

# McGregor Museum Department of Archaeology



## Archaeological Impact Assessment at a proposed substation site and along the route of a proposed transmission line at Schmidtsdrift, Northern Cape.

SAHRA FILE REF: 9/2/038/0001

David Morris  
June 2010

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## **Introduction**

The author was contacted by Carmen du Toit of The Environmental Partnership (PO Box 945, Cape Town, 8000 Tel: 021 422 0999 Fax: 021 422 0998 and email: [carmen@enviropart.co.za](mailto:carmen@enviropart.co.za)) to carry out a phase 1 archaeological impact assessment at the site of a proposed 20 MVA Substation and along alternative routes for a proposed 22 kV power transmission line in the Schmidtsdrift area west of Kimberley (See Appendix 1 for background detail).

The servitude within which alternative routes for the line are proposed was visited on 3 June 2010. Observations made and recommendations are given in this report.

Fieldnotes and photographs are lodged with the McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

## **Legislation**

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHRA) provides protection for archaeological resources.

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object (defined in the Act), without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Section 35 of the Act protects all archaeological and palaeontological sites and requires that anyone wishing to disturb a site must have a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. Section 36 protects human remains older than 60 years. In order for the authority to assess whether approval may be given for any form of disturbance, a specialist report is required. No mining, prospecting or development may take place without heritage assessment and approval.

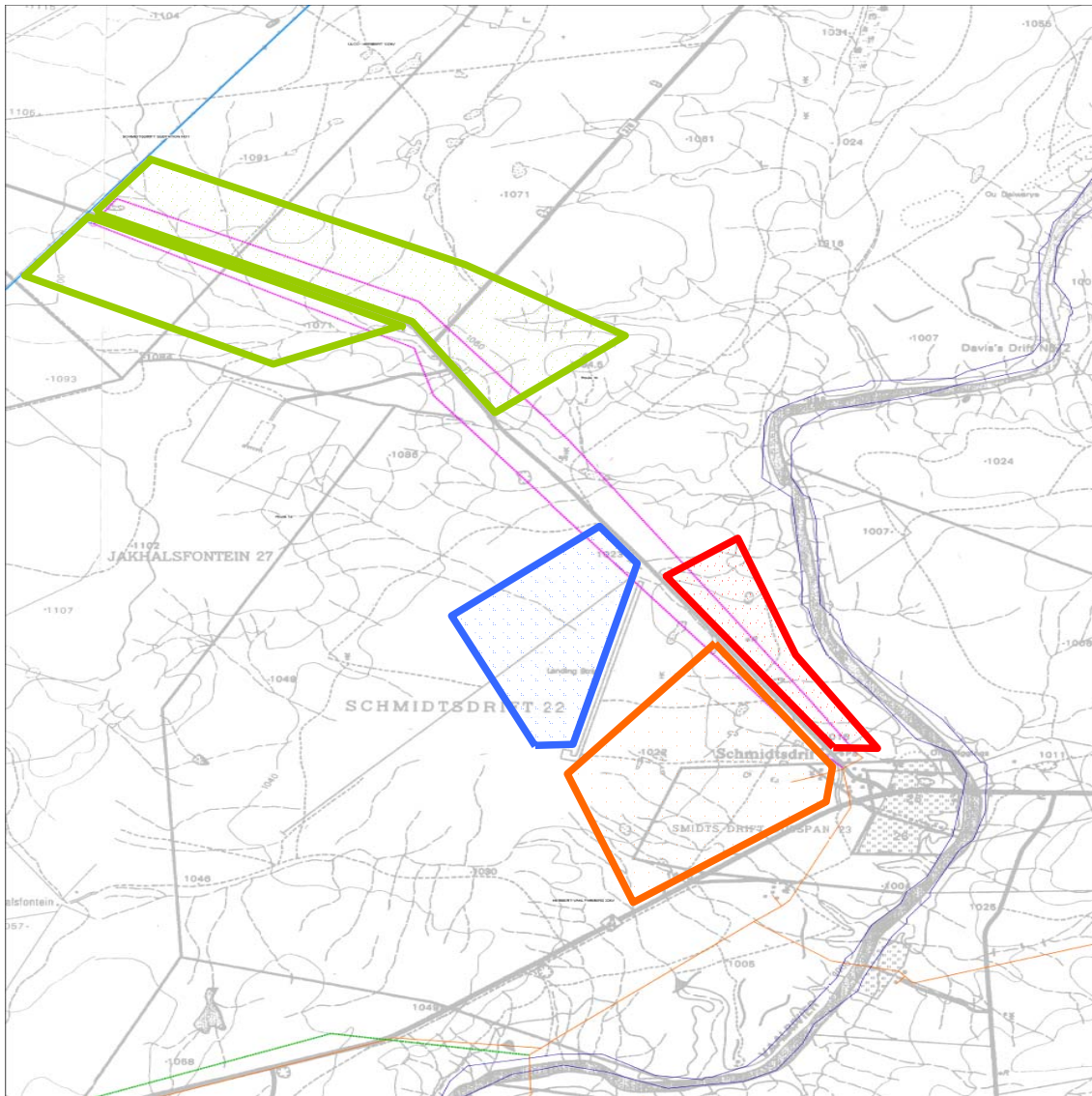
SAHRA at national level acts on an agency basis for the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in the Northern Cape, where archaeological sites are concerned. Permit applications should be made to the SAHRA office in Cape Town.

## **Methods and limitations**



A background literature/museum database search provides indications of what might be expected in the region. Archaeological surveys have been conducted in the area in the past in relation to mining activity on terraces on the north bank of the Vaal River (e.g. Morris 2006, 2007).

In this environment sediments of archaeological significance may both be on and below the present surface. Sedimentation history includes Vaal River alluvial gravels

near to the river and shallow sand or calcrete accumulations over Precambrian rocks associated with the foot of the Ghaap Escarpment further upslope.



**Outline of proposed future land use for the SCPA**

- |   |   |                     |   |   |                         |
|---|---|---------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
|  | - | <b>Agricultural</b> |  | - | <b>Commercial</b>       |
|  | - | <b>Residential</b>  |  | - | <b>Light Industrial</b> |

In places superficial sediments have been mined into (as is the case in the vicinity of Schmidtsdrift itself – including a current deep trench being cut for the laying of new sewerage).

## **Background: archaeological resources in the region**

The Northern Cape has a wealth of archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris 1990), with locales along and adjacent to the major river systems, as also along the Ghaap Escarpment close to the proposed development, being of particular note.

Stone Age material found in this area spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene times. Of particular interest are Pleistocene sites along the Vaal River (e.g. Beaumont & Morris 1990; Beaumont & McNabb 2000; Morris 2006). Late Holocene material with pottery is known to occur on the river banks, while rock engravings are richly distributed in the region (Wilman 1933; Morris 1988). There are numerous shelters along the nearby Ghaap Escarpment (Humphreys & Thackeray 1983) which also contain finger paintings.

Terraces along the rivers have long been known for their association with archaeological and Plio-Pleistocene fossil material (e.g. Helgren 1979).

## **Observations**

In the vicinity of Schmidtsdrift itself the terrain is substantially disturbed by past and current mining activity. A circa 4 m deep trench is currently being dug for sewerage installation by the Siyacuma Local Municipality, which encounters gravel deposits below calcified sands.

In this vicinity built structures include the police station, buildings previously used by the SADF and the ruins of the old Schmidtsdrift Hotel (more information in Appendix 1 background document).

The surface is strewn with a low density scatter of material culture traces ranging from Stone Age stone tools (of various ages) to twentieth century glass and metal items (see also Morris 2007).

Further up the proposed route of the transmission line the servitude traverses a part of the old Schmidtsdrift No 3 Location, a pre-forced-removals settlement area of the BaTlhaping. The community was removed to the Kuruman area in the late 1960s but returned to Schmidtsdrift after 1994. Our local informant who indicated old 'Location' areas and burial grounds was Mr Samuel Kgatlane (contact details available on file at McGregor Museum). Rre Kgatlane was 16 when the Location was removed in 1969.

The most notable features observed within this portion of the servitude, indicated by Mr Kgatlane, are two cemeteries defined by GPS readings (Garmin WGS 84): 28°40'13.9" S 24°02'31.3" E; 28°40'13.3" S 24°02'31.8" E; 28°40'14.0" S 24°02'33.4" E; 28°40'14.5" S 24°02'33.0" E; and (secondly) 28°40'15.4" S 24°02'45.6" E; 28°40'15.4" S 24°02'45.9" E; 28°40'16.2" S 24°02'45.8" E. Both cemeteries contain a mix of old pre-apartheid and post-1994 burials, with family names such as Morope dating from both before and after the community's exile north of Kuruman. Mr Kgatlane was 16 when the Location was removed in 1969.





Recent grave in Cemetery 1 (above) and Cemetery 2 (below)



An older pre-1969 Morone grave from Cemetery 2





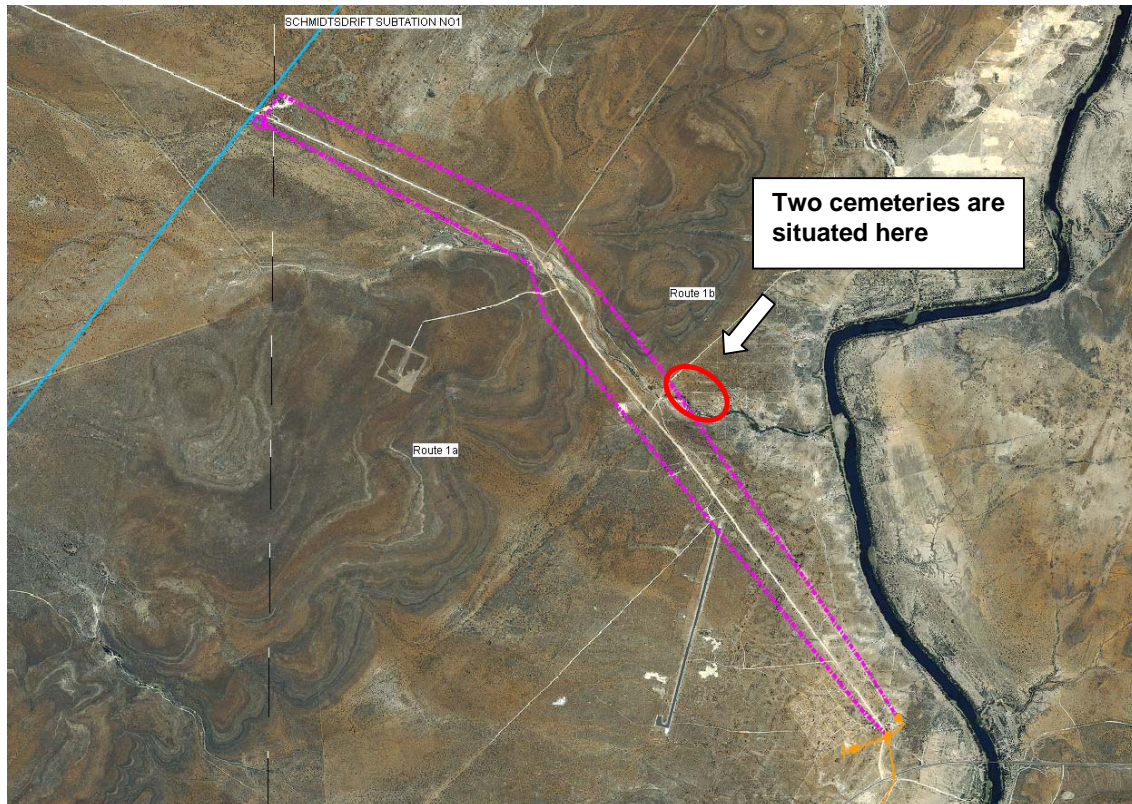
Stone atefacts are sparsely distributed on the surface in most parts of the study area





A truncated stone kraal was noted at 28°41'16.1" S 24°03'10.9" E, of low significance. No major village ruins were found within the servitude: they would be found to the east of the line near to the cemeteries.

At the northern-most end of the servitude, at 28°38'41.9" S 23°59'58.2" E, a twentieth century midden was located which almost certainly dates to the time of the building of the new gravel Schmidtsdrift-Monteville road (probably 1960s), this spot being in the vicinity of a borrow-pit used for road construction. The site is of low significance.



## Recommendations

Although Stone Age material was found sparsely scattered over the areas to be traversed by the proposed powerline, the density of such material was found to be low in comparison with more definite sites in the region.

Part of the route cuts through a portion of the former No 3 Schmidtsdrift Location (from which BaTlhaping people were expelled under Apartheid rule in the late 1960s and to which erstwhile inhabitants have since returned) and two cemeteries associated with this former settlement have been identified. Transmission line development should avoid these locales.

Of the alternative routes proposed for the overhead powerline, route alignment alternative 1a would be preferable.

From a heritage resources perspective, taking cognizance of the above observations and recommendation, it is recommended that transmission line development may proceed.

In the event that any archaeological sites/traces/features of note should be found either at the surface or sub-surface in the course of transmission line development, work should halt and SAHRA be conducted so that, inter alia, an archaeologist is consulted to recommend any necessary mitigation measures.

### **Acknowledgements**

I thank Mr Koot Msawula who assisted with the fieldwork; and Mr Kgatlane for information on the former Location No 3 at Schmidtsdrift.

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## **Appendix 1 Background information: General Description of Site and Area and Proposed Activities**

### **3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

The proposed study area and route alignments are located in proximity to the banks of the Vaal River, approximately 71 km west of Kimberly and 53 km north-east of Douglas in Schmidtsdrift, Northern Cape (see Figure 1). The area falls within the jurisdiction of the Siyancuma Local Municipality and the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.

The project area falls outside the urban edge and within the Savanna Biome. The terrain within the study area is characterised by a combination of flat areas and low hills, with relatively vast tracts of open areas of natural vegetation; predominantly grasslands. The area is predominantly arid and thus the majority of the land is used for livestock farming (cattle, goat and sheep).

The area is sparsely populated with isolated clusters of homesteads scattered in the area. The proposed substation & powerline are within proximity to the Schmidtsdrift informal settlement which abuts the R64 Road to the south and the Vaal River to the east. The study area includes disused buildings and a disused landing strip that once formed part of South African Defence Force (SADF) [which is now known as SANDF] infantry battalion military training base. Other amenities in the area include a newly built primary school (Schmidtsdrift Primary School). The current land use activities in the surrounding area are mining, agriculture, livestock farming (mainly subsistence and partially commercial exploitation).

### **3.2 SITE LOCATION**

The proposed study area is located, along a dirt road, co-ordinates, 28°38'42.47"S, 23°59'51.84"E. The site is approximately 71km west of Kimberly, 53 km northeast of Douglas and 21km north of the Schmidtsdrift informal settlement. The Herbert Vaal Farmers powerline lies directly overhead the proposed site, which will enable the proposed infrastructure to connect to this existing infrastructure.

The proposed substation site lies adjacent to the Schmidtsdrift R370 which is currently a dirt road. The site lies approximately 12km north of the Schmidtsdrift informal settlement and approximately 20m southeast of the Ulco-Herbert 132kV line.

### **4.1 PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

The proposed project comprises the following components:

- a 20MVA substation linked to the Ulco Herbert 132kV line

- a 132kV loop-in line connecting the substation to the existing Ulco Herbert line
- a 22 kV powerline intended to extend from the substation to connect to the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmers 22kV line

## **4.2 20 MVA SUBSTATION**

The proposed substation will occupy an area of approximately 100m x 100m (footprint). The substation is an outdoor type and will contain two 10MVA transformers and associated equipment (see Figure 4). The purpose of the substation is to feed the generated electricity from the existing Ulco-Herbert 132kV line to the proposed 22kV powerline.

The proposed substation site will be enclosed with a small stock fence and a diamond mesh fence that will be installed around the substation yard (see Figure 4). The proposed development will be constructed according to the *Guideline for Servitude Widths and Building Restrictions*, (see Annexure 9).

## **4.3 PROPOSED POWERLINES**

### **4.3.1 132kV LOOP-IN LINE**

In order to connect the proposed substation to the existing powerline network, a 132kV loop-in line is required between the substation and the existing Ulco-Herbert line. The loop-in line consists of a new 132 kV powerline off the existing Ulco-Herbert powerline, carrying power to the proposed substation (see Figure 6). The loop is closed through a link back to the existing Ulco-Herbert line via a parallel 132 kV line, thus allowing the flow of electricity to continue.

The 132kV loop-in line will extend for approximately 125m between the existing 132kV Ulco-Herbert line and the proposed substation. The 132kV loop-in line specifications and component details are illustrated in Figure 6 of this report. The proposed structures will be erected and spaced according to the *Guideline for Servitude Widths and Building Restrictions*, see Annexure 9.

### **4.3.2 22kV OVERHEAD POWERLINE**

A 22kV powerline is proposed to extend from the new substation, connecting to the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmers 22kV powerline. The structures to be utilised include 11m high, 180mm-199mm top diameter wooden pole structures on the 22kV line and where they cross public roads, 13m poles will be used to ensure sufficient clearance. The Hare conductor will be utilized and span lengths will be limited to 120m due to pole strength (see Figure 7). The proposed structures will be erected and spaced according to the *Guideline for Servitude Widths and Building Restrictions*, see Annexure 9.

### **4.3.2.1 ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives proposed for the development include two route alignment alternatives for the overhead 22kV powerline (see Figure 3). A description of each alternative is provided below.

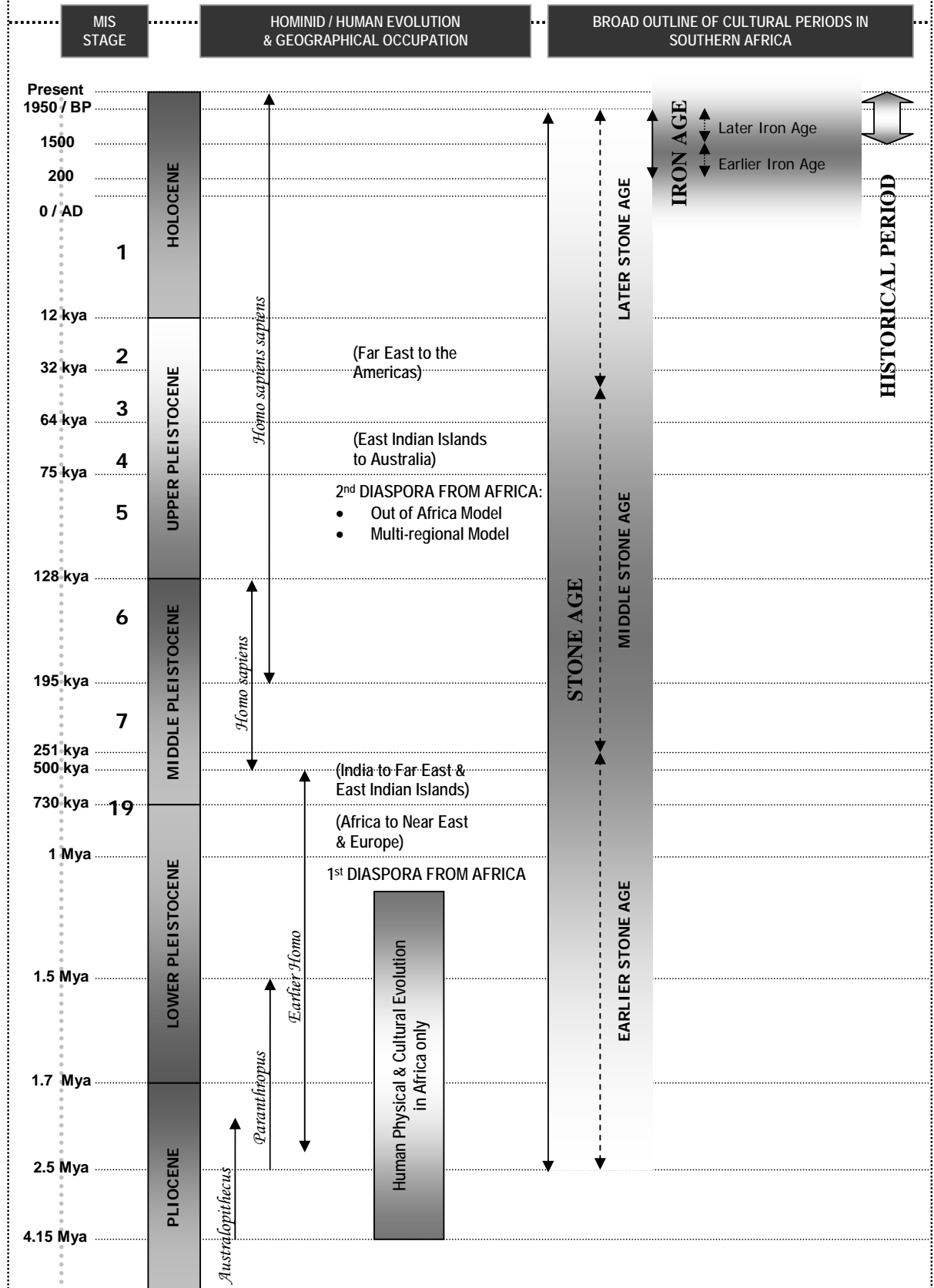
#### **4.3.2.1.1 Route Alignment Alternative 1a (see Figure 9)**

This route alignment alternative will connect the substation to the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmer powerline. The proposed overhead powerline will exit the substation, running parallel to the southern side of a nearby dirt road in a southeasterly direction for approximately 3.2km until it reaches the intersection of the dirt road and the R370. The line will then run in a southerly direction for approximately 0.5 km. It will then continue running parallel to the dirt road for 5.5 km, crossing the disused SANDF landing strip until it reaches the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmers powerline at the Schmidtsdrift informal settlement. The total length of the proposed line will be approximately 9.2km.

#### **4.3.2.1.2 Route Alignment Alternative 1b (see Figure 9)**

This route alignment alternative will connect the substation to the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmers powerline. The proposed overhead powerline will exit the substation, continuing in a northeasterly direction for approximately 0.5 km crossing the nearby dirt road. The line then continues on the northern side of the dirt road in a southeasterly direction for approximately 9 km as it follows the dirt road to join the existing Herbert-Vaal Farmers powerline at the Schmidtsdrift informal settlement. The total length of the proposed line will be approximately 9.5 km.

### Schematic Human Physical and Cultural Evolution in Africa





## Extracts from the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999)

### DEFINITIONS

#### Section 2

In this Act, unless the context requires otherwise:

- ii. "*Archaeological*" means –
  - a) material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures;
  - b) rock art, being any form of painting, engraving or other graphic representation on a fixed rock surface or loose rock or stone, which was executed by human agency and which is older than 100 years, including any area within 10 m of such representation;
  - c) wrecks, being any vessel or aircraft, or any part thereof, which was wrecked in South Africa, whether on land, in the internal waters, the territorial waters or in the maritime culture zone of the Republic,... and any cargo, debris, or artefacts found or associated therewith, which is older than 60 years or which SAHRA considers to be worthy of conservation.
- viii. "*Development*" means any physical intervention, excavation or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including –
  - a) construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or structure at a place;
  - b) carrying out any works on or over or under a place;
  - c) subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;
  - d) constructing or putting up for display signs or hoardings;
  - e) any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
  - f) any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;
- xiii. "*Grave*" means a place of interment and includes the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place;
- xxi. "*Living heritage*" means the intangible aspects of inherited culture, and may include –
  - a) cultural tradition;
  - b) oral history;
  - c) performance;
  - d) ritual;
  - e) popular memory;
  - f) skills and techniques;
  - g) indigenous knowledge systems; and
  - h) the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships.
- xxx. "*Palaeontological*" means any fossilised remains or fossil trace of animals or plants which lived in the geological past, other than fossil fuels or fossiliferous rock intended for industrial use, and any site which contains such fossilised remains or trace;
- xli. "*Site*" means any area of land, including land covered by water, and including any structures or objects thereon;
- xliv. "*Structure*" means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith;

### NATIONAL ESTATE

#### Section 3

- 1) For the purposes of this Act, those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations must be considered part of the national estate and fall within the sphere of operations of heritage resources authorities.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection 1), the national estate may 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 –
- i. objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including 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).

## **STRUCTURES**

### **Section 34**

- 1) No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY, PALAEOLOGY AND METEORITES**

### **Section 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 offices or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.
- 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;
  - 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 which assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- 5) When the responsible heritage resources authority has reasonable cause to believe that any activity or development which will destroy, damage or alter any archaeological or palaeontological site is under way, and where no application for a permit has been submitted and no heritage resources management procedure in terms of section 38 has been followed, it may –
- a) serve on the owner or occupier of the site or on the person undertaking such development an order for the development to cease immediately for such period as is specified in the order;
  - b) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not an archaeological or palaeontological site exists and whether mitigation is necessary;
  - c) if mitigation is deemed by the heritage resources authority to be necessary, assist the person on whom the order has been served under paragraph a) to apply for a permit as required in subsection 4); and
  - d) recover the costs of such investigation from the owner or occupier of the land on which it is believed an archaeological or palaeontological site is located or from the person proposing to undertake the development if no application for a permit is received within two weeks of the order being served.
- 6) The responsible heritage resources authority may, after consultation with the owner of the land on which an archaeological or palaeontological site or meteorite is situated, serve a notice on the owner or any other controlling authority, to prevent activities within a specified distance from such site or meteorite.

## **BURIAL GROUNDS AND GRAVES**

### **Section 36**

- 3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority –
- a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or 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, 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 equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.
- 4) SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for the destruction of any burial ground or grave referred to in subsection 3a) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has made satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such graves, at the cost of the applicant and in accordance with any regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority.
- 5) SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for any activity under subsection 3b) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has, in accordance with regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority –
- a) made a concerted effort to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such grave or burial ground; and
  - b) reached agreements with such communities and individuals regarding the future of such grave or burial ground.
- 6) Subject to the provision of any other 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 contents of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangements as it deems fit.

## **HERITAGE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

### **Section 38**

- 1) Subject to the provisions of subsections 7), 8) and 9), any person who intends to undertake a development categorised as –
- a) the construction of a road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length;
  - b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length;
  - c) any development or other activity which will change the character of a site –
    - i. exceeding 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or
    - ii. involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or
    - iii. involving three or more erven or subdivisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or
    - iv. the costs which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority;
  - d) the rezoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or
  - e) any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority,
- must at the very earliest stages of initiating such a development, notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.
- 2) The responsible heritage resources authority must, within 14 days of receipt of a notification in terms of subsection 1) –
- a) if there is reason to believe that heritage resources will be affected by such development, notify the person who intends to undertake the development to submit an impact assessment report. Such report must be compiled at the cost of the person proposing the development, by a person or persons approved by the responsible heritage resources authority with relevant qualifications and experience and professional standing in heritage resources management; or
  - b) notify the person concerned that this section does not apply.
- 3) The responsible heritage resources authority must specify the information to be provided in a report required in terms of subsection 2a) ...
- 4) The report must be considered timeously by the responsible heritage resources authority which must, after consultation with the person proposing the development decide –
- a) whether or not the development may proceed;
  - b) any limitations or conditions to be applied to the development;
  - c) what general protections in terms of this Act apply, and what formal protections may be applied, to such heritage resources;

- d) whether compensatory action is required in respect of any heritage resources damaged or destroyed as a result of the development; and
- e) whether the appointment of specialists is required as a condition of approval of the proposal.

## **APPOINTMENT AND POWERS OF HERITAGE INSPECTORS**

### **Section 50**

- 7) Subject to the provision of any other law, a heritage inspector or any other person authorised by a heritage resources authority in writing, may at all reasonable times enter upon any land or premises for the purpose of inspecting any heritage resource protected in terms of the provisions of this Act, or any other property in respect of which the heritage resources authority is exercising its functions and powers in terms of this Act, and may take photographs, make measurements and sketches and use any other means of recording information necessary for the purposes of this Act.
- 8) A heritage inspector may at any time inspect work being done under a permit issued in terms of this Act and may for that purpose at all reasonable times enter any place protected in terms of this Act.
- 9) Where a heritage inspector has reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence in terms of this Act has been, is being, or is about to be committed, the heritage inspector may with such assistance as he or she thinks necessary –
  - a) enter and search any place, premises, vehicle, vessel or craft, and for that purpose stop and detain any vehicle, vessel or craft, in or on which the heritage inspector believes, on reasonable grounds, there is evidence related to that offence;
  - b) confiscate and detain any heritage resource or evidence concerned with the commission of the offence pending any further order from the responsible heritage resources authority; and
  - c) take such action as is reasonably necessary to prevent the commission of an offence in terms of this Act.

A heritage inspector may, if there is reason to believe that any work is being done or any action is being taken in contravention of this Act or the conditions of a permit issued in terms of this Act, order the immediate cessation of such work or action pending any further order from the responsible heritage resources authority.