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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATIONS ERF 2078, LANGEBAAN

Prepared for

Langebaan Cove (Pty) Ltd

By

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**MAY
2000**

Executive summary

Trial excavations at erf 2078 Langebaan, on the Cape West coast were carried out over 4 days, between 23-26 May 2000.

The archaeological sites were first located during a baseline study undertaken in December 1999.

The proposed development of erf 2078 comprises a residential development, and a subdivision of the site in 68 erven.

Erf 2078 is located just behind Lentjiesklip 1, on the eastern shores of the Langebaan Lagoon.

Marginal and diffuse scatters of fragmented shellfish remains were located throughout the dune body during the baseline study. Very little cultural material was found, however, other than a few stone flakes, one hammerstone, and one piece of pottery.

The archaeological sites located during the baseline study were therefore given a medium to low significance rating.

It was recommended, however, that test excavations be carried out on erf 2078, prior to development proceeding, in order to determine the depth and significance of the archaeological deposit. Excavations undertaken at Lentjiesklip 2 and 4 have shown that archaeological deposits have been found buried up to nearly 3 metres below the sand body.

Eight, 1 x 1 metre squares were excavated on the site. Each square was excavated to a depth of between 1.5 and 1.9 m below the surface.

Only small quantities of shellfish remains were generated from the trial excavations. Cultural material was only found in the first 45 cm of excavated deposit. These included a very small quantity of stone, a few ostrich eggshell beads and some ostrich eggshell pieces. A very small quantity of bone was also recovered. Thereafter, all the trial squares were characterised by extremely low frequencies of shellfish remains, in a coarse, white, sterile dune deposit.

The results of the test excavations have shown that the archaeological significance of erf 2078 is low. With perhaps the exception of Cove 5, no significant buried deposits were located in any of the trial excavations.

The impact of the proposed development on erf 2078 on significant archaeological sites/remains is therefore considered to be low.

Human burial remains, may, however be exposed during implementation of the project.

The following archaeological recommendations are made:

- The development should be allowed to proceed
- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to a professional archaeologist, or the South African Heritage Resources Agency. Burial remains should be treated sensitively at all times.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the South African Heritage Resources Agency Plans Committee.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In December 1999, Crowther Campbell & Associates requested the Agency for Cultural Resource Management to undertake an archaeological assessment of erf 2078 Langebaan, on the Cape West coast (Kaplan 1999).

The proposed development (known as the Cove) comprises a residential development, and subdivision of the site in 68 erven.

The aim of the study was to assess the archaeological significance and sensitivity of the site.

A detailed foot survey of erf 2078 was undertaken. A desktop study was also undertaken.

Fragmented shellfish remains were located in open spaces on the slopes and dune tops of the high vegetated dune in the north-western portion of the site.

Diffuse patches of fragmented shellfish remains were also located in open spaces along the parallel dune ridge in the western portion of the property.

Marginal scatters of shellfish remains were located in a degraded and disturbed context in the extreme south-western portion of the site.

Patches of fragmented shellfish remains and a few stone flakes were also located in the backward portion of the site on compacted gravel and loose calcrete surfaces.

Shellfish remains were also associated with extensive dune mole rat activity on the site, indicating that archaeological material lay buried beneath the sand.

The archaeological sites located during the study were given a medium to low significance rating (Kaplan 1999).

It was recommended that trial excavations be carried out on erf 2078, prior to development proceeding, in order to determine the depth and significance of the archaeological deposit (Kaplan 1999).

In May 2000 Langebaan Cove (Pty) Ltd requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake test excavations at erf 2078.

The aim of the test excavations was to determine the significance of the archaeological deposits.

ACRM was granted a South African Heritage Resources Agency Permit (Permit No. 80/00/05/002/51) to undertake trial excavation at erf 2078, in May 2000.

2. THE STUDY AREA

The study area and location of test excavations is illustrated in Figure 1. Erf 2078 is located just behind Lentjiesklip 1, on the eastern shore of the Langebaan Lagoon, between the Langebaan Municipal Caravan Park and the Langebaan Waterfront Development (Lentjiesklip 2).

3. THE EXCAVATION

Eight 1 x 1 metre test squares were excavated on the site (Figure 1).

Test excavations were carried out over a period of 4 days, between 23-26 May 2000.

All the excavated material was sieved through a 1.5 mm mesh sieve, and sorted on site. No bulk samples were taken. Only cultural material from Cove 5 was kept.

Cove 1 GPS reading S 33°03.775 E 18°02.526

The site is located about 25 metres south of the boundary wall on the east-facing dune slope in the northern portion of the site, and comprises a fine, soft, loose, windblown sand deposit with small quantities of fragmented and crushed shellfish (limpet and black mussel). At about 40 cm below the surface, the deposit comprises coarse, sterile white dune sand. Three pieces of tortoise bone were recovered from the trial excavation. No cultural items were found. The deposit was excavated to a depth of 1.5 metres below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

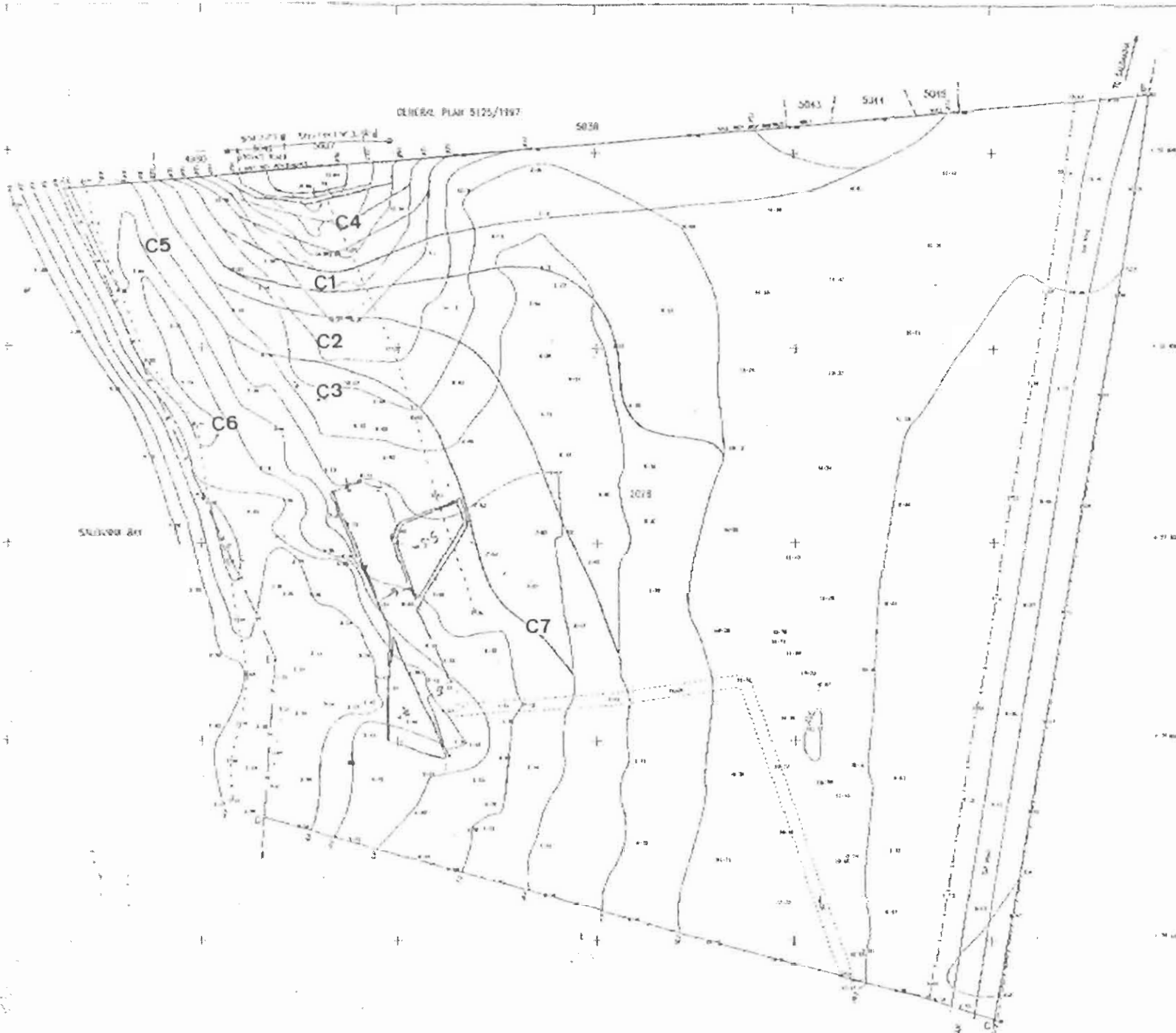
Suggested mitigation: **none required**

Cove 2 GPS reading S 33°03.779 E 18°02.523

The site is located about 15 metres south of Cove 1, and comprises a soft, loose, fine, windblown sandy deposit with twigs, leaves and fine rootlets. The Shellfish densities are higher than in Cove 1, but still very low, comprising mainly fragmented and crushed black mussel and limpet. At 55 cm below the surface, the deposit comprises a coarse and sterile white dune sand. Three ostrich eggshell beads were found, as well as a very small quantity of bone (bird and tortoise). No other cultural items were recovered. The deposit was excavated to a depth of 1.6 meters below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**



- NOTES:
- 1) HEIGHTS ARE IN METRES ABOVE MEAN SEA LEVEL AS DETERMINED FROM
 - 2) GEODENSITRICAL READING (GMS) INSTRUMENT NO. 540
 - 3) CONTOURS ARE AT 100 METRE INTERVALS
 - 4) --- DENOTES DRAINAGE
 - 5) --- DENOTES DRAINAGE WITH FENCE
 - 6) --- DENOTES AREA OF QUARRY
 - 7) --- DENOTES VINE PLANT

TOPOGRAPHICAL PLAN
OF
ERF 2078 LANGEBAAW
SITUATE IN THE
ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT OF MATIELAND
PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

CLIENT:
ROWMOOR INVESTMENTS (PTY) LTD

DRAWN BY:



John Greenwood
Professional Land Surveyor
No. 2 of the 3rd SURVEYING
COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

DATE OF SURVEY: 10 DECEMBER 1999

OWNED BY:



TEDVA
SURVEYORS

DATE OF SURVEY: 10 DECEMBER 1999

SCALE: 1:2500

Figure 1. Archaeological test excavation, erf 2078 Langebaan: study site and location of test holes

Cove 3 GPS reading S 33°03.784 E 18°02.522

The site is located about 10 metres south of Cove 2 and comprises a very small quantity of fragmented and crushed shellfish (limpet and black mussel), twigs, leaves and some rootlets in a soft, fine, loose, windblown sand deposit. At about 40 cm below the surface the deposit comprises coarse, sterile white dune sand. One piece of tortoise bone one quartz chunk and three ostrich eggshell beads were recovered. The deposit was excavated to a depth of 1.3 meters below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**

Cove 4 GPS reading S 33°03.769 E 18°02.526

The site is located about 10 metres north of Cove 1 and comprises a very small quantity of fragmented shellfish (limpet and black mussel), with some twigs and leaves in a soft, loose, fine windblown sand deposit. At about 30 cm below the surface, the deposit comprises a coarse, white, sterile dune sand. One piece of tortoise bone was found. No cultural material was recovered. The deposit was excavated to a depth of 1.4 metres below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**

Cove 5 GPS reading S 33°03.766 E 18°02.512

Two 1 x 1 m squares were excavated here. The site is located on the dune top about 10 metres from the boundary fence in the northern portion of erf 2078.

Cove 5 comprises a marginal scatter of fragmented shellfish remains (black mussel and limpet) in a fine, soft, loose, windblown sand deposit. Shellfish quantities are relatively higher than in the other sites, but are still quite small. Dune mole rat burrowing is present in both squares. A small amount of bone, including tortoise and bird was found. Altogether, five pieces of ostrich eggshell, one ostrich eggshell bead, three quartz chips/flakes, one silcrete flake, one quartz backed point, and one white mussel scraper were found.

At about 45 cm below the surface, the deposit becomes a coarse grained, white, sterile dune sand. At about 75 cm below the surface, a small patch of 11 whole perlemoen shell was found. No bone or cultural items were located in the deposit below 45 cm. Cove 5 was excavated to a depth of 1.9 metres below the surface.

Significance of site: **medium-low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**

Cove 6 GPS reading S 33°03.782 E 18°02.517

The site is located about 35 metres south of Cove 5, and comprises a fine, soft, loose, sandy, windblown deposit, with rootlets and humic material. Shellfish quantities are extremely low, comprising mainly fragmented and crushed limpet and black mussel. At about 45 cm below the surface the deposit becomes a more coarse grained, sterile, white dune sand. Four pieces of tortoise bone and one bird bone was found. No cultural items were recovered. The deposit was excavated to a depth of 1.5 metres below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**

Cove 7 GPS reading S 33°03.812 E 18°02.534

Cove 7 is located about 60 metres north-east of the Information Office, in an open space surrounded by low bushes, on a compacted flat shell surface. Cove 7 comprises a compact light brown coloured deposit, with higher quantities of fragmented and crushed shellfish (black mussel and limpet). A handful of small whole limpet (*patella granatina*) appear at about 30 cm below the surface. Thereafter the deposit is a homogenous compact light brown colour, with smaller quantities of crushed and fragmented black mussel and limpet shell. At about 1.0 metres below the surface, the deposit becomes less shelly and more compact, slightly coarse-grained and yellow-orange in colour. At 1.30 metres below the surface, the deposit comprises a coarse, yellow beach deposit. Only three pieces of ostrich eggshell, a few tortoise bones, one quartz chip and one quartz chunk were found. The deposit was excavated to 1.8 metres below the surface.

Significance of site: **low**

Suggested mitigation: **none required**

4. CRITERIAL USED IN EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATIONS AT ERF 2078

The criteria used in evaluating the significance of the archaeological trial excavations at erf 2078 include the following:

- the state of preservation of the archaeological deposit
- the range and density of domestic and cultural material recovered;
- rarity of occurrence; and
- regional importance

5. DISCUSSION

Archaeological visibility in the Langebaan area is extremely high (Kaplan 1993), with more than 40 sites recorded between Lentjiesklip 1 and Lynch Point (Parkington & Poggenpoel 1987). Excavations and studies have shown that the rocky shoreline at Lentjiesklip and Lynch Point acted as a foci that attracted Later Stone Age¹ (LSA) people as they offered greater opportunities for the exploitation of marine foods, particularly shellfish (Hart 1991).

The archaeology suggests that the pattern of occupation of the Langebaan area involved people locating themselves at the coast where large quantities of shellfish was consumed, as well as seals, fish, bird, tortoise and small antelope. Evidence also suggests that LSA people may have been scheduling their visits to collect lower tidal zone shellfish such as limpets and perlemoen (Hart 1991)

Excavations at Lentjiesklip 4 (Parkington *et al* 1988) and Lentjiesklip 2 (Hart 1991) show that some of the sites in the region date to between 4000 BP and AD 1800 (Hart 1991), some of which have been found buried up to three metres below the sand body. The domestic and material cultural items generated from these excavations indicate a wide range of human responses to opportunities and needs over time.

A human burial was also uncovered during excavation of a service trench at Lentjiesklip 2 (Hart 1991).

With regard to excavations at erf 2078, Langebaan, very little cultural material was recovered from the eight trial excavations. Shellfish remains were very thinly dispersed throughout the excavated squares. With perhaps the exception of Cove 5, the test excavations at erf 2078 did not locate significant archaeological material. Very little bone and only a few cultural items were recovered. No natural stratigraphy is evident in any of the 8 squares excavated on the site. All the cultural items were found within the first 45-55 cm of the deposit. Thereafter the deposit was a coarse, white, sterile dune deposit. Excavations in all 8 squares exceeded 1.5 metres. The results suggest a very ephemeral and dispersed occupation by LSA people.

6. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The results of test excavations show that erf 2078 is not considered to be archaeologically sensitive, vulnerable or threatened.

Human burial remains may however be uncovered or exposed during earthworks.

¹ A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.

7. LEGISLATION

Archaeological sites, including human burial remains are protected under the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) The Act came into effect on 01 April 2000, and replaces the National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969).

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the development of erf 2078, Langebaan, the following archaeological recommendations are made:

1. The development should be allowed to proceed.
2. Should any human remains be disturbed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to a professional archaeologist or the South African Heritage Resources Agency. Burial remains should be treated sensitively at all times.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

9. REFERENCES

- Hart, T. 1991. Archaeological excavation at Lenjiesklip 2. Archaeology Contracts Office, University of Cape Town.
- Parkington, J., & Poggenpoel, C. 1997. An archaeological survey of the Lynch Point Lenjiesklip area. Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town.
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