

# Archaeological Impact Assessment

**Title:** Darling Low Cost Housing Development.

Proposal to develop on 19.25 ha of land that is portion of Erf 551 Darling East, Swartland Municipality, Western Cape. The zoning of the property is single residential and rezoning to a sub divisional area is proposed to accommodate 540 housing erven, one church, one crèche, one community facility and one school erven, seven business erven and six open space erven. The development adjoins and will extend an existing development of low cost housing on the north east side of the town of Darling.

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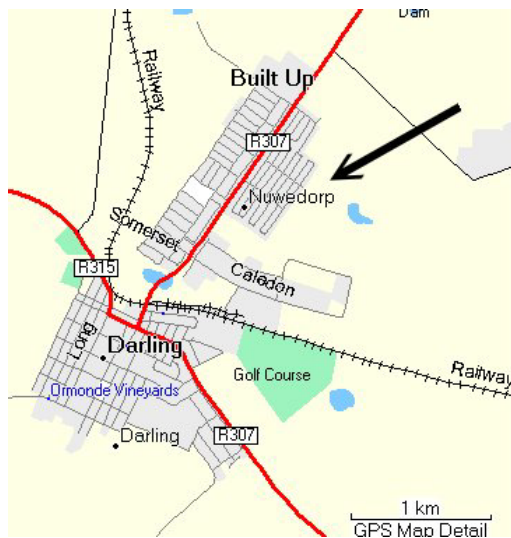
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**Date:** 18 June 07



**Figure 1. Location of Erf 551 development north east of Darling town.  
1:50 000 sheet 3318 AD Darling**

### **Executive Summary**

A survey of the archaeological resources on Erf 551, Darling, to be developed for low cost housing, was carried out. A localised occurrence of Middle and Later Stone age artefacts was recorded on the edge of the area adjacent to a dam. The degree of disturbance through ploughing and construction reduces the significance of the occurrence. No specific mitigation is recommended.

### **Background Information**

Erf 551 is on the north east side of Darling town and on the eastern side of the R307 Darling to Moorreesburg road (Figure1). There is an existing housing development, Nuwedorp, adjacent to the road and this development will be an extension of Nuwedorp.

This report is part of a Basic Assessment Activity and a full EIA is not required.

### **Archaeological Background**

This is the third survey I have carried out within the immediate environs of Darling town in the last year. The expectation was that there would be a low-density, background scatter of stone artefacts in the flats around the town but that the preservation of fauna would be poor.

### **Description of the property**

The property is old farmland that has been ploughed. There are no structures. The northern part of the property beyond the proposed development has been mined for road metal and is unrehabilitated. There is a dam to the east bordering the proposed extension and this feature is functionally a wetland. There are agricultural lands on the eastern and northern sides while the industrial area of Darling makes up the southern border. Nuwedorp the existing low cost housing adjacent to the R307 is to the west.

### **Methodology**

The survey was a random GPS tracked walk across the property designed to optimise encountering archaeological occurrences. Exposures on the property were examined. The survey was carried out over three separate visits.

### **Observations and Results**

The main observation relates to a concentration of artefacts above the normal background scatter in a localised area west of the dam feature and on the edge of the proposed extension of the low cost housing development (A in Figures 3 & 4). Of the order of 20 artefacts were noted in the concentration. All the artefacts (Figures 5-7) are in a similar pale cream silcrete. Typologically there are Middle Stone Age flakes and points with

faceted platforms and in addition there are pieces, an adze and a scraper, that relate to the Later Stone Age. This indicates that artefacts of different time periods are mixed as part of the same occurrence. The higher concentration of artefacts in a limited area (Figure 4) could be an indication of Stone Age encampments there or it could be the result of disturbance related to dam building activities. The dumping of scraped out materials from a wide area to form the down slope wall of the dam and subsequent lag concentration of artefacts with the washing out of fines is the more probable explanation. Although the concentration is anomalous in this context, it is not of such a level that would warrant a surface collection being made.

The dam is an artificial feature but it may be sited on what was originally a vlei, an area of perched water table. This may account for artefacts being distributed in its proximity. There is no associate fauna preserved.

### **Sources of Risk and Statement of Significance**

The whole of the area of the proposed development and its surrounds has been ploughed. The dam building activities have contributed to further disturbance. These factors reduce the risks of development uncovering materials in undisturbed context.

The significance is rated medium to low. The lower rating in spite of a localised occurrence is because of the degree of disturbance through ploughing and dam construction. The mixture of artefacts of different ages reduces the significance of the occurrence. It is unlikely that a mixed age collection would warrant curation in a museum collection. It is also unlikely that any collection from the property would add significantly to our knowledge of the Stone Age.

### **Recommended Mitigations**

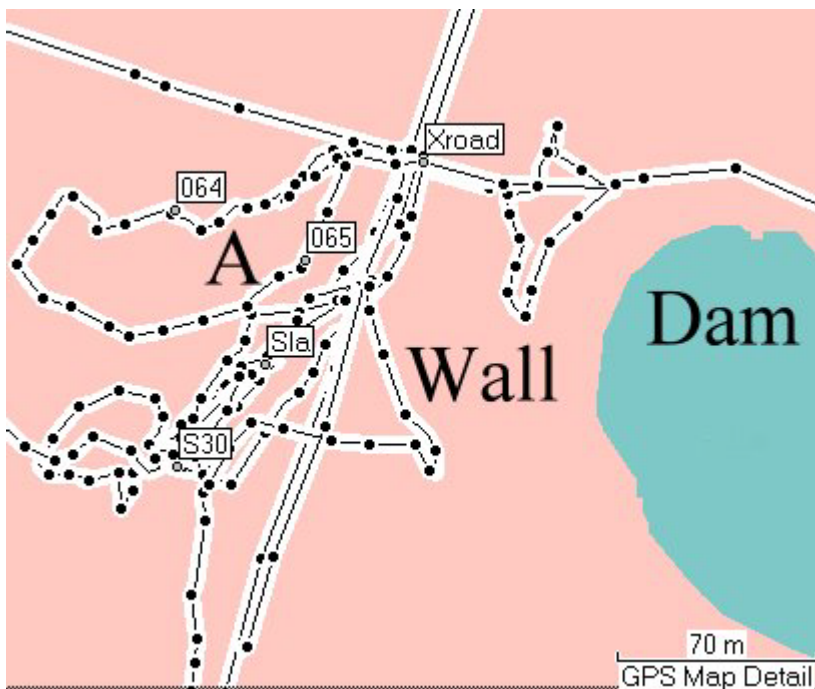
It is recommended that should any excavations by chance uncover buried palaeontological or archaeological materials including human remains that Heritage Western Cape is notified (Mr N Ndlovu, Senior Heritage Officer – Archaeologist, Private Bag X9067, Cape Town 8000, Tel: 021 483 9687, Fax: 021 483 9842, [nndlovu@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:nndlovu@pgwc.gov.za) ). Features like burials for example can occur in unpredictable locations.



Figure 2. Erf 551 Darling (brown) showing proposed extension to the housing (black outline), the disturbed mined out area and the position of the dam. A= artefacts .



**Figure 3. Aerial view showing the position of the artefact occurrence, A, in relation to the area to be developed and the dam feature.**



**Figure 4. GPS track of the artefact occurrence, A (Sla, S33 22 07.1 E18 23 45.0; S30, S33 22 08.3 E18 23 43.8; 064, S33 22 05.4 E18 23 47.1) in relation to the dam, wall and cross road reference point (Xroad S33 22 04.8 E18 23 47.1). 064-S30-065 defines the area of the scatter, some 70 x 70 m.**



**Figure 5. The largest artefact is a silcrete flake with flaking on the margins that served as a core (position Sla).**



**Figure 5. Rectangular silcrete Middle Stone Age flake**



**Figure 6. Small Later Stone Age silcrete convex scraper and gerbil holes (064)**