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**FINAL REPORT ON THE PHASE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATION OF PORTION 44 OF THE FARM
BRAKKLOOF NO. 443, PLETTENBERG BAY**

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a Phase 2 archaeological investigation undertaken on behalf of the consulting engineer, Mr Anstey (of Anstey, Bignaut & Clogg), to assess the possibility that archaeological material (including the remains of the Sao Goncalo) could be destroyed during installation of roads and services on the farm Brakkloof. A Phase 1 archaeological assessment of Portion 44 of the farm Brakkloof No. 443, Plettenberg Bay was submitted to Barry Doel Associates by the Archaeological Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town, in May 1993.

Since the Archaeological Contracts Office was unable to undertake the Phase 2 investigations they suggested that Mr Anstey contact the archaeologists at the Albany Museum. An archaeological impact assessment of this particular area is considered mandatory by the National Monuments Council (NMC) in view of the fact that it appears to have been the area settled by the survivors of the Sao Goncalo in 1630. The Albany Museum applied for a permit from the NMC to investigate the possibility that important archaeological material would be destroyed during the installation of roads and services by S. Colarossi Civil CC on the land concerned. A preliminary report of the archaeological investigations was sent on 19 March 1996 to the consulting engineer and the National Monuments Council (Appendix D).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Portuguese merchantship, the Sao Goncalo, heavily laden with pepper and porcelain, and on her return voyage from Goa to Portugal, started to take in water off the coast of the southern Cape in June 1630. She anchored off the bay formed by the Robberg headland (then called Ponta Delgado) and started to pump water from the holds. Some 100 people had landed, but the majority of the passengers and crew (including a large complement of slaves) drowned when the ship shattered in pieces after a heavy storm. The survivors built various 'habitations' (including a church) of wood and lived on the coast for approximately 8 months during which time they constructed two smaller wooden vessels to take them back to Portugal. From accounts it would seem that they obtained sheep and cattle from local Khoekhoen herdsmen for pieces of iron. The survivors eventually set sail in hope of reaching home.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE AREA

Artefactual remains relating to the survivors of the wreck of the Sao Goncalo were first recovered in 1980 when Mr J. Jerling built two private homes on the vegetated coastal dune area at the junction of the Robberg Peninsula and the Plettenberg Bay beach.

He recovered a large sample (in excess of 2000 fragments) of blue and white porcelain of the late Ming period (1623-1633), called 'kraak' porcelain. In addition, glazed earthenware decorated in the 'kraak' style but European in origin were also found. Less well known are the coarse porcelain dishes of Swatow type which had a glaze of

A black grey or greenish tinge. In addition, beads of paste glass and carnelian, lead fragments of incense, religious medals, coins and navigational instruments were recovered. The mother-of-pearl spoons are likely to have been manufactured on site by the survivors of the wreck. This led to the conclusion that the remains related to the camp of the survivors of the Sao Goncalo.

In 1981 a team from the University of Cape Town Archaeology Department followed the Jerling finds with professional excavations. Smith (1986) and his team excavated a 14 square metres and located the remains of what appeared to be a workshop area where iron was being smelted and forged - probably for the manufacture of components for the sailing vessels. Several associated concentrations of mussel shell and fragments of porcelain lying some 0,50 m below the soil surface, suggested that they related to the survivors of the Sao Goncalo.

During 1993 the Archaeological Contract Office at the University of Cape Town was contracted by Barry Doel and Associates to assess the prehistoric and historic archaeological potential of the area to be developed. At the time of undertaking the survey, plans of the proposed services or access roads were not available. The Phase 1 assessment involved a surface survey of the area, trial trenches around the Jerling homestead and a metal detector survey. The survey was unable to locate any *in situ* prehistoric shell middens but concluded that, despite the destruction of a portion of the historic site during the construction of the Jerling home, further areas relating to the activities of the survivors could possibly be uncovered during development of the area. Their report concluded that they 'fact that an historic site has already been identified in the development area, precludes any excavations for further development taking place until the requirements of the National Monuments Act are met'. They recommended that a Phase 2 investigation must be undertaken of Lot 3 where Smith (1986) located the workshop area.

METHODS

An on-site meeting, held at Robberg Beach End on 7 February 1996, was attended by Mr J. Binneman. It was agreed that the Contractor start with clearing and earthworks in road reserves and for sewer trenches as this would assist with the archaeological assessment. Furthermore, that the archaeologist (Albany Museum) apply for a permit to investigate the archaeological potential of the site. No work to proceed until receipt of the permit. Mr Jerling, who lives immediately south of the area to be developed, offered his assistance with any historical archaeological material excavated as he is familiar with the material from the Sao Goncalo.

In a letter of the 15 February 1996, Mr J. Binneman confirmed that the permit for excavations had been received from the National Monuments Council and requested that the contractor start clearance of the bush.

Johan Binneman and Lita Webley (archaeologists at the Albany Museum) and assistants S. Coetzee and A. de Villiers, arrived at the site 20th February and completed the contract on the 29th February 1996. Two more days were spent on the site from 7-8 March excavating the Workshop Area and on the 10 June to collect skeleton and to

had observations.

He visited Mr J. Jerling on the 21st February to discuss the nature of the historical material from the area which he had collected during the last 15 years. He showed them a collection of porcelain and other artefacts and, pointed out an area, close to where the road will be constructed and near his old house (Fig. 1) where he had not dug for material. He was of the opinion that they would recover material from the Sao Goncalo road beneath a small hill.

Furthermore, during discussions, Mr Jerling pointed out that the 'Workshop Area' identified during the Phase I investigations undertaken by the University of Cape Town, was shown on the wrong place on the consulting engineer's map. In his opinion the 'Workshop Area' was much closer to his old house.

1) During the course of the next few days, while the archaeologists were waiting for the Contractor to clear the bush from the road reserve, they started to investigate the 'undisturbed area' adjoining a small hill indicated by Mr J. Jerling (Fig. 1). This involved excavating a series of trenches and sieving the soil. Several sherds (Table 1) of blue and white porcelain as well as earthenware sherds, were recovered from a depth of approximately 50 cm. The historical material (which also included badly corroded nails, a fragment of brass, two clear glass and one cornelian bead) was found in a thin layer of fragmented mussel (*Perna perna*) remains situated in a 3 cm thick layer of dark brown soil. Of interest was a broken, worked piece of mother-of-pearl, possibly discarded during the manufacture of the mother-of-pearl spoons recovered by the Jerlings during their earlier work on the site. Fish bones were found interspersed with the mussel shell and two small (3 cm across and 10 cm deep), bowl-shaped hearths were uncovered and the charcoal retained.

Approximately 6 square metres was investigated to a depth of 1 m. Although further historical material is likely to be recovered from beneath the small hill, it was decided not to investigate this area further as it is covered by a small dune and is not in an area identified for development.

2) The 'Workshop Area' as indicated on the engineer's plans was sampled through a series of 7 test pits (Fig 1), but except for a thin scatter of marine shell some 50 cm from the surface, no historical material was recovered.

3) After the arrival of the bulldozer, we were able to monitor the bush clearance and request the removal of the top soil around the Jerling's old house (Fig. 1) in order to determine whether there was any historical material still in primary context. Two trenches and five test pits were dug in this area but it was obvious that the area was well-worked over and disturbed by leveling and gravel surfacing. A few fragments of porcelain, a button, a clear glass bead and a piece of incense was found in the trenches (Table 2).

On the northern side a small *Perna perna* shell midden with abundant fish remains (Table 3) was located and sampled. Five buckets of shell from the thin shell layer some 0,10 m below the surface was collected for species identification back at the Albany

Museum. A single small fragment of porcelain was recovered from the midden which makes it difficult to determine whether the porcelain is an accidental inclusion in a prehistoric midden or whether the midden actually relates to the historical period. Complicating the issue is the fact that more recently the occupants of the Jerling homestead appear to have dumped some of their domestic refuse (which includes fish remains) in this area.

3) Large test pits were also dug a few metres north-west of the shell midden in a hollow between the dunes at the area identified by Mr J. Jerling as the possible 'Workshop Area'. A few small fragments of iron, iron slag and brown stoneware was recovered to a depth of 80 cm indicating that this was probably the 'workshop area' (Table 4). The large domestic rubbish dump mentioned above, spilled over into this area.

4) Test pits were also dug at regular intervals all along the road and adjacent areas without finding any artefactual remains.

5) Several months after the archaeologists had completed their investigation a burial was uncovered by the contractors during trenching operations. According to one of the workers the long bones were in an up-right position, suggesting that the body was buried in a sitting position. A flat stone covered the skeleton. There were no other material found with the skeleton. The burial position indicates that it is of prehistoric origin, probably a Khoisan burial. The skull and most of the long bones were badly damaged by the bulldozer. No analysis of the skeleton has been conducted.

ARTEFACTUAL REMAINS

Precolonial remains

This included porcelain, earthenware, beads, iron etc. which would appear to relate to the survivors of the Sao Goncalo. It is more difficult to relate stone, bone and shellfish to the historical material because determining primary context was not possible with the exception of the excavation under the small hill next to the Jerling's old house.

Prehistoric remains

This included a 'prehistoric shell midden' as well as a possible 'Khoisan' burial. Material recovered from the midden included marine shell (brown mussel) as well as fish remains. The skeleton, buried in an upright position, appears to be that of an adult Khoisan individual.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have extensively investigated the areas identified for development. Tables of the artefactual material recovered are presented below. It is clear that there may be further remains under the small hill next to the Jerling's old home and also in the dune hollow near the house. The 'Workshop Area' which would be affected by road construction was intensively investigated and the remainder will not be affected by development as it falls outside the area to be developed. Artefactual material is some 50 cm from the surface and is therefore not affected by 'limited leveling' operations. It would appear that the area in the immediate vicinity of the Jerling's house has been well worked-over

The findings in the past and there is little likelihood that further important discoveries will be made when the house is demolished. It appears unlikely that large amounts of material will be found on the 8 plots earmarked for developed as the sites are located on a dune.

The findings would agree with those made by UCT archaeologists, namely that the site under investigation is more likely to be the landing site of the Sao Goncalo, than the actual camping site itself. We would suggest that the settlement of the survivors may be behind the coastal dune cordon.

It is recommended that any concentrations of material uncovered during further development of the site be reported to the Albany Museum and/or the National Monuments Council immediately so that systematic and professional excavations can be undertaken.

The material recovered from the excavations are to be deposited at the Bartholomew Hall Museum in Mossel Bay in due course as per the stipulations of the permit issued by the National Monuments Council.

REFERENCES

- Archaeology Contracts Office. 1993. A phase I archaeological assessment of portion 44 of the farm Brakkloof No 443, Plettenberg Bay.
- Smith, A.B. 1986. Excavations at Plettenberg Bay, South Africa of the camp-site of the survivors of the wreck of the Sao Goncalo, 1630.
- Storarr, P. 1988. Drama at Ponta Delgado. Shipwreck in Plettenberg Bay. The Hardegen Press: Cape Town.

APPENDIX I

PERMIT No.: 8/96/02/006/51
PLOTION 44 OF THE FARM BRAKKLOOF 443
CHECK SITE OF THE SAO CONCALO
KAYENA DISTRICT, WESTERN CAPE
19 MARCH 1966

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE PHASE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

The day after we arrived we met with Mr J. Jerling and after viewing the material in his possession, we visited the area where he recovered most of the ceramic and other artefacts. He also pointed out an area, close to where the road will be constructed, where he had not dug before. During the discussions, Mr Jerling pointed out that the 'Workshop Area' identified by the Phase 1 Archaeological Assessment undertaken by the Archaeology Contract Office at the University of Cape Town in 1993, was in the wrong place on the consulting engineer's map. Although Mr Jerling was not precisely sure of the exact location of the 'Workshop Area' excavated by Prof A. Smith in 1981, he indicated an area much closer to the house than was marked on the development plans.

While we waited for the Contractor to start clearing the bush, we started to investigate the 'undisturbed' area. A series of trenches were excavated. All soil was sieved after the top soil was removed. The material recovered include a small number of ceramic fragments, a few iron slag fragments, shellfish remains (mainly *Perna perna*), fish remains and charcoal. Approximately 6 m² were excavated. It was decided to end the investigation in this area because not much material was recovered, the remaining material (if any) is covered by a small dune in an area not identified for development.

We then proceeded to investigate the 'Workshop Area' as marked on the development plans. Several testpits were excavated, but except for a thin scatter of marine shell some 0.50 m deep no historical material was found.

When the bulldozer eventually arrived we monitored the bush clearing for all the roads and requested the removal of the top soil of a large area near the house. Several trenches and test pits were dug in this area but it was obvious that the area was well worked over and disturbed by leveling and gravel surfacing. On the northern side a small *Perna perna* shell midden with abundant fish remains, probably prehistoric, was located. One small ceramic fragment was recovered, but may have been an accidental inclusion.

Large test pits were also dug a few metres north-west of the shell midden in a hollow between the dunes at the area identified by Mr Jerling as the possible 'Workshop Area'. A few small fragments of iron, iron slag and brown stoneware were found which indicated that this area was probably the 'Workshop Area'. A large rubbish dump filled with recent domestic refuse was also located in this area.

Test pits were also dug at regular intervals along all the roads and adjacent areas without finding remains.

PLANNING REMARKS

Extensively investigated the areas identified for development. The only areas where possibly still occupational remains are in dune hollow area and under a small dune house. The 'Workshop Area' which would be affected by road construction was investigated and the remainder will not be affected by development. The latter is the areas earmarked for development. The material in both areas are some 0,50 to the surface and therefore 'protected' from limited leveling operations. The area to existing house was extensively worked over by Mr Jerling and occasional finds will be made when the house is demolished. It appears highly unlikely that large amounts will be found on the 8 plots earmarked for development as the sites are located in areas where no archaeological remains are known to exist. Should however, any concentrations of material be unearthed, it should be reported immediately to the Albany Museum Archaeology Department and/or National Monuments

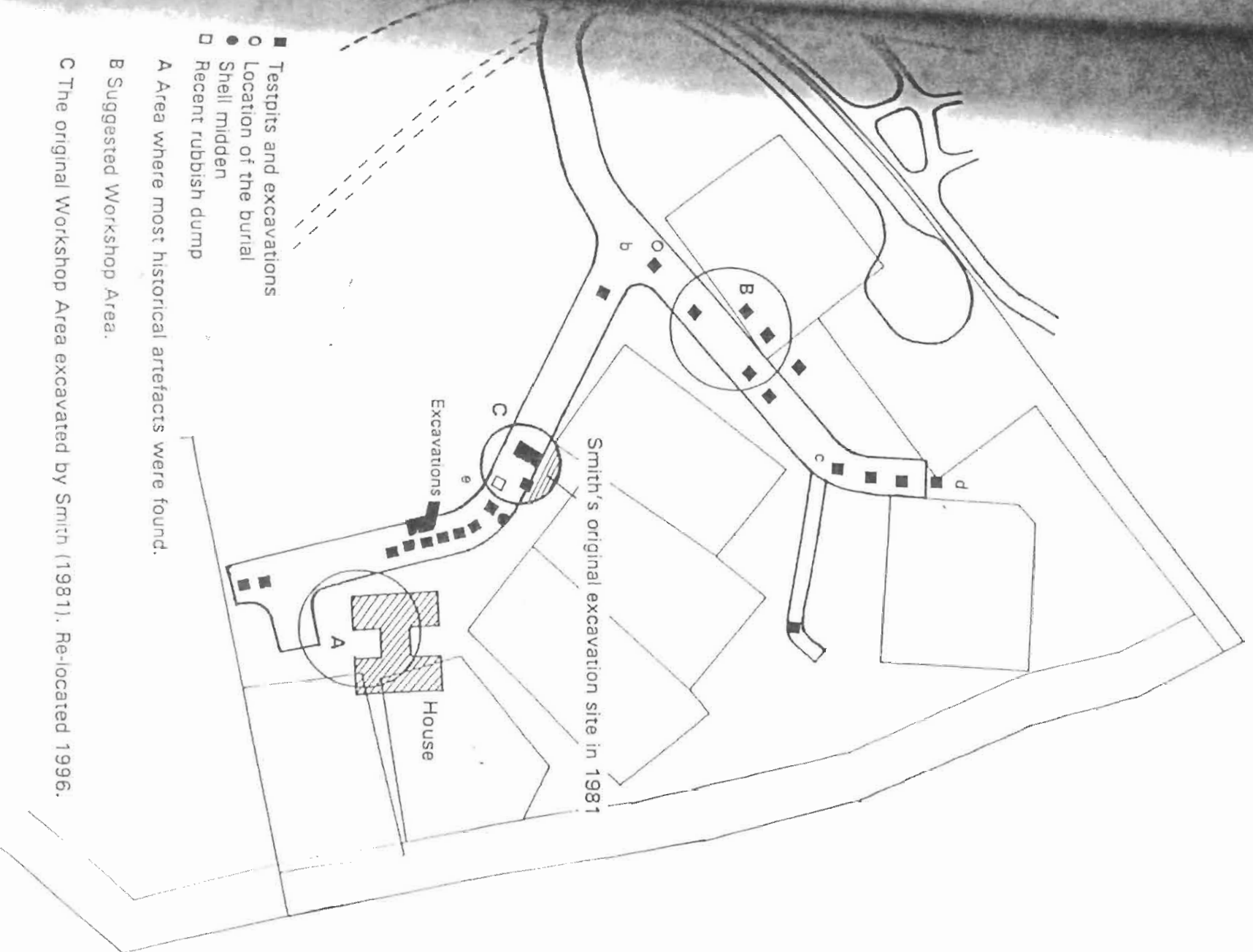


Fig. 1. Map of the Robberg Beach End development and archaeological investigations.

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