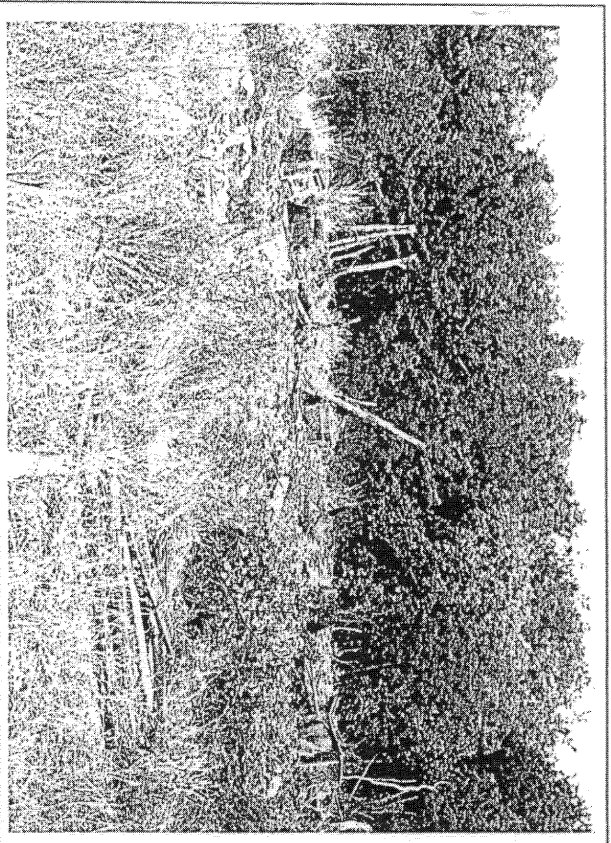
**Figure 3- Part of the wooden framework of Site RRP06 is still in tact.**

Site RRP07

Site RRP07 consists of the remains of a cement and brick structure which used to serve as a compound for labourers working on the farm.

Site RRP08

The ruins of this dwelling are associated with rubbish lying around as well as with guava and paw-paw trees.



**Figure 4- The ruins of Site RRP08 are associated with modern rubbish and with fruit trees.**

Site RRP09

Site RRP09 consists of the ruins of a clay house. This house used to belong to Eliphas Nkomane.

#### Site RRP10

The remains of this dwelling are associated with GY06 and consist of the cement floor of a dwelling.

#### Site RRP11

Site RRP11 is associated with GY09 and consist of a piece of cement foundation, wrecks of vehicles and other 'modern' rubbish.

#### 5.1.3 The farm homestead and associated outbuildings

The Farm Homestead (in Zone 6) on The Rest 454JT consist of at least two main residences, outbuildings, sheds, two tobacco sheds and other temporary structures. These structures are modern and have no historical significance. The two tobacco sheds were used to dry and to store tobacco leaves when tobacco was still planted on the farm. Both these structures have been adapted to be used as hostels. A large number of individuals and families are currently housed in these structures.

#### 5.1.4 Late Iron Age sites

Stone walled sites dating from the Late Iron Age most probably occur in the mountainous high sensitive Zone 3 and Zone 4 areas as a few rudimentary stone walls have been observed on the outer fringes of these areas. A number of lower grinding stones that originate from these sites also occur near the farm homestead where these artefacts are used as decoration in the garden.

According to Michael Nkosi stone walled sites do occur in the mountainous parts of the project area as well as on neighbouring farms. It is also known from earlier

archaeological surveys in the Nelspruit area that stone walled sites do occur in this part of the Lowveld. These sites were built and inhabited from the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Eastern Sotho peoples and by the Swazi

Late Iron Age stone walled sites are usually conspicuous as they are composed of stone walls that can be as high as one meter. These circular or oval-shaped walls usually surrounded centrally located enclosures and either served as villages (*dikgoro*) for Sotho speaking communities or as villages (*imiziz*) for Nguni (Swazi) speaking people. These villages date from as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and were occupied by farmers who kept large and small stock and who practised agriculture.

if these stone walled sites do exist in Zones 3 and 4 they can be considered to be of high significance.



## **6 RATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA**

### **6.1 The rating scheme**

The HIA survey revealed the presence of the following types and ranges of heritage resources in the project area, namely:

- Graves and graveyards (GY01 to GY10).
- Remains dating from the relatively recent past (Site RRP01 to Site RRP11).
- A Farm Homestead (complex) with associated outbuildings such as tobacco sheds, labourer's quarters and other temporary structures.
- Possible Late Iron Age stone walled sites.

### **6.2 The significance of the heritage resources**

The graves and graveyards (GY01 to GY10) are undoubtedly of a high significance. These remains may not be affected by the proposed development project. Legislation requires mitigation measures whenever graves are to be affected by development activities. Legislation with regard to graveyard includes the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999), the Ordinance on Exhumations (Ordinance No 12 of 1980) and the Human Tissues Act (Act No 65 of 1983 as amended).

The remains dating from the relatively recent past (Site RRP01 to Site RRP11) have little historical or cultural significance as these remains are only a few years or perhaps a few decades old. These remains can be destroyed by the new development project.

The Farm Homestead (complex) with its associated outbuildings, tobacco sheds and other temporary infrastructure also date from the relatively recent past and have little or no historical significance.

Any possible Late Iron Age sites that may exist in the higher mountainous part of the project area (Zones 3 and 4) may have historical and cultural significance. Legislation that bears relevance on these sites and their associated remains is the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999).

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The only remains of significance to be considered with regard to the proposed residential development on The Rest 454JT include:

- The graves and graveyards (GY01 to GY10).
- Possible Late Iron Age sites.

Two possible mitigation measures can be followed with regard to the graves and graveyards, namely: graveyards can be exhumed and relocated or the graveyards may be preserved *in situ*. However, the latter option would not be viable as the graveyards have to be accommodated in one way or another in the residential area. This would mean that the graveyards have to be secured (fenced-in or walled-in) and that the graveyards must be accessible to family members or friends who want to visit the deceased. Graveyards that are kept behind walls must also be maintained.

The relocation of the graveyards would be a more practical solution. The exhumation of human remains and the relocation of graveyards are done by forensic archaeologists who are acquainted with the relevant legislation and procedures that have to be followed.

Any Late Iron Age sites in Zones 3 or 4 that may be affected by the proposed residential development have to be studied by means of Phase II investigations before they can be demolished. These studies may require that sites of significance have to be documented (mapped, surveyed, photographed and described) before they may be affected (demolished) by the development project. It is also possible that stone walled sites of outstanding significance have to be preserved and incorporated (in open or public spaces such parks) in the development project.

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Graves and graveyards	Coordinates
GY01	25° 30' 56" S 30° 58' 24" E
GY02	25° 30' 39" S 30° 58' 13" E
GY03	25° 30' 44" S 30° 58' 12" E
GY04	25° 30' 42" S 30° 58' 13" E
GY05	25° 30' 50" S 30° 58' 20" E
GY06	25° 31' 26" S 30° 58' 33" E
GY07	25° 31' 21" S 30° 58' 34" E
GY08	25° 31' 21" S 30° 58' 34" E
GY09	25° 31' 22" S 30° 58' 51" E
GY10	Inaccessible

Table 1 - Coordinates for graves and graveyards discovered in the project area on The Rest454JT.