

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
ST. HELENA VIEWS PHASE 3  
COASTAL PORTION  
ERF 35  
ST. HELENA BAY**

Prepared for

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## Executive summary

CK Rumboll and Partners requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for a proposed housing development on the coastal portion of Erf 35 in St. Helena Bay, on the Cape West Coast.

The proposed project forms part of the the planned St. Helena Views housing development, that includes Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the subject property provides for the development of approximately 157 group housing units, including associated infrastructure such as internal roads and services.

The extent of the proposed development 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 following findings were made:

Dispersed scatters of weathered marine shellfish and a few stone tools were documented on the west facing slopes of the property, immediately below the Main Road.

**The archaeological heritage remains have been rated as having low local significance.**

Most of the shoreline area, between the high water mark and the coastal track running through the centre of the property, is covered in shellfish remains. Low density scatters of stone tools, ostrich eggshell and pottery also occur. A (rare) decorated lug from a pot was documented in the north-western portion of the proposed site.

**The archaeological heritage remains have, provisionally, been rated as having medium-high local significance.**

With regard to the proposed development of the coastal portion of Phase 3 of the planned St. Helena Views development, the following recommendations are made:

- Trial excavations, shellfish sampling and dating of the archaeological deposits in the shoreline area is required. If some of the surface scatters are found to have depth and undisturbed deposits they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavations.
- A set back line of between 30-40 m from the Admiralty Zone has been proposed by the consulting botanist and this is supported by the consulting archaeologist, as it will provide for a greater measure of protection of archaeological heritage remains that are present in the shoreline area.
- The construction of raised boardwalks to the beach is recommended as this will also ensure some measure of protection for archaeological deposits that occur in the shoreline area.

- Bulk earthworks and excavations must be monitored by a professional archaeologist.
- Should any unmarked human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502), or Heritage Western Cape (Mr N. Ndlovu 021 483 9692).

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and brief**

CK Rumboll and Partners, on behalf of West Coast Miracles (Pty) Ltd requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment for a proposed housing development on the coastal portion of Erf 35 St. Helena Bay, on the Cape West Coast in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the subject property provides for the development of about 157 group housing units, including associated infrastructure such as internal roads and services.

The study site is currently zoned Open Space.

The proposed project forms part of the the planned St. Helena Views development, that includes Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 (see Kaplan 2006a, b).

The extent of the proposed development (nearly 8.5 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 aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites/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.

## **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.

An aerial photograph of the study site is illustrated in Figure 2.

A proposed site layout plan is illustrated in Figure 3.

The subject property is located in St Helena Bay, approximately 20 km north of Vredenburg. The study site is located below the Main Road (Figures 4-6). The rocky, coastal portion of the site is flat and covered in thick winter grass, bush and scrub. The grass-covered slopes below the main road are fairly steep. The soils are loose and comprise highly weathered quartzites. A modern house and outbuildings are situated on the coast in the north western portion of the site. There are no significant landscape features occurring on the site. The surrounding land use is vacant land (public open space), township and increasing residential development.

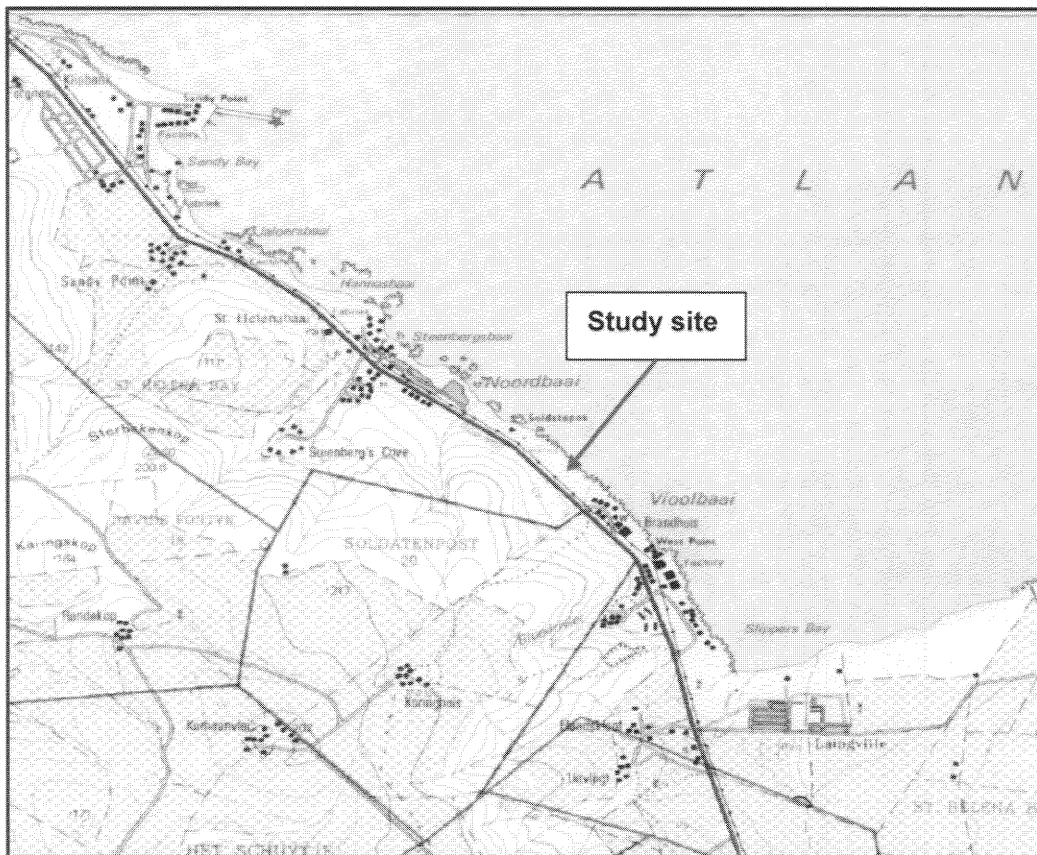


Figure 1. Locality map (3218 CA & CC Veldriff)

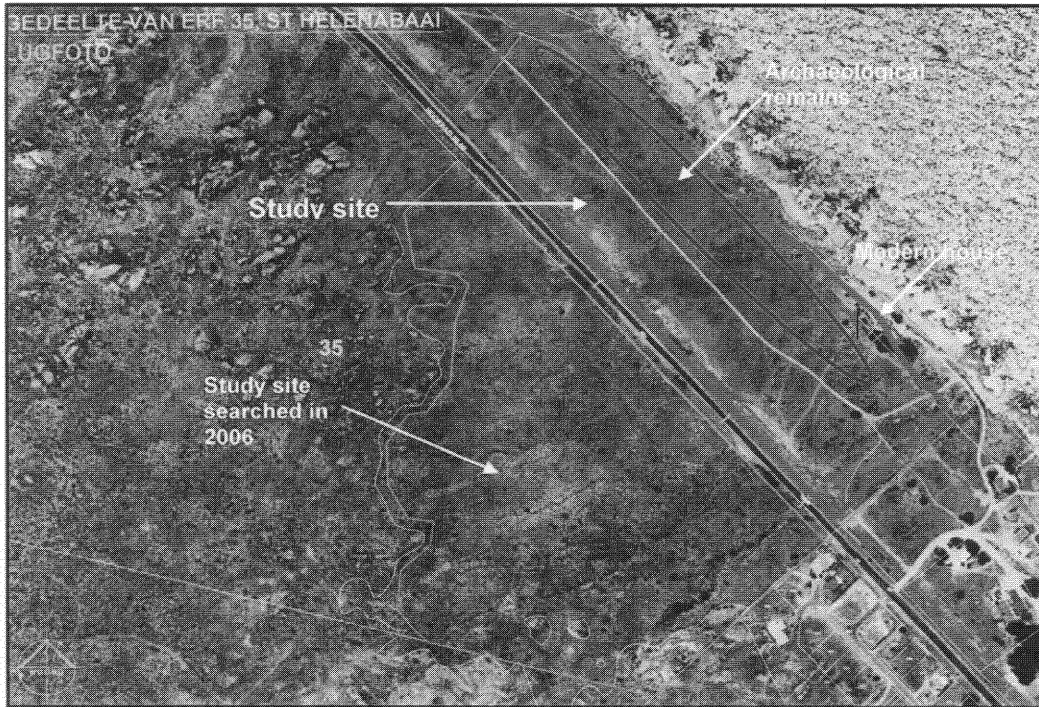


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the property

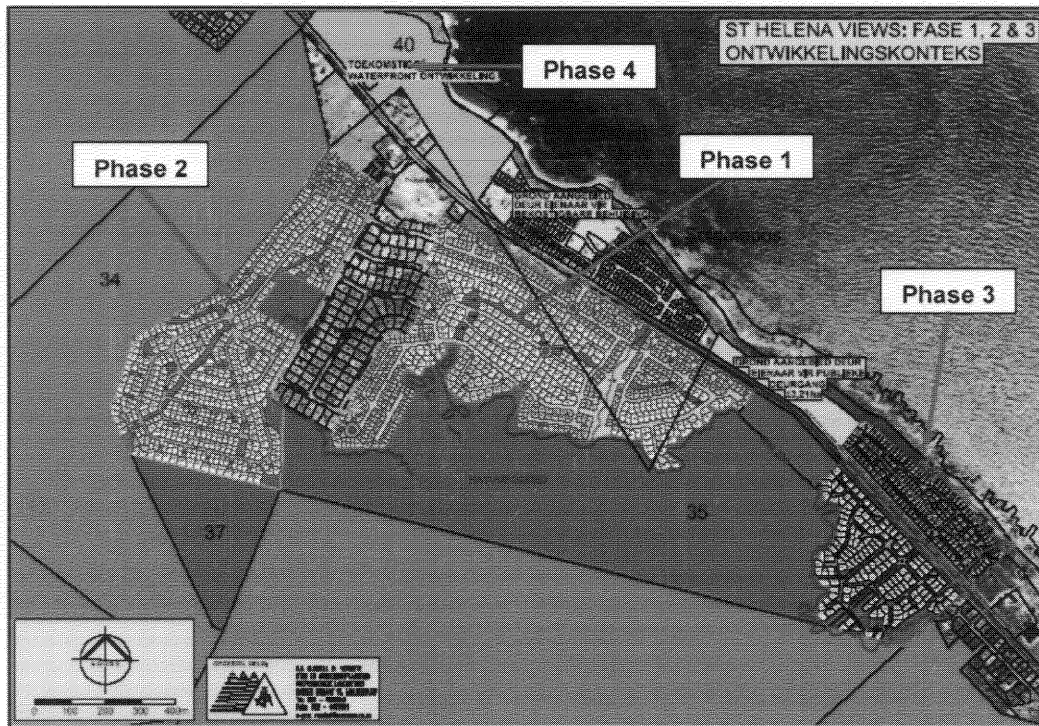
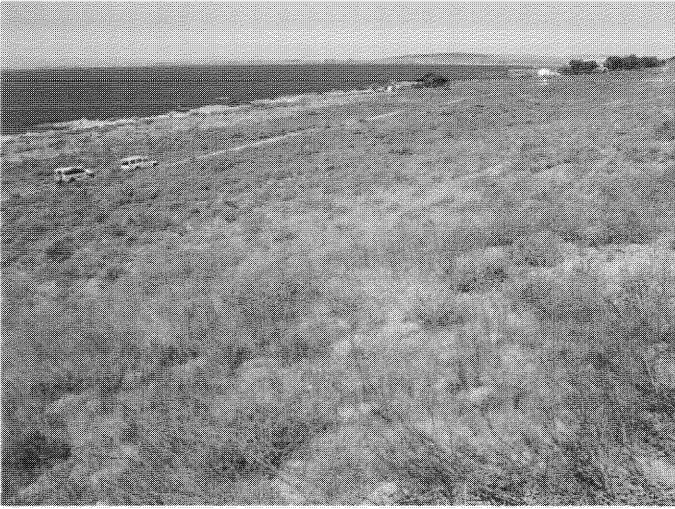


Figure 3. St. Helena Views (Phase 1-4). Site layout plan

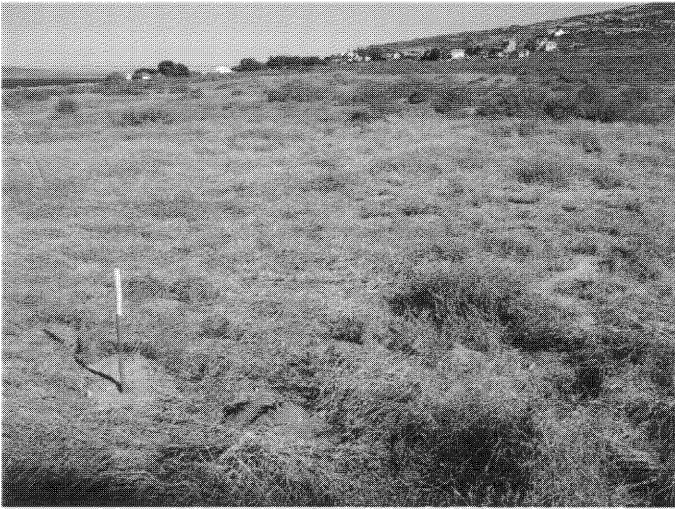




**Figure 4. View of the site facing north west**



**Figure 6. View of the site facing south**



**Figure 5. View of the site facing north**

## **4. STUDY APPROACH**

### **4.1 Method of survey**

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a foot survey of the proposed site.

Archaeological heritage remains were recorded using a Garmin Geko 201 GPS unit set on map datum wgs 84.

The site visit and assessment took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2007.

A desktop study was also undertaken.



## **4.2 Limitations**

There were no limitations associated with the proposed study.

## **4.3 Identification of potential risks**

- The proposed development will impact negatively on potentially important archaeological heritage remains in the shoreline area.
- Unmarked human burials may also be uncovered or exposed during earthmoving operations.

## **4.3 Results of the desk-top study**

Phase 1-4 of the proposed St Helena Views housing development has already been subjected to an AIA (Kaplan 2006a, b), with the exception of the coastal portion in Phase 3. Dispersed scatters of shellfish and stone tools were documented in Phases 1-3, while extensive scatters of shellfish, stone tools and pottery were documented in Phase 4 on the coast. Extensive scatters of shellfish and large numbers of stone artefacts have been recorded on the lower slopes of a property adjacent to Sandpiper Village in St. Helena Bay – but these sites have since been destroyed as a result of (illegal) development activities. Dispersed fragments of shellfish and a thin scatter of stone tools were also documented at Sandpiper Village (Kaplan 2005a), while weathered and bleached shellfish and a handful of stone artefacts were found during a study of Erf 4404, 4405, 4056, 4059, 4054, 4055 and 2793 (Kaplan 2007a, b, 2006c, 2005b).

It is also well known that large numbers of archaeological sites occur along the rocky shoreline around Duyker Eiland and Britannia Bay (Kaplan 1993; Halkett & Hart 1995; Thackeray & Cronin 1975). Recently, extensive scatters of shellfish, stone tools, pottery and reused colonial artefacts have been found in Britannia Bay, providing compelling evidence for possible herder sites (Kaplan 2006b, c).

With its rocky shoreline, the St. Helena Bay region acted as foci that attracted both LSA hunter-gatherers and later Khoekhoe herders as it offered greater opportunities for the exploitation of marine foods, particularly shellfish, while the local shales and granites provided vital nutrients for domestic stock. Shellfish meat was either cooked in pots or on open fires, but there is also evidence to suggest that meat was dried and smoked. Other marine resources exploited included sea birds, fish, crayfish, seal, dolphin, and even occasionally whales.

Research focussing on the Khoekhoe herder economy around 2000 years ago in the Vredenburg Peninsula has, significantly, identified large numbers of sites up to several kilometres from the shoreline (Sadr *et al* 1992). Many of these sites, comprising substantial shellfish deposits with pottery and stone tools, are centred round the many large granite outcroppings that are ubiquitous in Vredenburg, Paternoster and the St. Helena Bay area.

## 5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 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).

The relevant sections of the act are outlined below.

### 5.2 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.

### 5.3 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.

## 6. FINDINGS

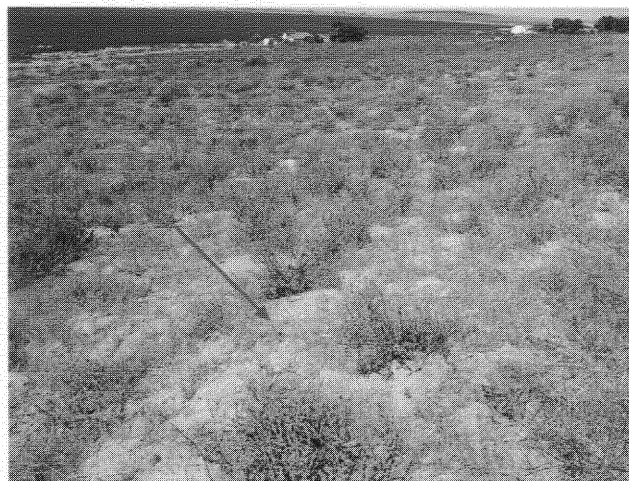
A thin, dispersed scatter of bleached and weathered shellfish and a few quartz, quartzite and shale flakes and chunks were documented on the upper grassy and loose sandy slopes of the property, about 15 m below the St. Helena Bay Main Road (Figure 7).

The shellfish is dominated by the limpets (*Scutellastra argenvillei* and *Cymbula granatina*), with some Black Mussel (*Choromytilus meridionalis*) also occurring. Such (dispersed) occurrences are fairly common in St. Helena Bay and have been documented at a number of localities in the area (Kaplan 2007a, b, 2006 a, c, 2005a, b). A GPS reading for the site is S° 32 46 145 E° 18 02 463.

Occasional fragments of weathered shellfish and the odd quartz and quartzite flake and chunk and shale blade was also noted on the upper slopes of the property below the Main Road (refer to Figure 4), but these

'sites' do not display any spatial integrity or coherence.

**The archaeological heritage remains have been rated as having low local significance**



**Figure 7. Dispersed shellfish fragments occur on the upper slopes of the property below the Main Road. Arrow indicates shell fragments**

Virtually the entire coastal strip of the property contains archaeological heritage remains. These comprise extensive scatters of fragmented and crushed shellfish, but corresponding low density scatters of cultural remain such as stone tools, ostrich eggshell and pottery. Some larger, whole shellfish does occur in places, however. Most of the shellfish deposits are hidden under and among thick, dry winter grasses and bush (refer to Figure 5), between the High Water Mark and almost up to the gravel road running along the length of the central portion of the property (Figures 8-13). Dune mole rat activity and animal burrowing is extensive in the surrounding area. Some shellfish occurs in open sandy patches on slightly elevated sandy ridges below the gravel road. Substantial shellfish deposits also occur below the Admiralty Zone (Figure 13). The shellfish remains are dominated by the limpets (*S. argenvillei* and *C. granatina*), and smaller amounts black mussel. Some whelks also occur. Much of the archaeological site is intact, but some disturbance and damage has occurred mainly as a result of pedestrian traffic, construction of gravel roads and 4 x 4 activity.

The stone artefacts include mainly flakes, chunks, cores ( $n = 2$ ) and small rounded beach cobbles (occasionally smashed and broken). The tools are mostly in quartz, but a few tools in quartzite and shale were also counted. One convex scraper and one adze, both in silcrete were found. A few small pieces of ostrich eggshell and three weathered pieces of undecorated pottery were documented.



Figure 8. Shellfish scatters in the shoreline area

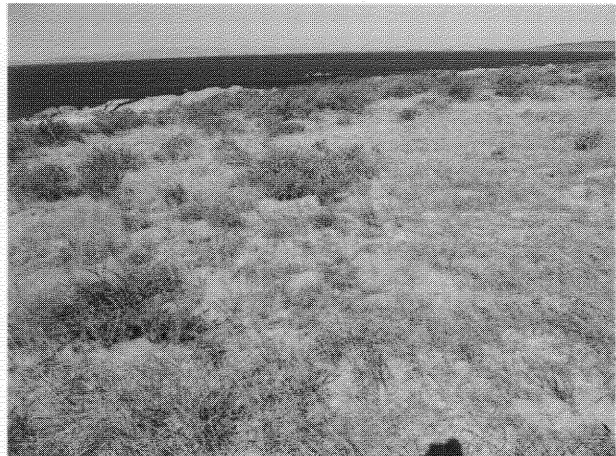


Figure 10. Shellfish scatters in the shoreline area



Figure 9. Shellfish scatters in the shoreline area

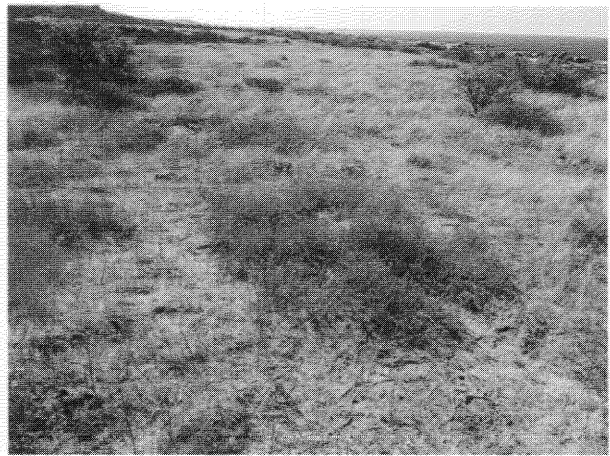


Figure 11. Shellfish scatters in the shoreline area





**Figure 12. Shellfish scatters on elevated dunes in the shoreline area**



**Figure 13. Shellfish scatters below the Admiralty Zone**

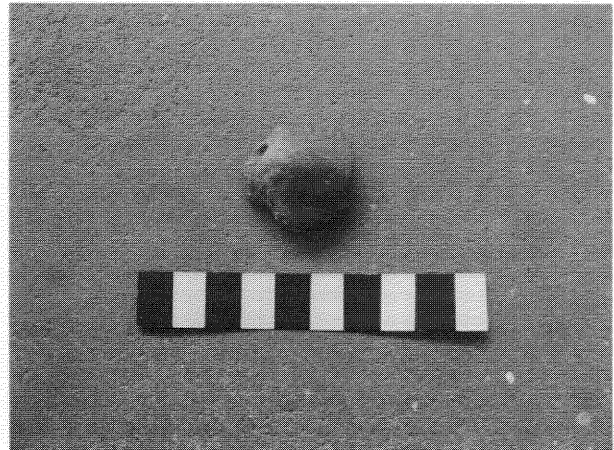
Of particular interest is a scatter of weathered shellfish that occurs in open patches of sand on elevated, vegetated dunes aligned behind the modern home in the far north western portion of the site (refer to Figure 2 & Figure 14). A few, thicker patches of shellfish occur in places among the dunes. The fragmented shellfish is dominated by *S. argenvillei* and *C. granatina*, with some Black Mussel and whelk also occurring. Some whole shellfish was noted. Ostrich eggshell, pottery and a few stone flakes, chunks and cores (in quartz) are scattered about the low dune hummocks. Two pieces of colonial-era Anular-ware and a few fragments of coloured glass were also counted. An important find is a decorated lug from a clay pot (Figure 15). Such a find has not been made before in the St. Helena Bay area, although pottery has been fairly widely documented. A GPS reading for the site is S° 32 46 205 E° 18 02 613.

The shellfish deposits on this stretch of coastline are almost identical to deposits and culultural remains that have been documented near Slippers Bay, about 2 kms to the north (Kaplan 2006f) and are currently the subject of archaeological trial excavations (Mary Patrick Cape Archaeological Survey pers. comm.).

**The archaeological heritage remains have, provisionally, been rated as having high local significance**



**Figure 14. Shellfish scatters near modern home**



**Figure 15. Decorated lug. Scale is in cm**

## 7. IMPACT STATEMENT

The impact of the proposed development on important archaeological heritage remains is likely to be **high**.

Bulk earthworks and excavations for services may also expose or uncover unmarked human burials.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed development of the coastal portion of Phase 3 of the planned St. Helena Views development, the following recommendations are made:

- Trial excavations, shellfish sampling and dating of the archaeological deposits in the shoreline area is required. If some of the surface scatters are found to have depth and undisturbed deposits they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavations.
- A set back line of between 30-40 m from the Admiralty Zone has been proposed by the consulting botanist and this is supported by the consulting archaeologist, as it will provide for a greater measure of protection of archaeological heritage remains that are present in the shoreline area.
- The construction of raised boardwalks to the beach is recommended as this will also ensure some measure of protection for archaeological deposits that occur in the shoreline area.
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- Should any unmarked human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502), or Heritage Western Cape (Mr N. Ndlovu 021 483 9692).

## 9. REFERENCES

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