

# **ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: BOSCHENDAL FOUNDERS ESTATE, STELLENBOSCH DISTRICT, WESTERN CAPE**

(Assessment conducted under Section 38 (8) of the  
National Heritage Resources Act as part of an EIA.)

Prepared for  
Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants

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Prepared by

**Tim Hart & Lita Webley**

**Archaeology Contracts Office**  
Department of Archaeology  
University of Cape Town  
Private Bag  
Rondebosch  
7701

Phone (021) 650 2357  
Fax (021) 650 2352  
Email [Lita.Webley@uct.ac.za](mailto:Lita.Webley@uct.ac.za)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) at the University of Cape Town was appointed by Baumann & Winter to undertake a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment of the proposed Founders Estate development on Boschendal, Stellenbosch District, Western Cape.

The Founders Estate consists of 412 ha of land situated on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains above the Dwars River Valley. The development will consist of 19 estates, comprising 20 ha of agricultural land each. Each estate will contain an 800 m<sup>2</sup> area which is excluded from the 99-year agricultural area and which has been identified for residential development. This area of 800 m<sup>2</sup> must include all development activities, including all structures as well as landscaping interventions. It is the intention of the developers that the new owners will become shareholders in the agricultural activities which will continue on the remainder of the property.

### **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Previous archaeological reports have been concerned with the Historical Archaeological Impact of the development on the Founders Estate (Hart 2005) and the pre-colonial archaeology of the Boschendal Lands in the Dwars River Valley (Kaplan 2005).

*This report is more specific, and is directed at assessing the impact of the residential development on the archaeological heritage (both pre-colonial and colonial) of each of 800 m<sup>2</sup> foot print areas identified on the 19 Founders Estates.*

Due consideration was also given to the significance of any archaeological sites and remains in adjoining lands to pre-empt possible impact or destruction of such sites during the development of the infrastructure of the estate, such as roads, water and electricity pipelines and sewerage.

### **3. LEGISLATION**

In terms of Section 27(5) of the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999, SAHRA declared a "*Portion of the Cape Winelands Cultural Landscape, identified as Boschendal Founders Estate, Dwars River Valley Stellenbosch in the Boland Region, Western Cape, a National Heritage Site*" (Notice 120 dated 13 February 2009). Protection is therefore afforded to all heritage related matters on the estates and this includes: archaeological remains, the built environment, graveyards and cemeteries, living heritage and the cultural landscape.

In February 2006, SAHRA issued "Conditions required for the Archaeological Component of the Boschendal Farmlands, Founders Estate Permit" based on the reports produced by Hart (July 2005) and Kaplan (July 2005). In this permit, SAHRA

requires that the recommendations of these two reports should be adhered to and spelt these out to include:

- The Colonial Period Structures, werfs, graves, historical middens/dumps;
- The Mill, Muller's House and the Silver mine Structures;
- Any other archaeological/historical residues, the latter includes old trails and irrigation systems which must be recorded and should be avoided during development;
- Any graves that are older than 60 years that are associated with these sites are protected and will need a Site Management Plan.

Further, SAHRA has insisted that:

- All archaeological work should be done by an archaeologist accredited by ASAPA and the SAHRA Archaeology Unit must approve the work before the development proceeds;
- All earthmoving and construction of sensitive sites must be monitored by a professional archaeologist.

## **4. BACKGROUND**

### ***4.1 Pre-colonial archaeology***

The fertile Dwars River valley is likely to have attracted pre-colonial settlement by both San and Khoekhoen groups but intensive agricultural activities over the last 300 years means that much of this information has been destroyed or possibly reworked.

Goodwin and Van Riet Lowe (1929) reported that Early Stone Age implements were found in a deep erosion gully from Pontac Hill, Pomona estate, on the lower slopes of the Simonsberg in the Drakenstein Valley.

Kaplan has reported on the discovery of Early Stone Age (ESA) artefacts from the Franschoek/Stellenbosch/Drakenstein/Dwars River Valley (Kaplan 2005). The Early Stone Age was first identified on the river terraces of the Eerste River in Stellenbosch and was initially referred to as the "Stellenbosch Culture". Today the term ESA is more commonly used. It is divided into a number of periods with the 'Acheulean' characterised by the presence of stone tools such as handaxes and cleavers.

Kaplan (2005) found a large number of Early Stone Age artefacts on the Boschendal property. He specifically mentions finding stone artefacts "among piles of rocks from cleared fields and packed in rows in the vineyards. Tools were also noted in orchards alongside the banks and on the floodplain of the Dwars River". He also found ESA artefacts "in orchards and vineyards and fields in the area surrounding the Rhodes Cottage Homestead, alongside some of the gravel roads in the area and among piles of river cobbles and rocks cleared from farm lands, and near several dams in this area". Finally, he also reported finding ESA artefacts "on the higher gravel slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains in the proposed Founders Estate, and in some of the lands north and east of the Goede Hoop Farm, and near a small stream/river. Artefacts were also found near an old gravel quarry above Goede Hoop Farm".

Kaplan (2005) also claims to have found Middle Stone Age (MSA) and Later Stone Age (LSA) remains in the Franschoek/Paarl area, but these sites are not common. Early historic maps and accounts refer to Khoekhoen settlement in the valley but no precise information is supplied to determine their exact localities.

## **4.2 Colonial Archaeology**

There are a number of significant historical structures on the Founders Estate which relate to: early silver mining in the valley and the early colonial settlement. The historical archaeology of the Dwars River valley has been well studied by Lucas (2004).

The old VOC silver mine complex lies partially within the Founders Estate and is considered an extremely important industrial site, as it provides evidence for the earliest mining operation (c. 1748) in South Africa.

With regard to colonial period settlement on the present Founders Estate, previous reports have identified the two late 17<sup>th</sup> century settlements of Goede Hoop (now Good Hope) and Nieuwedorp. With respect to Nieuwedorp, the farm was granted parts between 1689 and 1692. Details regarding the construction of early dwellings still need to be determined. Good Hope was settled in 1688 and title was granted in 1708. The present homestead was apparently built in 1821. The cellar next to the house is dated 1832. Other outbuildings include an old mill house, in line with the cellar, an outbuilding behind the house, a modern outbuilding and bell tower in front of the cellar and a section of a long werf wall on one side (Fransen 2004). Titlestad (2007/8) describes the “Foundations of the original house in backyard of present homestead” but this needs to be verified.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The higher slopes of the Simonsberg are uncultivated but covered in dense stands of Black Wattle. Under the direction of Working for Water, some of this vegetation is currently being removed. The lower slopes of the mountain comprises an agricultural landscape consisting of a geometric patchwork of vineyards, fruit orchards and fallow lands, divided by rows of trees planted as wind breaks, farm roads and irrigation ditches (*leiwater*). Most of the 19 estates are located on existing agricultural land, either on vineyards, orchards or fallow agricultural lands or a combination of these.

There are three estates (Estates 3, 7 and 9) which contain buildings, comprising modern managers’ residences with garages. There are two historic Cape farmsteads, i.e. Nieuwedorp (Estate 11) and Good Hope (Estate 17), which are carefully placed in the landscape. They are characterised by clearly defined use of space on the *werf*, with the farm house the focus of attention. The walls and gates define the limits of the werf. Avenues of oak and eucalyptus trees draw attention to the significance of the farmstead, and provide order to the landscape.

## **6. STUDY METHOD**

Founders Estate was visited on the 13 and 15 May 2009 by archaeologists Tim Hart, Lita Webley and Katie Smuts. Specific attention was given to the development footprints which had been identified on each of the 19 Founders Estates. Previous reports by Hart (2005), Kaplan (2005) and Titlestad (2007/8) were consulted prior to the survey.

## 6.1 Restrictions

There were no restrictions in terms of access to Founder's Estate. All the estates could be reached by a network of farm roads. Vegetation growth, particularly on the fallow lands prevented a close inspection of the soil surface. Visibility was good in the vineyard and orchards.

## 7. DISCUSSION OF ESTATES

Estate 2: The development footprint lies on the corner of a large farm dam and includes a substantial portion of existing vineyard.

Estate 3: The development footprint includes a 20<sup>th</sup> century house and landscaped surrounds as well as a portion of vineyards. The land around the house has been substantially transformed.

Estate 4: The development footprint is located on the edge of a vineyard. The aerial map suggests that this portion of land was deliberately excised from the vineyard, which may imply an earlier history for this land. The 800 m<sup>2</sup> of land contains a clump of large oak trees suggesting a possible earlier settlement. The land contains a corrugated tin and wire "chicken coop", a modern brick lined well, evidence of modern red bricks dumped on the site as well as recent dumping of old vineyard stumps.



Plate 1: Some of the large trees and informal structures on Estate 4.

Estate 5: The tongue of vineyard shown on the aerial photograph no longer exists on the ground. The vineyard has been removed and the land is now fallow and covered in low shrubs which make a ground survey difficult.

Estate 6: This development footprint is located predominantly in a vineyard which means the soil surface has been substantially transformed. However, a large ditch which accommodates a small stream runs along its western edge.

Estate 7: This development footprint contains a modern 20<sup>th</sup> century house and swimming pool. There are several large trees and shrubs in the garden, and the kikuyu lawn has covered the soil surface. This piece of land has been completely transformed.

Estate 8: This development footprint is located predominantly on fallow lands, presumably from the contours visible on the aerial map this would have been a vineyard in the past. There area a number of farm roads and a small stream running through a portion of the property.

Estate 9: This development footprint comprises a small modern cottage and associated outbuildings, which do not appear to be older than 60 years. The area around the cottage has been completely transformed and is a mixture of kikuyu grass and gravel farm yard.

Estate 10: The development footprint is located on old lands which are now thickly vegetated. It is difficult to view the soil surface. There is a small stream/channel which runs along the margin of the property.

Estate 11: The development footprint is occupied by the Nieuwedorp farmhouse and outbuildings. Since the site has been substantially transformed over a period of 200 years it is unlikely that significant prehistoric archaeological remains will be uncovered. The historic significance of the homestead is discussed below.

Estate 12: The development footprint consist predominantly of vineyards, but there is a stream running down one margin, and a deep irrigation ditch (*leiwater*) running along another margin. The ditch is packed with stone. There is evidence of a clay pipe running at an angle into the ditch. Since this *leiwater* crosses the property on the diagonal, it does not appear as if it can be retained during development. This means that it will be destroyed.



Plate 2: The “leiwater” running along one margin of Estate 12. Plate 3: Earthen pipe which runs into the “leiwater”

Estate 13: The development footprint is located on undeveloped land with a stream running along one margin. The vegetation was very thick, making a survey of the surface difficult.

Estate 14: There is a large amount of rubble dumped on this development footprint, consisting of concrete embedded with cobbles. It is unclear whether this represents a wall which was demolished, or perhaps the concrete thrown to support wooden fence

poles. The rubble appears to be modern. There are several large oak trees on this property which may suggest an earlier settlement. There is also an irrigation furrow running through part of the property.



Plate 4: The oak trees on Estate 14. Plate 5: The blocks of concrete on Estate 14 which reflect the demolition of a wall or structure.

Estate 15: This development footprint is located on the highest point of the Estate, above the vineyards, and partly against a small rocky hill covered in indigenous vegetation.

Estate 16: This development footprint is situated next to a small dam which has been constructed over a small stream. There are several large boulders and rocky outcrops on this plot. Two test holes have been excavated into the soil and it is apparent that there are many sandstone cobbles beneath the surface.

Estate 17: This comprises the original Goede Hoop farmhouse and associated farm buildings.

Estate 18: The development footprint is situated on a fallow field with some indigenous vegetation along once margin.

Estate 19: This development footprint is located lower down the valley floor. It comprises fallow fields covered in pastures, with a "leiwater" running along one margin. The dense vegetation covering the soil surface resulted in poor visibility.

## **8. RESULTS OF SURVEY**

The results of the survey indicate that the heritage resources on the property can be divided into the following types of categories:

### **8.1 Historic Cape Farmsteads**

There are two Estates, that is 11 (Nieuwedorp) and 17 (Good Hope) which contain historic homesteads. Both are Cape farmsteads and 'werfs' dating to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and are extremely important in terms of built environment.

However, the development of Nieuwedorp as part of the Founders Estate will require considerable intervention as the Estate contains remnants (at least the barn and possibly portions of the original house) which will need to be mitigated prior and during development. This would include archaeological mitigation. A detailed assessment will be required prior to the possible demolition of the house. It seems unlikely that permission will be granted to demolish the barn which appears to be the older of the two structures. *Archaeologists will need to be involved in looking at the original fabric of the buildings as well as any sub-surface features which may be uncovered during restoration or demolition.*

Similar constraints apply to the "restoration" of Good Hope, which is in a better condition than Nieuwedorp.

### **8.2 Industrial Heritage**

Estate 15 is potentially of significance in terms of its location in proximity to the 18<sup>th</sup> century silver mining in the area. The location of the 800m<sup>2</sup> property is very close to Gavin Lucas' Site 2 (Upper Ruins) Structure 7 – which he defines as "labourer's quarters". In view of the proximity of these 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings relating to the silver exploitation of the area, it is suggested that care be taken when clearing the little hill of vegetation prior to development. There may be further stone ruins in this area or even furrows or rubbish dumps relating to the settlement. The monitoring of this site is proposed.

The ruins of the old Mill are located on the lower slopes of Estate 15 and although not under any threat from the development of the new homestead, they are of great historic significance. The Founders Estate development potentially separates the old Mill from the remainder of the complex of historic ruins which lie on the commonage belonging to the inhabitants of Pniel. The development of the Site Management Plan for the Founders Estate needs to consider these implications.

### **8.3 Farm Infrastructure**

The Founders Estate has been transformed after almost 300 years of agricultural endeavours. There are numerous physical remnants of this transformation process, from farm roads, dams, vineyards, orchards, avenues of trees to provide windbreaks and irrigation ditches.

The development of the road system may be traced on early maps of the area and aerial maps post-dating the 1930s. It seems likely that the formal road system developed as a result of the intensive agriculture practised when the land formed part of the Rhodes Fruit Farms.

The ditches may date to earlier attempts to control the streams running down the slopes of the Simonsberg in winter. These ditches were later formalised, becoming stone lined, etc. The irrigation ditch (*leiwater*) ditch running along the margin of Estate 12 is packed with stone and there is a section of a clay pipe running at an angle into the ditch. Since this *leiwater* crosses the property on the diagonal, it does not appear as if it can be retained during development. This means that it is likely to be negatively impacted. There is also an irrigation ditch along the margin of Estate 14 which will be impacted.



There is a large amount of rubble (blocks of concrete with cobbles embedded in it) on Estate 14. The question is whether this represents a wall which was demolished, or perhaps the concrete thrown to support wooden fence poles? The rubble appears to be modern. There are several large oak trees on this property, possibly relating to an earlier settlement?

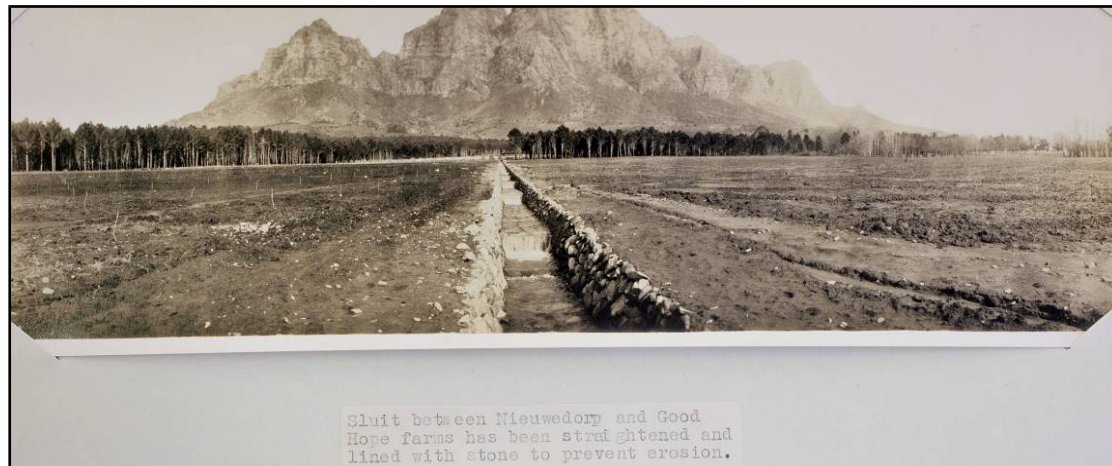


Plate 6: An example of the stone lined “leiwater” or “sluite” which were constructed between Nieuwedorp and Good Hope farms in the 1960s. The exact location of this particular furrow has not been determined (Titlestad 2007/2008).

Estate 4 contains a number of large trees, a red brick well, some wooden chicken runs, and some rubble, suggesting an earlier complex of farm buildings. It is proposed that this site needs some monitoring during development.

*Consider S Titlestad's overlays to get a sense of who lived here.*

#### **8.4 Modern Houses**

There are a number of houses on the various estates which were built in the recent past. They are not protected by the NHRA and may be demolished to make way for the new developments. These include houses on the following properties: Estates 3, 7 and 9. They are all

#### **8.5 Groupings of Oak Trees**

Groupings of oak trees on Estates 4 & 14 may indicate historic settlement in the valley.

### **9. SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE RESOURCES**

The silvermine on the slopes of Simonsberg is extremely significant as it represents the earliest example of a preserved industrial site in South Africa. It has been sadly neglected and deserves to be restored and made available for the public to appreciate. The various elements of the mine are spread out over a large area, and fall within the commonage belonging to the inhabitants of Pniel as well as in the Founders Estate.

Hart (2005) points out that the Dwars River/Pniel Valley between Stellenbosch and Franschoek is highly historically significant as it was here that some of the earliest

Cape Farms were granted to both Dutch Colonists and French Huguenots in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Two farms in particular, Good Hope and Nieuwedorp are located on the Founders Estate and while the former is in a good state of preservation, the latter has been neglected.

## **10. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### ***10.1 Pre-colonial archaeology***

Despite the report by Kaplan on the widespread occurrence of stone artefacts in the area, no artefacts were found on any of the development footprints during the survey by Hart and Webley in 2009. It is not anticipated that the development will have a significant input on the pre-colonial past, which consists of scatters of stone artefacts no longer in their original context.

### ***10.2 Colonial archaeology***

The historic farmsteads and associated buildings belonging to Good Hope and Nieuwedorp date to the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since there are a limited number of these homesteads in existence, it is likely that SAHRA will insist on very stringent conditions with regard their restoration and this will include an archaeological input.

### ***10.3 Rhodes Fruit Farm infrastructure***

There are a number of elements of the transformed landscape which owe their origins to the development of the Rhodes Fruit Farms. These elements include the formalised road system, “leiwater” or “sluite” and dams. Many of these elements date to the 1920s and 1930s and are therefore protected by the NHRA. They are also part of the cultural landscape. The destruction of these elements will lead to the loss of their contribution to the landscape.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report endorses the recommendations of the SAHRA ROD dated February 2006: “Conditions required for the Archaeological Component of the Boschendal Farmlands, Founders Estate Permit”.

- Archaeological monitoring will be required when developments take place on Estate 15, which contains the “Mill” to ensure that there are no associated structures, paths or rubbish dumps;
- Archaeologists will be required to participate actively in the restoration of the Nieuwedorp and Good Hope (Estates 11 & 17 respectively) farmsteads. This may involve archaeological excavations prior to restoration to determine the location of below ground features, test excavations around the foundations during restoration, and plaster stripping inside the present buildings to determine the development of the buildings;
- Archaeological monitoring is proposed for Estates 4 and 14 which appear to contain evidence of earlier farming activities. It is not clear what these remnants represent but they may be indicative of earlier settlement;
- The mitigation of the “leiwater” on Estate 12. This will involve relocating the boundaries of the property so that the “leiwater” is not destroyed.

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