

31 Mechau Street Monitoring Brief at Erf 742



Prepared for Bestcape Property Developers (Pty) Ltd
June 2005

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31 Mechau Street (Erf 742 Cape Town)

Archaeological Monitoring Brief

1. Introduction

This report, commissioned by Bestcape Property Developers (Pty) Ltd on behalf of their client is submitted to the Heritage Authorities in fulfillment of a Record of Decision set out by Heritage Western Cape (Ref: 2004-11-001), that requested that an archeological monitoring brief be undertaken while the planned demolition of 31 Mechau Street (Erf 742 Cape Town) was underway. The site is located at 33 55'01.12205"S, 18 25'13.43324"E and falls within the Green Point Conservation area. Figure one shows the location of the site in the city.

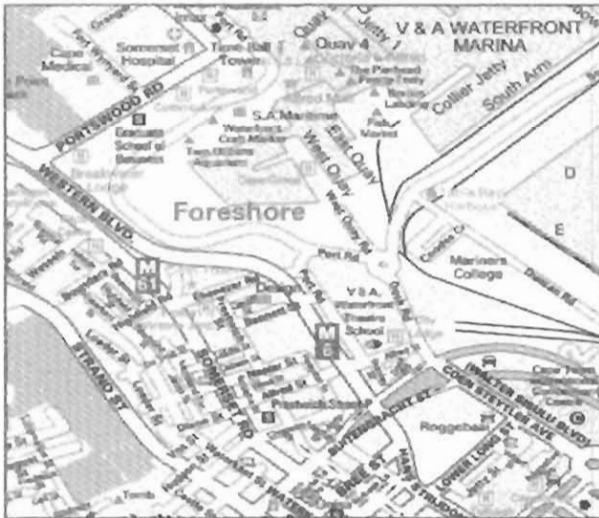


Figure 1. The location of the site in the Western city where accidental discovery of burials have been found in the block bounded by Prestwich, Napier and Alfred Streets (2003 & 2004) as well as in the block bounded by Prestwich, Napier and Coburn Streets, Prestwich and Chiappini Streets (2005).

2. Fieldwork Findings

The site was monitored on the 21, 23 May, and 10,11,13, 14 and 16 June while the contemporary flooring of 31 Mechau Street was removed by Skye Demolition and Neil Muller Construction. The archaeologists monitored, collected and bagged the fauna from the site in order to evaluate the skeletal material recovered from the survey area. A species list and analysis of these finds are discussed below. The foundations of an 19th century dwelling was also noted but did not constitute a significant find that required mapping, or indeed further archaeological research.

2.1 Fauna:

The sample contains a minimum of two sheep, a cow, a chicken, and a fish with a total of 43 bones. There are no human remains in this sample. The analysis of the faunal material was such that each bone was identified to lowest possible taxon. The element, side, end, age-at-death and any bone modifications were identified and recorded.

Sheep (*Ovis aries*)

A total of eighteen bones were identified to sheep ranging from leg bones to ribs. There is at least two individuals as three bones (a talus, a radius and metacarpal) are from an adult >24 months old, while another two bones (a femur and a tibia) are from a juvenile <12 months old.

Cow (*Bo Taurus*)

A total of four bones were identified to cattle and include a lone bone shaft, a vertebrae, and some ribs.

Chicken (*Gallus gallus*)

A total of four chicken bones were identified, all long bones.

Osteichthyes sp.

A total of two bones were identified to unidentified fish species, although they are cranial bones or head bones.

The remaining fifteen bones are unidentified small- medium mammal long bone shafts and cranial remains. These unidentifiable bones are most likely sheep bones, but they lack any identifiable morphological traits.

2.2 Bone modifications

There were a total of two sheep long bones and a cow rib with saw cut marks and one sheep phalanx that exhibited evidence of knife cut marks. This just indicates that the sheep and cow were being butchered at a proper butcher shop with access to a saw. Finally, a sheep femur exhibited evidence of carnivore gnawing, suggesting the presence of a dog.

3. Ceramics

Eight late 19th century British earthenware ceramics were found similar to those recovered from the trial excavations in January 2005 and require no further investigation.

4. Conclusions

The faunal sample is typical of household refuse as it varies from beef and mutton to chicken and fish, and it includes the good pieces of meat such as ribs and a leg of lamb. These finds are consistent with other finds in the City and require no further investigation. No human skeletal material was recovered during the demolition phase, either as in-situ or as secondary burials.

