



EMAKHOSINI-OPATHE HERITAGE PARK

WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

The Emakhosini-Opathe Heritage Park is located near the town of Ulundi in Northern KZN. This area is also known as the 'Valley of the Kings' and contains the burial places of a number of early Zulu Kings, King Dingane's Royal Residence, uMgungundlovu, and kwaMatiwane where Voortrekker leader Piet Retief and his men were killed and subsequently buried. Dingane rose to power after murdering his half-brother, King Shaka. Whilst initially reassuring his people that he was a man of peace, he soon became just as paranoid and brutal as Shaka, murdering anyone whose loyalties were in question. He decided to build his grand royal kraal in the Emakhosini Valley and uMgungundlovu was established in 1829. It was oval in shape, and consisted of about 1500 traditional grass huts (umuzi). Though the original capital was burnt to the ground, archaeologists are raising it from the ashes and reconstructed huts show what it was like in its prime.



HOW DID ACT WORK TO PRESERVE THE HERITAGE OF THE AREA?

Working with AMAFA Heritage KZN, the ACT heritage team utilised a number of techniques to document the heritage features at Emakhosini, including an ancient paleosol site.

GPS coordinates were captured for key locations around the site including graves, monuments, information centres, viewpoints and a selection of the huts and excavations. These points were used to populate an interactive Google Earth map that will allow people to explore the site from the aerial imagery.

Historical mapping was conducted, integrating the historical data with other spatial data in a GIS. A digital elevation model was created and a viewshed analysis conducted to represent what was on the ground.

Digital high resolution panorama images were taken at key locations on the uMgungundlovu and Paleosol sites and a very high resolution aerial image was taken for the whole of the uMgungundlovu site using drone technology.



A virtual tour was created to show the uMgungundlovu huts, the interior of Dingane's hut, the kraal, the Multimedia centre and viewing platform, Piet Retief's grave and monument, the massacre hill and other sites of significance. A virtual tour is a web-based tool that allows the user to take a virtual walk through the site from their computer screen.

The site was scanned, using a 3D laser scanner and modelled. A total of 301 scans were taken for a comprehensive spatial coverage of the whole of uMgungundlovu. This highly accurate scan data is measurable and accurate from 2-5mm. Not only does this act as a permanent digital record of the site as it stands, but the scan data can be manipulated to remove the reconstructed huts and show the original excavations.

For more information and links to the interactive tools please follow the link: <http://www.actheritage.org/emakhosini-opathe-heritage-park/>

