

9-2-253-0003-20010101-RRCRG

9/2/2003/3

PHASE 1
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED ESKOM OVERHEAD POWER LINE
*PALMIETFONTEIN, GA-MOTHIBA,
MATHIBASKRAAL*
Polokwane: Northern Province

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November 2001

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SYNOPSIS

Although significant historical sites were found along the proposed route, the impact of the power line will be minimal. Care must be taken to avoid certain indicated features. No phase 2 cultural resource management procedures are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

The **Project Proposal** constitutes an activity that is listed in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989), for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required to satisfy the requirements of the List of Activities and Regulation for EIA's – Government Gazette of 5 September 1997 - provided for in terms of sections 21, 22 and 26. In terms of the above mentioned Act, and the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999, Section 38), a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (scoping) was undertaken.

AIM

The aim was to undertake a **Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment** of the proposed route of the Overhead Power Line, in order to assess the impact of the proposed project on archaeological and historical sites and features; and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features.

METHOD

A thorough survey of the proposed route was undertaken on foot and by vehicle. Standard archaeological practises for observation were followed. As most archaeological material occur in single or multiple stratified layers beneath the soil surface, special attention was given to disturbances, both man-made such as roads and clearings, as well as those made by natural agents such as burrowing animals and erosion.

Locations of archaeological material were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin 12). Archaeological material and the general conditions along the route were photographed with a KODAK DC120 Digital camera.

LOCATION AND DISCRPTION

Refer to maps, South Africa 1:50 000 2329 DC and 2429 BA.

The proposed Power Line follows a route along and east of the Ga-Mathiba road, from a point opposite Thaba Moshu (Silicon hill) to Ga-Mathiba. It also branches off along the Mathibaskraal road

The veld type varies from *Pietersburg plateau false grassveld* in the north to *mixed Bushveld* in the south and east. The eastern and southern parts have been extensively ploughed in the vicinity of villages.

The vegetation near to villages has been degraded through wood collection and over grazing.

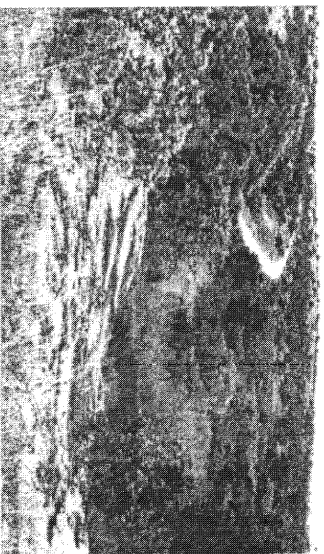


Figure 1. General view in northerly direction

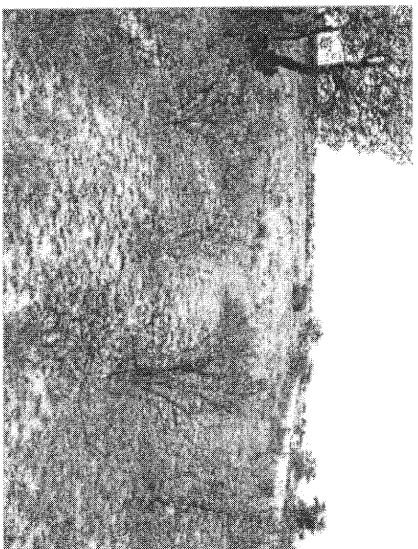


Figure 2. General view in southerly direction

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL FINDS

A small number of mainly historical heritage remains were located on the proposed route. Only one archaeological site of low significance was found. Single Middle Stone age flakes were found scattered along the route, but one donga recorded as site 7 had a large concentration of MSA blades, although the Overhead Line will not directly affect the site.

SITE 1 Co-ordinates: S23°58'44.3" E29°31'36.2"

This is a low profile Iron age site typically covered with aloe growth. It contains a low concentration of non-diagnostic pottery remains. This is probably related to the Ndebele occupational phase and an outpost of a larger site such as the one at the nearby quarry.

SITE 2 Co-ordinates: S24°02'11.1" E29°33'48.5"

Historical remains of a typical farm worker's houses.

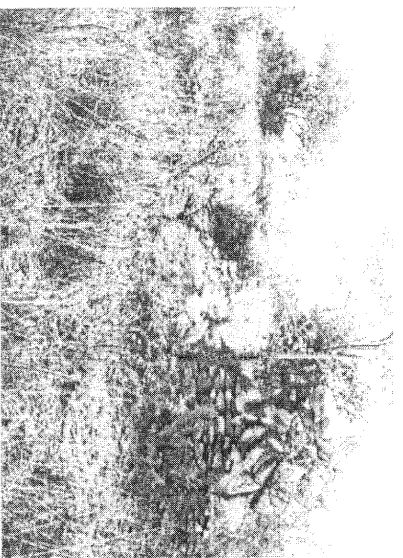


Figure 3. Ruin, site 2



Figure 4. Communal grinding stone, site 3

SITE 3 Co-ordinates: S24°02'05.2" E29°33'46.2"

This site contains communal grinding stones related to the ruins above.

SITE 4 Co-ordinates: S24°02'06.4" E29°33'47.3"

This site contains communal grinding stones related to the ruins below.

SITE 5 Co-ordinates: S24°02'08.0" E29°33'48.4"

Historical remains of a typical farm worker's dwelling. Traditions layout with rondavels and lapa wall. A possible grave is located in close proximity.

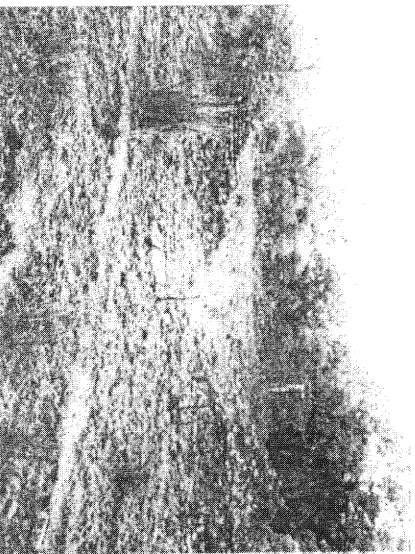


Figure 5. Ruin, site 5



Figure 6. Communal grinding stone, site 4

SITE 6 Co-ordinates: S24°01'48.8" E29°35'49.3"

Historical remains of a typical farm worker's dwelling. Traditions layout with rondavels and lapa wall. A child's grave is located at the ruins.

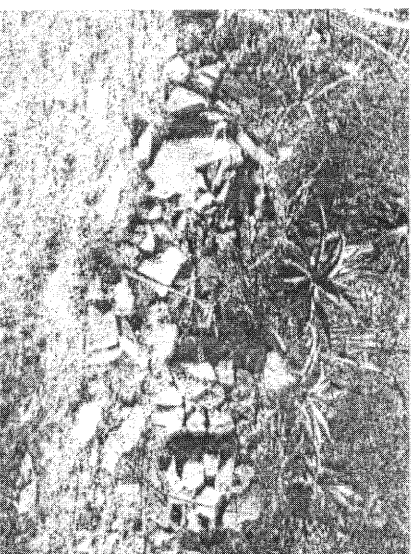


Figure 7. Ruin, site 6

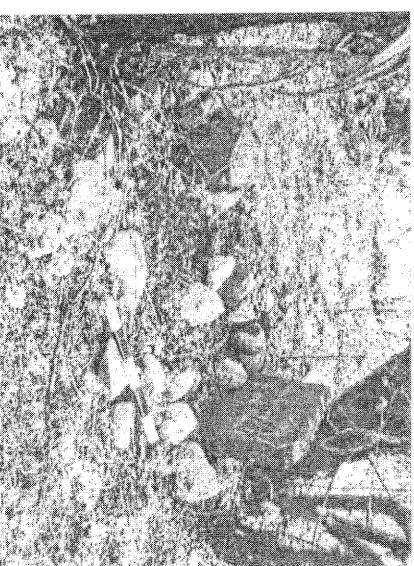


Figure 8. Child's grave, site 6

SITE 7 Co-ordinates: S24°02'14.6" E29°35'10.3"

This is an extensive donga area in which large concentrations of Middle Stone Age (MSA) flakes and core are present. The power line should however not affect this MSA deposit.

EVALUATION

A crucial aspect in determining the significance and protection status of a heritage resource is often whether or not the sustainable social and economic benefits of a proposed development outweighs the conservation issues at stake. There are many aspects that must be taken into consideration when determining significance, such as rarity, national significance, scientific importance, cultural and religious significance, and not least, community preferences. When, for whatever reason the protection of a heritage site is not deemed necessary or practical, its research potential must be *assessed and*

mitigated in order to gain data / information which would otherwise be lost. Such sites must be adequately recorded and sampled before being destroyed.

The nature of this development must be considered. Damage could only be done on the spot where a posthole is excavated or where access routes are made. In this particular case the existing road could serve as an access route, but much of the proposed route has a firebreak scrapped along the fence on privately owned land. Elsewhere, on communal land, fields have been made up to the shoulder of the road. With this in mind it is clear that the construction of the proposed Power Line will have little or no damaging effect.

With the above in mind the evaluation of the heritage resources are as follows:

Site 1 is not regarded as significant and the impact here will be minimal.

The historical sites (2, 3, 4, & 5) with the communal grinding areas and graves as well as site 6 are regarded as significant. The Power Line will pass the actual ruins, but one must bear in mind that these previously dwelling place will contain graves, even though they may not be marked. Human remains must be treated with sensitivity.

When excavating postholes, care must be taken should any signs of human activity be exposed. The communal grinding area must be avoided at all cost and planning must ensure that the power line spans over these places.

The Stone Age remains are not regarded as significant as a phase 2 assessment will be impractical here and the power line will probably span over this area.

The proposed development could have an adverse impact on the recorded historical sites. In our view however, the potential sustainable socio-economic benefits of the proposed development outweighs the conservation value the historical remains.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above it is recommended that:

1. That no posts be erected within 10 meters of the communal grinding places.
2. That an archaeologist be allowed to inspect the positions of postholes at the areas generally identified as historical sites, i.e. Sites 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,

Extracts from:
The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Subsection 35. (3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Subsection 35. (4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite.

Burial grounds and graves

Subsection 36. (6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and
- (b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

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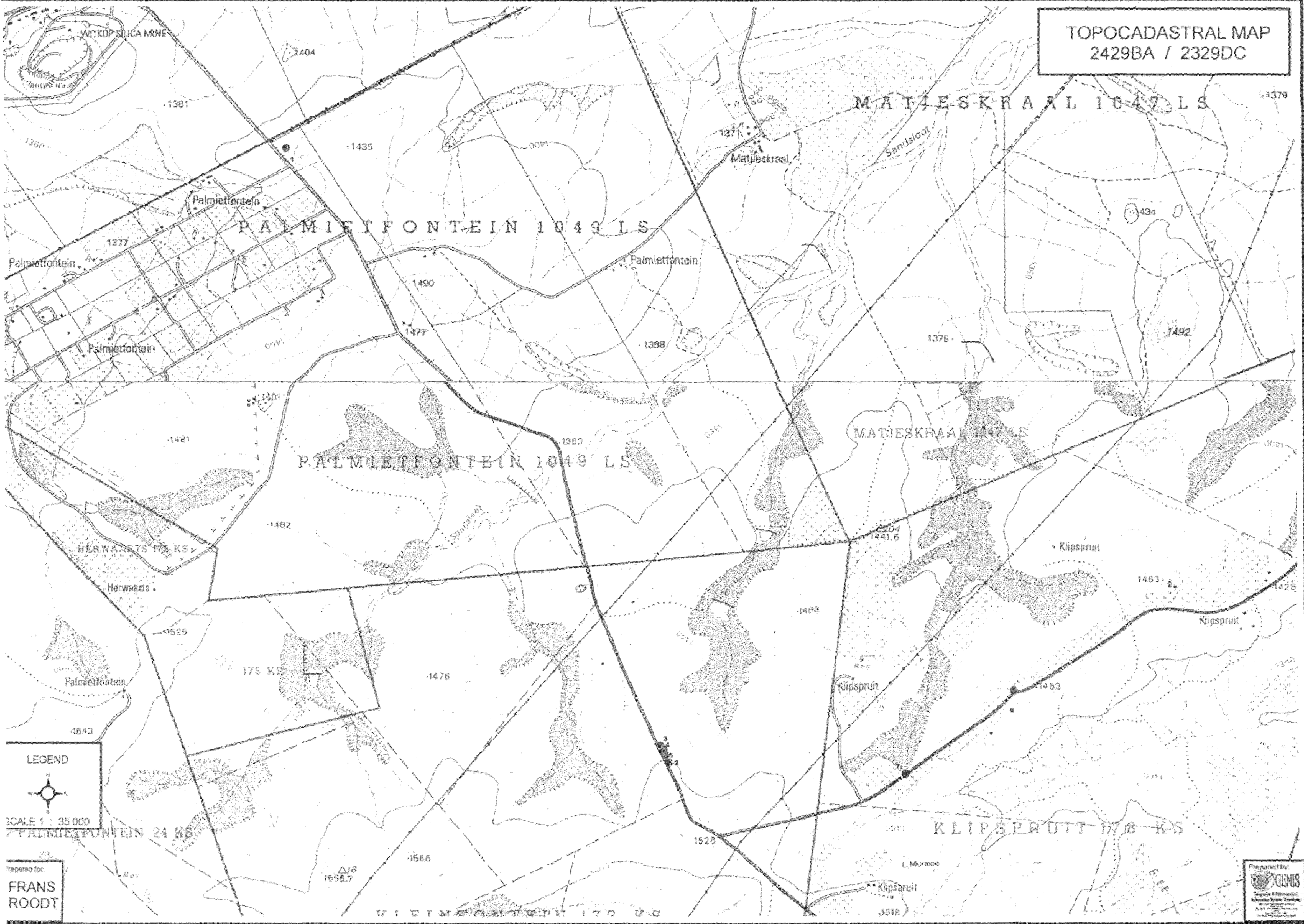
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TOPOCADASTRAL MAP
2429BA / 2329DC



LEGEND

SCALE 1 : 35 000

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