

The background image is a photograph of a rock face, likely a cave wall, covered in ancient paintings. The rock has a mottled texture with shades of grey, brown, and purple. Several small, circular holes are visible in the rock surface. The paintings are primarily in red and yellow ochre. In the upper left, there are two red animal figures, possibly deer or stags, facing each other. Below them are more red markings, including what looks like a large red 'X' or a similar symbol. To the right, there are yellow ochre markings, including a large, stylized figure that could be a bird or a human figure. The text 'EXECUTIVE SUMMARY' is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### State Party

The Republic of South Africa.

### State, province or region

The three sites included in the proposed composite World Heritage Property are located in two district municipalities in the Western Cape Province and in one district municipality in KwaZulu-Natal<sup>1</sup>.

No.	Name	Province	District	Local Municipality
01	Diepkloof Rock Shelter	Western Cape	West Coast	Cederberg
02	Pinnacle Point Site Complex	Western Cape	Garden Route	Mossel Bay
03	Sibhudu Cave	KwaZulu-Natal	iLembe	KwaDukuza

### Name of Property

The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa.

### Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

No.	Name	Coordinates
01	Diepkloof Rock Shelter	32° 23' 11" S, 18° 27' 9" E
02	Pinnacle Point Site Complex	34° 12' 27" S, 22° 05' 22" E
03	Sibhudu Cave	29° 31' 26" S, 31° 05' 10" E

### Textual description of the boundaries of the nominated Property:

- 01 **Diepkloof Rock Shelter** is on Portion 3 of the Farm Groote Drift 5, Piketberg in the Cederberg Local Municipality in the Western Cape Province on a ridge about 550 m from the edge of the Verlorenvlei wetland. The area is protected as a

---

<sup>1</sup> The Tentative List for this nomination was submitted in 2015 with six sites. However, three of them, namely Blombos Cave, Border Cave and Klasies River are not part of the current nomination.

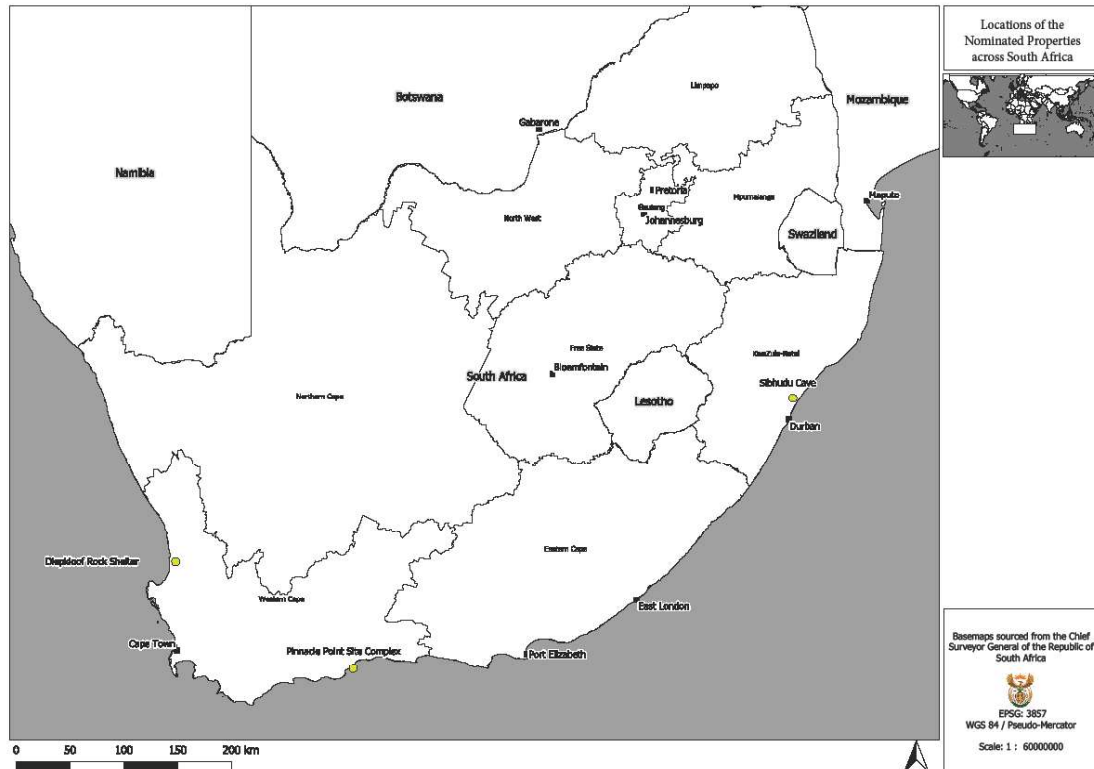
Provincial Heritage Site and lies above the 100 m contour line, which runs along the bottom of the hill.

- 02 **The Pinnacle Point Site Complex** is situated on the Pinnacle Point Estate, in Mossel Bay Local Municipality in the Western Cape Province. The southern border of the site is the coastline. The site is situated along the southern and western edge of Erf 15391 (a portion of Erf 2001), Boplaas, Mossel Bay. The area protected as a Provincial Heritage Site includes the area above the Provincial boundaries until the southern border of the Pinnacle Point Estate. The World Heritage Site includes the area between the Cape St Blaize Trail and the provincial boundaries at the coastline with an extension beyond the Cape St Blaize Trail as per Map 3. Additionally, the entire extent of the site complex below the cliff is included in the proposed property.
- 03 **Sibhudu Cave** is situated on Portion Sibhudu of the Farm Sinembe no. 16902-fu, in the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, in KwaZulu-Natal. The cave itself is located in a steep, forested cliff that overlooks the uThongathi River in an area that is now a sugar cane plantation. The shelter was formed by erosional downcutting of the uThongathi River, which now lies 7–10 m below the shelter. The site is protected as a National Heritage Site.

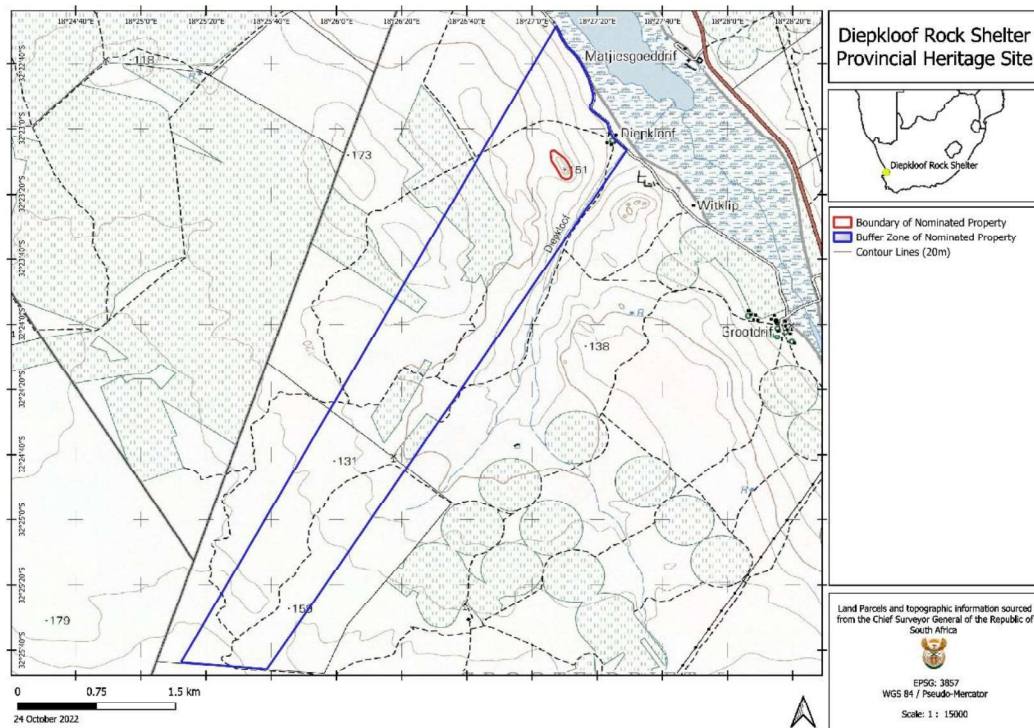
**A4 or A3-size maps of the nominated Property showing boundaries and Buffer zone (if present)**

Considering the space constraints for the Executive Summary, the maps are presented as the reduced version of the A4 maps in Section 1.e. The hard copy maps are presented in Annexure 1 as per the requirements in the Operational Guidelines.

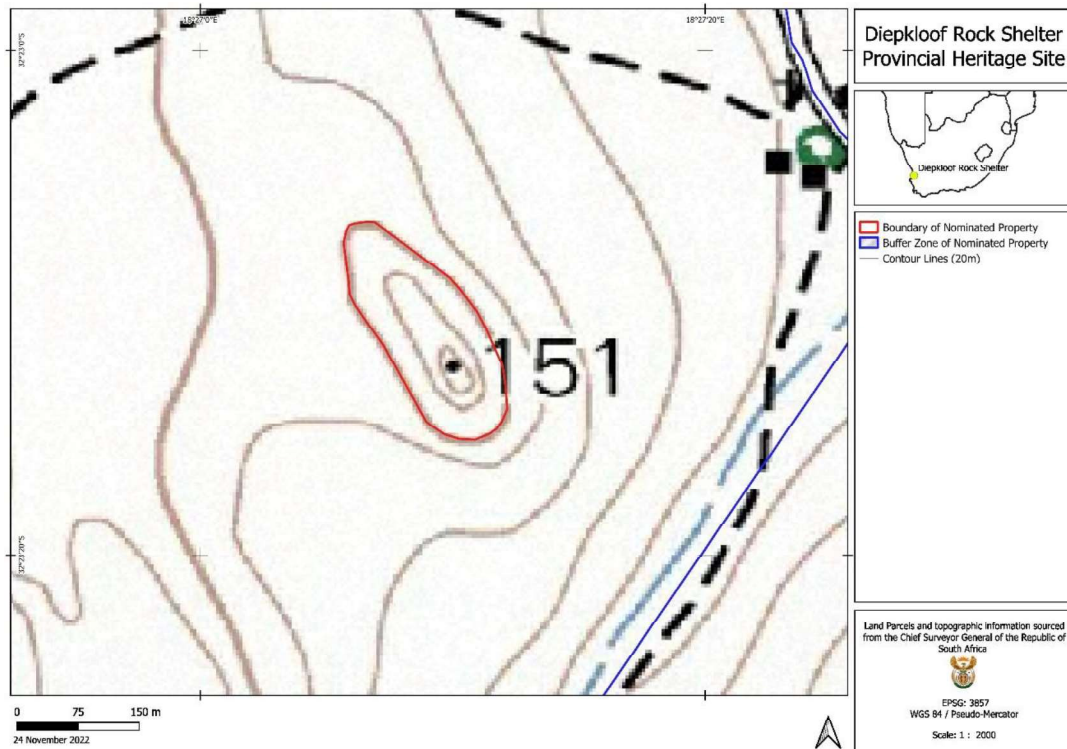
# The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa



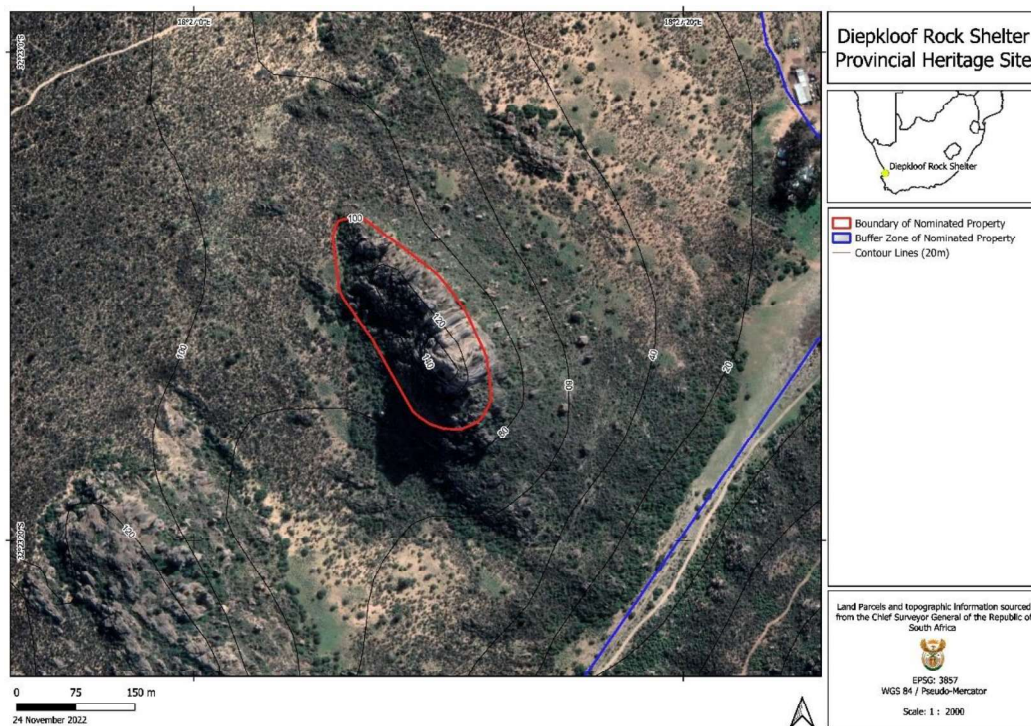
Map 1. Locations of the Nominated Properties across South Africa. Scale 1:50 000



Map 2. Diepkloof Rock Shelter Property and Buffer zone. Scale 1: 15 000.

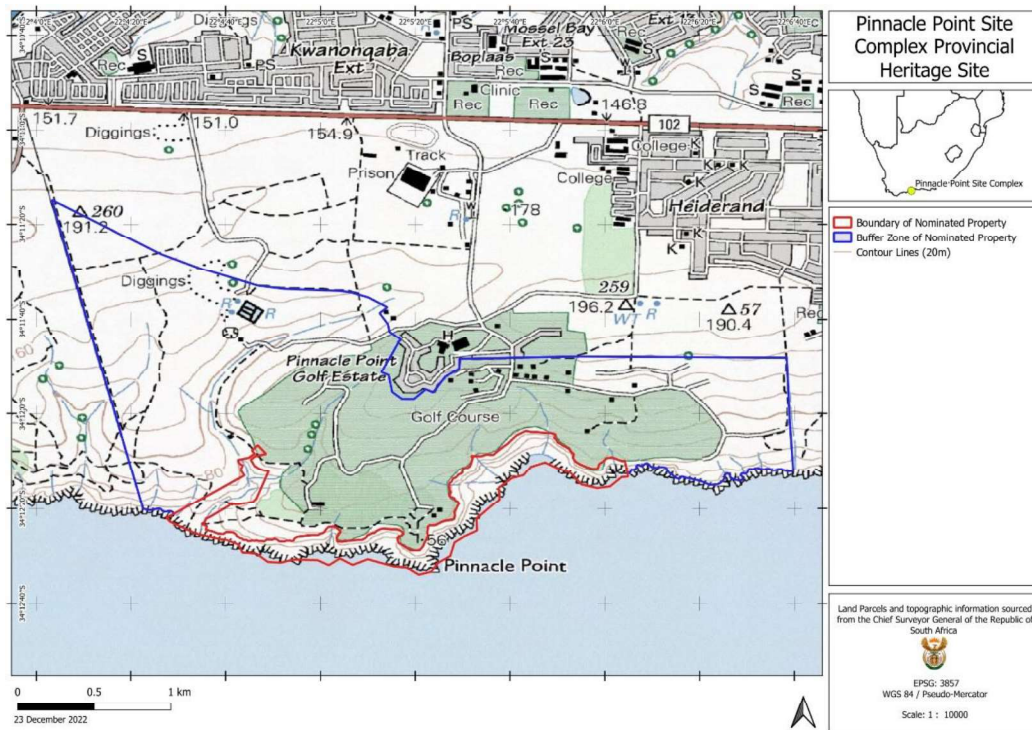


Map 3. Close up of Map 2. Diepkloof Rock Shelter Property. Scale 1 : 2 000.

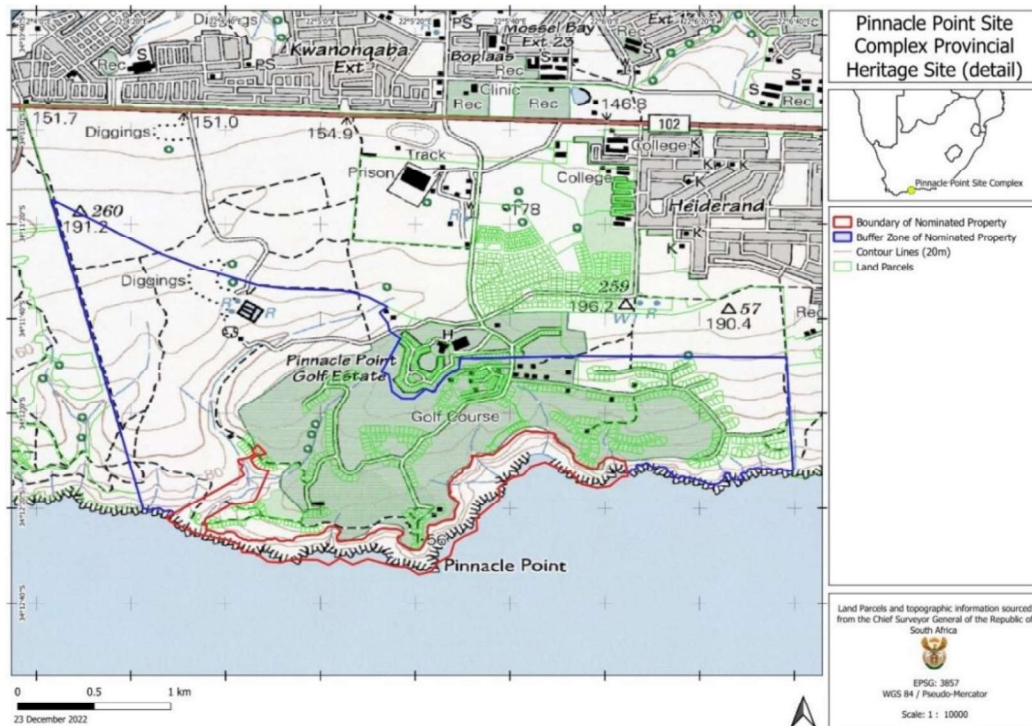


Map 4. Satellite close up of Map 2. Diepkloof Rock Shelter. Scale 1 : 2 000.





Map 5. Pinnacle Point Site Complex Property and Buffer zone. Scale: 1:10 000

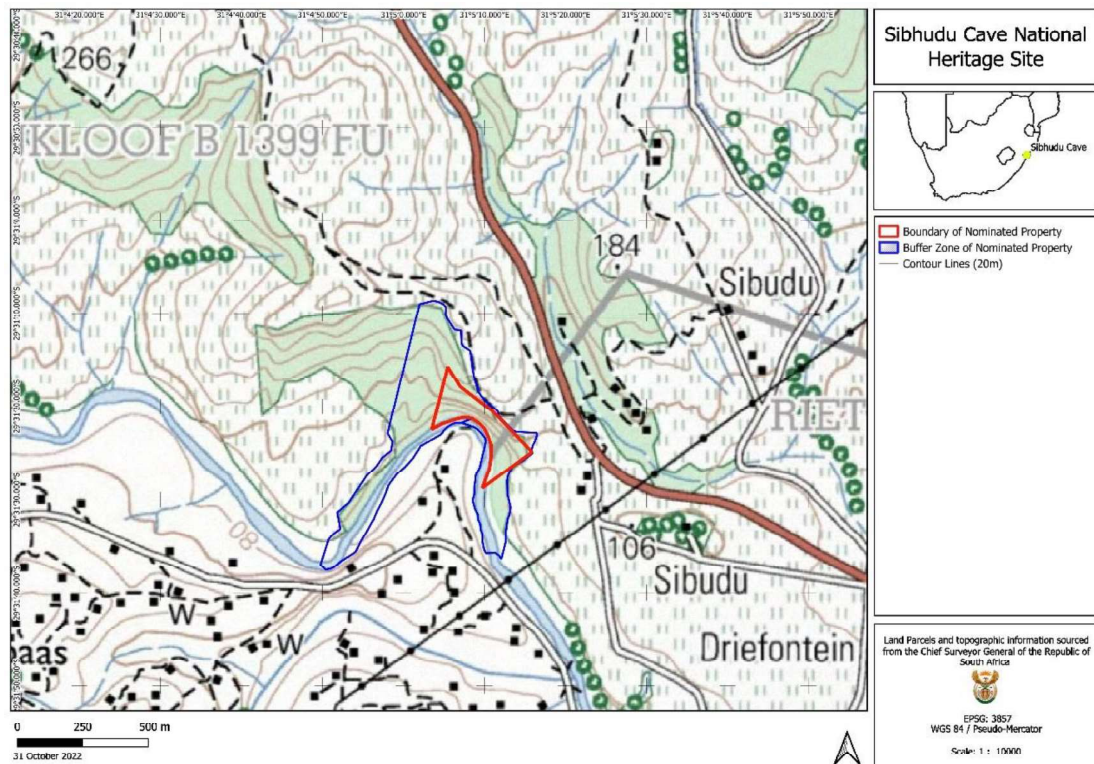


Map 6. Pinnacle Point Site Complex Property and Buffer zone with land parcels indicated. Scale: 1:10 000.



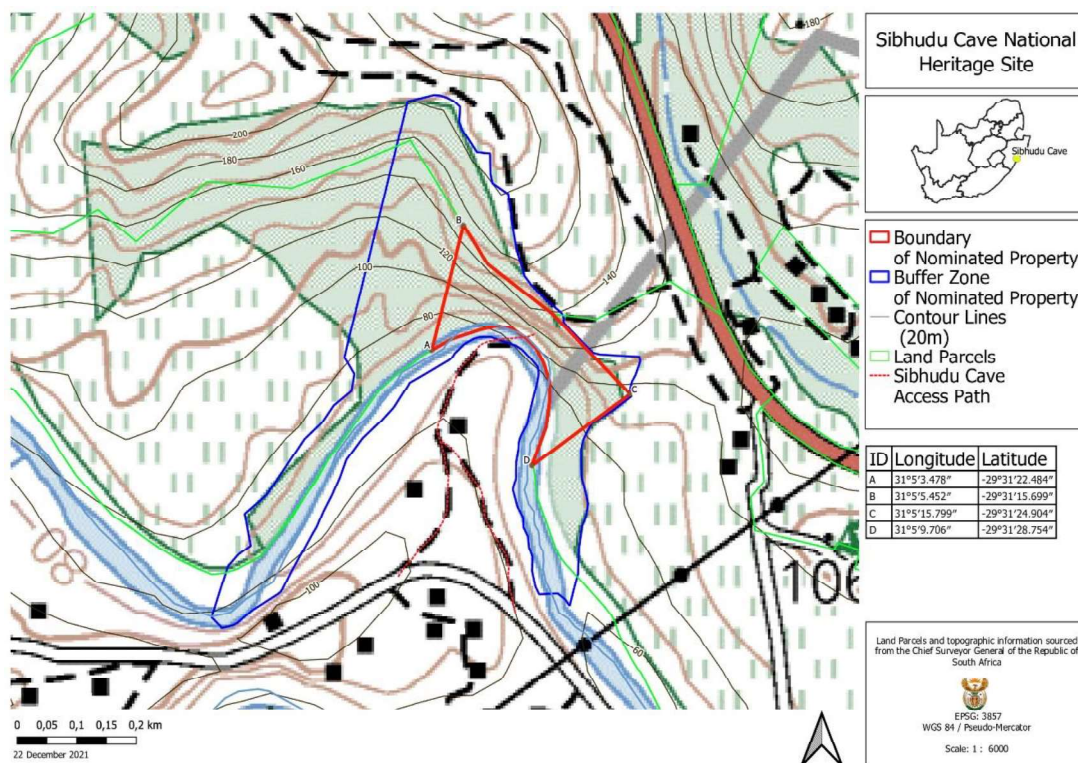


Map 7. Satellite close up of Maps 5 and 6. Pinnacle Point Site Complex Property. Scale 1: 6 000



Map 8. Sibudu Cave Property and Buffer zone. Scale 1: 10 000.





Map 9. Sibhudu Cave Property and Buffer zone. Scale 1: 6 000.

### Criteria under which the three components are nominated:

The sites are proposed for inscription under the following criteria:

*Criterion (iii): Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.*

*Criterion (iv): Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

*Criterion (v): Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use or sea-use which is representative of a culture, or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.*

### Cultural Landscape

The property is not nominated as a cultural landscape.

## **Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

### **Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

#### **a) Brief synthesis:**

Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Pinnacle Point Site Complex and Sibhudu Cave are three archaeological cave sites in South Africa. Two of them, Sibhudu cave and Diepkloof Rock Shelter, are located within 15km from the current shoreline, while Pinnacle Point Site Complex is located directly on the coast. These sites provide the best-preserved record worldwide of the development of modern human behaviour dating back over 162 000 years ago.

As a group, they are vital to our understanding of the origin of behaviourally modern humans, the climatic transitions that they survived, and their cognitive abilities and cultures.

#### **b) Justification for criteria (iii, iv and v)**

**Criterion (iii):** These sites provide an exceptional example of the early cultural tradition of modern humans, when *Homo sapiens* became behaviourally modern. The archaeological layers of these sites provide exceptional evidence and insight into the behavioural and palaeoenvironmental remains of the Middle Stone Age. They contain early evidence of symbolic thought and advanced technologies in the form of extensive ochre processing; engraved patterns on ochre and bone; estuarine shellfish beads used for body decoration; decorated ostrich eggshell; lithic technologies used for advanced projectile weapons; heat treatment and microliths; and the capture and use of fur of dangerous nocturnal felines.

**Criterion (iv):** These sites furthermore preserve exceptionally well-stratified and well-dated sedimentary records of ancient human life dating from about 162 000 to 38 000 years ago. They bear evidence of the development of complex cognition through the deliberate heat treatment of stone for toolmaking, prepared-core stone blades and backed tools; polished bone points; engraved bone tools, and some of the earliest recorded evidence of art in the form of incised patterns on ochre and ostrich eggshell.

**Criterion (v):** Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Pinnacle Point Site Complex and Sibhudu Cave offer some of the earliest and best-preserved evidence in the world for the consistent exploitation of coastal resources during the Middle and Late Pleistocene. The consumption of nutrients included in this food may have contributed to the healthy development of the *Homo sapiens* brains and the expansion of its advanced cognitive abilities during the MSA.



As current sea levels rise due to climate change, much of the ancient record of human coastal resource use has been obliterated or is in grave danger. As such, the excellent preservation of these sites is pivotal in the preservation of outstanding evidence for palaeoclimates and palaeoenvironment.

**c) Statement of integrity**

Each of these sites contain long sequences of human occupation. Diepkloof Rock Shelter and Sibhudu Cave have remained remarkably intact, while Pinnacle Point Site Complex was only identified during the impact assessment process for a high-end real estate development. The implementation of the recommendations included in the impact assessment for this estate development has ensured that the site is preserved and not negatively impacted by further development.

Archaeological excavations have been conducted following the highest international standards and methods available. All findings have been carefully curated and catalogued in national collections, and their significance and interpretation have been reported in many highly significant papers published in international journals. Ongoing research at these sites continues to demonstrate the reliability and quality of the existing information. Additionally, many more scientific discoveries will undoubtedly be made from these sites, as new material is analysed or new methods and questions are applied to previously excavated finds.

The designated property defined in this serial nomination conserves the sense of place and experience of these sites within their current landscape.

**d) Statement of authenticity**

Archaeological discoveries at the three sites have revealed authentic evidence of an original cultural phase in our evolution as humans. All three sites have been excavated by different international multidisciplinary teams of experts, leaders in their field of speciality. These specialists are also linked to some of the most prestigious universities worldwide.

Favourable depositional processes have led to the steady accumulation of archaeologically significant deposits with little or no loss of them due to natural erosion. Fortunately, human activity and development in the immediate vicinity of these sites has been restricted, thus largely minimising or even avoiding damage of these significant archives of key steps within our evolution as a species. The cultural sediments in PP13B and PP5-6 of the Pinnacle Point Site Complex are well protected, as these sites are situated well above the high-water mark of the ocean. At Diepkloof Rock Shelter,

the site is located on a small hill about 15 km from the current shoreline. Similarly, Sibhudu Cave is well protected from floods.

**e) Requirements for protection and management**

All three sites are formally protected under the national heritage legislation and 'no person may destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of any heritage site without a permit issued by the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of such a site' (s. 27(18)).

The sites are also subject to a comprehensive management framework of laws, regulations and planning instruments relating to heritage, conservation and environmental protection, which are detailed in the integrated management plans developed for each site. Besides a Management Authority and a Joint Management Committee rooted in the provincial and national structures, each site has a Management Committee based in the local context and relies on local authorities and the involvement of relevant local stakeholders.

**Name and contact information of official local institution/agency**

**Organisation:** Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

**Address:** Private Bag X447, Pretoria, 0001

**Tel:** +27 12 399 9535

**E-mail:** Ms Thumeka Ntloko: [tnntloko@dfre.gov.za](mailto:tnntloko@dfre.gov.za)

**Web address:** <https://www.environment.gov.za>