Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment

Erf 14205 (Portion of Erf 1) Oudtshoorn, Magisterial District Eden, Western Cape Province: proposed development of a Shopping Centre

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by

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Executive Summary

On 6 May 2008 an archaeological impact survey was undertaken by CHARM cc as commissioned by Melanie van Breda of Chand Environmental Consultants on Erf 14205 (Portion of Erf 1) Oudtshoorn, Western Cape Province (Figures 1 to 4).

Apart from the historical buildings (which are currently being used by a sun dried tomato business and are to be incorporated within the shopping centre design) there were only two items of archaeological interest.

Firstly, there was a very sparse presence of stone artefacts attributable to Early Stone Age and/or Middle Stone Age periods. These were heavily patinated, medium to large-sized quartzitic flakes. This kind of occurrence is fairly common on exposed hillsides and koppies, especially in this kind of situation where abundant raw materials are available in the form of cobbles of quartzitic nature. No diagnostic artifacts were encountered and very little can be deduced about the age of the artefacts except that they are probably in excess of 50 000 years old. No mitigation is required in this instance.

A second, and much more important issue, is the presence of several human burials located within the area of the proposed development. The presence of human burials in this area is perhaps not unexpected as there is a large cemetery immediately to the west of the development site. The graves in question may be regarded as ‘informal’ burials as they lay outside the walled cemetery, on the west facing slope of the small koppie above the cemetery.

Although many of the graves have plain headstones with no written dedication, all the legible inscriptions identify the burials as belonging to the Moslem faith. Furthermore, all the graves are orientated east-west. The most likely scenario is that this area, although unfenced, was a recognised Moslem burial ground. It is located near the formal Christian cemetery, but far enough to form a separate entity.

The recommended mitigation for the presence of human burials within the area of the proposed development is as follows:

1. If at all possible, relocate proposed development and “formalize” burial ground.
2. No development can proceed until the question of the burials is resolved to the satisfaction of all interested parties.
3. As the process of removing any human remains is inevitably long and complicated (and sometimes not feasible) consideration should be given towards incorporating the graves within the shopping centre design.
4. If the development is to proceed, a separate AHIA should be undertaken directed specifically towards obtaining as much information as possible on all the burials which fall within the area affected by the development. This would include accurate location and mapping of all the graves, documentation of all headstones, a public participation process aimed at identifying any living relatives as well as a conservation and management plan to ensure the future protection and conservation of the site’s integrity.
5. It should be noted before any action is taken, authorization must be obtained from the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) who hold jurisdiction over recent human remains.
6. There is a possibility that unmarked graves may be present within the area to be developed. If the development goes ahead, it is recommended that the site be monitored by a suitably qualified person during earthmoving and construction operations. Particular attention must be paid to the western portion of the site overlooking the cemetery.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The 10 hectare site is to be re-zoned as an industrial area. Proposed developments include a shopping centre and a petrol station (Figure 5). The site contains one building of heritage significance which has a date of 1912 inscribed below the front arch. Originally a municipal depot, it is currently being used by a sun dried tomato business (Plates 1 to 4). It is understood that the building is to be incorporated within the Shopping Centre design and its heritage status guaranteed.

1.2. Purpose and Scope of the Study

Objectives of the Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment are:
• To assess the study area for traces of archaeological and heritage-related materials;
• To identify options for mitigation in order to minimize potential negative impacts; and
• To make recommendations for mitigation.

Terms of Reference (ToR):

a) Locate boundaries of the study area.
b) Conduct a foot survey of the study area to identify and record archaeological and heritage-related resources.
c) Assess the impact of the proposed development on archaeological and heritage-related materials.
d) Recommend mitigation measures where necessary.
e) Prepare and submit report to Melanie van Breda of Chand Environmental Consultants that meets standards required by Heritage Western Cape in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999.

1.3 Study Area

Erf 14205 (Portion of Erf 1), Magisterial District Eden, Western Cape Province is situated on the eastern edge of Oudtshoorn, adjacent to the Oudtshoorn Golf Course (Figures 1 through 4). It is easily accessible by road from Oudtshoorn.

1.4 Approach to the Study

To the best of our knowledge, no archaeological work has been conducted on the affected property or in its immediate vicinity. It is understood that a separate heritage impact assessment has been conducted with special reference to the Municipal Depot Building (currently in use as a sundried tomato business). For this reason, the focus of the study is restricted to archaeological concerns with the exclusion of historical buildings.

On 6 May 2008 a preliminary archaeological heritage impact assessment of the affected property was undertaken by Tony Manhire and Winston Manginda of CHARM as commissioned by Melanie van Breda of Chand Environmental Consultants. The study area was reached by vehicle with the aid of site plans, Google imagery and coordinate data provided by Melanie van Breda.
Access to the study area was obtained via the sundried tomato business property and the Oudtshoorn Golf Club. The survey was conducted on foot once the study area had been reached. Much of the area around the Old Municipal Depot has been severely impacted by previous construction and road building operations. Most of the remaining area was covered by low scrub vegetation with occasional trees. Although these areas are by no means in a pristine condition the ground – archaeological - visibility was generally good.

Records of the search include data fixed with a hand held GPS, notes on the materials found as well as their contexts and digital photographs. Any archaeological heritage located during the survey was assessed in terms of its significance and scale of importance as well as in terms of the potential impacts of the proposed development.

2. Results

No archaeological material of the pottery / pastoralist (from about 2000 to a few hundred years ago) was observed. The only Stone Age materials encountered were a few heavily patinated, medium to large-sized quartzitic flakes attributable to Middle Stone Age and/or Middle Stone Age periods (Plates 5 to 7). The distribution across the landscape was extremely thin and no focus of activity was discernible. No formal tools or diagnostic artefacts were encountered and very little can be deduced about the age of the artefacts except that they are probably in excess of 50 000 years old.

An issue of more import is the presence of several human burials located within the area of the proposed development (Plates 8 to 12). The presence of human burials in this area is perhaps not unexpected as there is a large cemetery immediately to the west of the development site (Plate 13). The graves in question may be regarded as 'informal' burials as they lay outside the walled cemetery, on the west facing slope of the small koppie above the cemetery. The grave positioned furthest from the cemetery is marked by an upright, unmarked headstone (Figure 4, Plates 10 and 11). The GPS coordinates for the burial are: S 33.58617 E 22.21662 in decimal degrees.

Although many of the graves have plain headstones with no written dedication, all the legible inscriptions identify the burials as belonging to the Moslem faith (Plate 8). Furthermore, all the graves are orientated east-west. The most likely scenario is that this area, although unfenced, was a recognised Moslem burial ground. It is located near to the formal Christian cemetery but far enough away to form a separate entity.

All archaeological and heritage related artefacts identified on the property are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999. These materials may in no way be removed or disturbed without a permit from Heritage Western Cape.

3. Sources of Risk, Impact Identification, Assessment and Recommendation

Activities associated with the proposed development will have a permanent and negative impact on human burials. The recommended mitigation for the presence of human burials within the area of the proposed development is as follows:

(1) No development can proceed until the question of the burials is resolved to the satisfaction of all interested parties including the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).
(2) As the process of removing any human remains is inevitably long and complicated (and sometimes not feasible) consideration should be given towards incorporating the graves within the shopping centre design.

(3) If the development is to proceed, a separate AHIA should be undertaken directed specifically towards obtaining as much information as possible on all the burials which fall within the area affected by the development. This would include accurate location and mapping of all the graves, documentation of all headstones, a public participation process aimed at identifying any living relatives as well as a conservation and management plan to ensure the future integrity of the site.

(4) It should be noted before any action is taken, authorization must be obtained from the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) who hold jurisdiction over recent human remains.

(5) There is a possibility that unmarked graves may be present within the area to be developed. If the development goes ahead, it is recommended that the site be monitored by a suitably qualified person during earthmoving and construction operations. In particular, the western portion overlooking the cemetery must be carefully monitored.

Table 1 summarizes the impact of the proposed development on heritage resources with and without mitigation.

### Table 1. Potential Impact on and Loss of Heritage Resources

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<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Confidence</strong></td>
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**Figures and Plates** (on following pages)
Figure 1. General location of study area – framed in black – relative to Oudtshoorn, Western Cape.

Figure 2. Enlarged area as indicated in Figure 1 showing the approximate extent of the study area framed by a blue rectangle.
Figure 3. View of study area with the boundary points of the property shown as red dots. Oudtshoorn is to the west of the property and the golf course to the east.
Figure 4. Enlarged view of the study area with the boundary of the property outlined in red. The blue rectangle marks the approximate position of the unmarked headstone mentioned in the text.
Figure 5. Floor plan layout of the proposed development.
Plate 1. View of the Municipal Depot building, currently in use as a sundried tomato business.

Plate 2. View of the Municipal Depot building and surrounds.
Plate 3. Date of 1912 inscribed on the arch of Municipal Depot building.

Plate 4. View of the koppie looking SE towards the Municipal Depot building.
Plate 5. Flaked quartzite cobble. Probably of Early Stone Age origin. The pen in the photo is 14cm long.

Plate 6. Quartzite flakes. Probably of Middle Stone Age origin.
Plate 7. Quartzite core showing flake removals. Probably of Middle Stone age origin.

Plate 8. Inscribed headstone from a Moslem burial.
Plate 9. View of Moslem graves on the slope above the cemetery.

Plate 10. View of the isolated headstone with the Municipal Depot building in the background. This grave marks the furthest extent of the burials located outside the cemetery (see Figure 4).
Plate 11. Close up of the isolated unmarked headstone shown in Plate 10.

Plate 12. View of scattered graves on the slope above the cemetery.
Plate 13. Cemetery located just outside the western boundary of the proposed development.