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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE FARM SLIGO 214, VREDEFORT, FREE STATE**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The site for the proposed residential developments on the farm Sligo 214, Vredefort was visited on 7 September 2005. Christine Fouché of Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, Danie Krynauw and Erica Schultz from Free State Environmental Conservation, Bloemfontein, accompanied us to the site. Hein Pretorius from Centurion, Mark Willemse and Philip Dyason from Potchefstroom, were also present during the inspection. At the farm, the landowner and his son, Des and Kennie Warren of Potchefstroom, showed us around.

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 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 Sligo 214 (Surveyor-General O.F.S. 1973) is located on the southern bank of the Vaal River near Skandinavia Drift in the district of Vredefort (Maps 1-3).

The farm is reached from the turn-off from the R501 from Potchefstroom to Viljoenskroon by travelling east on the gravel road along the Vaal River. The site earmarked for the planned residential settlement covers about 80 hectares.

The area seems to be part of the flood plain along the river and contains sandy soil with dense bush and tree cover (Fig.3). There is a thick stand of Eucalyptus trees some distance away from the river (Fig.9). Judging from their height and dense growth I contemplate that these trees must be very old (Fig.10).

The area consists of a deep sandy soil from the alluvial sediment deposited by the river. The deep sandy deposit is clearly visible along the southern bank.

There is a heavy growth of indigenous trees along the banks of the river. On the higher banks and flood plain along the river the soil surface is grass covered with scattered clusters of trees and shrubs.

Clear indications of agricultural activities exist along the riverbank and flood plain.

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

Proposed entrance            26°56'18"S 027°05'26"E Altitude 1311m (Fig.1).

Existing borrow pit            26°56'18"S 027°05'24"E Altitude 1309m (Fig.2).

A handsome little river cottage had been built by the owner of the land some years ago (26°56'06"S 027°05'30"E Altitude 1305m) (Fig.5).

## **FINDS**

There is a graveyard where the ancestors and family of the present farm owner had been buried (Fig.4). The tombstones indicate the graves of the following people (26°56'06"S 027°05'39"E Altitude 1307m):

Robert Thomas Warren    \*24.12.1914    †18.6.1978

Christiaan M Visagie        \*1.1.1905       †23.1.1973

Freda Mahala van Vuuren (nee Visagie)        \*4.3.1908       †4.11.1974

Ethan Warren                \*12.1.1877       †6.12.1957

Ada Warren (Jenkins?)     \*8.10.1878       †31.8.1954

James Charles Warren     \*21.4.1917       †8.11.1976

These graves must be incorporated in the planning.

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

## **DISCUSSION**

It is unlikely that any prehistoric human occupation could have taken place on the riverbank and floodplain. It is also most probable that the agricultural activities on the floodplain have destroyed all remains of human cultural activities and early human occupation in this area.

It is therefore, important to keep in mind that 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 features or the environment.

It is stressed that in case of the discovery of any 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 and other specialists from the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **MITIGATION**

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

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Christine Fouché of Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, accompanied me to the site and supplied information on this investigation. I have also benefited from discussions with Danie Krynauw and Erica Shultz, both officials from the Free State Department of Environmental Affairs, Bloemfontein.

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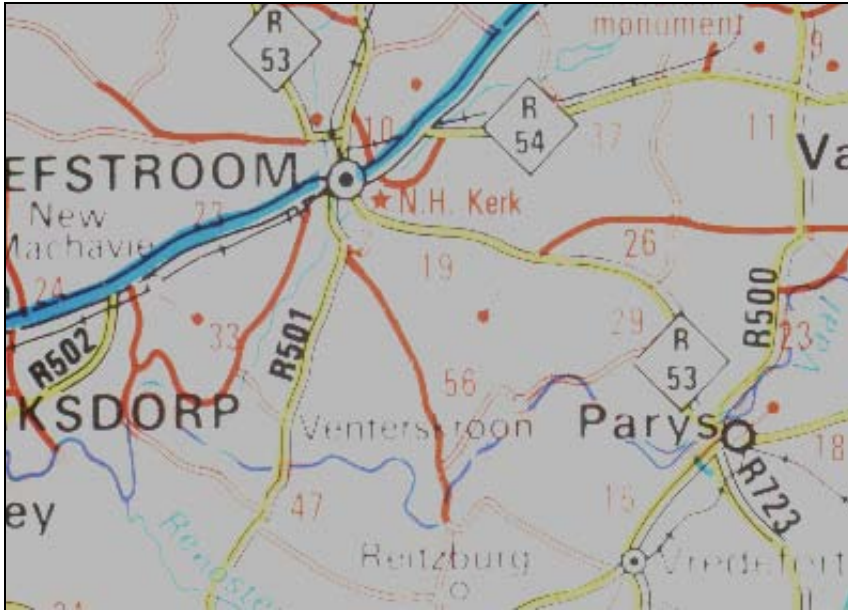
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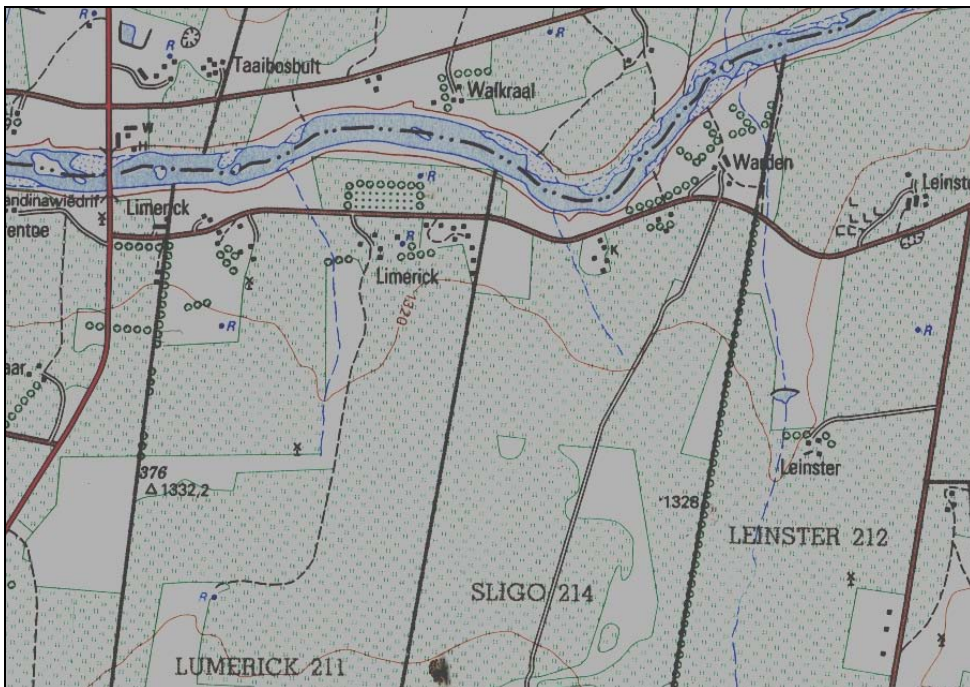
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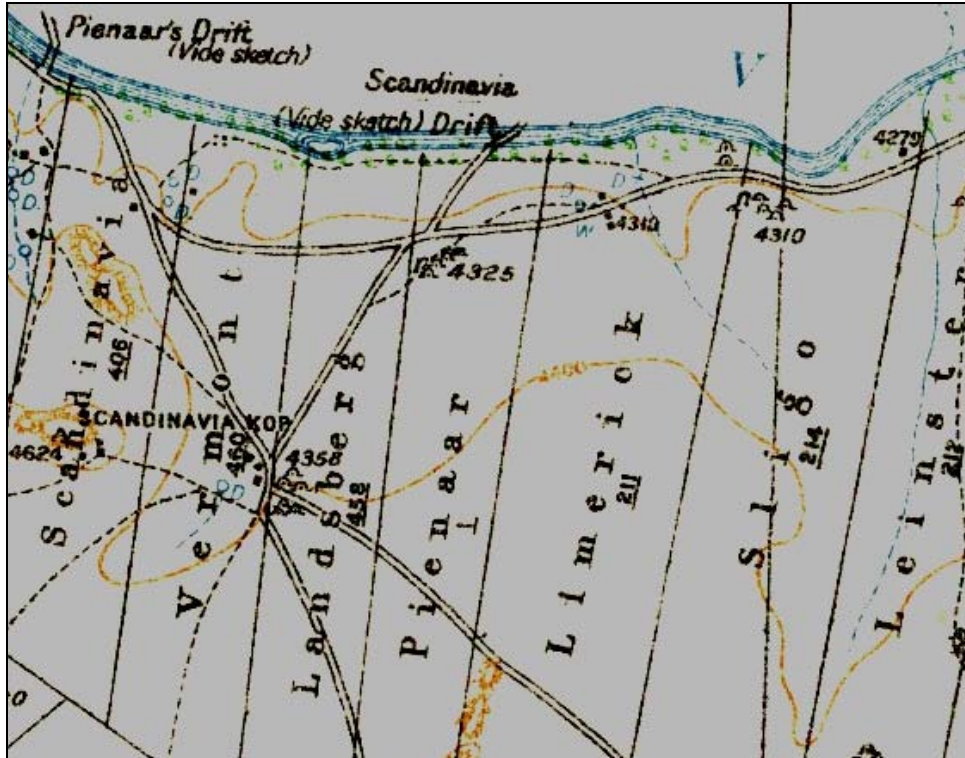


Map 1 Locality of Potchefstroom, Parys, Venterskroon and Reitzburg in and around the Vredefort Dome.



Map 2 Locality of the farm Sligo 214 on the Vaal River (2627CC 1997).  
The road from Viljoenskroon to Potchefstroom, via Skandinavia-drift is on the left.





Map 3 A 1928 print of the same area showing Sligo 214 adjacent to the Vaal River.



Fig.1 Eucalyptus trees grow where the entrance to the residential area is planned.



Fig.2 Existing borrow pit near the planned entrance.



Fig.3 The area along the riverbank has a dense tree and shrub cover.





Fig.4 A grave yard on the farm where the ancestors of the present occupant had been buried.



Fig.5 A handsome little cottage that had been built by the landowner on the river bank.





Fig.6 A view along the Vaal River facing east and up-stream.



Fig.7 Another view along the river facing down-stream (west).



Fig.8 One of the side streams flowing into the Vaal River.



Fig.9 A growth of Eucalyptus trees some distance away from the Vaal River.



Fig.10 Judging from the height and dense growth the Eucalyptus trees are clearly very old.