

A PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED LOW COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT ICWILLI SETTLEMENT NEAR KEI RIVER MOUTH TOWN, GREAT KEI RIVER LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.

Prepared for: AGES (Pty) Ltd

Contact person: Mr. R. Williams
Postnet Suite 203
Private Bag X9063
East London
5200
Tel: 043 7262070
Fax: 043 7269232
Cell: 082 6929871
Email: rwilliams@ages-group.com

Compiled by: Dr Johan Binneman

On behalf of: Eastern Cape Heritage Consultants

P.O. Box 689
Jeffreys Bay
6330
Tel/Fax: 042 2960399
Cell: 0728006322
email: kobusreichert@yahoo.com

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Note: This report follows the minimum standard guidelines required by the South African Heritage Resources Agency for compiling Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA).

SUMMARY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to conduct a phase 1 archaeological impact assessment (AIA) of the proposed Phase 2 low cost housing project at iCwili settlement near Kei River Mouth, Great Kei River Municipality, Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province; to establish the range and importance of possible exposed and *in situ* archaeological heritage features, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to these sites.

Background information

The Great Kei River Municipality proposed to develop Phase 2 of a low cost housing project at iCwili formal settlement near Kei River Mouth. The total area of the development will be 6,6 ha and include the building of 120 low cost houses and providing basic sanitation and water facilities.

The investigation

A large part of the proposed property for development is already occupied and therefore disturbed. The remainder is covered by dense grass, shrubs and low trees. No archaeological sites/materials were found during the survey of the proposed area for development.

Cultural sensitivity

Although no archaeological sites/remains were found and the area appeared to be of low cultural sensitivity, the proposed development is situated within 3 kilometres from the coast and therefore falls inside the distance marine shell middens are expected to be found. The nearby coast is rich in archaeological sites and material.

Recommendations

If any concentrations of archaeological heritage material and/or human remains are uncovered during construction, all work must cease immediately and be reported to the Albany Museum and/or the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) so that systematic and professional investigations/excavations can be undertaken.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Status

The report is part of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The type of development

A low cost housing project at iCwili formal settlement near Kei River Mouth. The total area of the development will be 6,6 ha and include the building of 120 low cost houses and basic sanitation and water facilities.

Developer:

Great Kei Local Municipality
Amathola District Municipality
Eastern Cape Province

Consultant:

AGES (Pty) Ltd
Contact person: Mr. R. Williams
Postnet Suite 203
Private Bag X9063
East London
5200
Tel: 043 7262070
Fax: 043 7269232
Cell: 082 6929871
Email: rwilliams@ages-group.com

Terms of Reference

To conduct a survey of possible archaeological heritage sites for the Phase 2 low cost housing project at iCwili settlement near Kei River Mouth, Great Kei River Municipality, Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province. The survey was conducted to establish the range and importance of possible exposed and *in situ* archaeological heritage features, the potential impact of the development and to make recommendations to minimize possible damage to these sites.

BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Little is known about the archaeology of this part of the coast, because no systematic field research has been conducted there. Notwithstanding, there are a number of reports, references and accessioned material in museums of the region and nationally which provide us with a

background. This information was compiled R.M. Derricourt during the early 1970's and published in his book, *Prehistoric Man in the Ciskei and Transkei* in 1977. This part of the coast between East London and the Great Kei River is rich in archaeological sites and material.

From the archival information and limited fieldwork, it is evident that the area has an interesting and complex archaeological past. Earlier Stone Age (ESA) handaxes, cleavers and other stone tools, dating to approximately between 1,5 million and 250 000 years old, were found mainly in inland areas such as in the districts of Middledrift, Kentani, Butterworth, Idutywa and Lusikiki to name a few.

Middle Stone Age (MSA) stone artefacts dating between 250 000 and 30 000 years old can be found throughout the region, but carry little information because they are not associated with any other archaeological material. Later Stone Age (LSA) open sites, dating to the past 20 000 years are also widely scattered throughout the area.

The most common archaeological sites are shell middens (large piles of marine shell) found usually concentrated opposite rocky coasts (generally referred to as 'Strandloper middens'). These were campsites of San, Khoisan and Bantu-speakers who lived along the immediate coast and collected marine foods. Mixed with the shell are other food remains and cultural material, often human remains are found in the middens. These middens date from the past 8 000 years.

Although no evidence of Early Iron Age (EIA) (first farming communities) sites or material from the Kei River area have been documented, it is possible that such settlements may be present in the wider region (Maggs 1973, Feely 1987). Evidence in the form of thick-walled well-decorated pot sherds are present along other parts of the Transkei coast (Rudner 1968) as is evident from sites that were excavated at Mpame River Mouth (Cronin 1982) and just west of East London (Nongwaza 1994). Research in the Great Kei River Valley indicates that the first mixed farmers were already settled in the Eastern Cape region between A.D. 600 -700 (Binneman 1994).

References

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- Maggs, T. 1973. The NC3 Iron Age tradition. *South African Journal Science* 69:325-326.
- Mostert, N. 1992. *Frontiers: the epic of South Africa's creation and the tragedy of the Xhosa people*. London: Pimlico.
- Rudner, J. 1968. Strandloper pottery from South and South West Africa. *Annals of the South African Museum* 49:441-663.

Museum/University databases and collections

The Albany Museum in Grahamstown houses some collections and information from the region.

Relevant impact assessments

Binneman, J and Booth, C. 2008. A phase 1 archaeological impact assessment: the proposed Kei Beach Hotel and Apartment Development, Erven 160, 161, 162 and 163, Kei River, Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province. Prepared for Arcus Gibb Engineering and Science, East London.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Area Surveyed

Location Data

The proposed Phase 2 low cost housing project at iCwili formal settlement near Kei River Mouth is situated approximately one kilometre north-west of Kei River Mouth Town, Great Kei River Municipality, Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province. The development is located next to the existing settlement (south-east) and is two kilometres from the coast, on a high hill overlooking the Great Kei River some 1,5 kilometres away (Maps 1-3). GPS readings were taken at 32.40.687S; 28.21.837E and 32.40.540S; 28.21.924E.

Map

1:50 000 CB & CD Kei Mouth

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Methodology and results

The area was investigated on foot and spot checks were also conducted from a vehicle. GPS readings were taken with a Garmin and all important features were digitally recorded. The area for development is relatively flat with a steep slope towards the Great Kei River. A large part of the proposed development has been occupied for some time and the remainder of the area is occupied sporadically in parts. In general, most of the area has been severely disturbed by the construction of houses, shelters, leveling and other activities. Open spaces between the houses have been investigated, but the dense grass, shrubs, patches of low *Acacia karroo* trees, domestic rubble/rubbish and human waste made it difficult to locate archaeological sites/material. The relatively flat hill top was investigated for possible traces of Late Mixed Farming Community (Late Iron Age people) settlement (circular sunken features, raised platforms, changes in soil colour, baked clay etc.), but none were observed. In general, these communities lived further inland. Although the property is situated within three kilometres from the coast, no coastal archaeological materials were found during the survey. The nearby coast is rich in archaeological sites and material. A large number of mole heaps were investigated to check for possible marine shell remains pushed to the surface. In general, it would appear that it is unlikely that any archaeological heritage remains of any value will be exposed during the development.



Figs 1-6. Different views of the proposed area for development at iCwilli near Kei River Mouth. Note the dense vegetation.

Discussion

Although it would appear that the area is of low cultural significance, there is always a possibility that human remains and/or other archaeological and historical material may be uncovered during the development. The relatively flat hill top is an area which could have been preferred for settlement by Late Mixed Farming Communities (Late Iron Age people). However, in general their settlements were located further inland which may be the reason that no traces for such occupation were observed. The property is also situated within 5 kilometres from the coast opposite a rocky coast, and therefore falls inside the distance marine shell middens are expected to be found. If such materials are found exposed, it must be reported to the nearest museum,

archaeologist or to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), so that a systematic and professional investigation can be undertaken. Sufficient time should be allowed to remove/collect such material (See Appendix B for a list of possible archaeological sites that maybe found in the area).

RECOMMENDATIONS

If any concentrations of archaeological heritage material and/or human remains are uncovered during development, it should be reported to the Albany Museum and/or the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) immediately so that systematic and professional investigation/ excavation can be undertaken. Sufficient time should be allowed to remove/collect such material (See appendix A for a list of possible archaeological sites that may be found in the area).

GENERAL REMARKS AND CONDITION

Note that this letter of recommendation only exempts the proposed development from a full Phase 1 Archaeological Heritage Impact Assessment, but not for other heritage impact assessments. It must also be clear that this letter of recommendation for exemption of a full Phase 1 archaeological heritage impact assessment 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.

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999, section 35) (see Appendix A) requires a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in order that all heritage resources, that is, all places or objects of aesthetics, architectural, historic, scientific, social, spiritual linguistic or technological value or significance are protected. Thus any assessment should make provision for the protection of all these heritage components, including archaeology, shipwrecks, battlefields, graves, and structures older than 60 years, living heritage, historical settlements, landscapes, geological sites, palaeontological sites and objects.

GENERAL REMARKS AND CONDITIONS

It must be emphasised that this letter of recommendation for exemption of a full Phase 1 archaeological heritage impact assessment is based on the visibility of archaeological sites/material and may not therefore, reflect the true state of affairs. Sites and material may be covered by soil and vegetation and will only be located once this has been removed. In the unlikely 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 (see attached list of possible archaeological sites and material). The *onus* is on the developer to ensure that this agreement is honoured in accordance with the National Heritage Act No. 25 of 1999.

APPENDIX A: brief legislative requirements

Parts of sections 35(4), 36(3) and 38(1) (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 apply:

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

35 (4) *No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority—*

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;*
- (b) destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;*
- (d) bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assist in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.*

Burial grounds and graves

36. (3) (a) *No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority—*

- (a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;*
- (b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or*
- (c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.*

Heritage resources management

38. (1) *Subject to the provisions of subsections (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development categorized as –*

- (a) the construction of a road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300m in length;*
- (b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length;*
- (c) any development or other activity which will change the character of the site –*
 - (i) exceeding 5000m² in extent, or*
 - (ii) involving three or more erven or subdivisions thereof; or*
 - (iii) involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or*
 - (iv) the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA, or a provincial resources authority;*
- (d) the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000m² in extent; or*
- (e) any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority, must as the very earliest stages of initiating such a development, notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.*

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

Identification of Iron Age archaeological features and material

- Upper and lower grindstones, broken or complete. Upper grindstone/rubber will be pitted.
- Circular hollows –sunken soil, would indicate storage pits and often associated with grindstones.
- Ash heaps, called middens with cultural remains and food waste such as bone.
- Khaki green soils would indicate kraal areas.
- Baked clay/soil blocks with or without pole impressions marks indicate hut structures.
- Decorated and undecorated pots sherds.
- Iron slag and/or blowpipes indicate iron working.
- Human remains may also be associated with khaki green soils.
- Metal objects and ornaments.

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.

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 or in ceramic pots. Developers are requested to be on alert for these features and remains.

Fossil bone

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

Stone artefacts

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

Stone features and platforms

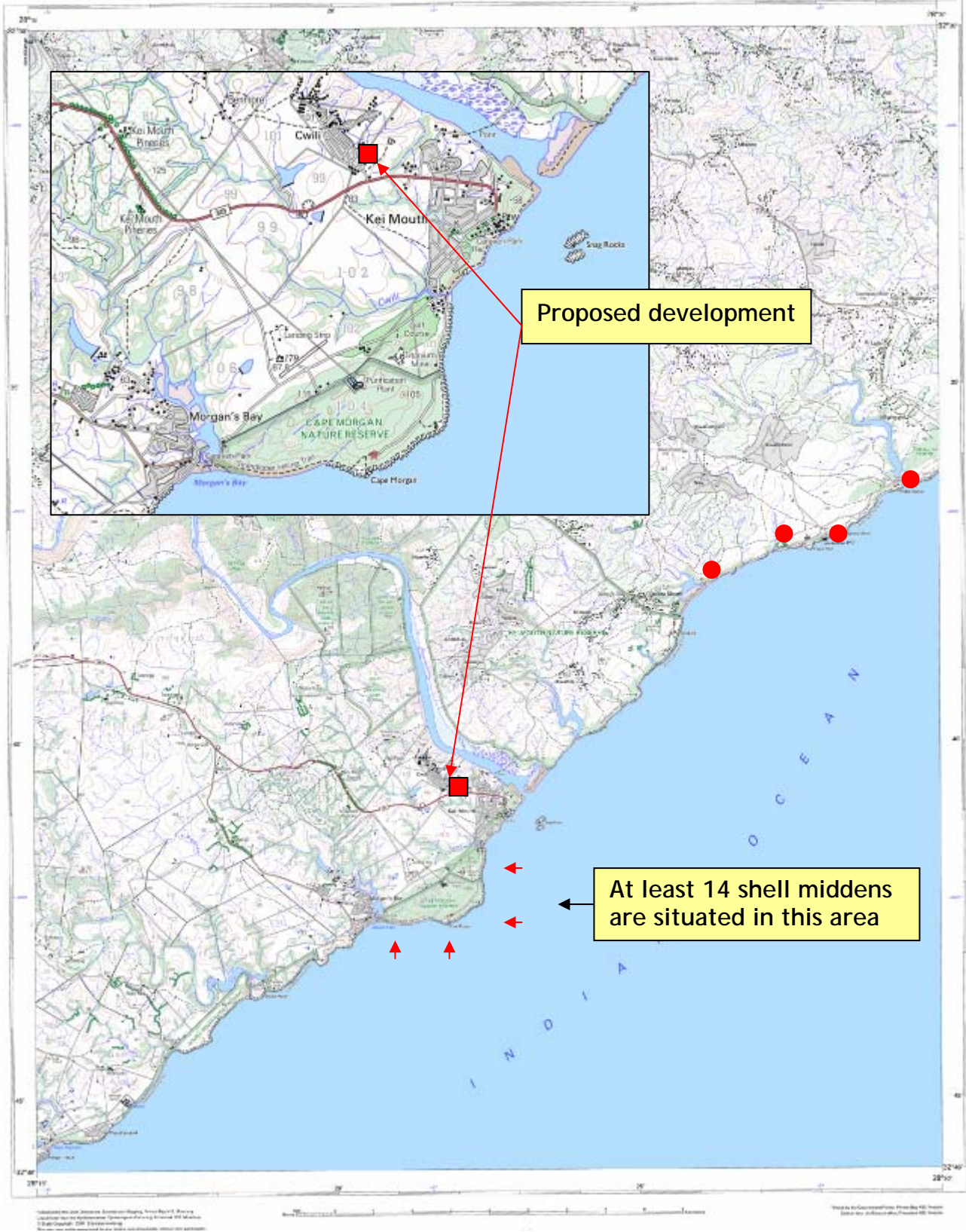
These occur in different forms and sizes, but easily identifiable. The most common are an accumulation of roughly circular fire cracked stones tightly spaced and filled in with charcoal and marine shell. They are usually 1-2metres in diameter and may represent cooking platforms for shell fish. Others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

Large stone cairns

The most common cairns consist of large piles of stones of different sizes and heights are known as *isisivane*. They are usually near river and mountain crossings. Their purpose and meaning is not fully understood, however, some are thought to represent burial cairns while others may have symbolic value.

Historical artefacts or features

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



Map 1. 1:50 000 maps indicating the location of the proposed development and archaeological sites along the coast.



Map 2. Aerial views of the location of the proposed development at iCwili, Kei River Mouth (outline in red).



Map 3. Aerial view of the proposed development at iCwilli, Kei River Mouth (in red) (map courtesy of the AGES (Pty) Ltd.