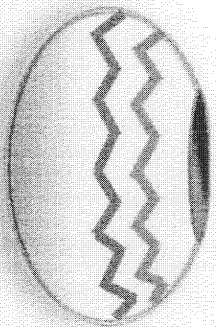


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Report on Archaeological Survey of Portion 2 of the farm Dingwell 276 JT  
in respect of Phumulani Residential Development  
compiled by

# Kudzala Antiquity



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## 1. Introduction

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act no. 25 of 1999) requires of individuals (engineers, farmers, mines and industry) to have impact assessment studies undertaken whenever any development activities are planned.

This includes guidelines for impact assessment studies to be done whenever cultural resources may be destroyed by development activities.

Against this background a preliminary Archaeological or Cultural Resources Management (CRM) survey was carried out during June 2005 on portion 2 of the farm Dingwell 276 JT near Rocky Drift.

Van Vollenhoven (1995:3) describes cultural resources as all unique and non-renewable physical phenomena (of natural occurrence or made by humans) that can be associated with human (cultural) activities.

These would be any man-made structure, tool, art object or waste that was left behind on or beneath the soil surface by historic or pre-historic communities.

These remains, when studied in their original context by archaeologists, are interpreted in an attempt to understand, identify and reconstruct the activities and lifestyles of past communities.

When these items are disturbed from their original context, any meaningful information they possessed is lost, therefore it is important to locate and identify such remains before construction or development activities commence.

A CRM survey consists of three phases, this document deals with the first phase. This (phase 1) investigation is aimed at getting an overview of cultural resources in a given area, thereby assessing the possible impact a proposed development may have on these resources.

When the archaeologist encounters a situation where the planned project will lead to the destruction or alteration of an archaeological site, a second phase in the survey is normally recommended.

During a phase 2 investigation the impact assessment of development activities on identified cultural resources is intensified and detailed investigation into the nature and origin of the cultural material is undertaken. Normally at this stage, archaeological excavation is carried out in order to document and preserve the cultural heritage.

Phase three consists of the compiling of a management plan for the safeguarding, conservation, interpretation and utilization of cultural resources (Van Vollenhoven, 2002).

Continuous communication between the developer and surveyor after the initial report have been compiled may result in the modification of a planned route or development to incorporate or protect existing archaeological sites.

## 2. Description of surveyed area

The survey was carried out on portion 2 of the farm Dingwell 276 JT in the vicinity of Rocky Drift. The surveyed area is surrounded by residential- and farmland on the eastern and northern side and afforested area to the west and south. A non-perennial stream flows through the portion from the north-eastern side to the south and is joined by another which flows parallel to this but further south.

The majority of the surveyed area carries grassland interspersed with indigenous trees and small granite outcrops. There are certain indications like terracing which suggest that at least some of the land was used for agricultural purposes in the past.

### 3. Aim and method of survey

As stated earlier the aim of the survey is to establish the whereabouts and nature of cultural heritage sites should they occur in the area.

This includes settlements, structures and artifacts, which have value for an individual or group of people in terms of historical, archaeological, architectural and human (cultural) development.

It is the aim of this study to locate and identify such objects or places in order to assess whether they are of significance and warrant further investigation and/ or protection.

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) formulated guidelines for the conservation of all cultural resources and therefore also divided such sites into three main categories. These categories might be seen as guidelines that suggest the extent of protection a given site might receive. They include sites or features of local (Grade 3) provincial (Grade 2) and national (Grade 1) significance.

For practical purposes the surveyor uses his own classification for sites or features and divides them into three groups, those of low or no significance, those of medium significance, those of high significance.

Sites of low significance:

These are sites or features that indicate some form of human activity in the form of a structure, shelter, materials used by historic settlers but which is in such a weathered state that it will provide very little information that warrants further investigation. Features or structures that are not considered as national treasures also fall within this category.

Sites of Medium significance:

A good number of sites fall into this category. These include sites which are moderately to well-preserved and may be of such a nature that they may be utilized for future research. Sites of this nature also fall into an archaeologically well-known category which means that in most instances they will provide little new or significant information during further investigation.

Sites of High significance:

There exist archaeological sites that contain invaluable data which will significantly enhance the knowledge that archaeologists currently have about our cultural heritage. These sites are rare and normally of more ancient origin (Stone Age shelters and Early Iron Age settlements are among the more common ones). In most instances these sites should be preserved and not damaged during construction activities.

When development activities do however jeopardize the future of such a site, a second and third phase in the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) process is normally advised.

Graves are considered very sensitive sites and should never under any circumstances be jeopardized by development activities. In all instances where graves are found by the surveyor the recommendation would be to steer clear of these areas. If this cannot be done or if construction activities have for some reason damaged graves, specialized consultants are normally contacted after development activities have been brought to a halt.

The survey was carried out on foot and by using a motor vehicle in an effort to locate any cultural

remains in the area where the proposed development will take place.

No significant cultural remains could be located during the survey. It must be noted however that some features may have been missed by the surveyor due to inaccessibility or simply because they were not located during surveying.

An interesting building was documented (PR 2) although it is considered to be of low importance.

→ This is a building made of stone and located close to where current residents are occupying the land. Closer inspection led the surveyor to believe that the building is of recent construction and not culturally significant. (See photo, fig. 2).

Some undiagnostic (undecorated) pieces of clay pottery were found scattered in an area where the soil have been eroded by water. Only two pieces of pottery could be found (See photo, fig.1) and the possibility that they may have been transferred from further uphill of the location PR 1 is great. The fact that larger concentrations of these shards were not located during the survey may suggest that the rest of the remains are located deeper under the soil surface and will only be found when digging deeper. This should be considered when development activities commences and should more broken pottery, bones or other remains turn up during excavation or earth-moving, the archaeologist must be notified at once.

On location PR 3 some evidence of historic occupation was found. Highly-weathered rectangular features that seems to have been stone walls suggest that some form/s of dwelling existed here. Some of the remains seem to indicate collapsed walls and at certain sections where they join at roughly 90° angle, foundation trenches are exposed.

Further to the east, more linear stone structures were found. These seem to have been made to create terraces to counter the sloping from west to east.

The area was searched for more signs of cultural remains but none were found. This site is considered to be of low importance.

A couple of metres south of PR 3 a fourth location was documented, although no remains could be found on the soil surface, the presence of Sisaal trees seems to indicate that there used to be some form of human activity, possibly a refuse dumping area.

#### 4. History of the area

The surveyed area is located close to Rocky Drift, a modern-day business centre between Nelspruit and the town of White River.

According to Borman (in Barnard 1975) Rocky Drift is a small railway stop on the branch-line between Nelspruit and White River. It's name originated from the rocky stream west of the railway. In popular parlance this railway stop became known as "Rokkiesdrif" but the original name of the farm is Blinkwater.

Scientists are of the opinion that the first residents of Nelspruit and surrounding area roamed this part of the Lowveld approximately a million years ago. A hominid of the Australopithecine species is believed to have been the first to stake a claim as first inhabitant. Succeeded by more modern physical types such as Homo erectus, evidence of both these pre-historic predecessors of modern man, was discovered on the location of the Lowveld National Botanical Gardens in Nelspruit. This evidence is in the shape of formal stone tools belonging to the Early- (Approx. 1,5 – 3 million AD) and Middle Stone Age (Approx. 200 000 – 30 000 AD) periods. (Milne in Borman, 1979).

Some 1500 years ago Negroid tribes appeared in the Eastern Transvaal, leaving behind them a history of iron and copper production, farming with cattle and sheep and also planting crops. These tribes migrated from the north and brought with them unique skills such as the making of beautifully decorated pottery. At least three Early Iron Age pottery sites have been recorded in

Nelspruit, there are also sites at Friedenheim, Plaston and Hazzyview.

Other finds of Archaeological and cultural significance have also been documented in this area. These are rock-art sites or better known as Bushman paintings.

“ In the vicinity of Rocky Drift in the White River District appears one of the best kept rock art sites in the Transvaal. The dark red elephant were painted by a highly skilled artist. These images are well-hidden inside a shelter on top of a granite hill.” (Schoonraad in Barnard, 1975).

Although no similar sites could be located during the survey, it is believed that some may be found in the near vicinity.

Before Europeans settled the area in large numbers, native bantu-speaking tribes occupied the land. The first of these groups were encountered by the odd traveller who documented their existence in diaries. This area was notorious for the abundance of Tsetse flies that made cattle herding impossible. Subsequently the groups that settled here were few and consisted of small family units (Barnard, 1975; Bommman, 1995).

In later years, when pioneers such as Hugh Lanion (H.L.) Hall established commercial farming in this area (since 1890) more of the land surrounding Nelspruit and White River were utilized for this purpose.

This provided the opportunity for people to be employed as farm labourers and this state of affairs have been the norm ever since.

## 5. Findings and recommendations

— Features documented at sites PR 2 and PR 4 are considered to be of low importance and low cultural significance.

— Although inspection of sites PR 1 and PR 4 did not reveal material that would suggest that they are archaeologically significant, they are still categorized as sites of medium importance or significance. This purely due to the fact that features or objects may be revealed during excavation or disturbance of the soil which are significant archaeologically.

In terms of site PR 1 these objects may include shards of pottery relevant to Early Iron Age history and in terms of site PR 2 historically significant material may be revealed.

It is the opinion of the surveyor however that the above-mentioned is unlikely.

It is important to note that the bulk of archaeological remains are normally located beneath the soil surface. It is therefore possible that some significant cultural material or remains were not located during this survey and will only be revealed when the soil is disturbed.

Therefore it is recommended that the developers take this into consideration when such activities are planned and executed at this location.

Should excavation or large scale earth moving activities reveal any human skeletal remains, broken pieces of ceramic pottery, large quantities of sub-surface charcoal or any material that can be associated with previous occupation, a qualified archaeologist should be notified immediately.

This will also temporarily halt such activities until an archaeologist have assessed the situation.

It must also be noted that if such a situation occurs, it will probably have further financial implications for the developers.

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## 7. Appendix A



## Appendix B

### 8. List of Site Locations

During the survey, the location of the sites were plotted with aid of a GPS (Global Positioning System). The sites were also numbered in the following fashion: The initials PR followed by a number marks the identity of the site. The “P” stands for Phumulani and “R” for Rocky Drift.

#### 1. Site name: PR 1 (Site 1)

Date of compilation: 4/06/2005

GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 58, 554' E

Latitude, 25° 21, 260' S

Altitude: 818 m

Photo: Figure 1

#### 2. Site name: PR 2 (Site 2)

Date of compilation: 4/06/2005

GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 59, 067' E

Latitude, 25° 21, 384' S

Altitude: 886 m

Photo: Figure 2

#### 3. Site name: PR 3 (Site 3)

Date of compilation: 08/06/2005

GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 59, 025' E

Latitude, 25° 20, 480' S

Altitude: 888 m

Photo: Figure 3, 4, 6, 7

#### 4. Site name: PR 4 (Site 4)

Date of compilation: 08/06/2005

GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 58, 884' E

Latitude, 25° 20, 517' S

Altitude: 917 m

Photo: Figure 5



## 9. Appendix C

