



# AFRICAN HERITAGE CONSULTANTS CC

2001/077745/23

**DR. UDO S KÜSEL**

Tel: (012) 567 6046 Fax: 086 594 9721  
Cell: 082 498 0673  
E-mail: [udo@nconnect.co.za](mailto:udo@nconnect.co.za)  
Website: [www.africanheritage.co.za](http://www.africanheritage.co.za)

P.O. Box 652  
Magalieskruin  
0150

---

## **A. PHASE I CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(a) CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 89 OF THE FARM NOOITGEDACHT 268 IT ERMELO MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

### **(b) REPORT COMPILED BY**

Dr. Udo S. Küsel; African Heritage Consultants CC  
P.O. Box 652, Magalieskruin, 0150  
Tel: (012) 567 6046; Fax: 086 594 9721; Cell: 082 498 0673; E-mail: [udo@nconnect.co.za](mailto:udo@nconnect.co.za)

### **(c) DEVELOPER AND CONSULTANT INFORMATION**

#### **Developer:**

Pieter Beyers of Stylestar Investments (Pty) Ltd  
Tel: 012 361 7970; Fax: 086 567 0872  
P.O. Box 72689, Lynnwood Ridge 0040

#### **Landowner**

Ermelo Distrikslandbou-Unie  
Tel: 012 361 7970; Fax: 086 567 0872

#### **Consultants:**

Dr. Gwen Theron of LEAP  
Tel: 012 343 2751; Cell: 086 606 6130  
P.O. Box 13185, Hatfield, 0028

**Date of report: 24 February 2014**

## **B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed development site lies in the southern part of Ermelo. The site was developed in the 1950's for the Annual Agricultural Show. The earliest buildings are the KWB Building, the women's section, poultry facilities and the horse stables as well as the pavilion and arena. The later built buildings on the show grounds date from 1960 to 1980.

It was difficult to determine the exact dates when the original buildings were completed but it must have been between – 1952 and 1955.

The recorded six buildings represent the typical structures built in rural towns for the Annual Agricultural Show. Though their exact date of construction is not known they should be recorded in a Phase II Cultural Heritage Resources Impact Assessment before they are demolished.

If during construction any cultural heritage resources or graves are unearthed all work has to be stopped until the site has been inspected and mitigated by a cultural heritage practitioner.

## C. TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
A. Title Page	01
B. Executive Summary	02
C. Table of Contents	03
D. Background Information on the Project	04
E. Background to the Archaeological History	05
F. Description of the Property or Affected Environment	09
G. Description of sites	10
H. Description of the Artefacts, Faunal, Botanical or other Finds and Features	15
I. Clear Description of Burial Grounds and Graves	15
J. Field Rating	15
K. Statement of Significance (Heritage Value)	15
L. Recommendations	15
M. Conclusions	15
N. Bibliography	16
O. Appendices	18
. Maps:	19

**D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PROJECT:**

**(a) Whether the report is part of a scoping report/EIA/HIA or not**

*Report is part of the Basic Assessment*

**(b) Type of development (e.g. low cost housing project, mining etc).**

*Shopping Centre*

**(c) Whether re-zoning and/or subdivision of land is involved.**

*Re-zoning from Agricultural to Special*

**(d) Developer and consultant and owner and name and contact details;**

**Prepared for: Developer and owner**

**Developer:**

Pieter Beyers of Stylestar Investments (Pty) Ltd

Tel: 012 361 7970; Fax: 086 567 0872

P.O. Box 72689, Lynnwood Ridge 0040

**Landowner**

Ermelo Distrikslandbou-Unie

Tel: 012 361 7970; Fax: 086 567 0872

**Consultants:**

Dr. Gwen Theron of LEAP

Tel: 012 343 2751; Cell: 086 606 6130

P.O. Box 13185, Hatfield, 0028

**(e) Terms of Reference**

The broad generic term *Cultural Heritage Resources* refers to any physical and spiritual property associated with past and present human use or occupation of the environment, cultural activities and history. The term includes sites, structures, places, natural features and material of paleontological, archaeological, historical, aesthetic, scientific, architectural, religious, symbolic or traditional importance to specific individuals or groups, traditional systems of cultural practice, belief or social interaction.

## **(f) Legislative requirements of Act 25 of 1999.**

### **Protected sites in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act No. 25 of 1999**

The following are the most important sites and objects protected by the National Heritage Act:

- Structures or parts of structures older than 60 years.
  - Archaeological sites and objects.
  - Paleontological sites.
  - Meteorites.
  - Ship wrecks.
  - Burial grounds.
  - Graves of victims of conflict.
  - Public monuments and memorials.
  - Structures, places and objects protected through the publication of notices in the Gazette and Provincial Gazette.
  - Any other places or objects, which are considered to be of interest or of historical or cultural significance.
- 1.1 Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance.
  - 1.2 Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.
  - 1.3 Objects to which oral traditions are attached.
  - 1.4 Sites of cultural significance or other value to a community or pattern of South African history

## **E. BACKGROUND TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE AREA**

The Ermelo area has been severely impacted by mining developments over the last two centuries. Older and in particular more recent infrastructural developments, for example the development of the Ermelo-Uitkoms Line and others, have demonstrated a paucity of heritage remains around the Ermelo town development. Agricultural activities have also intensively altered the original landscape. Burials and formal/informal cemeteries are some of the major social resources that ensued from these developments. Informal cemeteries are therefore a prominent feature of the general region around the study area. See for example the burial sites located along the Ermelo Majuba railway servitude near Amersfoort in the PixleyKaSeme Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province (SAHRIS Murimbika Permit Application). Vhubvo Archaeo-Heritage Consultants (2011) recorded only burial sites in an investigation of 413 ha for a proposed township approximately 4 km north-west of Ermelo. These comprised five burial sites with a total of 78 graves. Contemporary farm dwellings were also observed within the footprint of the proposed development. Pistorius (2013b) also reported on cemeteries, graves and burials and farm buildings within the general region.

SAHRIS (2014), in the application for the proposed construction of the Overvaal rail tunnel approximately 30 km south-east of Ermelo (Case ID 4341), pointed out that this region is underlain by geology known for its significant palaeontological resources. Any proposed structural development should take this into account. However, granite bedrocks in some areas are unfossiliferous. Superficial sediments covering such bedrocks often have only sparse fossil inclusions and are accordingly of low significance (Almond 2013a, 2013b). An application for the mining of 1.5 ha of aggregate on a portion of the farm De Roodepoort 435 IS, is situated within such a deposit of the Karoo Dolerite Suite that was not deemed of significance (Almond 2013a, 2013b; Van der Walt 2013). In the event that substantial fossils of vertebrates, fossil wood or plant fossils are uncovered these should be reported and the location mitigated (Almond 2013a, 2013b).

### **The historical development of the region**

This used to be a rural area that was likely settled first by hunting and gathering groups and subsequently African farmers. A more recent settlement by European farmers during the colonial period resulted in the development of small towns over the past 150 years. A demand for coal resulted from the newly discovered Witwatersrand gold fields. The long-term extraction of coal required vast infrastructural developments. Such developments, and in particular early mining practices before investigations of heritage resources had been required, probably destroyed most evidence on settlement by hunter-gatherer groups and early African farmers who would have utilized the resources of this area.

In order to illustrate the ubiquitous presence of prehistoric peoples on the southern African landscape, we reference research in the 1950s by Potgieter and Ziervogel on the //Xegwi serves as a case study. They researched the origins, history and language of the //Xegwi of the Lake Chrissie area, which lies at a distance of around 200 km from the study area under review. While this San group still retained some of their ritual practices, they have been in contact with African farmers of Sotho stock and, more recently, with Swazi and most of them were employed as farm workers by European (Potgieter 1955; Ziervogel 1955; Colson 1956; Barnard 1992).

There is also a lacuna for sites or other evidence that relate to African farmer settlement in this region. Hoernlé (1930) does provide an invaluable record of the Iron Age Tafelkop Settlement near Ermelo. The remains of dome-shaped stone houses are on a prominent spur within a range of low hills. This site is now a Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0003). Some of the heritage reports do mention stone-walled settlements with enclosures and African ceramics that have been recorded (see for example Van der Walt 2013). Van Schalkwyk (2012) in a desktop study reported on a lack of data for the Stone Age or for Iron Age settlements within this region. White farmers started to move into the region during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The early beginnings of Ermelo stem from the establishment of a church in the late 1800s by Frans Lion Cachet. The town was established in 1879 on the farm Nooitgedacht (Van Schalkwyk 2012). The name of the town derives from the eponymous town in Netherlands where the Reverend Cachet originated from (Van der Walt 2013). The NZASM railway line, built in the 1880s, resulted in more structured development of this region. Several important battles between the boers and the English took place during the Anglo Boer War of 1901, some of which were directed at the railway line. Block houses were also erected (Van Schalkwyk 2012).

Historic buildings and sometimes farmsteads are a feature of the eastern Highveld but are often demolished for new developments (Pistorius 2013a). The town itself has several historic buildings, including the Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0020) of the Old Residency, 34 Taute Street. The Old Prison in the small town of Amsterdam in the Ermelo District is a Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0004). The residence of HT Buhrman (1822-1890) is another Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0003). The 1897/8 Paul Kruger Bridge (Bridge 63) known as the Begin-der-Lijn Bridge, Vaal River, Ermelo District is a Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0008). Sytze Wopkes Wierda was the designer of the bridge that was to provide a crossing for transport over the Vaal River (<http://able.wiki.up.ac.za>). Another Provincial Heritage Site (SAHRIS 9/2/222/0007) is the Natural Rock Bridge on the farm Goedehoop 106 IT, District of Ermelo.

The Highveld was to a large degree avoided by early people because there was no wood available for fire making and building. The archaeological database of the National Museum for Cultural History in Pretoria has no archaeological data on the area south of Ermelo. The nearest Late Iron Age sites are early Sotho sites on Tafelkop some twelve kilometres north west of Ermelo. These were the so-called Leghoya and were associated with the stone huts which mainly occur in the north-eastern Free State (Mason R 1962, pp385 and Maggs TM 1972, pp54 – 65) (GPS S26° 27' 35.18 & E29° 48' 32.71")



**Archaeological sites of the Late Iron Age on Tafelkop north of Ermelo**

Ermelo was founded by the Dutch Reformed Churches reverent Frans Leon Cachet. He named the settlement Ermelo after a town in the Netherlands where Hermanus Willem Witreveen lived, which had a great influence on Cachets life. A congregation was started at Ermelo in 1870.

The town developed at a steady pace as it was on the wagon route between Durban and the Eastern Transvaal Goldfields. Halfway between Ermelo and Amersfoort is the beautiful sandstone bridge known as “Begin der Lijnbrug” over the Vaal River. This name comes from the fact that the original border fence between the ZAR and Swaziland started here. The bridge was inaugurated on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1898 and declared a National Monument in 1955 (Oberholster JJ 1972, p329 and Transvaal Archive records) – see photograph.



“Begin der Lijnbrug” bridge  
during construction  
*Photograph: Transvaal Archive*

During the Anglo Boer War the town was totally destroyed with only one house surviving. The same happened to Boer farmhouses in the district. After the war the town was totally rebuilt (Erasmus BP 2004, p302).



One of the oldest buildings in the town which is about 500 metres from the new proposed power line route is the old Prison built in 1903 with sandstone. The building was in use till 1990 (Lombard RTJ 1980, p26).





The town has also a substantial number of buildings older than sixty years of which some are badly neglected - see photograph.



## **F. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

### **(a) Details of area surveyed:**

- Full location Data for Province, Magisterial District/Local Authority and property (e.g. farm/erf) name and number etc. ;
  - \* *Remainder of Portion 89 of the Farm Nooitgedacht 268 IT Ermelo Mpumalanga Province*
  - \* *Gert Sibande District Municipality*

\* *Msukaligwa Local Municipality*

- Location map(s)/ orthophotos of the general area. These must include the map name and number (e.g. 3313 DC Bellville). Maps must include at least a 1:50 000 and (if) available also a 1:10 000 (i.e. most detail possible). Large scale colour satellite photos make a useful addition. Maps should be preferable at least A4 size.

*The invested sites co-ordinates: S26° 32' 06.03" & E29° 59' 39.34"*  
*Attached page: 19 & 21*

- Either the Location Map or the Site Map must have the polygon of the area surveyed marked on it and full geographical co-ordinates for all relevant points and where applicable, indication of the area to be developed (footprint).

*Attached page: 19 & 21*

#### **(b)Description of the Methodology**

The literature on the area was studied as well as the database of the National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria. The site was inspected on foot. Mr. C.G. Jacobs the manger of the site was interviewed. The site is clean and well managed. Other historic sites in the town were also visited.

### **G. DESCRIPTION OF SITES MAPPED**

The site was visited and inspected on foot. Originally the site was typical highveld grassland as most of the Ermelo district.

The site is a typical agricultural show ground site with buildings for exhibitions, housing of animals an arena and pavilion.



The development of the site commenced on the 1st August 1952, according to Mr. C.G. Jacobs who is in charge of the site. The earliest buildings erected on the site are as follows:

## 1. The KWB Building (Korporatiew Wolboer Beperk).

This building is near the gate entrance and also houses the show office. The building is well maintained and was used to exhibit wool produced by wool farmers – see photograph.



## 2. Vroue Landbou Unie Saal

This building originally was built for the Vroue Landbou Unie to exhibit the products produced by the woman. This included embroidery, needlework, preserves, cakes etc. – see photograph.



### **3. Poultry Building**

This building originally was the restaurant but later was changed to home the poultry – see photograph.



### **4. Horse Stables**

At present there are two rows of horse stables. Of these the one row was built in the 1950`s – see photograph.



## 5. Pavilion

The present pavilion was also built in the 1950`s as well as the performance surface in front of the pavilion – see photograph.



The five above mentioned structures were all developed after 1952 and shortly afterwards but the accurate dates are not known. Some of these structures may be sixty years old or just younger than sixty years.

## 6. Other structures

Other later structures include an entrance gate, exhibition halls new stables and stalls – see photographs.



**New entrance to show ground**



**New horse facilities**



**New cattle facilities**



**The new exhibit hall**

#### **H. DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTEFACTS, FAUNAL, BOTANICAL OR OTHER FINDS AND FEATURES**

None

#### **I. CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF BURIAL GROUNDS AND GRAVES**

None

#### **J. EVALUATION AND RATING (FIELD RATING)**

The recorded six structures represent a typical 1950`s agricultural show facility. They are given a rating of General Protection B (Field rating IV B). They should be recorded before destruction.

#### **K. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)**

These six buildings have a special association with the farming community of Ermelo and represent the history of the development of the local agricultural show.

#### **L. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recorded six buildings represent the typical structures built in rural towns for the annual Agricultural Show. Though their exact date of construction is not known they should be recorded in a Phase II Cultural Heritage Resources Impact Assessment before they are demolished.

If during construction any cultural heritage resources or graves are unearthed all work has to be stopped until the site has been inspected and mitigated by a cultural heritage practitioner.

#### **M. CONCLUSION**

None of the six possible heritage structures exhibit any outstanding architectural features and were rather built as cheap functional facilities. The exact dates of the building erected are also unknown. Not with outstanding this they represent a typical agricultural show facility and should be recorded before destruction.

## N. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almond, J. October 2013a. Recommended Exemption from further Palaeontological Studies: Proposed Aggregate Mine on Portion 7 of Farm Roodepoort 435 near Ermelo, Mpumalanga.
- Almond, J. November 2013b. Proposed Libangeni Landfill Site, Farm Leeuwfontein No. 188JR, Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, Mpumalanga.
- Barnard, A. 1992. Hunters and herders of southern Africa: A comparative ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colson, E. 1956. Review of the disappearing Bushmen of Lake Chrissie: a preliminary survey. EF Potgieter. *American Anthropological Association* 58(5): 933-934.
- Hoernlé, RFA. 1930. The stone-hut settlement on Tafelkop, Near Bethal. *Bantu Studies* 4: (1)33-45, DOI:10.1080/02561751.1930. <http://able.wiki.up.ac.za>.
- Pistorius, JCC. 2013a. A Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study for a proposed raw water supply pipeline for Kipower (Pty) Ltd near Delmas on the highveld and eastern highveld in the Gauteng and Mpumalanga Provinces of South Africa Prepared for Jones & Wagner Consulting Engineers.
- Pistorius, JCC. 2013b. A Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies for Sasol Mining's proposed borrow pits on the eastern highveld in the Mpumalanga Province. Prepared for JMA Consulting (Pty) Ltd.
- Potgieter, EF. 1955. The disappearing Bushmen of Lake Chrissie: a preliminary survey. Pretoria: van Schaik.
- SAHRIS. Correspondence Case ID 4341. Accessed 20 February 2014.
- Van der Walt, J. October 2013. Archaeological Impact Assessment For the proposed Mine on De Roodepoort 435, IS, Mpumalanga Province.
- Van Schalkwyk, J. 2012. Heritage scoping assessment for the proposed Ermelo Ring Road Development, Mpumalanga Province. Prepared for Interdesign Landscape Architects.
- Vhubvo Archaeo-Heritage Consultants CC. 2011. Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment specialist study report for the proposed township establishment of 5760 Stands On Portion 6 Of Farm Rietspruit 437-IS in Ermelo Region within Msukaligwa Local Municipality of Gert Sibande



- District, Mpumalanga Province. Prepared for Dynamic Integrated Geo-Environmental Services.
- Ziervogel, D. 1955. "Notes on the language of the Eastern Transvaal Bushmen." In Potgieter, EF. The Disappearing Bushmen of Lake Chrissie: A Preliminary Survey. Pretoria: van Schaik.

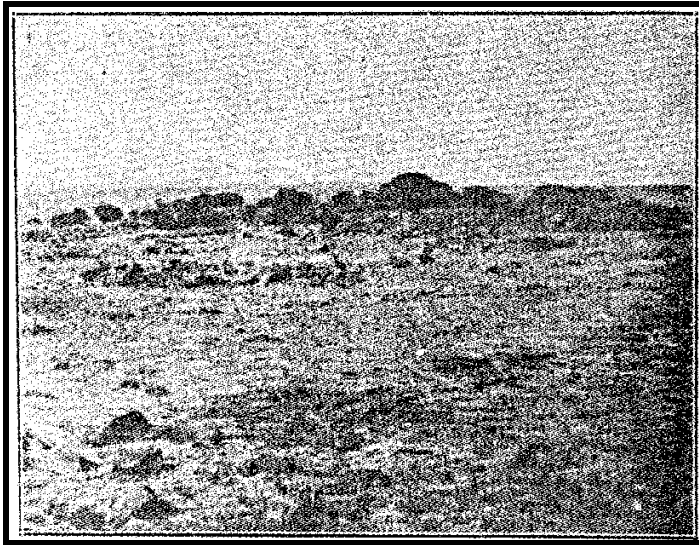


Fig. 1 General view of Tafelkop (from Hoernlé 1930).

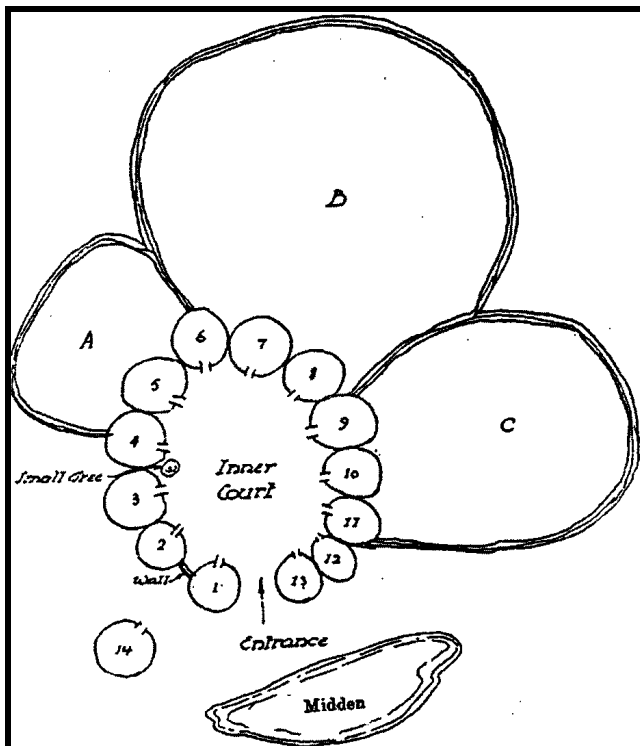


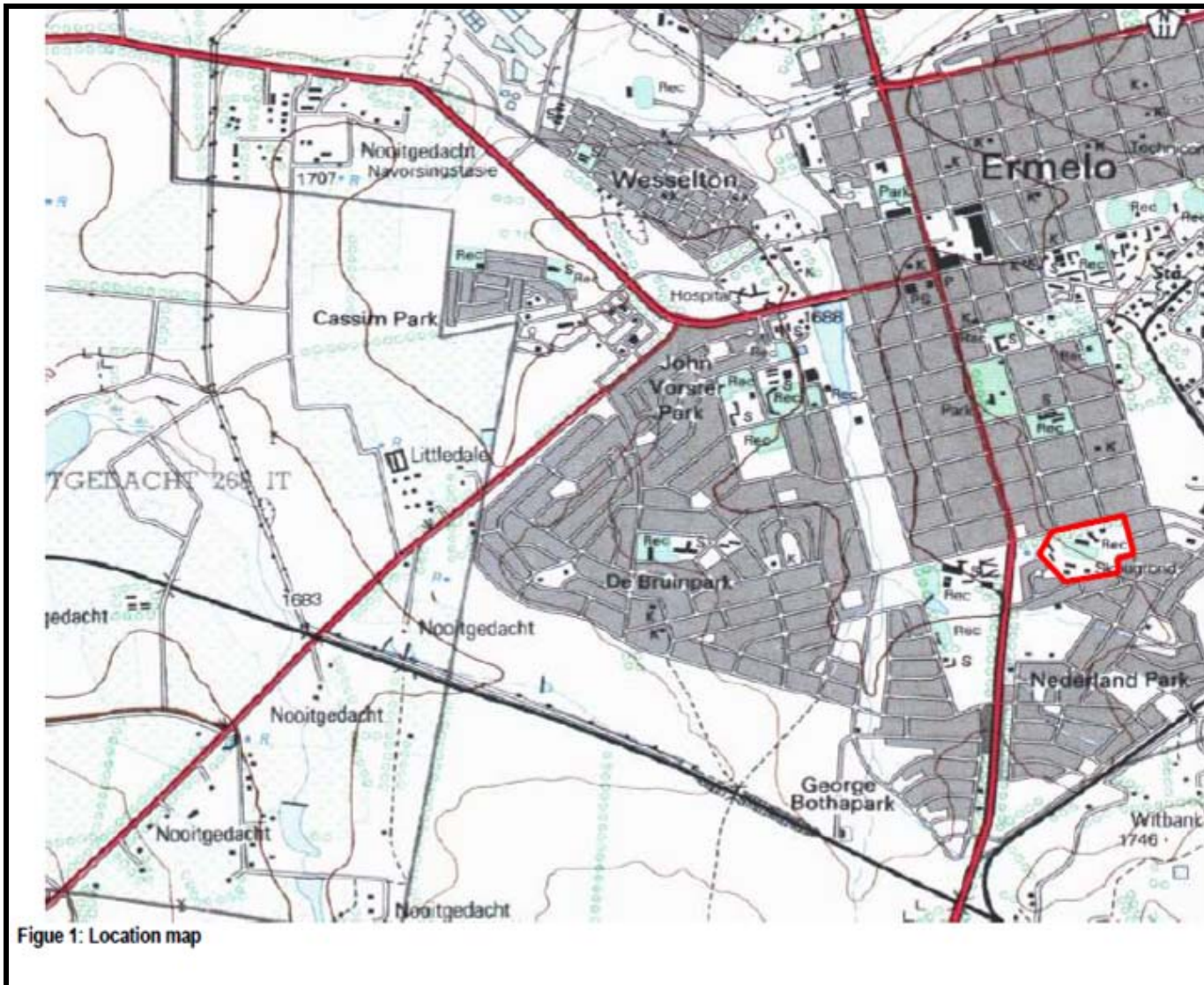
Figure 2: Small group of huts. A, B, C, are cattle kraals; huts Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, are more or less dilapidated; No. 6 has a double lintel. From entrance (between huts 1 and 18} to back (huts 6) is a distance of 30 ft. Across the Inner Court (huts 8, 4 to 10) is about 20 ft. Drawing by EG Tucker delt. 1930. Figure 1 Hoernlé 1930.



Figure 3: Stone hut (Ermelo Tourism Bureau)

## O. APPENDICES

- Locality Map page 19
- Google Map with detail page 20





Map showing investigated site



Google Map with detail