

# **Rock engraving site report and evaluation for the Western Limb Tailings Re-treatment project, Rustenburg**

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## **1. Introduction**

The rock art site is located on the farm Hoedspruit 298 JQ @ 25 40 33.5S 27 24 22.6W. The site comprises an irregularly-shaped, flat rock surface approximately 55cm at its most elevated point (Figures 1 and 2).

Located on this rock surface are three rock engravings (Figures 3, 4 and 5), executed by scraping into the rock surface with a hard mineral or other implement. These engravings are circular-shaped and somewhat reminiscent of Iron Age engravings depicting settlements. Two other images, which may be rock engravings, are also present (Figures 6 and 7). A discussion of all the images present follows later in this report.

## **2. Methodology**

Exploration of other, similarly-shaped rock formations within the vicinity of the site in question revealed no other rock engravings to be present within the immediate area. All images that may represent rock engravings were documented photographically, with scale, in digital format. The three circular engravings were traced in actual size (Figures 8, 9 and 10).

## **3. Discussion**

As mentioned before, three engravings reminiscent of Iron Age settlement depictions are present. However, their intended depiction is not very clear as they are not scraped deeply into the rock surface and are furthermore obscured by surface spalling. The engravings appear to have been created very recently.

Two other possible engravings occur. One (Figure 6) appears to have been created by some form of rubbing or similar mechanical action over the rock surface and owes its appearance to the natural irregularities in protrusion of the rock surface. It is unclear if this image was created as a result of human endeavour and it is also possible that it may be a result of natural rock weathering.

The other image (Figure 7), is irregularly square-shaped and appears to have been created very recently. It is also unclear if this image was created as a result of human endeavour and may be a result of natural rock weathering or damage caused by agricultural activities.

#### **4. Evaluation and recommendations**

The physical removal of this site from its context is not considered an option, as this would be prohibitively expensive, and has shown to cause substantial damage to the engravings when this has been attempted in the past. Documentation through photographs and tracings has ensured that this site has been recorded for the future.

The three engravings reminiscent of Iron Age settlements appear to have been created very recently and there is doubt concerning their authenticity. The other two images are more likely to have been created as a result of natural rock weathering or agricultural activities within the proposed development area. Taking these elements into account, this site can be regarded as being of low research and cultural significance and it is recommended that in the case of this site, the proposed development be allowed.



**Figure 1.** View of the site



**Figure 2.** View of engravings on the site



**Figure 3.** Engraving reminiscent of Iron Age settlement depictions



**Figure 4.** Engraving reminiscent of Iron Age settlement depictions



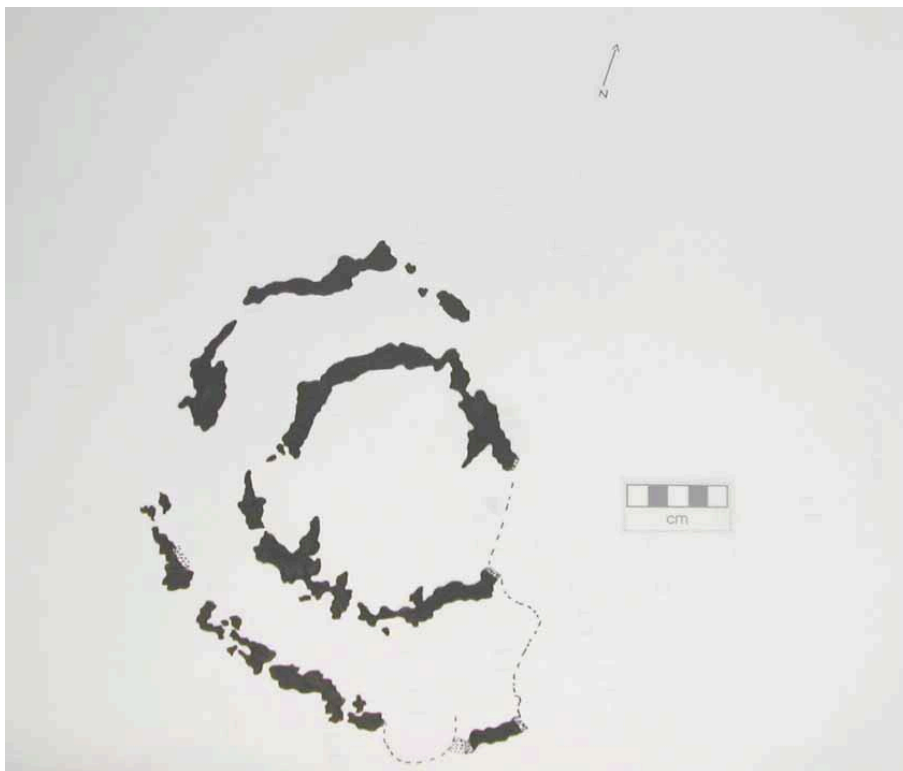
**Figure 5.** Engraving reminiscent of Iron Age settlement depictions



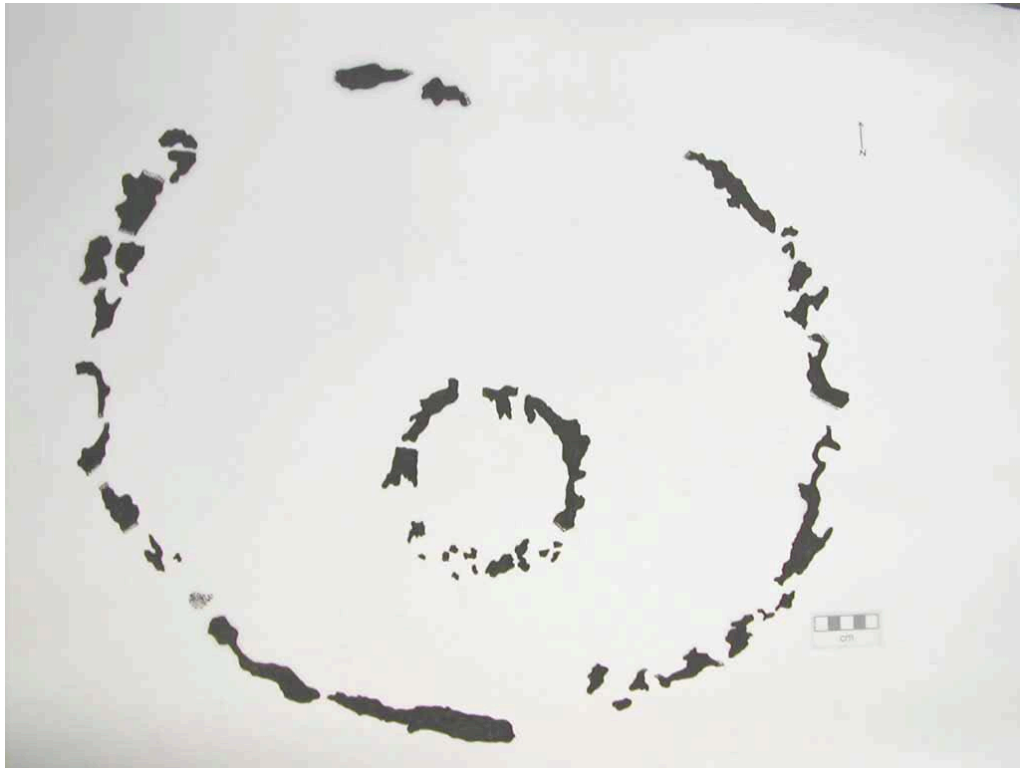
**Figure 6.** Image possibly created by rubbing or weathering



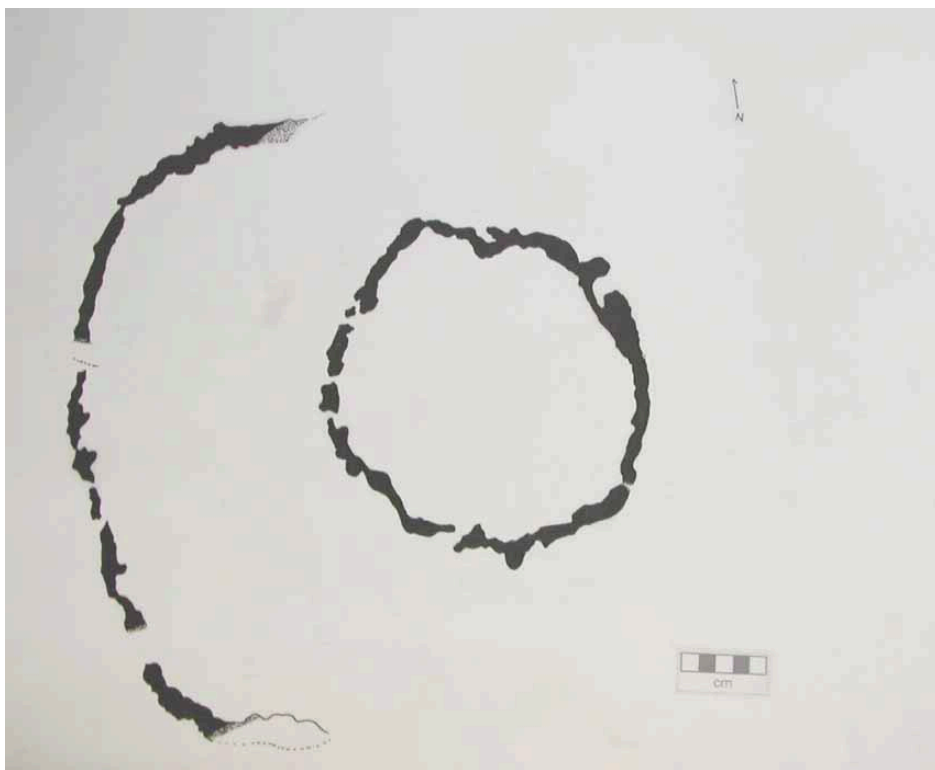
**Figure 7.** Image possibly created by weathering or agricultural activity



**Figure 8.** Tracing of Figure 3.



**Figure 9.** Tracing of Figure 4



**Figure 10.** Tracing of Figure 5.