



Ms. Robyn Phillips
Strategic Environmental Focus (Pty) Ltd

4 May 2015

Via: Email

Dear Robyn,

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE STUDY AREA FOR THE DURBAN NORTHERN AQUEDUCT PROJECT, ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU NATAL

This letter provides the comments and observations by PGS Heritage (Pty) Ltd (PGS) of the built environment associated with the study area for the Durban Northern Aqueduct Project.

The project study area is located on the north-western end of the city of Durban and primarily runs through the residential suburbs of Reservoir Hills, Newlands West, Newlands East, Avoca Hills and KwaMashu. Most of these suburbs are the direct result of the Group Areas Act of 1950 within which Black, Indian and Coloured people were removed from the predefined "European" areas in Durban to newly established suburbs further afield where each suburb was within the classification of Apartheid grouped as exclusive spaces for separate races.

KwaMashu for example was one of the first of Durban's dormitory townships that emerged with the implementation of the Apartheid Group Areas Act during the 1950s. KwaMashu resulted from the mass resettlement of the slum population of Cato Manor during the period of 1958 to 1965 (www.sahistory.org). Before the establishment of the township the area was a sugar cane plantation owned by Marshall Campbell (www.ulwazi.org). The name means "the place of Mashu", Mashu being the Zulu name for Sir Marshall Campbell (Erasmus, 2014).

Newlands East was established as a township for Coloured people after the promulgation of the Group Areas Act (Khan, 2013). It would appear that Newlands West was also planned for Coloured people, and likely has a similar history.

Reservoir Hills is another of the areas that was zoned for Indian residence after the Group Areas Act was implemented in 1950 (Schensul, 2009). At the time it was apparently advertised as “an Indian area available for the more well to do Indians” (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/indian-community>). From Horrel (1956) it would appear that by 1956 this suburb had been proposed but not yet proclaimed.

While the history of Avoca Hills is not clear, neither the 1940 nor 1956 topographical sheets depict any residential development here. This area should of course not be confused with the historic Avoca suburb which is located across the railway line and N2 Highway and which dates to the late 19th century.

From the historic overview of the various residential suburbs through which the proposed pipeline passes, it is clear that these suburbs were established after the promulgation of the Group Areas Act of 1950, and in actual fact many of the areas were only developed between the late 1950s and the 1970s. This means that the buildings from these residential suburbs can almost exclusively be dated to younger than 60 years and as a result do not fall under the general protection of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999.

During the background study for the Heritage Impact Assessment conducted by PGS it was established that before the development of the above-mentioned residential suburbs the landscape through which the pipeline is proposed was for the most part characterized by dense indigenous bush and agricultural land (sugar cane and banana) with isolated buildings and huts scattered around.

During the fieldwork only one historic building was identified within or in proximity to the study area, namely the Narainsamy (Vishnu) Temple in Newlands West. The temple was completed between 1906 and 1908 for the Narainsamy family and was built at the time as a secluded family temple. Its location at the start of the 20th century was well chosen to achieve this purpose of seclusion, with very little habitation found in the areas surrounding the temple at the time. This temple is located in proximity to the Route 3 Alternative and as a result the HIA report strongly recommends for this alternative not to be chosen. However, should the decision be taken by the developers for this Route 3 Alternative to be implemented and developed, a Built Heritage Assessment would be

required.

Yours sincerely,



Polke D. Birkholtz (Professional Archaeologist Accredited by ASAPA and Amafa)
Director (PGS Heritage)

References cited in this letter:

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