

AN INITIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF BLOUBERGSTRAND

(FOR STRUCTURE PLAN PURPOSES ONLY)

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report has been to identify areas of archaeological sensitivity in an area of Bloubergstrand as part of a local structure plan being compiled by Steyn, Larsen and Partners, Town and Regional Planners on behalf of the Western Cape Regional Services Council. The area of land which is examined is presented in Figure 1. Our brief specifically requested that we not undertake any detailed site identification. The conclusions reached are the result of an in loco inspection of the area and reference to observations compiled by members of the Archaeological Field Club¹ during a visit to the area in 1978. While these records are useful they are not comprehensive and inaccuracies may be present.

2. BACKGROUND

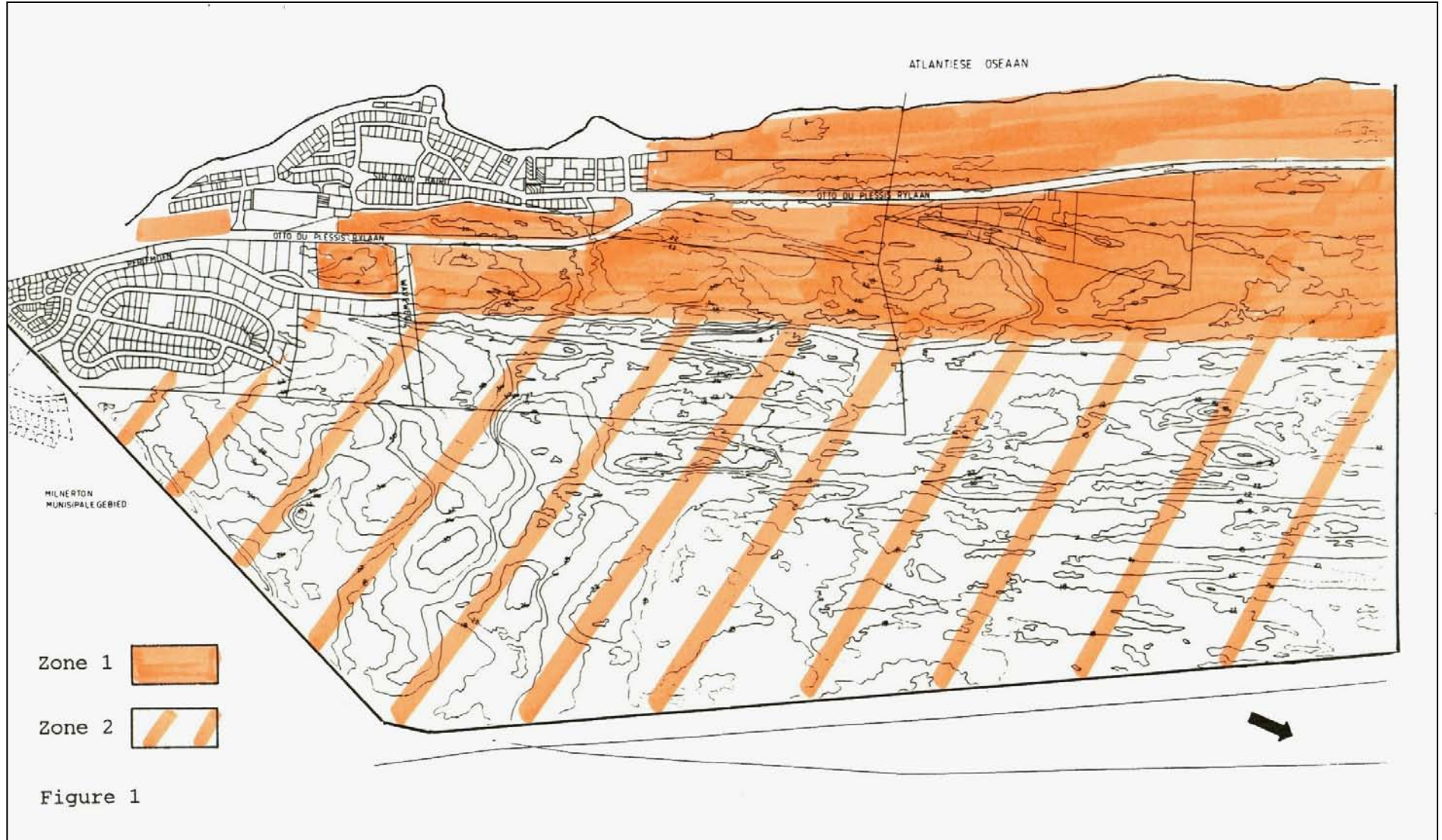
Human occupation of the coast and exploitation of marine resources was practised for many thousands of years before the colonisation of southern Africa by Europeans. This practise continued for some time after colonisation as well. Archaeological sites along the coast are often identified by the scatters of marine shells (middens) which accumulated at various places, sometimes in caves and rockshelters, but very often out in the open. Other food remains such as bones from a variety of faunas will often accompany the shells showing that the early inhabitants utilised the full range of resources of the coastal zone. Plant foods are known to have been utilised but remains are seldom preserved in open situations. The ages of the sites can be established through radiocarbon dating of bone or charcoal, or by looking at associated artefacts. For example the presence of potsherds on sites is an indication that all or most of the occupation post-dates 2000 years ago. The content of sites when examined in association with age, provides not only useful information about a period of history for which there are no written records, but also allows observations to be made through the changing shellfish types about fluctuating sea levels and water temperature and global climate in general. The destruction of archaeological sites represents the loss of cultural resource which can never be replaced.

3. OBSERVATIONS

Areas of rocky shoreline as occur at the southern point of the area, are usually an indication that middens will occur in the immediate area. Rock outcroppings form anchor points for limpet species and mussels, both favoured as foods by the early occupants of the coast. Similarly the stretches of sandy beach cover the shoreline over the rest of the area contain other shell species such as white mussel. In our experience the area immediately adjacent to rocky shoreline will contain middens. Considerable development has taken place in the area surrounding the rocky outcrops and where this has occurred there is little chance of finding any in situ archaeological material. Comments on the archaeological sensitivity will therefore be concerned more with as yet undeveloped areas.

We have indicated a number of zones on Figure 1 which summarise the archaeological potential of the area. Each of the zones represents a probability of finding archaeological sites but does not imply that there should be a difference in approach to be followed should one or more of the zones be developed.

¹ This is a Student organisation at UCT which seeks to promote an understanding of field methods amongst undergraduate students.



Zone 1 - very high potential (solid orange)

Close proximity to shoreline. Sites likely to be located in inter-dune bays or on top of dunes (some midden material will be buried below recent windblown sand). This zone is bisected by the road to Melkbostrand. Areas which have already been developed or substantially landscaped will be excluded. The high sensitivity of this area means that there is strong possibility that expenses will be incurred here as archaeological sites threatened by development will have to be removed or protected.

Procedure: Phase I archaeological survey required in order to locate and assess individual archaeological sites. A phase 2 excavation programme will probably be recommended.

Zone 2 - lower potential (orange hatch)

This zone lies at a greater distance from the sea and extends from a very prominent inland vegetated dune ridge to the north-western boundary of the area. This area is less sensitive which means that it is less likely (although nevertheless possible) that money will have to be spent on the rescue of archaeological sites.

Procedure: Phase I archaeological survey required. Second phase excavations may be required.

4. PROCEDURES

The procedure outlined below is that used by contracting archaeologists internationally, and has been adopted throughout South Africa.

A phase 1 survey is a detailed search undertaken by archaeologists to identify whether or not any sites are present, and whether they would be adversely impacted by any development. If this is the case, recommendations will be made to mitigate their destruction. Sites adjudged to be of importance may require further mitigation in the form of Phase 2 work. This would involve specialised and controlled removal of part or all of a site if it is to be negatively impacted by development.

All archaeological remains in South Africa are protected by law and may not be disturbed or removed without the permission of the National Monuments Council (National Monuments Act 1969 as amended). Permits will only be granted to persons qualified to do this work. Local authorities should require some form of report showing that archaeological survey has been undertaken prior to rezoning applications being approved. Archaeological work may be seen as the cultural component of Integrated Environmental Management.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The structure plan zone must be subject to a phase 1 survey well before any development takes place. Furthermore, it is desirable that should a phase 2 investigation be required, this be undertaken before any building activities begin.

Fieldwork and report

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