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**INITIAL HERITAGE STATEMENT:
ERF 4894 HOUT BAY, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

Prepared for
Hendrik van der Hoven, Landscape Architects and Environmental Planners in Association

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Executive summary

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was appointed by Hendrik van der Hoven to compile a heritage statement on erf 4894, Hout Bay, for which subdivision for residential development is proposed. The site is situated adjacent to Hout Bay Main Road, in the steep ravine immediate below Houtkapperspoort, Constantia Nek.

The site is somewhat degraded having been used partially as a landfill/dump in the past. The remainder is so intensely overgrown that physical assessment of the land surface is extremely difficult. A series of historic maps were checked to establish if there were any indications of historic buildings or places in the area. These produced largely negative results.

The site lies well below the Hout Bay Main Road and is screened by roadside trees and a steep embankment. Impacts to the scenic Hout Bay Main Road drive are not expected.

While the study area does not contain any known structures of historical significance, it is recommended that a second site visit is made after brush clearing to check for the (unlikely) presence of pre-colonial remains. Site layout plans, when available need to be submitted to Heritage Western Cape for approval.

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1 Introduction

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was appointed by Hendrik van der Hoven (Environmental Consultant) to compile a heritage statement with respect to the proposed subdivision of erf 4894, Hout Bay for residential purposes (Figure 1). It is proposed that the land be subdivided into 5 – 10 plots (to be finalised once a site contour map is available). Since the proposed action lies within section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, the heritage potential of the site needs to be evaluated

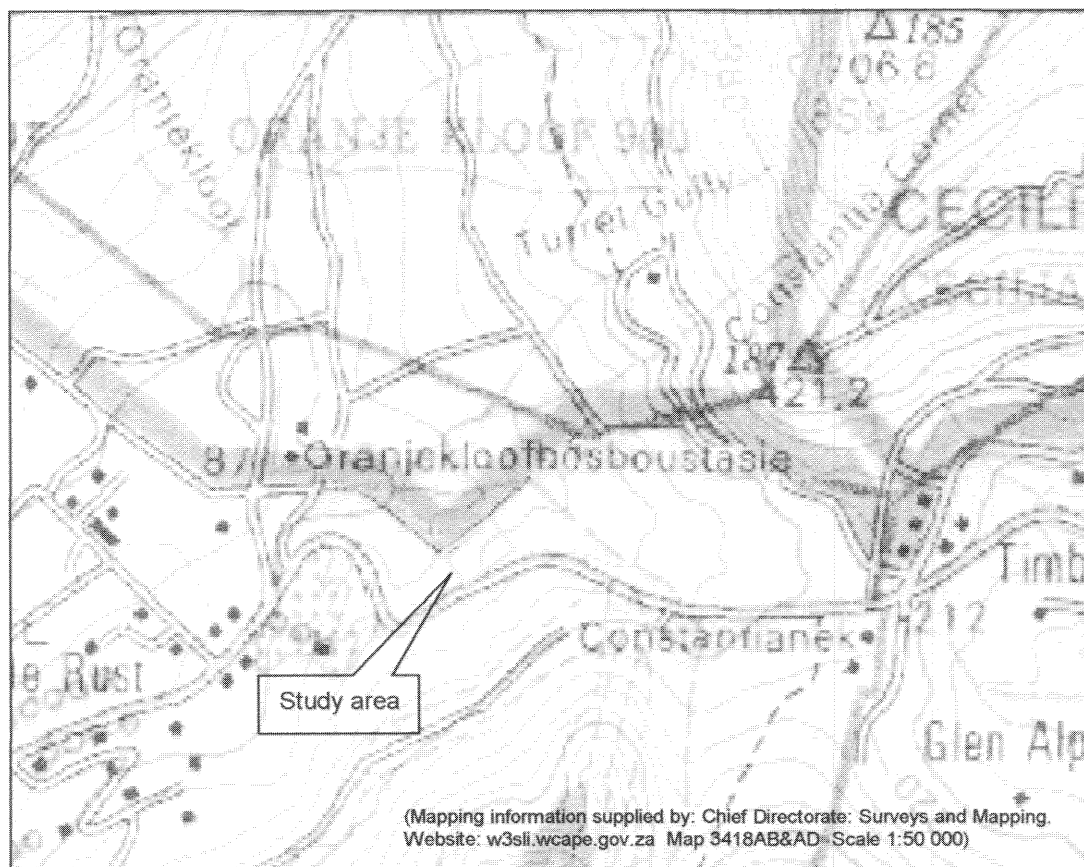


Figure 1. Study area location.

1.1 The receiving environment

The proposed development site is situated immediately below Houtkapperspoort (Constantia Nek), between Hout Bay Main Road and the Orangekloof section of the Table Mountain National Park. There is a steep deep embankment below the Main Road which is densely vegetated. A small stream which leads from the Constantia Nek watershed runs between the embankment and the site. The proposed development area is very heavily overgrown with a mixture of alien and indigenous bushes and several very large trees. In the past the upper section was partially used as a landfill area.

1.2 Archaeological background

No archaeological material has ever been recorded on or close to the proposed development

site. The closest documented heritage site, other than Table Mountain National Park is Conway Redoubt, the earthworks of which currently lie in the backyard of the Constantia Nek Restaurant. In terms of pre-colonial material, a single Early Stone Age cleaver was noted in the parking lot at Constantia Nek.

2 Method

The proposed site was visited by Tim Hart (MA Archaeology), however the dense vegetation (jungle) and leaf litter precluded any surface visibility apart from in the landfill area. As a further measure the HARG (Historical Archaeology Research Group) historic map collection was scrutinized to check for any evidence of historic roads, structures or places.

3 Findings

3.1 Archaeology and artefacts

Due to the restrictions caused by dense vegetation it was not possible to establish if any pre-colonial archaeological material existed of the site.

3.2 Colonial period

Scrutiny of the historic map collection produced no evidence of any structures. The early 20th century topographic map of 1934 indicates that the study area was close to the edge of a wetland and contained some small fields or vegetable gardens (Figures 2). A similar situation existed in 1963. Although the study area apparently has very little heritage significance we cannot exclude the possibility that foundations of less substantial structures such as workers cottages (one was found at Houckapperspoort) could exist in the area.

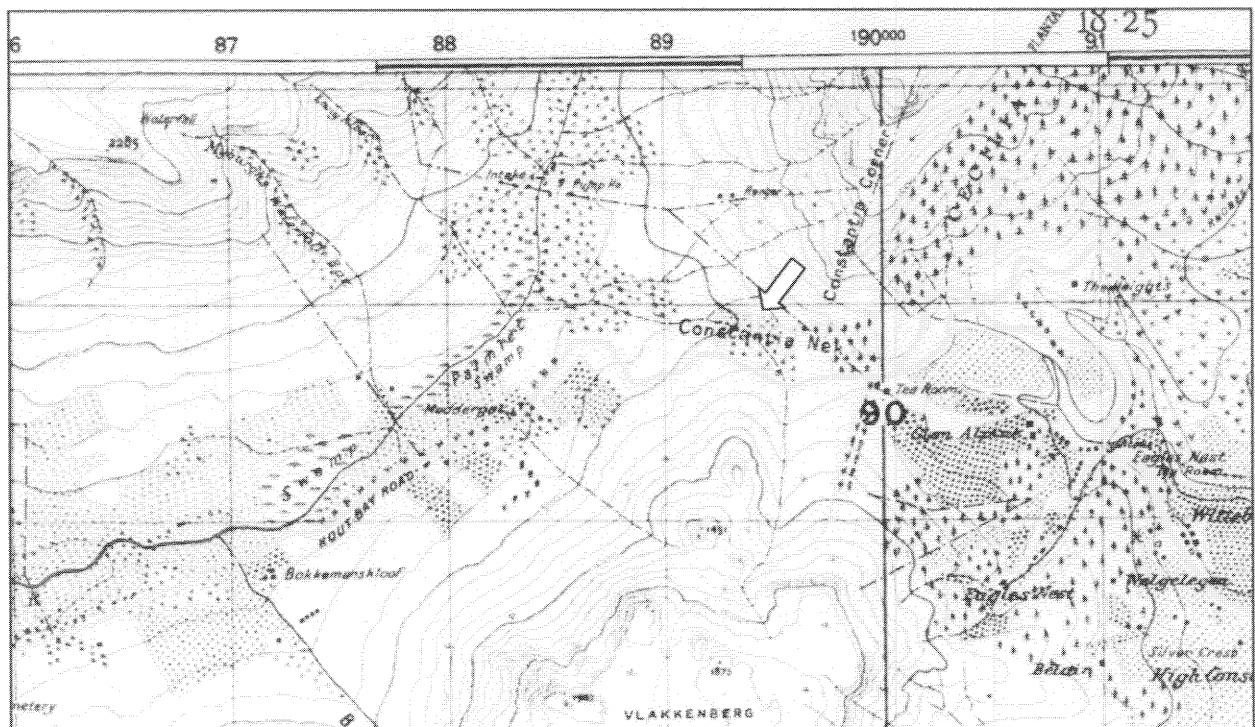


Figure 2. Study area circa 1934 (Mapping information supplied by: Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping. Website: w3sl.wcape.gov.za Scale 1:50 000)

3.3 Intangible heritage

The development of the erf will have the effect on encroaching on "green space" which getting increasingly less in the Hout Bay Valley, an area which was in relatively recent living memory rural in character but has now taken on a suburban quality.

It is expected that the scenic qualities of Hout Bay Main Road will not be heavily impacted as the site is deeply recessed into the valley.

What is of greater concern is encroachment of suburban development onto the boundaries of the Table Mountain National Park as presently this area forms an ecological and visual buffer zone. The layout of erven and design houses and landscapes will be critical to maintaining buffer zone qualities.

4 Sources of risk

Initial examination of the proposed site has shown that there are no major sources of risk in terms of physical impacts to heritage, however the intangible qualities of the site with respect to its future use will be a critical issue in terms of obtaining Heritage Western Cape approval of the proposed development.

5 Future requirements

- The site needs to be inspected for pre-colonial archaeological material once alien vegetation is cleared.
- A site plan, landscape and house design must be submitted to HWC (Heritage Western Cape) who in terms of section 48.2 of National Heritage Resources Act have recourse to comment on the aesthetics of any proposed development that is within view of a heritage site.
- Since the site lies on the boundary of the Table Mountain National Park (a National Heritage Site) the South African Heritage Resources Agency should be considered an interested and affected party.

6 References

Smith, A.B. 1981 The French period at the Cape, 1781 - 1783: a report on excavations at the Conway Redoubt. *Military History Journal*. Volume 5 No 3.

Hart, 2002 Phase 1 Archaeological Assessment of Conway Redoubt and Constantia Nek Unpublished ACO report prepared for Piet Louw Architects.