

Phongola/Mboza Bridge. uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality. Royal Haskonig Environmental Consultants.

# HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF PHONGOLA (MBOZA) RIVER BRIDGE, UMHLABUYALINGANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL.



**For: Royal Haskonig DHV Environmental Consultants**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>EIA</b>	<b>Early Iron Age</b>
<b>ESA</b>	<b>Early Stone Age</b>
<b>HISTORIC PERIOD</b>	<b>Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1820 in this part of the country</b>
<b>IRON AGE</b>	<b>Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 1000 Late Iron Age AD 1000 - AD 1830</b>
<b>LIA</b>	<b>Late Iron Age</b>
<b>LSA</b>	<b>Late Stone Age</b>
<b>MSA</b>	<b>Middle Stone Age</b>
<b>NEMA</b>	<b>National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998 and associated regulations (2010)).</b>
<b>NHRA</b>	<b>National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and associated regulations (2000)</b>
<b>SAHRA</b>	<b>South African Heritage Resources Agency</b>
<b>STONE AGE</b>	<b>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</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a cultural heritage survey of the proposed construction of the Phongola (Mboza) River Bridge, uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality, KwaZulu Natal. A ground survey did not show evidence for any identifiable heritage sites, or features. A Google Aerial Survey did however, identify a number of discernible homestead features that may predate 60 years of age. The closest features are no more than 15 m from the banks of the river. While no artefacts were observed during the ground survey, there is a strong possibility that artefacts, such as gindstones, pot sherds, and burnt ash heaps may become evident during the time of construction. There may also be hidden graves which lie close to the construction area, and within the vicinity of construction.

The development may proceed as planned but 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

<b>Consultant:</b>	<b>Frans Prins and Sian Hall (Active Heritage cc) for Royal Haskonig Environmental Consultants.</b>
<b>Type of development:</b>	<b>Active Heritage CC has been appointed by Royal Haskonig DHV, who have themselves been appointed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZN DoT) to perform feasibility studies and to investigate, design, and manage the construction for the proposed Phongola Bridge (No.3513) located between Ward 10 of Jozini and Ward 13 of uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality</b>
<b>Rezoning or subdivision:</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Terms of reference</b>	<b>To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment</b>
<b>Legislative requirements:</b>	<b>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)</b>

Table 1. Background information

## 1.1 Details of, and Background to the Proposed Development

Royal Haskonig DHV have been appointed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZN DoT) to perform feasibility studies, and to investigate, design and manage the construction for the proposed Phongola Bridge (No. 3513). This bridge will be located between Ward 10 of Jozini, and Ward 13 of uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality, linking the Zinhlabeni and Mboza communities within the Mkanyakude District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal (Royal Haskonig . DHV BID Document, August 2015).

The Phongola (Mboza) Bridge project consists of a vehicular bridge of approximately 110 m in length. It will also include a 4.5 km long new gravel road that will provide safe linkage for communities on both sides of the Phongola River with vehicles, or pedestrians access. Communities (including scholars) presently use a boat to cross the river at this site, which is unsustainable and not safe (ibid).

The proposed site GPS co-ordinates are 27°11'17"S 32°14'20"E. At this site the main channel of the river is approximately 55 m wide and 3 m deep and is frequently inundated with water. At this stage it is proposed that the bridge comprises a total span of 110 m, with a width of 6 m, that will accommodate a 4.5 m wide single lane and 1.5 m wide pedestrian sidewalk with parapet hand railings. The total length of road to be constructed to a gravel road is 4.5 km. The road approach to be constructed on the east is 3.5 km in length and ties into the existing district road (D1834). The proposed road is presently a track passing through agricultural land; a section of 2 km of which gets inundated annually and the remaining 1.5 km is through village tribal land. (ibid).

To the west a road approach of 1 km is to be constructed, again on an existing track, which also passes through agricultural land, to a distance that clears the existing floodplain only. The present intention is for the link road to be constructed to a dual-lane gravel Type 4 standard with a road width of 7 m incorporating 2 lanes of 3.5 m wide. This is one lane in either direction. The road reserve will not exceed 30 m. The construction of this link road would greatly improve the road network and improve mobility (ibid).

Bearing in mind the type of road construction intended, it is almost certain that this will impact upon the archaeological material, and huts and kraals, and homesteads remains of the surrounding prehistoric Iron Age Settlement.



Figure 1. Site of Phongola Bridge with Examples of Possible Cultural Features.

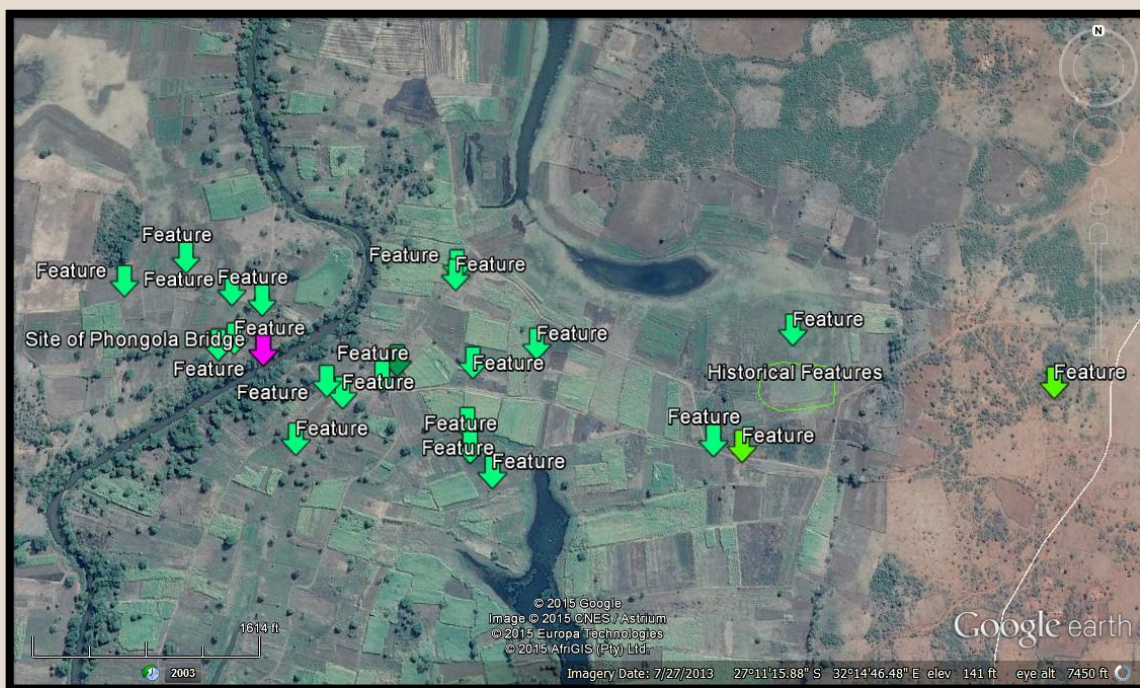
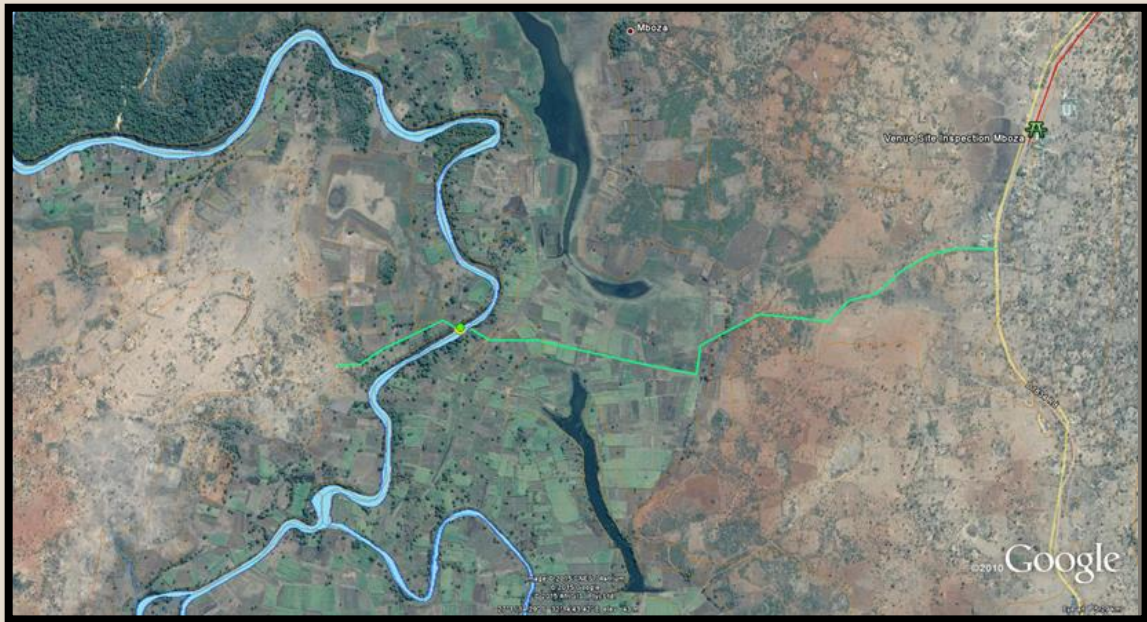


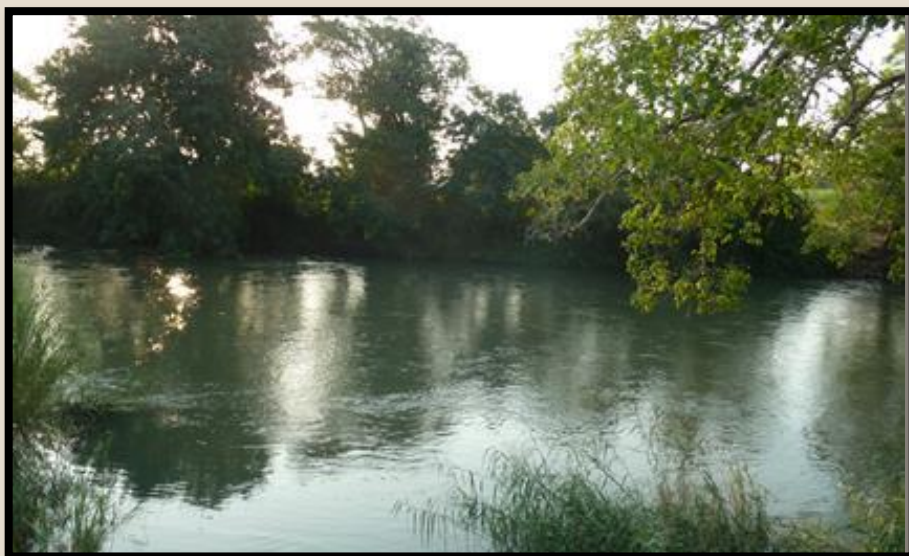
Figure 2. Site of Phongola Bridge with Examples of Possible Cultural Features, following the Proposed Route.



**Figure 3. Locality Map of the Preferred Route Alignment.**

## **1.2 Details of surrounding area**

The proposed bridge is to be situated across the Phongola River which surrounding floodplains are under heavy cultivation. Further back from the river are shrubby grasslands upon which scattered Tembe Tonga homesteads are located. The banks of the river are heavily vegetated with woody vegetation.



**Plate 1. Photo of the Proposed Site of the Phongola River Bridge.**

### 1.3 Cultural Heritage Legislation

According to Section 3 (2) of the NHRA, the heritage resources of South Africa include:

- a. places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- b. places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- c. historical settlements and townscapes;
- d. landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- e. geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- f. archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- g. graves and burial grounds, including.
  - i. ancestral graves;
  - ii. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
  - iii. graves of victims of conflict;
  - iv. graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
  - v. historical graves and cemeteries; and
  - vi. other human remains which are not covered in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983);
  - h. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;
  - i. movable objects, including objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
  - ii. objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
  - iii. ethnographic art and objects;
  - iv. military objects;
  - v. objects of decorative or fine art;
  - vi. objects of scientific or technological interest; and
  - vii. books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).”



In terms of section 3 (3) of the NHRA, a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of:

- “a. its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- b. its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- c. its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- d. its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- e. its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- f. its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- 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; and
- i. sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.”

## **2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA**

The greater Maputaland is endowed with heritage sites of various traditions and periods spanning the Stone Ages, Iron Ages and the Historical Period. However, the majority of these occur to the west of the Phongola River in the foothills of the Lebombo Mountains. A second large concentration occurs adjacent to, and on the dune cordon along the coastline. The coastal plain by contrast to the rest of Maputaland, is devoid of known archaeological sites.

Oliver Davies, an archaeologist who conducted pioneering research and surveys in northern KwaZulu Natal in the 1960's and 1970's, commented that the coastal plain was unpromising for archaeological research due to its being covered by superficial sands and bush coverage which affect preservation and visibility (Avery 1980). By contrast, the foothills of the Lebombo in the vicinity of Ingwavuma, to the west of the study area, is well endowed with archaeological sites. The provincial heritage data base of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum lists twenty nine sites in the Ingwavuma

magisterial district. These include Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age, Later Stone Age and Later Iron Age sites.

## 2.1 Stone Age

Based on typological criteria it can be speculated that the known Early Stone Age sites in the greater Ingwavuma area most probably dates back to between 300 000 and 1.7 million years ago. Some of the stone tools have been identified as belonging to the Acheulian tradition and it is therefore possible that these sites were occupied by an early hominin such as *Homo erectus* or *Homo ergaster*. Middle Stone Age Sites dates back to ca. 40 000 - 200 000 BP. These sites relate to the first anatomically modern people in the world, namely *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

Most of the Middle Stone Age sites in the greater Maputaland are open air stone tool scatters with little archaeological context. However, some notable cave deposits do occur. The world renowned Border Cave Site, situated approximately 65km to the north of the town of Ingwavuma, is a good example. Humans lived at Border Cave over a period of 200 000 years. The human skeletal remains found in the cave are believed to be some of the oldest evidence of anatomically modern human beings. Various radiometric-dating techniques suggest that Middle Stone Age people were living at Border Cave more than 110 000 years ago. More than a million stone artefacts have been excavated in the cave and an enormous amount of animal material has been recovered from the site as well (Derwent 2006).

Only a handful of Later Stone Age sites have been recorded in the greater Maputaland. These relate to San hunter-gatherers or, their immediate ancestors. The stone tool technology is smaller, and more diverse and specialised, than those made during the Middle Stone Age.

The San were the owners of the land for almost 30 000 years 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. By 1500 years ago these early Bantu-speaking farmers also arrived in the project area. Due to the fact that these first farmers introduced metal technology to southern Africa they are designated as the Early Iron Age in archaeological literature. Their distinct ceramic pottery is classified to styles known as "Msuluzi" (AD 500-700), Ndongdwane (AD 700-800) and Ntshekane (AD 800-900).

## 2.2 Iron Age

The Early Iron Age of the coastal zone in Maputaland contains ceramic fragments identified as belonging to the Matola phase. The Matola phase sites can be identified with the very first Bantu-speaking agriculturists that entered KwaZulu-Natal approximately 1 600 years ago from Eastern Africa (Maggs 1989).



**Plate 2. Fluted Ceramics (“Matola” Tradition) and Iron Slag. Taken from: The Iron Age communities in the Zambezi river basin excavations in Mozambique by Hilario Madiquida.**

## 2.3 The Thembe-Thonga

Although oral history indicates that the area was occupied in more recent centuries times by the Thembe-Thonga or their immediate ancestors, archaeological sites belonging to this period have not yet been identified. Nevertheless the present African inhabitants of the area, the Thembe-Thonga and the Swazi, have a rich oral history and culture relating to their intimate relationship with the environment spanning many centuries. Aspects of their cultural heritage identified by community representatives as being important include the following:

- Relationship of the local community with the physical environment

- Traditional fishing practises (fonya basket fishing)
- The indawo spirit possession cult
- Wild fruit utilisation
- The significance of the mothers brother in Thembe-Thonga social organisation
- Settlement rules and history
- Thonga language
- Issues relating to cross border identities
- Trade across the border
- History of various traditional authorities in the area
- Occupation of some areas by refugees of the Zulu wars
- The grave site of King Dingane
- Influence on local customs by refugees of the Mozambican War of 1975-1990

The conventional view is that that the historical occupants of Maputaland, the Tembe-Thonga, migrated from Karanga in the present day Zimbabwe in the middle of the seventeenth century Junod (1962:23). However, the theory that the African societies of south-east Africa migrated there in fixed ethnic units, as in the case of the Tembe-Thonga, has been questioned by archaeological research and recent research on oral traditions of Zululand and Natal (Maggs 1989).

Instead of migrating there in fixed ethnic groups, it is now argued that the African societies of south-east Africa emerged locally from long established communities of diverse origins and diverse cultures and languages. Nevertheless, whether the Tembe came from Karanga to establish their authority over the people of south-east Africa, or whether they emerged locally, reports from Portuguese sailors indicate that a chief Tembe was in control of the ruling chiefdom in the Delagoa Bay hinterland in the mid-1600s (Wright & C. Hamilton 1989:46-64 and Kuper 1997:74).

Tembe and his followers gradually established their authority over the people who lived in this hinterland, including the area to the immediate east of the study area. Due to the abilities of their strong and charismatic leaders, the Tembe-Thonga remained a unified chiefdom and gradually extended their influence. This unity was upset in the middle of the eighteenth century when a split in the ruling lineage led to the fragmentation of the chiefdom. The division came after the death of Silamboya in 1746. The descendants of Silamboya's oldest son, Muhali, settled west of the Maputo River and north of the

Usuthu River. This group, the senior branch of the Tembe-Thonga, became known as the Mututwen-Tembe.

The other part of the Tembe-Thonga followed a junior son of Silamboya, Mangobe, and settled east of the Maputo River. This branch would later become known as the Mabudu, or Maputo (Bryant 1965:290). The imposed international border of 1875 bisected the area where the Mabudu branch settled. Being unable to control the vast area under his control, the chief of the junior branch, Mangobe, placed his sons in strategic positions so as to ensure his control. When Mangobe died, his first son, Nkupo, was named chief. However, his younger son, Mabudu, soon established himself as the stronger leader and took the chieftainship from his older brother (Hedges 1978:137). With the army now at his disposal Mabudu was able to dominate all trade between Europeans who landed at Delagoa Bay and local people living in the hinterland. Through this domination the Mabudu became, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the strongest political and economic unit in south-east Africa (Smith 1972:178-184).

The people under his authority became known as the *abakwaMabudu* or the people of Mabudu's land (Webb and Wright 1979:157). By the early 1800s the Mabudu chiefdom stretched from the Maputo River in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east, and from Delagoa (Maputo) Bay in the north to as far south as Lake St. Lucia (Felgate 1982:1). This extensive area included the present-day Ingwavuma.

During the early 1800s similar processes of political centralisation were taking place amongst the Mthetwa, Ndwandwe and later the Zulu chiefdoms to the immediate south east of Ingwavuma. The Zulu eventually defeated the other groups and established themselves as the dominant power in south-east Africa (Wright & Hamilton 1989:67 and Laband 1995). The Mabudu were never attacked by, nor directly involved in any war with the Zulu. They were, however indirectly affected by wars of conquest the Zulu waged in the northern part of Zululand in the first half of the nineteenth century (Omer-Cooper 1975:57).

Various groups of refugees passed through the Mabudu chiefdom during the reign of Shaka. Many of them settled among the Mabudu. The people who crossed the southern boundary of the Mabudu chiefdom brought with them languages and customs foreign to the Mabudu. Over time, Mabudu identity became less distinctive as people

adopted many customs of those living south of them (Bryant 1964:292). As more and more people from the southern chiefdoms crossed into the Mabudu chiefdom, an increasing amount of prestige was attached to being Zulu and speaking isiZulu, since the Zulu were the dominant political force.

The Zulu cultural influence in the greater Ingwavuma area was however not complete. People who fled the onslaught of the Zulu only stayed in the area for a short period before they moved on (Felgate 1982:11). Furthermore, in exchange for tribute paid, the Zulu recognised the Mabudu as leaders of a vast territory. This, to an extent, secured their sovereignty (Bradley 1974). The relationship between the Mabudu and the Zulu differed markedly from that which the Zulu instituted with other chiefdoms. Ballard (1978) states that although the Mabudu 'paid tribute to the Zulu kings and cooperated on a military and economic level, they enjoyed much greater independence than the chiefdoms south of St. Lucia.

Despite the Zulu influence, Maputaland, remained politically and culturally distinct from areas to the north, south and west. The people of the area spoke a unified language – xiRonga (Thonga). With some exceptions, notably the Ngubane and Khumalo, they accepted the rule of Mabudu chiefs (Felgate 1982:11). They practised customs that were unique to the area and differed from those of their Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga neighbours (Webster 1991:250). Nevertheless, many siSwati-speaking people crossed the nearby border and settled at Ingwavuma. Today a large percentage of the inhabitants in the immediate vicinity of Ingwavuma are Swazi people, or people with strong cultural and historical links with the Swazi such as the Nyawo Chiefdom. The footprint is situated within traditional Nyawo territory. The Nyawo also played a significant part in the history of the Zulu state situated further south during the reign of King Dingane.

After the defeat of the Zulu by the Voortrekkers during the battle of Blood River in 1838 King Dingane fled to the north and established a new homestead in the Hluhluwe River Valley. From this new location he launched an attack into Swaziland but this attack was repulsed. It was, however, to become a prime cause of his death. Mpande, the king's half-brother, fled southward in September 1839 with his followers to claim protection from the Voortrekker, fearing that Dingane was intending to have him killed.

Mpande and the Boers eventually agreed to attack the king's forces and this led to the battle of Maqongqo, in which Dingane's forces were defeated. King Dingane then fled into the Lebombo mountains, in the close environs of the study area, where he built a homestead, called Esankoleni on the slopes of Hlatikulu hill. This hill was located in the territory of Silevana who was acting as regent for Sambane, heir to the Nyawo chieftainship.

Silevana saw King Dingane's presence as a threat and notified a Swazi patrol, under Sonyezane Dlamini. In 1840 the Swazi, with Nyawo help, surrounded the homestead and King Dingane was stabbed by Silevana when he came out of his hut. He was buried at Esankoleni, but the Nyawo were fearful of the possible consequences of killing Zulu Royalty, and tried to brush over their part in the deed by keeping the location of the grave a closely-guarded secret for many years. Today King Dingane's grave is a provincial monument. . A small commemorative plaque, which was unveiled by Dr Buthelezi of the Inkhatha Freedom Party, has been placed close to the actual site.

During the colonial period the greater Maputaland area was frequented by hunters, traders, and later missionaries (Bruton et al 1980). However, sites and structures associated with these activities need to be identified and placed in an inventory. Likewise during the more recent past many refugees of Mozambique crossed the international border and settled in the area (Klopper 2004). Sites belonging to this more recent "struggle era history" are also protected by national heritage legislation and needs to be surveyed and placed in an inventory.

Apart from human history the greater Maputaland also has extensive fossil deposits and geomorphology dating back to the Cretaceous, Tertiary and Quaternary periods. The Cretaceous fauna yielded by sequences includes ammonites, bivalves, gastropods, and nautiloids in abundance. Vertebrates are uncommon, only fish and reptiles being noted so far. Plant remains are relatively abundant in the form of logs and lignite chips. The Tertiary limestone deposits contain marine macro-fossils, calcareous nanno-fossils and planktic foraminifers (Avery 1980). Shell imprints have been found imprinted in concretions to the immediate south of Thembe Elephant Park and may therefore palaeontological significance (Anderson 2008).

### **3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum and the SAHRA inventory of heritage sites. Aerial photographs of the area were surveyed. The SAHRIS website was researched to evaluate past surveys in the area. In addition, the available archaeological and historical literature covering KwaZulu-Natal was also consulted.

A site visit was made to the project area on 29<sup>TH</sup> October 2015. A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted. The consultant walked the area on foot and surveyed the area for potential heritage sites. Both sides of the Phongola River was surveyed.

#### **3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey**

##### **3.2.1 Visibility**

Visibility was good.

##### **3.2.2 Disturbance**

The area within, and surrounding the project footprint, is heavily cultivated and disturbed.

#### **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:* Mboza, Ingwavuma.

*Municipality:* uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality, Mkanyakude District Municipality.

#### **4.2 Description of the general area surveyed**

No heritage sites or features were observed during the ground survey. However, the area within, and surrounding the project footprint, is heavily cultivated and disturbed. The entire project footprint and surrounding area is littered with Thembe and Zulu homesteads, cultivated fields, and some livestock enclosures (Plate 3). Google aerial photographs do show the outlines of possible features that were invisible during the ground survey but it is difficult to date these.



**Plate 3. Rural homestead with livestock pen and cultivated fields. No graves were recorded on the footprint or in association with homesteads situated along the proposed route.**

The consultants at Active Heritage CC advise that during construction great care be taken during construction, to avoid obvious homestead outlines, stone walling, grindstones, and graves. Cultural and Heritage material is often associated with old homesteads and domestic activity areas, but not always visible above surface.

## 5 HERITAGE SITES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)

A number of homestead and domestic activity area sites were identified on the project footprint but these appear to be younger than 60 years.

### 5.1 Field Rating

The following table provides the Field Rating Values as outlined by SAHRA..

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

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

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development of the Pongola Bridge may proceed from a heritage point of view as no known heritage sites are threatened. The area is also not part of any known cultural landscape. However, there is a vague possibility that construction work may unearth cultural material that was invisible during the ground survey. Cultural and heritage material is often associated with homesteads and domestic activity areas, but not always visible above surface. The fact that the footprint lies upon a domestic landscape suggests the possibility of hidden graves lying below the surface. These may well be discovered, or even exposed, during construction. Should graves or any archaeological material be identified then all construction work should stop and the heritage consultants or Amafa be contacted for further evaluation. We also draw

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stakeholders attention to the South African National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA) 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.

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