

First Progress Report on the Archaeological Monitoring of construction activity at Elephant Point located on Portion 10 of the farm Belfast 291 KU, Mpumalanga Province.

Compiled by

Kudzala Antiquity



For

Eco 8 Environmental Planners

Surveyor: Mr JP Celliers

30 Aug, 2012

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Executive summary

Site name and location: Elephant Point Resort located on Portion 10 of the farm Belfast 291 KU.

Purpose of the study: Monitoring of ongoing construction activity in respect of the development of a private resort and associated tourism infrastructure in order to identify sites or features which are of Archaeological significance.

1:50 000 Topographical Map: 2431 CD Newington

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Report date: 30 August 2012

Description and findings:

Two site visits were conducted during the course of August 2012. They were done on Aug 3 and Aug 18 respectively. Another visit during September will be conducted. The monitoring consisted of the physical inspection of various trenches which was excavated to accommodate bulk services including sewage, electric cables and water supply. This was done to comply with a SAHRA request and *Section 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999)* as stipulated in a formal letter dated 29 March 2001 (Attached as Appendix E). No sites or features which are regarded as being of archaeological significance were noticed during the monitoring. The monitoring will continue for the duration of the project.

Disclaimer: *Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural importance during the investigation of study areas, it is always possible that hidden or sub-surface sites could be*

overlooked during the study. Kudzala Antiquity CC will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result of such oversights.

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- The results of the project;
- The technology described in any report
- Recommendations delivered to the Client.

1. Description of the area

The study area falls within the Mbombela Municipality, Mpumalanga Province. The monitoring was conducted on a number of trenches dug for infrastructure which includes sewage, electric cabling and water supply (see map, Appendix C).

Veld type: The area is located within the Pretoriuskop Sour Bushveld veld type. This is characterized by uplands and open tree savanna and few low shrubs. Also open to dense short mountain bushveld on rocky outcrops and lower lying areas. The grassy layer is dense and dominated by sour grasses.

Geology: Most of the area is underlain by granite and gneiss of the Nelspruit Suite. Hills with large boulder, soil is shallow sandy loam and also coarse sandy lithosols (Mucina and Rutherford, 2009).

The survey was conducted on foot and with the use of a motor vehicle in an effort to locate cultural remains.

3. Methodology

A desktop archival study followed by a physical (on foot) inspection of the trenches was conducted on 3 August 2012 and again on 18 August 2012. This was done to assess whether graves or features of historical or archaeological value were or may be impacted upon during the excavation activities.

3.1. Desktop study

The purpose of the desktop study is to compile as much information as possible on the heritage resources of the area. This helps to provide an historical context for located sites. Sources used for this study included published and unpublished documents, archival material and maps. Material obtained from the following institutions or individuals were consulted:

- Lydenburg Museum, Lydenburg
- Published and unpublished archaeological reports and articles
- Published and unpublished historical reports and articles

3.1.1. Previous Archaeological studies in the area

The SAHRA database was used to gather information on previous Archaeological Impact Assessments conducted in the area. No archaeological or heritage reports exist on the SAHRA database for this area.

3.2. Significance of sites

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) formulated guidelines for the conservation of all cultural resources and therefore also divided such sites into three main categories. These categories might be seen as guidelines that suggest the extent of protection a given site might receive. They include sites or features of local (Grade 3) provincial (Grade 2) and national (Grade 1) significance.

For practical purposes the surveyor uses his own classification for sites or features and divides them into three groups, those of low or no significance, those of medium significance, those of high significance.

Regarding the establishment of the significance of a site or feature certain classifications of significance is allocated to a site or feature.

These include:

- **Types of significance**

The site's scientific, aesthetic and historic significance or a combination of these is established.

- **Degrees of significance**

The archaeological or historic site's rarity and representative value is considered. The condition of the site is also an important consideration.

- **Spheres of significance**

Sites are categorized as being significant in the international, national, provincial, regional or local context. Significance of a site for a specific community is also taken into consideration.

To arrive at a specific allocation of significance of a site or feature, the archaeologist considers the following:

- Historic context
- Archaeological context or scientific value
- Social value
- Aesthetic value

More specific criteria used to allocate value or significance to a site or feature include:

- The unique nature of a site or feature
- The integrity of the archaeological deposit
- The wider historic, archaeological and geographic context of the site
- The location of the site in relation to other similar sites or features
- The depth of the archaeological deposit (when it can be determined or is known)
- The preservation condition of the site
- Quality of the archaeological or historic material of the site
- Quantity of sites and site features

In short, archaeological and historic sites containing data which may significantly enhance the knowledge that archaeologists currently have about our cultural heritage should be considered highly valuable. In all instances these sites should be preserved and not damaged during construction activities. When development activities do however jeopardize the future of such a site, a second and third phase in the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) process is normally advised which entails the excavation or rescue excavation of cultural material along with a management plan to be drafted for the preservation of the site or sites.

Graves are considered very sensitive sites and should never under any circumstances be jeopardized by development activities. Graves are incorporated in the National Heritage Resources Act under section 36 and in all instances where graves are found by the surveyor, the recommendation would be to steer clear of these areas. If this is not possible or if construction activities have for some reason damaged graves, specialized

consultants are normally contacted to aid in the process of exhumation and reinterment of the human remains.

3. Archaeological background

3.1. Stone Age

The Later phases of the Stone Age began at around 20 000 years BP (Before Present). This period was marked by numerous technological innovations and social transformations within these early hunter-gatherer societies. Hunting tools now included the bow and arrow. More particularly, the link-shaft arrow which comprises a poisoned bone tip loosely linked to a shaft which fell away when an animal was shot and left the arrow tip embedded in the prey animal. Other innovations included bored stones used as digging –stick weights to help with uprooting of tubers and roots, small stone tools, normally less than 25mm long, which was used for cutting meat and scraping hides. There were also polished bone needles, twine made from plant fibers, tortoiseshell bowls, fishing equipment including bone hooks and stone sinkers, ostrich eggshell beads and other decorative artwork (Delius, 2007).

These people may be regarded as the first modern inhabitants of Mpumalanga, known as the San or Bushmen. They were a nomadic people who lived together in small family groups and relied on hunting and gathering of food for survival. Evidence of their existence is to be found in numerous rock shelters throughout the Eastern Mpumalanga where some of their rock paintings are still visible. A number of these shelters have been documented throughout the Province (Bornman, 1995; Schoonraad in Barnard, 1975; Delius, 2007). These include areas such as Witbank, Ermelo, Barberton, Nelspruit, White River, Lydenburg and Ohrigstad.

Two Late-Holocene (Later Stone Age) sites near Hazyview in the Kruger National Park date to the last 2500 years and are associated with pottery and microlith stone tools (Bergh, 1998: 95). This is contemporary to typical hunter-gatherer lifestyle and may also have been sites frequented by San.

San paintings in Mpumalanga are characterized by representations of animals and human figures and are normally fine-lined paintings which are produced by using brushes made of plant material, sticks and quills. The colours are usually red and black or sometimes white. It has been argued that the red ochre source for some of these paintings is to be found at Dumaneni, near Malelane (Bornman, 1995).

At Honingklip near Badplaas in the Carolina District, two LSA rock shelters with four panels of rock art was discovered and archaeologically investigated. The site was used between 4870 BP and as recently as 200 BP. Stone walls at both sites date to the last 250 years of hunter-gatherer occupation and they may have served as protection against intruders and predators. Pieces of clay ceramic and iron beads found at the site indicates that there was early social interaction between the hunter-gatherer (San) communities and the first farmers who moved into this area at around 500 AD. Evidence from Welgelegen Shelter on the banks of the Vaal River near Ermelo suggests that the early farming (Bantu) and hunter-gatherer (San) communities coexisted (Delius, 2007; Bergh, 1998).

The farmers who used metal tools, occupied the shelter while an independent hunter-gatherer group who made typical LSA (Late Stone Age) stone tools and used pottery, occupied the overhang area of the shelter. Similar “symbiotic” relationships existed between the Batwa San from the Lake Chrissie area and the Swazi well into the 20th century (Delius, 2007).

3.2. Early Iron Age

The period referred to as the Early Iron Age (AD 200-1500 approx.) started when presumably Karanga (north-east African) herder groups moved into the north eastern parts of South Africa. It is believed that these people may have been responsible for making of the famous Lydenburg Heads, ceramic masks dating to approximately 600AD.

Ludwig von Bezing was a boy of more or less 10 years of age when he first saw pieces of the now famous Lydenburg heads in 1957 while playing in the veld on his father’s farm near Lydenburg. Five years later von Bezing developed an interest in archaeology and went back to where he first saw the shards. Between 1962 and 1966 he frequently visited the Sterkspruit valley to collect pieces of the seven clay heads. Von Bezing joined the

archaeological club of the University of Cape Town when he studied medicine at this institution. He took his finds to the university at the insistence of the club. He had not only found the heads, but potsherds, iron beads, copper beads, ostrich eggshell beads, pieces of bones and millstones. Archaeologists of the University of Cape Town and WITS Prof. Ray Innskeep and Dr Mike Evers excavated the site where von Bezing found the remains. This site and in particular its unique finds (heads, clay masks) instantly became internationally famous and was henceforth known as the Lydenburg Heads site.

Two of the clay masks are large enough to probably fit over the head of a child, the other five are approximately half that size. The masks have both human and animal features, a characteristic that may explain that they had symbolic use during initiation- and other religious ceremonies. Carbon dating proved that the heads date to approximately 600 AD and were made by Early Iron Age people. These people were Bantu herders and agriculturists and probably populated Southern Africa from areas north-east of the Limpopo river. Similar ceramics were later found in the Gustav Klingbiel Nature Reserve and researchers believe that they are related to the ceramic wares (pottery) of the Lydenburg Heads site in form, function and decorative motive. This sequence of pottery is formally known as the Klingbiel type pottery. No clay masks were found in similar context to this pottery sequence.

Two larger heads and five smaller ones make up the Lydenburg find. The heads are made of the same clay used in making household pottery. It is also made with the same technique used in the manufacture of household pottery. The smaller heads display the modeling of a curved forehead and the back neck as it curves into the skull. Around the neck of each of the heads, two or three rings are engraved horizontally and are filled in with hatching marks to form a pattern. A ridge of clay over the forehead and above the ears indicates the hairline. On the two larger heads a few rows of small clay balls indicate hair decorations. The mouth consists of lips – the smaller heads also have teeth. The seventh head has the snout of an animal and is the only head that represents an animal.

Some archaeological research was done during the 1970's at sites belonging to the EIA (Early Iron Age), location Plaston, a settlement close to White River (Evers, 1977). This

site is located on a spur between the White River and a small tributary. It is situated on holding 119 at Plaston.

The site was discovered during house building operations when a collection of pottery shards was excavated. The finds consisted of pottery shards both on the surface and excavated.

Some of the pottery vessels were decorated with a red ochre wash. Two major decoration motifs occurred on the pots:

- Punctuation, using a single stylus and
- Broadline incision, the more common motif

A number of Early Iron Age pottery collections from Mpumalanga and Limpopo may be compared to the Plaston sample. They include Silver Leaves, Eiland, Matola, Klingbiel and the Lydenburg Heads site. The Plaston sample is distinguished from samples of these sites in terms of rim morphology, the majority of rims from Plaston are rounded and very few beveled. Rims from the other sites show more beveled rims (Evers, 1977:176).

Early Iron Age pottery was also excavated by archaeologist, Prof. Tom Huffman during 1997 on location where the Riverside Government complex is currently situated (Huffman, 1998). This site known as the Riverside site is situated a few kilometers north of Nelspruit next to the confluence of the Nelspruit and Crocodile River. It was discovered during the course of an environmental impact assessment for the new Mpumalanga Government complex/ offices. A bulldozer cutting exposed storage pits, cattle byres, a burial and midden on the crest of a gentle slope. Salvage excavations conducted during December 1997 and March 1998 recovered the burial and contents of several pits.

One of the pits contained among other items, pottery dating to the eleventh century (AD 1070 ± 40 BP) this relates the pottery to the Mzonjani and Broederstroom phases. The early assemblage belongs to the Kwale branch of the Urewe tradition.

During the early 1970's Dr Mike Evers of the University of the Witwatersrand conducted fieldwork and excavations in the Eastern Transvaal. Two areas were studied, the Letaba area south of the Groot Letaba River, west of the Lebombo Mountains, east of the great

escarpment and north of the Olifants River. The second area was the Eastern Transvaal escarpment area between Lydenburg and Machadodorp.

These two areas are referred to as the Lowveld and escarpment respectively. The earliest work on Iron Age archaeology was conducted by Trevor and Hall in 1912. This revealed prehistoric copper-, gold- and iron mines. Schwelinus (1937) reported smelting furnaces, a salt factory and terraces near Phalaborwa. In the same year D.S. van der Merwe located ruins, graves, furnaces, terraces and soapstone objects in the Letaba area.

Mason (1964, 1965, 1967, 1968) started the first scientific excavation in the Lowveld which was followed by N.J. van der Merwe and Scully. M. Klapwijk (1973, 1974) also excavated an Early Iron Age (EIA) site at Silverleaves and Evers and van den Berg (1974) excavated at Harmony and Eiland, both EIA sites.

Recent research by the National Cultural History Museum resulted in the excavation of an Early Iron Age site in Sekhukuneland, known as Mototolong (Van Schalkwyk, 2007). The site is characterized by four large cattle kraals containing ceramics which may be attributed to the Mzonjani and Doornkop occupational phases.

3.3. Late Iron Age

The later phases of the Iron Age (AD 1600-1800's) is represented by various tribes including Ndebele, Swazi, BaKoni and Pedi which is characterized by extensive stonewalled settlements found throughout the escarpment and particularly around Lydenburg, Badfontein, Sekhukuneland, Roosenekal and Steelpoort. Smaller tribes such as the Pai (Mbayi) and Pulana residing in the Lowveld, were attacked by and made to flee from the aggressive Swazi, especially during the *mfecane* (difaqane). They (Swazi) were particularly active in the Lowveld during the difaqane period (1820's) and it is well-known that they frequently attacked and ousted smaller herder groups like the Pai and Pulana, especially in the area today known as Low's Creek. They were however prevented from settling in the low-lying areas due to the presence of the tsetse fly and malaria. Consequently there is little evidence of large scale settlement in the Crocodile River valley until the time of colonial settlement (1890's) and later. Small, isolated dry-packed stone-walled enclosures found near Nelspruit and surrounding areas may be

attributed to these smaller groups who hid away from the Swazi onslaught. The sites were probably not used for extended periods as they were frequently on the move as a result of the onslaught and therefore small, indistinct and with little associated cultural material. As mentioned previously, it is known that the Mbayi (Pai) resides near Legogote in modern times (Bornman, 1995).

4. Located sites, description and suggested mitigation

No archaeological sites or site features of archaeological significance were documented.

5. Findings and recommendations

Monitoring will continue as the project progresses. When sites or features of archaeological significance are located during monitoring, all excavation or earth moving activity at that specific location will be halted and application made to SAHRA for a rescue excavation permit in accordance with section 36 of the NHRA (25 of 1999). Note that this will have additional financial as well as time implications.

Note:

The bulk of archaeological remains are normally located beneath the soil surface. Should excavation or large scale earth moving activities reveal any human skeletal remains, broken pieces of ceramic pottery, large quantities of sub-surface charcoal or any material that can be associated with previous occupation, a qualified archaeologist should be notified immediately. This will also temporarily halt such activities until an archaeologist have assessed the situation.

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Appendix A

Terminology

“**Alter**” means any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place or object, whether by way of structural or other works, by painting, plastering or other decoration or any other means.

“Archaeological” means –

- 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 artifacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features or structures;
- 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 10m of such representation;
- 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, as defined respectively in sections 3, 4 and 6 of the Maritime Zones Act, 1994 (Act No. 15 of 1994), and any cargo, debris or artifacts found or associated therewith, which is older than 60 years or which SAHRA considers to be worthy of conservation; and
- Features, structures and artefacts associated with military history which are older than 75 years and the sites on which they are found;

“Conservation”, in relation to heritage resources, includes protection, maintenance, preservation and sustainable use of places or objects so as to safeguard their cultural significance;

“Cultural significance” means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance;

“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 –

- construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- carrying out any works on or over or under a place;
- subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;
- constructing or putting up for display signs or hoardings;
- any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
- any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

“Expropriate” means the process as determined by the terms of and according to procedures described in the Expropriation Act, 1975 (Act No. 63 of 1975);

“Foreign cultural property”, in relation to a reciprocating state, means any object that is specifically designated by that state as being of importance for archaeology, history, literature, art or science;

“Grave” means a place of internment and includes the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place;

“Heritage resource” means any place or object of cultural significance;

“Heritage register” means a list of heritage resources in a province;

“Heritage resources authority” means the South African Heritage Resources Agency, established in terms of section 11, or, insofar as this Act (25 of 1999) is applicable in or in respect of a province, a provincial heritage resources authority (PHRA);

“Heritage site” means a place declared to be a national heritage site by SAHRA or a place declared to be a provincial heritage site by a provincial heritage resources authority;

“Improvement” in relation to heritage resources, includes the repair, restoration and rehabilitation of a place protected in terms of this Act (25 of 1999);

“Land” includes land covered by water and the air space above the land;

“Living heritage” means the intangible aspects of inherited culture, and may include –

- cultural tradition;
- oral history;
- performance;
- ritual;
- popular memory;
- skills and techniques;
- indigenous knowledge systems; and
- the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships;

“Management” in relation to heritage resources, includes the conservation, presentation and improvement of a place protected in terms of the Act;

“Object” means any moveable property of cultural significance which may be protected in terms of any provisions of the Act, including –

- any archaeological artifact;
- palaeontological and rare geological specimens;
- meteorites;
- other objects referred to in section 3 of the Act;

“Owner” includes the owner’s authorized agent and any person with a real interest in the property and –

- in the case of a place owned by the State or State-aided institutions, the Minister or any other person or body of persons responsible for the care, management or control of that place;
- in the case of tribal trust land, the recognized traditional authority;

“Place” includes –

- a site, area or region;
- a building or other structure which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such building or other structure;
- a group of buildings or other structures which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such group of buildings or other structures;
- an open space, including a public square, street or park; and
- in relation to the management of a place, includes the immediate surroundings of a place;

“Site” means any area of land, including land covered by water, and including any structures or objects thereon;

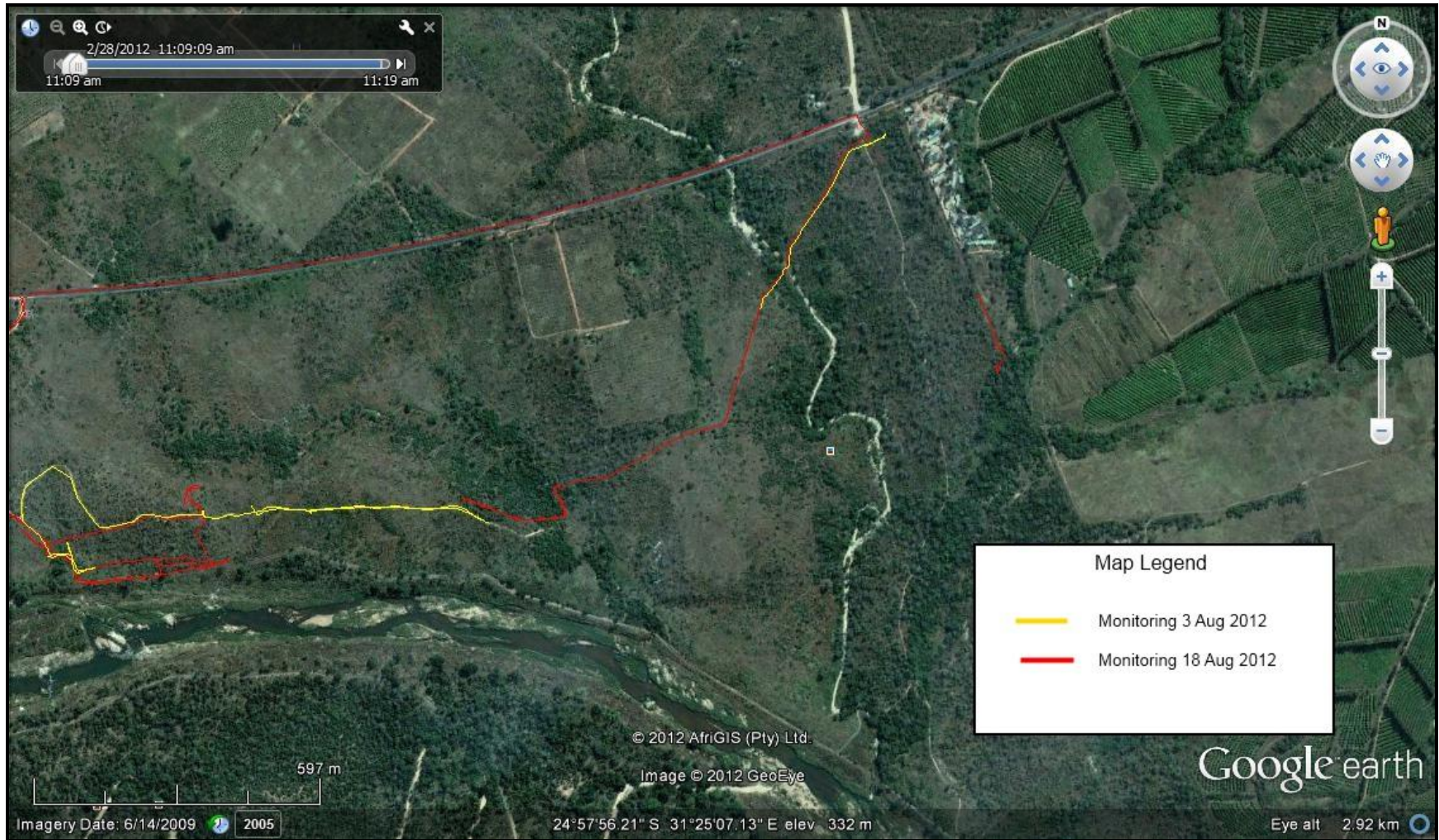
“Structure” means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith

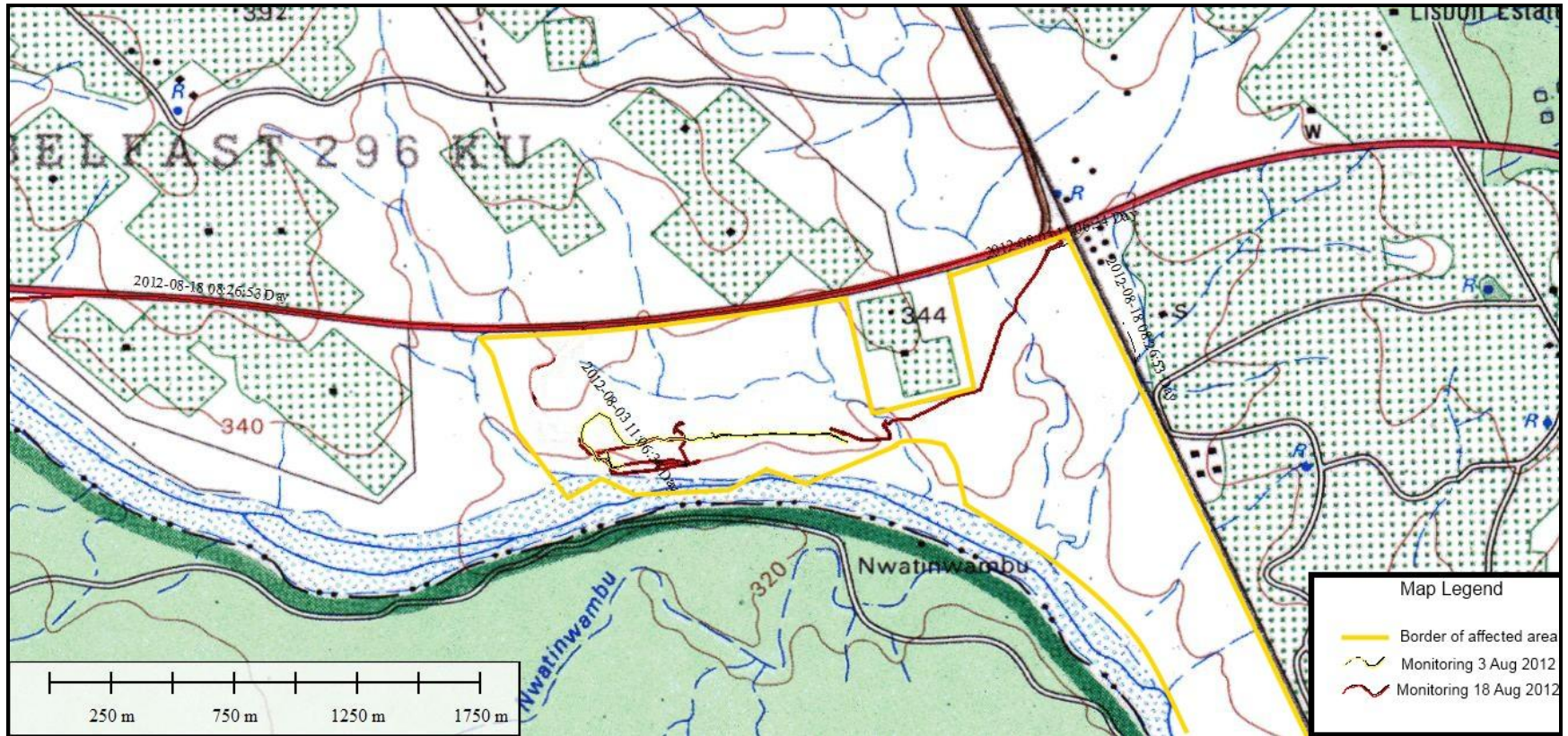
Appendix B

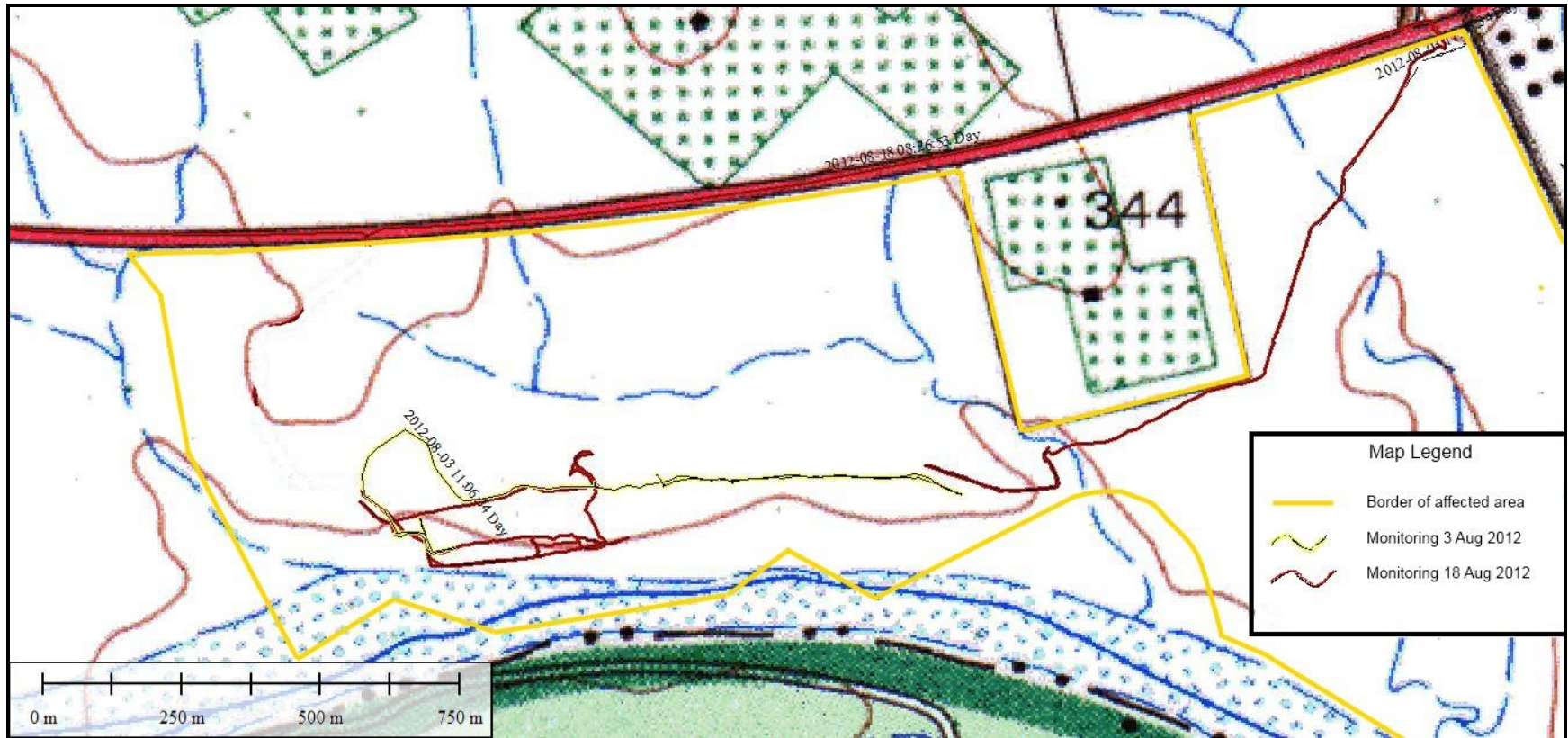
9. List of located sites

No sites located during the monitoring of 3 and 18 August 2012.

Appendix C – Maps







Appendix D



Fig. 1. Taken in western direction one of the service trenches inspected on Aug 3, 2012.



Fig. 2. The same trench as in fig. 1. Photo taken in eastern direction.



Fig. 3. A sewage line running in a southern direction. Inspected on Aug 3, 2012.



Fig. 4. The same sewage line as in fig. 3 where The line has turned east. Photo taken in western direction.



Fig. 5. An electric cable trench. Monitored on Aug 3, 2012. Photo taken
In south-western direction.



Fig. 6. Sewage trench monitored on Aug 18, 2012. Photo taken west.



Fig. 7. A small section of the water supply line monitored on Aug 18, 2012.

Photo taken in western direction.



Fig. 8. The water supply line continues in an eastern direction.



Fig. 9. Groundworks in preparation for foundation. Photo taken East.



Fig. 10. Continuation of the electric cable trench. Monitored on Aug 18, 2012.

Appendix E



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY
A RECORD OF OUR PAST, CONSERVED FOR OUR FUTURE

S A H R A

Box 87552, Houghton, 2041; 21 Rockridge Road, Parktown:
Tel.: 011 482 8365; Fax.: 011 482 8196; cel.: 083 357 7593;
e-mail: rviney@jhb.sahra.org.za

Your ref.: 12/5/10/296-ku
Our ref.:
Contact: Ron Viney
Date: 16 January 2001

Eko-Tekton Environmental Planners
Box 1096
Sabie
1260

By fax.: 013 764 1592
Attn.: Riaan Visagie

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING REPORT: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
A TOURISM RESORT, ASSOCIATED BUSSINESS AND
INFRASTRUCTURE; PORTION 10, BELFAST 296 KU, NORTHERN
PROVINCE.**

I refer to your letter of 3 January 2001.

You are requested in terms of section 36, read with the definitions of *cultural significance*, *archaeological* and *living heritage*, of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999 to provide the following information:

- Whether any *living heritage* will be affected. A qualified statement by a historian or cultural anthropologist with at least an Honours degree and experience in the field must be submitted to this effect.
- Whether any *archaeological* material or *burial sites* will be affected. A qualified statement by an archaeologist with at least an honours degree and experience in the field must be submitted.
- Whether any indigenous architecture will be affected. A qualified statement by a social anthropologist or architect must be submitted.
- Whether any trees or vegetation with cultural significance are to be found on or near the site. [An outspan for example or a tree with special significance for local communities]

Yours faithfully


Manager, Northern Province

SAHRA

ELE - DFB - 001
Mjansen

South African Heritage Resources Agency

21 Rockridge Road, Parktown, Johannesburg
Box 87552, Houghton, 2041
Tel. 011 482 8365
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OUR REF :
ENQUIRIES: Ron Viney
DATE : 28 March 2001



Nuplan Development Planners
Box 2555
Nalspruit
1200

By fax: 013 752 5795
Attn: Lani Van Vuuren

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LAND DEVELOPMENT AREA: PORTION 10 OF THE FARM BELFAST 296 KU, NORTHERN PROVINCE

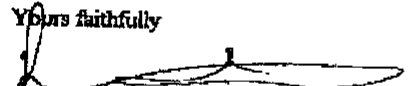
With reference to our site visit with the developer and Mr Riaan Visagie of Ekotekton on 7 March 2001.

SAHRA has no objection to the proposed development at this time provided that when the development commences SAHRA must be informed to enable monitoring of the site. Monitoring must be done in two phases, viz.

- SAHRA must be informed when clearing of vegetation is to take place. An on site inspection with the developer should then again be arranged.
- SAHRA must be informed when any trenches for utilities or foundations are started. An on site inspection with the developer should then again be arranged.

Please refer to the attached documentation for future reference on the provisions of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999.

Yours faithfully


Manager: Northern Province