

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE BOYNTON  
PLATINUM: GROOTBOOM PROJECT, STEELPOORT**

A phase-1 report prepared for Metago Environmental Engineers

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Boynton Platinum intends to develop the platinum group metals in the UG2 deposit on Grootboom Hill south of Steelpoort. SAMANCOR now mines deposits on the west side of the hill, and their Tobatse Residence lies on the south side.

Boynton will retrieve their bulk sample from the southern slopes, and access will be from the south. Two alternative routes are under consideration: one follows the southern fence of the Tobatse Residence and the other lies north of the residential boundary.

Metago Environmental Engineers, the environmental co-ordinators for the project, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to assess the impact of the project on archaeological sites.

## **METHOD**

Two ARM staff examined the area on 21 and 22 January 2003. SAMANCOR staff (C.Pienaar and E. Marais) granted permission and expressed their concerns about the access options. SAMANCOR favours the north option. The north option was examined on foot, while the southern route was examined by car and on foot.

## **RESULTS**

### **Bulk Sample Area**

There are no archaeological sites on the southern slopes of the hill.

### **Southern Access Route**

Mud walls of an African household stand at 24 49 22.7S 30 10 31.5E (Site 1). Metal and other recent artifacts lie scattered over the surface. Presumably, this was the residence of African labourers when this was a working farm. There were no signs of a graveyard in the near vicinity.

Older African settlements were found at the northeast end of this option. Sisal, stonewalling and grindstones mark the location of three homesteads: Site 2 stands at 24 48 28S 30 10 46.6E; Site 3 at 24 48 24S 30 10 48.6E; and Site 4 at 24 48 20S 30 10 50.3E. A graveyard could be present.

#### *Significance*

Site 1 has no archaeological significance.

Sites 2-4 have no significance.

If a graveyard is present, it will have high social significance.

#### **Northern Access Route**

One Earlier Stone Age artifact (dating to between 1 million and 250 000 years ago) lay next to the fence at 24 47 36.3S 30 10 07.5E. No other artifacts were noted.

#### *Significance*

The isolated Earlier Stone Age artifact has no significance.

#### **Tobatse Conservation Area**

Erosion has exposed a few sites (dating from the Middle Stone Age through the Iron Age to the Historic Period) on the north side. These sites lie outside the proposed access routes and will not be impacted by the project. Their location downslope from the north option reinforces the observation that no archaeological sites will be damaged along the preferred route.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The bulk sample area and north access option will not impact archaeological sites of significance, and therefore no further work is necessary. If the south option is chosen, then a further search is needed for a possible graveyard associated with Sites 2 to 4. Such a graveyard, if it exists, will require protection.

With this provision, there are no archaeological reasons why the Boynton Platinum: Grootboom Project should not proceed.