

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED CASA MARIS DEVELOPMENT, GORDON'S BAY, STRAND MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT, WESTERN CAPE

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

Prepared for

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Guillaume Nel Environmental Consultants, on behalf of the developers of the proposed Casa Maris Eco Estate to conduct an archaeological impact assessment of several properties on the slopes of the Hottentots Holland Mountains above Gordons Bay. The proponents have proposed a residential estate on the approximately 400 ha site. Although the site is very steep and extends well up the mountainside, most development is planned for the lowermost slopes.

The site is almost entirely covered in dense vegetation but with parts having recently burnt. Many small tracks criss-cross the site and it is currently used for harvesting of gum poles. Visibility was generally very poor and survey difficult. However, the conclusions reached are not deemed to have been compromised by these difficulties.

Prehistoric archaeology is very sparse and nothing significant was located. Limited historical material was located at the top of the old Gantouw Pass but is not significant. No protected ruins were located. The only significant find was the remains of the Gantouw Pass. While clearly present above the upper railway line, it is either less obvious or non-existent below this point.

There is still potential for significant archaeological remains to occur in two areas, around the cottage on the site and in the vicinity of the old toll house. These areas and the alignment of the Gantouw Pass need to be regarded as being of high significance until proven otherwise.

From an archaeological point of view development of the site may proceed but the following recommendations are made:

- A further limited archaeological survey will be required once vegetation has been cleared from the site. It is critical that no earthworks of any sort are conducted in the sensitive areas prior to this survey which should have three aims:
 - to record any remaining sections of the old Pass that might still be visible;
 - attempt to locate the remains of the toll house;
 - and check for graves near the cottage;
- Archaeological monitoring of any excavations within about 100m of the house should occur to check for historical material.
- Consideration should be given to creating an open belt along the alignment of the Gantouw Pass in recognition of its place in both the pre- and post-colonial history of South Africa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office was requested by Guillaume Nel Environmental Consultants, on behalf of the developers of the proposed Casa Maris Eco Estate to conduct an archaeological impact assessment of several properties on the slopes of the Hottentots Holland Mountains above Gordons Bay (Figure 1, Table 1). The proponents have proposed a residential estate on the approximately 400 ha site. Although the site is very steep and extends well up the mountainside, most development is planned for the lowermost slopes.

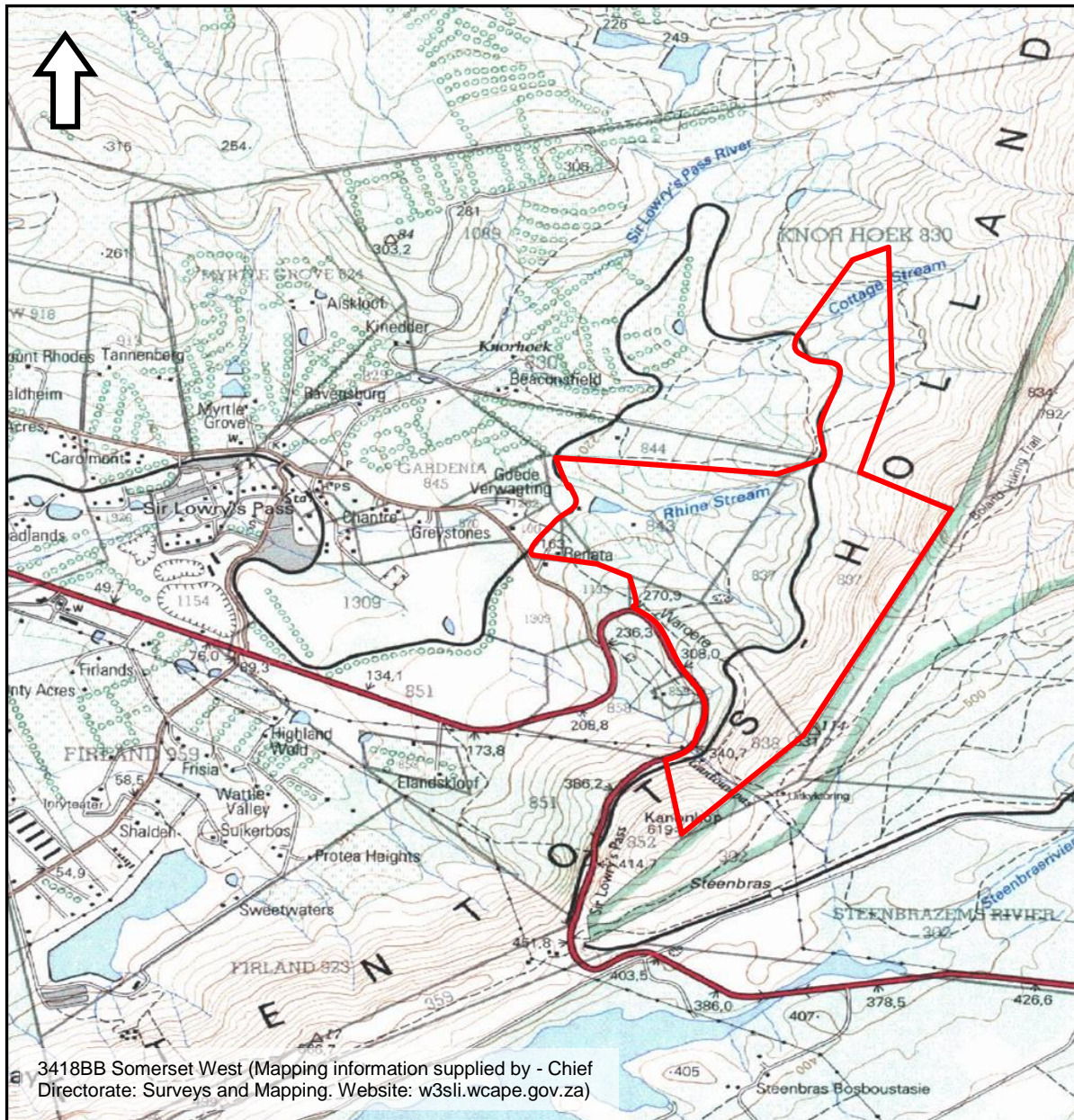


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the study area.

Table 1: Sir Lowry's Pass properties included within the proposed development area.

Portion 8 of Farm Knorhoek 830
Portion 9 of Farm Knorhoek 830
Remainder of Farm 838

Remainder of Farm 843
Remainder of Farm 862
Farm 1052
Farm 1369
Farm 839
Farm 1100

The project has many aims¹:

- Socio-economic upliftment of Sir Lowry's Pass Village;
- Establishment of an eco-estate with ~1 unit / ha;
- Rehabilitation of the natural vegetation (fynbos) and establishment of a conservation area;
- Job Creation, establishment of a water bottling plant; and
- Promotion of Tourism

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 (3.2d)). Under Section 38 (1) of the act the affected properties require heritage assessment based on their size of greater than 5000 m².

Since the project is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, Heritage Western Cape (HWC) is required to provide 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 on the lower to middle slopes of the Hottentots Holland Mountains immediately west of Sir Lowry's Pass Village and north of Gordon's Bay. The Sir Lowry's Pass road (N2) and railway line run alongside and/or through the site. It is mostly very steep extending from about 180 m.a.s.l. in the lower parts to more than 600 m.a.s.l. along the upper margin which lies near the crest of the mountain (Figure 1).

Small gravel tracks are present in many areas and the site is currently used for small-scale forestry (gum poles), although large tracts have been recently burnt. The uppermost slopes above the railway line largely retain their fynbos cover, while virtually the entire surface of the rest of the site is covered in blue gum forest. Many other species of exotic trees are also present in places and are spreading up slope above the railway. A number of dams of varying size have been built in the steep valleys on the middle to lower slopes. The photographs in Figures 2 to 12 illustrate these features of the site.

¹ Aims extracted from Casa Maris Eco Estate Development Proposal



Figure 2: View of the site towards the northeast from the large hair-pin bend on the N2.



Figure 3: Gravel tracks on site.



Figure 4: Gravel track, Port Jackson trees and pine trees on site.



Figure 5: View along a gravel track.



Figure 6: View across the site looking towards the north.



Figure 7: One of the large sandstone boulders that has come to rest on the mid-slopes of the site.



Figure 8: A larger, well established row of gum trees near the railway line.



Figure 9: View across the upper slopes of the site towards the south and showing one of the larger boulders present there.



Figure 10: View from the upper slopes down on to the forested middle slopes. The railway crosses the bare area on the far hill.

In terms of geology, much of the site lies on an exposure of fine-grained granite, while just the uppermost slopes are on sandstone. Limited shale occurs in between the two. The upper slopes are covered in small sandstone boulders, while several larger ones have rolled down the mountain and come to rest on the middle slopes. One area in the central part of the site (just north of the N2) has been stripped down to its granitic substrate and also displays a seam of darker igneous rock. Although some soil is present in the lowermost part of the site, the vast majority of it is covered by nodules of ferruginous gravel.



Figure 11: One of the gravel tracks running through the burnt section of forest.



Figure 12: View the burnt area showing better ground visibility.



Figure 13: View of the recently burnt northern part of the site with one of the newly built houses on the upper slopes.



Figure 14: View of the dense fynbos above the railway line in the southern part of the site.

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4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The site lies on the mountainside above Gordon's Bay. Being steep ground, little prehistoric archaeology would be expected. Given that Early Stone Age material has been recorded on the valley floor (Halkett & Hart 1996; Hart 2004; Orton 2004, 2008), one might well expect to find some scattered artefacts on this site as well. Later Stone Age material has only been recorded along the coastline where it is associated with shell middens (Halkett & Hart 1996; Van Noten 1974).

European settlement of the valley began prior to 1700 (Finnegan 2008) so some potential for historical archaeology does exist. The valley was intensely farmed until the laying out of the town of Somerset West in 1822 (Fransen 2004). Development and agricultural activities in the valley have, however, probably obliterated many archaeological occurrences, whether pre-colonial or historic, that might once have been present.

The historic pass, known as Gantouw Pass (Fransen 2004), is marked on the 1:50 000 map in Figure 1, and its alignment crosses through the southern part of the site. It ran from the Sir Lowry's Pass Village and provided the first road link between Cape Town and the eastern part of the colony.

5. METHODS

The site was examined in a general way on 19th June 2009 in order to gauge the lie of the land and establish the likelihood that a comprehensive survey would be required. Relevant finds and features were photographed and recorded. After some background research two further visits were conducted on 6th (with the assistance of Carol Starke) and 8th July to target certain areas and ensure that no key spots were omitted from the survey.

5.1. Limitations

Much of the site is covered by dense stands/plantations of exotic vegetation (Figures 4 to 6) and could not be searched comprehensively. A small part was also covered by very dense fynbos (Figure 14). However, large tracts had been recently burnt and offered better visibility. Those areas that could be checked showed that Stone Age material of significance is highly unlikely to be present. The second and third visits ensured that, despite the relatively low overall coverage of the site, the limitations imposed by vegetation and study area size did not have any adverse effects on my confidence in the results of the report.

6. FINDINGS

6.1. Stone Age

Just four Stone Age artefacts were found. Two are typical Early Stone Age cores (#2 and #3) from the middle and upper slopes of the site, while a third is a distal fragment of a Middle Stone Age blade from the dam wall on the lower slopes (#5). A fourth (#1), from the upper slopes, could be later and is very large. It looks more recent due to its lack of weathering and might be Later Stone Age. One further probable artefact was found on the middle slopes.

This was of quartz and would date to the Later Stone Age. All are clearly random occurrences and not associated with any archaeological sites.

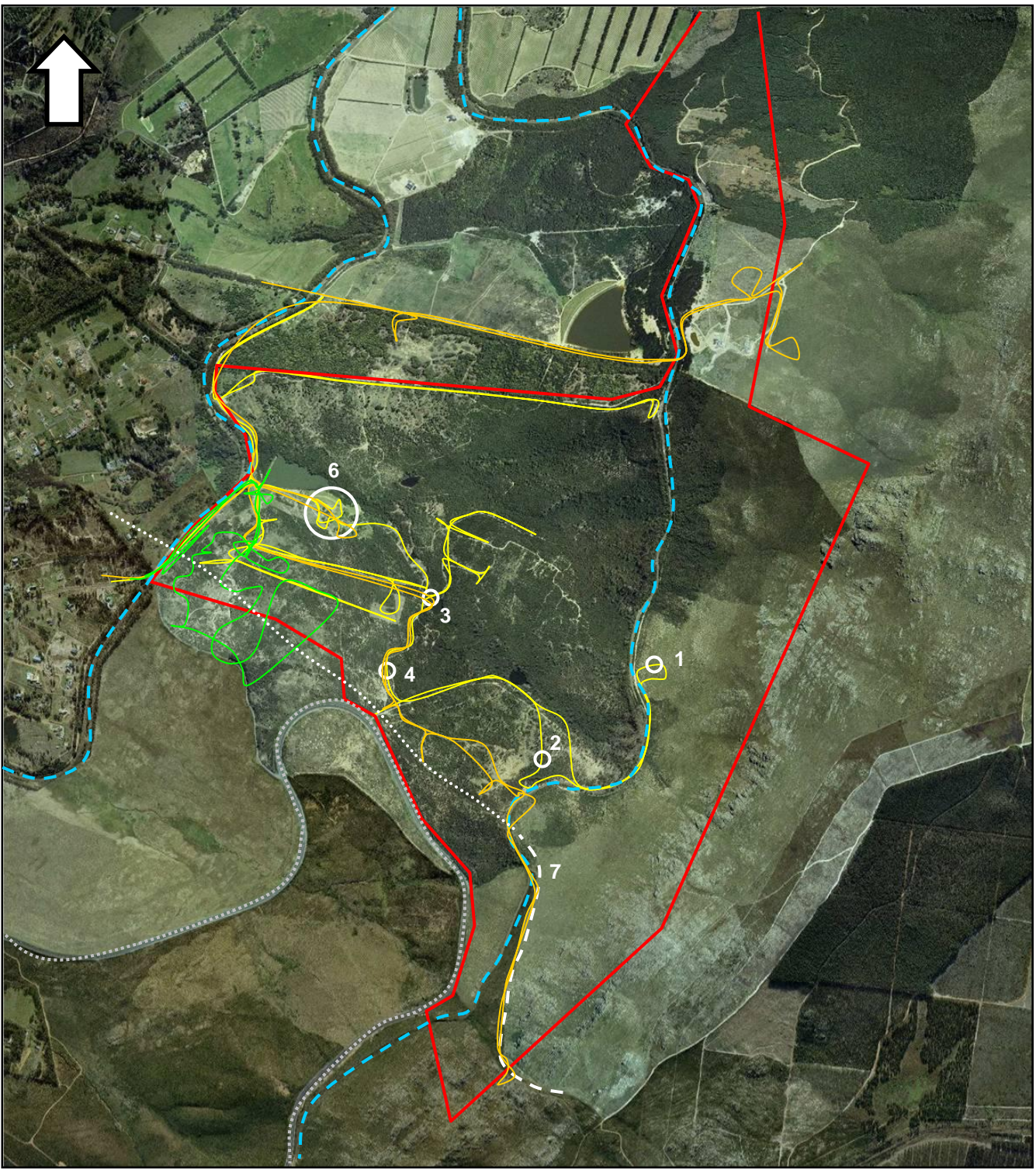


Figure 15: Aerial photograph of the study area (red polygon; provided by the client) showing the areas examined during the survey (yellow line = 18th June; orange line = 6th July; green line = 8th July) and the locations of finds (white circles and numbers; white dotted line is Gantouw Pass with large dots being the preserved portion and small dots the extrapolated alignment taken from the 1:50 000 map of the area). The N2 freeway is the grey dotted line while the railway is in blue.



Figure 16: A large core found on the upper slopes above the railway line (#1).



Figure 17: A core found on the upper slopes below the railway line (#2).



Figure 18: A core found in the valley on the lower slopes (#3).



Figure 19: A small quartz (probable) artefact from the middle slopes (#4).



Figure 20: Quartzite distal flake fragment from the lower slopes (#5).

6.2. Built environment

Archaeology related to the built environment (i.e. ruins greater than 100 years of age) was not found. Numerous younger ruins were noted, with all being mid-20th century or later. Two are composed of cement block foundations and lie in the middle of the site very close to point

#3 and just south of the house at #5. Many other concrete, cement and brick ruins were present in the south-western corner of the western part of the site. The largest was the remains of a brick house. None are protected and they are thus not considered heritage resources. A small packed stone feature was also seen near these ruins but is unlikely to be significant. Given the surrounding context (i.e. modern ruins) it is very unlikely to be a grave. Examples of are illustrated in Appendix 1. Also in this area were a great many earthworks. They consisted of excavations, trenches and piles of gravel and are likely to be relatively recent. They are of no heritage significance.

The house at point #5 is likely to be some 200 years old but is not directly relevant to this archaeological survey (Figure 21). Similarly, bridges, retaining walls and earthworks related to the railway line are greater than 60 years of age but are not dealt with here.

6.3. Historical archaeology

The old house on the property may well have some sort of dump associated with it. Although a search yielded nothing, the thick grass could have obscured any material present. The vicinity of the house does remain of concern, since it has the potential to yield archaeological material. Similarly no graves were seen during an examination of the surroundings of the house, but the potential cannot be ruled out. The structure of the house and the presence of a large European camphor tree (Figure 22) support an early date and if the house does predate the mid-19th century then historical archaeological material might well be present.

Sir Lowry's Pass was originally constructed in 1829 to 1830 to replace the older Gantouw Pass which ran very steeply up the uppermost slopes of the Hottentots Holland Mountains through Hottentots Holland Kloof (Ross 2002; Scott & Hoffman 1998)². The date of construction of the original pass could not be ascertained at this stage, although Ross (2002) notes the presence of a *Cloevermaker* (who maintained the road) from the 1740s. Ross (2002) suggests that prior to 1830 the pass had been the primary route over the mountain for some 150 years and that by 1821 some 4500 wagons were making the crossing annually. It is known that the Khoekhoe and their cattle used the kloof as a crossing point over the mountains with the name Gantouw being derived from *T'kana Ouwe*³ which was translated by the VOC as Eland's Path (Ross 2002).

The road maker's house soon became the toll house for the pass (Mossop 1927). The exact location of this toll house remains unknown but, from Mossop's (1927) description of the pass⁴ and an examination of a 1776 sketch by Johannes Schumacher (Figure 24; taken from Ross 2002: 15), it seems likely that it was somewhere in the vicinity of the south-western corner of the lowermost slopes of the proposed development site. The cottage in the centre of the site (currently referred to informally as "Die Tolhuis"; Figure 21) must, therefore, relate to something else, perhaps a farm house. It also seems too deep in the valley to have functioned effectively as a toll house. Similarly, the ruins below the modern N2 are also too far away from the Gantouw Pass to have served this function.⁵



Figure 21: The cottage at #6.

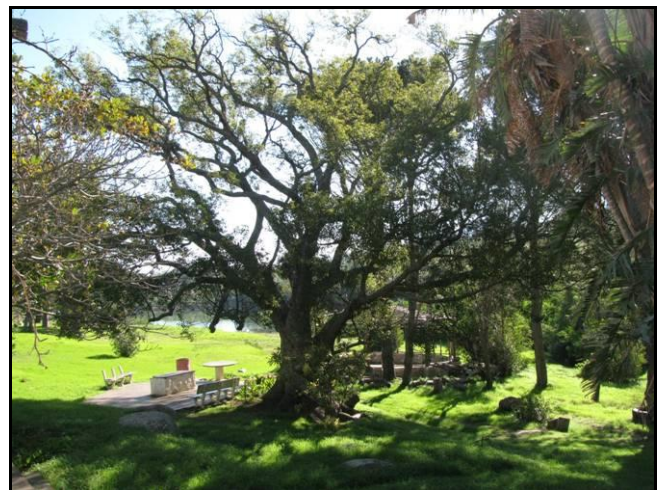


Figure 22: The large camphor tree immediately north of the house.

² Mossop (1927) suggests the new pass to date to 1838.

³ Mossop also mentions this Khoekhoe name but spells it *T'kana Ouwe*.

⁴ See Appendix 2 for details.

⁵ Note that these ruins were not visited.

An extensive search both within and slightly outside of the study area yielded no historical material or any evidence for the toll house but, given the nature of the vegetation, it might still be present somewhere.



Figure 23: The driveway leading to the cottage.



Figure 24: View of the garden area in front of the cottage.

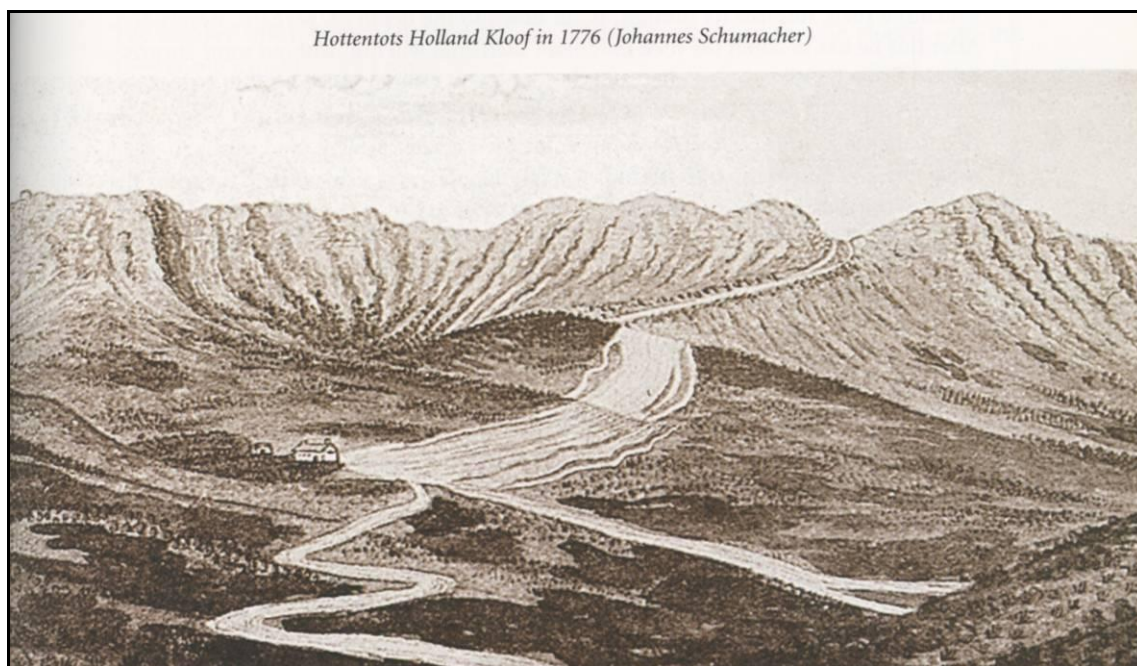


Figure 25: A 1776 sketch by Johannes Schumacher showing the Gantouw Pass running up what was known as the Hottentots Holland Kloof. The study area lies in the deep valley to the left of the pass and the small house in the middle ground is probably in the vicinity of Sir Lowry's Pass Village. A photograph of the upper part in the background appears in Figure 25.

Remains of the old Gantouw Pass are present on the property. It ran through the southern part of the site (#6; Figure 15) and, being in a state of disuse and older than 100 years, it has been included in this archaeological survey. Only the upper part of the pass above the railway line remains visible (Figure 26), with the lower parts having been subsumed within the blue gum plantations. A prominent hill, the "Roode Hoogte" (Mossop 1927), adjoins the mountain on the southern edge of the site separating it from the N2 freeway. The old pass

took advantage of this hill to gain height and it can be seen in the centre of the sketch in Figure 25. This hill is now entirely forested with blue gum trees and it is on the lowest part of this hill that the original toll house was probably located. The slope of this hill is more gradual and no doubt the road would have been less formalised, although Mossop (1927:63) does describe the pass as a deep cutting into this hill⁶ which, by the time of his writing, had been reduced to “a mere donga or water sluic”. No doubt with a further 80 years having gone by it would have deteriorated much further. Although no trace of it could be found during the ground surveys, aerial photographs do suggest that something does still remain on the slope immediately northeast of the modern N2. The bush there was unfortunately very thick, although there was definitely no visible sign of the Pass at the access point on the N2 hairpin bend.

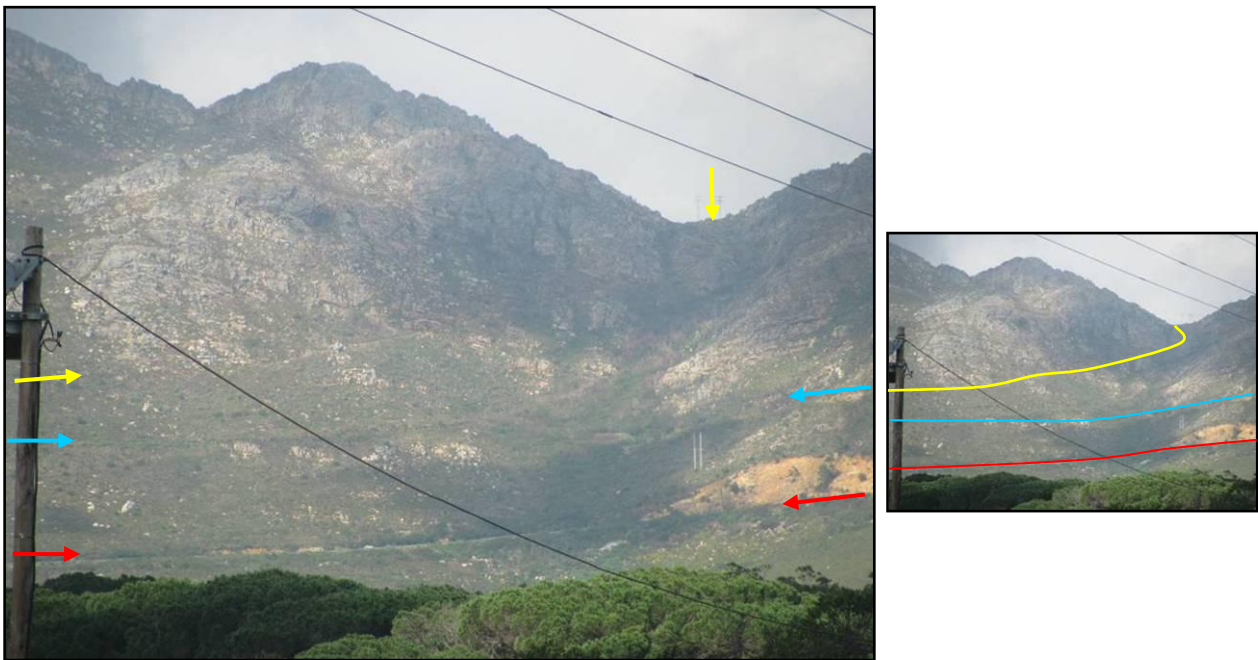


Figure 26: View of the Hottentots Holland Kloof showing the alignments of the Gantouw Pass (yellow), the railway line (blue) and the modern Sir Lowry’s Pass (N2; red). The property boundary runs along the N2.

The uppermost part of the pass has become famous for the wagon tracks preserved in the rocks. These tracks are grooves of varying depth worn into the rocks by the *remskoene* fitted to the wagon wheels and attached to the wagons to prevent the wheels from turning. They were made of iron and fastened beneath the wheels such that the wagons slid down the pass on their *remskoene* rather than on their wheels. This both slowed the wagons on the steep downhill and protected the wheels from wearing through and breaking. The result was a series of grooves ground into the bedrock and paving in various places. The visible scars vary from large, obvious ones (Figures 27 to 29) to smaller, subtle ones that are only visible with close observation (Figure 30). Grooves are visible in many locations (Figures 27 to 33 show several examples).

Aside from the grooves, the remainder of the pass is more like a footpath nowadays with 200 years of erosion having narrowed the road to some degree. It is also quite overgrown but in general the cutting is still quite clearly visible (Figures 26 & 34 to 37). Near the top,

⁶ William Burchell (1922 quoted in Ross 2002) considered it to be as much as 20 feet deep.

immediately above the steepest section of the pass, it goes through a cutting into the sandstone bedrock (Figures 38 & 39). It is not clear how much rock was cut away but it is not likely to have been a very large amount. Immediately above (north of) this cutting is a second, but far narrower cutting (Figure 40). It is unclear what the purpose of this upper cutting was, since it seems too narrow to allow an ox wagon to pass through and it would have taken far more work to create than the far wider section of road that passes it (the main pass is in fact at its widest at this point; see Figure 38). The bifurcation corresponds with the Schumacher drawing (Figure 25) but the reason for this split remains unknown.

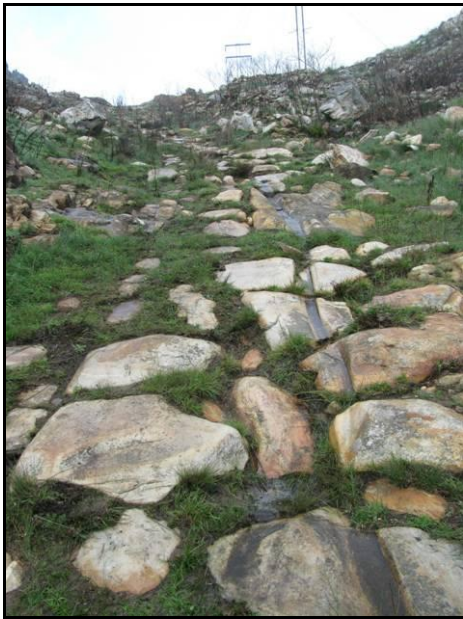


Figure 27: A double set of grooves worn into the paving on the uppermost part of the Gantouw Pass.



Figure 28: A deep, wide groove worn into a bed rock outcrop halfway up the slope.



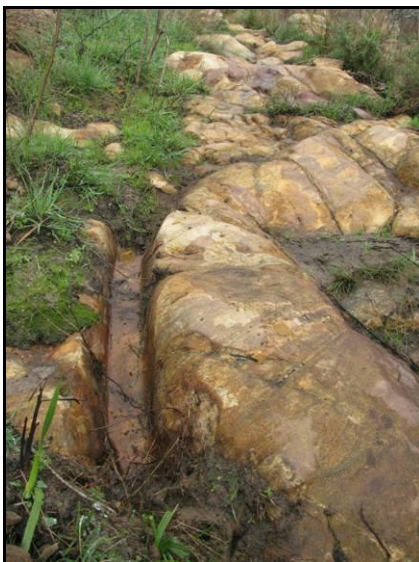
Figure 29: A set of double grooves in the bedrock on the steepest section of the pass.



Figure 30: The smallest, least obvious grooves. This pair were the lowest grooves seen and are no more than 15 cm long.

Immediately alongside the cutting is a small stone structure (now tumbled down; Figure 41). Mossop (1927:64), citing Lady Anne Barnard, describes the Pass as passing “between two

rock pillars forming the porch or poort". Although Mossop suggests the Porch to be at the crest of the Pass, his quote from Lady Anne Barnard⁷ suggests it to be just before reaching the summit. The tumbled rock structure lies immediately behind the southern "rock pillar" and it seems likely that the name "Porch" refers rather to this structure than simply to the natural rock pillars. As one passes through the cutting between the pillars the angle eases considerably and people may well have stopped briefly to rest their oxen and take advantage of the view offered by "The Porch". As one continues beyond this point one's view becomes very restricted by the walls of the kloof.



Figures 31 & 32: Wagon track grooves worn into the bedrock below the steepest section.

Figure 33: Another view of the very steep upper section of the pass with parallel sets of grooves.



Figure 34: The lowest visible section of the old pass disappears into very dense bush.



Figure 35: A section of the pass showing its overgrown nature.



Figure 36: Nearing the top of the pass there are sections that are paved.

⁷ See Appendix 2 for details.



Figure 37: Part of the pass that is cut deep enough into the slope to have left a raised section along the outside.



Figure 38: View of the cutting through the sandstone on the upper part of the pass. This is the steepest section.



Figure 39: Looking back down through the cutting with the N2's hairpin bend visible down below.



Figure 40: Just above the cutting is a second cutting visible here to the right of the pass (which can be seen in the extreme left). This photograph is taken looking downhill towards Somerset West.

At the neck on top of the mountain three fragments of European ceramic were found (#8 on Figure 15). Two were stoneware and one was Chinese coarse porcelain (Figure 42). Half of a base of a glass wine bottle was also found (Figure 43) and, although it is not modern, its age is uncertain. These items were found at S 34° 08' 20.5" E18° 56' 23.9". They could relate to people having stopped here to rest their animals after the steep ascent and their sparseness may be due to recent collection by hikers (the Boland hiking trail passes this point). However with their age unknown (they may well be late 19th to early 20th century) it is impossible to make any further judgement on what they may relate to.



Figure 42: A Chinese coarse porcelain (left) and two stoneware fragments found at the top of the pass.



Figure 43: A base of a wine bottle found near the top of the pass.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This very large study area is generally devoid of archaeological material but certain areas of the site are sensitive. The extent and bushiness of the property prevented a comprehensive survey but the following conclusions can nevertheless be drawn:

- Prehistoric archaeological material is only present in the form of random artefacts and no archaeological sites were found. This category of archaeology can thus be assigned very low significance overall.
- Besides the Gantouw Pass, archaeology related to the built environment was not found, although the potential for the old toll house ruin to still be present does exist. The area around where the toll house would be should be regarded as sensitive and potentially significant, while the remainder of the study area is of very low significance.
- The remains of the Gantouw Pass are regarded as very significant. While the Pass is clear on the uppermost slopes, it was not seen below the upper railway line. Some evidence of it may well be present between this point and the hairpin bend on the N2 but the entire length of the alignment should be regarded as sensitive.
- Historical archaeological material was noted at the top of the pass but is of low significance. No other material was seen in the study area and the majority of the site should be regarded as of very low significance. However, the area surrounding the old cottage is potentially sensitive due to the possible presence of a dump in the vicinity. Dense grass prevented any finds being made there.
- No graves were seen anywhere on site but again, the area close to the cottage should be regarded as potentially sensitive.

The map in Figure 42 indicates areas of potential significance as outlined above. Should vegetation clearing occur then these areas will need to be re-examined. It is important that no earthworks take place in these areas until they have been confirmed clear by an archaeologist. While the proposed development is likely to be sensitive for various reasons, including archaeology, it is considered likely that at least some development will be possible.

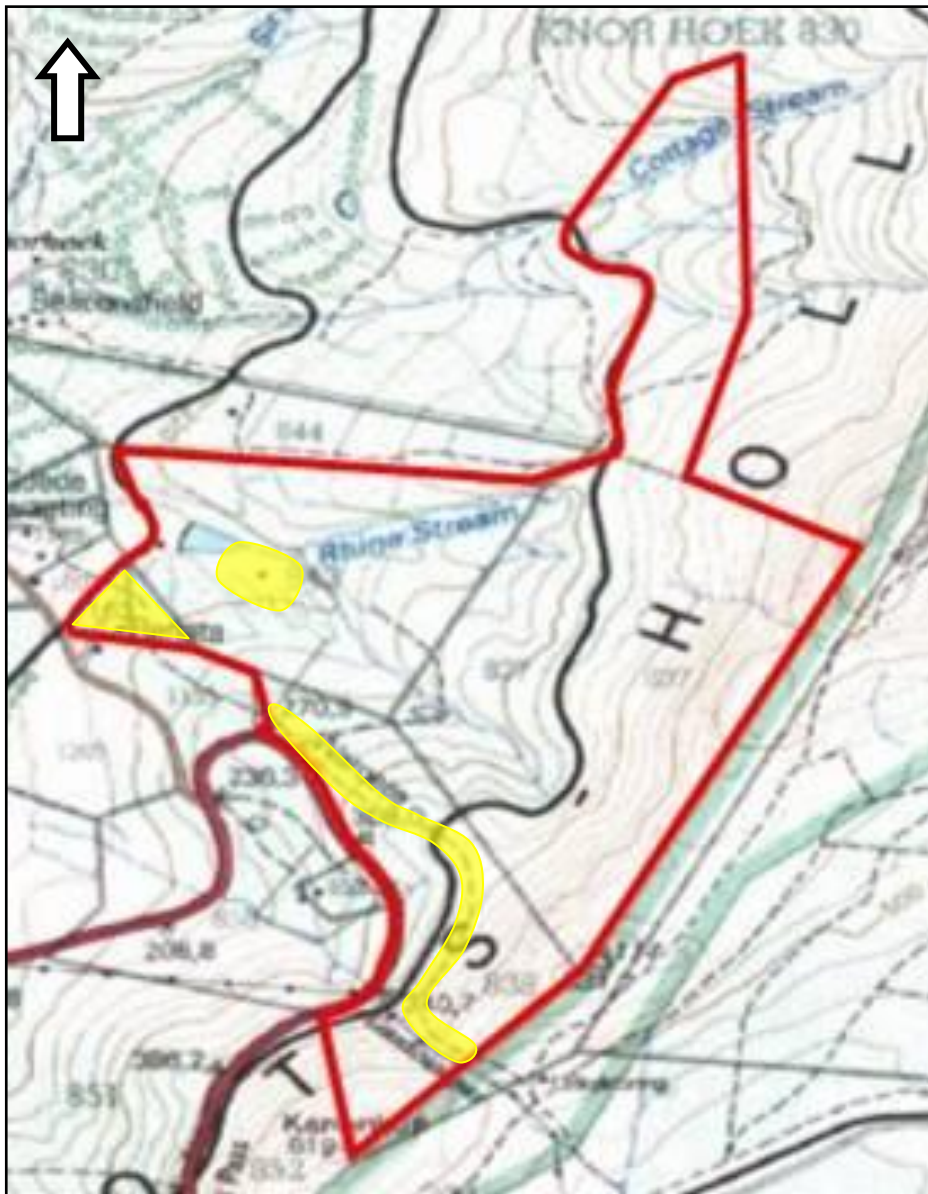


Figure 42: Map showing the approximate areas of archaeological significance within the proposed development site.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

From an archaeological point of view development of the site may proceed but the following recommendations are made:

- A further limited archaeological survey will be required once vegetation has been cleared from the site. It is critical that no earthworks of any sort are conducted in the sensitive areas prior to this survey. This survey should have three aims:
 - record any remaining sections of the old Pass that might still be visible;
 - attempt to locate the remains of the toll house;
 - and check for graves near the cottage;
- Archaeological monitoring of any excavations within about 100m of the house should occur to check for historical material.

- Consideration should be given to creating an open belt along the alignment of the Gantouw Pass in recognition of its place in both the pre- and post-colonial history of South Africa.

9. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1

20TH century ruins



Figure A1.1: Cement block ruin in the centre of the study area near #3.



Figure A1.2: Remains of a cement block structure near the cottage at #5. Note that most blocks have been removed leaving the fill beneath floor level.



Figure A1.3: Modern brick and stone ruin from west side of site.



Figure A1.4: Modern concrete slab from west side of site.



Figure A1.5: Modern brick and cement house from west side of site.



Figure A1.6: The small packed stone feature found among the modern ruins.

APPENDIX 2

Extract from Mossop (1927:63) describing the lower section of the Gantouw Pass

“In the grounds of Goedeverwachting may be seen the course of the old road, which leaves the present one near Sir Lowry’s Pass Station. It crosses the grounds and the railway line about a hundred yards to the left of the present railway crossing [the one taken by the post-1830 Sir Lowry’s Pass], and ascends to an old ruin which in 1780 is marked as the road-maker’s house and later became the toll. Here begins the “Roode Hoogte” or Red Heights, a deep cutting in the hill side which has now become a mere donga or water sluit. At the summit of the Roode Hoogte it again crosses the railway line...”

Extract from Mossop (1927:64 citing Lady Anne Barnard) describing the upper section of the Gantouw Pass.

“The path was very perpendicular and the jutting rocks over which the wagon had to be pulled were so large that we were astonished how they were accomplished at all, particularly at one part called the ‘Porch’. At length we reached the summit, and the new Canaan opened to my eye, hillock upon hillock, mountain behind mountain, as far as the eye could reach”.