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**FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED NEW EXTENSIONS TO THE
CEMETERY AT ALHEIT NEAR KAKAMAS, NORTHERN CAPE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kai !Garib Municipality is planning new extensions to the existing cemetery at Alheit in the Northern Cape. The land lies close to the N14 main road at the junction with the Kakamas to the Augrabies Falls National Park road.

The township of Alheit surrounds the proposed piece of land adjacent to the existing cemetery. The area is quite bare and consists of a dense scatter of quartz crystals.

No archaeological or historical material was found at the proposed site.

The developments will not require any mitigation measures and I recommend that the planning of the site may proceed.

INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION

Scope and Limitations

MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, and Stabilis Developments, Upington, on behalf of the Kai !Garib Municipality commissioned the archaeological assessment of the proposed piece of land proposed for the extension of the cemetery at Alheit, in the Kakamas district, Northern Cape Province.

The investigation provided the opportunity to examine the site.

No limitations were experienced during the site visit.

Methodology

1. Standard archaeological survey and recording methods were applied.
2. A survey of the literature was done to obtain information about the archaeology and cultural heritage of the area.
3. The site was inspected on foot.
4. The layout of the area as well as objects and features were plotted by GPS.
5. The surroundings and features were recorded on camera.

INVESTIGATION

The Kai !Garib Municipality is planning new extensions to the existing cemetery at Alheit in the Northern Cape (Map 1). The land lies close to the N14 highway at the junction with the Kakamas to Augrabies Falls National Park road (Map 4).

The investigation was done on 14 September 2012. Neil Devenish and Marguerite Cronjé from MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, took me to the site. The Environmental Assessment is performed on behalf of the Kai !Gariiep Municipality. The new cemetery will make provision for about 100 new stands (Map 3). Activities will include pre-excavated and back-filled graves, a water supply installation, ablution and sanitation facilities, erection of a storeroom, a security fence and gravel roads to the site.

The site was examined for any possible traces of cultural and historical remains to establish the potential impact of the developments on any archaeological and cultural historical material. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

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 ordinary self-sown trees and other types of vegetation determine a major part of the historical landscape of human settlements in villages and towns, on farmyards or even deserted places in the open veld.

The present site is quite bare (Figs.1&2) with rocky outcrops (Fig.3) on very shallow soil. There is a dense scatter of quartz crystals on the surface (Fig.4).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological environment of the Northern Cape is rich and diverse, representing a long time span of the human past. The area is exceptionally rich in terms of Stone Age material and rock art sites. Some areas are richer than others and not all the sites are equally significant (Beaumont et al. 1995, Beaumont & Morris 1990). For various reasons, there is a relative lack in research records, but certain sites such as the Wonderwerk Cave in the Kuruman Hills, several ancient specularite mines near Postmasburg and a number of significant Stone Age sites near Kathu (Beaumont 1990, 2007), have produced important archaeological information. Beaumont (1990) has indicated the importance of the Early Stone Age lithic material after many seasons of excavations at Kathu Pan and elsewhere near the town.

Not much is known about the history of this particular area. During a previous investigation, a scatter of worked stone flakes was found at a site near the present locality along the road from Kakamas to Augrabies Falls. The finds were made from lithic sources of chert and jasper imported from the riverbed. Quarts nodules are scattered in abundance on the surface and a single artefact made out of quartz was found. No actual tools occurred and the flakes are described as Later Stone Age material (Dreyer 2010b).

Khoi stock farmers moved into this area between AD 400 and AD 1100. Black farming communities followed into the Northern Cape. This phase known as the Later Iron Age (AD 1300 to about 1840 AD), 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 characterised their semi-permanent settlements. These remnants are known from the prominent Sotho/Tswana settlements at Dithakong, a Bathlaping capital near Kuruman. A number of Korana and Griqua groups, remnants of the Later Stone Age peoples, managed to survive the assimilation by Sotho/Tswana tribes in the region.

Dramatic climate changes resulted in a rapid population growth along the east coast. Increased pressure on natural resources and attempts to control trade during the early 19th century brought the emergence of powerful leaders in the area. The subsequent power struggle resulted in a period of instability in the central parts of Southern Africa. This period of strife or wars of devastation, known as the “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 carried on by the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi and the AmaNgwane of Matiwane into the Free State, thus uprooting among others, the Batlokwa of Sekonyela and Mantatise and various smaller Sotho/Tswana tribes. On their turn, the Batlokwa drove off the Bafokeng of Sebetoane from Kurutlele near Senekal, 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 also affected the peoples of the Northern Cape, 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 refugees.

Early European missionaries and travellers ventured into the inland of the country during the 19th century and reached Dithakong as early as 1801. 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.

Anglo-Boer War (1900-1902) camping and skirmish sites in the Northern Cape, should be recorded. Distinctive food cans and specific types and calibres of fired cartridge cases normally identify these sites. Conflict sites between early White farmers and Bushmen in the Northern Cape could contain gunflints and fired cartridge cases and should likewise be noted.

LOCALITY

The Kai !Garib Municipality is planning new extensions to the existing cemetery at Alheit in the Northern Cape (Map 1). The proposed new cemetery (Map 2) is planned adjacent and as an extension of the existing graveyard (Fig.4&5) at Alheit, about 12km from Kakamas in the Northern Cape (Map 1). The land lies close to the N14 main road at the junction with the Kakamas to the Augrabies Falls National Park road (Map 4).

The soil surface is relatively undisturbed and rocky outcrops are visible (Fig.3). There is also a coarse scatter of quartz nodules on the surface (Fig.4). The proposed site is surrounded by the township. The cemetery is not fenced and is open to wandering livestock from the township with the inevitable further impact on the environment.

The following GPS coordinate (Cape scale) was taken (Map 2&4):

ALH 28°45'45"S 020°32'12"E Altitude 656m (Figs.1&2).

FINDS

No archaeological material was found, nor were there any engravings or other relics or historical material discovered at the site.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The proposed developments at Alheit will have no impact on any cultural and historical heritage remains of the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that the planning of the proposed cemetery may proceed.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures will be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Neil Devenish and Marguerite Cronjé from MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for taking me to the site.

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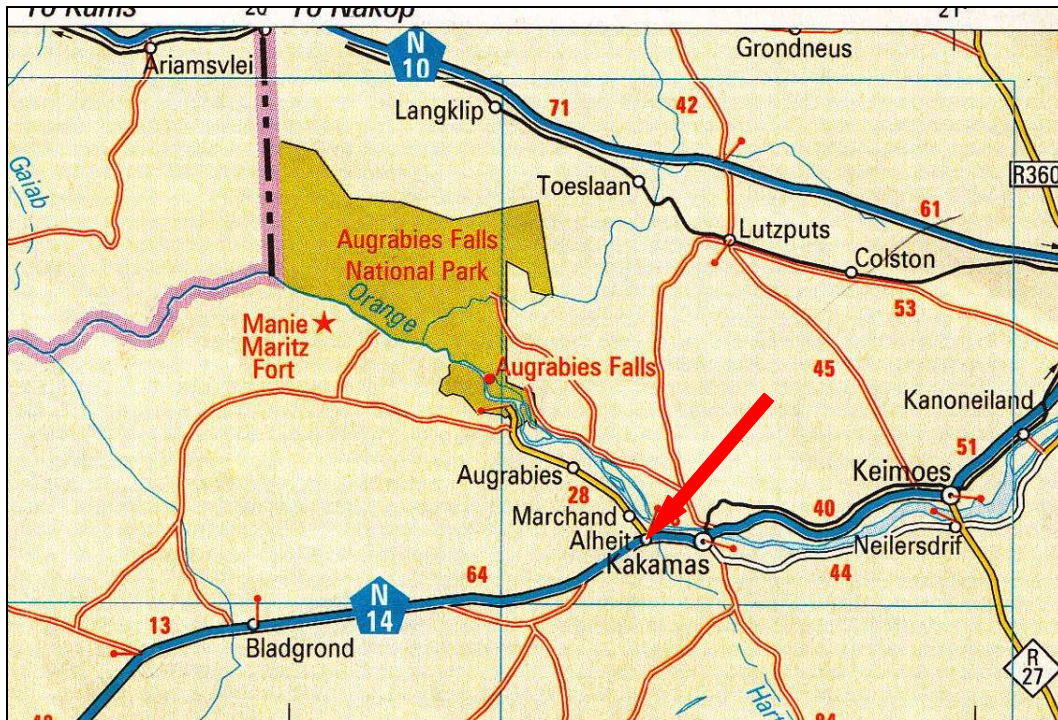
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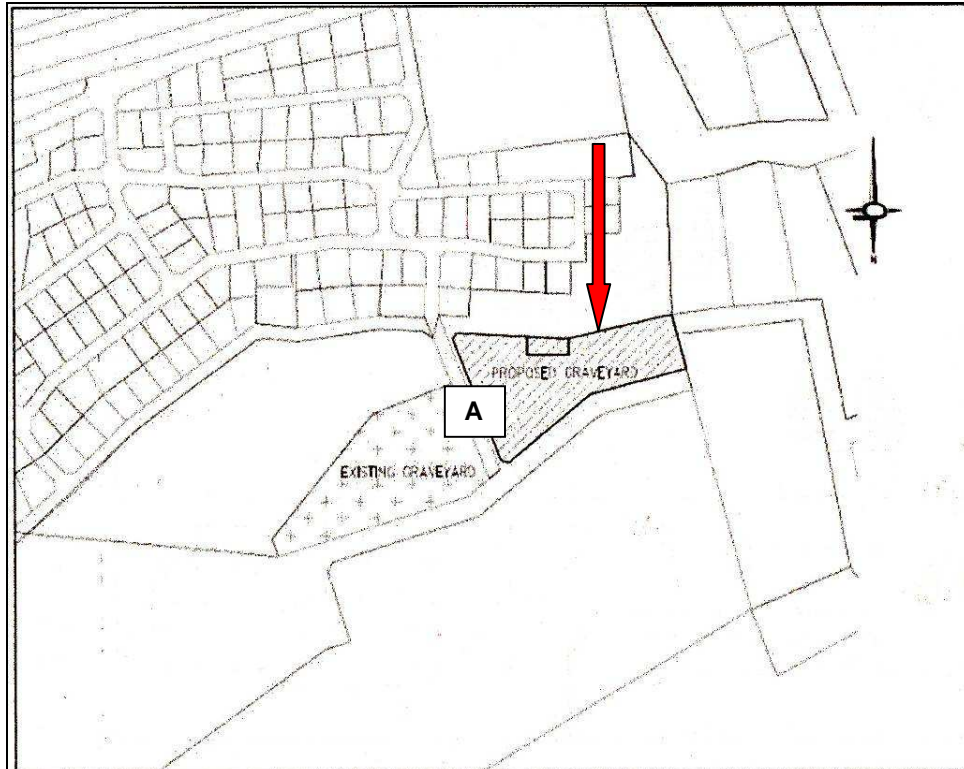
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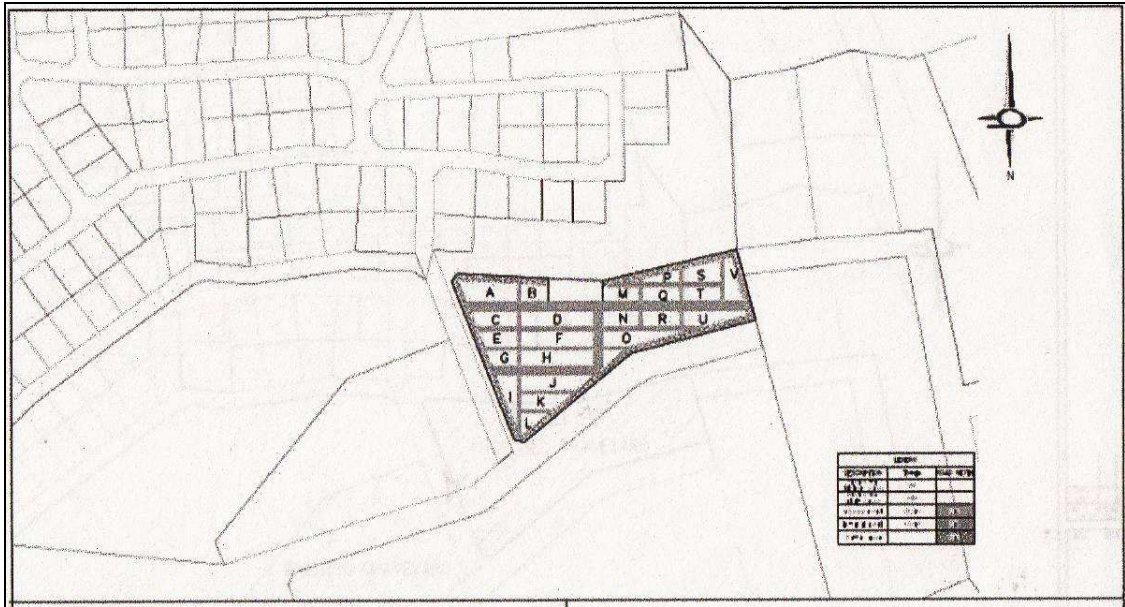
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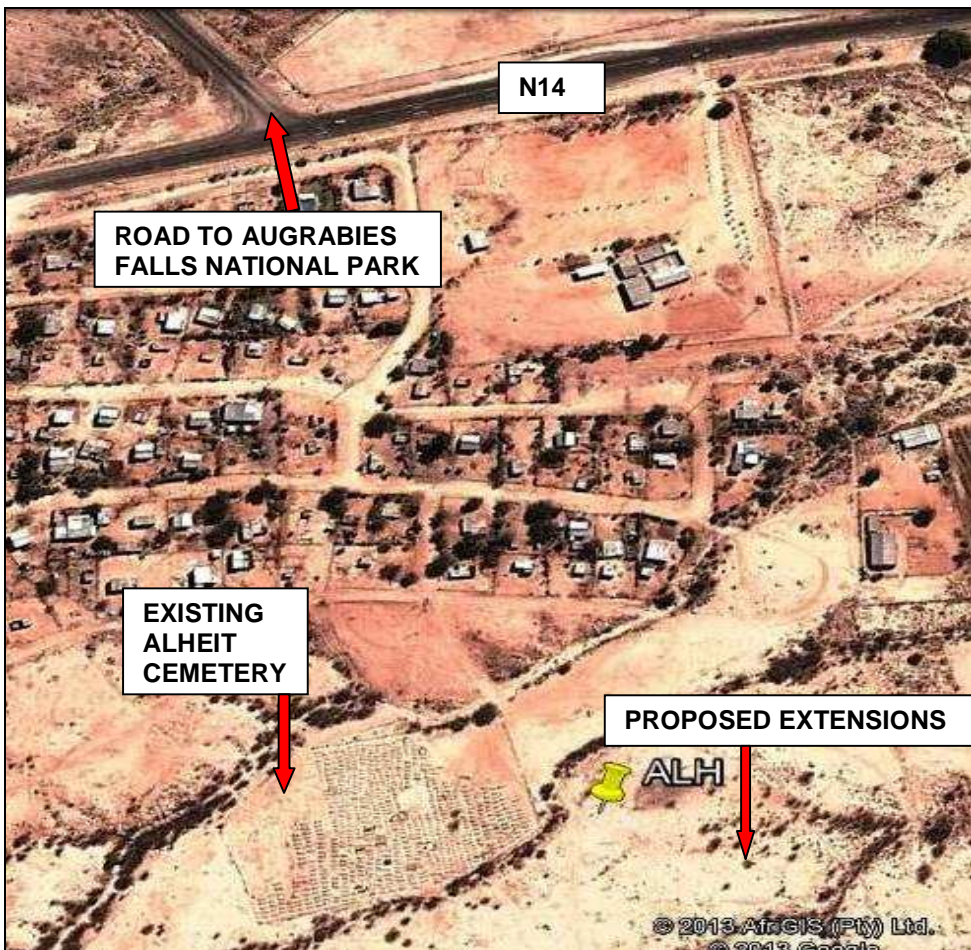
Map 1 Augrabies village between Kakamas and the Augrabies National Park, Northern Cape.



Map 2 Position of the old & new cemeteries at Alheit. Coordinate Point A indicated.



Map 3 Layout of the new Alheit cemetery.



Map 4 Locality of the Alheit cemetery near Kakamas.



Fig.1 Point A at the new cemetery site, Alheit, Northern Cape.



Fig.2 Point A at the new cemetery site, Alheit, Northern Cape.



Fig.3 Rocky outcrop at the new cemetery site, Alheit, Northern Cape.



Fig.4 Quartz scatters on the surface at the new cemetery site, Alheit, Northern Cape.



Fig.4 Existing cemetery at Alheit, Northern Cape.



Fig.5 Existing cemetery at Alheit, Northern Cape.