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Archaetnos Culture & Cultural  
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BK 98 09854/23

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**A REPORT ON A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON  
VARIOUS PORTIONS OF THE FARMS VAALDAM SETTLEMENT 1777  
AND UITKYK 506, FRANKFORT & HEILBRON DISTRICTS,  
FREE-STATE PROVINCE**

For:

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**REPORT: AE715**

Work conducted: *June 2007* Date of report: *June 2007*

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## SUMMARY

Archaetnos cc was requested by Plan-Enviro CC to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment on various portions of the farms Vaaldam Settlement 1777 and Uitkyk 506, located in the Frankfort and Heidelberg Districts of the Free State. The development of around 264 holiday residential units is planned on this property.

The fieldwork undertaken revealed a number of sites of cultural significance on the property, namely the remains of stonewalled Iron Age settlements, as well as the foundations of historical stone built structures and associated features and graves. Some of these sites will be impacted upon by the proposed development. It is recommended that the development can continue as planned, taking into consideration the recommendations put forward at the end of the report.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Archaetnos cc was requested by Plan-Enviro CC to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment on various portions of the farms Vaaldam Settlement 1777 and Uitkyk 506, located in the Frankfort and Heidelberg Districts of the Free State. The development of 264 holiday residential units is planned on this property.

**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
2. Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their archaeological, historical and scientific value
3. Recommend suitable mitigation measure should there be any sites of significance that might be impacted upon by the proposed development

**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. The latitude and longitude of any archaeological site or feature, is to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public
4. All recommendations are made with full cognizance of the relevant legislation

## **LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

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

### **South African Heritage Resources Act**

#### **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 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.
- (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)**.

### **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

### **METHODOLOGY**

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 where necessary, although sections of the property were traversed by vehicle where possible.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

The development area is located on various portions of the farms Vaaldam Settlement 1777 and Uitkyk 506 on the banks of the Vaaldam, in the Free State Province. The topography of the area is generally flat, although there are some low rocky ridges overlooking the Vaaldam. Large portions of the area were ploughed in the past for agricultural purposes, and have therefore been extensively disturbed. Portions are also inundated with water during wetter seasons, and therefore not suitable for any development.

Around 4000 hectares are currently utilized as a so-called green zone (nature reserve), with mainly blesbok, springbok and blackwildebeest present. This area will not be developed, but will remain intact. Some of the identified sites are located here, and will therefore not be impacted on by the housing development.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### ***Site 1 (Re Ptn 4 of Vaaldam Settlement No. 1777)***

The first site (**Figure 1**) found is located between **26.94448° S and 28.15840° E**. The site consists of the remains of a fairly extensive Late Iron Age (LIA) stonewalled settlement. It is situated on a low rocky ridge overlooking the dam, and contains various small circular stonewalled enclosures (huts), stone platforms (possibly granary bases or stands), as well as a

number of centrally located cattle enclosures (kraals). There are also a number of ash middens, with fairly good cultural deposit, present.

The site will not be directly impacted on by the development, as it is located in the “green zone” (nature reserve) earmarked for the area.

#### ***Site 2 (Ptn 196 and 197 Vaaldam Settlement No 1777)***

This is an informal farm cemetery (Figure 2) located between **26.94292° S and 28.15744° E**. It is also situated in the “green zone”, in close proximity to Site 1, and will not be disturbed by the development.

The cemetery contains around 18 graves, some with headstones and others just stone packed. The earliest identified date of burial is 1986, with the latest being 1990. Some of the others, specifically those without headstones might be much older.

#### ***Site 3 (Re Ptn 35 of Vaaldam Settlement No 1777)***

This site is similar to Site 1, and also situated on a rocky ridge overlooking the Vaaldam. This is a fairly large site, and it contains the remains of stonewalled features such as huts, cattle enclosures and granary stands. It represents a LIA settlement, probably related to Site 1. Large ash middens, with cultural deposit, are also present. Later, historical, structures, including a rondavel, built on top of the older site, are also present. It is clear that these structures were built using the stones from the earlier LIA structures. The site is located between **26.95507° S 28.15952° E and 26.95630° S 28.15980° E**.

This site will not be directly impacted upon by the development as it is located in the “Green Zone” (Nature reserve) earmarked for the area.

#### ***Site 4 (Re Ptn 6 Vaaldam Settlement No. 1777)***

This site is located between **26.93679° S and 28.16173° E**. It consists of the remains of a recent stone built kraal, while a refuse midden is also present. The development will not impact on the site.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Sites 1 & 2 – Late Iron Age Settlement and Informal Cemetery***

Although the LIA settlement is relatively large and well preserved, it will not be directly impacted on by the housing development. It is located in the green zone (nature reserve) earmarked for the development. However, the secondary impact of the development on the site should be considered. Although the rule and regulations of the developers clearly states that no unauthorized hiking or vehicular travel of any kind will be allowed here, **it is our opinion that the site should be fenced in to negate any possible vandalism.**

Regarding Site 2 (the cemetery), although the graves will not be disturbed, **we would recommend that the area around the graves are cleaned and that a proper fence be**

**erected around the graves. This will also facilitate easy access to the graves, should any descendants wish to visit.**

***Site 3 – Late Iron Age Settlement***

This site, a LIA stone walled settlement with a historic component (See Figures 3 – 5), is located in an area that will not be directly impacted on by the development. However, the secondary impact of the development on the site should be considered. Although the rule and regulations of the developers clearly states that no unauthorized hiking or vehicular travel of any kind will be allowed here, **it is our opinion that the site should be fenced in to negate any possible vandalism.**

***Site 4 – Recent stone built kraal and midden***

No mitigation needed.

Lastly, in the light of comments made on reports of surveys in the Vaaldam area (by the same author) by SAHRA regarding possible palaeontological studies in the area, it is our believe that these studies would be unnecessary (see Letter to SAHRA dated (2007-04-10).

**It should also be noted that if any artifacts or features are uncovered during the development process (the subterranean presence of these is a possibility) a professional archaeologist should be called in to investigate.**

**REFERENCES**

Locality Plan – Plan-Enviro cc

**PROJECT TEAM**

A.Pelser, Archaeologist: Archaetnos cc



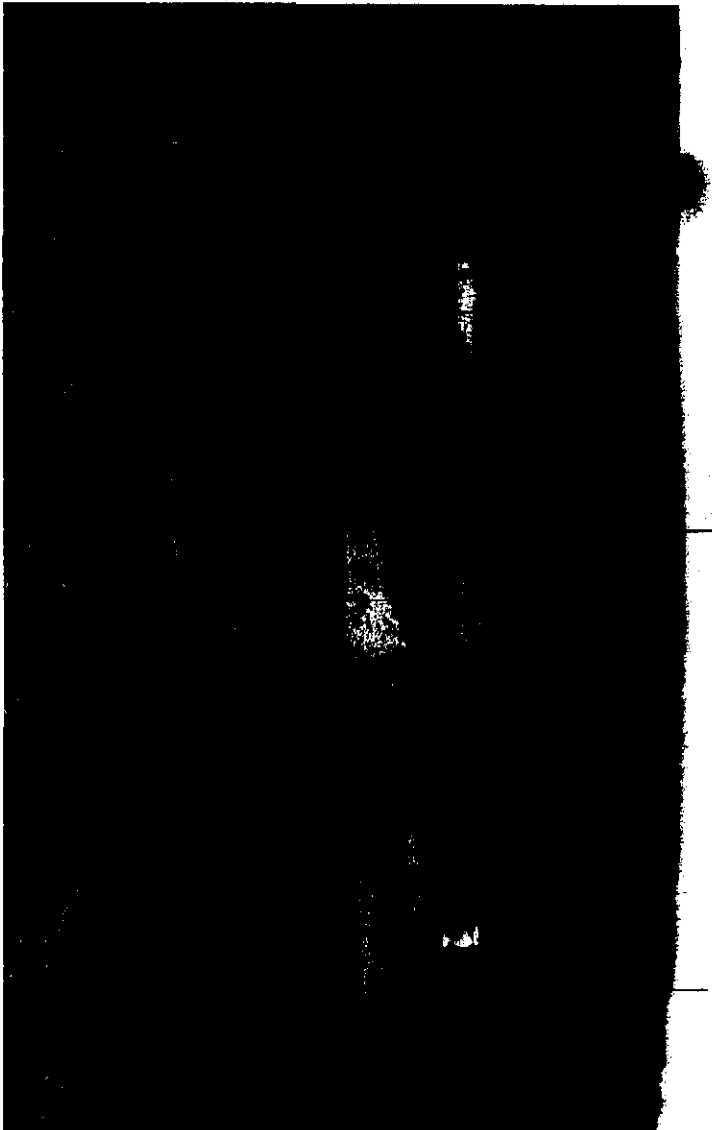
**APPENDIX 1 – MAP OF AREA**



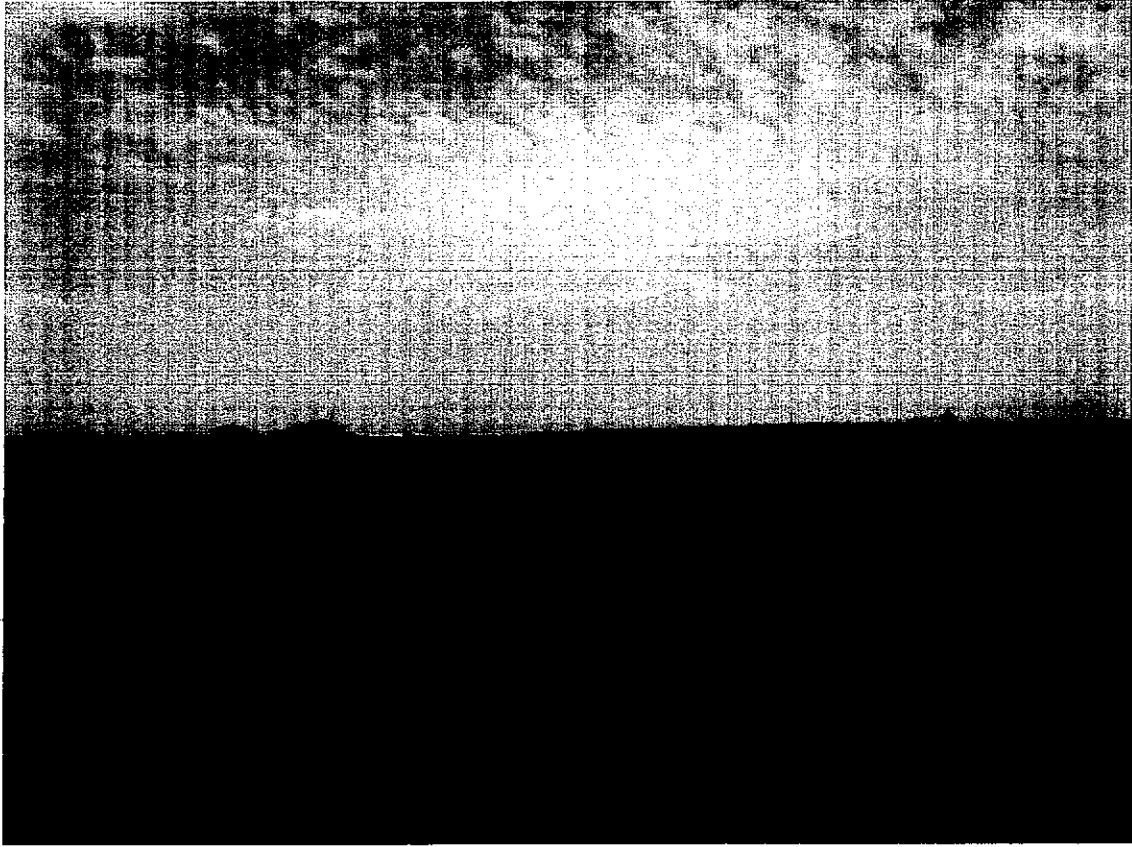
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**Fig. 1. Remains of stonewalled settlement on Site 1**



**Fig. 2. Site 2 – Informal cemetery**



**Fig. 3. The ridge where Site 3 is located and where the so-called Sandstone Estate will be developed**



**Fig. 4. Stone walling on Site 3**



**Fig. 5. Later, historic structures built on top of earlier LIA settlement at Site 3**