

# **HERITAGE STATEMENT: PROPOSED INFILL PLANNING AT OCEAN VIEW, SIMONSTOWN DISTRICT, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE**

(Assessment conducted under Section 38 (1) of the  
National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) at the University of Cape Town was appointed by BKS (Pty) Ltd to undertake a baseline Heritage Impact Assessment for infill planning at Ocean View within the Simonstown District, Cape Town Metro.

Ocean View is a product of Apartheid forced removals and resettlement and was constructed in the mid-1960s on vacant land which formed part of Imhoff's Gift, an extremely significant heritage site. A number of vacant erven and public open space (comprising a total area of 16, 8876 ha) on Ocean View have been identified for infill development. Approximately 500 medium density residential units are planned for the land but there is little information at this stage on the nature of the layout or the design of the buildings.

The vacant erven are situated between residences, and are generally used for the dumping of rubble and rubbish, or are used for informal recreation activities. Erf 321 is covered in informal dwellings.

- No archaeological sites were found on the properties;
- There is only one piece of ground (Erf 321), which contains any structures, and these are all recent informal dwellings less than 60 years old;
- Some of the erven are used for informal recreational purposes by the community and this should be considered during development;
- Consideration should be made to the retention of the stone pines in any future development proposal;
- Some of the erven which have been identified are adjacent to a *World Heritage Site, namely the Table Mountain National Park*, and it is recommended that aspects of height, density and design of buildings in this area must be considered;
- Finally, development along the Scarborough and Kommetjie Roads will occur along *scenic routes*, and the same considerations of the height, density and design of the buildings should be considered.

It is suggested that a landscape architect be contracted to provide input into the edge treatment of Ocean View, especially the Gateway area and its interface with Imhoff's Gift. The development proposal should be evaluated through a process of visual impact assessment.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) at the University of Cape Town was appointed by BKS (Pty) Ltd to undertake a baseline Heritage Impact Assessment for infill planning at Ocean View within the Simonstown District, Cape Town Metro (Figure 1). Ocean view is bordered by the Table Mountain National Park to the west and south, and by private land to the east and north (Imhoff's Gift). The settlement is bounded to the north by the Kommetjie Road (M65) and to the west by the Scarborough Road (M82).

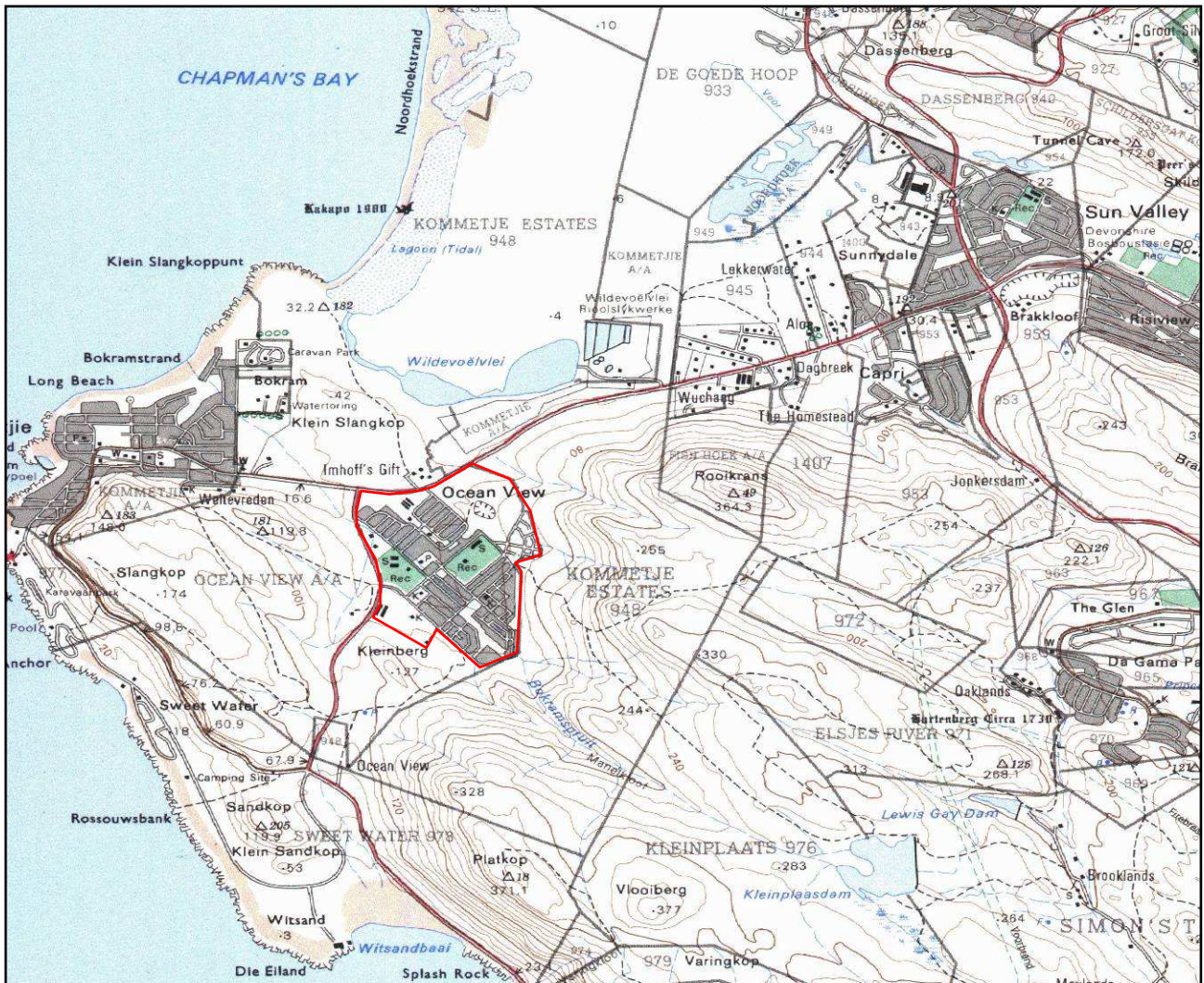


Figure 1: Map Sheet 3418 AB & AD Cape Peninsula (Mapping information supplied by - Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping. Website: [w3sli.wcape.gov.za](http://w3sli.wcape.gov.za)). Ocean View indicated within the red line.

The development will involve the development of the following vacant erven and/or public open space at Ocean View: Erf 306, 315, 321, 1219, 2030, 2454, 2508, 2543, 2558, 2703 and 2804 (Figure 2). Increasing population pressure requires that vacant land within the borders of Ocean View should be utilised for housing. Expansion opportunities at Ocean View are restricted by the presence of significant nature conservation areas on its borders.

Since this is at the early stage of development, little is known about the design and layout of the development – which comprises approximately 500 medium density residential units.

## 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 the built environment older than 60 years (Section 34). Landscapes with cultural significance are also protected. Under Section 38 (1) of the Act the affected properties require a heritage assessment based on their combined size of greater than 5000 m<sup>2</sup>.

*The land to the south and west of Ocean View comprises the Table Mountain National Park. The Park forms an important component of the Cape Floristic Region which was declared a Natural World Heritage Site in June 2004.*

*Imhoff's Gift, to the north of Ocean View, clearly has heritage significance and although not graded, would be considered a Grade 2 or Grade 3a site.*

## 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1743, Baron Gustav Wilhelm van Imhoff ordered the construction of a refreshment station at Simon's Town. Lands in the Fish Hoek and Noordhoek valleys were cultivated. The widow Christina Rousseau supplied the ships from her farm Zwaanswiede and so impressed Baron van Imhoff that he awarded her with a gift of land near Slangkop ridge. This land became known as "Imhoff's Gift" and included the land on which the settlements of Imhoff's Gift, Ocean View and Kommetjie now lie.

In 1967 a portion of farmland and fynbos was appropriated by the government in terms of the Group Areas Act to form the township of Ocean View to house "coloured" people forcibly removed from the "white" areas of Fish Hoek, Simonstown and Noordhoek.

Decades later Ocean View consists of a community of some 25 000 people, dependant on local industry, seasonal fishing and labour. There is much unemployment and poverty in the area and social problems inherited from its recent history. Ocean View has three schools and a centre for physically and educationally-challenged people. There is a large multi-purpose centre, sports and other civic facilities including a library, community centre and clinic. SAPS also have a police station at the junction of Scarborough Road and Kommetjie Road. The local authority is rehabilitating some of the older accommodation and the government redevelopment programme (RDP) has led to the building of many new homes (<http://www.fishhoek.com/oceanview.html>).

## 4. DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The erven are a combination of vacant erven (2030, 2454, 2508, 2543, 2558, 2703 and 2804 ) located within the current Ocean View settlement, i.e. vacant plots between existing housing, as well as vacant erven (306, 315, 321, 1219) located on the periphery, but within the urban edge (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Ocean View indicating the erven which will be affected by infill planning.

Most of the vacant plots within the settlement have been significantly transformed. Many (e.g. Erf 2558) are covered in kikuyu grass and have been the focus of informal dumping of rubble and rubbish by their immediate neighbours. Others, such as Erf 1219, contain a few pine trees and are crossed by numerous tracks leading up to the mountain behind the settlement. Erf 321 is partly covered in informal wooden dwellings and the development is presumably intended to regularise the settlement.

## 5. METHOD

A field survey was conducted by Tim Hart and Lita Webley on the 6 May. We drove to each erf and examined its position and immediate environment. Areas which had not been transformed by illegal dumping were examined on foot. The visual sensitivities were assessed by driving around the perimeter of the settlement on the M65 and M82.

### 5.1 Limitations

There were no limitations to the survey, but the dense kikuyu grass covering most of the vacant plots made a surface survey for archaeological remains difficult. Erf 321 could not be examined in any detail as it is covered in informal dwellings.

## 6. FINDINGS

Erf 1219: This erf runs all along the fence between the eastern section of the town and the Table Mountain National Park. This land is disturbed with short vegetation and signs of

dumping of rubbish. There are many short paths crossing the area, up to and through the fence, and then into the mountain to the south, evidence that the inhabitants of the town are making use of the mountain. They are also using Erf 1219 for recreational purposes. We encountered some young men sitting and talking on this piece of land. In the middle of this open land is a group of stone pines. There is also another tree with a rubber tyre swing suspended from it, and an old armchair under the tree. This suggests that this erf is used for social recreation. At the southern end of this property, the fence has been cut and some informal dwellings have been built up against the side of the mountain.



Plate 1: View of Erf 1219 running alongside the fence, with the mountain in the background. Plate 2: A stone pine with a swing and armchair nearby.

Erf 2558: is in the middle of a residential development. A large part of the erf is covered in builder's rubble, but there is a section covered in short lawn – and this is clearly used for sporting activities such as soccer. This erf has spectacular sea and mountain views.



Plate 3: View of Erf 2558 to the north east, showing rubble and rubbish dumped on the erf. Plate 4: View of Erf 2558 to the north, showing an informal football field in the foreground.

Erf 2508: is a small pocket of land immediately below (sloping ground) to Erf 2558. It has play ground equipment for children's use. It indicates social use of space.



Plate 4: Shacks built on Erf 321. Plate 5: Stone walling, possibly built to prevent slope erosion below the informal dwellings. Note the rocky outcrops and the stone pines.

Erf 321: is next to the M82. It is located on the periphery of the town but this erf is not vacant. There are many informal dwellings arranged in an irregular fashion. They are clustered in a rocky area. There is some stone walling running along the north-eastern side, its function uncertain but possibly built to prevent slope erosion.

Erf 315: This erf also adjoins the M82. A portion of this north-eastern margin of this property runs along a river which has been channelled into a narrow canal.

Erf 306: This erf is a triangle of land which adjoins the M82 and the M65. The police station is located in the centre of this erf. A small portion of the land is located at the entrance to Ocean View, opposite the Imhoff Farm (M65). This area contains a number of stone pines. The largest area of this erf is situated along the M82 (Plate 7).



Plate 6: Erf 306 – a portion being located at the entrance of Ocean View, opposite Imhoff Farm. Plate 7: Vacant land on Erf 306 running along the Scarborough Road.

While Ocean View is a product of Apartheid forced removals and resettlement, there are sections of the older part of the town which are well cared for. There are houses which are brightly painted and gardens which are well-cared for which have matured in colourful streetscapes in certain areas. There is a clear sense of a community. The stone pines

growing around the periphery of Ocean View are reminiscent of those which once grew at Red Hill and Brooklands (pre-apartheid settlements) – perhaps these indicate a purposeful attempt by members of the community to create some form of continuity with the past.

### **7.1 Archaeological**

No pre-colonial archaeological remains were discovered on any of the properties.

### **7.2 Built Environment**

There are no buildings on any of the erven with the exception of Erf 321, which contains a number of informal dwellings, presumably constructed within the last decade. No existing historical structures older than 60 years will therefore be directly physically impacted by the development.

### **7.3 Cultural/Natural Landscapes**

The land to the west of the M82 (road to Scarborough) forms the Slangkop section of the Table Mountain National Park, while the southern section is also part of the Park. *The Park is part of a serial nomination of the Cape Floristic Region as a World Heritage site. Adjoining land is therefore of great value for its biodiversity.* Privately owned land to the east is also undeveloped so that visitors to the Noordhoek and Kommetjie area are surrounded by vistas of mountains and fynbos vegetation. *These edge areas are clearly visually sensitive - It is important to avoid unsympathetic development along the periphery of Ocean View which borders on the Park, and make sure that a suitably pleasing urban edge is created (see Plate 8).*

### **7.4 Living Heritage**

Some of the vacant pieces of land are currently being used for recreational purposes, including informal sporting activities. Children play on some plots (i.e. swings in the trees) while Erf 2508 contains children's play equipment. The land comprising Erf 1219, which abuts the fence and mountain, is also a recreational area for especially the youth. While these areas do not constitute heritage as defined by legislation, they are clearly important social spaces.

### **7.5 Visual Impact**

The property to the north of the M65 is Imhoff's farm – a very historic farmstead discussed briefly above. Imhoff's Farms, although surrounded by disadvantaged communities and sub-economic housing, is a locally valued local enclave hosting restaurants, shops, a play farm and snake park that has developed a charming organic quality. Kommetjie road separates Imhoff's Farm from the gateway precinct of Ocean View. *The green space that exists at this point is an important place maker, which if developed inappropriately will not only reduce the aesthetics of the entrance to Ocean View, but also detract from the heritage qualities of Imhoff's farm.* The property to the west of the M82 forms part of the Table Mountain National Park. There is a scenically sensitive approach to Ocean View from both the south (Scarborough Road) and the east (Kommetjie Road), and development should take into consideration the rural nature of the surrounding lands. Any development along these roads, both scenic drives, should take into consideration the nature of the housing, its height, density and colour etc to limit the visual impact on the area (Plate 8).





Plate 8: View along the M82 from Scarborough with the Table Mountain National Park in the foreground. The area encircled in red is part of the development area.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ocean View was constructed in the mid-1960s on vacant land which formed part of Imhoff's Gift (an extremely significant heritage site). A number of vacant erven on Ocean View have been identified for infill development. There is no information at this stage on the nature of the development, the density or design of the buildings.

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## **9. REFERENCES**

<http://www.fishhoek.com/oceanview.html>

## **INVESTIGATION TEAM**

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