

A DESKTOP ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
POTENTIAL OF DURBAN OUTER WEST

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It is important to recognise that few systematic archaeological surveys have been carried out in Durban Outer West. Consequently, this report cannot in any way be regarded as providing a comprehensive statement on the archaeological sites and resources in that area. I am certain that many additional archaeological sites remain unrecorded. Some of these may be of great scientific significance and thus worthy of conservation.

Many of the archaeological sites that have been recorded occur in the vicinity of development projects such as newly-constructed roads or new works for major dams. Occasional finds have been located in formally white areas, but very few in areas previously reserved for black communities. Many, perhaps most, of these sites have been destroyed by development – both formal and informal.

Given these circumstances, it would be pointless to provide detailed site location data in this report. First, many recorded archaeological sites no longer exist. Secondly, such data are incomplete. ‘Dots on a map’ therefore, would provide a false impression of the archaeological potential of Durban Outer West. Herein lies a danger, from an archaeological point of view, because developers and planners separated from this report may fail to appreciate the incomplete nature of the data. Consequently, they may inadvertently make decisions that adversely affect archaeological sites and data. What follows then is an overview of the known archaeological potential of Durban Outer West. The intention is to alert developers and planners to this potential.

Overview of the known archaeological resources of Durban Outer West

We consulted four 1: 50 000 topographic maps from the regional recording centre in the Department of Archaeology. The following types of sites are recorded on each sheet in Durban Outer West.

2930DA Cato Ridge:

Little archaeological work has been done in this area. Early and Middle Stone Age sites have been recorded in river gravels on the banks of the Mzunduzi river. Little Iron Age material has been noted but this is certainly a consequence of early narrow research interests rather than a real absence.

2930DB Inanda:

One systematic archaeological survey has been carried out in this area, on the property Langefontein 5981 in connection with proposed housing development. A Natal Museum team recorded several Early and Late Iron Age sites, as well as Early Stone Age sites. Sites elsewhere include at least one *isivivane* (stone cairn) and a small shelter (illegally excavated) with Stone and Iron Age deposits.

2930DC Hammarsdale:

Little archaeological work has been done in the area. The recorded sites encompass the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages, as well as the Late Iron Age. An important Stone and Iron Age site and several other potentially important sites occur near Shongweni Dam. Rock shelters with Iron Age material occur elsewhere. There is one recorded site with some rock art near

Shongweni, and another apparently close to the western boundary of Durban Outer West. These suggest that other rock art sites may occur in the area. Some of the known archaeological sites in this area (and pockets of indigenous vegetation) have been destroyed as a result of extensive and apparently inadequately-managed sand mining.

2930DD Durban:

Some archaeological work in this area has been done, but no systematic archaeological surveys. An important Stone Age site, a National Monument, is located in the vicinity of the Marinnehill Toll Plaza. Several rock shelter sites occur in the Giba Gorge and Kranskloof Nature Reserve.

Tourism and educational potential

Two the known sites would be suitable for development as tourist and educational resources. These are the National Monument near the toll plaza and a site in the Shongweni area. Both, however, require appropriate financial investment so that this can be achieved in accordance with the requirements of the National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969, as amended) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (No. 10 of 1997). People should not be encouraged to visit the sites prior to development and implementation of an appropriate management plan for the sites, in consultation with the National Monuments Council or provincial heritage agency. Details of the location of these sites can be obtained from the Pietermaritzburg offices of the provincial heritage agency.

Cultural resource management

The archaeological potential of Durban Outer West is considerable. Any development should be preceded by an Environmental Impact Assessment which should include an assessment of cultural resources (archaeological, historical etc.). In this connection, it is worth noting that heritage management in this province will shortly become the responsibility of the provincial heritage agency, Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali. Amafa will be established in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (No. 10 of 1997).

Section 27 of the Act, dealing with heritage resources management, requires that the Council of Amafa, at the earliest stages of initiating certain categories of development projects, be furnished with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development. These categories of development are:

- construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline canal or similar form of linear development or barriers exceeding 300 m in length.
- construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length; and
- any development, or other activity which will change the character of an area of land or water exceeding 10 000 m in extent;
 - involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or
 - involving three or more existing erven, or subdivisions thereof, which have been consolidated within the past five years; or
 - the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations; or
 - any other category of development provided for in regulations.

The Amafa Council may require that heritage impact assessments are carried out prior to any development being undertaken.

Glossary

The **Stone Age** refers to the period when human and human ancestors survived principally through scavenging, gathering, fishing and hunting food. Technology was simple, people typically lived in smallish groups.

Early Stone Age: from older than 1 million years to about 200 000 years ago

Middle Stone Age: from about 200 000 years to about 25 000 years ago

Late Stone Age: from about 25 000 years ago to colonial times

The **Iron Age** refers to the period when black, Bantu-speaking people settled in southern Africa. They farmed domestic animals and crops and produced various metals from ore.

Early Iron Age: from about AD 400 to AD 1000

Late Iron Age: from AD 1000 to colonial times

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