

# **McGregor Museum Department of Archaeology**



Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment  
of the so-called 'Kemo Dump' (National Site  
Number 2824DB039) on Remainder of Erf 5024,  
Erf 6376 and Erf 5058, Vooruitzicht-81, Kimberley,  
Northern Cape

David Morris  
October 2005

**Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of the so-called 'Kemo Dump' (National Site Number 2824DB039) on Remainder of Erf 5024, Erf 6376 and Erf 5058, Vooruitzigt-81, Kimberley, Northern Cape**

David Morris

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October 2005

## **Introduction & Summary**

The author was contracted by Messrs I.A. Peyper and R. Raath (P.O. Box 3190, Kimberley 8300) on 3 October 2005 to carry out a phase 1 archaeological impact assessment in an area of proposed debris clearance at the 'Kemo Dump' site (Remainder of Erf 5024, Erf 6376 and Erf 5058, Vooruitzigt-81) in Kimberley. Part of this dump is a registered archaeological site, National Site Number 2824DB039. This report is intended to indicate the extent of the historic midden relative to mine debris. A sketch map was made using a hand-held GPS.

Recommendations are made concerning parts of the dump that may be mined away relative to parts which, it is urged, should be conserved.

Fieldnotes and photographs are lodged with the McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

## **Legislation**

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHRA) provides protection for archaeological resources (see appendix 1).

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object (defined in the Act), without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Section 35 of the Act protects all archaeological and palaeontological sites and requires that anyone wishing to disturb a site must have a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. Section 36 protects human remains older than 60 years. In order for the authority to assess whether approval may be given for any form of disturbance, a specialist report is required. No mining, prospecting or development may take place without heritage assessment and approval.

SAHRA at national level acts on an agency basis for the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in the Northern Cape, where archaeological sites are concerned. Permit applications should be made to the SAHRA office in Cape Town.

## **Methods and limitations**

This is no more than a Phase 1 assessment which is based on inspection of visible traces only, on and around the so-called Kemo Dump on Remainder of Erf 5024, Erf 6376 and Erf 5058, Vooruitzigt-81.

A number of prospecting pits have been dug at various points on the dump and these provide an indication of the nature of the dump material below the surface at those positions.

The principal types of features on and around the site have been plotted from GPS readings (Garmin eTrex; WGS 84). A schematic sketch map (Latitude and Longitude reduced to common scale, but with vertical axis 1 cm = about 18.5 m at 28°40' S, and Y axis 1 cm = 16.3 m) is considered adequate for current purposes.

### **Background: historic middens of Kimberley**

Kimberley's history spans the last 135 years. Initially, in 1870-1, 'diggers' camps sprang up around the Dutoitspan, De Beers and New Rush diamond workings. Through the 1870s-80s, when the diggings became full-scale mines, the burgeoning towns of Kimberley and Beaconsfield (united as a single city in 1912) were transformed from rough and ready aggregations to permanent settlements in which numerous refuse dumping sites must have existed. Many of these may have been more or less haphazardly distributed in and around the towns. In 1899 organised refuse management was upgraded with the establishment of a major tip at Kamfersdam, served by rail, and it is known that smaller early middens began to be systematically cleared and consolidated at designated spots including Kamfersdam (Morris & Kaplan 2001). These sites represent part of the archive of Kimberley's history and they may well reflect aspects of the city's past that are not recorded in any other way.

Today a number of historic midden sites are known in and around Kimberley. Most of them are badly disturbed by 'bottle digging' (e.g. the big Kamfersdam dump). Some have been totally destroyed. It has become apparent that some such sites may be enveloped in more than one of the mining debris heaps in and around Kimberley. Some such middens were identified during recent surveys of the Kenilworth Dump and in the vicinity of Kimberley Mine. Others are said to exist in other dumps. All are protected by the NHRA.

Not all surviving sites would be of equal significance. Where middens may be threatened, it is required that they be evaluated.

Significance criteria for determining conservation-worthiness and the necessity for Phase 2 mitigation would include the nature and history of the dump in question; depth and presence/extent of stratigraphy; and degree of preservation (e.g. of organic materials such as bone). Sites in primary deposition context would be of greater significance than secondary dumps – although secondary dumps may be so stratified that one could separate out different events and debris sources.

It is against this background that the value and future of the rubbish midden at the Kemo Dump needs to be assessed.

### **Observations**

The 'Kemo Dump' lies within a piece of open ground adjacent to the Floors township, behind the Kemo Hotel, alongside Madelliefie Street. Clearance of it commenced during 2005. When it came to the attention of local heritage personnel, meetings were held with the mining company in July and August and the company

was requested to halt mining of the sensitive site 2824DB039 (see letter SAHRA to Mr I.A. Peyper 1 Sep 2005). Notification of the need for a Phase 1 survey had been issued in February 2005. Agreement for the McGregor Museum to undertake this survey was reached on 3 October 2005.

With reference to the sketch map, the following observations are made:

1. The dump lying to the south and west of the line A-A (from about 28°43.636'S 24°45.644'E to 28°43.567'S 24°45.696'E) consists of an historic midden containing ash and a wealth of cultural material which is in large measure stratified. The site was first investigated in a limited way in the early 1990s and registered at the McGregor Museum Archaeological Data Recording Centre. National Site Number 2824DB039 has been assigned to it. The upper part of this circa 4-6 m high midden has been dug into sporadically by bottle diggers, but almost all sections that have been cut into it recently at its southern and western margins reveal stratified in situ deposit. What is not clear is whether this is a primary dumping site: it may more possibly be a secondary dumping area for ash middens cleared from elsewhere in the first half of the twentieth century. The striking stratigraphy gives it some integrity, however, and would permit unraveling of deposition processes. Oral testimony that this was debris from a mining compound seems contradicted by the finding of plate fragments from the up-market Hotel Belgrave (1902-1933); but it is not impossible that *some* strata within the midden may indeed represent discard from a mining compound/s. The presence of compound debris could greatly enhance the value of the site since none of the previously sampled middens could be linked with this significant feature of Kimberley's early social history. There is good bone preservation and a wide range of cultural material survives. A paper tram ticket (Kimberley trams ceased to run in 1939) was found in this dump in the 1990s.

2. The base of the dump in the region marked 'B' consists (e.g. at 28°43.616'S 24°45.736'E) of a thin band of relatively low density midden material, immediately overlying Hutton Sands, and overlain, in turn, by a considerable thickness of mine debris. This band or lens probably represents the earliest level of cultural midden accumulation in the vicinity (quite possibly unrelated to the younger midden described in point 1 above). Its spatial spread is impossible to establish at this point. Glass bottles include rounded coddles, as opposed to the later flat-bottomed variety higher up in the midden to the west. Similar coddles at other Vooruitzigt middens appear to date from about 1900, and they could be older.
3. The substantial dump indicated by the letter 'C' (defined by points 28°43.590'S 24°45.693'E; 28°43.631'S 24°45.713'E and 28°43.548'S 24°45.751'E) appears to be exclusively shale and mine debris, almost completely bereft of cultural material, if surface traces and recently cut sections (e.g. at 28°43.611'S 24°45.706'E) are considered as representative.
4. What is taken to be the ruins of old haulage infrastructure exists at the north end of the dumps (28°43.558'S 24°45.679'E), doubtless associated with the floors that extended northwards from this point.

5. Sports facilities had been constructed in the area east and south east of these dumps in the 1970s. Remains of an abutment block associated with them (28°43.640'S 24°45.689'E) are in the process of being demolished south of the line A-A.
6. Much of the space south of the historic midden (i.e. the dump south and west of the line A-A) has been cleared and flattened. The south end of the ash midden has been partly damaged by this clearance and the upper two thirds of the midden was cut back by several metres. Vertical (stratified) sections at this point (28°43.620'S 24°45.650'E) are unstable and will easily collapse.

## Recommendations

### Dump 'C'

There appears to be no reason why mining of the dump portion designated 'C' should not proceed, but on the proviso that work should cease immediately if any cultural material is found within the dump. Additionally, the base of this dump consists of early midden material, and it is thus suggested that dump clearance should extend no deeper than the top of the said midden material.

### Area 'B'

It may be useful to conduct a limited salvage excavation to determine the nature of the material emerging at the base of Dump 'C'. Site grading: Generally Protected Grade A: mitigation before destruction.

### Abutment block

This feature has no heritage significance.

### Haulage infrastructure to north of dump

Further research is needed to determine the age and significance of these features.

### Dump west and south of line A-A

This is the site known as the Kemo midden and designated as Archaeological National Site Number 2824DB039. *It is recommended that no further mining or clearance should take place on the midden.* Subject to closer investigation, it should qualify as at least a Grade 3 Local Heritage Site of high significance. Vertical stratified sections are presently in danger of collapse. It may be advisable to step these back while obtaining systematic samples to determine more clearly the nature and age of the strata, and to shore up remaining exposed sections.

A request from the mining company to investigate the possibility of mining lenses of mine debris that overlies the dump in places would need to be addressed as part of a Phase 2 assessment. Exploratory trenching to understand the possibly very variable depth of such debris would be needed, and for this an excavation permit and further contract between the museum and the mining company would be required.

Interest has been expressed (independently) by officials in the education department (who were involved in discussions on the site several years ago) to make this a focus of a research-in-action and heritage conservation programme that could be run in association with the McGregor Museum. Community involvement of this nature would help in the management of possible further subsistence bottle digging on the site which, thus far, has been relatively superficial, but could become a serious threat.

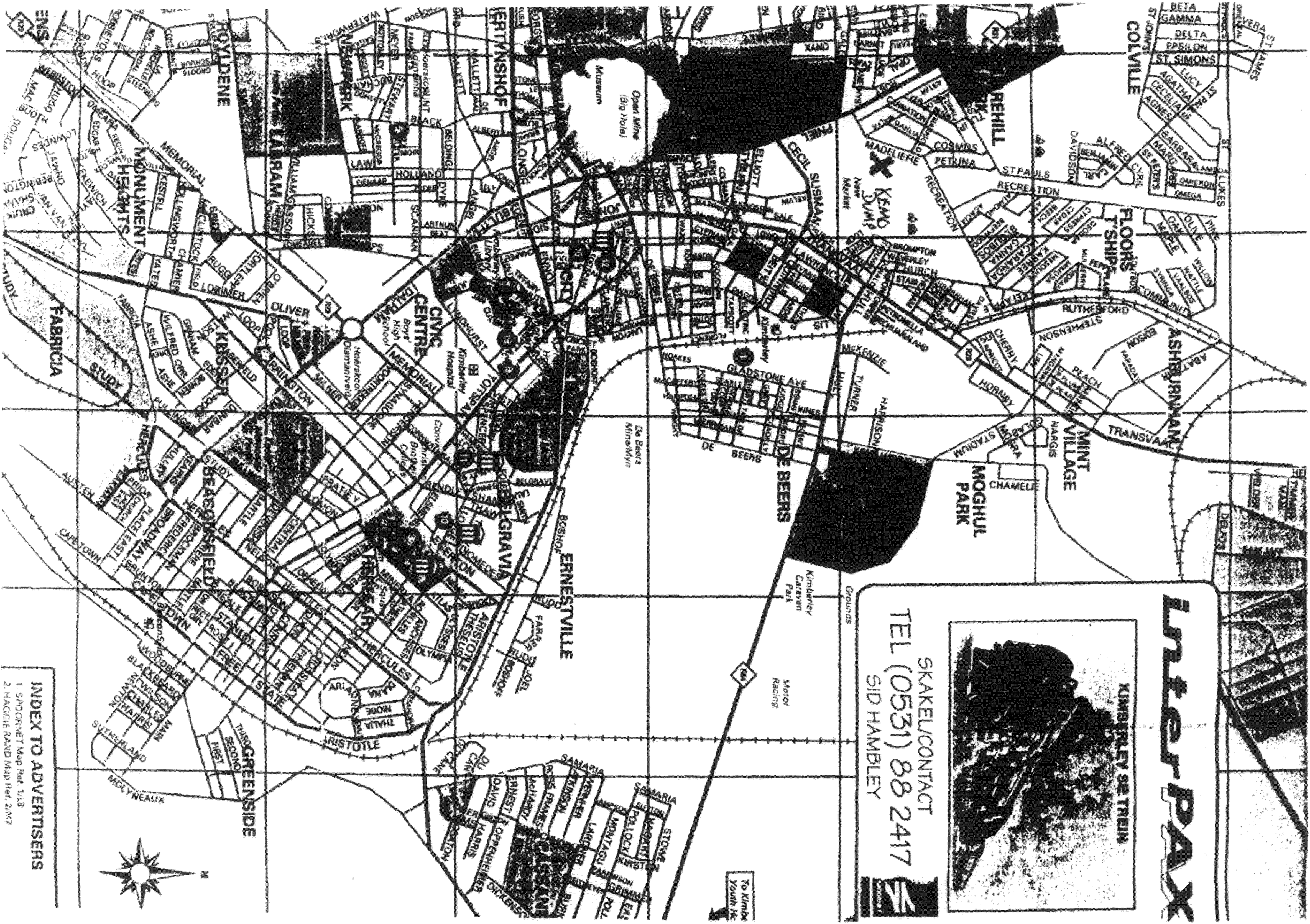
### **Acknowledgements**

I thank Messrs I.A. Peyper and R. Raath for their help; Mr Tsholofelo Chinkuli who assisted with the GPS survey and assessment of the site; and Mrs M. Lesley, Dr S. Wurz and Mr A. Timothy of SAHRA for advice.

### **References**

- Morris, D. & Beaumont, P. 2004. *Archaeology in the Northern Cape: some key sites*. Kimberley: McGregor Museum.
- Morris, D. & Kaplan, J. 2001. Phase 1 excavation of a century-old municipal refuse midden, Kamfersdam, Kimberley. Unpublished report to Chand Environmental Management and Research.





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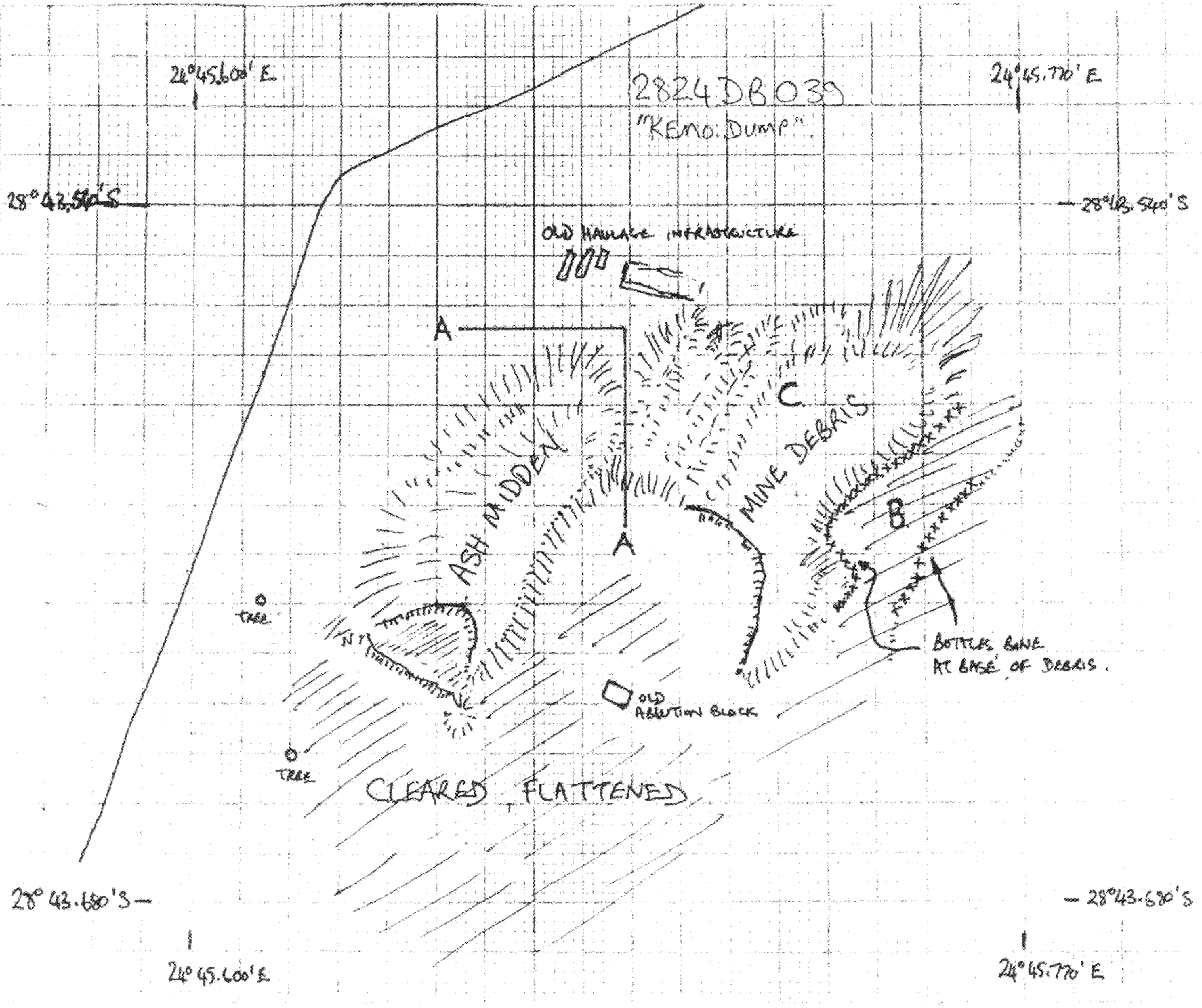
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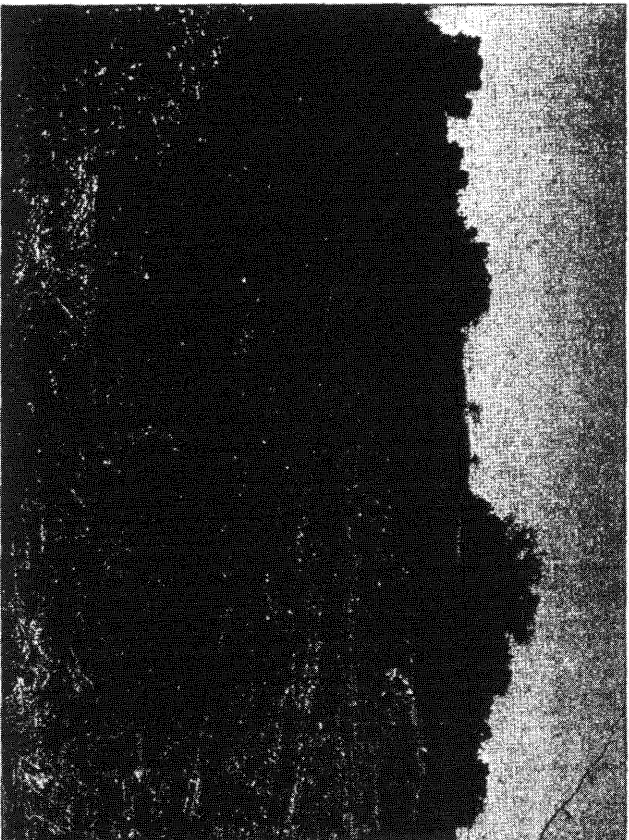


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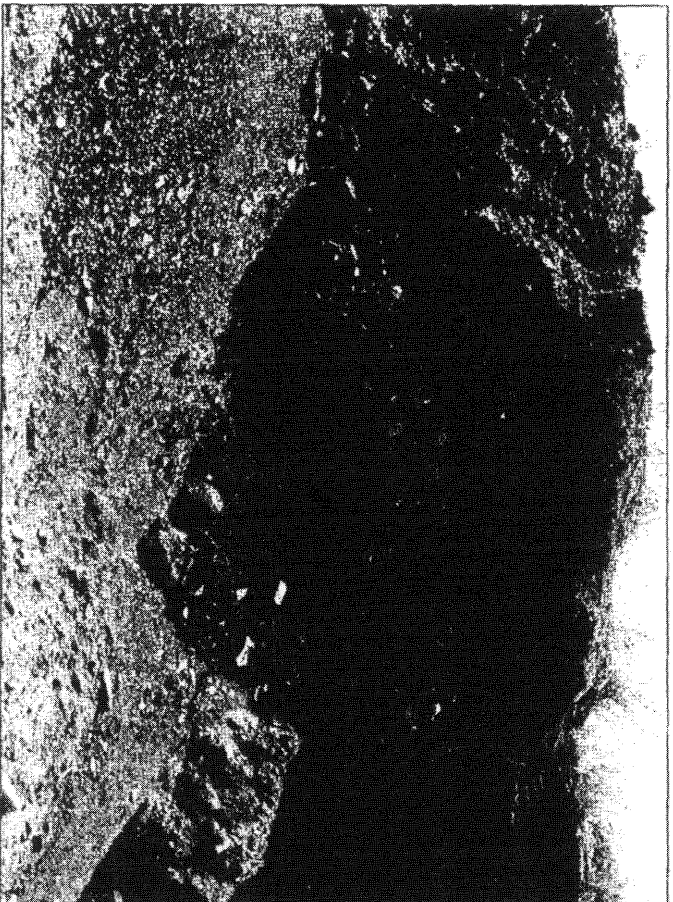
- 1. SPOORNET Map Ref 11/8
- 2. MAGGIE RAND Map Ref 21/7



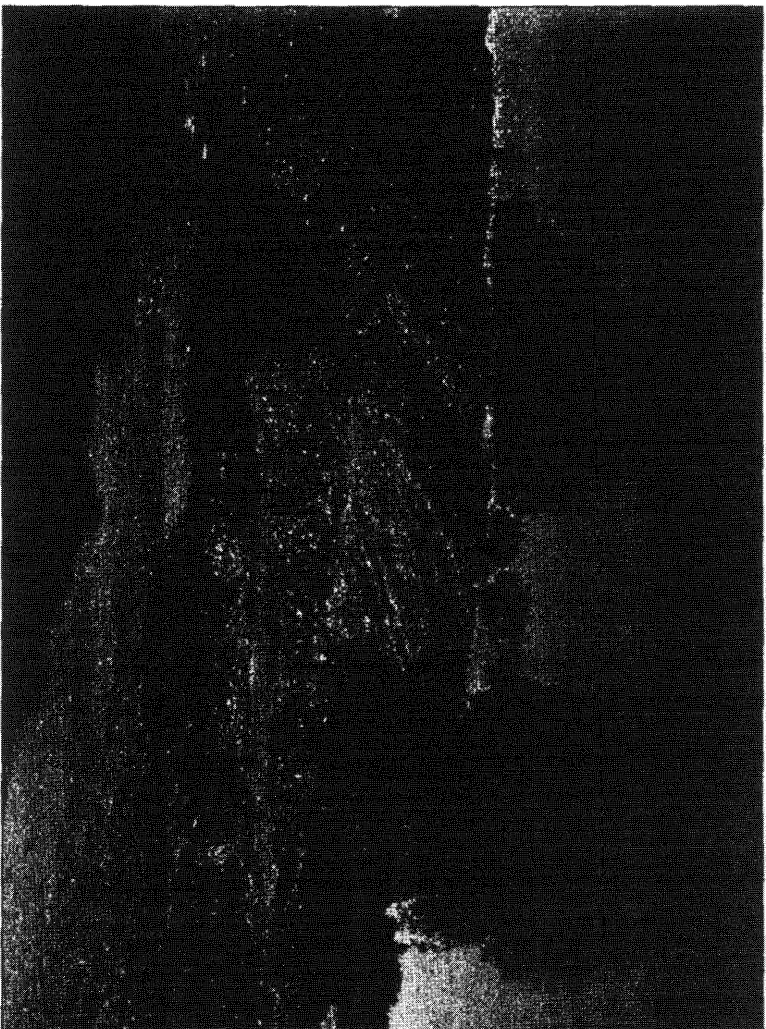




View of Ash Midden from south western corner showing cleared area and mining into the southern part of site 2824DB039



Stratified dump layers rich in cultural debris, in unstable section at 28°43.620' S, 24°45.650' E.



Stratified dump layers with no cultural debris at  
28°43.611' S; 24°45.706' E.