

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT
SPECIALIST STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED DEMACATION OF SITES IN
GWANGWATINI VILLAGE WITHIN THULAMELA LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

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REPORT DETAILS

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ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST STUDY
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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Vhufa Hashu Heritage Consultants cc has been appointed to conduct an Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment study for the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites at Gwangwatini Village in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. This Heritage Impact Assessment (AIA) study focus on potential impacts on archaeological, cultural, and historical heritage resources associated with the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites.

SUMMARY RESULTS

The field survey was conducted on the 19 of July 2022. The survey covered the proposed site. By nature, the proposed demarcation of residential sites' impact is limited. The archaeological impact assessment did not revealed archaeological and heritage sites. Furthermore, the proposed site is situated on land currently used for grazing. We recommend that a heritage-monitoring program be designed to deal with potential chance finds should archaeological or historical finds be found accidentally during construction of streets and pipe lines. We concluded that the proposed development may proceed subject to the following recommendations:

- A monitoring programme is essential during the excavation of foundations as we cannot rule out the possibilities of encountering subsurface chance archaeological remains. Should archaeological materials be identified during construction development.
- Communities living close to the proposed site should be consulted and kept informed about the development. The local communities may come forward with relevant information on heritage resources such as previously unidentified graves, as well as sites that do not show any structures, but have emotional significance, such as battlefields, etc.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CHA	Cultural Heritage Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
VHHC	Vhufa Hashu Heritage Consultants
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency

DEFINITIONS

Archaeological material remains resulting from human activities, which are in a state of disuse and are in, or on, land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains, and artificial features and structures.

Chance Finds archaeological artefacts, features, structures or historical cultural remains such as human burials that are found accidentally in context previously not identified during cultural heritage scoping, screening and assessment studies. Such finds are usually found during earth moving activities such as water pipeline trench excavations.

Cultural Heritage Resources same as Heritage Resources as defined and used in the South African Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). Refer to physical cultural properties such as archaeological and palaeontological sites; historic and prehistoric places, buildings, structures and material remains; cultural sites such as places of ritual or religious importance and their associated materials; burial sites or *graves* and their associated materials; geological or natural features of cultural importance or scientific significance. Cultural Heritage Resources also include intangible resources such as religion practices, ritual ceremonies, oral histories, memories and indigenous knowledge.

Cultural Significance the complexities of what makes a place, materials or intangible resources of value to society or part of, customarily assessed in terms of aesthetic, historical, scientific/research and social values.

Excavation principal method of extracting data in archaeology, involving systematic recovery of archaeological remains and their context by removing soil and any other material covering them.

Grave a place of interment (variably referred to as burial), including the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place. A grave may occur in isolation or in association with others where upon it is referred to as being situated in a cemetery.

Historic material remains resulting from human activities, which are younger than 100 years, but no longer in use, including artefacts, human remains and artificial features and structures.

In Situ material, material culture and surrounding deposits in their original location and context, for example an archaeological site that has not been disturbed by farming.

Material culture buildings, structure, features, tools and other artefacts that constitute the remains from past societies.

Site a distinct spatial cluster of artefacts, structures, organic and environmental remains, as residues of past human activity.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR THE
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL SITES AT GWANGWATINI AREA OF VHEMBE
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

1. INTRODUCTION

Vhufa Hashu Heritage Consultants was appointed to undertake the Cultural Heritage Assessment specialist study for the proposed Gwangwatini Residential Sites. This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study was conducted to fulfil the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 Section 36 and 38. The HIA study focus on identifying and assessing archaeological, cultural, and historical heritage resources associated with the proposed Gwangwatini sites. Aims and terms of reference of the HIA study are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Terms of Reference for the HIA Study associated with Gwangwatini Residential sites within Thulamela local Municipality, Limpopo Province.

PURPOSE	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fulfil the statutory requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999, Section 38. <input type="checkbox"/> To identify and describe (in terms of their conservation and / or preservation importance) sites of cultural and archaeological importance that may be affected by the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites. This study should include the identification of gravesites. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and describe impacts to archaeological and cultural resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Make recommendations on mitigation measures. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and describe management measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify, describe and map sites of archaeological, historical or cultural interest affected by the proposed development. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify, where possible, the gravesites affected by the development. <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with the local communities (if applicable) with regards to the impact of the development on the heritage resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the importance or significance of these sites and whether these sites need to be conserved, protected or relocated. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the procedures for mitigation or relocation of sites and provide an indication of time required for these management measures to be implemented. <input type="checkbox"/> Document findings and recommendations.

This HIA study primarily seeks to:

- Identifying heritage resources affected by the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites.
- Assess the significance of the resources.
- Evaluate the impact thereon with respect to the socio-economic opportunities and benefits that would be derived from the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites.
- Consult with the affected and other interested parties in regard to the impact on the heritage resources in the project's receiving environment.
- Make recommendations on mitigation measures with the view to reduce specific adverse impacts and enhance specific positive impacts on the heritage resources.

- Identify and discuss with local communities (where applicable) on potential impacts of the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites on graves and burials sites within the affected area and make the necessary recommendations on how to handle the matter.
- Take responsibility for communicating with the Limpopo Heritage, SAHRA and other related authorities in order to obtain the heritage relevant permits and authorization.

In terms of Section 35 (4) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999)

...no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority, destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or material or any meteorite; or bring onto, or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

Clearly, archaeological and palaeontological sites, materials, and meteorites are seen in the NHRA as “the source of our understanding of the evolution of the earth, life on earth and the history of people.” In this context, the law emphasize that the management of heritage resources is integrated with environmental resources and this means that heritage resources should be assessed and, if necessary, rescued before development is allowed to take place.

In areas where there has not yet been systematic survey to identify conservation-worthy places, a permit is required to alter or demolish any historic structure older than 60 years or military installation of over 75 years old. This will apply until a survey is done and identified heritage resources are formally protected.

2. BRIEF BACKGROUND

The proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites will be developed in Gwangwatini area in the Thulamela Local Municipality, Vhembe District, and Limpopo Province. The project area is situated on the southern side of Thengwe Village.

3. METHODS

The study consisted of standard field survey covering the proposed site. In practice, most archaeological and historical sites are found through systematic survey of the target landscapes. The survey therefore, sought to identify cultural heritage sites including graves, burial grounds and contemporary religious or sacred ceremonial sites associated with the proposed demarcation of sites.

On the 19 of July 2022, VHHC heritage specialists conducted the reconnaissance survey and an impact assessment by transecting the affected landscape on foot looking for

indicators of archaeological and any other cultural materials in the affected areas. The field officer also inspected soil profiles for potential archaeological materials that may still be trapped *in situ* in an area already disturbed by previous earthmoving activities.

Identification of archaeological or historical sites during surveying depends on visibility and accessibility. The surrounding areas of the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites are accessible. The proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites is at the place where the area is already disturbed. By looking at the nature of the area, the area is presumably dormant in terms of the existence or availability of archaeological or historical resources that can be classified as of high or medium in terms of significance.

4. RESULTS

LOCATION DETAILS

Province: Limpopo

Magisterial District: Vhembe

Name of Properties affected: Gwangwatini

Proposed development: Demarcation of Residential Sites

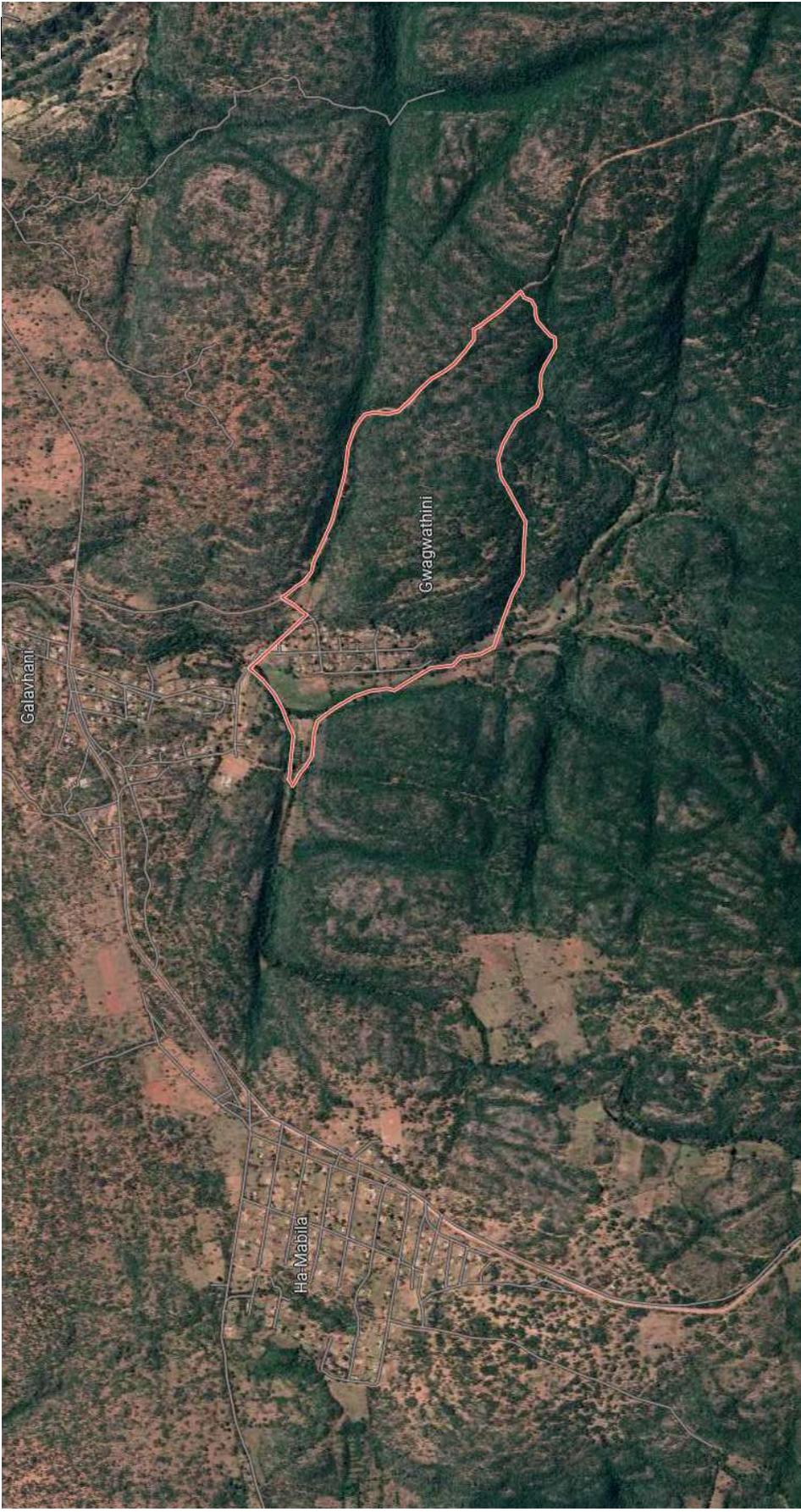


Figure: 1 Aerial Photo for the proposed site.



Figure 2: View of the proposed area for residential sites.

5. A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE GREATER STUDY AREA

STONE AGE (ESA, MSA AND LSA) AND THE IRON AGE

Most of these sites preferably are around springs and fountains that are surrounded by evidence of Stone Age occupations. Evidence of Stone Age within the study area dates back to 500 000 years ago, this time period is associated with the earliest Homo predecessors who lived near water source. These sites are represented by caches of stone tools manufactured from dolerites with Sangoan feature has been found.

These tools were simple meant to chop and butcher meat, de- skin animal and probably to smash bones to obtain marrow. The presence of cut marks from animal fossil bones dating to this period has led to the conclusion by researchers that human ancestors were scavengers and not hunters (Esteyhuysen, 2007). They may have preyed on a drowned or crippled animals or shared a kill by another predator, which explains why at some ESA sites occur high bone proportions of large, dangerous game (Wadley, 2007).

The industries were later replaced by the Acheulian stone tool Industry which is attested to in diverse environments and over wide geographical areas. The Industry is characterized by large cutting tools mostly dominated by hand axes and cleavers. Bifaces emerged and have been reported from a wide range of areas in South Africa. These stone tools products were astonishingly similar across the geographical and chronological distribution of the Acheulian techno-complex: large flakes that were suitable in size and morphology for the production of hand axes and cleavers perfectly suited to the available raw materials (Sharon, 2009). Evidence presented from Sterkfontein cave shows that the first tool making hominids belong to either an early species of the Homo or an immediate ancestor which is yet to be discovered here in South Africa (Esteyhuysen, 2007).

These discoveries have made considerable contribution to the body of scientific knowledge in the subject of tool manufacturing process in association with human evolutions. The Middle Stone Age dates back to about 250 000 ago ending at around 25 000 years ago. In general Middle Stone Age tools are smaller than those of the Early Stone Age period. They are characterized by smaller hand axes, cleavers, and flake and blade industries. The period is marked by the emergence of modern humans through the change in technology, behavior, physical appearance, art, and symbolism. Various stone artifact industries occur during this time period, although less is known about the time prior to 120 000 years ago, extensive systemic archaeological research is being conducted on sites across southern Africa dating within the last 120 000 years (Thompson & Marean, 2008). Surface scatters of these flake and blade industries occur widespread across southern Africa although rarely with any

associated botanical and faunal remains. It is also common for these stone artifacts to be found between the surface and approximately 50-80cm below ground. Fossil bone may be associated with MSA occurrences. These stone artifacts, like the Earlier Stone Age hand axes are usually observed in secondary context with no other associated archaeological material.

An early South African Middle Stone Age stone artifact industry referred to as the Mangosian had a very wide distribution stretching across Limpopo, the eastern Orange Free State, around Cape Point and Natal (Malan 1949). This stone artifact industry, according to the period, may have represented the final development that the prepared core technique of the Middle Stone Age reached prior to its replacement by the microlithic techniques of the Later Stone Age. Malan (1949) also made mention that there are variations of Middle Stone Age assemblages throughout South Africa (Binnerman *et al*, 2011).

A variety of MSA tools includes blades, flakes, scraper and pointed tools that may have been hafted onto shafts or handles and used as spear heads. Residue analyses on some of the stone tools indicate that these tools were certainly used as spear heads (Widely, 2007). The presence of spear heads on some of the MSA assemblages is an indication that these group of people were hunters who targeted middle sized game such as hartebeest, wildebeest and zebra (Wadley, 2007), some assemblages show the presence of bone tools such as bone points.

The last phase of stone tool industry is associated the late stone age. The Karoo landscape is exceptionally rich in the distribution of this phase and is characterized by wide distribution of engravings. The greatest concentrations of engravings occur on the basement rocks and the intrusive Karoo dolerites, but sites are also found on rock types including dolomite, granite, gneiss, and in a few cases on sandstone (Morris, 1988). Most of these paintings depict a wide variety of the fauna of the artistic renderings of animal such as giraffes and other large grazers and mixed feeders such as zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest, eland and buffalo (Parkinton *et al*. 2008) Late Stone age period is associated with the use of microlithic stone tools. On farm fourteen stream Rossouw (2008) recorded a rock art site with over 80 different rock engravings in close proximity to the Vaal River bank. Since there are no caves or rock shelters in the study area no LSA sites of significance were recorded and no isolated finds or occurrence were recorded. The above also applies to the early and Middle Iron Age. The study area is well represented during the historical era associated with the arrival of the white communities.

6. HISTORICAL / COLONIAL PERIOD

Historical archaeology refers to the last 500 years when European settlers and colonialism entered into southern Africa. Movement into the interior was closely linked with the change from farming to stock farming. The movement of Boer into the interior got underway when Wilhelm Adrien van der Stel began to issue free grazing permits in 1703. The exoduses went hand in hand with hunting expeditions into the interior which not only provided the farmers with meat, but also enable them to learn more about the resources of the hinterland. British government made its laws which undermine the freedom of the Boers. The mounting conflict between African and white stock farmers played the dominant part. This led to the general dissatisfaction and a feeling of insecurity among the Afrikaner. The frontier wars of 1834/35 caused the frontier farmers to suffer heavy losses. To aggravate matters, land prices rose sharply during the 1820 and 1830 and drought was a serious problem. These conditions threatened the pastoral lifestyle. There was no land for the younger generations. They opted to migration in search of land and grazing in the interior.

During the great trek into the interior they were already acquainted with conditions of the interior and with the main trek routes. They got available information from travelers, hunters and missionaries.

The 18th century's period is marked by the presence of white, where land was taken from African chiefs and redistributed to the Boers; this was followed by demarcation of portions of land into farms. The first white farms were established along the rivers and tributaries, close to springs. Many of these farms have been in the ownership of families for generations. As a result, they possess a large corpus of information with regarding to the area and its history. A significant number of battles and skirmishes took place in the region (Van Schalkwyk, 2011).

7. ASSESMENT OF SITES AND FINDS

This section contains the results of the heritage site/find assessment. The phase 1 heritage scoping assessment program as required in terms of the section 38 of the National Heritage Resource Act (Act 25 of 1999) done for the proposed demarcation project.

There are no primary or secondary effects at all that are important to scientist or the general public.

<i>Heritage Significance:</i>	No significance
<i>Impact:</i>	Negative
<i>Impact Significance:</i>	High
<i>Certainty:</i>	Probable
<i>Duration:</i>	Permanent
<i>Mitigation:</i>	A

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

No archaeological materials were found in the study area.

HISTORICAL

No historical sites/materials found on site.

GRAVES

No graves were identified on site.

8. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAVES AND BURIAL SITES

Graves and burial grounds are considered to be very sensitive (high cultural significance). Burial grounds and graves as stipulated by the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)

Section 36 (3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority:

- (i) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, 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
- (ii) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in detection or recovery of metals.

Subsection 36 (6) Subject to the provision of any person who in the course of development or any other activity discover the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously

unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resource authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police service and in accordance with regulation of the responsible heritage resource authority-

- (l) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this act or is of significance to any community; and if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Grave and Graveyards can be mitigated by one of the following strategies, Namely:
 - ✓ Graveyards can be considered as a 'NO GO' area and be conserved *insitu underneath* or the area could be fenced or a danger tape could be placed around the entire site for clear visibility to mitigate future damage during construction period.
 - ✓ In case where graves are to be exhumed and relocated. The exhumation process is regulated by various legislations, regulations and administrative procedures. This task is undertaken by Forensic archaeologist and reputed undertakers who are acquainted with all administrative procedures and relevant legislation that have to be adhered to whenever human remains are exhumed and relocated. This process also includes social facilitations process with 60 days statutory notice period for grave older than sixty years. Permission of exhumations and relocation has to be obtained from the decedents of the deceased, the National Department of Health, the Provincial Department of Health, The Premier of the Province and the Local Police. This process is time consuming and very costly.
 - ✓ The identified burial grounds are located within the demarcated proposed development foot print and we strongly recommend that the proposed development should avoid all identified graves.

- ✓ All construction activities including clearing of access route should be designed not to disturb the identified burial grounds.

- ✓ Site monitoring process is strongly recommended during streets construction and water pipe line construction.

10. STATEMENT OF OVERALL IMPACTS

- From a cultural heritage point of view, any development that alters the ground surface status quo will potentially destroy any archaeological resources in its direct path, and the impact will be permanent in nature, extent and duration. Archaeological resources are fixed in space. Any activities that threatens to alter the status quo is, therefore an immediate and direct threat to the heritage resources (Bickford and Sullivan, 1977) However, since there were no archaeological or cultural heritage sites that was identified on the proposed sites the overall impact of the proposed Alternative is considered to be low.

- Generally speaking, the proposed demarcation of residential project will have minimal impact upon any cultural heritage resources given the fact that the survey did not encounter any such sites with any significance threshold.

11. OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- No further predevelopment study or mitigation is necessary for the archaeological and cultural heritage resources with regards to the proposed demarcation of residential stands project. However, there is always a probability of discovering archaeological sites during sub-surface earth moving activities such as digging the foundations or any other trenches. This study recommends that a heritage-monitoring plan (as part of the EMP) be put in place during construction period.

- Furthermore, the construction team should be informed about the value of the cultural heritage resources in general so as to ensure that they do not damage or destroy the chance archaeological sites they may encounter during construction.

12. CONCLUDING REMARKS

From a heritage perspective, in the absence of any known heritage resources and taking into consideration the socio-economic and other values of the proposed Demarcation of Residential Sites development, there are no barriers to the proposed development. The cultural landscape affected by the Demarcation of Residential Sites does not have significance threshold to call for total protection of the landscape. Nonetheless, detailed monitoring procedures should be scheduled into the project EMP in order to adequately respond to chance finds that may be found accidentally during the construction development. The proposed project may proceed as planned subject to a heritage monitoring programme. With the constraints herein discussed and appropriate monitoring measures adopted, there are no objections to the proposed development project and we recommend to the heritage authorities to approve the project accordingly.

13. REFERENCES

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