

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**PROPOSED SELCOURT EXT 5 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
ON PORTION 3 OF THE FARM VLAKFONTEIN 103 IR,
EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, GAUTENG PROVINCE.**

Compiled for:
MARSH VIKELA (PTY) LTD
Tel: 011 506 5319
Fax: 086 673 3177

Developer:
NU-WAY HOUSING
DEVELOPMENTS (PTY) LTD
Tel: 011 789 3334
Fax: 011 886 2801



Archaeology Africa CC
Tel: 012 332 5305
Fax: 012 332 2625
Cell: 082 717 6661
E-mail: polke@lantic.net

Compiled by: P.D. Birkholtz
Date: 14 January 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Archaeology Africa was appointed by *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd* to undertake a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Selcourt Ext. 5 Housing Development. The development is to be constructed on Portion 3 of the farm Vlakfontein 103 IR. The project developer is *Nu-Way Housing Developments (Pty) Ltd*.

This study forms part of the Environmental Scoping and Impact Assessment procedures undertaken for the proposed development.

During the initial fieldwork a site was identified which had the potential of being a human grave. Mitigation measures were proposed consisting of intensive social consultation with local residents to establish whether this feature indeed represented a grave or not. Subsequently, four days were spent in KwaThema communicating with local religious leaders and residents. In the end the person who had constructed the feature was identified and communicated with. It was established that the feature was not a human burial, and had no further significance for the person who had constructed it. As such the site can be destroyed.

It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed development may continue and that no heritage reasons can be given for it to be altered or stopped in any way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND 3

2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 3

2.1 STUDY AREA 3

2.2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 3

3. METHODOLOGY 2

3.1 DESKTOP STUDY 2

3.2 FIELD SURVEYS 2

3.3 CONSULTING WITH LOCAL INTERESTED AND/OR AFFECTED PARTIES 2

3.4 ASPECTS REGARDING VISIBILITY AND CONSTRAINTS 2

4. FINDINGS 3

4.1 DESKTOP STUDY FINDINGS 3

4.1.1 Cartographic findings 3

4.1.2 General Aspects about the Area’s History 8

4.1.2.1 The Vlaktefontein Gold Mine 8

4.1.2.2 The Power Station 8

4.1.2.3 KwaThema 9

4.2 SOCIAL CONSULTATION FINDINGS 9

4.3 SURVEY FINDINGS 10

4.3.1 VLF-1 10

4.3.1.1 Site Location 10

4.3.1.2 General Description 10

4.3.1.3 Proposed Mitigation 10

4.3.1.4 Mitigation measures undertaken 11

5. CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS 13

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEXURES

Annexure A Site Distribution Map

Annexure B Legislative Framework

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Archaeology Africa was appointed by *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd* to undertake a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Selcourt Ext. 5 Housing Development. The development is to be constructed on Portion 3 of the farm Vlakfontein 103 IR. The project developer is *Nu-Way Housing Developments (Pty) Ltd*. This study forms part of the Basic Assessment Report in terms of the new Environmental Regulations.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Study Area

The study area consists of the Portion 3 of the farm Vlakfontein 103 IR, and is situated south-west of Selcourt and east of Kwa-Thema. The western boundary of the study area is defined by the Tonk Meter Way, while its northern boundary is along South Road. The study area's eastern boundary is defined by a power line.

The proposed development is situated within an ever expanding residential area, with significant levels of disturbance already prevalent in the study area and surroundings. This includes earthmoving activities, illegal dumping sites and old agricultural fields. In terms of the last aspect, it is worth noting that almost the entire study area bears evidence with regards to past agricultural activities. According to historical maps accessed for the purposes of the study, agricultural fields have existed on the property since at least the late 1930s.

2.2 Proposed Development

The development proposes the phased construction of affordable housing in the range of R350,000 per unit of which there are approximately 1200 units.

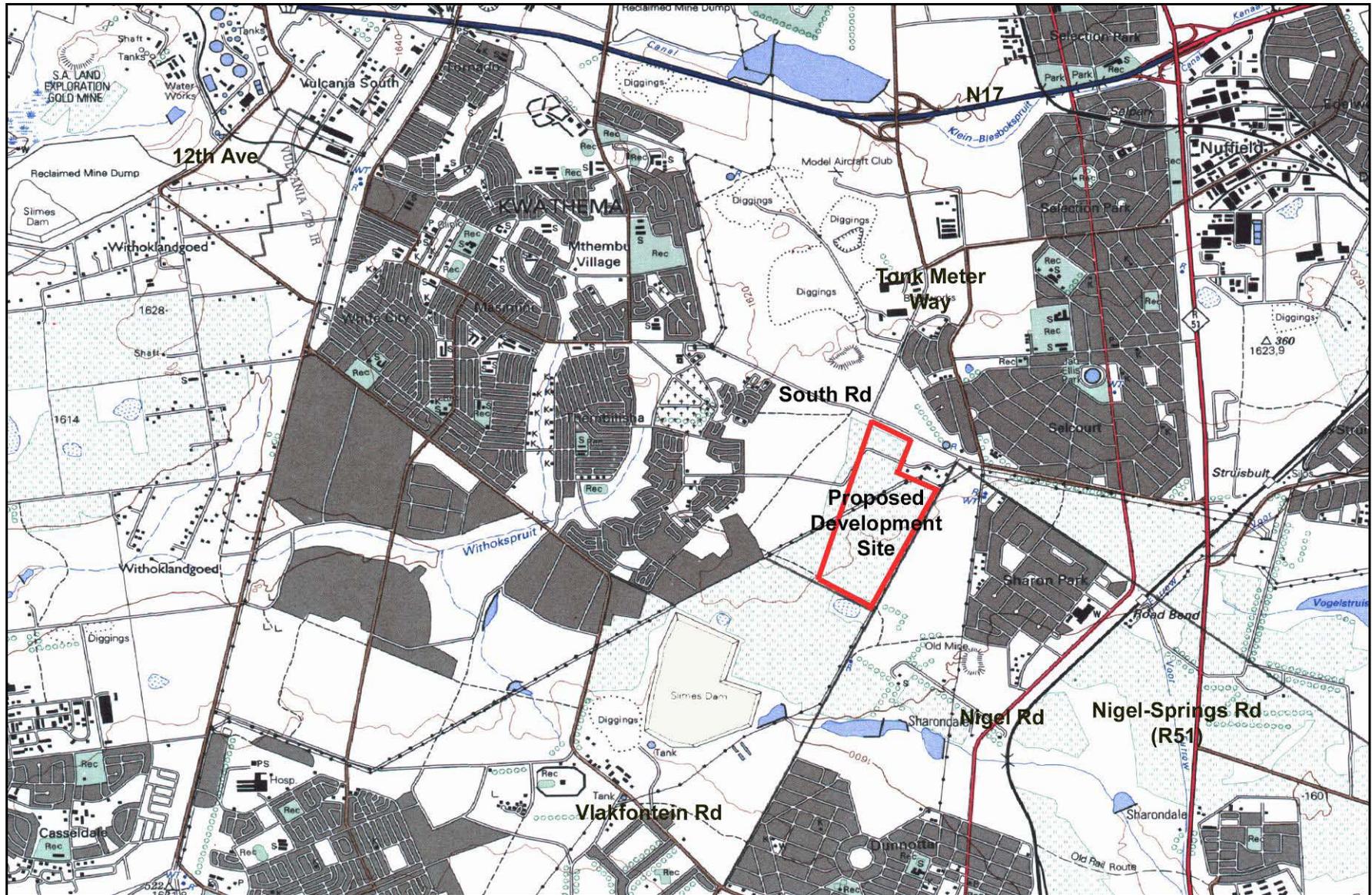


Figure 1 Locality map showing the position of the proposed development. The map was obtained from *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd.*



Plate 1 General view of a section of the proposed development. Note the road as well as the power lines on the left.



Plate 2 Another view of a section of the proposed development area.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop Study

The primary aim of the desktop study is to compile as much available information as possible on the heritage resources of the area. Such a study also helps in providing historical context for any sites that are located. The desktop investigation focussed on the study of archival maps.

3.2 Field Surveys

The area was surveyed by a single person on Thursday, the 31st of May 2007. The survey consisted of a foot survey of the entire proposed development area and was undertaken by means of transects.

Location data was captured with a Garmin Summit handheld GPS receiver set to WGS84 as datum. Data was captured when accuracy greater than 6m was indicated by the instrument. The location data was represented using GIS software by Arcview. Photographs were taken with a Canon Powershot A550 digital camera.

3.3 Consulting with Local Interested and/or Affected Parties

Informal discussions were held with local residents met during the initial fieldwork as well as during the subsequent mitigation phase. A public participation process was also undertaken by *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd.*

3.4 Aspects regarding Visibility and Constraints

Not subtracting in any way from the comprehensiveness of the fieldwork undertaken, it is necessary to realise that the heritage resources located during the fieldwork do not necessarily represent all the heritage resources located there. This may be due to various reasons, including the subterranean nature of some archaeological sites and dense vegetation cover. As such, should any heritage features and/or objects not included in the present inventory be located or observed, a heritage specialist must immediately be contacted. Such observed or located heritage features and/or objects may not be disturbed or removed in any way until such time that the heritage specialist has been able to make an assessment as to the significance of the site (or material) in question. This is true for graves and cemeteries as well.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Desktop Study Findings

4.1.1 Cartographic findings

4.1.1.1 "Heidelberg" Sheet, Major Jackson Series, Revised Edition April 1903

A section of the "Heidelberg" sheet from the Major Jackson Map Series is depicted in Figure 1. This map series was compiled, surveyed and produced during the South African War of 1899 to 1902 (National Archives, Maps, 2/179). The "Heidelberg" sheet was first printed in July 1902, while the sheet depicted below represents the revised edition dated 21 April 1903.

No heritage features are depicted within the study area and its direct surroundings. The power station (sub-station) still located directly adjacent to the study area on its eastern end, is not depicted on the map.

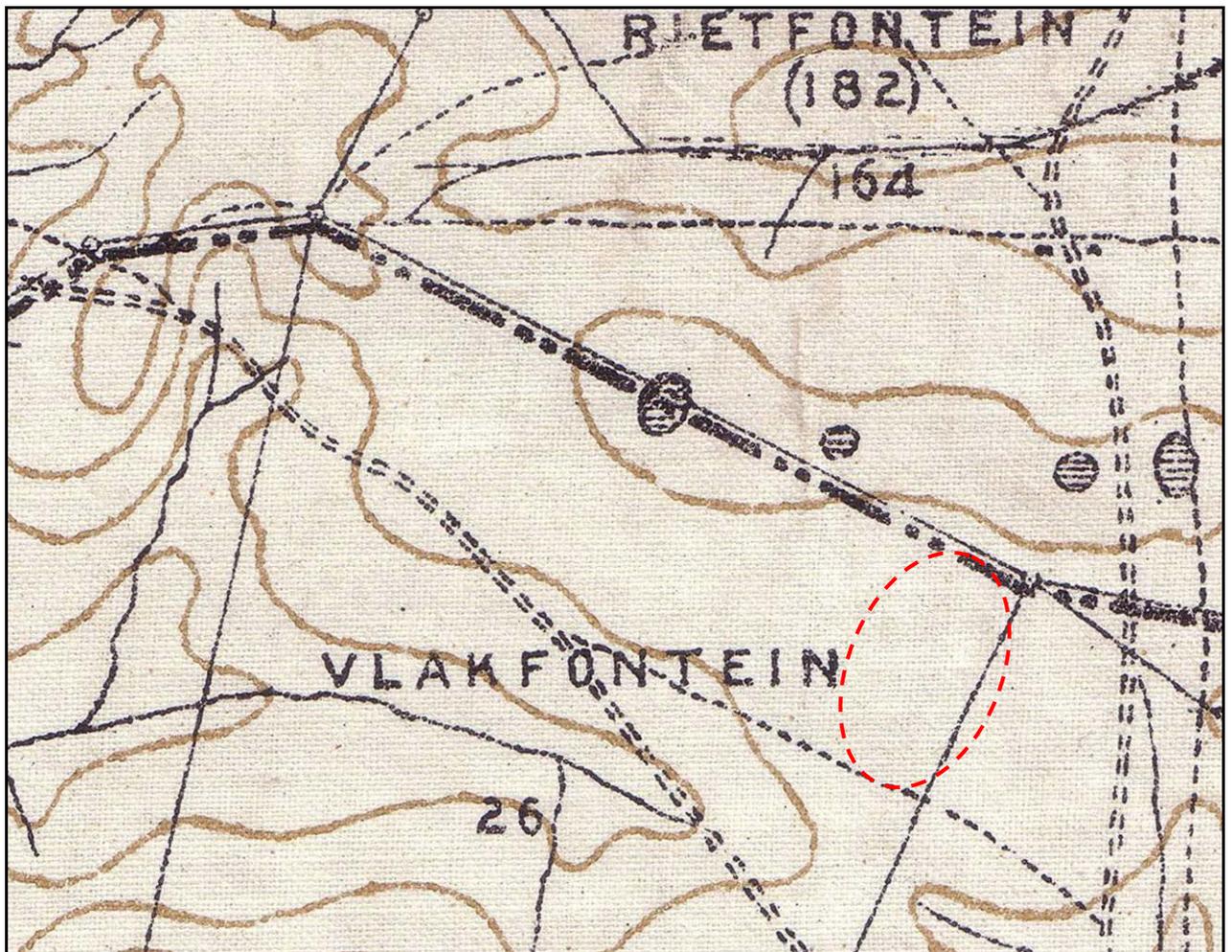


Figure 2 The farm Vlakfontein as depicted on the Major Jackson Series "Heidelberg" Sheet, dated April 1903 (revised edition).

4.1.1.2 2628AD Sheet, First Edition

Figure 3 below depicts an enlarged section of the First Edition of the 2628AD Topographical Sheet. Although its date of survey is not known, the sheet depicted here is a reprint dated to 1944. This suggests that the map represents data that was captured before 1944 and quite likely from the late 1930s.

A number of power lines as well as two roads are shown within the site. Large sections of the study area are depicted as agricultural fields. Outside the study area the Vlakfontein Gold Mine is indicated to the south whereas a number of buildings associated with the power station (or sub-station) directly to the east of the site are also depicted.

4.1.1.3 2628AD Sheet, Second Edition, 1942

Figure 4 below depicts an enlarged section of the Second Edition of the 2628AD Topographical Sheet. It was surveyed in 1942 and printed in 1945 by the Trigonometrical Survey Office.

The power lines, roads and agricultural fields are again showed, as are the Vlakfontein Gold Mine and the buildings associated with the power station.

4.1.1.4 2628AD Sheet, Third Edition, 1960

Figure 5 below depicts an enlarged section of the Third Edition of the 2628AD Topographical Sheet. It was based on aerial photography undertaken in 1952, while the survey took place in 1957. It was printed by the Trigonometrical Survey Office in 1960.

The same power lines as depicted on the previous maps are again showed. However, none of the roads from the previous maps are shown. The extent of the agricultural fields within the proposed development area is depicted to be far less than the almost total coverage from the previous two maps. A new feature in the form of a single 'hut' is depicted within the study area. This feature could not be located during the fieldwork.

Outside the study area the Vlakfontein Gold Mine and adjacent power station are also depicted. To the west and outside of the study area No. 5 shaft of what appears to be Springs Mine is depicted. The shaft is linked to the mine's No. 4 shaft by a railway line. Kwa-Thema is also shown for the first time.

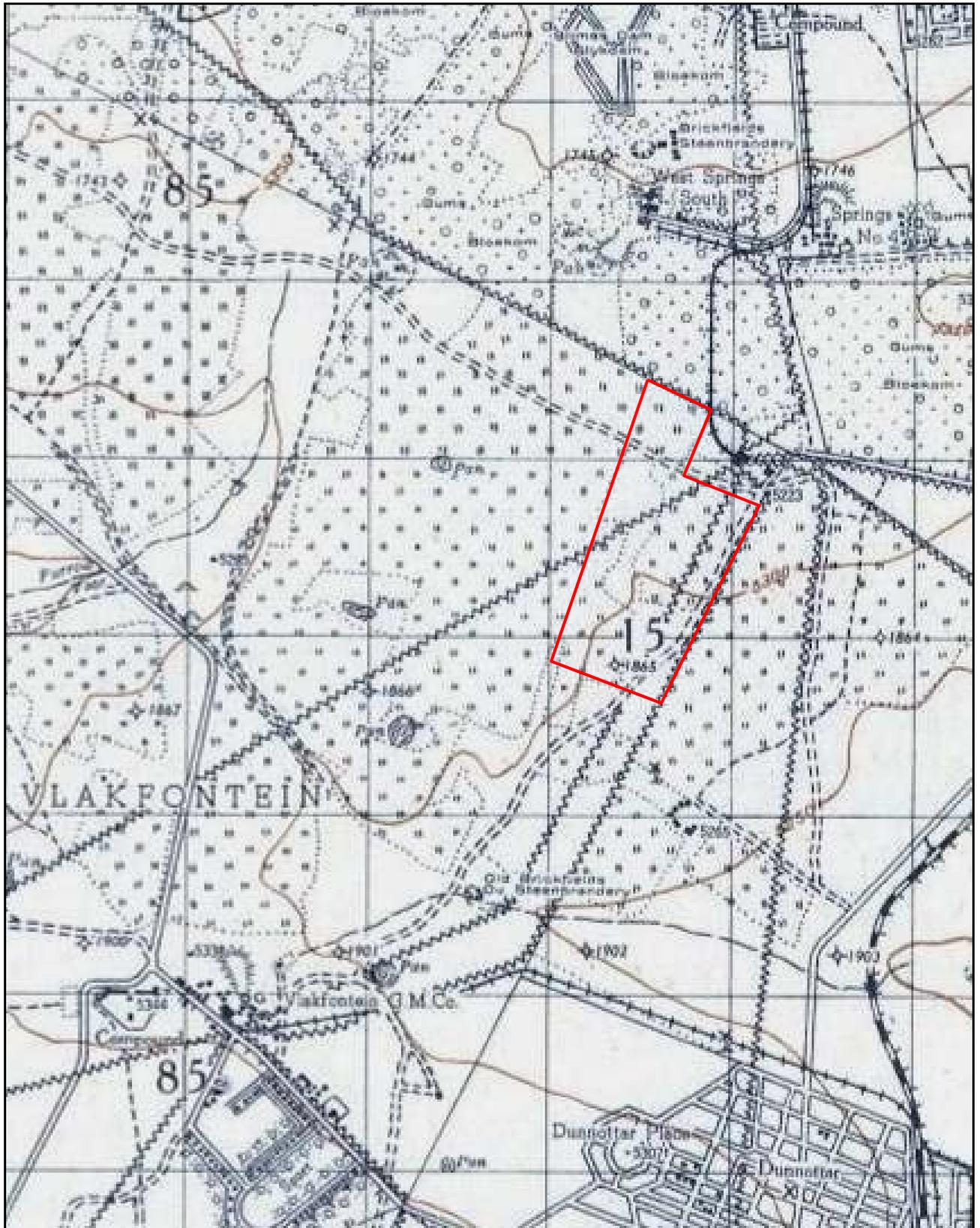


Figure 4 First edition of the 2628AD topographical sheet. The approximate position and boundaries of the study area are shown.

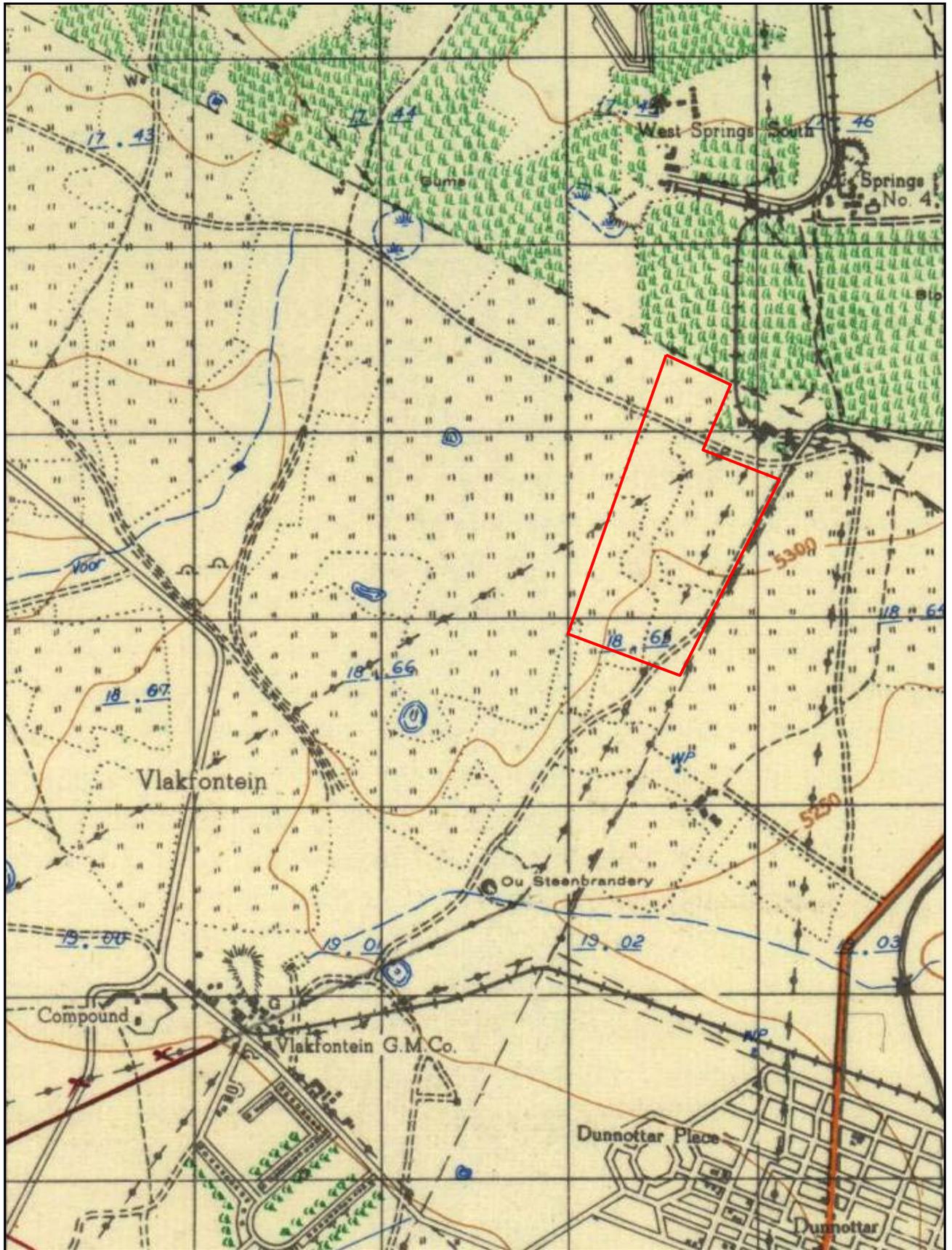


Figure 5 Second edition of the 2628AD topographical sheet. The approximate position and boundaries of the study area are shown.

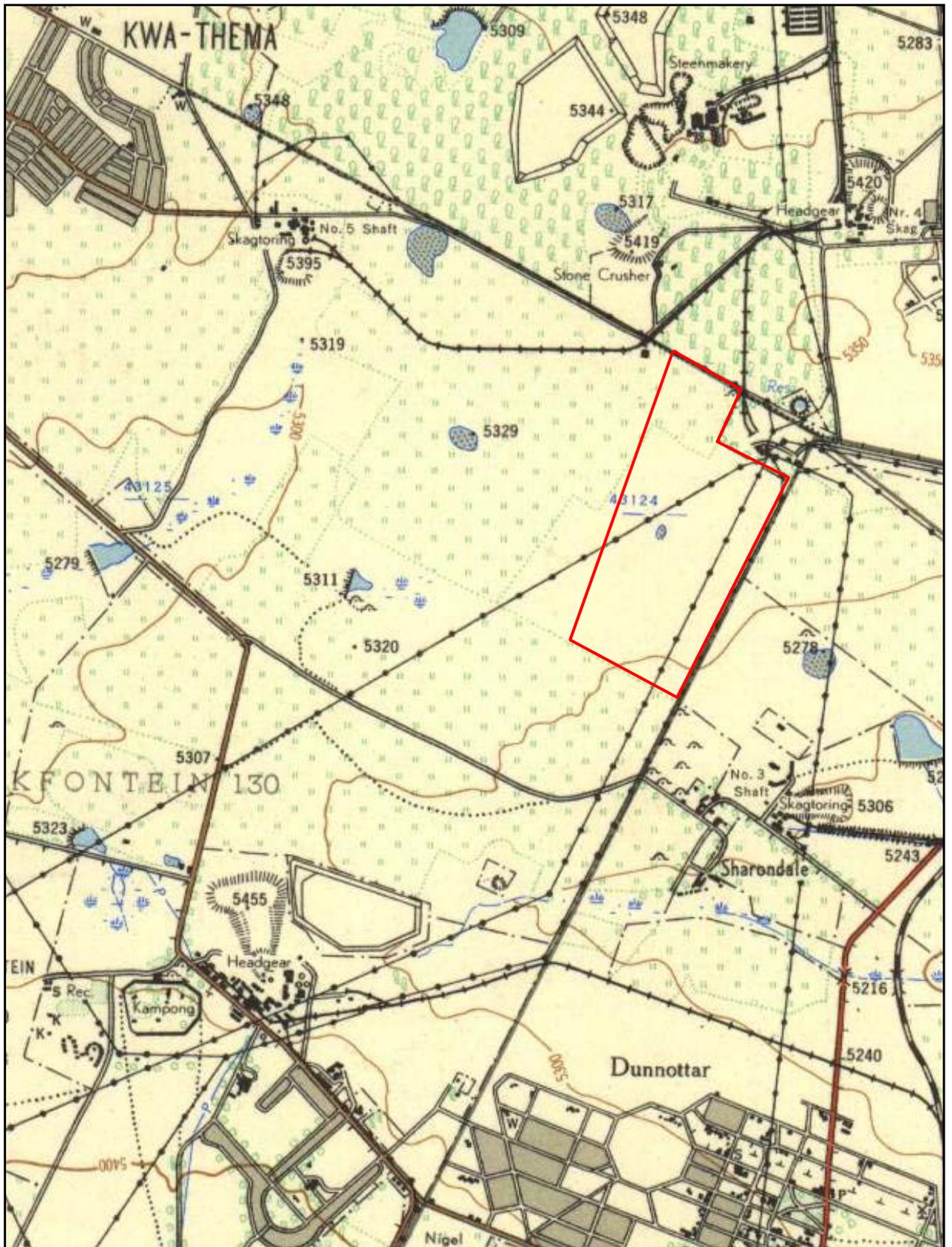


Figure 6 Second edition of the 2628AD topographical sheet. The approximate position and boundaries of the study area are shown.

4.1.2 General Aspects about the Area's History

A number of historic features or sites are found in the vicinity of the study area. It must be stressed that these features are not situated within the study area, nor will the proposed development have any impact on them. They are discussed here simply to provide an indication of the landscape in which the development is proposed.

4.1.2.1 The Vlakfontein Gold Mine

Although the Springs area is known for its gold mining activities from the early 1900s onward, the earliest indication of such activities on the farm Vlakfontein which could be found was a reference to prospecting activities during 1928 (MNW, 924, MM722/28). Shortly thereafter, in 1933, the *Vlakfontein Gold Mining Company* was established (LC, 845, UC4846). It can be expected that from this date forward various activities took place to establish the mine. In 1935, for example, mineworkers were transferred from the Sub Nigel Gold Mine to the Vlakfontein Gold Mine (GNLB, 391, 37/82) and in 1939 an application was made for the brewing of traditional beer (NTS, 7059, 248/322). Various infrastructural elements were also constructed to allow for the successful working of the mine, which included a compound, married quarters, single quarters and recreation grounds. The road to the mine was furthermore constructed from 1936 onward by means of a £15,000 loan offered by the Brakpan Municipality (MBP, 2/2/690, 12/6/9). The rapid development of the mine's surface infrastructure can clearly be seen from the three topographical maps depicted above (see Figures 4-6).

In 1978 an application was made for the company to be liquidated (WLD, 7504/1978)

4.1.2.2 The Power Station

During the fieldwork a number of old buildings were observed in a fenced area directly northeast of the study area. On the first edition of the 2628AD topographical sheet (dated to the late 1930s) some of these buildings are already depicted and associated features indicate that they formed part of a power station or sub-station.

The only archival reference to a power station on the farm Vlakfontein which could be found deals with the construction of single quarters for black staff members on the farm between 1965 and 1973 (BAO, 2411, C31/3/369/45). This document also identifies the power station as belonging to ESCOM (the Electricity Supply Commission).



Plate 3 General view of some of the buildings associated with the power station. The building in the background bears the date 1932.

4.1.2.3 KwaThema

The township of KwaThema was established in 1951 when black people who had been removed from Payneville near Springs were settled there. A black local authority with municipal status was established in 1984 (www.wikipedia.com).

4.2 Social Consultation Findings

The informal consultations with local residents encountered during the fieldwork did not result in any significant information with regards to the study area and surroundings. During the mitigation process undertaken for Site 1 (see Section 5 below), a large number of informal consultations took place with local residents. Apart from the located site, these intensive consultations did not yield any additional information with regard to heritage resources found within the study area. Similarly, the public participation process also did not reveal any heritage-related issues or information.

4.3 Survey Findings

4.3.1 VLF-1

4.3.1.1 Site Location

S 26.31709

E 28.42817

4.3.1.2 General Description

The site consisted of an area which had been cleared of vegetation and which contains a rectangular area of whitish soil with a wooden cross on its eastern end. The cross had been fixed in position by a small number of rocks and at its base the burnt-out remains of coloured candles as well as a number of coins were observed.

While the general appearance of the feature was that of a grave, a number of typical grave characteristics were lacking. These included the fact that the cross was positioned on the eastern end of the "grave dressing". In Christian burials most headstones and crosses are in fact placed on the western end above or in the vicinity of the head, which is always on the western end with the feet on the eastern end. The orientation of the rectangular "grave dressing" was furthermore along the North-West axis. The other disparity was the fact that the customary method for informal burials found in the veld is to either place a high heap of soil on the grave or alternatively pack some stones over it. Especially the last measure is to ensure that the grave will not be excavated or disturbed by dogs or other animals.

4.3.1.3 Proposed Mitigation

Based on the observations made at the site, it seemed extremely unlikely for the feature to represent a human burial. The fact that it could represent the grave of a pet was seen as a possibility, but its function as part of a religious ritual seemed most appropriate. It was therefore recommended that consultation with local residents had to take place in an attempt to properly identify the function of the feature. As a last resort test excavation was also an option.

4.3.1.4 Mitigation measures undertaken

After consultation with Ms. Lizelle Prosch of *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd*, the go-ahead was given for the mitigation to take place. Four visits were subsequently undertaken to KwaThema. The methodology at first consisted of communicating with as many of the church leaders situated in close vicinity of the study area. These persons include Ria Mthombeni, Matamzan Diyeko and Marie Sibiyi. Although no information with regard to the site could be obtained, more people were informally consulted with. With the assistance of interpreters Ben Makume and Buti Timothy Gcantsante the person who had erected the feature was eventually located. Mr. Ernest Mandjati admitted that he constructed the feature on the instructions of his pastor. It was used as a place of prayer with the aim of obtaining employment. On the question as to whether it still had any significance for him, Mr. Mandjati indicated that he was employed shortly after constructing the feature and that it had no further significance for him and can be demolished.



Plate 4 General view of the site.



Plate 5 Close-up view of the wooden cross. Note the burnt candles at its base.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Archaeology Africa was appointed by *Marsh Vikela (Pty) Ltd* to undertake a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Selcourt Ext. 5 Housing Development. The development is to be constructed on Portion 3 of the farm Vlakfontein 103 IR. The project developer is *Nu-Way Housing Developments (Pty) Ltd*.

This study forms part of the Environmental Scoping and Impact Assessment procedures undertaken for the proposed development.

During the initial fieldwork a site was identified which had the potential of being a human grave. Mitigation measures were proposed consisting of intensive social consultation with local residents to establish whether this feature indeed represented a grave or not. Subsequently, four days were spent in KwaThema communicating with local religious leaders and residents. In the end the person who had constructed the feature was identified and communicated with. It was established that the feature was not a human burial, and had no further significance for the person who had constructed it. As such the site can be destroyed.

It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed development may continue and that no heritage reasons can be given for it to be altered or stopped in any way.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Records

BAO, 2411, C31/3/369/45

GNLB, 391, 37/82

LC, 845, UC4846

MBP, 2/2/690, 12/6/9

MNW, 924, MM722/28

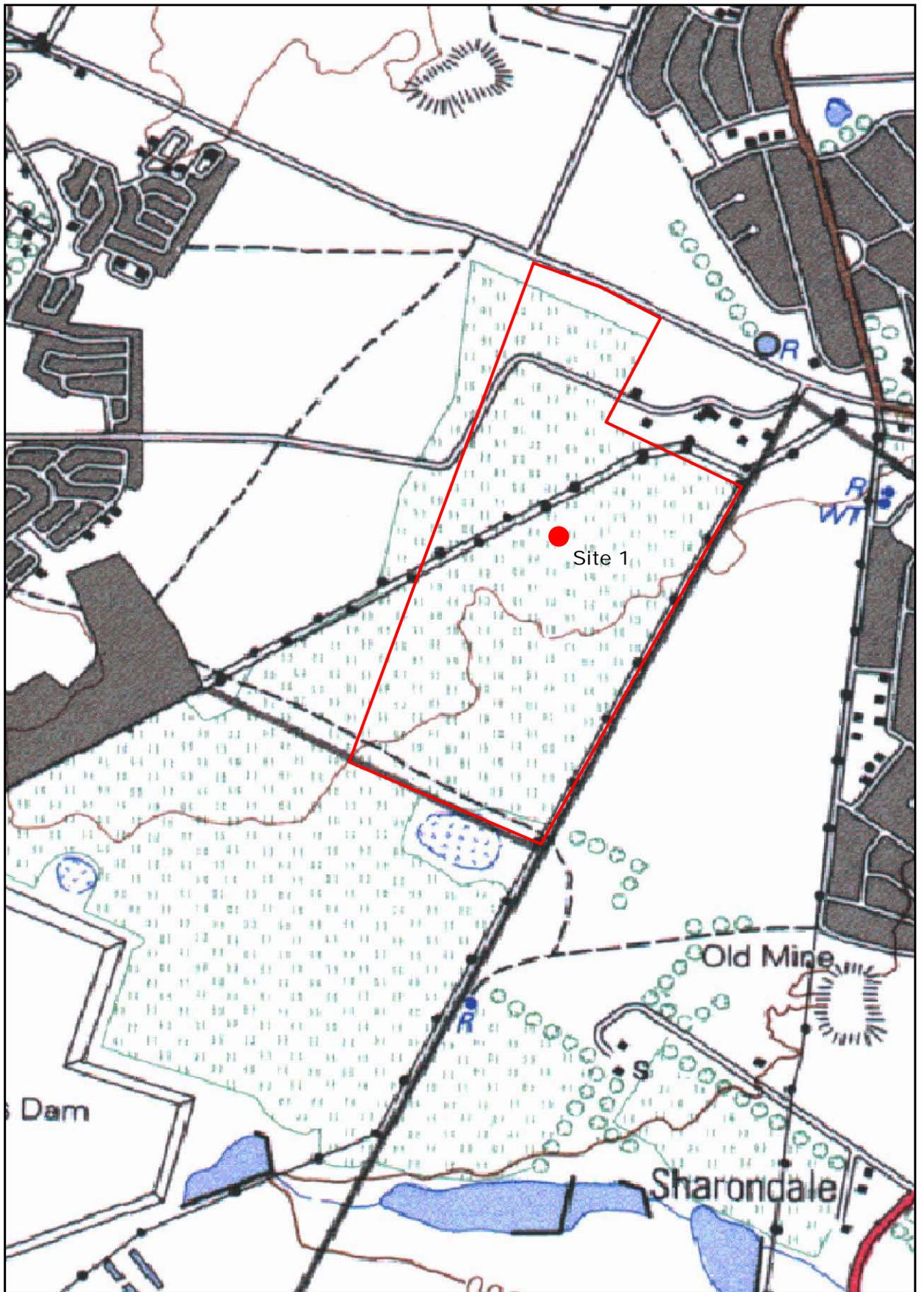
NTS, 7059, 248/322

WLD, 7504/1978

Archival Maps

National Archives, Maps, 2/179

ANNEXURE A – SITE DISTRIBUTION MAP



ANNEXURE B – LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

South Africa has a number of legislative measures in place aimed at protecting its heritage resources. Of these the most important is the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.

1. National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999

The promulgation of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 brings the conservation and management of heritage resources in South Africa on par with international trends and standards.

Section 38 (3) of the act provides an outline of ideally what should be included in a heritage report. The act states:

“(3) The responsible heritage resources authority must specify the information to be provided in a report required in terms of subsection (2) (a): Provided that the following must be included:

- (a) The identification and mapping of all heritage resources in the area affected;*
- (b) an assessment of the significance of such resources in terms of the heritage assessment criteria set out in section 6(2) or prescribed under section 7;*
- (c) an assessment of the impact of the development on such heritage resources;*
- (d) an evaluation of the impact of the development on heritage resources relative to the sustainable social and economic benefits to be derived from the development;*
- (e) the results of consultation with communities affected by the proposed development and other interested parties regarding the impact of the development on heritage resources;*
- (f) if heritage resources will be adversely affected by the proposed development, the consideration of alternatives; and*
- (g) plans for mitigation of any adverse effects during and after the completion of the proposed development.”*

Replacing the old National Monuments Act 28 of 1969, the Heritage Resources Act offers general protection for a number of heritage related features and objects (see below).

Structures are defined by the Heritage Resources Act as *“...any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures,*

fittings and equipment associated with it." In section 34 of the Act the general protection for structures is stipulated. It is important to note that only structures older than 60 years are protected. Section 34(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act reads as follows: "*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.*"

The second general protection offered by the Heritage Resources Act which is of relevance for this project, is the protection of **archaeological sites and objects (as well as paleontological sites and meteorites)**. Section 35(4) of the National Heritage Resources Act states that:

"No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;*
- (b) destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;*
- (c) trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or*
- (d) bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assist in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites."*

In order to understand exactly what is protected, it is important to look at the definition of the concept "**archaeological**" set out in section 2(ii) of the Heritage Act:

- "(a) material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures;*
- (b) rock art, being any form of painting, engraving or other graphic representation on a fixed rock surface or loose rock or stone, which was executed by human agency and which is older than 100 years, including any area within 10m of such representation;*

- (c) wrecks, being any vessel or aircraft, or any part thereof, which was wrecked in South Africa, whether on land, in the internal waters, the territorial waters or in the maritime culture zone of the Republic, as defined respectively in sections 3, 4 and 6 of the Maritime Zones Act, 1994 (Act No. 15 of 1994), and any cargo, debris or artefacts found or associated therewith, which is older than 60 years or which SAHRA considers to be worthy of conservation; and
- (d) features, structures and artefacts associated with military history which are older than 75 years and the sites on which they are found;..."

The third important general protection offered by the Heritage Resources Act that is of importance here, is the protection of **graves and burial grounds**. Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act states that:

"No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority –

- a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;*
- b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or*
- c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals."*

Of importance as well is section 36 (5), which relates to the conditions under which permits will be issued by the relevant heritage authority should any action described in section 36 (3), be taken. Section 36(5) reads that:

"SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for any activity under subsection (3)(b) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has, in accordance with regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority –

- a) made a concerted effort to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such grave or burial ground; and*

- b) *reached agreements with such communities and individuals regarding the future of such grave or burial ground."*

This section of the Act refers to graves and burial grounds which are older than 60 years and situated outside of a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

Section 36 (6) of the act refers to instances where previously unknown graves are uncovered during development and other activities.

"Subject to the provision of any other law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- a) *carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such a grave is protected in terms of the Act or is of significance to any community; and*
- b) *if such a grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangement for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any arrangements as it deems fit."*

2. Other Legislation

In terms of graves, other legislative measures which may be of relevance include the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies Ordinance (Ordinance no. 7 of 1925), the Human Tissues Act 65 of 1983, the Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980) as well as any local and regional provisions, laws and by-laws that may be in place.