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PRELIMINARY REPORT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT
DOORSPRING, LAMBERTS BAY.

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1993 the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) was commissioned by Le Cap Projects to undertake an archaeological survey of a portion of Doorspring Farm some 8 Kilometers north of the town of Lamberts Bay on the Cape west coast. The aim of the survey was to minimise the negative impact of the proposed Doorspring development on possible important archaeological sites.

The development of the coastal portion of Doorspring is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA forms part of a rezoning condition imposed by the West Coast Regional Services Council and the Cape Provincial Administration to the proposed development of the site.

Archaeological remains were found scattered over a wide area of the proposed development site during the survey. Prehistoric shell remains were widely dispersed in some areas (particularly among erfs 1-8, 12-16 & 25-30), and less dispersed in others. Some pottery, ostrich eggshell pieces and a few stone flakes, split cobbles and chunks were also found. A potentially important and notably different shell midden 'site' was located close to the boundary fence of the farm, on a sandy and vegetated ward behind the proposed restaurant facility which Le Cap Project aims to construct.

ACRM recommended that a fieldwork programme be initiated to recover sufficient archaeological material in order to comment on the importance and significance of the archaeology of Doorspring and to minimise the negative impact of the development on the archaeological remains present.

THE EXCAVATION

A 10 day excavation programme commenced on the 22 February with a team of five qualified archaeologists. Working in three teams, 1-4 meter square excavations were undertaken among the erf layout plan of the proposed development, and behind the proposed restaurant facility site. The aim of the excavation was to:

1. establish the number of sites and their location in the area of the proposed development;
2. establish the depth and thickness of the archaeological deposit;
3. establish the contents of the sites and the density of artefactual material contained and
4. establish the relative age of the archaeological deposits.

Twelve 'sites' were excavated, numbered DSP 1-12.

12 areas of the proposed development were sampled by excavation, which entailed the total or partial removal of 16m² and revealed the presence of concentrations of prehistoric human occupation debris. DSP 10 and DSP 11 proved to be of little interest, whilst DSP 1-9 and DSP 12 merited investigation.

DSP 1: An initial 4m² sample area was taken from DSP 1, located in the south of the development, adjacent to the boundary fence, and above the road leading to the car park. Although this area would not be directly impacted by construction activities it was felt necessary to excavate here as well, so as to minimize any unforeseen negative impact such as storing of building materials, plant equipment, facilities for workers etc. Of the 12 sites identified, DSP 1 yielded by far the best sample of cultural material and food remains, other than shell.

The main occupation level at this site is a lens of shell, approximately 15-20cm thick, found just below the surface. Besides marine shell, this layer also contained the highest concentration of bone found at any of the 12 sites sampled. Of the terrestrial fauna, the majority of the bone is that of tortoises, although the remains of *Raphicerus*, two types of carnivore (one large, one small), and snake have also been identified. There is also a strong marine component, represented by seal, penguin, albatross, fish and large quantities of crayfish mandibles.

The bone densities at DSP 1 are in strong contrast to those of all the other sites sampled, where very little bone and cultural material was recovered.

10

DSP 2: The site is located on the seaward side of the main track (outside boundary) of the proposed development site, a few meters outside erf 6. Shell remains up to 1.5m thick in a cutting close by was the reason we decided to sample this area. A 2m² area was excavated up to a depth of 50cm in square A1. The main level of occupation is a shell lens approximately 20cm thick, dominated by limpets, with small quantities of black mussel and whelks. A small hearth with charcoal was also identified. Approximately 15cm below the prehistoric shell deposit, the deposit takes on the character of older (? raised) beach (mussel dominated and mainly water worn shell) with no cultural material present.

Cultural material of interest found at DSP 2 includes three unusually large ostrich eggshell beads whose diameter is greater than 8.5mm suggesting that this site may be harder in character. Other than the beads very little cultural material was recovered; some bone and charcoal and a few pieces of stone. The archaeological deposit was likely formed sometime after 2000 BP.

DSP 3: The site was excavated in the prospectors furrow between erf 11 and 12. A substantial megalith was excavated even though the top layers had been removed. A 1m² test pit was excavated to a depth of approximately 130cm until bedrock. The site is of high significance for palaeoenvironmental information and changing shellfish subsistence exploitation patterns through time. This megalith could provide information comparable to other megaliths in the Blanda Bay/Lamberts Bay regions. The deposit has minimal disturbance in most levels. Most levels were mussel dominated. Very little cultural material was recovered. This included a large number of possibly worked mussel, some whelk pendants, stone chips and chunks, and some bone and charcoal. A presumed age of the deposits is between 4000-2000 BP.

Of the other sites sampled, DSP 4-8 (erfs 5-8 & 12) and DSP 12 (erf 30) are all shallow shell middens, which like DSP 1 have deposits of anything up to ± 50m of overlying sterile beach or dune sand, but all only a single or at most 2-3 relatively thin main occupation levels of ± 15-25cm thick found just below the surface. Unlike DSP 1, however, these sites have occupation layers dominated by black mussel shell, with varying percentages of limpet present. Small amounts of stone were found in DSP 4-8 and DSP 12, most of what was recovered been split pebbles and lithic manuports with some quartz pieces. Three pieces of pottery were recovered from DSP 8 and a sandstone grooved stone from the surface of erf 12, while DSP 7 produced one ostrich eggshell bead.

Source
Location
4302
2400

DSP 11 (exf 16) was shown to be no more than a surface scatter of shell with no depth at all, and sterile except for shell. DSP 10 (exf 18) turned out to be a calcified prehistoric (Pleistocene) beach. These two sites are of little archaeological significance, except that DSP 10 may be of some interest to a geologist.

DSP 0 (exf 14) is interesting in that the surface and overlying deposits may represent a Khol herder occupation, while those underlying reflect more a San hunter-gatherer occupation. Several stone chips and chunks were found in the overlying units as well as a small piece of pottery. One large bead was found in the top of unit 2, but the excavators believe it to be displaced. The underlying units contained very dense volumes of shell (mainly mussel) and are reflective of a San hunter-gatherer occupation of pre-pottery period. A small amount of bone and informal stone, 'mussel scrapers' and two mussel spoons were found in these layers.

DISCUSSION

Sites DSP 1 and DSP 3, ironically outside of the aref layout plan, are considered to be of high significance. DSP 1 contained the largest amount of cultural and non-shell foodwaste assemblages, including stone, bone, charcoal, an ostrich eggshell bead and pieces of ostrich eggshell. DSP 3 was the only megamidden excavated and should provide important comparisons with other megamidens excoavated in the Islands Bay/Lamberts Bay region, as well as providing information of palaeoenvironments and changing shellfish subsistence exploitation patterns.

DSP 2 may represent the remains of a herder site. The shell from here is limpet dominated (unlike the other sites which are mussel dominated), with few stone artefacts being recovered. Three large ostrich beads were recovered hinting that DSP 2 may be a Khol site.

DSP 8 appears to contain two main levels of occupation; one later occupation by Khol herders and an earlier hunter-gatherer occupation.

Considering DSP 4-8 and DSP 12, it would appear that the prehistoric populations exploiting this area of the coastline were visiting the coastline in small numbers, probably at regular intervals, and leaving behind small, discarded sites (mainly shellfish food parosels) dotted along the dune cordon above the sea.

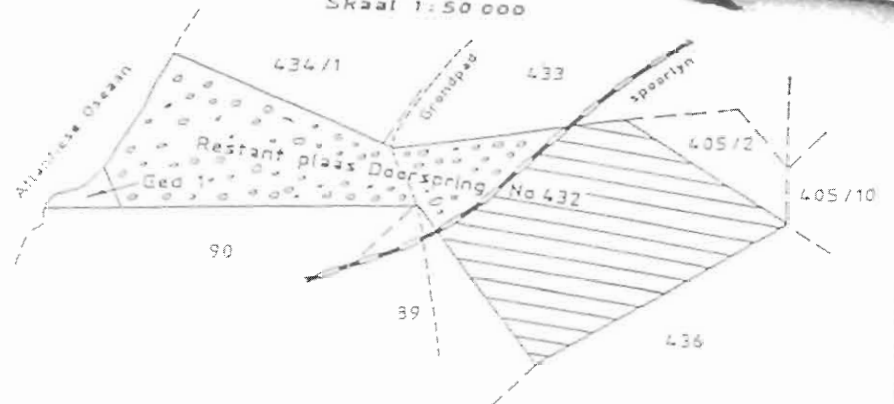
RECOMMENDATIONS

A further 5 days is considered necessary to complete the sampling programme at Doonspring. Further test pits will be excavated between arfs 21 and 28. Although DSP 1 will not be directly impacted by construction activities, it is considered necessary to extract a larger sample of prehistoric cultural remains from this site. This site is by far the richest in cultural and non-metal foodwaste assemblages and some time will be scheduled to excavate a larger sample from here. Further work on the megamidden will not take place. It is felt a sufficient sample has been excavated from here and that no further work is necessary. A sufficient amount of megamidden material remains in the prospectors furrow for possible research work in the future.




CONCLUSION

Based on the initial archaeological excavations at Doonspring, there is no reason why the proposed development cannot proceed in the ext layout plan so far archaeologically sampled and proposed by Le Cap Projects. Apart from DSP 1 and DSP 3 the sites excavated so far are not considered to be of such significance as to prevent the development from taking place.

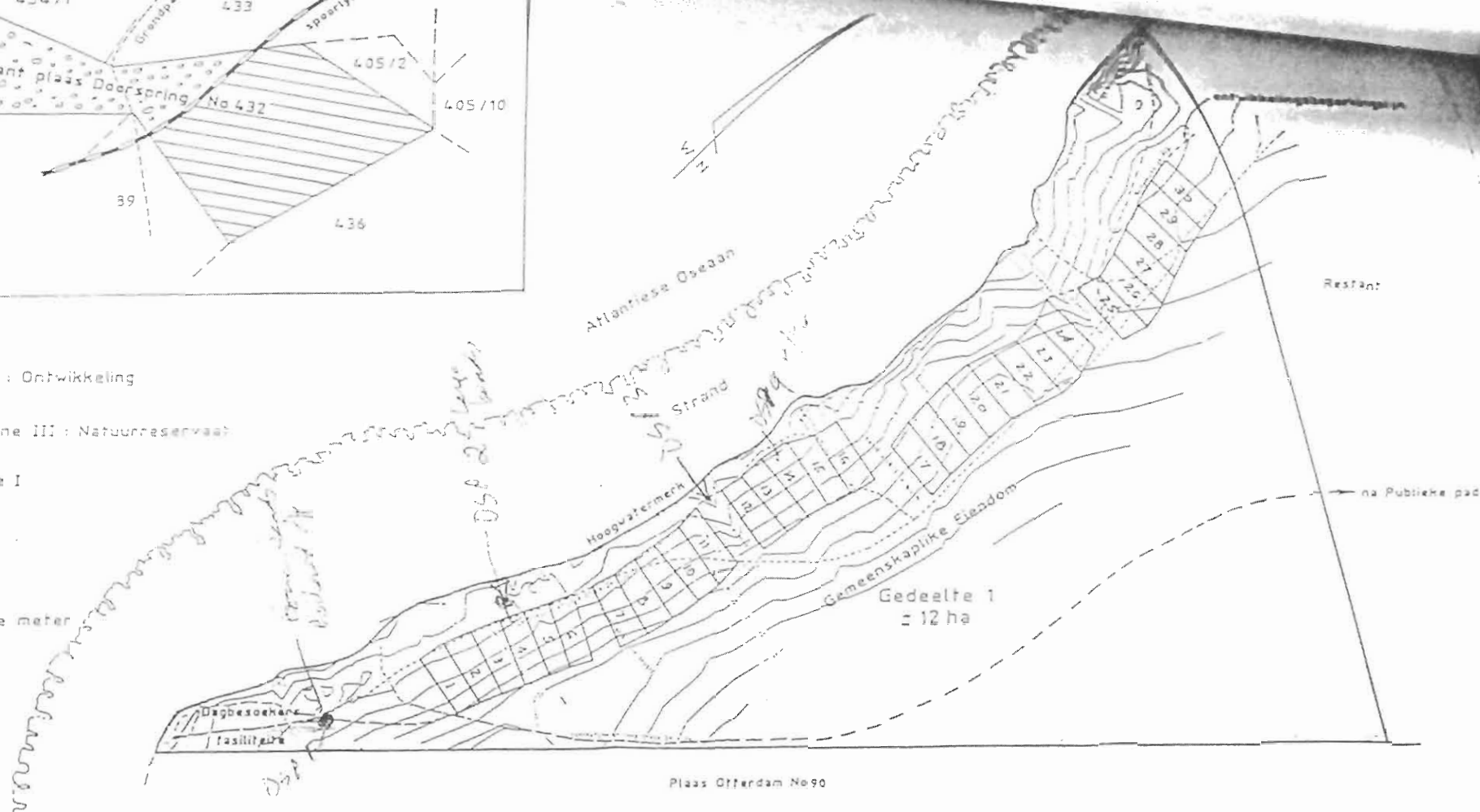
INLAS
Skaal 1:50 000



SONERINGS

-  Oordsones II : Ontwikkeling
-  Oopruimtesone III : Natuurreservaat
-  Landbousones I

NOTA:
Die gemiddelde grootte
van Erwe 1-30 is
15m x 40m = 600 vierkante meter



ERFNUMMER	
KOPER	
HANDTEKENING	
DATUM	

MUNISIPALITEIT: MUNICIPALITY:	
ADMINISTRATIEWE DISTRIK: ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT:	VAN RHYNSDOORP
PROVINSIE: KAAP DIE GOEIE HOOP PROVINCE: CAPE OF GOOD HOPE	
NOTESVEL: NOTING SHEET:	CH-1B (4-59)
LÊER: FILE:	B 3041
SKAAL: SCALE:	1:2500

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DATUM / DATE	PLAN NR / NO
DESEMBER 1993	3041/1
FEBRUARIE 1994	3041/2
WYSIGINGS / AMENDMENTS	