



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency - Head Office | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001

SITE INSPECTION REPORT: Mapungubwe World Heritage Site in Limpopo

Prepared By: Kim Ngobeni [{kngobeni@sahra.org.za}](mailto:kngobeni@sahra.org.za)

HERITAGE PROTECTION UNIT

Date: 12 February 2021

APP Indicator Number: 4.1





an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

1. Introduction

Section 5 (1)(a) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) states that “Heritage resources have lasting value in their own right and provide evidence of the origins of the South African society and as they are valuable, finite, non-renewable and irreplaceable they must be carefully managed to ensure their survival”.

2. Purpose of Report

The purpose is to give a report on the site visit held at the Mapungubwe National Heritage Site in Limpopo on the 10th of February 2021.

3. Project background

The APM unit of SAHRA had notified the HPU of an illegal road construction and fencing that was being erected by ZZ2 in Bismarck Limpopo. The HPU then issued a cease works order to ZZ2 to cease all the construction, until all the processes have been followed and adhered to.

4. Site Assessment

The HPU undertook a joint site inspection with the APM Unit on the 10th of February 2021 at Mapungubwe in Limpopo. The site inspection was attended by the management authority of ZZ2 and SAHRA officials from HPU, APM, BEU and NIU.

Upon arrival we had noticed that the fence had already been erected, however they have stopped the work after the cease works had been issued. The construction of the road has been constructed as well; however they have also ceased the work. The plan of ZZ2 was to construct a road that gives the farm easier access to their land. ZZ2 wants to construct a water pipeline for their farm produce.



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture



Figure 1: Fence Poles already constructed

On site, the team observed that a large part of the site had recently been destroyed where a trench measuring approximately 15m x 200m has been bulldozed through deep intact archaeological deposits from east to west. A number of large holes were dug into the site and its deposits. Stones were displaced from stone features and archaeological deposit was used to create an abutment to the one side of the site. As a result of growing safety concerns in the Weipe area, ZZ2 is currently in the process of upgrading existing border fence lines where electric fences are erected and it appeared that site impact was the result of fence construction in the hill. It was observed that, on the hill the existing fence was constructed around the archaeological site where the new fence development bisects the site.



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture



Figure 2 and 3: Displaced stones

The site, measuring approximately 300m x 100m displays a dense surface scatter of cultural material such as decorated pottery, faunal remains, OES beads, metal objects and upper grind stones. In addition, large quantities of stone granary stands, stone platforms and stone cairns litter the site. Cupules and grinding hollows were noted in bedrock and large stones at the site. The entire western section of the site is deposited with vitrified cattle dung and a number of ash middens and lenses occur along the outer periphery of the site.

This settlement probably dates to the TK2 Period dating to circa AD 1200 where fragments of recurved jars, bowls and beakers with hatched triangles in the neck, hatched bands and upright incised triangles and comb stamps in the neck were noted. Hilltop locations are typically elite residences, the size and the location of the site suggests it to be the site of a regional headman, likely tied to the political dynasty of Mapungubwe.



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture



Figure 4: Meeting Undertaking

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is recommended that ZZ2 applies for both permits. These permits will be for both the fencing and the road construction. Only then, can the HPU lift the Cease Works Order for the work to commence.



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

Heritage Officer: Kim Ngobeni

Date: 12 February 2021

Heritage Protection Manager: Ms. Nkosazana Machete

Date: 24 March 2021