

HASANI HISANI CYDRICK

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED  
CONSTRUCTION OF A FILLING STATION AT MHINGA  
VILLAGE, THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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## REPORT DETAILS

**PROJECT NAME:** Proposed Filling Station at Mhinga Village in Thulamela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province

**REPORT TITLE:** CULTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST STUDY

**AUTHOR:** McEdward Murimbika

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## **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Mr Hasani Hisani Cydrick (the Developer) proposed to construct a Filling Station at Mhinga Village in Thulamela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. For the purpose of environmental authorisation the Developer appointed Nzumbululo Heritage Solutions [South Africa] (HeSSA) to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) exercise for the proposed development. This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study was conducted as part of EIA studies. The HIA study focus on identifying and assessing archaeological, cultural, and historical heritage resources associated with the proposed filling station site's receiving environment.

### **SUMMARY RESULTS**

A reconnaissance survey and a field site survey were conducted. Although the area within which the proposed development is situated has potential for archaeological sites, this HIA study did not identify any archaeological resources that may be affected by the proposed Filling Station construction. Furthermore, no other physical cultural heritage properties of significance were identified within the affected area.

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The proposed construction of filling station is unlikely to disturb any cultural heritage resources within the identified project area. As such, we did not identify any archaeological or physical cultural properties barriers to the development. However, we recommend that a heritage monitoring program be put in place laying out chance finds procedures. Within these considerations, we have no objections to the proposed filling station project at Mhinga Village.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>HIA</b>	Heritage Impact Assessment
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>HeSSA</b>	Nzumbululo Heritage Solutions (South Africa)
<b>SAHRA</b>	South African Heritage Resources Agency

## DEFINITIONS

**Archaeological** Material remains resulting from human activities, which are in a state of disuse and are in, or on, land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains, and artificial features and structures.

**Chance Finds** Archaeological artefacts, features, structures or historical cultural remains such as human burials that are found accidentally in context previously not identified during cultural heritage scoping, screening and assessment studies. Such finds are usually found during earth moving activities such as water pipeline trench excavations.

**Cultural Heritage Resources** Same as Heritage Resources as defined and used in the South African Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). Refer to physical cultural properties such as archaeological and palaeontological sites; historic and prehistoric places, buildings, structures and material remains; cultural sites such as places of ritual or religious importance and their associated materials; burial sites or *graves* and their associated materials; geological or natural features of cultural importance or scientific significance. Cultural Heritage Resources also include intangible resources such as religion practices, ritual ceremonies, oral histories, memories and indigenous knowledge.

**Cultural Significance** The complexities of what makes a place, materials or intangible resources of value to society or part of, customarily assessed in terms of aesthetic, historical, scientific/research and social values.

**Grave** A place of interment (variably referred to as burial), including the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place. A grave may occur in isolation or in association with others where upon it is referred to as being situated in a cemetery.

**Historic** Material remains resulting from human activities, which are younger than 100 years, but no longer in use, including artefacts, human remains and artificial features and structures.

**In Situ material** *Material culture* and surrounding deposits in their original location and context, for example an archaeological site that has not been disturbed by farming.

**Material culture** Buildings, structure, features, tools and other artefacts that constitute the remains from past societies.

**Site** A distinct spatial cluster of artefacts, structures, organic and environmental remains, as residues of past human activity.

# PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A FILLING STATION AT MHINGA VILLAGE: PHASE 1 CULTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST STUDY

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Mr Hasani Hisani Cydrick (the Developer) proposed to construct a Filling Station at Mhingha Village near the junction to Maphophe Village. In order to obtain environmental authorisation and clearances from the environmental authorities, the developer appointed Nzumbululo Heritage Solutions cc (South Africa) (HeSSA) to handle the environmental and heritage aspects for the proposed project. This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) program (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Terms of Reference for the HIA Study associated with proposed construction of Filling Station at Mhingha Village.

PURPOSE	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ To identify and describe (in terms of their conservation and / or preservation importance) sites of cultural and archaeological importance that may be affected by the proposed construction of Filling Station at Mhingha Village. This study should include the identification of gravesites.</li> <li>❑ Identify and describe impacts to archaeological and cultural resources.</li> <li>❑ Make recommendations on mitigation measures.</li> <li>❑ Identify and describe management measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify, describe and map sites of archaeological, historical or cultural interest affected by the proposed construction of Filling Station.</li> <li>❑ Identify, where possible, the gravesites affected by the development.</li> <li>❑ Liaise with the local communities (if applicable) with regards to the impact of the development on the heritage resources.</li> <li>❑ Describe the importance or significance of these sites and whether these sites need to be conserved, protected or relocated.</li> <li>❑ Describe the procedures for mitigation or relocation of sites and provide an indication of time required for these management measures to be implemented.</li> <li>❑ Document findings and recommendations.</li> </ul>

## **2 AIMS OF THE CHA STUDY**

This CHA study seeks to fulfil the requirements of South African Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) Section 38. As heritage specialists, we were charged with the responsibility of:

- Identifying heritage resources affected by the proposed construction of a Filling Station and the associated infrastructural development.
- Assess the significance of the resources and evaluate the impact thereon with respect to the socio-economic opportunities and benefits that would be derived from the proposed filling station construction.
- Make recommendations on mitigation measures with the view to reduce specific adverse impacts and enhance specific positive impacts on the heritage resources.
- Identify and discuss with local communities (where applicable) on potential impacts of the proposed development on graves and burials sites within the development area and make the necessary recommendations on how to handle the matter.
- Take responsibility for communicating with the SAHRA and other authorities in order to obtain the relevant permits and authorization.

## **3 BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

The proposed Filling Station construction project at Mhinga Village will form part of local business efforts to improve services and infrastructure development for the community. The proposed filling station construction will be a road side development that will consist of underground tanks and office buildings and other associated filling station infrastructure.

From a culture history perspective, Vhembe District, within which the proposed project area is located, in general has a long history of human occupation. The area is central to the prehistoric and culture history of modern day Venda-speaking communities (Hammond-Tooke 1993; Huffman 1996). In fact, Mhinga area is in the heartland of the cultural landscape associated with the evolution of the present day Tshivenda-speaking community (also see Loubser 1991) and today the area is dominated by Vatsonga speaking community. From this perspective, there is a potential to encounter archaeological resources in the area affected by the proposed filling station project. It was from this background that the HIA study was conducted.



## 4 METHODS

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2006, a heritage specialist accompanied by the environmental specialist conducted a foot survey on the proposed Filling Station construction site. The survey was conducted by walking in transects in an attempt to identify archaeological and physical cultural heritage sites (including graves, burial and religious or sacred sites) within the project area. We used a GPS recording devices to guide the systematic transects as we traversed the site on foot. The affected project area has been disturbed by existing developments nearby, such as electricity lines, tarred road and agricultural activities. Therefore, the survey concentrated on identifying any archaeological materials that may have been exposed or affected by previous land use activities. It was anticipated that any archaeological materials that might still be on site were already not *in situ*.

## 5 RESULTS

### Location Details

**Province:** Limpopo

**Local Municipality:** Thulamela

**Name of Property:** Mhinga Village

**Proposed development:** Construction of Filling Station – spatial development involving subsurface construction.

**1:50 000 map name:** 2230 AB (*see attached map*)

**GPS Co-ordinates:** The following points mark the area affected by the proposed Filling Station development at Mhinga Village.

- S22.78877° E30.90791° (north western end of the affected area bound by existing R524 tarred road to Kruger National Park);
- S22.79082° E30.90911° (south western end of the proposed site for filling station );
- S22.78994° E30.90950° (south eastern end of the project area bound by communal grazing land);
- S22.78709° E30.90945° (north eastern section of proposed development site).



**Plate 1:** View of Maphophe/ Makuleke tarred road along the affected project area.

**Current land:** (See Plate 1 to 2) the identified site for the proposed construction of a filling station is an undeveloped grazing land bound by existing developments such as tarred road and electricity lines.



**Plate 2:** View south west showing the dense vegetation that characterized the area.

### **Archaeological and Physical Cultural Resources**

No archaeological heritage resources were identified during the HIA study of the proposed Filling Station site. No historical structures or features were observed near the affected area.

### **Statement of overall impacts**

Archaeological resources are none renewable and they will be destroyed by any activity that alters the status quo of any area they may be laying. The situation is further complicated by the fact that archaeological resources are usually buried

underground and they may not be visible unless the ground surface is disturbed either by erosion or by earthmoving activities such as the proposed filling station construction. Naturally, the impact on archaeological resources will be permanent in nature, extent and duration (Bickford and Sullivan, 1997). However, since there were no archaeological or physical cultural heritage resources that were identified on surface of the area affected by the proposed filling station construction, no impacts were identified or measured in probabilities or intensity.

### **Recommendations**

No further predevelopment study or mitigation is necessary for archaeological and physical cultural heritage resources with regards to the proposed Filling Station project. Should any archaeological materials, middens, unmarked graves or any historical materials be discovered accidentally during the proposed development, work should be suspended on site until heritage authorities have given the instruction to proceed with the construction. Furthermore, a heritage-monitoring plan should be put in place covering the construction phase of the project to enable the authorities to respond to any chance finds that may be exhumed during subsurface construction activities.

### **Burial Grounds and Grave Sites**

No burial grounds or individual gravesites were identified within the project area.

### **Recommendations: Burials and Grave Sites**

Although no burial grounds or gravesites were identified during this study, all burial grounds and gravesites, known or previously unknown, are accorded special protection under applicable national and provincial legislations and ordinances. Keeping on mind that there is a possibility in any development to encounter previously unknown burials, it should be emphasised here that should previously unknown burials be disturbed by the proposed development, there are regulations and procedures that should be followed when human remains or previously unknown graves are discovered on the development site:

- Work must cease on the affected area and the heritage authorities be notified immediately

- The affected area should be protected from further disturbance or any form of interference from the construction workers or members of the public( human remains must always be accorded the highest respect and protection
- The heritage authorities will advise on the way forward in removing the remains.
- Notification of the impending removals;
- Consultation with individuals or communities related to the deceased where applicable;
- Notices at the grave sites and other local media;
- Consultation with individuals or communities related to the deceased;
- Satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment with the relevant permits from SAHRA;;
- Satisfactory arrangements for curation of the remains where applicable.

## **6 MONITORING**

Since it is not possible to predict where the previously unidentified archaeological and physical cultural materials, including human burials, may be uncovered during Filling Station construction activities, it is recommended that an archaeologist should be retained to monitor the construction activities on the development site. Since the archaeological resources would permanently be damaged, should they be exposed during the construction they should be documented by a qualified archaeologist following the laid out salvage and rescue procedures as stipulated in SAHRA regulations.. Thus it will be important from the construction scheduling phases that the archaeological monitoring activities are taken into consideration.

## **7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

If our recommendations are acceptable and taken into consideration, from a heritage perspective, we have no objections to the proposed development subject to a monitoring program. As such there are no identified archaeological or cultural heritage barriers to the proposed Filling Station construction project and request the SAHRA heritage authority to issue the necessary authorisation.

## 8 REFERENCES

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