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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE EXEMPTION FROM A FIRST PHASE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED  
EXTENSION OF THE BLOEMFONTEIN CURRO SCHOOL ON PORTION 34 OF THE  
FARM GROENVLEI 2844, BLOEMFONTEIN**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Curro Holdings Private Schools is planning extensions to their existing facilities at the Curro School on Portion 34 of farm Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein. The new extensions will cover about 3,8 ha.

The land consists of red sterile sandy soil and represents old plough lands. Road building and the grading of rainwater trenches caused further damage to the soil surface.

No archaeological, cultural or any historical remains were found.

It is clear that the new development will have no impact on the cultural heritage and historical environment of the area.

I recommend that the proposed new extensions of the school facilities should be exempted from a full Phase I report.

Further planning of the proposed project may continue, and no mitigation measures will be needed for the proposed development.

## **INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION**

Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, on behalf of the applicant, Curro Holdings Private Schools, commissioned the archaeological and heritage assessment of the extensions to their existing facilities at the Curro School on Portion 34 of farm Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The investigation provided the opportunity to examine the piece of land proposed for the extensions. The land consists of red sterile sandy soil and represents old plough lands. Road building and the grading of rainwater trenches caused further damage to the soil surface.

The area contains a grass cover with scatters of intruder weeds.  
No limitations were experienced during site visit.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Standard archaeological survey and recording methods were applied.  
A survey of the literature was done to obtain information about the archaeology and cultural heritage of the area.  
The site was inspected on foot.  
The layout of the area was plotted by GPS.  
Surroundings and features were recorded on camera.

## **INVESTIGATION**

New extensions are planned to the existing facilities (Fig.9) of the Curro School at Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein. The developments will cover about 3,8 ha (Map 1).

The site was examined on 13 May 2013. Enviroworks Environmental Consultants gave directions to the site. The study aims to locate and evaluate the significance of cultural heritage sites, archaeological material, manmade structures older than 60 years, and sites associated with oral histories and graves that might be affected by the proposed developments. In many cases, planted and self-sown trees and other types of vegetation determine a major part of the historical landscape of human settlements in villages and towns, on farmyards or even deserted places in the open veld. These features should be recognised and taken into consideration during any cultural investigation.

The site was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

Anglo-Boer War (1900-1902) camping and skirmish sites in the Free State and Northern and Eastern Cape, should be recorded. Distinctive food cans and specific types of fired cartridge cases normally identify these sites (Dreyer 2006b). Various Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessments in the past made us aware of Anglo-Boer War activities around the Tempe Military Base in the Lilyvale, Hillandale, Woodland Hills and the Rayton area and other parts to the east of Bloemfontein (Dreyer 2004a, 2004b, 2004d, 2006b, 2009b; Henderson 2004, 2006).

Extensive farming activities around Bloemfontein had been at the order of the day before the land was earmarked for residential purposes.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The archaeological environment of the Free State Province is rich and diverse, representing a long time span during the human past. The area is exceptionally rich in terms of Stone Age material and rock art sites. Some areas are richer than others and not all the sites are equally significant (Maggs 1976). For various reasons, there is still a relative lack in research records, but certain Later Iron Age sites, have produced important archaeological information (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1996). These Iron Age sites date between 1660 AD and 1810 AD.

The Later Iron Age phase brought people who cultivated crops, kept livestock, produced an abundance of pottery in a variety of shapes and sizes and smelted metals. Extensive stone walled enclosures characterised their permanent settlements. These living places are known from the prominent Sotho/Tswana settlements at Viervoet (Tihela) near Clocolan, Biddulpsberg (Kurutlele) near Senekal and Marabeng near Ficksburg. A number of Taaibos Korana and Griqua groups, remnants of the Later Stone Age peoples, managed to survive the assimilation by Sotho/Tswana tribes in the region.

Dramatic climate changes resulted in a rapid population growth along the east coast. Increased pressure on natural resources and attempts to control trade during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century brought the emergence of powerful leaders to the area. The subsequent power struggles resulted in a period of instability in the central parts of Southern Africa. This period of strife or wars of devastation, known as the “difaqane” (Sotho/Tswana) or “Mfecane” (Nguni), affected many of the Black tribes in the interior. Attacks from east of the escarpment initiated by the AmaZulu impis of Chaka in about 1822, were carried on by the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi and the AmaNgwane of Matiwane into the Free State, thus uprooting among others, the Batlokwa of Sekonyela and Mantatise and various

smaller Sotho/Tswana tribes. On their turn, the Batlokwa drove off the Bafokeng of Sebetoane from Kurutlele near Senekal, who, in their effort to escape the pursuit by the AmaNdebele forces, eventually landed up in the Caprivi (Dreyer & Kilby 2003).

This period of unrest directly affected the peoples of the Free State and Northern Cape, resulting in the displacement of scores of tribesmen, women and children. The stronger tribal groups, such as the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi, assimilated many of these refugees.

Early European missionaries and travellers ventured into the interior of the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dreyer 2001) and the Rev James Archbell established the missionary at Thaba Nchu by 1834. Several of the marauding hordes affected the lives of the Batswana people living at Dithakong near the mission station of Robert and Mary Moffat near Kuruman.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Rooidam Military Cemetery is situated about 2km from our present site. The cemetery contains graves from the time of British occupation after the Anglo-Boer War (1902-1914). According to the inscriptions others graves are from the 1920s.

Another graveyard in the Rooidam area, which probably dates from World War I, is located on the northern slope of the little hill called Turksvykop. There are many stone covered graves, which all have a very ancient appearance. Some of the graves contain wrought iron imitations of the military cross, while other crosses were reproduced out of sheet metal. It is anticipated that these imitations of the military cross could indicate a link with the military activities at the Tempe base and the people buried here are accepted as Black war veterans who were employed by the armed forces as labourers.

According to local informants, a number of graves from an unknown source were exhumed some time ago and reburied elsewhere under impressive military attention.

Local experts on the cultural heritage of Bloemfontein were unaware of these events. When newspaper articles (Sauer 2005) reported about the reburials people became concerned about the legal status of this action. Enquiries to SAHRA at the time did not result in any response to the matter (J.C. Looock Personal Communication). Certain people who were mentioned to have been involved in the reburial process could not be contacted to bring light on the subject.

The existence of a third graveyard in the vicinity was mentioned by an informant who is familiar with the Anglo-Boer War history of the region. This locality could not be found.

Another researcher mentioned the possibility that a Black refugee camp could have been located in this area during the Anglo-Boer War. This could be true when compared

with findings in other places where it was clear that the British forces used to place the labour source near their camps and close to the railway line (Dreyer & Looock 2001, Dreyer 2001).

## **LOCALITY**

The Curro School is located on the agricultural holdings, known as Groenvlei 2844, to the west of Bloemfontein (Maps 1 & 2). The land consists of red sterile sandy soil and represents old plough lands (Fig.6). Road building and rainwater ditches caused further damage to the soil surface (Fig.1). The area contains a grass cover with scatters of intruder weeds (Fig.5).

The following GPS co-ordinates were taken (Cape scale) (2926) (Surveyor-General 1973): (Map 2).

- A**                            29°02'44"S. 026°09'18"E. Altitude 1397m (Figs.1&2).
- B**                            29°02'39"S. 026°09'17"E. Altitude 1397m (Figs.3&4).
- C**                            29°02'42"S. 026°09'26"E. Altitude 1386m (Figs.5&6).
- D**                            29°02'37"S. 026°09'25"E. Altitude 1388m (Figs.7&8).

## **FINDS**

No indication of archaeological or any historical material was found along the water pipeline route.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The potential impact caused by the new school developments on the heritage resources of the route is of minor significance and no mitigation measures will be needed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The impact resulting from the new developments on the archaeological and heritage resources is considered to be of minor significance.

There are no obvious reasons to delay further planning of the developments at the specific site.

I recommend that the proposed new extensions should be exempted from a full Phase I report and that the planning of the proposed developments may proceed.

**MITIGATION**

No mitigation measures will be required.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Enviroworks Environmental Consultants for giving information on the site.

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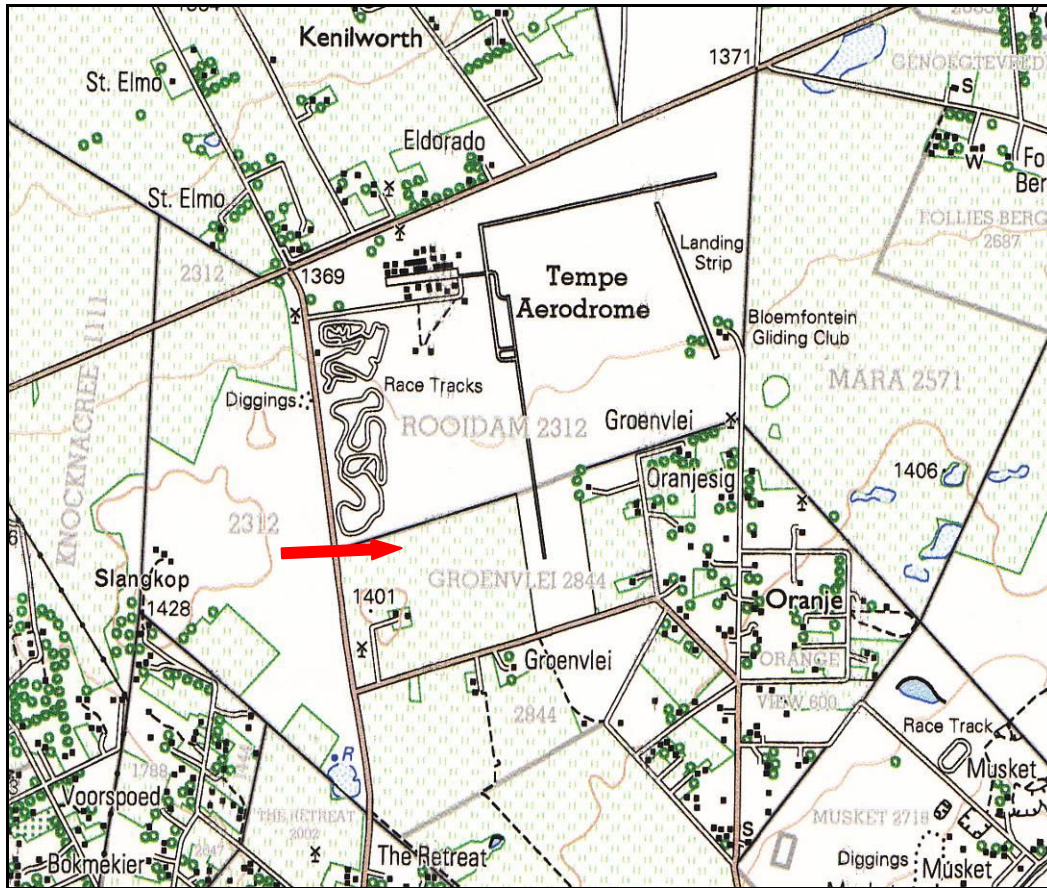
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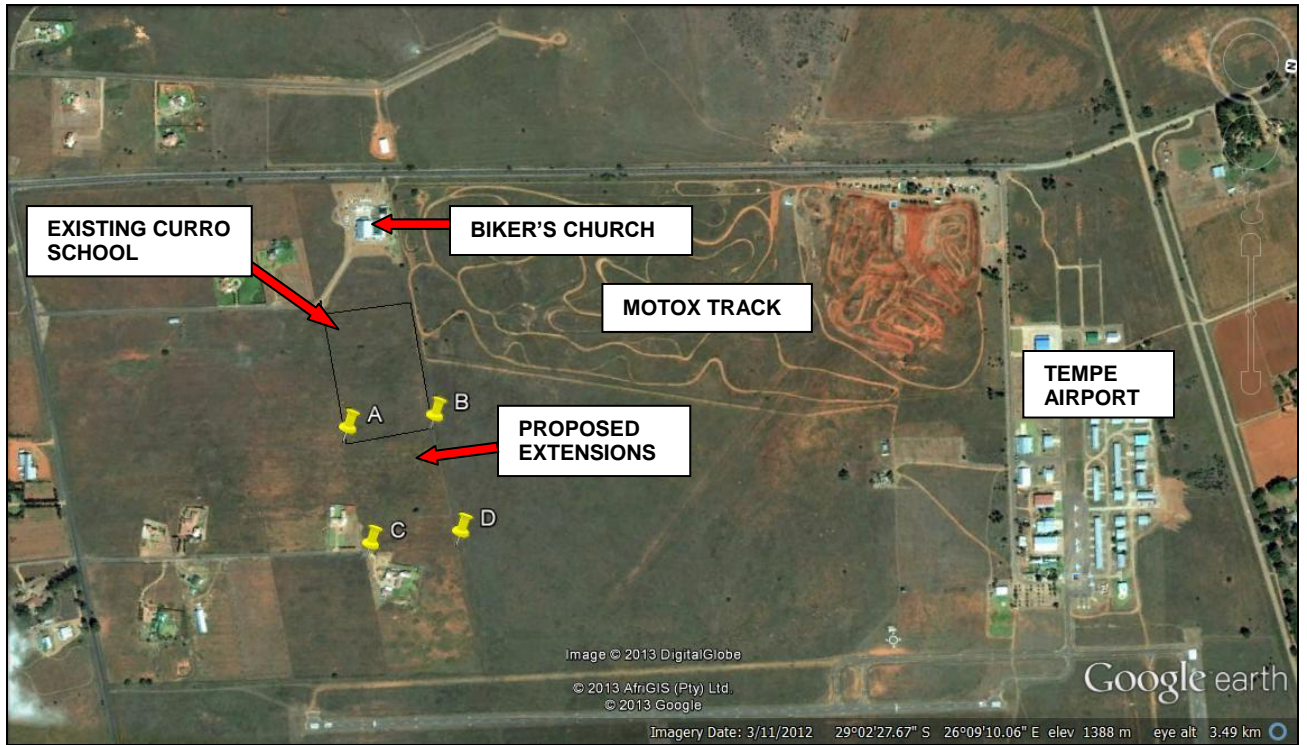
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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



**Map 1: Locality of Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein (2926AA).**



**Map 2: Existing Curro School and proposed extensions. GPS coordinate points indicated.**





Fig.1 Point A of proposed extensions at the Curro School Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein.



Fig.2 Point A of proposed extensions at the Curro School, Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein.



Fig.3 Point B at the Curro School, Bloemfontein facing Point A, on far right.





Fig.4 Point B at the Curro School, Bloemfontein facing Point D on the left (east).

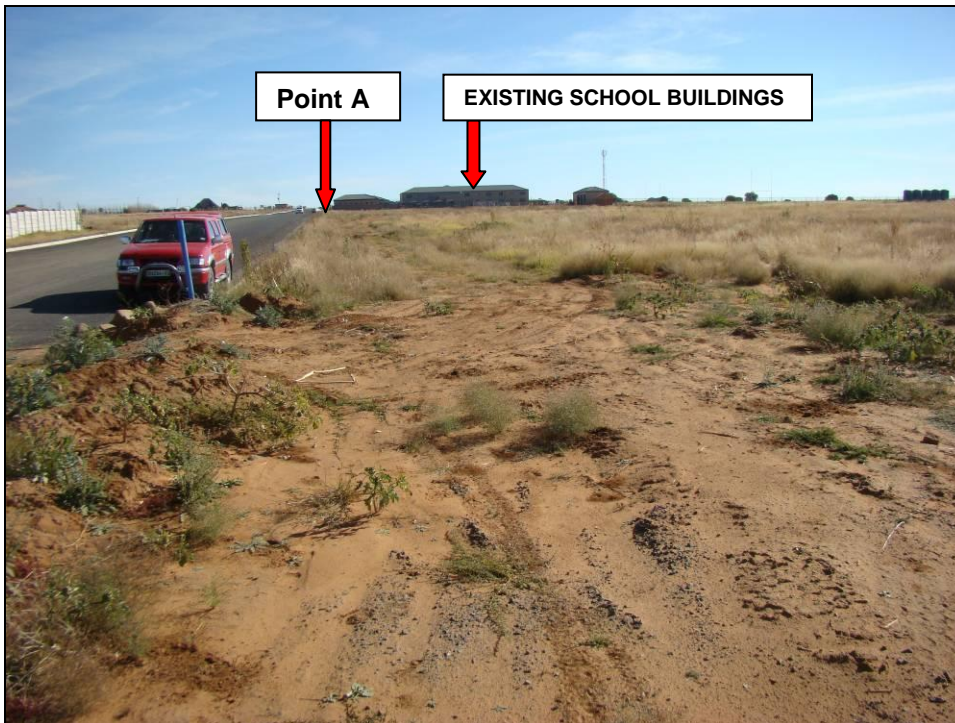


Fig.5 Point C at the Curro School, Bloemfontein facing Point A (west).





Fig.6 Point C of the proposed extensions at the Curro School, Bloemfontein facing north west.



Fig.7 Point D at the Curro School, Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein facing C (south).



Fig.8 Point D at the Curro School, Bloemfontein facing Point B with existing buildings.



Fig.9 Existing Curro School at Groenvlei 2844, Bloemfontein.