



COBUS DREYER

Pr. Archaeologist/Heritage Specialist

**P.O. Box 12910
Brandhof
9324
dreyerj@telkomsa.net**

**Tel: 051-444 1187
Fax: 051-444 4395
Cell: 083 357 7982**

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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED MIXED LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AT SUNNYSIDE 2620, BLOEMFONTEIN

ADDENDUM ON GRAVES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mangaung Metro Municipality is planning a mixed land use development on the farm Sunnyside 2620 outside Bloemfontein. The project will cover about 700 hectares and lies adjacent to the N8 main road to the Bloemfontein Airport and Ladybrand in the east and to the south on the R702 road to Dewetsdorp.

The development will include an international conference centre, an urban square, shopping malls and a range of different residential units.

The area had previously been exploited for a variety of purposes. Remains of farming activities, a large borrow pit run by the Bloemfontein Municipality, grazing areas and irrigation fields are visible. Road building and the installation of municipal services in the past and present had severely damaged the land. A major part of the land contains a flood plain consisting of sterile clay and sandy soil deposited by the Bloemspruit that intersects the area.

Two clusters of graves are located near the N8 main road. Some of the graves are recognisable by the heaps of stones on top, but others contain only a few scattered stones. None of the gravestones has any inscriptions and the age of the graves could not be established.

No other archaeological, cultural or any historical remains were found.

The new developments will have a serious impact on the graves and depending on the planning, drastic mitigation measures will have to be implemented. Further planning of the proposed project may continue, but the required arrangements for the protection and preservation of the graves should be in place, before any developments take place near the graves.

LOCALITY

The development is planned on the farm Sunnyside 2620 to the east of Bloemfontein. The project will cover about 700 hectares and lies adjacent to the N8 main road to the Bloemfontein Airport and Ladybrand in the north and in the west bordered by the R702 road to Dewetsdorp. The site includes the Bloemfontein Equestrian Centre. Structures and buildings of the Bloemfontein Turf Club and the Bloemfontein Race Course have already been demolished.

The following GPS co-ordinates were taken (Cape Scale) (2926AB) (Surveyor-General 1973): (Maps 3&4).

G1 29°06'35"S. 026°18'10"E. (Figs.1-5).

G2 29°07'36"S. 026°16'05"E (Figs.6-9).

FINDS

Two clusters of graves are located on a small rise near the N8 main road. Incidentally, the graves are in line with the main runway of the Bloemfontein Airport across the N8 road.

Most of the graves are recognisable by the heaps of stones, but others contain only a few scattered stones. None of the gravestones has any inscriptions and although they appear very old, the age of the graves could not be established.

Gravesite 1 (G1) contains about seven (7) stone covered graves (Figs.1-5). The graves include an area of $\pm 20\text{m} \times 10\text{m}$ and are located about 55m south of the N8 main road.

At gravesite 2 (G2), about six (6) stone covered graves are recognisable (Figs.6-9). The graves cover an area of $\pm 20\text{m} \times 10\text{m}$ and lies about 18m south of the N8 road. The grave clusters are located about 630m east of Point L (Fig.10) at the N8 – Bloemfontein Airport intersection (Maps 3&4). The two clusters of graves are more or less in a straight line, but a 37m distance between G1 and G2 shows no signs of any grave remains, contradicting the possibility of a single graveyard.

No indication of any archaeological, historical or Anglo-Boer War material was found at the proposed site.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact by the proposed developments on the graves is not clear (Map 5). It seems that the graves are located on the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) stand, which falls outside the proposed development area and therefore will not have to be removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

I recommend that the planning of the proposed developments may proceed, but that the required preservation and protection measures should be in position before any further developments take place near the graves.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures will be required concerning the two grave clusters.

In case of the exhumation and re-burial of the graves, a permit must be obtained from SAHRA in Cape Town. The next step will be to acquire the services of an accredited undertaker for the official exhumation of the graves and re-burial of the human skeletal remains. Experienced undertakers are familiar with the relevant Provincial requirements and permits that have to be obtained before the graves can be disturbed.

In the case of keeping the graves intact, SAHRA requires that the dilapidated graves should be restored and that a proper fence with entry gates should be erected at least 5m away from the perimeter of the graves. Developments are not allowed within 15m from the fence surrounding the graves. Arrangements should be made to ensure the protection and preservation of the graves in future.

The graves should be accommodated on an official stand, open area or can be incorporated in the planning of the developments.

There is a strong possibility that other human graves might be found during excavations. Work must stop in the area and the finds should immediately be reported to Free State Heritage and to SAHRA in Cape Town.

Care should be taken not to destroy the graves by heavy vehicles and excavators during the trenching and building process.

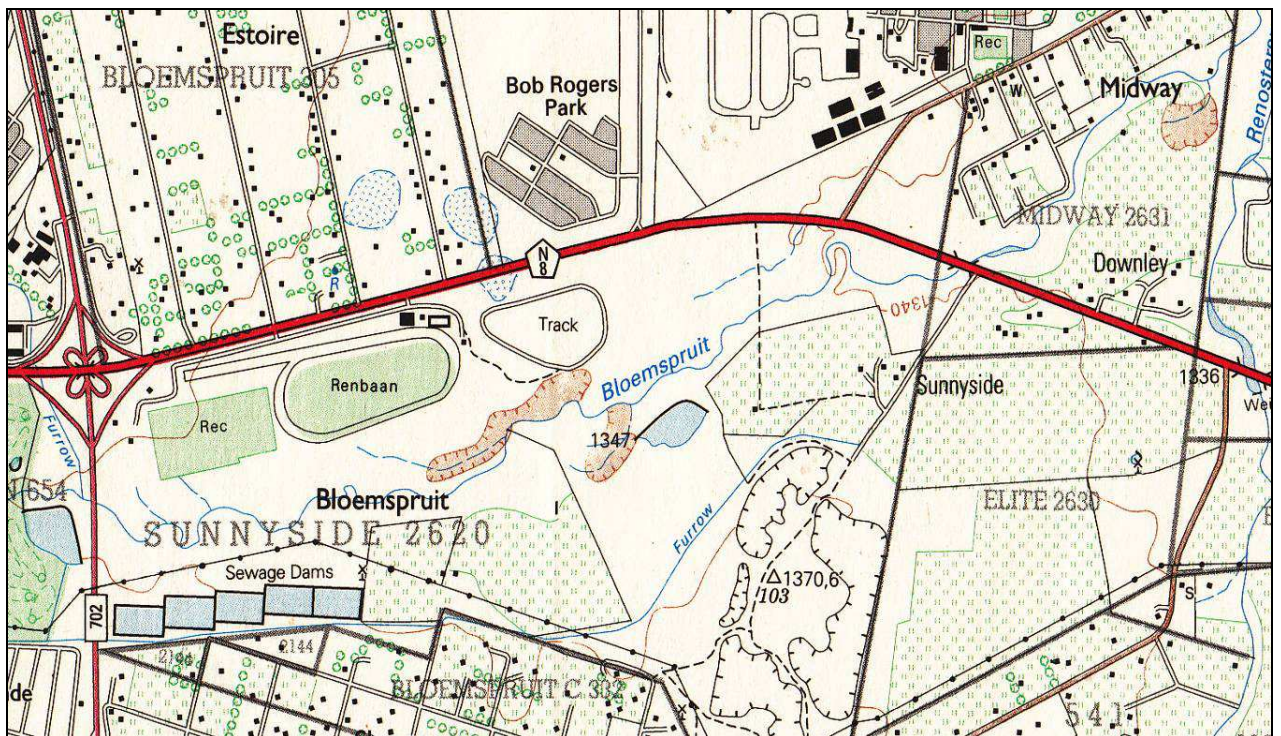
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Johan van Wyk from Pro-Plan Engineering Consultants, Bloemfontein, for bringing the graves to my attention.

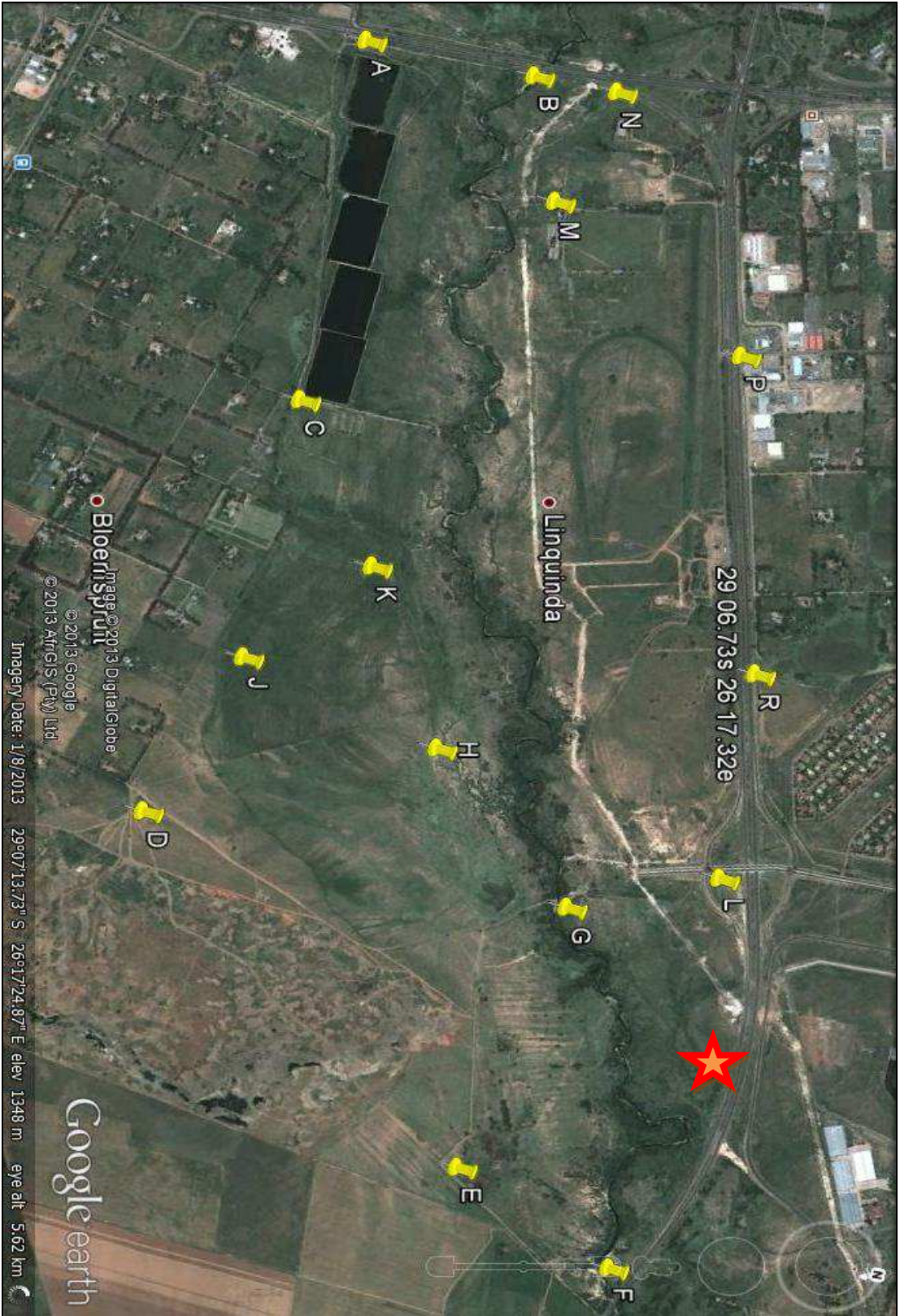
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



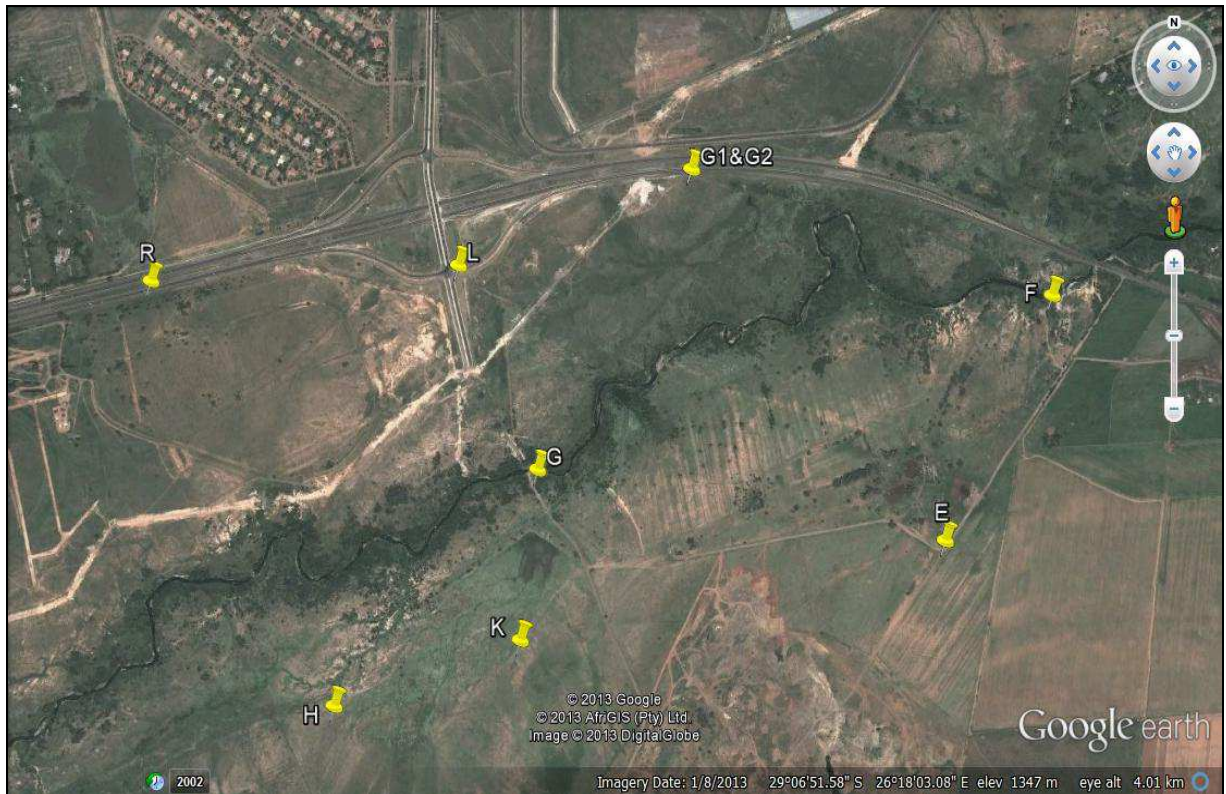
Map 1 Locality of the N8 main road west of Bloemfontein.



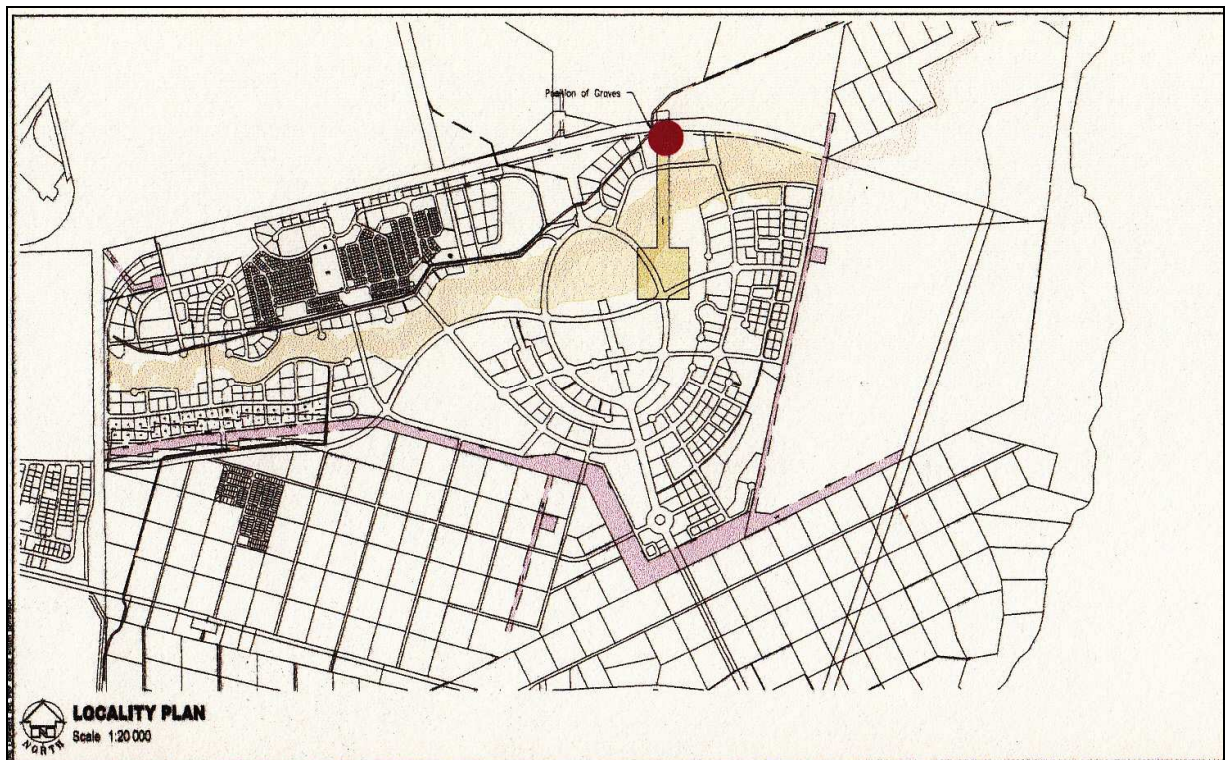
Map 2 Locality of the farm Sunnyside 2620, Bloemfontein (2926AB).



Map 3 Locality of the graves (red star) at Sunnyside in relation to other coordinate points.



Map 4 Locality of grave clusters G1 & G2 along the N8 and in relation to other coordinate points.



Map 5 Layout of the development & locality of the graves at Sunnyside, Bloemfontein.



Fig.1 Graves at Point G1, Sunnyside, Bloemfontein.



Fig.2 Grave at Point G1.



Fig.3 Grave at Point G1.



Fig.4 Grave at Point G1.



Fig.5 Grave at Point G1.



Fig.6 Graves at Point G2, Sunnyside, Bloemfontein.



Fig.7 Grave at Point G2.



Fig.8 Graves at Point G2.



Fig.9 Graves at Point G2.



Fig.10 Point L at the N8-Bloemfontein Airport intersection, facing the Bloemspruit Air Force base.