



**ETHEMBENI  
CULTURAL  
HERITAGE**

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10 August 2015

**Attention      Bernadet Pawandiwa**

Dear Ms Pawandiwa

**Application for Exemption from a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment  
Maqumbi Rural Subsidised Housing Project  
Qadi Ward, Maqumbi Traditional Authority, Maphamulo Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal  
APPLICATION IN TERMS OF THE KZN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT (6 OF 2008)**

**Project description**

The Maphumulo Municipality and KZN Department of Human Settlements intend to construct 1500 (one thousand five hundred) 40m<sup>2</sup> houses for beneficiaries earning less than R3 500 per month in the Qadi Ward of the Maqumbi Traditional Authority. There are a total of just under 2000 households in the area, many of them in extended homesteads.

Houses will be built with connections and fittings for services such as water and electricity to be installed at a later stage. Each structure will be supplied with a JoJo tank and rainwater harvesting system, as well as a VIP latrine. New houses will be built adjacent to the existing dwellings within existing homestead precincts.

Beneficiaries in non-serviceable or environmentally sensitive areas will be offered a new site in more accessible areas closer to infrastructure. The Beneficiary sites will be formally leased from the Ingonyama Trust Board by individual Home Owners. [Information provided by Client].

**Site location**

The proposed development site is located within the Maphumulo Local Municipality to the north and east of the R74 and abuts the south bank of the Thukela River between Mvumase and KwaMshibe. The relevant 1:50 000 map sheet is 2931 AA, Mapamulo (see also Google kmz.imagery in SAHRIS Case File).



**FIGURE 1 GOOGLE EARTH IMAGERY INDICATING MAQUMBI PROJECT LOCATION.**

### **Site assessment and recommendations**

This PI is very familiar with the Maqumbi area as it was a regular access route onto the Thukela River whilst conducting Iron Age Surveys of the Lower Thukela Basin during the 1980's and 1990's (van Schalkwyk 1996; Greenfield *et al* 2008). The landscape is deeply incised off the N/S oriented interfluvial valleys below the Thukela/Mvoti watershed and these steep sided valleys and sandstone scarp faces are historically eschewed for settlement. Typically, homesteads have been established on the flatter valley bottoms or on the level interfluvial areas.

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, a Heritage Impact Assessment is required in terms of Section 38(1c): *Any development or other activity which will change the character of a site (i) exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup> in extent.*

However, whilst the combined area of proposed developments exceeds 5000m<sup>2</sup>, each housing unit is only 40m<sup>2</sup> in extent and confined to within the precinct of original homestead settlements. The majority of the 1500 beneficiaries reside on the flatter interfluvial areas below the Mvoti/Thukela watershed in modern bungalow-styled household buildings. These are historically recent settlements on previous commercial sugar farms that were incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland in the late 1970's. This landscape was fundamentally altered in the contour ploughing of slopes for sugar cane production during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and remains the principle agricultural activity, albeit at the level of numerous small cane growers producing collectively. Any archaeological footprint on these interfluvial areas has been erased.

A minority of beneficiaries residing in the valley bottoms of the development area retain more traditional *imizi* with attendant cattle byres and small-stock pens. All homesteads are serviced by graded local and district roads. Previous surveys here (Greenfield, van Schalkwyk *et al* 2003) yielded no evidence of Early and Middle Iron Age sites in the vicinities of current settlement.

Graves occur in and immediately adjacent to historically more recent homesteads in the upland areas and are attended by next-of-kin. The same is observed on the historically older settlements but in the lower valleys a greater degree of homestead abandonment has occurred through time. Kin-folk however retain a deep knowledge of these and their attendant graves, and avoid resettlement in their vicinity.

As both beneficiaries, and civic and traditional leadership, have endorsed these *in situ* developments and issues of graves' sanctity resides with the recipient families. Suffice to state that in the event of unmarked or unrecognised graves being identified such may not be altered, damaged or moved without a permit issued by Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali.

The SAHRIS Palaeosensitivity Map indicates that the area has low sensitivity, requiring no palaeontological studies.

Accordingly, we request that Amafa grant an exemption from an HIA for this activity, allowing the project to proceed with no further heritage resource mitigation.

Please can you notify ourselves on behalf of our client, Vines Masupha Associates, as to the decision of Amafa in this regard.

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk  
Principal Investigator.

References:

- 2008 with Haskel J. Greenfield. Early Iron Age Regional Settlement and Demographic Patterns along the Eastern seaboard of South Africa: a view from the lower Thukela Valley. In. Animals and People: Archaeozoological Papers in Honour of Ina Plug. BAR International Series 1849: 131-151. Oxford.
- 2003 with Haskel J. Greenfield. Intra-settlement social and economic organisation of Early Iron Age farming communities in southern Africa: a view from Ndongondwane. Azania 38: 121-137.
- 1996 Settlement Shifts and Socio-Economic Transformations in Early Farming Communities in the lower Thukela Basin, Zululand. A Revisionist Model. Proceedings of the conference on the growth of farming communities from the Equator southwards. Azania (XXVIII).