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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED CEMETERY DEVELOPMENTS AT RATAU, THABA NCHU, FREE STATE**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The site for the placing of the proposed cemetery at Ratau Section, Thaba Nchu, was visited and inspected on 22 August 2006. Erica Jacobs and Mane van Wyk of Spatial Solutions Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, accompanied me 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 cemetery at the Ratau section, Thaba Nchu, will be located on the farm Thaba Ncho 404 and lies adjacent to the existing residential area (Map 2&3) (Surveyor-General 1973). The land is reached from the N8 main road to Ladybrand at a turn-off to Thaba Nchu Sun (Map 1).

The area consists of a dark clay soil with grass cover, which appears to be heavily overgrazed at present. According to some indications, parts of the terrain could have been old plough lands.

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

Point A (pylon)      29°14'34"S. 026°49'35"E. Altitude 1513m (Fig.1).

Point B (south)      29°14'50"S. 026°49'22"E. Altitude 1496m (Fig.2).

Concrete floors (1) 29°14'50"S. 026°49'30"E. Altitude 1512m (Fig.4).

Concrete floors (2) 29°14'50"S. 026°49'33"E. Altitude 1514m (Fig.5).

Point C 29°14'50"S. 026°49'35"E. Altitude 1512m (Fig.7).

## **FINDS**

Concrete storm water pipes still indicate the route of the old road to Dewetsdorp (Fig.3). A cluster of concrete floor pads occur on the surface. The origin and purpose is not clear, but it could be the remains of a school from previous times (Fig.4). The impressions of IBR corrugated iron sheets are visible on the edge of the concrete pad (Fig.6).

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 storm water pipes and concrete floors are considered as of minor cultural significance and not worthy of preservation

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

No obvious reasons could be found to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site.

After examination I recommend that the proposed developments may proceed.

## **MITIGATION**

Concerning the area for the proposed development, no mitigation measures will be necessary regarding any cultural and historical heritage.

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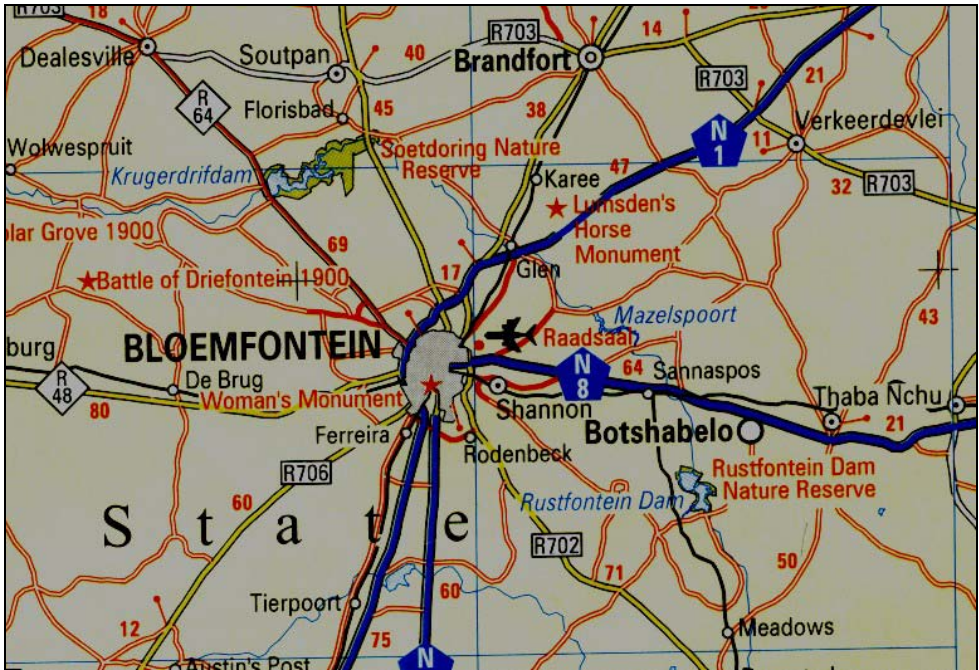
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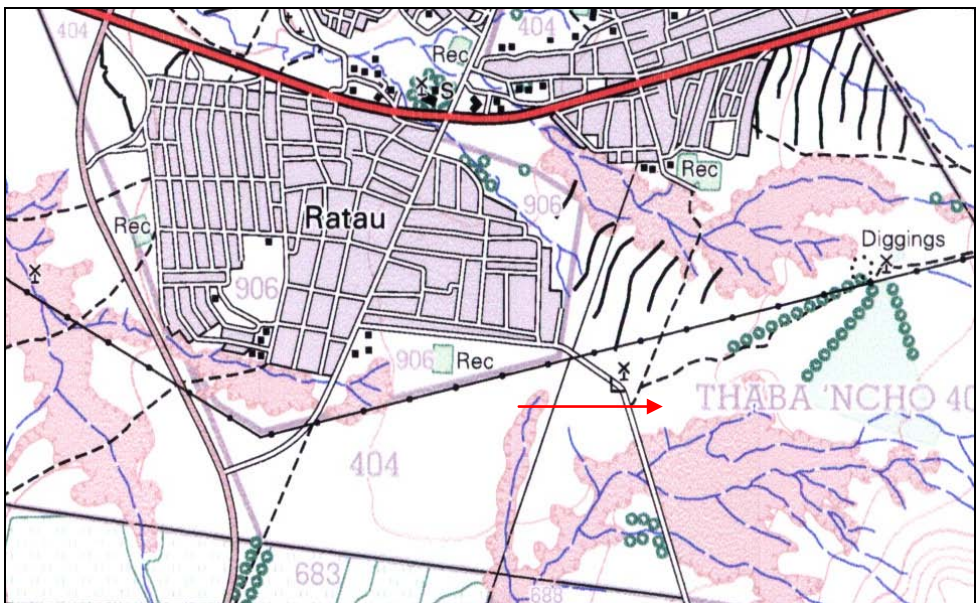
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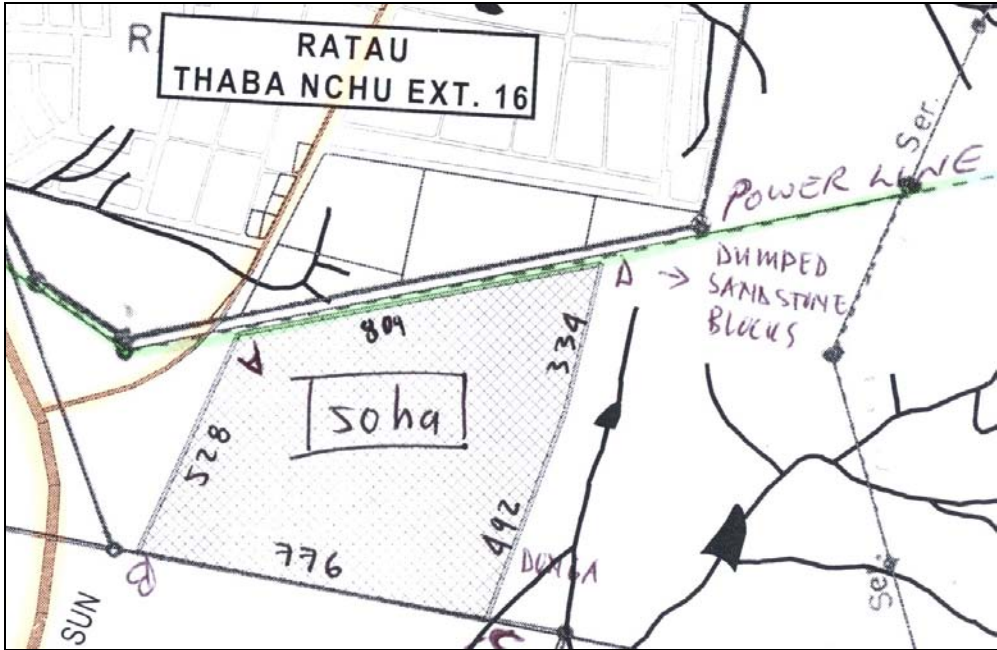
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



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



Map 2 Locality of the area proposed for the new cemetery at Ratau, Thaba Nchu



Map 3 Placing of the land proposed for the new cemetery.



Fig.1 View from point A facing east.



Fig.2 View from point B facing east.



Fig.3 Remains of a culvert at the old road to Dewetsdorp that used to run through the area.



Fig.4 Concrete floors that seems to be the remains of an old school.



Fig.5 Impressions of an IBR type of corrugated iron in the concrete.



Fig.6 Remains of oil filters and other pieces of metal near the concrete floors.



Fig.7 View from point C facing east towards Thaba Nchu Mountain.





Fig.8 The area contains clay soil with a heavily overgrazed grass cover.