

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PHILIPPI EAST COMMUNITY SPORTS AND RECREATION HALL SITE

Prepared for

**Ninham Shand
Consulting Engineers**

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Prepared by

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was requested by Ninham Shand Consulting Engineers to monitor excavation and ground leveling activities at the community sports and recreation facility, Philippi East, Western Cape Province. A Phase 1 archaeological assessment of the area conducted by Dr G. Avery of the South African Museum (Avery 1997) pointed out that the underlying calcareous sediments in the area were potentially sensitive in terms of palaeontological as well as Middle and Early Stone Age archaeological material. He recommended that excavations for construction purposes should be monitored by an archaeologist and that contingency funding be set aside in the event that any deposits of material were exposed.

Calcretes and calcareous sands provide a basic chemical environment which preserves animal bone and shell remains extremely well. These sediments have produced both fossil and archaeological material of great age and international importance in several localities in the western Cape. Unfortunately there is no way of predicting where deposits of fossil material may occur as they are normally associated with widely dispersed events in the past such as hyena lair accumulations or archaeological occupations. This means that monitoring of excavation of calcretes and similar sediments must take place whenever these are impacted.

2. FINDINGS

Construction activities on the site have involved excavation of foundation trenches for structures, lowering of levels over a large area for preparation of an astro-turf field and excavation of trenches for subsurface drainage. Two site visits were made. The excavations had revealed that below the surface sands were large nodular calcrete boulders that were highly cemented and compacted. No evidence of palaeontological or archaeological material of any kind was seen in the boulders or associated sediments. This indicates that the chances of archaeological or palaeontological material being encountered during further construction activities on this site are low.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is not necessary to contract further specialists to monitor excavations on the site on an ongoing basis.
2. Although we have inspected the below surface deposits and believe that the likelihood of accidental exposure of archaeological or palaeontological material is very low, we cannot guarantee that this will not happen. If fragments of bone are unearthed in any excavations, an archaeologist or palaeontologist should be contacted to evaluate it.

4. REFERENCES

Avery, G. 1997. Report on the historical, cultural, archaeological and palaeontological assessment of the proposed Philippi East Community Sports and Recreation Hall site. Unpublished Report, The South African Museum.

5. PROFESSIONAL TEAM

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