

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/028/0012
	Site Name	Martello Tower, 20 Bell Street, Fort Beaufort
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-32.778931, 26.635306

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 28850

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: Fort Beaufort is situated in a bend of the Kat River and owes its origin to the establishment of a military post there in 1822 by Colonel Scott, mainly for the purpose of countering continual raids by Makomo. From its inception this post played a very important part in the defence of the eastern frontier. Towards the end of the 1820's two important conferences with Xhosa Chiefs took place there and the country round Fort Beaufort was a storm- centre during the earlier part of the Sixth Xhosa War of 1834-35. At the end of the war the construction of strong fortifications was commenced at Fort Beaufort on the instructions of Sir Benjamin D'Urban. The remains of these buildings may still be seen in the grounds of the Tower Mental Hospital in Bell Street. The most important and most picturesque of them is the so-called Martello Tower. There is some difference of opinion on the origin of this term, but one may accept that it is a corruption of Mortella and relates to the British naval attack on Cape Mortella in Corsica in 1794 where the defenders of a tower of this type were able to offer prolonged resistance to a superior force. As their success was ascribed to the design of the tower, similar towers were erected in England for coastal defence and they were also considered to be suitable for colonial conditions. This circular tower is a massive dressed stone building. The dome, built of brick, is exceptionally fine. The woodwork which has been restored after a fire some years ago enables the visitor to climb up to the open space at the top. Here a wooden mounting still supports a small cannon that can be swivelled round. The fort was manned until 1869 and served through the years to protect the village and the surrounding district against attacks, including one by Hottentots under the leadership of Hermanus in 1851. Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: EXCELLENT Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: Fort Beaufort, No: 03 (05), Significance Category:

Damage Types: