

Figs. 20 & 21 The Medical Superintendent's House c1895. The verandah and trelliswork are a Victorian additions to the earlier building.

(Photos: Robben Island Collection S & Library)

8.28* THE CLUB HOUSE : FORMERLY MEDICAL SUPERINTENDANT'S HOUSE

Location: Church Street
Constructed: early 1840's

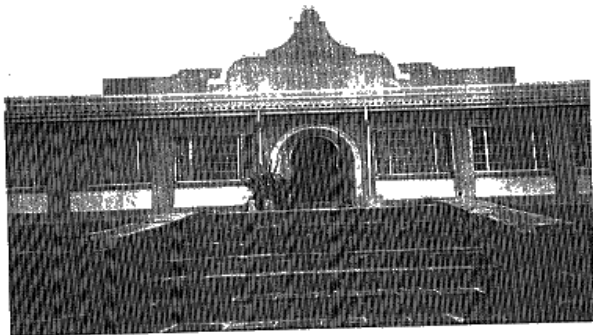


Stylistically and in plan-form this house appears to be contemporaneous with the Anglican parsonage (see 8.33). The first Medical Superintendent succeeded the Military Commander of the Island in 1846 when this building became his residence. Dr Wright had, however, been appointed as permanent surgeon to Robben Island in 1842. It therefore seems probable that this building was built at that time.

Later a large service and stable wing also adjacent to the present Church Street still shown on the 1905 map which has been demolished.

The main facade of the building faced the sea and extensive park which is now the cricket ground. The old jetty built in 1827 and the flagpole were also sited below this house. The jetty blew down in 1865.

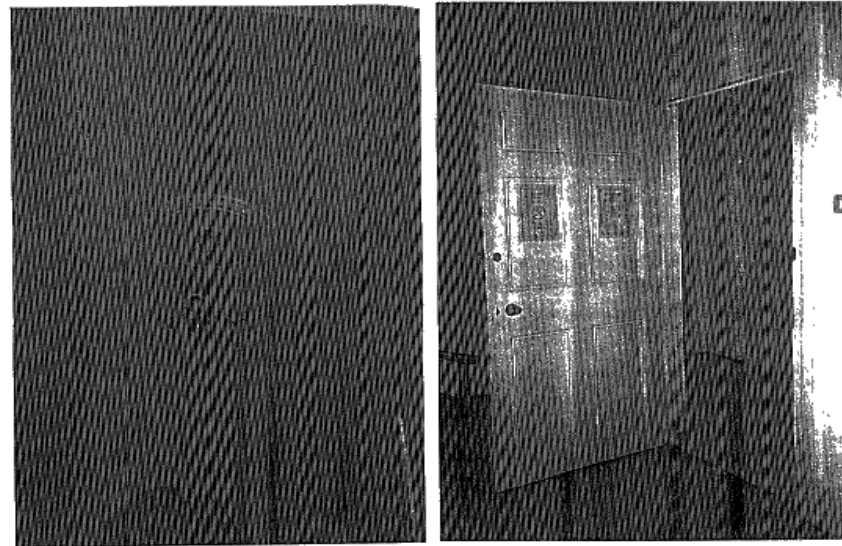
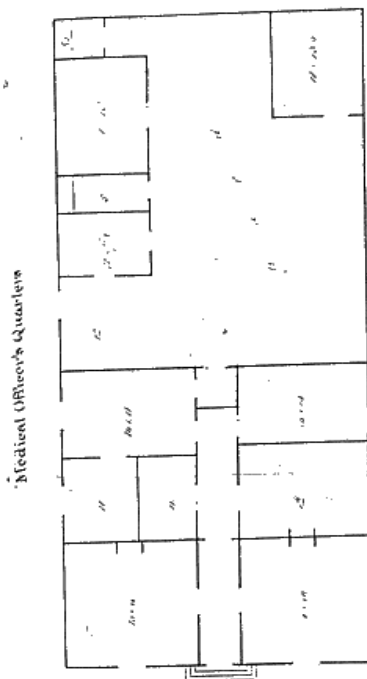
At present, the original form of this building is almost completely concealed. A large imitation "holbol" gable has been built above the central entrance door and the long verandah in front has been completely enclosed with modern steel windows with the parapet cornice moulding extended above it. The building is plastered and painted pink. Its construction material is unknown but is almost certainly stone.



Indications of the original form can be found in the room on the left hand side of the old entrance door which has a cast iron fireplace with a timber surround with bull's eye corner mouldings. There are double doors to the verandah. The central passage has a ceiling rosette and a fine moulded cornice. Beneath the new entrance is said to be a cellar with unlighted isolation cells containing shackles and other restraints for violent prisoners but this was not inspected.

Considerable unsympathetic internal modification has taken place to accommodate the present function. The 1846 diagrammatic plan illustrated below is, however, still identifiable and the doors and architraves are in good condition

This is one of the three identifiable earliest buildings on the island. It must originally have been very handsome and should be restored to its original form for which there is good evidence.



2
Fig. 22 (left) 1846 plan of the Medical Superintendent's house
(Archives C O 4372)

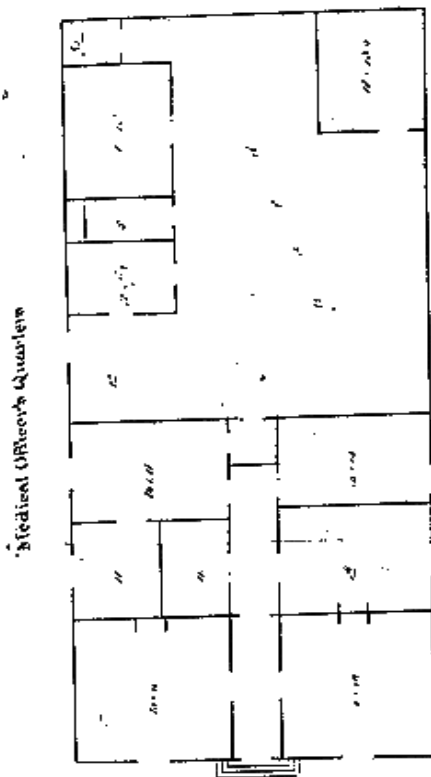
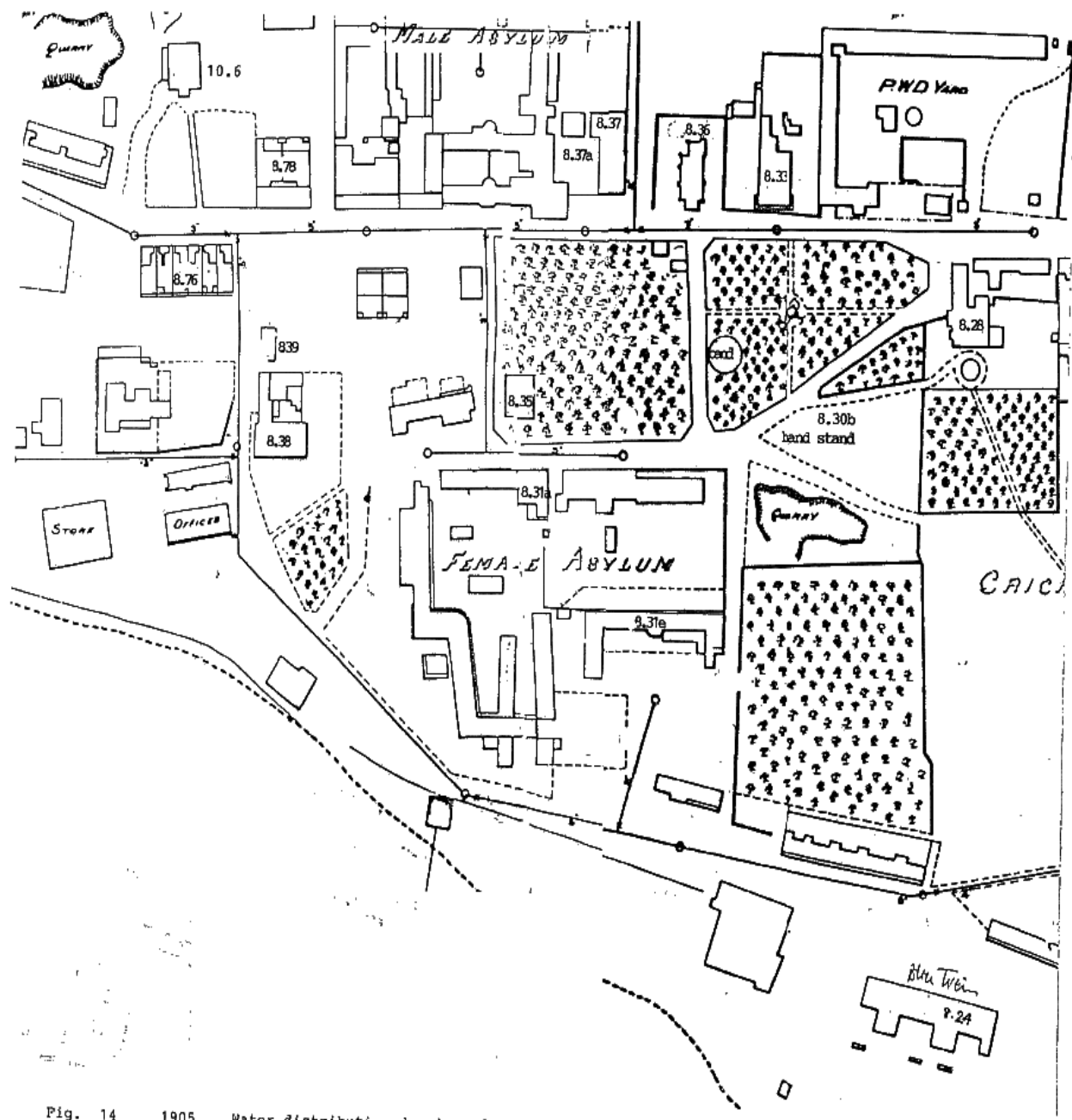


Fig. 22 (left) 1846 plan of the Medical Superintendent's house
(Archives C O 4372)



- Note:
Surviving buildings are numbered according to survey map sheets and named according to their present function
- 10.6 Primary School
core early 1840s
 - 8.24 Terrace of staff houses
c1900
 - 8.28 Robben Island Club
early 1840s
 - 8.30b Concrete memorial
1870
 - 8.31a Offices and single
quarters c1900
 - 8.31e Single quarters
c1900
 - 8.35 Staff house
1870s
 - 8.38 Shop ?includes part
of old building
 - 8.39 Trust Bank
probably 1870s
 - 8.76 Terrace of staff
housing 1877
 - 8.78 Semi-detached staff
houses ?1860s

Fig. 14 1905 Water distribution drawing of central area of village showing buildings at that time. Archives M4/77. cf. Figs. 13 & 14



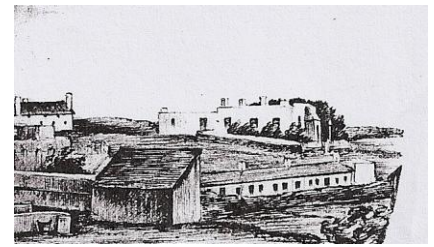
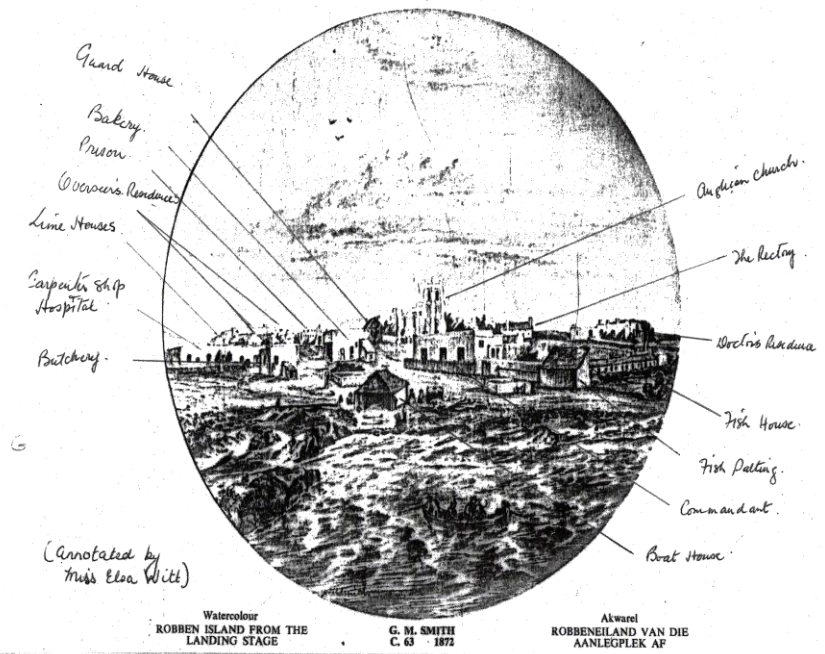
View from belfry - see striped stoep roof of Medical Officers house. Note also the park to the south of the building.
BRN 146292: Elsa Witt's albums: miscellaneous (circa 1920)



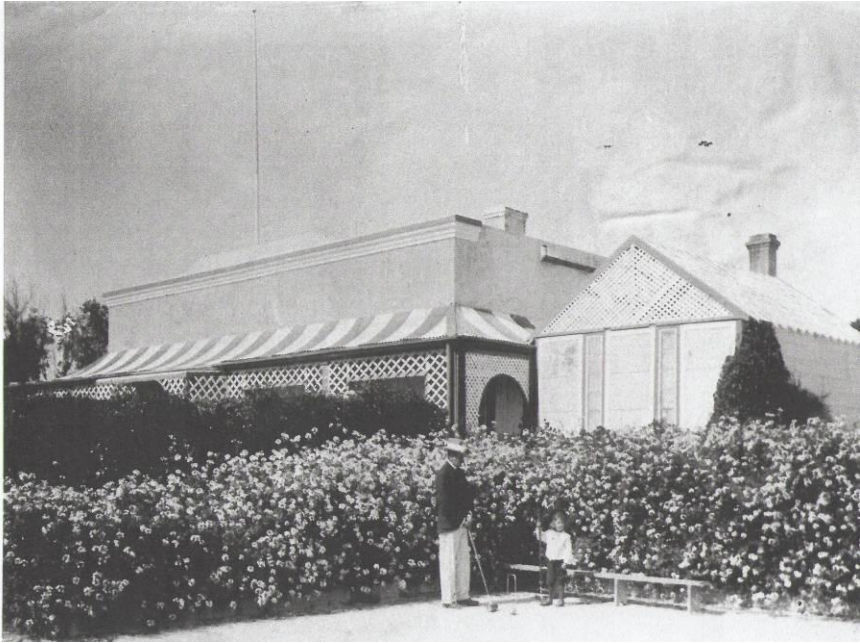
Medical officer's residence from cricket field
BRN 146292: Elsa Witt's albums: sport (circa 1920)

CT. Robben Island

INIL 15670
(neg) (ex ALBX 19)



Painting by GM Smith 1872 with annotations by Elsa de Witt (SA Library)



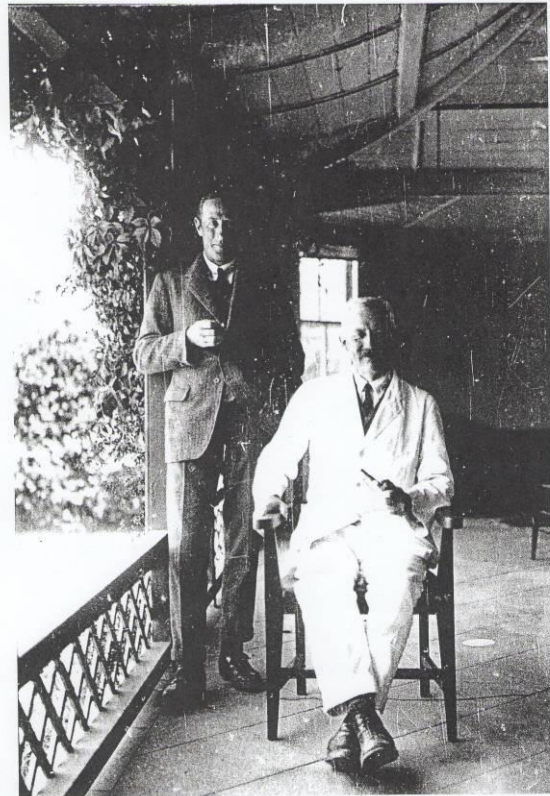
'Village' showing close up of medical officers house with croquet court in front
Elsa Witt Album BRN 146292 (circa 1920)

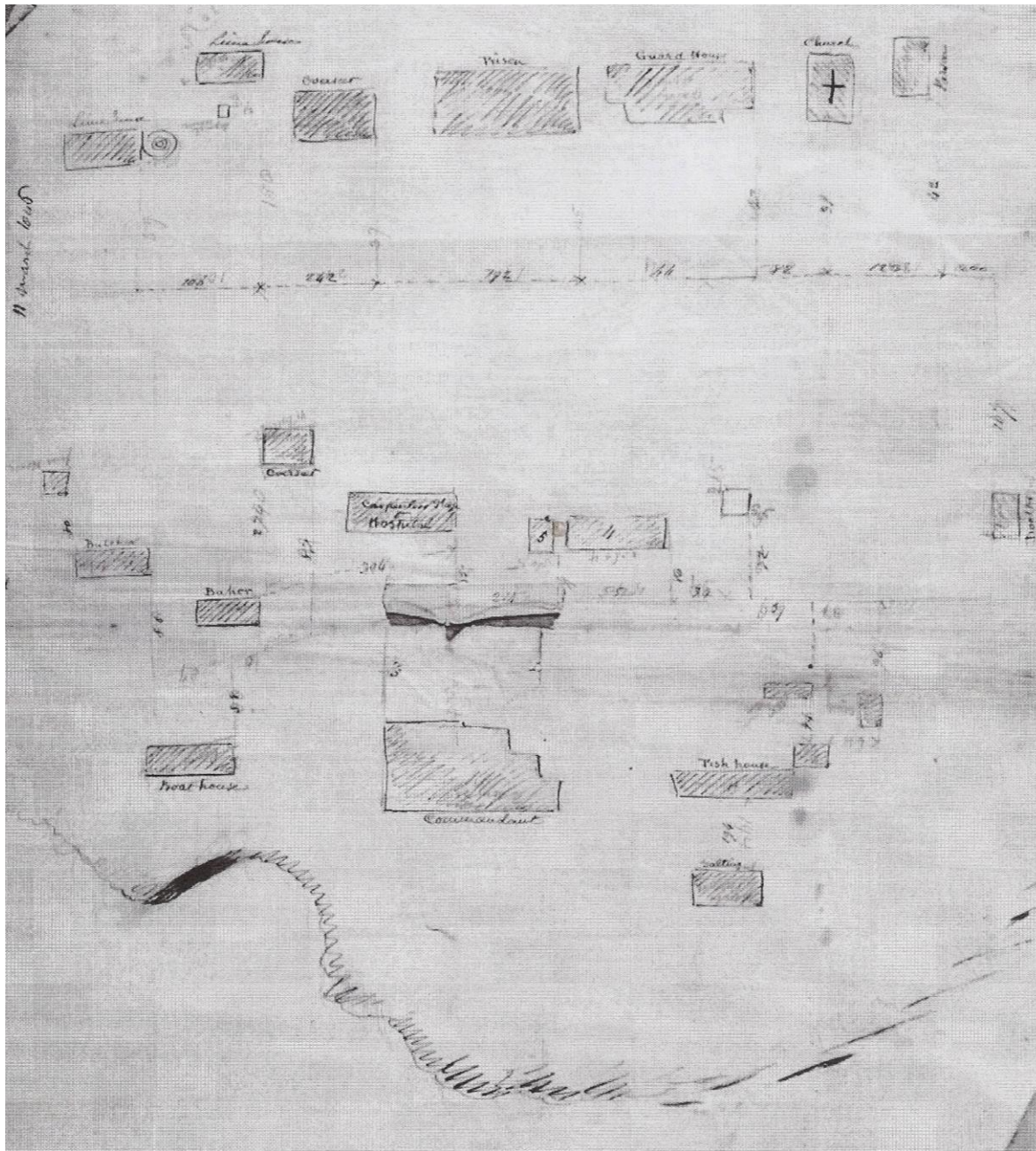
A.G.2635. View of garden and home of Doctor R. Davies,
Robben Island.

1923.



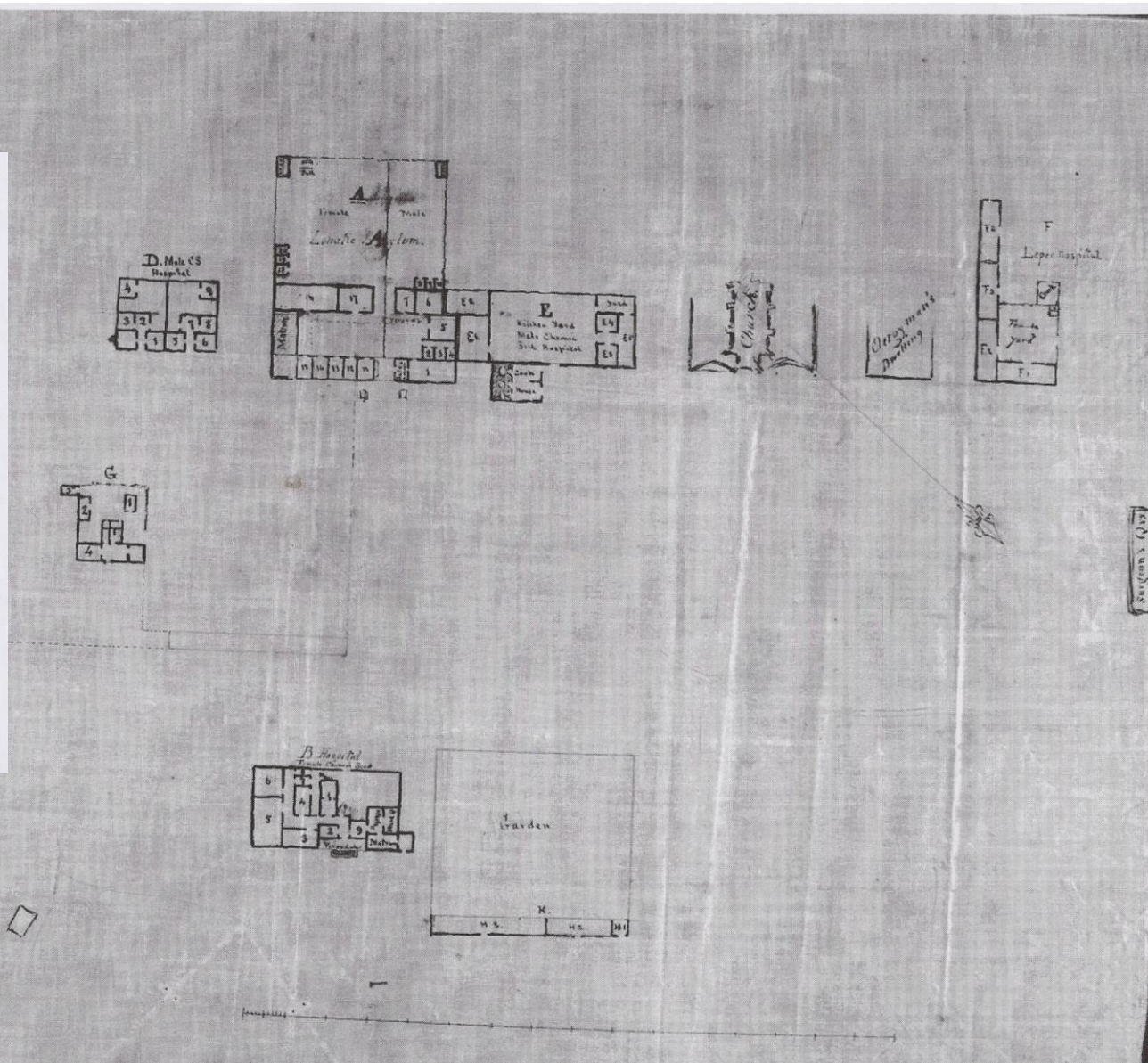
A.G.2637. Doctor W. Budd standing and Doctor R. Davies seated
on front veranda of home of Doctor R. Davies,
Robben Island. 1920



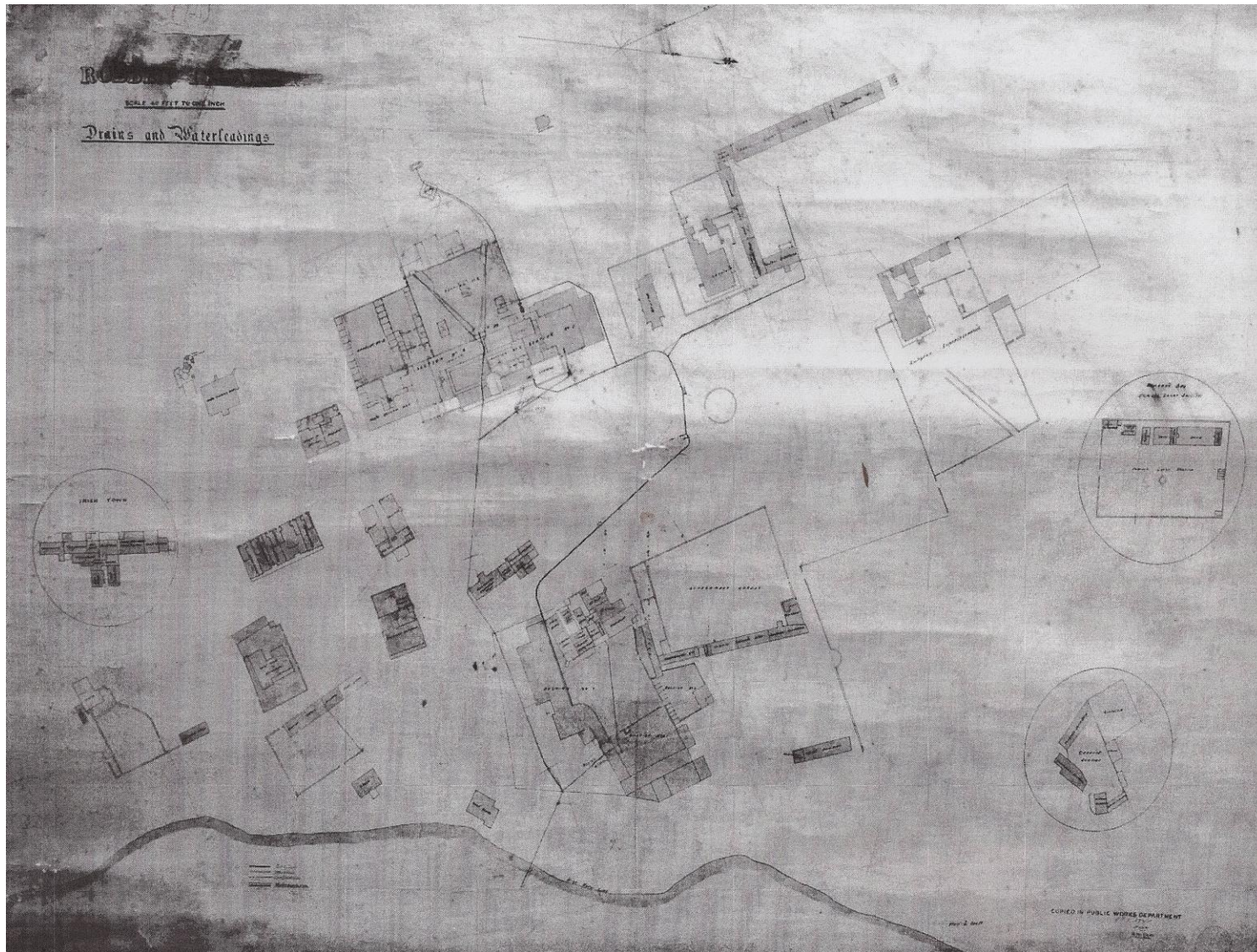


1846. Layout plan of the hospital buildings on Robben Island by Major Wolfe with doctor's house on the right. The site is drawn as a rectangle and lies diagonally opposite the church. (CO 4372/no. 17)

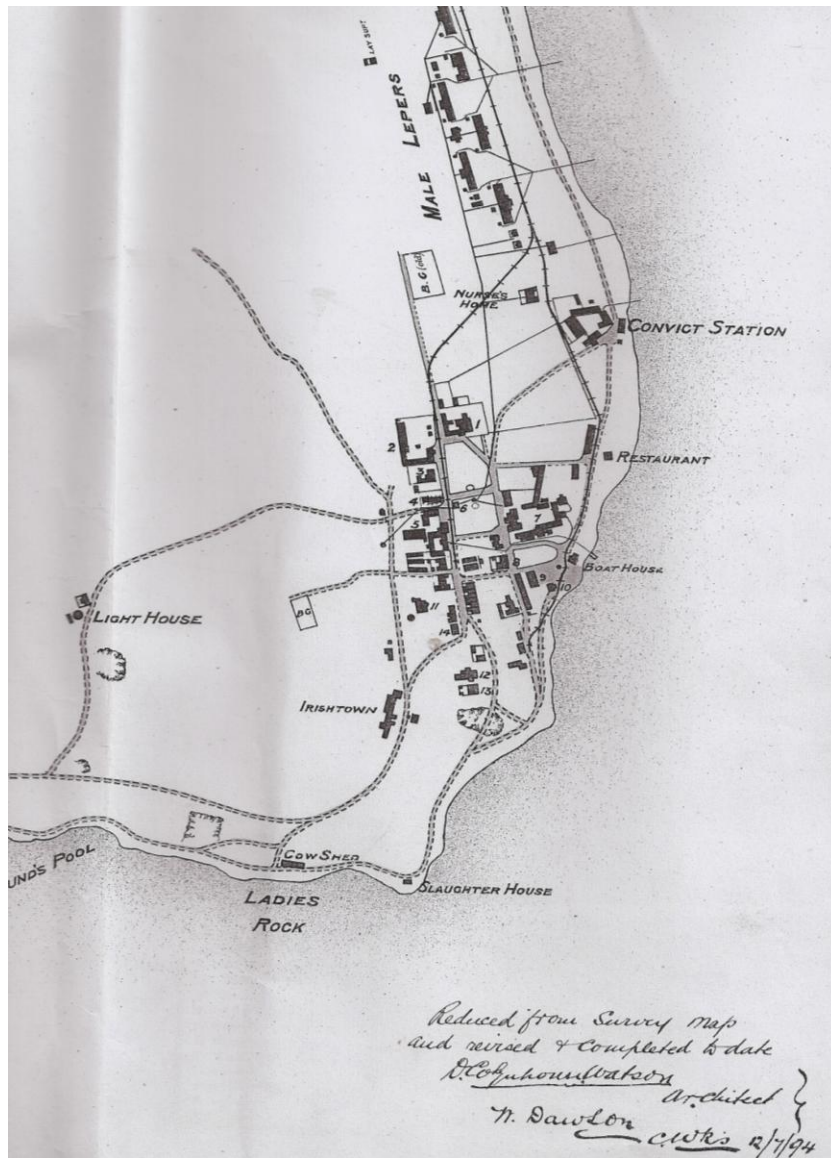
- C
Flagstaff
D. Male CS Hospital
- A. Male and Female Lunatic Asylum
previously prison
In early 1890,s replaced by Male Asylum building
now demolished
 - B. Female chronic sick
previously Commandant's House
survived as part of the female asylum until c1900
when it was replaced by building 8.31a still existing
 - C. Male chronic sick "Flagstaff ward"
previously limehouse; still survives as part of the
present school building 10.6
 - D. Male chronic sick
previously overseers' semi-detached houses
later incorporated into Male Asylum; now demolished
 - E. Male chronic sick
previously guard house
Right hand side possibly still exists
in altered form
 - F. Leper hospital - not shown on 1846 map
later PWD workshops and yard; now demolished
 - G. Purpose not indicated on drawing
previously overseer's house; now demolished
 - H. Purpose not indicated
previously possibly stables and fish house
now demolished
- The Church is shown with inward curving
walls which is reflected on an early painting



1858. Sketch showing layout of hospital buildings. Side of surgeon superintendent's quarters shown on the right (CO729/no 226)



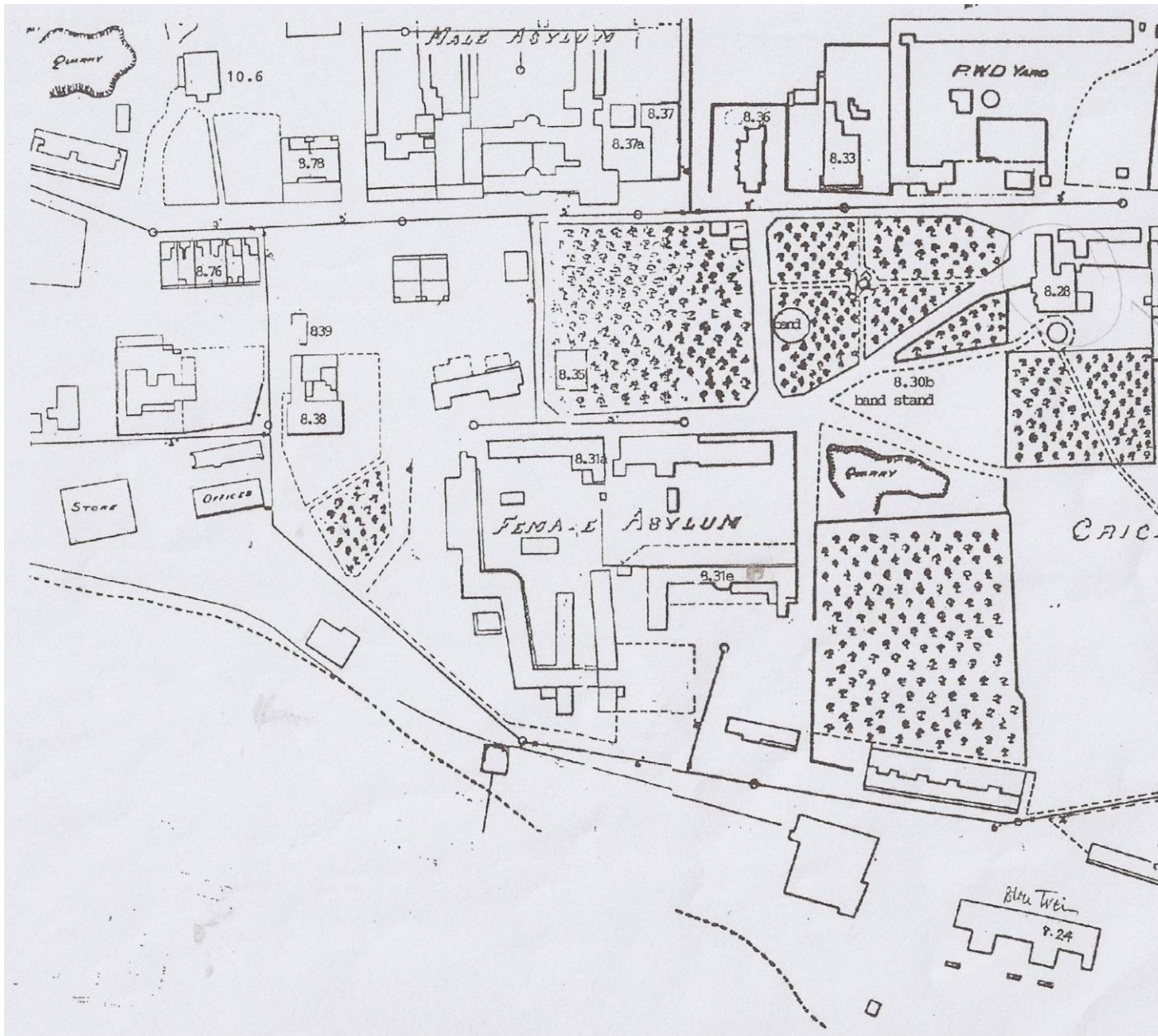
1890. Plan showing drains and water leadings. Surgeon's property (buildings and gardens) are shown. Since 1846 the backyard has been extended on the east side. The building opposite has also been extended. There are additional structures on the north side. A wall extends around the property. A diagonal path leads up to the house. A steep encircles the front of the house on three sides. (M3/528)



REFERENCE.

- 1 Chief & Med. Supt.
 - 2 Workshops.
 - 3 Parsonage.
 - 4 English Church.
 - 5 Male Asylum.
 - 6 Tank, Masonry.
 - 7 Female Asylum.
 - 8 Asst. Med. Officer.
 - 9 Offices.
 - 10 Store.
 - 11 Library & Billiard Room.
 - 12 Dutch Parsonage.
 - 13 Magistrate's Quarters.
 - 14 Wrks. Dept. Recreation Rm.
- + + + + + Tram Line.
 Blue—Water Pipes.
 Brown—Drain. "
 B.G.—Burial Ground.

1894. Large sketch map showing the Medical Superintendent's house (M2/2062)



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Fig. 14 1905 Water distribution drawing of central area of village showing buildings at that time. cf. Figs. 13 & 14 Archives M4/77

(1905)

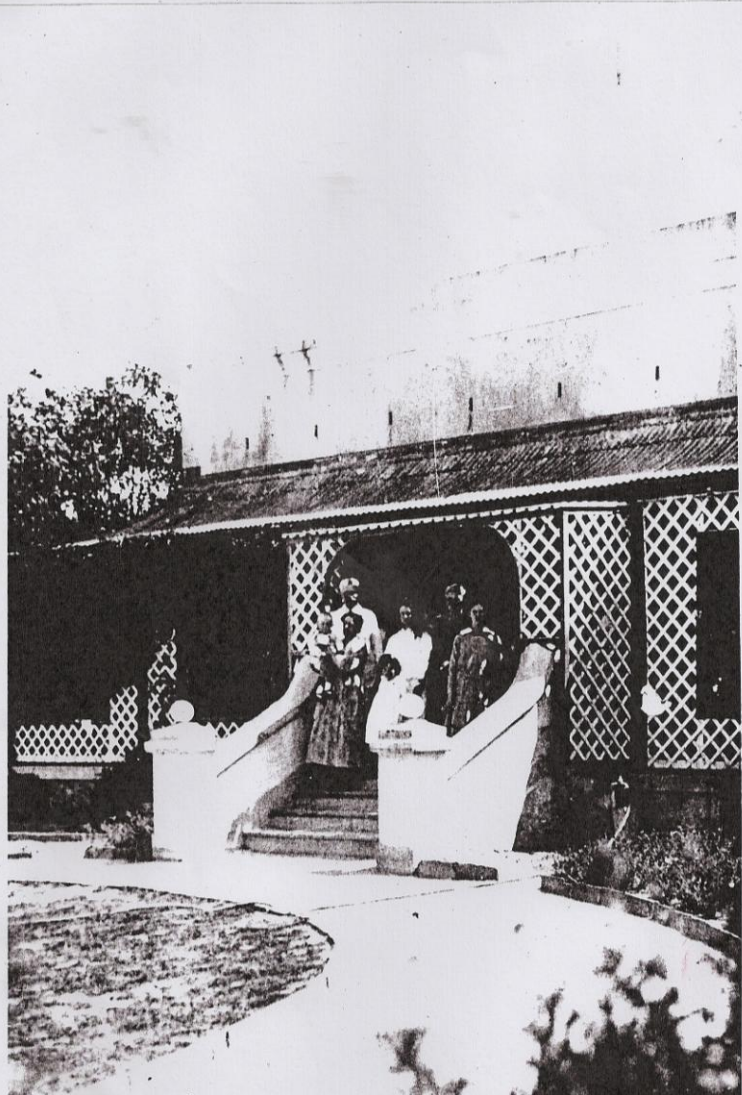
Riley 1993

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1914. Robben Island Water Supply map. Medical superintendent's house indicated. Park to south, tennis court to north and cricket ground to east. Diagonal path leads to circular bed in front of house. Steop on south side partly enclosed. Addition on northeast corner. Backyard additions. Ring and enclosures on north side (General Moodie)

A.G. 5661 View of Doctor T. S. Davies' house
showing family group on veranda
steps, Robben Island. 1921.

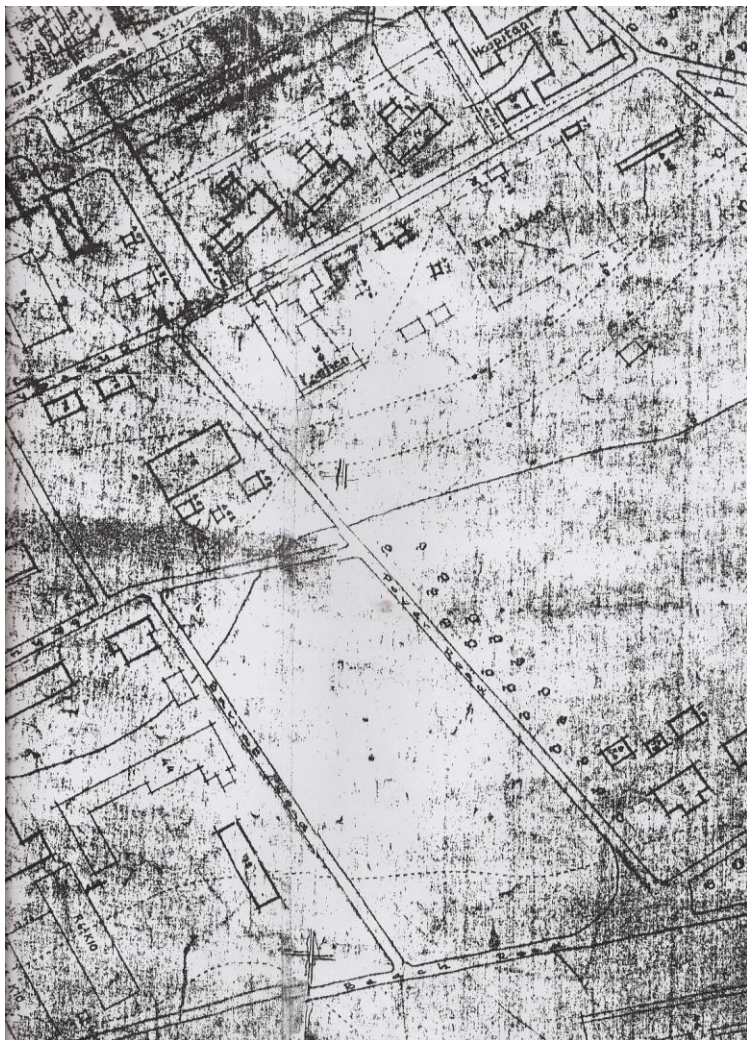




1931. Plan showing "buildings for sale". Site no 29 Medical Officer's residence ringed not to be demolished. The outline of the property is similar to 1914, (General Moodie)



1940. Robben Island, Secret copy no 7, CA/5/1, SA Airforce 20.3.20. Scale 1/5000. Map belonged to General Moodie who lived in the medical superintendent's house as commanding officer (then major) during the war and for a few years afterwards. He says beautiful garden ruined by Prison's Dept and grave in garden has disappeared. Roof construction replaced and false gable built by Prison's Dept. Large cellars underground. Rim database record him as mentioning bay windows at left of house and access to attic room.



1980. Section of Prison Dept map showing clubhouse marked "kantein" with tennis court (old NMC files: 3k/RobE/1/3/ (WC Box 305)