

McGregor Museum

Department of Archaeology



Heritage Impact Assessment for proposed drilling site on the farm Elleboog 1191 near Dealesville, western Free State.

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Executive Summary

A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment is presented.

Precise co-ordinates for proposed drilling were presented and De Beers Exploration personnel took us directly to the specific site in question. This report describes the limited archaeological/heritage traces that were observed at the surface.

It is possible that archaeological material of significance may occur subsurface. If encountered this should be brought to the attention of heritage authorities for further assessment, and mitigation if necessary.

In terms of this report, no significant heritage traces were found in the area of proposed drilling that are considered to require further mitigation.

The loss of heritage resources is therefore assessed to be of **low** significance with and without the implementation of mitigation.

Background

The McGregor Museum Archaeology Department was appointed by The De Beers Group of Companies: Exploration Office – DBGS in order to conduct a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment at four proposed drilling sites at localities in the vicinity of Dealesville (x3) and near Koffiefontein (x1) in the western Free State. This report addresses the possible impacts on heritage resources (archaeological and cultural) of this operation. It excludes palaeontological assessment.

This report assesses the site on the farm Elleboog.

The site was inspected on 10 March 2016 and relevant observations are indicated in this report.

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

Specialist

The author is a professional archaeologist (PhD) accredited as a Principal Investigator by the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists. He has worked as a museum archaeologist and has carried out specialist research and surveys in the Northern Cape and western Free State since 1985.

The author is independent of the organization commissioning this specialist input, and provides this heritage assessment (archaeology and colonial history but not palaeontology) within the framework of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).

The National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999 (NHRA) provides general protection to heritage resources which include archaeological and palaeontological objects/sites older than 100 years, graves older than 60 years, structures older than 60 years, as well as intangible values attached to places. The Act requires that anyone intending to disturb, destroy or damage such sites/places, objects and/or structures may not do so without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. This means that a Heritage Impact Assessment should be performed, resulting in a specialist report as required by the relevant heritage resources authority/ies to assess whether authorisation may be granted for the disturbance or alteration, or destruction of heritage resources.

Where archaeological sites and palaeontological remains are concerned, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) at national level acts on an agency basis for Provincial Heritage Resources Agencies (PHRAs) which have not been accredited for these categories of heritage management.

Description of environment and potential impacts

The environment in question consists of relatively flat terrain with grassland vegetation and dolerite hills in the surrounding landscape. The vicinity is covered by Kalahari sands of up to a few metres depth, over calcrete and underlying dolerite bedrock. It is relatively sparsely vegetated on the grassy plains. Surface archaeological traces are likely to be reasonably visible. However, Stone Age material may overlie bedrock, at the base of the sands, as has been noted routinely at other sites in the region (e.g. Beaumont & Morris 1990).

The locality is indicated in the following map.

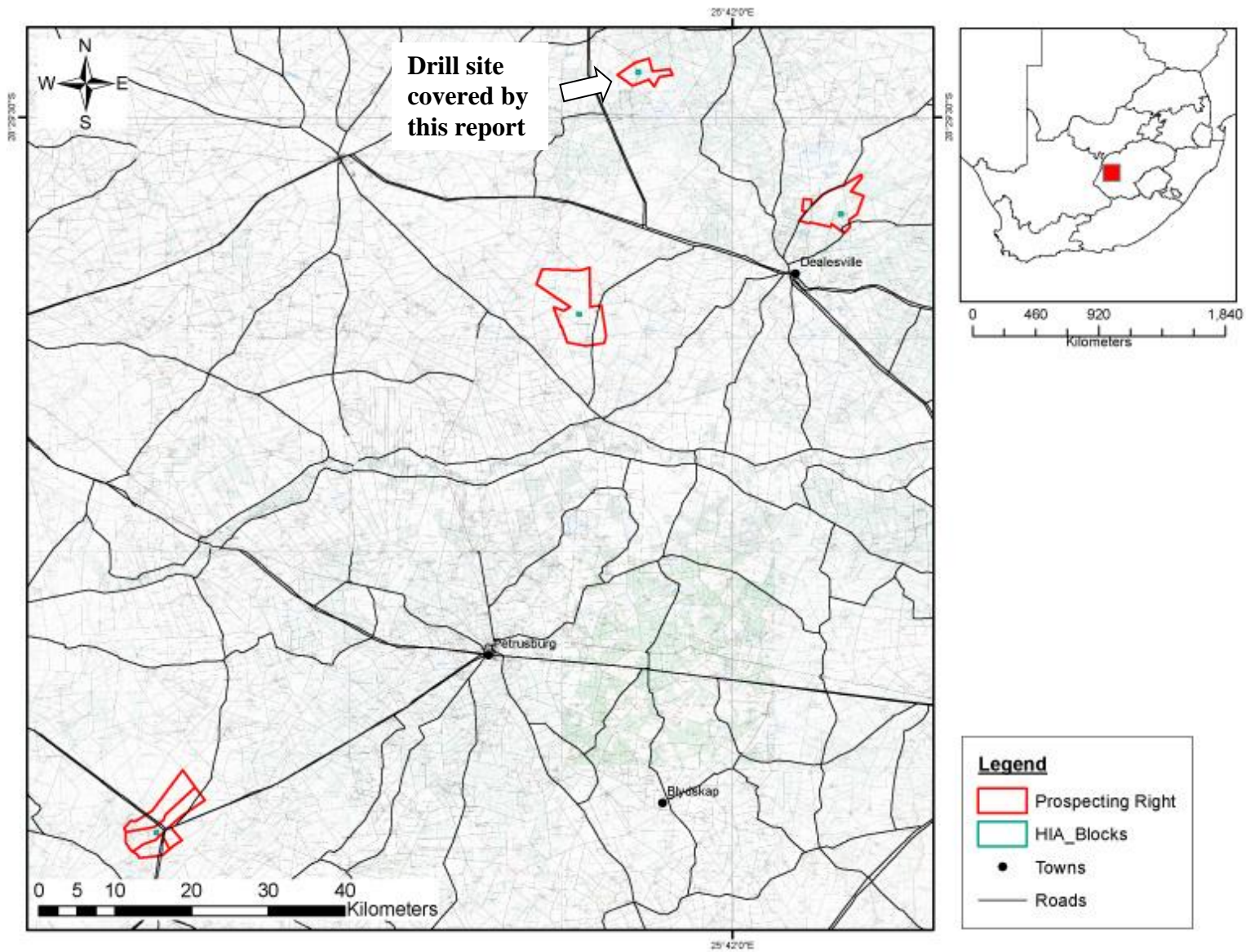


Figure 1: Locality Map

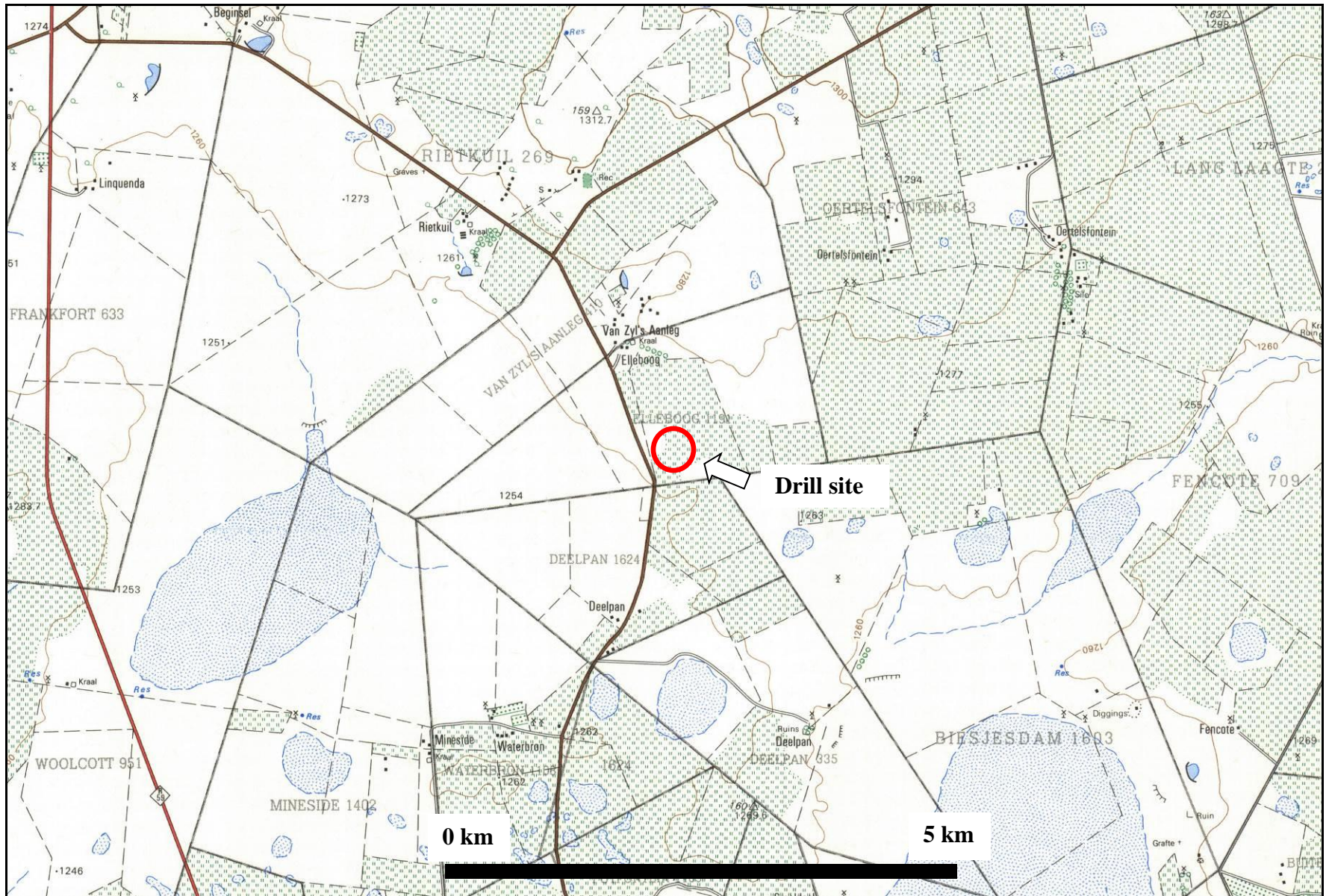


Figure 2. Farm Elleboog 1191 indicating drill site position.



Figure 3. Google Earth image showing position proposed drilling site in middle of ploughed farmland.

In terms of heritage features of the region, the following introductory comments can be made:

Colonial history

The colonial history of the area pertains to rural farm settlement in the western Free State, with the area featuring in the history of the South African War. The material traces of this history at the drill site location itself consists of the development of ploughed farmland.

Stone Age

Stone Age material found in the broader region spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene times. Of particular interest are sites around the fringes of pans, which are a feature of the local area (cf. Beaumont & Morris 1990). Late Holocene material may occur and rock art in the form of engravings (also more recent scratchings and graffiti) may be found on ridges of dolerite that protrude above the plains in this landscape (Orton pers. comm.).

Description and evaluation of environmental issues and potential impacts

Heritage resources including archaeological sites are in each instance unique and non-renewable resources. Area and linear developments can have a permanent destructive impact on these resources in cases where they are impacted. The objective of this study is to assess the significance of such resources, where present, and to recommend no-go or mitigation measures (where necessary) to facilitate or constrain the development.

Area impacts would occur in the area of the drilling locale under consideration.

Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts (in terms of nature and extent)

The destructive impacts that are possible in terms of heritage resources would tend to be direct once-off events occurring during drilling.

Indirect and cumulative impacts could result from on-going use of the site should further developments ensue.

Statement of significance

In addition to guidelines provided by the National Heritage Resources Act, a set of criteria based on Deacon and Whitelaw 1997 for assessing archaeological significance has been developed for Northern Cape settings (Morris 2000a).

Estimating site potential

Table 1 is a classification of landforms and visible archaeological traces for estimating the potential for archaeological sites (after J. Deacon and National Monuments Council). Type 3 sites tend to be those with higher archaeological potential. There are notable exceptions, such as the renowned rock art site Driekopseiland, near Kimberley, which is on landform L1 Type 1. Generally, moreover, the older a site the poorer the preservation. Estimation of potential, in the light of such variables, thus requires some interpretation.

Assessing site value by attribute

The second matrix (Table 2) is adapted from Whitelaw (1997), who developed an approach for selecting sites meriting heritage recognition status in KwaZulu-Natal. It is a means of judging a site's archaeological value by ranking the relative strengths of a range of attributes. While aspects of this matrix remain qualitative, attribute assessment is a good indicator of the general archaeological significance of a site, with Type 3 attributes being those of highest significance.

Table 1. Classification of landforms and visible archaeological traces for estimating the potential for archaeological sites (after J. Deacon, National Monuments Council).

Class	Landform	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
L1	Rocky surface	Bedrock exposed	Some soil patches	Sandy/grassy patches
L2	Ploughed land	Far from water	In floodplain	On old river terrace
L3	Sandy ground, inland	Far from water	In floodplain or near feature such as hill	On old river terrace
L4	Sandy ground, Coastal	>1 km from sea	Inland of dune cordon	Near rocky shore
L5	Water-logged deposit	Heavily vegetated	Running water	Sedimentary basin
L6	Developed urban	Heavily built-up with no known record of early settlement	Known early settlement, but buildings have basements	Buildings without extensive basements over known historical sites
L7	Lime/dolomite	>5 myrs	<5000 yrs	Between 5000 yrs and 5 myrs
L8	Rock shelter	Rocky floor	Sloping floor or small	Flat floor, high ceiling

Class	Landform	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
			area	
Class	Archaeo-logical traces	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
A1	Area previously excavated	Little deposit remaining	More than half deposit remaining	High profile site
A2	Shell or bones visible	Dispersed scatter	Deposit <0.5 m thick	Deposit >0.5 m thick; shell and bone dense
A3	Stone artefacts or stone walling or other feature visible	Dispersed scatter	Deposit <0.5 m thick	Deposit >0.5 m thick

Table 2. Site attributes and value assessment (adapted from Whitelaw 1997)

Class	Attribute	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
1	Length of sequence/context	No sequence Poor context Dispersed distribution	Limited sequence	Long sequence Favourable context High density of arte/ecofacts
2	Presence of exceptional items (incl regional rarity)	Absent	Present	Major element
3	Organic preservation	Absent	Present	Major element
4	Potential for future archaeological investigation	Low	Medium	High
5	Potential for public display	Low	Medium	High
6	Aesthetic appeal	Low	Medium	High
7	Potential for implementation of a long-term management plan	Low	Medium	High

Methodology for HIA assessment

A site visit to inspect the site was planned for 10 March 2016 in the company of De Beers Exploration personnel Lorraine Mothobekhi and Daphne van der Westhuizen. An assessment was made of heritage traces at the chosen drilling locale.

It was anticipated that limited indications of the archaeology of the site would be visible at the present surface, which consists of ploughed land. It was possible that artefacts may occur sub-surface. It was reported that the sands are up to 20 m deep.

Observations

The site was found to be mantled by a layer of red Hutton sand, reportedly some 20 m deep. It is, as indicated, in previously ploughed land, sparsely covered by grass.



Figure 4. Drill site.

No artefacts of any description were found on the site, situated at 28°26'19.8" S 25°25'21.2" E.

There is a possibility that artefacts may occur subsurface.

Characterising the significance of impacts

The following criteria are used in this study to characterise the significance of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts:

- The **nature**, which shall include a description of what causes the effect, what will be affected, and how it will be affected.

- The **extent**, wherein it will be indicated whether the impact will be local (limited to the immediate area or site of development) or regional:
 - local extending only as far as the development site area – assigned a score of 1;
 - limited to the site and its immediate surroundings (up to 10 km) – assigned a score of 2;
 - will have an impact on the region – assigned a score of 3;
 - will have an impact on a national scale – assigned a score of 4; or
 - will have an impact across international borders – assigned a score of 5.
- The **duration**, wherein it will be indicated whether:
 - the lifetime of the impact will be of a very short duration (0–1 years) – assigned a score of 1;
 - the lifetime of the impact will be of a short duration (2-5 years) – assigned a score of 2;
 - medium-term (5–15 years) – assigned a score of 3;
 - long term (> 15 years) – assigned a score of 4; or
 - permanent – assigned a score of 5.
- The **magnitude**, quantified on a scale from 0-10, where a score is assigned:
 - 0 is small and will have no effect on the environment;
 - 2 is minor and will not result in an impact on processes;
 - 4 is low and will cause a slight impact on processes;
 - 6 is moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way;
 - 8 is high (processes are altered to the extent that they temporarily cease); and
 - 10 is very high and results in complete destruction of patterns and permanent cessation of processes.
- The **probability of occurrence**, which shall describe the likelihood of the impact actually occurring. Probability will be estimated on a scale, and a score assigned:
 - Assigned a score of 1–5, where 1 is very improbable (probably will not happen);
 - Assigned a score of 2 is improbable (some possibility, but low likelihood);
 - Assigned a score of 3 is probable (distinct possibility);
 - Assigned a score of 4 is highly probable (most likely); and

- Assigned a score of 5 is definite (impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures).
- the **significance**, which shall be determined through a synthesis of the characteristics described above (refer formula below) and can be assessed as low, medium or high.
- the **status**, which will be described as either positive, negative or neutral.
 - the degree to which the impact can be reversed.
 - the degree to which the impact may cause irreplaceable loss of resources.
 - the *degree* to which the impact can be *mitigated*.

The **significance** is determined by combining the criteria in the following formula:

S = (E+D+M) P; where

S = Significance weighting

E = Extent

D = Duration

M = Magnitude

P = Probability

The **significance weightings** for each potential impact are as follows:

- < 30 points: Low (i.e. where this impact would not have a direct influence on the decision to develop in the area),
- 30-60 points: Medium (i.e. where the impact could influence the decision to develop in the area unless it is effectively mitigated),
- > 60 points: High (i.e. where the impact must have an influence on the decision process to develop in the area).

Impact table summarising the significance of impacts at Ramphela PV site

Nature		
Acts or activities resulting in disturbance of surfaces and/or sub-surfaces containing artefacts (causes) resulting in the destruction, damage, excavation, alteration, removal or collection from its original position (consequences), of any archaeological material or object (what affected).		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Local (1)	Local (1)
Duration	Permanent (5) where archaeological material is impacted – but this has been rated as insignificant and not requiring mitigation	Permanent – but no mitigation regarded as necessary (5)
Magnitude	Minor (2)	Minor (2)
Probability	Improbable (2)	Improbable (2)
Significance	Low (16)	Low (16)
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	No	No
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No artefacts noted.	
Can impacts be mitigated?	No physical traces noted on the ground: Not regarded as necessary other than by way of on-going management as per EMP.	On-going management as per EMP
Mitigation:		
Specific mitigation measures not regarded as necessary. Possible subsurface Stone Age archaeological traces. Report immediately to SAHRA if any major feature is found.		
Cumulative Impacts:		
Where any archaeological contexts occur the impacts are once-off permanent destructive events. Future infrastructure development may lead to spatially extended impacts in the vicinity. EMP should provide for on-going monitoring.		
Residual Impacts:		
Depleted archaeological record where present.		

MEASURES FOR INCLUSION IN THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

OBJECTIVE: Archaeological or other heritage materials occurring in the path of any surface or sub-surface disturbances associated with any aspect of the development are highly likely to be subject to destruction, damage, excavation, alteration, or removal. The objective should be to limit such impacts to the primary activities associated with drilling and hence to limit secondary impacts during the medium and longer term if further development occurs.

Project component/s	Any road construction over and above what is necessary and any extension of other components.
Potential Impact	The potential impact if this objective is not met is that wider areas or extended linear developments may result in further destruction, damage, excavation, alteration, removal or collection of heritage objects from their current context in the area.
Activity/risk source	Activities which could impact on achieving this objective include deviation from the planned drilling site and of access road/s without taking heritage impacts into consideration.
Mitigation: Target/Objective	A drilling environmental management plan that takes cognizance of heritage resources in the event of any future expansion, access roads or other infrastructure.

Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
Provision for on-going heritage monitoring in a facility environmental management plan which also provides guidelines on what to do in the event of any major heritage feature being encountered during any phase of development or operation.	Environmental management provider with on-going monitoring.	Environmental management plan to be in place before commencement of development.

Performance Indicator	Inclusion of further heritage impact consideration in any future expansion or infrastructural elements. Immediate reporting to relevant heritage authorities of any heritage feature discovered during drilling operations.
Monitoring	Officials from relevant heritage authorities (National and Provincial) to be permitted to inspect the operation at any time in relation to the heritage component of the management plan.

CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological and historical/cultural resources were not found at the drilling site.

From an archaeological perspective the observed heritage resources may be regarded as being of low significance.

It is not regarded as necessary to carry out mitigation.

References

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