



06 Recommendations, Future Research and Conclusions

Recommendations

In the setting up of the Footsteps Along Tracks Research Proposal it was envisaged that the findings have a wider implication by providing the requisite information to identified parties so as to assist them in their future planning for and management of the shared heritage of the NZASM:

- *By listing of the sites on the SAHRIS database, their heritage value and legal status is made public. This will assist property owners (including Transnet), local and regional government and statutory bodies such as Provincial Heritage Authorities to ensure they conform to statutory requirements with regard these sites and help inform future planning;*
- *Providing information as baseline for further interaction between South Africa and the Netherlands through the Shared Cultural Heritage programme;*
- *As much of this built heritage is located in outlying towns and villages in outlying areas, the identification and appreciation of this heritage can form the basis for redevelopment impetus into these important regional centres;*
- *The dissemination of the data generated by the project can increase tourism potential, especially through the web-based hosting of the data.*

Future spin-off projects could be generated from this information include:

- *Tourist guides and routes;*
- *Photo-exhibitions showcasing heritage structures (houses) and their current uses (occupants) and what this heritage means to the owners today.*

This report then speaks directly to various implementing agencies and affected parties, so that the above-mentioned vision might be attained.

The Owners

The NZASM extant built residue was all once property of the NZASM, a privately floated and owned company. In the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) this status remained unchanged although the advancing British forces took possession of the rail and its infrastructure. Only in 1908, under the then newly-elected Liberal Government in Britain, was the matter finally resolved and laid to rest. The NZASM was compensated financially and ownership legally transferred to the Transvaal Colony. Since Union (1910) and the consolidation of assets, ownership has invariably remained with the state through the various re-configurations of the rail authority and its subsidiaries. This remains the status quo although various rural structures once on the trajectory, now isolated through re-alignment and electrification of the lines, are of dubious title in ownership.

It is recommended that:

- the legal status, both in respect of ownership and usage of all the resources is investigated, documented and recorded. This can be passed through to the researchers for recording on the pertinent entries of the database, but should also be recorded in title;
- various structures - particularly stations, bridges and houses - are declared heritage resources.

It is recommended that, in view of this their

06.1 (Left): NZASM-built staff housing built for Black operations staff at Malelane Station, Mpumalanga (NZASM_EL_012). These are still in use for the housing of Transnet staff.

06.2 (Right): The former NZASM Headquarters Building at Emgwenya (Waterval Boven, NZASM_EL_062), which, in this historic NZASM town, holds much potential for redevelopment as tourism resource.



heritage status, these be re-assessed, then the heritage status endorsed or rescinded;

- that occupancy and tenure be audited, verified and normalized. Where title can be passed so as to secure ownership, this should be done. Ownership is one of the best ways of ensuring the preservation of the resources;
- in the re-planning of any rail infrastructure, cognizance be taken of the residual structures in the proposals for all upgrading and or replacement. To that end it is recommended that heritage management plans be commissioned for all lines and structures and permitted by the relevant heritage authority and thereafter operationalized.

Archives

The Transnet archive in South Africa holds the bulk of the material related to the NZASM endeavour. At present the curating of the physical fabric is parlous and in a state of neglect. If this record is to be preserved it needs dedicated space, skills and resources. There are co-operative endeavours afoot to transfer knowledge and skills from the Netherlands to the responsible agencies and officers in South Africa. It is recommended that this be fostered and the momentum maintained.

The Record

Very little by way of the record is in the public domain so as to make information accessible and thereby foster knowledge and research on the topic of the NZASM. It is recommended that a dedicated electronic hub be established for the co-ordination and integration disparate endeavours and assist in facilitating the dissemination of the current state of knowledge and promote research.

Dissemination of Information

It is recommended that interpretative material be placed in strategic locations and electronic media so as to raise awareness and promote public valuing of the extant Built Environment heritage resources of the NZASM.

Tourism and Rail

It is recommended that partnerships be established with specialized heritage-based tourism initiatives so as to promote and maximize the tourism potential of the extant built residue of the NZASM endeavour.

Heritage Authorities

There are three tiers of legislated management of the extant NZASM built environment heritage resources in South African Law:

- **The National Authority, namely the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)**

The SAHRA has already been pro-active in facilitating

the placing of the record in the public domain through the SAHRIS database. This achievement should be highlighted in their general reporting and be communicated to the responsible Provincial Authorities and Interested and Affected Parties, highlighting its existence and importance. It is recommended that the SAHRA consider the national importance of the extant built residue of the NZASM endeavour as heritage resources as most are owned nationally and part of the national estate.

Since a number of the NZASM lines cross provincial boundaries it is further recommended that these be encompassed in a serial declaration so as to facilitate their integrated management as heritage resources.

- **The Provincial Authorities, namely Provincial Heritage Resources Authority – Gauteng (PRAH-G), Mpumalanga Heritage Resources Authority (MHRA) and North West Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (NWPHR)**

It is recommended that the Databases, more extensive than the SAHRIS entries, be actively engaged and used by these authorities in matters of their heritage management and decisions as to their status as heritage resources when considering declarations as provincial heritage resources, permit applications, and future planning for these resources.

Two additional Provincial Heritage Authorities other share jurisdiction over the abutments and/or piers of two defunct and ruinous border bridges. These are the Border Bridge (FAT Inventory: NZASM_SEL_001) for which the jurisdiction is shared between MHRA and Amafa / Heritage Kwa-Zulu Natal, and the Bridge over the Vaal at Vereeniging, (FAT Inventory: NZASM_SL_001) shared between the PHRA_G and the Free-State Heritage Resources Authority.

- **Local Heritage Resource Authorities**

There is as yet no local authority as having jurisdiction over the NZASM residue that is known to be declared competent to act independently in heritage matters. Never-the-less the Act requires of them that:

5. (5) *Heritage resources contribute significantly to research, education and tourism and they must be developed and presented for these purposes in a way that ensures dignity and respect for cultural values.*

44. (1) *Heritage resources authorities and local authorities must, wherever appropriate, co-ordinate and promote the presentation and use of places of cultural significance and heritage resources which form part of the national estate and for*



which they are responsible in terms of section 5 for public enjoyment, education, research and tourism, including

(a) the erection of explanatory plaques and interpretive facilities, including interpretive centres and visitor facilities;

(b) the training and provision of guides;

(c) the mounting of exhibitions;

(d) the erection of memorials;

It is recommended that, in compliance with the Act, these authorities identify, consider and integrate the tourism potential of these heritage resources in their preparation of strategic management plans.

Further, that in order to unlock their tourism potential, they further comply with the provisions of the act as stipulated above.

National and International Agencies

The residue is of interest in being focus, as demonstrated by this research, of shared heritage of international interest, namely the shared heritage programme of the Ministry for Education and Science as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and South African Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Science and Technology.

Hence it is recommended that these ministries and departments take cognizance of this research as being funded by and meeting their objectives and facilitate the operationalization of these findings in their intergovernmental, ministerial and departmental dealings.

Interested and affected parties

We recommend to interested and affected parties namely:

- The broad South African public, for whom this is their legacy;
- Occupants and users of structures;
- Rail historians - rail history has a particular appeal both locally and internationally. For various parties it is their stated focus and concern;
- Researchers in the various disciplines related to the provisioning, economics and residue of the rail enterprise;
- Previous employees and their issue;
- Heritage Association of South Africa;
- Heritage South Africa, Pretoria;
- Mpumalanga Heritage Interest Group;
- Nederlands Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging, The Netherlands;
- Stichting ZASM, The Netherlands
- Transnet Heritage Foundation.

It is further recommended that that this information be in promoted public domain and spread to the public. It is hoped that it will assist and facilitate the lobbying for preservation and

06.3: Detail of a 1901 photograph of the reconstruction by the Imperial Military Railroads (IMR) of the viaduct over the Olifantsspruit, south of Irene, Gauteng. The contribution of Black South Africans to the development, maintenance and operations of railways in South Africa required scholarly research. (Imperial Military Railways. United photo album, c. 1900. Private collection).

use of the extant built environment heritage resources of the NZASM endeavour for posterity in meeting the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act.

Future Research

In conducting the archival and field research in order to identify the extant built environment residue of the NZASM endeavour highlights the need for future research. Since the objective of this report is to facilitate their use as heritage resources the areas of future research identified is for facilitating this objective.

The Act requires the broadening of our understanding of our heritage to be inclusive of all the peoples of South Africa, and to present this so as to celebrate this aspect:

Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and local customs. (Preamble, National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999).

In order to meet this goal, there needs to be research which broadens the appreciation of the NZASM endeavour from merely a technical, political and industrial achievement to one which celebrates its residue as a monument and memorial to the hands that made it. There were many local labourers engaged—some press-ganged—into its construction. This offers opportunity to discover who these people were through researching oral traditions as well as archaeological excavations and archival study of the records.

Much of what has been reported to needs further and deeper study in order to facilitate interpretation and presentation of the resources for the economic benefit and upliftment of their users as well as contributing to local economies through unlocking their tourism potential.

To this end economic and tourist research needs to be undertaken so as to empower their management by the owners and local authorities to the benefit of the broader public.

As has been stated in the report, basic research as to the legal status of ownership, title and occupation is needed in order to regularize and manage these assets as heritage resources.

Conclusion

In undertaking the archival and field research the researchers were initially unaware as to exact amount of residue there was after one-hundred-and-thirty years after the start of the NZASM endeavour. We were surprised—nay alarmed!—by how much still lay embedded in the infrastructure of still operational rail lines: beautiful stone vaulted culverts embedded in concrete over which long coal freight trains still thundered, even while we inspected beneath, majestic steel bridges over picturesque valleys in far-off locations offering photo-moments as the large diesel locomotives passed by.

We were concerned when finding houses occupied in a state of minimum maintenance, disrepair and dereliction, being approached by occupants who believed—or hoped—we might be persons responsible for, or able to, alleviate their plight.

Sadly, once declared former National Monuments, now Provincial Heritage Resources, and other heritage resources have been stripped of material or razed by fire, are defunct, derelict and ruinous.

There is still much that is authentic and operational. The Barberton Branch Line is located in magical and mystical countryside and offers ideal tourism potential, both as a heritage rail line and tourism destination, particularly if the proximate tentatively listed Barberton Makhonjwa Mountain Lands World Heritage Site is realized.

The endeavours of the FAT project are already paying dividends in that they have provoked awareness and facilitated support in certain quarters. This needs consolidation and direction in order to maximize the potential the possession of the heritage resources offers South Africa and the Shared Heritage ambitions of the Netherlands.

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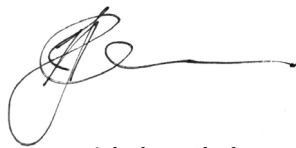
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