



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural  
Resource Consultants  
BK 98 09854/23

---

**A REPORT ON A HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL  
DEVELOPMENT ON THE FARM VOGELFONTEIN 69, DIHLABENG LOCAL  
MUNICIPALITY (BETHLEHEM), FREE STATE PROVINCE**

For:

***DIHLABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY  
P.O. BOX 551  
BETHLEHEM  
9700***

REPORT: AE1142

by:

***A.J. Pelsler  
Accredited member of ASAPA***

***May 2011***

Archaetnos  
P.O. Box 55  
GROENKLOOF  
0027  
Tel: 083 291 6104/**083 459 3091**  
Fax: 086 520 0673  
E-mail: [antonp21@yahoo.com](mailto:antonp21@yahoo.com)

Members: AC van Vollenhoven BA, BA (Hons), DTO, NDM, MA (Archaeology) [UP], MA (Culture History) [US], DPhil (Archaeology) [UP], Man Dip [TUT], DPhil (History)[US]  
AJ Pelsler BA (UNISA), BA (Hons) (Archaeology), MA (Archaeology) [WITS]

**©Copyright  
Archaetnos**

**The information contained in this report is the sole intellectual property of Archaetnos CC. It may only be used for the purposes it was commissioned for by the client.**

**DISCLAIMER:**

**Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural importance during the survey of study areas, the nature of archaeological and historical sites are as such that it always is possible that hidden or subterranean sites could be overlooked during the study. Archaetnos and its personnel will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result thereof.**

**The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or one of its subsidiary bodies needs to comment on this report and clients are advised not to proceed with any action before receiving these.**

## SUMMARY

Archaetnos cc was appointed by the Dihlabeng Local Municipality (Bethlehem) to conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment on the farm Vogelfontein 69, near Bethlehem in the Free State Province. A Residential Development (Vegelfo) is being proposed. The project came about on request of the Maseko family, who indicated that there are a number of family graves in the area that will have to be exhumed and relocated before the development could continue. The HIA was then requested as part of the assessment of these possible graves.

Besides the graves a number of other heritage sites were identified in the area of the development. These sites, as well as the possible graves, will be discussed in this report. A number of recommendations in regards to these sites are put forward at the end of this document.

From a Cultural Heritage point of view there is therefore no objection to the proposed development taking place, once the mitigation measures put forward at the end of this report have been successfully implemented. This will include the exhumation and relocation of the graves located in the area.

## CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY.....	3
CONTENTS .....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. TERMS OF REFERENCE .....	5
3. CONDITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS .....	5
4. LEGALISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS .....	6
5. METHODOLOGY .....	9
6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA.....	9
7. DISCUSSION .....	14
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	20
9. REFERENCES.....	21
APPENDIX A.....	22
APPENDIX B.....	23
APPENDIX C .....	24
APPENDIX D.....	25

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Archaetnos cc was appointed by the Dihlabeng Local Municipality (Bethlehem) to conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment on the farm Vogelfontein 69, near Bethlehem in the Free State Province. A Residential Development (Vegelfo) is being proposed. The project came about on request of the Maseko family, who indicated that there are a number of family graves in the area that will have to be exhumed and relocated before the development could continue. The HIA was then requested as part of the assessment of these possible graves.

The client indicated the boundaries of the area to be investigated and the survey was confined to this area.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference for the survey were to:

1. Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature (cultural heritage sites) located in the area of the proposed residential development.
2. Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their archaeological, historical, scientific, social, religious, aesthetic and tourism value.
3. Describe the possible impact of the proposed development on these cultural remains, according to a standard set of conventions.
4. Propose suitable mitigation measures to minimize possible negative impacts on the cultural resources.
5. Review applicable legislative requirements.

## **3. CONDITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS**

The following conditions and assumptions have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

1. Cultural Resources are all non-physical and physical man-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences associated with human activity. These include all sites, structure and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development. Graves and cemeteries are included in this.
2. The significance of the sites, structures and artifacts is determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. The various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these aspects.

3. Cultural significance is site-specific and relates to the content and context of the site. Sites regarded as having low cultural significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium cultural significance may or may not require mitigation depending on other factors such as the significance of impact on the site. Sites with a high cultural significance require further mitigation (see Appendix B).
4. The latitude and longitude of any archaeological or historical site or feature, is to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.
5. All recommendations are made with full cognizance of the relevant legislation.
6. It has to be mentioned that it is almost impossible to locate all the cultural resources in a given area, as it will be very time consuming. Developers should however note that the report should make it clear how to handle any other finds that might be found.
7. In this particular case certain areas had a thick grass cover which made archaeological visibility difficult.

#### 4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

##### 4.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the above-mentioned act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

The national estate (see Appendix D) includes the following:

- a. Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance
- b. Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage
- c. Historical settlements and townscapes
- d. Landscapes and features of cultural significance
- e. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance

- f. Sites of Archaeological and palaeontological importance
- g. **Graves and burial grounds**
- h. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery
- i. Movable objects (e.g. archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens, military, ethnographic, books etc.)

**A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process to be followed in order to determine whether any heritage resources are located within the area to be developed as well as the possible impact of the proposed development thereon. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) only looks at archaeological resources. An HIA must be done under the following circumstances:**

- a. The construction of a linear development (road, wall, power line, canal etc.) exceeding 300m in length
- b. The construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length
- c. **Any development or other activity that will change the character of a site and exceed 5 000m<sup>2</sup> or involve three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof**
- d. Re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>
- e. **Any other category provided for in the regulations of SAIIRA or a provincial heritage authority**

#### Structures

Section 34 (1) of the mentioned act states that no person may demolish any structure or part thereof which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

A structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith.

Alter means any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place or object, whether by way of structural or other works, by painting, plastering or the decoration or any other means.

#### Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act deals with archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites. The act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority (national or provincial):

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals

- or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

**The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). In order to demolish such a site or structure, a destruction permit from SAHRA will also be needed.**

### **Human remains**

Graves and burial grounds are divided into the following:

- a. **ancestral graves**
- b. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
- c. graves of victims of conflict
- d. graves designated by the Minister
- e. **historical graves and cemeteries**
- f. **human remains**

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

**Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980) (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).**

**Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.**

**Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended).**

**Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.**



## **4.2 The National Environmental Management Act**

This act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation thereof are made.

Environmental management should also take the cultural and social needs of people into account. Any disturbance of landscapes and sites that constitute the nation's cultural heritage should be avoided as far as possible and where this is not possible the disturbance should be minimized and remedied.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Survey of literature**

A survey of literature was undertaken in order to obtain background information regarding the area. Sources consulted in this regard are indicated in the bibliography.

### **5.2 Field survey**

The survey was conducted according to generally accepted HIA practices and was aimed at locating all possible objects, sites and features of cultural (archaeological and historical) significance in the area of proposed development. If required, the location/position of any site is determined by means of a Global Positioning System (GPS), while photographs are also taken where needed.

The survey was undertaken partially on foot, while certain sections were traversed by vehicle.

### **5.3 Oral histories**

People from local communities are sometimes interviewed in order to obtain information relating to the surveyed area. It needs to be stated that this is not applicable under all circumstances. When applicable, the information is included in the text and referred to in the bibliography.

### **5.4 Documentation**

All sites, objects, features and structures identified are documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Co-ordinates of individual localities are determined by means of the Global Positioning System (GPS). The information is added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

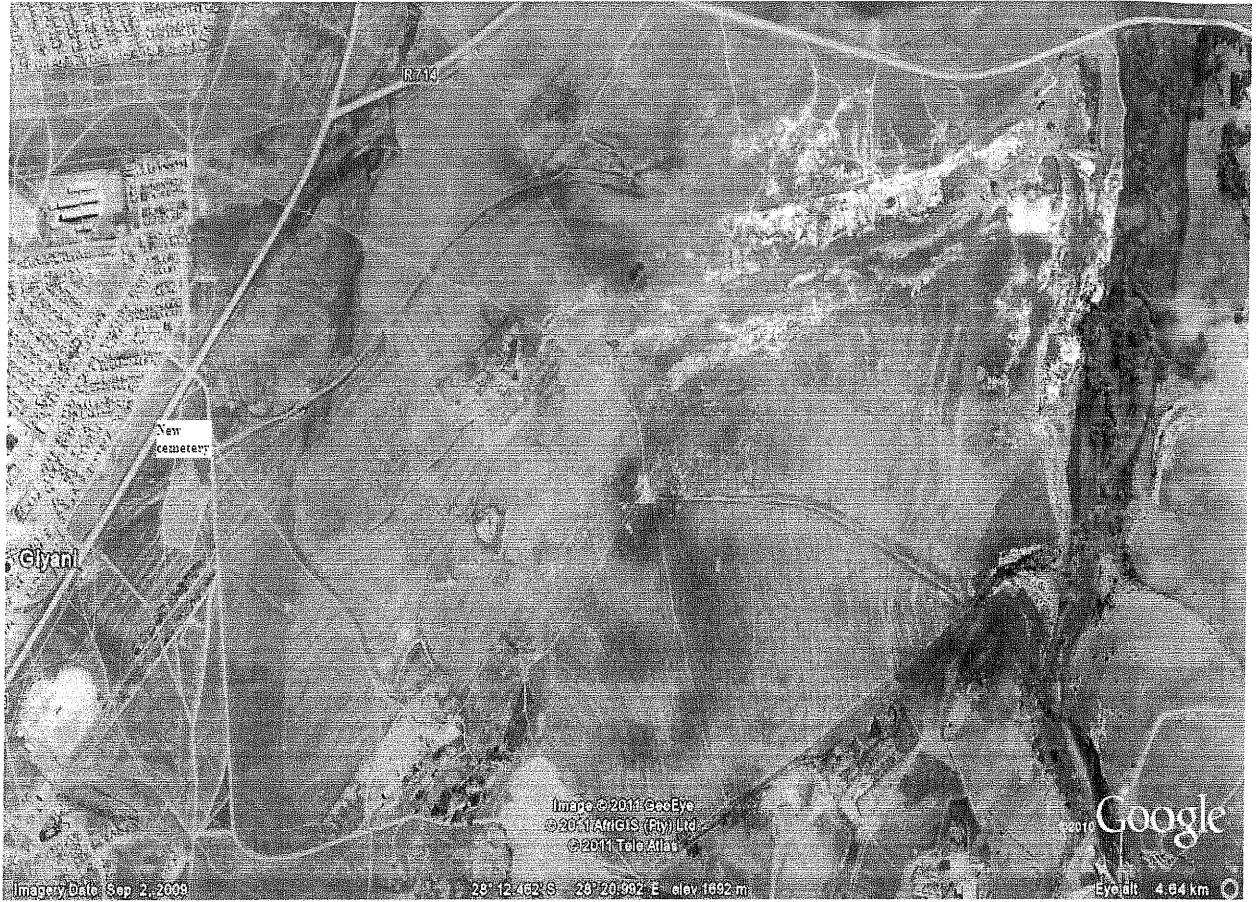
## **6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

The residential development area is located on the farm Vogelfontein 69, in the Dihlabeng Local Municipality (Bethlehem) in the Free State Province. It is situated just outside of the town of Bethlehem. In the past the area was known as Mdoko by local inhabitants (Elijah Maseko: Pers.comm. 2011-05-03).

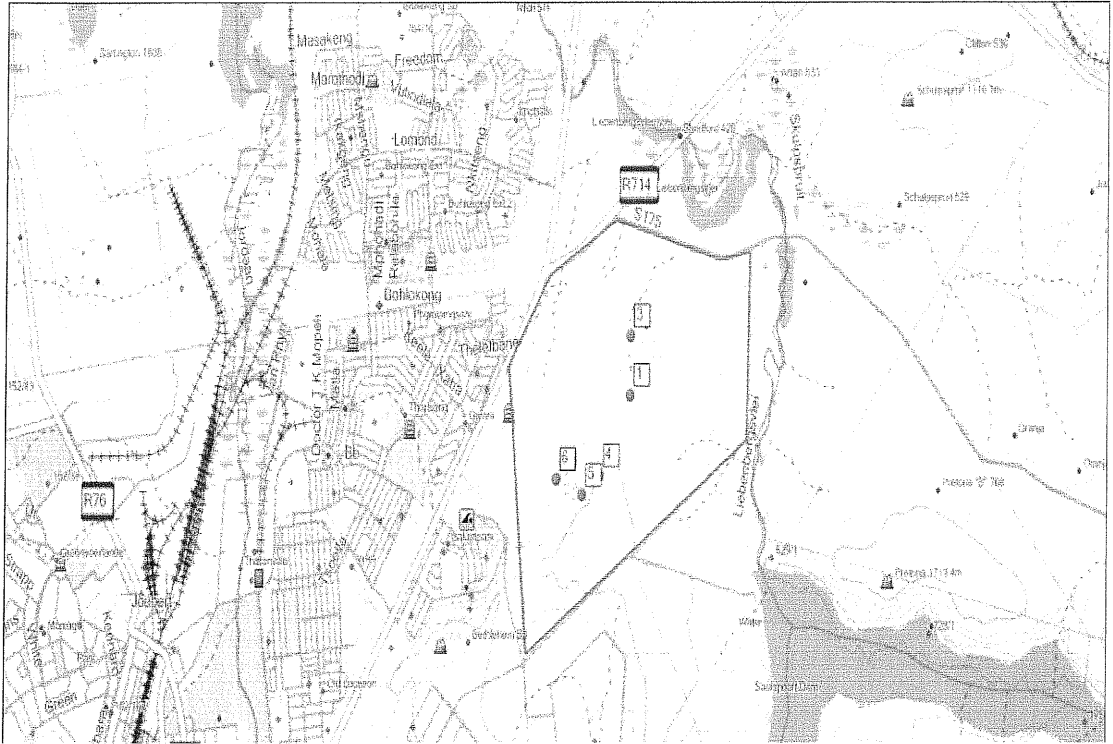
Dense grass cover made visibility difficult, while the area has been fairly disturbed through past farming activities, such as ploughing and other agricultural activities. The area is currently being used (as it was likely in the past) for cattle grazing as well. The topography is characterized by rolling grass fields and low hills (sandstone outcrops), with very little tree cover remaining. Portions of the area has also been disturbed by the commencement of the development (prior to the HIA), and specifically the installment of reticulation (water, sewerage) services. The 1:50 000 topographic map of the area (2828AB Bethlehem – 1984) shows extensive ploughed fields and farm related structures in the area.



**Figure 1: Location of the development area (Courtesy Google Earth 2011).**



**Figure 2: Closer view of the area. Note the ploughed fields and other disturbed areas  
(Courtesy Google Earth 2011)**



**Figure 3: Topographic location of area and site distribution (Map Source 2010).**



**Figure 4: General view – note the dense grass cover.**



**Figure 5: Another view – note the low, sandy outcrop.**



**Figure 6: A view of the area towards town and the section already being developed.**



**Figure 7: A closer view of the already disturbed area where services are being installed.**



**Figure 8: Cattle grazing in the area.**

## **7. DISCUSSION**

In order to enable the reader to understand archaeological and historical objects, features and sites that could possibly be unearthed and disturbed during development, it is necessary to give a general background regarding the different phases of human history.

### **7.1 Stone Age**

The Stone Age is the period in human history when lithic (stone) material was mainly used to produce tools (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 293). In South Africa the Stone Age can be divided

roughly into three periods. It is important to note that the dates are relative and only provide a broad framework for interpretation. The division for the Stone Age according to Korsman & Meyer (1999: 93-94) is as follows:

Early Stone Age (ESA) 2 million – 150 000 years ago  
Middle Stone Age (MSA) 150 000 – 30 000 years ago  
Late Stone Age (LSA) 40 000 years ago – 1850 - A.D.

No Stone Age sites or artefacts were identified in the area of the proposed development. However, San Rock painting sites are known to exist in the Bethlehem region, such as at Aasvogelkrans, Barnea and Broodkop ([www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)). These sites are normally found near sandstone cliffs and rock shelters, and although none were located during the survey care should be taken when the development commences that no possible rock art sites are disturbed around the sandstone outcrops in the area.

## **7.2 Iron Age**

The Iron Age is the name given to the period of human history when metal was mainly used to produce artifacts (Coertze & Coertze 1996: 346). In South Africa it can be divided in two separate phases according to Van der Ryst & Meyer (1999: 96-98), namely:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 200 – 1000 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1000 – 1850 A.D.

Huffman (2007: xiii) indicates that a Middle Iron Age should be included. His dates, which now seem to be widely accepted in archaeological circles, are:

Early Iron Age (EIA) 250 – 900 A.D.  
Middle Iron Age (MIA) 900 – 1300 A.D.  
Late Iron Age (LIA) 1300 – 1840 A.D.

No Iron Age sites, features or objects were identified in the area, although the dense grass cover could have obscured low stone walled features such as cattle kraals.

## **7.3 Historical Age**

The historical age started with the first recorded oral histories in the area. It includes the moving into the area of people that were able to read and write.

Bethlehem was founded in the 1840's by the Voortrekkers, and there are many historical sandstone buildings in the town that have been proclaimed heritage sites ([www.savenues.com](http://www.savenues.com)). The graves and other sites found in the development area date to the recent historical period.

#### 7.4 Discussion of the various sites identified

##### *Site 1 – Possible graves*

This site was indicated to us by representatives of the Maseko family, who resided here prior to their 1967 moving away. They lived and worked here on the farm, and according to them the site was used to bury deceased relatives in the past. No graves are visible (no stones or other visible markings) as they claim that the area was ploughed over. The number of graves present, as well as their ages (dates of death) and the identities of the deceased are also unknown. However, they estimate that the number of burials could be anything from 20 – 40. The family has indicated that they would want the graves to be exhumed and relocated before any development could commence.

**Site Location: S28.20740 E28.34998**

**Significance: High**

**Mitigation measures: Exhumation and Relocation. This will entail the excavation of the area indicated as the burial plot. A permit from SAHRA is required, while a registered undertaker also needs to be employed.**



**Figure 9: Site 1 – the area indicated as being the burial site of the Maseko family.**

##### *Site 2 – Maseko family homestead area*

According to the family this was the area where their homestead was located during their residence and working on the farm. Very little physical remains are visible, except for a large tree recognizable to them and some scatters of building rubble (including cement and bricks and cultural material including glass and metal pieces). Dense grass also obscured visibility.

**Site Location: S28.20409 E28.34995**

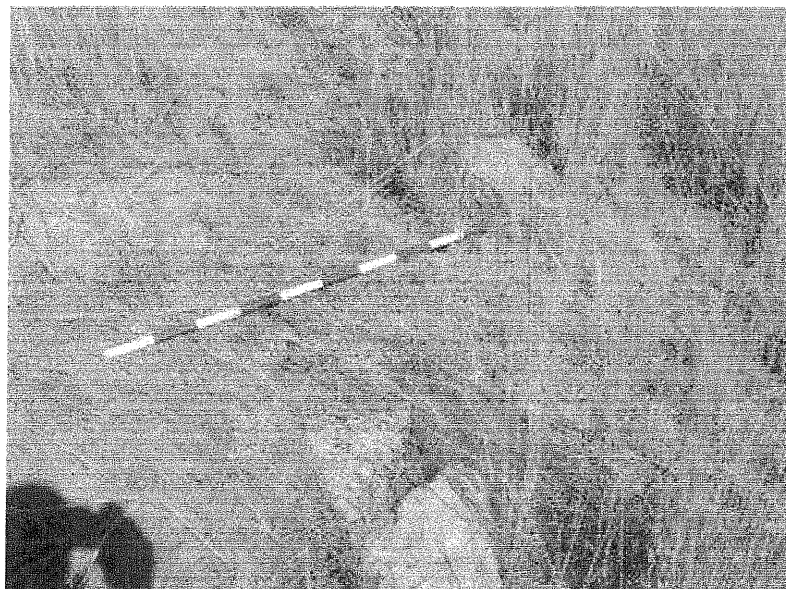
**Significance: Low**



**Mitigation measures: None – documentation in field seen as sufficient**



**Figure 10: Homestead area where Maseko family resided.**



**Figure 11: Building rubble on Site 2.**

***Site 3 – Low stone walled feature***

Site 3 is a low, stone packed feature, rectangular in shape. It is fairly large (more than 20m x 20m) and contains a number of smaller, circular stone circles and stone heaps inside. The age and function of the structure is not known, although it is likely fairly recent (younger than 60 years of age).

**Site location: S28.20547 E28.35042**

**Significance: Low**

Mitigation measures: None required – documentation during survey seen as sufficient.



**Figure 12: Part of low stone wall of structure on Site 3.**



**Figure 13: Small stone circle on Site 3.**

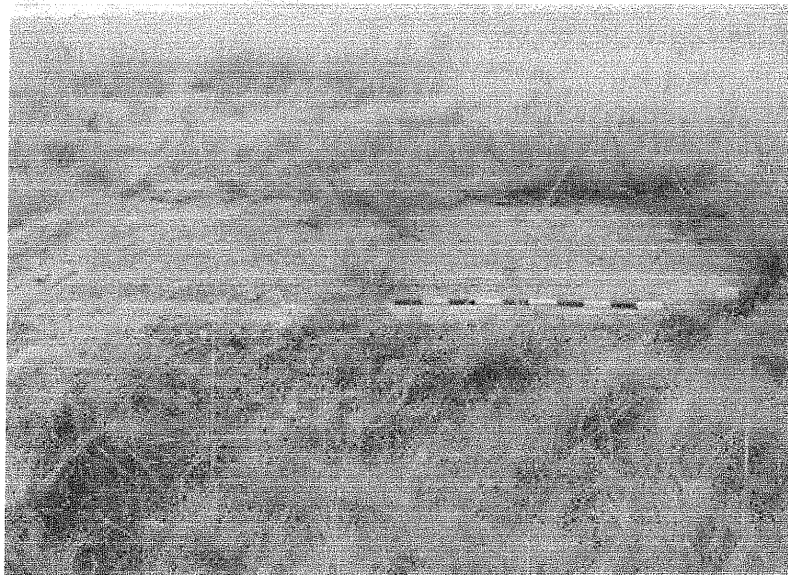
Sites 4 & 5 – Farming related remains and farmstead

Both these sites contain the remains of features and structures related to the recent farming activities on Vogelfontein. It includes the ruins of the old farmstead, outbuildings, the farm dam and other features.

**Site location: S28.21188 E28.34698 (Site 4) and S28.21295 E28.34522 (Site 5)**

**Significance: Low**

**Mitigation measures: None required – documentation during survey seen as sufficient.**



**Figure 14: Unknown cement foundation (Site 4)**



**Figure 15: Ruins of farmstead area (Site 5).**



**Figure 16: Close-up of homestead ruins (Site 5).**



**Figure 17: Farm dam (Site 5).**

## **8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion it can be stated that the assessment of the proposed residential development area was conducted successfully. A number of sites and features of some archaeological or historical (cultural heritage) significance were identified in the area, with the possible graves the most significant. Most of the area has been extensively disturbed in the past through agricultural activities (ploughing and grazing), while current development activities on a portion of the area also have had an impact.

The Maseko family has indicated that they would want to exhume and relocate the graves from Site 1 before any further development takes place in the area. It is therefore recommended that this be undertaken as soon as possible. The area where the burials are situated will have to be cleared and trenches dug in order to locate the burial pits, as no

surface indicators, such as grave dressings are visible. All the other sites recorded in the area are deemed as of low significance, and no further mitigation measures are required.

Therefore, from a Cultural Heritage perspective there would be no objection to the proposed development once the graves have been exhumed and relocated. **However, it should be noted that the subterranean presence of archaeological and/or historical sites, features or artifacts are always a distinct possibility. Care should therefore be taken during any development activities that if any of these are accidentally discovered, a qualified archaeologist be called in to investigate. Because of the dense grass cover, visibility was difficult. Any features, objects or sites could therefore have been missed. This includes low, stone-packed, graves.**

## 9. REFERENCES

Location of development and distribution of sites: Images © Google Earth 2011 and Map Source 2010

1:50 000 Topographic Map series (2828AB Bethlehem) – 1984 edition

Bergh, J.S. (red.). 1999. **Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika. Die vier noordelike provinsies.** Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

Coertze, P.J. & Coertze, R.D. 1996. **Verklarende vakwoordeboek vir Antropologie en Argeologie.** Pretoria: R.D. Coertze.

Knudson, S.J. 1978. **Culture in retrospect.** Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.

Korsman, S.A. & Meyer, A. 1999. Die Steentydperk en rotskuns. Bergh, J.S. (red.). **Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika. Die vier noordelike provinsies.** Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

Republic of South Africa. 1999. **National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).** Pretoria: the Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 1998. **National Environmental Management Act (no 107 of 1998).** Pretoria: The Government Printer.

Van der Ryst, M.M. & Meyer, A. 1999. Die Ystertydperk. Bergh, J.S. (ed.). **Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika. Die vier noordelike provinsies.** Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

<http://www.sa-venues.com/attractionsfs/bethlehem.php>

<http://www.up.ac.za>

## APPENDIX A

### Definition of terms:

Site: A large place with extensive structures and related cultural objects. It can also be a large assemblage of cultural artifacts, found on a single location.

Structure: A permanent building found in isolation or which forms a site in conjunction with other structures.

Feature: A coincidental find of movable cultural objects.

Object: Artifact (cultural object).

(Also see Knudson 1978: 20).

## APPENDIX B

### Cultural significance:

- Low            A cultural object being found out of context, not being part of a site or without any related feature/structure in its surroundings.
  
- Medium        Any site, structure or feature being regarded less important due to a number of factors, such as date and frequency. Also any important object found out of context.
  
- High            Any site, structure or feature regarded as important because of its age or uniqueness. Graves are always categorized as of a high importance. Also any important object found within a specific context.

## APPENDIX C

### **Cultural significance:**

- Low            A cultural object being found out of context, not being part of a site or without any related feature/structure in its surroundings.
- Medium       Any site, structure or feature being regarded less important due to a number of factors, such as date and frequency. Also any important object found out of context.
- High           Any site, structure or feature regarded as important because of its age or uniqueness. Graves are always categorized as of a high importance. Also any important object found within a specific context.

### **Heritage significance:**

- Grade I       Heritage resources with exceptional qualities to the extent that they are of national significance
- Grade II      Heritage resources with qualities giving it provincial or regional importance although it may form part of the national estate
- Grade III     Other heritage resources of local importance and therefore worthy of conservation



## APPENDIX D

### Protection of heritage resources:

#### - Formal protection

National heritage sites and Provincial heritage sites – grade I and II

Protected areas - an area surrounding a heritage site

Provisional protection – for a maximum period of two years

Heritage registers – listing grades II and III

Heritage areas – areas with more than one heritage site included

Heritage objects – e.g. archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens,  
visual art, military, numismatic, books, etc.

#### - General protection

Objects protected by the laws of foreign states

Structures – older than 60 years

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Burial grounds and graves

Public monuments and memorials