

# A PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A SECTION OF THE FARM 'MALKOPPAN' WEST OF THE COASTAL ROAD, LAMBERTS BAY

Prepared for

**Mr. T. Turner**

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Prepared by

**Archaeology Contracts Office**

Department of Archaeology

University of Cape Town

Private Bag Rondebosch

7700

Phone 650 2357

Fax 650 2352

Email [djh@Beattie.uct.ac.za](mailto:djh@Beattie.uct.ac.za)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested to survey an area of the farm "Malkoppan" lying on the eastern side of the coastal road to Lambert's Bay (see Figure 1) to determine the impacts of development on archaeological material. In 1995 another area of the same farm on the seaward side of the road was also investigated<sup>1</sup>. Current development proposals would see development occurring on both of the portions of land that have been surveyed.

## 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 has been occupied by people for at least a million years. During the LSA (Late Stone Age) a period which began about 20 000 years ago, the ancestors of the San (Bushmen) 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.

Specific research in the area immediately south of Lamberts Bay has been conducted by Jerardino<sup>2</sup> who has been sampling the large *Choromytilus meridionalis* middens (megamiddens) which are unique to the Elands Bay - Lamberts Bay area. Most of these sites have been dated between 2 - 3 000 years ago, but Jerardino recently obtained dates from material found at Malkoppan that is older than 4000 years.

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. Shell middens are specifically protected by the National Monuments Act of 1969 (as amended).

## 3. METHOD

The area of land defined by the client was investigated by means of a foot search. The positions of archaeological sites were plotted on a plan and notes were made about the content and importance in respect of research potential, while the ground was probed to determine if sub-surface material could be detected. If material was detected test holes were

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<sup>1</sup> Hart, T. & Halkett, D. 1995. A phase 1 archaeological investigation of a portion of 'Malkoppan'. Unpublished report prepared for BCD Inc., Town and Regional Planners. UCT: Archaeology Contracts Office.

<sup>2</sup> Jerardino, A. 1994. Test excavations at Grootrif and Malkoppan, Piketberg district, Cape Province. Interim report prepared for the National Monuments Council.

dug to determine the nature of the buried material. Sites were also assigned GPS co-ordinates. (Since plotting the sites on return I have found that all readings were subject to a common error which I believe to have been as a result of a satellite problem. I can therefore not supply these co-ordinates as they are inaccurate.) Sites have been numbered following on from the last site recorded in the previous survey.

#### **4. RESULTS**

Six archaeological sites, all dating to the Late Stone Age, have been located within the demarcated area. Positions of the sites are marked on Figure 1 and descriptions of them are found below. While in the field it was difficult to establish with accuracy the position of the eastern and southern boundaries of the property as no physical markers were present.

##### ***MKP 13***

This is an ephemeral surface shell scatter on top of the elevated area along the eastern edge of the property. Shell species observed include *P. granularis*, *P. granatina* and *P. argenvillei* in very low numbers. No artefactual material is present. It is difficult to establish if the site is inside or outside the boundary. In this instance the minimal site content means that only minimal mitigation is necessary and so the position is not crucial.

**Importance:** Low

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development.

**Suggested mitigation:** Collect some surface shell for future dating.

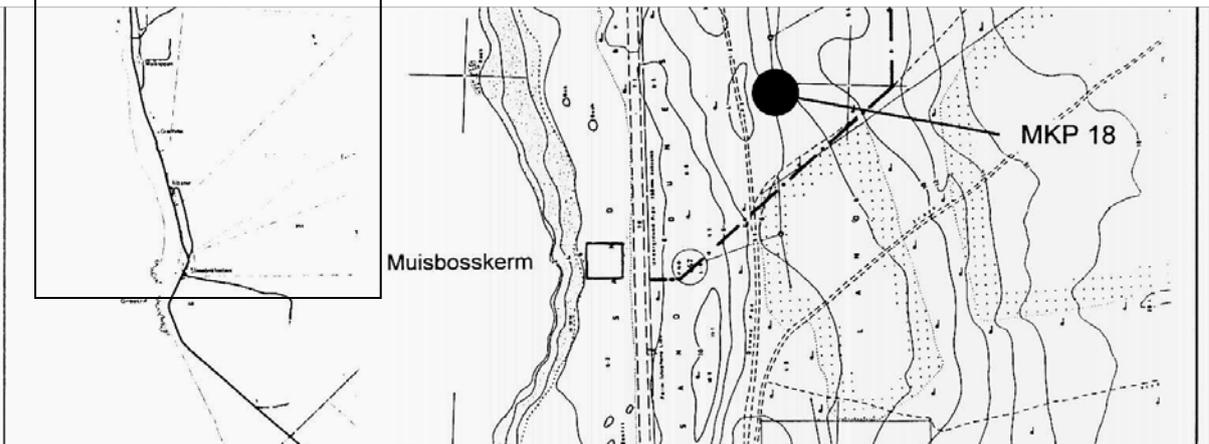
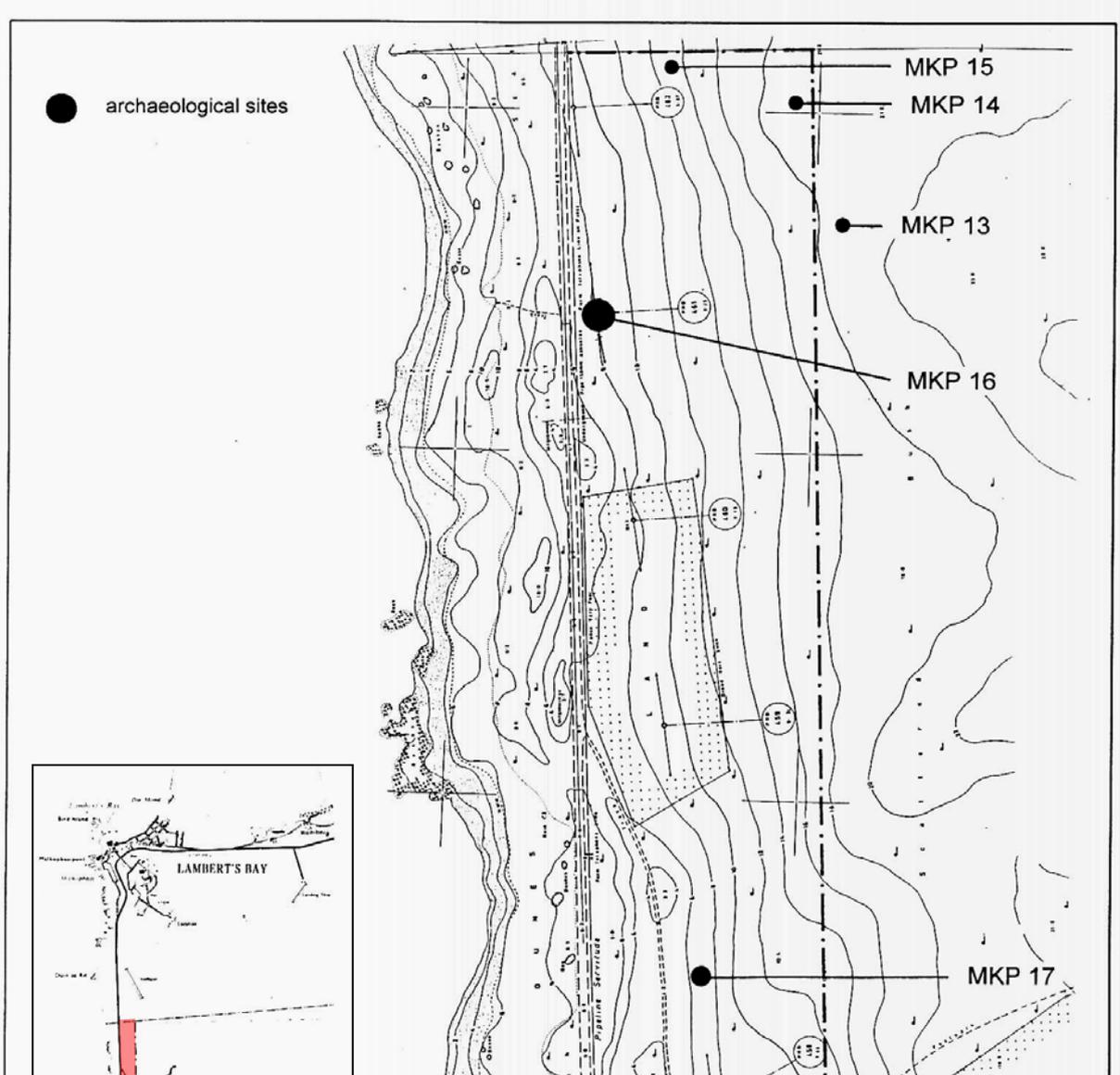
##### ***MKP 14***

This is an ephemeral surface shell scatter on top of the elevated area along the eastern edge of the property. A single quartz flake was observed. Shell species observed include *P. granularis*, *P. granatina*, *P. argenvillei* and *Burnupena* sp. in very low numbers. It is also difficult to determine if this site is inside or outside the boundary.

**Importance:** Low

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development

**Suggested mitigation:** Collect some surface shell for future dating.



### **MKP 15**

This is an ephemeral surface shell scatter which differs in terms of shell species observed at other sites. This site contains *C. meridionalis*, *D. serra*, *P. granatina* and *Burnupena sp.* in very low numbers. One quartz and one quartzite flake were observed.

**Importance:** Low

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development

**Suggested mitigation:** Collect some surface shell for future dating.

### **MKP 16**

A more dense surface scatter of shell close to the road. The shell is dispersed over quite a large area and may well be an extension of the site found on the opposite side of the road (MKP1). The bulk of the shell is *C. meridionalis* with lesser amounts of *Burnupena sp.*, *P. granularis*, *P. granatina*, and *P. argenvillei*. No material was detected below surface here but the species are a mixture of what is found stratified at MKP1.

**Importance:** Low

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development

**Suggested mitigation:** Collect some surface shell for future dating.

### **MKP 17**

A small surface shell scatter. Shell species observed include *Burnupena sp.*, *P. granularis*, *P. granatina*, *P. argenvillei* and *P. barbara*. There are more whole specimens here than at other sites described so far.

**Importance:** Low

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development

**Suggested mitigation:** Collect some surface shell for future dating.

### **MKP 18**

A large area (approx 150x150m) of which has shell patches present on it. While the area appears to have been subject to some form of de-vegetation and possibly some cultivation, *in situ* archaeological shell lenses have been identified below surface. This suggests that if cultivation has taken place it did not disturb portions of the area. A wide range of shell species are present and the species observed include *Burnupena sp.*, *P. granularis*, *P. granatina*, *P. argenvillei*, *P. barbara* (high frequencies) and *C. meridionalis* and *P. cochlear* (lower frequencies). Stone artefacts, indigenous ceramics and occasional bone fragments were also observed. Test excavation revealed a single buried shell lens at a depth of 350mm below surface. The shell lens is approximately 100mm thick and densely packed. Species are a mixture of limpets and whelks. It is highly likely that some of the surface shell originates in this layer and has been brought to the surface by moles.

**Importance:** Medium

**Impacts:** Site may be destroyed by development

**Suggested mitigation:** The sub-surface *in situ* shell lens should be sampled at different points over the area of the scatter.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

While archaeological material is present within the demarcated area, most of the sites are rather ephemeral suggesting very short term use by the pre-colonial inhabitants. The general paucity of either artefactual material or bone on all the sites (except MKP18) means that they have little research potential and do not need substantial mitigation. It has been suggested that small samples of the surface shell at these sites be collected for possible future radio-carbon dating.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The site MKP18 is the only one which contains artefactual material in sufficient quantities to warrant further action. It is recommended that a number of small excavations be undertaken at different points in this location so that the buried shell lens can be sampled and documented.

6.2 Small samples of shell should be collected from the identified sites so that if destroyed, material for future radio-carbon dating would be available.

6.3 A permit must be issued by the National Monuments Council for the destruction of any archaeological material by development. Evidence that mitigation has been carried out will have to be supplied with such an application.

## **8. PROFESSIONAL TEAM**

Fieldwork and report

Dave Halkett  
Belinda Mütti