CHAPTER 2

Wupperthal in context

Fig. 2.1 Historic church of Pella (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.3 Genadendal, garden (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2. 4 Genadendal, aerial photograph (Fransen 1987)

Fig. 2.2 Genadendal, old mill (Grogan 1878)

TOWNS OF THE CAPE
BY 1850
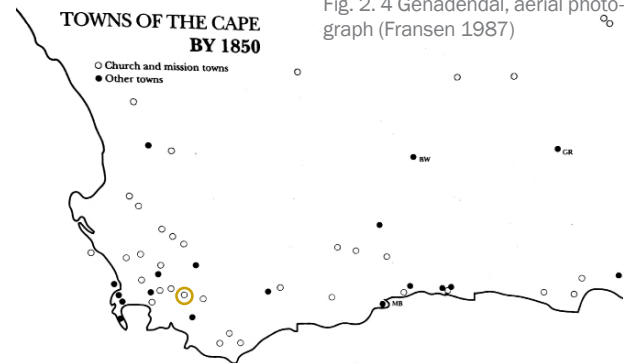○ Church and mission towns
● Other towns

Fig. 2.5 Towns of the Cape, Genadendal (Fransen 1987)

In order to understand Wupperthal as a mission station it should be understood in the context of the larger Western Cape mission movement during the establishment of the colonial empire. Chapter 1 sketched the background to this mission movement that originated from an increased mission drive in Europe. In this chapter Wupperthal will be compared to the Moravian mission stations of Genadendal, Mamre, Pella and Elim.

2.1 GENADENDAL 1738

Genadendal was the first mission station to be established in the Western Cape. It was established by George Schmidt of the Moravian church. It was also the mission station that Leipoldt visited before establishing Wupperthal to see how a mission station was run. With efforts from the Dutch government Genadendal was restored as part of their shared heritage campaign. The restoration was mainly focused around the historic core of Genadendal where the buildings as well as elements within the landscape were restored. The restoration of Genadendal was executed in the hope that it would uplift the community and preserve the historic urban landscape yet the larger area has transformed under new development and modern building techniques (Figure 2.8 - 2.9). Greyton, situated a mere 5km from Genadendal, is an example of gentrification where an entire community has been displaced by wealthier residents.

Land tenure: Private ownership of residential homes
Current condition: Historic core has been restored and functions as a museum with an active church. Increasing development affects the historic quality of the town within the larger town. The garden in Genadendal adds to the sense of place (Figure 2.3). The use of agricultural land has declined over the years.
Historic function: Teachers college, grain mill, school, production of knives and the oldest pipe organ in South Africa
Current Function: Museum, church, school, tea garden, knives, bookshop, accommodation, printing museum and restaurant
Conservation: Declared as a world heritage site (UNESCO) for its historic urban landscape (core and settlement).

2.2 MAMRE 1808

Although the church of Mamre still plays an active role in its community, its influence is limited to the church 'werf'. All residents own their property. The agricultural lands are however still visible but not used for its original purpose. There are a variety of shops within Mamre to cater for their household needs.

Fig. 2.6 Genadendal, church (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.7 Genadendal, old house type (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.8 Genadendal, new development (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.9 Genadendal, new building (Franklin 2015)

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Fig. 2.10 Mamre, aerial photograph (Fransen 1987)

Fig. 2.11 Mamre, church (Franklin 2015)

F12 Mamre, modern houses (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.13 Mamre, church office (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.14 Mamre, agricultural fields (Franklin 2015)
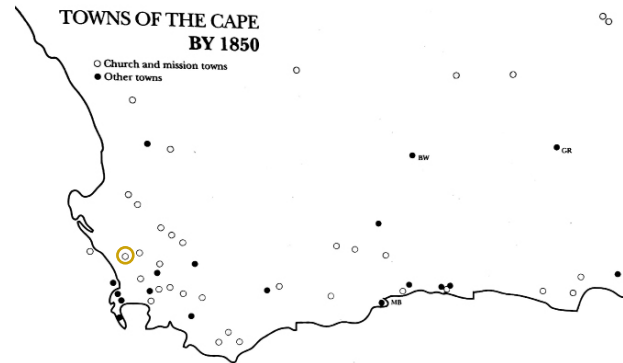

Fig. 2.15 Mamre, mission shop (Grogan 1878)

Fig. 2.16 Towns of the Cape, Mamre (Fransen 1987)

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Mamre is further located in close proximity to Atlantis with direct bus access to Cape Town. The church therefore does not have to look after their 'temporal' well-being as was the case in historic mission stations.

Land tenure: Private ownership, historic core still belongs to the church
Current condition: Historic core is in a good condition, very little reference remains to the original house type. Agricultural land has shown a decline over the years (Figure 2.14). Outside 'werf' once formed part of the ambience, now subject to forgotten and over-grazed condition. Most buildings are still in use. The soup kitchen attracts individuals onto the 'werf' that is fairly isolated from the rest of the town.
Historic function: Grain mill, school, church
Current function: Tea house, cookhouse (soup kitchen), school and church
Conservation: 'Werf' buildings restored (declared National Monument)

2.3 PELLA (Outstation of Mamre) 1869

Pella is one of the outstations of Mamre with no obvious reference to a mission station. Today it merely operates as a traditional town. The only visual reference to its historic function is the old church ruins and the graveyard (Figure 2.1 and 2.17). These two elements do not form part of the formal town and will not be seen without the help of the residents living there. None of the structures have any reference left to the 19th century architecture that was prominent during the time that the mission station was established.

Land tenure: Private ownership
Current condition: Poor (little reference to mission station left)
Conservation: None
Historic function: Outstation of Mamre (church, post office and school)
Current function: Post office, new church, school and bus stations linking to Cape Town

2.4 ELIM 1824

Elim is situated close to Bredasdorp. This small mission station is still influenced by the church and although lands are privately owned, a coherence exists in the architecture of the town in the historic core and settlement. Recent upgrades re-aligned the main road on the church axis and a series of walls. These upgrades are a direct result of needed infrastructure. Although these upgrades do not directly address the economic decline of the town, it adds to the sense of place and pride for its residents.

Fig. 2.17 Pella, graveyard (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.18 Pella, rectory (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.19 Pella, typical street (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.20 Pella, play park (Franklin 2015)

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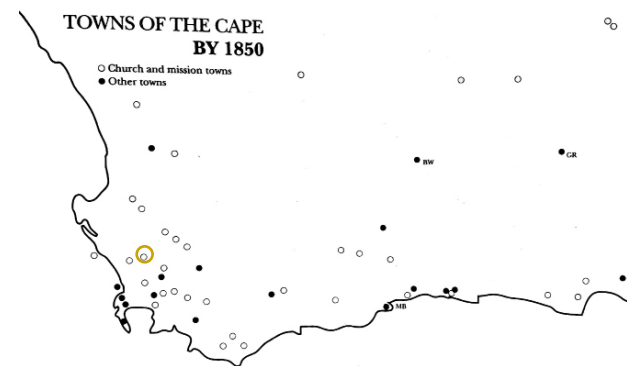Fig. 2.21 Washerwoman of Pella
(Grogan 1978)

Fig. 2.22 Towns of the Cape, Pella
(Fransen 1987)

Land tenure: Land claims, private ownership
Current condition: Only other mission station where the settlement (entire) as well as the core still reflects the old house type in its style. Agricultural lands are still in use.
Conservation: Core and settlement (Provincial heritage)
Historic function: Wild flower export, thatch, mission mill products, wine production, slave memorial.
Current function: tea room, dairy farm, and oldest water wheel still in use.

Fig. 2.24 Elim, aerial photograph (Fransen 1987)

Fig. 2.25 Upgrades to Elim (Fransen

Fig. 2.26 Elim, entrance (Google 2015)
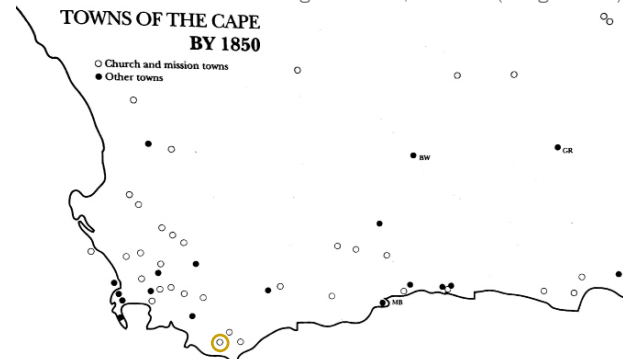

Fig. 2.23 Elim, mission church (Grogan 1878)

Fig. 2.27 Towns of the Cape, Genadendal (Fransen 1987)

2.5 WUPPERTHAL 1830

Wupperthal was established as a Rhenish mission station and in 1965 handed over to the Moravian mission society, Wupperthal in its isolation is situated on the edge of the Cederberg and is still under administration of the church.

Land tenure: Church own all land; fields and houses are rented at a small fee
Current condition: Core as well as settlement is in a good condition. The agricultural fields are still in use on a daily basis. The community still functions on a sharecropping system. It is completely isolated in its location on the edge of the Cederberg. The greater Wupperthal area consists of 14 outpost that form part of the mission settlement.
Conservation: Core and settlement (Provincial heritage)
Historic function: Shoe factory, glove and hat factory, tannery, livestock farming, tobacco, rooibos tea production, mission shop, post office, school and church.
Current function: Shoe factory, rooibos tea production, mission shop, post office, school and church.

Fig. 2.29 Wupperthal, aerial photograph (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.30 Wupperthal, mission church (Franklin 2015)
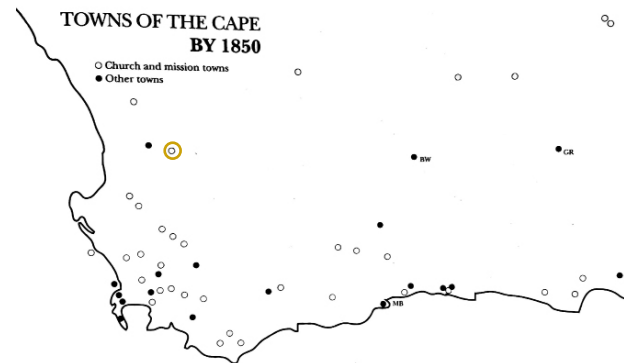

Fig. 2.28 Wupperthal (Grogan 1978)

TOWNS OF THE CAPE BY 1850
○ Church and mission towns
● Other towns

Fig. 2.31 Towns of the Cape, Wupperthal (Fransen 1987)

2.6 SUMMARY, Wupperthal in context

Wupperthal is the only mission station still under complete administration of the church. Genadendal was a good case study to understand the restoration of a mission station as well as the impact it can have on the community. In the cultural landscape of Wupperthal care should be taken not to turn the historic core into a museum, but rather continue to function as a working town in order to cater for the needs of an active community. The upgrades in Elim also proved valuable as a case study to understand the framing of historic elements with a new take on existing materials. Pella shows the complete destruction of a mission station due to change and development.

Wupperthal, Genadendal and Elim are the only three mission stations in the Cape where the core as well as the settlement is worthy of conservation. Even though modern construction material is prevalent, Wupperthal is however the only mission station that has not really been affected by new development. All additional houses constructed are built in a style to fit in with the historic house type. Some of the thatched roofs have been replaced with corrugated iron sheets and some of the old window frames with iron frames. Buildings are however subject to neglect and high maintenance cost that is difficult for all households to keep up. Wupperthal differs from the rest of the mission stations in its historic core. Genadendal and Mamre has a carefully laid out and formulated core while Wupperthal still has a werf-like feel to it.

The most important build elements in Wupperthal include the church building, the school, the factory buildings, the agricultural lands and the irrigation channel (Heyns 1980: 95). In a telephonic interview with one of the residents of Wupperthal special reference was made to the significance of the shoe factory as well as the rooibos industry. Perceptions were also tested on site amongst residents and visitors to the aspects of the land by the ordering of a series of photographs from most to least characteristic of Wupperthal. Some of the findings included the lack of appreciation for Wupperthal. Most visitors merely looked for the church, shoe factory and something to eat and then left again, failing to recognise some of the photos shown (Figure 2.32). Residents as well as visitors unanimously chose the same photographs as favourite (Figure 2.32 and 2.33) and least favourite (Figure 2.34). They all recognise the charm of Wupperthal in its historic building techniques and perceive the modern influence on the town as destructive.

Fig. 2.32 Wupperthal, residential street (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.33 Wupperthal, town square (Franklin 2015)

Fig 2.34 Wupperthal, rooibos factory (Franklin 2015)

Fig. 2.35 Wupperthal, pedestrian bridge (Franklin 2015)