

***SPECIALIST REPORT***  
**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
GRASKOP GORGE TOURISM PROJECT ON PORTION 4 OF THE FARM GRASKOP  
564 KT, MPUMALANGA**

**MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

**REPORT PREPARED FOR  
WANDIMA ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES cc**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) regarding archaeological and other cultural heritage resources was conducted on the footprint for the proposed Graskop Gorge Tourism Project on *portion 4 of the farm Graskop 564 KT*, Mpumalanga Province. The study area is situated on topographical map 1:50 000, 2430 DD GRASKOP, which fall within the Mpumalanga Province, under the jurisdiction of the Ehlanzeni district municipality, and Thaba Chweu local municipality.

The National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 (1999)(NHRA), protects all heritage resources, which are classified as national estate. The NHRA stipulates that any person who intends to undertake a development, is subjected to the provisions of the Act.

Graskop Gorge or Panorama Gorge forms part of the scenic Mpumalanga Escarpment. The Panorama or Graskop waterfall is a thin trickle which dries up in early spring, but after heavy rains, up to seven separate falls thunder over the edge of the ravine, flooding most of the gorge and valley floor within the study area. The Graskop Gorge is situated on the outskirts of the town of Graskop, to the south on the R533 to Hazyview and Bushbuckridge. A recent low cost housing development is directly towards the south-west, an established tourist facility, Panorama Rest Camp to the south-east, and Mogodi Lodge to the north-west. The study area is approximately 19ha in total of which the middle section consists of the Panorama Gorge and waterfall with a sheer drop of 150 – 200m. The floor and sides of the gorge is a pristine indigenous forest. The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail runs through the study area on both sides of the gorge.

The Graskop area at the top of the escarpment was sparsely populated in the past. The area below the escarpment was however extensively and continuously inhabited since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the local people made use of animal footpaths of which one became the later Kowyn's Pass, to reach the top of the escarpment. The field survey, literature study and personal communication with specialists in the field revealed that this area was not rich in archaeological material or sites.

No archaeological or cultural material was observed during the survey, and based on the findings in this report, Adansonia Heritage Consultants cc, states that there are no reasons that may prevent the proposed Graskop Gorge Tourism Project, to continue.

**Disclaimer:** *Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural significance during the investigation, it is possible that hidden or sub-surface sites could be overlooked during the study, Christine Rowe trading as Adansonia Heritage Consultants will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred by the client as a result.*

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- 1) The results of the project;*
- 2) The technology described in any report;*
- 3) Recommendations delivered to the Client.*

June 2014

Christine Van Wyk Rowe

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# PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE GRASKOP GORGE TOURISM PROJECT ON PORTION 4 OF THE FARM GRASKOP 564 KT, MPUMALANGA

## A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE PROJECT

Adansonia Heritage Consultants were appointed by Wandima Environmental Services cc in conjunction with Thaba Chweu Local Economic Development Agency (THALEDA), to conduct a phase 1 heritage impact assessment (HIA) on archaeological and other heritage resources on *portion 4 of the farm Graskop 564KT*. This section, approximately 19ha in extent, includes natural grassland (Fig. 8-12 & 15-17), as well as the gorge with a dense indigenous forest (Fig. 1-4), and is situated on the edge of the Mpumalanga Drakenberg Escarpment. Existing infrastructure surrounds the study area. Mogodi Lodge is situated directly to the west. Panorama Rest Camp borders the study area in the south-east. The R533 is bordering the area in the south and south-west. The gorge is situated in the middle section (**Appendix 4-6**). A section is currently allocated for informal traders, and the Big Swing and Edge Bar is trading on the property (Fig. 13).

A literature study, relevant to the study area was done, to determine that no archaeological or heritage resources will be impacted upon by the proposed development (**Appendix 3: Topographical Map: GRASKOP 2430DD**).

The aims for this report will therefore be to source all relevant information on archaeological and heritage resources in the study area, and to advise the client on sensitive heritage areas and where it is viable for the development to take place in terms of the specifications as set out in the National Heritage Resources Act no., 25 of 1999 (NHRA). Recommendations for maximum conservation measures for any heritage resource will also be made. The study area is indicated in **Appendix 3 – 6**. Photographic evidence is in **Appendix 1**.

- This study forms part of an EIA, Consultant: Wandima Environmental Services, P.O. Box 1072, Nelspruit, 1200, Tel: 013 7525452 / Fax: 013 – 7526877 / e-mail: admin@wandima.co.za.
- Type of development: 19 ha, are earmarked for a tourism project, *portion 4 of the farm Graskop 564KT*, Mpumalanga Province. The proposed project will involve accommodation, lifestyle centre with bar, restaurant, shop and offices, parking

facility, informal traders, a lift into the gorge, walkway and outdoor activities such as hiking trails (see **Appendix 6**, Layout plan).

- The site is currently zoned as: Tourism. No rezoning will take place.
- Location of Province, Magisterial district / Local Authority and Property (farms): The area falls within the Mpumalanga Province under the jurisdiction of the Ehlanzeni district municipality, Thaba Chweu local municipality.
- Land owners: Thaba Chweu local municipality.
  
- **Terms of reference:** As specified by section 38 (3) of the NHRA, the following information is provided in this report.
  - a) The identification and mapping of heritage resources where applicable;
  - b) Assessment of significance of the resources;
  - c) Assessment of the impact of the development;
  - d) Evaluation of the impact of the development;
  - e) Consultation with community members.
  - f) Alternatives given to affected heritage resources by the development;
  - g) Plans for measures of mitigation.

- **Legal requirements:**

The legal context of the report is grounded in the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25, 1999, as well as the National Environmental Management Act (1998) (NEMA).

- **Section 38 of the NHRA**

This report constitutes a heritage impact assessment investigation linked to the environmental impact assessment required for the development. The proposed development is a listed activity in terms of Section 38 (1) of the NHRA. Section 38 (2) of the NHRA requires the submission of a HIA report for authorisation purposes to the responsible heritage resources agency, (SAHRA).

Heritage conservation and management in South Africa is governed by the NHRA and falls under the overall jurisdiction of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and its provincial offices and counterparts.

Section 38 of the NHRA requires a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to be conducted by an independent heritage management consultant, for the following development categories:

- Construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other linear form of development or barrier exceeding 300m in length;
- Construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length;
- Development or other activity that will change the character of a site -
  - exceeding 5000sq m;
  - involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions;
  - involving three or more erven or divisions that have been consolidated within the past 5 years;
  - rezoning of a site exceeding 10 000sq m;
  - the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulation by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority;
- Any other development category, public open space, squares, parks or recreation grounds.

In addition, the new EIA regulations promulgated in terms of NEMA, determine that any environmental report will include cultural (heritage) issues.

The end purpose of this report is to alert Wandima Environmental Services, the client and interested and affected parties about existing heritage resources that may be affected by the proposed development, and to recommend mitigation measures aimed at reducing the risks of any adverse impacts on these heritage resources. Such measures could include the recording of any heritage buildings or structures older than 60 years prior to demolition, in terms of section 34 of the NHRA and also other sections of this act dealing with archaeological sites, buildings and graves.

The NHRA section 2 (xvi) states that a “heritage resource” means any place or object of cultural significance, and in section 2 (vi) that “cultural significance” means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.

Apart from a heritage report assisting a client to make informed development decisions, it also serves to provide the relevant heritage resources authority with the necessary data to perform their statutory duties under the NHRA. After evaluating the heritage scoping report, the heritage resources authority will decide on the status of the resource, whether the development may proceed as proposed or whether mitigation is acceptable, and whether the heritage resource require formal protection such as a Grade I, II or III resource, with relevant parties having to

comply with all aspects pertaining to such grading.

- **Section 35 of the NHRA**

Section 35 (4) of the NHRA stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object. This section may apply to any significant archaeological sites that may be discovered. In the case of such chance finds, the heritage practitioner will assist in investigating the extent and significance of the finds and consult with an archaeologist about further action. This may entail removal of material after documenting the find or mapping of larger sections before destruction. This section does not apply since no archaeological material was found.

- **Section 36 of the NHRA**

Section 36 of the NHRA stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA, 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. This section may apply in case of the discovery of chance burials. No graves were identified during the survey.

- **Section 34 of the NHRA**

Section 34 of the NHRA stipulates that no person may alter, damage, destroy, relocate etc, any building or structure older than 60 years, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority. This section does not apply since no building / structure older than 60 years will be affected by the proposed development. All tourism infrastructure that is currently on or adjacent to the property, is recent.

- **Section 37 of the NHRA**

This section deals with public monuments and memorials but does not apply in this report.

- **NEMA**

The regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, (107/1998), provide for an assessment of development impacts on the cultural (heritage) and social environment and for specialist studies in this regard.



## B. BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA

- **Literature review, museum databases & previous relevant impact assessments**

In order to place the area of Graskop in archaeological context, primary and secondary sources were consulted. Ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as Ziervogel and Van Warmelo shed light on the cultural groups living in the wider area since ca 1600. Historic and academic sources by Küsel, Meyer, Voight, Bergh, De Jongh, Evers, Myburgh, Thackeray and Van der Ryst were consulted, as well as historic sources by Makhura and Webb.

Primary sources were consulted from the Pilgrim's Rest Museum Archives for a background on the pre-history and history of the study area. The information centre in Graskop was helpful but had very little information on the history of the town. The author was involved in the Late Iron age site - *Inspection of Umbhaba Stone-walled settlement, Hazyview*, in 2001. Apart from a few reports mentioned below, the author was not aware of any previous impact assessments in the direct study area. Research has been done by the author on San rock art as well as Bantu speaking rock art sites on the Mpumalanga Escarpment area, of which several are recorded towards the north of Graskop. None have been recorded in the direct vicinity of the study area.<sup>1</sup>

The topographical map GRASKOP 2430DD revealed no disturbance on the site (**Appendix 3**), apart from the Fanie Botha Hiking route which follows the edge of the escarpment. A section of the study area is currently utilized by informal traders and the Big Swing and Edge Bar as well as access roads. The rest of the property is natural grassland (**Appendix 1, 3 & 4, Fig. 13, 14 & 15**).

Very little contemporary research has been done on prehistoric African settlements in the study area. Only one professionally excavated Early Iron Age site was executed, in the wider area namely the Plaston site near White River, dating ca 900 AD.<sup>2</sup> The Lydenburg Head site, which was discovered by a school boy in the 1960's, dated to approximately 400 AD.<sup>3</sup> The *Bushman Rock Shelter* was excavated in the 1970's near Ohrigstad.<sup>4</sup> Archaeological excavations dating to the Later Iron Age have been conducted in the Kruger National Park and in the Lydenburg

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<sup>1</sup> PRMA: Information file 9/2.

<sup>2</sup> M.M. Van der Ryst., *Die Ystertydperk*, in J.S. Bergh (red)., *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika: Die vier Noordelike Provinsies*. p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> M.M. Van der Ryst., *Die Ystertydperk*, in J.S. Bergh (red)., *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika: Die vier Noordelike Provinsies*. p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> E. Voight, *Guide to Archaeological sites in the Northern and Eastern Transvaal*, p. 110.

area<sup>5</sup> but none have been conducted to date directly within the study area. A stone walled settlement with terracing was recorded by C. van Wyk (Rowe) near Hazyview,<sup>6</sup> as well as several others further west and north-west,<sup>7</sup> outside the study area.

According to Bergh, there are no recorded sites that date from the Stone Age, or Iron Age (Early or Late) settlements. Two rock painting sites are indicated to the north of Graskop. It can be confirmed that none of the above mentioned sites were encountered during the survey.<sup>8</sup>

A local resident and worker at the Big Swing, Mr. Kallie Dibakoane confirmed that there are no graves or cultural resources which he encountered during the eight years that he is working on this site.<sup>9</sup> The Pilgrim's Rest Museum as well as the Graskop Information centre was consulted and also confirmed that they were not aware of any graves or cultural resources on the site.<sup>10 11</sup>

Elizabeth Voight,'s *Guide to the Archaeological sites in the northern and eastern Transvaal* , revealed no significant sites in the study area.

The SAHRA database for archaeological and historical impact assessments was consulted and revealed no Archaeological Impact assessment reports in the direct vicinity of the study area.

The author was however involved in surveys in the area, such as:

- C. Van Wyk Rowe: 2007: Assessment of Historic Mining Structures for proposed demolition, at the Rock Window, Graskop – historic mining infrastructure.
- C. Van Wyk Rowe: 2008 HIA for the extension of plantation area and demolishing of structures (Latre type houses), Blyde Plantation, Graskop – recent forestry infrastructure.
- C. Van Wyk Rowe: 2008 HIA for structure / foundation for proposed rehabilitation of area, Lisbon Plantation, Graskop – historic foundation of diggers house.

Several early ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as D. Ziervogel

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<sup>5</sup> A. Pelsler 2014: Report on 1<sup>st</sup> phase of archaeological investigation of LIA stone walled sites, Lydenburg, Mpumalanga.

<sup>6</sup> C. Van Wyk, *Inspection of Umbhamba Stone-walled settlement, Hazyview*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>PRMA: Information file 9/2.

<sup>8</sup> J.S. Bergh, *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*, pp. 4-7

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication: Kallie Dibakoane, 2014-06-07.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication: Rene Reinders, Pilgrim's Rest museum, 2014-06-05.

<sup>11</sup> Personal communication: Graskop information centre, 2014-06-02.

and N.J. Van Warmelo, revealed that the wider area was inhabited by Eastern Sotho groups (Pulana, Kutswe and Pai), and the Tsonga (Nhlanganu and Tšhangana), from before the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12 13</sup> (See **Appendix 2**).

The whole district is divided in two, with the Drakensberg Escarpment (in which the study area is situated), and the Lowveld towards the east. Today, we found that the boundaries of groups are intersected and overlapping.<sup>14</sup> Languages such as Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Nhlanganu, Nkuna, sePedi, hiPau and seRôka, are commonly spoken throughout this area.<sup>15</sup>

When the Swazi began to expand northwards they forced the local inhabitants out of Swaziland, or absorbed them.<sup>16</sup> There is evidence of resistance, but the Eastern Sotho groups who lived in the northern parts of Swaziland, moved mainly northwards.<sup>17</sup> This appeared to have taken place towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>18</sup> when these groups fled from Swaziland to areas such as Nelspruit, Bushbuckridge, Klaserie, Blyde River and Komatipoort.<sup>19</sup>

Several circular stone-walled complexes and terraces as well as graves have been recorded in the vicinity of Hazyview<sup>20</sup>, Bushbuckridge, Graskop and Sabie, clay potsherds and upper as well as lower grinding stones, are scattered at most of the sites.<sup>21</sup> Many of these occur in caves as a result of the Swazi attacks on the smaller groups.<sup>22</sup>

Van Warmelo based his 1935 survey of *Bantu Tribes of South Africa* on the amount of taxpayers in an area. The survey does not include the extended households of each taxpayer, so it was impossible to actually indicate how many people were living in an area.<sup>23</sup>

The only early trade route mentioned, which crossed this section, was a footpath used by the

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<sup>12</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. pp. 90-92 & 111.

<sup>13</sup>H. S. Webb, *The Native Inhabitants of the Southern Lowveld, in Lowveld Regional Development Association, The South-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld*. p.16.

<sup>14</sup>N.J. van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup>M. De Jongh (ed)., *Swatini*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>A.C. Myburgh, *The Tribes of Barberton District*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. p. 111.

<sup>18</sup>H. S. Webb, *The Native Inhabitants of the Southern Lowveld, in Lowveld Regional Development Association, The South-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld*. p. 14

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>PRMA: Information file 9/2.

<sup>21</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup>C. Rowe, 2009: *Heritage Management of Archaeological, Historical and Industrial resources on the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve*, MA dissertation. Pretoria: UP.

<sup>23</sup>N.J. van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p.9.

African groups from Delagoa Bay towards Bushbuckridge (Magashulaskraal), along the Sabie river, up the Escarpment, and further north to the Soutpansberg.<sup>24</sup> There is however, no physical evidence left of this particular early route.

### **Eastern Sotho group: The Pai**

Van Warmelo identified the groups in northern Swaziland and the Pilgrim's Rest district before 1886, as Eastern Sotho (Pulana, Pai and Kutswe). According to Von Wielligh, the **Pai** occupied the area as far south as the Komati River (umLumati). Most of the younger generation has adopted the Swazi language.<sup>25</sup>

The Swazi constantly attacked the Eastern Sotho groups during the nineteenth century. The Pai fled to the caves in the mountains near MacMac (west of Graskop), while some of them (which were subjugated by a Swazi leader) fled from *Mswazi* in about 1853 to Sekukuniland (Steelpoort area), but decided to turn back towards their country along the Sabie River (1882). By this time, Europeans had already settled in this area when gold was discovered in 1873, near Graskop.<sup>26</sup>

### **Eastern Sotho group: The Pulana**

The history of the **Pulana** goes back to the Barberton area from where they trekked via Krokodilpoort (Nelspruit district) to settle north-east of Pretoriuskop. When the Swazi invaded them, they moved on and split up under several chieftainships,<sup>27</sup> of whom chief Kobêng (after which Kowyns' Pass directly south of the Graskop gorge study area, was named), is well-known in the area's history.

The Pulana roughly lived in the following areas: north of the Crocodile River, west of the western boundary of the Kruger National Park as far north as its crossing the Sabie River, south of the Sabie river until its cutting through the main road from Pretoriuskop to Bushbuckridge, west of this road as far as Klaserie, south of a line drawn from Klaserie to the confluence of the Blyde and Orighstad rivers, east of the Blyde River. This large area is divided in two by the main road from Pilgrim's Rest and Graskop to Bushbuckridge. This road was since ancient times the

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<sup>24</sup>L. Changuion & J.S. Bergh, Swart gemeenskappe voor die koms van die blankes, in J.S. Bergh (red), *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid Afrika: Die vier Noordelike Provinsies*. p. 104.

<sup>25</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

only connection between the Lowveld and Escarpment, and became known as “Kowyns' Pass”.<sup>28</sup> The majority of Pulana lived to the north of this line (mainly below the Escarpment), while south of this line the Pulana are scattered in groups into which are wedged Pai groups on both sides of the Sabie River, and Swazi peoples in the south, and south-eastern portions.<sup>29 30</sup>

It was the Pulana clans who, under chief Maripi Mashile, defeated the Swazi at Mariepskop in the Blyde River Canyon, ca 1864 (north of Graskop).<sup>31</sup>

### **Eastern Sotho group: The Kutswe**

The **Kutswe** trekked from the northern parts of Swaziland northwards as a result of pressure from the Swazi in the south.<sup>32</sup> The Kutswe settled north-east of the present Nelspruit at a river called Kutswe (Gutshwa)<sup>33</sup> from where they got their present name. From here they moved on and settled at various places, and ruins of their kraals are scattered from Pretoriuskop, Hazyview (Phabeni) as well as on the farms Welgevonden 364, Lothian 258, Boschhoek 47, Sandford 46, Culcutta 51 and Oakley 262 in the Bushbuckridge area,<sup>34</sup> all situated in the Lowveld. They occupied additional areas between White River and Sabie, and had sufficient influence amongst the Pai during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to establish authority over more than 2000 individuals living on farms on both sides of the Sabie River from the town of Sabie as far as the main road from White River to Bushbuckridge.<sup>35</sup> They had chief jurisdiction over the following farms near Bushbuckridge: Oakley 262, Calcutta 51, Madras 50, Alexandria 251, Cork 60 and Ronoldsey 273. They intermarried with Nhlangu (Shangaan), Swazi and Pai.<sup>36 37</sup>

### **Tsonga groups: The Nhlangu and Tšhangana**

The Nhlangu and Tšhangana (also generally known as the Shangaan-Tsonga)<sup>38</sup> form part of the larger Tsonga group of which the original group occupied the whole of Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa), and it has been recorded that by 1554, they were already living

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<sup>28</sup>M. De Jongh, (ed)., *Swatini*, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 107.

<sup>30</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. p. 111.

<sup>31</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 110.

<sup>33</sup>T. Makhura, Early Inhabitants, in *Delius, P. (ed)., Mpumalanga: History and heritage*. p.105.

<sup>34</sup>D. Ziervogel, *The Eastern Sotho, A Tribal, Historical and Linguistic Survey*, p. 110.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 4-10.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>38</sup>M. De Jongh (ed)., *Swatini*, p. 24.

around the Delagoa Bay area (Maputo).<sup>39</sup> They fled from the onslaughts of the Zulu (Nguni) nation from the Natal area and great numbers of emigrants sought safety in the “Transvaal” as recently as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the greater Pilgrim's Rest district. The Tsonga also moved west from Mosambique into the “Transvaal”. They have never formed large powerful tribes but were mostly always subdivided into loosely-knit units, and absorbed under the protection of whichever chief would give them land.<sup>40</sup> They were originally of Nguni origin.<sup>41</sup> The term “Shangaan” is commonly employed to refer to all members of the Tsonga division.<sup>42</sup> The **Nhlanganu** occupied the Lowveld area in their efforts to escape the Zulu raids during 1835-1840. They lived side by side with the Tšhangana, and the differences between the two are inconsiderable. They have mixed extensively with other tribes.<sup>43</sup>

The **Tšhangana** are also of Nguni origin who fled in the same way as the Nhlanganu, settled in the “Transvaal” a little later than the former. Most of the Tsonga were subjects to *Soshangane*, who came from Zululand.<sup>44</sup> The downfall of *Ngungunyana* (son of *Soshangane*) saw his son seeking sanctuary in the “Transvaal”, and the latter became known as *Thulamahashi*,<sup>45</sup> the name that is still used for the area east of Bushbuckridge.

## HISTORY OF GRASKOP

The town of Graskop is at an altitude of 1493m and dates back to the 1840's when the Voortrekker Andries Potgieter went down the escarpment in search of a route to Delagoa Bay or Maputo.

When Potgieter settled on the Ohrig River (near Ohrigstad north of Graskop), he found the MaPulanla tribe in occupation of the Highveld and the immediate foothills of the Drakensberg. The Swazi claimed sovereignty over the whole of the Lowveld though this area was virtually uninhabited.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, Grouping and Ethnic History, in *Schapera I., The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa. An Ethnographical survey*, p. 55.

<sup>40</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>41</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, Grouping and Ethnic History, in *Schapera I., The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa. An Ethnographical survey*, p. 55.

<sup>42</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 92

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>44</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, Grouping and Ethnic History, in *Schapera I., The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa. An Ethnographical survey*, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup>N.J. Van Warmelo, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, p. 92.

<sup>46</sup>Mailcoach Organising Committee. *Graskop – Van Riebeeck Festival*, 1952, p. 23.

During the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Swazi continually raided the MaPulana and carried off their cattle. In the 1860's the MaPulana, under their Chief Mariep, annihilated the Swazi impis in a fierce battle at what is now known as Mariepskop (to the north of Graskop).<sup>47</sup>

In the 1950's, the Graskop area was a farm owned by Abel Erasmus, the Chief Native Commissioner for the Lydenburg District, who was involved in hunting, prospecting and imposing law and order in the area. Following the discovery of gold at Mac Mac, the farm Graskop was bought from Abel Erasmus by the Government of the Republic of Transvaal. The purpose was to establish a Government Township from the newly discovered goldfield. The town was never proclaimed as most of the diggers left the area in favour of the new discovery of gold in Pilgrim's Rest (1873).<sup>48</sup> Graskop is also famous for *Jock of the Bushveld*, which dates between 1885 and 1887. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick established his camp at Paradise berg (in Graskop) and described his experiences of this area in his book *Jock of the Bushveld*.<sup>49</sup>

The shortest route from Graskop to the Lowveld was via the Kowyn's Pass. (Kowyn's Pass is approximately 4km south of the Graskop gorge study area). In the 1840's, access to the Lowveld was by means of an animal track on land under control of a local chief, Koveni, translated into Afrikaans as Kowyn. Chief Kowyn had his settlement halfway down the pass and his people used this track to reach the top of the Escarpment.<sup>50</sup> In 1902, Max Carl Gustav Liebnitz arrived on the farm Graskop and erected a trading store, hotel and a house at the top of Kowyn's Pass. He soon realized that a road to carry wagons was essential for his business. He turned the existing animal track into the first, *Kowyn's Pass*. The pass had a gradient of, in some places 1 in 3. The heavier wagons required three spans of oxen to get up the steeper sections. Going down was not much easier as huge branches had to be attached to the wagons to assist with braking. The present road is the third, and was opened in 1959. Due to the high rainfall on the escarpment (Graskop being the highest rainfall area in South Africa), dangerous rock falls had been common. Engineers incorporated a Swiss design to create a more protected passage between the Highveld and the Lowveld, which was completed in 1980.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Mailcoach Organising Committee. *Graskop – Van Riebeeck Festival*, 1952, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Southey, F., (ed), *The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Southey, F., (ed), *The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook*, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Mailcoach Organising Committee. *Graskop – Van Riebeeck Festival*, 1952, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> Southey, F., (ed), *The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook*, p. 14.

In 1910, the newly formed government of the Union of South Africa, decided to build a railway line from Nelspruit to the farm Graskop, the nearest place to the goldfields of Pilgrim's Rest. The station was called Graskop and the official date for the establishment of Graskop was 12 September 1914.<sup>52</sup>

R.W. Richardson introduced the Zeederberg Coach Service between Graskop railway station and Pilgrim's Rest. He also opened the first garage and motor agency in Graskop. Together with Max Liebnitz, he served on the first Health Committee of Graskop. A.P. Cartwright in his book "Valley of Gold" refers to a "Gold Rush" in 1908, when the Department of Mines cancelled the concession on the farm Graskop and proclaimed the area as a goldfield, to allow syndicates and individual diggers the opportunity to peg new claims.<sup>53</sup>

Graskop Gorge forms part of the Mpumalanga Drakensberg Escarpment, which is on average 1000m high and stretches from the Blyde River Canyon in the north (roughly from the Strijdom Tunnels), to Graskop, and Sabie in the south. It forms the boundary between the grassy Highveld plateau and the bushveld or Lowveld. The entire area is interspersed with plantations, forests, rivers, waterfalls and gorges, resulting in spectacular scenery of incredible beauty which makes it a popular tourist destination. The famous Gods Window, is approximately 5km to the north of the Graskop Groge.<sup>54</sup>

Graskop is still today the centre of mining, forestry and timber-milling industries.<sup>55</sup>

### **C. DESCRIPTION OF AREA TO BE AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT**

The study area is roughly 19ha in extent. This section includes natural grassland and a deep gorge with dense indigenous forest. It is situated on the edge of the Mpumalanga Drakensberg Escarpment. Existing infrastructure surrounds the study area. Mogodi Lodge is situated directly to the west. Panorama Rest Camp borders the study area in the south-east. The road R533 down Kowyn's Pass, to Hazyview and Bushbuckridge is bordering the area in the south. The gorge is situated in the middle section. A section is currently allocated for informal traders, and the Big Swing and Edge Bar is trading on the property.

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<sup>52</sup>Southey, F., (ed), The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup>Southey, F., (ed), The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Southey, F., (ed), The Silver Spoon Panorama Handbook, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> H. S. Webb, The Native Inhabitants of the Southern Lowveld, in *Lowveld Regional Development Association, The South-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld*. p.



#### **D. LOCALITY**

The study area was investigated for all possible heritage related features which might fall within the Graskop gorge area. (**Appendix 3**, Topographical Map: 2430 DD GRASKOP). The area is within the Mpumalanga Province and owned by the Thaba Chweu local municipality.

The Graskop Gorge study area is situated on the outskirts of the town of Graskop, to the south on the R533 to Hazyview and Bushbuckridge. A recent low cost housing development is directly towards the south-west, an established tourist facility, Panorama Rest Camp to the south-east, and Mogodi Lodge to the north-west. The study area is approximately 19ha in total of which the middle section consists of the Panorama Gorge and waterfall with a sheer drop of 150 – 200m. The floor and sides of the gorge is a pristine indigenous forest (See **Appendix 1**). The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail runs through the study area on both sides of the gorge.

A section is currently allocated for informal traders, and tourism facilities such as the Big Swing and Edge Bar is trading on the property (Fig. 13).

The escarpment consists mainly of North-eastern Mountain Grassland with Afromontane Forest along the highest mountains. The altitude is over 1500m above sea level while the rainfall varies from 900-1600mm per annum with a few places receiving over 2000mm annually. Mist provides additional essential moisture. The Graskop area consists essentially of open grassland with rocky patches, wetlands and dense indigenous forests.<sup>56</sup> GPS co-ordinates were used to locate any heritage features within the study area.

- **Description of methodology:**

In order to reach a comprehensive conclusion regarding the cultural heritage resources in the study area, the following methods were used:

- The desktop study consists mainly of archival sources studied on distribution patterns of early African groups who settled in the area since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and which have been observed in past and present ethnographical research and studies.
- Literary sources, books and government publications, which were available on the subject, have been consulted, in order to establish relevant information.
- Several specialists currently working in the field of anthropology and archaeology have

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<sup>56</sup> J. Onderstall, *Wild Flower Guide*, p. xxvi.

also been consulted on the subject.

-Archival sources consulted: Pilgrim's Rest Museum Archives (PRMA);

-Literary sources: A number of books and government publications about prehistory and history of the area were consulted, and revealed valuable information;

-Personal communication on current research of African groups (UNISA); and Archaeologists were conducted.

- The fieldwork and survey was conducted on foot with two people over 1 day.
- Local community members and inhabitants concerned with the history of Graskop, were consulted throughout the survey; Personnel from the Pilgrim's Rest museum were consulted.
- Although the grass vegetation was fairly lush it was dry (being winter), the section above the gorge was small enough to do a thorough survey. The gorge area and valley floor consists of impenetrable indigenous forest which was impossible to survey in detail. Here the author had to rely on local knowledge of historians in the area. Visibility on top of the escarpment was good.
- The Fanie Botha Hiking trail is situated on the study area and follows the edge of the escarpment. Disturbance in sections by the existing access roads, tourism facilities and informal traders are evident.
- The terrain on top of the Escarpment was even and accessible but the terrain below in the deep gorge was difficult and mostly impenetrable. The entire valley floor is flooded during certain times in the rainy season (see explanation in report and photographic evidence).
- The relevant data was located with a GPS instrument (Garmin Etrex) datum WGS 84, and plotted. Co-ordinates were within 4-6 meters of identified sites.
- Evaluation of the resources which might be impacted upon by the footprint, was done within the framework provided by the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 (1999);
- Personal communication with relevant stakeholders on the specific study area, were held, such as with the community members.<sup>57 58 59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Personal communication: Thaba Tsweni Lodge, Gerald, Maria and Wendel Hough, 2014-06-01.

<sup>58</sup> Personal communication: Dr. Ian Whyte, 2014-06-01.

<sup>59</sup> Personal communication: R. Reinders, Pilgrim's Rest Museum, 2014-06-02.

- **GPS-Co-ordinates of the study area:**

<b>POINT</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>
<b>A</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 38.92"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 24.17"
<b>B</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 51.36"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 39.30"
<b>C</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 50.94"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 39.68"
<b>D</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 45.01"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 35.74"
<b>E</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 42.94"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 36.53"
<b>F</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 43.86"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 39.10"
<b>G</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 34.54"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 46.19"
<b>H</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 34.36"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 29.89"
<b>I</b>	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 37.17"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 28.93"

#### **E. DESCRIPTION OF IDENTIFIED SITES**

Non archaeological or historical sites were identified on the study area. See **Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6** for photographic and other relevant information on the study area.

Recent tourism infrastructure is situated at the following GPS co-ordinates:

<b>SITE</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>
Informal traders	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 41.80"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 29.67"
Edge Bar	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 40.95"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 31.02"
Big Swing Landing pad	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 40.01"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 30.50"
Big Swing at Waterfall	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 37.33"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 28.69"
Mogodi Lodge	S24 <sup>0</sup> 56' 37.22"	E30 <sup>0</sup> 50' 26.15"

#### **F. DISCUSSION ON THE FOOTPRINT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

<b>ACT</b>	<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>IMPLICATION</b>	<b>RELEVANCE</b>	<b>COMPLIANCE</b>
NHRA	S 34	Impact on buildings and structures older than 60 years	None present Modern structures as well as temporary structures present	None

<b>ACT</b>	<b>COMPO- NENT</b>	<b>IMPLICATION</b>	<b>RELEVANCE</b>	<b>COMPLIANCE</b>
NHRA	S35	Impacts on archaeological and palaeontological heritage resources	None present	None
NHRA	S36	Impact on graves	None present	None
NHRA	S37	Impact on public monuments	None present	None
NHRA	S38	Developments requiring an HIA	Development is a listed activity	HIA
NEMA	EIA regulations	Activities requiring an EIA	Development is subject to an EIA	HIA is part of EIA

- **Summarised identification and cultural significance assessment of affected heritage resources:** (Standardized set of conventions used to assess the impact of projects on individual heritage features).

**General issues of site and context:**

<b>Context</b>		
Urban environmental context	Yes	Graskop gorge development is on the outskirts of the town of Graskop
Rural environmental context	No	-
Natural environmental context	Yes	Small portions still in natural context although sections area utilized for tourism
<b>Formal protection (NHRA)</b>		
(S. 28) Is the property part of a protected area?	No	-
(S. 31) Is the property part of a heritage area?	No	-
<b>Other</b>		
Is the property near to or visible from any protected heritage sites	No	-

<b>Context</b>		
Is the property part of a conservation area of special area in terms of the Zoning scheme?	No	-
Does the site form part of a historical settlement or townscape?	No	-
Does the site form part of a rural cultural landscape?	No	-
Does the site form part of a natural landscape of cultural significance?	No	-
Is the site adjacent to a scenic route?	Yes	Part of the Panorama route
Is the property within or adjacent to any other area which has special environmental or heritage protection?	Yes	In vicinity of the protected Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve
Does the general context or any adjoining properties have cultural significance?	No	-

<b>Property features and characteristics</b>		
Have there been any previous development impacts on the property?	Yes	Informal traders and tourism activities (Big Swing and Edge Bar);  Fanie Botha Hiking trail
Are there any significant landscape features on the property?	Yes	Graskop gorge and waterfall / spectacular views
Are there any sites or features of geological significance on the property?	No	-
Does the property have any rocky outcrops on it?	No	Area is flat with no outcrops, but on edge of escarpment and gorge
Does the property have any fresh water sources (springs, streams, rivers) on or alongside it?	Yes	Panorama / Graskop waterfall and stream

<b>Heritage resources on the property</b>		
<b>Formal protection (NHRA)</b>		
National heritage sites (S. 27)	No	-
Provincial heritage sites (S. 27)	No	-
Provincial protection (S. 29)	No	-
Place listed in heritage register (S. 30)	No	-
<b>General protection (NHRA)</b>		
Structures older than 60 years (S. 34)	No	-
Archaeological site or material (S. 35)	No	-
Palaeontological site or material (S. 35)	No	-
Graves or burial grounds (S. 36)	No	-
Public monuments or memorials (S. 37)	No	-
<b>Other</b>		
Any heritage resource identified in a heritage survey (author / date / grading)	No	-
Any other heritage resources (describe)	No	-

<b>NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category</b>	<b>ELE- MENTS</b>	<b>INDICATORS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE</b>										<b>RISK</b>	
		Histo rical	Rare	Sci enti fic	Typi cal	Tech- nolog ical	Aes thetic	Pers on / com munit y	Land mark	Mate rial con dition	Sust aina bility		
Buildings / structures of cultural significance	None	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Areas attached to oral traditions / intangible heritage	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Historical settlement/ townscapes	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Landscape of cultural significance	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Geological site of scientific/cultural importance	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Archaeological / palaeontological sites	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grave / burial grounds	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<b>NHRA</b>	<b>ELE-</b>	<b>INDICATORS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE</b>										<b>RISK</b>	
Areas of significance related to labour history	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Movable objects	No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- **Summarised recommended impact management interventions**

<b>NHRA S (3)2 Heritage resource category</b>	<b>SITE</b>	<b>IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE</b>		<b>Impact management</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
		<b>Cultural significance rating</b>			
		<b>Cultural significant</b>	<b>Impact significant</b>		
Buildings / structures of cultural significance	None	None	None	-	-
Areas attached to oral traditions / intangible heritage	No	None	None	-	-
Historical settlement/ townscape	No	None	None	-	-
Landscape of cultural significance	No	None	None	-	-
Geological site of scientific/ cultural importance	No	None	None	-	-
Archaeological / palaeontological sites	No	None	None	-	-



<b>NHRA S (3)2 Heritage</b>	<b>SITE</b>	<b>IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE</b>		<b>Impact management</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
		<b>Cultural significance rating</b>			
Grave / burial grounds	No	None	None	-	-
Areas of significance related to labour history	No	None	None	-	-
Movable objects	No	None	None	-	-

<b>ACT</b>	<b>COMPO- NENT</b>	<b>IMPLICATION</b>	<b>RELEVANCE</b>	<b>COMPLIANCE</b>
NHRA	S 34	Impact on buildings and structures older than 60 years	Only modern and temporary structures	None
NHRA	S35	Impacts on archaeological and palaeontological heritage resources	None present	None
NHRA	S36	Impact on graves	None present	None
NHRA	S37	Impact on public monuments	None present	None
NHRA	S38	Developments requiring an HIA	Development is a listed activity	Full HIA
NEMA	EIA regulations	Activities requiring an EIA	Development is subject to an EIA	HIA is part of EIA

## **G. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & EVALUATION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES IN THE STUDY AREA**

Section 38 of the NHRA, rates all heritage resources into National, Provincial or Local significance, and proposals in terms of the above is made for all identified heritage features.

- **Evaluation methods**

Site significance is important to establish the measure of mitigation and / or management of the

resources. Sites are evaluated as *HIGH (National importance)*, *MEDIUM (Provincial importance or LOW, (local importance)*, as specified in the NHRA. It is explained as follows:

- **National Heritage Resources Act**

The National Heritage Resources Act no. 25, 1999 (NHRA) aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Heritage is unique and it cannot be renewed, and contributes to redressing past inequities.<sup>60</sup> It promotes previously neglected research areas of which the study area is in crucial need of.

All archaeological and other cultural heritage resources are evaluated according to the NHRA, section 3(3). A place or object is considered to be part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value in terms of:

- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa;<sup>61</sup>

Please note that no archaeological / heritage features or graves were identified on the study area.

## **H. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study area falls within the popular Panorama Route on the Graskop Drakensberg Escarpment. This area is known for its scenic beauty and it is for this reason that the client is applying to develop it as a tourist facility with accommodation, lifestyle centre with bar, restaurant, shop and offices, parking, informal traders, a lift into the gorge, walkway and outdoor activities such as hiking trails.

No archaeological / heritage features or graves were identified on the property and from an

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<sup>60</sup>National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. p. 2.

<sup>61</sup>National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. pp. 12-14

archaeological and heritage perspective, Adansonia Heritage Consultants have no reason to prevent the proposed development to continue.

## **I. CONCLUSION**

Archaeological material or graves are not always visible during a field survey and therefore some significant material may only be revealed during construction activities. It is therefore recommended that the developers be made aware of this possibility and when human remains, clay or ceramic pottery etc. are observed, a qualified archaeologist must be notified and an assessment be done. Further research might be necessary in this regard for which the developer is responsible.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants cannot be held responsible for any archaeological material or graves which were not located during the survey.

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