

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR THE MODDERFONTEIN PROJECT
GAUTENG**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson & Associates
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Executive Summary

No archaeological or heritage sites occur inside the project area. An African cemetery outside the western boundary needs to be demarcated and avoided.

INTRODUCTION

Kiron Pty (Ltd) intends to develop affordable housing on Portion 32 of the farm Modderfontein 76 IR in Benoni, Gauteng. The project area covers about 230 ha.

The environmental coordinators for the project, Seaton Thompson and Associates, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to examine the area for sites of archaeological and historical value in terms of Sections 35 and 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

BACKGROUND

The project area has not been investigated before. A previous survey for the nearby Modder East Gold Mine (Huffman 2006) recorded the remains of African housing and an African cemetery, in addition to mining activities.

METHOD

Two ARM staff examined the project area on 18 February 2009. The team surveyed the area on foot and by vehicle, paying close attention to the edges of pans. A hand-held GPS instrument, programmed for WGS 84, was available. The entire area appears on the 1: 50 000 map sheet 2628AB Benoni (Figure 1).

Site significance is always 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, while high significance requires extensive

mitigation and outstanding sites should not be disturbed at all. Recognizable graves have high social value regardless of their archaeological significance.

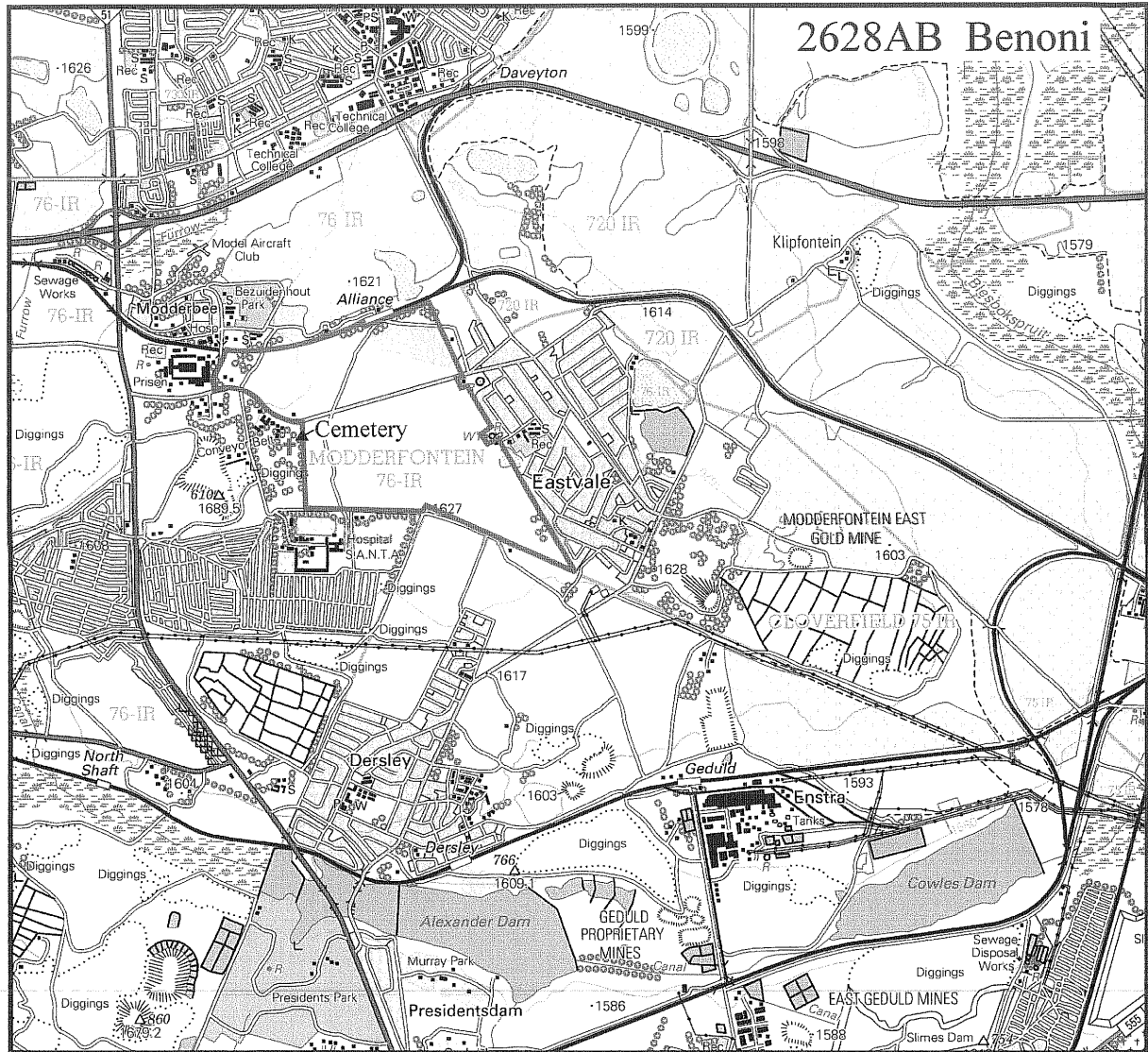


Figure 1. Location of project area on the 1:50 000 map sheet 2628AB Benoni.

RESULTS

High thick grass covers most of the project area. South of the Modder B road the entire section is a former agricultural land, including some natural depressions that were probably pans in the distant past. No prehistoric artefacts were noted anywhere in this section.

The north section experienced less ploughing, but there is a small tree plantation in the northeast corner and the remains of soil dumps and recent disturbance in the northwest corner.

No artefacts were noted in this section either.

One site of note lies just outside the western boundary. A large African cemetery contains several headstones, some dating to 1936 (Figure 2). Others bear cement crosses without inscriptions. The boundary fence between the cemetery and ploughed field no longer exists although there is a shallow ditch. This cemetery appears on the 1976 edition of the Benoni map and is clearly visible on the Google aerial photo. This cemetery has *high social significance*.



Figure 2. Graves in cemetery outside western boundary of project area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the cemetery lacks an obvious boundary, it is in danger from construction activities even though it lies outside the project area. A barrier needs to be erected to guarantee protection.

With this provision, there are no heritage reasons why the development should not proceed.

REFERENCE

Huffman, T.N. 2006. *Archaeological Assessment for the Modder East Gold Mine*. A Phase 1 report prepared for Prime Resources. Johannesburg: Archaeological Resources Management.