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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE TOWN LANDS 131 & 132, HARRISMITH, FREE STATE**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The site for the proposed housing development at Harrismith was visited on 9 March 2006. Piet Rheeder of Nuhela Trust, Harrismith, directed me to the site.

The site was examined for any possible traces of cultural and historical remains to establish the potential impact of the developments on any archaeological and cultural historical material. The significance of certain structures was examined and the possibility of archaeological remains was also investigated. 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 land for the proposed residential developments is located on the town lands to the west of Harrismith (Map 1) and is situated between Alexander Road and the foot of 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill. In the east, the land borders on to the N3 to Durban and is bi-sected by the road to Phomolong township (Map 2) (2829AC 1983). The area will covers about 1119 stands.

The proposed land is grass covered with scattered shrubs and trees. It seems as if the soil had been disturbed in various ways including roads, electricity and water installations. Cattle posts are still visible in one part at the foot of the hill.

There is a substantial flood plain along the riverfront.

The following GPS co-ordinates (Cape) were taken (2829AC):

A ± 45 Graves            28°16'50"S 029°09'44"E Altitude 1733m.

Channal	28°17'04"S 029°10'34"E Altitude 1774m.
B Shembe Graves	28°17'21"S 029°10'49"E Altitude 1799m.
Channel	28°17'02"S 029°10'13"E Altitude 1752m.
Gibson Dam	28°16'29"S 029°12'39"E Altitude 2289m.
42 <sup>nd</sup> Hill	28°15'21"S 029°06'40"E Altitude 1645m.
Old Crusher	28°17'11"S 029°09'21"E Altitude 1711m.
Officer's Mess	28°17'09"S 029°09'11"E Altitude 1728m.
Pipe line	28°16'04"S 029°08'27"E Altitude 1642m.
Akkerbos	28°17'16"S 029°12'05"E Altitude 2029m.
Kings Hill Reservoir 1904	28°17'47"S 029°09'27"E Altitude 1764m.
Wooden Hut	28°17'46"S 029°10'25"E Altitude 1778m.
Botanical Gardens	28°17'04"S 029°09'55"E Altitude 1736m.
Bush House	28°17'17"S 029°11'10"E Altitude 1854m.

## **FINDS**

During the investigation a variety of the remains of previous structures and activities such as a pump house (Fig.7) with electrical instillations (Fig.6), an old road (Fig.6) and places where soil had been removed, were discovered on the surface.

No remains of archaeological and any other material of cultural and historical importance could be found on the site.

## **DISCUSSION**

The disturbances by previous activities and agricultural developments made it unlikely that any remains of early human occupation could have survived.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **MITIGATION**

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

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Piet Rheeder of Harrismith took me to the site and I have benefited from previous investigations on the Harrismith commonage.

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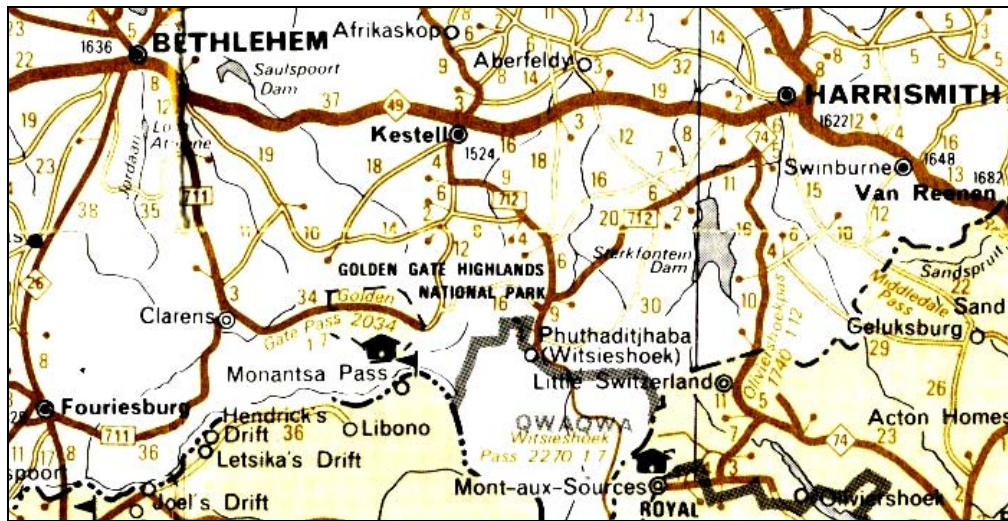
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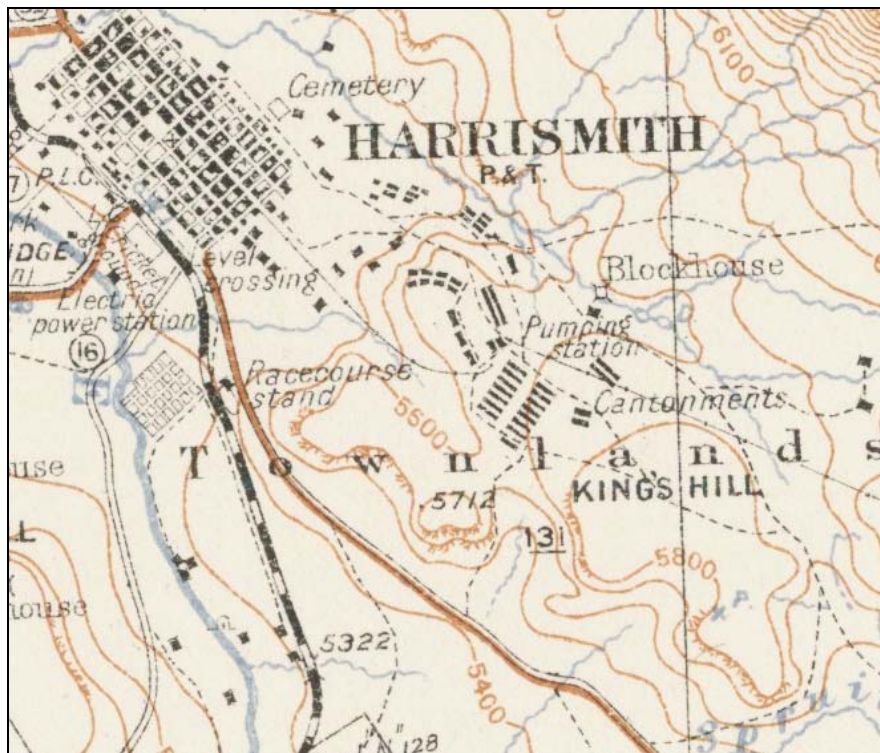
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**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:**



Map 1 Locality of Harrismith in relation to Kestell, Bethlehem and Van Reenen.



Map 2 Locality of the proposed developments indicated by red arrow.

Fig.1 View from Alexandra Avenue across the area of development.



Fig.2 View from the railway line towards 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill facing north.

Fig.3 The municipal dumping site south of Intabazwe township.

Fig.4 Corner of Alexander Avenue and the road to Intabazwe township.

Fig.5 The spruit and the N3 junction.

Fig.6 Old culvert indicates the position of the old road.

Fig.7 The pump house.

Fig.8 View from 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill across the area of development.

Fig.9 View from the pump house at 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill.

Fig.10 Facing east from 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill towards Harrismith.

Fig.11 Cattle posts at the foot of 42<sup>nd</sup> Hill is located in the area of development.