

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
MEERUST ESTATE  
FRANSCHOEK**

Report prepared for

**AIKMAN & ASSOCIATES**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and brief**

Aikman & Associates requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of the proposed development of the Meerust Estate, in Franschoek, in the South Western Cape Province.

An application for the rezoning of the remainder of farm 1475 Paarl has been made for the purpose of rezoning the property, in order to allow for a conference centre, guest rooms, restaurant and an agricultural processing plant on the property.

The aim of the AIA is to locate, identify and map archaeological remains that may be negatively impacted by the proposed project, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference for the study were:

1. to determine whether there are likely to be any archaeological sites of significance within the proposed site;
2. to identify and map any sites of archaeological significance within the proposed site;
3. to indicate the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites potentially affected by the proposed development;
4. to assess the status and significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development;
5. to identify mitigatory measures to protect and maintain any valuable archaeological sites that may exist within the proposed site, and
6. to propose actions for inclusion in the Construction Environmental Management Plan for the proposed project.

### 3. THE STUDY SITE

A map of the study area is illustrated in Figure 1.

The property is located approximately 12 km north of Franschhoek. Access to the property is taken off the R45, which links Paarl with Franschhoek. The property is located at the intersection of the R310 that links Stellenbosch with Pniel with the R45.

An aerial photograph of the property is illustrated in Figure 2.

The existing land use on the farm is primarily focused on agricultural activities, with a very substantial portion of the farm under fruit orchards, vine yards, olive groves and herbs.

Although this is only one of the properties that form part of the larger Meerust Estate, it is the only property on which the proposed activities are based. The remainder of farm 1475 is 142 ha in extent.

As instructed by Aikman and Associates, all three farms that form part of the larger Meerust Estate were searched for archaeological remains.

Aikman & Associates have been requested to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of the site, which includes the AIA.

### 4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY

#### 4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the AIA entailed a foot and vehicle survey of the remainder of Farm 1475.

A desktop study was also undertaken.

Archaeological work undertaken in the Franschhoek area has recorded relatively large numbers of Stone Age tools (Kaplan 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a,b, 2003a,b; Yates & Manhire 1997). The most commonly-occurring tools in the area are assigned to a period known as the Early Stone Age<sup>1</sup> (ESA).

ESA tools were first discovered on terraces above the Eerste River in Stellenbosch (Peringuey 1902, 1911). Among these was an artefact type of great antiquity recognised as an early handaxe. For many years after this, the ESA of South Africa was referred to as the 'Stellenbosch Culture' until the term was re-defined in the 1960s (Goodwin & Van Riet Lowe 1929).

Today the ESA is divided into the 'Olduvan' period, which is up to 1.7 million years old. This industry is associated with the oldest and most simple human-made artefacts. This was followed by the 'Acheulean' Tradition, a more developed stone artefact industry,

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<sup>1</sup> A term referring to the period between 2 million and 200 000 years ago.

characterised by the presence of specific types of stone tools such as handaxes, choppers and cleavers.

Acheulean sites have been recorded throughout South Africa and are especially associated with pans, river terraces, streams, and certain types of rock outcrops. Acheulean tools are also commonly found on mountain slopes, in degraded areas such as slope washes, road and bridge cuttings, excavations, in gravels deposits, vineyards, and in ploughed fields.

Younger Middle Stone Age<sup>2</sup> (MSA) and Later Stone Age<sup>3</sup> (LSA) remains appear to be less common in the Franschoek area, but such sites are known to occur. LSA rock paintings occur in the Wemmershoek area and on the farm Môreilig (Kaplan 2003b).

## 5. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Three separate precincts are proposed.

### 5.1 Entrance Precinct

The precinct represents the main entrance to the estate and includes the following activities:

- Entrance gate and security
- Nursery
- Farm store
- Parking area

### 5.2 Werf Precinct

This precinct represents the main `plaaswerf' and houses the historical dwelling units of the farm. The proposed land uses will be concentrated inside the existing farm werf. Two additional buildings will be developed in the future as part of the historic werf.

The Werf Precinct includes the following activities

- Gable House: the building will be converted into a restaurant.
- Mill house: the activities will include wine and olive tasting.
- Cellar building: the building will be upgraded to accommodate guest units.
- Main Homestead: the complex will offer luxury accommodation units.
- Homestead Annex: the building will be upgraded and restored for storage purposes.
- Baker House: the building will be converted to accommodate guest units.
- Conference facility
- New Accommodation units: new units will be built on the historical footprints of the buildings demolished over time.
- Parking
- Swimming pool and accompanying facilities.

<sup>2</sup> A term referring to the period between 200 000 and 20 000 years ago.

<sup>3</sup> A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.

### 5.3 Agricultural Precinct

The Agricultural Precinct includes the following activities

- Wine cellar
- Processing and manufacturing facility

## 6. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

### 6.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)

#### 6.1.1 Structures (Section 34 (1))

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by Western Cape Heritage, the responsible provincial heritage resources authority.

#### 6.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

No person may, without a permit issued by Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

#### 6.1.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))

No person may, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

### 6.2 Application requirements and procedure

Permit applications must be made on the official form:

- *Application to destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of a Provincial Heritage Site or demolish a structure 60 years old or more, as protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999);*
- *Application for permit to destroy: Archaeological and palaeontological sites and meteorites;*
- *Application for permit: Burial Grounds and Graves.*

Permit application forms are available from Heritage Western Cape.

## 7. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL RISKS

Within the Entrance Precinct and the Agricultural Precinct, there are no potential risks associated with the proposed project.

Bulk earthworks and excavations for services may, however, expose or uncover historical middens (domestic rubbish dumps) in the Werf Precinct during the construction phase of the project.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTION

### 8.1 Entrance Precinct

No archaeological remains were located in the Entrance Precinct.

### 8.2 Werf Precinct

Some ESA tools were located in the Werf Precinct. The tools, comprising a split cobble and a large quartzite flake were found among small piles of river cobbles alongside some shallow test pits in front of the Gable house.

A large ESA chunk/core was also noted in one of the low retaining walls within the plaaswerf.

Current excavations behind the main office have also uncovered some ESA tools. These include a few split/flaked cobbles and a large quartzite flake.

**Significance of finds:** low

**Suggested mitigation:** none required

### 8.3 Agricultural Precinct

The footprint for the proposed Agricultural Precinct comprises a large block of vineyards. The site has been heavily ploughed. Some ESA quartzite flakes, and flaked/split cobbles were located in some of the rows of vineyards in the proposed precinct. A few ESA tools and split cobbles were also noted on the eastern edge of the block, alongside the gravel road.

**Significance of finds:** low

**Suggested mitigation:** none required

#### **8.4 The remainder of Farm 1475**

Overall, relatively large numbers of ESA tools were located during the survey of the remainder of the Meerust Estate. This included a survey of the farms known as Delta and Lubck. Current land use is focused primarily on intensive agricultural activities with a large portion of the farms being under fruit orchards, vineyards, olive groves and herbs.

Stone Age tools were found in a variety of contexts on the remainder of the farm. The assumption was that wherever there has been physical alteration or modification of the landscape, stone tools are likely to be found.

Thus, large flakes, flaked/split cobbles, incomplete handaxes, cleavers, large cores, and choppers were located during the survey. The tools were found in a variety of contexts. Tools were located in ploughed fields, in some of the orchards, among large and smaller heaps of river cobbles cleared from farm lands, alongside excavation/test pits, on the raised terrace above the Berg River, in the floodplain, and alongside the banks of the Dwars River. Tools were also located in the numerous gravel roads and in the road reserves that cut across the remainder of the large farm.

The type of tools located during the survey are consistent with tools located during recent surveys in the Franschoek/Berg River valley (Kaplan 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a,b, 2003a,b).

**Significance of finds:** low

**Suggested mitigation:** none required

#### **9. IMPACT STATEMENT**

The impact of the proposed project on precolonial archaeological remains is likely to be low to negligible.

The probability of locating significant precolonial archaeological remains during implementation of the project is also likely to be low to negligible.

Historical middens or domestic rubbish dumps may, however, be uncovered or exposed during bulk earthworks and excavations in the Werf Precinct.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed Meerust Estate project, the following recommendations, to be included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan, are made.

- Bulk earthworks and excavations within the Werf Precinct should be monitored by a professional archaeologist.
- Should any historical middens or dumps be exposed within the Werf Precinct, some archaeological sampling of the remains will be required.
- Contractors, plant operators and workers should be informed what to look out for during development of the Werf Precinct.
- Should any ash dumps, glass bottles, clay pipes, ceramics, bone, or any other domestic refuse be exposed during bulk earthworks in the Werf Precinct, the archaeologist should be immediately informed.
- The Environmental Control Officer (ECO) should be briefed by a professional archaeologist what to look out during construction work within the Werf Precinct.
- Proposed borrow pits should be inspected for precolonial archaeological remains.

The recommendations are subject to the approval of Heritage Western Cape.



## 11. REFERENCES

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