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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AT SUBDIVISION 3, KWAGGAFONTEIN 2300, BLOEMFONTEIN**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Residential developments are planned on Subdivision 3 of the farm Kwaggafontein 2300, Bloemfontein. The land is located to the south west of the N8 (R48) main road to Petrusburg.

No archaeological and cultural remains occurred on the surface.

Base stones of an old cattle kraal are visible against the hill, but the walls have seriously been robbed.

A cluster of about thirty graves of black people was found to the south of the proposed development area. There is also a cemetery near the farmhouse, which contains the graves of the former owner, his first wife and some of their relatives. The farmhouse and cemetery are of historical importance because of the fact that the farm belonged to Sir Cornelis Wessels, the second Administrator of the Free State.

I recommend that the planning of the developments may proceed, but providing that the graves will be avoided. It is also necessary that the graves should be accommodated in the planning and should be fenced and maintained.

I further recommend that the farmhouse and the cemetery should be maintained and preserved as an important part of the history of the Free State.

I also remind the owner of the land and the developers that in the case of any alteration of the building, a permit should be obtained from the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in Bloemfontein.

## INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

### INVESTIGATION

Manie van Wyk from Spatial Solutions Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, accompanied me during a site visit on 17 August 2007.

The land was investigated on foot and the outer limits of the planned developments were plotted by GPS (Map 3) and recorded on camera.

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 farm Kwaggafontein is located to the west of the N8 (R48) main road from Bloemfontein to Petrusburg (Map 1). Subdivision 3 is only a small portion of the original farm (Map 2), which had been subdivided into small agricultural holdings.

The land had been used for farming purposes, mostly as grazing and plough lands.

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

**A**                                    29°06'43"S 026°08'01"E    Altitude 1395m (Fig.1).

**Graves**                            29°06'47"S 026°08'09"E    Altitude 1393m (Figs.6-10)

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUAGGAFONTEIN (KWAGGAFONTEIN) AND THE WESSELS FAMILY

Through his political and social connections, Cornelis Hermanus Wessels became a very prominent citizen of Bloemfontein and the Free State. In 1915, CH Wessels followed in the footsteps of Dr. AEW Ramsbottom to be elected as the second Administrator of the Free State (Fig.20). His term of office lasted for nine years until his sudden death in 1924. Wessels was knighted in 1920.

After some squabbles with the Batlhaping chiefs Mankurwane and Gasebone about stock thefts in the remote parts of the western Free State, Wessels sold some of his land in the Boshof district. He subsequently bought the farm

Kwaggafontein (Quaggafontein) 2300 outside Bloemfontein in 1892. This farm became available after the death of KA Chapman, a prominent businessman from Bloemfontein. The Wessels family then settled on the farm. After Wessels became Administrator of the Free State, the family occupied the official residence "*Mon De'sir*" (My Desire), at 52 Aliwal Street opposite the Klipkerk. (Haasbroek 1987).

## **RESULTS**

### **FINDS**

The investigation at Subdivision 3 Kwaggafontein did not produce any material of cultural or archaeological importance.

Base stones of an old cattle kraal are still visible against the hill (Figs.2-4), but the walls have seriously been robbed and have no significance anymore.

A cluster of about thirty graves was found at the foot of the hill, to the south of the proposed development area (Fig.6). According to the names on some of the graves (Figs.7-10), these are the resting places of black people, which were most probably farm labourers in the area. The inscriptions and lettering on these graves are indistinct and the dates of burial and names of the people are uncertain.

There is also a cemetery near the farmhouse (Fig.11), which contains the graves of Cornelis Hermanus Wessels (Born 26.4.1851 Died 4.11.1924) (Fig.12), the former owner, his first wife Christina Magdalena Wessels, who passed away on 4.11.1905 at the age 48 years (Fig.13). There is another grave of Johannes Mattheus Wessels, fifth child of CH Wessels, who was born on 15 June 1887 (given as 16 June on the tombstone) and who died on 2 August 1933 (Fig.14).

The fourth grave in the cemetery is that of Christina Magdalena (Born 7.3.? Died 5.12.1912), daughter of Louis Theodorus Hermanus, the eldest son of Cornelis Wessels and his wife, MJJ Wessels (Fig.15).

Both the farmhouse (Fig.16) and cemetery are of historical importance because of the fact that the farm belonged to Sir Cornelis Wessels, the second Administrator of the Free State (Fig.20).

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The proposed developments will have a serious impact on the cluster of about thirty graves of black people, which was found to the south of the proposed development area.

It is accepted that the placing of a cluster of five leisure residential units around the hill on Subdivision 3 of Kwaggafontein (Map 3), should be done with the required sensitivity to the farmhouse and the environment. It should also be planned to prevent any impact on the cultural, historical and archaeological remains in the vicinity.

Concerning the farmhouse, I believe that the original core of the house could be older than sixty years. When considering exterior wall finish only, the outer walls of this section have roughcast finishing in most cases (Fig.17). When certain contradictory styles in other parts of the house are considered, I cannot fully agree with Haasbroek's statement that the house has largely remained unscathed in its original form ("die huis het grootliks in sy oorspronklike form behoue gebly") (Haasbroek 1987:374).

Actually, a sun porch on the western side of the house (Fig.19) does not match the original style. The columns, for instance, contain Primrose bricks, which could date from the 1940s (NST van der Walt: personal communication). The finishing on the walls on the south eastern part of the house (Fig.18) does likewise not match the original style in design and wall finish and seems to be a later addition.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning and development at Subdivision 3, Kwaggafontein and I recommend that the planning and developments may proceed.

The cluster of graves at the foot of the hill should be avoided at all cost and should be accommodated in the layout design in the form of a park or as an open space. The graves should also be fenced for protection and kept out of the present planning.

The cemetery near the farmhouse contains the graves of the former owner and some his relatives. The farmhouse and cemetery are of historical importance because of the fact that the farm belonged to Sir Cornelis Wessels, the second Administrator of the Free State.

I recommend that the farmhouse and the cemetery should be maintained and preserved as an important part of the history of the Free State.

I also remind the owner of the land and the developers that in the case of any future alterations to the farmhouse, an application for the necessary permit should be submitted to the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in Bloemfontein.

Dr Louis T.H. Wessels, a resident and former Mayor of Bloemfontein, confirms that there are only a few of the descendants of Sir Cornelis Wessels left in Bloemfontein. The family would nevertheless appreciate a sympathetic handling of the matter and would be grateful for the maintenance and preservation of the house and cemetery.

## **MITIGATION**

Mitigation measures will be required in the case of the cluster of graves at the foot of the hill.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Manie van Wyk from Spatial Solutions Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for accompanying me to the site. Mr NST van der Walt, retired architect of Bloemfontein, shared his experience and expertise with me.

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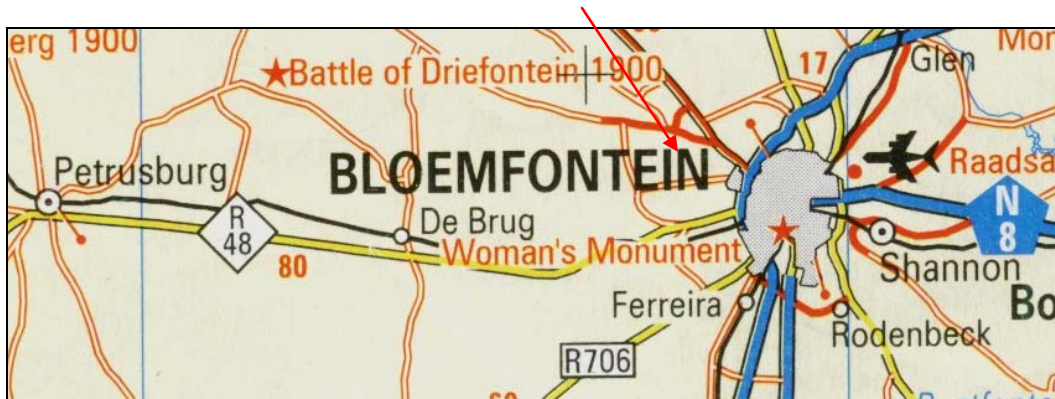
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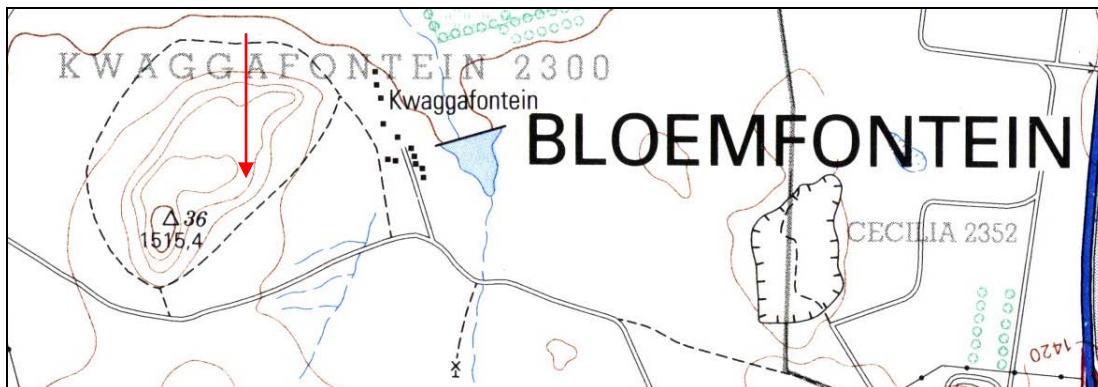
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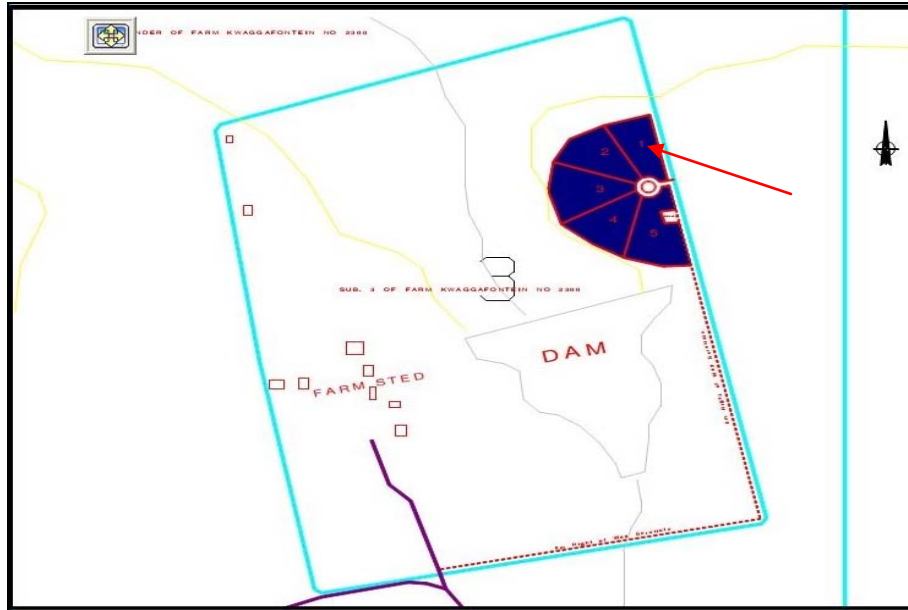
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 The locality of Subdivision 3 south west of Bloemfontein.



Map 2 Locality of the residential developments at Subdivision 3 Kwaggafontein 2300 south west of Bloemfontein (2926AA).



Map 3 Locality of the proposed stands along the hill at Subdivision 3 Kwaggafontein 2300.



Fig.1 The hill where the residential developments are planned. Point A is located at the foot of the hill.





Fig.2 Base of stone-wall at Subdivision 3 of the farm Kwaggafontein 2300.



Fig.3 Base of the kraal wall at Subdivision 3 of the farm Kwaggafontein.

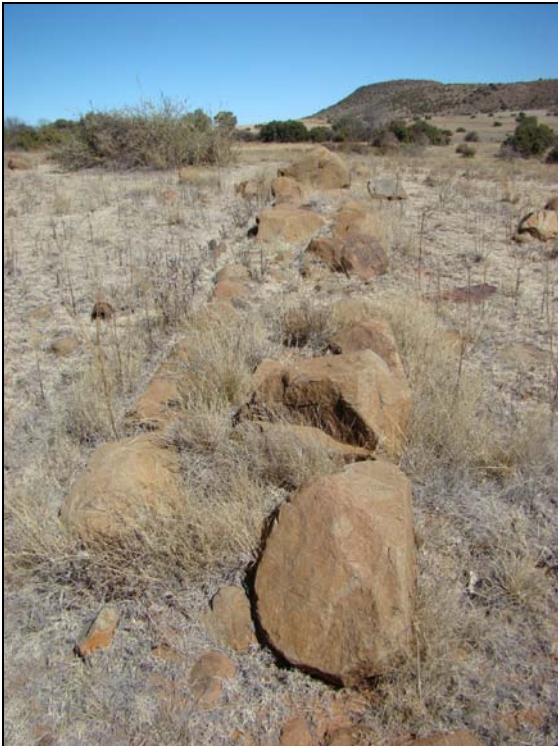


Fig.4 Base of the kraal wall at Subdivision 3 of the farm Kwaggafontein.



Fig.5 Wolfkop as seen from the hill at Subdivision 3 of Kwaggafontein.





Fig.6 A cluster of graves on the south side of the hill at Kwaggafontein 2300.



Fig.7 Name on one of the graves.

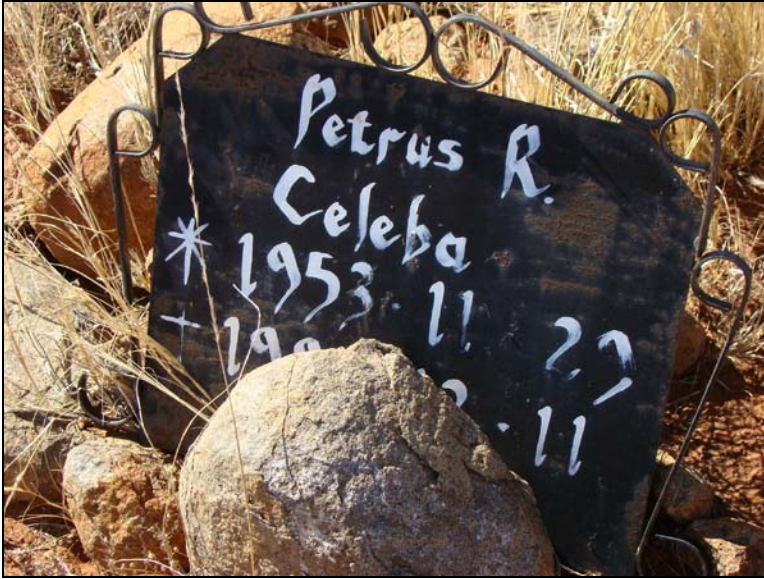


Fig.8 Name on one of the graves at Kwaggafontein 2300.



Fig.9 Another grave at Kwaggafontein 2300.





Fig.10 View towards Stuck in the mud, from the graves at Kwaggafontein.



Fig.11 The cemetery at Kwaggafontein containing graves of the Wessels family.



Fig.12 The gravestone of Cornelis Hermanus Wessels Born 26.4.1851 Died 4.11.1924.



Fig.13 Gravestone of Christina Magdalena Wessels, first wife of CH Wessels who passed away on 4.11.1905 at the age 48 years.





Fig.14 Grave of Johannes Mattheus Wessels, fifth child of CH Wessels, Born 16.6.1887 Died 2.8.1933.



Fig.15 Gravestone of Christina Magdalena Born 7.3.? Died 5.12.1912, daughter of LTH & MJJ Wessels.



Fig.16 North elevation of the farmhouse at Kwaggafontein.



Fig.17 A smokestack at the farmhouse. The outer surface is finished in rough cast plaster.





Fig.18 The south eastern part of the house does not match the original style and seems to be a later addition.



Fig.19 A sun porch on the western side of the house. This also does not match the original style.



Fig.20 Sir Cornelis Hermanus Wessels, the second Administrator of the Free State.