

**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE  
RIETSPRUIT DRAINAGE DISTRICT,  
SEBOKENG AREA, GAUTENG PROVINCE**

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**NASIONALE KULTURHISTORIESE MUSEUM**  
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## SUMMARY

### **A survey of cultural resources in the Rietspruit drainage district, Sebokeng area, Gauteng Province**

A survey to establish the nature, extent and significance of cultural resources was made in the area of the proposed expansion of the sewerage disposal site in the Rietspruit drainage district, Sebokeng area, Gauteng Province.

The area under consideration is largely disturbed, making the location of primary archaeological sites very difficult, as well as highly unlikely.

No sites, objects or structures of cultural significance were identified during the survey, and it is therefore recommended that the development can continue.

**CONTENTS**

SUMMARY .....	i
CONTENTS .....	ii
1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY .....	1
2. TERMS OF REFERENCE .....	1
3. CONDITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS.....	1
4. METHODOLOGY .....	2
5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA SURVEYED.....	4
6. DISCUSSION .....	4
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	5
8. REFERENCES .....	6
9. PROJECT TEAM .....	6
APPENDIX 1.....	7
APPENDIX 2.....	8
APPENDIX 3.....	9



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## 1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The National Cultural History Museum was requested by **Booz-Allen & Hamilton** to survey an area west of Sebokeng, Gauteng Province. The aim was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of archaeological, historical and cultural importance within the boundaries of the proposed development. The proposed development is the expansion of an existing sewerage disposal plant.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

- 2.1 Identify all known and potential cultural resources in the proposed area of development. These resources include the areas of historical, scientific and cultural importance.
- 2.2 Assess the significance of the known and potential cultural resources in the area of interest.
- 2.3 Determine the possible impacts on the known and potential cultural resources in the area of interest. Impacts will be determined or predicted for pre-construction, construction, operation and post-operation phases.
- 2.4 Develop mitigation or control measures for impact minimization and cultural resources preservation.
- 2.5 Develop procedures that will be used during the construction phase if previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered.

## 3. DEFINITIONS 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 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 is 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 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 reference to the **National Monuments Act, No 28 of 1969**, as amended.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Preliminary investigation

#### 4.1.1 Survey of the literature

A survey of all relevant literature was conducted with the aim of reviewing the previous research done and to determine the potential of the area. In this regard various anthropological, archaeological and historical sources were consulted - see list of references below.

#### 4.1.2 Data sources

The **Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC)**, housed at the National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria, was consulted.

#### 4.1.3 Other sources

The relevant topocadastral and other maps were studied - see list of references below.

### 4.2 Field survey

The field survey began with a site orientation by Mr C. Schreuder, manager of the sewerage disposal works. At the same time, he was also interviewed as to his knowledge of the area under investigation.

The survey was conducted according to generally accepted archaeological practices, and

was aimed at locating all possible sites, objects and structures. This was done by dividing the whole area into blocks, making use of natural and human-made topographical elements. Areas with potential for human use were investigated. Special attention was given to outcrops, stream beds and banks, and unnatural topographical occurrences such as trenches, holes and clusters of exotic and indigenous trees.

#### 4.3 Documentation

All sites, objects and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standard accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the **Global Positioning System (GPS)**<sup>1</sup> and plotted on a map. The information was added to the description to facilitate the identification of each locality.

#### 4.4 Presentation of the information

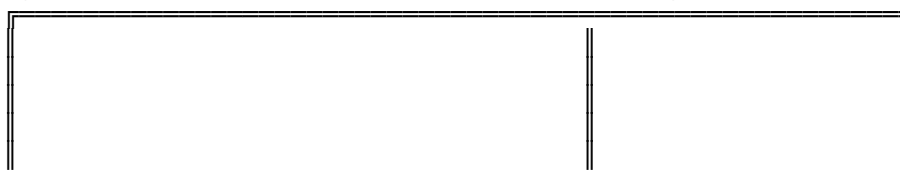
In discussing the results of the survey, a chronological rather than a geographical approach was followed so as to present an overview of human occupation and land used in the area. This helps the reader to better understand the potential impact of the development.

### 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA SURVEYED

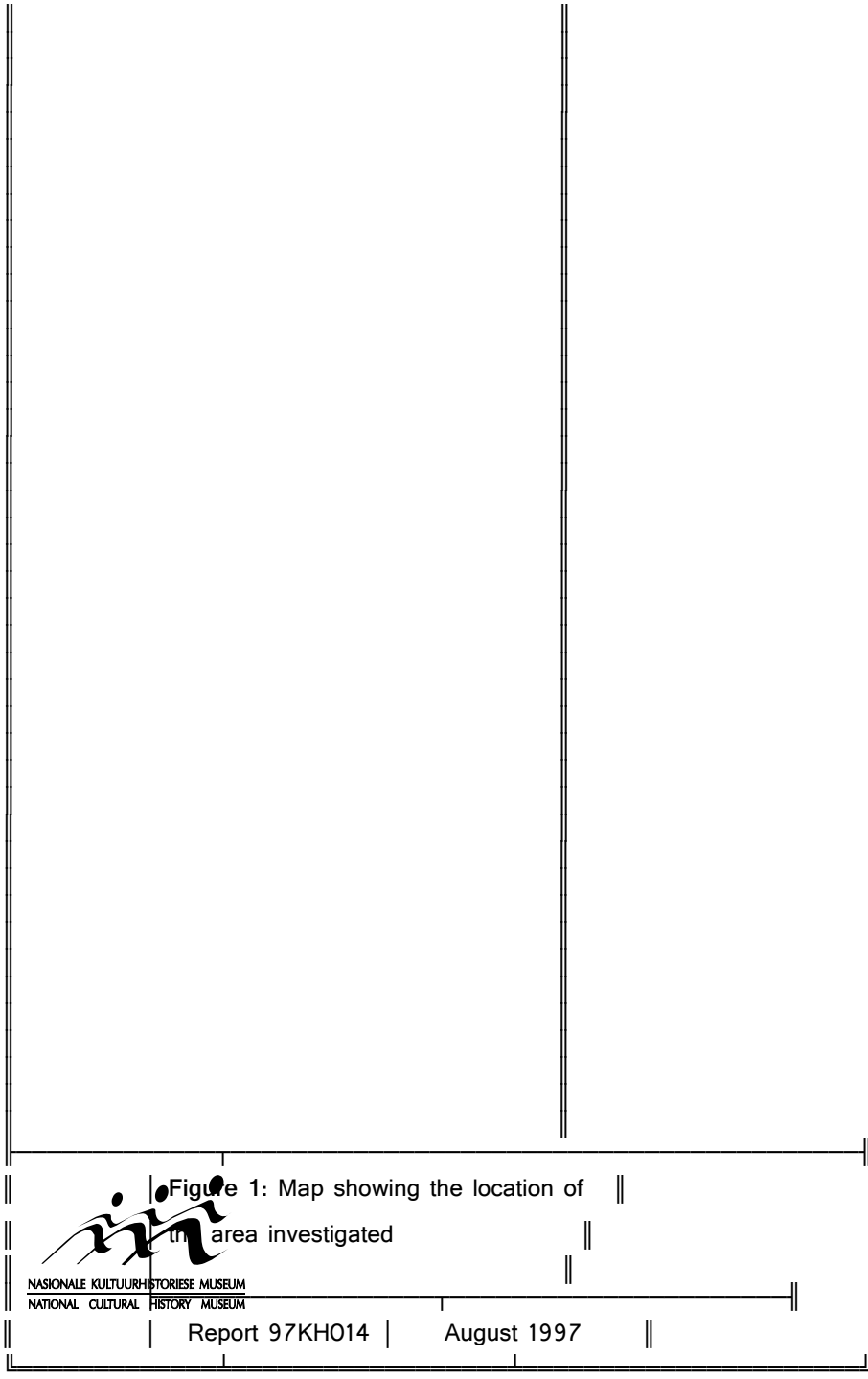
The area surveyed (Figure 1) is located on the farm Rietspruit 535IQ, in the Vereeniging district, Gauteng Province.

The geology of the study area consists basically of a soil cover, dating to the Quaternary period. Quartzite and shale dikes occur in places. The vegetation of the area is classified by Acocks (1978:88) as Cymbopogon-Themada Veld, featuring gentle rolling highveld. The most important geographical feature is the Rietspruit, which flows from north to south through the area.

Large sections of the area can be classified as a marsh area and would have been too wet for human settlement. Parts of the area are also subject to intensive informal housing, agricultural activities, and dumping of stone rubble.



<sup>1</sup> According to the manufacturer a certain deviation may be expected for each reading. Care was, however, taken to obtain as accurate a reading as possible, and then correlate it with reference to the physical environment before plotting it on the map.



The result is that any archaeological indicators visible on the surface would have been destroyed or disturbed out of context.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Stone Age



A small number of Middle Stone Age artifacts were identified, scattered all over the area. These artifacts are made primarily of quartzite, though examples made from chert were also noticed. Being surface finds, they are considered to be disturbed out of context and therefore does not pose any obstacle to the proposed development.

## 6.2 Iron Age

No objects, sites or structures pertaining to the Iron Age were identified.

## 6.3 Historic

The remains of a large number of structures were identified, mostly on the southern section of the development area. Some of these were possibly farm houses or smallholdings, and the layout of the individual homesteads can still be determined to some extent. It is judged, however, that this would not produce any new or significant information on settlement patterns.

It should be kept in mind that all buildings over 50 years (current legislation), or 60 years (proposed legislation), are protected by law, and a permit is required before they may be altered or demolished.

On the south eastern section of the area, the remains of a number of so-called squatter houses were identified. These are apparently of recent origin and were therefore ignored.

No graves or cemeteries were identified. This was also confirmed by Mr Schreuder, who is in charge of the sewerage disposal plant. A small structure was, however, identified as possibly a small cemetery - see Appendix 2. Being very overgrown and wet at present, it could not be investigated during the survey. This structure should be kept in mind and investigated if future development takes place.

## 6.4 Living culture

According to Mr Schreuder, manager of the sewerage disposal plant, local people still carry out initiation rituals on the site. This was later confirmed when a number of women, undergoing these rituals, were noticed while they were gathering material for fire and possible food plants (*Marogo*).

Although areas used in this manner cannot be classified as sacred or even restricted, the need of the people for such an area, where they can operate in relative isolation, should be considered. The local community should be consulted and provision should be made that a section, or alternative area, be set aside for use in this manner.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is our opinion that there is no cultural resources in the area to be developed which would impact on the proposed development, and therefore have an influence on, or require to be significantly accommodated in the project design, or require mitigation. We therefore recommend that the development can continue.

It must be kept in mind that archaeological objects and features, due to their specific nature, usually occur below ground level. It is therefore recommended that the developers be notified that archaeological sites might be exposed during construction. If anything is noticed, it should be reported immediately to a museum, preferably one at which an archaeologist is available, so that an investigation and evaluation of the find can be made.

## 8. REFERENCES

### 8.1 Unpublished sources

#### 8.1.1 Data base

Archaeological Data Recording Centre, (former) Tvl section, National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria.

### 8.2 Published sources

#### 8.2.1 Books and journals

Acocks, J.P.H. 1975. Veld Types of South Africa. Memoirs of the Botanical Survey of South Africa, No. 40. Pretoria: Botanical Research Institute.

Holm, S.E. 1966. Bibliography of South Africa Pre- and Protohistoric archaeology. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

Maggs, T.M.O'C. 1976. Iron Age communities of the Southern Highveld. Occasional Papers of the Natal Museum, No. 2. Pietermaritzburg: Council of the Natal Museum.

Mason, R. 1962. Prehistory of the Transvaal. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University press.

Van Schalkwyk, J.A. 1991. Museums and the treatment of sacred/restricted material in South Africa. Unpublished conference paper: 55th South African Museums Association Conference, Cape Town.

Van Warmelo, N.J. 1977. Anthropology of Southern Africa in Periodicals to 1950. Pretoria: Government Printer.

### 8.2.2 Maps

1: 50 000 Topocadastral map - 2627DB Vereeniging

1: 250 000 Geological map - 2626 Wes-Rand

## 9. PROJECT TEAM

J. van Schalkwyk - project leader

S Smith

## APPENDIX 1: STANDARDIZED SET OF CONVENTIONS USED TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF PROJECTS ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Significance of impact:

- low where the impact will not have an influence on or require to be significantly accommodated in the project design
- medium where the impact could have an influence which will require modification of the project design or alternative mitigation
- high where it would have a "no-go" implication on the project regardless of any mitigation

### Certainty of prediction:

- Definite: More than 90% sure of a particular fact. Substantial supportive data to verify assessment
- Probable: Over 70% sure of a particular fact, or of the likelihood of that impact occurring
- Possible: Only over 40% sure of a particular fact, or of the likelihood of an impact occurring
- Unsure: Less than 40% sure of a particular fact, or the likelihood of an impact occurring

### Status of the impact:

With mitigation and the resultant recovery of material, a negative impact can be turned positive. Describe whether the impact is positive (a benefit), negative (a cost) or neutral

### Recommended management action:

For each impact, the recommended practically attainable mitigation actions which would result in a measurable reduction of the impact, must be identified. This is expressed according to the following:

- 1 = no further investigation necessary
- 2 = controlled sampling of the site necessary
- 3 = test excavation to determine if further work is necessary
- 4 = preserve site if possible, otherwise extensive salvage excavation necessary
- 5 = preserve site at all costs

### Legal requirements:

Identify and list the specific legislation and permit requirements which potentially could be infringed upon by the proposed project

## APPENDIX 2: SURVEY RESULTS

[See Appendix 1 for definitions of the conventions used in assessing cultural remains]

1. Site number: 2627DB8

Location: Rietspruit 535IQ - 26°34'54.3" S; 27°48'53.1" E [SA Co-ordinate System: X 2941319.428; Y 118085.392].

Description: Rectangular structure, built of stone, with an entrance facing east. The approximate size is 12 x 3 m.

Discussion: This structure was originally thought to be a small cemetery, but no headstone or other indications of graves could be seen. However, the vegetation is very dense, and it was decided to document the structure for possible later investigation. It might also have been a small stock pen, eg. for keeping pigs, etc.

Significance of impact: Low

Certainty of prediction: Definite

Status of impact: Neutral

Legal requirements: None at present

Recommended management action: (1) None necessary as the site is already fully documented.

### APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

This section is included to give the reader some necessary background. It must be kept in mind, however, that these dates are all relative and serve only to give a very broad framework for interpretation.

#### STONE AGE

Early Stone Age (ESA)	2 000 000 - 150 000 Before Present
Middle Stone Age (MSA)	150 000 - 30 000 BP
Late Stone Age (LSA)	30 000 - until c. AD 200

#### IRON AGE

Early Iron Age (EIA)	AD 200 - AD 1000
Late Iron Age (LIA)	AD 1000 - AD 1830

#### HISTORICAL PERIOD

Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1830 in this part of the country