
**REVISED BRAKFORTEIN RESERVOIR HERITAGE
REPORT AND MITIGATION**

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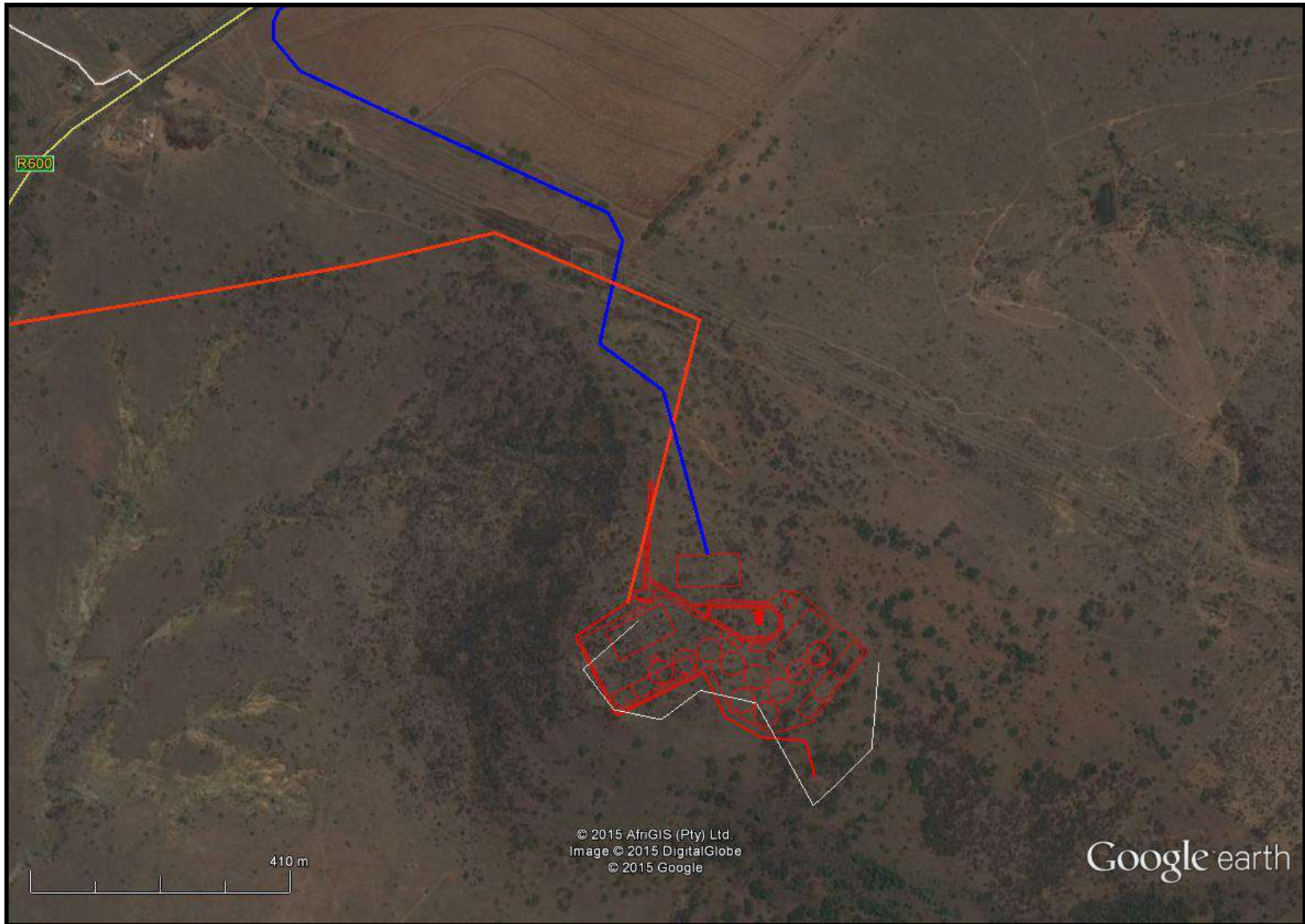
INTRODUCTION

This report is an update of the results of various meetings between various consultants, IAPs, and Amafa KZN, since the original heritage report was submitted. The original plan was to place the water treatment works and reservoir on the top of Brakfontein koppie. This would have resulted in most of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War site being destroyed (fig. 1).

The HIA red flagged the projected, noted that it had a Class 2 Rating (i.e. worthy of Provincial heritage status) and that it was a pristine battlefield. It was for this reason that the HIA did not support the location of the reservoir and treatment works. The HIA requested that alternative sites be chosen and that no impact occurs on heritage site. Other areas related to the 2nd Anglo-Boer War (2ABW) above the 1 200m contour lines were suggested as sacrifice sites.

Two societies also objected to the development: the SA Military History Society and the Society for the Preservation of Militaria

FIG. 1: ORIGINAL LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA



POST-HIA REPORT MEETINGS

Subsequent to the HIA report there have been some meetings regarding the project. Several alternative sites were chosen away from the Brakfontein site. WMN did an analysis considering the economics, engineering, environmental and heritage aspects of each alternative site. The only viable option at the 1200m contour line would have increased the costs of the project substantially. This would have placed the project behind Spionkop in an area that was already degraded, even if it was part of the Battlefield.

The best-case scenario was to split the waterworks and reservoir sections into two areas. The waterworks was placed to the northwest of the R600. This area has been degraded by farming activity; however, it will still require an HIA. The reservoir, is the much smaller component, and remains on Brakfontein.

A site survey was undertaken on two occasions to determine the location of features at Brakfontein. The results of the first survey were used for the relocation of the reservoir. The second survey noted more features on the koppie and this was used in the planning of the location and size of the reservoir. The survey results are shown in figure 3.

Umlando stated that while they were not convinced that the Brakfontein Reservoir should occur on the site, they would suggest Amafa KZN is contracted at this stage for comment. If Amafa KZN was not against the development, then Umlando would consider a way forward for the project. A meeting was set up with two representatives from Amafa KZN, WMN, Jeffares and Green, and Umlando.

At the meeting, the urgency of the project was explained, as well as the engineering restrictions. Amafa KZN, agreed that the project was important and that it could continue provided that some offsets occurred. Umlando, WMN, Jeffares and Green were then left to discuss a way forward with minimal impact.

FIG 2: NEW LOCATIONS OF THE TREATMENT WORKS AND RESERVOIR



The three companies would then need to approach Amafa KZN with a new management plan, and be required to discuss this with the two historical societies.

The rest of the meeting revolved around creating a minimal working space for the reservoir in an area that has the least amount of features and the least visual impact. Halfway through the meeting Umlando suggested that the roof of the reservoir is converted into a viewing platform. In this way, the reservoir is “hidden” from the site and from the visitor’s view when on site. The viewing platform would have basic railings and signage.

The final estimated layout of the reservoir would also depend on the geotechnical report. This would decide where the reservoir could be built, how deep it could go below the surface, etc. etc.

Umlando suggested the following management plan:

1. The entire site is digitally scanned under the supervision of Umlando.
2. All graves in the footprint will be removed – these are archaeological graves and would not require a social impact assessment.
3. All footprints will be surveyed with a metal detector.
4. The reservoir footprint will be excavated. This will involve a checkerboard excavation with assessments made as the excavation progresses. Initially 30 days was estimated as a baseline for excavations.
5. Results of the study will be published in the SA Military History Society Journal.
6. A mobile display for various museums and schools will be made from the results of the excavations and digital scans.
7. The reservoir roof would be converted to a viewing platform with minimal displays, etc.
8. The reservoir would be “restored” to have a minimal visual impact

A final meeting was made that included Umlando, Jeffares and Green, WMN, Amafa KZN, and representatives of the historical societies. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the new management plan and assess how the historical societies viewed this plan. IF the historical societies vetoed the management plan, this would imply a lengthy administrative process as the permit application would be gazetted and the objected to.

This meeting went through the entire process of the project, and the results, and included the heritage management plan. The historical societies gave their reasons for objecting and the project was further discussed.

At the end of the meeting, the historical societies agreed to the management plan and requested to be kept informed about the project. They are to write letters stating that they no longer object to the project provided that the current footprint is not altered.

Umlando suggested that mitigation begins in early 2016 as the mitigation as a lengthy process. Umlando also noted that there could be unforeseen delays in the mitigation, e.g. more graves were found, graves could be well preserved and thus take longer to excavate, the excavations might find subsurface features that would require extra excavations, etc.