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ILLOVO SUGAR (South Africa) (Pty)Ltd
Sezela Sugar Mill

Amafa application for demolition of brick chimney stack



Location of the chimney stack at Sezela Mill



Early photograph of the Sezela Mill c.1916

In 1891 the Reynolds Brother Ltd was listed as a company in Natal.

C.G.Smith, a local entrepreneur, was appointed as agent for the company in Durban.

After establishing the first Sugar mill in Umzimkulu in 1904, the Reynolds Brothers built the mill at Sezela on the Sezela River, 70km South of Durban in 1915.

The mill rapidly expanded and doubled it's capacity by 1922. The original Mill had one brick chimney stack, presumed to be the current remaining stack in the heart of the mill. A second brick chimney was built after 1922 (date unknown) but demolished and replaced with concrete chimneys.

The Chimney stack is presumed to be 107 years old, it has been monitored and stabilised in recent years.

A recent drone inspection was done in March 2022, which revealed rapid corrosion to stabilising elements and spalling in the bricks. Due to its size and height, the top half has been deemed unsafe and is recommended for demolition and replacement with a steel stack.

Demolition and change over has to be scheduled according to the season and can only be done in the shut-down period.

Reference to : Young &Satharia Consulting engineers Inspection report dated 16/03/2022

Given the circumstance and findings of the engineers' report above, it is recommended that a permit be approved for the demolition of the chimney stack. The retention of the chimney will adversely affect the working of the mill, as it would impact on the structures and functions in the immediate vicinity which are all active.

The Offices of Illovo Sugar at Sezela have a collection of historic photographs that demonstrate the development of the mill, including framed prints of the original drawings of the factory buildings. This is a good record of the historic structures.

