

**McGregor Museum  
Department of Archaeology**



**Report on a  
Phase 1 Archaeological Impact  
Assessment at Erf 143 near  
Douglas,  
Northern Cape.**

DME NC 30/5/1/3/2/1948 EM

David Morris  
December 2010

## **A Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment at Erf 143 near Douglas, Northern Cape.**

David Morris  
McGregor Museum, Kimberley. December 2010

### **Introduction**

The author was contacted by Mr F.J. Smit, Tel 053-2981560, P.O. Box 254 Douglas 8730, to undertake an archaeological impact assessment ahead of proposed mining/rehabilitation of an already mined area at Erf 143, Douglas.

### **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 at this site is nearly identical that reported in two previous reports (Morris 2009a; 2009b) for the nearby Erven 83 and 95-7, 106-7, namely cultivated lucerne lands, mined previously in places, 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 have been and 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

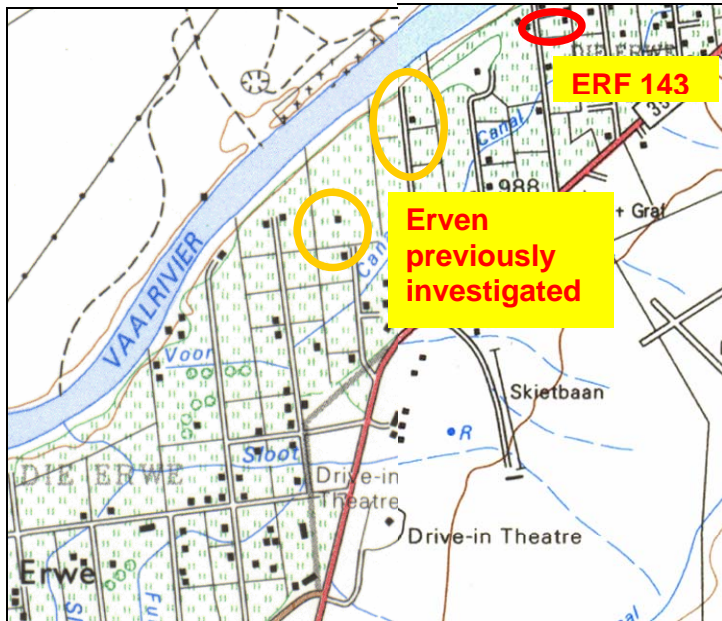
The Northern Cape has a wealth of archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris 1990, Morris & Beaumont 2004), with locales along and adjacent to the major river systems being of particular note. Stone Age material found in this area spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene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

## Observations

As noted above, the site of proposed mining (Erf 143) consists currently of already disturbed sediment surrounded by lucerne fields.

Erf 143 is indicated in the following Google Earth image:





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

Substantial diggings have taken place on this erf in the past, in an area defined by GPS readings: 29.05929° S 23.75451° E; 29.05921° S 23.75601° E; 29.06067° S 23.75469° E; 29.06050° S 23.75615° E. As noted previously (Morris 2009a, b), there is a very low density of Acheulean artefacts within the gravels in the area, including Victoria West cores (both 'perdehoef' and 'hoenderbek' varieties, noted for instance at 29.06650° S 23.74715° E).



Previous mining in the area





Victoria West 'hoenderbek' core found on Douglas Erven.

### **Significance**

As noted in the previous studies nearby (Morris 2009a & b), 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, and the fact that Erf 143 has been almost entirely churned over by mining in the past, it is not considered necessary that mitigation should take place here.

In the unlikely event of any in situ archaeological feature of note (including precolonial burials) being found during mining or secondary impacts in the vicinity, work should be stopped and SAHRA in Cape Town should be contacted immediately (Ms Nonofho Ndobachani/Ms Mariagrazia Galimberti, tel 021-4624502).

### **Acknowledgements**

I thank Mr Smit for his assistance in connection with this report.

## References

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