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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AT AMELIA 518, SASOLBURG

INVESTIGATION

The area for the proposed residential developments lies at Amelia 518 near Zamdela, Sasolburg (Map 1). The site was visited and inspected on 27 May 2005 in the company of Dr Johan du Preez from Cebo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material to establish the potential impact on any cultural relics that might be present. 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 site for the proposed residential developments is located on the farm Amelia 518 (Surveyor-General O.F.S. 1973), adjacent to the R82 to Koppies and the R57 road to Heilbron (2627DD) (Map2). It is possible that the farms Leitrim 926 and Mooidraai 44 could also be affected.

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

Intersection between R82 and R57 (26°51'57"S. 027°54'47"E. Altitude: 1468m).

Quarry 26°51'49"S. 027°54'22"E. Altitude: 1457m (Fig.).

The non-perennial river runs through a grass covered low-lying flood plain with sandy soil and scattered calcrete outcrops.

FINDS

A monument constructed from natural dolerite stones, cemented together was found (26°51'48"S. 027°54'01"E.) at the site (Fig.10). The marble-stone plaque on the cairn had been damaged (Fig.11) and the whole inscription is not clearly readable anymore.

The inscription reads as follows:

Hier is ons maatjie

 helder oordag wreed vermoor
 op pad na skool op
 26 Maart 1952.
 Die gedenkteken is opgerig
 deur sy skoolmaats en
 onderwysers en is onthul op
 27 Junie 1952
 deur die prinsipaal
 mnr J Jonker

According to Mr Abie de Kock (016-972 1957), an old citizen and respected farmer from the area, the memorial stone was erected in remembrance of Frits Pistorius, a young boy from the region who attended school at Coalbrook and who had been murdered there on 26 March 1952. The stone was unveiled on 27 June 1952, some time after the little boy was buried in the cemetery at Vereeniging.

Our spokesperson, related that the boy's relatives are no longer living in the area. They could not be traced during the present survey and no arrangement in connection with the monument could be made.

Several other graves are found some way distant along the west facing slope. According to the inscriptions on the head stones these are the graves of farm labourers who were living in the region (26°51'50"S. 027°54'23"E. Altitude: 1455m (Figs.2-7).

A rectangular stone foundation of a single roomed house was found (26°51'45"S. 027°54'24"E. Altitude: 1454m (Fig.8) in the same area. The position of the entrance is clearly marked by upright stones (Fig.9).

No cultural remains or other indication of cultural or archaeological material was found on the site.

MITIGATION

With relation to the stone monument, there are several options to follow:

1. The monument could be left in situ, and its position should be taken into consideration in the planning of the proposed developments at the site. It is recommended that a strong devils fork fence should be erected around the structure.
2. A serious effort should be made to trace the relatives of the deceased boy, Frits Pistorius, for discussions about the future of the monument.
3. The marble-slab should be removed and be placed at the grave of the little boy in the cemetery at Vereeniging.
4. The marble-slab should be removed and placed in a museum in the area for proper preservation. Prior arrangements with the museum will be needed before the removal of the slab.

In the light of the possibility of further vandalism, the first option does not appear to be the ideal solution to the problem. I recommend that other options for the preservation of the marble-stone should be investigated.

The cluster of graves on the west-facing slope should be avoided in the planning of the present developments and should only be included into a future cemetery or open space, or should be fenced and left undisturbed.

The stone foundation does not represent any important occupation of the site. It could either be removed in the case of important residential development, or could be left untouched. In this case special note should also be taken not to destroy the feature during the construction phase.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr Johan du Preez for taking me to the site.

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Personal communications with:

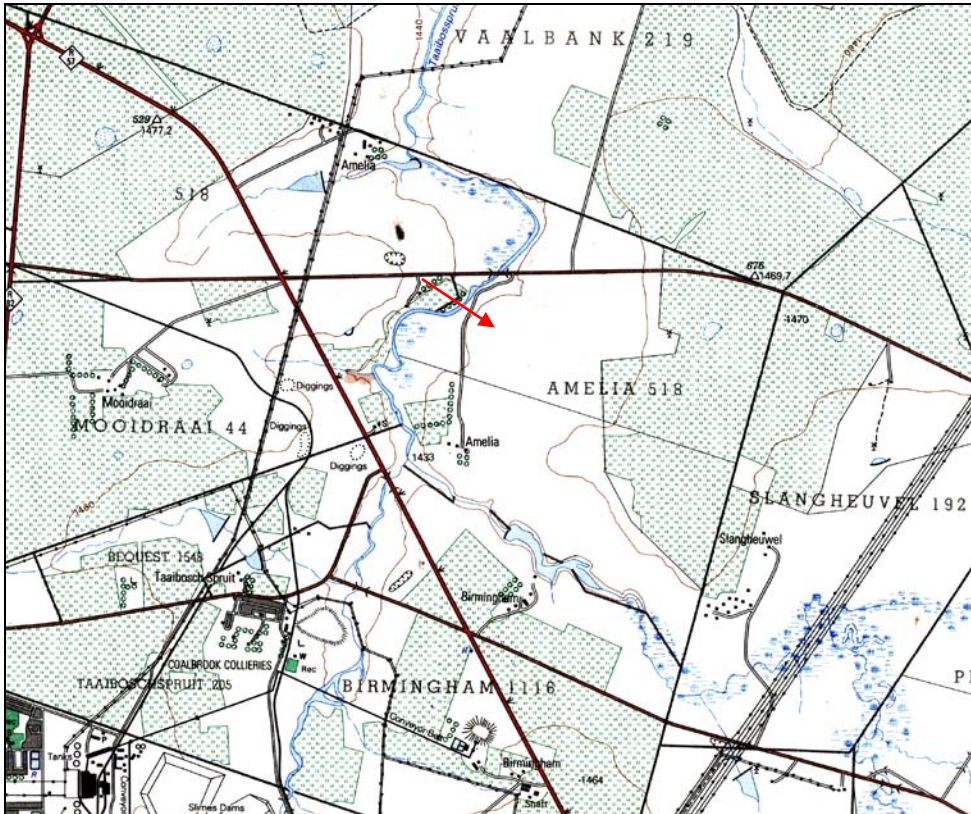
Mr Abie de Kock of Sasolburg (016-972 1957)

Marieta Blom Sasolburg Municipality (016-976 0765 / 082 414 5165).

René Pelser Vaal Technorama, Vereeniging (016-450 3136).



Map 1



Map 2

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

Fig.1 Several graves are visible at the site.



Fig.2 Some of the graves have head stones.



Fig.3 Head stones of some graves at the site.



Fig.4 An inscribed head stone on one of the graves.



Fig.5 Another inscribed head stone at the site.



Fig.6 Inscribed head stone at Amelia 518, Sasolburg.



Fig.7 Another inscribed head stone at Amelia 518.



Fig.8 The foundation of a rectangular house at Amelia 518.

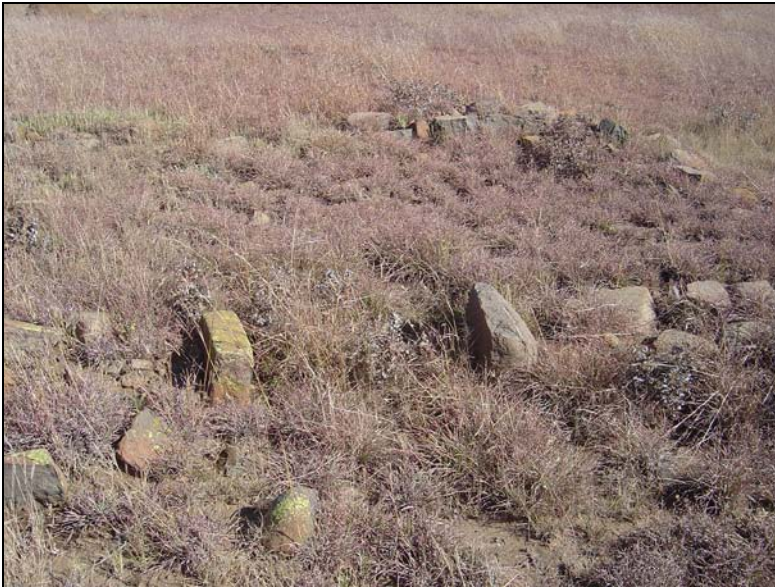


Fig.9 The entrance of the house is clearly visible.



Fig.10 A little monument to commemorate the murder of young Frits Pistorius on 26 March 1952.



Fig.11 The damage to the plaque is clearly visible.