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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED BORROW PIT SITES ALONG THE MR 768 ROAD BETWEEN BRITSTOWN & VOSBURG, NORTHERN CAPE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Six borrow pits were investigated along the MR768 gravel road between Britstown and Vosburg, Northern Cape.

There is a general distribution of sparsely scattered highly patinated Middle Stone Age / Later Stone Age flakes at some of the sites. Source material occurs in the form of scattered outcrops of lydianite amongst banks of calcrete and dolerite boulders. The boulders are without any engravings.

I consider the Stone Age artefacts as part of a general distribution in the region which seems to be of minor significance. I recommend that the proposed developments and planning of the sites may proceed.

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

INVESTIGATION

Six borrow pit sites for the removal of road-building material for the upgrading of the MR768 road between Britstown and Vosburg were visited on 10 October 2006. Dr Johan du Preez of MDA Environmental Consultants took me to the sites, where Mr Attie Prins directed and accompanied us.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage

Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

LOCALITY

Six borrow pits were investigated along the MR768 gravel road between Britstown and Vosburg, Northern Cape (Map 1)

BP 1 is located on the farm New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown. The site contains an existing quarry (Fig.1) and with the extension will eventually cover about 2,5ha.

As most of the other sites in the region, this borrow pit contains outcrops of shale and calcrete (Fig.2), with scatters of highly patinated lydianite flakes (Fig.3).

Lithic material is found in abundance (Fig.4), but tools are rare (Fig.5). The region contains a heavy sand cover with Driedoring thorny vegetation (Fig.4). Outcrops of dolerite boulders occur (Fig.6) but no engravings were found.

BP 2 Existing borrow pit and extensions at Subdivision 4 of Pomfontein 104, Britstown (Fig.7), will cover about 9ha.

Stone tools with parallel flaking and duckbill scrapers with secondary retouch occur scattered at the site (Figs.8-9).

BP3 is located on Subdivision 3 of Sand Pan 106, Britstown (Map 10). It is estimated that the borrow pit will eventually cover about 6ha.

Crude patinated stone flakes appear amongst the calcrete patches (Fig.11).

BP4 is located at Bloemfontein 106, near Britstown. The area has a sparse grass cover on red sandy soil with shale and calcrete outcrops (Figs.12-13).

No stone flakes or other cultural material was found at the site.

Dolerite boulders occur at BP4 on Bloemfontein 106, Britstown (Fig.14) but no engravings were found.

BP5 at Arcadia 112, Vosburg, will approximately cover about 12ha.

The area contains a red sandy soil (Fig.15) and is bush covered (Fig.16).

No stone flakes or other cultural material was found at the site.

BP6 is located on the R384 near Vosburg. The borrow pit will cover only about 4ha.

Patches of calcrete and shale appear on the surface and source material in the form of scattered lydianite stones is found (Figs.17-18, 20&21).

Spreads of highly patinated flakes occur at the site (Figs.19&22).

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken:

BP1	30°33'55"S 023°17'31"E	Altitude 1108m.
BP2	30°34'04"S 023°08'14"E	Altitude 1100m.
BP3	30°34'16"S 023°02'38"E	Altitude 1124m.
BP4	30°34'20"S 023°01'38"E	Altitude 1129m.
BP5	30°34'35"S 022°57'59"E	Altitude 1144m.
BP6	30°35'23"S 022°52'11"E	Altitude 1137m.

RESULTS

Scatters of highly patinated lydianite core material appeared in abundance at some of the sites. There is a general distribution of sparsely scattered highly patinated Middle Stone Age / Later Stone Age flakes at the indicated sites.

Archaeological or historical material was absent from BP4 and BP5.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Because of the apparent general distribution of the lithic material and sparsely scattered patinated stone flakes at most of the sites, I consider that the proposed opening of the borrow pits along the MR768 road between Britstown and Vosburg will have a low impact on the archaeological and cultural remains of the area.

The specific tools are highly patinated and do not fall into a clear cluster. It is therefore, not considered of very high significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the borrow pits and I recommend that the work may proceed.

MITIGATION

Concerning the areas for the proposed developments, mitigation measures will not be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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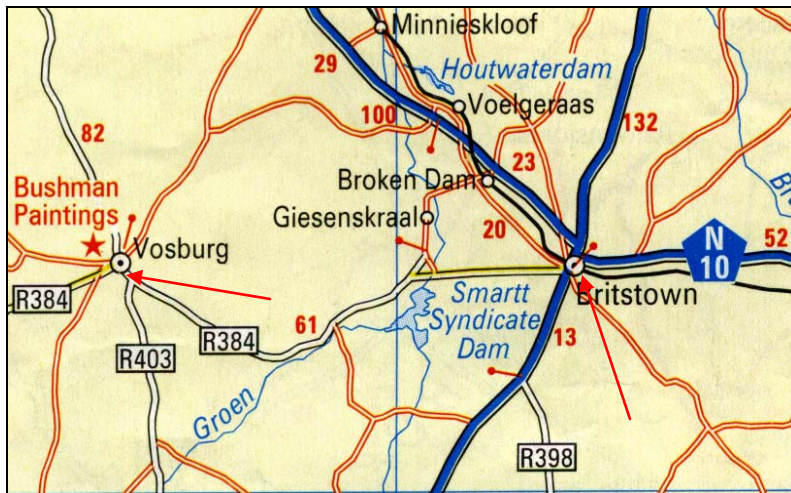
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 The MR768 road between Britstown & Vosburg, Northern Cape.



Fig.1 BP1 Existing borrow pit on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown.



Fig.2 Calcrete outcrop at BP1 on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown.



Fig.3 Scattered patinated lydianite stones at BP1 on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown.



Fig.4 Scattered stones in old road at BP1 on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown.



Fig.5 A few scattered stone tools at BP1 on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.6 Dolerite boulders at BP1 on New Nietgedacht 166, Britstown.



Fig.7 BP 2 Existing borrow pit at Subdivision 4 Pompfontein 104, Britstown.



Fig.8 Selection of stone flakes from BP 2. (Pocket knife = 103mm).



Fig.9 Selection of stone flakes from BP 2. (Black Pen = 130mm).



Fig.10 BP3 at Subdivision 3 of Sand Pan 106, Britstown.



Fig.11 Scattered stone tools at BP3 on San Pa 106, Britstown. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.12 BP4 View of the site at Bloemfontein 106, Britstown.



Fig.13 Another view of BP4 at Bloemfontein 106, Britstown..



Fig.14 Dolerite boulders at BP4 at Bloemfontein 106, Britstown.



Fig.15 BP5 at Arcadia 112, Vosburg.



Fig.16 View of the soil surface at BP5 at Arcadia 112, Vosburg.



Fig.17 View of the area at BP6 along the R384 outside Vosburg.



Fig.18 Existing BP6 along the R384 near Vosburg.



Fig.19 Stone flakes at BP6 on the R384 near Vosburg. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.20 BP6 on the R384 near Vosburg.



Fig.21 Note the sandy soil and vegetation cover at BP6 on the R384 near Vosburg.



Fig.22 More stone flakes from BP6 on the R384 near Vosburg. (Pocket knife = 83mm).