

**MONTEBELO DEVELOPMENT, GAUTENG:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates  
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# **MONTEBELO DEVELOPMENT, GAUTENG: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY**

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

*The survey yielded four Stone Age sites: 1 dating to the Middle Stone Age, 2 to the transition between the Middle and Later Stone Ages and 1 to the Later Stone Age. In addition, there were the remains of 6 households of farm labourers, 2 Historic farm complexes with old buildings and 1 Historic European cemetery. The buildings and cemetery will require mitigation if they will be destroyed.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dr R. Graca, trading as Blue Rose Developments, intends to develop a golf estate on about 720 ha of the Farm Nooitgedacht 176 IR in Gauteng south of Johannesburg (Figure 1). The golf estate will incorporate two elongated hills that rise some 100 m above the Kliprivier valley floor. The environmental coordinators for the project, Seaton Thompson and Associates, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to survey the area for places of archaeological and historical interest. In addition, ARM would compile a report that satisfied Sections 35 and 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

## **BACKGROUND**

The project area itself has not been investigated before. In the larger district, Stone Age and Historic sites are on record in the Archaeological Survey files at the University of the Witwatersrand, and at the nearby Mountain View site (Huffman 2008). For the Stone Age, Earlier Stone Age (about 1 million to 400 000 years ago) artefacts, such as handaxes, cleavers and other bifaces, occur in river gravels of the Vaal system, while Middle Stone Age (400 000 to 40 000 years ago) points and blades are more frequent. Later Stone Age (40 000 to 1000 years ago) sites cluster in areas, such as the Magaliesberg, where rock shelters are more common. The remains of a British blockhouse still stand next to the railroad line between Kliprivier and Daleside.

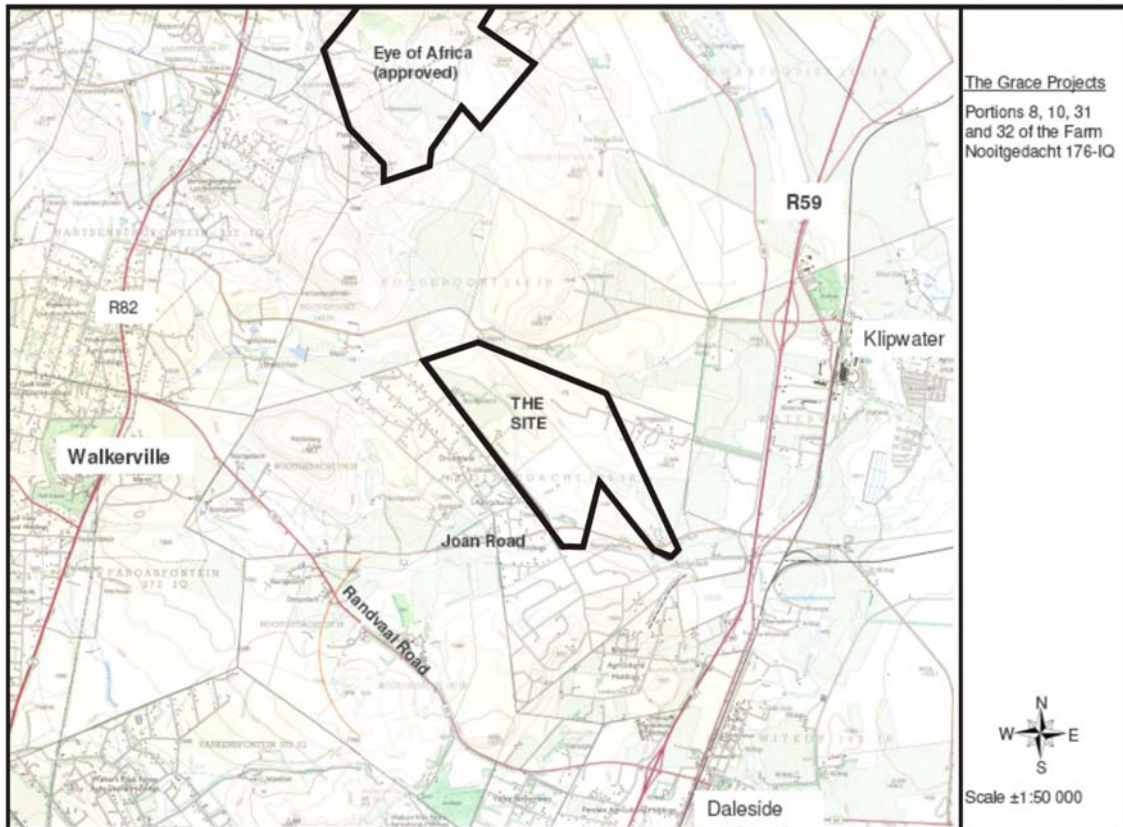


Figure 1. Location of project area number 3.

## METHOD

Two ARM staff visited the project area on 18 February 2007. Later, the boundaries were revised slightly, and one ARM staff revisited the area on 15 August 2008. In both cases, the teams traversed the areas on foot, examining likely places such as rocky outcrops. Sites were recorded with a hand-held GPS instrument calibrated to WGS 84, and then transferred to the 1: 50 000 map sheet 2628AC Alberton (Figure 2).

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

## RESULTS

Most of the area was relatively stony, and ground visibility good. The teams recorded a few Stone Age sites, one Historic European cemetery and two Historic farm complexes (Figure 2).

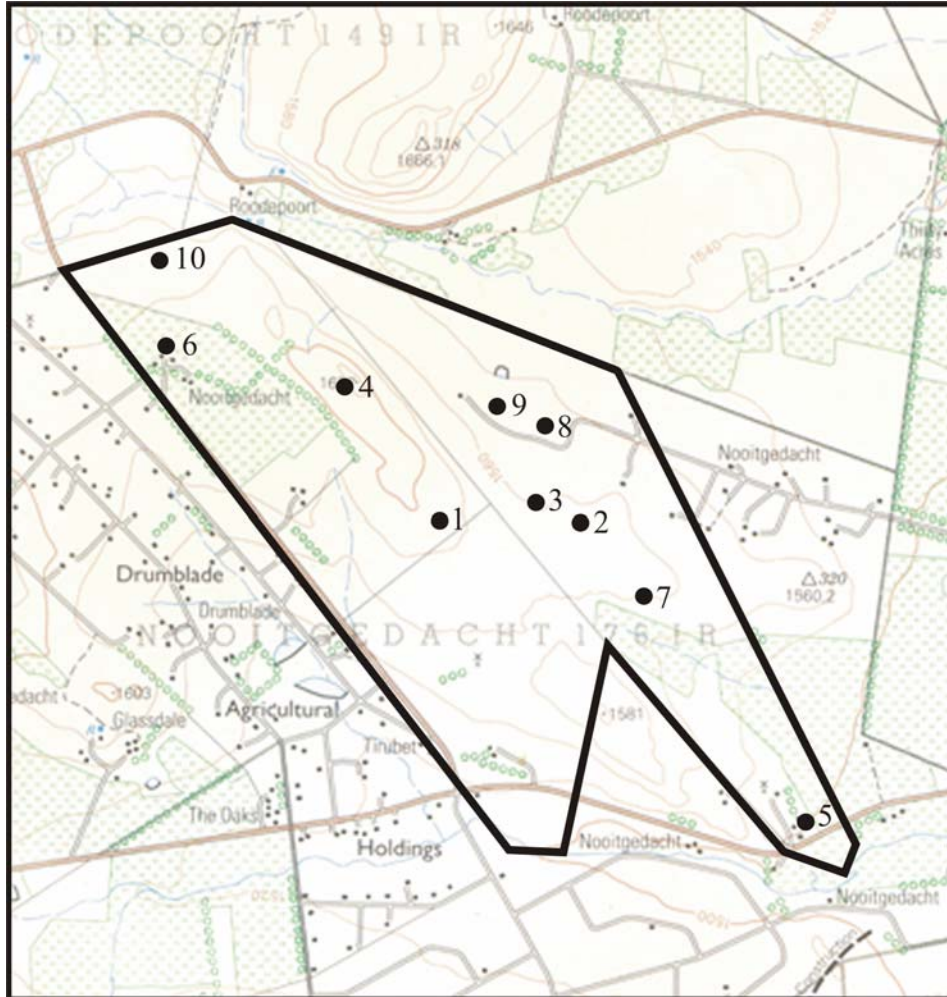


Figure 2. Location of sites inside the project area.

A few Middle Stone Age flakes lay near a small pass (**Site 1**: 26 26 08.7S 28 02 05.7E) through a ridge on the longest hill. The location suggests that the ridge may have served as a hunting blind. Although there is some deposit, bone is unlikely to be preserved. **Site 1** therefore has *low significance*.

A cluster of stone flakes lay scattered among a small outcrop of dolomite (**Site 2**: 26 26 10.0S 28 02 37.7E). The flakes were made from chert incorporated in the dolomite. The type of flaking suggests these artefacts date to the Earlier Later Stone Age (ELSA), that is, the transition between the Middle and Later Stone Ages. The rocky area is located near the top of

a small drainage, on the east side. Research elsewhere (e.g. Sampson 1985) shows that this was a favoured location for hunters: they could observe water sources without disturbing game. There is little soil among the outcrop, and so the research potential of this site is minimal. **Site 2** has *low significance*.

Another dolomite outcrop on the opposite side of the drainage also had a few ELSA artefacts (**Site 3**: 26 26 07.6S 28 02 30.2E). There is little deposit to excavate, and **Site 3** also has *low significance*.

A small scatter of stone flakes, possibly dating to the Later Stone Age, lay scattered on a ledge just below the top of the longest hill (**Site 4**: 26 26 0S 28 02E). This small scatter is probably *in situ*, but there appears to be little deposit. **Site 4** has *low significance*.

A Historic cemetery appears on the third edition of the Alberton map (**Site 5a**: 26 27 06.3S 28 03 25.8E). This cemetery still exists. It contains some 9 graves with 8 headstones (Figure 3). One is the grave of Jurgens Jacobus Greef, 1868-1917. Others range from 1889 to 1932 and 1918 to 1935. **Site 5a** has *high social significance*.



Figure 3. **Site 5a**: Historic cemetery.



Figure 4a. **Site 5b**: Main house for the farm and cemetery complex.



Figure 4b. **Site 5c**: African compound behind main house.

Presumably, the old house to the west (**Site 5b**: 26 27 12.2S 28 03 19.5E) was the original homestead (Figure 4a). It is now occupied by Thomas Khutsoane, the foreman. In the 1960s, he lived in a four-room longhouse (**Site 5c**: 26 27 10.5S 28 03 13.7E), about 100m behind the main house (Figure 4b). Other workers once lived on a terrace above the floodplains to the south (**Site 5d**: 16 27 14.6S 28 03 21.7E). This complex has *medium significance*.

Another cemetery marked on the Alberton map (26 25 54S 28 01 15E) no longer exists. It must have been removed when the present road was built.

The second cemetery was probably associated with another Nooitgedacht farm complex (**Site 6**) at the northwest end of the project area. A few outbuildings appear to be over 60 years old (Figure 5). These buildings have *medium significance*.

Finally, the third edition (based on data from the 1950s) shows the location of four separate households of African labours (**Site 7**: 26 25 S 28 02E; **Site 8**: 26 25S 28 02E; **Site 9**: 26 26S 28 02E; Site 10; 26 S 28 E). Presumably, these people all worked on the same farm at about the same time. The survey team examined Sites 7 and 8. House mounds and other debris mark them today. There are many hundreds of such places, and many have better research potential. **Sites 7, 8 9 and 10** therefore have *low significance*.



Figure 5. **Site 6:** Historic out buildings on Nooitgedacht.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

All sites with low significance do not require further investigation. These include the Middle Stone Age **Site 1**, the ELSA **Sites 2 and 3**, the Later Stone Age **Site 4**, and the African households **Sites 7, 8, 9 and 10**.

If the Historic buildings at **Site 5** and **Site 6** are going to be destroyed, then the developer must obtain a permit from the Gauteng office of the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA). They will require a full study of the two farm complexes by a recognized architectural historian.

Similarly, if the developer intends to move the graves at **Site 5a**, he will need a permit from SAHRA. Among other things, a recognized re-burial unit will need to trace living descendants. In all, it would be better to leave the cemetery undisturbed.

## **REFERENCES**

- Huffman, T.N.** 2008. Mountain View Heritage Assessment, Gauteng. Johannesburg: Archaeological Resources Management.
- Sampson, G.C.** 1985. *Atlas of Stone Age Settlement in the Central and Upper Seacow Valley*. (Museum Memoirs **8**). Bloemfontein: National Museum.