

Archaeological site at Sheffield Beach Estate Development

A brief archaeological survey was undertaken by the Institute for Cultural Resource Management (ICRM) at the proposed Sheffield Beach Estate Development. One archaeological site was recorded on the site and further mitigation should be undertaken prior to any development of this site.

The site

The archaeological site, referred to as SBE1, occurs over most of the proposed development area. The main part of the site is along the flatter ridge in the development area, with the highest concentration of artefacts along the northwestern parts.

The artefacts consisted of non-local stone fragments (from grinding stones), shellfish remains (*Patella spp.* and *Perna perna*), and pottery sherds from various vessels. The high density of these artefacts suggests that more of the site may occur beneath the surface.

The location of artefacts along the surface of the site indicates that some form of spatial settlement organisation may be occurring, and that the site has an archaeological deposit.

The occurrence of some organic remains on the surface, suggests that other organic remains may occur in the archaeological deposit.

It appears that the site dates to the Late Iron Age (AD 1000 to AD 1830): a Period about which little is understood along the KwaZulu-Natal coast. This time period has several socioeconomic changes for farmers in KwaZulu-Natal and is considered to be a Period of significance along the KwaZulu-Natal coastal. (see Anderson 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000; Davies 1971; Robey 1980).

Significance of the site

The site has an archaeological deposit that may yield organic remains and spatial features. In tact remains may still occur, despite the area having been under sugar-cane agriculture for several years.

The site is initially of medium significance and further mitigation should occur. Test-pit excavation will determine the full significance of the site.

Suggested Mitigation

I suggest that several test-pit excavation are undertaken in various areas of the site. Test-pit excavations are used when more an archaeologists want to determine the full significance of a site, prior to any major excavations. Test-pits are placed at various places along the site. This is used to determine the extent of the site and if any patterns in settlement organisation can be recovered.

The location of the test-pits should occur in several areas for the following reasons:

1. The development of the houses will impact part of the site
2. Development of servitudes nearby the houses shall also impact the site
3. The site shall become, literally, closed to researchers after development.

I suggest the following management plan for SBE1:

1. The location of each housing unit is clearly marked prior to archaeological excavations. Each house should have 1 to 2 test-pits excavated in that locality. This will determine immediate areas of concern and/or significance. Those houses on the steeper slopes would not require excavation.

2. The known areas of artefact concentrations should be excavated even if they are not affected by the housing units. This is to provide mitigation in areas that will be affected by servitudes.
3. The test-pit excavations should occur over a maximum period of seven days. The site will be continuously re-assessed during the course of the excavations. If the test-pit excavation recovers material that is regarded as being significant, then the developer may be required to undertake further mitigation. This will become apparent during the course of the test-pit excavations and justified in a report to the developer.
4. All archaeological work should begin well in advance of any construction work. I would suggest at least 2 months in advance. This will negate any potential construction delays if significant finds are recovered that would require further excavations.
5. The client should consider whether the material from the site should be used as part of a display in the development of the Estate. For example, the club house may be used to depict part of the excavations and/or material excavated from this site. Alternatively, a more public location may be used for these displays. These displays would highlight the history of both the immediate and broader area of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition to the above, media releases may be used to highlight the role of development and heritage resource management (in a positive manner). Several of the local newspapers run articles on archaeological excavations in KwaZulu-Natal, and may be willing to write about this development..

References

Anderson, G. 1996. *Final results from the archaeological excavations at the proposed Southgate development park, Umbogintwini*. CRM report to AECI.

Anderson, G. 1997a. *Archaeological excavations at the Westbrook shell midden*. Report to Simon Elliot and Associates.

Anderson, G. 1997b. *Archaeological survey for Tongaat-Hulett on the proposed Casino Site*. Report for Moreland Estates.

Anderson, G. 1999. Archaeological survey and excavations of the Richards Bay Minerals Zulti north and Tisand mining Leases. Report to Richards Bay Minerals

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Davies, O. 1971. Excavations at Blackburn. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 26: 164-178.

Robey, T. 1980. Mpambanyoni: a Late Iron Age site on the Natal south coast. *Annals of the Natal Museum* **24(1)**: 147-164.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR TEST-PIT EXCAVATIONS

Item		No.	Total
Consultation	R150/hour	56	8400.00
labour	4@R70/day/person	7	1960.00
Assistant	1@R250/day	7	1750.00
Report costs	(incl. copies and time)	16	2550.00
Minimal analyses	R150/hour	8	1200.00
Admin.			1000.00
Transport	R2.50/km	400	1000.00
Subsistence	R60/day/person	7	2520.00
Accommodation	R350/night	7	2450.00
Curation of materials	R130/box	8	1040.00
Equipment costs	R7/day	7	49.00
Photography		0	250.00
Tolls		0	15.00
Subtotal			24184.00
VAT			3385.76
TOTAL			27569.76
25% in advance			6892.44

This budget is for a maximum of 7 days work on the site and report writing after the excavations. The quote is valid for 2 months. Items such as accommodation, subsistence and mileage are estimated and these are maximum costs.