

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/018/0139
	Site Name	De Waal Park, Gardens, Cape Town
	Date	30/09/2014 - 08:50
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.936796, 18.412590

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 29214

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: This park was originally part of the Van Breda estate, Oranjezicht. For 170 years the estate belonged to this family and it extended from the Platteklip Gorge against the slope of Table Mountain to Molteno Road and Camp Street. The City Council of Cape Town purchased this property in 1877. It was 10,3 hectares in extent and was in turn divided into three parts. The top part would be used for the building of the Molteno reservoir and on the small strip below Camp Street smaller reservoirs would be built. The piece of ground which lay in between, i.e. from the Molteno reservoir down to Camp Street, formed a natural park. In the upper right-hand corner next to Molteno Road there was a pine-forest and some of the trees were already eighty years old. Here was also the sepulchral vault of the well-known Hofmeyr family. In the deed of sale a servitude was registered forbidding the erection of any buildings and the alienation of any part of the grounds. In the eighties David Christiaan de Waal hit upon the idea to develop this terrain into a park purposefully and systematically. He was not only city councillor at the time but also a member of the Legislative Council of the Cape Colony. He said that a tree, in its serene dignity and with its branches always pointing heavenward, was to him a symbol of prayer. Thus with his aid thousands of trees were planted in Cape Town and a beginning was made with the planting of trees in the park. While he was Mayor of Cape Town, 1889-1890, he aided the further development of the park. In 1895 it was opened to the public and named in honour of its founder. D. C. de Waal died in 1909, but in the course of time the park has come to occupy a special place in the hearts of all Capetonians. At the same time, however, a new suburb, stretching to the slopes of the mountain, had sprung up round the park. Pressure was brought to bear upon the City Council to set apart a small part of the park for the building of a bowling-green and tennis-courts. This would necessitate the removal of about one hundred of the oldest trees. A section of the public, supported by the Historical Monuments Commission, opposed this. A moving plea to preserve the park as a whole was made by the well-known Dr. J. Luckhoff. To him the park is not only a historical heritage, which is both beautiful and useful, but also of spiritual value. Consequently there is a philosophical undercurrent in his letters. About the trees he writes : "All trees are symbols of the noble fulfilment of the majesty and mystery of life. The creative spirit formed these trees by many years of patient work, carried out in ordered rhythm through every part and completed in exquisite perfection. They stand self-contained as personalities, grouped together in harmony to create a fuller whole and a richer character. Thus is expressed the culmination and joy of supreme fulfilment." To safeguard the park against any mutilation the City Council and the Historical Monuments Commission agreed in 1965 that this park should be maintained in perpetuity as public gardens and that none of the land comprising the park should be used for any other purpose. Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: 1895 Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: