

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED BURIAL SITE OF SARAH BAARTMAN AT HANKEY, KOUGA MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

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### Background

The small hill (33.50.13S:24.53.5E) and proposed burial site of Sarah Baartman was visited on 28 July 2002 and surveyed for possible archaeological heritage remains and features. The site offers spectacular scenic view of the Gamtoos River, the town of Hankey, Cape Mountains and surrounding areas. Due to this prominent position in the landscape and a popular view point that the hill and surrounding areas in the past were exposed to development and other disturbances. The modern disturbances which also damaged and/or demolished the archaeological remains and features include:

- Communication towers, brick buildings and fences
- electrical cables
- Cement car tracks and steps
- Reservoir
- The name HANKEY constructed from white washed river cobbles
- Graffiti on the soft exposed sandstone slopes

It is suggested that these modern features and disturbances be removed in the future to honour the dignity, importance and aesthetics of the site.

### Archaeological heritage survey

The hill is capped by a thick layer of alluvial sand and river cobbles and pebbles. Stone tools are visible on the surface and mixed with the river gravels and deposits along slopes of the hill, foot paths and other disturbed areas. The implements date from the Later Stone Age (past 20 000 years) and Middle Stone Age (between 30 000 - 120 000 years ago) and were manufactures from local river pebbles. No typical Earlier Stone Age tools (older than 200 000 years old) were found on the hill top, but it is anticipated that they will be found in the vicinity of the hill.

The stone implements are disturbed and in secondary context with no other associated archaeological remains, such as food waste or features. It is therefore regarded as of low archaeological importance. The Albany Museum have collections of similar stone tools from the region. Implements may, however, be collected for later use, i.e; display purpose in an information centre (a permit from SAHRA will be required to collect material).

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Unfortunately the small area where the proposed grave will be situated, could not be investigated because of the dense vegetation. During the visit peculiar 'mounds' and 'packed' river cobbles were noticed. Although these 'features' are most probably natural build-ups of old vegetation and soil, the possibility of historical graves cannot be excluded. It could also be heaps of rubble dumped there from earlier building/developments (construction of the communication towers) and eventually covered by vegetation. However, an assessment of the area can only be made once the vegetation has been removed.

Other possible archaeological features such as a small tunnel, 20 x 2 x 2 metres on the slope of the hill was also investigated. Apart from the walls being covered in graffiti and garbage on the floor, no cultural remains were visible.

**Summary and recommendations**

Apart from the stone implements, no other visible archaeological material or features were found. In general, the survey indicated that the burial site is of low archaeological sensitivity (excluding the grave site). A final assessment of the grave site can only be made once the dense vegetation is cleared.

It is recommended that if any archaeological material or features are discovered during the clearing of the vegetation, an archaeologist be contacted immediately.

Any collection or removal of 'other remains' requires a permit from SAHRA.