

# **The Archaeological Survey of the Tarring of the P 52-3**

**For Buk'Indalo Consultancy**

**Date: 26 October 2004**

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## **Introduction**

David Totman & Associates contracted Umlando to undertake the archaeological survey of the upgrade of the P 52-3 road. The road extends from the Mkuze River to the outskirts of Nongoma. The current road is a gravel district road. The proposed upgrade consists of tarring the gravel road and a few deviations may occur. Two existing quarries will be used for this road as well.

The archaeological survey located two archaeological/historical sites. Both of these will require some form of mitigation. One site consists of several graves located above a quarry. The other site is an Early Iron Age site located near the Mkuze bridge.

## **Method**

Archaeological survey consisted of driving along the existing road and walking those areas that may have deviations, appear to be sensitive, and will be quarried.

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, 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 before 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**

#### **NON1**

NON1 is located at the first quarry south of the Mshanelo Store. The site consists of two sensitive areas. The western side of the site consists of  $\pm$  four graves. The eastern side consists of  $\pm$  four graves, and apparent foundations of an homestead. The graves from both sites appear to be relatively old as they have a sunken appearance and are not attended to by the local community<sup>1</sup>. The graves probably date to the historical period, or more recent past.

The foundations of the homesteads are ephemeral and consist of small terraces and some stonewalling.

The graves may be affected by quarrying activity for the P52-3 upgrade.

Significance: The site is of high significance because of the graves.

Mitigation: Human skeletal remains older than 60 years are protected by the Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage Act of 1997. The removal of these remains requires certain procedures and Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage must be informed.

A two-phased approach is needed for these graves. First, the local community needs to be interviewed to ascertain whether these graves belong to an immediate family. An estimated date of burial is required if the local community claims the ancestors of these graves. If the estimated date is younger than 60 years then negotiations with the local community may continue. If the graves are older than 60 years, then the local community and the developer are required to negotiate with Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage.

The graves fall under automatic protection if no one claims the ancestry of these graves. If the graves are older than 60 years, then they may need to be excavated and stored at Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage offices.

The developer needs to ascertain the extent of the proposed quarry and if this will affect the graves.

## NON2

NON2 is located along the northern side of the Mkuze River. It will be affected by the construction of the road deviation and bridge. NON2 consists of a high density of pottery sherds and (upper and lower) grinding stones. The site is currently under dense sugar cane and a full assessment of the site could not be made.

The artefacts date to at least Msuluzi Phase of the Early Iron Age (1500 – 1300 years ago). The site forms part of an Iron Age village, of which most of it occurs under the sugar cane. Only the areas along the road/track were surveyed.

Significance: We cannot ascertain the full significance of the site until the sugar cane has been cleared. Few Early Iron Age sites have been recorded in this area; thus, the site may have some significance. These types of sites tend to yield the remains of villages, pits, kraals, iron working activities and possible graves.

Mitigation: The site needs to be re-assessed once the sugar cane has been cleared. Test-pit excavations may occur after this re-assessment. An alternative is to deviate the road through the disused buildings on the opposite side of the road.

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<sup>1</sup> A few graves were observed alongside the road. Members of the local community attend to these graves. These graves are excluded from the archaeological survey as they are not part of this survey.

## **Conclusions**

The archaeological survey of the P52-3 road upgrade located two archaeological / historical sites. Both sites require further mitigation if affected by the road upgrade. Community involvement with the human graves is essential. The Early Iron Age site may be significant, however it needs to be re-assessed once the sugar cane has been cleared.

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## Site Record Forms

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE RECORD FORM

**SITE CATEGORY:** (X where applicable)

Stone Age

Early Iron Age:

Late Iron Age

Historical Period: X

Recorder's Site No.: NON1

Official Name:

Local Name:

Map Sheet:

GPS reading: S 27 49' 24" E 31 39' 21.2"

Directions to site: Sketch or description.

From Nongoma, take the P52-3 gravel road. Pass the old Mshanelo Store on the left-hand side. Site is  $\pm 1$ km east of this store on the third hill. Part of site is an old quarry site



### SITE DESCRIPTION:

Type of Site: graves and homesteads

Merits conservation: Yes

Threats: Yes

What threats: Quarry

### RECORDING:

Details of graphic record: N/A

Colour slides: N/A

Black & White photographs N/A

Tracings N/A

Re-drawings N/A

Recorder/Informant: Name: Gavin and Louise Anderson

Address: PO Box 491, Mkuze, 3965

Owner State

References:

### Description of site and artefactual content.

GPS reading was taken in the middle of the two sites. Both sites consists of  $\pm 4$  graves each and possible homesteads.

Sites appear to be more Historical Period than recent as they have sunken and are neglected. Some homestead foundations are visible.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE RECORD FORM

**SITE CATEGORY:** (X where applicable)

Stone Age

Early Iron Age: X

Late Iron Age

Historical Period:

Recorder's Site No.: NON2

Official Name:

Local Name:

Map Sheet:

GPS reading S 27 39' 41.1" E 31 43' 09.1"

Directions to site: Sketch or description.

From Pongola Drive to Nongoma along the R66. Just before the Mkuze, river/bridge, on the right hand side, is the site. It is on the upper banks of the Mkuze River.



### SITE DESCRIPTION:

Type of Site: Open

Merits conservation: Possible: needs re-assessment after sugar cane is cleared. Possible test-pits required

Threats: Yes

What threats: Road deviation and location of new bridge

### RECORDING:

Details of graphic record: N/A

Colour slides:

Black & White photographs

Tracings

Re-drawings

Recorder/Informant: Name: Gavin and Louise Anderson

Address: PO Box 491, Mkuze, 3965

Owner State

References:

Description of site and artefactual content.

Site is high density of Msuluzi (?) sherds, and grinding stones. Dense sugar cane makes it difficult to assess the full extent. Location nearby river suggests iron working will occur. Possible village located here.

Pottery decoration: various on neck-shoulder, other decorations do occur but fragments are too small to locate on the pot.