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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AT THE MANGAUNG INTEGRATED HOUSING INITIATIVE, HAMILTON, BLOEMFONTEIN**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The new proposed residential developments are planned over an elaborate area in Hamilton, Bloemfontein, between Memoriam Road in the west, Church Street in the east and Vereeniging Avenue in the south.

The whole area is mostly unexploited virgin land with remains of human activities relating to the Anglo-Boer War occurring in one place.

It is apparent that the tree plantation in the area represents the remains of what used to be known as Hamilton Forest and Ehrlich Forest, dating from the time of British occupation after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

There was reference to the Ehrlich borehole, which contained mineral water described as a "sulphur spring".

I recommend that the proposed developments may continue while more research concerning about the plantation and sulphur borehole should be done. Any finds of archaeological and historical significance should immediately be reported to the archaeologist and to the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein.

## INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

### INVESTIGATION

The site for the proposed residential developments at Hamilton, near Bloemfontein was visited on 17 February 2006. The area was plotted on a 1:50 000 topo-cadastral map (2926AA 1999) and on an aerial photograph supplied by the consultants (Fig. 1). A large part of the area was inspected on foot.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material 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 an elaborate piece of land covering a total of about 236ha between Memoriam Road in the west, Church Street in the east and Vereeniging Avenue in the south (Map 1 & Fig. 1) (Surveyor-General 1973).

The numbering of Zones A, B, C & D is my own allocation.

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (2926AA 1999):

### ZONE A

Culvert Railway line/Memoriam Rd 29°09'23"S 026°12'25"E Altitude 1415m (Fig.2).

Soil wall (west) 29°09'32"S 026°12'34"E Altitude 1411m (Figs.1&3).

Soil wall (east) 29°09'33"S 026°12'42"E Altitude 1407m (Figs.1&3).

### ZONE B

Culvert Area1/Zone D 29°09'46"S 026°12'11"E Altitude 1426m (Fig.6).

Cemetery Bridge 29°10'18"S 026°11'49"E Altitude 1431m (Fig.7).

Sewer pit 29°09'58"S 026°12'14"E Altitude 1437m (Fig.12).

Hill B1 29°09'55"S 026°12'16"E Altitude 1436m (Fig.12).

Hill B2 29°10'02"S 026°12'11"E Altitude 1444m (Fig.13).

Hill B3 29°10'05"S 026°12'16"E Altitude 1451m (Figs.14&15).

Rectangular stone foundation 13mx9m 29°10'05"S 026°12'19"E Altitude 1434m (Fig.25).

Macsteel/Cutshe Street 29°09'53"S 026°12'57"E Altitude 1408m.

MotoX track 29°10'18"S 026°11'49"E Altitude 1431m (Figs.8&9).

## **ZONE C**

Water reservoir 29°10'35"S 026°12'01"E Altitude 1468m (Fig.20).

Pipeline 29°10'36"S 026°12'23"E Altitude 1422m.

## **ZONE D**

Vista University 29°10'41"S 026°13'06"E Altitude 1412m (Fig.25).

Vereeniging Dr/Church St 29°10'19"S 026°13'05"E Altitude 1403m (Fig.27).

## **RESULTS**

Cultural finds relate to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

Others such as the remains of a house with ash heap could date from the same period, but could also be from a later era.

## **FINDS**

### **1. ANGLO-BOER WAR REMAINS**

The area to the south of Bloemfontein is rich in history from the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). In March 1900, the Boer forces were expecting a British attack on Bloemfontein from the west along the Riet River. By his approach from the south, Lord Roberts actually out-manoeuvred the unexpected Boer defence.

It is possible that the Hill B3 could contain the remains of this period in time, but also be from the defence system after the occupation of Bloemfontein by the

British forces on 13 March 1900. By the end of June 1900, when the march to Pretoria started, the defence of Bloemfontein did not remain a priority anymore (J.C Loock personal communication).

## **2. STONE- WALL FOUNDATION**

The remains of a rectangular stone-wall foundation, which measure about 13m x 9m occur near the foot of hill B3 (Fig.25). According to an informant, the house could be a later addition and could have been occupied by municipal staff (M.P.J van Vuuren personal communication).

## **2. EHRLICH FOREST & HAMILTON FOREST**

Respondents also spoke about Hamilton and Ehrlich Forests, which were founded during the British occupation after the Anglo-Boer War. It is related that a certain Australian forest officer named Griffiths, was commissioned the grow trees to be planted in the Free State. The exact locality of these plantations could not be ascertained.

## **2. EHRLICH BORE HOLE**

Rindl (1917) and Hall (1938) relate to the Ehrlich borehole, which allegedly contained mineral water and is described as a “sulphur spring”.

Several possible sites were mentioned by present respondents but due to a lack of time this could not be investigated properly.

## **ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

The impact on the cultural heritage remains of the proposed developments at Hamilton Bloemfontein will possibly be of minor significance.

In the case of the stone walls and other remnants from the Anglo-Boer War, more time should be spent to learn about the origin and purpose of the remains and on the localities of the plantations and the borehole.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

I recommend that the planning of the proposed developments at Hamilton could proceed.

I further recommend that the significance of the Anglo-Boer War remnants and the question around the plantations should be investigated.

I also suggest that, depending on the finds of the research, some form of commemoration and acknowledgement should be included in the planning of the specific residential areas.

## **MITIGATION**

Concerning the area for the proposed developments, mitigation measures will be required in the case of the stone-walled site.

The vegetation of the tree little hills should also be preserved in some way.

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site.

After examination I recommend that the proposed developments may proceed, providing that more research should be done in the area.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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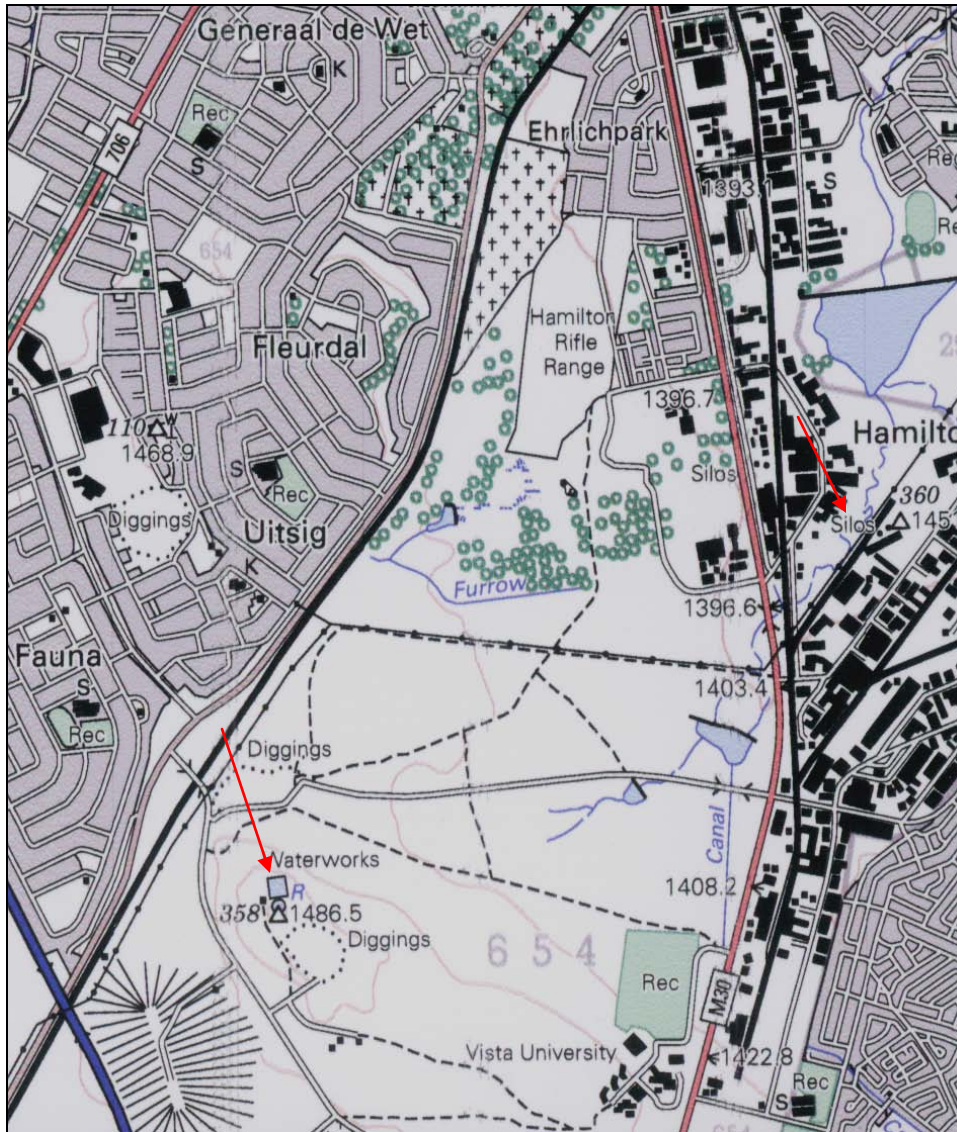
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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 General orientation of the area for the proposed housing developments). Positions of the silos and the water reservoir are indicated (2926AA 1999).



Fig.1 Locality of the proposed areas of development. The numbering of areas A, B, C & D is my own allocation. The position of the silos on the right and the water reservoir in the lower left corner are indicated by green arrows. Red arrow shows the position of the soil wall.



Fig.2 View along the railway line and Memoriam Road adjacent to the suburbs of Fleurdal and Uitsig. Facing west.





Fig.3 A soil wall that could be the remains of the rifle range in Area A, Hamilton.



Fig.4 Adjacent to Ehrlichpark the installation of services have already started. Area A Hamilton. Naval Hill is visible in the background.



Fig.5 A general view of the proposed Area A opposite Fleurdal and Uitsig.



Fig.6 The railway bridge across the main flood furrow from Uitsig.



Fig.7 Bridge across the railway line giving access to the West Park Cemetery. It is also the southern limit of the Development Area B, Hamilton.



Fig.8 An iron and concrete fixture. This could have been the start of a MotoX trial at the site.



Fig.9 A date of 21/01/1994 confirms when the feature was constructed.



Fig.10 Neglected public toilet facilities are now occupied by homeless people



Fig.11 View across area B. Hill B1 is visible left of pylon.



Fig.12 Part of the existing sewer installation in area B.



Fig.13 Hill B1 in Area B. Navel Hill in the background.



Fig.14 Hill B2 in area B.



Fig.15 Hill B3 in area B. Note the power line that runs through the area.



Fig.16 Facing Hill B3 in Area B from the west.



Fig.17 View from Hill B3 facing north towards Uitsig.



Fig. 18 Contemporary graffiti on hill B3 in development area B (See Fig. 1).





Fig.19 White washed rocks and stone edging of pathway on top of hill B3.



Fig.20 View towards the water reservoir. Note the remaining Pine trees in Ehrlich Forest.



Fig.21 The pathway down the hill is clearly marked by a row of stones on each side.



Fig.22 Bullet holes through pieces of metal found at the foot of hill B3.  
Length of pocket knife = 85mm.



Fig.23 An ash heap covered with vegetation. There is a tendency that patches of *Rhus ciliata* (Klein Suurtaibos) occur where the soil had been disturbed.



Fig.24 A stone quarry on the eastern side of hill B3.



Fig.25 Remains of the stone foundations of a 13mx9m rectangular structure.  
Foot of Hill B3.



Fig.25 View from the corner of Vereeniging Avenue and Church Street  
facing south towards Vista University



Fig.26 View across Area C facing north towards Uitsig.



Fig.27 Cattle from the township, grazing opposite Area C along Church Street.



Fig.28 View towards Fleurdal. Hill B3 in Area B on horizon in the centre.



Fig.29 View across Area D. Uitsig Dutch Reformed Church on horizon.



Fig.30 View across Area D facing towards Vista University.



Fig.31 Area D with view towards water reservoir.



Fig.32 View towards the east with grain silos in the centre.



Fig.33 View from the reservoir facing towards hill B3 in area 3 (See Fig.1).