

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
PORTION 2 OF THE FARM 113 (DE PLAAT ANNEX)  
VELDDRIF**

Prepared for

**ROBIN ELLIS TOWN AND COASTAL PLANNER**

By

**Agency for Cultural Resource Management**

P.O. Box 159

Riebeeck West

7306

Ph/Fax: 022 461 2755

Cellular: 082 321 0172

E-mail: [acrm@waccess.co.za](mailto:acrm@waccess.co.za)

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## **Executive summary**

Robin Ellis Town and Coastal Planner requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake a specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annex), at Velddrif.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the above property is for the purpose of a relatively high-density residential housing development, including a retirement village.

A portion of the affected property alongside the Berg River estuary has been set-aside as a proposed Conservation Area.

The extent of the proposed development (about 72 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South African Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

The proponent, Mr R. Ellis, will undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the proposed project.

The specialist AIA forms part of the HIA

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological sites and remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

Relatively large numbers of Later Stone Age tools were located in a large blowout on the affected property, but occur in a highly disturbed and altered context. As a result, the archaeological remains have been graded low local significance.

The Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annex), in Velddrif has identified no significant impacts to pre-colonial archaeological material that will need to be mitigated prior to the proposed development activities.

Human burials may, however, be exposed or uncovered during bulk excavations and earthworks.

Archaeological heritage remains may also be exposed or uncovered during vegetation clearing operations.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and brief**

Robin Ellis Town and Coastal Planner requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management undertake a specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annex), at Velddrif on the Cape West Coast.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the above property is for the purpose of a relatively high-density residential housing development, including a retirement village. A portion of the affected property alongside the Berg River estuary has also been set-aside as a proposed Conservation Area.

The extent of the proposed development (about 72 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South African Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

The proponent, Mr R. Ellis, will undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the proposed project.

The specialist AIA forms part of the HIA.

The aim of the study is to locate, identify and map archaeological remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference for the archaeological study were:

- to determine whether there are likely to be any archaeological sites of significance within the proposed site;
- to identify and map any sites of archaeological significance within the proposed site;
- to assess the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites within the proposed site;
- to assess the status and significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development, and
- to identify mitigatory measures to protect and maintain any valuable archaeological sites that may exist within the proposed site

### 3. THE STUDY SITE

A locality map is illustrated in Figure 1.

The proposed site is situated at Velddrif, on the Cape West coast. The property is located on either side of the R399 between Velddrif and Piketberg. The bulk of the property to the north of the R399 comprise thick indigenous veld, but some areas have also been strip ploughed (Figures 2-5). Some open spaces occur in places. A portion of the affected property is located alongside the Berg River estuary. There are no significant landscape features such as rocky outcrops or kopjes that occur on the property.

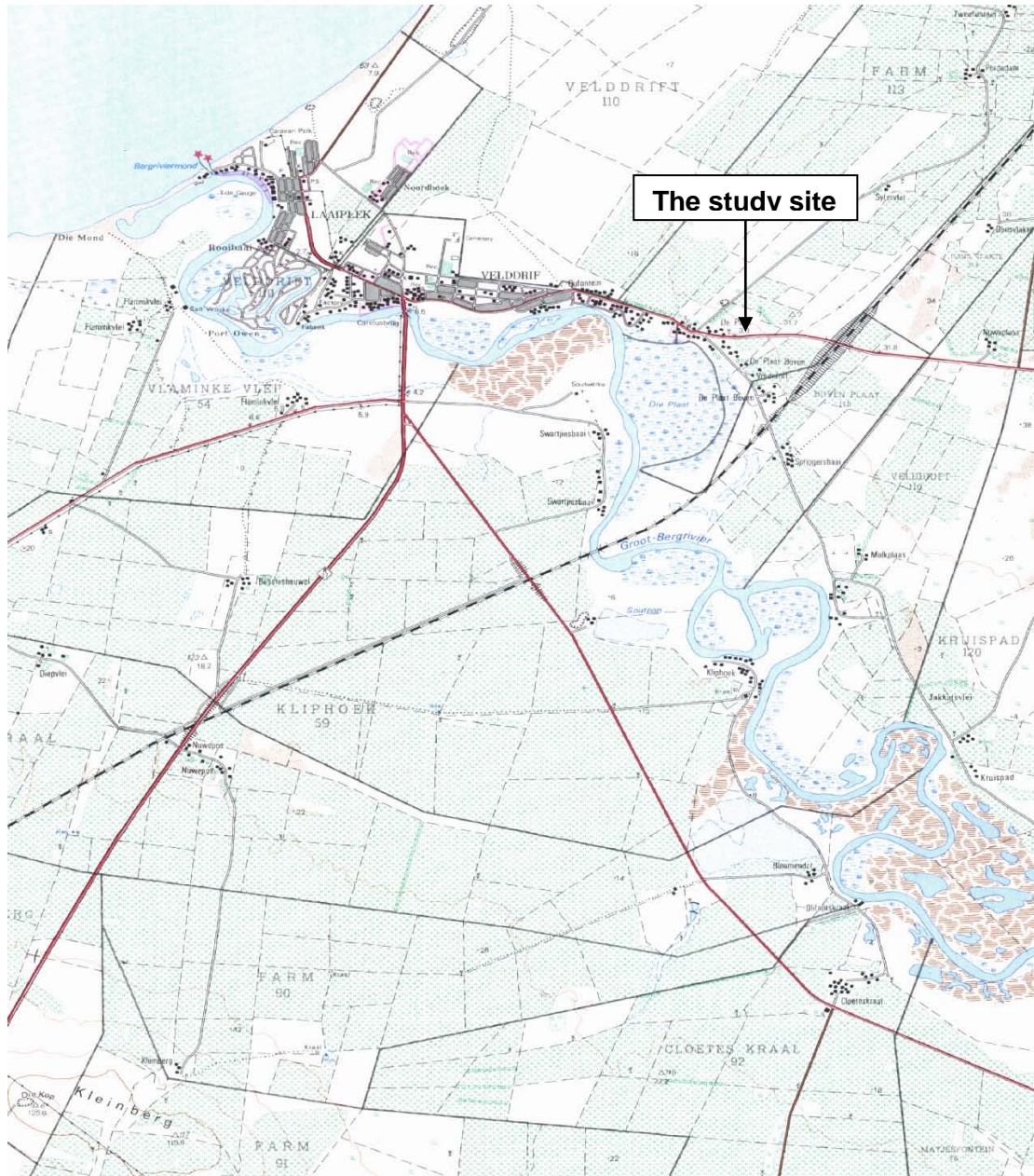


Figure 1. Site locality (3218 CA & CC Velddrif).



Figure 2. View of the site facing south west. The Berg river estuary is in the foreground.



Figure 3. View of the site facing west taken from the trig beacon.



Figure 4. View of the site facing south.



Figure 5. View of the site facing west. The R399 is to the left of the plate.

## **4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY**

### **4.1 Method of survey**

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a foot survey of the affected property.

The focus of the study was on the proposed development footprint and associated activities, but the surrounding area was also foot-searched for archaeological heritage remains.

The site visit and assessment took place over two days, on 9<sup>th</sup> August and 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2005.

More visible archaeological occurrences were recorded and given a co-ordinate using a Garmin Gecko 201 GPs set on map datum WGS 84.

A desktop study was also undertaken.

## **5. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PRECOLONIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE VELDDRIF REGION**

The archaeological significance of the West Coast region has been highlighted and is well-known (Kaplan 1990, 1993, 2003).

Ancient tidal fishtraps (*visvywers*) occur at Swartpunt, south of the mouth of the Berg River (Hart & Halkett 1992). Archaeologists have proposed that the concept originated among Later Stone Age<sup>1</sup> (LSA) people who lived on the coast after 2000 years ago (Avery 1975; Goodwin 1946).

Several shell middens (ancient rubbish dumps) have been recorded on a fossil shell bar on the eastern shores of St Helena Bay, between Laaiplek and Dwarskersbos (Hart & Miller 1994).

Along the alignment of the West Coast Highway, between the mouth of the Berg River and Rocher Pan, for example, there are a number of deflated hollows in the veld, which contain small numbers of stone artefacts, a few potsherds and occasional pieces of ostrich eggshell (Parkington & Manhire 1988; Kaplan 1997, 1998).

Rudner (1968) also describes LSA shell middens at Duinefontein and among the sand dunes at Die Vlei.

Just inland of the coastal shoreline, the region is characterised by an expanse of unconsolidated red sands, bush and scrub known as the Sandveld. Agricultural activity (mainly wheat, potatoes and some grazing) is fairly marginal here. From the records of early Dutch travellers, it seems clear that much hunter-gatherer settlement was ephemeral and in the open veld. Most explorers mentioned the large numbers of abandoned windbreaks, which seem to have been occupied for very short periods of time (Parkington 1976). If these were the most 'typical' sites then their remains would not be visible in the modern Sandveld landscape of today.

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<sup>1</sup> A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.

## **6. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL RISKS**

Human burials may be exposed or uncovered during bulk earthworks and excavations.

Archaeological heritage remains (for example shell middens and open habitation sites), may also be exposed during vegetation-clearing operations.

## **7. CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS**

The bulk of the property to the north of the R399 is covered in thick indigenous veld, resulting in low archaeological visibility. However, some open spaces occur in places.

## **8. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

### **8.1 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 000m<sup>2</sup>, or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

#### **8.1.1 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 the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), or Heritage Western Cape.

#### **8.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))**

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

#### **8.1.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))**

No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.



## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTION

### DPA 1 (GPS reading S° 32 47 31.4 E 18° 12 88.2)

Relatively large numbers of Later Stone Age tools were located in a large blowout on the affected property north of the R399 (Figure 6). The blowout occurs alongside a line of mature Eucalyptus trees, and is visible from the R399.

The tools are mainly concentrated in the northern portion of the blowout, and are dominated by tools in quartz, including cores, chunks, flakes, chips and bladelets. Several silcrete flakes (including one utilised flake), chunks and at least two large irregular cores were also counted. Some flakes in quartzite were noted, as well as a possible anvil and one small hammerstone. Three pieces of schist also occur. No other formal tools, pottery or ostrich eggshell was found on the site.

A small patch of about 12 large silcrete flakes, including several utilised and retouched tools, large chunks and a large utilised blade, occur in the southern section of the blowout.

The scatter of stone tools occur in a severely disturbed context, however. No stone lined hearths, or any other archaeological features occur on the site. The site has been heavily trampled, while a 4x4 track runs through the blowout and over the exposed dunes. Rusted metal, glass and other farm-related items are spread over the surrounding area.

Given the highly disturbed context in which the stone tools occur, the archaeological remains have been graded low local significance.

Several quartz chunks, and two small silcrete flakes were also noted in the blowout to the east of the Eucalyptus trees. A small patch of highly fragmented, water worn shell was also noted. The shellfish is not derived from an archaeological context (no large whole shell was noted), and its origin is most likely related to construction of the nearby R399, where large amounts of highly fragmented, water worn shell, road metal and gravel, is visible on both sides of the road reserve.



Figure 6. The archaeological site DPA 1 facing south.

## **10. IMPACT STATEMENT**

The impact of the proposed development on of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annexe), at Velddrif, on important archaeological heritage remains is likely to be low.

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

## **11. CONCLUSION**

The Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annexe), at Velddrif, has identified no significant impacts to pre-colonial archaeological material that will need to be mitigated prior to the proposed development activities.

Human burials and other heritage sites may, however, be exposed or uncovered during bulk earthworks and vegetation clearing operations.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

With regard to the proposed development of Portion 2 of the Farm 113 (De Plaat Annexe), at Velddrif, the following recommendations are made.

- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502).
- Vegetation-clearing operations and bulk earthworks must be monitored by a professional archaeologist.

### 13. REFERENCES

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