

The Archaeological Survey of the Ekubo Eco-Estate

For Buk'Indalo Consultancy cc

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INTRODUCTION

Buk'Indalo Consultancy contracted Umlando to undertake a preliminary archaeological survey of the proposed Ekubo Eco-Estate, north of Port Edward in February 2004. The area is regarded as being archaeologically and historically sensitive as Iron Age sites have been located in the vicinity of Port Edward and the São João wreck and possible survivor's camping site occur in the affected area. A second survey was conducted in June 2004 after parts of the area had been burnt. Umlando has also been appointed, by Buk'Indalo to act as the co-ordinators for all heritage matters.

Much of the area is heavily vegetated with grasses, guava trees and lantana, as well as banana plantations. This resulted in poor archaeological visibility. We concentrated on areas that were more likely to have archaeological sites. Four archaeological sites, one historical building complex and some archaeologically sensitive areas were recorded. The historical and archaeological sites are protected by the KwaZulu Natal Heritage Act of 1997. Those archaeological areas within the Admiralty Reserve are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999. Both Amafa aKwaZulu Natali and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) will be informed of all developments and reports regarding this development.

The wreck of the São João, and the possible survivor campsite is an area of concern for this development. Preliminary research (Maggs 1984; Burger 2003) suggests that the general area of development is the likely location of the 1552 São João campsite. Shipwreck campsites are of high significance for several reasons. The vessels often carried cargo to-from Europe and the East and thus they would leave evidence of such trade. The mariners also traded with indigenous people and thus a three-way trade network occurs. Campsites are rare in southern Africa, as many have been inadvertently destroyed by development. Those few that may survive are thus important because of the rarity. A shipwreck often results in loss of life. Graves of these mariners would thus also occur in the vicinity of the shipwreck and/or camp. Campsites may also

yield spatial information regarding the layout of the camp. This in turn may indicate nationality of the site, intra-site hierarchies (i.e. “who stayed where”, e.g. women and children were separated from the main camp, as were slaves, etc.).

The possibility of the São João shipwreck campsite in the affected area is thus a major area of concern with this development.

Method

Archaeological survey will include a foot survey of the entire affected area(s) as well as a desktop study. The desktop study is normally undertaken by KwaZulu-Natal Heritage when the developer contacts them during the Scoping Phase. Any known sites are then noted.

The survey results will define the significance of each recorded site, as well as a management plan. **Management plans may include further excavations and/or destruction permits from the relevant authority.**

All sites are 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, several criteria 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 various 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.

THE SITES

EKU1

This site is located on a flat area on the slopes of a hill. The site extends further downhill for ± 50 m. Areas of EKU1 have been disturbed by a sand borrow pit. The site consists of several Early, Middle, and Late Stone Age stone tools, and a few Late Iron Age pottery sherds and upper grinding stones.

EKU1 may be a result of natural erosion from EKU5; however, we have kept it as a separate site.

Significance: The site is of low archaeological significance and no further mitigation is required.

EKU2

This site appears to be an old dairy. The outbuildings are dated between 1929 and 1931.

Above the dairy is the main house, however no date could be observed. The house is, however, older than sixty years.

Significance: KwaZulu-Natal Heritage will need to evaluate these buildings in terms of their historical and architectural significance. Umlando is not qualified to undertake this assessment. Built structures older than 60 years are protected by the KwaZulu-Natal heritage Act of 1997.

EKU3

EKU3 is located in the banana plantation and covers most of the upper hill. The artefacts include pottery sherds, *Perna perna* (brown mussel) fragments, and Late Stone Age flakes.

Significance: The site is of low archaeological significance as most of the site has been damaged by agricultural activity,

EKU4

EKU4 was recorded during the second survey. The site consists of several concentrations of pottery sherds and *daga* fragments located on the top of the hill. The pottery is thin-walled pottery mostly in a brown colour. One diagnostic piece was recorded: the rim and lip was flat. The pottery suggests a late Iron Age date to the site. The *daga* fragments are smoothed on one side and rough on the other side: this suggests that these are hut floor fragments. They do not have the pole impressions commonly associated with granary *daga*.

Two historical artefacts were observed at this site. One artefact is an old piece of glass: it was thick and slightly oxidised. The second artefact appears to be a generic ceramic plate (without decorations). Both artefacts suggest a late 19th, or early 20th, century date. These are not associated with the São João dates.

Significance: The various concentrations of artefacts suggest that a spatial component may exist at the site. *Daga* fragments tend to be rare on sites due to their organic components. The occurrence of the *daga* fragments suggests that hut floors exist at the site, and thus further intra-site spatial features may exist. While marine shell fragments were not observed, there is a strong possibility that they will occur underneath the surface of the sand. This is the trend for Iron Age sites along the coast. Shell middens tend to preserve organic remains.

EKU4 has the highest concentration of Late Iron Age (LIA) artefacts of all the sites so far recorded in the affected area. We believe that a site such as this should thus be salvaged since it is the best representative sample of sites in this area, of a similar time period¹.

Mitigation: The site should have test-pit excavations to determine the full potential of the site. The test-pit excavations may (not) require further mitigation.

¹ The other sites in the area have similar pottery and this may indicate a similar time period. Furthermore, these sites are on hills that overlook the proposed shipwreck site, and that were reported in the travelers' accounts. There may be a link btw these sites and those mentioned in the historical records.

EKU5

EKU5 is located on the highest area in the affected area. The trigonometric beacon is located in the approximate center of the site. The site is ± 30 m from EKU4, however there is a small saddle in the hill that separates the two sites. The pottery at EKU5 is identical to that of EKU4, however it is in a lower density. The artefacts consist of LIA pottery and *daga* fragments. While EKU5 occurs over a larger area than that of EKU4, the artefacts are still more dispersed. This suggests that EKU4 has the higher concentration of artefacts.

Significance: The site is of low-medium significance. The test-pit excavations at EKU4 should yield better results than those that may be obtained at EKU5, and thus, EKU5 should not require further mitigation.

Mitigation: No further mitigation is required for this site.

PED2

The São João was wrecked nearby the development area on 24 June 1552. The shipwreck and survivor camp has been well documented in academic literature (see Maggs 1984, and Burger 2003 for a full list of references). All of the research has yielded tentative results and to date no conclusive evidence exists as to the exact location of the survivor's campsite². Burger (2003) has undertaken several excavations in the general area. Her results indicate that the site, PED2, yielded several peppercorns. These peppercorns can only be associated with East Indian trade networks.

Burger (2003) excavated PED2 as part of a project to locate the shipwreck campsite. The site is located in the current wetland area and will not be affected by development. However, the borders of the site may be affected by development. This site yielded several peppercorns associated with the European-Indian trade networks. Burger's hypothesis surmises that PED2 may be part of the location of the survivor's campsite. Given that ± 500 people were

² There appears to be mutual agreement that the São João did wreck in this area.

camping in this area for 12 days, the occurrence of these spices may well indicate a campsite³.

Significance: The occurrence of peppercorns may well indicate the occurrence of foreign trade networks. However, the site was only occupied for 12 days and thus it would not leave substantial material. Nonetheless, of all of the sites excavated, PED2 is the only site to yield these artefacts and thus places the site above the other sites in terms of significance.

Mitigation: The current development plans do not include this site as part of the development plan. That is, PED2 will not be affected. However, given the number of people who were marooned in this area, one can assume that parts of the presumed campsite may extend beyond the wetland area, and thus into the proposed development area. If the area adjacent to PED2 is to be developed, then test-pit excavations should be undertaken to determine if any further artefactual material occurs. This area occurs in line with the *boma* area that has been previously demarcated as being sensitive, and another area that appears to be sensitive (see below).

PED3

PED3 is located on the hill near the *boma* and the entrance to the church camping area. Burger (2003) excavated a small area of this site, however no artefacts were observed. We believe that the lack of artefacts, as with PED1 and PED2, is a result of small-scale excavations. Furthermore, Maggs (1984), Burger (2003) and ourselves have targeted this area as an area of human disturbance. We did this prior to any literature research, and thus we consider it as an independent observation. The dense vegetation in this area, even after a superficial burn, made it difficult for archaeological observations.

³ Burger's thesis does not, however, state the extent of excavations, *albeit* exploratory. Furthermore her excavations near Tragedy Hill were equally small, and thus no conclusive results can be made from such (assumed) small-scale excavations.

Significance: This area is of archaeological significance, even though no material culture has been forthcoming. We regard this area as being extremely sensitive with regards to the potential São João shipwreck campsite.

One must take into consideration that ± 500 people are reported to have camped in this area. The area that was occupied must have been substantial, given the social differentiation between males|females, Europeans|slaves, and soldiers|officers, etc. Even if the center of the campsite was in the wetland, the periphery of the site may have occurred up to the existing *boma* as well as south of the *boma* (i.e. towards the hill of the lagoon). Given the demographics of the campsite, and that ± 100 people were buried, the campsite, *in tota*, may extend further to the south. It is for this reason that the area downhill of EKU1, is also considered as being sensitive (see attached map). This proposed area is labeled as S1.

Mitigation: The area from the top of this hill to the current *boma* should have several test-pit excavations to determine if material from the São João occurs (see Burger, 2003, for the virtual campsite). The area demarcated as S1 on the map should also have test-pit excavations. On-site monitoring should occur even after the excavations have been completed.

Mitigation Details

EKU4

We recommend 3 days of test-pit excavations on this hill. Test-pit excavations will determine the full extent of the site, and if any sub-surface features exist. Further mitigation may be required depending on the result of the excavations.

PED2

Most of this area will not be affected by the development. The periphery of PED2 will, however be affected. We suggest that test-pit excavations are undertaken between PED2 and PED3 to determine if campsite remains occur.

S1

Test-pit excavations should be conducted in the areas that appear to have human disturbance. Specifically there are areas that have raised mounds that appear to be non-natural. We suggest one-day of test-pit excavations.

In addition to the above, certain areas appear to be sensitive and require on-site monitoring.

On-site monitoring would be as follows:

- One qualified archaeologist per earthmoving equipment per day.
- The archaeologist has the right to stop earthmoving operations at any time they deem necessary in order to salvage any material.
- On-site monitoring would occur in the areas of PED2, PED3, and S1.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological survey for the proposed Ekubo Eco-estate noted several archaeological / historical sites and areas that are of high sensitivity. The developer will need to obtain a permit for the destruction of the recorded sites from Amafa aKwaZulu Natali. The development occurs beyond the Admiralty Reserve and thus does not require permission from SAHRA. Amafa aKwaZulu Natali will require an architectural survey of the historical buildings. The developer will need to liaise with Amafa aKwaZulu Natali regarding these features.

Three areas require test-pit excavations. These should occur ahead of the operation phase of the development. Our suggestion is that these occur as far ahead as possible since further mitigation may be required. Furthermore, we suggest that on-site monitoring occur in three areas of the development: S1, PED2, and PED3.

The aim of the on-site monitoring and excavations is to salvage any material that may occur in the development area. The developer must note that the test-pit excavations and on-site monitoring may require further salvage operations.

Archaeological excavation permits currently exist for PED2 and PED3 under the Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali Heritage Act. The Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali Heritage permits are valid until 1 February 2005. All permits for the Admiralty Reserve have expired. This leaves the development in a precarious position, since the research permit does not include salvage archaeology. The current permit holder is not registered with Amafa aKwaZulu Natal to undertake salvage excavations in this province, and is thus not qualified to undertake any rescue excavations. The developer is under no obligation to pay for research excavations. If the developer intends to impact on the São João sites, then he (in this case) is financially responsible for the salvage excavations for the campsite. The current permit holder thus needs to complete her (in this case) research prior to the construction phase of the project (at own cost), or she needs to relinquish her excavation permit for archaeological salvage operations. If the permit is relinquished, then the developer is liable for costs for those areas relating to the São João.

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