

Archaeological Survey of the Hary Gwala Housing Development, Matatiele

For Uddi and KwaZulu-Natal Heritage

By

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Udidi contracted the Institute for Cultural Resource Management to undertake an archaeological survey of the proposed Harry Gwala Housing Development Project, Matatiele. The site is situated between the existing housing development, a landing strip, and the base of a small hill and sandstone outcrop. The land has been previously used for agricultural purposes.

No archaeological sites were located in the affected area. While the area is suitable for at least Stone Age sites, no artefacts were observed in the field. Even if these artefacts did exist in the field they would be in a secondary context, and thus of no significance.

Several sites do, however, exist in the areas adjacent to, or nearby, the development project. The first site was recorded by the ICRM. It is situated at the base of the hill and above the current track. The site is a Middle Stone Age quarry and stone knapping area. Several cores were observed, and some of these cores were part of the rock outcrop. One flake had evidence of the Levallois technique, while the other flakes were standard flakes. This site is of low archaeological significance, and no further mitigation is required.

I am, however, more concerned with other sites in the immediate vicinity of the town of Matatiele. Patricia Vinnicombe has previously recorded many rock art sites in the area. Specifically one site is ± 1 km from the proposed development, in an apparently disused Nature Reserve. This site is a shelter with an archaeological deposit and several rock art images. While the site is closed to the public, I did notice children playing within the Reserve as we drove past. I believe that the Matatiele Municipality should ensure that these sites are not impacted with the planned increase in human population as a result of these housing developments. KwaZulu-Natal Heritage should liaise with the relevant authorities regarding this site and others in the neighboring area.