
**PHASE 1 HERITAGE RESOURCE IMPACT
ASSESSMENT
(SCOPING & EVALUATION)**

**Proposed Mining Development
on the Farm Groothoek 256 KT, Ga-Maroga,
Limpopo Province**

For: Mr T Ngonyama
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INTRODUCTION

The archaeologist was contacted by Mr T Ngonyama of Absolute Bliss Investments to undertake a Phase 1 Heritage Resources Impact Assessment of the proposed mining development at Ga-Maroga on the farm Groothoek 256 KT. A meeting took place on site (January 12, 2015), between two archaeologists, the manager, Mr P Ngonyama and an informant, Mr S Leseneya, who also is the Community Liaison Officer.

At least 11 graves were identified. The remains from all the graves have to be exhumed and relocated before mining operations can continue. Extensive earth removal is already in progress, surrounding the site (*see figures 01 and 02*), with the cemetery clearly demarcated and still intact, forming an island amidst the present earth removal.

In compliance with the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA – Act No 25 of 1999 – *see the attachment*), the applicant approached the archaeologist for a Phase I assessment of the graves with the aim to relocate them. This survey forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.



Figure 1. This photograph, taken from the south-western side of the cemetery, clearly shows the demarcated cemetery (the only undisturbed landscape in the image) and the progress of mining operations. Part of Moretha township is visible in the background. Apparently the old homestead was located immediately above and uphill from the cemetery (indicated by the arrow).



Figure 2. The south-eastern view of the cemetery with Moretha village in the background. The graves are indicated: Grave 01 – its fencing is clearly seen; Graves 02 & 03 are just behind the tree; Grave 04 is located downhill from the tree (behind the American agave, *Agave americana*); Grave 05 is located in an open area between the trees and behind the agave; Graves 06, 07 and 08 are all located in the grassy area behind the agave; Grave 11 is that of a child and clearly seen in the image.



Figure 3. The north-eastern view of the cemetery, in which the current extent of the ground removal operations are visible. All work on site has halted, awaiting the removal of the graves.

METHODOLOGY

A survey of the demarcated area was undertaken on foot during which standard methods of observation were applied. A Garmin Nüvi was used for recording the coordinates of each grave, and all possible graves have been photographed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TERRAIN

The proposed development area is on the outskirts of Moretha township (see figure 4) Previous earth removal and dumping on the site is evident in the demarcated area, attested by some earthen mounds.



Figure 4. Google Earth image, showing the location of the cemetery in relation to Moretha. The general coordinates of the cemetery is S24°32'10.03" E30°08'10.80". Each grave's location is indicated separately under its description below.



Figure 5. A closer view of the cemetery. The graves are arranged along the perimeter wall, which is still clearly seen, particularly between Graves 01, 05 and 09 and 10 (see figures 8-10).

Grave 01

Coordinates: S24°32'09.7" E30°08'11.0".

An old granite headstone, imbedded in concrete marks this grave. The name of the deceased, Phaladi Maroga, is engraved on its face. The grave is rudimentarily fenced in by barbed wire. The remains of the cemetery perimeter wall stretches from immediately in front of the grave to both left and right sides.



Figure 6 and 7. The dilapidated fence is clearly seen, with detail of the headstone at right.



Figure 8. The remains of the perimeter wall are seen to the left (in an eastern direction) of the grave (facing it), with a single remaining row.



Figure 9. The double row stones represent the thick perimeter wall to the right of the grave (facing it). View from the grave in a westerly direction (towards Graves 05 and 04).



Figure 10. Another photograph showing the close proximity of Grave 01 and the perimeter wall. The view is from west to east.



Figure 11. These graves are on the verge where the earth works had stopped. Their positions are thought to be in the vicinity of the black bag under the tree.

Graves 02 & 03

Coordinates: S24°32'09.9"
E30°08'09.7"

The informant, Samson Leseneya, also Community Liaison Officer, indicated this area as the location of two graves, but due to the lack of any surface signs such as headstones or stones demarcating a burial, was not sure of the exact location. However, he remembers the two graves marked by the tree, for he would often rest there on his way to or from school.

Grave 04

Coordinates: S24°32'09.6" E30°08'09.9"

This grave was also indicated by the informant, although he was not sure of its exact location. He remembers the grave to be close to the Buffalo-thorn (*Ziziphus mucronata*). No indication of a grave is visible.



Figure 12. The grave is believed to be close to the tree basis.

Grave 05

Coordinates: S24°32'09.4" E30°08'10.4"

The grave consists of a modern granite headstone, a bed of white marble chips and granite and is surrounded by well tended steel fencing. The face of the headstone is engraved with the following words:

MORETHE

SERIBANE

P 15-09-1888

> 12-03-1933

ROBALA

KA KHUTSO

MOREMADI

The informant also mentioned a dispute between two families claiming ownership of the grave. According to one group, the deceased is male, while the other group insists that it is female.

The skeletal analysis of the remains will resolve this family dispute.



Figure 13 and 14. The grave and engraved detail on the granite headstone.



Figure 15. The location of Grave 05 in an open area.

Graves 06, 07 and 08

Coordinates: S24°32'10.7" E30°08'11.9"

Two of the graves apparently are located in close vicinity of the agaves, while the third is indicated by a boulder. No other features, such as delineation of graves by means of smaller boulders/stones, are visible.



Figure 16. The three graves apparently are all grouped in this open, grassy area. The informant was not sure of the exact location. No features could be detected on the surface. At least one of the boulders (encircled in red) could possibly be a grave, for it is set in an upright position into the earth. The other boulders in the image all lay on the surface, which represents relative recent activity.

Graves 09 and 10

Coordinates: S24°32'10.2" E30°08'11.4"

The surnames of the two deceased buried under the marula tree (*Sclerocarya birrea*) are respectively Maepa and Maroga. There is no visible surface identification of the graves.



Figure 17. According to the informant (in the foreground), the probable location of the two graves, respectively of Maepa and Maroga, are indicated by the red circles.

Grave 11

Coordinates: S24°32'10.50" E30°08'11.70"

The small grave of a child is clearly indicated by a boulder which serves as headstone, while the rest of the grave is delineated by smaller boulders/stones.



Figure 18. Compared to the 0.5 m measure in the image, this is the small grave of a child.

DISCUSSION

Only three of the 11 graves are clearly marked, with the possible location of a fourth grave known.

All the graves are older than 60 years and therefore fall under the jurisdiction of the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999 as well as the Human Tissues Act, 1983.

RECOMMENDATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

All the graves are to be exhumed and relocated before any other work on site can continue. Location of the graves which are not clearly marked should be determined by excavating test trenches.

The archaeologist will apply for an excavation permit from SAHRA, accompanied by the following documents:

- Consent forms/letters from the family/families for the excavation and relocation of the graves;
- Consent from the traditional authority for the relocation of the graves, and as land owner, also permission to undertake the relocation on their property;
- Place of reburial – confirmed by the traditional authority.



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ATTACHMENT

The **National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA - Act No. 25 of 1999)** protects all structures and features older than 60 years (**Section 34**), archaeological sites and material (**Section 35**) and graves and burial sites (**Section 36**).

In terms of the act, the following is of relevance:

Historical remains

Section 34(1) No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

Archaeological remains

Section 35.(3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Section 35(4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite.

Burial grounds and graves

Section 36 (3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, alter, exhumate, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- (b) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in detection or recovery of metals.

Section 36 (6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and
- (b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

Culture resource management

Section 38(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development* ...

must at the very earliest stages of initiating such development notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.

***‘development’** means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of the heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including-

- (a) construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- (b) carry out any works on or over or under a place*;
 - (e) any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land, and
- (f) any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

****‘place’** means a site, area or region, a building or other structure* ...

****‘structure’** means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to the ground, ...

TERMINOLOGY

Early Stone Age:	Predominantly the Acheulean hand axe industry complex dating to + 1Myr yrs – 250 000 yrs before present.
Middle Stone Age:	Various lithic industries in SA dating from ± 250 000 yr - 30 000 yrs before present.
Late Stone Age:	The period from ± 30 000-yr to contact period with either Iron Age farmers or European colonists.
Early Iron Age:	Most of the first millennium AD.
Middle Iron Age:	10 th to 13 th centuries AD.
Late Iron Age:	14 th century to colonial period. <i>The entire Iron Age represents the spread of Bantu speaking peoples.</i>
Historical:	Mainly cultural remains of western influence and settlement from AD 1652 onwards – mostly structures older than 60 years in terms of Section 34 of the NHRA.
Phase 1 assessment:	A scoping survey to establish the presence of and to evaluate heritage resources in a given area.
Phase 2 assessment:	An in depth culture resources management study which could include major archaeological excavations, detailed site surveys and mapping / plans of sites, including historical / architectural structures and features. Alternatively, the

sampling of sites by collecting material, small test pit excavations or auger sampling is required.

The Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and Ordinance on the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies (Ordinance 7 of 1925)

This Act and Ordinance protects graves younger than 60 years. These fall under the jurisdiction of the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Departments. Approval for the exhumation and re-burial must be obtained from the relevant Provincial MEC as well as the relevant Local Authorities.

Graves 60 years or older fall under the jurisdiction of the National Heritage Resources Act as well as the Human Tissues Act, 1983.