

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
LAND-EN-ZEEZICHT (REMAINDER OF ERF 4070)
SOMERSET WEST, WESTERN CAPE**

Prepared for

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1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Description of the study area.....	3
2	METHOD.....	4
2.1	Limitations	4
3	FINDINGS	4
3.1	Archaeological material	4
3.2	Buildings.....	5
3.2.1	Winery.....	5
4	CONCLUSION.....	5
4.1	Recommendations	6

1 INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was approached by Margaret Neethling on behalf of Westacre Projects to conduct an archaeological assessment of the remainder of erf 4070, Somerset West (Figure 1) Ms Margaret Neethling is currently preparing a phase 1 heritage impact assessment of the site, of which this study is a specialist component.¹ The developer intends to build additional housing units within the erf.

1.1 Description of the study area

The study area is the surviving portion of what was once the farm Land-en-Zeezicht, part of one of the four farms that were subdivided from Vergelegen after the corrupt governor; William Adriaan Van der Stel was relieved of his position by the Dutch East India Company. Land-en-Zeezicht itself was established in 1813 while the gables on the main dwelling house depict a date of 1834. The area was last farmed before 1947 after which the land was



subdivided. Continuing subdivision saw the Farm gradually whittled away and transformed into suburban Somerset West. A number of significant outbuildings were also demolished – the process only being brought to a halt with the declaration of the remaining land and buildings as a National Monument in 1985 (Provincial Heritage Site in terms of the NHRA of 1999). Today Land-en-Zeezicht has lost all identity as a farm but rather manifests itself as a gracious homestead with a large garden within a suburban setting.



Today the study area contains 3 structures. The main house which is a vernacular homestead

¹ Neethling, M. 2003 Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment of the remainder of erf 4070, Somerset West. Land-en-Zeezicht Estate. Unpublished report.

with an “H” shaped layout and neo-classical gables (Plate 1). The out-buildings consist of a winery (Plate 2) which has been converted into a cottage, as well as the groundsman’s residence. There is also a tennis court and swimming pool. The garden is planted with lawn and a variety of trees (Plate 3) many of them very recent; however several camphor trees allude to elements of an earlier landscape.



According to Neethling the buildings have been heavily renovated to the point that original fabric has largely been replaced below roof level. There appears to be no formal record of changes that have taken place to the buildings so the layering of their development is not well understood.

2 METHOD

The site was inspected by archaeologists David Halkett (MA) and Tim Hart (MA) and Charlie Arthurs (BA Hons). The area was checked for surface traces of pre-colonial and colonial period archaeological material protected by the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999. No trial excavations or detailed archival research was completed other than that reviewed by Ms Margaret Neethling. The groundsman opened the winery for inspection as Ms Neethling specifically requested that we comment on this structure.

2.1 Limitations

The study area is covered by lawns and a certain amount of surface hardening. Land surface visibility was therefore restricted to planting beds and less vegetated patches of the garden. No interventions into the fabric in any of the structures took place.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Archaeological material

Little archaeological material (colonial or pre-colonial) was observed within the landscaped and gardened areas. The area surrounding the main house had been tarred or paved, and clearly heavily modified in the last century. A few fragments of blue and white oriental porcelain as well as refined earthenware were found in some of the planting beds.

There is a possibility that somewhere within the immediate vicinity of the main house there is a domestic midden. Experience at other historic homesteads has shown that these were typically found close to the rear entrance of what was the kitchen. Such sites are considered to be of high archaeological value in terms of the information value about past lifestyles that can be obtained from analysing the animal bone, plant remains and artifacts contained within.

3.2 Buildings

To our knowledge no formal studies have been done on the building fabric or above ground archaeology of any of the buildings although extensive modifications have been carried out in recent years. Only the winery was inspected.

3.2.1 Winery

This vernacular structure which is situated next to the main house has been extensively altered by being converted to a cottage. The exterior walls of the building are fairly thick and probably contain early fabric. Virtually all the interior walls and divisions are contemporary as is most of the joinery and architraves. Vernacular style and joinery has been emulated during the recent alterations making the building sequence very difficult to “read”. Only one bricked up opening (perhaps a *muurkas*) was identified as being of 18th-19th century origin (Plate 4). There is evidence of a *stoep* around the exterior of the winery.



4 CONCLUSION

Indications are that the study area and the buildings are not particularly archaeologically sensitive in that no material has been identified that would preclude redevelopment of the site. There may however, be features or archaeological material buried below surface that are protected by that National Heritage Resources Act that may be encountered during development activities. These will need to be identified in advance of any development activities commencing.

If changes are made to the standing structures, plaster will need to be removed and the structures analysed to determine how the buildings developed and how they changed over time. From this information good design informants can be generated to ensure that changes

to the buildings do not detract any further from the significance of the site.

4.1 Recommendations

- Although very little is visible on the surface, buried material may well exist on the property, especially within 50 m of the main house. Trial excavations must be conducted within this radius if construction or landscaping is to take place. Any material that is older than 100 years of age is protected by the National Heritage Resources Act. Period inspection of service trenches in other parts of the erf by an archaeologist must be included within the development plan.
- If any renovations are required in the historic structures, fabric analysis should be done to try and establish whether any proposed changes will impact original elements of the buildings.

