

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/010/0003
	Site Name	Old Town Hall, Donkin Street, Beaufort West
	Date	13/09/2012 - 00:28
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-32.350525, 22.583022

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 29453

Site Category: Building

Directions:

Large old cypress tree on pavement, also old pear trees

SiteComments:

The Town Hall of Beaufort West stands in the main street, at the centre of the-historic Karoo town. It is a striking building, white and massive with- bold lines and an old- fashioned tower. The origins of Beaufort West go back to 1818 when Governor Lord Charles Somerset proclaimed it as a town and gave his family-name to it. The little town was barely fifty years old when the town hall was built; it was then and still is one of the most dignified buildings in the town. At the middle of the nineteenth century there was a strong feeling that a proper town hall was a necessity. At a public meeting held on 26th July, 1859, it was decided to buy Erf No. 14 from a Mr. Cormack for Ri 300 as a site for a town hall, and the plans were drawn up before the end of that year. They made provision for a town hall, public offices, a magistrate's court and a library, all under one roof, but the building was only erected in 1865-1866 and the tower was completed in 1867. The history of the building is closely related to that of the town. In 1869 the large dam above the town broke as a result of heavy rain and the town suffered serious damage. Besides all its other functions, the town hall had to serve as the post office, school and mission church. Later the Divisional Council and the telegraph office were also housed in the building. During the Anglo-Boer War a part of the building was set aside for military purposes. But the building did not function exclusively as a centre of administration. It also became a recreational centre: it served as a skating rink, wrestling ring, cinema and a venue for other forms of recreation. It gradually became too small for the growing population with the result that the hall was partitioned into various offices and the building lost its character as far as the interior is concerned. Nevertheless, it is still a worthy building with its own architectural style, which lends a certain character to the main street. Visual Description: S/s bldg, 5 bays, symm. roof hidden by parapet, bracketed cornice. Hexagonal bell tower over clock above entrance on Donkin. Windows with shouldered arches. Rusticated pilasters Construction Date: 1865-66 Materials: Plastered brick : corrugated iron Catalogue: Beaufort West, No: 21.09

AdminComments:

Archive Import Bibliography archive: Vivier, W G H & Vivier, S (1969) Hooyvlakte, pp 18-23

Damage Types: