

**A SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THREE
AREAS OF NANDONI DAM,
THOHOYANDOU, NORTHERN PROVINCE**

For:

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SUMMARY



A survey of cultural resources in three areas of Nandoni dam, Thohoyandou, Northern Province

The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of three areas in which it is proposed to relocate existing communities affected by the development of the Nandoni Dam.

Although a number of sites have been identified (Appendix 2), none of these are judged to be of such cultural or historical significance that the project design will require modification. Based on what was found and its evaluation, it is recommended that the proposed development can continue in all of the areas, but only if the following mitigation measures are implemented. This consist of:

- The relocation of the graves, its contents and headstones, if necessary.
- The impact on the archaeological sites identified should be mitigated according to suggestions made in Appendix 2.
- If it is decided to develop these sites, a further survey should be done to consider infra-structural development such as access roads, power lines, borrow pits, etc.
- The developers should be notified that archaeological sites might be exposed during the construction work. If anything is noticed, it should immediately be reported to a museum, preferably one at which an archaeologist is available, so that an investigation and evaluation of the finds can be made.

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1. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The National Cultural History Museum was requested by **BKS Consultburo** to survey three areas for the relocation of existing communities affected by the development of the Nandoni Dam. The aim of the survey was to locate, identify, evaluate and document sites, objects and structures of cultural importance found within the boundaries of the areas that is to be impacted by the developed.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The **Terms of Reference** for the study were to:

- 2.1 Identify all objects, sites, occurrences and structures of an archaeological or historical nature located in the area of the proposed development.
- 2.2 Assess the significance of the cultural resources in terms of their historical, social, religious, aesthetic and scientific value.
- 2.3 Determine the possible impacts on the known and potential cultural resources in the area of interest.
- 2.4 Develop mitigation or control measures for impact minimization and cultural resources preservation.
- 2.5 Develop procedures to be implemented if previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered during the construction.

3. DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following aspects have a direct bearing on the survey and the resulting report:

- **Cultural resources** are all nonphysical and physical human-made occurrences, as well as natural occurrences that are associated with human activity. These include all sites, structures and artifacts of importance, either individually or in groups, in the history,

- architecture and archaeology of human (cultural) development.
- The **significance** of the sites and artifacts are determined by means of their historical, social, aesthetic, technological and scientific value in relation to their uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential. It must be kept in mind that the various aspects are not mutually exclusive, and that the evaluation of any site is done with reference to any number of these.
 - Sites regarded as having low significance have already been recorded in full and require no further mitigation. Sites with medium to high significance require further mitigation.
 - The latitude and longitude of archaeological sites are to be treated as sensitive information by the developer and should not be disclosed to members of the public.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are mainly dealt within two acts. These are the South Africa Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989).

4.1 South African Heritage Resources Act

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority:

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- (b) destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- (c) trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- (d) bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

Human remains:

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- (a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;

- (b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- (c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old is subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations.

Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925). Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (ie where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

4.2 Environmental Conservation Act

This act states that a survey and an evaluation of cultural resources should be undertaken in areas where development, which will change the face of the environment, is to be made. The impact of the development on the cultural resources should also be determined and proposals to mitigate this impact is to be formulated.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Preliminary investigation

5.1.1 Survey of the literature

A survey of the relevant literature was conducted with the aim of reviewing the previous research done and determining the potential of the area. In this regard, various anthropological, archaeological and historical sources were consulted - see the list of references below.

Reports, done previously by other survey teams in two of the areas, were also used.

5.1.2 Data bases

The **Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC)**, housed at the National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, was consulted. The **Environmental Potential Atlas** was also consulted.

5.1.3 Other sources

The topocadastral and other maps were also studied - see the list of references below.

5.2 Field survey

The field survey of the new areas was done according to generally accepted archaeological practices, and was aimed at locating all possible sites, objects and structures. The areas that had to be investigated were indicated on maps that was supplied by BKS Consultburo. The areas were investigated by walking across it in a grid pattern. Special attention was given to unnatural topographical occurrences such as trenches and holes and stream beds and clusters of trees were investigated.

As no information regarding access roads, borrow pits or other potential infra-structural development was supplied, the search was extended to include areas outside the main areas of development.

With regard to the two areas that have already been investigated, the coordinates supplied by the previous investigators were used to locate the sites. It was quickly realised that some mistakes occurred in their data, and therefore a grid pattern was also walked in these areas.

5.3 Documentation

All sites, objects and structures identified were documented according to the general minimum standards accepted by the archaeological profession. Coordinates of individual localities were determined by means of the **Global Positioning System (GPS)**¹ and confirmed by plotting on a map. This information was added to the description in order to facilitate the identification of each locality (Appendix 2).

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The three areas that were investigated are located on the farms Mpapuli 278MT and Molenje's Location 204LT in the Thohoyandou district of Northern Province and are indicated on the map in Fig. 1.

The dominant geographical feature is the Levuvhu river running through the area. A number of smaller streams also cross sections of the area, meeting up with the Levuvhu River. The terrain morphology of the larger area can be described as slightly irregular plains. The dominant lithology is gneis, overlain with clay accumulation especially close to the river banks.

The vegetation in the area is quite undisturbed, being largely used as grazing. The original veld type is classified as Lowveld Sour Bushveld and the landcover can be described as bushveld

¹ According to the manufacturer a certain deviation may be expected for each reading. Care was, however, taken to obtain as accurate a reading as possible, and then correlate it with reference to the physical environment before plotting it on the map.

dotted with a variety of tree species. Belts of forest occurs along the river, with lianas and scramblers densifying the growth (see also Acocks 1975:27-28).

Currently, the vegetation in all areas, except for those sections that are used as agricultural fields, is very dense, making the doing of an archaeological survey somewhat difficult.