

CHAPTER 6

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY SURVEY

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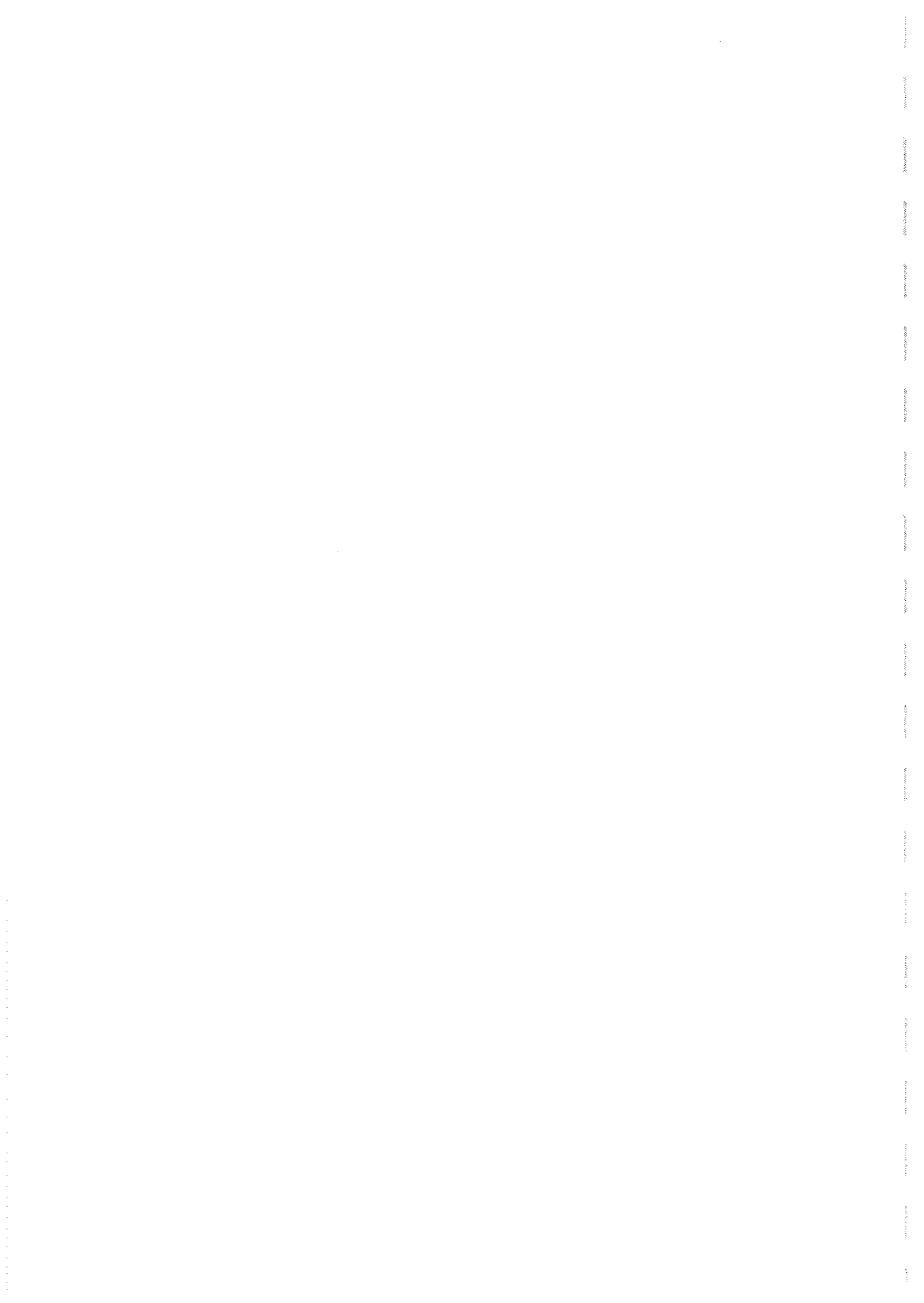


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6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY SURVEY

6.1 Background

A desktop scoping survey conducted in April 2001, pointed out *that the proposed road will be constructed in a region where little is known about the archaeological heritage, and recommended that a phase 1 survey be conducted.*

Due to the distance and terrain to be covered, it was suggested that *areas where archaeological sites would most likely be found be identified, and spot visits made to these sites. For example river banks, floodplains and valleys. Sites are often visible in sections of dongas or areas exposed by other soil erosion actions. This would provide information to 'map' possible sensitive areas where special care should be taken during the construction phase.*

6.2 Methodology

This survey, following the above suggestions, took place during July 2002. Many potentially sensitive archaeological heritage areas in different environments, such as grassland areas, river gorges and caves were visited along the proposed route. In general, dense tall grass made it virtually impossible to observe archaeological sites. Possible aids such as recently burnt areas, mole heaps, ploughed fields and dongas were investigated to find any traces of exposed material.

This survey only focused on the greenfields section of the toll road, which stretches from the Ndwalane intersection to the Mtamvuna River, as the scoping study concluded that no significant archaeological sites could be expected in the road reserve along the existing N2 and R61 routes. This study therefore covers the following sections:

- Section 5: Ndwalane up to and including the Ntafufu River crossing
- Section 7: Magwa intersection up to and including Msikaba River crossing
- Section 8: Msikaba River up to and including the Mtentu River crossing
- Section 9: Mtentu River up to and including the Mtamvuna River crossing

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Section 5: Ndwalane up to and including the Ntafufu River crossing

The Ndwalane intersection to the eastern bank of the Mzimvubu River was surveyed, with special attention given to the wide, flat riverbank along the Mzimvubu River, as these areas are known to have been settled by early farming communities in the former-Transkei (Prins 1993; Binneman, 1996). Apart from a few potsherds found on the eastern bank, no other sites were located.

Site 1: A few small thin walled potsherds, probably of Late Iron Age origin, were found on the eastern bank on a path leading down to the Mzimvubu River (GPS location recorded), in relatively close proximity to the road. These potsherds may indicate that there was a Late Iron Age settlement in the vicinity. Figure 6.1 shows the approximate position of all sites.

A possible historical site may be situated at the Riverside Primary School Area (GPS location recorded). According to the occupant, Mr D. Otto, a trading store was built there in 1901 (*vide* Mr J. Costello). However, this assertion could not be validated. If this is the case and remains are preserved (including rubbish dumps), a permit must be obtained from SAHRA to remove or destroy it. This site will not need to be investigated, since the new alignment will not disturb it.

6.3.2 Section 7: Magwa intersection up to and including Msikaba River crossing

Several spot checks were made at the proposed crossings of the Msikaba River. However, no sites of archaeological interest were found in this section of the route. This is not surprising as the area is considered to largely be in a natural state, hence its ecological sensitivity (see Chapter 3). Due to the poor soils in the valley, the area has probably only been used for grazing (and not agriculture), with no formal dwellings therefore being established.

6.3.3 Section 8: Msikaba River up to and including the Mtentu River Crossing

Several spot checks were made at the proposed crossings of the Mtentu River, but no sites of archaeological interest were found in this section of the route. This is probably due to the area being largely uninhabited, due to the poor soils in these valleys. The only anthropogenic use of the area would have been by herd boys watching over grazing stock.

6.3.3 Section 9: The Mtentu River up to and including the Mtanvuna River crossing

The survey in this section extended from the Mnyameni River to the west bank of the Mpahlane River to the east bank of the Mzamba River. Large sections of the survey were conducted on foot. Several spot checks were made to the Mnyameni River. The steep sides of the Mnyameni River and its tributary, a few hundred metres above the waterfall, housed a large number of caves and shelters (see Plate 6.1). Surprisingly, only four shelters on the southern bank of the Mnyameni River, all facing north, yielded small quantities of archaeological deposits and only one displayed a few rock paintings. The following archaeological sites were recorded:

Site 2: A small shelter measuring 7 m wide, 7 m deep and approximately 7 m high at the entrance with the wall extending another 12 m (GPS location recorded). The black, fine, dusty living deposit is estimated to be some 0.2 m deep. Archaeological remains include black shale stone tools scattered on the floor and along the drip line, and some marine shell, which include the mussels *Patella miniata*, and *Dinoplax gigas*. The only rock paintings found during the survey were situated in this shelter. The paintings are painted in red with fine detailed lines and consisted of a small group of some 11 human figures (others faded beyond recognition) walking in a straight line. Three are wearing long karosses, and carrying long sticks and arrows. Some 10 m further along the cliff face is a delicate painting of a group of three small antelope (possible Grysback). One animal is lying, looking back towards the other two standing buck. This is a rare image.

Site 3: A fairly large cave situated next to site 1 and measuring 25 m wide, 12 m deep and approximately 12 m high at the entrance (GPS location recorded). The roof slopes steeply to the rear and leaves little room for living activities. The loose, dusty living deposit is estimated to be about 0.2 m deep in places. A large number of stone tools (many utilised and retouched) manufactured of black shale and occasionally chalcedony, along with some red ochre fragments, were visible on the floor of the cave and along the drip line. A few thin walled potsherds were also found, but it is not known whether these are Stone Age pastoralists (Khoi) or Late Iron Age (late farming communities) in origin. Large quantities of marine shell were present on the floor and in the drip holes, and included shellfish and mussels (*Patella cochlear*, *P. tabularis*, *P. miniata*, *Dinoplax gigas*, *Thias*, sp., *Nassa* sp. and *Burnupena* sp.).



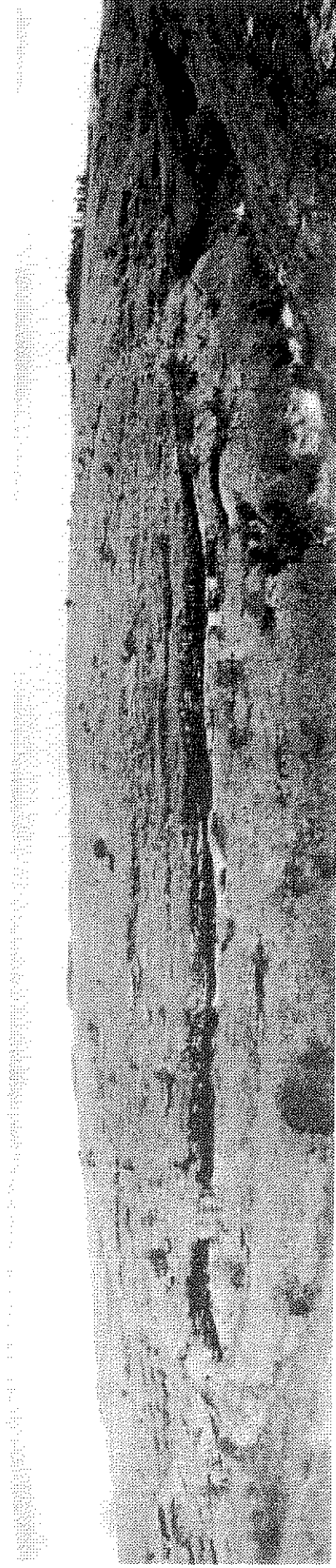


Plate 6.1: A photograph showing the caves and shelters in the Mnyameni River valley.



Site 4: A fairly large rock shelter situated some 25 m above the channel of the Mnyameni River, measuring 20 m wide, 10 m deep and some 7 m high at the drip line (GPS location recorded). A thick layer of fine white river sand covered the floor. The archaeological material was visible at the entrance of the shelter and consisted of a few stone tools manufactured of black shale and fragmented marine shell.

Site 5: A large semi-circular cave with a low roof, measuring 20 m wide, 8 m deep and the height ranging from 2.5 to 5 m high at the drip line, with the roof supported by a pillar (GPS location recorded). The stony deposit was only a few centimetres deep, but large quantities of stone tools (utilised, retouched and small scrapers) manufactured of black shale and occasional chalcedony were visible on the floor and exposed in the drip holes. A number of thick walled potsherds (none decorated), and probably of Late Iron Age origin were also found on the site. The marine shell remains were similar to the species found at the other sites.

Site 6: Situated on the slope above the river valley and consisting of a few thin walled potsherds, probably of Late Iron Age origin in a ploughed field (GPS location recorded). The potsherds suggest that there was a Late Iron Age settlement in the vicinity, but no other remains or features were found which could provide more information.

The steep banks of the Mpahlane and Mzamba rivers displayed no potential for possible archaeological sites. The area between the two rivers was flat with gentle undulating hills. The dense grass cover proved a major problem in identifying potential sites.

Four stone cairns, called izivivane, were found on the western bank at the top next to the path that crosses the Mpahlane River (31.06.21S; 30.08.10E). These stone features are found throughout the Eastern Cape, as it was a Khoi custom followed by the Xhosa to place a stone on the cairn as a simple prayer for a safe journey (Hodgson 1982). The largest one was some 3 metres in diameter and 0.8 metres high. They are small and it would appear that no stones have been added to the cairn for some time. Local people could provide information on the age and importance of these features. These features are protected by the National Heritage Act of 1999 and a permit must be obtained from the South African Heritage Resources Agency before they may be removed or destroyed.



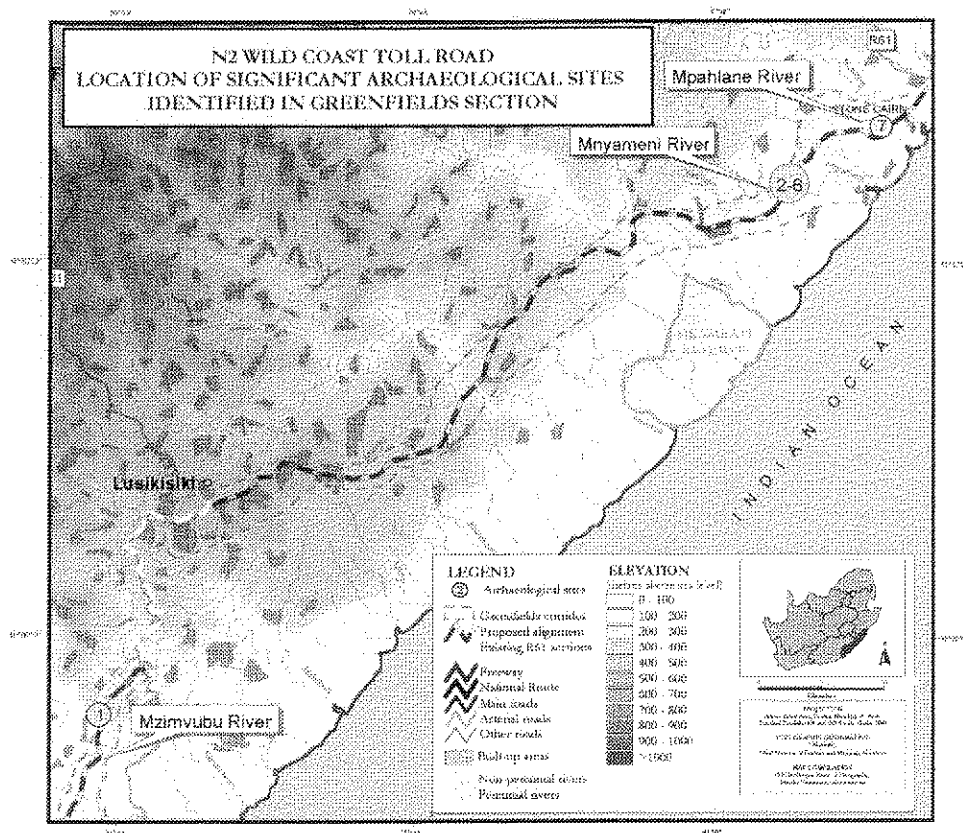
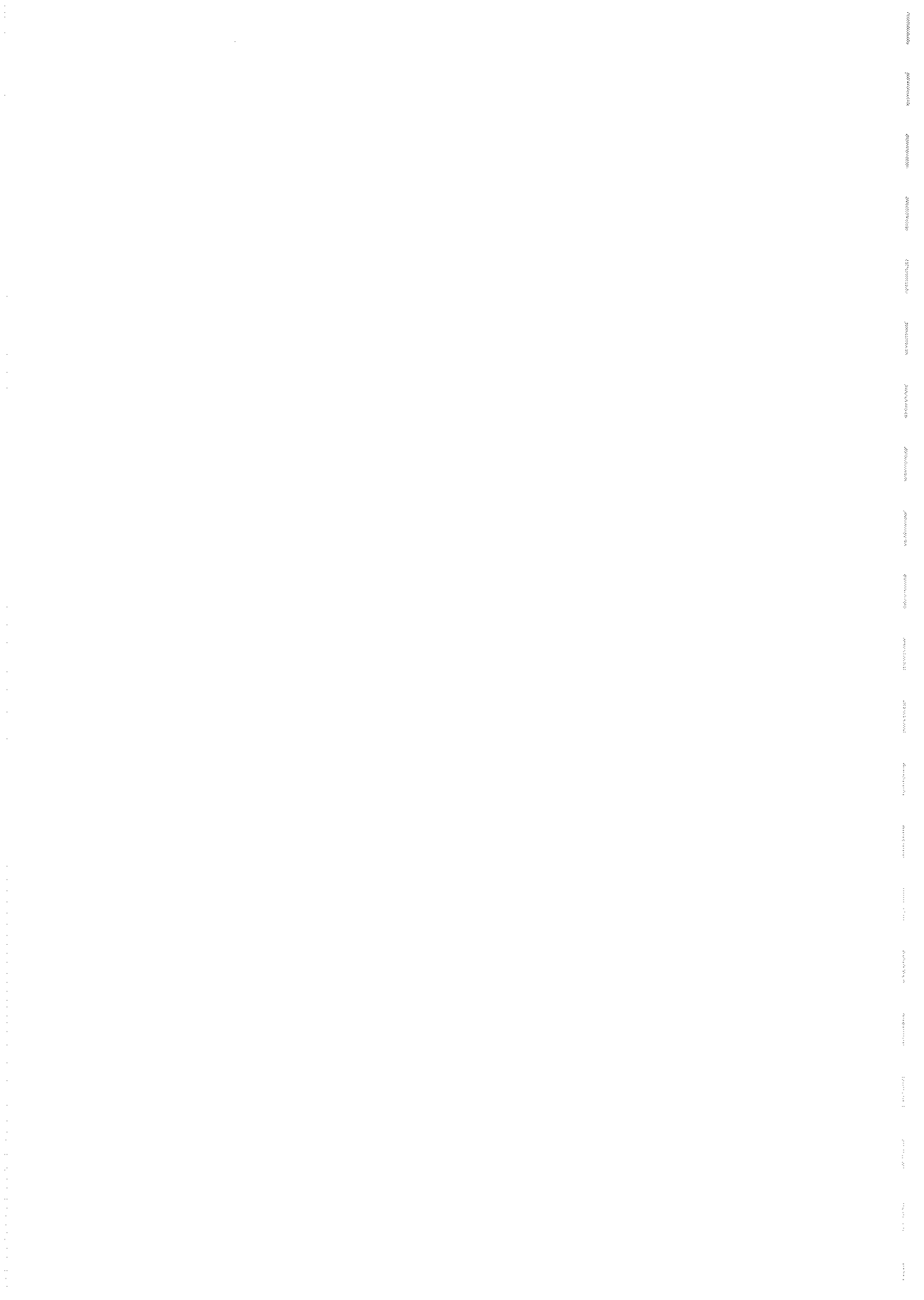


Figure 6.1 The approximate position archaeological sites recorded during field surveys.

6.4 Cultural sensitivity

The few archaeological sites located during the survey may create the idea that the area is of low cultural sensitivity. However, this may not be the case, and it is believed that many archaeological sites could be found during the construction phase of the road and associated activities such as access roads and the establishment of construction camps. The location of possible archaeological sites was hampered by the dense grass cover. Feely (1987), who surveyed large areas in the former-Transkei for archaeological sites and features, also remarked that the “archaeological visibility was reduced to zero” when the ground was covered by vegetation.

It is not the scope of this report to explain why so few archaeological sites were found. The report therefore focuses on why those that were found, and those that may be found during construction, are important, and why they should be protected from being damaged or destroyed. The Mnyameni River, where a concentration of archaeological sites is located, is such a case. Although these sites are considered to be of low archaeological significance in terms of volume and depth of deposits, they were the only living sites found on the coastal



foreland of this part of the former-Transkei, which is essentially the area of the Msikaba Formation. This, together with the fact that the only rock art site identified in the region was also found here, makes this an important and sensitive cultural heritage location, which is also the only record of the early history of this part of the former-Transkei. These non-renewable archaeological resources are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 and may not be damaged, destroyed or altered without a permit.

In addition, it is acknowledged that the proposed construction of the road will require the relocation of graves. Due to the abundance of individual grave sites associated with scattered homesteads, not all sites will be able to be avoided. In addition, some sites may only be unearthed during construction activities if headstones or other indicative signs are absent.

6.5 Environmental impacts on archaeological sites

The only environmental impact addressed in this report is the possible loss or disturbance to archaeological sites. Impacts on graves are discussed in the Social Impact Report, and impacts on sites of historical significance are not applicable, as none occur along the greenfields section of the route. This impact is discussed for the four sections of the route covered in this report and is summarised in Table 6.1.

6.5.1 Section 5: Ndwalane up to and including the Ntafufu River

The location of a small Late Iron Age deposit near the Mzimvubu River suggests that a *localised* impact of *moderate severity* may occur. Since archaeological impacts can be effectively mitigated, the environmental significance after mitigation will be **LOW**.

6.5.2 Section 7: Magwa intersection up to and including Msikaba River

It is unlikely that the road will have an impact in this section, as no sites of archaeological interest were found. However, if a site is impacted, it will probably have a *moderately severe, permanent* impact at a *localised* scale of **MODERATE** significance. Since archaeological impacts can be effectively mitigated, the environmental significance after mitigation will be **LOW**.

Table 6.1: Summary of archaeological impacts along the route.

ISSUE/IMPACT	WITHOUT MITIGATION						WITH MITIGATION	
	Risk	Temporal	Spatial	Cert.	Severity	Significance	Severity	Significance
Loss or disturbance to archaeological sites								
Section 5: Ndwatane up to and including the Ntafufu River	May occur	Permanent	Localised	Probable	Moderate	MODERATE	Slight	LOW
Section 7: Magwa intersection up to and including Msikaba River	Unlikely	Permanent	Localised	Probable	Moderate	MODERATE	Slight	LOW
Section 8: Msikaba River up to and including the Mientu River	May occur	Permanent	Localised	Probable	Severe	MODERATE	Slight	LOW
Section 9: Mientu River up to and including the Mtamvuna River	May occur	Permanent	Localised	Probable	Moderate	HIGH	Slight	LOW

6.5.3 Section 8: Msikaba River up to and including the Mtentu River

It is unlikely that the road will have an impact in this section, as no sites of archaeological interest were found, and interesting sites are not anticipated to occur in this area. However, if a site is impacted, it will probably have a *moderately severe, permanent* impact at a *localised* scale of **MODERATE** significance. Since archaeological impacts can be effectively mitigated, the environmental significance after mitigation will be **LOW**.

6.5.4 Section 9: Mtentu River up to and including the Mtamvuna River

This section of the road yielded a large number of sites of interest, particularly those associated with the Mnyameni River. However, since the road has been re-aligned in this section (see Chapter 3 for further discussion on the re-alignment of the road), the rock caves and paintings will be largely avoided by the road. This effectively mitigates any potential impact of **HIGH** significance on these features, and impacts on archaeological sites in this section will probably be *localised* and of **LOW** significance, as mitigation will be effective. Some protection of these sites may be requested in the long-term.

6.6 Recommendations

The National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 protects all archaeological and historical sites and material older than 60 years, or which are considered to be worthy of conservation. No person may destroy, damage, alter, remove from its original site, or excavate any such material without a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). If convicted of an offence in terms of the Act, a person could be liable for a fine or imprisonment, or both.

It must be emphasised that the conclusions and recommendations expressed in this heritage sensitivity survey are based on the visibility of cultural sites and may not therefore reflect the occurrence of actual sites. Many sites may be covered by soil and vegetation, and will only be located once this has been removed. In the event of such finds being uncovered, archaeologists must be informed immediately so that they can investigate the importance of the sites and excavate or collect material before it is destroyed. The *onus* is on the developer to ensure that this agreement is honoured in accordance with the National Heritage Act of 1999.

In light of this, the following recommendations are made:

1. Permits must be obtained from SAHRA before any archaeological sites are disturbed or destroyed.
2. A full-time Environmental Control Officer (ECO) is required in the study area during vegetation clearing and implementation of the project. The ECO need not be a qualified archaeologist or heritage resource specialist. However, the ECO must be briefed by a professional archaeologist.
3. Archaeologists must be informed immediately of any new sites found during construction so that they can investigate the importance of the sites and excavate or collect material before it is destroyed.
4. Archaeologists should meet with ECO, contractors and construction staff prior to construction to inform them of the possible heritage sites and cultural material they may encounter and the procedures to follow when they find sites.
5. Heritage remains uncovered or disturbed during vegetation clearing and earthworks should not be further disturbed until inspected by the ECO and, if necessary, a professional archaeologist.
6. ECO and contractors must ensure that workers do not disturb, damage or collect cultural material from sites if they are located during the construction phase.

6.7 References

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