

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF PORTION 6 OF KABELJOUS RIVER NO. 328,
JEFFREY'S BAY.**

Prepared for: Integrated Environmental Management Unit
36 River Road
Walmer
Port Elizabeth
6070

Compiled by: Dr Johan Binneman
Department of Archaeology
Albany Museum
Somerset Street
Grahamstown 6139

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PROPOSAL

The original proposal was to do a survey of possible archaeological heritage sites of portion 6 of Kabeljous River No. 328, Jeffrey's Bay; to establish the range and importance of the heritage sites, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to these sites.

THE INVESTIGATION

Archaeological survey

The area for the proposed development is a narrow strip of land situated between the Kabeljauws River estuary and the access road to Kabeljauws/Jeffrey's Bay townships and the old national road. The area was investigated on foot. Where the land is not disturbed by recent activities or penetrated by alien vegetation, it is covered with very dense almost impenetrable valley bushveld vegetation. All land immediately adjacent to the roads is disturbed in one way or another and a pipeline crosses through the northern part.

In general, the area proposed for development can be regarded as archaeologically very sensitive and evidence for sites and remains can be found in many locations on the property. Only the very steep gravelled covered slope along the old national road and turn-off to Kabeljous River township may not have any sites. This area is covered with very dense vegetation and it is not possible to know whether there are sites or not. Occasional stone tools were found associated with the gravels (older than 30 000 years).

Two very sensitive areas were identified during the survey. Virtually the whole northern part, a large flat area between the estuary and the old national road comprised a mega shell midden. Shell fish remains found along the rock and sandy coasts, stone tools and bone remains are distributed over a large area of some 100 x 50 metres. There may be more shell middens in this area of the western bank of the estuary stretching southwards towards the sea, but the dense grass cover made any proper investigation impossible.

The second sensitive area comprised the southern side of the proposed area for development. Traces of several shell middens were found on the large relatively flat area between the nearest houses and the steep gravel terraces towards the centre of the property. There are indications that there may be many more, but thick grass and other vegetation made it difficult to carry out a proper investigation. Shell midden material was also exposed in trenches and other disturbances along the access road to Kabeljous River township.

Community consultation

Consultation with the Gamtkwa KhoiSan First Nation, was conducted with Mr K. Reichert as required by the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999, Section 38(3e). Mr K. Reichert will communicate their recommendations to the Integrated Environmental Management Unit.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

The proposed area for development is regarded as archaeologically extremely sensitive. The dense vegetation made it difficult to establish the quality and quantity of the archaeological heritage. However, our knowledge and experience of coastal archaeology, observations and research within close vicinity of the proposed development, provide strong evidence and possibilities that many archaeological sites may be buried under the top soil. In general the sites should be relatively undisturbed and are also the last examples of the living sites of the KhoiSan peoples between the Kabeljous River and Cape St Francis Point. The last remaining sites along this part of the coast were destroyed during the early 1980's only a few hundred metres from the proposed development. The opinion is that the area should not be developed. The reasons are as follows:

Places like the Kabeljous estuary were popular areas for the KhoiSan people to live due to the wide variety of food resources within easy walking distance, i.e., shell fish along the beach, fish in the estuary and game in the nearby hills. The many traces of shell middens observed throughout the property and those demolished by development over the years in adjacent areas, support this statement. Indications are that one of these middens is very large and must not be disturbed or demolished and should be protected against any development. One way of doing this would be by declaring it (and others) provincial heritage site.

Research at a rock shelter some four kilometres upstream indicated that this part of the coast was well utilised by prehistoric people from 6 000 years ago (research report available on request). Two KhoiSan skeletons were found on the nearby Papiessfontein farm during the past few years, indicating that such remains may also be buried on the property in question (Die Burger 27-09-2005). During 1983 several middens were badly damaged and eventually demolished by a bulldozer to build houses near the present day caravan park. These were found to be extremely rich in archaeological material (Binneman 1985, 1996, 2001, 2005). The following results were obtained from the limited research project.

1. Two of the shell middens were occupied by San hunter-gatherers ('Bushmen') and one was radiocarbon dated to 2 570 years old. Although the middens were situated along a sandy beach, they have preferred to collect brown mussel from the rocky shore almost a kilometre away, to white mussel which could be collected 50 metres away.
2. Two shell midden were of Khoi pastoralist origin (these people introduced ceramic pots and domesticated animals to southern Africa some 2 000 years ago). A similar shellfish collecting pattern was followed by the Khoi.
3. The Khoi were the first food producers in South Africa and the sheep remains recovered from the middens were radiocarbon dated to 1 560 years old - the oldest date for the presence of sheep in the Eastern Cape.

4. These middens yielded more fish remains than any other open-air shell midden along the Eastern Cape coast. The remains were mainly from mullet species and taken from the nearby estuary. The method of capture is unknown because it is known from historical records that the indigenous groups did not process nets of any kind.

The area on the opposite side of the estuary is a nature reserve. This property and the archaeological sites should be declared a provincial heritage site and be incorporated into the reserve to protect not only the KhoiSan heritage, but also the very sensitive estuary ecology. These sites also have a huge potential for further research into the early history of the KhoiSan people of the region.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed property for development would appear to be rich in archaeological sites and it is therefore an extremely sensitive area. All possible measures must be taken to protect and preserve such heritage resources. During 1983 heritage sites of national and provincial importance were destroyed close to this property, and it is therefore possible that similar remains may be buried under the top soil. These sites also represent the last remaining KhoiSan heritage sites left west of the Kabeljous River. It is recommended that the property should not be developed, but rather declared a provincial heritage area to protect the prehistory and ecological value of the estuary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that due to the archaeological sensitivity of the property, it not be developed, or at least be postponed until the full archaeological status of the area has been established. This can be done by testing the area by means of test pits and trenches. After the initial testing project and evaluation, further recommendations will be proposed.

BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The coastline between Kabeljous River Mouth and Cape St Francis once housed thousands of archaeological sites, including the remains of the indigenous people (Rudner 1968). Unfortunately, in a few decades virtually all of these important archaeological features have been destroyed by the development of the coastal towns and many were covered with dune sand and vegetation (Binneman 1985, 2001, 2005).

The most common archaeological sites are shell middens (relatively large piles of marine shell) found usually concentrated opposite rocky coasts, but also along sandy beaches if there was a large enough source of white mussel (people refer to these as 'strandloper middens'). These were campsites of San hunter-gatherers, Khoi herders and KhoiSan peoples who lived along the immediate coast (up to 5 km) and collected marine foods. Mixed with the shell are other food remains, cultural material and often human remains are found in the middens. In general middens date from the past 8 000 years. Also associated with middens are large stone floors which were probably used as cooking platforms.

Other archaeological sites may consist of concentrations of stone artefact and/or bone remains. Some of the stone tools may date back to 100 000 years old, and the fossil bone occurrences along the coast may also date this old (See appendix for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area).

General remarks

It must be emphasised that the conclusions and recommendations expressed in this archaeological heritage sensitivity investigation are based on the visibility of archaeological sites/material and may not therefore, reflect the true state of affairs. Many sites may be covered by soil and vegetation and will only be located once this has been removed. In the event of such finds being uncovered, (during any phase of construction work), archaeologists must be informed immediately so that they can investigate the importance of the sites and excavate or collect material before it is destroyed. The *onus* is on the developer to ensure that this agreement is honoured in accordance with the National Heritage Act No. 25 of 1999.

It must also be clear that Phase 1 Specialist Reports (AIAs), will be assessed by the relevant heritage resources authority. The final decision rests with the heritage resources authority, which should give a permit or a formal letter of permission for the destruction of any cultural sites.

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APPENDIX: IDENTIFICATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AND MATERIAL FROM COASTAL AREAS: guidelines and procedures for developers

1. Shell middens

Shell middens can be defined as an accumulation of marine shell deposited by human agents rather than the result of marine activity. The shells are concentrated in a specific locality above the high-water mark and frequently contain stone tools, pottery, bone and occasionally also human remains. Shell middens may be of various sizes and depths, but an accumulation which exceeds 1 m² in extent, should be reported to an archaeologist.

2. Human Skeletal material

Human remains, whether the complete remains of an individual buried during the past, or scattered human remains resulting from disturbance of the grave, should be reported. In general the remains are buried in a flexed position on their sides, but are also found buried in a sitting position with a flat stone capping and developers are requested to be on the alert for this.

3. Fossil bone

Fossil bones may be found embedded in calcrete deposits at the site. Any concentrations of bones, whether fossilized or not, should be reported.

4. Stone artefacts

These are difficult for the layman to identify. However, large accumulations of flaked stones which do not appear to have been distributed naturally, should be reported. If the stone tools are associated with bone remains, development should be halted immediately and archaeologists notified.

5. Stone features and platforms

They come in different forms and sizes, but are easy to identify. The most common are an accumulation of roughly circular fire cracked stones tightly spaced and filled in with charcoal and marine shell. They are usually 1-2 metres in diameter and may represent cooking platform for shell fish. Others may resemble circular single row cobble stone markers. These are different sizes and may be the remains of wind breaks or cooking shelters.

6. Historical artefacts or features

These are easy to identified and include foundations of buildings or other construction features and items from domestic and military activities.