Intangible and tangible landscapes: an anthropological perspective based on two South African case studies

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The relationship between landscape and culture, or landscape and memory, is a developing discourse in anthropological and other cross-disciplinary fields in recent years. During the late nineties, tangible and intangible aspects in culture also became more prominent in anthropological discussions. There is currently a global movement towards a unified vision of landscape, focussing on the integration of culture and nature and incorporating the conservation of the identities of people and places. Within the development industry in South Africa, the concept and realities of preserving intangible heritage are still misunderstood, with the role of memory and meaning of place largely ignored in conservation policies. Formal training as a Landscape Architect focussed the researcher on the physical and spatial aspects of landscape. Subsequent training in the anthropological field added a unique dimension to the studies of landscape. Through qualitative anthropological fieldwork methods it became possible to access its intangible aspects. These intangible values of meaning, memory, lived experience and attachment, in relation to people's connection to locality and landscape, were then traced back to the tangible fabric of place. In this paper, the researcher will attempt to illustrate with two case studies, the complexity of interpreting intangible landscapes and its relation to the tangible fabric, specifically focussing on the role of memory.
Keywords: memory, landscape, mnemotechnics, landscape architecture, anthropology.

Tasbare en ontasbare landskappe: 'n antropologiese perspektief baseer op twee Suid-Afrikaanse gevallestudies.
Die verhouding tussen landskap en kultuur, of landskap en herinnering, is tans 'n ontwikkelende diskoers in antropologie en ander interdissiplinêre velde. Gedurende die negentigerjare het tasbare en ontasbare aspekte in kultuur prominent geraak in besprekings oor antropologie. Daar is tans ook 'n wêreldwye beweging na 'n meer omvattende begrip vir landskap wat kultuur én natuur inkorporeer met die bewaring van die identiteite van mense en plekke. In Suid-Afrika word die beginsels en realiteite van die bewaring van ontasbare erfenis steeds misverstaan in die ontwikkelingsbedryf. Verder word die belang van die ontasbare – herinnerings en betekenis van plek – grotendeels geïgnoreer in die formulering van huidige en toekomstige beleidstukke vir bewaring. Formele opleiding as 'n landskapargitek het die navorser laat fokus op die fisiese en ruimtelike aspekte van landskap. Daaropvolgende opleiding in die veld van antropologie het 'n bykomende aspek van die landskap ontsluit. Kwalitatiewe antropologiese veldwerkmetodes het die navorser toegang gegee tot ontasbare aspekte van die landskap. Hierdie ontasbare waardes van betekenis, herinnering, ondervinding en behoud, in verhouding tot die mens se verband met die landskap, verwys na die tasbare raamwerk van plek. In hierdie artikel poog die navorser om, met twee gevallestudies, te fokus op die rol van herinnering binne die kompleksiteit van interpretasie van die ontasbare landskap en die daaropvolgende verhouding tot die tasbare raamwerk te illustreer.
Sleutelwoorde: herinnering, landskap, mnemotegnies, landskapargitektuur, antropologie

The relationship between landscape and culture, or landscape and memory, has been a developing discourse in anthropological and other cross-disciplinary fields in recent years. Scholars such as Barbara Bender, Adrian Franklin, Simon Shama, Tim Ingold and Mcnachten and Ury contemplated and analysed this relationship. During the late nineties, tangible and intangible aspects in culture also became more prominent in anthropological discussions. This emanated from the 2003 ICOMOS International Scientific Symposium: "Place, memory, meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites", where the dialogue surrounding cultural and intangible landscapes was further elaborated. The subsequent European Landscape Convention signed in Florence (Italy) came into force on 1 March 2004 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 176). The Convention introduced the concept of "landscape quality objectives" into the protection, management and planning of landscapes, and highlights the role of public and professional identification of landscapes to be protected, managed or developed according to the set quality objectives (Council of Europe 2000).

There is currently a global movement towards a unified vision of landscape, focussing on the integration of culture and nature and incorporating the conservation of the identities of people and places (Scazzosi 2004:336). The most recent Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas, adopted in Xi'an, China by the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS (2005) paved the way for landscape to be understood as being integrally part of cultural heritage.

Within the development industry in South Africa, the concept and realities of preserving intangible heritage are still misunderstood or ignored. Most development projects in South Africa show little or no recognition of the role of memory and meaning of place in present or for future conservation policies (Bakker 2003). Current legislation provides broad guidelines as to how cultural heritage should be interpreted, but the field of intangible landscapes remains vague. In this paper, I will attempt to illustrate with two case studies, the complexity of interpreting intangible landscapes and its relation to the tangible fabric, specifically focussing on the role of memory.

Background

As a trained Landscape Architect, the core of my profession is primarily focussed on the physical and spatial aspects of landscape. It is a profession that focuses on the relationship between people and the environment, striving to design social spaces by identifying, connecting and constructing with local resources. Problems are usually solved at multiple scales in collaboration with other design professionals and community members (UP 2007).

From my experience in the field, I believe the above definition is true in its ideology, but the reality of the profession could not be further from it. The development sector is predominantly time and money driven, resulting in the sidelining of the ideologies cited above. The premise, the "relationship between people and the environment" is seated in the tangible and intangible aspects of the landscape. In a recent article in the South African Archaeological Bulletin, Scheermeyer (2005:121) states that "...the practical integration of intangible heritage into mainstream heritage resources management has been sorely lacking". Furthermore, in a paper presented at the 2003 ICOMOS General Assembly, Bakker (2003) stated that "...many local planning authorities and most developers are not sensitised to and cannot practically deal with the concept and the realities of preserving intangible heritage". From my experience within the development and heritage sectors, I fully agree.

Whereas tangible aspects are thoroughly defined and understood in the landscape architectural profession, I believe methods of gaining insight into the intangible aspects could be developed further. Integration of the intangible dimension into the design and development process could lead to a more satisfactory solution. Methods in studying and understanding the tangible and intangible aspects of landscape are seated in anthropological profession. As a result of subsequent training in the anthropological field, I realised that through qualitative anthropological fieldwork methods (participant observation, individual and focus group interviews, accompanying individuals or groups to places of interest) it becomes possible to access the intangible aspects related to the landscape. These intangible values of meaning, memory, lived experience and attachment, in relation to people's connection to locality and landscape, can subsequently be traced back to the tangible fabric of place as documented previously.

Intangible heritage has been defined by UNESCO (2001) as:

"People's learned processes along with the knowledge, skills, and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products that they create and the resources, spaces, and other aspects of social and natural context

necessary to their sustainability. These processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity..."

In South Africa, the White Paper on Arts and Culture, existing Policy on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) and the National Heritage Council Act (No11 of 1999) constitute the major policy and legislative frameworks attempting to define intangible heritage and the protection thereof. The general principles of the NHRA refer to "heritage resources, which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations that must be considered part of the country's national estate". These include, and are not limited to: places, buildings, structures of cultural significance, archaeological, palaeontological sites, graves, sites of significance to the history of slavery in South Africa and objects to which oral traditions are attached (NHRA No. 25 of 1999, Government Gazette 28 April 1999, No. 19974, Vol. 406: 14(3)). One of the most important elements of the new legislation is the opportunity it provides for communities to participate in the identification, conservation and management of heritage sites, and the eminence it gives to the intangible dimension of heritage (Mbangela 2003).

The question that arises, however, is how the above could be practically applied in the development field of South Africa. As a start, it is imperative to understand the phenomenon of 'landscape' in its physical and socio-cultural context. A brief overview of the theory of tangible and intangible landscapes will prove insightful at this stage.

Landscape

The term "landscape" has been much debated in the past ten years, where many authors have proposed different meanings or roots for it. In the assimilation of different definitions, it could be stated that the term may refer to both an environment shaped by human action, and to a representation (particularly a painting or artwork) which signifies its meanings (Ucko and Layton 1999:1). The term 'landscape' is therefore not tantamount to the bio-physical environment, but rather a generic term for the expression of particular ways of perceiving the environment (Darvill 1999: 105 and Duncan & Ley 1993:262). Subsequently, this polysemic term amalgamates a number of different disciplines and approaches, ranging from classical geography to historic to socio-economic and even design professions (Scazzosi 2004: 337)

Stewart and Strathern (2004:4) took the idea further and linked the term with the concepts of place and community. They define landscape as "the perceived setting that frames[1] people's senses of place and community". Landscape is therefore a key component of how people perceive, memorise and represent history. It leads to the construction of collective memory of a social group or population, which is one of the sources of identity[2] (Guo 2004: 193). In other words, it becomes a physical manifestation of a culture's knowledge and understanding of its past and future (Kuchler 1993: 85 and Spiegel 2004: 8, 9).

Landscape is thus primarily seated in perception and does not exist as a material object *per se* (Ucko & Layton 1999: 1, 7). The primary way in which we should view landscapes is thus as a social phenomena. Landscape implies the human as its key element; human ideas and concepts about a certain landscapes differentiates it from an environment and ushers in the cultural. Physical features and relationships in the landscape are socially mapped through cultural or cognitive factors and meanings or values are attributed to them (Allison 1999: 276). We consequently perceive, understand and create the landscape around us through the filter of not only our social and cultural milieu, but also specific time, place, material and historical conditions (Schama 1995: 12). Therefore, in most cases, landscape may have different meanings

and interpretations for different cultural groups or individuals (Mbangela 2003:1 and Cooney 1999:46). The response to landscape is therefore not necessarily universal (Green 1996:31).

Ermischer (2004:380) continued this concept by investigating the idea of landscape as a mental construct and the role of the image, or perception in change. The image of a landscape, that which is determined by the cultural or social background of the viewer, determines the way it is perceived, observed or treated. Therefore, people's ideas and concepts are part of landscape change and the change of perception. Landscape is therefore a "living canvas" and will inevitably change.

Tangible / Intangible Landscapes

From the above discussion, it is clear that landscapes typically comprise intangible as well as tangible elements. Regular users attribute significant[3] meanings to a landscape in whose culture it was constructed. Occasionally, the cultural significance of such landscapes is understandable to outsiders, but typically, even in those cases, concealed meanings and levels of significance are attainable to only a few (Todeschini 2003:online).

The relationship between tangible and intangible landscapes is inseparable. The intangible is materialised by the tangible, and the intangible plays a vital role in the establishment of tangible (Ito 2003:online). Furthermore, the concept and perception of landscape can be used to help build a critical link between the tangible fabric of places and the meanings, memories, cultural traditions and social practises that form part of the associated intangible values. This connection or critical link is clearly explained by Clarke & Johnson (2003: online):

> "The notion of landscape encompasses connections – routes, links, events, stories, traditions – that cross the 'boundary' between intangible and tangible heritage, and offers opportunities for a more holistic understanding. Landscape also has the potential to be the medium that helps in understanding the commonalities and differences in the way that indigenous and non-indigenous communities perceive cultural heritage".

Reading the landscape as an expression of meanings and memories seated in past or present cultures, i.e. its intangible dimension, will depend on "identifying a community's reference to external features that we can also perceive" (Ucko and Layton 1999:11). Communicative discourse (language) and participant observation - both qualitative anthropological fieldwork methods - are thus proposed as means of obtaining an understanding of a landscape. Language, the basis of both these techniques, can thus be considered the primary device that gives definition and expression of the tangible and intangible dimension in order to interpret the associations users have with a landscape (Mbangela 2003).

Memory & Mnemotechnics

> All cognition is embedded in interpretation. All landscapes are interpretations when seen as something, by somebody. Landscapes are semiotic entities, signs. The iconic quality of the landscape as a sign is obvious and appreciated, and often exploited in landscape research which addresses the communication of landscape change to observers (Arnesen 1998:42)

In the perception of landscape we find a dichotomy. Within a typically western society, there is a predominantly visual perception and experience of landscape. It is thus an individualist and predominantly pictorial landscape (Bender 1993:1). Kuchler (1993:84) argues that the 'Western' view, which originated from landscape art since the Renaissance, "treats landscape as an inscribed surface, as an aide memoir of cultural knowledge and understanding of its past and future". However, in less complex societies, landscapes are experienced through multiple senses: oral recollections, storytelling, touch, olfactory exploration and social experience

(Franklin 2002:186). In this case, the visual may not be the most significant aspect. For these societies, landscape is not the inscription of memory or encoding of memories, but the "process of remembering" (Kuchler 1993:85).

> The western conceptualisation – 'landscape of memory' – sees landscape as a fixed, objectifiable and measurable description of a surface, while the indigenous conceptualisation – 'landscape as memory' – sees landscape as something that is affected by the project of its representation and remembrance, as part of the process of remembering (Guo 2004:200).

Scazzosi (2004) introduced the idea of landscape as a document or palimpsest[4], leading from the perspective of landscape of memory. In his paper, "*Reading and Assessing the Landscape* (2004:335), he argued that mere perceiving the landscape in a visual sense is no longer valid. Landscapes should be viewed as archives or living documents, where the history of the place and traces of eras are combined with the activities of the present. Landscape is thus a "reading of the world in its complexity; a means to contemplate our own history and to build our future, being fully aware of the past." It is a multi-layered document with elements of the past merged with the tangible present.

The alternative to landscape as defined as an inscribed surface and 'aide memoir' of culture is the perspective of landscape as a key component in the process of memory. This perspective of landscape as memory, rather than inscription of memory, follows from the above discussion on the dichotomy between western and traditional views of landscape (Kuchler 1993:103). Spiegel (2004:8) subsequently argues that landscape is an agent of memory inscription; and that it exists in a dialectical relationship with memory. Memories and stories are significant parts of living heritage of a community or an individual, including the social and cultural connections between people (Mbangela 2003). Spiegel proposed the premise that the only way landscape can make memory (landscape as memory) is through intellectual or cognitive processes. It is necessary for memory to cognitively reinterpret and (re)compose the landscape through the intellectual processes in order to recollect earlier experiences (Spiegel 2004: 3, 7).

Integral to this discussion of the connection between landscape and memory, is the practice of mnemotechnics. It had its inception during the Greek and later Roman times and was primarily a sub-discipline of speech-making, namely the "art of memory". Classical orators extensively used place analogies as an aid in memorizing argumentative themes or rhetoric of their speeches. "Study of mnemonic theory - including constructs of modern art theory, philosophy and cognitive psychology, along with ideas developed by classical orators - suggests that mental organization structures itself in a fundamentally spatial manner" (Parker 1997:147). This concept was originally explored by Jan Vansina, the Belgium anthropologist who worked in Central Africa (1985:45). He advocated that memory often needs mnemotechnic devices (mnemonic = designed to aid the memory) to be efficiently activated. These can be objects, landscapes, or forms of music.

Within the modern art world, many projects are focussed on this "art of memory". In Australia, the exhibition *Mnemotech: sense + scape + time + memory*, asked artists to consider memory in relation to place. Its title refers to mnemotechnis, the technique of using physical elements of architectural space and landscape to trigger memory. Another group, Memoryscapes, based in South Africa, also utilise the technique of mnemotechnics in their works of art, being an "artistic manifestation of a shared memory" (Raub 2007 & Flynn 2007).

Intangible change

To summarise, one might understand the landscape and its perception, as revealed in visual and verbal representations, as a result of the process of memory, from an acutely acculturated

process of remembering to a personal and measurable capacity (Kuhler 1993:103). The practises that perpetuate memory are inscribed on the landscape, and respectively inscribe the landscape itself into memory (Spiegel 2004: 8). The intangible dimension is continually recreated because, in contrast to written history, "oral history is more inclusive and involves the history in which each generation adds its knowledge and transmission of past generations" (Mbangela 2003). In effect, the perception of the landscape respectively changes as it is essentially embedded in the intangible dimension of culture (Franklin, 2002:37).

> Today's landscape is inevitably processual and transforming, integral to processes of objectification and the sedimentation of history, subjected to poetic and hermeneutic interpretation and a place where value and emotion coincide (Morphy 1993:205).

Continuity of intangible cultural values often requires a tangible materialization. This may be a place where the relationship between the fabric of the place and the intangible associations (meanings and memories) with that place to a specific culture or group, have continued through time. However, in the event of the continuity of the relationship of intangible value and place is disrupted, often due to external or material changes, the intangible connection to that place is at risk of breaking (Truscott, 2003).

This discussion attempted to clarify the concept of landscape and memory and described two seemingly opposing, but actual congruent approaches to understand the role of memory in the landscape. The one position describes the landscape as a document of past and present memories, while the other sees the landscape as a process in the perpetuation of memory. Both highlight the relationship between the landscape and culture. Consequently, two unique South African case studies will be discussed in order to further elucidate this concept.

Discussion

My first professional exposure to the relationship between the tangible and intangible dimensions of landscape occurred during a study I completed for the Environmental Potential Atlas of South Africa (ENPAT) in 2000. I was contracted to compile an inventory of places, landscapes, structures and localities with inherent cultural value for Pondoland in the Eastern Cape. A database with extensive information on each specific site was linked to a GIS spatial map of the area. As a landscape architect with no formal training in anthropological fieldwork methods, I stayed with local families in the area, doing informal interviews with community members and walking the land with others. This resulted in the identification and mapping of a number of significant localities. However, the most important personal consequence was the discovery of Ngquza Hill. During my fieldwork, almost every community member I interviewed referred to Ngquza Hill as the most significant place in Pondoland. I realised that I needed to conduct additional research on the Hill, which came to fruition in an Honours Thesis in Anthropology in 2002. At this stage, I acquainted myself with the full spectrum of anthropological fieldwork methods.

In July 2004, Union Buildings Architectural Consultants (UBAC) appointed Cultmatrix, to develop a Conservation Management Plan for the Union Buildings Estate. As part of Newtown Landscape Architects, I was appointed as a sub-consultant to carry out a Heritage Audit of the Estate to complement Cultmatrix's audit of the buildings. During my research, I predominantly utilised qualitative fieldwork methods in addition to archival research to gain insights into the significance of the site. In both projects, the significance of accessing the intangible dimension of the landscape in order to fully understand and contextualise its tangible aspects, became

abundantly clear to me. Subsequently, the role of memory in the construction of landscape was investigated on a variety of levels.

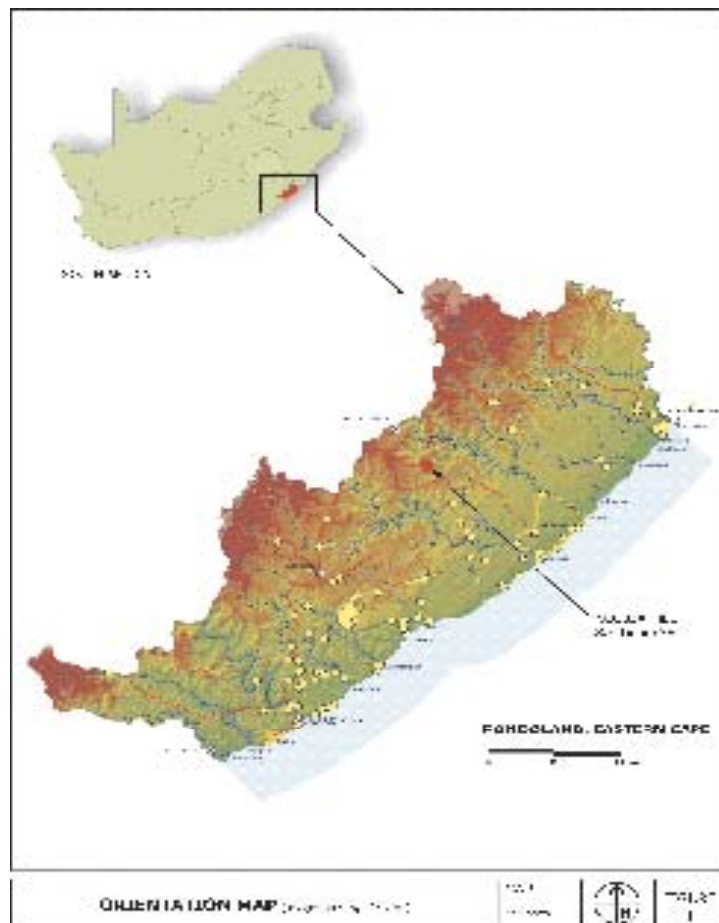## Case study 1: Ngquza Hill, Pondoland

Figure 1
Orientation Map (Muller 2004: 5).

This case study revolves around a relatively unknown site in the Eastern Cape. Ngquza Hill hosted one of the most tragic events in Mpondo[5] history. The event had a profound impact on the lives of all the people involved, their families and also the Mpondo community as a whole.

Ngquza Hill is located in the northern part of Pondoland, within the Eastern Cape, South Africa. It is approximately 20km south-east of Flagstaff, which is the closest town, and 40km north-east of Mkambati Nature Reserve on the coast. The main secondary road that runs from Flagstaff to Mkambati is currently the only access road to Ngquza Hill. Please refer to Figure 1 for the location of Ngquza.

The Pondoland Revolt of 1960 – 61 was based on grievances about the Bantu Authorities System, Bantu Education, the Betterment Schemes and appointed chiefs. Public discontent resulted in the formation of a formalised group disputing the governing bodies. When not referred to as 'Intaba' (The Mountain) the organization, known as 'Ikongo' (Congress), dominated the affairs of an area of about 4000 square kilometres, comprising a population of 180000. This area consisted of the towns of Flagstaff, Bizana and Lusikisiki and the areas adjacent to them.
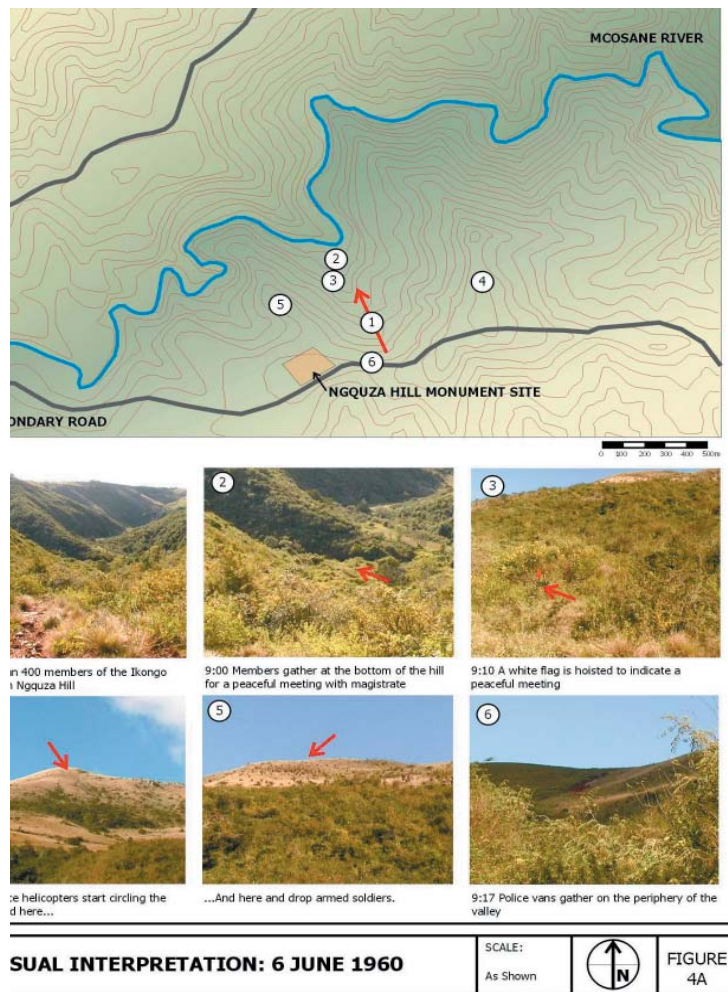
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Figure 2
Visual Interpretation 6 June 1960 (Muller 2004: 32).

After a ban was placed on all public meetings in the area and police and military presence increased, Ikongo requested a meeting with the magistrate of Lusikisiki. This meeting resulted in a military ambush at Ngquza which ended in the killing of eleven men, the further execution of more captives, and the declaration of the State of Emergency issued a week before the infamous Sharpeville shootings. Please refer to Figure 2 and 3 for a graphic representation of the events.

After thorough archival and literature[6] research into the history of the event, the fieldwork research focussed on anthropological research methods to decipher the intangible legacy of the landscape. After a number of informal and focus group interviews with community members, a number of key informants were identified. I walked the site with a number of veterans of the event, documenting their observations and mapping the events, linking the tangible aspects of history and the landscape with the intangible values related to the people who experienced the events.

As an initial outsider, a white Afrikaans girl with a very elementary understanding of Xhosa and the Mpondo culture, my first encounter with Ngquza was from the homestead of the family that I stayed with in Kwa Bhala. Nosipho Holweni, the eldest sister of the family and the local schoolteacher, took me outside and conveyed the story of Nqguza (Personal Communication: Holweni 2001). At that stage, I had never been to the site and only noticed the hill from a distance. Nosipho briefly told me about the Pondoland Revolt and that members of their community died during the Ngquza incident. She then went on to explain the cultural root of the name "Ngquza". The name refers to the coming of age ceremony, the *Mngquzo*, where

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Mpondo virgins are initiated into womanhood. These ceremonies were conducted frequently at the Hill. Another custom was also associated with the Hill: If a man fell in love with a woman, he would take a stick with a white cloth and put it on the top of the Hill. Everyone would see it and know his intentions, thus he could go to the girl's parents and be allowed to see the girl after paying a number of goats to the mother and father. This Hill has additionally long been regarded as the place where people went to announce something to the community (Personal communication: Sipolo 2001).
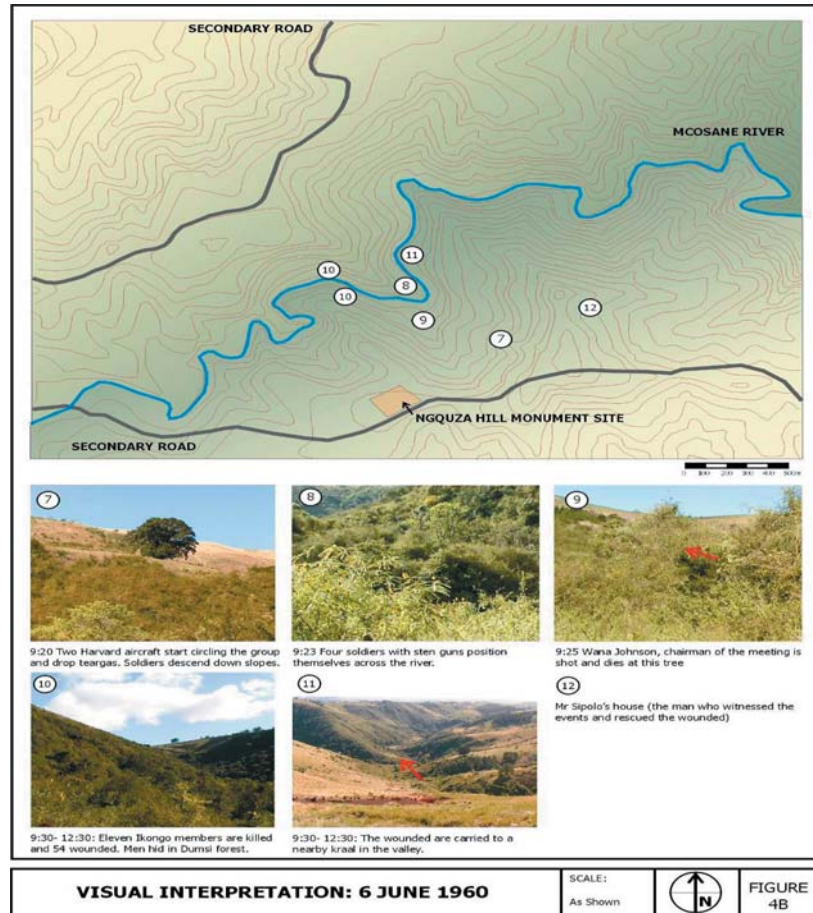

Figure 3
Visual Interpretation 6 June 1960 (Muller 2004: 33).

Image 1
Researcher with members of the Ngquza Steering Committee and veterans
(Source: L Muller 2004).

The day we were scheduled to visit the oldest surviving witness to the event, Mr Sipolo, it rained profusely. We had to walk all the way up a steep hill and down the opposite side in pouring rain. It is clear that I did not get a very clear view of the setting of the event during my first visit. I did however receive the most thorough and unbiased account of the events from this old man who rescued the survivors from the valley after the incident with the armed forces. He carefully related every detail of the event and was still visibly pained from recollecting that tragic day. Unfortunately, this man died before I could officially visit Ngquza again two years later.

The Reburial

The second visit occurred on the day of the reburial ceremony of the bodies of those executed after the events in 1961. On 6 June 1998, The Ngquza Hill Commemoration Committee, with the assistance of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture of the Eastern Cape, erected a monument commemorating the men who died in the massacre on 6 June 1960, and the men who were executed in 1962 at the Pretoria Central Prison (now the Pretoria C Max Prison) after being arrested due to involvement with the Ikongo. During May 2001, the remains of all the executed men were exhumed at the Mamelodi Cemetery outside Pretoria and on 6 June 2003, twelve of the men were reburied at the site of the Ngquza monument. This event was planned and paid for by the Government and had a very strong ANC focus. It was widely attended, with busloads of residents from Pondoland streaming to this remote setting. During this event, I had the opportunity to interview a number of younger community members, but also the veterans of the event itself.

Image 2
Ngquza Hill Monument with graves in the background.
(Source: L Muller 2004).

The following day, I was to meet with a number of these veterans to walk the site and utilise landscape features to serve as mnemotechnic devices triggering memories of the event. Only two men, Clement Gxabu, veteran and spokesperson for the Nqguza Hill Steering Committee and Mr Silangwe, another veteran and part of the Steering Committee, accompanied me. A number of veterans were expected to give a more complete view of the happenings, and this meeting was regarded as an introduction for follow-up individual meetings. With only two veterans attending this meeting, it was rather disappointing. I enquired about why there were

only two veterans attending the meeting. They stated that there were no other veterans, and that they were the only other people that knew what had happened during the massacre.

This contradicted the fact that a number of veterans were observed and introduced to the researcher during the reburial of the exhumed bodies two days before. Mbambo (2000:12) discussed the resistance of the community to talk about the event: "...those that took part in the Mpondo Revolt are sceptical to talk about anything related to the Ngquza massacre…Those that are keen to talk about it are those who did not take part, but who know what happened".

Image 3
Researcher with Simon Silangwe (Source: L. Muller 2003).

However, the day proved very insightful and I was able to construct a detailed spatial account of what occurred during the day of the event (refer to Müller 2004). After spending a day on the slopes of the hill and in the valley, I obtained a thorough understanding of the tangible aspects of the landscape. However, more importantly, by listening to the eyewitness accounts of the veterans, documenting the locations of individual events, understanding the consequences of the day, I began to access the intangible dimension of the landscape that was seated in the memories of the veterans.

Beyond the Reburial

My third visit to Ngquza was two years later, with a friend[7] who had no previous knowledge of the event. I found it insightful to note his response to the landscape. In a typically western view (refer to Kuchler and Bender previously), he only perceived a beautiful landscape. He did not have the same access I had to the intangible dimension of memory connected to the landscape.

During this time, I again met with the Ngquza Hill Steering Committee. At the previous meeting, they had plans to develop Ngquza Hill as part of a larger provincial initiative to boost tourism in the area. At this second meeting, nobody was willing to elaborate on the plans, but it did not seem that there was any progress. From informal interviews within the community, I did however gather that there was a mounting disunity amongst its members concerning Ngquza. Apparently, another group of veterans were contesting the validity of Mr Gxabu and Mr Silangwe, or the Ngquza Hill Steering Committee.

My most recent visit to Ngquza (September 2007) was two years after the first formal meetings by the Ngquza Steering Committee and the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. After enquiring about any progress on the project, I was met with a despondent response from

most community members. Up to date, nothing has been done. Many community members do not believe that any development would occur, their views supported by the fact that, after more than twelve years of being promised basic services such as water and electricity, they still have no infrastructure. Due to this reason, many have decided not to be involved in the Ngquza development process (personal communication: Holweni 2007).

This indifferent attitude to the site extends even further. During an interview with the headmistress of the Mgwili Senior Preparatory School, located on the crest of Ngquza Hill, she explained the reluctance of the younger generations to learn about the event. She related how learners would interrupt teachers or their parents when they tried to tell them about the history of Ngquza. They felt that it had nothing to do with them and that it represents a part of history that is too familiar to them (many have lost family members) (personal communication: Norolela 2007). In the same vein, when interviewing younger members of the Kwa Bhala community, they predominantly refer to the hill as significant to their history, but very few could actually describe the basic tenements of the events.

After speaking to the departmental officer responsible for the site and project, Mrs M Wopula, it was troubling to note that the development of Ngquza would not entail the development of the site, but would comprise the erection of an Arts Centre next to the existing monument. She argued that an Art Centre would better serve the needs of the community as they can sell their crafts at the Centre. Nothing was said about the site's inherent heritage value and the conservation thereof in the development process (personal communication: Wopula 2007).

In the face of the growing indifference towards Ngquza and politically driven development proposals in the pipeline, continual studies into the shifting perceptions, meaning and significance of this landscape would prove insightful.

Case Study 2: Union Buildings Estate

The heritage audit

In July 2004, Union Buildings Architectural Consultants (UBAC) appointed Cultmatrix, to develop a Conservation Management Plan for the Union Buildings Estate (the Estate). I was appointed as a sub-consultant of Newtown Landscape Architects, to carry out a heritage audit of the Estate to complement Cultmatrix's audit of the buildings.

The heritage audit comprised the full extent of the 1994 declared heritage site, but also referred to the entire cultural landscape, including all buildings, formal and informal gardens and natural areas that are deemed to form part of the Union Buildings. For the study, the Estate site was divided into separate but distinct areas. Information about each area was captured to a database, comprising previous studies of the Union Buildings, archival material on the subject and historic plans and photographs. At the conclusion of the research phase, the database was reviewed and the general history of the Estate written. Concurrent with this task, extensive site visits were conducted. The setting (landscape form and character), a provisional plant species survey and the history leading to the current status of each area of the Estate were described and ascribed a *heritage value.* Management actions for each area were proposed, that would increase the heritage value of the area, as well as contribute to the cultural significance of the Estate. After assessing each component of the Estate and the Estate as a whole, the audit process culminated in a *statement of significance.* Significance ratings were developed in accordance with the National Heritage Resources Act 25(1999).

Image 4
View of Union Buildings, 1922
City of Tswane Library, Pretoriana Collection, Image 1266 (Muller & Young 2005: 14).

From its earliest inception, the Union Buildings Estate has played an important part in South African history. It has developed a special meaning to the South African community as a whole, not only in terms of its beauty, but also for its symbolic meaning and national significance. The Union Buildings has served as an icon for many generations and cultural groups for almost 100 years and is according to Fisher (2001) "South Africa's most public work of art". Historically, the Estate represented a symbol of unification and national pride for many of the Afrikaans and English speaking communities. However, since 1994 this meaning has evolved to embrace all cultural groups of South Africa and taken on a meaning that is recognized both nationally and internationally. The Union Buildings are arguably South Africa's most important symbol of reconciliation and democratic freedom (Bakker 2004). In the case of the Estate all National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) criteria (aesthetic, historical, scientific and social) of significance apply, resulting in the *highest* level of significance for the Estate (Müller & Young, 2005).

During its lifetime, aspects of the history of South Africa have been etched onto its terrain to remain as memorials. Apart from the many monuments of historically significant people, the site itself bears witness to important events. These include the meaningful time of botanical exploration of Southern Africa, evident in the many rare plant species found all over the Estate. Also included, are various war memorials and cannons, serving as a reminder of the tragic war era. There are also more 'hidden' aspects, dating to before the construction of the Union Buildings: the numerous historic farm boundaries traversing Meintjeskop; the possibility of an historic traditional settlement; and the three grand buildings (House Vrede, Engelenburg House, Craigielea) that once housed some of the most prominent residents of Pretoria. The significance of the estate runs deep and today new monuments are being added, including the unveiling of the National Womens' Memorial in the amphitheatre. Furthermore, nationally relevant events are often staged at the Estate.

The Estate's landscape design deals with the small to regional scale and manages to integrate the formal gardens in the "grand manner" with the indigenous informal gardens on the west and north sides of the buildings, including the idea of a symbiosis with the African Highveld. The Estate evokes a definite sense of awe from its grandeur of scale. Together with

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this, it also evokes a strong sense of age, history and time depth. The buildings and gardens are both excellent examples of historic styles[8] and the different monuments and memorials contribute to the historic setting.
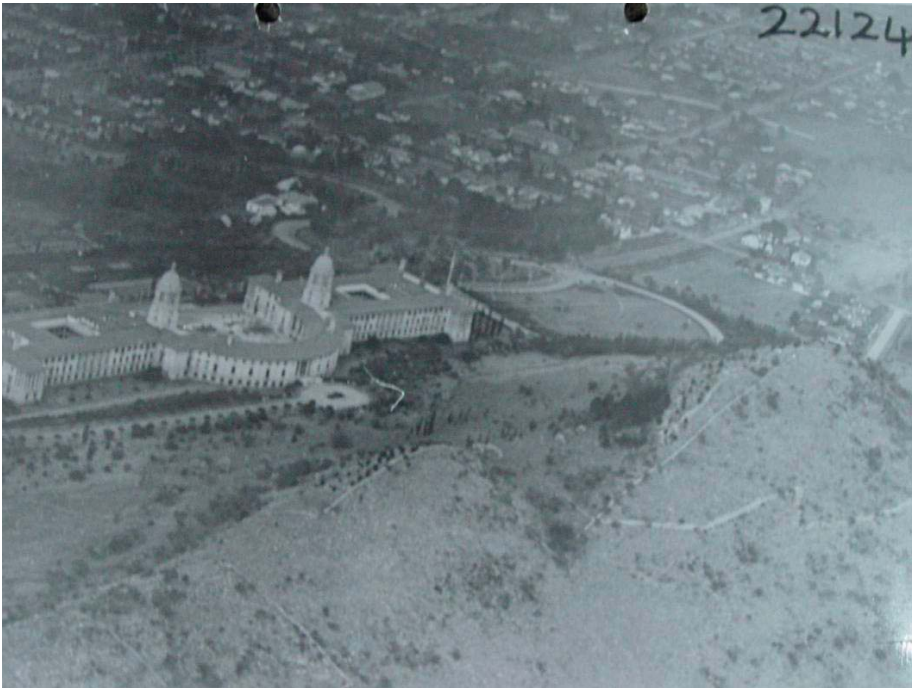

Image 5
Footpaths and old farm walls on Meintjeskop undated
National Archives Image TAB 22124, accessed 24 July 2004 (Muller & Young 2005: 51).

Image 6
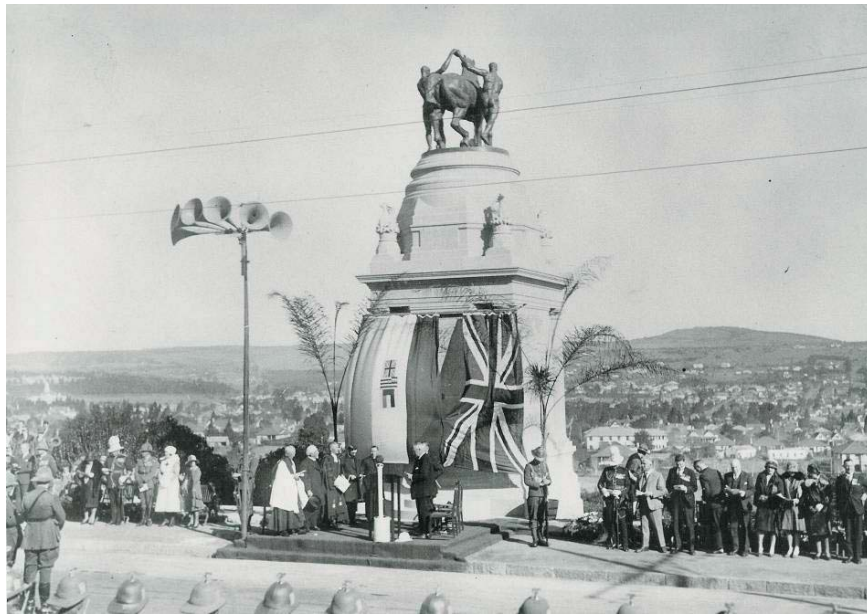**Remnants of footpaths traversing Meintjeskop (Source Muller 2005).**

Image 7
Commemorative service at the Delville Wood Memoria
City of Tswane Library Pretoriana Collection Image No 323 (Muller & Young 2005: 62).

During the lifespan of the project, I was continuously exposed to people interacting with the site. Consequent to the study, I shifted my focus to the users and their experience of the Estate. A number of people were interviewed, including gardeners that worked on the site in the 1960's, people who reminisced on the legacy of the gardens and 'what it used to be like'. Attempting to cover a broad spectrum of past and present users of the site, I not only interviewed current users of the site, but also residents of Pretoria that currently do not visit the Union Buildings. I interviewed people that live in different cities of South Africa and especially tourists visiting the site. Most importantly, I made a point of interviewing representatives of all races and cultural groups in South Africa, young and old[9].

What emanated from these interviews was a dichotomy between the perception and ingrained intangible values, of different cultural groups towards the Buildings.

In an insightful interview with an advertising executive on the lawns of the Buildings, this dichotomy was clarified in simple terms. Reginald Phiri related to me that he grew up in Mamelodi, immediately outside of Pretoria (Personal Communication, 25 August 2007). When he was young, black citizens were only allowed to experience the Union Buildings from a street island directly adjacent to the Estate. He recalled how he would look up at buildings, thinking it was a fort. He regarded the terrain as the seat of the oppressive regime, the seat of Apartheid and subsequently, all of their grievances. As a teenager, just before 1994, he stated that they were ready for war, and as a youth, part of the ANC Youth League during that time, their main goal was to bomb the Union Buildings.

Today, Reginald lives in a flat in Church Street, immediately opposite the Union Buildings. He chose this location as "he is proud of his country and democracy". He also related to me that he values being able to bring his children to the gardens, teaching them about plants and history. He said that, when he was young, they did not value plants or the aesthetics of the gardens – they were poor and had no resources. The environment was something to be exploited to

survive. This changed completely, to where he now enjoys sitting in the gardens every afternoon, studying the different species and layouts.

In stark contrast with the above account, stands the interview with Helen Muller from Uitenhage (Personal Communication, 9 September 2007). I specifically chose a person of roughly the same age, but of a different race and cultural group as that of Phiri (36). When asked how she perceived the Union Buildings today, she replied that she never really thinks about the Union Buildings. She would not come and visit the buildings today as it is probably overgrown and unkempt, with a definite security risk. She referred to television broadcasts of the Woman's Day Celebrations, saying that the entire estate was filled with black people and that she did not want to experience that. She stated that she did not harbour pride for the buildings, but would rather go and visit the Voortrekker Monument, which did still contain meaning to her. When asked what her perception of the buildings and gardens was when she was younger, her response was that the entire nation regarded the buildings as the symbol of national pride. She visited the gardens whenever she came to Pretoria and commented on how beautiful it used to be. She emphasised the fact that it must most definitely not look like that any more.

It is interesting to note the same sentiment in a number of the history students attending the History of Environment class I teach at the University of Pretoria. In an assignment, I asked them to visit the Union Buildings to study its style. A number of students[10] came to see me afterwards, telling me they have been told that the area is not safe and they refused to complete the assignment. Most of these students have never been to the Union Buildings, others have only briefly visited it on school tours or in their parents' vehicle driving past. When asked what the buildings mean to them, their response was that they did not care and did not know. "Mbeki's office is there, right?" After the assignment, I again enquired about their perceptions of the gardens. Most students replied that they enjoyed visiting the site and were impressed with its condition. One student remarked that she realised her parents harboured a certain misconception of the Union Buildings (unsafe and untidy, seat of new government), and she regretted believing them (personal communication: Lombard 2007).

Image 8
Current use of the site - Freedom Day celebrations 2006
(L Muller 2006).

An enlightening fact is that these students harboured none of the political sentiments that interviewees 15 years their seniors did. This is supported by another interview with a black girl of the same age (19) Tabang is a financial management student at the Tshwane University of Technology. She resides in a flat in the immediate vicinity of the Union Buildings and visits the gardens on a regular basis for either exercise or relaxation. During the interview, she continuously emphasised how much she admires the beauty of the gardens and that she is proud of them. When prompted on whether the meaning of the buildings had changed for her after 1994, she replied that she did not even know of the buildings before 2000, when she first visited it on a school tour. Even then she saw it as only a beautiful place and that the ideas of "Apartheid" and "democracy" did not mean anything to her (personal communication: Tabang 2007)

Memory and landscape: intangible and tangible

In the case of Ngquza, the natural landscape – the valley and the hill - is the seat of its significance. For years, the community referred to the geographical and natural features when describing the event. The entire landscape served as a visual reminder of the incident, and individual landscape elements served as mnemotechnic devices triggering recollection of specific details. However, the intangible dimension of the landscape is only clear to the community and those that were affected by the event. An outsider, who has no insight into the event, would only admire the beauty of the natural environment. The deeper, intangible meanings would be completely lost to such a person. With the erection of the monument in 1999, the focus of the heritage site shifted from the entire landscape, to the site of the monument. Here, a tangible object was placed in the landscape to enable the uninformed access to the intangible aspects connected to the site. Unfortunately, in so doing, many of the details surrounding the event became lost. In the transmission of the history of the event from older to younger generations and in referring to Ngquza, community members refer mostly to the monument site or the hill. The significance of the valley is slowly disappearing. Furthermore, with the dawning of 'development' prospects and the potential exploitation of the tourism industry, the meaning of the site has shifted from its original significance to that of monetary value and political gain.

Thus, erecting a tangible element within a landscape with an essentially intangible heritage could destroy part of its heritage and meaning. In development, it is preferable in these types of landscapes to highlight those aspects intrinsic to the intangible heritage and integrate them into the design and future planning of the site. The purpose of this would be to retain those landscape elements which serve as mnemotechnic devices, ensuring the conservation of the intangible dimension.

In the case of the Union Buildings, the original landscape – the valley and the hill – was altered to such an extent that nothing of its original state was still recognisable. However, in this case, its specific design and layout, but also its function – the seat of Government in South Africa - is the basis of its significance. The Union Buildings and gardens (which were never conceived as separate, but integrally connected) are the "monument" and the tangible and intangible dimensions are integrally linked. The various monuments, statues, plaques and busts strengthen this connection. However, after interviewing a broad spectrum of past and future users (see case study 2), it became clear that those ingrained meanings, perceptions and memories connected to the landscape were different for not only the diverse cultural groups within South Africa, but also for different age groups. Furthermore, it was also established that these meanings, perceptions and memories, changed after the change of political power in 1994.

If one considers the memory connected to both sites, one gains insight into the fluid nature of memory (landscape as memory) and subsequently, the intangible dimension of landscape. It has already been stated that memory and landscape are integrally linked (Kuchler 1993:85 and Spiegel 20048, 9). In the inevitability of the physical landscape changing due to external factors such as development, change of power, neglect or the course of nature, the memory connected to those landscapes will change resultantly (Mbangela 2003). Likewise, collective or individual memory can also change due to change in living circumstances, change of political power, or changes in the social paradigm. This results in an altered perception of the landscape.

Conclusion

It could be stated that landscape and memory are fundamentally interconnected through the intangible dimension. Both are part of a continuum and both are equally susceptible to change. The above examples illustrate the interrelationship between the intangible and the tangible landscape and that they are inseparable. The tangible landscape guides, informs and shapes the intangible landscape, and vice versa.

I have attempted to establish that landscape essentially informs culture. Therefore, in the development projects with a cultural landscape component, it is essential to preserve/conserve or even highlight those landscape elements (mnemotechnic elements) that enable the continued memory and understanding of the place, even if it means a change in perception. This is primarily possible through a thorough understanding of the intangible dimension of a landscape as it is manifested in the tangible.

> The study and understanding of intangible cultural heritage will offer an important basis for the maintenance, custody, conservation, and repair of tangible cultural heritage (Ito 2003).
> The integration of intangible values (memory and meaning) into conservation practice, whether associated with place, landscape or both, will require a fundamental shift from a somewhat static view of significance to one that recognises the dynamic and contextual nature of social meaning (Clarke & Johnson, 2003).

The inherent nature and practice of Anthropology, considering the numerous fieldwork and research methodologies of accessing the intangible, offers the most thorough and unique way of understanding the landscape.

Notes

1. Refer to Parkers' discussion on mnemotechnics – how the landscape or the loci are the setting or the background (frame) for certain rhetoric (Parker 1997).

2. The concept of "identity" has become a controversial point in schools in contemporary sociology. According to Arnesen (1998:49) the 'disembeddedness' of 'modern society man' is explained by Giddens (1991), where understanding of self and identity is not developed and built in a confined space as is implied in the landscape identity approach.

3. Social significance encompasses "people's attachment to place, the meanings and associations built through history, direct experience and cultural memory, often across generations" (Clarke & Johnson 2003).

4. The term 'palimpsest' is here referred to in its etymological sense (from the Greek palı`n 'newly' and psa`n 'to scratch out', when parchment manuscripts were newly written on, on top of the old writing scratched out) to signal the existence, in the present state of places, of numerous physical traces left over time by the work of man and nature, each time adding to or changing or erasing or overlapping, etc. one another and not necessarily being re-interpreted or re-used (Scazzosi 2004:350).

5. The inhabitants of Pondoland are generally referred to as the Mpondo, a subgroup of the Xhosa.

6. The book by Govan Mbeki, The Peasants' Revolt (1984) is among the most resourceful on the events during that era. J.A. Copelyn's B.A.

dissertation on the Mpondo Revolt (1974) was very informative together with the dissertation by Wiseman L. Mbambo, The Construction of Ngquza Site Memories in Eastern Pondoland (2000). In addition to this, media coverage of the event was consulted. Newspapers, especially the Daily Despatch, The Star and the Natal Mercury, were scanned for any information about the events. The official report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the Pondoland Revolt (Chapter 2 of 1998) and individual testimonies during the TRC hearings in Lusikisiki, March 1997, proved insightful. The article by Beinart, Environmental Origins of the Pondoland Revolt (2002) presented an interesting hypothesis on the event.

7.   Mr Matthew Munting, 26 December 2005

8.   Design influences included works of the Italian Renaissance era (Palladio, Villa d'Este, Boboli Gardens) and the works of Herbert Baker's friend and mentor Sir Edward Lutyens. In 1890,

Lutyens introduced Baker to Gertrude Jeckyll, a famous Arts and Crafts garden designer. He would have been influenced by her massed informal plantings in a structured layout. Baker also became a follower of William Morris. He joined the Art Workers' Guild and was a keen proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement. All these associations proved to be influential in the design of the Union Buildings and Estate (Heritage Audit Union Buildings Estate, (UBAC Document B3, 2005).

9.   At present, 24 formal interviews have been conducted, with a number of supporting informal interviews. A complete list and detailed accounts are available on request.

10.   It should be stated that the students who complained were predominantly from a white, middleclass background, but a number of black students residing in University residences also formed part of the group.

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