

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Of the Proposed Cultivation of 99 ha on York Farm, near New Hanover, uMshwathi Local Municipality, KwaZulu Natal.

For Janet Edmonds Consulting

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Phase One Cultural Heritage survey of the proposed cultivation of 99 ha of York farm, uMshwati Local Municipality, KZN identified no heritage sites on the footprint. This may partially be ascribed to the dense grassland vegetation encountered that may have masked any heritage features during the survey. However, the footprint is part of a cultural landscape that embodies various layers of history of which the most tangible is the early colonial history of the Natal Midlands. The footprint formed part of the York Village Commonage – one of only three commonages in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, it represents a near pristine grassland as would have been encountered by early Nguni agropastoralists and colonial settlers when they settled in the area. The footprint also contains indigenous knowledge values as relating to African symbolic perceptions of the land. Living Heritage values are therefore associated with the area. It is one of the few remaining pieces of pristine indigenous grassland in KwaZulu Natal Midlands area, and it formed part of the Living Landscape of past inhabitants of the area. Today most of the greater York area is covered by commercial tree plantations that sadly has significantly transformed the ambience of the land.

It is suggested that a Phase Two Heritage Study be conducted of the study area before any development commence. This phase two study should include archival research on the spatial layout of York Village and its associated commonage. Oral interviews should be conducted with old residents of the area. These should include both colonial descendants and Zulu-speaking elders. In addition, another archaeological survey of the area should be conducted when the grass is short and the archaeological site visibility at a premium. The possibility of bestowing a heritage rating as associated official protection to the study area should be investigated.

We would also like to draw stakeholders attention to the South African National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act No. 4 of 2008), which requires that operations that expose archaeological, or historical remains should cease immediately, pending evaluation by the provincial heritage agency.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

The consultant was approached by Janet Edmonds Consultancy to conduct a heritage impact assessment (HIA) of the proposed establishment of the proposed 99 ha cultivation of York Farm, uMshwati Local Municipality, for the York Landowners Association. The Applicant, the York Landowners Association wish to cultivate 99 ha of indigenous grassland on York Farm for the commercial cultivation of sugarcane, maize and other crops. The cultivation is proposed to make better use of the property in terms of its agricultural potential, as well as to improve the economic viability of the shareholders or the York Landowners Association.

A portion of the profits generated from this commercial production will enable the applicant to implement improved management of the undisturbed portions of York Farm, e.g. Erosion control, improvement of fencing for livestock etc.

JEC Environmental Services (JEC) has been appointed by York Landowners Association to act as the Environmental Practitioner (EAP) and conduct the necessary Basic Assessment Process for the proposed cultivation (Janet Edmonds Consulting BID Document).

3. LEGALITIES

According to the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (NHRA) (Act No. 25 of 1999), the heritage resources of South Africa include:

- a. places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- b. places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- c. historical settlements and townscapes;
- d. landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- e. geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- f. archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- g. graves and burial grounds, including-
 - i. ancestral graves;
 - ii. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
 - iii. graves of victims of conflict;
 - iv. graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
 - v. historical graves and cemeteries; and
- vi. other human remains which are not covered in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983);

- h. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;
- i. movable objects, including-
 - i. objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
 - ii. objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
 - iii. ethnographic art and objects;
 - iv. military objects;
 - v. objects of decorative or fine art;
 - vi. objects of scientific or technological interest; and
 - vii. books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).

The newly promulgated KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act No. 4 of 2008) also makes specific mention to rock art and archaeological sites.

It is furthermore stated that:

- (1) No person may destroy, damage, excavate, alter, write or draw upon, or otherwise disturb any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Council.
- (2) Upon discovery of archaeological or palaeontological material or a meteorite by any person, all activity or operations in the general vicinity of such material or meteorite must cease forthwith and a person who made the discovery must submit a written report to the Council without delay.
- (3) The Council may, after consultation with an owner or controlling authority, by way of written notice served on the owner or controlling authority, prohibit any activity considered by the Council to be inappropriate within 50 metres of a rock art site.
- (4) No person may exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb, damage, destroy, own or collect any object or material associated with any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.

(5) No person may bring any equipment which assists in the detection of metals and archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, or excavation equipment onto any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, or meteorite impact site, or use similar detection or excavation equipment for the recovery of meteorites, without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.

(6) (a) The ownership of any object or material associated with any battlefield site, archaeological site, rock art site, palaeontological site, historic fortification, meteorite or meteorite impact site, on discovery, vest in the Provincial Government and the Council is regarded as the custodian on behalf of the Provincial Government.

(b) The Council may establish and maintain a provincial repository or repositories for the safekeeping or display of—

- (i) archaeological objects;
- (ii) palaeontological material;
- (iii) ecofacts;
- (iv) objects related to battlefield sites;
- (v) material cultural artefacts; or
- (vi) meteorites.

(7) The Council may, subject to such conditions as the Council may determine, loan any object or material referred to in subsection (6) to a national or provincial museum or institution.

(8) No person may, without the prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council, trade in, export or attempt to export from the Province—

- (a) any category of archaeological object;
- (b) any palaeontological material;
- (c) any ecofact;
- (d) any object which may reasonably be regarded as having been recovered from a battlefield site;
- (e) any material cultural artefact; or
- (f) any meteorite.

(9) (a) A person or institution in possession of an object or material referred to in paragraphs (a) – (f) of subsection (8), must submit full particulars of such object or material, including such information as may be prescribed, to the Council. (b) An object or material referred to in paragraph (a) must, subject to paragraph (c) and the directives of the Council, remain under the control of the person or institution submitting the particulars thereof.

(c) The ownership of any object or material referred to in paragraph (a) vest in the Provincial Government and the Council is regarded as the custodian on behalf of the Provincial Government.

This study aims to identify and assess the significance of any heritage and archaeological resources occurring on the site. Based on the significance, the impact of the development on the heritage resources would be determined. Then appropriate actions to reduce the impact on the heritage resources would be put forward. In terms of the NHRA, a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of:

- a. its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- b. its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- c. its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- d. its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- e. its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- f. its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- g. its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- h. its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa; and
- i. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

Table 1. Background information

Consultants:	Frans Prins (Active Heritage cc) and Sian Hall (Cultural Solutions) for Janet Edmonds Consultancy.
Type of development:	The Applicant, York Landowners Association, propose to cultivate 99 ha of indigenous grassland on York Farm, uMshwati Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations under Section 24(5), 24M and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998) published in Government Notice No. R. 543 of 2010, the proposed development triggers Listed Activities published in Government Notice No R. 544:
Rezoning or subdivision:	N/A
Terms of reference	To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment
Legislative requirements:	The Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and following the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA) and the KwaZulu Natal Heritage Act (Act No. 4 of 2008)

4. LOCATION OF THE PROJECT AREA

York farm is approximately 767 ha in size and is currently used for grazing by cattle, and mowing for the production of hay. The site is currently dominated by *Aristida junctiformis*, which has limited grazing potential, particularly during the winter months.

The properties on which the cultivation is proposed are Erf 73, 74 and 75 of York. The site is located approximately 4.5 km north-west of New Hanover. The site can be accessed as follows: From Pietermaritzburg, travel towards Greytown on the R33. Approximately 2km before New Hanover, turn left onto District Road D153. York Farm is located approximately 2km from the R33 (Figs 1 and 2). The GPS co-ordinates for the centre of the site are as follows: 29° 20' 00" S; 30° 29' 24" E (Janet Edmonds Consulting BID Document) See (Fig 1).

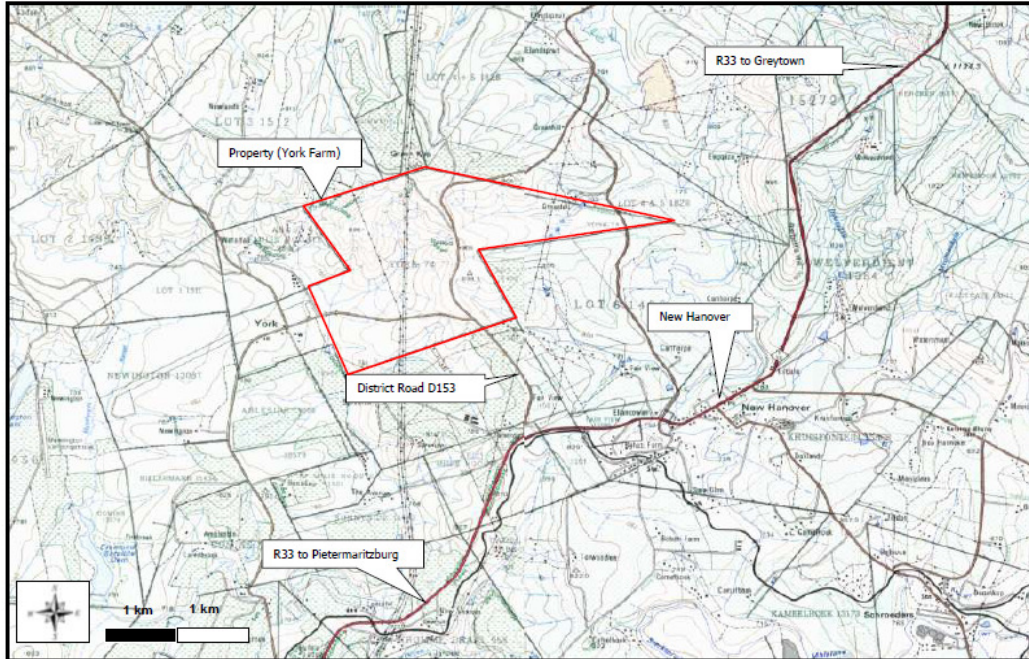


FIGURE 1: Location of York Farm, near New Hanover (Extracted from 1:50 000 Topographical Map 2930AD and 2930BC)

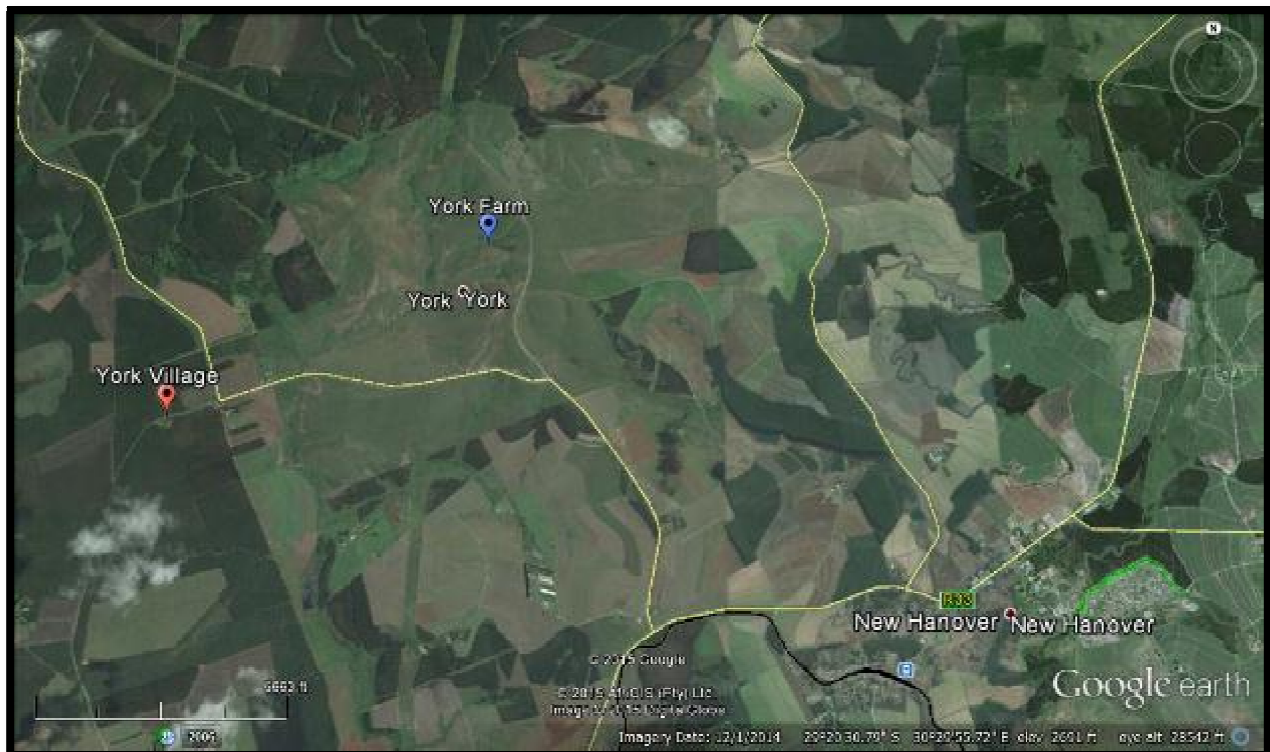


FIGURE 2: Aerial Photo showing location of York Farm, near New Hanover (Extracted from Google Earth)

5. GENERAL PREHISTORY OF THE AREA

Portions of the greater New Hanover area have been relatively well surveyed for archaeological heritage sites by the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, post-graduate students from the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, and subsequently by private heritage consultants over the last few years. However, the project area has not been covered in these surveys.

The available evidence, as captured in the Amafa and the KwaZulu-Natal Museum heritage site inventories, indicate that this area contains a wide spectrum of archaeological sites covering different time-periods and cultural traditions. These range from Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age, and Later Stone Age to Middle and Later Iron Age sites as well as Historical sites relating to the rise of the Zulu Kingdom and the subsequent Colonial Period. There are four Middle Stone Age sites, four Later Stone Age sites, two San rock art sites, seven Later Iron Age sites and numerous recorded Historical Period sites in the general region extending from Wartburg to the south of York Farm to Greytown in the immediate north of the study area.

The San were the owners of the land for almost 30 000 years but the local demography started to change soon after 2000 years ago when the first Bantu-speaking farmers crossed the Limpopo River and arrived in South Africa. Around 600 years ago, if not earlier, Bantu-speaking farmers also settled in the greater New Hanover area. Although some of the sites constructed by these African farmers consisted of stone walling, not all of them were made from stone. Sites located elsewhere in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, including the Karkloof Mountains in the immediate environs of the study area, show that many settlements just consisted of wattle and daub structures.

These Later Iron Age sites were most probably inhabited by Nguni-speaking groups such as the Lalo/Wushe, Zondo and related groups (Bryant 1965). These groups were known to be excellent metal workers and it is not surprising that some archaeological evidence for early metal working has been found near Wartburg and the in the Karkloof mountains. However, by 1820 the original African farmers were dispersed from this area due to the expansionistic policies of the Zulu Kingdom of King Shaka. African refugee groups and individuals were given permission to settle in the area by the British colonial authorities after 1845 where most of them became farm labourers. After the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the Bambatha Rebellion of 1911 many of the African people in the study area adopted a Zulu ethnic identity.

6. GENERAL HISTORY OF THE HISTORICAL PERIOD

European settlement of the area started soon after 1838 when the first Voortrekker settlers marked out large farms in the area. However, most of these farms were abandoned in the 1840's when Natal became a British colony only to be reoccupied again by British immigrants. The greater New Hanover area, however, was settled in the 1850s by German families (Derwent 2006). Many of the people living here today are fourth generation Germans, with their language, customs, schooling and worship all presenting a legacy from the immigrant farmers and missionaries who arrived in the colony in the mid-19th century.

It was in 1850 that cotton planter families founded New Hanover, followed in 1854 by members of the Hermannsburg Mission who settled in what became known as Hermannsburg. More German immigrants, mostly from the Hanover District in Germany, followed. As new settlements arose, steeped in the Lutheran faith, churches and schools were built. The Wartburg crest depicts the arrival of the immigrants by sailing vessels; the heraldry of Wartburg castle in Eisenach where Dr Martin Luther translated the bible into German. The crest also includes the 'Luther Rose', and the watchword 'Pray and Work'. These words are also inscribed on the church bell of Kirschdorf, near Wartburg, and reflect the industry of the local community to this day.

7. LIVING HERITAGE

Living heritage locales may include archaeological sites with a Living Heritage component, or natural features such as mountains, forests, boulders, caves, pools, or waterfalls with cultural significance. Living Heritage is not only site-specific but also relates to oral history, indigenous knowledge systems, and indigenous languages, practices, and beliefs. Oral history specifically is a rich resource that has been passed down the generations and provides diverse narratives and interpretations concerning places of historical significance. It also provides a window into community perspectives regarding heritage resources, including indigenous names for sites and plant and animal species – all of which are imbued with cultural meaning.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) constitute an integral component of local knowledge, at grass roots level, often associated with traditional methods of land management and use. In this regard Indigenous Knowledge Systems can enhance conservation and sustainable management of cultural heritage to which communities may relate.

Conservation should provide an enabling environment for communities to continue with the tradition of transmitting knowledge and skills, and of safeguarding their cultural heritage. Living Heritage sites, and sites of local significance could, for example, include various pools, waterfalls, hot springs, kaolin and red ochre deposits, and boulders afforded special significance by traditional healers and sectarian Christian groupings.

Living Heritage – Wilderness:

Areas least influenced by human activities are often said to be representative of a “pristine” landscape. Such areas are recognised by the IUCN. In the context of the Drakensberg for instance, only the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site has any proclaimed wilderness areas, making up about 48% of the Park. In this regard, a specific wilderness management plan has been produced for the World Heritage site, with the express aim of retaining the integrity of these wilderness areas. In terms of the South African National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (no 57 of 2003), a wilderness area is defined as *“an area designatedfor the purpose of retaining an intrinsically wild appearance and character, or capable of being restored to such and which is undeveloped and road less, without permanent improvements or human habitation”*.

In addition, wilderness can be considered as a value of a given area and in this regard can be defined as a *“...largely undeveloped and intrinsically wild character of the area in vast wilderness areas that provide outstanding opportunities to experience solitude and for spiritual renewal”* (EKZNW 2006). There are a number of stakeholders promoting the concept of wilderness, including the Wilderness Action Group and the Wilderness Foundation. From a cultural heritage perspective, the concept is more akin to a western inspired ideal than an academic reality. In this sense the concept of wilderness, as an area where visitors may experience and enjoy pristine nature removed from anthropogenic influence and pollution, is therefore a western expression of living heritage. The wilderness notion, however, finds expression also in the indigenous concepts of cultural landscapes which are usually natural areas with profound cultural significance.

8. THE RELEVANCE OF THE GENERAL HISTORY TO THE PROJECT AREA

These grasslands were occupied by Later Stone Age peoples, and early Nguni speaking small-scale subsistence farmers. Due to the activities of King Shaka Zulu and the expansion of the Zulu kingdom, the Mfecane, and subsequent Colonial activities and expansionist policies, these early Nguni peoples were displaced from this landscape. However, the intact indigenous grassland evident at York Farm is very much the same landscape that early Nguni-speakers would have inhabited to practice their small-scale farming, and cattle and other livestock herding. York Farm is one of the few areas left where this original landscape occurs in the uplands to the immediate south of the Tugela Valley Basin. As mentioned, this landscape is the same, or very similar, to how this area would originally have appeared when Iron Age peoples settled here. Since Colonialism the surrounding landscape has transformed tremendously, most especially by the Pine, Wattle and Eucalyptus plantations which grew in size after 1860, and which has replaced most of the midlands grassland in this area.

These wood plantations contributed significantly to the local economy, and impacted greatly upon the general environment and local regional landscape which had previously been settled by multilayered ethnic strata including Stone Age San Bushmen, Iron Age Nguni-speakers, early Voortrekker Farmers, and the later Colonial British Settlers, such as the settlers of historic York Village. Much of this area, previously covered in lush grasslands and used for transhumance summer grazing by both Nguni-speaking and later Voortrekker farmers, was replaced by thousands of hectares of wood saplings.

These plantations were essentially the work of German immigrants to the area. Through their endeavours they transformed a pristine Stone Age and Iron Age landscape into an unrecognizable and seemingly limitless vista of alien trees which have destroyed the integrity of this landscape by degrading the soils, and altering the soil composition, and dried up the natural fountains and springs, and the abundant wetlands, so that it would now take hundreds of years for this landscape to be restored to a resemblance of what it once was, if at all possible. These woodlots also replaced old traditional self-sustaining economic farming strategies which were based upon livestock herding and transhumance.

Along with this ancient ideology, the peoples who once lived upon this landscape were replaced by these woodlots for economic gain, and Western commercial endeavour. Some of these people later drifted back to their former homelands, impoverished, as cheap migrant labour on plantation, and cattle and crop farms.

9. THE TRIPARTITE NGUNI-SPEAKERS NATURE COSMOLOGY

The Nguni-speaking groups that lived in this area comprised of the Qunu, Lala, Zondo and Wushe. Sir Theophilus Shepstone on his map depicting the groups who lived on this landscape prior to the Mfecane marks York area as having been inhabited by a group called the amaMurdi (Guy 2013 2013), presumably a clan of one of the above groups . Although displaced, and having been removed from the area to find refuge in the Tugela Ferry area, and other parts of KwaZulu Natal, it is possible, and even likely, that these once pristine grasslands still find a place in the memories and oral history, and in the traditions of the descendants of these original Nguni-speaking peoples who have drifted back to their former homelands in this area. Such persistent living memories therefore render this piece of land in essence an intact relic Iron Age Sour Grass landscape, and a Living Landscape.

David Hammond-Tooke (1975) describes the tripartite structure that exist among the southern Nguni-speakers of the Forest, the Homestead and the Grassland, creating the spatial categories of:

Forest.....Grassland.....Homestead.

Certain animal categories correspond with each of these natural spatial designations:

Forest.....Grassland.....Homestead.

Carnivores.....Antelope.....Cattle and Goats.

The Forest is characteristically regarded with awe and danger. In Forests witches are believed to secrete the fearsome zombie, and to gather for their secret covens. It is also from the Forest that herbalists and sorcerers obtain their herbal medicines (Hammond-Tooke 1975, p. 25).

At the opposite end of the scale the homestead provides the model for human society and safety. With the lack of villages among the southern Nguni, the homestead becomes the stage upon which the individual's social life is played, with the social and ritual centre being the cattle kraal (ibid).

Forest and Homestead cosmologically represent the opposites of Nature/Culture. Carnivores (which are associated with the Forest, and are forbidden food), are opposed to Cattle and Goats (which are associated with the Homestead and regarded as wholesome food). The Grassland and its Antelopes mediate between these two poles. Antelope however, are still regarded as wild animals, and therefore possess some danger. Rituals are performed before hunts to neutralize the danger associated with the hunt, and ritual is also seen as domesticating the meat brought in from the Grassland (ibid).

The ambiguity of the Grasslands also contains the potent symbol of Water, most especially Rivers and Pools, and this association results in the following additional structure of:

Forest.....Water.....Homestead

And the corresponding creatures associated with each category:

Forest.....Water.....Homestead

Familiars.....River People.....Shades of the Ancestors

(ibid, p. 27).

The project area presents a prime example of this southern Nguni-speakers cosmology, which equally applies to the northern Nguni-speakers (in other words, inhabitants of this project area). To the north, north-west, and north-east of York Farm lie the Karkloof indigenous forests. To the north-east also lie the Blinkwater indigenous forest, home to leopards, and previously to elephants and other dangerous animals. The project area itself comprises intact indigenous grassland. During the Iron Age, throughout these grasslands, Wushe, Zondo, Qunu and Lala homesteads would have stretched scattered across this landscape. Add to this potent inventory the streams which flow through the project area, and surrounding area, and there results the perfect stage upon which the Nguni-speaking tripartite cosmology could, and almost certainly did, operate. Interviews conducted by the consultants with Zulu-speaking traditional healers in the Karkloof area in 1998 suggests that these indigenous knowledge systems pertaining to the land still persists (Prins in prep).

Based upon Living Heritage concerns alone, we suggest that the project area on York Farm be preserved for its Heritage Value, or at the very least that Phase 2 Social and Cultural Assessments, and Heritage assessments be conducted. The likelihood that this piece of land remains an intact Iron Age and early Settler landscape further adds to its Heritage Value, and its classification as a Living and Symbolic Cultural Landscape.

10. HISTORIC YORK VILLAGE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA

Very little remains of the Village that once was York. Only a church building and a graveyard remains. The remainder of the village has either been removed in the form of its corrugated structures, or been consumed by the alien wood plantations and crop fields that now cover all other evidence of the village, including building foundations and refuse middens, which would have provided invaluable information in the form of use of space and artefacts to future research by historians and archaeologists. Even the villages historic water furrows has been obliterated.



Plate 1. York Village Wesleyan Church and Anglican Graveyard. Surrounded by plantations.

Historic York Village lies at the foot of the Karkloof Hills, at the coordinates 29°20'40.04"S, 30°27'43.15"E, and no more than 7 kilometers from New Hanover, as the Crow Flies. It was once a thriving community, but now is no more than deserted ground, almost all evidence of the village obliterated by the alien plantations and cultivated fields which have destroyed all evidence of the structures and village life, other than the old Yellowwood Wesleyan Chapel and Anglican Church graveyard. These plantations and fields have also obliterated much of what remains of an old commonage.

In his book **Tales from the Karkloof Hills** (1971), Charles Scott Shaw writes that farms initially allotted to English Settlers to this area were said to be too small to be economical if farmed individually, and so the York area settlers decided instead to build their homesteads in a village and to rather pool some of their land to form a commonage upon which to graze their animals. They laid out their gardens in the village, planted vegetables and fruit and flowers, and dug water furrows, and built their houses. To supplement their meagre incomes the men cut some of the ancient and giant Yellowwoods in the Blinkwater Forest several kilometers away to the north-east.



Plate 2. York Village Commonage.

As the village grew and prospered the residents built a new chapel, a miniature of a Yorkshire Chapel in Britain, with its seats arranged in piers, while the old chapel was reconstructed to become the mission house for a permanent Wesleyan Minister. The Anglicans built their own church nearby. The village also included a Blacksmith, a school, a trading store-post office, and a library (Shaw 1972, p. 47).



Plate 4. Corrugated house removed from York Village and transported to the then Midmar Historical Village at Howick. Poor management practices is evident and the loss of a heritage.

The village was based upon strict spiritual and moral principles. One of the fundamental principles underlying this society was total abstinence from alcohol (ibid, p. 48). In fact, this staunch outlook was to lead to the village's ultimate demise. When the railway was being built between Pietermaritzburg and Greytown, the York villagers refused to allow it to pass through York as they feared that it would bring with it the temptation to consume liquor. As a result, the railway bypassed York to pass through New Hanover instead. In fact, the villagers would not even allow piped water to be laid when it was offered, as it was said that if water was so easy to obtain, then this might lead to the temptation to drink something stronger. And so it was that York never grew, but maintained its Old-World feel, and was eventually abandoned (ibid, p. 49).

11. UNESCO GUIDELINES FOR CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

South Africa is a signatory to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Cultural Landscapes are one of the categories specifically outlined and developed by UNESCO in terms of Heritage Conservation. As a result the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), also adheres to the principals outlined by UNESCO in this regard. This further extends to the Provincial Heritage Agency AMAFA, which must in turn itself comply with the regulations set out by SAHRA relating to Cultural Landscapes. Perhaps the best known Cultural Landscape in South Africa is the Richtersveld, which is also a UNESCO acknowledged World Heritage Site.

Cultural Landscape can be interpreted as complex and rich extended historical record conceptualised as organisation of space, time, meaning, and communication, moulded through cultural process. The connections between Landscape and Identity, and hence Memory are fundamental to the understanding of Landscape and the human Sense of Place.

Cultural landscapes are the **interface of Culture and Nature**, Tangible and Intangible Heritage, and Biological and Cultural Diversity. They represent a closely woven net of relationships, the essence of culture and people's identity. They are symbols of the growing recognition of the fundamental links between local communities and their heritage, human kind, and its natural environment.

In contemporary society particular, Landscapes can be understood by taking into consideration the way in which these societies have been settled and modified, including **overall spatial organisation, settlement patterns, land uses**, circulation networks, **field layout**, fencing, buildings, topography, **vegetation**, and **structures**. The dynamics and complex nature of Cultural Landscapes can be regarded as text, written and read by individuals and groups for very different purposes and with very many interpretations. The messages embedded in the Landscape can be read as signs about values, **beliefs**, and practices from various perspectives.

Most cultural landscapes are Living Landscapes where changes over time result in a **montage effect**, or **series of layers**, each layer able to tell the human story and relationships between people and the natural processes. The impact of human action on the Landscape occurs over time so that a Cultural Landscape is the result of a complex history. It creates the concept of Place in shaping historical identities. The deeply social nature of Place is involved in people's understanding of their environment, and their movements within it. It is a process which continues to inform the construction of people's social identity today. Social and spatial relationships are dialectically interactive and interdependent. Cultural Landscape reflects social relations and institutions, and they in turn shape subsequent social relations.

Cultural Landscapes tell the story of people, events, and places through time, offering a sense of continuity, and a sense of the stream of time. **Landscapes reflect human activity** and are imbued with cultural values. They combine elements of space and time, and represent political as well as social and cultural constructs. Culture shapes the landscape through day-to-day routine and these practices become traditions incorporated with a collective memory), examples of such include monuments, annual events and archives. As the notion of a Living Cultural Landscape evolves over time, and as human activity alters, such Living Landscapes acquired **many layers of meaning** that can be analysed through archaeological, historical, geographical, and sociological study.

Indigenous people, European explorers, Missionaries, Pastoralists, International and Domestic Travellers all looked, or look, at similar landscapes and experience as different versions of reality. Regardless of the power-relations, or the political status, of different cultural ethnicities, all groups create Cultural Landscapes and interpret them from their own perspectives. This gives rise to social and political tensions, and contradictions between groups, invariably expressed in Landscape forms as well.

The dynamics and complex nature of Cultural Landscapes can be regarded as text, written and read by individuals and groups for very different purposes and with very many interpretations. The messages embedded in the landscape can be read as signs about values, beliefs, and practices from various perspectives. Most Cultural Landscapes are Living Landscapes where changes over time result in a **montage effect, or series of layers**, each layer able to tell the human story and relationships between people and the natural processes.

Underlying the ideology of Landscape as the setting for everything we do, is the concept that that the Landscape is a repository of intangible values and human meaning that nurtures our very existence. Intangible elements are the foundation of the existence of Cultural Landscapes that are still occupied by contemporary communities. Landscape, Culture and Collective

Memory of a social group are intertwined, and that this binds the individuals to their community through a Living Landscape.

Culture shapes a society's everyday life -- values bind gradually, change slowly, and transfer from generation to generation. Culture is a form of memory. We see Landscapes as a result of our shared System of Beliefs and Ideologies. In this way Landscape is a Cultural Construct, a mirror of our memories and myths, encoded with meanings which can be read and interpreted. Pivotal to the concept of Cultural Landscapes is the realisation that places, traditions, and activities of ordinary people create a rich Cultural Tapestry of life. Values attached to Landscape create a sense of place and identity.

Living Heritage are the cultural expressions and practices that form a body of knowledge and provide for continuity and meaning of social life to generations of people as individuals, as social groups, and as communities. It also allows for a sense of identity and belonging, and a mutual respect for human, social and cultural rights.

Protection of these Cultural Landscapes involves management practices based upon the continued vital link between people and their Landscapes. This link can be disrupted, or affected, for instance by economic reasons. Other threats can be attributed to urban expansion and development, tourism, war and looting, and by natural disasters and climate change. Cultural Landscape Management and conservation processes bring people together in caring for their Collective Identity and Heritage, and provide a shared local vision within a global context.

Local communities need therefore, to be involved in every aspect of identification, planning and management of these areas as they are the most effective guardians of Landscape Heritage. **Most elements of Living Heritage are under threat of extinction due to neglect, modernisation, urbanisation, globalisation, and environmental degradation.**

As Living Heritage is at the centre of people's culture and identity, it is importance to provide space for its continued existence. Living Heritage must not be seen as merely safeguarding the past, but seen as safeguarding the logic of continuity of what all communities, or social groups regard as their valuable heritage, shared or exclusive.

12. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

12.1 Methodology

A desktop study was conducted of the SAHRA inventory of heritage sites. Unfortunately this database is incomplete and of only limited use. The SAHRIS website was consulted in order to evaluate past heritage surveys and assessments of the greater New Hanover area. In addition, the archaeological database of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum was consulted. This data base indicated a number of heritage sites. However, none of these known heritage sites occur in the immediate vicinity of the footprint, nor will they be impacted-upon by the proposed development. A ground survey following standard and accepted archaeological procedures was conducted.

Telephonic interviews were conducted with members of various Heritage Societies who, and a Literature Survey was conducted. An aerial survey using Google earth was also conducted.

12.2. Restrictions Encountered During the Survey

12.2.1 Visibility

Visibility was good of the general area, but the surface of the land was covered with grass, so obscuring any visibility of prehistoric, or historic structures and traces, and of any artefacts that may be present. We suggest a Phase 2 Survey once the surface is more visible.

12.2.2 Disturbance

Much of the land surface was visible on Google Earth aerial search. There is no evidence of the disturbance of heritage sites on the project area, other than degradation of the soil, and erosion scars.

12.2.3 Details of Equipment used in the Survey

GPS: Garmin Etrek. Digital cameras: Fuji Finepix S. All readings were taken using the GPS. Accuracy was to a level of 5 m.

13. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED

No archaeological sites, or material were observed within the project footprint. The project area is however, a distinct Multi-layered Cultural Landscape and a Living Landscape, with historical value and import.

14. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)

14.1 Field Rating

The SAHRA system of field rating (Table 2) rates this site as preliminary Provincial Grade II. This site is considered to be of Provincial significance. Nominated to be declared by the Provincial Heritage Authority. This status is pending further investigation by the local heritage authority Amafa, and a Phase 2 Social and Cultural, and Heritage Assessment Processes.

Table 2. Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)

Level	Details	Action
National (Grade I)	The site is considered to be of National Significance	Nominated to be declared by SAHRA
Provincial (Grade II)	This site is considered to be of Provincial significance	Nominated to be declared by Provincial Heritage Authority
Local Grade IIIA	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be retained as a heritage site
Local Grade IIIB	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be mitigated, and part retained as a heritage site
Generally Protected A	High to medium significance	Mitigation necessary before destruction
Generally Protected B	Medium significance	The site needs to be recorded before destruction
Generally Protected C	Low significance	No further recording is required before destruction

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

No visible sites, or heritage material occur within the project footprint, the land was well-covered by grass and the surface of the land was not fully visible. It may contain artefacts, foundations, walling, and other features. In addition to this, the land may very well have Living Heritage Value associated with it. Oral History, myths and legends, Living Memory may pertain to this piece of land which remains endangered intact indigenous grassland (Ngongoni Sour Veld). While the land has already suffered some degradation, and soil erosion from possible overgrazing, it remains comparatively intact and appears as it must have when the first Nguni-speaking peoples, and the first Voortrekkers, and the first German and British Settlers to the area made it their home.



Plate 3. Thick grass coverage of York Commonage.

We suggest that a possible Phase 2 Social and Cultural Survey, and a Survey incorporating Living Heritage be considered during which the Cultural and Social relevance to past, and extant communities of the past and present be explored. Failing this, we suggest that stakeholders might consider preserving this piece of relatively intact indigenous landscape as a reserve and show-piece, or example, of how this area must have appeared before, and during the Later Iron Age, and the early Historic Period. So little of this original Cultural Landscape remains. This would entail more stringent strategies for self-sustaining grazing which will halt further degradation to the soils and erosion, and measures to rectify the damage already inflicted upon this old and rare commonage.

16. CONCLUSION

There exist various concerns relating to the further development of the project area in question, and outlined throughout the text of this report. To recap, these are:

- The project area comprises of one of the last few **relatively pristine pieces of Nongoni Sour Veld** in the Midlands and Karkloof areas of KwaZulu Natal, and in the Tugela Basin Uplands.
- The project area comprises one of the last few pieces of relatively pristine indigenous grasslands inhabited by Stone Age peoples, and encountered by Iron Age peoples when they entered this region. This land is almost identical to the way this landscape appeared when these grasslands were used for grazing by these pastoralist Iron Age peoples, and upon which their scattered homesteads were located. It is still, in essence, a **Later Iron Age Landscape**.
- The project area appears as it first did to early Voortrekker Settlers who farmed this land, and to the later British and German Settlers who followed in their trails. This land therefore forms part of an intact **Settler and Colonial Landscape**.
- This land is a prime example of the southern-, and northern-Nguni-speakers tripartite Nature Cosmology, and therefore forms part of **an Indigenous Symbolic Cultural Landscape**.
- As this land almost certainly forms part of indigenous peoples Historical Memory, and the legends of elders, and of the descendants of the groups who resided upon this landscape, and because York Village forms part of the Living Memory and legends of the descendants of European Settlers in this part of KwaZulu Natal, the project area forms part of a Multi-layered Living Cultural Landscape. In fact, the area once encompassing, and surrounding, York Village is presently being farmed by the very descendants of the inhabitants of this historical village in the form of the York Farmer's Association.
- Because this lands was inhabited by Later Stone Age San, Later Iron Age Pastoralists, Dutch speaking Voortrekkers, and Colonial German and British Settlers, it forms part of a **Multi-layered Cultural Landscape**.
- Because this land forms part of Historical Memory of certain of these groups it renders the land a **Multi-layered Living Cultural Landscape**.
- York Village and its Commonage forms part of a wider Cultural Landscape which extends to include the Karkloof Mountain range which overlooks York, as well as the village and towns and landscape reaching to Pietermaritzburg to the south, and the towns and villages and landscape to the Tugela Valley and Greytown to the north, and lowlands towards the coast. Huge elephant herds once roamed KwaZulu Natal Midlands. In fact, Natal was first occupied by British traders because of the feverish ivory trade that once existed in historical times. The Karkloof Forest was a prime habitat for elephants. Other large wild game also passed through this area as part of their seasonal transhumant migrations. There are a number of material artefacts that relate to this hunting trade

including Later Stone Age tools, Elephant Hunting Pits at Karkloof Forests and Blinkwater Forests. There are known Later Iron Age villages at Otto's Bluff, at Umgeni Valley, and in the Karkloof. There is also a Historical Iron Age Battle Site at the foot of Loskop in the Karkloof. Even the Later Stone Age Bushmen hunted in this area, took part in the Elephant Trade, and passed through this area on their own transhumant seasonal migration route. During early colonial times Bushman cattle raiders also targeted the Karkloof area (Wright 1976). All of this forms part of the wider Cultural Historical Landscape of which York is just one node.

- Most of York Village and its Commonage have been decimated by alien woodlands, and fields. Its houses and other structures have either been destroyed, or moved to the once Midmar Historical Village. There, some of them have been left to deteriorate into ruins by KZN Wildlife, or eventually burnt down by fire. Plantations and fields have annihilated any traces of structures, foundations, water furrows, gardens, boundaries, pathways, and other imprints of human activity in the daily life of the historical village. This has robbed future generations of a rich historical legacy, and future archaeological, historical, anthropological and social researchers of historical material which would permit them to piece together the rich fabric of Settler Village life in this area.
- Large parts of York Commonage has been put under plantations and fields -- a Commonage which was once used for grazing. The Commonage formed part of a rich Cultural Landscape of what was once York Village. This should never have been allowed to happen under modern Heritage Legislation. What little remains of historic York Village – the Wesleyan Church, the Anglican Graveyard, the project area Commonage – should be preserved intact.
- The remains of this Commonage form one of only three such Commonages in KwaZulu-Natal, and in this regard is of rare Historical import, and should be preserved. It also forms part of a vestige of historical British Culture transported into the Colony, and with all the Cultural Meaning and Symbolism embodied in this old Feudal System.
- Active Heritage suggests that the project area is preserved intact as a Commonage with self-sustainable grazing, and that stringent measures are taken to rectify the damage already done to its fragile soils by over-grazing and erosion.
- As a further note outside the scope of this report would be to set what remains of the Commonage aside as a show-piece of what an early historical landscape would comprised.

York Farm 99 ha Cultivation. uMshwati Local Municipality. Janet Edmonds Consultancy.

Should the Stakeholders wish to persist in developing this old Commonage for further agricultural use Active Heritage suggests that a Phase 2 Social and Cultural Assessment, and a Living Heritage and Archaeological Assessment be implemented.

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