

EIA FOR THE PROPOSED REZONING AND SUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF ERF 1556, HOUT BAY

HERITAGE SPECIALIST STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the EIA for erf 1556, Hout Bay, this report examines the heritage resources located on the site. Five items pertaining to local heritage were located on the site, with three being of very low significance. The other two comprise the forest belt and an old pathway, both of which form part of the local cultural/historical landscape. Impacts on these features are only of medium to low significance and could be successfully mitigated.

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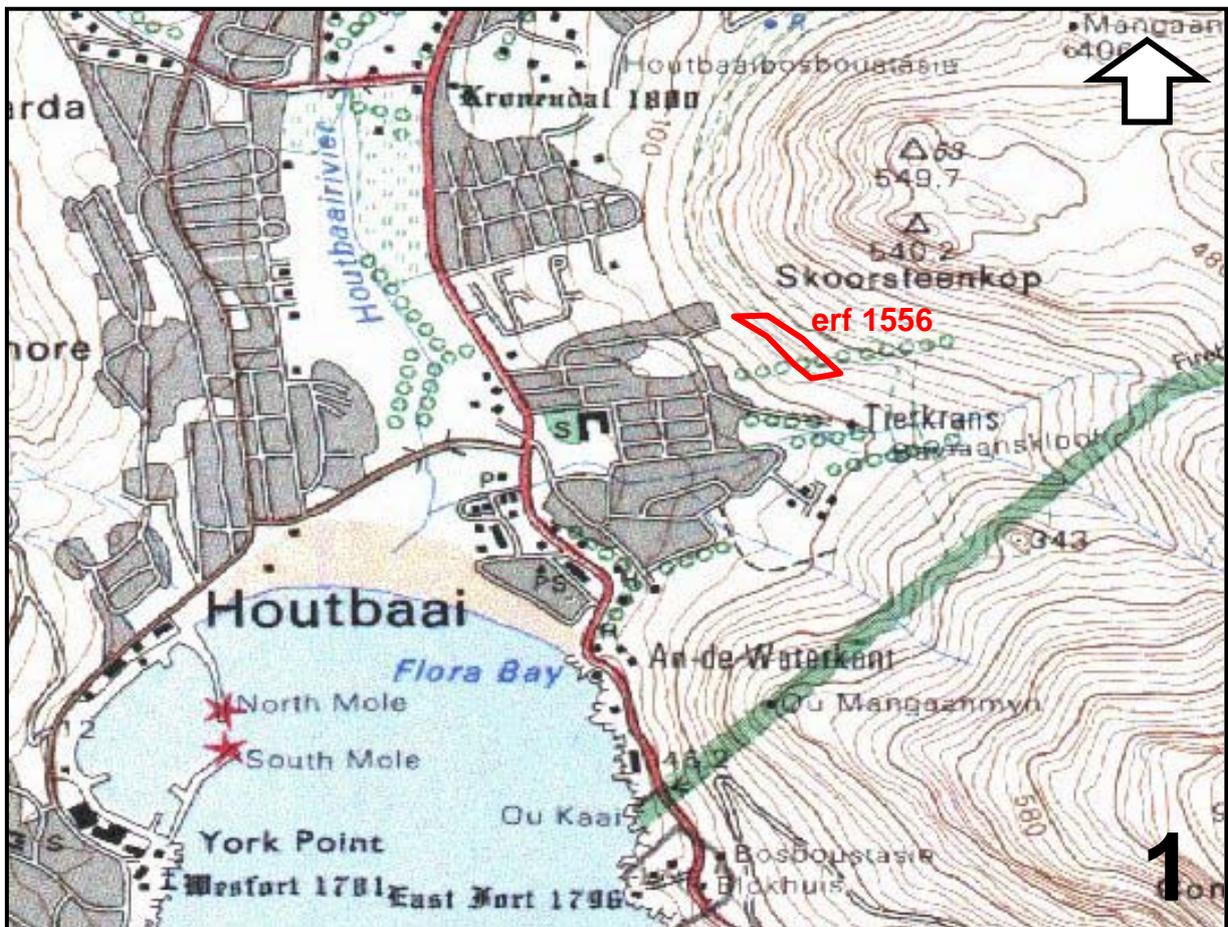
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and terms of reference

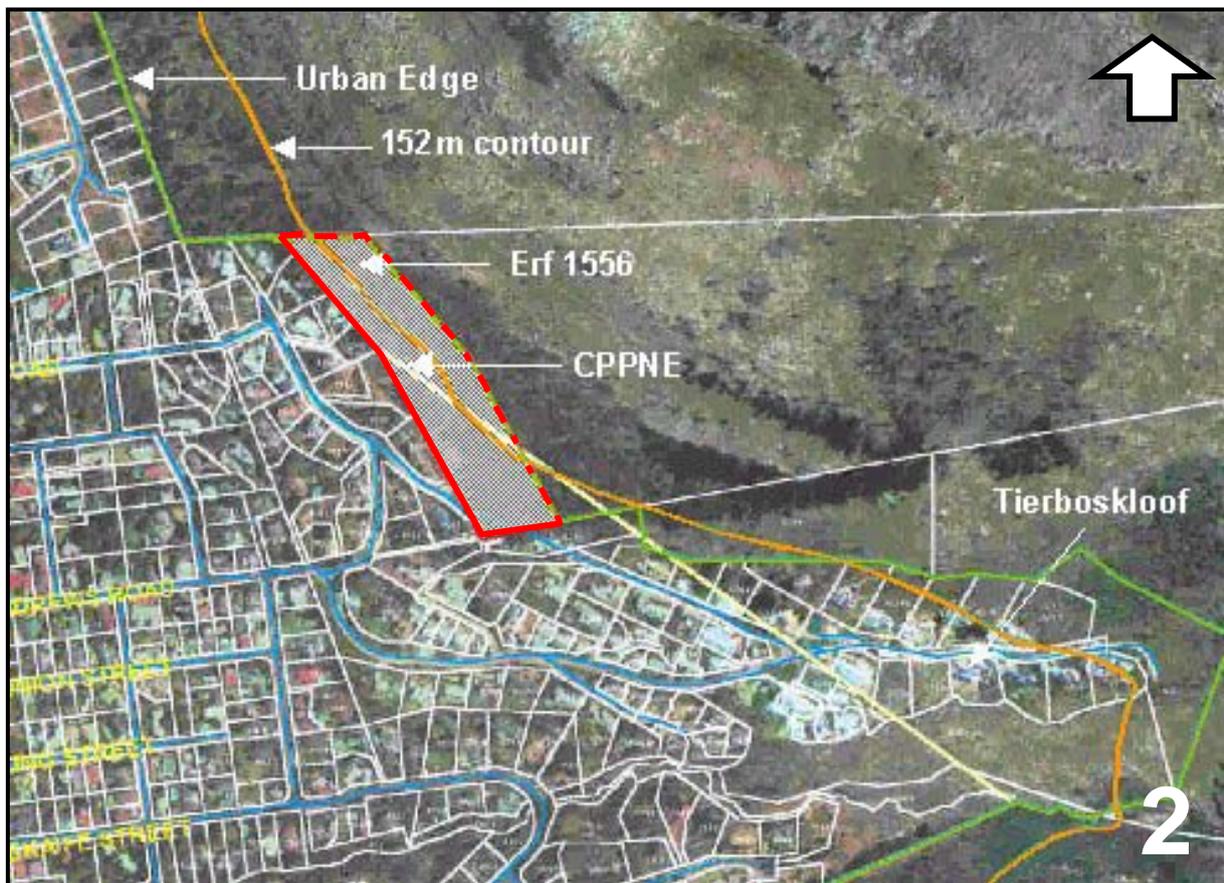
The Archaeology Contracts Office was asked to undertake an heritage impact assessment of a portion of ERF 1556, Hout Bay, of which it is proposed that a portion be rezoned residential. We were asked to examine the site to determine whether any archaeological or heritage resources were present on the erf and whether these might influence the proposed development if the rezoning is approved.

1.2 Study area

Erf 1556 is located on the eastern side of Hout Bay and immediately to the north of Tierboskloof as indicated in Figure 1. The site is immediately upslope of existing residential areas and the 152m building line, the urban edge and the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) boundary all pass through the property as indicated in Figure 2.



3419AB&AD Cape Peninsula (Mapping information supplied by the Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping; Website: w3sli.wcape.gov.za)



Aerial photograph showing the location of the site relative to nearby residential areas.

The site is located on a steep mountain slope and is largely covered by alien vegetation, primarily Eucalyptus and pine trees (Figure 3). These are a remnant of earlier plantations in the area. Most of the area falling above the CPPNE boundary has been cleared by the Table Mountain National Park authorities. A forestry road also runs through the site (Figure 3).



2. STUDY APPROACH

The site was examined physically on foot with site locations being recorded by means of a hand-held GPS receiver using the WGS84 datum. All relevant features and finds were photographed. Due to its location on a steep part of the mountainside, the site was unlikely to have any Later or Middle Stone Age material on it. However, we expected that historical, and possibly Early Stone Age (ESA) material, might be encountered on the site. During the course of the study, we also considered the impacts on the local cultural landscapes.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Although the road cutting (Figure 3) provided a good opportunity to search for ESA material, no Stone Age material of any sort was found on the site. Several features pertaining to the recent historic period, however, were recorded. These include a small ad-hoc reservoir (S 34° 02' 19.5" E 18° 22' 01.2"; Figure 4) and path alignment (Figure 5) as well as the cultural landscape of both the greater Hout Bay area and the area immediately surrounding the site.



Jeremy Blood of Crowther Campbell & Associates mentioned that this area, due to its altitude and location on a steep slope, has traditionally experienced water shortages due to low pressure. As a result, many local residents have resorted to local water storage and sourcing from the mountain as a means of overcoming the shortages. He suggested that this reservoir might represent such a water storage scheme used by earlier residents of the area, a suggestion with which we concur. The reservoir clearly dates to some time in the earlier half of the 20th century since the galvanised pipe and brass tap built into it (Figure 6) probably date to the 1930's or 1940's. The reservoir is constructed from local cobbles and boulders of Table Mountain Sandstone. The innermost rocks are partly cemented with Portland cement and a plaster layer has been applied to seal the inside (Figure 7). The remainder of the wall towards the outside is dry-packed (Figure 8). The approximate position of the reservoir on erf 1556 is indicated in Figure 9.



This reservoir is linked by means of a modern PVC pipe (part of which is visible in Figure 6) to another smaller reservoir located upslope to the south-east, but well off the property (Figures 9 & 10). The PVC pipe (now broken in several places) also runs downslope from the lower reservoir and

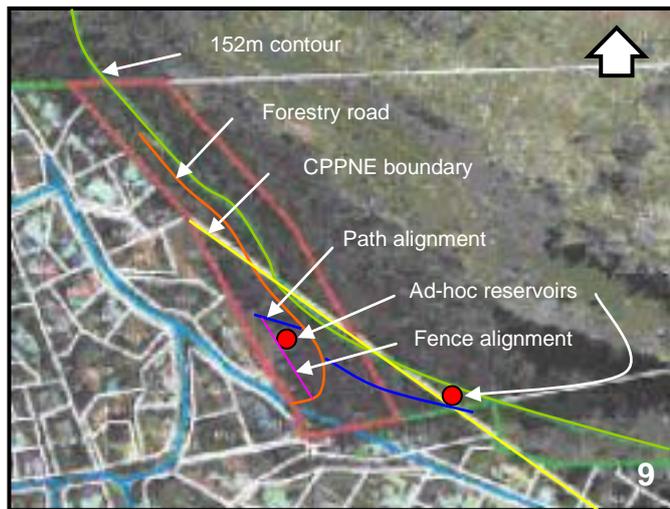


indicates that the system has been maintained and used in recent years. The approximate position of the second reservoir is also shown in Figure 9. By virtue of its construction materials, this reservoir is possibly younger than the lower one.

The pathway (Figures 5 & 9) is a roughly constructed one, with the lower side built up with rocks to stabilise the edge. Upslope from the forestry road a row of pine trees lines the lower edge of the path. The path runs past both reservoirs, but was cut through by the forestry road destroying any direct links. The modern PVC pipe has been laid along this path. It is uncertain whether the path is younger or older than the reservoirs.

A further feature related to the lower reservoir is a small platform edged with rocks (Figure 11) that was possibly constructed to create a flat area on which to site the reservoir. This platform coincides with an old fence line that runs directly across the front of the reservoir extending only a few metres to the north-west, but ending to the south-east to the edge of the forestry road (S 34°02'22.0" E 18°22'03.1"). The fence line is of iron poles, and strands of rusted barbed wire are evident in places. Since the fence does not coincide with an erf boundary, it is likely to be an informal division within a property.

Both the path and fence may be regarded as part of the local cultural landscape and are described above. The forestry road and surrounding forest also form part of this landscape. As mentioned above, many trees lying above the CPPNE boundary have already been cleared, and with the encroaching residential area to the west little remains of the forest today (Figure 12). The forest also constitutes part of the cultural landscape of the greater Hout Bay area, since forestry has been a part of the area for many years.



Please note that the path, reservoir and fence positions are only approximate



4. IMPACT DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT

The impacts on the five heritage features located on erf 1556 are described in this section. The assessment in each case considers a worst case scenario, since it is not known to what extent each feature may be damaged during development. Similarly, mitigation assumes a zero impact on each feature. The real impacts would depend on the design and layout of individual houses and gardens and therefore cannot be assessed at this stage. Note that the intensity, and hence significance of the impacts on each feature, considers that feature's

importance in the context of the local heritage. Unless specifically stated, all three planning alternatives are regarded simultaneously since impacts are unlikely to differ between them.



4.1 Ad-hoc reservoir

Description of effect: Any construction or landscaping activity has the potential to affect the reservoir.

Assessment: In terms of local heritage, the reservoir is not considered worthy of conservation. Any impact would therefore be of very low significance. “Alternative C”, however, has the greatest likelihood of impacting the reservoir.

Mitigation: Preservation of the reservoir would result in a zero impact, but considering the low intensity of the impact before mitigation, none is suggested.

Table 4.1 Summary of impacts on the reservoir resulting from construction and landscaping.

| | Before mitigation | After mitigation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extent | Local (site) | Local (site) |
| Duration | Permanent | Permanent |
| Intensity | Low | Low |
| Probability | Probable | Improbable |
| Status | Neutral | Neutral |
| Degree of confidence | High | High |
| Significance | Very Low | Not applicable |

4.2 Path

Description of effect: Any construction or landscaping activity has the potential to affect the path.

Assessment: In terms of local heritage, the path is not considered highly conservation-worthy and furthermore, a considerable portion of the path does extend beyond the current site. However, since the path is part of the cultural landscape, and has probably been in regular use for some time, a low to medium intensity impact would be experienced. The developer has proposed linking the access servitude with existing pathways, and as such, losing the section of path falling within erf 1556 would be of low significance.

Mitigation: Ideally, the path might be preserved and incorporated within a public servitude, thus resulting in a zero impact. However, bearing in mind the relatively low intensity and significance of the impact before mitigation, ensuring public access to the remaining portion of the path to the east of erf 1556, via a suitably sited linking pathway, would be a suitable mitigation requirement.

Table 4.2 Summary of impacts on the path resulting from construction and landscaping.

| | Before mitigation | After mitigation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extent | Local (site) | Local (site) |
| Duration | Permanent | Permanent |
| Intensity | Low to medium | Low |
| Probability | Definite | Highly probable |
| Status | Neutral | Neutral |
| Degree of confidence | High | High |
| Significance | Low to medium | Not applicable |

4.3 Fence line

Description of effect: Any construction or landscaping activity has the potential to affect the fence line.

Assessment: In terms of local heritage the fence line is not considered worthy of preservation. Any impact would therefore be of very low significance.

Mitigation: Preservation of the fence line would result in a zero impact but considering the low intensity of the impact before mitigation, none is suggested.

Table 4.3 Summary of impacts on the fence line resulting from construction and landscaping.

| | Before mitigation | After mitigation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extent | Local (site) | Local (site) |
| Duration | Permanent | Permanent |
| Intensity | Low | Low |
| Probability | Definite | Highly probable |
| Status | Neutral | Neutral |
| Degree of confidence | High | High |
| Significance | Very low | Not applicable |

4.4 Forestry road

Description of effect: Any construction or landscaping activity has the potential to affect the forestry road.

Assessment: In terms of the local cultural landscape the road has little heritage significance. Destruction of this road is therefore regarded to carry a very low significance.

Mitigation: Preservation of the forestry road would result in a zero impact, but considering the low intensity before mitigation, none is suggested.

Table 4.4 Summary of impacts on the forestry road resulting from construction and landscaping.

| | Before mitigation | After mitigation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extent | Local (site) | Local (site) |
| Duration | Permanent | Permanent |
| Intensity | Low | Low |
| Probability | Definite | Definite |
| Status | Neutral | Neutral |
| Degree of confidence | High | High |
| Significance | Very low | Very low |

4.5 Forest

Description of effect: The forest is regarded as a feature of the cultural landscape of the area and any construction or landscaping activity has the potential to affect it.

Assessment: Hout Bay has long been synonymous with forestry and the line of trees upslope of the residential area has been a feature of the cultural landscape for many years. As such their removal would result in a medium intensity impact. These trees form a buffer zone between the residential areas and the Table Mountain National Park, which itself is now considered to be a heritage asset.

Mitigation: It will not be possible to preserve the forest during the development of this property, and much of it has already been cleared by the Table Mountain National Park authorities. Gradual replacement of the alien vegetation with indigenous species would help to preserve the traditional buffer zone, thus reducing the impact on the cultural landscape of Hout Bay. Although the changing species composition of the forest would itself constitute an impact, this is not considered to be as serious as total loss of the forest zone itself, and hence of the traditional appearance of the upper slopes of Hout Bay.

Table 4.5 Summary of impacts on the forest resulting from construction and landscaping.

| | Before mitigation | After mitigation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extent | Local (Hout Bay) | Local (site) |
| Duration | Permanent | Permanent |
| Intensity | Medium | Low |
| Probability | Definite | Highly probable |
| Status | Negative | Neutral |
| Degree of confidence | High | High |
| Significance | Medium | Very low |

5. DISCUSSION

The site contains no Stone Age archaeological material, but a number of relatively recent historical and cultural landscape features are present. The reservoir and fence line probably date to the 1930's or 1940's and are believed to be of little heritage significance. Similarly, the forestry road is also considered to be of very little significance. No mitigation is considered necessary for these features, for any of the three alternatives development proposals.

The pathway may be of similar age to the reservoirs, and due to its forming part of the local cultural landscape, is however, considered to be of greater significance. The path extends beyond the boundary of the property and the proposed rezoning and developments would therefore not disturb its entire length. While complete preservation of this pathway would be ideal, it is recommended that, as a minimum mitigation measure, a suitable link be constructed between the off-site eastern portion of the path and one, or both of the public access servitudes.

The forest is probably the most important feature of this site, since it forms a fairly significant part of the cultural landscape of Hout Bay. Unfortunately the Parks Board authorities have already cleared a fair proportion of the local forest cover such that the impact is already evident in the area under consideration. With the planned gradual removal of the trees the impact will be softened. It is recommended, however, that replacement with suitable trees takes place such that the traditional appearance of the upper slopes of the area be maintained.