

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT BOSCHENDAL WESTERN, EASTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN PRECINCTS, 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

June 2009



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 development on Boschendal, Stellenbosch District, Western Cape. The development will take place on the lower slopes of the Simonsberg and Groot Drakenstein Mountain Ranges in the Dwars River Valley.

Development is planned for the following areas (Figure 1):

- a) There are seven (7) nodes of development which have been identified in the Western Precinct (Figure 1) in an area known as “Excelsior”.
- b) There will be a commercial development in the Central Precinct at the intersection of the R45 and the R310 (Groot Drakenstein).
- c) There are two development areas in the Eastern Precinct (to the south of Dwars River), including a Retirement Village, a Club House and “Institutional”.
- d) There are four (4) nodes of development in the Southern Precinct around the old Bethlehem farmstead.

## 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 concerned with assessing the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological heritage (both pre-colonial and colonial) in the identified areas.*

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 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 Founders Estate and this includes: archaeological remains, the built environment, graveyards and cemeteries, living heritage and the cultural landscape.

The development discussed here does not fall in the Boschendal Founder’s Estate, which has been discussed elsewhere (Hart 2009), but is afforded protection in terms of Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999.

## **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL 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 at least two locations of settlement with buildings older than 60 years, namely the early Dutch farmstead of Bethlehem in the southern precinct and the more recent homestead of Excelsior in the western precinct.

According to Titlestad (2007/8), Bethlehem was granted to Petrus Simmond (as a grant of three separate pieces) in 1696. While in the employ of the VOC, the company built him a house on the farm. The earliest diagram of the Surveyor General shows "woonhuis" on the one portion and "Bokkenhok" on the other. However, it is difficult to place the positions of these early structures on the present landscape. The current homestead was apparently built in 1812. It is not clear whether it incorporated elements of the original 1696 homestead, and this would only become apparent with restoration of the building. Titlestad adds the following comment in her report: "Ruins of the original house south-west of the current building. The current homestead, barn and cellar are considered to have been constructed mid 19<sup>th</sup> C".

### **4.3 Industrial Archaeology**

There are several buildings in the area identified for commercial development around Groot Drakenstein, which may be older than 60 years and may qualify to be rated as having industrial interest.

Titlestad (2007/8) also has a photograph dated before 1930, showing the Excelsior homestead (AG7545), proving that this building possibly dates to the Rhodes Fruit Farm era. Remnants of the original structure are still visible in the altered building used as offices.

Titlestad (2007/8) also has a number of images relating to the development of the Rhodes Fruit Farm. There are photographs of the RFF General Store (converted into Engineer's house) and the RFF Offices and Cannery at Groot Drakenstein dating to around 1930, as well as a number of images of the construction of the new packhouse which was completed in 1931. An image of the RFF clubhouse at Groot Drakenstein (now demolished?) dating to 1934.

## **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, footpaths and irrigation ditches (*leiwater*).

This mix of agricultural and natural environment is interspersed with at least four settlement patterns in the valley and these include the original historic homesteads along the main corridor of the valley, "off-farm agro-villages" also along the central spine, villages on a secondary corridor to the east of the central spine and the fourth pattern relates to the on-farm accommodation for farm labourers (According to the EIA-HIA Baseline Study).

The features of the cultural landscape include the composite settlement structure in the valley, historical built form and setting, visual corridors and scenic routes.

## **6. STUDY METHOD**

Boschendal was visited on the 19 and 28 May 2009 by archaeologists Tim Hart and Lita Webley. 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.

All the development nodes 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. RESULTS OF SURVEY OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

### **7.1 Western Precinct**

Node 1: This development is located close to the planned "Cannery Row" or commercial centre at Groot Drakenstein. The level fields are covered in vineyards, with a row of pine trees running along one margin. A foot survey between the vineyards failed to provide any

evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 2: This development occurs on fallow lands and orchards on both sides of a farm road. The development will be bisected by a small stream, the road crosses this river via a small bridge. There is an area next to a drain in the fallow fields where the soil is exposed. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node3: The development is planned for both sides of the farm road which links the Excelsior offices and a farm dam. The development also runs at right angles into the fields, forming a cross. The one arm of the cross follows an existing farm track, which runs parallel to a ditch. There are many large blocks of concrete lying on the side of the ditch. It is not clear where these came from but their presence suggests recent interventions in this area. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 4: This development takes place on fallow lands which are located between the Excelsior Offices and the R45. Both fields have been levelled and ploughed in the past. They have been completely transformed. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 5: This development forms two sides of a triangle and is bordered on one side by an avenue of pine trees. The development is partly situated on vineyards and partly incorporates a large collection of farm workers houses. They are of the same age and design as the houses in Node 6. There is an irrigation ditch running along one margin of the development. An abandoned school building, relating to the settlement, is situated on one corner. None of the buildings are older than 60 years. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 6: This development is extensive and spreads along 2 axes, forming three arms of a cross.

The most easterly portion of the development comprises a field which has a two-bar wooden fence running parallel to a ditch and avenue of pine trees, and next to a gravel farm road. This field is more uneven than those in Node 7 and is presently fallow. Nevertheless, it also has old vine stumps confirming it was a vineyard in the past. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

The fields below the modern house have been recently ploughed and there is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement. Behind the house is a shed, which has several features (lintel above windows and doors, pitch of the roof, etc) which suggests it may be older than 60 years. There is a small section of white painted walling, next to a small cemetery which includes 2 graves. The one individual died in the 1940s, suggesting that the graveyard, and presumably the shed, may be older than 60 years. From the map, it appears this settlement has been incorporated into Node 6.

One of the fields (above the workers cottages) contains a small patch of oak trees. The height of the trees suggests they may have been deliberately planted some time in the past and formed part of an earlier historic settlement. However, there are no remains of any structures between the trees. There is evidence of dumping, both of red brick, and many large river cobbles. The latter may have been ploughed out of the surrounding fields. There are 2 large trenches excavated into the edge of this area, perhaps to test the sub-soil. Modern refuse has been dumped here, possibly by the workers living in nearby cottages.

Node 6 also includes at least 5 workers houses. They are all identical in design and age. They are clearly recent and the windows have all been closed with aluminium sheeting.



Presumably these will be retained and the other houses which fall outside of the development node will be destroyed?

Plate: Staff quarters in Node 6 of the Western Precinct, presently boarded up.

There are also fields below the farm road which are incorporated into Node 6. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 7: This development stretches in an easterly direction through several three (3) fields to two dams. The most easterly field is level and covered in pasture and is currently being utilized to graze cattle. It appears that the field was ploughed in the past and a huge pile of stones (river cobbles) at the end of the field, next to the dams, indicates how much stone has been removed from the field. There is a gravel road around this field, and the one margin is a row of pine trees. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 7 (field 2): This field resembles the previous field and contains many old vine stumps indicating it was a vineyard in the past but has been ploughed and is now used for pasture. It contains many large quartzite river cobbles. There is no sign that any of them have been reworked. The westerly border is a row of pine trees. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 7 (field 3): This field has a line of pine trees running along the western margin of the field. It is also under pasture, and it contains almost no river cobbles. There is a large irrigation pump in one corner. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement. Fields two and three have a deep irrigation ditch running alongside the border of pine trees.

## **7.2 Central Precinct**

The development will include a commercial centre ("Cannery Row") at the preset T-junction of the R310 and R45.

The land immediately to the north of the R310 contains a number of staff houses relating to the Rhodes Factory. Some of the houses are now unoccupied. However, all appear to be of recent construction and they are not 60 years of age.



Plate: Mix of staff housing and industrial style buildings at Groot Drakenstein.

The land immediately to the south of the R310 is more intensively settled and contains a number of structures. These include the old sawmills which appears abandoned although there are still large amounts of wood dumped in the area. The saw mill does not appear to be older than 60 years, although there is an adjoining and collapsing corrugated iron shed which may be old. The railway station for the loading of the fruit and canned goods contains older elements. Opposite the station is a complex of buildings, which appear to be staff quarters, with their windows and doors covered in metal sheeting. There is a more recent police station and some other buildings which may have older cores.

**7.3 Eastern Precinct**

The gravel farm road, from the R45, runs parallel to the Dwars River, with orchards on the left and fallow lands on the right. The fallow lands appear to be old orchards/vineyards. The land is undulating, suggesting considerable disturbance of the topsoil while removing the trees and vines. There is also evidence for dumping of rubble over a large area. The fallow lands extend up to the abandoned staff quarters, built in a Georgian style. The windows and doors of the buildings have all been boarded up. There is a large amount of modern rubbish between and around them. The settlement is in a bad condition and there is evidence of some informal settlement in the area. It was not possible to examine the soil surface to determine whether there are any archaeological remains.





Plate: The Georgian style staff quarters in the Eastern Precinct, now boarded up.

The second area for development lies below a farm dam. There are many orchards, interspersed with lines of pine trees, presumably planted for wind breaks. Some of these fields are fallow, suggesting the orchards or vines had been uprooted.

None of these fields contained any evidence for prehistoric or colonial settlement.

#### **7.4 Southern Precinct (Bethlehem)**

Node 1: This field comprises fallow land situated next to the stream running down to the Dwars River. There are quartzite stones in this field which look flaked, but this is probably fire cracking as a result of a recent fire. The soil surface is undulating evidence of disturbed old lands. There is a line of river cobbles on the edge of the field, probably ploughed out in the past. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 2: This piece of land is located just beyond the sewerage farm and above the gravel access road to Bethlehem. At present the land is covered in fruit trees which will need to be removed for the development. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 3: The development consists of two areas connected by a road. The one area identified for development is located in an existing wattle plantation (adjoining the dam) which was too thick to survey. The large trees will have impacted on any sub-surface remains. The second area is situated above the dam and consists of two fields, bisected by a line of pine trees, running to a very deep ditch. The fields appear to represent old orchards/vineyards which have been ploughed. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

Node 4: This development is located on the most easterly part of the Boschendal property and is fairly close to Kylemore. It is located high up in the valley along a winding road. There is no evidence of old fields. The development will be partly on virgin bush and black wattle plantation. Some of the area has been burnt. There is no evidence for any prehistoric archaeological remains or any historic material relating to colonial settlement.

#### **Bethlehem farmhouse**

It is not clear from the developments plans whether the old Bethlehem farmstead will also be sold, as is the case with Good Hope and Nieuwedorp. The complex of buildings includes an abandoned wine cellar in need of conservation.

#### Ruins:

There is a complex of ruins immediately in to the front of the main Bethlehem farmhouse (north-west).

Approaching the house from the Dwars River, the ruins are on the right hand side of the road. They are well hidden by the dense vegetation and only faintly visible. The dense bush made digital photography and GPS readings difficult. The ruins consist of stone walls forming a large square, with evidence with that the interior walls had been plastered. There appears to be an entrance on one side. The walls are around 2 m high, but the one end wall is much higher, and of an uneven height. It is difficult to determine the function of this building. It does not appear to be a reservoir (it has an entrance), or a cemetery (walls too high) or a kraal (quality of the stone walling is too fine).



Plate: The ruins in the forest to the north of the Bethlehem farmstead.

This complex of ruins extends in a north-westerly direction toward Node 1 on both sides of the farm road. On the one side (between the stream and the road) is clear evidence for stone stables. On the other, is a large rectangular building, with interior stone pillars supporting wooden poles. There may have been flooring in this building as there is a small ridge running along the inside walls, about 50cm from ground. There is also evidence of fittings for machinery in this building. The stone walling is capped by red brick, in one corner to a considerable height. It is possible that this building represents shed, possibly for milking?

Behind this building is a very large stone kraal, with an iron gate still in place. The stone walling is dry packed, unlike the other ruins, and much lower (around 1.5 m).

## **8. SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE RESOURCES**

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. The EIA-HIA Baseline Study emphasises the importance of preserving the “character of a working agricultural landscape”.

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

### ***8.1 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.

### ***8.2 Historic Cape Farmsteads***

There is one historic Dutch homestead in the southern precinct, namely Bethlehem. The original grant dates to 1696 but it appears that the present homestead dates to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> C. The house and associated structures, including the ruins identified in the survey, are highly significant in terms of the built environment. Since no significant restoration has been undertaken on this property, it allows archaeologists the opportunity to determine whether the

original house of 1696 is incorporated into the later homestead, to examine the building sequence on the property and to determine the relevance of the ruins to the north-west.

### **8.3 Industrial/farm Heritage**

The establishment of the RFF on the historic farms in the Dwars River Valley led to significant changes in the built environment. Many of these developments took place between 1920 and 1935 and are therefore protected in terms of the NHRA. The industrial environment includes:

- Cannery, sheds, station, clubhouse, staff quarters, etc at Groot Drakenstein and Languedoc;
- Fruit orchards, roads, dams, avenues of trees, footpaths, bridges, irrigation systems, etc on all the properties.

Development planned for both the southern and eastern precincts will cross “historical pedestrian linkages”, which means access will be restricted and the traditional footpaths which cross the properties will disappear.

## **9. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATION**

This report has identified a number of areas of concern with regard the development proposals:

### **9.1 Colonial archaeology**

The historic farmstead of Bethlehem lies in the Southern Precinct, in close proximity to development nodes 1, 2 and 3. The close proximity of Node 1 to the ruins which are located to the north of the historic homestead is a cause for concern.

*These ruins, if they belong to the original farmhouse, are potentially of great interest to historical archaeologists. They may be at risk, as inhabitants of new developments may be tempted to collect stone from these ruins. Mitigation should be undertaken and this can include, but should not be limited to, detailed survey of the ruins identified during the survey and targeted excavations of important elements.*

It is not clear from the developments plans whether the old Bethlehem farmstead and associated farm buildings will be sold.

*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 work. According to Titlestad's report, the ruins of the original Bethlehem buildings are located to the south-west of the present house. However, the ruins discovered and described here are to the north-west. Detailed investigations around the Bethlehem homestead needs to be undertaken to avoid destruction of buried elements.*

### **9.2 Rhodes Fruit Farm infrastructure**

The survey identified a number of buildings which are older than 60 years but are possibly not highly significant.

These include the house at Excelsior, which is currently used by the farm manager as offices but dates to the 1930s.

The house and associated barn and graveyard in Node 6 of the Western Precinct appear to be at least 60 years old. If there are any plans for demolition, then it is important that a comprehensive mapping exercise needs to be undertaken of this house and the graveyard. Presumably the cemetery will be retained, but conservation plans need to be put in place to retain the site in good condition.

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.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

This report makes the following recommendations:

- Archaeologists will be required to participate actively in the restoration of the Bethlehem farmstead if development of the homestead is planned. 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: Node 1 on the Bethlehem farmstead, in order to ensure that no below ground remains, relating to the ruins across the river, are destroyed.

## **11. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Aikman Associates Heritage Management. May 2005. Boschendal Heritage Assessment: Built Environment and Evaluation.

Aikman Associates Heritage Management. May 2005. Boschendal Heritage Assessment: Design Indicators for the Founders Estate: Findings of the Tree and Built Environment Surveys.

Fransen, H. 2004. The old buildings of the Cape. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

Goodwin, A.J.H. and Van Riet Lowe, C. 1929. The Stone Age cultures of South Africa. Annals of the South African Museum Vol 27: 1-270.

Hart, T. 2005. Historical Archaeological Impact Assessment of the Founders Estate, Boschendal. Prepared for Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants.

Kaplan, J. 2005. Archaeological Impact Assessment: Proposed development of Boschendal Lands, Dwars River Valley. Prepared for Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants.

Lucus, G. 2004. An Archaeology of Colonial Identity. Power and Material Culture in the Dwars River Valley, South Africa. London: Kluwer.

SAHRA. February 2006. Conditions required for the Archaeological Component of the Boschendal Farmlands, Founders Estate Permit.

SAHRA. February 2009. Declaration of a Portion of the Cape Winelands Cultural Landscape, identified as Boschendal Founders Estate, Dwarsrivier Valley, Stellenbsoch in the Boland Region, Western Cape Province, a National Heritage Site.

Titlestad, S. 2007/8. Boschendal Estates: Catalogue of Historical Images and Evidence. Compiled in association with Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants.