

# **PHASE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ERF 853 STRUISBAAI, SOUTH WEST CAPE PROVINCE**

Prepared for

**Essprop Developments (Pty) Ltd**

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Prepared by

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A Phase 1 study of the Argonauta Park site<sup>1</sup> (erwen 940 and 922) in Struisbaai, identified the remains of an historic dump clearly associated with buildings that in the past had belonged to the original fishing community. At least one foundation of a small building can be found on the edge of the dune on erf 853 (Plate 1) and probably represents the remains of a cottage of the vernacular style. Examples of these are still to be found on the ridge adjacent to the national road and some have been declared national monuments (Plate 2). The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

A portion of the dump that had extended into erf 922 had been severely impacted by earthmoving activities (Plates 3, 4) but in situ deposits were still preserved on erf 853. Erf 853 is not part of the development and consists of open space administered by the Struisbaai Local Council.

The National Monuments Council requested the developer to implement a Phase 2 archaeological investigation of the remaining in situ deposits on erf 853 so that artefactual material could be recovered in the event that the destabilised dune should slump or was damaged by future impacts associated with the development.

The Archaeology Contracts Office was appointed to do the rescue excavations. These were carried out in December 1995.

## 2. METHOD

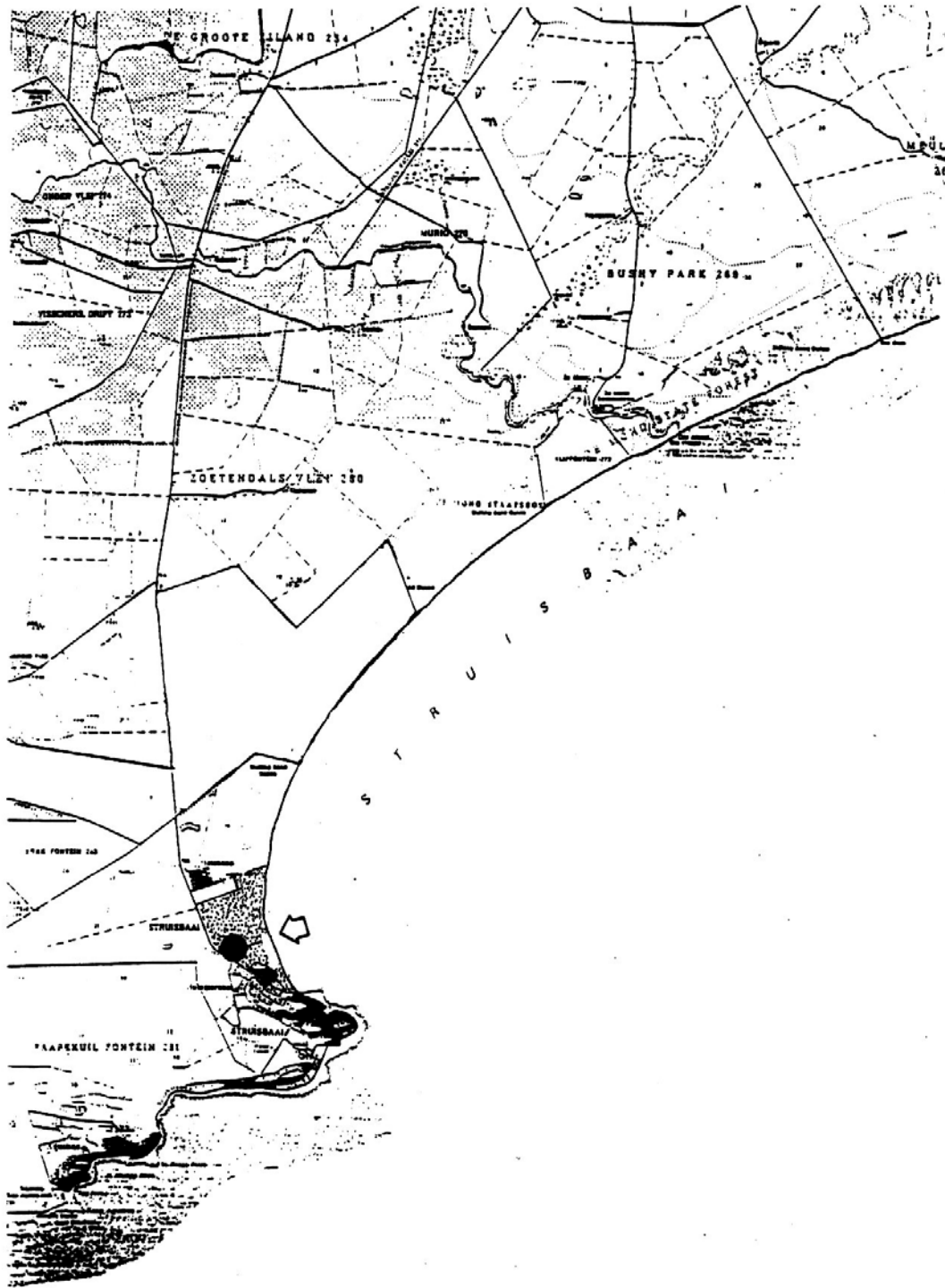
The excavations were conducted according to standard archaeological procedures. A system of one meter square grid units was imposed over the in situ deposits and was used to record the horizontal provenance of artefactual material. The base line for the grid system was established between the surveyor's pegs (H12 and H11) which mark the boundary between erwen 922 and 853 at this point. Although the artefactual material was located in a dump context, care was taken during excavation to assess if any stratigraphy was discernible.

A total of 8m<sup>2</sup> were excavated with deposit being sieved through a 3mm mesh. The sieved material was partially processed on site with squares of high artefact density being bulked for sorting in the laboratory.

Artefactual material has been sorted into various categories namely shell, bone, glass, ceramics, metal and specialised finds. A list of the types of materials that have been recognised is presented in Appendix 1. Four of the larger samples of fish bone have been examined by Mr C. Poggenpoel to establish the range of species that are represented. A list of the species is presented along with the artefactual lists in Appendix 1. This has not been a detailed quantitative analysis. Dr. Jane Klose has inspected the small ceramic collection but this has also not been a detailed analysis. All the material recovered from the excavations will be curated and stored until more detailed studies take place. These detailed studies are not the responsibility of the developer.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase 1 archaeological investigation of erwen 940 and 922, Struisbaai, south west Cape Province. Report prepared for VKE Consulting Engineers, August 1995. UCT, Archaeology Contracts Office.



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### 3. EXCAVATIONS

During the Phase 1 investigation we had been alerted to the presence of the dump deposit by a scatter of ceramics and bone that had been exposed by the earthmoving operations. The material was widely broadcast and it was impossible to establish how far in situ material had extended owing to disturbance. Closer inspection of the origin of the material revealed a lens of mixed organic and artefactual material in situ in the side of the remaining dune to the east. It was this layer of material that was targeted during our Phase 2 investigation. The location of the dump and the excavated squares is shown in Figure 2.

We immediately set up a grid over the visible sections and extended one of the rows of the grid towards the north in order to dig some test holes upslope where some material was visible on the surface but where it was not clear that in situ material was present below.

Excavation began in G8 over the exposed and partially damaged lens. Excavation followed the deposit back to a point where the material began to thin out and where fairly dense vegetation was encountered. As the vegetation was binding the soil this was not disturbed. F8 was covered almost entirely by the dump material whereas this proved not to be the case with most of the other squares. A detailed plan of the excavated squares in Figure 2 shows the distribution of the dump deposit. From this drawing it seems safe to conclude that the material under discussion was disposed of around the base of the dune possibly filling a shallow interdune depression. Plate 5 shows the excavation in context while Plate 6 shows a detail of the section.

Larger artefacts that were exposed on the surface, though out of context, were collected. The shaded area in Figure 2 shows the approximate extent of the surface collection. This material consists mainly of ceramics, glass and bone but some other specials are also included.

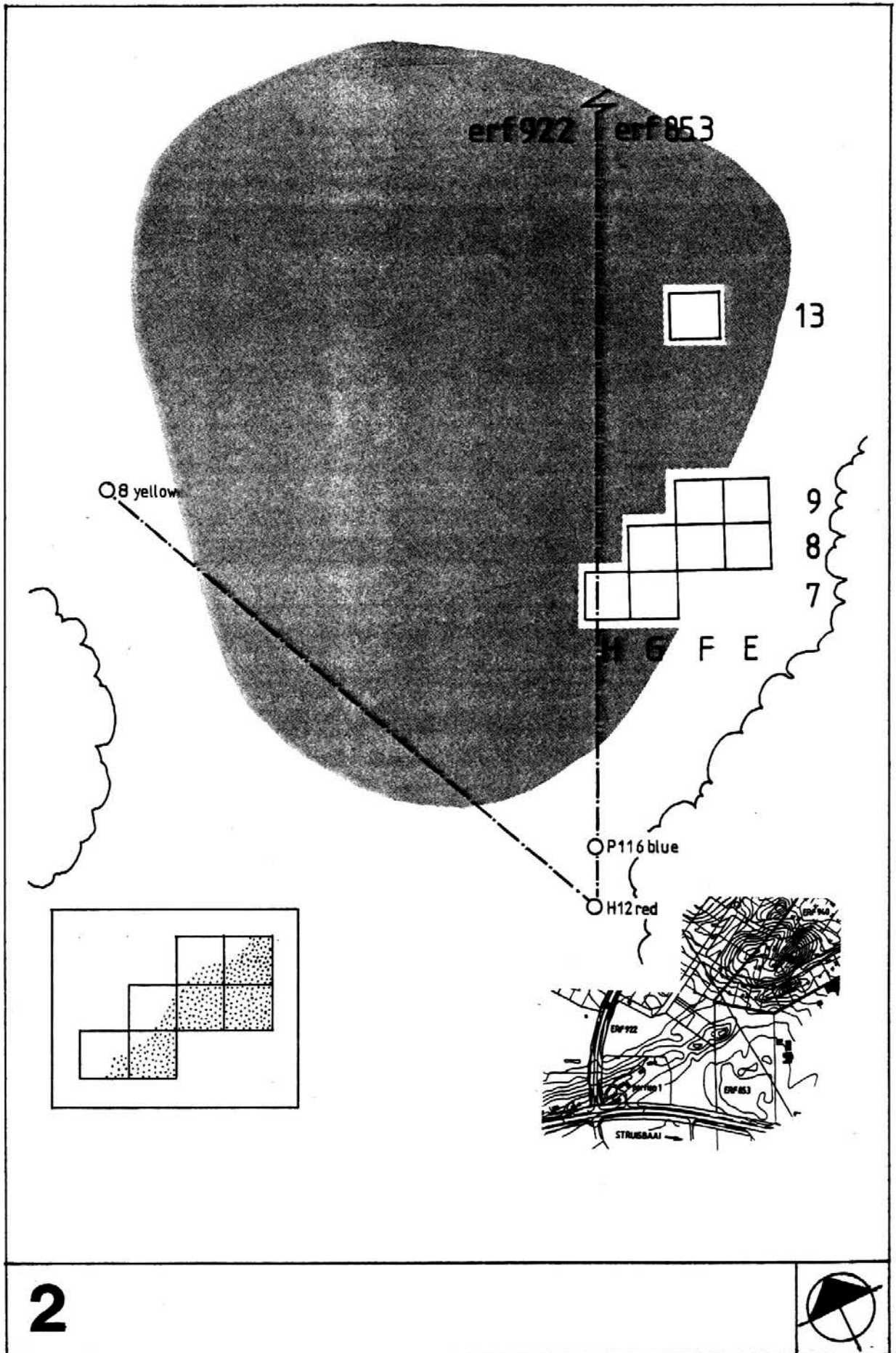
### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The initial age estimate of the material that was observed on the surface was clearly too early. The misleading factor in the initial assessment was based on a particular type of ceramic known as spongeware. While this type is usually found on sites dating to the 19th century, it would appear that the spongeware on this site is of Swedish rather than English manufacture (Klose, pers comm). The pattern emulates the designs of the 19th century<sup>2</sup>. We know too that some of the material is of recent vintage such as a bicycle licence dated to 1963 whereas some of the bottle glass is suggestive of the early part of this century.

It would seem likely that the items that have been collected during this investigation were discarded over a fairly long period beginning around the turn of the century. It is possible that earlier sections of the dump may have been destroyed. The precise age range for the settlement would need to be established through an archival study. The absence of large amounts of plastic items, particularly plastic containers suggests that dumping ceased before these items were readily available. The cessation of dumping may coincide with the application of the group areas act but without more detailed archival studies we cannot be absolutely sure of this.

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<sup>2</sup> Klose, J. and Malan, A. 1993. Ceramics of the south western Cape, 1650 to 1850. HARG Handbook No1. Dept of Archaeology, University of Cape Town.



The collection provides a look at the material culture of a rural household subsisting to a certain extent on marine foods including fish and shellfish. While bones of sheep and cow are present, the marine portion of the diet was substantial. Diet was also supplemented by the inclusion of tortoises and small wild antelope. The food and other remains are consistent with our assessment that the dump is associated with the original fishing community.

## **5. PROFESSIONAL TEAM**

Fieldwork

Dave Halkett  
Tim Hart  
Harriet Clift  
Jan Jakebowski

Report

Dave Halkett  
Tim Hart

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DESCRIPTION OF EXCAVATED MATERIAL BY UNIT**

#### ***E8 BROWN DUMP***

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Oxysteles sp., Patella sp.

Bone: fish (see below), mammal, tortoise, bird.

Ceramics: Refined earthenware 2 frags.

Glass: clear, brown - bottle, kitchen ware, lamp.

Metal: sheet metal frags, wire, nails.

Specials: Shoe fragments, gramophone record frag, tennis ball frag, plastic comb teeth, buttons, metal washer, copper wire, clothes hooks/eyes, pencil rubber holder, metal bangle frag with raised decoration.

Fish species:

Black musselcracker, Dassie, Silverfish, Elf, Red stumpnose, White stumpnose, Kabeljou, Galjoen, Haarder, White steenbras.

#### ***E9 BROWN DUMP***

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Oxysteles sp.

Bone: fish (see below), mammal, tortoise, bird.

Ceramics: Porcelain 1 frag, Refined earthenware 1 frag.

Glass: clear, brown - bottle, light bulb.

Metal: sheet metal frags, wire, nails.

Specials: Prise off carbonated drink cap, shoe eyes, metal blazer button, metal bangle fragment with raised decoration, marble, plastic comb tooth, hot water bottle cap.

Fish species:

White musselcracker, Yellowtail, Elf, Red stumpnose, Galjoen, Haarder, Silverfish, Sand steenbras, White steenbras.

#### ***F8 BROWN DUMP***

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Oxysteles sp., Haliotis sp., Patella sp., Chorymitilis meridionalis, Cypraea sp (cowrie)

Bone: fish (see below), mammal, tortoise, bird.

Ceramics: Porcelain 14 frags, Refined earthenware 16 frags.

Glass: clear, brown, green, blue - bottle, light bulb.

Metal: sheet metal frags, tin can frags, wire, nails.

Specials: Silcrete core, copper nail, brass frag, copper wire, copper wire hoop, plastic comb teeth, gramophone record frags, metal washer, bicycle saddle - metal and leather parts, rubber frags, fish hooks, glass beads, slate pencil frag, bicycle pedal bearing cover, buttons, small lead artefact (shaped like dumbbell), aluminium bottle cap, prise off carbonated drink caps, foil frags, metal buckle, cast iron artefact?, linoleum frag, quartz flakes, lead dripping (probably from casting sinkers), aluminium containers - shoe polish and snuff, shoe frags.

Fish species:

Black musselcracker, White musselcracker, Dassie, Yellowtail, Silverfish, Elf, Red stumpnose, Kabeljou, Galjoen, Haarder, Spotted grunter, Red roman, Steenbras, Zebra fish, Shark (small).

### **F9 BROWN DUMP**

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Patella sp., Oxystele sp.

Bone: fish, bird, cow, sheep, tortoise

Glass: clear, green

Ceramic: Refined earthenware 1 frag

Metal: sheet metal frags, nail

Specials: .22 cartridge case, safety pin, shoe eyes, shoe leather frags, pencil leads, linoleum fragment, whetstone fragment, plastic comb teeth, copper wire.

### **G7 BROWN DUMP**

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Oxystele sp., Haliotis sp.

Bone: fish (see below), mammal, tortoise, bird.

Ceramics: Porcelain 18 frags, Refined earthenware 4 frags.

Glass: clear - bottle, kitchen ware, light bulb.

Metal: sheet metal frags, wire, nails.

Specials: aluminium foil, bolt, brass screw, nut, aluminium tube, fish hook, bicycle valve cap, light bulb base bayonet, slate fragment with incised lines, slate pencil frag, pencil lead, soapstone cube - from bicycle puncture repair kit, clothes eye, metal ring, rubber grommet, nylon fishing line, linoleum frags, round brass fitting?, buttons, washer, shoe frags, aluminium bottle caps, tin bottle caps (Jeyes fluid?), plastic comb teeth, enamel cup handle, copper wire, bicycle licence - aluminium 1963 #180 Bredasdorp Municipality, Cycle lamp battery - Eveready (round in paper sheath), buckles, plastic table cloth surround, ostrich eggshell frags.

Fish species:

Black musselcracker, White musselcracker, Dassie, Yellowtail, Silverfish, Elf, Red stumpnose, White stumpnose, Kabeljou, Galjoen, Haarder, Zebra fish, Shark (small), Strepie, Steentjie.

### **G8 BROWN DUMP**

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus (allekreukel), Donax serra (white mussel), Patella sp. (limpet), Oxystele sp. (winkles), Haliotis sp. (perlemoen), Whelks.

Bone: fish, bird, cow, sheep, tortoise

Glass: brown, clear, blue, green

Ceramic: Refined earthenware 2 frags

Metal: sheet metal frags

Specials: Buttons, battery core, copper wire, blue bead, pin, shoe frags.



## **H7 BROWN DUMP**

Shell: Turbo sarmaticus, Donax serra, Patella sp., Oxysteles sp., Haliotis sp.

Bone: fish, bird, cow, sheep, tortoise

Glass: clear - ex bottle, salt cellar, lamp

Metal: sheet metal frags

Specials: aluminium foil, cork, peach pip, shoe leather, metal washer, clear glass bead, plastic bottle cap, .303 cartridge case (U53 Mk 7), small brass item?, plastic table cloth edging.

□. *Phase 1 archaeological investigation of erwen 940 and 922, Struisbaai, south west Cape Province. Report prepared for VKE Consulting Engineers, August 1995. UCT Archaeology Contracts Office.*

□. *Klose, J. and Malan, A. 1993. Ceramics of the southwestern Cape, 1650 to 1850. HARG Handbook, No 1. Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town.*





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