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**PHASE 1 REPORT TO HILLAND ASSOCIATES
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION OF
FARM ARCH ROCK No. 296 (KEURBOOMSTRAND)**

Brief

At the request of Mr Andries Fourie an assessment was made of the potential archaeological impact of the proposed subdivision of the Remainder of Farm Arch Rock No.296. The property to be subdivided includes the Matjes River Rockshelter, a National Monument, located on Subdivision 296/4. The proposed subdivision will create three titles (Figure 1). Portion A will be the property of the Fourie family and the construction of six dwellings on this portion is planned. Portion B is the plot on which there is an existing house (Fourie). As no further development is planned on this portion it is no considered further. Portion C is at present undeveloped apart from a shed on the road leading to the pump house on the next property. The National Monument is on the south eastern corner of this portion and access to the monument is across this portion.

Development on Portion A

Although the specific building sites are not clearly demarcated on the ground, there are foundation trenches dug for part of the development. These give some subsurface exposures in an area of tall fynbos with low ground visibility. No archaeological materials were seen in the dumps from the trenches. In natural exposures examined along the road to the pump house that runs past this proposed development again no archaeological materials were noted.

From the available exposures it appears that there would be no archaeological impact from the erection of these six dwellings on Portion A. The foundation trenches indicate construction of one or more of the dwellings would be on the edge of the valley and depending on specifications the construction may have a visual impact that needs to be assessed in relation not only to the beach but also to the route from the river mouth to the Matjes River Rockshelter.

Subdivision Portion C

The National Monument is at the foot of a high cliff in the incised valley of the Matjes River and is thus physically separated the larger part of this portion. There is a pipeline crossing the southern part of Portion C. The path along this pipeline is one of the access routes to the National Monument. As the path crosses Portion B, directly behind the house, access along this route is unsatisfactory. The National Monument is inaccessible at high tide when the route along the beach is impassable and the provision access to the pipeline path east of Portion B would be of benefit.

In the course of this assessment a Middle Stone Age site has been identified at the top of the cliff above the Matjes River Rockshelter. There is a track running in a southeasterly direction from the shed and this leads to a clearing and the site is on the edge of this clearing (Figure 1). The road, clearing and visible occurrences of stone artefacts are located in Figure 2 in relation to the survey peg put in the ground by S.J. McMillan, the professional land surveyor employed in the subdivision.

The artefacts are associated with clastic rubble on bedrock below cover sands. They are exposed along the edge of cliff where the sand cover is absent and down slope from the clearing in eroded patches. The artefacts are predominately flakes in quartzite and silcrete. They can be identified as Middle Stone Age by the presence of sub-triangular pieces with wide faceted platforms and the presence of blades with prominent dorsal ridges. On typological grounds some of this material is probably of the order of 100 000 years old. There may be younger artefacts in addition.

The cover sands limit the exposures but this appears to be a relatively extensive occurrence. The occurrence can be traced over a linear distance of 30 m. The terrain position is not anomalous as a Middle Stone Age site has been reported on the cliff top at Harkeville, west of Plettenberg Bay. The association with rubble suggests the artefacts occur in a lag deposit formed in a previous erosion cycle before the emplacement of the present cover sands. The implication is that the context is not primary. No bone is present in the exposures. Preservation of bone would not be expected given the acid ground waters issuing from rocks of the Cape Supergroup and the base-poor status of the cover sands indicated in the fynbos vegetation.

The site is conservation-worthy. Its significance is on a landscape scale as a record of where Middle Stone Age occupations took place. The context of the artefacts and the absence of faunal remains means the site would not be a priority for further investigation at this stage. Mitigation can take the form of avoidance.

In the compass and tape survey (Figure 2) a baseline was laid across the clearing on a bearing of 141° (118° magnetic) from the survey peg and the distance to nearest artefact close to the cliff edge was 40 m. The cliff edge was at 45 m and trends in a north-south direction. Minimally avoidance would entail re-routing the existing road so it passes west of the survey point and conserving an area between the cliff edge and a line with points at 50 m north and 50 m south of the survey peg.

It can be recorded that apart from a single Middle Stone Age flake seen on the slope above Portion B no other archaeological materials were noted on the property.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that development on Portion C of the proposed subdivision avoid the Middle Stone Age occurrence on the cliff top above the Matjes River Rockshelter (Figure 1).
2. It is recommended that minimally no development be allowed between the cliff edge and 50 m north and south of the survey placed on the edge of the clearing (Figure 2)
- 3.

Conclusion

If adequate provisions are made for the avoiding disturbance of the Middle Stone Age site there are no other archaeological considerations bearing directly on the proposed

subdivision. It would be beneficial if as a result of the proposed subdivision there was improved public access to the Matjes River Rockshelter.

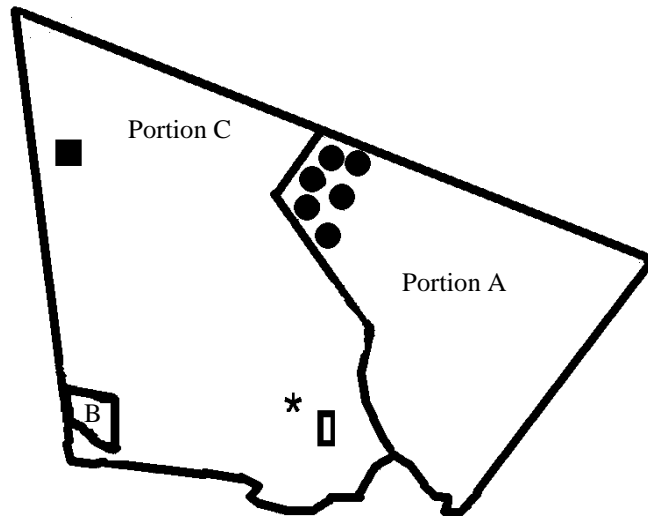


Figure 1 Proposed subdivisions of Remainder Arch Rock No. 296, Keurboomstrand, showing the positions of the proposed dwellings (dots) on Portion A and the existing building, a shed (square), the Middle Stone Age site (star) and the National Monument on 296/4 (rectangle) on Portion C. Portion B has existing house.

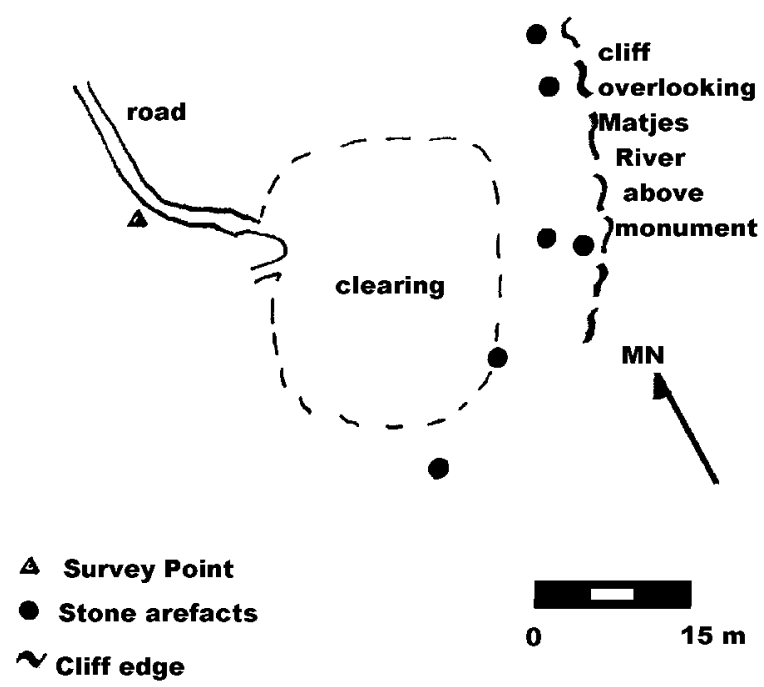


Figure 2. Tape and compass plan of the Middle Stone Age site marked as * in Figure 1. The site is located by reference to the surveyor's peg.

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