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## **FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED SOLAR FARM DEVELOPMENTS AT SPES BONA 2355, BLOEMFONTEIN**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

PV solar installations are planned at the farm Spes Bona 2355 outside Bloemfontein.

The proposed land consists of sterile red sandy soil, with clear indications of crop cultivation and until recently, still used as plough lands.

No archaeological, historical or cultural material or graves were found at the site.

The developments will have no impact on any cultural or historical remains.

I recommend that the planning of the new PV Solar plant may proceed.

No mitigation measures will be needed.

### **INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION**

#### **Scope and Limitations**

Scatec Solar Consultants South Africa will be the developers and Sustainable Development Projects, Balito, commissioned the archaeological and heritage assessment for the proposed new developments at the farm Spes Bona outside Bloemfontein.

The investigation provided the opportunity to examine the new development area.

Except for a sudden down pour during a thunderstorm, no further limitations were experienced during the site visit.

## **Methodology**

1. Standard archaeological survey and recording methods were applied.
2. A survey of the literature was done to obtain information about the archaeology and cultural heritage of the area.
3. The site was inspected by vehicle and on foot.
4. The layout of the land as well as objects and features were plotted by GPS and transferred to Google Earth.
5. The main characteristics of the surroundings and features were recorded on camera.

The heritage investigation is part of an extensive Environmental Impact Assessment, (EIA).

## **INVESTIGATION**

Scatec Solar Consultants South Africa will be the developers and Sustainable Development Projects, Balito, commissioned the archaeological and heritage assessment for the proposed new developments at the farm Spes Bona outside Bloemfontein. The solar plant will cover 200ha.

The site was visited on 23 December 2013 to identify and evaluate the features and structures that should be preserved. Werner Johns, the owner of Spes Bona, showed me around during the site visit. Jean Beater, from Scatec Solar Consultants, supplied maps of the area.

The study aims to locate and evaluate the significance of 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. In many cases, planted and self-sown trees and other types of vegetation determine a major part of the historical environment of human settlements in villages and towns, on farmyards or even deserted places in the open veld. These features should be recognised and taken into consideration during any cultural investigation.

The site was examined for possible archaeological and historical remains 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 National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act. 108 of 1998).

## LOCALITY

The farm Spes Bona 2355 is located to the west of the N8 (R48) main road from Bloemfontein to Petrusburg at a turn-off on to the S336 secondary road (Map 1). The farm lies adjacent to the historical farm Kwaggafontein (Map 2-4).

The land had been used for farming purposes, mostly as grazing and plough lands.

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (2926AA) (Surveyor-General Bloemfontein 1973):

<b>A</b>	29°06'49"S 026°04'25"E	Altitude 1405m (Figs.1&2).
<b>B</b>	29°06'43"S 026°03'29"E	Altitude 1384m (Figs.3&4).
<b>C</b>	29°06'46"S 026°04'53"E	Altitude 1408m (Figs.5&6).
<b>D</b>	29°06'22"S 026°03'13"E	Altitude 1384m (Figs.7&8).
<b>E</b>	29°06'13"S 026°04'44"E	Altitude 1399m (Figs.9&10).
<b>F</b>	29°06'21"S 026°03'22"E	Altitude 1384m (Figs.11&12).

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPES BONA AND KWAGGAFONTEIN

Not much is known about the early history of the farm Spes Bona. The present owner is a member of the younger generation, who is not familiar with the early history of the property. He bought the farm from a person who actually acquired it from somebody else. The neighbouring farm, Kwaggafontein is celebrated for the fact that it belonged to Sir Cornelis Hermanus Wessels, the second Administrator of the Orange Free State Province. The relationship between the two adjoining farms Kwaggafontein and Spes Bona is not clear.

Wessels was born in the Winburg district in 1851. After completing his school training, his career started as a stock farmer. Wessels bought the farm Kwaggafontein (Quaggafontein) 2300 near Bloemfontein in 1892. This farm became available after the death of a certain K.A. Chapman, a prominent businessperson from Bloemfontein. Wessels settled on the farm with his family, but when he became Administrator of the Free State, the family occupied the official residence in Aliwal Street opposite the Klipkerk. (Haasbroek 1987).

Through his political and social connections, C.H. Wessels became a very prominent citizen of Bloemfontein and the Free State. In 1915, Wessels followed in the footsteps of Dr. A.E.W. Ramsbottom, as the second Administrator of the Free State. His term of office lasted for nine years until his sudden death in 1924. Wessels was knighted in 1920.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The archaeological environment of the Free State Province is rich and diverse, representing a long time span during the human past. Certain Later Iron Age sites elsewhere in the Province have produced important archaeological information (Maggs 1976). These Iron Age sites date between 1660 AD and 1810 AD. The Later Iron Age phase brought people who cultivated crops, kept livestock, produced an abundance of pottery in a variety of shapes and sizes and smelted metals. Extensive stone walled enclosures characterise their permanent settlements. These living places are known from the prominent Sotho/Tswana settlements in the Vredefort Dome, Doringberg (Maphororong) near Ventersburg, Viervoet (Tihela) near Clocolan, Biddulpsberg (Kurutlele) near Senekal and Marabeng near Ficksburg. A number of Taaibos Korana and Griqua groups, remnants of the Later Stone Age peoples, managed to survive the assimilation by Sotho/Tswana tribes in the region.

Early European missionaries and travellers ventured into the interior of the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dreyer 2001). The Rev James Archbell established the missionary at Thaba Nchu by 1834, for instance and Bloemfontein was established in 1846.

Despite the placing of Bloemfontein within this potentially rich cultural region, not much is known about the prehistory of the specific area. Maggs' (1976) archaeological survey is limited to the north of the 30°S line, excluding the Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu and Ladybrand areas. Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) to the west of Bloemfontein (Dreyer 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013) produced a variety of material of cultural and historical significance. In the immediate surroundings of Bloemfontein, however, the research confirms a lack of Later Iron Age sites.

## **RESULTS**

### **FINDS**

The sterile red sandy soil, which had been used mostly as grazing and plough lands, produced no archaeological material or historical remnants.

There is no graveyard or burials on the land.

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The potential impact by the proposed PV Solar farm developments on the heritage resources of the site is of minor significance and no mitigation measures are needed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no obvious reasons to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the PV Solar farm at Spes Bona.

I recommend that the planning and developments may proceed.

**MITIGATION**

No mitigation measures will be required.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Werner Johns, the owner of Spes Bona, for accompanying me during the site visit.

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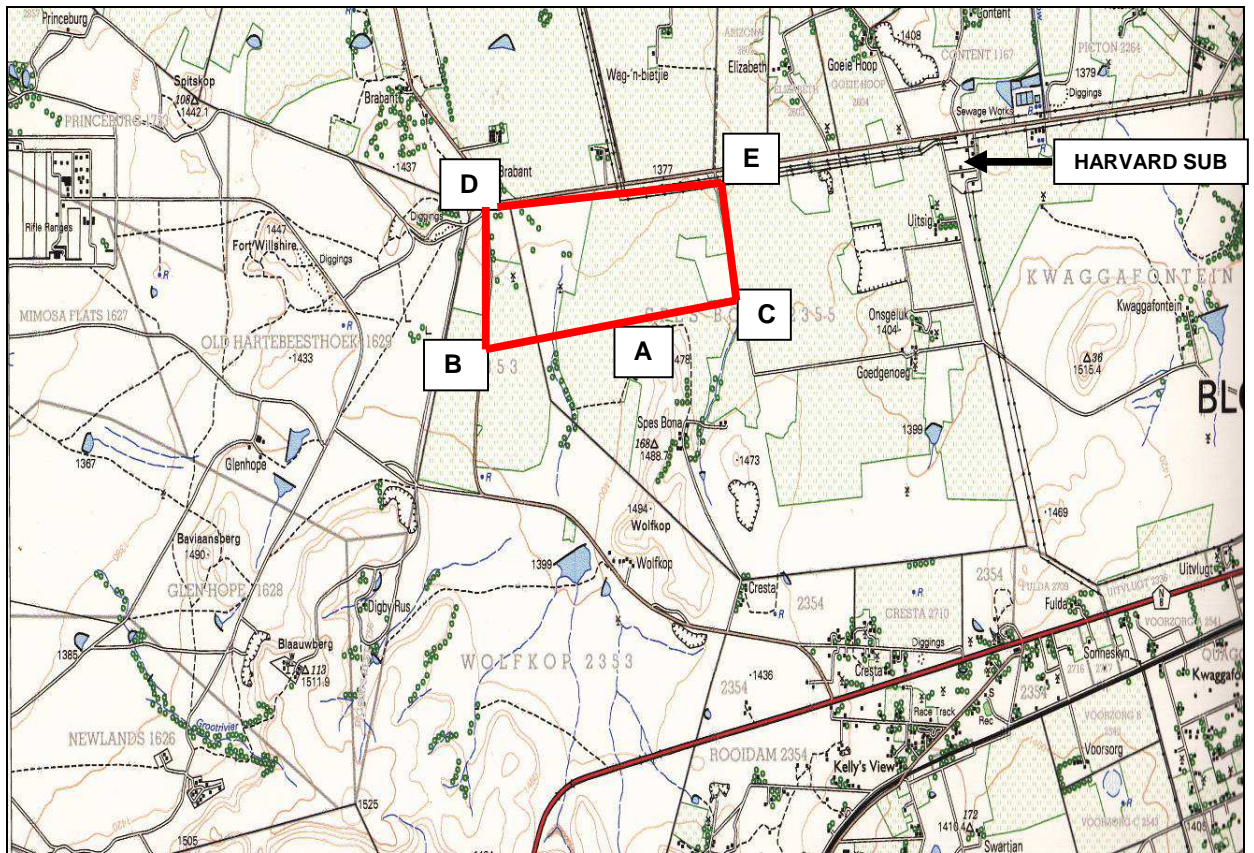
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**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

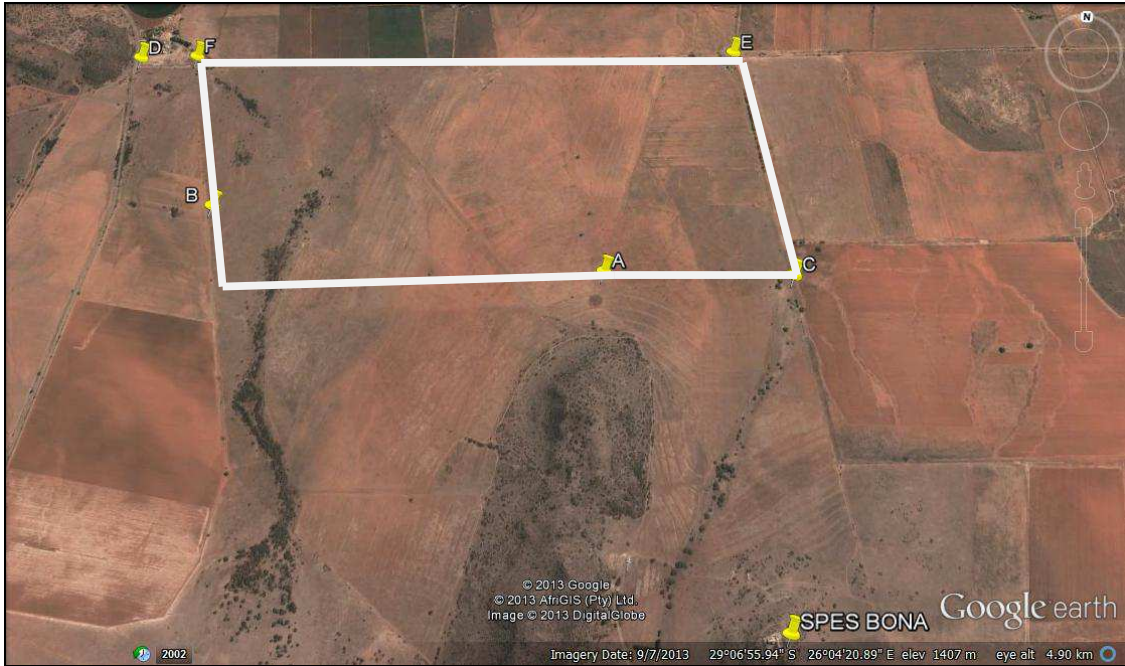


Map 1 Spes Bona 2355, Bloemfontein (2926AA). Coordinate points of development indicated.

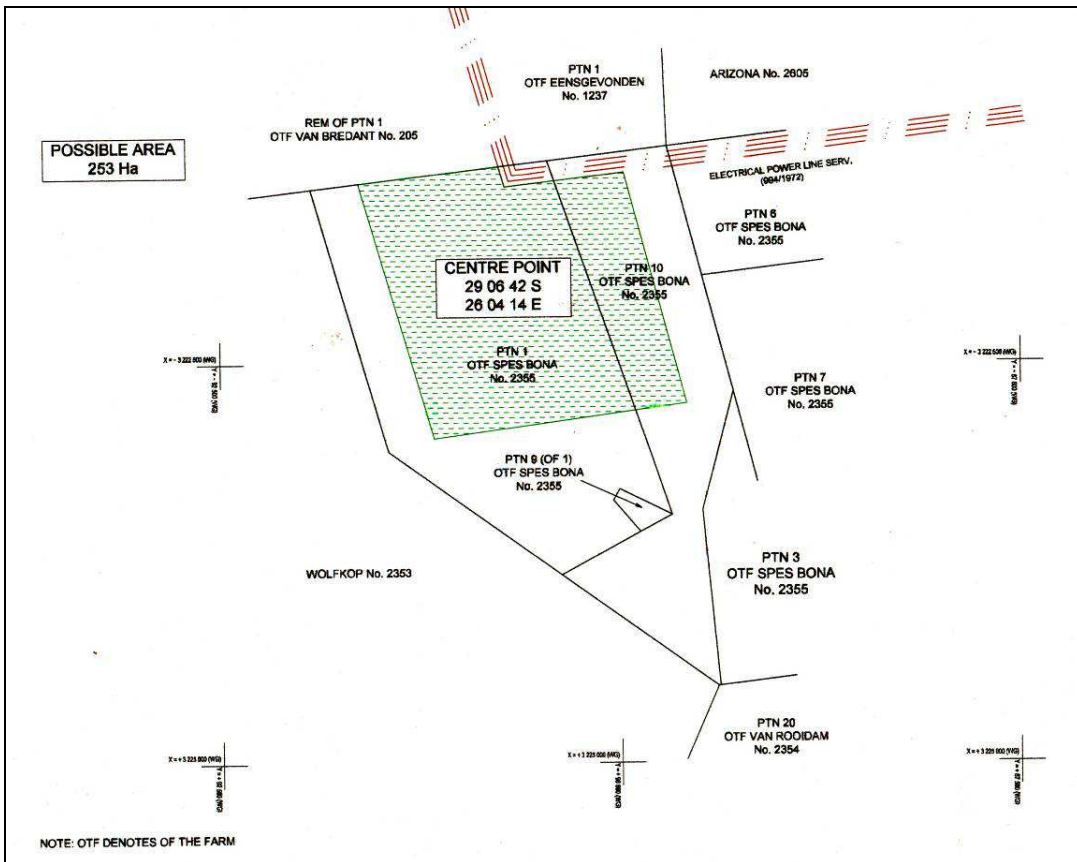


Map 2 Spes Bona 2355, Bloemfontein, in relation to other points in the area.





Map 3 Locality of the proposed development area at Spes Bona. Coordinate points indicated.



Map 4 Proposed area of development at Spes Bona.



Fig.1 Point A at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing west.



Fig.2 Point A at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing south.





Fig.3 Point B at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein facing north.



Fig.4 Point B at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing south.





Fig.5 Point C at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing north.



Fig.6 Point C at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein.





Fig.7 Point D at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein.



Fig.8 Point D at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing east.



Fig.9 Point E at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing south.



Fig.10 Point E at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing west.





Fig.11 Point F at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein.



Fig.12 Point F at Spes Bona, Kwaggafontein, facing south.