

**PORTION 115 OF KNOPJESLAAGTE:
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**

A Phase I report prepared for Seaton Thompson and Associates
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EXCEUTIVE SUMMARY

An African cemetery will require mitigation.

INTRODUCTION

Molefi Properties intend to establish low cost housing on Portion 115 of the Farm Knopjeslaagte 140 IR, Gauteng. The project area comprises some 21 hectare of open ground just east of Diepsloot and south of the N14. One small section of land lays south of the Knoppieslaagte Road. The environmental coordinators for the project, Seaton Thompson and Associates, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to examine the two sections for sites of archaeological and historical value in terms of Sections 35 and 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

METHOD

One ARM staff visited the first project area on 8 May 2009. Staff traversed both sections on foot, examining disturbances such as soil pits and cleared areas such as paths and roads. Sites were recorded with a hand-held GPS instrument calibrated to WGS 84, and then transferred to the 1: 50 000 map sheet 2528CC Lyttelton (Figure 1).

ARM bases its site significance on five main criteria: (1) primary versus secondary context; (2) amount of deposit; (3) number and variety of features; (4) uniqueness; and (5), potential to answer present research questions. Sites with no significance do not require mitigation, low to medium sites may require limited mitigation, and high significance requires extensive mitigation. Outstanding sites should not be disturbed at all. Recognizable graves have high social value regardless of their archaeological significance.

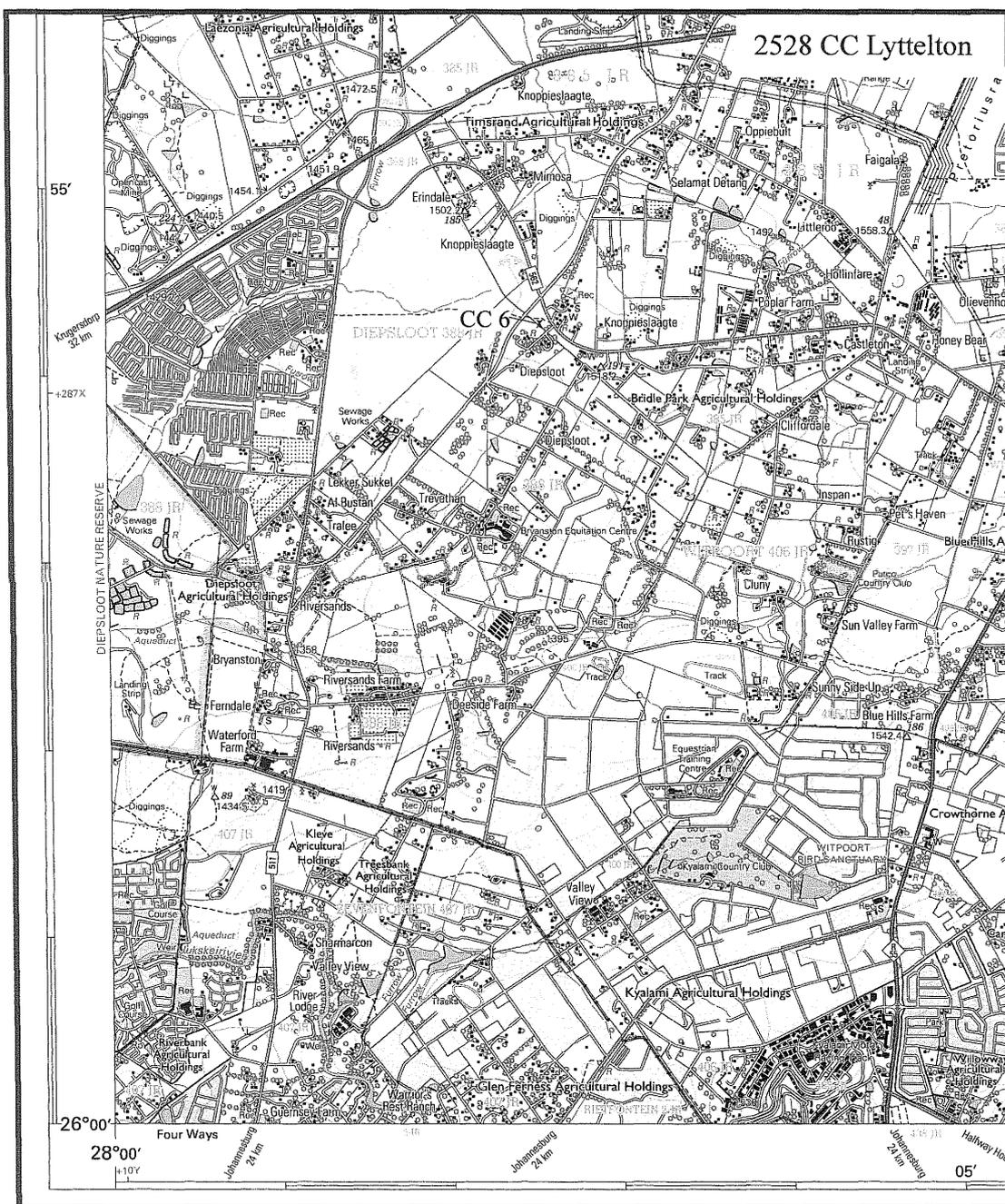


Figure 1. Location of African cemetery (CC 6).

RESULTS

Although grass was high, it was obvious that most of the large section had been disturbed by agricultural activity. The only artefact noted was a broken and weathered MSA flake in a rubbish pit on the north-western edge of the large section.

In contrast, the small section contains an extensive African cemetery at the southern most end (from 25 55 42.2S 28 02 32.7E to 44.1S 32.6E). There appears to have been a formal entrance on the east side (Figure 2) leading to some 87 graves. Some 16 headstones have dates ranging from 1958 to 1993 (Figure 3). Many names belong to the Nguni language, such as Banda, Ndhlovu and Twala, and these people were probably Southern Ndebele who worked on Knopjeslaagte when it was an active farm. If the dates are accurate (Figure 4), Phaladi Hendrick Mokgachane lived to be 108 (1873-1981). This cemetery was previously recorded (2528 CC 6) in a survey for the Diepsloot Pipeline (Huffman and Schoeman 2001).



Figure 2. Formal entrance to cemetery.

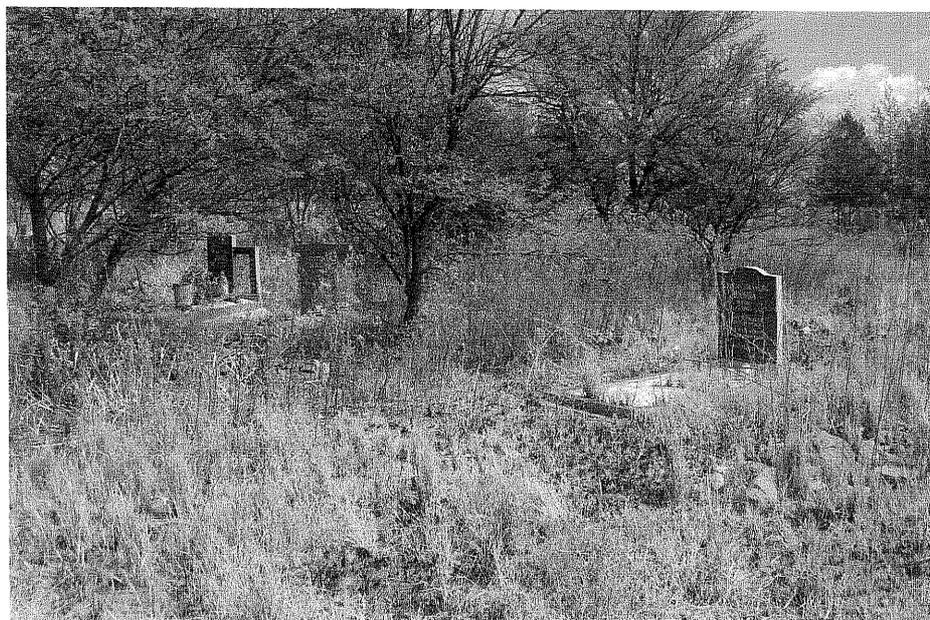


Figure 3. Some graves with headstones.



Figure 4. Headstone of man thought to be 108 years old at death in 1981.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The cemetery has high social significance and requires mitigation. If the developer intends to move the graves, he will need a permit from SAHRA. The existing legislation is quite demanding. Among other things, a recognized re-burial unit will need to trace living descendants and then rebury the remains with their agreement: each grave with a named headstone requires its own coffin, hearse and gravesite. This is a costly exercise. In all, it would be better to put a fence around the cemetery and leave it undisturbed.

With this proviso, there are no heritage reasons why the project should not continue.

REFERENCE

Huffman, T.N. and Schoeman, M.H. 2001. *Archaeological Assessment of the Diepsloot Pipeline, Gauteng*. A Phase-1 report submitted to Bohlweki Environmental. Johannesburg: Archaeological Resources Management.