

Archaetnos Culture & Cultural Resource Consultants BK 98 09854/23

A REPORT ON A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR A PROPOSED TRANSPORT FACILITY ON PORTION 33 OF THE FARM VAALBANK 289 JS, CLOSE TO MIDDELBURG, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

For:

Clean Stream Environmental

P.O. Box 647 Witbank 1035

REPORT NO.: AE014225V

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SUBMISSION OF REPORT

Please note that the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or one of its subsidiary bodies needs to comment on this report.

It is the client's responsibility to do the submission via the SAHRIS System on the SAHRA website.

Clients are advised not to proceed with any action before receiving the necessary comments from SAHRA.

DISCLAIMER

Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural importance during the survey of study areas, the nature of archaeological and historical sites are as such that it always is possible that hidden or subterranean sites could be overlooked during the study. Archaetnos and its personnel will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result thereof.

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SUMMARY

Archaetnos cc was requested by Clean Stream Environmental Services to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment for a proposed transport facility on portion 33 of the farm Vaalbank 289 JS. This is close to the town of Middelburg in the Mpumalanga Province.

A survey of the available literature was undertaken in order to obtain background information regarding the area. This was followed by the field survey which was conducted according to generally accepted HIA practices, aimed at locating all possible objects, sites and features of cultural significance in the area of the proposed development.

All sites, objects features and structures identified were to be documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS). The information was added to photographs and the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

During the survey one site of cultural heritage significance was located. The site is of low significance and is discussed in the report. Possible mitigation measures are proposed. After implementation of these, the proposed development may continue.

It should be noted however that the subterranean presence of archaeological and/or historical sites, features or artifacts is always a distinct possibility. Care should therefore be taken when the development commences further that if any of these are discovered, a qualified archaeologist be called in to investigate.

It is also important to take cognizance that it is the client's responsibility to do the submission of this report via the SAHRIS System on the SAHRA website. No work on site may commence before receiving the necessary comments from SAHRA.

CONTENTS

Page			
SUMMARY3			
CONTENTS4			
1. INTRODUCTION5			
2. TERMS OF REFERENCE8			
3. CONDITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS8			
4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS9			
5. THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATIONS' PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE 12			
6. METHODOLOGY13			
7. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT14			
8. HISTORICAL CONTEXT18			
9. DISCUSSION OF SITES FOUND DURING THE SURVEY19			
10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS20			
11.REFERENCES21			
APPENDIX A – DEFENITION OF TERMS23			
APPENDIX B - DEFINITION/ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE24			
APPENDIX C – SIGNIFICANCE AND FIELD RATING25			
APPENDIX D – PROTECTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES26			
APPENDIX E – HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT PHASES 27			

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaetnos cc was requested by Clean Stream Environmental Services to conduct a cultural heritage impact assessment for a proposed transport facility on portion 33 of the farm Vaalbank 289 JS. This is close to the town of Middelburg in the Mpumalanga Province (Figure 1-4).

The report is done as part of a Basic Assessment Report to be submitted to DEDET. The development will be a light industrial development mainly consisting of offices, workshops, parking bays for trucks, a refueling bay and security.

The site forms part of the Vaalbank Private Nature Reserve which was proclaimed in 1961. However, the site and surrounding properties have not been utilized as a nature reserve. It has previously been used for grazing and agriculture. More recently a lintel manufacturing plant was in operation here. A section of the site was also used for coal and soil stockpiling. ESKOM power lines also borders the site.

The client indicated the area to be surveyed. The field survey was confined to this area.

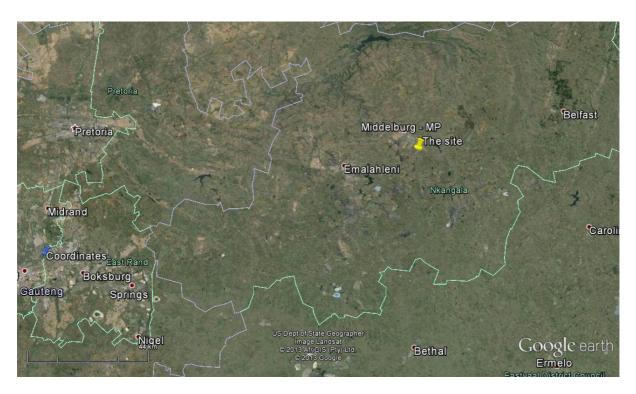


Figure 1 Location of the surveyed site in the Mpumalanga Province. North reference is to the top of the map.

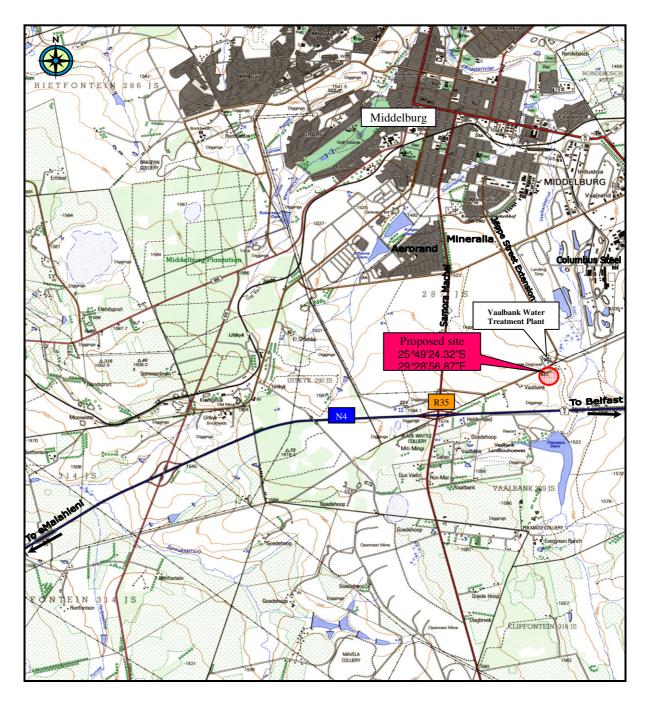


Figure 2 Location of the site in relation to Middelburg.



Figure 3 Map indicating the boundary of the surveyed area.

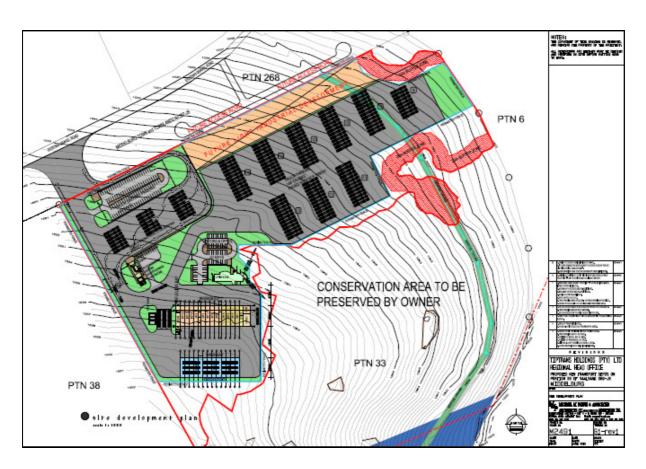


Figure 4 Site development plan.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the survey were to:

- 1. Identify objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural heritage sites) located on the property (see Appendix A).
- 2. Study background information on the area to be developed.
- 3. Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their archaeological, historical, scientific, social, religious, aesthetic and tourism value (see Appendix B).
- 4. Describe the possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains, according to a standard set of conventions.
- 5. Recommend suitable mitigation measures to minimize possible negative impacts on the cultural resources by the proposed development.
- 6. Review applicable legislative requirements.

3. CONDITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

The following conditions and assumptions have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

- 1. Cultural Resources are all non-physical and physical man-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences associated with human activity (Appendix A). These include all sites, structure and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development. Graves and cemeteries are included in this.
- 2. The significance of the sites, structures and artifacts is determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. The various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these aspects.
- 3. Cultural significance is site-specific and relates to the content and context of the site. Sites regarded as having low cultural significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium cultural significance may or may not require mitigation depending on other factors such as the significance of impact on the site. Sites with a high cultural significance require further mitigation (see Appendix C).

- 4. The latitude and longitude of any archaeological or historical site or feature, is to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.
- 5. All recommendations are made with full cognizance of the relevant legislation.
- 6. It has to be mentioned that it is almost impossible to locate all the cultural resources in a given area, as it will be very time consuming. Developers should however note that the report should make it clear how to handle any other finds that might occur. In this case there were certain areas where the vegetation cover was reasonably dense which had a negative effect on archaeological visibility.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

4.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the above-mentioned act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- Objects, structures and sites or scientific or technological value.

The national estate (see Appendix D) includes the following:

- a. Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance
- b. Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage
- c. Historical settlements and townscapes
- d. Landscapes and features of cultural significance
- e. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance
- f. Archaeological and paleontological importance
- g. Graves and burial grounds
- h. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery
- i. Movable objects (e.g. archaeological, paleontological, meteorites, geological specimens, military, ethnographic, books etc.)

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process to be followed in order to determine whether any heritage resources are located within the area to be developed as well as the possible impact of the proposed development thereon. An Archaeological Impact Assessment only looks at archaeological resources. The different phases during the HIA process are described in Appendix E. An HIA must be done under the following circumstances:

- a. The construction of a linear development (road, wall, power line canal etc.) exceeding 300m in length
- b. The construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length
- c. Any development or other activity that will change the character of a site and exceed 5 000m² or involve three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof
- d. Re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m²
- e. Any other category provided for in the regulations of SAHRA or a provincial heritage authority

Structures

Section 34 (1) of the mentioned act states that no person may demolish any structure or part thereof which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

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

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

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act deals with archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites. The act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority (national or provincial):

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or paleontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or paleontological material or object or any meteorite:
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or paleontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. Bring onto or use at an archaeological or paleontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or

- recovery of metals or archaeological and paleontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. Alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). In order to demolish such a site or structure, a destruction permit from SAHRA will also be needed.

Human remains

Graves and burial grounds are divided into the following:

- a. ancestral graves
- b. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
- c. graves of victims of conflict
- d. graves designated by the Minister
- e. historical graves and cemeteries
- f. human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. Destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. 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; or
- c. Bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations** (**Ordinance no. 12 of 1980**) (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place. Human remains can only be handled by a

registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act** (**Act 65 of 1983 as amended**).

4.2The National Environmental Management Act

This act (Act 107 of 1998) states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation thereof are made.

Environmental management should also take the cultural and social needs of people into account. Any disturbance of landscapes and sites that constitute the nation's cultural heritage should be avoided as far as possible and where this is not possible the disturbance should be minimized and remedied.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATIONS' PERFORMANCE STANDARD FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

This standard recognizes the importance of cultural heritage for current and future generations. It aims to ensure that clients protect cultural heritage in the course of their project activities.

This is done by clients abiding to the law and having heritage surveys done in order to identify and protect cultural heritage resources via field studies and the documentation of such resources. These need to be done by competent professionals (e.g. archaeologists and cultural historians). Possible chance finds, encountered during the project development, also needs to be managed by not disturbing it and by having it assessed by professionals.

Impacts on the cultural heritage should be minimized. This include the possible maintenance of such sites in situ, or when impossible, the restoration of the functionality of the cultural heritage in a different location. When cultural historical and archaeological artifacts and structures need to be removed is should be done by professionals and by abiding to the applicable legislation. The removal of cultural heritage resources may however only be considered if there are no technically or financially feasible alternatives. In considering the removal of cultural resources, it should be outweighed by the benefits of the overall project to the effected communities. Again professionals should carry out the work and adhere to the best available techniques.

It is necessary to engage into consultation with affected communities. This entails that access to such communities should be granted to their cultural heritage if this is applicable. Compensation for the loss of cultural heritage should only be given in extra-ordinary circumstances.

Critical cultural heritage may not be impacted on. Professionals should be used to advise on the assessment and protection thereof. Utilization of cultural heritage resources should always be done in consultation with the effected communities in

order to be consistent with their customs and traditions and to come to agreements with relation to possible equitable sharing of benefits from commercialization.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Survey of literature

A survey of literature was undertaken in order to obtain background information regarding the area. Sources consulted in this regard are indicated in the bibliography.

6.2 Field survey

The survey was conducted according to generally accepted HIA practices and was aimed at locating all possible objects, sites and features of cultural significance in the area of proposed development. One regularly looks a bit wider than the demarcated area, as the surrounding context needs to be taken into consideration.

If required, the location/position of any site was determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS)¹, while photographs were also taken where needed. The survey was undertaken by doing a physical survey via off-road vehicle and on foot and covered as much as possible of the area to be studied (Figure 5). Certain factors, such as accessibility, density of vegetation, etc. may however influence the coverage. The size of the area that was surveyed is 26 Ha and the survey took three hours to complete.

6.3 Oral histories

People from local communities are interviewed in order to obtain information relating to the surveyed area. It needs to be stated that this is not applicable under all circumstances. When applicable, the information is included in the text and referred to in the bibliography.

6.4 Documentation

All sites, objects features and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Co-ordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the Global Positioning System (GPS). The information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

6.5 Evaluation of Heritage sites

The evaluation of heritage sites is done by giving a field rating of each (see Appendix C) using the following criteria:

¹ A Garmin Oregon 550 with an accuracy factor of a few meters.

- The unique nature of a site
- The integrity of the archaeological deposit
- The wider historic, archaeological and geographic context of the site
- The location of the site in relation to other similar sites or features
- The depth of the archaeological deposit (when it can be determined or is known)
- The preservation condition of the site
- Uniqueness of the site and
- Potential to answer present research questions.

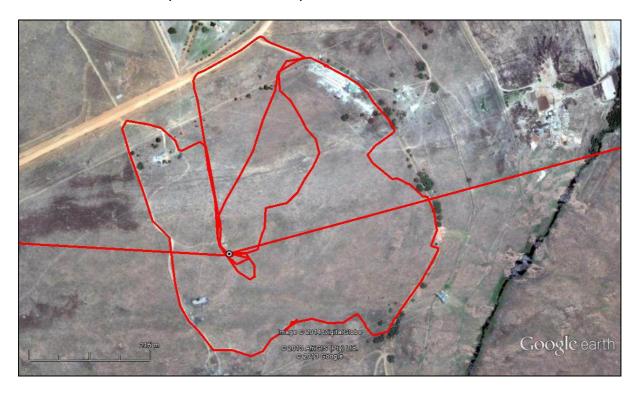


Figure 5 GPS track of the surveyed area. North reference is to the top.

7. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment of the surveyed area mostly consists of very short grass, although with a dense ground cover (Figure 6). The area is mostly populated by pioneer species such as weeds and grass, indicating recent disturbance. It is clear from the environment that it had been disturbed to a large extent. This includes the former coal stock pile area (Figure 7), old agricultural fields and mining or prospecting activities (Figure 8), the lintel plant mentioned above (Figure 9) and current soil stockpiling (Figure 10).

A few trees are found on the eastern side of the property, following a pipe line that was buried there. A few houses are also found on the property. None of these have any heritage significance.

The topography of the area is reasonably flat in the west. It then falls quite rapidly on the eastern edge of the property towards a small stream, which lies outside of the boundaries of the surveyed area (Figure 11).



Figure 6 General view of the surveyed area. Note the disturbance and pioneer plant species.



Figure 7 View of the area that was used as a coal stockpile.



Figure 8 Further signs of disturbance in the surveyed area.



Figure 9 Some of the remains of the lintel plant in the surveyed area.



Figure 10 Soil stockpiling in the surveyed area.

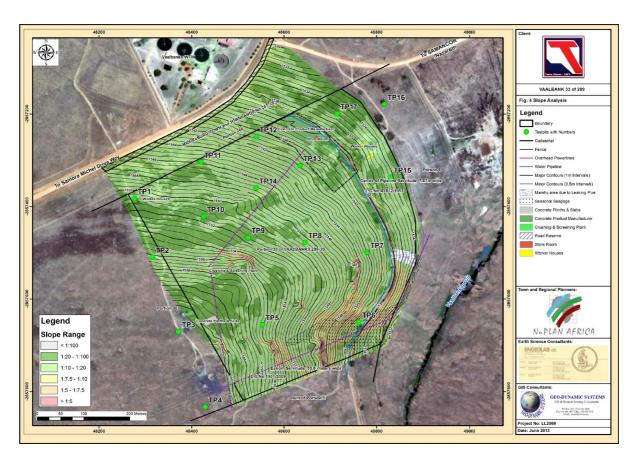


Figure 11 Contour map of the surveyed area.

8. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

One site of cultural heritage significance was located in the surveyed area. In order to place this within context and to understand possible finds that could be unearthed during construction activities, it is necessary to give a background regarding the different phases of human history in the area.

8.1 Stone Age

The Stone Age is the period in human history when lithic material was mainly used to produce tools (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 293). In South Africa the Stone Age can be divided in three periods. It is, however, important to note that dates are relative and only provide a broad framework for interpretation. The division for the Stone Age according to Korsman & Meyer (1999: 93-94) is as follows:

Early Stone Age (ESA) 2 million – 150 000 years ago Middle Stone Age (MSA) 150 000 – 30 000 years ago Late Stone Age (LSA) 40 000 years ago – 1850 - A.D.

No Stone Age sites are indicated on a map contained in a historical atlas of this area (Bergh 1999: 4). The closest known Stone Age occurrence is that of rock art close to the Olifants River to the south of Emalahleni (Witbank) (Bergh 1999: 5). This however should rather be seen as a lack of research in the area and not as an indication that such features do not occur.

However, no natural shelters were seen during the survey and therefore it is possible that these people did not stay here for long times. The closeness to the river would have created ample grazing for wild animals and would have lured these to the area. It may therefore have been a prime spot for hunting and obtaining water. Therefore one may assume that Stone Age people probably would have moved through the area. Although no Stone Age material was found during the survey, one will have to be on the lookout for these during construction.

8.2 Iron Age

The Iron Age is the name given to the period of human history when metal was mainly used to produce metal artifacts (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 346). In South Africa it can be divided in two separate phases according to Van der Ryst & Meyer (1999: 96-98), namely:

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Early Iron Age (EIA) 200 – 1000 A.D.
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1000 – 1850 A.D.
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Huffman (2007: xiii) however, indicates that a Middle Iron Age should be included. His dates, which now seem to be widely accepted in archaeological circles, are:

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Early Iron Age (EIA) 250 – 900 A.D.
Middle Iron Age (MIA) 900 – 1300 A.D.
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Late Iron Age (LIA) 1300 – 1840 A.D.

No Iron Age sites have been identified around the town of Witbank, but this may only indicate a lack of research. The good grazing and access to water in the area would have provided a good environment for Iron Age people although building material seems to be reasonably scarce. No Iron Age occurrences were identified during the survey.

8.3 Historical Age

The historical age started with the first recorded oral histories in the area. It includes the moving into the area of people that were able to read and write. This era is sometimes called the Colonial era or the recent past.

Due to factors such as population growth and a decrease in mortality rates, more people inhabited the country during the recent historical past. Therefore and because less time has passed, much more cultural heritage resources from this era have been left on the landscape. It is important to note that all cultural resources older than 60 years are potentially regarded as part of the heritage and that detailed studies are needed in order to determine whether these indeed have cultural significance. Factors to be considered include aesthetic, scientific, cultural and religious value of such resources.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Phuthing, a South Sotho group, stayed in the vicinity of modern day Bethal. During the Difaquane they fled to the south (Bergh 1999: 10-11; 109).

The first white traveler to visit these surroundings was Robert Scoon in 1836 (Bergh 1999: 13). White farmers only settled here after 1850 (Bergh 1999: 16).

One may therefore expect to find farm buildings, structures and objects from this period in time in the area. Many graveyards from this period have indeed been identified in surrounding areas during past surveys (Archaetnos database). One should therefore be on the lookout for indications of these during construction activities.

9. DISCUSSION OF SITES FOUND DURING THE SURVEY

As indicated, one site of cultural heritage importance was identified during the survey. The site dates to the Historical Age. As indicated there always is a possibility that some sites may have been missed. In such a case it should be handled in accordance with the recommendations in this report.

9.1 Site 1 – farm workers dwelling remains

This is the low stone walled remains of a workers dwelling (Figure 12). The walls are about 0.30 m high and the structure is rectangular with a size of approximately 8 x 3

m. It seems to be consisting of three rooms, but due to the density of the vegetation, it is difficult to be accurate.

Nothing else, such as a refuse midden and graves, was identified. It therefore seems that the building was not occupied for a very long time.

GPS: 25°49'34.6"S 29°29'03.5"E



Figure 12 Stone walled remains of a recent workers dwelling.

The site is regarded as having a **low** cultural significance. It is not very unique and most likely younger than 60 years. The field rating thereof is General Protection, Grade C (IVC). It should be included in the heritage register, but this report is seen as ample mitigation.

No further action is required. The site lies in the area that will not be developed (proposed conservation area) and may therefore be left as it is.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey of the indicated area was completed successfully. The site identified is indicated in Figure 13.

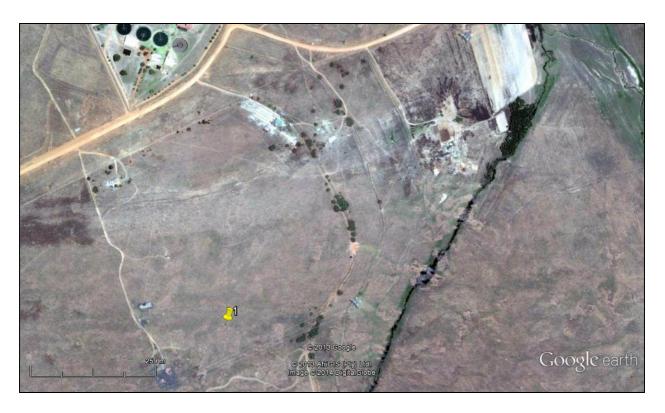


Figure 13 Location of the site identified during the survey.

The following is recommended:

- The site identified (farm workers dwelling remains) is regarded as having a low cultural significance. This report is seen as ample mitigation.
- The structures may be demolished. However, since it falls outside of the area to be developed it can be left as it is.
- No further mitigation is required.
- It should be noted that the subterranean presence of archaeological and/or historical sites, features or artifacts is always a distinct possibility. Care should therefore be taken when development commences that if any of these are discovered, a qualified archaeologist be called in to investigate the occurrence.

11. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Site: A large place with extensive structures and related cultural objects. It can also be a large assemblage of cultural artifacts, found on a single location.

Structure: A permanent building found in isolation or which forms a site in conjunction with other structures.

Feature: A coincidental find of movable cultural objects.

Object: Artifact (cultural object).

(Also see Knudson 1978: 20).

23

APPENDIX B

DEFINITION/ STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic value: Important in the community or pattern of history or has an

association with the life or work of a person, group or organization

of importance in history.

Aestetic value: Important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued

by a community or cultural group.

Scientific value: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an

understanding of natural or cultural history or is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement

of a particular period

Social value: Have a strong or special association with a particular community

or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Rarity: Does it possess uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of

natural or cultural heritage.

Representivity: Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a

particular class of natural or cultural places or object or a range of landscapes or environments characteristic of its class or of human activities (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, landuse, function, design or technique) in the environment of the

nation, province region or locality.

APPENDIX C

SIGNIFICANCE AND FIELD RATING:

Cultural significance:

- Low A cultural object being found out of context, not being part of a site or without any related feature/structure in its surroundings.

- Medium Any site, structure or feature being regarded less important due to a number of factors, such as date and frequency. Also any important object found out of context.

- High Any site, structure or feature regarded as important because of its age or uniqueness. Graves are always categorized as of a high importance. Also any important object found within a specific context.

Heritage significance:

- Grade I Heritage resources with exceptional qualities to the extent that they are of national significance

- Grade II Heritage resources with qualities giving it provincial or regional importance although it may form part of the national estate

- Grade III Other heritage resources of local importance and therefore worthy of conservation

Field ratings:

i.	National Grade I significance	should be managed as part of the national estate
ii.	Provincial Grade II significance	should be managed as part of the provincial
		estate
iii.	Local Grade IIIA	should be included in the heritage register and not
		be mitigated (high significance)
iv.	Local Grade IIIB	should be included in the heritage register and
		may be mitigated (high/ medium significance)
٧.	General protection A (IV A)	site should be mitigated before destruction (high/
		medium significance)
vi.	General protection B (IV B)	site should be recorded before destruction
		(medium significance)
vii.	General protection C (IV C)	phase 1 is seen as sufficient recording and it may
	· , ,	be demolished (low significance)

APPENDIX D

PROTECTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES:

Formal protection:

National heritage sites and Provincial heritage sites – grade I and II
Protected areas - an area surrounding a heritage site
Provisional protection – for a maximum period of two years
Heritage registers – listing grades II and III
Heritage areas – areas with more than one heritage site included
Heritage objects – e.g. archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens, visual art, military, numismatic, books, etc.

General protection:

Objects protected by the laws of foreign states Structures – older than 60 years Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites Burial grounds and graves Public monuments and memorials

APPENDIX E

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT PHASES

- 1. Pre-assessment or scoping phase establishment of the scope of the project and terms of reference.
- 2. Baseline assessment establishment of a broad framework of the potential heritage of an area.
- 3. Phase I impact assessment identifying sites, assess their significance, make comments on the impact of the development and makes recommendations for mitigation or conservation.
- 4. Letter of recommendation for exemption if there is no likelihood that any sites will be impacted.
- 5. Phase II mitigation or rescue planning for the protection of significant sites or sampling through excavation or collection (after receiving a permit) of sites that may be lost.
- 6. Phase III management plan for rare cases where sites are so important that development cannot be allowed.