

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON A
PORTION OF THE FARM BLOUBOSPUT 340 NEAR
NIEKERKSHOOP, KAROO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN
CAPE PROVINCE.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to establish if any heritage sites were present on a portion of the farm Bloubosput 340 near Niekerkshoop, Karoo District Municipality, Northern Cape. Within the ca. 10 ha strip that was examined, Precambrian jaspilite with Tigers Eye lenses was noted to be thinly covered by reddish sand with occasional artefacts, but no sites, fossil bones or graves were seen. It is consequently considered that the examined area has no heritage significance and that envisaged further open cast diggings would have no impact on the archaeological resources of the Northern Cape.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tigers Eye is a highly silicified form of asbestos that is, in South Africa, largely confined to ~2.4 billion year – old Asbestos Hills Banded Ironstone Formation (Kent 1980) outcrops between Griquatown and Prieska. On the farm Bloubosput 340 it occurs in the form of thin and discontinuous lenses in banded ironstone or jaspilite beds that occur on the crest of the Noute se Berg ridge in the Asbesberge at ~1300 m (Fig 1). This study is part of an EMP that is being prepared by Adriaan du Toit for the farm owner.

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The McGregor Museum has a small collection (MMK 1130) of Acheulean handaxes, based on jaspilite, from Griquatown (Goodwin & van Riet Lowe 1929). There is also an extensive handaxe site overlying an old river gravel exposure flanking a meander of the Orange River some 10 km upstream of Prieska, according to Adriaan du Toit. However, to my knowledge, no Stone Age localities have as yet been found in the broad vicinity of Niekerkshoop.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The ca. 10 ha strip that was examined is on the farm Bloubosput 340 in the Karoo District Municipality about 18 km SW of Niekerkshoop. It lies on the northern extension of Noute se Berg in the southern Asbesberge, centred on 29° 26' 47" S, 22° 41' 24" E, as shown on the appended 1:50 000 map 2922 BC Bloubosfontein (Fig 2). About an hour was spent walking over two portions of the strip on Friday 22 September 2006, together with Annemarie van Heerden, Botany Department, McGregor Museum.

SUPERFICIAL GEOLOGY

The mountain crest there was pocked by smallish (10 – 50 m²) pits where thin discontinuous lenses of Tigers Eye in the jaspilite had been followed downwards.

Overlying those bedrock deposits was a consistently thin (0 – 10 cm) covering of rubble and reddish sand that forms the modern surface.

HERITAGE FINDINGS

My search within the two areas produced eleven irregular jaspilite flakes, of which one was markedly end struck, but all had similar slightly smoothed surfaces (Fig 3). These specimens are probably of ESA age and, if so, given the mountain crest setting, an implication would be that they have undergone almost no surface change, despite long exposure. No palaeontological bones or graves were seen or were to be expected.

CONCLUSIONS

The inspected areas revealed a very sparse scatter of artefacts, but no sign of an actual site. My conclusion is therefore that the further mining there of Tigers Eye will have no impact on the archaeological resources of the Northern Cape. I note also that the mining of Tigers Eye is one of the few potential jobs available for the many unemployed people in Niekerkshoop.

REFERENCES

- Goodwin, A.J.H. and van Riet Lowe, C. 1929. The Stone Age cultures of South Africa. *Ann. S. Afr. Mus.* **27**, 1 – 289.
- Kent, L.E. (ed) 1980. Stratigraphy of South Africa. Part 1. *Geol. Survey of S. Afr. Handbook* **8**, 1 – 690.

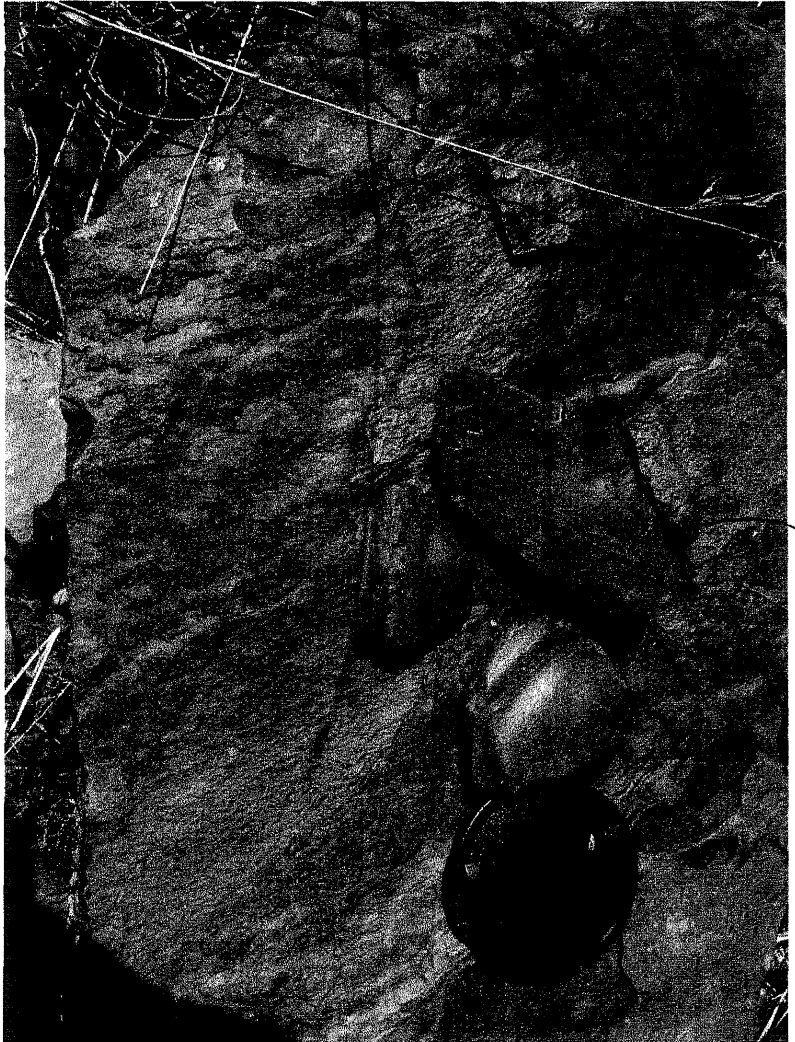
NOTES

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

FIG 2.



FIG 3.



ENDSTRUCK FLAKE