

Archaeological Survey of Somkele Mine

For Groundwater Consulting Services

By

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Introduction

The Institute for Cultural Resource Management was contracted by Groundwater Consulting Services to undertake an archaeological survey of the area to be affected by the Somkele Mine. This area included the open mining area, drilling areas, and mining plant site itself. Archaeological sites have been previously recorded in the vicinity of the mine suggesting that the area had archaeological potential.

No archaeological sites *per se* were recorded, however, isolated scatters of sherds and/or stone tools were observed – these did not constitute an archaeological site.

No further archaeological mitigation would be required for the Somkele Mine provided that

Methodology

The affected area is as defined by the topographical maps supplied by Groundwater Consulting Services.

All sites have been grouped according to low, medium and high significance for the purpose of this report. Sites of low significance have no diagnostic artefacts, especially pottery. Sites of medium significance have diagnostic artefacts and these are sampled. Sampling includes the collection of artefacts for future analysis. All diagnostic pottery, such as rims, lips and decorated sherds are sampled, while bone, stone and shell are mostly noted. Sampling usually occurs on most sites. Sites of high significance are excavated or extensively sampled. The sites that are extensively sampled have high research potential, yet poor preservation of features. I attempt to recover as many artefacts from these sites by means of systematic sampling, as opposed to sampling diagnostic artefacts only.

Significance is generally determined by several factors. However, in this survey, a wider definition of significance is adopted since the aim of the survey is to gather as much information as possible from every site. This strategy allows for an analysis of every site in some detail, without resorting to excavation.

Defining significance

Archaeological sites vary according to significance and several different criteria relate to each type of site. However, several criteria allow for a general significance rating of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

1. State of preservation of:

- Organic remains:
 - Faunal
 - Botanical
- Rock art
- Walling

- Presence of a cultural deposit
- Features:
 - Ash Features
 - Graves
 - Middens
 - Cattle byres
 - Bedding and ash complexes

2. Spatial arrangements:

- Internal housing arrangements
- Intra-site settlement patterns
- Inter-site settlement patterns

3. Features of the site:

- Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts or images at the site?
- Is it a type site?
- Does the site have a very good example of a specific period, feature, or artefact?

4. Research:

- Providing information on current research projects
- Salvaging information for potential future research projects

5. Inter- and intra-site variability

- Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between various features and artefacts?
- Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities?

6. Archaeological Experience:

- The personal experience and expertise of the CRM practitioner should not be ignored. Experience can indicate sites that have potentially significant aspects, but need to be tested prior to any conclusions.

7. Educational:

- Does the site have the potential to be used as an educational instrument?
- Does the site have the potential to become a tourist attraction?
- The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

The more a site can fulfill the above criteria, the more significant it becomes. Test-pit excavations are used to test the full potential of an archaeological deposit. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of significance. Sites may also be mapped and/or have artefacts sampled as a form of mitigation. Sampling normally occurs when the artefacts may be good examples of their type, but are not in a primary archaeological context. Mapping records the spatial relationship between features and artefacts.

Archaeological sites

No archaeological sites *per se* were recorded in the proposed mining area. Two scatters of artefacts and isolated artefacts were noted in the affected area.

The first scatter of artefacts are pottery sherds in front of the Sizanani Tea Room. The sherds are a red-brown colour and thin-walled construction. These sherds are in a secondary context and are of low significance. No further mitigation is required.

The second scatter of artefacts occurs in front of an agricultural field near the Sizanani Tea Room. This scatter consists of three Middle Stone Age stone tools. These are in a secondary context. No further mitigation is required.

Historical/Cultural Sites

The area appears to be mostly recently occupied by humans - recent refers to 20th century. Many old and current homesteads were observed and these have associated graves. It is not the scope of the archaeological study to assess the recent graves. I would, however, recommend that a social impact study is undertaken to determine ownership of the graves that may be affected by the proposed mining, and thus determine the mitigation required for each/all graves. The locations of these graves are available on request.

Various legislative Acts Human protect human graves and the mining company will need to mitigate for these graves.

Conclusions

The archaeological survey at the proposed Somkele mining area did not record any significant archaeological sites. Several human graves were observed during the survey, however, these do not form part of the archaeological component and need to be treated separately.