

CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF RIETVALLEI FARM, KWAZULU-NATAL



ACTIVE HERITAGE cc.

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October 2009

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EIA	Early Iron Age
ESA	Early Stone Age
HISTORIC PERIOD	Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1820 in this part of the country
IRON AGE	Early Iron Age AD 200 - AD 1000 Late Iron Age AD 1000 - AD 1830
LIA	Late Iron Age
LSA	Late Stone Age
MSA	Middle Stone Age
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998 and associated regulations (2006).
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and associated regulations (2000)
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
STONE AGE	Early Stone Age 2 000 000 - 250 000 BP Middle Stone Age 250 000 - 25 000 BP Late Stone Age 30 000 - until c. AD 200

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A cultural heritage survey of the proposed low income residential development at Rietvallei Farm, Lidgetton, identified no heritage sites. There is no known archaeological reason why development may not proceed on the proposed estate as planned. However, attention is drawn to the South African Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act no 4 of 2008) which, requires that operations that expose archaeological or historical remains should cease immediately, pending evaluation by the provincial heritage agency.

1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

Table 1. Background information

Consultant:	Frans Prins (Active Heritage)
Type of development:	Proposed low income residential development
Rezoning or subdivision:	subdivision
Terms of reference	To carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment
Legislative requirements:	The Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and following the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA) and the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, 1997 (Act No. 4 of 2008)

1.1. Details of the area surveyed:

The footprint is 17.5 hectares in extent and is located adjacent to the R 103 to the north east of Lidgetton approximately 34 km north west of Pietermaritzburg (see Figure 1). Presently most of the footprint is occupied by informal settlements. There is also a wetland system on the property.

2 BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF AREA

The greater Lidgetton area has never been intensively surveyed for archaeological sites. However, some sites have been recorded by cultural resource consultants who have worked in the area during the last two decades whilst archaeologists from the Natal Museum have made sporadic visits to the area.

The available evidence, as captured in the Natal Museum heritage site inventories, indicates that the greater Lidgetton area (including Howick and Nottingham road)

contains a wide spectrum of archaeological sites covering different time-periods and cultural traditions. These include one Early Stone Age site, four Middle Stone Age sites, twenty Later Stone Age sites, two rock painting sites, eight Later Iron Age sites, and numerous historical sites dating back to the colonial period. Some of the farms in the area contain graves and structures relating to early Voortrekker settlement, however, the majority of older buildings on farmsteads were erected by British colonists after 1850 (Bizley & McKenzie 2007). These are also protected by heritage legislation.

Most of the Stone Age sites in the immediate vicinity of Lidgetton occur in open air contexts as exposed by donga and sheet erosion. Some Middle Stone Age flakes, probably dating back to ca. 40 000 – 200 000 years ago, occur in disturbed context in dongas and road cuttings. The majority of Later Stone Age sites as well as rock art sites occur further west in the adjacent area of Nottingham Road. These typically occur in small shelters in the sandstone formations of leading up to the Drakensberg.

The San were the owners of the land for almost 30 000 years but the local demography started to change soon after 2000 years ago when the first Bantu-speaking farmers crossed the Limpopo River and arrived in South Africa. Around 400 years ago, if not earlier, Bantu-speaking farmers also settled in the greater Lidgetton area. Although the majority of sites constructed by these African farmers consisted of stone walling not all of them were made from stone. Sites located in the Dargle and Karkloof Valley areas also show that many settlements just consisted of wattle and daub structures. These Later Iron Age sites were most probably inhabited by Nguni-speaking groups such as the Wushe and related groups (Bryant 1965). The Wushe was known to be excellent metal workers and it is not surprising that some archaeological evidence for early metal working has been found in the Karkloof, Nottingham road, and Dargle areas. However, by 1820 the Wushe was dispersed from this area due to the expansionistic policies of the Zulu Kingdom of King Shaka. African refugee groups and individuals were given permission to settle in the area by the British colonial authorities after 1845 where most of them became farm labourers. After the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the Bambatha Rebellion of 1911 many of the African people in the study area adopted a Zulu ethnic identity.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Methodology

A desktop study was conducted of the archaeological databases housed in the Natal Museum. In addition, the available archaeological literature covering the greater Lidgetton area was also consulted.

A ground survey, following standard and accepted archaeological procedures, was conducted.

3.2 Restrictions encountered during the survey

3.2.1 Visibility

Visibility was good.

3.2.2 Disturbance

No disturbance of any potential heritage features was noted. However, a large percentage of the footprint is occupied by informal settlements. It is therefore possible that archaeological material could have been disturbed and covered by informal building activities in the past. In addition, it appears that some of the informal housing structures were built from corrugated roof material that could potentially be older than sixty years. However, these structures are in a state of decay, the building material is out of context and they have no heritage value.

3.3 Details of equipment used in the survey

GPS: Garmin Etrek

Digital cameras: Canon Powershot A460

All readings were taken using the GPS. Accuracy was to a level of 5 m.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND MATERIAL OBSERVED

4.1 Locational data

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Town: Lidgetton

Municipality: uMngeni

4.2 Description of the general area surveyed

The footprint is situated on Rietvallei Farm adjacent to the R 103 to the north east of Lidgetton and approximately 34 north west of Pietermaritzburg. It is 17.5 hectares in extent. Presently most of the footprint is occupied by informal settlements. Some Australian acacias and other alien vegetation occur on the property. A wetland system borders the R103.

5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE VALUE)

As there are no heritage sites on the footprint the area is not significant in terms of heritage values.

5.1 Field Rating

The field rating criteria as formulated by SAHRA (Table1) does not apply to the footprint as no heritage sites or features have been identified.

Table 2. Field rating and recommended grading of sites (SAHRA 2005)

Level	Details	Action
National (Grade I)	The site is considered to be of National Significance	Nominated to be declared by SAHRA
Provincial (Grade II)	This site is considered to be of Provincial significance	Nominated to be declared by Provincial Heritage Authority
Local Grade IIIA	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be retained as a heritage site
Local Grade IIIB	This site is considered to be of HIGH significance locally	The site should be mitigated, and part retained as a heritage site
Generally Protected A	High to medium significance	Mitigation necessary before destruction
Generally Protected B	Medium significance	The site needs to be recorded before destruction
Generally Protected C	Low significance	No further recording is required before destruction

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development at the footprint may proceed in terms of heritage values as no heritage sites are in any danger of being destroyed or altered. However, it should also be pointed out that the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act requires that operations exposing archaeological and historical residues should cease immediately pending an evaluation by the heritage authorities.

7 RISK PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION

Not applicable.

8 MAP

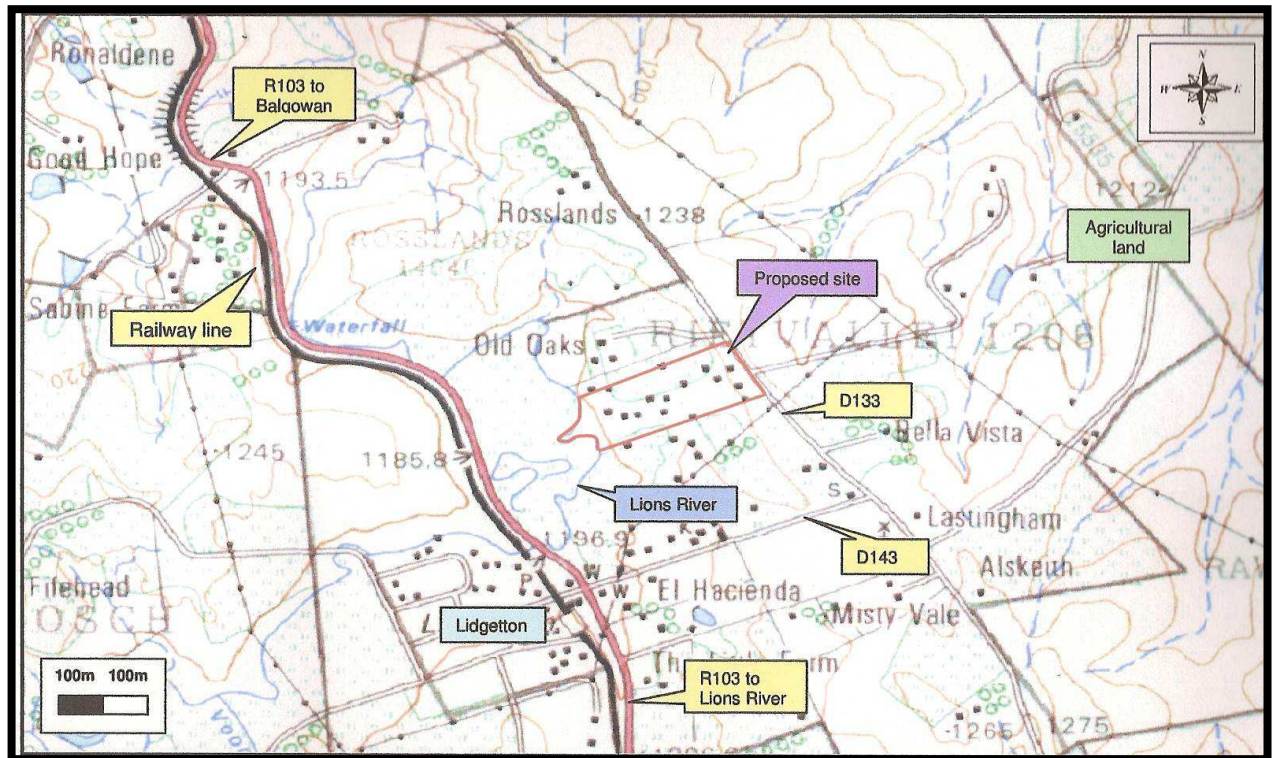


Figure 1. Footprint of the proposed residential development at Rietvallei Farm, Lidgetton. No heritage sites have been identified in this area.

9 REFERENCES

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