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PHASE 1

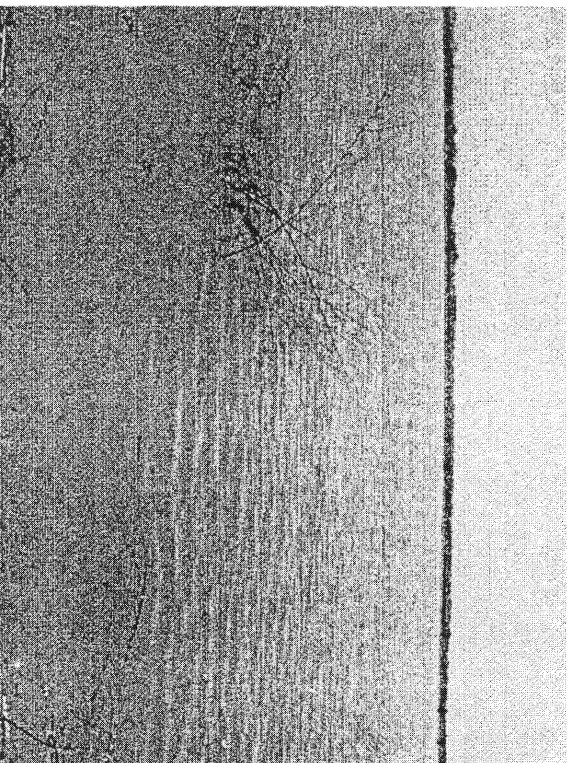
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Oxidation Dam

Pienaarsrivier

Pienaarsrivierbrug 70 JR

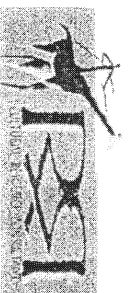
NORTHERN PROVINCE



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April 1999

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SYNOPSIS

Cultural material ranging from the Middle Stone Age through to Moloko settlement has been identified at the site. The character of some sites warrants further investigation, as more information will be acquired once test excavations had been conducted. It is thus of importance that a Phase 2 archaeological assessment be conducted.

The relevant archaeological cultures are shortly discussed in the report. The attached addenda will stress the importance of these sites, and highlights the dearth of knowledge relating to certain aspects of these specific cultures.

AIM

A phase 1 *Archaeological Impact Assessment* was conducted on approximately 5ha at Pienarsivierbrug 70 JR, portion of the farm Iregasie, at Pienarsivier. The demarcated area lies about 100m from the railway. The recomnitted area lies approximately 200m parallel to the railway and 150m rectangular to it. As has been indicated, this area is set aside for the building of an oxidation dam which will serve the development at Ruimte 74 JR, which is located between the R101 and the N1.

The aim was to assess the impact of the proposed project in terms of archaeological/historical sites and features and to make recommendations. The task was performed on April 8, 1999.

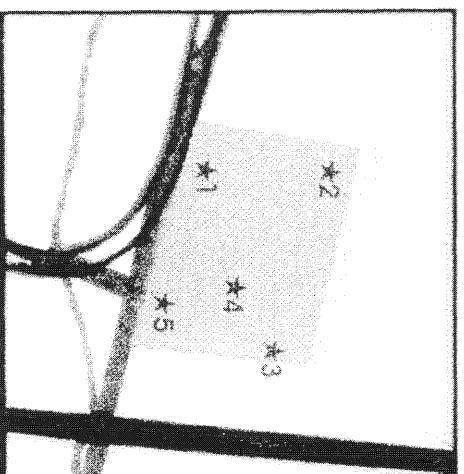
METHOD

A survey of the whole area demarcated for development was done on foot by an archaeologist. Locations were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin, 45XL), and archaeological features were photographed with a Kodak Digital DC120 camera.

DESCRIPTION

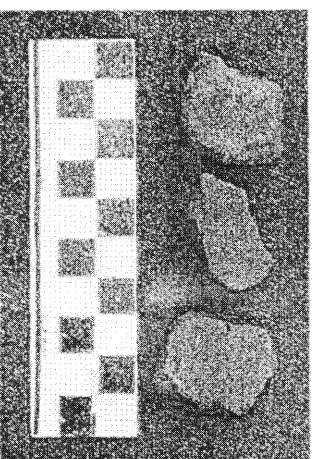
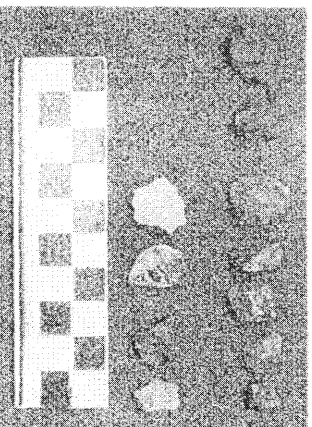
The fairly level surface is mainly covered in shrub and tree growth. The Pienars river lies in close proximity to the north of the terrain. Cultural material, mainly stone artefacts, were recovered from the surface, as well as a few isolated pottery sherds. The stone artefacts resembles the finds at Ruimte 74 JR.

According to the farmer, Wits University conducted excavations approximately four years ago on the farm, when an area was debushed for agricultural purposes. I have since spoken to Prof Tom Huffman, Head of the Department of Archaeology at Wits, who has confirmed the excavations. The excavations apparently revealed a burial, as well as some pottery and ostrich eggshell beads. Their report will be forwarded to me.

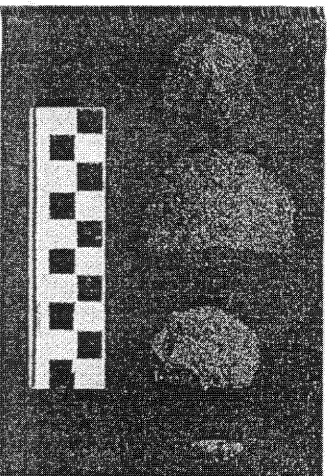


Random samples of cultural material were taken from at least five sites, their GPS readings being the following:

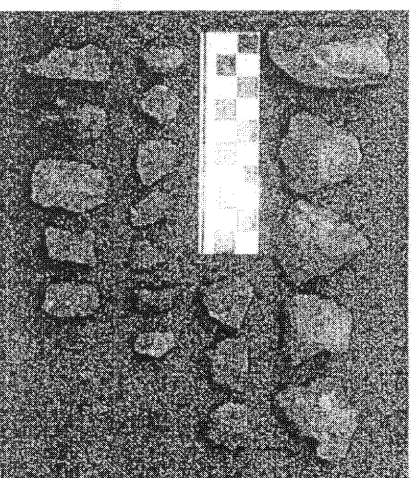
- | | | |
|----|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | S25°13'22.6" | E28°17'23.5" |
| 2. | S25°13'18.7" | E28°17'23.7" |
| 3. | S25°13'20.8" | E28°17'30.4" |
| 4. | S25°13'25.0" | E28°17'26.7" |
| 5. | S25°13'24.5" | E28°17'27.7" |



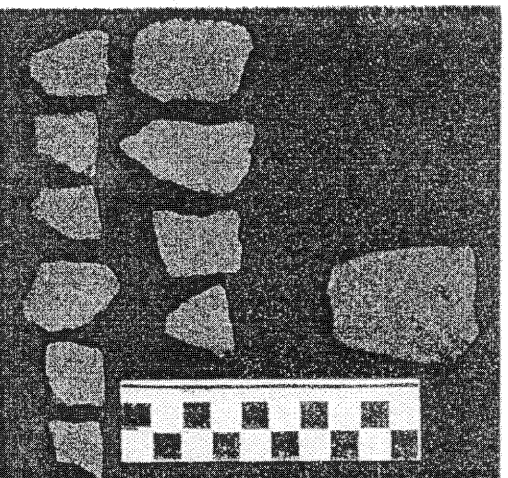
Site 1
LSA Microliths and Eiland
pottery sherds



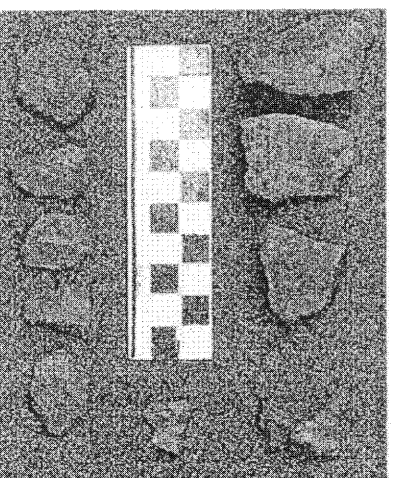
Site 1



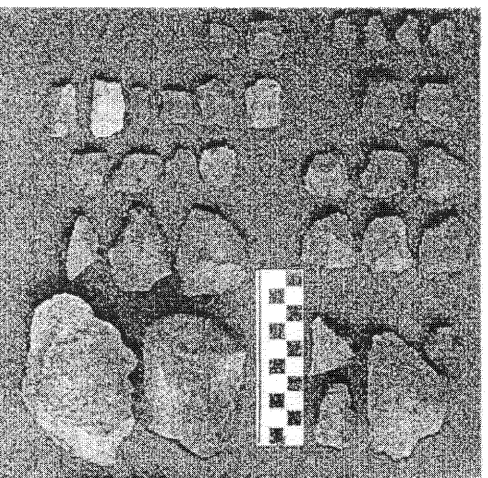
Site 2



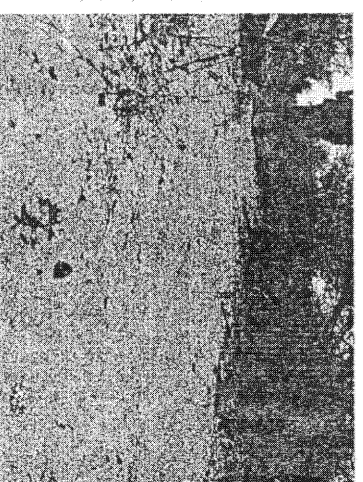
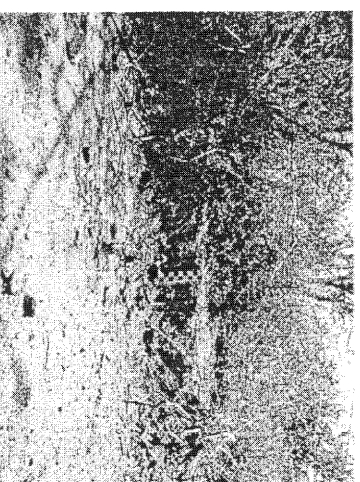
Site 3



Site 4



Site 5

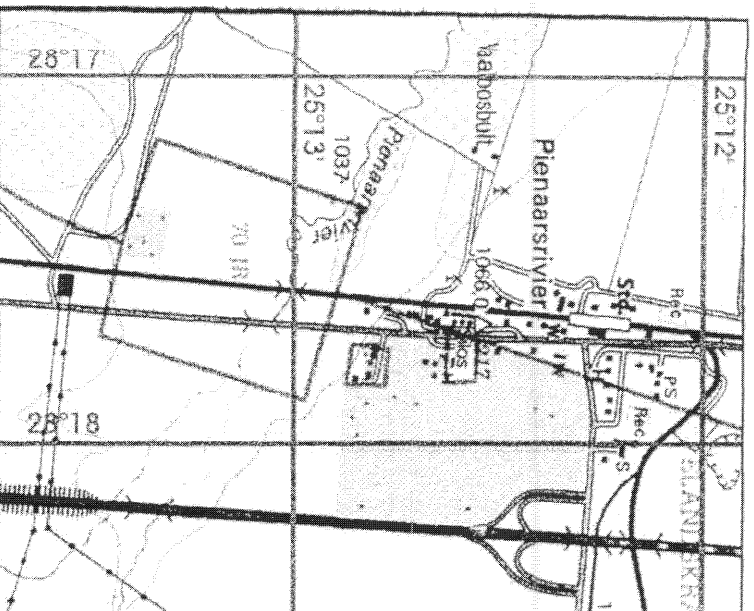


Of all these sites, Site 5 proved to be the most important, as the stone artifacts occurred in a slightly eroded area. The erosion was caused by an earlier access road or fire break which was made by a previous owner. The stratification indicates that more cultural material may be expected below surface.

INTERPRETATION & EVALUATION

The material finds from this site compares well with that of Ruimte 74 JR. Site 5 was probably a production site or is an indication that the majority of material has been covered by top soil after deposition. The rest of the finds are indicative of hunting practices in the area. Both Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age artefacts were recovered, which is indicative of an extended period of land use by these earlier peoples. No Early Stone Age material were recovered.

The few pottery sherds, together with the finds of Wilwatersrand University, proves that Iron Age people also utilised this area, being in close proximity to a reliable water source.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above, it is recommended that a Phase 2 Archaeological Impact Assessment be undertaken. The details could be finalised through mitigation on site.

Depending on the Phase 2 report and its recommendations, it would be of the utmost importance that the archaeologist be notified once the initial surface preparation (clearing of plant growth, etc.) has been done and again once the digging of foundations, water trenches and other earth works are initiated. If any GRAVES and/or MIDDENS are encountered during initial clearing of the surface or during subsoil removal, the archaeologist should be notified immediately. *In this regard, please refer to Addendum 2, especially paragraphs (b) to (f) as well as Addendum 3.*

Method

- The area should be reconnotified in order to obtain a better representative sample. This will be done according to a grid system in order to establish the site layout and to see whether a pattern of artefactual material clusters occur within the area.
- Should it prove necessary, this survey would be enlarged in order to establish the extent of the site/s.
- Some test pits or trenches need to be excavated at Site 5 in order to determine further deposits and depth of deposition. This test pits will cover at least 25m² (in total).
- ◆ All material already recovered, as well as those from Phase 2 will be lodged with the *Pietersburg Museum* together with all documentation such as finds lists, daily reports, site description and a full report.
- ◆ A copy of the report will be sent to the *National Monuments Council (NMC)*.
- ◆ A complete documentation form regarding this survey as well as the Phase 2 survey will be lodged with the *National Cultural History Museum* in Pretoria, which will be included in their database regarding all archaeological finds in the Northern Province.

For the purposes of this report, a short description of the cultural material which were recovered from this area, will be given, in order to impress the importance of these sites.

BACKGROUND TO THE STONE AGE

The Stone Age can be divided in three stages based on technological and typological characteristics of southern African archaeological collections. The three main stages are the following:

- The Early Stone Age (ESA), 1,8 Ma - 10 000 years ago.
- The Middle Stone Age (MSA), ca 150 000 years ago.
- The Late Stone Age (LSA), ca 40 000 years ago

As no Early Stone Age artefacts were recovered, it will not be discussed in detail.

The Middle Stone Age

South from the Limpopo the Middle Stone Age (MSA) replaces the ESA at the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene, and possibly even earlier. The earliest MSA site has been dated for 150 000 years ago. To date no transitional industries have been identified, but a transition would probably result in very small hand axes and very long flake blades.

Collections are characterised by a variety of prepared cores and retouched flake tools, of which most have no equivalent in the ESA. Hand axes and choppers are absent, while flake and blade tools such as points, scrapers and finely toothed tools are characteristic. Both retouched and unretouched pieces could have been attached to wooden handles, as many examples presents a blunt back and sharp blade.

Three groups of MSA artefacts are distinguished, namely tools (with signs of secondary retouching or use), cores and waste (the pieces without signs of edge retouching). Characteristic of the MSA are the many triangular flakes with converging dorsal flaking and faceted butt-ends. Two broadly defined cores are distinguished, namely cores which were used to produce flakes with crossed dorsal flaking (mainly rodlike, disc shaped or cores which had been worked from any direction), and cores with parallel, half-parallel or sometimes converging dorsal flaking (mainly with single or double platforms). The narrow, thin butt-ends and digressive percussion bulbs of some of the artefacts indicate the use of an intermediate punch (the so-called indirect percussion technique). This type of flake cores are present in large quantities in the South African interior and further north.

MSA sites occur in a variety of sites, such as river banks, flood plains, on the shores of lakes and pans as well as in fountain deposits. The materials of long occupation layers are well preserved in caves.

Hearths are characteristic of Upper Pleistocene, i.e MSA occupation, such as at the Cave of Hearths and Border Cave, Kwa-Zulu Natal. It is thus clear that humankind was able to control fire in South Africa at least 130 000 years ago, and probably earlier.

Problem areas

- Very little information still exists relating to the ESA transition to the MSA. This type of artefacts are very rare in the collections.
- It is still inconclusive whether the ESA and MSA traditions existed simultaneously in restricted regions.

The Late Stone Age

The Late Stone Age (LSA) is the youngest development of the 2 million year-old Stone Age tradition of artefact manufacture and hunter-gatherer subsistence. The early LSA starts in some places in Sub-Saharan Africa around 40 000 years ago, and is characterised by microlithic collections which is totally dissimilar to the retouched tools, flakes and cores of the MSA. A further characteristic of the LSA is the presence of other material remains, e.g art (rock paintings and engravings), items of personal adornment (e.g decorated bone tools, beads, pendants and amulets of ostrich eggshell as well as marine and freshwater shells), specialized hunting and fishing equipment such as bows and arrows, a greater variety of numerous formal scrapers (apparently used for skin working), associated with bone skin-working tools, bone needles and awls, specialized food gathering tools and containers such as bored stone digging

slid weights, carrying bags of leather and netting, storage pits, ostrich eggshell water containers, tortoiseshell bowls and scoops and, later, pottery and stone bowls; formal burial of the dead in graves sometimes covered with painted stones, grindstones or unmodified cobbles and boulders, and sometimes accompanied by grave goods; the miniaturisation of some stone tools linked to the practice of hafting stone artefacts in mastic to handles; a characteristic range of formal stone tools designed for making some of the items listed above, for example boiers for making beads, reamers for making bored stores, adzes for woodworking, and grooved stones for smoothing beads, straightening arrows and applying poison to arrowheads.

The southern African LSA can be classified into industrial complexes (cultures), industries and phases. This classification is based on time, the characteristic method of tool manufacture and the range of formal tools. These units are:

- late Pleistocene microlithic assemblages ca 40 000 - ca 12 000 BP
- terminal Pleistocene / Early Holocene non-microlithic assemblages ca 12 000 - ca 8 000 BP
- Holocene microlithic assemblages ca 8 000 - ca historic times
- late Holocene assemblages with pottery ca 2 000 BP - present.

These subdivisions are also broadly coincident with shifts in subsistence strategy brought about by habitat changes at the end of the Pleistocene and by the strategy brought about by habitat changes at the end of the Pleistocene and by the introduction of domestic stock within the last 2 000 years.

Sanlike *Homo sapiens sapiens* people were present in southern Africa as much as 115 000 years ago, however, indicating that there is no close correlation between the development of physically modern people and the artefacts used by modern hunter-gatherers that appear only after 40 000 years ago. The material culture of present-day hunter-gatherers in southern Africa is thus the result of the gradual introduction and adoption of a range of items and habits that has been constantly changing throughout the LSA.

In contrast to the distribution of dates in the terminal Pleistocene / early Holocene and the late Holocene time ranges, there is a general dearth of dated mid-Holocene assemblages from the South African interior (with the exception of the Drakensberg region and foothills), and it is not until after 4500 BP that dated sites become as numerous as they are in the adjacent ecozones in the southern and eastern Cape, Zimbabwe and parts of Namibia. It has been suggested that this distribution may reflect a lower population density in the interior during the mid-Holocene climatic optimum. Data on microfauna and other sources support the contention that conditions were drier after ca 6500 BP in the northern Cape, but data are not available as yet from other regions, in particular from Natal where little is known about the mid-Holocene and the dearth of dated sites may be an artefact of modern archaeological research rather than a reasonably good reflection of site density. The distribution of radiocarbon dates available at present would support an hypothesis that population fluxes occurred during the last 10 000 years. In some areas where rainfall or other environmental factors played a critical role in maintaining population levels, some regions were at times more densely populated than at other times. Unknown factors are the extent to which the preference for open sites (which are currently undated) may have fluctuated in relation to rock shelter sites, and the bias that is introduced by the sampling programmes of present-day archaeologists.

Problems:

- More specific data on the dating of environmental changes in different regions of southern Africa are needed to resolve this issue.
- An increase in the density of sites is suggested by the increase in the number of radiocarbon dates after 12000 BP. Whether this is a 'real' increase in terms of a higher density of population or simply the result of the reorganization of people into smaller groups with a higher archaeological visibility is not yet clear, but its coincidence with a change in the artefact record is tantalizing and needs investigation.

BACKGROUND TO THE IRON AGE

The southern African Iron Age began around AD 200 when people with knowledge of iron smelting moved into Botswana, the Northern Province, Mozambique and the eastern coastal regions of South Africa. The archaeological name, Iron Age, derives from the fact that these new people with their knowledge of metallurgy made metal tools and weapons.

Iron Age people were farmers in contrast to the hunter-gatherers and herders of the Stone Age. Iron tools such as axes and hoes were used to clear forests and brush from the land and plant fields of grain (sorghum and millet) and other crops. As farming required a more settled life, they tended to live in villages and not move around as much as Stone Age people did. Stock raising was also an important part of Iron Age life.

The Iron Age can be divided into three phases, namely:

- Early Iron Age (EIA) AD 200 - 1 000
- Middle Iron Age (MIA) AD 1 000 - 1 500
- Late Iron Age (LIA) AD 1 500 - colonial times

The Early Iron Age

The early period of farming, from AD 200 up to AD 1 000 is known as the Early Iron Age. The fact that excavations at Early Iron Age sites have revealed domesticated plants, cattle bones, iron and slag from metal working, and evidence of settled village life, suggests that the people brought these skills and knowledge with them. Sheep, goats and cattle must have been introduced from the north. Comparisons of pottery decorations support the theory that the southern African Iron Age originated to the north, spreading southwards in a series of movements of people and technology.

Early in the first millennium AD a certain type of pottery, which belonged to a single stylistical tradition, was found in association with iron and copper production in the largest parts of East and southern Africa. As it was the first signs of metal production in the entire area, it was called the Early Iron Age.

This cultural entity can be subdivided in an eastern and western stream on the grounds of:

- pottery typology
- chronological differentiation, and
- divergent cultural features.

Pottery typology

Settlements with distinctive Early Iron Age pottery have been found at sites all over the Bushveld areas into which the early farmers first moved. Pottery is the most important artefact for identifying Iron Age groups. Iron Age pottery from different regions and different periods is decorated in different ways. This shows that the movement of Iron Age farmers into southern Africa did not occur at only one time, or involve only one group. By studying pottery, archaeologists are also able to demonstrate that some people remained in an area over a period of time during which their style of pottery changed and therefore divide individual groups chronologically into successive phases.

For the purpose of this report, only the relevant assemblages will be discussed.

Eiland assemblage

The Eiland assemblage of ceramics have been dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries and forms the third phase of the Western Stream in the Northern Province. Some deposits occur at e.g. Eiland in the eastern Northern Province, Lowveld, Tzhatshena and Begwa in the Southpansberg, Silver Leaves in the eastern Northern Province, Lowveld, Roodberg in the western Northern Province and at Ficus (Makapan Valley, 19 km from Potgietersrus) in the central Northern Province.

Moloko assemblage

Moloko ceramics dates to the fourteenth century in the Northern Province and the fifteenth century in the Northwest Province and on the southern Highveld (southern Gauteng and the northeastern Free State), where it is associated with stone-walled settlements. Moloko tradition ceramics are commonly

considered to have been made by the ancestors of the Sotho-Tswana people because modern Pedi, South Sotho and Kgatla pottery can be derived from it.

Conclusion

Southern Africa has some of the longest, best known archaeological sites in the world. It is expected that knowledge concerning the cultural development of the later Pleistocene in the future will increase as a result of continuous large scale excavations of rock shelters and open air sites, improved palaeoenvironment reconstructions and the application of accelerated dating techniques. Progress concerning earlier time sequences will depend on the discovery of sites from which much information can be gained, as well as the development and application of new analytical techniques.

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Hester Roodt

May 5, 1999

ADDENDUM 1

THE LAW

The National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969) protects all palaeontological, archaeological and historical sites and material older than 50 years. It is an offence to destroy, damage, alter, remove from its original site, or excavate any such site or material without a permit from the National Monuments Council. A person convicted of an offence in terms of the Act, could be liable for a fine of up to R10000 or two years imprisonment, or both. See *Addendum 1 for extracts from this act*.

In terms of the Environmental Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989) the Integrated Environmental Management Procedure, Guideline Document 1 identifies certain man-made areas and features that are listed as environments which must be included in an environmental impact assessment report. These include archaeological and palaeontological sites, graves and burial sites, buildings and sites of religious, social and cultural significance.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

To minimise the impact of development on archaeological sites, and the impact of archaeological sites on development projects, and to avoid costly delays if a site is discovered during the course of construction work, it is important to hire an archaeologist well in advance to survey the area. It is important that developers realise that only qualified professional archaeologists should be employed to undertake survey work.

The developer is responsible for the costs involved in hiring an archaeologist to investigate the site.

Phase 1

The archaeologist hired to do the work will submit a phase 1 report. On the basis of the recommendations and assessment of significance made in the report, a decision can be taken on how the development may proceed. In most cases development will be able to go ahead as planned after the sites have been recorded.

Phase 2

In some cases, mitigation in a Phase 2 programme will be necessary and may involve excavation or collection of archaeological material. The purpose behind mitigation is to sample the site so that the evidence can be stored permanently in a museum where it can be consulted at a later date for record and research purposes.

Phase 3

More rarely, the site may be so important that it will warrant modification of the development in a Phase 3 programme. If this happens, the archaeologist, the National Monuments Council and the developer can confer on the action to be taken. It may be possible to incorporate an Iron Age village into a green belt in a housing scheme, or to modify a high rise building plan by covering rare 18th century foundations and associated rubbish dumps beneath a parking lot to avoid destroying them completely. Such solutions are possible if the archaeologist is consulted early enough in the planning process.

Permission for the development to proceed can be given only once the National Monuments Council is satisfied that steps have been taken to ensure that the archaeological sites will not be damaged, or that they have been adequately recorded and sampled.

If this chain of action is followed, we stand a chance of saving something of our archaeological heritage for future generations and of avoiding conflict between developers and cultural conservationists. The National Monuments Council must ensure that the historical and cultural heritage of all South Africans is protected. Careful planning can minimise the impact of archaeological surveys on development projects by selecting options that cause the least amount of inconvenience and delay.

ADDENDUM 2

EXTRACTS FROM THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT (NO 28 OF 1969, AS AMENDED IN 1986) THAT ARE RELEVANT TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

- 12(2A) No person shall destroy, damage, excavate, alter, remove from its original site or export from the Republic -
- (a) any meteorite or fossil; or
 - (b) any drawing or painting on stone or a petroglyph known or commonly believed to have been executed by Bushmen; or
 - (c) any drawing or painting on stone or a petroglyph known or commonly believed to have been executed by any other people who inhabited or visited the Republic before the settlement of the Europeans at the Cape; or
 - (d) any implement, ornament or structure known or commonly believed to have been made, used or erected by people referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c);
- or
- (e) the anthropological or archaeological contents of graves, caves, rock shelters, middens, shell mounds or other sites used by such people; or
 - (f) any other historical site*, archaeological or palaeontological finds, material or object,

except under the authority of and in accordance with a permit issued under this section.

[* An "historical site" is defined as "any identifiable building or part thereof, marker, milestone, gravestone, landmark or tell older than 50 years."]

ADDENDUM 3

Report on Workshop on Standards for the Assessment of Significance and Research Priorities for Contract Archaeology

SA3 (Southern African Association of Archaeologists) Biennial Conference
University of Venda, 10 July 1998

*Janette Deacon
National Monuments Council*

Opportunities for archaeological contract work will expand in southern Africa in the next few years. To make the best of the opportunities, medium-term (3-5 year) research and heritage conservation priorities need to be established as a matter of urgency in consultation with CRM practitioners, provincial and national heritage agencies and research archaeologists. The following factors are relevant.

6. In South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism published on 5 September 1997 its long-awaited List of Activities which may have a substantial detrimental effect on the environment and the regulations regarding activities identified under Section 21(1) of the Environment Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989). These effectively make environmental impact assessments compulsory for the listed activities.
7. The National Heritage Bill, designed to replace the National Monuments Act in South Africa, came before the Cabinet and Parliament in 1998. It could become law from 1 April 1999. Amongst other innovations, it makes impact assessments compulsory where historical, archaeological and palaeontological sites are affected by development but are not protected by other legislation.
8. In neighbouring African countries, the tempo of contract work is also rising as new legislation and requirements of the World Bank are implemented.

It seems widely accepted that CRM practitioners do mitigation to rescue the research potential of a site which would otherwise be lost. The following kinds of sites were identified as being worthy of mitigation:

Stone Age / Hunter Gatherer

- any open air site with bone or other organic material;
- any cave or rock shelter with deposit;
- rock paintings and rock engravings (record context as well as images);
- quarry sites with possibilities for core re-fitting;
- long sequence sites;
- coastal and inland shell middens;
- any sites with Howiesons Poort, Stillbay or Robberg artefacts;
- human remains or burials;
- fish traps;
- placement of Earlier Stone Age sites in the landscape - are they associated with river valleys, water sources or quarries?
- evidence for modernity in Middle Stone Age sites;
- sites with evidence for interaction between Stone Age and Iron Age or colonial people;
- Later Stone Age sites with Bambata pottery;
- pastoral sites, especially in the Eastern Cape;
- caches of ostrich eggshells or other items;
- hunting blinds;
- evidence for exploitation of raw material sources such as haematite or specularite.

Iron Age / Agriculture

- sites that will help to clarify the ceramic sequence of the Early Iron Age in the northern and eastern regions of southern Africa;
- any Bambarra settlement;
- early Iron Age sites with evidence for structures or long term occupation;
- sites with evidence for political or social hierarchies;
- evidence of the organization of metal production;
- burials with evidence for social differentiation, health and nutrition;
- evidence for trade within and outside of the Zimbabwe culture area;
- sites in areas that are under-researched to build up the culture-historical sequence;
- special-purpose sites such as rainmaking, circumcision, mining, furnaces, cattle posts vs living sites, salt making;
- Blackburn and Moor Park sites in KwaZulu-Natal;
- well preserved early Moloko sites with middens for evidence of diet and subsistence or stone walling;
- any Zimbabwe-style stone walling should be mapped in sufficient detail to estimate factors such as population size and grain-bin variability;
- evidence for contemporary cultural interaction, for example between Khami and Moloko;
- sites with architectural styles and information on materials used for housing, even in the recent past;
- evidence for the introduction of maize, either direct or in the style of grindstones used;
- sites with botanical remains of cultigens;
- information on the distribution, size and characteristics of dolly-holes for gold mining;
- evidence for textiles or weaving in addition to spindle whorls;
- evidence for games and contextual information relating to them;
- figurine caches and spatial relationships to settlements;
- check stone outcrops near stonewalled sites for engravings.

Historical / Colonial

- sites connected with whaling and sealing;
- ships or ship/boat structures on land;
- shipwreck survivor camps;
- sites in the interior with nineteenth century ceramics (RESUNACT is preparing guidelines for identification);
- single occupation sites in urban environments with deposits such as wells, cisterns and depressions;
- 17th century or early 18th century sites in Cape Town;
- sites that are connected with national and international slave trade routes;
- LSA sites with metal items such as brass buttons;
- documentary and archival searches should be done before going into the field;
- sites that could inform on the effects of military forces on indigenous local populations;
- the symbolic significance of textiles, beads and other items imported by traders;
- sites with oral traditions of sacred significance - oral histories increase significance and are therefore relevant to archaeology;
- historical graves need sensitive removal during mitigation and this is often best done in collaboration between archaeologists and funeral specialists.

