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CRC

PHASE 1  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT

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PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL STANDS IN  
VILLAGES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING  
GYANI AREA  
*NORTHERN PROVINCE*

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FOR: C. Dzeifos

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## SYNOPSIS

At least one archaeological site of medium significance was detected at Mashavela although low in significance with regard to permanent protection status, mitigation for further assessments based on scientific considerations are recommended at this site. At Mphagani two graves had been identified by Headman Mphagani it is recommended that these two sites best be undisturbed. On the remaining three sites of Khani, Maswanganyi and Dzingidzingi nothing of archaeological or historical significance was found.

## INTRODUCTION

The **Project Proposal** constitutes an activity that is listed in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989), for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required to satisfy the requirements of the List of Activities and Regulation for EIA's – Government Gazette of 5 September 1997 - provided for in terms of sections 21, 22 and 26. In terms of the above-mentioned Act, and the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999, Section 38), a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (scoping) was undertaken.

## AIM

The aim was to undertake a **Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment** of the proposed sites for the provision of additional stands in the villages of Mashavela, Khani, Maswanganyi, Dzingidzingi and Mphagani, in order to assess the impact of the proposed project on archaeological and historical sites and features; and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features.

## METHOD

The demarcated sites were surveyed on 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2002. A thorough survey of the sites was undertaken on foot and by vehicle. Standard archaeological practises for observation were followed. As most archaeological material occur in single or multiple stratified layers beneath the soil surface, special attention was given to disturbances, both man-made such as roads and clearings, as well as those made by natural agents such as burrowing animals and erosion. Locations of archaeological material were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin 12). Archaeological material and the general conditions on the terrain were photographed with a KODAK DC120 Digital camera.

The significance of heritage resources is graded according to criteria ranging *from no significance to high significance*.

No significance: sites / features that do not require mitigation.
Low to medium significance: sites / features which may require mitigation.
High significance: sites / features which should not be disturbed at all – has protection status.

The significance of an archaeological site is based on the amount of deposit, the integrity of the context, the kind or nature of the deposit, and the potential of the site to help answer present research questions. Historical structures are defined by Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, while other historical and cultural significant sites, places and features, are generally determined by community preferences.

## LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The villages earmarked for the proposed development is located south and southwest of Giyani on the R578 to Elin and the R81 to Mooketsi, one site Mphagani lays to the west of Giyani.

The dominant veld type is mixed Mopane Bushveld. Most of the village sites have been degraded by extensive agricultural activities and higher lying parts have generally had much soil loss from sheet erosion against the slopes.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

### 1. IRON AGE REMAINS

Site 1 (*Mashahavela*): Co-ordinates: S23° 20'06.3" E30° 29'24.5"

The Iron Age archaeological remains consisted of a high concentration of metal slag and fragments of tuyère pipes (in-situ) over an extensive area, which represents a possible iron-smelting site, which is significant. This is not a forging site because forging usually took place in an Iron Age settlement in or close to the men's area and no signs of a settlement were found in the close proximity to the metallurgical remains. Non-diagnostic pottery had been found, but at this time it is not possible to connect the iron-smelting site to a particular cultural group.

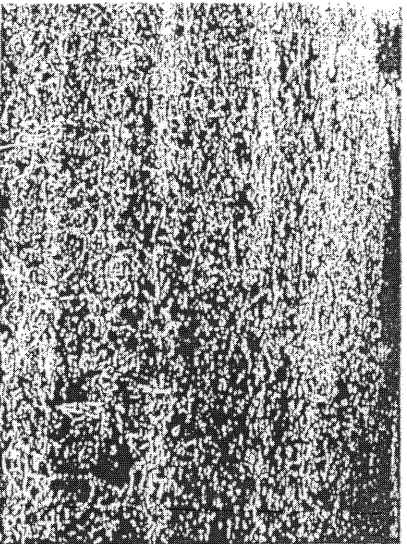


Figure 1. Slag heap



Figure 2. Slag and tuyère remains

This smelting site is of medium significance.

### 2. GRAVE SITES

Site 2, (*Mphagani*): Co-ordinates: Grave 1; S23° 36'58.1" E30° 41'15.2"

Grave 2; S23° 36'54.8" E30° 41'09.2"

Two stone heaps had been identified by Headman Mphagani as graves and he showed them to Mr. Kobus Winterbach & Mr. Petrus Mthetho who in-turn notified the archaeologist of their existence.

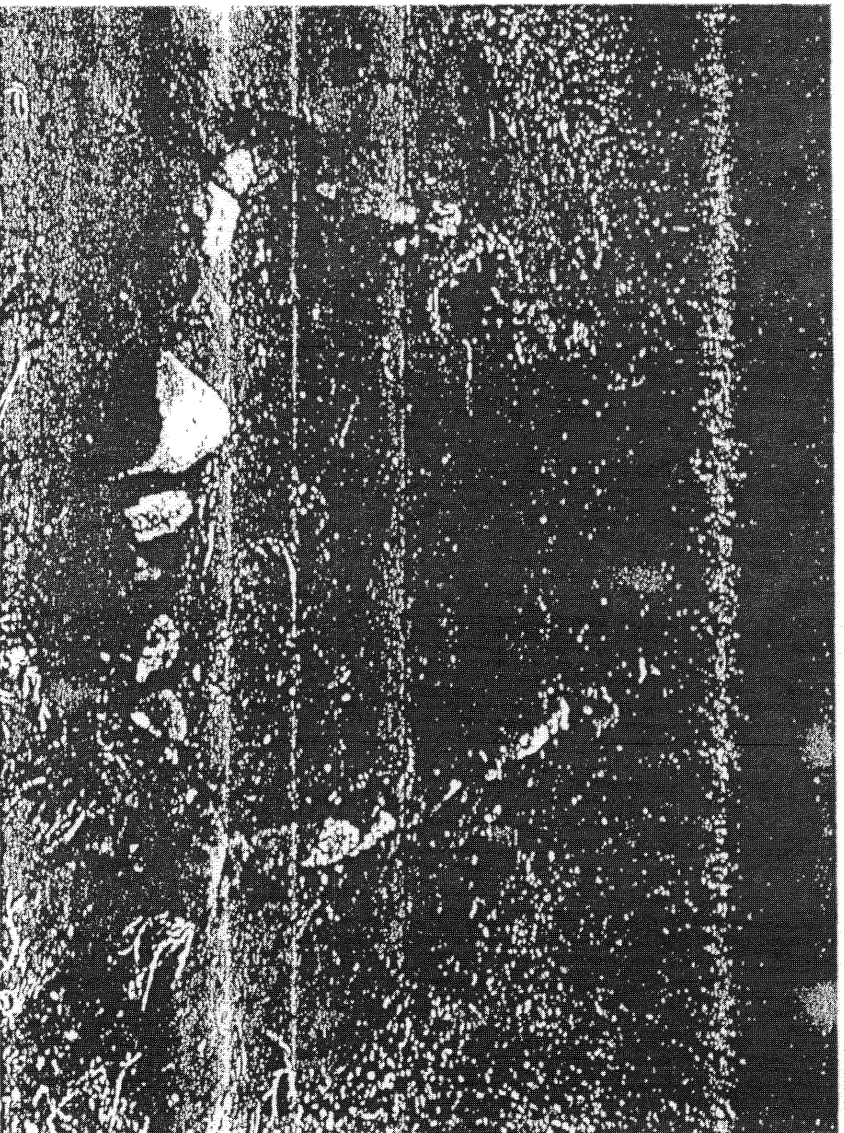


Figure 3. Grave 1

The graves are of high significance locally.

The remaining three sites are:

Site 3 Maswanganyi;      *Co-ordinates: 23° 18'58.1" E30° 41'15.2"*

Site 4 Dzingidzingi;      *Co-ordinates: 23° 20'32.4" E30° 38'17.6"*

Site 5 Khani;      *Co-ordinates: 23° 21'44.4" E30° 29'24.5"*

No archaeological or historical features were detected at these proposed sites.

## EVALUATION

A crucial aspect in determining the significance and protection status of a heritage resource is often whether or not the sustainable social and economic benefits of a proposed development outweigh the conservation issues at stake. There are many aspects that must be taken into consideration when determining significance, such as rarity, national significance, scientific importance, cultural and religious significance, and not

least, community preferences. When, for whatever reason the protection of a heritage site is not deemed necessary or practical, its research potential must be *assessed and mitigated* in order to gain data / information which would otherwise be lost. Such sites must be adequately recorded and sampled before being destroyed.

**Site one** is of significance because of the high academic and scientific value of the smelting site. It was because of the ability to smelt and forge iron that the Bantu speaking people were able to manipulate and cultivate the land with their iron tools. This enabled them to stay in one place for longer periods and to make a living of the land, in contrast to the Stone Age people who were constantly on the move scavenging and hunting for food. Iron also was a sign of power and wealth and had much value in trade.

The graves at **site two** are regarded as significant. These sites may be ancestral to the present day population, who would have ties with it resulting high social and religious significance.

It must be borne in mind that all archaeological sites as well as certain historical sites could contain burials sites and graves. Human remains must be treated with sensitivity.

The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the recorded archaeological sites. In our view however, the potential sustainable socio-economic benefits of the proposed development outweighs the conservation value of the archaeological remains.

For mitigation purposes the scientific and academic significance of the Iron Age smelting site must bear considerable weight. A phase 2 archaeological assessment is essential in order to extract sufficient and adequate data from this site should development impact on the site. The graves must however be avoided.

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#### RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above it is recommended that:

**Site one:**

This site will need further mitigation, because of its high scientific and academic significance. It is recommended that a phase two archaeological excavation be conducted at this site. Even if the terrain where development will take place is relocated in order not to destroy the smelting site, the development location will still result in an impact. Because of human movement between the two villages, the in-situ smelting site will be destroyed over time. It is also important to collect an adequate ceramic sample to identify the cultural group.

**Site two:**

Human remains are a sensitive issue and because these graves are probably ancestral to members of the present day community, it would be in the best interest of all parties not to disturb them. It is thus recommended that the graves be permanently cordoned off to protect them during construction as well as for future protection.



Extracts from:

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Subsection 35. (3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Subsection 35. (4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

(a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite.

Burial grounds and graves

Subsection 36. (6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and
- (b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

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