

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON ERF 134, CAPE INFANTA

Magisterial district: Swellendam

Assessment conducted in terms of
Section 38 (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

ACO Associates was appointed to carry out an archaeological Impact Assessment of proposed development on a small portion of Erf 134, Cape Infanta on the cape south coast (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Location of the proposed development (red) in local geographical context. This represents a small portion of erf 134. **Figure 2:** The full extent of erf 134 is shown by the red polygon. The proposed development site is the small section lying to the west of the main road immediately adjacent to the coast.

Erf 134 is large (Figure 2) and the proposed development section will presumably be subject of sub-division and rezoning. Harriet Clift has investigated the historical background to the establishment of the small village of Cape Infanta and that information is included in the HIA document being compiled by Nicholas Baumann.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed site already contains a single dwelling and garage and it is proposed to construct 23 residential units on the remainder of the site excluding the corner occupied by the existing structure (Figure 3). It would appear that the garage will be demolished in the process.



Figure 3: Proposed development layout. Existing building visible in the top corner.

3. THE SITE

Lying immediately adjacent to the sea, the site measures ~200m at its widest in the north, with the narrowest part in the south measuring only ~80m. The length is ~200m from north to south. The site slopes down from the road and calcrete (limestone) can be seen outcropping along the western margin resulting in a more sparse vegetation cover there. A similar rock platform can be seen extending beyond the eastern boundary where it is cut by wave action. The remainder of the site is covered by low dune and all but the developed section is covered by indigenous coastal vegetation transacted by pathways and occasional blowouts. Introduced grass surrounds the existing house. A prominent natural drainage feature cuts through the lower part of the site from where the land rises up to the point at the south where the property adjoins the existing village. The site also slopes up to the north where it adjoins undeveloped land covered by dense vegetation. It would appear that substantial landscaping has occurred around the existing house in the form of levelling. A montage of the site showing existing structures can be seen in Plate 1, while other views are shown in Plates 2 and 3.



Plate 1: Existing structures on the northern part of the site showing the landscaping.



Plate 2: View towards the existing village showing thicker bush beyond the landscaping. **Plate 3:** View from the south looking towards the existing house.

4. OBSERVATIONS

Although vegetated, there was good visibility of the surface by way of paths and blowouts. As was to be expected given the location on the coast, marine shell was found scattered about the site where it had been discarded by early occupants of the area, in some cases associated with artefactual material. Shellfish were often highly dispersed on the surface and probably represent very ephemeral sites with little or no significance, or as the dispersed indicators of larger accumulations in the vicinity. Three localities in particular show denser surface accumulations of shellfish and artefacts and appear to mark places of more frequent activity/occupation. These are indicated approximately by the yellow dashed lines on Figure 4. A summary table of the archaeological sites is presented in Table 1.



Figure 4: The location of archaeological occurrences on the site and also showing existing structures

Table 1: Summary of observations

Site	Lat/Lon (dec°)	Type	Description
Ci01	S34.41816 E20.85336	shellfish and artefact	ephemeral shell and 1 qtz flake
Ci02	S34.41849 E20.85368	shellfish	ephemeral disturbed shellfish
Ci03	S34.41857 E20.85393	shellfish and artefact	dense shellfish with artefacts 2 silcrete flakes, 1 silcrete bi-polar core, 3 qtz flakes, 1 ostrich eggshell fragment
Ci04	S34.41920 E20.85380	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci05	S34.41885 E20.85416	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci06	S34.41900 E20.85378	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci07	S34.41862 E20.85378	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci08	S34.41871 E20.85388	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci09	S34.41870 E20.85399	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci10	S34.41825 E20.85407	shellfish	shellfish at edge of lawn
Ci11	S34.41865 E20.85371	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci12	S34.41895 E20.85385	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish

Ci13	S34.41897 E20.85369	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci14	S34.41944 E20.85406	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci15	S34.41958 E20.85416	isolated find	ephemeral shellfish and 1x bird bone
Ci16	S34.41953 E20.85427	shellfish and artefact	shellfish scatter with artefacts, qtz flakes chunk and core, 1 possible lower grindstone
Ci17	S34.41937 E20.85430	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci18	S34.41926 E20.85430	shellfish and artefact	2 patches of dense shellfish, 1 silcrete flake, 1 silcrete irregular core, 5 qtz flakes, 1 qtz irregular core
Ci19	S34.41913 E20.85432	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish
Ci20	S34.41881 E20.85301	isolated artefact	1 quartzite hammerstone/core
Ci21	S34.41855 E20.85419	shellfish	ephemeral shellfish

The built structures on the site do not appear to have any historical significance in the sense that they do not appear to be older than 60 years. There is however a “grave” just to the north of the house (Plate 4). As the north east corner of the site is excluded from the development proposal, only the “garage” would appear to be impacted.



Plate 4: The “grave” located to the north of the house.

5. CONCLUSIONS

While archaeological material is widespread on the site, it tends to be most concentrated in three places. Artefacts are associated with the shellfish remains there and suggest that these were more focussed points on the landscape. Our assessment has taken into consideration that no archaeological sites have ever been documented before in Cape Infanta and as such their significance is considered to be high. The nearest surveys have been within the De Hoop Nature Reserve and Henshilwood et al have been investigating some caves therein.

The prevailing sandy conditions and pre-colonial signature on the landscape means there is an increased possibility that pre-colonial burials could be located within the development footprint.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Shovel testing should be undertaken by an archaeologist to evaluate the content, depth and extent of the 3 shell and artefact accumulations around Ci03, Ci16 and Ci18 in order to assess if mitigation or conservation is required, and/or to determine to what extent planning could be modified to avoid impacting the material.
- As burials may be present on the broader site, a protocol should be in place for dealing with the remains, particularly during the construction phase of the project.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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