

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/018/0034/008-02
	Site Name	Chavonnes Battery, Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town
	Date	6/05/1999 - 14:41
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.906795, 18.421548

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 44379

Site Category: Ruin > 100 years

SiteComments:

The Chavonnes Battery, originally known as the Waterkasteel, Waterpas or Mauritius Battery was built between 1714 and 1725 at the instigation of Mauritz De Chavonnes, a professional soldier who was at that time Governor of the Cape. He was concerned that the Castle did not provide adequate protection of the west side of Table Bay and ordered the construction of the Waterkasteel on a small rocky promontory overlooking the bay.. Escalating political tension in Europe resulted in the building of more defenses in later years. By the mid-18th century a sea wall, five batteries and a fort defended Woodstock beach while the massive Imhoff Battery strengthened the Castle defenses. The Roggebaai Battery, Chavonnes Battery and Amsterdam Battery protected the west side of the bay, while other smaller gun emplacements were built at Muizenberg, Hout Bay and Simonstown. By the time that the British took over the Cape in 1795 after the Battle of Muizenberg, Cape Town was a heavily fortified city.³ Apart from the Castle, a fragment of the Amsterdam Battery and portion of the French Lines in Woodstock comprise the only visible remains of the city's early defenses. The Chavonnes Battery was the first major defensive facility other than the Castle built by the Dutch East India Company. It was maintained throughout the period of the Dutch occupation of the Cape. The British appreciated its strategic importance after their take over and went to some lengths to maintain the battery in working order until it was decommissioned in 1861. Its final operational act was to fire the Royal Salute heralding the construction of the harbour complex now known as the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. The study has demonstrated that portions of the Chavonnes Battery still exist, buried in 19th century fill around and under the Concentra factory. The rear portions of the battery were destroyed by excavation of the Alfred Basin. It is expected that aspects of the side ramparts, the central courtyard and its interior features, may remain. The status of the front rampart is as yet unclear. This site represents the remains of South Africa's largest and earliest gun emplacement and as such, is of high historical value. After firing the salute heralding the first steps towards construction of the harbour, the remaining parts of the battery appear to have been included into the fill which now makes up part of the reclaimed land of the Clock Tower precinct. Section of wall thought to be part of the western side rampart in trial excavation B 8 Besides the Chavonnes Battery, there are other aspects of the site that are of interest. These include the first rail alignments in the country and the remnants of a 19th century cargo store that make up the ground floor of the eastern half of the Concentra factory.

AdminComments:

See report for more information.

Damage Types: