

30 August 2013



Att: Mr Andrew Salomon

Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessor
South African Heritage Resources Agency
PO Box 4637
Cape Town
8000

By email: asalomon@sahra.org.za

Dear Mr Salomon,

REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT STUDY: EXTENSION TO EXISTING FACTORY BUILDING, MACKINNON CHAIN/SCAW METALS, DUNCANVILLE, VEREENIGING, GAUTENG PROVINCE

1. Introduction

This letter constitutes a notification of intention to develop an extension to the existing factory building of McKinnon Chain (a division of Scaw Metals SA), located at 161A Ring Road Duncanville, Vereeniging. Due to both the small size of the proposed new extension (5250sqm) and the previously disturbed nature of the property, this letter also indicates that there is no necessity for any further assessment of the property regarding the impact on heritage resources. Also see the memorandum from Golder Associates confirming that no environmental authorisations are required for the proposed new extension building.

Therefore, PGS Heritage, on behalf of McKinnon Chain /Scaw Metals, requests that the project be exempted from the requirement of a full Phase 1 AIA/HIA, due to the property being disturbed previously to a considerable extent as well as the small size of the property.

2. Description of the receiving environment

The McKinnon Chain/ Scaw Metals facility at Duncanville is a large industrial complex. The proposed site for the new factory extension building is approximately 5250sqm and was previously excavated and backfilled when the existing factory building was constructed in 1981. Any archaeological heritage resources present would have been disturbed and destroyed at that time. The entire area is, therefore, a heavily disturbed and transformed industrial landscape.

McKinnon Chain/Scaw Metal's Factories at Duncanville, Vereeniging, produce a wide range of chain and related fittings to service the mining, industrial, marine, offshore, agricultural, and forestry industries. Forged fittings are manufactured from nickel-chrome-molybdenum alloy steel bar. Commercial products are manufactured from a wide variety of steels ranging from mild steel to the specialised steels used in the rock drilling industry. The new extension building will be approximately 5250sqm. It will house a range of large machinery including: Industrial Robots, Flash Butt Welders, Heat Treatment Furnaces, etc. The aim of expansion is to increase the annual productivity of Flash Butt Weld Products (information from McKinnon Chain).

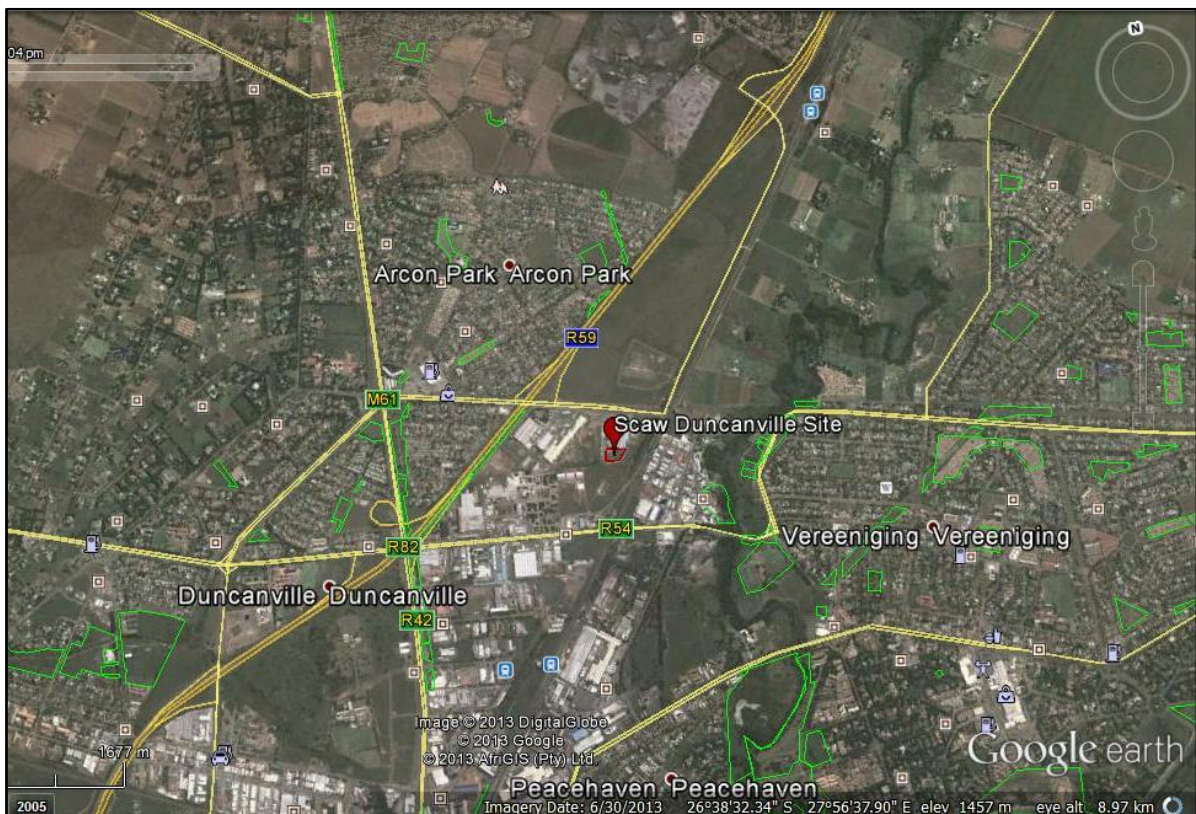


Figure 1 – Scaw Duncanville Locality Plan (red polygon and icon)

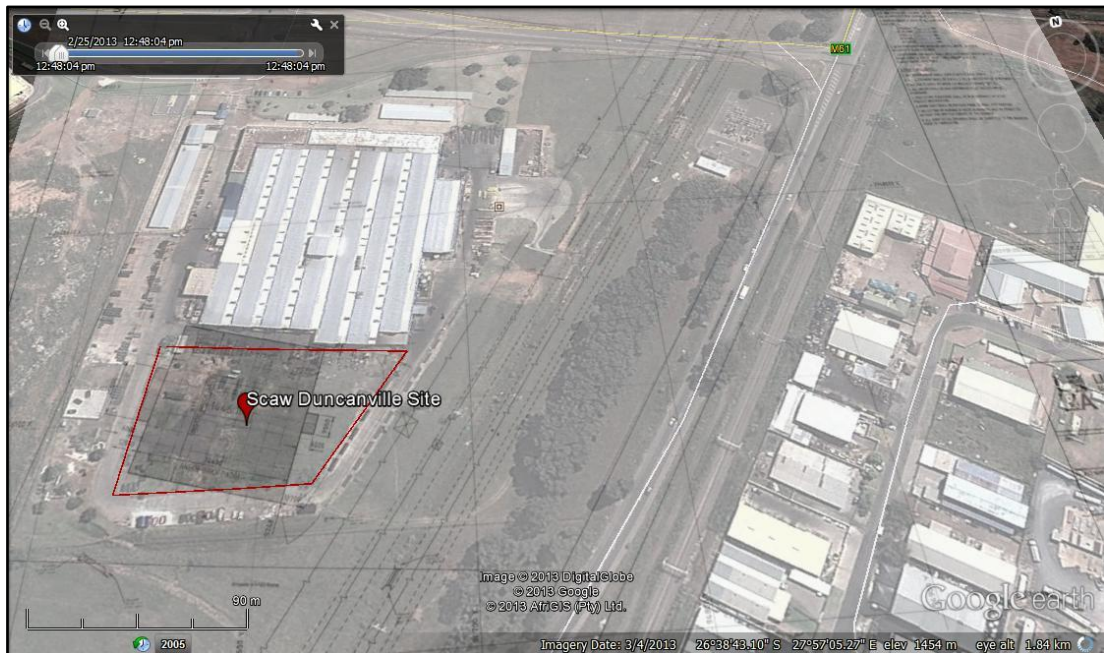


Figure 2 - Locality plan showing the study area in relation to the existing factory

3. Archaeological and heritage potential

Stone Age

A number of Early Stone Age sites are known from the Vereeniging area. According to Bergh (1999) these include Waldrif, Drie Riviere, Duncanville, Riverview Estates and Amcor. Of these sites, Duncanville is the closest and is located 0.43km south-west of the study area (Figure 3). The Duncanville Archaeological Reserve was proclaimed as a National Monument in 1944 (Oberholster, 1972).



Figure 3 –Location of Duncanville Archaeological Reserve (yellow arrow) and study area (red polygon)

The Duncanville Archaeological Reserve was proclaimed as a National Monument (now Provincial Heritage Site) due to the large number of stone implements dating to the Acheulian period of the Early Stone Age which were discovered on the surface of the gravel beds deposited by the Vaal River several million years ago. A similar site is located at the Klip River Quarry (also a Provincial Heritage Site) and both sites were excavated by Revil Mason between 1960/61. Both of these sites were initially discovered by T N Leslie, an engineer, and later investigated by Van Riet Lowe, who was instrumental in them being declared as National Monuments (Prins, 2007).

Iron Age

Evidence of the Late Iron Age (1500-1800 AD) is prevalent in the Suikerboschrand and Keyterskloof area. Stone kraals & remnants of stone dwellings of the Sotho -Tswana peoples have been found. As well as Iron Age tools, weapons & decorative beads, manufactured from iron and copper. (http://www.vaaltriangleinfo.co.za/general_info/article2a.htm). Other Late Iron Age stone walled sites, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, occur towards Alberton, along the rocky ridges of the eastern part of the Klipriviersberg (Huffman, 2000).

The rock engraving site of Redan which is located approximately 7km to the east of the study area, along the R59 road, is also believed to date to the Late Iron Age. This site was researched by A.R. Willcox and H.L. Pager in 1967. Willcox and Pager copied all the petroglyphs by drawing them to scale and recorded a total of 244 petroglyphs, the majority of which comprised geometrical designs. Besides the petroglyphs, Willcox and Pager also documented 21 flattened or smoothed surfaces produced by rubbing or grinding activities. Willcox and Pager considered that the weathering of the surfaces of the petroglyphs suggested an estimated age of between 500 and 100 years; they were therefore probably made by the San people (Kovacs 1998).

History of Vereeniging

In 1878 George Stow conducted test shafts in the vicinity of the Taaiboschspruit and Vaal River confluence as well as on the farms Maccauvlei and Leeuwspruit. His investigations on both these latter farms indicated the presence of extensive coalfields (Leigh, 1968). As a result, the farms Leeuwkuil, Klipplaatdrift, Maccauvlei and Rietfontein were acquired. The first mining activities were undertaken in the vicinity of the test shaft on Leeuwkuil, which later was to become Bedworth Colliery. In 1882 the *Vereeniging Estates Limited* applied to the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek to establish a village on the farms Leeuwkuil and Klipplaatdrift. On 4 July 1884 the Volksraad approved the application as well as the proposed name "Vereeniging", which was derived from the company's name (Leigh, 1968).

South African (Anglo-Boer) War

During the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) the town of Vereeniging had a significant role to play. This was largely due to its strategic value in that one of the main entry points from the Republic of the Orange Free State into the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek was located in this area. The railway link between the two republics had also been established here. After the annexation of the Republic of the Orange Free State on 24 May 1900, Lord Roberts (the commander in chief of the British forces) was able to travel via railway line from Bloemfontein all the way to the Vaal River (Bergh, 1999). On 27 May 1900 the crossing of the main army over the Vaal River took place. Vereeniging was annexed on the same day.

During the latter period of the war, a concentration camp was established at Vereeniging. The camp was located on the farm Maccauvlei, and was divided into a camp for the Boers and another camp for black people (Leigh, 1968).

Subsequently, Vereeniging was the site of negotiations between the Boer and British leadership, which eventually resulted in the signing of the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging. Although the actual signing of the Peace treaty, on Saturday, 31 May 1902, took place at Melrose House, Pretoria (Leigh, 1968)

4. Findings of Site Visit

A site visit was undertaken by two PGS staff on Monday 26 August 2013. We were accompanied by a representative of McKinnon Chain / Scaw Metals. Since the study area is only 5250sqm, we were able to cover it with a walk-through survey. According to the McKinnon/Scaw representative, the existing factory was built in 1981 and is used for manufacturing metal chains of varying sizes. The McKinnon/Scaw representative also showed us the locations of two test pits which had been excavated to provide information on the soil profile of the study area. Apparently, both pits produced soft soil, down to 1.2 m depth.



Figure 4 – Panorama view of the site from the south-west corner



Figure 5 – Panorama view of the site, from the south-east corner, one of the soil test pits is visible (white arrow)



Figure 6 – View towards south-east corner



Figure 7 – View showing existing factory building

5. Conclusion

Based on the information from the desktop research and the results of the site visit, no heritage resources are present within the study area proposed for development of the new extension to the existing factory building. Indications are that the receiving environment is not a sensitive archaeological or historical landscape, and is in fact a severely degraded industrial landscape. Therefore, no negative impacts on heritage resources are foreseen and no mitigation is required.

Although the Duncanville Archaeological Reserve, containing river gravels with stone tools that date to the Acheulian period, is located close to the study area, the fact that the study area was excavated and backfilled in 1981 when the existing factory building was constructed, should negate the possibility of uncovering any heritage resources associated with that archaeological site.

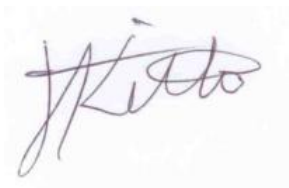
6. Recommendations

With regard to the proposed development, the following recommendations are made:

1. No further heritage impact assessment of the study area is required.
2. No archaeological mitigation is required.
3. In the unlikely event of any unmarked human burials, burial pits, potsherds or stone tools being uncovered during earthworks, these must be reported immediately to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mr Andrew Salomon 012 362 2535).

Should you have any queries, please contact Jennifer Kitto (email: jennifer@gravesolutions.co.za; tel: (012) 332 5305).

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kitto', is written on a light-colored background.

Jennifer Kitto

Heritage Specialist

References

- Bergh, J.S. (ed.). 1999. *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika: Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*. J.L. van Schaik. Pretoria.
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