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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE
PROPOSED TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENTS AT MAUERSNEK,
LADYBRAND, FREE STATE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New township developments are planned at Mauersnek, Ladybrand, Free State. The developments will be an extension of the existing township and will make provision for 562 new residential stands.

Archaeological remains occur in the form of a midden with a substantial amount of Late Iron Age potsherds on the surface. This locality lies against the foot of the hill and will fall outside the area of development.

An old dynamite store was found in the area of development. The feature could be of general significance and it is left to the local society to decide on the preservation of the structure.

The new township development at Mauersnek will have no direct impact on any archaeological or heritage remains at the site at present.

I recommend that the proposed developments and planning of the site may proceed.

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

Scope and Limitations

The investigation provided an opportunity to examine the site earmarked for the development of the new township extension.

No limitations or obstacles were experienced during site visit.

Methodology

1. The site was inspected on foot.
2. GPS points were taken on the outskirts and the surrounding areas and features were recorded on camera.

INVESTIGATION

The site at Mauersnek, Ladybrand, where extensions of the residential area are planned was visited on 1 September 2010.

Mr. Piet de Bie from Phethogo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, gave directions to the site at Ladybrand.

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).

The study aims to locate and evaluate the significance of cultural heritage sites, archaeological material, manmade structures older than 60 years, and sites associated with oral histories and graves that might be affected by the proposed developments.

LOCALITY

The proposed developments are planned as an extension of Mauersnek along the foot of the mountain and to the west of the town of Ladybrand (2927AB) (Map 2).

The following GPS co-ordinates (Cape scale) were taken on the outskirts of the proposed area of development (Map 3).

Point A	29°11'28"S 027°26'42"E Altitude 1592m (Figs.1&2)
Point B	29°11'23"S 027°26'31"E Altitude 1596m (Figs.3-5).
Point C	29°11'25"S 027°26'17"E Altitude 1623m (Fig.6)
Point D	29°11'40"S 027°26'13"E Altitude 1624m (Figs.7&8)

Point E	29°11'47"S 027°26'27"E Altitude 1593m (Fig.9)
Midden M	29°11'28"S 027°26'04"E Altitude 1628m (Figs.19&20)

RESULTS

FINDS

The remains of a dynamite store (Fig.17) are found in a cluster of Black wattle trees towards the centre of the proposed area of development. The structure is made out of concrete slabs and although the doors have been removed the container seems to be in a good condition. Relatively high soil walls were erected as protection on three sides (Fig.16). The exact history of this feature at Ladybrand could not be traced. A replica of this construction was found at the town lands of Vrede in the eastern Free State, but due to its damaged state, could not be preserved (Dreyer 2006d). It might be possible that during a specific period of time in the past this type of building could have been a general arrangement for municipalities or local roads departments to store caches of explosives.

Archaeological finds in the form of a wide scatter of Later Iron Age undecorated pottery and a single finger decorated pot rim (Fig.20) occur on a midden at Point M and against the foot of the hill (Fig.19).

Remains of sandstone blocks (Fig.13) are found against the hill near Point C. These blocks have been quarried in the mountain and most probably produced building material for many of the attractive old buildings in town. The drill holes and break levels are already heavily patinated and appear to be old fractures. The Roman Catholic (Fig.15) and Dutch Reformed Churches (Fig.14) in town are excellent specimens of the sandstone building style and date from 1922 and 1889 respectively. Judging from the considerable measurements of the sandstone blocks it is speculated that the building material for at least some of the public buildings and domestic houses could have been mined here.

No graves were found on the proposed area of development.

DISCUSSION

The ash heap and ceramic scatter along the foot of the hill are clearly remains of Later Iron Age settlements in this area and on the plateau above the site. Information obtained from the limited finds on the surface and research on archaeological material from elsewhere in the Free State indicate that the

settlements could have been part of the Later Iron Age occupation of the area along the Lesotho border (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1996).

Radio-carbon dating places the Later Iron Age occupation in the Free State between about mid-17th century to early 19th century (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1992).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The present placing of farm animals could create a problem that will have to be addressed (Figs.10-12). In this regard, the relocation of the animals to a more formal setting of enclosures near to the community could be an acceptable solution. The community kraals at Tweespruit could be a practical example to follow.

The midden and associated Late Iron Age pottery fall outside the present area of development and it is accepted that the new development will have no immediate affect on this find. In future people living close by could finally destruct the midden and finds without even noticing the historical deposit.

The new township developments at Mauersnek will have no direct impact on any archaeological or heritage remains at the site at present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The old dynamite store could be of general significance and it is left to the local society to decide on the preservation of the structure. I have brought the occurrence to the attention of Mr Jan Oberholzer from the Maloti Tourism Office in Ladybrand (051-924 2556, 082 690 2489).

There are no obvious reasons to delay further development of the township at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

I recommend that the planning of the proposed township could proceed.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures will be required to preserve the remains of the old dynamite store.

For mere practical reasons it could be wise to consider the removal of the informal farming activities before the final planning of the township layout.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Piet de Bie from Phethogo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for directing me to the site.

I also owe gratitude to Jan Oberholzer of Maloti Tourism, Ladybrand for information on the history of the town.

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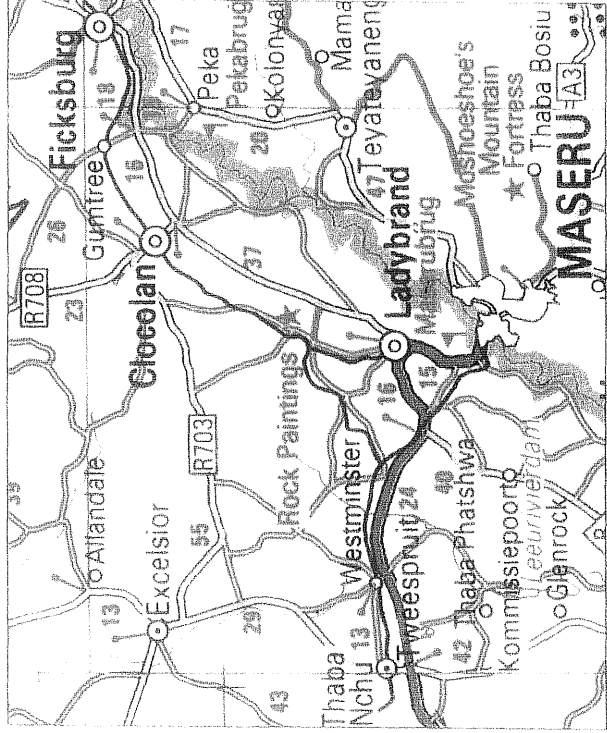
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:



Map 1 Ladybrand in relation to towns along the Free State – Lesotho border

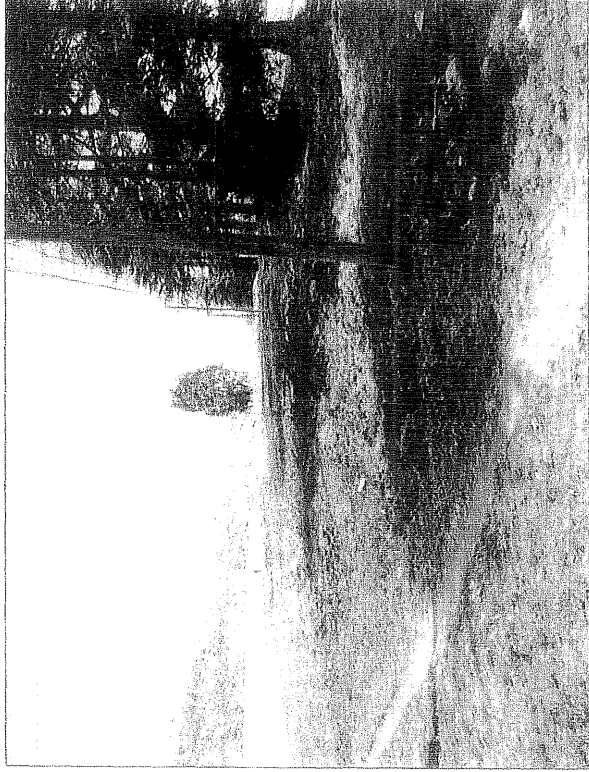
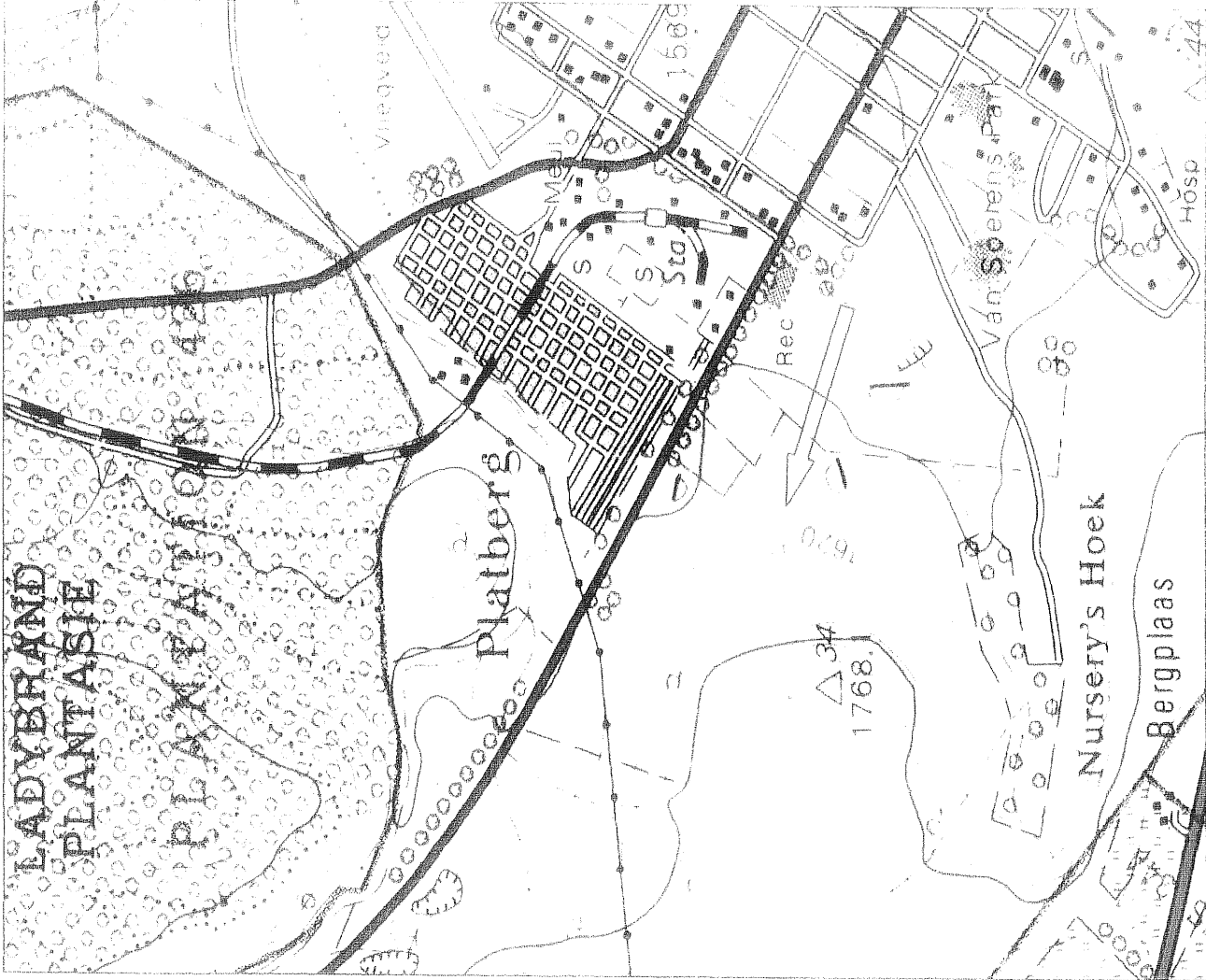


Fig. 1 Point A facing west towards Point B at Mautersnek, Ladybrand



Map 2 Placing of the proposed developments at Mauersnek, Ladybrand (2927AB)



Map 3 Layout of the new Mauersnek township developments at Ladybrand
Position of GPS coordinates indicated.



Fig. 2 Point A facing south west at Mauersnek, Ladybrand



Fig.3 Point B facing towards Point A at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

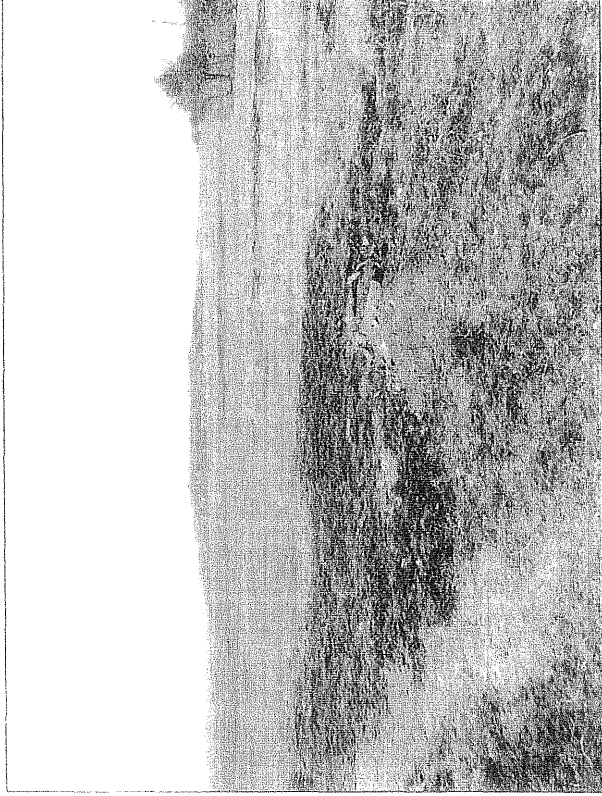


Fig.4 Point B facing south at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

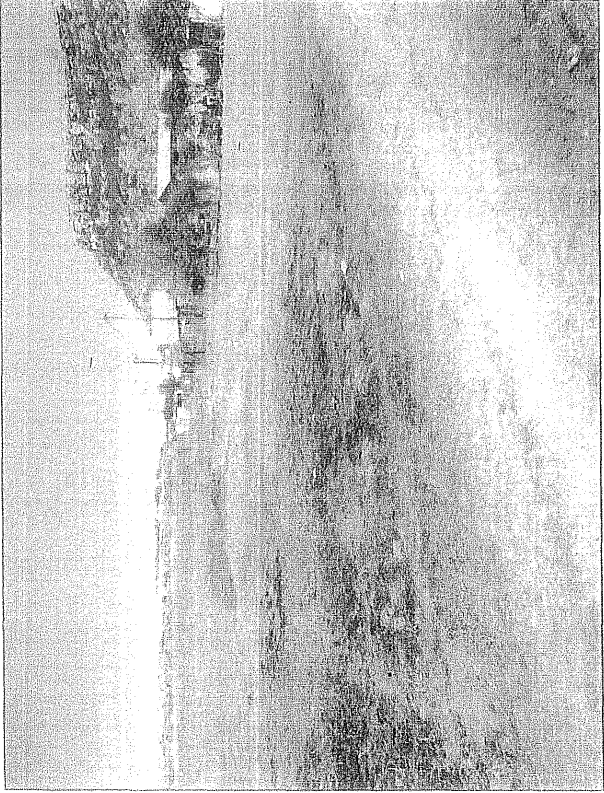


Fig.5 Point B facing Point D at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.



Fig.6 Point C facing east at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

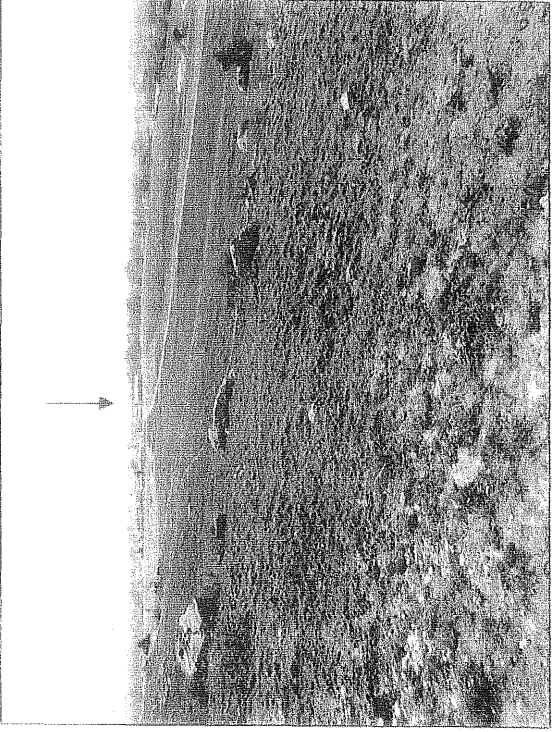


Fig.7 Point D facing Point A at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

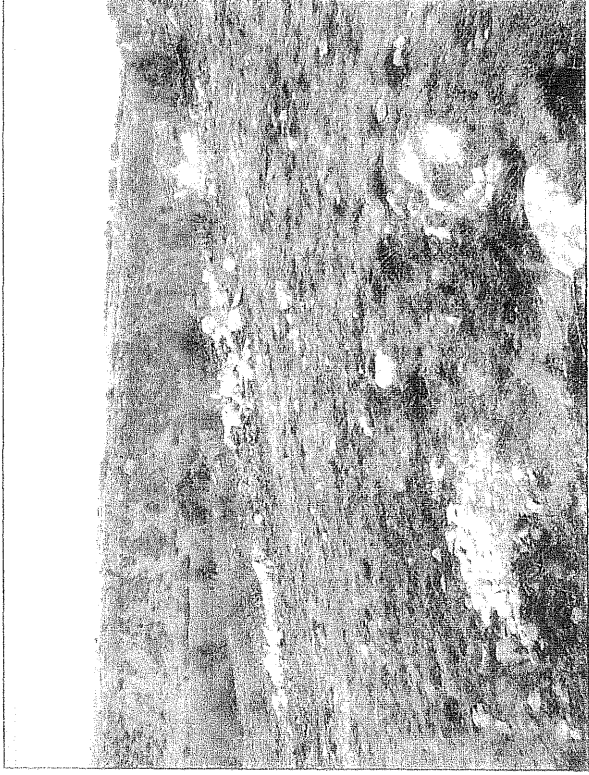


Fig.8 Sandstone mining by local people at Point D.

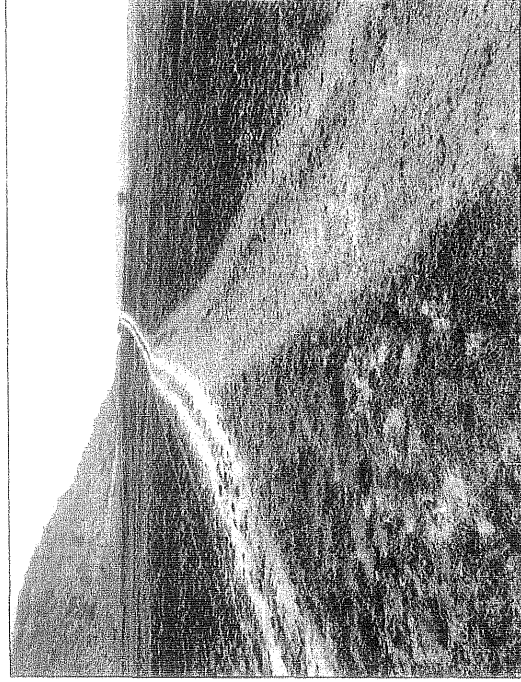


Fig.9 Point E facing north at Mauersnek, Ladybrand.



Fig.10 Stock enclosures along the foot of the mountain at Point M, Mauersnek, Ladybrand



Fig 11 Stock enclosures at Point M, Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

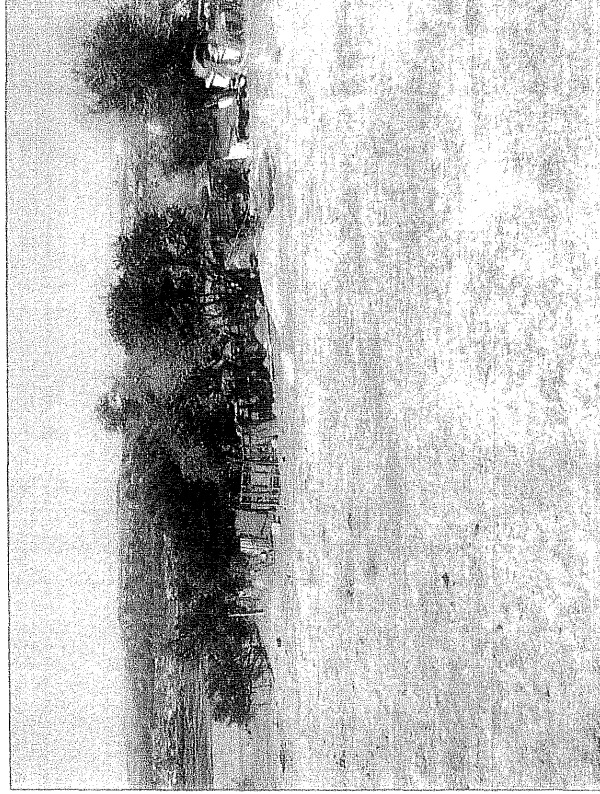


Fig. 12 Stock enclosures at Point M, Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

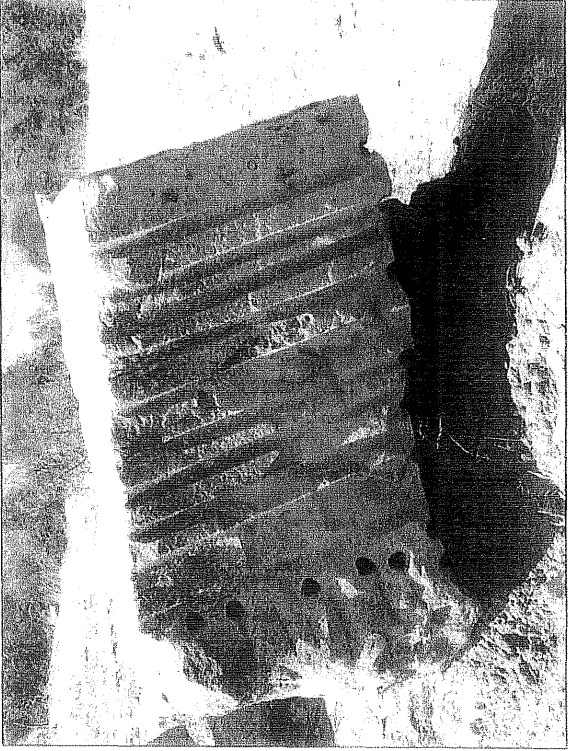


Fig. 13 Sandstone mining at Point C. Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

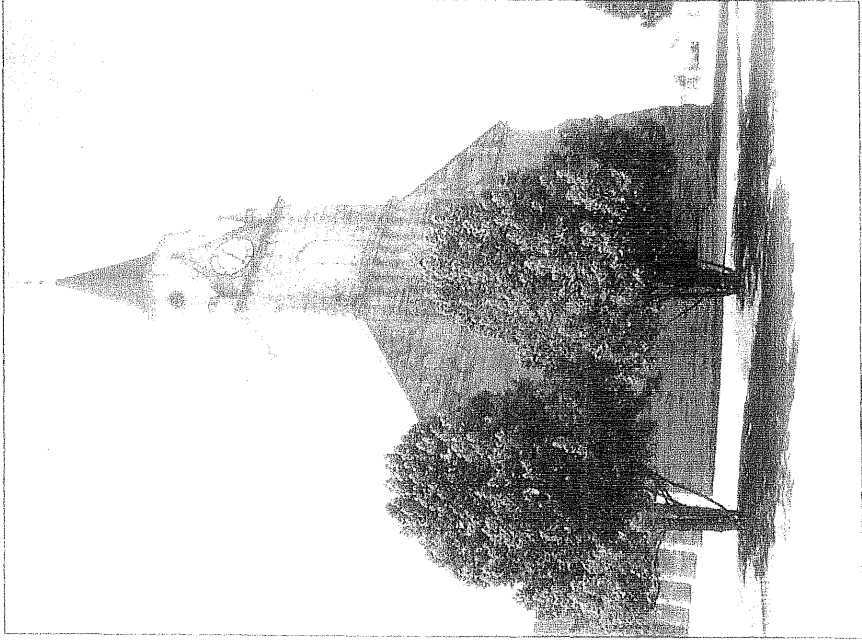


Fig. 14 Dutch Reformed Church in Ladybrand dating from 1889

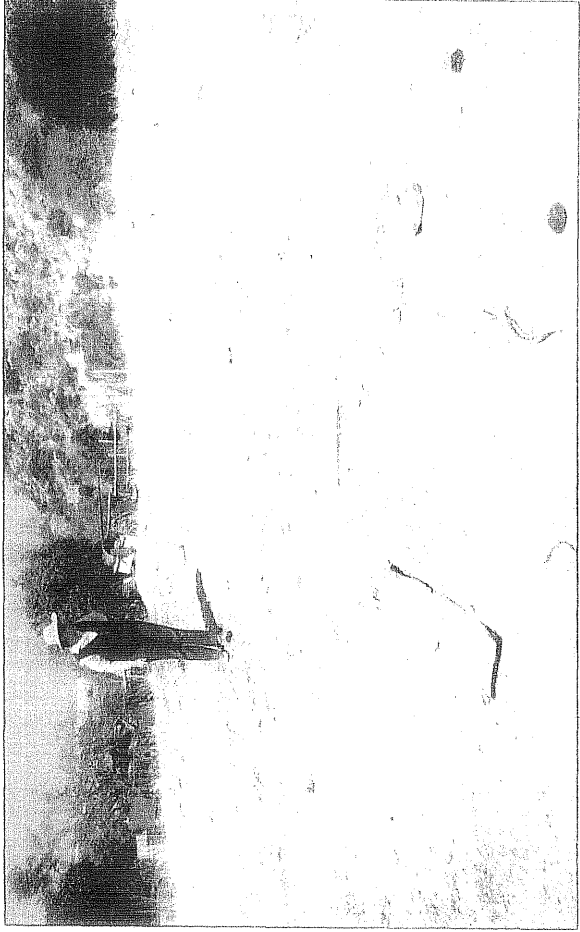


Fig.19 Midden at Point M, Mauersnek, Ladybrand.

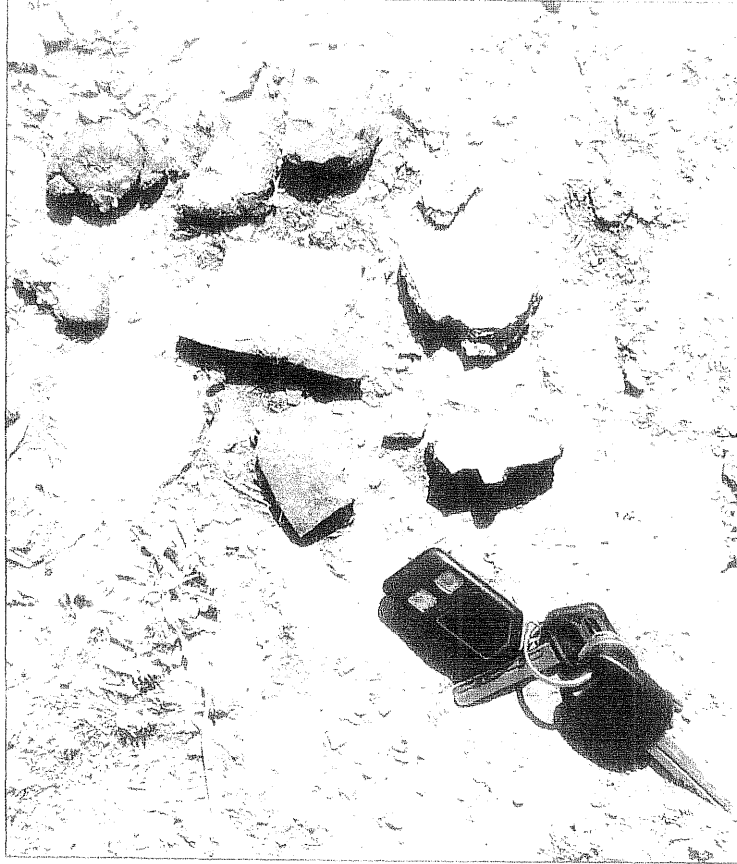


Fig.20 Later Iron Age pottery from Midden at Point M, Mauersnek, Ladybrand

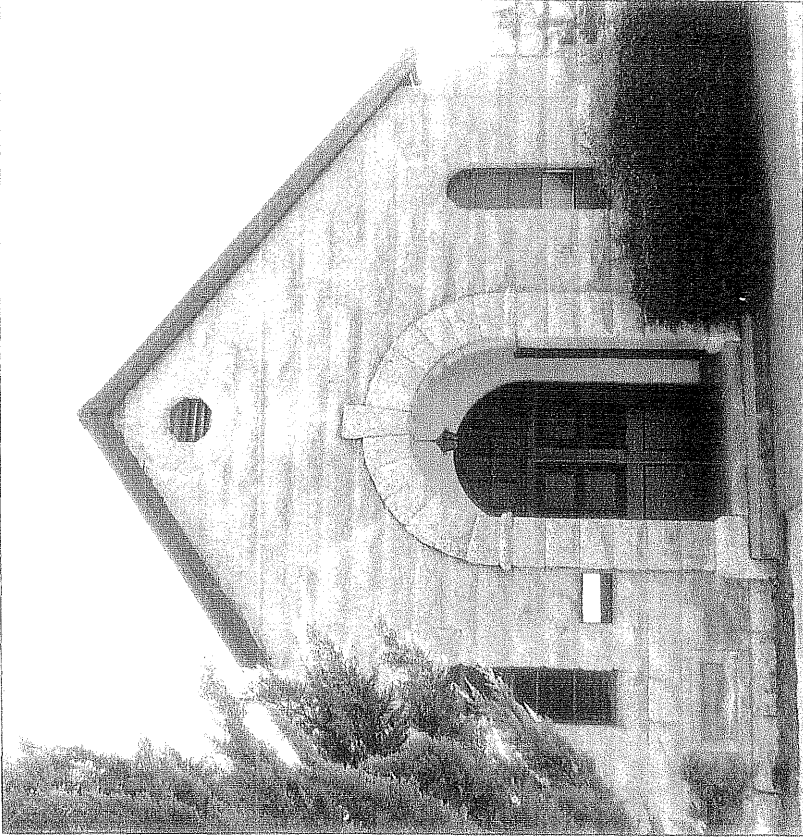


Fig. 15 Roman Catholic Church in Ladybrand was built in 1922.

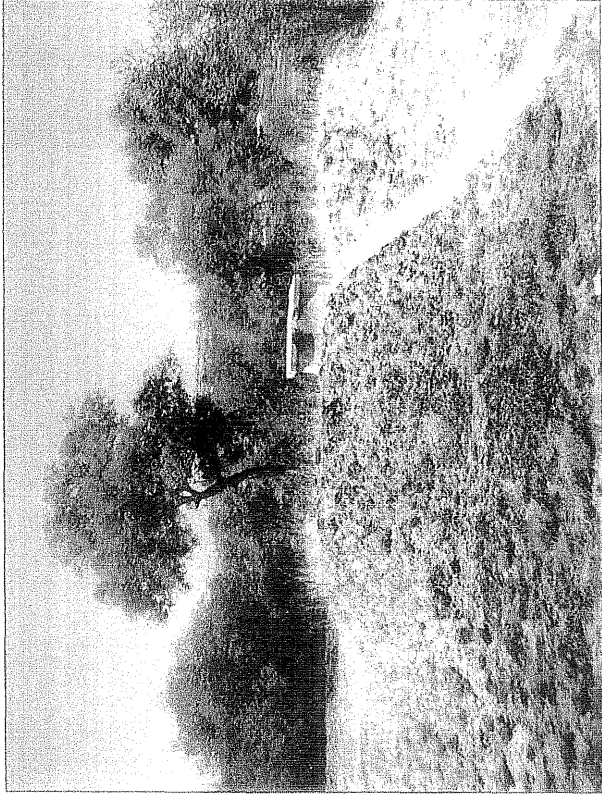


Fig. 16 Dynamite store is protected by a soil wall.

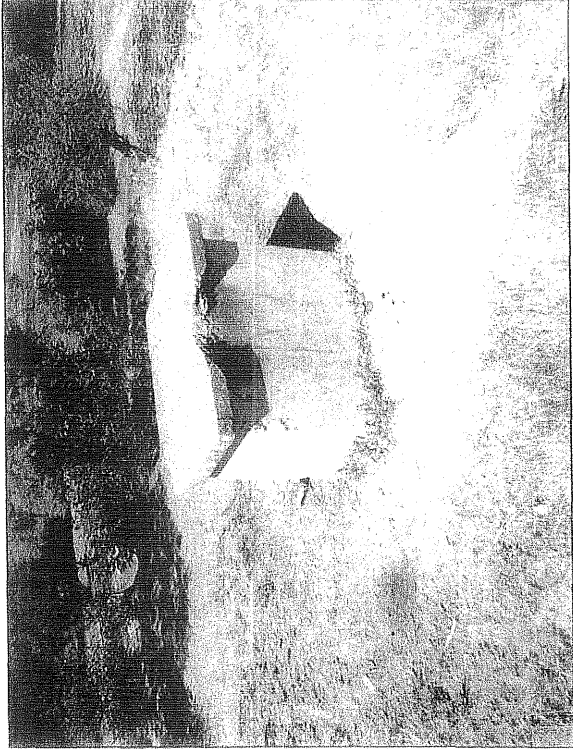


Fig.17 Dynamite store in the area selected for development.

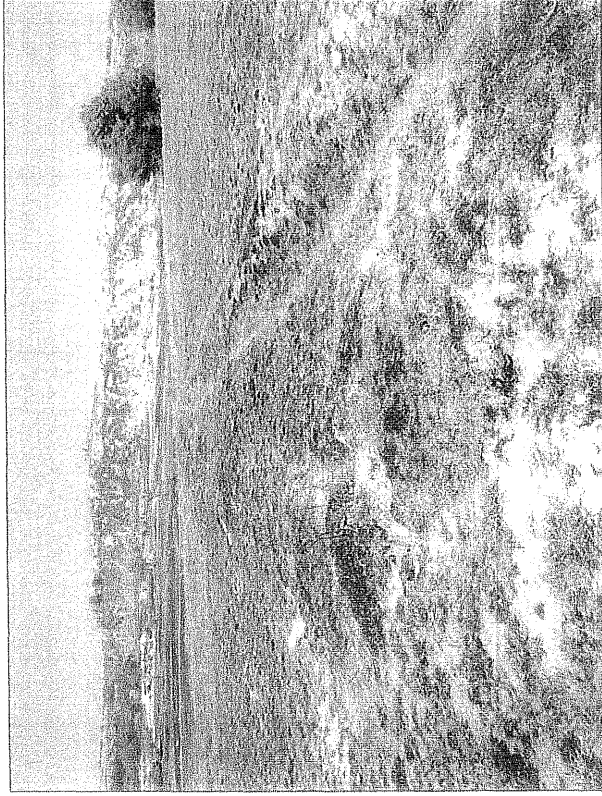


Fig.18 Ploughing contours in the central part of the development area