

**CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
FOR THE R61 SECTION 6 ROAD UPGRADE
PROJECT BETWEEN COFINVABA AND
ENGCOBO, EASTERN CAPE**



ACTIVE HERITAGE cc.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EIA	Early Iron Age
ESA	Early Stone Age
HISTORIC PERIOD	Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1820 in this part of the country
IRON AGE	Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 1000 Late Iron Age AD 1000 - AD 1830
LIA	Late Iron Age
LSA	Late Stone Age
MSA	Middle Stone Age
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998 and associated regulations (2010).
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and associated regulations (2000)
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
STONE AGE	Early Stone Age 2 000 000 - 250 000 BP Middle Stone Age 250 000 - 25 000 BP Late Stone Age 30 000 - until c. AD 200

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A cultural heritage survey of the proposed R61 Section 6 Road Upgrade Project between Cofimvaba and Engcobo in the Eastern Cape Province identified no heritage sites. There is no archaeological reason why development may not proceed as planned. However, attention is drawn to the South African Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) which, requires that operations that expose archaeological or historical remains should cease immediately, pending evaluation by the provincial heritage agency.

1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

Table 1. Background information

Consultant:	Frans Prins (Active Heritage) for SRK
Type of development:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New geometric alignment and development for a section of R61 road (Section 6) between Engcobo and Cofimvaba • Assessment of potential borrow pit associated with this section of the R61
Rezoning or subdivision:	na
Terms of reference	To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment
Legislative requirements:	The Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and following the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999)

1.1. Details of the area surveyed:

The area surveyed consists of a section of the national road R61 between Engcobo and Cofimvaba and its immediate environs where a potential borrow pit has been identified (Fig 1). . The R61 is the main route between Umtata and Queenstown. The footprint consists of the area between Engcobo and the Qumanco River on the R 61 (Fig 2).

The site identified for a potential borrow pit occurs to the immediate north of the R 61 adjacent to a dirt road (Fig 3). Its coordinates are given as: S 31° 46'17. 35" E 27°

52' 22.51. The site demarcated for development covers an area of approximately 150 X 80m. With the exception of the towns of Engcobo and Cofimvaba the largest portion of the study area consists of communal land with rural homesteads and some exotic plantations along the mountain slopes.

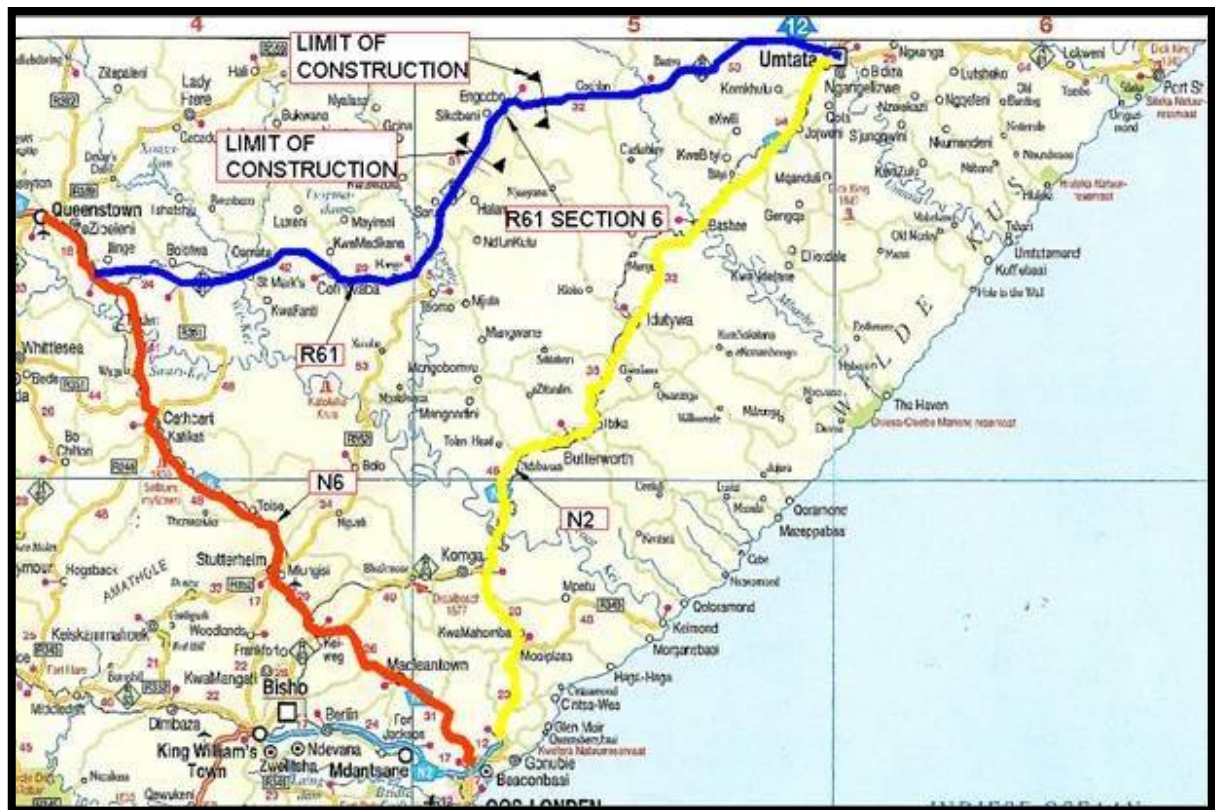


Figure 1. Map of study-area showing the section of the R61 (Section 6) that was surveyed.

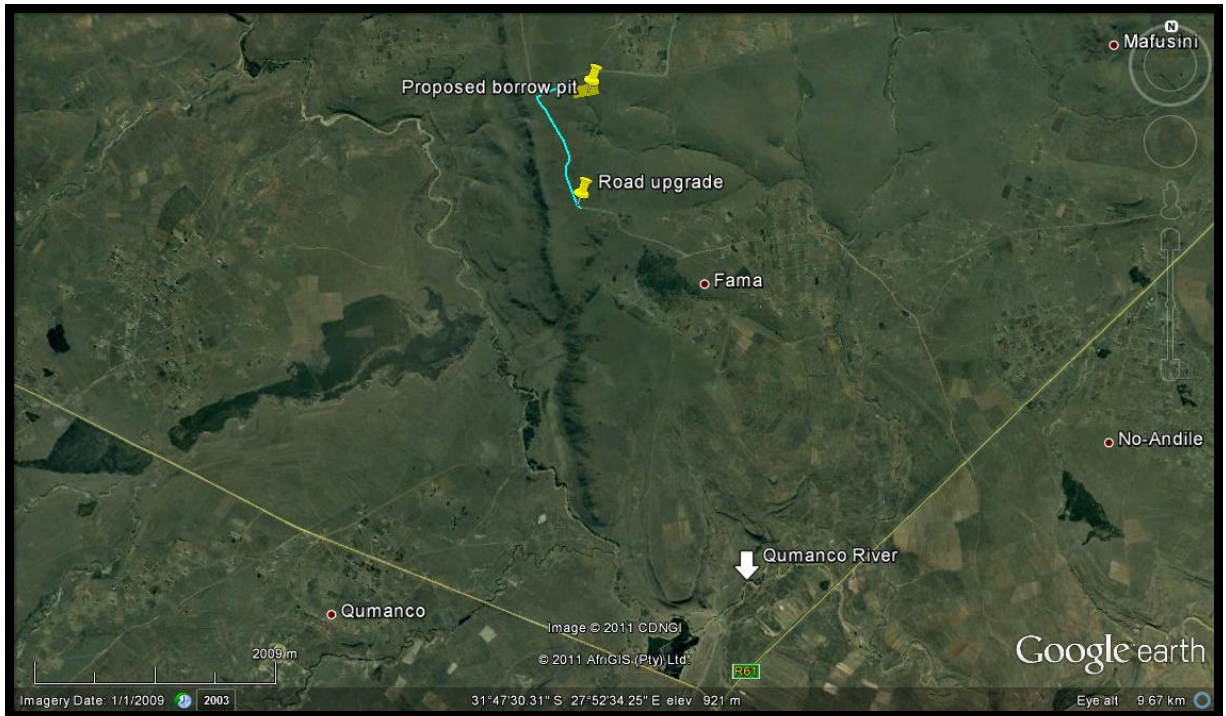


Figure 2. Google aerial photograph showing the area surveyed along the R61 and the associated proposed borrow pit.



Figure 3. Google aerial photograph showing the location of the proposed borrow pit.

1.2. Cultural Heritage legislation

According to Section 3 (2) of the NHRA, the heritage resources of South Africa include:

- 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 palaeontological 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 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. movable objects, including objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including
 - i. archaeological and palaeontological 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, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996)."

In terms of section 3 (3) of the NHRA, a place or object is to be considered part of the

national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of:

- “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; and
- i. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.”

2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA

The archaeological history of the Province of the Eastern Cape Province dates back to about 2 million years and possibly older, which marks the beginning of the Stone Age. The Stone Age in the Eastern Cape Province was extensively researched by archaeologists attached to the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, the University of Stellenbosch, the then University of Transkei (UNITRA), Fort Hare University and more recently by rock art researchers attached to the Rock Art Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand. The Stone Age period has been divided in to three periods namely: Early Stone Age (ESA) dating between 2 million years ago to about 200 000 years ago, Middle Stone Age (MSA) dating between 200 000 years ago to about 30 000 years ago, and the Later Stone Age (LSA) which dates from 30 000 to about 2 000 year ago. The Stone Age period ends around approximately 2 000 years ago when Bantu-speaking Iron Age farmers from the north arrived in southern Africa. The Iron Age is also divided into three periods, namely: Early Iron Age (EIA) dating between AD 200 and AD 900, Middle Iron Age (MIA) dating between AD 900 and AD 1300, Late Iron Age (LIA) dating between AD 1 300 and 1 820.

2.1 Stone Age

2.1.1 Early Stone Age (ESA)

The ESA is considered as the beginning of the stone tool technology. It dates back to over 2 million years ago until 200 000 years ago. This period is characterised by the Oldowan and Acheulean industries. The Oldowan Industry, dating to approximately between over 2 million years and 1.7 million years predates the later Acheulean. The Oldowan Industry consists of very simple, crudely made core tools from which flakes are struck a couple of times. To date, there is no consensus amongst archaeologists as to which hominid species manufactured these artefacts. The Acheulean Industry lasted from about 1.7 million years until 200 thousand years ago. Acheulean tools were more specialized tools than those of the earlier industry. They were shaped intentionally to carry out specific tasks such as hacking and bashing to remove limbs from animals and marrow from bone. These duties were performed using the large sharp pointed artefacts known as hand axes. Cleavers, with their sharp, flat cutting edges were used to carry out more heavy duty butchering activities (Esterhuysen, 2007). The ESA technology lasted for a very long time, from early to middle Pleistocene and thus seems to have been sufficient to meet the needs of early hominids and their ancestors. Although not identified on the study area, ESA tools occurrence have been reported in other sites in the Transkei (Derricourt 1977; Feely 1987). Apart from stone artefacts, the ESA sites in the Transkei have produced very little as regards other archaeological remains. This has made it difficult to make inferences pointing to economical dynamics of the ESA people in this part of the world (Mazel 1989).

2.1.2 Middle Stone Age (MSA)

The MSA dates to between 200 000 and 30 000 years ago, and is generally associated with the emergence of anatomically modern humans. The MSA technology is therefore believed to have been manufactured by fully modern humans known as *Homo sapiens* who emerged around 250 000 years ago. While some of the sites belonging to this time period occur in similar contexts as those of ESA, most of the MSA sites are located in rock shelters. Palaeoenvironmental data suggest that the distribution of MSA sites in the high lying Drakensberg and surrounding areas was influenced by the climate conditions, specifically the amount and duration of snow (Carter, 1976). In general, the MSA stone tools are smaller than those of the ESA. Although some MSA tools are made from prepared cores, the majority of MSA flakes

are rather irregular and are probably waste material from knapping exercises. A variety of MSA tools include blades, flakes, scrapers and pointed tools that may have been hafted onto shafts or handles and used as spearheads. Between 70 000 and 60 000 years ago new tool types appear known as segments and trapezoids. These tool types are referred to as backed tools from the method of preparation. Residue analyses on the backed tools from South African MSA sites including those in KZN indicate that these tools were certainly used as spear heads and perhaps even arrow points (Wadley, 2007). Derricourt (1977) reported a few MSA sites in the Transkei and some sites investigated by Opperman (1987) in the 1970's and 1980's occur near Maclear directly to the north east of the project area.

2.1.3 Late Stone Age (LSA)

Compared to the earlier MSA and ESA, more is known about the LSA which dates from around 30 000 to 2 000 (possibly later) years ago. This is because LSA sites are more recent than ESA and MSA sites and therefore achieve better preservation of a greater variety of organic archaeological material. The Later Stone Age is usually associated with the San (Bushmen) or their direct ancestors. The tools during this period were even smaller and more diverse than those of the preceding Middle Stone Age period. LSA tool technology is observed to display rapid stylistic change compared to the slower pace in the MSA. The rapidity is more evident during the last 10 000 years. The LSA tool sequence includes informal small blade tradition from about 22 000 – 12 000 years ago, a scraper and adze-rich industry between 12 000 – 8 000 years ago, a backed tool and small scraper industry between 8 000 – 4 000 years and ending with a variable set of other industries thereafter (Wadley, 2007). Adzes are thought to be wood working tools and may have also been used to make digging sticks and handles for tools. Scrapers are tools that are thought to have been used to prepare hides for clothing and manufacture of other leather items. Backed tools may have been used for cutting as well as tips for arrows. It was also during Later Stone Age times that the bow and arrow was introduced into southern Africa – perhaps around 20 000 years ago. Because of the extensive use of the bow and arrow and the use of traps and snares, Later Stone Age people were far more efficient in exploiting their natural environment than Middle Stone Age people. Up until 2 000 years ago Later Stone Age people dominated the southern African landscape. However, shortly after 2 000 years ago the first Khoi herders and Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists immigrated into southern Africa from the north. This led to major demographic changes in the population distribution of the subcontinent. San hunter-gatherers were either

assimilated or moved off to more marginal environments such as the Kalahari Desert or some mountain ranges unsuitable for small-scale subsistence farming and herding. The San in the coastal areas of the study area were the first to have been displaced by incoming African agro pastoralists. However, some independent and sometimes hybrid groups continue to practice their hunter gatherer lifestyle in the foothills of the Drakensberg until the period of white colonisation around the 1840's (Opperman 1987; Wright & Mazel, 2007; Mallen 2008; Henry 2010).

The renowned San rock paintings of the Drakensberg region also belongs to the Later Stone Age period although the majority were made between 4000 years ago and about 120 years ago. Rock Art can be in the form of rock paintings or rock engravings. The Eastern Province is renowned for the prolific San rock painting sites concentrated in the southern Drakensberg and adjacent areas (Blundell 2004; Mallen 2008; Henry 2010). These sites are the subject of ongoing research by post-graduate students of the Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersand. Recently researchers identified 3 new traditions/styles of rock art in the Eastern Cape Drakensberg (*ibid*). Derricourt (1977) reported 3 rock art sites in the greater Ngcobo district (Fig 3). These include paintings of wild ungulates such as eland and elephant as well contact period imagery with depictions of early African agriculturists in contact with San hunter-gatherers.

2.2 Iron Age

2.2.1 Early Iron Age (EIA)

Unlike the Stone Age people whose life styles were arguably egalitarian, Iron Age people led quite complex life styles. Their way of life of greater dependence on agriculture necessitated more sedentary settlements. They cultivated crops and kept domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and dogs. Pottery production is also an important feature of Iron Age communities. Iron smelting was practised quite significantly by Iron Age society as they had to produce iron implements for agricultural use. Although Iron Age people occasionally hunted and gathered wild plants and shellfish, the bulk of their diet consisted of the crops they cultivated as well as the meat of the animals they kept. EIA villages were relatively large settlements strategically located in valleys beside rivers to take advantage of the fertile alluvial soils for growing crops (Maggs 1989; Huffman 2007). The EIA sites in the Eastern Cape Province dates back between AD 600 to AD 900. Based on extensive research on EIA sites in the

eastern seaboard they can be divided along the following typological criteria and time lines according to ceramic styles (Maggs, 1989; Huffman 2007):

- _ Msuluzi (AD 500-700);
- _ Ndondondwane (AD 700 – 800);
- _ Ntshekane (AD 800 – 900).

However, no known Early Iron Age sites occur within the study area probably as the greater portion of this area is situated above the 1000m contour. The vast majority of Early Iron Age sites occur below the 1000m contour along areas in the large river valleys with a rainfall of less than 700mm a year.

2.2.2 Late Iron Age (LIA)

The LIA is not only distinguished from the EIA by greater regional diversity of pottery styles but is also marked by extensive stone wall settlements. However, in this part of the world, stone walls were not common as the Nguni people used thatch and wood to build their houses (Derricourt 1977). This explains the failure to obtain sites from the aerial photograph investigation of the study area. LIA sites in the Eastern Cape Province occur adjacent to the major rivers in low lying river valleys but also along ridge crests above the 800m contour. The LIA in the greater project area can be ascribed to the Thembu tribal cluster or their immediate predecessors (Feely 1987). It is also possible that some stone walled sites, especially those incorporating shelters or caves, were constructed by hybrid Khoisan/Nguni groups. Trade played a major role in the economy of LIA societies. Goods were traded locally and over long distances. The main trade goods included metal, salt, grain, cattle and thatch. This led to the establishment of economically driven centres and the growth of trade wealth. Keeping of domestic animals, metal work and the cultivation of crops continued with a change in the organisation of economic activities (Maggs, 1989; Huffman 2007). The existing data base does not indicate the location of any Later Iron Age sites in the greater project area. However, this is most probably an artefact of archaeological survey preferences in the past. It is known from oral history, for instance, that some early Thembu groupings occupied the area from the 17th century onwards (Peires 1981) and it is possible that systematic archaeological ground surveys will locate sites of this period in due course

2.3 Historic Period

Oral tradition is the basis of the evidence of historical events that took place before written history could be recorded. This kind of evidence becomes even more reliable in

cases where archaeology could be utilised to back up the oral records. Sources of evidence for socio political organization during the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century in the study area and the Transkei suggest that the people here existed in numerous small-scale political units of different sizes, population numbers and political structures (Feely 1987; Wright & Hamilton, 1989). This period was largely characterised by rage and instability as political skirmishes broke due to the thirst for power and resources between chiefdoms. During the 2nd half of the eighteenth century, stronger chiefdoms and paramuncies emerged. However, these were not fully grown states as there was no proper formal central political body established. This changed in the 1780's when a shift towards a more centralized political state occurred in parts of northern KwaZulu-Natal. The Zulu kingdom, established by King Shaka however became the most powerful in KwaZulu-Natal in the early years of the 19th century and had a marked influence on the local Nguni chiefdoms of the project area (Feely 1987). Refugees from north of the Umtavuna River such as the Bhaca and Qwabe tribes moved into the Transkei and asked the Mpondo chief for permission to settle in adjacent parts. These refugees were collectively called amaMfengu and many of these people were settled in parts of the project area and the adjacent areas near Qumbu and Mount Fletcher. One group of refugees from the north, the amaNgwane, crossed the Umthatha River near the project area, and fought a decisive battle against British colonial troops and their Thembu and Xhosa allies in 1828 at Mbholompo Point. During this episode the amaNgwane was defeated and the tribe broken-up (Peires 1981). The project area specifically saw tremendous interaction between Thembu agriculturalists and Khoisan pastoralists in the recent past (ibid). Many place names in the study-area such as Ngcocora, and Qumanco had a Khoisan origin.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Methodology

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum and the SAHRA inventory of heritage sites in the Eastern Cape Province. In addition, the available archaeological and historical literature covering the Eastern Cape was also consulted.

A visit was made to the project area on the 8th November 2011. A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted during this visit.

3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey

3.2.1 Visibility

Visibility was relatively good in most of the project area. No sites or features were masked by vegetation or other factors. Overgrazing and sheet erosion contributed to site visibility in many areas.

3.2.2 Disturbance

No disturbance of potential heritage features was noted. However, extensive soil erosion does occur in various localities of the study area but none of these areas had any heritage sites.

3.3 Details of equipment used in the survey

GPS: Garmin Etrek

Digital cameras: Canon Powershot A460

All readings were taken using the GPS. Accuracy was to a level of 5 m.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED

4.1 Locational data

Province: Eastern Cape Province

Towns: Engcobo, Cofimvaba and adjacent areas.

4.2 Description of the general area surveyed

The area surveyed consists of a section of the national road R61 between Engcobo and Cofimvaba in the environs of the Qumanco River (Figs 1 & 2). The areas adjacent to the R61 consist of communal land dominated by rural homesteads and grasslands (Fig 4).

The proposed borrow pit is situated on a ridge overlooking a tributary of the Qumanco River (Fig 3). It covers an area of approximately 150m X 80m. No homesteads or other human made structures occur in the vicinity of the proposed borrow pit (Fig 5).



Figure 4. Communal land borders the R61 in the study area.



Figure 5. No heritage sites occur on the site identified for the proposed borrow pit.

4.3 Heritage Survey Results

No heritage and archaeological sites have been identified in the project area. In addition, no cultural landscapes occur in the area.

4.4 Field Rating

SAHRA developed a methodology to evaluate the significance of heritage sites (Table 3). However, as no heritage sites occur in the project area the field rating methodology did not apply

Table 2. Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)

Level	Details	Action
National (Grade I)	The site is considered to be of National Significance	Nominated to be declared by SAHRA
Provincial (Grade II)	This site is considered to be of Provincial significance	Nominated to be declared by Provincial Heritage Authority
Local Grade IIIA	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be retained as a heritage site
Local Grade IIIB	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be mitigated, and part retained as a heritage site
Generally Protected A	High to medium significance	Mitigation necessary before destruction
Generally Protected B	Medium significance	The site needs to be recorded before destruction
Generally Protected C	Low significance	No further recording is required before destruction

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development at the footprint may proceed in terms of heritage values as no heritage or archaeological sites are in any immediate danger of being destroyed or altered. No potential cultural landscapes or palaeontological sites have been located on the footprint. However, the following rules must be adhered to during the proposed development of the footprint:

- Only use existing roads during the development phase of the project. All informal access roads, once identified, must first be surveyed for heritage sites before construction may commence.
- It should also be pointed out that the South African National Heritage Act requires that operations exposing archaeological and historical residues should cease immediately pending an evaluation by the heritage authorities.

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