

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SURVEYS AT HILLENDALE MINE**

For Exxaro (Pty) Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Umlando was contracted by Exxaro (Pty) Ltd to undertake monthly surveys at the Hillendale mine. The appropriate mitigation would be undertaken if required after each survey. This report is a summary of the work undertaken in 2008.

METHOD

The archaeological survey consists of a foot survey along the selected area. These areas are normally less than an acre in size, and have been cleared of the vegetation and some of the topsoil. The aim of these surveys is to continuously assess the area in terms of the concentration and age of the artefacts in relation to their significance.

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.

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 also include observing construction activity at sensitive sites.

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

The Hillendale mine was surveyed ten times during 2007: the 2 months of non-survey was because the mine had not moved further ahead. Of the several areas were surveyed throughout the year, only one area had a high concentration of artefacts: TIC1a/b, and this was repeatedly monitored throughout the year.

TIC1a/b

One main area was uncovered in February, and we monitored and sampled this site (TIC1a/b) throughout most of the year¹. Initially several stone tools and pottery sherds were observed. The stone tools probably date to the Late Stone Age. The sherds date to the Early Iron Age and the Late Iron Age or Historical Period. The artefacts became more numerous towards the top of the hill and we also observed fragments of slag.

The newly exposed area, in February, was the periphery of the main site. We surveyed along various road cuttings that went into the sugar cane field and noted two Ntshokane sherds and more pieces of slag. It appears that the main site occurs under the current sugar cane. The Ntshokane period dates from AD 950 – AD 1030. This is the first Ntshokane period site to be recorded in the Hillendale vicinity. Other Ntshokane sites have been recorded north of Richards Bay, and this site will be useful as a comparative site.

The artefacts consist of the following:

- Various pieces of slag
- A few tuyère fragments
- Quartz and quartzite hammer stones and flakes were observed
- Pottery:
 - Mostly thin-walled and undecorated. These probably date to the Late Iron Age or Historical Period

¹ S 28° 49' 41.8" E 31° 56' 16.3" – WGS84

- A few Ntshokane sherds, of which one was thin-walled and decorated
- Stone: A few upper grinding stones
- Bone: A few fragments of (assumed) domestic bovid. These are on the surface and can date from last year backwards.

The main part of TIC1a/b is a smelting site, however we could not locate the furnace(s), or the concentrations of slag. We did excavate a furnace in 2006, and this was located within 100m of TIC1a/b. We presume that the site still occurs under the rest of the sugar cane to the northeast. We will continue to monitor this area as the mine progresses. The previously excavated furnace was very fragile and the ones at TIC1a/b may have disintegrated by now.

CONCLUSION

Only one new site was recorded in 2007, and this was repeatedly monitored and sampled throughout the year. Other areas were monitored; however they did not contain archaeological material.