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27 FEBRUARY 2014

FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED ESKOM POWER LINE AT BRAKSPRUIT NEAR KLERKSDORP, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eskom is planning an extension of the power line at the Brakspuit Sub-station along the R30 road between Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp. The length of the line will be approximately 400m. The area is covered by a thick stand of tall grass which seems to be either part of a natural grass cover or an area of cultivated grazing. Two graveyards which contain a total of about a hundred and fifty graves occur next to the road.

Several of the old Batswana tribes take their 18th century and 19th century origins back to the western part of the region, including the districts of Potchefstroom and Rustenburg. Important Later Iron Age archaeological sites are found in the vicinity of Klerksdorp, with major settlements at Palmietfontein, Platberg and Buisfontein (Thabeng). Sites with excellent specimens of rock engravings, such as Bosworth, are also on record from the same region.

The first South African War of Independence (1880-1881) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) respectively, had a significant influence on the area around Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. Distinctive food cans and specific types and calibres of fired rifle cartridge cases, normally identify the camping and skirmish sites. A large concentration camp from the Anglo-Boer War is known from Klerksdorp.

Due to its locality in this potentially rich cultural region, various heritage impact assessments around Klerksdorp produced archaeological and historical material.

In the case of Brakspuit, no archaeological, cultural or any historical remains were found at the site and the new developments will have no impact on any heritage remains. I recommend that the planning of the proposed power line may proceed. No mitigation measures will be needed.

INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION

Envirolution Consulting from Mondeor, Johannesburg, is commissioned by Eskom to do the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including a heritage investigation of the route for the extension of the power line at the Brakspruit Sub-station along the R30 road between Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp,.

Scope and Limitations

Eskom is planning the construction of a power line at Brakspruit Sub-station along the R30 road from Klerksdorp to Ventersdorp. The developments will cover about 400m.

No sampling was done and the investigation is based on a visual inspection of the area. The site contains a red stony top soil with substantial grass cover. Natural open spaces and clusters of animal burrows, inspection pits, motor vehicle tracks, cattle paths and other disturbances were examined for traces of cultural material.

Except for a rank stand of tall grass which restricted visibility to a certain extent, no other limitations have been experienced during the site visit.

Methodology

1. Standard archaeological survey and recording methods were applied.
2. A study of the literature was done to obtain information about the history, archaeology and heritage remnants of the area.
3. The site was inspected on foot and the outskirts were patrolled by vehicle.
4. The layout of the area was plotted by GPS and the coordinates transferred to Google Earth.
5. The site and its surroundings and features were recorded on camera.

INVESTIGATION

The current heritage investigation provided the opportunity to examine the land proposed for the installation of the power line at the Brakspruit Sub-station. The site was visited on 25 February 2014. Dirk Prinsloo from Envirolution Consulting 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 represent a major part of the historical environment of human

settlements in villages and towns, on farmyards or even deserted places in the open veld. These features should be 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 may be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act. 108 of 1998).

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

The city of Klerksdorp was founded in 1837 when the first European settlers reached the banks of the Schoonspruit. Klerksdorp is one of the oldest European settlements in the region across the Vaal River. The town started on the farm Elandsheuwel, where plots of land and communal grazing areas were marked out. A water reservoir dam and an irrigation canal were soon built. This collection of stands was later given the name of Klerksdorp in honour of Jacob de Clercq, the first landdrost of the area. Klerksdorp was connected by rail to Krugersdorp on 3 August 1897 and to Kimberley in 1906.

When gold was discovered in the Klerksdorp district in 1886, thousands of fortune-seekers descended on the small village, rapidly turning it into a town with many taverns and even a stock exchange. The nature of the gold reef demanded expensive and sophisticated equipment to mine and extract the gold, causing the majority of diggers to move away during the late 1890s and leading to a decline in the gold mining industry.

In the same area, the remains of old gold mining activities (c.1889) are found as far as Potchefstroom and the Vredefort Dome. These finds occur in the form of rectangular single room houses, horizontal mining shafts dug into the side of the mountain and heaps of mining debris (Bakkes et al 2004, Pelsner 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, Naudé 2005). The gold mining industry was revitalized by large mining companies in 1932, causing the town to undergo an economic revival, which accelerated after World War II.

Today Klerksdorp is celebrated as the birthplace of Anglican Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu on 7 October 1931.

ETHNIC HISTORY

Several of the ancient Batswana tribes, including the different Barolong groups and Bahurutshe, Bakwena, Bakhatla, Baphiring, Bataung and Batlokwa tribes with other smaller groups, take their 18th century and 19th century roots back to the western part of the region, including the districts of Pilansberg, Marico, Lichtenburg, Wolmaransstad, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Klerksdorp (Breutz 1953, 1954, Van Warmelo 1935, Massie 1905). Important Later Iron Age stone walled archaeological mega living sites are found in the vicinity of Klerksdorp,

with major settlements at Palmietfontein (White 1977), Platberg (Wells 1933) and Buisfontein (Thabeng) (Maggs 1976) within a radius of about 20km from Brakspruit (Maps 5&6). Late Iron Age archaeological sites occur near Klerksdorp and Hartbeesfontein (Maggs 1976:38,39,304,305). The major Iron Age sites in this area are classified as the Type Z or bilobial hut settlement pattern (Maggs 1976, Taylor 1979, Mason 1962, 1986, Pistorius 1992, Walton 1956) (Maps 7&8). This occurrence is confirmed by Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) (Birkholtz 2010, Coetzee 2012, Henderson & Koortzen 2007, Kusel 2007, 2008, 2010, Pelsler 2012, 2013, Dreyer 2013). The distribution of these living sites seems to be fairly general and widespread. It was anticipated by the author that the proposed developments at Brakspruit could produce archaeological material from this period.

Further away at Lepalong between Potchefstroom and Carletonville, an underground dolomite cavern system had been used as a hiding place in times of turmoil during the Later Iron Age. This large natural cavern system was occupied by the Bakwena ba Modimosana ba Mmatau under Maselwane from 1827 to 1836, while seeking refuge from Mzilikazi (Houghton & Wells 1942, Hall 1995).

Sites with excellent specimens of rock engravings, such as Bosworth, are also on record from the same region (Clark 1959).

The First War of Independence (also known as the Jameson-Raid, 1880-81) had a significant impact on the town of Potchefstroom (Aston 1897, Kotze 1967), but it is unlikely that it did not affect other towns in the region. The siege of the British garrison at Potchefstroom by the Boer forces under Genl. P.A. Cronjé lasted for three months (16 December 1880 – 21 March 1881). During this time, a constant bombarding of the fort on the outskirts of the town and small arm skirmishes took place on a regular daily basis (Van den Bergh 1975). Revil Mason from Wits excavated the Fort at Potchefstroom in 1973-74, almost a hundred years after the war (Mason 1975, Keene 1976, Van den Berg 1996). The present condition of the Fort is unknown.

Historical research shows that the Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom area is also characterised by remnants of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Blockhouses and sangars, fired cartridge shells and metal food containers displaying heavily soldered seams, are some of the most common finds (Bergh 1999, Breytenbach 1978, Dreyer 2003, Van den Berg 1996, Van Eeden 1988). It is essential to take note of the Second War of Independence, or Anglo-Boer War (1900-1902), camping and skirmish sites in the Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom and Gatsrand region of the Northwest Province (Meyer 1971, Breytenbach 1978, Van den Berg 1996, Scheepers-Strydom 1970). Distinctive food cans and specific types and calibres of fired cartridge cases normally distinguish these sites. It is known that during the Anglo-Boer War, Lord Methuen with his British forces used Potchefstroom as their base prior to the Battle of Tygerfontein (6&7 August 1900) near Venterskroon in the Vredefort Dome (Van den Berg 1996, Pelsler 2005).

Heavy fighting also occurred in the Klerksdorp area during the Anglo-Boer War. The Battle of Ysterspruit, which took place on 25 February 1902 about 12 miles from Klerksdorp, is considered as the most famous of the battles around the town. Here, General, Koos de la Rey, achieved a great victory over the British occupational forces, in one of the most celebrated actions of the general's career. On 11 April 1902, the Battle of Rooiwal turned out to be the last major engagement of the war, where a Boer charge was beaten off by entrenched British troops.

Klerksdorp also housed a large concentration camp. Here, the graves of Boer women and children can still be found in the old cemetery.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological record of the Free State and North West Province represents a long time span during the human past. The area is exceptionally rich in terms of Iron Age living sites, which date between mid 17th century and early 19th century (Maggs 1976, Mason 1962, 1986, Evers 1988). For various reasons, there is still a relative lack in essential research results from the Free State, but certain Later Iron Age sites, have produced important archaeological information (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1996).

The Late 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 characterise their permanent settlements. These living places are known from the prominent Sotho/Tswana settlements along the Renoster and Vals Rivers near Kroonstad and Bothaville, at Klerksdorp, Rustenburg and in the Magaliesberg.

A number of Taaibos Korana and Griqua groups, remnants of the Later Stone Age peoples, managed to survive the assimilation by Sotho/Tswana tribes at Mamusa near Schweizer Reneke (Van den Berg 1996).

Dramatic climate changes resulted in a rapid population growth along the east coast of South Africa. Increased pressure on the natural resources and attempts to control trade during the early 19th century brought the emergence of powerful leaders in the coastal area. Subsequent power struggles developed into a period of instability on the central Highveld. This time of strife or wars of devastation, known as “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 sustained by the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi and the AmaNgwane of Matiwane into the Free State and North West Province, thus uprooting among others, the Batlokwa of Sekonyela and Mantatise and various smaller Sotho/Tswana tribes further inland. On their turn, the Batlokwa drove off the Bafokeng of Sebetoane from Kurutlele near Senekal

in the Free State, 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 North West Province, 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 Batswana refugees.

Early European missionaries and travellers ventured into the interior of the country during the 19th 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.

The Iron Age archaeology of the Free State and North West Province is characterised by a wide distribution of stone-walled sites on the flat-topped ridges and hills. There is detail and consistency in the arrangement and design of these structures. People's expression of culture has left its imprint on the material environment. The settlement patterns display human perceptions with regard to social clustering, economic system and political organisation. Patterns culminate in the arrangement of huts, byres and middens in a particular order and in relation to one another. Spatial organisation in general is characterised by the central position of stock enclosures and the placing of the main dwelling area on the perimeter of the settlement. Although a variety of different classes and types of settlement have been defined, these are all variations of the Central Cattle Pattern (CCP), a specific model for the organisation and use of space in Zulu and Sotho/Tswana settlements.

The classification of sites is based on the assumption that settlement layout is bound and prescribed by cultural perceptions. The identification of different ethnic groups is thus possible from the way in which these traditional peoples organised their different living places in terms of space and time. The result was directed by cultural preference (choice) and function. The significance of livestock, personal status, kinship, social organisation and the diverse roles of men, women and offspring have always been important in the understanding of settlement patterns.

The Later Iron Age classification of settlement patterns formulated by Maggs (1976) and Mason (1986), produced a standardised archaeological framework for the ordering of structures and sites characterised respectively by stock enclosures with connecting walls, in certain cases including corbelled huts (Type V), surrounding walls (Type N) and huts with bilobial courtyards (Type Z). Associated pottery assemblages with different decoration styles confirm the classification of sites based on layout (Maggs 1976:290). Different settlement patterns also produced huts of different materials in different styles.

The remains at Type Z sites normally show up as a ring of scalloped stone-walls surrounding several stock enclosures. From this, it is concluded that these dwellings consisted of a cone on cylinder hut with stone-walled courtyards at both front and rear, forming a bilobial layout. The huts are arranged around a cluster of central cattle byres. Raw materials have been substituted at different localities, resulting in a variation in settlement pattern where clay walls replaced stone-walling of the front lobe as at Bothaville (Maggs 1976) and at the Willem Pretorius Game Reserve on the Sand River, near Ventersburg (Dreyer 1997). The occupation of the sites with bilobial dwellings is ascribed to Batswana (e.g. Thlaping and Rolong) groups. It is also possible to link Kubung people to every known site of this kind (Maggs 1976).

Pottery decorations associated with these settlements are characterised by shallow line incisions in bands and triangles below the rim and on the shoulder, combined with straight or curved lines and areas of red ochre burnish on the body of clay vessels (Maggs 1976).

According to radiocarbon dating and oral tradition, these Type Z sites were occupied from the 16th and 17th to early 19th century at Ventersburg, and 18th to early 19th century at Bothaville. A single bone sample from Jansfontein in the Doringberg, near Ventersburg, produced a calibrated date of 1670, which is slightly later than the Ventersburg date (Dreyer 1992). Taylor's Group II sites produced a date between AD 1650 and 1800 with the settlements at Askoppies around late 1670s, early 1680s and early 1800 (Pelser 2005).

Rock engravings have been recorded at Bosworth and at Doornhoek near Klerksdorp (Clark 1959:254).

LOCALITY

The Brakspruit Sub-station is situated about 20km from Klerksdorp along the R30 road to Ventersdorp (Maps 1&2). Eskom is planning a 400m extension of the power line at the Brakspruit (Map 3). The area consists of a red stony top soil covered by a thick stand of tall grass (Figs.2,3,4,18).

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken (Maps 3&4):

A	26°40'24"S	026°35'34"E	Altitude 1359m	(Fig.1).
B	26°40'38"S	026°35'38"E	Altitude 1377m	(Fig.2).
C	26°40'38"S	026°35'31"E	Altitude 1361m	(Fig.3).
D	26°40'37"S	026°35'31"E	Altitude 1364m	(Figs.14&15).

FINDS

The Brakspruit Sub-station is situated in a potentially cultural rich area near Klerksdorp, but no archaeological and heritage remains were found at the site.

The area is covered by a thick stand of tall grass which seems to be either part of a natural grass cover or an area of cultivated grazing (Figs.2&15). Several existing power lines cross over head to and from the Sub-station (Figs.1,3,14).

Two graveyards which contain a estimated number of about one hundred and fifty graves occur next to the road (Map 3&4). The sites are divided by a fence, leaving part C next to the road reserve. Most of the graves are unmarked elongated stone covered heaps (Figs.4,9,13), without any inscriptions, giving it an old appearance. Other stone heaps are marked in some way (Figs.7,8,12), while a number of graves have tombstones with inscriptions (Figs.6,10,11,17). From the look of some of the graves and the inscriptions, there seems to be old graves and others dating from more recent times. The dates on the marked graves vary from 1928, 1962, 1968, 1984, 2005 to 2008 (Figs.3,5,6,11). I can only speculate on the origin of the stone covered unmarked graves. No records or any confirmation about the people buried there could be found. From the inscriptions on some of the graves, it can be concluded that all the burials represent the mortal remains of either farm workers from the area or other labourers and their families.

The two grave yards, at Point C and Point D, is located outside the area of development (Maps 3&4) and will not be affected by the erection of the new power line.

No archaeological, cultural or any historical remains were found at the site.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed new power line developments will have no effect on any of the graves at the Brakspruit site and it will have no impact on any heritage or historical resources.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is possible that the First Phase Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed power line development at the Brakspruit Eskom Sub-station near Klerksdorp has been conducted successfully. From a heritage perspective the development should be allowed to continue. The sub-soil presence of archaeological and/or historical sites, features or artefacts are always a clear possibility and this aspect

needs to be kept in mind at all times. Care should therefore be taken during any development activities that if any of these are accidentally discovered, a qualified archaeologist be called in to investigate. This would include the discovery of previously unknown graves.

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

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures will be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dirk Prinsloo from Envirolution Consulting for directions to the site.

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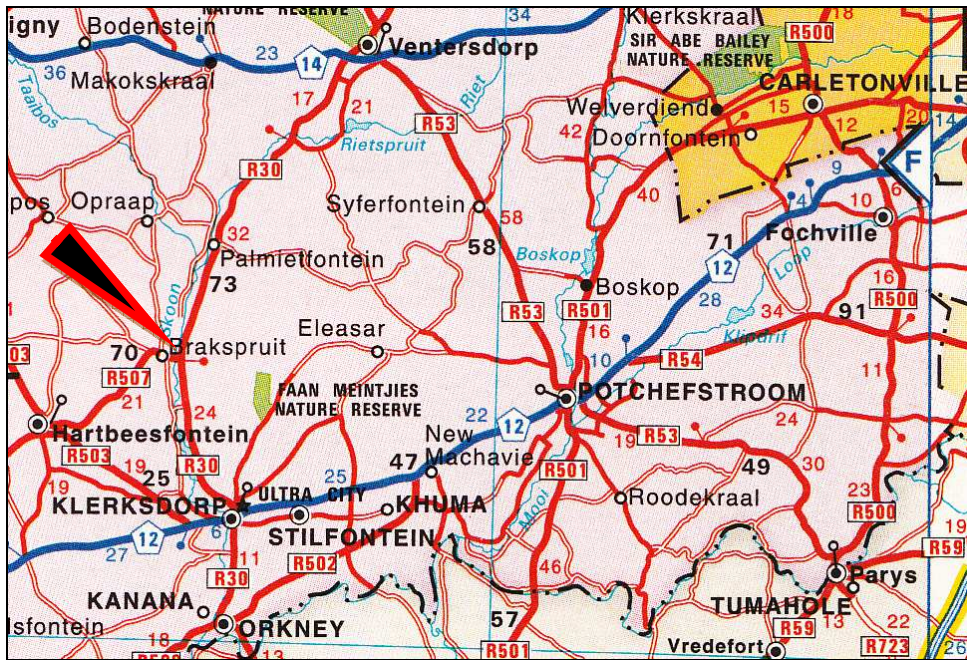
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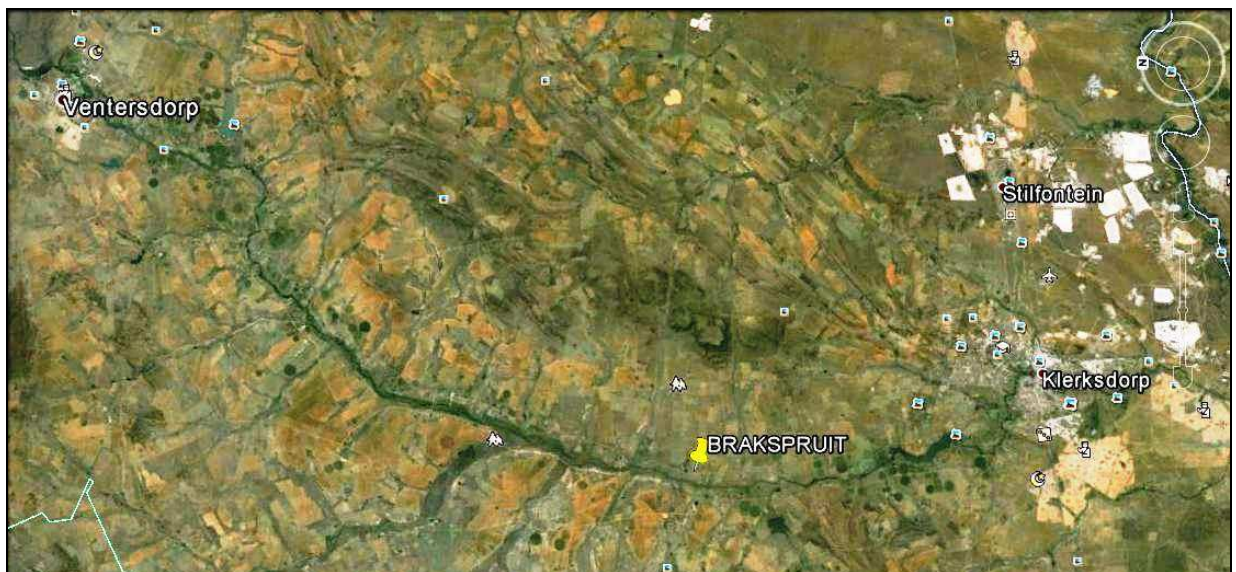
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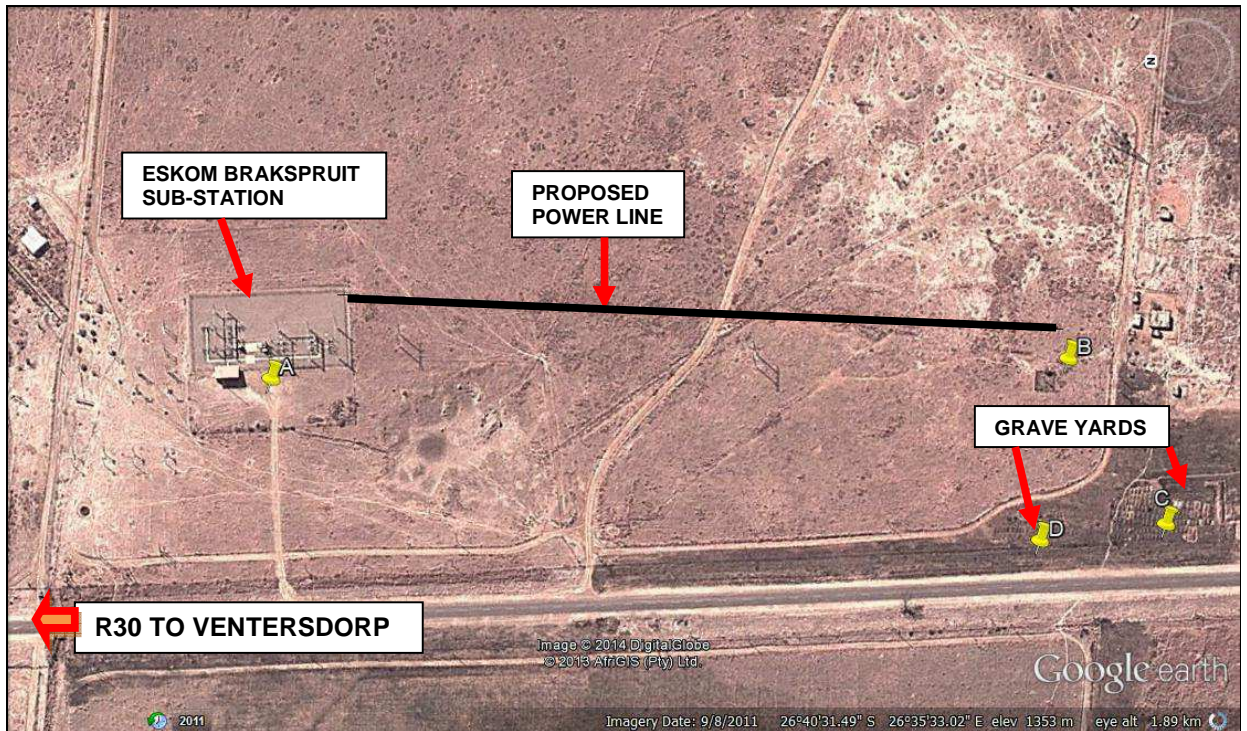
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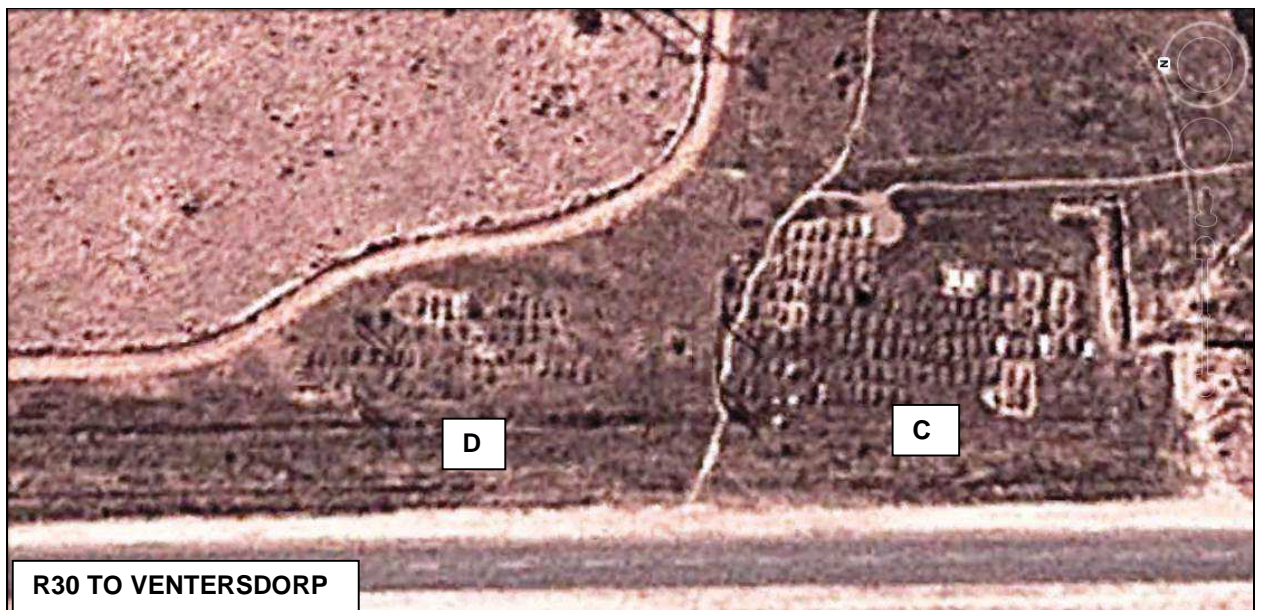
Map 1 Brakspruit on the R30 between Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp.



Map 2 Locality of Brakspruit between Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp, North West Province.



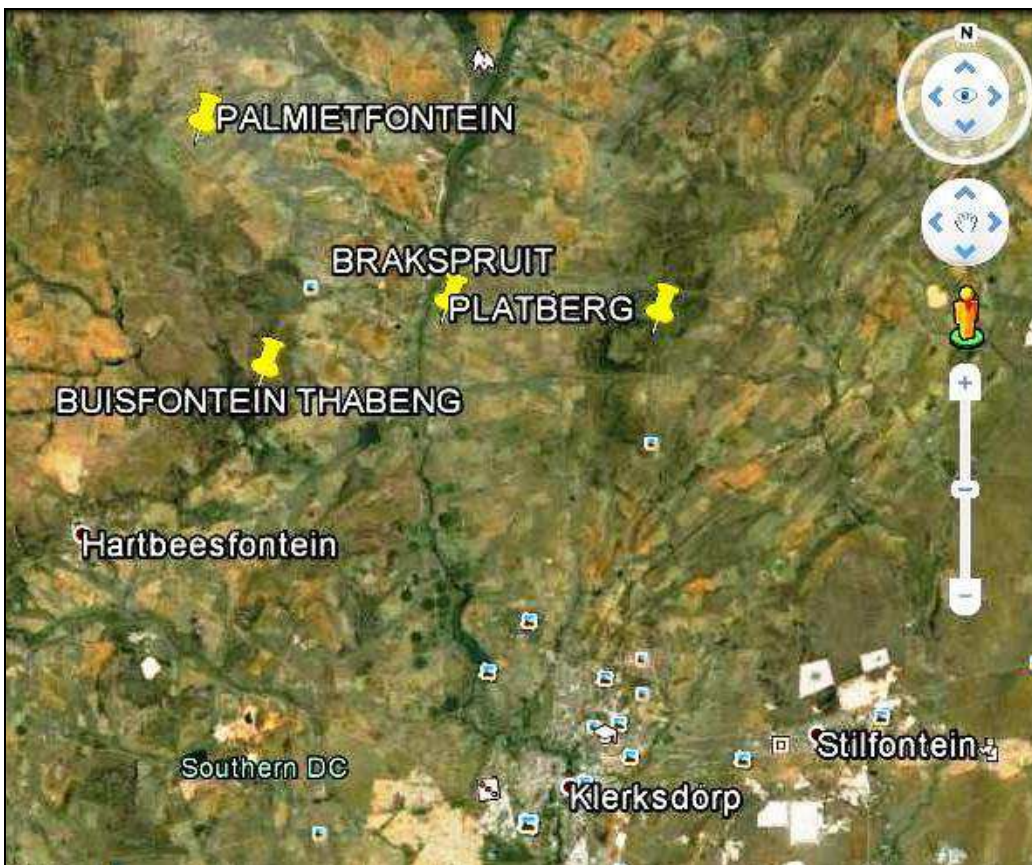
Map 3 The proposed Eskom power line with GPS coordinates at Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Map 4 Grave yards at Point C & D near Brakspruit Sub-station.



Map 5 Later Iron Age archaeological sites near Klerksdorp (Maggs 1976:38,39,304,305).



Map 6 Brakspuit with stone walled Later Iron Age archaeological sites at Palmietfontein, Platberg & Buisfontein (Thabeng) in relation to Hartbeesfontein, Klerksdorp & Stilfontein.



Map 7 Later Iron Age stone walled living sites at Platberg near Klerksdorp.



Map 8 Later Iron Age stone walled living sites at Palmietfontein near Klerksdorp.

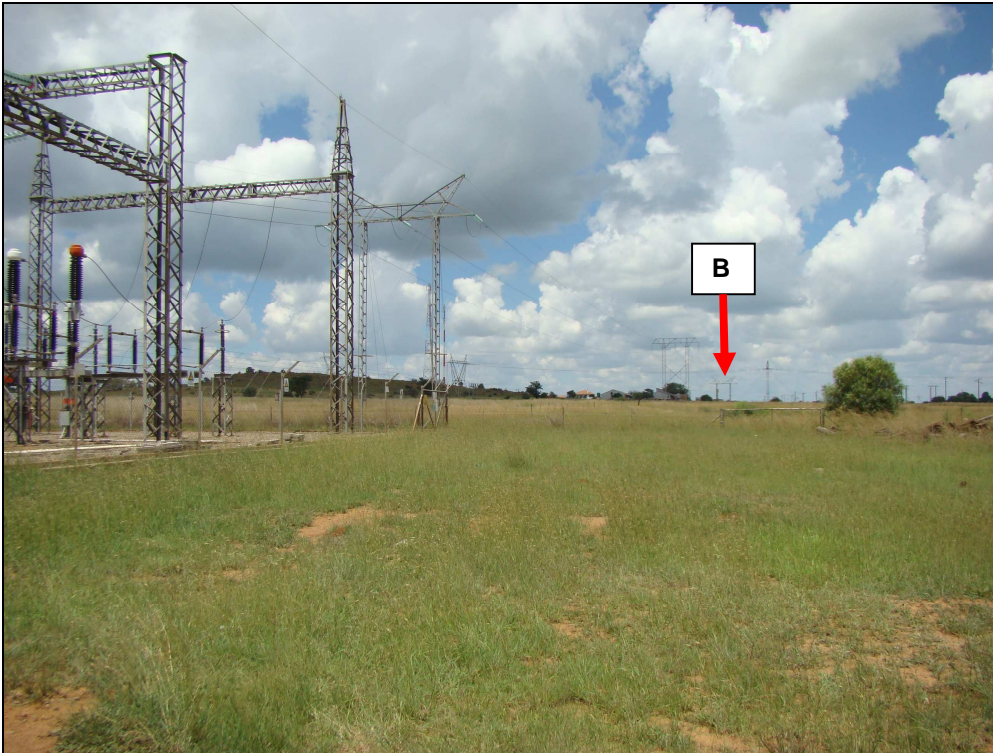


Fig.1 Point A at Brakspruit Eskom Sub-station near Klerksdorp, facing Point B.

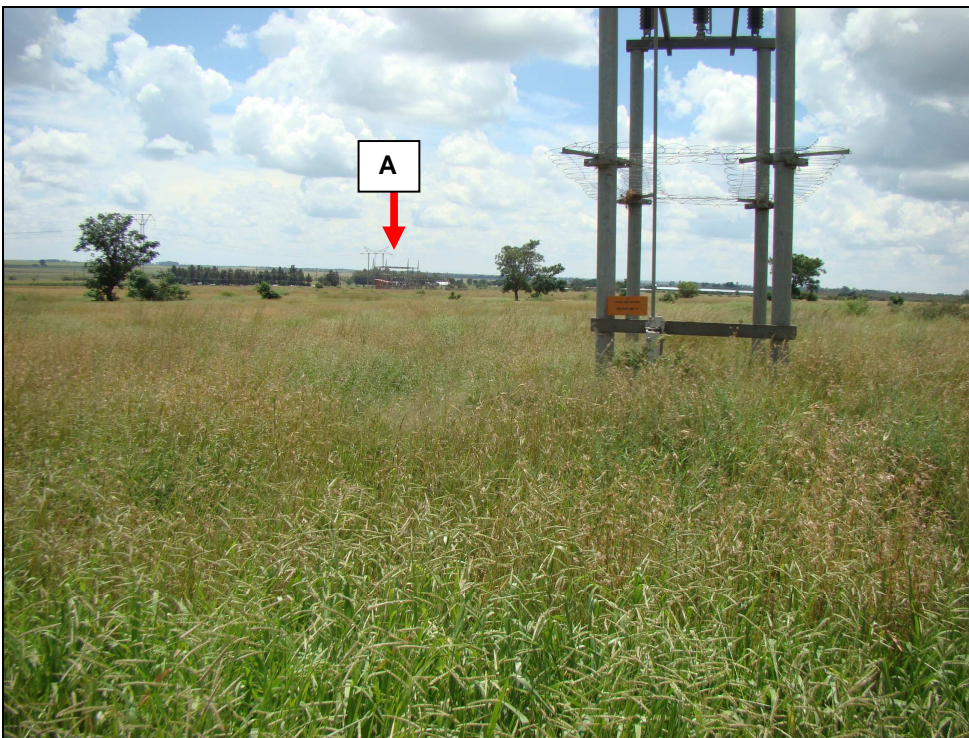


Fig.2 Point B at Brakspruit Eskom Sub-station near Klerksdorp, facing Point A.



Fig.3 Grave yard at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.4 Unmarked stone covered grave at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.5 Unmarked grave at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.6 Grave of Miriam Malebo 1906-1984 at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.7 Unmarked grave at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.8 Y-standard steel cross marked graves at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.9 Stone covered graves at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.10 Grave of Joel Ntsokolo 1969-2008 at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.

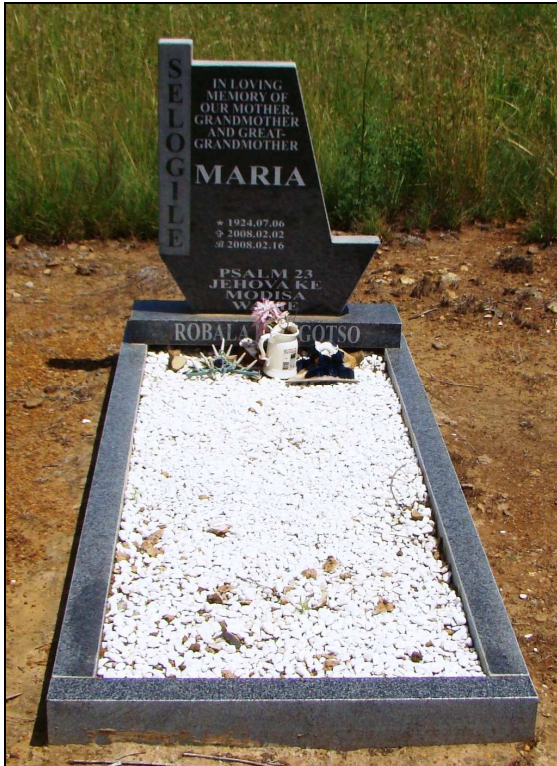


Fig.11 Grave of Maria Selogile 1924-2008 at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig. 12 Stone covered grave of Mampuru Solomon Arens 1931-2008 at Point C, Brakspruit.



Fig.13 Stone covered graves at Point C, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.14 Grave yard at Point D, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.15 Grave yard at Point D, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.16 Graves at Point D, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.17 Grave of Joseph P. Dibetso 1884-1962 at Point D, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.



Fig.18 Stone covered graves at Point D, Brakspruit near Klerksdorp.