

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF DORSTFONTAIN COAL MINES

Professor TN Huffman
Mr JA Calabrese

Archaeological Resources Management
Archaeology Department
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

December 1996

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SYNOPSIS

Two historic period archaeological sites were identified in the Dorstfontein Coal Mines project area. The first historic period site is a European house that was built in about 1896. This house and associated outbuildings should be mapped and photographed prior to mining activities. The second historic site is a Black homestead with a small associated graveyard. The small graveyard should be fenced off or relocated prior to construction activities. Three isolated finds of Iron Age pottery were also identified. These are not significant and no further work is necessary.

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INTRODUCTION

Anglo-Vaal Mines commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to survey the proposed Dorstfontein Coal Mines property for archaeological sites as part of an Environmental Management Programme Report.

The proposed coal mine lies about 8 kilometres north of Kriel in the Bethal District. It occupies various portions of the farms Rietkuil 57 IS and Dorstfontein 71 IS on the 1:50 000 map sheet 2629 AB Vandyksdrif. Two ARM staff visited the area on December 5, 1996. Sites were recorded on a 1:6000 map supplied by Anglo-Vaal.

OBSERVATIONS

Generally speaking, the geology of this area does not produce stone suitable for flaking, and there were no Stone Age sites. There was, however, evidence for two historic occupations.

Site 1. European Farm Complex (26.13.36S 29.17.56E)

A late nineteenth century house with modern additions marks the remains of a European farm complex at approximately X + 2 901 800, Y -30 000. The site is still in use as a farm and includes several outbuildings. According to the current occupant, Mr. Tom Sheppard, the original house was built in 1896. The house has since been modified. The original structure has two large entrances, and one section may have functioned as a shop.

Site 2. Black Homestead With Graves (26.14.02S 29.18.13E)

This site is located between X + 2 902 400 to X + 2 902 650 and Y -30 300 to Y -30 450. All that remains of this homestead are a few rectangular building foundations, a few trash deposits, and at least two, and possibly three, burials.

One burial has a partially intact headstone covered with plaster. Unfortunately, most of the plaster has peeled off, and only the year '1955' is legible.

Prehistoric Occupation

Three isolated finds of Moloko (i.e., Sotho-Tswana) pottery were recovered, mostly from ploughed fields. No structural remains or archaeological deposits were associated with these, and presumably they represent a very short occupation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Iron Age occupation of the project area was minimal and no further archaeological work is recommended. The 1896 farmhouse (Site 1) is protected by the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969), and prior to mining activities this structure should be photographed and mapped. The burials at Site 2 should be protected during construction activities. A fence will be sufficient but the planned main access road may have to be redesigned. In the event that avoidance is not possible, ARM recommends that the descendants should be located, and the grave remains reburied elsewhere.