

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY:
RONDEBERG FARM, CAPE WEST
COAST**

Prepared for
**Schneeberger Associates
(Pty) Ltd**

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No sites of significance were located in an archaeological survey of a portion of the farm Rondeberg, where a proposed development is planned. Six of the seven proposed development nodes, as well as the proposed public facility and parking area, were searched for the presence of archaeological sites or remains.

Incidental remains of archaeological material were found at the base of the dune ridge associated with Node HB and Node HA. These remains are not considered to be significant. The development of these nodes will also not impact directly on the archaeological material. Secondary activities such as the increased human activity in the area as a result of the development, and the construction of boardwalks, may however impact on these archaeological residues. It is recommended that the erection of archaeological information boards may minimise the impact that increased human activity will have on the archaeological residues associated with Node HB and Node HA.

The vegetation cover in the proposed development Node HD, Node HE, Node HL and Node HF behind the frontal dune system is at present too thick in parts to allow an assessment to be made of the Stone Age sites that may be buried beneath the surface. Overgrazing has also probably disturbed any sites that may once have been visible.

Vegetation clearing, the removal of dune sand for cut and fill purposes, the construction of building units and access roads, and the laying of services, may impact on possible below ground archaeological sites. Any sites, and particularly human burials which may be uncovered during these activities, should be immediately reported to the archaeological consultant to assess their importance and to intervene where necessary.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Agency for Cultural Resource Management has been appointed by Schneeberger Associates (Pty) Ltd to undertake a baseline archaeological survey of the proposed Rondeberg development site. This report contains the findings of the archaeological survey.

The specific issues to be addressed included the following:

1. an archaeological survey of the proposed Rondeberg development site;
2. the identification of any sites of archaeological interest that may exist, including their status and significance; and
3. the identification of measures to protect and maintain any valuable sites that may exist.

2. METHODOLOGY

The approach used in the investigation is the standard archaeological procedure for a study of this nature. It entails a thorough foot survey of the areas to be developed or managed. Archaeological visibility in the proposed development nodes behind the frontal dune system is low due to thick vegetation cover and trampling caused by decades of domestic animal grazing patterns.

Findings and recommendations are made on the basis of the survey.

3. THE SURVEY

The site proposed for the Rondeberg development is privately owned. The proposed sites were searched for the presence of archaeological sites and other cultural resources. The aim of the study was to survey and plot any sites of archaeological, cultural or historical interest that may exist in the proposed development nodes, including their status and significance.

4. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

1. Node HC. Fifty units are planned for this site. The site is located on top an extensive ancient dune ridge on the southern point of the proposed development area of the farm. The site is fairly well vegetated and consists of a series of dune ridges and dune hummocks. A large concentration of probably naturally-occurring and seagull-deposited white mussel (*Donax serra*) shell occur on this site. Besides two large pieces of bleached ostrich eggshell found behind the dune ridge, no archaeological material was noted at this proposed development site.

2. Node HD. Twenty units are planned for this site. The site is located on the north-western side of the pan or vlei behind the ancient barrier dune, close to Node HC. The site has been altered by brush cutting to generate grass cover and is overgrazed. No archaeological material was found at this proposed development site.

3. Parking and public facility. The site is situated at the end of the main access road leading to the beach. The area is overgrazed and disturbed. No archaeological material was found.

4. Node HB and Node HA. Twenty units are planned for each of these sites. The two nodes are located on top of an extensive barrier dune system about 200 meters apart on the northern side of the Dwars River. No archaeological remains were found on the actual proposed sites. However, an extensive scatter of whole and fragmented white mussel shell and some black mussel (*Choromytilus meridionalis*) shell occur in a stretch at the base of the dune ridge between the two sites. Archaeological material including ostrich eggshell (32 pieces counted), artefactual stone including a few flakes, chunks and one silcrete core, were found. Fairly large numbers of a burnt or blackened calcrete type of material, as well as beach cobbles, were also noted. The large concentrations of white mussel are probably naturally occurring, while the occurrence of black mussel shell is probably the result of human activity.

5. Node HE and Node HL. Node HE is located close to the boundary fence of Jackalsfontein on the northern edge of Rondeberg. Ten units are planned for this site. The site is thickly vegetated and no archaeological material was found at this proposed development site. Node HL is about 250 meters south-east of Node HE. Fifteen units are planned for this site. This site is also thickly vegetated making archaeological visibility very low. No archaeological material was found at this proposed development site.

6. Node HF. Fifteen units are planned for this site. The site is located approximately 300 meters south-east of Node HD and, like Node HE and Node HL is also thickly vegetated in parts and overgrazed, making archaeological visibility low. For these reasons Node HF was not searched for archaeological material.

5. DISCUSSION

No archaeological sites were located in a foot survey of the proposed Rondeberg development nodes. The probable impact of the development on above ground archaeological sites is therefore low to negligible. Secondary activities including construction of access roads, boardwalks, foundations and infrastructure needed for the development, and vegetation clearing, may impact on below surface sites. This impact however is also considered to be low to negligible. There is a chance however, that secondary activities may uncover human burials which are not visible from the surface. We note that the National Monuments legislation (Act No. 28 of 1969, as amended) obliges anyone finding burials or other buried sites to report them to the National Monuments Council, or to the archaeological consultant. This reinforces the need for on-site monitoring and briefing of contractors by an archaeological consultant prior to construction activity commencing.

Incidental remains of archaeological material were found associated with Node HB and Node HA. These are not considered to be significant as to warrant any detailed attention or sampling.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed Rondeberg site, the following recommendations are made:

1. No immediate mitigation is necessary;
2. Secondary activities such as construction of access roads, boardwalks, foundations and infrastructure needed for the construction of the housing units, may impact on sites and human burials buried beneath the surface. If burials or sites are uncovered a professional archaeologist should be called onto site to assess the archaeological material and to intervene where necessary;
3. The archaeological consultant may be called onto site prior to construction and secondary activities commencing in order to inform contractors of what to look out for in case sites or burials are disturbed;
4. In consultation with the archaeological consultant the developers of Rondeberg should consider the erection of information boards within development Node HB and Node HA to alert residents and visitors of the presence of archaeological remains, their importance, and the need to conserve and protect a diminishing cultural heritage;

5. Any plans to utilise the original homestead by the developers should be preceded by a historical archaeological and architectural investigation.

7. CONCLUSION

From the Rondeberg srvey no significant archaeological sites were found. As a result no archaeological mitigation is required.