

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/073/0021
	Site Name	Old Grey Institute, Belmont Terrace, Port Elizabeth
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.314128, 26.529400
Page No: 1 SiteAutoID: 27909		

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: This old building faces the well-known Donkin Reserve with its characteristic Donkin Memorial and lighthouse. The 1850's saw a considerable revival in higher education in the Cape Colony. In this revival Sir George Grey, the governor from 1854 to 1861, played no small part. In Port Elizabeth he granted ample land for the erection of public schools. John Paterson, one of the first representatives of Port Elizabeth in the Cape Parliament, made good use of this. He first managed to have the claims of the Municipality to certain vacant land on the hill, which was in danger of being declared Crown land, recognized. A part of this land was then allocated by the Municipality for a "grammar school". Then he arranged for the land granted by Sir George Grey to be sold. The proceeds of the sale augmented by a special municipal tax, were to be used to build a school to be called the Grey Institute in honour of Sir George Grey. The Institute was eventually built on the site on the hill that had been reserved for the "grammar school". The Institute was established in terms of an Act sponsored by Paterson and passed by the Cape Parliament on 4th June, 1856. Its affairs were placed in the hands of a Board of Control consisting of the Civil Commissioner as Chairman, members of the Municipality and some elected members. In September, 1856, a certain Mr. Archibald was instructed to prepare plans and specifications for the building. The tender was awarded to Murrel and Campbell. By the end of 1858 the building was ready, and in January, 1859, elementary classes were commenced under J. H. Webb. J. R. Macleisch of Swellendam was appointed principal of the high school and on his arrival in April the high school was formally opened. Macleisch's term of office as principal was an unhappy one, but he died in 1862 at the age of 29. Now provision was made for a post of Rector who would have control of the whole school and all its ramifications. The first Rector was Henry Johnson who held the post for ten years before being succeeded by John Thurlow in 1873. It is Thurlow that must be given the credit for adding the clock tower to the building in 1875 and for giving the school its particular character. The school began with an enrolment of 100 boys, but the numbers increased rapidly, so that at the turn of the century there were 1 000 pupils in the Primary and High Schools together. It goes without saying that the old building was inadequate for such numbers, so a new building was erected for the Grey Institute in 1914 and the old one served as a preparatory school only. Later, however, it lost its connection with the Grey Institute completely and became known as the "Albert Jackson School". Apart from its place in the history of education in South Africa, this old building is not only architecturally attractive, but of special importance as a fine early example of a secular "Gothic" building in South Africa. Proclaimed 1963 Visual Description: The building is partly faced in stone with brick lintels over some openings. Areas of the facades are plastered and include Tudor mouldings above the windows. The composition consists of a central double storeyed corps-de-logis with tower and two parallel side wings. Gothic elements include a pointed arch as a focus, a tower which was added in 1875, finials and a fine centre window with wooden tracery and stained glass. The building has been the home of several schools and is presently used as a teachers centre. It was proclaimed a national Monument in 1963. Colours: Site Features: Condition: Fair Construction Date: 1859 Materials: Loadbearing brickwork Catalogue: Theron 1983, No: A.5.2.09, Significance Category:

AdminComments:

Bibliography archive: Rainier, M 'The Albert Jackson School Buildings' Looking Back, II (2), June 1962, pp

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Damage Types: