

**McGregor Museum  
Department of Archaeology**



**Report on a  
Phase 1 Archaeological Impact  
Assessment at Erf 83 near Douglas,  
Northern Cape.**

DME NC 30/5/1/3/2/1584 MP

David Morris  
March 2009

# **A Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment at Erf 83 near Douglas, Northern Cape.**

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McGregor Museum, Kimberley. March 2009

## **Introduction**

The author was contacted by Mr G.P.F. Jung, Tel 0828221568, Douglas, to undertake an archaeological impact assessment ahead of proposed mining at Erf 83, Douglas.

The property was visited on 20 March 2009. 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.

The situation encountered at the site is identical that reported in a previous report (Morris 2009) for the nearby Erven 95-7, 106-7, namely cultivated lucerne fields on a terrace above the Vaal River, south bank, downstream from Douglas. Existing mining pits in the vicinity (whether these were preceded by impact assessments is not known) reveal a thickness of up to some 4 or 5 metres of silt overlying gravels which are being targeted by diamond diggers. At the surface it is impossible to assess with any certainty the impact of proposed mining on any archaeological traces that might exist at that depth, but existing nearby pits and churned over deposits from rehabilitated mining sites do give an opportunity to make some estimations in this regard.

## Background: archaeological resources in the region

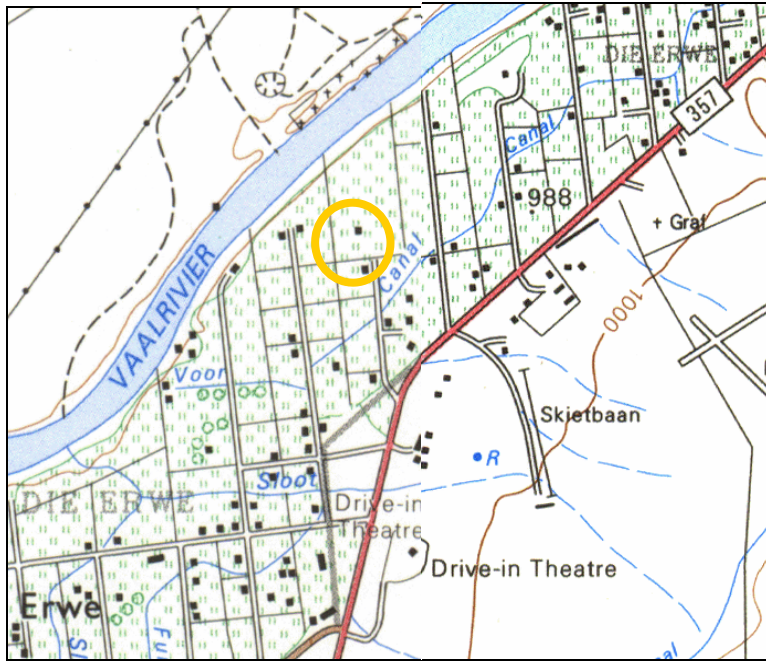
The Northern Cape has a wealth of archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris 1990, Morris & Beaumont 2004), with locales along and adjacent to the major river systems being of particular note. Stone Age material found in this area spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene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

## Observations

As noted above, the sites of proposed mining consist currently of lucerne fields with minimal archaeological visibility.

Erf 83 is indicated in the following Google Earth image:





Extract from 1: 50 000 map sheets 2923BA & BB

Substantial diggings have taken place and are in progress on adjacent erven. These provide glimpses of sediment profiles and the archaeological content of the underlying gravel. As noted previously (Morris 2009), there is a very low density of Acheulean artefacts within the gravel, which here included Victoria West cores (both 'perdehoef' and 'hoenderbek' varieties, noted for instance at  $29.06650^{\circ}$   $23.74715^{\circ}$  which near the corner of the proposed mining area on Erf 83.



View across the proposed mining area from north east corner of Erf 83.



Rehabilitated mining immediately north of Erf 83 (above) and soon to be filled in pit north east of Erf 83 (below).





Acheulean flake and Victoria West 'perdehoef' core (above) and  
'hoenderbek' core (below)



## **Significance**

As noted in the previous study nearby (Morris 2009), indications from existing/previous mining disturbances are that Acheulean artefacts occur within the gravel unit buried beneath the south bank silt terrace where proposed mining is to take place.

The incidence of artefacts is low, however, compared with other major sites in the area, such as Canteen Kopje or Pniel (Beaumont & Morris 1990).

## **Recommendations**

In view of the above significance assessment, it is not considered that mitigation is necessary here, although monitoring of mining should be scheduled to assess whether densities are universally low.

It is possible that Later and/or Middle Stone Age material may occur/may have occurred at or beneath the surface of the silt terrace, a surface largely modified by agricultural activity. Precolonial burials are also known to occur within such terraces (as at St Clair, just east of Douglas).

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 M. Leslie or Dr A. Jerardino, tel 021-4624502).

## **Acknowledgements**

I thank Mr Jung and his daughter who guided me to the proposed mining area at Erf 83, Douglas.

## **References**

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