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**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
PORTION 57 OF THE FARM BRAKKLOOF NO 443,
PLETTENBERG BAY**

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a Phase 1 archaeological impact assessment undertaken on behalf of Grant Johnston Associates cc (Landscape Design and Environmental Planning) to assess the possibility that archaeological material could be destroyed during the re-zoning and subdivision of Portion 57 of the farm Brakklouf 443.

An archaeological impact assessment of this property is considered mandatory in terms of both the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

Historical background

The area to the north of the Robberg Peninsula is particularly sensitive in terms of development because it appears to have been settled by the survivors of the Sao Goncalo in 1630. The Portuguese ship, the Sao Goncalo was laden with pepper and porcelain and on her return voyage from India to Portugal when she was wrecked in the bay formed by the Robberg headland. The 100 survivors built various buildings of wood (including a church) and lived on the coast for approximately 8 months during which time they constructed two smaller vessels to take them back to Portugal.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 archaeological work on Portion 44 of the farm Brakklouf No. 443 (in 1981, 1986, 1993 and 1996) have produced artefactual remains from the wreck, including blue and white porcelain of the Ming period, glass and carnelian beads, lead balls, fragments of incense, coins, medals and home made mother-of-pearl spoons. These remains relate to the camp of the wreck of the survivors of the Sao Goncalo.

Prehistoric background

The Robberg Peninsula contains numerous caves containing midden material relating to the prehistoric occupation of the area. Nelson Bay Cave on Robberg is crucial to our understanding of the Middle Stone Age and Later Stone Age periods. The area adjoining the peninsula is potentially of great interest as it may contain shell middens of prehistoric settlement.

RESEARCH METHODS

The area (Portion 57) is some 3 hectares in size and it bordered on its eastern side by the Indian Ocean and its western side by a small road. The site is well covered in coastal vegetation and is undulating with numerous small hollows and a general slope down to the sea. A colour aerial photograph and a contour overlay map was available for purposes of the survey.

The area was visited on the 21 and 22 September 2001. The entire site was investigated on foot with the exception of two small, densely vegetated areas in the south-east and south-west.

RESULTS

Three potential areas of archaeological/palaeontological interest were located. They are described in greater detail below:

Site 1

This is a small hollow (some 4m x 4m in extent) located between vegetated dunes close to the sea. Scattered on the floor of the hollow are fragments of marine shell, including *Donax serra* (white mussel) and *Perna perna* (brown mussel). The closest source of the brown mussel is some 2-3km south, on the Robberg Peninsula. In addition, there are several large pieces of animal bone, some with evidence of butchery with a metal axe/knife. Scattered in the hollow are a lead sinker, fragments of clothing as well as plastic items.

The presence of modern items suggests that the marine shell were collected by visiting fishermen or perhaps vagrants living in the area. There is no conclusive evidence that the marine shell relate to prehistoric occupation and the location of the hollow, perhaps no more than 20m from the sea would make it an unlikely location for a settlement.

GPS reading:

S 34° 05. 464
E 23° 22. 330

Site 2

A diffuse scatter of marine shell was found over a large area (at least 30m x 30m) close to the boundary of Portion 65 of the farm Brakklouf No 443. The shell included both *Donax serra* and *Perna perna*, and the closest source of the brown mussel is at least some 2-3 km south on the Robberg Peninsula. Some of the fragments are quite large and complete, suggesting that they may be of more recent origin. One small piece of modern white china was found in this same area. It is possible that this marine shell scatter may also be of recent origin. However, the size of the distribution as well as the location of the scatter over a large flat area on the top of the ridge overlooking the sea, makes it an ideal settlement area for prehistoric inhabitants. For this reason, I would suggest that further investigation of this area should be undertaken when leveling of the vegetation and dunes for development. It is possible that a prehistoric shell midden may be situated beneath the soil surface.

GPS reading;

S 34° 05. 480
E 23° 22. 267

Site 3

A small collection of calcined roots/bone was found in a cutting close to the access road running past

the property. These roots/bones were eroding from the cutting and appeared well weathered. Since it was not clear whether these remains were of animal or plant origin, a small samples was collected for identification. Lying on the nearby surface was a large aikreukel (*Turbo sarmaticus*).

Dr B de Klerk (a qualified geologist and palaeontologist at the Albany Museum) confirmed that they were calcined roots and of no great significance.

GPS reading:

S 34° 05. 475

E 23° 22. 231

RECOMMENDATIONS

A surface survey has found that, with the exception of two localised surface scatters of marine shell, no archaeological sites of significance are situated on the area which is to be developed. These shells may be of recent origin and there is no concrete evidence to support a prehistoric origin. However, the discovery of the two marine shell scatters suggests that there may be sub-surface archaeological deposits, possibly even shell middens beneath the soil surface.

I would recommend that development of the property can take place but that every care should be taken to avoid destroying archaeological sites which may be located beneath the soil surface. When leveling of the soil takes place, contractors should look for the following features:

1. Dense accumulations of marine shell - evidence of a prehistoric shell midden.
2. Concentrations of shell associated with pieces of bone, pottery and stone artefacts.
3. Concentrations of fossilised bone.
4. Concentrations of blue and white china, pieces of iron, coins, etc.
5. Human remains including burials.

With regard to the above, it is important to note that development of Portion 44 of the farm Brakklouf No 443, resulted in the discovery of a Khoisan burial.

If any of the above are discovered, further development must stop immediately and the archaeologists at the Albany Museum and/or the South African Heritage Resources Agency must be contacted to determine the significance of the discovery.

Scale 1:1000

Portion 57 of the Farm BRAKKLOOF No.443

