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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY:

ERF 1491 AND A PORTION OF THE FARM SEARLES NO  
252, GREAT BRAK RIVER, SOUTHERN CAPE

Prepared for

CODEV

On behalf of

**MACROPLAN**

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By

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and brief

The Agency for Cultural Resource Management has been requested by Coastal Conservation and Development Facilitation Services (CODEV) to undertake an baseline archaeological survey of Erf 1491 and a portion of the farm Searles No 252, Great Brak River. This is the site of the planned Hersham Beach development

The aim of the study is to locate, identify and map any archaeological remains that may be negatively impacted by the planned development, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

The terms of reference for the archaeological study are:

1. an archaeological survey of Erf 1491 and a portion of the farm Searles No 252, Great Brak River.
2. the identification and assessment of any sites of archaeological interest that may exist, including their status and significance; and
3. the identification of measures to maintain any valuable sites that may exist.

### 1.2 The study site

The study site for the proposed Hersham Beach development is Erf 1491 and a portion of the farm Searles No 252, Great Brak River, in the southern Cape. The study site is about 10 kilometers north of the coastal town of Great Brak River. The site is accessed from the old coastal road and is clearly signed. The extent of the site is about 38.7 hectares.

The study site is largely undeveloped, but a gravel road containing the site has already been built, and pegs demarcating erf boundaries have been put in place. Some disturbance to the site has therefore already taken place. The northern portion of the site is densely vegetated with indigenous vegetation, and some alien vegetation occurring in places. Archaeological visibility is low here and this portion of the site was not searched for archaeological sites.

A partly vegetated stable driftsand system is located in the middle portion of the site, while the southern (or sea-facing) portion of the site has been severely disturbed as a result of sheet erosion. The frontal sand dunes are severely infested with alien vegetation, with some indigenous vegetation occurring in open clearings.

## 2. STUDY APPROACH

The approach used in the study is the standard archaeological procedure for a study of this nature. It entails a detailed foot survey of the planned area to be developed and managed.

In addition to the field study, an examination of the existing records in the South African Museum was also undertaken. No archaeological sites have been recorded in the study area, although shell middens among the sand dunes on the plateau east of the Great Brak River have been recorded (Rudner 1968). According to Mr Chris Gaigher of CODEV, a Bushman burial was excavated from the sand dunes close to the mouth the Great Brak River.

## 3. RESULTS OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

*base archaeological + 2° 22' 14" 30" E  
scarpings 34 03*

1. A low density scatter of Later Stone Age<sup>1</sup> archaeological material was identified in six different locations on the sea-facing slope of the planned Hersham Beach Development (Figure 1). A low density scatter of material was also found in the planned conservation node (previously laid out in erf's). The archaeological material was found among wind-exposed calcrete beds and on consolidated red sands, which have been severely disturbed by sheet erosion. The occurrences consist of very thin scatters of fragmented shell, pieces of pottery, and stone tools.

The shell remains are highly fragmented and consist of mainly brown mussel, with some white mussel and limpet occurring.

1. A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history. The presence of pottery indicates, however, that these occurrences date within the last 1800 years.

Many small pieces of pottery sherds were located, some of them in such close proximity to each other suggesting they are the remains of once complete pots or bowls. All the pottery is thin walled, black and red burnished, and unburnished. All are grit and shell tempered.

The stone tools consist of large unmodified and modified flakes, utilised flakes and flake blades, split cobbles, chunks and a few cores. The tools are all in fine-grained quartzite, while a few small flakes in silcrete were also found.

Quartzite flakes, chunks and split cobbles were also found alongside the gravel road which rings the site.

2 The remains of a severely disturbed shell midden were located on the shoulder of the gravel road which surrounds the site (Figure 1). This site has been almost entirely destroyed as a result of the construction of the road, and remains of shell and some bone can be seen clearly in the spoil heap next to the midden.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made with regard to the planned Hersham Beach development:

1. A controlled collection of stone tools and pottery from the surface scatter within the sea-facing erfs to be undertaken
2. The remains of the severely disturbed shell midden to be subjected to a controlled excavation.
3. Secondary activities such as excavation of trenches for laying of services, excavation of foundations for houses, vegetation clearing and disturbance of sand dunes, and landscaping, may well impact on below surface archaeological sites.

Of considerable concern is the possibility of human burials and shell middens being uncovered during earthmoving and excavation, particularly in the vegetated dunes within the exposed driftsand system, and the sea-facing dunes within the erf layout plan.