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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT GRASSLANDS SMALLHOLDINGS PHASE III, BLOEMFONTEIN

INVESTIGATION

The site for the proposed housing development at Grasslands Smallholdings Phase III was visited and inspected on 24 June 2004. Mr Sempe Mosothoane of Sektor Development Consulting, Bloemfontein accompanied me to the site.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural remains 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 site includes all the existing Grasslands smallholdings between the Meadows Road in the south, Eeufees Road in the north, Clover Street in the west with Kerk Street forming the eastern boundary (2926AB 1995). The land is part of the original farm Grasslands 575 in the district of Bloemfontein (Surveyor-General O.F.S. 1973).

The following GPS co-ordinates were taken:

- 29°10'08"S. 026°17'30"E. Altitude 1367m at the south eastern corner formed by the Meadows Road and Kerk Street.
- 29°09'09"S. 026°17'53"E. Altitude 1374m on the north eastern corner of Kerk Street and Eeufees Road.

- 29°08'59"S. 026°17'22"E. Altitude 1371m on the north western corner of Clover Street and Eeufees Roads.
- 29°09'53"S. 026°17'01"E. Altitude 1380m at the south western corner of Clover Street and Meadows Road.
- Maritz Street between Eeufees and Meadows Roads bisects the area. A GPS reading 29°09'04"S. 026°17'37"E. Altitude 1368m was taken at the corner of Eeufees Road and Maritz Street.

The area consists of sterile red sandy soil with a dense grass cover in places between the different agricultural smallholdings, while other parts resemble old plough lands. The residential buildings have a neglected appearance and in some places houses and outbuildings are demolished leaving heaps of building rubble in the veld.

FINDS

No indication of any archaeological or historical material was found in the inspected area.

Enquiries about old and or historical buildings or graves or graveyards produced nothing of value. No cultural material or places of cultural significance were found.

Although no cultural or historical heritage is damaged in the process of residential development in the Grasslands area, the loss of arable land during the urban sprawl in the region is quite disturbing.

DISCUSSION

Together with the disturbances by roads and agricultural developments mentioned above it also seems unlikely that remains of any early human occupation could have survived. The locality is likewise not close enough to the higher ground to be the obvious living site for people during prehistoric times.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No obvious reasons could be found to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site and it is recommended that the proposed developments may proceed.

MITIGATION

Concerning the area for the proposed development, no mitigation measures are needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Mr Sempe Mosothoane for taking me to the site.

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