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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS ON THE FARM DE VLUGT 340 (LINWOOD), CLARENS, FREE STATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residential developments are planned at the farm De Vlucht 340 (Linwood), near Clarens, Free State.

A number of circular and rectangular stone-walled structures of unknown origin and purpose were found. No other archaeological and cultural or historical remains occurred on the surface.

The region is known for the historical site at Surrender Hill where about four thousand Boers laid down their arms on 30 July 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War. It is also claimed that more than two million rounds of Boer ammunition had been destroyed at the site. Even today the bare patches are visible on the surface where the soil had been burnt.

The sacred cave known as Salpeterkrans or Mothuleng (Motouleng) is rapidly growing in popularity with people who come from as far as Gauteng to pray and to offer their sacrifices. The site is considered as sacred and it is believed that there is a holy atmosphere around the cave.

I recommend that the proposed developments and planning of the site should be proceed, providing that the stone-walls and other historical and sacred features in the vicinity should be considered during the planning of the developments.

Care should be taken to inform potential buyers of the properties about the significance of the structures and cultural features.

Certain rules recommended by professional archaeologists for the protection of cultural heritage sites are enclosed herewith and should apply to the site at Linwood during the construction phase and afterwards.

INVESTIGATION

A portion of the farm De Vlugt 340 (Linwood) near Clarens, Free State, is proposed for residential developments, and was visited on 9 February 2006. At the site I was accompanied by Dr Johan du Preez of MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, and by Jako Viviers of LMV Environmental Specialists, Kroonstad.

The land was examined for possible archaeological and historical remains and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

LOCALITY

The proposed residential developments are planned on the farm De Vlugt 340 (Linwood) near Clarens in the district of Fouriesburg (Surveyor-General O.F.S. 1973) (Map 1). The land borders on the R711 road from Clarens to Fouriesburg (Map 2).

The residential development will include 15 share title living units, but a final plan for the placing of the developments could not be obtained.

The vegetation is described as moist afro-mountain grassland and consists of natural wavy ridges and folds with a short grass cover and sandstone outcrops (Figs.2-4).

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (2828BC):

Entrance to farm R711	28°34'40"S 028°23'53"E Altitude 1769m (Fig.1).
Stone walls	28°34'28"S 028°23'33"E Altitude 1766m (Fig.5).
Rectangular structure	28°34'25"S 028°23'41"E Altitude 1783m.
Circular structure	28°34'25"S 028°23'39"E Altitude 1780m.
Rectangular structure	28°34'26"S 028°23'39"E Altitude 1781m (Fig.8).
Pool	28°34'39"S 028°23'21"E Altitude 1722m (Fig.10).

FINDS

The site was surveyed on foot in search of any cultural, historical remains and archaeological material.

Circular and rectangular stone-walled structures were found against the slope (Fig.5). The walls are well-built and are still in very good state of preservation (Figs.6,7,9).

Due to the thick stand of grass no ash heaps or any cultural remains were found in association with the stone walls and their origin and purpose could not be determined.

No other indication of archaeological or historical material was found on the surface neither were any stone tools or ceramic ware found.

DISCUSSION

The farm is situated in an area with a rich historical and cultural significance.

The well known fertility cave of Mothuleng (Motouleng?) (Figs.9&10) is nearby on the farm Verliesfontein (Map 2). The Afrikaans name for the cave is given by some people as Salpeterkrans, but this could lead to confusion with another cave by the same name near Rouxville. Anglo-Boer War sources give the name of the cave as Slaapkrantz, or Slaapkrans in the Afrikaans version (Jones & Jones 1999:202-3).

There is an active presence of people from as far as Gauteng who visit, and in many cases, stay over at the cave to be either trained as Sangomas (Fig.12) or to say their prayers and offer their sacrifices to the ancestors. Some of the people are living at the site permanently. The cave is neatly divided into sleeping and cooking places, areas for sacrifice, prayer (Fig.11) and a holy area at the back.

There is a very strong belief in the powers of this sacred place and I am convinced that it is no exaggeration to claim that at any given time during a normal week, near to fifty or more people are living and sleeping there at night. Judging by the number of private cars and taxis arriving here on a Saturday, this number could escalate to several hundreds over weekends.

Surrender Hill is also famous for the nearly 4000 burghers under Commandant Marthinus Prinsloo, who capitulated there on 30 July 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War (Fig.13). Anglo-Boer War sources claim that over two million rounds of Boer ammunition had been destroyed there by the British forces after the surrender (Kruger 1967:332). Active and uncontrolled collection by visitors of the exploded

bullets, burnt rifles and other remnants over the past century has deprived the site of its visible impact. The patches of bare soil where the ammunition had been burnt are still clearly detectable on the surface at the site right next to the R711 road (cf. Van Rensburg 1968).

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussion it is clear that the area is important for its great significance as historical site and should not be endangered in any way.

The same measure of significance applies to the sacred cave which is an important cultural feature and could be highly sensitive because of the sacred rituals performed there. It had been noticed over the last two years that the cave is rapidly growing in substance and popularity, with a gradual increase in the number of visitors.

I recommend, therefore, that a detailed and systematic investigation should be done before any final planning of the developments is done.

I also recommend that the stone-walls should be avoided during the planning phase and that the structures should be moved away from this area.

MITIGATION

Concerning the area for the proposed development, mitigation measures are needed in the case of the stone-walled structures.

There could also be a risk that any insensitive actions in the vicinity of the cave could result into an unpleasant and serious response towards the planned developments.

Considering the importance and sensitivity of the area, it is significant that a comprehensive survey should be done to establish the viability and desirability of the project.

Care should be taken to inform potential buyers of the properties about the significance of the structures and cultural features.

Certain rules recommended by professional archaeologists for the protection of cultural heritage sites are enclosed herewith and should apply to the site at Linwood during the construction phase and afterwards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr Johan du Preez of MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, and Jako Viviers of LMV Environmental Specialists, Kroonstad, for involving me in the project and accompanying me to the site.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

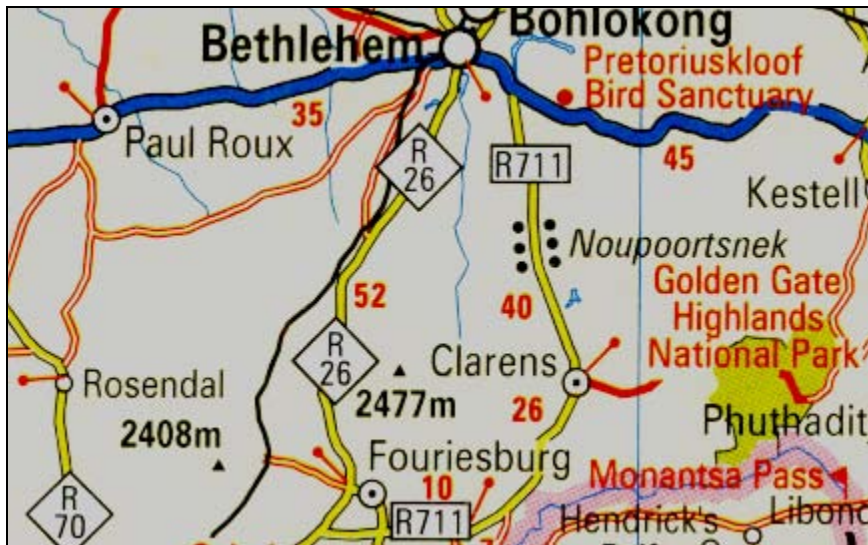
The recommendations and guidelines for the utilization and preservation of the site are made in the knowledge that **all archaeological, historical and palaeontological finds are protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999).**

The following minimum standards are approved by archaeologist and are prescribed for site museums or other places of interest open to the public. The guidelines are, therefore, strongly recommended as the basic rules at any archaeological site, and are applicable in the case of Katdoringfontein, Senekal.

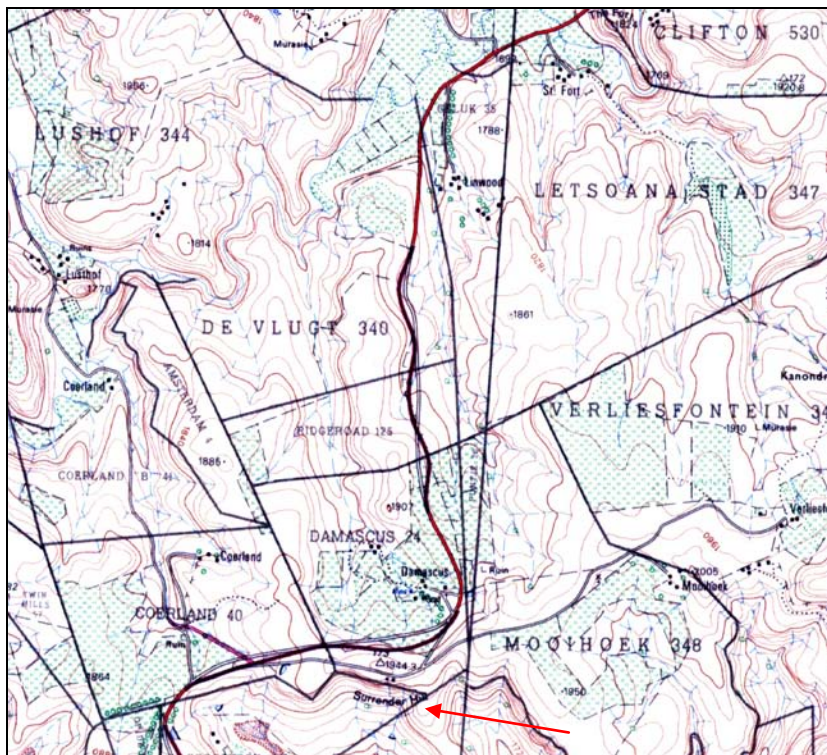
- Do not allow unauthorised visitors to the ruins;
- Always have a knowledgeable guide available to accompany visitors to the site;
- Allow visits to certain selected sites only;
- Educate the regular visitor about preserving the site;
- Prepare an explanatory brochure for the farm/development;
- Have a single access road to the site;
- Provide a clearly marked parking area at the site;
- Plan hiking routes where the structures can not be damaged;
- Prevent people from climbing on to the walls;
- Control vegetation growth at the site;
- Prepare a notice board explaining the sites;
- Do not **restore** the walls, leave them as they are;
- Do not remove any finds (e.g. stone tools, beads or potsherds);
- Provide a litter bin at the parking area or along the hiking trail;
- Visit sites regularly to check on litter, damage, vegetation, etc;
- Use a qualified archaeologist when planning any developments;

(SA3 Newsletter 37, 1992)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:



Map 1 Position of the R711 road from Bethlehem via Clarens to Fouriesburg.



Map 2 The locality of the farm De Vlucht 340 near Clarens (2828CB). Surrender Hill is indicated by the red arrow.



Fig.1 The entrance gate to De Vlucht 340 (Linwood) from the R711 road to Fouriesburg.



Fig.2 View of the area of development showing the grass covered ridges.



Fig.3 The grass cover is broken up by sand stone outcrops.



Fig.4 A view down the kloof at Linwood, Clarens.



Fig.5 A series of four circular stone structures of about 3m diameter against the slope at De Vlugt 340 (Linwood) near Clarens.



Fig.6 The stone wall of one of the structures.



Fig.7 The walls are still in a very good and sturdy condition. The building method seems to indicate construction by a European-builder.



Fig.8 The base of the wall of a rectangular structure of about 16mx6m at De Vlucht 340 (Linwood) near Clarens.



Fig.9 A view of the wall of the rectangular structure.



Fig.10 A natural pool is formed in the sand stone at De Vlugt 340 (Linwood) near Clarens.



Fig.11 Banners of different denominations are displayed in the cave at Mothuleng or Motouleng.



Fig.12 Sangomas in training under the watchful eye of their tutor (far right), performing a dance in traditional dress at Salpeterkrans, (Mothuleng or Motouleng) Clarens.



Fig.13 Burghers laying down their arms at Surrender Hill on 30 July 1900.
(Pakenham 1993 p.228).