

Archaeological Survey of the
realignment of the NB 11 and NB 14
Eskom powerline

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Introduction

The Institute of Cultural Resource Management was contracted to undertake an archaeological survey for the proposed realignment of parts of the NB 11 and NB 14 Eskom powerline. The powerline will consist of wooden poles that deviate from the existing powerline.

One archaeological site was recorded, and isolated sherds were observed. This site is of low archaeological significance and no further mitigation is required.

All archaeological sites are protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage of 1998. A permit for the damage, alteration and/or destruction of any archaeological site requires a permit from KwaZulu-Natal Heritage. The onus is on the developer, in this case Eskom, to apply for such a permit.

This report does not give the developer permission to continue with the archaeological component of the contract. Permission can only be granted by KwaZulu-Natal Heritage.

Methodology

The realigned route had been mapped and this route was followed with one exception. The route on the map running along False Bay Nature Reserve was incorrectly placed as being inside the reserve. The route is now placed along the borders of private land. Archaeological sites were plotted on the maps provided.

Certain areas were densely vegetated resulting in low archaeological visibility. These sections are, however, in areas that appear to have low archaeological significance.

All sites have been grouped according to low, medium and high significance for the purpose of this report. Sites of low significance have no diagnostic artefacts, especially pottery. Sites of medium significance have diagnostic artefacts and these are sampled. Sampling includes the collection of artefacts for future analysis. All diagnostic pottery, such as rims, lips and decorated sherds are sampled, while bone, stone and shell are mostly noted. Sampling usually occurs on most sites. Sites of high significance are excavated or extensively sampled. The sites that are extensively sampled have high research potential, yet poor preservation of features. I attempt to recover as many artefacts from these sites by means of systematic sampling, as opposed to sampling diagnostic artefacts only.

Significance is generally determined by several factors. However, in this survey, a wider definition of significance is adopted since the aim of the survey is to gather as much information as

possible from every site. This strategy allows for an analysis of every site in some detail, without resorting to excavation.

Defining significance

Archaeological sites vary according to significance and several different criteria relate to each type of site. However, there are several criteria that allow for a general significance rating of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

1. State of preservation of:

- 1.1. Organic remains:
 - 1.1.1. Faunal
 - 1.1.2. Botanical
- 1.2. Rock art
- 1.3. Walling
- 1.4. Presence of a cultural deposit
- 1.5. Features:
 - 1.5.1. Ash Features
 - 1.5.2. Graves
 - 1.5.3. Middens
 - 1.5.4. Cattle byres
 - 1.5.5. Bedding and ash complexes

2. Spatial arrangements:

- 2.1. Internal housing arrangements
- 2.2. Intra-site settlement patterns
- 2.3. Inter-site settlement patterns

3. Features of the site:

- 3.1. Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts or images at the site?
- 3.2. Is it a type site?
- 3.3. Does the site have a very good example of a specific time period, feature, or artefact?

4. Research:

- 4.1. Providing information on current research projects
- 4.2. Salvaging information for potential future research projects

5. Inter- and intra-site variability

- 5.1. Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between varies features and artefacts?
- 5.2. Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities.

6. Archaeological Experience:

- 6.1. The personal experience and expertise of the CRM practitioner should not be ignored. Experience can indicate sites that have potentially significant aspects, but need to be tested prior to any conclusions.

7. Educational:

- 7.1. Does the site have the potential to be used as an educational instrument?
- 7.2. Does the site have the potential to become a tourist attraction?
- 7.3. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

The more a site can fulfill the above criteria, the more significant it becomes. Test-pit excavations are used to test the full potential of an archaeological deposit. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of significance. Sites may also be mapped and/or have artefacts sampled as a form of mitigation. Sampling normally occurs when the artefacts may be good examples of their type, but are not in a primary archaeological context. Mapping records the spatial relationship between features and artefacts.

Findings

Isolated sherds were observed along the realigned route. These artefacts do not constitute an archaeological site¹.

BON1

This site is located on the southern border of Bonamanzi and the blue gum plantation, on a level area halfway up the hill². The site consists of several pottery sherds and broken grinding stones are visible on the surface. The site extends for ± 30 m in diameter and probably extends into the uncleared area to the north. A cultural deposit may exist at the site.

Several broken vessels were recorded and these were undecorated. The pottery is brown or black in colour and thin-walled. These sherds indicate that the site dates either to the Late Iron Age or Historical Period.

¹ As defined above

² The site had been marked on the provided maps.

Significance: The site is of low archaeological significance.

Mitigation: No further mitigation would be required. The wooden poles will have a low impact on the site.

Conclusion

The archaeological survey of the proposed realignment of the NB11 and NB 14 route recorded one archaeological site of low significance and a few isolated sherds. No further mitigation is required for the archaeological site. Eskom will be required to apply for a permit to impact on BON1 as stated in the Kwazulu-Natal Heritage Act of 1998.