

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON A
PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FLANKING DAKOTA
DRIVE IN UPINGTON, //KHARA HAIS MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN
CAPE PROVINCE.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to establish if any heritage sites were present in a planned residential development flanking Dakota Drive in Uppington, //Khara Hais Municipality, Northern Cape (Figs 1 & 2). This 16 ha property comprises the lower south – western slopes of a ridge on which Precambrian schist bedrock is overlain by schist and calcrete rubble in a matrix of gritty red sand up to a metre deep in places. On it I found an isolated Acheulean handaxe and was taken to two separate graveyards, of which the larger one, near a railway line, has been much vandalised. These burials, of which one is dated to 1927, will certainly need to be protected, but the rest of this property is not deemed to have any significant heritage potential.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Upington is a thriving city with a burgeoning population and a consequent huge demand for housing there. This study was requested by Irmé van Zyl of Van Zyl Environmental Consultants, acting in conjunction with Stabilis Development Planners based in Upington.

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Rather few sites are known in the near vicinity of Upington, with one of these being the recently - located Victoria West occurrence on the farm Droogehout 422, about 30 km WNW of it, on the N 10 to Nakop.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

This 16 ha area, a portion of Erven 1, is flanked to the south by Dakota Drive, to the west by a railway line, to the north – east by a 846 m – high ridge, and lies some 2 km north – west of the Upington town centre (Figs 1 & 2). It comprises a mostly sloping hillside that is well – covered by grass and low shrubs due to an unusually deep cover of red sand over much of its extent. I spent 1.5 hrs walking over this ground, which has co-ordinates near its margin half – way down Dakota Drive of 28° 26' 49" S, 21° 13' 49" E, where elevation was 816 m, on Wednesday 2 August 2006.

SUPERFICIAL GEOLOGY

The sediment sequence was seen to be bedrock of Precambrian schist covered by a schist and calcrete rubble in a thin matrix of red sand upslope grading further down to deep red sand, over a metre deep in places, on calcrete.

HERITAGE FINDINGS

The lower slope, near Dakota Drive, produced a single isolated handaxe based on quartzite and with a broken tip (Fig 3), thereby re-affirming an Acheulean presence in Upington, as originally shown by SAM 2999 (Gordon & van Riet Lowe 1929 p. 50).

On the western side of this ground, near the present railway line, is a large graveyard, about 50 x 130 m in extent, as noted by the ground surveyor (Fig 2), that is somewhat irregularly covered by individual interments. Most of these are in the form of low mounds, sometimes with a few covering stones and / or a headstone, now often displaced (Fig 4), while some are marked by half inch iron bar crosses with a flattened corrugated iron nameplate, from which writing has now faded. However, there were two graves that were neatly cemented and, although both had been deliberately damaged (Figs 5 - 7), the headstone on the one could still be seen to read "Wilhemina Raats, Gebore Koopman, Orlede 11-8-27". Vandalism by latter – day meths drinkers and long neglect made a firm estimate for the total number of burials impossible, but my estimate would be at least 60, with co-ordinates of 28° 26' 47.9" S, 21° 13' 40.4" E and 28° 26' 38.8" S, 21° 13' 43.6" E for the northern and southern – most extents of this cemetery.

Some distance due east of the above-mentioned graveyard, with co-ordinates of 28° 26' 48.7" S, 21° 13' 48.4" E and 28° 26' 49.3" S, 21° 13' 49.0" E for its northern and southern limits, is another one. It, being further removed from any housing, is far less disturbed, with my count being about 30 graves, in the form of low mounds, with or without associated stones, and a few with the same iron crosses. Those suggest, in the absence of any names and dates there, a similar population and age to the other occurrence, but why there should be two coeval graveyards is a mystery, as also where these people lived, given that nearby Pabellelo is, seemingly, a new suburb. What is certain is that both graveyards owe their presence to the deep red sand, which is unusual for ground in and around Upington that lies above the Orange River floodplain.

CONCLUSIONS

Both cemeteries will have to be fenced with 2 m wire mesh set in rectangles at least 5 m from the nearest possible grave, with entry by way of a padlocked gate of the same height. Their maintenance should, if possible, be integrated with the municipal schedule for the regular upkeep of the presumably many other graveyards within the //Khara Hais Municipality. As for the rest of the ground, this produced no significant heritage material in the form of actual sites or palaeontological occurrences and its use for housing will therefore have no impact on the archaeological resources of the Northern Cape.

REFERENCES

Goodwin, A.J.H. and van Riet Lowe, C. 1929. The Stone Age Cultures of South Africa. Annals of the S. Afr. Museum 27, 1 – 289.

NOTES

- A copy of the locality maps and other appended Figures must accompany this report to SAHRA.
- Applications to SAHRA are not processed unless accompanied by the payment of R150 per application. SAHRA banking details are: ABSA, Branch Code: 312109; Current Account no.: 360 680 606.

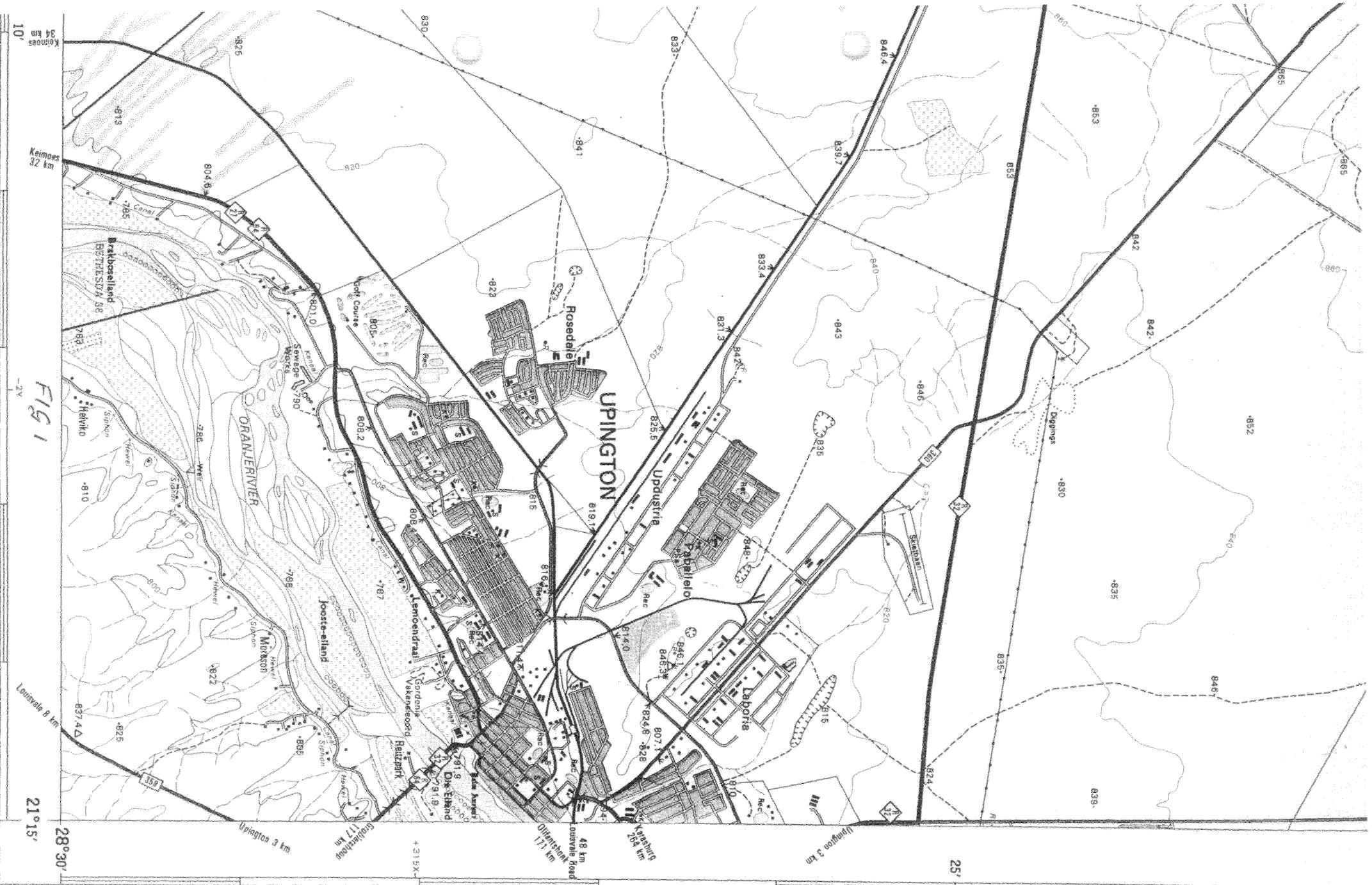


FIG 1

2821 AC UPINGTON.

Keimoes 34 km

Keimoes 32 km

Louisa 8 km

21°15'

Upington 3 km

Galesburg 17 km

+315X

Upington 111 km

48 km

Upington 264 km

Upington 3 km

25°

10°

9

10

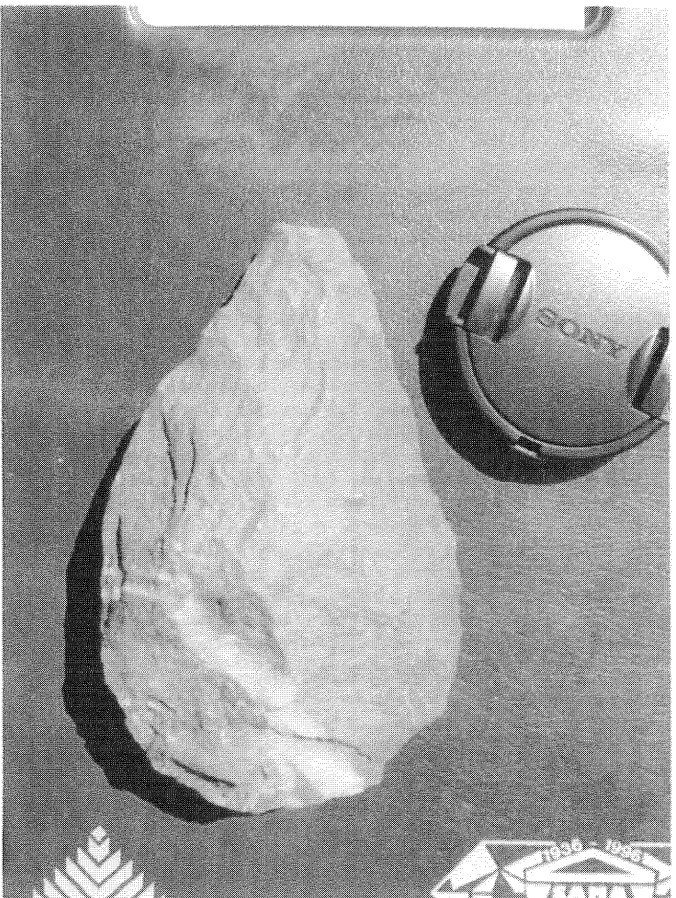


FIG 3. QUARTZITE HANDAXE WITH BROKEN TIP



FIG 4

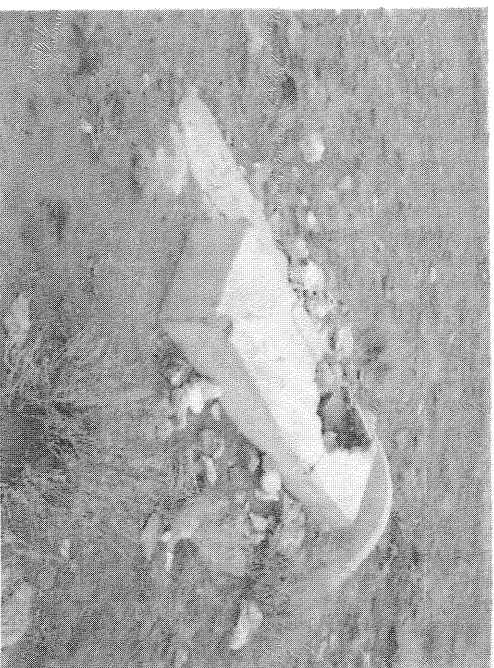


FIG 5



FIG 6



FIG 7