

**PHASE ONE CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT
ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSED LOW INCOME
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT CORNFIELDS D
NEAR ESTCOURT, KWAZULU-NATAL.**



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1 October 2014

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EIA	Early Iron Age
ESA	Early Stone Age
HISTORIC PERIOD	Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1820 in this part of the country
IRON AGE	Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 1000 Late Iron Age AD 1000 - AD 1830
LIA	Late Iron Age
LSA	Late Stone Age
MSA	Middle Stone Age
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998 and associated regulations (2006).
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and associated regulations (2000)
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
STONE AGE	Early Stone Age 2 000 000 - 250 000 BP Middle Stone Age 250 000 - 25 000 BP Late Stone Age 30 000 - until c. AD 200

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A cultural heritage survey of a proposed low cost housing project at Cornfields D near Estcourt, KwaZulu-Natal produced no heritage features on the footprint. However, a Later Iron Age Stone Circle occurs within 10m from the north western border of the footprint. A buffer zone of 25m must be maintained around this feature. There is no archaeological reason why the proposed development may not proceed on the remainder of the footprint as planned. However, attention is drawn to the South African Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act no 4 of 2008) which, requires that operations that expose archaeological or historical remains should cease immediately, pending evaluation by the provincial heritage agency.

1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

Table 1. Background information

Consultant:	Frans Prins (Active Heritage cc) for Mrs Wendy Dlamini (Snesatech)
Type of development:	Proposed construction of a low cost housing project at Cornfields D near Estcourt.
Rezoning or subdivision:	rezoning
Terms of reference	To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment
Legislative requirements:	The Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and following the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, 1997 (Act No. 4 of 2008)

1.1. Details of the area surveyed:

The study area is situated between Estcourt and Colenso near the R103 (Fig 1). The footprint covers an area of approximately 800m x 230m (Fig 2). The footprint is situated in a rural area dominated by overgrazed grasslands and thornveld. Rural Zulu homesteads occur to the immediate south of the footprint. The GPS coordinates for the central section of the footprint is: 28° 51' 18.21" S and 29° 52' 32.81" E.

2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA

The greater Estcourt area has been relatively well surveyed for archaeological sites in the past. Some sites have been recorded by cultural resource consultants who have worked in the area during the last two decades whilst archaeologists from the then Natal Museum have made various visits to the area. The low altitude and densely wooded areas in the immediate vicinity of Estcourt have been intensely occupied by Middle and later Iron Age farmers since around 1200 AD. Some of these sites have also been excavated by Professor Oliver Davies, Dr Tim Maggs and Gavin Whitelaw of the then Natal Museum at various periods between 1978 and 2005 (Huffman 2007). The well-known Moorpark Middle Iron Age site occurs approximately 20km to the west of the study area.

The available evidence, as captured in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum heritage site inventories, indicates that the area in the near vicinity to the study area contains a wide spectrum of archaeological sites covering different time-periods and cultural traditions. These include 11 Early Stone Age site, 28 Middle Stone Age sites, 14 Later Stone Age sites, and 48 Later Iron Age sites (including some Middle Iron Age Sites belonging to the Moor Park Tradition), and numerous historical sites dating back to the colonial period

Most of the Stone Age sites in the near vicinity of the footprint occur in open air contexts as exposed by donga and sheet erosion. The Early Stone Age sites occur close to permanent water sources. Some Middle Stone Age flakes, probably dating back to ca. 40 000 – 200 000 years ago, occur in disturbed context in dongas and road cuttings. The majority of Later Stone Age sites as well as rock art sites occur further west in the foothills of the Drakensberg. These typically occur in small shelters in the sandstone formations some leading up to the Drakensberg. However, 11 Iron Age rock engraving sites also occur in the greater Estcourt area. These engravings are usually made on dolerite outcrops in areas with an altitude above 1000 metres above sea level.

The San were the owners of the land for almost 30 000 years (Mitchell 2002) but the local demography started to change soon after 2000 years ago when the first Bantu-speaking farmers crossed the Limpopo River and arrived in South Africa. Around 800

years ago, if not earlier, Bantu-speaking farmers also settled in the greater Estcourt area. Although the majority of sites constructed by these African farmers consisted of stone walling not all of them were made from stone. The earliest sites that dates back to approximately 1200 AD are called Moor Park after the type site situated at Moor Park Nature Reserve close to the project area. These sites were occupied by early Nguni-speaking farmers and most probably represent extended family homesteads (Huffman 2007). The Later Iron Age sites of the area were most probably inhabited by Nguni-speaking groups such as the amaBhele and related groups (Bryant 1965). However, by 1820 the amaBhele was dispersed from this area due to the expansionistic policies of the Zulu Kingdom of King Shaka. African refugee groups, such as the amaHlubi, and other individuals were given permission to settle in the area by the British colonial authorities after 1845. After the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the Bambatha Rebellion of 1911 many of the African people in the study area adopted a Zulu ethnic identity.

European settlement of the area started soon after 1838 when the first Voortrekker settlers marked out large farms in the area. . Various sites in the area belong to the Voortrekker era especially former laagers such as Veglaager – now covered by the waters of Wagendrift Dam and Blaawkranz (Bloukrans). The Bloukrans Provincial Heritage Site is situated approximately 2km to the west of the study area (Figs 2 & 3). On the night of 16 February 1838 a Voortrekker Laager situated at Blaawkranz was attacked by Zulu warriors and 96 adults, 185 children and about 200 servants were killed by a Zulu force that also seized about 25 000 head of cattle (Ransford 1974). In the days following the attack the Voortrekkers buried their dead in a mass grave near the Great Moordspruit River. In 1895, the bodies were exhumed and reburied under the Bloukrans monument at the site of the battle (Derwent 2006).

Despite early Voortrekker settlement the majority of older buildings on farmsteads in the area were erected by British colonists after 1850 who occupied farms previously inhabited by Voortrekker pioneers (Bizley & McKenzie 2007). Fort Durnford, for instance, was built in the 1870's to combat San raids from the Drakensberg. Anglo-Boer War activities also took place in the area and the most southern skirmish between Boer and Brit in Natal took place at Willow Grange to the immediate south of

Estcourt. The capture site of the young Winston Churchill occurs about 3km to the west of the study area (Derwent 2006).

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Methodology

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. The SAHRIS website was consulted for potential heritage sites in the area. In addition, the available archaeological and historical literature covering the greater Estcourt area was also consulted.

A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted on the 26th of September 2014.

3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey

3.2.1 Visibility

Visibility was good.

3.2.2 Disturbance

No disturbance of any potential heritage features was noted on the footprint. However, stone robbing of Later Iron Age sites occurred on sites situated approximately 1km to the north east of the study area.

3.3 Details of equipment used in the survey

GPS: Garmin Etrek

Digital cameras: Canon Powershot A460

All readings were taken using the GPS. Accuracy was to a level of 5 m.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED

4.1 Locational data

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Towns: Estcourt and Colenso

Municipality: Umtshezi

4.2 Description of the general area surveyed

Although the greater Estcourt area contains a high percentage of heritage and archaeological sites only one archaeological site occurs within the immediate environs of the footprint. This site is a singular stone walled circle indicative of a Later Iron Age settlement. A more detailed description of this site follows below under paragraph 4.3. During the survey the consultant also noted a large percentage of stone walled Later Iron Age and the remains of Zulu homesteads older than 60 years to the immediate north east of the footprint. These sites are more than 200m from the footprint and will not be threatened by the proposed development. Graves were also noted in close association with contemporary Zulu homesteads approximately 120m to the south west of the proposed developmental area. Again these graves will not be impacted upon by the proposed development.

4.3 Later Iron Age Site

A singular stone walled Later Iron Age Site was recorded on the north eastern boundary of the footprint. This site occurs within 10m from the boundary (Fig 2) and the GPS coordinates is S 28°51' 05.15" E 29°52' 26.01. The stone circle that measures roughly 22m x 17 m is most probably the remains of a livestock enclosure associated with the Later Iron Age (Figs 4 & 5). No pottery, grinders or other archaeological material was observed on the site. Although it is difficult to typologise this site was most probably constructed by the amaBhele who lived in this area prior to the expansion of the Zulu Kingdom under King Shaka in the 1820's (Huffman 2006).

5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)

5.1 Field Rating

The later Iron Age site is not unique as there are many and better examples within the greater Estcourt area. Nevertheless, the site is older than 60 years and it is protected by provincial and national heritage legislation. It has been rated a having medium significance (Table 2). In other words the site need to be recorded as part of a second phase heritage impact assessment before destruction is allowed.

Table 2. Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)

Level	Details	Action
National (Grade I)	The site is considered to be of National Significance	Nominated to be declared by SAHRA
Provincial (Grade II)	This site is considered to be of Provincial significance	Nominated to be declared by Provincial Heritage Authority
Local Grade IIIA	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be retained as a heritage site
Local Grade IIIB	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be mitigated, and part retained as a heritage site
Generally Protected A	High to medium significance	Mitigation necessary before destruction
Generally Protected B	Medium significance	The site needs to be recorded before destruction
Generally Protected C	Low significance	No further recording is required before destruction

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development of a low cost housing project at Cornfields D may proceed from a heritage point of view but the following recommendations must be adhered to:

- Strictly maintain a buffer zone of 25m around the identified Later Iron Age Stone Circle. No heritage material may be removed from this buffer zone and no alteration of the actual stone walled circle structure is allowed.
- Alternatively, should the developers deemed it wise to expand into the direction of the Later Iron Age Site then a second phase heritage impact assessment may be requested in order to arrange for mitigation. This would entail the detailed recording of the site and the application of a permit from Amafa to allow for rescue excavation prior to destruction.
- The proposed development may proceed on the remainder of the footprint as planned.
- Should the developer decide to expand beyond the footprint in a north easterly or a south westerly direction then a heritage impact assessment of these areas will be imperative as a large concentration of heritage sites have been noted here. This would also be relevant should the developer decide to construct access roads that may transverse these areas leading towards the footprint.
- It is important to note that the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act requires that any operations exposing archaeological and historical residues should cease immediately pending an evaluation by the heritage authorities.

7 MAPS AND FIGURES

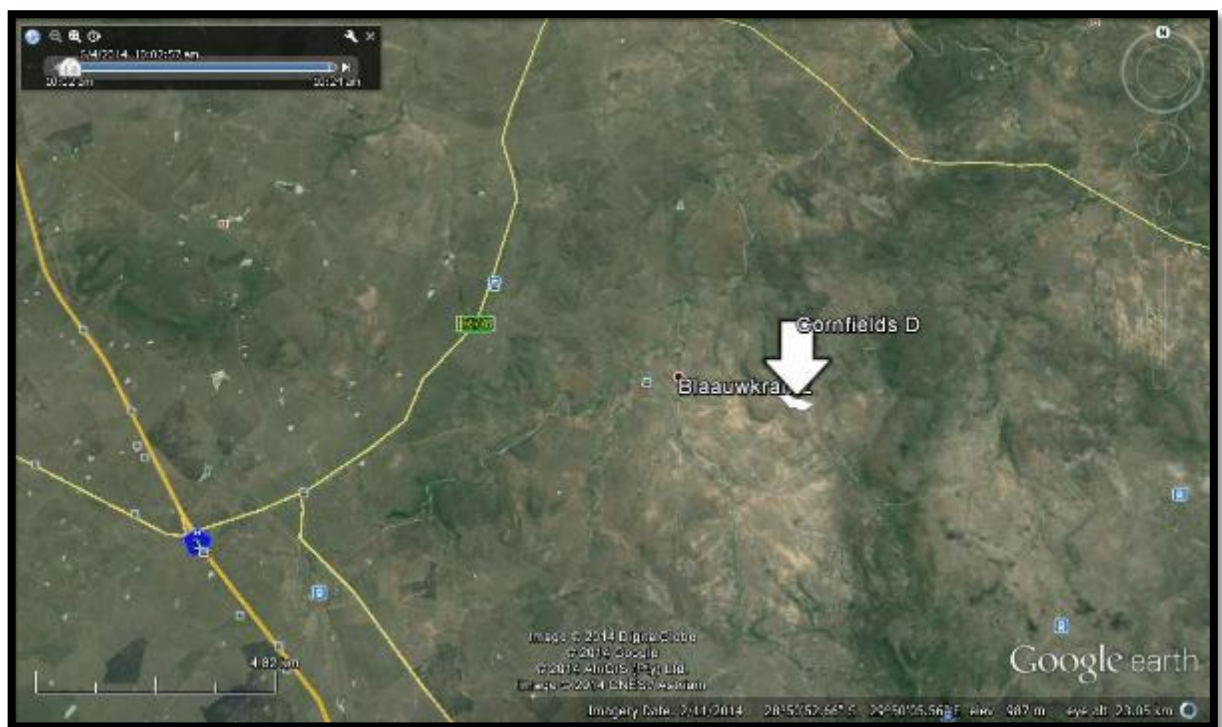


Figure 1. Google aerial photograph showing the location of the study area at Cornfields D near Estcourt, KwaZulu-Natal.



Figure 2. Google aerial photograph showing the location of the Later Iron Age Site relative to the footprint at Cornfields D.

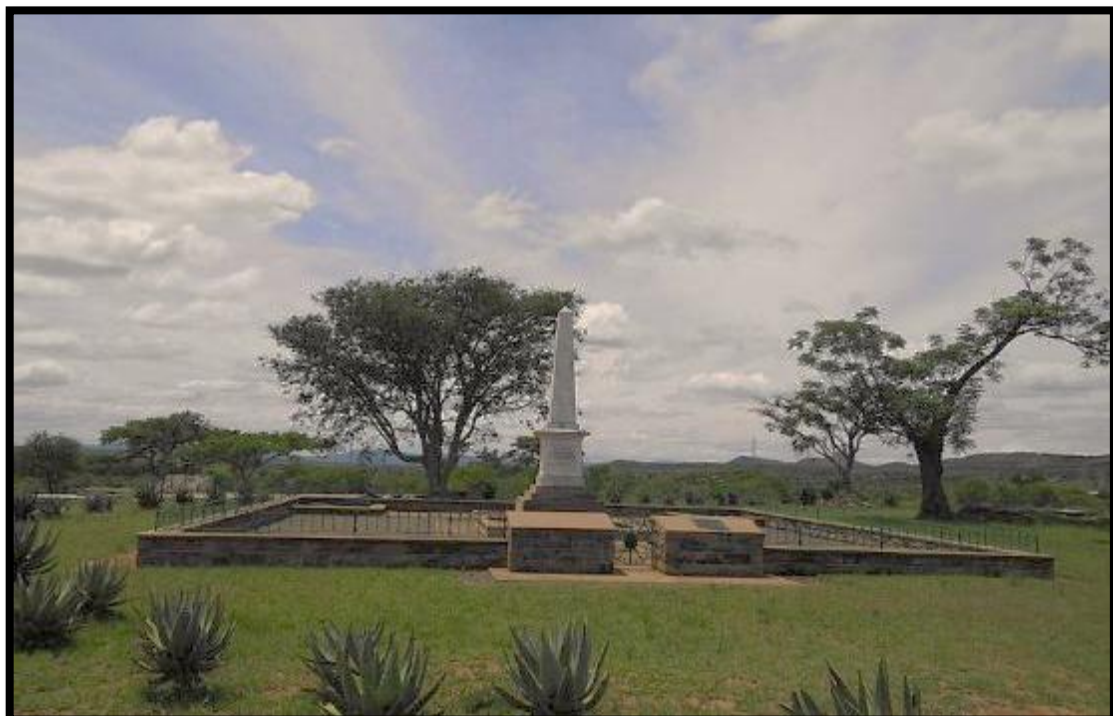


Figure 3. Photograph of the Bloukrans Memorial, a Provincial Heritage Site, situated approximately 2km to the west of the study area.



Figure 4. Google aerial photograph of the Later Iron Age Stone Walled Circle at Cornfields D.



Figure 5. Photograph of the Stone Walled Iron Age Circle at Cornfields D.

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