

**DRAFT**

**A PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE  
PROPOSED UPGRADE OF THE HLULEKHA ROAD, NYANDENI MUNICIPALITY,  
O.R. TAMBO DISTRICT, MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE**

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**Note:** This report follows the minimum standard guidelines required by the South African Heritage Resources Agency for compiling Archaeological Heritage Phase 1 Impact Assessment (AHIA) reports.

## **SUMMARY**

### **Purpose of the study**

To conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed upgrade of the road from the R16 at St. Barnabas Hospital to Hlulekha Nature Reserve, Nyandeni Municipality, O.R. Tambo District Municipality, Eastern Cape; to evaluate the importance of the archaeological and historical heritage sites, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to these sites.

### **The investigation**

No archaeological sites or materials were found along the immediate vicinity of the road. Only one grave was located some 20 metres from the road. Areas on both sides of the road are disturbed and made it impossible to find any /materials.

### **Cultural sensitivity**

The proposed upgrade of the Hlulekha road is of low archaeological sensitivity and construction may proceed as planned.

### **Recommendations**

1. If any concentrations of archaeological material are exposed during construction, all work in that area should cease and it should be reported immediately to the nearest museum/archaeologist or to the South African Heritage Resources Agency.
2. The grave should be fenced to avoid any damage to it.

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

### **Status**

The report is part of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **The type of development**

The proposed development involves the upgrade of the current Hlulekha gravel road to a bitumen surfaced road over a distance of 47 kilometres and 9,8 metres wide.

### **The Developer**

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## **BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Literature review**

#### **Brief archaeological background**

Little is known about the archaeology of this part of the coast, because no systematic field research has been conducted there. Notwithstanding, there are a number of reports, references and accessioned material in museums of the region and nationally which provide us with a background. This information was compiled by R.M. Derricourt during the early 1970s and published in his book, *Prehistoric man in the Ciskei and Transkei* in 1977. This part of the coast between East London and the Great Kei River is rich in archaeological sites and material.

From the archival information and limited field work, it is evident that the area has a interesting and complex archaeological past. Earlier Stone Age (ESA) hand axes, cleavers and other stone tools, dating to approximately a million or more years old, were found mainly in inland areas such as in the districts of Butterworth, Idutywa and Lusioni to name a few.

Middle Stone Age (MSA) stone artefacts dating between 200 000 and 30 000 years old can be found throughout the region, but carry little information because they are not associated with any other archaeological material. Later Stone Age open sites, dating to the past 20 000 years are also widely scattered throughout the area.

The most common archaeological sites are shell middens (large piles of marine shell) found usually concentrated opposite rocky coasts (people refer to these as 'strandloper middens'). These were campsites of San, KhoiSan and Bantu-speakers who lived along the immediate coast and collected marine foods. Mixed with the shell are other food remains, cultural material and often human remains are found in the middens. These middens date from the past 8 000 years.

There are no records of Early Iron Age (first farming communities) sites or material from the Hlulekha area, but there are settlements in the wider region (Maggs 1973, Feely 1987; Prins 1993). The nearest EIA site, Ntsitsana in the Mzimvubu River, was excavated by Prins (1993) and is some 90 kilometres north of the Hlulekha Nature Reserve. Evidence in the form of thick walled well-decorated pot shards are present along other parts of the Transkei coast (Rudner 1968) as is evident from sites that were excavated at Mpame River Mouth (Cronin 1982) and just west of East London (Nongwaza 1994). Research in the Great Kei River Valley indicates that the first mixed farmers were already settled in the Eastern Cape between A.D. 600 - 700 (Binneman 1994).

## References

- Binneman, J 1994. Preliminary report on the investigations at Kulubele, an Early Iron Age farming settlement in the Great Kei River Valley, Eastern Cape. *Southern African Field Archaeology* 5:28-35.
- Cronin, M. 1982. Radiocarbon dates for the Early Iron Age in the Transkei. *South African Journal of Science* 78: 38-39.
- Derricourt, R.M. 1977. *Prehistoric man in the Ciskei and Transkei*. Cape Town: C. Struik .
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- Maggs, T. 1973. The NC3 Iron Age tradition. *South African Journal Science* 69:325-326.
- Mostert, N. 1992. *Frontiers: the epic of South Africa's creation and the tragedy of the Xhosa people*. London: Pimlico.
- Prins, F.E. 1993. *Aspects of Iron Age ecology in Transkei*. Unpublished M.A. thesis: university of Stellenbosch.
- Rudner, J. 1968. Strandloper pottery from South and South West Africa. *Annals of the South African Museum* 49:441-663.

## Museum/University databases and collections

The Albany Museum in Grahamstown houses some collections and information from the region.

## Relevant impact assessments

None in the immediate vicinity.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

### Area surveyed

#### Location data

The proposed road for upgrading runs from the R16 to Hlulekha Nature Reserve (47 kilometres), Nyandeni Municipality, O.R. Tambo District Municipality, Eastern Cape (Maps 1-5).

## Maps

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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION**

GPS readings were taken with a Garmin Plus II

### **Methodology**

The survey consisted of a slow drive by two people from the R16 road (between Mthatha and Port St Johns) to the gate of the Hlulekha Reserve and back, identifying possible sensitive areas for archaeological heritage sites/materials. Whenever a possible sensitive area was identified, spot checks/investigations were conducted on both sides of the road between 20-30 metres wide. Many existing and old borrow pits and other disturbances next to the road were investigated on foot. Dense grass along most of the road made it difficult to locate archaeological sites/material.

The current road mainly follows the flat hill tops and winds through many small villages, settlements and fields (Figs 1-4). The immediate areas (up to 30 metres) on both sides of the gravel road have been well exposed to extensive human and natural erosion and therefore any archaeological features and material will be destroyed, damaged or in secondary context. In general, the road is constructed in areas where one would not normally expect to find archaeological sites such as Late Mixed Farmer Settlements (Late Iron Age Settlements). No such sites were recorded during a preliminary study of the distribution of Iron Age settlements in the Transkei by Granger and Feely (nd.) and Feely (1987). However, if any were situated in this area, these settlements would have been destroyed during the initial construction of the road. Early Iron Age Settlements are situated in the valleys bottoms of larger rivers and such sites would not be found on the hill tops (Maggs 1980; Binneman 1994).

The first 21 kilometres of the road from the R16 runs through villages, small settlements, fields, gardens, etc. and along the hill tops covered with dense grass. The immediate areas along the road are well disturbed by these developments which are usually within 25 metres from the road. The current road is in general lower than the surrounding landscape because the access soil from the water draining furrows was pushed upwards to form a 'wall' parallel to the road (Fig. 3-4). In some areas there are also side drainage furrows approximately every 50 metres. No archaeological sites/materials were found.

Although it is not part of the TOR of the archaeological investigation to record historical features/sites, a grave was observed some 25 metres from the road, is reported here (Maps 2-3) (Figs 5-6). GPS reading at 31.37.244S; 29.06.450E. It is a recent grave, dating to 1973 (Madikiza family) and falls outside a formal cemetery. The following is important regarding the grave:

The grave is younger than 60 years and therefore not protected by the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, but is subject to the provisions of the Human Tissue Act of 1983 and to local, regional, municipal and/or provincial regulations. However, if the grave is that of a victim of conflict it is protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Section 36(3a) and must be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency's Burial Unit.

The next 21 kilometres are similar to the first part and developments in the area are also situated close to the road, for example houses, fields, dams and borrow pits (Figs 2-6). The road also runs along steep hill slopes in places which are covered with dense forest and/or shrub vegetation.

The last 5 kilometres to the Hlulekha gate and the coast is an important area for coastal archaeological sites. Coastal research elsewhere along the east coast of South Africa indicated that features such as shell middens are usually found up to 5 kilometres from the coast (Binneman 2001, 2005). The gate area is situated close to a rocky coast and the possibility for shell middens along the immediate coastline is high. (see Appendix A for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area) (Map 4-5).

### **Description of the sites**

Apart from the grave no archaeological sites/materials were found.

### **References**

- Binneman, J.N.F. 2001. An introduction to a Later Stone Age coastal research project along the south-eastern Cape coast. *Southern African Field Archaeology* 10:75-87.
- Binneman, J.N.F. 2005. Archaeological research along the south-eastern Cape coast part1: open-air shell middens *Southern African Field Archaeology* 13 & 14:49-77. 2004/2005.



**Figs 1-4. Views of the proposed road for upgrading. Examples of the small villages, settlements and fields it passes through and the disturbances next to the road. Note the road is lower than the surrounding landscape.**





**Figs 5-6. Views of the grave. Note the dense grass cover.**



**Figs 7-10. Views of the quarries and other disturbances along the road and the Hlulekha Nature Reserves gate area.**

## Discussion

The immediate areas on both sides of the proposed gravel road for upgrading have been well exposed to extensive human and natural erosion and therefore any archaeological features and material will be destroyed, damaged or in secondary context. In general, one would not normally expect to find archaeological sites such as Early or Late Mixed Farmer Settlements in the close vicinity of the road. Dense grass along most of the road made it difficult to locate archaeological sites/material. However, it is a possible that coastal archaeological sites may be



found at the coastal part (up to 2 kilometres inland) of the proposed road, especially in the area of the present Hlulekha Nature Reserve gate. Although it is unlikely that any archaeological heritage remains of any value will be found *in situ* or of any contextual value, there is always a possibility that human remains and/or other archaeological and historical material may be uncovered during the development. Such material must be reported to the nearest museum, archaeologist or to the South African Heritage Resources Agency if exposed, so that a systematic and professional investigation can be undertaken. Sufficient time should be allowed to remove/collect such material (See Appendix A for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area). In general it is unlikely that any archaeological heritage remains of any value will be found *in situ* or of any contextual value will be exposed during the development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Although no archaeological material and sites were observed and documented it is therefore highly unlikely that any archaeological material or sites would be uncovered during the construction activities. However the following recommendations are suggested:

1. If any concentrations of heritage material (including graves, burials or human remains) are uncovered during development, it should be reported to the Albany Museum and/or the South African Heritage Resources Agency immediately so that systematic and professional investigation/excavations can be undertaken. Sufficient time should be allowed to remove/collect such material (See appendix A for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area).
2. It is recommended that the grave be fenced to protect it against possible damage during the development. Graves and graveyards older than 60 years and graves of victims of conflict are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 Of 1999) (Section 36). Those younger than 60 years are not protected by the National Heritage Resources Act, but protected by the Human Tissue Act and by regional and municipal regulations and may not be disturbed or destroyed without the necessary permits and proceedings.

If relocation of the grave is considered, then all the correct procedures, especially the public participation process must be followed. Permits must be obtained from SAHRA for any work on graves and graveyards. It is recommended that a specialist be consulted should any further work be required on the grave.

## GENERAL REMARKS AND CONDITION

**Note:** This report is a phase 1 archaeological heritage impact assessment/investigation only and does not include or exempt other required heritage impact assessments (see below).

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999, section 35) requires a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in order that all heritage resources, that is, all places or objects of aesthetics, architectural, historic, scientific, social, spiritual linguistic or technological value or significance are protected. Thus any assessment should make provision for the protection of all these heritage components, including archaeology, shipwrecks, battlefields, graves, and structures older than 60 years, living heritage, historical settlements, landscapes, geological sites, palaeontological sites and objects.

It must be emphasised that the conclusions and recommendations expressed in this archaeological heritage sensitivity investigation are based on the visibility of archaeological sites/features and may not therefore, reflect the true state of affairs. Many sites/features may be covered by soil and vegetation and will only be located once this has been removed. In the event of such finds being uncovered, (such as during any phase of construction work), archaeologists must be informed immediately so that they can investigate the importance of the sites and excavate or collect material before it is destroyed. The onus is on the developer to ensure that this agreement is honoured in accordance with the National Heritage Act No. 25 of 1999.

It must also be clear that Archaeological Specialist Reports (AIAs) will be assessed by the relevant heritage resources authority. The final decision rests with the heritage resources authority, which should grant a permit or a formal letter of permission for the destruction of any cultural sites.

## **APPENDIX A: IDENTIFICATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AND MATERIAL FROM INLAND AREAS: guidelines and procedures for developers**

### 1. Identification of Iron Age archaeological features and material

- Upper and lower grindstones, broken or complete. Upper grindstone/rubber will be pitted.
- Circular hollows - sunken soil, would indicate storage pits and often associated with grindstones.
- Ash heaps, called middens with cultural remains and food waste such as bone.
- Khaki green soils would indicate kraal areas.
- Baked clay/soil blocks with or without pole impression marks indicate hut structures.
- Decorated and undecorated pot shards.
- Iron slag and/or blowpipes indicate iron working.
- Human remains may also be associated with khaki green soils.
- Metal objects and ornaments

### 2. Shell middens

Shell middens can be defined as an accumulation of marine shell deposited by human agents rather than the result of marine activity. The shells are concentrated in a specific locality above the high-water mark and frequently contain stone tools, pottery, bone and occasionally also human remains. Shell middens may be of various sizes and depths, but an accumulation which exceeds 1 m<sup>2</sup> in extent, should be reported to an archaeologist.

### 3. Human Skeletal material

Human remains, whether the complete remains of an individual buried during the past, or scattered human remains resulting from disturbance of the grave, should be reported. In general the remains are buried in a flexed position on their sides, but are also found buried in a sitting position with a flat stone capping or in ceramic pots. Developers are requested to be on the alert for these features and remains.

### 4. Fossil bone

Fossil bones may be found embedded in deposits at the sites. Any concentrations of bones, whether fossilized or not, should be reported.

### 5. Stone artefacts

These are difficult for the layman to identify. However, large accumulations of flaked stones which do not appear to have been distributed naturally should be reported. If the stone tools are associated with bone remains, development should be halted immediately and archaeologists notified.

### 6. Stone features and platforms

These occur in different forms and sizes, but easily identifiable. The most common are an accumulation of roughly circular fire cracked stones tightly spaced and filled in with charcoal and marine shell. They are usually 1-2 metres in diameter and may represent cooking

platforms for shell fish. Others may resemble circular single row cobble stone markers. These occur in different sizes and may be the remains of wind breaks or cooking shelters.

#### 7. Large stone cairns

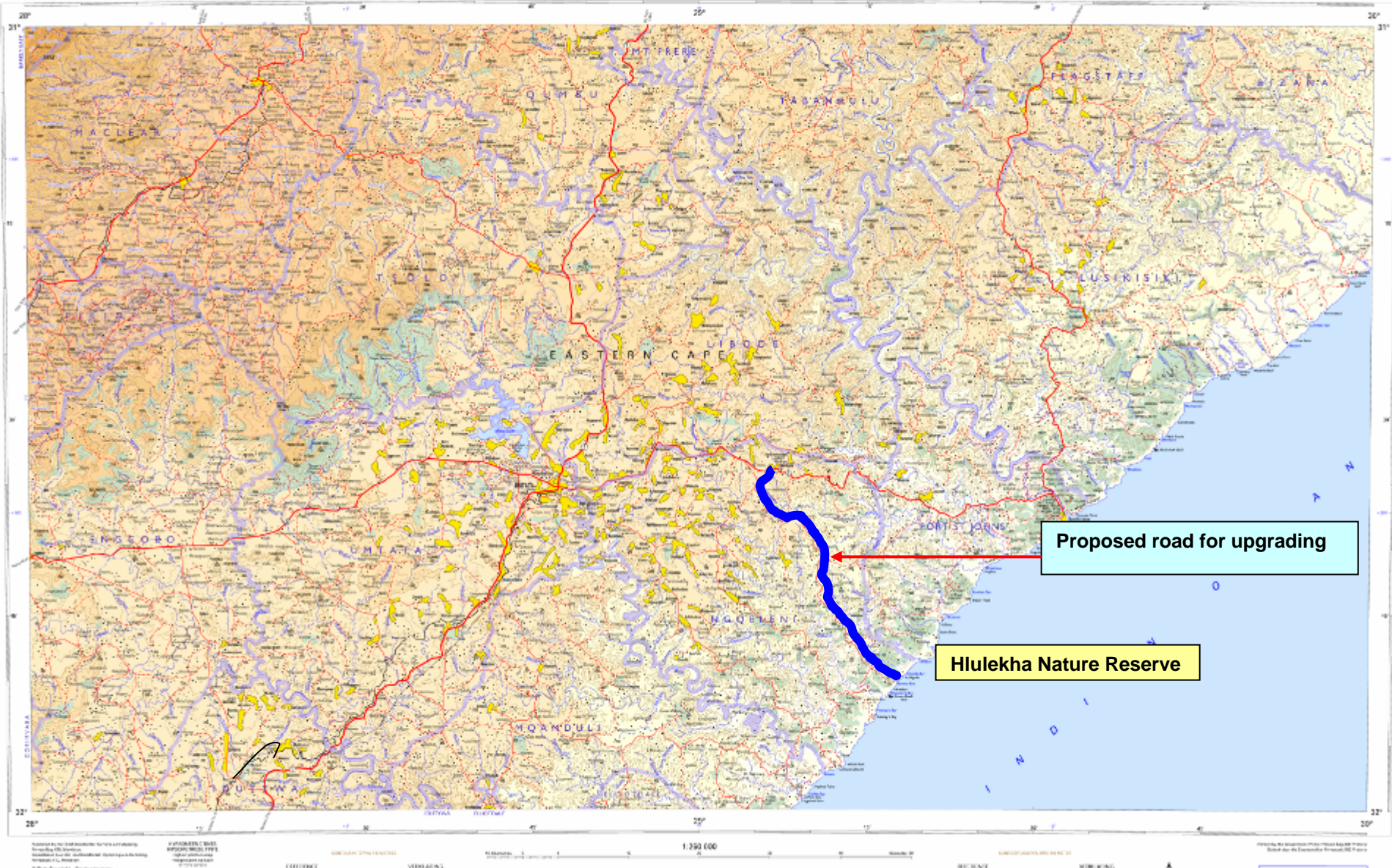
The most common cairns consist of large piles of stones of different sizes and heights and are known as *isisivane*. They are usually near river and mountain crossings. Their purpose and meaning is not fully understood, however, some are thought to represent burial cairns while others may have symbolic value.

#### 8. Historical artefacts or features

These are easy to identified and include foundations of buildings or other construction features and items from domestic and military activities.

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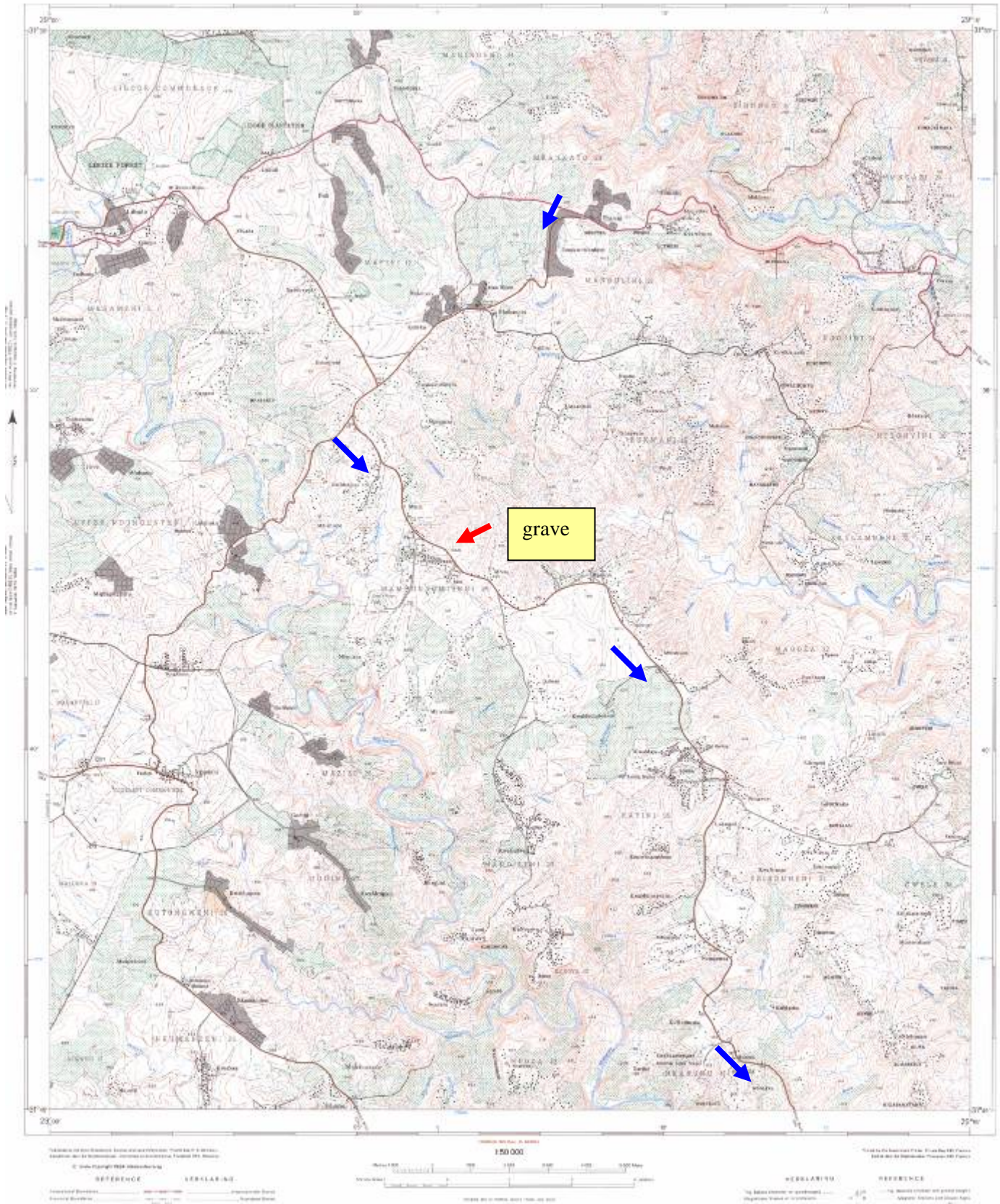


Map 1. 1:250 000 Topographic map indicating the proposed road for upgrading.



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1:50 000 NORTH AFRICA  
SUDAN



**Map 2. 1:50 000 Topographic map of the proposed road for upgrading and also indicating the location of the grave.**

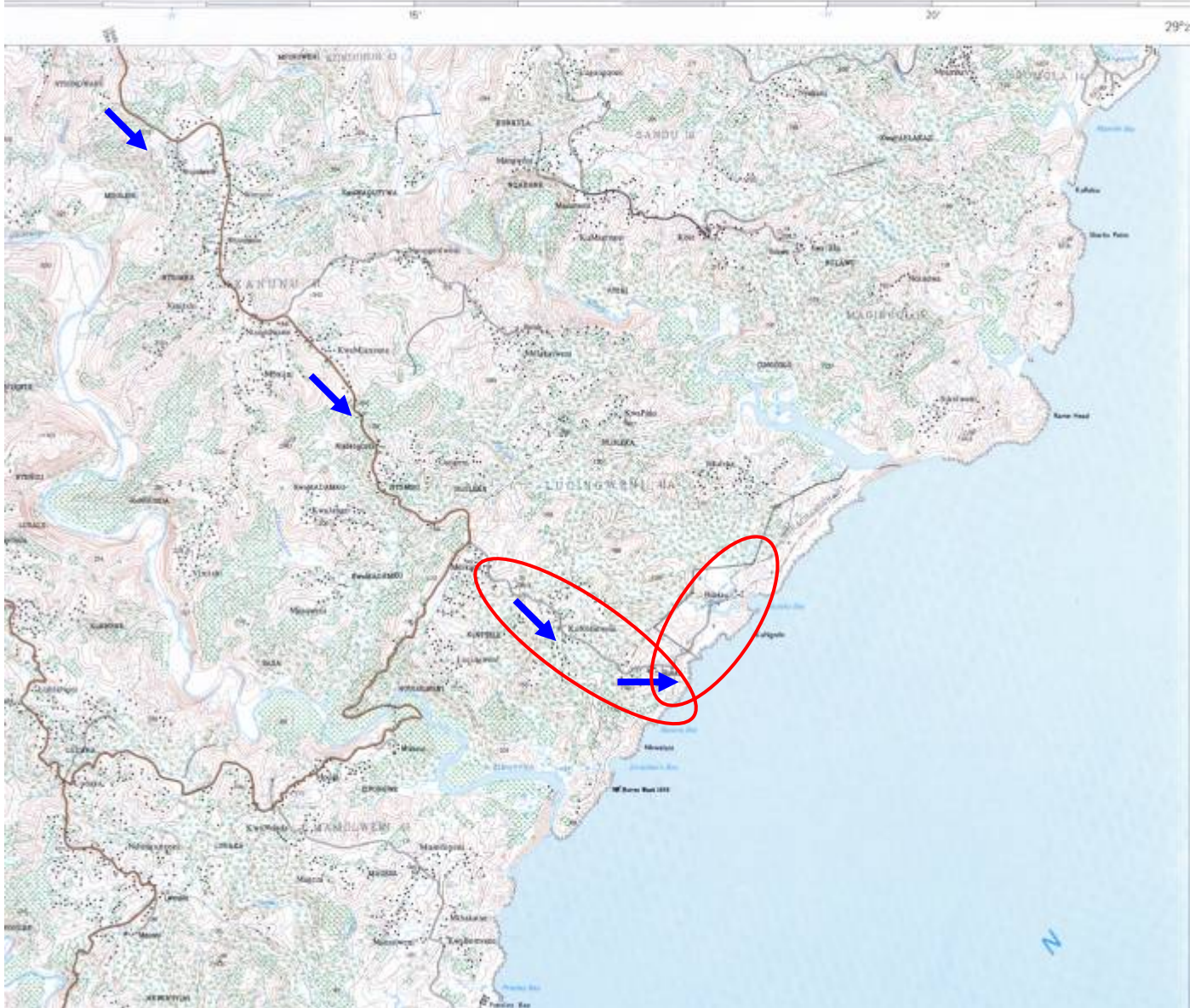




Map 3. Aerial view of proposed road for upgrading and also indicating the location of the grave.



## 3129CC &amp; CD Coffee Bay

1:50 000 SOUTH AFRICA  
SUID-AFRIKA

**Map 4. 1:50 000 Topographic map of the proposed road for upgrading and also indicating the sensitive zone where possible coastal archaeological sites may be found.**





**Map 5. Aerial view of proposed road for upgrading and also indicating the sensitive zone where possible coastal archaeological sites may be found.**