

P.O.BOX73703

LYNNWOOD RIDGE

0040

Tel: 083 459 3091

Fax: 086 695 7247

Email: apac.heritage@gmail.com



Comprehensive and Professional Solutions for all Heritage Related Matters

CK 2006/014630/23

VAT NO.: 4360226270

2019-10-22

Reference: **APAC019/104**

**To: Mr. Francois Van Vuuren
Director – Properties
Kanton**

RE: SHORT REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF STONE-WALLED LATE IRON AGE NDEBELE SITES AND A HISTORICAL CEMETERY ON PORTIONS 287-296 OF THE FARM MOOIPLAATS 367JR, NEAR PRETORIA, GAUTENG

APelser Archaeological Consulting cc was appointed by Kanton to undertake the assessment of a number of archaeological and historical sites on Portions 287 to 296 of the farm Mooiplaats 367JR. The aims of the assessment were to determine the significance of these sites, as well as the possibility of preserving some of these sites within the proposed development that will be taking place on this property. The historical site (Informal Graveyard) had to be re-assessed as well and recommendation on the way forward in terms of this site be provided also.

BACKGROUND

In 2007 African Heritage Consultants cc undertook a Cultural Heritage Resources Impact Assessment on the Remainder of Portion 13 and Portions 287 - 296 of the farm Mooiplaats 367 JR in Tshwane, Gauteng. During this assessment a total of 30 sites were identified and recorded, including 27 stone-walled Late Iron Age sites, a recent historical cemetery and the remains of a water furrow (See Kusel 2007).

The area surveyed in 2007 consisted of a small hill and low laying areas of grassland and dense thorn Tree veld. The visibility in most areas was very bad because of the dense vegetation, which made the finding of archaeological sites difficult. At the following localities Late Iron Age sites and historic sites were recorded:

1. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 33.6" E28° 25' 24.5"
2. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 34.0" E28° 25' 23.6"
3. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 30.1" E28° 25' 24.1"
4. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 28.4" E28° 25' 23.3"
5. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 25.3" E28° 25' 21.8"
6. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 22.1" E28° 25' 18.8"

AJ Pelser BA (UNISA), BA (Hons) (Archaeology) [WITS], MA (Archaeology) [WITS]

7. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 24.0" E28° 25' 15.1"
8. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 27.3" E28° 25' 17.2"
9. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 26.5" E28° 25' 15.6"
10. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 25.3" E28° 25' 14.8"
11. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 20.7" E28° 25' 12.2"
12. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 17.3" E28° 25' 11.0"
13. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 17.1" E28° 25' 09.1"
14. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 11.2" E28° 25' 05.2"
15. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 29.2" E28° 25' 13.2"
16. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 40.3" E28° 25' 14.9"
17. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 08.9" E28° 25' 03.8"
18. Square kraal S25° 50' 07.2" E28° 25' 05.9"
19. Late Iron Age site S25° 50' 05.3" E28° 25' 05.9"
20. Late Iron Age Site S25° 50' 07.0" E28° 25' 03.8"
21. Late Iron Age Site S25° 50' 03.7" E28° 25' 00.3"
22. Late Iron Age Site S25° 50' 00.6" E28° 24' 54.8"
23. Late Iron Age Site S25° 49' 57.4" E28° 24' 53.9"
24. Late Iron Age Site S25° 49' 54.8" E28° 24' 51.7"
25. Late Iron Age Site S25° 49' 51.2" E28° 24' 51.9"
26. Late Iron Age Site S25° 49' 51.4" E28° 24' 51.3"
27. Late Iron Age Site S25° 49' 47.7" E28° 24' 50.2"
28. Cemetery S25° 49' 35.6" E28° 24' 54.6"
29. Furrow South S25° 49' 27.8" E28° 24' 47.0"
30. Furrow North S25° 49' 19.2" E28° 24' 55.4"

According to Kusel the Late Iron Age Sites are most probably Ndzundza Ndebele Sites dating to the period + 1800. The Ndzundza Ndebele was conquered in this area in the 1820s by Mzilikazi and incorporated into his tribe. The Ndzundza Ndebele sites are concentrated in the area west of Donkerhoek (Diamond Hill) and the Bronberg up to the present Mamelodi southern border. This whole area is under severe pressure from township development. The present site investigation lies halfway between Donkerhoek and the Bronberg

A typical site consists of an outer stone circle and an inner stone circle. In many cases the inner stone circle is again sub-divided. Some of the sites are only 10 metres in diameter while others are 50 to 100 metres and more in diameter. On average the stonewalling is less than one meter high though some stonewalls are nearly two metres high. It is also clear that some of the stonewall have been reused for modern cattle kraals (square) while others may even have been used as redoubts during the battle of Diamond Hill in the Second Anglo Boer War.

From an archaeological point of view many sites have been recorded but nothing has been published on these early Ndebele sites. Prof. Chris van Vuuren of Unisa who has mainly worked on oral history of the Ndebele has done the most extensive work on these sites. According to him the main settlement of the Ndzundza Ndebele was more or less where the Silver Lakes Golf Estate is today. The sites on Mooiplaats would thus form part of the Ndzundza settlements in the area, most probably associated with a headman and his followers).

At present it is impossible to assess the sites interrelation ship to each other because of the dense vegetation. From the fieldwork it seems that most sites are relatively small (one family unit) but a number of the sites are much larger (up to 100 metres in diameter and more). From this it can be conducted that a large site most probably has up to ten smaller sites associated with it. This can possibly be a settlement of a headman with a number of families under his jurisdiction. Some of the sites as already mentioned have been reused possible during the Diamond Hill Battle or by later White farmers.

Kusel concluded that The Ndzundza sites in the area are all under threat and many have already been destroyed by township development and farming activities. The sites on Mooiplaats 367 JR (Remainder 13 and portion 287 - 296) are still in a relative good state of preservation and most probably are of a Field

Rating Grade II. This would not necessary apply to all the sites but at least two or three of them with nearby associated sites. Dense vegetation made proper recording and evaluation difficult. For this reason a detailed phase II investigation and even a phase III development might be necessary.

He recommended the following:

- A phase II investigation of the archaeological sites should be conducted. For this purpose the veld will have to be burned in the spring to get rid of the tall grass. Some bush clearing will also have to take place so that individual sites can be recorded.
- Two or possible three of the most important sites should be preserved in a heritage park in the new development and be properly restored in a phase III investigation.
- The possibility to declare these preserved sites; provincial heritage sites should be investigated.
- After the phase II investigation an application for mitigation and destruction of the rest of the sites can be made.
- A heritage management plan must be compiled for the preserved heritage sites after the completion of the phase II and III mitigation.
- The cemetery should be cleaned the graves recorded and a decision must be taken to either preserve the cemetery or to move the graves to a new locality in accordance with present provincial legislation.
- The old water canal should be recorded in detail and be preserved as a feature in the new development if possible. If not a permit for destruction must be applied for

18th October 2019 Assessment Results

Site 28 - Cemetery

Part of the October 2019 assessment focused on the cemetery (Kusel Site 28). In his 2007 report he mentions that the site contains around 40 graves that are mostly just heaps of stones. Some were difficult to see because of the vegetation and stones, which have over the years been scattered. From the grave goods it was clear that these graves are not older than sixty years and thus fall outside the jurisdiction of Act 25 of 1999, but is protected by Provincial legislation. At the time two of the graves were in a good condition and according to one of the present farm workers were still visited by family members.

The October 2019 assessment found that there are around **59** graves located on the site. Most were only stone-packed, with only a few containing formal headstones. It was only possible to read the inscription on one of the headstones, with the others either illegible or fallen over. The inscription on the readable headstone indicates that the grave was that of one Phangwabo Thubana who was born in 1872 and died in 1962.

It is recommended that the grave site be kept in situ. A fence should be placed around it with an access gate to allow possible family members to visit the graves. The site and graves should be cleaned and recorded photographically and a Graves Register drafted.



Figure 1: A view of Site 28 cemetery in October 2019.



Figure 2: Another view of the cemetery site.



Figure 3: One of graves with a headstone.



Figure 4: The headstone on the grave of Phangwabo Thubana.



Figure 5: The headstone on this grave was overturned and could not be read.

Late Iron Age stone-walled sites (Sites 1 to 27 and New Sites)

The October 2019 assessment focused in the main on the stone-walled LIA sites identified in the 2007 fieldwork conducted by African Heritage Consultants cc. The aim was to determine (as indicated in 2007) which of these sites is the best preserved and might warrant in situ preservation within the proposed development and which sites could possibly be demolished as “less” significant.

Over and above the known sites on Portions 287 – 296 a number of previously unrecorded sites (related to the known ones) were also identified and recorded. This included three sites (Sites F, H & I on the Sites Maps) with Stone Age material (stone tools). The material found on these sites date to between the ESA and MSA (Earlier Stone Age (ESA) up to 2 million – more than 200 000 years ago; Middle Stone Age (MSA) less than 300 000 – 20 000 years ago).

GPS Coordinates: S25 50 18.60 E28 25 05.00 (F); S25 50 05.60 E28 24 59.40 (H) & S25 49 33.60 E28 25 01.30 (I)



Figure 6: ESA Handaxe from Site H.



Figure 7: ESA/MSA tool from Site I.



Figure 8: More ESA/MSA tools. Site F.

A number of additional stone-walled sites were also recorded in the general area (Sites A-E & G on the Sites Maps). These sites are similar to those identified in 2007 by Kusel and contain circular enclosures (for cattle/other livestock), hut bays and large ash middens. The walling is fairly well-preserved in places (between 0.50m and more than 1m in height), with only low foundations present at some. These sites will have to be studied in conjunction with the others on the property and is in all likelihood linked together as part of the same settlement complex on Mooiplaats.

GPS Coordinates: S25 50 05.60 E28 24 51.30 (A); S25 50 11.40 E28 24 53.40 (B); S25 50 13.90 E28 24 53.00 & S25 50 14.10 E28 24 53.50 (C); S25 50 15.50 E28 24 53.30 (D); S25 50 22.90 E28 24 54.10 & S25 50 22.90 E28 24 55.70 (E) and S25 50 29.10 E28 25 12.20 (G).

The known sites (Sites 1 – 27) identified by Kusel in 2007 was also visited during the October 2019 assessment. It was however clear that a detailed assessment of these sites during the site visit would not be possible as a result of the very dense vegetation that covered most of these sites and the stone-walled features on them. To determine the relative significance of each in terms of preservation/wall height and through this determining which of these sites are the best candidates for in situ preservation was not possible.

What is clear however from the October 2019 assessment is that the Late Iron Age Ndebele stone-walled sites on Mooiplaats 367JR (Portions 287-296) covers a fairly extensive area and that these sites are more than likely all associated with a single Settlement Complex here, made up of a number of inter-related homesteads or individual Settlement Units. To separate these from each other by just preserving the most significant in terms of wall height and diameter of the unit and demolishing the others would not be possible based on the site visit undertaken in October 2019. The following is therefore recommended:

1. That the vegetation around these sites be cut in order to allow the detailed recording of the sites and the features on them.
2. That detailed mapping and drawing of the sites and features be undertaken in order to determine settlement layout and organization
3. That archaeological excavations be carried out on the ash middens located on some of the sites, as well as in the circular enclosures and hut bays. Through this cultural material will be recovered that will assist in reconstructing the identity of the occupants of these sites, the time-frame of occupation as well as material and social economy. This will ensure that at least the cultural heritage of these sites will be preserved when the least well-preserved of these sites are demolished for the purposes of the development. For the archaeological research and demolition purposes permits will have to be obtained from SAHRA.
4. Once the above has been done the best preserved and most significant of the sites can be preserved in situ by fencing them in and including them in a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the proposed Development.



Figure 9: Some stone walling on Site A.



Figure 10: Site B.



Figure 11: Some of the walling on Site C.



Figure 12: View of ash midden on Site D.



Figure 13: Pottery from Site D ash midden.



Figure 14: View of some of the walling on Site E.



Figure 15: View of area around Site 1. Note the vegetation.



Figure 16: Stone-walling close to Site 1/Site 2.



Figure 17: Another view showing the dense vegetation covering the areas where the Stone-walled sites are located.



Figure 18: Stone walling at Site 9.



Figure 19: Stone walling close to Site 10. The dirt road cuts through the site here.



Figure 20: View of dense vegetation between Sites 17 & 20.



Figure 21: Well-preserved walling at Site 21.



Figure 22: View of walling around Site 22.



Figure 23: View of walling around Site 24. Note the dense vegetation again.



Figure 24: Distribution of sites in the study area (Google Earth 2019).



Figure 25: A closer view of the distribution of stone-walled and other sites in the study area. The sites in red (A-I) are the newly found ones (Google Earth 2019).

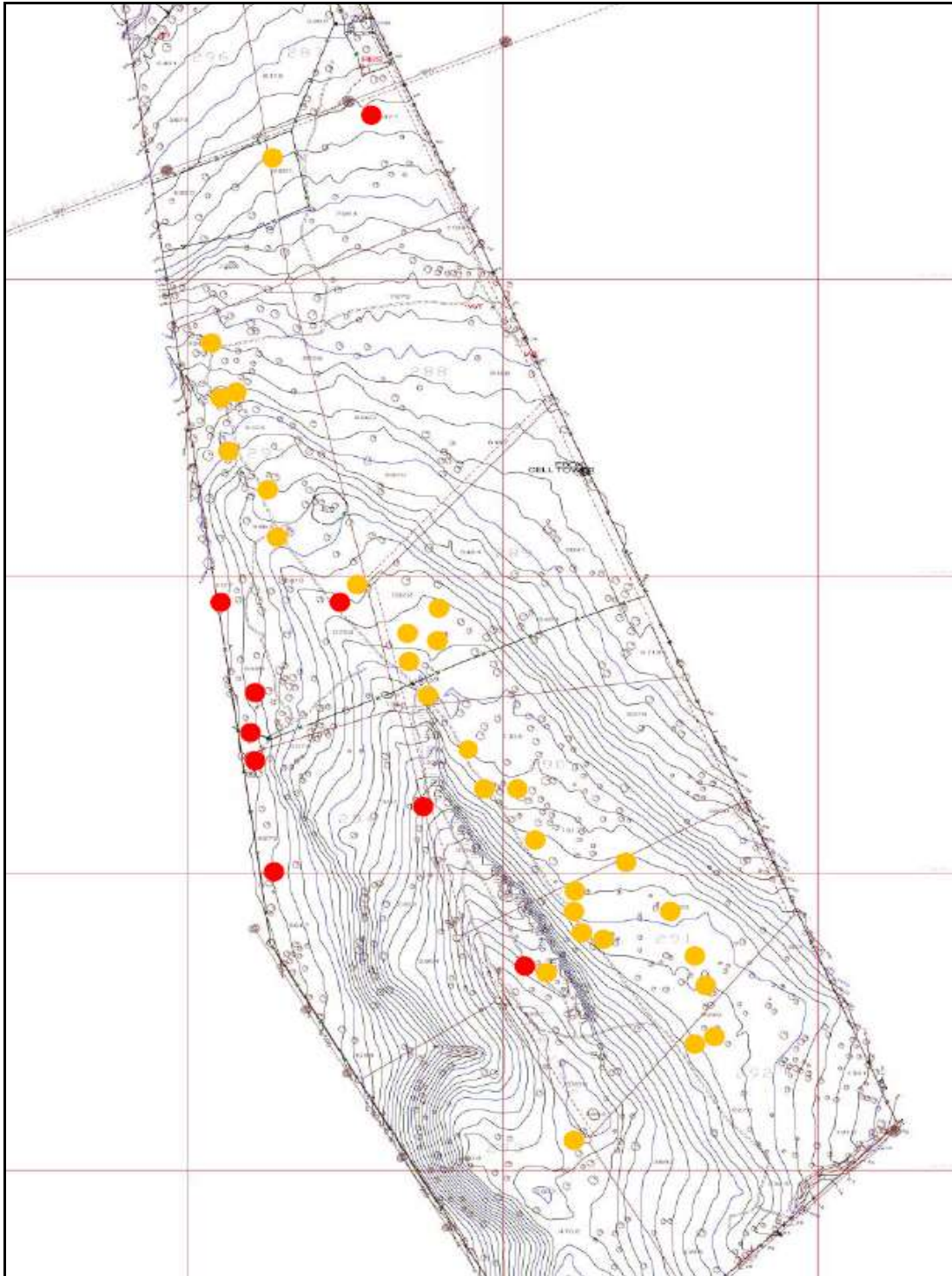


Figure 26: Map showing the location and distribution of the sites. The red dots indicate the sites recorded in 2019.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion it can be said that the the assessment of a number of archaeological and historical sites on Portions 287 to 296 of the farm Mooiplaats 367JR was conducted successfully. The October 2019 assessment focused in the main on the stone-walled LIA sites identified in the 2007 fieldwork conducted

by African Heritage Consultants cc. The aim was to determine (as indicated in 2007) which of these sites is the best preserved and might warrant in situ preservation within the proposed development and which sites could possibly be demolished as “less” significant.

Over and above the known sites on Portions 287 – 296 a number of previously unrecorded sites (related to the known ones) were also identified and recorded. The known sites (Sites 1 – 27) identified by Kusel in 2007 was visited during the October 2019 assessment. It was however clear that a detailed assessment of these sites during the site visit would not be possible as a result of the very dense vegetation that covered most of these sites and the stone-walled features on them. To determine the relative significance of each in terms of preservation/wall height and through this determining which of these sites are the best candidates for in situ preservation was not possible.

What is clear from the October 2019 assessment is that the Late Iron Age Ndebele stone-walled sites on Mooiplaats 367JR (Portions 287-296) covers a fairly extensive area and that these sites are more than likely all associated with a single Settlement Complex here, made up of a number of inter-related homesteads or individual Settlement Units. To separate these from each other by just preserving the most significant in terms of wall height and diameter of the unit and demolishing the others would not be possible based on the site visit undertaken in October 2019. The following is therefore recommended:

1. That the vegetation around these sites be cut in order to allow the detailed recording of the sites and the features on them.
2. That detailed mapping and drawing of the sites and features be undertaken in order to determine settlement layout and organization
3. That archaeological excavations be carried out on the ash middens located on some of the sites, as well as in the circular enclosures and hut bays. Through this cultural material will be recovered that will assist in reconstructing the identity of the occupants of these sites, the time-frame of occupation as well as material and social economy. This will ensure that at least the cultural heritage of these sites will be preserved when the least well-preserved of these sites are demolished for the purposes of the development. For the archaeological research and demolition purposes permits will have to be obtained from SAHRA.
4. Once the above has been done the best preserved and most significant of the sites can be preserved in situ by fencing them in and including them in a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the proposed Development.

Should there be any questions or comments on this document and its contents please contact me directly.

Kind regards,



Anton Pelser

REFERENCES

Distribution & Location of Sites: Google Earth 2019.

Kusel, U. 2007. **CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF REMAINDER 13 AND PORTION 287 - 296 OF THE FARM MOOIPLAATS 367 JR TSHWANE GAUTENG.** Unpublished Report AFRICAN HERITAGE CONSULTANTS CC. For: African EPA. August 2007.