

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR NEEDWOOD EXTENSION 5

A Phase-1 report submitted to Rob Taylor and Associates for ABSA Property Development (Pty) Ltd

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DEFINITIONS

Archaeological

Material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in, or on, land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains, and artificial features and structures.

Grave

A place of interment, including the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place.

Historic

Material remains resulting from human activity which are younger than 100 years, but no longer in use, including artefacts, human remains and artificial features and structures.

In Situ material

Material culture and surrounding deposits in their original location and context, for example a site that has not been disturbed by farming.

Later Stone Age (LSA)

Material remains resulting from human activity from ca 25 000 years ago onwards. This period is associated with *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The material culture from this period includes: microlithic stone tools; bone and wooden tools; personal ornamentation, such as beads and pendants made of ostrich eggshell, shells, ivory, wood and bone; rock art and formal burials.

Middle Stone Age (MSA)

Material remains resulting from human activity from ca 250 000 to 25 000 years ago. The MSA is associated first with archaic *Homo sapiens* and later *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Material culture includes stone tools with prepared platforms and stone tools attached to wooden handles. Some of these hafted tools were used as spears for hunting.

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INTRODUCTION

ABSA Property Development (Pty) Ltd intends to develop a new township, Needwood Extension 5, on the remainder Portion 4 of the farm Witkoppen 194 IQ.

Rob Taylor and Associates, who are conducting the scoping study, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM), to survey the area for sites of archaeological and heritage interest, especially graves.

METHOD

Two ARM staff visited the area on 10 December 2001 and then traversed it on foot. Sites were recorded with a GPS instrument, and then transferred to the 1:50 000 map 2627BB Roodepoort (Figure 1).

RESULTS

Witkoppen 194 IQ, has been subdivided into farm portions. Large portions have been disturbed by trenches, dirt roads and soil mounds. It was nevertheless possible to survey the project area.

Stone Age

LSA/MSA stone tools lay scattered over most of the area. Five dense clusters

(26 00 18.9S 27 58 35.4E, 26 00 18S 27 58 35.4E, 26 00 28.2S 27 58 16.3E,

26 00 28.5S 27 58 15.2E and 26 00 43.2S 27 58 27E) were located on the surface near quartz outcrops.

The team collected representative samples. No diagnostic tools were found, and the clusters could not be classified.

Significance

- The stone tool clusters have no archaeological significance.

Historic Period

Remains of several historic houses stand on the southern side of the proposed development area. Two different structure types are represented.

Rectangular ruins made from brick and cement mark the old European homestead (26 00 42.1S 27 58 36.2E and 26 00 45.7S 27 58 35E). This homestead was already a ruin by the time of the 1983 edition of 2627BB Roodepoort.

African workers lived in the second type, made from daga (a mixture of mud and dung). A cluster lies down slope from the European homestead, for example at 26 00 45.7S 27 58 28.1 E, 26 00 48.6S 27 58 30.3 E, 26 00 45.4 S 27 58 28.1 E, 26 00 46.3S 27 58 27.8 E and 26 00 45.5S 27 58 27E. A number of rectangular cement floors are also part of this cluster eg. 26 00 48.6S 27 58 30.2E and 26 00 47.4S 27 58 30.3E.

A separate rectangular foundation was found at 26 00 24.8S 27 58 32.8E. The foundation was built with granite and ferricrete.

Significance

- The historic ruins might have low local historical significance.

Graves and Stone Mounds

The European cemetery associated with the homestead stands at 26 00 41S 27 58 20E on the western portion of the development area. A fenced area contains three inscribed headstones: MMM Steyn (23/7/1900 – 14/4/ 1978), JPH Steyn (8/5/1897 – 17/7/1965) and JD Venter (14/2/1937 – 5/7/1992).

Another cemetery associated with African labourers is located on the border of the Cedar Lakes property (26 00 21.5S 27 58 44.3E). The graves are marked by mounds of ferricrete, and none has an inscribed headstone. The Cedar Lakes fence goes around this cemetery, and the graves may not be inside the proposed township area. A few other mounds inside the project area may be graves: two ferricrete mounds are close to the African cemetery (26 00 20.8S 27 58 42.5S and 26 00 20.3 27S 58 42.2E) and one mound (not marked by ferricrete) stands alone (26 00 18S 27 58 35.4E).

A large circular stone mound (26 00 21.1S 27 58 43E) was found near the fenced off cemetery on the border between the study area and Cedar Lakes.

Significance

- The two cemeteries are culturally significant.
- The significance of the stone mounds have not been established. They could be mounds created as a result of clearing the area or they could be graves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed township area is devoid of significant archaeological sites, and consequently mitigation is not needed.

The graves, however, require mitigation. If possible, the development should avoid the cemeteries. If avoidance is not possible, then the graves must be relocated by specialists in terms of existing legislation.

Two sets of legislation protect human burials: the Human Tissues Act (Act No 65 of 1983) and the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999). The former applies to graves younger than sixty years, whereas the latter protects graves in formal cemeteries older than a hundred years, graves outside formal cemeteries older than sixty years, as well as graves of cultural significance or victims of conflict.

Both Acts establish the steps to follow before remains are removed. These include:

- notification of the impending removals;
- consultation with individuals or communities related to the deceased;
- calling on relatives to claim the remains;
- notices at the grave sites;
- satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment.

Finally the South African Heritage Resources Agency should be notified if human remains falling under the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999) are uncovered during development.

Exhumations conducted under this Act must be supervised by an archaeologist. The removal must be conducted with due respect for the customs and beliefs of the affected relatives, and where requested, in the presence of relatives or community representatives (Appendix 1 and 2).

With these constraints, there is no archaeological reason why the project should not proceed.