

SPECIALIST REPORT
**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDELBURG DAM PRECINCT PLAN, (18Ha) ON A PORTION
OF PORTION 87 OF THE FARM RONDEBOSCH 403-JS, MIDDELBURG,
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

**REPORT COMPILED FOR
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JUNE 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) regarding archaeological and other cultural heritage resources was conducted on the footprint for the proposed clearance of 18.7ha vegetation for the purpose of the Middelburg Dam Precinct Plan. The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (the applicant), in co-operation with CORE Environmental Services, is proposing the clearance of 18.7ha for the upgrading and development of the existing Middelburg Dam recreational area. The development in the proposed Middelburg Precinct Plan will include lodges, accommodation, caravan park, conference facilities, a mini golf course and country estate, *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm RONDEBOSCH 403-JS, Middelburg.*

The study area is located approximately 10km east of the town of Middelburg, next to the R104 provincial road. Topographical image of 1997 indicates the footprint of the proposed site (map 1:50 000, 2529DC). This area falls under the jurisdiction of the Nkangala District Municipality, and Steve Tshwete local municipality, Mpumalanga Province.

The National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 (1999), (NHRA), protects all heritage resources, which are classified as national estate. The NHRA stipulates that any person who intends to undertake a development, is subjected to the provisions of the Act.

The proposed study area is situated on a historically disturbed recreational land section. The Middelburg dam and recreational facility was established between 1965 and completed in the 1978. Existing infrastructure consisted of an entrance gate, an office building, a water pump station and manager's house. Ablution facilities and other buildings on the site are located outside of the project area. There are several camping sites, a jungle gym for children, a waste dump and an area where building rubble is dumped. The entire area has been maintained well over the years and the grass was cut short which made visibility excellent.

Several soil samples have been dug as part of the pre-feasibility studies for the proposed project. These soil samples have been investigated for any signs of archaeological material, but none were found. The infrastructure on the property is not yet 60 years old. The survey did not reveal any archaeological or cultural historical features, and no graves were observed.

It is recommended that the applicant be made aware that distinct archaeological material or human remains may only be revealed during the proposed development. In such instance, a

qualified archaeologist must be contacted to monitor the activities and make a recommendation. Based on the survey and the findings in this report, Adansonia Heritage Consultants state that there are no compelling reasons which may prevent the proposed development to continue.

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.*



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Christine (Van Wyk) Rowe
June 2021

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A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE PROJECT

The Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (the applicant), in co-operation with CORE Environmental Services, is proposing the clearance of 18.7ha for the upgrading and development of the existing Middelburg Dam recreational facility. The development in the proposed Middelburg Precinct Plan will include lodges, accommodation, caravan park, conference facilities, a mini golf course and country estate, *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm RONDEBOSCH 403-JS, Middelburg.*¹ The study area is located approximately 10km east of the town of Middelburg, next to the R104 provincial road. This area falls under the jurisdiction of the Nkangala District Municipality, and Steve Tshwete local municipality, Mpumalanga Province.²

The investigation revealed that the area which is applied for in this development is entirely situated on historically transformed land. The Middelburg Municipality has developed a dam and recreational facility in 1965, for the purposed of water supply and a recreational area. The project was completed in the 1978.^{3 4} Existing infrastructure consisted of the entrance gate, an office building, water pump station and manager's house. Ablution facilities and other buildings on the site are located outside of the project area. There are several camping sites, a jungle gym for children, a waste dump and area where building rubble is dumped. The entire area has been maintained well over the years and the grass was cut short which made visibility excellent. (See Appendix 2).

The study area, *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm RONDEBOSCH 403-JS*, is indicated on the topographical map of 1997, which indicates the footprint of the proposed site (map 1:50 000, 2529DC).

Adansonia Heritage Consultants were appointed by *CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES* to

¹ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

² CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

³ Personal Communication: David Nonyana, Middelburg Dam operating officer, 2021-06-12.

⁴ Middelburg Dam: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelburg_Dam Access: 2021-06-13.

conduct a Phase 1 heritage impact assessment (HIA) on archaeological and other heritage resources on the farm. A literature study, relevant to the study area as well as a foot survey was done, to determine that no archaeological or heritage resources will be impacted upon by the proposed development.

The aims of this report are to source all relevant information on archaeological and heritage resources in the study area, and to advise the client on sensitive heritage areas as well as where it is viable for the development to take place in terms of the specifications as set out in the National Heritage Resources Act no., 25 of 1999 (NHRA). Recommendations for maximum conservation measures for any heritage resources which may be encountered, will also be made. The study area is indicated in maps 1 - 5, and Appendix 1 & 2.

- This study forms part of an EIA, Consultant: Ms. Anne-Mari White, *CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES*, Nelspruit, 1206, Cell: 0608781591 / e-mail: info@coreenviro.co.za. The EIA is in the Planning & Scoping phase.
- Type of development: Development of 18.7ha of land which was historically transformed *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm RONDEBOSCH 403-JS*, Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province. The area is currently zoned as an open space, but it will be rezoned.
- Location of Province, Magisterial district / Local Authority and Property (farms): The area falls within the Mpumalanga Province under the jurisdiction of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, and the Steve Tshwete local municipality.
- Land owner: Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. ⁵

Terms of reference: As specified by section 38 (3) of the NHRA, the following information is provided in this report.

- a) The identification and mapping of heritage resources where applicable;
- b) Assessment of the significance of the heritage resources;
- c) Alternatives given to affected heritage resources by the development;
- d) Plans for measures of mitigation.

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 107 of 1998 (NEMA 107), GNR 983 of

⁵ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

2014 (as amended in 2017):

- A basic Environmental Impact Assessment is required in terms of the following listed activities (GNR 983):

Activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for –

- (i) The undertaking of a linear activity; or maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.⁶

- **Section 38 of the NHRA**

This report constitutes a heritage impact assessment investigation linked to the environmental impact assessment required for the development. The proposed development is a listed activity in terms of Section 38 (1) of the NHRA. Section 38 (2) of the NHRA requires the submission of a HIA report for authorisation purposes to the responsible heritage resources agency, (SAHRA). Heritage conservation and management in South Africa is governed by the NHRA and falls under the overall jurisdiction of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and its provincial offices and counterparts.

Section 38 of the NHRA requires a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to be conducted by an independent heritage management consultant, for the following development categories:

- Any development or other activity which will change the character of a site:
 - exceeding 5000m² in extent;
 - the rezoning of a site exceeding 10 000m² in extent;

In addition, the new EIA regulation promulgated in terms of NEMA (as amended), determines that any environmental report will include cultural (heritage) issues.

The end purpose of this report is to alert *CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES*, as well as the client and interested and affected parties about existing heritage resources that may be affected by the proposed development, and to recommend mitigation measures aimed at reducing the risks of any adverse impacts on these heritage resources. Such measures could include the recording of any heritage buildings or structures older than 60 years prior to demolition, in terms of section 34 of the NHRA and also other sections of this act dealing with archaeological sites,

⁶ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

buildings and graves.

The NHRA section 2 (xvi) states that a “heritage resource” means any place or object of cultural significance, and in section 2 (vi) that “cultural significance” means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.

Apart from a heritage report assisting a client to make informed development decisions, it also serves to provide the relevant heritage resources authority with the necessary data to perform their statutory duties under the NHRA. After evaluating the heritage scoping report, the heritage resources authority will decide on the status of the resource, whether the development may proceed as proposed or whether mitigation is acceptable, and whether the heritage resource require formal protection such as a Grade I, II or III, with relevant parties having to comply with all aspects pertaining to such a grading.

- **Section 35 of the NHRA**

Section 35 (4) of the NHRA stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any **archaeological material** or object. This section may apply to any significant archaeological sites that may be discovered. In the case of such chance finds, the heritage practitioner will assist in investigating the extent and significance of the finds and consult with an archaeologist about further action. This may entail removal of material after documenting the find or mapping of larger sections before destruction. No archaeological material was found during the survey.

- **Section 36 of the NHRA**

Section 36 of the NHRA stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA, destroy, damage, alter, exhume or 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. It is possible that chance burials might be discovered during development of the road infrastructure or agricultural activities. No graves or burial sites were observed during the survey.

- **Section 34 of the NHRA**

Section 34 of the NHRA stipulates that no person may alter, damage, destroy, relocate etc., any **building or structure older than 60 years**, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority. The infrastructure on the property were all built in the 1970's and therefore not yet 60 years old.

- **Section 37 of the NHRA**

This section deals with public monuments and memorials but does not apply in this report.

- **NEMA**

The regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, (107/1998), provides for an assessment of development impacts on the cultural (heritage) and social environment and for specialist studies in this regard.

B BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA

- **Literature review, museum databases & previous relevant impact assessments**

In order to place the study area in archaeological context, primary and secondary sources were consulted. Ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as Ziervogel and Van Warmelo shed light on the cultural groups living in the area since ca 1600. Sources from Maggs and Huffman were also consulted. Other useful sources that were used are: Theal (pre-historic), De Jongh (ethnographic and historic information in the area), Bergh (historic), Schoeman, Delius, and internet sources such as *The Military History Journal* on the Sekukuni Wars.

There are no museums in Middelburg which could be consulted, and no historical information was available at the municipality. The closest museum with relevant information on the wider area was the museum in Lydenburg. This museum covers information on the general history and pre-history of the surrounding area.

Very little contemporary research has been done on prehistoric African settlements in the wider area. According to Bergh, there are no recorded sites that date from the Stone Age, or Early Iron Age.⁷ A rock art site was observed on the farm Groenvlei, east of Belfast town.⁸ The section falls within the general zone of Late Iron Age (LIA) stone walled settlements.⁹ No LIA stone walls were identified during the survey of the study area.

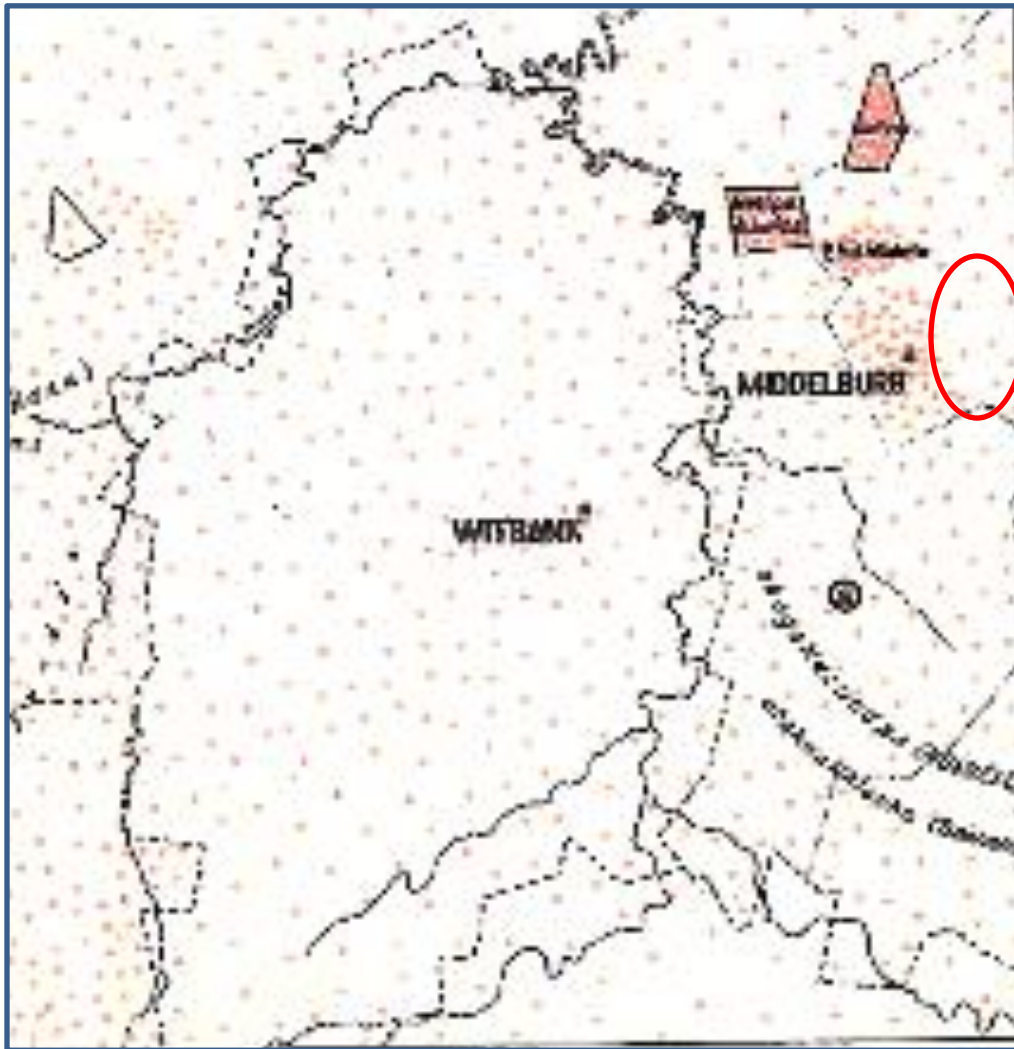
The wider area was sparsely populated during the 19th century, and only a few Late Iron Age

⁷ Personal Communication, Mr. H. Kuschke, 2019-02-02.

⁸ C. Rowe, Phase 1 AIA & HIA for a tourism accommodation establishment on the remaining extent of ptn. 4 of the farm Groenvlei 353JT, Emakhazini (Belfast), 2019.

⁹ J.S. Bergh, *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*, pp. 4-7

settlements are known in the direct vicinity by the author. Bergh ¹⁰ does not indicate any cultural groups specific to the Belfast area, and even ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as D. Ziervogel and N.J. Van Warmelo, does not include this area. It may be assumed that some of the *Ndzundza abaga* (Ndebele), and various tribes of the *baSotho* (baKôpa, baPedi),¹¹ inhabited this area as they do occur extensively towards Stofberg and Middelburg.



MAP 1: 1935 Map of Van Warmelo: The map shows that the area was sparsely populated during the early 20th century.

¹⁰ J.S. Bergh, *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*, p. 10.

¹¹ N.J. Van Warmelo, *A preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 18.

The local inhabitants around Middelburg, currently consist of various groups including Ndebele, Sotho, Swazi and Zulu, according to Mr. Elmon Mabuza who was interviewed during a previous survey.¹²

- **Stone Age**

Evidence from rock shelters in the Mpumalanga / Limpopo region suggest that the earliest inhabitants in the area were small groups of Stone Age hunter- gatherers. These San people led a nomadic lifestyle and rock paintings found in some of the shelters are an indication of their presence.^{13 14} Unfortunately very little research in this regard has been conducted, although several rock painting sites have been recorded in the areas of Ohrigstad / Blyderivierspoort Canyon, and rock engravings in the surrounding area of Lydenburg.¹⁵ The closest Middle- and Later Stone Age sites have been documented near Ohrigstad. The Bushman Rock Shelter and Heuningneskrans are the most well-known Middle Stone Age sites in the vicinity, dating back to approximately 35000 BP.¹⁶

Bushman (or San) presence occurs in the wider area as research by rock art enthusiasts revealed 109 sites in the Kruger National Park,¹⁷ and over 100 rock art sites at Bongani Mountain Lodge and its immediate surrounds.¹⁸ Thirty-one rock art sites were recorded on the Mpumalanga Drakensberg Escarpment.¹⁹ Rock art sites were also recorded in the Ohrigstad Chrissiesmeer, Lothair and Lochiel areas.²⁰ Late Iron Age rock engraving sites occur at Lydenburg, Boomplaats and Kudu Ranch (Between Lydenburg and Burgersfort). A rock art site was observed during a survey on the farm Groenvlei, east of Belfast.²¹

¹² Personal communication: Mr. Elmon Mabuza, 18 Feb 2012.

¹³ Hampson et al., 2002, The rock art of Bongani Mountain Lodge, SA Archaeological Bullitin 57: p. 15.

¹⁴ Rowe C., 2009, Heritage Management of Archaeological, Historical and Industrial resources on the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, p. 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.22.

¹⁶ Voight, E.,1981, *Guide to the Archaeological sites in the Northern and Eastern Transvaal*, p. 115.

¹⁷ English, M. Die Rotskuns van die Boesmans in die NKW, in *De Vos Pienaar, U., Neem uit die Verlede*, p. 18-24.

¹⁸ Hampson, et al., The rock art of Bongani Mountain Lodge, SA Archaeological Bullitin 57: p. 15.

¹⁹ Rowe, C. Heritage Management of Archaeological, Historical and Industrial resources on the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, p. 22.

²⁰ Bergh, J., *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika*, p. 4.

²¹ C. Rowe, Phase 1 AIA & HIA for a tourism accommodation establishment on the remaining extent of ptn. 4 of the farm Groenvlei 353JT, Emakhazini (Belfast), 2019.

- **IRON AGE**

Later Bantu-speaking tribes from further north moved into southern Africa, bringing with them a new way of life based on agriculture, pastoralism and metal working. This period is broadly referred to as the Iron Age, starting around AD 200. Cattle played a crucial role in the world-view and social organization of these societies, which is reflected in the layout of their homesteads – referred to as the Central Cattle Pattern. This type of settlement may be recognized archaeologically from centrally located cattle pens associated with high-status burials, grain storage pits, men’s assembly areas and evidence of iron-forging.^{22 23}

- **Early Iron Age (EIA)**

Secondary source evidence of Early Iron Age sites is lacking, with only one well known site in the area, the Lydenburg Heads site.²⁴ The Lydenburg Heads site at Sterkspruit, Lydenburg dated to approximately AD 600. Excavations at the Klingbeil Nature Reserve also revealed direct archaeological evidence that the Early Iron Age people in the area introduced cattle and sheep/goat as well as crop plants. Based on pottery identification, Klingbeil is dated to about AD 1000.²⁵

- **Late Iron Age (LIA)**

The Late Iron Age spans a period between AD 1300-1840, and is associated with groups like the Ndebele, Bakoni and BaPedi in the area (see Map 1). Sites in the area are characterized by widespread stone walling such as the Badfontein type that were used to define homestead areas, agricultural land (terracing) and cattle tracks. Maize was introduced into southern Africa by the Portuguese during the Late Iron Age contributing to an increase in population. Its cultivation is linked archaeologically to special grindstones.^{26 27} Huffman,²⁸ place the stone walling in the wider area into the Badfontein tradition.

²² Huffman T.N., 2007, *Handbook to the Iron Age*, p.331.

²³ Pelsaer A., 2014, *A Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites, located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C*, p. 8.

²⁴ Bergh J., 2009. *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika*, p.8.

²⁵ Pelsaer A., 2014, *A Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C*, p. 8.

²⁶ Huffman T.N., 2007, *Handbook to the Iron Age*.

²⁷ Pelsaer A., 2014, *A Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C*, p. 8.

²⁸ Huffman T.N., 2007, *Handbook to the Iron Age*, p. 32.

The Pedi is the most famous group to have inhabited areas in the vicinities of Lydenburg, Steelpoort, Stofberg, Roosenekal, Burgersfort etc. in historic times. The area in which these people settled is historically known as Bopedi but other groups resided here before the Pedi came onto the scene. Among the first of these were the Kwena or Mongatane, who came from the north and were probably of Sotho origin. A second tribe to settle in Bopedi, before the arrival of the Pedi was the Roka, followed by the Koni.²⁹ Some Koni entered the area from the east and others from the north-west. According to historians, most Koni trace their origin to Swaziland and therefore claim that they are related to the Nguni. After the first Koni settled in the southern part of Bopedi, the area became known as Bokoni. Many people who were previously known as Roka also adopted the name Koni as the name “Roka” was not always held in esteem by other groups.

Historically the Pedi was a relatively small group who by various means built up a considerable empire. The Pedi are of Sotho origin. They migrated southwards from the Great Lakes in Central Africa some five centuries ago. The names of their chiefs can be traced to a maximum of fifteen generations. Historical events can be deduced reasonably well for the last two centuries, while sporadic events can be described during the preceding centuries.³⁰

According to oral tradition the BaKoni were already in the area of the escarpment before the arrival of the Pedi (a northern Sotho group), which would indicate a date of before AD 1650 for some of the settlements. Therefor the BaKoni clans were some of the earliest people to settle in what are today the Mpumalanga / Limpopo Provinces. They most likely followed a central route of migration out of northern KwaZulu-Natal, becoming “Sotho-ized” along the way.³¹

Later on, the Badfontein Koni became allied to the Pedi. This is reflected in the archaeological evidence, which shows that ceramics associated with the Badfontein walling are historic Pedi pottery of the Marateng facies. By the late 18th and 19th century the Pedi ruled an extensive area that included areas surrounding Lydenburg / Burgersfort, although Swazi and Ndebele groups also occupied some parts of the region – mainly in caves referred to as refuge sites. They were shortly followed by the first European settlers in the area.³²

²⁹ E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18

³⁰ E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18

³¹ Pelsler A., 2014, *A Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C*, p. 10.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Recent research has linked the LIA stone walled settlements in the Mpumalanga escarpment more specifically to the Bakoni. During the 16th and 17th centuries the Bakoni built a vast complex of stonewalled settlements in this area. These cities were carefully planned around terraced farms and roads that were built to lead cattle to pasture while keeping the cows out of the gardens. In the late 1700's the sites had populations of between 30 000 to 50 000 people.³³

During the Difaqane (a period of great instability and migration in the interior of South Africa) the various groups living in the area were ruthlessly conquered by Mzilikazi, around 1826. At that time the BaKoni were under the chieftainship of Makopole. He was a son of the Pedi chief Thulare. After first warding off an attack led by his brother, Makopole was then faced by the full onslaught of Mzilikazi's Ndebele. The invaders were responsible for destroying the Lydenburg-Ohrigstad settlements of the BaKoni people.³⁴ According to Bergh,³⁵ the Difaqane had no direct influence in the Middleburg area.

Metal and iron in particular were an important commodity during the Iron Age. Upper and lower grindstones and pottery are commonly associated with Iron Age settlement and several were found during Collett's excavations at Badfontein, south of Lydenburg.³⁶ These are regarded as indirect evidence for agriculture and the two different types may indicate which crops were cultivated.³⁷

Some 150 years before the *Voortrekkers* entered the area, some battles took place between the Koni (Zulu under Makopole) and Swazi (under Moselekatse). At that time the BaPedi resided in the Steelpoort area. The Bakoni (Koni) were attacked and defeated by the Matabele and their chief, Makopole, was killed. The Matabele, not yet satisfied with their victory, moved further north towards the BaPedi headquarters. At Olifantspoortjie the whole BaPedi regiment was wiped out as well as the sons of Thulare, the BaPedi chief (except for Sekwati who managed to escape).³⁸

³³ Rowe, C., August 2013, *DOCUMENTATION REPORT: LIA stone walled settlements, RDR 1, 2 & 7 within the proposed development area (Morning Tide Complex), on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT, Mashishing, Mpumalanga*. P. 10

³⁴ Pelser A., 2014, *A Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C*, p. 10.

³⁵ Bergh J., 2009. *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika*, p. 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 13.

³⁸ E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18.

After four years, Sekwati together with a few followers who had also managed to escape the Matabele, now slowly started to rise. In 1830 Sekwati invaded some of the smaller groups and eventually the Koni (under Marangrang) were ambushed and defeated. Now the empire of Maruteng (Bapedi) ruled the Koni.

At the beginning of the 19th century, groups such as the **Pedi, Roka, Koni** and **Tau** populated the immediate areas of Lydenburg, Steelpoort & Burgersfort. The Pedi of chief Sekwati (ca 1860) lived at Phiring (near Polokwane). Sekwati lived in constant fear of the Zulus. The country was unsafe, and in an attempt to survive, some of the Koni turned to cannibalism.³⁹ This area was heavily under attack during the *Difaqane*. The Ndebele attacked this area in ca 1822, and Zwibe (Swazi) attacked the Pedi in ca 1825.⁴⁰

- **AmaNDEBELE**

According to Van Warmelo, the *amaNdebele* are the earliest known offshoot of the *Nguni* group. The Ndebele is divided into two groups, the Southern and the Northern, and they are separated from one another. A certain legendary chief *Msi* or *Musi* heads a list of about twenty-five successive chiefs who lived just north of where Pretoria now stands. His two sons were *Manala* and *Ndzundza* and form the most important tribes of the Southern group. The *abagaNdzundza* moved eastwards and settled near Roos Senekal, and it is said that some of *Manala's* followers, the *abagaManala*, settled in the Witbank district. The tribes slowly broke up after the days of the Republic.⁴¹

- **CENTRAL SOTHO**

The tribes in this group were at one time largely under the rule of the baPedi, who's last independent king was *Sekhukhune*, who's stronghold was to the north of Belfast (Steelpoort area), although his domain was extremely large.⁴² Great numbers of *baSotho* who belong to the above group, who still speak *sePedi* but which became detribalized, live in the districts of Middelburg, Lydenburg, Witbank and Springs. They mingled freely with other groups such as the Zulu, Swazi and Tonga.

³⁹ Van Warmelo, N.J., 1944. *A genealogy of the house of Sekhukhune*, p.47.

⁴⁰ Bergh J., 2009. *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika*, pp.10-28.

⁴¹ N.J. Van Warmelo, *A preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 87.

⁴² N.J. Van Warmelo, *A preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 108.

History of the MIDDELBURG & MIDDELBURG DAM

Middelburg was initially established as a halfway station between Lydenburg and Pretoria by the Republic of Lydenburg in 1860. The Lydenburg Republic merged with the ZAR (Zuid Afrikaanhe Republic) soon afterwards. The town was established on two farms named *Klipfontein and Keerom* but the Dutch Reformed Church (1890), was built on the farm *Sterkfontein*, thus the town moved there. Middelburg town was initially named *Nasareth* (meaning “root from dry land”), by the Voortrekkers in 1864. It was established on the banks of the Klein Olifants River. The name changed in 1872 to Middelburg to mark its location between the Transvaal capital, Pretoria and the gold mining town of Lydenburg.

The British built a large concentration camp in Middelburg during the Second Boer War. A memorial museum, was built at the site next to the 1381 graves of women and children who died in the concentration camp.⁴³

Many expatriates and their families from the United Kingdom and Europe moved to Middelburg during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's to avoid the slump of the post World War II industrial and manufacturing sectors in those countries. These families were attracted by the need for industrial expertise, and were often rewarded with company sponsored housing and discounted education. The children of those immigrant families have moved to the larger nearby cities such as Witbank, Pretoria and Johannesburg.⁴⁴

The Middelburg Dam is located on the Klein Olifants River, located east of the town of Middelburg. The dam was built in 1965,⁴⁵ but construction was only completed in 1978.⁴⁶ The primary purpose of the dam was to supply water to the town and surrounds of Middelburg. The dam is a popular spot for weekend camping and recreational water sports and fishing.

⁴³ Middelburg History, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelburg,_Mpumalanga Access: 2021-06-13.

⁴⁴ Middelburg History, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelburg,_Mpumalanga Access: 2021-06-13.

⁴⁵ Personal Communication: David Nonyana, Middelburg Dam operating officer, 2021-06-12.

⁴⁶ Middelburg Dam: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelburg_Dam Access: 2021-06-13.

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

- Rowe, C., August 2009, *Phase 1 Archaeological / Heritage Impact assessment: Sections 1a, 1b, 2, 3 & 4 of Leeuwallei 297KT*, Burgersfort, Limpopo Province;
- Rowe, C. 2009. *Heritage Management of Archaeological, Historical and Industrial resources on the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve*, MA dissertation. Pretoria: UP;
- Rowe, C, 2012. Phase 1 AIA & HIA for 4 Extensions at Siyathuthuka, Belfast (Ext. 4; Ext. 5; Ext. 6; & Ext. 7);
- Rowe, C., September 2014, *Phase 2: Report on the Archaeological investigation of a poorly defined Late Iron Age stone wall located on the remainder of Portion 58 of the farm Leeuwallei 297KT, to be impacted upon by residential development; Site LB/3; Burgersfort.*
- Rowe, C., August 2013, *DOCUMENTATION REPORT: LIA stone walled settlements, RDR 1, 2 & 7 within the proposed development area (Morning Tide Complex), on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34JT, Mashishing, Mpumalanga;*
- Rowe, C., September 2013, Phase 1, LIA stone walled settlement (RDR 7) within the Morning Tide Complex on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34JT, Mashishing (Lydenburg);
- Rowe C., 2013, *SPECIALIST REPORT & MANAGEMENT PLAN: LIA rock engraving site within the proposed development of the Lydenburg Mall (Morning Tide Complex), on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34JT, Mashishing, Lydenburg.*
- Rowe C., April 2014: Relocation of the Roodraai Rock engraving RDR 8 on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34JT, Mashishing, (Lydenburg), Mpumalanga Province;
- Rowe C., November 2014: Phase 1 AIA / HIA for de-bushing of natural land for agricultural use, portions 7 & 8 of Boerboonkraal 353KT, Burgersfort;
- Rowe C., February 2015: Phase 1 AIA / HIA for a proposed residential and business development on the remainder of the farm Witgatboom 316KT, Burgersfort.
- Rowe, C., Phase 1 AIA & HIA for a tourism accommodation establishment on the remaining extent of ptn. 4 of the farm Groenvlei 353JT, Emakhazini (Belfast), 2019.
- Rowe C., Phase 1 AIA & HIA for the construction of bulk services infrastructure for the Mpumalanga High Altitude Training Centre, Belfast, Emakhazeni Local Municipality, February 2021.

The SAHRA database for archaeological and historical impact assessments was consulted and revealed other Archaeological Impact assessment reports in the area of Belfast, Lydenburg or Burgersfort:

- Pistorius, J.C.C., February 2005, *A Phase 1 HIA study for the proposed New Burgersfort ext 30 residential and the Burgersfort ext 31 industrial development projects near Burgersfort.*
- Birkholtz, P. 2006, *Phase 1 HIA for the Morning Tide Development Complex, Morning Tide Power Line and Abrina Residential Development, (Lydenburg), 2007.*
- Pistorius, JCC, 2013, *Proposed Wonderfontein Colliery near Belfast in the Mpumalanga Province, - Graveyards were identified.*
- Pelsler, A, 2013, *A Revision of the Phase 1 HIA for the Wonderfontein Colliery near Belfast, Mpumalanga; Historic buildings were identified;*
- Pelsler, A., 2014, *Report on the first phase archaeological investigations on LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooibraai 34JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments: sites RDR 7 & 1C, Lydenburg, Mpumalanga.*
- Celliers, JP, 2016: *Phase 1 AIA for the Belfast implementation Project resettlement site, Mpumalanga province; No archaeological sites were identified; Historical sites were identified.*

C. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The study area is located in the Highveld, approximately 10km east of the town of Middelburg, next to the R104 provincial road. ⁴⁷ Large areas surrounding the project site have been transformed by agriculture or coal mining, and many seasonal pans occur in the vicinity.

The 18.7ha study area has historically been transformed for recreational purposes since 1965 (see figs. 1 – 8). The study area is next to the Middelburg dam which is located on the Klein Olifants River (figs. 1 & 8). The area was flat, open, well maintained and the grass was cut short, which made visibility excellent. Some large trees such as bluegums and willow trees are situated on the property. A few Karee trees (*Searsia lancea*), are also present on the site. The dam is a popular spot for weekend camping, recreational water sports and fishing and is managed by the Steve Tshwete Municipality. ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

⁴⁸ Personal Communication: David Nonyana, Middelburg Dam operating officer, 2021-06-12.

The infrastructure on the property has been established during the 1970's and is not yet 60 years old. The existing infrastructure within the project site consists of the entrance gate (fig. 9), the site office (fig. 5), a residential house (fig. 10) and a pump station (fig. 11). An ablution block on the southern corner near the dam falls outside of the study area (fig. 4).⁴⁹ (See Appendix 2: Photographic documentation). There is a dumping site in the north western corner as well as an area where building rubble is dumped (figs. 12 & 13). Several soil samples were excavated by specialists to determine the soil types and structure and these were investigated for any signs of archaeological material, but none were found (figs. 14 – 16).

No archaeological or historical remains were observed during the survey and no graves are situated on the property. This was also confirmed by Mr. David Nonyana who is the Middelburg Dam operating officer for the Steve Tshwete Municipality,⁵⁰ and who has been working on the site for several years.

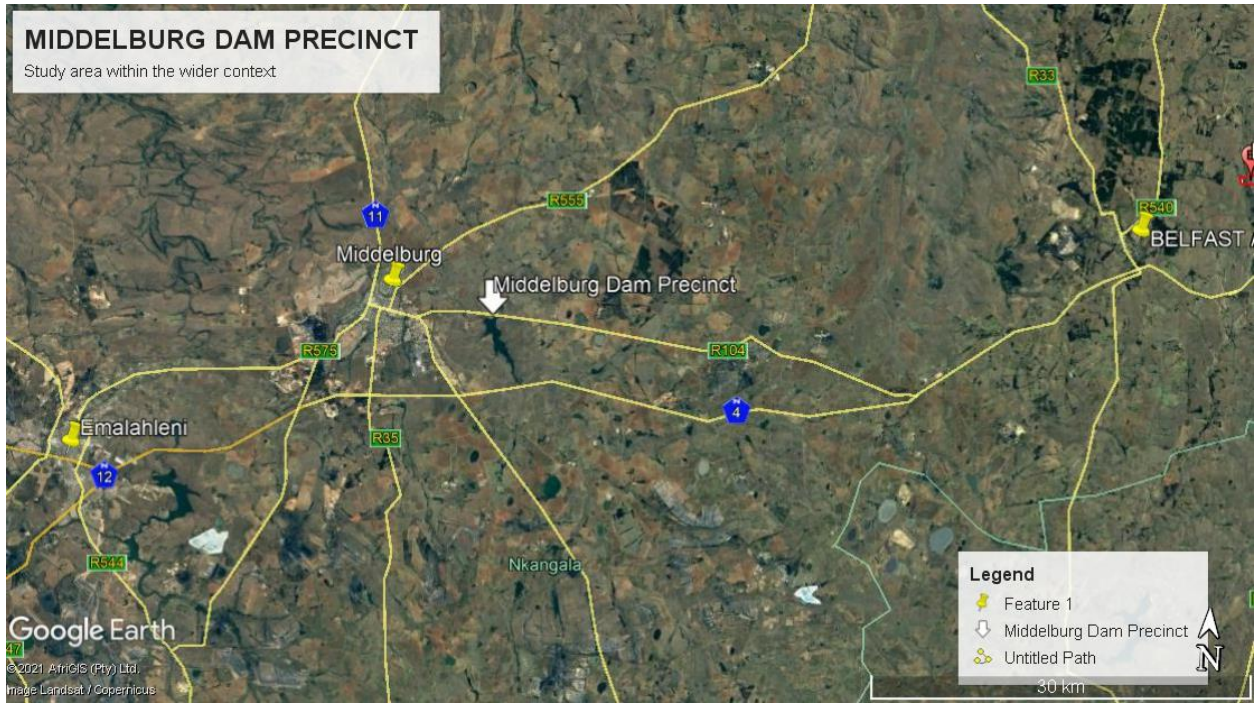
D. LOCALITY

The study area is located approximately 10km east of the town of Middelburg, next to the R104 provincial road. This area falls under the jurisdiction of the Nkangala District Municipality, and Steve Tshwete local municipality, near Middelburg, *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm RONDEBOSCH 403-JS*, Mpumalanga Province .⁵¹ (see maps 2 - 5 and Appendix 1 & 2 for the study area).

⁴⁹ Personal Communication: David Nonyana, Middelburg Dam operating officer, 2021-06-12.

⁵⁰ Personal Communication: David Nonyana, Middelburg Dam operating officer, 2021-06-12.

⁵¹ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.



MAP 2: Google image of the project site (Middelburg Dam Precinct), within the wider context.



MAP 3: Google image of the study / project area.

Description of methodology:

Google images as well as the topographical map (maps 4), indicate the area of the proposed development. These were intensively studied to assess the current and historically disturbed areas and infrastructure. In order to reach a comprehensive conclusion regarding the cultural heritage resources in the study area, the following methods were used:

- The desktop study consists mainly of archival sources studied on distribution patterns of early African groups who settled in the area since the 18th century, and which have been observed in past and present ethnographical research and studies.
- Literary sources, books and government publications, which were available on the subject, have been consulted, in order to establish relevant information.
- Several specialists currently working in the field of anthropology and archaeology as well as Biodiversity have also been consulted on the subject.

-Literary sources: A list of books and government publications about prehistory and history of the area were cited, and revealed some information;

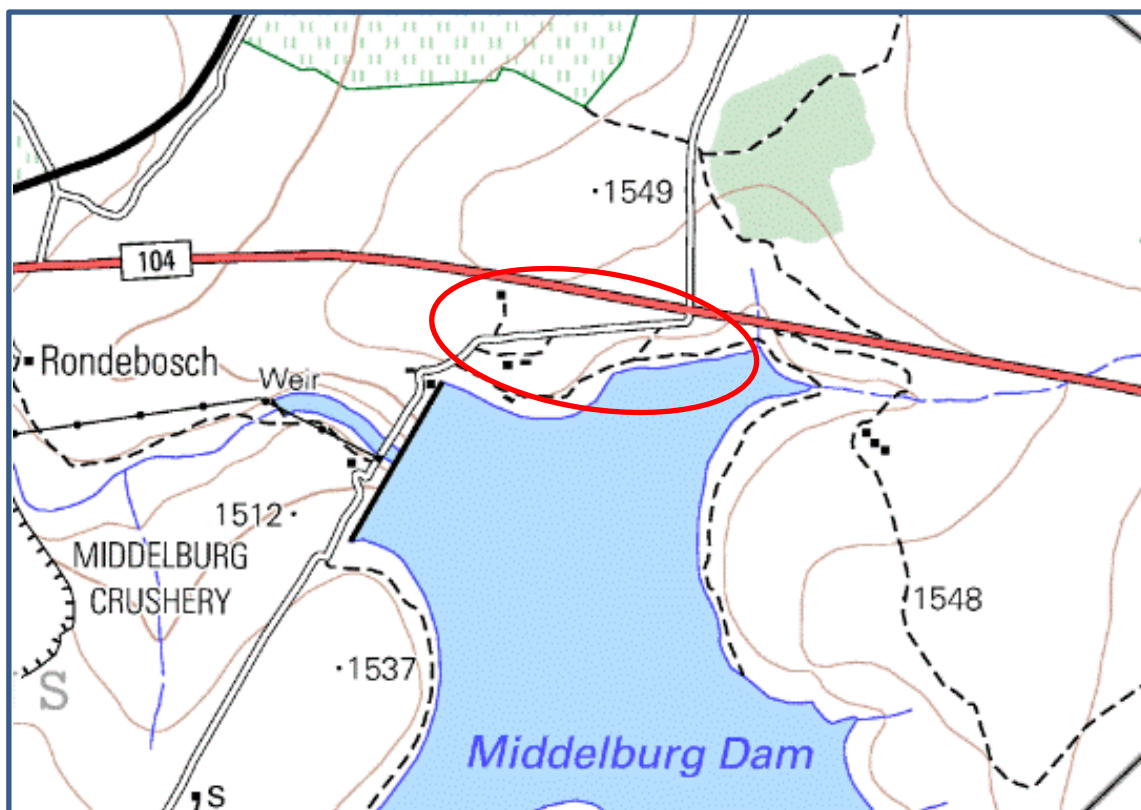
-The archaeological databases of SAHRA as well as the National Cultural History Museum were consulted. Heritage Impact Assessment reports of specialists who worked in the area were studied and are quoted in section B.

- The study area is transformed land which was used for recreational purposes since 1965 (figs. 1 – 16).
- The site visit consisted of 2 people during winter.
- The fieldwork and survey were conducted on foot. The area was flat, open and accessible (See Appendix 1).
- Medium to large pioneer and indigenous species were planted for shade in the recreational / camping areas. Visibility in the entire study area was excellent (fig. 1 – 16).
- Disturbed areas such as the soil samples, were scrutinized for any archaeological material.
- The relevant data was located with a GPS instrument (GPSMAP 64X series) datum WGS 84, and plotted. Co-ordinates were within 3 meters of identified sites.
- Evaluation of the resources which might be impacted upon by the footprint, was done within the framework provided by the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 (1999).
- Personal communication with relevant stakeholders on the specific study area, were held, such as environmental specialist Ms. Anne-Mari White.⁵²

⁵² Personal communication: Ms. A-M White, 2021-06-15.

- GPS co-ordinates were used to locate the perimeters and any heritage features within the study area (Co-ordinates provided by CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES):⁵³
The perimeters of the study area are indicated by the GPS co-ordinates (maps 3 & 5):

GPS CO-ORDINATES			
Location	South	East	Elevation
A	S 25° 46' 11.77"	E 29° 32' 55.27"	1543m
B	S 25° 46' 15.84"	E 29° 33' 21.94"	1530m
C	S 25° 46' 20.30"	E 29° 33' 20.72"	1521m
D	S 25° 46' 25.31"	E 29° 33' 08.20"	1519m
E	S 25° 46' 16.32"	E 29° 32' 51.38"	1535m



MAP 4: 1997 Topographical map: The study area is indicated by the red oval.

⁵³ Personal communication: Ms. A-M White, Email Access: 2021-06-02.

E. DESCRIPTION OF IDENTIFIED SITES

The applicant, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality in co-operation with *CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES*, is proposing the clearance of approximately 18.7ha of vegetation on historically transformed land, *on a portion of portion 87 of the farm Rondebosch 403JS*. The development plan is for the Middelburg Dam Precinct to establish Lodges, accommodation, conference facilities, a caravan park, a mini gold course and a country estate.⁵⁴ The site is currently functional and used as a recreational facility.



MAP 5: Google image 2021: Infrastructure in the property is indicated with white polygons. Recent soil samples which were taken, are indicated by the red polygons.

Google images and topographical maps, as well as personal communication with stakeholders, revealed that the area was historically transformed to be used as a recreational facility. The study area was open, flat and accessible and existing tracks and paths were also used.

The field investigation revealed no archaeological or historical features on the study area.

⁵⁴ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

F. DISCUSSION ON THE FOOTPRINT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

<i>ACT</i>	<i>COMPO- NENT</i>	<i>IMPLICATION</i>	<i>RELEVANCE</i>	<i>COMPLIANCE</i>
NHRA	S 34	Impact on buildings and structures older than 60 years	None present in the study area	None
NHRA	S35	Impacts on archaeological heritage resources	None present	None visible
NHRA	S36	Impact on graves	None present	None
NHRA	S37	Impact on public monuments	None present	None
NHRA	S38	Developments requiring an HIA	Development is a listed activity	HIA done
NEMA	EIA regulations	Activities requiring an EIA	Development is subject to an EIA	HIA is part of EIA

- **Summarised identification and cultural significance assessment of affected heritage resources: General issues of site and context:**

<i>Context</i>		
Urban environmental context	No	NA
Rural environmental context	No	Vacant transformed land
Natural environmental context	No	NA
<i>Formal protection (NHRA)</i>		
(S. 28) Is the property part of a protected area?	No	NA
(S. 31) Is the property part of a heritage area?	No	NA
<i>Other</i>		

Context		
Is the property near to or visible from any protected heritage sites	No	NA
Is the property part of a conservation area of special area in terms of the Zoning scheme?	No	NA
Does the site form part of a historical settlement or townscape?	No	NA
Does the site form part of a rural cultural landscape?	No	NA
Does the site form part of a natural landscape of cultural significance?	No	NA
Is the site adjacent to a scenic route?	No	NA
Is the property within or adjacent to any other area which has special environmental or heritage protection?	No	NA
Does the general context or any adjoining properties have cultural significance?	No	NA

Property features and characteristics		
Have there been any previous development impacts on the property?	Yes	The entire study area was historically transformed as a recreational area
Are there any significant landscape features on the property?	No	NA
Are there any sites or features of geological significance on the property?	No	NA
Does the property have any rocky outcrops on it?	No	The entire area is flat and accessible

<i>Property features and characteristics</i>		
Does the property have any fresh water sources (springs, streams, rivers) on or alongside it?	Yes	It is situated next to the Middelburg Dam

<i>Heritage resources on the property</i>		
<i>Formal protection (NHRA)</i>		
National heritage sites (S. 27)	No	NA
Provincial heritage sites (S. 27)	No	NA
Provincial protection (S. 29)	No	NA
Place listed in heritage register (S. 30)	No	NA
<i>General protection (NHRA)</i>		
Structures older than 60 years (S. 34)	No	NA
Archaeological site or material (S. 35)	No	NA
Graves or burial grounds (S. 36)	No	NA
Public monuments or memorials (S. 37)	No	NA
<i>Other</i>		
Any heritage resource identified in a heritage survey (author / date / grading)	No	NA
Any other heritage resources (describe)	No	NA

NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category	ELE- MENTS	INDICATORS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE										RISK	
		His tori cal	Rar e	Scie ntifi c	Typi cal	Tech - nolo gical	Aes theti c	Pers on / com muni ty	Land mark	Mate rial con diti on	Sust aina bility		
Buildings / structures of cultural significance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Areas attached to oral traditions / intangible heritage	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	-
Historical settlement/ townscapes	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Landscape of cultural significance	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Geological site of scientific/ cultural importance	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Archaeological sites	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grave / burial grounds	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category	ELE- MENTS	INDICATORS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE										RISK
		His tori cal	Rar e	Scie ntifi c	Typi cal	Tech - nolo gical	Aes theti c	Pers on / com muni ty	Land mark	Mate rial con diti on	Sust aina bility	
Areas of significance related to labour history	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Movable objects	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- **Summarised recommended impact management interventions**

NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category	SITE	IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE Cultural significance rating		Impact management	Motivation
		Cultural significance	Impact significance		
Buildings / structures of cultural significance	No	No	None	-	-
Areas attached to oral traditions / intangible heritage	No	None	None	-	-
Historical settlement/ townscape	No	None	None	-	-
Landscape of cultural significance	No	None	None	-	-

NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category	SITE	IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE Cultural significance rating		Impact management	Motivation
		Cultural significance	Impact significance		
Geological site of scientific/cultural importance	No	None	None	-	-
Archaeological sites	No	None	None	-	-
Grave / burial grounds	No	No	None	-	-
Areas of significance related to labour history	No	None	None	-	-
Movable objects	No	None	None	-	-

ACT	COMPONENT	IMPLICATION	RELEVANCE	COMPLIANCE
NHRA	S 34	Impact on buildings and structures older than 60 years	None present	None
NHRA	S35	Impacts on archaeological heritage resources	None present	None
NHRA	S36	Impact on graves	None present	None
NHRA	S37	Impact on public monuments	None present	None
NHRA	S38	Developments requiring an HIA	Development is a listed activity	Full HIA

ACT	COMPO- NENT	IMPLICATION	RELEVANCE	COMPLIANCE
NEMA	EIA regulation	Activities requiring an EIA	Development is subject to an EIA	HIA is part of EIA

G. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & EVALUATION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Section 38 of the NHRA, rates all heritage resources into National, Provincial or Local significance, and proposals in terms of the above is made for all identified heritage features.

• Evaluation methods

Site significance is important to establish the measure of mitigation and / or management of the resources. Sites are evaluated as *HIGH (National importance)*, *MEDIUM (Provincial importance)* or *LOW, (local importance)*, as specified in the NHRA. It is explained as follows:

• National Heritage Resources Act

The National Heritage Resources Act no. 25, 1999 (NHRA) aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Heritage is unique and it cannot be renewed and contributes to redressing past inequities.⁵⁵ It promotes previously neglected research areas.

All archaeological and other cultural heritage resources are evaluated according to the NHRA, section 3(3). A place or object is considered to be part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value in terms of:

- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. p. 2.

⁵⁶ National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. pp. 12-14

H. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

The Steve Tshwete Local municipality in co-operation with *CORE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES*, is requesting the clearance of 18.7ha vegetation on historically transformed land which is currently used for recreational purposes.⁵⁷

The proposed project site is situated on a historically disturbed recreational land. The Middelburg dam and recreational facility was established between 1965 and completed in the 1978. Existing infrastructure consisted of an entrance gate, an office building, a water pump station and manager's house. Ablution facilities and other buildings on the site are located outside of the project area. There are several camping sites, a jungle gym for children, a waste dump and an area where building rubble is dumped. The entire area has been maintained well over the years and the grass was cut short which made visibility excellent.

Several soil samples have been dug as part of the pre-feasibility studies for the proposed project. These soil samples have been investigated for any signs of archaeological material, but none was found. The infrastructure on the property is not yet 60 years old. The survey did not reveal any archaeological or cultural historical features, and no graves were observed.

It is recommended that the applicant be made aware that distinct archaeological material or human remains may only be revealed during the development of further agricultural operations. In such instance, a qualified archaeologist must be contacted to monitor the activities and make a recommendation. Based on the survey and the findings in this report, Adansonia Heritage Consultants state that there are no compelling reasons which may prevent the proposed development to continue.

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

⁵⁷ CORE Env. Serv., BID document, e-mail access: 2021-06-09.

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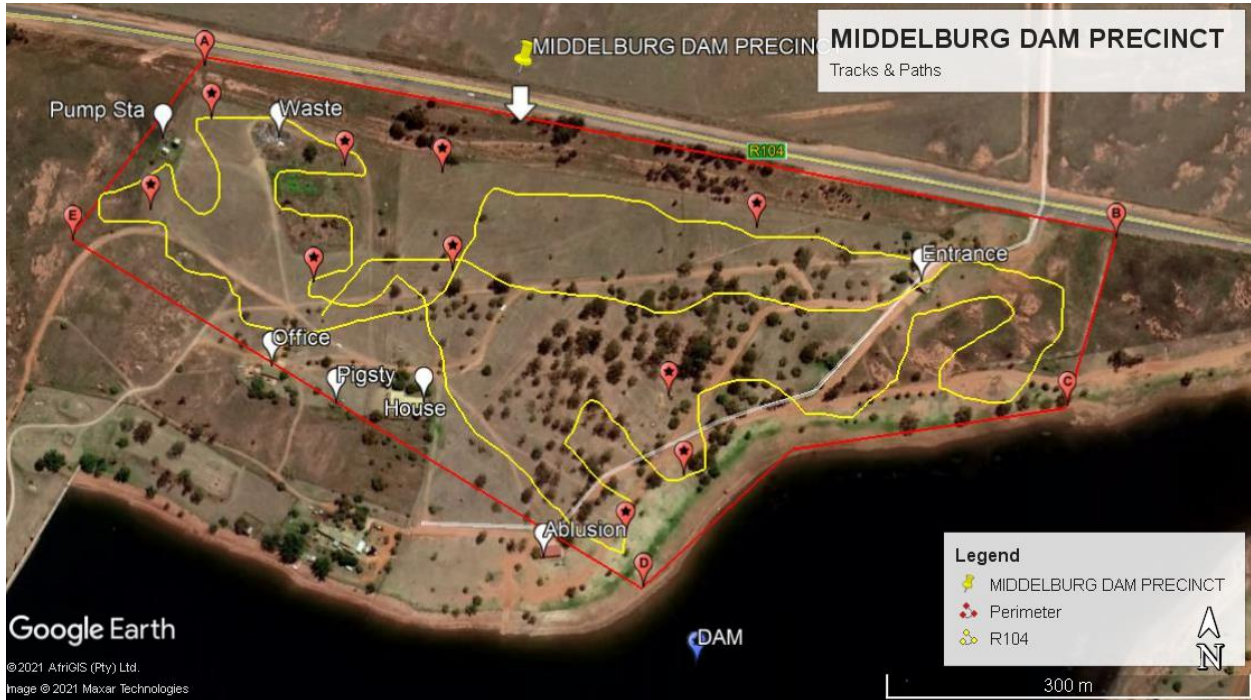
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APPENDIX 1

Tracks and Paths used to access the study area



Tracks used during the survey.