



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural
Resource Consultants
BK 98 09854/23

**A REPORT ON A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON A
PORTION OF THE FARM VAALDAM SETTLEMENT 1777, VAALDAM,
HEILBRON DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

For:

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REPORT: AE710

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SUMMARY

Archaetnos cc was requested by Plan-Enviro CC to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment on a portion of the farm Vaaldam Settlement 1777. The site is located on the banks of the Vaaldam. The development of low density residential housing is planned on this property.

The fieldwork undertaken revealed one site of cultural significance on the property, namely the remains of an old stone built farmhouse. This structure will not 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

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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 Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989).

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)**.

Environmental Conservation Act

This act states that a survey and an evaluation of cultural resources should be undertaken in areas where development, which will change the face of the environment, is to be made. The impact of the development on the cultural resources should also be determined and proposals to mitigate this impact are to be formulated.

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 proposed development area is located on the farm Vaaldam Settlement 1777 on the banks of the Vaaldam, in the Heilbron District of the Free State. The topography of the area is generally flat. Most of the area was ploughed in the past for agricultural purposes, and has therefore been extensively disturbed. Some parts of the area is also utilized currently as feeding kraals for cattle.

DISCUSSION

Only one site of cultural significance was located on the property. This is the remains of a fairly large stone built structure, possibly an old farmhouse, consisting of about five individual rooms. The site is located at **27. 02229° S 28. 15009° E**. It is also clear that this site would be consistently under water should the water levels only rise slightly. It is also for this reason that development is not currently considered on this portion of the property. Should this however be considered in future this structure would have to be assessed and researched in ore detail.

Past agricultural activities (ploughing etc.) would have destroyed most sites, features or objects in the area if they did indeed exist.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we believe that the survey was conducted successfully. The only site of any possible cultural significance found is the old stone built structure (farmhouse). It will be kept intact at this stage. No other surface evidence of any cultural resources exists. We therefore recommend that the proposed development continue. However, 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.

Secondly, we recommend that the stone built structure be assessed should any development in the area where it is located be considered in the unforeseeable future. This work should be conducted by an architectural historian. 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)).

REFERENCES

Locality Plan – Plan-Enviro cc

PROJECT TEAM

A.Pelser, Archaeologist: Archaetnos cc

APPENDIX 1 – MAP OF AREA

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Fig. 1. Photograph of stone built structure. This site would be under water when water levels rise slightly as it is right on the banks of the Vaaldam



Fig. 2. Close-up of stone wall of structure. The brown line in the distance indicate the level of the water in wetter conditions