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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE FARM WATERPOORT 669, FICKSBURG, FREE STATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Timeshare residential developments are planned on the farm Waterpoort 669, Ficksburg, Free State.

The area consists of plough lands with cultivated grazing and rocky outcrops on the edges with a grass cover on the unexploited land.

Historical and cultural material occurs in the form of stone-walls representing the remains of Later Iron Age living sites with middens containing potsherds and bone fragments. The stone-walls are seriously robbed with only the original base stones remaining in some places. Although the site lies within the general Batlokoa living area of post-difaqane times, these finds could not be connected to any of the described Sotho/Tswana settlements in the Free State (Maggs 1976).

A cluster of about 16 graves is located near the entrance to the farm, which is outside the planned areas of development.

I recommend that the planning and development of the proposed leisure residential settlement may proceed, providing that the stone-wall site be avoided.

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

INVESTIGATION

The sites for the proposed residential developments at the farm Waterkloof 669, Ficksburg, Free State, were visited on 18 July 2007. The area was investigated

on foot, GPS coordinates were taken on the peripheral points, and the features were 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 proposed developments are planned at the farm Waterpoort 669, Ficksburg, Free State (Map 1). The development will include 42 time-share residential units, which will be located above the flow of the Meulspruit Dam (Map 2). There is a steep slope down from the level of development to the flood line (Fig.4).

The numbering of points A - F is my own allocation.

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (2827DD):

A	28°51'29"S 027°49'32"E Altitude 1615m (Figs.1&2).
B	28°51'32"S 027°49'37"E Altitude 1593m (Fig.3).
C (Lodge)	28°51'52"S 027°49'37"E Altitude 1602m (Figs.4&5).
D (Grazing)	28°51'37"S 027°49'47"E Altitude 1573m (Fig.6).
E	28°51'24"S 027°49'56"E Altitude 1560m (Fig.7).
F	28°51'12"S 027°49'46"E Altitude 1568m (Figs.8&9).
GRAVES	28°50'40"S 027°49'36"E Altitude 1576m (Figs.10&11).

RESULTS

FINDS

Vague remnants of stone-walls, possibly dating from the Later Iron Age, occurred at Point A and on the slope above Point F. Undecrated potsherds (Fig.12) resembling Later Iron Age ceramic ware were found in association with the walls at Points A and F (Map 3). Unfortunately, the samples are too small for dating or for comparison with other known and described assemblages.

A random collection of material on the sites also produced a broken upper grinding stone and several pieces of a cast iron pot (Fig.12).

A cluster of about 16 graves is located near the entrance gate to the farm (Figs.10&11). A family from Lesotho come to tend to two of the graves on a regular basis.

Two panels of rock paintings are located in a cave high up in the mountain (Figs.15-16) above the site. These features lie outside the planned area of development, is difficult to get to, and will not be affected by the planned improvements. It is also the intention of the owners to allow only controlled access to the caves in future.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The ceramic collections found during the investigation seem to be specific concentrations in association with stone-walling at old living sites.

The impact on the cultural heritage remains of the proposed development sites at Waterpoort 669 will be of minor significance.

No other cultural, historical or palaeontological components were found during the investigation, nor were there any other old buildings in the area.

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 stone-walls. It is stressed that in case of the discovery of any other archaeological or historical material during the course of further work, all activities should temporarily be stopped in the specific area for inspection by the archaeologist or other specialists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the residential developments and I recommend that the work may proceed.

MITIGATION

Concerning the areas for the proposed extensions, mitigation measures will be required in the immediate surroundings of the stone-walls and associated ash heaps.

It is emphasised that the rock-paintings in the cave above the site should be protected against vandalism.

Basic rules recommended for the protection of archaeological sites, which have been approved by the South African Association of Professional Archaeologists are enclosed herewith and should be implemented as guide lines for the management of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

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 Waterpoort, Ficksburg.

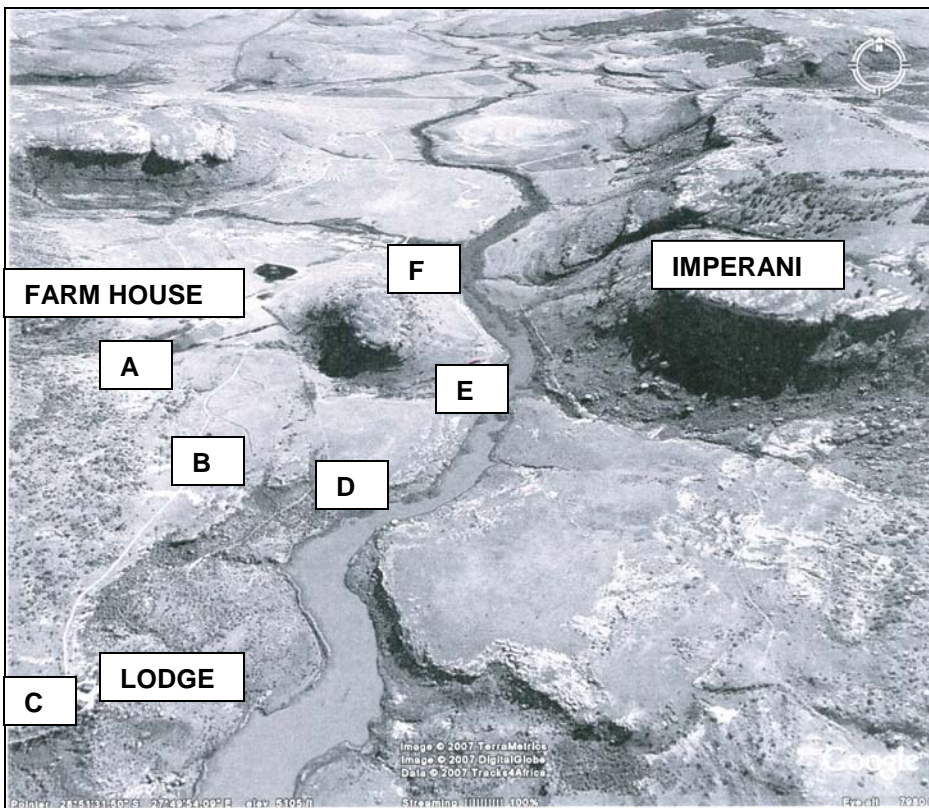
- Do not allow unauthorised visitors to the ruins;
- Always have a knowledgeable guide available to accompany visitors to the site;
- Allow visits to certain selected sites only;
- Educate the regular visitor about preserving the site;
- Prepare an explanatory brochure for the farm;
- Have a single access road to the site;
- Provide a clearly marked parking area at the site;
- Plan hiking routes where the site can not be damaged;
- Prevent people from climbing on to the walls;
- Control vegetation growth at the site;
- Consider 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)

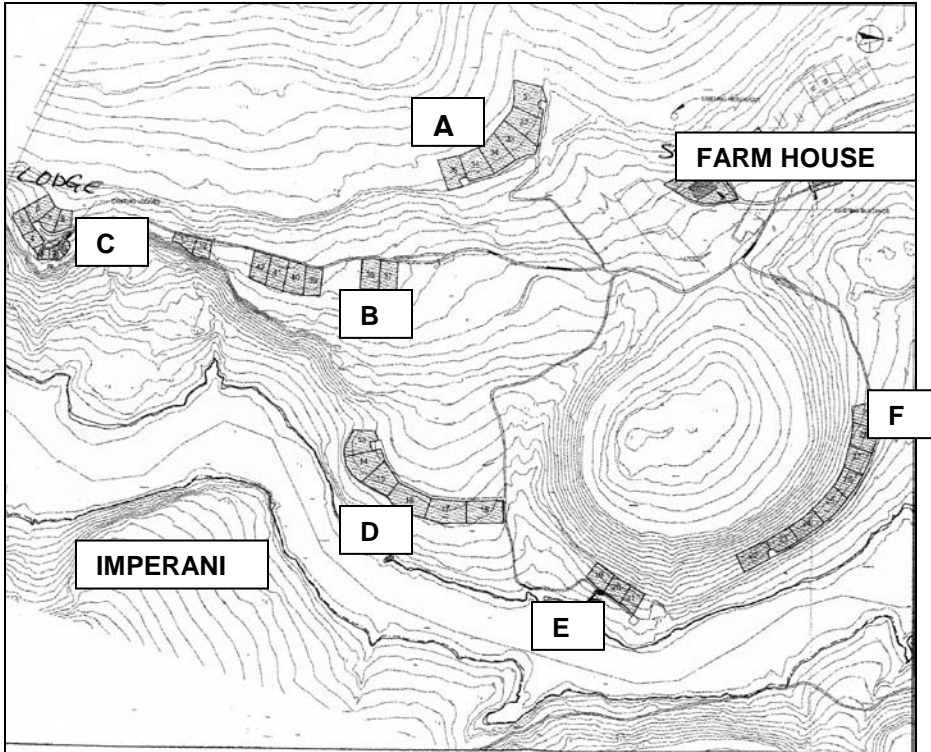
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



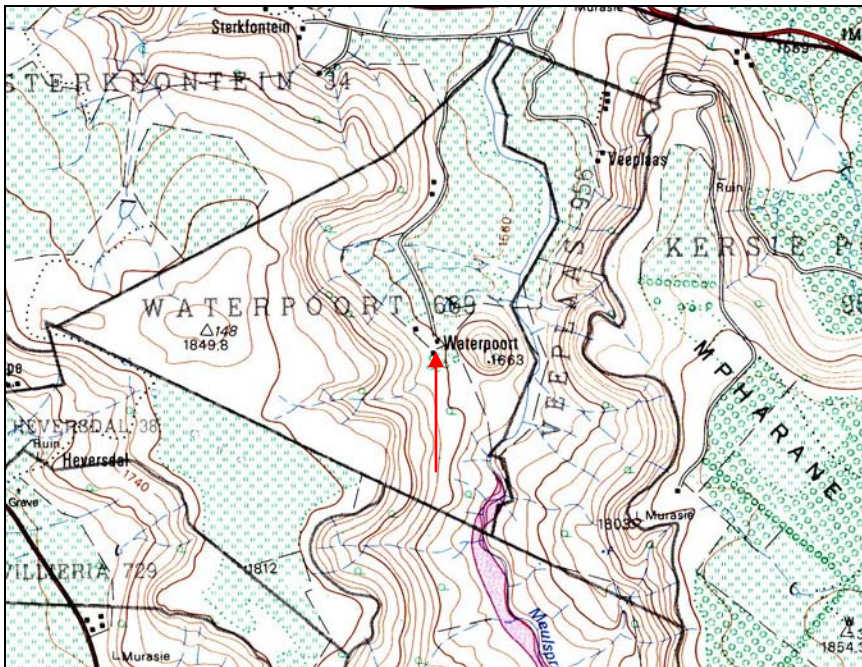
Map 1 Ficksburg in relation to Marquard, Cloccolan and the Lesotho border.



Map 2 Proposed areas of developments along the Meulspruit at the farm Waterpoort 669.



Map 3 Placing of the proposed residential development at Waterpoort 669, Ficksburg.



Map 4 The farm Waterpoort 669 at Mpharane (Imperane) mountain near Ficksburg (2827DD).



Fig.1 Stone-wall remains at Point A.



Fig.2 Soil erosion of the Later Iron Age site at Point A facing west.



Fig.3 View across the cultivated grazing at Point B.



Fig.4 The Lodge at Point C facing towards the Meulspruit Dam.



Fig.5 Another view of the Lodge at Point C.



Fig.6 The cultivated grazing at Point D facing north.



Fig.7 View from Point E facing south.

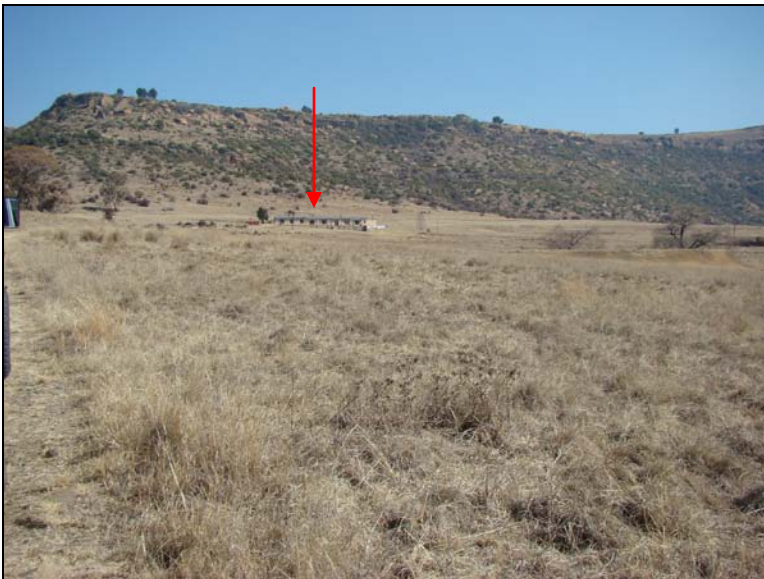


Fig.8 View from Point F facing towards the farmhouse.



Fig.9 View from Point F facing north.



Fig.10 A cluster of graves near the entrance gate.



Fig.11 Two well attended graves in the cluster.



Fig.12 An assemblage of potsherds, porcelain, broken upper grinding stone and pieces of an iron pot from the living site at Point A. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.13 A quarry near Point D.



Fig.14 Stone-walls along the slope above Point F.



Fig.15 Rock paintings in a cave high above the area of development.



Fig.16 Rock paintings in a cave high above the area of development.