

9/12/05/00002

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON
PORTION 5 OF THE FARM UITKOMS 463, KGALAGADI
DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine to which extent the Kathu Townlands 1 site covered the ca. 25 ha area known as Portion 5 of the farm Uitkoms 463, which currently flanks the eastern edge of the town Kathu in the Kgalagadi district of the Northern Cape. It was established that this handaxe locality stretched over ca. 45 000 m² of the property, which suggests, assuming the 9 000 artefacts per m² density in a 1990 excavation there, that the southern portion of the Kathu Townlands site contains some 400 million artefacts. It is recommended that this segment of Portion 5 should be declared a Provincial, or preferably, a National Heritage Site, bearing on the subcontinental beginnings of blade production and pigment usage, by at least 350 000 years ago. No artefacts, palaeontological bone or graves were seen on the southern and western remainder of the property, and the use of that area for urban development would therefore have no impact whatsoever on the archaeological resources of the Northern Cape.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Kathu Townlands site was discovered by N. Viljoen in 1980 and investigated by way of two small excavations some 300 m apart in 1982 and 1990 (Beaumont & Morris 1990). The latter dig established that the site extended south of the main road into Kathu, but other priorities then prevented me tracing its precise extent in that direction (Figs. 1 & 2). This was done during the present study, which was requested by M. Geldenhuys of MEG Environmental Impact Studies, acting on behalf of the property owner, the Gamagara Municipality.

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The geologist G. Collins, in the early 1970's, made small collections, now housed at the McGregor Museum, from a number of specularite workings and Acheulean scatters flanking the Gamagara River south-west of Kathu. Subsequent fieldwork by myself in the vicinity was largely centered on localities at or near Kathu Pan, which is located just north-west of Kathu (Fig. 1), on the Dibeng road (Beaumont & Morris 1990).

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The ca. 25 ha that was examined lies on the eastern outskirts of the town Kathu in the Kgalagadi district of the Northern Cape. The property is flat and has an elevation of 1227 – 1235 m, with its location on the 1:50 000 map 2723C Kathu being as shown in Fig. 1. Over two hours was spent walking over the full extent of this terrain on the afternoon of Thursday 25 May 2006.

SUPERFICIAL GEOLOGY

Bedrock over the southern and western parts of the property was seen to be Tertiary – aged Kalahari Group calcrete (Kent 1980) with a heavily weathered surface covered by orange – red sand that seems to be deep (>0.5 m) in places. Over the rest of Portion 5 the thinner (5 – 10 cm) surface sands cover a 0 – 1 m – deep rubble which in turn underlain by Precambrian jaspilite. This southern part

of the Kathu Townlands 1 site extends North – South for ~320 m and East – West for up to ~170 m, excluding the up to 60 m – wide strip on Namakwari ground (Fig 3).

HERITAGE FINDINGS

- * A random foot search over that portion of the property in which calcrete constitutes bedrock produced no artefacts, no palaeontological bones and no graves of any age. However, along the northern part, where bedrock is jaspilite, the artefact rubble covers ca. 45 000 m², which given a yield of 9 000 artefacts per m² in the 1990 excavation there, suggests that this area contains about 400 million artefacts.
- These lithics reflect quarry – workshop activities, with most bifaces being roughouts, but the occasional finished ones are typically small and refined, as are the associated “tortoise” and blade cores. Of note was the recovery from a roadside exposure of a fist – sized nodule of specularite that must have come from one of its hillside occurrences flanking the Gamagara River, some 15 – 20 km to the south – west. ^(Forte) Specularite has been found at Fauresmith sites, such as the one in Stratum 4a at Kathu Pan 1, but this is the first good evidence that the practice of collecting this particular mineral ranges back still further, to the Late Acheulean.

CONCLUSIONS

- * No artefact, palaeontological bones or graves were found over the southern and eastern parts of Portion 5 that have calcrete bedrock and the use of those areas for housing will therefore have no impact on the archaeological resources of the Northern Cape.
- * However, that area with jaspilite bedrock and about 400 million overlying Acheulean artefacts is an archaeological treasure that deserves National heritage status, and, certainly any use of it for urban development would be a fatal error.

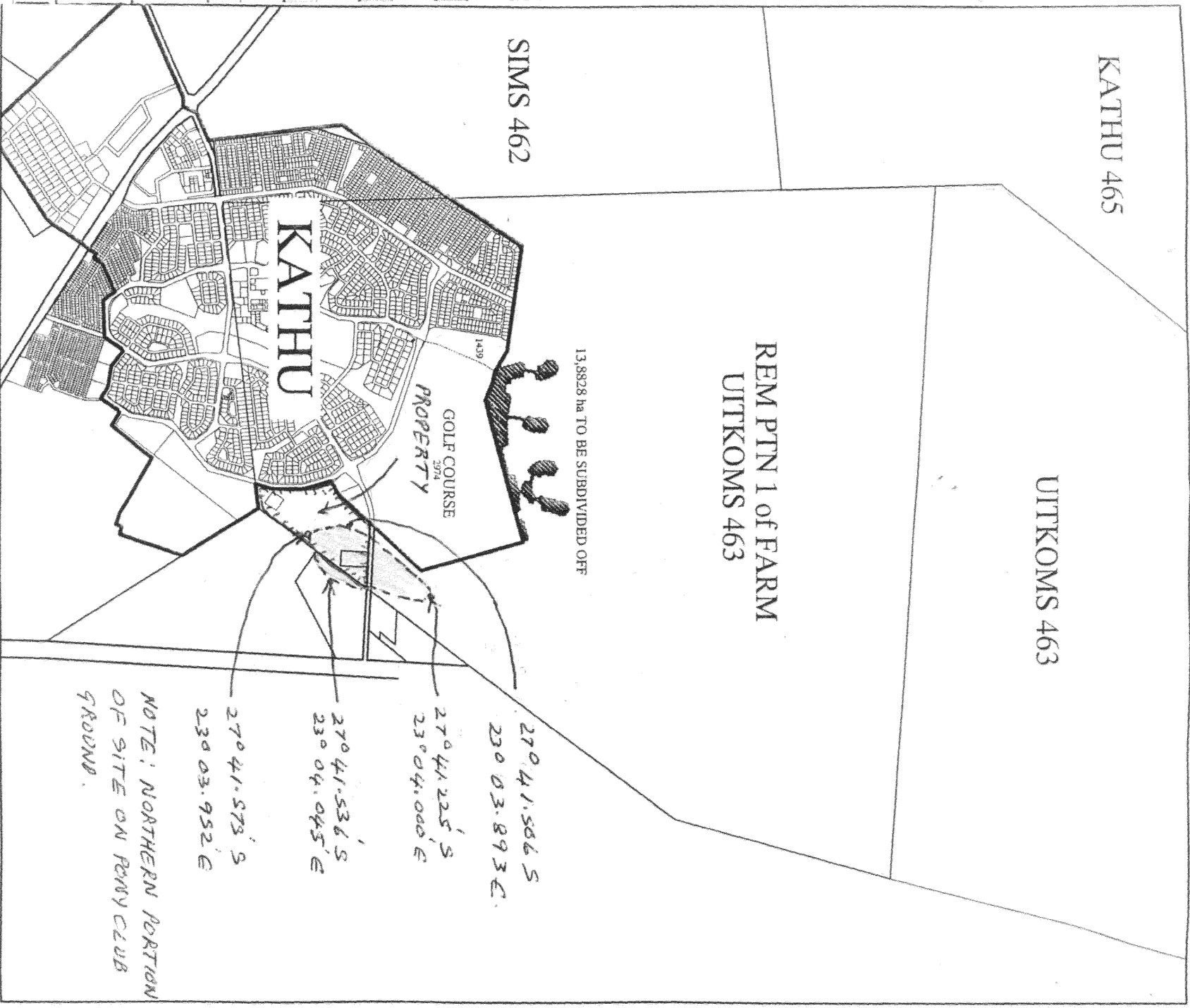
REFERENCES

- Beaumont, P. and Morris, D. (1990) *Guide to archaeological sites in the Northern Cape*. McGregor Museum. Kimberley.
- Kent, L.E. (ed.). 1980. Stratigraphy of South Africa. Part 1. *Geological Survey of South Africa Handbook 8*: 1 - 690.

NOTES

- A copy of the locality maps 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.



PTN OF FARM 463 TO BE CONSOLIDATED WITH
ERF 2974, GOLF COURSE = 13,8828ha

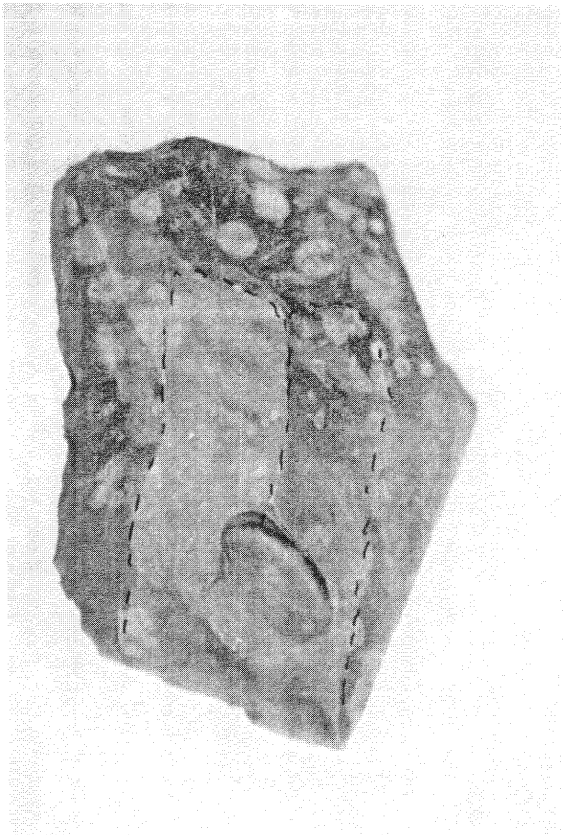
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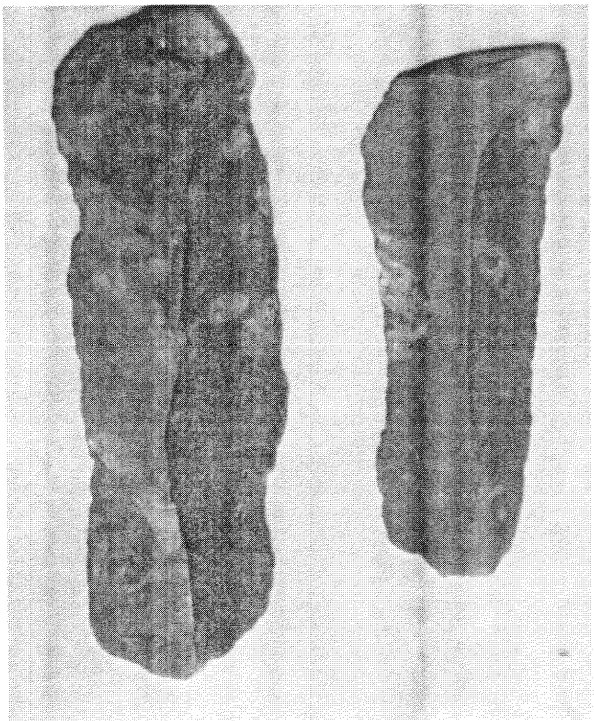
FIG. 2 EXTENT OF KATHU TOWNLANDS 1 SITE

Figure 9 : Proposed Subdivision of Ptn 1 of
Farm Utikoms 463

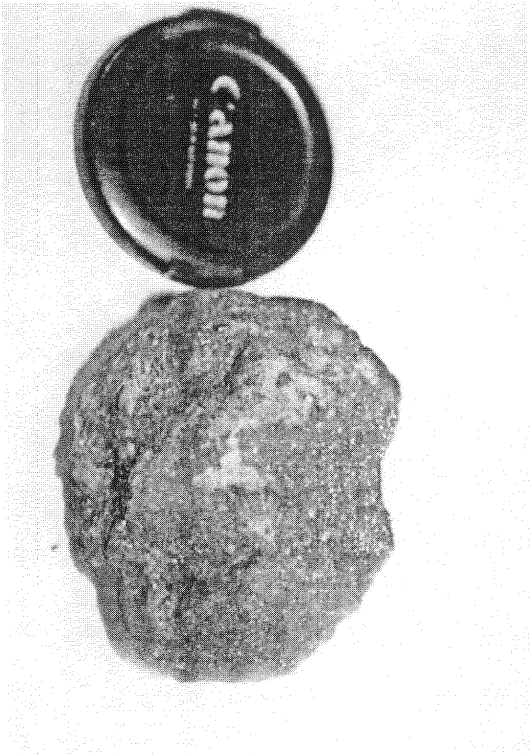
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BLADE CORE



BLADES



SPECULARITE
SLAB.

Figure 2.

PHOTO 1.