

**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES AT THE SITES
OF WUCOR GRANITE MINING AND THABA ROMANA
GRANITE, NORTHWEST PROVINCE**

For:

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SUMMARY

A survey of cultural resources at the sites of Wucor granite mining and Thaba Romana granite, Northwest province

A survey to establish the nature, extent and significance of cultural resources was made at the sites of Wucor granite mining and Thaba Romana granite. These are situated approximately 15 km northwest of Brits in the Northwest province. Only the areas that will immediately be impacted upon by the mining activities were investigated.

Only one site was identified, although potsherds, an indication of human presence in the area, were also found in isolated spots. As the proposed mining activities will have a medium impact on this site, it is recommended that the mining activities can continue. However, the site should be investigated at a later stage. It is also recommended that if, during any part of the proposed work, sites or artefacts of cultural importance are found, the Museum be contacted to undertake proper scientific investigation of the finds.

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A SURVEY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT THE SITES OF WUCOR GRANITE MINING AND THABA ROMANA GRANITE, NORTHWEST PROVINCE

1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The National Cultural History Museum was requested by **Wucor granite mining and Thaba Romana granite** to survey their sites where mining activities are in progress, situated in the Kareepoort mountain, approximately 15 km northwest of Brits in the Northwest province. Granite mining has already commenced in the area and it is planned to expand the mining operations higher up into the mountain. The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document possible sites, objects and structures of archaeological importance within the boundaries of the proposed mining areas.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The **Terms of Reference** for the study were to:

2.1 Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural resources) located in the area of the proposed development.

2.2 Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their historical, social, religious, aesthetic and scientific value.

2.3 Describe the possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains, according to a standard set of conventions.

2.4 Propose suitable mitigation measures to minimize possible negative impacts on the cultural resources.

2.5 Review applicable legislative requirements.

The survey was to be confined to the area mentioned above, as indicated by the client.

3. CONDITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following aspects have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

- **Cultural resources** are all nonphysical and physical human-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences that are associated with human activity. These include all sites, structures and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development.

- The **significance** of the sites and artifacts are determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. It must be kept in mind that the various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and that the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these.

- Significance is site-specific and relates to the content and context of the site. Sites regarded as having low significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium to high significance require further investigation and/or mitigation.

- The latitude and longitude of an archaeological site is to be treated as sensitive information by the developer, and should not be disclosed to members of the public.

- All recommendations are made with full cognisance of the relevant legislation, in this case the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969).

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989). It is however important to note that new legislation is being prepared and this might come into effect before the end of 1999.

4.1 National Monuments Act

According to this Act the following cultural resources are protected:

- a. Meteorites and fossils
- b. Prehistoric rock art
- c. Prehistoric tools, ornaments and structures
- d. The anthropological and archaeological contents of graves, rock shelters, caves, middens etc.
- e. Historical sites and archaeological finds, material or artifacts
- f. Declared national monuments
- g. Cemeteries and graves with headstones older than 50 years

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit to do so from the National Monuments Council.

4.2 Environmental Conservation Act

This act states that a survey and an evaluation of cultural resources should be undertaken in areas where development, which will change the face of the environment, is to be made. The impact of the development on the cultural resources should also be determined and proposals to mitigate this impact is to be formulated.

4.3 The White Paper on Heritage Resources

The white paper is currently being discussed by parliament and is destined to be promulgated before the end of 1999. It will replace the current National Monuments Act. The types of sites protected by this act will be more or less the same than that covered by the National Monuments Act, but provides more strict measures of protection. One of the changes to the current act is that

all graves, cemetaries and structures older than 60 years will be protected, moving away from the 50 year clause.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Field survey

A thorough and complete survey of the sites of the proposed mining at Wucor granite mining and Thaba Romana granite was undertaken by means of a foot survey.

5.2 Literary and other research

A search in the relevant literary sources was also carried out, as well as in the Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC) of the National Cultural History Museum.

5.3 Documentation

All sites, objects and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the **Global Positioning System (GPS)** and plotted on a map. The information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

5.4 Presentation of the information

In discussing the results of the survey, a chronological rather than a geographical approach was followed in the presentation of an overview of human occupation and land use in the area. This helps the reader to better understand and facilitate the potential impact of the development. Information on the individual objects, sites, occurrences and structures are presented in Appendix 1 and summarised in Table 1.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA SURVEYED

Both sites are situated against the slopes of the Kareepoort mountains. Wucor granite mining lies against the northwestern slope and Thaba Romana against the northeastern slope. The topography of the area is therefore very steep. The mountain consists of rocky peaks and a large amount of rocks are found on the slopes thereof. The natural vegetation is very dense and the grass were quite long at the time the survey was undertaken. This vegetation consists of sourish mixed bushveld (Acocks 1988). The area was previously used for grazing cattle.

7. DISCUSSION

One site and two occurrences (see appendix 2) where cultural material were found was identified during the survey. Potsherds were found in the area of the proposed mining at Thaba Romana granite and at Wucor granite mining. As these were undecorated it is impossible to date, but never the less are an indication of the presence of people in the area during the Iron Age. The

dates for the Iron Age are between 200 AD - 1850 AD.

The site was found at Thaba Romana granite, outside of the area to be mined and can be described as a low stone wall of considerable extent. As a result of the density of the vegetation it was not possible to form an idea of the layout thereof. As it is known that the camp was used for collective grazing during the latter part of the previous century and early in this century (Personal comment: C. Nel), it is possible to link it to this period. This deduction is however not conclusive. If this is the case, it can be seen as a historical site.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As no cultural resources of significance were found in the area of the proposed mining activities at both Thaba Romana granite and Wucor granite mining, it is recommended that the mining can continue. The site found outside of this area at Thaba Romana will probably not be impacted upon by the mining. It should however be examined again at a later stage when the vegetation is less dense in order to come to a conclusive evaluation thereof. It is also recommended that if, during any part of the mining activities, sites or artefacts of cultural importance are found, the National Cultural History Museum be contacted to undertake proper scientific investigation of the finds.

TABLE 1

**No. Type Significance Certainty of Status of Recommended
of impact prediction impact management
action**

1	Iron Age	Low	Definite	Neutral	No further investigation
2	Iron Age	Low	Definite	Neutral	No further investigation
3	Historic?	Medium	Probable	Neutral	Further investigation necessary

9. REFERENCES

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10. PROJECT TEAM

Dr. J.A. van Schalkwyk - Principal Investigator

A.C. van Vollenhoven - Investigator

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY RESULTS

1. Site number: 2527DA2

Description: Potsherds

Location: 25°36'09"S; 27°42'22"E (Thaba Romana)

Discussion: Iron Age

Significance of impact: Low - impact will not have an influence

Certainty of prediction: Definite - more than 90% certainty

Status of impact: Neutral

Recommended management action: No further investigation

2. Site number: 2527DA3

Description: Potsherd

Location: 25°36'15"S; 27°41'31"E (Wucor)

Discussion: Iron Age

Significance of impact: Low - impact will not have an influence

Certainty of prediction: Definite - more than 90% certainty

Status of impact: Neutral

Recommended management action: No further investigation

3. Site number: 2527DA4

Description: Stone wall

Location: 25°36'13"S; 27°42'29"E (Thaba Romana)

Discussion: Probably remains of cattle kraal - historical age

Significance of impact: Medium - impact could have an influence

Certainty of prediction: Definite - more than 90% certainty

Status of impact: Neutral

Recommended management action: Further investigation necessary

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS

-A site can be defined as an immovable cultural resource, and may include archaeological features such as smelting furnaces and structures such as stone walls.

-An occurrence is a movable cultural resource, meaning small finds (artefacts) such as isolated stone tools and potsherds.