

# HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

---

## ASSESSMENT OF SUSPECTED GRAVES IVERAAN VILLAGE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT BLOUBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

---

For: Tshepo Built Environment Consulting (Pty) Ltd  
Postnet Suite No.72  
Private Bag X 9700  
POLOKWANE  
0700

**Frans Roodt**  
18 July 2023

**Cell:** 083 770 2131  
**E-Mail:** fransroodt2454@gmail.com



PostNet Suite 139  
P/Bag X9700  
**POLOKWANE**  
0700

## CONTENT

---

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION	3
2. TERMS OF REFERENCE	3
3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS	3
3.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999) (NHRA)	3
3.2 The Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and Ordinance on the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies (Ordinance 7 of 1925)	4
4. METHODOLOGY	4
5. RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION	5
6. EVALUATION	6
7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	6
8. RECOMMENDATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES	7
9. REFERENCES	7
10. VISUAL RECORD	8

### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Google earth image showing the larger Blouberg village area. The red icons 1 & 2 to which the arrow points are the gravesites.	8
Figure 2	Google earth image showing the Blouberg hospital and the gravesites 1 & 2 to which the arrow points.	9
Figure 3	Extract from 1:50000 Topographical Map. The insert highlights the location of the graves. The black dots represent dwellings.	10
Figure 4	The insert in Figure 3 above superimposed on the Google earth 2003 historical view. A reservoir had replaced the dwelling near gravesite 1.	11
Figure 5	Signboard for the Iveraan village water supply project.	12
Figure 6	General view of the gravesite area. Site 1 is to the right side of the people in the view, while site 2 is behind the tree in the upper left corner.	12
Figure 7	Detail view of gravesite 1.	13
Figure 8	Detail view of gravesite 2.	13

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT LOCATION**

---

### **1.1 Introduction**

The author was requested by Gudani Consulting; Environmental and Social Scientists, to investigate and assess alleged unmarked graves/burial sites along the Iveraan water supply project.

The Iveraan water supply project is a Municipal Infrastructure Grant Project by the Capricorn District Municipality: Project Number; ORB – INV – W74/2020/202, Contract Number; INF – 262022/23. The contractor is TQM Project Engineers.

### **1.2 Location**

The alleged graves are located on the farm Nairn 74 LS (Nairn Village) Ga-Tshabalala within the Blouberg Local Municipality in the Capricorn District of Limpopo. On a local scale, the site is about 600 meters south of the Blouberg Hospital and 20 km north-west of Bochum (Senwabarwana) (Figure 1) along road D3322.

### **1.3 Terrain descriptions**

The effected area falls within a low-density occupation area with dwellings and surrounding yards in the Ga-Tshabalala rural setting. There is no formal Township layout or streets in the settlement. The area of interest has already been impacted on by an existing water supply network and a reservoir exists near the alleged graves. The closest dwelling is about 35m from gravesite 2. Road D3322 is situated about 20m and 35m from the gravesites.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

---

Undertake an investigation into the alleged graves / burials and submit an assessment report, which addresses the following:

- A field assessment to gather information on the alleged graves within the proposed development site;
- Identify possible archaeological, cultural and historic sites within the project area;
- Evaluate the potential impacts of construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed development on archaeological, cultural and historical resources;
- Recommend mitigation measures to ameliorate any negative impacts on areas of archaeological, cultural or historical importance.

## **3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

---

### **3.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999) (NHRA)**

This Act established the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and makes provision for the establishment of Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRA). The Act makes provision for the undertaking of heritage resources impact assessments for various categories of development as determined by Section 38. It also provides for the grading of heritage resources

(Section 7) and the implementation of a three-tier level of responsibilities and functions for heritage resources to be undertaken by the State, Provincial authorities and Local authorities, depending on the grade of the Heritage resources (Section 8).

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (1999) the following is of relevance:

### **Burial grounds and graves**

#### **Subsection 36(3)**

- (a) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-
- (c) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, 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
- (d) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in detection or recovery of metals.

Subsection 36(6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and
- (b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

### **3.2 The Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and Ordinance on the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies (Ordinance 7 of 1925)**

This Act and Ordinance protects graves younger than 60 years. These fall under the jurisdiction of the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Departments. Approval for the exhumation and re-burial must be obtained from the relevant Provincial MEC's office as well as the relevant Local Authorities.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

---

### **4.1 Sources of information**

The sources of information were the two affected Next of Kin (NoKs) families who claim the graves. They are:

- Mrs. Mahlodi Morata (Neè Molepo), and

- Mrs. Mokgadi Pauline Makwaila
- Present were also Ms Moloko Modiba (Community liaison officer) and Ms Anna Shibambo (Safety, health and environmental representative)
- The 1:50000 topographical map 2329AA (1970's database) was consulted.

#### 4.2 Limitations

The investigation was limited due to the fact that there are no physical features or structures normally associated with graves. The locations were pointed out by the witnesses.

#### 4.3 Terminology

NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act (Act no. 25 of 1999)
NoK's	Next of Kin
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SAHRIS	South African Heritage Resources Information System

### 5. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

---

Two possible or alleged unmarked graves/burial sites were pointed out by the Next of Kin (NoK's):

#### **Gravesite 1.** Coordinates: -23.146972°, 29.011444° (**Morata burial**)

This site is claimed by Mrs. Mokgadi Morata as the **Morata** graves. It is said to be the burial site of two of her baby sons Thabo and Thabang; one 2 weeks old and the other 2 days old. This occurred about 30 years ago in the early 1990's. Mrs Morata said that the babies were buried next to her home, which was later demolished (probably because of the construction of the earlier water supply works and reservoir. She was assisted by Mr George Morata, uncle to the children.

#### **Gravesite 2.** Coordinates: -23.147222°, 29.011722° (commonly known as the **Molokomme burial**)

This site is claimed by Mrs. Mokgadi Makwaila. It is the burial site of her mother's uncle Mahlodi Bodirwa. Mrs. Makwaila was born in 1954 and was a child when made aware of the grave, but cannot explain why there is no grave marker. She cannot give an age for the gravesite.

This alleged burial site is located under some large trees and is currently used for leisure gaming purposes.

The area which will be impacted in the vicinity of the water supply project was inspected for any other cultural remains or features that may indicate any other occupation such as precolonial or archaeological period sites. No such evidence was found.

## 6. EVALUATION

---

**Gravesite 1:** In order to assess the authenticity of the claim, I consulted the old 1970's database 1:50000 topographical map 2329 AA and the 2003 historical view Google earth image. The topographical map shows a dwelling adjacent to gravesite 1 (Morata graves), while the structure is absent on the Google earth image of 2003, which shows the nearby reservoir. This is in agreement with the evidence given by Mrs. Morata, i.e., that her babies were buried near the house in which she lived. Based on the evidence, I conclude that this claim is valid. The site is highly significant to the community.

This gravesite is younger than 60 years and must be dealt with under the Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and Ordinance on the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies (Ordinance 7 of 1925). The developer must appoint a registered funeral undertaker to exhume the graves.

### **Gravesite 2:**

This is the alleged grave of Mahlodi Bodirwa (Molekomme) and is unmarked. It is located under some large trees where a lot of stones of various sizes are scattered of which some have been arranged to form squares as the basis of games. The nearby dwelling (about 35 – 40m away) is present on the 1:50000 topographical map, but the family living there does not claim the grave.

The Next of Kin and the local headman is however confident that the location of the grave is correctly identified. There is no counter evidence to disprove the claim and therefore there is no reason to question the validity of the claim. I therefore accept that there is a grave at or very close to the spot pointed out by the NoK's. The site is highly significant to the community.

This alleged grave is most probably older than 60 years and therefore protected by Section 36 of the NHRA. A permit from SAHRA is required to relocate the grave.

The Iveraan village water supply project will have a direct impact on the two burial sites identified above and will result in the destruction of the graves if not mitigated.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

---

The identified graves clearly have a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (Section 3(3) of the NHRA and they are rated as highly significant.

Section 38(3)(g) of the NHRA requires plans for mitigation of any adverse effects during and after the completion of the development. In this case it is highly recommended that mitigation to relocate the graves with consent from the Nok's and Traditional authority be undertaken.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

---

In view of the above, it is recommended that the graves be exhumed and relocated to a local cemetery. Mitigation must be conducted with the relevant stakeholders to obtain the necessary consent.

### **8.1 The Morata gravesite:**

This gravesite is younger than 60 years and must be dealt with under the Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and Ordinance on the Removal of Graves and Dead Bodies (Ordinance 7 of 1925). The consent for exhumation and reburial must be obtained from the NoK's and traditional leadership and the developer must appoint a registered funeral undertaker to exhume the graves. Due to the sensitivity of such graves, it is recommended that an archaeologist be appointed to supervise the process.

### **8.2 The Mahlodi Bodirwa (Molekomme) gravesite:**

This gravesite is presumed to be 60 years or older. A permit from SAHRA is required. The consent of the NoK's and traditional leadership must be submitted to SAHRA during the permit application.

## **9. REFERENCES**

---

**Republic of South Africa, 1999.** South African Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999). Pretoria: Government Printer.

## 10. VISUAL RECORD

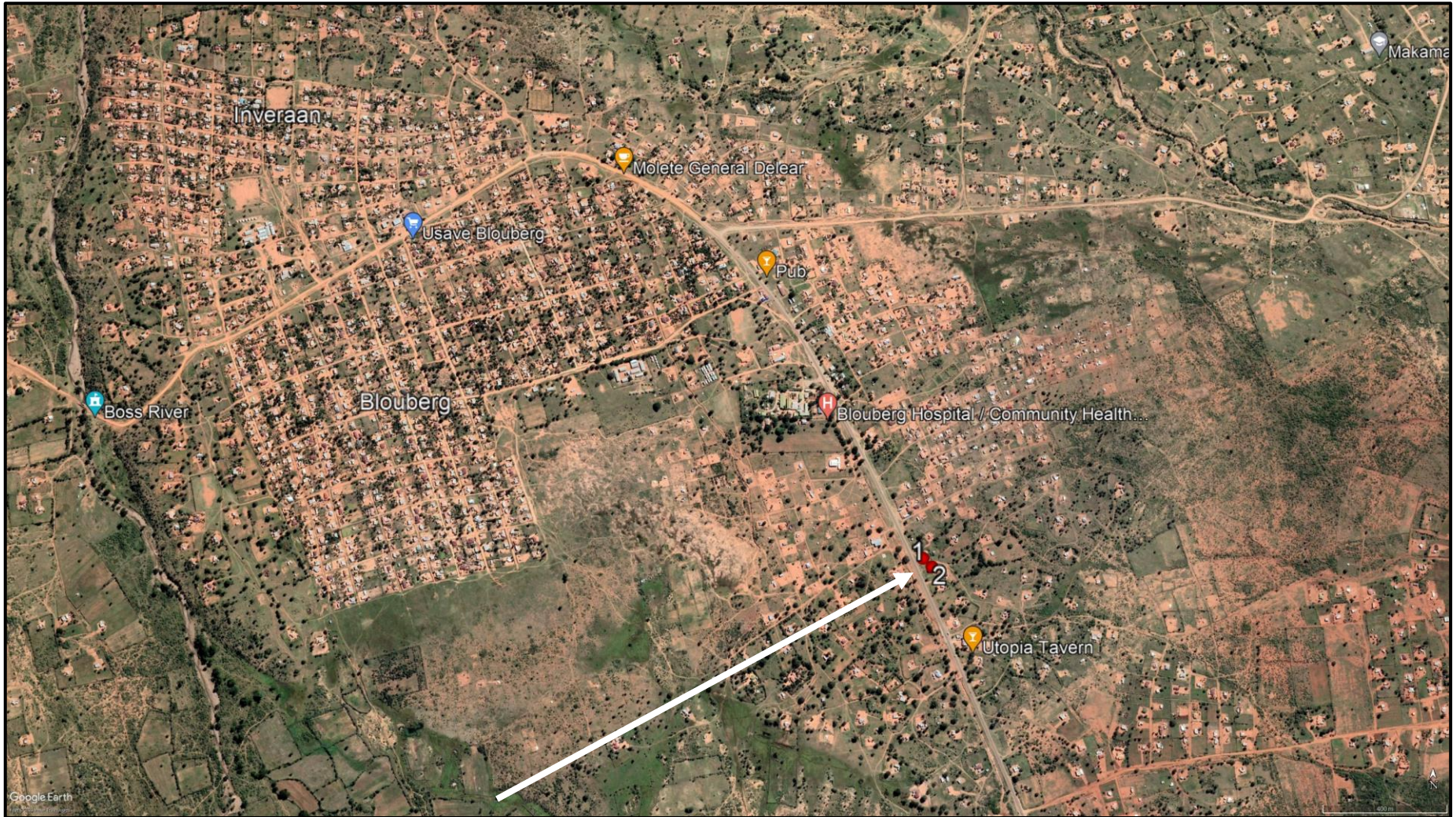


Figure 1. Google earth image showing the larger Blouberg village area. The red icons 1 & 2 to which the arrow points are the gravesites.





Figure 2. Google earth image showing the Blouberg hospital and the gravesites 1 & 2 to which the arrow points.

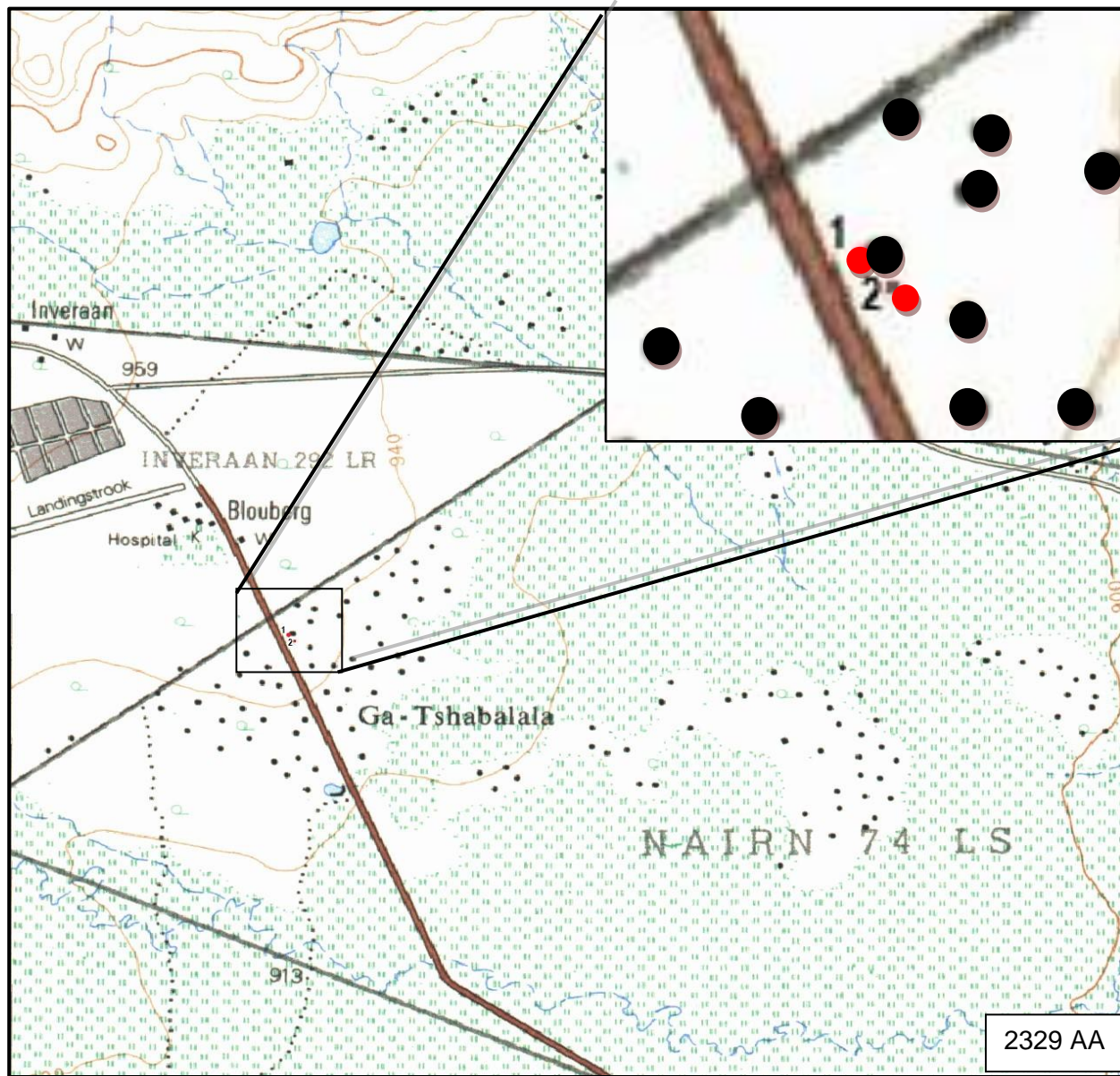


Figure 3. Extract from 1:50000 Topographical Map. The insert highlights the location of the graves. The black dots represent dwellings.

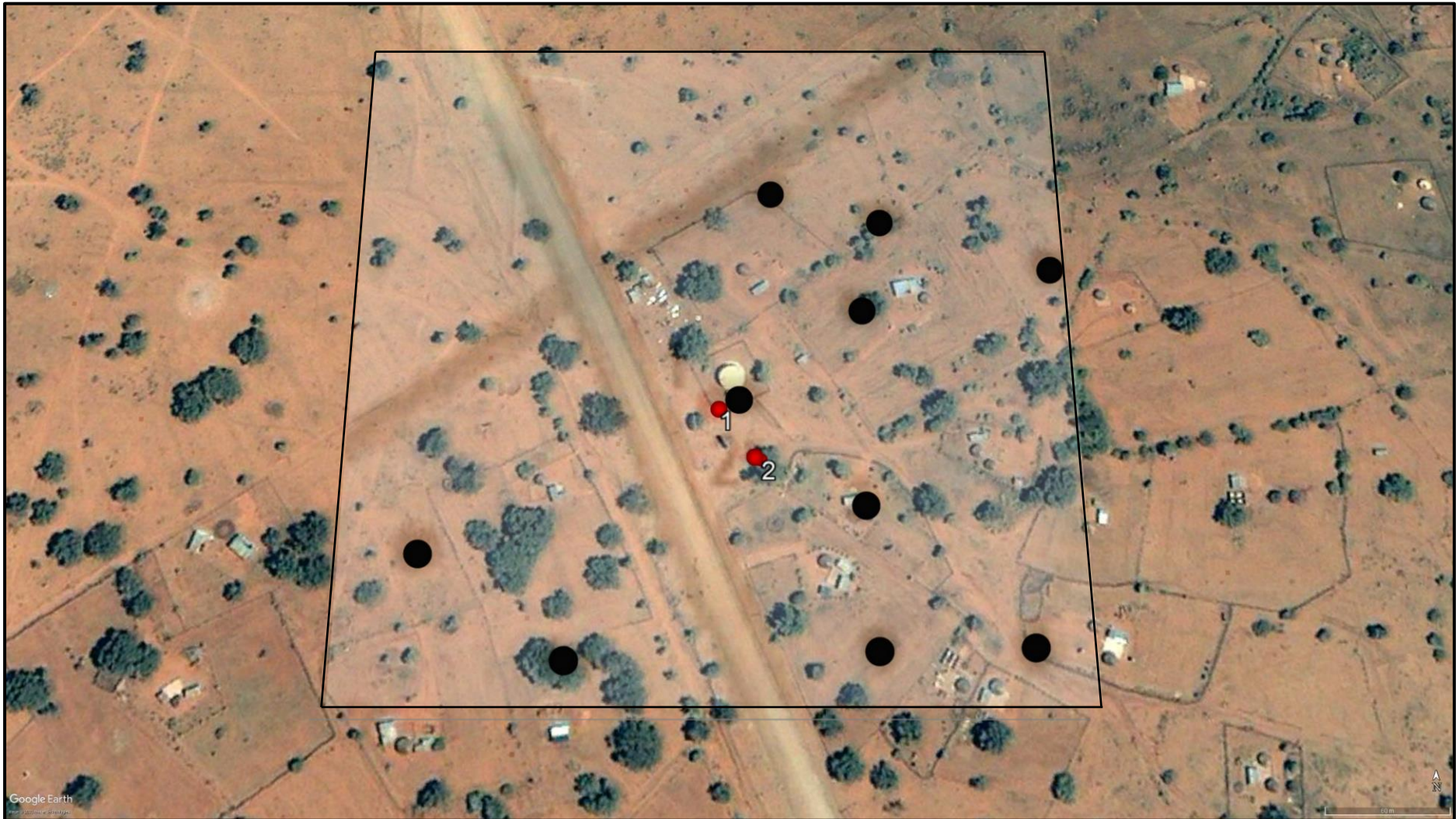


Figure 4. The insert in Figure 3 above superimposed on the Google earth 2003 historical view. A reservoir had replaced the dwelling near gravesite 1.



Figure 5. Signboard for the Iveraan village water supply project.



Figure 6. General view of the gravesite area. Site 1 is to the right side of the people in the view, while site 2 is behind the tree in the upper left corner.



Figure 7. Detail view of gravesite 1.



Figure 8. Detail view of gravesite 2.