ANNEXURE D
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Guidelines for Property Owners and Managers

Groot Constantia and Vergelegen Estates

Revised May 2018
SAFEGUARDING ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology is the study of human cultures by analysing the material remains (sites and artefacts) that people left behind, from the distant to recent past. Archaeological sites are non-renewable, very susceptible to disturbance and are finite in number. They are protected by law. Archaeological remains can be exposed during activities such as digging holes and trenching, or clearing ground, or when doing building maintenance and construction – or merely by chance discovery. Unlike the natural environment, a deposit that has been bulldozed away by mistake cannot be restored.

The purpose of this document is to promote preservation of archaeological information while minimising disruption to projects or routine activities. It provides procedures to follow in the case of planned interventions and developments, or in the case of a chance archaeological find, to ensure that artefacts and sites are documented and protected.

Archaeological sites are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA). According to the NHRA, all material remains resulting from human activity that have been abandoned for more than 100 years ago are the property of the State and may not be removed from their place of origin without a permit from the provincial heritage resources authority (Heritage Western Cape (HWC)) or from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). See HWC Regulations. In addition, the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) makes provision for assessment of impacts that activities such as large developments will have on archaeological heritage.

“Archaeological site” means any place where material remains resulting from human activity have been abandoned and have been in a state of disuse for more than 100 years, including hominid remains, artefacts and refuse, rock art, human remains outside of areas formally declared as cemeteries in the past, artificial features and structures that are no longer standing and any place where features, structures and artefacts associated with military history have been abandoned and in a state of disuse for more than 75 years” REGULATIONS MADE BY HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE IN TERMS OF SECTION 25(2)(h) of the NHRA.

Only archaeologists with a permit are allowed to disturb archaeological remains, excavate or destroy archaeological sites, or remove artefacts. The reason for the permit system is that whenever you take artefacts away from their original place, you destroy the contextual evidence and can never reconstruct the details that might tell you how old they are, who made them, what they were made for, and what they are associated with. It is better to leave the archaeological material in its original place and protect it there, than to remove it. An artefact without context has no meaning.

“Excavation or rescue of [archaeological] material is managed, in the Western Cape, through the HWC permitting (S 35 NHRA) or Workplan (S 38 NHRA) approval process and it is required that: (a) Excavation, collection or removal of material takes place only after the necessary permissions are obtained from HWC; (b) A permit is issued only to a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist with the relevant specialisation for the work that has been applied for.” HWC GUIDELINES: MANAGEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

When archaeologists make collections or do excavations, they keep stringent records, just as detectives do at the scene of a crime. There are guidelines and set minimum standards. If properly investigated by trained people, sites and artefacts provide information about the history of the earlier inhabitants of South Africa, and even our grandparents, that cannot be found in written records. This evidence is fragile and is often destroyed in the process of being studied. Because it is irreplaceable and cannot be renewed, careful records must be kept during excavation or collection. The subsequent reports and publications are lodged with the heritage authority and become available to the public.

“A person who has obtained a permit from Heritage Western Cape to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or meteorite for a period of one year or less must (subject to paragraph (b)) submit a final report within two years of the anniversary date on which the said permit was first issued, unless Heritage Western Cape has given written permission for extension of
Archaeological sites are graded according to their significance, in a similar manner to the built environment. The more research that is conducted on a site; the more likely it becomes that higher significance will be assigned to the site. Furthermore, archaeological and palaeontological residues represent only a fraction of the evidence that was once available. So much is lost over time that rarity becomes a significant criterion in grading. Small and insignificant-looking sites may carry high scientific and cultural significance. Sites graded as having Medium / Low / ‘local’ significance may contribute immensely to our understanding even beyond the local level.

IDENTIFYING ARCHAEOLOGY

In South Africa the oldest artefacts found are generally stone tools or pots made of fired clay as they survive a long time, but under favourable circumstances artefacts survive that were made from bone, shell, ostrich eggshell, wood, plant fibre, leather and metal such as iron or copper. Archaeological evidence can also be rock paintings and rock engravings. More recent artefacts include objects made of materials such as metal alloys, glass and ceramics, textiles and plastics.

Most people visualise archaeological sites as being buried beneath the ground. Above-ground archaeological sites and features can include earthworks, roads, walls, buildings and other structures. Fields, orchards and gardens are an important part of our heritage. Many aspects of these adapted and designed landscapes will be visible above ground, but earlier traces may only survive as below-ground archaeological features.

One way that sites are found is by people going out and looking for them - a survey. There has been previous archaeological work on the Vergelegen and Groot Constantia Estates, and these reports form a basis for predicting where future archaeological finds may occur and to flag areas of archaeological sensitivity. Archaeological work at Vergelegen has built up a substantial body of information, but there are still areas that need investigation. Groot Constantia would benefit from investment in a review of existing research, which is only reported in preliminary drafts, and an assessment of potential archaeological work with recommendations for predictive surveys.
The second way archaeological sites are found is by accident. They are discovered by people walking on the farms, digging to make a road, or clearing away vegetation and soil to build a new structure. Archaeological evidence can also be hidden behind the plaster of a wall or under the floorboards of a building. Accidental discoveries can be costly and disruptive.

If archaeological remains are found while gardening or clearing vegetation or laying an irrigation pipe, leave them in place or, if already disturbed, place them nearby in a safe place, make a note of the location or take a GPS reading, and take photographs for purposes of identification. Inform an archaeologist who can assess the significance of the find. If there are several artefacts in a dense cluster or associated with a feature that may be an archaeological site, leave them in place, stop work and inform an archaeologist.

Family burial grounds can be found on many farms in the Western Cape, such as the Colijn and Cloete plots on Groot Constantia (Provincial Heritage Sites). Graves were reported to have once been present in the area around the Colijn vaults, but these were destroyed when the land was cleared for vineyards. Brick rubble was observed in the vineyard surrounding the vault in 1996, indicating that it is quite likely that there are other graves beneath the topsoil. Farm workers were also buried on the farmlands. If graves or human remains are found, they must be left exactly where they are, if necessary protecting the site and covering them from sight. Human remains, and the surrounding archaeological context, must not be disturbed or moved without a permit from HWC.

**COMMISSIONING ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK**

Archaeological work must be proactive and pre-emptive, not simply monitoring of development-related interventions. There is a place for reactive archaeological work and monitoring, such as when a chance find is made. However, in general, the approach must be that archaeological investigation is required prior to any interventions in either the built fabric or soils throughout both farms, in particular of the core heritage areas. Exemptions can be made for specific areas or activities that will definitely not impact the archaeological record.

It is international best practice to commission and conduct an archaeological assessment before the proposing of interventions, the submission of planning applications, or applications affecting known archaeological sites. Even a simple hole for a post or tree, or a trench for irrigation pipes, can destroy
archaeological evidence. It is the nature of archaeological evidence that until the research is done, the extent and significance of the remains is not known. Stopping work for archaeologists to clear the site costs money, and it is harder to adapt masterplans and programme planning if it is necessary to mitigate the impact of the activity or development upon the archaeology, by having to leave it in place.

If artefacts or features are exposed during minor earthworks or building works, the following procedures should be followed.

- All construction activity in the vicinity should cease immediately;
- The find location should be recorded, and all remains left in place;
- The project archaeologist (if there is one) or a heritage authority should be contacted;
- Potential significance of the remains will be assessed and mitigation options identified;
- If the remains are deemed significant and warrant further action, and they cannot be avoided, then the archaeologist / authority will determine the appropriate course of action. A permit must be obtained.

Human remains found on the estates are likely to be archaeological. Graves are automatically assigned a Grade IIIA significance. If suspected human remains are found, immediately stop work and seal off the site.

- HWC / an archaeologist and the police must be notified. If the remains are, or may be, older than 100 years (‘archaeological’), the police must consult with an archaeologist and/or physical anthropologist.
- If they are assessed to be archaeological, then HWC must be consulted to determine how to handle them and a permit must be obtained. Options could include avoidance or respectful removal and reburial, for example.
- Historical graves and burial grounds include the place of burial as well as the contents, headstones or any other markers or structures on or associated with the place.
- If burials are to be removed, there are stringent protocols, for instance all efforts have to be made to identify and contact interested parties such as descendants.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND MONITORING PROGRAMME

Archaeological conservation management is best served through an ongoing and regular programme of awareness-raising and information-sharing with the managers and staff of both estates. This can be used reinforce the heritage requirements of the ICMP in the context of the day to day running of the farms, but can also serve as a platform to educate those who live and work on the farms about the heritage of their place of work.

The following Guiding Conservation Principles stated in section 8 of the ICMP, relate to archaeology:

- Need to acknowledge a range of heritage values;
- Respect for historical layering;
- Cultural landscapes;
- Multi-disciplinary approach;
- Enabling development;
- Education and training; knowledge skills and techniques;
- Public consultation;
- Interpretation;
- Respect for intangible elements of heritage;
- Transformation and inclusivity;
- Documenting and recording;
- Heritage, tourism and economic growth.
A priority for the future is the more effective communication of knowledge about the past, and this requires the initial steps of demystifying the process whereby academic knowledge is produced. Archaeological evidence lends itself as a mode of communication. Workshops at Vergelegen in 1993 highlighted the fact that physical, tactile accessibility to objects improves participants’ learning experience of the material. It elicits a great deal more interest than an object which is visibly accessible, but inaccessible in every other way in its position behind a secured glass case. A great strength of historical period objects is that people can recognise them and make links with their own experiences.

The NHRA prioritises “sites of slavery” as a criterion for assessing heritage significance (and therefore a focus for research), which has inadvertently been at the expense of indigenous groups of hunter-herders and their descendants (many of whom also had slave and settler ancestry). At Groot Constantia there is an increasing emphasis on the estate’s wine-producing history. Pastoralists and hunter-gatherers would have used the original natural pool that was filled from water courses that run down the mountainside, long before it passed into private ownership in the 17th and 18th centuries. Vergelegen has incorporated pre-colonial and descendant community history into its exhibits. However, it is acknowledged that tangible remains of those earlier periods are rare at Vergelegen and Groot Constantia, as they have been dispersed or obliterated by subsequent farming and building developments. If artefacts are found, their value is therefore all the greater.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AUTHORITY AND PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS**

Heritage Western Cape, with the professional assistance of its Archaeology, Palaeontology & Meteorites Committee, is responsible for assessing and approving Permits for archaeological work, and archaeology Workplans for Environmental Impact Assessments. Contact HWC at:

+27(0) 21 483 5959 or hwc.hwc@westerncape.gov.za / www.hwc.org.za.

Most archaeologists in Southern Africa belong to the **Association of Southern African Archaeologists** (ASAPA) and some are registered as Cultural Resource Managers (CRM) who are accredited to do certain types of specialist archaeological work and at different levels of project management. A list of CRM members can be found at: www.asapa.org.za.

Some archaeologists also belong to the **Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners** (W. Cape):

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