



The KZN Provincial Heritage Resources Authority  
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30 November 2020

**Attention      Bernadette Pawandiwa**

**Heritage Scoping Report  
Yellowwood Housing Development 1340 OSS  
Otto's Bluff Road, Pietermaritzburg  
Msunduzi Municipality.**

**Project Area and Project description<sup>1</sup>**

The proposed Yellowwood low-cost housing development, 1340 OSS, was incepted by Msunduzi Municipality without due authorization and consequently the project was stopped pending environmental compliance. A NEMA section 24G process<sup>2</sup> is currently being pursued. EnviroPro Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd are the Environmental Assessment Practitioners appointed to assist with the environmental authorization process.

The development involves both site and service expansion and the provision of RDP class housing units.

**Observations**

eThembeni staff inspected the site on 25 November 2020. The area, spanning 13.6 Hectares is sloped and was formerly used for commercial forestation. The proposed development area is municipal land and has been subject to commercial forestry for at last the last 30 years with associated de-stumping of old growth root stock.

At the time of the inspection, the development area had been cleared of trees, and housing stands erected through roughly half the area with the remainder covered in grass and shrub. (See Figure 1 and Google Earth imagery; kml. loaded to SAHRIS Case File).

<sup>1</sup> Information provided by the appointed EAP, EnviroPro Environmental Consulting (Pty) Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> The National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998, as amended.

- Surface visibility was fair (See Figure 2a/b) and survey observations revealed no evidence of Iron Age cultural debris.
- No historical structures that could potentially be impacted by the development were observed during the survey.
- No obvious grave sites were discernable during the walk-over.  
 ➤ *However, given the proximity to the nearby developing community the potential for informal or secret graves associated with impoverished communities need to be considered. It would be wise to be wary of recent burials of either people too poor to afford a formal burial (pauper graves), stillborn/aborted fetuses, and/or victims of crime (see Appendix A).*
- The geology of the study area grades from Vryheid to Pietermaritzburg Formation shales of the Ecca Group, both of the Karoo Supergroup. Neither are considered to be palaeontologically sensitive.<sup>3</sup>  
 Consequently, no further palaeontological studies are recommended.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 1**      **Proposed Yellowwood 1340 OSS low-cost housing development footprint**

<sup>3</sup> Bordy et.al. 2017. Lithostratigraphy of the Pietermaritzburg Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup), South Africa. Department of Geological Sciences, University of Cape Town.

<sup>4</sup> Groenewald. G. 2012. Unpublished Palaeotechnical Report for Amafa KwaZulu-Natali. Pietermaritzburg



**Figure 2a** Surface visibility within the development footprint was fair to good



**Figure 2b** Surface visibility within previous afforested areas was fair to good



**Figure 3**      **Unauthorised building developments**



**Figure 4** **Development area adjacent to extant afforestation on municipal lands**

## **Recommendations**

In the absence of any heritage resources of significance, and that no further palaeontological mitigation is required, we accordingly request that Amafa allow the proposed development to proceed with no further heritage resource mitigation; suffice that the protocols in Appendix 1 are made binding to any Environmental Authorisations issued.

Please can you notify us timeously, via the loaded SAHRIS Case File, as to the decision of Amafa in this regard.

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk  
Principle Investigator.

## Appendix 1

### **Protocol for the Identification, Protection and Recovery of Heritage Resources During Construction and Operation**

It is possible that sub-surface heritage resources could be encountered during the construction phase of this project. The Environmental Control Officer and all other persons responsible for site management and excavation should be aware that indicators of sub-surface sites could include:

- Ash deposits (unnaturally grey appearance of soil compared to the surrounding substrate);
- Bone concentrations, either animal or human;
- Ceramic fragments, including potsherds;
- Stone concentrations that appear to be formally arranged (may indicate the presence of an underlying burial, or represent building/structural remains); and
- Fossilised remains of fauna and flora, including trees.

In the event that such indicator(s) of heritage resources are identified, the following actions should be taken immediately:

- All construction within a radius of at least 20m of the indicator should cease. This distance should be increased at the discretion of supervisory staff if heavy machinery or explosives could cause further disturbance to the suspected heritage resource.
- This area must be marked using clearly visible means, such as barrier tape, and all personnel should be informed that it is a no-go area.
- A guard should be appointed to enforce this no-go area if there is any possibility that it could be violated, whether intentionally or inadvertently, by construction staff or members of the public.
- No measures should be taken to cover up the suspected heritage resource with soil, or to collect any remains such as bone or stone.
- If a heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project, s/he should be contacted and a site inspection arranged as soon as possible.
- If no heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project, the head of archaeology at Amafa's Pietermaritzburg office should be contacted; telephone 033 3946 543.
- **The South African Police Services should be notified by an Amafa staff member or an independent heritage practitioner if human remains are identified. No SAPS official may disturb or exhume such remains, whether of recent origin or not.**
- **All parties concerned should respect the potentially sensitive and confidential nature of the heritage resources, particularly human remains, and refrain from making public statements until a mutually agreed time.**
- Any extension of the project beyond its current footprint involving vegetation and/or earth clearance should be subject to prior assessment by a qualified heritage practitioner taking into account all information gathered during the initial assessment.