

# Archaeological survey of the Hawaan Forest Development

For Guy Nicolson Consultancy cc

By

By Gavin Anderson

Institute for Cultural Resource Management, Natal Museum, Private Bag 9070,  
Pietermaritzburg, 3200

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Guy Nicolson Consulting contracted the Institute for Cultural Resource Management to undertake an archaeological survey for the proposed development near the Hawaan Forest. The area is marked for future housing development.

A total of two archaeological sites were recorded in the development area. One site requires test-pit excavations, and the other site needs to be reassessed when the sugarcane has been burnt/cut. Several individual artefacts were observed throughout the whole development area. However, these are too ephemeral to constitute a site.

### **Methodology**

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 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.

## **SITES**

The location of the sites and their assessment are summarised in Table 1.

### **HAW1**

This site is located in the sugarcane along the northern part of the main development. A track goes through the center of the site exposing a cross section of the site. Various marine shells fragments and pottery sherds were observed along this track . This indicates that there is a spatial component to the site as well as an archaeological deposit.

The observed pottery is undecorated thin-walled sherds suggesting a Late Iron Age occupation. The pottery is scattered throughout the hill. The marine shell consists of individual scatters and large shell middens. At least two middens were observed. These shells include limpets, oyster and brown mussels. Several upper grinding stones were observed. These were manufactured on quartzite pebbles.

Significance: The site is of medium archaeological significance due to its deposit, spatial component and shell middens.

Mitigation: Several test-pit excavations should be undertaken to determine the full extent of the site.

## **HAW2**

This site is located south of HAW1. The area was covered by dense sugarcane in most of the places. Only a small area has good ground visibility and it was in this area that several artefacts were observed.

Several pottery sherds, daga floor fragments, and marine shell were observed in those small areas. This suggests that more of the site may occur under the sugar cane.

Significance. The site cannot be fully assessed currently due to the dense sugar cane. My experience with sites such as these is that there will be material beneath the sugar cane and that the site would be of at least medium significance.

Mitigation: My personal experience with these sites suggest that the site would require at least test-pit excavations. However, the site needs to be reassessed after the sugar cane has been cut or burnt.

## **CONCLUSION**

The area to be affected by the proposed Hawaan Forest Development was surveyed for archaeological sites. Two sites were recorded in this development area. One of these sites would require test-pit excavations, and the second site requires reassessment. Test-pit excavations are to test the full significance of a site. Further excavations may be required if significant information is recovered.

The developer is required to obtain a permit from KwaZulu-Natal Heritage for permission to damage/alter these sites. This is a requirement of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act of 1997.

**Table 1: Location and Assessment of archaeological sites<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Latitude</b>
HAW1	Medium	Test-pits	29 <sup>0</sup> 42' 09"	31 <sup>0</sup> 05' 35"
HAW2	Unknown (medium?)	Re-assess	29 <sup>0</sup> 42' 29"	31 <sup>0</sup> 05' 30"

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<sup>1</sup> The location of these sites is for the developers plans. The co-ordinates should be omitted from all public documents.