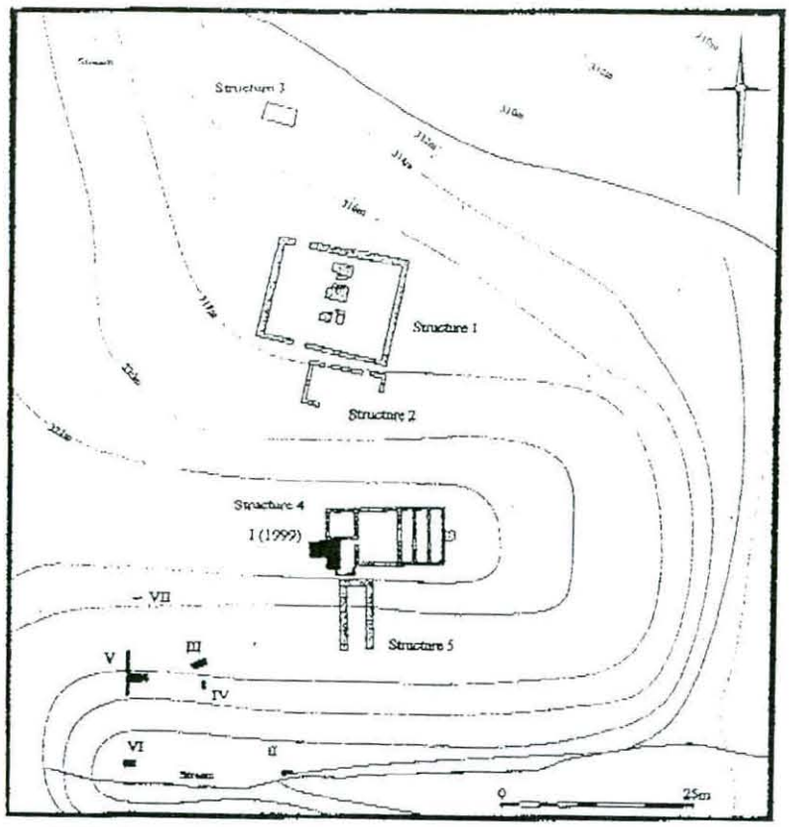
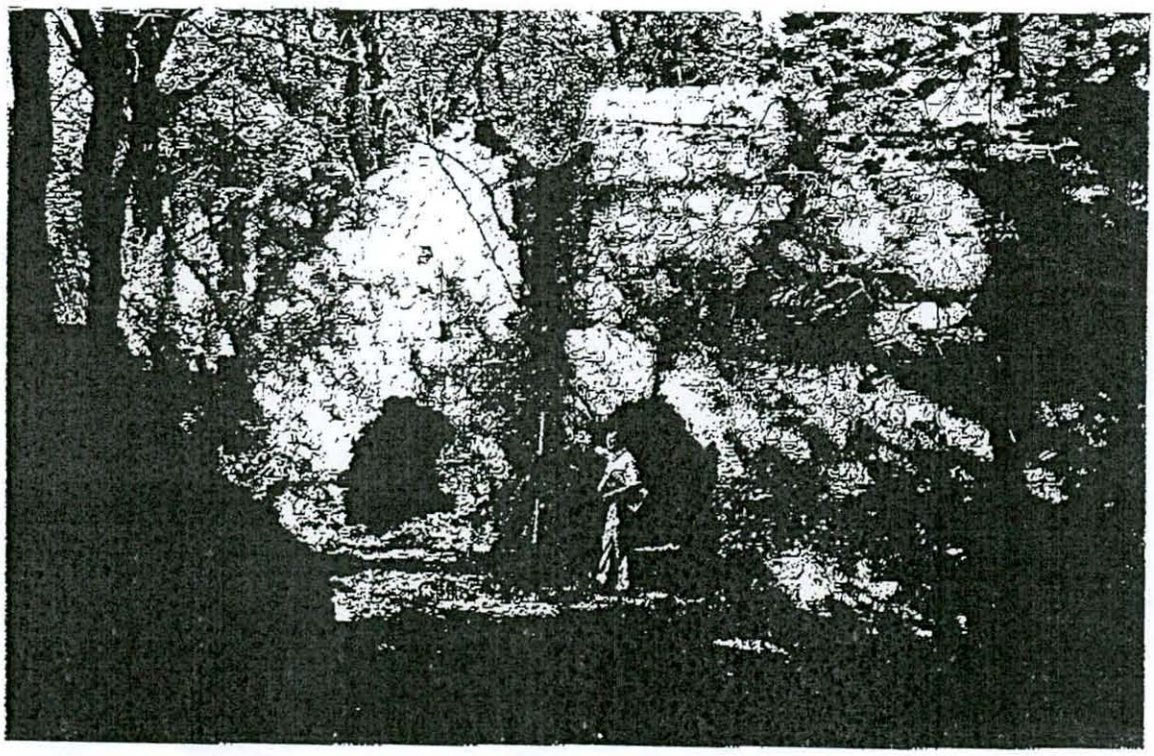
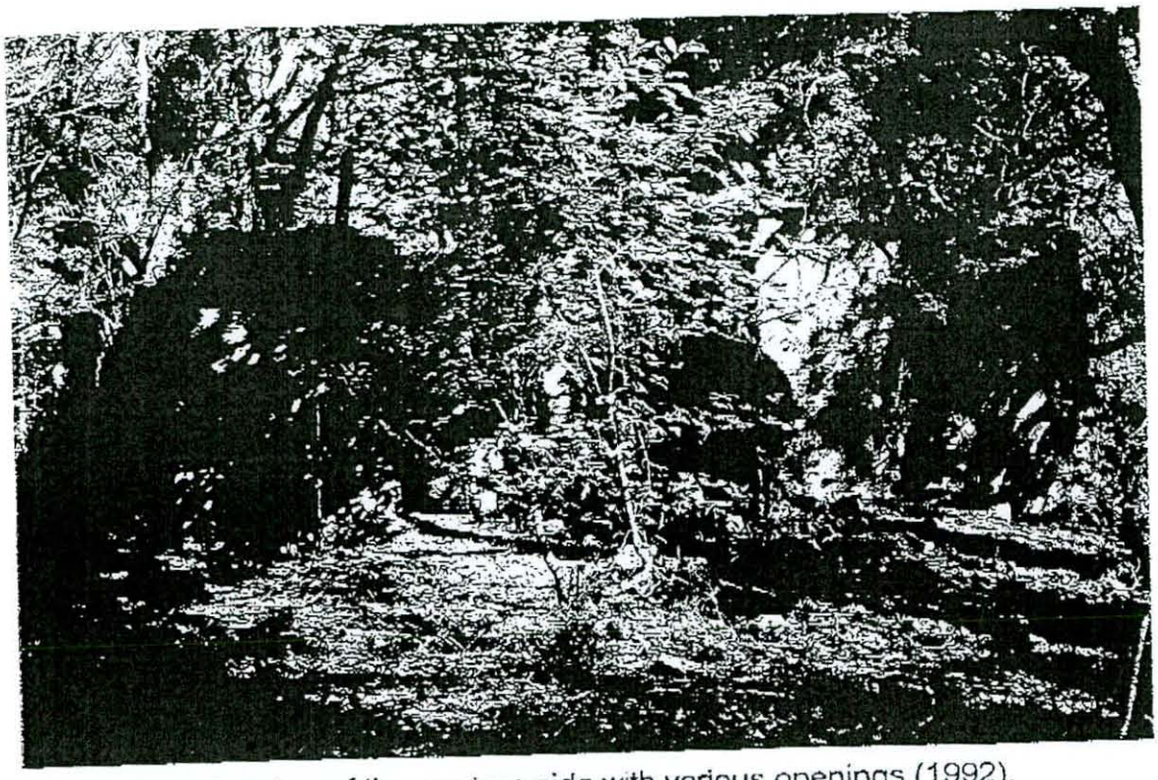


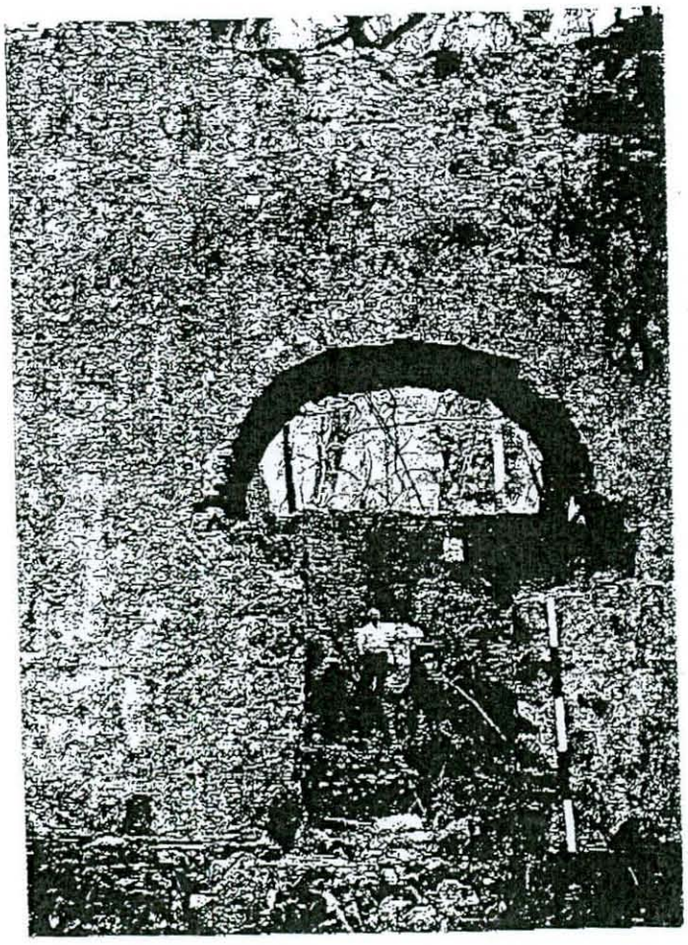
FIG.2 Plan of site 1, with the mill and associated structures (Lucas et al 2001:4).



3. End gable with two large openings (1992).



4. Exterior view of the eastern side with various openings (1992).



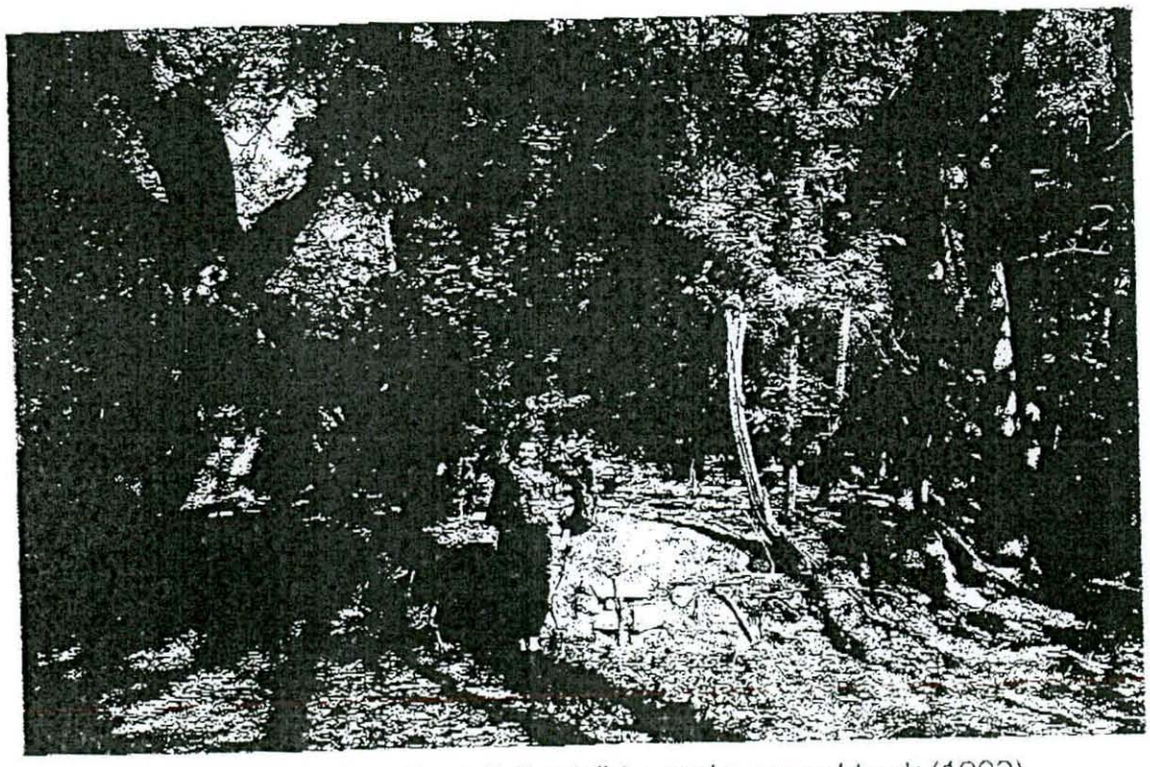
5. Same view of the far left window, which has collapsed (2000).

2.2 ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES (SITE 1)

We did not visit these sites due to a lack of time and the tremendous dense acacia growth. Nonetheless, important structures are nearby (see FIG.2).

Recommendations: similar to 2.1

6. Exterior view of the southern side of the washhouse. On the right is a portion of associated structure 2. Everything is presently overgrown with acacia.



7. View of structure 4, partially visible, and a very old oak (1992).

8. Interior view of room 2 with Gavin Lucas on the fragile brick surface (2000).

9. Similar view with vegetation covering old floor. Note amounts of clay fill. The front wall is leaning dangerously. (2004).

3 MULLER'S HOUSE (PRESUMABLY) (SITE 2)

ue to the laborious work by Gill Sutton and her school children, the site is well-cleared nd exposed (**FIG.3, 4**). The dwelling is in fair condition, but the stones in the walls, built a soft clay, were leeching out fast. Some stones and walls are just waiting to collapse.

On the **interior** a few acacias were cut to stumps, and huge amounts of backfill of stone and clay are still present. The front stone lining of the stoep has deteriorated (robbed), so hat all of it is moving northwards and one front wall is already leaning dangerously.

2.3.1 Recommendations

Short term:

1. Maintain clearance of invasives.
2. Stabilise building with proper mix of lime, clay, cement and sand.

Long term:

1. Stabilise walls, buttress some, repair/reconstruct stoep, staircase, hearth, etc.
2. Excavate and clear fill on interior and exterior.
3. Reconstruct towards permanent stabilisation and possible reconstruction.
4. Option: Cover with a separate roof construction and enclosure against elements.

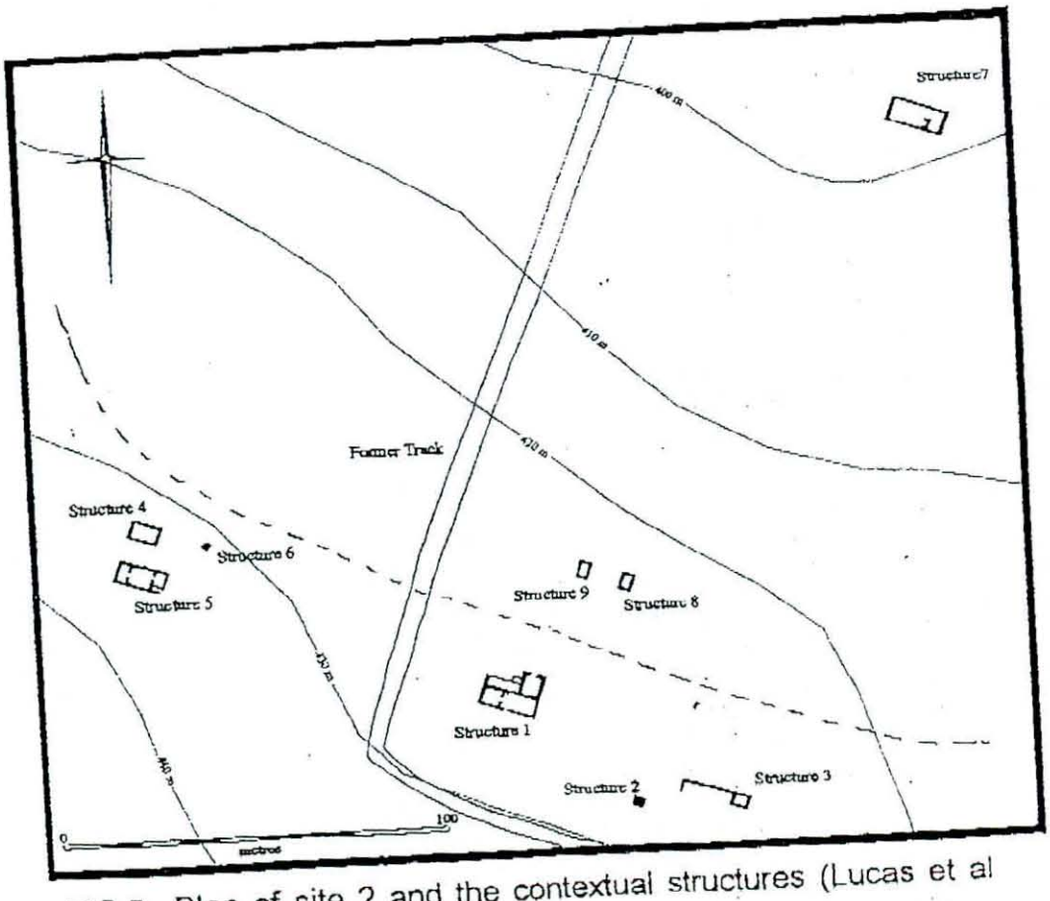
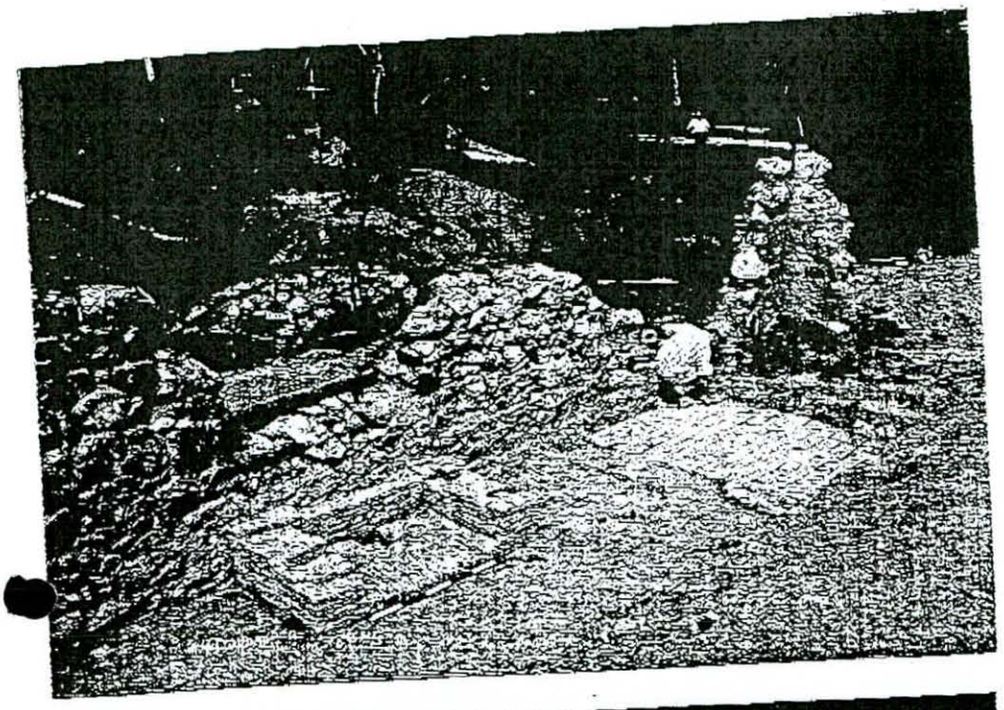


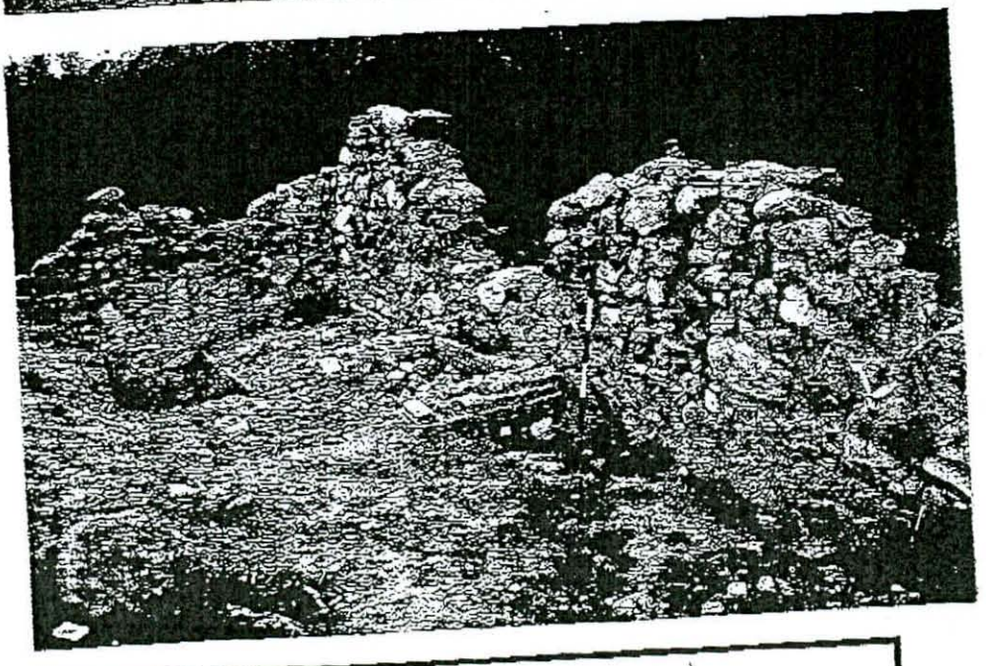
FIG.3 Plan of site 2 and the contextual structures (Lucas et al 2001:6).

10. View of the back of Muller's house during excavation in 2000. Note the excavated fill piled up inside the building.

11. Similar view, showing the scorched earth and stonework. Some of the stones cracked during the 2001 blaze (2004).



12. Interior view of the kitchen hearth and brick surface (2001).



13. Similar view, but the hearth has deteriorated visibly. Clay and stone fill covers the floors. Note how the stonework has been leeched of its clays (2004).

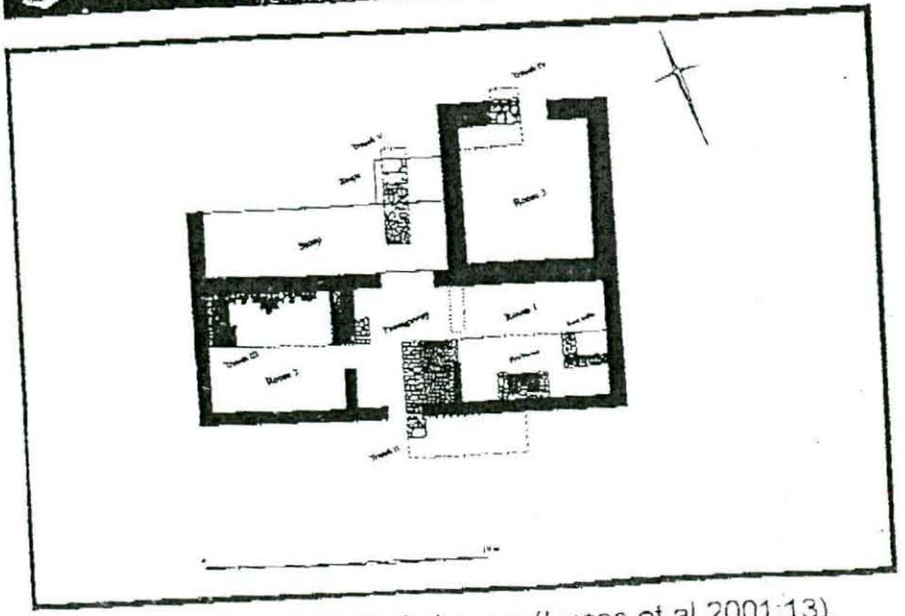
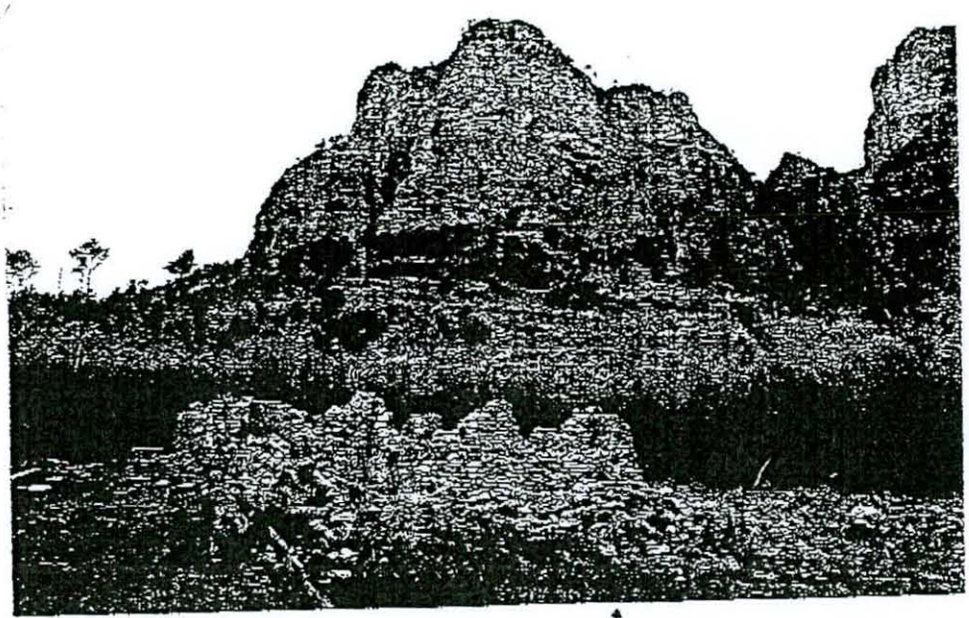


FIG.4 Site plan of Muller's house (Lucas et al 2001:13).

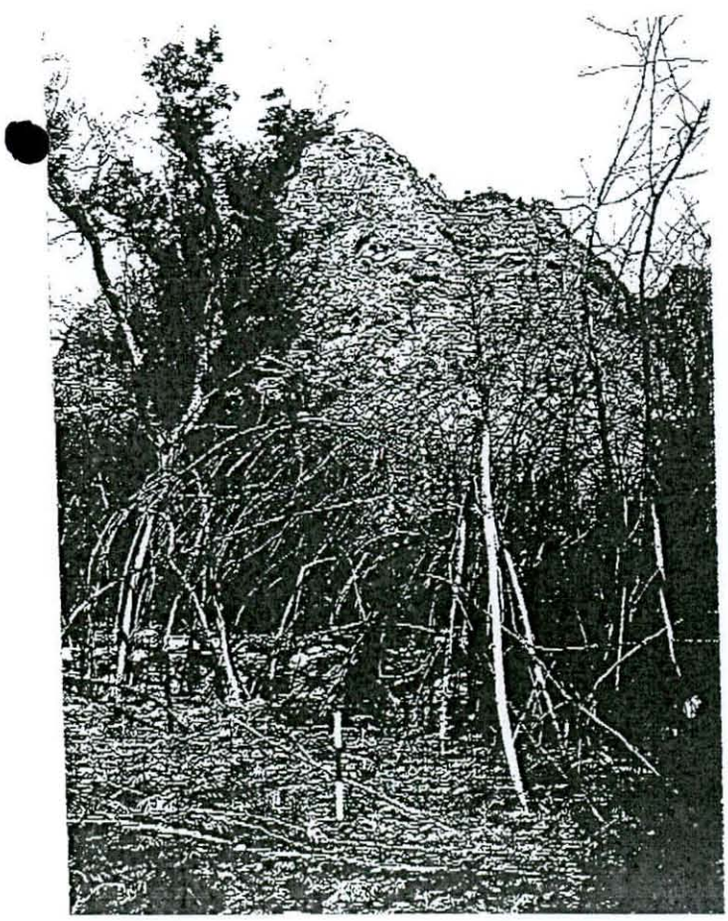
2.4 ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES

A number of associated structures were present, i.e. a kraal, smithy, "cells" (square like buildings), labourer structures, etc. All overgrown and practically inaccessible. It is important to note that there are probably other structures or features hidden within the landscape not yet identified.

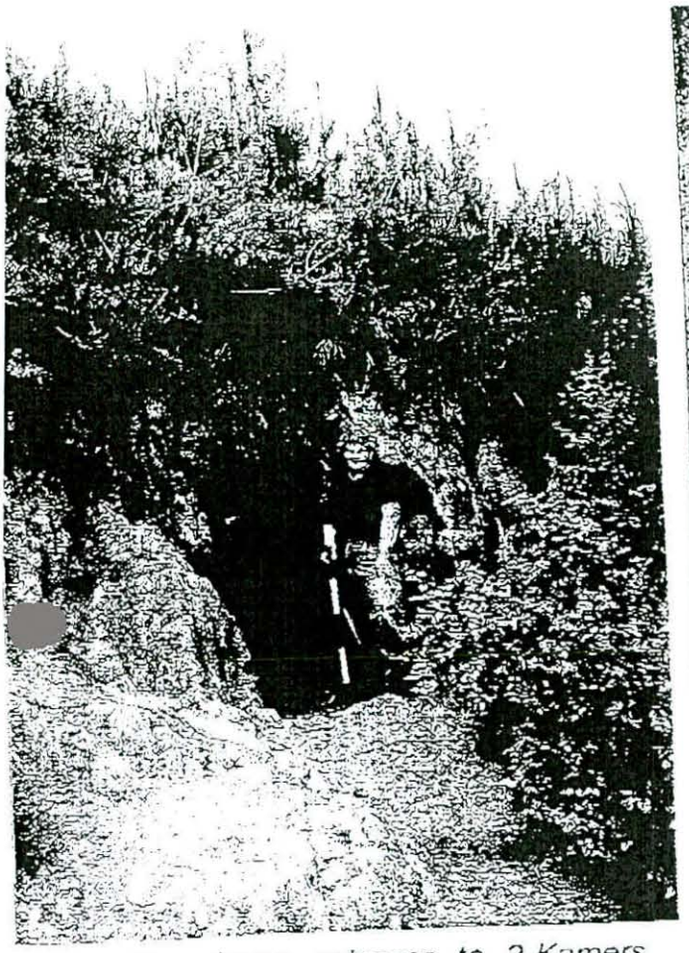
Recommendations: as 2.1



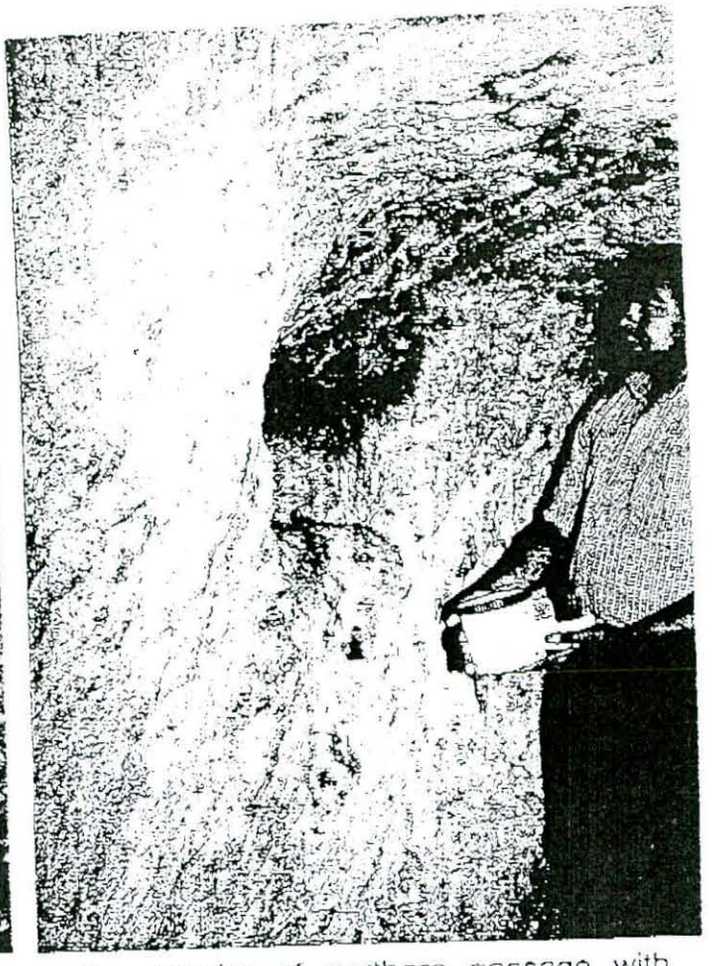
14. The ruins of Muller's house against the backdrop of the Silver mine at Simonsberg. Note the amount of out-of-context stonework in the foreground. It can be re-used.



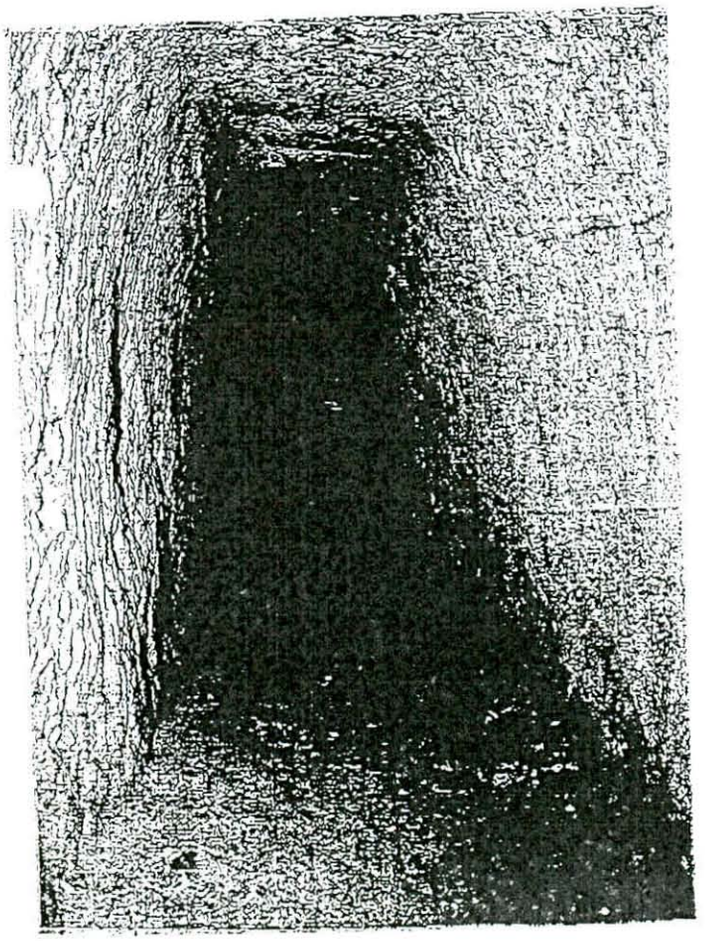
15. A portion of structure 3, presumably the kraal (2000).

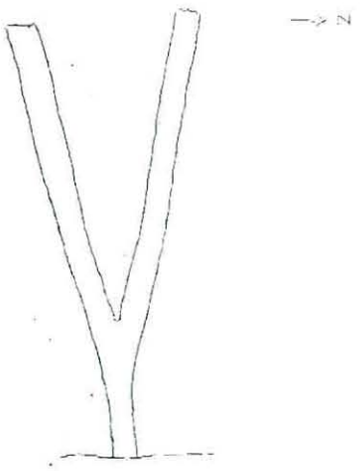


16. The clayey entrance to *2-Kamers* passage with Gill Sutton (2004).



17. Interior of northern passage with niche for earlier lantern or candles. It is blackened by burnt pinecones, highlighted by Quinton Fortuin.





18. View towards the entrance from within the northern passage. Note scattered pinecones.

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SAHRA WESTERN CAPE

facsimile transmittal

To:	Beverley Crouts/ Kirstin Pieterse	**Fax:**	021 - 4624509
From:	Quinton Fortuin	**Date:**	05/08/16
Re:		**Pages:**	22
CC:			

☐ Urgent ☑ For Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply ☐ Please Recycle

HEREWITH FIND THE DOCUMENT AS REFERED TO IN MY EMAIL SUBJECT " " SILVERMINE CONSERVATION CONCERNS"

Kind regards

Quinton

SA HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY
RECEIVED
18 AUG 2005

3. SILVER MINE PASSAGES & SHAFTS

Quinton Fortuin, a descendant of David de Villiers, is at present Pniel's corporative manager. He has been instrumental in a number of heritage and tourist initiatives. He related how the Pniel residents have visited the ruins and *Zilvermyn* shafts over many decades, adults and children alike. Most of the graffiti at the mines and shafts can be attributed to them.

3.1 *RONDEKOP* PASSAGE (*SANTA ELISABETH?*)

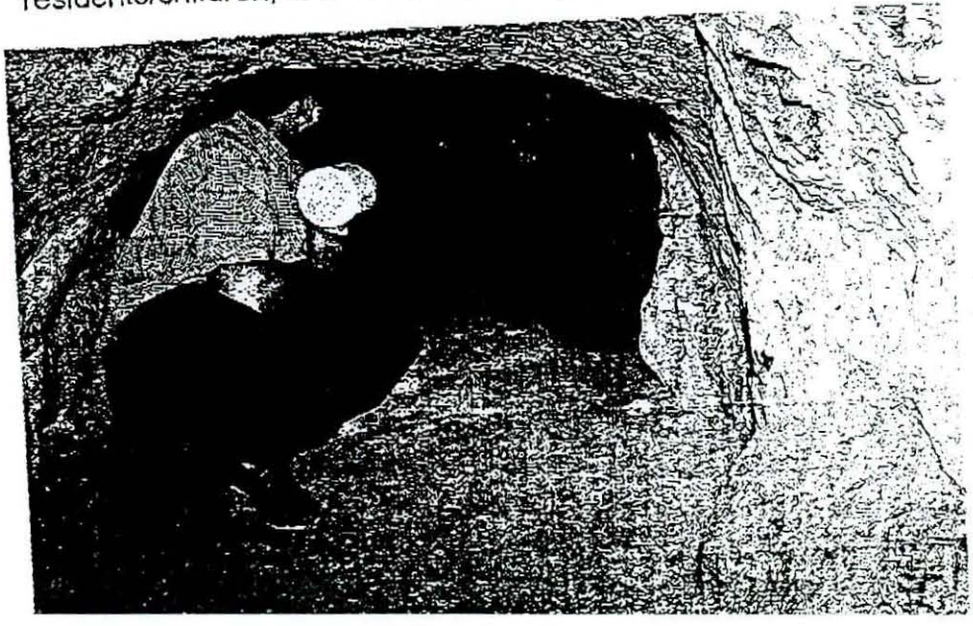
Near the southern base of the small hill-lock Rondekop (above DGH farm), a stone platform and horizontal passage towards Simonsberg mountain, was located by Fortuin years ago. Due to its dilapidated state it became dangerous and he did not further investigate it. Its location was unknown to Lucas (Lucas et al 2001: 41-42)(see title photo).

3.2 *2-KAMER* PASSAGES (*SANTA HELENA*)

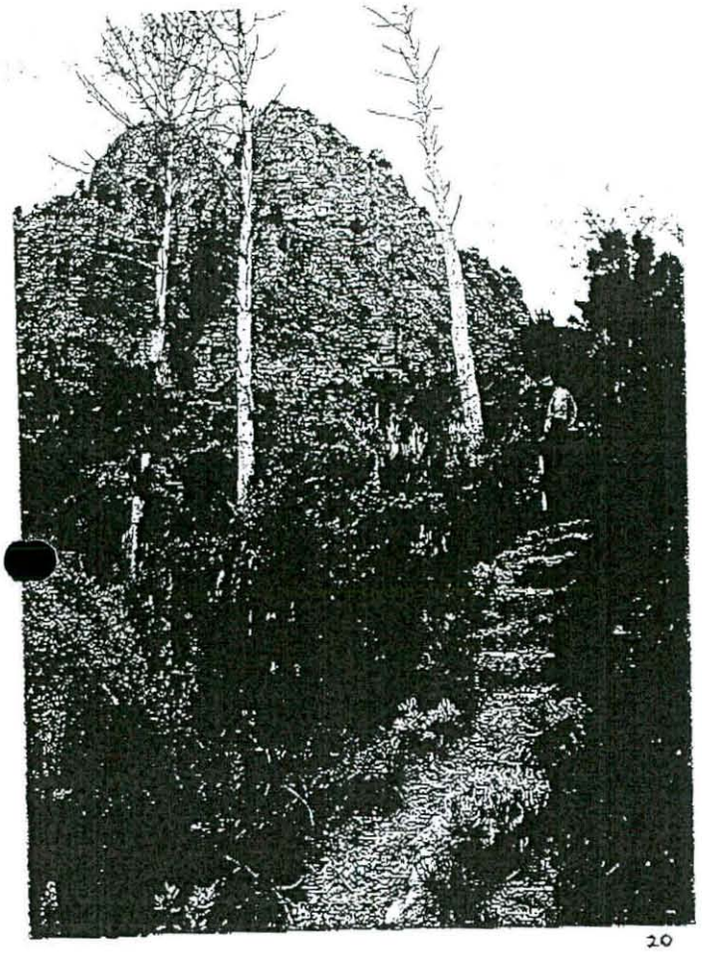
The entrance is small and at the lower base of the foothill above the ruinous building complex. A single passage soon forked into two passages, stretching horizontally into the lower "clayey" foothill. The 1.8 m high passages have been dug by sharpened iron bars/rods, and rhythmic "chisel" marks are obvious in the yellowish, weathered granites, which is comparatively soft, facilitating their excavation.

The right (northern) passage was investigated by means of a torchlight. A small niche for presumably holding a candle was extant. Numerous recent graffiti of initials or names have been scratched onto the sides, defacing the passages. After the soft granite with thin linear greyish or whitish quartz seams, followed orange clays (numerous names) and finally a hard shale/slate section of short duration, after which the tunnel ended (latter blasted?).

The southern passage was similar and Quinton pointed out the oldest recognisable date *1898 DD* on the wall. The problem was to identify these older, solitary inscriptions by visitors (light must be oblique), from the countless names of the 20th century Pniel residents/children, who visited on a regular basis.



19. End portion of southern passage which had caved in partially.



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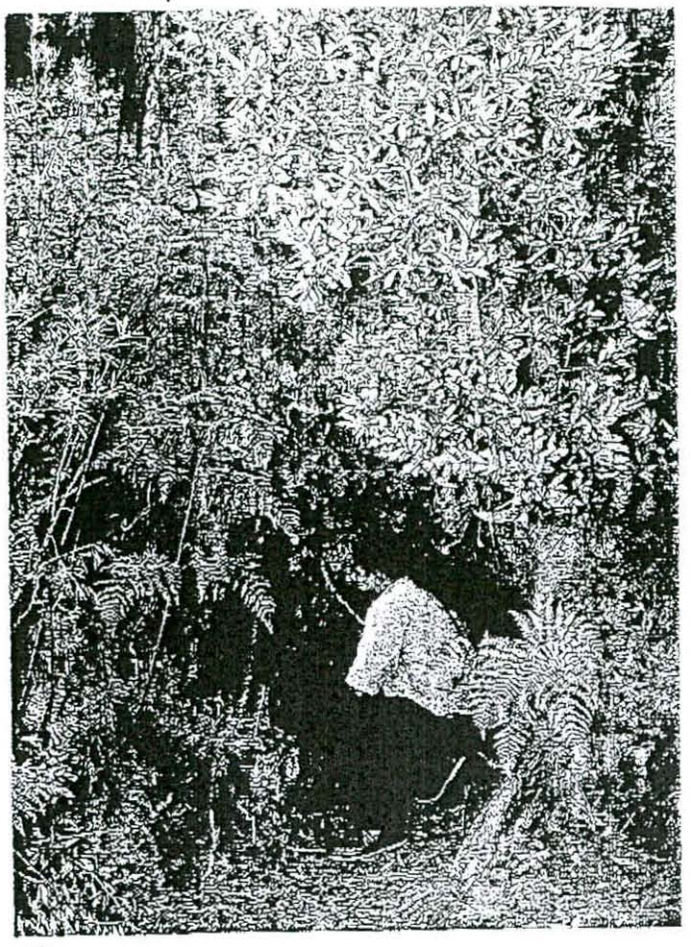

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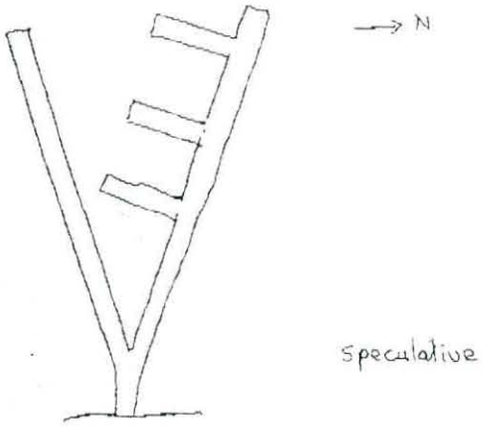
20. The steep pathway up the mountain with recently cut steps leading to the upper passages of *5-Kamers*.

21. View of the half-hidden entrance to *5-Kamers*.



22. The front portion of the southern passage, where it forks. Note the thick seam of quartz on the upper side (scale 1m).

3.3 *5-KAMER* PASSAGE (*ISABELLA?*)

Situated about 30-40 metres above *2-Kamers* passage.

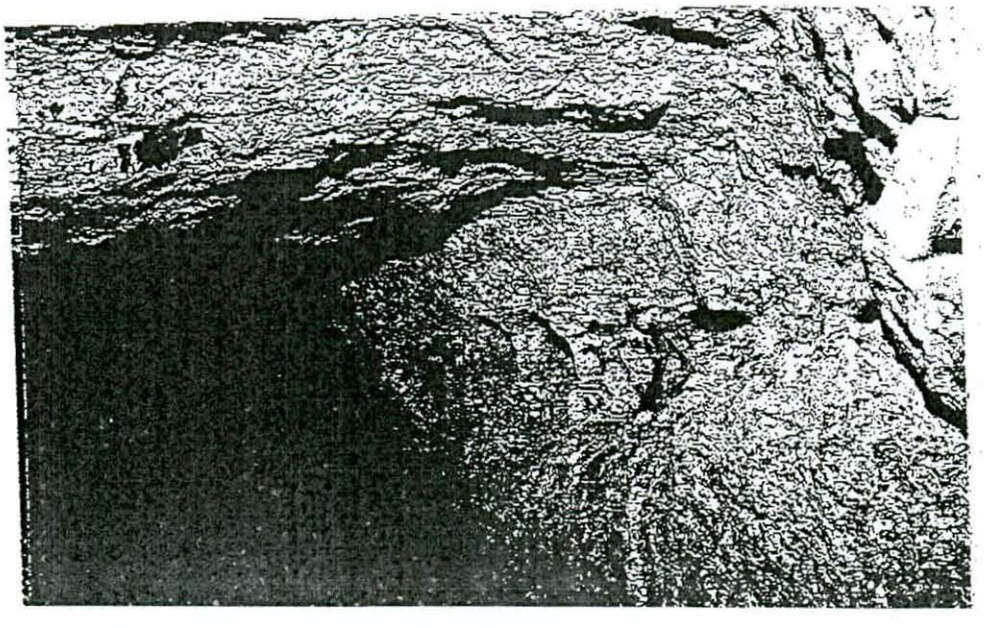
A single passage soon splits in two, with a single straight passage on the south, which we superficially surveyed. Old niches were cut into the walls, presumably for lanterns or candles (much fat was imported). Remnants of black pinecone embers, used as torchlights by the children, were visible. The ceiling was also blackened and names were burnt by candle flame. The end portion of the tunnel apparently collapsed. Weathered granite and clays were the main fabric.

The northern passage is quite straight and about three or four passages were cut in a southernly direction. Not inspected as torchlight was fading.

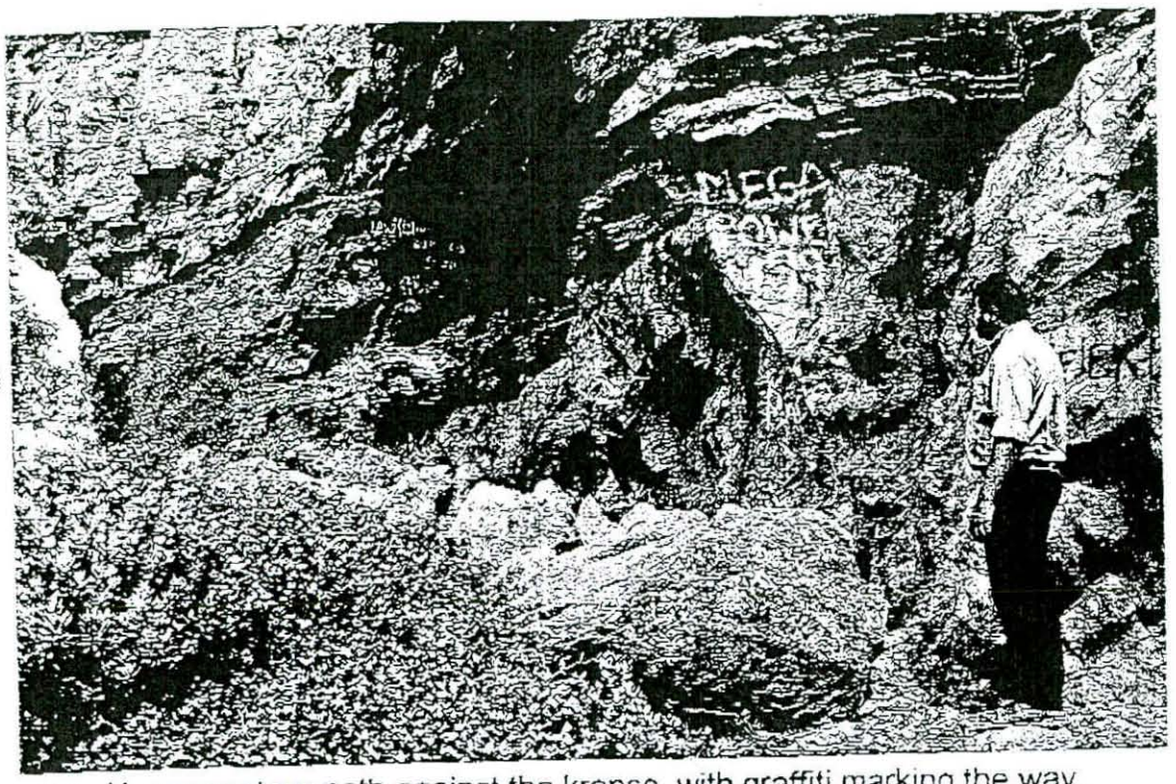
These two primary passages (*2-Kamers* and *5-Kamers*) are commonly known as ***7-Kamers*** by the local residents. These passages are obviously easily accessible by means of contour roads and seen as local diversions, where names are applied, and signifying *"I was here"*. Originally these 7-Kamers were presumably dug after the upper rock mines (Lucas 2003:29).

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The shafts are on "private" property and should be managed as an important cultural resource. Mining techniques, geological formations, visitors and graffiti can all provide a data base for future research.
2. For the short term, no more visits by locals should be advised, as they deface and "destroy" these mining passages. They should be educated on how to treat the environment and culture with respect.
3. Passages should be accurately mapped and explored by professional geologists and miners to glean as much information as possible.
4. Passages should be searched metre by metre for early dates and inscriptions.
5. Access to them should be by permit only, controlling all visits.

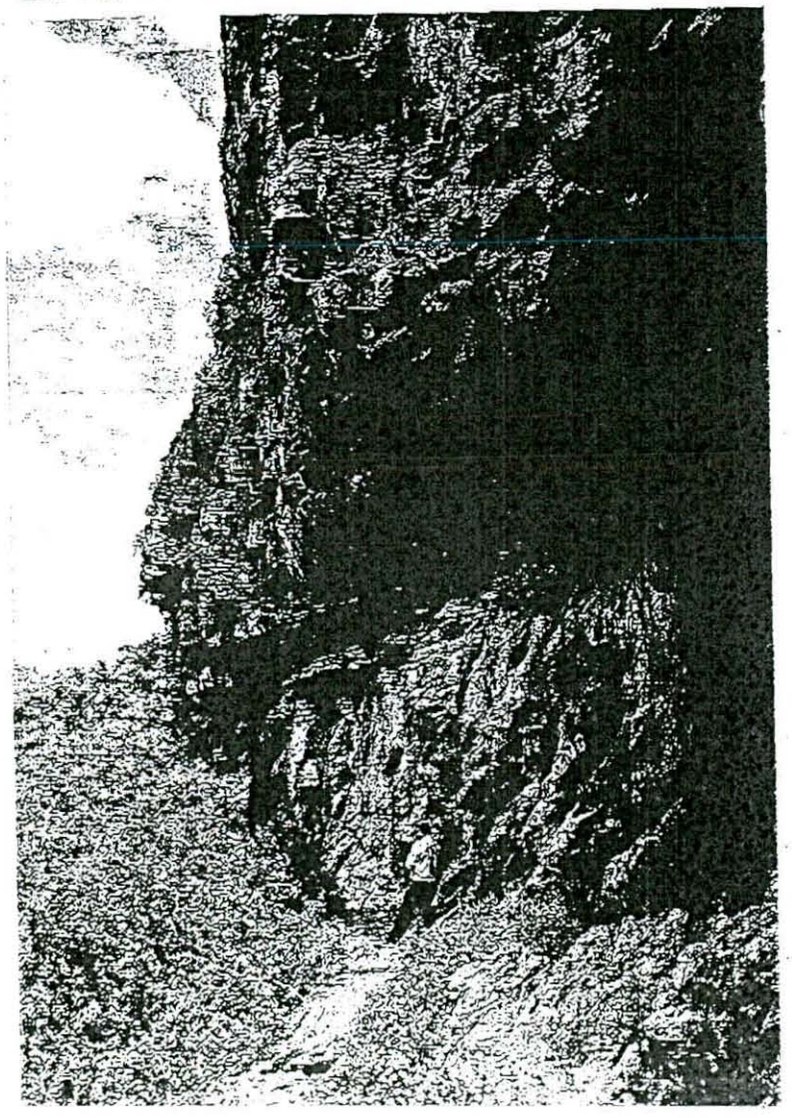


23. Close-up of the whitish quartz seam, presumably the mineral the miners followed in search of the elusive silver veins.



24 Upper contour path against the kranse, with graffiti marking the way.

25. Another view further along the stone path accompanied with graffiti.



4. SILVER MINE: PRIMARY ROCK FACE

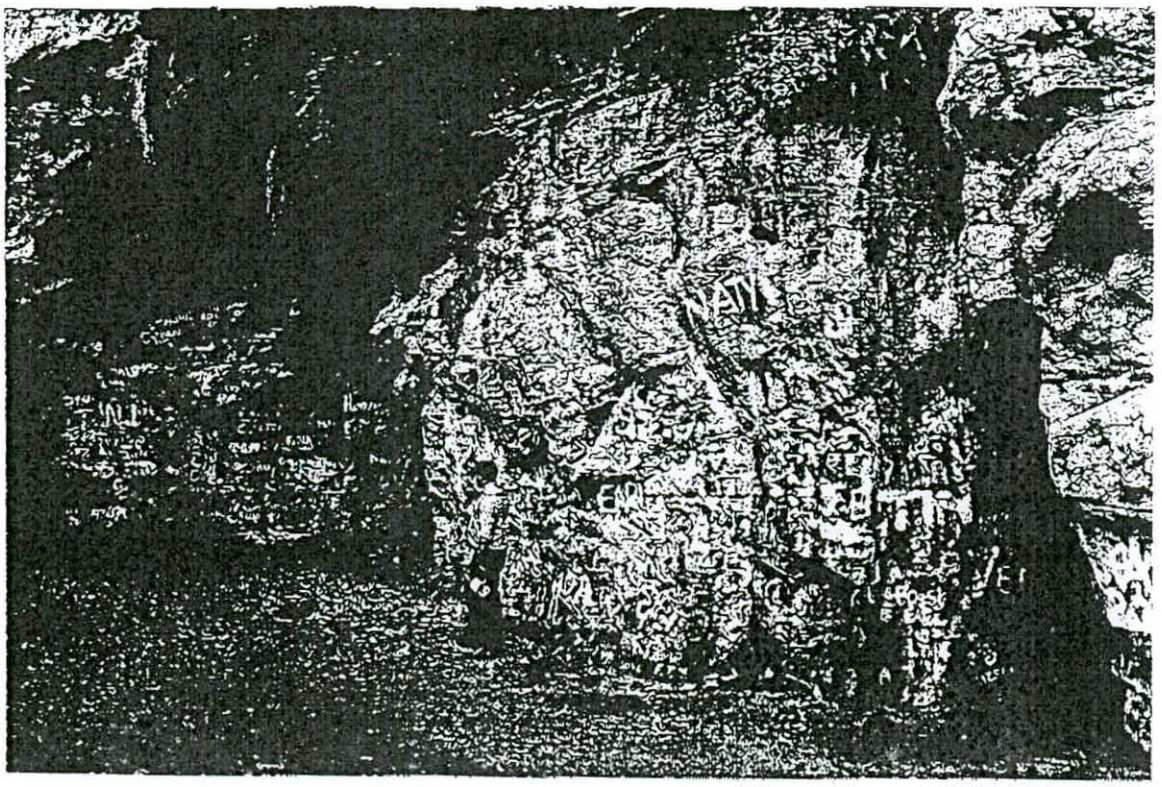
4.1 Entrance, passages and shafts

At the highest level, where the slate rock face of *kranse* begins, there is a circuitous path with indigenous vegetation and trees lining it. The rock face has been painted with graffiti over many years of mostly local inhabitants. It can be seen as a recent cultural manifestation of Pniel's extended domain.

Various circular (3-4cm wide) pipe shafts (some up to 50cm in length) can be distinguished on the rock face. They represent drilled holes by iron drills, for blasting purposes. A small concave opening represents a failed attempt at another entry passage. Of this primary mine excavations, there is a 1747 sectional drawing (**FIG.5**) (Lucas 2003.17).

One enters into a cavernous opening, with a large rectangular shaped shaft, descending vertically for about 20-30 metres. A few metres along the passage another vertical shaft with a crossbeam and a ladder descends, but our flashlight failed here. Unfortunately my photographs were poor in the absence of light to focus them.

Fortuin relates that as a teenager he had descended the wooden ladder and walked the horizontal passage between the two shafts, that still continues to be used by daring youngsters. He relates a story of individuals who fell into these shafts and actually survived. In my opinion they are potential death-traps.



26. The rock face entrance is on the immediate right, with a wide-open space

26. The rock face entrance is on the immediate right, with a wide-open space in front. Here the miners dumped the stone and ore, and probably relaxed here and cooked their meals.

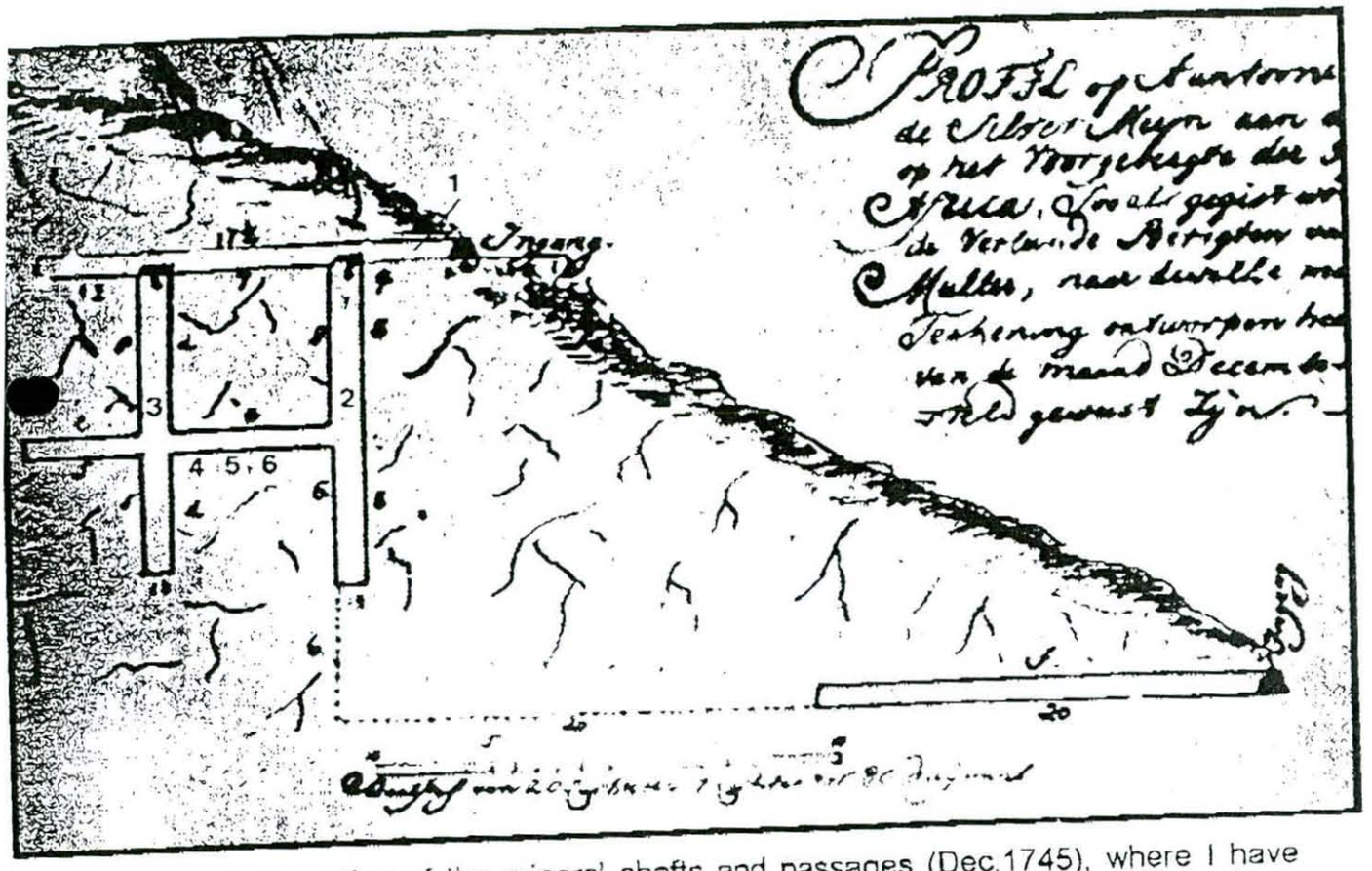


FIG.5 Elevation section of the miners' shafts and passages (Dec.1745), where I have [illegible] as provisionally identified by Lucas (2000:17).

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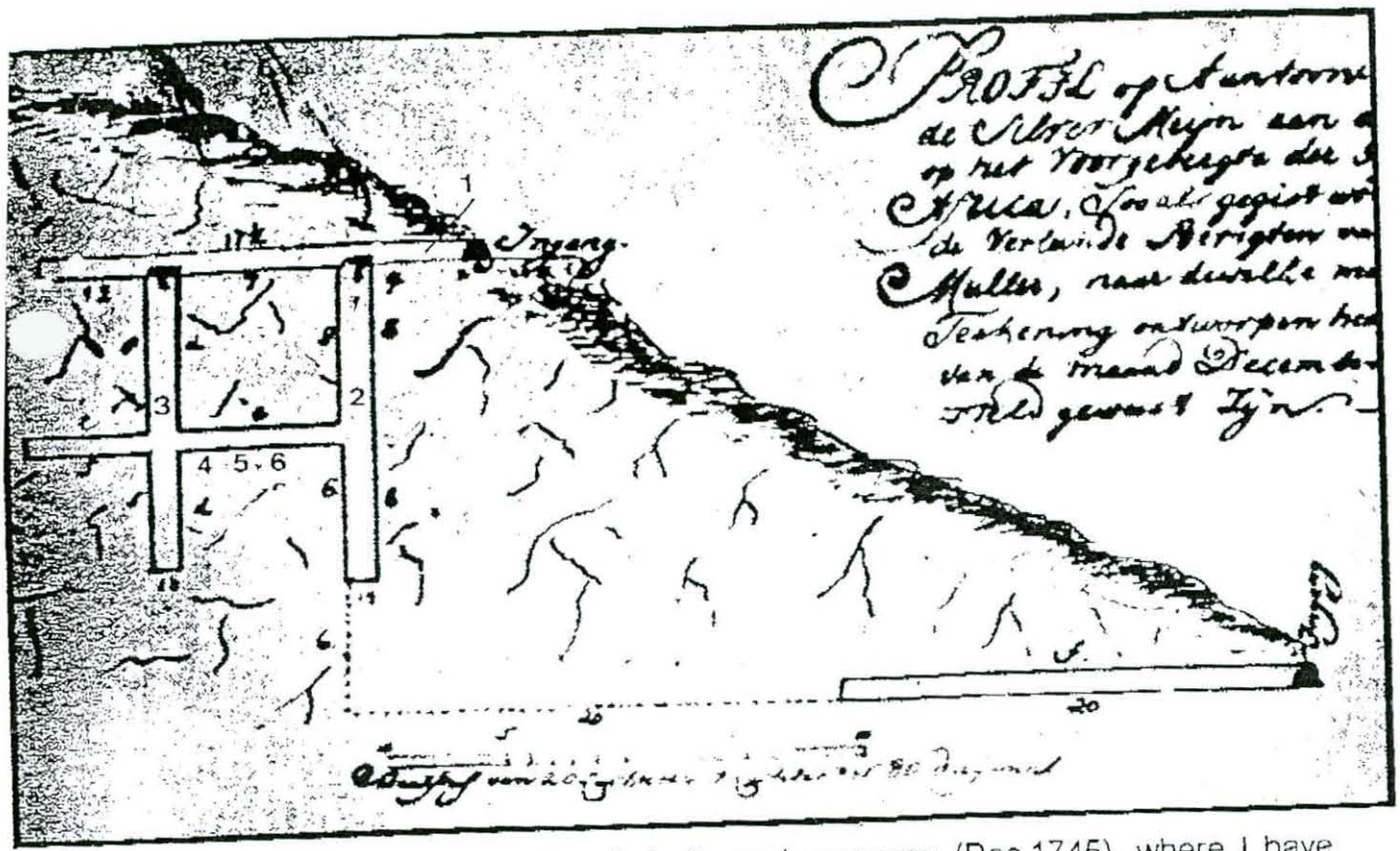


FIG.5 Elevation section of the miners' shafts and passages (Dec.1745), where I have added the historic names, as provisionally identified by Lucas (2000:17).

KEY

1. Jacob Straat
2. Jonker Hendrick
3. Jonker Willem

4. Timmerman
5. Ryke Gang
6. Witten Spaad Gang

4.2 Recommendations

1. There is very little space left for additional graffiti. A ban should be placed on it.
2. All visits should be by permit only.
3. The passages should be accurately mapped.
4. Geologists and miners should investigate them for traces of mine activity and formations.
5. Excavations at the base of the two shafts may reveal broken tools, artefacts, etc.
6. Legend has it (Robinson 1973:91) that from the first two silver ingots a chain for the Castle's keys was made. An emblem identifying the *Zilvermyn* for marketing purposes, may look like this. Designs should be elicited.

Traced from VOC Jap. plate c. 1690-1700

Key from well in Castle (c. 1720-60)

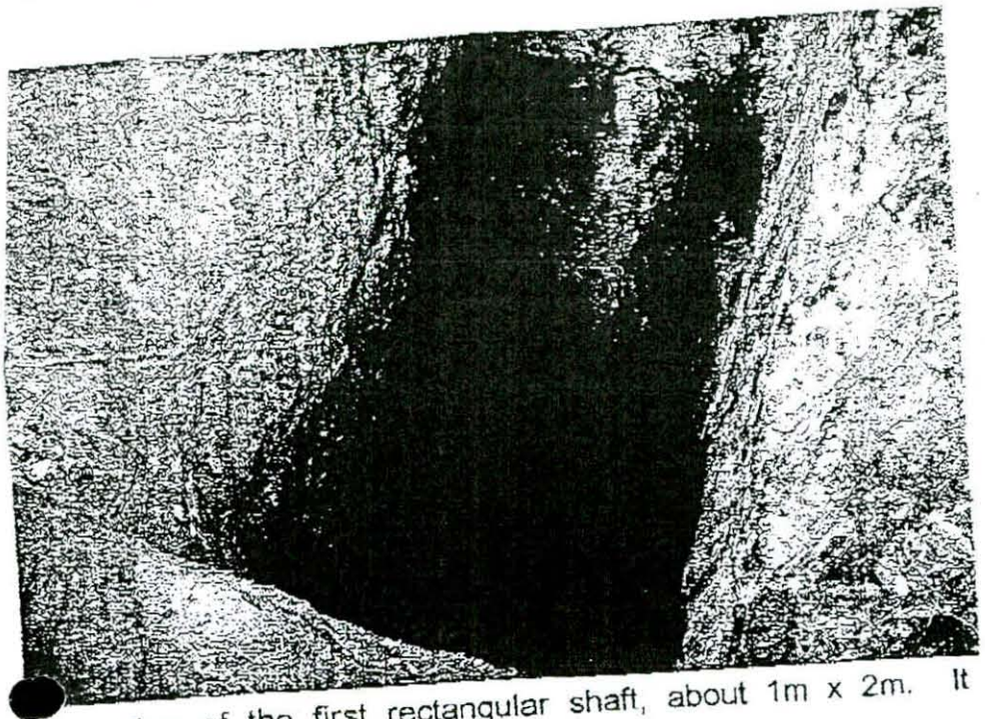
7. The individual passages and shafts of *De Goede Verwachting* mining venture have been provisionally identified with names (Lucas 2003:29). Future investigations should attempt to clarify and confirm these documentary aspects.
8. Placement of iron grids (Mr Fortuin's suggestion) above these vertical shafts is seriously and urgently advised.
9. Eco and cultural trails are again advised, natural pathways in stone and marked with the Zilvermyn emblem.

5. CONCLUSION

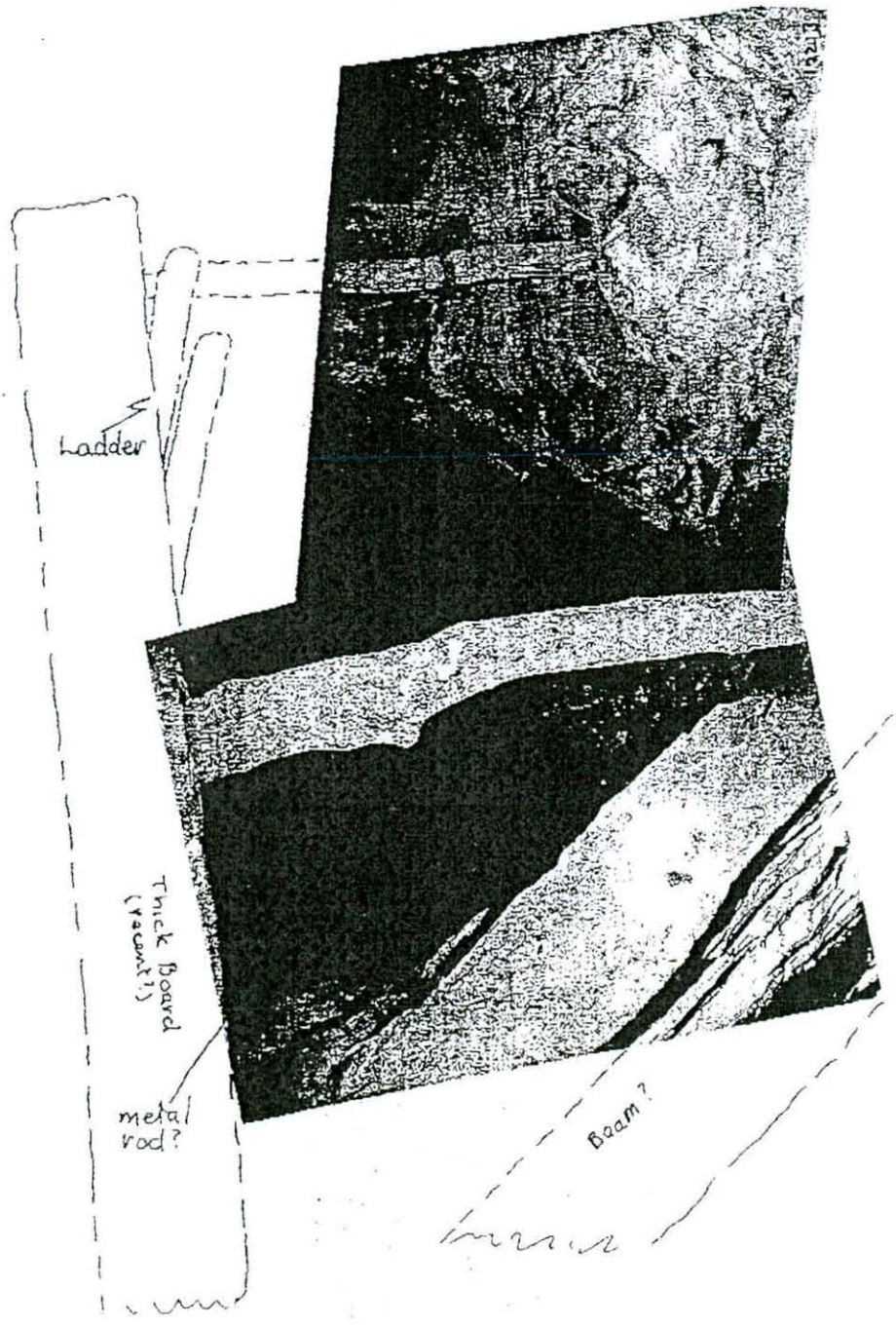
The Silver Mine Industrial Complex is unique in South Africa in respect of diversity of ruins, state of preservation and variety of passages and shafts. Before these contexts further deteriorate because of people, vegetation or natural elements, urgent conservation and preservation principles should be implemented as soon as possible.

In conjunction with environmental concerns and eco-tourism,. these fragile cultural resources can be utilised, but all efforts must be made to sustain them with no degradation for the use of future generations. They are intimately linked to the farm De Goede Hoop & Papier Molen (Pniel) (Vos 2004).

It is seriously recommended that the silver mines (shafts, passages) be physically linked with the ruins (dwellings, labourers' cottages, washing house/mill, platforms, ovens, charcoal structures, etc.). There are certainly more features and ruins to be discovered. Retaining a unified context would be an important aspect.



27. View of the first rectangular shaft, about 1m x 2m. It descends for about 25 m.



28. View of the second rectangular shaft, upper portion (poor quality, speculative reconstruction).

Mr Quinton Fortuin as Corporate Manager at Pniel for Stellenbosch Municipality, has already played a significant and vital role in the conservation and tourism of the area and buildings. He is a key role player and should be regularly consulted.

Miss Gill Sutton is also a very enthusiastic educator and organiser, who has promoted heritage, conservation and environmental management at an educational level to the local communities. Her arm should be strengthened to promote these ideals and practical utilisation of these heritage sites.

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