

PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION: DOORSRING SOUTH

Prepared for

**Van der Merwe Duxbury & Kirkwood
Town and Regional Planners**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office of The University of Cape Town was commissioned by Van der Merwe, Duxbury and Kirkwood (Town and Regional Planners) to conduct a Phase I archaeological assessment of the property Doorspring (South) north of Lamberts Bay. Seven Late Stone Age shell middens were located in or close to the proposed development zone. Four of these sites are expected to be directly impacted while the others may suffer secondary impacts. At least two stratified middens are going to require mitigation should the proposed development proceed. The most significant archaeological sites are associated with the rocky beach area at Doorspring which provided a ready source of exploitable marine foods for prehistoric people.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by Van der Merwe, Duxbury and Kirkwood (Town and Regional Planners)¹ to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological survey of a proposed housing development at Doorspring (south) in the Clanwilliam administrative district. The development area is the coastal strip of the remainder of the farm Otterdam 90. The inland areas of this property as well as the farm Zoutpans Klipheuvcl No 89 are to be set aside as private nature reserve areas.

The ACO was instructed by the client to undertake the following:

1. Supply a report regarding the presence of archaeological sites on the property and the mitigation of such sites.
2. Locate the seaward boundary fence and the road to the east thereof.

2. BACKGROUND

The west coast south of Lamberts Bay has been subjected to research by archaeologists during the last three decades. This work has shown that the west coast of has been occupied by people for at least a million years. During LSA (Late Stone Age) period which began about 20 000 years ago, the ancestors of the San (Bushman) hunter/gatherers occupied the Cape. They were attracted to the coastline which provided a predictable marine food supply. As a result of this the existing late Holocene coastline (last 5000 years) is extremely rich in archaeological sites, especially shell middens in the immediate coastal zone. The archaeological sites associated with this period that have been identified are associated with stretches of rocky shoreline where black mussels could be collected. Human settlement patterns of this period are not well understood and are currently being researched. Just after 2000 years ago the Khoi Khoi (Hottentot) herders moved into southern Africa via the west coast. They brought with them domestic sheep, goats, cattle and the art of making pottery. It appears that the San were marginalised as a result of this new economic order until their decimation during the historic period.

Archaeological sites of the west coast are an important cultural resource because they contain information about the history of indigenous people and their interaction with the natural environment. The destruction or disturbance of an archaeological site can represent a loss of information about the past, which unlike other environmental resources can never be renewed.

3. METHOD

Fulfilment of the brief required the ACO to visit and systematically search the development area (as identified on the plan provided with the brief) on foot for archaeological sites. The search was concentrated on those areas set aside for housing development and not the surrounding nature area. Sites located were plotted by global positioning system (GPS)

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and have been evaluated for their archaeological significance and mitigation requirements. In some instances small test excavations were made to verify the presence of archaeological material below the surface. Figure 1, a map showing the property and the location of archaeological sites is included.

4. RESULTS

This section presents summary descriptions of located archaeological sites in the development area.

DSS 1

GPS Location: 32° 01.6058'S 18° 17.8895'E

This site consists of a thin scatter of black mussel shells (*Choromytilus meridionalis*) on the landward side of the top of the coastal dune. Limpets such as *Patella argenvillei*, *Patella barbara* and *Patella granatina* are also present but in lower quantities. No artefactual material was noted.

Importance: Low

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None required.

DSS 2

GPS Location: 32°01.5207'S 18°17.8331'E (GPS on seaward boundary fence)

This is a small diffuse surface scatter of limpets some 15 m in diameter. *Patella argenvillei*, *Patella barbara*, *Patella cochlear*, *Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Choromytilus meridionalis* and some whelks are present. No artefactual material was noted.

Importance: Low

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None required

DSS 3

GPS Location: 32°01.4375'S 18°17.7663'E

This large scatter of shell lies opposite the rocky shoreline of the northern portion of the development zone. The main bulk of the material lies on the seaward side of the boundary fence. Stone artefacts in the form of silcrete and quartz flakes, fragments of pottery and ostrich egg shell are present on the site. The presence of pottery is an indication that some of the material is less than 2000 years old. Small test excavations showed that the main bulk of midden deposit is not immediately present on the surface in

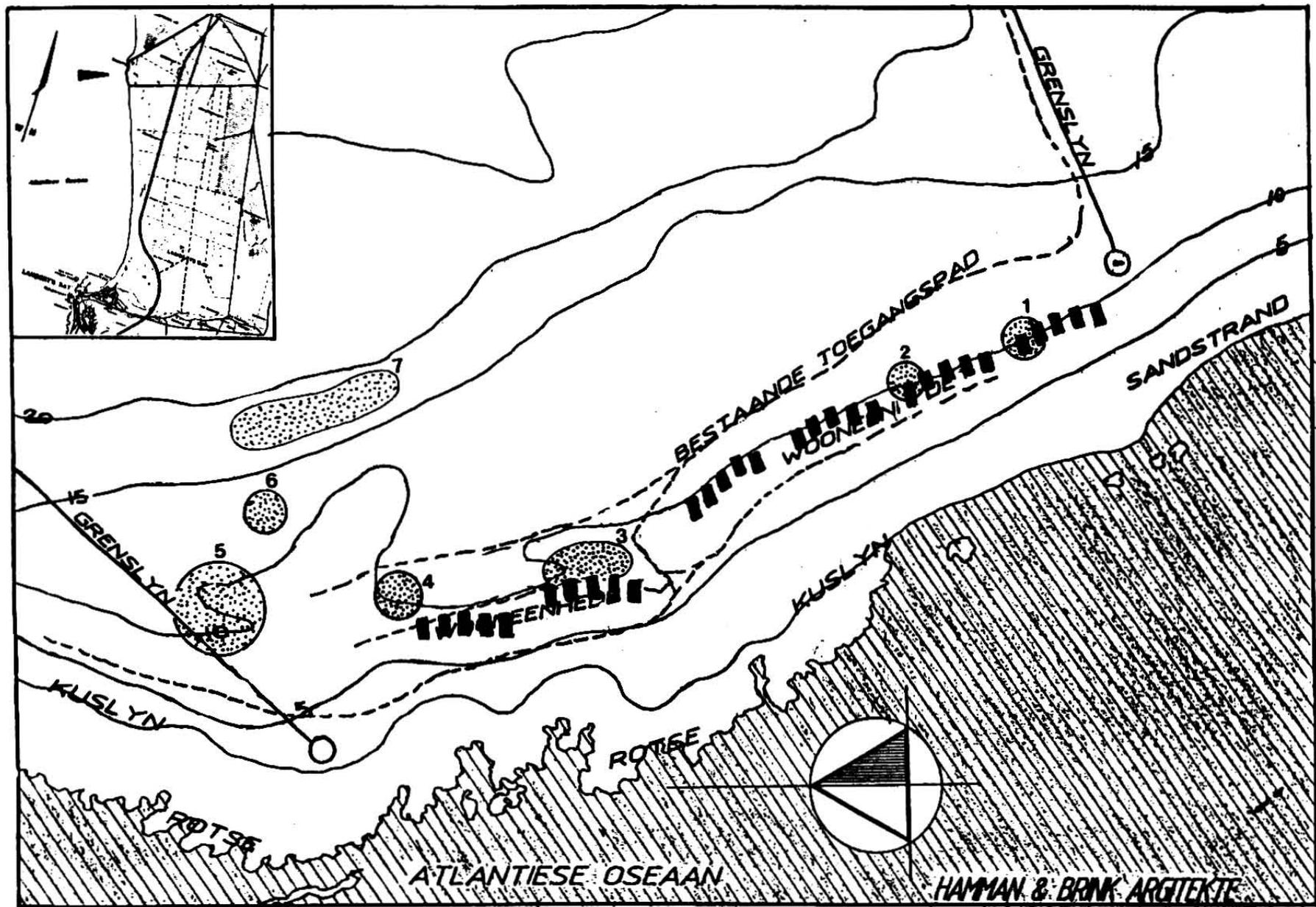


FIGURE 1 Location of archaeological sites at Doorspring (south)

that the densest part of the lens lies between 15 cm and 30 cm below the surface. The shellfish species are dominated by *Patella granatina* and *Choromytilus meridionalis*. Whelks, *Patella argenvillei*, *Patella barbara* and *Patella granatina* are also present.

Importance: Medium-high

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on. Secondary damage may occur as a result of increased pedestrian or vehicular activity both during the development and after.

Mitigation: A representative sample of archaeological material needs to be excavated before the site is impacted by development related activities.

DSS 4

GPS Location: 32°01.3885'S 18°17.7525'E

This is a rich shell midden just to the north of DSS 3. Unlike DSS 3 it is dominated by limpets, particularly *Patella argenvillei*, *Patella granatina*, *Patella cochlear* and *Patella barbara*. *Patella granularis*, *Choromytilus meridionalis* and whelks are present in lesser quantities. Ostrich egg shell, stone artefacts, whale bone and lobster mandibles were also noted. Two small test excavations showed that there is a dense lens of shell midden extending to a depth of 16-20 cm below the surface. There is a second lens of material occurring at a depth of 50 cm below surface. It is possible that more may exist deeper down in the dune body.

Importance: High

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on. Secondary damage may occur as a result of increased pedestrian or vehicular activity both during the development and after.

Mitigation: A representative sample of archaeological material needs to be excavated before the site is impacted by development and related activities.

DSS 5

GPS Location: 32°01.2860'S 18°17.7175'E

(position read at junction of seaward boundary fence and northern border of property)

The shoreline at the northern boundary of the property is very rocky. This in turn has attracted prehistoric settlement close to this ready source of shellfish. There is a very large shell midden on top and around the sandy hummock at the northern end of the property. Pottery, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell, bone fragments and lobster mandibles were seen on the shell midden. Black mussel shell, whelks and many species of limpets are present. Two small test excavations show that there are multiple layers of midden material within the dune body. The surface lens extends to a depth of 12 cm. This is followed by a very dense shell body of mixed limpets and mussel 13 cm thick. A deep sounding of the edge of the site showed that a further shell lens lies some 80 cm below the surface. It is quite likely that further buried lenses exist in other parts of the dune

body. The presence of ceramics indicates that components of this site are less than 2000 years old.

Importance: High

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on, or roads or services positioned in this area. Secondary damage to the upper deposits may occur as a result of increased pedestrian or vehicular activity both during the development and after.

Mitigation: An archaeological excavation directed towards locating and sampling the various shell lenses in the dune body will be required if the site is to be impacted.

DSS 6

GPS Location: 32°01.3128'S 18°17.7986'E

Although surface indications are that this shell scatter is small and sparse, a test excavation has shown that it is densely packed with limpets (*Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Patella argenvillei*) tortoise and bone just 5cm below the surface.

Importance: High

Impact: The site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on. Secondary impacts may be caused by increased pedestrian or vehicular activities.

Mitigation: The midden will need to be sampled by archaeological excavation.

DSS 7

The high stable dune west of the existing road was searched for archaeological material. A series of small well defined scatters were located on the top of this ridge. All the sites are dominated by *Patella* sp. Some of these sites appear to be well preserved and have the potential to produce spatial information. Although these sites are outside the immediate development area it is possible that they could be impacted by laying of services, road clearing etc.

Importance: Medium - high

Impact: The sites will be damaged by road building, pipe laying, power lines. Further impacts could occur as a result of pedestrians/vehicles using the area.

Mitigation: These sites should be viewed as a component of the private nature reserve area. Roads, services, walking trails should be routed to avoid the area. Access to the development should be by way of the existing road. Alternatively, if services have to be positioned in this sensitive area, archaeological material will have to be mitigated by excavation and sampling.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main focus of prehistoric settlement in the development area is associated with the rocky shoreline. Sites that lie adjacent to the sandy beach are ephemeral while those in

the northern half of the development area are larger, denser and stratified. Kaplan (1994) notes the existence of at least one buried archaeological site that contains quantities of formal stone tools in the Doorspring development immediately north of the boundary fence. This indicates that the Doorspring coastal outcrops have attracted people for most of the later Holocene. The results of this survey have shown that surface indications of archaeological sites do not continue inland (in those areas that we have searched) into the flat coastal plain beyond the coastal dunes. Known archaeological sites exist on the rocky outcrops east of the Lamberts Bay road. As this area has been set aside as a Nature Reserve impacts are not expected to occur unless moves are made to develop the nature area in the future..

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Mitigation of shell midden material requires that the site is subject to controlled excavation by qualified and experienced archaeologists and assistants working under a permit issued by the National Monuments Council. All shell middens are explicitly protected by the National Monuments Act of 1969 (as amended).

1. The proposed resort development as indicated on the plan (Hamman and Brink Argitekete) shows that of the sites that are conservation worthy, DSS 3 and DSS 4 will be directly impacted. The destruction of these sites will require mitigation in the form of a program of excavation and collection before construction work can take place. The purpose of such a program is to obtain a representative sample of the material to characterise the different kinds of archaeological material and so establish an archive that can be used by interested persons in the future.

2. Sites DSS 5, 6, and 7 will not be impacted by construction of buildings according to the plan. Of concern is the possibility that they may be affected secondary by impacts. The broader implications of development is that serious indirect damage can occur to these sites through the laying of services and roads as well as increased vehicular and pedestrian activity after the development is complete. Services should be routed to the development via the existing road as this will minimise damage to archaeological material. If this is not possible, damage to the sites will have to be mitigated by controlled archaeological sampling. Also of concern is the use of off road vehicles which do a tremendous amount of damage to both archaeological sites and the coastal environment. There will have to be a commitment from the developers to ensure that vehicles are kept to established routes. The archaeological sites should be considered as being an integral part of the nature reserve area and conserved as such.

3. Sites DSS 1 and 2 are of minimal significance and in our opinion, do not require mitigation before destruction by development.

4. It is possible that human remains will be encountered during the course of the development. Such finds, besides providing a great deal of information to scientists, are also protected by the National Monuments Act and Human Tissue Act. It is important that they are removed by an archaeologist under controlled circumstances so that the context of the remains can be noted. The remains will have to be housed in an institution licensed for this purpose. Finds of this nature should be reported to the South African Museum, a University, or National Monuments Council.

5. Should any areas other than that already subject to a phase 1 archaeological assessment be set aside for development, these too, should be subject to an archaeological survey.

6. It is suggested that the developer approach the Cape regional manager, National Monuments Council (Ms Laura Robinson). The measures that need to be taken to mitigate the archaeological sites will require the approval of the Archaeology Plans Committee of the National Monuments Council. It is suggested that a meeting should be arranged with this committee to negotiate a suitable program for the mitigation of archaeological material in the development zone.

7. REFERENCES

Kaplan, J. 1994. Provisional report: Final season of contract work at Doorspring, Lamberts Bay. Unpublished report (submitted to NMC): Agency for Cultural Resource Management.

8. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Field work and report preparation

Dave Halkett
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