

02

Fortification of Pretoria Historical Influence



fig. 2.1. Sketch indicating the entrance to West Fort. (2010)

+ West Fort Institution

According to historian, R.C de Jong, in the late 1880's a hospital for research into and treatment of smallpox was established on the outskirts of Pretoria. It was named Daspoort Hospital, because it was situated at the foot of the southern slope of the Daspoortrand or Witwaterberg. However, the facility was used since its inception as a hospital for leprosy patients. The earliest reference to the hospital is by the official architect of the ZAR Government, Zytse Wierda (1839 – 1911), in 1888. At this stage the hospital consisted of four rooms with an outside toilet, and housed eight patients. Leprosy barracks were added in 1890. Further accommodation was required in 1892 and additional bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen and dining hall were constructed. Daspoort Hospital housed 99 patients by 1896 (1999:66).

West Fort Hospital was originally built as an extension of Daspoort Hospital, but these two facilities soon merged to become known as the Pretoria Leprosy Hospital. In Wierda's guideline document to his architects and to the hospital staff, he stated that the place should provide in the most humane way a pleasant and attractive residence for those "unfortunates" who, through an incurable infectious disease, should be tied to it for as long as they lived. The first buildings were erected in 1898 and consisted of an administration block, smallpox clinic and staff accommodation. Initially lay people were appointed to manage the hospital, but in 1900 Dr Von Gernet were appointed medical officer in charge on a part-time basis.

The structures built during the ZAR period are characteristic of the type of building erected by the Department of Public Works under Wierda: elegantly proportioned, substantially built brick structures with corrugated iron roofs, stone plinths and sandstone detailing. Examples of these are the administration building, the post office, two of the staff residences and an octagonal Dutch Reformed Church. Some of the buildings from this period have been finished in stucco, such as the dispensary, certain dormitories for patients and the first hospital buildings (1999:66).

Hospital

1880

West Fort

1898

Roads

1906

Catholic church

1914

Transferring of patients

1918 - 1931

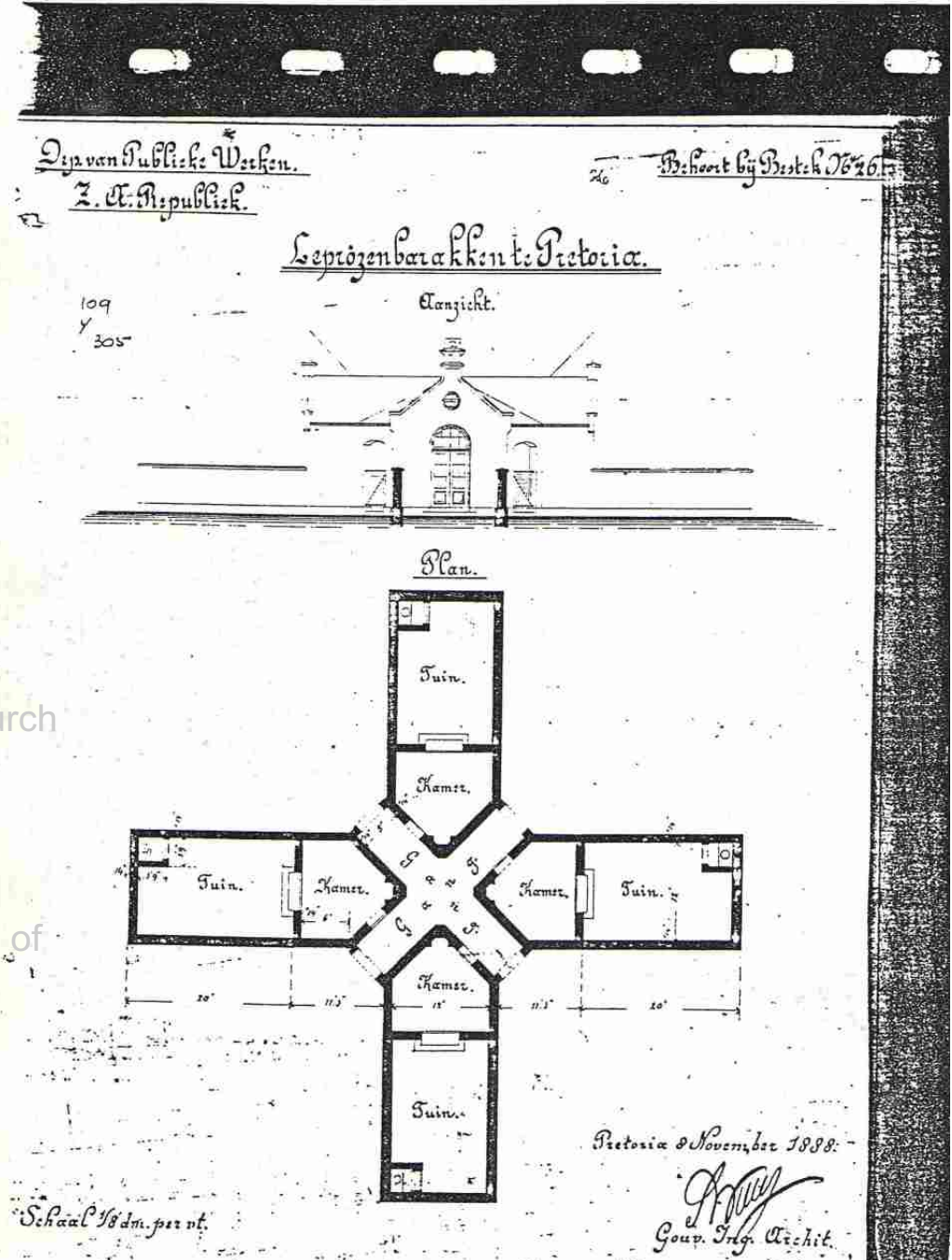


Fig. 2.2. Original plan of West fort hospital. (1996: 93)

It is likely that, due to the threat of war, further construction of buildings was halted as materials and labour were required for the construction of Fort Daspoortrand on the ridge above the hospital. In the first year 99 patients from Daspoort, 100 from Pankop and 6 from Rietfontein were transferred to West Fort. By 1902, 328 patients were housed at the hospital (ibid). The institutions was divided into White, Black and Indian sections, with males and females housed separately. First full-time medical superintendent was Dr George Turner from 1901 to 1906 (1999:67).

The institution managed its own farm during the early 20th century. With its own post-office, police station, churches, school and shops, it can be regarded as a virtually independent settlement. In February 1906 roads, a wall around the hospital and other site works were completed. An Anglican Catholic church was built in 1914, and in 1916 a Roman Catholic church was constructed. A carpentry shop, smithy, bookbinding shop and milk depot were added soon after. In 1917 eight watchtowers were erected to prevent patients from escaping.

A remarkable feature of the period 1900-1918 is the low brick and sandstone walls that enclose a number of wards. Apart from the stained glass windows and the panels painted by the artist Frank Brangwyn (now removed), the Roman Catholic church building possesses no exceptional architectural qualities. The same can be said of the Methodist church. The finest of the three churches built during this period is the Swiss Mission church, built in an Arts-and-Crafts style. The earliest workshop buildings are prefabricated, corrugated iron structure.

By 1918, all the leprosy patients in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State had been transferred to West Fort. The institution then housed 892 patients. In 1931 the leprosy hospital on Robben Island was closed down, as the island was required for other functions, and the patients were transferred to West Fort, pushing the patient population up to 2000. Under the auspices of the Department of Public Works, a number of substantial face-brick buildings were erected during this period (1999:67).



Fig. 2.3. West fort hospital: Pharmacy. (1996: 90)



Fig. 2.4. Burial places next to the hospital of leprosy patients. (1996: 97)

The most prominent buildings dating back from this time are the kitchen complex, theatre and store. With other leprosy hospitals closing down and patients being transferred to West Fort, more accommodation was needed, thus necessitating the construction of additional wards. As it was still believed at the time that leprosy was a highly contagious disease, the original pattern of constructing isolated rooms was followed. A new structural type was a concrete roofed *rondavel*, an attempt at making Black patients from traditional areas feel more at home (*ibid*).

This constitutes to a vernacular being created for the user to familiarize himself with his surroundings and "contain" a certain *genius loci*.

1. Church
2. Watchtower
3. Administration building
4. Postoffice
5. Living quarters
6. Hospital
7. Pharmacy
8. Inspection rooms
9. Wall
10. School
11. Dwellings
12. Police barracks
13. Nurse quarters

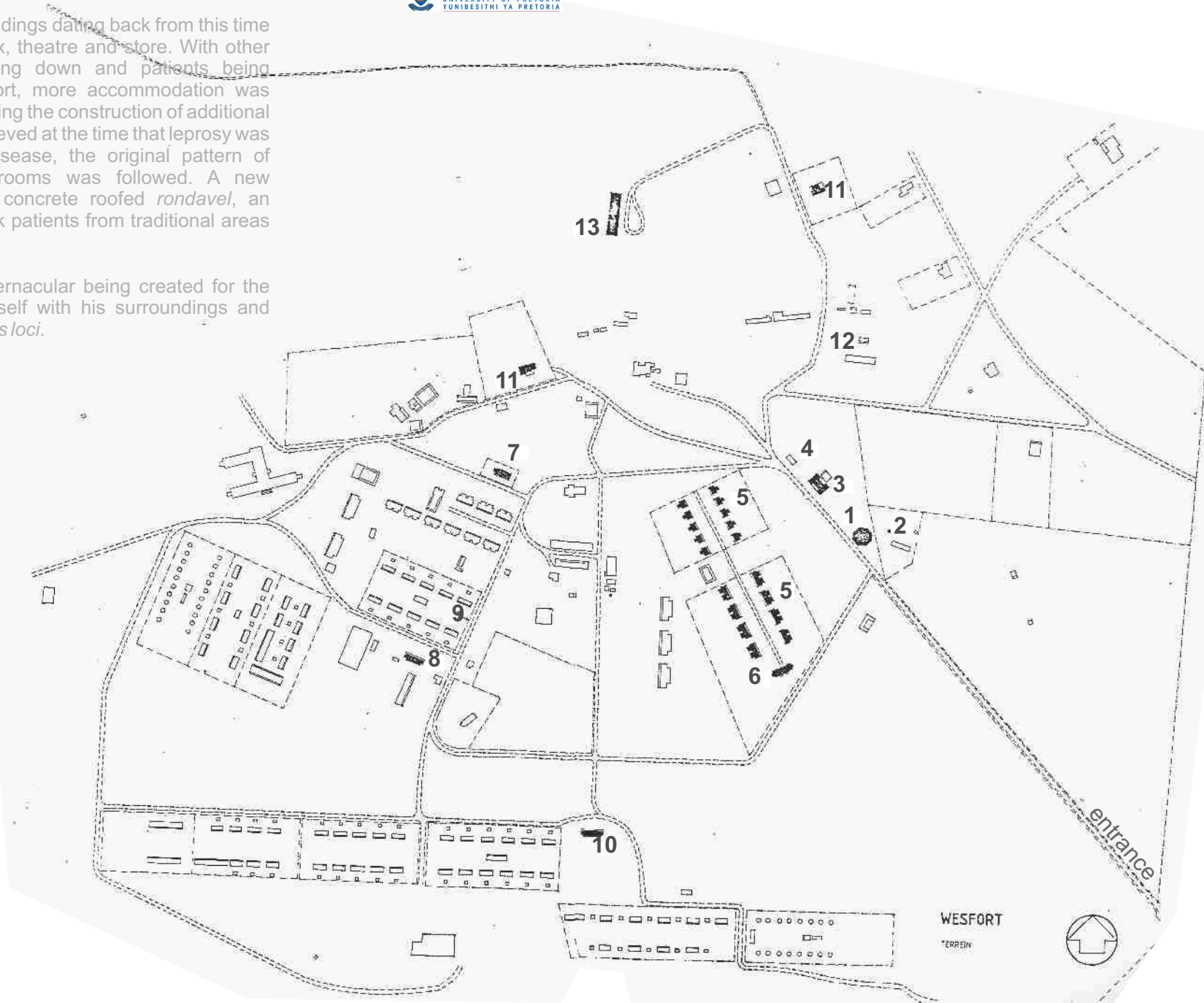
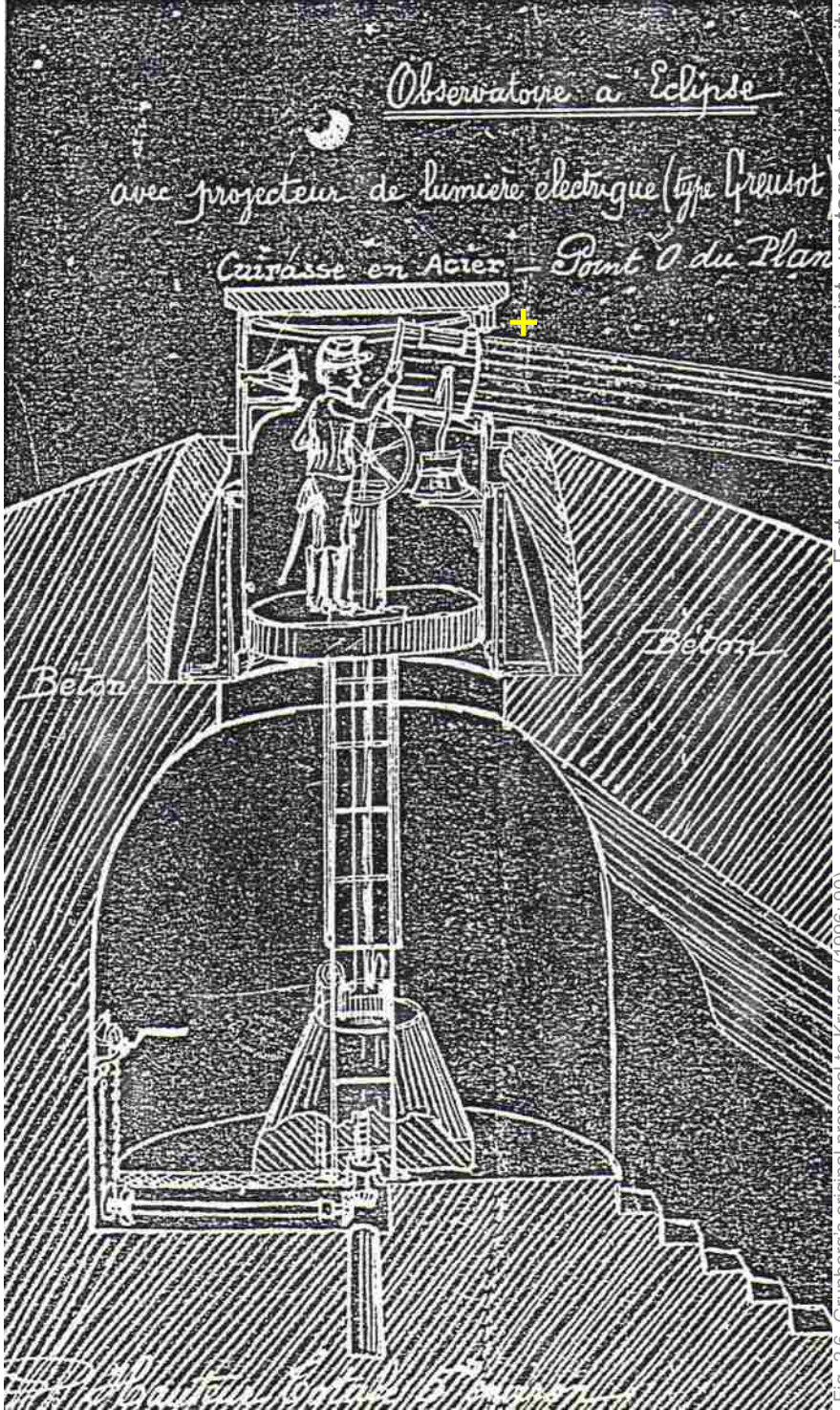


Fig. 2.5. 1890 site plan of West fort hospital and village. (1996: 97)



Fort as observation point - vantage point over city

Fig. 2.6. Grunberg's original proposal to Kruger. (1996: 90)

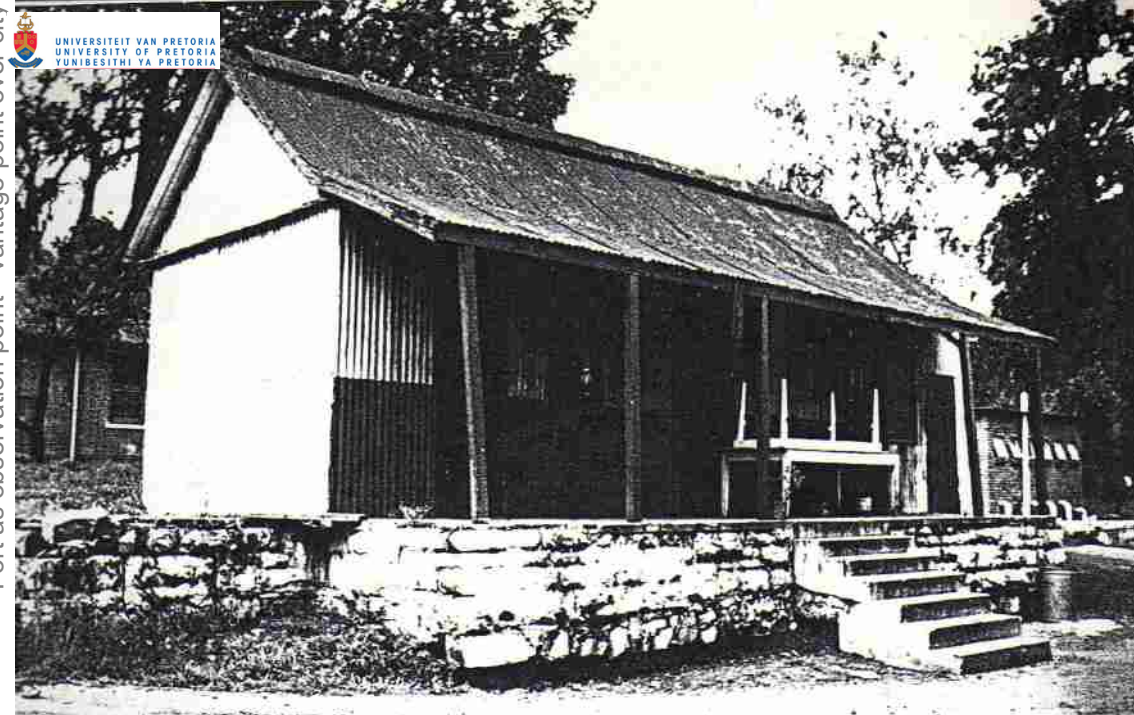
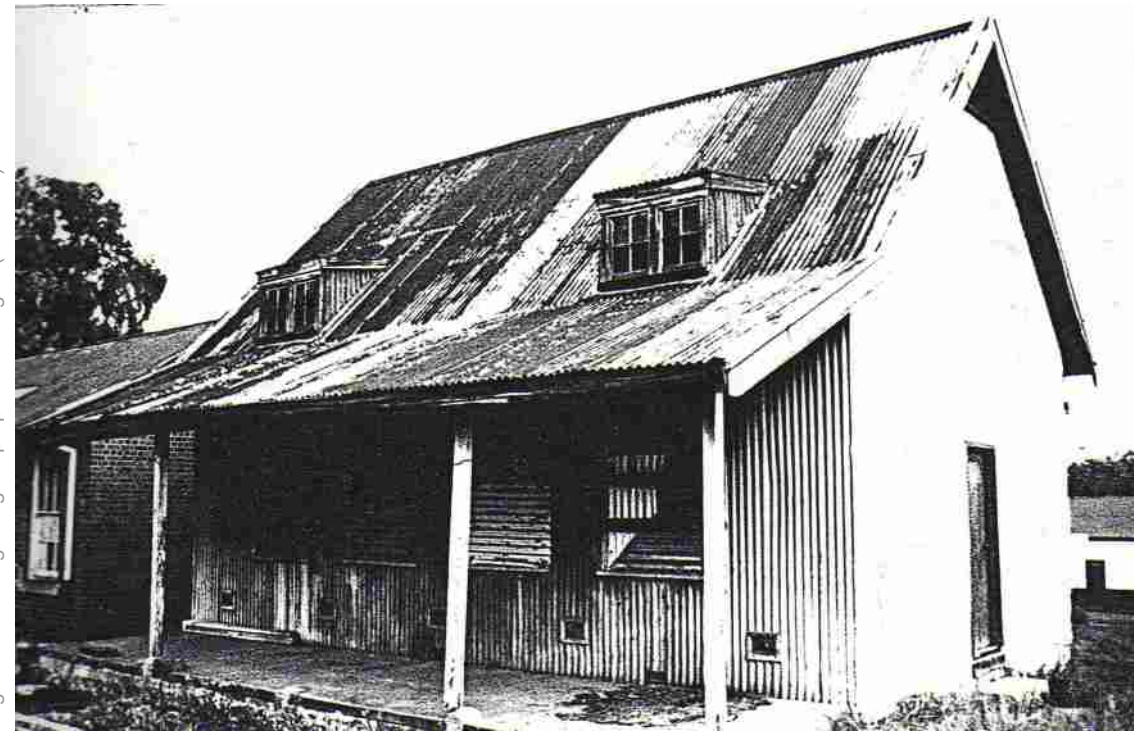


Fig. 2.7. West fort hospital: Workshed & Pharmacy. (1996: 90)



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S. A. Republiek

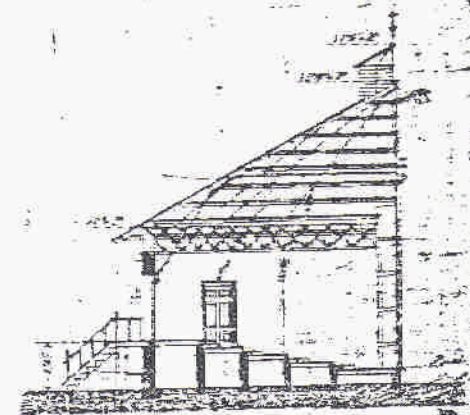
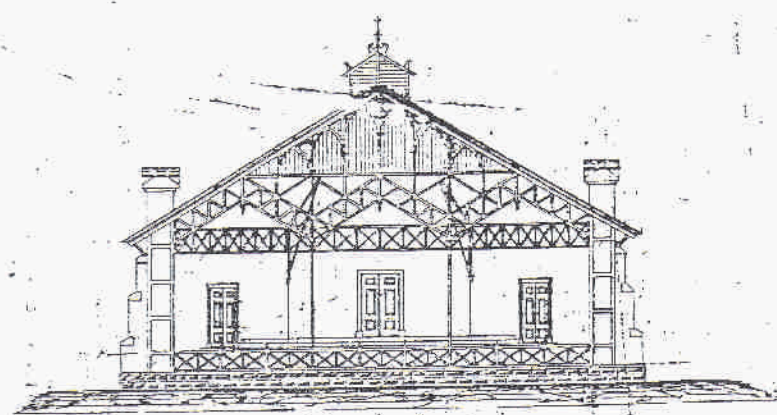
Seproxon in zichting te Pretoria
Open keek gebou w. c. a.

Bekannt by beslek n^o 149
Teekening n^o 1

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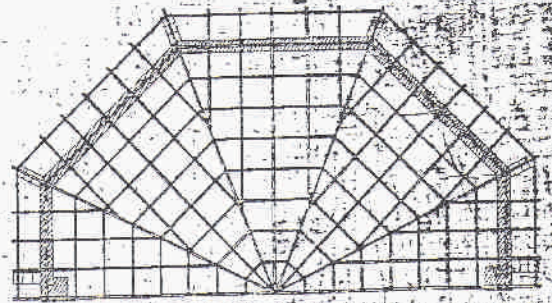
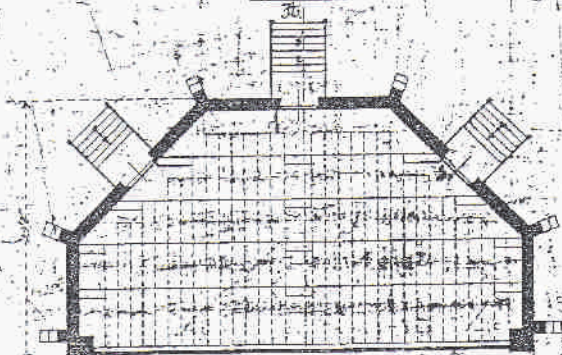
Danicht A.

Doornede St. B.



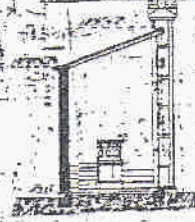
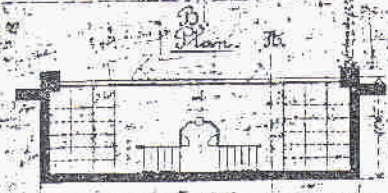
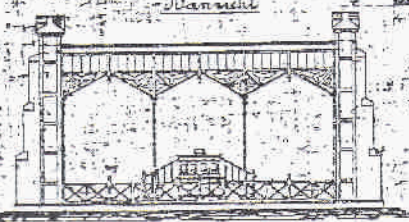
Plan

Kappelan



Plan n^o 1

Doornede St. B.



Pretoria 4 Aug 1896

[Signature]
Hoofd van Publ. Werken

Fig. 2.8. 1896 original plan of the church in the village. (1996: 93)

Gebouw voor Docters - Directie en Administratie.
A.

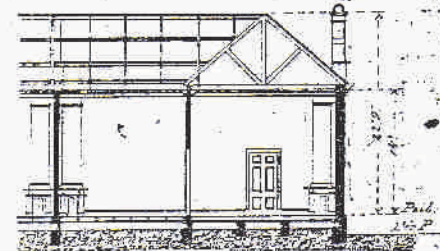
Voorgevel.



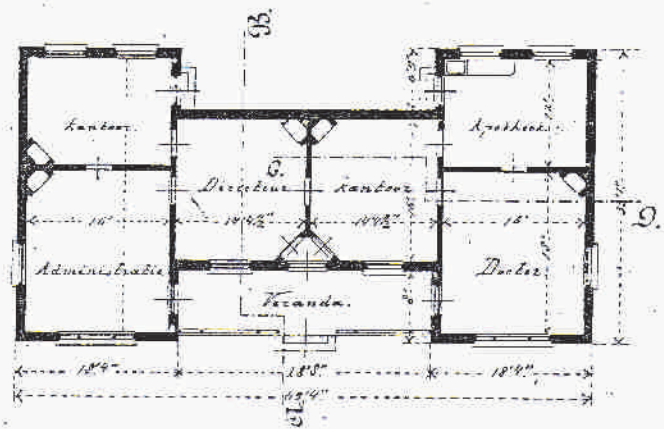
Doorsnede C. B.



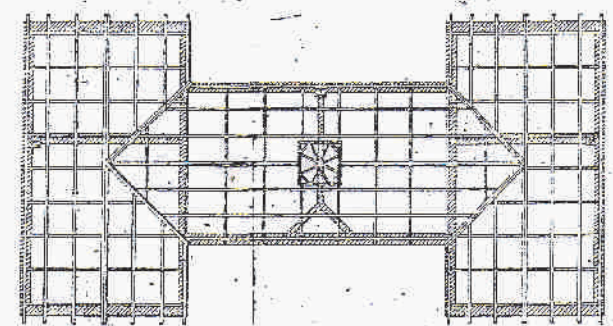
Doorsnede C. D.



Plan.



Kapplan.



Pretoria 20 Juni 1895

[Signature]
Hoofd van Publieke Werken

Schaal 1/8" per Voet.

Doorn van N. v. l. Wecken.
E. O. Republiek.

Behoort bij Bestek N^o 549
Teekening N^o 2.

Leproseninrichting bij Pretoria

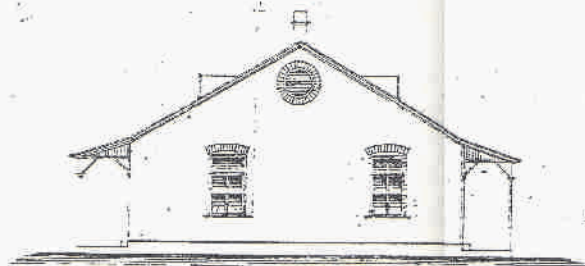
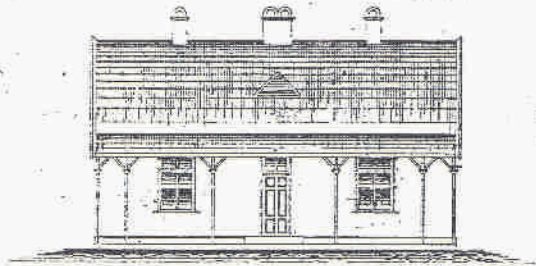
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Centraal Keuken-gebouw

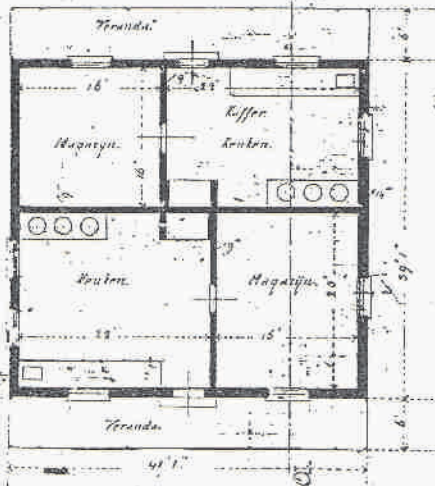
Voorgevel

B

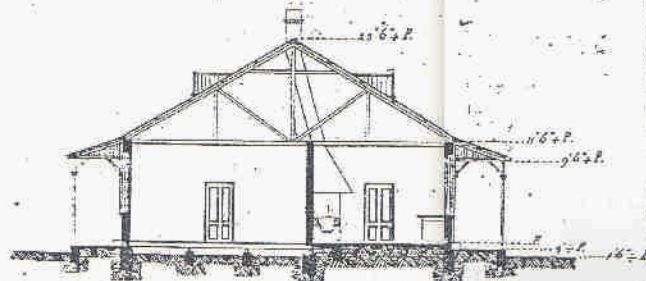
Zijgevel



Plattegrond



Doorsnede A-B



Schaal $\frac{1}{8} = 1$.

Pretoria 4 Augustus 1896

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Hoofd van Publ. Werken

Since 1931, as treatment for leprosy became more effective, the number of patients gradually decreased. Some patient and staff accommodation was built after 1931, including hostel accommodation for nurses. West Fort was finally closed down in 1996. Policy regarding the treatment of leprosy patients has changed. It was found that leprosy is not a contagious disease and that the best treatment for sufferers is to be found in their own community (1999:67).

The area has also botanical and geological significance, forming a transition from a Highveld to a Bankenveld ecosystem. The *Acacia arabica* is the dominant indigenous tree type in this area. The site has been heavily planted with exotics, especially around the eastern perimeter of the hospital complex, such as eucalyptus trees, jacarandas and palm tree (*ibid*).

+ Anglo Boer War

FIRST ANGLO BOER WAR (1880 - 1881):

The British gradually realised that the Transvaalers were preparing for war. Troops were therefore sent in advance to keep order in all the most important towns of the Transvaal, including Pretoria. P.L. Bezuidenhout of Potchefstroom refused to pay certain costs additional to his taxes, as a result of which the British confiscated his wagon. On 11 November 1880 the wagon was violently reclaimed from the bailiff and returned to Bezuidenhout by P.A Cronje and 100 men. A national convention which was set to take place on 8 January 1881, was rescheduled for 8 December 1880. On this day 8000 to 10 000 men gathered at Paardekraal (1998:29).

Shortly after the Bezuidenhout incident at Potchefstroom, the British in Pretoria started preparing to avert a possible Boer attack. Military reinforcements were summoned from Marabastad (close to present Pietersburg) and Lydenberg. Major Le Mesurier was told to prepare a defence strategy for Pretoria. All ammunition and supplies had to be guarded in the central magazine of the military camp and the artillery had to be placed at suitable positions in order to defend the town and the camp (1998:33).

Preparations were made for war and field-cornets were appointed. On 10 December 1880 the leadership of the ZAR was transferred to the hands of a triumvirate, comprising Paul Kruger (Vice-President), Piet Joubert (Commandant-General) and M.W. Pretorius (Ex-President). On 13 December 1880 they issued a statement which announced the restoration of the Republican Government. The seat of government was relocated to Heidelberg, where the republican flag was raised on 16 December 1880.

The first shots of this war were fired in Potchefstroom on 16 December 1880. Commandant P.A Cronje and his troops had been sent to this town to have the first proclamation of the triumvirate printed there. Boer troops were dispatched to seven towns in the Transvaal in order to lay siege to the British garrisons there. The towns which were under Boer siege were Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Standerton, Lydenberg, Rustenberg and Marabastad.

During the night of 26 and 27 February 1881, General-Major Sir George Pomeroy Colley occupied the mountain Amajuba. At daybreak the Boers saw the British troops on the mountain and Commandant-General Joubert called for volunteers to charge up the mountain. At 06:00 150 volunteers started climbing up the face of the mountain under the protection of covering fire. By 11:00 the Boers were able to fire very accurately at the British. Still, Colley was so sure that they could not be taken that he even went to sleep during these events (1998:29).

At 12:30 he was woken by rifle shots and to his amazement found that his men were retreating. The Boers had reached the summit and some British soldiers took flight. During the battle, the Boers lost only two men, while more than 90 British soldiers, including Colley, died and more than 50 were captured (*ibid*).

According to Van Vollenhoven, during the First Anglo-Boer War eleven fortifications were erected. The development of Pretoria caused the destruction of most of these structures. The only fortifications of which remains probably still exist above ground, are Fort Commeline, the blockhouse at Eloff Cutting and Fort Tullichewan. It is possible that archaeological excavations at Magazine Hill will uncover parts of the structure of Fort Commeline (1998:40).

SECOND ANGLO BOER WAR (1896 - 1898):

The most important reason behind the Boers fortification of Pretoria was probably the Jameson Raid of 1895/96. This event and the contemporary unrest amongst the *uitlanders* (foreigners) on the Rand made the Government of the ZAR aware of an increasing foreign threat against peace was present (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:50).

The “Reformers” prepared a supply camp near Irene and were ready to march from there against Pretoria on 27 December 1896. Two hundred and fifty horses were allegedly kept at Halfway House for this purpose. Commandant-General Piet Joubert repeatedly expressed his fears about a possible attack on Pretoria. On New Years day 1896 Commandant D.E. Schutte requested him to guard the roads between Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The fact that the capital had been divided into defence wards and that a vigilance committee had been introduced there, proves that Pretoria did expect an invasion. All commandants in the Republic were instructed to have their men ready and Johannesburg was surrounded by Boer Commandoes.

The situation became even more serious when a secret map of Pretoria was discovered in the trunk of a British spy, Captain Robert White. He had already drawn this map in April 1895. Other proof of espionage activities were also found on him. It is a fact that the Jameson Raid was directly responsible for the Boers fortification of Pretoria (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:51).



Fig. 2.10. Image of a military canon used in the Anglo Boer Wars. (lydenburgmuseum.org: 2010)

+ Fortification of Pretoria

The French military engineer, Leon Grunberg, advised that armoured, revolving domed towers, provided with artillery, should be constructed at strategic points. The locations which he had in mind for these structures, were Schanskop, Kwaggaspoort, Daspoortrand, Magaliesberg West, Wonderboompoort, Derdepoort and Strubenkop. A vantage point, supplied with electric lighting, had to be constructed to monitor the nightly movements from Johannesburg. In other words, eight structures were proposed (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:51).

Grunberg's proposal was unacceptable, as the domed towers would not offer sufficient protection and housing for a substantial number of soldiers. It was decided rather to accept the plan of two German engineers, Otto Albert von Dewitz and Heinrich C. Werner. According to a report of Von Dewitz, dated August 1896, Pretoria would not only be protected, but would also become the base from where operations against the enemy could be launched.

THE FIRST FORTIFICATION

The first fortification of Pretoria took place during the First Anglo Boer War. It should be mentioned that at this stage, Pretoria was being occupied by the British forces and therefore was fortified by them in order to repel attacks by the Boer sieges. The Transvaal was annexed by Britain on 12 April 1877. After unsuccessful efforts were made to reverse the annexation by means of negotiations, the Boers resorted to armed resistance against Britain in December 1880. They (i.e the Boers) laid siege to Pretoria and the British fortified the town in order to be able to avert Boer attacks (1998:12).

According to Bellairs and Grobler, three forts, namely Fort Royal, Fort Tullichewan and Fort Commeline were erected, while the military camp, prison and convent were fortified. A blockhouse was also built to the north of Pretoria at the Eloff Cutting. Only Fort Tullichewan had ever been involved in action, namely on 17 January 1881 when British fired from inside this fort at Boers who were trying to rustle cattle.



Fig. 2.11. Archival photograph of Fort Commeline. (1998: 36)

The war ended with the Boer victory at Amajuba on 27 February 1881, where the forces of Commandant-General Piet Joubert thoroughly defeated the British under the command of General-Major Sir George Pommeroy Colley. The Boer Republic regained its independence. The First Anglo Boer War in all probability did not have the impact on South African history that the Second Anglo Boer War did. It was to a large extent, a prelude to the Second War. According to Archaeologist, Van Vollenhoven, it is therefore clear that an archaeological survey of these forts is required (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:13).

THE SECOND FORTIFICATION

The second fortification of Pretoria took place shortly after the start of the Second Anglo Boer War. The Jameson Raid convinced the Government of the ZAR of the necessity of fortification. This Raid was an unsuccessful attempt by Britain to take control of the ZAR Government. Following this event, four large forts were built between 1896 and 1898 as a defence around Pretoria, namely Fort Schanskop, Fort Wonderboompoort, Fort Klapperkop and Fort Daspoortrand (West Fort). Four more had been planned, but were never built due to a lack of funds. According to Ploeger and Botha, the Boers decided to defend Pretoria, because they thought that the manpower and armament that such a defense would take, would be of better use in the field (1998:13).

THE THIRD FORTIFICATION

After Pretoria had been occupied by the British Forces, it was fortified for the third time. This fortification transformed the town into an impenetrable citadel, as it supplemented the shortcomings of the second (incomplete) phase of fortification. There only exists information on seventeen fortifications, namely Cable Hill, Johnston, Eastern, Magazine, Quagga, Howitzer, Johannesburg Road and River Redoubt, as well as Vesting, Wesfort, Klapperkop, Kwaggapoort, Wonderboompoort, Meintjieskop, Hillcrest and Muckleneuk Blockhouse plus the blockhouse at Eloff Cutting (1998:14).

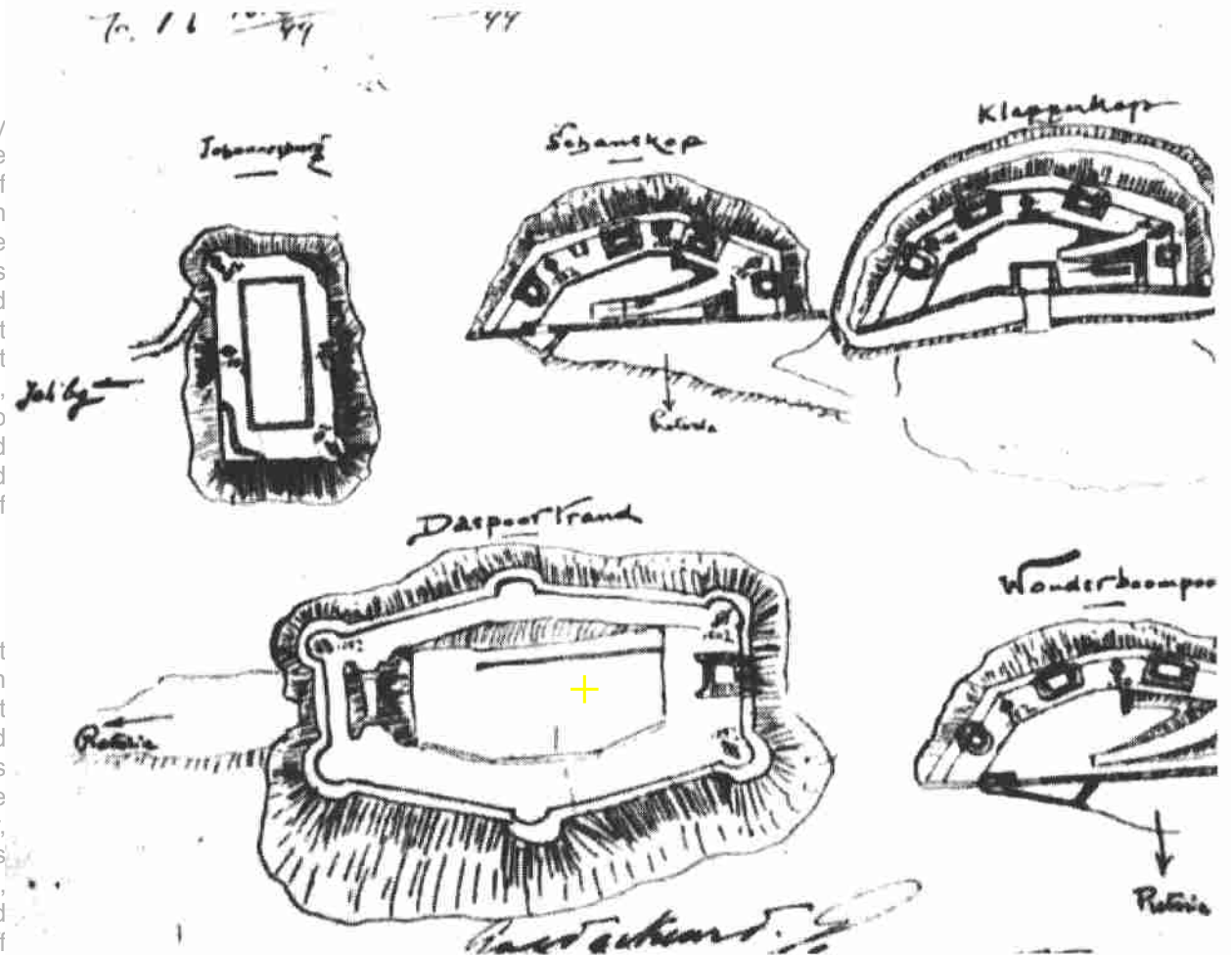


Fig. 2.12. Sketch by Major P.E Erasmus depicts the armament plans of the forts. (1998: 63)

As has already been mentioned, nightly manoeuvres on the Johannesburg road had to be monitored. This could prevent a surprise attack from Johannesburg. The forts also served as a deterrent - as is illustrated by the fact that the British troops hesitated to attack Pretoria (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:51).

Werner and Von Dewitz made a study of similar projects in the past in order to determine the most suitable positions for the forts. The British fortification scheme of 1880 - 1881 had already emphasized value of Elandspoortrand. Fort Schanskop and Fort Klapperkop would be constructed to control this southern access point to Pretoria. A fort at Wonderboompoort would control the northern entrance to the city. The British spy, Captain Robert White, had already underlined how important the access points at Wonderboom, Schanskop, Klapperkop, Daspoortrand and Magasynheuwel would be during a possible siege of Pretoria. From Schanskop it would be possible to control the road and railway links with Johannesburg and Lourenco Marques. Together with Fort Wonderboompoort, Fort Daspoortrand would control the western access route to the city. The roads to Soutpansberg and Middelburg (Transvaal) as well as the railroad to Lourenco Marques would be controlled by Fort Derdepoort. This network of fortifications would have been completed by the fort on Strubenkop (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:52).

As previously stated, the Government of the ZAR finally could only complete four of these forts during the Second Anglo Boer War, namely those at Schanskop, Wonderboompoort, Klapperkop and Daspoortrand (Fig. 2.13). After the British forces had occupied Pretoria, they constructed blockhouses to improve the defences of the city. Two of the latter were erected on Kwaggasrand and Strubenkop, which emphasizes the strategic importance of these locations.

+ DEFINITION

- Blockhouse* - Fortified stone building with loopholes
- Fort* - A fortified military construction, a stronghold, a rampart
- Fortify* - To supply with fortifications, to strengthen with forts
- Entrenchment* - A military fortification comprising a trench
- Fortification* - That which fortifies
- Stronghold* - A fortified place, a fort

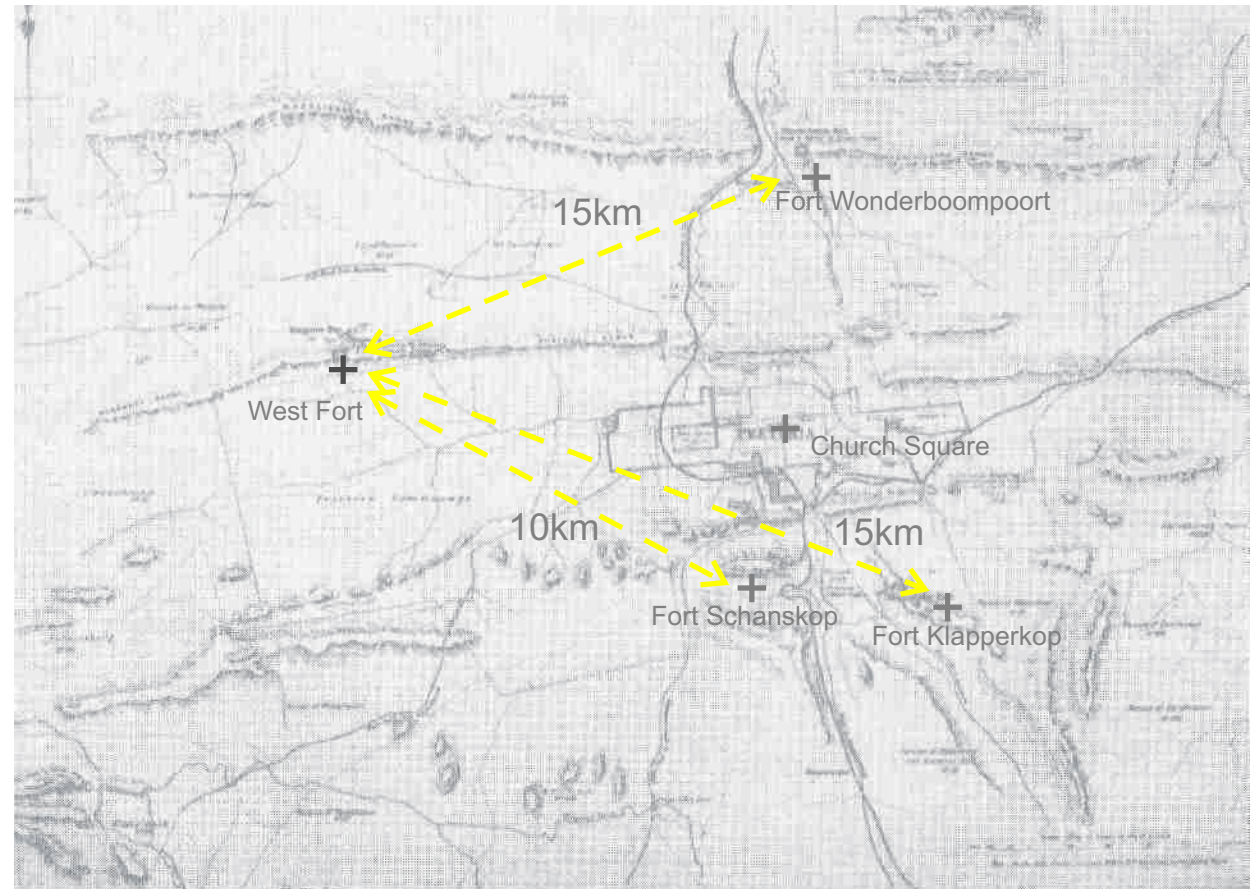


Fig. 2.13. 1899 map indicating the positions of the four forts of Pretoria. (1998: 52)

BRITISH FORTIFICATIONS OF THE SECOND ANGLO BOER WAR (1900-1902):

The war came to an end on 31 May 1902, with the signing of the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging. Although the Boer forces' efforts had astonished the world and several Boer generals, such as General C.R de Wet, had become famous, the overwhelming might of Britain could not be stopped (Van Vollenhoven 1998:80).

The Second Anglo Boer War was a decisive event in South African history. It resulted in the political unification of South Africa and strengthened Afrikaner Nationalism. Both of these factors would be of great importance on South Africa's road to unification.

THE BLOCKHOUSE SYSTEM

After Pretoria had been occupied by the British, it was clear that the railway links had to a large extent been left defenseless. In order to protect the railways and thereby communication in general, it was decided to erect fortified posts next to these routes. From July 1900 the erection of blockhouses started. The most important stations, bridges and other strategic points along the lines were fortified in this manner. Most of these blockhouses comprised two storeys with a machine gun mounted on the roof. Such a blockhouse could shelter a garrison of thirty men and took approximately three months to complete (1998:81).

By January 1901, the large scale erection of blockhouses next to the railway lines begun. These blockhouses were much smaller, so that it would take less time to complete them. They were respectively manned by a non-commissioned officer and five or six troopers. By March 1901, this type of blockhouse was also being erected at other strategic points such as roads, in order to curb mobility of the Boer Commandoes. This strategy of Lord H.H Kitchener was especially designed to entrap the Boers with battues against the blockhouse lines. By January 1902, the blockhouses were completed and this tactic could be executed (*ibid*).

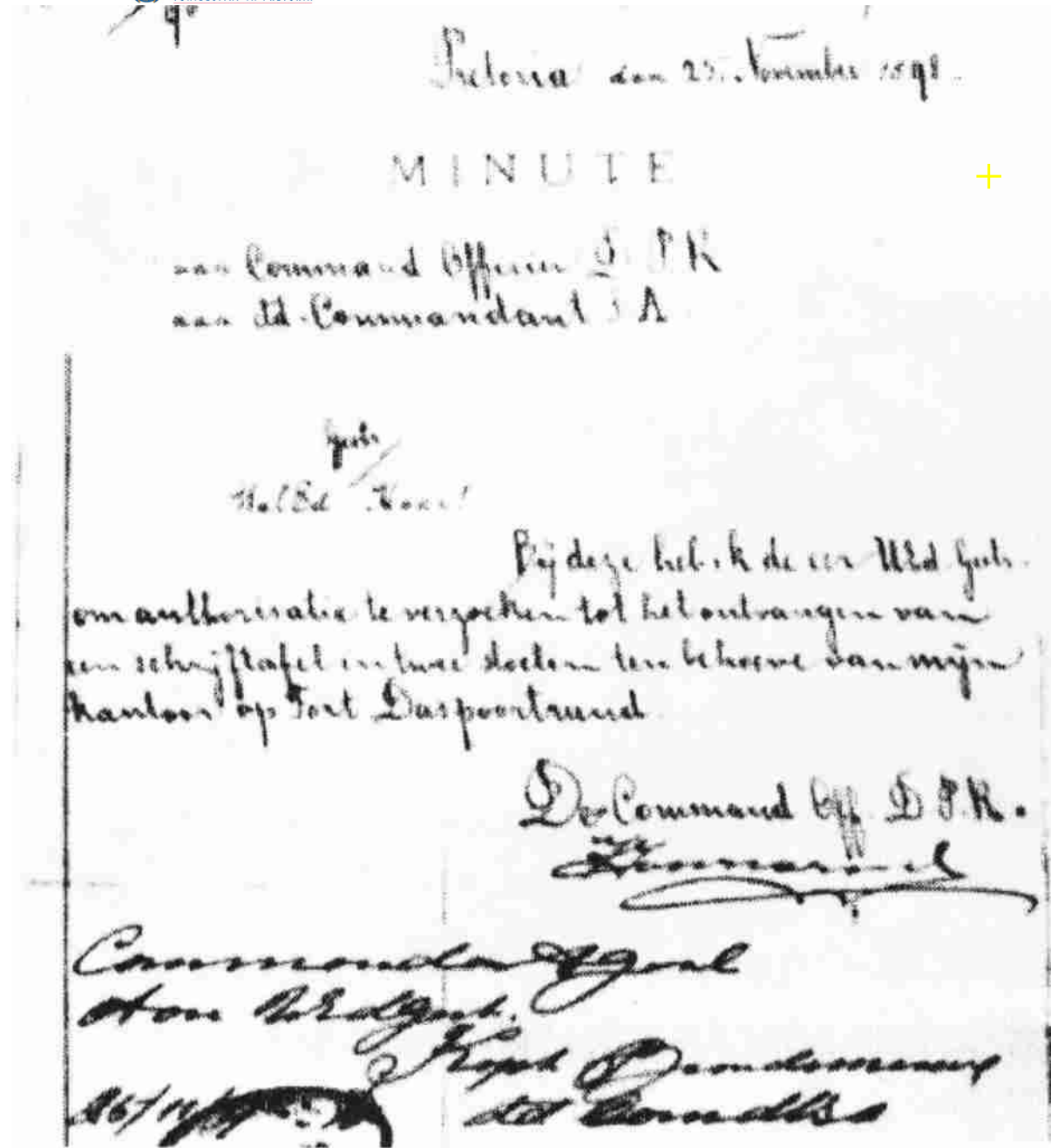


Fig. 2.15. A request letter for furniture from Lieutenant F. Townsend, Commader of Fort Daspoortrand. (1998: 60)

The blockhouses were erected from 1,2 - 2,4km from each other. Although Lords Roberts and Kitchener are regarded as the inventors of the blockhouse system, a certain Edward H. Fry claimed that he actually deserved this honour. Whatever the case may be, this system left a valuable historical heritage. At the end of the war, more than 8000 blockhouses had been built over an area of more than 6000 kilometers. They were manned by approximately 50 000 soldiers plus 16 000 non-white scouts and guards (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:81).

TYPES OF BLOCKHOUSES

The first type of blockhouses which were erected in January 1901, was octagonal with corrugated iron walls, such as the Bastion Blockhouse. Loopholes were cut into the walls. It also had corrugated iron roof and was ten to fifteen feet (3,05 - 4,57m) in diameter (1998:81).

By February 1901, the second kind was erected. It had been designed by Major S.R Rice and was an improvement on the first type. It was cheaper, as less wood was required for its construction.

The third type was also designed by Major Rice. It was a circular galvanised iron blockhouse, erected from March 1901. It was cheaper, larger and easier to erect than the previous types. Four - and -six sided galvanised iron blockhouses were also built.

Stone blockhouses, such as the Johnston Redoubt (fig. ?), were erected too. They were the most expensive kind of blockhouse and took the longest time to complete. Slight differences are found in the roofs and loopholes of these blockhouses.

The blockhouses were protected by erecting wire entanglements between them. These wires were anchored in many ways. Thick wire was vertically strung and plaited between strips of fencing. Different kinds of alarms were attached to these in order to warn the soldiers, should the enemy try to break through the wiring. Loaded guns were also set as traps. A trench of 1,52m wide by 1,22m deep was dug around every blockhouse (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:82).

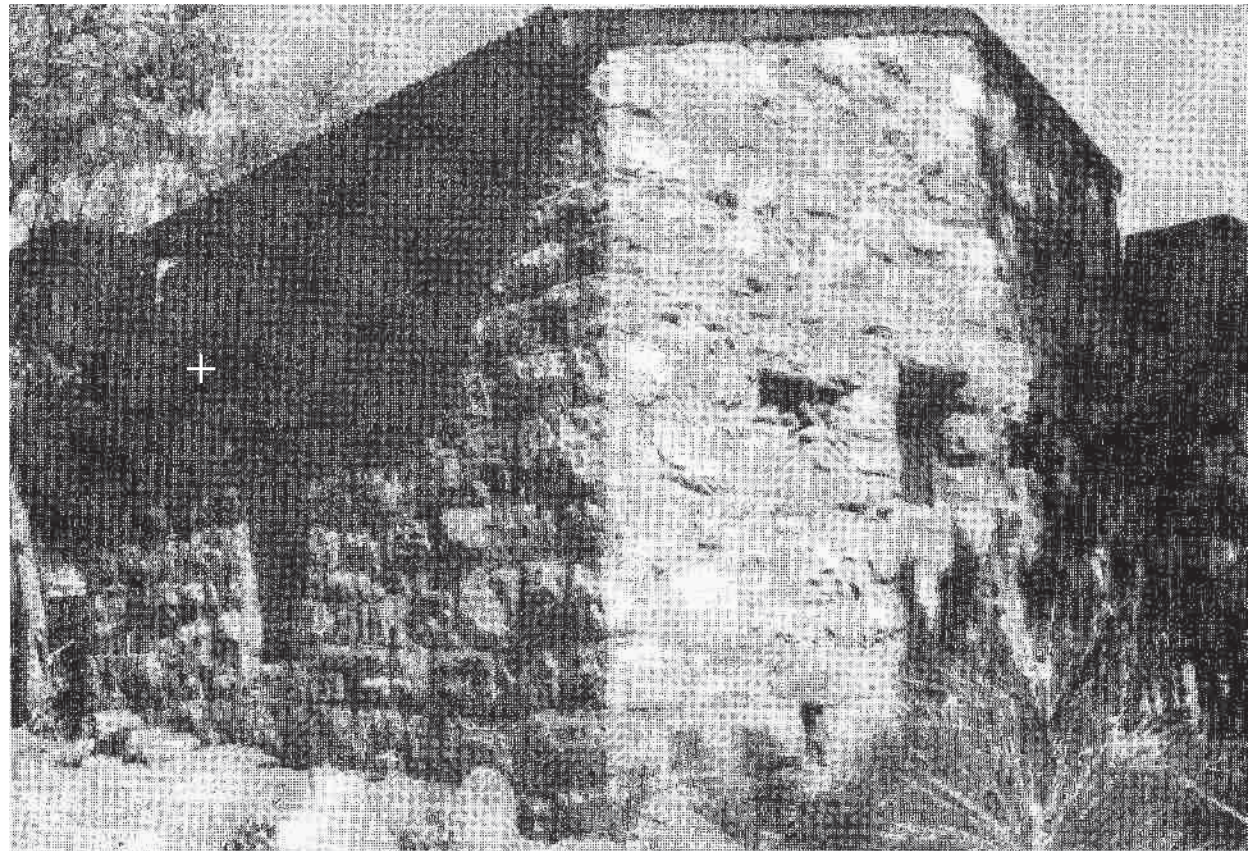


Fig. 2.16. The Johnson Redoubt is situated on the terrain of the State President's home in Pretoria. (1998: 85)

BLOCKHOUSES IN AND AROUND PRETORIA

After occupying Pretoria on 5 June 1900, it was of the utmost importance to the British to remain in control of the capital. It soon became clear that they were wrong in assuming that the war would come to an end soon. The war raged on and a number of fortifications were constructed in and around Pretoria to protect the city against a possible Boer attack (1998:83).

A total of 61 blockhouses, comprising 36 of stone (four of which were double storey structures) and 25 of corrugated iron were erected in and around Pretoria itself. The work was done by the 26th Company of the Royal Engineers. One has to bear in mind that the four Boer Forts were now manned by British soldiers and formed a part of the defence system of the capital. Information about the British fortifications is extremely limited and most of them have been destroyed since the war (*ibid*).

Blockhouses:

- Cable Hill Redoubt
- Johnston Redoubt
- Eastern Redoubt
- Howitzer Redoubt
- Vesting Blockhouse
- Magazine Redoubt
- Quagga Redoubt
- Kwaggapoort Blockhouse
- West Fort Blockhouse
- Klapperkop Blockhouse
- Blockhouse number 27
- Wonderboompoort Blockhouse
- Johannesburg Road Redoubt
- River Redoubt
- Hillcrest Blockhouse
- Muckleneuk Blockhouse
- Blockhouse at Eloff Cutting

WEST FORT BLOCKHOUSE

To the east of Fort Daspoortrand (West Fort) another blockhouse was erected (fig. 2.18). This circular structure was built of stone. It probably had a corrugated iron roof and its entrance on the western side seems to have been hidden (1998:90).

The blockhouse was connected to Fort Daspoortrand by means of a neat stone path. This path and the blockhouse are indicated on a geological map of Pretoria which was compiled in November/December 1904 and January 1905. The distance between the two structures is approximately one kilometer. It proves that Fort Daspoortrand was intensively involved in Britain's defence of Pretoria.

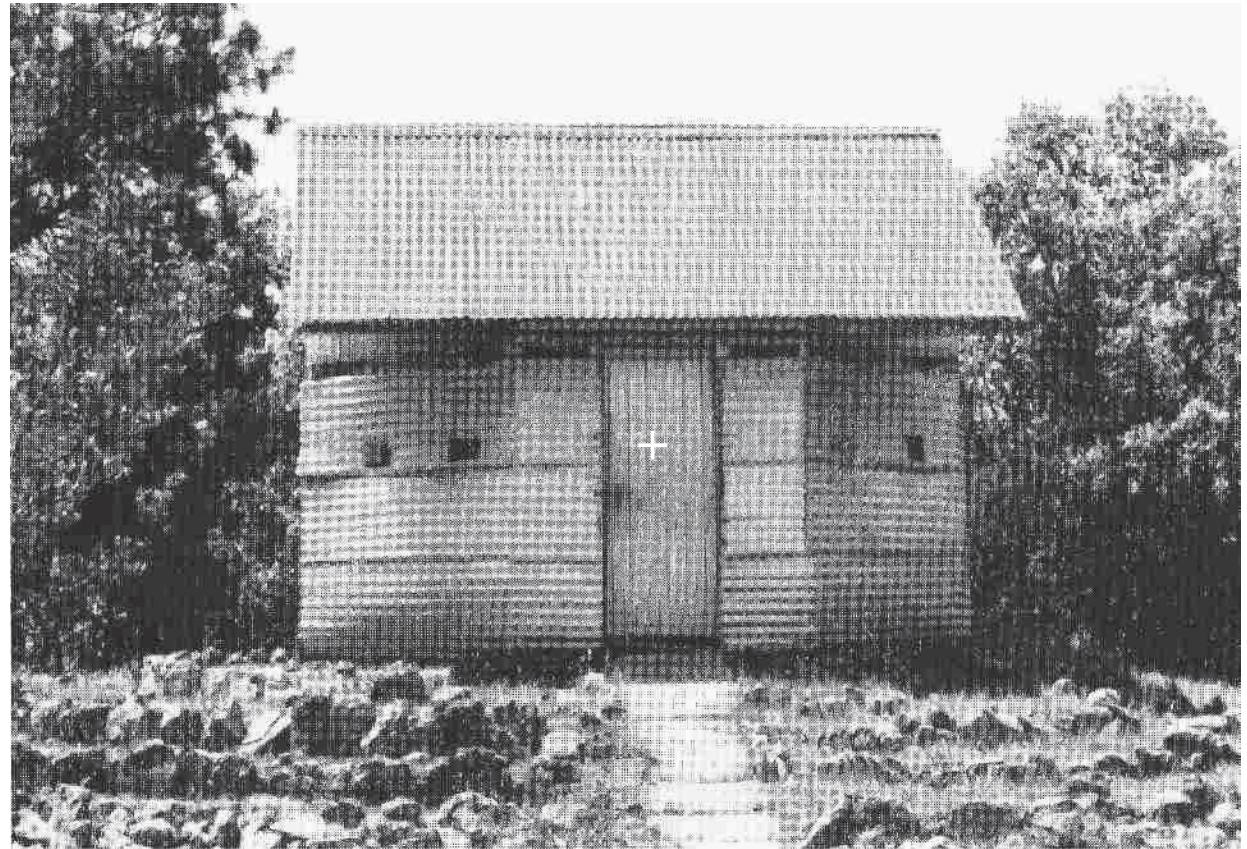


Fig. 2.17. The Vesting Blockhouse is the only blockhouse of corrugated iron in Pretoria which has been preserved. (1998: 87)



Fig. 2.18. Remains of the West Fort Blockhouse. (1998: 91)



Fig. 2.19. Remains of the Klapperkop Blockhouse. (1998: 91)

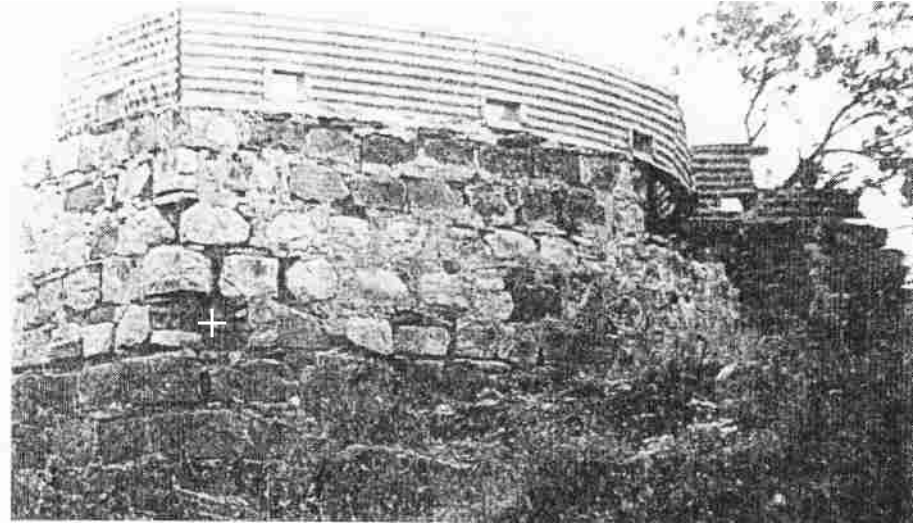


Fig. 2.20. 1970 photo of the Eastern Redoubt. (1998: 86)



Fig. 2.21. Remains of the Cable Hill Redoubt. (1998: 84)



Fig. 2.22. West Fort - Layered view of stone and nature (sky), (2010)

+ Fort Daspoortrand (West Fort)

Fort Daspoortrand is located on a hill above West Fort, the historical leprosy hospital of Pretoria. It is situated on the farm Broekscheur, number 318 JR in the Pretoria district. Its reference is 25° 43,9' southern latitude by 28° 04,4' eastern longitude according to Map 2528CA, Pretoria, of the South African 1:50 000 topographic series (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:102).

As has already been pointed out earlier, this fort is quite unique and forms the basis of the author's study. It appears as if both Commandant-General Joubert's pro-French sentiments, and the French-German competition in the ZAR contributed to the decision to award the contract for this fort to two military engineers, Leon Grunberg and Sam Lèon, and not to a German contractor, Heinrich C. Werner. The Executive Board invited the two parties to a meeting where the matter was laid to rest (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:58).

By July 1897, the construction of Fort Daspoortrand had already commenced and on 12 November 1898, it was officially handed over to the Government of the ZAR. Its total cost amounted to £ 46 500.

The engineer responsible for the construction of the fort, was Edgar Cassen. Other French and Italians who were involved in the building process, were Carlo Prina, Petro Testan and Joseph Allias. Their specific duties are not known.

Grunberg and Lèon were to have laid the foundations for the guns at all the forts in Pretoria. They would also have been responsible for installing the guns. This was done at Fort Daspoortrand and Fort Schanskop. Major Erasmus suggested that Fort Daspoortrand required two guns. The fort contained two 37mm Maxim-Nordenfeldt guns as well as a 155mm gun (Long Tom).

On 23 October 1899, 20 men were stationed here. They included the following: Officer in charge - Lieutenant F. Townsend, Adjutant P.J. Van der Merwe, E.A. Venter, E.A. Pretorius, C. Van Bogaarde, A. Fenske and R.Hirsch. A photograph published in the Pretoria Centenary Yearbook proves that 25 men were stationed here (fig. ?) (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:61).

The fort is a hexagonal fortification with bastions. The munition rooms are underground. They are connected to the courtyard by passages. The ammunition was hoisted to the surface through two shafts, one on the eastern and the other on the western side of the Fort.

A telegraph cable was laid between the fort and the central telegraph office. An overhead telegraph connection was also installed and the fort was equipped with a telephone as well. Two dynamos supplied electrical lighting in the fort. They also powered two search lights. Fort Daspoortrand had its own pump-station and a steam-driven pump house. Lighting conductors were installed.



Fig. 2.23. The garrison stationed at Fort Daspoortrand. (1998: 60)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF WEST FORT

During the summer of 1989, parts of Fort Daspoortrand (West Fort) were excavated. The purpose was to be able to draw up a plan of the fort (fig. 41). It is standard practice not to excavate certain parts of the site, in order that it may be excavated by future archaeologists with improved methods (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:105).

Indentations, probably for flagpoles, are found on both sides of the entrance to the building. Right in front of the entrance a hole, lined out with cement, is found. It appears as if it is connected to a similar hole in the middle of the courtyard of the fort. It probably served as a drainage system (1998:102).

The plasterwork at the entrance still clearly depicts an imprint of the ZAR's coat of arms. The imprinted Republican motto, "Endracht maakt macht" is legible. Holes have been drilled through the latter, probably to affix metal letters here. When the holes are connected, they spell out "West Fort", which is the name given by the British to the fort. British soldiers also made inscriptions in the stone. Written details which are excavated, such as these examples, are known as paleographic information sources. As paleography might refer too literally to old handwriting, paleo-historiography will probably be a more acceptable term.

The roof had caved in all over but the fracture lines clearly indicate where it had been. A sturdy steel pillar, which had served as a roof support in a room, is still in position to the south of the gateway. Pitch was used to waterproof the roof. Many remains of this are still visible on roof debris.

On both the eastern and western sides of the fort, badly eroded stairs are found. They lead to the courtyard. The date completion of the fort, 1898 (another example of paleo-historiography), is still visible against the inner wall of the gateway, although it is eroded. The jagged edged battlement is a typical characteristic of forts. The battlement of the eastern wall is still standing, but on the western side, a part of it lies scattered in the courtyard.

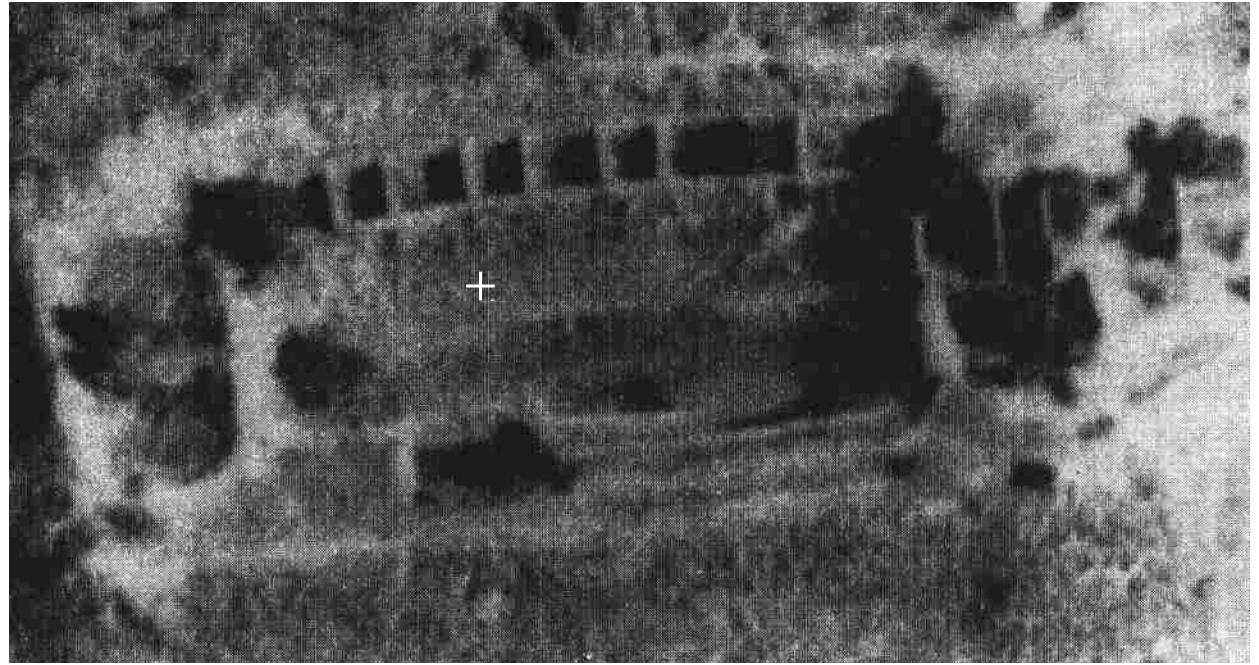


Fig. 2.24. 1968 Aerial photo of Fort Daspoortrand. (1998: 103)

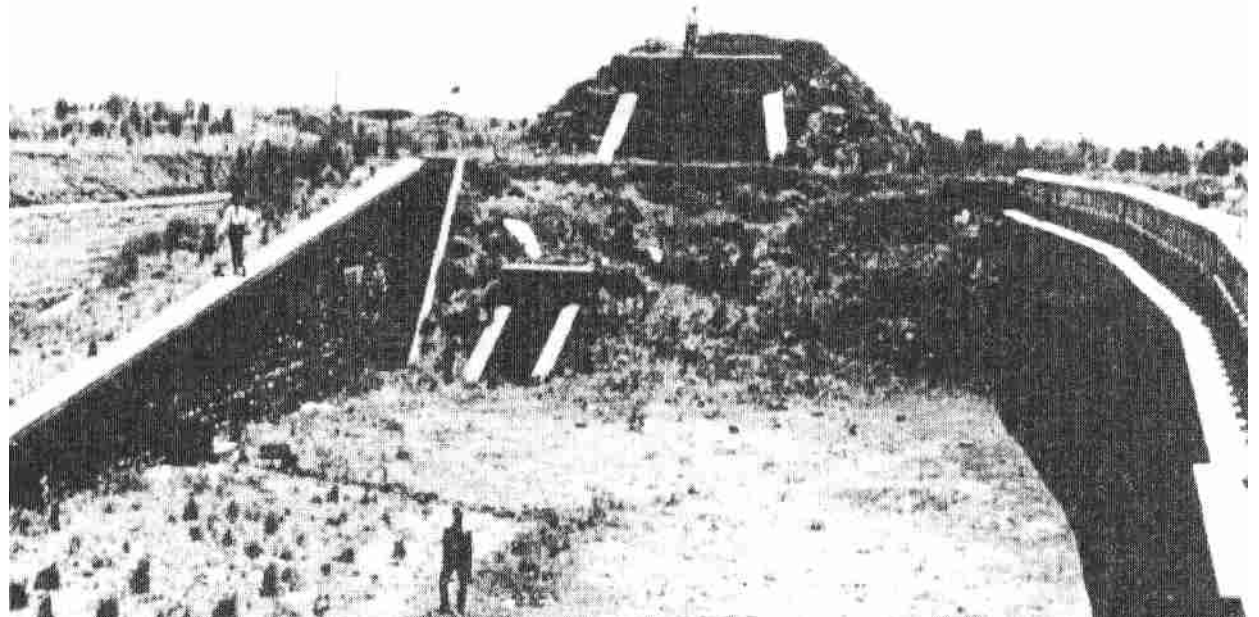


Fig. 2.25. 1913 Photo of Fort Daspoortrand (West Fort) of the western side. (1998: 105)

A passage which leads to the western shaft, is more readily accessible. At the entrance one has to walk in a crouching position, but further on you walk upright. Near the shaft two doorframes are found, one to the left and the other to the right of the passage. These are probably the entrances to two munition rooms (Van Vollenhoven 1998:104).

A second passage turns off to the right (north), a short way after the entrance to the first. It ends in the provisions rooms. Wooden blocks and porcelain portals which conducted the electrical wiring, were also found in these passages as well as the shaft. A large rectangular cement block, which would have been part of the shaft, lies outside the western shaft.

Outside the fort, on the south-eastern side, a number of stone terraces are found. Wire entanglements were probably erected here to protect the fort. A hill blocks the view from the fort to the old wagon trail east of the fort. A guard pit was dug to overcome this obstacle. Just east of the hill a neatly dressed stone floor was found. This might have been part of a sentry-box.

The old wagon trail can still be identified in some places, by means of the stones which formed its edge. It goes in an eastern direction and then swerves down against the northern side of the mountain. The fort is also connected to a small British blockhouse on the edge of the ridge, to the east of the fort. It is connected via a path, which is not clearly visible anymore.

A stairway leads from the north-eastern side of the fort to a terrace. Here a cement floor is found on which a structure might have been erected. It probably had to do with the construction of the Fort.

The parts where excavations were undertaken are:
the western munition shaft;
the provisions room;
the gateway.



Fig. 2.26. Fort Daspoortrand during construction. (1998: 59)

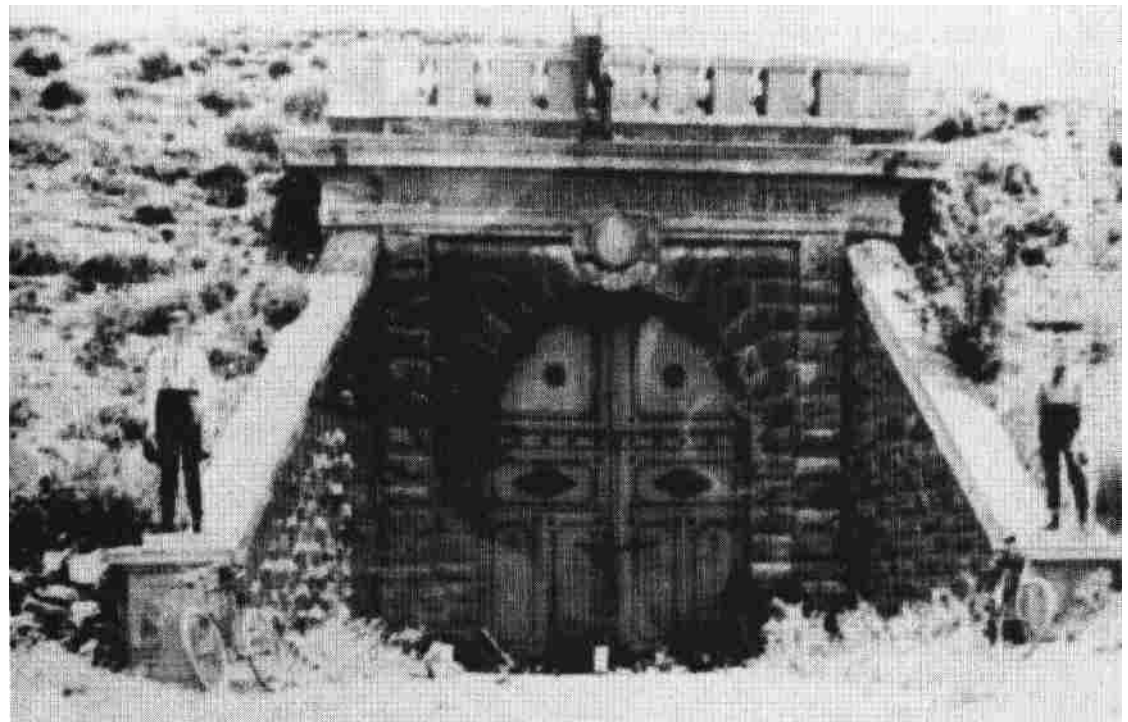


Fig. 2.27. Fort Daspoortrand after completion, with its impressive entrance. (1998: 59)

THE WESTERN MUNITION SHAFT

The purpose of the excavation here was to find the floor of the tunnel, in order to measure the depth. For this four trenches of 12m by 0,5m were measured out. It was soon clear that no stratification existed here, as the soil was alluvial soil which had washed down the shaft through the years (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:106).

THE PROVISIONS ROOM

Excavations were done here to determine the floor level of the rooms, as this is a different level from that of the munition shafts. First the grass had to be burned, in order to make the ground visible.

A test trench of 4,55m x 1,30m was measured out against the eastern wall of the room. It stretched from the northern wall up to the southern wall. From here onwards, the test trench was systematically deepened by means of arbitrary layers of 10cm each. No stratifications were found here and only two artefacts were uncovered.

At approximately door level, the point where the door frame protrudes above ground, at the depth of 60cm, therefore were already so many concrete blocks which barred the way, that an alternative had to be found in order to determine the floor level. These concrete blocks are too large to be moved by hand and a vehicle does not have access to the rooms to remove them.

THE GATEWAY

The gateway of Fort Daspoortrand is by far the most imposing entrance of all the forts in Pretoria. Apart from scientific purposes, it was a practical necessity to open up the gateway. This would make the fort accessible to vehicles which would make future work here much easier. The scientific reason behind this action was to determine the ground level or floor for plotting and to reveal and identify features hidden in this gateway (Van Vollenhoven, 1998:107).

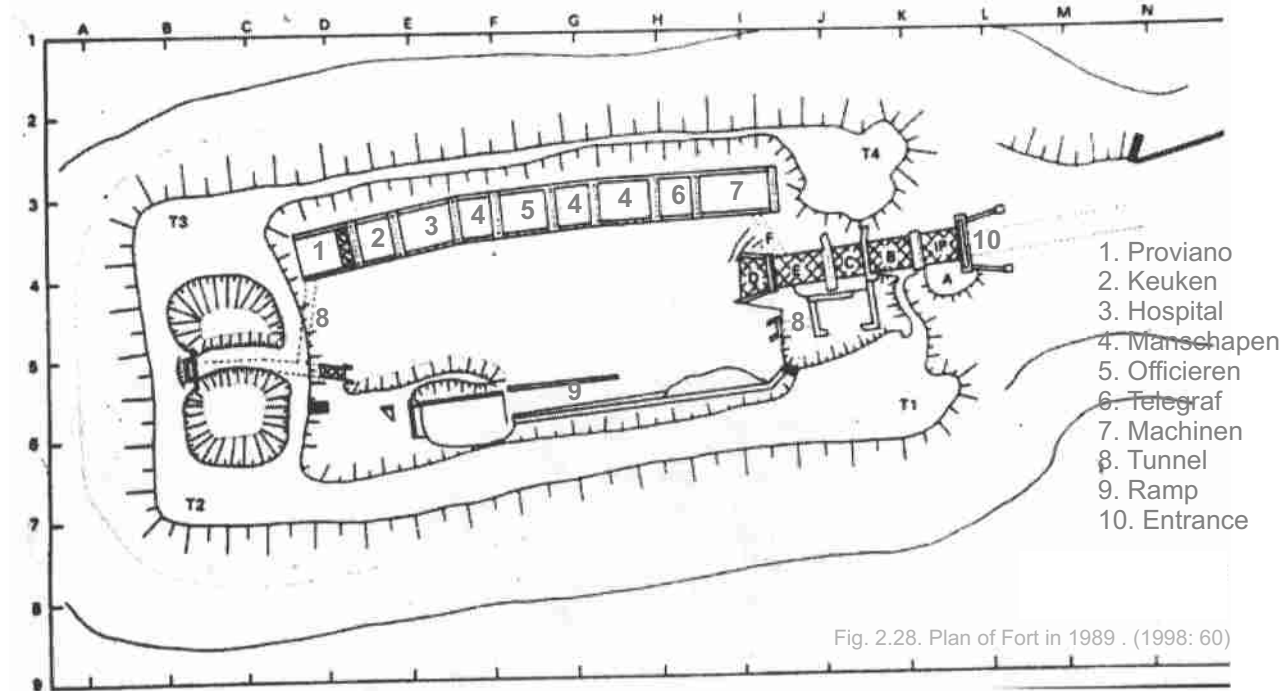
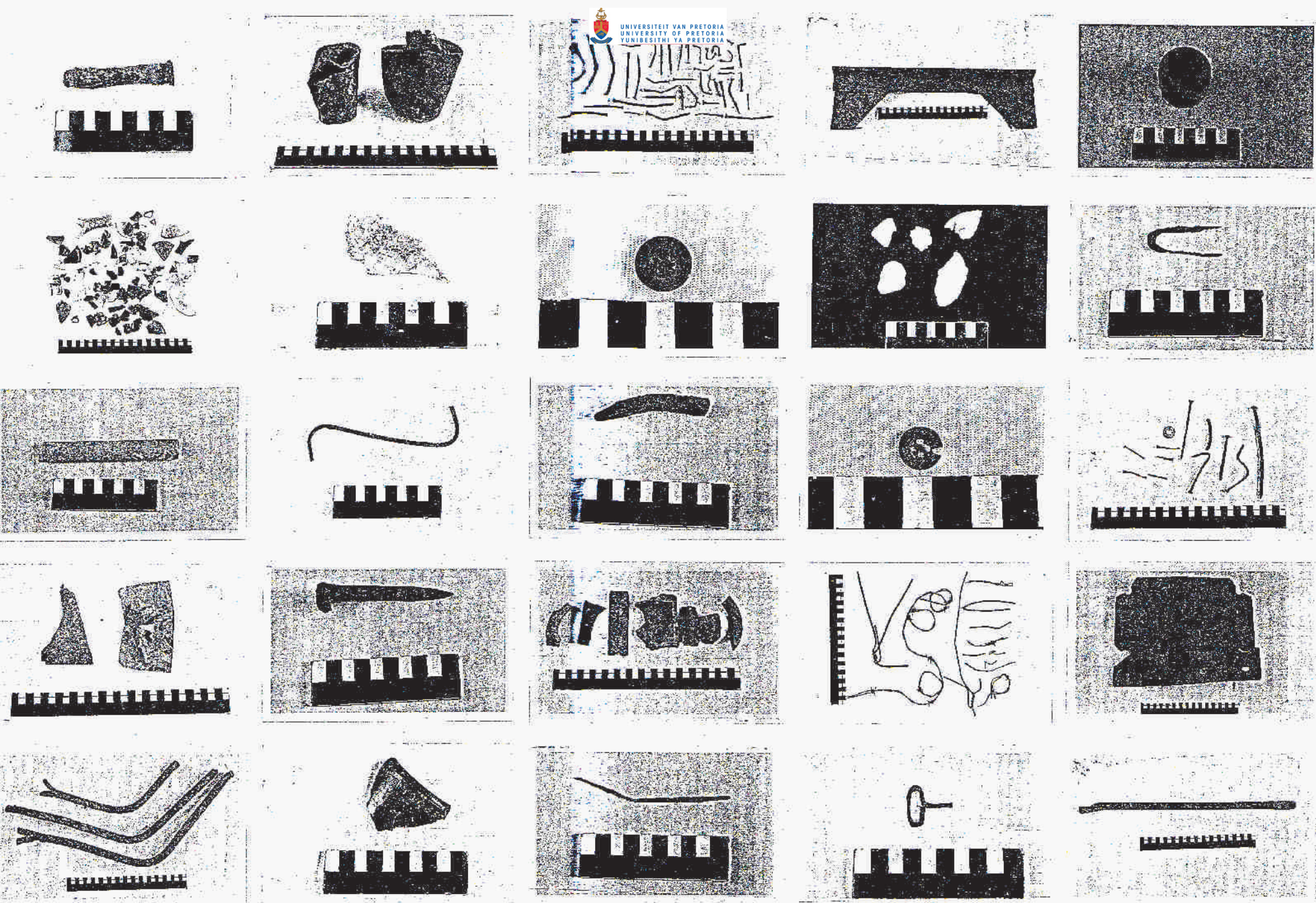
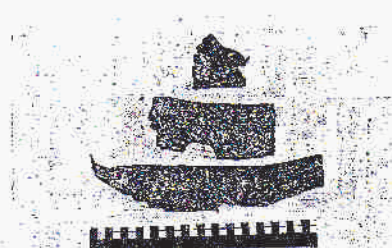
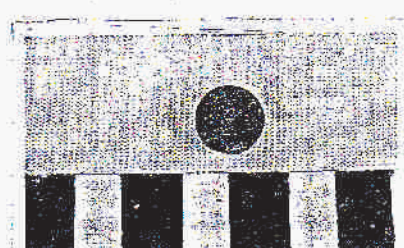
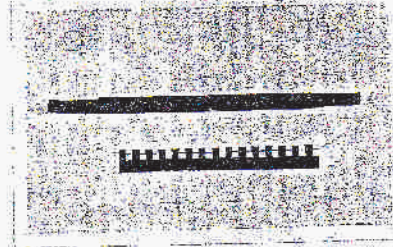
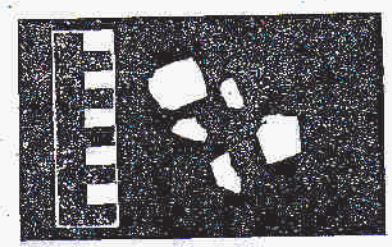
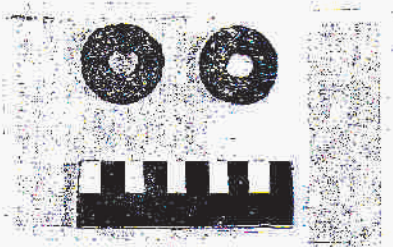
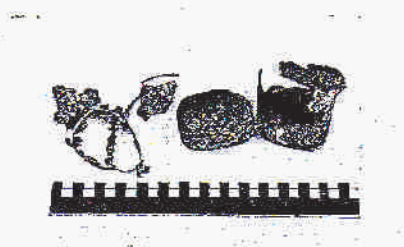
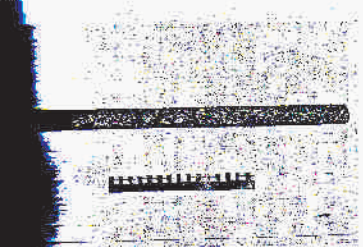
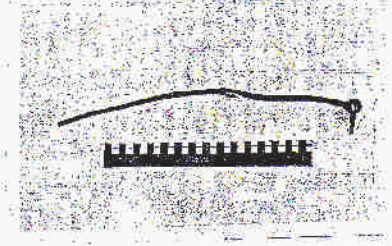
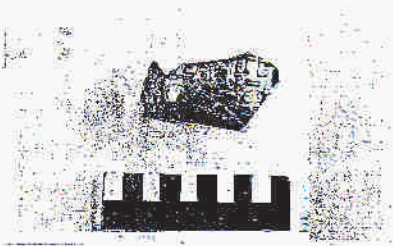
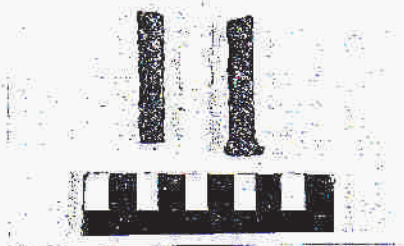
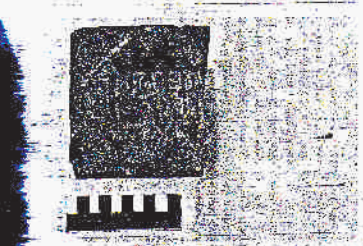
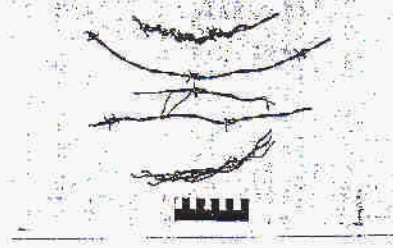
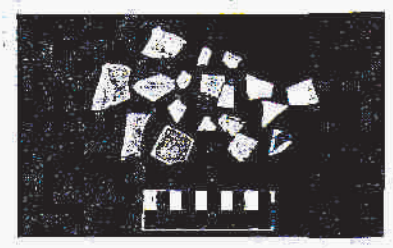
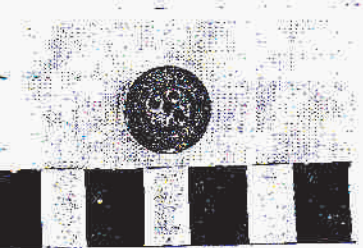
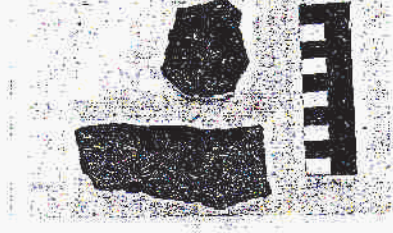
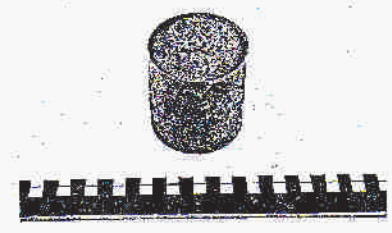
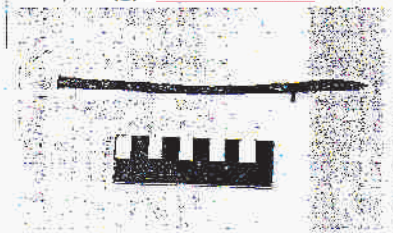
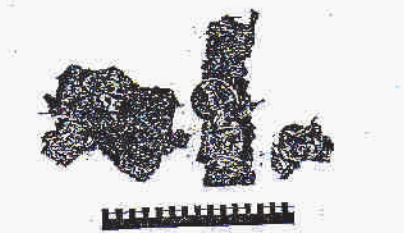


Fig. 2.29. Photos of the provision rooms in their current condition. (Viljoen, C: 2010)





Spanpoging nodig om forte te red

Willem Koetze

Pretoria — Al die inwoners van Pretoria moet betrokke raak by die bewaring van die vier ou forte om die stad. Die stadsraad en kultuurorganisasies soos die Rapportryers kan wel die leiding neem in 'n omvattende bewaringsveldtog maar dit behoort elke Pretorianer se trots te wees om die forte as kultuurerfenisse te behou.

Dit is die mening van mnr Anton van Vollenhoven van die van die nasionale kultuurhistoriese museum wat 'n meesters-verhandeling oor die 30 forte en blokhuse om die hoofstad geskryf het. Hy sê die ou erfenisse moet tot elke prys bewaar word. Vyftien van die ou vestings bestaan nog, maar is in verskillende toestande van verval. Fort Schanskop en Fort Klapperkop en die blokhuse op die terrein van die staatspresidentwoning en by admiraalshuis in Voortrekkerhoogte is nasionale gedenkwaardighede en het die beste behoue gebly.

Wanneer al die forte en blokhuse eendag opgeknop en geresoureer is, kan 'n fortroete soort-

gelyk aan die kunsroete ingestel word. Pretoria sal dan met 'n unieke toeriste-aantreklikheid kan spog omdat die forte 'n besondere uitsig op die stad bied en 'n groot kultuurbate kan wees.

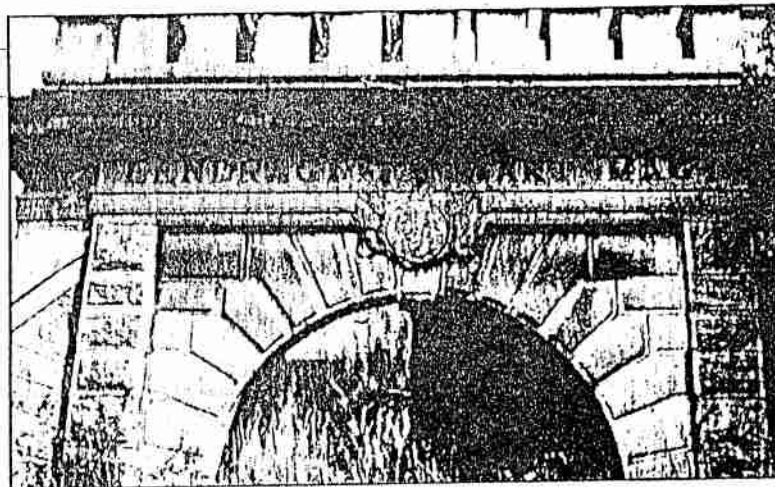
Mnr Van Vollenhoven sê dit is betreurenswaardig dat Wesfort by Daspoortrand in 'n toestand van algehele verval beland het. Dié fort is die enigste wat deur 'n Franse argitek ontwerp is en verskil heeltemal van die ander.

Die ou vesting staan op grond wat aan die provinsiale administrasie behoort.

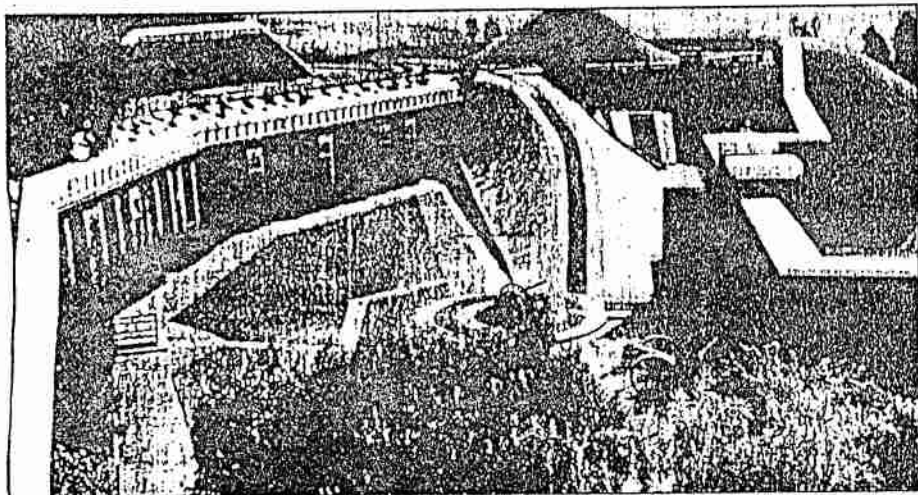
Fort Wonderboompoort, wat ook baie verwaarloos is, behoort reeds aan die stadsraad.

Fort Schanskop en Klapperkop is tot Maart verlede jaar deur die Weermag as museums gebruik en in stand gehou. Sederdien het die geboue ook verval begin raak.

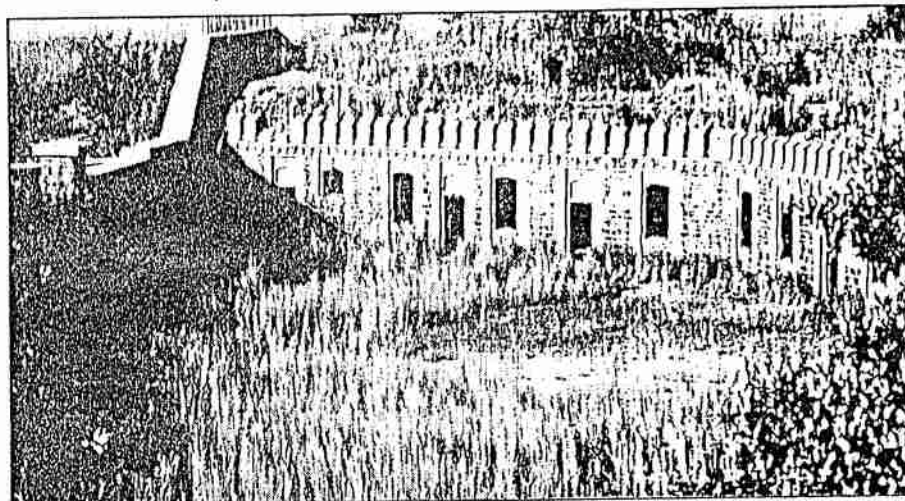
Die weermag het reeds die stadsraad gender om die geboue oor te neem en verkieslik weer in museums om te skep, maar die Departement van Openbare Werke moet eers die goen lig gee.



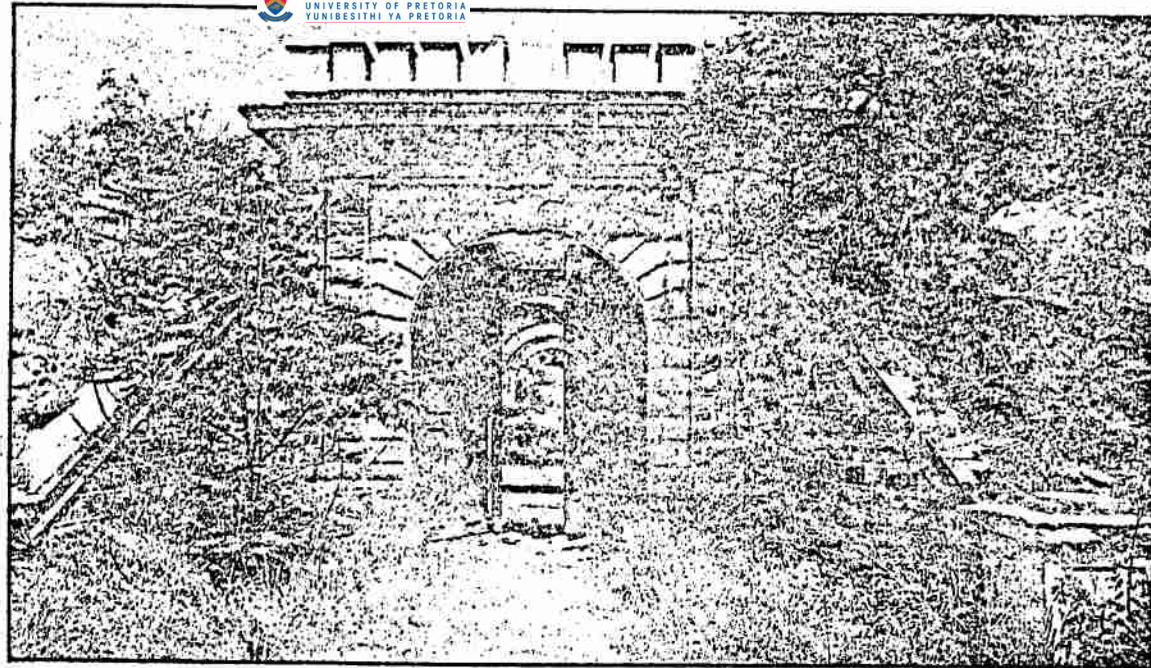
Wesfort by Daspoortrand, die enigste in Pretoria wat deur 'n Franse argitek ontwerp is, het heeltemal verval geraak.



Fort Klapperkop nadat dit deur die weermag oorgeneem en in al sy glorie herstel is. Verwaarloosing tree reeds in sedert die weermag in Maart verlede jaar onttrek het.



Fort Schanskop voordat dit deur die weermag oorgeneem en geresoureer is. As 'n plan nie gemaak word nie, lyk dit binnekort weer so.



Die gletysterhekke na Fort Daspoortrand is al beskadig, maar darem nog nie weggedra nie. Dié fort is die enigste van die vier ZAR-forte om die stad wat nog nie tot 'n nasionale gedenkwaardigheid verklaar is nie.

Foto: BENNY BOOYSEN

Pretorianers wil vier forte om stad beskerm, bewaar

Deur Marga Ley

'N GROEP bewaringsgesinde Pretorianers het uit hul eie bymekaar gekom en werp nou alles in die stryd om die laaste van die stad se vier geskiedkundige forte beskerm en bewaar te kry.

Fort Daspoortrand, later onder Engelse bewind bekend as West Fort, is op 12 November 1898 amptelik deur die destydse Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) in ontvangs geneem en is die enigste van die vier forte wat deur die ZAR rondom Pretoria gebou

waarvan die dakke gemaak is. Dit is 'n staal van hoë gehalte en het gekeer dat die sandwalle bo-op die vertrekke die struktuur laat instort.

"Ná dié verwydering, hét die sandwalle ingestort. Ons doel is ook om met die hulp van vrywilligerorganisasies die sand te verwyder en die fort so ver as moontlik skoon te maak.

"Dan sou ons graag wou sien dat dit ingesluit word by die historiese roete deur die stad, met miskien 'n permanente tentoonstelling en gras op die walle om erosie te voorkom en mense plek te bied om maklik niks

voorsitter van die komitee wat hom beywer vir die bewaring van Fort Daspoortrand.

Bouwerk aan die fort het reeds in Julie 1897 begin. Dit boukoste was 46 500 pond. Die fort is 'n seskantige verdedigingswerk met bastions. Die ammunisiekamers was ondergronds en gange lei uit die binnehof daaraan. Die ammunisie is deur middel van twee skagte, een aan die voorkant en een aan die agterkant, omhoog gehys. Van die gange aan die agterkant is vandag nog oop, maar aan die voorkant het alreeds toegesluit omdat die sandwalle te hoog is.

+ Archaeology

The word archaeology means “*the study of ancient things*” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology by T. Darvill, 2002).

Archaeology is the study of the people of the past: how they lived, where they lived, what they ate, and what their environment was like. Archaeologists use tools, houses, plant and animal remains, pollen, shells, and other evidence that they dig up in excavations to understand what the people of the deeper past were like and how they lived (Van Vollenhoven 1998:101).

In the mid-16th century, people in Britain working for King Henry VIII started making lists of old buildings and the history of the places that they visited. Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, people started to collect old things, taking them home and displaying them in their homes. Some people were curious about these objects and started to study where they came from and what they meant, and so they started to dig into burial mounds to look for “treasures”.

By the late 19th century, many of these “treasure hunters” were digging all over Britain and Europe – for example Heinrich Schliemann, a German archaeologist who excavated at Troy. These “treasure hunters” were mostly men who were quite rich and had the money to pursue their hobby of collecting antiquities.

At the end of the 1900's, General Pitt-Rivers (who now has a museum named after him in Oxford, United Kingdom), was the first person properly to excavate archaeological sites. He laid out grid patterns and carefully mapped and collected all the artefacts that he found. He realized that once you have dug something up, you can never get back the information that gets lost as you dig through the site. General Pitt Rivers also wrote about the things that he found, so that people outside of his friends and family would know what he had discovered about the past.



Fig. 2.33. Image of the entrance to the Fort (2010).

Slowly but surely, other people started to follow his example and record what they had found. After the First World War, all sorts of inventions helped people to learn about the past, and finally, people (both men and women) started to pursue archaeology as a job, rather than as a hobby. Nowadays, most archaeologists work in museums and universities across the world (*ibid*).

METHODS OF EXCAVATION

The following is a basic introduction and description in archaeological surveying. This is to understand the process of archaeological work, to be able to investigate the principles in order to design the research centre. The ideal excavation would extract from the site everything that could possibly be known about it, everything that has survived the physical and chemical changes of centuries of burial (1993:100).

It should be “dissected logically from the surface down, in the way that the site dictates, layer by layer, feature by feature, down to the smallest visible unit, and sometimes beyond the mechanical or chemical analysis of deposits in order to understand their structure or contents.

A series of sections at critical points will provide the maximum practicable obtainable information, while, at the other end of the scale, it is helpful to section features of many sorts in order to reveal and record their structures. Some excavators attempt to get the best of both worlds by excavating in intensive areas, but leaving thin bulks, or undug strips, across the site, drawing visible faces of the balks as they proceed. The balks can be removed at any time to reveal the whole surface plan (1993:104).

DATA RETRIEVAL

The object of all excavation recording is data retrieval. At the end of the excavation all that remains are the site records, the drawings and photographs, and the finds. Any information which is not contained in one of these is lost for good. If it is there somewhere, but is difficult to find, its retrieval may be as laborious as the excavation itself (1993:162).

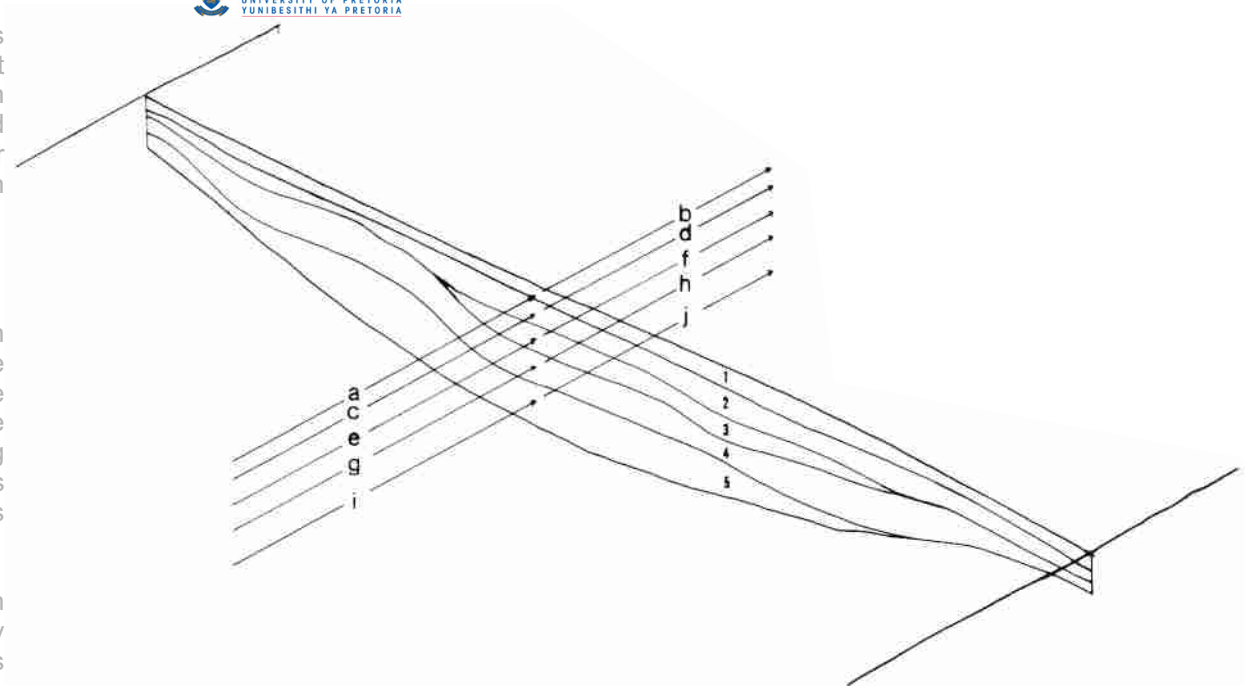


Fig. 2.34. Diagram indicating the layered process of archaeological excavations. (1993: 114)

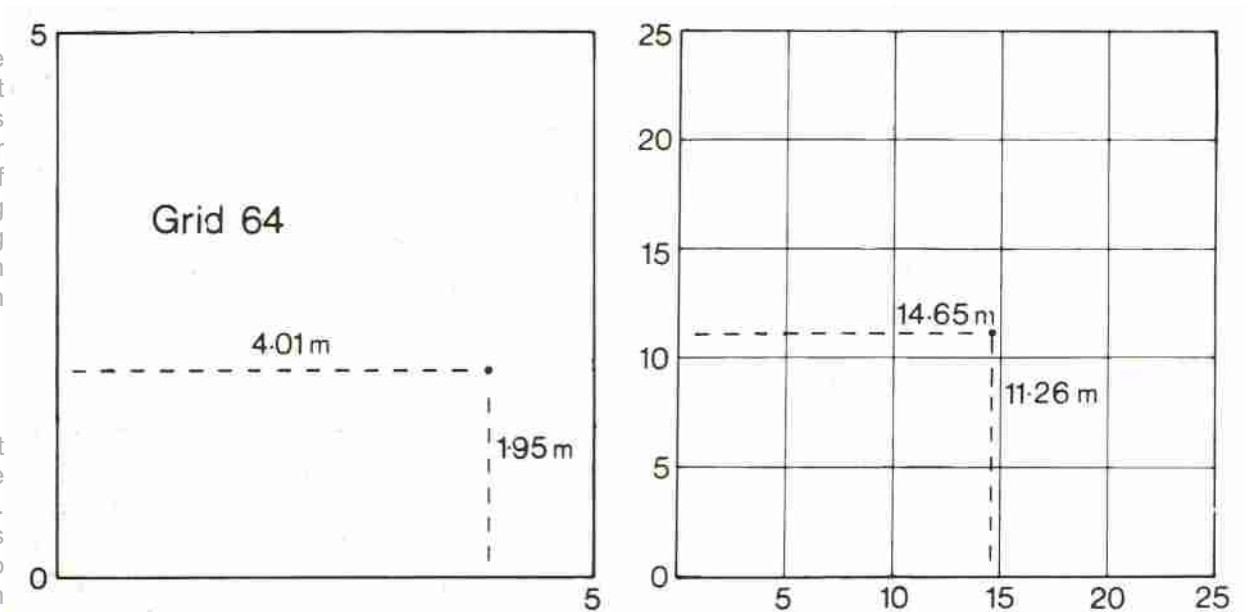


Fig. 2.35. The use of the site grid for excavations. (1993: 172)

All aspects of the site recording system visual, in the form of drawings, sections, contour surveys, together with photographs, vertical and oblique, in colour and black and white, or written, in the form of record cards, notebooks, punched cards, or tape should be devised so that they make interpretation, publication and storage as easy as possible (1993:162).

THE SITE GRID

The skeleton of any recording system must be the site grid. Under all but emergency conditions this should be laid out before the excavations begin; and it is essential to relate the excavation and its grid to permanent features in the landscape. With the advent if ever larger areas of development in towns, and the wholesale removal of hedgerows and other landmarks in the area, this is becoming increasingly difficult, and the excavator, in these circumstances, may become disorientated and literally may not know where the excavation is (1993:171).

In urban areas it is necessary to obtain the co-operation of the engineers and surveyors concerned with the development in order to locate precisely the excavation areas in the old and new townscapes. In the country, in the middle of a large gravel pit or an area of "prairie" farming, the situation may not be so easy; rather like fixing one's position in the desert, it may be necessary to do some very accurate surveying. It is necessary where an excavation is taking place in a radically altered landscape, to publish its relationship to the old landscape as well as to locate it in the new.

The metric units are standard on archaeological site (Fig. 2.36). Whether the co-ordinate system or a system of numbered or lettered grids is used, the corners of the squares should be pegged with accurately placed metal pegs, and it is an advantage to paint these corner pegs a bright colour so that they can be easily seen (1993:172).

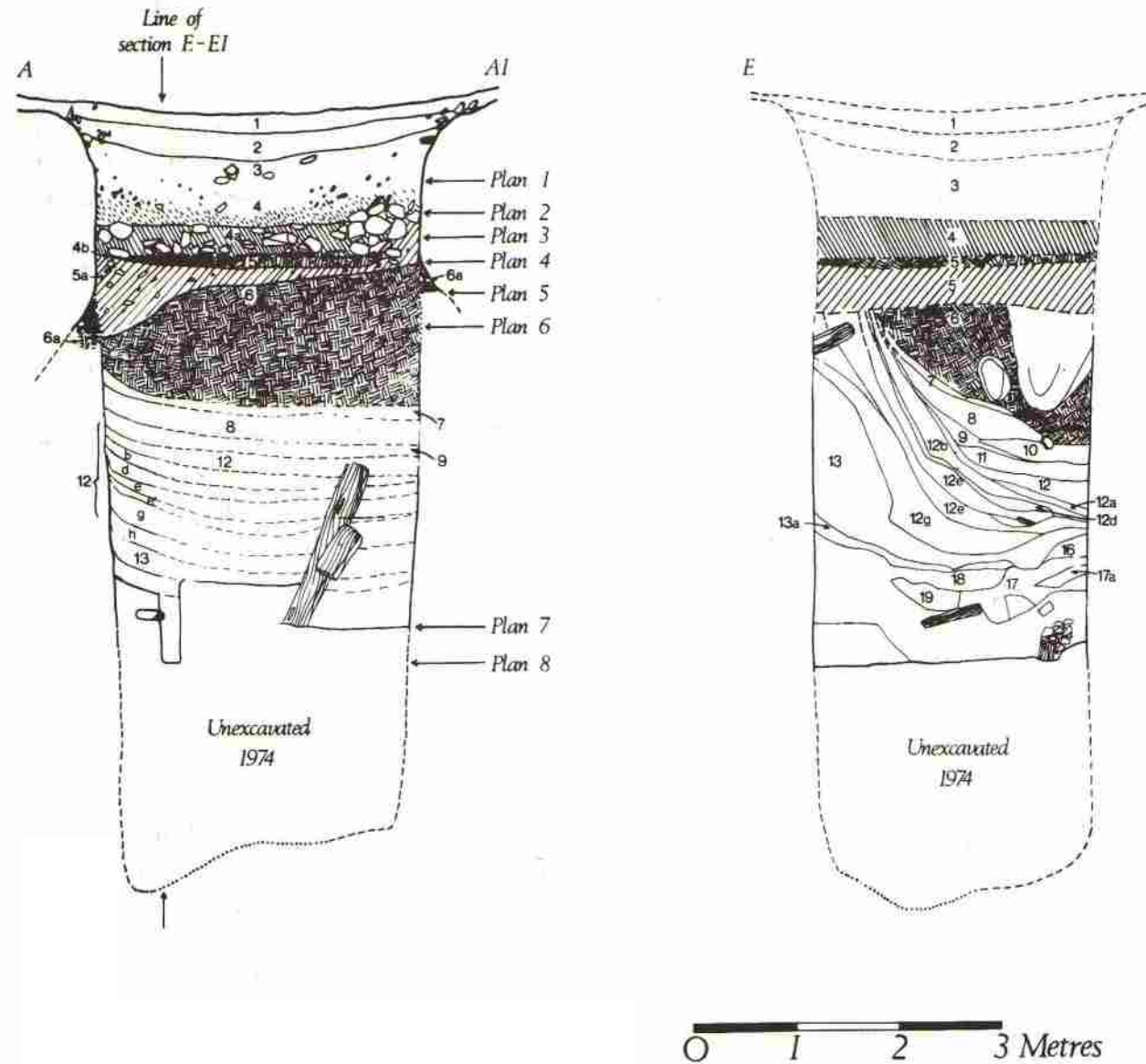


Fig. 2.36. Cumulative sections of a typical archaeological excavation. (1993: 116)



Fig. 2.37. Photo of the Manschappen provisions room. (2010)





Fig. 2.38. Views from West Fort - Historical layering of iconic buildings in the city scape. (2010)