

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
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Enquiries: Thingahangwi Tracy Tshivhase

Tel: 012 941 4968

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CaseID: 15117

Date: Thursday May 28, 2020

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Final Decision

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Mr Trust Mlilo

Sativa Travel and Environmental Consultants

Head Office/Gauteng Office 135 Pitzer Road Glen Austin Midrand 1685

Proposed removal of a section of of Vereeniging Concentration Camp Cemetery (Beaconsfield Cemetery)to create space for construction vehicles and heavy equipment during construction of the Sedibeng Regional Sanitation Scheme Pipe line to Pump Station 2 in Vereeniging Gauteng Province.

Sativa Travel and Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd was appointed by GIBB (Pty) Ltd on behalf of Rand Water to investigate the viability of removing a section of a historical Concentration Camp (Beaconsfield Cemetery) fence for construction purposes. The proposed activity will include the removal of approximately 80m of perimeter fence to create space for construction vehicles and heavy equipment during construction of the Sedibeng Regional Sanitation Scheme Pipeline to Pump Station 2 in Vereeniging, Gauteng Province.

Mlilo, T. November 2009. Status Quo Report for Sedibeng Regional Sanitation Scheme: Pipeline to Pump Station 2 Running in The Vicinity of Vereeniging Concentration Camp Cemetery (Beaconsfield Cemetery) in Vereeniging, Gauteng Province.

These were the findings of the assessment:

- The removal of the fence line is not detrimental to the graves.
- The fence in question was recently erected, no graves were damaged during construction of the fence.
- The removal and re-erection of the same fence will not harm the graves.
- The fence has no historical significance because it is fairly recent, as such it does not trigger Section 34 of the NHRA which protect structures and buildings older than 60 years.
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The following recommendations were provided:

1. The removal and restoration of the fence must be done manually to avoid accidental damage of graves and excessive vibration caused by movement of construction vehicles.
2. Section which are not going to be removed must be covered to protect graves from dust pollution
3. A professional archaeologist/heritage practitioner must be retained to monitor the removal and restoration of the fence.
4. The contractor must ensure that no grave goods or artefacts should be removed from the graves.
5. No stone robbing or removal of any material is allowed. Any disturbance or alteration on this graveyard would be illegal and punishable by law, under section 36 (3) of the National Heritage Resources Act NHRA of 1999 (Act 25 of 1999);
6. The developer/contractor must maintain a buffer zone of approximately 50m between graves and the working area in accordance with heritage legislation.
7. No dumping of construction material is allowed within the burial site and no un-monitored alteration or excavation within the cemetery may occur;
8. Construction workers must be notified and oriented about the sensitivity of the affected burial site before construction commences.

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9. Noteworthy that any measures to cover up any accidental damage of graves or to collect any grave goods 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 relevant authority.

Final Comment:

SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves Unit (BGG) acknowledges the findings and recommendations of the Heritage Specialist. Based on the nature and significance of the heritage site, a decision was taken not to authorize the removal of fence for the following reasons:

1. Concentration camp burial sites were only fenced much after their initial burial. In some cases, graves were only marked later for visibility.
2. There is a high risk that the fence may run over graves. Therefore, digging the boundary of the concentration camp may result in unearthing of human remains.
3. Construction cars and the heavy equipment may disrupt graves.
4. Developing near a concentration camp may set the wrong precedent which may have unwanted consequences.
5. There is a high possibility that sewage spillage may occur at a latter stage and flood the Concentration camp if installation of the proposed pipelines is authorized.

It is SAHRA's responsibility to ensure long-time survival of all heritage sites through conservation. To achieve this mandate and for the above reasons, we advise the developer to find an alternate place where the pipeline can be installed.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Removal of a section of perimeter fence for Beaconfield cemetery

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Thingahangwi Tracy Tshivhase
Heritage Officer: Permitting
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Mimi Seetelo
Manager: Burial Grounds & Graves Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/537015>

(, Ref: Removal of perimeter fence: Beaconfields Cemetery)

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.