

Remainder Erf 9343, Mossel Bay, Western Cape

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

Prepared For:

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By:



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Table of Contents

<u>Content</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table of Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	3
1.1. Background	3
1.2. Purpose of the Study	3
1.3. Study Area	4
1.4. Approach to the Study	5
2. Description of the Affected Environment	5
3. Identification of Heritage Sites during the 2003 Survey	6
4. Sources of Risk, Impact Identification and Assessment	7
5. Recommended Mitigation Measures and Management Actions	8
6. Environmental Acceptability and Comparison of Alternatives	8
7. Conclusions and Recommendations	8
References	9
Acknowledgement	9

Executive Summary

A Heritage Impact Assessment of the Remainder of Erf 9343, Mossel Bay, revealed the presence of early 20th Century structures that can only be demolished with a permit from Heritage Western Cape as they are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999). The structures are not of historic significance and are currently in a state of disrepair. There are no interested parties to undertake the renovation and maintenance of these buildings. The Remainder of Erf 9343 is a sore point for local residents because the buildings are deteriorating and the property is being used by vagrants and for dumping. Local residents, therefore, welcome the proposed future development of the site as it will uplift the area and prevent further decay of buildings and improper use of the property. Archaeological material may be unearthed during the construction phase of the proposed development and therefore it is recommended that a professional archaeologist monitors earth moving activities.

Recommendation

- Apply to Heritage Western Cape for a permit to demolish the old school and dwellings.
- Appoint an archaeologist to monitor earth movement activities during the construction phase of the proposed development.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Remainder of Erf 9343, Mossel Bay, is the registered property of the Roman Catholic Church. The land became the property of the Roman Catholic Church in the late 19th Century and was used for the earlier St Blaize Primary School. Quite recently, the church purchased property in Heiderand, a new suburb of Mossel Bay, and built a new school there. The church wishes to sell Remainder of Erf 9343 to raise funds to upgrade the new school in Heiderand. In applying for a demolition permit for built structures on Remainder Erf 9343, Mr. G.O. Pocock – acting on behalf of the church – was advised that Heritage Western Cape (HWC) requires a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) report before the application to demolish is considered.

MAPCRM was appointed to undertake a specialist study to determine the potential impact of the proposed demolition of buildings and future development of the area on the heritage (historic and pre-historic archaeological) resources of the area.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the HIA include the following:

- To assess the potential impacts associated with the proposed demolition and future development and compare these with the "no-go" alternative;
- To identify mitigatory options – where applicable - to minimize potential negative impacts and enhance positive impacts; and
- Indicate the environmentally preferred alternative.

The terms of reference (TOR) for the HIA are to:

- a) review available data regarding sites of archaeological or historical importance in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development (dealt with in Section 2)
- b) identify any sites of archaeological or historical importance within the development area (dealt with in Section 3)
- c) describe the historical and/or archaeological significance of sites typical to the immediate area and any sites that may be identified within the development area (dealt with in Sections 2 and 3)
- d) assess the impact of the proposed development on the historical and/or archaeological sites described (dealt with in Section 4)
- e) recommend measures that should be implemented during the construction phase should any potential sites be uncovered (dealt with in section 5)
- f) prepare and submit a HIA report to Mr. G.O. Pocock that meets standards required by Heritage Western Cape in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999.

1.3 Study Area

Figure 1 shows the location of the area where Remainder Erf 9343 is situated in Mossel Bay, Western Cape. Figure 2 is the enlarged area indicated in Figure 1, showing the location and outline of Remainder Erf 9343 – a 1.4 hectare area -, which was studied during the fieldwork for this HIA. To the best of our knowledge, no previous archaeological research was conducted on Remainder Erf 9343, Mossel Bay.

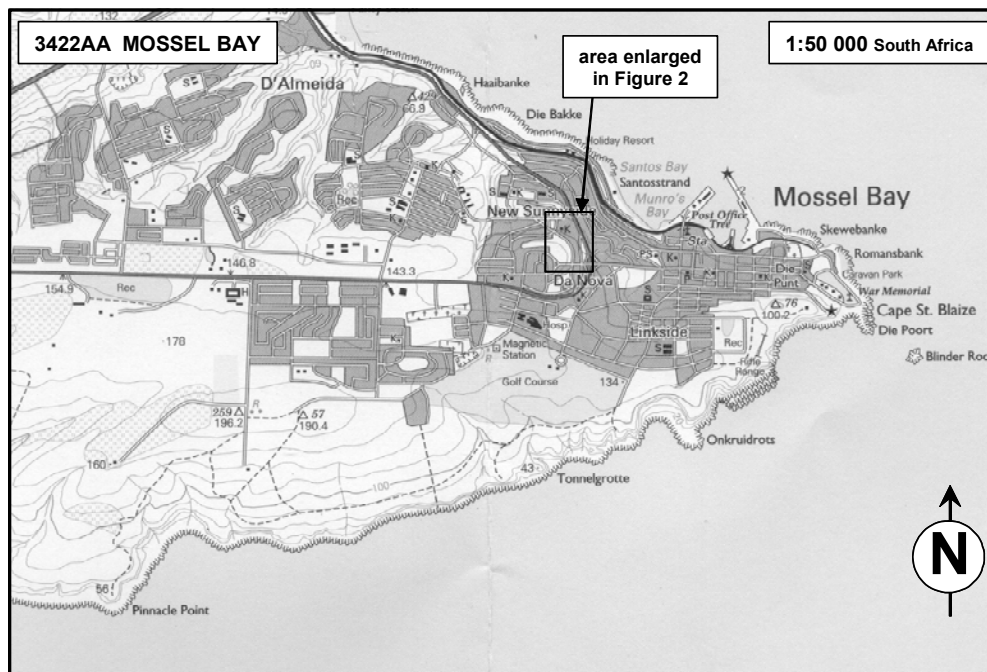


Figure 1. Map of Mossel Bay showing the area enlarged in Figure 2.

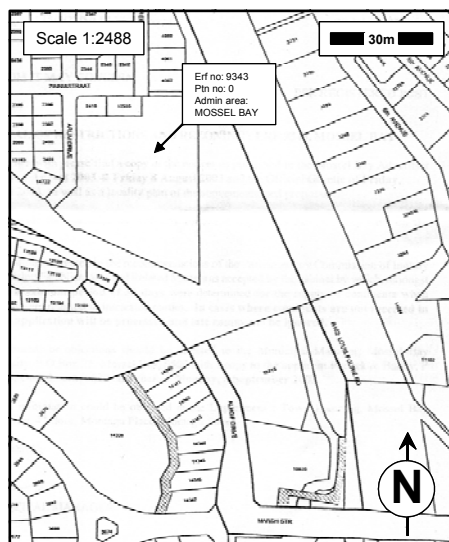


Figure 2. Enlarged area indicated in Figure 1 showing the location and outline of Remainder Erf 9343, Mossel Bay.

1.4 Approach to the Study

Prior to conducting the fieldwork for this study, Professor Wesley Gavin, acting joint chairman of the Heritage Society of Mossel Bay was consulted regarding the Society's objections to demolition of old buildings and the future development of the study area.

Mr. Cor van Noordwyk of Cor van Noordwyk Properties was contacted to obtain maps and plans as well as information on the planned structural facilities and services for the proposed development of Remainder Erf 9343 and the adjoining portion of Erf R/2001.

On 14 February 2004 the site was traversed on foot in a systematic manner and a detailed digital photographic record – available on request - was made of the older school buildings and dwellings. Exposed ground surfaces and earth profiles were examined for the presence of archaeological materials.

2. Description of the Affected Environment

Heritage resources differ in a fundamental and crucial way from most other environmental resources; they are entirely irreplaceable and not renewable. Rapid and widespread development in the Mossel Bay and surrounding areas is a serious threat to Heritage Resources. Unless long-term conservation and management plans are put in place, the Heritage Resources of the affected environment are in grave danger of being lost forever.

The areas to the North and West of Remainder Erf 9343 contain residential dwellings and some of these, according to the Heritage Society of Mossel Bay, are "century-old stone houses of the Tarka community." A new Super Spar is located to the South and the Louis Fourie Road (R102) lies to the East of the property (see Figure 2). Apparently, inhabitants of the above-mentioned residential areas welcome the proposed development on Remainder Erf 9343 and the adjacent Portion of Erf R/2001 because the former is falling into disrepair

while both are being used for dumping and temporary “homes” for vagrants. Additionally, local residents feel that the proposed development will uplift the area as well as the value of properties in the area.

The Remainder Erf 9343 contains numerous school buildings and dwellings and large concrete surfaces. Very small portions of the 1.4 hectare property are void of built structures and are mostly covered by bush and grass. Apart from the few old dwellings that are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) because they are older than 60 years, it is possible that earlier archaeological sites or materials are currently covered by built structures and vegetation and are therefore not currently visible. In accordance with the above-mentioned legislation a permit from Heritage Western Cape must be acquired to demolish the old school buildings and dwelling.

Most of the natural and possible anthropogenic sediments and their stratification in Remainder Erf 9343 have undergone considerable disturbance during the construction of the school buildings and dwellings. Nevertheless, there may be areas of the property that were not affected in the past and therefore it is recommended that an archaeologist monitor the earthmoving activities during the construction phase of the proposed future development.

3. Identification of Heritage Sites During the 2003 Survey

On 14 February 2004 a survey of the study area revealed the presence of numerous



school buildings, a church and a few dwellings. All of these are in a state of disrepair and require renovation to restore to their former condition. There are no interested parties to undertake such renovation and maintenance. The school and at least one of the dwellings date to the early 20th Century. According to Professor Wesley Gavin of the Heritage Society of Mossel Bay, the architecture represents nice examples of that time, but is not

unique. Being older than 60 years, these built structures are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) and a permit for their demolition is required from Heritage Western Cape. Due to the limitations described above, only small areas of the ground surface was visible for inspection, but exposed areas and sediment profiles did not reveal any archaeological material.



Table 1. Age, significance and required mitigation for discovered heritage sites.

Site Name	Period/Age	Potential Significance	Mitigation
School building	Early 20 th Century	Local	Obtain permit for destruction from Heritage Western Cape
At least one dwelling	Early 20 th Century	Local	Obtain permit for destruction from Heritage Western Cape
none	Stone Age	Local/National	Monitor earth moving activities during construction phase

4. Sources of Risk, Impact Identification and Assessment

The National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999 protects all built structures older than 60 years and all archaeological sites and they may not be destroyed, damaged, excavated, altered, defaced or disturbed without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or a Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA, e.g., Heritage Western Cape [HWC]). In this light, a permit from Heritage Western Cape is required to demolish buildings on Remainder Erf 9343.

The proposed demolition and proposed future development should not have obvious adverse affects on the general Heritage Environment (ambience, sense of place, built structure, historic landscape, oral histories, etc). The proposed development includes structures that are no more than 2 stories high and include considerable exposed, dressed stone that should blend with the existent built environment. As mentioned above, the proposed development is welcomed by local residents as it will uplift the area and stop the current use of the property for dumping and temporary “housing” for vagrants.

While deposits that may have contained archaeological materials were previously disturbed during construction of the school buildings, church and dwellings and while no archaeological traces were discovered during the field work, the possibility exists that such materials lie buried beneath the surface. Unlike most other environmental resources, heritage resources can never be replaced, replicated or renewed and this makes them particularly vulnerable to permanent destruction. Any form of excavation and earth movement may disturb, alter and/or destroy potential heritage/archaeological sites. Monitoring by – or under the supervision of - a professional archaeologist is therefore recommended during the construction phase of development.

The Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed demolition and future development on Heritage Resources is summarized in Table 2. The assumption in the “Assuming Mitigation” columns is that all mitigatory measures recommended in this document are adopted and adhered to.

Table 2. Impact on and Loss of Heritage Resources

	CONSTRUCTION		OPERATION	
	Without Mitigation	Assuming Mitigation	Without Mitigation	Assuming Mitigation
Extent	Local	Site	Indeterminate prior monitoring (IPM)	IPM
Duration	Permanent	Permanent	IPM	IPM
Intensity	Low	Low	IPM	IPM
Probability	Definite	Probable	IPM	IPM
Significance	Medium	Low	IPM	IPM
Status	-ve & +ve	-ve & +ve	IPM	IPM
Confidence	High	Medium	IPM	IPM

5. Recommended Mitigation Measures and Management Actions

The old school building and at least one dwelling are older than 60 years and are therefore protected by the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999. As such, a permit for their destruction must be applied for and obtained from Heritage Western Cape before demolition and proposed future development. As archaeological materials may lie beneath the ground surface, it is recommended that earth moving during the construction phase be monitored by, or under the supervision of a professional archaeologist. In the event that archaeological sites or materials are unearthed during the construction phase, the archaeologist should be given sufficient time and resources for mitigation (to obtain permits from HWC and to conduct archaeological excavation).

6. Environmental Acceptability and Comparison of Alternatives

The negative impact of demolition and the proposed future development on the heritage of the area is that the built environment will be destroyed during the construction phase. However, the former built environment is now in disrepair and the area is being used for dumping and as housing for vagrants. The local community welcomes the proposed future development of Remainder of Erf 9343 as it will uplift the area and prevent further disorder and improper and/or unwelcome use of the property. Provided that mitigatory measures - as recommended above - are employed, the proposed demolition and proposed future development is acceptable from a heritage perspective. Although the “no-go” alternative does not have the same negative impacts as the proposed development, the latter has the positive impact of uplifting the currently deteriorating Remainder Erf 9343 to blend and add to the surrounding natural and built environment. If the “no-go” option was chosen, the physical heritage of the area will be lost by decay through time.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

While the built environment and fairly dense vegetation cover restricted a detailed and comprehensive survey, no heritage resources of significance were discovered during the Heritage Impact Assessment. It is highly likely that sediments containing archaeological materials were disturbed during the construction phase of the built structures currently on the property. The old school building and at least one dwelling are protected by law and a permit

from Heritage Western Cape must be obtained for their destruction. Due to the potential existence of pre-historic and more recent heritage resources within the Remainder of Erf 9343 it is recommended that archaeological monitoring is undertaken during the construction phase of the proposed future development. Provided the recommended mitigation measures - described several times in the body of this document - are adopted and adhered to, the demolition and proposed future development option is preferred over the “no-go” alternative.

Acknowledgements

We thank Mr. Cor van Noordwyk for supplying maps showing the location of the Remainder of Erf 9343 as well as layout plans for the proposed future development. Professor Wesley Gavin of the Heritage Society of Mossel Bay provided information concerning the old buildings on the above-mentioned property. The management committee and staff of the Dias Museum, Mossel Bay provided office and work space. The map used in Figure 1 was supplied by the Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping, Mowbray, Cape Town.

References

Correspondence from Heritage Society of Mossel Bay to the Department of Land and Development Management dated 5 September 2003 (available on request from Professor Wesley Gavin – Heritage Society)