

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE FOR THE PROPOSED NEW SOUTH DEEP TAILINGS DAM

A phase-1 report prepared for Metago Environmental Engineers

M.H. Schoeman
L. Barry
Reviewed by Professor T.N. Huffman

Archaeological Resources Management
School of Geography, Archaeology & Environmental Studies
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

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INTRODUCTION

South Deep mine intends to develop a new tailings dam on a portion of the farm Modderfontein 345IQ, adjacent to the existing mine. The environmental co-ordinators for the project, Metago Environmental Engineers, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to examine the proposed area for places of archaeological and historical interest, and for recent graves. Whilst a number of alternative sites are being considered, ARM was commissioned only to survey the preferred site.

METHOD

Two ARM staff visited the project area on the 30th of March 2004. They traversed the area on foot and by vehicle. Soil dug up in the process of planting the new fence poles was also examined for artefacts. Site locations were recorded with a hand-held GPS instrument and then transferred to the 1:50 000 map 2627 BC Westonaria.

RESULTS

Parts of the designated area had been cultivated or otherwise disturbed. In addition thick vegetation restricted ground visibility. Nevertheless, the team recorded a representative sample of the local prehistoric sequence.

Earlier Stone Age (ESA)

A cluster of worked stone was found at 26 26 36S 27 39 54.3E (Figure 1A). This included a core and flakes removed from it. These were collected. The worked stone was not diagnostic.

Worked cobbles were found at 26 25 48.8S 27 40 23E (Figure 1B) above the stream, which marks part of the north-eastern boundary of the preferred site. No diagnostic

artefacts were found, but the density of artefacts potentially indicates a site of scientific value.

Middle Stone Age (MSA)

The MSA was well represented, including triangular points and flakes. Erosion and plowing had exposed this material in several areas eg. 26 26 45.2S 27 40 48.7E and 26 26 47.7S 27 40 49.1E (Figure 1 C&D). These artifacts, however, are not *in situ* and of no scientific value.

Middle / Later Stone Age (MSA/LSA)

Two clusters of MSA / LSA worked stone occurred on the south-eastern slopes of the low hill running through the western side of the property at 26 26 44.1S 27 40 35.4E and 26 26 47S 27 40 31.6E (Figure 1 E&F). Whilst there are numerous pieces of worked stone and flakes, we found no diagnostic artifacts. Consequently the material could not be dated more accurately. The worked stone clearly had eroded out, however no *in situ* artifacts could be found. The surface clusters have little scientific value.

Historical

An isolated, low 8m long stonewall was noted at 26 26 36.9S 27 40 19.8E (Figure 1G). No material culture debris was found in the vicinity of the wall. It is, therefore, unlikely that it was part of a residential structure, but could have been part of a stock enclosure. It has no scientific value.

A second historical site was found at 26 25 57.6S 27 40 24.1E (Figure 1H). It contains the remains of an old homestead, which now consists of two partial rectangular foundations and remnants of a rubbish midden. The site has been disturbed extensively by recent human activities, such as making the dirt road that runs through the property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Neither of the historic sites requires mitigation. The isolated stonewall has been recorded, and it has no associated material. The homestead remains have been extensively disturbed and have little remaining scientific value. Consequently, there is no need for mitigation.

The Middle/ Late Stone Age clusters are not *in situ* and have little scientific value. A surface collection has been made, and there is no need for further mitigation.

The Early Stone Age sites, require investigation by an Early Stone Age specialist. This specialist will determine the extent of the mitigation needed. This might consist of simply recording the sites and collecting artefacts from the surface or could include excavation.

With the provisions for mitigation of the Early Stone Age material, there are no archaeological reasons why the project should not proceed.

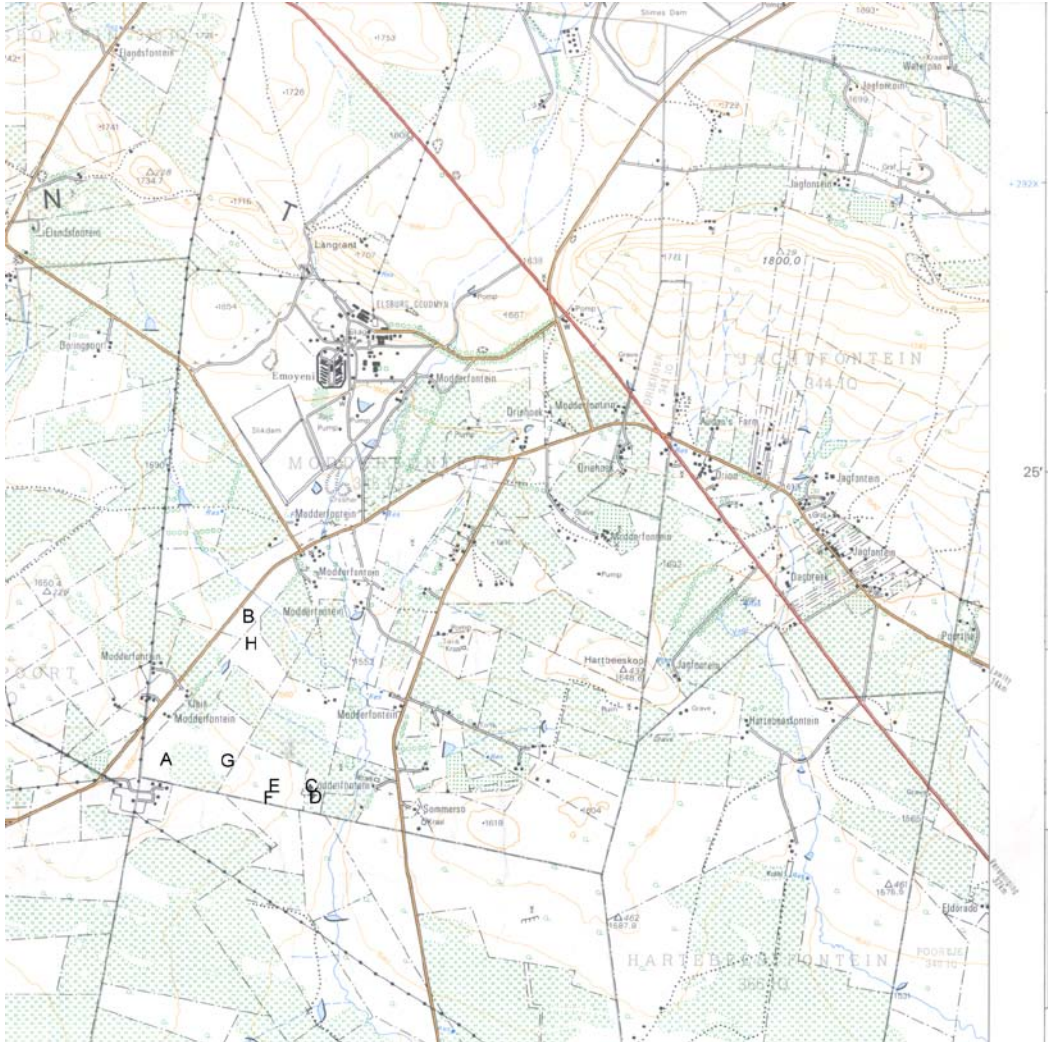


Figure 1. Portion of the 1:50 000 map 2627 BC Westonia on which the sites mentioned in the text are indicated.