

**REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SAMPLING OF
SHELL MIDDEN DEPOSITS IN ERF 6 JACOBSBAAI
SALDANHA-VREDENBURG MUNICIPALITY**

Report prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background brief

In September 2003, the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) was instructed by Envirodinamik to undertake a specialist Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of Erf 6 Jacobsbaai on the Cape West coast (Kaplan 2003a & Figures 1 & 2).

The proposed development of Erf 6 (S° 32 57 58.1 E° 17 53 15.4) provides for the construction of 22 single residential units on 2.0 ha of land.

An extensive scatter of fragmented shellfish remains was located on Erf 6 during the baseline study. The archaeological remains were concentrated in the north-western portion of the property, a few metres from the boundary fence, which runs parallel to the public access road overlooking the small embayment of Jacobsbaai.

The surface scatter of shell comprises mainly limpet species (*Patella oculus*, *Patella granatina*, *Patella argenvillei*, and *Patella longicosta*), with smaller amounts of Black Mussel (*Choromytilus meridionalis*) and some perlemoen (*Haliotis midae*) occurring. The concentration of shellfish remains in this area are associated with an outcropping of granite, located a few metres from the fence line. A few cultural items were also located in this portion of the site (Kaplan 2003a). It was suggested that Erf 6 is possibly the same site called BCSB 19, recorded during an archaeological survey in 1987 (Parkington & Poggenpoel 1987).

A small test pit close to the granite outcrop revealed the presence of some large whole limpets (*Patella argenvillei*, *Patella granatina*, *Patella cochlear*, and *Patella miniata*), and a few fragments of perlemoen, in a dark brown, slightly coarse-grained sandy deposit, at a depth of about 35 cm below the surface. Two manuports (stone items introduced by people onto the site) and one small upper grindstone were also recovered from the test pit (Kaplan 2003a).

Erf 6, located close to the rocky shoreline of the embayment, was clearly a focus of prehistoric human activity and was therefore considered to be an archaeologically sensitive area. It is here that shellfish was stripped from the rocks at lower tides, processed and consumed by Later Stone Age hunters-gatherers.

With regard to the proposed development of Erf 6 Jacobsbaai, the following recommendations were made:

- A professional archaeologist must be appointed to dig a series of test pits alongside the fence line and among the granite outcropping, in order to determine the significance, density and the extent of the archaeological deposits in this area (Kaplan 2003a).

It was later agreed to by Heritage Western Cape, that a more cost-effective means of determining the significance of the archaeological deposits would be for an archaeologist to monitor the excavations of a JCB digger-loader



Figure 1. Locality map (3217 DB & DB Vredenburg)



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of Jacobsbaai indicating the site

ACRM was then instructed by Dr A. Lambrechts of BKS (Pty) Ltd, to monitor the excavation by the JCB digger-loader, of a series of Test Pits on the above property. This was undertaken in October 2003 (Kaplan 2003b).

Five test pits around the granite outcropping were inspected and the archaeological deposits sorted for heritage remains (Kaplan 2003b). None of the test pits revealed the presence of significant archaeological remains. A few cultural items were recovered from Test Pit 2, but the density of archaeological material and shellfish remains from this test pit was very low.

The following recommendations were made:

- No systematic archaeological excavations were required on Erf 6.
- Human burials or human burial remains uncovered or disturbed during bulk earthworks and excavations should not be removed or disturbed until inspected by a professional archaeologist.
- Should any human remains be exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to a professional archaeologist, and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (Kaplan 2003b).

Dr A. Jerardino, newly appointed Senior Heritage Office, Heritage Western Cape (HWC), later requested (in October 2004) from Dr Lambrechts (on behalf of the owner of the site), that archaeological shellfish deposits in Erf 6 Jacobsbaai be sampled, primarily in order to obtain a radiocarbon date, and a minimum age for the site.

ACRM was then instructed by Dr Lambrecht to undertake the sampling of shell midden deposits in Erf 6 in order to provide a radiocarbon date for the site.

ACRM worked off the permit issued by HWC (Permit No. 2003/10/APM 002) in 2003, in order to extract a shellfish sample from Erf 6 for radiocarbon dating.

2. FIEDLWORK

Sampling of archaeological shell midden deposits in Erf 6 took place on the 4th of October 2004. A fairly dense scatter of fragmented shellfish remains among the flat granite outcropping, about 1.5 m from the fence line, was selected for sampling (Figure 3).

A 3 x 1 m long trench was dug by means of a shovel (Figure 4). It emerged that fragmented shellfish remains were scattered and dispersed within a coarse, light orange-brown coloured sandy deposit (Spits 1-3). No discernable stratigraphic shell lenses or occupational horizons were noted in the 'excavated' sections, while very few whole shellfish was noted throughout the 'excavation'.

No bulk samples of shellfish were retained.

As no stratigraphic sequence was discernable, no section drawings of the excavations were made. A photographic record of the excavation was made.



Figure 3: View of the site. Arrow indicates the site.



Figure 4. The 'excavation'

3. DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Erf 6 Jacobsbaai (Figures 5 – 7)	
Stratigraphy	
Surface 0.0-0.20 m	Fragmented surface shell underlain by loose, darker-brown coloured humic deposit with rootlets and dispersed shell fragments. No shellfish lenses present. Some whole shell present.
Spit 1 0.20-0.40 m	Relatively loose, light-brown/orange coloured, coarse sandy deposit with fragmented shellfish. No discernable shell lenses present. Some whole shell present.
Spit 2 0.40-0.56	More compact, lighter-brown/orange coloured coarse/gritty sandy deposit with fragmented shellfish. Fine rootlets present. No discernable shell lenses present. A few whole shells present. Shellfish densities lower than above. Small nodules of calcrete/limestone occur.
Spit 3 0.56-073 m	Light orange/yellow coloured fine chalky sandy deposit with some fragmented shellfish. Chunks/clods of hard limestone/calcrete present. Shellfish densities very low. 1-2 whole shell present. Onto hard, smooth, uneven limestone base. Essentially sterile.
Biological & cultural evidence	
Surface	Shellfish dominated by fragmented limpets (genus <u>Patella</u>). Some Black mussel (<u>Choromytilus meridionalis</u>) occurs. No bone or cultural items found.
Spit 1	Shellfish dominated by highly fragmented limpets (genus <u>Patella</u>). Some Back Mussel (<u>Choromytilus meridionalis</u>). Small amount of Perlemoen. No bone or cultural items found.
Spit 2	Shellfish dominated by fragmented limpets (genus <u>Patella</u>). Some Back Mussel (<u>Choromytilus meridionalis</u>) present. No bone or cultural items found.
Spit 3	Shellfish dominated by fragmented limpets (genus <u>Patella</u>), with tiny amount of Black mussel present. No bone or cultural remains found.

4. DATING

A single sample of fragmented shellfish, from between 22 and 40 cm below the surface, was extracted for dating purposes (Figure 6). The sample, from Spit 1, was submitted to the radiocarbon dating laboratory in Pretoria on 25-10-2004, for dating.

A radiocarbon date (Pta – 9378) or 3300 ± 50 (BP) was obtained for the Erf 6 shellfish sample. The date has been calibrated to 1604 (1519) 1489 BC.

The Erf 6 radiocarbon date is the first date to have been obtained from archaeological deposits from Jacobsbaai. As residential development in Jacobsbaai has increased over the years, several archaeological impact assessments have been carried out (Kaplan 2004a,b, 2005; Yates & Henshilwood nd), later followed by shovel testing of archaeological heritage deposits (Kaplan 2004c,d).

Shovel testing of archaeological deposits in Jacobsbaai has revealed that significant archaeological heritage remains occur in the area, of which several sites will require systematic archaeological excavations, and radiocarbon dating of deposits.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Assistant: Mr Stephen Koopman

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Figure 5. View of the excavation. The darker brown deposits are the Surface deposits.



Figure 6. View of the excavation trench.



Figure 7. View of the excavation. Arrow indicates where shell sample was taken