

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE ARIADNE-BULWER
TRANSMISSION: CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2

Eskom intends to build a transmission line from the Bulwer to Ariadne substations. The transmission line route has been completed and interested and affected parties have been consulted. The Institute for Cultural Resource Management (ICRM) was approached to undertake an archaeological survey of this route after they had raised concerns regarding the impact of transmission lines on potential archaeological sites.

The archaeological survey of the transmission route was conducted by driving along the route and locating areas of archaeological sensitivity. Areas of housing development and afforestation were excluded from the survey since any potential archaeological sites would already have been impacted upon.

All archaeological, historical and palaeontological sites are protected by the National Monuments Act of 1969 (with Amendments). This Act makes it an offence to damage, alter, remove and disturb these sites without permission from the National Monuments Council. Permission is granted by means of a permit after appropriate archaeological or historical mitigation has been undertaken. The permit is a legal document.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

One archaeological site was found along the Phase 2 route. This site was located near the boundaries of Baynesfield Estate and Mondri Forest near the top of a hill overlooking the river at the bottom of the valley. The site has been plotted with a GPS (S 29° 43' 39"; E 30° 13' 33") and the reading was taken in the centre of the main site. Since this is only a survey of potential sites no detailed recordings have been undertaken.

The site is approximately 100m wide and between 500m - 1000m long. It consists of several structures made from basalt, which is located near the outcrop at the top of the hill. These structures comprise the remains of stone walling, cattle and sheep/goat byres, houses, and stone terracing. There are several of these structures and they probably reflect the remains of a village. At least two large rectangular byres were observed. While no artefacts were observed, because of the dense ground vegetation, the site probably dates within the last 250 years

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The site is of high archaeological significance. Few settlements of this age, type or structure have been recorded in KwaZulu-Natal. Moreover the site probably consists of a whole village with most of its structures in a primary context, ie it is largely undisturbed. While a similar stone walled village was found near Butu, this village may not necessarily be related to that described for the Phase I report. The village near Butu had slightly different structures and upright basalt slabs in most of the larger byres.

Because of the significance of this site, I recommend that it is not disturbed in any manner. This means that transmission lines, especially the transmission towers, should not be placed within 50m of the outer perimeter of this site. The construction of a powerline through the site will have a negative impact in terms of the visual aspect as well as the loss of archaeological information.

If ESKOM intends to continue with its present location of the transmission line and servitudes along this route several mitigatory steps should be undertaken:

1. obtain a permit from the National Monuments Council - this is a legal necessity;
2. map the site with a qualified archaeologist especially those areas that will be impacted upon - this should preferably occur in winter;

3. allow an archaeologist to dig test pits in areas where transmission pylons will be placed before these holes are dug by ESKOM;
4. ensure that an archaeologist is present when construction work begins near the site; and,
5. any stones, or walling, from the site and its immediate environment should not be used in the construction and erection of the pylons, or any other structures ESKOM may require.

I do however recommend that the transmission line and the servitudes are located below the site, and that the site is not impacted upon by any means.

CONCLUSIONS

The ICRM was approached to survey the potential route for the Phase 2 of the Ariadne-Bulwer line has been chosen. Only one archaeological site was observed along this route. The site is a consists of several stone structures that appear to be the remains of a village. This site is regarded as having high archaeological significance, and I recommended that ESKOM should either not impact upon this site, or undertake the proposed archaeological mitigation .

2 November, 1999

Eskom
Eastern Region
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Attention Dudu Ngidi

Your ref: Our Ref: Mormond 10/99

Project Name: Elandskop 132/88kV Yard and Refurbishment

I conducted the archaeological survey of the Elandskop 132/88kV Yard. No archaeological sites were observed in the affected area, and no further mitigation will be required.