

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE
PROPOSED SIKWEBEZI RIVER BRIDGE AND
ASSOCIATED ROAD LOCATED IN OMBUMBINI,
NEAR NONGOMA, NORTERN KWAZULU-NATAL**



ACTIVE HERITAGE cc.

**Frans Prins
MA (Archaeology)**

**P.O. Box 947
Howick
3290**

activeheritage@gmail.com

Fax: 0867636380

www.activeheritage.webs.com

14 February 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT	2
1.1.	Details of the area surveyed:	2
2	BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA	3
3	BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY	4
3.1	Methodology	4
3.2	Restrictions encountered during the survey	5
3.2.1	<i>Visibility</i>	5
3.2.2	<i>Disturbance</i>	5
3.3	Details of equipment used in the survey.....	5
4	DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED	5
4.1	Locational data	5
4.2	Description of the general area surveyed.....	5
5	STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)	6
5.1	Field Rating.....	6
6	RECOMMENDATIONS	6
7	RISK PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION	7
8	MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS	8
9	REFERENCES	10

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Background information.....	2
Table 2.	Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)	6

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
IIA	Intermediate Iron Age
ISA	Intermediate Stone Age
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 heritage impact assessment and survey of the Sikwebezi River Bridge and associated road located in Ombumbibi, Near Nongoma in northern KwaZulu-Natal identified no heritage sites. There is no known archaeological reason why the development may not proceed as planned. However, it should be noted that the general area is rich in archaeological and historical sites. Construction work may expose material and 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) for Green Door
Type of development:	The Applicant, the Department of Transport, seeks to establish a bridge over the Sikwebezi River with an associated road, located in Ombumbini, near Nongoma, Northern KwaZulu-Natal. Presently, no bridge exists and pedestrians are walking across the river (Fig 1).
Rezoning or subdivision:	Not applicable
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 project is located in the Nongoma Local Municipality (NLM). Nongoma is situated in the north of the KwaZulu-Natal Province (KZN) and forms 2,184 km² of the total KZN area of 92,417km². The project area is situated between the Ombumbini Village and the Sikwebezi River (Fig 1). Presently there are signs of a road that was constructed in the past. At the time of construction no drainage was done which has lead to erosion and damage of the existing road. Only the first 0.5 km of road is being utilised; the balance of the road (1.1 km) is overgrown and impassable. No bridge currently exists and pedestrians are walking across the river. Vehicles are unable to utilise the road or cross the Sikwebezi River.

The proposed bridge can be found at the following GPS coordinates:

27° 53' 44.15" S 31° 26' 39.58" E

The proposed road starts and ends at the following GPS coordinates:

Start: 27° 53' 47.47" S 31° 27' 24.03" E

End: 27° 53' 44.88" S 31° 26' 37.67" E

2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA

The greater Nongoma area has been sporadically surveyed for archaeological heritage sites by archaeologists previously employed by the Natal Museum, the Ondini Cultural Museum and Amafa. The most systematic surveys occurred in the Umfolozi-Hluluwe Nature Reserve. It is especially the extensive surveys conducted by Penner (1970), and Hall (1980) but also subsequent research by Feely (1980) and Anderson (1988) that has thrown light on the heritage resources of the nature reserve.

The available evidence, as captured in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum heritage site inventories, indicates that this area contains a wide spectrum of archaeological sites covering different time-periods and cultural traditions. Six Early Stone Age sites have been recorded. These sites date back to between 300 000 and 1.5 million years ago. Most of these are situated in dongas close to water with little in-situ material. An astonishing 59 Middle Stone Age sites have been recorded in the nature reserve. Middle Stone Age sites are associated with anatomically modern people and dates back to approximately 40 000 to 200 000 years ago. The vast majority of Middle Stone Age sites in the nature reserve are open-air sites. They therefore do not occur in archaeological context and have limited excavation value. Later Stone Age sites occur in various localities in the nature reserve. Thirty five Later Stone Age sites have been recorded. Although the majority of these sites are situated in open air context some are also associated with small shelters and caves. These shelters have archaeological excavation potential. The Later Stone Age is usually associated with San hunter-gatherers or their immediate predecessors and dates back to between 200 years and 30 000 years ago. Interestingly, the nature reserve also contains 11 rare examples of Zululand rock art sites. Although not as well known as the rock art of the Drakensberg the art of this region is nevertheless unique as it is probably older and executed in a different style from the Drakensberg art.

Archaeological sites have also been recorded outside of the Umfolozi-Hluluwe Nature Reserve although our knowledge of these is more limited. Early Stone Age tools have been recorded in the greater Ulundi district. One Middle Stone Age open air site has been recorded immediately adjacent to Nongoma in the 1970's. However, this site seems to have been destroyed by development in recent years. Later Stone Age tools, belonging to the San and their immediate ancestors, occur in various localities in Zululand but none has been recorded close to Nongoma as yet. An Iron Age engraving site also occurs in the area but not in the immediate vicinity of the footprint.

Around 1 700 years ago an initial wave of Early Iron Age People settled along the inland foot of the sand dunes on sandy but humus rich soils which would have ensured good crops for the first year or two after they had been cleared. These early agropastoralists produced a characteristic pottery style known as Matola. The Matola people also exploited the wild plant and animal resources of the forest and adjacent sea-shore. The communities seems to been small groups of perhaps a few dozen

slash-and burn cultivators, moving into a landscape sparsely inhabited by Later Stone Age San hunter-gatherers.

By 1500 years ago another wave of Iron Age migrants entered the area. Their distinct ceramic pottery is classified to styles known as “Msuluzi” (AD 500-700), Ndongondwane (AD 700-800) and Ntshokane (AD 800-900). The vast majority of recorded sites belonging to this period occur in the Tugela River Basin below the 1000m contour to the south of the project area. Some of these, such as the Ndongondwane and Mamba sites have been excavated by archaeologists (Maggs 1989:31; Huffman 2007:325-462).

The Nongoma and Ulundi areas are particularly well known for their central situation relative to the development of the Zulu state of King Shaka Zulu in the early 1800's. The emaKhosini valley (Valley of the Kings) is situated in the immediate environs of Ulundi. This area also contains the military capital of King Dingane – the half brother and successor of Shaka. Some of the graves in this valley predate Shaka Zulu and relates to the early Zulu lineage of the area (Derwent 2006). As such this valley can also be classified as a cultural landscape. Sites associated with Zwibe, the leader of the Ndwandwe clan who initially opposed Shaka, occurs closer to the project area not far from Nongoma. Historical era sites relating to the period of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 also occurs in the general area. Most of these again are situated further south closer to Ulundi but King Cetshwayo's Gqikazi settlement occurs closer to Nongoma. Apart from sites relating to Zulu history the area also contains an Iron Age rock engraving site. However, none of these sites occurs in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

The colonial history of the area starts around 1820 when early English ivory traders established themselves at Port Natal (Durban). Dutch descendants (i.e. Voortrekkers) moved into the area soon after 1834 and established a short lived Boer republic called Natalia to the south of the Tugela River. However, by 1845 Natal became a British colony. In 1879 Zulu-land was invaded by British forces and the area annexed soon thereafter.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Methodology

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. In addition, the available archaeological literature covering the greater Nongoma and Hlabisa areas was also consulted. The SAHRIS website was consulted to obtain background information on previous heritage surveys and assessments in the area. A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted.

3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey

3.2.1 Visibility

Visibility was good

3.2.2 Disturbance

No disturbance of any heritage sites or features was noted.

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: Nongoma

Municipality: Nongoma Municipal Area

4.2 Description of the general area surveyed

The project area is situated in a rural landscape dominated by grasslands on the higher altitudes and along the existing road network and wooded valleys along the stream beds. Small rural settlements are dotted along the roads in the area. The area adjacent to the proposed road and bridge is dominated by disturbed grasslands, cultivated fields. There are no graves or other heritage features directly associated with it. Dongas along the stream beds in the near vicinity of the proposed bridge and associated road also produced no artefacts or archaeological remains. The area is not part of any known cultural landscape.

5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)

As there are no heritage sites on the footprint the area is not significant in terms of heritage values. In addition, the footprint does not form part of any identified cultural landscape. Nevertheless there is a slight possibility that excavation and construction work may expose archaeological material. Should archaeological material been exposed during construction then all development work should stop immediately and the provincial heritage agency, Amafa, must be contacted for further evaluation.

5.1 Field Rating

The field rating criteria as formulated by SAHRA (Table1) does not apply to the footprint as no heritage sites or features have been identified on the footprint.

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 construction of the Sikwebezi River Bridge and associated road may proceed in terms of heritage values as no sites are in any danger of being destroyed or altered. However, it should also be pointed out that the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act requires that operations exposing archaeological and historical residues should cease immediately pending an evaluation by the heritage authorities.

7 RISK PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION

Construction work and excavations may yield archaeological material. If any heritage features are exposed by construction work then all work should stop immediately and the provincial heritage agency, Amafa, should be contacted for further evaluation.

8 MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

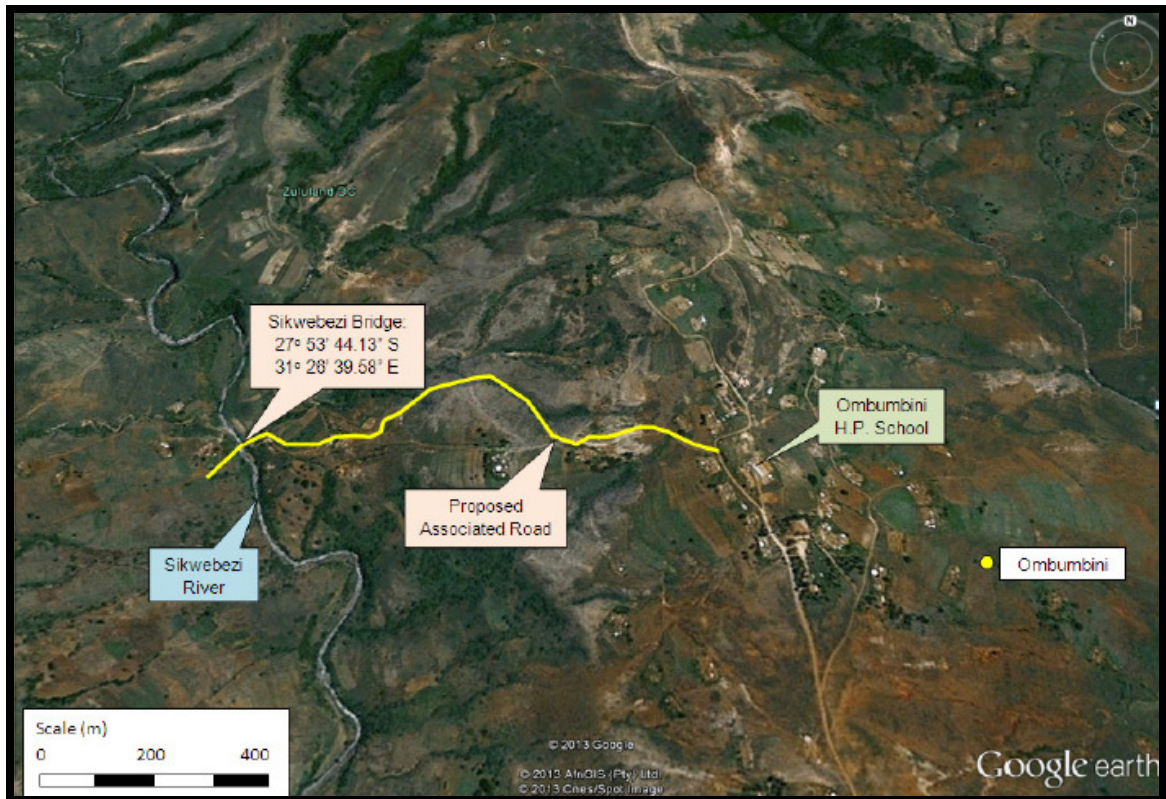


Figure 1. Google aerial photograph showing the location of the proposed Sikwebezi River Bridge and the associated road near Ombumbini (Source: Green Door).



Figure 2. Google aerial photograph showing the road adjacent to the proposed Isdudana Causeway.



Figure 3. Present crossing at the Sikwebezi River

9 REFERENCES

Anderson, G. 1988. *Archaeological Survey of the Hluluwe Game Reserve*. Unpublished Report.

Derwent, S. 2006. *KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Sites: A Guide to Some Great Places*. David Phillips: Cape Town

Feely, J. 1980. *Archaeological survey Mfolozi Park*. Unpublished Report.

Hall, M. 1980. *Field Survey: The Ecology of the Iron Age*. Unpublished report

Huffman, T. N. 2007. *Handbook to the Iron Age: The Archaeology of Pre-colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. Pietermaritzburg.

Maggs, T. The Iron Age farming communities. In Duminy, A. and Guest, B. 1989. *Natal and Zululand: from Earliest Times to 1910. A New History*. Pg. 28-46. University of Natal Press. Pietermaritzburg.

Mitchell, P. 2002. *The Archaeology of Southern Africa*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

Penner, D. 1970. *Archaeological Survey in Zululand Game Reserves*. Natal Parks Board. Unpublished Report.

SAHRA, 2005. *Minimum Standards for the Archaeological and the Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports, Draft version 1.4*.

