

PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
ERF 55 & 462
ST. HELENA BAY

Prepared for

BCD TOWN AND REGIONAL PLANNERS

Client: **Mr Frederick Walters**

By

Agency for Cultural Resource Management

P.O. Box 159

Riebeeck West

7306

Ph/Fax: 022 461 2755

Cellular: 082 321 0172

E-mail: acrm@wcaccess.co.za

JUNE
2006

Executive summary

BCD Town and Regional Planners, on behalf of Mr Frederick Walters, requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment for a proposed housing development on Erf 55 and 462 in St. Helena Bay on the Cape West Coast.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision of the affected property is for the purpose of a residential housing development consisting of about 117 single residential erven, group housing, public open spaces and streets. The property is currently zoned agriculture and light industry.

The extent of the proposed development (10.08 ha) falls within the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment as required by Section 38 of the South African Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites/remains that may be negatively impacted by the planning, construction and implementation of the proposed project, to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

The subject property is located at Springer Bay, in St Helena Bay, approximately 25 km north of Vredenburg on the Saldanha Peninsula on West Coast of the Western Cape. The site is located alongside Laingville Township. Access to the site is via the main road between Vredenburg and St. Helena Bay.

The property comprises old agricultural lands characterised by highly weathered quartzite soils on north facing slopes. The northern portion of the property (the Admiralty Zone), abuts the ocean and a coastal zone that is characterised by a long rocky shoreline. There are no significant landscape features (such as rocky outcrops or kopjes) on the site, but a fresh water spring is located on the property. Overall, the site is severely degraded by past agricultural activities. A modern home and several modern outbuildings are located in the shoreline area of the property, while the foundations of two demolished buildings are located just a few meters from the Admiralty Zone, in Erf 55.

Several scatters of crushed, fragmented and weathered marine shellfish and stone tools were located during the baseline study of the proposed development, but the remains occur in fairly disturbed and degraded context.

Shellfish and stone tools were located in the shoreline area, above the Admiralty Zone (in Erf 55), while several more scatters of fragmented shellfish and stone tools (including pottery) were found on the upper slopes and in the north western corner of the property (in Erf 462). Interestingly, some shellfish and a few stone flakes were also noted around the fresh water spring.

The archaeological heritage remains have been graded provisionally medium-low local significance, subject to verification by trial excavation.

regard to the proposed development of Erf 55 and 462 in St Helena Bay, the following recommendations are made:

Evaluation of the conservation worthiness of the archaeological sites will require shovel testing, before development activities take place. If the sites are found to have depth and undisturbed deposit, they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavation.

Bulk earthworks and excavations are monitored by a professional archaeologist

Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502) or Heritage Western Cape Dr A. Jerardino 021 483 9692).

3. THE STUDY SITE

A locality map is illustrated in Figure 1.

An aerial photograph of the proposed site is illustrated in Figure 2.

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The proposed site comprises old agricultural lands characterised by highly weathered quartzite soils on north-west facing slopes (Figures 3-6). Several tracks and roads cut across the boundary of the two properties, while some diggings and excavations are also evident. A modern home and outbuildings, which will be retained by the current owner, is located in the shoreline area, while the foundations and rubble of two demolished buildings are located a few meters from the Admiralty Zone, in Erf 55.

The bulk of the property (i.e. 462 Erf) comprises old agricultural lands that are well vegetated and dotted with large numbers of sout-bossies (salt bushes) on the upper slopes. A wide, natural drainage line runs through the central portion of the property from the main road, opening up into a small earth dam. There are no significant landscape features (such as rock outcrops or kopjes) on the proposed site, although a fresh water spring is located in the south eastern portion of the property, next to a concrete reservoir and drinking trough. The surrounding hills to the south are dotted with granite outcrops. Overall, the site is quite severely degraded and disturbed.

The proposed property, although quite rural in its setting, is situated within an area characterised by increasing urban development of a residential nature.

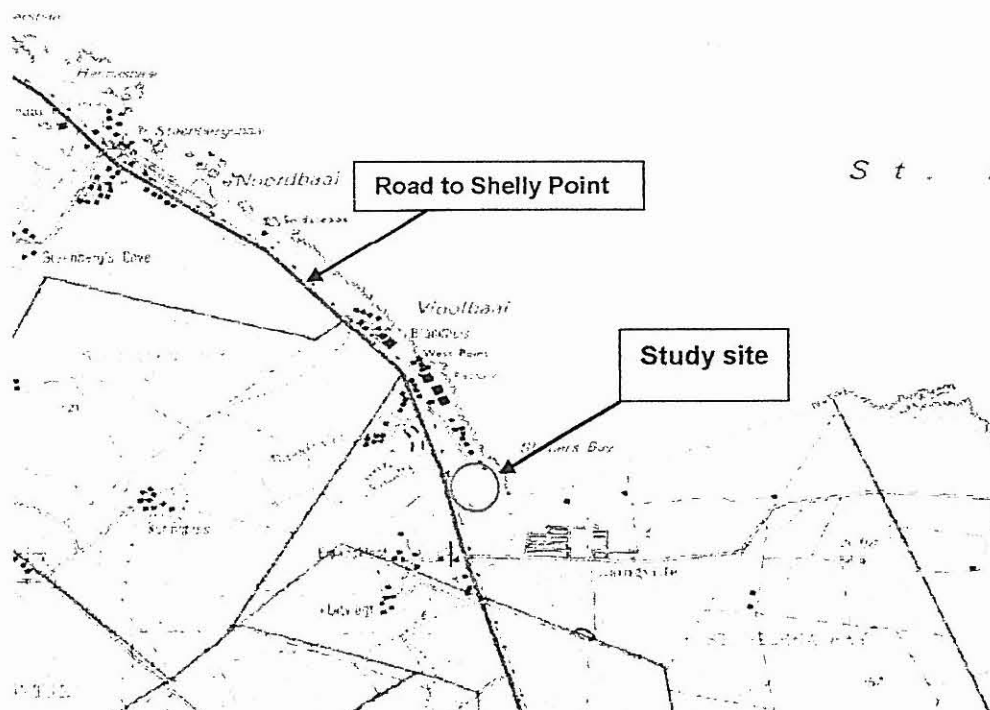


Figure 1. Site locality map (3218 CA & CC Veldruff).

Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the study site

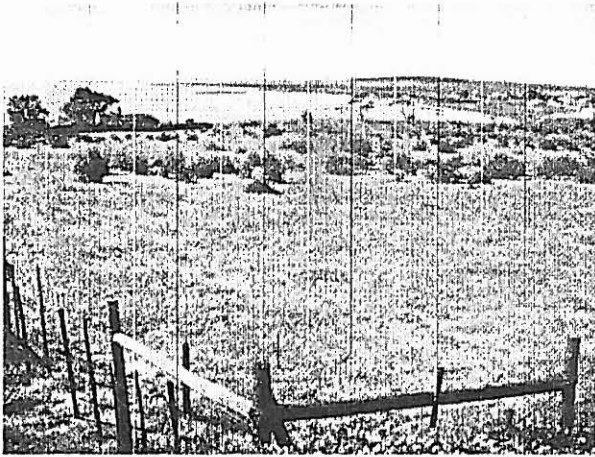


Figure 3. View of the site facing north, taken from the main road. Note the modern home in the top left hand corner of the plate.

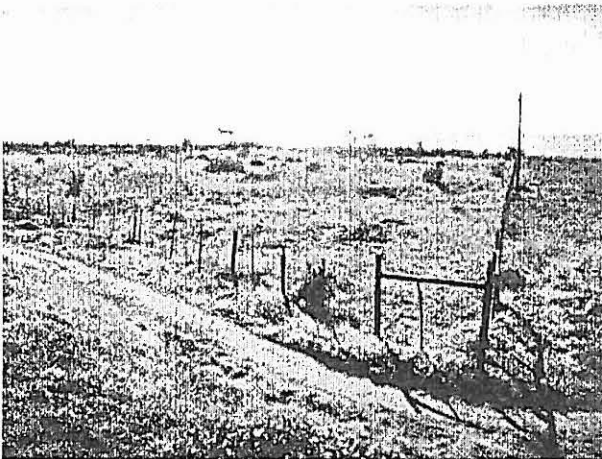


Figure 4. View of the site facing north west, taken from the main road.

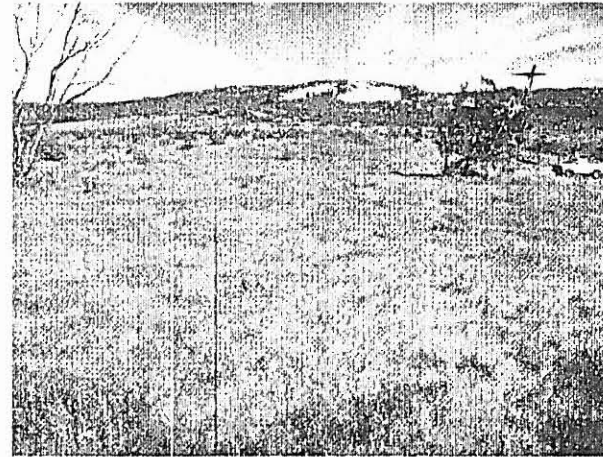


Figure 5. View of the site facing south, taken from the shoreline area.

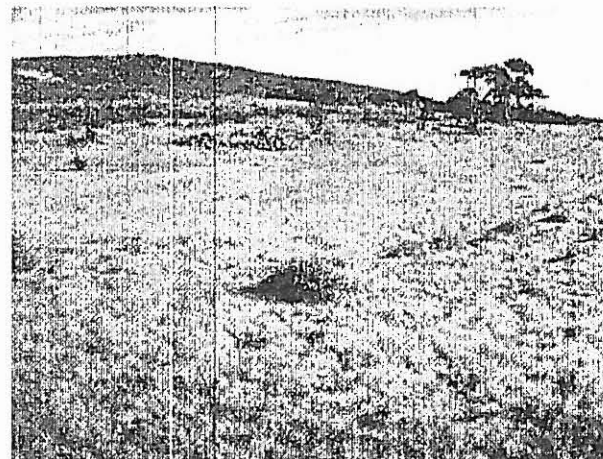


Figure 6. View of the site facing south west taken from the shoreline area.

4. APPROACH TO THE STUDY

4.1 Method of survey

The approach followed in the archaeological study entailed a detailed survey of the subject property.

Archaeological heritage remains were recorded using a hand-held Garmin Geko 201 GPS unit set on map datum WGS 84.

The site visit and assessment took place on the 16th June 2006.

A desktop study was also undertaken.

4.2 Limitations

There were no limitations associated with the study.

4.3 Results of the desk-top study

The shoreline area between Steenberg Cove and Springer Bay, in St. Helena Bay has not been subjected to archaeological research. Archaeological heritage remains do occur in the surrounding area, however, but are located several kms to the south. Scatters of fragmented shellfish and large numbers of stone artefacts (in quartz, quartzite and silcrete) have been recorded on the lower slopes of a property directly adjacent to Sandpiper Village (personnel observation) in St. Helena Bay, while several low-density scatters of marine shellfish and stone artefacts were located during a study of nearby Erf 2793 and Erf 4404, 4405 and 2798 (Kaplan 2005a, 2006a). Some archaeological material was located during the assessment of Sandpiper Village (Kaplan 2005c). Several quartz flakes and fragments of shellfish were also noted on weathered quartzite soils during an archaeological assessment of a proposed pipeline in nearby Hanna's Bay (Kaplan 2005b).

It is well known that large numbers of archaeological sites occur along the rocky shoreline around Duyker Eiland and Britannia Bay (Kaplan 1993; Halkett & Hart 1995; Thackeray & Cronin 1975). Recently, extensive scatters of shellfish, stone tools, pottery and reused colonial artefacts have been located in Britannia Bay, providing compelling evidence for previously unknown herder sites (Kaplan 2006b, c in prep.).

With its rocky shoreline, the St. Helena Bay region acted as foci that attracted both LSA hunter-gatherers and later Khoekhoe herders as it offered greater opportunities for the exploitation of marine foods, particularly shellfish, while the local shales and granites provided vital nutrients for domestic stock. Shellfish meat was either cooked in pots or on open fires, but there is also evidence to suggest that meat was dried and smoked. Other marine resources exploited included sea birds, fish, crayfish, seal, dolphin, and even occasionally whales.

Research focussing on the Khoekhoe herder economy around 2000 years ago in the Vredenburg Peninsula has, significantly, identified large numbers of sites up to several kilometres from the shoreline (Sadr *et al* 1992). Many of these sites, comprising substantial shellfish deposits with pottery and stone tools, are centred round the many large granite outcroppings that are ubiquitous in Vredenburg, Paternoster and the St. Helena Bay area.

5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)

...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m², or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m², requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

5.1.1 Structures (Section 34 (1))

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), or Heritage Western Cape.

5.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))

No person may, without a permit issued by the SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.

5.1.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))

No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape, destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTION

The archaeological heritage remains described below are illustrated in Figure 2.

SB 1 (GPS reading S° 32 47 014 E° 18 03 226)

A fairly extensive scatter of fragmented, crushed and weathered marine shell occurs in the shoreline area, between the Admiralty Zone and the foundations of the two demolished houses set among some Blue Gum trees. The shellfish appears to be a mix of both archaeologically (i.e. human) derived deposits and natural shell (beach) deposits comprising rounded and water worn shell, small round pebbles and shingle. The site and the immediate surrounding area is quite severely degraded, which is intensified by the presence of building rubble, glass, asbestos, wire, rusted metal and other domestic items that cover a fairly wide area.

The shellfish is dominated mainly by Scutellastra and Cymbula sp. with no whole shell noted. Some Black Mussel (Choromytilus meridionalis) occurs. Stone tools counted include 11 flakes, nine chunks, seven chips and at least three round cores, all in quartz. One flake in hornfels and a several flakes and chunks in quartzite were also noted. No pottery was found.

Significance: Provisionally "low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

SB 2 (Incorrect GPS reading taken)

A scatter of crushed, fragmented and weathered shellfish (mainly Scutellastra and Cymbula sp.) was found near the fresh water spring in the south-eastern portion of the property. The surrounding area is heavily trampled (by ostriches) and fairly well vegetated. According to the owner of the property, Mr Frederick Walters (pers. comm.), the spring was used by early settler farmers when this area was first farmed more than 100 years ago. Given the presence of marine shellfish and a few quartz chunks and chips, it is likely that the spring was also used by indigenous hunter-gatherers and herders during pre-colonial times.

It is important to note that the spring and immediate surrounding area will be retained as a landscape feature in the proposed development.

Significance: Provisionally "medium-low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

SB 3 (GPS reading S° 32 47 002 E° 18 03 130)

A thin scatter of highly fragmented and weathered shellfish was located alongside a two-track road in the south western portion of the property. The shellfish is dominated by Scutellastra and Cymbula sp. Two quartz flakes, three quartz chunks, and a few quartz chips were counted, both in the track and on the north-facing slopes. The site is highly degraded.

Significance: Provisionally "low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

SB 4 (GPS reading S° 32 47 010 E° 18 03 089)

A fairly large scatter of shellfish (possibly an extension of SB 3) measuring about 7-10 m in extent, and spread among numerous outcrops on the north facing slopes occurs immediately to the south of SB 3, alongside a smaller two-track road. The weathered and fragmented shellfish is dominated by Scutellastra and Cymbula sp, with some Black Mussel also occurring. Seven quartz flakes, six quartz chunks, one thick utilised quartz flake and one quartzite flake were found on the slopes. One fairly large piece of pottery (partially burnished) was also found among the bushes. The site is fairly degraded and disturbed.

Significance: Provisionally "medium- low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

SB 5 (GPS reading S° 32 46 980 E° 18 03 058)

A small scatter of highly fragmented and crushed shellfish was located in the south-western corner of the property, alongside the fence line. The surrounding area has been heavily trampled, eroded and overgrazed by ostriches. One large quartz core and one quartz chunk were counted.

Significance: Provisionally "low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

SB 6 (GPS reading S° 32 46 927 E° 18 03 127)

A thin scatter of crushed and weathered shellfish and a relatively large number of stone tools were located in the north western corner of the property, directly alongside the fence line (Figure 7). The immediate surrounding area is severely degraded as a result of trampling and overgrazing. The shellfish is dominated by Scutellastra and Cymbula sp. Stone tools, including several quartz flakes, chunks, chips and a large core, a silcrete flake, a possible broken lower grindstone, a small (snapped) hammerstone, a number of broken/flaked round quartzite beach cobbles, several unworked quartzite cobbles, and at least one snapped but end-damaged sausage-shaped quartzite cobble was found. The latter is an interesting find as large numbers of such tools were found recently during a study of a possible herder site near Duyker Eiland/Britannia Bay (Kaplan 2006b)

Significance: Provisionally "medium- low" subject to verification by shovel testing.

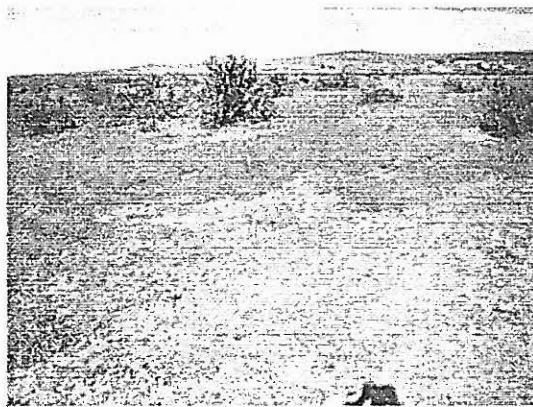


Figure 7. SB 6. The site facing south east.

6.1 Other finds

The occasional quartz flake and chunk was found scattered over the remainder of the site.

Significance: low

7. IMPACT STATEMENT

Archaeological heritage remains in the form of shell middens will be negatively impacted by the proposed development in Erf 55 and Erf 462 in St. Helena Bay.

The archaeological sites have been graded medium-low local significance, subject to verification by shovel testing.

Human burials may also be exposed or uncovered during earthworks and excavations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed development in Erf 55 and 462, in St Helena Bay, the following recommendations have been made:

- Evaluation of the conservation worthiness of the archaeological sites (SB 1-6) will require shovel testing, before development activities take place. If the sites are found to have depth and undisturbed deposit, they will have to be sampled by way of controlled archaeological excavation.
- Bulk earthworks and excavations are monitored by a professional archaeologist
- Should any human remains be disturbed, exposed or uncovered during earthworks, these should immediately be reported the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Mrs Mary Leslie @ 021 462 4502) or Heritage Western Cape (Dr A. Jerardino 021 483 9692).

9. REFERENCES

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