

**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES ON A SECTION
OF THE FARM NOVENGILLA, LETSITELE AREA,
NORTHERN PROVINCE**

For:

NALEDI DEVELOPMENT

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SUMMARY**A survey of cultural resources on a section of the farm Novengilla, Letsitele area, Northern Province.**

The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of the area in which the proposed development is to take place.

Unfortunately earth workings have started on the area and two important Iron Age sites have been destroyed in the process.

- Actions such as this must be condemned in the strongest possible manner.
- It is strongly recommended that, in the light of the fact that much damage have already been done to the sites, the developer stick to that areas and does not expand his operations further unless a detailed archaeological survey have been done.
- The developers should be notified that archaeological sites might be exposed during the construction work. If anything is noticed, it should immediately be reported to a museum, preferably one at which an archaeologist is available, so that an investigation and evaluation of the finds can be made.

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**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES ON A SECTION
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NORTHERN PROVINCE**

1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The National Cultural History Museum was requested by **Naledi Development** to survey an area in which it is proposed to build a factory. The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of the area that is to be developed.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The **Terms of Reference** for the study were to:

- 2.1 Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature located in the area of the proposed development.
- 2.2 Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their historical, social, religious, aesthetic and scientific value.
- 2.3 Determine the possible impacts on the known and potential cultural resources in the area of interest.
- 2.4 Develop mitigation or control measures for impact minimization and cultural resources preservation.
- 2.5 Develop procedures to be implemented if previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered during the construction.

3. DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following aspects have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

- **Cultural resources** are all nonphysical and physical human-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences that are associated with human activity. These include all sites, structures and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history, architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development.
- The **significance** of the sites and artifacts are determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. It must be kept in mind that the various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and that the evaluation of any site is done with

reference to any number of these.

- Sites regarded as having low significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium to high significance require further mitigation.
- The latitude and longitude of archaeological sites are to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are mainly dealt within two acts. These are the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989). It is however important to note that new legislation is being prepared and this come into effect by April 2000.

4.1 National Monuments Act

Article 12, subsection 2A of this act states that anyone who wishes to disturb, destroys, alter, remove or export any fossils, rock art or artifacts left at places inhabited by indigenous people before European colonisation, shipwrecks and their contents older than 50 years, buildings and structures that are older than 50 years, as well as paintings or furniture that have been in South Africa for more than 50 or years respectively, may do so only if they have a permit from the National Monuments Council. According to this Act the following resources are protected:

- a. Meteorites and fossils
- b. Prehistoric rock art
- c. Prehistoric tools, ornaments and structures
- d. The anthropological and archaeological contents of graves, rock shelters, caves, middens etc.
- e. Historical sites and archaeological finds, material or artifacts
- f. Declared national monuments
- g. Cemeteries and graves with headstones older than 50 years

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the National Monuments Council to do so.

4.2 Environmental Conservation Act

This act states that a survey and an evaluation of cultural resources should be undertaken in areas where development, which will change the face of the environment, is to be made. The impact of the development on the cultural resources should also be determined and proposals to mitigate this impact is to be formulated.

4.3 The Heritage Resources Act

The Act is currently being discussed by parliament and is destined to be promulgated by April 2000. It will replace the current National Monuments Act. The types of sites protected by the new act will be more or less the same than that covered by the current act, but provide more strict measures of protection. One of the changes to the current act is that the 50 year clause is extended to 60 years.

4.4 Graves, cemeteries and skeletal remains

There are several laws and bylaws pertaining to the exhumation and reinterment of human remains. All graves older than 50 years are protected under the **National Monuments Act**. This holds true for unmarked as well as marked graves. In the latter case, it also includes the headstone.

Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925). Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (ie where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Preliminary investigation

5.1.1 Survey of the literature

A survey of the relevant literature was conducted with the aim of reviewing the previous research done and determining the potential of the area. In this regard, various anthropological, archaeological and historical sources were consulted - see the list of references below. Nothing pertaining to the particular area was found.

5.1.2 Data bases

The **Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC)**, housed at the National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, was consulted. The **Environmental Potential Atlas** was also consulted.

5.1.3 Other sources

The topocadastral and other maps were also studied - see the list of references below.

5.2 Field survey

The field survey was done according to generally accepted archaeological practices, and was aimed at locating all possible sites, objects and structures. As the area that had to be investigated is quite small, it was quite easy to survey it by walking across it. Special attention was given to outcrops, cliffs were inspected for rock shelters, while stream beds and unnatural topographical occurrences such as trenches, holes and clusters of trees were investigated.

5.3 Documentation

All sites, objects and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were

determined by means of the **Global Positioning System** (GPS)¹ and plotted on a map. This information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

¹ According to the manufacturer a certain deviation may be expected for each reading. Care was, however, taken to obtain as accurate a reading as possible, and then correlate it with reference to the physical environment before plotting it on the map.