

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF PORTION 37
LIEFDE EN VREDE 104 IR**

A Phase 1 Report prepared for Aspen Hills Development Company (Pty) Ltd

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INTRODUCTION

Aspen Hills Development Company (AHDC) intends to establish a township on Portion 37 Liefde En Vrede 104 IR (about 70 hectares) on behalf of the landowners Patroni Investments (Pty) Ltd. Stonewalling dating to the Late Iron Age is well known throughout the area, and some appear on the 1 : 50 000 map 2628 AC Alberton. In 2002, AHDC exchanged some 78 hectares of hilly terrain to the west (Rietvlei 101 IR, Portion 31, 34 to 36 & 62) for 38 hectares of comparatively flat land (Portion 32 Liefde En Vrede 104 IR), in order to preserve natural and cultural features on the ridges to the west. In keeping with this concern for heritage, AHDC has designated part of the proposed development as a nature reserve (Figure 1). To comply with existing regulations, AHDC commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to assess the impact of the proposed development on heritage resources.

METHOD

One ARM staff accompanied various AHDC personnel (A. Goldring & R. Sheahan) on two occasions to examine the property. AHDC provided aerial photographs and surveyed plans of the proposed development. The team concentrated on the koppie in the southwest portion where AHDC staff had already identified stonewalling.

SIGNIFICANCE

Site significance is based on such criteria as primary versus secondary context, amount of deposit, variety of features, condition of walling and present research questions. Sites with no significance do not require mitigation, low to medium sites may require limited mitigation, while high significance requires mitigation; outstanding sites should not be disturbed at all.

RESULTS

The cluster of stonewalled settlements in the southwest portion was already on our records as 2628 AC 12 (Figure 2).

This cluster includes two types of walling. The earliest, known as Type N (Maggs 1976), or Group I (Taylor 1979), dates to between AD 1500 and 1700. Concentric circles characterize this type; the inner circle functioned as a cattle kraal, while the outer circle enclosed a residential zone of clay houses and grain bins. Each unit represents the homestead of a single family.

Two of these early homesteads stand on the west side of the hill (Site 1 : 26.18.49S 28.03.10E, Site 2 26.18.51S 28.03.10E). Although the walling is fairly clear, there appears to be no deposit or clay features in either homestead. The two sites therefore have low significance.

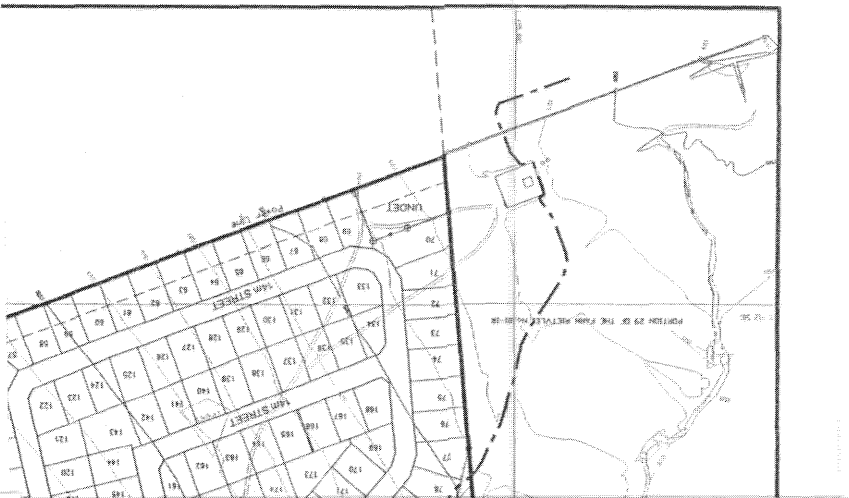


Figure 1. Plan of the Aspen Hills development, showing the Park, the area designated as a nature reserve.

2628AC ALBERTON



Figure 2. Stonewalled sites mentioned in the report.

The second walling type, Klipriviersberg (or Group III), dates to between AD 1750 and 1840. In plan, the inner zone includes several inward-facing cattle kraals, while arcs in the outer boundary wall mark the back courtyards of individual homes. In addition, the outer wall sometimes incorporates small stock kraals. This is the most common type in the area.

Klipriviersberg homesteads occurred in four clusters:

Site 3: hilltop inside designated reserve (26.18.47S 28.03.18E).

Site 4: saddle of hill with one good midden (26.18.42S 28.03.23E). This cluster has been extensively damaged through illegal dumping and therefore has low significance.

Site 5: southwest corner of hill (26.18.55S 28.03.18E). Two of the homestead units lie within the reserve, but at least one good midden and three other units are under threat. The threatened area has medium significance.

Site 6: southern base of hill below the saddle (26.18.49S 28.03.27E). There are at least two units and one good midden. This cluster has medium significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on four factors:

1. AHDC has already protected some cultural resources through the exchange of land.
2. The designated reserve will protect other examples.
3. The Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve to the west has examples of both walling types.
4. The 18th to 19th centuries Klipriviersberg type is quite common.

The Type N homesteads, **Site 1** and **Site 2**, can be destroyed, but they require some mitigation. Both need to be mapped.

The reserve designated by AHDC will protect the Klipriviersberg settlements of **Site 3** and the western portion of **Site 5**; and so, further mitigation is unnecessary. The fence in these areas, however, should be erected before AHDC develops the nearby stands.

The remainder of **Site 5** as well as **Site 4** and **Site 6** need further attention. The walls in all three areas should be mapped and archaeologists should excavate one midden in each cluster. The excavations will provide bone and pottery samples of use to research in the future. Finally, archaeologists should be present to retrieve any important artefacts when the settlements are destroyed.

From an archaeological perspective, if these recommendations are accepted, there is no reason why the proposed development should not proceed.

REFERENCES

- Maggs T. 1976. **Iron Age communities of the southern Highveld**. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Museum.
- Taylor, M.O.V. 1979. **Late Iron Age settlements on the northern edge of the Vredefort Dome**. MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.