

PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
PORTIONS 1/15, 92 AND R16 OF THE FARM MATJIESFONTEIN
NO: 304 KEURBOOMSTRAND, PLETTENBERG BAY.

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological impact assessment undertaken on behalf of Grant Johnston Associates cc. The proposed development of Portions 1/15, 92 and R16 of the farm Matjesfontein No. 304, Keurboomstrand makes an archaeological assessment mandatory (National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1998)).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND TO THE AREA

This area is particularly important from an archaeological perspective because of its proximity to the Matjes River rock shelter, some 1 km east of Keurbooms River. The rock shelter is situated in Table Mountain sandstone, which is important in view of the discussions which follow. The shell deposits in the shelter are over 10 m in depth and appear to have accumulated as a result of human occupation over the last 12 000 years. As with other coastal sites along the southern Cape, the cultural material include bone tools, shell ornaments, ostrich eggshell beads, and a painted burial stone.

There are many other archaeological sites in the Tsitsikamma mountains and it is common knowledge that there are numerous rock shelters and caves with evidence of human occupation. For this reason, it was important that the steep slopes of the affected areas should be surveyed for caves and rock shelters. It was also important to survey the coastal strip for possible shell middens.

RESEARCH METHODS

The area which was surveyed is some 37 hectares in extent. Portion 17/R, and some of the land on top of Candlewood Ridge and below Candlewood Creek have been cleared of vegetation. Unfortunately, the bulk of the portions which were surveyed were covered in very dense vegetation which made a thorough examination of the surface impossible. A colour aerial photograph and contour maps were provided in order to facilitate the survey.

The survey took place on the 19 and 20 November 2001. The area was investigated on foot and all relevant cleared areas were examined. However, many densely vegetated areas could not be reached.

Survey work commenced with Candlewood Beach. No evidence of shell middens could be found behind the first coastal dune. There are not many rocky areas along this stretch of the coast and this may have inhibited human occupation in the past. The survey then moved to the area below Candlewood Crest. All the foot paths which had been cleared of vegetation were examined. Thereafter (20 November) the survey moved to Portion 17/R which had recently been burnt and this was thoroughly searched. The area above Candlewood Ridge was examined carefully because of its location, providing excellent views over the bay.

During the afternoon, the survey work moved to the ridge itself as this seemed to offer the best potential for caves and rock shelter which could contain archaeological material. However, it was

apparent while walking over the area that the right types of rock formations were not present for caves or rock shelters. The rock outcrops appeared to be either shales or enon conglomerates. They were not very substantial (rarely more than 2m in height) and there was no evidence of any overhangs.

RESULTS

Only two (2) possible areas of archaeological settlement (sites) were located during the two day survey. Neither are very substantial in size or remains and they do not represent any significant discovery.

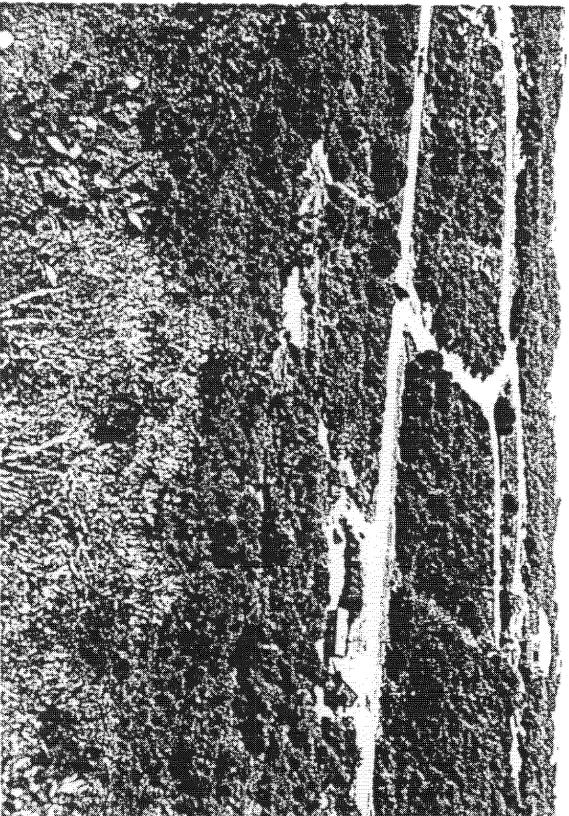
Site 1

This site represents a very diffuse scatter of shell in the disturbed soil around the recently constructed brick utilities building below Candlewood Crest. The shells are brown mussel (*Perna perna*) and estuarine species shells (*Dosinia hepatica*). The latter were not commonly collected for food in prehistoric times and their presence may point to changes in the river course during the past. No stone tools or any other evidence of human occupation could be found in this area.

GPS readings:

S 33°57.801

E 23°06.298



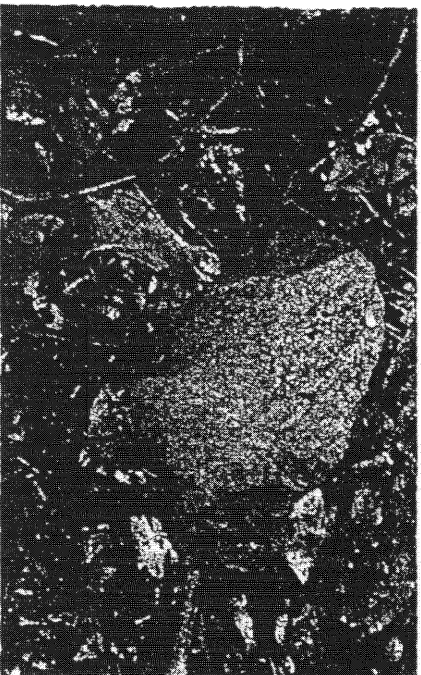
Site 2

The only archaeological items found were some large quartzite stone tools scattered around in the forest at the base of the footpath leading up the Candlewood Ridge to Portion 17. They were not diagnostic and it was not possible to identify them as Early or Later Stone Age implements. These quartzite tools were clearly imported to the area as the natural rock encountered in the surveyed area was either Enon Conglomerate or Shales. Their distribution, over a fairly wide area, suggests that they are probably not in context.

CPS Reading:

S34°00.307

E23°26.411



RECOMMENDATIONS

A surface survey has located only two localities (indicated on the accompanying map) which may represent the remains of archaeological occupation of the area. The first site, which consists of a disbursed scatter of marine and estuarine shell, may not be archaeological at all. However, every care should be taken during the development of the land around the utilities area to ensure that the recovery of dense accumulations of shell are reported immediately. With regard the second 'site', namely the diffuse scatter of large stone tools, these may relate to a more dense buried accumulation of stone tools in the survey area. The developer of the site should report the discovery of any accumulations of stones (these would be of stone not found locally) to Grant Johnstone Associates cc.

A source of concern during the survey of the property was the very dense vegetation cover which

means that it is quite possible that important archaeological sites may have been overlooked. For this reason, I would recommend that development may take place, but that every care should be taken to avoid destroying archaeological sites which may be buried beneath the soil surface. When leveling of the soil takes place, contractors should look for the following features:

1. Dense accumulations of marine shell - which are evidence of prehistoric human occupation.
2. Concentrations of shell associated with pieces of bone, pottery and stone artefacts.
3. Concentrations of fossilised bone.
4. Human remains including burials.

If any of the above are discovered, further development of the property 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.

