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11 April 2005

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED UPGRADING OF THE ROAD (N5) BETWEEN SENEKAL & PAUL ROUX, FREE STATE

INVESTIGATION

The N5 road between Senekal and Paul Roux, Free State, was inspected on 8 February 2005 in the company of Dr Johan du Preez of Cebo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein.

The different intersections where secondary roads link up with the main road were examined for the presence of archaeological material.

LOCALITY

The proposed developments are located along the N5 road between Senekal and Paul Roux.

The different sites where work is planned is limited to the intersections of connecting roads with the N5 and are indicated and identified by the following GPS co-ordinates (Cape):

TURN OFF TO SENEKAL INDUSTRIAL AREA

28°18'45"S. 027°38'47"E. Altitude 1475m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Grass cover on surface.

R707 TURN OFF TO ARLINGTON & LINDLEY

28°18'37"S. 027°40'20"E. Altitude 1497m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Ploughed lands on both sides.

R70 TURN OFF TO ROSENDAL & FICKSBURG

28°18'27"S. 027°41'06"E. Altitude 1489m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Ploughed lands on both sides.

TURN OFF TO BIDDULPHSBERG (EAST OF MOUNTAIN)

28°17'59"S. 027°47'06"E. Altitude 1533m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Grass cover on surface.

S1288 TURN OFF

28°18'38"S. 027°51'47"E. Altitude 1566m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Grass cover on surface.

S668 TURN OFF

28°18'33"S. 027°53'40"E. Altitude 1639m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Grass cover on dolerite surface.

S223 TURN OFF TO ARLINGTON (North 34,8km)

28°18'18"S. 027°55'41"E. Altitude 1565m.
Existing interchange.
Surface damaged during previous road building.
Grass cover on surface.

S222 TURN OFF TO ROSENDAL (West of Paul Roux)

28°18'19"S. 027°56'15"E. Altitude 1608m.

S turn to be cut out.

Old plough lands and planted grazing.

Vague stone protrusions on surface.

(28°18'21"S. 027°56'13"E. Altitude 1605m).

FINDS

All these existing intersections with the N5 road between Senekal and Paul Roux have been in use for many years. The different areas had clearly been exploited during previous road building activities, resulting in the disturbance of the soil surface of the immediate areas.

Only in the case of the S222 turn off to Rosendal near Paul Roux, there is a vague scatter of stones visible on the surface (Fig.1). In this case the road is planned to be deviated and could by-pass the particular occurrence.

No ceramics were recovered, and neither were traces of rock art or graffiti of historical significance found at any of the sites.

DISCUSSION

Every archaeological occurrence is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should, therefore, be made to avoid disturbance or destruction of the stone feature.

No obvious reasons could be found to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site.

MITIGATION & RECOMMENDATION

Concerning the areas for the proposed developments, mitigation measures will only be needed in the case of the S222 turn off near Paul Roux.

It is recommended that the connecting road should be planned to by-pass the stone structure. Care should be taken to limit the disturbance of the environment near the structure.

No obvious reason could be found to delay the commencement of the work and it is recommended that the proposed development may proceed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Johan du Preez of CEBO Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, took me to the site and supplied information on this investigation.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

Fig.1 The vague occurrence of stones visible on the surface above the S222 turn off from the N5 west of Paul Roux.



Fig.2 The area of the S222 turn off to Rosendal from the N5, west of Paul Roux.