



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

COMMITTEE MEETING**DATES:**

GDRC: 30/08/18

EXCO: 19/09/18

HRM COM: 05/10/18

COUNCIL: 26/10/18

DECLARATION SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: Heritage Protection Unit

DATE: 15 August 2018

SAHRIS SITE ID: 94609

SAHRIS SITE CATEGORY: Shipwreck

Significance Category (THEMES): History of Slavery

ENQUIRIES: Ms Heidi Weldon / Ms L. la Grange

ITEM: Proposal for National Heritage Site Declaration: The Wreck of the Slave Ship *São José*; off Clifton Second Beach, Cape Town, Western Cape

A1. BACKGROUND

- A1.1. After Portugal colonized Brazil, the Portuguese reliance on slave labour for their expanding sugar plantations increased. Through their already established trading stations along the East Coast of Africa, the Portuguese traders began importing Slaves from the East Coast of Africa to Brazil.
- A1.2. The *São José*, a 18th Century wooden Portuguese sailing vessel, left Mozambique with a cargo of about 500 slaves captured or traded from the interior. Sailing on its way to Brazil around the Cape Coast just off what is today Clifton, the ship ran into submerged rocks in the early hours of the morning on 27 December 1794.
- A1.3. Although a rescue was attempted, only the captain and crew were truly saved. 212 of the slaves, fewer than half the number on board, were rescued from the waves. More than 200 slaves left on board were simply abandoned, many still shackled below deck, and died on board.
- A1.4. Those slaves that were saved from drowning were not, however, truly saved, but were resold in Cape Town. The tragic story of wrecking of the *São José* is an example of the disregard for human life exemplified by the slave trade across the globe.

- A1.5. Her voyage, although unsuccessful in its mission to bring slaves to Brazil, was an important precedent for the sourcing of slaves from East Africa, something which ultimately contributed to prolonging the Atlantic Slave Trade.
- A1.6. The wreck lay undiscovered for about 200 years and was found by local divers in the 1980s and subjected to salvage operations. She was initially misidentified as a Dutch Merchant Vessel. The salvors discovered human remains and handed them over to the police. Unfortunately, despite the efforts by Iziko to locate the present-day location of these remains, nothing further is known about them. To date SAHRA is not aware of the discovery of any additional human remains during excavations
- A1.7. In 2015, through the discovery of iron ballast blocks, she was positively identified as the wreck of a slave vessel, the *São José*. The *São José* is the only slave shipwreck to have been excavated and scientifically studied off the coast of South Africa.
- A1.8. Iziko Museums of South Africa's Slave Wrecks Project have been and continue to carry out sensitive, scientific excavations of the site to learn more about the slave trade and to bring previously untold stories to light.
- A1.9. The site is significant due to its association with the history of slavery in South Africa and because it is the site of the long-unacknowledged lives lost in the tragic wrecking. The people who died when she wrecked were first commemorated at a ceremony after the positive identification of the Wreck in 2015. It had thus taken almost 221 years for the loss of life to receive due recognition. The story of the wrecking makes this site particularly special because of the links it establishes between the slaves' home country of Mozambique, the Portuguese origins of the ship, the ship's intended destination of Brazil, and its final resting place off the South African south west coast.
- A1.10. The site of the wreck of the *São José* was nominated by SAHRA's Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (MUCH) unit, as part of an effort to acknowledge the loss of life in the wrecking and as the result of the slave trade in general. The site was graded as a Grade I site on the 29th of March 2018.

A2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A2.1 Following the approval by Council to grade the site as a Grade I site, SAHRA notified all relevant Interested and Affected Parties. SAHRA has received responses back in support of the declaration with one respondent offering some suggestions regarding the placement of a plaque, informing the Table Mountain National Park of the any excavation work taking place, and amendments to the Statement of Significance and location description. These amendments have been incorporated in this dossier. SAHRA will investigate all

suggestions offered. Iziko has also offered their support of the declaration and requested that they be kept abreast of any developments in the declaration process.

A2.2. As the Wreck is situated within the coastal waters of South Africa and is archaeological in nature, the site is within the State's possession. Therefore, SAHRA as the appropriate State agency, are the primary custodians of the site. Iziko Museum through the excavation work and the curation of material, are the current permit holders for the site. Both SAHRA and Iziko are in full support of the declaration.

A2.3. SAHRA has drafted and submitted to Iziko a Heritage Agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both parties in the management of the site. The Heritage Agreement speaks to the development of a Conservation Management Plan, which will be compiled by Iziko. Final signing of this Heritage Agreement is currently planned to take place in the 4th Quarter of the 2018/19 Operational Year (i.e. between January and March 2019).

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1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

- 1.1. The submission is made to discuss and recommend the declaration of the Wreck of the Slave Ship *São José*, off Clifton Second Beach, Cape Town, Western Cape, as a National Heritage Site.

2. LANDOWNER'S DETAILS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS DECLARATION

- 2.1. As was indicated in the Grading Submission considered via Round Robin by Council on 29 March 2018, archaeological material is the property of the South African State. The site is situated 125m of the high-water mark off Clifton Second Beach and is therefore within the waters of South Africa.

- 2.2. SAHRA, acting as the agent of State responsible for the management of heritage resources is the primary custodian of the site. The site was nominated by SAHRA, which is therefore in full support of the declaration. SAHRA is duly represented by:

Mr Thomas Kgokolo
Interim Chief Executive Officer
SAHRA
PO Box 4637
Cape Town
8000

- 2.3. The Iziko Museums of South Africa, through the Slave Wrecks Project team, have been conducting research and scientific excavations on the site since 2012 under SAHRA permits. The Museum is also the approved curating authority of all material excavated from the site as well as the permit holders for current excavations and are also in full support of the declaration. They are duly represented by:

Ms. Rooksana Omar

Chief Executive Officer
Iziko Museums
PO Box 61
Cape Town
8000

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION

3.1. Letters of notification were sent on 20th June 2018 to the following interested and affected parties:

- African Centre for Heritage Activities
- Bungalow Owners Association
- Heritage Western Cape
- Iziko Museums
- St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town
- Institute of Internal Affairs of The George Washington University
- National Association of Black Scuba Divers (USA)
- Submerged Resources Centre of the United States' National Parks Service
- Smithsonian Institute - National Museum of African American History and Culture

Including the following individuals:

- Mr S. Gordon (Clifton resident)
- Prof C. Rassool
- Ms D. Ferrus

3.2. To date SAHRA has received indications of support from Iziko Museums, Ms Diana Ferrus and Mr S Gordon.

3.3. Mr Gordon also put forward a few suggestions in terms of the following:

- a plaque of similar installed on Victoria Road where the path enters Second Beach,
- that the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area are notified of any excavations taking place in the vicinity,
- that the number of deaths from the shipwreck is included in the Statement of Significance,
- and that the location of the site be described in a bit more detail "*Off Clifton Second Beach*".

3.4. SAHRA responded noting his suggestions and committing to

- investigating the installation of a plaque (probably information boards with a declaration badge) at the point suggested,

- notifying TMNP/MPA of permits issued for excavations (as the nature of the excavations are unpredictable),
- including the number of deaths in the Government Gazette notice published,
- and changing the location description to be more detailed.

3.5 Iziko requested that they be kept abreast of developments regarding the declaration, and indicated that they are in the process of developing the Conservation Management Plan for the site.

4. OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE

4.1. The *São José* was an 18th Century wooden Portuguese sailing vessel (Figure 1). Items which have been found on site include pulley blocks, iron concretions and ballast blocks, copper fastenings and sheathing (Figure 2), shackles, Mozambican hardwood, structural timber carved from Mangrove, ceramics, and human remains¹.

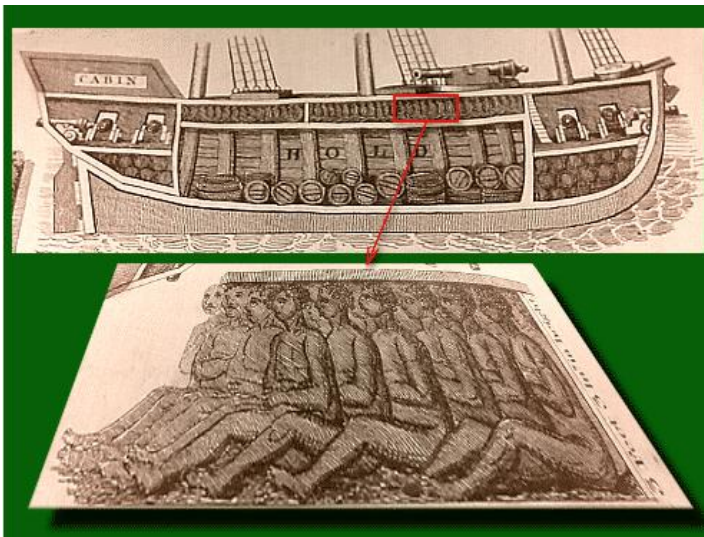


Figure 1: An example of a slave ship



Figure 2: Copper fastenings and sheathing

4.2 The Iziko Museums of South Africa Slave Wrecks Project team has been conducting research and scientific excavations at the site since 2012. The site plan shown in Figure 3, produced by Iziko, broadly describes the layout and location of artefacts on the site.

¹ Iziko interim permit report, 2015

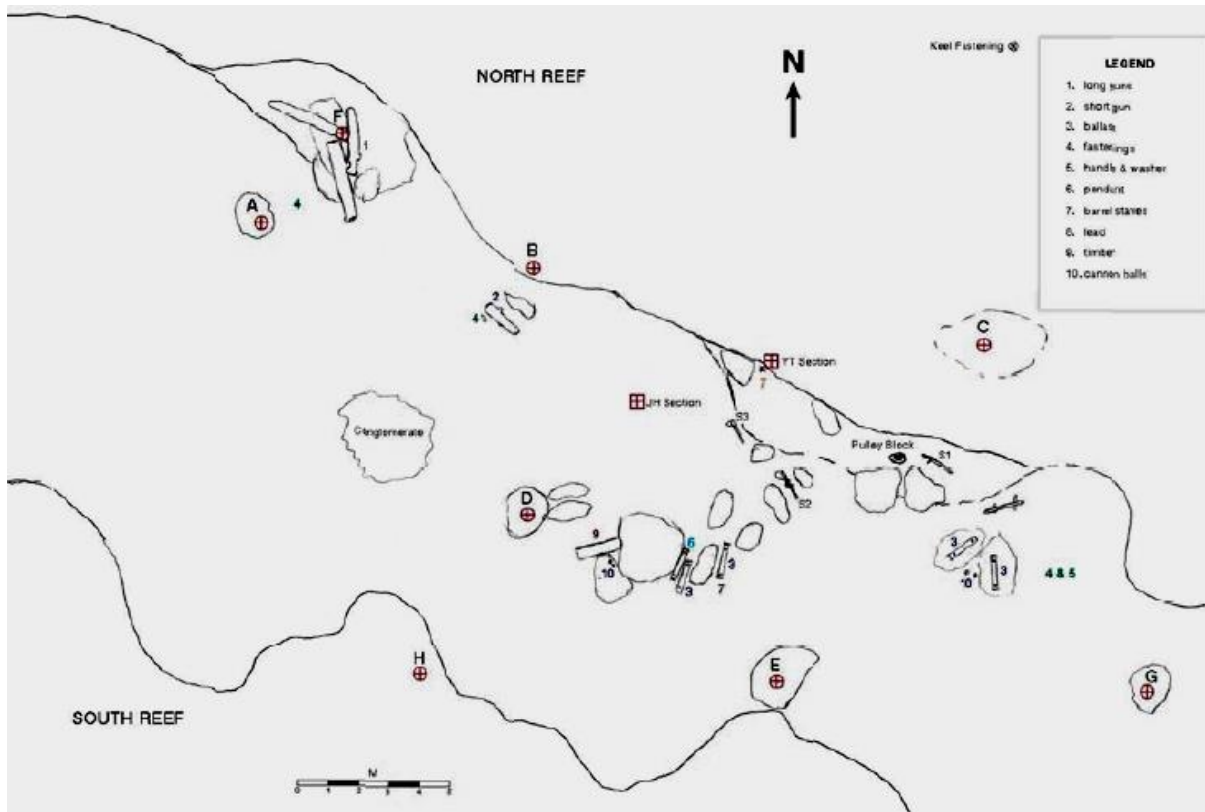


Figure 3 – A plan view of the site, produced by Iziko

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TO BE DECLARED (SITE BOUNDARIES)

Site Name	Position	Province	Nearest Town	Municipality
Wreck of the Slave Ship <i>São José</i>	125m from High Water Mark off Clifton Second Beach. GPS: -33.93711°, 18.37571°	Western Cape	Cape Town	City of Cape Town

The area to be declared is shown in Figure 4, and is bound by the following coordinates:

Point number	Latitude	Longitude
1	-33.937213°	18.377044°
2	-33.936134°	18.377356°
3	-33.935453°	18.376341°
4	-33.935591°	18.374761°
5	-33.936480°	18.373673°
6	-33.938110°	18.373864°
7	-33.938944°	18.375892°
8	-33.938270°	18.376495°

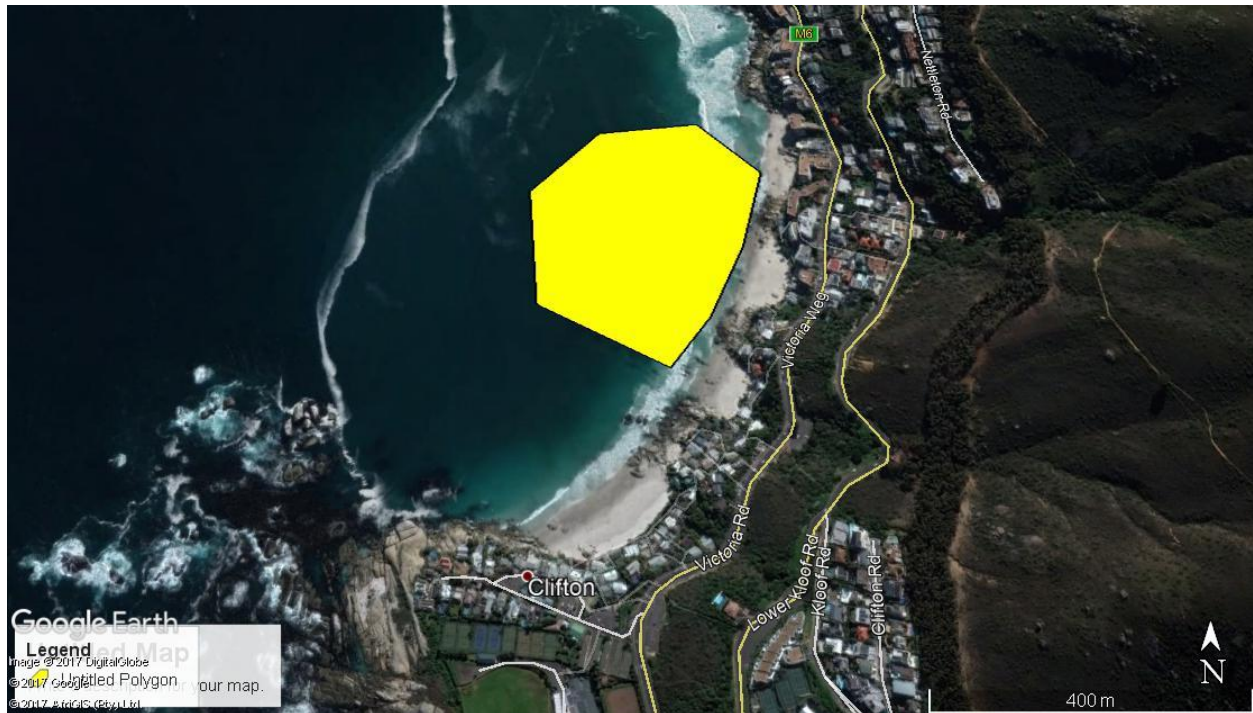


Figure 4 – The area to be declared

6. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE

- 6.1. Iziko Museums are currently ensuring that the site and any cultural material excavated from the site are properly conserved and curated and are working towards a Conservation Management Plan.
- 6.2. In the meantime, SAHRA has drafted a Heritage Agreement and submitted to Iziko for their input and ratification. It is expected that the heritage agreement will be finalized by the end of October for submission for approval at the GDRC on 1st November 2018, with parties signing by the end of March 2019.


7. RESOURCE UTILISATION

- 7.1. The site is primarily used for scientific research.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. It is recommended that the declaration of The Wreck of the Slave Ship *São José* as a National Heritage Site is approved.

Proposal for National Heritage Site Declaration: The Wreck of the Slave Ship *São José*; off Clifton
Second Beach, Cape Town, Western Cape

Prepared By:		Supported By:	
Heidi Weldon Heritage Officer: Grading and Declaration		Nkosazana Machete Manager: Heritage Protection	
Date 15 Aug 2018		Date:	

Recommendation supported by GDRC		Recommendation not supported by GDRC	
Mamakomoreng Nkhasi - Lesaoana Chairperson: GDRC		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by EXCo		Recommendation not supported by EXCo	
Thomas Kgokolo Chairperson: EXCo		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by HRM Committee		Recommendation not supported by HRM Committee	
Prof. H.C. Bredekamp Chairperson: HRM Committee		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by Council		Recommendation not supported by Council	
Prof. S. Bouillon Chairperson: Council		Signature	
Date:			