

**Archaeological Survey of the African Oceans Casino Complex**

**For Dutton Environmental Consultants**

**By**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The area to be developed by the proposed African Oceans Casino Complex line was surveyed for potential archaeological sites. Previous surveys in adjacent areas had recorded archaeological sites and thus there was a high probability that archaeological sites would occur in the area to be developed.

Two new archaeological sites were recorded in the area proposed for development by the African Oceans Casino Complex. These sites are the remains of Iron Age settlements dating to either the Late Iron Age (AD 1000 to AD 1824) and/or the Historical Period (AD 1824 onwards). Further analysis would be able to provide a more precise date. Associated with these two sites are various artefacts that include pottery sherds, iron ore, stone-walled features and stone terracing.

The sites are not of such significance that they would impede the proposed development and they can be salvaged for future research.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Natal Museum Institute for Cultural Resource Management was approached by Dutton Environmental Consultants to undertake an archaeological survey of the proposed African Oceans Casino Complex, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. The affected area is located in Westville, between The Pavilion and Westville Prison. This report describes the sites recorded during this survey and suggests further mitigation. Two new archaeological sites were recorded in the affected area and probably date to the Late Iron Age. The exact location of archaeological sites are not given in this report due to the sensitive nature of archaeological sites. However, the developer does have their location on a map.

The terms of reference are to:

- Highlight where the potential development might contravene legislation pertaining to archaeological sites;
- Identify sites of archaeological interest, if any;
- In the event of finding such sites, recommend how best to preserve, salvage, and manage them;
- Recommend in the proposal any other relevant aspects not included in your TOR;

All archaeological sites in KwaZulu-Natal are protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act of 1998. This legislation protects archaeological sites from damage, alteration and/or destruction as a result of potential development and/or research. A permit for the destruction of these sites, recorded in the survey, will be required from KwaZulu-Natal Heritage.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Natal Museum is the provincial repository for recorded archaeological sites. No archaeological sites had been previously recorded in the affected area, however, two iron smelting sites had been recorded in the vicinity outside of the proposed development. area. This information indicated that there is a probability that other archaeological sites may occur in the affected area.

The fields survey entailed walking the affected area and doing a ground survey. The visibility of archaeological sites was limited due to the dense vegetation, and thus I concentrated on small open areas. In this way I could sample parts of the site over a broad area.

### Defining archaeological 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 evaluation 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. Presence of a cultural deposit

##### 1.3. Features:

###### 1.3.1. Ash Features

###### 1.3.2. Graves

###### 1.3.3. Middens

###### 1.3.4. Cattle pens

#### **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 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/or 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. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.
- 7.2. Educational value is in terms of display at an Heritage institution

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. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of high significance. 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.

### Archaeological procedures for site management

The management of archaeological sites has various phases:

1. Phase 1: An area to be affected by development is surveyed and assessed. Sites are recorded and placed on the museum, database. If sites of no or low significance are recorded, and require no mitigation, then the developer is required to obtain a permit for the destruction of the site.
2. Phase 2: If the assessment suggests mitigation then be archaeological mapping, and/or test-pit excavations may take place at the site. If test-pit excavations are undertaken then the archaeologist is required to obtain a permit for the archaeological salvage of this site. This permit is different to that required by the developer, since the archaeologist is only sampling a part of the site and is not destroying or damaging the site. If the test-pit excavations locates and recovers material that is significant, and indicate that more such material may occur, then a Phase 3 option may be required.
3. Phase 3: Phase 3 options tend to be full excavations of a site in accordance with archaeological practice and methodologies. These tend to occur when valuable and significant information has been recovered from a site in the Phase 2, and more may be recovered by further mitigation.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Description of Archaeological Sites**

Two new archaeological sites were recorded during this survey. Both sites date either to the Late Iron Age or Historical Period and require further mitigation.

#### **AOC1**

This site is located near the top of the hill on the edge of the spur where temporary casino will be located. Two ceramic sherds, stone features and stone terracing were observed. The ceramic sherds are adiagnostic and one has a red burnish. Two stone features were recorded along the spur. The first feature was rectangular in shape. Rectangular stones demarcated the outer wall, but little stone infill was present. The second stone feature appears to have larger stones at its base, with smaller stones placed above them. These stone features appear to be structured mounds of stones similar to that of a grave or collapsed wall. They are not piles of stones from field clearance, since these tend to be more amorphous. Several stone-walled terraces were located on the site. This terracing may date to the archaeological deposit at the site or alternatively to more recent agricultural activity. The site may have a potential archaeological deposit.

The site dates to the Late Iron Age (AD 1000 – AD 1824) and/or Colonial Period (AD 1824 onwards). Other archaeological sites have been recorded in the general area with iron smelting activities. According to oral histories and anthropological work in Africa, iron smelting is a highly ritualised activity with many social prohibitions. One of these 'prohibitions' is that smelting activity tends to occur away from the main domestic area. AOC1 may thus be the domestic area of the iron smelting sites located outside of the affected area. No iron smelting activity and/or debris was observed at AOC1. .

The site is of low-medium archaeological significance since it has a potential deposit, intra-site features and a possible grave. Further mitigation for this site is required.

#### **Mitigation required:**

There should be further mitigation for this once the vegetation has been burnt. This will allow for an analyses of the stone features and terracing, as well as an opportunity to sample pottery of the site. If the stone features and terracing are part of the site, then the site will need to be mapped according to archaeological methods. If the analysis of this site indicates that an archaeological deposit exists, then test-pit excavations may be required.

### **AOC2a & b**

AOC2a occurs on the northern side of the road, while AOC2b occurs on the southern side of the road. This road appears to have had little impact on the site. The site is an extensive scatter of pottery sherds over most of the area to be affected by the proposed parking lot. The site occurs on the top of the hill along the flatter areas. There is a deep deposit in this area that may contain archaeological cultural horizons. While the vegetation was as dense as AOC1, many open areas made site visibility easier.

Several pottery sherds were located in both areas. These sherds come from at least nine different vessels, and they vary in size, thickness and colour. AOC2a has several iron-ore fragments along the eastern part of the site. It appears as if this site originally covered the whole area prior to the construction of the road. The current road has cut into the top part of the site, but appears to have left the rest of the site in tact. The site is either a very large single settlement or a multi-component site (i.e. it consists of several individual settlements that were occupied in similar places but over a longer period of time). If an archaeological deposit does exist, then intra-site patterns may be recorded.

This site is of low-medium archaeological significance since it has a potential archaeological deposit and may yield information about intra- and inter-site patterns. The site will require further mitigation.

### **Mitigation required**

The mitigation for this site should be in the form of archaeological test-pit excavations to determine the full potential of the site. Test-pit excavations should occur on both sides of the road in order to determine if there is a settlement layout and/or if the two sites are related. This mitigation can only occur once the vegetation has been cleared and/or burnt.

## **CONCLUSION**

The area to be developed by the proposed African Oceans Casino Complex was surveyed for potential archaeological sites. Prior to the survey archaeological sites had only been recorded outside of the study area. Two new archaeological sites were recorded in the study area. This information is valuable in terms of building the history of KwaZulu-Natal.

These two sites, AOC1 and AOC2a & b, are of low-medium archaeological significance since they have potential archaeological deposit and may yield information regarding intra- and



inter-site patterns. The proposed development will permanently alter and/or damage the archaeological sites and some form of mitigation will be required. Mitigation should be in the form of test-pit excavations, to determine the nature of the deposit, and archaeological mapping of surface features. This mitigation can only occur once the vegetation has been cleared and/or burnt.

The archaeological sites in the area to be affected by the proposed African Oceans Casino Complex do not pose any major threat to the development plans. The development can continue once the archaeological mitigation has occurred and the developer has been issued with a permit for the damage and destruction of the site. The developer will require a permit for the destruction of the archaeological sites in the affected area. This permit is available from KwaZulu-Natal Heritage in Pietermaritzburg.

**APPENDIX A****Location of archaeological sites<sup>1</sup>**

AOC1	S29 <sup>0</sup>	42'	34"	E30 <sup>0</sup>	09'	24"
AOC2a & b	S29 <sup>0</sup>	40'	26"	E30 <sup>0</sup>	07'	27"
2930DD 116	S29 <sup>0</sup>	51'	45"	E30 <sup>0</sup>	56'	49" <sup>2</sup>
2930DD 125	S29 <sup>0</sup>	51'	15"	E30 <sup>0</sup>	55'	53"

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<sup>1</sup> The geographical location of these sites are confidential and not to be made public.

<sup>2</sup> The last two sites are not in the defined study area but cognisance must be taken of there location if they are to be affected by any servitudes.