

**Archaeological survey of the Ariadne-Elandskop**

**Transmission Line**

**For Eskom**

**By**

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## **Archaeological survey of the Aridane-Elandskop Transmission Line**

The Natal Museum Institute for Cultural Resource Management was approached by Eskom to undertake an archaeological survey of the proposed Ariadne-Elandskop transmission line, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. While the exact location of pylons has not been finalised, two new archaeological sites may be affected by this route. These two sites vary in significance. This report describes the sites recorded during this survey and suggests further mitigation. One site is of medium significance, while the other is of high-medium significance. These new sites should be read in conjunction with previously recorded sites along this transmission line.

### **Defining archaeological 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. Presence of a cultural deposit

### 1.3. Features:

1.3.1. Ash Features

1.3.2. Graves

1.3.3. Middens

1.3.4. Cattle pens

## 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 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 various features and/or 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. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

7.2. Educational value is in terms of display at an Heritage institution

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 high 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.

### **Description of Archaeological Sites**

Several old settlements were observed during the survey. However, these settlements are not archaeological, and were thus omitted from the results. Two archaeological sites were recorded during the course of the survey. Both sites date to the Late Iron Age and/or Historical Period.

#### **ESK7**

This is a large site extending for  $\pm 100$  m x 50 m. The site consists of dry stone walling in the form of cattle pens terracing and house foundations. There are two main occupation areas at the site.

The first area appears to be more recent than the second occupation. This area has rectangular stone walling with a grave on the right hand side. The main stone-walled feature appears to have subdivisions within the outer wall. However, the dense vegetation surrounding this feature made it difficult spatial layout and structures. In front of this feature are two terraces with circular depressions suggesting that these may be the remains of houses. More terracing occurs below these terraces.

It initially appears that a cultural deposit may exist at this site. The occurrence of a potential burial is important to note, since local communities may acknowledge this possible human grave.

The second area of the site, towards KwaQanda Rock, appears to be older than the first area. The main stone-walled feature is a cattle byre  $\pm 15$  m in diameter with the entrance facing downslope. A smaller stone-walled feature is nearby the entrance. Behind and to the left of the stone-walled feature are five to seven terraced areas that appear to be the remains of houses. These areas vary in size. Several terraces occur in front of this site as well.

The walling from both areas are structurally similar. That is, there are two rows of large rocks with smaller stones having been used as an infill. The two areas are architecturally and spatially different and inter-site differences are visible.

**Mitigation required:**

The site is of high-medium archaeological significance and further mitigation would be required if the servitudes and/or pylons affect the site. There is a probability that the pylons will affect the cultural deposit. According to onsite discussions only one pylon will be erected in this area. This area may be one of the terraced areas, and thus impact on a potential archaeological deposit. If the pylon caps are to be excavated in the deposit of the site, then I suggest that an archaeologist excavates these holes for Eskom, according to archaeological methods.

The location of the towers and the servitude should be considered in relation to the stone-walled features. While it is unlikely that the stone walled features may be directly impacted by the pylons and servitudes, I believe a cautionary approach should be taken. That is, the stone-walled features should be mapped in case of accidental damage to the site during or after construction. The area surrounding the main stone-walled feature would need to be cleared prior to any mapping.

**ESK8**

This site is a single stone-walled cattle byre with an archaeological deposit. The cattle pen is  $\pm 15$  m in diameter and the walling is structurally similar to that of ESK7. The entrance to the cattle pen faces downslope. No other features were observed in the vicinity of the pen. This is due to intensive agriculture in the surrounding area.

The site is of medium archaeological deposit because of the deposit in the pen.

### **Mitigation required**

The transmission line is unlikely to affect ESK8. However, care should be taken with servitudes and the construction of the transmission line. If the site is to be affected then it would require test-pit excavations and archaeological mapping.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed Ariadne-Elandskop transmission line was surveyed for potential archaeological sites. Two new archaeological sites were located along this route in addition to those recorded previously. These sites are of medium and medium-high significance and both would require further mitigation if they were to be affected by the transmission line and or servitudes. Mitigation would be in the form of archaeological mapping and/or excavating the holes for the pile caps.

**Appendix A****Location of archaeological sites<sup>1</sup>**

ESK7	S29 <sup>0</sup> 42' 34"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 09' 24"
ESK8	S29 <sup>0</sup> 40' 26"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 07' 27"

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<sup>1</sup> The geographical location of these sites are confidential and not to be made public.