



2 November 2011

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **1. Background**

Dr AC van Vollenhoven from Archaetnos has been involved in archaeological research relating to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) for the past 25 years. His research interests mainly focused on military structures and camps in Pretoria and the Kruger National Park.

Over the last number of years more and more people has been in contact with him, indicating that they would somehow like to get involved and learn first-hand by doing archaeological excavations. This included students who are looking for practical experience in the field. For the last few years many parent have contacted him indicating that they would like their children to get involved especially as this could assist them in making a career choice.

This proposal stems from the mentioned need as well from the very important site, called the Eastern Redoubt, providing the opportunity in this regard.

### **2. Reserve in which the study will be conducted**

Strubenkop Nature Reserve

### **3. Recommendations from the Management Plan of the Strubenkop Nature Reserve**

In the Strubenkop Nature Reserve there is only one cultural heritage resource being the remains of the Eastern Redoubt. This cultural resource is of extremely high importance and therefore needs to be conserved, preserved and protected.

The following particular recommendations are applicable to this proposal:

- Archaeological and historical research should be implemented as a matter of urgency and in accordance with legislative requirements.

- Information educating visitors with regards to the National Heritage Resources Act and indicating that it is an offence to damage historical resources should be included in a brochure or information panel at the reserve.
- Information should be placed in a brochure with a map or on a plaque at the site so as to enhance visitor experience.
- The tourism potential of the reserve should not be under estimated.
- Visitors to the site should be monitored in order to prevent any damage thereto. This should form part of the reserve's tourism development plan.
- The staff at the reserve as well as others involved in the management thereof (including new appointees) should be trained.
- Partnerships should be formed with concerned parties order to get these people involved in the preservation and conservation of the cultural heritage (fortification) of the reserve.

#### **4. Title of the project**

An archaeological investigation of the Eastern Redoubt, a British military fortification, dating to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)

#### **5. Contact details**

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#### **6. Historical context**

The history of the Anglo-Boer War in Pretoria has been quite well documented. The War took place between 1899 and 1902. It was a war between the two Boer Republics (the Transvaal or Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and the Orange Free State) and Great Britain (Pretorius 1998: 247).

After the fall of Pretoria on 5 June 1900, the British erected fortified posts at strategic position all over South-Africa. The main aim was to protect railway lines and other routes as well as to limit the movement of the Boer commando's (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 176). The railway lines were of particular importance as illustrated by the fact that the Boers also guarded it when they were still in control thereof (NAB: TAB, SS0, R 8496/00).

By January 1901 many blockhouses (small fortifications) have been erected. These were mainly corrugated iron structures (called Rice pattern blockhouses) as these were pre-fabricated and could be built in a short period of time. From March 1901 blockhouses were also placed on other strategic position such as main routes. By January 1902 the blockhouse lines have been completed. It has been calculated that as much as 8 000 blockhouses were eventually completed stretching over a distance of about 6 000 kilometre (Hattingh & Wessels 1999:41; Van Vollenhoven 1999:81).

For the British it was of particular importance to protect Pretoria after they had occupied it. Therefore they built additional fortifications here (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 180). Pretoria already had four forts - Fort Klapperkop, Fort Schanskop, Fort Wonderboompoort and Fort Daspoortrand – which were erected by the Boers prior to the War Van Vollenhoven 1995: 54-61). In order to turn the town into a complete fortified town the British added to this. As far as what could be determined, 36 stone-and-masonry blockhouses and 25 corrugated iron ones were erected in Pretoria, a total of 61. Most of these did not survive (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 180-181).

The fortification built on Strubenkop, was one of these. Officially it is called the Eastern Redoubt, but sometimes it is also referred to as East Fort. Strubenkop was strategically important to safeguard the town from the east. The Boers also planned to build a fort here, but this never materialized. The site was even used by the British during the Anglo-Transvaal War (1880-1881) as a signal station and lookout point (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 182).

The Eastern Redoubt was the largest fortification built by the British in Pretoria. It is described as having been built from stone and with a corrugated iron roof. Parts of the walls also were made from corrugated iron with loopholes (Van Vollenhoven 1994: 71).

The fort was vacated shortly after the War. Apparently it still was in a good condition in 1963. A photograph from the early 1970's indicates that it had deteriorated much further by then. In 1992 the site was visited and only one short low wall could be identified (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 182), probably due to the vegetation cover being much denser than now.

In 1979 Mervyn Emms draw a plan of the fort. As the fort has by then already deteriorated much the plan may not be correct, but at least it does give a fair indication of the layout thereof.

It seems as if the fort was less formal than the Boer forts mentioned. One gets the idea of a surrounding wall and inner courtyard with. Some of the wall may have been completed with corrugated iron. The fort had three blockhouses and at least two canon positions and was armed by a five inch canon (Van Vollenhoven 1999: 27). This means that blockhouses must have been placed at strategic positions inside or on the walls of the fort.

The fort is also indicated on a sketched diagram of Pretoria during the Anglo-Boer War indicating the communication lines between fortifications (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 210). It shows East Fort to the south-east of a military camp.

## **7. Objectives & Key Questions**

### **7.1 Main aim:**

To make use of archaeological methods, supplemented by other historical sources, to write a comprehensive history of the British fortification called the Eastern Redoubt in Pretoria.

### **7.2 Objectives:**

- To obtain first-hand knowledge of the site, the building methods and materials used as well as other aspects related thereto
- To obtain additional background information on the Eastern Redoubt by using archival and other historical sources
- To obtain information on the lifestyle and way of life of British soldiers at this site during the Anglo-Boer War
- To compare the above mentioned with other known military sites from the same time period
- To write a comprehensive history of the site
- To recommend preservation and management measures for the site
- To make recommendations for cultural tourism opportunities and the management of the site
- To publish the information obtained by the research in scientific journals

### **7.3 Key questions:**

- Does the archaeological data from the Eastern Redoubt site support the historical information that it is associated with the Anglo-Boer War and the British?
- Does the collection of archival and other historical information relating to the Eastern Redoubt add to the comprehensive and representative writing of the history of the site?
- Does the comparison of excavated material from the site assist in obtaining information on the lifestyle of British soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War?
- Can the comparison of artefacts from the site with that of other similar sites be utilised to understand more about this time period in the history of South-Africa?
- Can the study of the site add to the monitoring of erosion and site degradation in order to be able to recommend preservation and heritage management measures?
- To what extent can the assessment of the site, regarding location, accessibility and extent of cultural material and features be used to recommend opportunities for cultural tourism and the management of thereof?
- Does the information obtained add to our knowledge of the Anglo-Boer War?
- Does the information obtained add to our knowledge relating to the everyday activities and the way of life of British soldiers?

### **8. Research methods**

- Archival research

Archival research into relevant data in the South African National archives and British National archives will be conducted and will continue in order to obtain more background information on the Eastern Redoubt. This is used to obtain background information.

- Historical (literature and oral) research

A vast variety of sources will be consulted with the aim of obtaining information on the Eastern Redoubt. This includes historical literature relating to the different artefacts excavated in order to

make an accurate identification thereof. This would place it within a chronological context that can be utilised to link it to the Anglo-Boer War.

- Archaeological excavation

Excavations will be done at the site with the aim of retrieving archaeological material. The amount that will be removed shall be determined by the depth of the archaeological deposit. The aim is to conduct about 2-4 excavations per visit, depending on the time available due to natural factors such as rain and also from what can be determined from the first few excavations.

A permit for excavating will be obtained from the South African Heritage Resources Agency. In accordance with the permit, the appropriate archaeological methods of data gathering and recording will be used. This includes surveying the site, drawing maps and plans, taking photographs and documenting.

Based on the assessment of the site, which is in accordance with the historical importance thereof, as stated under article 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999), it is proposed that archaeological research continue.

The aim of such archaeological research will be to obtain information to be used as indicated above. This will enable the researchers to write a comprehensive history of the Eastern Redoubt.

Through excavation it will be possible to identify artefacts of the time period (roughly 1885-1910) and specifically to identify military objects, such as uniform buttons, ammunition and household objects known to have been used by the British army.

- Collection and preservation

Collection of material remains will be done during the process of excavating the sites. The objects will be packed with care and handled as fragile. Archaeos will handle the issuing of the necessary permits in this regard in collaboration with the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

The material will, according to the standard of archaeological curation which is controlled by the South African Heritage Resources Agency, be kept preserved and curated by an approved cultural institution (the City of Tshwane's own Anglo-Boer War Museum, Fort Klapperkop, is suggested). This is in accordance with the National Heritage Resources act (25 of 1999), as the material must be curated by an institution accredited for this purpose because of its professionally trained staff and suitable storage facilities.

The material will however be made available to the CoT Section Nature Conservation and Resorts for purposes such as displays.

- Documentation

Documentation of the site will be done according to standardised archaeological methodology. This will include location on 1:50 000 maps, taking GPS co-ordinates and photographing and describing the sites, features associated therewith and excavations.

- Analysis and interpretation

The excavated material from each individual site will be analysed and interpreted with the help of specialists. Thereafter it will be compared with the material from other sites in order to highlight differences and similarities. This will help in answering the indicated research questions and therefore to write a comprehensive history of the Eastern Redoubt and its role during the Anglo-Boer War.

## **9. Strategic Support and Logistics**

The project is undertaken by Archaeynos Research as part of our social responsibility programme. The CoT may decide to become a partner herein, but also may just wish to approve the project.

- Beneficiaries:

- City of Tshwane – research reports and management information to be utilised in future
- Archaeynos – research benefits and information available for publication and conferences
- Students, school learners and volunteers – those who wish to participate in the research. These people receive training in archaeological methodology and pick up valuable field experience.

- Who is the funding provider and what is the estimated cost of the project?

Archaeynos Research will give their expertise and equipment for free. It is most likely that Archaeynos will be able to do most of the specialist work needed to analyze the excavated material.

If agreed by CoT an administrative fee can be charged for the participants. Contributions to equipment or food for those assisting would also be appreciated, although one would probably have to provide one's own.

- What assistance is expected from CoT Nature Conservation & Resorts?
  - Approval of the project proposal in principle as soon as possible. This will support the research team in planning.
  - Entrance to the site for vehicles and people on each research visit.
  - Approval of camping on site if needed.
  - Keeping the vegetation cover as short as possible without damaging the historical features on site.
  - Any other assistance CoT wishes to add.
- Time scales:

It is foreseen that the research can take up to five years as it will be done over weekends, long weekends and holiday periods. Specific times will be arranged between Archaetnos and the CoT.

### **10. Environmental Impact:**

The environmental impact of the project is very low. Archaeological excavations are done by hand with trowels and brushes. Only in extreme cases picks and shovels are used. Therefore no heavy machinery is involved.

It is standard practice in archaeology to fill excavations with the same soil coming from them. The excavations rehabilitate reasonably quick so that in one or two years' time one cannot detect where it was done.

It is however believed that at this particular site the importance of the historical remains exceeds that of the natural environment. Any work will always be done in proper liaison with the CoT Nature Conservation and Resorts.

### **11. Abbreviated CV of Dr AC van Vollenhoven**

#### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- Born: 20 January 2010
- Address: Archaetnos, PO BOX 55, Groenkloof, 0027
- Cell phone: 083 291 6104
- Nationality: RSA
- E-mail: antonv@archaetnos.co.za



## **TERTIARY EDUCATION**

- BA 1986, University of Pretoria
- BA (HONS) Archaeology 1988 (cum laude), University of Pretoria
- MA Archaeology 1992, University of Pretoria
- Post-Graduate Diploma in Museology 1993 (cum laude), University of Pretoria
- Diploma Tertiary Education 1993, University of Pretoria
- DPhil Archaeology 2001, University of Pretoria.
- MA Cultural History 1998 (cum laude), University of Stellenbosch
- Management Diploma 2007 (cum laude), Tshwane University of Technology
- DPhil History 2010, University of Stellenbosch

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

- *1988-1991*: Fort Klapperkop Military Museum - Researcher
- *1991-1999*: National Cultural History Museum. Work as Archaeologist, as well as Curator/Manager of Pioneer Museum (1994-1997)
- *1999-2002*: City Council of Pretoria. Work as Curator: Fort Klapperkop Heritage Site and Acting Deputy Manager Museums and Heritage.
- *2002-2007*: City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Work as Deputy Manager Museums and Heritage.
- *August 2007* – present – Managing Director for Archætnos Archaeologists.
- *1988-2003*: Part-time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Pretoria and a part-time lecturer on Cultural Resources Management in the Department of History at the University of Pretoria.

## **OTHER**

- Has published 69 articles in scientific and popular journals on archaeology and history.
- Has been the author and co-author of over 400 unpublished reports on cultural resources surveys and archaeological work.
- Has published a book on the Military Fortifications of Pretoria.
- Has delivered more than 45 papers and lectures at national and international conferences.
- Member of SAHRA Council for 2003 – 2006.
- Member of the South African Academy for Science and Art.
- Member of Association for South African Professional Archaeologists.
- Member of the South African Society for Cultural History (Chairperson 2006-2008).
- Has been editor for the SA Journal of Cultural History 2002-2004.
- Member of Provincial Heritage Resources Agency, Gauteng's HIA adjudication committee.

A list of reports can be viewed on [www.archaetnos.co.za](http://www.archaetnos.co.za)

## 12. References

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National Archives Depot, Transvaal Archives Depot, SS0, R 8496/00.
- Pretorius, F. 1998. **Die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899-1902** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cape Town: Struik.
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- Van Vollenhoven, A.C. 1999. **The military fortifications of Pretoria 1880-1902. A study in historical archaeology**, Pretoria: Technikon Pretoria.
- Van Vollenhoven, A.C. 1999. Britse blokhuse in Pretoria gedurende die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902). **Pretoriana** (112), October.