

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF ERF 578 SCHAAPKRAAL, CAPE TOWN

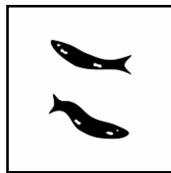
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Executive summary

ACRM was appointed to conduct an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for the proposed rezoning and development of Erf 578 Schaapkraal near Philippi, in the Western Cape.

The AIA forms part of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that is being undertaken by Bridget O'Donoghue, on behalf of Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultant.

Three alternative development proposals have been assessed, including the 'No-Go' Alternative.

Alternative 1 (the preferred alternative) provides for a mixed-use development, comprising a school, sports fields, shopping centre and parking.

Alternative 2 envisages that the entire ± 10ha site will be developed as a shopping center.

Erf 578 is located in the south western corner of the Philippi Horticultural Area and north of Strandfontein Village. Access to the site is from Strandfontein Road/M17. Existing infrastructure on the property comprises a number of ruined and derelict buildings. A large portion of the site has been disturbed during the levelling of dunes.

The overall purpose of the study is to assess the sensitivity of archaeological resources in the affected area, and to determine potential impacts on such resources.

A field assessment of the proposed development site was undertaken on the 20th August 2015, in which the following observations were made:

- A few fragments of *Turbo Sarmaticus* were found, but this is unlikely to be an archaeological site. No stone implements or cultural remains such as pottery or ostrich eggshell were encountered.

Conclusion

Indications are that, in terms of archaeological heritage, the receiving environment is not a sensitive or threatened landscape.

The wind blown aeolian dune sands of the Witzand Formation are deep at these higher elevations, and the fossil potential is considered to be generally low. Excavations for services are therefore unlikely to penetrate underlying Langebaan Formation aeolianites, where fossil bone and Middle Stone Age remains may be found.

The impact significance of the proposed development on archaeological resources is assessed as LOW and therefore, there are no objections to the authorization of the proposed development.

Recommendations

1. No archaeological mitigation is required.

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2. Should any unmarked human remains being uncovered during bulk earthworks these must immediately be reported to Heritage Western Cape (Guy Thomas 021 483 96 85).

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1. INTRODUCTION

ACRM was appointed by Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultant to conduct an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for the proposed rezoning and development of Erf 578 Schaapkraal near Philippi, in the Western Cape (Figures 1-3).

The AIA forms part of a wider Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that is being undertaken by heritage practitioner, Bridget O'Donoghue.

Three alternative development proposals have been assessed, including the 'No-Go' Alternative (meaning that the existing agriculture zoning of the property is retained).

Alternative 1 (the preferred alternative) provides for a mixed-use development comprising a school, sports fields, shopping centre and parking.

Alternative 2 envisages that the entire site will be developed as a shopping center.

The proposed development site is 9.76 ha in extent.



Figure 1. Locality map. Red polygon indicates the location of the study site.

Archaeological Impact Assessment, Erf 578 Schaapkraal



Figure 2. Locality map. Close up of the study site (red polygon)



Figure 3. Google aerial photograph indicating the location of Erf 578 (red polygon).

2. HERITAGE LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) makes provision for a compulsory Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) when an area exceeding 5000 m² is being developed. This is to determine if the area contains heritage sites and to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are not damaged or destroyed during development.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

Erf 578 is located in the south western corner of the Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA), directly alongside Strandfontein Road. The site is bound by the PHA to the north, a large dune ridge and sand mining operation to the east, and Punt Road/Strandfontein Village to the south. The ± 10 ha site was previously used to stable and exercise horses (the remains of paddock fencing are still visible), while the existing (now ruined) buildings/stables were later converted to a backpacker's accommodation. The high dune ridge on the eastern boundary is densely vegetated, while the remainder of the site is covered in a mix of Port Jackson, ground cover and thick grass on a substrate of wind-blown calcareous sands (Figures 4-6). There is a small excavated dam close to Strandfontein Road and a, small wetland/seep below the dune ridge in the north east. Piles of excavated material (mainly sand) from the dam, as well as building rubble and dumping are also present, especially along Punt Road. According to the soil report, a large section of the site has historically been disturbed during the levelling of dunes for vegetable farming. There is an existing access road, and a few small footpaths and informal tracks covering the site. Dune mole rat activity is extensive.

Surrounding land use is the PHA to the north, sand mining operations to the east and Residential (Strandfontein Village & Pelican Park) to the south and west, as well as vast tracts of vacant agricultural land.



Figure 4. View of the proposed development site facing north west



Figure 5. View of the proposed development site facing south east from Strandfontein Road



Figure 6. View of the proposed development site facing south from the north eastern corner.

4. STUDY APPROACH

4.1 Method

The overall purpose of the study is to assess the sensitivity of archaeological resources in the affected area, and to determine potential impacts on such resources.

The position of identified archaeological occurrences, were plotted using a hand held GPS unit set on the map datum WGS 84.

A track path of the survey was captured (Figure 7).

The field survey was undertaken by J. Kaplan and G. Slingsby on 20th August, 2015.

A desk top study was also done.

4.2 Constraints and limitations

Most of the proposed development site is covered in dense vegetation, resulting in low archaeological visibility. However, this did not affect the findings of the study.

4.3 Identification of potential risks

Based on the results of the field assessment, as well as previous work undertaken by the archaeologist in the Schaapkraal sand mining area and the PHA, there are no archaeological risks associated with the proposed development.

4.4 Archaeology of the study area

Urban development, including historical sand mining and agricultural production in Schaapkraal and the PHA, has virtually destroyed any archaeological traces that might have existed. Sporadic finds of Early Stone Age (ESA) as well as Middle Stone Age (MSA) tools have been encountered on the 'Cape Flats' (Humphreys 1998; Kaplan 1993), while historical records indicate that several Herder pastoralist groups lived more or less permanently in the vicinity of the area (Elphick 1985; Smith 1983).

A number of studies done in Schaapkraal and the PHA have failed to uncover any significant or tangible archaeological heritage (Kaplan 2009, 2007, 2006a, b, 2005a, b, c). Fragmented shellfish and a few pieces of ostrich eggshell were recorded alongside Strandfontein Road (Kaplan 2002), while a scatter of marine shellfish and ostrich eggshell was encountered during a study for the Pelican Park housing project south west of the proposed development site (Kaplan 2001, 2005d). According to Mr Dalton Gibbs (pers. comm. 2002) former reserve manager at the Rondevlei Nature Reserve, a shell midden was located in the northern portion of the reserve, as well as a Dutch clay pipe. Buried midden material from the late 19th/early 20th century that may have accumulated as a result of a small trek-fishing community, has been recorded behind the dunes near Capricorn Park (Halkett & Hart n.d.). Hilary Deacon (pers comm. 1993) reported isolated scatters of stone artefacts between Strandfontein and Macassar Beach, while Jalmer Rudner (1968) described shell middens behind the dunes at Strandfontein and Swartklip (Kaplan 1993).

5. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A few small fragments of 'fresh' *Turbo Sarmaticus* (Site 509) were found on the lower slopes of the vegetated dune ridge near the north eastern boundary of the proposed development site (refer to Figure 7). This is unlikely to be an archaeological site, however. No cultural remains such as stone implements, pottery or ostrich eggshell was found.

No shell deposits were found among the many dune mole rat dumps that cover the site, suggesting that no archaeological resources are present in the sub surface deposits.

No visible graves or typical surface grave markers were found during the site assessment. A cross was found near the entrance to Punt Road and most likely marks the site of a road accident victim.



Figure 7. Track paths (red lines) and waypoint (Site 509)

6. IMPACT STATEMENT

The results of the study indicate that the proposed development of Erf 578 Schaapkraal will not impact on significant archaeological heritage.

Previous studies undertaken in the PHA and Schaapkraal sand mining areas have encountered very little/no tangible archaeological heritage.

The wind blown aeolian dune sands of the Holocene Witzand Formation are deep at these higher elevations and according to Pether (2014), the fossil potential is generally low. Excavations for services are therefore unlikely to penetrate underlying Langebaan Formations aeolianites, where fossil bone and Middle Stone Age archaeological remains may be found.

7. CONCLUSION

Indications are that, in terms of archaeological heritage, the receiving environment is not a sensitive or threatened landscape.

The impact significance of the proposed development on archaeological resources is assessed as LOW and therefore, there are no objections to the authorization of the proposed development.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the proposed development of Erf 578 Schaapkraal, the following recommendations are made.

1. No archaeological mitigation is required.
2. Should any unmarked human remains be uncovered during the development, these must immediately be reported to Heritage Western Cape (Mr Guy Thomas 021 683 9543).

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