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12 October 2005

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURE HISTORY ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED OXIDATION DAM SITE AT MEMEL, FREE STATE

INVESTIGATION

The land for the proposed sewer oxidation dams at Memel, Free State, was visited on 29 September 2005 in the company of Leratho Tihomelang, Cedric Nelson and Christiaan Vermaak of Bokamoso Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein.

The land 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 oxidation dams will be developed on the commonage at Memel and will cover about 8ha (Map 2) (Surveyor-General 1973).

The land is located to the north east of the town above the Pampoenspruit (Fig.4) and borders on the gravel road to Vrede. The area consists of a flood plain with sedimentary deposit (Fig.3).

The area is partly damaged by a rubbish dump (Fig. 7) and by extensive sand robbing (Fig. 3).

The following observations were made and GPS coordinates (Cape scale) taken (2729DA).

Bridge Pampoenspruit (27°40'07"S 029°33'51"E Altitude 1699m) (Fig.6).

Highest point above dumps (27°40'12"S 029°34'02"E Altitude 1718m).

Graves (27°40'10"S 029°34'06"E Altitude 1710m) (Fig.8).

Existing residential area (27°40'03"S 029°33'49"E Altitude 1708m) (Fig.5).

High point north along road (27°39'43"S 029°33'47"E Altitude 1710m).

FINDS

The whole area consists of grazing fields (Figs. 4, 5 &11) and is void of any cultural or historical material.

No indication of any archaeological or historical material was found on the surface neither were any stone tools or ceramic ware found.

A graveyard which contains about 24 graves appears to be very old (Fig. 8) is found on the hill a little distance from the rubbish dump. The grave of Private C. Cherrill of the 1st York & Lancaster Regt. "who died of wounds received near this spot". 14 February 1902. from the Anglo-Boer War (Fig. 9) (cf. Van der Westhuizen 2000).

Another grave is that of James Ernest Francis, who was born on 18 September 1869 and died 5 July 1912. Several other graves are unmarked and their origin is unknown.

A steel municipal garbage cart was found in the vicinity (Fig. 10). According to the bushes on the axles the vehicle was clearly originally fitted with two wagon wheels and a draw pole, but these have been removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The old municipal garbage cart could be a unique specimen of its kind, which should be restored and preserved. I recommend that the municipality must recover this vehicle and order a knowledgeable person to restore the wagon for preservation.

It is also of importance that the graveyard should be fenced and maintained properly.

There is no obvious reason to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site.

After examination by the archaeologist, I recommend that the proposed developments may proceed.

MITIGATION

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Cedric Nelson of Bokamoso Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for taking me to the site.

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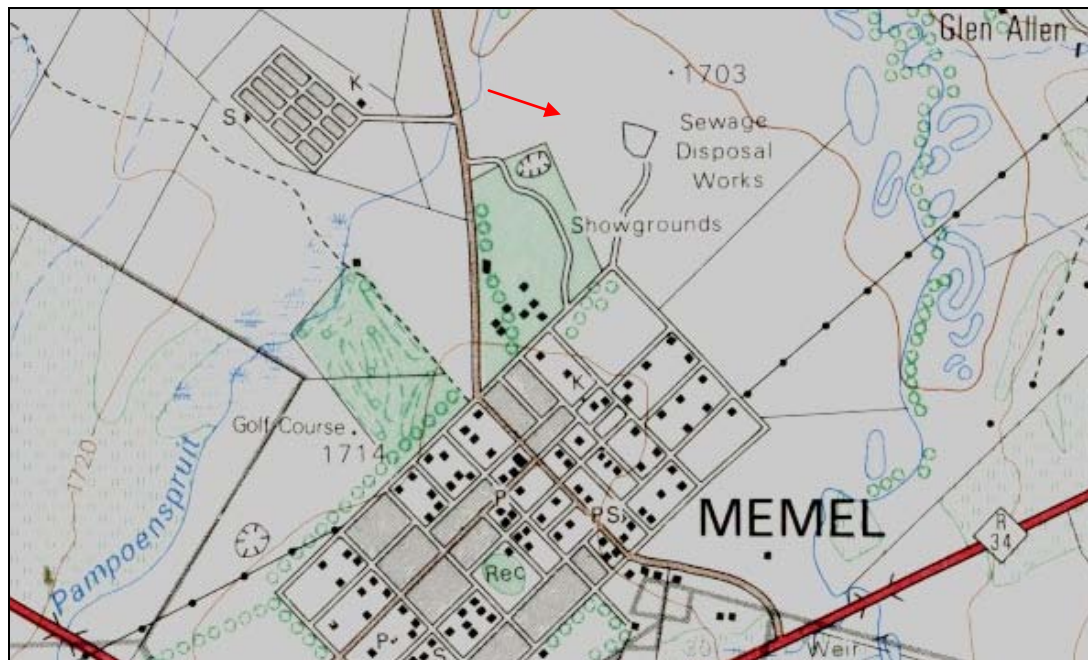
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:



Map 1 Locality of Memel in relation to Vrede, Warden and Newcastle.



Map 2 Locality of the proposed oxidation dams at Memel (2729DA).



Fig.1 A view of the soil disturbance near the proposed new developments at Memel.



Fig.2 A view towards the existing residential settlement at Memel.



Fig.3 One of the sand robbing sites near the proposed developments at Memel.



Fig.4 View across the proposed area of developments.



Fig.5 View along the gravel road to Vrede outside Memel.



Fig.6 Bridge across the Pampoenspruit outside Memel.



Fig.7 The rubbish dump higher up the hill above the proposed sewerage developments.



Fig.8 Old graveyard near the rubbish dump on the hill outside Memel.



Fig.9 The grave of Private C. Cherrill of the 1st York & Lancaster Regt. "who died of wounds received near this spot". 14 February 1902. (cf. Van der Westhuizen 2000).



Fig.10 A unique specimen of a rubbish removal cart used by the Municipality was found near the proposed site of development. The age of the vehicle could not be ascertained.



Fig.11 A view across the area proposed for development at Memel.