

RECORDING OF HISTORIC BUILDING AT STEENKOOLESPRUIT IMPUNZI MINE (WITBANK – MPUMALANGA PROVINCE)



M. NAUDE

Assessment of historic sites and buildings

P.O Box 584, La Montagne, Pretoria, 0184.
Tel: 012 8033716, Cell: 083 4472232, mauritzn@telkomsa.net Fax: 012 3464168

Recording: M. Naude & C.M. Naude
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RECORDING OF THE FLOOR PLAN AND ELEVATIONS OF THE DWELLING.

General description

The building is a small sandstone farm dwelling set on a slight slope with its principle façade facing southwestwards (downhill). The building was a ruin when it was recorded in October 2014 with no remains of the roof structure or roof covering left. Most of the interior clay brick walling have melted due to the exposure to rainwater while the original exterior walling constructed with sandstone along two elevations remained intact.

The floor plan resembles the typical vernacular character of a core building with several later additions and extensions. The original exterior is defined by solid sandstone walling constructed with clay mortar. The floor plan indicates that the gable side of the building - usually considered the more public facade and main entrance - was located downhill and the dwelling was originally entered from this side. The dwelling was entered along a low set of stairs, underneath small verandah and the central passage formed the spine for movement inside the dwelling. All the interior walls were constructed with sundried clay bricks and these have melted away making it difficult to determine the exact internal arrangement of spaces. The dwelling also had a back verandah but was later closed-off becoming a room, most likely a dining room as it is located directly adjacent to the room that contains evidence of having a chimney suggesting that it could have been a kitchen. The functions of the various rooms remain difficult to determine as all detailing (floors, doors, ceilings and roofs) have been removed. Later additions to the floor plan seem to be irrational and wrongly placed such as the bathroom and toilet. When the front verandah was closed –off it became a bathroom and a smaller room assumed to be a toilet was added where the front door used to be, resulting in a small protruding room constructed with red bricks in the centre of the original principal façade.

Little is known about the building materials of the original building. The sandstone exterior was left unplastered while the interior was plastered with clay and was redone with a cement and sand mixture. Some technical detailing can still be seen and contributes to the little knowledge available about the dwelling and also contributes to the data regarding early farm dwellings in the region dating to the first years of the 20th century. Most of the simple gable (triangular section above the ceiling) has been removed or broken off but a small section has remained intact. This indicates that the gable was not constructed with sandstone but with sun dried bricks of which some have remained on top of the sandstone walling. It may also imply that the gable was a later addition. The bricks used for the gable were laid as a single course 4 inch wide, rendering the gable rather flimsy. An outstanding element is the presence of a large protruding sandstone window sill in the eastern façade. For such a simple dwelling this sill is quite monumental and indicates some level of sophistication in the masonry. The dwelling reflects no other decorative elements except for this detail. Some effort has been made with the stone window sill. All the lintels were done with timber. No lintels were done with sandstone.

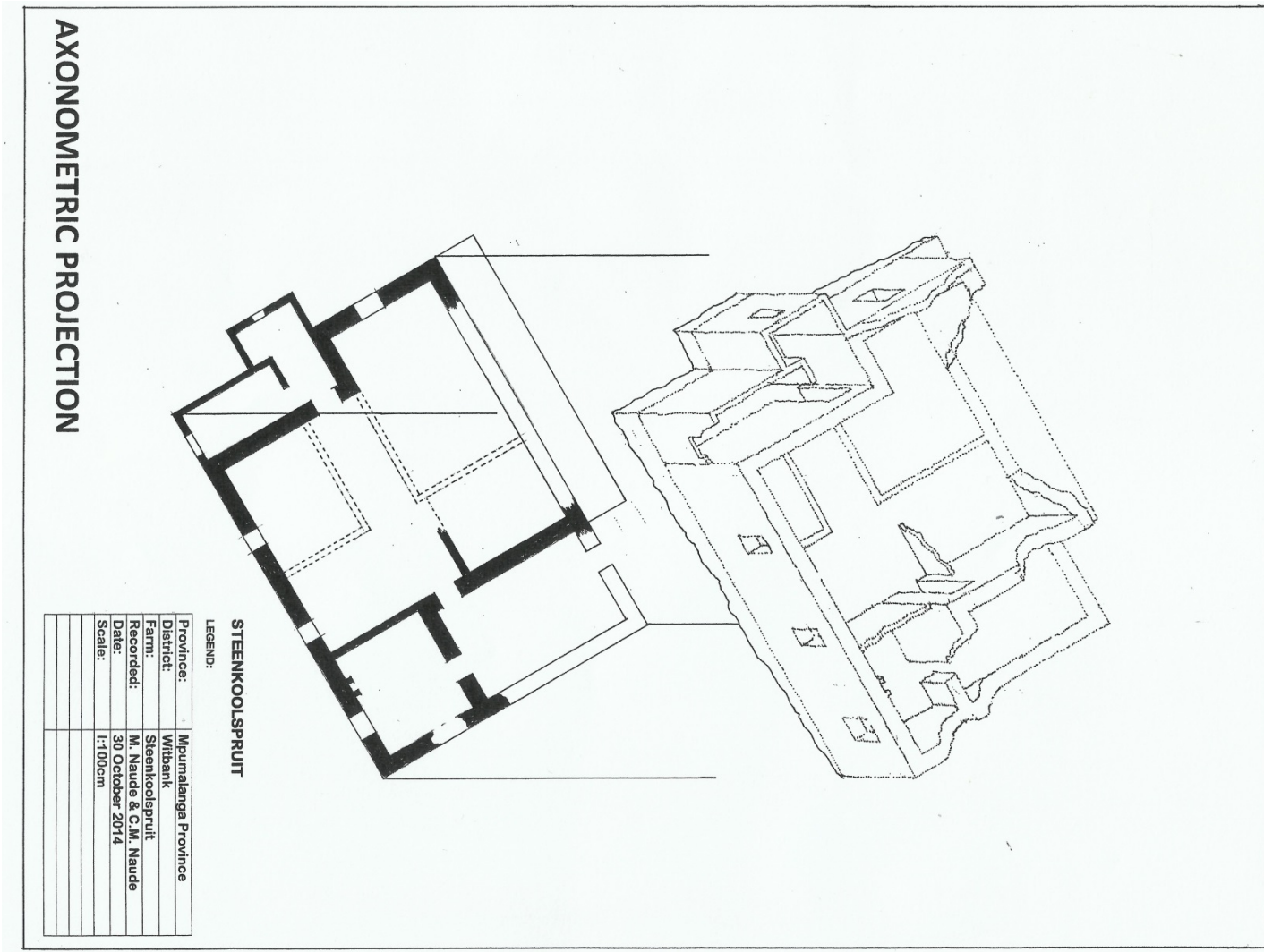


Figure 1. Axonometric view of the ruin indicating the floor plan layout and condition of the dwelling (Drawing: M. Naude 2014)

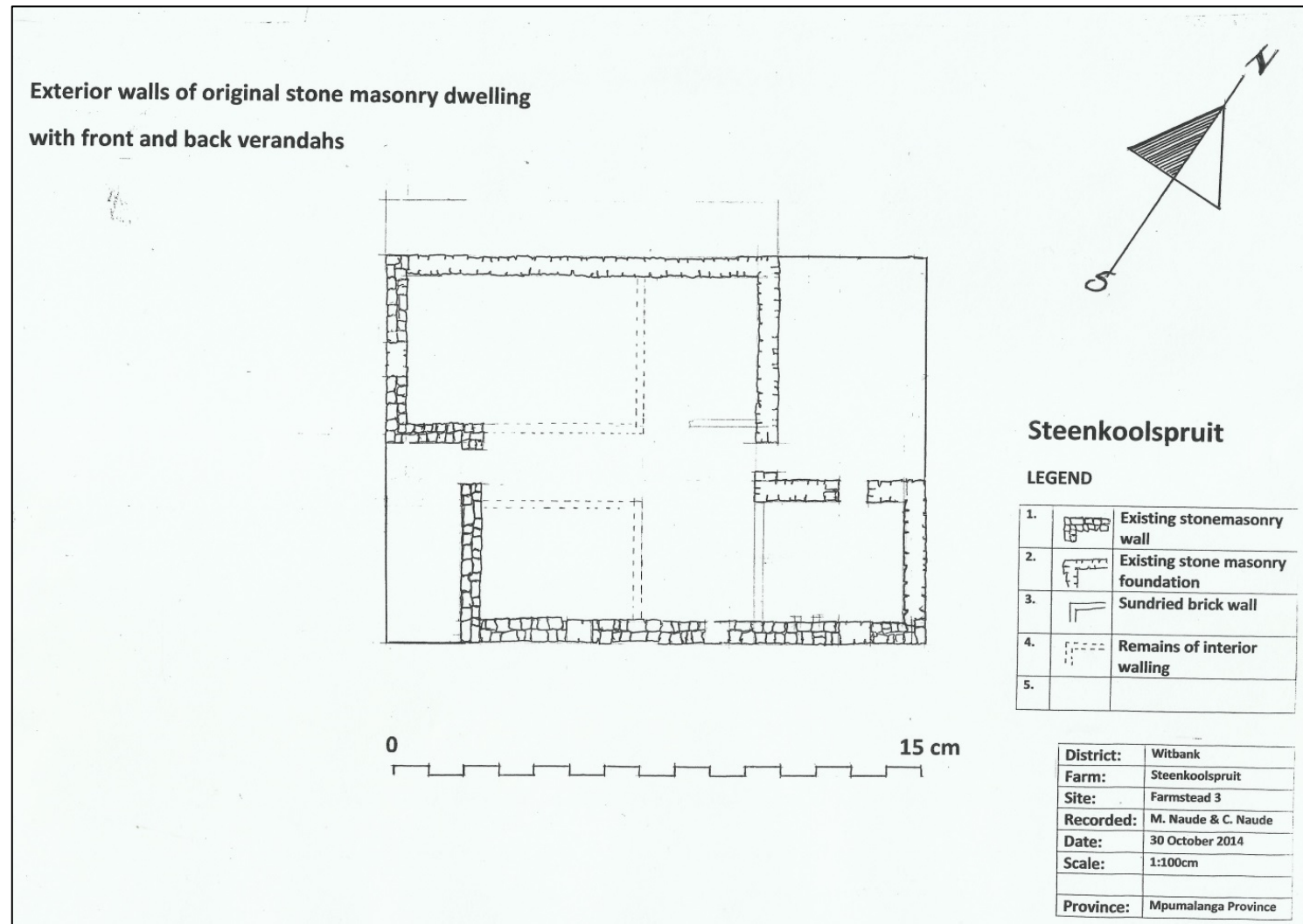



Figure 2. Floor plan of the original dwelling with the exterior stone masonry walls and the hypothetical interior division of spaces as most of the sundried brick walls have disappeared - scale 15cm equals 15m (Drawing: M. Naude 2014).

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HISTORIC DWELLING (FARM STEENKOOLSPRUIT AT IMPUNZI MINE):**Elevations**

1.	<p data-bbox="279 537 554 561">North western elevation</p> <p data-bbox="279 597 1535 654">The building is not orientated according to the exact north-south axis but is set slightly off this coordinate. Almost the entire façade has been demolished and no evidence is available in the structure in order to reconstruct the elevation.</p>  <p data-bbox="800 1040 1058 1065">North-western elevation</p>	



2.

South eastern elevation

The façade seems to have been the principle facade of the dwelling and faces downhill towards the Steenkoolspruit valley and flood plain. The most significant feature is the original protruding sandstone gable and the red brick toilet which is a later addition. This façade was originally defined by the sandstone gable and a small verandah to its right. The verandah was later closed with walls (red brick and plastered section in the picture) to create a bathroom and toilet.



Figure 3. South-eastern facade with gable and recent toilet and bathroom additions done in red bricks.



Figure 4. This used to be the principal facade with gable and stoep where the red brick and plastered room were added to form the bath room and toilet

3. Southern elevation

This elevation has remained almost completely intact and contains most of the remaining windows. It contains no entrances. The entire wall section consist of sandstone walling up to ceiling height.

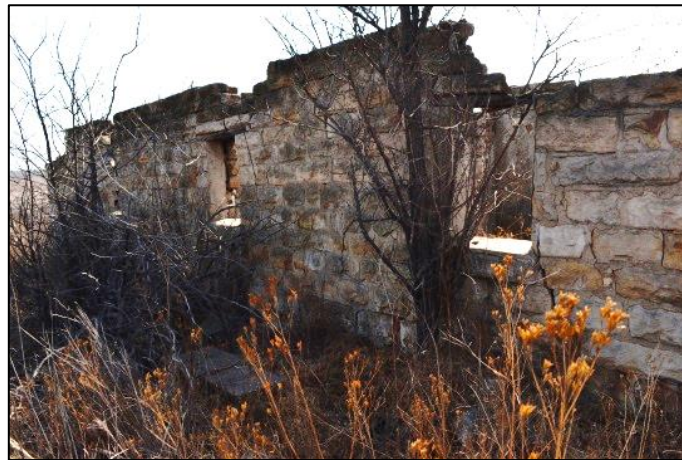



	Figure 5. South-eastern elevation and facade is the only facade that has remained intact	
4.	<p>North western elevation</p> <p>The entire north-western elevation has become a ruin without any remaining walls. No photographic recording could be done. The best evidence of what this elevation consist of is reflected in the axonometric drawing. It is assumed that this elevation also boasted a verandah and formed the back of the dwelling. The verandah was later closed-off with walls and became a dining room.</p>	

	<i>Building elements</i>	<i>Photograph</i>
1.	<p><u>Foundations</u></p> <p>The original core section of the building was constructed with sandstone and the stone rises directly from the foundation upwards to ceiling height.</p> <p>No excavations were done to expose the foundations of the interior walls and the sundried bricks of these walls have melted to form a wide projecting feature as the only remains of the original walling.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 6. Plinth where the original stone foundation of the stoep was used as base for a later addition</p>


2.	<p><u>Floors</u></p> <p>According to the depth of the floor cavities it is assumed that the dwelling had a timber floor structure but all evidence of the timber have been removed and destroyed. No ventilation openings were identified in the exterior walling.</p> <p>The stoeps had concrete floors with thin screeds on top and these have remained intact. The stoeps seemed to have been incorporated into the interior of the dwelling when they were closed-in by walls to become rooms.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Stairs and staircases</u></p> <p>The dwelling is set on a slight slope rising from west to east. This resulted in the gable end of the building and front facade to face south west. A small stoep used to be located on this side but it was later closed to form new rooms. When the dwelling was erected with this space used as an open stoep it must have had a pedestrian entrance with stairs. These have been altered and included into the floor of a more recent addition and extension of the floor plan along this façade. The building has no interior stairs.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Walls</u></p> <p>The exterior walling of the original dwelling was constructed with sandstone and the walls are about 600mm in diameter. The interior walling was constructed with sundried bricks of about 200mm in diameter. The stone masonry walling was left unplastered on the exterior while plastered along the interior. Some sections still have the original mud plaster while other sections were plastered with a sand and cement mixture.</p> <p>All the later additions were done in brick and they were plastered. The most significant brick addition was added to the front façade of the dwelling and left unplastered.</p> <p>All the walls are badly damaged as the building has no roof to protect them.</p>	



Figure 7. Part of the exterior walling with clay bricks forming part of a later addition



Figure 8. Projecting dressed sandstone window sill neatly incorporated as part of the exterior walling

Figure 11. neatly constructed dressed sandstone corner on the southeastern corner of the original core building



Figure 12. Sundried bricks exposed after the plastering have been washed off the addition along the southwestern facade





Figure 9. Exposed stone masonry walling of the gable



Figure 10. Painted cement and sand plastering along the interior of the original exterior walls



Figure 13. Sundried clay bricks on top of the sandstone wall, define the triangle of the remains of the gable

5.	<p><u>Fire places and chimneys</u></p> <p>No formal hearth was identified in the floor plan but the remains of a chimney sheath defining the exit of a chimney for a coal stove or slow combustion stove was identified in what could have been the kitchen.</p> 	 <p>Figure 14. Remains of plastered brick chimney fluting guiding the round metal chimney pipe of a coal stove</p>


		 <p data-bbox="1356 732 1913 813">Figure 15. Remains of the chimney fluting to guide the metal chimney of a coal stove through the ceiling and roof</p>
6.	<p data-bbox="249 878 317 902"><u>Roofs</u></p> <p data-bbox="249 935 1251 1024">The entire roof has been removed and no evidence of the roof structure or roof covering have remained on the structure or on the site. It is only assumed that the dwelling had a timber roof structure with corrugated iron sheet covering.</p>	
7.	<p data-bbox="249 1092 344 1117"><u>Ceilings</u></p> <p data-bbox="249 1149 1234 1174">No remnants of any ceilings, ceiling boarding or supporting structure are left in the dwelling</p>	
8.	<p data-bbox="249 1255 317 1279"><u>Doors</u></p> <p data-bbox="249 1312 1293 1369">No doors have been left in the building and all the door frames have been removed. A single door frame has been left intact.</p>	



Figure 16. Remains of a single door frame



Figure 17. Remains of a door where the frame has been removed.

9.

Windows

Windows had timber frames and timber lintels. Some have remained intact while others have disappeared after being exposed to the sun and rain. It is assumed that some timber frame windows were replaced with steel frames and these were also removed.



Figure 21. Small window with remnants of the timber lintel at the top



Figure 18. Window with lintel and a short section of the top part of the architrave intact



Figure 19. Window with lintel and architrave intact



Figure 22. Well-prepared sundried clay bricks used for this recent addition exposed after the plastered was broken and had fallen off



Figure 20. Window with timber lintel intact



Figure 23. Window with solid sandstone window sill

10.	<p><u>Toilets, bath tubs and wash basins</u></p> <p>No evidence of any toilets, bath tubs or hand basins was found in the structure</p>	
11.	<p><u>Light fittings</u></p> <p>No evidence of any light fittings was found inside the structure.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Cupboards and shelving</u></p> <p>No evidence of any cupboards and shelving was found inside the structure.</p>	
13.	<p><u>Other elements</u></p> <p>All detailing and special elements have been lost as it has been stripped of its roof, roof structure, windows, doors, ceilings, the entire floor structure and all fixtures and fittings.</p>	

References.

Fleming, J., Honour. H. and Pevsner, N. 1980. The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture (3rd ed). England: Penguin Books.