

Archaeological Impact Assessment

Title: Darling Chicken Abattoir.

Proposal to develop an abattoir with a building footprint of 2400 sq. m. and parking/loading facilities on 4.1 ha of land, Erf 955 zoned industrial, on Caledon Street in the industrial area of Darling, **Swartland 'B' Municipality, West Coast District Municipality, Western Cape.**

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Commissioned by Environmental Consultants

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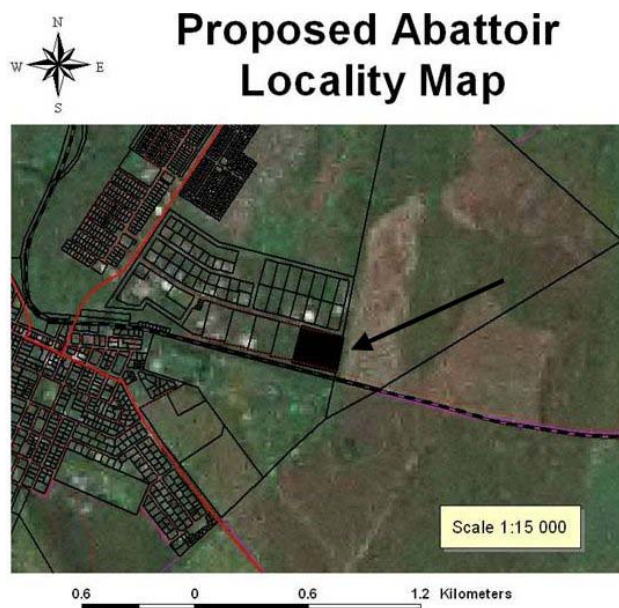


Figure 1. Erf in the industrial area of Darling bounded by the rail to the south.

Executive Summary

A survey was conducted of 4.1 ha Erf 955 in the industrial area of Darling, the proposed site of an abattoir (Figure 1). The land bordering the railway and golf course is undeveloped with no standing structures. The substrate is sandy with iron concretions and there is wide disturbance by animal and human activity. Two silcrete stone artefacts were recorded in different parts of the property. Typologically different and probably of different age the significance is rated as low (Figure 2). No palaeontological remains were noted. No significant impact on heritage resources is anticipated.

Background Information

This erf (Figure 1) bordered by Caledon Street and the railway adjacent to the golf course in the industrial area of Darling.

Archaeological Background

There is no known major archaeological occurrence in the immediate vicinity but sites like Elandsfontein near Hopefield show the presence of prehistoric hunter-gatherers and later herders in the area. Stone artefacts are permanent markers of past human activities and would be expected to occur widely as a background scatter.

Description of the property

The property is undeveloped level ground that has been used in part as a dump area for industrial waste (Figure 3).

Methodology

The property is vegetated in the main by aliens but ground visibility is reasonable. The sandy substrate is 0.5 m or thicker and visibility is restricted to these surficial deposits. Animal and artificial disturbances give some indication of the underlying material. The inspection concentrated such exposures (Figure 4).

Observations and Results

There are no buildings or structures on the property. The sandy acid substrate with iron concretions is not favourable for the preservation of organic materials like bone and shell and no palaeontological remains were observed. Two stone artefacts were recorded one in the centre and one on the southeastern corner of the property. The former is a small silcrete core possibly of Later Stone Age date (c. 5000 years) and the latter the proximal portion of a Middle Stone Age (c. 100 000 years) silcrete flake with a faceted butt (Figure 2). It is suspected that these are part of the background scatter of artefacts in the landscape. As such they do not constitute an occurrence that would be worth investigating.

Sources of Risk and Statement of Significance

The presence of artefacts on the property shows a prehistoric presence in the area and there is the risk that construction will uncover more artefacts. Examination of mole and porcupine disturbances and the ditch along the railway, which were negative, suggests artefacts are sparsely distributed and the risk of development disturbing any significant occurrence is low.

Recommended Mitigations

It is recommended that should any excavations by chance uncover buried palaeontological or archaeological materials including human remains that Heritage Western Cape is notified (Mr N Ndlovu, Senior Heritage Officer – Archaeologist, Private Bag X9067, Cape Town 8000, Tel: 021 483 9687, Fax: 021 483 9842, ndlovu@pgwc.gov.za).

Conclusions

The examination of the property did not reveal significant archaeological, palaeontological or other heritage resources that may be impacted by development.



Figure 2. Proximal section of a Middle Stone Age flake with a faceted platform



Figure 3. Industrial waste on the site.



Figure 4. Animal burrows on the site.