

SPECIFICATION FOR THE CLOSURE AND REHABILITATION OF THE OLIEBOOMSPOORT EXCAVATIONS

January 2015



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1. Site significance and sensitivity.

The shelter site of Olieboomspoort (OBS) is located in the drainage basin of the Mokolo River close to Lephalale. OBS is a key locality for the establishment of the cultural sequence of the Stone Age in this region and to probe the earliest signs of modernity in human evolution. OBS represents one of the very few interior localities with occupation sequences that span all periods of the Stone Age. Excavations at this locality established a sequence of occupations that began with intermittent use of the shelter by Earlier Stone Age people (Mason 1962; Van der Ryst 2006). Subsequently, during the many thousands of years that humans frequented OBS during Middle Stone Age, they brought in enormous quantities of lithics and pigments. OBS is cited for the remarkably large assemblages of ochre recovered from the MSA contexts (Mason 1962, 1988; Volman 1984; Watts 1998, 2002; Mitchell 2002; Wadley 2005). The Holocene occupational sequence is extensive as evidenced by the extensive lithic assemblages and other items of material culture. Favourable preservation conditions resulted in the recovery of a wide range of LSA tool types and hunting equipment made from organic materials, as well as a representative assemblage of macroscopic plant taxa (Van der Ryst 2006).

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) the following applies:

Structures

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.

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

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

- *destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;*
- *destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;*
- *trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or*
- *bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assist in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.*

Burial grounds and graves

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

- *destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;*
- *destroy, damage, alter, exhume, 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*
- *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 the detection or recovery of metals.*

2. Status Quo



- The excavation was initially stabilised with the view to potential further excavations. Stabilisation included the packing of sand bags, covering the exposed deposit with geotextile and the placement of a corrugated roof over the structure to reduce the potential impact of water on the excavation. The rehabilitation was carried out in 2005.
- As a result of vandalism and in an attempt to better protect the excavation the following rehabilitation will be undertaken:

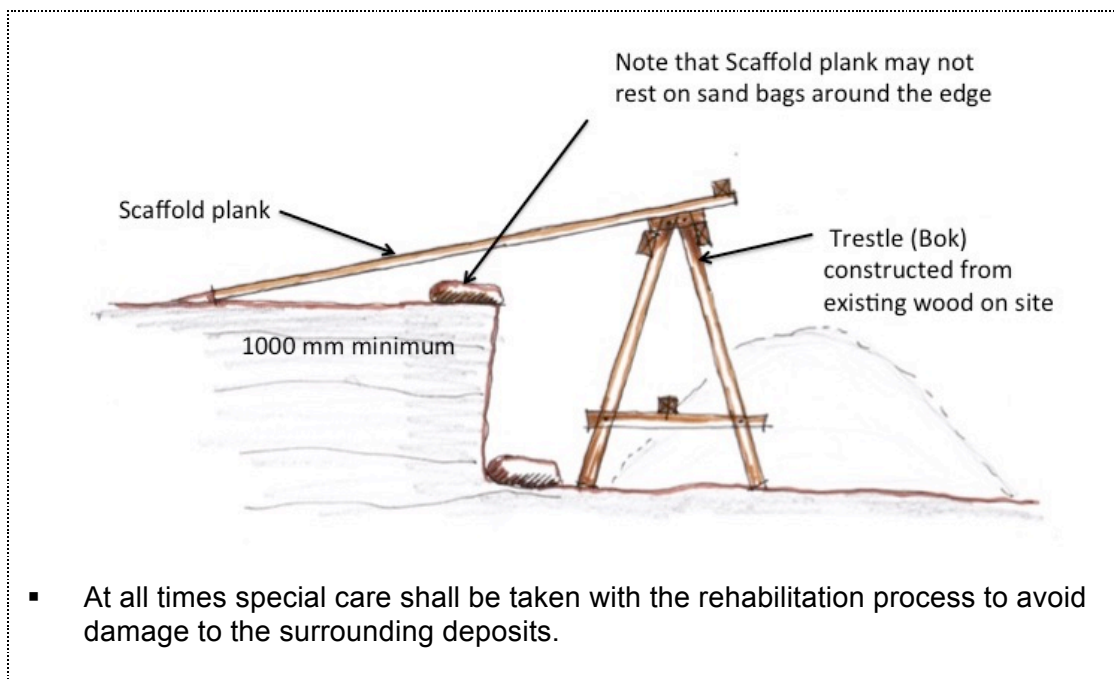
- 1) Remove existing wood and corrugated iron roof structure.
- 2) Backfilling of excavation without the removal of any of the sand bags or markers
- 3) Removal of steel droppers that mark the excavation grid

3 Selection of fill material

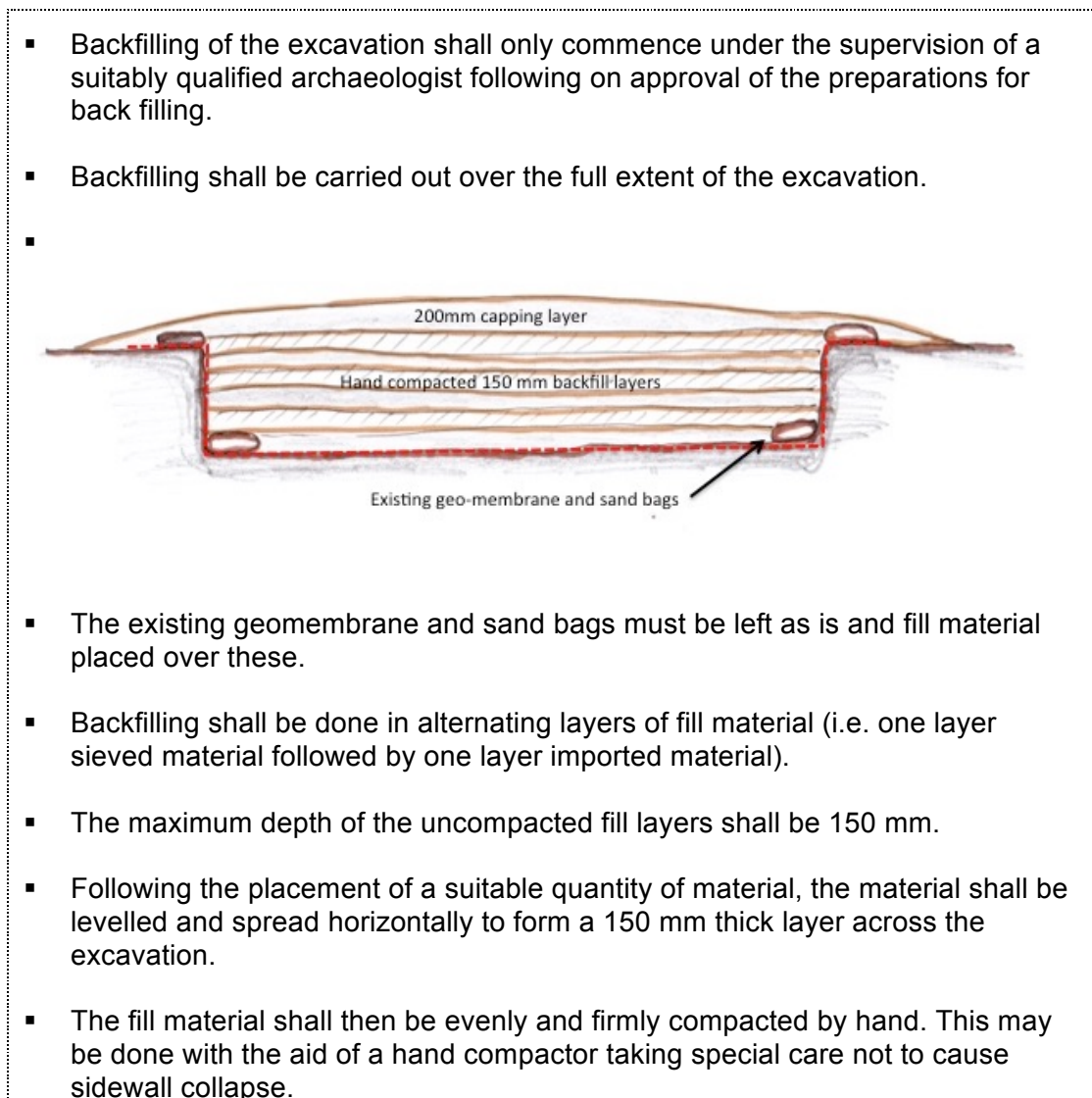
- The total fill required for the rehabilitation will be around 18 cubic meters of material.
- Some backfill material can be sourced from the existing spoil heap (sieved material from excavations).
- The existing spoil heap will not have sufficient volume to fill the excavation to capacity and hence it will necessary to source at least 10 cubic meters of alternative fill material.
- Fill material may not be sourced within 300 m of the rock shelter.
- Fill material shall be sandy loam to sand clay loam with the ideal a ratio being 15 – 25% clay, 10% silt and 75 – 66% sand. The minimum organic material shall be 2% of volume. The soil shall be free from harmful salts, weed seeds and waste of any kind.

4 Preparation for backfilling

- During the backfilling process all effort must be made to protect the integrity of the *in situ* archeological deposits by:
 - Limiting access to the work area by demarcating specific pedestrian routes to and from the excavation.
 - Limiting movement within 1 m from the sides of the excavation to prevent disturbance as a result of sidewall collapse.
- Prior to the commencement of the backfilling process a single pedestrian access shall be selected from the existing spoil heap to the excavation and the work area demarcated with danger tape or similar.
- Prior to the commencement of the backfilling the old wooden roof structure and Y standard steel pegs must be removed.
- For the purposes of carting the soil to the excavation a suitable ramp shall be constructed for safe use with a wheelbarrow. The existing wood used for the 2005 rehabilitation may be used for this purpose.



5 Backfilling



- Following compaction of a layer the next layer of fill material can be imported.
- Special care must be taken during the placement of the final capping. The capping layer shall be at least 200 mm thick after compaction. The capping layer must be shaped to facilitate drainage away from the excavation by forming a concave form that drains uniformly.

6 Finishing

- All working areas shall be tidied upon completion of the works.
- All stones, rubble, rubbish and other unwanted materials as well as surplus contract materials must be removed from site.

7 References

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