



# **COBUS DREYER**

**Pr. Archaeologist/Heritage Specialist**

**P.O. Box 12910  
Brandhof  
9324  
dreyerc.HUM@mail.uovs.ac.za**

**Tel: 051 - 444 1187  
Fax: 051 - 401 2363  
Cell: 083 - 357 7982**

25 November 2004

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AT THE REMAINDER OF THE FARM BOVEN TEMPE 203, BLOEMFONTEIN**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The property earmarked of the proposed residential developments on the farm Boven Tempe 203 (Bloemendal), Bloemfontein, was visited and inspected on 17 November 2004. Dr Johan du Preez of Cebo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, accompanied me to the site and indicated the layout and borders of the specific land. During a later visit the present occupant of the second house, Mr James Combrinck (084 793 2124) was interviewed. I also had an interview with Mrs André Saltzman (051-4477337) who lived in the main house for some time. During a telephonic conversation with Mrs Enid Ralph, a former owner of the property, in Hermanus (028-3163165) on 14 December 2004, certain facts were cleared out about the age of the buildings on the farm.

The area 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 developments are planned on the Remainder of the farm Boven Tempe 203 (Bloemendal) (29°03'28"S 026°12'19"E Altitude 1394m) to the north of Bloemfontien (Surveyor-General O.F.S. 1973) directly west of the N1 Main Road (2926AA) (Map 1&2).

## FINDS

The area was surveyed on foot and all cultural material, building remains and other structures were plotted by GPS and recorded on camera. The finds are listed below.

Several structures occur along the gravel road that presently runs through the farm. From the building style and the debris on the associated ash heaps it is accepted that these could be the remains of labourer's houses. The features include the following:

1. Stone base and paving of rectangular house (29°03'06"S 026°12'20"E Altitude 1381m) (Fig.).
2. A stone wall that runs along the ridge and which is possibly part of the same feature that continues from the National Botanical Gardens (29°03'03"S 026°12'21"E Altitude 1385m) (Fig.)
3. Old low-water causeway (29°03'01"S 026°12'26"E Altitude 1373m) (Fig.)
4. Paving with ash heap (29°03'06"S 026°12'21"E Altitude 1380m) (Fig.)
5. Rectangular stone base of house wall (29°03'04"S 026°12'20"E Altitude 1378m) (Fig.).
6. Old labourer's house consisting of stone walls with windows (29°03'11"S 026°12'21"E Altitude 1384m) (Fig.).
7. Large ash heap (29°03'10"S 026°12'21"E Altitude 1284m) (Fig.).
8. Old farm house with stone outer walls (Fig.) and partitions of raw bricks inside (Fig.). At the front door there are indications of a smeared stoep (Fig.). (29°03'15"S 026°12'21"E Altitude 1383m). Mrs Enid Ralph, wife of the former owner, recounts that there were stories told that this house was used by British officers during the Anglo-Boer War. One corner of the outer wall of the house has already collapsed and at the moment this structure is in a very dilapidated state and seems to be past the stage of repair.
9. Cow shed with crib and silo (29°03'16"S 026°12'20"E Altitude 1384m) (Fig.). This building seems to be a later addition to the farm and appears to be made during more recent times.
10. Small entrance gate next to N1 (29°03'22"S 026°12'26"E Altitude 1398m) (Fig.). This structure could have been the entrance leading to the graves on top of the hill, as there are also indications of a road winding up the slope.

11. Two marble stone covered graves on top of the hill adjacent to the N1 main road (29°03'21"S 026°12'26"E Altitude 1402m). The stones carry the following inscriptions in Afrikaans:

Mijndert de Villiers 22 September 1891 – 20 Januarie 1951 (Fig.).

Carla Johanna de Villiers                      Gebore Dalldorf  
17 Augustus 1895 – 21 September 1937

12. Two reservoir dams below the graves on hill (Fig.) (29°03'22"S 026°12'25"E Altitude 1397m).

13. A water well possibly dating from the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 (29°03'22"S 026°12'20"E Altitude 1399m) (Figs.). No other remnants of the Anglo-Boer War were found on the lower part to indicate any activity during the war. It is said that remains of stone-walled ramparts dating from the War are still found on top of the ridge behind the farm house (Personal communication Mr James Combrink & Mrs Enid Ralph).

14. Main house higher up the hill (29°03'19"S 026°12'17"E Altitude 1396m) with large green houses at the back. According to Mrs Ralph, this house was still under construction at the outbreak of WWII (1938) when Mrs Carla Johanna de Villiers (born Dalldorf) passed away on 21 September 1937. Dr Mijndert de Villiers, a dentist and member of the City Council in Bloemfontein, completed the residence and married again later. The Ralphs bought the property in about 1960.

15. Old residence lower down is the original farmhouse in which Dr De Villiers and his first wife initially lived. According to Mrs Enid Ralph, the house had been renovated and extended by her children in more recent years, but the primary part of this house could date from the 1800s.

## **DISCUSSION**

No indication was given during the investigation as to how the proposed developments would affect the two residential houses and other outbuildings on the farm. It seems very clear according to the evidence given by Mrs Enid Ralph, that all three the residential houses are older than 60 years. The oldest structure with stone walls is possibly in a state of non-repair. The other two houses can still be restored and used for residential purposes.

It was not clear what role this area played during the Anglo-Boer War. It is known that Tempe as a military base for the British garrison was established only after the Anglo-Boer War. The Tempe base remained an important stronghold of the

occupational forces until the majority of the British troops were withdrawn from South Africa at the onset of WWI round about 1914.

It is not certain what role the old buildings in particular and the farm in general played during the Anglo-Boer War and the occupation of Bloemfontein afterwards. From the old maps (1913) it is learnt that there were “cantonments” on the adjacent farm Tempe (Map 1&2), but no records could be found to explain the importance of the land in question.

The graves on top of the hill do not fall inside the proposed area of development and should be left untouched. No further development should be allowed in this part and should also be left out of the upgrading of the sewerage pipeline.

The stone rampart walls on top of the ridge should also be left undisturbed and should be placed on record.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the developers should be requested to explain their intended plans concerning the future utilisation of the two houses and that the age of the buildings should be brought to their attention. Although the houses are not unique examples of the specific building styles that they represent, both residences could still be preserved as they are.

Every archaeological and historical site is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or destruction of the buildings or the environment.

It is stressed that in case of the discovery of any historical remnants of Anglo-Boer War origin or archaeological finds in the form of stone tools, pottery and other archaeological material of significance during the course of the work, all activities should temporarily be stopped for inspection by the present archaeologist or other specialists from the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

It is stressed that the outbuildings or labourer’s houses and fence support walling have only been photographed and their positions plotted by GPS. No further recording of these structures has been undertaken.

## **MITIGATION**

Concerning the area for the proposed development, and apart from the three houses and two graves on the hill, no other structure will need any further mitigation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Dr Johan du Preez of Cebo Environmental Consultants for taking me to the site. I also owe gratitude to Mr James Combrink of Bloemfontein, Mr Otto le Roux (formerly of the SABC), Mrs André Saltzman of Bloemfontein and Mrs Enid Ralph of Hermanus. Martie Venter from Bloemfontein verified the genealogical information on the De Villiers family.

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