

Archaeological and Historical Survey for The Point, Durban

For Moreland Developemnts. Pty (Ltd)

By

By Gavin Anderson

Institute for Cultural Resource Management, Natal Museum, Private Bag 9070,
Pietermaritzburg, 3200

15 January 2003



INTRODUCTION

Moreland approached the Institute for Cultural Resource Management (ICRM) to undertake an archaeological survey of the next phase of development for The Point. The ICRM included a full historical survey for those areas/topics not covered in the previous scoping report. This brief Historical Report can be viewed in Appendix A.

This report is a brief outline of areas that may have potential historical archaeological material underneath the current surface. A management plan is set out for future development. This management plan excludes existing buildings that may or may not be listed or protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act. The report only deals with areas that are currently undeveloped and not with any of the current buildings.

The archaeological component of this report is based on the historical findings. As with most historical archaeology surveys, the written records have been consulted prior to the archaeological survey or excavations. In addition, this report also uses the findings from a previous survey, monitoring program, and archaeological excavations as a basis for its conclusions (Anderson 2003).

The Point appears to have been an area of high historical activity since the first colonialists landed. Apart from several battles, there was Durban's first *squatter camp* (referred to as Bamboo Square), several industrial landmarks, shipwrecks, a gallows, railway lines, piers, and buildings. Most of these have been damaged due to previous developments. This project has the potential to recover the last vestiges of a very important part of Durban's history.

FINDINGS

The provided map has been laid out in a grid, and important areas have been noted in the Appendix. In general, all undisturbed areas have the potential to reveal material. By undisturbed I specifically refer to those areas that do not have current buildings. The foundations of many of these buildings would have damaged most of the archaeological material. Those areas that are currently grassed, under parking lots and/or roads have the potential to yield much information. Furthermore, the areas that have been reclaimed may also yield material (approximately 5-7m below the current surface).

Bamboo Square

Bamboo Square was partially excavated in 2002. However, much of the site still exists. The squares B – G and 3 – 8 are areas of high sensitivity. These areas still have the remains of Bamboo Square under the current surface. I estimate that Bamboo Square is approximately 1 – 3 m below the current surface. Much of Bamboo square has been damaged by previous and current development, however, previous excavations have revealed that *in situ* material still occur on the landscape.

Significance:

Bamboo Square is of high archaeological and historical significance. Kearney (2003) describes it as follows:

“Bamboo Square was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, informal settlement in the country and, in numerous ways was Durban’s District Six. It had commenced as a Tonga ‘kraal’ for migrant Tonga harbour workers in the 1860’s. Thereafter it became a refuge for marginalised peoples including Indians released from plantation indentureship, Chinese, Malays East Coast Africans and St Helenites. The sense of refuge was found not only in the site which was situated between high sand dunes and thus obscure, but also in that the place was owned by the War Department, in far off London. Thus it fell outside the Borough of Durban for whom it was a perpetual social and sanitation nuisance and eventually became to be administered by the Natal Harbour Board and the Natal Harbour Department after 1880. Their administration included many instances of shack removals and demolitions in the 1880’s and 1890’s. They also made numerous attempts to replan the settlement, moving it progressively closer to the ocean beach by the end of the nineteenth century. Much of the information about the settlement derives from the extensive reports of the Harbour Board officials, the Water and Borough Police and the Inspector of Nuisances (early Heath Department).

The community was fairly homogenous, drawn as they were by their common marginalisation, and they lived largely in either wattle and daub huts and shacks or later in small wood and iron cottages. By the mid 1890s the population numbered several thousand. It also seems that the inhabitants provided accommodation in very small shacks for the growing number of ‘togt’ workers who sought periodic work in the nearby docks. The community supported a few shops and a school whose fortunes fluctuated depending on the attractions of harbour work. Other occupations included fishing and this was probably the ancestral branch of the seine fishing community of the twentieth century. After the Durban Town Council skilfully took over ownership of the land in 1898, along with the adjacent Addington Lands and commenced a formal sanitation and renewal programme. This was interrupted in 1902 by the outbreak of Bubonic Plague, whose origins were traced to Bamboo Square and the settlement was completely demolished early in 1903. The population were dispersed to other informal settlements including Island View, Clairwood and South Coast Junction.”

Significance:

Bamboo Square is of high archaeological and historical significance. Little is known about the lives of the general people who lived there, and many of the written records are from municipal and police records. The previous, and limited, archaeological excavations recorded a better picture than one of squalor that was officially portrayed.

Mitigation:

There are three options for this area. First, the area should be declared a no-development zone and it should be preserved for the future. Second, excavations should be undertaken with the purpose of developing the site as an open-air museum. This implies that the area is still a no-development zone. Third, the remaining parts Bamboo Square need to be systematically excavated and recorded. The artefacts and photographic material should be used for displays within the development and the area should be commemorated. I personally believe that the site is integral to the formation of Durban as a city, and that this heritage needs to be saved as a matter of priority.

If excavations do occur then they should begin with test-pit excavations to determine the extent of the whole of Bamboo Square.

Transport routes

Roads, piers, tramlines, and railway lines should form under the heading of industrial archaeology. These lines occur throughout the proposed development, however it is unlikely that the physical remains still exist.

Significance:

The use of transport to and from a harbour to the city is important features in the development of any city. The ways in which roads are changed, through time, for increasing traffic in goods is linked to the economy of that city.

These features should be considered as being medium significant.

Mitigation:

It is unlikely that these features still exist. If this area is developed, then all construction work would need to be monitored.

Stables and Domestic Housing

Many of these buildings do not exist anymore as they have been damaged by previous developments. However, several areas have not been developed, and may yield subsurface features. These are located in squares G7, H10, J8, L10, O7, O10, O11, P7, and P11.

These features include the locations of the Port Captain's Indian compound, stevedore's compounds, pilot's housing, a prison, and stables.

Significance:

These features vary from medium to high significance.

Management:

It is unlikely that the remains of these features occur above the ground. However, subsurface features may still exist. Test-pit excavations should occur in these areas to determine if subsurface features do exist.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries refer to areas that have been formally proclaimed as burial grounds, and thus exclude isolated burials such as the one excavated at Bamboo Square (Anderson 2003). Cemeteries were situated in squares I9, I10, J9, J10. The written records indicate that many of the graves were exhumed in the late 19th and early 20th century and removed to other locations in Durban.

Significance:

Cemeteries are of high significance.

Mitigation:

It is unlikely that human remains still exist in these older cemeteries. However, there is a possibility that a few individuals were missed. All development in these areas should be monitored.

Shipwrecks

Much of the eastern side of the development has the potential to yield the remains of shipwrecks. These can be located in squares J –S and 3 – 8. This area is currently part of the reclaimed land and the original surface is approximately 4 – 8 m below the current surface.

According to the historical records, many of the shipwrecks were reused by local inhabitants, and thus it is unlikely that a complete shipwreck would be found.

Significance:

All shipwrecks are of high significance and may yield information regarding maritime activities.

Mitigation:

This area needs constant monitoring during the development phases. No earthmoving should occur unless an archaeologist is on site.

Recreational areas

The general beach has been used for the last few millennia. No direct evidence for Stone Age and Iron Age occupations have been recorded previously in this area, nor did I observe such sites during the 2002 stage of the project. However, isolated artefacts have been observed.

The area has been extensively utilised over the last 150 years for social events. These events can be colloquially referred to as “beach braai” areas. Several of these were observed during the monitoring stages in 2002.

Significance:

These sites are of low significance.

Mitigation:

This area should be monitored during the earthmoving stages. Excavations may be required during the earthmoving stage.

Fishing activities:

Several areas have been noted for their seine fishing activities. These are concentrated in O7 and P7. While this specific area post-dates 1903, similar activities have occurred since the 1870s, specifically with the arrival of Indian fishermen.

Landfills

The area of the proposed development has been largely reclaimed. Much of the landfill is beach sand and the remains from previous rubbish dumps. The occurrence of bottles, ceramics metal objects, wood, etc. attest to this. While these artefacts are in a secondary context, they are still valuable as they can be accurately dated and yield information.

Significance;

I believe that the landfill is of medium to high archaeological significance.

Mitigation:

All landfill areas require constant monitoring during the earthmoving stages. A collection depot for bottles should be made and all bottles should be stored in this area for later retrieval. Furthermore, security regarding possible theft of these bottles, and other artefacts, needs to be upgraded and stringently enforced. I believe that the current security measures are inadequate, and that there is little regard for the loss of these artefacts. More security personnel should be employed for this purpose.

Increased security should entail the constant monitoring of all vehicles without exception. All vehicles should be searched when leaving the premises. This is a standard procedure at most construction and mining sites and should occur for this development as well. All employers and employees on the site should be informed both verbally and in writing that artefacts may not be removed.

CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Point area has high archaeological and historical significance with the formation of Durban harbour and city. Much of this heritage has been inadvertently destroyed by previous developments. The current development has the potential to allow for the salvaging of this heritage. All mitigation should thus occur timeously ahead of any development. In this case I would think 6 months ahead of schedule would be adequate for test-pit excavations.

The brief historical survey and archaeological excavations and monitoring have already yielded a wealth of information. This is however only a small part of what still remains.

The remains included subsurface features of buildings, Bamboo Square, transport systems, industrial areas and cemeteries. Most of these are older than 100 years and are thus protected by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act. Buildings older than sixty years are also protected. The developer will need to liaise with KwaZulu-Natal Heritage regarding the built environment and other historical features that have not been covered by this report.

The following squares would require test-pit excavations: G6, H6, J7, K8, L8, M8, L9, M9, P8, and Q8, O10, O11, and P10. The rest of the development should be monitored, especially those in

squares H4, columns I to R, and Rows 1 to 6. If current development plans are to change in the future, then the archaeological component needs to be evaluated.

References

Anderson, G. 2003. *Archaeological survey and excavations at The Point*. . Archaeological report for Ushaka Island Development

B.T. Kearney. 2003. A Brief Report to the ICRM for Bamboo Square.

Appendix A

AN HISTORICAL BASIS FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A PORTION OF THE POINTⁱco-ordinating axes from the Durban City Council cadastral map of 1974 (1 in 6000).

MAP REFERENCE	NOTES ON SURFACE	DATE	REMAINS & ACTIVITIES ⁱⁱ much material will have survived. ARTIFACTS ⁱⁱⁱ
B3	Port worker's housing	c1880-1925	Domestic
B4	Port worker's housing	c1880-1925	Domestic
D4	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
D5	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
D6	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
D7	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
E4	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
	Bamboo Square municipal power station, sewerage pumping station and garbage incinerator	from 1893	Industrial
	Piping including outfall pipe to north pier		
E5	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
E6	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
E7	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
E8	Rail lines from first Point - Durban railway	1860	Industrial
F5	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Bamboo Square municipal power station, sewerage pumping station and garbage incinerator	from 1893	Industrial, service
	Piping including outfall pipe to north pier		
F6	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
F7	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
F8	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
F9	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines ^{iv}	1879-1905	Industrial
F10	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
G6	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
	Paraffin stores	c 1890	Industrial
G7	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
G8	Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni	c 1862	Industrial
	Bamboo Square settlement	c1875-1903	Domestic, fishing
	Stevedore's compounds	c1903-1935	Domestic
G9	Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni	c 1862	Industrial
G10	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
	Water police station	c1900	Service
	Early timber buildings for port functions	1850's	Building
	Early track to Durban	1850's	Service
H5	Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni	c 1862	Industrial
H6	Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni	c 1862	Industrial
	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone

	Port and SAR&H housing	1890-1935	Domestic
H7	Fort Victoria, British military magazine and well* Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni Root of Vetch's pier	1838 c1862 1860-1864	Military Industrial Timber staging, stone
H8	Port and SAR&H housing Fort Victoria, British military magazine and well * Rail lines to serve Vetch's pier from Umgeni Root of Vetch's pier	1890-1935 1838 c1862 1860-1864	Domestic Military Industrial Timber staging, stone
H9	Port and SAR&H housing Timeball * British military magazine and stockade Block house * Early port housing Natal harbour Department and SAR&H Stevedores compounds and latrines	1890-1935 1882-1904 1842-1845 1860's 1880's - 1935	Domestic Electric Military Domestic Domestic
H10	Early track to Durban Block house and stockade *	1850's 1842-1845	Service Military
H11	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
I2	Later shipwrecks ^v	After 1880	Maritime
I3	Later shipwrecks	After 1880	Maritime
I4	Stevedore's compounds	1900-1935	Domestic
I4	Stevedore's compounds	1900-1935	Domestic
I4	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone
I5	Stevedore's compounds	1900-1935	Domestic
I6	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
I7	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay Port housing	1860 Pre 1895 and 1903	Industrial Domestic
I8	Port housing	Pre 1895 and 1903	Domestic
I9	Stockade around blockhouse * Cemetery * Port housing and latrines	1842-1845 1842-1894 Pre 1895 and 1903	Military Human Domestic
I10	Stockade around blockhouse * Cemetery * Alexandra Hotel ^{vi}	1842-1845 1842-1894 1881-1912	Military Human Domestic,
building			
I11	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
J2	Early customs house	1846	Building
J2	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
J2	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone
J3	Early shipwrecks Root of Vetch's pier	Before 1880 1860-1864	Maritime Timber staging, stone
J4	Early shipwrecks Root of Vetch's pier	Before 1880 1860-1864	Maritime Timber staging, stone
J5	Early shipwrecks Stevedore's compounds	Before 1880 1900-1935	Maritime Domestic

J6	Stevedore's compounds	1900-1935	Domestic
	Port housing	After 1880	Domestic
J7	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from the Bay	1860	Industrial
	Port housing	After 1880	Domestic
J8	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from the Bay	1860	Industrial
	Port housing	After 1880	Domestic
	Municipal tram stables	1881	Service
J9	Port housing	After 1880	Domestic
	Early industrial: James Brown Cemetery *	1870's	Industrial
		1842-1894	Human
J10	Early industrial: James Brown Cemetery *	1870's	Industrial
		1842-1894	Human
J11	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
	Early port buildings, timber sheds	1850's	Building
K2	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone
K3	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone
	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Football fields	c1915	
K4	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Football fields	c1915	
K5	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Football fields	c1915	
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
K6	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Football fields	c1915	
K7	Prison housing and recreation	After 1907	Domestic
	Missions to seamen	c1935	Domestic
K8	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
	Municipal tram stables	1881	Service
	Early industrial	1870's	Industrial
	Port housing	After 1903	Domestic
K9	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
	Early and later pilot's housing	1860's and 1903	Domestic
K10	Early industrial	1870's	Industrial
	NGR rail lines	1900	Industrial
K11	First house of the Port Captain	1850's	Domestic
	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
K12	First house of the Port Captain	1850's	Domestic
	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
L2	Root of Vetch's pier	1860-1864	Timber staging, stone
L3	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
L4	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
L5	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
	Football fields	c1915	
L6	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
	Football fields	c1915	
L7	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Prison housing and recreation	After 1907	Domestic
L8	Prison housing and recreation	After 1907	Domestic
L9	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
	Early and later pilot's housing	1860's and 1903	Domestic
L10	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay ^{vii}	1860	Industrial
	Early and later pilot's housing	1860's and 1903	Domestic
	Second house of the Port Captain	c1880	Domestic

L11	Early port workshops	c1880	Industrial
L12	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
M4	Later shipwrecks	After 1880	Maritime
M5	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
	Later shipwrecks	After 1880	Maritime
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
M6	Football fields	c1915	
	Oil storage tanks and pipe to wharfside	c1940	Industrial
M7	Football fields	c1915	
	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
M8	Prison	1907	Domestic
	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
M9	Prison	1907	Domestic
	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
M10	Concrete blockyard	C1885	Industrial
	Second house of the Port Captain	c1880	Domestic
M11	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
	Early port workshops	c1880	Industrial
M12	Point Road: horse and electric tram lines	1879-1905	Industrial
N4	Beach recreation	1950's	
N5	Later shipwrecks	After 1880	Maritime
	Beach recreation		
N6	Later shipwrecks	After 1880	Maritime
	Beach recreation		
N7	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Prison	1907	Domestic
N8	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Prison	1907	Domestic
N9	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Concrete blockyard	C1885	Industrial
N10	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
N10 (contd)	Berthing Master's stores	c1890	Maritime
N11	Early port workshops	c1880	Industrial
	Natal Harbour Department Institute	1895	Maritime
N12	Early port workshops	c1880	Industrial
	Narrow gauge rail lines to Vetch's pier from Bay	1860	Industrial
O4	Beach recreation		
O5	Beach recreation		
O6	Beach recreation		
O7	Prison	1907	Domestic
	Seine net fishing base	After 1903	Fishing
O8	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Prison	1907	Domestic
O9	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Concrete blockyard	c1885	Industrial
O10	Signal station	c1890	Maritime
	Port Captain's Indian compound	c1860	Domestic
O11	Signal station	c1890	Maritime
	Port Captain's Indian compound	c1860	Domestic
O12	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
P4	Beach recreation		
P5	Beach recreation		
P6	Prison	1907	Domestic
P7	Prison	1907	Domestic
	Seine net fishing base	After 1903	Fishing
P8	Prison	1907	Domestic
P9	Concrete blockyard	c1885	Industrial
P10	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial

P11	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Port Captain's Indian compound	c1860	Domestic
	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
P12	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
Q5	Beach recreation		
Q6	Beach recreation		
Q7	Prison	1907	Domestic
Q8	Maize shed	1938	
Q9	Concrete blockyard	c1885	Industrial
Q10	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
Q11	Early shipwrecks	Before 1880	Maritime
	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
R5	Beach recreation		
R6	Beach recreation		
R7	Beach recreation		
R8	Maize shed	1938	
R9	Maize shed	1938	
R10	Port workshops	After 1900	Industrial
	NGR and SAR&H rail lines	Post 1900	Industrial
S6	Beach recreation		
S7	Beach recreation, sand pumping		
S8	Maize shed	1938	

GENERAL

Some activities of historical significance have not been referenced as there are no mapped records available. These include the Zulu War stockade across the Point of 1879 which probably ran from around E9 to J5. There were also water wells which were used before piped water before 1885 and their locations are unknown.

Professor BT Kearney
Durban
January 2003

ⁱ The map references are to a 1 in 2000 map of the Point with a grid of 200meter squares. The north line at L-M is the longitude at 4800m east of 31⁰. The east-west line at 7-8 is the latitude at 3 305 500m south of the equator. Both of these are

ⁱⁱ It must be noted that the term 'surface' does not necessarily refer to the present land surface since a great deal of the Point has been altered over time, particularly through the flattening of the original sanddunes. Thus, for example, the timeball noted in references H7 and H8, actually stood on top of a sanddune which has been removed. Such activities are denoted with an *.

Similarly the shape of the Point was greatly altered during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through reclamation, especially on the seaward side. Thus beaches present in the period 1840 to 1880 are now situated in the centre of the Point. This accounts for the large number of references to the sites of possible shipwreck material which may possibly be found towards the centre of the Point.

However, since most ships wrecked were comprehensively taken apart and items of value salvaged, it is not anticipated that

ⁱⁱⁱ Possible artifacts and remains are noted with reference to the primary surface activities. Other casual items may well be present but are not suggested.

^{iv} The horse trams ran along Point Road from 1879 and were gradually extended as the road was pushed towards the customs house. The electric tram lines were laid from 1898.

^v Earlier shipwrecks would be those which took place before 1880 when the beach was towards the centre of the Point (see note 3 above). Later wrecks took place after 1880 and would have been on beaches between the centre of the Point and the present shore line, as the progressive reclamation occurred. I have comprehensive lists and reports on the wrecks..

^{vi} The Alexandra Hotel which was one of the finest in the British Colonies (Refer Kearney 1973) was burnt down in 1912 and the present rather poor replacement built.

^{vii} The depression which runs behind the group of two-storied, semi-detached pilot's houses in Escombe Terrace and which also carried an NGR rail line is probably the site of this early narrow gauge rail.