

Agency for Cultural Resource Management

Specialists in Archaeological Studies and Heritage Resource Management

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21 September, 2011

Att: Mr Winston Cloete
Bvi Consulting Engineers
P. O. Box 683
Springbok
8240

Dear Mr Cloete,

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT THE PROPOSED EKSTEENFONTEIN WASTE SITE, NORTHERN CAPE

1. Introduction

Bvi Consulting Engineers, on behalf of the Richtersveld Municipality commissioned the Agency for Cultural Resource Management to conduct an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for the proposed construction and operation of a waste refuse facility at Eksteenfontein in the Richtersveld region of the Northern Cape Province (Figures 1 & 2).

The proposed project entails the following:

- Construction of a waste refuse facility
- Installation of security fencing around the facility
- Construction of a 0.4 km long gravel access road.

The footprint area for the proposed waste site is 3.3 ha.

The proposed activities are to be located on Portion 3 of Farm Richtersveld 11, Namaqualand.

Trenches (4m - 5m wide and 2m - 3m deep) will be excavated in which general waste will be disposed. After a trench has reached its capacity it will be closed off by covering it with a final layer of soil and a new trench will be opened up.

In terms of Section 38 (1) (c) of the National Heritage Resources Act 1999 (Act 25 of 1999), an AIA of the proposed development is required if the development footprint area is more than 5000 m². This is to determine if the area contains heritage sites and to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are not damaged or destroyed during development.

In addition, Section 38 (1) (a) of the Act indicates that any person constructing a powerline, pipeline or road, or linear development exceeding 300m in length is required to notify the responsible heritage resources authority, who will advise whether an impact assessment is required before development can take place.

ACRM has been instructed to undertake a baseline study in order to locate and map archaeological sites or remains that may potentially be impacted by the proposed development, to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate any impacts.

The AIA forms part of the Environmental Basic Assessment process that is being undertaken by independent environmental consultants, Enviro-Logic cc.

2. Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the archaeological study were to:

- Determine whether there are likely to be any archaeological resources that may be impacted by the proposed construction of the waste refuse site, and the proposed gravel access road;
- To identify and map archaeological resources that may be impacted by the proposed development;
- To assess the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological resources affected by the proposed development;
- To assess the significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development, and
- To identify measures to protect and maintain any valuable archaeological sites that may be impacted by the proposed development

3. Description of the affected environment

An aerial photograph indicating the layout for the proposed Eksteenfontein waste site is illustrated in Figure 3.

Eksteenfontein is a small Nama village located about 130 kms north east of Port Nolloth and about 110 km north of Springbok in the Northern Cape. The settlement is located on the edge of the Richtersveld National Park.

The proposed waste site is located about 1.5 kms north east of the village alongside (i.e. to the south of) the gravel road that leads into the Park. The site is quite flat at the top, but slopes fairly steeply toward the gravel road and a small, dry stream bed. The proposed site is already fairly severely degraded, as it is the settlements existing waste refuse facility. The site is currently fenced off and dumping of domestic waste occurs in the north east (Figures 4-6). The site has also been 'scraped' and partially shaped and there are several gravel tracks that intersect the footprint area. The slopes are covered in small quartz pebbles. There is virtually no natural vegetation on the proposed site.

There are no significant landscape features in the footprint area and the surrounding land use is 'Wilderness; (Richtersveld National Park) and marginal grazing.

The existing gravel access road that leads to the proposed waste site will be upgraded and no new access roads are planned.

4. Approach to the study

The proposed 3.3 ha footprint area and the proposed 0.4 km long access road was searched for archaeological, remains.

The site visit and assessment took place on the 4th August, 2011.

5. Constraints and limitations

There were no constraints or limitations associated with the study.

6. Identification of potential risks

There are no archaeological risks associated with the project.

A possible 'traditional' grave was identified close to the existing waste site which may be threatened by the proposed activities.

7. Results of the study

7.1 The proposed waste site

No pre-colonial archaeological heritage was documented during the study of the proposed waste site.

7.2 Graves

A possible 'traditional' (i.e. non-Christian) grave (S 28 48.887 E 17 15.993 on map datum wgs 84) was recorded close to the existing waste site (Figures 7 & 8). Typically, 'traditional' forms of graves appear in the landscape as circular stone cairns and are common in the Richtersveld landscape (Halkett 1999¹ and personnel observation).

The Eksteenfontein grave does not appear as a cairn, and has possibly collapsed with just a few stones and rocks lying about. There are no grave goods such as glass jars, bottles or marine shell, but the feature is still reasonably visible to the naked eye.

Graves older than 100 years are protected under the NHRA and it is an offence to damage or remove any grave without a permit issued by SAHRA.

¹ Halkett, D. 1999. A Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of heritage resources in the Trans Hex Diamond Concession, Richtersveld. Report prepared for Trans Hex Group Ltd. Archaeology Contracts Office, University of Cape Town.

As a precaution, the 'grave' location site has been 'Red Flagged'.

7.3 The proposed access road

No archaeological remains were found in the existing gravel road, which will be upgraded.

8. Impact statement

The Archaeological Impact Assessment of the proposed construction and operation of a waste refuse site at Eksteenfontein in the Northern Cape has identified no significant impacts to pre-colonial archaeological material that will need to be mitigated, prior to proposed development activities.

The proposed development may impact on a possible grave that is located close to the existing waste site, and measures must be taken to avoid damaging or disturbing this potentially sensitive feature.

9. Recommendations

1. The project is deemed to be viable.
2. No archaeological mitigation is required.
3. The possible grave that has been identified must be fenced off prior to construction work commencing.
4. Should any unmarked human remains, or features such as buried ostrich eggshell caches be exposed or uncovered during excavations and bulk earthworks these must immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Ms Mariagrazia Galimberti 021 4624502). Burials must not be disturbed until inspected by the archaeologist and will have to be removed by an archaeologist under a permit issued by SAHRA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jonathan Kaplan', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Kaplan



Figure 1. Locality map: Regional context



Figure 2. Locality map: Local context



Figure 4. View of the proposed Eksteenfontein waste site facing north east.



Figure 5. View of the proposed Eksteenfontein waste site facing north east.



Figure 6. View of the proposed site Eksteenfontein waste facing north east.



Figure 7. Remains of a possible grave alongside the existing Eksteenfontein waste site



Figure 8. Approximate boundary of the proposed Eksteenfontein waste site (dotted red line), illustrating the location of the possible grave site.