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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DIAMOND MINING ACTIVITIES AT THE FARM MATLABANE STAD 299 HO, BLOEMHOF, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diamond mining activities are planned on the farm Matlabane Stad 299 HO, Bloemhof District, North West Province.

The proposed areas show remnants of old plough lands and disturbances of previous diggings and diamond prospecting.

Two Stone Age flakes and a single blade were collected on the surface. No other archaeological and cultural remains occurred.

I recommend that the planning and development of the mining activities may proceed.

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

INVESTIGATION

Two areas proposed for diamond mining activities on the farm Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof District, North West Province, were visited on 22 May 2007. Mr. Japie Loubser of Schweizer-Reneke gave directions to the farm and Mr. Dave du Plooy, the owner, took me to the sites.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage

Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

LOCALITY

The mining activities are being planned on portions 6 and 10 of the farm Matlabane Stad 299 HO, Bloemhof District, North West Province. The farm is located about 33km from Christiana along the N12 national road to Bloemhof, in the district of Bloemhof, North West Province (Map 1).

The proposed areas are located just above the flood level on the flood plain along the Vaal River.

Part of the area had been used as old plough lands previously and disturbances of earlier diggings and diamond prospecting are visible. The soil surface is bush and grass covered (Fig.2), which become very dense near the River. Scatters of river washed pebbles appear (Figs.4&12).

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (2725CB):

MATLABANE STAD 299 HO PORTION 6 (Map 2).

Point A	27°43'37"S 025°23'13"E	Altitude 1210m (Fig.1).
Point B	27°43'41"S 025°23'19"E	Altitude 1212m (Fig.2)
Point C	27°43'43"S 025°23'23"E	Altitude 1209m (Fig.3).
Point D	27°43'47"S 025°23'24"E	Altitude 1212m (Fig.4).
Point E	27°43'47"S 025°23'08"E	Altitude 1210m (Fig.5).

MATLABANE STAD 299 HO PORTION 10 (Map 3).

Point A	27°43'07"S 025°24'07"E	Altitude 1211m (Fig.10).
Point B	27°43'26"S 025°24'11"E	Altitude 1217m (Fig.11)
Point C	27°43'25"S 025°24'13"E	Altitude 1213m (Fig.12).
Point D	27°43'17"S 025°24'19"E	Altitude 1211m (Fig.13).

RESULTS

Two Stone Age flakes and a single blade (Fig.9) were collected on the surface near Point E of Portion 6.

No other archaeological or cultural remains could be found on any other site.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The stone flakes found at Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof, seem to be a solitary occurrence and is considered as an insignificant find.

The proposed developments of diamond mining will have no impact on any cultural, archaeological and historical remains on the surface.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning of the mining developments and I recommend that the work may proceed.

MITIGATION

Concerning the areas for the proposed extensions, no mitigation measures will be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Japie Loubser from Schweizer-Reneke for involving me in the project and Dave du Plooy for taking me to the sites.

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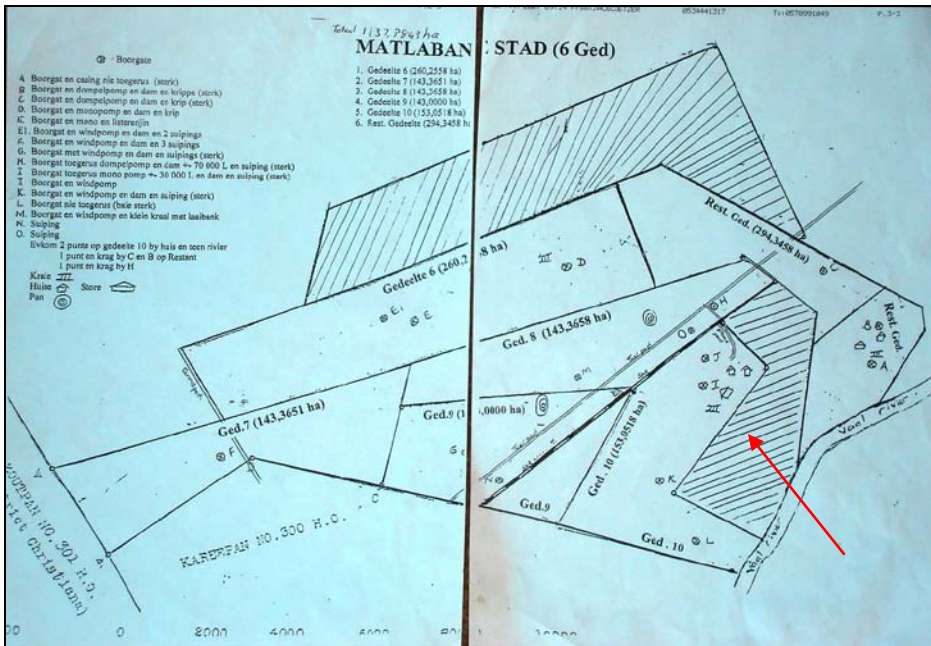
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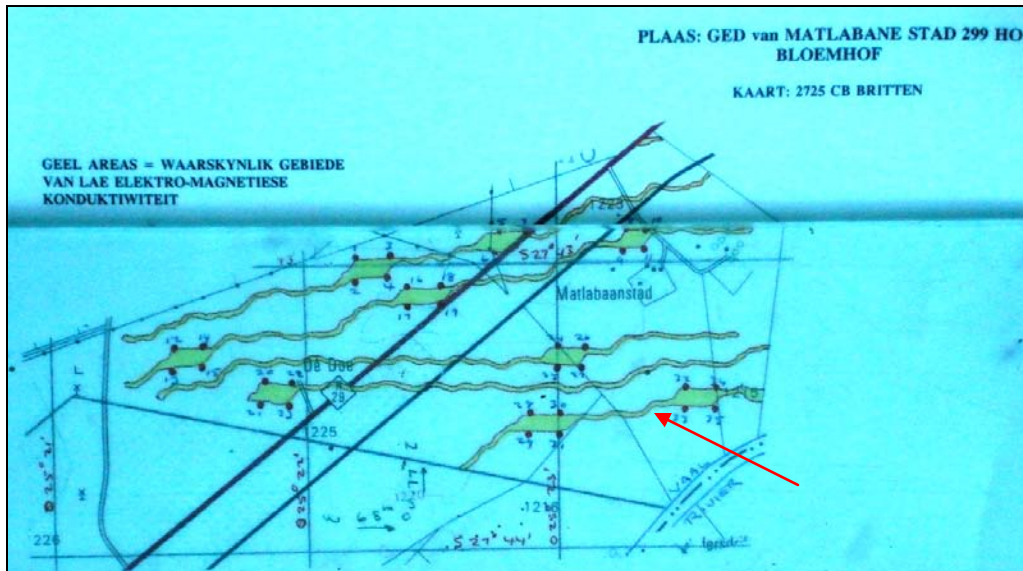
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 The N14 road between Christiania & Bloemhof, North West Province.



Map 2 Locality of the proposed developments at Portion 6 of the farm Matlaban Stad 299 HO, Bloemhof, North West Province.



Map 3 Locality of the proposed developments at Portion 10 of the farm Matlabane Stad 299 HO, Bloemhof, North West Province.



Fig.1 Portion 6 Point A at Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.2 Portion 6 Point B at Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.3 Portion 6 Point C Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.4 Portion 6 Point D. Note the dense vegetation on the riverbank.



Fig.5 View at Portion 6 Point E at Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.6 Portion 6. Old prospecting site, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.7 Portion 6. Old prospecting site near Point E, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.8 Portion 6. Old prospecting site near Point E, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.9 Flakes and scrapers from prospecting heaps near Portion 6 Point E, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof. (Pocket knife=85mm).



Fig.10 Portion 10 Point A. Old prospecting heap at Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.11 Portion 10 Point B, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.



Fig.12 View at Portion 10 Point C, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.
Dense vegetation near the River.



Fig.13 Portion 10 Point D near the River bank, Matlabane Stad 299, Bloemhof.