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Archaeo-Info Northern Province

# Heritage Impact Assessment for Telkom SA Ltd.

*Evaluation of the heritage component of the Environmental  
Impact Assessment for the erection of a Telecommunication  
Mast at the Thornybush Lodge - Northern Province.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
LOCATION .....	4
FIELDWORK.....	4
METHODOLOGY.....	4
THE SITES .....	5
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	6
CONCLUSION .....	6
REFERENCES.....	6
ADDENDUM A.....	PHOTOGRAPHS

# Telkom Telecommunication Mast (Thornybush Lodge - Northern Province)

## *Evaluation of the Heritage Potential of the Project*

### **Executive Summary**

**Site name and location:** Thornybush Lodge, Hoedspruit, Northern Province

**Magisterial district:** Hoedspruit

**Developer:** Telkom SA Ltd.

**Consultant:** AINP, PO Box 7296, Thohoyandou, 0950, South Africa

**Date development was mooted:** May, 2000

**Date of Report:** 21 July 2001

**Proposed date of commencement of development:** July 2001

**Findings:** It is the finding of AINP that the proposed development can continue, as there are no sites of historical, cultural or archaeological value.

## Introduction

Telkom SA Ltd. has identified a location on the Thornybush Lodge for the erection of a microwave telecommunication tower in the Hoedspruit area. Tekplan Environmental Analysis Services contracted Archaeo-Info Northern Province (AINP) to perform a Heritage Impact Assessment (H.I.A.) on the identified site.

This HIA forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required by the Environmental Conservation Act (ECA) 73 of 1989, the Minerals Act, 50 of 1991 and the Development Facilitation Act (DFA), 67 of 1995. The HIA is performed in accordance with section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), 25 of 1999 and is intended for submission to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

## Location

The site is located on the Thornybush Lodge. A luxury lodge covering an area of 11 000 hectares in the Northern Province, approximately 27km from the town of Hoedspruit. The site for the mast is located within the staff residence of the lodge on the western side of the garden (Photo 1 & 2).

## Fieldwork

The site was surveyed and investigated on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2001 by a professional archaeologist.

Sites were plotted with a Magellan 2000 XL GPS and photographed using colour prints in 100 ASA format. The site was surveyed on foot.

Not only the site itself was surveyed but also the surrounding areas, to determine if any sites were present in the immediate vicinity of the site itself. This was done in an effort to determine if the construction of the mast would have any visual impact on important sites in the immediate vicinity of the site. People with local knowledge of the area were also interviewed to determine if any sites were located in the surrounding area.

## Methodology

The area was surveyed using standard archaeological surveying methods. The site was surveyed by foot. This technique has proven to result in the maximum coverage of an area.

Standard archaeological documentation formats were employed in the description of sites. Using standard site documentation forms as comparable medium, it enabled the surveyors to evaluate the relative importance of sites found. Furthermore GPS (Global Positioning System) readings of all finds and sites, if any, were taken. This information was then plotted using a *Magellan 2000 XL* GPS (*Cape datum*).

Indicators such as surface finds, plant growth anomalies, local information and topography were used in identifying sites of possible archaeological importance. Test probes were done at intervals to determine sub-surface occurrence of archaeological material. The importance of sites was assessed by comparisons with published information as well as comparative collections. All sites or possible sites found were classified using a hierarchical system wherein sites are assessed using a scale of one to five on the basis of their importance. These categories are as follows;

## Thornybush

**Category 1.** Sites in this category are of such great international and/or national importance in terms of cultural heritage that they can not be disturbed or altered at any cost. No development will be allowed in such an area. It should be noted that sites in this category are very rare - e.g.: - *Great Zimbabwe, Swartrams, Mapungubwe*

**Category 2.** Although these sites are not unique in terms of their culture they are of such archaeological value that any decision concerning their destruction can only be taken after full scale excavations have been undertaken - e.g. - *Thulamela*.

**Category 3.** These sites are of lesser importance than the first two categories, but should be fully documented before they are destroyed. This documentation would entail the excavation of certain parts of the site - e.g. - *Masorini*

**Category 4.** Sites in this category consist of scattered evidence of archaeological occupation. Sometimes dilapidated stone walling can occur. Surface scatters of cultural material are evident. A limited number of test trenches should be excavated in order that the cultural affinity and importance of the site can be established.

**Category 5.** Areas that consist only of very loose scattering of cultural material on the surface. No structures are visible and little archaeological deposits are evident. The occurrence of cultural material could for example be due to erosion. Apart from the surface collection of cultural material, no further work needs be done on such sites.

**NB: It is important that any archaeological sites should be monitored during construction.**

#### **Category 6: Graves**

The only archaeological aspect that could still be encountered during construction is the exposure of unmarked graves. It should be noted that graves are subjects of great sensitivity and should be treated as such. Prompt and correct procedures will eliminate possible embarrassing situations for the developer.

### **The Sites**

The results of the survey at each site will be discussed in this section

Approximately 120 metres to the north-west of the proposed site for the mast the remains of the house of the original owner was located. The original farm was given to a Colonel Dyan for his services to the British army. Colonel Dyan unsuccessfully tried to farm cattle in this area for several years. The encroachment of pioneer plant growth is still evident in the areas used for cattle farming. According to local informants the homestead was built in 1960 and the building materials and style support this (Photo 3 & 4).

No sites of cultural, historical or archaeological value were found.

#### **Thornybush**

## Recommendations

The following interpretations and recommendations are given for the sites described. These recommendations are given in accordance with the requirements of the SAHRA Offices and includes the evaluation of the *cultural significance* as well as the *living heritage* of the sites.

*Living heritage* means the intangible aspects of inherited culture.

It was found that the remains of Colonel Dyras's house do not constitute a site of historical or cultural importance to any person or group. This site will therefore not suffer any negative impacts from the construction of the telecommunications mast.

The construction of the mast can continue as no signs of sites of cultural, historical or archaeological value was found.

## Conclusion

From a cultural heritage perspective the proposed development can continue.

## References

1. Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1981. *Boundaries and Belief: The structure of a Sotho worldview*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University press.
2. Huffman, T.N. and Steel, R.H. 1996. *Salvage excavations at Planknek, Potgietersrus, Northern Province*. Southern African Field Archaeology, 5: 45-58.
3. Loubser, J.H.N. 1994. *Ndebele archaeology of the Pietersburg area*. Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum Bloemfontein. 10(2): 61-147.

## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

No	Description
1.	The proposed site is located within the Thornybush Staff residence
2.	The proposed site next to a water tank
3.	The foundation remains of Colonel Dysan's house
4.	The remains of the homestead, obscured by heavy grass growth

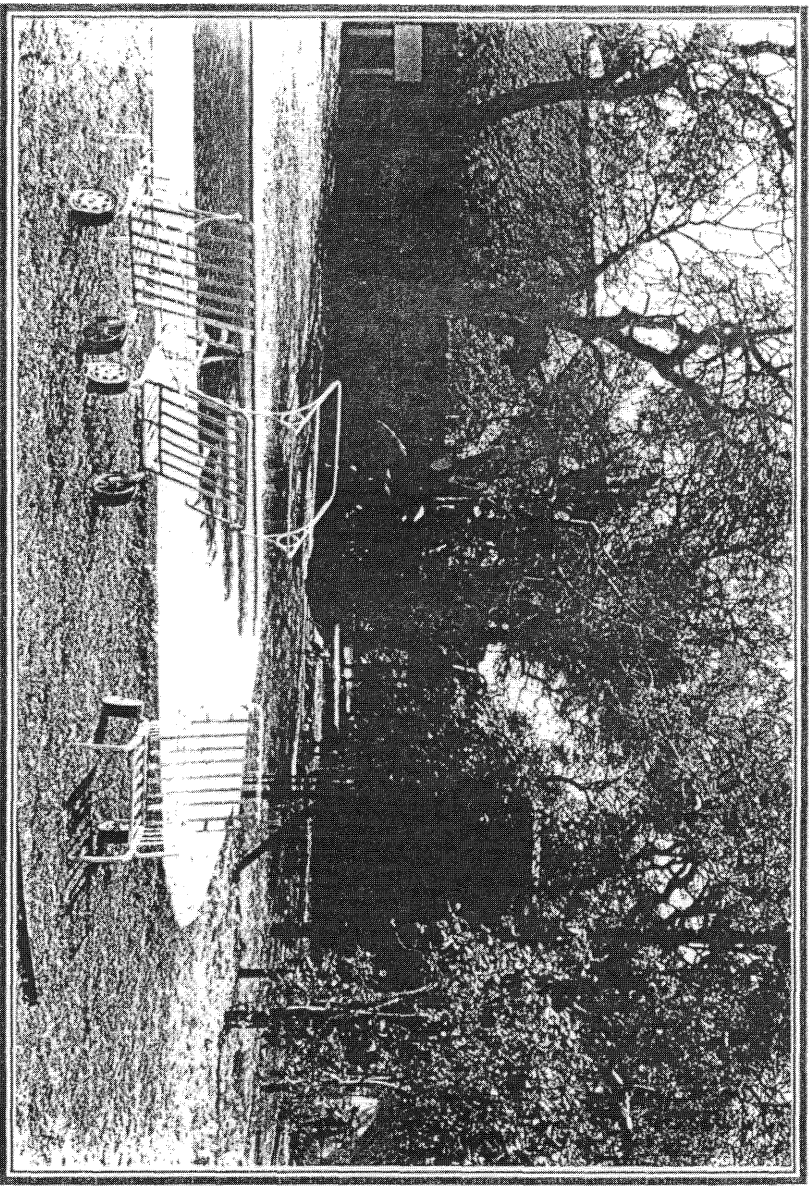


Photo 1. Proposed Site within staff residence.

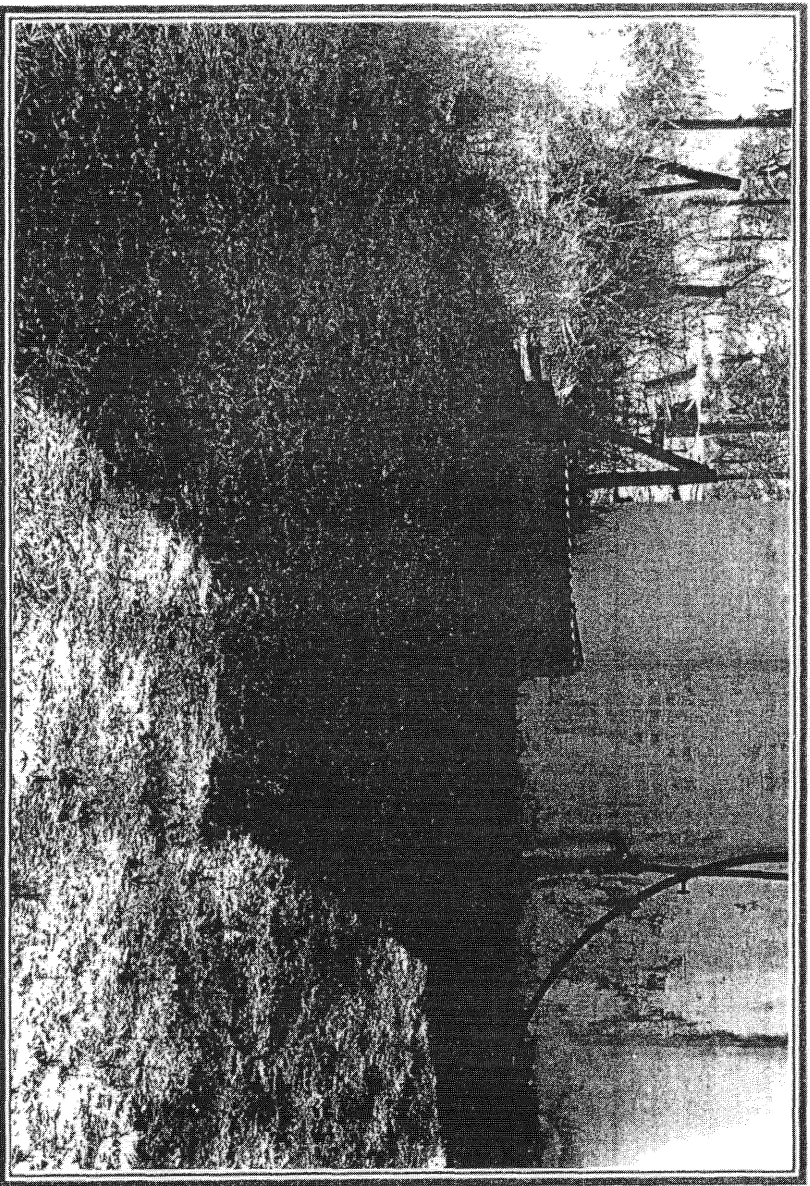


Photo 2. Proposed site.

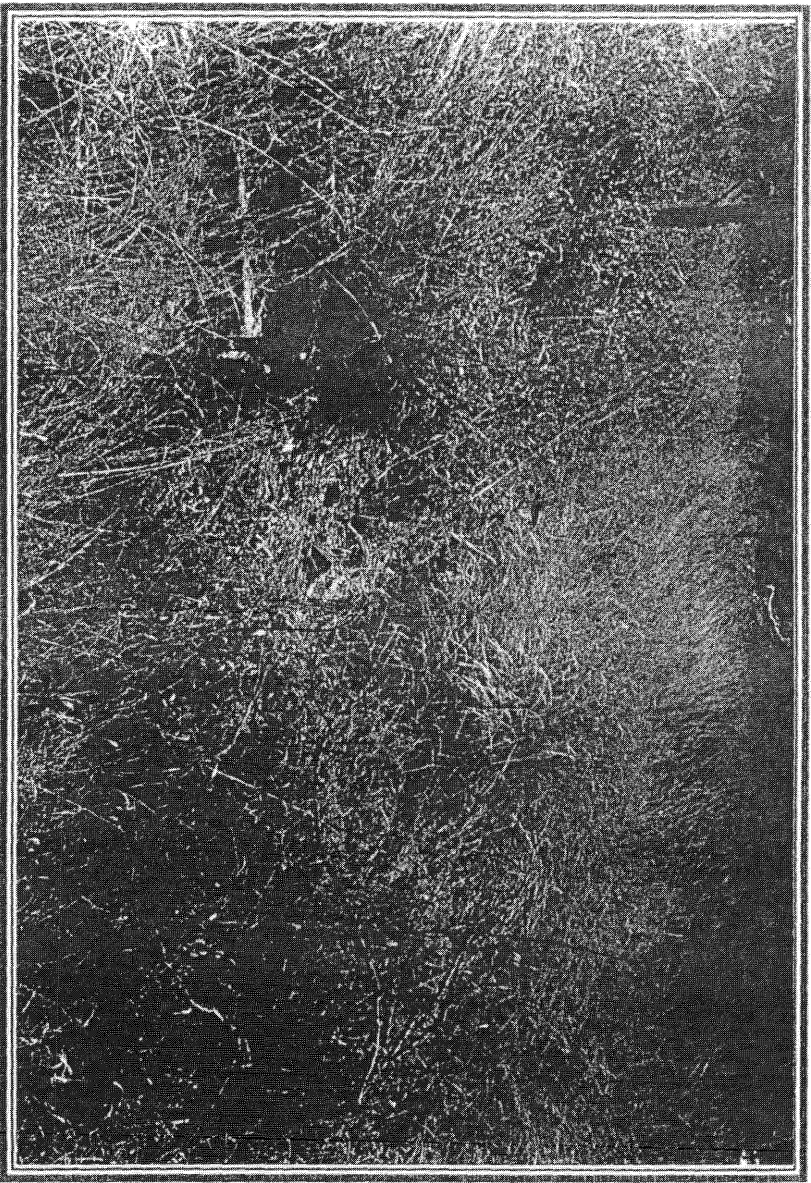


Photo 3. Remains of original homestead

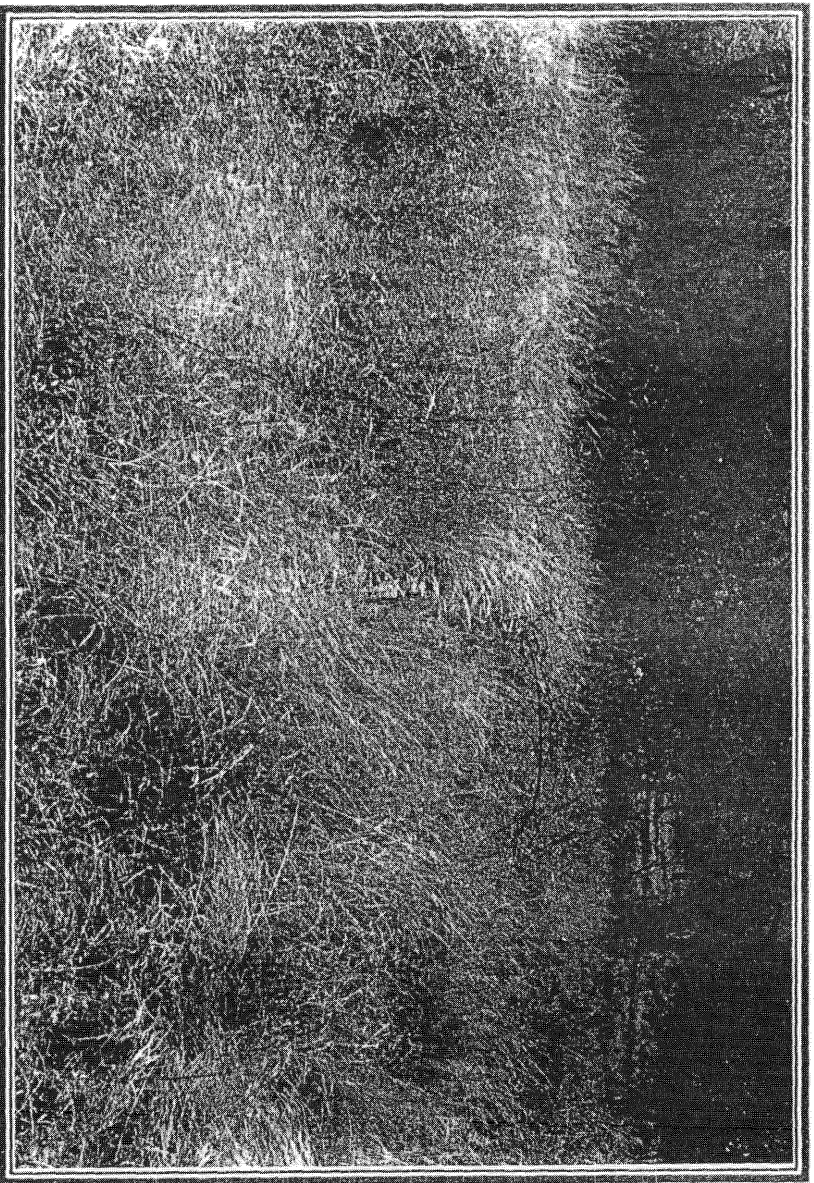


Photo 2. Remains of homestead (obscured by grass).