

BASE LINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF ROBBEN ISLAND

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Environmental Risk Services

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by Environmental Risk Services, on behalf of their client, Robben Island Museum to undertake a baseline archaeological assessment of Robben Island. The following pages detail the archaeological background, method and findings of the study.

1.1 Background

Due to the fact that Robben Island has been off limits to the public since the 1960's, very little archaeological research has taken place to date. Mr H. Vos of the Stellenbosch Museum¹ visited the island in 1987, after which he submitted a report to the NMC describing a 19th century dump and an inscription site on the southern side of the island. It was not until 1992 that the next archaeological study took place. Members of the Historical Archaeology Research Group visited the island to collect stone samples from the shale quarries to enable them to source the stone from which the entrance of the castle of the Cape of Good Hope was built². In 1992 Operation Sea Eagle, consisting of a systematic survey of shipwrecks around Robben Island, was completed³. Later in 1993 Patricia Riley of the National Monuments Council completed a comprehensive inventory of built structures which included comments on the archaeological potential and a summarized history of events on the Island.⁴ Harriet Deacon finally wrote a key work in 1996 detailing the period from the 15th century until the present.⁵ The establishment of the Robben Island Museum along with necessary upgrading of infrastructure for coping with the increasing number of tourists has resulted in several small archaeological impact studies, the most recent of which was conducted by Ute Seeman⁶ and the ACO this year.

It is clear that that the island has an extraordinary history beginning before the establishment of VOC settlement in Cape Town and culminating with the beginning of true democracy in South Africa in 1994. The archaeological legacy of this history remains largely uninvestigated. However, increasing commercial pressures on the island threaten to cumulatively impact the archaeological heritage. The archaeological baseline study is a first step towards identifying the kinds of archaeological sites and material that have survived and the ways that they may be impacted in the future. The discovery and documentation of archaeological sites on the island will be a continuous process as many archaeological sites which are buried or obscured, will only be visible when exposed by construction, clearing or erosion.

¹ Vos H. 1987. Robben Eiland, ondersoek van mop. Unpublished report, Stellenbosch Museum.

² Hall, M.J., Miller, D. & Moore, J. 1993. Provenance studies for stone from the castle gateway, Cape Town. South African Journal of Science. 89: 110-112.

³ Werz, B and Deacon, J 1992 Operation Sea Eagle. Final report on a survey of shipwrecks around Robben Island.

⁴ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

⁵ Deacon, H. 1996. The Island. Cape Town: Howard Phillip.

⁶ Seeman, U. 1998. Historical/archaeological sites along a proposed sewer pipe line. Unpublished report prepared for Kayad Consulting Engineers and Department of Public Works.

1.2 Method

1.2.1 Restrictions

Significant limitations were encountered during the course of the study.

- a) The survey was commissioned during the spring at peak growing season of grasses that cover the island. In most areas surface visibility was extremely restricted, making it very difficult to effectively search for archaeological material.
- b) Members of the team were requested not to dig *ad hoc* test excavations. We are therefore unable to comment on subsurface conditions in areas of potential archaeological significance.
- c) The deadline and amount of time available for the study was inadequate to effectively complete a comprehensive archaeological assessment of the island incorporating archival research, oral histories or extensive evaluation or description of sites/structures.
- d) The terms of reference for the project required that the study of the built environment be separated from the archaeological assessment. This means that we have had to restrict our study to a very conservative definition of what constitutes an archaeological site or potential archaeological site.

For the purposes of this study we have defined archaeological sites as - ruined stone structures, buried or partially buried features or artefacts and quarries. Although this definition does include aspects of the "built environment", sites such as ruins and quarries would not normally be commented on by built environment consultants. We have, at the request of the built environment consultants, included a general assessment of features relating to the Second World War.

1.2.2 Fieldwork

Members of the team familiarised themselves with the available documentary sources and archival material before commencing fieldwork. The fieldwork took place over a period of some 12 days during which time known sites of potential archaeological significance were visited and appraised. Large areas of land were covered on foot and searched for traces of archaeological material where vegetation cover permitted. Geotechnical excavations were inspected to gain an understanding of sub-surface conditions on the island. Archaeological sites that were located were recorded on a 1:5000 aerial bromide. A decision was taken not to take GPS fixes as these are only accurate to within a radius of 100m. Sites were recorded using conventional, digital photography and video. During the course of the fieldwork, a 1:1000 map proved very useful with regard to location of features.⁷

⁷ Robben Island survey, Director General, survey and mapping. Unpublished map prepared for Dept of Correctional Services.

2. RESULTS

The following pages summarise the findings of this report. The sites are described and rated in terms of their potential. Current impacts are rated, previous observed impacts are noted and management options are suggested. A number (e.g. A1) identifies sites in the text and locations are plotted on the accompanying maps (Figures 1-5, at the back of the report).

2.1 Palaeontological sites

2.1.1 Calcretes (1A)

Description: The rocky substrate of Robben Island is made up of ancient Malmesbury shales⁸. Overlying this is the Langebaan formation - a thick layer of fossilised dune sands cemented together with calcium carbonates, which make up the limestone or calcrete for which the island is infamous. The surface of the island consists of windblown sands, fragments of calcrete and water rounded beach cobbles close to the coast. Calcretes of the Langebaan formation have produced a number of important Pleistocene fossils and early archaeological sites in the Western Cape. Since the island was connected with the mainland several times during the Pleistocene, it is possible that ancient archaeological sites and fossils exist.

Potential: medium. It is difficult to evaluate the study area in terms of its prehistoric and palaeontological potential as deep exposures of calcrete are confined to the main lime quarry. A site inspection has shown that a small amount of fossil bone exists together with abundant fossil plant remains. No artefacts or deposits of human origin were found.

Impacts: low. The exposed calcretes are not suffering any visible impacts at present apart from natural weathering.

Management: It would be of benefit to the RIM to invite or contract a palaeontologist to examine the calcretes exposed in the lime quarry as he/she will be able to interpret the sequence and provide information about the geological history of the island.

2.1.2 Raised beaches

Description: Pleistocene and Holocene beaches and wave cut platforms are present in various forms on the all sides of the islands but are most visible on the southern, northern and western shorelines.

Potential: medium. The features are of potential scientific importance to geologists and palaeo-environmental specialists interested in researching sea level fluctuations.

Impacts: low. The features are not being impacted.

Management: No specific management is necessary in terms of existing activities on the island.

⁸ Hall, M.J., Miller, D. & Moore, J. 1993. Provenance studies for stone from the castle gateway, Cape Town. South African Journal of Science. 89: 110-112.

2.1.3 Fossil shell (1B)

Description: A dense exposure of fossil shell representing an ancient raised beach is visible in a quarry on the south side of the island. The quarry is currently used as a dumping area for garden and domestic refuse. The fossil shell exposure, which is raised some 12m above the present sea level is extremely old - possibly dating back several million years.

Potential: high. The exposure is of potentially high research value to palaeontologists and may interest some specialist tourists.

Impacts: low. The exposure is not suffering any physical impacts, however the dumping of refuse in the area will have a negative impact if the site is ever to be used for tourism purposes.

Management: Non-intervention is suggested, however, refuse should not be piled against the exposure.

2.1.4 Pre-colonial material

No pre-colonial archaeological sites have been identified to date. It is quite possible that such material may exist deeply buried in the calcretes. Dense winter vegetation cover on the island restricted surface visibility making location of such material extremely difficult.

2.2 Early colonial period settlements

2.2.1 Murray's Bay early settlement (2A)

Description: In terms of settlement on Robben Island, Murray's Bay has played a key role. Historical records indicate that a "cave" which existed in the area, was used for shelter by passing sailors and early settlers. Later, Murray and his family who started a whaling operation at the end of the 18th century used the cave for temporary lodgings⁹. It is also quite likely that in the 17th century, Herry (Autshumato), leader of the "Cape Men" and his group of followers also focussed their activities on the sheltered Murray's Bay coastline where they could collect mussels and limpets.

The bay which was the island's only sheltered bay, was the location of an extensive VOC outpost, which researchers have estimated lay just back from the shoreline immediately south of Murray Harbour. Details of this complex are shown on a map of 1785¹⁰ as well as on Robert Jacob Gordon's¹¹ painting of the settlement. At present this area is heavily vegetated with aliens and appears to have been used as a picnic/recreation area by correctional services staff.

A site inspection has shown no trace of any caves in the area of Murray's Bay. The cave, (which was probably a calcrete overhang) was destroyed or filled in during the construction of the harbour in 1940. Several alignments of quarried stone and scattered boulders in areas heavily overgrown with alien vegetation immediately south of the harbour may be remnants of structures from the VOC period. The submarine monitoring post south of the harbour is

⁹ Deacon, H. 1996. The Island. Cape Town: Howard Phillip

¹⁰ Caart van 't Robben Eiland. CA M1/902

¹¹ Rijksarchief, Den Haag, Nederland TOPO 120

built on a mound, which predates WW2. Within this mound is evidence of earlier stone wall footings which probably relate to a structure known as the white house indicated on the map of 1897. Very little artefactual material was observed apart from 2 sherds of oriental porcelain.

Potential: low-medium. Although Murray's Bay is an area of high historical significance, physical remains of structures may have not survived.

Impacts: low. Unfortunately the area in the vicinity of Murray's Bay has been subject to extensive impacts in the past. The first of these was the construction of the 18" tramway, which follows the existing asphalt main road. This required construction of an embankment which would have destroyed or covered foundations of previous structures. The second major event that took place was the construction of Murray's Bay harbour in 1940. This involved both a cut and fill operation as well as major land reclamation which would have had negatively impacted archaeological material. The construction of a WW2 facility and building of submarine detection cables has also resulted in impacts to earlier material. It is also possible that construction of the existing prison would have affected some aspects of the archaeology of the VOC period.

Since establishment of the RIM, impacts to the area caused by human agents are minimal. However, dense stands of alien vegetation are resulting in disturbance to both surface and subsurface archaeological material through root penetration. Since the WW2 facility no longer has a clear view of the sea, it is concluded that alien vegetation has proliferated since the 1940s.

Management: The following points apply.

a) A broad pattern of archaeological test excavations will be necessary to establish the extent and condition of any sub-surface archaeological material. If it becomes apparent that wall foundations are present, it will be necessary to control the growth of vegetation so that damage to wall footings can be minimised.

b) Depending on the condition of any sub-surface material, RIM may wish to develop a part of the site as a static display and at the same time create a research opportunity for archaeologists interested in early settlement at the Cape.

2.2.2 North west side - early colonial period settlement (2B)

Description: A noted officer in the VOC, Robert Jacob Gordon, visited the island at the end of the 18th century, commented on the excellent quality of vegetables grown by the islanders¹². A map of the island dating to 1785¹³ shows that features, possibly enclosed fields or gardens existed close to the north west shore. Bearing in mind inaccuracies in the early map, the area was searched with the result that a number of interesting features were located. These consist of a complex of tumbled down stone alignments, most of which are heavily overgrown and partially buried. The structures, which are visible on the 1985 aerial photograph of the island¹⁴, take the form of a number of square enclosures, possibly representing the remains of small walled gardens established by officials of the VOC.

¹² Raper, PE and Boucher, M. eds. 1988. Robert Jacob Gordon - Cape Travels, 1777-1786. Horton: Brenthurst Press.

¹³ Rijksarchief, Den Haag, Nederland TOPO 120

¹⁴ Chief director, surveys and mapping, Mowbray.

Potential: high. The site presents a potentially interesting research opportunity and is worthy of further exploration. It is the only provisionally identified set of structures dating to the VOC period on the island and may present tourism opportunities when more of the alignments are made visible.

Impacts: medium. The alignments have been slightly impacted by the road, which leads from the prison to the quarry. Some parts of the site have been obscured by dense stands of alien vegetation.

Management: The alignments should be recorded and mapped, while clearing of vegetation and archaeological excavation will serve to reveal the features more fully.

2.3 Convict station (3A)

Description: Historical maps of the island show the location of the old convict station, which served in the first half of the 19th century until the penal settlement was disbanded in 1848¹⁵. The convict station, which was subsequently used to house *lunatics*, was completely demolished in the early part of this century. The site on which it stood currently lies immediately to the south of the cricket field.

Potential: high. In consideration of the fact that a central theme in the history of the island has been its use as a place of confinement, the site of the old convict station is of particular importance. Should the RIM desire to develop the site as part of the tourist route, it is very likely that archaeological excavations will succeed in revealing old foundations and other physical remains which could form the core of an on-site display.

Impacts: medium. The land is presently undeveloped but cut by Beach Road. There is a very good chance that sub-surface remains of the convict station still exist, although parts of the site may have been impacted by excavation of a large septic tank.

Management: The following points apply.

- a) The site of the convict station should be considered to be highly sensitive. Care must be taken to ensure that no development activities, road works or excavations for laying of services take place on the site.
- b) A series of preliminary test excavations should be conducted to establish the quality and extent of any sub-surface remains before any major excavation programs are embarked on.
- d) At present there are few physical reminders of the island's role as a prison before construction of the modern prison. RIM tour guides should point out the location of the old convict station and appropriate signage could also be used to explain the significance of the area.

¹⁵ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

2.4 Leper colony and associated sites

2.4.1 Male leper colony (4A)

Description: In 1846 the first lepers were moved from Hemel en Aarde (near Hermanus) to Robben Island. At first they were housed in make-shift and some existing buildings until the female leper block was built to the north of Murray Harbour in 1887. A new male wing was built in 1891 occupying an extensive tract of land between the village and the leper cemetery south of Murray Bay¹⁶. The lepers were housed in a complex of bungalows equipped with bathrooms, recreation halls and a church (the Church of the Good Shepherd built in 1895). In 1930 the lepers were moved from the island and the buildings of the leper colony (apart from the church) were burned and demolished¹⁷. A site inspection showed ample evidence of wall foundations, and cement floors. It would appear that a variety of materials were used in the buildings ranging from wood and corrugated iron to stone and brick.

Potential: high. The potential exists for both archaeological research and public archaeology in this area. Foundations could be exposed for display purposes while the artefactual material associated with the site will provide potentially interesting social and medical information.

Impacts: low. The area that was once the male leper colony is currently undeveloped but has been taken over in places by thickets of alien vegetation. The male leper colony site is not suffering any direct impacts at present apart from that fact that invasion of alien plant species will slowly damage buried foundations and floors.

Management: The following points apply.

- a) Excavations for services in this area will damage archaeological remains relating to the leper colony. Such activities should be avoided.
- b) When the leper colony was closed, all building rubble and artefacts associated with the lepers were buried in trenches. It is possible that these trenches are located close to the sites of the colonies. The artefactual contents of the trenches (if they exist) are a valuable resource, which have the potential to produce information about aspects the lepers' daily lives on the island.
- c) A pattern of test excavations will help verify the existence of below surface foundations, dumps or trenches. Furthermore, should the RIM desire, an area of the leper colony could be opened to establish an on-site display.

2.4.2 Female Leper colony (4B)

Description: The female leper colony was situated well away from the male leper colony to the north of Murray's Bay. Male and female lepers were strictly segregated. A photograph showing the female leper colony (circa 1890-1900) indicates that it consisted of series of stone bungalows surrounded by a high wooden stockade¹⁸. The buildings were razed to the ground in the 1930's after lepers were moved to hospitals on the mainland. An aerial

¹⁶ Map of Robben Island, 1897 1:600. Historical Archaeology Research Group

¹⁷ Deacon, H. 1996. The Island. Cape Town: Howard Phillip

¹⁸ Photograph in possession of ACO.

photograph taken in 1985 shows evidence of crop marks indicating that building foundations probably exist below the surface. At present the site is overgrown with grasses and weeds so it was not possible to locate surface material.

Potential: high. The potential exists for both archaeological research and public archaeology in this area. Foundations can be exposed for display purposes while the artefactual material associated with the site will provide potentially interesting social and medical information

Impacts: low. A site inspection has shown that the site of the female leper colony is undeveloped and not being significantly impacted at present.

Management: The following points apply.

a) Excavations for services in this area will damage archaeological remains relating to the leper colony. Such activities should be avoided.

b) When the leper colony was closed, all building rubble and artefacts associated with the lepers were buried in trenches¹⁹. It is possible that these trenches are located close to the sites of the colonies. The artefactual contents of the trenches (if they exist) are a valuable resource, which have the potential to produce information about aspects the lepers' daily lives on the Island.

c) A pattern of test excavations will help verify the existence of below surface foundations, dumps or trenches. Furthermore, should the RIM desire, an area of the leper colony could be opened to establish an on-site display.

2.4.3 Leper cemetery (4C)

Description: A small portion of the leper cemetery was maintained and fenced off by the prison authorities. This enclosure surrounds only those graves, which are easily identifiable and have formal headstones. In reality, the leper cemetery contains thousands of graves, most of them are unmarked. The estimated extent is indicated in the shaded area on Figure 2. The sequence and patterns of burials are poorly understood. It is quite possible that the original VOC burial ground was the starting point of the leper cemetery, which grew very rapidly during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

A site inspection has shown that the cemetery is extensive, occupying a large portion of land between the existing logistics offices extending as far as the prison and possibly as far as the Kramat. The vast majority of graves are unmarked while many others are marked with simple shale headstones without any inscriptions. Apart from the small area set aside by Department of Correctional Services, most of the site is densely overgrown with alien vegetation. Despite this, it is still possible to distinguish formal paths and features that show that the cemetery was once well maintained and landscaped. The 1985 aerial photograph shows that a hedge (*Manitoca*) marked the outer boundary of the cemetery. Alien vegetation has since grown out of control spreading throughout the cemetery and its environs.

Potential: high. Apart from the obvious tour stop that the site offers, the cemetery is of high research value. The RIM should expect to receive applications from physical anthropologists, local and international, who may wish to conduct research on human skeletal material from

¹⁹ Deacon, H. 1996. The Island. Cape Town: Howard Phillip

the leper cemetery. Identifiable leper cemeteries are rare by international standards and are valued as research resources by scientists who are interested in bone pathology, the effects of disease and the way in which socio-economic factors such as nutritional stress affected people. It is important that RIM consult widely to formulate a policy on how to deal with applications to exhume human remains. Such a policy will need to draw on existing and proposed legislation, stakeholders, living relatives (if identifiable) and the potential scientific/educational merit and benefit to the Museum that such research may offer.

Impacts: high-medium. The cemetery has been impacted in the past by the activities of The Department of Correctional Services. There is a high likelihood that parts of the existing prison have been built over the northern portion of the cemetery. Skeletal material was no doubt exhumed when foundations and services were built in the area. Furthermore, large quantities of gravestones have been removed. Alien vegetation growing within the cemetery has uprooted gravestones and will continue to impact until adequate management is in place. Most recently trial excavations (close to the main road near the prison) for building of services exposed two wooden coffins resulting in the disturbance of skeletal material.

Management: The following points apply.

- a) The effects of alien vegetation are going to require careful monitoring. Trunks and roots that threaten to uproot or disturb gravestones will have to be excised.
- b) Some thinning of the vegetation and clearing will allow reuse of the formal paths through the cemetery, which could be more effectively be incorporated into tour route of the island.
- c) A separate study should be conducted to determine the precise boundaries of the cemetery and map identifiable gravestones.
- d) Any excavations, other than those that have a specific archaeological goal, should not take place within or in the vicinity of the known boundaries of the cemetery.

2.4.4 Leper Church well (4D)

Description: A site inspection showed evidence that a structure, possibly a well (indicated by a ring of stones) exists just to the west of the church.

Potential: unknown. If the structure does turn out to be a well, it should be considered to be an archaeological research resource as such features act as catchment areas of archaeological material.

Impacts: low. It is heavily overgrown and filled in.

Management: Clearing of the dense vegetation surrounding the feature will reveal its form and confirm its identity.

2.4.5 Leper colony sewage outfall pipes

Description: The plan of the island of 1897²⁰ clearly shows the outfall pipes of the male leper colony. It would appear that at this time that sewerage was discarded into the Blouberg

²⁰ Map of Robben Island 1:600 1897. Historical Archaeology Research Group.

Channel without any form of treatment. Remains of the pipe alignments are still visible today and thus represent the last standing structures relating to the male leper colony. Remaining material consists of two alignments of concrete supports for cast iron pipes. The pipes have long since disappeared and the metal fasteners on the supports are highly corroded.

Potential: low. Despite being the last standing remains of the male leper colony, these features are unlikely to attract great interest. These structures (as humble as they may be) are part of the historic fabric of the Island and are indicators of 19th century attitudes towards waste disposal.

Impacts: low. Current impacts are restricted to those caused by the natural environment.

Management: The structures should be photographed and left in an undisturbed state.

2.4.6 Leper farm (4E)

Description: During the height of the leper colony period, the island was self-supporting in terms of production of vegetables and to a degree, meat. Pigs were farmed and vegetable gardens and fields were established²¹. A pigsty of a construction style consistent with the leper period still exists among more modern structures at the prison farm. A site inspection revealed evidence of terrace agriculture in the area of to the east of the prison farm as well as close to the quarry on the north western side of the island. The terraces consist of low stone or rubble retaining walls that are completely overgrown with thick grass and bushes. Such terraces imply irrigation and cultivation of crops.

Potential: medium. The site could form a feature of a specialist tour.

Impacts: low. The terraces and pigsty show no evidence of negative impacts at present. Spread of alien vegetation may impact the site in the future, which is a factor that will have to be periodically monitored

Management: At the discretion of the RIM the features could be surveyed, recorded photographically and plotted onto a map.

2.5 Cemeteries

2.5.1 Staff cemetery (5A)

Description: The staff cemetery at the south end of the village served during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Unlike the leper cemetery, it has a clear boundary in the form of a wall and entry is via turn styles. The graves are formal and marked with inscriptions. The genealogical society has recorded the inscriptions on the gravestones²².

Potential: medium. This is a picturesque historical site which could form part of a tour itinerary.

²¹ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

²² Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

Impacts: medium. The cemetery is overgrown in places and does not appear to have been maintained for some time. A number of gravestones have been broken while others have fallen/toppled. Further spread of vegetation may negatively impact the graves in the future.

Management: While restoration of the cemetery is not advocated here, measures must be taken to conserve the site. Vegetation spread needs to be controlled. It is also extremely important to ensure that fallen grave markers are not removed or moved from the places in which they lie. If this happens contextual information will be lost. If the cemetery is to be restored in future, an archaeologist should be in attendance to ensure that fragments of broken gravestones are recovered and matched with the appropriate graves.

2.5.2 Old cemetery near the pistol range (5B)

Description: A large cemetery is marked on maps of 1897 and 1905 as existing on high ground above the leper colony in the area of what today is the pistol range. The identity of persons buried in the cemetery remains unknown, as is the fate of any human remains, which were buried there.

Potential: low. The site has been destroyed.

Impacts: high. A site inspection showed that the area where this was located has been subject to extensive earthmoving and no trace of the cemetery remains.

Management: The area has been so heavily impacted that nothing remains to indicate the presence of a cemetery. No specific management is required. However, archival research may reveal the identity and dates of persons buried at the cemetery.

2.5.3 Unmarked graves near Kramat (5C)

Description: Graves exist hidden among dense alien bushes in an area immediately north of the Kramat. The graves are extremely difficult to identify due to the dense ground cover. Some are marked with single shale headstones without inscriptions. There is a high likelihood that many graves are unmarked and have no surface indications. The origin of this cemetery is unknown. It is possible that they may be the graves of Moslems buried close to the Kramat, or alternatively, the extreme northern end of the Leper cemetery.

Potential: unknown. Little is known about the graves, which are in a very inaccessible area.

Impacts: medium. Alien vegetation has impacted the site by root growth disturbing grave markers. African penguins have dug a number of nesting burrows in the area. Their activities may eventually lead to disruption of grave markers.

Management: The following points apply.

a) The disruptive effects of alien vegetation will need to be monitored. It may be necessary to thin out the bush growth from time to time as well as ensure that penguin burrows do not undermine any of the gravestones. As yet, we are not sure of the full extent of the cemetery due to the impenetrable vegetation.

b) Further studies on the site should involve an in-depth survey to establish the extent of the site. This will involve having to thin the vegetation enough to work with survey instruments

and gain access to the whole site. Archival research may be able to assist in establishing the identity of the graves.

2.5.4 Unmarked graves

Description: Very little is known about burial practices on the island before the 19th century as no graves from this period have been identified to date. The implication of this is that there maybe graves outside the boundaries of known cemeteries.

Potential: unknown.

Impacts: unknown.

Management: There is a risk that unmarked graves may be exhumed by accident during the course of laying of services and excavation of building foundations. In the event of an unmarked burial being encountered, work must stop and the remains should not be disturbed until a professional archaeologist is called in to document the finds and exhume them if necessary.

2.5.5 Leper cemetery (5D)

The leper cemetery is discussed in section 2.4.3

2.6 Quarries and dumps

There are numerous quarries and excavations on the island. Some of these are well known through their association with apartheid period political prisoners while others date back to the early colonial period at the Cape. Findings of a study completed in 1992 revealed that the stone for the building of certain aspects of the castle was more likely to have come from Robben Island than the quarries near Cape Town.²³ Most of the quarries are quite small, in many instances overgrown with aliens and barely recognisable. We have noted that quarries have been used as dumping areas for unwanted scrap and domestic rubbish, a practice, which continues until the present day. Vos (1987) has reported on a 19th century midden located in a quarry on the south end of the Island²⁴. Such accumulations are important heritage resources on account of the artefactual material they contain.

It is not within the scope of this project to document all of the many quarries on the island. This would require a separate dedicated study. We have however, identified several quarries that are particularly important on account of their historical significance and potential to contain archaeological material.

2.6.1 Lime quarry (6A)

Description: The well-known lime quarry is not only one of the oldest person-made features on the island²⁵ but is of considerable importance with respect to the history of political prisoners on the island. Lime was first quarried in the 17th century by the VOC (Riley 1992). Since that time the mining and burning of calcrete has played an important role in the island's

²³ Hall, M.J., Miller, D. & Moore, J. 1993. Provenance studies for stone from the castle gateway, Cape Town. South African Journal of Science. 89: 110-112.

²⁴ Vos H. 1987. Robben Eiland, ondersoek van mop. Unpublished report, Stellenbosch Museum.

²⁵ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

industry. During the apartheid years calcrete was mined and crushed by prisoners for surfacing the island roads.

A physical inspection of the quarry has shown that it has been worked for many years. The calcretes of the upper part of the section have been subject to many years of natural weathering while deeper portions of the site show evidence of more recent working. The origins of the man-made "tunnel" at the bottom of the quarry are unclear. The north east side of the quarry was used for dumping scrap by the prison authorities. Ex-political prisoners have erected a stone cairn on the quarry bottom close to the entrance while a glass bottle lying on the slope of the quarry may have been left behind by prisoners. There are no immediate visual indications of the submerged route from the quarry to the prison.

At present busses drive into the quarry so that visitors can view the site. Officially they are not permitted to leave the vehicles to ensure that "souvenirs" are not collected nor the site is damaged.

Potential: high. The site is charged with historical significance on account of the use of forced prison labour.

Impacts: medium-high. Robben island staff have informed us that the cairn of stones built by the prisoners is "getting smaller". Despite the efforts that have been put in place to safeguard the quarry, souvenir hunting continues. It has been claimed that bus exhausts are blackening the calcrete walls of the quarry. This however, is natural weathering of calcrete, which turns grey after long exposure to the elements.

Management: The following points apply.

a) Since this site is among the most significant on the island, it is important that it is disturbed as little as possible. This means that on no account should calcrete mining resume. The scrap heap is also part of the historic fabric of this area and should not be removed unless it poses a waste hazard danger.

b) Visitors may be permitted to leave the busses under supervision provided that an established rope cordoned viewing area is established in or above the quarry. It is important that visitors do not alter the calcrete faces or collect material from the cairn.

2.6.2 Van Riebeeck quarry (6B)

Description: There is a large open shale quarry on the south side of the island which is purported to be one the oldest on the island - possibly used by Commander Wagenaer in the 17th century as a source of stone for structures on the mainland²⁶. The quarry shows signs of long-term use spanning several hundred years. Modern drill and blasting holes attests to recent working.

At present the quarry is no longer in use and partially flooded. It is home to small flocks of both wild and domestic ducks. The RIM allows tour busses through the quarry, which is an element of the historic/scenic drive around the island. Vehicular traffic to the quarry is via a diversion from the perimeter road. An inspection of the site has not revealed any artefactual

²⁶ Hall, M.J., Miller, D. & Moore, J. 1993. Provenance studies for stone from the castle gateway, Cape Town. South African Journal of Science. 89: 110-112.

material that relates to the earlier period of its use. There are, however, a number of features of interest that are being negatively impacted by vehicular traffic through the quarry. A large portion of the base of the quarry consists of an exposure of bedding planes (ripple marks) in the Malmesbury shale. This represents a fossilised landform that is up to 800 million years old (ref)

Potential: medium. This is an historical site with some aspects of geological interest. The ripple marks are not unique, but are good examples of ancient cross bedding that may interest specialist tourists.

Impacts: medium. The geological feature is being eroded by the action of wheels of busses grinding on loose gravels which lie on the surface.

Management: The bypass road into the quarry should be closed immediately to halt the impact of vehicles on both the graffiti and shale bedding planes. Access to the quarry should be for pedestrians only via an established route, which does not result in impacts.

2.6.3 Inscription site (6C)

Description: A further feature of interest is a slab of smooth shale, which partially lies in the access road to the quarry. This is covered with 18th and 19th century inscriptions (1745 - 1818), some of which are very faint. There are likely to be more inscriptions on parts of the rock that are currently buried under shallow overburden. The exposed parts of this site are under immediate threat as it lies in a road leading into the quarry used by tourist busses. Vos first recorded the site in 1987. Illustrations in his report indicate that deterioration of the inscriptions has taken place over the last 10 years²⁷.

Potential: high. The inscriptions are exciting artefacts that will please tourists with specialist interests.

Impacts: high. Vehicles are driving over the site wearing away the exposed inscriptions.

Management: The following points apply.

- a) The by-pass road into the quarry must be closed immediately to stop vehicles from driving over the site. Access to the quarry should be on foot from the perimeter road via an established route.
- b) Careful exposure of the full extent of the rock may produce further inscriptions. This would involve a small archaeological excavation to clear the surrounding soils and clear the rock surface.
- c) A small fence/rope cordon should be erected around the rock to prevent people from walking on the rock surface or adding their names to the inscriptions.

²⁷ Vos H. 1987. Robben Eiland: ondersoek van mop. Unpublished report, Stellenbosch Museum.

2.6.4 Guesthouse quarry (6D)

Description: Immediately south of the guesthouse is a quarry, which is indicated on 19th century maps of the island. The age of the quarry is currently unknown apart from the fact that it appears on the map of 1897. The quarry is no longer present but is indicated by subsided area and changes in vegetation visible on aerial photos. There is a very good chance that the quarry was used a dumping area and filled in. It is possible that this quarry may contain archaeological deposits or midden material that is worthy of investigation.

Potential: unknown. The site is too overgrown with grass to determine the nature of any deposits. The possible dump material (if present) has research potential in that it may be able to provide evidence concerning the material culture of people living on the island at the turn of the century.

Impacts: low. There are no visible impacts at present.

Management. The following points apply.

a) In the event of the midden being excavated for research purposes, it is suggested that preliminary test excavations are undertaken to evaluate the site before major resources are directed to any research.

b) Any positioning of services or earthmoving in this area should be monitored.

c) A combination of archival research and archaeological investigation will be able to provide some evidence as to the age of the quarry.

2.6.5 Village quarries (6E, 6F)

Description: There are at least two quarries within the village²⁸. One of these lies immediately south west of the cricket ground close to the old site of the female asylum. The other lies immediately south of the primary school. These are likely to contain domestic and other refuse which will be of interest to researchers and of importance to the museum.

Potential: unknown. Both quarries potentially contain material, which will be of importance to researchers interested in the 19th century.

Impacts: low. The sites are not being impacted but may suffer damage if services are routed through them.

Management: Excavation of any service trenches in the village should be inspected by an archaeologist.

2.6.6 North quarry (6G)

Description: The northern shore of the island appears to have been used as a dumping area for many years with the trend continuing until the recent past. A very large quarry, which was worked by prisoners in 1961-74, has been filled with a vast amount of building rubble from

²⁸ CA M4/77 Map of 1905.

demolished structures, parts of vehicles and ash. The quarry, which according to Riley²⁹ may have been worked since VOC times, probably provided much of the stone from which parts of the prison were built. The debris with which it has been filled probably includes the remains of demolished WW2 structures as well as debris from the apartheid prison period.

Potential: Medium - high. The importance of the site is both its probable age and the legacy of prison labour used in its working.

Impacts: low. The site is not being impacted. It is situated in the penguin colony and is not visited by tourists.

Management: No specific management is required. The quarry is a repository of 20th century artefactual material that the RIM may wish to investigate in the future.

2.6.7 North West quarry (6H)

Description: This quarry with a sea wall made of quarried stone is referenced on the 1785 map of Robben Island. It provides a high quality of metamorphosed shale (hornfels) valued for building purposes. It is likely to have been quarried regularly throughout the history of the island. In the recent past prison labour was used to strengthen the outer side of the embankment by piling loads of small boulders³⁰. A site inspection has shown evidence of quarrying extending in to the surf zone.

Potential: high. This is probably one of the longest worked stone quarries on the island having been reworked by political prisoners in the recent past.

Impacts: low. No impacts to the site were noted apart from the fact the sea wall might suffer some changes as a result of wave action.

Management: Non-intervention is suggested.

2.6.8 Guest house midden (6I)

Description: There is surface evidence of midden material in the form of broken glass and bone immediately north of the Guesthouse. Although not enough material is visible through the dense grass cover to establish any further details, we estimate that the material dates to the late 19th or early 20th century.

Potential: medium-high. The midden has research potential in that it may be able to provide evidence concerning the material culture of people living on the island at the turn of the century.

Impacts: low. Building of new services may impact the midden in the future.

Management: Any building of services or earthmoving in this area should be avoided. If such activities do become necessary, an archaeologist should be consulted to suggest and undertake suitable mitigation – ie. monitoring and excavation. In the event of the midden being excavated for research purposes, it is suggested that preliminary test excavations are

²⁹ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

³⁰ Deacon, H. 1996. The Island. Cape Town: Howard Phillip.

undertaken to evaluate the quality of the material before major resources are directed to any research program.

2.6.9 Historic midden (6J)

Description: In 1987 H Vos of the Stellenbosch Museum examined a 19th century midden situated between Van Riebeeck's quarry and the Robben Island club. The midden contained 19th century bottles and ceramics, bone and sundry artefacts. As the site had already been disturbed, Vos gave permission to the prison staff to excavate for their own interest³¹. No surface material was observed during this survey.

Potential: low. The site was evaluated by Vos in 1987.

Impacts: low. The area of the site is not being impacted at the moment but has been subject to amateur excavation in the past.

Management: No specific management is suggested.

2.6.10 Scrap heap (6K)

Description: The existing rubbish dump that is used mainly for dumping of scrap metal and non-domestic refuse is an area of potential interest. A site inspection revealed that it contained the remains of a number of the notorious Robben Island cars, prison bars and window frames, Correctional Services signage and caps and badges.

Potential: medium. The scrap heap contains artefacts that are relevant to the history of the island and of importance to the museum.

Impacts: low

Management: The scrap heap is an artefact of the apartheid era in itself, which means that consideration should be paid to its conservation. Should the RIM decide to sanitise the island, an archaeologist should be present to rescue any artefacts from the heap that may be of relevance to the history of the island.

2.7 The village

Description: Riley has noted that 80% of the buildings that exist in the village were built in the last 50 years³². Sadly, most of the buildings that were present on the island at the turn of the century have been demolished. Of 85 buildings that were present in the village in 1905, only 10 have survived in anything close to their original form. Very little remains of the male and female *lunatic* asylums, or staff houses and infrastructure.

Potential: high. The village has a high archaeological potential as foundations and associated artefacts from many structures may be preserved, albeit under newer buildings in places.

³¹ Vos H. 1987. Robben Eiland, ondersoek van mop. Unpublished report, Stellenbosch Museum.

³² Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

Impacts: low. The sub-surface potential of the village will be negatively impacted by the laying of new services which may interrupt dumps or damage below surface foundations.

Management: Laying of new services should be kept to a minimum. It is best that established service routes are reused where possible to minimise new damage. Any new trenching must be monitored by an archaeologist. The RIM could at its discretion, commission archaeological investigations of selected sites that may be considered to be of significance in the future.

2.8 WW2 structures (8A, 8B)

Description: Robben Island has a high concentration of WW2 sites and as such, is regionally unique³³. The density and variety of features from this period is such that it warrants an extensive separate study of its own. However, we have taken this opportunity to make a number of general observations concerning impacts and management of the WW2 heritage. The Cornelia and Robben Island batteries are indicated on Figure 4.

The defensive structures of Robben Island consist of 2 main gun emplacements positioned on the south and north east sides of the island respectively. These are the Robben Island Battery (8A) consisting of three 9.2" inch naval guns (south) and the Cornelia Battery (8B) which consisted of two 6" quick firing naval guns (since dismantled) to cover the northern entrance to the Blouberg Channel. Each gun battery was equipped with underground bunkers, shell and cordite magazines and hoists. In addition to the main batteries, there are a number of forward observation posts, fire control towers, watchtowers, command posts, search lights, stores and an airstrip. An underground power station near the Robben Island battery and a power station in the village provided electric power for the military facilities and village. A complex of regularly spaced machine guns posts ("pill boxes") protected the shoreline of the island. The Blouberg channel was protected by submarine detection cables (8C). In addition there are numerous foundations and remains of permanent and temporary structures (barracks and stores) throughout the island.

Potential: high. The tourism and educational possibilities of the WW2 facilities are excellent.

Impacts: high. Many of the WW2 sites have been, and continue to be impacted by a variety of factors; the most serious of which is corrosion of the steel components. Much of the metal work on structures immediate to the shoreline is already beyond rescue. Of particular concern are structures where the metal work is now exposed to the elements as a result of degradation of the paintwork. Without quick intervention many of the steel doors and windows will corrode to a point where their conservation will no longer be possible. Other previous impacts we have noted are theft and vandalism, flooding of underground buildings and improper use of structures.

Management: The following points apply.

a) Steel doors and shutters that are still in a condition worthy of conservation need to be unidentified and treated. Ideally, each door, shutter, or any other components needs to be removed from the buildings and subject to electrolytic cleaning and stabilisation. The parts then need to be primed, painted and reattached. Sand blasting, then repainting with a

³³ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

suitable primer and paint may also be effective in the short term but will not halt deep-seated corrosion. Steel hinges on doors and shutters need to be regularly oiled and maintained.

b) The Coastal Artillery Maintenance Unit maintained the three 9.2" naval guns until the 1980's when the unit was disbanded. Since that time degeneration and corrosion of the turrets and training mechanisms has accelerated. The rust will need to be removed and the turrets treated and repainted. The mechanical components of the guns need to be regularly greased and mechanisms (motors and hydraulic pumps) kept free of corrosion. The bronze breech blocks and other components of the cannons have been removed to prevent the guns from being used. Their whereabouts needs to be established and the components returned and refitted (if possible). The navy may be able to assist in this regard.

c) The underground magazines and cordite hoists of both the Cornelia and Robben Island batteries are either flooded or filled with debris. These need to be cleared and drained under the supervision of an archaeologist, then made safe for specialist tour visits. Artefacts found during this process will need to be collected and conserved. Of particular concern is the power station bunker, which is flooded. An inspection of the interior revealed that original components and WW2 paintwork still exists. These will deteriorate rapidly unless the drainage system of the bunkers is maintained.

d) Most of the concrete machine gun posts are filled with debris or the entrances blocked with vegetation. A selection of these needs to be cleaned out and made safe for specialised tours. Those in the vicinity of the penguin colony could also double as bird watching hides.

e) Cannon shells of 9.2" and 6" caliber have been used throughout the island as landscape features and the bases to barriers around road islands. These are part of the historical landscape and should not be moved. Any shells that are not associated with landscape features should be positioned at the respective batteries after their locations have been recorded. It is also important to establish that the shells are checked for safety.

f) An immediate concern is the collection of oral histories and historic material relating to the experiences of persons stationed on the island during the war years. It is imperative that as many veterans as possible who were stationed on the island are interviewed and videoed/recorded as soon as possible. The veterans are now elderly, which means that in a few years time oral histories from this period will be lost. Photographs and archival material needs to be collected to form the basis of a small museum of the WW2 period.

2.9 Miscellaneous sites

2.9.1 Informal settlements (9A)

Description: Very few traces have been found of the informal settlements of the lepers and prisoners who lived in corrugated iron shacks and or traditional dwellings. It is expected that such sites will be very ephemeral and difficult to locate. The dense winter grasses have reduced ground surface visibility significantly which means that ephemeral sites such as these will be extremely difficult to locate. A single site that may relate to some form of informal settlement has been found. It consists of a scatter of limpet shell, some fragments of corrugated iron sheet and several small pieces of hand-cut copper sheeting.

Potential: high. The site has a high research value in terms of the study of the material culture of these exiled communities.

Impacts: low. The site is not being impacted at present.

Management: It is likely that similar sites exist under vegetation on the eastern side of the island. Attempts to locate such sites need to take place at the end of summer when the grasses are at their lowest. If any new foot paths or roads are to be developed, it is important that the proposed routes are checked by an archaeologist before construction work begins.

2.9.2 Indunas kraal (9B)

Description: A large square arrangement of alien bushes at the southern end of the rifle range is referred to as “indunas kraal” on the 1989 survey of the island³⁴. The significance of the name of this feature is unclear.

Potential: unknown.

Impacts: low. The area is not being impacted at present.

Management: Archival research and oral histories may assist in establishing the history of this feature.

2.9.3 Rifle range feature (9C)

Description: A square alignment of stone walling situated on the close to the northern end of the rifle range, appears to predate the rifle range. Its identity is unknown but it is suggested that it may be the remains of a large stone walled kraal dating to the 19th century or earlier.

Potential: unknown.

Impacts: low. The site is not being impacted at present.

Management: Field survey in the dry season when the grass is shorter may reveal more details. The site should be surveyed and mapped while test excavations could produce more evidence about its origins.

2.9.4 Rifle range (9D)

Description: Mention is made of the presence of a rifle range during the days of the leper colony. The aspects of the existing range may date back to the turn of the century, however the main period of its use was probably during WW2 and during the apartheid era. Numerous 7.62mm cartridges behind some of the earthworks attest to its recent use by the prison services. Railway sleepers from the railway near the harbour have been used to make *ad hoc* repairs to parts of the range.

Potential: low. The site is not of high research value but remains a powerful symbol of the recent past.

Impacts: low - medium. The target raising mechanisms are suffering from the effects of corrosion and are not expected to last for very much longer.

³⁴ Directorate, mapping and Surveys, Mowbray. 1989 Robben Island 1:1000.

Management: The 7.62mm rifle cartridges should not be removed as they are a powerful reminder of past circumstances. If in the future, the public are permitted to walk in the area, the cartridge cases will have to be collected and stored in a place of safe keeping.

2.9.5 Re-adapted stone structure

Description: Stone foundations on the south side of the island have been capped with a concrete skin indicating use of the remains of an older structure for a later WW2 purpose. The identity of the foundations is unknown.

Potential: unknown.

Impacts: low.

Management: Apart from suggesting that further attempts are made to identify the structures through excavation or archival research, no particular management is required.

2.10 Industrial sites

2.10.1 Narrow gauge railway lines (10A)

Description: Towards the end of the 19th century a narrow gauge (18") mule drawn railway was built to service the eastern side of the island. An 1897 map of the area shows the railway that operated between the quarry and female leper colony on the north east side and the village and pier on the south east side.

The narrow gauge railway is still visible on the Faure pier, while geotechnical test excavations in the vicinity unearthed a number of bucket sleepers. The asphalt road between Murray's Bay and the village is built on a raised embankment that was originally built for the narrow gauge railway system that followed the same alignment.

Potential: medium. Exposure of some of the rail and signage would add to the visible historic fabric of the island.

Impacts: medium - high. Some of the rails may become exposed during road surfacing operations.

Management: Although very little of the narrow gauge railway is visible today, it is quite possible that portions of track lie buried under the asphalt of existing roads. Any lifting of the surface of the main road between the harbour and the village may result in exposure of the tracks. In the event of this happening the exposed material should be photographed and if at all possible, left *in situ*.

2.10.2 Railway trucks and track (10B)

Description: Although not mentioned in any published accounts of the island, it appears that a second railway system was built during WW2 to assist in the construction of harbour and transport of building materials for the war effort. The wheels of a rail truck, sleepers and railway line have been observed in bushes near the new power station. Further remains of a railway mounted crane and lengths of track lie in thick bushes close to the penguin colony

walkway. A number of wooden railway sleepers have been used for *ad hoc* repairs to the rifle range on the western side of the island. The gauge of the track is the standard 3'6" Cape gauge used throughout southern Africa. It is quite probable that a small steam locomotive operated on the island during the war years.

Potential: low - medium. The material is heavily corroded and moved out of context. Suitable signage would illustrate the meaning of what appears to the uniformed observer as scrap.

Impacts: medium. The crane and other components in the penguin colony are badly corroded - a process exacerbated by the sea air.

Management: It would appear that most of the railway has been demolished and dumped on various parts of the island. It is important that these identified objects are not removed for scrap but should be left in place as they part of the historic fabric of the island. At some time in the future the RIM will have to make a decision as to whether to conserve it's steel artefacts, or allow them to deteriorate.

2.10.3 Piers (10C)

Description: The derelict Faure pier at the south east end of the island represents some of the earliest use of reinforced concrete in southern Africa and is thus conservation-worthy. It was built at the end of the 19th century to replace an older wooden structure, parts of which are visible nearby. The narrow gauge rail tracks that connected the village with the slate quarry on the north east side of the island are still visible on the pier. One set of tracks leads southwards from the pier and disappears into overburden and vegetation. Soil and ballast under this portion of the track has been eroded away by wave action exposing the steel rails.

Potential: medium. There is a high possibility that lengths of steel 18" track still exist under recent overburden. The site, with adequate presentation of relevant information, could be a focus of interest on the tour route.

Impacts: low - medium. The pier is presently in a poor state of repair and is not safe or serviceable. Railings are missing and the concrete structure is showing signs of spalling caused by corrosion and resulting expansion of the steel reinforcing. The pier is currently being impacted by the natural environment and will continue to deteriorate. The tracks are being displaced by wave action.

Management: The following points apply.

- a) An embankment should be constructed to protect the remaining visible tracks from wave action.
- b) Repair of the jetty will require the services of an engineer and contractors to deal with the spalling problem.
- c) In the mean time it is best that the state of deterioration of the jetty be monitored on an annual basis. It will be very difficult to halt or slow the spalling process without extensive renovation and rebuilding. The RIM museum will have to eventually have to make a decision as to lose the jetty to natural factors or restore it.

d) While the jetty is in a relatively good state it is important that the structure be properly recorded by means of measured drawing and photography. This is so that a record is available for posterity should the structure collapse or need to be reconstructed.

2.10.4 Lime works (10D, 10E)

Description: Lime burning (the burning of shell and calcrete to make mortar and white wash) is known to have taken place on Robben Island since the 17th century³⁵. The locations of two possible lime kilns have been identified.

One of these, which is indicated on the 1897 plan, is located near the foghorn site on the west side of the island (10D). This consists of a pit and circular feature close to the shoreline. Details of the site are not visible due to the dense grass growth.

The other site is located on one of the high points of the island between the prison and the prison farm. It consists of a mound littered with lumps of calcrete. A small calcrete quarry exists nearby hidden in dense bush.

Potential: high. Both sites, depending on findings of test excavations, may prove to be interesting items to add to the tour itinerary. Furthermore, a research opportunity exists to study the archaeology of lime burning.

Impacts: low. Neither of the sites are being impacted at present

Management: Non-intervention is recommended. Archaeological excavation however, will assist in the verification of the identity of these features, as well open parts of the sites for display purposes.

2.10.5 Bore holes, wells and wind pumps

Description: Robben Island has good ground water, which was exploited by passing mariners since the early 17th century³⁶. A spring, which was marked on the 1785 map of the island, is still visible on the north west side of the island. The settlement at Murray's Bay was well known for its fresh water wells. The early islanders had enough water to maintain vegetable gardens at a number of locations. At the end of the 19th century wind pumps were installed on the island to service the need of the community. During the course of the survey we noted a multitude of well points on the island, many of which are disused.

The pumping mechanism of a Lloyds wind pump was found close to the pistol range while other remains were found in bushes behind the prison and in the central area of the island. Extant wells are present close to the harbour and the dog handling centre. These have been subject to recent modification and their ages are unknown.

Potential: unknown. Wells have proved to yield excellent archaeological material in parts of Cape Town, however no wells relating to the early settlement have been identified.

Impacts: low. No impacts have been identified.

³⁵ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

³⁶ Riley, P. 1993. Conservation study of Robben Island. Unpublished report. National Monuments Council.

Management: Non-intervention is recommended with respect to wells and wind pumps. The RIM, may at its discretion appoint archaeologists to investigate the known wells.

2.11 Shipwrecks

Operation Sea Eagle³⁷ established that 22 ships were wrecked in waters round Robben Island from the 17th century until present. Of these, physical remains of 10 have been identified. Furthermore, there are wrecks of 4 vessels visible on the shoreline. Two of these, a salvage vessel and trawler were wrecked in 1998. While Cape Town remains a major port, ships will continue to be wrecked on Robben Island.

Werz and Deacon (1992) recommended measures to ensure that the underwater heritage of Robben Island (extending out 1 nautical mile) is protected. A key recommendation of the report is that no commercial salvage be permitted on shipwrecks protected by the National Monuments Act within 1 nautical mile of Robben Island. The emphases being placed on use of the wrecks for educational and research purposes. An underwater shipwreck trail is also suggested. Despite the recommendations of Operation Sea Eagle, unlawful activities have taken place on Robben Island wrecks (Gribble pers comm).

Management: The following is suggested.

a) The RIM is urged to implement the recommendations of Operation Sea Eagle. Any unauthorised salvage operations in Robben Island waters should be reported to the SAPS water wing and the National Monuments Council.

b) Salvage operations will have to take place on any ships that are wrecked in the future. Although shipwrecks are part of the historical trajectory of events of Robben Island, the island should not be permitted to become a "museum of shipwrecks". History has shown that when ships run aground in Table Bay since the 16th century, all possible measures are taken to salvage them. Failing that, equipment and cargo is salvaged and the wreck is broken up or made safe. It is suggested that this standard policy is implement on the island.

c) The RIM should keep a "diary" of shipwrecks including video or photographic material and account of events for future historical reference.

3. CONCLUSION

By virtue of the islands past status as a place of confinement, political changes, events and attitudes of the mainland were powerfully manifested in its history. Ironically, some of the most important aspects of the history were also the agents of destruction of the early archaeological record. For example, much of the early colonial period material culture was lost as a result of the Second World War, which in turn left its own material legacy. Likewise, the notorious Robben Island Prison is built over the graveyard of other unwanted persons - lepers confined to the island during the 19th century.

Despite the destruction, this study has demonstrated that it is likely that a great deal of material culture reflecting the lives and values of ordinary people remain. These are the leper graveyards and wards, dumps of the 19th and twentieth century and remains of farms and quarries which all tell a story. It would have been desirable to include the built environment

³⁷ Werz, B and Deacon, J 1992 Operation Sea Eagle. Final report on a survey of shipwrecks around Robben Island.

within this study, as this would have permitted us to identify the subtle connections that exist between what lies above and below the ground surface.

In general, the policy of minimal intervention practiced by the RIM is supported. We have identified many sites that could be developed for tourism, educational and research purposes, or generally to enhance visitors experience of the island. At the same time we both acknowledge and warn that the process of development will impact the landscape and alter the ambience of the place. It remains the prerogative of the RIM to implement the findings of the study in terms of their long-term vision for the island.

The most significant overall impact we have identified is deterioration of sites by natural forces and neglect. Corrosion is affecting many metal fixtures of Second World War structures while spreading vegetation is slowly destroying building foundations and graves. These impacts will need to be controlled. Maintenance of the island as a sustainable resource is going to require a great deal of thought, sensitivity, and physical input from RIM staff and any consultants that may be appointed.

4. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Fieldwork and report preparation

Tim Hart
David Halkett
Bellinda Mütti

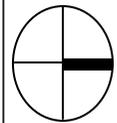


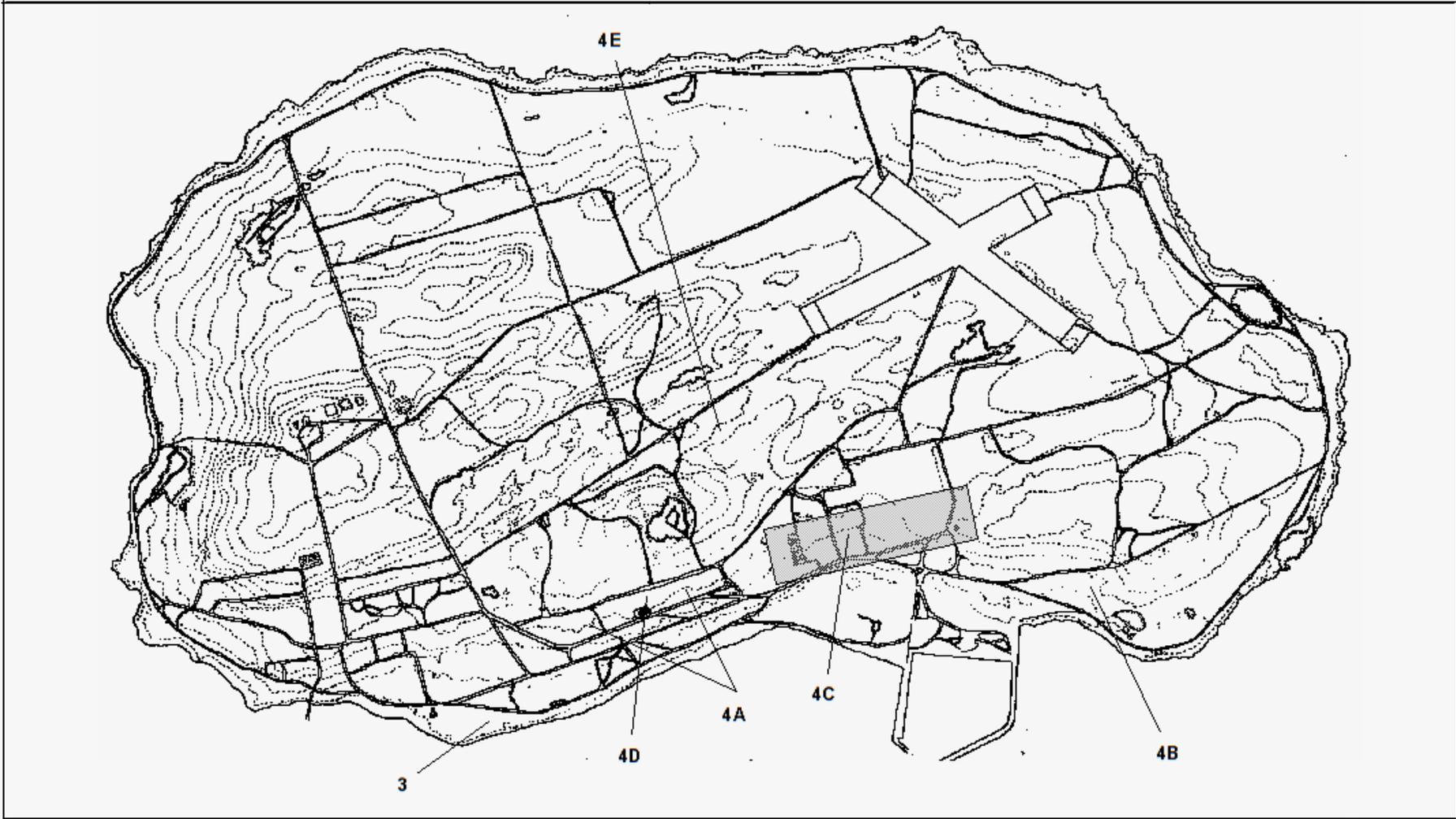
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ROBBEN ISLAND

Areas Of Archaeological Potential

- 1. Calcrete exposures
- 2. Fossil shell



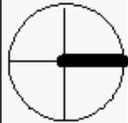


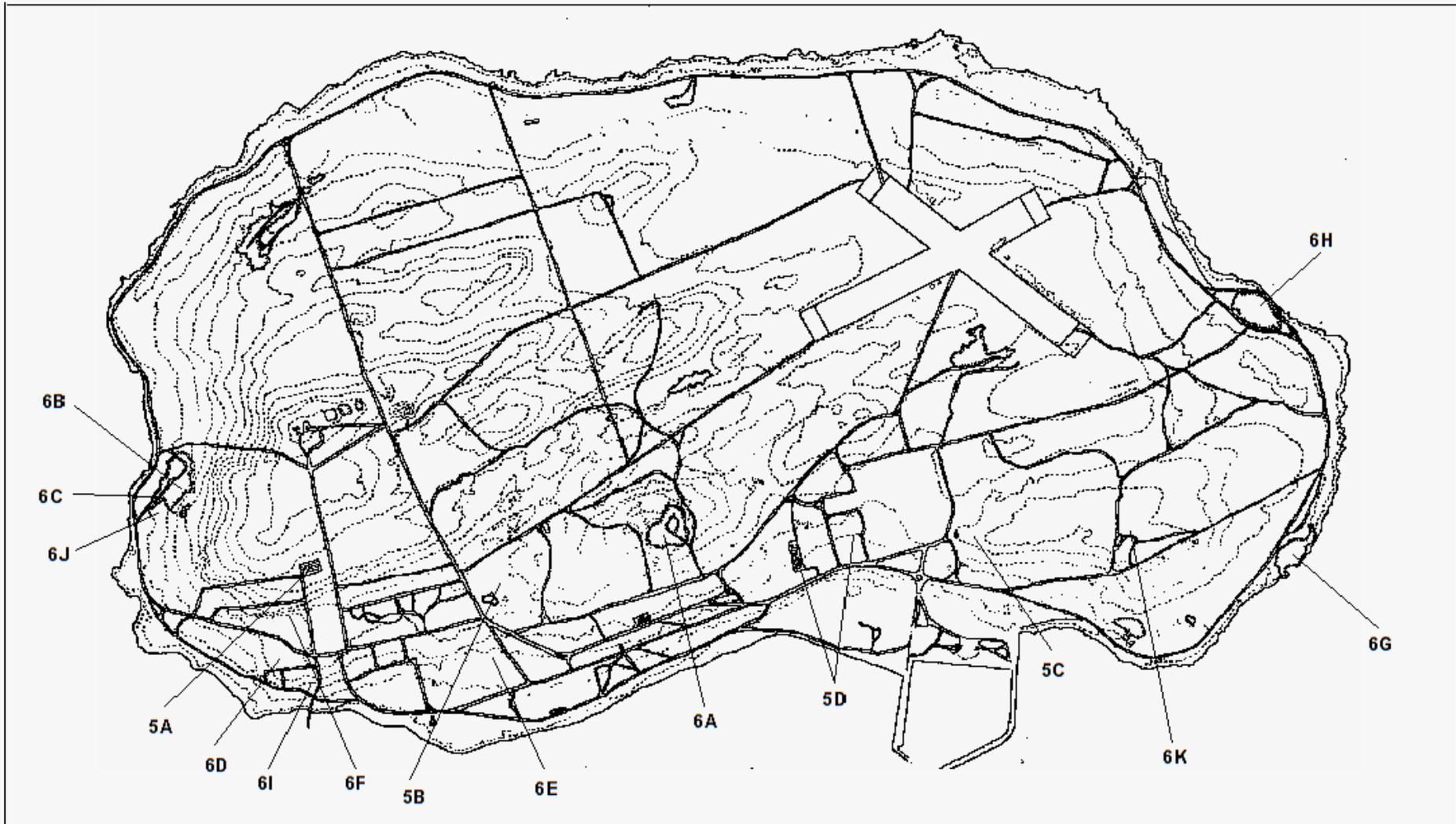
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ROBBEN ISLAND

Areas Of Archaeological Potential

- 3. Old Convict Station
- 4. Leper Colony and Assoc. sites



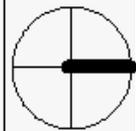


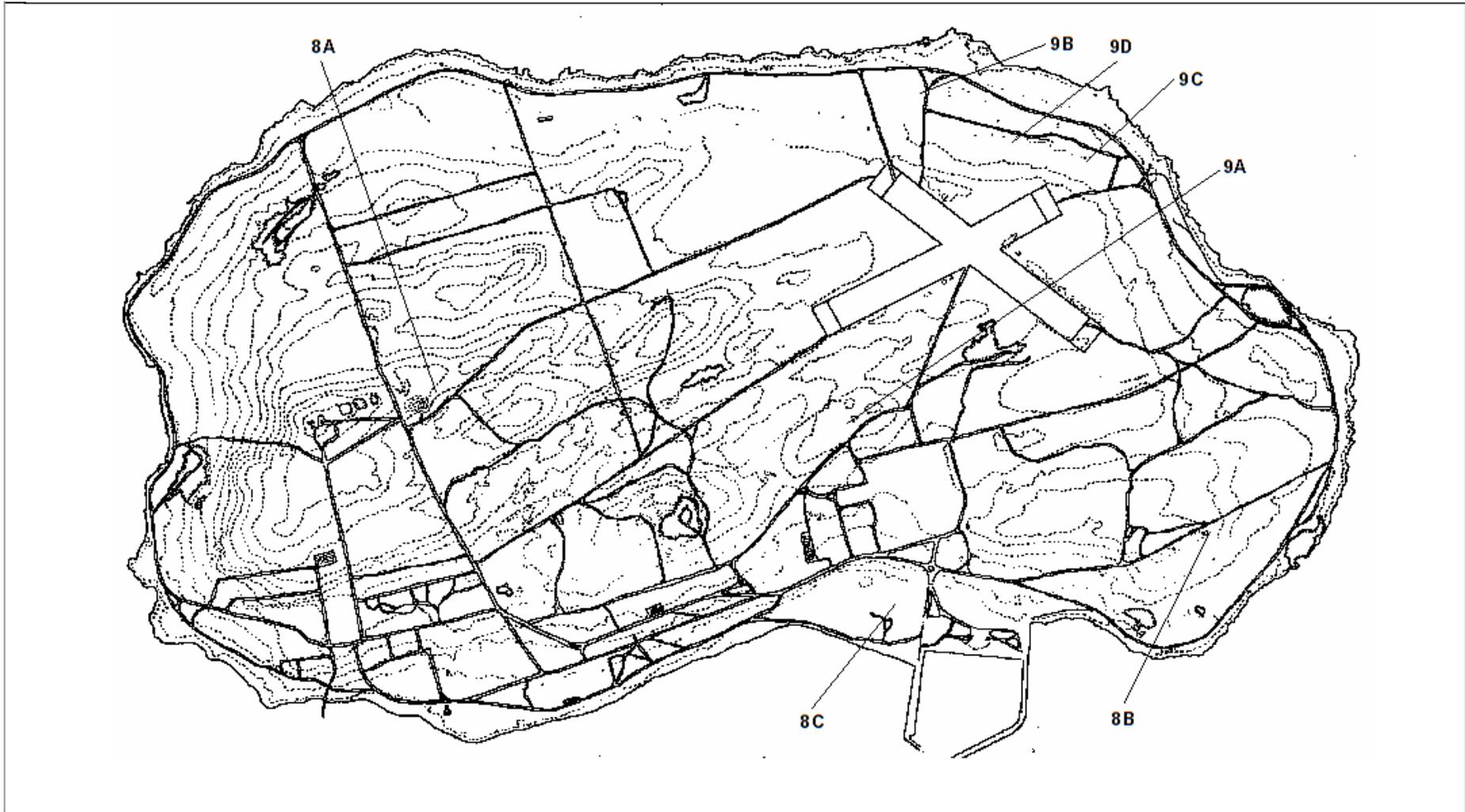
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ROBBEN ISLAND

Areas Of Archaeological Potential

- 5. Cemeteries
- 6. Quarries and Dumps



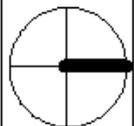


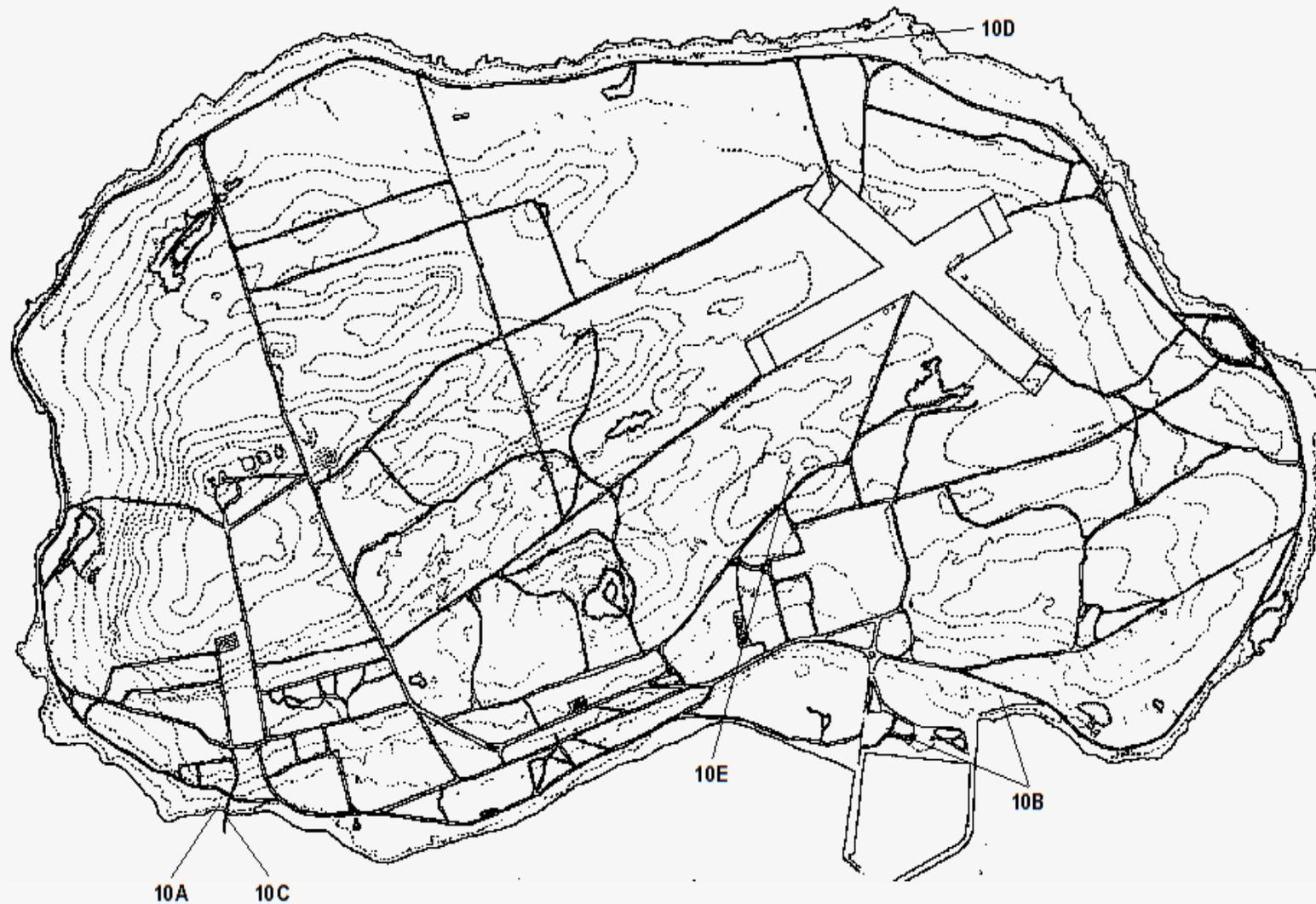
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ROBBEN ISLAND

Areas Of Archaeological Potential

- 8. Main Second world War sites
- 9. Other sites





5 ROB BEN ISLAND

Areas Of Archaeological Potential

10. Industrial sites

