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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AT MOROKA EXTENTION 22, THABA NCHU, FREE STATE

INVESTIGATION

The site for the proposed residential development at Moroka Extention 22, Thaba Nchu, was visited and inspected on 18 August 2005. Mr Piet de Bie of Phethogo Consulting, Bloemfontein, gave directions to the site.

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 residential area is described as Moroka Extension 22, Thaba Nchu (Surveyor-General 1973) and lies adjacent to the existing residential area (Fig.14) where it borders on the N8 main road to Ladybrand (Map1).

The area is grass covered with sparse scatters of indigenous shrubs and the remains of Blue gum and Pine trees, which have been destroyed for firewood.

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

Concrete block inscribed Thaba Nchu 33 near borehole T21118 (Figs.2-3)

Borehole T21118 & dam etc. (Figs.1, 4 & 5).
29°14'13"S. 026°51'02"E. Altitude 1546m

Old brick works (Figs.6-7).
29°14'13"S. 026°51'00"E. Altitude 1537m.

Borehole T21537 & dam (Fig.13).
29°14'28"S. 026°50'22"E. Altitude 1530m.

Northern limit of the proposed development (Fig.14).
29°1'39"S. 026°50'58"E. Altitude 1538m.

FINDS

Remains of early human occupation in the form of stone walls (Fig.8-12) and graves were found (Fig.15-18).

Stone wall (24x1,5m) (Figs.8-9.).
29°14'13"S. 026°51'00"E. Altitude 1537m.

Rectangular stone structure (18x4m) (Figs.10-12).
29°14'47"S. 026°51'19"E. Altitude 1594m.

Rectangular stone kraal complex (Figs.10-12,20).
29°14'40"S. 026°51'21"E. Altitude 1588m.

±20 Graves (Figs.15-18).
29°14'37"S. 026°51'16"E. Altitude 1571m.

No indication of any other archaeological or historical material was found in the immediate vicinity neither were any stone tools or ceramic ware found.

DISCUSSION

The graves appear to be very old and are in serious need of maintenance and preservation. I recommend that this area, which lies high up against the mountain slope, should be fenced and kept outside the planned residential area. Soil erosion in the immediate vicinity of the graves should be stabilised.

The boreholes and water pumping equipment presumably dates from a previous era when drinking water for stock were supplied and maintained by Government. It is clear that the upholding of the equipment ceased to exist. Water pipes and windmills were removed to the extent that the water supply and reservoir dams are no longer in operation.

It is not clear if the boreholes will be restored and equipped to supply drinking water to future residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No obvious reasons could be found 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 present proposed development the cluster of graves should receive attention.

Otherwise, no mitigation measures will be necessary regarding cultural and historical heritage.

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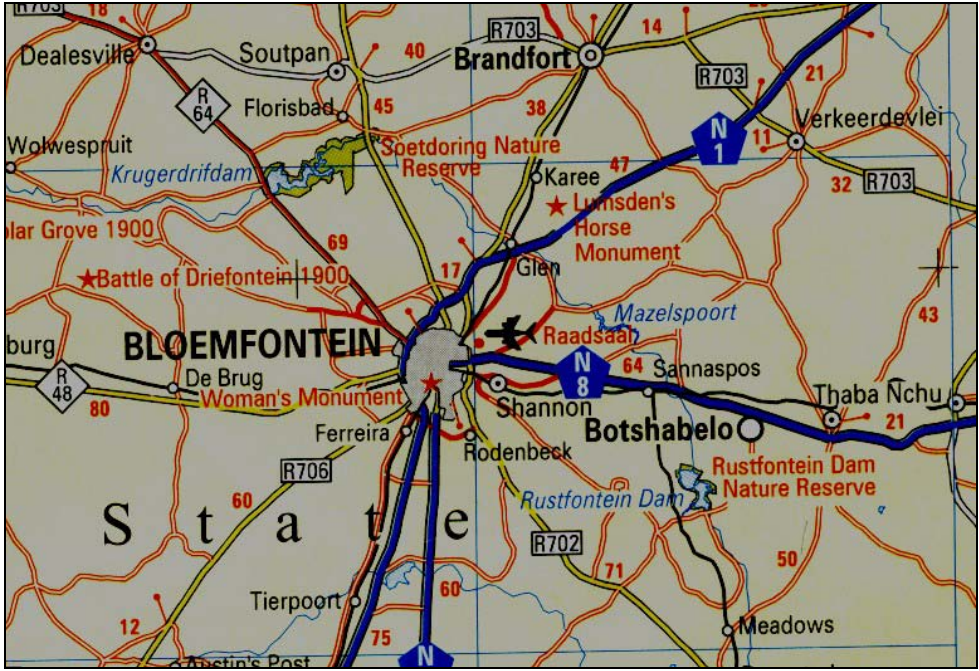
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Map 1 Locality of Thaba Nchu along the N8 main road to the west of Bloemfontein.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig.1 Inscription T21118 on concrete block on the borehole.



Fig.2 A stone and concrete structure, inscribed Thaba Nchu 33, is probably a tank stand near the bore hole T21118.



Fig.3 Inscription Thaba Nchu 33 on concrete block neat borehole T21118.



Fig.4 The water reservoir near bore hole T21118.



Fig.5 The water trough near bore hole T21118.



Fig.6 The remains of the brickworks near borehole T21118.



Fig.7 Brick debris at the brick works near the bore hole T21118.



Fig.8 Remains of a stone wall 25m long and 1,5m wide.



Fig.9 . Another section of the same stone wall 25m long and 1,5m wide.



Fig.10 Part of a rectangular stone kraal complex.



Fig.11 Another part of a rectangular stone kraal complex.



Fig.12 Rectangular stone kraal complex.



Fig.13 Borehole T21537 and water reservoir dam. Informal housing in the distance.



Fig.14 The northern limit of the proposed development



Fig.15 A cluster of about 20 graves at the site.



Fig.16 Some of the stone covered graves at the site.



Fig.17 A closer look at one of the stone covered graves.



Fig.18 Some of the graves are on the edge of the donga.
There is a risk that these graves will be washed away shortly.



Fig.19 View across the area planned for development. Thaba Nchu mountain at the back.



Fig.20 Stone kraal complex against the slope at the foot of Thaba Nchu mountain.