

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF TURTLE CREEK GOLF ESTATE, PLETTENBERG BAY

Prepared for

Grant Johnston Associates

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Prepared by

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was commissioned to undertake an archaeological survey of portions 36, 37, 48, 88 and a portion of 38 of Farm Ganse Vallei 444 situated close to Keurbooms River Mouth, Plettenberg Bay, Cape Province. The client is Mr W.B. Gibson, PO Box 181, Plettenberg Bay. This study was commissioned on behalf of the client by Di Grant of Grant Johnston Associates (landscape design and Environmental Planning), PO Box 1026 Plettenberg Bay 6600.

The land in question, known as Turtle creek, was previously agricultural land, which is to be developed into Turtle Creek Golf Estate. At present the land is relatively undeveloped and has been cleared of alien vegetation. None of the structures that are on or bounding the property are older than 60 years of age and are therefore not protected by the South African Heritage Resources Act of 1999. The study area, which is set back from the nearby Keurbooms River Estuary and borders the N2 road, is characterised by low ridges and valleys, much of which appears to have been ploughed in the recent past. In places there are thickets of bush and grassy fynbos, however most of the land surface has thick grass cover. Figure 1 shows the location, Plate 1 is a photograph (typical) of the development area.



PLATE 1

The development area (typical).
Note dense grass cover and
gentle topography.

1.1 Terms of reference

In order to minimise the potential impacts of development activities to heritage sites, the ACO undertook to:

- foot search the area;
- identify and describe any pre-colonial and/or colonial heritage sites;
- record the positions of sites using a GPS;
- prepare a report describing the findings and setting out appropriate mitigation steps if necessary.

1.2 Restrictions to the study

A restriction to the study was dense grass and bush cover in places, which made the ground surface difficult to see and search. This slowed down the pace of the survey, and at times, the archaeologists had to rely on examination of denuded areas (rubbish tips and road surfaces and burned out land) to get an idea of land surface conditions.

2. FINDINGS

Very little archaeological material was found on the site. The presence of cobble terraces (without beach material) indicates that the area was periodically effected by fluctuations in the in the flood plain of the Keurbooms River. The reason for the absence of archaeological material or middens may be a result of the fact that the area is very open and there are no rocks or outcrops that could provide shelter. Furthermore the shoreline consists of sandy beach, which is fairly unproductive in terms of easy food resources that could be exploited by prehistoric people. Archaeological sites of the Late Stone Age are numerous close to rocky shorelines throughout South Africa, but are not common in areas where food was not immediately accessible.

The material that has been found in the study area is incidental in character and does not represent any form of prehistoric habitation. The finds are indicated below:

2.1 Sites

TC 1 (Turtle Creek 1)

34.03273° South
25.37903° East

A quartzite core and flake of indeterminate age, possibly Middle Stone Age (40 000 - 200 000 BP)

Significance: Low

Impact: The artefacts will be displaced by earth moving.

Mitigation: Not recommended.

TC 2

34. 03246° South
23.38071° East

A broken quartzite blade with a faceted platform indicative of Middle Stone Age, a sand stone flake and quartzite flake of indeterminate age.

Significance: Low

Impact: The artefacts will be displaced by earthmoving activities.

Mitigation: Not recommended.

TC 3

34.03232° South

23.37962° East

A cobble terrace of river washed quartzite stones manifested in a dirt track. This is one of several remnant landforms relating to previous flood levels of the Keurbooms River.

Significance: Low

Impact: Displacement by earthmoving.

Mitigation: Not recommended.

TC 4

34.03220° South

23.38123° East

Some small thinly spread fragments of shellfish situated on the edge of thick bushes close the green labourer's cottage. Also seen on the surface were two chunks of stone (worked) of quartz and quartzite.

Significance: Low

Impact: Disturbance by earthmoving activities.

Mitigation: If the site was not disturbed by agricultural activities, collection of shell for radio carbon dating would be recommended. Site is so disturbed and polluted that this is not recommended.

TC 5

34.03200° South

23.38203° East

A single weathered flake of quartzite lying in a grassy field. An artefact of possible Early Stone Age origin.

Significance: Low

Impact: Will be displaced by earthmoving

Mitigation: Not recommended.

TC 6

34.03036° South

23.37763° East

A small bivalve shell with a ground perforation close to the hinge. This is possibly a prehistoric shell pendant that may have been dropped by its owner. The shell has been burned by grass fires.

Significance: Low.

Impact: Potential destruction during redevelopment.

Mitigation: Collection of artefact.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although we consider that the archaeological material found on site is of little significance and not worthy of any mitigatory action, it is nevertheless protected by the South African Heritage Resources Act and may not be disturbed without a permit issued by SAHRA. ACO does not have authority to issue permits to this end as these can only be issued by SAHRA.

It is the recommendation of this report that a copy should be forwarded to SAHRA, along with an application for a permit to disturb archaeological material. The contact person for this is Mary Leslie (021 4624502).

4. TEAM MEMBERS

Tim Hart MA (Principal Investigator)

Jayson Orton BA (hons)

Liesbet Schietecatte MA



FIGURE 1

The approximate location of the study area is indicated in yellow.

(After South Africa 1:50 000 sheet 3423AB Plettenberg Bay)