

PHASE ONE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION: SANDY POINT

Prepared for

Sandy Point Developers (Pty) Ltd

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Prepared by

Archaeology Contracts Office

Department of Archaeology
University of Cape Town
Private Bag
Rondebosch
7700

Tel (021)650 2357
Fax (021)650 2352
Email djh@Beattie.uct.ac.za

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by Sandy Point Developers (Pty) Ltd to survey 3 portions of land near Sandy Point on the Vredenburg Peninsula (Figure 1). 9 Late Stone Age and 1 Middle Stone Age archaeological sites were located. Most of the sites were found in the immediate coastal zone while the others occurred among granite boulders on the hillside. 2 of the coastal sites are significant enough to require mitigatory excavations before development activities begin.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by Sandy Point Developers (Pty) Ltd to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological assessment of three areas (portions of erven 20, 34, 474) close to Sandy Point on the Vredenburg Peninsula (see Figure 2). The ACO, after discussions with the development planning consultant, Mr. R. Ellis (Town and Coastal Planner) undertook to:

- 2.1. Survey the development areas and locate any archaeological sites,
- 2.2. Assess the sites for their significance and the possible impacts resulting from development activities,
- 2.3. Produce a report detailing the findings and indicating the options for mitigating possible destruction of archaeological material should the need arise.

The survey revealed that 10 prehistoric archaeological sites exist in the development zones. These are described along with options for the mitigation of their destruction.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

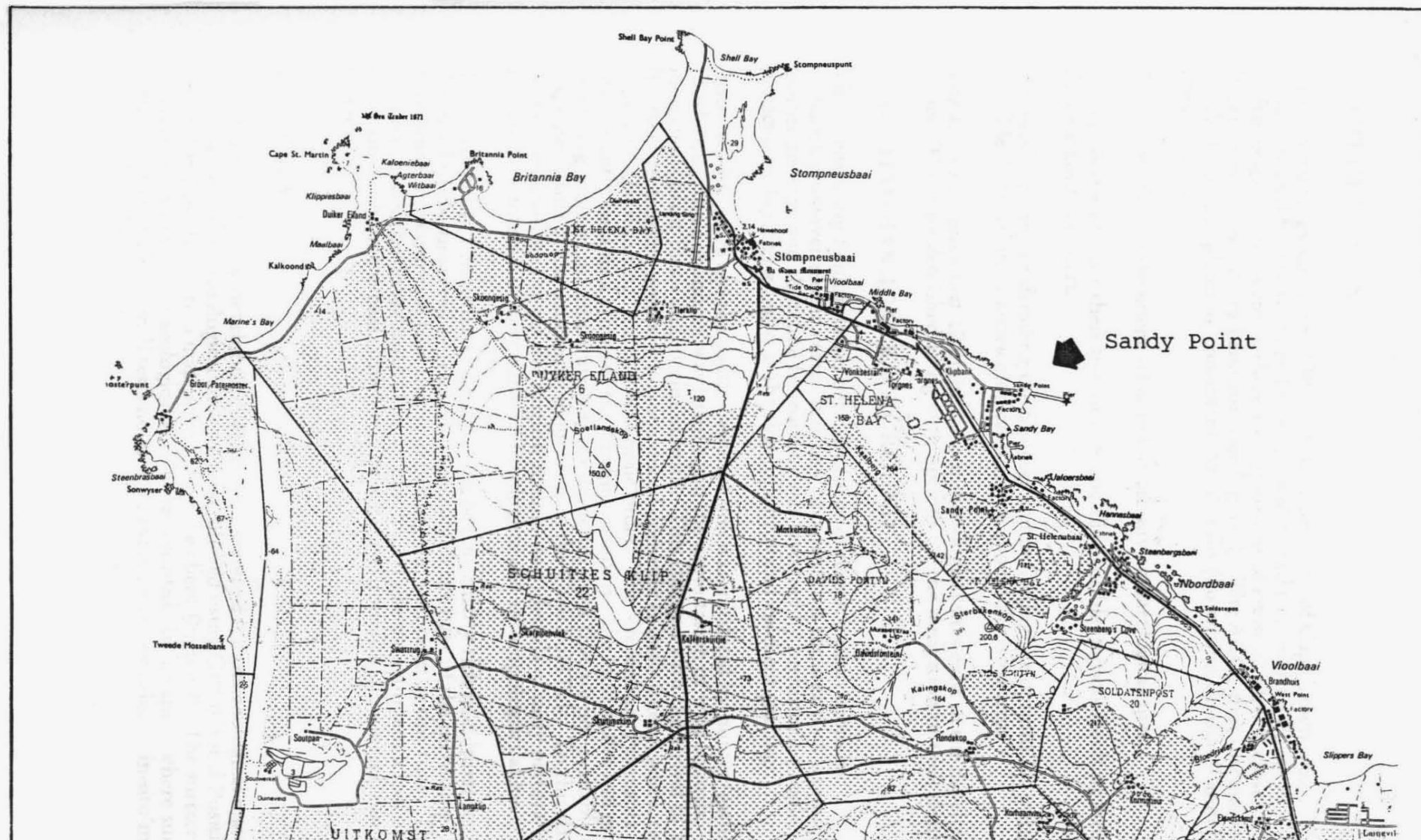
The Vredenburg Peninsula has been the focus of research excavations by archaeologists over recent years. It is now accepted that the area with its unique granite geology and shoreline formations was favoured by prehistoric people, particularly herding groups, as the rich soils provided excellent grazing.

Prior to 1800 years ago the south western Cape was inhabited by hunter/gatherers (Bushmen) who's economy was based upon the exploitation of wild animals, indigenous plant foods and marine animals. This changed with the arrival of Khoi (Hottentot) herding groups who introduced domestic animals (sheep, goats, cattle) into the Cape resulting in a new economic order. The Vredenburg Peninsula subsequently became a center of the herding economy - the local shales and granites providing some of the vital nutrients for domestic stock that are not available on the Cape Peninsula or the sandstone mountains of the Cape Fold Belt. To this day unresolved questions about the origins, ecology and lifestyle of early pastoralists have attracted the interest of historians, archaeologists and anthropologists alike.

The Vredenburg Peninsula is considered to be particularly rich in cultural resources that need to be conserved or rescued - especially in the light of the increasing development pressure on land that is impacting the west coast at this time. The destruction and/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 three prospective development areas were searched for archaeological material. The locations of archaeological sites were established using GPS (Global Positioning System) and plotted onto a map provided by the client (Figure 2). The surface characteristics of the archaeological sites were recorded. In instances where surface evidence was not clear, small test holes were excavated to establish if in-situ material existed below the surface.



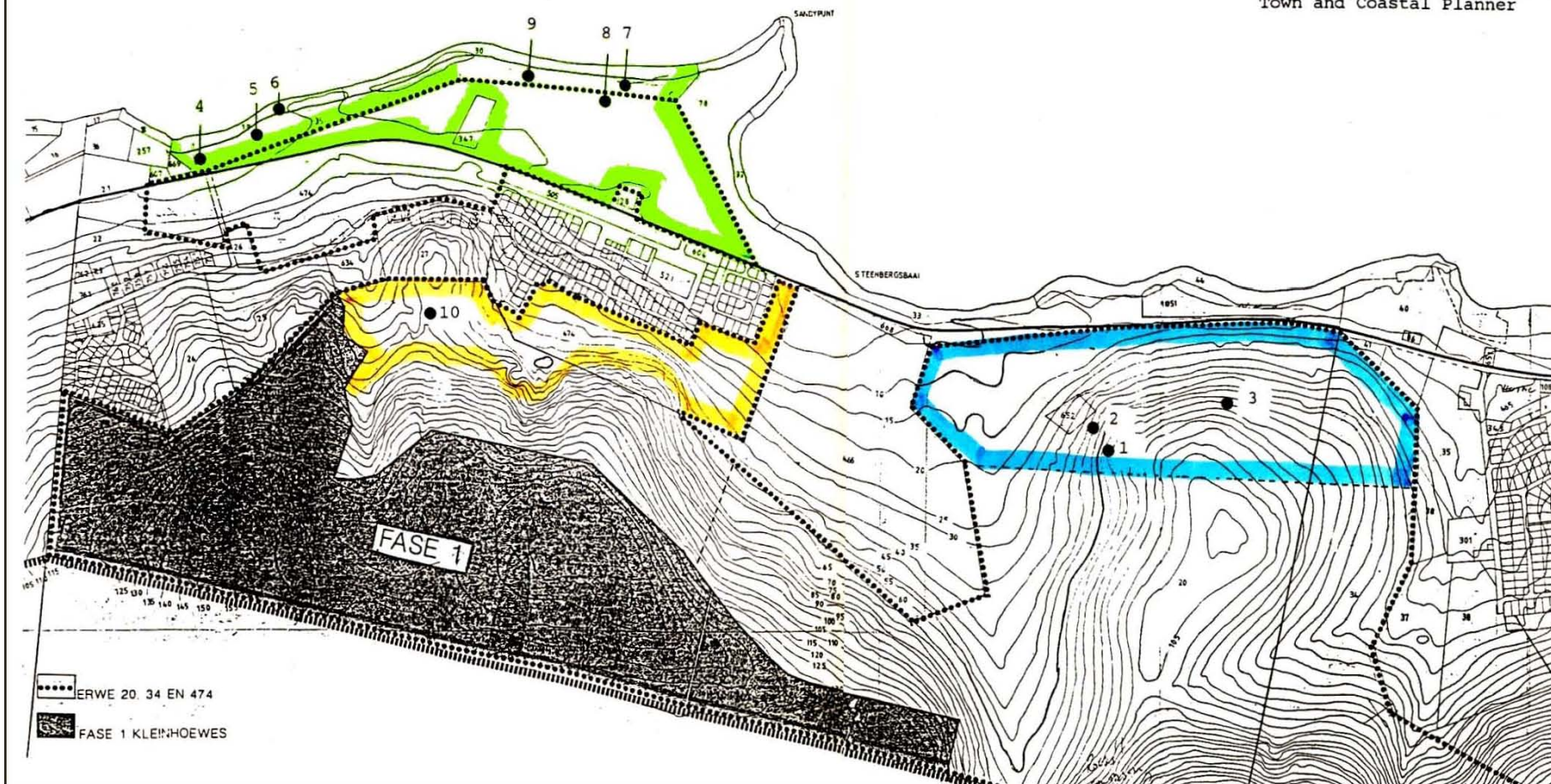
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1

Map supplied by Mr R. Ellis
Town and Coastal Planner



pa 1

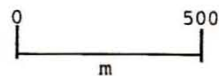


Area 2



Area 3

● Archaeological site



2



Area 4

5. RESULTS

3.1 Area 1

The first of the three development areas lies on the hillside to the west of Steenbergbaai (see Figure 2). The lower portion and crest of the hillside has been ploughed while the slopes are uncultivated due to the number of granite boulders which are present. Three prehistoric archaeological sites were found in uncultivated areas amongst the boulders. A description of the sites is presented below:

3.1.1 SP 1

GPS Location: 32°45.3653'S 18°00.9218'E

This is a shell scatter in the lee (south side) of a row of large granite boulders. The scatter is sparse and is limited to the surface. Shellfish seen include *Choromytilus meridionalis*, *Patella granatina*, *Burnupena* sp., *Patella granularis*. *Patella granatina* and *Choromytilus meridionalis* appear to be the dominant species. A single penguin bone was found on the site while the only artefact recorded was a chunk of limestone.

Importance: Low

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.1.2 SP 2

GPS Location: 32°45.2968'S 18°00.9096'E

The focus of this site is an open area between large granite boulders close to the water tanks behind the house belonging to the Pienaar family. This is a marginal shell scatter dominated by *Choromytilus meridionalis* and *Patella granatina*. *Burnupena* sp. and *Oxystele* sp. are also present. Artefactual material observed consists of a quartz flake.

Importance: Low

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.1.3 SP 3

GPS Location: 32°45.4332'S 18°01.1574'E

This is a scatter of Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts dispersed along the bottom and edges of an erosion gully. Although the artefact scatter was sparse, a silcrete unifacial point, some chunks, flakes and cores were present. Raw materials consisted of silcrete, quartz and quartzite.

Fragments of historic material were found in the same area. This consists of a fragment of annular ware and a wine bottle neck characteristic of the early 19th century.

Importance: Low. The MSA material is in an eroded context and the historic material is not dense enough to warrant further study.

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.2 Area 2

This portion of land includes the immediate coastal zone (Figure 2). A characteristic of the area is the prominent raised beach which extends the entire length of the development zone. The shoreline is sheltered but rocky. Behind the raised beach is a low-lying area which is mostly cultivated but disturbed at the eastern end by a disused gypsum quarry. The entire length of the raised beach was covered by prehistoric shell midden material of variable thickness and density. Much of this had become intermingled with the underlying raised beach shell deposits as a result of mole action. In other areas there was evidence that a workers compound had been build and demolished with the result that some areas had been quite badly disturbed. It was difficult to establish the edges of individual archaeological sites but 6 of the denser areas have been desribed. Two of these are interesting and will require mitigation.

3.2.1 SP 4

GPS Location: 32°44.0692'S 18°00.2001'E

This is shell midden material scattered along the raised beach. Species of shell present are *Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Patella barbara*, *Haliotis midae*, *Oxystele* sp., *Burnupena* sp. and *Choromytilus meridionalis*. *Patella* species are dominant. Stone artefacts consist of quartz and quartzite waste.

Importance: Below surface testing has shown that most of the shell is conflated onto the surface.

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.2.2 SP 5

GPS Location: 32°44.1346'S 18°00.2002'E

This shell scatter is localised on a low sandy mound on the raised beach. A small test holed indicated that there may be another thin lens of shell 25 cm below the surface. Shellfish species recorded are *Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Patella barbara*, *Patella argenvillei*, *Haliotis midae*, *Oxystele* sp., *Burnupena* sp. and *Choromytilus meridionalis*. *Patella granatina* appears to be dominant. Artefactual material consists of quartz and quartzite waste.

Importance: Low. If this site were unique in the survey area its importance would be greater.

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.2.3 SP 6

GPS Location: 32°44.1201'S 18°00.2510'E

This is a well defined and dense scatter of shell close to the shore on the seaward edge of the raised beach. Shellfish species present are *Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Patella barbara*, *Haliotis midae*, *Oxystele* sp., *Burnupena* sp., *Aulacomya ater* and small quantities of *Choromytilus meridionalis*. Although *Patella* sp. appears to be numerically dominant, there are large quantities of *Haliotis midae* which probably made up the bulk of meat weight on this site. There are large quantities of fish bone preserved in the deposit which appears to extend some 40 cm below surface.

Importance: High. This is the most well defined and best preserved site located during this survey.

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

Suggested mitigation: This site will need to be sampled by archaeological excavation if it is to be impacted.

3.2.4 SP 7

GPS Location: 32°44.2882'S 18°00.5574'E

This site lies very close to a demolished structure and has been disturbed. The scattered shell is mixed with building rubble and refuse. The contents of this site are very similar to others described so far in that the assemblage consists of mostly *Patella* sp. with small amounts of *Haliotis midae*, *Burnupena* sp. and *Choromytilus meridionalis*.

Importance: Low.

Impact: The site has already been impacted by previous building activities.

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.2.5 SP 8

GPS Location: 32°44.3173'S 18°00.5054'E

This shell scatter lies on a low portion of the raised beach adjacent to the gypsum quarry. Parts of the scatter are mixed with raised beach material which lies underneath. *Patella granatina* and *Patella granularis* appear to dominate the shellfish assemblage while *Haliotis midae*, *Burnupena* sp., *Choromytilus meridionalis* and *Aulacomya ater* are present. Artefactual material seen is a single quartz flake.

Importance: Low. The archaeological material which is confined to the surface has been disturbed by moles and gypsum quarry related activities.

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

Suggested mitigation: None required.

3.2.6 SP 9

GPS Location: 32°44.2266'S 18°00.4302'E

This shell scatter lies on a high portion of the raised beach. Of interest is a partly buried stone feature which could be the remains of a prehistoric structure. The archaeological material is confined to the surface and in places has been mixed with shell from the raised beach. *Patella granatina*, *Patella granularis*, *Burnupena* sp., *Haliotis midae*, and *Oxystele* sp. are present.

Importance: Medium. The stone feature is interesting and there is a possibility that further spatial patterning may lie below the surface.

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

Suggested mitigation: The stone feature needs to be exposed by archaeological excavation, and then recorded.

3.3 Area 3

This area consists of the hillside, saddle, disused granite quarry and cultivated lands south west of Sandy Point (Figure 2). The granite boulder strewn slopes of the hillside were excluded from the search at the request of the client. One site was located in the development area.

3.3.1 SP 10

GPS Location: 32°44.5437'S 17°59.9719'E

A diffuse scatter of shell was found in the vicinity of a quarried area on the saddle (see Figure 2). The archaeological material had no apparent focus and lay in an area that had been heavily disturbed by earthmoving. Colleagues confirmed that a site had been recorded in this area many years ago. This has been destroyed by quarrying and the archaeological material dispersed over a wide area. *Patella granularis*, *Patella granatina* and *Burnupena* sp. was found among the fragmented shell.

Importance: Low.

Impact: The site has already suffered high impact.

Suggested mitigation: None required.

4. CONCLUSION

The survey has shown that there are two types of landscape in the survey area that were favoured for settlement by prehistoric people. The first of these is the immediate coastal area along the sheltered shore line of St Helena Bay. Marine foods could be readily exploited - the emphasis being on the collection of *Patella* sp. and *Haliotis midae* (perlemoen) which colonise sheltered rocky shorelines. There is evidence of prehistoric occupation of the shoreline in area 2. Unfortunately this section of coast has been extensively used in modern times resulting in the partial destruction of many of these sites.

The second favoured area was among the many granite boulders that are found on the hillsides. Although the presence of overhangs is minimal, the boulders offered some shelter

from prevailing winds. While important sites exist in similar foci on other parts of the Vredenburg Peninsula, for example at Kasteelberg, those seen during this survey are ephemeral and of locational value only. No formal artefacts or ceramics were seen on any of the sites and it is therefore impossible to assess their age with any confidence. That the majority of them date to the Late Stone Age is not in dispute and in all probability they are less than 3000 years old. The exception is the Middle Stone Age site SP3 which is in all probability in excess of 30 000 years old.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

No significant impact on archaeological sites is foreseen in areas 1 and 3 as indicated on Figure 2. Archaeological material will however be impacted along the coastal zone in area 2 and will require mitigation in some form. Two sites, namely SP 6 and SP 9 are particularly important.

While some sites lie outside the specified development area, they are likely to be impacted indirectly through use associated to the development, for example, pathways to the beach, picnic sites and landscaping. These impacts and the location of all sites should be borne in mind when such features are planned.

Option 1: The best way protect the archaeological material would be to set development activities back from the immediate coastal zone - that is behind the bar of the raised beach. The present extent of the cultivated land roughly marks this boundary. The public should be given access to the shore line by way of established paths or walkways which avoid the archaeological sites. In this way the interests of conserving both coastal vegetation and archaeological material can be served.

Option 2: If the development is to encroach on the raised beach and immediate shoreline and particularly sites SP6 and SP9, then these will require excavation. Mitigation of shell midden material requires that the site is subject to controlled excavation by a qualified and an experienced archaeologist and assistants working under a permit issued by the National Monuments Council. All shell middens are explicitly protected by the National Monuments Act of 1969 (as amended).

These recommendations are subject to the approval of the National Monuments Council (NMC).

6. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Fieldwork and report preparation

Tim Hart
Dave Halkett