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**Umzinto SAPS and Magistrates Court  
Erf 123 and 124, Umzinto, KwaZulu Natal**

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT HERITAGE SCREENING**

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lindsay Napier Architect was appointed by Isibuko Development Planners, to conduct a heritage assessment/ screening to determine any heritage or cultural status of the existing SAPS complex as part of an investigation for clearing the site and or the repair and upgrade of structures to make way for a new police station.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report refers to KZN Amafa and Research Institute Act no.5 of 2018 and the National Heritage Resources Act (25/1999), which aim to protect heritage resources in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Some of the existing structures are protected by Clause 37 : General Protection : *“Structures – No structure which is, or which may reasonably be expected to be older than 60 years, may be demolished, altered or added to without prior written approval of the Council having been obtained on written application to the Council.”*

The report is an independent view and makes recommendations to the client based on its findings. The Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA) will consider the recommendations and the proposed development and make a decision based on conservation principles.

## 3. METHODS

Lindsay Napier is an architect experienced in assessment of protected buildings in KZN. She has previous experience in recording historic buildings, surveying townscapes and designing for protected buildings.

The properties were inspected by Lindsay Napier and Paul Dekker on the 22 April 2022.

Aerial photographs from Google Earth were used to establish the development of the area.

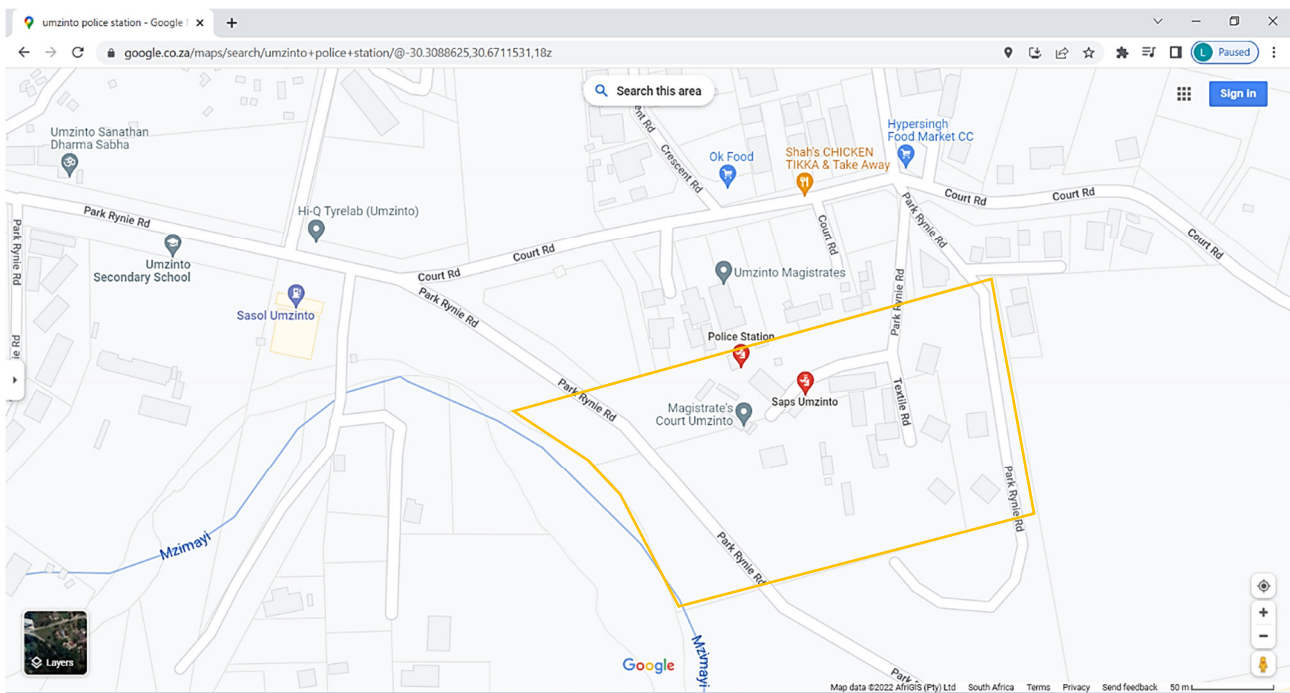
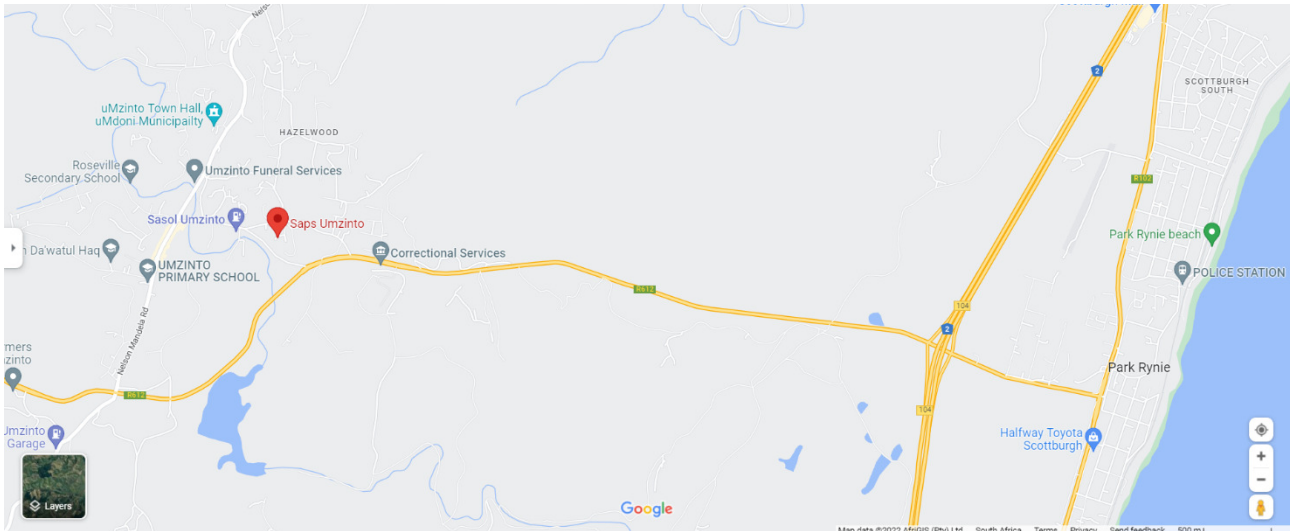
A mapping website <http://www.cdngiportal.co.za/cdngiportal/> was used.

Field survey photography and inspections of structures have assisted in the dating and grading of structures.

#### 4. LOCALITY :

The site is East of the town of Umzinto and part of Umdoni Municipality.

The site is accessed from the N2 South, travelling West on the R612 from Park Rynie.



## 5. HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

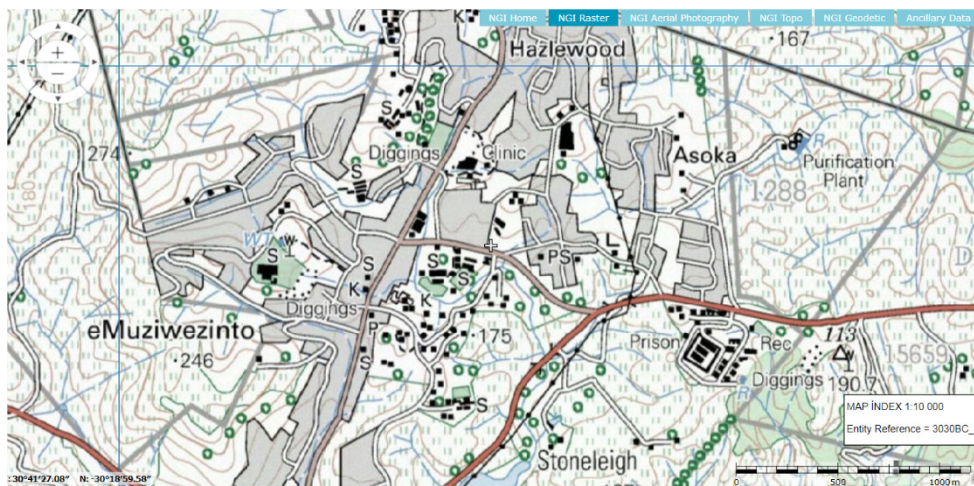
The town of Umzinto was established as a centre for a sugar mill that served the sugar farmers in the area. The first public company in Natal was established in Umzinto in 1846.

The name “Umzinto” is said to be derived from the Zulu “umenzi wezinto” meaning “the kraal of accomplishment”. *Ref. www.whatwherewhenKZN.co.za*

The date of the construction of the magistrates court and prison is unknown, but the materials and style of residences date from the early 1900's. The prison was in operation until 1991, when the function was transferred to a new Correctional Service facility nearby.



1967 Aerial photograph



Topographical map

## 7. ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE :

### Inventory of Structures



Structures over 60years old : red  
Structures younger than 60 years :grey  
Temporary structures : unmarked grey  
Demolished structure : unmarked grey, dashed line

1. Magistrates Court Building
2. The Old Prison
3. SAPS Crime Prevention Unit (old house at entrance)
4. Dwelling and outbuilding
5. Dwelling and outbuilding
6. Dwelling and outbuilding
7. Dwelling and outbuilding
8. SAPS Offices (old house)
9. Rodavels storerooms
10. SAPS Office
11. SAPS gun store room
12. SAPS Child Protection

## 1. Magistrates Court Building



*Figure*

The magistrates court complex consists of three linked structures, the front structure that houses the main entrance hall is a double storey block with flanking single storey wings. Construction date is estimated to be in the 1960's. An older structure may have been incorporated into the complex in the 1960s upgrade. It is plastered and painted masonry construction with sheet roof material. The entrances are framed with concrete “eye-lid” coverings, commonly used on government buildings in the 1960s. The rooms have high ceilings and windows and doors have fanlights. The courts and offices are accessed off an internal passage that runs the length of the building. The roof sheeting and storm water goods appear to be recently replaced, but missing in places.

Behind the double-storey block are two single-storey buildings with verandas opening onto a garden courtyard. They are estimated to have been constructed between 1920 and 1940. The upper block has high ceilings and a separate veranda roof with timber posts and brackets (equal to the school specification in schools built in 1920-30s). The lower block has an extended roof veranda facing the courtyard. The remains of an entrance portico is on the East side with timber posts. The blocks have been linked to the main magistrates court block via the entrance hall and stairway.





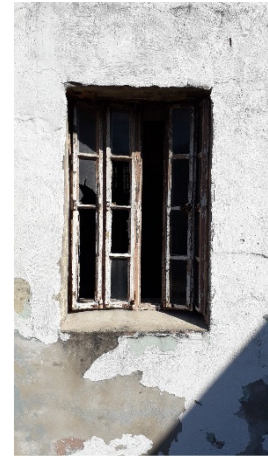
*Figure*



*Figure*



## 2. The Old Prison



*Figure*



*Figure*

The old prison structure covers an area of approx..1700sqm, measuring 55x30m, It is a rectangular plan of cells and rooms around an open courtyard in the centre. The East side was the female cells with a small open courtyard. The original structure is constructed of stone, but there is evidence of clay brick additions and extensions. Most of the building has been plastered or whitewashed. A portion of the East elevation shows the original stone. An arched structure below ground floor is visible on the East elevation, this needs further investigation. The original reinforced entrance gate is still in place. Windows are steel frame. The North end has been converted to a conference facility, most alterations are light-weight and removable.

The walls have suffered damage from trees and roots that have been allowed to grow into the structure.



*Figure*



*Figure*



*Figure*



*Figure*

3. SAPS Crime prevention Unit (old house at entrance)



*Figure*

The old house on the left at the top of the driveway is a single storey house and a typical example of a “Natal gabled-veranda-house”. It has an asymmetrical gable with bay window and a circular roof vent centred in the gable, a timber veranda with decorative filigree. The timber barge-boards on the gable are scalloped. Plaster detail on the gable, around the roof vent and below the bay window. The house is plastered and painted with ruled jointing detail. The roof material is asbestos sheeting. Timber windows have been replaced with aluminium frames. Floors are suspended timber. The internal and external walls show structural cracks.



*Figure*



*Figure*



*Figure*

4. Dwellings and outbuildings (bldgs. 4-7)



*Fig.*



*Fig.*

Four houses, built between 1954 and 1967 are located on the Eastern side of the site. They have asbestos roofs and are of masonry construction. Each house has a garage outbuilding.

8. SAPS Offices (old house)



9. Rodavel storerooms



10. SAPS Office



*Fig.*

11. SAPS gun safe



*Fig.*

Buildings of recent construction, estimated to be 20-30 years old. Asbestos roof, masonry construction.

## 12. SAPS Child Protection



*Fig.*



*Fig.*

The child protection unit consists of buildings of recent construction, estimated to be 20-30 years old. Asbestos roof, masonry construction.

## **8. ASSESSMENT :**

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Terms of reference KZN Amafa and Research Institute Act 2018 and the National Heritage Act 25/1999

The findings of this report are subject to confirmation of the actual age of all the structures through building plan records. Assessment has been based on visual and material evidence.

The NHRA clause 3(3) lists the following criteria for assessment of Heritage significance under the following headings:

1. Intrinsic Value
2. Associational Value
3. Contextual Significance

Each heading is broken down further, buildings that are over 60 years old and groups of buildings are to be assessed under these headings. For assessments to be accurate a **full Heritage Impact Assessment Report** would need to be prepared.

The following table lists the local Heritage significance in terms of low, medium or high and suitability for repurposing.

Building number	Building name/ current use	Estimated age	Local Heritage significance	Suitability to re-purpose exg bldg
1.	Magistrates Court Building	60-10d0yrs	Medium	High
2.	The Old Prison	70-80yrs	High	Medium
3.	SAPS Crime Prevention Unit (old house at entrance)	100yrs	Low	Low
4.	Dwelling and outbuilding	55-68yrs	Low	Low
5.	Dwelling and outbuilding	55-68yrs	Low	Low
6.	Dwelling and outbuilding	55-68yrs	Low	Low
7.	Dwelling and outbuilding	55-68yrs	Low	Low
8.	SAPS Offices (old house)	100yrs	Low	Low
9.	Rondavel storerooms	70-80yrs	Medium	Medium
10.	SAPS Office	20-30yrs	Low	Low
11.	SAPS gun store room	20-30yrs	Low	Low
12.	SAPS Child Protection	20-30yrs	Low	Low

A further assessment of the site as a whole is to be made with such a report : The site is to be graded in terms of architectural, historical, technical, scientific, contextual and social significance, either on a local or regional level.

## **Conclusion:**

The Magistrates Court complex (Bldg 1) is of **medium local heritage significance** due to its age, the incorporation of older court buildings in the complex and their prominent position on the site. It has the potential to be refurbished under its current or administrative use.

The Old Prison building (bldg. 2) is of **high local heritage significance**, due to its age, its service to the community, its design and materials. It has the potential to be repurposed as a public or private facility.

The old houses (Bldgs 3 and 8) are needing major upgrades due to the age of the structures and their lack of maintenance over the past years. Structural assessments are recommended to inform planning decisions. The internal layouts of these buildings were for residential use and do not suit the current use.

The two rondavels (bldg. 9) are unique in their construction and can easily remain as storage units. They contribute interest and history to the site and complex.

The overall impact of the proposed development is to be assessed with a proposed Site Development Plan.

Any proposed alteration or demolition of structures on the site will require a permit from the KZN Amafa and Research Institute.