HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(Historical component)
Mount Road Social Housing Project

Mount Croix site, Knowles and Wilkinson Streets (Photo: J.S. Bennie)

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Date: February 2011

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## ANNEXURES

- **Annexure 1** - Mount Road Locality Plan, 1995
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- **Annexure 3** - Development proposal typical elevation

## ACCRONYMS

- **EIA** - Environmental Impact Assessment
- **HIA** - Heritage Impact Assessment
- **POS** - Public Open Space
- **PHRA** - Provincial Heritage Resource Agency
- **SAHRA** - South African Heritage Resource Agency
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Jenny Bennie M.A. was commissioned by Arcus GIBB to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as a specialist study to inform the Basic (Environmental) Assessment required for the proposed rezoning of three erven in Mount Croix from Public Open Space to Residential 3. The erven are located in two clusters immediately north and north-east of Erica Girls’ School. These are:

- Erf 1995: Zoned Public Open Space (POS). The site is bordered by Knowles, Turvey and Hazelhurst Streets,
- Erf 3217: Zoned Transportation 1, bordered by Knowles and Hazelhurst Streets,
- Erf 518: Zoned POS and is bordered by Eastbourne, Kent, Wilkinson and Knowles Streets.

The combined area of the three erven is 3.07 hectares. The developer, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is proposing to rezone all three erven to Residential 3 for the development of a social housing development.

Terms of Reference

The anticipated development will include the following key activities:

- Conduct a survey and historical overview of Erven 518, 1995 and 3217 in the unoccupied area below Erica Girls’ School, bounded by Turvey, Knowles, Wilkinson, Hazelhurst, Kent and Eastbourne Roads
- Assess any possibility of lone graves in the area
- Assess the historical importance of the building sites
- Consider the potential impact on their surrounds

This HIA report follows the minimum standard guidelines required by the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

Receiving area

Most of the area (3.07 hectares) assessed is covered with short grass with a few trees on the boundaries. Erven 1995 and 3217 are on steep terrain (originally a quarry) and Erf 518 is currently a sports field utilized by the youth in the vicinity.

Findings

The possibility of finding lone grave sites exists. No culturally sensitive pre-18th century artefacts have been known to be found in the designated zones although oral history (not investigated in this study) might show different groups (such as Early, Middle and Stone Age man, San, Khoekhoen and Black Xhosa speaking peoples) once utilizing this area. The sites have no built structures which need to be considered from a heritage aspect, but the areas possibly could have had early cultural significance.
Recommendations

1. The South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) or PRHA Council (the Provincial Heritage Resource Agency permit committee in the Port Elizabeth is currently non-operative) should be informed and authorisation sought, and a permit obtained if any graves are found.

2. All work when excavating prospective sites that deliver any sensitive material (such as human remains) should stop until a proper investigation is launched by SAHRA or the principal senior historian at the Port Elizabeth Museum. An archaeological/historical watching brief is not considered necessary for the construction process, but should anything of archaeological / historical value be discovered on the site during construction, such a watching brief should be implemented immediately...

3. The EMP needs to allow for monitoring if needed as described above. The sites in question were possibly used as ancestral sites and although it is unlikely that human or other remains will be found owing to the previous disturbances on the sites, the EMP should make allowance for monitoring as required.

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INTRODUCTION

Mrs Jenny Bennie was approached by Arcus Gibb (Pty) Ltd and requested to undertake the historical component of the HIA survey assessing the heritage requirements regarding the three erven which are located north and north east of the Erica Girls’ School - two of which are zoned Public Open Spaces and one Transportation 1. The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality intends rezoning these to Residential 3 and developing a social housing project on the three erven. This HIA survey is intended to inform the Basic (Environmental) Assessment which is being undertaken by Arcus Gibb for the proposed development in terms of the EIA Regulations (R543, 2010). These require that such an assessment process be undertaken where rezoning of POS is proposed.

The three erven in question are in Mount Croix, Port Elizabeth and are located in two clusters immediately north and north-east of Erica Girl’s School. These are:

• Erf 1995: Zoned Public Open Space (POS). The site is bordered by Knowles, Turvey and Hazelhurst Streets,
• Erf 3217: Zoned Transportation 1, bordered by Knowles and Hazelhurst Streets,
• Erf 518: Zoned POS and is bordered by Eastbourne, Kent, Wilkinson and Knowles Streets.

The combined area of the three erven is 3.07 hectares.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1 National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)

The National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (No 25 of 1999) (hereafter referred to as the Act) makes provision for a compulsory Heritage Impact Assessment in a number of cases where a development will change the character of a site, including:

• when the development area exceeds 5000 m²
• when the development involves three or more existing erven

Both the above points trigger the need for a HIA in this case. Section 38 of the Act clearly indicates that in such a case the proponent is required to notify the responsible heritage resources authority or the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). They in turn will advise whether an impact assessment report is needed before development can take place.

Section 34 (1) of the Act stipulates that no person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

Section 36 of the Act relates to burial grounds and graves and stipulates that SAHRA must conserve burial grounds and graves after identifying and recording those which appear to be of cultural significance. Any memorials erected by them must be maintained. No person may destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position any burial ground or grave older than 60 years situated outside a
formal cemetery, or use any excavation equipment that assists in the detection and recovery of metals.

Section 38 (3) a) – g) of the Act sets out the minimum requirements of a heritage impact assessment, which include inter alia:

- Identification and mapping
- Assessment of significance
- Assessment of potential impacts

### 3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this investigation is to assess the historical significance of the three erven in question and review the overall impact on the surrounding area.

For significant sites to be conserved and managed effectively the current situation and future potential need to be assessed using a Conservation Plan Methodology which suggests a four phase approach to evaluation of heritage sites: understanding the sites; assessing the cultural significance; assessing the vulnerability and the proposal of policies. The four phase approach was applied in this case.

It is necessary to undertake conservation–based research and analysis to prevent actions which will be detrimental to the site’s significance and to provide a framework within which a future conservation planning process may be continued.

In order to better understand the local history of the sites, consultations with the following people were undertaken:

- Miss J Yates (neighbour)
- Mr Jeremy Davis (local councillor)
- Miss Francis Pearce (historically previously resident in the area)
- Mrs M Harradine (historian)
- Residents of Alamein Court (neighbouring complex of flats)

### 4 HISTORY

#### 4.1 Pre-history

In earlier times sea covered part of the land that is now sand–dunes in Algoa Bay. Late Archeulian artefacts found scattered at random in the vicinity of the sites prove that early man existed in this area. Middle Stone Age man, the inventor of the spear, left artefacts behind in the form of scrapers, flakes and knives. The Late Stone Age also left its traces in coastal middens, as did the Strandlopers, who were the last primitive groups of people who lived along the shores. History records that these early inhabitants were decimated by smallpox in 1740. Many of their graves have been found at the Swartkops River mouth, close to where Settlers Bridge now stands.
4.2 Early History

From the records of early travellers, the groups of Khoekhoen belonging to the Eastern Cape region included the Inqua, probably in the Aberdeen area, the Damaqua, between the Gamtoos and Swartkops Rivers and the Gonaqua, who by the middle of the 18th century had become the most powerful group, extending from the Sundays River to the Great Fish River. Little is known of these people regarding their customs and social habits. They were the first Khoekhoen to meet the Black invaders and because of conflict or intermixture, lost their individual identity. Although not proven, the area of the sites under review was open ground where, because of the proximity to the sea, habitation could have taken place and therefore it is imperative that sensitivity is shown when working the area.

4.3 A Brief History of Port Elizabeth

Early settlement in Port Elizabeth was determined largely by the topography and the presence of water. Initial expansion (by all inhabitants) was linear along a north-south axis as there was a narrow strip of land between the high ridge and the coastline. After the arrival of the 1820 Settlers, Sir Rufane Donkin authorised a surveyor to prepare a plan of lots to be available to those wishing to remain in Algoa Bay. In 1834 the Colonial Government made a grant of land to the London Missionary Society for a “burial ground” and an area of residence for “Hottentots and other coloured people…,” establishing a principle, for the first time, of locations for the indigenous population in Port Elizabeth.

After the Sixth Frontier War (1834-5), the Mfengu entered the wage labour market in Port Elizabeth, supplanting the Khoekhoen as beach labourers as they were more reliable and sober. They built huts in four areas viz. on the hill near Russell Road, at the beachfront near their work and in two villages about fifteen minutes walk in opposite directions from the centre of town (currently designated North End, South End). After the Cattle Killing of 1857, there was a large influx of Xhosa refugees into the town, resulting in the overcrowding of the “Strangers’ Location” (top of Russell road) where “Hottentots, Fingoes and other strangers visiting Port Elizabeth” could temporarily reside.

Coopers Kloof location (off Albany Road) came into being in 1877 with a set of municipal regulations. At Strangers’ Location a faction fight led to the death of the superintendent and was seen as symptomatic of the dangers the area presented. The establishment of the Reservoir Location (in the vicinity of present day Mount Road) was done on the understanding that the Strangers’ Location would be moved and the residents re-housed in this facility. Instead it provided accommodation for the influx of a steady new stream of Africans into Port Elizabeth. The local authorities tried to outlaw squatting which by 1890 still had not been solved, with one third of Africans living outside of municipal and private locations.
By the middle of the 19th century many shops and modest homes had been built along Main Road, Queen and Princes Street (now Govan Mbeki Avenue) towards North End. Roads like Elizabeth Street, Kent and Middle Street all have houses that are more than 100 years old and although alterations have taken place in many, an effort has been made by the present owners to look after them.
4.4 History of the sites and area in question

In the light of Mfengu graves having been found on Richmond Hill near the old Erica School in the last couple of years, should any remains be unearthed during initial construction an archaeologist needs to be informed immediately and all proceedings must stop until his/her assessment has been made and SAHRA informed.

4.4.1 Erf 518

Erf 518 which is flanked by Eastbourne Road, Knowles Street, Wilkinson Street and Kent Road formed a green belt behind the early ribbon development along the coast. Elderly residents remember goats grazing on the land. It is not known whether lone graves of early Africans or Khoekhoen might be found there as it would have been open veld (there could be ancestral sites, but without an oral history study this cannot be verified).

Fig. 2 Section of Kent Road with early houses and the view of the Bay and grassy corner of Erf 518 -August 2010 (Photo: J Yates)
Erf 518 is 1,4751 hectares and was believed to originally have belonged to Mr Botha (not to be confused with J D Botha who was Councillor for the local Fresh Produce Market and former resident of 73 Eastbourne Road, Mount Croix). It was known alternatively as “Botha’s Trust”, Botha’s Playground and “The Outspan”. A wooden sign to that effect was originally in place on the north border, but later when it rotted away it was not replaced. “The Green”, as it later became known, was bulldozed to make a rugby and soccer field with tennis courts at the southern end.

Erf 518 was registered to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality on 12 October 1985. According to records from the Deeds Registry, document T33536/1985 shows no purchase date, amount or seller, but indicated that it was PTN of 392 and is registered as a Public Place (see Fig. 4). Oral history contends that Botha gave it to the municipality on the understanding that it would be an open space used for recreational purposes in perpetuity.
During the disastrous floods of 1st September 1968, water rushed down Eastbourne Road undermining much of the paving and washing away drains. Erf 518 experienced severe flooding in this event, and again but to a lesser extent in the 1981 floods.
Fig. 5 Undermined paving - 1968 Floods, Eastbourne Rd., Mount Croix

Fig. 6 During the floods of 1968, corner of Eastbourne Road and Knowles Street (note water rushing down Eastbourne Road)
Fig. 7 “The Green” filled with water during the 1968 floods

Over the years the field was used as a rugby and soccer field, first by Excelsior School who later could not afford the upkeep, and then by local youngsters on an ad hoc basis. In a letter to The Herald on 12 July 2007 Bassett LeLean, an owner of property directly opposite the open field wrote pleading for an upgrade of the space as this “Green” is used daily by up to 30-40 keen soccer addicts… as well as a great many smaller children playing cricket, tennis…”

Fig.8 Youngsters playing soccer with two plastic poles for goalposts
4.4.2 Erven 3217 and 1995

Historically these erven are recorded as being used as quarries from before 1920.

Fig.9 Erf 1995 (foreground) and 3217 (to left) looking towards Erica Girls’ School (Photo: J S Bennie)

In September 2008 notification of A Town Planning Amendment 6057, rezoning and closure of Erven 518, 1995 and 3127, Mount Road, took place. The properties were scheduled to change from Public Open Space and Transportation to Special Purposes (Social Housing) to cater for 700 people of all races. Objections to the rezoning were invited until October 2008.

Fig.10 Looking toward Alamein Court and Erica Girls’ School (Photo: J S Bennie)
5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Graves

There is probably only a very low possibility of finding lone graves in the area of study as all three of the sites have previously been disturbed. However, in the light of Mfengu graves being found on Richmond Hill near the old Erica School in the last couple of years, should any remains be found during initial construction, an archaeologist should be informed immediately and all proceedings must stop until his/her assessment has been made and SAHRA informed.

Historical structures

The impact of a large housing development in historical surroundings will be high in terms of the sense of space and ambience of the area although there will be no direct impact on neighbouring built structures.

Summary of anticipated impacts

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<th>Extent</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ambience - historical surroundings</td>
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<td>High</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>High</td>
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6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

This report is only the historical component of the Heritage Impact Assessment, which in itself should make provision for the protection of all heritage resources of architectural, archaeological, scientific, social, linguistic, spiritual or technological significance that are over 60 years old.

The conclusions and recommendations expressed in this historical investigation are based on some oral history and desktop research and may not truly reflect the entire situation.

The possibility of finding lone grave sites exists. Although there are no built structures on the erven, cogniscence should be taken of the fact that the area could be of ancestral cultural significance to some groups.
The historical report will be assessed by the relevant heritage resources authority and the final decision rests with them regarding granting a permit or letter of authority for permission to destroy any cultural site.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 General

In terms of the requirements of the National Heritage Act 1999 (No 25 of 1999), the following recommendations are made regarding the significance of the three erven under discussion even though there are no historical structures on the land.

• Some documentary (see above) and oral evidence (interviews with those who currently live in the area as well as with former residents) exists that indicates the previous positive impact of the open space known as ‘The Green’ on the social and cultural heritage of the historical neighbourhood. In an area which has been occupied since the early 19th century cognisance should be taken of ensuring that a similar open space facility is provided especially in view of the density of the new housing project.

• The historical ambience of the area needs to be considered and every effort made to prevent the new housing development from changing the integrity of the suburb. As the sites will be subjected to developmental, environmental and natural pressures, the developer will need to be responsible for managing the project sensitively, preventing it from negatively impacting on the cultural heritage of groups historically resident in the locale.

• “Buy-in” from as wide a number of stakeholders as possible is recommended if the general Environmental Management Plan forming part of the EIA is to be effective. These stakeholders will obviously come from the local population whose needs have to be taken into consideration. Education on the significance and necessity of the utilisation of vacant ground in the area needs to be emphasised to both old and new residents. Broad consultancy is therefore paramount.

6.2.2 Burial grounds and graves

The following requirements in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, (No 25 of 1999), 36, are noted:

• (3) a) No person may, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency or provincial heritage resources authority-
  • (b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
  • (c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph a or b any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

• (4) SAHRA or PHRA may not issue a permit for the damage or destruction of any burial ground or grave unless it is satisfied that the applicant has made
satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such graves at the cost of the applicant and in accordance with any regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority.

- (5) The applicant must have made a concerted effort to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such graves or burial grounds and reached agreements regarding the future of such graves or burial grounds.

- (6) During the course of any development, the discovery of any previously unknown graves or burial sites must result in the immediate cessation of activities and the discovery must be reported to the responsible heritage resources authority (SAHRA) who in turn with the South African Police Service will carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such a grave is protected in terms of the Act or is of significance to any community. If it is, assistance must be given to any person or community to make arrangements for exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such graves or in the absence of any such person or community make arrangements as it deems fit.

Should any remains be found during initial construction an archaeologist needs to be informed immediately and all proceedings must stop until his/her assessment has been made and SAHRA informed.
REFERENCES


4. Harradine, Margaret 1996. Port Elizabeth – a social chronicle to the end of 1945. Published by EH Walton Group


6. Port Elizabeth Express, Wednesday, 15 October 2008

7. The Herald, 22 October 2008

8. The Weekend Post 28 August, 2010


10. Letters:

11. To: E Greeff Land Planning 17 October 2008 from Miss J Yates

12. Cllr J Davis 28 September 2008 from Executive Director: Housing and Land

13. Madam Speaker and Madam Mayor from Jeremy Davis (no date)
ANNEXURE 1
ANNEXURE 3

Typical Elevation
MOUNT CROIX APARTMENTS

Typical Elevation
MOUNT CROIX APARTMENTS