

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/049/0005/001
	Site Name	Market Square, Kimberley
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-28.738219, 24.763757
Page No: 1 SiteAutoID: 28424		

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: This historic old Market Square lies in the heart of Kimberley. Round it developed not only the town of Kimberley but in one sense, the whole of the Northern Cape. Immediately after the discovery in 1871 of the deep diggings on the farm Dutoitspan, later known as Kimberley, there was a rush of diggers to this place so that the population reached 50 000 by about 1872. According to a photograph taken by R. W. Murray in that year, the Market Square was then already the centre of the tent- town. Indeed, the entire population depended on the goods that were offered for sale on the square. Wagons from all parts of the country were outspanned there, laden with a variety of foodstuffs: flour, potatoes, onions, ham, fowls, eggs and all kinds of vegetables and fruit, especially oranges, peaches and watermelons. One of the most sought-after commodities was firewood, for there was no other source of fuel. Long rows of wagons, piled high with firewood drew up there day after day throughout the year. The surrounding countryside had been stripped bare of trees. In the course of time buildings arose round the Market 192 Square. At first all were of wood and iron, lined with bricks. One of the first of the offices that were built facing the market were those of the attorney, S. Carlyle; soon there followed a mineral water factory and the offices of the Public Prosecutor, the Roads Inspector and the Claims Inspector. There, too, were the house of the medical inspector, Dr. William Grimmer, the residence of the Civil Commissioner, the hail of the Diggers' Committee, the Court of the Resident Magistrate and the first three-storeyed building, the Grand Hotel. The two biggest businesses, Steytler Bros. and A. Webb & Co. had their premises on the northern side of the square. Inevitably, the Market Square played an important part in local history. Here many illicit diamond deals in which the notorious Scotty. Smith frequently figured, were transacted. Here the diamond magnate Barney Barnato, standing as a candidate for Parliament sought the votes of the farmers. When Kimberley was besieged during the Anglo-Boer War the Town Hall on the square served as a place of refuge for women and children, and here Gen. Frensch was welcomed when the town was relieved. But Market Square was involved not only in the history of the town, but in that of the area to the north of it. It was here that a prospector washed gold ore in the presence of J. B. Robinson, an event that led to the participation of Robinson, Rhodes, Barnato and others in the exploitation of the Rand. It was here that Rhodes and Matabele Thompson held their discussions, and it was from this square that the expeditions to Stellaland, Goshen and Rhodesia departed—expeditions which were eventually to lead to the annexation of those territories by Britain. Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: