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**1<sup>st</sup> PHASE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ASSAY  
FOR THE FARMS  
DONKERPOORT 448 KQ, RANDSTEPHNE 455 KQ AND WATERVAL 443 KQ,  
THABAZIMBI, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**



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## **DEFINITION**

The broad generic term *Cultural Heritage Resources* refers to any physical and spiritual property associated with past and present human use or occupation of the environment, cultural activities and history. The term includes sites, structures, places, natural features and material of palaeontological, archaeological, historical, aesthetic, scientific, architectural, religious, symbolic or traditional importance to specific individuals or groups, traditional systems of cultural practice, belief or social interaction.

## **PROTECTED SITES IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE ACT, Act. NO. 25 OF 1999**

The following are the most important sites and objects protected by the National Heritage Act:

- a. Structures or parts of structures older than 60 years
- b. Archaeological sites and objects
- c. Palaeontological sites
- d. Meteorites
- e. Ship wrecks
- f. Burial grounds
- g. Graves of victims of conflict
- h. Public monuments and memorials
- i. Structures, places and objects protected through the publication of notices in the Gazette and Provincial Gazette
- j. Any other places or object which are considered to be of interest or of historical or cultural significance
- k. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance
- l. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa
- m. Objects to which oral traditions are attached
- n. Sites of cultural significance or other value to a community or pattern of South African history

## **METHODOLOGY**

All relevant maps and documents on the sites were studied. Amongst others, Tiaan Van Den Berg, Sello Motaung, Elias Matlou, Jeremiah Mvula and Thomas Mothloki were interviewed owing to their local knowledge and job assignments at the proposed mine. Tiaan was born and lived in the general Thabazimbi area for nearly thirty years while Thomas Mothloki lived most of his seventy four years on Randstephne. Elias and his family lived on Waterval since he was born over thirty years ago. Sello and Jeremiah have been working with the assaying geologists since work started at the proposed mining site, and had traversed much of the proposed mining site during this period. Information regarding archaeological sites found by the assaying geologists were also utilized in the survey and included in the report. Of these that could be reached during this assessment all were correctly identified by the geologists, and therefore three of the sites that was difficult to reach on foot were assumed to be correctly identified.



*Figure 1. This is the typical landscape in which mine is to be located.*

Special attention was given to identify places of spiritual importance in the landscape, including graves and places of worship.

It must be noted that the assessment was undertaken at the end of autumn when the vegetation, especially the grasses, were at its highest stand. The site is also especially geophysically challenging, as the height difference between the highest (1860 meters a. s. l.<sup>1</sup>), and lowest points (1000 m a. s. l.<sup>2</sup>) of the site, is in the region of seven hundred meters.

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<sup>1</sup> Above sea level.

Furthermore, the present investigator has been working in the general area for the past five years and has accumulated significant local knowledge regarding the local archaeology, including the 14 000 ha of land belonging to the present KUMBA mine.<sup>3</sup> Located directly to the West of this property.

Finally it must be kept in mind that what lies beneath the surface of the site cannot be detected, even by a well trained archaeologist. If any archaeological artefacts or burials are exposed during the course of exploration, road building or mining, then such discoveries should be reported to the nearest heritage authorities. (LIHRA<sup>4</sup>, Polokwane)



*Figure 2. Prospecting and drilling are underway on the mountain. This is not necessary the area that is to be mined.*

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<sup>2</sup> Above sea level.

<sup>3</sup> The old ISCOR,

<sup>4</sup> Limpopo Heritage Resources Agency.

## COMMENTS

The site is located in the warm Waterberg Bushveld where several different veldt types intersect (See Acocks<sup>5</sup>) and converse. From writers such as Moffat and others it is understood that the region was harsh to live in, especially during summers, and under the constant threat of Malaria, and the Tsetse Fly. Game abounded here in the past, and the vegetation yielded sufficient sources for gatherers, and then more.

It appears then to have been a place that both attracted and repelled the settlement of people through time. But the region had another aspect to consider, namely its minerals. These have been exploited since early times, and throughout time to the present day, where especially iron is one of the most treasured resources.

For the South African Iron Age peoples, that has apparently been active in the region since the eighth century A.D. the iron was used for the manufacturing of implements and weapons that assisted them in farming, hunting, war and as bridal procurement. It also formed part of an intertribal tax system.

Because of the above it is generally known that Stone Age people, as well as Iron Age people utilized the region throughout the centuries before white hunters exterminated the Buffalo that carried the dreaded Tsetse fly. Changes in climate, to a large extent, eliminated the occurrence of malaria.

The Stone age in the region is represented through a sprinkling of stone artefacts throughout the area, and fixed sites such as Mokopaan that represents nearly the full range of the 'Homo specie's' development. In the general Waterberg region, the Stone age is furthermore represented by a large number of shelters that acted as semi-permanent dwellings for the more recent stone age peoples and also retains rock-art, that formed part of their religious lives.

Similarly the early black farmers are well represented from 600 A.D. to 1800 A.D.<sup>6</sup> Even that being said, it generally appears that, even during that period; the area has been relatively sparsely populated. One may attribute this to the climate (summer) conditions of the area.

The same were true for the later settlement of European Farmers. In the late nineteenth century the area was used as a winter hunting ground by people of all walks of life, even including Paul Kruger, President of the then Z.A.R.<sup>7</sup> It was only with the advent of the 'discovery' of the massive iron ore body of Thabazimbi in the 1920's that farms were first occupied by white settlers. The large scale iron ore mining today only commenced in the mid nineteen thirties, with the workforce of one mine manager, Mr Jourdaan and approximately 20 black labourers.

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<sup>5</sup> Veld Types of South Africa. J P H ACOCKS 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 1988, accompanying Map.

<sup>6</sup> See Millers report to KUMBA MINE, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek.

## **RESULTS**

Features from some of the possible periods mentioned above were located during the assessment, including a site of high religious context for ancestral worshippers from the region.

Site 1. The grave of one J.H.T.O. PERREIRA is located on the banks of the Sondagsrivier close to the bridge. On the 1: 50 000 map 2427DA SANDRIVIERSPOORT the abbreviation ‘R’ represents a watering point (possibly an old ‘drif’ and ‘uitspanning’<sup>8</sup>) on the ‘old road’. The inscriptions on his headstone gives the following information; born in 1881 being a ‘Burger’<sup>9</sup> of the Z.A.R., occupation as ‘KRUITMAKER’<sup>10</sup>, and cause of death as ‘VERMOOR’ IN 1901. This is a rather interesting issue from the second South African War<sup>11</sup>, as it is one of the few links to that period of our history here in Thabazimbi.

**The site should be seen to be of high significance, and treated accordingly.**

Site 2. The second site is a dolomitic cave that is still regularly visited for religious purposes. It is well defined by a sturdy game fence and is under supervision of one Thomas Mothloki<sup>12</sup>. This site must be treated with utmost care from a cultural point of view.

Secondly it is a dolomitic cave, opening to daylight, and from the outside appears to be of significant size. IT THEREFOR MAY CONTAIN BRECCIA SIMILAR TO THAT FOUND AT THE MOKOPAAN CAVE KNOWN AS THE CAVE OF HEARTHS.<sup>13</sup>

It is advised that a palaeontologist is asked to investigate this cave’s potential

**The site should be seen to be of high significance and treated accordingly. No demolition can be considered.**

Site 3a. The third site is the original Randstephne homestead. It contains classical ‘South African Edwardian’ features in the flanked front veranda where both flanking rooms support Cape Dutch Gables. This building is one of few remaining in the region from this period as few were originally built, and of those most were lost in the processes of ‘upgrading and modernization’.

A second phase recording is advised, and a ‘preservation’ plan must be put in place. This building and farmyard may be developed into site offices and/or accommodation for key personnel on the mine. SAHRA regulations must be adhered to.

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<sup>8</sup> Out – SPAN. Place for animal drawn carriages to stop for rest and refreshment.

<sup>9</sup> Citizen. Although this surname is of Portuguese origin, and not typical of ‘White Pioneers’ The influence of Portuguese traders on the old ZAR originated as early as 1845

<sup>10</sup> Possibly freely translated as armourer, or ‘one that fabricates ammunition’.

<sup>11</sup> Better known as the second Anglo Boer War.

<sup>12</sup> He is employed by Sandspruit Ranch Pty Ltd.

<sup>13</sup> Although not presently a ‘proclaimed site, under the National Heritage Act, Act 25 of 1999, this Act provides a blanket protection until otherwise proven. It at present legally protected under the Limpopo Environmental Act, Act no 7 of 2003.

**This building is of high significance and should be treated as such. No demolition can be considered.**

Site 3b. Closely associated with this homestead is the graveyard and former dwellings of the farm labourers that (one must assume), was the workforce of the dwelling on Randstephne. Owing to the physical nature of these dwellings they have long since disappeared, but the graves remain, and are obviously still tended to from time to time by relations.

**The dwellings will not benefit with any further attention and need not to be protected.**

The 13 (?) graves on the other hand are also protected under other laws apart from the National Heritage Act. These may be left in situ, and visiting rights may be negotiated with relations. Alternatively they may be exhumed and reburied in a formal burial site. The second alternative is advised, as the water reservoir and associated mining works close to the cemetery may create tension between the mine and the relatives of the deceased.

**The graves are of high significance and should be treated as such. Relocation is advised.**

Site 4. The rest of the sites are all related to the early nineteenth century Iron Age period<sup>14</sup> and has been treated as a collective. These include 'mines' (3?), 'smelting sites' (1), 'animal enclosures' (4?) and 'living areas' (2?). The 'group' is assumed to date from the stressful civil war period known as the Mfecane, or Defecane dating to the period of Mzilikazi, the renegade Zulu General that ruled most of the central and south 'Transvaal' circa 1800 to 1845.

The sites are individually not rare, or of outstanding quality, they are not deemed to be particularly worthy of preservation on their own. But, the information that can be retrieved from these sites as a collective is of special importance, as it has not yet been done so in the past by archaeologists in the region.

It is suggested that a full second phase study is undertaken to record and possibly date the sites through the carbon fourteen dating process. After such recording it will be possible to acquire demolition permits for the individual sites.

**Although the sites are individually of low significance, the collective is worthy of research. Only if such research is completed may demolition be considered.**

Site 5. The last subjects are the weir and bridge over the Sondagsrivier, possibly dating to circa 1940 and 1960. Owing to 'progress' South Africa is fast losing these type of structures that had in fact opened the 'frontiers for 'development'

Although the two structures are individually of low significance, the collective is worthy elevating them to medium significance.

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<sup>14</sup> Generally when societies are not under stress they tend to live on lower lying areas on relative flat terrain close to permanent water. When people, like in this instance, live several hundred meters above 'normal' levels of occupation it is an indicator of a serious threat to life and community



They have been included in this study for the possible event of the need of a new road to transport the iron ore.

**The structures are of medium significance and, if possible, demolition should be avoided.**

### **SUMMARY**

It is suggested that second phase work is undertaken on all the sites save the Pereira grave. Owing to the complexity of the archaeology, as well as the present position in the 'start- up' of the mine, it is suggested to set up a meeting to discuss possible mitigation solution, bearing in mind the national importance of the proposed iron ore Mine.



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**CONTACT DETAILS.**

**1 OWNERS DETAILS**

FARMS	NAME	TEL	E-MAIL
DONKERPOORT 448 KQ			
RANDSEPHHE 455			
WATERVAL 443			

**2 DEVELOPERS**

**AQUILA RESOURCES, Aquila Steel (S Africa) (Proprietary) (Limited)**  
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Fax (27) .....  
e-mail .....

**4. TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT**

**Mining**

**5. ZONING OF SITE**

**Farming**

**6. DESCRIPTION OF FARM**

See figure below

**7. GPS COORDINATES**

See figure below



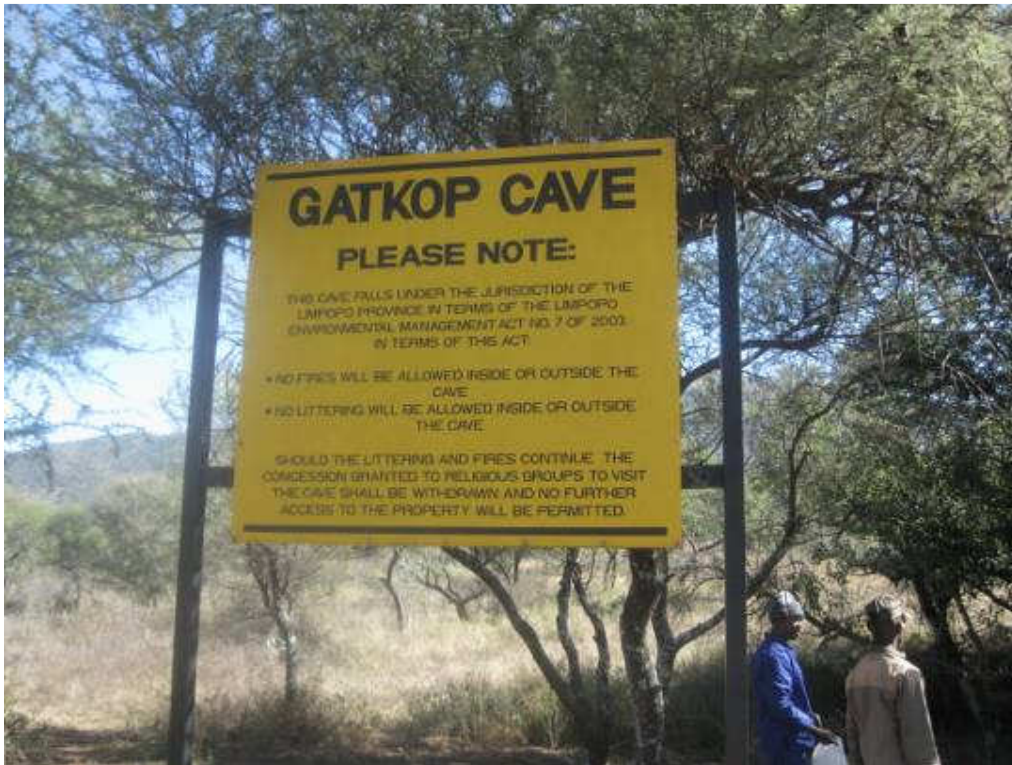
**SITE 1. PERREIRA GRAVE. (24 37 03, 1 South and 27 36 22, 4 East)**



*Figures 4 and 5. This gravestone claims that one J.H. TO Perriera, Kruitmaker from 1881 ZAR, was murdered here in 1901.*



**SITE 2. GATKOP CAVE. (24 37 04, 6 South and 27 39 08, 4 East)**



*Figures 6 and 7. These notices proclaim the rights of visitors to the site, and conditions that visitors must comply to, to visit the site. Note that the site is also protected by the Limpopo Environmental Act, Act 7 of 2003.*



*Figure 8. A fairly ancient notice erected by the Magistrate of 'Warmbad' (now Bela Bela) warns of the presence of 'grotkoors', an illness resulting from inhalation of miasma from bat guano.*



*Figure 9. The entrance to Gatkop shelter is fairly reminiscent to that of the original Sterkfontein Cave Entrance and should therefore seriously be considered as a potential breccia bearing site.*





*Figure 10. In front of the cave there is evidence of the continuous use of the site as a psychological point of access to the world of ancestral worship. In the view of the researcher this is one of the most vigorously utilised sites observed by him where the issue of ‘creation myths’ are concerned.*



*Figure 11. Four of the informants, Elias, Tiaan, Sello and Jeremiah are here captured in front of the shelter. Thomas Mothloki, the informal curator does not appear in the photograph.*

**SITE 3a. RANDSTEPHNE HOMESTEAD. (24 35 51, 9 S and 27 40 17, 8 E)**



*Figure 12. The south western Cape Dutch Gable of the 1920's period farmhouse.*



*Figure 13. This plaque proclaims that the building is presently well cared for by its proprietor. It is also a reminder that no demolition by neglect will be tolerated if the property is turned over to the mining company. It is rather hoped that the same care and use of the building will be applied in the future.*



*Figures 14 and 15. Detail of the Randstephne homestead's northern elevation and the front staircase.*



**SITE 3b. LABOURERS CEMETRY. (24 35 53, 8 S and 27 40 36, 3 E)**



*Figures 16 and 17. Detail of the Randstephne labourers cemetery. It is still a place of remembrance according to the care taken of the graves.*

**SITE 4a. CATTLE ENCLOSURE 1. (24 37 10, 1 S and 27 36, 29, 8 E)**



*Figure 18. This is a part of the wall of the cattle enclosure at this site. It has a diameter of approximately 10 meters. Although apparently isolated it is part of the greater use of land by people under stress where they retain their cattle at the base of their mountain retreat so as to avoid climbing the mountain every day.*

**SITE 4b. CATTLE ENCLOSURE 2. (24 37 14, 1 S and 27 37, 13, 5 E)**



*Figure 19. This is a part of the wall of the cattle enclosure at this site. It has a diameter of approximately 10 meters. Although apparently isolated it is part of the greater use of land by people under stress where they retain their cattle at the base of their mountain retreat so as to avoid climbing the mountain every day. It is a fair copy of the enclosure at site 4a but is located at the other side of the mountain.*



**SITE 4c. CATTLE ENCLOSURE 3. (24 36 52, 0 S and 27 39, 00, 9 E)**



*Figure 20. This is a part of the wall of the cattle enclosure at this site. It has a diameter of approximately 10 meters. Although apparently isolated it is part of the greater use of land by people under stress where they retain their cattle at the base of their mountain retreat so as to avoid climbing the mountain every day. It is an fair copy of the enclosure at site 4a and 4b but is located a fair distance to the east. This may be associated with a different settlement.*



*Figure 21. A small stone structure associates with the animal enclosure at this site. Although it appears to be a 'grave' it is not though to be one. This is based on the fact that this type of marking of a grave only started after Christianisation of black people in South Africa.*

**SITE 4d. CATTLE ENCLOSURE (4 ?). (24 35 43, 2 S and 27 39, 01,5 E)**



*Figure 22. The geologists indicated that the remains of a stone structure occur in this area. Whether the above photograph represents the same site remains to be verified.*

**SITE 4e. CATTLE ENCLOSURE (5 ?). (24 35 48, 1 S and 27 39, 24, 6 E)**



*Figure 23. This is a 'new' site. Owing to the vegetation this site has to be re-examined.*



**SITE 4f. PRE COLONIAL MINE 1. (24 35 28, 4 S and 27 39, 46, 8 E)**



*Figure 24. This is a site that appears to have been a area that was exploited for ore during the pre-colonial period.*



*Figure 25. This configuration of stones are often associated with initiation sites. It is located adjacent to the mine mentioned above.*

**SITE 4g. PRE COLONIAL MINE(2 ?) (24 35 12,04 S and 27 40 22,24 E)**

*This site was pointed out by the geologists but was not visited on this occasion.*

**SITE 4h. PRE COLONIAL MINE(3 ?) . (24 35 12,09 S and 27 39 41,75 0E)**

*This site was pointed out by the geologists but was not visited on this occasion.*

**SITE 4(i) a. LIVING ENCLOSURE. (24 35 02,84 S and 27 40 04,62E)**



*Figure 26. These walls are most probably linked to those at site 4(i) b. It is possibly a small stone walled village associated with the nearby smelting activity.*



**SITE 4(i) b. LIVING ENCLOSURE. (24 34 59,43 S and 27 40 03,51 E)**



*Figure 27. These walls are most probably linked to those at site 4(i) a. It is possibly a small stone walled village associated with the nearby smelting activity.*

**SITE 4j. SMELTING SITE. (24 35 06, 1 S and 27 40 04, 97 E)**



*Figure 28. Slag and pieces of tuyere from the smelting site.*

**SITE 4k LIVING ENCLOSURE. (24 35 25, 60 S and 27 39 43, 82 E)**

*This site was pointed out by the geologists but was not visited on this occasion*

**SITE 4l. LIVING ENCLOSURE. (A number of enclosures at this point indicates the existence of a large iron age village. Owing to its position it will possibly be one of the conflict period sites of the early 1800's.)**

**15m diameter kraal 24 37 08, 01 S 27 36 54, 19 E**

**4m diameter kraal 24 37 08, 63 S 27 36 54, 70 E**

**8m diameter kraal 24 37 09, 04 S 27 36 54, 51 E**

**5m diameter kraal 24 37 11, 43 S 27 36 54, 84 E**

**6m diameter kraal 24 37 10, 69 S 27 36 57, 49 E**

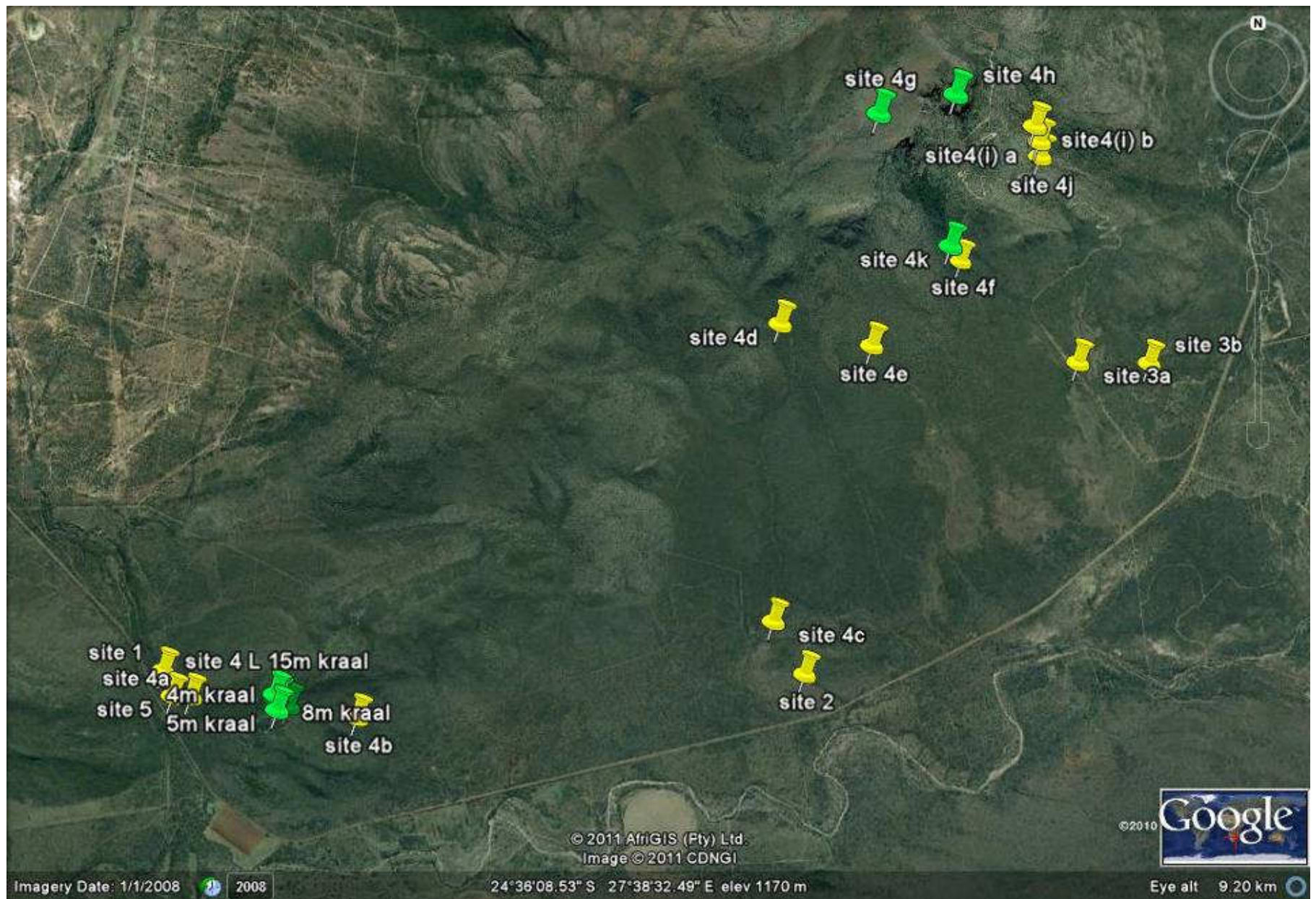
*This site was pointed out by the geologists but was not visited on this occasion.*

**SITE 5. BRIDGES. (24 37 10, 03 S and 27 36 24, 85 E)**



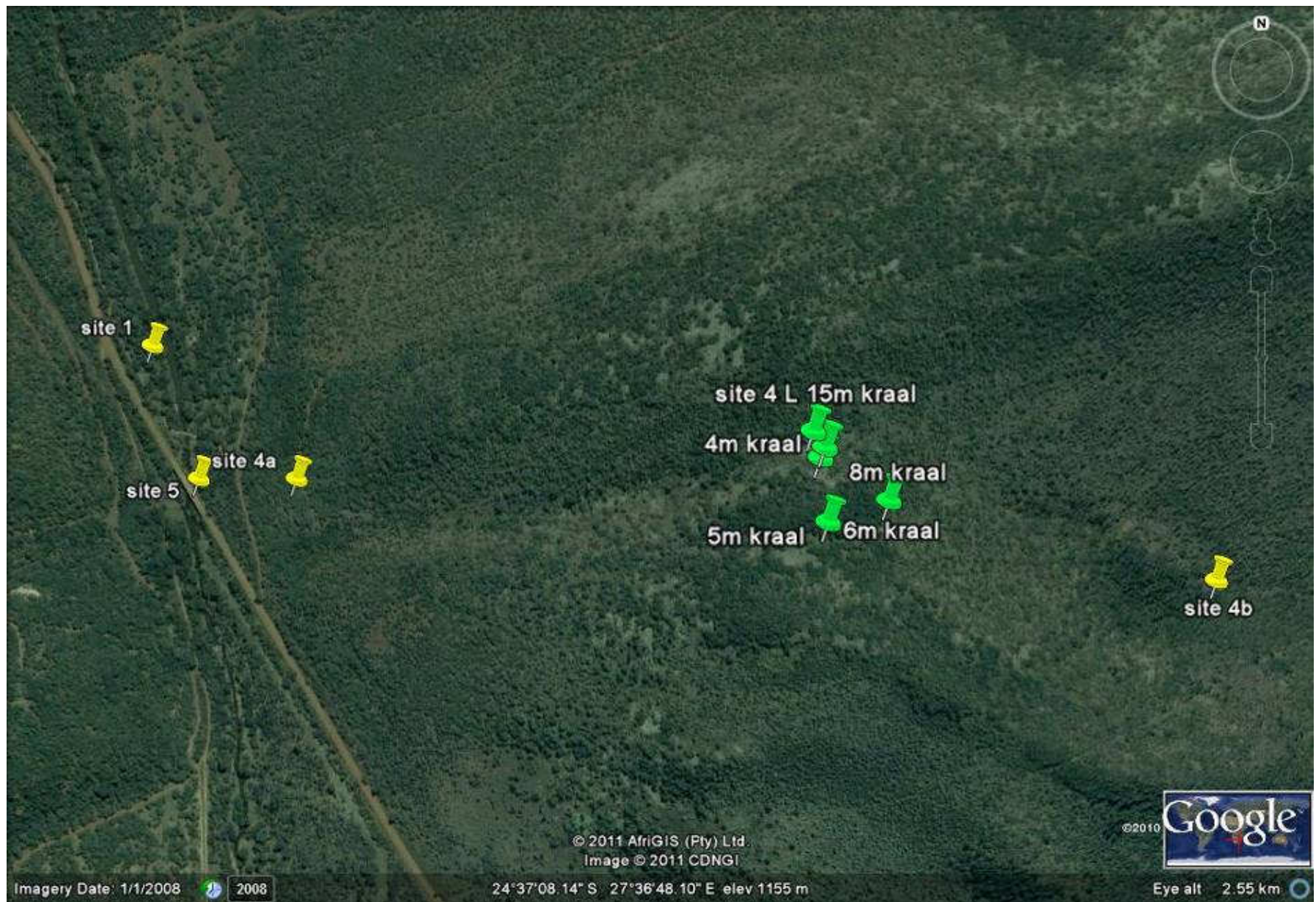
*Figure 29. The bridge and its older predecessor in this same area should be protected if new roads are considered.*





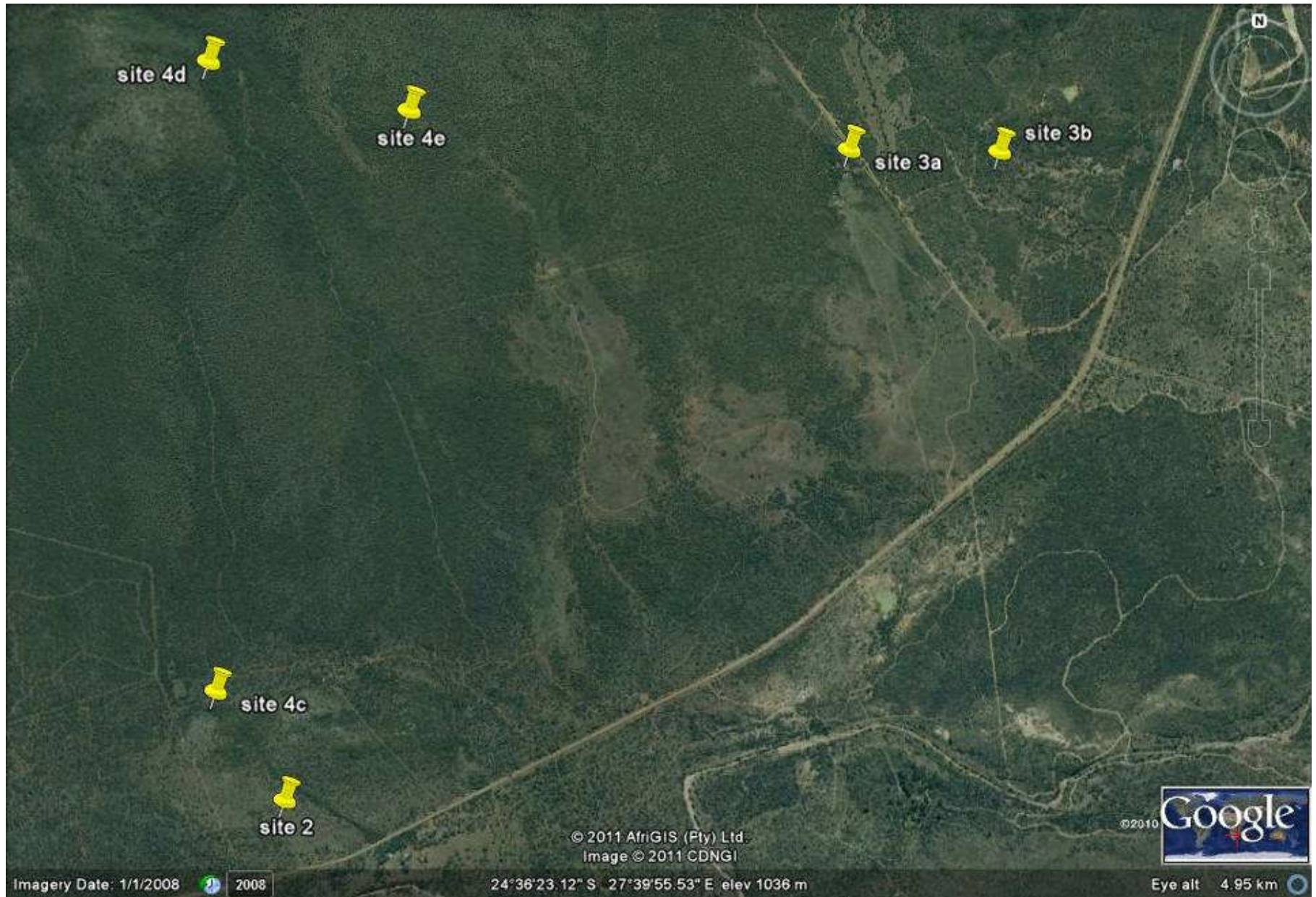
*Figure 30 Google image to show concentrations of heritage resources on the property as a whole.*





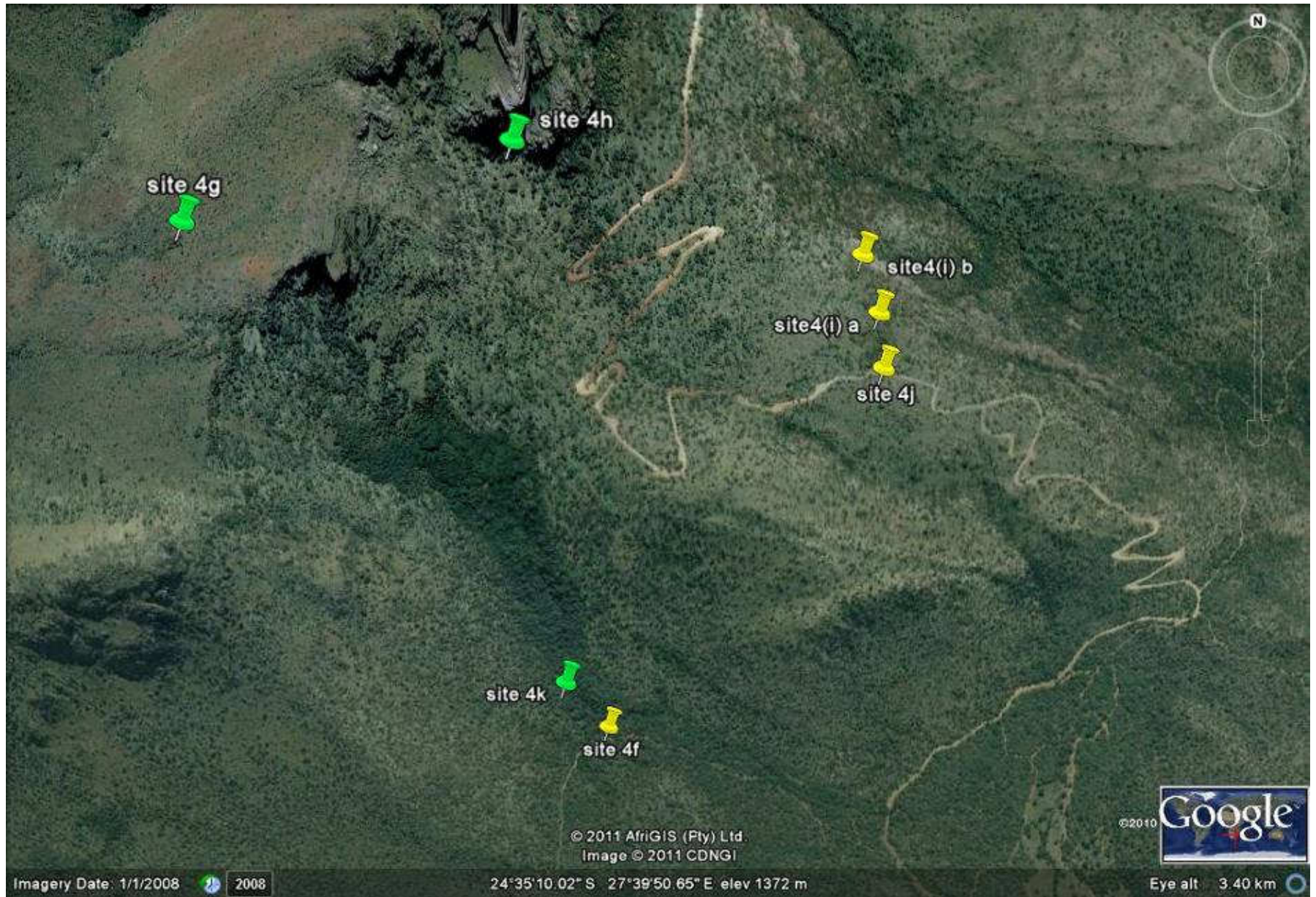
*Figure 31 Google image to show concentrations of heritage resources in the western part of the property.*





*Figure 32 Google image to show concentrations of heritage resources in the western part of the property.*





*Figure 33. 1 Google image to show concentrations of heritage resources in the western part of the property.*

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