



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural  
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**A REPORT ON A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT ERF 1522 ELLISRAS ON THE FARM  
ONVERWACHT 503 LQ, LEPHALALE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

For:

**WSP**

REPORT: **AE863**

by:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Archaetnos cc was appointed by WSP on behalf of Exxaro Coal (Pty) Ltd. to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment for the proposed residential development at Erf 1522 Ellisras in the town of Lephalale. The site is situated on the farm Onverwacht503 LQ in the Limpopo Province.

The basic terms of reference for the project was to identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural heritage sites) located on the property and to assess the significance of these. The possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains also had to be recorded and suitable mitigation and management measures proposed.

The methodology used included a survey of literature in order to obtain background information regarding the area. A field survey was conducted in accordance with generally accepted HIA practices and the location/position of any site was determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS). Added to this a description of each find is given.

In order to place these finds in context a description of the environment is given. This is followed by a short indication of past human activities in the area, including the different phases of the human past.

The fieldwork undertaken revealed one site of cultural heritage significance. It is from the historical era and in a very bad state of decay. Accordingly it is of a low cultural significance.

**The final recommendations are that the development may continue and that this report is seen as ample mitigation in this regard. During construction activities the client should however be on the lookout for the subterranean presence of archaeological features. Should something be unearthed an archaeologist should immediately be contacted to investigate the find.**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Archaeos cc was appointed by WSP on behalf of Exxaro Coal (Pty) Ltd. to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment for the housing development on Erf 1522 Ellisras on the farm Onverwacht 503 LQ. This is situated in the town of Lephale in the Limpopo Province.

The client indicated the area where the proposed development is to take place, and the survey was confined to this area.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference for the survey were to:

1. Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural heritage sites) located on the property (see Appendix A).
2. Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their archaeological, historical, scientific, social, religious, aesthetic and tourism value (see Appendix B).
3. Describe the possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains, according to a standard set of conventions.
4. Propose suitable mitigation and management measures to minimize possible negative impacts on the cultural resources.
5. Recommend suitable mitigation and management measures should there be any sites of significance that might be impacted upon by the proposed development.
6. Review applicable legislative requirements.

## **3. CONDITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS**

The following conditions and assumptions have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

1. Cultural Resources are all non-physical and physical man-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences associated with human activity. These include all sites, structure and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development. Graves and cemeteries are included in this.
2. The significance of the sites, structures and artifacts is determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. The various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these aspects.

3. Cultural significance is site-specific and relates to the content and context of the site. Sites regarded as having low cultural significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium cultural significance may or may not require mitigation depending on other factors such as the significance of impact on the site. Sites with a high cultural significance require further mitigation (see Appendix B).
4. The latitude and longitude of any archaeological or historical site or feature, is to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.
5. All recommendations are made with full cognizance of the relevant legislation.
6. It has to be mentioned that it is almost impossible to locate all the cultural resources in a given area, as it will be very time consuming. Developers should however note that the report should make it clear how to handle any other finds that might occur.
7. It should be noted that in this particular case the vegetation was reasonably dense in certain areas making archaeological visibility difficult.

#### **4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

##### **4.1 The National Heritage Resources Act**

According to the above-mentioned law the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

##### **Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites**

Section 35(4) of this act states that 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;

- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

### **Human remains**

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or 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
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.

## **4.2 The National Environmental Management Act**

This act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The

impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation thereof are made.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Survey of literature**

A survey of literature was undertaken in order to obtain background information regarding the area. Sources consulted in this regard are indicated in the bibliography.

### **5.2 Field survey**

The survey was conducted according to generally accepted HIA practices and was aimed at locating all possible objects, sites and features of cultural significance in the area of proposed development. If required, the location/position of any site was determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS), while photographs were also taken where needed.

The survey was undertaken on foot and by 4 x 4 vehicle.

### **5.3 Documentation**

All sites, objects features and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Co-ordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the Global Positioning System (GPS).The information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

## **6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

Erf 1522 Ellisras is a planned development in the southwestern part of the town of Lephalale (Figure 1). It is flanked by existing residential areas on all sides.

The relief of the area is basically flat and the environment is very disturbed. Pioneer species such as weeds and grass dominate the vegetation, but some medium to large sized trees were also identified. Many footpaths go through the site adding to its disturbance. The area is also used for illegal dumping of garden refuse and glass bottles (Figure 2).

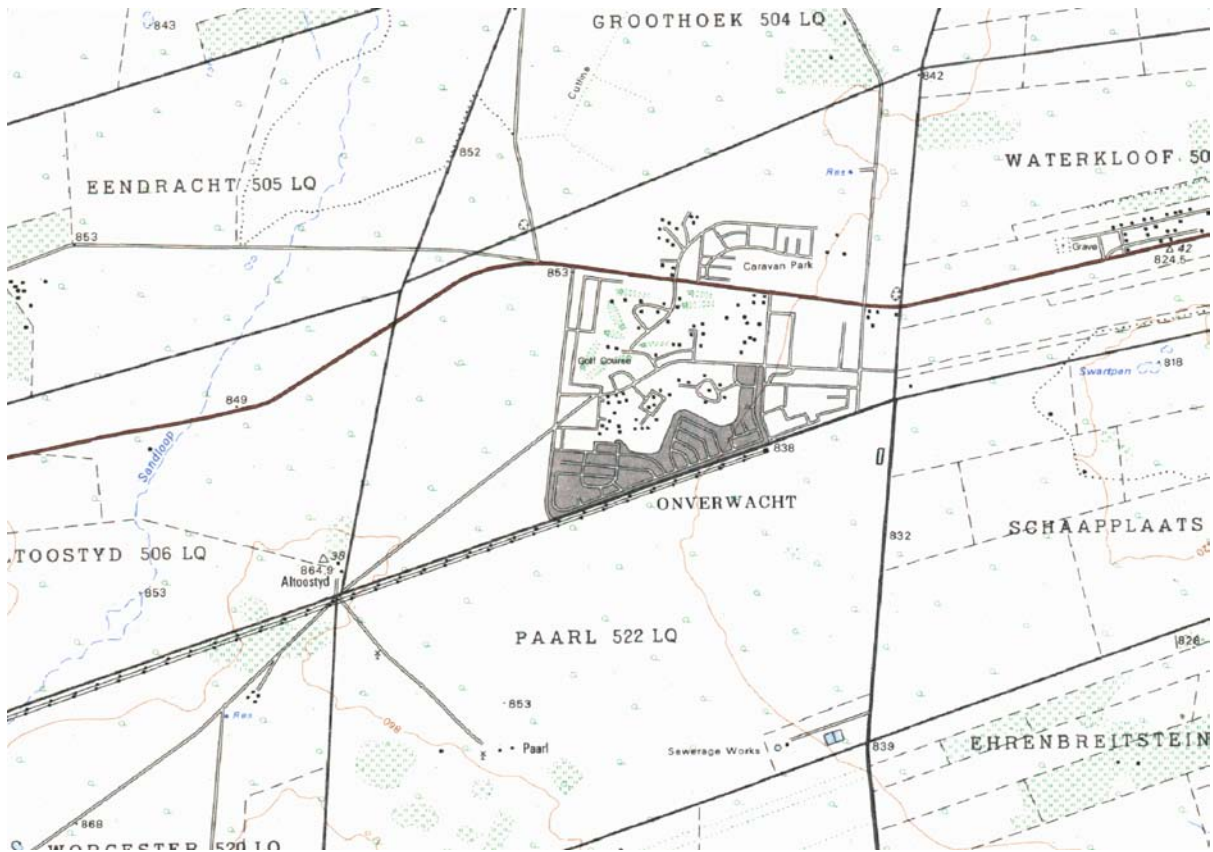


Figure 1 Map indicating the location of Ellisras extension 86.



Figure 2 General view of the surveyed area, including signs of illegal dumping.



## **7. DISCUSSION**

During the survey two sites of cultural heritage significance were located. This report indicates suitable mitigation measures with regards to the proposed development activities.

In order to enable the reader to better understand the finds, it is necessary to give a background regarding the different phases of human history.

### **7.1 Stone Age**

The Stone Age is the period in human history when lithic material was mainly used to produce tools (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 293). In South Africa the Stone Age can be divided in three periods. It is however important to note that dates are relative and only provide a broad framework for interpretation. The division for the Stone Age according to Korsman & Meyer (1999: 93-94) is as follows:

Early Stone Age (ESA) 2 million – 150 000 years ago  
Middle Stone Age (MSA) 150 000 – 30 000 years ago  
Late Stone Age (LSA) 40 000 years ago – 1850 - A.D.

Stone Age sites have been identified previously in the geographical area where the survey was done. Sites dated to the Middle Stone Age are known close to the Lephalala River to the east of the town (Bergh 1999: 4). Rock art are found in abundance in the geographical area to the east and south of the town (Bergh 1999: 5).

The environment of the surveyed is not suitable for Stone Age people as no natural water exist, no natural shelter is available and the natural rock is not good for making stone tools. Although it is possible that Stone Age people may have moved through this area, no indication of the Stone Age was identified.

### **7.2 Iron Age**

The Iron Age is the name given to the period of human history when metal was mainly used to produce metal artifacts (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 346). In South Africa it can be divided in two separate phases according to Van der Ryst & Meyer (1999: 96-98), namely:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 200 – 1000 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1000 – 1850 A.D.

Huffman (2007: xiii) however indicates that a Middle Iron Age should be included. His dates, which now seem to be widely accepted in archaeological circles, are:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 250 – 900 A.D.  
Middle Iron Age (MIA) 900 – 1300 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1300 – 1840 A.D.

In an area around the Lephalala River some 200 Late Iron Age sites have been identified (Bergh 1999: 7). The lack of known sites closer to the town may only indicate that no research has been done in this area.

The type of environment on the surveyed area definitely is suitable for human habitation. There is good grazing and would therefore expect that Iron Age people may have utilized the area. This is the same reason why white settlers later on moved into this environment. However there is a lack of water and building material. One would rather expect Iron Age people to have lived closer to the mountains and therefore it is no surprise that no Iron Age features have been identified during the survey.

### **7.3 Historical Age**

The historical age started with the first recorded oral histories in the area. It includes the moving into the area of people that were able to read and write.

Early white travelers moved through this area during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The first of these was the expedition of Dr. Andrew Cowan and Lt. Donovan in 1808. This was followed by Coenraad de Buys in 1821 and 1825. David Hume visited the area in 1825 (Bergh 1999: 12, 117-118).

Hume again passed through the area in 1830. He was followed by William Cornwallis Harris in 1836 (Bergh 1999: 13). White settlers only moved to this area after 1850 (Bergh 1999: 15).

The site identified during the survey date to the historical age.

### **7.4 Discussion of sites identified during the survey**

#### *Site 1*

This site consists of the possible remains of an old house. However it is completely destroyed. No floors or walls are visible and all that is left is a large heap of concrete.

GPS: 23°41'22"S  
27°40'53"E

Although the remains probably are older than 60 years (and therefore are protected by law), it is in such a bad state that preservation would be impossible. The site therefore is given a **low** cultural significance.

The proposed residential development will have an impact, but this report is seen as ample mitigation. What is left of the structure may therefore be demolished during the development.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion it can be stated that the assessment of the area was conducted successfully. One site has been found in the surveyed area. It is not of high cultural significance. The final recommendations are as follows:

- There are no areas to be avoided during development activities.
- For site no 1 this report is seen as ample mitigation and it may be demolished during development.

- It should be noted that the subterranean presence of archaeological and/or historical sites, features or artifacts are always a distinct possibility. Care should therefore be taken when any work commences that if any of these are accidentally discovered, a qualified archaeologist be called in to investigate.

## 9. REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

### Definition of terms:

Site: A large place with extensive structures and related cultural objects. It can also be a large assemblage of cultural artifacts, found on a single location.

Structure: A permanent building found in isolation or which forms a site in conjunction with other structures.

Feature: A coincidental find of movable cultural objects.

Object: Artifact (cultural object).

(Also see Knudson 1978: 20).

## **APPENDIX B**

### Cultural significance:

- Low            A cultural object being found out of context, not being part of a site or without any related feature/structure in its surroundings.
  
- Medium        Any site, structure or feature being regarded less important due to a number of factors, such as date and frequency. Also any important object found out of context.
  
- High            Any site, structure or feature regarded as important because of its age or uniqueness. Graves are always categorized as of a high importance. Also any important object found within a specific context.