

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE NKOMATI MINE  
BARBERTON**

A Phase-1 Report prepared for SRK Consulting

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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE NKOMATI MINE

## BARBERTON

### INTRODUCTION

Nkomati Joint Venture intends to extend its mining activities at the Nkomati Mine on the Farm Uitkomst 541 JT in the Barberton District. The coordinators for the Environmental Management Programme, SRK Consulting, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to conduct an archaeological survey of the impacted area.

### METHOD

One ARM staff examined the project area on February 12, 2000. The examination concentrated on four proposed pit areas and possible waste stockpiles. Nkomati Joint Venture supplied a 1:5000 map marking the location of the pits, and SRK supplied a 1:50 000 map of the overall plan. Sites in the proposed project area were located with a GPS instrument, marked on the 1:5000 map and then transferred to the 1:50 000 maps 2530 DA Ngodwana and 2530 DC Badplaas.

### RESULTS

Because of the unusually heavy rains, open areas were covered with thick grass. Further, much of the project area was inside a pine-tree plantation, and most slopes were covered in a thick layer of pine needles. Nevertheless, a few sites were noted.

#### Historic Period

The graveyard marked by danger-tape northeast of Pit 1 (25.45.05S 30.38.13E) shows that

there were Historic homesteads on the farm. The remains of the homestead associated with the graveyard lie on the opposite side of the road. Other similar homesteads were probably located at 25.45.08S 30.38.02E, inside Pit 1, and at 25.45.07S 30.37.48E, just west of Pit 1. Both were marked by grindstones, pottery and stone alignments.

A homestead with terrace walling and rectangular stone walls was also noted (25.44.42S 30.37.11E) inside Pit 3 near wooden pegs 7300/17 and 18. Another site on the ridge top inside Pit 2 (25.44.50S 30.37.43E) incorporated a cement stone slab (2x4m), stone lines, terraces and a rectangular wall made with stone and cement.

Presumably all these Historic sites date to when Uitikomst was a working farm.

#### Late Iron Age

Two other sites contained stone enclosures varying between 14 and 20m in diameter. One straddled the south east boundary of Pit 4 (25.44.28S 30.37.13E) and the other was on the west boundary of Pit 3 (25.44.36S 30.36.53E). Both circles probably functioned as central cattle kraals surrounded by houses.

These two stone-walled sites were probably Swazi homesteads, and they probably date to between AD 1750 and 1850. They were sited above the Gladdespruit where the inhabitants could take advantage of the alluvial soils for cultivation.

Stone walling also stands on top of the ridge (25.44.45S 30.36.48E) south of Pits 3 and 4. This walling is in a defensive location, and it may have provided protection for the Swazi homesteads below during the troubled period of the *difaqane*.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The hilltop site is not in danger, and the graveyard has been demarcated. The remaining Late Iron Age and Historic sites have already been damaged by afforestation, and their potential for significant preservation is therefore low. Consequently, mitigation is not recommended.

