

Archaeological Survey Of The Lilani Hot Springs Development Area

For Walmsley Environmental Consultants

By

By Gavin Anderson

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

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INTRODUCTION

The Natal Museum Institute for Cultural Resource Management was approached by Walmsley Environmental Consultants to undertake an archaeological survey of the area to be affected by development near the Lilani Hot Springs (LHS). This report describes the sites recorded during the survey and suggests further mitigation.

All archaeological sites, and certain cultural sites, in KwaZulu-Natal are protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act of 1998. This legislation protects these sites from damage, alteration and/or destruction as a result of potential development and/or research.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for this project are:

- Description of archaeological sites in the affected area.
- Assessment of the significance of each site.
- Assessment of the mitigation required for each site

The ToR was slightly altered by the client, who asked the ICRM to locate potential caves in the immediate area for tourism.

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METHODOLOGY

The Natal Museum is the provincial repository for recorded archaeological sites. No archaeological sites had been previously recorded in the affected area; however, other sites have been recorded in the vicinity outside of the affected area. This information indicated that there is a probability that other archaeological sites may occur in the affected area.

The fields survey entailed walking the affected area and doing a ground survey. The visibility of archaeological sites was limited due to the dense vegetation, and thus I concentrated on small open areas. In this way I could sample parts of the site over a broad area. I also briefly interviewed several people regarding their history (in relation to LHS) and if any caves existed in the area. These interviews were brief discussions and not in-depth interviews.

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 evaluation of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

- **State of preservation of:**
 - Organic remains:
 - Faunal
 - Botanical
 - Presence of a cultural deposit
 - Features:
 - Ash Features
 - Graves
 - Middens
 - Cattle pens
- **Spatial arrangements:**
 - Internal housing arrangements
 - Intra-site settlement patterns
 - Inter-site settlement patterns
- **Features of the site:**
 - Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts at the site?
 - Is it a type site?

- Does the site have a very good example of a specific time period, feature, or artefact?
- **Research:**
 - Providing information on current research projects
 - Salvaging information for potential future research projects
- **Inter- and intra-site variability**
 - Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between various features and/or artefacts?
 - Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities?
- **Archaeological Experience:**
 - 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.
- **Educational:**
 - The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.
 - 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.

FINDINGS

Two main sites were located during the course of the survey. Both of these sites do not occur in the proposed development area, however they may be indirectly affected by development and were therefore recorded.

LHS1:

LHS1 is a Remembrance Rock for a Mr. Mbulungeni. The rock is situated above the road, at the last fork before the turning circle at the ruins of the hotel.

Mr. Mbulungeni is, according to various people, the original founder of the Hot Springs, and may have been the founder of this community. There were conflicting views on his status within the community: some believe he was an Inkosi, while others said he had just lived in the area. According to the general oral history, Mr. Mbulungeni used to sit on this rock while waiting for the sun to come into the valley, either after or before having a bath in the springs. The informers were not certain of when the rock feature became a Remembrance Rock.

Site significance:

The site is of high cultural significance to the community.

Mitigation required:

The site may be affected if the road to the hotel is upgraded or widened. The developers and the community should be involved in any aspects regarding this Remembrance Rock. The site may also be protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, and a permit may be required if it is to be removed.

I do not believe that the rock should be moved, since any alteration to its current position will be changing its sense of place on the landscape.

I believe that this Remembrance Rock has tourism potential.

LHS2:

LHS2 consists of two middens (rubbish dumps) located just outside the current development plans. The first midden is neither archaeological nor historical *per se*, but does form part of the history of the

hotel. An informant, who worked at the hotel from 1959, noted the location of this midden as one of the places where he had discarded refuse in the past. This midden is located in front of the hotel, and near the river.

The second midden predates 1959, and may be one of the earlier middens of the hotel. It is presently ± 30 cm underneath the current topsoil. This dump has been partially affected by the cutting of the dirt road leading to the river crossing. The road cutting has made it possible to observe several concentrations of artefacts and features. These include, ceramics, wood, old tins, and an ash pit with a ?goat cranium. All of these artefacts are reasonably well preserved. The ceramics I observed were not of the expensive imported ceramics and initially appear to be mass produced.

Site Significance:

Aspects of this site are of high significance. The archaeological database for colonial colonisation of KwaZulu-Natal is under-represented and under-researched at the moment. These middens have the potential to inform historical archaeologists and historians more about the first half of the 21st century in this valley.

While historical sources tend to give the general picture of an area, and even of the specific people, historical archaeology has shown how the use of material culture can differ to that described in the written record. These middens, and presumably others occur in the area as well, are an indication of not just that which people had discarded, but also an indication of which people used the hotel through time, the various changes in the hotel (that may be related to local, national or even international changes), and the relative socio-economic status of the hotel – as seen in artefacts.

I believe that these middens have tourism potential.

Mitigation Required:

Technically the middens are not older than 100 years and are therefore not considered as archaeological sites. Similarly the middens do not fall under the sixty year clause of the KwaZulu-Natal

Heritage Act, since these are not built structures. If the middens are to be affected a permit would not be required for their destruction or alteration.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

No sites of archaeological significance were located in the affected area. There may have been sites in the vicinity of the old hotel, however these have been destroyed. Two sites were recorded that can be considered as having significance. The first is a Remembrance Rock for the “founder” of the Lilani Hot Springs and people of the area. The second is a series middens used through time by people from the hotel. Neither sites will be directly affected by the proposed development, but they may be indirectly affected. Both sites have tourism potential.

The Remembrance Rock should not be moved and a permit will be required for any changes to its current location. The middens are not classified as archaeological / historical sites and no permit would be required for their damage, alteration, and/or destruction.

Both cultural sites can be used to enhance any future development plans for the Lilani Hot Springs. The proposed Lilani Hot Springs hotel currently stands as an ahistorical building on the landscape. The landscape does, however, have a strong history that can be incorporated into the development and theme of Lilani Hot Springs.

The Lilani Hot Springs has a recent history that extends to at least 1820s when it was first “found” by the current community. There is a strong link between the community’s founder and the activities associated surrounding him and the LHS. I believe that the proposed development should use this oral history, and the Remembrance Rock, as part of the history of the hotel. I would argue that the story of Mr. Mbulungeni should be displayed near the Remembrance Rock and people should be actively encouraged to read this story, and other oral histories, of the local community.

The occurrence of the hotel in this area is of some significance. Few colonial sites have been documented in terms of archaeology, and the excavations of these middens often yield more than the usual broken cups, plates, and food remains. An excavation of the various middens should be able to put the various artefacts into a chronological order and record a history from at least 1906 (cf KwaZulu-Natal Heritage document: 10/1/3 Kranskop 1). Other documents/photographs may date the European occupation to before 1906. Further history may be located in a recent Masters Thesis (KwaZulu-Natal Heritage document: 10/1/3 Kranskop 1). The importance of these middens lies in the fact that they cover several major provincial and local events, as well as international, and the hotels response to each of these events would be seen in the artefacts of various layers in the middens.

If these middens were excavated and analysed, and the result were put on display, then the proposed development would have another tourism aspect to its development. Excavations can be left open, treated and form part of a display, while the artefacts are displayed nearby.

By using the communities direct history and the colonial history a viable and historical interpretation of the Lilani Hot Springs can be added as part of the tourist experience.

CONCLUSION

The Lilani Hot Springs were surveyed for archaeological sites. No archaeological sites were recorded in the direct affected area. However, one archaeological site was recorded on the outskirts of the old hotel ruins. This site will require a permit if it is affected in anyway. The second site is not classified as an archaeological site, however, it has potential for the interpretation of the proposed development.

I believe that the Remembrance Rock and the historical middens should be included in the future interpretation and development of the proposed Lilani Hot springs. The development would thus take cognisance of the social history surrounding the Lilani Hot Springs, and could thus be part of a tourist attraction. The local community, developers and Natal Museum will need to negotiate how this proposed tourist attraction could be undertaken.