

# MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HOEKFONTEIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



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## **PART ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Location and description of site**

The Hoekfontein archaeological sites lies north of Mmakau and west of Ga-Rankuwa in the North West Province (see attached map 1). The archaeological sites occur mainly on the Swartkoppies Mountain as well as at the northern foot of the mountain. The sites were originally discovered with the building of a water pipe line to Oskraal in 2001.

#### **1.2 Ownership and responsibility of site**

The site is government land allocated to the Mmakau Tribal Authority. The mining rights for granite mining have been allocated to Keeley Granite Mine (Pty) Ltd. Who mine the site.

#### **1.3 Statement of site significance**

The granite deposit on Hoekfontein 432 JQ covers about 1000 ha of the Swartkoppies Mountain. A total of over 470 individual archaeological sites have been recorded on the mountain (Küsel 2003). Dates for one of the sites excavated cover a period from 1433 to 1900. This makes the sites on Hoekfontein most probably the longest continues occupation of a Late Iron Age site in South Africa. From a settlement point of view it spans nearly 500 years of development. The site has all the features of settlements including large settlements associated with chiefs right down to commoners. It also includes historic footpaths, Isivivanes, waterholes and even one rock art site. There are also numerous rock gongs on the site.

#### **1.4 Objectives for opening the site to the public**

From a heritage point of view it is extremely important as it lies near the PWV and can be developed into a major educational and tourism facility to make the South African public aware of the importance of archaeological sites, their conservation and its contribution to our knowledge of the passed. It is also surrounded by large informal settlements whose inhabitants can gain from tourist development in the area.

#### **1.5 Objectives of management plan**

The site is also under threat from granite mining. For this reason a large portion of the mountain has been earmarked for a conservancy where no mining will take place (refer to maps attached to application for permit 80/05/07/008/51). The sites are damaged by trees which are growing through stonewalls. Local traditional healers also damage some of the sites while collecting traditional medicines from plants

growing in the walls. The site is also threatened by the expansion of informal settlements on the western side.

One of the large well-preserved settlements at the foot of the mountain should be developed as a site museum (S25° 35' 34.3" and E27° 54' 48.4"). The site has already been cleared from invasive plants and its layout recorded. For identification purposes it is called the Mmakau Heritage Site (see map 1 & 2 and photographs 1 – 4).

## **1.6 Revision of plan**

The site management plan will be revised every five years.

## **1.7 Potential impact on rock art and archaeological resources of opening site to the public**

At present the site is under threat from mining, township development, traditional healers and ignorant public. By implementing a proper management and development plan people visiting the site will be controlled and under supervision. This will hopefully contribute to the safeguarding of the site from further destruction. If the site is not protected and managed it will gradually be vandalized especially by people collecting stones for building purposes as is already happening at Elandsfontein just west of this site.

## **PART TWO**

### **2. RECORDING AND RESEARCH**

#### **2.1 Objections of recording and research**

The site is very large and many of the sites difficult to reach because of invasive plants. Most sites have already been recorded by G.P.S. (refer to Küsel November 2003).

Detail recording of the most important sites will be necessary to retrieve information for education and tourism development. This information is also necessary for the proper management of the sites. For interpretation and educational purposes it is proposed that the Mmakau heritage site be excavated and partially reconstructed as a site museum.

#### **2.2 Recording of rock art**

There is only one rock art site on the farm. There is no intention at this stage to open the site to the public. The sites locality has been send to the Rock Art Recording Centre at Wits. The rock paintings are most probably Late Iron Age paintings and hardly visible.

#### **4.1 Research into archaeology of the site**

This research will be necessary to determine the significance of the site but also for interpretation and educational purposes. Four sites have already been recorded and excavated (refer to Küsel June 2006).

The Mmakau Heritage Site earmarked for development is in need of research so that a portion of the site can be reconstructed.

#### **4.2 Research into history and indigenous knowledge of the site**

This research can contribute to the interpretation of the site as well as educational programmes. Indigenous knowledge on plants and animals of the mountain will also be recorded to interpret the natural resources of the mountain and how they were utilized in the past.

### **PART THREE:**

#### **4.3 SITE MANAGEMENT**

##### **4.4 Objectives of site management plan**

- Conserve, develop and interpret the unique heritage of Hoekfontein in a sustainable way.

##### **4.5 Site vegetation and firebreaks**

- To eradicate invasive plants from all important sites.
- To put a fire management plan into operation.

#### **3.3 Site infrastructure**

- Access arrangements  
At present the site is not protected at all except the mining area. It is planned to have the whole mountain as well as the flat grassland area north of the mountain proclaimed a reserve, with proper access control.
- Visitor control infrastructure  
A second phase of the development will focus on a proper access road to the site, an interpretive centre with access control and ablution blocks, as well as parking facilities.
- Education infrastructure  
This will be part of the second phase development.
- The maintenance of site infrastructure.

It is planned that some of the workers who will be trained to develop the site will be employed in a fulltime capacity to do the necessary maintenance work on an on going basis.

- **Permit requirement**  
An application for the excavation and reconstruction of the site is attached to this document.

### **3.4 Training of staff**

The development proposal of the site has a strong emphasis on training. A substantial portion of the development funding is earmarked for training. Training will also take place of personal of the granite mine.

### **3.5 Consultation with neighbours**

A development committee has been established three years ago on which all-possible role players are represented. This includes the Mmakau Tribal Authority, the City Council, politicians and various provincial departments.

### **4.6 Conservation requirements/interventions**

Conservations of the site can only be successful if all role players are involved. In principle everyone has agreed to the conservation and development of the site. We are working to our goal to have a very large area (7000ha) declared a conservancy. In the meantime we have cleared the proposed Mmakau Heritage Site from invasive plants. The site has also been documented (see map 2 site A, B, C & D). The next step will be to clear a much larger area around the site of approximately 20 ha followed by the excavations and reconstruction of one settlement node (see map 2 site A).

It is also envisaged that a network of hiking trails will be developed on the mountain to take visitors to some of the other important archaeological, geological and natural features on the mountain. The intention is that visitors will only be allowed on the heritage site under the supervision of trained guides. This is the most effective way to safeguard the site from vandalism and destruction.

## **PART FOUR**

### **5. MONITORING**

#### **5.1 Objectives of monitoring**

The objectives of monitoring will be to keep the conservancy in a pristine condition, including all the facilities, walkways, hiking trails and interpretive signage.

At this stage nothing has been developed, and no permission to proceed has been granted by SAHRA.

A detailed monitoring plan will only be compiled once the project has been approved and developed.

The only monitoring which can be done at this stage is to keep unwanted visitors out of the area and to educate the local people who use the site to avoid destruction of the archaeological sites.

## **PART FIVE**

### **6. VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION**

The detail planning for visitor experience and interpretation can only be planned and implemented once the site has been excavated and reconstructed. At this stage it is planned that site B (see map 2) will be left to a large degree as it is. Stonewalls at sites C and D will be reconstructed. At site A the whole site will be excavated and reconstructed including the houses and granaries.

#### **6.1 Objectives for visitors experience and interpretation**

To give the visitors an insight into Tswana culture during the Late Iron Age. Emphasis will also be placed on the importance of archaeological sites, their protection and the information, which can be retrieved from them.

#### **6.2 Viewing opportunities**

The detail can only be planned after the site has been excavated and reconstructed. The intention is to have specific pathways, which would have been used in the passed. Visitors will only be allowed under the guidance and supervision of trained guides.

#### **6.3 Interpretation and archaeological assessments**

Dr Udo Küsel and other archaeologists working on Tswana Iron Age sites will do the archaeological interpretation and assessment of the site.

#### **6.4 Education and awareness**

It is envisaged that visitors will firstly visit an interpretive centre with exhibitions to give them the necessary background knowledge to understand the site they will be visiting.

The interpretation of the site will take place through guided tours by well trained guides.

## **6.5 Guides**

The training of guides will commence with the excavation and reconstruction of the site. Their formal training will be done through Unisa's African Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies (ACACHS). This will be followed up by onsite training and monitoring.

## **PART SIX**

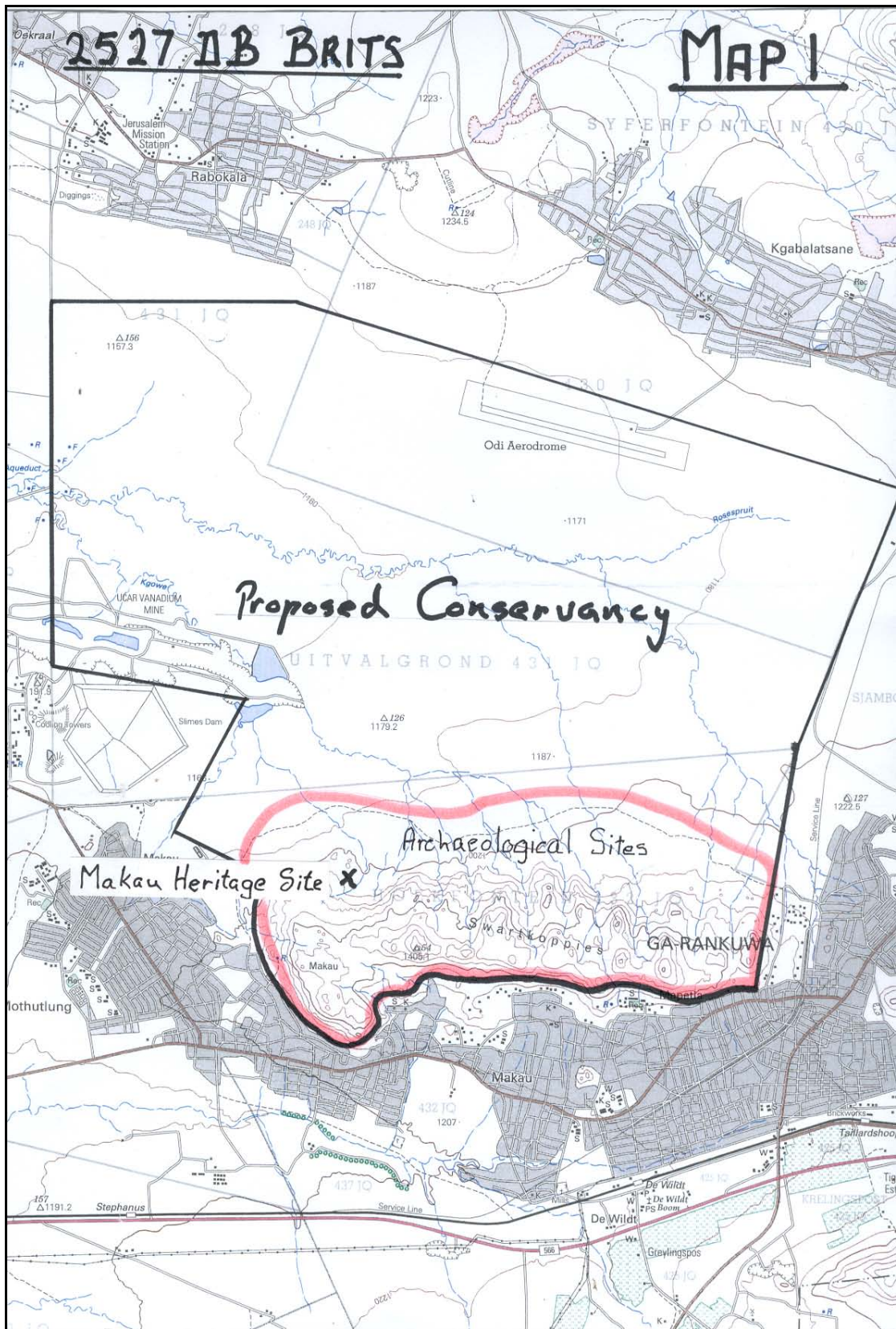
### **MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING BUDGET**

The detail here of can only be planned once the whole project is completed. Specific funding will be set-aside for this purpose in the operational budget for the site.

### **REFERENCES**

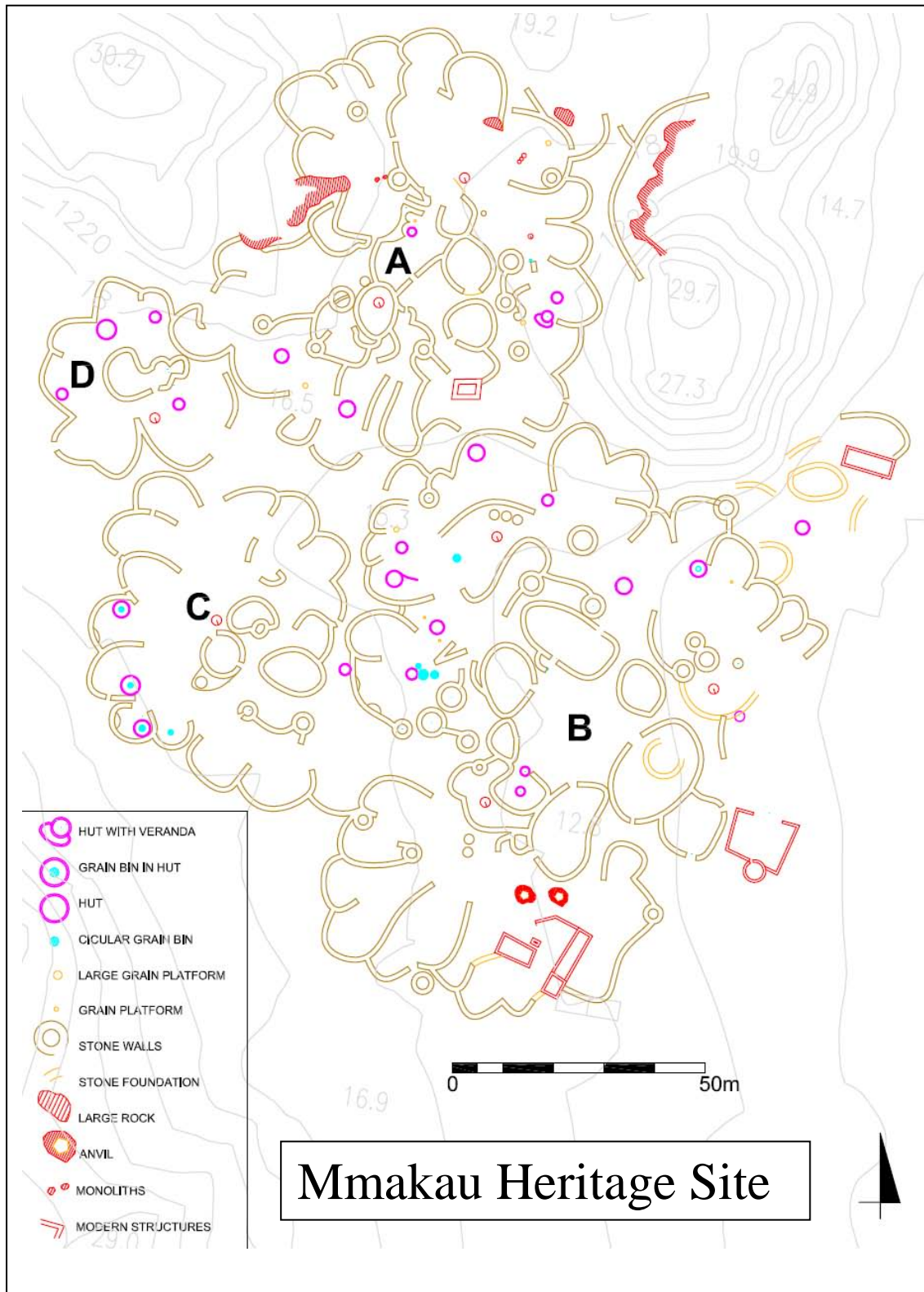
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MAP 1





MAP 2



## PHOTOGRAPHS



**No. 1 Mmakau heritage site after clearing of unwanted plants**



**No. 2 Stonewalling after clearing of site**



**No. 3 Monolith at chief's settlement**



**No. 4 Detail of stonewalling at chief's settlement**



**No. 5 Remains of a house**



**No. 6 The protruding stone circle in the foreground is the remains of a very**

**Large granary. This is most probably the senior wives settlement**



**No. 7 Stone gongs near the site**