

# HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED BREEDE VALLEY SHELL ULTRA CITY ON PORTION 61 OF FARM DE MOND VAN HARTEBEEST RIVIER 379, WORCESTER MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT, WESTERN CAPE

(Assessment conducted under Section 38 (8) of the  
National Heritage Resources Act as part of an EIA)

Prepared for

**Mr DW Venter c/o Sillito Environmental Consulting**  
P.O. Box 30134, Tokai, 7966.

1<sup>st</sup> version: 09 April 2008  
Revised and updated 05 August 2008



Prepared by

**Jayson Orton**

**Archaeology Contracts Office**

Department of Archaeology  
University of Cape Town  
Private Bag  
Rondebosch  
7701

Phone (021) 650 2357  
Fax (021) 650 2352  
Email [Jayson.Orton@uct.ac.za](mailto:Jayson.Orton@uct.ac.za)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Sillito Environmental Consulting to conduct an assessment of parts of Portion 61 of De Mond van Hartebeest Rivier No. 379, Worcester, for the purposes of completion and submission of an NID for Heritage Western Cape. The proponent wishes to construct two new Shell Ultra City Complexes, one on either side of the freeway. This has become necessary since the proposed upgrade of the freeway to a double-carriageway toll road with interchanges will make access to the current site problematic.

The project will entail subdivision and rezoning of two portions of farm 379/61. They will be similar sized sites split by the N1 freeway and with a combined area of approximately 3.5 ha. The land is characterised by dense quartzite cobbles and sand of the palaeoterrace and floodplain of the Breede River. The sites are vegetated with a variable mix of fynbos and grass and, given the species present, seem to be recovering from past grazing.

Two aspects of heritage were of concern. Heavily weathered and rolled Early Stone Age artefacts were observed to occur across the sites and are clearly incorporated within the river terrace. These are of low significance and do not require any further attention. The second aspect concerns the visual impact to the scenic qualities of the area. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is already underway and should guide the final approval.

The following recommendations are made:

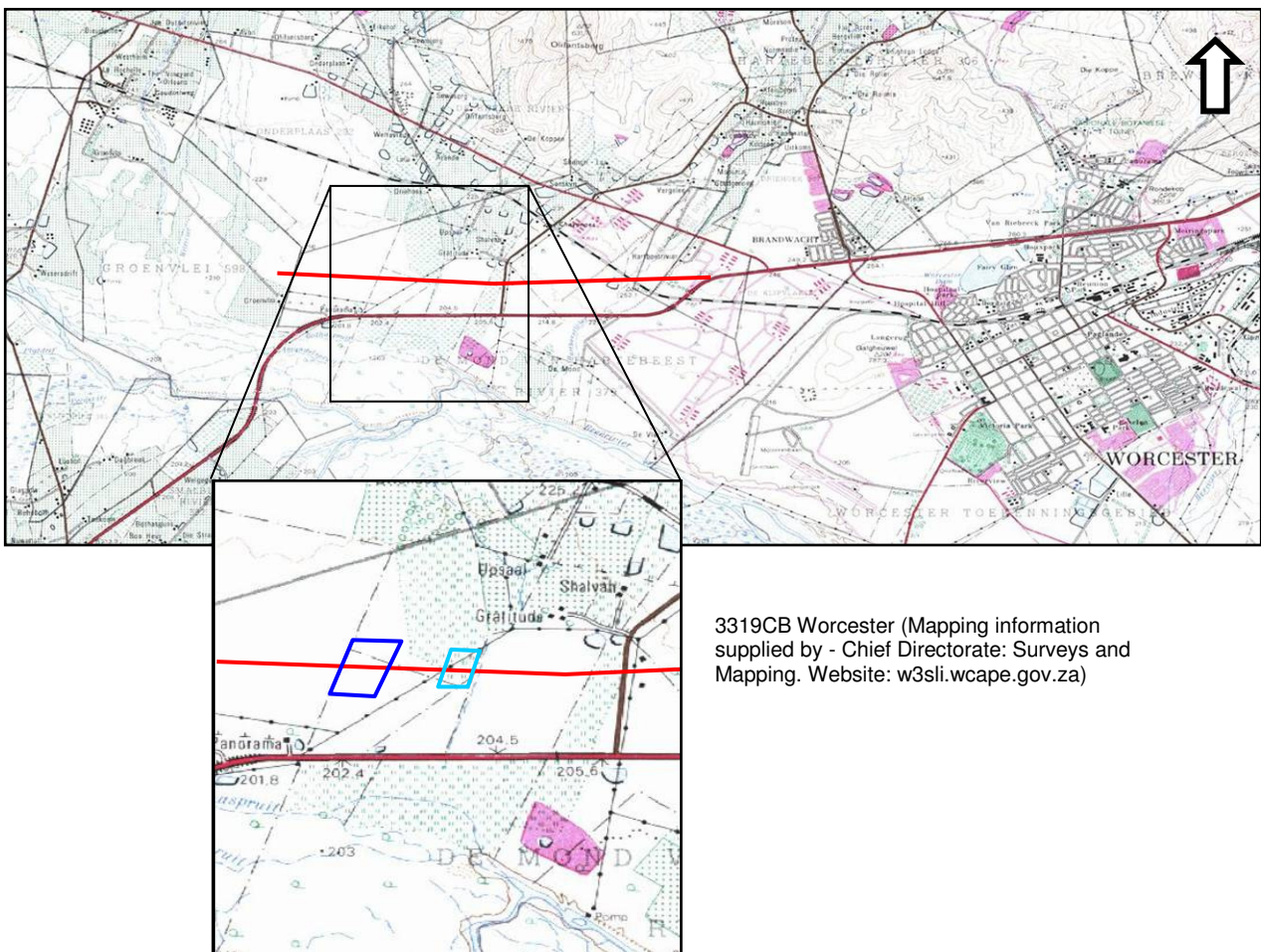
- No further archaeological work is required and, subject to the outcome of the VIA, the project should be allowed to proceed.
- Trees should be planted to screen the development from the surrounding areas and indigenous shrubbery should be considered as an alternative to exotic grass so as to reduce the impact on the local landscape.

# Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. HERITAGE LEGISLATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. METHODS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1. Limitations .....	9
<b>5. FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1. Stone Age Archaeology.....	9
5.2. Historical Archaeology.....	12
5.3. Built Environment and Cultural Landscapes.....	12
5.4. Scenic routes and visual impact.....	12
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Sillito Environmental Consulting on behalf of Willem Venter to conduct an assessment of parts of Portion 61 of De Mond van Hartebeest Rivier No. 379, Worcester, for the purposes of completion and submission of a Notification of Intent to Develop to Heritage Western Cape. The proponent is wishing to construct a new Shell Ultra City Complex on either side of the N1 Freeway (Figures 1 & 2). The existing complex will be closed due to the proposed road upgrades scheduled to take place. These will involve conversion of the road to a double carriageway which will not allow south-bound access to the present site. Furthermore, a new interchange will be too close to the existing complex. The two original sites totalled some 16 ha in extent, while the final footprints total approximately 3.5 ha. These latter footprints have been reduced to the absolute minimum so as to minimise impacts. The sites will need to be subdivided from the rest of Portion 61. The two parts are split by the N1 freeway. The land is currently zoned Agricultural Zone I and will need to be rezoned to Business Zone V to allow the proposed activity to take place.



**Figure 1:** Map showing the approximate location of the surveyed sites (original in dark blue and final in light blue). The inserted red line shows the correct position of the N1 freeway with that shown on the map now being the R101 road to Rawsonville (out of picture to the southwest).

Three alternatives were originally considered with two, both further to the east, having been ruled out in the earliest stages. Subsequently, the final footprint has again changed due to the requirements of protecting conservation-worthy vegetation and this report reflects both of the examined areas.



**Figure 2:** Aerial photograph taken from Google Earth showing the site and its surrounds. The sites are bisected by the N1 freeway. The original surveyed area is shown in dark blue while the new final footprints are in light blue.

## 2. HERITAGE LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) No. 25 of 1999 protects a variety of heritage resources including palaeontological, prehistoric and historical material (including ruins) more than 100 years old (Section 35), human remains (Section 36) and non-ruined structures older than 60 years (Section 34). Landscapes with cultural significance are also protected. Under Section 38 (1) of the act the affected property requires heritage assessment based on its size of greater than 5000 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The sites lie some 5 km west of the edge of Worcester and are bisected in an east-west direction by the N1 freeway. The area is at present unused and is covered by a variable mix of fynbos and wild grasses (Figures 3 to 6). The substrate throughout is dominated by the quartzite/sandstone cobbles of the Breede River palaeoterrace and floodplain but with sandier areas in places (Figures 7 & 8). Some areas have very thick grass cover (Figure 9).

The site must have been used for grazing in the past, since the vegetation is in varying states of recovery. In general the surrounding land is also either under agriculture or is old grazing land.

A 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmstead lies to the northeast of the final northern footprint. Some structures in this complex include Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century elements, while others quite likely have their roots in the middle 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is well screened from the proposed development site by trees and faces away from the site towards the north.



**Figure 3:** View towards the north over the final northern footprint. A 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmstead lies in the trees in the right hand background.



**Figure 4:** View towards the south over the final southern footprint area.



**Figure 5:** Panoramic view across the original northern site, looking towards the south-west. The N1 freeway is visible on its raised platform running through the centre of the picture.



**Figure 6:** Panoramic view across the original southern site, looking towards the northeast.



**Figure 7:** View across the final southern site showing the vegetation and sand and cobble substrate.



**Figure 8:** View across the original southern site showing the vegetation and sand and cobble substrate.





**Figure 9:** View across the final northern site showing thick grass cover. The raised platform of the N1 freeway is visible with the truck on it.

## 4. METHODS

A foot survey of the original sites was conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and of the new sites on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008. Only the two proposed subdivisions were assessed in each case rather than looking at the entire 109.6 ha of the total Portion 61. Finds were photographed and described.

### 4.1. Limitations

Although some areas were quite densely vegetated, this is not seen as a major limitation to the conclusions of this report since it was quite clear that the cobble substrate extended across the whole area.

## 5. FINDINGS

### 5.1. Stone Age Archaeology

Early Stone Age (ESA) artefacts on high quality sandstone (possibly some quartzite) were observed in several areas on all sites. In particular a ploughed fire break area (Figure 10) alongside the N1 servitude on both sites and a furrow on the southern side (Figure 11) yielded the greatest numbers of artefacts suggesting that they are well mixed into the cobble terrace. The majority were very well rounded indicating a period of time in the river terrace long enough to allow further weathering and rounding of the artefacts by the river. A few pieces were fresher with one or two seeming quite recent. These last were probably Middle or Later Stone Age artefacts made and dropped by people crossing the site.



**Figure 10:** Photograph of the ploughed up fire break showing the dense river cobbles in which the ESA artefacts were found.



**Figure 11:** Photograph of the furrow that yielded many ESA artefacts among the exposed gravel and cobbles.

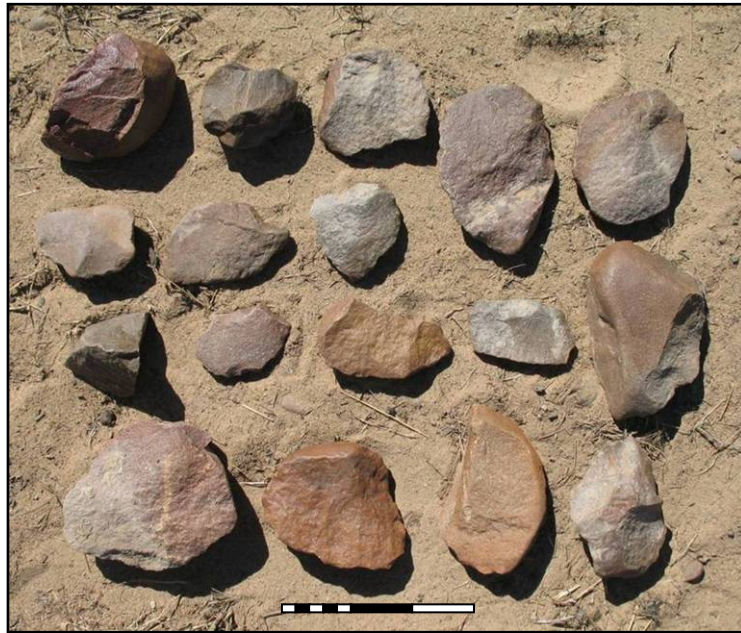
The high degree of weathering made it difficult to distinguish broken cobbles from flaked ones. However, it seemed that most of the artefacts on the original footprints were just flakes, with a small number of cores seen (Figure 12 & 13). No diagnostic artefacts such as Acheulean hand-axes or cleavers were seen. These artefacts are all in secondary context and have little heritage value.



**Figure 12:** A selection of ESA artefacts from the original southern site. Scale bar is 15 cm long.

The northern half of the final footprints had very little ESA material evident with most being confined to the furrow. However, to the south of the N1, the furrow had many more artefacts present. They are well mixed in with the cobbles and gravels that have been exposed by the running water and showed more variety than was evident anywhere else (Figure 14). One cobble tool could, on technological grounds, be Oldowan (the oldest ESA period), although such tools could easily have been made during later periods as well (Figure 15). Another

artefact is a heavily weathered biface, probably of Acheulean age (Figure 16). Just one good Acheulen hand-axe was found (Figure 17).



**Figure 13:** A selection of ESA artefacts from the original northern site. Scale bar is 15 cm long.



**Figure 14:** A selection of ESA artefacts from the furrow on the final southern site. Scale bar is 15 cm long.



**Figure 15:** A crude pebble chopper reminiscent of the Oldowan period.



**Figure 16:** An Acheulean biface.



**Figure 17:** A hand-axe found in the furrow. The scale bar is 10 cm long and the right hand picture showing the side view is enlarged.

## 5.2. Historical Archaeology

No historical material was noted on the site.

## 5.3. Built Environment and Cultural Landscapes

No structures or ruins were present and no cultural landscape elements were noted on the sites. A 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmstead is present to the northeast of the northern final footprint site. This complex is well shielded from the proposed development sites and will not be negatively impacted.

## 5.4. Scenic routes and visual impact

The N1 freeway can be considered a scenic route as it passes through the Breede River Valley. The vicinity of the site is characterised by green, open spaces with some areas under agriculture. On a wider scale the surrounding mountains provide a very scenic backdrop to the valley.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

Only two impacts to heritage resources are foreseen. The first is of low significance and concerns the displacement and damage of ESA artefacts occurring within the cobbles of the river terrace. These artefacts have very limited research potential and it is suggested here that the record of their presence is sufficient. Their heavily weathered state and poor context will not allow much more information to be gleaned.

The second impact carries greater significance and concerns the visual impact to the scenic qualities of the area. The addition of two Ultra City complexes is not in keeping with the surrounding land uses but can be regarded as the type of development that is to be expected alongside the freeway. They will detract from the visual experience though. This aspect has already been identified by the environmental consultants and an independent Visual Assessment has been carried out.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- No further archaeological work is required but the Visual Impact Assessment is important. This assessment should guide the final approval.
- As is often the case in such developments, it is recommended that trees are planted around the structures to minimise the surface area of exposed buildings. This will help to maintain the generally green nature of the area and reduce the starkness of the development within the local context. The use of indigenous shrubbery rather than exotic grass will also help soften the impact.