



HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND
SITE CONDITION REPORT PREPARED
FOR SAHRA & POTTER'S HOUSE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH, POLOKWANE

Prepared by:

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ATTACHMENTS 1-4

Locations and Contacts

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EXECUTIE BRIEF

Nzumbululo Heritage Solutions was commissioned by Plot 91 Ivy Park Developers to conduct a Heritage study with the view to conduct Phase 2 Archeological Excavations on site before the proposed development continues on site. This report derive from the archeological heritage impact assessment and site condition survey that were conducted by Nzumbululo Heritage Solutions on Plot 91, Ivydale in Polokwane for the proposed construction of a church building and related infrastructural development. This study was conducted in two phases first in August and then in September 2004. This is a follow-up to a Phase 1 assessment that was conducted in 2002 by Mr. Frans Roodie of the Polokwane Museum who recommended that the proposed development on sites be suspended and Phase 2 Archeological Mitigation studies be conducted. The site was disturbed during preliminary earth moving activities in 2002. This study identified circular and linear stone foundations, which probably represent the remains of original courtyard stonewalls, grain-bin foundations, etc. There are no stonewalls rising above the ground except for these foundation features. Sets of low stone cairns were also identified. There are ash middens and domestic refuse remains including pottery that were identified on the sites. However, the site has several areas that were disturbed either by digging or modern refuse dumping in recent times. A considerable portion of the site had its surface soil scrapped off by earth-moving machinery. Based on the results of study, we recommend that the site be mapped and test excavations be conducted before further construction work takes place.

INTRODUCTION

In 2002 the Potter's House Christian Church began construction work for a church building on Plot 91 Ivy Park (GPS Co-ordinates: S23o 55' 27" E 29o 26' 18"). Immediately as work began, the Limpopo Province South African Heritage Agency officials of the Polokwane Museum suspended construction activities on Plot 91 Ivy Park in Polokwane. The reason was that a potentially important archaeological site was located on this property. Mr. Frans Roodt the Polokwane Museum subsequently issued a brief Phase 1 Report confirming that there was an important archaeological heritage site on the property (see attachment). However, development work had already started and part of the site's surface had been scrapped off. There still remain several features on the ground including stonewall foundations, ash middens and pottery scatters visible on sites. In August and September 2004, HeSSA Archeologists conducted further assessment studies. We recommended that the site should be mapped and test excavations be conducted on site.

AIMS OF STUDY

The study was conducted to gather more information with regards to the extent and conditions of the site. An earlier study had recommended that the site the excavated and documented before its complete destruction by the proposed development. However, this report did not give any specific details as to the potential of the site except to highlight that there were stone walls on site. Therefore, if the recommendation to have the site excavated was to be implemented, we deemed it necessary to gather more details on the site condition and conduct a detailed assessment. The results of this study form the basis of an application for an Archaeological Excavation Permit from the South African Heritage Agency.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two phases. First we visited the site to verify its location, extent and to gather more details to help us evaluate the extent of the damage that had already occurred on the site and the impact of the proposed construction work. In the second phase we conducted further survey of the site to assess its current condition with the view to collect information that would help in planning and designing mitigation measures.

RESULTS

Remains of what was probably a perimeter stone wall were identified. This feature consists of at least 40m-long raised ridge of stones. It seems part of the original wall extended into neighbouring properties adjacent to Plot 91 Ivy Park (Fig 1).



Fig 1 : The neighbouring properties adjacent to Plot 91 Ivy Park are developed and parts of the site that originally extended into these properties were destroyed during the development of these properties.

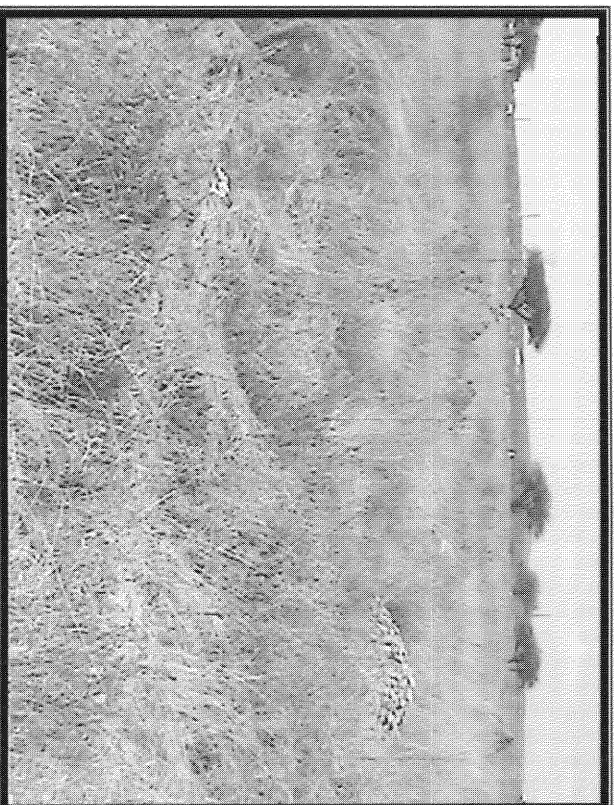


Fig. 2: Small stone piles like this one are found on this site. These seem to be as a result of stone clearance.

Therefore, those sections of the wall were destroyed because these neighbouring properties are already developed. Four low stone cairns were also identified on the site (fig 1). It is not possible to identify what exactly these features are at this point. There are other short stonewalls remains are found on other parts on the sites. These were most probably courtyards dividing walls in between houses. The circular stone foundations that are found within these stone wall demarcations support this conclusion. There are also some associated ash middens on the periphery of the site. These have pottery remains. No identifiable

potsherds were recorded during the surveys. All these features are concentrated on the southern portion of the property.

The northern part of the property represents the front since its is the road-facing section. This part was largely destroyed during earth-moving activities on site in preparation of the proposed development. Pottery and other refuse materials were identified in this area. Small lumps of cow-dung were also identified on the portion that was cleared of. This probably represents the cattle kraal of the prehistoric settlement. From the orientation of the other identified features, it would seem that this was the centre of the settlement. This would also mean that large parts of this settlement were destroyed by modern development since the surrounding properties are already developed.

Furthermore, the site has extensively been disturbed by some holes that were dug over the site. It is not clear what was the purpose of the holes but it appears that some sand or gravel was extracted. Some of these holes are filled up with modern rubbish suggesting that there were used for illegal dumping by the surrounding residents.

There are remains of recent bring and cement structures on the site (Fig. 2). These consist of fired brick remains and rectangular concrete slabs suggesting that some modern structures once stood on parts of the plot. However, these features are small and were probably not extensive in spatial distribution.



Fig. 3: Sections of the site have been disturbed and partially destroyed. There are remains of some recent brick and cement structures that were constructed on the site in the recent historic times.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original Phase 1 assessment study identified the site as highly significant but without necessarily classifying the level of this significance. Therefore, we then adopted a wide evaluation of significance based on the findings of this research. We measured the site's significance against qualities such as:

- Representativeness (is the site a good example, clearly illustration the attributes of its significance).
- Rarity (is the site rare or an unusual aspect of the local history or cultural environment that has few parallels elsewhere).
- Aesthetic significance (is the site visually pleasing in terms of unity of scale, materials, texture and such other elements in the landscape setting).
- Historical value (this relates to the recent peopling of the area in relation to themes such as an historic figure, event, phase and activity).
- Scientific (archaeological) Significance (research potential of the site and the relevance of any data that might be contained for the pursuit of academic research questions).
- Social significance (is the site linked to any recognisable community, or parts of a community, human burials, religious value etc).

From our assessment and the site condition survey, what remains of this site may not be considered as a significant representative sample which is rare with aesthetic significance. Parts of the site have systematically been destroyed and disturbed in recent times and no feature on the site stands out. However, the site has the potential of providing vital historical and scientific data. An excavation would establish the stratigraphy of the site as well identifying the cultural group that occupied the site and left the stone features. The history of the site would contribute to the on-going studies across the Limpopo Province on the distribution on African Farming communities.

There is a potential of encountering human burials on site. But we cannot state with any degree of certainty whether there are such burials on the site. Based on ethnographic information, some of the stone cairns that were identified seem to resemble burial markings. However, such stone cairns are not always associated with burials. Therefore, there is the potential that the site could have a social value related to burials since in the African communities, all burials are sacred and should be accorded deserving respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed construction work would destroy the archaeological site completely particularly in portions where physical structures are to be constructed. Therefore, as recommended in

the initial Phase 1 report, we recommend that the site should be documented in the most possible details. It should be mapped completely to cover the extent of the plot. We also recommend that a controlled archaeological phase 2 excavations be conducted. The excavation should sample those portions of the sites that have the least disturbances in order to get a reliable stratigraphy and the context of the site.

PROPOSED EXCAVATION PROGRAM

From this study, the recommended excavation may not be a long term or seasonal project. There are serious resources and time limitations to any long-term excavation program. In this context, it is sufficient to conduct vertical trench system excavation. What is important is to derive a representative sample sufficient enough to provide meaning data that would be useful to future researchers. Since there are no direct research questions linked to this site, it is vital that the proposed excavation collect a good sample that is based on well-recorded data as opposed to conducting an extensive and yet poorly documented excavation. The excavation program may also include a series of test trenches across the site to identify features or activity areas in relation to the visible stonewall remains and the middens.

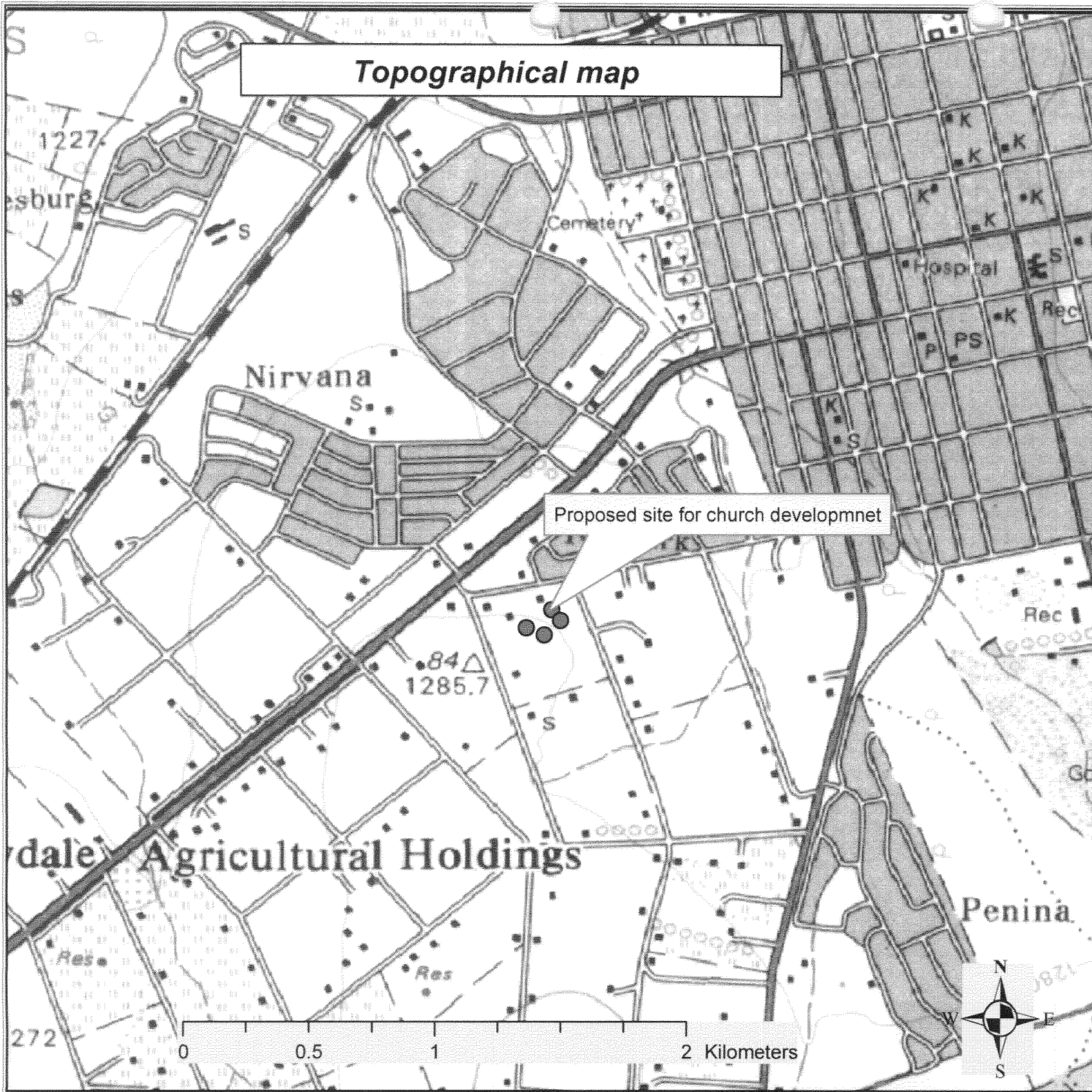
CONCLUSION

The assessment and site condition survey established that the site has scientific and historical significance and therefore, proposed to conduct archaeological excavations designed to collect a representative sample of data from the site. The site has been systematically been lost through human activities such as the recent pre-construction earth moving activities. Systematic documentation through excavation and mapping would be sufficient to preserve the site on record without necessary preserving it for perpetuity. The site lacks other value indicators that are necessary for high-level significance classification.

ATTACHMENTS

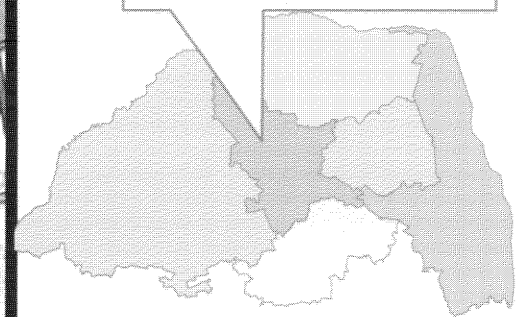
- 1. MAP 1 OF LOCATION OF SITE**
- 2. MAP 2 OF SITE LOCATION**
- 3. PHASE 1 HIA REPORT DONE BY F. ROODT.**
- 4. PLOT 91 IVY PARK PROPERTY TITLE DEED**

Topographical map



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OAI
Plot Park
Site

PIETERSBURG

Ivydale Agricultural Holdings

Stekloop Southoldings

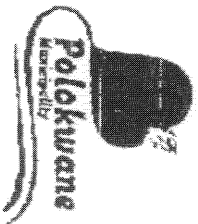
New Pietersburg

550

PIETERSBURG



187cm



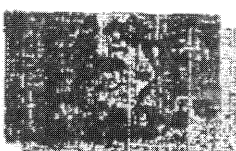
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21 October 2002

Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (Scoping & Evaluation)
PLOT 91 IVYDALE
Polokwane Municipality

STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO HERITAGE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Coordinates: S23°55'27" E29°26'18"

The terrain was inspected on 25 September, 2002.

A major archaeological stone walled complex is located on the terrain which is protected in terms of section 35 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999). During illegal earthworks by the owner, much of the surface remains of the site had been destroyed. These activities were stopped by the South African Heritage Resources Agency, who order an EIA for the proposed development.

Although the surface remains had been damaged by the earthworks, the archaeological deposits below is still intact. These deposits will contain stratified human remains that will include sensitive human remains.

The proposed project will thus have an adverse impact on the protection of this significant resource. It is therefore recommended that a phase 2 archaeological impact assessment be conducted on the terrain.

Yours faithfully

FRANS ROODT (BA Hon, MA Archaeology, Post Grad Dipl Muzology) (JP)