

9/2/08/291

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED
KAOLIN MINING SITE ON CHAPLIN ESTATE, NOORDHOEK

JONATHAN KAPLAN

28 AVENUE DE LONGEVILLE

FRESNAYE

8001

INTRODUCTION

The Noordhoek Valley has long been known for its rich archaeological value. Its geographical setting, comprising coastline with occasional intertidal rock zones, dune fields (now stabilised by vegetation and development) and mountains, made it an ideal situation for occupation by the indigenous inhabitants of southern Africa, namely the San (Bushmen) and Khoi (Hottentot). Shellfish, plantfoods and terrestrial mammals and reptiles would have been widely available to the early hunter-gatherer-fishers, and to pastoralist inhabitants.

The mountainous area of the Noordhoek Valley contains numerous small caves and rockshelters, many of which have signs of early human habitation. These caves and rockshelters are located among the Table Mountain Sandstone kopjes and ridges which contain the valley on its eastern front. Amongst earlier archaeological investigations in the Noordhoek area is one by Dr. E. F. Mossop in the Noordhoek Saltpan in 1950 and another by John Goodwin in 1929. The former study located dense scatters of stone artefacts which we would today classify as Middle Stone Age and Later Stone Age, i.e. at least 30 000

years old. The latter investigation by Goodwin located the existence of shell or kitchen middens containing pottery and stone artefacts. Shell middens are the ancient refuse dumps of the indigenous San and Khoi. In addition to these discoveries, several human burials of Later Stone Age people have also been recovered from the Noordhoek Saltpan.

With the knowledge that Serina (PTY) Ltd was interested in mining kaolin in part of the Noordhoek Valley, there was a concern that an archaeological impact study be carried out to ascertain the presence of sites in the area. The Serina project was already subject to an environmental impact study being conducted by Steffen Robertson and Kirsten INC. (SRK). The area under consideration is known as Chaplin Estate, which is owned by Die Goede Hoop Estate, of which Serina (PTY) Ltd owns mineral rights on 26 hectares of the farm.

The survey, with which this report is concerned, follows closely on another survey completed in July 1989 in the Noordhoek Saltpan, carried out by archaeologists from the University of Cape Town. The objective of this project is to determine the archaeological value of the area where mineral rights have been granted to Serina (PTY) Ltd, and the archaeological implications of the development of a kaolin mine there. This survey would be done in conjunction with the environmental impact study being conducted by SRK, and as part of the overall environmental impact study commissioned by Serina (PTY) Ltd. Recommendations would then be tabled,

suggesting ways of rescuing or saving the archaeological resources threatened by the possible mining of the area.

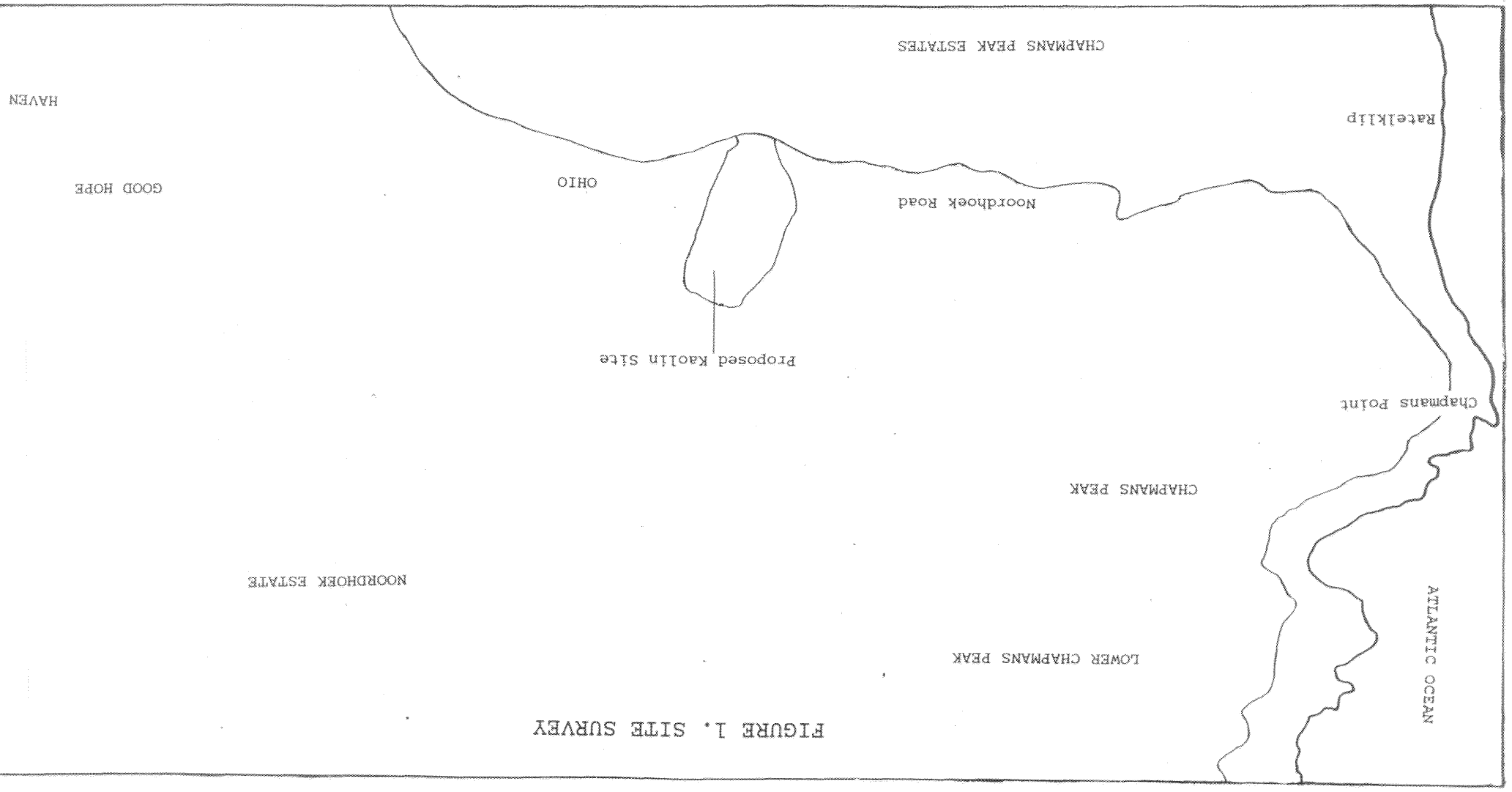
SITE SURVEY

The site where the proposed kaolin mine is to be established is located about 100 metres from the turnoff to Noordhoek Beach, on a south-facing slope (Figure 1). The 26 hectares of the estate where Serina (PTY) Ltd have acquired mineral rights, have been transected by road and path cuttings, and its boundaries are Ohio Farm on the western boundary and the main through road from Chapmans Peak to Sun Valley on its western flank. The area is covered with dense stands of rooikrantz and pine exotics. Apart from the cuttings, the area has not been altered by other human induced processes.

The archaeological investigation was carried out by means of a thorough surface survey by foot. Each cutting and transect, as well as the boundaries, were walked in an attempt to find any evidence of early human habitation. Such signs would manifest themselves in scatters of stone tools, flakes, and pottery. The possibility of locating scatters of food waste, such as shellfish remains, was also considered.

Apart from a few isolated quartz chunks and two marine shells of the species Turbo cochlear, very little archaeological material was found in the survey. It is significant in itself that no archaeological material was found on Chaplin Estate where Serina (PTY) Ltd plans to mine kaolin. This confirms a pattern of evidence which suggests that the majority of

FIGURE 1. SITE SURVEY



archaeological sites in the Noordhoek Valley are found only near the coastline, and in caves and rockshelters in the mountains. If a mining permit is granted to Serina (PTY) LTD, no archaeological sites would be threatened by the mining of kaolin.