

Report on assessment of archaeological resources in the vicinity of proposed mining at Morokwa

David Morris
McGregor Museum
P.O. Box 316, Kimberley, 8300
Tel 053-8420099; Fax 053-8421433
dmorris@kimberley.co.za
23 August 2001

Introduction

The author was requested to inspect a location in the vicinity of 27°59'48" S 23°02'36" E, on the farm Morokwa. The site was visited on 22 August 2001.

Observations made are described below.

Archaeological background

The area is in a region renowned for its archaeological heritage, with important sites in the wider region including Wonderwerk Cave, in the Kuruman Hills, to the east (Beaumont & Morris 1990); Tsantsabane (Blinkklipkop/Gatkoppies), an ancient specularite working, outside Postmasburg to the south (Thackeray *et al.* 1983); Doornfontein, another specularite working, to the south west (Beaumont 1973; Beaumont & Boshier 1974; Thackeray *et al.* 1983); and a cluster of Stone Age sites at Kathu, to the north (Beaumont & Morris 1990). Further ancient workings with associated Ceramic Later Stone Age material as well as much older Fauresmith (Early Middle Stone Age) have been documented at Demaneng, Mashwening and King, just north of Morokwa; while isolated occurrences of Stone Age material have been noted at Rust en Vrede, Mashwening (Beaumont 2000).

In addition there are rock engraving sites, one of which was recently salvaged within the mining area at Beeshoek (Fock 1969; Fock & Fock 1984; Morris 1992, 1993; Beaumont 1998).

Observations at Morokwa

The location of 27°59'48" S 23°02'36" E, on Morokwa, is situated west of the Postmasburg-Kathu road, on the plain below a prominent north-south orientated range of hills on the westward side.

A wide area around the site was walked. The surface consists of shallow soil with exposures of dolomite in places.

No artefacts were found in this area.

A transect was then examined up the slope to the west, and a surface patch of stone artefacts was noted in the vicinity of 27°59'41.6" S 23°02'18.6" E. This locale

consists of a sandy zone at the base of the hill. The scatter was quite localised, and no other artefacts were found in a radius of up to 50 m. The number of artefacts found was too small to make any definitive statement about typology, but they may well be early MSA (Fauresmith), similar material being known from other sites between Morokwa and Kathu. They were based on a fine-grained jaspilite.

No ancient workings or rock engravings were seen.

The sides of the hill away from the road-way were not investigated.

The area is one where ancient specularite workings have been recorded and cognizance should be taken of this in any mining operations in the vicinity of Postmasburg-Kathu. In the event of any ancient working being found it should be reported to an archaeologist and/or the S.A. Heritage Resources Agency.

Likely impacts

The very low to zero presence of archaeological resources in the areas examined suggests that the proposed development here would not have an adverse impact on archaeological or cultural heritage here.

Recommendations

From an archaeological perspective, envisaged development may proceed at the vicinity around 27°59'48" S 23°02'36" E, Morokwa.

Should mining be expanded to include the hillside, it would be advisable to inspect the slope in more detail.

References

- Beaumont, P.B. 1973. The ancient pigment mines of Southern Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 69:140-146.
- Beaumont, P.B. 1998. Report on preliminary fieldwork on the farm Beeshoek 448, Postmasburg district, Northern Cape. Unpublished report, McGregor Museum.
- Beaumont, P.B. 2000. Archaeological scoping survey for the purpose of an EMPR for Audax Mining Corporation PTY (Ltd). Unpublished report, McGregor Museum.
- Beaumont, P.B. & Boshier, A.K. 1974. Report on test excavations in a prehistoric pigment mine near Postmasburg, Northern Cape. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 29:41-59.
- Fock, G.J. 1969. Non-representational rock art in the Northern Cape. *Annals of the Cape Provincial Museums* 6(9):103-136.

- Fock, G.J. & Fock, D.M.L. 1984. *Felsbilder in Südafrika: Kinderdam und Kalahari*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag.
- Morris, D. 1992. An archaeological impact assessment of a rock engraving site on the mining property at Beeshoek. Unpublished report to the National Monuments Council and Associated Manganese Mines of South Africa, Ltd.
- Morris, D. 1993. Interim report, Phase 1: the salvage of rock engravings from Beeshoek. Unpublished report to the National Monuments Council and Associated Manganese Mines of South Africa, Ltd.
- Thackeray, A.I., Thackeray, J.F. & Beaumont, P.B. 1983. Excavations at the Blinkklipkop specularite mine near Postmasburg, Northern Cape. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 38:17-25.