

# **HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR THE ROODEPOORT-DRIEFONTEIN PROJECT, GAUTENG**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates  
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## **EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Several sites of archaeological, historical and heritage interest lay inside the project area. Early Stone Age (2 sites), Middle Stone Age (5 sites), Later Stone Age (2 sites), Pastoralist (2 sites) and Historic (2 complexes) remains were noted. In addition, two cemeteries are on record. Some of these sites will require mitigation if development proceeds. The Pastoralist sites, Historic complexes and cemeteries are particularly important.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cosmopolitan Projects intends to establish affordable housing on Portion 4 and the Remainder of the Farm Roodepoort 159 IR and the Farm Driefontein 146 IR. These two farms lay south of Johannesburg, just west of Kliprivier. 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**

In the larger district, Stone Age and Historic sites are on record in the Archaeological Survey files at the University of the Witwatersrand. For the Stone Age, Earlier Stone Age (ESA: 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 (MSA: 400 000 to 40 000 years ago) points and blades are more frequent. Later Stone Age (LSA: 40 000 to 1000 years ago) sites cluster in areas, such as the Magaliesberg, where rock shelters are more common although Oakhurst (14 000 to 10 000) quarries are also on record. The remains of a British blockhouse still stand next to the railway line a few kilometres east of the present project area.

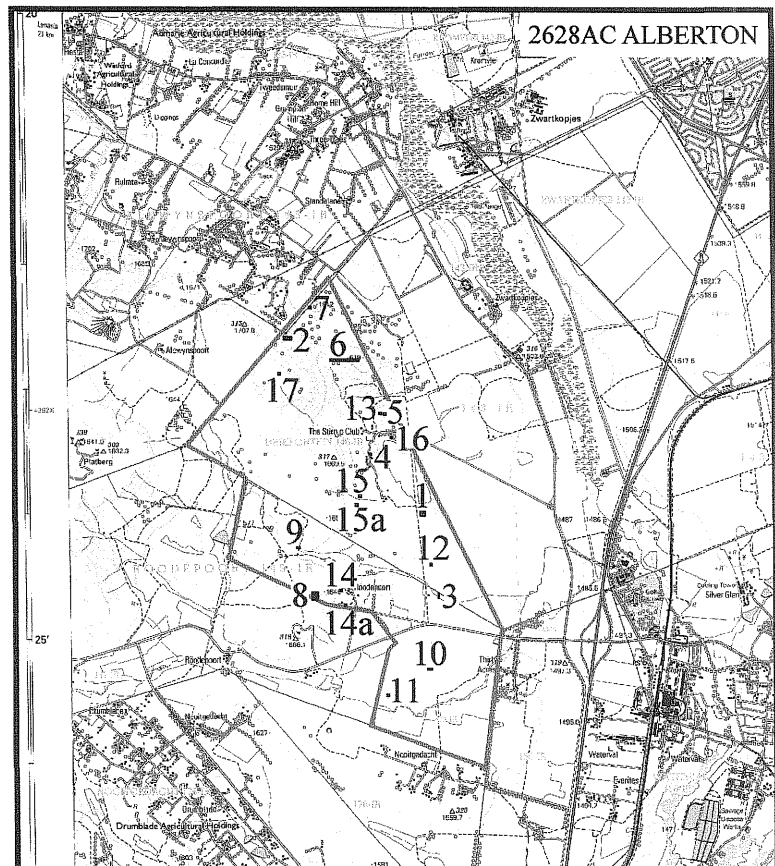
The present project area lies immediately south of the Eye of Africa development, previously investigated by ARM (Huffman & Schoeman 2004) and Pistorius (2004). Pistorius (2006) examined the Farm Driefontein for another proposed development. The present project area also lays north of Mountain View (Huffman 2008b) and Eye of Africa Valleys project areas (Huffman 2008a). These investigations recorded both Stone Age and Historic sites.

These various project areas straddle a geological sequence that affects the potential for archaeological sites. This sequence begins with dolomite at the bottom that marks a submerged environment. This dolomite was uplifted and then eroded to form a thick layer of chert (suitable for knapping) capped by the Bevit conglomerate. Subsequent subsiding ultimately led to the formation of shale and quartzite (also suitable for knapping); this quartzite bears ripple marks along its top edge. This sedimentary sequence was overlaid by a lava flow before the Vredefort Dome event dipped the layers west. Dwyka glaciations then scoured it all into ridges and valleys. Ecca sandstones later covered the entire area before erosion exposed the glaciated landscape that forms the basis of today's terrain (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005; McCarthy, pers com June 2009). The fine-grained chert and quartzites influenced Stone Age use of the area.

## METHOD

ARM staff visited the project area on 17 May, 22 May and 8 June 2009. Walter Dhooge from Seaton Thompson and Karim Sadr and Terrance McCarthy from the University of the Witwatersrand were members of the team on various visits. The teams traversed the area on foot and by vehicle, examining likely places such as rocky outcrops and natural terraces. 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 1).

Figure 1. Location of sites recorded in the survey on map 2628AC Alberton.



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

## RESULTS

Many sections of the project area were covered in tall grass, but it was nevertheless possible to record a variety of sites representing several time periods.

Early Stone Age cores and flakes lay scattered over the plateau on top of the Bevit conglomerate. Artefacts were mostly made out of dark brown quartzite boulders. One concentration occurs inside the gum tree plantation on the east edge of Driefontein (**Site 1**: 26 23 58S 28 03 11E to 26 24 01S and 28 03 14E) and another (**Site 2**: 26 22 35S; 28 01 59E to 37S and 54E) lay on the slope below the power lines on the north end of the project area. These sites have *low significance*.

Middle Stone Age points and other artefacts made out of the quartzite occur around a conglomerate outcrop on the edge of the vlei (**Site 3**: 26 24 37.9S 28 03 21.2E to 40S and 20.4E), and on a small hill (**Site 4**: 26 23 30.5S 28 02 44.7E) formed by the conglomerate near the old orphanage. These two sites have *low significance*.

Extensive areas of the chert below the conglomerate were utilised during Middle Stone Age times. Signs of flaking were noted along three raised outcrops (**Site 5**: 26 23 11.7S; 28 02 52.9E, **Site 6**: 26 22 46.8S; 28 02 38.6E to 45.6S and 23.3E, **Site 7**: 26 22 20.6S 28 02 13.6E). These quarries have *no significance*.

The quartzite ridge running through the centre of the project area was quarried during the Oakhurst period of the Later Stone Age (Figure 2). One good line was recorded between natural pathways through the ridge (**Site 8**: 26 24 36.4S; 28 02 16.2E to 40.9S and 13.4E) and another in a saddle (**Site 9**: 26 24 16.3S 28 02 07.5E). These two sites have *low significance*.



Figure 2. Site 9: Oakhurst Quarry.

The chert nodules inside the conglomerate show signs of flaking in various areas. Two are worth noting as examples (**Site 10**: 26 25 14S 28 03 14E to 13.7S and 17.5E, **Site 11**: 26 25 26.5S 28 02 53.9E). It is unknown when this flaking occurred. In any case, these two areas have *no significance*.

Of much greater interest are two stonewalled sites that can be associated with Khoi pastoralism. The first (**Site 12**: 26 24 23.8S; 28 03 16.5E) stands against an outcrop of conglomerate on the edge of the vlei (Figure 3). A considerable amount of stone artefacts lay around and inside the walling. Some date to the Middle Stone Age but others are typical of the informal industry produced by pastoralists. **Site 12** overlooks a small sinkhole. The second walled site (**Site 13**: 26 23 11S 28 02 51.3E) stands among the chert outcrop next to Site 5. Stone circles of various sizes characterise these sites: usually a medium-sized circle ( $\pm$  10m) stands inside a larger circle ( $\pm$  30m) which in turn is surrounded by small ones ( $\pm$  2-3m). The small circles were probably the base for shelters, while the others would have enclosed domestic stock. Pastoralist sites are rare in Gauteng and so both have *high significance*.



Figure 3. Site 12: Pastoralist walling.

The geology of this area produces suitable soils for good grazing, and Boer farmers were attracted to the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Le Roux farmstead (**Site 14**) was built in 1875, and it still occupied today (Figure 4a). Among other things, the farmstead includes an old stable (Figure 4b), stone walling on the west side of the ridge (**Site 17**: 26 22 52.2 28 01 57.2E) and a family cemetery (**Site 14a**: 26 24 44.8S; 28 02 30.1E). This cemetery includes members of most of the main families in the region (Figure 5), including Botha, Du Toit



(1878) Greeff, Jansen van Vuren, Kok, Krige, Le Roux, Muller and Snyman (1896). The cemetery and farm complex have *high significance*.



Figure 4a. Site 14: Le Roux farmstead.

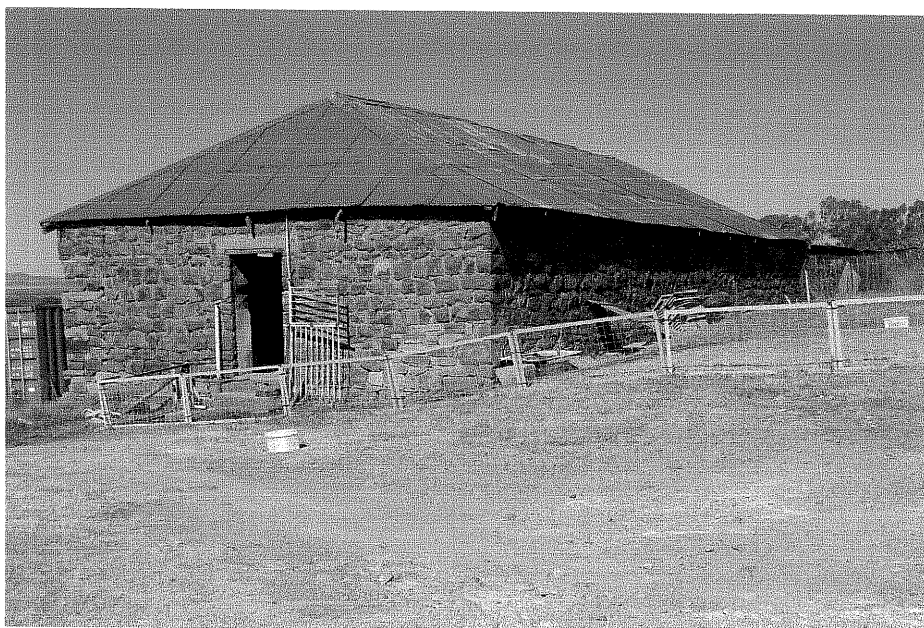


Figure 4b. Site 14: stable in Le Roux farmstead.

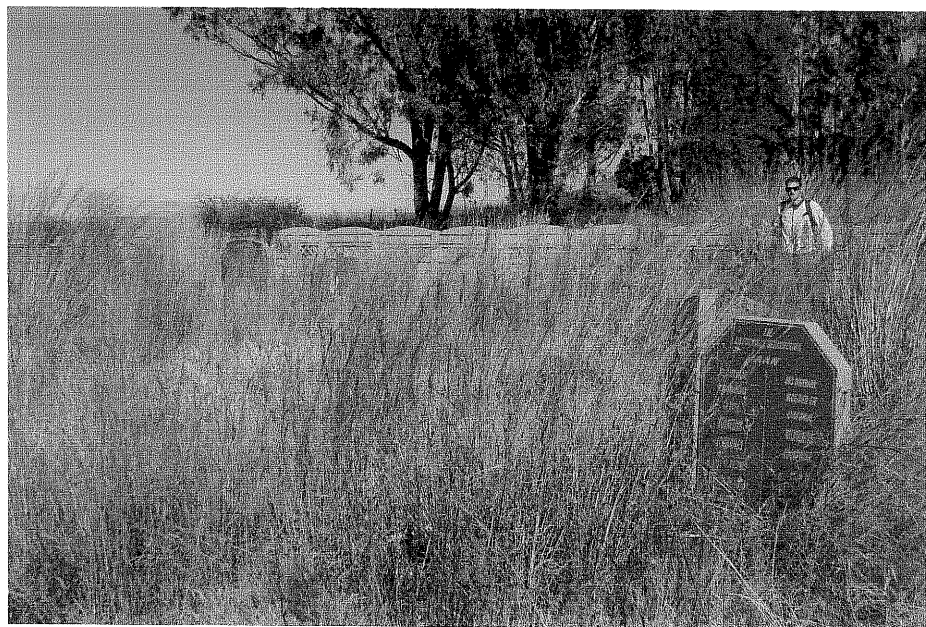


Figure 5. Site 14a: Le Roux Cemetery.

The African labourers lived a little way to the north (**Site 15**: 26 23 51.9S 28 02 38.3); several houses are marked on an early edition of the Alberton map, and the walls of one remain standing today (Figure 6). This compound included a cemetery (**Site 15a**: 26 23 55.8S 28 02 37.3E) that now holds some 60 graves (Figure 7). There is little soil here, and so the graves are covered by large mounds of stone collected from the immediate area. These stones include Early Stone Age artefacts. The cemetery has *high social significance*.





Figure 6. Site 15: African housing.



Figure 7. Site 15a: African Cemetery.

Another historic complex (**Site 16**) stands further to the north. As the Alberton map records, this complex was originally an orphanage. It includes a boarding house (Figure 8a), two twin-gabled houses (Figure 8b) and stables (Figure 8c). These structures were part of Moria, one of the orphanages under the umbrella of the Abraham Kriel children's home (Pistorius 2006). Kriel established Moria in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after purchasing Driefontein in 1912. It closed in the 1960s. This historic complex has *high significance*.



Figure 8a. Site 16:  
boarding house.

Figure 8b. Site 16: twin-gabled houses.



Figure 8c. Site 16: stable.

It is interesting to note that members of a Zionist church run a modern orphanage, this time for African children, near the Site 15 cemetery. On behalf of the church, they look after some 45 children.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

If development will impact the Historic complexes (**Sites 14 and 16**), then an architectural historian will need to record each extensively. Among other things, the historian will make plans of each structure and map the spatial relationships of each complex.

Under similar circumstances, the two cemeteries (**Sites 14a and 15a**) will also require mitigation. For the record, the existing legislation is quite demanding. Among other things, the developer 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. It would be better to protect the cemeteries and to allow access.

The two pastoralist stonewalled sites, **Sites 12 and 13**, are worthy of protection. If they were to be negatively impacted, they will require extensive recording and excavation. **Site 12** is particularly well preserved and has great research value.

For the Stone Age, the sites with no significance (**Sites 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11**) do not require further consideration. On the other hand, sites with low significance (**Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9**) will need further recording if they will be negatively impacted. Mapping and surface collections will suffice in most cases. **Sites 3, 4, and 9** have some soil and should be test excavated.

The Early Stone Age material at **Site 1 and 15b** suggest that more material is scattered across the flat plateau on top of the conglomerate. There are also more chert exposures that could have been utilised during the Middle Stone Age and Oakhurst period. Depending on the locations chosen for development, these other areas may need to be examined.

## REFERENCES

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