



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

COMMITTEE MEETING**DATES:**

GDRC: 06/09/2022

EXCO: TBC

HRM: TBC

COUNCIL: TBC

DECLARATION SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: Heritage Protection Unit

DATE: 06 September 2022

FILE REF: 9/2/008/0003

SAHRIS SITE ID: 29476

SAHRIS SITE CATEGORY: Archaeological Site

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY (THEMES): Archaeological, geological, Historical and Scientific value

ENQUIRIES: Ms H. Tuge & Ms H. Weldon

ITEM: Proposal for National Heritage Site Declaration: Canteen Kopje Archaeological Site, Northern Cape

A1. BACKGROUND

A1.1. The Stone Age archaeological site of Canteen Kopje, located close to Barkly West in the Northern Cape has been regarded as a highly significant site for Stone Age archaeological research for close to a century. During March 2016 diamond mining activities were started around Canteen Kopje. These activities threatened the archaeological site. Although the diamond mining was under a permit issued by the Department of Mineral Resources, the mining was in contravention of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) and urgent legal action instituted by the McGregor Museum with assistance from Sol Plaatje and Wits Universities resulted in an interim interdict granted on 19 March 2016 against the mining company, followed by a final interdict on 19 April 2016.

A1.2. These events prompted the SAHRA Archaeology, Paleontology and Meteorites Unit to initiate the process of Grading and Declaration of Canteen Kopje as a Grade 1 National Heritage Site. This submission serves as motivation for the Grading of Canteen Kopje as a Grade 1 National Heritage Site.

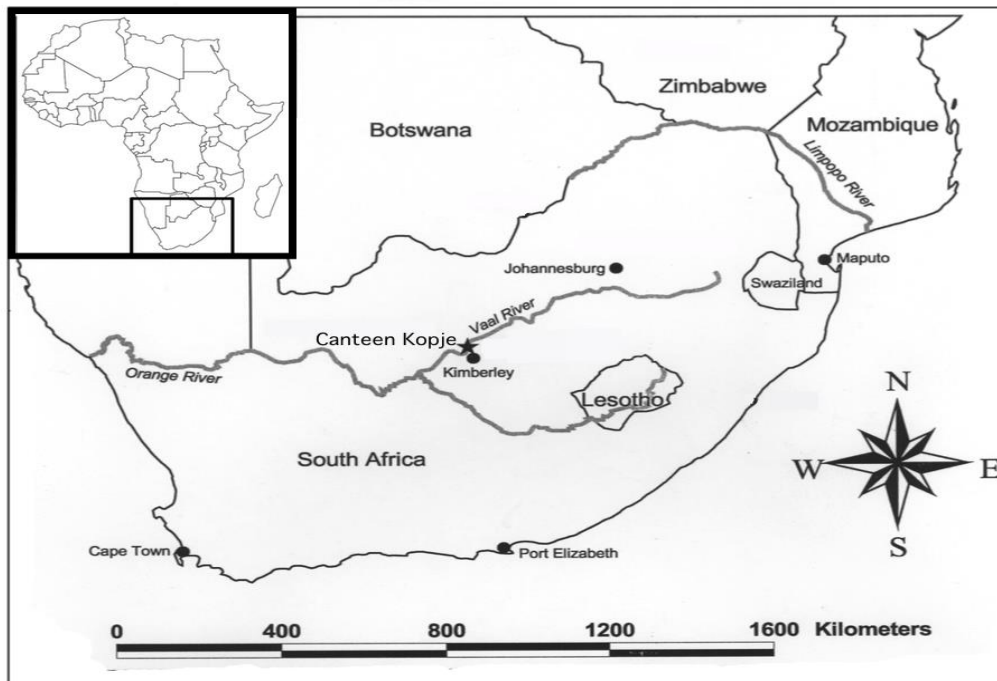


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the Canteen Kopje archaeological museum provided by G. Leader

A 1.3. The site is especially known for its extensive Earlier Stone Age assemblages, found within the deep Vaal River Gravels that characterise the area. The significant depth of these deposits is demonstrated in the photo and excavation drawing below.

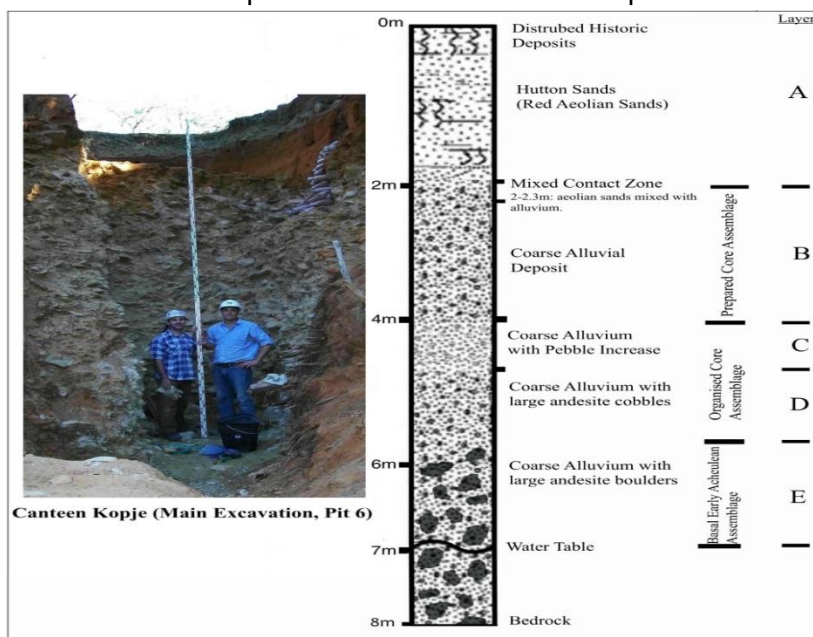


Figure 2: Image showing pit 6 Excavation and layers. (Image and drawing provided by G. Leader)

A1.4. A field session was conducted at Canteen Kopje in 2007 to sample the archaeological horizons and date the Hutton Sands. Their excavation was located near an exposed part of the Hutton Sands at the eastern boundary of the designated historic area. This location was chosen because there was no sign of diamond mining disruption (the remains of the tunnels could be seen to the east of the excavation area), and lithic items could be seen in the exposed part.

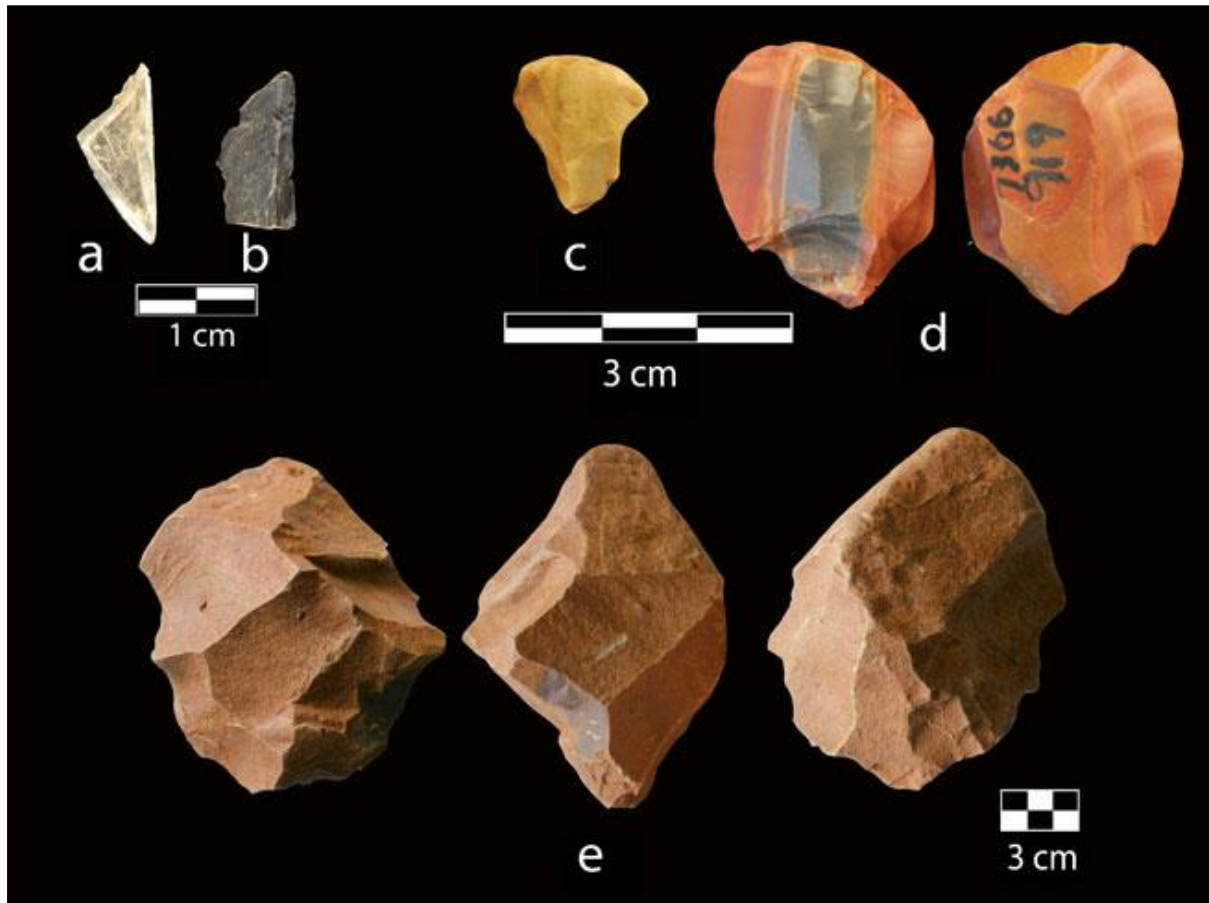


Figure 3: Glass and lithic artefacts from Canteen Kopje (Chazan, M., Porat, N., Sumner, A., Horwitz, L.K. 2017.)

A1.5. Canteen Kopje, also known as Klipdrift, was the site of the earliest alluvial diamond mining in interior Africa, beginning in 1869, and a mining town quickly arose to service the mining activity. Canteen Kopje was heavily mined for diamonds between 1869 and 1948, and both the old mining pits and filled tunnels, as well as large dumps and stacks of concentrates, can still be seen today.

A1.6. The Vaal River, with its narrow gallery forests and the availability of raw materials for stone artifact knapping, provided an appealing setting for past hominin populations, as evidenced by the extensive record of archaeological occupation along its banks. Peringuey discovered archaeological remains dating back to the Acheulian period near Canteen Kopje in 1911, and Goodwin discovered them in 1928.

- A1.7. The large number of Acheulian artifacts at the site, as well as the convenience of access via the Cape Town-Kimberley railroad, drew numerous early nineteenth-century archaeologists to the site. In 1948, a natural reserve (later declared a National Monument) was established over an area of roughly 9.2 hectares that comprised the main mining pits at Canteen Kopje. A permit was granted in 1996 for small-scale mining in the region to the south of the declared area, resulting in the removal of most of the intact deposits outside the National Monument's boundaries.
- A1.8. The area was developed as a heritage site in 2000, and open-air exhibitions were opened with the cooperation of the Dutch government. Beaumont and McNabb excavated between 1997 and 2000, resulting in the recovery of vast collections of Acheulian items. Recently, a team from the University of the Witwatersrand excavated the Hutton Sands and underlying Vaal Gravels, discovering both Middle and Later Stone Age artifacts. The broader region surrounding the site also has traces of Iron Age habitation and Anglo-Boer War activity.

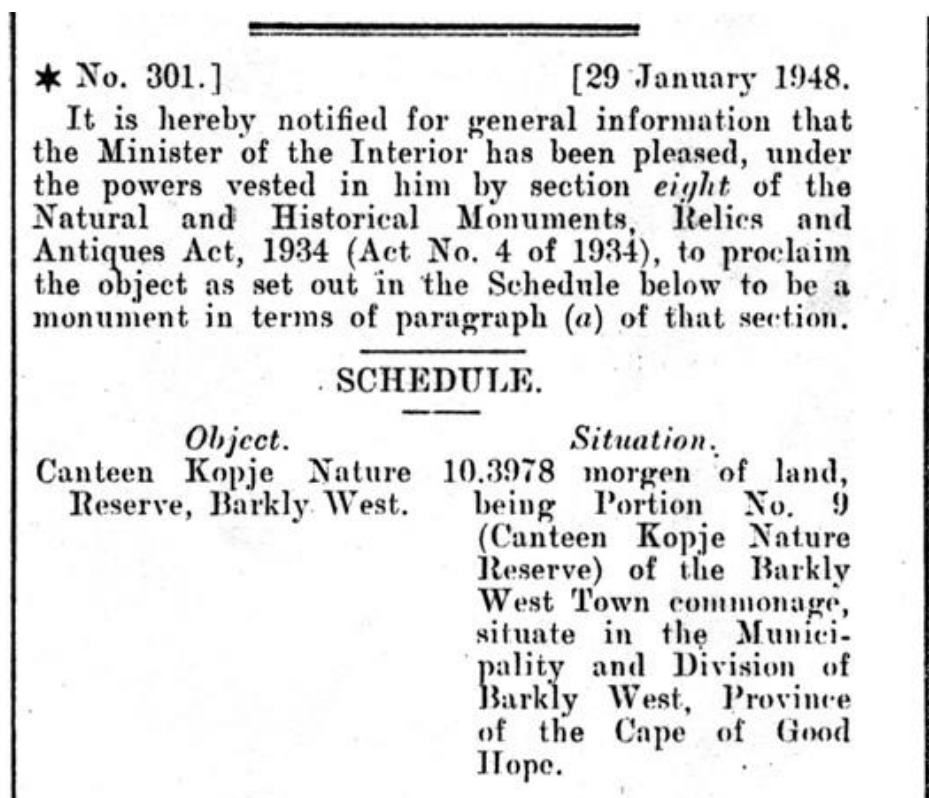


Figure 4: The original Gazette Notice in 1948 declaring Canteen Kopje a National Monument.

- A1.9. As diamond exploration progressed, a strongly mineralized partial skeleton was discovered near Johannesburg in 1913 at Boskop; the skeleton was linked to an ancient South African population. The discovery of the Tuinplaas (or Springbok Flats) skeleton, linked with an extinct buffalo, a few years later, was regarded more evidence of the existence of ancestors who varied from South Africa's existing inhabitants.



Figure 5: Views of diamond diggings on the Vaal River near Klipdrift (Canteen Kopje). Source: McGregor Museum archive.



Figure 6: Photographs showing cranial lesions on (a) the left side of the Canteen Kopje skull and (b) the Koffiefontein specimen's frontal bone.

A1.10. On March 18, 2016, some alluvial diamond mining occurred in Canteen Kopje, but it was quickly prevented by an urgent legal action initiated by the McGregor Museum with aid from Sol Plaatje and Wits Universities. The interim interdict issued on March 19, 2016, against the mining company Jackie M Wesi Mining (Pty) Ltd provided

temporary protection, which has now been made permanent. On April 19, 2016, Provisional protection is no longer necessary because the place is already protected by a final court ruling.

A1.11. A heritage agreement between SAHRA and the Dikgatlong Local Municipality is currently being negotiated.

A1.12. Following the assessment of the site, the site was graded as a Grade 1 site by the South African Heritage Resources Agency Council on 4th February 2017. The national significance of the site is based on its archaeological, geological, historical, scientific, values.

A2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A2.1. The archaeological site of Canteen Kopje in the Northern Cape has yielded evidence of human and human-ancestor occupation stretching as far back as 2.3 million years. The site also suggests a period of continuous occupation for possibly a million years. These aspects make Canteen Kopje one of the most unique and significant Stone Age archaeological sites in the world, comparable to sites found within the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site. The site has exceptionally deep archaeological deposits, of which many are undisturbed, and has yielded – and may continue to yield – invaluable information about the culture and way of life of our shared human ancestors.

A2.2. Canteen Kopje was also the site of the first alluvial diamond mining in interior Africa, predating the diamond rush in Kimberley.

A2.3. In the 1940s, the eminent South African archaeologist C. van Riet Lowe was of the opinion that: “When the last diamond claim has been abandoned, archaeologists throughout the world will be interested in

A2.4. Canteen Kopje, in the Vaal River diggings, where lie the prehistoric remains of a million years of human evolution.” His encouraging prediction has proved to be correct.

A3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A3.1. This submission includes a description and location of Canteen Kopje's archaeological site, as well as well marked site borders, a brief history of the site, and a description of the archaeological research that has been undertaken at Canteen Kopje over a substantial period. There includes an explanation of the site's present status, as well as a rationale for grading as a National Heritage Site. The heritage values connected with the property are conveyed in a statement of significance, and the landowner's attitude and existing management arrangements are highlighted. The SAHRA Grading and Declaration Review Committee believes that Canteen Kopje deserves to be declared as a Grade 1 National Heritage Site.

- A3.2. Canteen Kopje, a notable Stone Age Archaeological site in Barkly West, Northern Cape, was declared as a historical monument in 1948, making it South Africa's first archaeological declaration. When the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 was passed in 2000, all National/Historical Monuments were designated as Provincial Heritage Sites. The goal is for these sites to be examined and, if required, regraded. Following mining threats to the site in 2016, SAHRA was compelled to reconsider site regrading. On February 4, 2017, the site was inspected and graded as a Grade 1 site (as having national significance).
- A3.3. In June 2017, public notification letters were issued to all relevant stakeholders. In December 2021, relevant stakeholders received the second notification letter. SAHRA received no objections to the declaration.
- A3.4. It is recommended that the site to be declared as a national heritage site.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

- 1.1. The submission is made to discuss and recommend the declaration of the Canteen Kopje Archaeological Site as a National Heritage.

2. LANDOWNER'S DETAILS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS DECLARATION

- 2.1. The Dikgatlong Local Municipality has not responded to communication made by SAHRA for the Grading and Declaration of Canteen Kopje as a Grade 1 National Heritage Site.

- 2.2. Contact details are as follows:

Mr. Kgotso Mocketse
Municipal Manager
Dikgatlong Local Municipality
Private Bag X5
Barkly West
8375
Per email: munman@dikgatlong.co.za

Mr. Marvelous Seele
Town Planner
Dikgatlong Local Municipality
Per Email: mseele@dikgatlong.co.za

Mr. Eddie Manuel
LED Officer
Dikgatlong Local Municipality
Per Email: eddiemanuel@dikgatlong.co.za

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION

- 3.1. The first notification letters were sent in June 2017 to the following stakeholders as well as the owners as stated above:
- McGregor Museum
 - Sol Plaatje University
 - Dikgatlong Local Municipality (Owners)
 - Dikgatlong Tourism Association
 - University of Pennsylvania
 - University of Toronto
 - University of the Witwatersrand
- 3.2. A meeting was held with the Barkly West Community and the small-scale miners on the 19th of April 2018. to inform the community of Barkly West and the small-scale miners of SAHRA's intent to declare Canteen Kopje as a national heritage site and to allow an opportunity for comments, questions, concerns, and objections to be raised. This was done to ensure that proper notification takes place and that SAHRA follows section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act.
- 3.3. The declaration of the site was not supported as it was felt that the meeting was not fully representative. There was a strong bias towards the mining of the site despite the recognition of the heritage value of the site. The meeting felt that no declaration should take place until a more representative meeting is held.
- 3.4. Below are pictures of the meeting undertaking:



Figures 6 and 7: Meeting undertaking

3.5. SAHRA received a response from Prof Yunus Ballim, the then Vice Chancellor of Sol Plaatje University, that the intention to Declare the site looks positive.

3.5. The second notification letters and a public notification was sent on the 20th of December 2022 to the following stakeholders as well as the owners:

- Dikgatlong Local Municipality (owners)
- Department of Mineral Resources - Northern Cape
- Northern Cape Department of Sports, Art & Culture
- Frances Baard District Municipality
- Jackie M. Wesi Mining (Pty) LTD
- Klipdrift (Dikgatlong) Tourism Association
- Sol Plaatje University
- McGregor Museum
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Toronto
- University of the Witwatersrand

3.6. SAHRA received comments via email and formal letters from the following:

- Prof George Leader, from the department of anthropology, at the University of Pennsylvania stated that, there is still much to learn from Canteen Kopje. The new methods and technology will help us to uncover more about the evolution of the area and the secrets it holds.
- Two emails in support of the declaration were received from the McGregor Museum and Sol Plaatje University.

3.7. In addition, SAHRA published a public notice on the SAHRA website, all our social media platforms and SAHRIS.

4. OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE (AS PER THE TITLE DEEDS)

4.1 The map image below reflects the area identified for declaration, along with the latitude and longitude reference points used to demarcate the site boundaries.

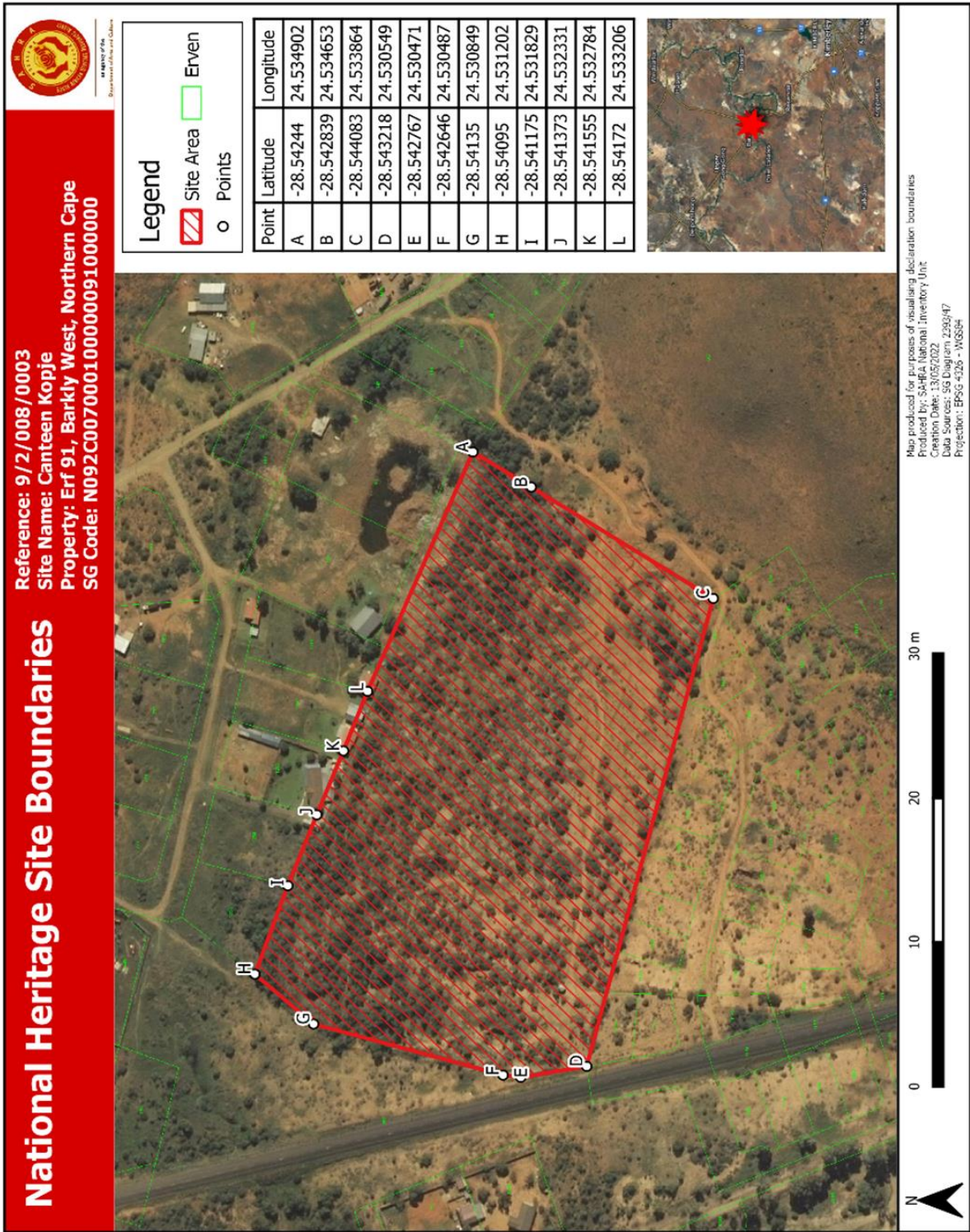


Figure 8: Map showing area identified for declaration

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TO BE DECLARED (SITE BOUNDARIES)

5.1. Canteen Kopje (28°32'35" S, 24°31'51" E) is a tiny, low hill 1.3 kilometres southeast of Barkly West (Northern Cape Province), on the north bank of the Vaal River, 16 meters above and 500 meters away from the river, and opposite the Mission Station at Pniel. The site was previously declared a National Monument by the National Monument's Council in 1947.

SITE NAME	Erf Number	TOWN	MUNICIPALITY		PROVINCE	SG DIAGRAM
			LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY		
Canteen Kopje	Erf 91	Barkly West	Dikgatlong Local Municipality	Francis Baard District Municipality	Northern Cape	2392/47 Figure ABCDEF

Co-ordinates:

Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	-28.54244	24.534902
B	-28.542839	24.534653
C	-28.544083	24.533864
D	-28.543218	24.530549
E	-28.542767	24.530471
F	-28.542646	24.530487
G	-28.54135	24.530849
H	-28.54095	24.531202
I	-28.541175	24.531829
J	-28.541373	24.532331
K	-28.541555	24.532784
L	-28.54172	24.533206

6. INDICATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1. Canteen Kopje falls under the jurisdiction of the Dikgatlong Local Municipality. The University of the Witwatersrand and Sol Plaatjie University manage archaeological research activities at the site and SAHRA manages research permitting related to Canteen Kopje.
- 6.2. In addition, a heritage agreement between SAHRA and the Dikgatlong Local Municipality is in the process to being submitted.

7. RESOURCE UTILIZATION

- 7.1. Due to the extent of its archaeological deposit, Canteen Kopje offers an abundant locale for archaeological research and the training for multiple future generations of researchers. The site also lends itself well to the establishment of a site museum and interpretative centre to benefit school groups and the wider public, to be added to the displays already present.
- 7.2. In March 2017, it was discovered that illegal mining was taking place on the site. The legal judgement that halted illegal mining and the increased media attention that the site garnered through has decreased the likelihood of similar illegal attempts at site disturbance.
- 7.3. Although illegal mining has been formally halted by the courts, it cannot be discounted as an ongoing threat, and now that the presence of diamonds on the site is known more widely, small-scale opportunistic mining may also be a threat.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. It is recommended that the Grading and Declaration Review Committee supports the approval to the declare Canteen Kopje as a National Heritage Site.

9. REFERENCES

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