

*FINAL PROGRESS REPORT*  
**RELOCATION OF ROOIDRAAI ROCK ENGRAVING RDR 8,  
ON THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 7 OF THE FARM ROOIDRAAI 34 JT,  
MASHISHING (LYDENBURG), MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

**REPORT COMPILED FOR**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In terms of section 35(4) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999), a permit (PermitID: 1669, CaseID 4602), was granted to Ms. C. Van Wyk Rowe on 15 April 2014 for the relocation of the Roodraai rock engraving (RDR 8) at Lydenburg / Mashishing.

The relocation of the rock engraving took place on 23 April 2014 under the conditions as stipulated on the permit by the issuing agency (SAHRA), by the permit holder.

A full photographic recording as well as sketch plans were done to document the entire process of the relocation (Appendix 1).

The rock engraving is now at the Lydenburg Museum which will in due course incorporate it as part of the display inside the building.

**A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE PROJECT**

An archaeological scoping assessment was conducted in 2006 on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34 JT, on the outskirts of the town Lydenburg (Mashishing), Mpumalanga. A section on the farm was earmarked for the development of the Lydenburg Mall.

- P. Birkholtz, Archaeology Africa cc, 2006: Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment for the Morning Tide Development Complex (SAHRA Arch. Ref. 9/2/236/0002);
- SAHRA review comment: 23 October 2007: The rock engraving was listed as RDR 8.

The review comment stated that “the rock engraving (RDR 8) must be preserved *in situ* and a surrounding buffer zone must be demarcated. A management plan which includes monitoring during the construction and operational phases and sustainable conservation must be compiled.”

Detail recording of the rock engraving:

- C. Van Wyk Rowe, Adansonia Heritage Consultants, August 2013: Specialist documentation report and management plan for a Late Iron Age rock engraving site

within the proposed development of the Lydenburg Mall (Morning Tide complex), on *the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34 JT*, Mashishing (Lydenburg), Mpumalanga.

Phase 2 archaeological excavations were executed in February 2014 by Anton Pelser at RDR 7, directly adjacent RDR 8 as required in the SAHRA review comments of 23 October 2007.

- A.J. Pelser, A. Pelser Archaeological Consulting, March 2014: A report on the first phase of archaeological investigations of the Late Iron Age stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Roodraai 34 JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments – sites RDR 7 and 1c, Lydenburg, Mpumalanga.

The owners / developers, Thornby Mellows One (Pty) Ltd, of the Panorama (Lydenburg) Mall, initially planned to incorporate the site as part of a feature in the development and to preserve it as a green open space. The site was fenced in with a locked gate to protect it against vandals and during the construction phase (Fig. 2).

After preparation work at the site had begun, the developers (Thornby Mellows One (Pty) Ltd), realized that the rock engraving will be negatively impacted upon and that the site will be at risk as it will be 4-6m below the surface of the parking area which will also create future water drainage problems. The developers requested permission to relocate the engraving on 9 December 2013.

- Letter: Thornby Mellows One (Pty) Ltd, to Adansonia Heritage Consultants, 9 December 2013. Request to relocate the rock engraving RDR 8 (Appendix 3);
- Motivation Letter: Adansonia Heritage Consultants to SAHRA, 12 December 2013 (Appendix 4).
- Response E-mail: Received from SAHRA (M. Galimberti), 10 February 2014.

SAHRA APMHOB permit committee requested “a rock art specialist to revisit the site to assess whether it is feasible to relocate the engraving and if it is the best option for the rock engraving itself”.

A rock art specialist Jeremy Hollmann visited the site on 7 March 2014.

- J.C. Hollmann, 7 March 2014: Report on the engraving RDR 8, Panorama shopping mall development, Lydenburg, Mpumalanga (Appendix 5).

Mr. Hollmann stated that the rock engraving was placed in a vulnerable situation because of lack of planning on behalf of the developers. It was recommended that the engraving be removed to a suitably protected area.

- A permit, SAHRA PermitID 1669, was issued to Ms. C. Van Wyk Rowe, to remove the rock engraving RDR 8 from its original position.

The Rooidraai rock engraving RDR 8, was relocated to the Lydenburg museum on 23 April 2014. Adansonia Heritage Consultants was asked to assist with the motivation, application and relocation processes. Utmost care was taken to ensure that the rock engraving was protected at all times from damage during the relocation.

The area for the proposed development is currently vacant although preparation work for the development has commenced (Fig. 1). It is zoned as residential / commercial. The small rocky outcrop where the rock engraving is situated is directly south of the new Weltevreden dirt road, east of the R36 (Lydenburg - Machadodorp road) and south of the Doringbergspruit (Map 1 & 2), and will be destroyed after the relocation of the rock engraving. Some indistinct Late Iron Age (LIA) stone and agricultural terrace walls which were possibly connected to the history of the Bokoni or Pedi groups. These walls (RDR 7) were excavated during February 2010 by Anton Pelsler, as a phase 2 requirement by SAHRA (23 October 2007), and subsequently destroyed.

This report is a final follow-up on the processes as listed above (SAHRA Case ID 4602).



Fig. 1: Arrow indicates the rock art site within the current development.



Fig. 2: Site of the rock engraving was initially fenced in with a locked gate.

## **B. Legal requirements**

The legal context of the report is grounded in the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25, 1999. The National Heritage Resources Act no. 25, 1999 (NHRA) aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Heritage is unique and it cannot be renewed, and contributes to redressing past inequities.<sup>1</sup> It promotes previously neglected research areas.

All archaeological and other cultural heritage resources are evaluated according to the NHRA, section 3(3). A place or object is considered to be part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value in terms of:

- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- (b) its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;

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<sup>1</sup>National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. p. 2.

- (e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- (f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.<sup>2</sup>

- **Section 35 of the NHRA**

Section 35 (4) of the NHRA stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object. This section may apply to any significant archaeological sites that may be discovered. In the case of such chance finds, the heritage practitioner will assist in investigating the extent and significance of the finds and consult with an archaeologist about further action. This may entail removal of material after documenting the find or mapping of larger sections before destruction.

After much deliberation and with all the necessary studies requested and executed, SAHRA issued a permit in terms of section 35(4) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999, Permit ID: 1669, CaselD 4602), to relocate the rock engraving to the Lydenburg Museum (Appendix 2).

### **C. LOCALITY**

The small rocky outcrop where the rock engraving is situated is directly south of the new Weltevreden dirt road, east of the R36 (Lydenburg - Machadodorp road) and south of the Doringbergspruit (Map 1 & 2). Some indistinct Late Iron Age (LIA) stone and agricultural terrace walls were scattered in the surrounding area (LIA - RDR 7), but were subsequently excavated and destroyed (Fig. 1), as the Panorama Mall development has already commenced. The report by archaeologist Anton Pelsler, indicated that no significant material was recovered and only undecorated potsherds and bone were found in disturbed sections. He concluded that it

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<sup>2</sup>National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. pp. 12-14

could point to the sites not having been occupied for long periods or that it was mainly agricultural sites.<sup>3</sup>

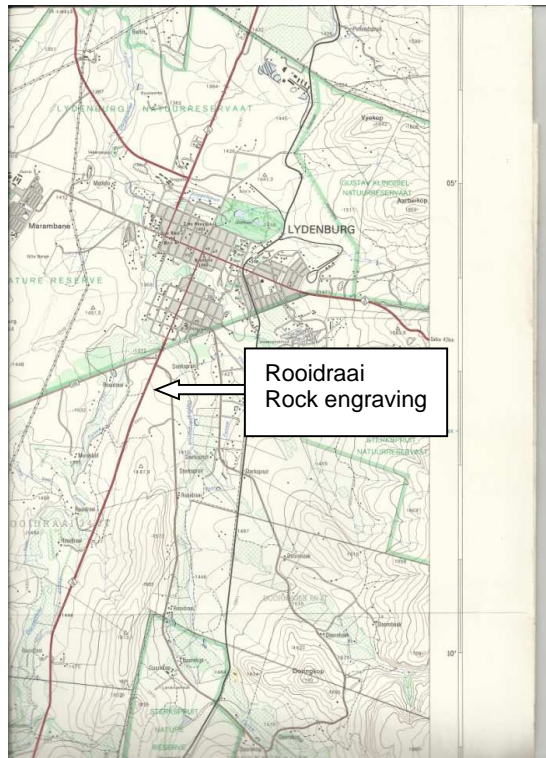


Map. 1: Locality of rock engraving site: The residential area of Lydenburg (Mashishing) is located directly north of the Doringbergspruit. The Weltevreden road was relocated (red line) as construction of Panorama Mall has covered the old road.

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<sup>3</sup> Pelsaer A.J., March 2014: A report on the first phase of archaeological investigations of the LIA stone walled sites located on portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34 JT to be impacted by commercial and residential developments – sites RDR 7 & 1c, Lydenburg, Mpumalanga p. 49.





Map 2: Topographical map 1:50 000 topographical map, 2530AB LYDENBURG.

#### D. Description and methodology:

For a full documentation of the rock engraving as well as the method of fieldwork for the initial survey, see the documentation report and management plan done in August 2013.<sup>4</sup>

- Evaluation and permission for the relocation of the rock engraving was done within the framework provided by the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 (1999), section 35(4), and permit ID 1669;
- All relevant documentation was studied as set out in section A (Background), above.
- The area was difficult to access, as preparation for the Panorama Mall had already commenced (Fig. 3).
- The fieldwork was conducted by myself with assistance from J.P. Celliers, (Lydenburg Museum), Robbie Rudman (Leasing agent, Thornby Mellows (Pty) Ltd), contractor Wessel Laatz (Fig. 22) and two helpers; The rock engraving was moved per hand but could only be transported by heavy vehicle equipment;
- Sketches were made of the north, east, south and west angles of the site before the

<sup>4</sup> C. Van Wyk Rowe, August 2013. Specialist report and management plan for a LIA rock engraving site within the proposed development of the Lydenburg Mall on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Rooidraai 34 JT Lydenburg, Mashishing, p. 11.

relocation took place (Fig. 11-14);

- A photographic record before, during and after the relocation was made and is included in the report (Fig. 7-10 & 15-32);
- Heavy vehicle equipment (TLB) was used to load and transport the engraving to the Lydenburg Museum (Fig. 27-31).
- Personal communication with relevant stakeholders on the specific study area, were held, J.P. Celliers, Anton Pelsler, Jeremy Hollmann, Robbie Rudman, Alf de la Hunt and Danie van der Walt.
- GPS: Co-ordinates of the rock engraving:

Co-ordinates		
	Latitude	Longitude
Rock engraving	S 25° 06' 56.96"	E 30° 26' 52.11"

This single rock engraving is situated on a rocky outcrop consisting of dolerite (diabase). These outcrops occur in the landscape around Lydenburg, which consists of a predominant shale nature (See Fig. 4-6).



Fig. 3: Current view of the area after construction has commenced. Access was extremely difficult.

#### **E. RELOCATION OF THE ROCK ENGRAVING**

The single engraving was situated on a small rocky outcrop consisting of dolerite (diabase), of originally approximately 50<sup>2</sup> in size. A buffer zone of 5m surrounding the engraving was kept open and fenced in (Fig. 2). The engraving was done on a single large rock which measured

1450mm in length, 300mm at the top (east) end, 550mm in the middle section at its base (west). It lied at an angle of 10°. It appears as if a piece of the rock was broken off but no loose pieces of the same rock could be linked to the above. The rock engraving consists of 11 distinct segments, and possibly two or three indistinct segments. It is not currently clear if it resembles a LIA settlement layout plan associated with the nearby indistinct stone walls.

Dolerite and diabase have a very dark weathered outer skin or patina. When parts of this are removed a strong contrast with the heart material results.<sup>5</sup> The rock engraving of Rooidraai (RDR 8) was done by pecking the patina away with another stone. The freshly engraved surface weathers, forming a patina of its own which after many years approaches that of the original surface, thus making some engravings very difficult to see.<sup>6</sup> This is clearly the case with the Rooidraai engraving (Fig 4, 5 & 6).



Fig. 4: RDR 8, The Rooidraai rock engraving. The patina resembles that of the natural rock.

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<sup>5</sup> Dowson, T., *The rock engravings of southern Africa*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Dowson, T., *The rock engravings of southern Africa*, p. 1.

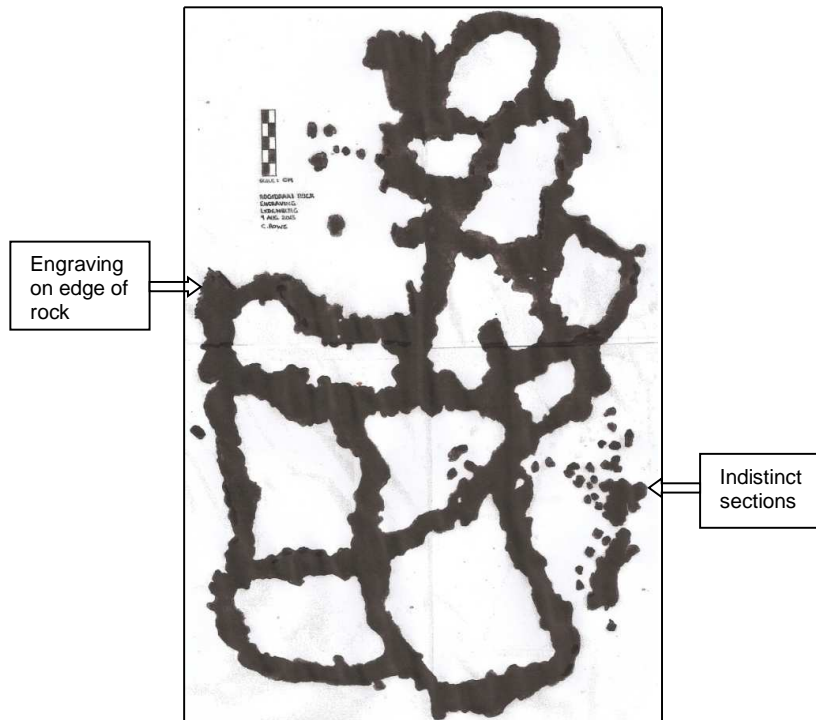


Fig. 5: Rock engraving RDR 8, Roodraai.



Fig. 6: The loose dolerite stone with the rock engraving. The arrow indicates the edge of the stone where a piece has broken off. The engraving might have continued further.

Before the relocation took place the site was documented by pen and ink scale drawings of the north, south, east and west angles, indicating the location of the rock engraving by solid black



coloring in the remaining section of the outcrop. Accurate recording of the engraving and the relocation was made and photographs of the remaining outcrop are also included as panoramic views, below.



Fig. 7: Panoramic view of the rock engraving before removal as taken from the east, facing west.



Fig. 8: Panoramic view of the engraving taken from the west, facing east.



Fig. 9: The view from the north, facing south.



Fig. 10: The view from the south facing north was taken from a slightly elevated angle, as a ground level perspective was not possible.

Three helpers tested the weight of the rock engraving and realized that it is possible to move it manually from its original position (Fig. 22-23). It was lifted up and then moved onto a plastic



palet (Fig. 23-25). The entire rock with the engraving was covered with a blanket to protect it from any scratch marks (Fig. 26).

A TLB was the only heavy vehicle that could enter the area to reach the engraving which was now located in the middle of construction activities for the Panorama Mall development (Fig. 1). The rock engraving was slightly elevated which made the entrance of the TLB easier (Fig. 27). It was then manually moved into the TLB (Fig. 27-30), and transported for approximately 5km on a tarred road to the Lydenburg Museum (Fig. 31).

The rock engraving was temporarily positioned close to the Museum entrance (Fig. 32). J.P. Celliers, curator of the Lydenburg Museum is planning to exhibit the rock engraving inside the museum. All relevant site record forms were lodged with the Lydenburg Museum (See documentation report and management plan, August 2013).<sup>7</sup> The Lydenburg museum accessioned the rock engraving as part of their museum collection (Appendix 6).

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<sup>7</sup> C. Van Wyk Rowe, August 2013. Specialist report and management plan for a LIA rock engraving site within the proposed development of the Lydenburg Mall on the remainder of portion 7 of the farm Rooddraai 34 JT Lydenburg, Mashishing.

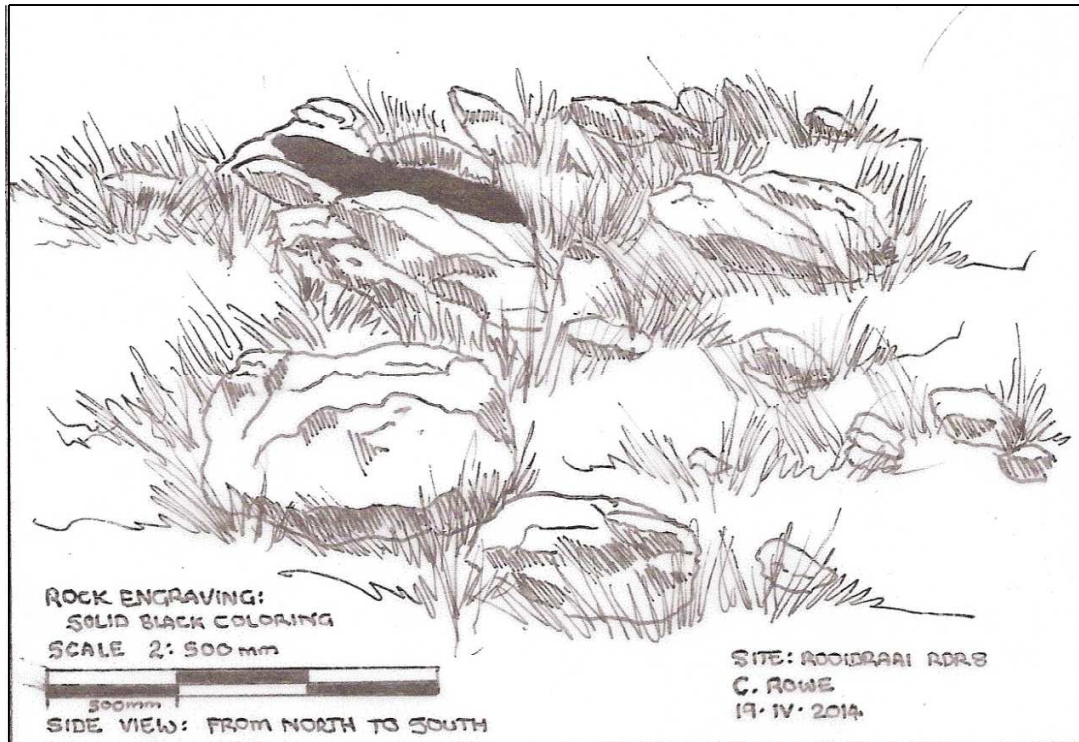


Fig. 11: View from north facing east. The position of the rock engraving is indicated in black. The engraving is at a 10° angle.

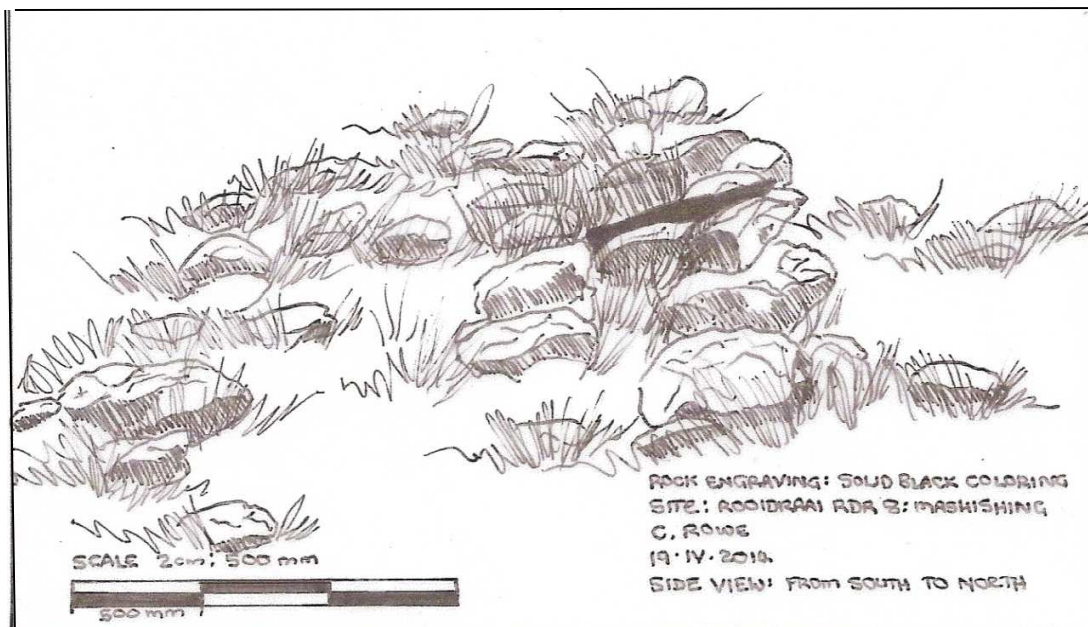


Fig. 12: View from south facing north. The position of the rock engraving is indicated in black.



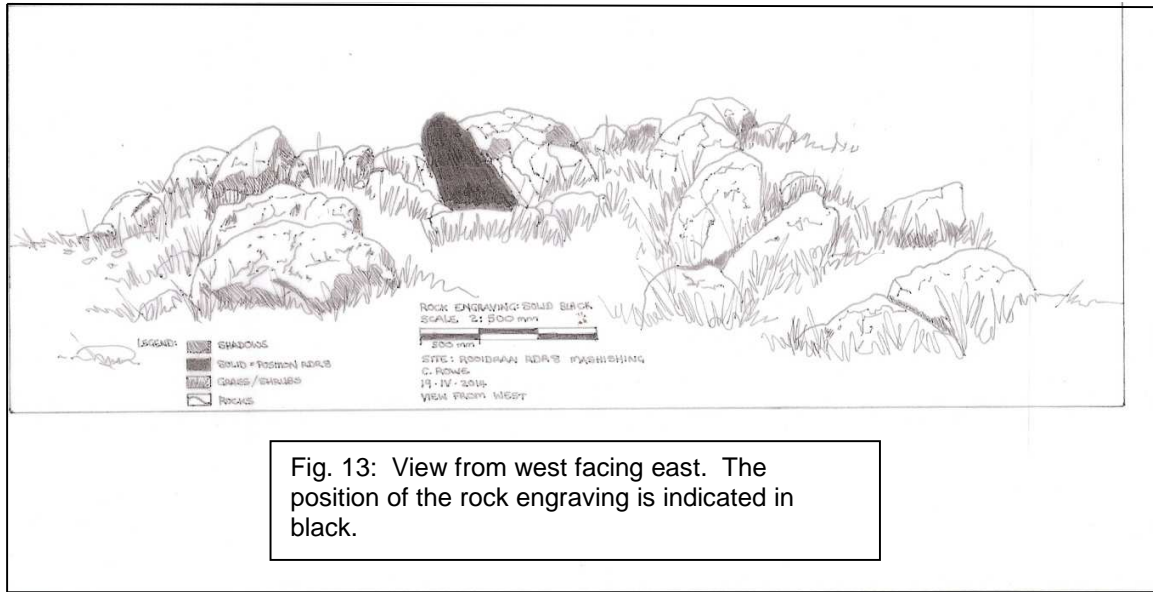


Fig. 13: View from west facing east. The position of the rock engraving is indicated in black.

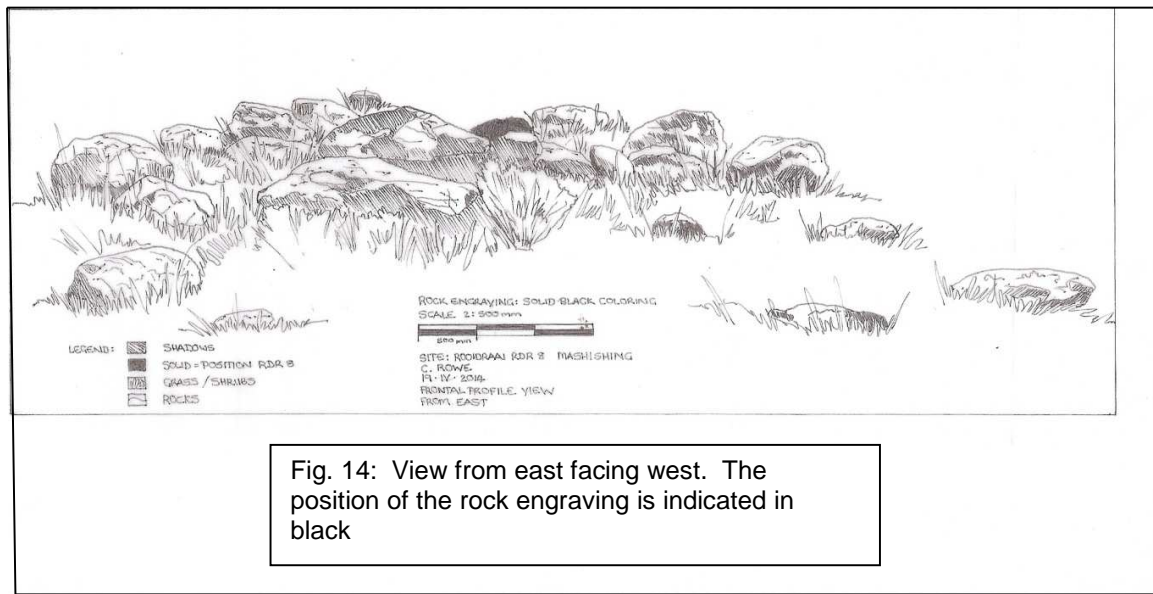


Fig. 14: View from east facing west. The position of the rock engraving is indicated in black

## F. CONCLUSION

The rock engraving, Roodraai RDR 8 was relocated to the Lydenburg Museum on 23 April 2014 under the SAHRA permit ID 1669. All conditions of the permit were adhered to and the rock engraving now forms part of the collection of the Lydenburg Museum. Although the relocation process was not initially planned, it was found that the engraving was at risk and was no longer secure in its original location. Relocation became the only option for its future protection.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants cannot be held responsible for any damages or losses experienced during the project.

## **G. REFERENCES**

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### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- Mr. R. Rudman, March / April 2014.
- Mr. A. de la Hunt, 09-08-2013, 2014.
- Mr. D. van der Walt, 09-08-2013, 2014.
- Mr. A. Pelsler, April 2014.
- Mr. J.P. Celliers, April 2014.

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Mr. W. Laatz: Contruction company, For assistance during the project;

Mr. J.P. Celliers and the Lydenburg Museum for assistance during the project, organizing the TLB and consent to house the rock engraving at the Lydenburg Museum.

Mr. A. Pelsler and J. Hollman for providing valuable discussions.

Two black helpers who assisted with moving the rock engraving.