

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE MODDER EAST GOLD
MINE**

A phase I report prepared for Prime Resources

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INTRODUCTION

New Kleinfontein Goldmine (Pty) Ltd is currently converting their old order mining rights on the farms Modder East 72 IR, Modderfontein 76 IR, Klipfontein 70 IR Cloverfield 75 IR, Welgedacht 74 IR and Geduld 123 IR, in the Benoni and Springs Districts, into a new order mining right so that they can initiate new mining activities. These new activities include processing and storage facilities, decline and ventilation shafts, roads, pipelines, waste dumps and water treatment plants. For these purposes the EMPR needs to be updated.

Prime Resources, in charge of the EMPR, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to assess the impact of the proposed mining on the archaeological heritage of the area.

METHOD

Prime Resources introduced the environmental team to the project, and then ARM staff returned on April 2nd to examine the area. The team traversed the designated area on foot and by vehicle. Sites were recorded on a site plan provided by Turgis Consulting, the lead consultants, and then transferred to the 1 : 50 000 map 2628AB Benoni.

Site significance was based on five main criteria: (1) primary versus secondary context; (2) amount of deposit; (3) number and variety of features; (4) uniqueness; and (5), potential to answer present research questions. Sites with no significance do not require mitigation, low to medium sites may require limited mitigation, high significance requires extensive mitigation, while outstanding sites should not be disturbed at all. Recognizable graves have high social value regardless of their archaeological significance.

RESULTS

Most of the proposed infrastructure will be located inside a zone already impacted by the earlier mining. This zone is highly disturbed: for example, a deep trench circumscribes the old

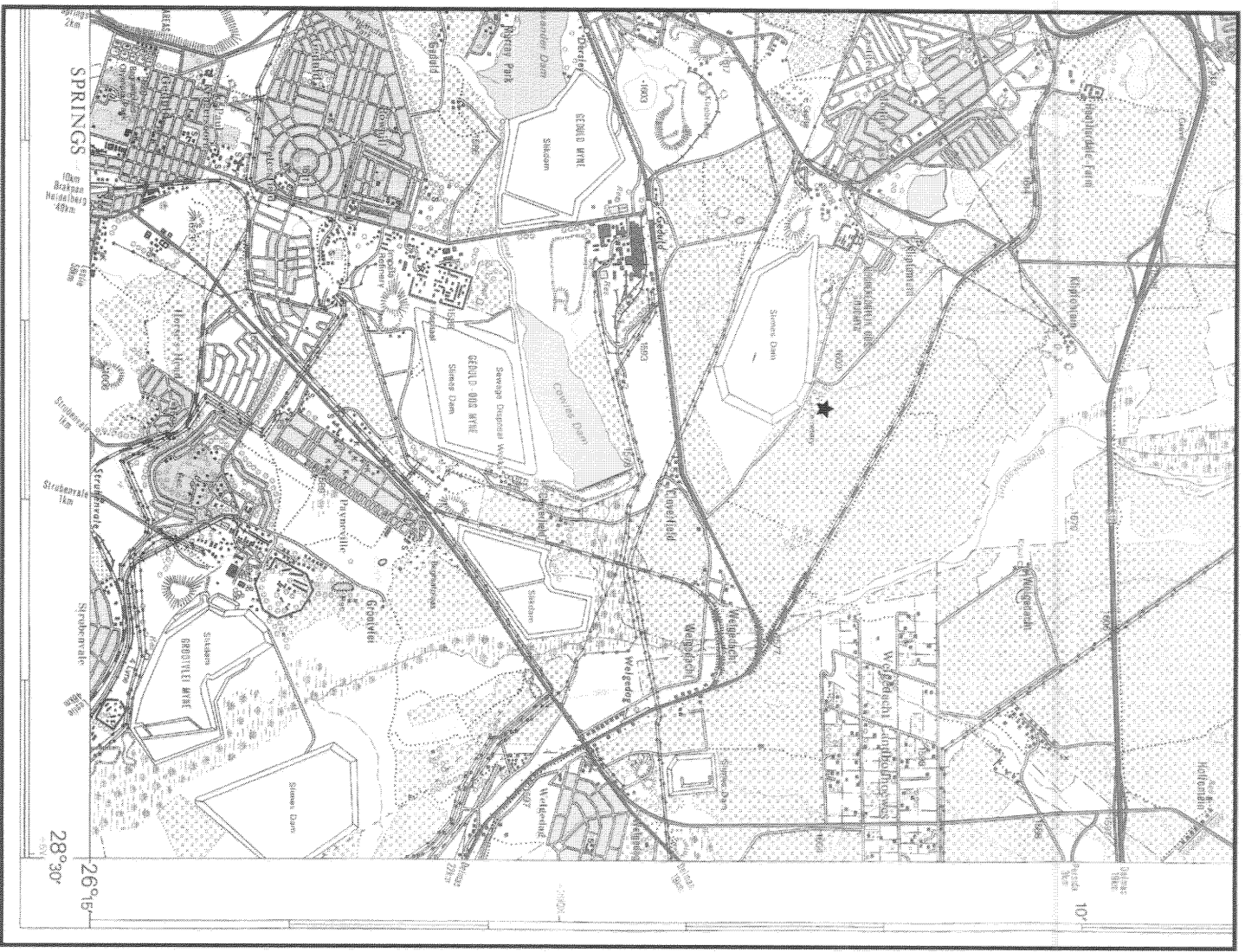


Figure 1. African Cemetery at Modder East. Note size of slimes dam.

slimes/raillings dams, and the area has been scrapped flat. Further, all the surrounding land has been ploughed for soya beans, maize and grass.

The only undisturbed place is an African cemetery located inside a tall stand of gum trees on the northern edge of the project area (26 11 22S; 28 27 26E). This cemetery appears on the 1978 edition of the 1: 50 000 map (Figure 1): it is huge and is still being used. *The archaeological significance is medium, and the cemetery has high social value.*

The remains of a few mud and stone buildings occur near the cemetery inside the ploughed lands. Patches of coal-cinder, glass, brick and stone mark the locations of historic African housing. Presumably, farm labourers occupied these dwellings when this was an active farm, before the first gold mining. These structures are now totally destroyed, and *they have no archaeological significance.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the historic house remains have no significance, they do not require further consideration.

The cemetery, on the other hand, requires mitigation. For the record, if the Mine decides to reclaim the land, the existing legislation is quite demanding. Among other things, the Mine will have to locate the descendents and then rebury the remains with their agreement: each grave with a named headstone requires its own coffin, hearse and gravesite. In the present case, Mine Management intends to protect the cemetery and to allow access.

Finally, should artefacts be uncovered during the course of mining activities, the Mine must notify an archaeologist, or the regional office of the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

With this proviso, there are no archaeological reasons why the new mining project should not proceed.