

**WOODACRES EQUESTRIAN ESTATE, GAUTENG:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates  
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May 2007

# WOODACRES EQUESTRIAN ESTATE, GAUTENG: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The survey recorded 1 Earlier Stone Age site, 2 Historic farm complexes and 1 African cemetery. The buildings and cemetery will require mitigation if they are scheduled for destruction.*

## INTRODUCTION

Dr R. Graca, trading as Blue Rose Developments, plans to establish an equestrian estate on portions of the Farm Hartsenbergfontein 332 IQ, south of Johannesburg (Fig. 1). The development will incorporate about 225 ha. 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).

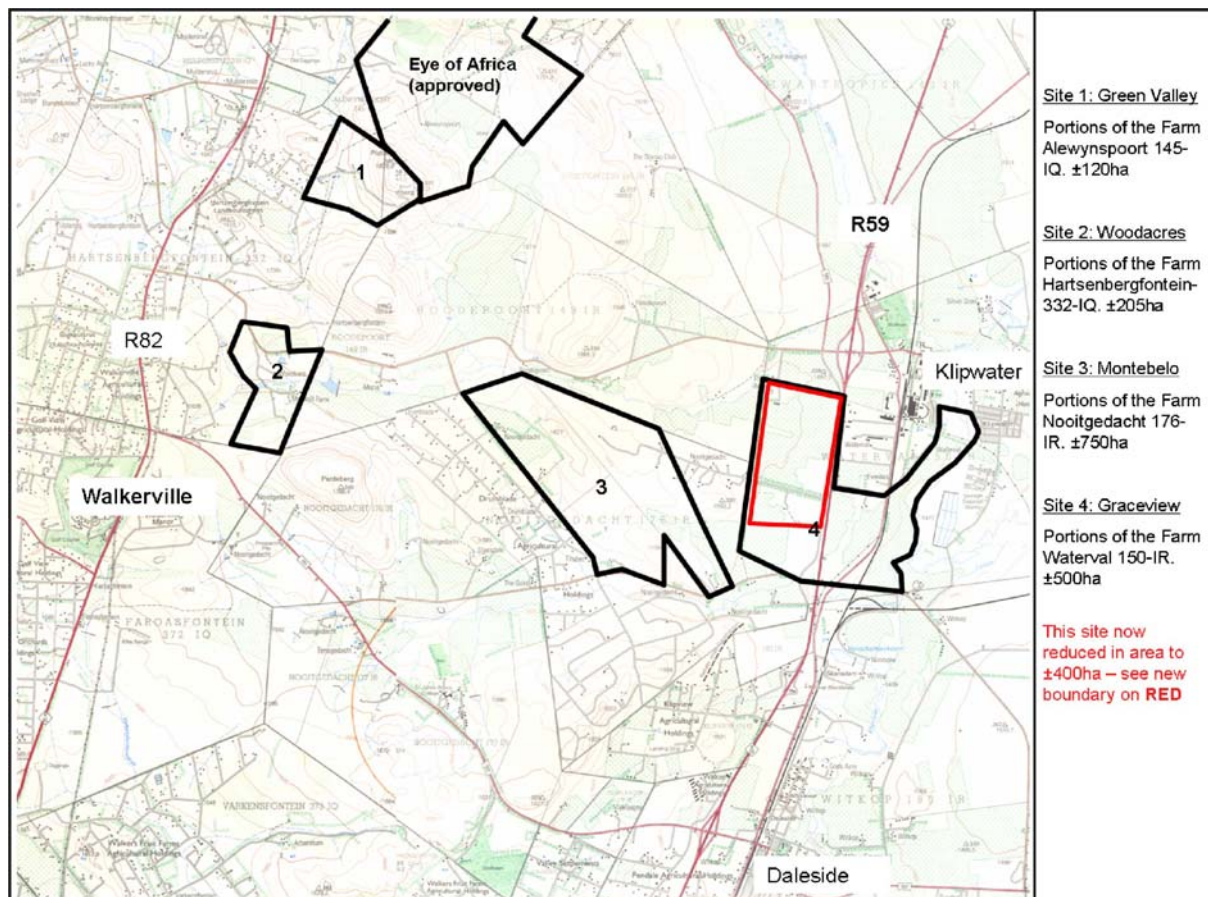


Fig. 1. Location of project area number 2.

## **BACKGROUND**

Archaeologists have not investigated the project area before. 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, some 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) sites with points and blades are more common. Later Stone Age (40 000 to 1000 years ago) sites cluster in areas, such as the Magaliesberg, where rock shelters occur. A British blockhouse still stands a few kilometres east, between Kliprivier and Daleside.

## **METHOD**

Two ARM staff visited the project area on 14 March 2007, and one returned on 16 May. Staff traversed the ground on foot, and by vehicle. Sites were recorded with a hand-held GPS instrument calibrated to WGS 84, and then transferred to the 1: 50 000 map sheet 2627BD Lenasia.

Site significance is 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, 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**

Earlier Stone Age material was found eroding out of an old road (**Site 1**: 26 25 45.8S 27 58 53.8E) at the southeast end of the project area (Fig. 2). The artefacts include a small hand axe, as well as polyhedral cores and flakes made from quartzite and dolerite. The typology suggests that they probably date to the end of the period, about 400 000 years ago. The artefact scatter extends for at least 100m southeast to the basal slopes of the Perdeberg. This prominent hill is outside the project area and was not examined. It may have been the original source of the raw material. The artefacts are probably not *in situ*, and Site 1 has *low significance*.

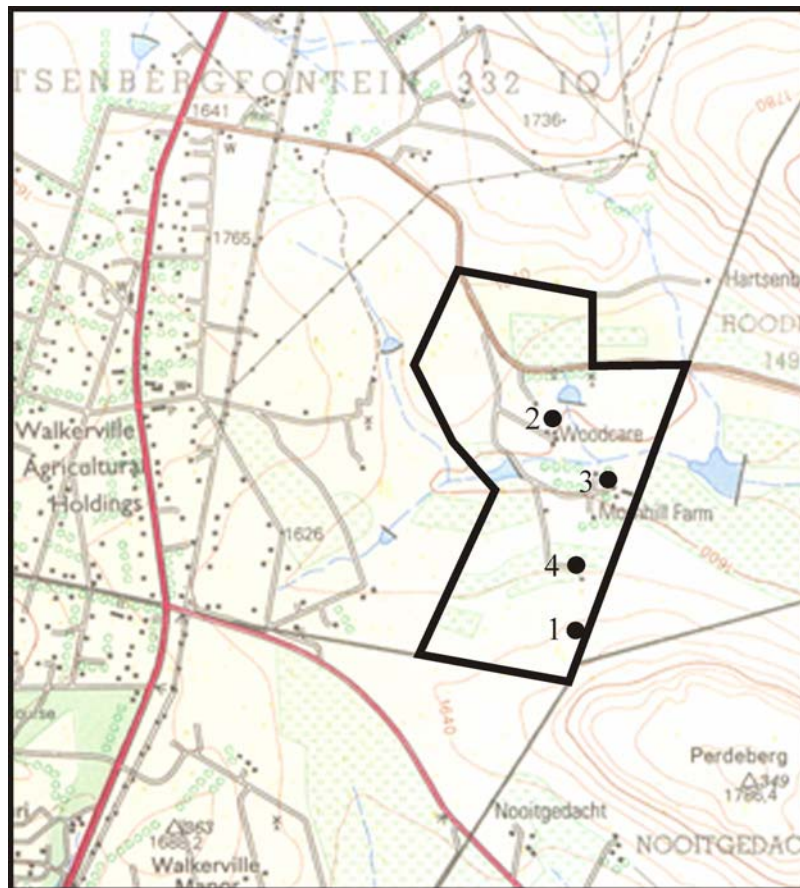


Fig. 2. Location of Sites inside the project area.

Two European homesteads once stood on either side of a small stream on the property. Woodcare (**Site 2**: 26 25 14.5S 27 58 46.6E) stood on the north side. At one time it operated a dairy. One shed bears a date of 1925 (Fig. 3), and the Manager's house is probably equally old (Fig. 4).



Fig.3. 1925 shed at **Site 2**.



Fig. 4. Manager's house at Site 2.

Mornhill farm (**Site 3**) stood on the south side. A few outbuildings appear old, particularly a chicken hatchery (Fig. 5). Some of the African housing is probably of equal age (Fig. 6). Overall, Site 3 has *medium significance*.



Fig. 5. Old hatchery at **Site 3**.



Fig.6. Remains of African housing at **Site 3**.

The African cemetery (**Site 4**; 26 25 35.8S 27 58 52.7E) for the Mornhill Farm lays on the edge of a gum tree plantation some distance upslope from the compound (Fig. 7). There are some 53 graves arranged in about 6 lines orientated east/west. The cemetery was still used in the 1960s. Site 4 has *high social significance*.



Fig. 7. African cemetery (**Site 4**) on Mornhill Farm.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Earlier Stone Age **Site 1** does not require further mitigation.

If the Historic buildings at **Site 2** and **3** 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 farm complexes by a recognized architectural historian.

Similarly, if the developer intends to move the graves at **Site 4**, 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.