

Archaeological Impact Assessment

Title: Melkbos Private School Expansion.

Proposal to expand the existing school on Farm 88 Melkbos to provide additional classrooms, sports fields and spectator facilities and parking.

Author of this report:

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Commissioned by

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Owner

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Local Authority

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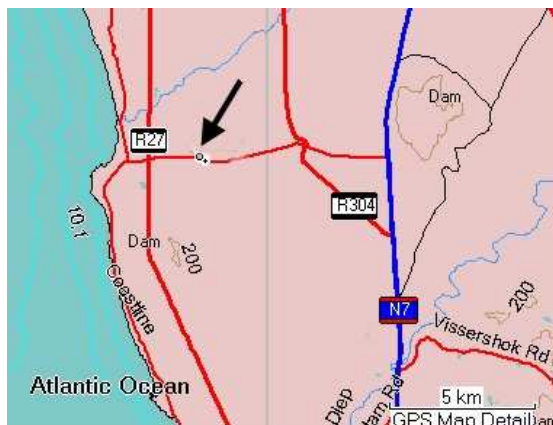


Figure 1. Melkbos School, north of R304, 4 km from Melkbos (1: 50 000 3318 CB, GPS 33°43'12.3" S: 18°28'33.3" E).

Executive Summary

A survey of the area for the proposed extensions to the Melkbos Private School was undertaken to assess any possible impact on cultural resources. The school is housed in wood, brick and prefab buildings and set in farmland. The wooden structure incorporated in the main building is a noteworthy feature and conservation worthy. It should be retained unaltered. There are no other obvious heritage, archaeological or palaeontological resources that will be threatened by this development but as a general recommendation if any such resources are exposed by chance in the course of further building operations the occurrence be reported to Heritage Western Cape.

Background Information

The property lies north of the R304 (Fig. 2). Portion 5 of Farm 88 Melkbos has the name Inshallah, A previous owner Mrs Barry Burger suggested the name was given to the property by an owner who had served in Egypt in WW 2 and that it has no direct Islamic connection. The same informant and others reported the farm was the site of a radar installation in WW 2. She mentioned that the core of what was the farmhouse was a wooden prefabricated structure that had been imported from Canada (Figs. 3-5). The owners, the Burgers' and before them the Hugos', had built on to the wooden structure in brick. This is confirmed by inspection of the building. The joinery and the materials of the uprights (? Oregon Pine) and wall cladding of the wooden structure are of high standard and quality and it is still functionally part of the building. The wooden structure is conservation worthy and may date back to the original WW 2 station.

The school has grown rapidly since its establishment in 1966 and needs additional buildings and upgrading of facilities. The school premises are contained in a small square area set back from the R304. This basic assessment includes a larger rectangular area stretching to the R304. The larger area will allow for future development of the school.

Archaeological Background

There are Holocene shell middens known closer to the coast, which have been affect by roads and housing development at the town of Melkbos. There are major archaeological and palaeontological sites that have been excavated north of the nuclear power station at Duinefontein. Duinefontein 1 is a series of fossil hyaena burrows and Duinefontein 2 includes Middle Pleistocene fauna and rare artefacts ((Klein *et al.* 1999 - Duinefontein 2, an Acheulian site in the Western Cape Province of South Africa - *Journal of Human Evolution* 37: 153-190). As this property is bordering the sensitive coastal zone it merited inspection.

Description of the property

The area is cultivated farmland. The ground surface is pale coloured cover sands (Fig. 6). Subsurface exposures in drainage ditches show a duplex profile (Fig. 7) of less than 2 m

with sands over ferruginised clayey material with iron concretions over weathered Malmesbury metasediments.

Methodology

The surface disturbances and exposures in agricultural ditches were examined for archaeological and palaeontological materials in a foot traverse.

Observations and Results

No *in situ* archaeological or palaeontological materials were observed. The rugby sports field has been dressed with imported shelly material. Some of this material came from a shell midden because an ostrich eggshell bead (Fig. 8) was located on the edge of the field (Fig. 8). Silcrete artefacts were noted in south western corner of the property among other materials introduced as substrate for portion of the old course of the R304. The drainage ditch exposures failed to reveal any buried cultural materials.

Sources of Risk and Statement of Significance

There are no obvious signs that the development will impact any archaeological or palaeontological resources above or below ground and the risks are considered low. The significance is rated as low.

Recommended Mitigations

The wooden structure as part of the main building should be retained without alteration as it is the footprint of building history on the property.

It is recommended that should any excavations by chance uncover buried palaeontological or archaeological materials including human remains that Heritage Western Cape is notified (Mr N Wiltshire, Heritage Resource Management Services, HWC, Private Bag X9067, Cape Town 8000, Tel:021 483 9743, Fax:021 483 9842, nwiltshire@pgwc.gov.za). In this context the indicators would be *in situ* shell from middens and fossil bovid bones from hyena dens. Features like human burials can occur in unpredictable locations.



Figure 2. The property lies north of the R304, the school buildings are on the northern side and the setting cultivated farmland.

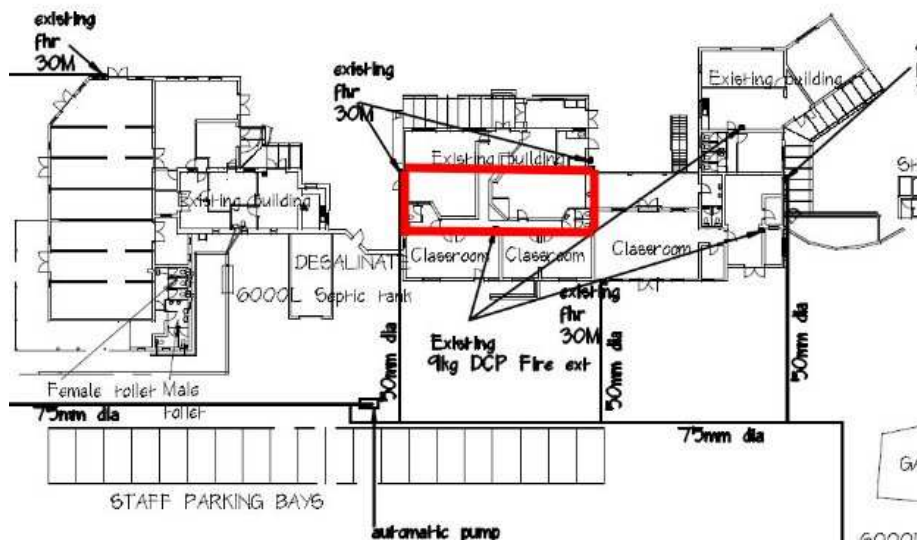


Figure 3. The core of the main building (red) is the original wooden prefab.



Figure 4. The science laboratory in part of the original wooden structure



Figure 5. Detail of the joinery where part of the cladding has been removed



Figure 6. The pale cover sands exposed in the plough zone, school buildings in the distance



Figure 7. Duplex soil profile, sands over clayey material, on weathered bedrock. No archaeological or palaeontological were observed in such profiles during the survey.



Figure 8. Ostrich eggshell bead imported along with shelly material to dress the rugby field