

WONDERKOP GRANITE QUARRY – ASSESSMENT OF SITE TO BE MITIGATED/EXCAVATED

The site is located at **S25 38 49.50 E27 32 51.84**. No site number was given by the Heritage Specialist (Van Schalkwyk 2009) and was one of several sites identified by him during a survey in the area for the Quarry Expansion at the time. The recommendations at the time indicated that should any sites be impacted by future expansion then the site/s should be mitigated through excavation and mapping. The area to be impacted is relatively small and at this point none of the other marked and identified sites will be impacted. The Waste Rock Dump footprint area covers an area of approximately 80m x 80m to 100m x 100m.

The site lies directly to the north of the current soil berm and stockpiles. The stock piling will be minimal. There is a spruit to the north of the site and the stockpiling cannot be pushed close to that. Any further development that might affect the other sites will only occur in a long time from now, and each site could be mitigated before being impacted. The soil stockpiles are for future rehabilitation.

There is a limited surface scatter of potsherds, with no decorated fragments identified so far. Some stone walling occurs, but preservation is poor, and in some places it is difficult to tell walling from bedrock. The walling is uniformly around 1.30m in width with an approximate height of no more than 0.50 to 0.60m. Only a few small kraals (livestock enclosures) are visible on the site, but wall preservation is poor. The extent and layout of the site could not be determined during the site visit, and the envisaged mapping during the Phase 2 Work will focus on this aspect as well.

The occupation of the larger geographical area (including the study area) did not start much before AD 1500. Because of their specific technology and economy, Iron Age people preferred to settle on the alluvial soils near rivers for agricultural purposes, but also for firewood and water. In this particular area, because of the turf soil, which is not suitable for settling on, they preferred to settle close to the gabbro outcrops, using the abundance of stone to create their complex village layouts. Iron Age sites dating to the Late Iron Age abound in the study area. These are linked to Tswana occupation of the area and date in all probability to the period from 1600 and later. They are all stonewalled and each site probably made up one individual settlement unit. The layout of these settlements usually consists of a group of large primary stone walled enclosures, with associated bilobial dwellings linked to it. The latter usually occur in groups of four to five units, facing the associated livestock pens to the center of the settlement. The plains to the west of the hills were mostly used for agriculture and herding of cattle, as well as for hunting, collecting of firewood, etc (Van Schalkwyk 2009: 4-5).

The mitigation/excavation work that is recommended will comprise the following:

- a number of formal trenches located in areas with the best possibility of recovering cultural material (possible ash middens, kraals and hut bays)
- some shovel test pits across the site to test the depth of cultural deposit
- proper surface sampling of cultural material to increase the archaeological sample size
- detailed mapping of the site and the features contained on it, as well as of the excavations

- the photographic recording of the site, all features on it, as well as of the excavations and the possible features and material that would be recovered during the work.



Figure 1: View of site showing norite outcrop typical of the area, while the expanding quarry is visible as well.



Figure 2: A section of stone walling on the site.



Figure 3: More stone walling on the site.



Figure 4: Undecorated pottery found on the site.