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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AT KATDORINGFONTEIN 379, SENEKAL, FREE STATE**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Residential developments are planned at the farm Katdoringfontein 379, Senekal, Free State.

Archaeological and cultural remains occurred in the form of an exceptionally well-preserved Later Iron Age stone-walled site with relatively undamaged high walls, prominent ash heaps, lower and upper grinding stones and an abundance of potsherds on the surface to the south and west of the kloof. These prehistoric relics date from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I recommend that the planning of the proposed residential developments may proceed on the land near the eastern border of the farm, providing that the stone-walls and other cultural remains should be avoided at all times. No residential developments should be placed at the stone-walled sites near the kloof. Care should be taken to avoid damage to any of the walls or to destroy ash heaps during the installation of services and the building of roads. The removal of stones from the walls should likewise be prohibited.

Care should be taken to inform potential buyers of the properties about the significance of the structures.

Certain rules recommended by professional archaeologists for the protection of cultural heritage sites are enclosed herewith and should apply to the site at Katdoringfontein during the construction phase and afterwards.

## INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

### INVESTIGATION

The land identified for residential developments at Katdoringfontein 379 near Senekal was visited on 14 June 2006. Dr Johan du Preez of MDA Environmental Consultants accompanied me to the site.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

### LOCALITY

The site is located on the farm Katdoringfontein 379 on the Britsberg range to the west of Senekal (Map 2) (Surveyor-General 1973). The farm lies along the R70 main road from Senekal to Ventersburg (Map 1).

The vegetation of the area is described as Sandy High Veld Grassland with indigenous trees and shrubs. There is a significant stand of *Euryops empetrifolius* (Harpuisbos), *Cussonia* sp. (Kiepersol), *Rhus lancea* (Karee), *Ziziphus mucronata* (Blinkblaar Wag-'n-Bietjie), and *Euclea undulata* (Gwarriebos) amongst others (Figs.1,3,14).

There are several large natural dolerite outcrops with a very shallow soil cover (Fig.16). These outcrops clearly had been the sources of building material during prehistoric times.

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken on the outskirts of the proposed site (2827AD&2827BC):

Stone walls (east)	28°15'47"S 027°29'53"E	Altitude 1536m (Fig.1).
Stone walls	28°16'02"S 027°30'07"E	Altitude 1568m (Fig.2).
Border fence	28°16'06"S 027°30'11"E	Altitude 1565m (Fig.3).
Stone walls (west)	28°16'08"S 027°28'55"E	Altitude 1503m (Fig.5-10).

## **RESULTS**

### **FINDS**

Archaeological and cultural remains occur in the form of an exceptionally well-preserved Later Iron Age stone-walled site with a substantial compound of relatively undamaged walls (Fig.7-8), prominent ash heaps (Figs.17-18), lower and upper grinding stones (Figs.11-12) and an abundance of potsherds (Fig.4) on the surface to the south and west of the kloof. These prehistoric relics date from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Potsherds are also found on the surface where the soil had been graded to construct roads (Fig.17), presumably as an opening of the land for the planning of the residential area.

Some of the walls to the east towards the border fence (Fig.14) seem to have been robbed previously (Fig.1). On the southern and western side of the kloof, the walls and other cultural remains are in an excellent state of preservation (Figs.5-10).

The farmhouse and other farm buildings are dilapidated and cannot be refurbished (Fig.15).

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The stone-walled living complex at Katdoringfontein 379, Senekal, is obviously part of the prehistoric occupation of the whole Doringberg Range, which lies nearby and runs into the Willem Pretorius Game Reserve (cf. Dreyer 1996). It has been confirmed that this region played a substantial role during the times of the Later Iron Age settlement, that lasted between mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1996).

The mountain range to the west is known as Doringberg, or Maphororong (the waterfall) in Sesotho. The region was part of the area occupied by the Bataung of Makhoana, Moletsane and Thulo up to the difaqane (wars of devastation), which took place between 1822 to about 1830. According to lore, the so-called Leghoya (Dihoya or Digoya) occupied the ridge. Differences in the cultural background of several traditional groups of occupants are clear from the variation in settlement layout, which can still be recognised. The intricate overlap of sites with different settlement layouts (Maggs 1976) offers scope for future archaeological research.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The proposed residential developments will have a serious impact on the archaeological and cultural remains at Katdoringfontein 379, Senekal.

The building activities, road construction and installation of services could result in permanent damage and final destruction of the stone-walls and cultural remains on the site.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

I recommend that the planning of the proposed residential developments could be considered, only on the eastern part of the farm near the border fence, providing that the stone-walls and other cultural remains should be avoided. Care should be taken not to damage any of the walls or destroy ash heaps during the installation of services and roads. The removal of stones from the walls should be prohibited.

No residential developments should be placed at the stone-walled sites to the south and west near the kloof.

I recommend that the archaeologist should be engaged for a briefing at the site to communicate with the developers and planners to specify the different sites.

It will be essential to inform potential buyers about the significance of the structures. Certain rules, which are recommended by the archaeologists for the protection of cultural heritage sites should apply to the site at Katdoringfontein during the construction phase and afterwards.

The commencement of further planning and development of the site should only proceed after a meeting with the archaeologist and other environmental officials at the site. The support of SAHRA is needed in this case.

## **MITIGATION**

Mitigation measures will be required in the case of the stone-walls to the south and west of the kloof.

No buildings should be planned within a five hundred meter radius from these structures.

It could also be to the benefit of the developers to have a meeting with the archaeologist at the site before any further work takes place.

The archaeologist must be consulted before and during the planning and building stages of the development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Dr Johan du Preez from MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for taking me to the site.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

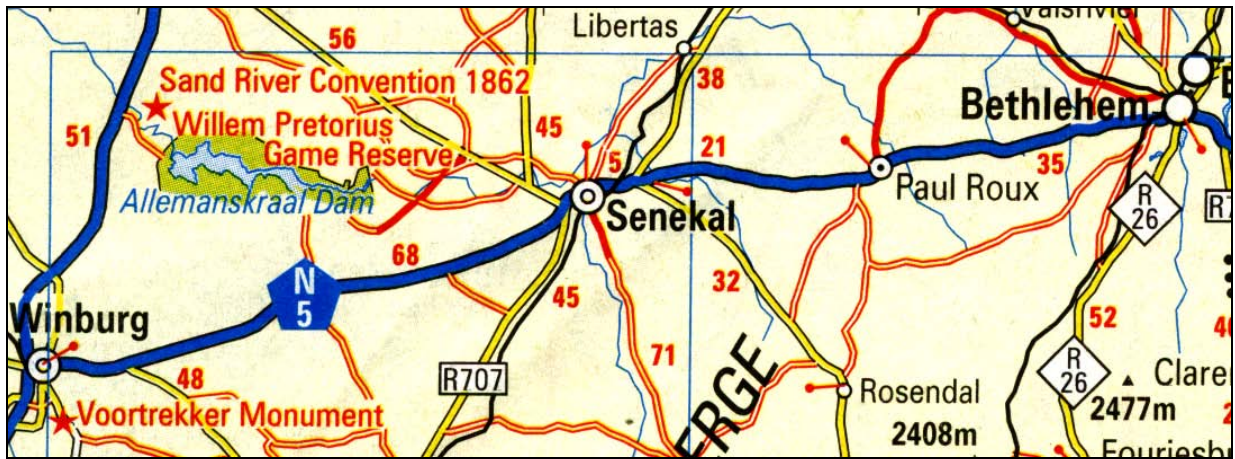
The recommendations and guidelines for the utilization and preservation of the site are made in the knowledge that **all archaeological, historical and palaeontological finds are protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999).**

The following minimum standards are approved by archaeologist and are prescribed for site museums or other places of interest open to the public. The guidelines are, therefore, strongly recommended as the basic rules at any archaeological site, and are applicable in the case of Katdoringfontein, Senekal.

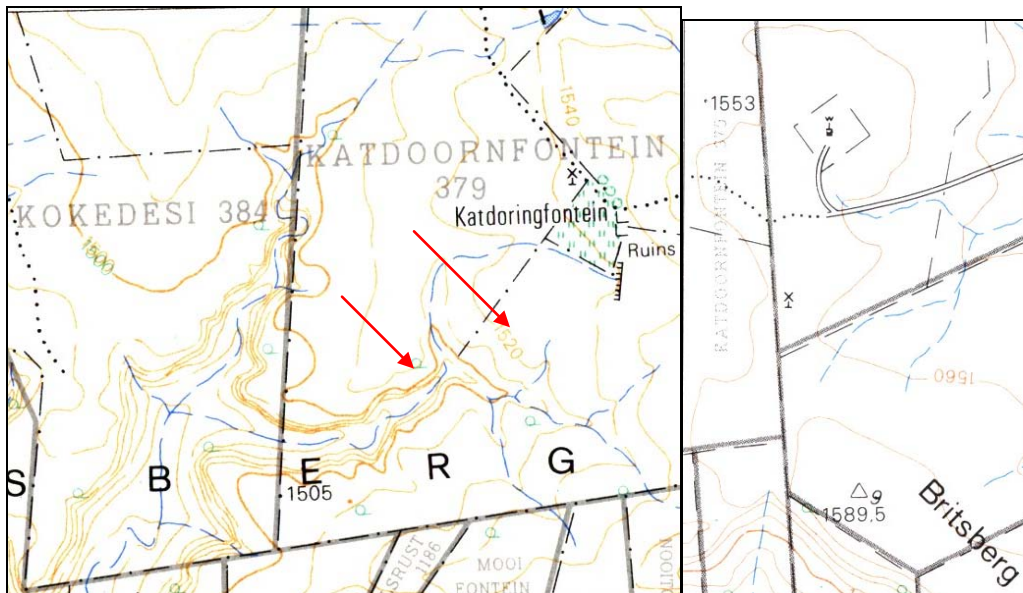
- Do not allow unauthorised visitors to the ruins;
- Always have a knowledgeable guide available to accompany visitors to the site;
- Allow visits to certain selected sites only;
- Educate the regular visitor about preserving the site;
- Prepare an explanatory brochure for the farm/development;
- Have a single access road to the site;
- Provide a clearly marked parking area at the site;
- Plan hiking routes where the structures can not be damaged;
- Prevent people from climbing on to the walls;
- Control vegetation growth at the site;
- Prepare a notice board explaining the sites;
- Do not **restore** the walls, leave them as they are;
- Do not remove any finds (e.g. stone tools, beads or potsherds);
- Provide a litter bin at the parking area or along the hiking trail;
- Visit sites regularly to check on litter, damage, vegetation, etc;
- Use a qualified archaeologist when planning any developments;

(SA3 Newsletter 37, 1992)

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 Locality of Senekal in relation to Winburg, Rosendal and Bethlehem.



Map 2 Locality of the stone-walled sites at Katdoringfontein 379, Senekal (2827AD&2827BC).



Fig.1 Stone-walls on the eastern side of the kloof at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.2 Remains of stone-walling west of the kloof at Katdoringfontein.





Fig.3 The eastern border fence. Stone-walls are visible on the other side of the fence.



Fig.4 Potsherds from near the eastern fence of the farm.



Fig.5 Stone-walls in the area to the west of the kloof at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.6 Another well preserved stone-wall at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.7 Exceptionally high walls are found at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.8 The structures represent the typical Later Iron Age walls of two separate parts on the outside with rubble in-fill.



Fig.9 Some of the stone enclosures are of a considerable size.



Fig.10 Outside of a well-preserved stone-wall at Katdoringfontein.



Fig.11 Lower and upper grinding stones . Pocket knife=100mm.



Fig.12 Upper grinding stone from the Later Iron Age site at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.13 A drain-hole in one of the stone-walls at Katdoringfontein.



Fig.14 A view of the kloof at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.15 Remnants of the farmhouse at Katdoringfontein, Senekal.



Fig.16 Large dolerite outcrops at Katdoringfontein, Senekal were the source for building material during the Later Iron Age occupation.



Fig.17 Ash heap exposed by road grading at the Later Iron Age site at Katdoringfontein.



Fig.18 Ash heap exposed by game at the farm Katdoringfontein.