**PERMIT APPLICATION FOR MAPPING AND RESCUE EXCAVATION OF A LATE IRON AGE STONE WALL SITE ON PORTION 191 OF THE FARM TWEEFONTEIN 915LS WITHIN POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY, CAPRICORN DISTRICT.**

**1.1. Methodology**

**1. Ground Truthing**

To achieved reliable information ground truthing will be conducted, this will enable us to identify and map settlement layout pattern, the theoretical ideal being to recover and document all traces of human activities visible on the surface. An intensive systematic foot-survey and inspection will be conducted to delineate different activity areas as well as the extent of the entire site. The documentation process will involve digital photography, video recording. Note books will be used to record data gathered from the site. All the information will be recorded in a specially created project database. The fieldwork will be important for understanding the nature of the heritage resources, their distribution on the landscape and spatial extent of the property. GPS, maps and if necessary total stations will be used for recording site details including recording of substantial information on the features and density of surface artefacts. A combined systematic and random sampling procedure will be adopted. Sampling has been defined by Fagan (1991) as the science of controlling and measuring the reliability of information through the theory of probability. This process will enable us to understand the nature of activity areas, and their possible function. Controlled surface collections will be carried out during ground surveys and Mapping. All visible surface artefacts mostly diagnostic ceramic shards will be collected to assist in generating site chronology.

**2. Mapping at intra-site level**

Rapid growth of Geographic Information technologies is transforming how archaeological and heritage sites including environment are visualised, represented and understood. Thus, a digital theodolite and global information system will be used to map the stone walls site. The objective is to produce an up best representation and conventional form of scientific spatial information that incorporated local environment data sets. Stone wall shape and pattern are part of the spatial world that marks spatial knowledge which developed in human through three progressive stages which includes landmark, route and survey knowledge. A map will be created with three-dimensional representation of space, view of the landscape where in landmarks with salient features are visible, this includes, stonewall site extent and cultural materials remains density and activity area. Areas with high potential information will marked and targeted for rescue excavation.

**3. Rescue Excavations**

Excavation has been defined by Shrare and Ashmore (1979) as the principal means by which data is gathered about the past the method is used to gather and retrieved data from beneath the ground. This data is seldom in primary context. Archaeological excavations will includes formally laid out excavation trenches and/or squares in predetermined disturbed areas, middens and where or livestock dung deposit is visible from the surface of the site. It is hoped that these areas would produce a representative sample of cultural material remains to enable site dating there by preserving site integrity through records keeping for future reference.

Rescue excavation program is aimed at recovery of datable archaeological material remains to understand site’s culture historic sequence. The program is considered to address several questions, among them, reconstruction of site’s chronology, subsistence and other economic pursuits. The excavations will follow international best standard procedures observed throughout the world and will be conducted according to the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. The procedures involved include establishing baselines (Datum points) and excavation grids system to control artefacts’ proveniences. Excavations in a form of trenches(1X2) whereby units of measurement are in meters (M), conducted in arbitrary spits of 10 centimeters (CM) to expose subsurface artefacts and their occurrence patterns will be adopted. Trenches will be laid over surface indications of features such as areas where there is high ceramic concentration. In several cases, trenches will be standardized at areas with no visible indications of any activity to establish the nature and the use of such area.

**Research Objectives**

The main objective of this exercise is to rescue all cultural material remains from the late Iron Age before the entire site is destroyed by the construction of student accommodations blocks. The exercise is geared at exploring the nature of the site, due to the absence of diagnostic ceramics on the surface of the site.

The following specific objectives apply:

* To reconstruct past way of life associated with Iron Age community who inhabited the site using material finger prints collection.
* To infer affinity with known Iron Age sites documented in the nearby Tweefontein farm
* To understand when the site was occupied and abandoned

Research objectives will be pursued through an interdisciplinary methodology that combines historical, ethnographic, archaeological and scientific data. The general historical and ethnographic information will be obtained from published accounts as well as early travellers’ reports and personal interviews. Subsequently, archaeological surveys, mapping and excavations will be carried out to understand the nature of the sites, and to obtain samples for further laboratory analyses.

**4. Dating and post-excavation Finds Analysis**

Samples of dateable materials will be submitted to laboratories to obtain radio carbon dates of the site. The objects recovered from the excavations will be studied using standard artefact studies procedures to reconstruct the activities represented on site. For example, ttypological ceramics analysis will be conducted to determine vessel classes, and decoration motif, as a broader exercise in cross-examining human identities. Ceramic studies have undoubtedly contributed to our understanding of the region’s archaeology (Pikirayi, 1999). The analysis will be limited to available attributes, although qualitative comments about the motif and shape profile modes will be made. Ceramic studies will be modified to develop a typology that will assist in interrogating the relationship between ceramics and human group identities. The advantage of using this approach is that it makes it easier to relate ceramic from the study area to those uncovered from other sites that falls within the same period. The second analytical methods involve archaeometallurgy analysis, this will be carried out in the Materials Laboratory of the Department of Archaeology University of Cape Town. To achieve this archaeometry will be used, the analytical process involves chemistry and physics to identify and understand artefacts chemical composition (XRF Analysis) (Bachmann,1982). Other sectioned Samples will be photographed and mounted as polished blocks for Optical microscopy.

**5. Publication**

The results of the excavations will be published in high impact academic journals to disseminate the results to the public

**6. Curation of finds.**

All retrieved cultural material remains will be curated at the University of Venda. An application will be made to SAHRA to use some of the objects from the excavations to develop an exhibition at the university art gallery centre. The exhibition will meet standards of curation in the field of museum practice. The university community can learn from their past as well as visitors to the art gallery.