

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
BABOON POINT  
ERVEN 65, 66 AND PTN 4 OF VERLORENVLEI  
FARM NO. 8  
ELANDS BAY**

**CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

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**NOVEMBER  
2007**

## **Executive summary**

Baboon Point at Elands Bay on the Cape West Coast contains a wealth of archaeological and historical sites of great regional, national and international significance. Elands Bay Cave, the most visible and prominent of the archaeological sites at Baboon Point has early modern human deposits dating back more than 100 000 years. It is a site of high local significance in terms of its heritage and scientific value.

Uncontrolled access to the site has sadly resulted in disturbance and damage to the archaeological deposits and its well-preserved paintings. There is also on-going degradation of archaeological sites and the natural environment at Baboon Point, due to uncontrolled public use of the area. Left neglected these important resources may soon be lost forever. It is not only future generations that will suffer, but the professional archaeological community as well.

Despite the national importance of the heritage resources at Baboon Point, no Heritage or Conservation Management Plan is in place that would effectively maintain and protect the areas rich archaeological heritage.

A new, more ominous threat to the archaeological and cultural landscape at Baboon Point is the planning of a proposed residential housing development. The proposed development will undoubtedly impact negatively on pre-colonial archaeological heritage resources, both in the short term during the construction phase, as well as in the long term during the operational phase. Any such development at Baboon Point is considered to be extremely sensitive and will threaten vulnerable and fragile archaeological sites.

As an immediate response to the proposed development, Baboon Point has been provisionally declared a Provincial Heritage Site, a status that it will enjoy until June, 2008. The proposed nomination recommends 'minimal or no residential development' be allowed at Baboon Point. Instead an emphasis on developing eco and heritage tourism products is encouraged which it maintains supports longer term sustainable employment opportunities. The proposed development is being highly contested by the professional archaeological community.

However, although the declaration formally protects Baboon Point from 'inappropriate development' it does not include measures that will ensure the protection of tangible archaeological and historical resources. In this context, the declaration is flawed.

Three nodes have been identified for proposed development, including a private nature reserve at Baboon Point. The subject properties, including Erf 65 currently have industrial development rights, while Erf 66 has an Undetermined, zoning. An application will be made by the developers to rezone the affected erven to sub-divisional area for residential purposes.

A Stage 1 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the proposed development has already been carried out by Arcon Architects and Heritage Consultants while a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has also been undertaken that acknowledges the areas rich cultural landscape qualities and powerful 'sense of place'.

The Stage 1 HIA report concludes that, despite Baboon Point extremely important status as a site of high local significance, the no development option at Baboon Point 'cannot realistically be entertained'. Limited development is therefore endorsed in principle, subject to clearly articulated constraints and design informants.

This report suggests that a sensitively planned and negotiated development at Baboon Point presents an opportunity whereby development may in fact help to protect the areas important archaeological and historical resources, both in the short term (the construction phase) but more importantly, during the long term (the operational phase). Having no development (or maintaining the status quo) might well hasten the destruction of archaeological sites and lead to further degradation of the regions cultural landscape.

It is also maintained that a limited and strictly controlled development could provide tangible benefits not only for the archaeological community, but also provide employment opportunities for local residents in an economically depressed area. Therefore, the potential longer term positive impacts and opportunities arising out of the proposed development may possibly outweigh the short term negative impacts.

There is no reason why Baboon Point site should not enjoy a permanent Provincial Heritage Site status while at the same time allowing for a limited and closely managed and controlled development to proceed. Such a scenario will, however, require a considerable social and economic contribution by the developers. This contribution will ensure that a sensitively planned development proceeds, but strives to maintain the integrity of the regions rich archaeological and historical resources and its cultural landscape qualities.

A financial and human capital investment will also be required from the Provincial Heritage Authority (Heritage Western Cape), and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), as the mere declaration of a Provincial Heritage Site is not enough to secure the future of its important archaeological heritage.

There must therefore be a common goal and a shared responsibility to maintain the archaeological and historical integrity of Baboon Point.

An appeal is made for all role players to rise to this challenge.

Some form of residential development at Baboon Point should therefore be allowed to proceed, subject to the following recommendations:

- Development should be managed and controlled and undertaken in a phased approach.
- Archaeological trial excavations must be undertaken in Sites A-C. If some of the deposits/surface scatters are found to have depth and undisturbed deposits they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavations.
- Proposed development of Site C (Erf 66) must be restricted east of the untarred coastal road. There should be no development west of this road as this will encroach on the well-known Cape Deseada Midden. Both the botanical report the Stage 1 Heritage Impact Assessment and the Visual Impact Assessment consider Site C to be too sensitive for development as it is currently envisaged.

- Public access to the beach must be controlled, but should not be compromised. This can be done by constructing raised, wooden boardwalks that avoid sensitive archaeological deposits. Illegal access roads must also be closed and rehabilitated.
- Informal public parking areas on the low lying dunes west of the untarred coastal road must be formalised and maintained.
- Appropriate and sensitively placed signage highlighting the archaeological importance of Baboon Point should also be considered.
- A legally binding Heritage Agreement/Contract between the developers (Midnight Storm Investments 170 (Pty) Ltd) and Heritage Western Cape and SAHRA should be drawn up, that covers both the Construction and Operational Phase of the proposed project. The National Heritage Resources Act provides for such a partnership agreement to be established. The contract will also address issues regarding custodianship of archaeological and historical sites at Baboon Point.
- A Homeowners Association must be constituted and a constitution to be formulated and approved by Heritage Western Cape.
- A Conservation or Heritage Management Plan (HMP) must be implemented for Baboon Point (including Erven 64, 65, 66, and 67) and presented to Heritage Western Cape and SAHRA for approval. The HMP must be seen as a dynamic document, or a 'work in progress' that should be critically reviewed and updated as conditions on the ground change. Interested and Affected Parties who should be consulted during the formulation of the HMP must include the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town who have been involved in research Eland Bay for more than 30 years.
- The HMP will form part of an integrated Construction and Operational Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to be implemented for the proposed project, and must be administered by a suitably qualified and independent Environmental Control Officer.
- Full-time monitoring of vegetation clearing operations and all earthworks to be carried out by a qualified professional archaeologist. This includes associated infrastructure such as access roads, services for pipelines, electricity and other related infrastructure between effected sites and elsewhere.
- Archaeological deposits intersected by earthmoving operations must be adequately and professionally sampled.
- If any unmarked burials are uncovered or exposed during earthmoving operations these must be immediately reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and Heritage Western Cape.
- Archaeologists must be allowed unrestricted access to the proposed Private Nature Reserve in order to conduct research and/or visit sites.

- No development on slopes steeper than 1:4 must be allowed.
- An annual audit of archaeological and historical sites must be carried out.
- A trust account be set up, and the developers retain between 1% and 0.5% of each property sale in this trust account and the proceeds used to manage archaeological resources on the site, be it further (rescue) excavation, applied conservation, setting up of community heritage tourism products, heritage training, guiding, etc. In addition, a further 1% - 0.5% of every re-sale of property must also be put into this trust account. This trust will serve as a means through which 'previously disadvantaged' communities of Elands Bay could participate in the mainstream local economy. The proposed trust would be made up of community representatives, Heritage Western Cape, SAHRA, The Department of Archaeology University of Cape Town, EBEDAG (Elands Bay Environmental and Development Action Group), Baboon Point Homeowners Association and a representative(s) of the developers Midnight Storm Investments 170 (Pty) Ltd.
- The upgrading and re-use of existing WW2 buildings and the Labour Compound at Baboon Point should be undertaken. Such buildings may be equipped and used as a possible permanent archaeological research facility, information and education centre, local heritage museum, accommodation for school groups, and for eco and heritage tourism purposes, training, support and capacity building.

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Executive summary	1
1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. THE STUDY SITE	7
3. TERMS OF REFERENCE	11
4. STUDY APPROACH	11
5. IDENTIFICATION OF RISK SOURCES	11
6. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS	12
The National Heritage Resources Act	12
Structures (Section 34 (1))	12
Archaeology (Section 25 (4))	12
Burials ground & graves (Section 36 (3))	12
7. DISCUSSION	13
8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15
9. REFERENCES	17

## 1. INTRODUCTION

BKS (Pty) Ltd, on behalf of Midnight Storm Investments 170 (Pty) Ltd, requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake an archaeological impact assessment of a proposed residential housing development at Baboon Point in Elands Bay on the Cape West coast.

The assessment forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that is being conducted by independent environmental consultants Withers Environmental Consultants.

The proposed development is considered to be extremely sensitive, given that the subject property contains a wealth of archaeological sites of regional, national and international importance.

A Heritage Scoping Study of Baboon Point and the proposed development even have been carried out by the Archaeology Contracts Office (Halkett 2005). The heritage resources documented in the report are believed to be a 'fairly comprehensive list' of what occurs in the proposed development area. The more significant sites have been documented with GPS points. Halkett (2005:14) does submit, however, that there may be some 'minor sites' that have not been documented, but maintains that they would not 'seriously effect the placement of development'. The report recommends that if the proposed development continues to a detailed planning phase, Baboon Point would need to be subjected to a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). Halkett (2005) also states that no development should take place in the immediate vicinity of Elands Bay Cave or that restricts views of the coastline.

As a result a Stage 1 HIA (scoping) report of the proposed development has been carried by Arcon Architects and Heritage Consultants (Jacobs 2007). The report pays particular attention to potentially highly significant archaeological sites that might be impacted by proposed development.

The report concludes that, despite Baboon Point extremely important status, the no development option 'cannot realistically or fairly be entertained' (Jacobs 2007:3). Limited development is therefore endorsed in principle, subject to a detailed Stage 2 HIA, based on the clearly articulated constraints and design informants contained in the Stage 1 report.

Jacobs (2007:21) also argues that new development can in fact create an opportunity to conserve and control access to archaeologically sensitive sites currently under threat from uncontrolled public use. Such abuse can already been seen at a number of very sensitive sites at Baboon Point, including Cape Deseada Midden and Elands Bay Cave.

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has also been carried out on the site by BOLA (Oberholzer 2007). Oberholzer (2007:8) asserts that the concentration of pre-colonial archaeological remains and more recent historical sites add to the cultural and historical significance of the Baboon Point landscape. The combination of, these elements, he argues, contribute to a strong, almost powerful 'sense of place'.

As a response to the threat of proposed development, Baboon Point at Elands Bay has been provisionally, proclaimed a Provincial Heritage Site in terms of section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), a status that it will enjoy until 02 June, 2008. Letters of support endorsing the nomination have been received from the Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town<sup>1</sup>; the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists (ASAPA)<sup>2</sup>, and The Elands Bay Environmental and Development Action Group (EBEDAG)<sup>3</sup>. It is an understatement to say that the proposed development is being highly contested by the professional archaeological community.

## 2. THE STUDY SITE

A locality map is illustrated in Figure 1.

Aerial photographs of the study site in a Macro and Intermediate context are illustrated in Figure 2.

An aerial photograph indicating the known archaeological and historical resources is illustrated in Figure 3.

Baboon Point is located on the western end of Elands Bay, about 2 kms south of Elands Bay Village and about 1.5 km from the mouth of the Verlorenvlei. It contains the landmark Bobbejaansberg, a prominent vertical and flat-topped cliff that overlooks the Indian Ocean. On a clear day Baboon Point can be seen from St. Helena Bay more than 80 kms to the south.

Existing buildings on Baboon Point comprise the Elandia Crayfish factory and Labour Compound and several Second World War buildings including the radar station, main operations room and ancillary structures. Most of these structures have fallen into disrepair and ruin. Despite its wilderness feel, the receiving environment is already fairly severely degraded. The coastal fore dunes have been heavily impacted as a result of the construction of illegal parking areas, picnic, braai and informal camping sites. A large borrow pit was created during the removal of material for the construction of the radar station road (that was never rehabilitated), while cut and fill excavations for the some of the structures have also been felt. The area around the Labour compound is degraded and much building rubble and dumping is evident. Baboon Point is not quite the 'unspoilt natural landscape' that has often been projected.

Three development nodes (Sites A, B and C) have been identified for residential development at Baboon Point, including a private nature reserve (see Figure 2). It is important to note that the proposed extent and development densities of the three development nodes have still to be determined.

The subject properties, including Erf 65 (Site B) currently have development rights, while Erf 66 (Sites A and C) currently has an Undetermined, zoning.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter dated 30 November, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated 01 November, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Letter dated 26 January, 2007





**Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the study site in a Macro and Intermediate context (after Jacobs 2007)**

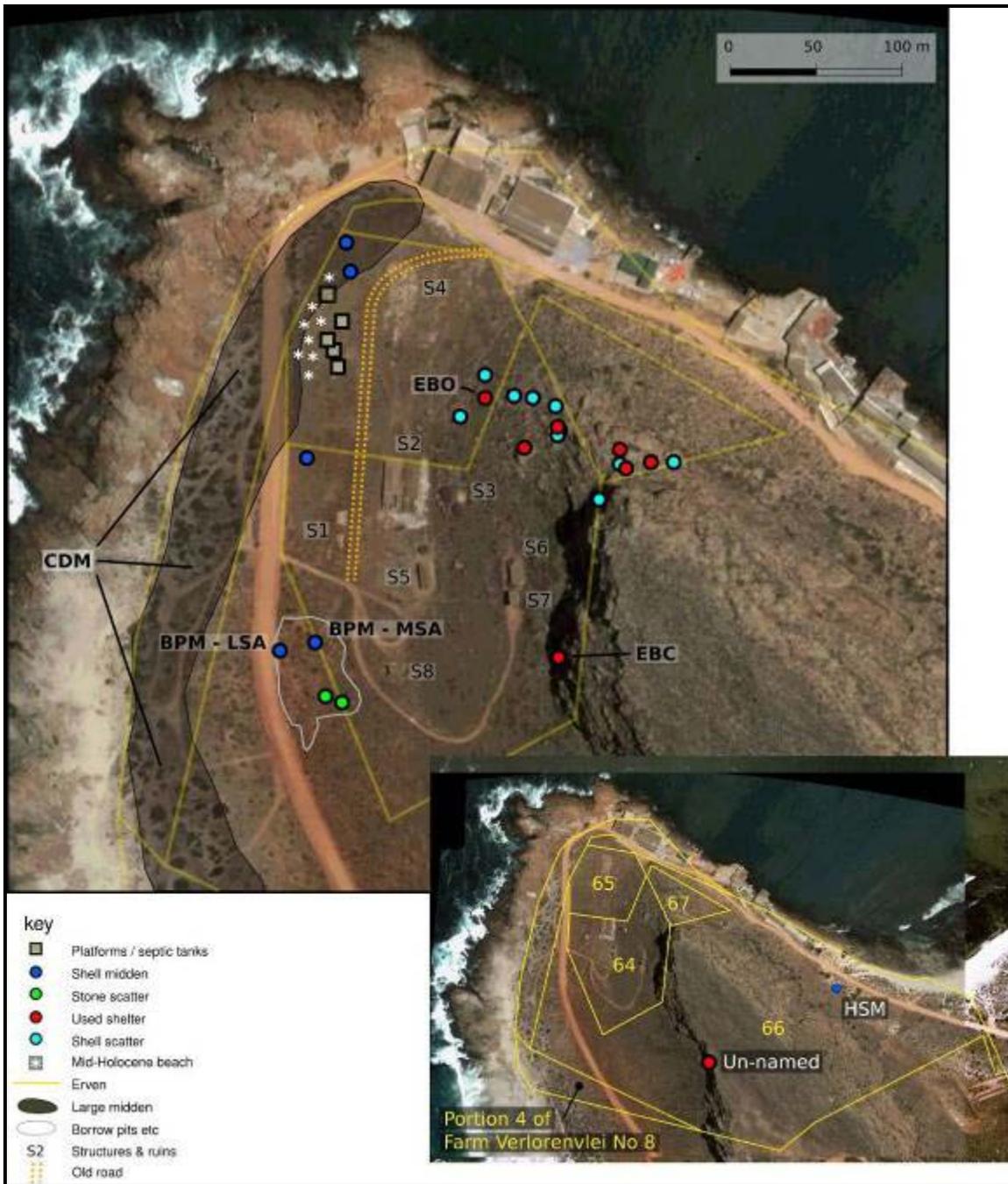


Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the study site illustrating known archaeological sites and heritage resources (after Jerardino et al 2006)

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference for the archaeological study are to:

- Evaluate the constraints and opportunities for a proposed residential development at Baboon Point, Elands Bay; and
- Recommend realistic and achievable goals that would facilitate a proposed development to proceed.

### **4. STUDY APPROACH**

The proposed development sites (A-C) have been visited many times by the writer, but was not specifically visited for the purpose of this study.

This report instead relies on the results of the Heritage Scoping Study of Erven 58, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 596, Elands Bay undertaken by the Archaeology Contracts Office at the University of Cape Town (Halkett 2005).

The known archaeological, palaeontological and historical sites at Baboon Point are also described in detail in the proposed Provincial Heritage Site nomination form (Jerardino *et al* 2006), and there is therefore no need or purpose to describe these again. The sites described by Jerardino *et al* (2006) are also indicated in Figure 3. Suffice to say the rich overlay of pre-colonial archaeology, later colonial developments and landscape qualities makes Baboon Point unique along the Capes West Coast. Almost, the entire history of human kind within the subcontinent is reflected at Baboon Point (Jerardino *et al* 2006:7).

This report has not reviewed the many archaeological reports, papers, articles, books and monographs that have been produced over more than 30 years of research at Baboon Point that has generated a wealth of social and scientific information on indigenous history and past environments over tens of 1000's of years. Only a few pertinent research papers have been cited by the writer.

As indicated in the Terms of Reference, this report evaluates the constraints and opportunities for proposed development and recommends realistic and achievable goals that would facilitate an appropriate, negotiated and sensitively planned development to proceed.

### **5. IDENTIFICATION OF RISK SOURCES**

Possible sources of risk in terms of archaeological impacts arising from the proposed development are listed below.

Risk sources apply to both the construction and operational phase of the proposed project.

- Archaeological, palaeontological and historical heritage remains will very likely be negatively impacted by the proposed development.

- Unmarked human burials may also be exposed or uncovered during earthmoving operations.

## **6. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

The following section provides a brief overview of the relevant legislation.

### **6.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)**

The National Heritage Resources (NHR) Act requires that "...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup>, or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, requires an archaeological impact assessment"

The relevant sections of the Act are briefly outlined below.

#### **6.2 Structures (Section 34 (1))**

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), or Heritage Western Cape.

#### **6.3 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))**

Section 35 (4) of the NHR stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by HWC, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

#### **6.4 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))**

Section 36 (3) of the HHR stipulates that no person may, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

## 7. DISCUSSION

Baboon Point contains a wealth of archaeological, palaeontological and historical sites of great regional, national and international significance. Much has also been said of the areas rich cultural landscape qualities and powerful `sense of place' (Jacobs 2007; Oberholzer 2007; Jerardino et al 2006; Chittenden Nicks Partnership 1996).

Elands Bay Cave, nominated for National Heritage Status in the early 1990's, and the most visible and prominent of the archaeological sites at Baboon Point, has early modern human deposits dating back more than 100 000 years. It is a site of high local significance in terms of its heritage and scientific value. Despite repeated attempts to protect the cave, uncontrolled public access to the site has resulted in disturbance and damage to the archaeological deposits and its well-preserved paintings.

Formal protection of Baboon Point **is** urgently needed in order to safeguard its valuable and unique heritage for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations (Jerardino et al 2006:16). Constrained by financial and human resources, however, the archaeological heritage remains at Baboon Point are not being maintained nor protected for the benefit of future generations. There is on-going degradation of archaeological and historical sites (and the natural environment) due to uncontrolled public use of the area. Unfortunately, it is not quite the `unspoilt landscape' that is argued (Jerardino et al 2006:2). The damage to shell midden deposits and `Bushmen' paintings at Cape Deseada Midden and Elands Bay Cave respectively is a case in point. Left un-maintained these important resources may soon be lost forever. It is not only future generations that will suffer, but the professional archaeological community as well.

Despite the national importance of the heritage resources at Baboon Point, no Heritage or Conservation Management Plan is in place that would effectively manage and protect the areas rich archaeological and historical heritage.

Proposed development at Baboon Point will undoubtedly impact negatively on pre-colonial archaeological heritage resources, both in the short term during the construction phase of the proposed project, as well as in the long term during the operational phase. Any type of residential development at Baboon Point is considered to be extremely sensitive.

As an immediate response to the threat of development, Baboon Point (including Erven 64, 65, 66 and 67) has been provisionally declared a Provincial Heritage Site, a status that it will enjoy until 02 June, 2008. The proposed nomination recommends `minimal or no residential development' be allowed at Baboon Point (Jerardino et al 2006:30). Instead an emphasis on developing eco and heritage tourism products is encouraged which supports longer term sustainable employment opportunities.

Although the declaration formally protects Baboon Point from `inappropriate development', it does not include measures that will ensure the protection of tangible archaeological and historical resources. In this context, the declaration is flawed.

Erf 65 currently has development rights. The Stage 1 Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that, despite Baboon Point extremely important status as a site of high local significance, the no development option at Baboon Point 'cannot realistically be entertained'. Limited development is therefore endorsed in principle subject to clearly articulated constraints and design informants (Jacobs 2007:3).

A sensitively planned and negotiated development at Baboon Point presents an opportunity whereby development may in fact help protect the areas important archaeological and historical resources, both in the short term (the construction phase) but more importantly, during the long term (the operational phase). Having no development (or maintaining the status quo) might well hasten the destruction of the archaeological sites and further degradation of the cultural landscape.

But unless considerable financial and human resources are committed by Heritage Western Cape (the Provincial Heritage Authority) and SAHRA – currently the joint custodians of a Provincial Heritage Site – archaeological, palaeontological and historical sites will continue to be damaged and disturbed due to uncontrolled public access and associated human impacts. The mere declaration of Provincial Heritage Site status is, unfortunately, not enough to secure Baboon Points, future.

There is no reason why Baboon Point site should not enjoy a permanent Provincial Heritage Site status while at the same time allowing for **limited development** to proceed. This scenario will, however, require considerable social and financial investment by the developers. This will ensure that a sensitively planned development proceeds, but at the same time strives to maintain the integrity of the regions rich archaeological heritage and cultural landscape qualities.

It is also argued that the proposed development could provide tangible benefits not only for the archaeological and scientific community, but also provide employment opportunities in an economically depressed area. In other words, the management and sustainable development of cultural heritage resources can contribute to social and economic development (NHRA 1999 General Principles for heritage management Section 5. 1-7:16).

It has recently been proposed by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)<sup>4</sup> that Baboon Point could become a focus of job creation and heritage conservation of equal importance to the 'Cradle of Mankind' project at Maropeng in Gauteng. We agree, but such a proposal should not be seen as an alternative to, or in conflict with proposed development at Baboon Point, but as complementary and a positive intervention.

Properly managed and co-ordinated, the potential longer term positive impacts and opportunities arising out of the proposed development may possibly outweigh the short term negative impacts.

In order to achieve this, however, there must be a common goal and a shared responsibility by all role players to maintain the archaeological integrity of Baboon Point, well into the future.

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<sup>4</sup> Cape Times, August 01, 2007 pp 3

## 8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limited development of Erven 65, 66 and Portion 4 of Verlorenvlei Farm No. 8, Elands Bay, should be allowed to proceed, subject to the following:

- Development should be managed and controlled and undertaken in a phased approach.
- Archaeological trial excavations must be undertaken in Sites A-C. If some of the deposits/surface scatters are found to have depth and undisturbed deposits they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavations.
- Proposed development of Site C (Erf 66) must be restricted east of the untarred coastal road. There should be no development west of this road as this will encroach on the well-known Cape Deseada Midden. Both the botanical report the Stage 1 Heritage Impact Assessment and the Visual Impact Assessment consider Site C to be too sensitive for development as it is currently envisaged.
- Public access to the beach must be controlled, but should not be compromised. This can be done by constructing raised, wooden boardwalks that avoid sensitive archaeological deposits. Illegal access roads must also be closed and rehabilitated.
- Informal public parking areas on the low lying dunes west of the untarred coastal road must be formalised and maintained.
- Appropriate and sensitively placed signage highlighting the archaeological importance of Baboon Point should also be considered.
- A legally binding Heritage Agreement/Contract between the developers (Midnight Storm Investments 170 (Pty) Ltd) and Heritage Western Cape and SAHRA should be drawn up, that covers both the Construction and Operational Phase of the proposed project. The National Heritage Resources Act provides for such a partnership agreement to be established. The contract will also address issues regarding custodianship of archaeological and historical sites at Baboon Point.
- A Homeowners Association must be constituted and a constitution to be formulated and approved by Heritage Western Cape.
- A Conservation or Heritage Management Plan (HMP) must be implemented for Baboon Point (including Erven 64, 65, 66, and 67) and presented to Heritage Western Cape and SAHRA for approval. The HMP must be seen as a dynamic document, or a 'work in progress' that should be critically reviewed and updated as conditions on the ground change. Interested and Affected Parties who should be consulted during the formulation of the HMP must include the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town who have been involved in research Eland Bay for more than 30 years.

- The HMP will form part of an integrated Construction and Operational Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to be implemented for the proposed project, and must be administered by a suitably qualified and independent Environmental Control Officer.
- Full-time monitoring of vegetation clearing operations and all earthworks to be carried out by a qualified professional archaeologist. This includes associated infrastructure such as access roads, services for pipelines, electricity and other related infrastructure between effected sites and elsewhere.
- Archaeological deposits intersected by earthmoving operations must be adequately and professionally sampled.
- If any unmarked burials are uncovered or exposed during earthmoving operations these must be immediately reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and Heritage Western Cape.
- Archaeologists must be allowed unrestricted access to the proposed Private Nature Reserve in order to conduct research and/or visit sites.
- No development on slopes steeper than 1:4 must be allowed.
- An annual audit of archaeological and historical sites must be carried out.
- A trust account be set up, and the developers retain between 1% and 0.5% of each property sale in this trust account and the proceeds used to manage archaeological resources on the site, be it further (rescue) excavation, applied conservation, setting up of community heritage tourism products, heritage training, guiding, etc. In addition, a further 1% - 0.5% of every re-sale of property must also be put into this trust account. This trust will serve as a means through which 'previously disadvantaged' communities of Elands Bay could participate in the mainstream local economy. The proposed trust would be made up of community representatives, Heritage Western Cape, SAHRA, The Department of Archaeology University of Cape Town, EBEDAG (Elands Bay Environmental and Development Action Group), Baboon Point Homeowners Association and a representative(s) of the developers Midnight Storm Investments 170 (Pty) Ltd.
- The upgrading and re-use of existing WW2 buildings and the Labour Compound at Baboon Point should be undertaken. Such buildings may be equipped and used as a possible permanent archaeological research facility, information and education centre, local heritage museum, accommodation for school groups, and for eco and heritage tourism purposes, training, support and capacity building.

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