

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE
PROPOSED HILLVIEW HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT, EMPANGENI**

FOR EXIGENT ENVIRONMENTAL CC

DATE: 13 NOVEMBER 2008

By Gavin Anderson

**Umlando: Archaeological Tourism and Resource
Management**

PO Box 102532, Meerensee, 3901

Phone/fax: 035-7531785 cell: 0836585362



INTRODUCTION

Umlando cc was contracted by Exigent Environmental cc, to undertake a heritage survey of a proposed Hillview housing development in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal.

The area is located north of the main town of Empangeni (fig. 1). Several sites have been recorded in the general area of Empangeni and there was thus good reason to believe that sites would occur in the affected area.

The land is covers three small hills that are currently under sugarcane agriculture. The soil is not deep on these hills, and where it does occur, it tends to be clay-like in rain. Beneath the soil is a very pebbly stone layer of various formations. These types of geological conditions tend to be associated with a very low, if any, density of past human activity, especial domestic activity.

One archaeological site was recorded during the course of the survey.

METHOD

The method for Heritage assessment consists of several steps.

The first step forms part of the desktop assessment. Here we would consult the databases from both Umlando and the Natal Museum. These databases contain most of the known heritage sites in KwaZulu-Natal. This database does; however, tend to be restricted to archaeological and palaeontological sites. Consulting with the relevant authorities will also cover known battlefields and historical sites. We also consult with an historical architect and an historian where necessary.

The initial archaeological survey (i.e. fieldwork) consists of a foot survey where the selected area was covered. The survey results will define the significance of each recorded site, as well as a management plan.

All sites are grouped according to low, medium and high significance for the purpose of this report. Sites of low significance have no diagnostic artefacts, especially pottery. Sites of medium significance have diagnostic artefacts and these are sampled. Sampling includes the collection of artefacts for future analysis. All diagnostic pottery, such as rims, lips and decorated sherds are sampled, while bone, stone and shell are mostly noted. Sampling usually occurs on most sites. Sites of high significance are excavated and/or extensively sampled. Those sites that are extensively sampled have high research potential, yet poor preservation of features. We attempt to recover as many artefacts from these sites by means of systematic sampling, as opposed to sampling diagnostic artefacts only.

Defining significance

Archaeological sites vary according to significance and several different criteria relate to each type of site. However, there are several criteria that allow for a general significance rating of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

1. State of preservation of:

1.1. Organic remains:

1.1.1. Faunal

1.1.2. Botanical

1.2. Rock art

1.3. Walling

1.4. Presence of a cultural deposit

1.5. Features:

- 1.5.1. Ash Features
- 1.5.2. Graves
- 1.5.3. Middens
- 1.5.4. Cattle byres
- 1.5.5. Bedding and ash complexes

2. Spatial arrangements:

- 2.1. Internal housing arrangements
- 2.2. Intra-site settlement patterns
- 2.3. Inter-site settlement patterns

3. Features of the site:

- 3.1. Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts or images at the site?
- 3.2. Is it a type site?
- 3.3. Does the site have a very good example of a specific time period, feature, or artefact?

4. Research:

- 4.1. Providing information on current research projects
- 4.2. Salvaging information for potential future research projects

5. Inter- and intra-site variability

- 5.1. Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between various features and artefacts?
- 5.2. Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities?

6. Archaeological Experience:

- 6.1. The personal experience and expertise of the CRM practitioner should not be ignored. Experience can indicate sites that have potentially significant aspects, but need to be tested prior to any conclusions.

7. Educational:

- 7.1. Does the site have the potential to be used as an educational instrument?
- 7.2. Does the site have the potential to become a tourist attraction?

7.3. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

8. Other Heritage Significance:

8.1. Historical buildings

8.2. Battlefields and general Anglo-Zulu and Anglo-Boer sites

8.3. Graves and/or community cemeteries

8.4. Living Heritage Sites

8.5. Cultural Landscapes, that includes old trees, hills, mountains, rivers, etc related to cultural or historical experiences.

The more a site can fulfill the above criteria, the more significant it becomes. Test-pit excavations are used to test the full potential of an archaeological deposit. This occurs in Phase 2. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of significance (Phase 3). Sites may also be mapped and/or have artefacts sampled as a form of mitigation. Sampling normally occurs when the artefacts may be good examples of their type, but are not in a primary archaeological context. Mapping records the spatial relationship between features and artefacts.

A Phase 2 may yield enough material so that further excavations are not required. However, if significant material occurs in the archaeological deposit then it is likely that a Phase 3 will be required.

RESULTS

One archaeological site was recorded in the development area (fig. 2).

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED AREA

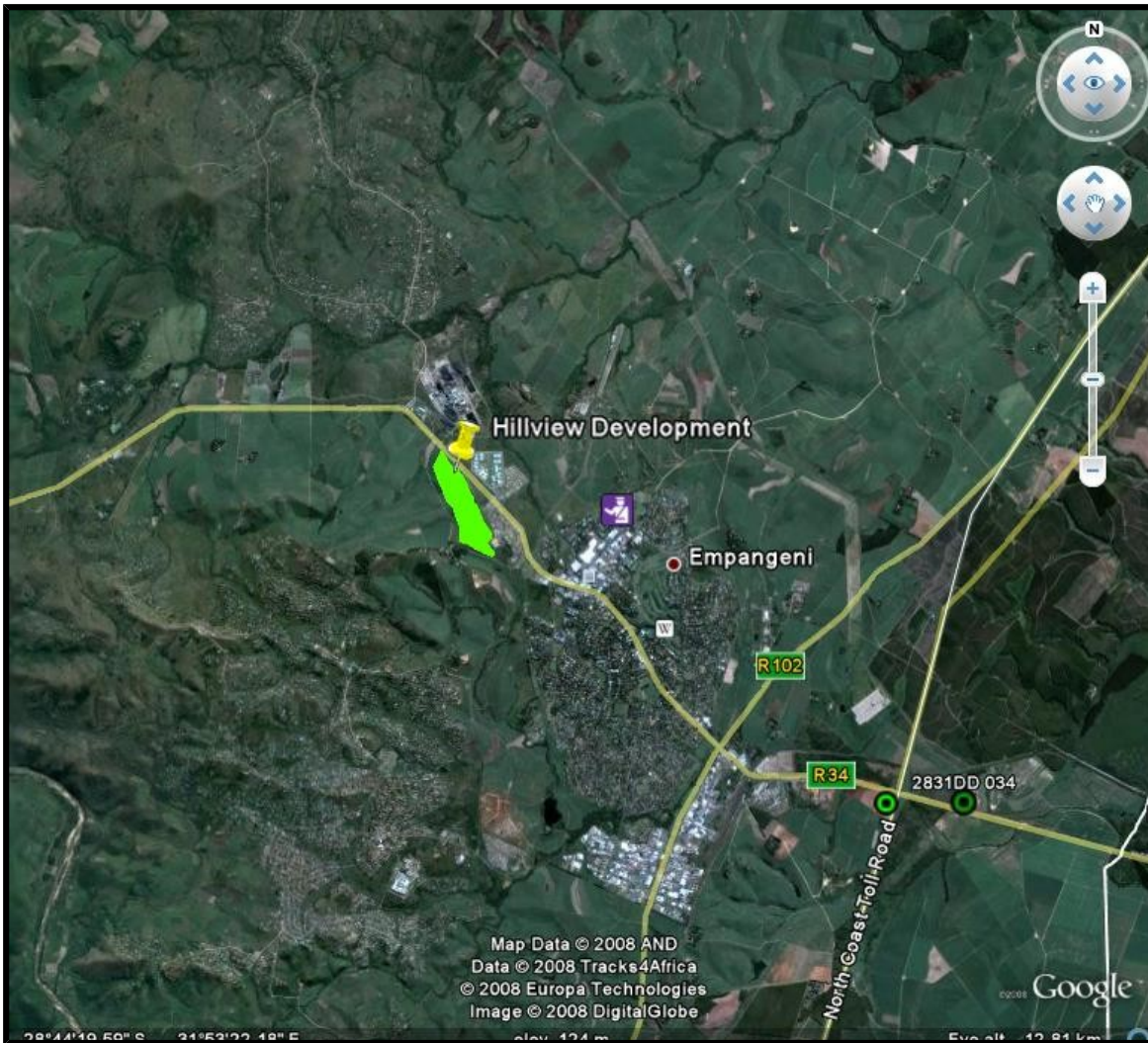


FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF THE SITE AND SURVEYED AREAS



HVW001

HVW001 was located in the sugarcane. The site consisted of an ephemeral scatter of thin-walled pottery. The pottery may date to the Late Iron Age or Historical Period. No other artefacts were observed.

Significance: The site is of low significance.

Mitigation: No further mitigation is required.

CONCLUSION

A small area of land along the northern part of the proposed Hillview Housing Development, Empangeni, was surveyed. One site of low significance was recorded, and it requires no further mitigation.

The development would still need to apply for a permit from Amafa KZN, for the destruction of the site.

**APPENDIX A
SITE RECORD FORM**

UMLANDO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE RECORD FORM



SITE CATEGORY: (X where applicable)

Stone Age:

Early Iron Age:

Late Iron Age X?

Historical Period: X?

Recorder's Site No.: HVW001

Map Reference: S28 44' 08.7" E31 52' 23.3" (alt = 128m)

DIRECTIONS TO SITE: SKETCH OR DESCRIPTION.

Drive through Empangeni towards the Dept. of Correctional Services. After the prison and near Exxaro is a gravel road to the left. Take this road and site is on the second hill on the LHS.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Type of Site: Surface

Merits conservation: No

Threats: yes

What threats: Possible development

RECORDING:

Graphic record: None

Digital pictures:

Tracings :

Re-drawings:

Recorder/Informant: Name: Gavin Anderson

Address: PO Box 102532, Meerensee, 3901

Date: 10 November 2008

Description of site and artefactual content.

Site consists of an ephemeral scatter of pottery.