



Application to the South African Heritage Resources Agency for Permit to exhume and relocate ten graves found in Labore, Brakpan, Gauteng Province.

Date: June 2021

Archaeology and Heritage Services

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

This report has been compiled by Makhosazana Mngomezulu, principal archaeologist and heritage consultant. The views expressed in this report are independent of the author and no other interest was displayed during the decision making process for the proposed relocation of graves.

SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Mngomezulu", is written over a horizontal line.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Ekurhuleni's Economic Development Department is constructing an automotive aftermarket manufacturing hub in Labore, Brakpan within the City of Ekurhuleni. The intention of the project, whose construction is currently underway, is that it serves as an automotive aftermarket industry which is the secondary market of the automotive industry. This includes the manufacturing, remanufacturing, distribution, retailing, and installation of all vehicle parts, equipment, and accessories, after the sale of the automobile by the original equipment manufacturer to the consumer. The project scope entails the construction of warehouses, storages and offices. The Labore Automotive Hub forms part of the greater Labore Industrial Park currently being developed by the City of Ekurhuleni. This project has an approved Environmental Authorization (EA) together with an approved Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment Record of Decision (RoD) dated 19 June 2018 and issued 12 July 2018.

During construction, an estimated number of ten (10) graves were discovered and barricaded as per the recommendation of the heritage report to avoid any impact. Some of these graves were noted during the Phase I HIA site visit, however, they could not be confirmed if whether or not they are graves due to some parts of the study area being used as a dumping site. As such, these were marked as possible graves. Due to the nature of the proposed project the City of Ekurhuleni would prefer to relocate the graves. SAH Development Managers on behalf of the City of Ekurhuleni have appointed Vungandze Projects to undertake the process of exhumation and relocation of the said graves.

According to Section 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999):

"...(3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority—

...(b) 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

(c) 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 the detection or recovery of metals...

...(5) SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for any activity under subsection (3)(b) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has, in accordance with regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority—

(a) made a concerted effort to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such grave or burial ground”.

The report will be submitted to the SAHRA for review and for a decision as per the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999).

The purpose of this document is to provide SAHRA with the background of the project and the processes that have been followed thus far in order to fulfil the requirements of a permit application to exhume and relocate graves.

2. METHODOLOGY

Exhumation will be conducted by hand using picks, trowels, shovels and hand brushes. Prior to the exhumation; each grave will be labelled (e.g. grave 01 – grave 10) and photographs will be taken. Each coffin will also be labelled as per each grave number provided. Remains will be transported by hearse as provided for by Alpha Funeral to the nearest cemetery, namely, Vlakfontein Cemetery. Upon burial, the grave number provided by the cemetery will be recorded and documented in reference to the grave number initially provided (e.g. grave 01); this will allow ease of reference in terms of knowing which grave is associated with which cemetery number.

3. LOCALITY AREA

The proposed study area is an open veld located in Joe Arnison Street in Labore, Brakpan at Ekurhuleni District Municipality, Gauteng Province (see figure 1-2).

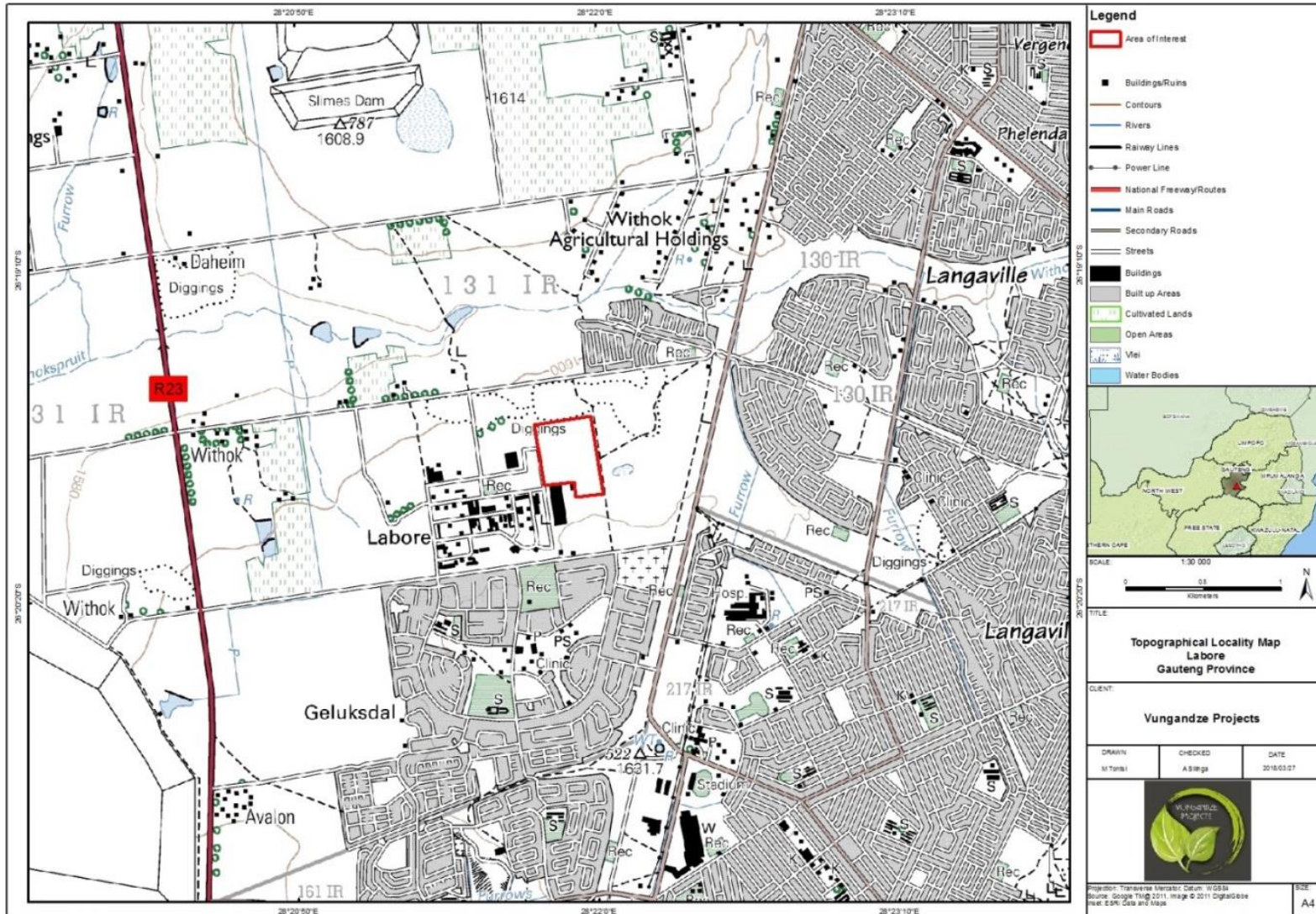


Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed automotive aftermarket hubs in Labore Brakpan.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the study area

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation Process was conducted with the aim of finding the relatives of the said graves. This includes newspaper advertisement; placing of site notices; community meetings; distribution of Background Information Documents (BIDs) and radio announcements. The newspaper advertisement was published by the Brakpan Herald under the classifieds on Friday 05 March 2021. The site notices were placed around Labore, Geluksdal and Tsakane. Background Information Documents (BIDs) written in both English and IsiZulu were circulated by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Fortunate Masilela, who also assisted in circulating a voice note on the WhatsApp community group. The same voice notes which were both in English and SiSwati/IsiZulu were broadcasted on EKFM 103.6 (Community Radio Station) from 10 April 2021 – 14 April 2021 under different time slots in five South African official languages IsiZulu, SiSwati, IsiXhosa, SeSotho and English. Two community meetings were held at Faranani Site Hall under Covid 19 restrictions One on 07 April 2021 where attendance was not satisfactory; and another attempt on 14 April 2021 where again, the BID (English and IsiZulu version) was circulated to all the attendees. During the meeting a PowerPoint presentation was presented to the community explaining the background of the project and the purpose of the meeting which was to bring awareness the proposed graves relocation and assistance in locating the next-of-kin of the said graves. Community members had no knowledge of the graves under study nor assist in locating their next-of-kin.

Until this date, no comments have been received from the community or the next-of-kin.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the circumstances we pleading with SAHRA to grant the City of Ekurhuleni the approval to proceed with the exhumation and reburial of the unknown graves to the nearest cemetery in terms of the Heritage Resources Act (Act No.25 of 1999) by granting them permit.