

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/018/0107
	Site Name	Riebeeck Square (block bounded by Shortmarket, Bree, Church and Buitengracht Streets), Cape Town
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.921225, 18.417471

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 29231

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: During the seventeenth century Cape Town expanded for the most part from the sea towards Table Mountain along the axis of the Heerengracht or Adderley Street. During the eighteenth century it expanded laterally also, and began to fill Table Valley. Then it was that another famous old square came into being almost unnoticed, three streets to the west of Greenmarket Square, on the slopes that rise towards Lion's Head. This square was situated on the outermost street of the City, Buitengracht Street. It was first known as "Boeren Plijn", then as "Hottentot Plyn" and finally as Riebeeck Square. These three names reflect the history of the square. In the olden days the roads from the interior joined at a point somewhere east of the Castle and the wagons with their long spans of oxen all had to pass through a toll-gate. At first the farmers outspanned their wagons anywhere, but soon they had to be properly controlled. They trekked past the Castle and up Sea Street (now Strand Street) to this large square which thus acquired the name of "Boeren Plijn". However, inroads were made on the Square during the first British occupation of the Cape. In 1799 the vain, haughty and spendthrift governor, Sir George Yonge, started to build the first theatre in Cape Town. Meanwhile the square lost its original function and name. In 1812 a new market was established immediately east of the Castle where the farmers now outspanned their wagons and conducted their business. The "Boeren Plijn" gradually became known as Hottentot Square, a name which appeared for the first time on a plan of Cape Town prepared by Geo. Thompson in 1827.2 Opinions differ widely on the origin of this name. One early writer derives the name from the Hottentot kraals that were supposed to have been situated there in earlier times, while another ascribes it to the noisy shouting and babbling of Hottentot wagoners. But it is much more likely that it owes its name to t that the square became more and more the meeting place of Coloured people because of its Proximity to the Malay Quarter. This, however, was not to be the last change of name that the square was to experience In the 1860' it was re-named Riebeeck Square in honour of the founder of the City and of South Africa. By this time, too, it had become much smaller and, to prevent any further encroachments it was proclaimed as a monument on 17th February 1961, Proclaimed 1961" Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: Rennie, Vol 2, No: 042.30, Significance Category:

Damage Types: