

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION FOR
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE FOOTPRINT OF THE
CONCRETE BATCH PLANT AND PRE-CAST FACILITY IN MIDDELBURG, CHRIS HANI
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE**



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1. INTRODUCTION

InClover Consulting recently obtained Environmental Authorisation on behalf of Concrete Units Pty Ltd for a Concrete Batch Plant and Pre-Cast Facility in Middelburg, Eastern Cape Province. This facility will construct concrete panels for the towers for approved wind farms around the nearby town of Noupoort.

The phase 1 archaeological impact assessment was undertaken by CTS Heritage in December 2021 and report completed and submitted in January 2022. The study identified several archaeological resources on the preferred site location, Option 1, the southern half of the proposed site (Figures 1 – 6).

The development site is located about 6 km south of Middelburg on Portion 11 of the Farm Bultfontyn 128, Middelburg, Eastern Cape Province, and will occupy a footprint of approximately 12 hectares in the southern portion (Option 1) of the previously proposed development area.

Eleven stone artefact scatter sites were recorded. These included MID2_1, MID4 – MID7, MID9 – MID10 which ranged from Middle (Acheulian / Fauresmith Industries) to Later Stone Age stone artefacts made on fine-grained hornfels raw material. These scatters occurred predominantly in disturbed *ex situ* contexts and the Middle Stone Age artefacts were mostly weathered from prolonged surface exposure. These sites were rated as 'Not Conservation Worthy' (NCW) and no further mitigation was recommended. Of the eleven sites, two sites (MID8 and MID11), were rated as IIIB (medium – high significance). These two scatters included concentrations of Later Early Stone Age and Early Middle Stone Age stone artefacts (Acheulian / Fauresmith Industries) mostly in disturbed *ex situ* contexts and substantially weathered from prolonged surface exposure. MID8 and MID11 lies within the development footprint and destruction (of integrity of the resource via removal) will be unavoidable. Further mitigation recommended formal recording, collection of key surface finds and application for a destruction permit.

The remains of two stone-packed structures (MID2_2 and MID3), possibly the remains of stone kraals, were recorded. These structures, however, are not situated within the development footprint, but adjacent to the development boundary. The sites were rated IIIC due to the preservation of the sites. Further mitigation recommended a 20 m no development buffer for the two structures.

Ms Booth was approached and appointed by InClover Consulting to implement the mitigation measures recommended in the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment

compiled by CTS Heritage. No comment from the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority had been issued for phase 1 archaeological impact assessment for this project.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the current study included:

- i. The formal scientific recording and collection of MID8 and MID11 artefacts located at the surface
- ii. Determine whether the scientific and systematic excavation is required
- iii. Formal scientific write up of the findings
- iv. Apply for permission from SAHRA / Eastern Cape Heritage Authorities to conduct the mitigation interventions
- v. Possible ad-hoc archaeological monitoring of development activity in the vicinity of the other finds

3. RESULTS FROM THE SITE ASSESSMENT

The sites (MID8 and MID11) were visited on 16 July 2022 over four hours. Ms Booth was accompanied by Mr Pieter Kahts, the landowner, who supplied invaluable assistance and information of the heritage of the farm and wider area.

During the site visit, Ms Booth accompanied Mr Kahts to observe the remains of the two packed sites (MID2_2 and MID3). The sites were not observed at the coordinates provided in the phase 1 archaeological impact assessment report. However, the remains of two stone packed structures (BULT_SP1 and BULT_SP2, current study sites) were observed within the development footprint (see Section 3.2. for description).

3.1. Sites MID8 and MID11 – Stone Artefact Scatters (Figure 7)

It was determined that no further scientific recording or collection of representative samples of the stone artefacts recorded at sites MID8 and MID11 was required. The Albany Museum situated in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown), is the only archaeological repository in the Eastern Cape Province, and accordingly reserves the right to collect and accept archaeological material.

The stone artefacts recorded at site Sites MID8 and MID11 are *ex situ* surface findings and are heavily weathered due to prolonged surface exposure.

The sites have been regraded to having a low cultural significance:

'General' Protection C (Field Rating IV C): This site has been sufficiently recorded during the current study. It requires no further recording before destruction.

3.2. Sites BULT_SP1 and BULT-SP2 – Stone Packed Remains (Figure 8)

The remains of two stone packed structures (BULT_SP1 and BULT_SP2, current study sites) were observed within the development footprint during the current study.

3.2.1. BULT_SP1 (31°33'48.79"S; 25°00'57.41) (Figure 9)

The remains of the stone packed structure is situated near the northern boundary of Option 1. Only the foundation stones remain of the structure indicating a square / rectangular shape. It is mostly likely the remains of a dwelling, possibly previously occupied by farm labourers. The relatively well-preserved stone packed remains of a dwelling can be observed near the reservoir about 200 m along the gravel access road to the east of the development site (Figure 10). The area around the remains of the structure is flat and grass covered indicating that it could have been a yard. No substantial midden was observed within the vicinity but fragments of historical glass and metal was observed nearby. Sardine and diesel cans were observed within the vicinity of BULT_SP2.

It is most likely that the structure collapsed over time and the stone used in other areas and for other purposes on the farm.

The site is considered as having a low cultural significance:

'General' Protection C (Field Rating IV C): This site has been sufficiently recorded during the current study. It requires no further recording before destruction.

3.2.2. BULT_SP2 (31°33'57.35"S; 25°01'02.72) (Figure 11)

This site is located within the area of Site MID8 and MID11. The stones are strewn across the landscape and it is difficult to identify the type of structure that it may have been previously or historically. The intention is to acknowledge that the scatter of rocks may have been a stone packed structure and permission sought for destruction according to the NHRA (25 of 1999).

The site is considered as having a low cultural significance:

'General' Protection C (Field Rating IV C): This site has been sufficiently recorded during the current study. It requires no further recording before destruction.

4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the terms of reference the following conclusions have been determined:

- i. The formal scientific recording and collection of MID8 and MID11 artefacts located at the surface:

The condition of stone artefacts and context in which the stone artefacts were identified are not significant enough for collection, therefore, the sites have been regraded and are considered as having a low archaeological significance with 'General' Protection C (Field Rating IV C) which indicates that this site has been sufficiently recorded during the current study. It requires no further recording before destruction.

- ii. Determine whether the scientific and systematic excavation is required:

No scientific or systematic excavation is required. The stone artefacts occur as *ex situ* surface occurrences within the flood plains.

- iii. Formal scientific write up of the findings:

This report of the current study may be regarded as the scientific write-up of the findings.

- iv. Apply for permission from SAHRA / Eastern Cape Heritage Authorities to conduct the mitigation interventions:

Two destruction permit applications have been submitted with this report for the stone artefact sites and the two stone packed features identified during this study.

- v. Possible ad-hoc archaeological monitoring of development activity in the vicinity of the other finds

No ad-hoc archaeological monitoring is required; however, the permit holder must be on-site during the destruction process of the sites MID8, MID11.

5. MITIGATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the terms of reference the development may proceed as planned:

- Once the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (ECPHRA) have approved the destruction permits for the stone artefacts scatters MID8 and MID11 including the sites MID2_1, MID4 – MID7, MID9 – MID10 as well as the remains of the stone packed features BULT_SP1 and BULT_SP2.
- The ECO for the project should apply to be permit holder for the destruction of the sites, as mentioned above, so that they may be on-site during the destruction of the sites.
- If concentrations of pre-colonial archaeological heritage material and/or human remains (including graves and burials) are uncovered during construction of the proposed development and / or future excavations for individual graves, all work must cease immediately and be reported to the Albany Museum (046 622 2312)

and/or the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (ECPHRA) (043 745 0888) so that systematic and professional investigation/excavation can be undertaken. Phase 2 mitigation in the form of test-pitting/sampling or systematic excavations and collections of the findings will then be conducted to establish the contextual status of the sites and remove the archaeological deposit before development activities continue.

6. REFERENCES

Lavin, J. 2022. Heritage Impact Assessment: Proposed development of a cement factory, Middelburg, Eastern Cape.
National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.

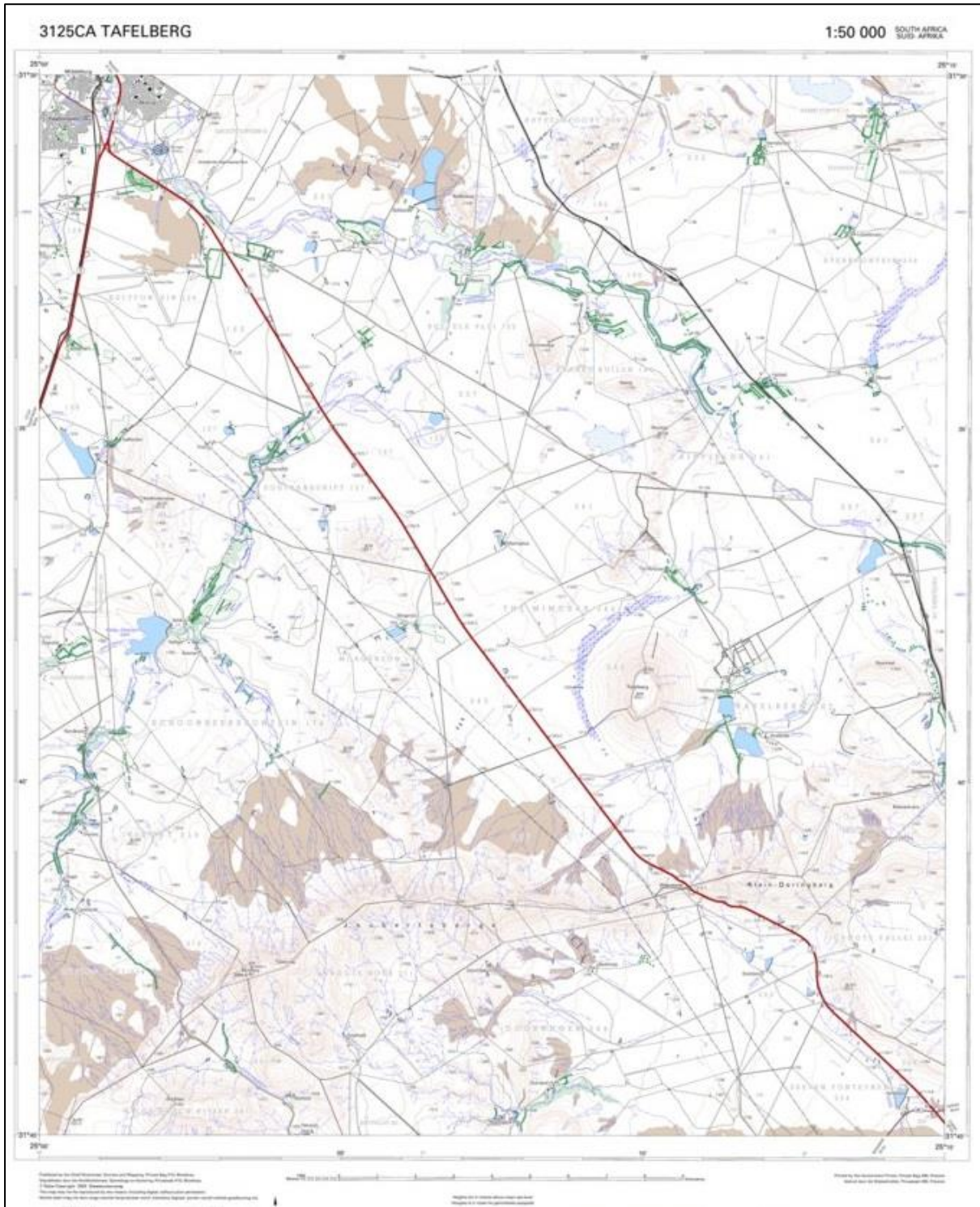


Figure 1: 1:50 000 topographic map 3125CA TAFELBERG.

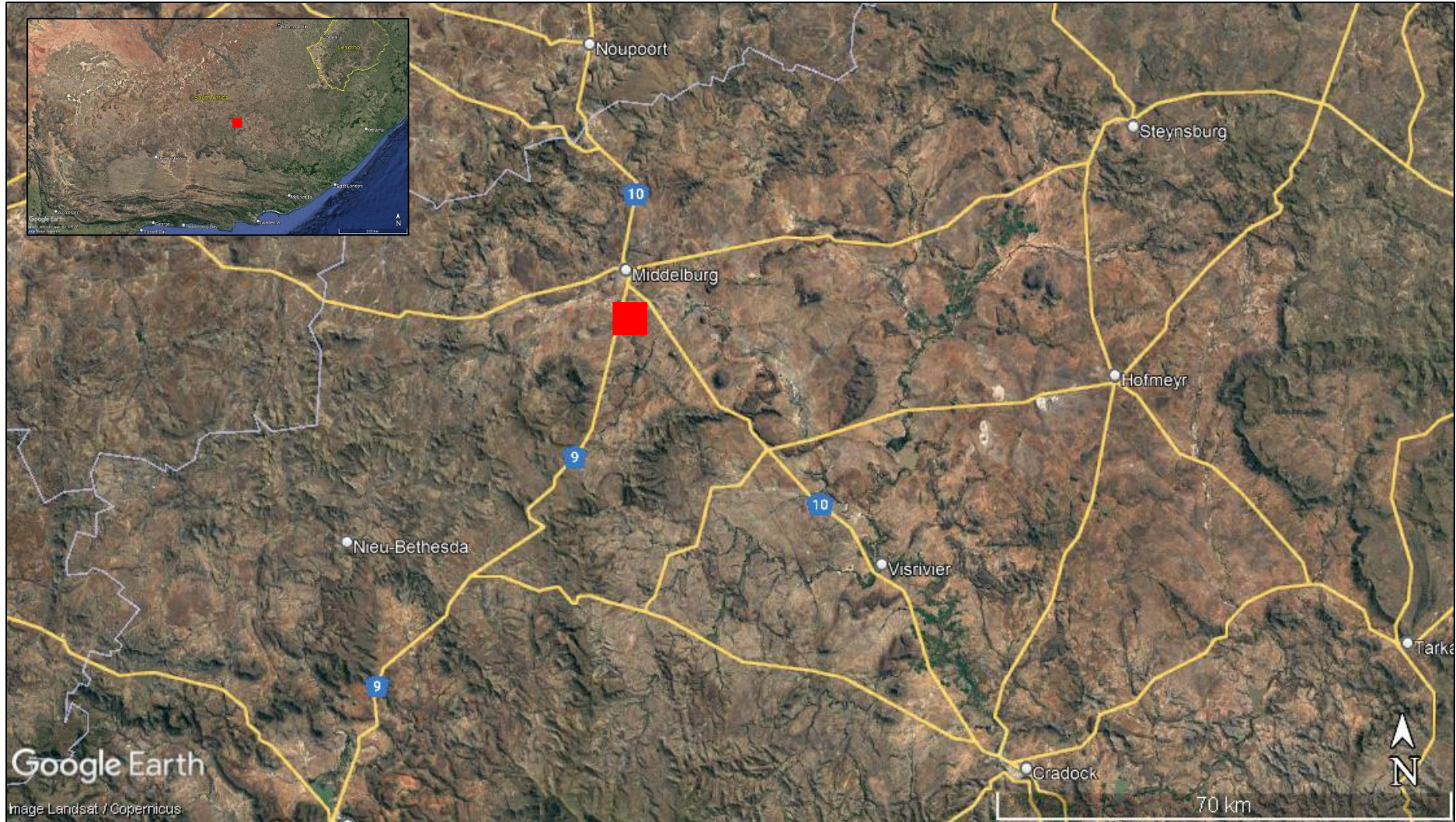


Figure 2: Google Earth generated map showing the location of the development site.



Figure 3: View the location of the development site in proximity to the town of Middelburg, Eastern Cape Province.

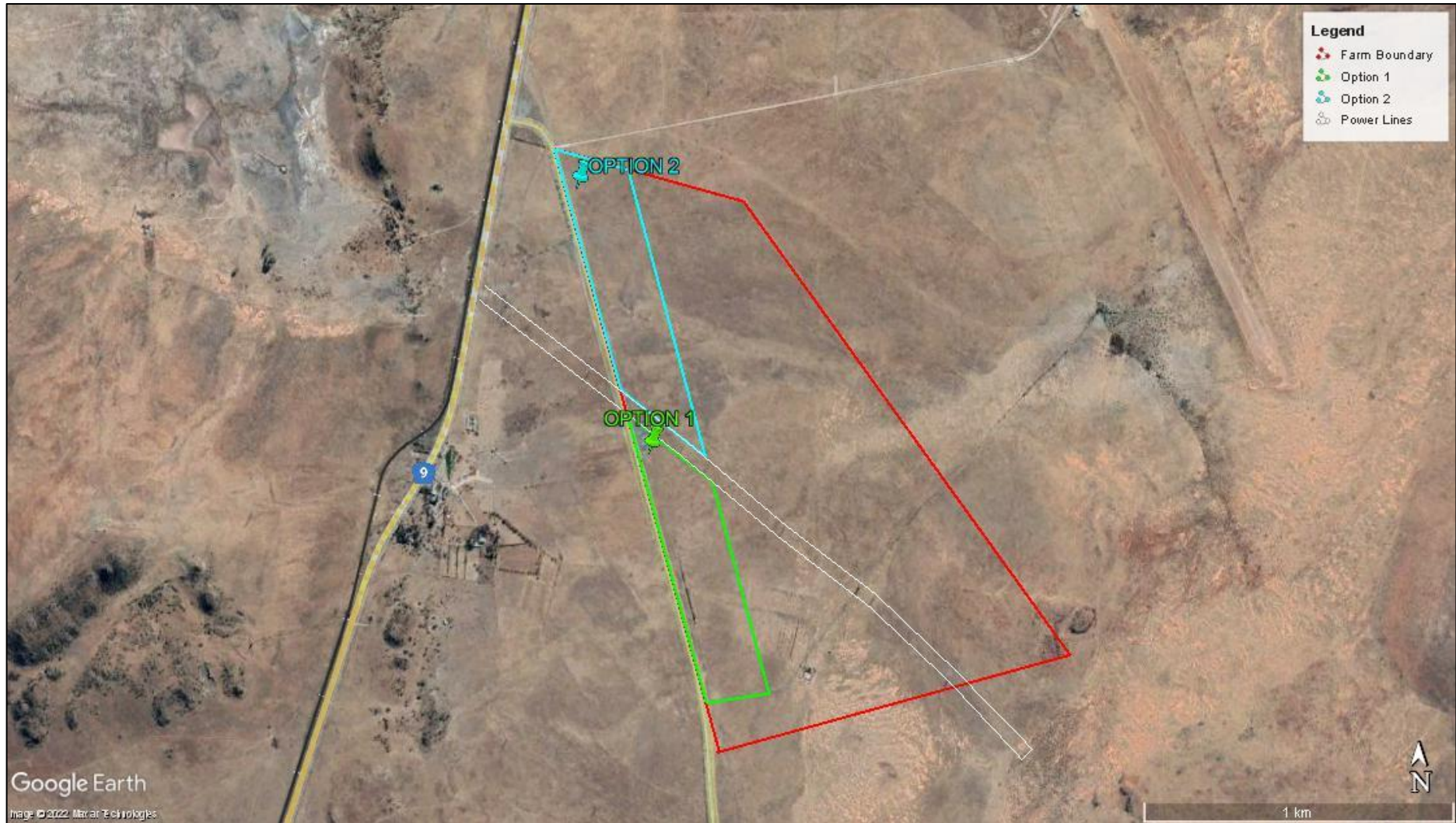


Figure 4: View of Option 1 and Option 2 of the proposed development site.

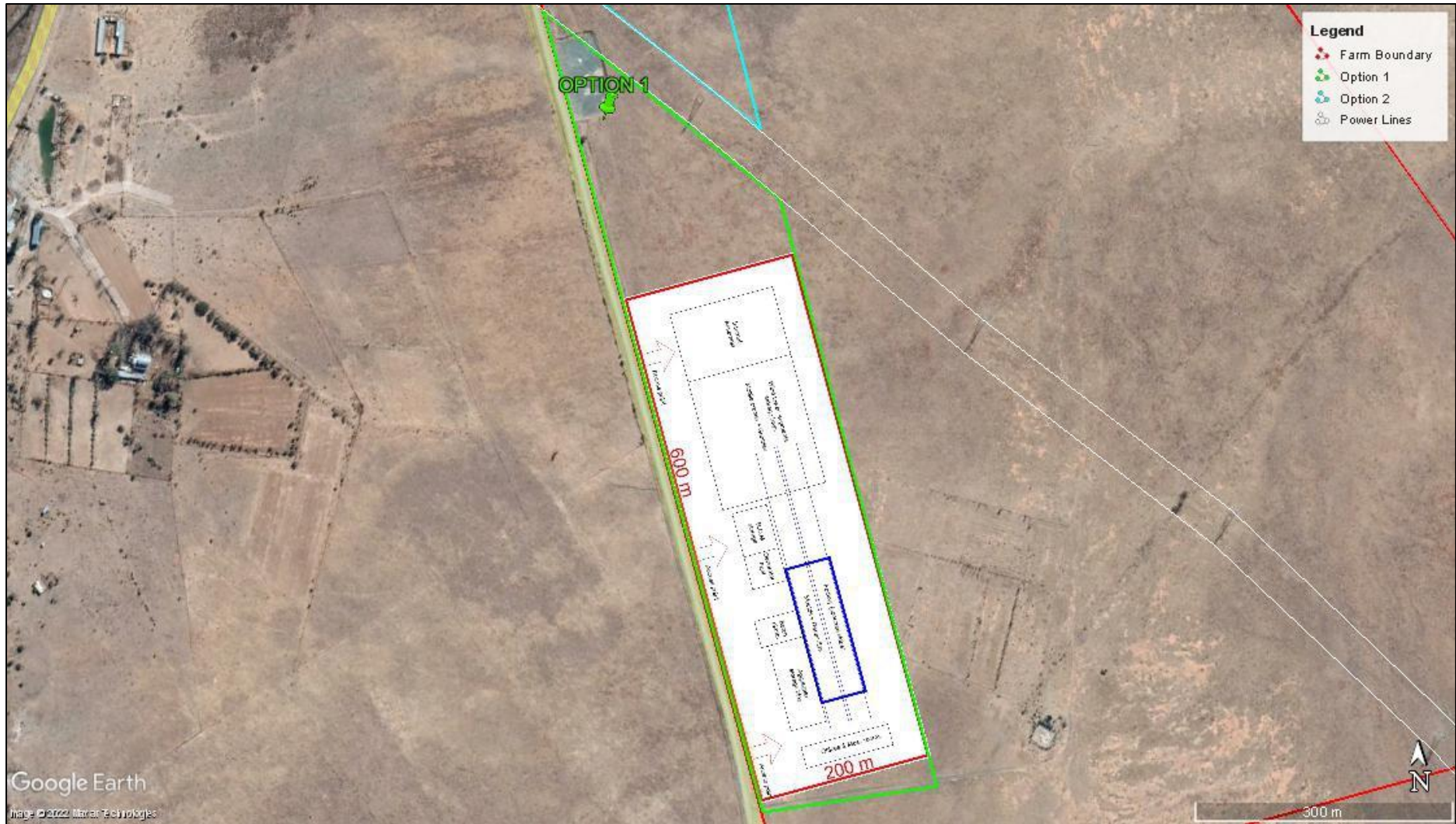


Figure 5: View of the final layout within the Option 1 of the development site.

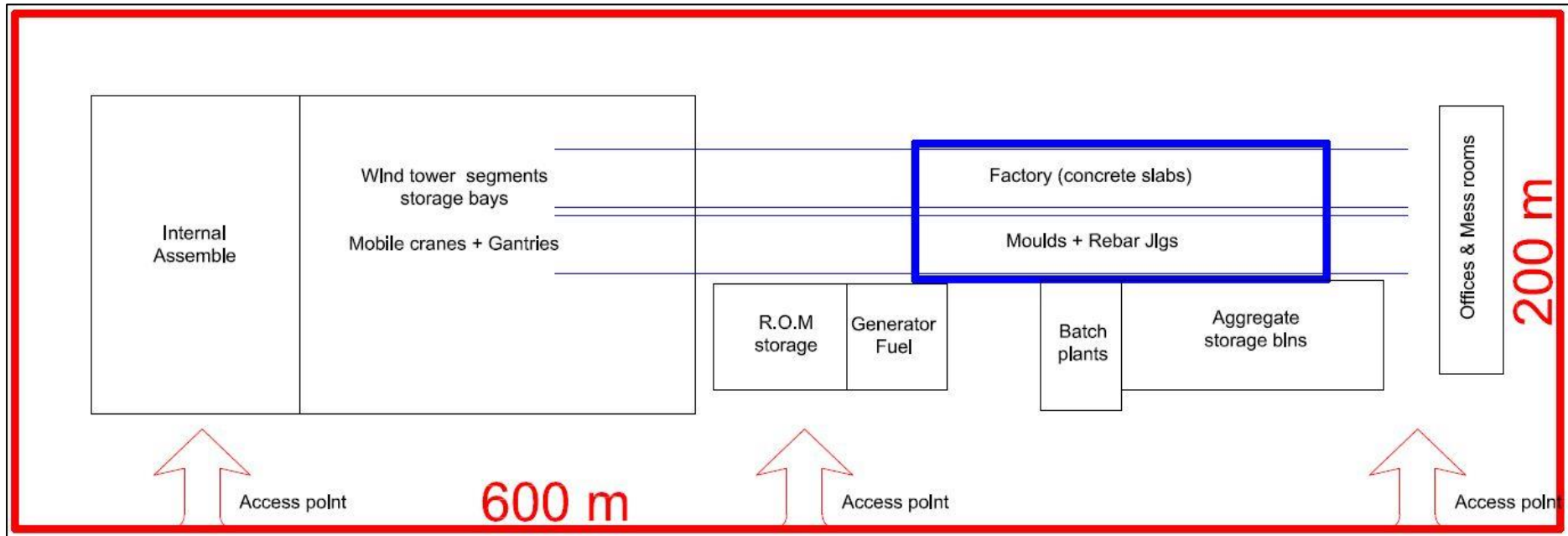


Figure 6: View of the final layout within the Option 1 of the development site.



Figure 7: View of the stone artefact sites recorded in the Option 1 development site overlaying the final layout.

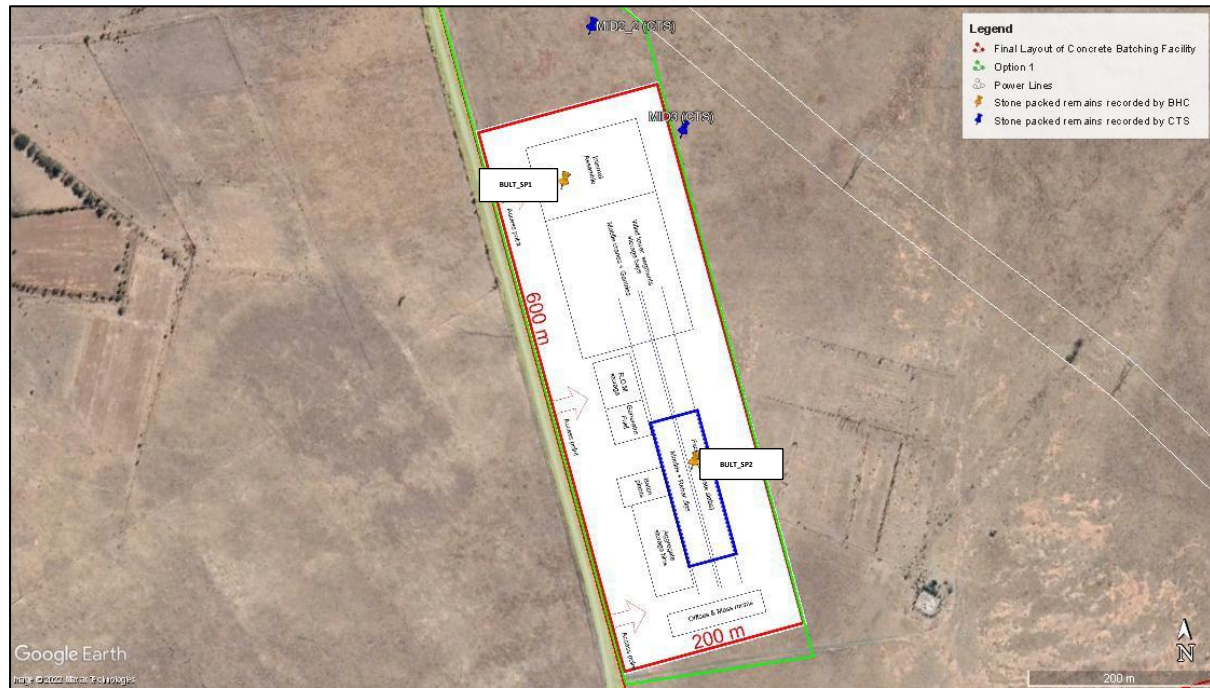


Figure 8: View of the remains of the stone packed sites recorded in the Option 1 development site overlaying the final layout.



Figure 9: View of the stone packed remains of BULT_SP1.



Figure 10: View of the relatively well-preserved stone packed remains near the reservoir east of the development site.



Figure 11: View of the scatter stone of a previous stone packed feature at BULT_SP2.

APPENDIX A: GRADING SYSTEM

The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 stipulates the assessment criteria and grading of archaeological sites. The following categories are distinguished in Section 7 of the Act and the South African Heritage Resources Agency:

- National: This site is suggested to be considered of Grade 1 significance and should be nominated as such. Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance.
- Provincial: This site is suggested to be considered of Grade II significance and should be nominated as such. Heritage resources which, although forming part of the national estate, can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region
- Local: This site is suggested to be Grade IIIA significance. This site should be retained as a heritage register site (High significance) and so mitigation as part of the development process is not advised.
- Local: This site is suggested to be Grade IIIB significance. It could be mitigated and (part) retained as a heritage register site (High significance).
- 'General' Protection A (Field Rating IV A): This site should be mitigated before destruction (usually High/Medium significance).
- 'General' Protection B (Field Rating IV B): This site should be recorded before destruction (usually Medium significance).
- 'General' Protection C (Field Rating IV C): This site has been sufficiently recorded (in the Phase 1). It requires no further recording before destruction (usually Low significance).

Site Name	Description	Co-ordinates
MID2_1	A concentration of weathered hornfels artefacts. Overlaps with a historical structure. The site was disturbed by a bioturbation process most likely a mole rat activity. Finds include cortical artefacts, cores and a hammerstone possibly suggesting it was a tool production area	31°33'43.42"S; 25° 0'58.54"E
MID4	A concentration of hornfels artefacts. The site demonstrates how artefacts deflate on the surface in that area. Finds include an MSA core, a retouched flake and a flake.	31°33'50.51"S; 25° 0'56.95"E
MID5	A concentration of hornfels artefacts. Finds include a couple of fragmented stone artefacts.	31°33'53.17"S 25° 1'0.05"E
MID6	A small concentration of artefacts. Palimpsest of MSA and LSA artefacts	31°33'49.00"S; 25° 0'57.35"E
MID7	A small concentration of artefacts in a burrow. The site was disturbed by a bioturbation process most likely a mole rat activity. Finds include a carinated scraper and a retouched flake	31°33'55.58"S; 25° 1'3.97"E
MID9	A small concentration of weathered artefacts. Acheulean and Fauresmith bifaces and a uniface, mixed with some MSA like artefacts.	31°34'4.62"S; 25° 1'7.25"E
MID10	Small concentration of artefacts. The site was disturbed by a bioturbation process most likely a mole rat activity. Finds include a fragments and a retouched flake	31°34'2.39"S; 25° 1'3.94"E
MID8	A concentration of Acheulean-Fauresmith artefacts eroding on the surface due to bioturbation.	31°33'57.02"S; 25° 1'1.81"E
MID11	Levallois flake, probably the same site as MID8. A palimpsest of MSA-LSA	31°33'57.02"S; 25° 1'2.42"E

Table 1: Stone artefact sites for application for a destruction permit (description of sites from Lavin 2022)