

REF: 566HIA

19 October 2021

Att: Ms Mimi Seetelo

Burial Grounds and Graves Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency
PO Box 4637
Cape Town
8000

By email: MSeetelo@sahra.org.za

Dear Mrs Seetelo,

INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRESENCE OF POSSIBLE HUMAN REMAINS – NORTHAM ELANDS OPEN CAST MINE - FARM ELANDSFONTEIN 440 JQ, DISTRICT OF BRITS, SOUTH AFRICA

1. Introduction

PGS Heritage (Pty) Ltd (PGS), was appointed by Northam Elands Open Cast mine to assist with the identification of possible burial grounds and grave that could potentially be impacted by the mining activities related to their opencast mine on the farm Elandsfontein 440JQ, close to Brits in the North West Province (**Figure 1**).

The Elands Mine operates under Environmental Authorisation (approved by the DMRE on 21 December 2006 – Ref No: (NW) 30/5/1/2/3/2/1/280EM). An updated Heritage Impact Assessment was completed and submitted to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) - case: 15430.

2. Background

On Friday 30 July 2021 it was reported that part of a human skull (cranium) was found on the eastern portion of the Elands mine. The incident was reported to the police (SAPS Mmakau) (OB:1256/07/2021). PGS was consulted and advised to open a case with the



Figure 2 – General view of survey conditions



Figure 3 – View of surveyed area towards the south

4. Heritage findings

Two archaeologists from PGS assisted by the environmental Officer of Northam Elands mine did a walk through survey of the area in question. A transect survey with a 20-30 meter spacing between surveyors were conducted on the 23 September 2021 (**Figure 4**).

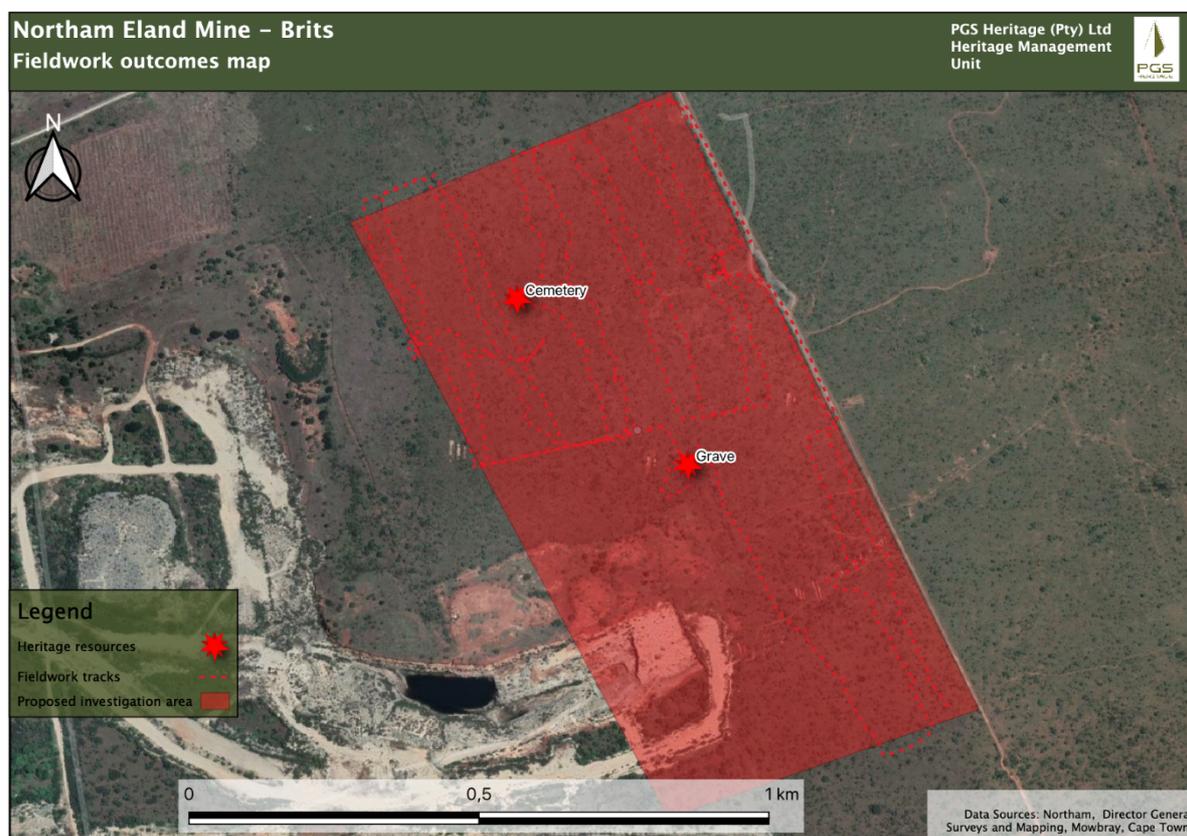


Figure 4 – Track Logs and heritage sites from the survey undertaken on 23 September 2021

During the survey one burial ground and one single grave was identified (**Figure 4**). The burial ground was identified in the Heritage Impact Assessment that was completed for the project by Dr J van Schalkwyk. The burial ground is fenced and marked as a no-go area (**Figure 5**).

As single grave consisting only of a stone packed dressing in an east-west alignment was identified alongside a service road. There was no headstone present (**Figure 6**). This newly identified grave is within 50 meters of the berm that was constructed during the site survey. Upon informing mine management tipping of over burden was stopped and the berm

immediately realigned as indicated in **Figure 9**. All new activities will be kept at 100 meters from the identified grave (refer to **Figure 10**).



Figure 5 – View of fenced burial ground



Figure 6 – View of single grave found next to road (newly constructed berm visible in the background)



Figure 7 – View of single grave

5. Assessment of historic maps

The 1943 map of the study area does not provide any indication of any settlements in the area that can be related to the burial ground and grave (Figure 8).

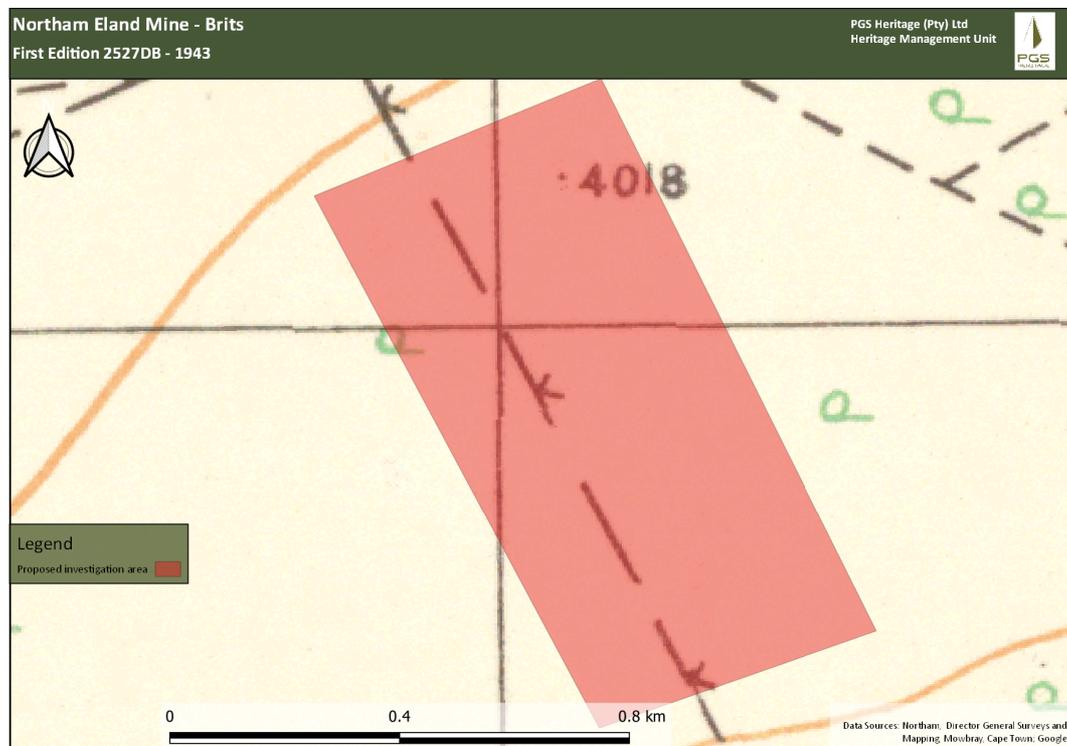


Figure 8 – 1st Edition 1939 Topographic Map (2628AB)

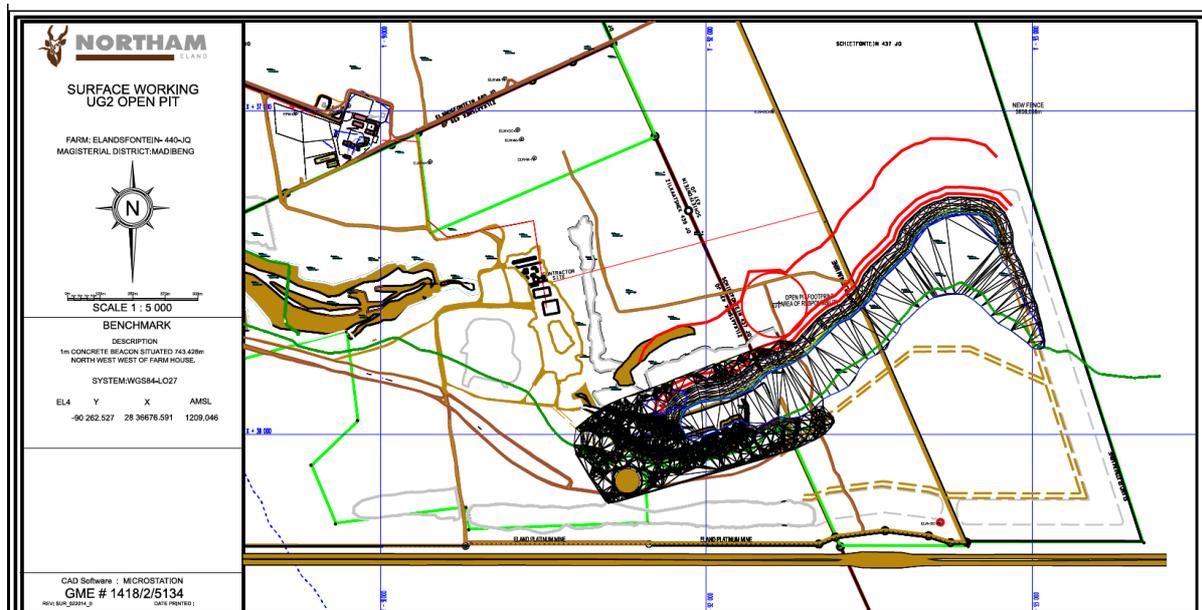


Figure 9 – Current and proposed layout with buffer indicated



Figure 10 – Implemented buffer around identified grave

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The field assessment as completed by PGS has confirmed that the human remains (cranium fragment) did not originate from any open or disturbed burial grounds or grave located within the assessment area.

The survey further confirmed the presence of a single burial ground as previously identified in the HIA completed for the project.

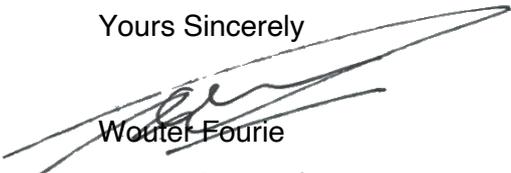
An additional grave was identified on the side of a service road within 50 meters from a new overburden berm being tipped by the mine. The activities were immediately stopped by the mine and contractor and the berm realigned to keep further mining activities outside of the recommended 100 meter buffer from the South African Heritage Resources' (SAHRA) Burial Ground and Graves Unit (BGG).

It is recommended that:

- The existing service road is closed off or realigned to ensure no further traffic close to the grave;
- The grave must be demarcated with a no-go sign;
- All further activities must be kept outside of the 100 meter no development buffer around the grave; and
- In the event that the buffer cannot be implemented the grave must be relocated with all the relevant permits and authorisations.

Should you have any queries, please contact Wouter Fourie (email: wouter@pgsheritage.com; Tel: (012) 332 5305).

Yours Sincerely



Wouter Fourie

Accredited Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA)

Accredited Professional Heritage Practitioner (APHP)