



Amafa aKwazulu-Natali
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31 July 2015

Attention Bernadet Pawandiwa

Dear Ms Pawandiwa

**Application for Exemption from a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment
Development of the Amangwane Community Lodge, Mbila Traditional Council,
Umhlabuyalingana District Municipal Area, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Project description

Through the National Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programme, the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has provided funding for the development of the Amangwane Community Lodge, which is to be located in the Umhlabuyalingana Municipal Area, on Ingonyama Trust land administered by the Mbila Traditional Council. This Lodge is being developed for the local community and will be operated on their behalf by the Mbila Traditional Council (T/C), with support from Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.

The site is undeveloped and approximately 4 ha in extent. It falls outside of any formal Town Planning Scheme and is not currently zoned, and as such relevant planning permission needs to be obtained from the local authority to allow for the proposed development.

The proposed Amangwane Community Lodge includes:

Phase 1:

- Main lodge comprising conference facility (100 persons), restaurant, entertainment areas, pool, and lodge offices.
- Entrance gate and boundary fence;
- Internal roads and parking areas;
- Piped services (including stormwater, water, sewerage, and telecommunications); and
- Landscaped areas.

Phase 2:

- Eight 2-sleeper chalet units;
- Additional internal roads and piped services for the chalet units;
- A package sewage treatment plant.

Site location

The site is located in kuQongwana, a largely rural area between Mbazwana and Sodwana Bay, approximately 500m from the western boundary of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The site is surrounded by a mix of rural settlement and tourist / hospitality facilities. The northern and eastern boundary of the site abuts a small microlight airport. To the west of the site are two lodges. The area to the south of the site is undeveloped.

The site is located on a ridge between the Siphudwini River and another small drainage line, both of which feed into Lake Mgobezeleni, and eventually the Mgobezeleni Estuary located within the Isimangaliso Wetland Park, a World Heritage Site.

The proposed Amangwane Community Lodge will be accessed from the main tar road (P447) between Mbazwana and Sodwana Bay via an existing gravel road, which is approximately 2km in length. The internal access roads will vary in width from 4.5m to 10m, with a 1m wide road reserve on either side.

Site assessment and recommendations

A site inspection was undertaken by eThembeni on 25 July 2015. Informal interviews with local residents confirmed a historically recent settlement of the immediate area around the site. These informants were aware of the proposed development and confirmed that the local traditional leadership had confirmed that no graves were present on the proposed site.

The site lies upon deflated Pleistocene sand dunes whose basal cover is predominantly sour coastal grassland. Auguring conducted on the site to 120 cm revealed only undifferentiated dune sand below a thin humic horizon. No evidence of Cretaceous fossils or Iron Age archaeological material was observed. Given the Pleistocene sand overburden it is highly improbable that Cretaceous fossil levels would be reached during construction.

Albeit that the site is located within one kilometre of the boundaries of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park it lies within an area of ongoing leisure resort development and community settlement in response to these leisure industry triggers. We are not aware of any restrictions being pursued by the Isimangaliso authorities in terms of a buffer between the Mbazwana- Sodwana corridor and the Park. The Park's fence is the *de facto* boundary between Isimangaliso and the Ingonyama Trust lands of the Mbila T/C.

Accordingly, we request that Amafa grant an exemption from an HIA for this activity, allowing the project to proceed with no further heritage resource mitigation.

In this regard, please can you notify us timeously via SAHRIS, as to the decision of Amafa.

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk
Director