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# Cultural Resource Management: Kleimond Harbour Development

## Final Report

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Prepared for Mr GE Starke of Whale Coast Projects

Compiled by Nicola Berrington and Catherine Snel  
Department of Archaeology, University of Stellenbosch, Private  
Bag X1, Matieland 7602

Assisted by: Prof HJ Deacon, Ms SJD Wurz & Mr RJ Goosen  
Tel: 021 808 3472,  
e-mail: [hjd@akad.sun.ac.za](mailto:hjd@akad.sun.ac.za)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December-January 1998-9, at the request of Mr GE Starke, a Phase 2 cultural resource impact assessment of the projected Kleinmond harbour development was undertaken. Forced removals in the 1950s evicted a local fishing community from the area to be developed and this report is an assessment of what is known of that community. Post-holes of the fish-house were the only visible tangible remains located. From interviews with former residents of the fishing village and others familiar with it, the village consisted of nine "houses" and a larger number of families and individuals, permanently resident there from 1923. The community was involved in fishing as a commercial enterprise. There remains a strong identity with the *place* among individuals particularly in the Protea township. The *place* is an important intangible cultural resource. The cave, a rockshelter across the stream from the parking area, served as community church and has been identified as an important focus. It is strongly recommended that development should not encroach on the cave and its frontage, that this locale be made more accessible by proper drainage and that it be rehabilitated to serve as an asset to the community. It could be established that there are relevant photographs and documents in the possession of individuals and that these have potential value for compiling a local history of the fishing village and the town. If a suitable repository can be found, the wider Kleinmond community can be encouraged to contribute material. This initiative should come from within the community but needs to be encouraged.

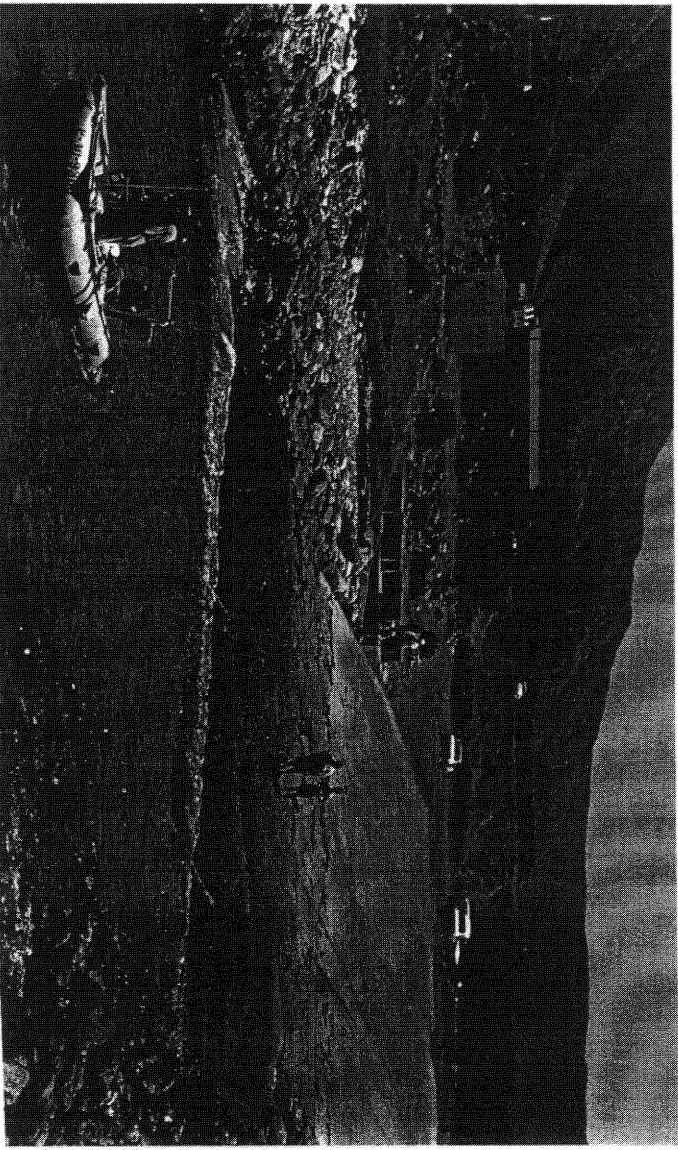


Fig 1. Kleinmond harbour showing the positions where the houses of the fishing community stood

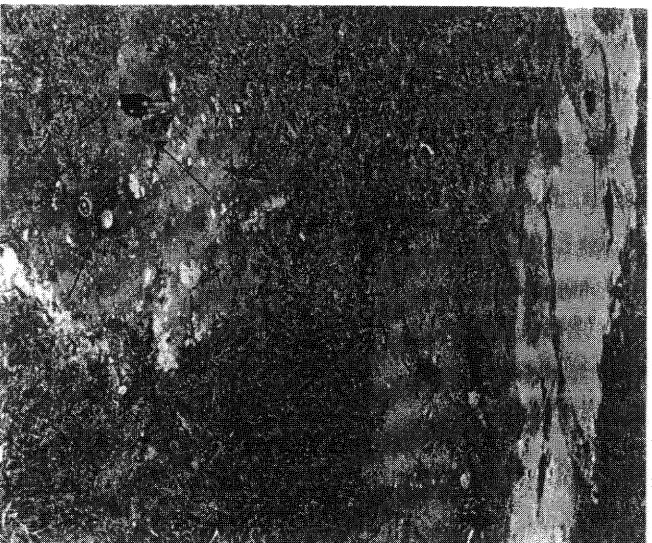


Fig. 2. Post-holes of the fish-drying structures

## INTRODUCTION

On the instruction of Mr GE Starke, in December 1998, a Phase 2 cultural resources impact assessment of the Kleinmond harbour development was undertaken. This followed out of a Phase 1 investigation by RJ Goosen and SJD Wurz and has been carried out by NJ Berrington and C Snel and co-ordinated by HJ Deacon. Seven day visits were made to the site to survey the cultural resources and to interview former inhabitants of the fishing village at the harbour. An interim but detailed report was submitted on 29 January 1999. This final report includes much of the same detail with added comments. There is potential to gather more cultural information on the fishing village. Ideally the initiative to do this should be community driven and the release of this report may help to stimulate such an initiative.

### **The brief was as follows:**

- to interview former residents of the fishing village
- to locate and collect information that would constitute a record of community life in this small fishing village
- to prepare a report on the investigation and recommend any mitigatory measures necessary

## FINDINGS - Interviews

There are a number of potential informants and a list of persons, compiled in the course of the survey, is appended. Only some of these persons were available for interviews during our visits. The following three persons had links to the fishing village (Figures 1 & 2), having lived there or having had family living there. Their information is particularly relevant. Other interviews were less complete.

### Mr Johan Singleton

Mr Johan Singleton is a representative of one the oldest families in Kleinmond. He said that after working at the whaling station in Betty's Bay, Mr Jim Roos, his grandfather and his father Izak Singleton ran a successful fishing business at the Kleinmond harbour. They had bought the business from a Mr Charlie van Breda. Mr Roos built a cold store(s) situated near the slipway water of the harbour. In 1939 Izak Singleton moved from the harbour area to open a shop in Kleinmond. His brother Willem continued to run the business with Mr Roos. In 1952 the Singleton brothers deepened the harbour by removing loose stones in an attempt to provide berthing for the numerous boats that used the harbour.

Johan Singleton states that there were six semi-detached fishermen's' houses (three units) where the present-day parking area is situated. Mr Jim Roos, the owner of the business, lived in the largest house on the property, near the cold store(s). Adjacent to the Roos house were the houses of Dirk Smit and Jannie de Villiers. Thus in the 1920s there were nine houses at the harbour. With the enforcement of the Group Areas Act, the families of the fishermen who were employed in the business at the harbour were moved to the

newly created Protea township. The forced removals took place in 1953. By 1972 all the houses at the harbour had been demolished.

Mr Singleton stated his disappointment at the demolition of the original fishing village and expressed his concern that efforts be made to preserve the history of the village as far as possible. Some of this information, based on interviews with Mr Singleton, has been published by Ms D Aves in the local newspaper.

### *Ms Mina Swart*

Ms Mina Swart, aged 88 now living in Protea township, was long resident at the harbour village or what she refers to as "Visbaai" or "Klipbaai". In the interview she stated that the fishing harbour village was built in about 1923 sometime after her arrival at Kleinmond. Before Ms Swart took up permanent residence there she lived in Betty's Bay. She held a job at the whaling station until it closed. This would have been about the same time Mr Roos moved to the Kleinmond harbour. There were no permanent residents of the harbour at the time of her arrival. She married a fisherman by the name of Piet Swart. Her father-in-law, who was of German descent, had purchased land at the harbour.

According to Mina Swart there were six original houses. They were double-storey, semi-detached houses, built from stone blocks. The houses were painted white with red roofs and each housed approximately twelve people. Ms Mina Swart speaks fondly of "die company" referring to the other families living at the harbour. The families formed a tight knit community. Names she remembers include Jert, Lamma, Dorp, Toll, Katie (a Scottish woman), Tries and Maria. The surnames could be not established in the interview. According to her (and Johan Singleton) Mr Jim Roos stayed in the largest of the houses that was situated a few meters off the slipway. In front of his house was the smaller house belonging to Dirk Smit whose wife came from the village. Jannie De Villiers (nicknamed "Jan Jakkels") lived next to the cold store(s). The cold store(s) built by Mr Roos had double walls filled with charcoal for insulation. Ms Swart also referred to the cave in the rocky outcrop where the villagers would attend church services.

Mina Swart remembers the order given to her and her family to move from their house to Protea township. In translation her comment was "they were nice houses but now they don't exist anymore, they broke everything down". This reflects her strong feeling of loss. She has suffered reduced circumstances as a result.

### *Mr Nolan Swartz*

Mr Nolan Swartz now lives in the Protea village. He and his two brothers, Michael and Nicholas, all fishermen, were born in the harbour village and spent their childhood there. Their father, Abraham Swartz, was a well-respected fisherman, employed in the business. The forced removals came when Nolan Swartz was about 14 years old. He was away at the time and on his return he remembers feeling perplexed that the family had had to move. He has fond memories of the harbour village community "most certainly we were poor but there was everything". The houses had well established vegetable gardens (they grew huge water melons) and there was fish to eat and sell. The catch was sold or bartered to farmers. The men did the

catching and the women were involved in the fish processing. It was a lifeway that involved all in the community and this gave the community a sense of identity and unity. This was not a racially segregated community.

According to Mr Swartz there were three houses built on the rise overlooking the slipway. This is the position of the present-day parking area and Captain Jack's Restaurant. There were three lots of two semi-detached houses and a single structure. The families living in these houses are listed from west to east were Piet Swart, Piet Hull, Kriel and Abraham Swartz. Flip Marais lived alone in single house. A Xhosa-speaking fisherman known only as Fourpence also lived on his own in a house in the direction of the cave. The Smit family house was positioned more or less where the present public toilets have been erected. Situated just off the slipway was the house of the Franckens that was demolished before Swartz family came to live there.

Mr Nolan Swartz acknowledges the benefits that will accrue from the new development but is concerned that something of his family heritage will disappear in the process. He and his family lost title (from long occupancy) to living at the harbour and this was a point made.

### *Interviews with other knowledgeable informants*

#### *Ms Dot Aves*

Ms Dot Aves writes for the local newspaper and has an interest in the documenting of the history of Kleinmond. Ms Aves says the first fishermen settled at the harbour in 1861. She has recorded that the thatched roof structure of the "fish-house" was supported by pillars from railway sleepers from the cargo of the ship "*Gustav Adolph*" wrecked at the mouth of the Palmiet River on 28 June, 1902. Six concrete postholes are all that remains of the "fish-house" structure. Ms Aves has drawn on the account of the history of the harbour provided by Mr Singleton history in some of her newspaper articles. This is a useful way of recording and publicising the local history.

#### *Dr Schalk Walters*

Dr Walters, a prominent educationalist, has retired to Kleinmond. He is interested in the history of Kleinmond as a whole and appreciates a need to document it as the history as it is presently non-existent. Dr Walters was able to supply information obtained from the interviews he has conducted and he has collected additional information about the fishing community. He has collected photographs of the harbour and the fishing village and has offered to make these available. As we experienced in this survey, Dr Walters has found gathering information about the fishing village to be time consuming. Interviews with specific people have to be arranged and they are not always available. Again, interviews he has conducted have produced contradictory facts that need to be cross-checked. He has found that some in the community are unaware of and even reluctant to talk about the details of the past.



Fig. 3. View of the rock outcrop, the "Cave" and stream

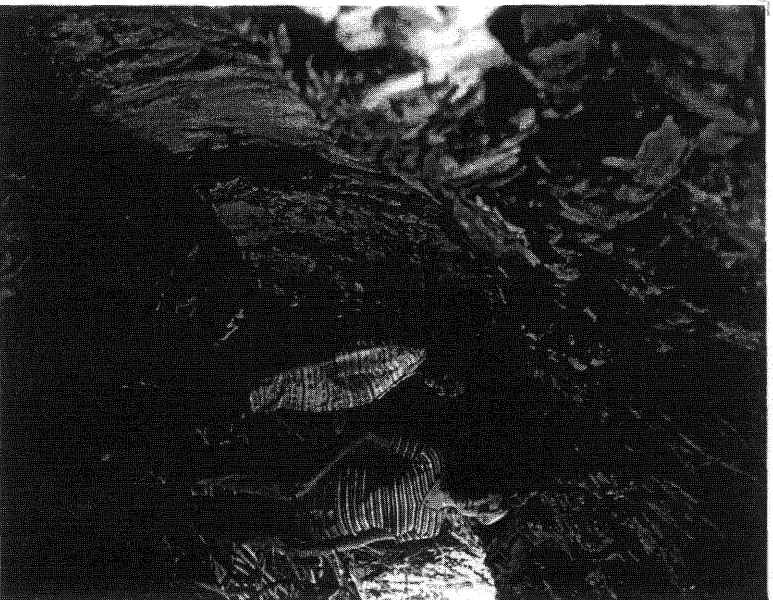


Fig. 4. The "Cave" overhang and flooded floor

## THE CAVE

The cave is a shallow overhang, eight metres by three metres, in the narrow valley north east of the slipway. The floor of the cave is flooded and no deposits are visible (Figures 3 & 4). The "cave" was mentioned by those interviewed as an important resource because it served as a church. Mr Nolan Swartz said the valley floor in front of the cave was grass covered and formerly the site was maintained by the municipality. The area became neglected after the houses were demolished. The high water table and rank vegetation now makes the cave virtually inaccessible. This cave and its surrounds are culturally sensitive. The site is a priority for rehabilitation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report draws attention to the harbour as a *place* being a significant but intangible cultural resource. Interviews conducted show that there is a strong community identification with the former fishing village. Changes made to the locale through the planned development will create a sense of loss. To mitigate against this potentially negative perceptions that changes to the *place* will be a denial of former associations and heritage, it is recommended that:

- people with associations with the original fishing village be encouraged to accept and take pride in their part in the history of the *place*. This will only happen if they appreciate that the new developments at the harbour have grown out of earlier initiatives represented by the fishing village. Recognition given to the importance of original fishing village as a pioneering initiative will act as a stimulus. This could be expressed in the form of a single suitably designed information board erected in an appropriately prominent position at the *place*. An intangible cultural resource draws on power of *place* and hence the positioning is important.
- the community, with ties to the original fishing village and who identify with the cave as a focal point in their heritage, be involved in planning its rehabilitation. Aspects needing attention are the inflow into the stream draining the front of the cave, landfill along the course of this stream and the partial blocking of the outlet of the stream at the slipway. There needs to be provision made for public access to the cave and development should not encroach on its setting. Rehabilitation of this site would allow it to be used to hold occasional religious services as in the past. Facilitating access to the cave would be a contribution to community solidarity.
- individuals with photographs or relevant documents and (taped) verbal or other information relating to the history of the harbour be encouraged to lodge these (or suitable copies) in a local archive. A local archive, for example, could be the municipality, public library or repository in an information centre. If a suitable repository is established then the materials will become a community resource.



List of possible local informants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Tel.no</u>
*Dot Aves	
Bernard Albertyn	57, 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave – 028 271 3219
# Henriette Louw (Lukhoffe)	B & B before Kleinmond turnoff
George & Stella Bailey	45, 15 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Kleinmond – 028 271 3343
*Paul & Maggie Fisher	Protea Township
Pat Gunter	11, 5 <sup>th</sup> St, Kleinmond - 028 271 3053
*Fanie Krige	Municipality
A Labaschagne	22 Daneel St, Palmiet – 028 271 4189 (Perlemoen Hatchery)
*Indes Maka	Protea Township
Niemand	57 Main Rd, Kleinmond – 028 271 4261
*Johan Singleton	14, 2 <sup>nd</sup> St, Kleinmond– Singleton Shop
*Peter Slingsby	
*Mina Swart	Protea Township
*Nolan Swartz	Protea Township - 028 271 3079
Robbie v/d Berg	Pottery Shop – Harbour
Dries Vermeulen	Hangklip Herald Newspaper
*Dr Schalk Walters	22 Lower Coast Road, Kleinmond – 028 271 4261

\*=persons with direct connections to the harbour # =related interviewees