

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE EXEMPTION FROM A PHASE 1
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE INVESTIGATION FOR THE PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENT ON THE REMAINING EXTENT OF PORTION 39 OF THE FARM DE RUST
12JU, HAZYVIEW
CITY OF MBOMBELA, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

**REPORT COMPILED FOR
LAUNCH Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning
Abbigail el Mohamadi
P.O. Box 418, Sonpark, Nelspruit, 1200
Cell: 0835095927 / e-mail: abbigail@launchlandarch.co.za**



NOVEMBER 2021

**ADANSONIA HERITAGE CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS
C. VAN WYK ROWE
e-mail: christinevwr@gmail.com
Tel: 0828719553 / Fax: 0867151639
P.O. BOX 75, PILGRIM'S REST, 1290**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed development area is located on *portion 39 of the farm DE RUST 12JU*, in Hazyview (Mpumalanga). The applicant, Comosmart (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with LAUNCH Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning are requesting the clearance of more than 1ha of indigenous vegetation for development purposes. The footprint of the highly compromised project site is 3,6953ha. Existing businesses (infrastructure) are in operation on the site and historical clearance of land as well as a road network, transformed the larger part of the property. The farm is currently zoned as agricultural, and will be rezoned to accommodate the industrial, tourism, business, open space and transportation sectors.

The topography of the site is flat with a slight decline towards the west where a small drainage line is on the border of the property. The site was accessible and visibility was excellent.

It is recommended that the proposed project be exempted from a full phase 1 study as the survey revealed no archaeological, historical remains or graves. During the investigation it was established that only 0.84ha of the 3,6953ha was untransformed (natural vegetation). The proposed development, which are applied for the clearance of vegetation will have no impact on the cultural or historical environment.

Further planning of the project may continue, and no mitigation measures are needed for the proposed development with a condition that should any archaeological or human remains be observed during the clearance of vegetation, a qualified archaeologist must be notified, and an assessment be done.

Disclaimer: *Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural significance during the investigation, it is possible that hidden or sub-surface sites could be overlooked during the study, Christine Rowe trading as Adansonia Heritage Consultants will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred by the client as a result.*

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- 1) *The results of the project;*
- 2) *The technology described in any report;*
- 3) *Recommendations delivered to the Client.*



Christine Van Wyk Rowe / NOVEMBER 2021

INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION

The proposed development area is located on *portion 39 of the farm DE RUST, 12JU*, Hazyview, Mpumalanga. The applicant, Comosmart (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with *LAUNCH Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning* are requesting the clearance of more than 1ha of indigenous vegetation for development purposes. The project site is 3,6953ha and the development footprint will be approximately 17000m² in extent.¹

The site is located along the R40 road just south of the town of Hazyview, within close proximity of existing retail businesses, hospitality & tourism establishments, agricultural and vacant land (see map 3). The project site has been extensively compromised by small businesses operating from it, namely a sawmill, construction equipment hire, aluminium, glass and fire safety suppliers (see Appendix 2: figs. 4 - 6, & map 4), as well as the historical clearance of land in 1984 (the southern section), 2009 & 2016 (see figs 2 & 4 & google images maps 4 & 5). The small section of natural vegetation which was left intact, is classified as Pretoriuskop Sour Bushveld, of the lowveld Bioregion with a conservation status of “least threatened.”² The sandy soil is underlain by potassic Gneiss and Migmatite of the Nelspruit suite.³

The basic environmental application will be submitted to the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA), for authorization.⁴

The study area is situated on topographical map 1:50 000, 2531 AA KIEPERSOL (see map 1). The proposed development will mainly consist of service retail, tourist facilities, warehouse facilities, a nursery, light industry and a few erven. The farm is currently zoned as agricultural, and will be rezoned to Industrial, Tourism, Business, Open space and Transportation.⁵

A field investigation revealed that the project site was highly compromised by existing infrastructure (as mentioned above), in the eastern section and bush clearance activities. A large section in the middle of the property was cleared of vegetation during 2016 (see google maps 4 & 5), which left only small patches of natural vegetation to the north, south and west. These were further disturbed by a network of roads (figs. 7 & 12). The foot survey also revealed

¹ LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, p. 3.

² LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, p. 3.

³ LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, p. 7.

⁴ LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, p. 3.

⁵ LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, p. 4.

extensive disturbances in the natural sections in terms of several deeply cut trenches. The trenches were also investigated for any signs of an archaeological nature, but none were found (see fig. 11). The site slopes gently towards a small drainage line in the west (border of property, fig. 9). Large sections on the study area have been invaded with pioneer vegetation such as Sickle bush – *Dichrostachys cinerea*. Sickle bush occurs in the bushveld and is often invasive and thicket forming particularly in disturbed areas.⁶ This is further evidence of the previously disturbed sections (figs. 10 & 12).

- **Terms of reference:** LAUNCH Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning requested Adansonia Heritage Consultants to investigate the presence of archaeological and heritage features or graves on the study area for the proposed development on *portion 39 of the farm DE RUST 12JU, Hazyview*. As specified by section 38 (3) of the NHRA, the investigation focused on the identification and mapping of heritage resources; the assessment, description and evaluation of possible archaeological and heritage sites, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to such sites.
- **Legal requirements:**
The legal context of the report is grounded in the National Heritage Resources Act no 25, 1999, as well as the National Environmental Management Act (Act no107, 1998) (NEMA) as amended.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The field investigation provided the opportunity to examine the 3,6953ha piece of land for the proposed development. The 1984 topographical map indicates that the southern side of the project site was already transformed by agriculture (see 1984 map 1 & fig. 12). The 2009 & 2016 Google images, further indicate a large disturbed section in the middle, with roads to the south and north (maps 4 & 5, figs. 2 & 3). A 1911 topographical map (Degree Sheet 22) of *Komatipoort* revealed no historic black settlements in the immediate area of the farm (map 2).

The study area consisted of disturbed areas and natural vegetation. The entire section was easily accessible and no limitations were experienced. The veld was open and the surface vegetation low. Visibility during the survey was excellent (see Appendix 2: figs. 1 - 12). A previous study by the author on an adjacent property of the farm DE RUST (2014), revealed no

⁶ Van Wyk, B., & Van Wyk P., Field Guide to Trees of Southern Africa, 1997, p. 500.

archaeological remains, only a building older than 60 years was observed and mitigation measures were proposed.⁷

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was conducted on foot by two people, and standard archaeological and recording methods were applied (see Appendix 1: Tracks & Paths). A survey of literature was done to obtain information about the archaeology and cultural heritage of the area. There are no museums in the area which could be consulted, and no historical information was available at the municipality. The author relied mainly on aerial images to assemble background information. The layout of the area was plotted with a GPS instrument (Garmin Etrex datum WGS 84). A digital photographic recording method was used.

The author was involved in desktop studies and surveys in the immediate area, such as:

- *Study for the Proposed Eskom Powerlines, Hazyview – Dwarsloop* (2008);
- *Inspection of Umbhaba Stone-walled settlement, Hazyview*, (2001);
- *a Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for 132Kv Powerlines from Kiepersol substation (Hazyview), to the Nwarele substation Dwarsloop* (2002);
- *a Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for a proposed traffic training academy, Calcutta, Mkhuhlu, Bushbuckridge* (2013);
- *Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Nkambeni cemetery in Numbi, Hazyview* (2013); no features of significance were identified;
- *Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for a Development on the farm Agricultural Holding no 56 JU, White River* (2013) was done in the wider area;
- *Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for a proposed township establishment, portion 127 & 131 of the farm **DE RUST, 12JU**, Hazyview* (2014) – only a historical building older than 60 years was observed and mitigation measures were proposed.
- Letter of recommendation for the exemption from a Phase 1 AIA / HIA *for the proposed new position for the Gutshwa substation, Gutshwa (near White River)* (2016);
- Phase 1 AIA / HIA for a *proposed agricultural development on the farm Krokodilspruit 248JT, White River, Mpumalanga Province* – some archaeological features as well as graves were observed.
- Phase 1 AIA & HIA for a *proposed development of a Lodge on a portion of the farm*

⁷ Rowe, C., Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for a proposed township establishment, portion 127 & .131 of the farm **DE RUST, 12JU**, Hazyview.

CORK 295KU (10ha), Mkhuhlu, Bushbuckridge area, Mpumalanga Province (2018) – no archaeological or historical material was observed.

- Phase 1 AIA & HIA for the rectification of an unlawful commencement for the construction of the LEOPARD SANDS RIVER LODGE & associated infrastructure on a portion of the remaining extent of the farm BELFAST 296KU, Mkhuhlu, Bushbuckridge area, Mpumalanga Province (2019); – no archaeological or historical material was observed.
- Phase 1 AIA / HIA for proposed establishment of macadamia plantation on portion 1 of the farm PEEBLES 31JU, White River, Mpumalanga Province (2019); Graves, Upper grinders and historical features were identified – associated with recent settlement.
- Letter of recommendation for the exemption from a Phase 1 AIA / HIA investigation for the clearance of 19ha indigenous vegetation on old Agricultural fields, on the farms Thistlecore 35JU & portion 12 of the farm Joyce 28JU, Hazyview, Mpumalanga (2020).
- Phase 1 AIA & HIA for the clearance of 13ha vegetation for the purposed of berry farming on portion 15 of the farm 291KU Sandford, Hazyview, Mpumalanga, (2020) – only historical structures older than 60 years were observed and mitigation measures were proposed.

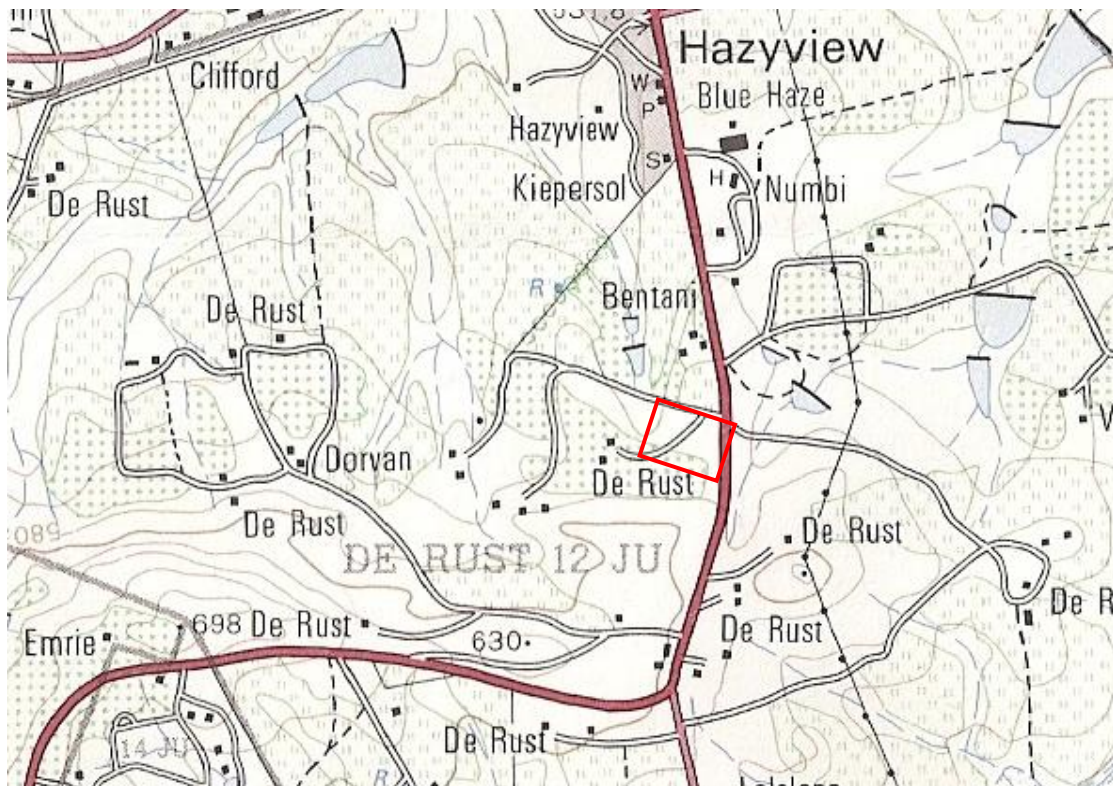
The SAHRA database for archaeological and historical impact assessments was consulted and revealed other Archaeological Impact Assessment reports in the wider and immediate areas:

- A. Van Vollenhoven: *A Report on a basic assessment relating to cultural heritage resources for the proposed ESKOM Tekwane North line and substations, Mpumalanga Province (2013)* – revealed historic remains of low significance and a cemetery.
- P. Birkholz: *HIA for the proposed development of the Karino Interchange located east of Mbombela, Mpumalanga Province (2017)* – Historical buildings and structures were revealed by no archaeological sites of features were identified.
- A. Van Vollenhoven: HIA for Aurecon, 15 June 2012, *Basic Assessment for the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Friedenheim Office Complex, Nelspruit, Mpumalanga.* – revealed no graves or archaeological sites. Recent buildings were observed.

INVESTIGATION

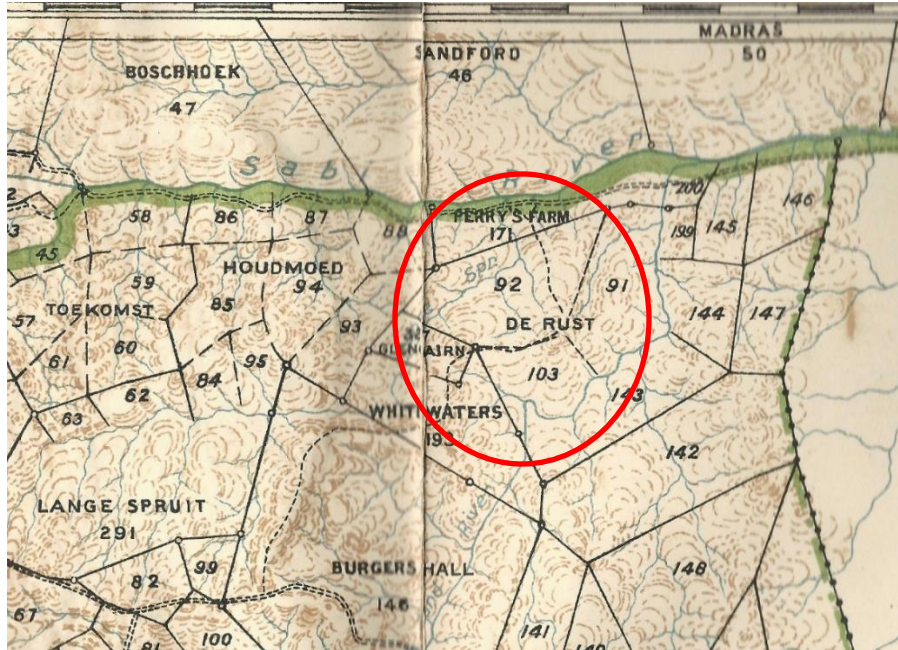
The study area consisted of disturbed land (which is used for small businesses such as a sawmill, equipment hire, aluminium, glass and fire safety suppliers (figs. 4- 6), as well as disturbed vacant land (see maps 4 & 5). The undisturbed section of natural vegetation is less than 1ha in size (it is approximately 0.84ha), and was investigated for any archaeological, historical remains or graves (see maps 4 & 5), but none were observed. Many trenches and roads disturbed this area. The study area slopes gently towards a small drainage line in the west (map 5 & fig. 9), which also forms the border of the site. The R40 main road to Hazyview, is situated to the east. Large sections on the study area have been invaded with pioneer vegetation such as Sickie bush – *Dichrostachys cinerea*. Sickie bush occurs in the bushveld and is often invasive and thicket forming particularly in disturbed or overgrazed areas.⁸ This is further evidence of the previously disturbed sections (figs. 10 & 12).

No archaeological, historical remains or graves were observed during the survey.



MAP 1: Topographical map 2531 AA KIEPERSOL (1984). The farm is indicated by the red square. The southern section was historically cultivated lands.

⁸ Van Wyk, B., & Van Wyk P., Field Guide to Trees of Southern Africa, 1997, p. 500.



MAP 2: The 1911 topographical map (Degree Sheet 22) of *Komatipoort* revealed no historic black settlements in the immediate area of the farm.⁹



MAP 3: Google image (2021): The DE RUST study area (red), located within the wider context.

⁹ Map: 1911 Topographical Map: Komatipoort Degree Sheet no. 22.



Map 4: Google image (2016): Study area. This image of the study area shows historically disturbed sections. Vegetation has established in the southern section which was indicated as agricultural areas in 1984 (see topographical map).



Map 5: The disturbed sections on the study area are indicated by the blue (1984), yellow (2009) & pink (2016), shaded areas. The undisturbed sections which were left, equals 0.84ha.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Very little contemporary research has been done on prehistoric African settlements in this section. The only professionally excavated Early Iron Age site in the immediate area, besides those in the Kruger National Park, is the Plaston site towards the south, dating ca 900 AD.¹⁰ No other archaeological excavations have been conducted to date within the study area, which have been confirmed by academic institutions and specialists in the field.^{11 12} A stone walled settlement with terracing was recorded by C. van Wyk (Rowe) close to Hazyview,¹³ to the south of the project site, as well as several others further west and north-west,¹⁴ of the study area.

Several early ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as D. Ziervogel and N.J. Van Warmelo, revealed that the study area was inhabited by Eastern Sotho groups (Pulana, Kutswe and Pai), the Tsonga (Nhlanganu and Tšhangana), from before the 18th century.^{15 16} (See map 6). When concentrating on ethnographical history, it is important to include a slightly wider geographical area.

The entire district is divided in two, with the Drakensberg Escarpment in the west, and the Low Veld (in which Hazyview is situated) towards the east. Today, we found that the boundaries of groups are intersected and overlapping.¹⁷ Languages such as Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Nhlanganu, Nkuna, sePedi, hiPau and seRôka, are commonly spoken throughout this area.¹⁸

¹⁰ M.M. Van der Ryst., Die Ystertydperk, in J.S. Bergh (red.), *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika: Die vier Noordelike Provinsies*. p. 97.

¹¹ Personal information: Dr. J. Pistorius, Pretoria, 2008-04-17.

¹² Personal information: Dr. MS. Schoeman, University of Pretoria, 2008-03-27.

¹³ C. Van Wyk (Rowe), *Inspection of Umbhaba Stone-walled settlement, Hazyview*, pp. 1-2.

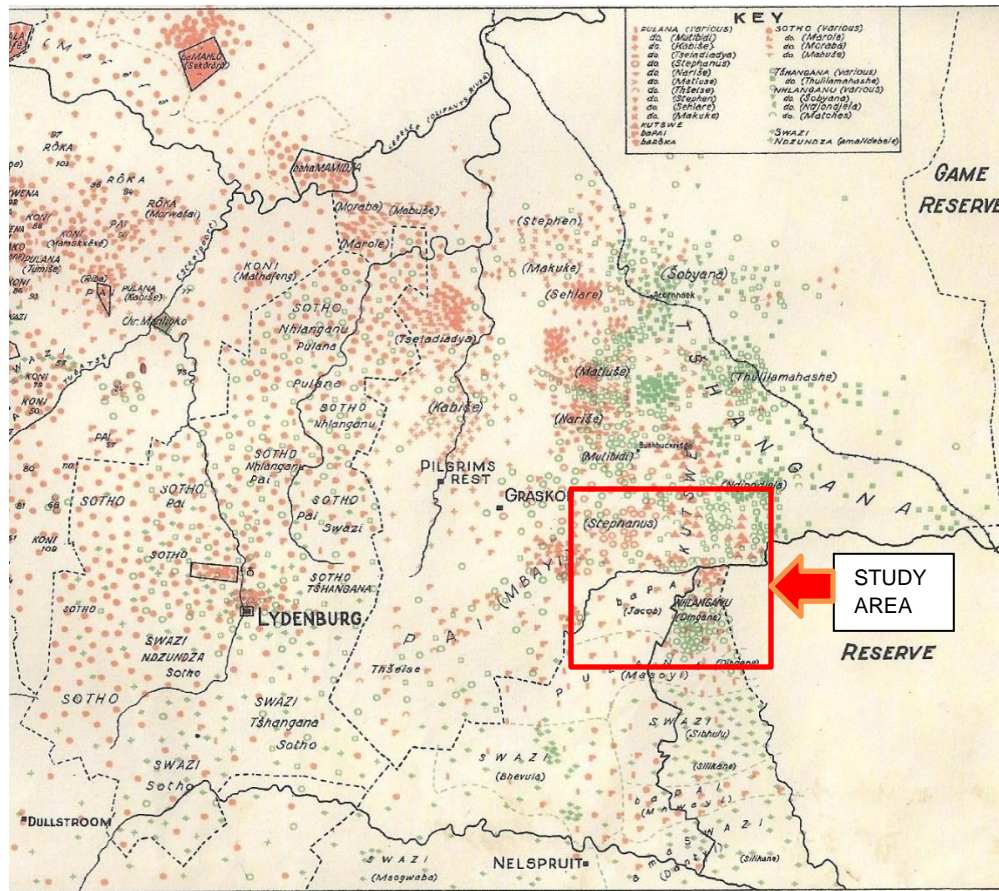
¹⁴ PRMA: Information file 9/2.

¹⁵ N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. pp. 90-92 & 111.

¹⁶ H. S. Webb, The Native Inhabitants of the Southern Lowveld, in *Lowveld Regional Development Association, The South-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld*. p. 16.

¹⁷ N.J. van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 51.

¹⁸ M. De Jongh (ed.), *Swatini*, p. 21.



MAP 6: 1935 VAN WARMELO: Area around Hazyview indicated by arrow.

When the Swazi began to expand northwards they forced the local inhabitants out of Swaziland, or absorbed them.¹⁹ There is evidence of resistance, but the Eastern Sotho groups who lived in the northern parts of Swaziland, moved mainly northwards.²⁰ This appeared to have taken place towards the end of the 18th century,²¹ when these groups fled from Swaziland to areas such as Nelspruit, Bushbuckridge, Klaserie, Blyde River and Komatipoort.²²

Several circular stone-walled complexes and terraces as well as graves have been recorded in the vicinity of Hazyview²³, Bushbuckridge, Graskop and Sabie. Clay potsherds and upper as well as lower grinding stones, are scattered at most of the sites.²⁴ Many of these occur in caves as a result of the Swazi attacks on the smaller groups.

¹⁹ A.C. Myburgh, *The Tribes of Barberton District*, p. 10.

²⁰ N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. p. 111.

²¹ H. S. Webb, *The Native Inhabitants of the Southern Lowveld*, in *Lowveld Regional Development Association, The South-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld*. p. 14

²² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²³ PRMA: Information file 9/2.

²⁴ D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 3.

Van Warmelo based his 1935 survey of *Bantu Tribes of South Africa* on the number of taxpayers in an area. The survey does not include the extended households of each taxpayer, so it was impossible to actually indicate how many people were living in one area.²⁵

A map of the “Transvaal” (Bradford’s pre-1926: *Map of black settlement in the Transvaal*), indicated that the areas east and south of Pilgrim’s Rest towards the current Kruger National Park, were extensively occupied by African people before 1926.²⁶

STONE AGE

The Stone Age is the period in human history when people produced stone tools. The Stone Age in South Africa can be divided in three periods:

Early Stone Age (ESA): +- 2 million – 150 000 years ago;

Middle Stone Age (MSA): +- 150 000 – 30 000 years ago;

Later Stone Age (LSA): +- 40 000 – 1850AD.

IRON AGE

The Iron Age is the period in time when humans manufactured metal artifacts. According to Van der Ryst & Meyer,²⁷ it can be divided in two separate phases, namely:

Early Iron Age (EIA) +- 200 – 1000 AD;

Late Iron Age (LIA) +- 1000 – 1850 AD.

HISTORY OF HAZYVIEW

Hazyview has a history of gold mining and played an important role in the development of the Low Veld area. The town was established in 1959 when the post office was built. It is a small farming town and is renowned for its fruit industry (banana, mango etc). Languages such as Afrikaans, English, Tsonga and Swazi are generally spoken.²⁸

LOCALITY

The proposed development area is located along the R40, from where it is accessed, on *portion 39 of the farm DE RUST 12JU*, Hazyview, under the jurisdiction of the local

²⁵ N.J. van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p.9.

²⁶ H. Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom*, p. 147.

²⁷ Van der Ryst, M.M, & Meyer, A, Die Ystertydperk in *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*, pp. 96 – 98.

²⁸ Hazyview information: http://www.mpumalangahappenings.co.za/hazyview_homepage.htm

municipality of the City of Mbombela, and the Ehlanzeni District Municipality. The applicant, COMOSMART (Pty) Ltd is requesting the clearance of more than 1ha of vegetation for development purposes, ²⁹ (see GPS co-ordinates below).

The farm has extensively been transformed by historically agricultural activities (since at least 1984), infrastructure of small businesses in the eastern section (since at least 2004 / expanded in 2009), and the clearance of natural vegetation (2016) (see map 4 & Appendix 2). Only 0,84ha consist of natural vegetation (figs. 7 -10).

GPS co-ordinates (see maps & google images of the study area: See maps 1 - 5:

GPS Co-ordinates			
Study area	South	East	Elevation
A	S 25° 03' 16.46"	E 31° 07' 41.69"	570m
B	S 25° 03' 19.41"	E 31° 07' 49.97"	570m
C	S 25° 03' 25.40"	E 31° 07' 49.86"	573m
D	S 25° 03' 22.03"	E 31° 07' 42.76"	573m

FINDINGS

No archaeological sites, material or graves were found during the survey on the footprint of the proposed project site, and it is unlikely that any significant heritage remains will be found. The proposed development will have no impact on the cultural or historical environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact which will result from the clearance of vegetation, will have no effect on archaeological, historical heritage resources or graves. There are no compelling reasons to stop the proposed development from a heritage perspective.

MITIGATION

Archaeological material or graves are not always visible during a field survey and therefore some material may only be revealed during the clearance activities of the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that the developers be made aware of this possibility and should human remains, clay or ceramic pottery etc. be observed, a qualified

²⁹ LAUNCH: Draft BAR for proposed development on the farm DE RUST 12JU, pp. 3-4.

archaeologist must be notified and an assessment be done. Further research might then be necessary in this regard, for which the developer will be responsible.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants cannot be held responsible for any archaeological material or graves which were not located during the survey.

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NATIONAL LEGISLATION

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MISCELLANEOUS

- History of Nelspruit: mpumalanganahappenings.co.za/nelspruit_homepage.htm, Access: 2020-02-29.

- Map: 1911 Topographical Map: Komatipoort Degree Sheet no. 22.
- LAUNCH: Draft Basic Assessment Report for proposed development on the remaining extent of portion 39 of the farm DE RUST 12JU, September 2021.
- Rowe, C., Phase 1 Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment for a proposed township establishment, portion 127 & .131 of the farm **DE RUST, 12JU**, Hazyview (2014).

APPENDIX 1 TRACKS & PATHS USED IN THE SURVEY



Tracks & paths which were used during the survey of the study area.

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION: DE RUST



Fig. 1: A general view of the study area facing east (from the southern side). Infrastructure is visible (top left).



Fig. 2: A general view of the study area facing east (from the northern side). Infrastructure is visible (top left).



Fig. 3: The area which was cleared in the central / middle section of the property. Vegetation re-growth is visible. Photo facing west and taken from the east, just behind (west) of the current infrastructure on the site.



Fig. 4: The back of the infrastructure (small businesses on the property).



Fig. 5: One of the businesses on the property (Equipment hire), facing the R40 road.



Fig. 6: The small sawmill operation (facing the R40 road).



Fig. 7: The southern section which was previously (1984) disturbed by agricultural activities. The southern border fence is visible. Natural vegetation has established but the road is still visible.



Fig. 8: The northern section: The area is partly natural, with a large road going from east to west near the northern border.



Fig. 9: The western section: The area is mainly natural but disturbances occur such as roads, paths and trenches (as can be seen in the picture). The western fence is visible.



Fig. 10: Natural bush section. Vegetation was low, and visibility excellent. Pioneer species such as Sickle bush is visible throughout the site (disturbances are present).



Fig. 11: One of the many trenches in this section. These were investigated for any signs of an archaeological nature, but none was observed.



Fig. 12: A road network cuts through the entire property. Pioneer species such as sickle bush is clearly visible (left in picture).