

Archaeological Survey At Hibberdene Spray Rock

For Guy Nicolson and the Hibberdene Spray Rock & Waterfront Association

**By
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INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Cultural Resource Management was approached by Guy Nicolson Consultants to undertake an archaeological survey for the Hibberdene Spray Rock and Waterfront Association. The survey was undertaken on the 29 July 2003. The survey covered the area for the proposed marina and housing to the south. Two archaeological sites were recorded during the survey, however these will not be a deterrent to any development. The dense vegetation of the area resulted in poor archaeological visibility. Further mitigation will be required once the bush clearance phase is completed. The co-ordinates for the site are given separately as it is considered sensitive information.

DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE

Methodology

All sites have been grouped according to low, medium and high significance for the purpose of this report. Sites of low significance have no diagnostic artefacts, especially pottery. Sites of medium significance have diagnostic artefacts and these are sampled. Sampling includes the collection of artefacts for future analysis. All diagnostic pottery, such as rims, lips and decorated sherds are sampled, while bone, stone and shell are mostly noted. Sampling usually occurs on most sites. Sites of high significance are excavated or extensively sampled. The sites that are extensively sampled have high research potential, yet poor preservation of features. I attempt to recover as many artefacts from these sites by means of systematic sampling, as opposed to sampling diagnostic artefacts only.

Significance is generally determined by several factors. However, in this survey, a wider definition of significance is adopted since the aim of the survey is to gather as much information as possible from every site. This strategy allows for an analysis of every site in some detail, without resorting to excavation.

Defining significance

Archaeological sites vary according to significance and several different criteria relate to each type of site. However, several criteria allow for a general significance rating of archaeological sites.

These criteria are:

1. State of preservation of:

1.1. Organic remains:

1.1.1. Faunal

1.1.2. Botanical

1.2. Rock art

1.3. Walling

1.4. Presence of a cultural deposit

1.5. Features:

1.5.1. Ash Features

1.5.2. Graves

1.5.3. Middens

1.5.4. Cattle byres

1.5.5. Bedding and ash complexes

2. Spatial arrangements:

2.1. Internal housing arrangements

2.2. Intra-site settlement patterns

2.3. Inter-site settlement patterns

3. Features of the site:

3.1. Are there any unusual, unique or rare artefacts or images at the site?

3.2. Is it a type site?

3.3. Does the site have a very good example of a specific time period, feature, or artefact?

4. Research:

4.1. Providing information on current research projects

4.2. Salvaging information for potential future research projects

5. Inter- and intra-site variability

- 5.1. Can this particular site yield information regarding intra-site variability, i.e. spatial relationships between various features and artefacts?
- 5.2. Can this particular site yield information about a community's social relationships within itself, or between other communities.

6. Archaeological Experience:

- 6.1. The personal experience and expertise of the CRM practitioner should not be ignored. Experience can indicate sites that have potentially significant aspects, but need to be tested prior to any conclusions.

7. Educational:

- 7.1. Does the site have the potential to be used as an educational instrument?
- 7.2. Does the site have the potential to become a tourist attraction?
- 7.3. The educational value of a site can only be fully determined after initial test-pit excavations and/or full excavations.

The more a site can fulfill the above criteria, the more significant it becomes. Test-pit excavations are used to test the full potential of an archaeological deposit. These test-pit excavations may require further excavations if the site is of significance. Sites may also be mapped and/or have artefacts sampled as a form of mitigation. Sampling normally occurs when the artefacts may be good examples of their type, but are not in a primary archaeological context. Mapping records the spatial relationship between features and artefacts.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

HIB1

HIB1 is a shell midden located on the first dune above a beach rock outcrop. The site is visible on the path and has been slightly affected by this path. The midden is ± 3 m wide and at least 0.5 m deep. The midden is located near the base of the sand dune. This suggests that it may have a relatively old age.

The midden has a stratified and ashy deposit. The main shell species are *Perna perna* (brown mussel), *Patella spp.* (limpets), and *Ostridaeae* (oyster). Other shell species did occur but in infrequent numbers and are probably not part of the subsistence base. No artefacts were found near the midden.

The depth of the midden, below the top of the dune, and the lack of pottery sherds suggest that the site may date to the Late Stone Age. However, this would need to be confirmed by excavations.

Significance: The site is of medium archaeological significance due to its stratified deposit and potential for well preserved organic remains.

Mitigation: The site is will not be affected by the marina development. The site may be affected by the planned housing development, in terms of boardwalks. The site will need at least test-pit excavations if the latter development affects the site. A permit for it destruction will be required from KwaZulu-Natal Heritage if the site is to be affected.

HIB2

HIB2 is located alongside the current railroad between the structures 90/11 and 90/12. The originated higher up the dune, near the top of the Berea Reds, but has partly subsided as a result of the railroad. The site consists of Middle Stone Age flakes that are in a secondary context.

Significance: The site is of low archaeological significance.

Mitigation: The site will not be affected by the proposed development, as it is located just on the outskirts of the affected area.

MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CONCLUSION

The survey recorded two archaeological sites in the general area of the planned development. The proposed housing development south of the marina may impact HIB1. This site will require test-pit excavations if it is to be affected. The second site will not be directly affected by the development.

The dense vegetation resulted in poor archaeological visibility. Since archaeological sites were located on the peripheries of the affected area, it is

highly likely that more sites will be located in the main area. The general pattern for shell middens in the KwaZulu-Natal is that they occur within the first three dunes from the coastline. These sites also tend to be concentrated near rock outcrops, such as is the case for the proposed development.

Those areas along the first dune cordon and the area south of the current disused landing strip should be resurveyed once the bush clearance phase for the marina and housing development has been completed. It is unlikely that any other archaeological sites in the affected area will hinder the planned development. Mitigation, in terms of excavations, can counter any negative impacts.