

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT: THE CONSTRUCTION OF
A DUAL CARRIAGEWAY LINKING FITZPATRICK ROAD AND CURRIE
STREET ON THE "SLEEPER SITE", ERF 15835 BUFFALO CITY,
EASTERN CAPE**

For att: Greer Hawley
Coastal and Environmental Services
East London Offices
Tel: 043 742 3302
Fax: 043 742 3306
Email: g.hawley@cesnet.co.za

By: Lita Webley and Gill Vernon
Lita Webley
Albany Museum
Somerset Street
Grahamstown
6139
Tel: 046 6222312
Fax: 046 6222398

G.N. Vernon
33 Syringa Ave.,
Beacon Bay
5241.

Tel 043-7482066

Email: L.Webley@ru.ac.za

E-mail: gvernon@qwest.co.za

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A piece of land, approximately 50 ha in size, in central Buffalo City/East London has been identified for development. In the past this land formed part of the railway yards and mechanical workshops of Propnet. Components of the property date back to 1874. However, the railway shunting yards have been abandoned and a large portion of the site is now derelict. A section to the north of the property has become the focus of light industry. The development of the "Sleeper Site" is expected to take place in phases and during the first phase it is proposed to construct a road connecting Fitzpatrick Road with Currie Street to deal with existing traffic problems. It appears from the plans that a section of a warehouse in Fitzpatrick Road will be demolished during the construction of the off-ramp. However, this warehouse appears to have been recently constructed and has no architectural or historic merit. The actual road and traffic circle will cross a concrete section of the old shunting yards and this area has no archaeological or historic significance. The exit of the new road onto Currie Street may impact on some warehouses located in Tutton Terrace. However, while some of these warehouses appear to be represented in old photographs of 1935 and 1972 of the shunting yards, they have been considerably re-modified during the intervening years, and have no historic or architectural merit. It is recommended that the construction of the road and traffic circle may continue without mitigation.

During the survey, some old stone buildings dating back to 1897 were discovered in the northern section of the site which is currently housing light industrial development. These stone buildings are presently not threatened, but it is recommended that they be surveyed once further development of the "Sleeper Site" takes place.

INTRODUCTION

The site under consideration is Erf 15835, which is located to the north east of Quigney (Ward 4 in the Buffalo City Local Municipality). It forms part of the original "Sleeper Site", the location of the railway and locomotive and mechanical workshops and shunting yards belonging to Propnet. The site is over 50 ha in size, and is partially utilised by light industries and businesses, while the remaining area is vacant and has been used in recent years for the dumping of refuse and building material (Figure 1).

The first phase of the development will include the construction of a double lane, dual carriageway, linking Fitzpatrick Road and Currie Street, across the Sleeper Site (Figure 2). The new road, turning from Fitzpatrick Road, will be built with a double laned traffic circle just north of where it meets up with Currie Street. This circle is designed to allow for integration with future possible roads over the Sleeper Site. This is a listed activity. In addition, Currie Street between Tutton Terrace and Fleet Street will be upgraded to a dual carriageway with a curb running between the south and north bound lanes. This is not a listed activity. The new route will become a main arterial link and take over the function of the existing R72 (Figure 2).

The new road and upgrading of existing roads forms part of the development of the "Sleeper Site" which forms part of the Buffalo City's Development Agency projects (Figure 1).

Terms of Reference

Dr Webley and Mrs Vernon were approached to undertake a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment. The terms of reference are:

* To undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of the “Sleeper Site” with a view to the development of the area including, but not limited to, the development footprint.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 makes provision for a compulsory HIA when an area exceeding 5000 m² is being developed (National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999: page 55). This is to determine if the area contains heritage sites and to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are not damaged or destroyed during development.

With regard burial grounds and graves, Section 36 (3) of the Act clearly stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage authority or SAHRA, (a) destroy, damage or exhume the grave of the victim of conflict; (b) destroy, damage or exhume any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

Subject to the provision of any other law, any person who in the course of development discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the relevant heritage authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with the regulations of the responsible heritage authority, carry out an investigation to determine whether the grave is protected in terms of the Act or is of significance to any community

Section 34 of the Act stipulates that no person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

Section 38 of the Act clearly indicates that any person constructing a road or similar linear developments exceeding 300m in length or developing an area exceeding 5000 m² in extent is required to notify the responsible heritage resources authority or SAHRA. SAHRA will in turn advise whether an impact assessment report is needed before development can take place.

Living heritage (defined in the Act as including cultural tradition, oral history, performance, ritual, popular memory, skills and techniques, indigenous knowledge systems and the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships) is also given protection under the Act. Section 24 of the Act makes provision for provincial heritage resources authorities to maintain a register of heritage resources and to set up management plans for their preservation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first land grant in the Quigney area was made to J.C. Fitzpatrick in 1864, and Fitzpatrick Road is named after him. The land west of Currie Street was granted to the East London Municipality in 1880. In 1882 the area was surveyed and the first streets laid out, named Fitzpatrick, Moore, Tennyson, Longfellow, Currie and Inverleith Terrace. For the first time wide streets were constructed, but they were all only gravel.

The upper part of Currie Street was tarred in 1893 (the section included in the plan) and the lower part in 1903. The land east of Currie Street was opened to development in 1897 and the first houses were erected in 1898. Fitzpatrick Road only reached Commercial Road in 1905 and was gravel. Later it was extended to meet the lower end of Bowls Road.

Fitzpatrick Road became a thoroughfare through the city when the North-East Freeway M11 was constructed. The M11 has links to the N2 and N6 at Abbotsford. This makes Fitzpatrick Road part of a major route from both the Transkei and KwaZulu-Natal and via Queenstown to the north through East London to join with the R72, the coastal route to Port Elizabeth.

The Railway Sleeper Site

The land on which to construct the railway station was granted to the Cape Government Railways in 1874. It was referred to as the 'Sleeper Site' when very large railway sleepers were imported and deposited on land adjoining Signal Street, but they were the incorrect size so they were never used as sleepers. The name however has been retained.

The area bounded by Fitzpatrick Street, Commercial Road and Signal Street on an upper level housed the original mechanical workshops and repair sheds. These were closed in 1988 and the land leased to the Small Business Development Corporation (SBCD).

The area on a lower level adjoining Tutton Terrace was where the original steam locomotive sheds and workshops were situated. With the introduction of diesel engines the main railway workshops were moved to the Diesel Depot in Cambridge in 1966.

Both areas were covered with railway tracks, some of which have been covered over. The original turntable was situated near Fitzpatrick Road and has been cemented over. There were numerous structures on the site but all have been removed with the exception of three along Tutton Terrace (Figures 3 & 4). These photographs from 1935 and 1972 respectively show the development of the railway yard and indicate that many of the original buildings have long since disappeared.

Buildings

The plan does not indicate the extent of demolition of the buildings which would be affected.

On the upper level of the Sleeper Site there is a 'warehouse-type' construction which extends the full width of the SBCD area and is bounded by Fitzpatrick Road, a part at least will have to be demolished to make way for the road (Figure 2).

It has been suggested that this would have been a store as a railway track extends along their full length with a cement platform to facilitate on and off-loading.

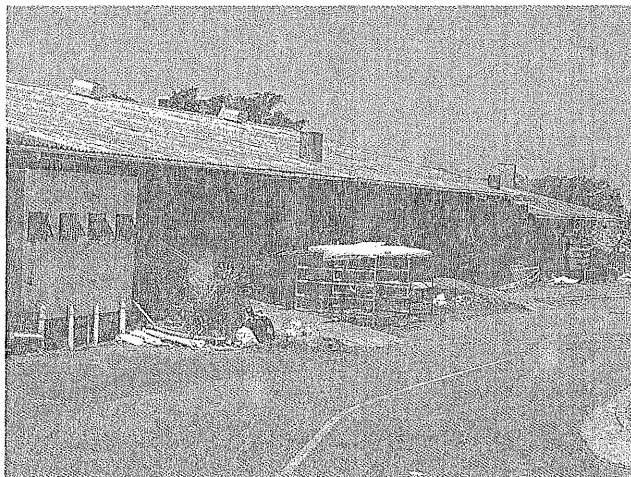


Figure 5: The warehouse which may be impacted by the off-ramp.

The foundation is of cement and the walls and roof is of corrugated iron. The building is stepped as the ground slopes down gradually. On the lower end there is a separate small building which appears to be a very much later addition. Many additions have been made, including toilet facilities and ramps. There are a number of small businesses housed in this warehouse. This building has no architectural or heritage merit and clearly does not date to the early days of the railways as it is not shown on the early photographs.

There are three buildings on Tutton Terrace which may be affected (Figure 2). The one is a long double-storey brick building with windows on the upper level, roofed with corrugated iron. It appears to be unused. There is no architectural or heritage merit in this building.

Opposite Currie Street and certainly in the way of the proposed road is a small square building with a flat cement roof which extends all around. The structure indicates that this was built later than the 1930s. It is at present occupied by Mandi's Curio Shop.

Next to this and also opposite Currie Street is a double-storey house which was originally the Workshop Manager's office. It is built of brick and plastered and has been extensively renovated. Attached to this is a single-storey building. These are occupied by a furniture store, 'The Loco Shed' and 'Plastic World'.



Figure 6: Buildings off Tutton Terrace.

The buildings themselves have no architectural or heritage merit but it may be noted that the fanlights over the windows on the street side have a triangular stained glass design, reminiscent of Art Deco, and would be worth saving.

Stone Buildings in the SBCD area

These do not fall within the current development footprint, but are situated within the broader area which has been identified for development (Figure 1). It is therefore important to draw attention to the presence of four very fine stone buildings which were constructed in 1897. Any future plans should incorporate plans to retain these fine structures.

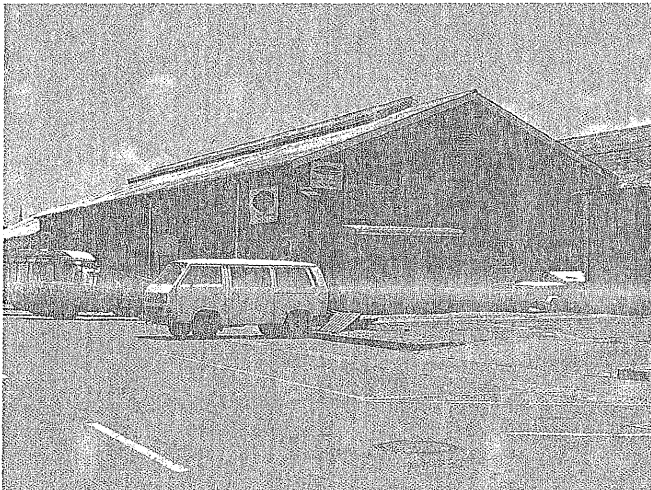


Figure 7: Stone buildings found in the industrial area which are not presently in the development footprint and are not threatened by development.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The literature on the archaeology of the Buffalo City/East London area is very limited. Information on coastal shell middens may be found in Derricourt (1977).

Binneman and Webley (1996) undertook an archaeological survey of the West Bank Precinct but no archaeological remains were found, with the exception of a number of badly deflated shell middens on the coast. Nogwaza (1994) has reported on some Early Iron Age pottery (representing the first black occupants of the region) from Canasta Place, some 12 km west of East London on the west bank of the Buffalo River. This site represents the most southerly occurrence of early black farming communities in Africa. Similar finds have been made elsewhere in the Eastern Cape, suggesting that the first Black farmers in the Eastern Cape settled in this area from AD 700 – AD 1000. It is quite possible that similar site(s) may be found elsewhere in the Buffalo City/East London area.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Webley and Vernon visited on 7 January 2008 together with Hawley and a security guard.

1) The first area visited was off Fitzpatrick Avenue, near some large trees. A corner of a large warehouse may be affected by the off ramp. This was apparently the location of the locomotive turnstile.

S 33°00'40,1"
E 27°54'50,7"

A section of this area is under tar, but dense bush covers the rest of the area to the south and west, and it is possible that there may be soil under the bush.



Figure 8: Tarred area, surrounded by dense bush, trees and rubbish.

2) The second area visited was the existing light industrial area off Commercial Road. We viewed the existing stone buildings (which are not threatened at present) and then examined the area which is to be developed. We stopped at:

S 33°00'43,9"
E 27°54'33,5"

3) The third area visited was in the approximate location of the planned traffic circle which will connect Fitzpatrick Road and Currie Street. This area formed the focus of the railway lines in the past, and the entire area is covered in concrete and old railway lines. No surface soil could be examined for possible archaeological remains.

S 33°00'45,2"
E 27°54'42,2"



Figure 9: The area which will be impacted by the road and traffic circle.

4) In close proximity is a large concrete structure, obviously related to the railway activity. However, it is not clearly shown on the old photographs of the area. Its GPS co-ordinates are:

S 33°00'45,1"
E 27°54'37,3"



Figure 10: Brick structure related to the railway activities in the past.

SOURCES OF RISK AND IMPACT IDENTIFICATION

It appears that the entire area which has been identified for the construction of the new connecting road and traffic circle is covered in concrete and old railway lines.

While it is possible that archaeological remains (such as stone artefacts or pottery) may be buried beneath the concrete of the "Sleeper Site", these will only be uncovered during bulldozing of the area to construct the roads and traffic circle.

It seems unlikely that the area was occupied by residences prior to the construction of the station (1874), as Vernon has shown that the earliest residential properties in this area were constructed in 1898. For this reason, it is unlikely that the "Sleeper Site" overlies any historical structures or material.

The only aspects of the "Sleeper Site" which may be of historical interest are the old station, railway lines and associated buildings. Vernon has pointed to the 'warehouse' on the upper level of the Sleeper Site which extends to Fitzpatrick Road, and which may be impacted by the development. According to the plans which we examined (Figure 2), a part of this building may have to be demolished to make way for the new road. The building has a concrete base and walls and roof of corrugated iron. However, this building does not feature in the old photographs of the area and does not appear to have historical value (Figures 3 and 4).

The concrete base of the railway junction will obviously be demolished to make way for the road and traffic circle but there does not appear to be any reason why it should be retained as it contains no historic or architectural merit (Figure 9).

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND POSSIBLE MITIGATION

The corrugated iron warehouse which touches on Fitzpatrick Road and which may be impacted by the construction of the new road does not appear to be related to the origins of the station in 1874 as it is not reflected on the old photographs of the area and appears to be of a more recent date. It has no architectural or heritage merit.

Most of the site is covered in concrete and old railways lines. Although these may date to the beginnings of the railways in East London, there seems to be little reason or merit in retaining any of these.

At present the buildings which abut on Tutton Terrace are not threatened by the new road connecting Fitzpatrick Road to Currie Road as they lie outside the current development footprint. However, they lie in portion 2 of the Sleeper Site Development Framework and they may be impacted at a future date (Figure 11). Some of these buildings appear on early photographs of the area although they may obviously have been significantly altered during the intervening years. At present they appear to have no architectural merit.

Amongst the buildings in the light industrial zone (Portion 11) are stone structures dating to 1897. They are not in the current development footprint but may be impacted by future developments. It is important that an architectural survey is done of these stone buildings when the development Portion 11 of the site is considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No archaeological or historical remains of any significance were found during the survey and it seems unlikely that any will be uncovered during bull-dozing of the site as the area has been intensively developed over a period of more than 100 years. Nevertheless, the developers should look out for the following:

- 1) Concentrations of stone tools;
- 2) Fragments of pottery;
- 3) Any graves;
- 4) Any historical material such as blue and white china

This survey has concentrated on the development footprint as this is the brief we were given. However, it is suggested that a good photographic record is undertaken of the area before development commences, to assist future historians in tracing the development of Buffalo City. Further, while there is no immediate indications that development may take place in the light industrial area of portion 11, it is important to record the importance of the old stone buildings and to ensure that provision is made in the future for them to be maintained.

All buildings older than 60 years are protected in terms of the Act and permission must be obtained from SAHRA for any alterations or demolition. Application forms should be obtained from:

Ms Noma-Africa,
Provincial Heritage Resources Agency,
PO Box 759, East London 5200.
Tel. 043-722 1934; Fax; 043-722 1749.

REFERENCES

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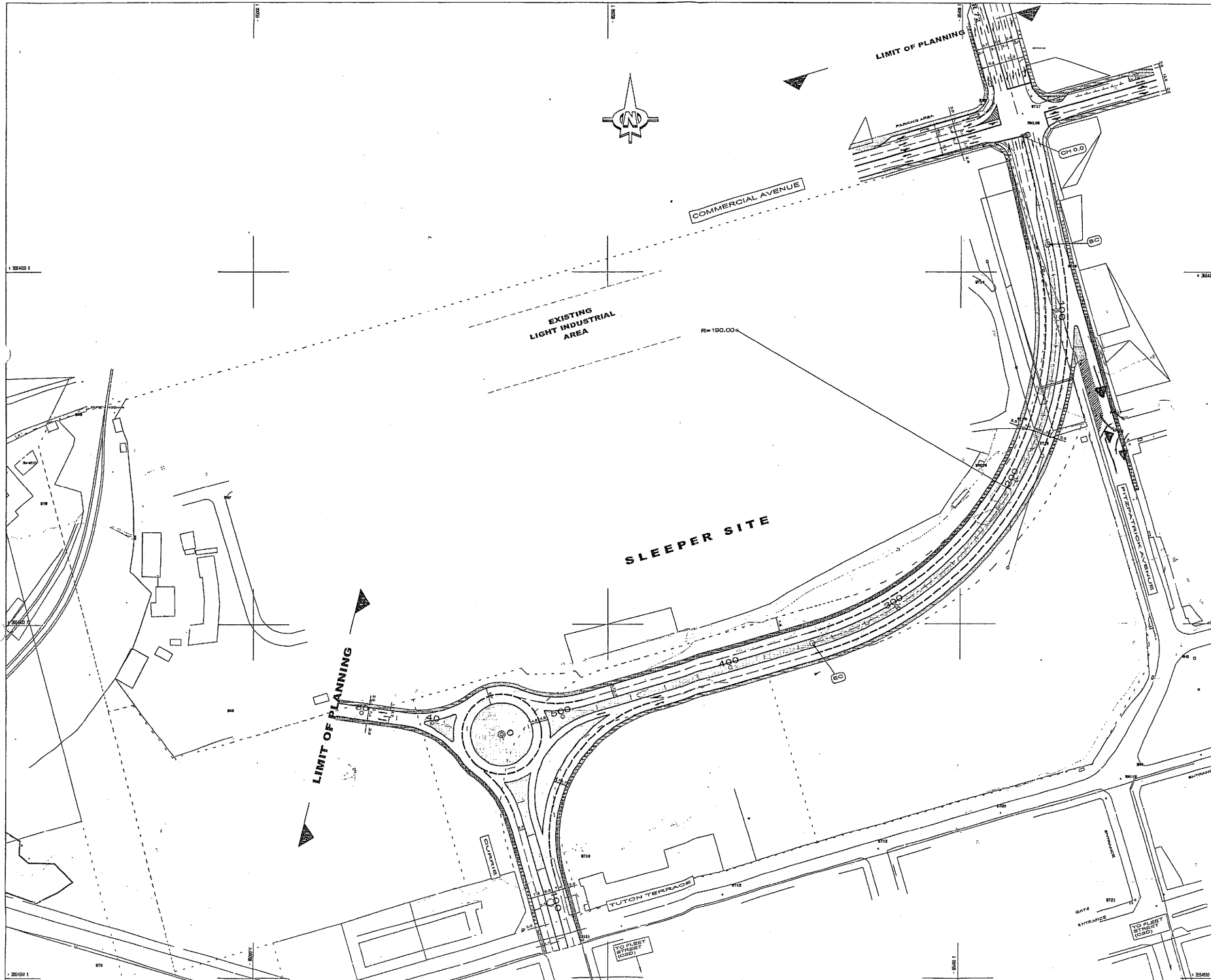
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

David Bowen, Head Drawing Officer, Transnet National Port Authority for information and the map.



Figure 1: The Sleeper Site Development Framework

FIGURE 2



Revision	Date	Description

Client
BUFFALO CITY MUNICIPALITY

ELEMENT
 Consulting Engineers
 A FIFTH DIMENSION TO ENGINEERING

Office 14, Beacon Park, Beacon Bay, East London, 6005
 P O Box 1979, Beacon Bay, 6020
 Tel: 043 748 4100 Fax: 043 748 4100
 E-Mail: info@element.co.za

Project
PROPOSED ROAD LAYOUT FOR CONNECTING FITZPATRICK AND CURRIE ROADS

Plan Description
LAYOUT : ROUNDABOUT WITH SLIPLANE

Designed	A VILJOEN	Scale	1:1000
Drawn	M PIENAAR	Date	02/2007
Checked	H MARAIS	Contract No.	

Drawing No. **06045/R/L/01**

Revision **0**

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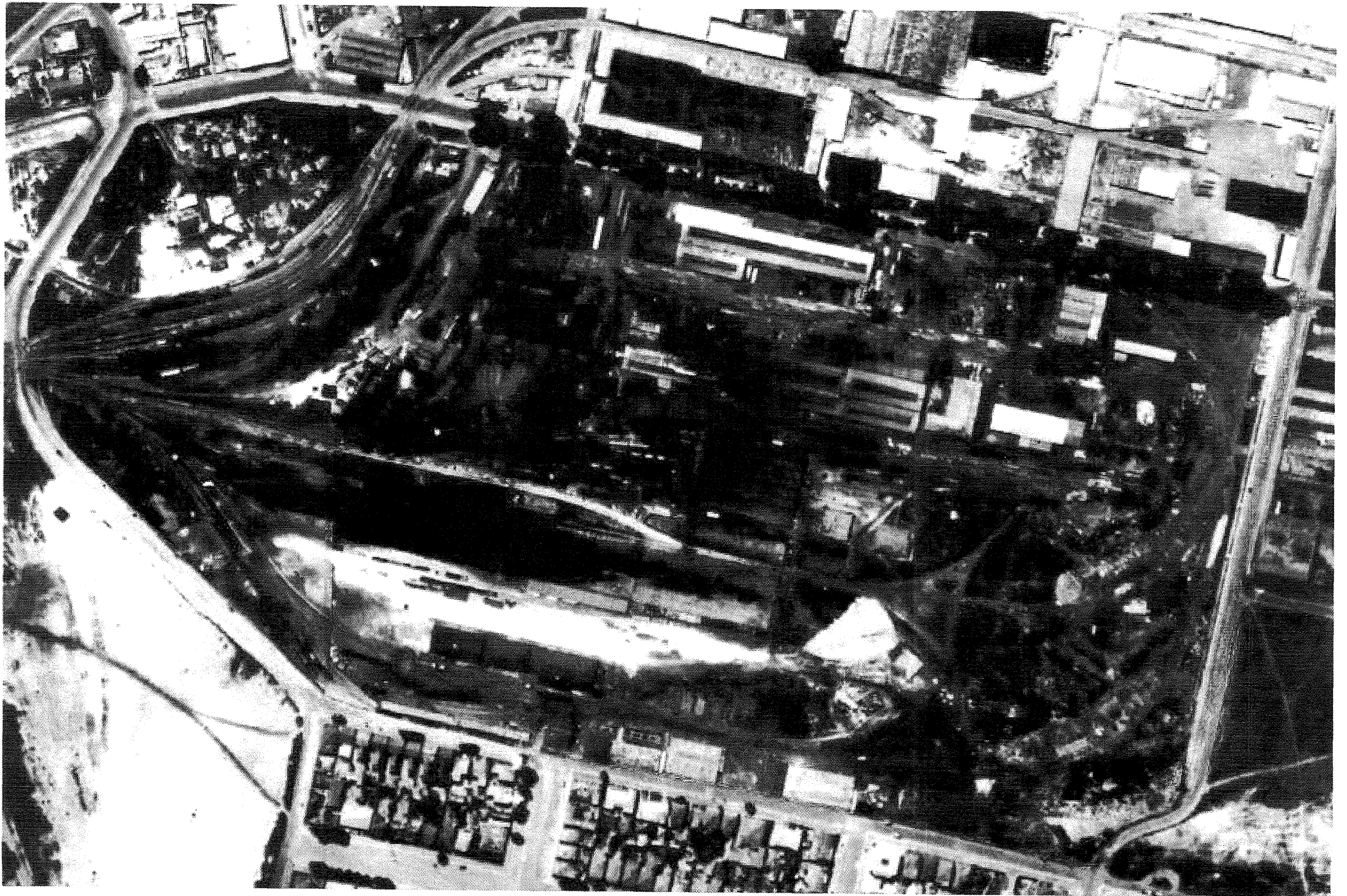


FIGURE 3 : 1935



FIG 4: 1972



Figure // Google Earth view of the “ Sleeper Site ” with the location of areas visited.