PHASE ONE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A PORTION OF THE FARM HOLLEBAKS STRANDFONTEIN, DORINGBAAI

Prepared for

King David Estates

May 1995

Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by King David Estates to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological assessment of the property described as Portion 24, a part of Portion 21, of the Farm Hollebaks Strandfontein at Doringbaai on the Cape west coast. Ten archaeological sites were located and consist of a range of sites including shell middens, early and Middle Stone Age artefact scatters and a colonial homestead. While the proposed development will impact some sites, these are not believed to be of great significance to the history of the west coast as a whole.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by King David Estates to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological assessment of the proposed township development at Doringbaai[1]. We inspected plans of the proposed development on site and as we understand it the development consists of three portions, namely the frontal strip between the existing road to Donkins Bay and the strip of state land adjacent to the beach, the main development zone lies to the east of the Donkins Bay road extending beyond the Sishen-Saldahna Railway line up towards the farm Holbak and the third zone is a portion set aside as nature reserve at the very eastern end of the property. (We do not have a plan of the development and thus cannot include this in the report.)

In our letter to the client we undertook to locate archaeological sites and utilising GPS (Global Positioning System) readings plot them on a map of the area.

2. BACKGROUND

The west coast south of Lamberts Bay has been subjected to research by archaeologists during the last three decades. This work has shown that the west coast of southern Africa has been occupied by people for at least a million years. During the LSA (Late Stone Age) period, the ancestors of the San (Bushmen) hunter/gatherers occupied the Cape. They were attracted to the coastline which provided a predictable marine food supply. As a result of this, the existing late Holocene coastline (last 5000 years) is extremely rich in archaeological sites, especially shell middens in the immediate coastal zone. Although some of these sites are nearly 5 000 years old, it appears that intensive exploitation of marine foods took place between 2000 and 3 000 years ago in the region between the Olifants and Berg River mouths. The archaeological sites associated with this period that have been identified are associated with stretches of rocky shoreline where black mussels could be collected in great numbers. Human settlement patterns of this period are not well understood and are currently being researched. Just after 2000 years ago, Khoi Khoi (Hottentot) herders moved into southern Africa via the west coast. They brought with them domestic sheep, goats, cattle and the technology of pottery production. It appears that the San were marginalised as a result of this influx and much debate surrounds the trajectory of hunter-gatherer society during this time. Both hunter-gatherers and pastoralists alike were later to be all but decimated after the arrival of the colonialists.

Archaeological sites on the west coast are an important cultural resource because they contain information about the history of people and their interaction with the natural environment. The destruction or disturbance of an archaeological site can represent a loss of information about the past, which unlike other environmental resources can never be renewed.

3. METHOD

The area was visited and a search was carried out for archaeological sites. Site record forms were completed for each incidence and a GPS reading was taken in most cases. A

[1] The contact person is the director of King David Estates: Mr D. Benloulou, PO Doringbaai, 8151, tel: (02723) 51326, fax: (02723) 51321

map of the area is presented in Figure 1 showing the location of the property and the position of archaeological sites.

The area closest to the coast was completely searched as this was the most likely area for sites to occur. The absence of rocky outcrops along the coast at this point somewhat lowered the possibility of finding many sites. Similarly the area that is to be set aside as nature reserve was also carefully examined as rocky outcroppings at the easternmost boundary would have acted as focal points for settlement in the past. The "middle" area was examined by way of a number of transects. The searches of the other two areas showed that there were few sites to be found on the featureless plains. The absence of rocky areas or prominent hillocks would not have made this area attractive for habitation in the past, at least not during the late Holocene.

4. RESULTS

The following section contains summary descriptions of the sites that have been located.

HOL 1

GPS Location: 31º50.1631'S 18º15.1032'E

The site consists of a thin surface scatter of shellfish remains and some stone artefactual material in an area of small deflations in the red sands amongst clumps of high bush. Some very weathered bone and fresher ostrich eggshell is also present. Shells present include P argenvillei, P barbara and P granatina with argenvillei being relatively the most abundant species. No formal artefacts were observed and the raw materials include both quartz and quartzite.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 2

GPS Location: 31º50.1615'S 18º15.1447'E

This is in a very similar context as HOL 1 and is in the same immediate area. Site consists of a thin surface scatter of P argenvillei and stone artefactual material. One silcrete scraper and a few pieces of pottery (including a decorated rim sherd) were also observed. Other raw materials include quartz and quartzite.

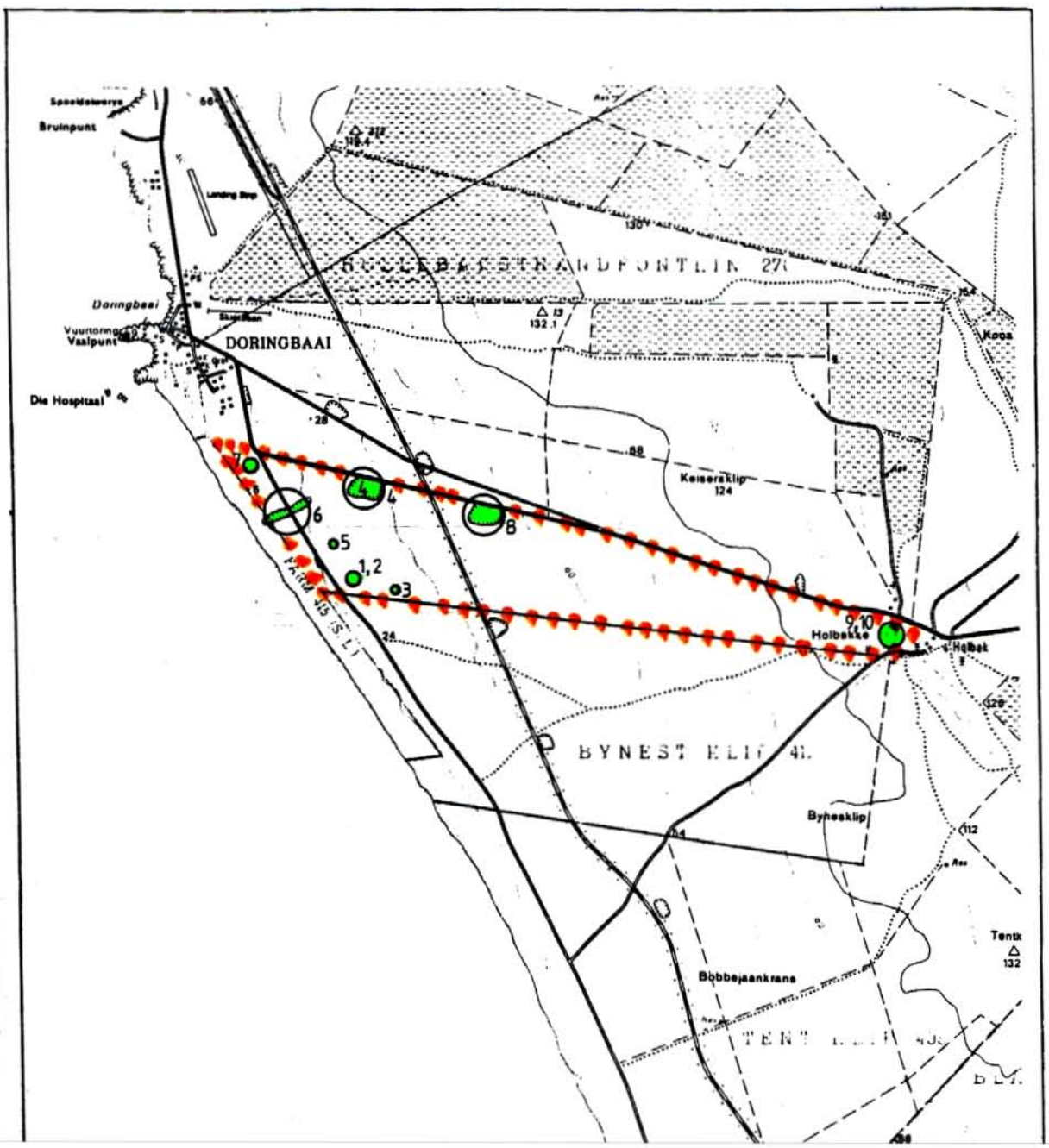
Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 3

GPS Location: 31º50.2193'S 18º15.3288'E



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The site consists of a thin scatter of stone artefactual material in a small deflation amongst high bush. Raw materials include quartz (which is relatively most abundant), quartzite and silcrete. No formal tools were observed. No shell was noted.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 4

GPS Location: 31º50.7326'S 18º15.2592'E

The site consists of a scatter of Early Stone Age (ESA) and Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts occurring around the edges of a borrow pit where sand has been removed. The artefactual seems to be lying at the interface between the red sands and the calcretes. No shell is present. Artefactual material consists of numerous flakes and cores on a range of materials most notably quartz and quartzite, while silcrete, hornfels and other crypto-crystallines are also observed. Quartzite cobble hammerstones are also present.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on but has already been subjected to disturbance by quarrying activities.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 5

GPS Location: 31º49.9756'S 18º14.9880'E

The site consists of an extremely ephemeral surface scatter of shell and stone. The scatter lies in a shallow deflation amongst occasional tall bush. No formal artefacts were noted and shell consists of one unidentified Patella fragment.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 6

GPS Location: N/A

The site consists of mixed ESA and MSA artefacts lying around the edges of an old prospecting trench which is bisected by the Donkins Bay road. Material consists of flakes and cores although one handaxe was also identified. Materials include quartzite, quartz and silcrete. The material is again lying at the interface between the red sands and the

calcrete. The trench has also brought shellfish remains to the surface which lying at approximately 20 meters above present sea level probably represent an old Pleistocene beach.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 7

GPS Location: 31º49.6650'S 18º14.6640'E

The site is exposed in an old sand track which may originally have served as the Donkins Bay road. Both shell and stone artefactual material is present. Shell has been compressed into the road surface in patches and in some instances does seem to bed in under the road embankment but is rather thin. Shell species observed include P argenvillei, P Granatina and P granularis. Ostrich eggshell fragments are also noted. The stone scatter is quite extensive and is exposed over a length of approximately 60 meters. A full range of raw materials is present including quartzite, quartz, hornfels, silcrete and other crypto-crystalline types. Formal tools are present and include MRP's, MBP's, scrapers, backed scraper, truncated blade. No pottery was observed.

Importance: medium

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on.

Mitigation: The plans that we have seen indicate that the area between the Donkins Bay road and the state land adjacent to the beach will not be developed but will be landscaped. We would suggest that the area be damaged as little as possible in the process as undoubtedly some more of this site lies buried.

HOL 8

GPS Location: N/A

The site lies around the edge of a deep borrow pit alongside the main road. Material consists of a mixture of both ESA and MSA. Raw materials include quartzite, quartz, silcrete and other crypto-crystalline types. Artefacts consist of flakes, cores and other waste. Two handaxes were observed. The material is in a similar context to that in other quarries namely at the base of the red sands.

Importance: low

Impact: the site will be destroyed if the area is landscaped or built on but is already disturbed by quarrying activities.

Mitigation: None suggested.

HOL 9

GPS Location: 31º50.4919'S 18º18.1415'E

The site consists of an old stone constructed homestead which has partially collapsed. Ceramics lying in the vicinity suggest that the building dates from at least the mid-19th century. This building lies at the very eastern end of the property in the area that will not be developed.

Importance: medium (some local historical and architectural value)

Impact: this building will not be directly impacted by development. Secondary impacts may occur as a result of human activity. The building will continue to deteriorate naturally.

Mitigation: This should perhaps be fenced.

HOL 10

GPS Location: similar location to HOL 9

The site consists of a stone scatter and lies immediately to the west of the rocky outcrop at Holbak. In fact the scatter is an extension of a general scatter of material that is found all over the koppie. Material is a mixture of LSA (Late Stone Age), MSA and ESA. Pottery and shell are present in small quantities. (Immediately outside the boundary fence are several shelters which contained dense occupation debris and these obviously formed a major focus for occupation in the area. These have unfortunately been dug out to form sheds and have resulted in a huge loss of potential information. These activities took place some years ago and have no relationship to the current development.)

Importance: low

Impact: Secondary impacts may occur as a result of the increase of human activity.

Mitigation: None suggested.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The absence of a large number of shell middens along the frontage of the property can probably be explained primarily by the lack of rocky points or headlands at this location. Large outcroppings are found in front of the town of Doringbaai and several middens have been noted there. Similarly, a lack of any natural features between the rock outcrop at Holbak and the Donkins Bay has resulted in there being no natural foci to attract occupation. The sites that have been found in this area do not appear to represent large or long term stays and may rather be overnight stops. The fact that sites often lie in amongst tall scraggly bushes on the Namaqualand coast may be an indication that this vegetation has always been like this and people sought them out for shelter much as the sheep do today.

Without doubt the major occupational focus of the inland zone of this area would have been the rocky outcrop at Holbak. Here a large natural reservoir and several smaller ones would have ensured at least some fresh water from time to time and the proximity to several large rockshelters was an added attraction. The presence of large amounts of shellfish remains in the dug out deposit of one of the shelters is an indication that the rocky shoreline was readily exploited by the indigenous inhabitants of the area.

Artefactual material has indicated a great time depth for occupation of the area ranging from the recent past to anything up to several hundred thousand years. Particular forms such as pottery tell us that some occupation took place after 2000 years ago and some stone tool forms tell us that other occupation occurred between 2000 and 5000 yrs ago. The extent of Early and Middle Stone Age material in all the quarries and other surface disturbances of the area indicates a massive presence of this type of material. Given the great time depth over which the material accumulated this is perhaps not surprising.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In our opinion none of the sites which have been identified require further mitigation by archaeologists. In two instances, namely HOL 7 and HOL 9, some mitigation can be implemented by the developer (see the notes on these sites above).

2. These recommendations are subject to approval by the National Monuments Council. Permission will have to be sought to destroy the existing sites that are identified in this report from the Archaeological Planning Committee of the NMC prior to development. Dr J Deacon can be contacted in this regard at the NMC offices in Cape Town:

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7. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

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