

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AT UBIZANE PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

FOR: GUY NICOLSON

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INTRODUCTION

Umlando was contracted to undertake an archaeological survey of a proposed development at Ubizane Private Game Reserve. The proposed development is ~5km west of Hluhluwe, in northern KwaZulu-Natal. The development consists of 21 wooden chalets on a 5ha area. Figure 1 is a locality map of the development.

A desktop study noted that twelve Stone Age sites had been previously recorded in a 10km radius of the proposed development. One multicomponent site was recorded in the development and it dates to the Middle and Late Stone Ages, as well as the Early Iron Age. This site will need on-site monitoring at specific areas during the course of the development.

RESULTS

The proposed development is on a flat area that overlooks a small stream. This is normally an ideal location for iron smelting and/or an Iron Age settlement. The vegetation was very dense during the time of the first survey and this resulted in low archaeological visibility. To counter this, I surveyed open areas adjacent to the development. The assumption is that if archaeological material occurs in the open areas, then it would occur in the proposed affected area as well. This is especially the case for stone tool scatters. I resurveyed the area at a later date, once the vegetation had been cleared. The artefacts previously noted extended across the land as expected.

One site, UBI1, was recorded. Parts of the site occur just outside of the boundary area of the development; however, it probably continues up to the river. UBI1 can be divided into two parts:

- Stone Age scatter
- Early Iron Age scatter

Fig. 1: Location of the affected area¹



¹ Hluhluwe is ~5km northeast of the site.

White line indicates area surveyed (affected area is to the southeast). Red line indicates potential EIA site

The Stone Age scatter occurs all over the development area and outside of it. The scatter consist of Middle Stone Age (MSA), and Late Stone Age (LSA) artefacts. The MSA artefacts are generic stone tools, of which one was a spear point. The LSA material is slightly more varied. These consist of utilised flakes, and formal tools. Formal tools are stone tools that have been modified into a specific shape for a specific function. The formal tools include an adze and a scraper. The adze (used for woodworking) was made on a large MSA core. Two scrapers (used for removing fat from hides) were noted and were made from dolerite and (possibly) chert.

The pottery is unusual, in that our records do not have any Early Iron Age (EIA) sites recorded for this general area. Five pottery fragments were observed, of which one sherd was decorated. The decorations appear to date to either the Mzonjani or Msuluzi Phase of the Early Iron Age. The decoration is too small to pinpoint the phase, but they do date between 1 700 and 1 300 years ago. It is however unlikely to date to the Mzonjani Phase as this Phase tends to be restricted to the coastal zones, and I thus opt for a date of 1 500 – 1 300 years old.

EIA sites tend to be large villages with 100+ people living there. The location of this site in his area is ideal, as it is relatively flat, and has water nearby. There is also a good chance of smelting activity occurring in the area. These sites tend to have a high density of artefacts, especially pottery: this does not occur on the surface of UBI1

There are several fresh water mussels on the surface. Most of these are ~3cm in width². One fresh water shell was >15cm in width. These are probably brought in more recently from local wildlife.

Significance:

² Width is from widest part of shell, not from apex.

The Stone Age material is of low significance, as it is mostly in a secondary context. The tools are of the general type normally associated with these Periods. The only value they could have would be for display purpose.

The EIA site is potentially of medium significance. No EIA sites have been recorded in the general area, and thus the site is of some importance for regional comparisons. The nearest EIA sites occur near St Lucia. The only negative aspect of this site is the low density of pottery sherds. I believe that the site is probably sub-surface, and that parts of the area have been disturbed by agricultural activity.

Mitigation:

No further mitigation is required for the MSA and LSA parts of the site. It would be a good gesture if Ubizane sampled some of the material and put it on display (with appropriate text). A permit for this would be required.

Mitigation is needed for the EIA part of the site. There will need to be on-site monitoring during any form of construction activity. I suggest that the sewer line is excavated first, and that a heritage practitioner monitors this. In this way, one would be able to assess the likelihood of artefacts and features occurring in the area by monitoring a transect of the affected site. If a lot of material were observed, then further monitoring would be needed for every lodge house. If little material is observed, then monitoring should occur at selected areas of housing development. There are nine proposed lodges along the (south)eastern part of the development. The construction at these lodges would need to be monitored

The monitoring program reserves the right to stop any earthmoving activity in order to rescue any archaeological material. In most cases, the earthmoving activity can continue elsewhere whilst the salvaging occurs.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological survey at Ubizane Game Reserve located one multicomponent site. This site extends into the proposed development area. The Stone Age aspect of the site is of low significance; however, the Iron Age content would require further mitigation. The area would need to be resurveyed once the vegetation has been cleared. I suggest that the sewer line is excavated first and that this is monitored. The monitoring will allow us to rescue any potential artefacts that may occur in the area, and allow for a general assessment of density of artefacts below the surface. The (south)eastern area of the development would also require on site monitoring during the construction of the houses.

The developer will need to apply to Amafa KZN for a permit³ for the destruction of the archaeological sites. The heritage practitioner would need to apply for a separate permit.

³ Permit can be downloaded from www.heritagekzn.co.za

APPENDIX A
SITE RECORD FORM FOR RECORDED SITES

UMLANDO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE RECORD FORM

SITE CATEGORY: (X where applicable)

Stone Age: MSA, LSA

Early Iron Age: X

Late Iron Age

Historical Period:



Recorder's Site No.: UBI1

Official Name:

Local Name: Ubizane Game Reserve

Map Sheet:

Map Reference: S 28° 1'37.50" E32°13'29.00" (alt = 1-7m)

DIRECTIONS TO SITE: SKETCH OR DESCRIPTION.

From Richards Bay Drive northeast along N2. Take Hluhluwe turnoff and turn right toward Hluhluwe Game reserve. ~5km down road is entrance to Ubizane Game Reserve. Follow road to reception, just before turning right to reception, take straight then left, then next right towards the river/stream. Site is at stream and to east

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Type of Site: Surface, may contain deposit.

Merits conservation: Yes: monitor

Threats: yes

What threats: Possible development

RECORDING:

Graphic record: None

Digital pictures:

Tracings :

Re-drawings:

Recorder/Informant: Name: Gavin and Louise Anderson

Address: PO Box 102532, Meerensee, 3901

Date: 14 April 2008

Owner:

References:

Description of site and artefactual content.

Site consists of an extensive scatter of MSA and LSA tools. MSA includes spear points, and generic MSA tools. LSA material includes 1 scraper and adze, and generic LSA tools. 5 Shards observed, 1 = Mzonjani decorations (although it could be Msuluzi). Fresh water shellfish occur on site but may be recent. Upper and lower grinding stones observed. Areas has seen ploughing in terms of furrows.

Environmental Impact Assessment details:

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The EIA reference number is DC 27/0004/08