

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
PORTION 17 OF THE FARM 113 (VREDEFORT)  
VELDDRIF**

Prepared for

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By

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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 17 of the Farm 113 (Vredefort), at Velddrif.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the above property is for the purpose of a residential housing development, including several smallholdings.

A large portion of the affected property has also been set-aside as a proposed Conservation Area.

The extent of the proposed development (about 77 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 heritage 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.

Later Stone Age tools were located during the baseline archaeological study, but these are spread very thinly over the surrounding landscape and occur in a disturbed and modified context.

The Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment 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, become exposed or uncovered during bulk earthworks and excavations.

Archaeological heritage remains such as shell middens or open living sites 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 17 of the Farm 113 (Vredefort), at Velddrif on the Cape West Coast.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the above property is for the purpose of a residential housing development, including several smallholdings.

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

The extent of the proposed development (about 77 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 affected property is situated at Velddrif, on the Cape West coast.

Three portions of land have been combined to form the proposed development (refer to Figure 1).

**Portion A.** About 22 ha (or 29%) of the site, have been set aside for a proposed Conservation Area, with limited development, such as bird hides. The affected property falls within the 100 year floodplain of the Berg River estuary. Access to the site is via an existing servitude alongside the Sishen-Saldanha railway line (Figures 2 & 3).

**Portion B.** The 21 ha hillside property overlooks the Berg River estuary and comprises old agricultural and grazing lands (Figures 4-6).

**Portion C.** The 34 ha property is located alongside and north of the R399 between Veldrif and Piketberg, and immediately west of the Sishen-Saldanha railway line. The property is flat and comprises mainly thick indigenous Fynbos, with some strip ploughing in the southern portion (Figures 7 & 8).

### 4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY

#### 4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a foot survey of Portions A-C of the affected property.

Portion C of the affected property (i.e. the Berg River floodplain) was only partially investigated as it is obvious that no coherent archaeological heritage remains would occur there.

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 on 9<sup>th</sup> August and 18<sup>th</sup> of 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.

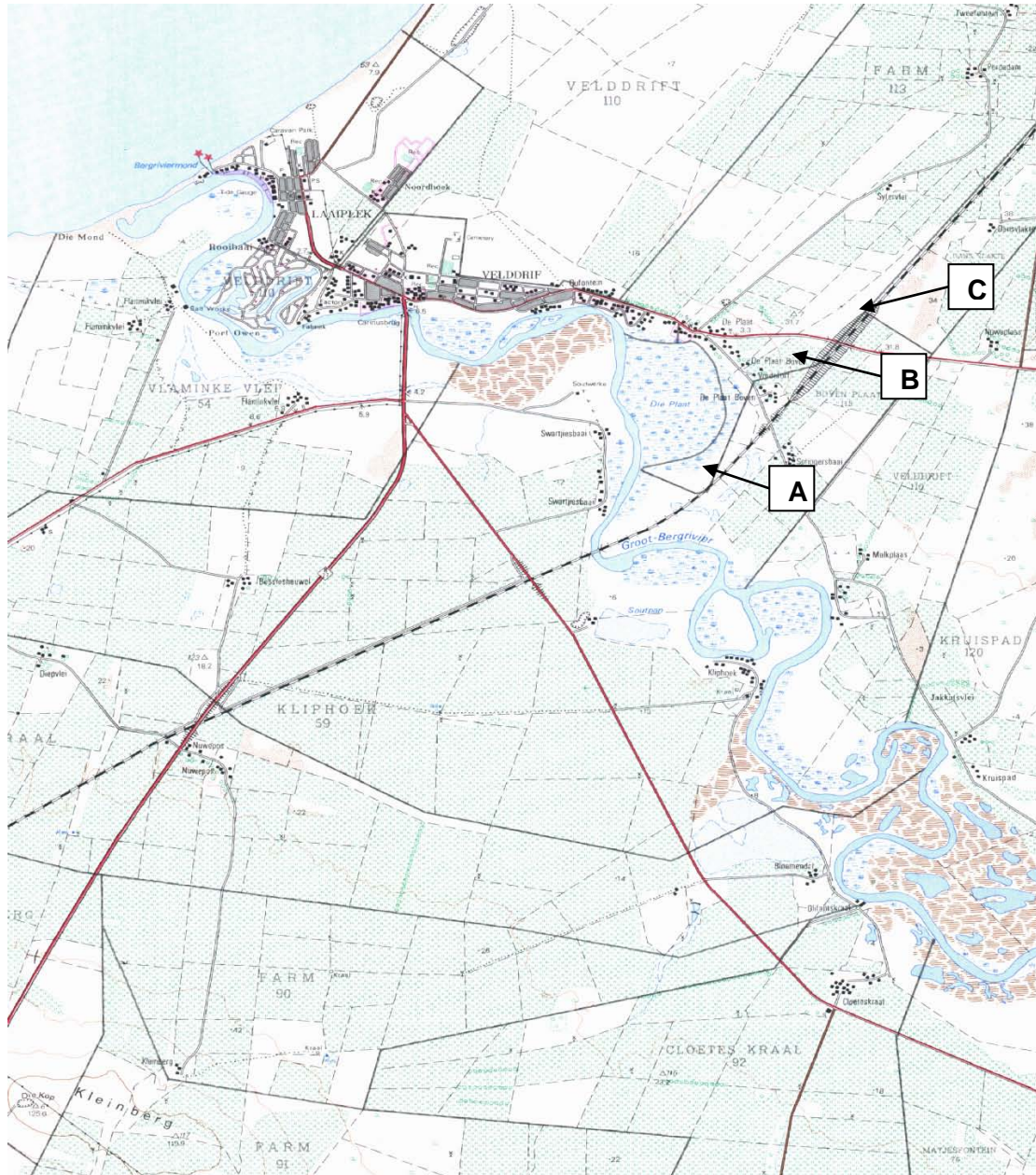


Figure 1. Site locality (3218 CA & CC Velddrif).





Figure 2. Portion A. the site facing south west. The Sishen-Saldanha servitude is to the left of the plate.



Figure 3. Portion A. The site facing north west.



Figure 4. Portion B. The site facing south west.



Figure 5. Portion B. The site facing south west.





Figure 6. Portion C. The site facing south. The Sishen-Saldanha servitude is to the left of the plate



Figure 7. Portion C. The site facing north. The Sishen-Saldanha servitude is to the right of the plate.



## **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).

Ancient tidal fishtraps (*viswywers*) 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.

## **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**

There were no constraints or limitations associated with the proposed development, although Portion C of the affected property is covered in indigenous veld, resulting in low archaeological visibility.

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

## 8. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

`...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 The National Heritage Resources Act (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 (refer to Figure 1)

**Portion A.** No archaeological heritage remains were located during the study. No significance landscape features occur on the site.

**Portion B.** A fairly extensive scatter of Later Stone Age tools were located in the northern portion of the property, near the fence line, but are spread very thinly and unevenly over the surrounding landscape.

Most of the tools comprise unmodified quartz flakes and several thin bladelets, chunks and chips. Three irregular cores and at least one bipolar core were noted. A few pieces of schist, one quartzite hammerstone, and one broken silcrete flake, were also found.

A very thin, discreet scatter of highly fragmented marine shellfish was also located close to the fence line. The shellfish is dominated by Black Mussel (Choromytilus meridionalis) with a few fragments of limpet (genus Patella) also occurring. One small whelk was also noted. Dune mole rat activity is quite extensive over the area.

A 1953 aerial photograph of the above property indicates a large blowout/deflated area, but this has since been overtaken by grazing veld.

A GPS reading for the site is S° 32 47 58.8 E° 18 13 06.3

**The archaeological remains in Portion B occur in a severely disturbed and modified context and have been graded low local significance.**

**Portion C.** No archaeological heritage remains were located during the study, although the affected property is covered in indigenous veld. No significance landscape features occur on the site.

## **10. IMPACT STATEMENT**

The impact of the proposed development on Portion 17 of the Farm 113 (Vredefort), 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 17 of the Farm 113 (Vredefort), at Velddrif, has identified no significant impacts to pre-colonial archaeological material that will need to be mitigated prior to the proposed development activities.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

With regard to the proposed development of Portion 17 of the Farm 113 (Vredefort), 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 in Portion C of the affected property and bulk earthworks must be monitored by a professional archaeologist.

### 13. REFERENCES

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