

**McGregor Museum
Department of Archaeology**



**Report on a
Phase 1 Archaeological Impact
Assessment at Bucklands
Settlement near Douglas,
Northern Cape.**

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SAHRA 9/2/038/0001

David Morris
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Introduction

The author was contacted by Mr G.D. Creedy of Diamond Dump Recovery CC (P.O. Box 550, Douglas 8730, cell 0826109489) to undertake an archaeological impact assessment on a portion of the Bucklands Settlement adjacent to the Orange River near Douglas in the Northern Cape.

The farm was visited in December 2008. Observations made and recommendations are given in this report.

Legislation

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHRA) provides protection for archaeological resources.

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object (defined in the Act), without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Section 35 of the Act protects all archaeological and palaeontological sites and requires that anyone wishing to disturb a site must have a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. Section 36 protects human remains older than 60 years. In order for the authority to assess whether approval may be given for any form of disturbance, a specialist report is required. No mining, prospecting or development may take place without heritage assessment and approval.

SAHRA at national level acts on an agency basis for the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in the Northern Cape, where archaeological sites are concerned. Permit applications should be made to the SAHRA office in Cape Town.

Methods and limitations

A background literature/museum database search provides indications of what might be expected in the region.

During the site investigation, the area of proposed mining, a large sand dune east of the Orange River, and the areas immediately abutting it on the north and west, were inspected.

In this environment sediments of archaeological significance may be well below the surface. Old diggings or quarries often provide sections that may be inspected, and dumps of gravel give an opportunity to assess the potential archaeological content of underlying sediment.

In this instance the site of proposed mining is currently a substantial dune that rises above the surrounding terrain. Gravel has been exposed closer to the river.

Background: archaeological resources in the region

The Northern Cape has a wealth of archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris 1990, Morris & Beaumont 2004), with locales along and adjacent to the major river systems being of particular note. Stone Age material found in this area spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene times. Late Holocene material with pottery is known to occur on the river banks.



Extract from 1: 50 000 map sheet 2923BA

Observations

It was found that the area to be mined, of 1.5 ha in extent, within the area Y and X co-ordinates (WGS 84 WG 23) -68 799.61: 3 221 472.70; -68 795.31: 3 221 322.76; -68 895.28: 3 221 319.90; -68 899.58: 3 221 469.83 consists of a substantial dune of just to the east of a bend in the Orange River.

It rises from a clayey silt river bank, with centre-pivot irrigation fields immediately to the north (with only a very narrow strip of undisturbed river bank). Between the dune and the river there is disturbance from previous diamond digging activity, and dumps of gravel provide an opportunity to assess the presence of cultural material.

In terms of findings, the dump surfaces were found to be very largely sterile but with one very small scatter of no more than half a dozen flakes at the north side outside

of the area of proposed mining. This single find indicates a possibility that other Later Stone Age (LSA) material occurrences may exist within the dump. The roadway running around the field at the northern foot of the dune has eroded out a low density of LSA lithics and ostrich eggshell pieces (at most 2-3 artefacts/m²). It is expected that there would be higher density 'hotspots' of such LSA material along the bank overlooking the river.

In the disturbed gravels between the dump and the river a very small number of heavily rolled flakes of Pleistocene age were noted.



View westwards to the Orange River from the crest of the dune.



Agricultural lands to the north of the dune.



Old diamond miners' debris heap between the dune and the river.



LSA flakes and core on river-rounded hornfels pebbles, found in the road skirting the northern edge of the dune.

Recommendations

No significant archaeological traces were found on the dune which is intended to be mined.

Some LSA material was found to the north of the dune, eroding from the roadway which cuts into across river silt.

It is noted that localised LSA occurrences within the dune are possible but the evidence for this was minimal. It appears more likely that archaeological traces would be found on the areas around the dune and possibly beneath it, and these may include human burials, given their occurrence along rivers in the region (e.g. at St Clair, Douglas, and along the nearby Riet River).

In the event of such materials/features being found during mining or secondary impacts in the vicinity, work should be stopped and SAHRA in Cape Town should be contacted immediately (Mrs Mary Leslie, 021-4624502).

Acknowledgements

I thank Mr Gareth Creedy and his brother who guided me to the Bucklands Settlement area and the proposed mining site.

References

Beaumont, P.B. & Morris, D. 1990. *Guide to archaeological sites in the Northern Cape*. Kimberley: McGregor Museum.

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