

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNIASANCE OF THE WITPOORTJIE
PROJECT, KRUGERSDORP**

A Phase 1 report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates

Professor TN Huffman

Archaeological Resources Management
School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The remains of two European farm complexes, including African housing, are still visible on the landscape. These features are marked on the 1976 edition of 2627BB Roodepoort. Only the European cemetery associated with the Witpoortjie homestead requires mitigation.

INTRODUCTION

The Mogale City Council intends to develop part of the Remainder of Portions 2, 21, 22 and 29 of the farm Witpoortjie 245 IQ, south of Krugersdorp, Gauteng. The project area comprises some 214 hectares, including the headwaters of a major stream (Figures 1 and 2). The Council has zoned the project area for a variety of activities, including low-cost housing, streets, light industrial/commercial, business, public open space, sports fields, a railway corridor and new road.

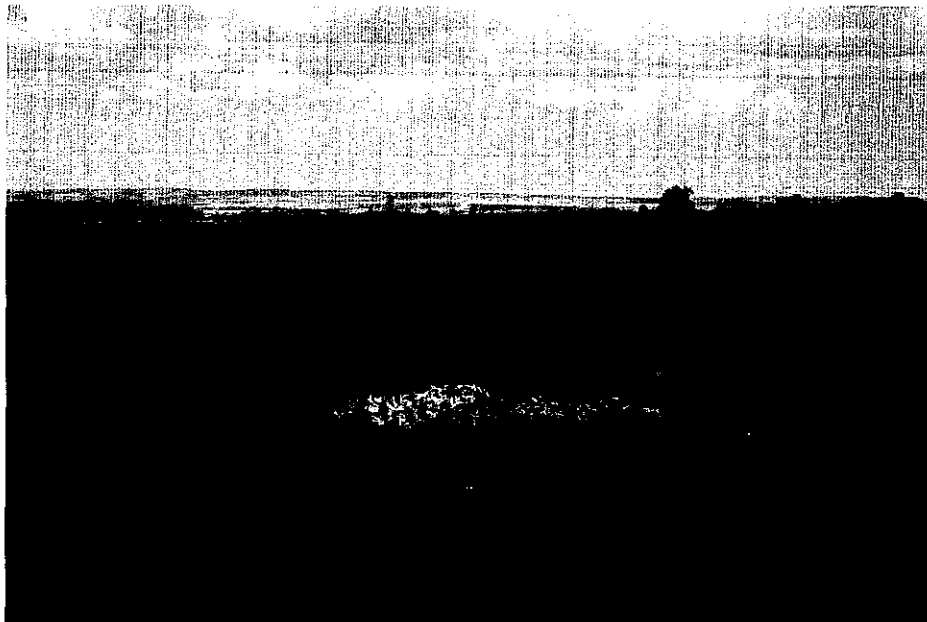


Figure 1. View of the Project Area from the North.



Figure 2. 1:50 000 map showing the Project Area.

Seaton Thompson, the environmental Coordinators for the project, 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 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. 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. Previous surveys in the near vicinity (e.g. Huffman 2006, 2008a,

2008b) yielded Middle and Later Stone Age sites, Anglo-Boer War fortifications and historic farm complexes.

METHOD

One ARM staff visited the project area on 15 February 2009. Staff traversed the area on foot, examining likely places such as rocky outcrops, exotic trees 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 2627BB Roodepoort.

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

High grass covers much of the project area. Nevertheless, it was possible to document the major heritage sites. These sites are limited to Middle Stone Age artefacts, prospecting trenches and the remains of two historic farm complexes.

Later Stone Age

A few flakes made from quartz, quartzite and hornfels lay on the surface and in a footpath next to an historic prospecting trench placed at the base of a small rocky outcrop (**Site 1**: 26 10 07.2S 27 48 39.7E). The artefacts extend upslope across the south side of the outcrop. There is little deposit, and the Stone Age component of **Site 1** has *low significance*.

Historic Farms

Site 1 includes another component. A small midden with coal cinder and a few porcelain fragments stands against a short stretch of stone walling on the south side of the outcrop; they mark the back of a farm labourer's household. This household appears on the 1976 edition (air survey in 1954) of the Roodepoort map (Figure 3) on Witpoortjie 10, but not on the 1983 edition. Little remains of the household now and it has *low significance*.

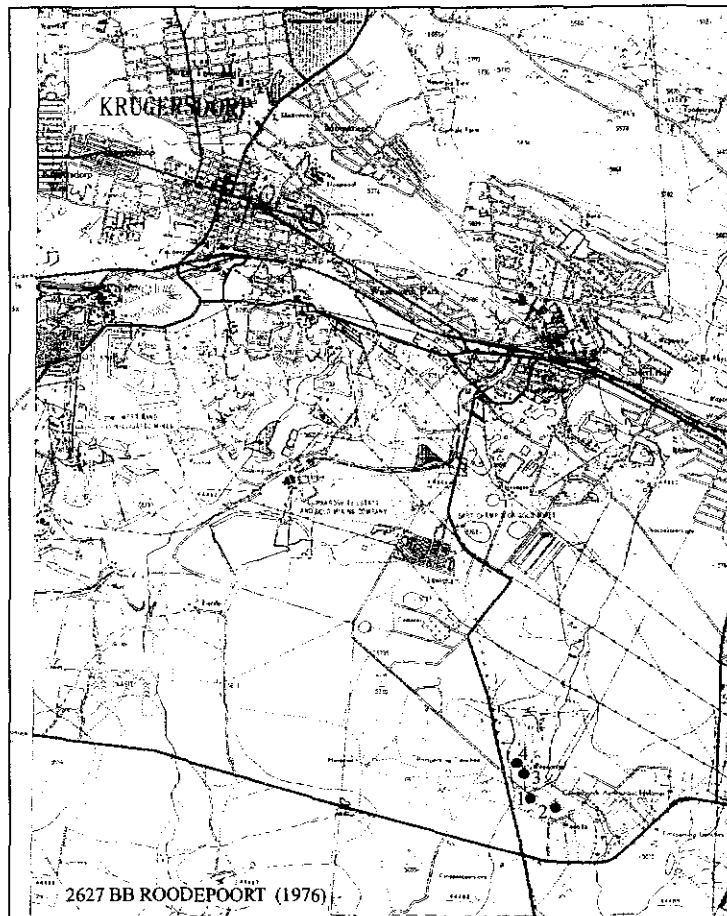


Figure 3. 2627BB Roodepoort 1:50 00 map showing location of sites.

Other African households appear on the 1976 map to the south of Site 1. They were probably part of the Madeira Farm complex. The remains of the Madeira farmhouse (Site 2: 26 10 08.7S 27 48 49.8E) still stand next to a line of oak trees (Figure 4). A long stone wall incorporates a midden and rectangular house foundations. Two stonewalled animal kraals stand along the same contour about 50m further south (26 10 13.3S 27 48 54.2E). These features do not appear on the 1983 edition and were therefore abandoned by that time. This farm complex has *low significance*.



Figure 4. Remains of the Madeira farmhouse

The early map also marks the location of the farmhouse on Witpoortjie 44. The remains of this complex (Site 3: 26 09 56.3S 27 48 36.1E), including house foundations and water tanks, are still visible in an informal maize field (Figure 5). It has *low significance*.



Figure 5. Remains of the Witpoortjie Farmstead.

The European graveyard associated with the Witpoortjie farmhouse lies about 200m upslope. A rectangular stonewall about 1m high surrounds the graveyard (**Site 4**: 26 09 53S 27 48 30.3E). Gaping holes show that three graves have been removed. High grass obscures the interior of the graveyard, and there may be a few graves without headstones that have not been removed. If there are a few undisturbed graves, they will have *high social value*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sites 1 to 3 all have low significance and do not require further consideration. Only **Site 4**, the graveyard, is of concern.

Site 4 needs to be re-examined in the winter, when vegetation will not obscure visibility. If graves are still present, some social consultation, in terms of SAHRA legislation, will be necessary. The graves could either be left in place and the graveyard left undisturbed, or the graves could be removed to an appropriate cemetery.

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

REFERENCES

Huffman, T.N. 2006. *Archaeological Assessment of Portion 164 and Remainder of Portion 52 of the Farm Turfontein 100 IR, Johannesburg*. A Phase 1 report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates. Johannesburg: Archaeological Resources Management.

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