

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND CULTURE HISTORY MUSEUMS: POTENTIALS OF THE KWAZULU CULTURAL MUSEUM

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The available educational facilities at the KwaZulu Cultural Museum are described and the potential for expansion programmes is discussed. As no permanent and resident education officers are currently employed, visiting teachers would have to devise their own programmes spontaneously or draw on the assistance of the resident professional officer.

The KwaZulu Monuments Council was asked at its inception in 1981 to develop a cultural museum at Ondini portraying the culture-history of the region.

Ondini, the Zulu capital of His Majesty King Ceteshwayo, was razed to the ground at the battle of Ulundi on the 4th July 1879; marking the end of the Anglo-Zulu war. It is on this historic site that the KwaZulu Cultural Museum has been built and where a large collection of indigenous regional cultural material is housed. Ondini today is a declared monument within the museum estate of 200 ha of thornveld savannah, and is located 8 km outside the KwaZulu capital of Ulundi on the through route to the Umfolozi Game Reserve.

The original Royal Capital at Ondini has been surveyed and excavated by archaeologists, and currently a programme of reconstruction is in progress. Here the Royal Enclosure, cattle byre, and parade ground will be reconstituted. To date the Royal Enclosure and cattle byre have been completed and visitors conduct themselves around by means of a self-guided trail.

A small site museum and scale model of Ondini provides a background to the self-guided trail. A series of panel displays in the site museum illustrate the pre-colonial peopling of the eastern seaboard, the rise of the Zulu nation and their expansion in historic times. This is coupled with a series of displays on the roles of men and women in the traditional society and specifically the divisions of labour between the sexes.

The self-guided trail not only gives the historic details surrounding Ondini, but explains the layout of the Royal Enclosure; its original construction, demise and reconstitution. Visitors are shown the social dynamics of the Royal Enclosure and explanation is made of the position of Ondini within the dynamics of the old Zulu order.

The use and procurement of traditional building materials and natural resources is discussed; as well as the problems encountered today in procuring these materials and constructing and maintaining a site museum of this magnitude. Visitors are encouraged to meet and speak with the reconstruction crew. Here one is able at first hand to learn something of the detail and intricacies involved in the construction of traditional and locally adapted housing.

The KwaZulu Cultural Museum's location, adjacent to the expanding development of Ulundi, lends itself well to observations on the changing nature of housing and shelter.



FIGURE 1 Ondini - King Ceteshwayo's Royal Residence. Note the surrounding palisading.

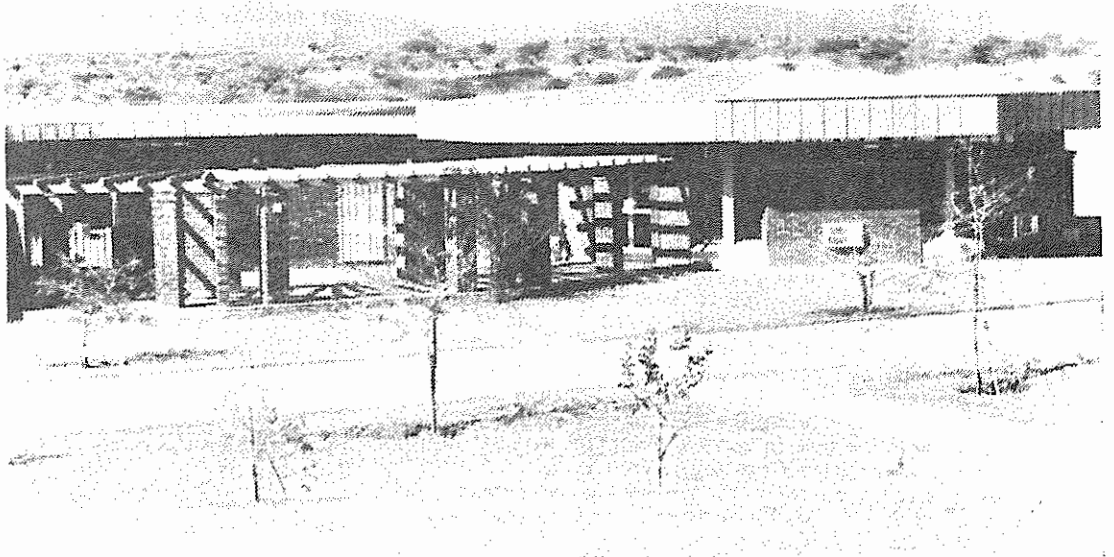
A depleted and over utilized natural environment has led to shifts in the use of certain building materials and changes in the execution of specific housing styles. A burgeoning local population has resulted in further land-use pressures which has been partly responsible for changes in traditional homestead layout and location.

of the type of environment that prevailed at the time that Ondini functioned as the capital of the Zulu nation.

Ondini's regenerating veld diversity supports a wide variety of bird life and small mammals. The latter are not often observed, but signs of their presence can be seen on any walk around the estate. A non-

FIGURE 2

*KwaZulu Cultural Museum.*



The contrasts between planned urbanisation and the expansion of spontaneous settlements are blatantly apparent. These provide a ready example for discussions on growth in developing regions and the need for resource management to support a growing urban population now and in the future.

The fenced estate surrounding the museum provides an obvious contrast to the effects of overgrazing and heavy population pressures on the surrounding countryside. Within the museum estate a living classroom is provided, where pupils can observe these contrasts and see the results of veld regeneration, donga reclamation and land use management.

Within the 200 ha of thornveld savannah, pupil groups could be conducted around and instructed in the basic principles of human and environmental ecology and resource conservation. This within a microcosm

perennial stream flowing through a wetland to the Thukwini river at the bottom of the estate provides adequate illustrative material for discussions on stream flow, erosion and wetland ecology.

The aforementioned should not be seen in isolation when field excursions are being planned. Ulundi is well located to be included in any tour of the Anglo-Zulu war battlefields of Isandlawana and Rorkes Drift, and in fact suitable group accommodation is available at Ondini.

This accommodation takes the form of a traditional Zulu homestead constructed around a central cattle byre. Five huts with beds for 30 people are provided and a modern fully equipped kitchen and separate ablutions are available. Educational groups are charged at a rate of R5,00 per person per day and need only provide their own food and refreshments.

FIGURE 3

*'Umuzi' tourist accommodation facility.*

