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Att: Salomon A,

Re: Exceptional Request of a Phase I Archaeological Impact Assessment for the proposed Mixed Housing Development on Erf 808 Germiston South in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng Province.

## **Introduction and background**

Mafmath Consulting was requested to conduct an Archaeological survey by GIBB (Pty) Ltd for the proposed mixed housing development in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng Province, in accordance with the SAHRA Minimum Standards for the Archaeology and Palaeontology. The Minimum Standards clearly specify the requirements of a project of this nature. The information presented to us is that the property in question is not a listed activity in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) NEMA as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) regulation of 2010. Hence, an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be conducted. Nonetheless, considering the extent of the area, an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) was proposed. However, a site inspection conducted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 on behalf of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality revealed that the area proposed for development does not warrant a full AIA. In fact, as will be seen below, the proposed area is disturbed such that no archaeological material could have remained *in situ* on the affected property. Three structures were however noted, and these include a fire station and associated structures, as well as a church. None of these will be negatively impacted by the proposed development. The proposed development will mostly concentrate on the southern section which is abandoned and seriously degraded by previous industrial activities.

## **Site location and description**

The proposed development is located on Erf 808 Germiston south which is situated within Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng Province. The total extent of the development area is estimated to be about 7Ha. The site can be accessed through Victoria or President Street, and is located south of the city of Germiston. With an exception of the area used for activities related to the fire station and the church, the site is predominantly abandoned and used for dumping refuse materials and also for informal trading, sectional space on the western tip is used as a park. The area's topography is fairly flat and mostly characterised by demolished structure. The coordinates of the approximate centre are: S26°13'13.53", E28°10'13.19"

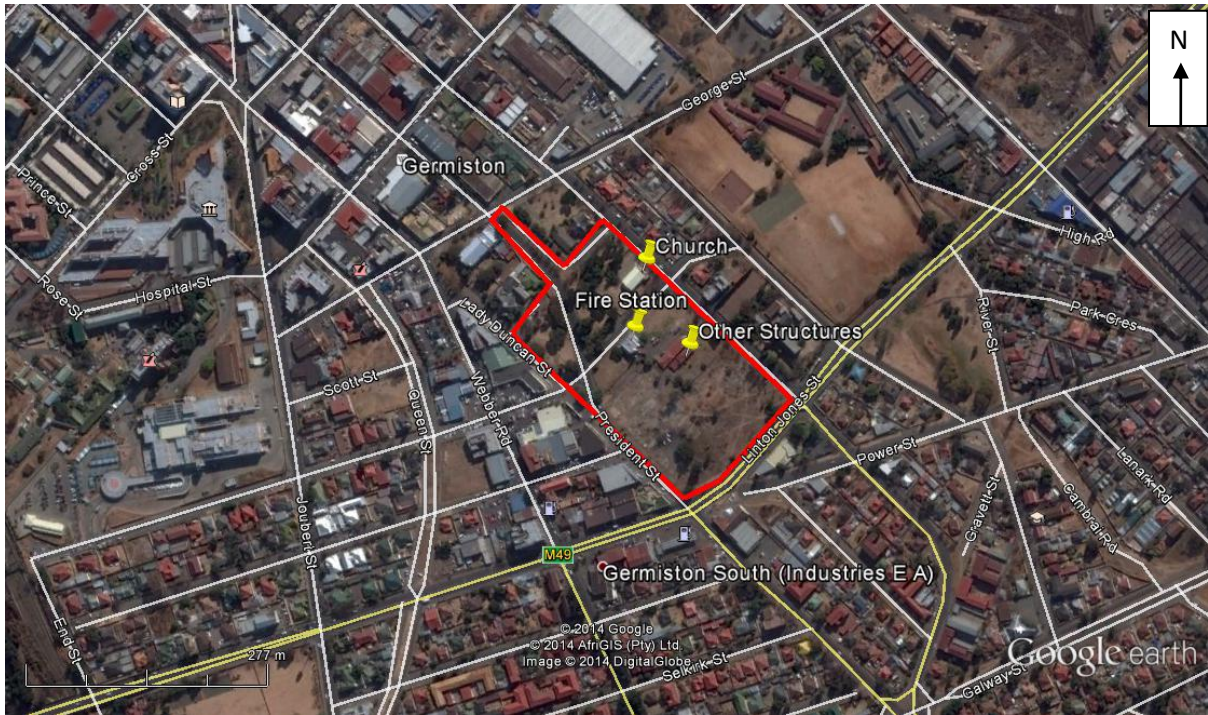


Figure 1: Google map of the proposed area as demarcated in red (Courtesy Google earth).



Figure 2: Topographical map of the proposed area.

## **Nature of the proposed project**

The Ekurhuleni Development Company (EDC) a Social Housing Institution with a 100% shareholding by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) has been given a mandate by the EMM to provide housing within the municipality area, as well as other related activities. As a result, portions of land which may be used for development have been offered to the EDC. ERF 808 Germiston South is one of such property which has been earmarked for development.

## **Archaeological and cultural sites around the development site**

### Introduction

The area around Germiston has been less intensively surveyed in the past years, to exaggerate the matter is that until very recent, several development were carried out in the region without conduction of AIA studies. Few AIA have thus been conducted, likewise very few academic research have been partitioned in the region. It is without doubt that archaeological material might have been destroyed by development over most of the past years that development has occurred in the area.

### Stone Age

The first and longest part of human history is the Stone Age, which began with the appearance of early humans around 3 - 2 million years ago. Stone Age people were hunters, gatherers and scavengers who were nomadic. Their stone tools are found in most places in southern Africa.

Early Stone Age 2 000 000 - 150 000

Middle Stone Age 150 000 - 30 000 BP

Late Stone Age 30 000 - until c. AD 200

As aforementioned, due to a lack of academic research, very few Stone Age sites are known to exist in the larger area. These include Pietkloof, Melvillekoppies, Roodekop, Linksfeld and Primrose. None of these are located close to the proposed area of development. The proposed area is built up, and if any sites of significance existed, they would have been destroyed during the past.

## Iron Age

Period covering the last 1800 years, and is associated with the arrival of new people who brought a new way of life to southern Africa. They established settled villages, cultivated domestic crops such as sorghum, millet and beans, and they herded cattle as well as goats and also sheep. Since they produced their own iron tools, archaeologists call this the Iron Age.

Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 900

Middle Iron Age AD 900 - AD 1300

Late Iron Age AD 1300 - AD 1830

The survey did not identify any Iron Age sites, this is synonymous with other Archaeological survey conducted in the area. Very few Iron Age sites are known to exist in the larger area of development, and include Iron Age furnace in Melville Koppies, another three furnaces were found at Lonehill in the far northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Lastly, another furnace was found near Bruma Lake. Other sites of notes occur near the town of Alberton.

## Historical period

The history of Germiston dates back to the 1800s. The city was established when John Jack from the farm of Germiston and August Simmer from Vacha both in Germany resided and made fortune through mine industry in the area we now call Germiston. The city is now the seat of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and includes much of the East Rand, and is also considered part of Greater Johannesburg. It is South Africa's sixth largest city and over 70% of the western world's gold passes through its gold refinery. Its gold refinery, the Rand Refinery, was established in 1921 and is the world's largest gold refinery. There are several historic buildings in Germiston, such that the city can be considered the historical city of South Africa, some of the historic buildings in the city includes, though not limited to, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St Boniface's Church and Alexander Hotel. No structures or features of historically significant are located on the footprint of the area proposed for housing, the structure currently used for fire station activities will not be negatively affected by this proposed development. Nonetheless, several foundations of already demolished structures were noted, these are related to earlier developments, and are over 60 years of age. A structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated there with.

Therefore these structures are protected by Section 34(1) of the National Heritage Resource Act, 25 of 1999.

### **Recommendations and conclusions**

Investigation of past archaeological studies in the region, aerial photography, coupled by a site visit revealed that the development is proposed on an area where no archaeological sites, burial grounds or isolated artefacts can be found. On that note, I thus recommend that the project be exempted from any archaeological assessment studies, since the landscape is severely degraded for any archaeological site/and or artifact to be acknowledged.

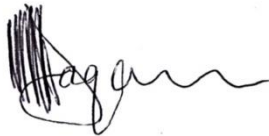
- Although the noted foundations (structures) are arguably of low significance, they are protected Section 34(1) of the National Heritage Act by virtue of being over 60 years of age. According to Section 34(1), no person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority, in this case, Gauteng Heritage Resource Authority (GAHRA). In accordance with the said Act, a permit will have to be applied for, in order to demolish them.
- Likewise, the church, fire station and associated structure have high significance value by virtue of being over 60 years of age and also by their aesthetic value. Despite that they are not listed in the heritage record of Gauteng sites, these buildings are important in the larger history of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. It is understood that the development will not impact negatively on them, however, if the developer decide to alter any of the features of these buildings, it is strictly recommended that a built heritage specialist conducts a second phase heritage impact assessment. Altering in this instance might include change of colour, fitting of new tile, or even it be ceiling, these will be classified as altering and will require a second phase heritage impact assessment. Depending on the nature of the proposal, there might be a need for monitoring such instigation.

It is the responsibility of the developer to notify contractors and workers about archaeological material (e.g. pottery, remains of stone-walling, graves, etc) and fossils

that may be located underground. Thus, unavailability of archaeological material does not mean absentee, archaeological material might be hidden underground, and as such the client is reminded to take precautions during construction.

In the event that archaeological materials are unearthed, all construction within a radius of at least 10m of such indicator should cease and the area be demarcated by a danger tape. Accordingly, a professional archaeologist or SAHRA officer should be contacted immediately. In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the contractor to protect the site from publicity (i.e., media) until a mutual agreement is reached. It is mandatory to report any incident of human remains encountered to the South African Police Services and SAHRA staff member.

Noteworthy that any measures to cover up the suspected archaeological material or to collect any resources is illegal and punishable by law. In the same manner, no person may exhume or collect such remains, whether of recent origin or not, without the endorsement by SAHRA.



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[http://www.gautenghappenings.co.za/germiston\\_homepage.htm](http://www.gautenghappenings.co.za/germiston_homepage.htm)

## Appendix A: Photos



**Figure 3:** View of the south-western section of the proposed area. Note the disturbance on the site.



**Figure 4:** View of the southern section of the proposed area.



**Figure 5:** View of some of the activities on the area proposed for development.



**Figure 6:** View of some of the remnant of structures in the proposed area.



**Figure 7:** View of disturbance noted in the area proposed for development.



**Figure 8:** An overview of the Fire Station from the front.



**Figure 9:** An overview of the church noted on the north-eastern section of the proposed area.



**Figure 10:** View of other structures in the area proposed for development.