

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON ERF 474, ST HELENA BAY, VREDENBURG MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT

(Assessment conducted under Section 38 (8) of the National Heritage
Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) as part of an EIA)

Prepared for

Advanced Projects

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Advanced Projects to conduct an assessment of erf 474, St Helena Bay, in the Vredenburg Magisterial District. A residential development has been planned comprising erven zoned single residential and general residential along with public roads, public open space and a nature area. The 17.97 ha site is currently zoned agriculture.

The site lies on a slope behind one of the existing residential areas of St Helena Bay and is largely old agricultural land. An area of granite boulders occurs on the upper part of the site. Vegetation cover was fairly light over the old fields but among the boulders it was impenetrable in places. The boulder area will not be developed so this limitation is not considered significant. Other developments are already underway in the area.

One palaeontological occurrence in the form of an exposure of palaeobeach deposit was encountered. Four very ephemeral Later Stone Age shell scatters were noted but only one included stone artefacts. That with artefacts lies in the boulder area that will not be impacted. No cultural landscape elements were present. Visual impacts are not considered significant in the context of this rapidly developing area.

It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Heritage Western Cape, the proposed development be allowed to continue with no further heritage work required. However, the following should be noted:

- The proponent is advised to develop architectural guidelines that are sympathetic to the scenic qualities of the area.
- There is always the chance that unmarked prehistoric burials could be present. Should such a find be made at any stage during the development it should be reported to Heritage Western Cape (021 483 9685) or the South African Heritage Resources Agency (021 462 4502) and an archaeologist should be contracted to remove the remains.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Advanced Projects to conduct an assessment of erf 474, St Helena Bay, in the Vredenburg Magisterial District. A residential development has been planned comprising erven zoned single residential and general residential along with public roads, public open space and a nature area (see Figure A1 in the Appendix). The 17.97 ha site is currently zoned agriculture. The assessment is for the purposes of submission of a Notification of Intent to Develop.

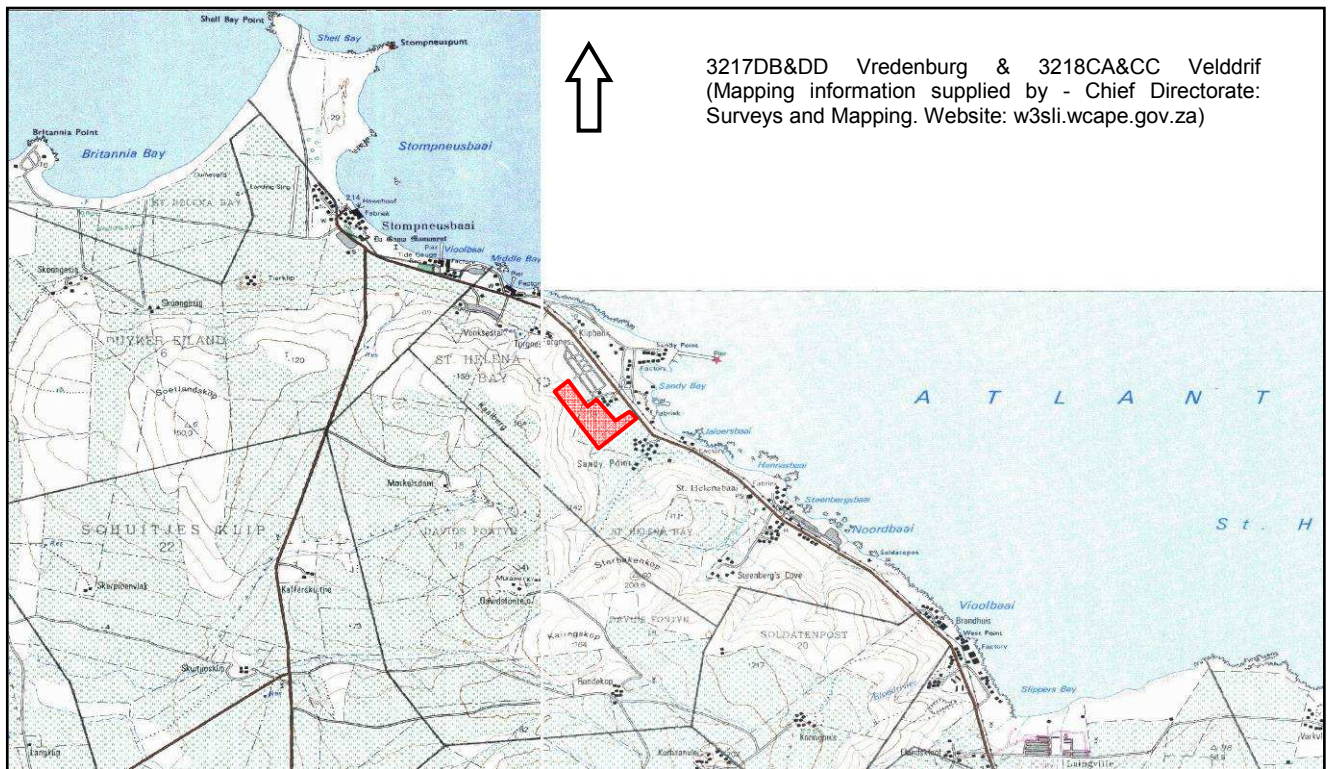


Figure 1: Map showing the location of erf 474, St Helena Bay (red polygon). See Figure 2 for further detail.

2. HERITAGE LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) No. 25 of 1999 protects a variety of heritage resources including palaeontological, prehistoric and historical material (including ruins) more than 100 years old (Section 35), human remains (Section 36) and non-ruined structures older than 60 years (Section 34). Landscapes with cultural significance are also protected under the definition of the National Estate (Section 3.1d). Under Section 38 (1) of the act the site required heritage assessment based on its size of greater than 5000 m².

Since the project is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, Heritage Western Cape (HWC) is required to comment on the proposed project in order to facilitate final decision making by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The site lies behind the currently developed area of St Helena Bay on the northeast-facing slopes of a granite hill, directly behind the harbour (Figure 2). It is predominantly old farmland covered by grasses (Figures 3 & 4; see Figures A2 & A3 in the Appendix), but an outcrop of granite boulders surrounded by dense indigenous bush occurs along the western boundary on the highest part of the site (Figure 5). There was also a strip behind the houses that had been recently ploughed, presumably as a firebreak (Figure 6). Several exotic acacia trees dot the site with most being in the eastern part near the main road where some recent clearing has also taken place (Figure 7). A small informal jeep track runs into the site from the main road and splits into two far less visible tracks.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph from Google Earth showing the St Helena Bay area with the boundaries of erf 474 marked in red.

The soil is granitic sand and in the eastern and lowest part of the site there was also some old beach deposit (see below). Several low mounds, probably old heuweltjies, were noted on the slope.

4. HERITAGE CONTEXT

The site lies on the slope of a hill behind the harbour and one of the residential areas of the town of St Helena Bay. The area immediately downslope of the site has already been developed with houses and much of the area some 100 m away to the southeast has already had roads laid out and services installed for new developments. The property to the

northwest is a smallholding with wild game on it. The coastline around St Helena Bay is generally developing rapidly with housing developments springing up in many areas from Stompneusbaai in the west to Dwarskersbos in the north.



Figure 3: Vegetation cover over much of the site is weeds.



Figure 4: Another view showing grass and grass and weed cover.

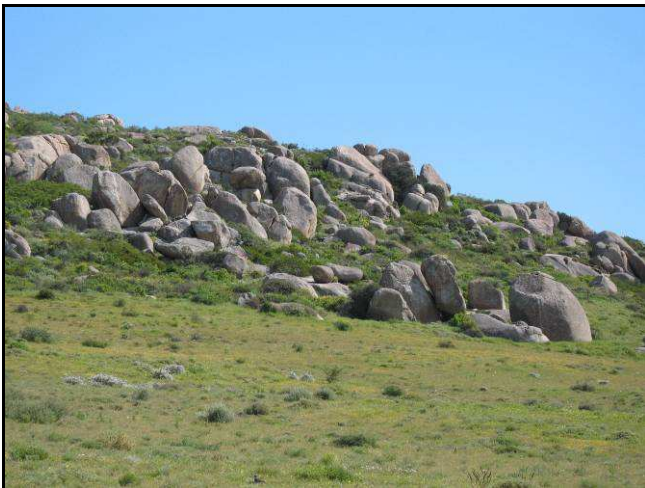


Figure 5: The farm track that runs across the site.



Figure 6: The ploughed area behind the houses.



Figure 7: View of the eastern part of the site showing exotic acacias and informal jeep track..

Much Stone Age archaeological research has been done on the Vredenburg Peninsula with much of it concentrated around the coastline (e.g. Berger & Parkington 1995; Buchanan *et al.* 1978; Hine 2004; Klein & Cruz-Urbe 1989; Orton 2008; Robertshaw 1977, 1979; Sadr *et al.* 2003; Smith 2006; Smith *et al.* 1991; Stynder *et al.* 2001).

Historically, farming has been the primary activity over much of the Vredenburg Peninsula with several old farm complexes present in the broader area. Many of those along the coast have been subjected to development in recent times though. All reasonably flat areas with no granite outcrops have been ploughed, including those on this site. However, on erf 474 agriculture has probably not been practiced for some time since the grasses are quite well established.

5. METHODS

The site was covered by two archaeologists on 24 August 2008. All finds and features were photographed and described and GPS co-ordinates of sites were taken using a hand-held GPS receiver on the WGS84 datum.

5.1. Limitations

The site was visited in late winter and the grass was fairly dense. The indigenous bush amongst the granite boulders was at times impenetrable and this area could not be properly searched. Enough gaps were present to allow suitable examination of the surface within the development footprint. The granitic soil will have deposited far more slowly than the aeolian sands typically present on other parts of the coastline and it seems likely that any shell scatters present would be visible at the surface. It is thus likely that the conclusions of this report will not have been significantly affected by the slightly limited visibility.

6. FINDINGS

Five sites were recorded and their numbers are prefixed with SHB474 for erf 474, St Helena Bay.

6.1. Palaeontology

6.1.1. SHB474-1

This site is an exposure of palaeobeach deposit. It is probably Pleistocene in age and seems to be somewhat disturbed within the visible section in an excavated drainage trench (Figure 8). The entire area near the main road is covered with a thin scatter of disturbed palaeobeach shell.



Figure 8: The palaeobeach exposed in a drainage trench.

6.2. Archaeology

Four archaeological sites were recorded, all of them Later Stone Age shell scatters. Each site is described in turn. A few isolated artefacts were noted in the area immediately downslope of the granite boulders. These included a core and a grindstone (Figures 9 & 10).



Figure 9: A grindstone with two grinding facets found on the slope below the granite boulders.



Figure 10: A core found on the slope below the granite boulders.

6.2.1. SHB474-2

This site was located at 32° 44' 51.8" S 18° 00' 26.8" E. It comprises a very ephemeral scatter of shell fragments in a disturbed area. *Cymbula granatina*, *Choromytilus meridionalis* and *Burnupena* sp. were present. The substrate is very hard granitic soil and it is highly unlikely that any subsurface material will be present.

6.2.2. SHB474-3

This site was located at 32° 44' 50.1" S 18° 00' 26.7" E. It too is an ephemeral shell scatter in a disturbed area and contains *Cymbula granatina*, *Scutellatra granularis*, *Choromytilus meridionalis*, *Oxystele* sp. and *Burnupena* sp.. It occurs on the same hard granitic substrate.

6.2.3. SHB474-4

This site was located at 32° 44' 46.1" S 18° 00' 20.5" E. It is a very ephemeral shell scatter with just one species, *Cymbula granatina*, being observed. This site does have very tiny fragments of shell present in molehills in the general area but close examination revealed nothing but the *C. granatina* fragments.

6.2.4. SHB474-5

This site was located at 32° 44' 43.91" S 18° 00' 06.6" E. It is a shell and artefact scatter in an open area among the granite boulders on the side of the hill (Figure 11). The shell species present included *Cymbula granatina*, *Scutellatra granularis*, *Scutellastra barbara*, *Choromytilus meridionalis* and *Burnupena* sp.. Flaked artefacts in quartz were also noted. This site falls outside of the development footprint and will not be impacted. Although this site is not of any research value, it is the only one that appears to be relatively undisturbed.

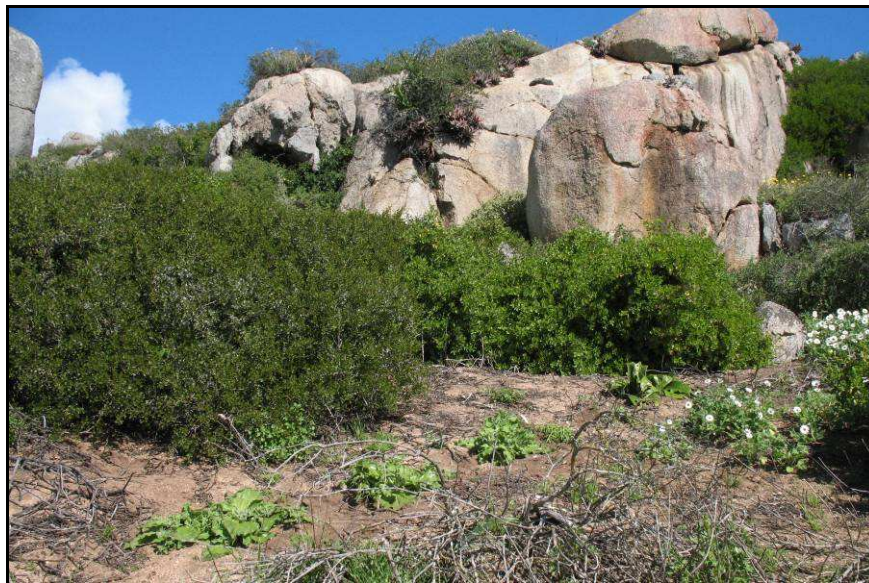


Figure 11: The clearing in which site SHB474-5 was located.

The boulder field offered no good rock shelters and not one item of archaeological material was seen in any of the places that were checked.

6.3. Cultural landscapes

No cultural landscape elements were present on erf 474.

6.4. Visual impacts

The primary concern here is the densification of buildings in an area which has traditionally been used for agriculture and with the fishing industry operating from the harbour. However, St Helena Bay is steadily developing into a more substantial residential town with houses even appearing on the crests of the surrounding hills. No doubt many more houses will appear within the next few years and the visual impact will be a progressive one as houses are slowly added to this and the neighbouring developments.

The main road through the area skirts the southern coastline of St Helena Bay and can be considered a scenic route. Given the comments above, there will be an increased visual impact on this scenic route.

7. CONCLUSIONS

A total of five heritage sites were located during the survey. Four are archaeological and one palaeontological. None are of any significance in their local context (Table 1) and no mitigation can be suggested for any of them.

Table 1: List of heritage sites indicating their significance.

Site number	Brief description	Significance in local context
SHB474-1	Palaeobeach deposit	very low
SHB474-2	LSA artefact scatter	very low
SHB474-3	LSA artefact scatter	very low
SHB474-4	LSA artefact scatter	very low
SHB474-5	LSA artefact scatter	low

The visual impacts are only those to be expected with a developing town. Since St Helena Bay (and other neighbouring small towns) is being developed as a residential area these impacts are not considered significant. However, it is important that some measure of control is exerted on the style of buildings. The proponent is advised to develop architectural guidelines that are sympathetic to the scenic qualities of the area. Use of earthy colours or white in combination with a more-or-less vernacular construction style is recommended.

Given the hard nature of the soil and the fact that the site had been ploughed in the past, it is highly unlikely that any subsurface archaeology will be present.

With the hard granitic soils of the area it is also very unlikely that unmarked prehistoric burials would be found. They are usually associated with occupation sites. However, this possibility can never be ruled out completely.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Heritage Western Cape, the proposed development be allowed to continue with no further heritage work required. However, the following should be noted:

- The proponent is advised to develop architectural guidelines that are sympathetic to the scenic qualities of the area.
- There is always the chance that unmarked prehistoric burials could be present. Should such a find be made at any stage during the development it should be reported to Heritage Western Cape (021 483 9685) or the South African Heritage Resources Agency (021 462 4502) and an archaeologist should be contracted to remove the remains.

9. REFERENCES

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10. INVESTIGATION TEAM

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APPENDIX 1

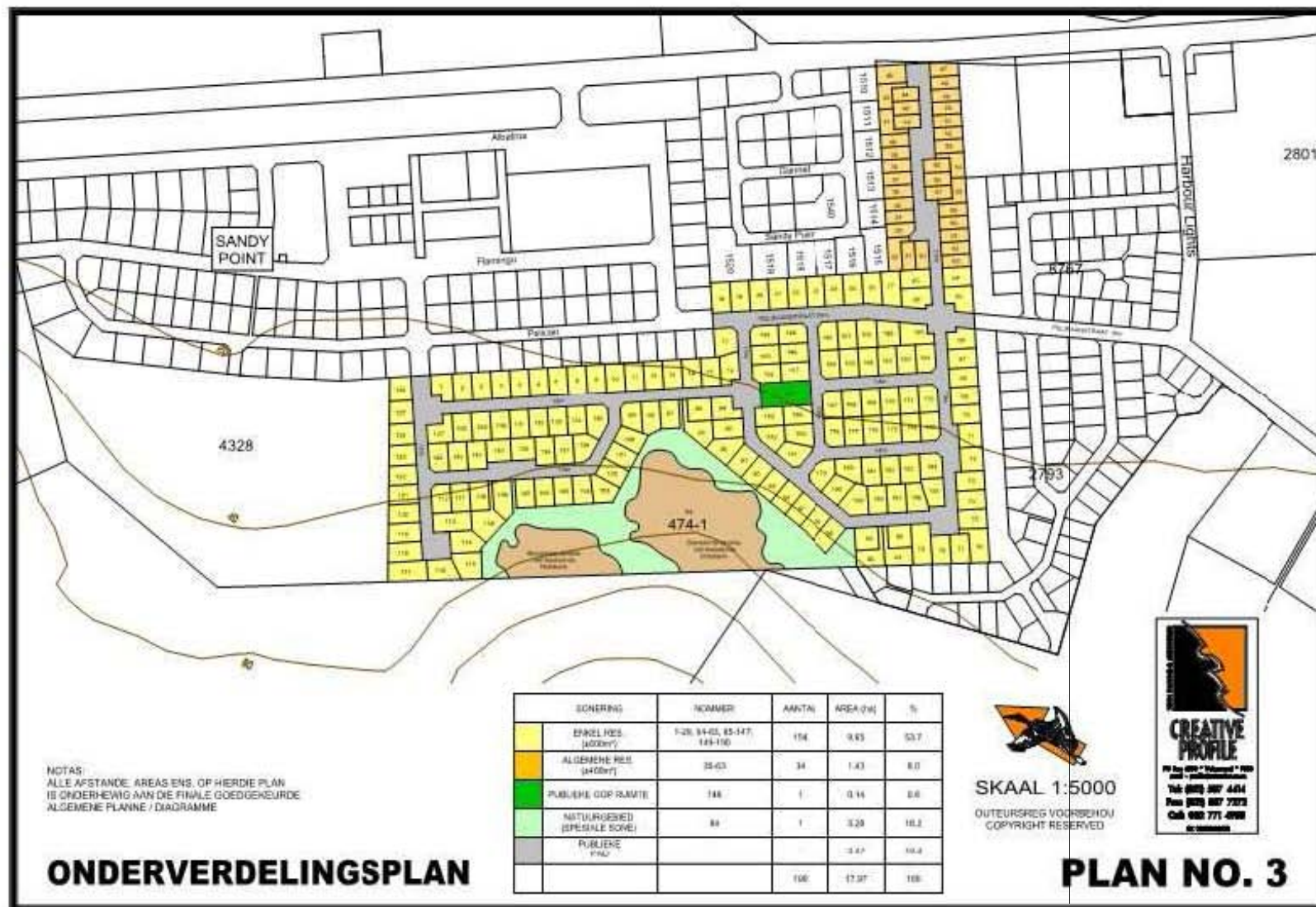


Figure A1: Proposed development plan.



Figure A2: Panoramic view of the site from across the hillside immediately above the southern corner of the erf. The approximate area of erf 474 is indicated by the white dotted line.



Figure A3: Panoramic view of the site from near the southern corner of the site. The white dotted line indicates the western boundary of erf474 with all the grass to its right being part of the site. To the right the property disappears behind the hill.