

**HERITAGE SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED RIETVALLEI
LOW COST HOUSING UPGRADE, CAMPERDOWN,
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**FOR KERRY SEPPINGS ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS CC**

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INTRODUCTION

Umlando cc by was contracted Kerry Seppings Environmental Management Specialists cc to undertake a preliminary heritage assessment of the Rietvallei proposed low cost housing upgrade, near Camperdown, KwaZulu-Natal (fig. 1-2). The proposal is an extension of the Rietvallei Phase 1a in-situ upgrade and forms Phase 1b of the existing Rietvallei in-situ upgrade. Approximately 694 low-cost housing units and associated infrastructure have been proposed. The 81.30ha site is owned by the eThekweni Municipality the project is designed to meet the municipality's need for affordable housing. The property is referred to as Portion 235 of the Farm Riet Vallei No. 851.

Most of the plots of land already have informal houses and gardens, and there are existing servitudes in the area. The area is thus very disturbed by previous activities. Figure 3 is an example of the types of housing occurring in the area.

The impacts in the area will be minimal, as each plot will have its own small house on an area that is already disturbed. Much of the land is on steep slopes and these areas have been reshaped to form housing terraces.

FIG. 1: GENERAL LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

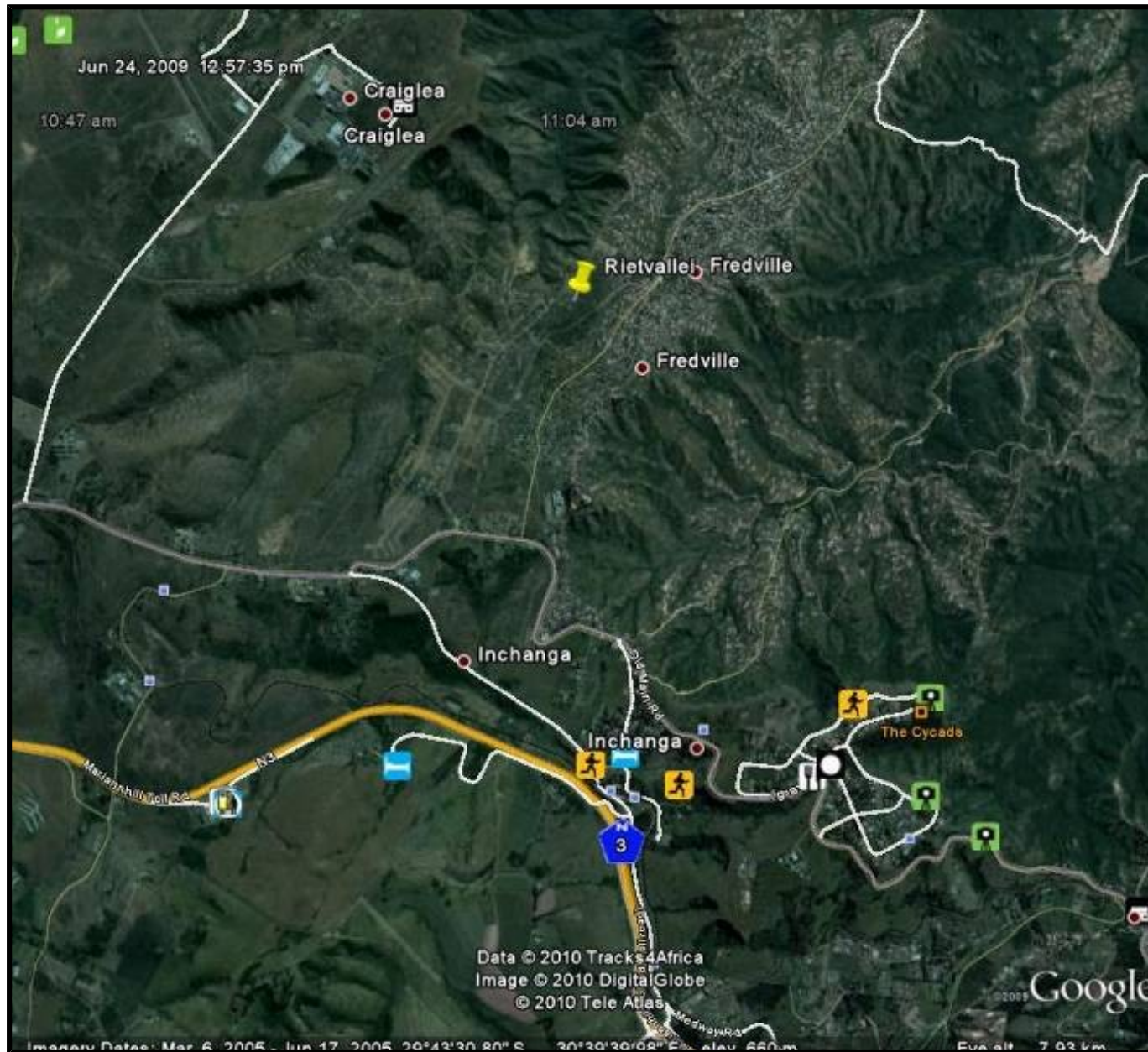


FIG. 2: OUTLAY OF THE PROPOSED UPGRADE DEVELOPMENT

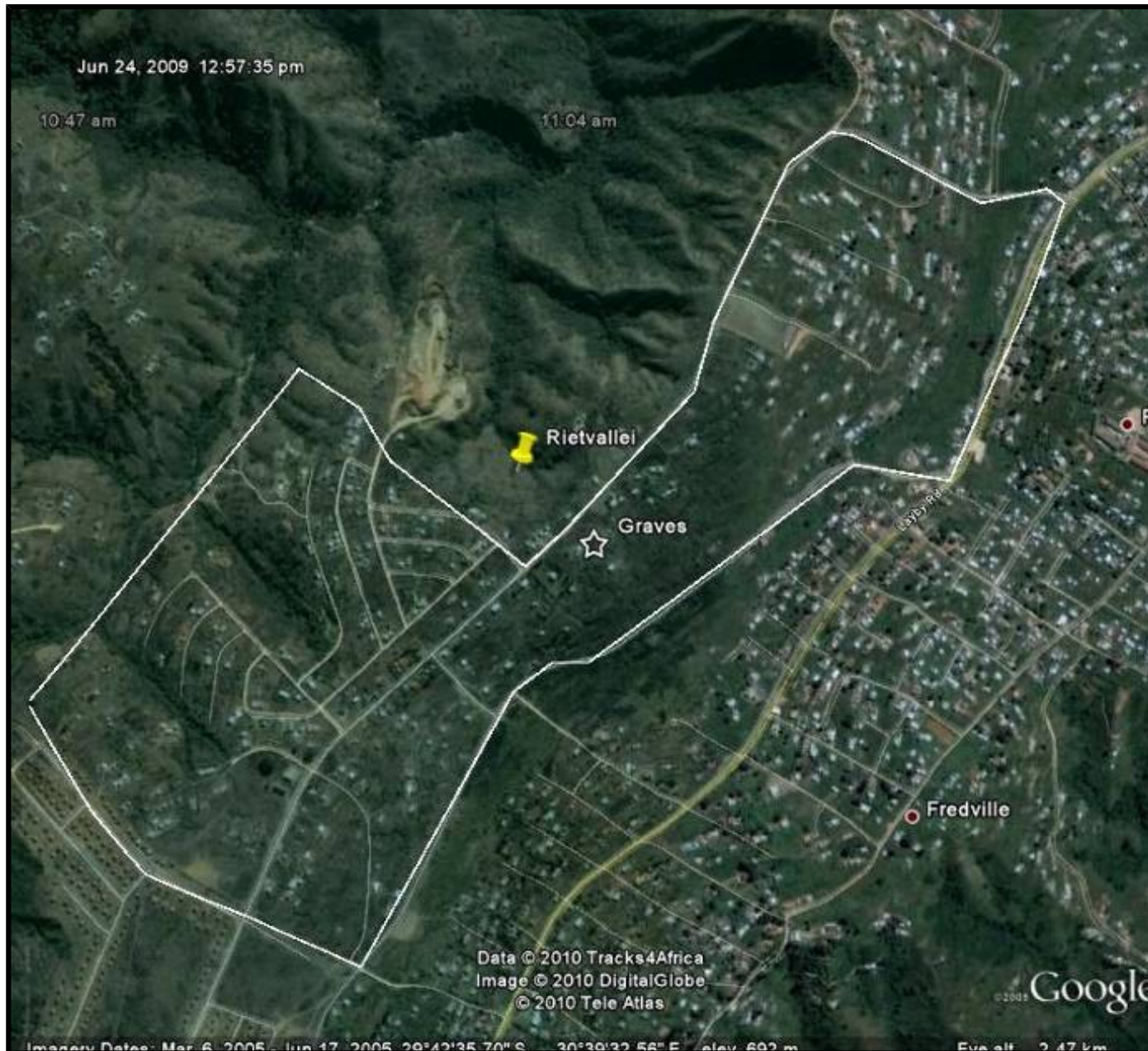


FIG. 3: EXAMPLES OF CURRENT HOUSING AND LAND USE



METHOD

The method for Heritage assessment consists of several steps.

The first step forms part of the desktop assessment. Here we would consult the databases. These databases contain most of the known heritage sites in KwaZulu-Natal, and known memorials and other protected sites, battlefields and cemeteries in southern Africa. We also consult with an historical architect, palaeontologist, and an historian where necessary.

The survey results will define the significance of each recorded site, as well as a management plan.

All sites are grouped according to low, medium and high significance for the purpose of this report. Sites of low significance have no diagnostic artefacts or features. Sites of medium significance have diagnostic artefacts or features and these sites tend to be sampled. Sampling includes the collection of artefacts for future analysis. All diagnostic pottery, such as rims, lips and decorated sherds are sampled, while bone, stone and shell are mostly noted. Sampling usually occurs on most sites. Sites of high significance are excavated and/or extensively sampled. Those sites that are extensively sampled have high research potential, yet poor preservation of features.

Defining significance

Heritage sites vary according to significance and several different criteria relate to each type of site. However, there are several criteria that allow for a general significance rating of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

1. State of preservation of:

- 1.1. Organic remains:
 - 1.1.1. Faunal
 - 1.1.2. Botanical
- 1.2. Rock art
- 1.3. Walling
- 1.4. Presence of a cultural deposit
- 1.5. Features:
 - 1.5.1. Ash Features
 - 1.5.2. Graves
 - 1.5.3. Middens
 - 1.5.4. Cattle byres
 - 1.5.5. Bedding and ash complexes

2. Spatial arrangements:

- 2.1. Internal housing arrangements
- 2.2. Intra-site settlement patterns
- 2.3. Inter-site settlement patterns

3. Features of the site:

- 3.1. Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts or images at the site?
- 3.2. Is it a type site?
- 3.3. Does the site have a very good example of a specific time period, feature, or artefact?

4. Research:

- 4.1. Providing information on current research projects
- 4.2. Salvaging information for potential future research projects

5. Inter- and intra-site variability

- 5.1. Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between various features and artefacts?

5.2. Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities?

6. Archaeological Experience:

6.1. The personal experience and expertise of the CRM practitioner should not be ignored. Experience can indicate sites that have potentially significant aspects, but need to be tested prior to any conclusions.

7. Educational:

7.1. Does the site have the potential to be used as an educational instrument?

7.2. Does the site have the potential to become a tourist attraction?

7.3. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

8. Other Heritage Significance:

8.1. Palaeontological sites

8.2. Historical buildings

8.3. Battlefields and general Anglo-Zulu and Anglo-Boer sites

8.4. Graves and/or community cemeteries

8.5. Living Heritage Sites

8.6. Cultural Landscapes, that includes old trees, hills, mountains, rivers, etc related to cultural or historical experiences.

The more a site can fulfill the above criteria, the more significant it becomes. Test-pit excavations are used to test the full potential of an archaeological deposit. This occurs in Phase 2. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of significance (Phase 3). Sites may also be mapped and/or have artefacts sampled as a form of mitigation. Sampling normally occurs when the artefacts may be good examples of their type, but are not in a primary archaeological context. Mapping records the spatial relationship between features and artefacts.

RESULTS

The database did not yield any known heritage sites in the affected area. Late Iron Age sites and Stone Age sites do exist outside of the affected area, and these are mostly of low significance.

No heritage sites were recorded during the course of the survey. This is not surprising given the extent of ground disturbance that has occurred in the area.

I did record one area that had at least three graves (fig. 4). The graves are probably associated with the nearby homestead, and at least two have names. These graves are recent, i.e. last 10 years, although the Euphorbia spp. adjacent to the graves is much older. Euphorbias were often used in the past to demarcate graves, and this may be the case at this site.

Across the path, to the southwest, are two piles of rock that may or may not be graves, or building rubble. These two piles of rocks are in association with a house that used to stand here. These rock piles are not old either, and local community members should be able to shed light on these.

Significance: Human graves are of high significance and may not be disturbed unless various processes have been followed.

Mitigation: The graves are younger than 60 years in age, and thus are not protected by the heritage legislation. They are protected by various municipal by-laws. Since the graves are recent, they do not fall under the heritage impact assessment. The living descendants will need to be consulted regarding the graves. A social impact assessment may be required if the graves are to be damaged or removed. The Euphorbia tree should not be moved, however, if it is essential to remove the tree, then a heritage specialist should be on site to identify potential human remains. The community should also be invited to comment on these potential graves.

FIG. 4: LOATION OF HUMAN GRAVES NEAR THE *EUPHORBIA INGENS*¹



¹ 29°42'36.13"S 30°39'32.79"E, *Euphorbia ingens* probably has a grave below it.

I did not observe any other recent graves in the study area; however, the development should be aware that other recent graves may occur.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

No heritage management plan is required.

CONCLUSION

Umlando undertook a heritage survey for the proposed Rietvallis low-cost housing project. No heritage sites were observed in the affected area. I did observe two graves and two possible graves.