

# **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT OF THE REMAINDER AND PORTION 1 (TIERKOP) OF FARM BRAMCOTE 446, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

**Magisterial district: Ga-Segonyana**

Assessment conducted in terms of  
Section 38 (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Prepared for

**Zama Mining Resources (Pty) Ltd**

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Report by

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
2. INTRODUCTION .....	4
2.1 Location.....	4
2.2 Project details.....	4
3. METHODS.....	5
4. LIMITATIONS .....	5
5. BACKGROUND .....	5
6. OBSERVATIONS .....	5
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
7.1 Stone Age Heritage Resources .....	15
7.2 Colonial Period Heritage Resources .....	16
7.3 Further mining .....	16
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	17

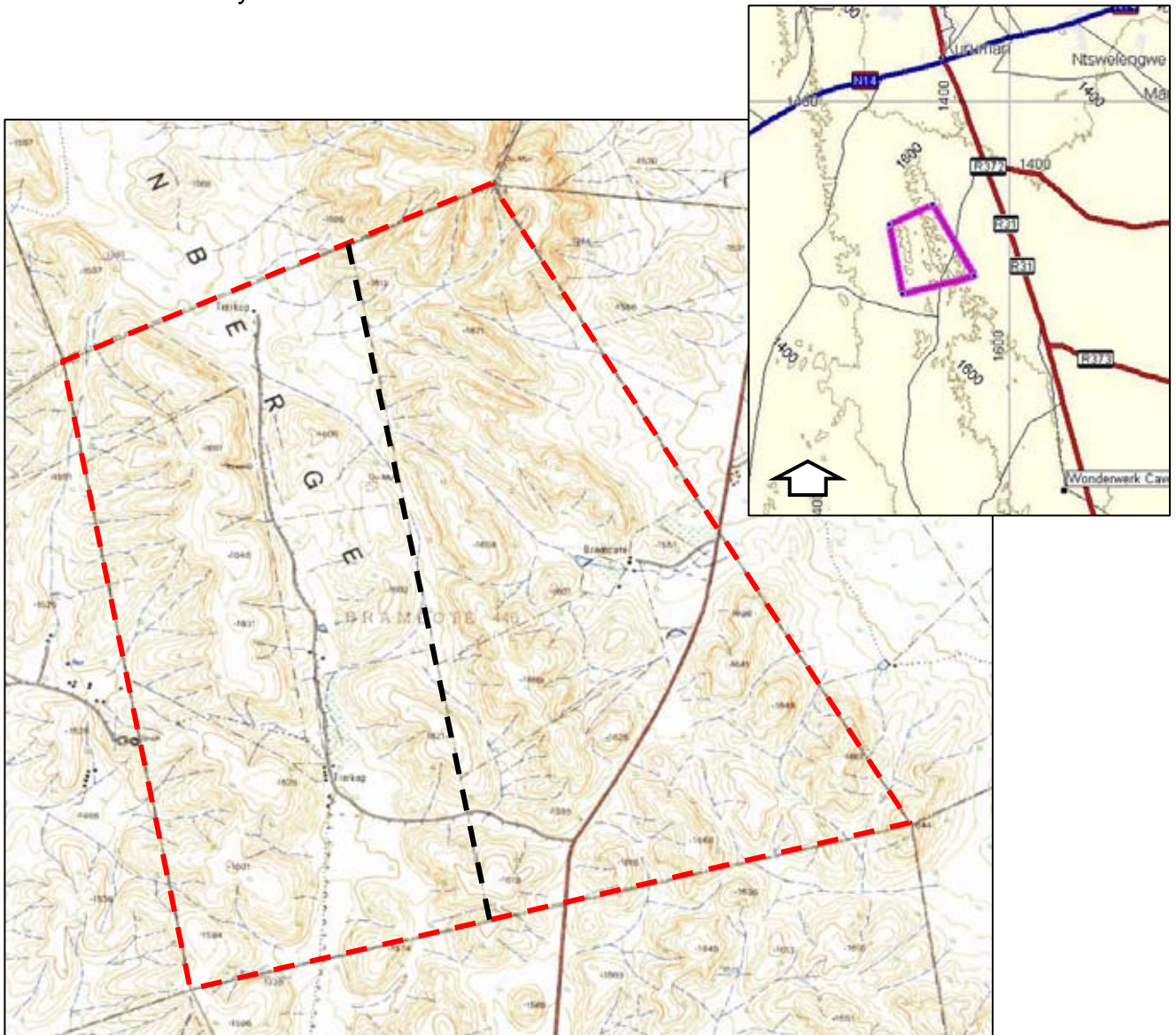
## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Archaeology Contracts Office was asked by Zama Mining Resources (Pty) Ltd to undertake a scoping survey of heritage resources on the Remainder, and Portion 1 (Tierkop) of the farm Bramcote 446, Northern Cape Province to determine if there would be any impact likely to result from prospecting. Prospecting for iron and manganese ore will be done largely via core drilling of +/- 100mm diameter concentrating predominantly on the valley bottoms. The farms were visited and owners and workers canvassed for information about heritage resources. The information was verified via fieldwork and in the process we were able to identify additional sites of interest. Heritage resources were found to consist of three types, namely pre-colonial stone age sites, colonial sites related to farming and settlement, and colonial sites with a mining focus. Heritage sites were generally found to be quite sparse on the landscape but focussed on particular localities, which tend to be predictable. We have identified what we believe to be the main heritage sites and these should be avoided during prospecting. The finding of unmarked graves is possible (though unlikely) during the course of prospecting, particularly on sandy areas. These should be reported to the heritage authorities if discovered. We see no reason why prospecting should not proceed as there is likely to be little or no significant impact.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Location

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested to carry out a scoping assessment of the impacts on archaeology of the proposed prospecting activities on the Farm Bramcote 446, in the Kuruman Hills, Northern Cape Province (Figure 1). Lying to the south of Kuruman, the land is accessed by farm roads off the R31.



**Figure 1:** The boundaries of the parent farm “Bramcote” are indicated by the dashed red line. The dashed black marks the sub-division line, with Tierkop to the west, and the present Bramcote to the east. The insert shows the farm in relation to main roads and towns.

### 2.2 Project details

Prospecting for iron and manganese ore will be done largely via core drilling of +/- 100mm diameter concentrating predominantly on the valley bottoms.

### **3. METHODS**

The boundaries of the site were loaded onto handheld GPS receivers to facilitate the identification of the search area during field work. The site was visited on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009 by Mr D. Halkett and Mr J. Orton and inspected via a combination of driving and walking. Walk paths and site locations were recorded with GPS. Apart from one site, all archaeological material consisted of rock paintings. We described and photographed the main images at each site and rated significance, and likelihood of impact. Prior to undertaking the fieldwork, we contacted Mr D. Morris, at The MacGregor Museum in Kimberley, and Dr A. Thackeray and Professor F. Thackeray (both of whom formerly conducted research in the area) for information about any known sites. We also spoke with Mr Simon who has been on Bramcote for approximately 30 years tending to the owners stock (Mrs Gerrie Markram who now lives in Kuruman). We enquired specifically about graves, rock engravings and/or paintings, old structures etc. Similarly, when we visited Tierkop, we engaged with the owner, Mr Johan Du Plessis who in response to our questions was able to indicate the locations of some places of interest. We were able to study the ridges of rock in the valleys with binoculars to determine if there were any overhangs or caves, although in general terms the geology is not conducive to formation of those features. Walk and drive paths are shown in Figure 3.

### **4. LIMITATIONS**

Our mobility around the site was to a large degree limited by the lack of farm tracks, particularly on Bramcote. We were travelling in a 4x4 and so were able to venture into the veld on occasion to get closer to places where we could do foot searches. The situation on Tierkop was much better with substantial tracks running the length of the valley as well as along the crest of the western-most ridge giving us good opportunity to canvass these two zones over several kilometres. The valley floors were covered by knee to thigh length grass which limited our visibility of the ground from a distance and on occasion made driving offroad hazardous as aardvark burrowing was similarly obscured. Despite these obstacles, we are of the opinion that we were able to gain a reasonable understanding of the type and density of the heritage resources and can make reasonable broad comment as a result.

### **5. BACKGROUND**

A title deed was issued for Bramcote in 1911 in favour of Jan Nicolaas Rickert Kotze<sup>1</sup>. The land totalled 5200 morgen and 282 square roods. It would seem that Tierkop was incorporated at that time although we can not access documents to that effect from the Surveyor General's office. The neighbouring farms of Mapperley and Strelley, have title deeds dating to 1895.

### **6. OBSERVATIONS**

Interaction with landowners and workers on the two farms, as well as examining some of the archaeological literature from the region, gave some idea as to the potential heritage resources that were likely to be encountered in the survey. Our fieldwork has further enabled us to expand on the information and determine where one is likely to find significant heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> SG B872/1911 attached to Ku. Q. 6-18

The distribution of heritage sites is closely linked to the particular landscape that prevails on these 2 farms which broadly comprises three zones, namely hill tops, hill sides and valleys (and valley bottoms/plains). The pre-colonial inhabitants were restrained by the need for water food and shelter, while the later farmers also needed water for both own consumption but also for watering herds of livestock. This could be alleviated to some degree by the ability to bore for water and construction of dams.

We found that in the broadest terms, pre-colonial sites focussed on small caves and shelters in the rocky strata in the valleys, whereas the farming sites tend to be on the valley bases/plains. The exception to the pattern was the exploitation of mineral resources which tend to be focussed wherever the resource is to be found.

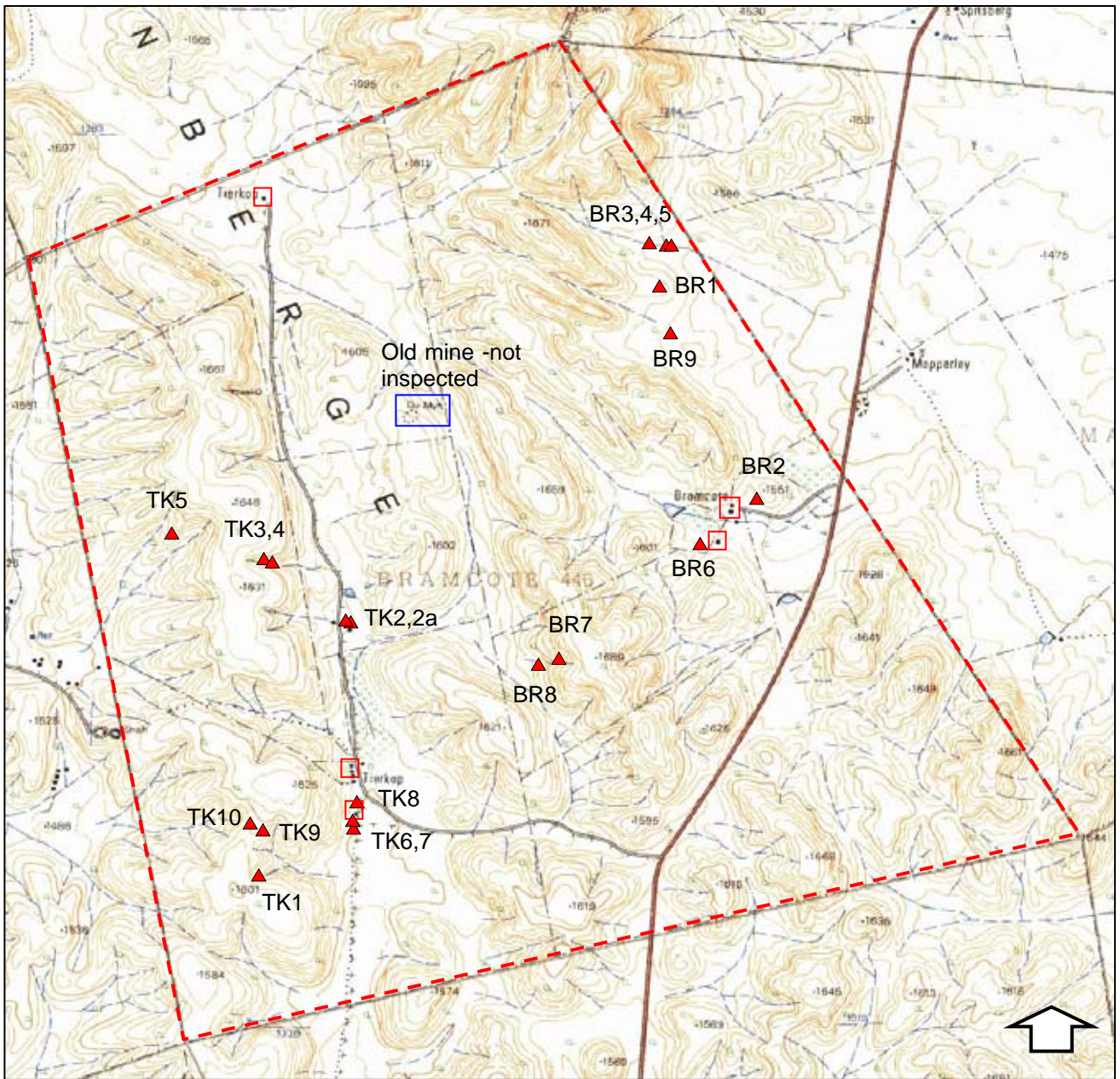
Figure 2 shows the positions of heritage sites that have been found and these are described in Table 1. A series of photographs following Table 1 shows the typical landscape and heritage sites in context.

Pre-colonial material seems to span the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages (ESA, MSA, LSA)<sup>2</sup>.

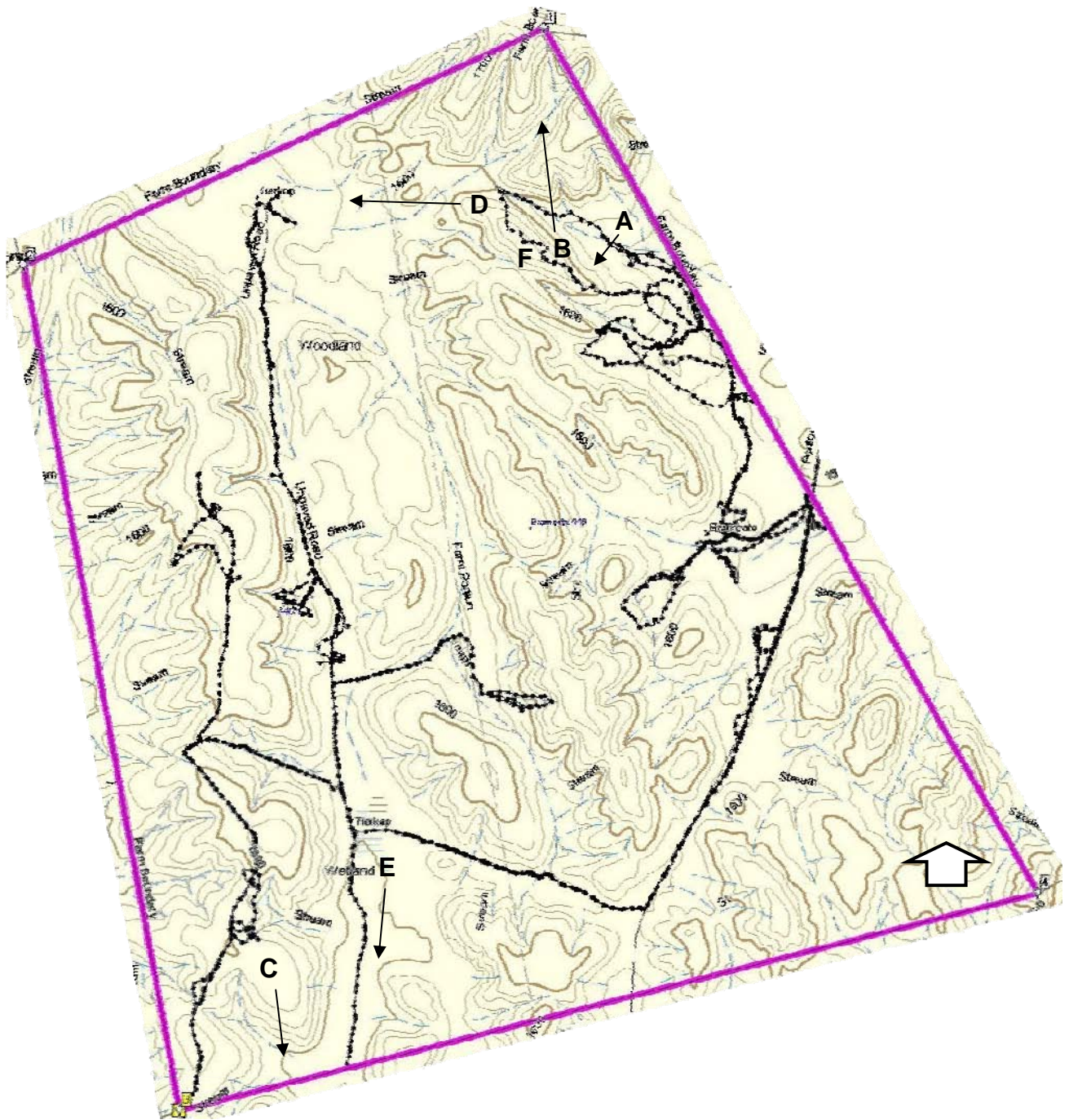
**Table 1:** Site descriptions

Site	Lat/Lon°	Type	Description
BR 1	S27.61169 E23.43108	mining	Pit on top of a hill, packed stone retaining embankments, spoil heap to one side. No artefactual
BR 2	S27.62850 E23.43816	grave/s	horizontal gravestone - Susara Adriana Pieternella Van Zyl, born 30 March 1921, died 18 August 1921. Possibly one other grave immediately to the south.
BR 3	S27.60851 E23.43002	isolated artefact	LSA stone flake
BR 4	S27.60855 E23.43129	isolated artefact	LSA denticulate stone flake
BR 5	S27.60852 E23.43151	isolated artefact	LSA stone core
BR 6	S27.63218 E23.43333	graves	6 workers graves, in a line, each marked by packed stones
BR 7	S27.64179 E23.42236	mining	Asbestos mine, several horizontal shafts and faces at various points along a seam
BR 8	S27.64219 E23.42079	ruin	Small partly ruined structure made from local rock, presumed to be associated with nearby asbestos mining
BR9	S27.61516 E23.43190	isolated artefact	ESA - crude handaxe?
TK1	S27.65880 E23.39836	cave with rock painting and artefacts	Well formed cave in banded ironstone seam at the head of a valley. Geometric finger paintings in red, white, yellow on ceiling and walls. No deposit but artefacts were observed on sward out front and on talus cone. LSA.
TK2	S27.63856 E23.40571	ruin	Partly ruined building built with local stone. This was part of a small farm werf
TK2a	S27.63828 E23.40501	grave	Appears to be a stone covered grave but due to partial disturbance, not unequivocal. Presumably associated with nearby werf.
TK 3	S27.63423 E23.40103	shelter w rock painting and artefacts	Small shallow shelter with a small area of finger painted lines on roof. Artefacts found out front, biggish retouched flakes. Stone walling observed enclosing small shelters to left and right (lammerkraals?)
TK4	S27.63368 E23.40002	shelter w artefacts	Very small shelter with some artefacts out front. The remains of stone walling on the side. CCS scraper.
TK5	S27.63131 E23.39188	shelter w rock painting and artefacts	Two small shelters ~8 meters apart, 1 has geometric finger painted stripes while both have LSA artefacts.
TK6	S27.65385 E23.40639	ruin	Collapsed workers dwelling. Unlikely to be older than 60 years.
TK7	S27.65468 E23.40640	graves	8 workers graves, in a line, each marked by packed stones
TK8	S27.65240 E23.40643	grave	Possible grave near to existing workers cottages
TK9	S27.65544 E23.39879	artefact scatter	Possible ESA artefacts on scree covered slope
TK10	S27.65476 E23.39794	isolated artefact	Possible ESA artefact on scree covered slope not far from TK9

<sup>2</sup> ESA - Approximately 1my - 200ky, MSA - Approximately 200ky -30ky, LSA - 30ky - 200years



**Figure 2:** the locations of heritage material on the landscape. Red squares indicate existing houses and cottages. The blue square indicates an old mine that we were unable to access.



**Figure 3:** Walk and drive paths. Parts of the site were difficult to access due to lack of roads or tracks. Letters indicate the positions of the landscape photographs that follow.





**l-r:** The flat plain adjacent to the farm Mapperley looking west toward the hills (A). The prominent hill called “Chee” is the highest point on the property (B).



**l-r:** Looking south from the top of the western ridge on Tierkop, showing typical landscape (C). Looking north west from Bramcote towards the plain near the northern Tierkop dwelling (D).



**l-r:** The broad plain on the southern portion of Tierkop (E). Typical banded ironstone rock strata exposed in the sides of valleys. Small shelters formed in these rocks were “occupied” by pre-colonial people (F).



I-r: BR1 - Small asbestos? mine/prospecting pit & spoil heap, BR1 - dry packed stone retaining wall to hold back spoil heap



I-r: BR1 retaining wall , BR2 - grave of Susara Van Zyl with possible second grave marked by stones



I-r: BR2 - Views of the headstone



I-r: BR4 - denticulate, BR9 - crude handaxe, TK10 - core?



I-r: TK9 - retouched piece, TK9 - retouched piece



I-r: TK9 - core? TK9 - core? TK9 -Banded ironstone flake, TK9 - flake



I-r: TK1 - retouched piece/ adze, TK1- large scraper



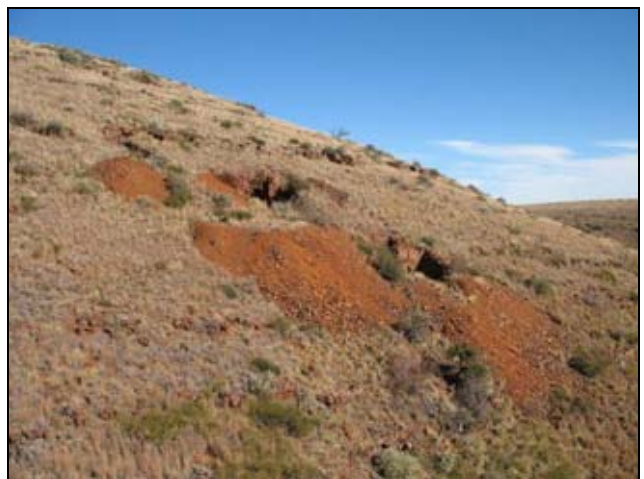
I-r: TK5 banded ironstone flakes, TK3 banded ironstone flakes?



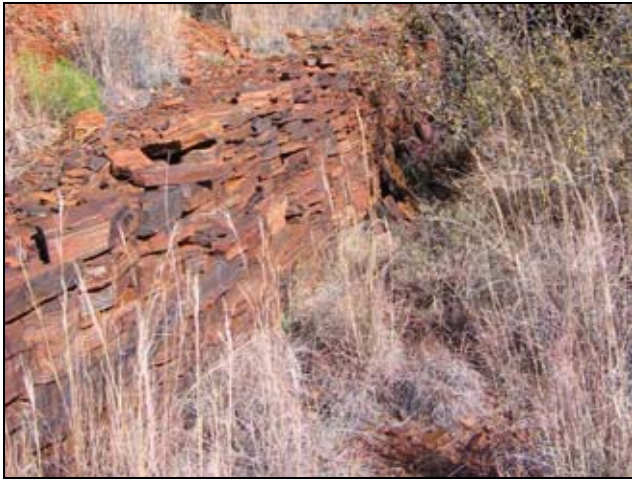
I-r: TK3 - banded ironstone scraper, TK4 - ccs scraper



I-r: Bramcote is a typical example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> c farmhouse. Several rock alignments were found and are believed to represent erosion control measures. They were often close to stream courses.



I-r: BR7 - Asbestos mining/prospecting pits and shafts cut into the hillside



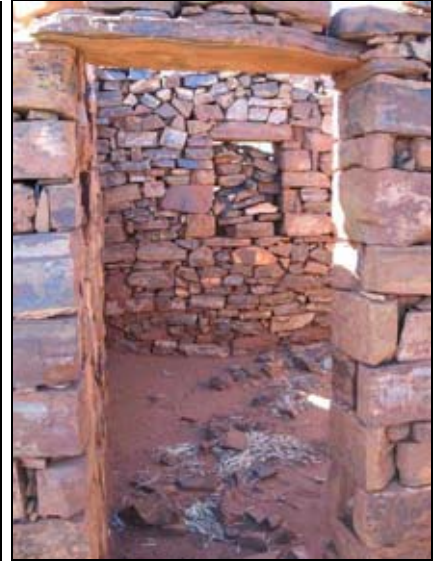
**l-r:** BR7 - Packed stone embankment wall at one of the mine shafts closely resembles a similar feature at BR1. BR8 - a small partly ruined structure made from local rock situated close to BR7 and probably erected by the miners.



**l-r:** TK1 - A fairly large cave in the banded ironstone rock strata. This was by far the best cave on the properties and contained a substantial amount of rock "paintings" and artefactual material. No archaeological deposit was preserved in the cave.



**l-r:** TK1 - Examples of the exclusively geometric finger painted images found predominantly on the roof of the cave, and on the ledges of the walls. Painting was done in a variety of colours.



TK2 - The old farm house is probably one of the oldest formal structures on Tierkop. It was made from local rock quarried adjacent to the house.



I-r: TK3 - A small rock shelter in banded ironstone strata contained some finger "paintings" and artefacts.



I-r: TK3 - To left and right were smaller overhangs both containing stone walling. These may have been used for penning small livestock. TK4 - Some artefactual material was found outside this shelter.



I-r: TK6 - Collapsed structure which the farmer suggested might have been a workers cottage. TK7 - a line of 8 farm workers graves are marked by stone covered mounds.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our interactions with local landowners and workers on the farms in question, as well as on the ground observations, have enabled us to get a good sense of the heritage resources of the area. While it was impossible to examine every inch of the ground, we feel relatively confident in making broader comment about the area with respect to the proposed prospecting.

### 7.1 Stone Age Heritage Resources

Early, Middle and Late Stone Age material is represented on the site. The abundance of fine grained banded ironstones and variants provided an abundant supply of raw material for artefact production. Despite this, we found relatively little stone age material. ESA and MSA items were widespread, though often found in erosion contexts and are not concentrated. LSA artefact scatters were most noticeable outside small shelters and overhangs formed in the banded ironstone strata. We found no LSA sites in other contexts on the property. The lack of natural water sources, and natural shelter may account for the lack of material. The LSA material seems to be characterised by large scrapers, perhaps representing material from the Oakhurst Industry. We saw no material that we would consider to be characteristic of the Wilton. The predominance of banded ironstone as a raw material rather than finer grained materials would also be more consistent with the earlier Oakhurst time. We saw no microlithic backed elements or beads but in mitigation, we saw very little material. No pottery was observed. The presence of crude geometric finger painting at some sites suggests that some late occupation is represented in the area. Although not possible to predict, pre-colonial burials could be located in the sandier areas of the site. Other researchers consulted with respect to known sites in the Kuruman Hills were unable to supply any information. No sites are indicated in the available literature.

- In our opinion, prospecting is unlikely to result in significant impacts to Stone Age resources and should be allowed to proceed.

## 7.2 Colonial Period Heritage Resources

Evidence of the use of the land at this time is also fairly limited in as far as tangible evidence is concerned. Title deeds were first issued in 1911, but we note that the neighbouring farms Mapperley (east) and Strelley (west) had title deeds issued in 1895, suggesting that farming was already underway on the land by that time. At present the land is used mainly to farm with livestock and although some agriculture has been attempted, water is probably too little to make this viable on a sustainable basis. The existing farmhouses (specifically Bramcote) is consistent with the style of the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. Other buildings consist of workers cottages and are unlikely to pre-date the main residences. Older, partly ruined structures represent an earlier farm dwelling (TK2) and a structure related to mining/prospecting (BR8). The building at TK 2 could be the oldest formal structure that we saw and is built with ironstone quarried adjacent to the house. The use of this abundant natural building material is typical for the area and kraals, walls and houses alike are built with it.

As is common with farming settlements, a number of graves were identified with the help of the farmers and workers. One grave at BR2 is highly formalised with an engraved headstone, while all others were simple stone covered mounds representing the burial places of the farm workers (6 graves at BR6 and 8 graves at TK7). We believe that another grave is to be found close to the old farmhouse (TK2a), also marked by a stone covered mound, while another is found close to the existing workers cottages on Tierkop.

Evidence for mining and prospecting is present in the form of pits and shafts cut into the rock strata in a few places. The absence of any associated artefactual material means that we have no immediate clues as to the age of the diggings. It is immediately obvious however that there are no roads leading to the sites suggesting they predated the age of readily available motorised transport. The one set of diggings we visited was exploiting asbestos, and it seems likely that other diggings were also looking for this material. A recent asbestos mine can be seen on the just off the western boundary of Tierkop on the farm Strelley.

- We believe that we have identified the main areas where recent settlement and industrial activity occurred. These are highly localised and for the most part easily recognised. Prospecting activities should avoid disturbance of any of these features. As such, we believe that prospecting will have little or no impact on these heritage resources and should be allowed to proceed.

## 7.3 Further mining

- If it transpires that significant commercially viable ore reserves are located, the area of the ore body should be reviewed by a heritage specialist to determine if any mitigation of heritage resources would be required prior to mining.



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