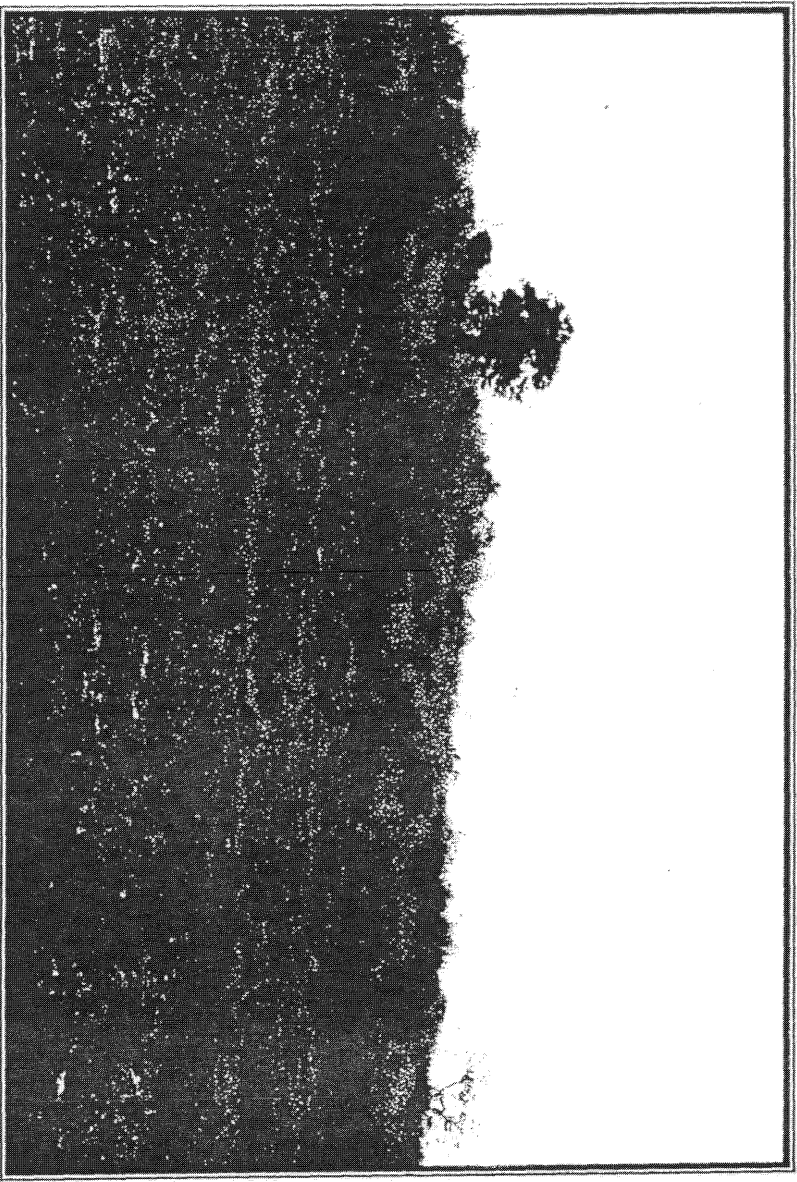


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PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For the Proposed Development of a Cellular Sub-Station near
Tshikweta (Sibasa) - Northern Province



Compiled by Archaeo-Info Northern Province (AINP)
For GAIA Earth Science
2000 - 09 - 06

**PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A CELLULAR SUB-STATION -
TSHIKWETA (SIBASA), NORTHERN PROVINCE**

September 6, 2000

**Compiled for;
GAIA Earth Science**

**Compiled by;
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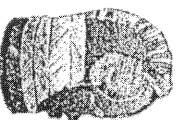


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**PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR A
PROPOSED VODACOM CELLULAR SUB-STATION AT TSHIKWETA
(SIBASA) - NORTHERN PROVINCE**

1. Introduction

GALA Earth Science appointed Archaeo-Info Northern Province (AINP) to conduct a Preliminary Archaeological Impact Assessment (PAIA) on the proposed site for the development of a cellular sub-station near the village of Tshikweta in the Northern Province. The study was undertaken to evaluate the potential archaeological significance of the study area. The PAIA was conducted in accordance with the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999 and formed part of the Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment.

2. Aim

A first phase archaeological investigation was performed to determine the archaeological potential of the study area. The proposed site was surveyed to determine the viability of the placement of the sub-station and to evaluate the impact it would have on possible archaeological structures and features. The aim was also to advise the client on alternative sites for the placement of the sub-station should it be deemed necessary to move it.

3. Fieldwork

Members of AINP consulted with the client on August 24, 2000 during an orientation visit to the site. The investigation of the proposed site was performed on the same day by a professional archaeologist (Marko Hutten) and assisted by a fieldworker (Eric Mathoho) who also acted as interpreter.

4. Geographical and Environmental Setting

The proposed site for development is situated in the village of Tshikweta close to Sibasa. The area is situated on a rocky outcrop next to a high voltage power line. Partially cleared agricultural fields are found on the eastern and northern sides of the site. The rocky outcrop is covered with tall grass and weeds with one tree on the highest point of the outcrop. A brickyard is found next to the proposed site on the dirt road to Dzingahe. The study area measured 150 x 150 metres in extent.

5. Previous Archaeological Investigations

Relevant anthropological studies such as *The Bavena*, by H.A. Stayt 1968, *Gazankulu en sy mense*, by J.D. Kriel and J.B. Hartman 1991 and an ethno-archaeological study *The Ethnoarchaeology of Venda-speakers in Southern Africa*, by J.H.N. Loubser 1991, were used as background studies during the investigations.

6. Methodology

The study area was surveyed using standard archaeological surveying methods. The area was surveyed by foot, which resulted in the maximum coverage of the study area. Indicators, such as surface finds, plant growth anomalies and topography were used in identifying sites of possible archaeological importance. Locals were also questioned and test probes were done at intervals to determine sub-surface occurrence of archaeological material.

Standard archaeological documentation formats were employed in the description of sites. Using standard site documentation forms as comparable medium, it enabled the investigators to evaluate the relative importance of the sites found. All archaeological artefacts and the sites were photographically documented (Canon A1 SLR and Ricoh KR 10 SLR).

Furthermore, GPS (Global Positioning System) readings of all finds and sites were taken. This information was gathered using a *Magellan 2000 XL GPS* (co-ordinate system - WGS 84).

The importance of finds and 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 were assessed using a scale of one to five on the basis of their importance (graves form their own category). The categories are as follows:

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, Swatkrans, 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 a 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 site 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.

7. Site Descriptions

On the northeastern side on the highest part of the outcrop there appears to be a small section of stone terracing (+/- 8m) which incorporated the natural rock formations of the outcrop. The rest of the terrace seems to be robbed and damaged. No archaeological artefacts or features could further be discerned on the surface. Test probes on both sides of this terrace wall did not produce any cultural material. Small stone heaps found across the site are the result of land clearing for agricultural activities. The function of the largest stone heap on the highest part of the outcrop is not clear and it is probably a natural rock formation with rocks of the cleared field heaped on top. No further structures or features were discernible. A few scattered potsherds were found in the ploughed field on the northern side of the outcrop. Local informants were interviewed, but no information concerning graves were forthcoming and according to them no graves are to be found in this area.

8. Interpretations and Recommendations

The terrace wall found on the site is the result of previous human activity although its age is unclear. The wall has however been damaged to such an extent that it has no archaeological value. The potsherds retrieved from the ploughed land were neither diagnostic nor indicative of an archaeological site. Small potsherds such as these are found in every field in this area and further investigations into their origin proved that they hold no archaeological value.

Although preliminary interviews with local inhabitants provided no information concerning the presence of graves on the site, this aspect will still have to be looked at by the social consultant on the project.

9. Conclusion

No sites of archaeological significance were found on the proposed site. Provided that the development stays within the area indicated to AINP the construction of the sub-station may continue from an archaeological point of view.

10. References

1. Hartman, J.B. & Kriel, J.D. 1991. *Gazankulu en sy Mense*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
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