

# **A HERITAGE SCOPING STUDY OF THE FARM HANGLIP, PLETTENBERG BAY**

Prepared for

**Chris Mulder and Associates Incorporated**

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Prepared by

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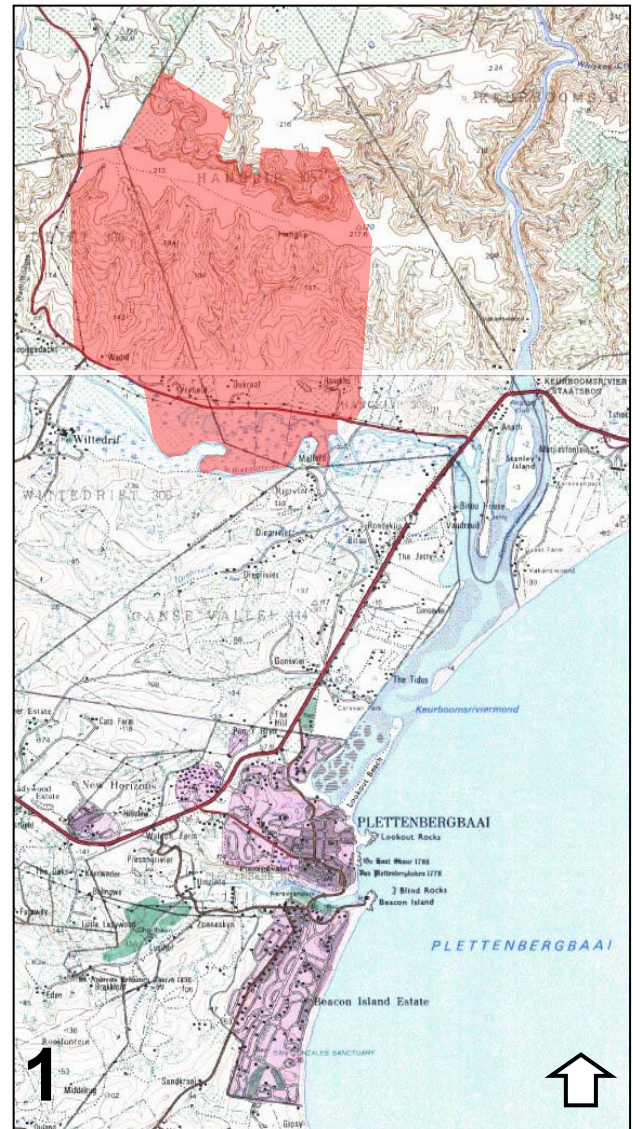
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) was approached by Mr Pieter Badenhorst<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Chris Mulder and Associates<sup>2</sup> to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of a portion of land to the north of Plettenberg Bay. The land consists mainly of the farm “Hanglip” (now subdivided into a number of smallholdings) and is bordered in the south by the Bitou River and to the west by the Keurbooms River. In the west is the Uniondale road while to the north, the area is bounded by a deep ravine containing a tributary of the Keurbooms River. The location is indicated in Figure 1.

The size of the property is approximately 1000 hectare. A number of farm buildings are indicated on the map adjacent to the Bitou River.

The large size of the area meant that several days would be required for the detailed coverage required by an HIA. It was suggested to the client that a scoping study be undertaken prior to commencing an HIA, to determine the nature of the landscape, and the potential for heritage sites to exist on the land. This proposal was accepted, and a 2 day scoping trip was undertaken in late April 2004.



Extracted from: 3423AB Plettenbergbaai & 3323CD The Craggs  
Scale 1:50 000

## 2. METHOD

The area was accessed in a 4x4 vehicle via a network of tracks that provided access to most parts of the survey area. At various locations, foot surveys were undertaken away from the vehicle. A GPS was mounted in the vehicle to navigate the tracks and carried when moving away from the vehicle to determine the geographical co-ordinates of archaeological material that was located. The WGS84 datum was used.

No development plans/drawings were provided at this early stage in the project so specific impacts to elements of on landscape are not considered in this report.

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**Plate 1:** Looking north towards the site from the outskirts of Plettenberg Bay. The uppermost escarpment of the survey area is arrowed.



**Plate 2:** Looking south towards Plettenberg Bay from the escarpment of the survey area. The Robberg Peninsula is visible at centre top, while the old floodplain of the Bitou River is visible at centre middle.



### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY AREA

The surveyed area consists of a number of zones. From south to north, the zones are as follows;

- *Floodplain:* A small part of the area lies on the present floodplain of the Bitou River. This is generally marshy and covered by vegetation;
- *Agricultural:* The old floodplain of the Bitou River is the area where most of the settlement is located. Agriculture probably occurred here in the past but at present it seems to be used mainly for pasture. The area is covered by grass and occasional stands of exotic trees;
- *Slopes:* Steep, rounded slopes angling up to the escarpment are incised by numerous ravines. These vary in depth and are all heavily overgrown with indigenous forest vegetation. Two tracks traversing the slopes lead up to the escarpment;
- *The escarpment* is a flat, level, expanse of land that has been used for agriculture until recently, and at present is used for pasture. It is easily accessed from the Uniondale road in the west. Some ruins were located on the escarpment. Some rock outcropping is noted on the summit, but is most visible in the ravine to the north. The area is covered by grass and occasional trees;
- *Indigenous forest:* Part of the area in the north encompasses a steep sided, deep ravine. Many rock bands are exposed in section and vegetation is generally dense indigenous forest. Some possible rock shelters were observed but could not be accessed.

#### 3.1 Limitations in conducting the survey

As this was a scoping study, the limitations that will be experienced in conducting a full HIA have been assessed.

While visibility on the escarpment and on the floodplain is limited by dense grass cover, it does not seriously affect conclusions. All parts of these two zones can be easily reached by vehicle and on foot.

Areas covered by indigenous vegetation are however problematic. Ravines are particularly difficult to access on foot due to thick vegetation, and in the case of the northern ravine, by both thick vegetation and loose, rocky, scree slopes. There is no access to the ravines by vehicle, except in one instance where a rough track had been constructed to permit the access of drilling equipment for a well point. This was located at the head of a ravine.

The dense afro-mountain forest vegetation presents a real problem in that it will add significantly to the time that will be necessary to carry out an HIA. Access to potential rock shelters can be achieved by using climbing equipment.



**Plate 3:** Looking north across the old floodplain of the Bitou River towards the slopes leading up to the escarpment.



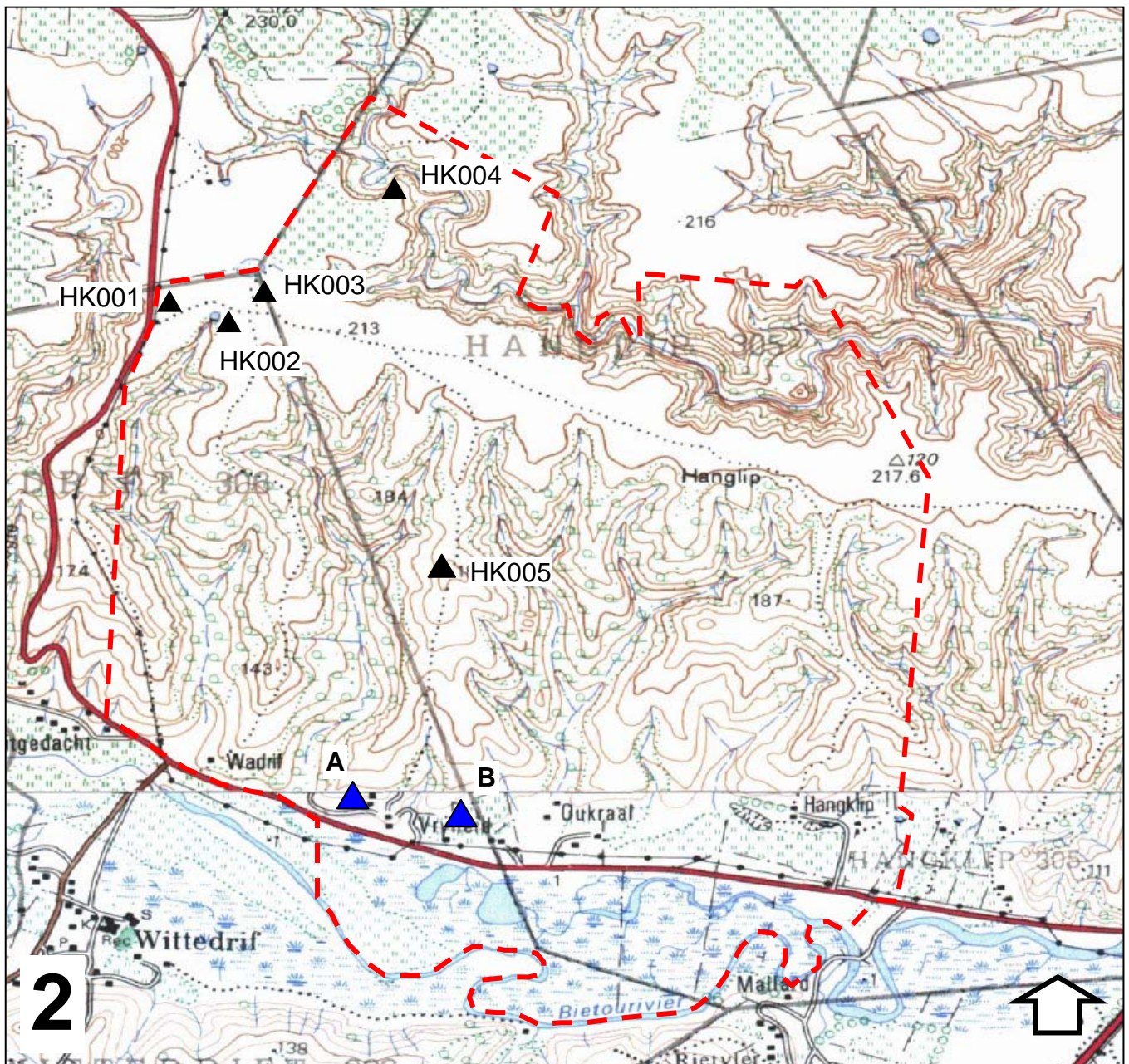
**Plate 4:** Looking south across the deep ravine in the north to the flat expanse of the escarpment.



## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Heritage sites

Seven features with heritage significance were recognised during the scoping study. Three of these are Stone Age artefact scatters, and four are structures. Of the structures, one is a complex of ruins, one is a standing building, re-used as a store, and 2 have been renovated and are still in use. The positions of the features are shown on Figure 2.





#### 4.1.1 HK 001

33°58'35.2"S 23°20'30.6"E

**Description:** The site consists of a scatter of MSA (Middle Stone Age) and ESA (Early Stone Age) stone artefacts around a small man-made pond. The artefactual material has been exposed by the removal of the topsoil during construction, and subsequent erosion. All the artefacts are made on quartzite, the MSA on grey and reddish varieties, while the ESA seems to be more on a brown variety. A selection of the artefacts is shown in Plate 5. The most distinctive artefact found is a handaxe. This is a fine specimen that was made on a large end struck flake and was retouched unifacially.



**Plate 5:** A selection of stone artefacts from HK 001

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is suggested.

#### 4.1.2 HK 002

33°58'34.7"S 23°20'42.0"E

**Description:** A small brick and cement structure now used as a store and shown in Plate 6. The building is in a general state of disrepair and no longer in use. The presence of a chimney, and proximity to a dam, suggests that it once served as a dwelling. The use of a mixture of relatively modern building materials suggests that it was built in the 20th century and is probably not more than a few decades old.



**Plate 6:** A dwelling later used as a store

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is suggested. It should not be necessary to apply for a permit to demolish the structure, unless clear evidence is found that it is more than 60 years old.

Proposed HWC Grading: n/a



### 4.1.3 HK 003

HK 003      33°58'35.1"S 23°20'40.0"E  
HK 003A     33°58'34.9"S 23°20'52.2"E  
HK 003B     33°58'36.0"S 23°20'50.1"E

**Description:** This is a small complex of features consisting of the ruin of a dwelling (003, Plate 7&8), an area of disturbed stone "alignments" that may represent an additional building/s (003A), and a nearby stone quarry (003B, Plate 9) from where the stone was brought for the construction of the buildings. The presence of good quality quartzite close to the surface was probably the reason for originally locating the buildings in this area. No associated household dumps were



**Plates 7,8,9:** The ruins of a house on the escarpment. A source of stone is found in a nearby quarry.

located although occasional fragments of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century refined earthenware were observed in the vicinity. It is difficult to date the structure precisely, but it seems likely that it could date to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mitigation:** This may be amongst the earliest structures on the farm. Demolition will require a permit to be issued by the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority. If demolition is to occur, the site should be the subject of a more detailed level of investigation. This should include archival research, clearing of grass and surveying of the structural elements and excavation of samples of any dumps that are located.

**Comment:** We were surprised not to find any indication of Stone Age use of the raw material source. Subsequent ploughing and attempts to move some of the blocks are unlikely to have completely removed all traces of use. Perhaps the outcrop remained below the surface until agricultural activities exposed it (?)

#### 4.1.4 HK 004

33°58'15.9"S 23°21'06.8"E

**Description:** The site consists of a scatter of MSA and occasional ESA stone artefacts eroding out, at various places, of the animal paths running along the edges of the deep, northern ravine. Raw materials include quartzite, on which most of the artefacts are made, but also occasional pieces of chert, and quartz. Selected items are indicated in Plates 10 and 11. It is difficult to know the full extent of these scatters, but they seem to extend across an



**Plate 10:** A large core made on quartzite



**Plate 11:** A characteristic MSA blade made on chert

erosion front of approximately 100 meters, and then seems to disappear.

The scatter is located at a point above where some rock overhangs are present. In general, the northern ravine seems to cut through many

more rock bands than any of the ravines in the west. As the rock and scree slopes below the edge of the ravine are not very stable, we were unable to access any of the uppermost overhangs to confirm if any artefactual material was present or if in fact any of the shelters had floors that could have supported occupation in the past. Subsequently, we spoke with a Mr van Zyl who has stayed on the farm for most of his life, who indicated that the only "cave" that he knew of, was in the ravine in the general vicinity of this artefact scatter.

**Mitigation:** As artefactual material is likely to be in secondary context, no mitigation is suggested. It would be useful to know if there is in fact an occupied rock shelter in the ravine.

#### 4.1.5 HK 005

33°59'25.6"S 23°21'19.5"E

**Description:** A scatter of stone artefactual material exposed in a small clearing adjacent to the track leading from the farm *Vryheid* up to the escarpment. Disturbance was probably the result of grading. This has removed topsoil and exposed underlying ferruginous gravels containing the artefactual material. The material is on quartzite and appears to be largely of ESA age although some MSA could be present as well.



#### 4.1.6 HK A



**Plate 12:** A vernacular style building

**Description:** This vernacular building is on the property of Mr Van Zyl, between Wadriif and Vryheid.

It has been well maintained and is still in use. It probably dates from the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mitigation:** Permission will be required to demolish or modify the building in terms of section 34 of the NHRA.

**Proposed HWC Grading:** 3

#### 4.1.7 HK B

**Description:** A small vernacular building that has also been well maintained and is still in use. It probably dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mitigation:** Permission will be required to demolish or modify the building in terms of section 34 of the NHRA.

**Proposed HWC Grading:** 3



**Plate 13:** A vernacular style building

### 4.2 Landscape

The cultural landscape of the study area has not been analysed in detail in this report as more work is required to establish its significance. Field observations have revealed that it consists of two main landscape varieties – namely cultivated or previously cultivated landscape, and the natural landscape of indigenous forest, steep ravines and thickets. The presence of ruins on the plateaux suggest that the land has been farmed for some time, but how long and by whom is not known (archival research required). Areas of the site that are developable are the high plateaux and



the lower riverine areas which have both been used for agriculture. Possible impacts of development of the landscape will involve housing on meadows and fields which will involve loss of “countryside”, however the extent of impacts cannot be assessed until such times that initial development plans are revealed. Issues of visual amenity, landscape character will require specialist input.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Given the large size of the survey area, few conservation worthy structures or archaeological sites were observed.

While there is clear evidence of occupation of the area during the Early and Middle Stone Age, we have seen no evidence of any Late Stone Age material. The lack of any visible rock shelters, except perhaps in the northern ravine, means that there were no obvious foci attracting human occupation to any specific place. Added to this the fact that the area was probably more heavily vegetated in the past, meant that movement through the landscape was certainly limited largely to game trails. The Early and Middle Stone Age material is in all likelihood very extensive, and removal of topsoil is likely to expose more of it in various places.

The more recent historical use of the area is indicated by some of the buildings and ruins that have been observed on the escarpment and on the old floodplain of the Bitou River. Historic linkages between the escarpment and the lower area were probably via tracks, some of which are still present. It is not certain when use of the escarpment for agriculture began, but it is likely to have been towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We noted a number of well points on the edge of the escarpment. These wells require the water to be drawn up by electric or diesel pumps. It is not clear if the few small dams on the ridges would have been able to provide enough water for irrigation of extensive cultivation and therefore original cultivation was probably on a subsistence basis.

In overall terms, the survey area does not appear to contain any heritage sites that cannot be mitigated, however treatment of the landscape to minimise visual-spatial impacts will be required.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

What was intended to be a scoping study to assess the needs of an HIA, has gone into a little more detail than intended, as it became clear that the heritage resources were very limited.

- In our opinion, there would be little point in intensively surveying all parts of the area. Such a survey would require a lot of time and effort to penetrate the thick vegetation, for little gain. It is our opinion that the developers should present some overall concept plans so that an HIA can target specific areas likely to be disturbed. It would be the decision of the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (Heritage Western Cape) as to whether they would make a concession in this regard.
- Three aspects of the site require further attention:
  - Firstly, the built environment contains some buildings which have obvious historic features, and these will need to be more carefully inspected by a specialist, recorded and graded. A survey of the deeds should be made to

establish the sequence of land occupation. This would also help with the interpretation of the ruins on the escarpment.

- The possibility of a rock shelter in the northern ravine should be explored.
- Once preliminary plans are on the table, the impacts to the landscape need to be assessed and planned for.