

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF ERVEN 13, 14 & 392, HONDEKLIPBAAI, NAMAQUALAND MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

(AIA conducted under Section 38 (1) of the National Heritage Resources Act
as a freestanding AIA)

Prepared for

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UCT Archaeology Contracts Office was appointed to undertake an archaeological impact assessment of three erven in Hondeklipbaai, Namakwa Municipality, Northern Cape. The erven are 13, 14 and 392 and have already been approved for subdivision by the municipality and surveyor general. Erven 13 and 14 are already zoned residential and are for the provision of housing for the local community. Erf 392 will be rezoned from undetermined to business with no subdivisions taking place. Erven 13 and 14 are each approximately 5.5 Ha in extent while the smaller erf 392 is about 0.6 Ha. The properties lie near the northern edge of the town just east of the shore of Hondeklip Bay.

Limited disturbance is present on all three erven in the form of multiple footpaths on erf 392 and footpaths, newly laid gravel roads and a single recently constructed house on erven 13 and 14. Vegetation coverage is low with the result that surface visibility was very good. The sites are flat although erven 13 and 14 slope very gently towards the sea and very low granite outcrops are present on erf 392.

A total of 36 Later Stone Age occurrences was recorded. None of these sites are significant on their own within a wider regional context, but given the paucity of work in the Hondeklipbaai area some local value can be attached to several of them. As such variable mitigation has been recommended with the majority needing only a shovel test to confirm the surface observations. Others require formal sampling for shellfish and to check for other buried content. Should cultural or faunal material be located then excavations will need to be expanded as appropriate. Based on surface observations, there is only one site, HKB2007/034, that would require more extensive work since it was seen to have categories of remains other than shellfish preserved on it.

Historical material in the form of scattered ceramic and glass fragments was also noted but no structures or foundations were present.

It should be noted that prehistoric burials could be present anywhere in the area and that permits would be required from the South African Heritage Resources Agency for archaeological mitigation and subsequent construction work.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The UCT Archaeology Contracts Office was appointed by C.D. Venter Land Surveyors to conduct an archaeological impact assessment of three properties in Hondeklipbaai on the west coast of the Northern Cape Province (Figure 1). The properties in question are erven 13, 14 and 392 (Figure 2). These properties lie in the northern part of the town a short way from the edge of the bay. Development had already begun on the two larger erven but has been halted pending the outcome of the assessment. Thus far a number of gravel roads and a single small house have been built. The smaller erf remains entirely undeveloped.

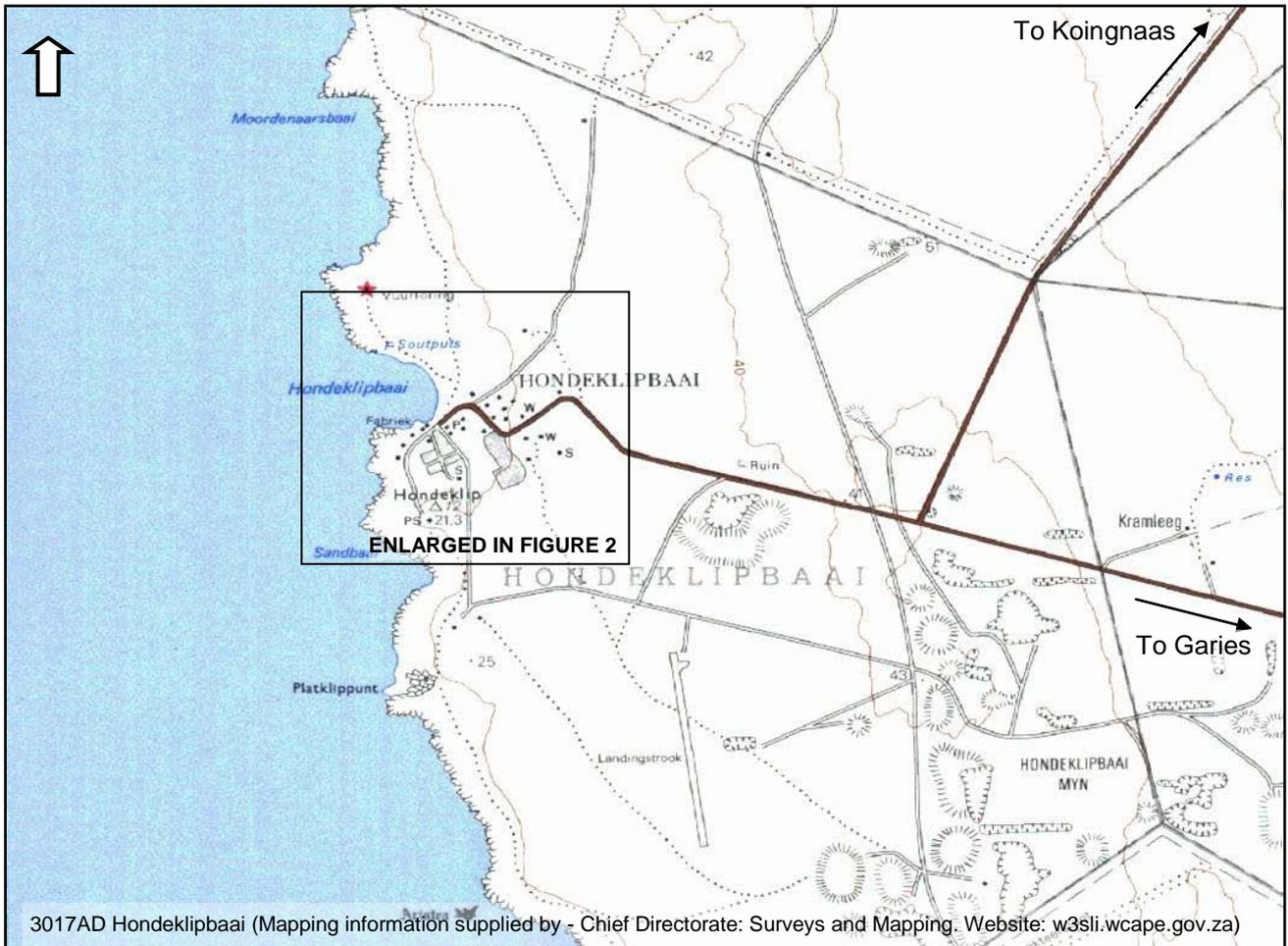


Figure 1: Location map of Hondeklipbaai.

Erf 13 (5.4946 Ha) and erf 14 (5.3925 Ha) are currently zoned residential and subdivision has already been approved by both the municipality and the surveyor general. They will be subdivided for residential purposes. Erf 392 (0.7045 Ha) is currently zoned 'undetermined' and this will change to 'business'. No subdivision will take place there. The subdivisional plan as approved is appended to this report.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph of Hondeklipbaai showing the locations of the three erven under study.

2. LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999 protects a variety of heritage resources including palaeontological, prehistoric and historical material (including ruins) more than 100 years old (Section 35), human remains (Section 36) and non-ruined structures older than 60 years (Section 42). Landscapes with cultural significance are also protected. Under Section 38 (1) of the act the affected properties require heritage assessment based on the size and number of erven involved.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The properties lie within close proximity of the Atlantic shoreline just to the east of the deeply in cut bay (Figure 2). Although the shore of the bay is sandy, rocky promontories exist to both

the north and the south providing ample area for the collection of shellfish. The smaller erf 392 is flat and sandy, although a few very low granite bedrock outcrops are present in the north-eastern part (Figure 3). The sandy substrate is red Pleistocene sand and vegetation coverage is extremely light. Disturbance in the form of footpaths and modern rubbish is present. The property is bounded by developed land to the west and south and by gravel roads to the east and north.



Figure 3: View across erf 392 showing a low granite outcrop, a footpath and the surrounding residential properties.

Erven 13 and 14 are also flat but they slope very gently down towards the sea in the west (Figure 4). At the very far western end of erf 13 a small amount of white Holocene dune is included within the property, but the rest of the area of both these erven is covered by red Pleistocene sand with low, scattered bushes. Several gravel roads cross the area from southeast to northwest and a single house has recently been built near the eastern end.

4. METHODS

The properties were examined on the 19th and 26th of August 2007. The ground was covered on foot with all sites found being described both verbally and photographically. Their positions were recorded by means of a hand-held GPS receiver on the WGS84 datum and mapped using Google Earth.

Following the system employed by the ACO during other Namaqualand surveys, sites have been named according to the farm on which they were found, the year recorded and with an individual site number following the year. Hence HKB2007/001 is the first site recorded on the farm Hondeklipbaai in 2007.



Figure 4: View towards the south-west across erven 13 and 14.
One of the new gravel roads is visible in the middle ground.

4.1. Limitations

Vegetation coverage was very sparse allowing for excellent visibility of the ground surface. However, several old footpaths have resulted in minor disturbance on all three erven and a number of new gravel roads have been built across the two larger erven. These roads may have obscured archaeological material. In addition an area in the southern corner of erf 13 has been subject to disturbance in the past and is covered by compact earth/gravel.

5. BACKGROUND TO LOCAL HERITAGE

5.1. History

The town of Hondeklipbaai was founded in 1846 in order to provide a harbour for the export of copper being mined in the region. However, the construction of a port at the more favoured location of Port Nolloth in 1871 led to the demise of Hondeklipbaai. During the 20th century a crayfish factory and the diamond mining industry have helped but neither operates at the town any longer (Routes.co.za 2005).

5.2. Prehistory

Early (ESA), Middle (MSA) and Later Stone Age (LSA) occupation of the area has been documented through extensive surveys and excavation in the De Beers diamond areas to the north and south of Hondeklipbaai (e.g. Halkett & Hart 1997; Halkett 2002, 2003; Orton & Halkett 2005, 2006). All these sites are open sites but one cave has also been excavated as part of a research project at Spoeg River (Webley 1992, 2002).

ESA and MSA sites are only represented by scatters of stone artefacts, frequently in places where they are actively eroding out of the substrate.

Later Stone Age sites are particularly common along the Namaqualand coast with many thousands of small shell scatters occurring within about 1 km of the coast but also extending up to 5 or more km inland. Many larger shell middens, often containing a variety of finds such as stone tools, pottery, beads and subsistence remains, are also present. In general this coastline has been vastly under-studied but as a result of the enormous amount of material generated through recent contract excavations research has begun to gain momentum (Dewar 2007; Dewar & Jerardino 2007; Dewar *et al.* 2006; Orton 2007; Orton *et al.* 2005). Although many rich sites containing valuable archaeological data are present, it should be noted that the vast majority of sites are very small and contain little other than marine shellfish – the residues of perhaps just one or two meals.

6. FINDINGS

No ESA or MSA material was located with a number of LSA shell scatters and many isolated historical artefacts being the only findings of the survey.

6.1. Historical

Historical artefacts in the form of glass and ceramic fragments were ubiquitous across all three erven but were substantially more common on erf 392 where a pipe stem was also noted. The glass and ceramics are fairly typical of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the latter including porcelain, stoneware and various refined earthenwares (Figure 5). No obvious middens or sites relating to historical occupation were seen in the study area and it is likely that the individual artefacts are the accumulated general occupation debris related to the early occupants of the town. No historical structures or foundations are present.



Figure 5: A selection of ceramic and glass fragments including willow pattern (top left) and porcelain (top right). All scales in cm.

6.2. Later Stone Age

6.2.1. General discussion of LSA sites

Shell scatters dating to the LSA were common across all three properties but were more so on land lying nearer the sea shore (Figures 6 & 7). In keeping with the general pattern of such sites in Namaqualand, almost all were very ephemeral and/or small scatters with little or

no other finds evident. They also tended to be quite well dispersed and very seldom showed any areas of concentration that might have been points of origin. Although no subsurface testing was done during this phase of work, it seems likely that many of these sites are ephemeral surface occurrences only. There are, however, some that clearly were deeper, notably some of those near the coast. Due to the great degree of similarity among these sites I have not given all of them individual attention in the text below, although all are summarised in Table 1. The text merely highlights some of those with unique or notable content.

It is likely that the historical material that currently lies in association with the shell scatters, especially on erf 392, is merely overprinted and it is strongly suspected that all the shell scatter are in fact LSA in age.



Figure 6: Detail of erf 392 showing the locations of all archaeological sites encountered. Note that all numbers are prefaced by HKB2007/ to indicate their full names. Site HKB2007/003 is a large scatter on which I took two GPS points. Photograph from Google Earth.



Figure 7: Detail of erven 13 and 14 showing the locations of all archaeological sites encountered. Note that all numbers are prefaced by HKB2007/ to indicate their full names. Photograph from Google Earth.

Table 1: List and summaries of all sites recorded during the survey. Note that the suggested second phase work is discussed further in Section 7 below.

Notes:

Type: SS = shell scatter
 SSA = shell scatter with artefacts.
 Size: Unless two measurements are given, the size is an approximate diameter.
 Shell content: GGA = *C. granatina*, *S. granularis*, *S. argenvillei*
 Burn. = *Burnupena* sp.
 Oxy. = *Oxysteles* sp.
 Other content: OES = ostrich eggshell
 Provisional significance: this is relative to coastal shell scatters in the general area and based on current surface observations.

Site	<u>Co-ordinates</u>	<u>type</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>shell content</u>	<u>other content</u>	<u>comments</u>	<u>provisional significance</u>	<u>suggested second phase work</u>	
HKB2007/001	S 30° 18' 58.3" E 17° 16' 36.9"	SSA	10 m	GGA	bone, historical		low-medium	This whole area needs: (1) testing to ascertain quality of subsurface deposits and; (2) sampling when appropriate and sufficiently undisturbed.	
HKB2007/002	S 30° 18' 58.7" E 17° 16' 37.2"	SSA	15 m	GGA	historical	low granite outcrop	low		
HKB2007/003	S 30° 18' 58.5" E 17° 16' 36.1"	SSA	15 x 40 m	GGA	historical (incl. pipe stem)	modern rubbish, mixed content but not otherwise disturbed; the two points are opposite ends of the site	low-medium		
	-								
HKB2007/004	S 30° 18' 58.9" E 17° 16' 37.8"	SSA	8 m	GGA	grindstone fragment	low granite outcrop, disturbed area	very low		
HKB2007/005	S 30° 18' 59.8" E 17° 16' 37.0"	SSA	15 m	GGA	historical		low		
HKB2007/006	S 30° 18' 59.4" E 17° 16' 36.6"	SSA	10 x 15 m	GGA	historical, bone	probably an extension of 003 area	low-medium		
HKB2007/007	S 30° 18' 51.4" E 17° 16' 36.8"	SS	8 m	GGA	historical, 1 ?ground argenvillei		low		test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/008	S 30° 18' 53.2" E 17° 16' 37.9"	SS	5 m	GGA			very low		shovel test
HKB2007/009	S 30° 18' 49.4" E 17° 16' 41.8"	SS	8 m	GG		very ephemeral, whole shells	very low	shovel test	

Site	<u>Co-ordinates</u>	<u>type</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>shell content</u>	<u>other content</u>	<u>comments</u>	<u>provisional significance</u>	<u>suggested second phase work</u>
HKB2007/010	S 30° 18' 48.2" E 17° 16' 41.0"	SS	20 m	GG		extremely ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/011	S 30° 18' 48.6" E 17° 16' 39.5"	SS	20 m	GG		ephemeral but wide scatter	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/012	S 30° 18' 47.9" E 17° 16' 39.1"	SS	15 m	GGA		ephemeral but wide scatter	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/013	S 30° 18' 49.0" E 17° 16' 38.5"	SS	8 m	GGA		ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/014	S 30° 18' 48.5" E 17° 16' 37.6"	SS	10 m	GG	1 ?hammer stone	quite a bit of shell	low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/015	S 30° 18' 48.9" E 17° 16' 36.5"	SS	10 x 30 m	GGA		good shell, extends to south as well	low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/016	S 30° 18' 48.7" E 17° 16' 36.1"	SS	5 m	GGA			very low	shovel test
HKB2007/017	S 30° 18' 49.4" E 17° 16' 36.2"	SS	8 m	GG, burn.			very low	shovel test
HKB2007/018	S 30° 18' 49.4" E 17° 16' 35.8"	SS	8 m	GG	?assoc. bone		very low	shovel test
HKB2007/019	S 30° 18' 49.8" E 17° 16' 36.0"	SS	8 m	GGA			very low	shovel test
HKB2007/020	S 30° 18' 49.5" E 17° 16' 35.3"	SS	15 m	GG		good scatter	low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/021	S 30° 18' 50.5" E 17° 16' 35.9"	SS	5 x 15 m	GG		ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/022	S 30° 18' 45.6" E 17° 16' 46.9"	SS	10 m	GG	oes	extremely ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/023	S 30° 18' 48.8" E 17° 16' 48.3"	SS	8 m	GG		extremely ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/024	S 30° 18' 44.5" E 17° 16' 45.6"	SSA	15 m	GG, oxy.	bone, kreef, historical		low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/025	S 30° 18' 43.4" E 17° 16' 48.1"	SS	10 m	GG		2nd patch 8 m north over path	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/026	S 30° 18' 42.8" E 17° 16' 47.3"	SS	10 m	GG			very low	shovel test

Site	<u>Co-ordinates</u>	<u>type</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>shell content</u>	<u>other content</u>	<u>comments</u>	<u>provisional significance</u>	<u>suggested second phase work</u>
HKB2007/027	S 30° 18' 44.6" E 17° 16' 53.3"	SS	5 m	GG		extremely ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/028	S 30° 18' 45.0" E 17° 16' 41.4"	SS	10 m	GG		ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/029	S 30° 18' 45.9" E 17° 16' 41.9"	SSA	10 m	GGA	quartz	ephemeral	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/030	S 30° 18' 47.0" E 17° 16' 40.4"	SS	30 m	GGA		huge area of isolated shells	very low	shovel test
HKB2007/031	S 30° 18' 45.5" E 17° 16' 39.9"	SSA	8 m	GG	historical		low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/032	S 30° 18' 50.6" E 17° 16' 36.8"	SS	5 m	GG	bone		low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/033	S 30° 18' 49.6" E 17° 16' 38.2"	SS	15 x 15 m	GG	bone	3 patches	low	test excavation / shell sample
HKB2007/034	S 30° 18' 50.8" E 17° 16' 32.8"	SSA	8 x 15 m	GGA, oxy.	bone, oes, kreef, quartz	truncated by road	medium	test / full excavation
HKB2007/035	S 30° 18' 50.0" E 17° 16' 33.7"	SS	30 x 30 m	GGA	bone	several patches	low-medium	multiple test excavations / shell samples
HKB2007/036	S 30° 18' 50.7" E 17° 16' 34.5"	SS	15 m	GGA		merges with 035	low-medium	

6.2.2. HKB2007/003

This site is a large scatter with several areas of vague concentration of shellfish (Figures 8 & 9). It is the most extensive scatter recorded on any of the three erven and may even be the result of the overlapping and subsequent partial deflation of two or more individual sites. Historical material and limited modern rubbish is present on the site but this seems to be only surface material. Several footpaths cross the site. Judging by the density and quantity of shell it is quite likely that some sub-surface material will be present. Given our experience of other similar Namaqualand occurrences, it is likely to be only a single shell layer since stratified sites tend to be very rare in the area.



Figure 8: The area of HKB2007/003 looking towards the west.



Figure 9: Close up of the surface of HKB2007/003 showing one of the areas of shellfish concentration.

6.2.3. HKB2007/007

This site is noted as it is another of the better shell scatters to have been recorded, despite the lack of any material other than shell on it. There was one *S. argenvillei* shell that looked as though it may have had a ground edge, although we have found that many such shells are entirely natural with no evidence for human intervention on them. Grinding striations are usually absent under microscopic examination. The shell is in relatively good condition at this site (Figure 10).



Figure 10: The shell scatter at HKB2007/007.

6.2.4. HKB2007/031

This site is another of the better shell scatters in the area and is much further inland than the other denser sites. It still has rather moderate amounts of shell in total (Figure 11) and serves as one of the better examples of the average type of scatter present on the site.



Figure 11: One of the moderate density shell scatters, HKB2007/031. A piece of purple historical glass lies on the surface just left of centre but is unlikely to be associated with the site.

6.2.5. HKB2007/034

This site is the nearest site to the sea shore at the point of initiation of the Holocene dunefield that stretches to the north and consequently is the largest and potentially most significant site recorded. It lies right on the edge of the property and has been truncated and damaged by a gravel track that crosses it (Figure 12), although there is certainly part preserved to the east of the track (Figure 13). This site was the only one to show a variety of categories of finds typical to west coast sites in the area, although lithics were scarce. Animal bones included those of tortoise, small bovid (steenbok) and fish. Ostrich eggshell and crayfish mandibles are also present.



Figure 12: View of HKB2007/034 from the gravel track that cuts it.



Figure 13: Close up of part of the surface of HKB2007/034 away from the deflated and damaged portion along the track.

6.2.6. HKB2007/035 & 036

These two sites may well be part of the same occurrence. This site is highlighted as it is one of the most extensive occurrences noted during the survey and seems as though it may represent a single site with multiple but related shell patches. It is also very near the coast which suggests it may have greater depth than sites further inland. There appeared to be some disturbance to this site in the form of some old excavations so mitigation should also aim to determine which parts of the site still retain original context.

7. CONCLUSIONS

A large number of sites were encountered and recorded during this survey, although none of them is deemed to have any great significance (Table 1). Our experience working in Namaqualand has shown that the richest sites typically occur in the Holocene coastal dune fields (e.g. Halkett 2003; Orton & Halkett 2005, 2006) and the properties under examination here fall on flat Pleistocene sand. However, even with very small, apparently ephemeral sites one can sometimes find *in situ* midden material buried a little way beneath the surface (Orton 2007). Given that there has been little or no other archaeological work in the Immediate Hondeklipbaai area, the sites discussed here have the potential to provide useful comparative material, albeit mostly only shellfish data, which will help to build the overall knowledge of the region as a whole. Obtaining shell samples from sites with any substance at all will also provide material for radiocarbon dating which might prove of value to future research projects conducted in the area.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the surface observations noted during this survey, the recommendations in Table 1 have been made and these are further discussed and expanded upon here.

8.1.1. Erf 392

This area contains several occurrences with varying degrees of disturbance. It is recommended that shovel testing be conducted across the entire erf in order to characterise the sites and assess the level of subsurface disturbance. Only then will it be possible to establish what sampling or excavation will be required, although the whole erf is unlikely to ever need more than two or three days of excavation.

8.1.2. Erven 13 and 14

The sites in this area are less disturbed than those on erf 392 making it easier to establish mitigation requirements. HKB2007/007, 014, 015, 024, 031, 032, 033, 035 & 036 all show a quantity of shellfish that could be meaningfully sampled. It is thus recommended that at least 1 m² is excavated in each so as to obtain shellfish samples. This excavation would also serve to establish whether any other potentially meaningful archaeological residues are present and whether any further excavation should be conducted. Should any cultural or faunal material be located at any of these sites then a few more square meters should be excavated at the archaeologist's discretion in order to create a reasonable sample of the material. In our experience of Namaqualand sites such expanded excavations would normally be in the

region of 4 m² to 8 m² which invariably constitutes the majority of the deposit in such small sites. On the other hand, should the deposits at any of these sites prove to be too ephemeral to make formal excavation meaningful, then the procedure of sampling described in Orton (2007) could be utilised in order to gain the maximum quantity of data. This method involves simply scooping up and sieving as much sand as possible from the area of shell scatter and generally results in much-improved findings than those made through initial surface observation.

HKB2007/034 is the only site that appears to have significant residues other than shellfish and will thus need to be subject to more detailed excavation than the other sites. Given its position at the very edge of the property, it may also be possible to omit this site from the development footprint. However, it has already been damaged by the old gravel road that runs along the beach front and if the site is probably not worthy of retention. Excavation at this site would probably need to entail about half to one day of work with an area of perhaps 6 m² to 12 m² being removed. This would depend on the degree of disturbance found and the amount of *in situ* deposit currently remaining.

All the other sites on these erven listed in Table 1 should be subjected to a simple shovel test to establish whether the very ephemeral surface material may have been bioturbated upwards from better deposits below. Should any such deposits be located then a 1 m² sample or sampling via the method in Orton (2007) would be required. It is likely that these two erven could be fully mitigated with about three full days of work.

8.1.3. Burials

It should be noted that prehistoric burials may be present anywhere. Should one be uncovered during excavations then it would require further time to excavate, perhaps one day. However, such finding is extremely unlikely to occur. It is more likely that burials could be disturbed during subsequent building operations and correct procedure following their discovery would need to be explained to the appropriate site foremen during construction work. This procedure would entail a cessation of work in the vicinity of the find and reporting of the burial to the project manager / property owner as appropriate. This person would then need to report the burial to SAHRA (Mrs. Mary Leslie (021) 462 4502) and appoint an archaeologist to remove the remains. Any remains found should be treated with the appropriate respect.

8.1.4. Permits

The archaeologist conducting mitigation work will need to apply for a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) to allow such work and subsequently, the developer would need a permit to allow destruction of all remaining archaeological material on site.

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10. INVESTIGATION TEAM

Fieldwork: J. Orton & M. Sasa
Report: J. Orton

Appendix 1: Subdivisional plan as approved by the municipality and the surveyor general. Erven 13, 14 and 392 are shaded red.

