

<b>Archaeological Site Report</b>	<b>SiteNo</b>	9/2/302/0010
	<b>Site Name</b>	Two Tower Church, Charles Street, Bloemfontein
	<b>Date</b>	
	<b>Project</b>	
	<b>CaseNID</b>	
	<b>Coords</b>	-29.115715, 26.222264

Page No: 1      **SiteAutoID:** 26552

Site Category: Building

#### **SiteComments:**

Archive Import History: The Two Tower Church is closely connected with the historical past of the Orange Free State. The congregation was established in 1848 and on 6th May, 1849, the Rev. Andrew Murray, Jr., was inducted as the first clergyman in the school building which was used as church hall and later served as the first Council chamber of the "Volksraad" of the Free State Republic. The foundation stone of the first church was, however, laid four months earlier by the British Resident, Major Warden. The church was consecrated in 1852. That building was demolished in 1878 and replaced by the present Two Tower Church on the same site. The foundation stone of the present church building was laid on 10th May, 1878, and on 7th May, 1880, the church was consecrated. This was the last congregation of the Rev. J. D. Kestell This remarkable old church stands squarely across Church Street in the heart of Bloemfontein. It has been the symbol of Afrikaans ecclesiastical interests in Bloemfontein for many decades. The Dutch Reformed congregation of Bloemfontein was established on 30th November, 1848. At first the services were held in the first Raadsaal in St. George's Street. On 6th January, 1849, Major Henry Warden, the British Resident, laid the foundation stone of the first church on the site where the 'Tweeteringkerk' now stands and on that occasion presented a church bell to the congregation. This church took a long time to build and it could only be opened four years later, on the 29th May, 1852. The population of the capital increased rapidly and the church soon became too small. There was talk of building a new church in 1862, but the project was only undertaken in 1874. The architect, A. W. Wocke, who had built the church at Philippolis, designed a church that would cost the congregation R35 000. Money was scarce, but the design was approved at a meeting of the congregation and it was decided to go ahead. The old building had to be demolished to make room for the new one, so services were held in the warehouse of the firm of G. A. Fichardt just across the road. President J. H. Brand laid the foundation stone of the new church on 10th May, 1878, in the presence of a large crowd. The building took exactly two years to complete and on 7th May, 1880, the well-known 'Tweeteringkerk' was formally opened. Thousands of people streamed into the city and no less than nineteen ministers of the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran and Methodist Churches attended the ceremony. The organ, a gift of the women of the congregation, was taken into use at the same time and gave good service for sixty years. The mahogany pulpit was made by Ernst Schmidt, a son of a German missionary and a member of the congregation, for the modest sum of R700. It was described as 'also . . . one of the finest gifts to the congregation'. The church stood unchanged until, one night in April, 1935, the western spire, including its clock, collapsed. Because there was a danger that the other spire might also fall, both were truncated to the height of the roof of the church and roofed at that height. Now the unique character that the two spires had given the building was more obvious than ever. Under the inspiring leadership of the Rev. C. R. Kotzé, money was collected during the Second World War and the years that preceded it, for restoring the spires, enlarging the vestry and for building an office for the church secretary. By the end of 1942 both spires had been restored and the renovated church was inaugurated on 1st May, 1943. In 1952 the church suffered another calamity. Someone broke in and started a fire. The beautiful pulpit was destroyed and the organ pipes were damaged. This caused great indignation and the congregation regarded the immediate restoration of the damage as a challenge. Both the pulpit and the organ were quickly rebuilt. The traditions of the old church are inextricably associated with the history of the Church and the State in the Orange Free State. Those who preached in it included such worthy figures as the Revs. G. van de Wall, G. Radloff, C. Morgan, T. Kriel, P. J. J. Boshoff, C. D. Murray, J. D. Kestell and C. R. Kotzé. The church played a

<b>Archaeological Site Report</b>	<b>SiteNo</b>	9/2/302/0010
	<b>Site Name</b>	Two Tower Church, Charles Street, Bloemfontein
	<b>Date</b>	
	<b>Project</b>	
	<b>CaseNID</b>	
	<b>Coords</b>	-29.115715, 26.222264

Page No: 2      **SiteAutoID:** 26552

part in many important state and ecclesiastical celebrations. In it the last three State Presidents of the Republic of the Orange Free State, J. H. Brand, F. W. Reitz and M. T. Steyn, were sworn-in. Services were held there in connection with special occasions like the inauguration of the Memorial Hall nearby (1898), the unveiling of the National Women's Monument (1913), the celebration of centenaries (1952 and 1954) and the unveiling of the monument to De Wet. In 1930 the congregation celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment and, in 1955, its seventy-fifth anniversary. On the other hand, the historic old church has shared in the sufferings of its people ; in it were held the funeral services of such men as President M. T. Steyn, General C. R. de Wet and the Rev. J. D. Kestell. Visual Description: The church is built in a modern roman style. It has two towers of 106 feet high. It has place for 7 Colours: Site Features: Condition: Fair Construction Date: 1878 Materials: Coursed Cut Stone, Metal Tile Catalogue: , No: Nil, Significance Category:

#### **AdminComments:**

Fagan, Gabriel, Mr Wocke Bibliography archive:

Damage Types: