

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF BOSCHENDAL LANDS
DWARFS RIVER VALLEY

Report prepared for

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Executive summary

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A baseline archaeological scoping study of the proposed development of the Boschendal Lands in the Dwars River Valley has identified no significant impacts to precolonial archaeological heritage remains that will need to be mitigated prior to development activities.

The study has shown that for the most part, the affected area constitutes a severely modified and disturbed environment. Stone tools occur mostly in these already highly altered environments.

The baseline scoping study failed to locate any significant precolonial archaeological heritage remains. Stone Age tools were located in a number of targeted and focussed searches but these were all found in a severely disturbed and degraded context.

The study has shown that the impact of the proposed development of the Boschendal lands on precolonial archaeological heritage remains is likely to be low.

The probability of locating significant precolonial archaeological heritage remains during implementation of the project is also likely to be improbable.

Middens and dumps relating to the colonial period may, however, be uncovered or exposed during bulk earthworks and excavations in the historical farmyard precincts.

It must also be noted that about a dozen graves were located among a patch of burnt lands alongside a gravel farm road close to the historic Lanquedoc Village. The affected area will be not be developed, but (if necessary), a road may be constructed which may damage or disturb the graves.

In terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999):

- Ownership and origin of the graves near Lanquedoc Village must be established.
- Communities living in and close to the study area must be consulted as to the whereabouts, origins and ownership of other burial sites (including both formal and informal), as well as the identification of cultural and religious interest sites and places.

With regard to the development of the Boschendal Lands, the following essential mitigation measures must be included in the Construction Environment Management Plan for the proposed project:

- Construction activities such as bulk services, earthworks and excavations within the existing historic farmyard precincts should be monitored by a professional archaeologist.
- Should any middens or dumps containing ash, glass/glass bottles, ceramics, metal items, bone or any other domestic refuse, or any building foundations, or stone walling, be uncovered or exposed during the course of construction activities within the historic farmyard precincts, work should cease and an archaeologist immediately informed. Archaeological mitigation in the form of excavations and sampling may likely be required.
- Contractors, plant operators and workers should be informed what to look out for during construction activities within the historical farm precincts.
- Should an Environmental Control Officer (ECO) be appointed, he/she should be briefed by a professional archaeologist what to look out during construction work within the weft precincts.

Key words: precolonial archaeology, Early Stone Age, graves

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake a baseline archaeological scoping study of the proposed development of the Boschendal Lands located in the Dwaars River Valley, Stellenbosch, in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed development provides for the establishment of a number of 'Gentleman Estates', single residential and group housing development(s), a hotel, commercial/business nodes, and a retirement village. Infrastructure development such as the construction of roads and other essential bulk services such as electricity, water and waste are also planned.

Approximately 75% of the property is zoned for agriculture, much of which is under extensive orchards, vineyards and agricultural infrastructure, farmyards, farmsteads and staff accommodation. The proposed development will be concentrated mainly in these areas.

The remaining approximately 25% of the area is zoned Open Space Zone III and is currently managed as a Conservation Area, much of which is infested by alien vegetation.

The extent of the proposed development (about 2 800 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South Africa Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

The aim of the study is to locate, identify and map significant archaeological heritage remains that may be negatively impacted by the proposed development of the Boschendal lands, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the proposed development is being coordinated by Heritage Consultants Nicholas Bauman and Sarah Winter.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the study were:

1. to determine whether there are likely to be any precolonial archaeological sites of significance within the affected Boschendal lands;
2. to identify and map any sites of precolonial archaeological significance within the affected property;
3. to indicate the sensitivity and conservation significance of precolonial archaeological sites potentially affected by the proposed development;

4. to assess the status and significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development; and
5. to identify mitigatory measures to protect and maintain any valuable precolonial archaeological sites that may exist within the effected Boschendal lands.

3. THE STUDY SITE

A 1:50 000 locality map of the study area is illustrated in Figure 1.

A conceptual site development plan is illustrated in Figure 2.

The Boschendal lands, covering nearly 3000 ha are situated in the Dwarfs River Valley, Stellenbosch.

At least 75% of the proposed development will take place in already developed and highly modified and altered agricultural lands (Figures 3-5). The remaining 25% are currently managed as a Conservation Area, much of which is infested by alien vegetation.

4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY

4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the archaeological scoping study entailed a vehicle and foot survey of the affected Boschendal lands. This included a targeted survey of the proposed development as well as an assessment of the existing Conservation Areas.

Given the large study area, the archaeological baseline study identified a number of focus sites within the surrounding landscape.

These included:

- Disturbed and modified areas such as orchards, vineyards and existing agricultural lands
- Dams and their immediate surrounding areas
- Farmyards and farmsteads
- River and floodplains
- Burnt and other exposed areas
- Roads
- Quarries and excavations.
- Existing conservation areas

A desktop study was also undertaken.

The fieldwork and assessment took place over 3 days in January and May 2005.



Figure 1. Site locality map (3318 DD Stellenbosch)

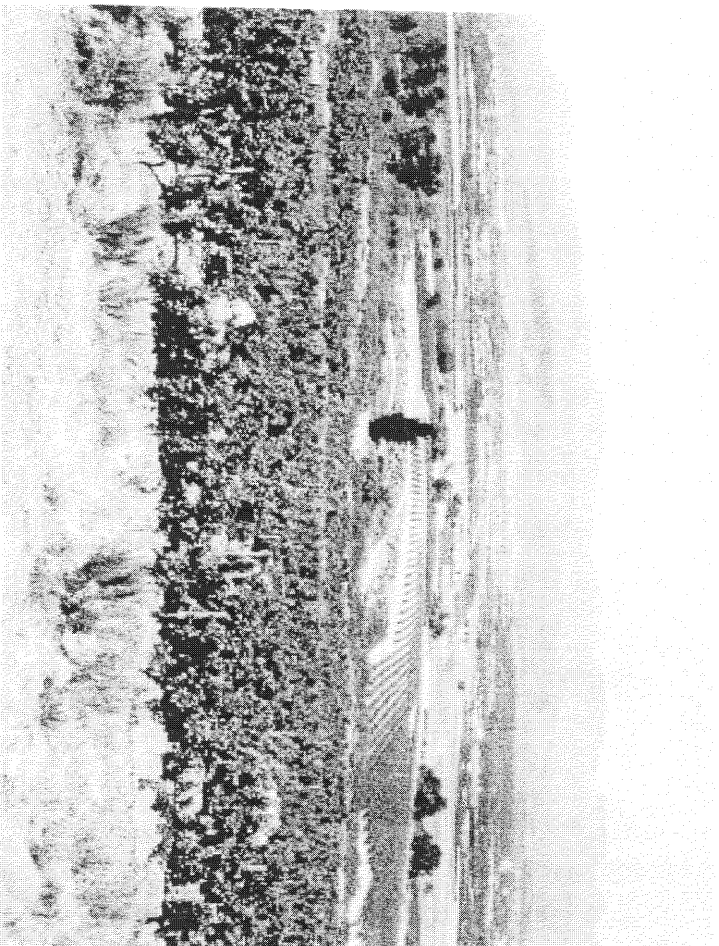


Figure 3. View of the study area taken from the Simonsig Nature Reserve.

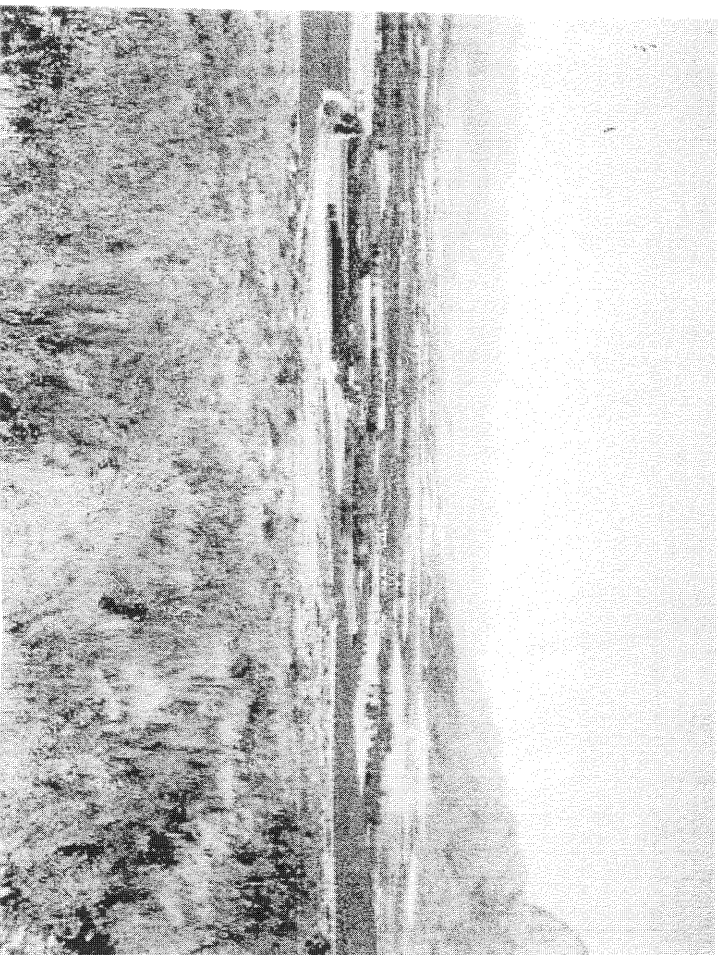


Figure 4. View of the study area taken from the Simonsig Nature Reserve.

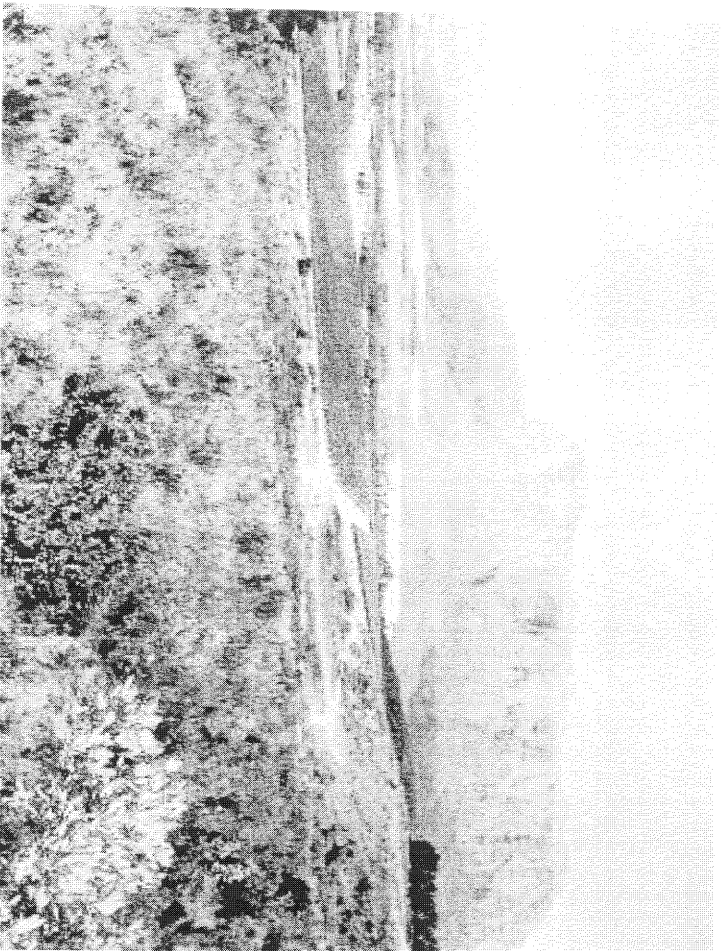


Figure 5. View of the study area taken from the Simonsig Nature Reserve.

4.2 Results of the Desk top study

Archaeological surveys undertaken in the Franschoek/Stellenbosch/Draakenstein/Dwars River Valley has recorded relatively large numbers of Stone Age tools (Kaplan 1998, 1 999, 2000, 2001, 2002a,b, 2003a,b,c, 2004a,b,c,d, 2005a & b in prep.; Yates & Manhire 1997).

The most commonly-occurring tools in the area are assigned to a period known as the Early Stone Age¹ (ESA). ESA tools were first discovered on terraces above the Eerste River in Stellenbosch (Peringuey 1902, 1911). Among these was an artefact type of great antiquity recognised as an early handaxe. For many years after this, the ESA of South Africa was referred to as the 'Stellenbosch Culture' until the term was re-defined in the 1960s (Goodwin & Van Riet Lowe 1929).

Today the ESA is divided into the 'Olduwan' period, which is up to 1.7 million years old. This industry is associated with the oldest and most simple human-made artefacts. This was followed by the 'Acheulean' Tradition, a more developed stone artefact industry, characterised by the presence of specific types of stone tools such as handaxes, choppers and cleavers.

Acheulean sites have been recorded throughout South Africa and are especially associated with pans, river terraces, streams, and certain types of rock outcrops. Acheulean tools are also commonly found on mountain slopes, in degraded areas such as slope washes, road and bridge cuttings, excavations, in gravels deposits, vineyards, and in ploughed fields.

Younger Middle Stone Age² (MSA) and Later Stone Age³ (LSA) remains appear to be less common in the Franschoek/Paarl area, but such sites are known to occur. LSA rock paintings occur in the Wemmershoek area and on the farm Móreilly (Kaplan 2003b).

A common denominator in all of the above-mentioned studies, all undertaken in response to large residential and infrastructure developments, is the highly modified and altered environments in which the archaeological heritage remains are located.

Based on the above findings, it is argued that with the exception of the surrounding natural environment, the Franschoek/Stellenbosch/Draakenstein/Dwars River Valley already constitutes a severely degraded and altered precolonial cultural landscape, which is no longer considered to be archaeologically sensitive, vulnerable or threatened.

¹ A term referring to the period between 2 million and 200 000 years ago.

² A term referring to the period between 200 000 and 20 000 years ago.

³ A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.

5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)

...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m², or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m², requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

5.1.1 Structures (Section 34 (1))

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by Western Cape Heritage, the responsible provincial heritage resources authority.

5.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

No person may, without a permit issued by Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

6. CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

The existing Conservation Areas, with reference to the Old Bethlehem Conservation area, and the Groot Drakenstein Eco Precinct, are infested with alien vegetation, resulting in low archaeological visibility. The Simonsberg Nature Reserve comprises mainly indigenous veld.

Otherwise, there are no other archaeological constraints associated with the proposed project.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL RISKS

There are no potential precolonial archaeological risks associated with the proposed project, although bulk earthworks and excavations may uncover or expose ancient Stone Age tools.

More importantly, however, historical middens (or archaeologically valuable rubbish dumps) relating to the colonial period and its impact on the surrounding environment, may be uncovered or exposed during bulk earthworks and excavations for services, in the historical farmyard precincts.

Construction of a possible new road and bulk earthworks may also impact on known/unknown graves in the study area.

8. RESULTS OF THE BASELINE STUDY

Relatively large numbers of Early Stone Age (ESA) tools, including large flakes, flaked/split cobbles, large chunks, worked and pitted river cobbles, large irregular and prepared cores, as well as several incomplete and complete handaxes, cleavers, and choppers were located during the survey.

The tools were found in a variety of highly disturbed contexts.

Tools were located in old agricultural fields, vineyards, and orchards close to the Carney Houses, the Jam Factory and south of the proposed Retirement Village. Tools were also noted among piles of rocks from cleared fields and packed in rows in the vineyards. Tools were also noted in orchards alongside the banks and on the floodplain of the Dwars River.

ESA tools were also located in orchards and vineyards and fields in the area surrounding the Rhodes Cottage Homestead, alongside some of the gravel roads in the area and among piles of river cobbles and rocks cleared from farm lands, and near several dams in this area.

Several ESA tools were also noted on the higher gravel slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains in the proposed Founders Estate (refer to Figure 2). ESA tools were also found in some of the lands north and east of the Goede Hoop Farm, and near a small stream/river. Tools were also found near an old gravel quarry above Goede Hoop Farm.

ESA tools were found in old fields near Languedoc village and near the sewerage works and in orchards alongside the Dwars River. Tools were also found near Willy Dam and in highly disturbed lands and a large dam under excavation above York Piggery.

ESA and some Middle Stone Age tools were also located on the steep gravel slopes of the Old Bethlehem Conservation area, and the Groot Drakenstein Eco Precinct. Tools were mainly found in the wide gravel roads and vineyards on the steep slopes.

Within the study area, it is also worth noting that ESA tools were found during earlier archaeological surveys undertaken within the Boschendal-owned lands. These include the proposed Languedoc social housing development (Kaplan 1999) and in farmlands located alongside the R44 for the proposed Bulkwater Supply Infrastructure Planning project for the City of Cape Town (Kaplan 2004c).

All the tools located during the study are made on large quartzite river cobbles, and were all located in severely disturbed and degraded locations.

The above finds have been graded low local significance and no mitigation is required.

The types of tools located during the archaeological assessment of the Boschendal lands are consistent with tools located during recent surveys in the Stellenbosch/Franschoek/Drakenstein/Dwars/Berg River Valley (Kaplan 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a,b, 2003a,b,c, 2004a, b,c,d, 2005a & b in prep.).

8.1 Graves/burials

During the course of the survey, at least a dozen graves were located in a recently burnt forest of Poplar Trees, alongside a gravel farm road close to the historic Lanquedoc Village, and to the east of the Sewerage Works (Figures 6-9).

A GPS reading for the site, set on Map Datum WGS 84, is S 33° 54 191 E 18° 57 697.

It is assumed that the graves are those of deceased farm laborer/s/villagers of Lanquedoc, although this was not confirmed by the archaeologist.

The graves appear to be formally arranged in rows and comprise raised mounds of earth packed with rounded river cobbles. Some of the mounds have collapsed inwards as a result of the heat from the recent fires. Unmarked head and footstones (of large river cobbles) presumably denote Christian burials. None of the graves are marked. Modern domestic items such as small broken glass jars, and broken bottles, were noted on some of the grave mounds, indicating at least recent visits and maintenance and care of the site. Several pieces of marine shell, including a large Trough shell (Lutraria lutraria) and a limpet fragment, were also noted.

All grave/burial sites are assigned a high local significance rating.

Note: the affected area will not be developed, but (if necessary), a road may be constructed in the area which may damage or disturb the graves.

In terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999):

- Ownership and origin of the graves must be established.
- Communities living in and close to the study area must be consulted as to the whereabouts, origins and ownership of other burial sites (including both formal and informal⁴), as well as the identification of cultural and religious interest sites and places.

⁴ Several graves were recently found 'hidden' on the farm L'Ormarins in Franschoek.



Figure 6. Burial site.

Figure 8. Burial site.

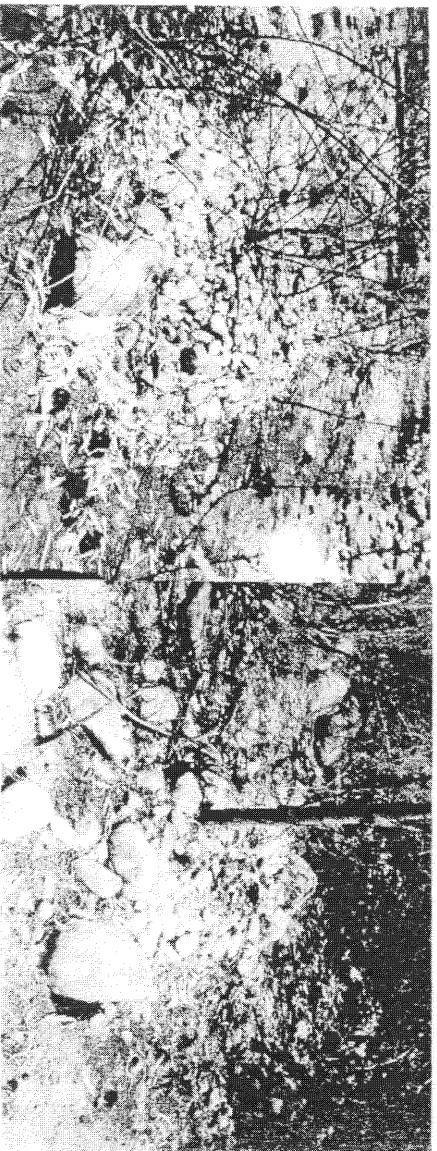


Figure 7. Burial site.

Figure 9. Burial site.

9. IMPACT STATEMENT

Given the already highly modified and disturbed context of the receiving environment, the impact of the proposed development of the Boschendal lands on precolonial archaeological heritage remains is likely to be low to negligible.

The probability of locating significant precolonial archaeological heritage remains during implementation of the project is also likely to be improbable.

The receiving environment is not considered to be archaeologically sensitive, vulnerable or threatened.

Middens and dumps relating to the colonial period may, however, be uncovered or exposed during bulk earthworks and excavations in the historical farmyard precincts.

10. MITIGATION MEASURES

With regard to the development of the Boschendal Lands, the following essential mitigation measures must be included in the Construction Environment Management Plan for the proposed project:

- Construction activities such as bulk services, earthworks and excavations within the existing historic farmyard precincts must be monitored by a professional archaeologist.
- Should any middens or dumps containing ash, glass/glass bottles, ceramics, metal items, bone or any other domestic refuse, or any building foundations, or stone walling, be uncovered or exposed during the course of construction activities within the historic farmyard precincts, work should cease and an archaeologist immediately informed. Archaeological mitigation in the form of excavations and sampling may likely be required.
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