Thimlich Ohinga
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

NOMINATION DOSSIER FOR INSCRIPTION ON
The World Heritage List

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

2013

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HARAMBEE

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

2013

Executive Summary

State Party: Republic of Kenya

State, Province or Region: Kenya, Migori County

Name of Property: Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second – E 34 ^{0}19’ 33.9852” and S 0^{0} 53’ 28.8168”

Textual Description of the nominated property

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is situated in Migori County of Kenya, some 181 Km south of the city of Kisumu. It occupies a gently sloping hill located 46 Km northwest of Migori town which is the nearest urban centre. The site covers a total of 21 hectares. It is a fourteenth-century stone-built complex representing a tradition of dry stone wall construction that characterized the early settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a complex dry stone-built heritage comprising six main *Ohingni* all of which have extensions except one, which is a single unit enclosure. The main *Ohinga* is referred to as *Kochieng*, while the others are *Kakuku*, *Koketch* and *Koluoch*. Each of the *Ohingni* has enclosures within them and smaller extensions adjacent to them. There is also an industrial and iron working site referred to as *Blacksmith* enclosure.

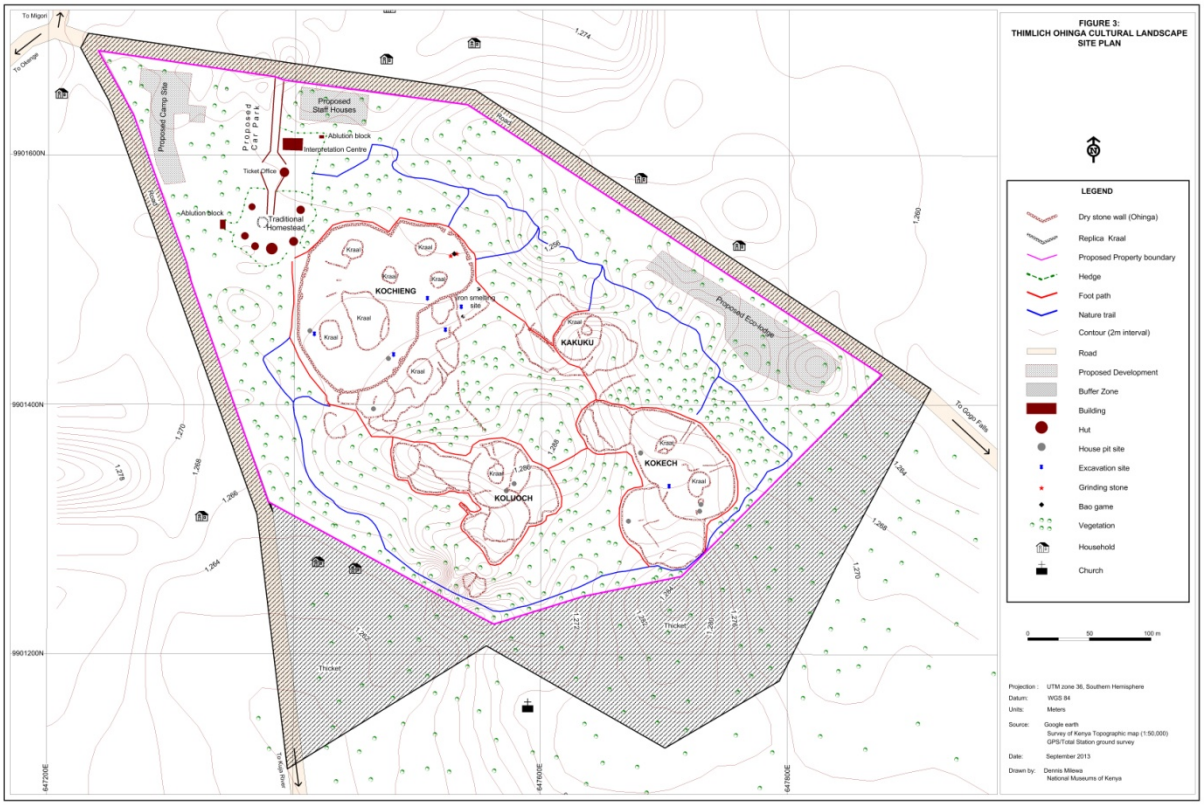
The main enclosure, *Kochieng,’* consists of an outer compound wall which is approximately 140 m in diameter from the north to south and stands 2.5 m to 4.2 m high. There are three gateways, one to the west and two to the east. These are in the form of passage-type doors. There are depressions which contain features that have been identified as cooking places and raised platforms, which were possibly used as stores. These depressions are circular and have average diameter of 5 m and could also have been used for threshing grain, as firing pits or places where grain was spread to dry. These depressions represent house pits that formed domestic areas as indicated by the associated material culture found after excavation at the site.

Structures at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape fall into two categories, namely, simple and complex ones. The simple structures consist of single enclosures which do not share walls with other structures. Simple structures are also found in multiple structure sites as single enclosures forming isolated units. Simple structures are joined together by abutting walls or corridors to form complex structures. Complex structures were built by connecting different categories with shared-walls. Attached to the complex structures are smaller extensions which suggest population increase among the original inhabitants.

Archaeological excavations at the site have yielded faunal, ceramic and lithic materials. Ceramics associated with the site are mainly cord rouletted. The cord roulette decorative motif is principally Nilotic while iron working is associated with the Bantu groups. The site, therefore, represents an early interaction between the two main groups. These materials have been used to explain the dynamics of settlement patterns in the region.

The architectural technique used at the site is a three-phase design where the walls have an outer and inner phase of neatly arranged stones of all shapes and sizes and a middle phase consisting of smaller stones. The middle held together the stones in the inner and outer phases of the walls. Due to lack of distinct shapes of the rocks used, the walls do not exhibit any clear coursing, as is common in modern stone walls or buildings. Stones were placed in an interlocking system that enhanced overall stability, without any mortar or cement. The walls range from 1.5 m to 4.2 m in height, with an average thickness of 1 m. The thickness of the walls increase at the entrances from 2 m to 3 m and rectangular slabs were used at the lintels (Onjala 2003).

Map of nominated property



Criteria under which the property is nominated: (iii) and (iv)

Justification Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief Synthesis

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a group of 14th century dry stone wall complexes located in Migori County, within the Lake Victoria Basin in Kenya. These imposing and structurally complex stone enclosures exhibit a highly developed indigenous architecture with in-depth knowledge of material, form and structure. They were constructed using predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique, with walls dotted with buttresses for structural stability. Thimlich Ohinga typifies what can be referred to as the archetype of three-phased stone layering technology.

The heritage is a testimony to great mobilization of labour in an otherwise non centralized system of leadership, in fluid mobile communities engaged in constant expansion of frontiers and faced with harsh and untamed environment, as well as, hostile neighbours. The *Ohingni* were part of an elaborate system of defense and expansionist agenda by the early settlers of southwestern Kenya. The tradition attained a very high degree of architectural planning involving functional spatial organization and an interior intricate communal occupation of successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples, who today form the majority of the population of East, Central and Southern Africa.

Archaeological evidence and oral literature indicate that Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa and beyond. The period between the14th and 16th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Thimlich Ohinga represents an advanced stage of indigenous African architectural technology which can be traced to the Sirikwa late Iron Age settlement sites in the Rift Valley of Kenya and Northern Tanzania as well as the livestock enclosures in the Horn of Africa.

The archaeological evidence shows that faunal remains are predominantly those of cattle, and, as such, the property expresses the centrality of livestock rearing in the East African region which is

also supported by the design of the enclosures which were primarily for defense and protection of the people and their stock. However, it was also not lost on them to leave behind a rare feat of well-developed stone architecture of pure dry stone building technique.

The criterion under which the site is being nominated is criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion iii

The cultural landscape is a living testimony to a unique cultural tradition. The magnificent layout of the site points to evolution from simple structures to more complex ones. The influence of this development went beyond Thimlich to the neighbouring areas within the region. It developed as an administrative centre where leadership consultations and labour organizations were carried out. It thus combined administrative, social welfare and economic functions. The functions endured until the entry of the British imperial power which disrupted much of the traditional systems leaving it as a place for occasional visits by locals to commune with the ancestral spirits.

Thimlich Ohinga embodied the complex social system that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the magnificent walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within.

Walls within the complex were believed to be a link with the ancestral spirits. This knowledge made all the occupants respect the walls and avoid any activity that would destroy them. This respect helped protect the site even after it was completely abandoned during the early twentieth century. Access into the complexes was through the gates and entry through any other point could only be allowed by the elders who also acted as a link between the people and the spirit world. It was believed that disobeying the rules governing the protection of the walls would invite the wrath of the spirits that lived in the walls from where they protected the people.

Criterion iv

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is an exceptional example of indigenous architecture characterized by a three-phase dry stone building technology which is not known to exist anywhere else. The development of the Cultural Landscape epitomized a higher stage of

architectural evolution in the sub-Saharan region. The development of this type of dry-stone building tradition can be traced from simple structures during the late Iron Age Sirikwa settlements in the East African Rift Valley, the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

Statement of integrity

The nominated area measuring approximately 21 hectares contains all the elements of the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape. It includes; the stone walls with their low entrances, the structural support features known as buttresses, low water/sludge draining vents from the inner livestock enclosures (kraals), the three-phase design, the inner and outer enclosures, the kraals, industrial site and house pits.

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) has ensured that archaeological excavations and restoration of walls at the site have applied conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property. The exterior part of the stone enclosures still have thick vegetation which afforded extra protection to the inhabitants and a few depressed cattle paths still remain that terminate at the gate entrances. There have been the challenge of rocks falling during heavy rains at weak sections but this are restored using the three phase traditional methods and thus maintaining the technology of construction.

The site is well secured by a perimeter fence that limits access through a single entrance. This controls the local community who come to collect herbs for human and livestock treatment, grass for thatching and fibres for basketry and for house construction. The periodic cutting of thatching grass is a conservation measures done by the local community under the supervision by the NMK staff as a control grass that regenerates fast within the enclosures.

Statement of authenticity

The Bantu people built and occupied the Thimlich Ohinga stone structures at around 14th century. The Nilotes arrived in the Lake Victoria region around the 16th century occupying the already existing stone structures until the late 20th century. Oral history indicates that the Nilotic occupants carried out maintenance work on the structures using the original materials and the traditional conservation technology.

These periods of occupation and repair did not interfere with the architecture and preservation of the structures. The nominated property has therefore retained its original architectural and aesthetic values. After their abandonment, no more stone structures were constructed at Thimlich Ohinga. Consequently, landscapes of similar design in the larger Lake Victoria region were reduced to mere traces of circumferences or disappeared altogether. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is one of the few stone structures that have survived.

The original fabric of the structures has been preserved and the most recent repairs have applied the original technique of construction. The property has, therefore, retained its character in of design and material. Its sustainability is ensured through skills transfer where the maintenance works are carried out by traditional masons who train the youth through apprenticeship.

The design of the walls is linked to their original purpose and their spiritual significance. This character has been maintained and preserved to the present times. It is evident that the exterior walls were designed to be thicker in size compared to the walls of the interior enclosures. The outer walls assured the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was considered feminine while the walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within. The security role of the outer wall still bears the additional security features that include purposely incorporated surveillance posts that are recesses left on the walls during the stone laying stage of the wall construction which are sited only at the gate entrances. Thus the protective apparatus of the complex has been maintained as found.

Indigenous beliefs and practices that persist in the area have ensured that the property remain intact. The community reveres the site as they also believe that it is a link between them and their ancestors and during calamities, traditional sacrifices are carried out at the site. There is a shrine that is still occasionally used by the local community in times of severe draught. The shrine is in the form of an indigenous tree that still stands in the main enclosure known (*Kochieng*).

The stone enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape have evolved from originally being homesteads to preserved monuments up to the 20th century. Archaeological excavations at the site have used conventional scientific methods. The natural vegetation within the landscape and the site is a major source of medicinal plants used by the communities to the present.

Protection and Management

The cultural landscape is protected by an act of parliament; the National Museums and Heritage Act, *Cap* 216 of 2006 and is managed by the National Museums of Kenya. A management plan has been formulated with the key objective of protecting the attributes of the dry stone architecture and the associated features. The plan was drafted in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The local community participates in the site's routine maintenance under the careful supervision of qualified personnel of National Museums of Kenya based at the site, as well as senior staff that visit the site for major conservation and research activities.

Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a group of 14th century dry stone wall complexes located in Migori County, within the Lake Victoria Basin in Kenya. These imposing and structurally complex stone enclosures exhibit a highly developed indigenous architecture with in-depth knowledge of material, form and structure. They were constructed using predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique, with walls dotted with buttresses for structural stability. Thimlich Ohinga typifies what can be referred to as the archetype of three-phased stone layering technology.

The *Ohingni* were part of an elaborate system of defense and expansionist agenda by the early settlers of Southwestern Kenya. The tradition attained a very high degree of architectural planning involving functional spatial organization and an interior intricate communal occupation of successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples, who today form the majority of the population of East, Central and Southern Africa.

Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa and beyond. The period between the14th and 16th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Thimlich Ohinga is an exceptional example of an advanced stage of indigenous African architectural technology characterized by a three-phase dry stone building technology which is

not known to exist anywhere else in the world. The development of the Cultural Landscape epitomized a higher stage of architectural evolution in the sub-Saharan region. Evolution of this type of dry-stone building tradition can be tracked from simple structures during the late Iron Age Sirikwa settlements in the East African Rift Valley, the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

The archaeological evidence shows that faunal remains are predominantly those of cattle, and, as such, the property expresses the centrality of livestock rearing in the East African region which is also supported by the design of the enclosures which were primarily for defense and protection of the people and their stock.

The cultural landscape is a living testimony to a distinctive cultural tradition. Thimlich Ohinga embodied the complex social system that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was symbolically considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the magnificent walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within.

The nominated area contains all the elements of the architectural tradition that includes; the stone walls with their low entrances, the structural support features known as buttresses, the three-phase design, the inner and outer enclosures, the kraals, industrial site, and leisure areas. Archaeological excavations at the site have applied conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property. The original architectural and aesthetic values have been maintained through adherence to the original technique of construction during all restoration activities. Sustainability is assured by having traditional masons train the youth through apprenticeship.

The cultural landscape is a gazetted site and thus protected laws of Kenya and is managed by the National Museums of Kenya. All activities on the site follow the existing management plan which was drafted in consultation with the local community.

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1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY

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Kenya

1. b: State, Province or Region
Kenya, Migori County

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Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

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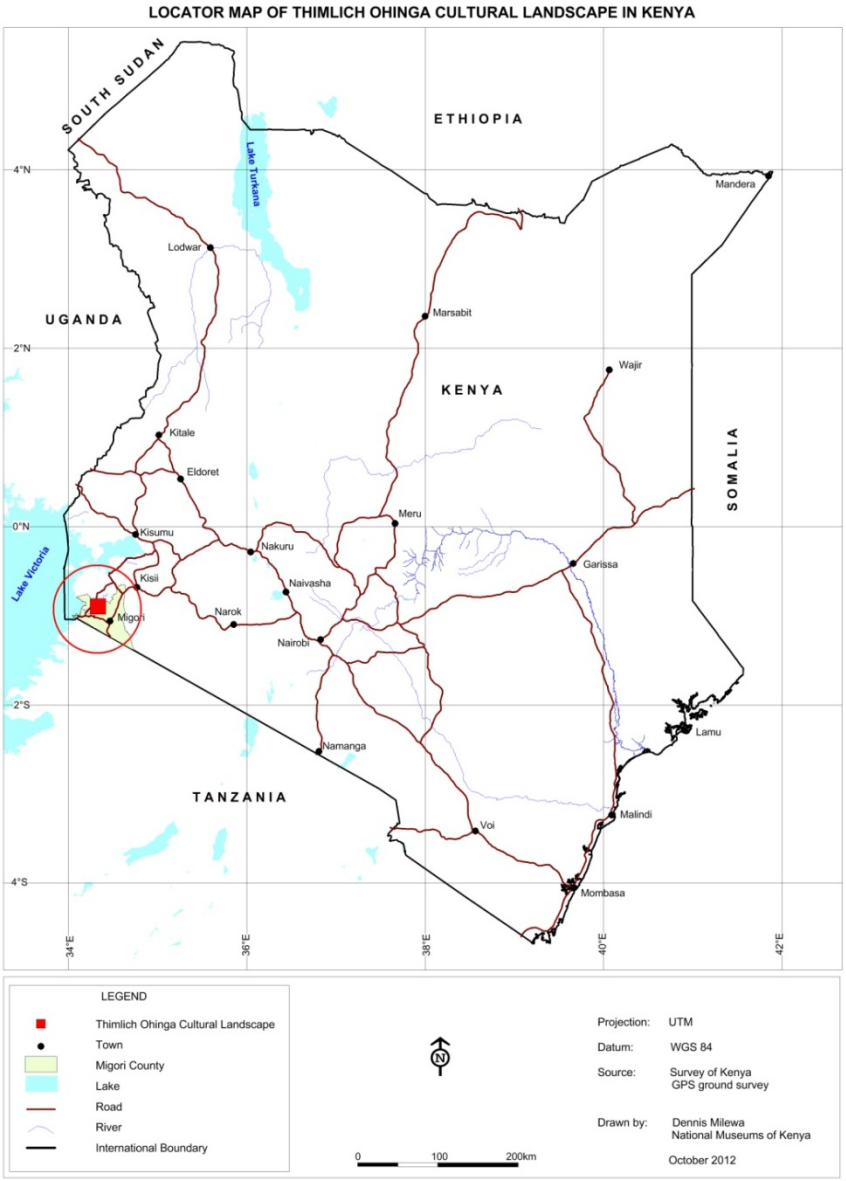


Figure 1 Locator map showing location of property in Kenya

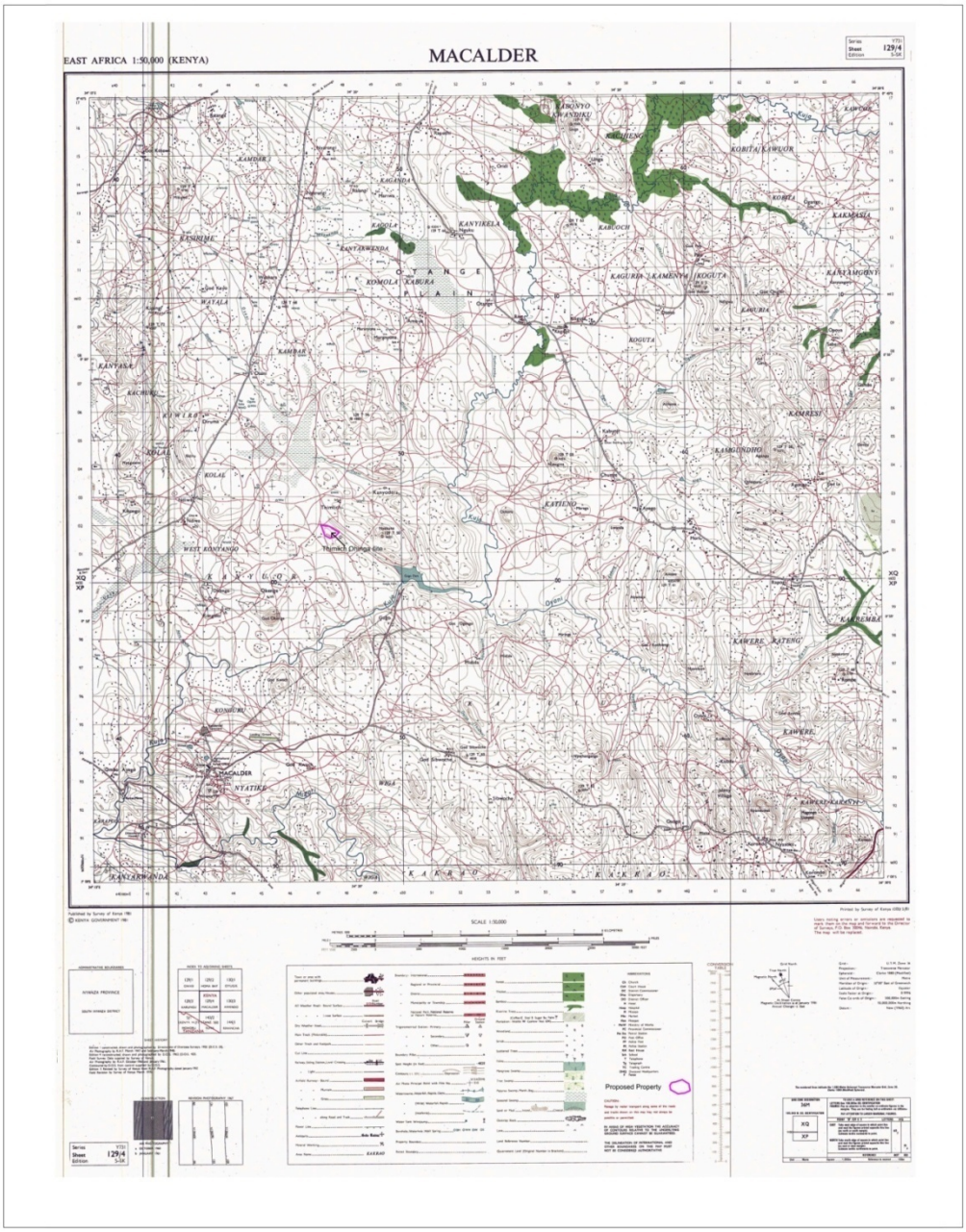


Figure 2. Topographic map showing the location of the nominated property

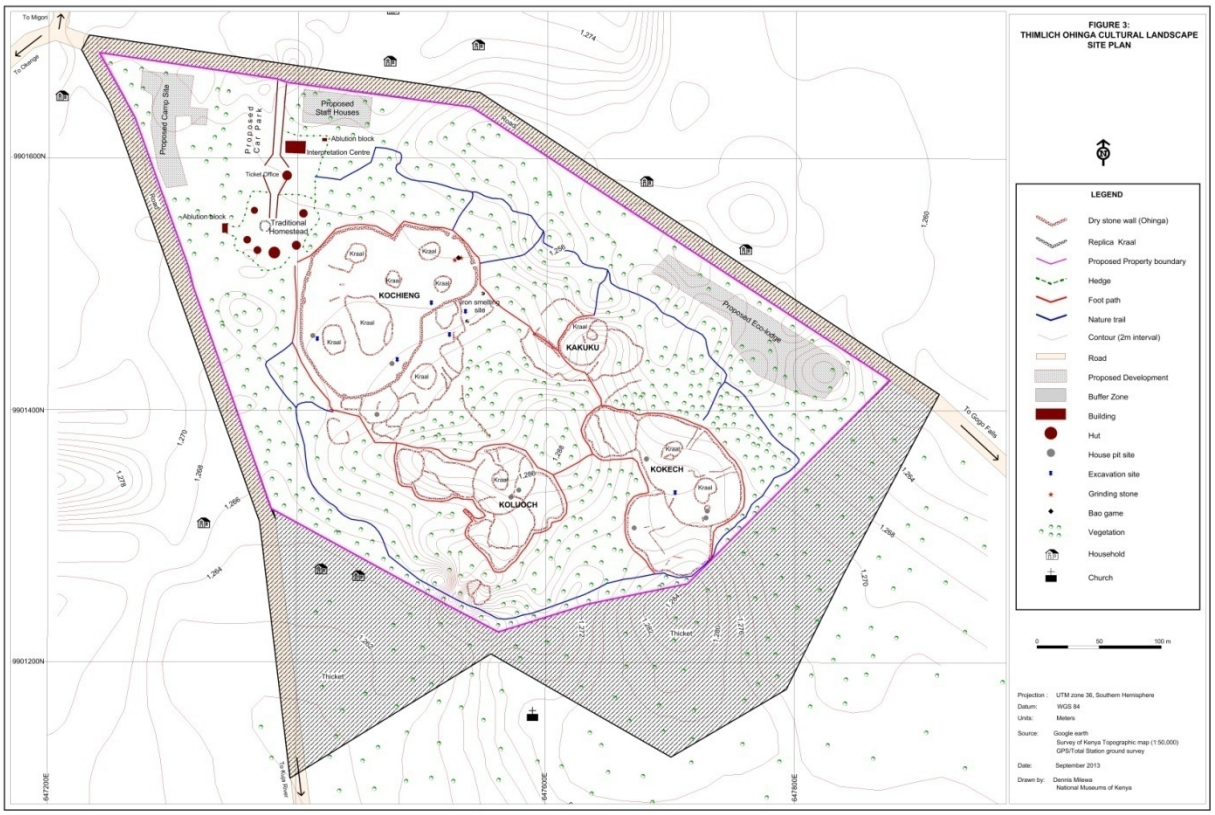


Figure 2: Map showing the proposed nominated area and its buffer zone

1. f: Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.)

Area of nominated property: 21 ha

Buffer zone: 7.135 ha

Total: 28.135 ha

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

2. a: Description of property

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is situated in Migori County of Kenya, some 181 Km south of the city of Kisumu. It occupies a gently sloping hill located 46 Km northwest of Migori town, which is the nearest urban centre.

The cultural landscape is a fourteenth-century stone-built complex representing a tradition of dry-stone building/ construction that characterized the early settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin. The site covers a total of 21 hectares.

The term *Thimlich* is derived from a local community word referring to a scary jungle. *Ohinga* (*Ohingni*-plural) on the other hand, is a form of earth/stone built settlement or enclosure found within the Lake Victoria region.

An important thing to note is that earthen wall enclosures are found in areas where stones are scarce and are rare because of their tendency to disintegrate fast upon abandonment and with the cultivation over the years. The earth enclosures are thus not well preserved and in areas where they are located within the Lake Victoria region, what remains are very low walls with a maximum of one metre in height. It is a common factor in the Lake region that stone enclosures are found where rocks are found in abundance. Where there were no rocks therefore, people had to improvise the protective walls by molding walls from wet clay. There is no documented research to show that there was any transportation of the stones over land or any quarrying of the construction material. Loose rocks were simply collected at site where there was need to erect the stone enclosures for protection. Evidence of this is that within all the enclosures there are large boulders which were left where they were because of their sheer weight. There is also no evidence of any attempts to break large boulders in to smaller stones. Where the large boulders were found on the predetermined perimeter line of the enclosures, such boulders were adopted as the stabilizing foundation.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a complex dry stone-built heritage comprising six main *Ohingni* all of which have extensions except one, which is a single unit enclosure. The main

Ohinga is referred to as *Kochieng*, while the others are *Kakuku*, *Koketch* and *Koluoch*. Each of the *Ohingni* has enclosures within them and smaller extensions adjacent to them. There is also an industrial and iron working site referred to as *Blacksmith* enclosure.

The main enclosure, *Kochieng,'* consists of an outer compound wall which is approximately 140 m in diameter from the north to south and stands 2.5 m to 4.2 m high. There are three gateways, one to the west and two to the east. These are in the form of passage-type doors. There are depressions which contain features that have been identified as cooking places and raised platforms, which were possibly used as stores. These depressions are circular and have average diameter of 5 m and could also have been used for threshing grain, as firing pits or places where grain was spread to dry. These depressions represent house pits that formed domestic areas as indicated by the associated material culture found after excavation at the site.

A set of neatly arranged stones were also found at the site suggesting an iron smelting area. Close to it were other stones with smooth surfaces possibly where hammering of iron implements occurred. Cord-rouletted potsherds were also found at the site.

Inside this main enclosure are also found five smaller enclosures which were probably used as cattle kraals or pens for small stock. The largest of the stone-built cattle kraals is found at the centre of the original oval compound wall. There are many potential explanations for the other smaller kraals found around it. There may have been a simple population expansion or an increase in the herd. There could also have been a shift in ideology from communal to personal ownership or the presence of many economic units in a single site. This explanation is supported by the presence of a number of boulder lines that appear to divide the site into sections.

In addition, at the main monument, there are at least six house pits. The houses at Thimlich Ohinga come in the form of circular depressions. These are assumed to represent domestic areas due to the associated material culture found after excavations at the site. The houses themselves were probably built of mud and thatch and are rather ephemeral in comparison to the site's stone walls.

The outer wall of the main enclosure appears to have undergone modification during the site's occupation. The extant structure is not circular in plan 'as found in an ideal Luo compound'. However, it is possible to identify the joint where an extension has been added to the north-eastern section, one can infer that the original shape was essentially oval. In the first instance, the structure seems to have been in keeping with the model of an oval plan, with the main gate on the downhill slope.

Structures at the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape fall into two categories, namely, simple and complex ones. The simple structures consist of single enclosures which do not share walls with other structures. Simple structures are also found in multiple structure sites as single enclosures forming isolated units. Simple structures are joined together by abutting walls or corridors to form complex structures. Complex structures were built by connecting different categories with shared-walls. Attached to the complex structures are smaller extensions which suggest population increase among the original inhabitants.

Both simple and complex *Ohingni* have interior structures of various kinds. These include small enclosures, depressions and corridors. The small enclosures within either simple or complex structures are grouped into 3 categories: cattle kraals, pens for smaller animals and garden fence structures. Cattle kraals or pens for smaller stock depended on the size of a particular structure. The kraals are larger and usually located at the centre of the structures, while the pens are smaller extensions to the outer walls of major structures or the walls of the kraals. Garden fence structures are small enclosures close to outer walls which were thought to have been *orundu* for growing vegetables. *Orundu* is a local name given to small gardens within the homestead on which vegetable or other food crops are grown to supplement what is grown on larger farms. The use of *orundu* was encouraged to allow the crops in the main farms to mature for harvest without interference.

Depressions found within the *ohingni* have been identified as house pits. One such depression is at Kochieng enclosure and is associated with food preparation and storage. The depressions are circular with an average diameter of 5 m in conformity with the shape of the *Ohinga*. These depressions may also have been used for other functions, including threshing grain, firing pits or

for drying grain. The majority of these are found in the main enclosure, which seems to have been recently occupied.

Within the structures are smaller enclosures that were used as cattle kraals. The main enclosure has six of these while the others have at least one. There are also a couple of smaller circular walls. In addition to the kraals, the enclosures also contain external support ramps and buttresses against the walls. Between the enclosures are passageways and corridors lined with low walls of stone. Some of these have been reconstructed during the ongoing conservation work at the site. A designated industrial area lies just outside the northern wall of the main enclosure. Here iron smelting and working took place, as indicated by the presence of a furnace area containing smooth stones that could have acquired that texture as a result of being used as anvils. Pieces of tuyere litter the area and there is also a mound of iron slag, refuse and pottery. An ancient version of the game known today as Bao was also found carved on a rock nearby, an indication that the area could also have been used for leisure activities (Onjala and Kamaru 2005).

Archaeological excavations at the site have yielded faunal, ceramic and lithic materials. Ceramics associated with the site are mainly cord rouletted. The cord roulette decorative motif is principally Nilotic while iron working is associated with the Bantu groups. The site, therefore, represents an early interaction between the two main groups. These materials have been used to explain the dynamics of settlement patterns in the region (*Ibid*).

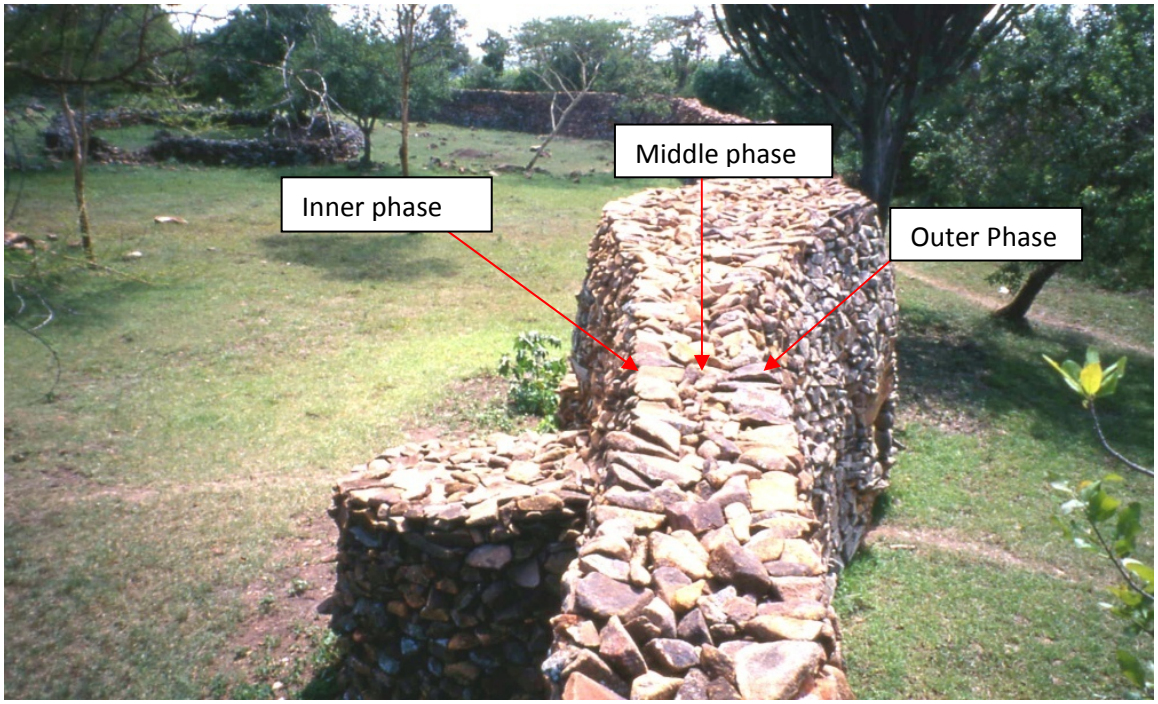


Figure 3: Photo showing the three phase technique

The architectural technique used at the site is a three-phase design where the walls have an outer and inner phase of neatly arranged stones of all shapes and sizes and a middle phase consisting of smaller stones (Figure 4). The middle held together the stones in the inner and outer phases of the walls. Due to lack of distinct shapes of the rocks used, the walls do not exhibit any clear coursing, as is common in modern stone walls or buildings. Stones were placed in an interlocking system that enhanced overall stability without the use of any mortar or cement. The walls range from 1.5 m to 4.2 m in height, with an average thickness of 1 m. The thickness of the walls increase at the entrances from 2 m to 3 m and rectangular slabs were used at the lintels (Onjala 2003).

Apart from Thimlich Ohinga, there are other similar stone structures in the region. These include Osani, Ongito, Kakwach, Kochingo, Masoge, Nyang'oma, Kamala, Nyawiso, Nyagidha, and Nyoniang, which have undergone massive destruction through farming and other human activities.

Geology

Rocks at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape are part of the Kavirondian System. They consist of boulder beds containing huge boulders of granite which are easily recognizable. Granite rocks are igneous rocks which were formed by slowly cooling pockets of magma that were trapped beneath the earth's surface. The granite at Thimlich Ohinga is an igneous intrusive rock. The rocks are grey in colour and are medium to coarse grained and are hard and tough. In the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape area, leucocratic granite is predominant. The granite is not foliated or sheared and seems to have some considerable amount of quartz. This granite is commonly referred to as the Migori granite and is generally dated at 2739 $\pm$ 111 Ma (Rb:Sr) and at 2.42 $\pm$ 0.06 Ga (Rb:Sr) (Ichangi 1990).

The Kavirondian rocks in this area are represented by boulder beds, felspathic grits and andesites, associated with an enormous mass of porphyrite. The extraordinary boulder beds, often contain huge yet well-rounded boulders of granite, porphyrite and many other rocks. They are easily recognized and are believed to have been swept down by torrents from scarps and mountain ranges which were being formed at the time.

There are other rock groups found within the area namely Pleistocene rocks formed as a result of faulting and tilting which took place in the area. There are also alluvial rocks recently owing to

erosion and deposition. Miocene deposits are visible in the form of clays and sand around the Gwasi area. This area is also associated with the Bukoban system or the Kisii series of the Paleozoic times consisting of basalt and quartz rocks. The final group is the Nyanzan basement system of Precambrian times mainly consisting of quartz.

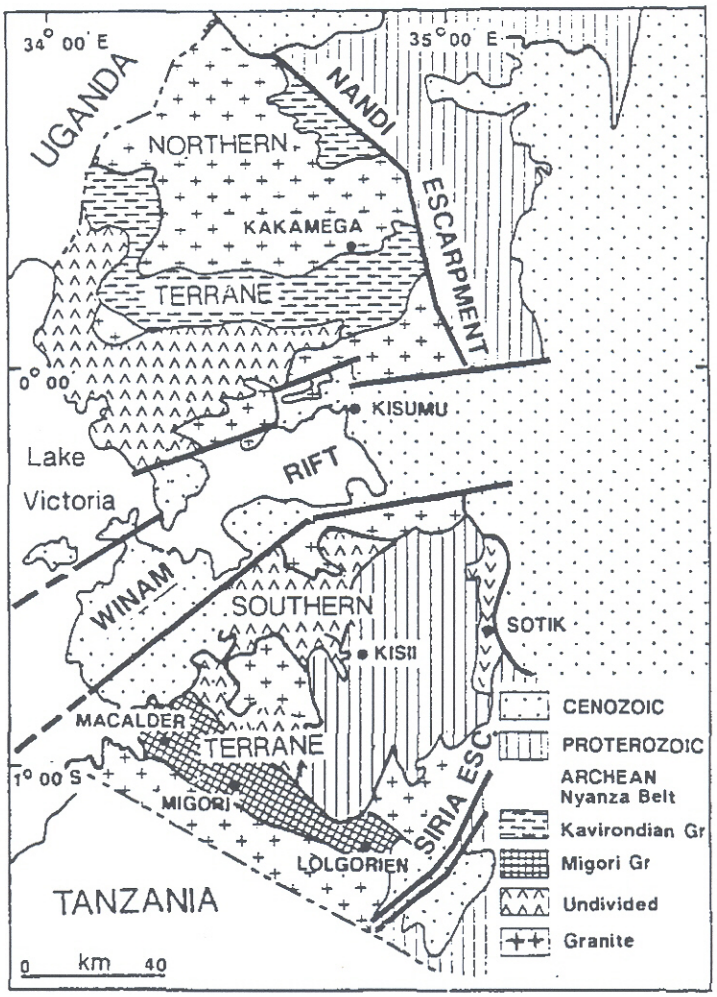


Figure 4: Diagram showing the geology of the Lake Victoria region (source: Ichangi 1990)

Environmental background

The area falls within the modified equatorial climate characterized by rainfall and temperature variations of 700 mm to 1500 mm and 14°^{C} to 34°^{C}, respectively. The area experiences rainfall in two main seasons annually, March-May (long rains) and October-November (short rains). Lake Victoria influences both the temperature and rainfall patterns by providing a cooling effect as well

as moisture that translates into rain, falling mainly in the evenings. Another influencing factor on the pattern of rainfall is relief. Land varies in altitude from 1163 m at the lake shore to 2272 m on the inland plateaus and hilly areas. Winds blowing across the lake lead to convectional rainfall (Onjala 1994). Human interference has also influenced the region's climate. Past settlement resulted in forest clearance, with farming and iron smelting practices being introduced. These affected water catchments and other aspects of the local environment (Onjala 2003).

There are also major rivers and streams that form the drainage pattern of the region. These rivers include River Kuja and Migori.

Biological diversity

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is rich in flora and fauna. The region in its entirety exhibits a very high level of biodiversity. The local community occupying the area today has a deeply rooted knowledge of the animals and plants which have a variety of uses. The fauna and flora are a major research data bank for local and international scientists. There are over 21 plant species in the landscape that the local communities have traditionally used for medicine, construction material, basketry, food and for magical purposes. Of the 21 species, some have more than one use. 15 species have medicinal use while 5 species being useful for their fruits. The traditional use is still relevant in the present generation and is evident as traditional healers still collect the materials from the site for the trade. Their local and scientific names are appended (See Annex 1 and 2).

2. b: History and Development

Fortified settlements were common features during the early periods of occupation in present day Western Kenya, including the Lake Victoria region. Pioneer and successive migratory waves of people from other areas necessitated the construction of such settlement as a means of mitigating security threats from potential enemy groups. Historical and archaeological studies suggest that, many of the inhabitants had a pastoral tradition where cattle played a key role in the economy (Ogot 1967; Ayot 1979; Onjala 2003). The value system with its emphasis on large herds demanded that more land be sought to maintain the herds despite the constant threat of mobile and militarily superior enemies. New settlements would be established when a given fortified

settlement was overpopulated with both humans and livestock. Studies also show that sociopolitical organization played a crucial role in the establishment of the fortified structures. When conditions were peaceful, small village groups appear to have been the only important political group. Where hostile conditions existed, larger units held together for defense. In the whole of the western Kenya region, there are over one hundred fortified settlements either built of stone or earth (Onjala 2003). Most of these fortified settlements have been destroyed over time due to pressure for land and modernization process.

The most recent phase of settlement in the Lake Victoria region started as early as the 15th century. Immigrants invaded the region from all directions and continued to enter as late as the 1940s. Much of this immigration occurred from the north, south and the west (Ogot 1967; Ayot 1979). Separate movements occurred at different periods of time although there is yet no well established chronology for each entry. Group identities for these immigrants are established on the basis of area of origin and direction of entry into the region. Oral tradition has it that early immigrants were basically of Bantu origin. This distinguished them from a later wave of immigrants who spoke a Nilotic dialect, Dholou. The latter group consisted mainly of the Luo who entered the region from the north. The period of immigration has been worked out on the basis of oral traditions (Ayot 1981).

The history of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape dates back to 500 years ago. Oral tradition has it that the earliest inhabitants were of Bantu groups including the Wagire and Kamageta. The Nilotic group that passed through the area consisted of the Kabuoch-Kachieng, Kadem, Kaler, Kanyamwa and Karungu. However, these groups later split and moved in different directions. The groups continued with the practice of stone structure construction. Both the Bantu and Nilotic groups seem to have adopted similar strategies in establishing their settlements (Onjala 1994). This pushes back the date of construction and occupation of the site to between 1590 and 1680, when such groups are known to have settled in the southwestern Kenya Lake Victoria region (Ayot 1979). These dates also correspond with charcoal samples from Thimlich Ohinga, which gives dates ranging from 1650 to 1900 AD (Wandibba 1986).

According to oral traditions (Ayot 1979; Onjala 1990), successive occupation by different groups has been the norm at the site. Its history is characterized by periodic occupation and out-migration until it was finally abandoned in the early twentieth century. In the 1680s the Nilotic Kabuoch-

Kachieng group moved into the area. The newcomers expanded the existing structures and built others further uphill. On hearing of prospects of better land elsewhere, this group later moved away. The site then fell into the hands of the Kanyamkago people led by Chief Ndisio, who was a magician, as they expanded their territory southwards. They eventually established themselves across River Kuja some 20 km away. Here, Ndisio established his headquarters and controlled much of the region that included the Thimlich area. The control of such a wide territory, especially land across the River Kuja, could not be sustained for long and soon the coveted settlement site of Thimlich fell into the hands of the Kadem people, another group that was also expanding southwards from their Raguda settlement in the present-day Karungu region. For reasons that are not clear, the Kadem people later handed over the site to the Kanyamwa people who remained there until the beginning of twentieth century. While not living on the site after this period, they continued to use it for various other purposes, mostly farming and grazing.

Throughout the periods of occupation, the site experienced modification in terms of additional walls, repairs and general maintenance. Additional structures were constructed uphill. These were mainly built by the Kabuoch-Kachieng people. The main enclosure has a demolished wall on the northern side where an extension was built, probably as a response to an increasing population. Enclosures to the main one, especially to the northeast, were also constructed to meet this particular need. (See figure 6).

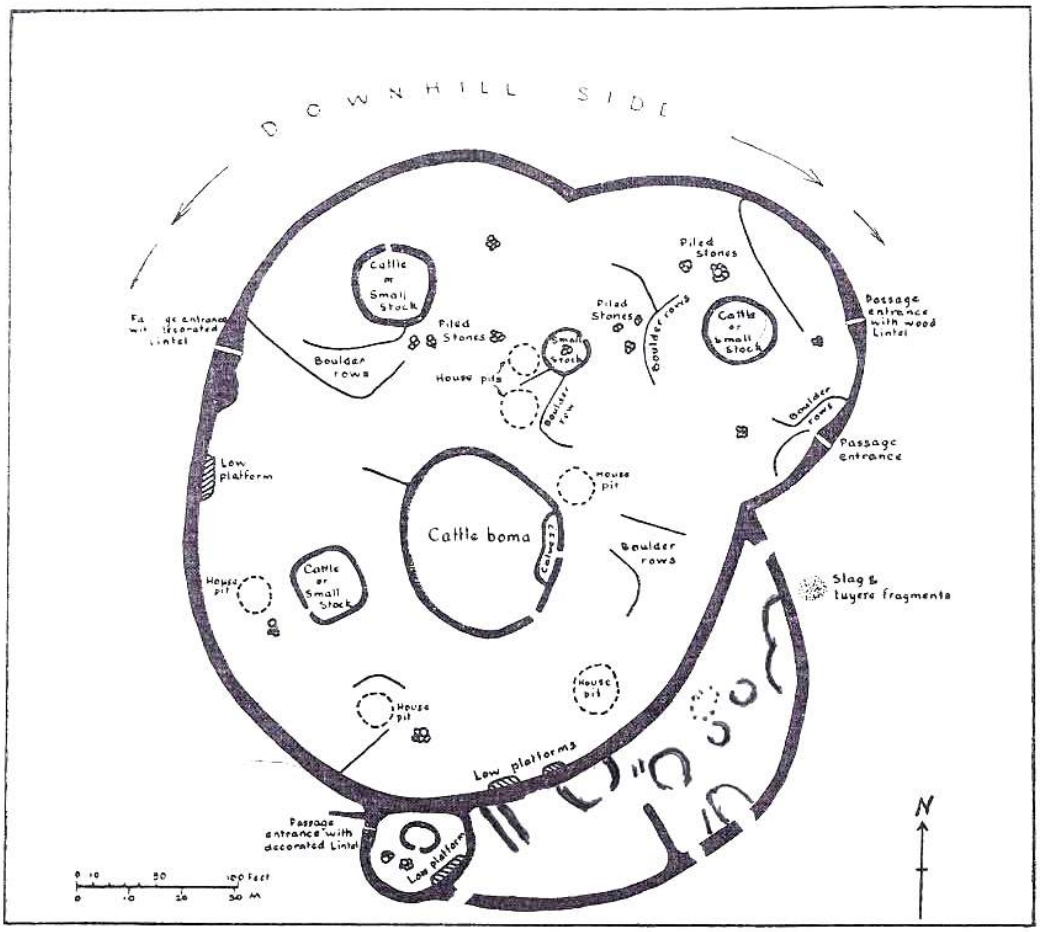


Figure 5: Illustration showing the extension at top right of the main enclosure (*Kochieng*) (source: Lofgren 1967)

Several reasons have been given for construction of the *Ohingni*. The structures are seen as a manifestation of areas of occupation by particular groups of people, a symbol of land ownership possibly evidenced by different engravings on gate lintels. In an area which was experiencing human settlement for the first time there was insecurity posed by the presence of wild animals and rivalry for land by competing immigrants. The structures were defensive forts and therefore have been called Hill Forts which were used for protecting livestock against wild animals and raiders, especially the Maasai people at a later period. They adequately blocked away any attackers who could not quickly enter the narrow guarded gates. Another reason for construction of the *Ohingni* is that the practice was more secure than other forms of fencing, such as, wood or tree fencing. It was, therefore, easier for the moving populations to construct stone structures where they settled while still scouting for better lands. The structures may therefore be used to establish points and

direction of movement of particular people if the people responsible and the chronology of the structures can be established (Onjala 1990).

Interviews conducted with knowledgeable people born between 1898 and 1962 and the results of environmental observations suggest that the *ohingni* can be interpreted in three basic ways in the context of oral history. The structures could be said were built for purposes of security in a newly settled region where dangers abounded, they may have been built due to social factors which made it possible for the livestock keeping culture to develop and thrive in this particular geographic region, or they were built on account of the favourable environmental conditions in the area where they are located (Onjala 1994).

Security is a theme which runs through these interpretations and is indeed evidenced in the architectural techniques of the *Ohinga.* However, given the wide geographical distribution of *Ohingni* in an ecologically diverse setting, it seems likely that several socio-political and environmental factors played a role in their construction, design and distribution.

The enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga acquired Luo names during the latter's occupation from the 17th Century. The pioneer Luo people who settled in the area arrived from Siaya through Mirunda Bay. The Bantu speakers present were, with time, assimilated or forced to move elsewhere (Fig. 7).

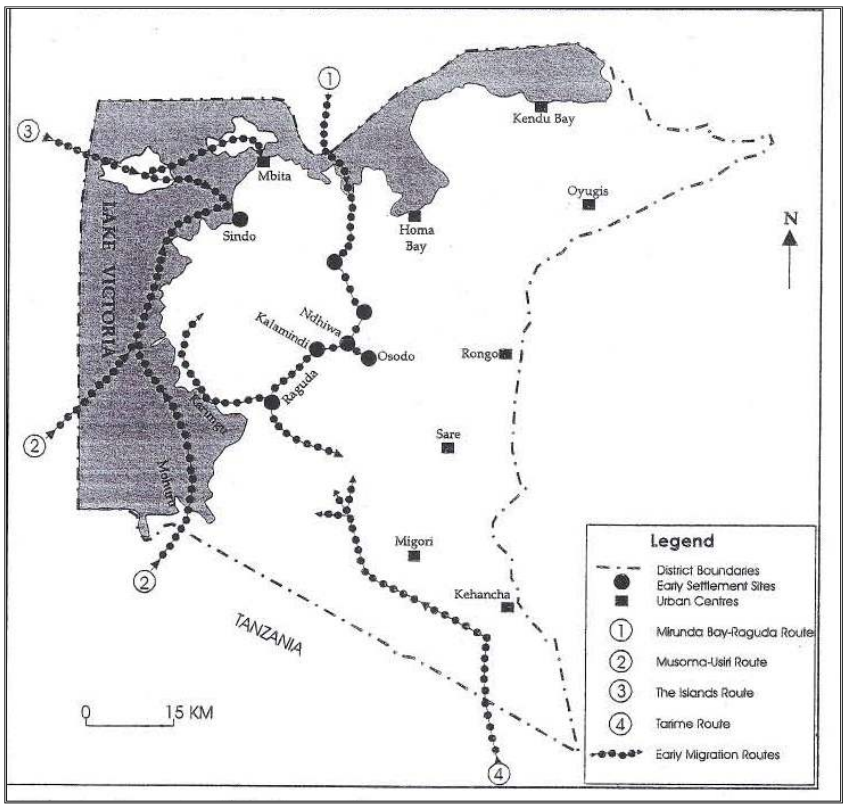


Figure 6: Map showing the migrations in the Western Kenya - Lake Victoria region (Source: Onjala 1990)

Complete abandonment of the site occurred in the early twentieth century. There was no further active occupation within the enclosures. Families that lived nearby continued to use land within the enclosures for livestock grazing and cultivation. This period coincided with the end of inter-clan conflicts and land acquisition demands. There were no major migrations and grand settlements in the region. People opted for smaller or individual open settlements as the area also became free of dangerous wild animals. The end of the establishment of the British colonial rule and 1st World War led to breakdown of traditional systems and family ties. Yet the maintenance and sustenance of these complexes depended on the very traditional systems. It was no longer possible to construct or maintain such massive stone structures. The site fell into decay and only survived the threats of time because of its unique in-built stability and favouring traditions of the communities living around it. It has survived and become a world recognized cultural heritage site.

Recent Conservation History

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September 1981 and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act which was repealed and replaced with the National Museums and Heritage Act *Cap* 216 of 2006.

In 1999, fencing of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape by the National Museums of Kenya began and was completed in 2000. In 2000, a detailed condition survey of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape was undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya. From 2001 to 2003, the American Express Company, through the World Monuments Watch (WMW) funded the first major partial restoration of the walls of Thimlich Ohinga. Between 2007 and 2008, the Ministry of State for National Heritage, through the National Museums of Kenya, funded restoration of the walls and excavation that was carried out at *Koketch* enclosure, the *industrial* area and the Blacksmith enclosure.

From 2011 to 2012, funding from the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) was used to carry out restoration of *Koketch* and *Koluoch* enclosures, as well as, restoring corridors. The funding was also used to put up interpretation panels and to facilitate community involvement in the conservation works.

Until the 1980s, the site was viewed as sacred by the local community who used it as a sacrifice venue in times of calamities. Presently, they use the site as a source of medicinal plants. They also frequently use the site facilities for community meetings. These links make all the communities within the surrounding areas claim ownership and a sense of belonging to the site and its history.

The scientific community contributes to and benefits from the site through research and visits. Many educational and research institutions, both local and international, have worked on the site. Examples include Schools, Universities, British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), Institute of French Research in Africa (IFRA), and UNESCO.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION

3. 1 a: Brief Synthesis

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a group of 14th century dry stone wall complexes located in Migori County, within the Lake Victoria Basin in Kenya. These imposing and structurally complex stone enclosures exhibit a highly developed indigenous architecture with in-depth knowledge of material, form and structure. They were constructed using predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique, with walls dotted with buttresses for structural stability. Thimlich Ohinga typifies what can be referred to as the archetype of three-phased stone layering technology.

The heritage is a testimony to great mobilization of labour in an otherwise non centralized system of leadership, in fluid mobile communities engaged in constant expansion of frontiers and faced with harsh and untamed environment, as well as, hostile neighbours. The *Ohingni* were part of an elaborate system of defense and expansionist agenda by the early settlers of southwestern Kenya. The tradition attained a very high degree of architectural planning involving functional spatial organization and an interior intricate communal occupation of successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples, who today form the majority of the population of East, Central and Southern Africa.

Archaeological evidence and oral literature indicate that Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa and beyond. The period between the14th and 16th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Thimlich Ohinga represents an advanced stage of indigenous African architectural technology which can be traced to the Sirikwa late Iron Age settlement sites in the Rift Valley of Kenya and Northern Tanzania as well as the livestock enclosures in the Horn of Africa.

The archaeological evidence shows that faunal remains are predominantly those of cattle, and, as such, the property expresses the centrality of livestock rearing in the East African region which is also supported by the design of the enclosures which were primarily for defense and protection of the people and their stock. However, it was also not lost on them to leave behind a rare feat of well-developed stone architecture of pure dry stone building technique.

3.1 b: Criteria under which the property is nominated

The criterion under which the site is being nominated is criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion iii

The cultural landscape is a living testimony to a unique cultural tradition. The magnificent layout of the site points to evolution from simple structures to more complex ones. The influence of this development went beyond Thimlich to the neighbouring areas within the region. It developed as an administrative centre where leadership consultations and labour organizations were carried out. It thus combined administrative, social welfare and economic functions. The functions endured until the entry of the British imperial power which disrupted much of the traditional systems leaving it as a place for occasional visits by locals to commune with the ancestral spirits.

Thimlich Ohinga embodied the complex social system that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the magnificent walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within.

Walls within the complex were believed to be a link with the ancestral spirits. This knowledge made all the occupants respect the walls and avoid any activity that would destroy them. This respect helped protect the site even after it was completely abandoned during the early twentieth century. Access into the complexes was through the gates and entry through any other point could only be allowed by the elders who also acted as a link between the people and the spirit world. It was believed that disobeying the rules governing the protection of the walls would invite the wrath of the spirits that lived in the walls from where they protected the people.

Criterion iv

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is an exceptional example of indigenous architecture characterized by a three-phase dry stone building technology which is not known to exist anywhere else. The development of the Cultural Landscape epitomized a higher stage of architectural evolution in the sub-Saharan region. The development of this type of dry-stone building tradition can be traced from simple structures during the late Iron Age Sirikwa

settlements in the East African Rift Valley, the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

3.1.c: Statement of integrity

The nominated area measuring approximately 21 hectares contains all the elements of the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape. It includes; the stone walls with their low entrances, the structural support features known as buttresses, low water/sludge draining vents from the inner livestock enclosures (kraals), the three-phase design, the inner and outer enclosures, the kraals, industrial site and house pits.

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) has ensured that archaeological excavations and restoration of walls at the site have applied conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property. The exterior part of the stone enclosures still have thick vegetation which afforded extra protection to the inhabitants and a few depressed cattle paths still remain that terminate at the gate entrances. There have been the challenge of rocks falling during heavy rains at weak sections but this are restored using the three phase traditional methods and thus maintaining the technology of construction.

The site is well secured by a perimeter fence that limits access through a single entrance. This controls the local community who come to collect herbs for human and livestock treatment, grass for thatching and fibres for basketry and for house construction. The periodic cutting of thatching grass is a conservation measures done by the local community under the supervision by the NMK staff as a control grass that regenerates fast within the enclosures.

3.1.d: Statement of authenticity

The Bantu people built and occupied the Thimlich Ohinga stone structures at around 14th century. The Nilotes arrived in the Lake Victoria region around the 16th century occupying the already existing stone structures until the late 20th century. Oral history indicates that the Nilotic occupants carried out maintenance work on the structures using the original materials and the traditional conservation technology.

These periods of occupation and repair did not interfere with the architecture and preservation of the structures. The nominated property has therefore retained its original architectural and aesthetic values. After their abandonment, no more stone structures were constructed at Thimlich

Ohinga. Consequently, landscapes of similar design in the larger Lake Victoria region were reduced to mere traces of circumferences or disappeared altogether. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is one of the few stone structures that have survived.

The original fabric of the structures has been preserved and the most recent repairs have applied the original technique of construction. The property has, therefore, retained its character in of design and material. Its sustainability is ensured through skills transfer where the maintenance works are carried out by traditional masons who train the youth through apprenticeship.

The design of the walls is linked to their original purpose and their spiritual significance. This character has been maintained and preserved to the present times. It is evident that the exterior walls were designed to be thicker in size compared to the walls of the interior enclosures. The outer walls assured the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was considered feminine while the walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within. The security role of the outer wall still bears the additional security features that include purposely incorporated surveillance posts that are recesses left on the walls during the stone laying stage of the wall construction which are sited only at the gate entrances. Thus the protective apparatus of the complex has been maintained as found.

Indigenous beliefs and practices that persist in the area have ensured that the property remain intact. The community reveres the site as they also believe that it is a link between them and their ancestors and during calamities, traditional sacrifices are carried out at the site. There is a shrine that is still occasionally used by the local community in times of severe draught. The shrine is in the form of an indigenous tree that still stands in the main enclosure known (*Kochieng*).

The stone enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape have evolved from originally being homesteads to preserved monuments up to the 20th century. Archaeological excavations at the site have used conventional scientific methods. The natural vegetation within the landscape and the site is a major source of medicinal plants used by the communities to the present.

3.1 e Protection and Management

The cultural landscape is protected by an act of parliament; the National Museums and Heritage Act, *Cap* 216 of 2006 and is managed by the National Museums of Kenya. A management plan has been formulated with the key objective of protecting the attributes of the dry stone

architecture and the associated features. The plan was drafted in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The local community participates in the site's routine maintenance under the careful supervision of qualified personnel of National Museums of Kenya based at the site, as well as senior staff that visit the site for major conservation and research activities.

3.2 Comparative analysis

Fortified settlements were common place in Africa during the early migration and settlement period. They were generally constructed for security, trade and administrative purposes while others were erected as landmarks for territorial ownership. Once established, they were used for conquest and expansion. Whereas a small percentage of the fortified settlements were earthen, the greater percentage was stone enclosures. In order to construct such monumental structures, there was need to have leadership to mobilize and organize labour for these constructions.

Thimlich Ohinga is one of such structures which was built for the purpose of defence by migrant populations in fairly new territories. Other structures which share some commonality and differences with Thimlich Ohinga are the Great Zimbabwe, the City walls of the Qing and Ming Dynasties of China and the Western Stone Forts of Ireland.

Great Zimbabwe National Monument

Great Zimbabwe National Monument is found in the midst of a wooded savannah backed by bare granite hills. Its coursed walls bear no mortar and reach enormous height, standing as high as 9 m over the surrounding savannah. The ruins form an amazing complex of regular, rectangular stones carefully placed upon each other. At Thimlich Ohinga the walls rise to about 4 meters and are assembled from undressed stones that were set in interlocking pattern without use of mortar. The major difference, therefore, is that at Thimlich Ohinga the complex was made of undressed stones.

At Great Zimbabwe, the stones were laid one atop the other with each layer slightly more recessed than the lower to produce a stabilizing inward slope. In contrast, Thimlich Ohinga employed a three-phase stone laying technique where the two outer layers interlock with the middle layer thereby concentrating the strength at the centre to increase stability of the walls.

The walls at Great Zimbabwe were constructed from granite blocks gathered from the exposed rock of the surrounding hills. Since this type of rock naturally splits into even slabs and can be broken into portable sizes, it provided a convenient and readily available building resource. At Thimlich Ohinga, the stones were of different shapes and sizes some of which were huge and heavy requiring some pulley-like equipment for lifting into position.

The Great Zimbabwe walls were built on hilltops for defensive purposes and also as symbolic show of authority designed to set the royal families apart from commoners while at Thimlich Ohinga there is no evidence of class differentiation. However, the walls were also constructed on hilltops for defense purposes.

Whereas Great Zimbabwe was constructed in the 11th Century and lasted for only 300 years, Thimlich Ohinga was constructed in the 14th century and lasted for 500 years, almost twice the time of occupation of the former.

In both cases, there are identifiably distinct architectural types. For instance, at Great Zimbabwe, the ruins form three distinct architectural types, namely, the Hill Complex, the Great Enclosure and the Valley Complex. At Thimlich Ohinga they are two distinct groups, simple and complex. The two sites are also associated with ritual practices and iron smelting.

Whereas Great Zimbabwe has received a lot of attention in terms of research, ongoing research has shown much more needs to be done at Thimlich Ohinga.

Thimlich Ohinga is a relatively more recent structure than Great Zimbabwe. It is said to have been abandoned at the turn of the nineteenth century due to changes brought about by the colonial administration and subsequent modernization.

Causes for the decline of Great Zimbabwe and ultimate abandonment of the site have been suggested as due to a decline in trade, political instability and famine and water shortages induced by climatic change.

City Wall in Xingcheng of China

Xingcheng City Wall is located at the west bank of Liaodong Bay of China, the middle part of Liaoxi Corridor and the central part of Xingcheng city. It was built in 1430 AD and meant to

protect and safeguard the city from intrusion from the north, thus making it an important military town. Thimlich Ohinga is a fourteenth century stone-built complex that was also used for defense purposes.

According to written records, the Xingcheng City Walls were restored in 1624, when its size, structure and layout were restored back to the original walls. Although Xingcheng City Walls had incurred many wars, natural disasters and political upheavals through its long history, it was not substantially damaged. Thimlich Ohinga, on the other hand, has not suffered any known natural disaster. However, it robustly withstood the turmoil of occupation by the different groups.

Xingcheng City Walls were square-shaped city walls in line with the Chinese cosmology that "the sky is round and the earth is square". To the Chinese, the square-shaped substance symbolizes the great earth, which should be steady and lasting in the long run. Xingcheng City Wall was built into a square-shape meant to adopt the firmness and steadiness of the great earth, in the hope that nothing would destroy it. On the contrary, the structures and enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga are mainly circular and oval in shape although a few of the enclosures have an undefined shape. The shapes are functional rather than symbolic.

The foundation of the Xingcheng City wall is composed of 1 metre glutinous rice slurries further rammed with a proportion of 30% ashes mixed with 70% soils on top of which three layers of longitudinal stones were laid. The external earthen walls were laid with large blocks of black bricks, whose slots were filled with lime slurries. The inner walls were laid with tiger skin and stones, using lime slurries to fill the slots. The middle parts of the walls were rammed with yellow soils. At Thimlich Ohinga, the stones were placed in an interlocking system without any mortar or cement. This is what is commonly referred to as an archetype of three-phased stone layering technology.

City wall of Xi'an

The city wall of the Xi'an City is located in the urban district of Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province. It was built in the Hongwu period of the Ming Dynasty, from 1370 to 1378.

Xi'an city wall had been maintained well through Ming and Qing Dynasties, with several times reparation, one of which was of a relatively large scale. The original wall was made of

compressed earth. In the second year of the Ming Dynasty Longqing Period (1568), blue bricks were laid on the top and the external sides of the walls. In the forty sixth year of the Qing Dynasty Qianlong Period (1781), the second large-scale maintenance was made. Drainage and crenels were added at this time. The structure of the present city wall of Xi'an mostly came from this reparation. In 1983, Xi'an's municipal government went through another comprehensive maintenance for the city wall. Part of the building was recovered, such as one Yangmacheng (tower where the late sheep and horses can rest at night), one Zhalou (the sluice tower), one Kuixinglou (the dipper tower), three Jiaolou (corner tower) and three Dilou (defence tower).

Thimlich Ohinga, a dry stone structure, served as an enclosure for livestock. Like the Xi'an City walls, Thimlich Ohinga also had a drainage system. The drainage openings at Thimlich Ohinga were located at the base of the enclosures. In both Xi’an and Thimlich Ohinga, there were towers which were used primarily for security purposes (http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentative lists/5324 April 2012).

Western Stone Forts of Ireland

The Western Stone Forts are dry stone walls occurring in stony areas and are located in the west of Ireland. Thimlich Ohinga also consists of dry stone walls that form a complex. The stone forts are exceptionally thick and have high enclosing walls. The walls are between 4 m and 9 m thick and up to 6 m high. They have distinctive architectural features such as terraces, steps and guard chambers. The Thimlich Ohinga walls range in height from 1.5 m to 4.2 m with an average thickness of 1m; however, the wall thickens at the entrances rise to between 2 m and 3 m. The features at Thimlich Ohinga include buttresses and large watch towers that could accommodate a single seated or standing person. There were also cattle kraals, house pits, bao games, grinding stones, iron working areas. The entrances were of low constructions with huge slabs for security purposes and had engraved lintels.

Archaeological excavations at the Western Stone Forts have revealed that they were royal sites used as residences of the kings or sub-kings of early medieval dynastic groups. At Thimlich Ohinga, however, no class systems are evident. Therefore the enclosures functioned as communal sites.

The Western Stone Fort enclosures were generally circular and their distribution character and hierarchy provide a mirror of the organization, economy and polity of the Irish society between AD 700 and 1000. They used the *murus duplex* method of wall construction and the landscape setting of these forts testifies to a way of life, such as, tribal pastoralism that disappeared in Ireland. Archaeological evidence has revealed that the occupants of Thimlich Ohinga were also pastoralists who constructed circular stone structures (whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5525 retrieved September 2012).

3.3 Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is a group of 14th century dry stone wall complexes located in Migori County, within the Lake Victoria Basin in Kenya. These imposing and structurally complex stone enclosures exhibit a highly developed indigenous architecture with in-depth knowledge of material, form and structure. They were constructed using predetermined choice of undressed stone, meticulously arranged in a traditional three-phase architectural technique, with walls dotted with buttresses for structural stability. Thimlich Ohinga typifies what can be referred to as the archetype of three-phased stone layering technology.

The *Ohingni* were part of an elaborate system of defense and expansionist agenda by the early settlers of Southwestern Kenya. The tradition attained a very high degree of architectural planning involving functional spatial organization and an interior intricate communal occupation of successive Bantu and Nilotic peoples, who today form the majority of the population of East, Central and Southern Africa.

Thimlich Ohinga was a major point of confluence for cultural interaction and peopling in the Lake Victoria Basin of East Africa and beyond. The period between the14th and 16th centuries marked an important episode in the migration and settlement of the Lake Victoria Basin and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Thimlich Ohinga is an exceptional example of an advanced stage of indigenous African architectural technology characterized by a three-phase dry stone building technology which is not known to exist anywhere else in the world. The development of the Cultural Landscape epitomized a higher stage of architectural evolution in the sub-Saharan region. Evolution of this

type of dry-stone building tradition can be tracked from simple structures during the late Iron Age Sirikwa settlements in the East African Rift Valley, the cattle enclosures in the Horn of Africa, culminating in the complex stone structures at Thimlich Ohinga.

The archaeological evidence shows that faunal remains are predominantly those of cattle, and, as such, the property expresses the centrality of livestock rearing in the East African region which is also supported by the design of the enclosures which were primarily for defense and protection of the people and their stock.

The cultural landscape is a living testimony to a distinctive cultural tradition. Thimlich Ohinga embodied the complex social system that defined the community. The walls were an integral part of the community, a source of the community's sustenance and protection. The whole complex was symbolically considered feminine, playing the mother role of nurturing while the magnificent walls played the 'masculine' role as the protector of people and animals that lived within.

The nominated area contains all the elements of the architectural tradition that includes; the stone walls with their low entrances, the structural support features known as buttresses, the three-phase design, the inner and outer enclosures, the kraals, industrial site, and leisure areas. Archaeological excavations at the site have applied conventional scientific methods that do not compromise the status of the property. The original architectural and aesthetic values have been maintained through adherence to the original technique of construction during all restoration activities. Sustainability is assured by having traditional masons train the youth through apprenticeship.

The cultural landscape is a gazetted site and thus protected laws of Kenya and is managed by the National Museums of Kenya. All activities on the site follow the existing management plan which was drafted in consultation with the local community.

4. STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

4. a: Present state of conservation

As a result of protecting Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape using the Kenyan law, through the gazettment process and by working with the local community living in the environs of the site, the

critical threats that would have seen to the neglect, deterioration and subsequent destruction of the site have been curbed.

Thimlich Ohinga is currently surrounded by a barbed wire perimeter fence. This contributes to its protection and wards off the local community and their livestock who would otherwise use the site as their herding grounds.

Occasional scientific research carried out at the site contributes to monitoring of the site. There is a caretaker and guides permanently stationed at the site who ensure tampering with the walls does not take place. On a daily basis there is clearing of vegetation that would otherwise affect the stability of the walls. This is done in and around the site. Security personnel at the site ensure illegal sourcing of stones is curbed.

The physical condition of the walls is good as they have been well maintained and preserved. The walls are stable and there is periodical monitoring and restoration when the need arises. Access to the site is through one entrance ensuring the control of visitors. The dry stone wall structures have designated entries and there is a clear path and walk ways to prevent interference with the walls. The method used for construction of the walls, that is, the three phase system, is clear for all to see and understand. The unique features, such as, the external support ramps, buttresses, surveillance posts, lintel inscriptions at the entrances, *bao* game, grinding stones, house pits, cattle enclosures and drainage ducts are all intact. The archaeological excavation sites are demarcated and well preserved. The cultural landscape has signage giving explanations on the unique features, as well as, directions on how to navigate round the site. This has been due to concerted efforts by the National Museums of Kenya and the local community.

There is a problem of vegetation encroachment. The trees render the walls unsteady and if they remain unchecked they may cause the deterioration of the walls. However, those that tend to grow nearest to the walls are periodically removed as a conservation measure. There is also a problem of the stones on the walls being loosened and falling due to the activities of monkeys. The staffs at the site have been trained to replace them when this occurs.

On certain sections of the walls there is lichen growth which gives the walls a grey hue. However, steps are currently being taken to control this.

The indigenous plants that grow within the site are well taken care of and their growth is monitored as they have many uses to both the local community and researchers and also contribute to the aesthetic value of the site.

4. b: Factors affecting the property

(i) Human and animal activities

There is occasional illegal grazing, collection of firewood and harvesting of sisal which grows naturally within the site. This, however, takes place when some members of the neighbouring community destroy sections of the fence and gain entrance to the site.

There is also encroachment of wildlife on the site as it is the only dense thicketed area with vegetation in the environs.

(ii) Environmental pressures

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape like any other site within the tropical region is subject to its varied climatic conditions. Water from excessive rain can cause instability to the walls due to flooding as it does not penetrate through the soil easily due to its clayey nature.

Trees growing near the walls are potential threats to the stability of the walls but these are removed periodically. Some parasitic tree species grow on rock crevices which could be a danger but are promptly removed when noticed.

Animals such as monkeys occasionally climb the walls contributing to the instability of the walls.

(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is not known to have faced any major natural disaster in history. However minor earthquakes do destabilize the walls and loosen the rocks.

(iv) Responsible visitation at World Heritage sites

Visitors have not caused any pressures as they are guided by the National Museums of Kenya staff as they visit and carry out research at the sight. The numbers of visitors to the site is negligible and can be controlled. Use of undesignated footpaths used to be a threat but has now been controlled.

(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone

Estimated population located within:

Area of nominated property – 4 members of staff

Buffer zone – 0

Total – 4 members of staff

Year - 2012

5. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

5. a: Ownership

The property is owned and managed by the National Museums of Kenya, which is a state corporation and whose headquarters is in Nairobi, the capital city.

5. b: Protective designation

The site was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September 1981 (Appendix 1) and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act *CAP* 215 which was repealed and replaced with the National Museums and Heritage Act 2006.

5.c: Means of implementing protective measures

The National Museums and Heritage Act *Cap* 216 of 2006 is an Act of Parliament that consolidates the law relating to national museums and heritage; provides for the establishment, control, management and development of national museums; and the identification, protection, conservation and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage of Kenya (Appendix 2).

A brief description is provided below explaining how the Heritage Act works.

Declaration of monuments

After consultation with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), the Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture may by notice in the gazette declare an open space to be a protected area within the meaning of the Act, a specified place or immovable structure considered to be of historical interest, and a specified area of land under or adjoining it, a site on which a buried monument or object of archaeological or palaeontological interest exists or is believed to exist, or a specified area of land adjoining it required for its maintenance.

Control of access to protected area

The Act allows the Minister in respect of a protected area by notice in the Kenya Gazette, to prohibit or restrict access, development, or for agriculture or livestock use or any other activity which is liable to damage a monument or object of archeological or palaeontological interest. The Minister may also place protected areas under the control of the NMK on such terms. The Minister may also direct or authorize the NMK to take such steps that are necessary or desirable for the maintenance of the protected area. The NMK may formulate necessary by-laws for controlling access thereto with or without payment, and enforce laws for conduct of visitors in the protected area.

Guardianship of monuments

The owner (s) of a monument may, by written instrument, constitute the NMK as the guardian of the monument if the latter agrees. When a specific property or national monument is declared a national monument within the meaning of the Act, the custodian is the NMK and if restoration, modifications or changes are to be made on the property, the NMK provides expertise enabling the site to retain its authenticity.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is protected through other Kenyan Laws. These include the Government Lands Act *Cap* 280 of 2010 which is an Act of Parliament to make further provision for regulating and leasing and other disposal of Government Land and for other purposes. Another law is that of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act 1999, which provides for the establishment of appropriate legal and institutional frameworks for the management of the environment and for matters connected to it. There is also the Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act *Cap* 376 of 1985 that handles the protection, conservation and management of wildlife in Kenya and for purposes connected therewith and incidental thereto. In addition, the Forests Act 2005 provides for the establishment, development and sustainable management, including conservation and rational utilization of forest resources and for the socio-economic development of the country.

5.d: Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located

Tourism Strategic Plan (Appendix 3)

Agency responsible – Ministry of Tourism

Date – 2010-2015

This strategic plan is informed by the Vision 2030 of the Ministry of Planning and the National Tourism Policy, the National Policy on Culture and Heritage, Department of Culture, Bomas of Kenya, and the National Museums of Kenya. The strategy acknowledges the challenges faced by the country in the development of cultural and heritage tourism and has thus come with ways that ensure the development of the sector and which provides quality culture and heritage tourism to all visitors.

To implement this strategy, the Ministry of Tourism coordinates the execution of the various programmes and activities proposed in the plan. The Ministry works closely with the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture where the National Museums of Kenya falls under. The Ministry also works with bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, communities and other stakeholders in the sector.

The strategic plan recognizes the potential of culture and heritage in the improvement of economic vitality of the Kenyan communities. In the plan, historic/ heritage buildings, sites and monuments are part of the available products for cultural and heritage tourism. The main themes in the plan are policy development for marketing of culture and heritage, empowerment of local communities, preservation and conservation and development of the heritage. The plan has an objective to identify and safeguard Kenya's tangible and intangible heritages that are relevant to tourism development in line with UNESCO Conventions and, promotion of the development of heritage products in tourism to be in tandem with current needs of the country.

The strategic plan seeks to address the issues that have positively or negatively impacted on cultural and heritage tourism. These include climate change, policy governance/legal issues, negative ethnicity, scarce resources, economic recession, global politics, UNESCO world heritage

sites, cross border conflicts on shared resources, training in culture and heritage at university level.

Nyanza and Western Kenya Tourism Development Plan (Appendix 4)

Agency responsible – Tourism Trust Fund under the auspices of the Government of Kenya the Ministry of Tourism being the responsible agency with the support from European Union

Date – 2009

The overall aim of the Nyanza and Western Kenya Tourism Development Plan is to ensure that tourism retains its position as a leading export, and that it becomes a major vehicle for job creation, poverty reduction and wealth creation for Kenyans in the future, and whose practices are closely harmonized with key national policies and laws pertaining to wildlife conservation, land ownership and physical planning. The plan also provides the framework for controlled tourism development that does not generate environmental or socio-cultural problems. The purpose is to promote tourism and at the same time conserve the environment and culture. The plan advocates for maximum participation of local residents in the development process and sharing the benefits that accrue. The plan lists the tourism product development opportunities and proposes a framework within which the development should be undertaken.

In order to create a varied experience and at the same time diversify the tourism product, a tourism circuit plan was developed. Local knowledge and insight was helpful in creating this circuit. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape was incorporated in the circuit, as well as, nearby attractions, such as, Gogo Waterfalls. A tour of the museums in the area, other cultural heritage sites, nearby animal sanctuaries and parks and also sites indicating the industrial potential of the area were also included in the circuit (Fig 8).

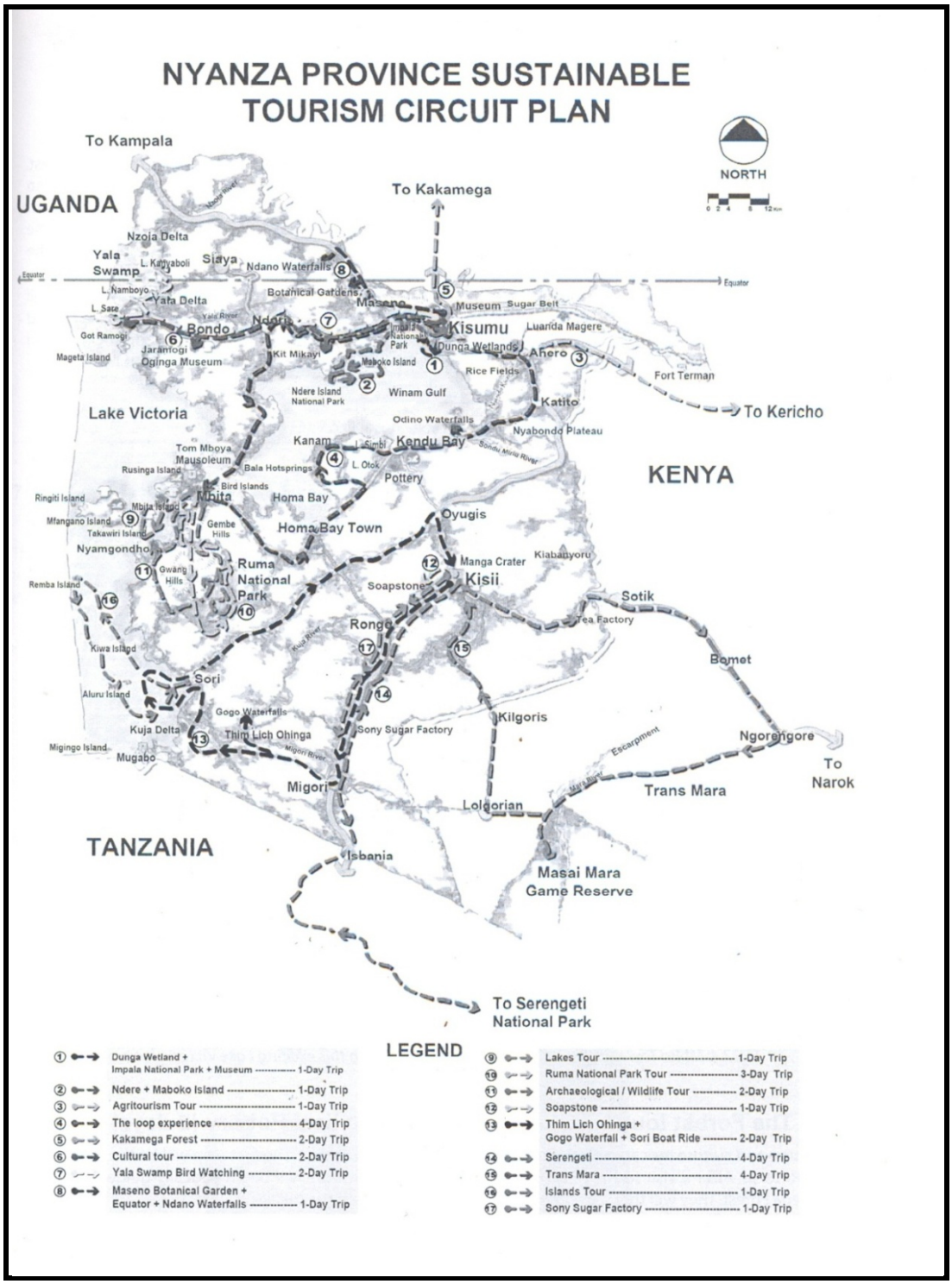


Figure 7: Thimlich Ohinga Cultural landscape on the Tourist Circuit

Migori District Environment Action Plan (Appendix 5)

Agency responsible – National Environment Management Authority under the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources

Date – 2009 – 2013

The Migori District Environmental Action Plan addresses environmental aspects in trade, industry, tourism and service sectors. The key issues are high pollution levels from industrial activities and weak enforcement of relevant legislations.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is incorporated in the study area. The plan cites Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape, other historical sites and nearby waterfalls developed as viable tourist sites. It goes ahead to list the tourist facilities available in the district. The plan also sites proposed interventions which include: extending the western tourism circuit in Kenya, encouraging sustainable and eco-tourism development, promotion of cultural and sports tourism, development of infrastructure, development of tourism facilities and improvement of information communication technology in order to promote tourism.

5. e: Property management plan or management system

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape Management Plan (Annex 3)

The Agency responsible for the daily management of the site is the National Museums of Kenya. The current management plan management covers the period from 2012 to 2017. The Thimlich Ohinga Management Plan has been prepared to harmonize the flow and direction of conservation activities that are taking place and those planned to take place at the landscape. The main objective is to empower the professional staffs involved to carry out the right actions to realize the goal of preserving and daily management of the site. The main focus of the plan is preservation and conservation of the key attributes of the site which principally are the outer walls, the interior enclosures with the associated features and the natural vegetation. The plan also forms a reference point for all future activities running from 2012 until 2017 and is thus critical in evaluating what is permissible and how the various interested stakeholders will engage with the landscape.

Thimlich Ohinga has several stakeholders with direct effects to the conservation of the landscape.

Their roles in the current management of the site vary considerably but mainly form a consultative body in the management process rather than the executive or decision making body. The most critical of these stakeholders are:

National Museums of Kenya (NMK)

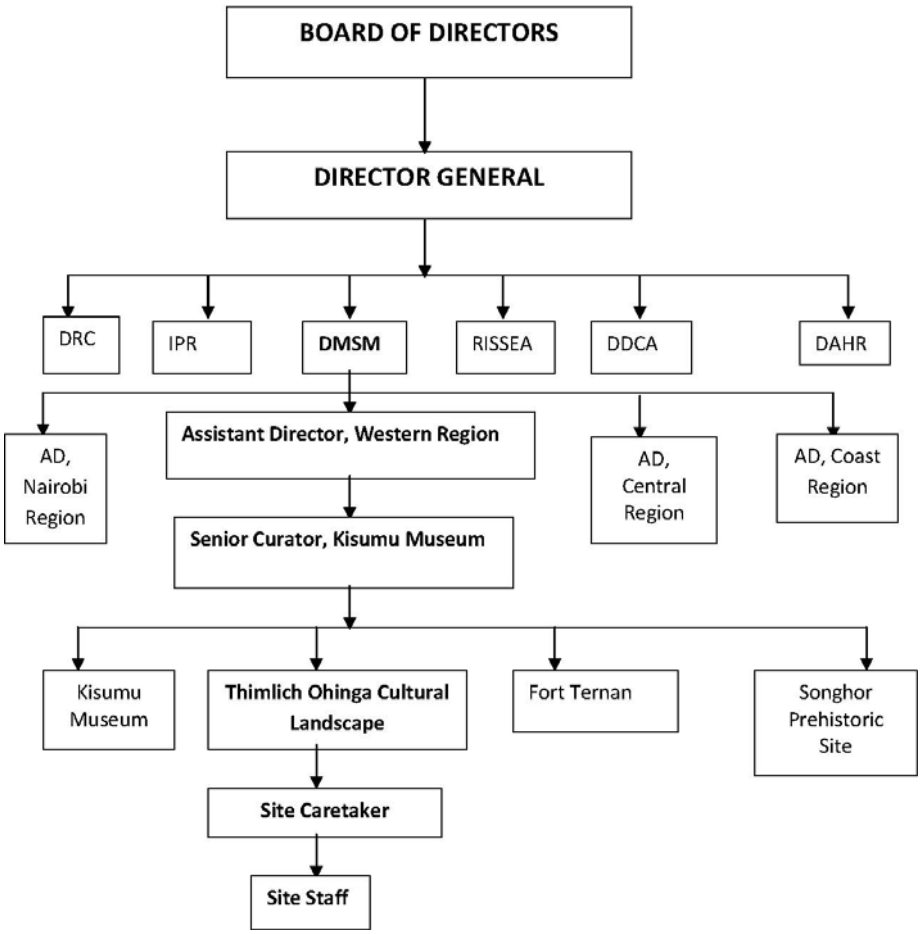
This is a parastatal that acts on behalf of the Government of Kenya by holding the property in trust for both the Government and the community together with the other stakeholders. Maintenance and all forms of conservation, research, marketing and promotion of the site are the responsibility of the NMK. The institution plays host to all other stakeholders and plans to collect revenue that will be pumped back to the management of the site.

Community

The community, consisting of different groups including farmers, business community, medicine men and women groups, forms a second category of stakeholders. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape serves as a meeting venue where issues affecting the community are deliberated. The National Museums of Kenya staff and visitors to the site purchase goods and services from the community thus providing much needed market for their produce. The staff and occasional guests, particularly researchers, buy most of their daily supplies and consumables from such traders within a radius of about 12km. This, therefore, extends the geographic area that the site serves and increases the number of stakeholders in this category. This interaction has resulted in boosting the sense of ownership of the site by the local community.

The landscape contains some of the natural vegetation that remains within the area. It has been used in the past as a source of medicinal plants, a role it continues to play to the present. In this capacity, the site has attracted the interest of medicine men or traditional herbalists as a subgroup within the category of community stakeholders. This group continues to use the site with permission from NMK as a collection point for medicinal herbs to treat ailments such as malaria. The community also links with the site as a place where they used rituals to consult the spirits during periods of environmental instability or social upheavals. These functions of the site seem to have ended but the community still looks at the site as a link to their ancestral spirits. The NMK recognizes this link and has made it clear that the community can carry out any such rituals whenever there is need.

Below is an organogram showing the management structure from the top government authorities to the local level.



DRC – Directorate of Research and Collections
IPR – Institute of Primate Research
DMSM – Directorate Museums, Sites and Monuments
RISSEA – Research Institute of Swahili Studies of Eastern Africa
DDCA – Directorate of Development and Corporate Affairs
DAHR – Directorate of Administration and Human Resource
AD – Assistant Director

Figure 8 Management structure of Thimlich Ohinga

5. f: Sources and levels of finance

National Museums of Kenya

The institution has employed both permanent and contractual staffs who take care of the site. Employee remuneration including running of the site per annum is approximately US $ 13,475.

Archaeological Institute of America

In 2012 the National Museums of Kenya was awarded a grant of US $ 23,700.

The grant went towards conservation and restoration with emphasis being placed on local community involvement and training the future generation on traditional conservation methods.

United Nations Education and Cultural Organization World Heritage Fund

In 2011 UNESCO funded the National Museums of Kenya US $29,990 for preparation of a nomination dossier and management plan for Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

American Express Company

Through the World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites, in 2000 the National Museums of Kenya was awarded a grant of US$40,000 for the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape Restoration Project.

Deficiencies – Inadequate funding for site conservation, infrastructure development, marketing and development, research and education. The staffs present at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape are inadequate and those present are in need of further and up to date conservation and management training.

5. g: Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

The National Museums of Kenya has staffs that have been trained at both local and foreign educational institutions. These staff members are in possession of various degrees for example, Doctorate, Masters and First Degrees. They have been trained in archaeology, anthropology, geology, geography, cartography and photography.

These staff members offer in-house training and pass on the skills they have acquired to those members of staff who do not have the opportunity to study.

Occasionally there have been researchers from foreign countries trained in the same or similar fields of study who carry out research studies at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape. These pass on the findings of their research to the National Museums of Kenya. Staff members of the National Museums occasionally take up short courses offered by the following institutions:

Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), which is an international Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) dedicated to the preservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage in Africa through a programme of training and development support services. Its core value is in the preservation of Immovable, Movable and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa. http://www.heritageinafrica.org

International Centre for the Study and Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), which is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage. By offering training to applicants from the Africa region, it emphasizes that the problems facing conservation in Africa must be addressed not only through technical solutions, but also by taking into account the relationship between the immovable cultural heritage and its social, environmental and economical aspects.

5. h: Visitor facilities and statistics

Majority of the visitors are local residents from the nearby community, schools, universities and research organizations within the country. The non-resident visitors are mainly researchers and students from international universities and research centers.

YEAR	RESIDENTS (LOCAL)	NON-RESIDENTS (FOREIGNERS)	TOTAL
2001	5	2	7
2004	15	5	20
2005	187	15	202
2007	137	39	176
2008	206	22	228
2009	205	59	264
2010	284	40	324
2011	199	48	247

Table 1: Visitors' statistics 2001 to 2011

The site has a resource documentation center, a ticket office, washrooms and car park. However, plans are underway for a proposed picnic site, camping site and eco-lodge.

5. i: Policies and programmes related to presentation and promotion of the property

National Policy on Culture and Heritage (Appendix 7)
Agency responsible – Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture
Date – 2009

The Kenyan Culture and National Heritage Policy is aimed at ensuring the fullest possible expression of culture and heritage in all their facets including equal access for all cultures to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form. It is also aimed at ensuring the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination.

The Culture and National Heritage Policy shall ensure that national heritage in all their forms are preserved, enhanced and handed over to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among Kenya's diverse cultures.

Culture and Heritage

Tangible Cultural Heritage - Refers to objects, movable and immovable, which men and women use to benefit from their physical environment. It includes archaeological findings, which testify to the high degree of our past civilization.

Policy Statement

The government shall enhance, support and assist in the promotion of the cultural heritage of Kenya by encouraging, preserving, sustaining and disseminating knowledge of traditional and contemporary tangible culture.

The government shall be committed to the protection, preservation and even retrieval of important objects of tangible culture including archaeological findings which bear witness to the antiquity of Kenyan Cultural expression.

The government recognizes the importance of research in the promotion and preservation of tangible culture and shall take all necessary steps to facilitate and encourage research in all aspects of culture.

The government shall endeavor to preserve cultural landscapes that testify to the creative genius, social development and imaginative spiritual vitality of humanity, all of which are part of Kenya's cultural identity.

Historical Sites, Monuments and Physical Environment

Sites and Monuments form the nation's immovable heritage. These cultural landscapes are a testimony of identities and shared aesthetical values.

Policy Statement

The government will establish and fund institutions at different levels to ensure the conservation and promotion of Kenya's immovable heritage and will further enact laws that provide the appropriate legislative and administrative framework for the protection of sites and monuments.

The government will encourage the participation of local communities in the planning and management of sites and monuments.

Cultural Tourism

Whereas cultural tourism is a vital foreign exchange earner and a major employment sector in our country, it is also an important avenue for local, regional and international understanding and has implications on intercultural relations and reduction of conflicts.

Policy Statement

The government shall encourage public, private individuals and institutions to establish and maintain networks that promote cultural tourism while ensuring that cultural products and services are not unduly exploited and/or corrupted.

The government will actively assist individuals, public and private institutions/organizations and communities in organizing, managing and marketing cultural products, festivals and services.

National Museums of Kenya, Tourism Sites (Appendix 8)

Agency responsible – National Museums of Kenya

Date – 2011

The National Museums of Kenya through the Department of Regional Museums, Sites and Monuments together with input from the Public Relations and Marketing Department has developed a tourism document for its museums and sites. This document is presented in the form of a map which is divided into three regions namely; coastal region, central region and western region. Each region has museums and site museums of archaeological or palaeontological interest which are important heritage sites to Kenya. There is a short description of the sites in each region, their location and also photographs of the sites. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is highlighted in the map and aptly described in the text. A copy of The National Museums of Kenya, Tourism Sites has been appended to this dossier.

Know Your Country Fact Book (Appendix 9)

Agency responsible – Public Communication Office, Office of the President

This is the ultimate guide to history, heritage, themes, traditions, genesis and trends of Kenya. It gives historical, cultural and factual aspects of Kenya. Its publishing came about as a result of Vision 2030 the Kenya national development blueprint that aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment.

The book gives information about Kenya which includes a brief history of Kenya. It gives facts on Kenya, such as, government type, location, surface area, population, suffrage, language, national colours, time zone, lowest and highest point, terrain, climate, religion, population growth, airports, railways, people of Kenya, provinces, extremities, currency, economy, industry, agriculture, natural resources, exports, communication among others.

The book gives information on the list of parks and reserves, hours of operation and park rules. It gives the name of the park, major attractions in the park, about the park, access to the park, contacts and where to stay i.e. in park accommodation.

The book gives information on museums and gazetted monuments of Kenya. It gives a list of the monuments in Nairobi, Rift Valley, Central, Coast, Eastern and Nyanza provinces. It gives a

description of the sites in Kenya and coloured pictures. It also gives the distance of towns from the main city of Nairobi. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is well described here.

5. j: Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

Archaeologist, Assistant Director, Western Region, National Museums of Kenya – The archaeologist studies past human life and culture by the examination of physical remains. The archeologist has studied the past human culture at Thimlich Ohinga through the recovery, documentation, analysis and interpretation of material remains and environmental data, including architecture, artifacts, features, biofacts and the landscape. He is in possession of a doctorate in Archaeology and sees to the administration of all museums and site museums in the Western Region of the country.

Cultural Anthropologist, Principal Curator, Kisumu Museum, National Museums of Kenya – The anthropologist has studied the past human life and culture of Thimlich Ohinga by the examination of physical remains. The anthropologist has also studied the cultural evolution of the people of Thimlich Ohinga in the past and present i.e. cultural change over time and space. He is in possession of a Masters Degree in Anthropology and sees to the administration of Kisumu Museum. The Site Caretaker of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape reports directly to him.
Site Caretaker, Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape – The caretaker is in possession of a Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, has attended training at the world renowned Koobi Fora Field School in Turkana and is currently undertaking Diploma Studies in Tourism Management. He acts as a curatorial assistant and visitor guide and sees to the daily running of the site and manages the staff working under him.

The site caretaker reports to the Senior Curator, Kisumu Museum, who works directly under the Assistant Director, Western Region of the National Museums of Kenya.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape has four support staff tasked with the maintenance and daily running of the site and see to it that the site is well kempt. Their mandate includes vegetation clearing and restoration works. There site also has two security staffs.

6. MONITORING

Monitoring has been taking place at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape since construction. Traditionally there were set rules and regulations in the form of prohibitions and taboos that were invisible laws that protected the site and its walls, the flora and fauna.

Since the National Museums of Kenya took over the management of the site, maintenance and accessibility to the site is controlled by its members of staff.

6. a: Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
Condition survey: Assessment of wall condition Assessment of vegetation growth	Daily routine checks and observation by staff stationed at the site.	Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape, National Museums of Kenya
Photographs	Taken when the need arises for instance documentation and analysis of site condition providing current status of the site before, during and after any restoration activity at the site.	Kisumu Museum, Audio Visual Department and Sites and Monuments Department, National Museums of Kenya
Status of fence: Inspection of barbed wire and poles used to construct fence Breakage points at fence	Daily observation by staff stationed at the site	Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape, National Museums of Kenya

Table 2: Key indicators for state of conservation

6. b: Administrative arrangements for monitoring property

a) Assistant Director, Western Region
National Museums of Kenya
P. O. Box 9194 – 40141
Kisumu, Kenya
Telephone: 254 57 20263556
Email: ionjala@museums.or.ke

b) Senior Curator, Kisumu Museum
National Museums of Kenya
P. O. Box 1779 – 40100
Kisumu, Kenya
Telephone: 254 57 2020332; Email: woloo@museums.or.ke

6.c: Results of previous reporting exercises

i) Final project report for the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) community based conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape – August 2012

Thimlich Ohinga AIA Community Based Conservation Project began in July/August 2011. Three major goals were set out namely; completion of restoration work, development of basic interpretive material, including, site signage system and lastly, active involvement of local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process.

- The first goal was fully achieved through a carefully conducted condition survey of the entire cultural landscape, a 3-month plus restoration of dilapidated walls, occasional pre-emptive restoration of weakened structures and carefully controlled vegetation management.
- The second goal was achieved through the development of road signage and site interpretative signage system. A site map was also produced showing the location of major features within the cultural landscape.

- The third and last goal was fully achieved through a series of workshops, including three community workshops, one education workshop and one all stakeholders workshop.

The project realized three distinct outcomes:

1. The project achieved a high level of community participation in the conservation and development initiatives. Through workshops and restoration work, the community registered a willingness to preserve the site which they now consider as their own heritage with benefits they can count on.
2. The project changed the outlook of the site, significantly improving the condition of the site, and enhanced its beauty.

3. The project made the site more beneficial to learners who can now access information about the site by using interpretive panels, documents including photographic CD's, brochures and documentaries that can be viewed using the equipment at the site.

The project was a milestone in the conservation history of Thimlich Ohinga since its gazettement as a national monument, and represents an important development in community-based site conservation for the National Museums of Kenya.

ii) Community and Site Preservation at Thimlich Ohinga Kenya, National Museums of Kenya and Archaeological Institute of America – April 2012

Thimlich Ohinga Community Based Conservation Project, which has funding from the Archaeological Institute of America had the following goals:

1. **Completion of restoration/conservation work:** This was done through a condition survey of the structures and the landscape in general and the complete emergency archaeological work: mapping of the site and all the important features: restoration work which is community driven and preventive conservation in the form of clearing of vegetation.
2. Development of basic interpretive material including a signage system: This involved the development of simplified interpretative materials from prior archeological research with an explicit aim of making such information publicly accessible.
3. Active involvement of the local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process: Four workshops spread out over a twelve month grant period were held to educate the community on the significance of the heritage and the need to preserve the site. The workshops aimed to seek input from the community on restoration efforts, educational and interpretive activities at the site and the wider impact of activities at the site on tourism, sustainability and economic development.

After the proposed conservation and outreach programs are put in place, a museum gallery will be constructed to complement the monuments, making the site the only fully fledged museum in the southwestern part of Kenya.

iii) Thimlich Ohinga Heritage Site / Project Exploration Mission 16-18 February 2011, Kenyatta University, French Embassy and French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA)

It was observed that it was possible to undertake two operations running concurrently:

♦ Heritage goal project – conservation of the site

The heritage goal would involve operations meant to protect, promote (tourism), conserve, maintain and restore the site from destruction

♦ Social and cultural goal project

The social goal will aim to uplift the living conditions of the local population by involving them in community activities.

This will then culminate in the establishment of a comprehensive action plan outlining the major and long term project goals which should be meant to conserve and rehabilitate the site to a major attraction in the area and preserve its heritage.

The French Institute for Research in Africa will then approach the European Union (EU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), British Institute of East Africa (BIEA) to provide assistance which will sustain the project.

iv) Report on Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape Development Project 2007/2008, National Museums of Kenya

This is a report written to the Directorate Regional Museums, Sites and Monuments of the National Museums of Kenya resulting from work and activities carried out at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape in 2007 and 2008. This included the following:

♦ Site condition survey and conservation preliminaries
♦ Archaeological investigation/recovery of materials
♦ Wall restoration, fence stabilization and traditional houses repair
♦ Analysis, interpretation and curation of archeological materials
♦ Production of Thimlich Cultural Landscape brochure
♦ Road and site signage
♦ Facility improvement: picnic shelter, toilets, water and storage system, and lighting
♦ Publication of reports and scientific papers

This work was funded by the government of Kenya through the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture with the funds being channeled through the National Museums of Kenya. However, this is an ongoing process.

7. DOCUMENTATION

7. a: Photographs and authorization table and other audiovisual materials have been consolidated for this work as shown in the table below.

No.	Format	Caption	Date of Photo	Photographer	Copyright Owner	Non exclusive cession of rights
1	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure and buttresses at either side for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
2	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure exhibiting use of large slabs of rock for construction and lintel inscriptions	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
3	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure exhibiting neatly arranged rock slabs of uniform size for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
4	jpg	Closer view of rock arrangement at the entrance of Kochieng enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
5	jpg	Use of larger well lined rocks at the entrance of Kochieng enclosure for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
6	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng with lintel engravings	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
7	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng with surveillance watch stations on either sides	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
8	jpg	Wall exhibiting three phase method of wall construction and rock buttresses for support	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
9	jpg	Entrance which is built very low for security purposes	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
10	jpg	Magnificence of walls	August	Ephraim	National	Granted

		with demarcated path round the structures	2011	Mwangi	Museums of Kenya	
11	jpg	Wall exhibiting three phase method of wall construction with an infill of smaller stones in the center	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
12	jpg	Joint at the wall to increase stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
13	jpg	Circular cattle enclosure with entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
14	jpg	Exterior enclosure which is a kitchen garden (*orundu*)	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
15	jpg	Natural vegetation at the cultural landscape	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
16	jpg	Demarcated path around the structures	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
17	jpg	Large uniquely shaped cattle enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
18	jpg	Cattle enclosure entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
19	jpg	Grinding stone	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
20	jpg	*Bao* game, rock with carved depressions	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
21	jpg	Vegetation growth along the wall at Kolouch enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
22	jpg	Three phase method of construction exhibited at Koluoch enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
23	jpg	Corridors used to guide animals and cattle enclosures	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
24	jpg	Cattle enclosure drainage ducts	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted

25	jpg	Industrial area where iron working took place	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
26	jpg	Use of already existing rock boulders as part of wall construction	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
27	jpg	Height and magnificence of walls	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
28	jpg	Section of the nature trail	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
29	jpg	Buttress along wall to increase stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
30	jpg	Space created in rock slabs to insert wooden pegs to seal entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted

Table 3: Image inventory and authorization table

Contact details of copyright owner:

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7. b: Texts relating to protective designation

Legal Notice stating that Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape is protected by law, Kenya Gazette Notice; Number 2966 Date 25th September 1981 and Kenya Gazette Notice; Number 1517 Date 27th May 1982.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape Management Plan 2012-2017

7. c: Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

The following records from work relevant to aspects of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape are available at the sources shown:

Type of Record	Details	Dates	Where available
Elder Interview Transcripts	Historical, botanical and zoological survey by J. Gitu, H, Wanderi, W. Oloo, I. Onjala	6th October 2011	National Museums of Kenya P. O. Box 40658-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Restoration and Preservation of Thimlich Ohinga as a Cultural Landscape	The current state of the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape; site protection, restoration work, general landscaping, maintenance work and photographic documentation, recommendations.	September 2002	National Museums of Kenya, P. O. 40658-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Restoration and Preservation of Thimlich Ohinga as a Cultural Landscape	Site preservation and condition survey, site protection, general landscaping, restoration of the walls, signage, architectural and photographic documentation, site management plan.	May 2002	National Museums of Kenya, P. O. 40658-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

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Director General, National Museums of Kenya

Date: _____

Annex 1**:** Flora: plant species found within Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Local Luo Name	Species Scientific Name	Description	Traditional Uses
Adugo	*Combetum molle* (*Combretaceae*)	A shrub or tree up to 10m high, bark dark grey, usually smooth. Leaves broad and dark green. Flowers white and fruit long and broad, dark brown.	Decoction or infusions of roots or leaves are used to treat dysentery and other gastrointestinal problems. It is also used as building material.
Powo	*Grevia trichocarpa (Tiliaceae*)	A shrub or tree up to 7m high. Leaves thin and rather papery, ovate to ovate-elliptic, with yellow flowers.	The fruit is edible and its other uses are timber, fibres and medicine. It is also used as building material.
Ondati	*Teclea nobilis (Rutaceae*)	An evergreen shrub or tree up to 1.3m high, bark grey, leaves dark green, flowers yellow green and fruit red.	Used as building material. Other uses unknown yet.
Sangla	*Clerodendrum myricoides* (*Verbenaceae*)	An erect shrub 1-3m high with pubescent branchlets. Flowers in lax few flowered cymes forming short terminal panicles.	Root decoction used in treatment of mental illness, treat sterility in women, introduced into anus to treat amoebic dysentery and other types of diarrhoea. Infusion of leaves used to treat *chira*, wasting disease believed to infect those who break Luo taboos. It is also used as building material.
Alii	*Acacia seyal var. fistula* (*Leguminosae subfam, Mimosoideae*)	A tree 3-9m high, bark on trunk powdery, white to greenish yellow. Leaves bipinnate and flowers bright yellow.	Decoctions used to treat gastrointestinal problems. It is also used as building material.
Keyo	*Combretum molle* (*Combretaceae*)	A tree up to 1.3m high with small spreading	Used as building material other uses

		branches, young bark smooth, grey; older bark rough scaling, slash yellow. Flowers yellow with scales and hair intermingled, fruit yellow, oval with wings broader than fruit.	unknown yet.
Podo	*Harrisonia abyssinica* (*Simaroubaceae*)	A much branched prickly shrub or small tree up to 6m high with grey bark. Fruit small black lobed berry.	Medicinal plant. Decoction of the roots either alone or in combination with other species is taken for treatment of *yamo*, veneral diseases, swelling of testicles, problems associated with pregnancy, stomachache and other gastrointestinal problems. Roots used as remedy for bubonic plague. It is also used as building material.
Dunga	*Acacia drepanolobium* (*Leguminosae subfam. Mimosoideae*)	A shrub tree up to 5m high, stems almost unbranched but usually densely beset with slender, horizontal twigs. Flowers white and fragrant.	Decoctions drunk to treat gastro intestinal problems. It is also used as building material.
Det	*Ormocarpum tridocarpum (Leguminosae subfam. Papillonoideae)*	A deciduous shrub up to 2m high, branchlets grey or white, leaflets oblong, flowers blue white streaked with purple.	Roots and leaves are taken for diarrhoea and other stomach problems, crushed leaves mixed with petroleum jelly are applied for dislocations and joint swellings. It is also used as building material.
Obolo	*Anona senegalensis* (*Annonaceae*)	A shrub or tree up to 6m high with smooth	Fruit edible. Also used to make cattle

		silver –grey bark. Leaves broadly ovate, broad and blue-green. A flower single or paired softly pubescent, fruit green at first but ripens to orange yellow.	yokes.
Okuro	*Acanthospermum hispidum* (*Asteraceae or compositae*)	An erect much branched long-hairy annual with rhombic elliptic leaves. Flower heads yellow.	The leaves are edible. Ground leaves are applied to boils to burst them. It is also used as building material.
Arupiny	*Commiphora Africana* (*Burseraceae*)	A shrub or small tree up to 9m high with bark peeling in papery scrolls exposing a green under bark. Flowers red and fruit ellipsoid shaped.	Bark decoction taken to treat coughs, decoctions of roots drunk as a remedy for gynecological and gastrointestinal problems.
Adugo	*Acacia drepanolobium*	A shrub or tree up to 5m high, stems unbranched but beset with slender horizontal twigs. Flowers white and fragrant.	Decoctions drunk to treat gastrointestinal problems and dysentery.
Achokra	*Keetia gueinzii* (Rubiaceae)	A shrub with branchlets at right angles, leaves oblong to ovate, flowers scented and fruit blackish.	The fruit is edible.
Ogaka	Aloe (*Aloeaceae*)	Fleshy herbs, with rosette or opposite leaves which are green or reddish. Flowers red, orange or yellow. Fruit is a capsule.	Roots and stem are made into a decoction that is drunk as a cathartic and to treat gastrointestinal problems.
Ochok	*Solanum incanum* (*Solanaceae*)	A shrub 1-1.5m high leaves ovate, flowers purple or white, berry yellow. Most times considered as a weed.	Fruit thought to have magical uses, infusions of roots drunk to treat gastrointestinal

			problems.
Ochuoga	*Carissa edulis* (*Apocynaceae*)	A shrub up to 3.5m high and much branched leaves ovate, flowers white inside and red outside. Berries red to purple red.	Berries edible. Concoctions of roots with that of other species are drunk as a cathartic and treatment of stomach problems, *yamo*, veneral disease and gynaecological problems.
Othoo	*Balanites aegyptiaca*	A tree 5-11m high, bark grey to dark brown, branchlets smooth and green, leaves grey green, flowers yellow green and fruits green.	Fruit edible. Bark is ground mixed with salt and licked to treat coughs.
Oluoro-chieng	*Ageratum conyzoides*	An erect branched annual herb 30-90cm high leaves ovate, flower heads bluish, purple or whitish. A common weed in arable land.	Juice from the leaves is highly haemostatic and is used to stop epistaxis or any other type of bleeding from injury treats, sore eyes and bowel problems.
Mapera	*Psidium guajava*	A shrub up to 2.8m high with fleshy enlarged and elongated tuberous roots.	Roots eaten fresh or dried and made into flour, leaves eaten as vegetable.
Ajua	*Toddalia asiatica*	A scrambling prickly shrub, flowers unisexual and pedicelled, fruit orange.	Infusion of roots drunk to treat coughs, chewed or taken as decoction or infusion for relief of stomachache.

Annex 2: Fauna: Animal and bird species found within Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Local Luo Name	Species English and Scientific Name	Description
Ong'er	Vervet Monkey, *Cercopithecus aethiops pygerythrus*	Round face monkey, black feet, black tail tip.
Apwoyo	Brown Hare, *Lepus capensis*	The ears are often shorter than the skull, nape grayish-buff. Front surface or upper incisors in same plane, muzzle less projecting usually lighter.
Mwanda	Klipspinger, *Oreotragus schillingsi*	Hair is speckled and rough for so small an animal. The feet are so formed that it appears to be walking on its toes, impression made by set of hoofs, springs from rock to rock. Horns are annulated and both sexes carry horns.
Oyieyo	Bush rats, Aethomys Rats	Aethomys have no obvious characteristics by which they can be identified in the field. They are rather variable in colour but all forms have a grey base to the fur which is small and sleek. Longer guard hairs in the rump are perceptible in some species.
Nyamwanda	Kirk's Dik-dik, *Madoqua kirkii*	A very small antelope, with nose moderately elongated forming a proboscis. Colour generally grizzled grey to brown. It has a whitish ring around the eyes and under parts are whitish. Male has horns while females are hornless and slightly larger than males.
Ogude	Oribi, Ourebia, ourebi	A small gracefully built antelope, with oval shaped ears, slender legs and long neck. Coat silky with wavy appearance, bright sandy

		rufous to brownish fawn but with pure white belly. Ears narrow and pointed. Horns short straight slender, upright and parallel to each other.
Okille	Rock hyrax, *Procavia jonstoni*	It has a round head and short muzzle. The molar teeth are heavy and hypsodont.
Rachier-mar-pii	Black spitting cobra, *Najanigricollis*	A large snake 1.5 to 2.5m long. Light brown through deep-red to jet-black. Extremely poisonous.
Fu	Puff adder, *Bitis arietious*	A medium sized snake 0.8 to 1.5m long, very heavily built. Patterns in various shades of yellow and light to dark brown. Extremely poisonous.
Ng'ielo	African Rock Python, Python *sebae*	The largest African snake of maximum length 7m. Robust built, dark brown, arrowhead marking on the head, dorsum largely dark brown with grey-brown blotches. Non poisonous.
Tula	African marsh owl, *Asio capensis*	Colour umber brown, breast to belly with buff spots, black bill, brown eyes. The sexes are alike and the young bird has a deeper colour than the adult.
Aluru	Blue quail, *Coturnix chinensis*	This is a small bird. The adult male has the colour above blue slates and a streak under eye and chin and throat black. The female is very dark in the chest and flanks are barred with black.
Awendo	Vulturine guinea fowl, *Acryllium vutlurinum*	Feathers are long and pointed and those of the lower neck and upper mantle long and coloured black, white and cobalt blue. Lower rump, tail, wings, lower flanks and thighs black. Bill bluish-white, eyes red. The sexes are alike.
Osogo	Baglafecht weaver, *Ploceus baglafecht*	Upper parts blackish, male with front hair half of crown

		rich golden yellow, ear coverts black, female has black crown and ear coverts.
Ochongorio	Dark-capped or common bulbul, *Pychonotus barbatus*	A common golden bird in East Africa. Upper parts grayish-brown, blackish or dark brown on head and chin, merging to pale brown on chest, belly white, under tail coverts pale yellow. The head appears slightly crested at times, the yellow under tail coverts are conspicuous. The bird often half raises its head and wings and utters a short warbling song when alighting.
Atutu or Tutu	Blue-headed coucal, *Centropus monachus*	Head, nape sides of face blue black and violet, tail iridescent green, eyes red, bill and feet black. The sexes are alike.
Tula	Barn owl, *Tyto alba*	It is golden buff and grey in colour with black and white specks. The sexes are alike. In the young bird the grey of the upper parts is darker and the under parts are washed with golden bluff.
Ng'ang'a	Hadada ibis, *Bostrychia hagedash*	A grey olive plumage rather paler on under parts, head and neck. A metallic green wash on the wings. Makes a loud well known noise as 'hah-hah-ha'.
Onyinjo	African pied wagtail, *Motacilla aguimp*	Whole upper side, base of bill to ear coverts and broad band across chest black, rest of plumage white. The sexes are alike.

Annex 3. Thimlich Ohinga Management Plan

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

WHERE HERITAGE LIVES ON

THIMLICH OHINGA CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012-2017

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INTRODUCTION

This heritage management plan has been prepared in accordance with the undertakings among other things to maintain, repair and preserve Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape and to maintain the heritage land and preserve its character.

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) is a state corporation established by an Act of Parliament, the National Museums and Heritage Act Chapter 216, 2006, Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 63 (Acts No.6) and is the custodian of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape.
The National Museums of Kenya is a multidisciplinary institution whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage. This is for purpose of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of those resources for the benefits of Kenya and the world for now and posterity.

Its mission being to provide for the establishment, control, management and development of national museums and the identification, protection, conservation and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage of Kenya.

The preparation of this heritage management plan was carried out by Dr. Isaya O. Onjala an archaeologist and currently the Assistant Director, Western Region National Museums of Kenya, Wycliffe Oloo Senior Curator Kisumu Museum, Hoseah Wanderi and Josephine Gitu both research scientists in the Department of Sites and Monuments of the National Museums of Kenya, stakeholders and community members.

The preparation of this heritage management plan was funded by the National Museums of Kenya and United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre.

CHAPTER ONE: SITE BACKGROUND

1.1 History of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

When the first nilotic settlers to the south of Winam Gulf sent out scouts from their initial settlement at Ramba (the present day Kalamindi Secondary School) to survey the land for possible areas for expansion, they received a report of stone structures nestled in the woods of a gently sloping hill, overlooking a vast wooded grassland and valley further south. A pioneering group consisting of the Kabuoch-Kachieng, inspired by the prospects of finding a ready-made settlement site with suitable grazing and agricultural land, arrived on the hill some time after 1688. As they climbed the slopes of the hill they encountered not only the beautifully constructed stone structures, but also a thick and dense forest containing some wild animals. Most of the hills in the region were covered in thick vegetation. The state of the area prompted them to call this site Thimlich Ohinga, which translates as 'stone-built structures in a scary jungle'. This name has been passed on through time to the present and is currently used to refer to the whole of the cultural landscape under the National Museums of Kenya management. The name is now synonymous to the complex stone structures found at the site, and those found elsewhere within south western Kenya.

The occupation of the site goes back to about 500 years (Wandibba 1986). Oral tradition mentions early Bantu groups such as the Wagire and Kamageta as some of the site's occupants. This implies that the site was constructed and occupied before or between 1590 and 1680, when most of the Bantu groups roamed and settled in the southwestern Lake Victoria region (Ayot 1979). These dates also fall within the same range of dates attained through radio metric dating methods (Carbon 14) which has been used at the site. They however remain to be confirmed through additional and better controlled collection and dating of materials from the site.

Successive occupation by different groups has been the norm at the site. Oral history is clear that the site was characterized by periodic occupation and abandonment till the time it was last abandoned in the early twentieth century. By the time the Nilotic Kabuoch-Kachieng group took over the site sometime after 1688, Bantu groups had occupied the site. The newcomers expanded the existing structures and built others further uphill. They were, however, forced to move eastwards on hearing of prospects of a better land. The site then fell into the hands of the

Kanyamkago people led by Chief Ndisio, who was a magician as they expanded their territory southwards. The group eventually established themselves across River Kuja some 20km from Thimlich. Here, Ndisio established his headquarters and controlled much of the region that included Thimlich area. The control of such a wide territory could not be sustained and soon Thimlich fell into the hands of the Kadem people who were also expanding southwards from their Raguda settlement in present-day Karungu region. For reasons not clear to us, the Kadem later handed over the site to the Kanyamwa who remained there until the beginning of the open and nucleus family settlement systems in the early twentieth century.

Throughout the period of occupation the site experienced minor modifications in terms of additional walls and repairs. Most conspicuous ones include additional structures constructed further uphill. The Kabuoch-Kachieng people mainly built these structures. The main enclosure also exhibits a wall that was pulled down at the northern side, which was followed by an expansion to add more room at this side of the enclosure. When it was done and by which group, it is not clear to us yet. What is evident, however, is that the occupants were faced by an influx of immigrants and were forced to tear down and expand the occupied area. The attached enclosures to the main enclosure, especially, to the northeast also portray signs of additions as population growth occurred through time.

Complete abandonment of the site occurred in the 1920s. There was no more active occupation within the enclosures. Families that lived outside the enclosure continued to use land within the enclosures for livestock grazing and crop cultivation. This period coincided with the end of inter-clan conflicts and/or land acquisition demands. There were no major population movements across the land in the region. People opted for smaller or individual open settlements as the area became free of dangerous wild animals. Perhaps more important is the fact that after World War I (1914-1918) and with the establishment of British colonial rule, there was a breakdown of family and lineage ties. There were no longer large groups controlled by powerful chiefs and as a result shortage of labour to construct and maintain the massive stone structures. The site was left to decay and only survived the threats of time because of its unique in-built stability, which is the reason it has become a recognized cultural heritage in the world.

In 1982 the site was put under the custody of the Government of Kenya after the gazettement process and handed over to the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) as one of the country's national monuments. Currently, NMK has seven members of staff at the site with the responsibility of managing the site. It is only recently that researchers and relevant world organizations have combined forces to assist in the work of conservation.

1.2 Physical Description of the Site

The cultural landscape is situated in Migori County some 181km south of the city of Kisumu. The site lies on a gently sloping hill located by road 46km northwest of Migori town in Kiwiro sub-location, North East Kadem location, in Nyatike District which is in Migori County. It can be accessed through Migori or Homa Bay towns (Figure 1). Some parts of the roads leading to the site are rough and require mostly four-wheel drive vehicles. During dry seasons however the 20km stretch off the Homa Bay-Karungu road and the 46km Migori-Thimlich road are both accessible by any form of transportation.

The entire cultural landscape covers a total of 52 acres of land. One entrance at the northwest provides the only entry point to the facility. The monument consists of circular dry stonewalls spread over the hill as shown in Figure 2. The main enclosure *Kochieng'* which measures approximatley 140metres in diameter shares its northeastern wall with the Blacksmith enclosure while *Kakuku* enclosure is believed to be an extension of the same. These may have been extensions of the main enclosure constructed during the phases of population pressure. They are, however, treated as independent and individual enclosures. Two other enclosures are located further uphill with *Kolouch* found at the southeast having its extensions running to only about 10m from the eastern walls of the *Kakuku* which is adjoined to the main enclosure. The remaining one enclosure *Koketch* occupies the uphill location and extends over a large area towards the eastern part of the hill.

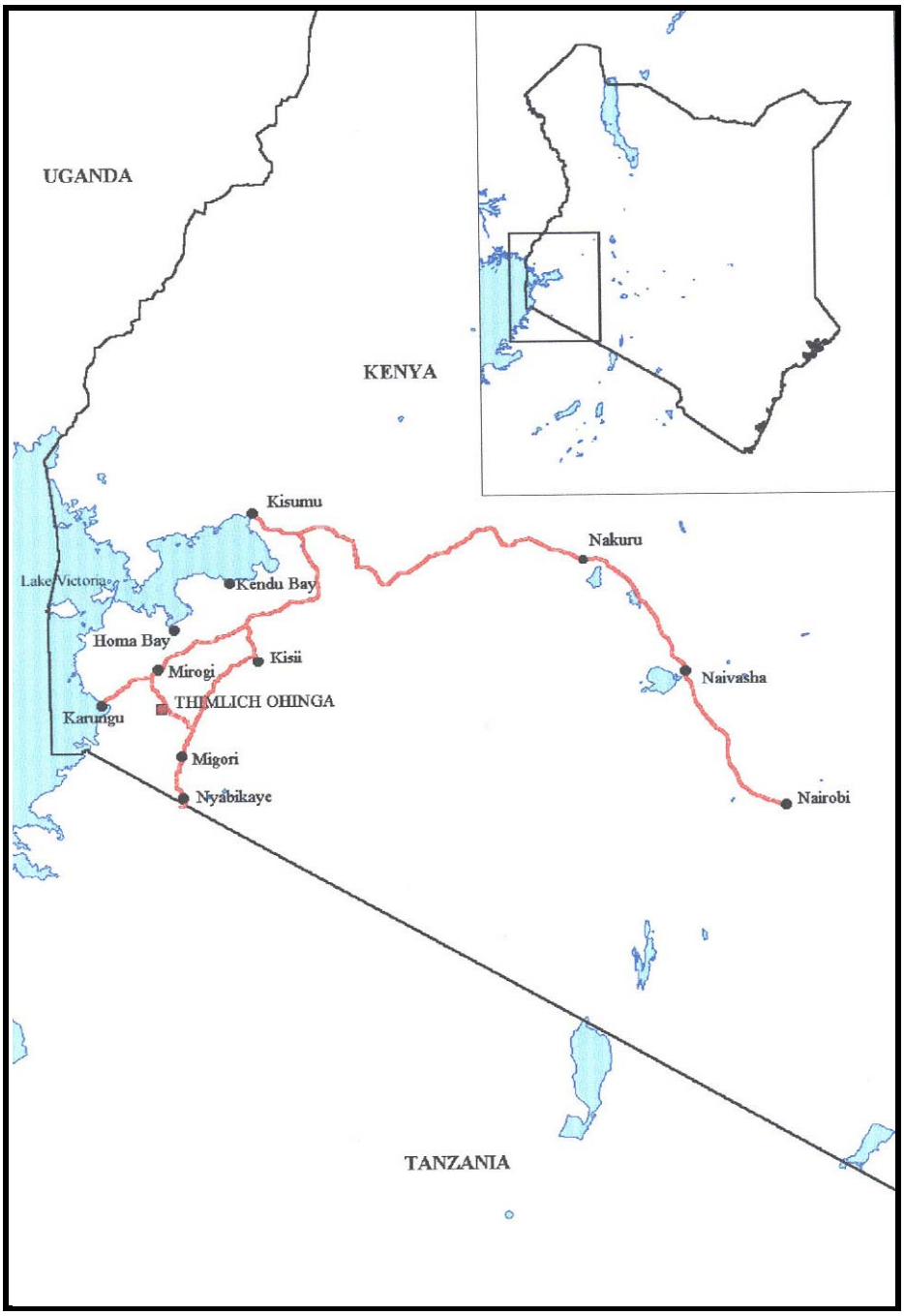


Figure 1 : Map of Kenya showing transportation network and position of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

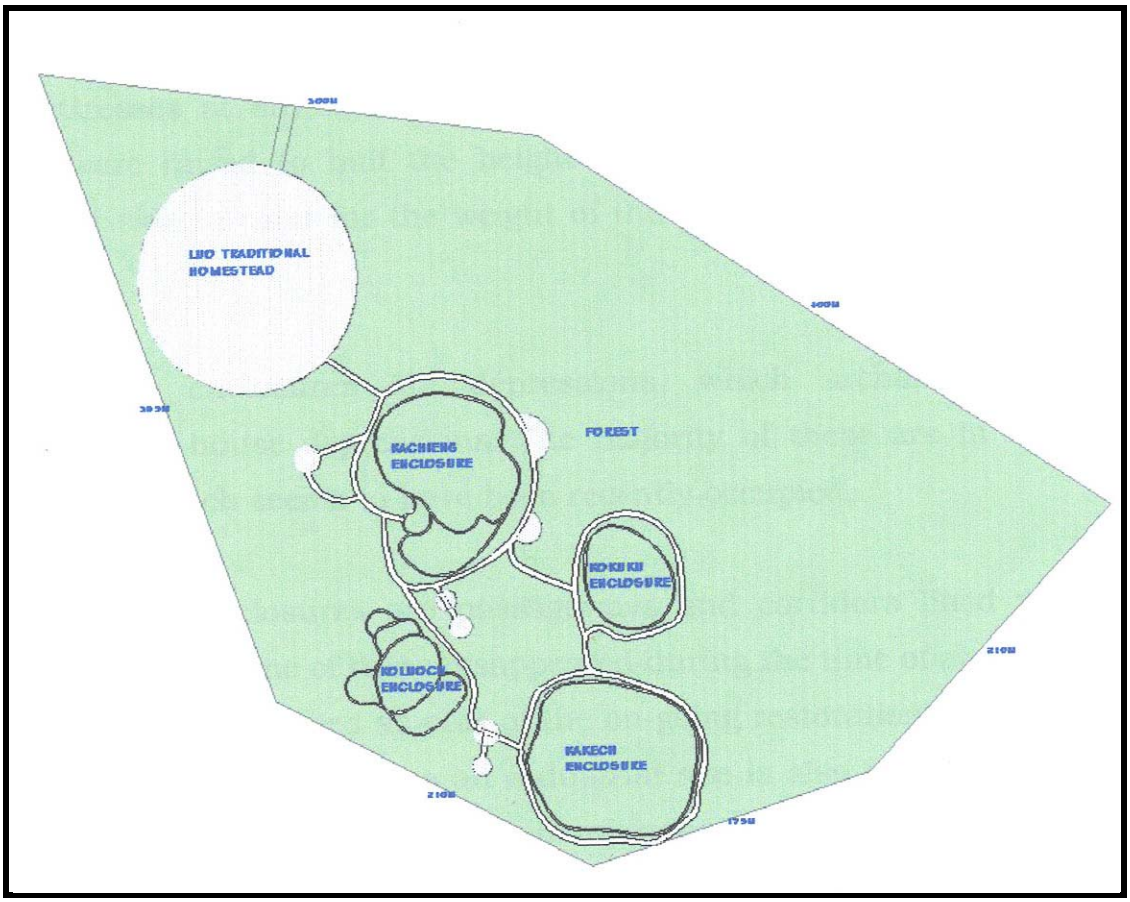


Figure 2 : Site layout showing the distribution of major enclosures at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Within the main structures smaller enclosures, which were used as cattle kraals still exist. The main enclosure called Kochieng has six of these while the others have one each except for the uphill complex, which has two. There are also a couple of tiny structures which were food processing areas. Besides the kraals, the enclosures also contain support heaps or buttresses at strategic sloppy positions to ensure stability. Most of these were raised to half the height of the walls, especially along the downhill side to cater for the weight of the walls relative to the effects of the slope.

Within the enclosures are depressions, which archeologists have identified as house depressions. The majority of these are in the main enclosure, which seems to have been recently occupied.
Between the enclosures are passageways and corridors lined with low walls of stone. Some of these disappeared during the time of abandonment but have been recreated as part of the on-going restoration work. An area that has been designated as an industrial site is also found just

outside the northeastern wall of the main enclosure. Here, iron smelting and working occurred, as indicated by the presence of a furnace area containing smooth stones, which are the result of iron shaping. Pieces of *tuyere* litter this particular area. Also found in this area is a mound consisting of iron slag and pieces of refuse including broken pottery. An ancient version of the game known today as *Bao* Game, carved on a piece of rock was also found nearby and could indicate that the area was equally used as a leisure spot where games were played. The area is large enough and could have easily accommodated both activities especially if the game was to be played during short resting periods in the course of the iron working process.

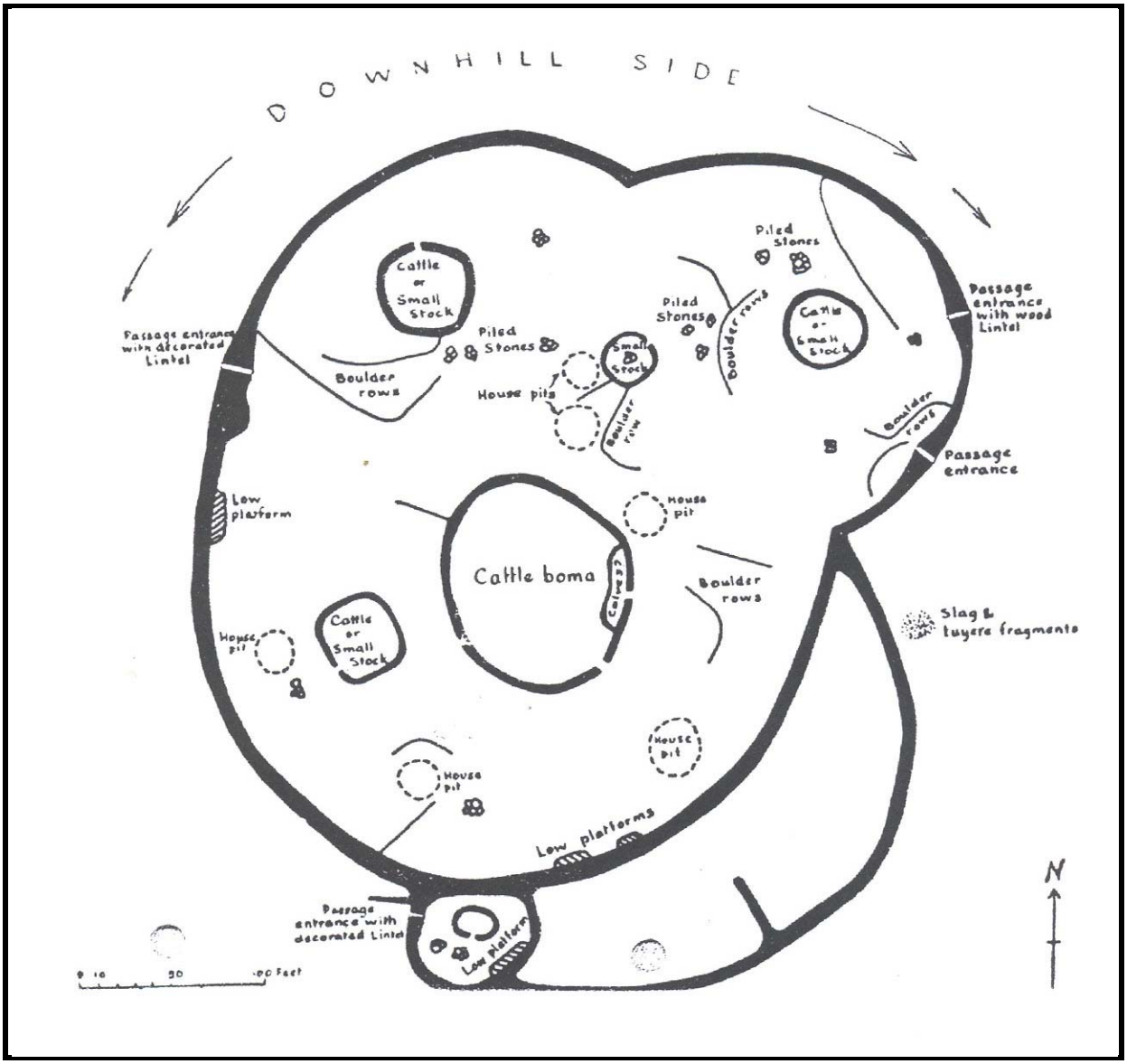


Figure 3 : Layout showing the features at the main enclosure, *Kochieng* (Source:Lofgren 1967)

In terms of the nature of the walls, these consist of neatly arranged stones of irregular shapes and sizes. The building was done in three phases that ran concurrently. The outer and inner phases of the walls were joined together using a third phase consisting of smaller stones that pressed down the end of the stones of the outer and inner ones. Due to lack of distinct shapes of the rocks used, the walls do not exhibit any course-line, as is common in modern stonewalls. The stones were simply put together through an interlocking system that enhanced stability. No mortar was used in the building of the walls, which range in height from 1.2meter to 4.2meter. The average thickness of the walls is approximately 1meter. The thickness of the walls increases at the entrances to about 2-3meters wide. This was a stability mechanism to create maximum strength at these points, which were constantly in use. Specific slabs or rocks were used at these points.

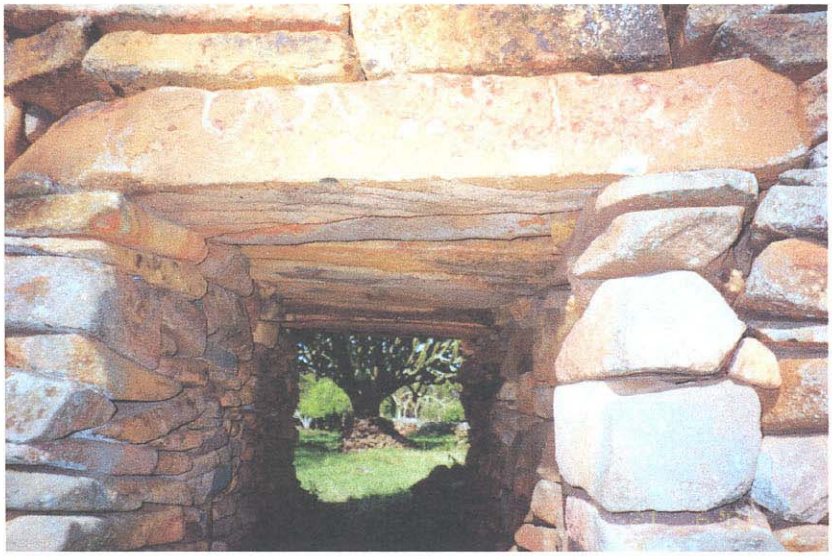
Plate 1 : Three-phase construction system seen from top

The structures include gates that measure about 1m wide and 1.5m high. The main enclosure *Kochieng* has three gates. The third one was blocked during the Kanyamwa period of occupation and had to be re-opened. *Kakuku*, which adjoins this main enclosure, has one beautifully preserved gate adorned with engravings on the main stone lintel. The adjoining Blacksmith enclosure has two gates facing east. The uphill enclosures had previously blocked gates which have since been opened. Almost all the gates have got rock engravings at the lintels, both on the outside and inside (Plate 2).

The walls also contain buttresses and features mainly in the inside sections of gates. Extended or notched areas on the walls by the gates have been thought to mark locations for watching out for any unwanted visitors to the enclosures. These watch stations are however confined to major entrances. They are only large enough to accommodate a single seated person.

The physical description of the site cannot be complete without a mention of the traditional Luo homestead that was constructed in the early 1980s as an exhibition. This has a replica of the first wife's house facing the main entrance and other replicas for the second and third wives on the sides. Towards the gate are the houses for the sons (*simba*) and a cattle kraal and granary (*dero*) at the center of the homestead.

(a)



(b)

Plate 2 : Details of the gates; (a) decorated lintel at *Kakuku* enclosure and (b) arrangement of stone slabs of uniform size to make the lintel of the gate at the *Kochieng* western entrance. Note also engravings.

Additional features within the cultural landscape include a ticket office located at the entrance to the cultural landscape and a documentation building, which is nearing completion. The ticket office building has two parts. The first part serves as a ticketing area. While the second part contains documents where information about the site is stored. Currently, the place also serves as a visitor centre where visitors get information about the site before taking a tour of the site. It is

planned that some of these activities will be transferred to the documentation building once it is fully completed and finished.

Plate 3 : Wall buttress

1.3 Archaeology and Archaeological Research

The archaeology of the site is defined by the fact that the structures are removed from the historical time they occupied in the past and can only be explained through archaeological investigation. The grounds enclosed by the structures contain archaeological materials and patterning that falls within the domain of archaeology. Explanation of these features however must involve the use of historical and oral literature in order to bring to light the events of the Late Iron Age period that the site represents. The structures, as archaeological features or occurrence, and the entire cultural landscape they occupy also form a major source of information in the reconstruction of the proto-history of the Lake Victoria region.

Archaeological research at the site can be traced from early field survey reports (Gillman 1944, Lofgren 1967), calls for studies on the structures (Anthony 1972) and in archaeological work conducted by the National Museums of Kenya (Wandibba 1986). An excavation in 1986 was followed by an examination of the site's architecture, as well as, some profound cultural issues that created and sustained the site's physical nature (Onjala 1990). Throughout the 1990s, the

NMK renewed interest in archaeological research at the site. This culminated in the site's listing in September 1999 by the World Monuments Watch (WMW) into the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world for the period 2000/2001. It was listed again in October 2001 for the year 2001/2002.

More work at the site followed with a second excavation in November 2000 (Stephane et al 2001). In 2007 a systematic archaeological study was carried out by the National Museums of Kenya to determine the nature contents and possible functions of some of the features found within or in association with the large stone-walled enclosures. Excavations were conducted on four of the small circular stone-walled enclosures and two house depressions within two of the four major enclosures. Findings from the excavation confirmed earlier suggestions that the larger dry stone wall structures and the enclosures within them were constructed and or remodeled and used as habitations by the local Luo sub-clans immigrating into the region during or after the 16th century, some of whom still inhabit the area today.

Major archaeological investigation of the entire cultural facility is, however, yet to be realized. Past excavations and other forms of investigation have concentrated on the main enclosure and its adjoining structures only. Future work should take a holistic approach and cover the entire cultural landscape. Archaeologists should seek an understanding of the use of space within the cultural landscape. They should also come up with a more confirmative date for the site based on excavations, modern dating methods and available oral literature.

Plate 4 : Previous excavation area within *Kochieng*

1.4 Conservation History

Taking the Burra Charter which defines conservation as all processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance, the conservation history of the site extends to the period when the site was in use several centuries ago. During this past period, traditional methods of conservation were definitely put into use to keep the site within its cultural significance. From the early twentieth century, however, such conservation methods changed or disappeared as the site was abandoned and not actively utilized in every day activities. New conservation methods were only introduced after 1982 when the site was placed under the custodianship of the National Museums of Kenya.

Two staff members were posted at the site with the responsibility of clearing portions of the site for public viewing while ensuring that the structures did not suffer any major interference that could lead to collapse. This arrangement remained in place until the close of the 1990s when international support was successively sought to boost the conservation efforts. A new approach to conservation was then adopted with an increased number of workers and the participation of professionals. A series of conservation activities aimed at ensuring the protection and preservation of the site has since been put in place. These measures are discussed in chapter three.

CHAPTER TWO: MANAGEMENT AND USE OF SITE

2.1 Legal Framework

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape occupies 21hectares of land belonging to the National Museums of Kenya. It was gazetted in 1982 as a national monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Act (Cap 215) which was repealed and is now the National Museums and Heritage Act CAP 216, 2006, of the Laws of Kenya. Previously the land belonged to the members of the community.

2.2 The Stakeholders

Thimlich Ohinga has several stakeholders. Their roles in the current management of the site vary considerably but mainly form a consultative body in the management process rather than the executive or decision making body.

2.2.1 National Museums of Kenya (NMK)

This is a parastatal that acts on behalf of the Government of Kenya by holding the property in trust for both the Government and the community together with the other stakeholders. Maintenance and all forms of conservation, research, marketing and promotion of the site are the responsibility of the NMK. The institution plays host to all other stakeholders and plans to collect revenue that will be pumped back to the management of the site.

2.2.2 Community

The community, consisting of different groups including farmers, business community, medicine men and women groups, forms a second category of stakeholders. The community have a sense of belonging to the site. Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape serves as a meeting venue where issues affecting the community are deliberated. The National Museums of Kenya staff and visitors to the site purchase goods and services from the community thus providing much needed market for their produce.

Plate 5: A section of stakeholders during a workshop held on site

Farm produce such as maize, cassava and other cereals, as well as, dairy products including milk and butter, are sold to the site's workers. Traders in the local markets also use the site as market for their goods. Staff and occasional guests, particularly researchers, buy most of their daily supplies and consumables from such traders within a radius of about 12km. This, therefore, extends the geographic area that the site serves and increases the number of stakeholders in this category.

The landscape contains some of the natural vegetation that remains within the area. It has been used in the past as a source of medicinal plants, a role it continues to play to the present. In this capacity, the site has attracted the interest of medicine men or traditional herbalists as a subgroup within the category of community stakeholders. This group continues to use the site with permission from NMK as a collection point for medicinal herbs to treat ailments such as malaria. The community also links with the site as a place where they used rituals to consult the spirits during periods of environmental instability or social upheavals. These functions of the site seem to have ended but the community still looks at the site as a link to their ancestral spirits. The NMK recognizes this link and has made it clear that the community can carry out any such rituals whenever there is need.

2.2.3 Schools and learning institutions

This category benefits from the site through educational programs. School visits to the site are usually organized as part of history lessons in which the students or pupils learn about the successive occupants and use of the site through time. They also learn the unique building technique and compare it theoretically with modern forms of building using stone. Besides using the site for learning purposes, this category also visits the site for satisfaction and fascination at the monumental work.

2.2.4 Tourism Industry

The tourism industry joins the group of stakeholders due to the interest of the tour operators in the potential of the site as a visitor attraction in the region. This attraction can translate into economic benefits if the conditions at the site are improved. Tourists would achieve satisfaction and fascination by visiting the site. An influx of tourist would benefit other stakeholders and help boost the economic status of the region.

2.2.5 Scientific Community

The scientific community, particularly researchers of various kinds, forms another category of stakeholders. This includes archaeologists, historians, architects, botanists, geologists, zoologists among others. There are various opportunities to carry out research at the site. Not only do the dry stone wall structures provide opportunity for research also the flora and fauna present at the site.

2.2.6 Government Institutions

Other stakeholders include government ministries and departments such as, the National Environment Management Authority, Kenya Tourist Board, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, the Ministry of Local Government among others. The presence of various flora and fauna at the site and the need for improvement of amenities and infrastructure in and around Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape demands the attention of various government institutions.

One example is the significant presence of a number of small mammals, monkeys, snakes and birds which calls for the attention of the Kenya Wildlife Service a government parastatal. The number of monkeys has increased in the past few years and the prediction is that the number will

continue to rise. This can be a menace in the future as they contribute to the instability of the walls. The Kenya Wildlife Service will therefore have to carry out its responsibility to protect and control the animals.

2.3 Current Uses of the Site

The cultural landscape falls within a category known as Sites and Monuments within the National Museums of Kenya's structure. In this category, it is mainly used as a site that is open to the public for viewing. It is yet to have a site museum, as is the case in other sites within the country. It however continues to act as a museum, receiving and attending to the needs of both local and foreign visitors.

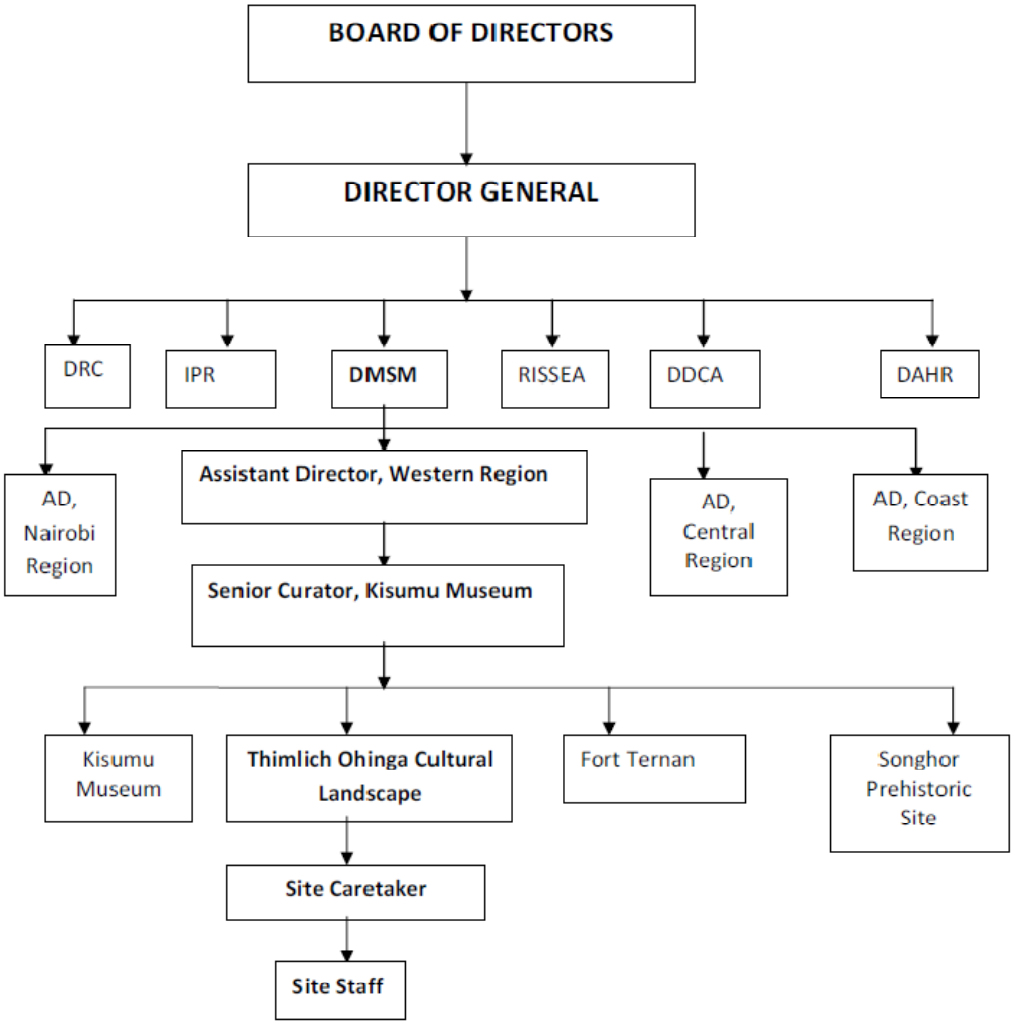
The Luo traditional homestead, which is part of the exhibition at the site, is currently used for accommodation. Both staff and visitors to the site use the houses for this particular need. Other uses of the site and its facilities include research, conservation activities and training, education especially for the local primary schools and as a source of medicinal herbs exploited by the local people. The Local community occasionally use it to perform religious ceremonies to appease the gods.

2.4 Management and Resources

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) and development partners are currently the financiers of activities at the site. NMK provides and pays the salaries of the regular staff, provides funds for general maintenance of the site and also provides equipment and other facilities. Funds from the development partners such as the American Express Company and Archaeology Institute of America have been used to pay those working directly on restoration. Such people include conservation project officers, traditional masons and other casual workers. Apart from the wages, funds from development partners have been used to purchase specialized equipment for the conservation work, to promote the site and to prepare management tools such as this plan. UNESCO World Heritage Centre has also contributed funds towards the management plan and the writing of the nomination dossier for Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape to have it inscribed in the World Heritage List. The Ministry of Local Government through the Local Authorities Trust Fund is in the process of funding a documentation centre at the site.

The site currently has seven employees and one of the staff members is the site caretaker. Their work mainly involves site maintenance, security and acting as guides to visitors. Depending on the magnitude of work several casuals are usually employed temporarily to ease the workload. Such workers have been involved in actual wall rebuilding, clearing of bush and grass as well as general maintenance of paths and other facilities. These staff members are answerable to the Curator of Kisumu Museum in the City of Kisumu through the Caretaker of Thimlich Ohinga. The Curator reports to the Assistant Director, Western Region on matters relating to the site. The Assistant Director is answerable to the Director Museums, Sites and Monuments who is then answerable to the Director General who is the overall executive officer.

The museum has employed both permanent and contractual staff at the site. Employee renumeration per annum is approximately US$ 12,600. The allocation per annum towards the site is approximately US$ 875.



DRC – Directorate of Research and Collections
IPR – Institute of Primate Research
DMSM – Directorate Museums, Sites and Monuments
RISSEA – Research Institute of Swahili Studies of Eastern Africa
DDCA – Directorate of Development and Corporate Affairs
DAHR – Directorate of Administration and Human Resource
AD – Assistant Director

Figure 4 : Illustration of management structure

CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

3.1 Conservation of the site

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape was gazetted and declared a national monument on 25th September 1981 and confirmed as a national monument on 27th May 1982 under the then Antiquities and Monuments Act which was repealed and replaced with the National Museums and Heritage Act Cap 216, 2006.

In 1999 the fencing of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape by the National Museums of Kenya began and was completed in 2000. This was followed by a detailed condition survey of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya the same year.

In 2001 to 2003 the American Express Company through the World Monuments Watch funded the first major restoration of the walls of the Thimlich Ohinga, however these funds did not cover the entire site and much of *Koketch* enclosure was not restored. Therefore in 2007 to 2008 the Ministry of State for National Heritage through the National Museums of Kenya funded restoration of the walls and excavation works in the *Koketch* enclosure, the industrial area and the Blacksmith enclosure.

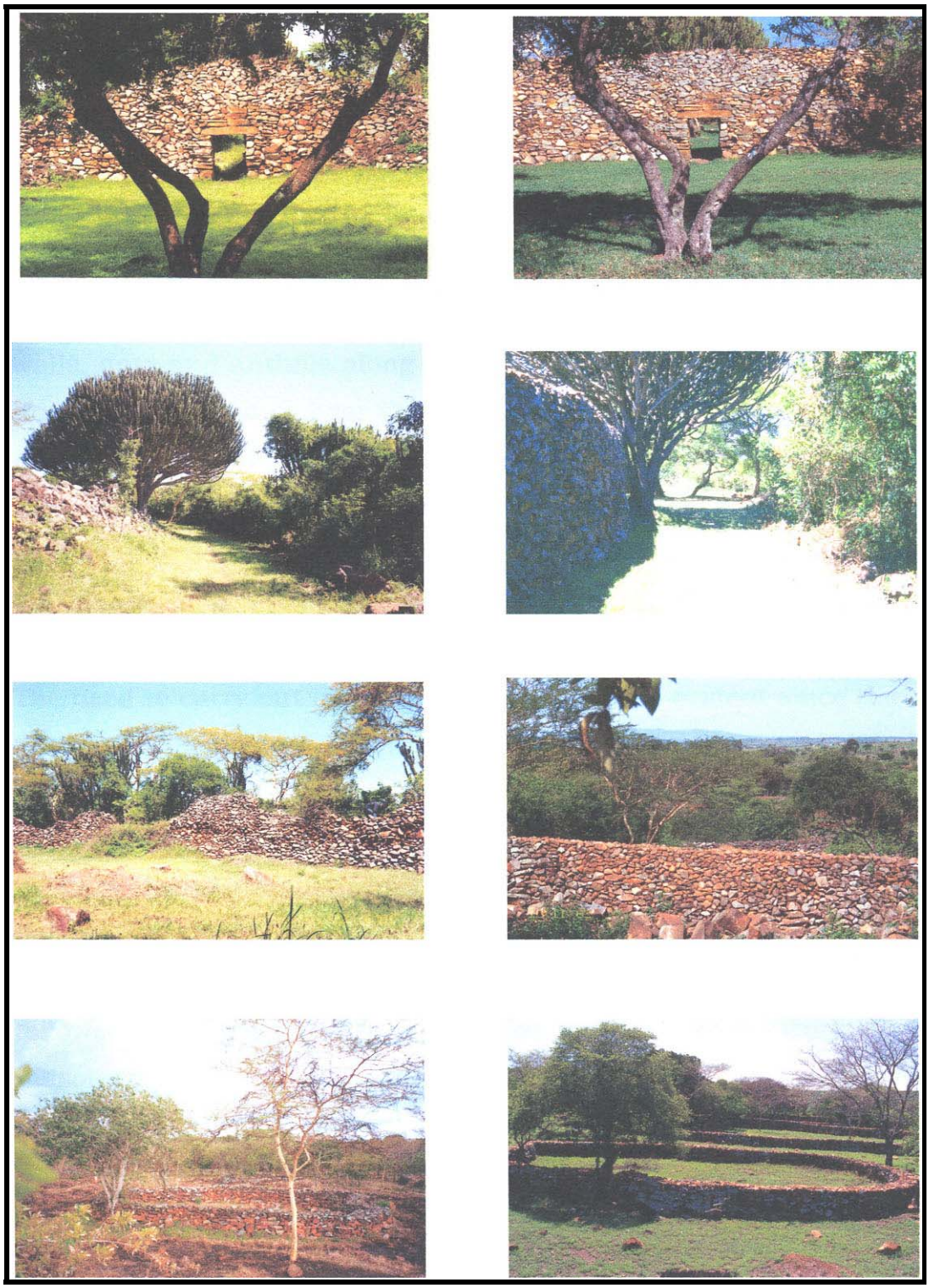
In 2011 to 2012 funding from the Archaeological Institute of America was used to carry out restoration of *Koketch* and *Kolouch* enclosures as well as restoring corridors. Funding was also used to facilitate community involvement in restoration works and erection of interpretation panels.

3.2 The State of the Walls

Several portions of the walls at the four major enclosures within the cultural landscape lay in a dilapidated state until the first half of 2001. Most of these portions fell several decades ago and already had vegetation cover over them. This state was more conspicuous with the hill structures where vegetation was the thickest. The condition survey carried out in November 2000 revealed the state of conservation of the walls. Specific features within the walls, particularly gates, were most affected. Several of these were completely blocked by the collapsed walls. The fallen parts, blocked gates and the caving and unstable portions of the walls posed a threat to the entire wall system as they attracted other factors like plant growth that led to further deterioration of the walls.

Following the condition survey, a major intervention involving wall restoration, was started during the second half of 2001. The restoration was carried out under the name 'Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape Restoration Project'. The project was made possible in part by the American Express Company through the World Monuments Watch (WMW), a programme of the World Monuments Fund (WMF). The main enclosure Koluoch and the adjoining ones were completely restored and all entrances put in use. Restoration also included all the features on the walls such as watch-stations at the gates and wall buttresses, as well as, at the hill structures. Restoration of the walls and entrance corridors was completed in 2012.

There has been a major change in the state of the walls at the site. Plates 1-8 below show some of these changes and the progress of the restoration work. The major challenge that now remains is the continued maintenance and other conservation practices to ensure stability of the walls.



Plates 6-13 : Condition of the walls before (left) and after restoration work (right)

3.3 Factors Causing Wall Deterioration

During the November 2000 condition survey, a number of factors were identified as responsible for the deterioration of the site's structures. These may be divided into anthropogenic and environmental factors.

Anthropogenic factors include first and foremost the lack of monitoring and maintenance of the structures. Since the last active occupation and abandonment in the early twentieth century, the walls were not maintained. This led to the collapse and dilapidation of several parts. This situation seems to have been worsened by imposed loads such as people and animals climbing on the walls throughout the subsequent years. Such loads result from visitation and grazing of animals at the site. Due to absence of designated visitor paths as they walked through the various parts of the site, people were forced to climb onto sections of the walls. Grazing led to animals mainly goats rubbing on and climbing on the structures. This made stones fall off the structures, given that no mortar or cement was used to bind them together. With additional activities such as cultivation within the enclosures and collection of firewood, the above factors led steadily to the falling of stones from various portions of the walls. However all this has since been taken care with controlled measures put in place to prevent recurrence of the same.

Environmental factors include the action of wind, lightening, earth tremors and slope action against the exposed walls at the site. For centuries the walls took the impact of these natural factors with the result that some portions collapsed or were seriously affected. The environmental factors contributed about 40% of the damage at the site. Other natural factors have included plant growth on or near the walls, ants and anthills along the walls act as a wedge that pushes apart the stones on the walls as the roots become bigger. Tree branches also lean on the walls exerting pressure that occasionally leads to collapse. Combined with wind action, leaning tree branches posed a major threat to the walls.

3.4 Restoration Work

The need to carry out restoration work has been evident since the time the National Museums of Kenya took over the management of the site. This need was, however, only realized after 1999, when the site was first nominated by the WMW and put in the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world. Subsequent funding led to the start of conservation work in November 2000. A

detailed condition survey was carried out to assess the state of the walls and the factors that caused deterioration. This was followed by a period of planning for restoration work. Traditional masons were identified and hired for the work. Materials required, including tools and machinery, were purchased and transported to the site. By June 2001 the main restoration work on the walls started with three traditional masons and six casual workers working together to put back the walls to their original state.

Restoration work used the traditional methodology. The three phase wall system was applied with other traditional forms being strictly adhered to under the direction and specifications provided by archaeological analysis of the architectural style. The height, thickness and location of other features such as gates were all established following measurements provided by early studies at the site.

At the time of writing this plan, all enclosures have been restored according to the standards laid down. All gates and associated features have also been restored.

3.5 Additional Activities to Enhance Site Protection

Site protection has become a major priority in the on-going conservation work and plans for future maintenance. Currently, a barbed wire fence that will be reinforced with a green hedge runs throughout the perimeter of the site. This is aimed at controlling unauthorized entry and reducing the anthropogenic factors mentioned in Section 3.3. The fence also helps in the control of visitors who now access the facility from one point at the entrance, where they report at the ticketing office before proceeding on a guided tour of the site. In such tours the visitors will use designated paths and will not be allowed to climb on the walls, as was common in the past.

Apart from the protective fence around the cultural landscape, restoration work has also involved the removal of encroaching vegetation on, within and near the walls. Periodic strategic clearing has been undertaken to ensure adequate vegetation control. The NMK has the challenge of increasing the number of staff at the site to deal with the fast growing vegetation and tame some species of plants, such as *lantana camara* that is very destructive. At Thimlich Ohinga, this plant is seriously targeted for destruction and wherever it is seen it is completely uprooted.

The landscape does not only consist of the walled monuments but also contains archaeological materials, some of which are visible above the ground. While the NMK has regulations that do not allow unauthorized digging/excavation at such sites, it would also be appropriate to have information signs showing some of the visible archaeological areas and materials. This will serve both as an educational and protective purpose. Features that should be considered include the house depressions and their associated elements, locations of past excavations, the ironsmith site area and its associated elements and other points of interest within and on the walls. The on-going conservation project and the NMK have the responsibility to ensure substantive signage so that visitors will better understand the site. When people understand the site, they will automatically contribute to its protection.

CHAPTER FOUR: OBJECTIVE SITE ASSESSMENT

4.1 Values of the site

In the first half of the twentieth century and extending into the first two decades of the second half, foreign researchers wrote reports about the site of Thimlich Ohinga (Gillman 1944, Lofgren 1967, Anthony 1972). Towards the end of the same century NMK researchers published and wrote extensively about the site (Wandibba 1986, Onjala 1990, 1994). It was also during the same period that the Government saw the uniqueness of the site and declared it a National Monument. It was handed over to the NMK which has continued to manage it with limited resources and staff. At the community level, several groups within the region claim a direct historical link to the site. The site was internationally recognized when the World Monuments Watch put it on the list of 100 most endangered sites in the world.

Why would this site attract such recognition and attention? What values or significance do these groups of people and institutions attach to this site? These are some of the questions that were faced when preparing this management plan. It was clear that the significance of the site transcends the local area. What is discussed below is a categorization of the values that have sustained the site to the present.

As defined earlier, values are aspects of a place that make it important to the public or different interested groups. Values also contribute to the survival of a place or a heritage place through time. The Burra Charter of 1983 categorizes heritage values as aesthetic, historic, scientific and social. Lipe (1984) further introduced four broader categories namely informational, associative, economic and aesthetic. This work has followed the latter categories in discussing the values attached to the site.

4.1.1 Informational Values

Informational values of the site are embedded in its scientific and educational reservoir that has been the subject of investigation for several decades. Different groups of researchers have sought an understanding of the site through interpretations of different aspects. The interpretations, mainly archaeological, historical and geological, have been aimed at amassing information for the public and general education. Organized visits to the site by school parties reinforce the

educational values attached to this heritage. Information demand is likely to grow with the increase of visitors to the site in the near future. Researchers therefore have to be prepared to provide the information that different members of public will require.

4.1.2 Associative Value

In terms of associative values, the site has a complex historical value, being an area that many of the community members (clans) occupied in the past. Several clans in the region claim a direct link to the site. There are also leadership links as powerful chiefs and rulers are said to have occupied this site before moving to other parts of the lake region where similar structures were later constructed. Apart from the diverse historical links, the site also played a religious role as a place for prayers, sacrifices and other rituals.

4.1.3 Economic Value

Economically, the site formed a major economic center for all the clans that occupied it as the enclosure provided safety to the cattle, sheep and goats within. When the site was abandoned, its status changed to that of farmland with the arable parts producing subsistence crops that were sold or exchanged for other goods. This status changed again in 1982, when the government took over management of the site from the community. The community saw a new benefit and started to look at the site as a place for gainful employment. A few members of the community have been permanently employed at the site but many more have benefitted from casual labour in the ongoing conservation.

Economic values also extend beyond the employment opportunities. Research work, conservation and other activities at the site have attracted various people, some of whom are not local to the area. Such people depend on the community for their supplies. This has made the site valuable to the society as market for merchandise and attached a new form of economic status to the site. This status is most likely to become more complex in the future when the site is open to the wider public and attracts tourists. Members of the community will make and sell gift items based on traditional craft. The site therefore holds great economic potential that will benefit both the community and the NMK, creating a small economic hub in the area.

4.1.4 Aesthetic Value

The very nature of the dry stonewall enclosures situated on a hilltop overlooking a vast green area with mountains in the distance is a real spectacle and forms the basis for the aesthetic value attached to the site. The nature of the architectural work is unique and captivating. The fact that no mortar was used in the construction and that the walls have remained standing for centuries can mainly be perceived aesthetically. The details of the interlocking stones, gate lintels, watch stations in lush environment of trees, succulents and planks are very beautiful images. This value is readily discerned on the visitors' faces and comments.

The values that have been attached to the site are therefore mainly scientific, educational, historical, religious, economical and aesthetic. They transcend from the local to international levels and make the site a heritage for the future.

4.2 Statement of significance

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape was declared a National Monument due to its spectacular dry stonewalls that form a massive complex. This Late Iron Age settlement attracts different visitors including groups from learning institutions who come to see the magnificent enclosures, their extensions and interior structures superbly located on the bushy hill.

Archaeological materials and unique features are found within and around the enclosures. The site also is one of the few areas where natural vegetation still survives. It is a source of medicinal herbs that are harvested by the community. The scientific potential attracts researchers from the fields of archaeology, history, geology, conservation, zoology and botany. Inclusion of the site into the World Monuments Watch List of 100 most endangered sites in the world reflects its international recognition.

In summary, the site has historical as well as contemporary significance to the community, which continues to interact with it. It also has research potential that calls the attention of relevant researchers or scientists. The spectacular dry stonewalls set against the background of the natural landscape consisting of flora and fauna and their preservation through the centuries is a significant aesthetic feature. All these carry elements of economic value, which is increasingly becoming important as the site undergoes restoration and infrastructural development.

CHAPTER FIVE: SWOT ANALYSIS

5.1 SWOT Analysis

A strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis was carried out for Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape resulting in the table below.

Table 1 : Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Unique to the East African Region. • International recognition. • Creates employment opportunities. • Creates income generating opportunities i.e. trade. • Tourism and foreign exchange earner. • Contributes towards scientific research. • Availability of traditional herbs and medicines. • Environmental attraction. • Adequate land for development. • Readily available material for restoration. • Easily accessible. • Community goodwill. • Adequate number of professional personnel. • Availability of manual labour.	• Lack of adequate funding. • Lack of publicity. • Poor infrastructure and amenities. • Site not prioritized in regional development agenda. • Lack of recreation facilities. • Short of skilled labour at the site • Poor documentation of the site.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Cross border trade and tourism. • Growth of accommodation facilities. • Education and research opportunities. • Development of research station. • Available road infrastructure to site proximity. • Goodwill from donors.	• Forced entry i.e. trespass into the site. • Rapid growth of vegetation. • Poisonous snakes.

The analysis involved an intense discussion and consultation with various stakeholders. As the table shows, the facility emerges stronger with lots of opportunities the management can exploit.

CHAPTER SIX: CONDITION SURVEY, KEY ISSUES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTION PLAN

6.1 CONDITION SURVEY AS OF 27TH AUGUST 2012

6.1.1 Visitor Facilities

- Documentation Center

  The building is incomplete; it requires four doors, four windows, plastering (floor and walls) gutters, wiring, window panes for eight windows, paint, vents and ceiling board.
- Ablution Block 1: Next to documentation centre

  Requires inner locks for all three doors, paint, the drainage needs expansion and wiring for lighting.
- Ticketing office

  It has cracks on the walls, it requires a gutter, two windows require fasteners, part of the ceiling is broken, stabilizing poles need treatment and or replacement, notice board required, metal grill door at the entrance has broken hinge which needs replacement. The building suffers from bat menace and it also needs a tank for rain harvesting.
- Ablution Block 2: Next to homestead

  Bathroom door needs repair, the toilet doors are not well aligned, the rooms require wiring for lighting and the urinal requires a swinging door. There is need for a toilet for the physically challenged.
- Camp site

  The site has already been designated, however the path to the area needs to be cleared to provide for accessibility, the bushes in the area need to be cleared and landscaping done. There is need for an ablution block, mess and cooking area which are yet to be determined and a water point needs to be put in place.
- Eco-lodge

  The site for the eco-lodge needs to be designated
- Parking area

  Parking area need to be clearly marked and landscaping is required.
- There is need to install running water facilities.

6.1.2 Exhibition Area

This consists of a traditional Luo homestead

- Man's hut

  The inner and outer walls of the hut need to be smeared using traditional methods with mud, the thatch needs to be redone, the installed solar wiring needs to be concealed, the window needs to be repaired, the floor needs to be smeared and smoothened with mud, the door needs an inside lock.

- First wife's hut

  The walls need to be smeared, the roof thatch needs to be re-done, the solar wiring needs to be concealed, the floor needs to be smeared and smoothened with mud and the hut requires termite treatment.

- Second wife's hut

  The walls need to be smeared, the door needs setting, the window needs repairing and the floor needs to be redone.

- Third wife's hut

  The walls need to be smeared, the thatch needs to be redone, the solar wiring needs to be concealed, the window needs to be repaired, the floor also needs to be smeared and the door needs an inside lock.

- First son's hut

  The roof needs to be re-thatched, the walls and floor require smearing, and the hut requires a traditional door.

- Traditional granary

  The wood needs treatment due to termite infestation and the roof needs re-thatching.

- Kraal structure

  The loose and fallen stones need to be reset back to their original positions thus stabilizing the structure. The kraal needs to be cleared of unwanted vegetation on the inside.

6.1.3 Perimeter Fence and Site Entrance

There is need for a gate at the entrance. The entrance signage need to be replaced and placed in conspicuous location where it can be seen from both sides of the road, The fence has a total of

three parts that need mending and planting of live fence all round the perimeter needed. The breakages are due to people harvesting sisal who should be encouraged to use the main gate. Some sections of the fence are to close to the *ohinga* (less than two meters), and there is a homestead that is too close to the fence on the south western side of the site.

6.1.4 Nature Trail

There is need to change the starting point from behind the ablution block. Old and inaccurately cleared trails to be blocked and vegetation left to regenerate. Loose rocks on the trail should be removed, some parts of the trail on the eastern and southern side need to be cleared of vegetation and rocks. Signage with directions is required along the trails, resting areas are to be demarcated and rock benches erected.

6.1.5 Ohingni

- **Kochieng**

  There is charcoal graffiti at the main entrance, vegetation and trees growing on the inner walls. There was evidence of burning of grass and vegetation which was discouraged as a measure to curb fast vegetation growth. The lintel engraving at the entrance to the blacksmith enclosure is covered by lichens, there is an anthill leaning on the wall by the blacksmith enclosure, there are some trees that have grown close to the walls, there is a path passing through house depression of excavation trench 1, fallen rocks from the wall due to wildlife in the area and a Bao game that is engraved on a rock that is undergoing weathering.

- **Kakuku**

  There is a sign with explaining details that has been placed too high and there is use of cracked rocks used in restoration of walls.

- **Koketch**

  There is an anthill against the wall of the extension, a tree growing in the inner kraal near the grinding stone, many fallen rocks and excessive vegetation growth mainly long grass, a tree growing at the entrance of the second extension, excavation pit three has been filled up and has no barrier around it, graffiti at the entrance with the letters “RO.”

- **Koluoch**

  Sections of the outer wall path on the southern side is not cleared and is inaccessible, trees have destroyed a section of the wall at the extension at the eastern side, small section of wall of the inner extension has collapsed and is in need of restoration, sections of the walls have growing vegetation including trees. Lintel in the interior entrances is completely covered by lichens.

6.1.6 Basic amenities and infrastructure

There is need of water, electricity, telephone, internet and proper access road.

6.1.7.Condition survey photographs

Plate 14: Incomplete documentation centre

Plate 15: Ticketing office in need of gutters, pole and crack repairs

Plate16: House in need of re-thatching

Plate17: House walls in need of smearing

Plate 18: vegetation and lichen growth on stone walls

Plate19: Lichen growth on lintels

Plate 20 : Anthill along the enclosure wall

Plate 21 : Fence breakage

Plate 22: Sisal harvesting along fence

Plate 23 : Charcoal graffiti on enclosure entrance

Plate 24 : Toilet door at ablution block in need of repair

6.2 KEY ISSUES

These issues are a result of the condition survey. The activities outlined in the table are measures suggested to enable Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape to be a fully functional site. The activities span a time frame of 2012 to 2017. However these issues are more clearly explained in the guiding principals and action plan.

Table 2 : Key Issues and Planned Activities

No.	**Key Issue**	**Activities**		
		Short Term Nov2012- June 2014	**Mid-Term Jul 2014-Feb2016**	**Long-Term Mar2016 – Dec2017**
1	Completion of documentation centre	1. Source for funds 2. Completion of building	1. Acquire furniture and electronic equipment	
2	Repair of ablution blocks	1. Unblock drainage 2. Repair of doors 3. Wiring 4. Painting 5. Install toilets with seats and ramp for disabled		
3	Repair of ticketing office	1. Replace window fasteners 2. Weld metal door 3. Replace wooden poles as these are termite infested 4. Install notice board 5. Use of thorns and chemical treatment for bat menace 6. Move store to completed documentation centre	1. Repair cracks on wall 2. Paint 3. Install gutters 4. Install tank for water conservation 5. Razor wire for bats 6. Repair ceiling	
4	Camp site	1. Demarcation of camp site and mess area 2. Clearing / Landscaping of bushes and paths 3. Clear path to existing ablution block	1. Design of new ablution block 2. design and construction of the mess 3. Install water tank for camp sight	1. Construction of new ablution block 2. Acquire tents and other camping equipment
5	Eco-lodges (*Bandas*)	1. Demarcation 2. Clearing of sisal	1. Design	1. Construction

		plantation at designated site		
6	Parking area	1. Signage 2. Landscaping (removal of rocks)		
7	Repair of Traditional Houses	1. Conceal wiring in houses 2. Repair 4 door locks 3. Repair 3 windows 4. Termite treatment 5. Repair fallen rocks in the kraal	1. Thatching of 4 houses and granary 2. Smearing of walls of 6 houses 3. Plastering of floors for 6 houses	
8	Perimeter Fence	1. Mend broken parts of the fence 2. Put acacia thorns in the exposed areas 3. Plant sisal along fence in affected areas		1. Propagate and plant key apple along the entire perimeter
9	Main Entrance Gate			1. Install main gate. 2. Construction of gate house
10	Entrance Signage		1. Construct signage wall.	
11	Nature Trail	1. Block old nature trail behind the ablution block. 2. Remove loose stones tree stamps along the trail 3. Clear the bushy sections of the trail at the southern and eastern sections	1. Erect direction signage along the trail	
12	Graffiti on Ohingni	1. Clean charcoal graffiti at Kochieng enclosure 2. Scrub graffiti at Koketch enclosure	1. Install rules on signs regarding enclosures	
13	Rapid vegetation and trees growth on and within the Ohingni	1. Continuous monitoring and physical removal 2. Chemical treatment of vegetation		
14	Burning of grass and vegetation within ohingni	1. Burning of grass and other vegetation in a designated spot away from the stone structures		

15	Lichens on entrance engravings	1. Provide gloves for removing lichens 2. Manual removal of lichens by hand	1. Manual removal by hand	1. Manual removal by hand
16	Anthills close to the walls	1. Dig out the queen from the anthill 2. Chemical treatment		
17	Foot Path passing through excavation site	1. Block path	2. Open up excavation and construct barrier around the site	
18	Falling Rocks due to wildlife	1. Monitor and return rocks	1. Purchase tripod light ladder for wall maintenance	
19	Weathering of *Bao* game at Kochieng	1. Document the *Bao* game		
20	High signages	1. Reduce lengths of the signages at Kakuku and Koketch		
21	Inaccessible paths outside the *Ohingni*	1. Clear path around the enclosures on regular basis	1. Increase personnel by at least 5 more	
22	Collapsed sections of walls	1. Restore collapsed section of extension wall at Koluoch 2. Continuous Monitoring	1. Continuous Monitoring 2. Set aside funds for emergency wall restoration	
23	No running water			1. Drill borehole
24	Electricity connection			1. Connect to main power grid
15	Disaster preparedness	1. Training of staff in basic first aid and fire fighting techniques	1. Acquire firefighting equipment	motion
16	Promotion of community participation	1. Awareness campaign	1. Form local management committee 2. Encourage formation of Community Based	1. Host community activities at the site

			Organizations	
17	Scientific research	1. Collect more information on the site 2. Document conservation work done	1. Cary out more research	1. Posting of a curator to the site
18	Education and Marketing	1. Design marketing materials	1. Production and dissemination of marketing material	1. Posting of education and public programs officers to the site
19	Rationalization of staff and management system	1. Assess the need 2. Provide clear job descriptions 3. Clarify reporting/management stricture	1. Train staff on detailed conservation work	
20	Access Road to the site	1. Approach relevant authority for improvement of access roads (Kalamindi – Thimlich, Migori-Thimlich and Sori Thimlich)		
21	Telephone		1. Purchase mobile phone and line for station	

6.3 GUIDING PRINCIPALS

In reference to the condition survey and outlined key issues affecting the site, guiding principals were defined and were used to set out an action plan detailing the measures to be taken to improve and promote Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape as a tourist destination, educational and recreational center whilst respecting its cultural and scientific values.

1. Completion of documentation centre will enable visitors and community members have access to information about the site and host education programs.
2. The existing ablution block is in poor condition. This will be repaired to expected standard for visitor comfort.

3. The ticket office will be repaired in order to make it welcoming and functional since eventually all visitors will be required to pay for entry and be issued with a receipt.

4. The cultural landscape is situated in a remote area with no hotel nearby, a well equipped camp site will be ideal for visitors who wish to spend a few days at the site.

5. In order to attract all kinds of visitors to spend a night at the site, self contained Eco-Lodges (Bandas) will be constructed in a serene and quiet environment within the site, for those who are ready to pay extra.

6. The site will have a designated parking area for buses and small cars since it is envisaged most visitors to the site will access it by motorized means.

7. The traditional homestead exhibition is a depiction of the spatial arrangement of houses within a homestead among the Luos. The houses and kraal will be repaired to their original conservation standard.

8. The perimeter fence must be functional to stop trespasses by mending and blocking broken sections of the fence for security purposes. In order to maintain the authenticity of the site a green edge fence will also be planted along the perimeter fence.

9. One main entrance will be erected to control entry and exit from the property.

10. Entrance signage is a prerequisite for directing visitors into the site. It will be in the form of a low wall, constructed from easily available rocks from the site.

11. The site is massive and ideal for those who wish to walk and commune with nature. Thus a nature trail will take visitors all round the property (but within the site) barely coming into contact with the stone enclosures. To enable easy and comfortable walk, tree stamps and loose rocks and boulders will be removed from the trail.

12. All graffiti material on stone enclosure entrances will be removed by either scrubbing or cleaning. This is in order to discourage visitors from imitating such habits in future.

13. The main threat to the stone structures is the rapid vegetation growth on and along the walls. If not checked they may lead to collapse to sections of the wall. Thus constant monitoring and removal both physically and chemically of the vegetation is paramount.

14. Burning of the of vegetation within the ohingni as a control measure must be checked since this practice may lead to cracking of the rocks due to rapid changes in temperature, hence a designated place for burning such vegetation waste once cut should be identified.

15. Lichens on entrance engravings are a threat to rock art since they cover such art work and they may eventually obliterate the art works completely. Careful removal of Lichens is important as a conservation measure in addition to enabling visitors to see the engravings.

16. Anthills close to the walls are potential threats to the walls since they are ideal areas where vegetation sprout hence weakening the walls. Removal and extermination of termites is required.

17. Excavation pit trench 1 will be opened up to be used for education programs. Therefore the foot path passing through the excavation site will be blocked and made to pass by the pit. A low barrier will be erected to prevent any accidental falls into the pit.

18. Falling rocks which are caused by the many monkeys available at the site, while walking along the walls will be picked and returned on the walls.

19. The Bao game at Kochieng that is weathering will be monitored and recorded constantly since it depicts an important activity.

20. Signage is an important source of information to visitors to the site. However some of the signs were placed too high, towering above the stone enclosure, hence an eyesore. These tall signs will be reduced to an appropriate height and where possible others will be camouflaged.

21. Vegetation at Thimlich Ohinga grows rapidly especially during raining season. This makes it impossible to access certain sections around the ohingni. Constant cutting of vegetation is advised but given the scarce number of staff based at the site this is not possible. The ultimate solution is to employ more staff.

22. The stone enclosures are the main attraction at Thimlich Ohinga. However, due to a number of factors small sections may fall now and again. It is therefore important to constantly monitor the walls, set aside funds for repair and always train the youths as apprentices on techniques of repairing the walls.

23. Water is an essential resource that is lacking at the site. By drilling a borehole and having constant running water, there will be enough water for visitors facilities, for landscaping of the site and for the surrounding community.

24. Lack of electricity at the site has hampered provision of a number of essential facilities at the site. With electricity at the site the documentation centre will fully be operational with computers and audio visual equipment for public programs. Cold drinks for visitors will also be available.

25. Disaster preparedness should be enhanced and skills acquired especially those that have to do with containing of fire. All staff must be trained in first aid and equipped with fire fighting techniques.

26. Promotion of community participation is important for the sustainability of the site. Their participation should be encouraged to blend in the past and present cultural practices to make the site relevant for the present and future society.

27. The property is endowed with scientific data that should be documented, collected, interpreted and used for both educational and marketing programs. This calls for more multi disciplinary scientific research and documentation.

28. Data collected from the site should be analyzed and developed into programs to be distributed to schools, higher learning institutions and the general public to inform them about learning and entertainment opportunities that exist.

29. To have effective conservation and quality of the cultural landscape maintained, there is need for rationalization of staff at the site with a clear management system. The need for a ticket officer and education office will be compulsory when visitors increase. Staff to guide visitors through the site and more permanent staff for maintenance of the site will be required.

30. Roads connecting the site to major centers in the region are in need of improvement, making accessibility by road to the site during raining season almost impossible. There is need of a link between the National Museums of Kenya and the District Development Committee to upgrade the roads by building better and sustainable roads.

31. Communication by any means is very important. Accessibility to site managers by telephone will enable bookings of facility to be done in advance.

6.4 Action plan

Table 3: Action plan

Guiding Principle	Key Issues	Activities	Indicators	Responsible	Timeframe for Activities
1	Completion of documentation centre	1. Source funds 2. Construction of building 3. Acquire furniture and electronic equipment	1. Funds acquired 2. Building complete 3. Furniture and Electronic equipment installed	Assistant Director, Western Region	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months
2	Repair Ablution blocks	1. Unblock drainage 2. Repair of doors 3. Wiring 4. Painting 5. Install toilet seat and ramp	1. Drainage unblocked 2. Doors repaired 3. Electricity installed 4. Ablution painted 5. Toilet seat and ramps put up.	Curator Kisumu Museum	32 Months
3	Repair ticketing office	1. Replace window fasteners 2. Weld metal door 3. Replace wooden poles 4. Install notice board 5. Thorns and chemical for bats 6. Move store to completed documentation centre 7. Repair cracks on wall 8. Paint 9. Gutter 10. Tank 11. Razor wire for bats 12. Repair ceiling	1. Window fasteners replaced 2. Metal door repaired 3. Wooden poles replaced 4. Notice board put up 5. Bats eradicated 6. Store moved 7. Cracks sealed 8. Painting done 9. Tank installed 10. Razor wire installed 11. Ceiling repaired	1. Curator Kisumu Museum 2 Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 32 Months 5. 32 Months 6. 32 Months 7. 50 Months 8. 50 Months 9. 50 Months 10. 50 Months 11. 50 Months 12. 50 Months
4	Camp site	1. Demarcation of camp site and mess area 2. Clearing / Landscaping of bushes and paths 3. Clear path to excising ablution block 4. design of new ablution block 5. design and construction	1.Camp Demarcated 2. landscaping done and bush cleared 3. Path to ablution block cleared 4. Ablution	1.Assistant Director Western Region 2. Cartographer 3. Curator Kisumu 4. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 50 Months 5. 50 Months 6. 50 Months 7. 74 Months 8. 74 Months

		of the mess 6. Water tank for camp sight 7. Construction of new ablution block 8. Acquire tents for hire	block designed 5. Mess designed and constructed 6. Tank in place 7.Block constructed 8. Tents purchased		
5	Eco-lodges (*Bandas*)	1. Demarcation 2. Clearing of sisal plantation 3. Design 4. Construction	1. Bandas site demarcated 2. Sisal cleared 3. Banda Architectural plan Designed 4. Bandas constructed	1. Director General. 2. Assistant Director Western Region. 3. Curator Kisumu 4.Cartographer 5. Architect 6.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months 4. 74 Months
6	Parking area	1. Signage 2. Landscaping (removal of rocks)	1. Parking signage erected 2. Rocks and boulders removed	1.Curator Kisumu Museum 2.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months
7	Repair of Traditional Houses	1. Conceal wiring in houses 2. Repair door locks 4 3. Repair 3 windows 4. Termite treatment 5. Repair fallen rocks in the kraal 6. Thatching of 4 houses and granary 7. Smearing of walls of 6 houses 8. Plastering of floors for the 6 houses	1. Electrical wires concealed 2. Locks repaired 3. Windows repaired 4. Termites eradicated 5. Kraal repaired 6. Houses thatched 7. Walls repaired 8. Floors re-plastered	1.Curator Kisumu Museum 2.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 32 Months 5. 32 Months 6. 50 Months 7. 50 Months 8. 50 Months
8	Perimeter Fence	1. Mend broken parts of the fence 2. Put acacia thorns in the exposed areas 3. Plant sisal along fence in affected areas 4. Propagate and plant key apple along the entire perimeter	1. Fence in good condition 2. Acacia thorns placed on broken sections 3. Sisal planted 4. Kie apple planted along perimeter fence	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 74 Months
9	Main Entrance Gate	1. Install main gate. 2. Construct gate house	1. Main gate at the site 2. House gate constructed	1.Assistant Director Western Region. 2. Curator Kisumu Museum	1. 74 Months 2. 74 Months
10	Entrance Signage	1. Construct signage wall.	1. Signage wall constructed	1. Assistant Director Western Region.	1. 50 Months

			next to main entrance	2. Curator Kisumu Museum	
11	Nature Trail	2. Block old trail behind the ablution block. 3. Remove loose stones tree stamps along the trail 4. Clear the bushy sections of the trail at the southern and Eastern sections 5. Erect direction signage along the trail	1. Old trail blocked 2. Loose stones and stamps removed 3. Bushy section of trail cleared 4. Directional signage erected	1.Assistant Director, Western Region 2. Curator Kisumu Museum 3.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 50 Months
12	Graffiti on Ohingni	1. Clean charcoal graffiti at Kochieng 2. Scrub graffiti at Koketch second enclosure 3. Install rules signages	1. Graffiti removed 2. Graffiti scrubbed-out 3.Rules signage installed	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months
13	Rapid vegetation and trees growth on and within the Ohingni	1. Monitoring and Physical removal 2. Chemical treatment	1. Vegetation removed and Reports done 2. Reports	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months
14	Burning of grass and vegetation within ohingni	1. Collect grass and burn in a designated spot away from the stricture	1. Designated spot identified	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	32 Months
15	Lichens on entrance engravings	1. Provide gloves for removing lichens 2. Manual removal by hand	1. Gloves provided 2. Reports	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. Continues
16	Anthill close to the walls	1. Dig out the queen from the anthill 2. Chemical treatment	1. Ant-hill removed	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months
17	Foot Path passing through excavation site	1. Block path 2. Open up excavation and construct barrier around the site	1. Footpath blocked 2. Excavation site opened and barrier constructed	1. Assistant Director Western Region. 2.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months
18	Falling Rocks due to wildlife	1. Monitor and return rocks 2. Purchase tripod light ladder for wall maintenance	1. Reports 2. Ladder purchased	1.Curator Kisumu. 2.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months
19	Weathering of *Bao* game at Kochieng	1. Document the Bao game	1. Reports	1.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months
20	High signages	1. Reduce lengths of the signages at Kakuku and Koketch	1. Signage height reduced	2.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months
21	Inaccessible paths outside the *Ohingni*	1. Clear path around the enclosures on regular basis 2. Increase personnel by 5	1. Paths cleared 2. More staff at the site	1. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga 2. Director General	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months
22	Collapsed	1. Restore collapsed	1. Restoration	1 Assistant Director	1. 32 Months

	sections of walls	section of extension wall at Koluoch 2. Continuous Monitoring 3. Set aside funds for Emergency	done 2. Reports 3. Funds Kitty established	Western Region. 2.Curator Kisumu Museum. 3.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	2. Continuous 3. 50 Months
23	No running water	1. Drill borehole	1. Borehole drilled and water available at the site	1. Director General 2. Assistant Director Western Region	1. 50 Months
24	Electricity connection	1. Connect to main power grid	1. Electricity from the national grid at the site	1. Director General 2. Assistant Director Western Region	1. 50 Months
25	Disaster preparedness	1. Training of staff in basic first aid and fire fighting techniques 2. Acquire firefighting equipment	1. Staff trained 2. Firefighting equipment acquired	1. DAHR 2. Curator Kisumu Museum	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months
26	Promotion of community participation	1. Awareness campaign 2. Local management committee 3. Encourage formation of CBOs 4. Host community activities at the site	1. Reports 2. Committee in place 3. CBOs formed 4. Calendar of activities	1. Assistant Director Western Region. 2. Curator Kisumu 3. Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months 4. 74 Months
27	Scientific research	1. Collect more information on the site 2. Document conservation work done 3. Carry out more research 4. Posting of a curator to the site	1. Scientific Reports 2. Documentation Reports 3. Curator at the site	1. DAHR, 2. Assistant Director Western Region 3. Curator Kisumu Museum 4. Research specialists (Researchers-DMSM & DRC)	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 50 Months 4. 74 Months
28	Education and Marketing	1. Design marketing materials 2. Production and dissemination of marketing material 3. Posting of education and public programs to the site	1.Publicity material designed 2. Publicity material distributed 3. Education /public programs officer posted at site	1. PRO, 2. Public programs & Education officers 3.Researchers, 4. Curator Kisum 5.Caretaker Thimlich Ohinga	1. 32 Months 2. 50 Months 3. 74 Months
29	Rationalization of staff and management system	1. Asses the need 2. Provide job description 3. Clarify reporting/ management stricture 4. Train staff on detailed conservation work	1. Report on needs assessment. 2. Memos 3. Report on training	1. DAHR 2. Curator Kisumu Museum	1. 32 Months 2. 32 Months 3. 32 Months 4. 50 Months
30	Access Road to the site	1. Approach relevant authority for improvement of access roads (Kalamindi – Thimlich,	1. Roads improved	1. Director General 2. Assistant Director Western Region	1. 32 Months

		Migori-Thimlich and Sori Thimlich)			
31	Telephone	1. Purchase mobile phone and line for station	Mobile phone and line purchased	1. Curator Kisumu Museum	1. 50 Months

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EAST AFRICA 1:50,000 (KENYA)

MACALDER

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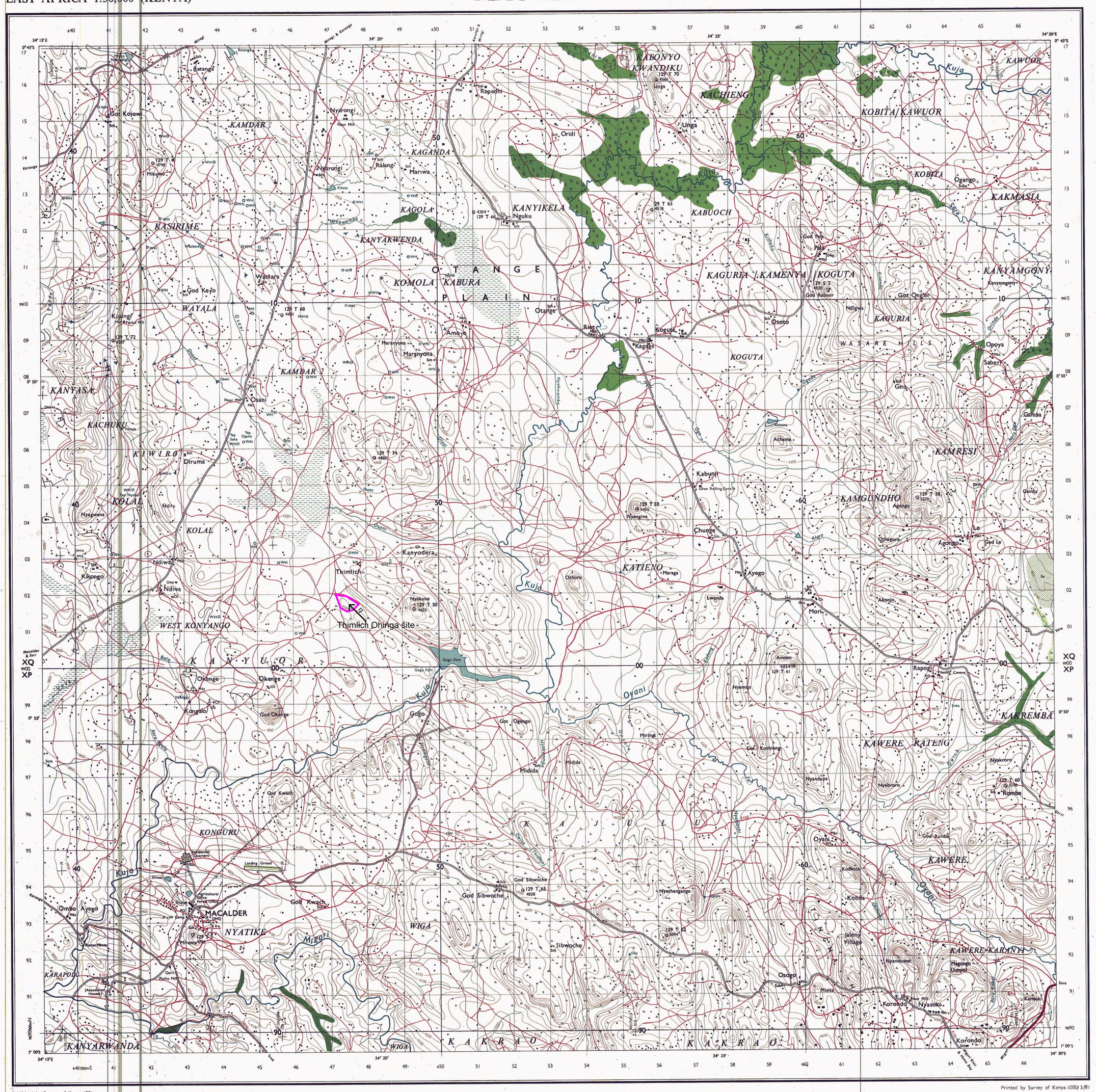

Published by Survey of Kenya 1981

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METRES 1000 — 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 KILOMETRES

MILE 1 — 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 MILES

FEET 5000 — 2500 0 5000 10000 15000 20000 25000 30000 FEET

HEIGHTS IN FEET

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

NYANZA PROVINCE

SOUTH NYANZA DISTRICT

INDEX TO ADJOINING SHEETS

129/1 GWASI	129/2 HOMA BAY	130/1 OYUGIS
129/3 KARUNGU	KENYA 129/4 MACALDER	130/3 AWENDO
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Edition 1 constructed, drawn and photographed by Directorate of Overseas Surveys, 1955 (D.C.S. 23).
Air Photography by R.A.F. March 1947 and February-March 1948.
Edition 4 reconstructed drawn and photographed by D.O.S. 1962 (D.O.S. 423).
Field Survey Data supplied by Survey of Kenya.
Air Photography by R.A.F. October 1960 and January 1961.
Contoured by D.O.S. from control supplied by D.O.S.
Edition 5 Revised by Survey of Kenya from R.A.F Photography dated January 1967
Field Revision by Survey of Kenya March 1978.

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Town or area with permanent buildings
Other populated area, Houses
All Weather Road:- Bound Surface — Road E101/Number
" " " Loose Surface
Dry Weather Road — Culvert, Bridge
Main Track (Motorable)
Other Track and Footpath
Cut Line
Railway, Siding, Station, Level Crossing — Sta, LC
" Light
Airfield Runway:- Bound
" " Murram
" " Grass
Telephone Line
" " along Road and Track
Power Line
Antiquity — Gebr Ruins
Mineral Working
Area Name — KAKRAO

Boundary:- International
" Regional or Provincial
" District
" Municipality or Township
" National Park, National Reserve or Nature Reserve
Trigonometrical Station:- Primary — Pillar, Ground Station
" " Secondary
" " Other
Boundary Pillar
Spot Height (in Feet) — 4820
Contours (V.I. 50ft) — Depression — 4500, 4400
Air Photo Principal Point with Film No. — V13A/1046 010
Watercourse, Waterfall, Rapids, Dams
" (Wide) Waterfall, Rapids
" (Incefinite)
Water Tank, Windpump
Borehole, Waterhole, Well, Spring — BH, WH, OW, OS
Property Boundary
Forest Boundary

Forest
Thicket
Bamboo
Riverine Trees
Plantation:- Wattle W, Cashew Nut CN (Coffee C, Sisal S, Sugar Sa, Palm)
Woodland
Scrub
Scattered Trees
Palms
Mangrove Swamp
Tree Swamp
Papyrus Swamp, Marsh, Bog
Seasonal Swamp
Sand or Mud — Inland, Coastal
Outcrop Rock
Lava
Land Reference Number
Government Land (Original Number in Brackets)

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch	Church
CtH	Court House
DC	District Commissioner
Disp	Dispensary
DO	District Officer
H	Hotel
Hosp	Hospital
M	Mission
Mkt	Market
Mos	Mosque
MoW	Ministry of Works
PC	Provincial Commissioner
Pet Sta	Petrol Station
PO	Post Office
PP	Police Post
PS	Police Station
RH	Rest House
Sch	School
T	Telephone
Tg	Telegraph
TC	Trading Centre
DHQ	Divisional Headquarters
F	Fence

Proposed Property

CAUTION:-
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THE DELINEATION OF INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER BOUNDARIES ON THIS MAP MUST NOT BE CONSIDERED AUTHORITATIVE

CONVERSION TABLE

Metres 2000 1900 1800 1700 1600 1500 1400 1300 1200 1100 1000 900 800 700 600 500 400 300 200 100 0 — Feet 6500 6000 5500 5000 4500 4000 3500 3000 2500 2000 1500 1000 500 0

Grid North
True North
Magnetic North 0°54'
At Sheet Centre
Magnetic Declination at 1 January 1981
Annual Change:- 6' East

Grid:-	U.T.M. Zone 36
Projection:-	Transverse Mercator
Spheroid:-	Clarke 1880 (Modified)
Unit of Measurement:-	Metre
Meridian of Origin:-	33°00' East of Greenwich
Latitude of Origin:-	Equator
Scale Factor at Origin:-	0·9996
False Co-ords of Origin:-	500,000m Easting 10,000,000m Northing
Datum:-	New (1960) Arc

The numbered lines indicate the 1,000 Metre Universal Transverse Mercator Grid, Zone 36. Clarke 1880 (Modified) Spheroid.

GRID ZONE DESIGNATION 36M

100,000 M. SQ. IDENTIFICATION: XQ, XP

TO GIVE A GRID REFERENCE ON THIS SHEET

LETTERS See 100,000m SQ. IDENTIFICATION

FIGURES Pay no attention to the smaller co-ordinate figures in the margins. They are for finding full co-ordinates: viz 1000m.

PAY ATTENTION TO LARGER MARGINAL FIGURES:

POINT ▽ 129 S 3 — LETTERS XQ

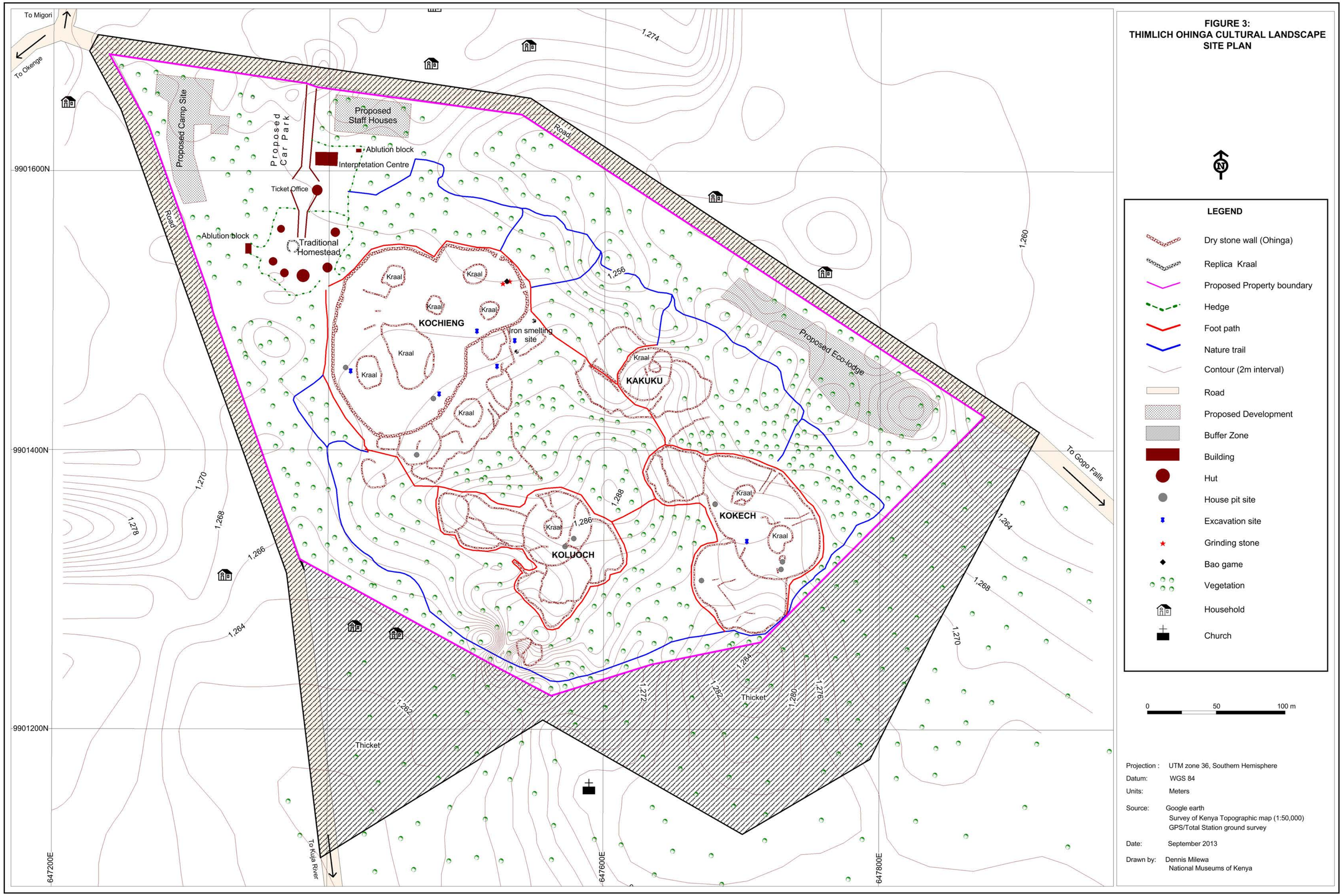
EAST Take west edge of square in which point lies and read the figures printed opposite this line (on north or south margin). Estimate tenths eastwards to point. — 60 7

NORTH Take south edge of square in which point lies and read the figures printed opposite this line (on east or west margin). Estimate tenths northwards to point. — 10 3

REFERENCE 607 103

Unit ..... Metre — Square ..... 1,000m — Reference to nearest 100m

Map of Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape nominated property



7. DOCUMENTATION

7. a: Photographs and authorization table and other audiovisual materials have been consolidated for this work as shown in the table below.

No.	Format	Caption	Date of Photo	Photographer	Copyright Owner	Non exclusive cession of rights
1	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure and buttresses at either side for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
2	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure exhibiting use of large slabs of rock for construction and lintel inscriptions	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
3	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng enclosure exhibiting neatly arranged rock slabs of uniform size for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
4	jpg	Closer view of rock arrangement at the entrance of Kochieng enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
5	jpg	Use of larger well lined rocks at the entrance of Kochieng enclosure for stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
6	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng with lintel engravings	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
7	jpg	Entrance at Kochieng with surveillance watch stations on either sides	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
8	jpg	Wall exhibiting three phase method of wall construction and rock buttresses for support	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
9	jpg	Entrance which is built very low for security purposes	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
10	jpg	Magnificence of walls	August	Ephraim	National	Granted

		with demarcated path round the structures	2011	Mwangi	Museums of Kenya	
11	jpg	Wall exhibiting three phase method of wall construction with an infill of smaller stones in the center	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
12	jpg	Joint at the wall to increase stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
13	jpg	Circular cattle enclosure with entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
14	jpg	Exterior enclosure which is a kitchen garden (*orundu*)	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
15	jpg	Natural vegetation at the cultural landscape	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
16	jpg	Demarcated path around the structures	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
17	jpg	Large uniquely shaped cattle enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
18	jpg	Cattle enclosure entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
19	jpg	Grinding stone	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
20	jpg	*Bao* game, rock with carved depressions	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
21	jpg	Vegetation growth along the wall at Kolouch enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
22	jpg	Three phase method of construction exhibited at Koluoch enclosure	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
23	jpg	Corridors used to guide animals and cattle enclosures	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
24	jpg	Cattle enclosure drainage ducts	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted

25	jpg	Industrial area where iron working took place	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
26	jpg	Use of already existing rock boulders as part of wall construction	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
27	jpg	Height and magnificence of walls	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
28	jpg	Section of the nature trail	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
29	jpg	Buttress along wall to increase stability	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted
30	jpg	Space created in rock slabs to insert wooden pegs to seal entrance	August 2011	Ephraim Mwangi	National Museums of Kenya	Granted

Table 1: Image inventory and authorization table

Contact details of copyright owner:

Name: National Museums of Kenya

Address: P. O. Box 40658 – 00100

Nairobi, Kenya.

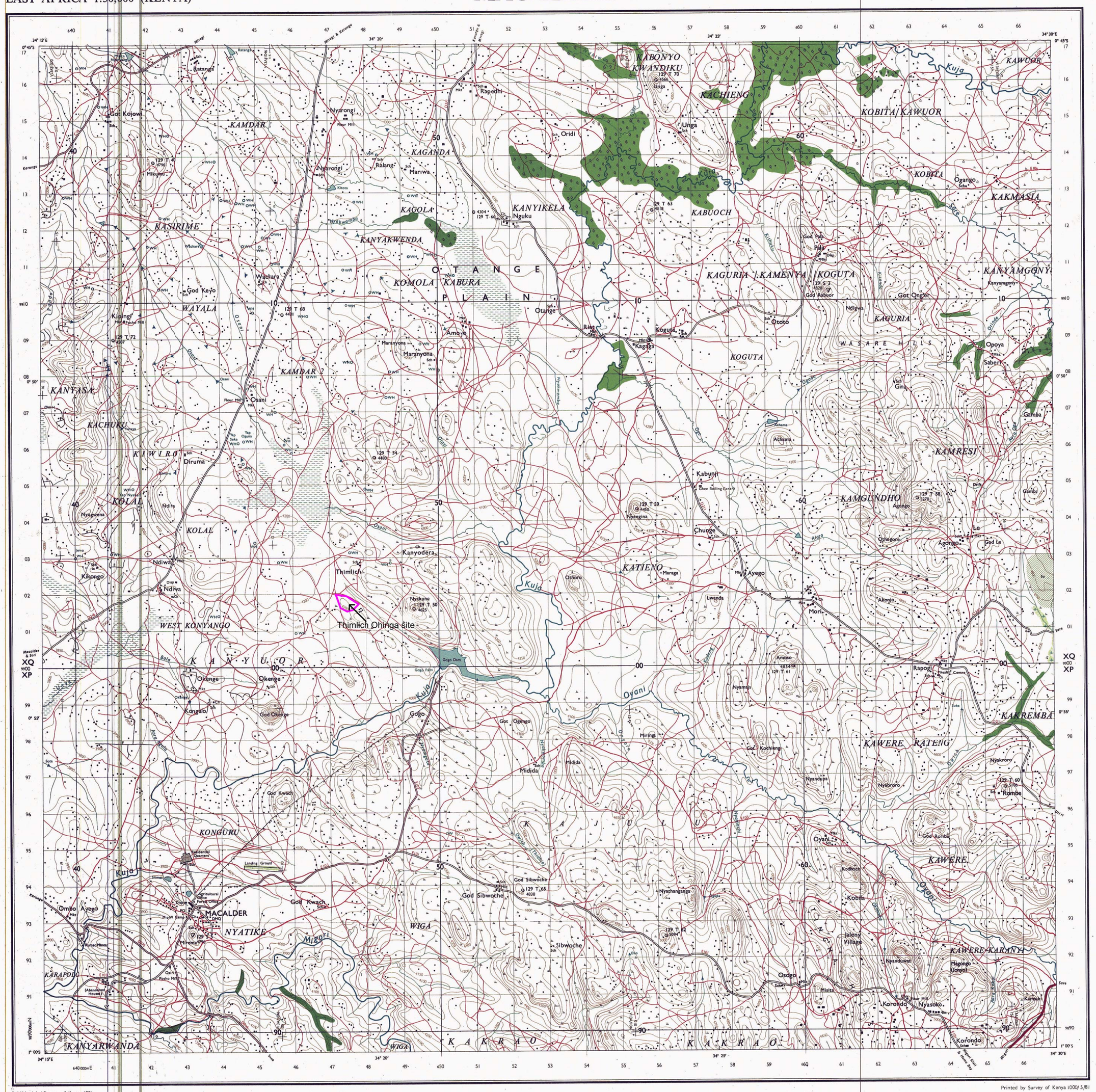
Telephone: 254 20 3742161/4 or 254 20 3742131/4

Email: dgnmk@museums.or.ke

EAST AFRICA 1:50,000 (KENYA)

MACALDER

Series	Y731
Sheet	129/4
Edition	5-SK



Published by Survey of Kenya 1981

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Printed by Survey of Kenya 1000/ 5/81

Users noting errors or omissions are requested to mark them on the map and forward to the Director of Surveys, P.O. Box 30046, Nairobi, Kenya. The map will be replaced.

SCALE 1:50,000

METRES 1000 — 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 KILOMETRES

MILE 1 — 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 MILES

FEET 5000 — 2500 0 5000 10000 15000 20000 25000 30000 FEET

HEIGHTS IN FEET

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

NYANZA PROVINCE

SOUTH NYANZA DISTRICT

INDEX TO ADJOINING SHEETS

129/1 GWASI	129/2 HOMA BAY	130/1 OYUGIS
129/3 KARUNGU	KENYA 129/4 MACALDER	130/3 AWENDO
5/1 (KENYA 14/1) MOHORO TANZANIA	143/2 (TANZ. 5/2) SUNA	144/1 KIHANCHA

SHEET HISTORY

Edition 1 constructed, drawn and photographed by Directorate of Overseas Surveys, 1955 (D.C.S. 23).
Air Photography by R.A.F. March 1947 and February-March 1948.
Edition 4 reconstructed drawn and photographed by D.O.S. 1962 (D.O.S. 423).
Field Survey Data supplied by Survey of Kenya.
Air Photography by R.A.F. October 1960 and January 1961.
Contoured by D.O.S. from control supplied by D.O.S.
Edition 5 Revised by Survey of Kenya from R.A.F Photography dated January 1967
Field Revision by Survey of Kenya March 1978.

CONSTRUCTION

AIR PHOTOGRAPHY
a OCTOBER 1960
b JANUARY 1961

REVISION PHOTOGRAPHY 1967

Series	Y731
Sheet	129/4
Edition	5-SK

Town or area with permanent buildings
Other populated area, Houses
All Weather Road:- Bound Surface — Road E101/Number
" " " Loose Surface
Dry Weather Road — Culvert, Bridge
Main Track (Motorable)
Other Track and Footpath
Cut Line
Railway, Siding, Station, Level Crossing — Sta, LC
" Light
Airfield Runway:- Bound
" " Murram
" " Grass
Telephone Line
" " along Road and Track
Power Line
Antiquity — Gebr Ruins
Mineral Working
Area Name — KAKRAO

Boundary:- International
" Regional or Provincial
" District
" Municipality or Township
" National Park, National Reserve or Nature Reserve
Trigonometrical Station:- Primary — Pillar, Ground Station
" " Secondary
" " Other
Boundary Pillar
Spot Height (in Feet) — 4820
Contours (V.I. 50ft) — Depression — 4500, 4400
Air Photo Principal Point with Film No. — V13A/1046 010
Watercourse, Waterfall, Rapids, Dams
" (Wide) Waterfall, Rapids
" (Incefinite)
Water Tank, Windpump
Borehole, Waterhole, Well, Spring — BH, WH, OW, OS
Property Boundary
Forest Boundary

Forest
Thicket
Bamboo
Riverine Trees
Plantation:- Wattle W, Cashew Nut CN (Coffee C, Sisal S, Sugar Sa, Palm)
Woodland
Scrub
Scattered Trees
Palms
Mangrove Swamp
Tree Swamp
Papyrus Swamp, Marsh, Bog
Seasonal Swamp
Sand or Mud — Inland, Coastal
Outcrop Rock
Lava
Land Reference Number
Government Land (Original Number in Brackets)

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100,000 M. SQ. IDENTIFICATION: XQ, XP

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REFERENCE 607 103

Unit ..... Metre — Square ..... 1,000m — Reference to nearest 100m

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

WHERE HERITAGE LIVES ON

24th November 2014

Alessandro Balsamo
Nominations and Tentative Lists Manager
Policy and Statutory Implementation Section
World Heritage Centre, UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy 75352, Paris 07 SP France
Tel > +33(0)1.45.68.11.36
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94220 Charenton-le-Pont
Tel: +33 (0)1 41 94 17 59
Fax. + 33 (0) 1 48 93 19 16

RE: THIMLICH OHINGA CULTURAL LANDSCAPE (KENYA) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reference is made to your letter Ref. GB/MA 1450 of 8th September 2014 addressed to the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Kenya to UNESCO on the above subject matter.

Enclosed herewith is further information to support the submitted nomination dossier for Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape.

- Annex 1: The Map. The resubmitted Map shows the nominated area (core) which is also the zone of special legal protection. In this case, the gazetted area includes the nature trail, the traditional homestead and the thickets as enclosed by the perimeter fence around the site. Note. The *Orundu* (small enclosures gardens) and the engraved Bao Game have been identified in the site plan. In this submission the maps are redone with the legend clearly indicating these features.
- Annex 2. Comparative analysis. Thimlich Ohinga cultural Landscape is compared at length with sites such as Engaruka(Tanzania), Konso cultural Landscape (Ethiopia), Fortresses of Sudan, ruins of Loropeni (Burkina Faso) and Sukur Cultural Landscape (Nigeria).
- Annex 3. Architectural drawings. Detailed architectural drawings for the two ablution blocks and interpretation centre and the traditional homestead are herein attached.
- Annex 4. Three-phase stone layering technology. A detailed sketch of wall cross section is herein attached.
- Annex 5. Excavations. The first excavation by Wandibba 1986, produced artefacts (comprising of pottery, stone artefacts of LSA and beads) and faunal finds (comprising of domestic plus wild species such as cattle, ovicaprids, chicken etc) charred bone were dated to 1650 to 1900 AD which is in general agreement with dates "indicated by oral traditions." Herein attached is Wandibba Simiyu article. For 2nd Excavation carried out in November 2000 by Emmerson, Stephanie and Onjala (2001) refer to Map in Annex 1.
- Annex 6. Documentation of Condition Survey and Restoration. The documentation for the restoration works described on page 17 and Condition Survey of Thimlich Ohinga that shade some light in understanding Thimlich Ohinga, is herein enclosed.
- Annex 8. Community Involvement. On page 45 there is reference to the Thimlich Ohinga AIA Community Based Conservation project which began in July/August 2011. See copy of three documents attached entitled, (i) Community and Site Preservation at Thimlich Ohinga, Kenya, (ii) Impact of interpretive signage at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape and (iii)Final project report for the AIA community based conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga cultural Landscape.

Kindly note for Development and restoration projects, figure 3 and figure 2 in the nomination dossier depicts proposed camp site, car park, staff houses and eco-lodge along the road to Gogo Falls. The National Museums of Kenya which is the custodian of Thimlich Ohinga wishes to clarify that these development features were inserted for zonation purpose. This was envisaged as critical in guiding future developments for the site which will ensure that sensitive areas of the site are not encroached and particulary, the wall enclosures. As such, there are no architectural drawings made yet.

Please note also *Tourism Strategic Plan* and all the nine appendices were submitted in the submission to the World Heritage Centre in three copies. The National Museums of Kenya has so far been in touch with World Heritage Secretariat to submit to ICOMOS copies of the appendices which they have confirmed to having the copies.

In the Bibliography Stephanie et al 2001 is not mentioned. This was an oversight; however these excavation findings were published in a publication of the National Museums of Kenya: *Horizons Magazine Issue No2/3. Vo 5. 2001,* pp 13-14, which is also herein attached, refer to Annex 6.

We remain at your disposal for any questions or clarifications otherwise we wish to thank you for your continued support and corporation.

Dr. Yassin Ahmed

AG. DIRECTOR GENERAL

Cc. Ms Christine Mkwenda
Second Secretary,
Charge d'Affaires a.i
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of
Kenya to UNESCO
PARIS

Encl.

Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Comparative analysis

African architecture reflects the interaction of environmental factors—such as natural resources, climate, and vegetation—with the economies and population densities of the continent's various regions. As stone is the most durable of building materials, some ancient stone structures survive, while other materials have succumbed to rain, rot, or termites (Hess 2013). Besides geographic influences, local economies were also an important factor that influenced the type of structures and materials used. Pastoral nomads, for instance, follow defined routes, reducing the risk of overgrazing and enabling them to contact other nomadic groups.

The cattle-herding pastoralists of Southern and East Africa settle for some years in one location. The Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania construct an oblong, or sometimes square, low-domed hut some 20 feet (6 meters) long and at shoulder height from closely woven frames of thin *leleshwa* sticks and saplings. Arranged in a circle around the cattle enclosure, or *manyatta*, the frames are packed with leaves and plastered over with cattle dung, which acts as a deterrent to termites. The huts are aerodynamically designed to resist high winds, and the *manyatta* thicket boundary acts as a defensive barrier. Defense for pastoral economies was a key determinant of the siting, material and design of settlement spots owing to the risk enemy group raiding to capture livestock (Hess 2013). The analysis below assesses stone fortifications found within Sub-Saharan Africa namely Eastern Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. The sites considered are compared and contrasted with Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape by focusing on the materials used, designs and their functions. The comparison is done with the premise that Thimlich Ohinga was functionally a pastoral economy.

Engaruka, Tanzania

Engaruka is an abandoned system of ruins in the Great Rift Valley of Northern Tanzania. Situated in the Arusha province, it is known for its irrigation and cultivation structures. The site is dated to around 15th -16th century, the iron age farming community with a large continuous village area on the foot slopes of the Rift Valley escarpment, housing several thousand people developed an intricate irrigation and cultivation system, involving a stone-block canal channeling water from the "Crater Highlands" rift escarpment to stone lined cultivation terraces (Stump,

Daryl 2006, Laulumaa, Vesa 2006). The Engaruka site presents itself as an agricultural settlement owing to the extant features still evident today. The inhabitants of Engaruka took measures to prevent soil erosion. Fertility of the plots for cultivation was increased by using manure of stall fed cattle.

Engaruka was first linked to the Sonjo by Robert Gray in 1963. The Sonjo people found in Tanzania are a numerically small Bantu-speaking living some 60 miles to the northwest. The Sonjo are known for their use of irrigation systems in agriculture. The Sonjo also maintain terraced village sites, albeit of considerably more rudimentary form than what is found at Engaruka.

The Engaruka site has a similarity to Thimlich Ohinga by the fact that both are contemporary having been active in 14th-15th Century. However they have a profound difference in that the sites were functionally different. Engaruka was principally an agricultural settlement but Thimlich Ohinga was a pastoral settlement. This is enhanced by the differences in stone laying designs and free standing enclosures of Thimlich Ohinga. Engaruka is characterized by channels for conducting water from high levels to lower levels for irrigation and for holding soil against erosion. The canals used spring water bifurcated by low earth and stone dams in the lower foothills of Mount Lolmalasin and then carried down from the highland in earthen and stone-lined canals. The systems involved a range of sophisticated techniques, including extensive earth and stone canals and dams constructed for both flood control and irrigation purposes (Hirst 2014). The case for Thimlich Ohinga construction was different since it was intended for security for livestock. The enclosures are exclusively made of stones unlike the Engaruka which, in some section, employed earthen material for water canals.

The walls at Engaruka were disjointed and very low indicating that defense was not a major factor for consideration by the inhabitant. The Thimlich Ohinga walls were continuous and completely surrounded the homesteads with openings only at the gate entrances. The Engaruka site was abandoned in the mid-18th century due to Maasai entry into the area. The Thimlich Ohinga on the other hand was inhabitant was inhabited by successive groups the latest being present Luo people who still occupied the site until it started being managed by the National Museums of Kenya in 1980s..

Konso Cultural Landscape, Ethiopia

Konso Cultural Landscape is an arid site of stone walled terraces and fortified settlements in the Konso highlands of Ethiopia. It is a 17th Century site characterized by extensive dry stone terraces bearing witness to the persistent human struggle to use and harness the hard, dry and rocky environment. The terraces retain the soil from erosion, collect a maximum of water, discharge the excess, and create terraced fields that are used for agriculture. The terraces are the main features of the Konso landscape and the hills are contoured with the dry stone walls, which at places reach up to 5 meters in height. (whc.unesco.2011) Again this site is principally an agricultural landscape different from the Thimlich Ohinga Landscape.

Konso site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011 under criteria (iii) and (v) but Thimlich Ohinga is proposed for inscription under criteria (iii) and (iv). While both share the similarity of criterion (iii) by being systems of stone fortifications with which bear exceptional testimony to cultural traditions, the Thimlich ohinga tradition has disappeared unlike Konso which is still living. Secondly the Konso landscape presents a big difference in that under criterion (v), the site principally represents human interaction with their environment (dry weather conditions) while the Thimlich Ohinga Landscape under criterion (iv) points to significant stages in human history in which case the culture of fortifications was influenced by the phase of migrations into and through Eastern Africa which caused collisions over resources between different groups of people.

The walled towns and settlements (paletas) of the Konso Cultural Landscape are located on high plains or hill summits selected for their strategic and defensive advantage. These towns are circled by between one and six rounds of dry stone defensive walls, built of locally available rock. The cultural spaces inside the walled towns, called moras, retain an important and central role in the life of the Konso. Some walled towns have as many as 17 moras. The tradition of erecting generation marking stones called daga-hela, quarried, transported and erected through a ritual process, makes the Konso one of the last megalithic people. The site selection of both Konso and Thimlich Ohinga Landscapes are similar but differences emerge by the layers of walls where the Konso site more layers while Thimlich Ohinga fortifications entailed one fortification being added to by successive families as population increased. The social places for the Thimlich Ohinga site were thus within different, sometimes in detached enclosures.

Fortresses of Sudan

The Fortresses of Sudan are located along the Nile River in Sudan and dated to between the Middle Kingdom and the Meroe Period. The end of the Post Meroitic period saw the stoppage of further construction of the fortifications. These architectural landmarks are mainly built of stones, mud brick or mixture of mud and organic components (Krzyżanowski *et al* 2011). The remains of many of these architectural works are bastions, towers and fortified passages. The oldest enclosures are located on the eastern bank of the Karni Island. These enclosures have a very regular, repetitive structure showing a large degree of unification.

The biggest fortified site of the Early Christian period is the old Dongola which was the capital of the Makuria Kingdom. Generally, areas around the fortified sites are very diverse but there are cases where fortifications are isolated from other settlements. Research conducted on the role of archaeological remains in the contemporary cultures of the northern Sudan ethnic groups point to a commonality of use.

A major difference between the Thimlich Ohinga and the Fortresses of Sudan is their conservation. The former is actively conserved by the local community who view the architectural works with reverence. The local community, (Luo) considers the former homesteads sites within the stone enclosures as abode of ancestral spirits who deserve respect. Contrariwise, the Fortresses of Sudan are considered by the local community (Rubatab ethnic group) as storages of free and ready-to use building materials. Many of the sites were plundered in a bid by the local community to access natural fertilizer (*marok*) (Krzyżanowski, *et al* 2011). In addition plundering is reinforced by the belief that these ruins have hidden treasures guarded by supernatural beings, *Jinns* who according to the Arabic myths inhabit deserted and abandoned places such as ruins and tombs. This encouraged the local people in Sudan to invade archaeological sites. This presents profound differences between the conservation of Thimlich Ohinga enclosures and the fortresses of Sudan.

Ruins of Loropeni, Burkina Faso

The Ruins of Loropeni is a fortress in Burkina Faso that was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2009 under criterion (iii). The Ruins of Loropéni consist of imposing, tall, laterite stone perimeter walls, up to six metres in height, surrounding a large abandoned settlement. The ruins

are considered to be the best preserved of ten fortresses in the Lobi area and is part of a larger group of 100 stone enclosures that bear testimony to the power of the trans-Saharan gold trade (UNESCO 2009). The ruins are at least 1,000 years old and thus older than Thimlich Ohinga by about 500 years.

The settlement was occupied by the Lohron or Koulango peoples, who controlled the extraction and transformation of gold in the region when it reached its apogee from the 14th to the 17th century. The two sites were functionally different. The Thimlich Ohinga site was set in a geographical area used by migrant groups through Eastern Africa contributing to the peopling in the region. The Ruins of Loropeni in contrast was a center of gold mining. The site is believed to have been important site of Trans-Saharan gold trade. The Loropeni site was finally deserted in the early 19th century. The materials used for their construction is different from that of Thimlich Ohinga in Kenya. The walls of Loropeni were constructed using laterite stone which were set using mud as mortar with plaster finish over the stones. In the case of Thimlich Ohinga, neither mortar nor plaster was used for construction.

Sukur Cultural Landscape, Nigeria

Sukur Cultural Landscape is located on a hill above the village of Sukur in the Adamawa State of Nigeria. It is situated in the Mandara Mountains, close to the border with Cameroon. The Sukur Cultural Landscape, with the Palace of the Hidi (Chief) on a hill dominating the villages below, the terraced fields and their sacred symbols, and the extensive remains of a former flourishing iron industry, is a remarkably intact physical expression of a society and its spiritual and material culture (UNESCO WHC 1999). It was inscribed on the World Heritage Site in 1999 under criteria (iii), (v), and (vi).

Despite its being a contemporary of Thimlich Ohinga being vibrant from the 16th Century, Sukur has a recorded history of iron smelting technology, flourishing trade, and strong political institution. Thimlich Ohinga though having an iron smelting site is not associated with iron smelting technology. Sukur laos features as having hand a strong political institution which was lacking in Thimlich Ohinga. Thimlich Ohinga is not known to have a centralized political system despite there being need to have mobilization of labour for the walls construction.

The Sukur Cultural landscape is characterized by terraces on the farmlands, dry stone structures and stone paved walkways. Hierarchical structure of Sukur presents a fundamental difference with the Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape where were there was no social hierarchy. In addition, the combination of intensive and extensive farming evident in Sukur is absent in Thimlich Ohinga which further enhances the functional differences between the two landscapes. A striking difference also presents in the exceptional paved tracks at Sukur Landscape. At Thimlich Ohinga, there was no such paving as the site was principally for livestock safety. However, the two sites have similarities with Sukur site being notable for spiritual association of the terraces, with their ritual features such as sacred trees. In contrast however, Thimlich Ohinga spiritual aspects are found in the symbolic association of walls with the place of a mother's nurturing role and the walls also being considered as the abode of the spirits of the departed ancestors.

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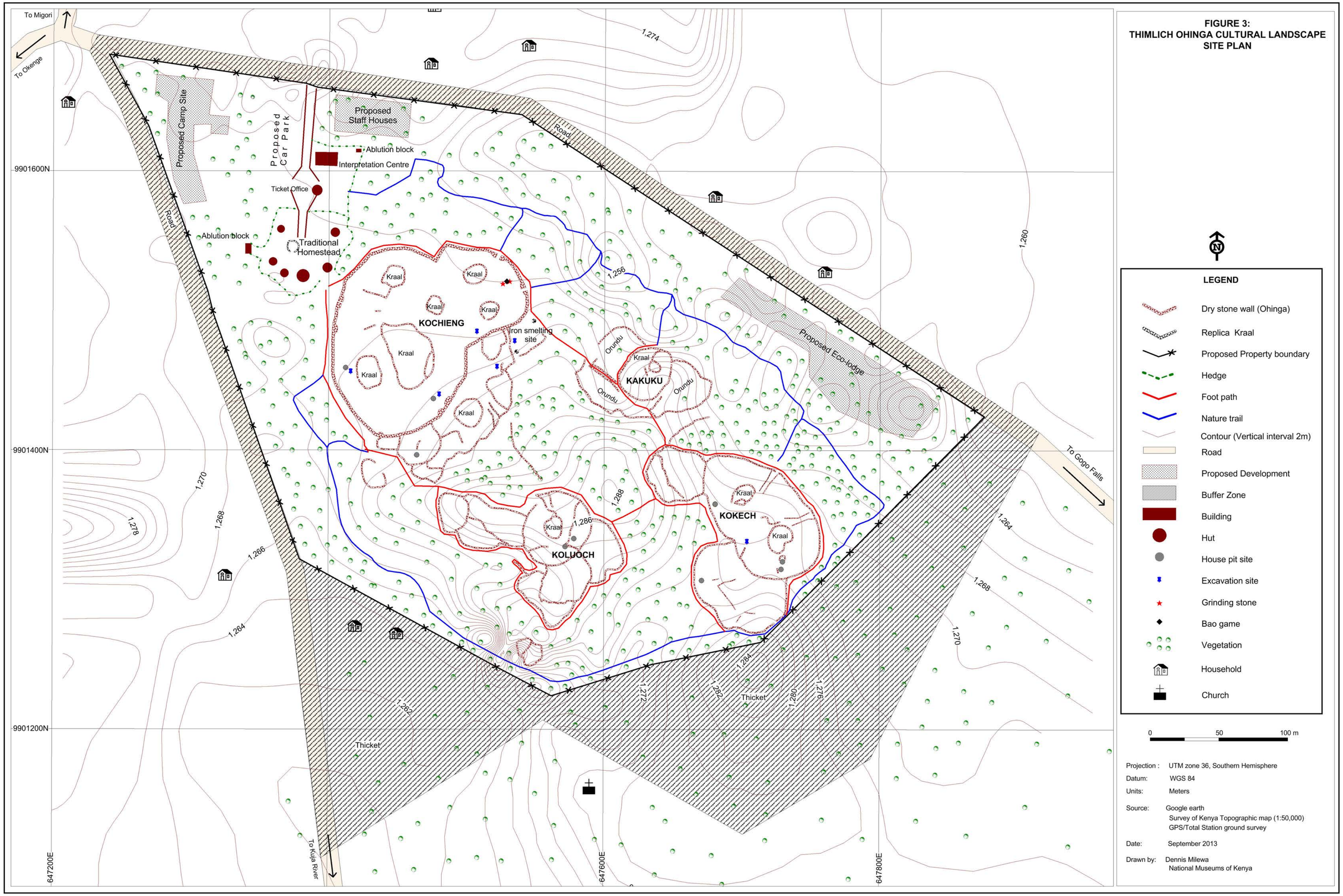
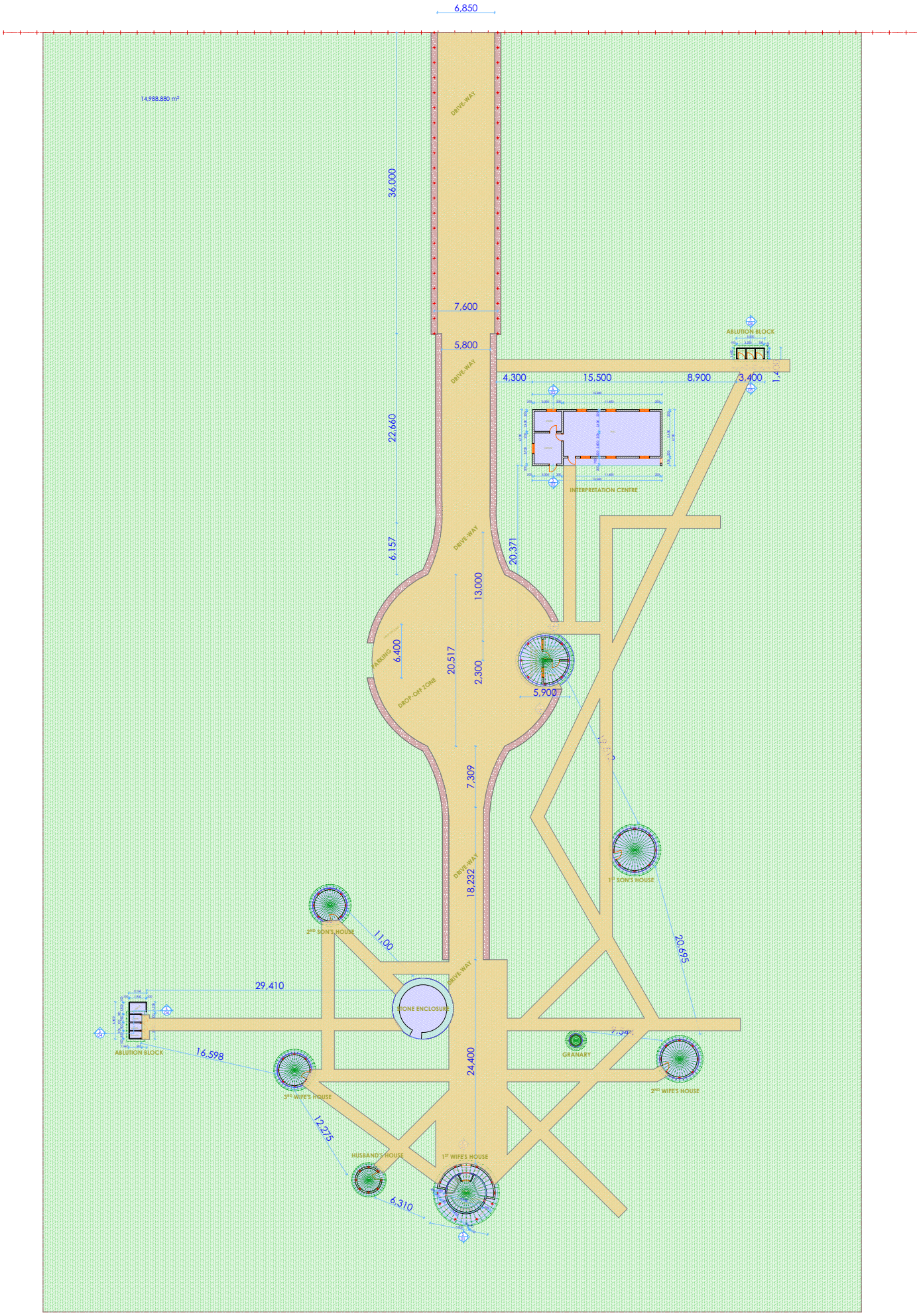
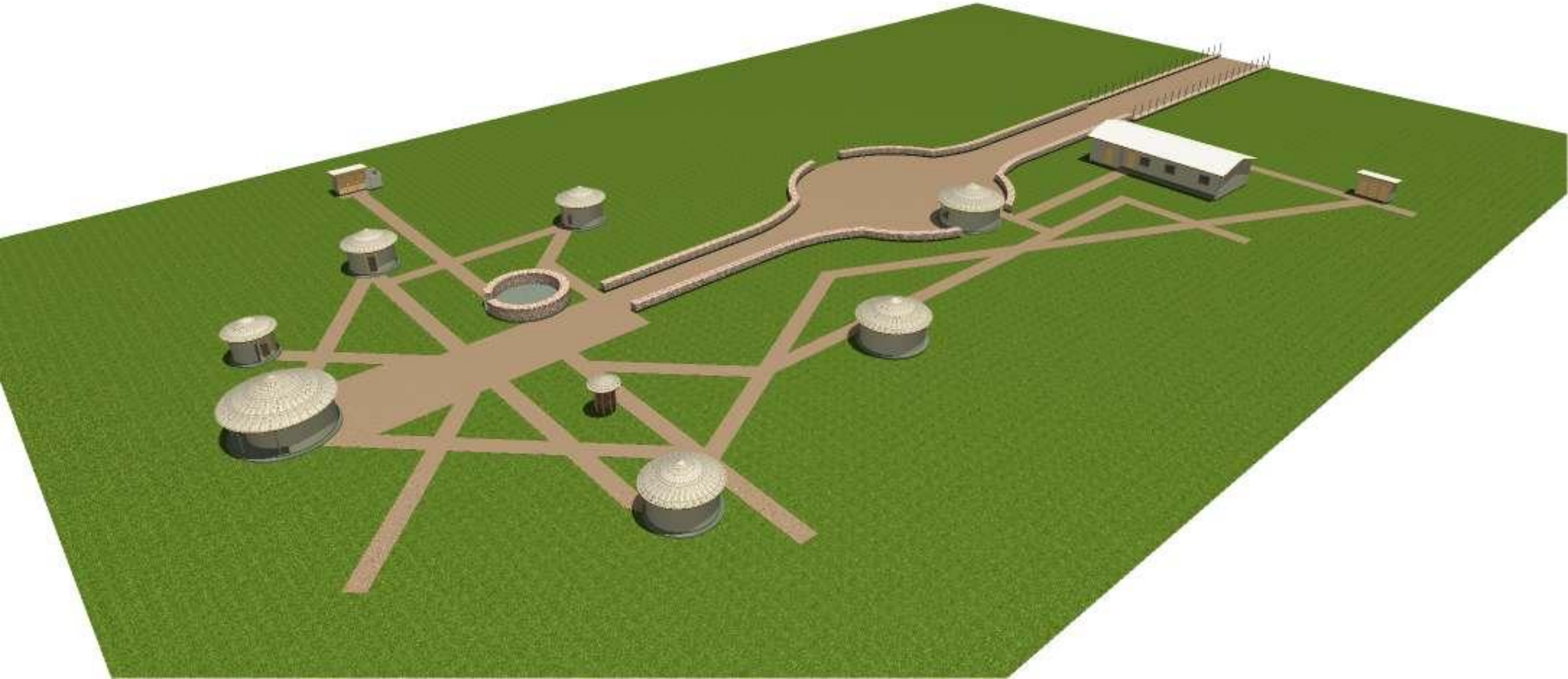
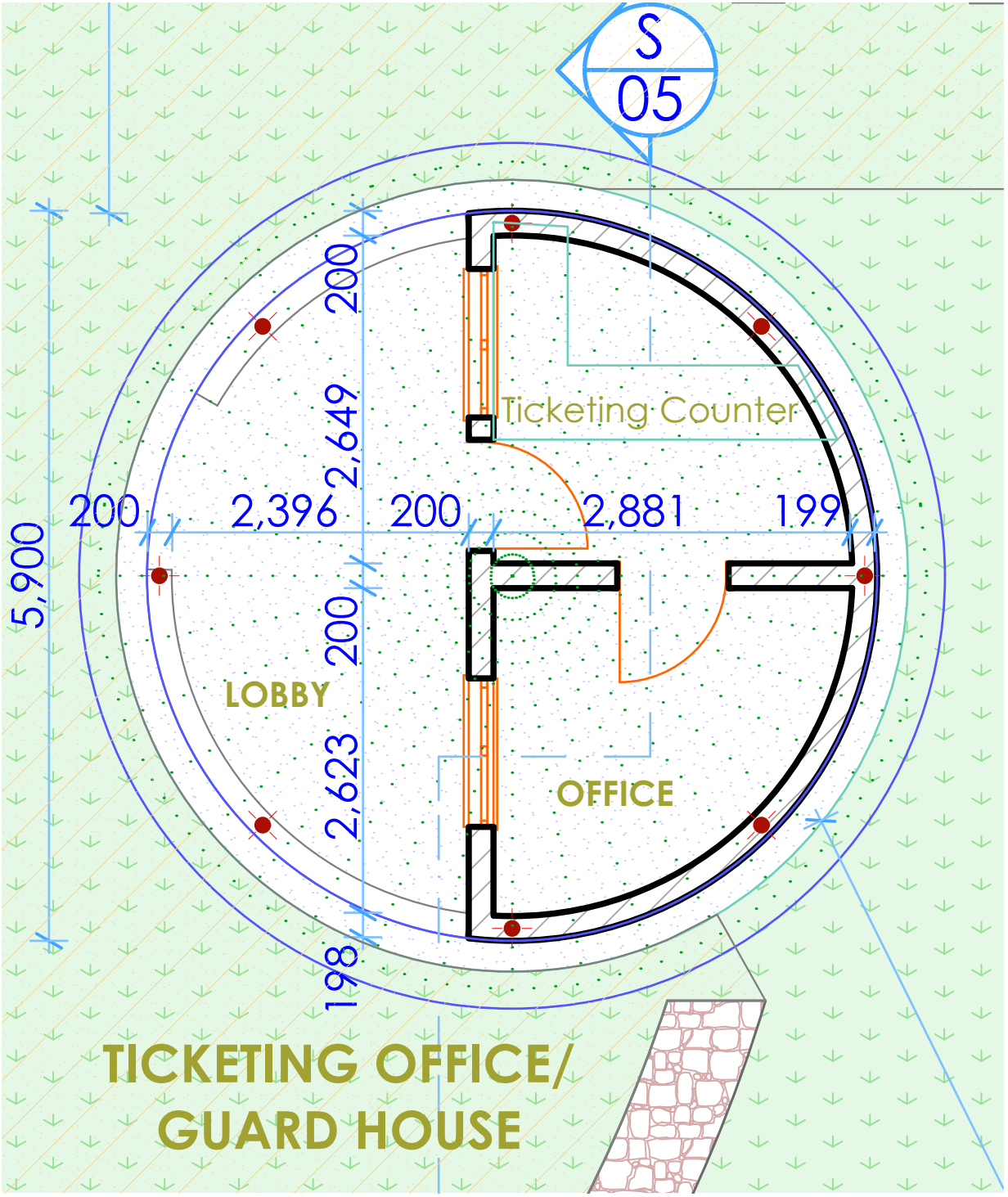
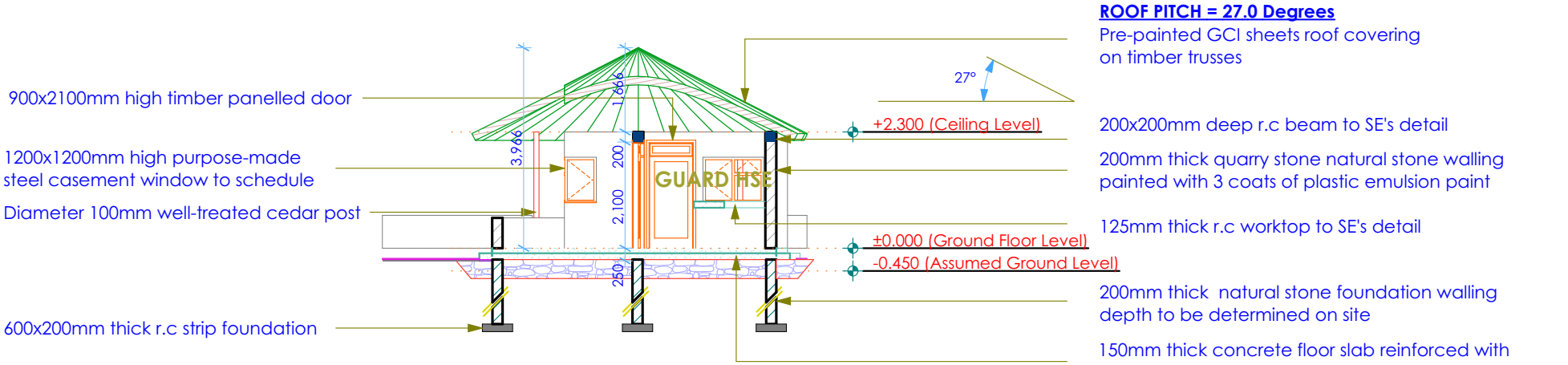

To Migori
To Okenge
Proposed Camp Site
Proposed Car Park
Proposed Staff Houses
Ablution block
Interpretation Centre
Ticket Office
Ablution block
Traditional Homestead
Road
Kraal
KOCHIENG
Iron smelting site
Orundu
KAKUKU
KOKECH
KOLUOCH
Proposed Eco-lodge
To Gogo Falls
To Kuja River
Thicket
9901600N
9901400N
9901200N
647200E
647600E
647800E
1,274
1,260
1,256
1,288
1,286
1,278
1,270
1,268
1,266
1,264
1,262
1,272
1,282
1,284
1,280
1,276
FIGURE 3:
THIMLICH OHINGA CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
SITE PLAN
LEGEND
Dry stone wall (Ohinga)
Replica Kraal
Proposed Property boundary
Hedge
Foot path
Nature trail
Contour (Vertical interval 2m)
Road
Proposed Development
Buffer Zone
Building
Hut
House pit site
Excavation site
Grinding stone
Bao game
Vegetation
Household
Church
0
50
100 m
Projection : UTM zone 36, Southern Hemisphere
Datum: WGS 84
Units: Meters
Source: Google earth
Survey of Kenya Topographic map (1:50,000)
GPS/Total Station ground survey
Date: September 2013
Drawn by: Dennis Milewa
National Museums of Kenya

ACCESS ROAD


6,850
14,988.880 m²
DRIVE-WAY
36,000
7,600
5,800
DRIVE-WAY
4,300
15,500
8,900
3,400
ABLUTION BLOCK
22,660
INTERPRETATION CENTRE
6,157
DRIVE-WAY
20,371
13,000
PARKING
6,400
20,517
2,300
DROP-OFF ZONE
5,900
7,309
DRIVE-WAY
18,232
1ST SON'S HOUSE
2ND SON'S HOUSE
11,00
20,695
DRIVE-WAY
29,410
STONE ENCLOSURE
ABLUTION BLOCK
16,598
GRANARY
24,400
3RD WIFE'S HOUSE
2ND WIFE'S HOUSE
12,275
HUSBAND'S HOUSE
1ST WIFE'S HOUSE
6,310

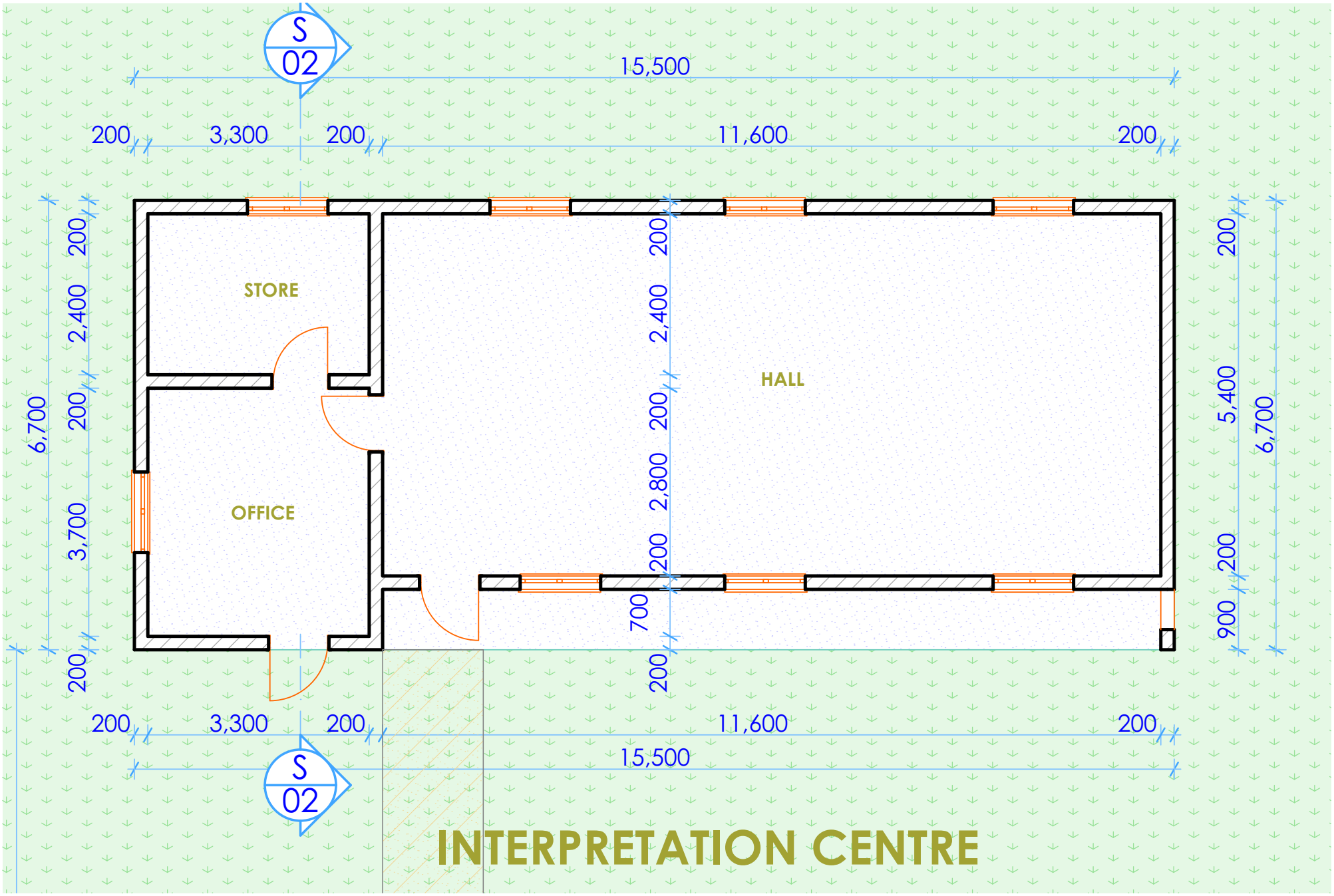



S
05
Ticketing Counter
200
2,649
200
2,396
200
2,881
199
5,900
200
LOBBY
2,623
OFFICE
198
TICKETING OFFICE/
GUARD HOUSE



SECTIONAL ELEVATION S/05

Scale 1: 100



INTERPRETATION CENTRE

Roof pitch = 25 degrees

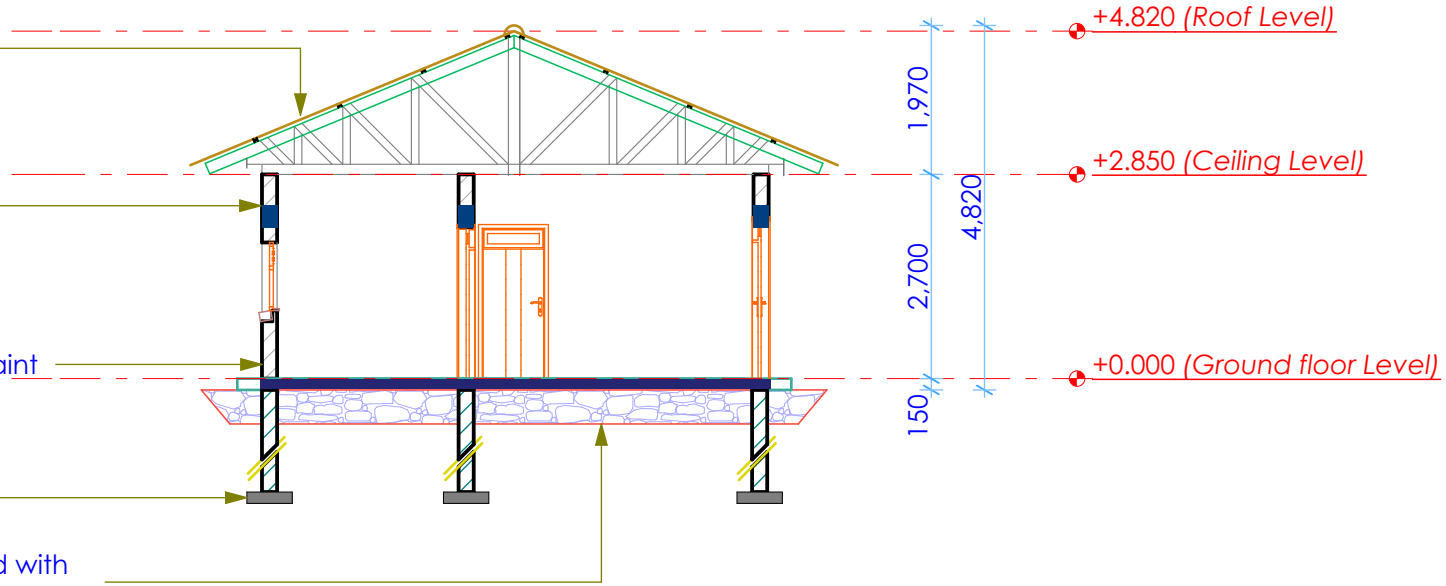
Pre-painted galvanised
iron sheets on timber trusses

200x300mm deep r.c beam to SE's detail

200mm thick natural quarry stone walling
painted with 3 coats of plastic emulsion paint

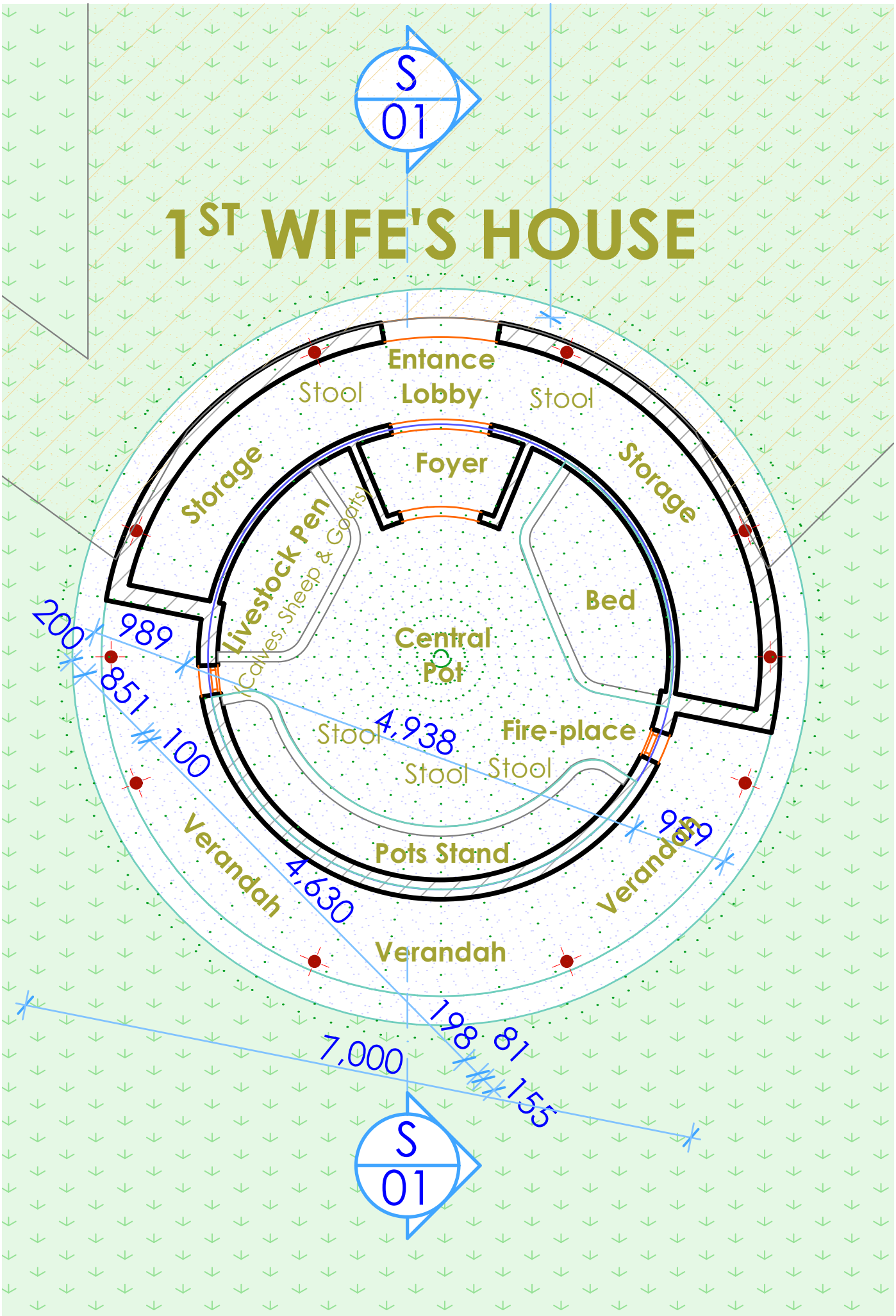
600x200mm thick r.c strip foundation

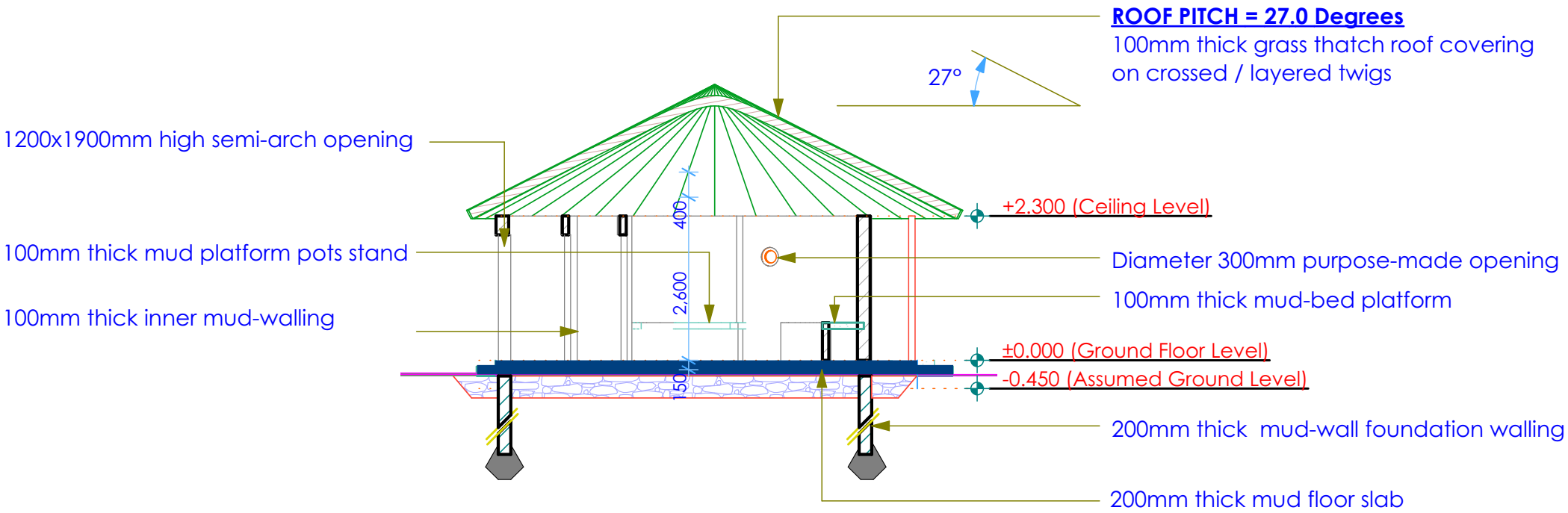
150mm thick concrete floor slab reinforced with
BRC A142 mesh on 50mm thick blinding
on 300mm well selected and compacted hardcore fill



SECTIONAL ELEVATION E/02

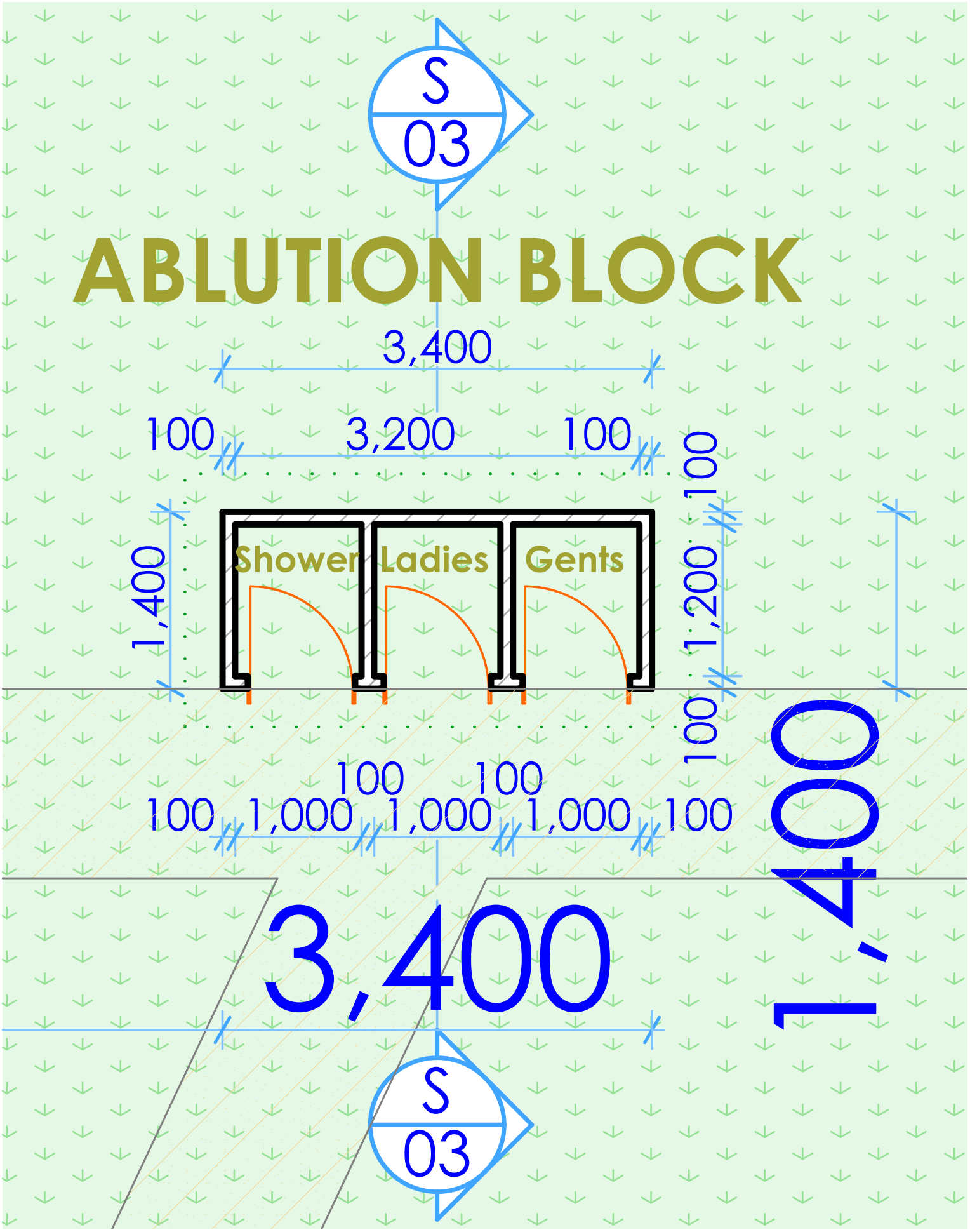
Scale 1: 100


S
01
1ST WIFE'S HOUSE
Entance
Lobby
Stool
Stool
Foyer
Storage
Storage
Livestock Pen
(Calves, Sheep & Goats)
Bed
Central
Pot
Stool
Stool
Stool
Fire-place
Pots Stand
Verandah
Verandah
Verandah
200
989
851
100
4,938
4,630
989
198
81
155
7,000
S
01



SECTIONAL ELEVATION S/01

Scale 1: 100


S
03
ABLUTION BLOCK
3,400
100
3,200
100
100
1,400
Shower
Ladies
Gents
1,200
100
100
100
100
1,000
1,000
1,000
100
3,400
1,400
S
03

Roof pitch = 7.5 degrees

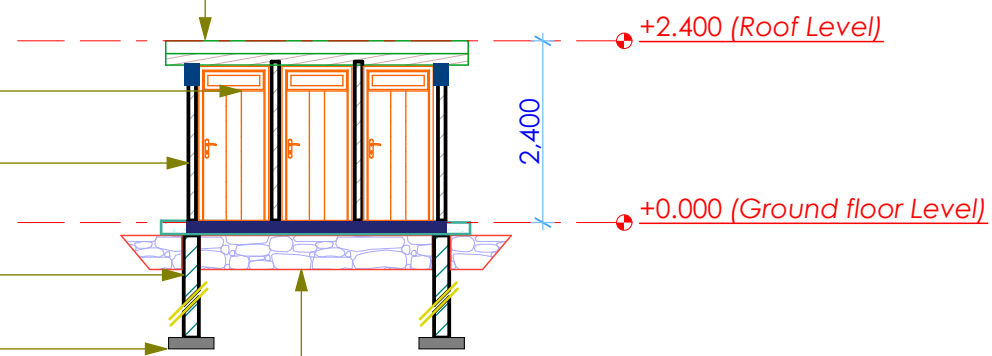
850mm x 2100mm timber flush doors

200mm thick natural quarry stone walling
painted with 3 coats of plastic emulsion paint

200mm thick natural stone foundation walling
depth to be determined on site

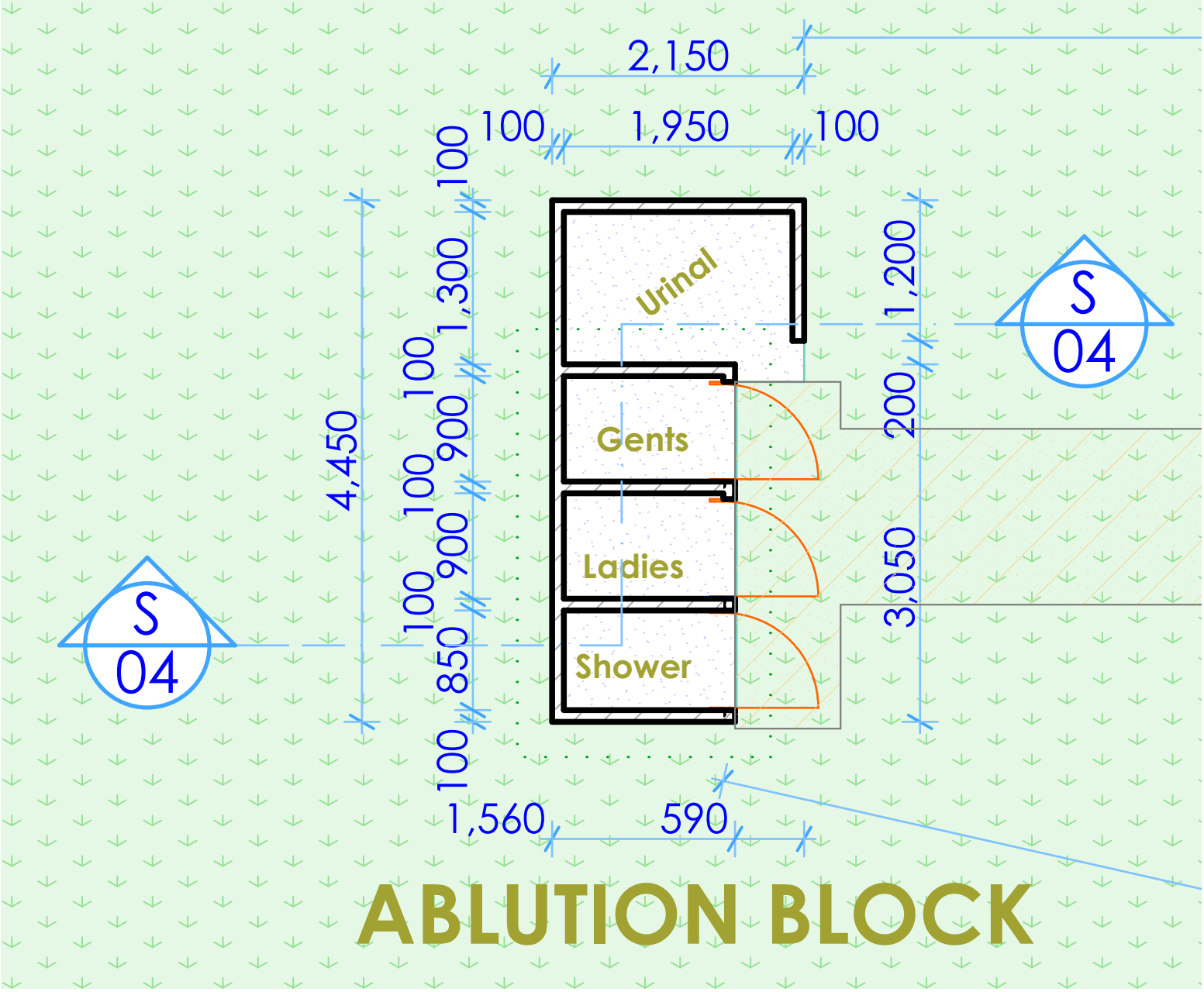
600x200mm thick r.c strip foundation

150mm thick concrete floor slab reinforced with
BRC A142 mesh on 50mm thick blinding
on 300mm well selected and compacted hardcore fill

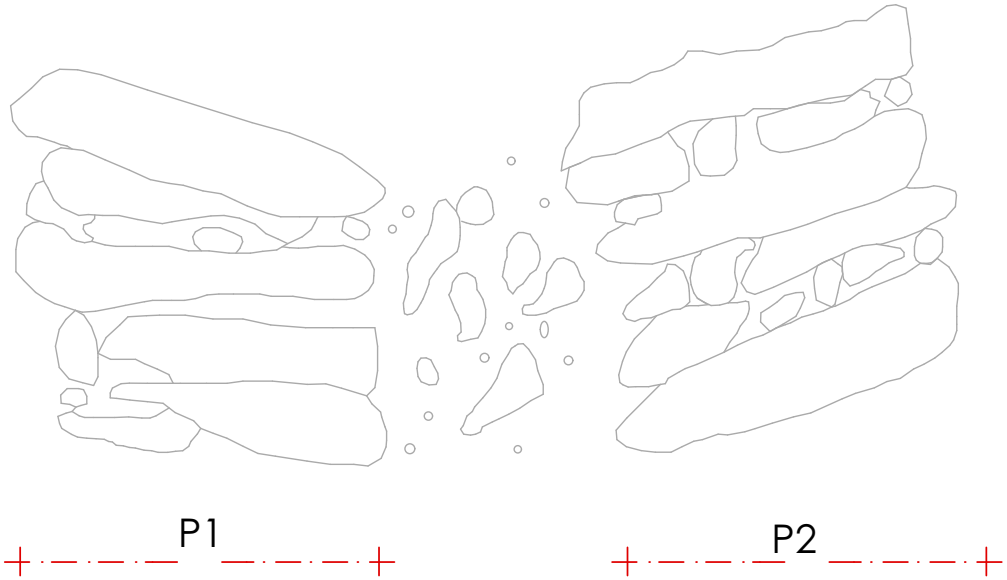


SECTIONAL ELEVATION E/03

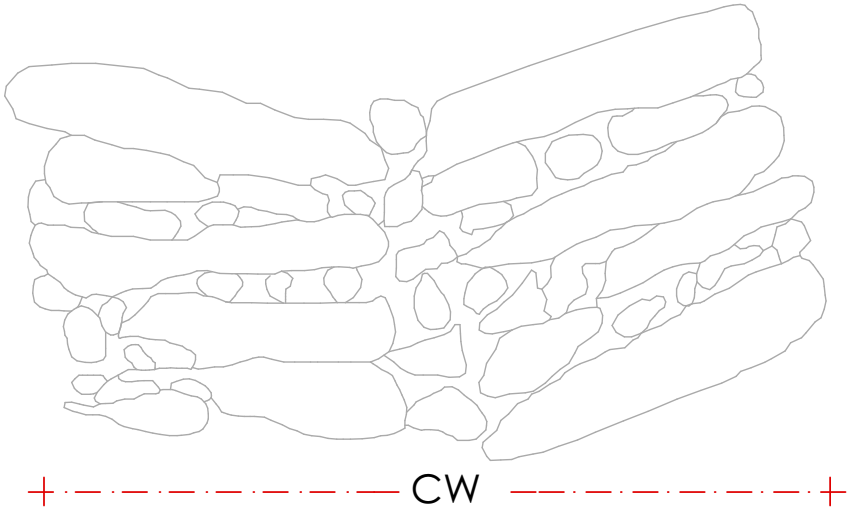
Scale 1: 100


2,150
100
1,950
100
100
1,300
100
900
100
900
100
850
100
4,450
1,200
200
3,050
Urinal
Gents
Ladies
Shower
S
04
S
04
1,560
590
ABLUTION BLOCK

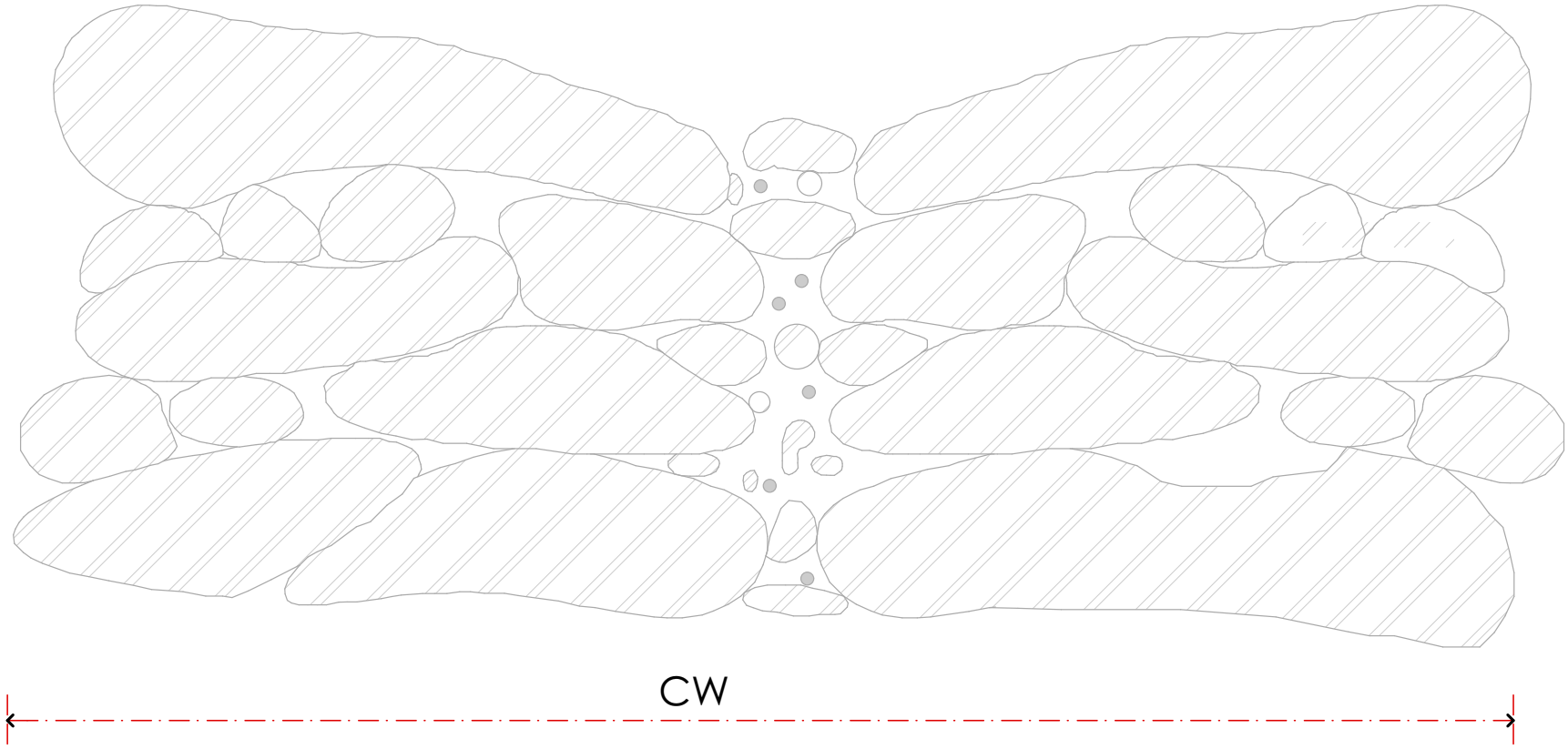
A



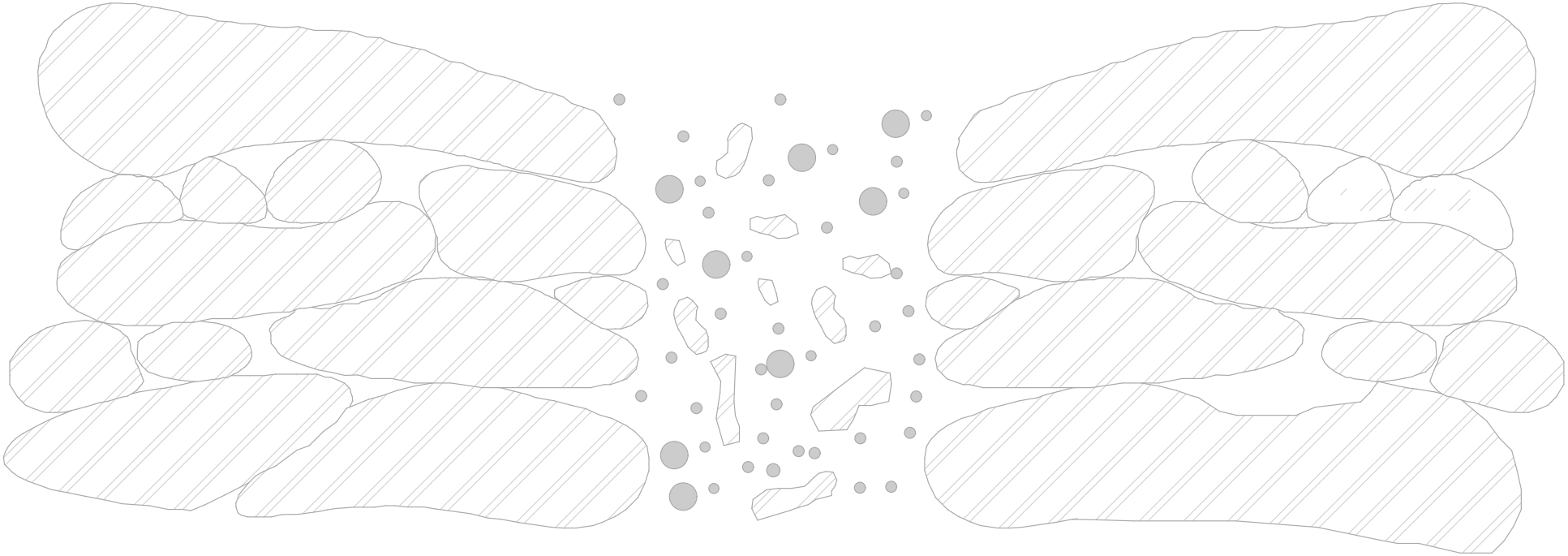
B



B



A



P1

P2

Thimlich *Ohingini*

In February 1985 the National Museums of Kenya conducted some preliminary work on one of the stone structures at Thimlich. These stone structures are referred to locally as *ohingini* (singular, *ohinga*). Thimlich is a complex of *ohingini*, comprising one main *ohinga* with adjuncts, and two smaller *ohingini* to the east of the main one.

The main monument consists of an outer compound wall, which is approximately 115 m in diameter from north to south and stands 2.5 to 3.5 m high. There are three gateways, one to the west and two to the east. These are in the form of passage-type doors. Inside this main monument are five smaller enclosures which were probably used as cattle kraals or pens for small stock. In addition, there are at least six house pits.

The work so far has comprised mapping the main *ohinga* and the interior features. Test-pits were also sunk in four selected areas, one of them a house pit. This last produced the most prolific finds — pottery, stone artefacts, beads and bones. The lithic artefacts consist of grindstones, as well as some quartz flakes of LSA type (presumably much older than the monument). Most of the pottery is decorated with a knotted cord-roulette, the motifs being very similar to those on modern Lwoo pottery in the locality. The beads are of various colours and sizes. Some are made of Gusii soapstone, whilst others are of imported glass. The presence of the beads on the site indicates some form of exchange between the inhabitants of the site and the outside world, that is the Gusii highlands to the north-east and areas beyond.

The fauna comprise domestic as well as wild species — cattle, ovicaprids, chicken, kongoni, duiker and hare. These last three were doubtless hunted for food. Fish bones were also recovered.

Two samples of charred bone were submitted to the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art at Oxford for dating. These have yielded dates of 110±80 BP (OxA-791) and 200±80 BP (OxA-794) respectively. The two dates are not significantly different; when calibrated they give a long possible range, from *c.* 1650 to 1900 AD (John Gowlett, pers. comm.). This order of dating is in general agreement with that indicated by oral traditions, as well as by the pottery and beads recovered.

REFERENCE

The main previous publication on the subject is Laurel Lofgren, 'Stone structures of South Nyanza, Kenya', *Azania* II (1967), pp. 75–88, in which the main Thimlich *ohinga* is called 'the Main Liare Valley Ruin', pp. 80f. See sketch plan of this *ohinga* (fig. 3) and plates XVIII and XIX.

SIMIYU WANDIBBA

Community and Site Preservation at Thimlich Ohinga, Kenya

By Edward M. Luby and Isaya Onjala

Paper submitted for the Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meetings, Philadelphia, January, 2012

Introduction

One of the most important cultural heritage places in Kenya is Thimlich Ohinga, an internationally significant archaeological site controlled by the National Museums of Kenya that consists of one of the largest stone enclosures in Africa, second only to Great Zimbabwe. The site was designated a National Monument by the Republic of Kenya in 1981, and was nominated by Kenya to be included on the prestigious World Heritage List in 2010.

Thimlich Ohinga occupies a remote 53-acre parcel of land in southwestern region of Kenya. It is a remarkable 500-year-old site composed of monumental stone walls that were built with unshaped stones and no mortar in a series of concentric enclosures, rising to almost 14 feet in places (Figure 1). The largest enclosure is nearly 500 feet in circumference (Images 1-3). The site likely served as a fortification and urban complex, and, after initial abandonment, was reused by several different groups who occupied the site until as recently as a few decades ago. Structures similar to Thimlich Ohinga are also spread out over a wide area in the region, though development is a continual threat to many of the walls located on private land.

In 1981, after Thimlich Ohinga was abandoned for the last time, the site was granted protection under Kenyan heritage laws as part of a cultural landscape. Thimlich Ohinga is currently managed by the National Museums of Kenya, and has been the subject of conservation and research work by National Museums of Kenya professionals (Image 4). The site currently serves as a research cultural landscape, a developing educational facility, and is the only museum facility in this region of southwestern Kenya. Responsible development of the site for tourism is part of the National Museums of Kenya's plan to enrich the site and surrounding region as a resource for local, national, and international audiences. The area is envisioned as a conservation center that blends culture with nature to create a one-stop tourist destination, where visitors can sample elements of eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and wildlife tourism.

Over the years, however, natural and human elements have affected Thimlich Ohinga, seriously threatening it. Trees and vegetation have grown through some of the walls and degraded them, and some of the stones have been moved over the years or have been toppled by winds (Image 5). Branches either lean on structure walls or dangerously hang over the walls, and some trees and/or plants also grow on the structure, a situation that leads to slow destruction of the walls. Fast-growing vegetation, especially grasses and shrubs, make it impossible for visitors to walk through the site at certain times of the year (Image 6). In addition, a number of the sections of the largest walls have fallen and need restoration, and inner enclosures have not been subject to prior conservation efforts (Image 7). Informal pathways are also a threat to the structures, and distinct pathways with signage to stop unauthorized movement through different sections of the landscape have not yet been established.

Significantly, groups inhabiting the area around Thimlich Ohinga today have an ongoing relationship with the site (Image 8). Thimlich Ohinga remains vitally important to local communities because it is

part of a protected heritage landscape, a place where traditionally important medicinal plants are still harvested, and because it is a location associated with a rich oral tradition. On a broader level, Thimlich Ohinga's links with a range of tribal groups makes it a compelling symbol of modern, multi-cultural Kenya. The site is of great importance to many of the diverse ethnic groups that inhabit Kenya today, for instance, because it is perceived as ancestral to several of them, including to the Luo, the group associated with the late father of U.S. President Barak Obama.

Although conservation intervention and initiatives have been carried out at the site in the past few years, until now, attempts to actively involve the community and other main stakeholders in a long term conservation program have not been made. A lack of appreciation for and identification with the site's conservation activities by the local community has existed, despite the ties local and national communities have to the site. As a result, promoting community participation in the conservation and management of the site was considered imperative in moving forward with plans to conserve the site, not only so that the public could be educated about the site, but so that local communities could be involved in efforts to develop tourism in the area.

The Thimlich Ohinga project is part of a broader MOU negotiated between San Francisco State University (SFSU) and the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) in 2010 that created an international partnership that focuses on professional training and exchange between museum personnel from NMK and students and alumni from SFSU's Museum Studies Program. The MOU supplies an important framework for the conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga. For example, the MOU is designed to support efforts to develop a regional research, heritage and training center in western Kenya by discussing collaborative opportunities with local university officials, regional cultural representatives, governmental officials, foundations, and local museum and heritage personnel, by emphasizing the immense heritage of western Kenya and the community-based, regional concerns of the area. The MOU also seeks to build human and physical capacity in the traditionally under-resourced museums and heritage sites in western Kenya by developing professional training opportunities for Kenyan museum professionals in western Kenya and in the United States in order to strengthen research activities and knowledge production. As such, the MOU is critical to the success of the conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga because it serves as a critical foundation for shared understanding between the two systems, as well as the basis for a long term partnership that explicitly recognizes the community-based concerns of heritage management in Kenya.

Project Goals

With much-appreciated funding from the AIA, the Thimlich Ohinga AIA Community Based Conservation Project began in July, 2011, under the supervision of Professor Edward M. Luby from SFSU and Dr. Isaya Onjala of National Museums of Kenya. Three main goals have been set, as outlined below: completion of restoration/conservation work; development of basic interpretive material, including a signage system; and lastly, active involvement of local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process.

The first goal was to conduct a condition survey of the structures and the landscape, and to complete emergency archaeological conservation work, initially supported by American Express Ltd and the government of Kenya. Progress has been made in both of these areas.

In the past month, GPS mapping of the site was completed by officers from the NMK HQs in Nairobi, resulting in a detailed map of the cultural landscape's important features. Pathways leading from the main entrances of one of the primary enclosures have also been built. Small circular enclosures close to

the walls likely used as storage areas/pits or kitchen spaces have been restored, and low walls enclosing a likely garden area around another enclosure were stabilized and reconstructed to reflect their original status, based on examples from other parts of the cultural landscape and oral history. Meanwhile, under the supervision of Dr. Onjala, the process of restoring dilapidated parts of the main, massive, outer walls to their original form is now underway, using, most significantly, experienced traditional stone masons and other community members.

The process of restoration at Thimlich Ohinga is community-driven, with NMK experts providing technical advice to local masons and community members. A total of nine community members have been hired and given contracts of three months to carry out restoration work. By the end of the three-month contract, in January, 2012, all dilapidated, outer wall sections in different enclosures, as well as inner enclosures that archaeologists have called cattle kraals or pens, will have been restored to their original form.

Preventive conservation is the form of clearing vegetation is also taking place to prevent further damage, and large trees that threaten to collapse walls are now being removed. Work is being completed by National Museums of Kenya staff in concert with local community members, the latter of whom are supplied with employment and training in an explicit recognition and appreciation of the value of the community's living cultural heritage, the craft of traditional stone masonry.

The second goal of the Community Based Conservation Project is to develop and simplify interpretive materials from prior archaeological research with an explicit aim of making such information publically accessible. Such information, and other interpretive materials, will be developed and made available in a basic visitors' centre that already exists but will need slight improvement and then serve as a place for interpretive, educational, and outreach activities. An extensive signage system within and around the site for the purposes of better understanding and for protection of the site and its structures will also be created. A number of features at the site require explanation panels for the public to understand and appreciate the site's significance, including descriptions of site features, history of the site and region, directional signage, and general informational signs, to aid in understanding and appreciating the heritage. The interpretive material will be created and produced by the staff of NMK in consultation with graduate students enrolled in a course in museum and heritage site interpretation taught in the Museum Studies Program at SFSU in the Spring, 2012, by Professor Luby. As outlined below, community input will be sought in the form of workshops to be held at the site and facilitated by the NMK staff, who will be responsible for producing the material in the end.

The third and most important goal of the project is to address the need to actively involve the local community as major stakeholders in the conservation process at the site. To meet this goal, four workshops, spread out over the 12-month grant period, will be held to educate the community on the significance of the heritage and the need to preserve the site.

Overall, workshops will be designed to attract community participation in the conservation and management of the site and to sensitize the community and other stakeholders on the need for active conservation practices. The workshops aim to seek input from the community on restoration efforts, educational and interpretive activities at the site, and the wider impact of activities at the site on tourism, sustainability, and economic development. For example, improvement of the site will lead to an increased number of visitors. The project will enhance the status of the site making it an improved tourist destination within the Western Region tourist circuit, which links the site with other destinations, especially the nearby world-famous Ruma National and Maasai Mara Game parks. This will encourage

and increase economic activities related to tourism, such as the sale of handicrafts and other merchandise at the site. After the proposed conservation and outreach programs are put in place, a museum gallery will be also constructed to complement the monuments, making the site the only full-fledged museum in this southwestern part of Kenya. Establishment of community handcrafts sales will contribute to the economic well being of the members of the community who will be able to sell their merchandise to visitors. These impacts will be discussed at the workshops so that the community is engaged in and can contribute to the process of development, such as designing or creating protected areas or sections within the site dedicated to the display of community handcrafts.

Specifically, the four workshops will consist of one designed to work with regional educators and local school teachers, called the "educators workshop"; one designated the "stakeholders workshop," which is designed to engage regional politicians, government officials, and local leaders; and two designed to reach the local community, called "community workshops." The educator's workshop, which will include local school teachers and administrators from around the region, will take place so that educators can learn site basics and supply feedback about how the interpretive material to be developed can best serve their students. The stakeholder's workshop is designed to seek the guidance, support, and input of local government officials and politicians, and will also be held at the site. Finally, the community workshops will be held to engage the local community in the conservation process and so that signage and brochures for the site, as well improvements to the visitor center and issues concerning visitor access to the site, can be reviewed and discussed with local people.

The First Community Workshop

As outlined below, the first of the four workshops, a community workshop, was held at Thimlich Ohinga in August, 2011. Facilitators included the projects directors and NMK staff. In light of long term conservation goals for Thimlich Ohinga, and the need to consult with the community and to promote community participation in the conservation and management of the site, it was decided that one of the two community workshops should be held first.

The objectives of the workshop were spelled out and discussed at the start of the session, and included the following: i) to seek ways of establishing best conservation practices that will ensure the site and all information embedded in it is passed on to future generations; ii) to involve the community in this exercise of conservation and presentations of the site to a wider audience nationally and internationally; and iii) to make the site relevant to the modern development needs of the region/area.

The workshop was organized as a day-long community session, and it was attended by approximately 50 community members, who learned about the preservation goals for the site (Image 9). The community workshop included presentations by heritage managers, respected local leaders, museum curators, and staff responsible for the site from the National Museums of Kenya's regional museum and headquarters in Kisumu, Kenya's third largest city. An open discussion was held about how the site should be preserved and how the local community can participate in the conservation process. Heritage management in Kenya and around the world today was also discussed. Traditional stone masons, who possess the skill set necessary to help conduct restoration work, were in attendance.

As facilitated by well-respected regional leaders, the lengthy open discussion component of the workshop was particularly informative, and community members were led into discussing what Thimlich Ohinga, as a site, means to them. The community members recognized the fact that the site is an important asset that required the efforts of all and particularly the Government to develop and turn into

an income generating area. Most of the members wondered why it has taken the NMK so long to develop the site so that their sons and daughters can obtain jobs. The discussion also established the fact that the community has played an important role in protecting the site through their support to the NMK activities. It was agreed that there is need to work together in order to conserve the site and pass it on to future generations. The community also unanimously agreed that the site can be developed to open up the area for other forms of development. This called for different stakeholders to be brought in order to realize necessary infrastructure, such as, electricity and water to the site, better roads leading to the site, accommodation and information/interpretive facilities at the site among other things. While accepting all that the community had to say about the site and the needs for development of the area, the workshop was told very clearly that the community has a role to play in both conservation and development of the site. Community members learned how they could be involved in the project, and, particularly importantly, what they can do in order to conserve and drive development at the site or around it. The community was told that the site is theirs, and that they needed "to own" all processes and be in the forefront of conservation and development. Together with the Government officials, mainly NMK staff and management, community members learned that their aspirations for the site could be met in the near future.

An open discussion such as the one described here is critical for the success of the Thimlich Ohinga conservation project, and will ultimately make efforts at the site sustainable for the long term. Project directors were quite beneficially able to build on years of interactions between NMK staff and community members and listened carefully to a wide range of concerns. NMK staff made plans to address the concerns that they could, and issues that were outside the purview of the project or even NMK's purview but were relevant to the site were listened to and seriously discussed. Respected regional leaders were integrated into efforts, signifying the importance of the workshop, and significantly, all community members were compensated for their time.

The open discussion and the workshop deliberations were concluded by leading the participants through addressing the way forward and listing a series of resolutions, which in this context, a most culturally appropriate and effective way to proceed. Project activities were outlined so that the community members were made aware when each activity would be expected. The resolutions of the workshop were as follows: i) "As community members around Thimlich Ohinga, we resolve to work with NMK in ensuring the success of the conservation project that has just started"; ii) "in all the development initiatives, workshop participants recognize the need for teamwork, and therefore resolve to uphold the spirit of teamwork involving government departments and community groups"; and iii) "The workshop underscores the need to keep, share and pass on to future generations this important heritage known as Thimlich Ohinga. On the basis of this knowledge, we, the workshop participants resolve to help in the protection and improvement of the site in all possible ways."

The community workshop supplied local people a forum to raise issues about how enhancements at the site will impact the community. At the same time, the community workshop outlined how the critically important work of stabilizing the site's walls will proceed, and it supplied a comprehensive framework for understanding the site's history, its management, and its national and international importance. Many of the concerns raised at the community workshop, such as the affect of monkeys living at the site on local crops located outside the site's boundaries, and the need for better roads and infrastructure in the region, highlight the fact that the AIA funded project at Thimlich Ohinga will have an impact that reverberates far beyond the core goals of the project.

Thimlich Ohinga: Lessons Learned

The AIA project has allowed proper conservation measures to be conducted by placing the community and other stakeholders at the center of efforts. While most of the conservation methods used at the site can characterized as decidedly "low tech," they have the significant advantage of using a traditional skill set in a way that not only employs local artisans but demonstrates an understanding of the value and importance of traditional culture. At the same time, an understanding of the preservation goals of the project is being built in a culturally appropriate manner, and important conversations about the economic impact of the project are underway.

In order to generate discussion, some of the lessons learned at Thimlich Ohinga that we believe can help build a "best practice" approach are outlined below:

--Projects that are part of wider efforts, such as pre-established partnerships, can build on already strong foundations. In these circumstances, human and physical resources can be more easily leveraged, communication is enhanced, and critical cultural misunderstands that can derail conservation projects can be more easily avoided.

--Long-term commitment to the site to be conserved is important, especially if the community "owns" the site. Individual preservation projects come and go, but everyone must recognize that in the end the primary impacts are on local communities. As a result, responsible parties need to recognize the long-term consequences of all projects, ensure that short-terms projects meet the larger goals for the site, and that time is allowed for building relationships.

--Partnerships in heritage preservation between professional training programs and systems that care for sites can be of key importance in conserving sites, since education, as well as preservation, is behind all these efforts. These partnerships, however, must be based on equality, a shared vision, clear goals, and a long term commitment.

--Recognition of a broad view of conservation is extremely helpful. Treating the preservation of traditional medicinal plants, oral history, the natural world, and living craft traditions such as traditional stone masonry seriously is essential to success. It is also important to recognize that sites are part of *cultural landscapes*, and that in addition to being places where information on various disciplines such as archaeology, zoology, botany, geology and ecology can be obtained, they are also living heritage areas, full of significance and meaning that can be hard for outsiders to comprehend.

--Conservation efforts can supply economic development to communities in a variety of ways, but communities need to be involved in discussions of impacts, and experts involved in these projects must be prepared to engage in these discussions.

--Communities must be able to participate in the conservation process in ways that respect them, including by making time to listen to historical accounts or to oral traditions, or by paying community members an appropriate nominal sum in order to recognize the value of their time and viewpoints.

--Conservation projects are embedded in wider societal concerns: time to listen to these wider concerns must be made, preferably though a process of consultation. To the extent possible, these concerns should be addressed.

--In the continuing race for ever-better technology to document and conserve sites, the skill set of local communities should not be overlooked, and a wider view of what constitutes conservation must be considered.

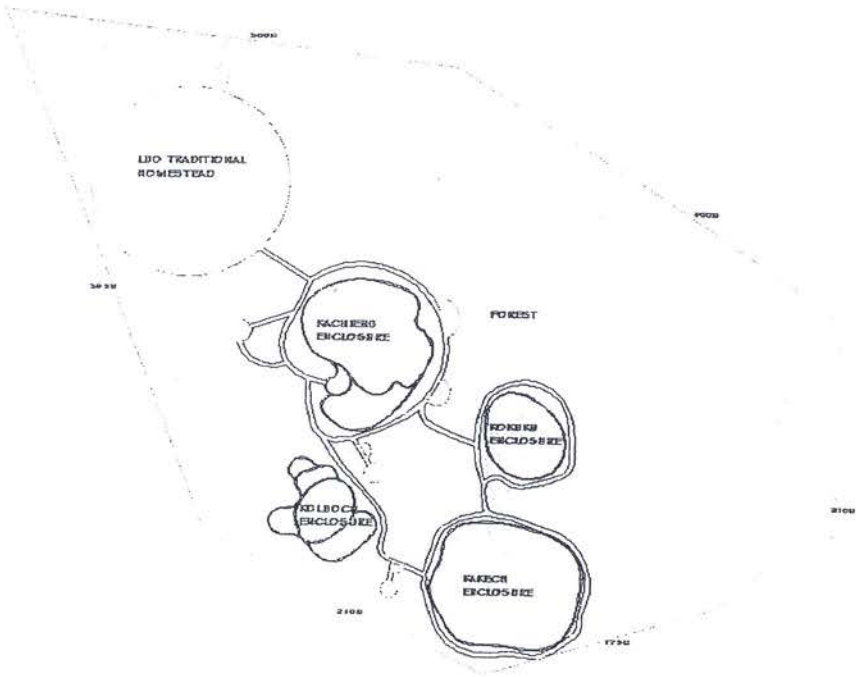
Community and Site Preservation at Thimlich Ohinga, Kenya

By Edward M. Luby and Isaya Onjala

Paper submitted for the American Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meetings, Philadelphia, January, 2012

Figures and Images

Figure 1. Sketch Plan of Thimlich Ohinga Prehistoric Site. The shaded part forms part of the Cultural Landscape, while the black circular line indicate walls that form the monument.



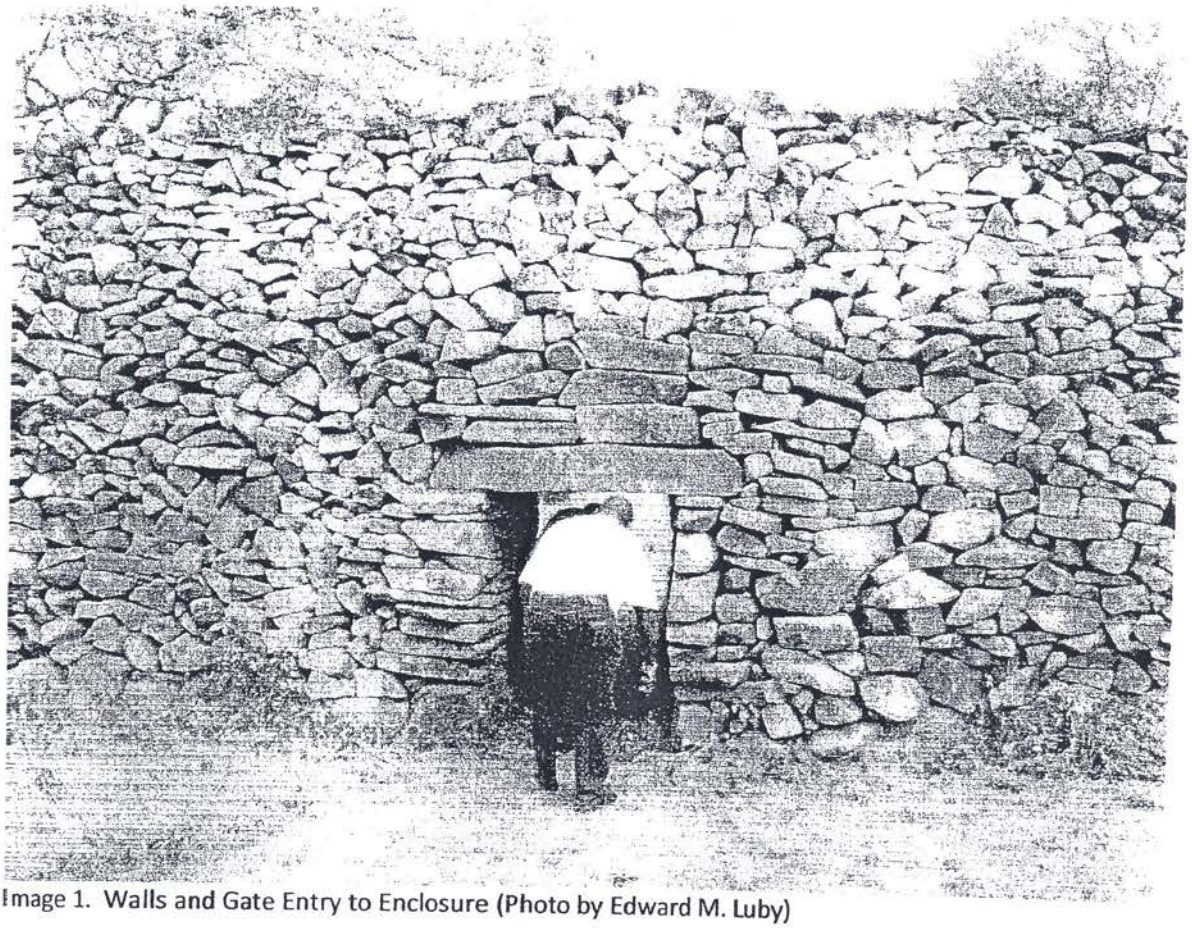


Image 1. Walls and Gate Entry to Enclosure (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

Images 2 and 3. Part of the towering walls at the Main Enclosure (Photos by Dr. Onjala)

Image 4. Entrance to Thimlich Ohinga (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

Image 5. Storm-fallen Tree at Thimlich Ohinga; Note Controlled Vegetation around Walls (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

Image 6. Overgrown Vegetation at Thimlich Ohinga (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

Image 7. Damaged Wall at Thimlich Ohinga (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

Image 8. Local Community at Thimlich Ohinga (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

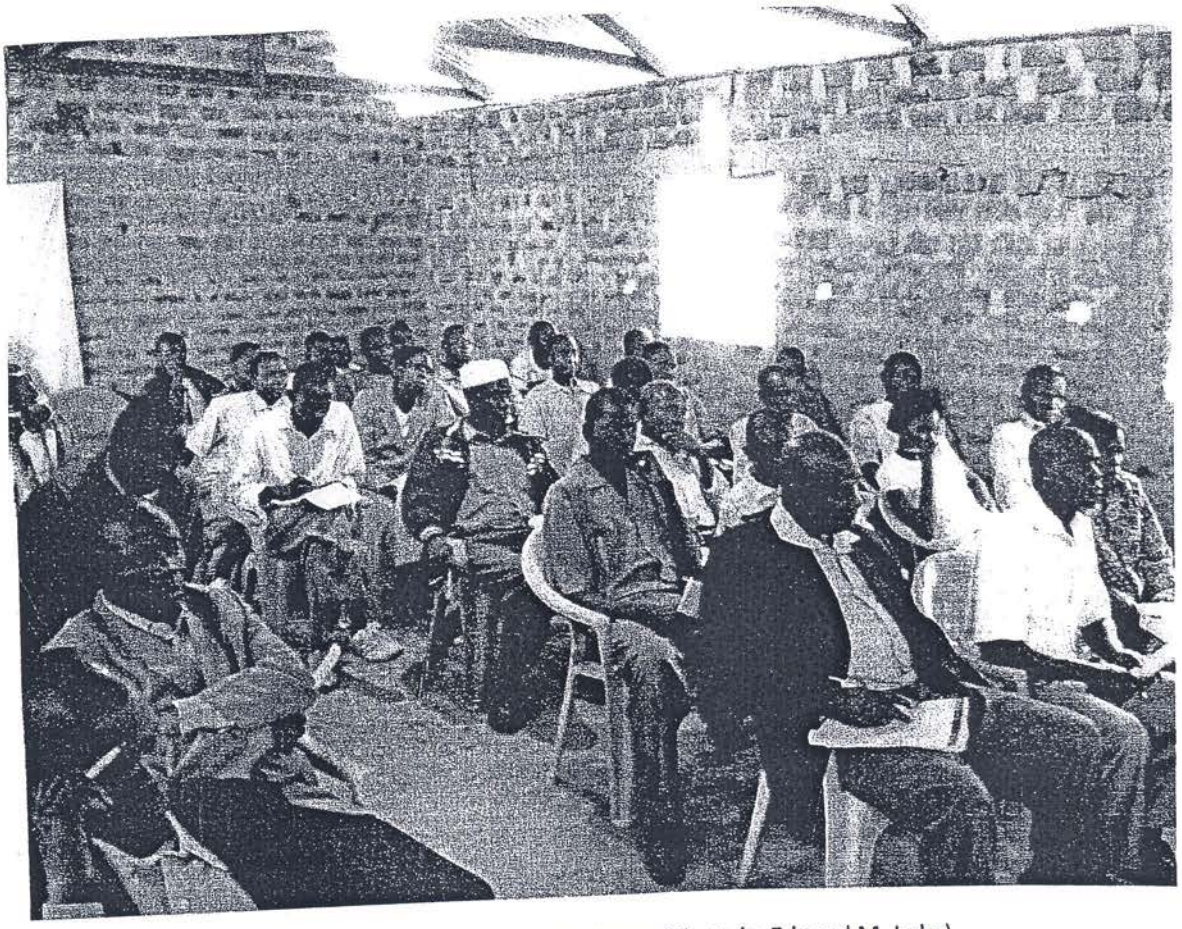


Image 9. First Community Workshop at Thimlich Ohinga (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

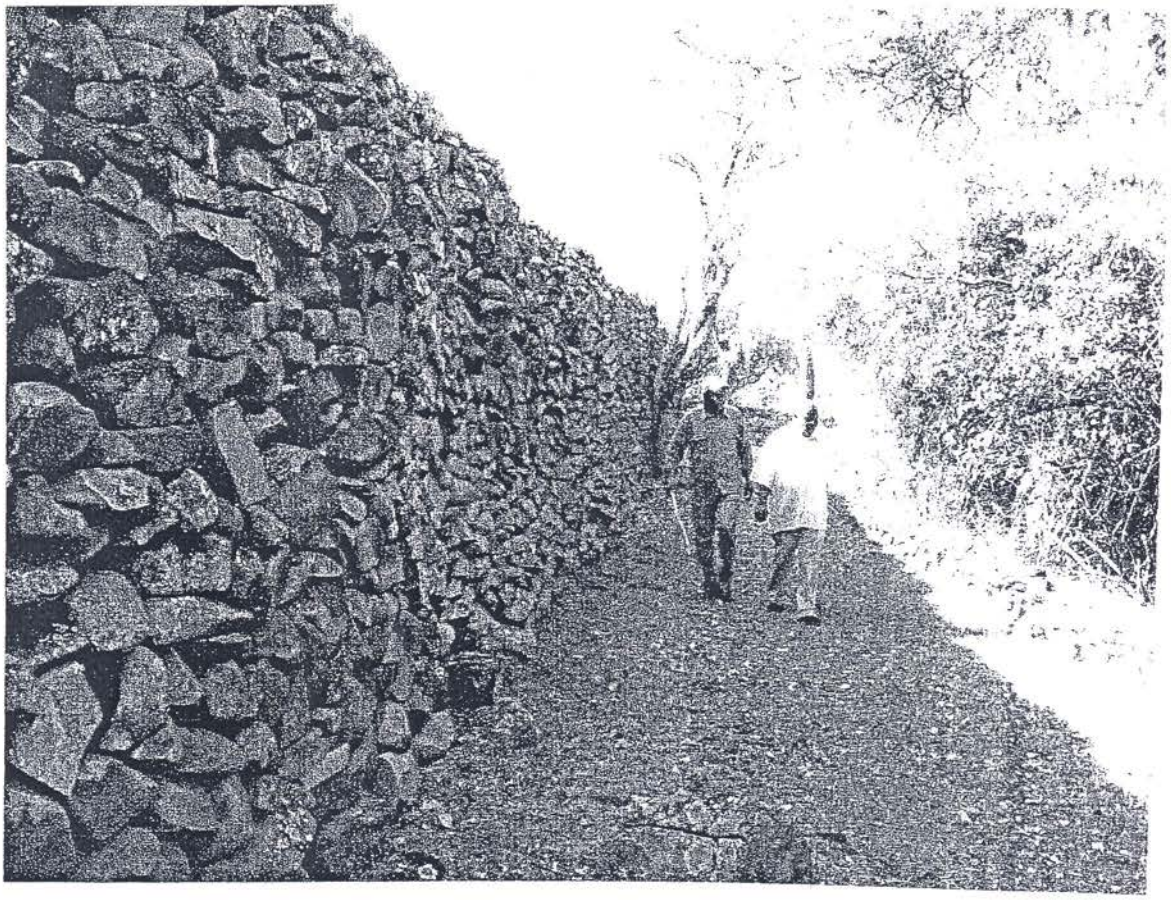


Image 10. General View of Main Wall (Photo by Edward M. Luby)

FINAL PROJECT REPORT FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA (AIA) COMMUNITY BASED CONSERVATION PROJECT AT THIMLICH OHINGA CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

August 2012

Name(s) of grant recipients:	Professor E. Luby and Dr. Isaya O. Onjala
Project Title:	Thimlich Ohinga Community Based Conservation Project
Project Duration:	July 2011-June 2012
Amount of Grant:	US $ 23,700
Date of Reporting:	August 2012

Objectives

Thimlich Ohinga AIA Community Based Conservation Project began in July/August 2011. Three major goals were set out, namely; *completion of restoration work*, *development of basic interpretive material*, including, site signage system and lastly, *active involvement of local community* as major stakeholders in the conservation process.

The first goal was fully achieved through a carefully conducted and documented *condition survey* of the entire cultural landscape, a 3-month plus *restoration* of dilapidated walls, occasional *pre-emptive restoration* of weakened structures and a carefully controlled *vegetation management* involving trimming of trees and cutting of grass and other weeds within the landscape and, particularly, within the structures. The information gathered during the condition survey will continue to inform future conservation interventions since several aspects of threats to the structures are repetitive and require continuous attention. Vegetation control, for example, remains a continuous exercise to enable visitors enjoy the beauty and magnificence of the site.

The second goal has also been achieved through the development of *road signage* and *site interpretative signage system*. A *site map* has been produced showing the location of major features within the cultural landscape. Portions of this map have been used in some of the interpretative panels to explain specific features. *Photographic documentation* of the site has also been

realized and this includes steps taken in the restoration process that was concluded during the project. Further, a *brochure* for the site is in the design stage and will be printed in the next few weeks. This will enhance understanding of the site and be a take away document that will market the site. Lastly, the process of gathering equipment and materials to aid in educating the public, especially, learning institutions, when they visit the site, has been started. Photographic documentation of the site and the restoration process is now available on CDs and can be viewed by interested persons. The process of equipping of the *Visitor and Documentation Centre* has started with the purchase of an LCD projector, DVD player, and television monitor so that learning groups can view useful television reports on the site, site documentation images, and also lectures on specific topics about the heritage. The project has also put in place a small power generator as source of power and part of the educational planning for the cultural landscape. This step of equipping the site for educational purposes is a major milestone in the conservation history of TOCL. It has also endeared the community to the site and encouraged willing participation in most of the conservation interventions.

The third and last goal has been fully achieved through a series of *workshops*, including *three community workshops, one education workshop and one all stakeholders workshop.* The community involvement also occurred in the form of participation in the restoration process where four (4) young community members were also trained in the restoration skills. However, more important was the participation of different community members in the workshop discussions to chart the way forward for the sustainable conservation and development of the cultural landscape. The ideas generated during the workshops will remain important for future management, development and conservation of the cultural landscape. One of the immediate results of the community involvement includes the community's insistence that the area Member of Parliament (MP), who controls a large portion of development funds in the area, visits the site. When the visit happened, the MP was able to promise the improvement of roads to the site and also installation of power to the site. NMK and the community are following these promises closely, and will remain closely involved in integrating the ideas generated in workshops into future plans for the management of the site.

Other information about the project

During the project, it was realized that the community had a very high expectation above and beyond the provisions of the project's stated objectives. The community, for example, expected immediate benefits from the project activities, despite careful explanations to the contrary from the outset. They thought the project would put in place major developments that would offer employment to the youth. Such expectations were unforeseen and explanations had to be made that these development projects could only be realized in the future with a more integrated approach to the site's development agenda. Significantly, however, the project's involvement of key stakeholders, including regional government representatives, has been a critical first step in creating the conditions that will allow discussions of major development to move forward.

The project has realized three distinct outcomes. First, the project has achieved a *high level of community participation* in the conservation and development initiatives. Through the workshops and restoration work, the community has registered a willingness to preserve the site which they now consider as their own heritage with benefits they can count on. Secondly, the project has *changed the outlook of the site, significantly improved the condition of the site, and enhanced its beauty.* Dilapidated walls have been restored and interpretive panels put in place to enable the visitors to enjoy the site. The new features of the site now make visitors to spend more time at the site as they go through the panels. Lastly, the project has made the site more beneficial to learners who can now access information about the site by using interpretive panels, documents including photographic CDs, brochures and documentaries that can be viewed/watched using the equipment at the site. The target of making the site a fully equipped education centre is just about to be realized.

With the above mentioned achievements, plans for the future include continued collaboration with the community for sustainable conservation of the heritage. There are also plans to improve the heritage experience by establishing an all-persons friendly footpath network, increasing signage, for example, and providing names for some of the trees and plants within the cultural landscape, as well as adding more directional signs. A plan to create an elevated viewing platform will enhance the total view of the heritage complex. For now, one can only view the structures by walking from one structure to the next. Other plans include additional upgrading of the Visitor and Documentation Centre by incorporating more learning materials and also following up on infrastructural developments with assistance from different organizations and governmental departments. Water, electricity and basic

accommodation facilities are still required at the site. Research work will also continue to answer some of the questions about the use and function of specific areas of the site that still need to be addressed.

The project has been a milestone in the conservation history of Thimlich Ohinga since its gazettement as a National Monument, and represents an important development in community-based site conservation for the National Museums of Kenya. Information generated has been shared in workshops and other research conferences, and an academic paper detailing the significance of the project is under development. We also intend to share the information with the public through media reports and website posting. Importantly, the interpretive officers on the ground have been closely involved in all aspects of the project, and have now been equipped to share the latest information about the site through presentations and video shows at the site.

The project had duration of one year starting in July 2011 to June 2012. There was, however, some slight delay in organizing the workforce due to the remote location of the site, and the project started in August, 2011, with the arrival of Professor Luby for the first workshop, and with a launch of restoration work at the beginning of October. This, together with some unforeseen circumstances during the duration of the project, including ensuring that NMK staff members were available at the site to supervise restoration, and that all text for interpretive signs was reviewed by a variety of stakeholders, pushed the end of the project to August 2012.

This report marks the end of the project and what remains is follow up on some of the items, such as, the final printing of the brochure, the production of a site booklet and the final equipping of the Visitor and Documentation Centre, which will be completed once the retained 15% of the project budget is eventually released.

Lastly, detailed information on the project budget projections, real expenditures to date, explanations on under and/or over expenditures on each budgeted item, and why any changes in the proposed plan were made, is outlined below.

First, in August, 2011, during Prof. Luby's visit, the original budget was revised, particularly in light of the likely increased costs of holding the workshops. In general, it was determined that workshops costs would be higher than anticipated due to the need to offer small stipends to workshop attendees, and the need to support visits by key NMK staff to participate in the workshops. Prof. Luby consulted AIA staff about these changes during Fall, 2011. This information is contained in **Table 1**.

Second, as outlined in **Table 2**, the Budget Revise of Fall, 2011 (Table 1) is compared with the Final Budget. In general, costs for restoration work differed from Fall, 2011 projections, mostly because restoration work took four months to complete instead of the three months originally projected. In addition, the costs of improving the Visitor and Documentation Centre, and in producing signage, were higher than expected. The Visitor and Documentation Centre, for example, required enhanced security systems to be put in place with the addition of valuable equipment, while costs for materials for producing the signage were higher than anticipated. However, both the costs of producing informational material were less than anticipated, as were the costs of most of the workshops. Labour and transport costs were also less than anticipated, so that areas for which costs were higher than anticipated could be covered. **Table 1**captures the originally approved budget and the changes approved in the Revised Budget of Fall, 2011.

TABLE 1: FALL 2011 BUDGET REVISE

NO	ITEM	ORIGINAL BUDGET US $	REVISED ALLOCATION US $	COMMENT
A	Condition Survey	1000	700	$300 less than original budget
B	Archaeological Investigation	0	none	Cost share amount from NMK of $ 150
C	Restoration Work	3500	3500	
D	Community Workshops	1200	3775	
E	Educational Workshops	900	925	
F	Stakeholder Workshops	600	925	
D THROUGH F: Total Workshop Cost (5): $5625 (original budget was $2700); re-budgeted from following areas: $1500 from Item H, Visitor Centre, and $1500 from Item J, Labour.				
G	Informational Materials	3000	3000	
H	Visitor Centre Improvement	2000	500	
Physical improvements to Centre to be completed by local people, greatly reducing costs, such as production of cabinets to hours information material and repairs to structure; remaining funds, $1500, transferred to cover Workshop costs				
I	Signage	3500	3500	
J	Labour	4000	2000	
	Some costs for labour were already included in Item C, Restoration, and re-budgeting indicated that $2000 here would be adequate Re-budgeted $2000 to following areas: $1500 to Workshops D through F; $500 to Transport, Item K.			
K	Transport	1000	1500	
Price of petrol continues to rise, and trips need to be made to the site on a regular basis by staff based in Kisumu or Nairobi, especially during the three month restoration process. Re-budgeted $500 to Transport from Item J, Labour				
L	Equipment	3000	3000	*Tasks:* Digital camera, DVD, restoration supplies, small generator

TABLE 2: FINAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET

Item	Budgeted Amount US $	Actual Amount US $	Difference US $	Comments
Condition Survey	700	450	250	The survey was integrated into efforts concerning the site's status on UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative list, and some condition report expenses were covered by these efforts.
Archaeological Investigation	0	150	-150	This activity was minimized to re-opening excavation trench III to prepare it for educational purposes while at the same time collecting finds in adjacent squares. Cost met by NMK.
Restoration work	3,500	4238	-738	Restoration period took four months as opposed to the budgeted three months. Required equipment also increased and included the hiring of power saw to trim the trees that threatened the heritage (walls).
Community workshops	3,775	3323	452	The last community meeting did not take the format of the previous two as only eight members of the community were invited for a round table discussion on the progress of the project on the last day of signage installation. This made the cost to be less.
Education workshop	925	881	44	The balance was used in other items with a deficit.
Stakeholders workshop	925	1000	-75	The deficit was covered by budget items with a surplus.
Informational Material	3,000	357	2,643	Cost of booklet, video production and printing of the brochure yet to be met. Only brochure has been designed awaiting printing. Balance used in the other budget items, including signage and visitor centre improvement.
Visitor Centre Improvement	500	1,250	-750	In order to secure the gains in educational equipment and other research documents NMK and community recommended completion of the centre as an

				educational and conferencing facility. More funds put here from the other areas in order to secure the equipment purchased and meet the demand.
Signage	3,500	4644	-1,144	Cost went up due to design work done at NMK headquarters in Nairobi and cost of transporting installation crew from Nairobi to work at the site for five days.
Labour Cost	2,000	895	1,105	Cost reduced as workforce was limited to those doing restoration and vegetation management at the site. NMK staffs were also engaged in the project as part of cost sharing. The balance covered other areas with deficit.
Transport	1,500	1,050	450	Cost of transport included in the other costs, for example, costs of workshops included elements of transport (fuel cost).
Equipment	3,000	1833	1,167	Laptop as part of the equipment not yet purchased. Generator, Lawn mower, TV, DVD player and LCD already acquired among other small conservation items.
Other Costs not reflected in the revised budget	377	172 **	207	Cost not budgeted for and becomes unforeseen expenditure in the project catered for with surpluses from other items.
Total	**23,700**	**20,093**	3,607	

NOTES:

i) The budgeted amount reflects the total amount awarded for the project in the Fall 2011 Revise

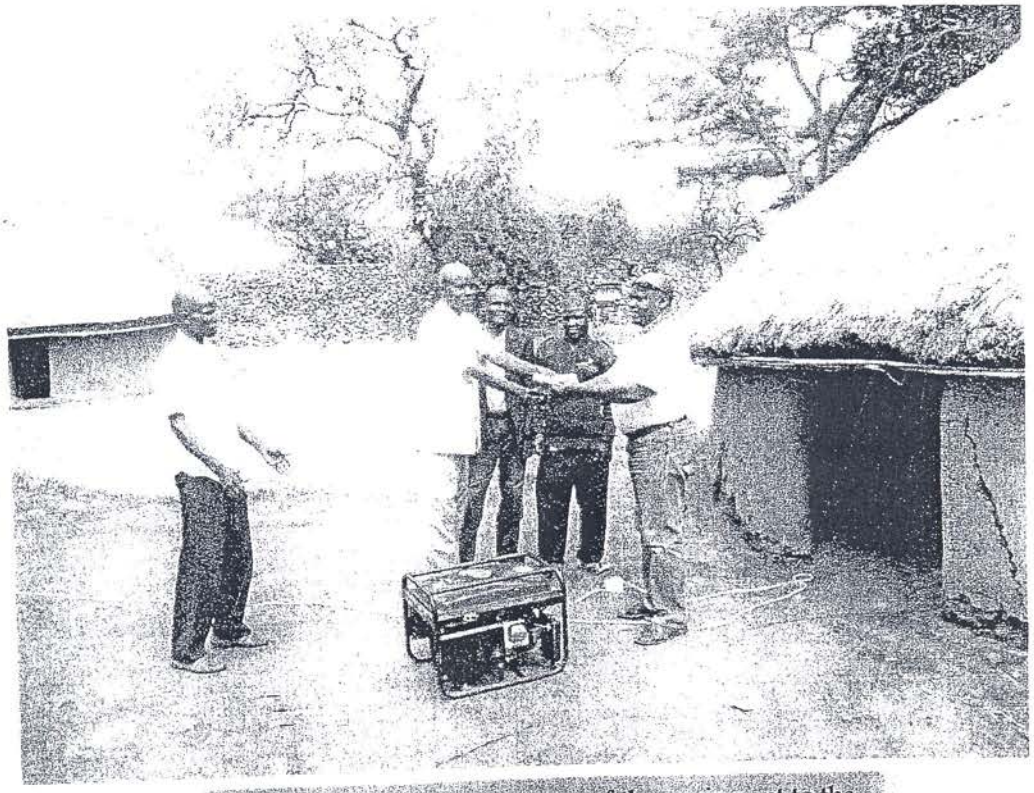
ii) The actual amount excludes the US $ 150 reflected as NMK contribution towards minimal archaeological investigation of one of the excavation trenches.

iii) The amount received so far for the project is US $ 20,145.

iv) Kenya Shillings 4,368.00 is balance still in our accounts. This is equivalent of US $ 52 at the exchange rate of 84 shillings to the dollar.

v) Much was contributed to the project in the form of indirect costs by both NMK and SFSU, including, by NMK: the staff time of a range of museum professionals in supervising activities, and the equipment used in preparing and producing signage at the site; and from SFSU: the time donated through Prof. Luby and his students in preparing interpretive material, in addition to SFSU's support of Prof. Luby's multiple visits to Kenya to develop or work on the project.

** Bank Charges.



Dr. Onjala handing over some of the equipment to the Caretaker of TOCI, Mr. Silas Nyagweth, at the close of the project in August, at the Luo homestead's grounds. In the background are the Thimlich stone enclosures.

This report has been prepared by the Project Manager, Dr. Isaya O. Onjala in consultation with Professor Edward Lubby and the Accountant, Kisumu Museum, National Museums of Kenya.

Signed: *Isaya O. Onjala*

Date: *September 2012*

GAZETTE NOTICE No. 1516

THE PRESERVATION OF OBJECTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEONTOLOGICAL INTEREST ACT

(*Cap.* 215)

NOTICE OF DECLARATION OF MONUMENT

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by subsection (1) of section 6 of the Preservation of Objects of Archaeological and Palaeontological Interest Act, the Minister for Constitutional Affairs declares the object and areas of land specified in the Schedule hereto to be a monument within the meaning of the Act.

Any objection to the declaration of any of the said objects or areas as monuments shall be lodged with the Minister within one month from the date of publication of this notice.

SCHEDULE

Parcel No. 690, Block 1, Lamu Island

All that area of land known as Parcel No. 690, Block 1 in Lamu Town in Lamu District, Coast Province.

Dated the 27th May, 1982.

C. NJONJO,
Minister for Constitutional Affairs.

GAZETTE NOTICE No. 1517

THE PRESERVATION OF OBJECTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEONTOLOGICAL INTEREST ACT

(*Cap.* 215)

CONFIRMATION OF NOTICES

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by subsection (3) of section 6 of the Preservation of Objects of Archaeological and Palaeontological Interest Act, the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, confirms Gazette Notices 3715 of 1980, 2075 of 1981, 2076 of 1981, 2210 of 1981, 2211 of 1981, 2212 of 1981, 2213 of 1981, 2214 of 1981 and 2966 of 1981, which declare the areas of land, the boundaries of which are specified in the Schedule hereto, in which areas objects of archaeological or palaeontological interest are believed to exist, to be monuments within the meaning of the aforesaid Act.

SCHEDULE

Kilombe Archaeological Site

All that area of land known as the Kilombe Archaeological Site, on Plot L.R. No. 487/28/1 in the Nakuru District, Rift Valley Province, comprising of cliffs and gullies of about 27.5 sq. metres fenced on its west side and marked by posts at the north-east, south-east and south-west boundaries and may be found at approximately Map Reference 212895, Sheet No. 11 82, Series Y731, 1:50,000.

Kapurtay Prehistoric Site

All that area of ground comprising the south-east corner of L.R. 10814 in Nandi District, Rift Valley Province, of approximately 227 acres, the boundary of which comprised of, on the south, the Ainomotua River, on the east the existing L.R. boundary northwards to Two Trees Hill, on the north by a line running from two Trees Hill southwestwards to Kapurtay Geodetical Station to a point half way between said end points of the line, thence southeasterly at a bearing of 130° to the Ainomotua River.

Mugruk Archaeological Site

All that fenced area of ground comprising approximately 2 acres, known as Mugruk Archaeological Site at Map Reference 899 of Map Sheet 116/1, Map Series Y731 in Kisumu District, Nyanza Province, situated on the east bank of the Mugruk River at a point 250 metres upstream from the bridge where the Kisian-Pala Akuche road crosses the said river.

Songhor Palaeontological Site

All that land known as Songhor Palaeontological Site, comprising Parcel No. 1 of L.R. No. 3105/R in Songhor Registration Section of Muhoroni Registration Section, Map No. 117/1, situated in Kisumu District, Nyanza Province, comprising approximately 78 acres.

Fort Ternan Palaeontological Site

All that land known as Fort Ternan Palaeontological Site comprising L.R. No. 11889 in Kericho District, Rift Valley Province, comprising 11.56 acres.

Italian Church Near Kijabe

All that area of land comprising L.R. 12148 in Nakuru District, Rift Valley Province.

Sibiloi National Park

All that area of land known as Sibiloi National Park formerly known as East Rudolf National Park in Marsabit District, Eastern Province, as delineated on Plan 204/47 which plan is deposited at the Survey Records Office, Survey of Kenya, Nairobi.

Lanet Prehistoric Site

All that area of land comprising L.R. 12208 in Nakuru District, Rift Valley Province.

Thimlich Ohingas

All that area of ground known as Thimlich Ohingas in Grid Square 4701 of Map Sheet 129/4, Series Y731, Edition 4-DDS at a scale of 1:50,000 in South Nyanza District, Nyanza Province, bordered on its north-east side a line starting at the junction of the Okengo-Gogo-Thimlich roads following the Gogo Road for a distance of eight hundred and fifty metres, thence by a straight line running at a bearing of 220° magnetic for a distance of seven hundred metres thence by a line running north north-westerly along a cattle tract to the point of origin.

Dated the 27th May, 1982.

C. NJONJO,
Minister for Constitutional Affairs.

GAZETTE NOTICE No. 1518

THE COMPANIES ACT

(*Cap.* 486)

THE KENYA CARGO HANDLING SERVICES COMPANY LIMITED

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING MANAGING DIRECTOR

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by article 3 of the Articles of Association of the Kenya Cargo Handling Services Company Limited, the Minister for Transport and Communications appoints—

CHRISTOPHER WAMBUA

to act as Managing Director of the Kenya Cargo Handling Services Company Limited, with effect from the 17th May, 1982.

Dated the 26th May, 1982.

H. K. KOSGEY,
Minister for Transport and Communications.

GAZETTE NOTICE No. 1519

THE CONSTITUTION OF KENYA

NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION

IN PURSUANCE of section 83 (2) (*b*) of the Constitution of Kenya, notice is given that—

MWANGI STEPHEN MURIITHI

has been detained under regulation 6 (1) of the Public Security (Detained and Restricted Persons) Regulations, 1978 (L.N. 234/1978).

Dated the 27th May, 1982.

J. G. KIEREINI,
Chief Secretary/Permanent Secretary.

GAZETTE NOTICE No. 1520

THE CONSTITUTION OF KENYA

NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION

IN PURSUANCE of section 83 (2) (*b*) of the Constitution of Kenya, notice is given that—

GEORGE MOSETI ANYONA

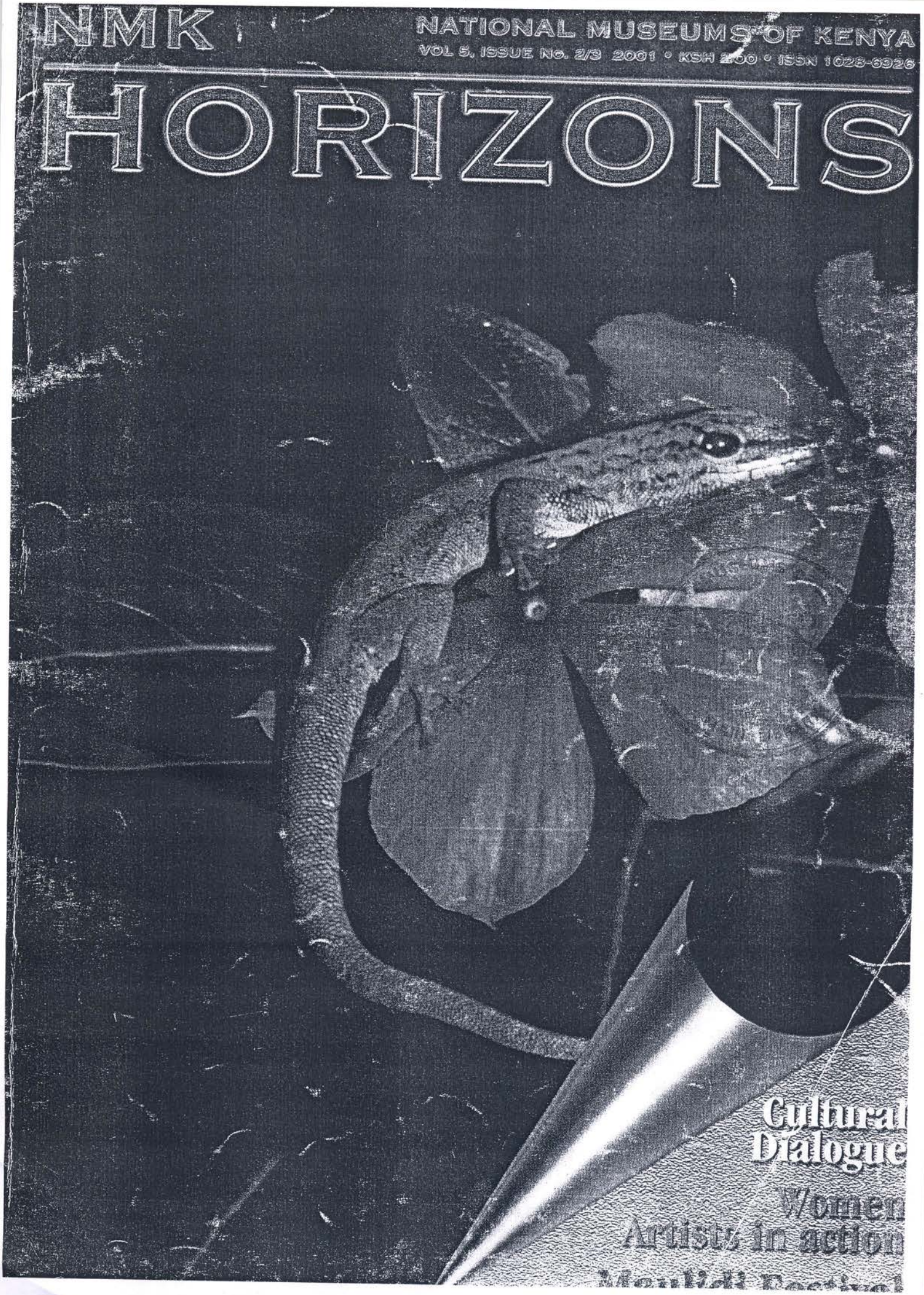
has been detained under regulation 6 (1) of the Public Security (Detained and Restricted Persons) Regulations, 1978 (L.N. 234/1978).

Dated the 31st May, 1982.

J. G. KIEREINI,
Chief Secretary/Permanent Secretary.

NMK
NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA
VOL 5, ISSUE No. 2/3 2001 • KSH 250 • ISSN 1028-6926

HORIZONS



Cultural Dialogue

Women Artists in action

Maulidi Festival

THIMLICH OHINGA: SPATIAL ORGANISATION AND LUO COSMOLOGY

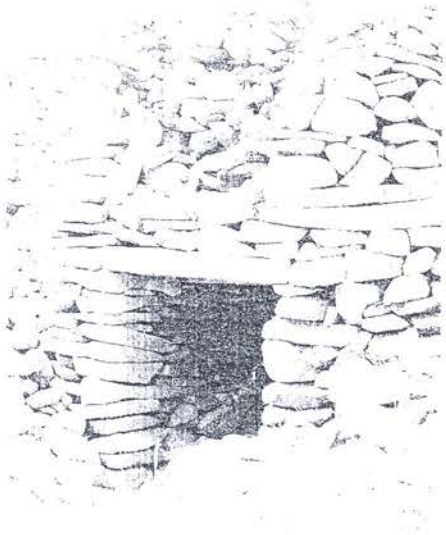
RECENT EXCAVATION AT THIMLICH OHINGA CONDUCTED BY STAFF OF THE NMK S DIVISION OF ARCHAEOLOGY HAS SHED SOME IMPORTANT LIGHT IN UNDERSTANDING THE STONE STRUCTURES, WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO THEIR ATTRIBUTION TO LUO CULTURE. VICTORIA EMMERSON, STEPHANIE WYNNE-JONES AND ISAYA ONJALA EXPLORE THE INFLUENCE OF THIS CULTURE S COSMOLOGY ON THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE SITE S STRUCTURAL REMAINS. COSMOLOGY IS USED HERE TO REFER TO A REGULARITY OF CULTURAL PATTERNING AND A CONSISTENCY OF WORLD VIEW.

The potential World Heritage site of *Thimlich Ohinga* is the largest of a number of stone enclosures widely distributed within the Nyanza region. The structures are mainly associated with the Nilotic Luo inhabitants of the region and have been dated to a few centuries ago using oral tradition. Thimlich was abandoned in the first decades of the 20th century. Artefactual evidence found at the site largely support attribution of Luo provenance. Further confirmation is found in the initial analysis of the ceramics from the excavations in 2000, which are exclusively of a roulette design typical of Luo tradition.

Thimlich Ohinga has been surveyed alongside other similar structures found in the region. There has, however, been little exploration of the site beyond this descriptive work. Two possible approaches to further analysis have been identified on both the macro- and micro-scales. The macro-scale addresses broader aspects of the structures as forming an archaeological landscape. The micro-scale on the other hand addresses issues at the site level and investigates if and how Luo cosmology is reflected through organisation of domestic space as can be observed at Thimlich. It is currently unclear how far these concepts apply to Luo populations.

An ideal layout of a Luo compound or homestead has been described by many scholars. Within a circular enclosure, the central or focal point is the *duol* or forum, the main male meeting place. To the right of this will be the central cattle kraal, circular or oval in shape. These two central structures will be arranged so as to allow a clear line of sight between the house of the senior wife and, opposite it, the main gate or *rangach*. An important feature to consider at Thimlich, then, is the enclosure wall itself. This appears to have undergone modification during the site's occupation. The extant structure today is not circular in plan. However, as it is possible to identify the joint where an extension has been added to the northeastern section, one can infer that the original shape was essentially oval. In the first instance the structure seems to have been in keeping with the model of oval plan, with the main gate on the downhill slope.

This pattern of initial conformity and later divergence may also have been the case with the second type of feature – the stone-built cattle kraals. The largest of these is found at the centre of the original oval compound wall. Unfortunately it is currently not possible to say whether this structure is earlier than the smaller kraals found in other positions in the compound. Nevertheless, as the largest enclosure, it represents the central cattle kraal as it is found in most Luo homesteads. There are many potential explanations for the other smaller kraals found around it. There may have been a simple population expansion or an increase in the herd. However, they may also reflect more elusive concepts such as a shift in ideology from communal to personal ownership or the presence of many economic units in a single site. This latter explanation is supported by the presence of a number of boulder lines that appear to divide the site into sections. Such suggestions remain mere speculation and more research is therefore required to put things right. The structures, however, represent a divergence from the ideal model of a single property-owning unit with a single central cattle kraal.



The living quarters in an ideal Luo compound are also arranged to a strict set of rules. This arrangement of domestic space mirrors the basis of the kinship structure in Luo society. In polygamous groups the house of the first wife is positioned against the back wall, opposite the main gate.The houses of the subsequent wives are arranged around the enclosure wall on alternating sides of the senior wife's house. This reflects the idea of opposition between odd and even numbered wives. They are thus housed on alternate sides of an imaginary line between the house of the first wife and the main gate. Each house represents a distinct economic unit with the only link between them being the husband. At puberty, the children are separated

according to sex and moved to 'dormitories'. The male dormitory or *simba* is located next to the main gate for defense reasons. The girls' dormitory is further inside the enclosure and is often also the house of the grandmother. This represents another fundamental division, one of seniority reflected by elevation. The second generation of the extended family, such as the inhabitants of the *simba* and later their wives, live nearest to the *rangach* downslope from their elders. The enclosure as a whole has a three-generation life cycle as the son will move out of the father's compound when his son reaches puberty.

Houses are represented at Thimlich by a number of circular depressions. These are assumed to represent domestic areas due to the associated material culture. The November 2000 excavations at the site seem to support this interpretation, as a trench dug across one of the depressions yielded domestic artefactual material as well as a stone wall foundation. The houses themselves were probably built of mud and thatch and are rather ephemeral in comparison to the site's stone walls. Indeed, it is not possible to identify more than a few such features with any certainty, let alone ascribe any notions of contemporaneity. Six depressions are easily recogniseable, but these represent only a fraction of the hollows on the site, the vast majority of which cannot be easily recognised as discrete features. The visible ones are broadly arranged in a circular pattern, a fact potentially predetermined by the shape of the compound itself. It is therefore not possible to distinguish from the traces visible on the surface the spatial organization of the various individual elements of the ideal Luo compound at Thimlich.

An analysis of *Thimlich Ohinga* as a site organised in keeping with the principles of Luo cosmology or world view requires a more flexible view of these principles than the ideal model would allow. This might be expected as the existing structures represent the closing point in a long period of occupation, adaptation and change. Scholars point out the numerous individual circumstances and ideas that can affect a site's conformity with the ideal model. However, although it would not be possible to come to a site such as Thimlich with no knowledge of its past inhabitants and infer their cosmology from the remains, once acquainted with this cosmology one can begin to see the principles at work through the structural features. At Thimlich, there is enough similarity to the ideal basic layout to assume an attempt to conformity. Although we cannot yet fully understand and know the specific circumstances that account for the divergence, we can take a guess at some of the causal factors. There are two issues specific to Thimlich that may affect the observed pattern today. The first is that the site seems to have been occupied for more than a single occupation period. This deviates from the principles of the Luo model where a compound is occupied once and abandoned, especially after the death of the founder. This takes only a few centuries. The radiocarbon dates currently available for the occupation of Thimlich put the site at about five centuries old. It is hoped that the samples taken in the 2000 field season will yield results to clarify further the time-span in question. At present, however, it does seem as if Thimlich represented a more permanent habitation than the ideal settlements described above. Secondly, the reason for this increased permanence may have been the investment required in building using stone. After the turn of the 20th century, Luo homesteads were more often constructed in timber and mud. It is often argued that stone walling was abandoned when conditions of hostility (which made this necessary) passed.

In conclusion, it can be said that *Thimlich Ohinga* does not conform to the ideal Luo settlement layout. However, with the two mentioned reasons as to why this would be so and other countless factors that only research will unveil, it is important to accept that the level of conformity is still very significant. There is nothing at Thimlich to suggest a different structural ideology at work, and the site may, therefore, be cautiously interpreted with the aid of Luo cosmology.

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Fredrick Za Odede

Secrets in stone

Who built the stone settlements of Nyanza Province?

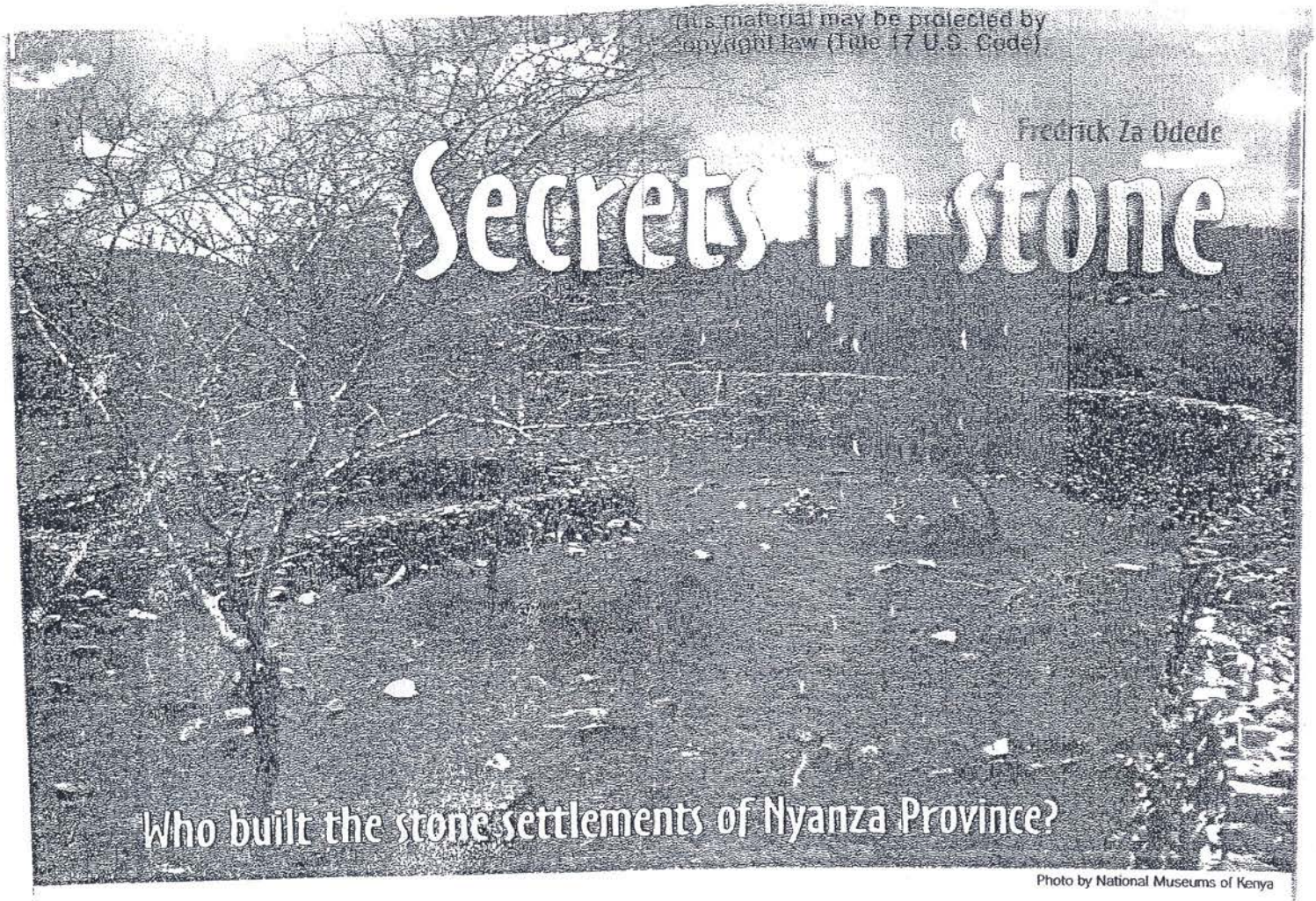
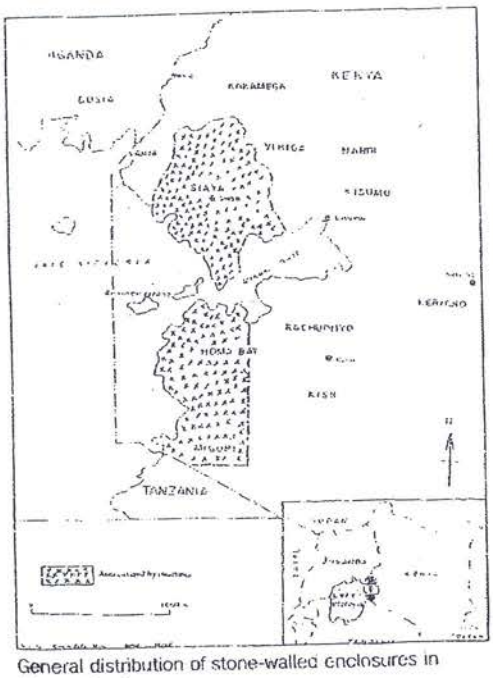


Photo by National Museums of Kenya

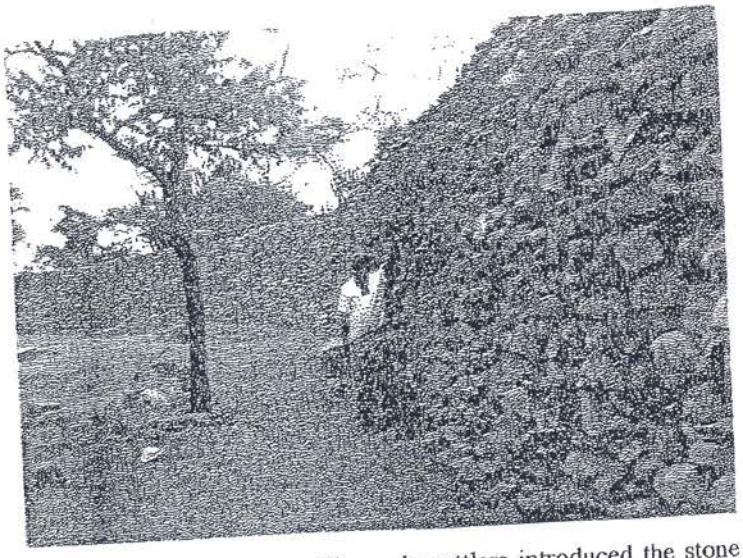


General distribution of stone-walled enclosures in Nyanza Province.

Ohingni (singular: ohinga) are ruins of dry-stone walled settlement enclosures unique in Kenya and East Africa. They are architecturally similar to the dry-stone structures of Zimbabwe and Botswana, though less skillfully made. The biggest and most elaborate structure in Kenya is Thimlich Ohinga, in Migori District, which in 2000 was named in the List of 100 Most Endangered Sites by the World Monuments Watch.

At least 521 dry-stone walled enclosures are presently known in South Nyanza, where their distribution is highly clustered. Of the stone-built enclosures in Northern Nyanza, some 20 have already been surveyed.

Oral history has it that immigrant groups built stone-walled enclosures in the Nyanza region of Western Kenya around 500 years ago. The first communities to settle here during this time were Bantu speakers, followed by highland and river-lake Nilotes. Oral information suggests that either Bantu or Nilotic Lwo speakers built these enclosures.



Enclosure wall with buttress. External walls range in height from 0.5–4.2m, with a thickness of 1m. They were made of loose stone without any dressing or mortar, and care must have been taken to ensure their stability.

The early settlers introduced the stone building tradition in the region due to urgent security requirements as different immigrant groups sought to dislodge each other over land ownership. They used the enclosures for protection against enemies, cattle raiders and wild animals. The construction of the enclosures was made possible due to the availability of loose surface rocks on the hills. Their highly-organised communal lifestyle also made labour mobilisation easy.

Architecture

Ohingni architecture is both captivating and unique. The enclosures were built using intersecting, curved and zig-zagging walls made of loose stones of various shapes and sizes. The walls were constructed from un-coursed random rubble made from local basalt without any dressing or mortar, and care must have been taken to ensure their stability.

The walls range from 0.5–4.2m in height and have a base of larger blocks, but no dug foundation. On the base, inner and outer wall phasing was erected and joined with a core of small stones. The walls are free standing, and 1m in thickness. They are dotted with buttresses, which add to the enclosures' general stability. In Northern Nyanza, architectural features* such as rock pillars, stone linings, natural wall defence utilising the steep face of the hill, and pilled rocks constitute the wall of the enclosures.

The gates of the enclosures are always similar in size at about 1–1.5sqm, but the number of gates per enclosure varies from one ohinga to another. The entrances feature stone lintels, loopholes and engraved markings.

Internal features

Immediately behind the entrances are watchtowers for good visibility of the surrounding landscape to spot advancing enemies. Elsewhere behind the walls are usually buttresses for structural stability. Within complex enclosures such as Thimlich Ohinga in South Nyanza, there are a series of interior partitions. The outer wall also encompasses several smaller enclosures, each measuring 10–20m in diameter.

External features

External features are mainly additional semi-circular enclosures, which are not part of the original enclosure. They are known as abutting structures. Their formation was dictated by the need for more space due to population increase within the main enclosures, which in turn sparked off expansions of simple enclosures to form complex ones.

Built for defence: view from inside the enclosure, showing low entrance gate and watchtower. All enclosures are situated on hilltops.

** Explanation of terms: Rock pillars — single isolated long rocks which are vertically anchored perpendicular to the ground surface; Stone lining — individual stones which are arranged in a long winding line as part of the wall or demarcation; Pilled rocks — an accumulation of numerous rocks on the surface as part of the wall.*

Organisation of space

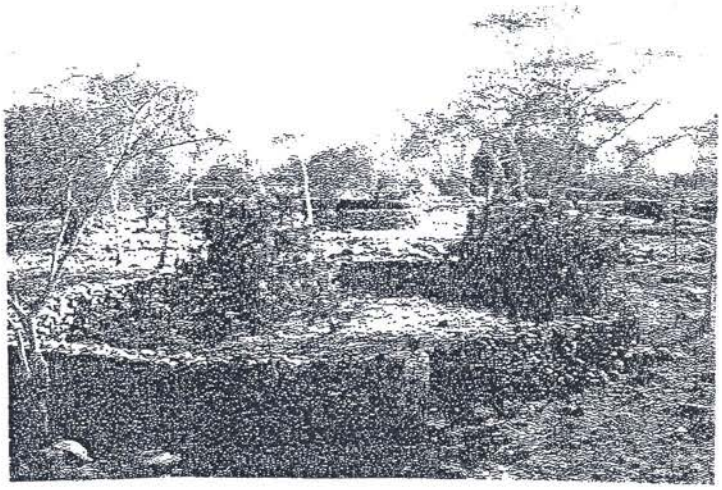
Archaeological investigation into these fortified settlements has shed light on some aspects of the organisation of domestic space. An important feature is the enclosure wall of the structures. The walls, which are oval in shape, were used for defence during conditions of hostility between different immigrant groups. They were also seen as territorial demarcations or signs of communal land ownership. A communal way of life thrived within these enclosures.

The entrances (gates) were narrow and low to allow a limited number of people to enter the structure at a given time.

Houses (huts) are represented within the enclosures by a series of circular depressions and raised platforms (house foundations), which are arranged in a circular pattern close to the walls, a fact potentially predetermined by the general shape of the enclosures themselves. The circular depressions and raised platforms are assumed to represent domestic areas (houses) due to associated material culture such as house floors, house stone linings, cooking places (hearths) and daub.

The houses were possibly built of mud and thatch. Several circular stone-built livestock kraals occur within some of the main enclosures while the largest livestock kraal was usually situated at the centre of the compound. The occurrence of several livestock kraals in one enclosure could be explained in various ways. There could have been population increase or an increase in the herd. It could also be a shift in ideology from communal to family ownership or the presence of many economic units in a single large enclosure. An example of single enclosures with several cattle kraals is Thimlich Ohinga in South Nyanza. However, some enclosures have a single central livestock kraal such as those in Northern Nyanza. Smaller kraals (10m wide) were places for keeping goats, sheep and calves.

Certain areas were designated for recreational activities such as *bao* (game board), engraved on a stone slab to the north–eastern side of the main enclosure at Thimlich Ohinga site.



Thimlich Ohinga livestock kraal. The presence of several kraals (each 10–20m diameter) inside the enclosure give an indication of the sizeable human and animal population living within the walls, and the highly-organised culture that built them.

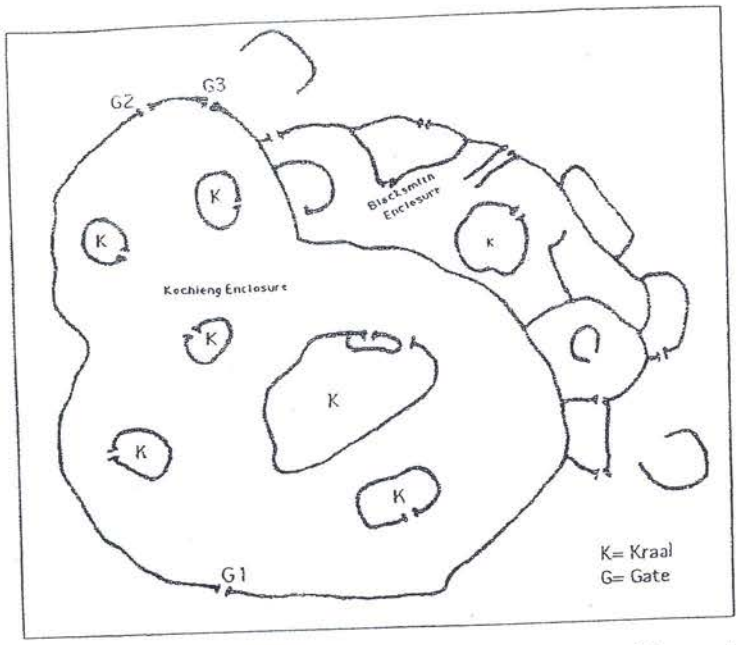
Blacksmithing activities were carried out at a partially stone-walled area, just outside the main enclosure at Thimlich Ohinga. Archaeological excavation at this place yielded numerous pieces of iron slag, broken pieces of *tuyeres* (smoking bellows), iron objects and rock surfaces with marks left during preparation of iron objects.

Abutting structures (semi-circular enclosures) are external extensions from the main enclosures, built to accommodate excess population. The external extensions usually enclose few house depressions, and one livestock kraal. Their size (30m across) and limited associated features indicate that few people occupied them.

Dating of ohingni

The dating of dry-stone walled enclosures is confusing. The majority of settlement sites have not been securely dated, but oral history suggests they were built about 500 years ago. Carbon-14 dating of charred bones from an early 1980s test excavation at Liare Valley (the earlier name of Thimlich Ohinga) showed that ohingni were built about 300 years ago during the Recent Iron Age period.

Cross dating of ohingni based on ceramics from Northern Nyanza enclosures in relation to pottery from Thimlich Ohinga enclosures in South Nyanza shows that ohingni from the two regions are contemporaneous. Further



Organisational plan of Thimlich Ohinga. The walls cover an area of over 0.7 hectares.

investigation is required to provide exact dates for these fortified settlement sites.

Oral history

Oral information regarding ohingni highlights certain issues about their origin and factors behind their construction. The interpretations of oral traditions of the inhabitants around Lake Victoria have not focused on explaining the ohingni, but rather, the broader issue of population migration. There is very little association between oral tradition and ohingni even in places where enclosures could provide strength to the explanation of settlement and population expansion. However, a few interpretive references to the structures are contained in oral traditions.

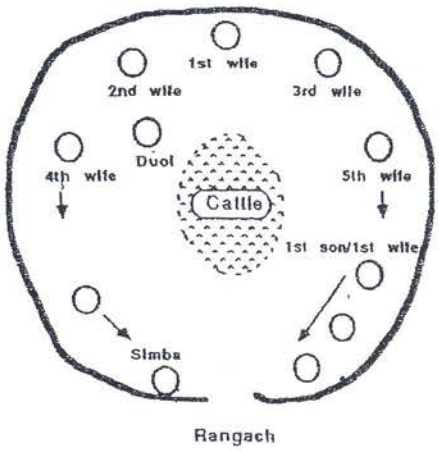
Oral traditions of the Luo indicate the occupation of dry-stone walled enclosures in Northern Nyanza mainly by Lwo speakers and a mixed race of Luo and Bantu clans known locally as Kagwa.

Oral traditions of the Luo also provide information about the underlying factors behind the construction of ohingni. The enclosures were used as defensive mechanisms due to insecurity posed by the presence of wild animals and external invaders in the region. The enclosures acted as fortresses on hilltops as more immigrant groups moved into the region and sought to dislodge others. Insecurity is a prominent theme in oral history, and it is clearly seen in the enclosures' architectural features such as watchtowers, lock holes, small-sized entrances and high-thickened walls. Large complex enclosures (approx. 0.7 hectares) are evidence of communal life that offered enhanced security as competition for land intensified, as well as cheap labour during the construction and maintenance of the enclosures. The construction of ohingni on hilltops was made easier by the availability of building material (loose surface rocks) on hilltops, which reduced transportation costs during their construction and maintenance.

Ethnographic analogy

The general organisation of space in ohingni resembles the typical layout of more recent traditional Luo homesteads. Within a circular Luo homestead, the focal point is known locally as *duol*, the main male meeting place. On its right is the central circular livestock kraal. The location of the livestock kraal is the same as in the ohingni.

The arrangement of huts in a Luo homestead mirrors that of the stone walled enclosures. The alignment of huts next to the fence conforms in pattern to the circular house depressions within stone walled enclosures such as Thimlich Ohinga. The conformity between the ideal Luo settlement layout and the organisation of space in ohingni is



A typical Luo homestead. The layout of traditional Luo homesteads reflects the general organisation of space found in ohingni.

significant in the understanding of the origin and use of stone-walled enclosures.

Archaeological inference

The identity of the inhabitants of ohingni can further be inferred from pottery recovered from these enclosures. Ceramics found within ohingni are mainly knotted strip roulette-decorated, necked or neckless vessel forms.

In East Africa, no rouletting is associated with the Early Iron Age, a period when Bantu immigrants were already settled in the region, which means the introduction of roulette decoration cannot be associated with Bantu speakers.

Twisted string roulette decoration is typically used by Kalenjin speakers of the highlands of the Rift Valley, while knotted strip roulette decorations have fairly close correlations with western Nilotic Luo communities.

Curved-wooden and knotted string roulette decorations are virtually absent in these enclosures which show that ohingni were not inhabited by either Bantu or Kalenjin immigrant groups who, according to oral history, are claimed to have invaded Western Kenya. Therefore, the occupants of dry-stone walled enclosures in the region — makers of knotted strip roulette decorated pottery — can be here identified as Western Nilotic Lwo speakers.

This claim is further supported by comparisons between modern Luo ceramics with pottery remains from the structures. They are very similar, showing some form of continuity from prehistoric times to the present.

Conclusion

All the three main sources of information have confirmed the occupation of ohingni by the early ancestors of Lwo speakers. The spatial distribution of these enclosures is a manifestation of Luo expansion in Western Kenya during the Later Iron Age period (roughly between 500 and 300 years ago). The enclosures fell into disuse by the first decade of the 20th century as conditions of hostility were replaced by peace and order during the establishment of colonial administration in the region. The stone walled enclosures were not abandoned, rather individual families moved out of the enclosures to establish individual Luo homesteads fenced by euphorbia as means of territorial demarcation and land acquisition. There was a shift in ideology from a communal lifestyle within the enclosures to individual family units outside the enclosures.

Preservation of ohingni

Thimlich Ohinga, the largest and most complex of the stone structures of Nyanza, is under the care of the National Museums of Kenya and open to the public. However, although the World Monuments Watch gave funds for the preservation of Thimlich Ohinga, the rehabilitation of the enclosures was not completed due to inadequate funds. The last enclosure is still in a pathetic condition with fallen walls and gates, collapsed interior partitions, and overgrown trees which have reduced visibilty as well as accessibility. There is an urgent need for the completion of the restoration work on these beautiful and unique historical structures.

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

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Fredrick ZA Odede is an archaeology lecturer at Maseno University, Western Kenya, in the Dept of History and Archaeology. From 2000–2004, Odede was the Western Kenya archaeologist at the National Museums of Kenya. In the early part of 2000, he served as a research assistant at the British Institute in Eastern Africa before he joined the National Museums of Kenya. He undertook his MA in Archaeology at the University of Nairobi where he is currently undertaking a PhD in archaelogy.

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ARTICLE TITLE: Secrets in stone : who built the stone settlements of Nyanza Province?

ARTICLE AUTHOR: Oded, Fredrick

VOLUME:

ISSUE:

MONTH:

YEAR: 2006

PAGES:

ISSN: 0257-8301

OCLC #: GZN OCLC #: 1784015

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Impact of Interpretive signage at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape

Dr. Isaya O. Onjala

4th Project Status Report (PSR) Submitted to Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)

August 2012

One of the main objectives of the AIA community based conservation project at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape (TOCL) was the development of interpretive signage, including road signs at major junctions to enhance understanding of the site and to show clear directions to the site. This objective was realized at the end of the project period during the second week of August 2012 when interpretive signage and road signs were installed with a lot of positive results on visitor turn out and site presentation.

To arrive at the current signage, the process started by gathering information from previous research records. Information gathered was then summarized and submitted to exhibit designers to design how it should be presented on interpretive panels. This was followed by printing of the information in the desired format, fabrication of the panels to hold the information and eventually the installation of the panels at the site.

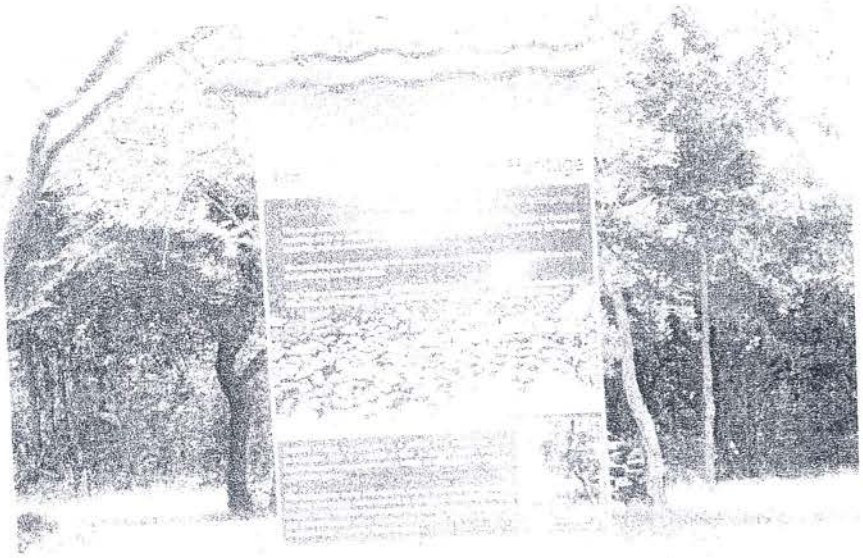
The installation of the signs has greatly improved the status of the site. In only two weeks, more people are now being directed to the site from the major junctions at which big road signs have been erected giving direction and distances to the site (see the photos for some of these road signs).

Interpretive signage at the site has also enhanced the informational value of the cultural landscape. Visitors now spend more time reading through the panels in order to better understand the various features at the cultural landscape. The signage has become beneficial to learners who now have a uniform body of information presented to them to boost their knowledge of the site unlike previously when they got conflicting information from the guides. This has led to more curious learners and readers, especially, from the local area and schools frequenting the site.

The site has also not only improved in terms of information to the public and learning institutions but has become attractive through the introduction of the well-designed and environmentally blending panels distributed throughout

the cultural landscape. Visitors no longer frequent specific areas but attempt to see-it-all by following the signs. This activity within the project has, therefore, been a major breakthrough opening the gate for an influx of visitors. High visitor turn out has been realized within the two weeks of installation of the panels. The locals have been the highest category of visitors. However, with more marketing and publicity, through brochures and other materials and means, it is hoped that other categories of visitors will be attracted to visit this important cultural landscape.

The following is a photographic presentation of some of the signs and panels that have been installed as part of the project at Thimlich Ohinga Cultural Landscape.

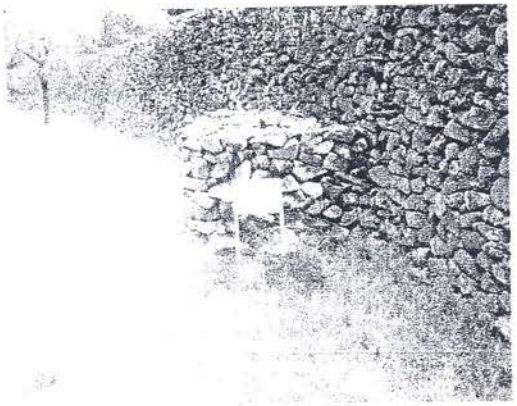


An introductory panel at the entrance of the cultural landscape close to the ticketing office

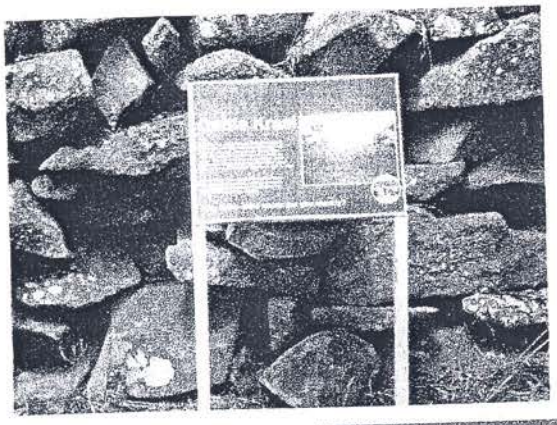
Panel introducing Kochieng Enclosure and other complexes

Road sign erected in Migori Town to show direction, distance and what is offered at the site

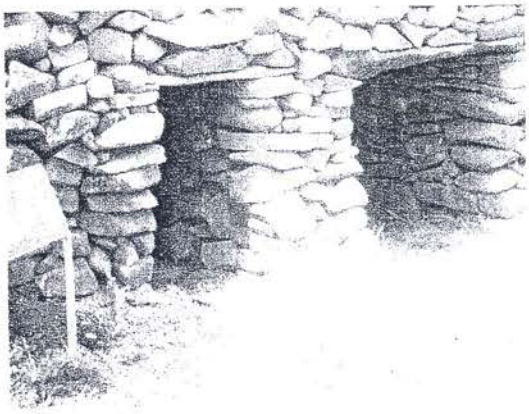
Road sign being put up at Kalamindi junction to show direction and distance to the site



Explaining wall support mechanism called Buttress



Explaining Cattle Kraals (pens) as a feature within the enclosures



Koketch complex and the twin gates

This unique gate forms a special feature of Kochieng Enclosure and is the subject of research to find why it was constructed different from the others

The photographs provided in this report are samples to show the signage work that was completed. Most of the features within the cultural landscape have been interpreted and information summarized on the panels that now form part of the site. This exercise or activity has made the site more interesting and worth visiting according to the feedback received in the last two weeks. It was an exercise worthy of the cost. *Thutinda!*