



CHARM
PO Box 176
Great Brak River
6525

(044) 620 4936

Company No. 2006\133900\23
VAT No. 4240230989

Our Ref:

28 June 2010

Attention: Ms Belinda Mutti
Heritage Western Cape
Bmutti@pgwc.gov.za

Re: Comment on excavation of a well at Dias Museum, Mossel Bay, Western Province

Dear Belinda,

Please accept my apologies for the delay in attending to this matter. This morning I visited the affected area with Mbulelo and Jonathan of the Dias Museum. The inspection was conducted independently.

The excavation for a water well is situated on the property of the Dias Museum complex in Mossel Bay (Figures 1 & 2). The excavation is located at S34.17997 E22.14095 (WGS 84 lat/lon). Severe floods during 1998 created a large erosion gully between the railway sleeper seats of the amphitheatre and a boundary fence to the WNW (Plate 1). The erosion gully was filled with stone and sand brought in from an unknown locality (Plate 1 bottom right image).

The excavation is approximately 1m in diameter – at the top - and about 1m deep though water running into the hole may have scoured it a bit after excavations were stopped (Plate 2). White arrows in Plates 1 and 2 indicate the location of the excavation for the well at the time of the floods and today respectively. It is clear that the erosion gully cut through the area where the excavation is sited. This strongly suggests that the artefacts unearthed during the excavation are not in primary context, and were either brought in at the time of infilling or were mixed at the time of the floods (Plate 3). Glass, ceramics, bone and leather were seen in the spoil heaps on the side of the excavation and these materials – probably of late 18th or 19th century origin - are mixed with modern debris. The profile photo in Plate 3 clearly shows that there are no in situ “dump” materials and this indicates that no in situ dump materials were truncated by the excavation.

It is recommended that no further archaeological or heritage related mitigation is required, and that the completion of the well should be authorized so that the Dias Museum can utilize this water source running through the property. Please contact me with any queries.

Sincerely and best wishes,

Peter Nilssen PhD
Archaeologist & Heritage Practitioner



Figure 1. Location of Dias Museum Well in the town of Mossel Bay, Western Province (courtesy Google Earth).

Centre for Heritage & Archaeological Resource Management

PO Box 176, Great Brak River, 6525 | 044 620 4936| 082 783 5896| peter@carm.co.za| www.carm.co.za



Figure 2. Location of Dias Museum Well within the grounds of the Dias Museum complex (courtesy Google Earth).



Plate 1. Erosion damage caused during the 1998 floods. White arrow indicates position of excavation for well (courtesy Dias Museum).



Plate 2. Compare top left image with that in Plate 1. Arrows indicate location of excavation. Bottom and right images show the excavation and an example of materials that were unearthed.



Plate 3. Profile of the excavation showing that no in situ materials occur, and that no in situ materials were truncated by the excavation.