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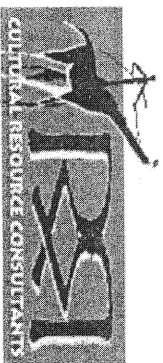
PHASE 1 HERITAGE RESOURCES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FISH EAGLE ESTATES
BLYDE RIVER: LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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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 development was undertaken. In order to comply with legislation, the developer requires information on the heritage resources, and their significance that occur on the demarcated area. This will enable the developer to take pro-active measures to limit the adverse effects that the development could have on such heritage resources.

The author was contracted by Sue Posnik & Associates to undertake a Phase 1 *Heritage Impact Assessment* of the demarcated terrain. 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 proposed development area. The significance of the heritage resources was assessed in terms of criteria defined in the methodology section. It is indicated which of the resources will be affected by the proposed development and the report recommends mitigation measures that should be implemented to minimize the adverse effect of the proposed development on these heritage resources. The mitigation measures also apply to heritage resources not detected during the survey, but which could be uncovered during the construction phase.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sources of information

The source of information was predominantly the field reconnaissance.

A survey of the demarcated area 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. Locations finds 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

Although the survey was thorough, it is possible that certain archaeological sites and/or features may have been missed. 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: The period from ± 1.6 million yrs - $\pm 250\ 000$ yrs ago. Acheulean stone tools are dominant.

Middle Stone Age: Various lithic industries in SA dating from $\pm 250\ 000$ yr. - 30 000 yr. before present.

Late Stone Age: The period from $\pm 30\ 000$ -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 pit excavations or auger 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

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 (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 graves 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

The proposed development is located on portions 16 to 24 and 41 to 43 of the farm Byderus 596 KT, portion 9 of the farm Southampton 213 KT and the farm Southampton 603 KT in the Bohlabela District, Limpopo Province. Refer to map, South Africa (1:50 000 2430 BD).

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL FINDS

5.1 Stone Age Material

Both Early Stone Age (Acheul) and Middle Stone Age material have been noted on the terrain. The Early Stone Age material is found among the cobblestones that form part of the ancient river-bed, which was an excellent source for the raw material. Although abundant, the material is scattered and not located in concentrations that would have significance, nor warrant protective measures because of the low impact nature of the development.

Significance: None

5.2 Iron Age Remains

Evidence for Iron Age habitation was found on the terrain. Pottery fragments and an upper grinding stone were noted at one spot at co-ordinates *S24°22'06.9" E30°50'29.4"*. The pottery fragments are unfortunately non-diagnostic, with the result that the period and cultural group could not be identified. More material was found in the old ploughed fields on the river bend that fall outside the development area.

Significance: None

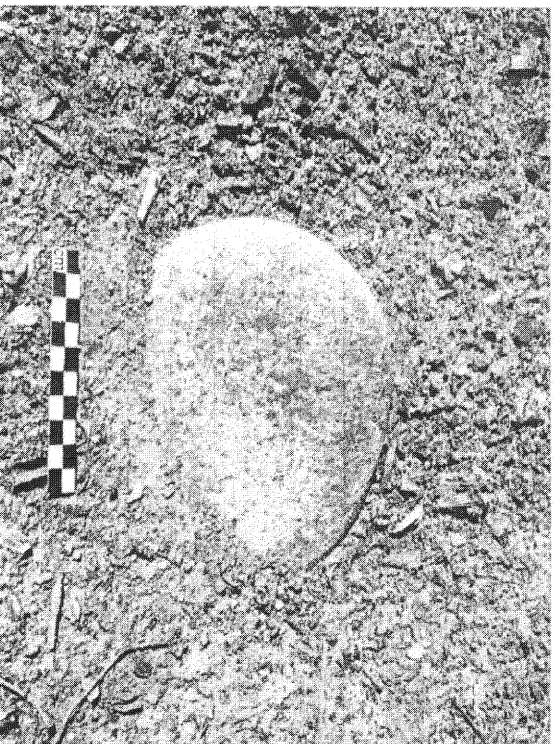


Fig 1. Upper grinder referred to in text.

5.3 Historical Remains

An old irrigation canal that is probably older than 60 years is located on the demarcated area (refer to section 34 of the NHRA). It had at least two concrete bridge-like constructions that cross the waterways. One such construction has already been demolished, but another is intact at co-ordinated ordinates *S24°22'32.8" E30°50'22.9"*.

Significance: Medium



Fig 2 Bridge-like canal spanning waterway



Fig 3. Section of canal

6. EVALUATION

Although no specific significant archaeological site was noted on the terrain, enough evidence exists to indicate that the area had been inhabited in the past. The area is thus sensitive and may contain undetected heritage resources that could be unearthed during development. Burials and graves are not marked on pre-colonial archaeological sites, and because of shifting settlement practices during the past, human skeletal remains could be located anywhere on such a terrain. *The uncovering of previously undetected cultural remains must be reported and may require mitigation measures.*

The recorded canal forms part of the culture historical landscape, and the bridge-like feature and adjoining portion of the old canal should be protected and maintained as a record of past activities.

The proposed development will probably not have an adverse impact on any significant archaeological site, although cultural remains may be unearthed in places. *We thus have no objection with regard to the proposed development on condition that the under mentioned recommendation is implemented.*

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above it is recommended that:

A section of the old canal and concrete bridge-like structure noted above be protected to reflect past agricultural practices.

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

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.

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