

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR THE KLINGBIEL HOTEL PROJECT,
LYDENBURG, MPUMALANGA**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson & Associates
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Executive Summary

No sites of heritage significance occur near the Museum where the hotel is planned. Stonewalled settlements, however, stand to the north. If development extends there, these sites will require mitigation.

INTRODUCTION

Group 5, in association with the Lydenburg Town Council, intends to develop a hotel complex next to the Lydenburg Museum in the Gustaf Klingbiel Nature Reserve. The project area covers about 27ha as a thin strip extending north from the R32 past the museum to the river. The hotel itself will probably be built near the Museum.

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

The Lydenburg district is of interest to archaeologists because of the famous ‘Lydenburg Heads’ dating to the Early Iron Age (Inskeep and Maggs 1975; Evers 1982), and a specific ceramic style named after the Reserve (Evers 1980). It is also well known for the huge number of stonewalled settlements dating to the Late Iron Age (Evers and Marker 1976). In this area stonewalling belongs to the Badfontein type (Collett 1982), associated with the BaKoni (Huffman 2007). Various portions of land around the Nature Reserve have been previously investigated (Fourie and Van der Walt 2005, Huffman 2008), and they all have recorded Badfontein-type walling. A survey for development on Lydenburg Extension 38 overlapped with the present project.

METHOD

One ARM staff examined the project area on 24 February 2009. Staff surveyed the area on foot and by vehicle, paying close attention to copse of trees where walling could be expected. Sites were recorded with a hand-held GPS instrument, programmed for WGS 84. The entire area appears on the 1: 50 000 map sheet 2530AB Lydenburg (Figure 1).

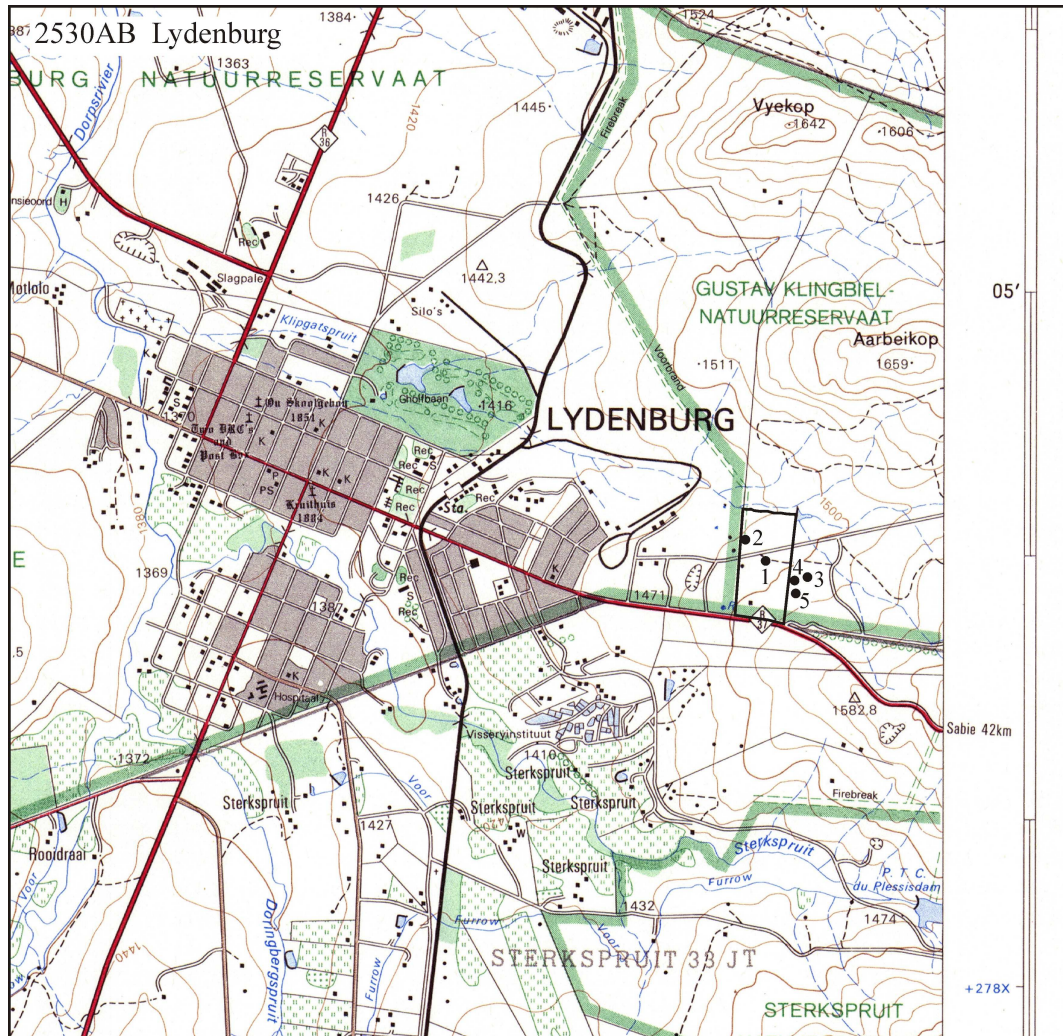


Figure 1. Location of sites in project area on the 1:50 000 map sheet 2530AB Lydenburg.

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 further work; low to medium sites may require limited mitigation, while high significance requires extensive

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

RESULTS

The project area is divided by the dirt road leading from the museum down to the river. On the west side, tall grass covers the remnants of stone walling (**Site 1**: 25 06 05S; 30 29 14.5E). This site was noted by an earlier investigation as of *low significance* because not enough remains to map.

The remains of three mud brick houses stand next to the western boundary (**Site 2**: 25 05 58.4; 30 29 09.2E). This house complex appears on the Lydenburg map, and farm labourers probably lived here until the establishment of the Reserve. It has *low significance*.

On the east side three copse of trees grow out of separate stonewalled settlements (**Site 3**: 25 06 05.4S 30 29 24.9E, **Site 4**: 25 06 06S 30 29 21.8E, **Site 5**: 25 06 09S 30 29 21.5E). They all belong to the Badfontein type. Portions of each are well preserved and enough remains to map.

One of the purposes of the Reserve is to protect heritage resources as well as wildlife. Consequently, the importance of sites inside is greater than it would be for the same resource outside. For this extra reason **Sites 3-5** have *high significance*.

There may well be more walling in between the copses, but tall grass obscures the ground. There are no sites near the museum inside the project area (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Proposed hotel site in foreground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If the hotel is built near the Museum as planned, mitigation is not required. If on the other hand, development extends further north and **Sites 3-5** are endangered, mitigation measures will be required. At the least, the endangered ruins must be mapped. In terms of research, there is a question whether the houses were the Nguni or Sotho-Tswana type. Therefore a house area needs to be excavated in each site.

Furthermore, if development extends north, the area in between **Site 3-5** needs to be re-examined in the winter when the grass is low.

From a heritage perspective, it would be better to build the hotel near the Museum.

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