

Schmidtsdrift Substation & 132kV Powerlines Project

SAHRA FILE REF: 9/2/038/0001

Eskom reported alignments on calcrete stones on the site cleared for their substation in the vicinity of 28°38.770' S 23°59.956' E on the west side of the Schmidtsdrift-Papkuil road. I had not noted this phenomenon in an impact assessment carried out in 2010.

The place was visited on 10 Sep 2013 and the following observations pertain.

Five alignments of stones, some 20 m apart, almost parallel and not completely straight, are found at this spot, a clearing made by Eskom for a planned substation. The alignments of stones, most closely resembling the lines of stones left after farmers remove fencing, disappear westwards into a thick swarthaak infestation. Near to the road within the cleared space there is a very low density of rusted tins and some broken bottle glass, and what may be the bases of up to two or three very insubstantial dwellings (not completely rectangular, not all sides present, so this is highly speculative).

Stone artefacts of Pleistocene age, including a handaxe, long predating the alignments of stones, were also noted in very low density (as noted in the 2010 report – generally highly dispersed isolated stone artefacts occur over most of this upland area mid-way between the Vaal River and the Ghaap Escarpment).

It is difficult to say with any certainty what the alignments of stones represent. As noted, they resemble the lines of stones that are typically left when farmers remove jackal-proof fencing. As a working hypothesis I would suggest that this most likely was some kind of mid-/later-twentieth century agricultural site with barriers (fences? - either gardens or linked with stock) associated with the Tswana villages of Schmidtsdrift. They were subsequently completely overrun with swarthaak infestation. The local headman had no recollection of any feature here. Photographs were taken of some of the stone alignments and of some of the rusted metal and glass, so that the phenomenon is on record. No significant finds were noted and I do not believe there is any reason to carry out any further heritage investigation or to delay construction.

David Morris

10 September 2013

McGregor Museum

P.O. Box 316, Kimberley 8300, South Africa

Tel +27-(0)82 2224777

+27-(0)53 8392707

Fax +27-(0)53 8421433