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To: Me. Dashantha Moodley

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**RE: SHORT REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES LOCATED ON THE FARM RIETFONTEIN 375JR TO BE IMPACTED BY THE MOOIKLOOF ECO ESTATE DEVELOPMENT**

APelser Archaeological Consulting cc (APAC cc) was appointed by Bokamoso Landscape Architects & Environmental Consultants CC (on behalf of Balwin Properties) to undertake an assessment of known cultural heritage sites on a portion of the farm Rietfontein 375JR in the greater Tshwane area of Gauteng. These sites will be impacted on by the Mooikloof Eco Estate development.

***Background to the Project***

During an October 2003 survey of cultural heritage resources on Rietfontein 375JR by African Heritage Consultants cc, seven (7) sites were identified in the area and described in a report by Dr. Udo Kusel (Kusel 2003: 2-7). It was these sites that formed the focus of the December 2020 field assessment by APAC cc, with the aim being to locate these sites again, determine their extent and state of preservation, as well as to provide recommendations in regard to the way forward in terms of the mitigation measures required to negate the impacts of the proposed development on these sites.

***Relevant Legislation***

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act No.107 of 1998), as amended.

**The National Heritage Resources Act**

According to the above-mentioned act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artefacts, structures and sites older than 100 years;

**AJ Pelser BA (UNISA), BA (Hons) (Archaeology) [WITS], MA (Archaeology) [WITS]**

- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography;
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts;
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years;
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years;
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites;
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years;
- h. Meteorites and fossils; and
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

**The National Estate includes the following:**

- a. Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- b. Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- c. Historical settlements and townscapes;
- d. Landscapes and features of cultural significance;
- e. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- f. Sites of Archaeological and palaeontological importance;
- g. Graves and burial grounds;
- h. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery; and
- i. Movable objects (e.g. archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens, military, ethnographic, books etc.).

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process to be followed in order to determine whether any heritage resources are located within the area to be developed as well as the possible impact of the proposed development thereon. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) only looks at archaeological resources.

According to Section 38 (1) of the Act, an HIA must be done under the following circumstances:

- a. The construction of a linear development (road, wall, power line, canal etc.) exceeding 300m in length.
- b. The construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length.
- c. Any development or other activity that will change the character of a site and exceed 5 000m<sup>2</sup> or involve three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof.
- d. Re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000m<sup>2</sup>.
- e. Any other category provided for in the regulations of the SAHRA or a provincial heritage authority.

***Description of the Study Area***

The study area is located on a portion of the farm Rietfontein 375JR, in the east of Pretoria and within the Greater Tshwane Municipal area of Gauteng. The sites located in the area will be impacted on by Balwin Properties's so-called Mooikloof Eco Estate residential development.

The general topography of the area is relatively flat and open, although there are some rocky outcrops and ridges present in sections. Visibility and access during the December 2020 field assessment was made difficult by dense vegetation cover (trees, bushes/shrubs and grass). The total development footprint was not covered during the fieldwork as the focus was on assessing the known heritage sites located here during the 2003 work conducted by Kusel.



Figure 1: General location of study area (Google Earth 2021).



Figure 2: Closer location of study area and known sites (Google Earth 2021).



## ***Results of Assessment***

The 1<sup>st</sup> site (Site 3.1) reported on by Kusel was the original farmhouse and yard on this portion of Rietfontein 375JR. The house and related structures – although older than 60 years of age – will not be impacted on by the development (according to the representative of Balwin Properties Mr.Warden) and was therefore not visited during December 2020.

Site 2 (Site 3.2 in Kusel's report) was a historical cemetery containing 3 graves of which 2 belongs to the original owners of the farm the Opperman family. Jacobus Opperman died in 1945 and Sibella Opperman (born Erasmus) passed away in 1958). As with the original farmhouse and yard Kusel recommended that the site should be preserved.

The site was situated at **S25 50 59.50 E28 20 37.50**. However, the December 2020 assessment could not locate the site and graves and even though the specific location and a wider area were searched it seems as if the site has been either destroyed or relocated. No evidence of a formal relocation could be traced at SAHRA however. A Google Earth image of the sites location dating to 2008 shows large scale earthworks here and in the larger area (as part of the The Hills Golf course development) and it is therefore more than likely that the site does not exist anymore. In the December 2017 Issue of The Hills Game Reserve Lifestyle Estate Magazine in an article on Rietspruit Farm History, it is indicated that during the development of the golf course on The Hills the remains of Koos (Jacobus) and Sybel (Sibella) were relocated to the Pretoria East Cemetery (The Hills Magazine 2017: 17).



**Figure 3: The grave site (Site 3.1) in 2003 (courtesy Kusel 2003).**



**Figure 4: The approximate location of the grave site in 2020.**



**Figure 5: The location of the grave site in 2008 with earthworks visible (Google Earth 2020).**



The next site (Site 3.3) recorded by Kusel in 2003 was a large cattle kraal. According to him this was kraal built from local stone without mortar and is typical of early kraals on Boer farms.

The site is located at **S25 50 56.60 E28 20 50.80**. The site could be located during the December 2020, although visibility was hampered by the dense vegetation. It is recommended that an exclusion buffer of 20m is placed around the site if it can be avoided by the development and can be preserved in situ. If the site cannot be preserved then the recommended mitigation measures will be the detailed mapping and drawing of the site before demolition.



**Figure 6: Site 3.3 in 2003 (courtesy Kusel 2003).**



**Figure 7: A section of the kraal in 2020.**





**Figure 8: Another view of the cattle kraal wall at Site 3.3.**

The next site is represented by 3 smaller square structures (Site 3.4 in Kusel's 2003 report). According to him these 3 enclosures were probably used for keeping smaller livestock such as goats or sheep.

The site was located at approximately **S25 50 51.70 E28 20 51.70**. With the dense vegetation present in December 2020 it was difficult to see the structures however. It is recommended that an exclusion buffer of 20m is placed around the site if it can be avoided by the development and can be preserved in situ. If the site cannot be preserved then the recommended mitigation measures will be the detailed mapping and drawing of the site before demolition.





**Figure 9: One of the stone enclosures at Site 3.4.**



**Figure 10: Another view of Site 3.4.**

Site 3.5 in the 2003 report of Kusel was the so-called “Bywoner” settlement. The site consisted of several stone ruins including homesteads built with stone and clay. A Mr. Gerhard Breedenkamp told Dr.Kusel that this site and the cattle kraal were all part of the Bywoner settlement on the farm. Bywoners were poor whites that after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) were allowed to settle on the farms of rich landowners.

The site is located at **S25 50 53.50 E28 20 55.20**. The December 2020 assessment was again hampered by the dense vegetation and all the structures could not viewed. An exclusion buffer of 20m around the site is recommended in the interim if it can be avoided by the development and can be preserved in situ. If the site cannot be preserved then the recommended mitigation measures is Historical Archaeological Excavations, Detailed Mapping and drawing of the site before demolition.



**Figure 11: The Bywoner site (Site 3.5) in 2003 (courtesy Kusel 2003).**





**Figure 12: A partial view of the Bywoner site in 2020.**



**Figure 13: Another view of Site 3.5 in 2020.**

The next site that had to be assessed (Site 3.6 in the 2003 report) was that of a larger cattle kraal. According to Kusel the kraal is approximately 25 x 45m in size and is constructed of dry stone walling. It was part of the original farm settlement and lies just east of farmhouse.

The site is located at **S25 50 47.20 E28 20 46.20**. Due to the dense vegetation the site could not be viewed in its entirety during December 2020. It is recommended that an exclusion buffer of 20m is placed around the site if it can be avoided by the development and can be preserved in situ. If the site cannot be preserved then the recommended mitigation measures will be the detailed mapping and drawing of the site before demolition.



**Figure 14: Site 3.6 in 2003 (courtesy Kusel 2003).**





**Figure 15: The location of the site in December 2020.**



**Figure 16: Part of the walling of the kraal at Site 3.6 is visible here.**



The last site (Site 3.7) identified by Kusel in 2003 was that of a Late Iron Age (LIA) stone-walled enclosure related to the Manala Ndebele who had settled the area in the past. The site is however not located in the development area and will therefore not be impacted. The site was not assessed during the December 2020 fieldwork session.

Site Location: **S25 51 13.40 E28 21 16.00.**



**Figure 17: Location of the known sites in the study area (Google Earth 2020).**





**Figure 18: Closer view of site locations and the interim 20m buffers placed around them (Google Earth 2020).**

### ***Conclusions & Recommendations***

APelser Archaeological Consulting cc (APAC cc) was appointed by Bokamoso Landscape Architects & Environmental Consultants CC (on behalf of Balwin Properties) to undertake an assessment of known cultural heritage sites on a portion of the farm Rietfontein 375JR in the greater Tshwane area of Gauteng. These sites will be impacted on by the Mooikloof Eco Estate development.

During an October 2003 survey of cultural heritage resources on Rietfontein 375JR by African Heritage Consultants cc, seven (7) sites were identified in the area and described in a report by Dr. Udo Kusel (Kusel 2003: 2-7). It was these sites that formed the focus of the December 2020 field assessment by APAC cc, with the aim being to locate these sites again, determine their extent and state of preservation, as well as to provide recommendations in regard to the way forward in terms of the mitigation measures required to negate the impacts of the proposed development on these sites.

Visibility and access during the December 2020 field assessment was made difficult by dense vegetation cover. The total development footprint was not covered during the fieldwork as the focus was on assessing the known heritage sites located here during the 2003 work.

Of the 7 sites identified during the 2003 work, two will not be impacted by the development and no mitigation measures are required. This is the original farmhouse and related structures, as well as the LIA stone-walled enclosure on another portion of the farm Rietfontein. The historical graveyard could not be located during the 2020 assessment and it seems likely that the site and graves on it had been relocated during 2008 earthworks related to the golf course development on The Hills.

The following is recommended in terms of the 4 remaining sites:

1. Cattle Kraal (Site 3.3): Buffer 20m. Detailed Mapping and drawing and then Demolition Application.

2. Stone structures x3 (Site 3.4): Buffer 20m. Detailed Mapping and drawing and then Demolition Application.
3. Stone Ruins (Bywoners) (Site 3.5): Buffer 20m. Historical Archaeological Excavations; Detailed Mapping and drawing and Demolition Application.
4. Cattle Kraal (Site 3.6): Buffer 20m. Detailed Mapping and drawing and then Demolition Application.

It is also recommended that the vegetation around these sites be cleared as a matter of course to allow the detailed study (mapping and drawing) of the sites and structures on it. This should be done in conjunction with the Heritage Specialist.

Should there be any questions or comments on the contents of this document please contact the author as soon as possible.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anton Pelser', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anton Pelser



## References

1. General and Closer views of Study Area Location and Distribution of Heritage Sites: Google Earth 2020 & 2021.
2. Kusel, U. Dr. **Survey of Cultural Heritage Resources on the farm Rietfontein 375JR, Pretoria District**. Unpublished Report. African Heritage Consultants cc. October 2003.
3. Republic of South Africa. 1998. National Environmental Management Act (no 107 of 1998). Pretoria: The Government Printer. 2017.
4. The Hills Game Reserve Lifestyle Estate Magazine. **December Issue 2017**. Issued November 30 2017.