

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF THE LAYING OF THE 132 KV ELECTRICITY CABLES FROM THE FORESHORE SWITCHING STATION TO THE NEW GREEN POINT STADIUM

Magisterial district: Cape Town

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

Prepared for

Jeffares & Green (Pty) Ltd

On behalf of

City of Cape Town: Electricity Services

November 2009



Report by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	4
3. BRIEF	4
4. MONITORING	5
5. OBSERVATIONS	5
5.1 Test holes.....	5
5.2 Trenches	6
5.3 Contractor - Consultant co-ordination.....	6
6. CONCLUSIONS	6
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	7
8. PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD	8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office was asked to monitor the excavation of trenches along parts of the route selected for new electricity cables to supply the 2010 Green Point stadium. Of particular concern were the sections that would traverse the lower parts of Green Point, formerly provisionally protected as the "Green Point Historical Burials Area". Parts of the area are known to contain large numbers of informal burials from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Having completed the monitoring, we can report that no human remains were recognised, from either primary or secondary contexts. The absence of human remains from even secondary context suggests that burials never occurred in the sensitive areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office at the University of Cape Town was appointed by Jeffares Green (Pty) Ltd, on behalf of the City of Cape Town to provide archaeological specialist services for monitoring of trenching activities related to the installation of underground electricity cables from Paarden Eiland through to the 2010 Green Point Stadium site. Parts of the proposed route crossed the previously provisionally declared “Green Point Historical Burials Area”¹. The primary concern was that the proposed activities could uncover human remains.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of the installation of a new 132kV switching station to be constructed behind the existing Foreshore main substation to reinforce the electricity supply to the CBD and to the new main substation to be constructed in conjunction with the 2010 Green Point Stadium. The footprint of the switching station is approximately 352m². Transformers within the existing Foreshore main substation will be replaced with two 132/11/66 kV 50 MVA units. New underground 132 kV cables will be installed in Oswald Pirow Street and Table Bay Boulevard to serve the new switching station. From there, underground cables will be laid through to the stadium along a circuitous route along Coen Steytler Avenue and the Roggebaai switching station, then up lower Buitengracht Street then in a westerly direction below the existing overhead freeway, through the Traffic Department Driver Testing Centre, the City Council’s Ebenezer Road depot, then again alongside Western Boulevard towards the stadium. The cable route is shown in Annexure 1.

Many of the trenches and test holes will be excavated by hand particularly along parts of the route which were confined between buildings. Other sections will be machine dug after test holes have identified existing services.

3. BRIEF

Responsibilities of the Archaeological Specialist included the following:

- Monitoring, as and when required, of excavation activities along the length of the trench;
- Reporting of monitoring findings;
- Liaise with authorities should any archaeological or paleontological remains be uncovered;
- Submission of Progress and Compliance Reports to the Electricity Department.

The scope of work does not require a continuous presence on site², so archaeological services would be required as and when.

¹Described in detail in Government Gazette Notice 1808 of 2005 (no. 28077) dated 30 September 2005 including parts of the Bo-Kaap, De Waterkant, Green Point, the V&A Waterfront and part of the West CBD of Cape Town City. The area has been provisionally protected by SAHRA in terms of section 29(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act to ensure that human remains buried there in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries are recovered and treated with respect according to legislative requirements. The declaration was however allowed to lapse.

²Much of the route from Paarden Eiland as far as the Roggebaai switching station is on reclaimed land. As the trenches were not very deep, much of this section was not monitored. Most of the concern lay with the route through Green Point in the vicinity of the old burial grounds.

4. MONITORING

Prior to beginning the monitoring, Mr Tim Hart of the ACO held discussions with Mrs Leslie at the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), in connection with the issuing of a permit for the trenching activities since they would cross through an area previously identified as the Green Point Historical Burials Area³. Although this area had originally been provisionally declared as a heritage site, the declaration was allowed to lapse. She informed Mr Hart that it would only be necessary to apply for a permit if any human remains were uncovered in the process, and that such permit to relocate the remains would be issued speedily to avoid any delays.

Our main concern during the course of this project has been the area below the freeways in the vicinity of Port Road in Green Point (see bibliography). This concern is as a result of the high number of human burials that are found in the general vicinity. In particular, there are reports of human remains from both the bus depot in Prestwich Street (adjacent to the cable route), and from the Council Roads Depot in Ebenezer Road, through which the route passes and which is close to the old Pauper's Burial Ground. Concerted monitoring has concentrated specifically on these areas. It was decided that the sections of trench dug by hand would not require constant monitoring, and those were visited at least once a day. It was decided however that machine-dug sections should be monitored in their entirety because of the large amount of damage that could be incurred in a short time if human remains were encountered.

As per instructions, we were contacted telephonically by the contractor, Michael Davies, when work was due to commence in the vicinity of the "Weylands Building" on the corner of Hospital and Napier Streets, and archaeological monitoring was ongoing in one form or another from 28.10.2008 up until 27.01.2009. A summary of monitoring visits is presented in Annexure 2.

5. OBSERVATIONS

A series of annotated photographs is presented as Section 8 at the end of the report.

5.1 Test holes

Test holes were hand dug by the contractor between Napier and Bennet Street in the Traffic Departments car impound facility and other areas leased for parking, and in the City Council Roads Depot at the bottom of Ebenezer Road all to identify pre-existing services.

No archaeological material or human remains were observed in the Napier-Bennet test holes but small areas of undisturbed sandy strata were noted amongst what were clearly heavily disturbed sections (resulting from previous installation of services), or lying directly on the underlying clay strata of decomposing Malmesbury shale. The sandy matrix represents the vestiges of the old coastal dunes which covered this area in the past and is one of the reasons that burials occurred in the area to start with.

Largely undisturbed sandy deposit were also observed in the test holes to the west of the entrance to the Roads Depot off Ebenezer Road. A variety of 19th century artefactual material found in one of the holes appeared to have come from a refuse dump. Quite a lot of bone was present, and after some initially anxious moments, closer inspection identified them as the remains of sheep, fish and cattle resulting from human consumption (see photo). Most of

³Described in footnote 1

what was found was immediately collected to pre-empt any unnecessary misidentification as human remains. This turned out to be the only dense scatter of material observed during the entire project and only a handful of isolated artefacts were observed elsewhere. The thickness of the sand strata here was cause for concern as this appeared to most resemble the deposits found in the burial grounds adjacent to Prestwich and Cobern Streets excavated some years before.

This concern was further heightened by the knowledge that human remains have previously been recovered from the Roads Depot, although precise locations of those finds has never been reported. In addition, the Roads Depot is close to the site of the infamous Gallows Hill and the large Pauper's Burial Ground lay to the east in what is now the V&A Waterfront (Halkett 2000).

Other trial holes adjacent to the roads depot buildings below the freeway, revealed many pre-existing services and disturbed deposit. Additional disturbance may have occurred here during construction of the freeway, at which time ground levels appear to have changed.

No human remains were observed in any of the holes.

5.2 Trenches

While no human remains had been observed in any of the test holes, they had mostly been located in previously disturbed deposit. While disturbance of the soil does not necessarily exclude the possibility of finding human remains, since attitudes were less sympathetic in the past and bones if found would have either been thrown back into the hole or removed by the police. Disturbance does however reduce the chance of identifying any signs of grave shafts or other signs of burial.

So with some fears allayed, monitoring of digging by machine commenced. We had a permanent presence on site at this stage, since a lot of soil would be moved in a relatively short space of time. Our concern was for pockets of undisturbed soil.

As it turned out, in the end no human remains were identified in any of the trenches.

5.3 Contractor - Consultant co-ordination

Despite some miscommunication at the start of the monitoring of the "sensitive" area, in overall terms we were satisfied with the level of monitoring and notifications received from the contractor. We were luckily not faced with the discovery of human remains and so no emergency plans had to be put in place.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the proximity of known burial areas adjacent to parts of the cable routes, as well as informal reports of burials recovered from the Ebenezer Roads Depot in the past, no human remains have been recovered from either primary or secondary context within the monitoring area. Although pre-existing services has led to considerable disturbance of the soil, we would still expect to have identified human remains if they had once been present. We cannot discount the possibility that remains may have been collected and removed by the authorities, but in our experience this was not official procedure and more often than not, disturbed remains were simply reburied. Our surprise at the lack of human remains stems from the high expectation that has been created by the proximity of the large informal burial

ground that is known to have existed to the west of the cable route, and that we and others believed was so extensive due to the lack of formal property boundaries. The lack of human remains in is therefore surprising and suggests that no regular informal burials took place here in the past.

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8. PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



(l) Contractors test holes along the cable route in the Council Roads Depot off Ebenezer Road (r) Large amounts of rubble fill were noted in the upper parts of the holes overlying in situ sandy deposits.



(l) Undisturbed sandy matrix seen in one of the test holes in the Council Roads Depot. Artefactual material was located just below the rubble as indicated. The content suggests that it emanated from a household/s dump (r) 19th century artefactual material recovered from spoil heaps of one of the test holes in the roads depot. Bones are all those of domesticates and fish, while glass and refined earthenware ceramics were also present. Two salt glazed earthenware ink pots can be seen at upper right. This was the only dense (though spatially limited) scatter of material observed during the entire monitoring exercise.



(l&r) Trenches alongside the elevated freeway in the Council's Ebenezer Roads Depot



(l&r) Trenches alongside the elevated freeway in the Ebenezer Roads Depot



(l&r) Trenches below the elevated freeway to the west of Port Road



(l&r) Trenches below the elevated freeway in the Traffic Department Drivers Testing facility on the corner of Port and Ebenezer Roads.



(l&r) A substantial re-inforced concrete foundation was encountered along the route. No similar features were observed elsewhere in the area suggesting that it was not part of a building but, more likely to have been a linear feature such as a wall or supporting structure of some kind.

ANNEXURE 1: CABLE ROUTE

ANNEXURE 2: RECORD OF MONITORING HOURS

Date	Time	Mins	Hrs	Consultant	Company
28.10.2008	08h45 - 09h15	30		Halkett	ACO
	13h00 - 13h50	50		Halkett	ACO
29.10.2008	08h00 - 08h15	15		Halkett	ACO
30.10.2008	08h15 - 08h30	15		Halkett	ACO
	15h30 - 16h00	30		Halkett	ACO
03.11.2008	08h00 - 08h15	15		Halkett	ACO
	13h15 - 13h30	15		Halkett	ACO
04.11.2008	13h15 - 13h30	15		Halkett	ACO
05.11.2008	16h00 - 16h30	30		Halkett	ACO
06.11.2008	16h00 - 16h15	15		Halkett	ACO
07.11.2008	13h30 - 13h45	15		Halkett	ACO
	15h00 - 15h30	30		Halkett	ACO
10.11.2008	09h45 - 11h15	30		Halkett	ACO
18.11.2008	17h30 - 17h45	15		Halkett	ACO
19.11.2008	13h00 - 13h15	15		Halkett	ACO
15 visits		335	(5.6)		
09.01.2009	08h15 - 10h00	105		Halkett	ACO
	11h00 - 11h45	45		Halkett	ACO
	14h50 - 15h15	25		Halkett	ACO
10.01.2009	09h00 - 10h00	60		Halkett	ACO
	10h30 - 13h45	195		Halkett	ACO
12.01.2009	09h00 - 10h00	60		Halkett	ACO
	10h30 - 12h45	135		Halkett	ACO
	14h50 - 16h00	70		Halkett	ACO
13.01.2009	13h45 - 14h00	15		Halkett	ACO
14.01.2009	08h00 - 09h30	90		Halkett	ACO
	15h20 - 15h30	10		Halkett	ACO
15.01.2009	09h00 - 10h00	60		Halkett	ACO
	15h30 - 15h40	10		Halkett	ACO
16.01.2009	08h30 - 09h00	30		Halkett	ACO
26.01.2009	08h00 - 12h00	240		Webley	ACO
27.01.2009	08h00 - 11h00	180		Webley	ACO
11 visits		1330	(22.2)		
TOTAL	26 visits	1665	(27.8)		