A FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A PORTION OF FARM 1065 (OLIPHANTSKOP) NEAR LANGEBAAN

Prepared for

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Report by

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a first phase archaeological survey of an area (portion A of farm 1065 (Oliphantskop) situated to the north of Lynch Point, Langebaan. Members of the Archaeology Contracts Office at the University of Cape Town were commissioned by Brandt Crous Steyn & Burger (Town and regional planners) to undertake the survey to locate and evaluate archaeological sites that could be endangered by development. The survey revealed 5 sites with Later Stone Age[1]1 and Middle Stone Age[2] components.

2. BACKGROUND

Recent resort development on the edge of Langebaan lagoon has resulted in a survey of the Lynch Point and Leentjiesklip areas (Parkington and Poggenpoel 1987) that documented sites that could be threatened by development[3]. Since this survey, two seasons of second phase rescue excavations have been completed by Parkington, Poggenpoel and Hart (1988) and Hart (1991). These excavations (which have produced a substantial body of information) have focused on the Club Mykonos resort area and the third on Leentjiesklip. A synopsis of findings from this programme are presented below:

A. The rocky outcrops of Lynch Point and associated Leentjiesklip points have acted as foci that have attracted Late Stone Age people. Radiocarbon dates indicate that recent occupation of the current shoreline started shortly after 4000 years ago, continued through the pastoralist period up to the colonial occupation of the Cape.

B. Analysis of shellfish remains shows that popular species were exploited to the extent that it is possible that a large proportion of animals failed to reach full growth potential.

C. Sites do not show evidence of dense prolonged occupation. It would appear that frequent visits to the coast were related to periods of spring/low tide when people could collected perlemoen (Haliotis midae) and other sub-tidal species.

D. At least one site has shown that people were not only exploiting marine resources but were also actively involved in the hunting and collection of terrestrial foods. These include numerous tortoise, as well as steenbok, eland, medium bovids and birds (ducks, geese cormorants and penguins). Evidence for plant foods has not been preserved but this was probably exploited as well.

[1] A broad term referring to the last 20 000 years of prehistory in South Africa.
[2] A broad term referring to a the period between 20 000 years to 200 000 years ago.
[3] All shell middens are protected by the National Monuments Act (Act no 28 of 1969 as amended). Permits for the disturbance of such are issued by the National Monuments Council to suitably qualified persons.

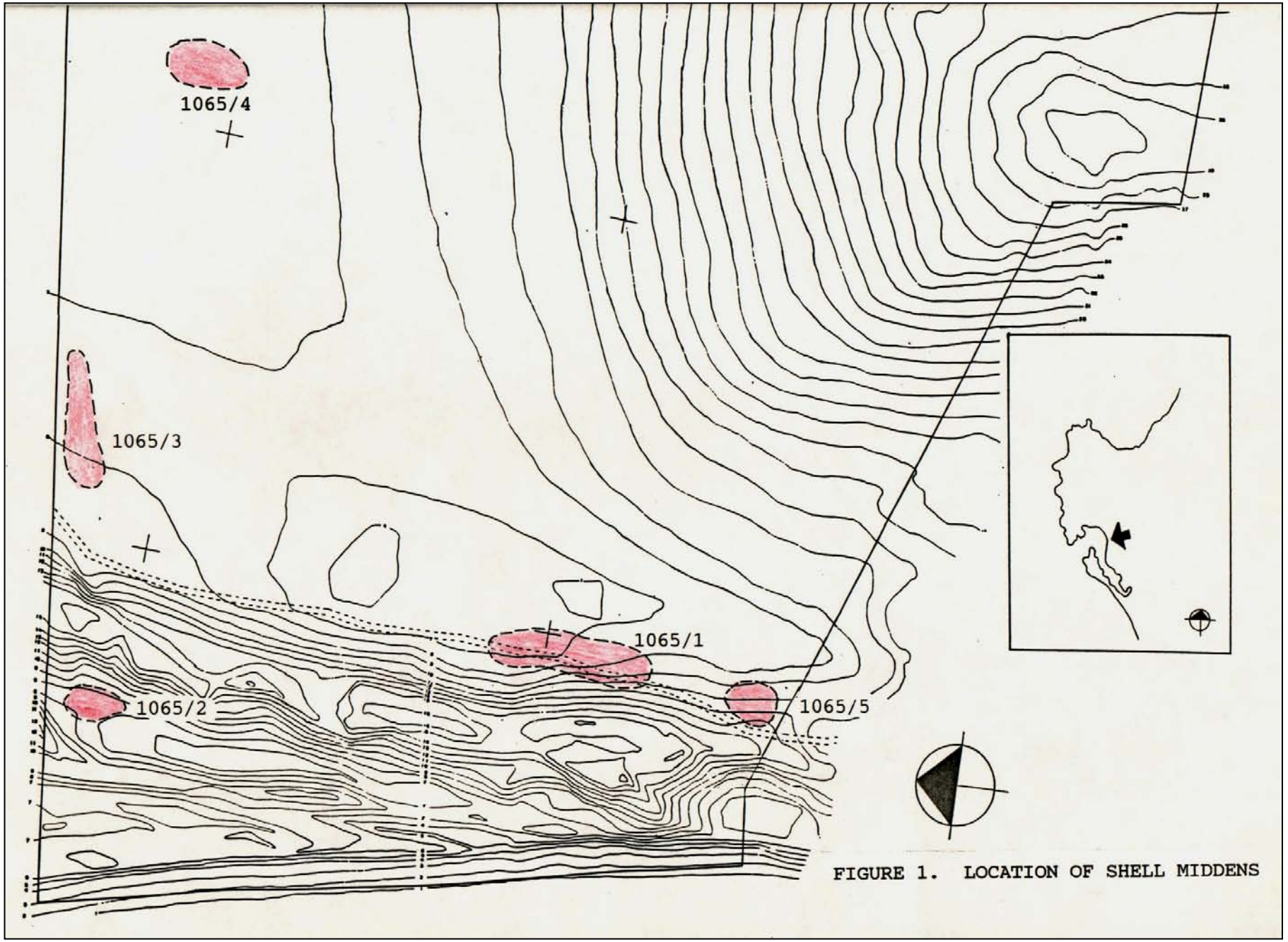

FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF SHELL MIDDENS

3. ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological sites recorded on this survey are evaluated in the context of current understanding of the archaeology of the region. Sites are located on Figure 1.

3.1 1065/1

This is a small ephemeral scatter of mostly Late Stone age material exposed in a jeep track and brought to the surface by dune mole rats. Most of the shell (Choromytilus meridionalis, Donax serra, Burnupena sp, Patella granatina, Patella granularis, Patella argenvillei and Patella barbara) is highly fragmented. Cultural remains found here are a quartz flake and core, a quartzite flake and 2 silcrete flakes and a core. Other finds include some fragments of ostrich egg and a quartzite flake characteristic of the Middle Stone Age.

Research potential: Low. The site, besides being extremely thin, has been disturbed by the jeep track.

No mitigation is necessary.

3.2 1065/2 (LP33)

Previously recorded by Parkington and Poggenpoel (1987), this Late Stone Age site is marked by a small scatter of shell (Choromytilus meridionalis, Donax serra, Patella granatina, Patella granularis and a number of Turbo sarmaticus). Small quantities of quartz and silcrete flakes were also seen.

Research potential: Low.

No mitigation is necessary.

3.3 1065/3

Tiny fragments of ostrich egg shell, fossil bone and a Middle Stone Age bifacially retouched flake are remains of a very old site which has been disturbed by a jeep track. The material was found to be lying in a thin layer of loose sand underlain by calcretes and limestones. It is possible that the material seen may be in a secondary context having eroded from the underlying calcrete.

Research potential: Indeterminate. What we have seen of the site is too disturbed to warrant excavation. Penetration of the calcretes could produce further evidence that may be of value.

The developer should be aware that earthmoving activities may produce fossil/archaeological material. In the event of this, an archaeologist should be consulted.

3.4 1065/4

A small Late Stone age site was located close to a marsh in the flatlands behind the dune cordon. A localised patch of limestone flakes indicates that people were using the exposures as a raw material source. Small amounts of shellfish (Choromytilus meridionalis, Patella sp. and Argobuccinam postulosum postulosum) and a few silcrete flakes are further evidence of a low level of prehistoric activity.

Research potential: Low. This is a very ephemeral surface scatter lying on shallow sands and calcretes.

No mitigation is necessary

3.5 1065/5

This site is indicated by a sparse shell scatter (Patella granatina, Burnupena sp. and Choromytilus meridionalis) lying in the flatland immediately behind the dune cordon. No artefacts were seen in association.

Research potential: Low

No mitigation is necessary.

4. CONCLUSION

The survey area was not heavily utilised in the past. Our present knowledge suggests that prehistoric people were camping close to rocky shorelines which offered greater opportunities for the exploitation of marine foods. All the sites located in the survey area are some distance from the rocky shoreline of Lynch Point which could be the reason why the shell scatters here are so sparse. In summary our findings are:

1. Sites 1065/1, 1065/2, 1065/3, 1065/5 do not require second phase excavation prior to development.

2. Site 1065/4 does not warrant excavation as the visible material is too disturbed to be of value. A concern here is that earthmoving could produce finds which lie fossilised in the underlying calcrete (The Langebaan/Saldanha region is well known for extensive fossil sites such as Langebaanweg and Hoedjiespunt which are associated with calcrete beds). If any excavation is to penetrate the underlying calcrete archaeologist should be hired to monitor activities.

3. Burials and human skeletal remains which are protected by the National Monuments Act may be unearthed during earthmoving operations. These should be left in situ until an archaeologist can be hired to remove them in accordance with established archaeological methods.

In terms of the archaeology of the surveyed zone, we hold no objection to any development that may be planned here provided that the recommendations in points 2 and 3 are adhered to.

5. REFERENCES

Parkington, J.E. and Poggenpoel C. 1987. An archaeological survey of the Lynch Point leentjiesklip area. Unpublished report submitted to Club Mykonos. University of Cape Town: Archaeology Contracts Office.

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