

25-06-2013

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED MINING OF THE FARM OWNED BY MR C. STIRK AND P. KEETON, SOUTHWELL AREA, NDLAMBE METRO.

THE PROPOSED MINING AREA IS IN THE MIDDLE OF SOUTHWELL. IT COVERS AN AREA IN WHICH 2 SCHOOLS (ONE DATING BACK TO 1835), 2 ACCOMMODATION BLOCKS FOR TEACHERS, 3 CHURCHES (THE OLDEST MISSION CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA OPENED BY BISHOP MERRIMAN IN 1835, THE OTHER 1875), 2 CEMETRIES (GRAVES DATED ABOUT 1849), 2 COMMUNITY HALLS AND A CRICKET FIELD. THERE ARE 6 OTHER EARLY 1830 BUILDINGS IN THE AREA, 3 OF WHICH ARE REGISTERED AS NATIONAL MONUMENTS.

THE OLDEST OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS IS LOMBARDS POST. OUR FAMILY TOOK TRANSFER FROM THE THEN COLONIAL AUTHORITIES IN 1840. THIS IS AFTER COL. GRAHAM MOVED FROM THE FARM TO ESTABLISH THE GARRISON IN GRAHAMSTOWN. TO HAVE BLASTING AND MINING ACTIVITIES SURROUNDING SUCH HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURELY APPEARS TO BE CONTRARY TO THE HERITAGE LAWS AS I UNDERSTAND THEM.

I PRESENTLY HAVE VERY FEW LABOURERS ON THE FARM DUE TO THE FARMING ECONOMIC DOWN TURN BUT IN YEARS GONE BYE, TOGETHER WITH MY LATE DAD, WE EMPLOYED AS MANY AS 80 STAFF ON A MONTHLY BASIS. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE WERE SECOND AND POSSIBLY THIRD GENERATION FAMILY MEMBERS. I HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH MY PRESENT STAFF, MOST OF WHOM WERE BORN ON THE FARM, AS TO THE CONSEQUENCE OF MINING THE FARM AND IN THE PROCESS, DISTURBING THE GRAVES. NATURALLY THEY ARE VERY DISTROUGHT AND HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD COMMUNICATE WITH THE HUGE RELATIVE GROUP LIVING IN NEARBY TOWNS. THE FIRST RESPONSE WAS WHETHER THE APPLICANTS WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE RELATIVES IN OUR COMMUNITY HALL TO EXPLAIN THEIR INTENTIONS. THIS IS VERY LITTLE TO ASK SEEING THEY WERE NOT REGISTERED AS IAF MEMBERS.

OUR GRAVEL ROADS ARE IN A SHOCKING STATE. BISHO SPENDS VERY LITTLE MONEY ON MAINTAINING THEM. I REALLY CANNOT SEE HOW THE PROPOSED HUGE TONNAGE OF MINED LIME WILL BE MOVED OUT OF THE AREA WITHOUT GREATLY ADDING TO ITS STATE OF DISREPAIR.

LOMBARDS POST FORT IS A REGISTERED HISTORICAL MONUMENT. I WAS BORN THERE AND HAVE LIVED THERE ALL MY LIFE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BOARDING SCHOOL AND THE ARMY DAYS. OVER THIS PERIOD I HAVE MET MANY INTERESTING VISITORS INCLUDING STUDENT GROUPS AND SOUVENIR HUNTERS. AS A RESULT OF WHAT I HAVE SEEN, I SUGGEST A DETAILED FOSSIL SURVEY OF THE PROPERTY BE CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE SCOPING EXERCISE.

FINALLY, I AM NEARING RETIREMENT AGE AND AS NONE OF MY CHILDREN ARE INTERESTED IN FARMING, I WILL BE LOOKING TO SELL THE FARM IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I REALLY DO NOT SEE THAT TAKING PLACE WITH A MINING CONCESSION COVERING THE ENTIRE FARM. I WILL BE DEEPLY COMPROMISED.

PETER KEETON.

LOMBARDS POST LAND OWNER.