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PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF PORTION 5 OF THE FARM DIE WOUDE NO. 500 IN  
THE THORNHILL DISTRICT.

Prepared for: Gertenbach Ecological Consultations

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**PROPOSAL**

The original proposal was to do a survey of possible archaeological and historical heritage sites of Portion A of the farm Die Woud No 500 in the Thornhill District, to establish the range and importance of the heritage sites, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to these sites.

**THE INVESTIGATION**

The proposed area for development comprised two large grass covered fields, enclosed or partly enclosed by dense vegetation (Holocene age dunes covered by dense grass and dune/valley bushveld). The one area is situated on a hilltop and the other next to the main road to Gamtoos River Mouth. Both areas were investigated on foot. The densely vegetated regions were not surveyed because these are excluded from any development and the vegetation was too dense to make any observations.

No visible archaeological or historical sites/material were found during the investigation. However, sites may be covered by soil and vegetation and will only be located once this has been removed. The proposed area for development is situated some 5 km from the coast and falls within the maximum distance shell middens are expected to be found from the beach. (Binneman 1996, 2001). The coastal regions on both sides of the Gamtoos River Mouth, to the Kabeljous River Mouth to the west and the Van Stakens River Mouth to the east are very rich in archaeological sites and material. It is possible that the occasional Earlier and/or Middle Stone Age (Late Pleistocene in age) stone tools may be found in the river gravels lining the Gamtoos River's old flood plains, but these would be in secondary context and not associated with any other archaeological material and therefore of no cultural significance. It is highly unlikely that such artefacts will be found on the proposed area for development. any on the hilltops.

There are no historical buildings or other features in the proposed area for development.

**Brief archaeological background**

The first European early traveller, Ensign Beutler who passed through the region in 1752, called the area between the Gamtoos and Van Stakens Rivers Damassqualand (Mossop 1935). The latter was the eastern border of the Damassqua people. Later visitors to the area such as Thunberg

(1773) and Sparrman (1775) only found Gonaqua people at Van Stadens River when they passed through.

Reports on archaeological features at the Van Stadens and Gamtoos River Mouths were made in 1954 and again in 1962/64 by Mr W.H.R. Gess (Albany Museum Collections). These notes were published by Mr J. Rudner (1968). Rudner mentioned the remains of several pots from both locations which are housed in the Port Elizabeth Museum and the South African Museum in Cape Town. According to Rudner the stone tools associated with the sites belonged to the Middle Stone Age - older than 30 000 years) and the Later Stone Age Wilton industry (past 8 000 years).

The coastal region between the Gamtoos River and Van Stadens River is very rich in archaeological remains (Binneman & Webley, pers. observ). The most common archaeological sites are shell middens (large piles of marine shell) found usually concentrated opposite rocky coasts (people refer to these as 'strandloper middens'). These were campsites of San, Khoi and KhoiSan groups who lived along the immediate coast and collected marine foods. Large stone features are often associated with shell middens. Mixed with the shell are other food remains, cultural material and often human remains are found in the middens. Human remains may also be buried in, or close to the middens. These middens date from the past 8 000 years and may occur to some 5 km from the coast.

Other archaeological sites along the coast may consist of concentrations of Middle Stone Age stone tools and fossil dating to approximately 120 000 years old. Inland from the coast Earlier Stone Age handaxes and cleavers dating to a million years old may be found in the river gravels.

#### **CULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF THE AREA**

The proposed area for development is of very low cultural sensitivity and development may proceed. It is highly unlikely that any archaeological or historical material would be located during development, but sites (possibly shell middens) and material may be exposed after the top soil is removed. See appendix for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. In the unlikely event, that any concentrations of archaeological material are uncovered during further development of the site, it should be reported to the Albany Museum and/or the South African Heritage Resources Agency immediately so that systematic and professional investigation/excavations can be undertaken. Sufficient time should be allowed to remove/collect such material.
2. Construction managers/foremen should be informed before construction starts on the possible types of heritage sites and cultural material they may encounter and the procedures to follow when they find sites.

3. Consultation with the Gamkwa KhoiSan First Nation, or any other interest group must be conducted as required by the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999, Section 38(3e).

## GENERAL REMARKS

It must be emphasised that the conclusions and recommendations expressed in this archaeological heritage sensitivity investigation are based on the visibility of archaeological sites/material and may not therefore, reflect the true state of affairs. Many sites may be covered by soil and vegetation and will only be located once this has been removed. In the event of such finds being uncovered, (during any phase of construction work), archaeologists must be informed immediately so that they can investigate the importance of the sites and excavate or collect material before it is destroyed. The onus is on the developer to ensure that this agreement is honoured in accordance with the National Heritage Act No. 25 of 1999.

It must also be clear that Phase 1 Specialist Reports (ALAS) will be assessed by the relevant heritage resources authority. The final decision rests with the heritage resources authority, which should give a permit or a formal letter of permission for the destruction of any cultural sites.

## REFERENCES

- Binneman, J.N.F.** 1996. The symbolic construction of communities during the Holocene Later Stone Age in the south-eastern Cape. Unpublished D.Phil. thesis: University of the Witwatersrand.
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- Spartman, A.** 1785. A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarcticpolar circle and around the world, but chiefly into the country of the Hotentots and Caffres, from the year 1772 to 1776. Vol. 1. London: Robinson.
- Thunberg, K.P.** 1795. *Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia*. Performed between the years 1770 and 1779. Vol. 1. London: William Richardson & John Egerton.

## APPENDIX : IDENTIFICATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AND MATERIAL: guidelines and procedures for developers

### 1. Shell middens

Shell middens can be defined as an accumulation of marine shell deposited by human agents rather than the result of marine activity. The shells are concentrated in a specific locality above the high-water mark and frequently contain stone tools, pottery and bone remains. Shell middens may be of various sizes and depths, but an accumulation which exceeds 1 m<sup>2</sup> in extent, should be reported to an archaeologist.

### 2. Human Skeletal material

Human remains, whether the complete remains of an individual buried during the past, or scattered human remains resulting from disturbance of the grave, should be reported. In general the remains are buried in a flexed position on their sides, but are also found buried in a sitting position with a flat stone capping and developers are requested to be on the alert for this.

### 3. Fossil bone

Fossil bones may be found embedded in calcrete deposits at the site. Any concentrations of bones, whether fossilized or not, should be reported.

### 4. Stone artefacts

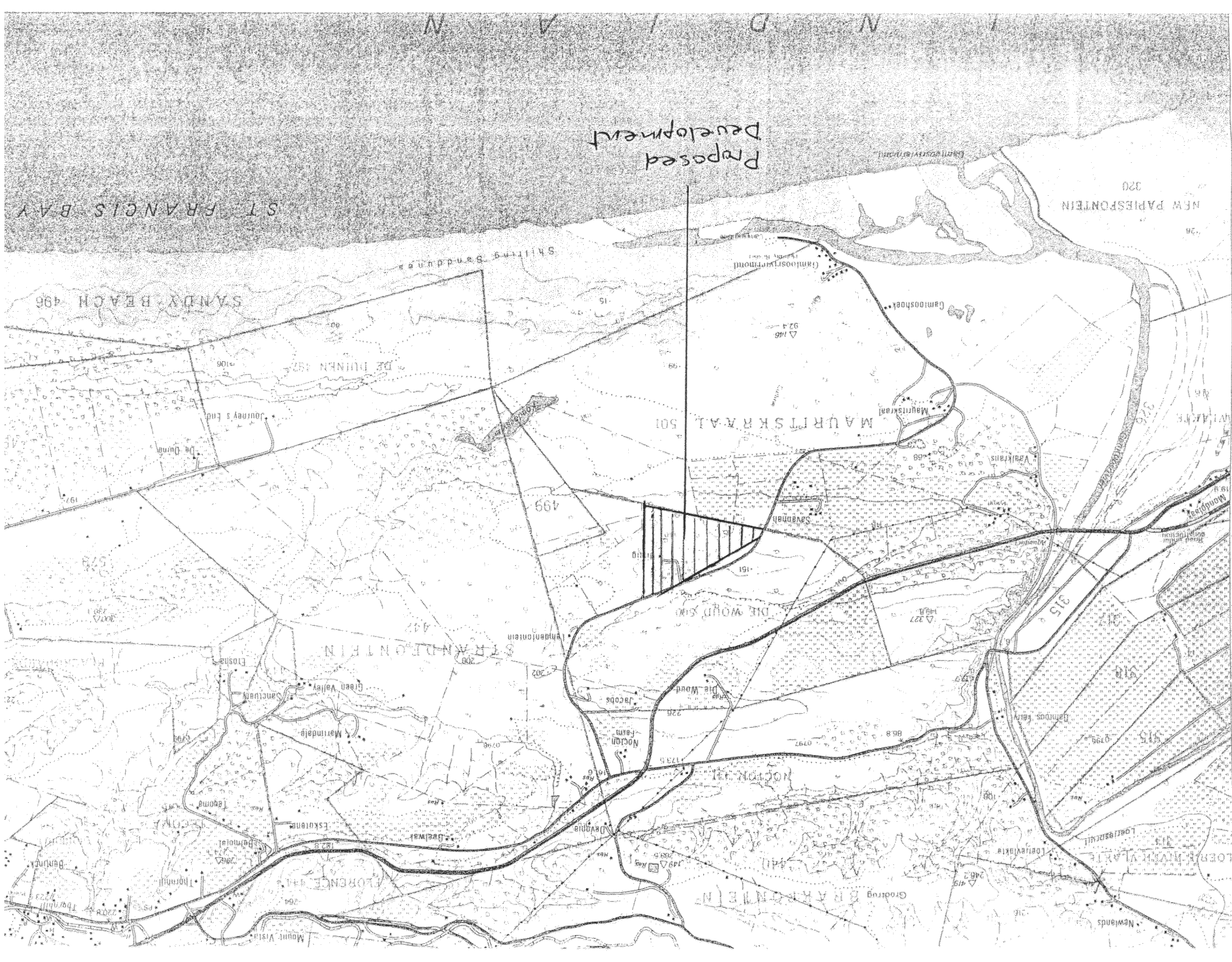
These are difficult for the layman to identify. However, large accumulations of flaked stones which do not appear to have been distributed naturally, should be reported. If the stone tools are associated with bone remains, development should be halted immediately and archaeologists notified.

### 5. Stone features and platforms

They come in different forms and sizes, but are easy to identify. The most common are an accumulation of roughly circular fire cracked stones tightly spaced and filled in with charcoal and marine shell. They are usually 1-2 metres in diameter and may represent cooking platform for shell fish. Others may resemble circular single row cobble stone markers. These are different sizes and may be the remains of wind breaks or cooking shelters.

### 6. Historical artefacts or features

These are easy to identified and include foundations of buildings or other construction features and items from domestic and military activities.



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