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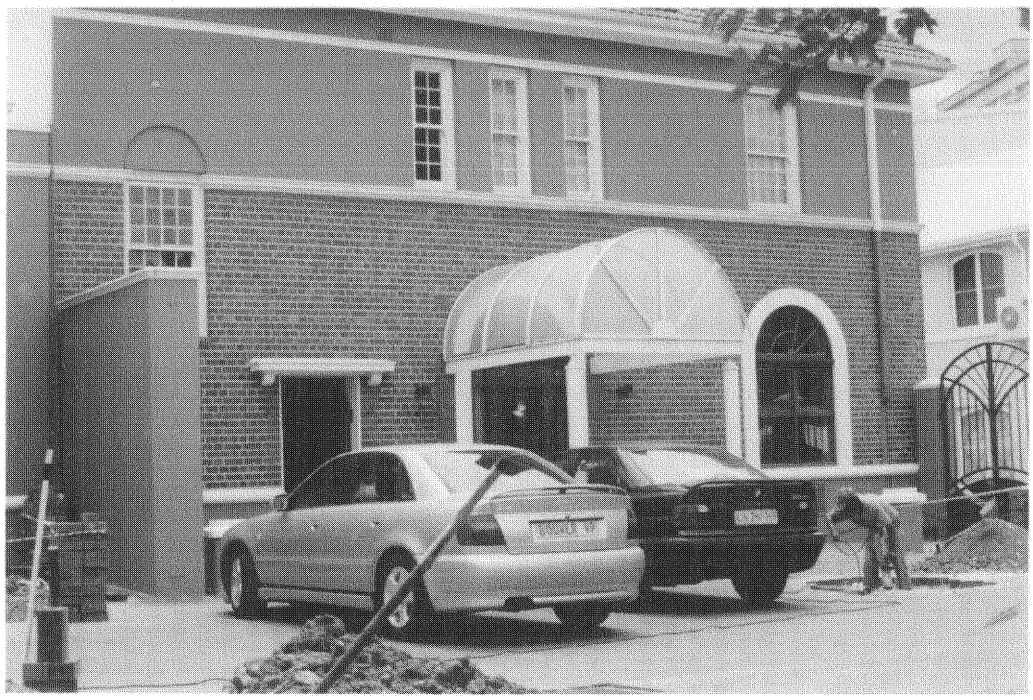
PHASE I EXPLORATORY EXCAVATION REPORT

31 Mechau Street
CAPE TOWN, ERF 742

(HWC permit No 2004-11-001)

A report prepared for BESTCAPE Property Developers (Pty) Ltd



Seemann, Manhire & Associates
Heritage Archaeologists & Consultants
1203 Simon's Bay Estate, Oatlands Road, Simon's Town 7975
Tel (021) 786 3656, cell: 073 1632 754
e-mail: useemann@telkomsa.net
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EXECUTIVE SUMMERY

Dr Ute A Seemann, historical archaeologist was commissioned to undertake a Phase I excavation of some six test holes at erf 742, located at 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town.

The excavation was conducted under the direction of Mr AH Manhire from 8 to 14 December 2004, comprising eight working days. The artifacts recovered consisted mainly of ceramics, with some faunal material, a few glass sherds and *in situ* foundations of earlier buildings.

There was no sign of human inhumation, either as primary burial or as secondary deposits of human bone. According to Prof AG Morris, it seems unlikely that formal historical burials will be found at this site.

It is strongly recommended that the site be monitored by an archaeologist during site clearance and foundation excavation.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The brief

At the request of BESTCAPE Property Developers (Pty) Ltd, Mr John Taylor commissioned us to undertake a phase I exploratory excavation of six test pits at their property erf 742, located at 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town (Fig. 1). The site had been flagged by the Cape Town City Council, Urban Planning Department as adjacent to or within the historical Green Point burial ground. The main aim of this test excavation was therefore to ascertain if any human remains are present, and if so, make recommendations for future mitigation.

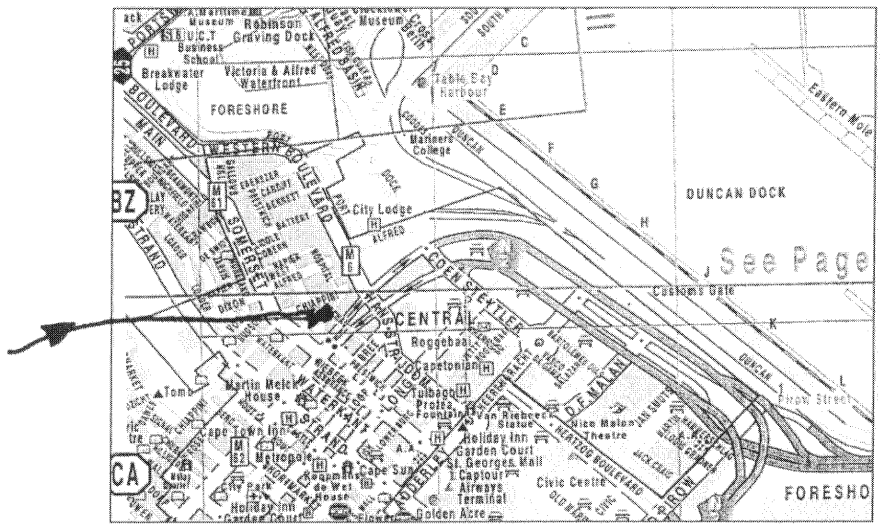


Fig. 1. Central Cape Town, location of the block (highlighted) under investigation, 2000.

1.2 Baseline description

Erf 742 is situated on Mechau Street next to the "Fireman's Arms" public house and close to the corner of Chiappini Street. The site has been the focus of several building episodes, probably commencing in the late 18th century, and has been redeveloped at least four times since 1815. The last major building episode occurred in 1993 when the existing double story structure was remodeled and a new single story wing was added. The rest of the site consists of an open-air courtyard that is used as a parking area. It is surfaced with red bricks which were probably also laid down in 1993.

2. EXCAVATIONS

As specified in the permits issued under Sections 35 & 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act, six test pits were dug as part of a trial excavation. Four pits were excavated in the outside courtyard area and two pits excavated inside the new wing which is currently used as a seminar room. The six test pits were numbered holes 2 to 7 (Fig. 2, next page). Hole 1 was abandoned as it contained recently disturbed material.

2.1 EXCAVATIONS IN THE OUTSIDE COURTYARD

The four test pits in the outside courtyard were numbered holes 2, 4, 6, & 7. They were spread across the site to give maximum coverage and are described in sequence starting from the south-western corner to the north-eastern corner of the courtyard.

2.1.1 Hole 1 – located near the SW corner of the site.

This hole was found to have been previously excavated, and therefore was abandoned.

2.1.2 Hole 4 – located near the SW corner of the site, and next to hole 1.

(see Fig. 3)

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of red brick paving above a thin layer of white sand.

Layer 2 – Brown Soil

This layer was all builders fill and probably dates to the construction of the car park in 1993. It was composed of brown sandy earth with stones, pieces of red brick and some large blocks of slate.

Most of the artifacts were located in the upper part of this layer. The ceramic fragments included both Chinese export porcelain and British ware. Some bone fragments were recovered, primarily from domesticated animals, a few pieces of glass and occasional marine shell. Recent material such as paper and plastic was present, which confirmed that layer 2 is recent fill.

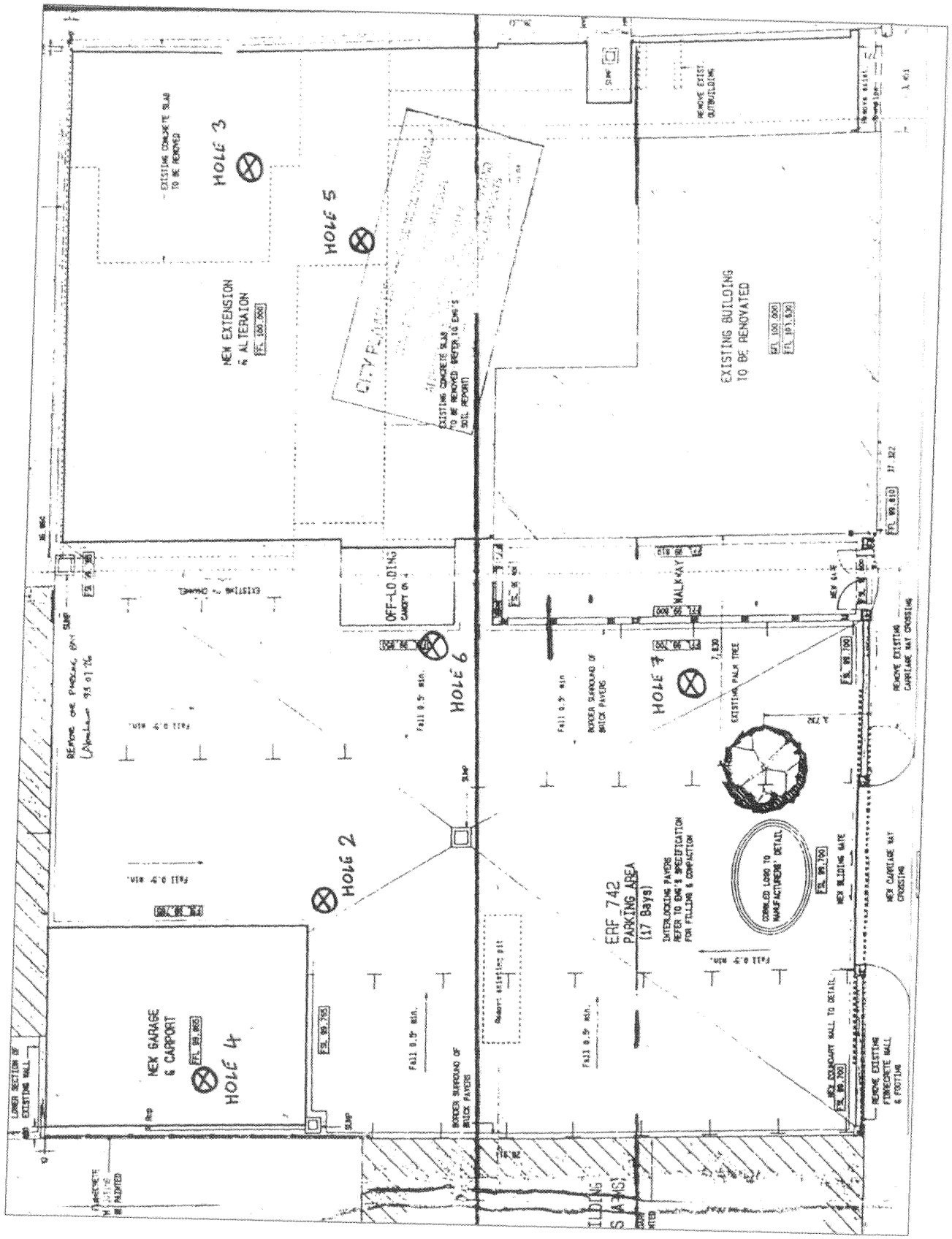


Fig. 2. Site plan of erf 742, 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town with test holes numbered.

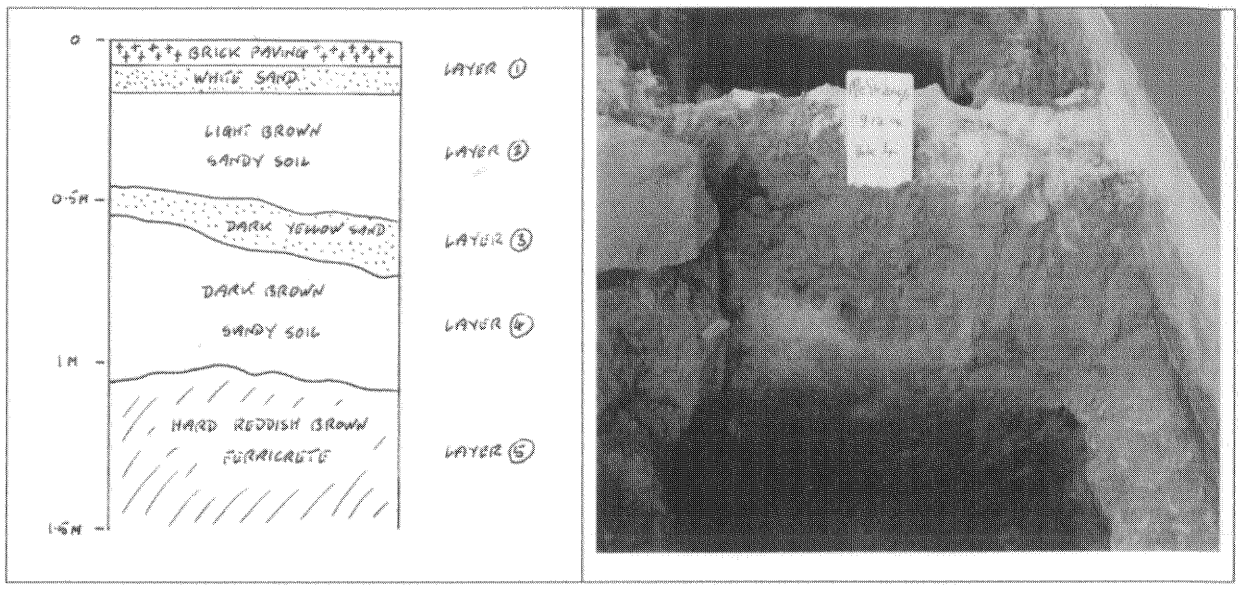


Fig. 3 Diagram and a photograph of the layers in hole 4.

Hole 4, continued …

Layer 3 – Dark Yellow Sand

This was a thin layer about 0,10 m. The finds were similar to layer 2 but less in quantity.

Layer 4 – Brown Earth

This was a layer of compacted brown soil and sand with very few artifacts. Several lumps of ferrocrete were encountered near the base of the layer.

Layer 5 - Ferrocrete

At a depth of around 1 m there was a layer of very hard ferrocrete. There were no artifacts recovered and the excavation of hole 4 was abandoned at this point as the ferrocrete was *in situ*, undisturbed material.

2.1.2 Hole 2 – located near the center of the courtyard area.

(Figure 4)

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of red brick paving above a thin layer of white sand.

Layer 2 – Sub-Base

A thin layer of clay and pebbles with a few pieces of slate.

Layer 3 – Brown Soil

An earthy brown soil layer comprised of builders fill. Very few artifacts: some ceramics and domestic animal bone. On the east side, at a depth of about 0,75 m building foundations were uncovered. These consisted of a regular line of dressed stone with traces of damage from laying drainage pipes at a later stage. The edge of these stone foundations ran approximately north-south in the same orientation as the buildings currently standing on Erf 742.

Fig. 4 Hole 2 with the foundations of a previous structure, 2004.

Layer 4 - Ferrocrete

At a depth of around 1 m there was a layer of hard, gritty ferrocrete. There were virtually no artifacts apart from two pieces of bone and a fragment of sea shell.

Layer 5 – Yellow/Grey Clay

Below layer 5 there was sterile yellow/grey clay. The excavation of hole 2 was concluded at this point.

2.1.4 Hole 6 – located on the northern edge of the courtyard area.

Hole 6 was placed near to the loading ramp of the currently occupied building, far enough away to avoid modern foundations. The hole was also meant to be situated on the road that ran east/west across erf 742, formerly part of Jerry

Street (see Fig. 5 below). It was thought that this placement would increase the likelihood of intercepting undisturbed material from earlier occupations.

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of red brick paving above a thin layer of white sand.

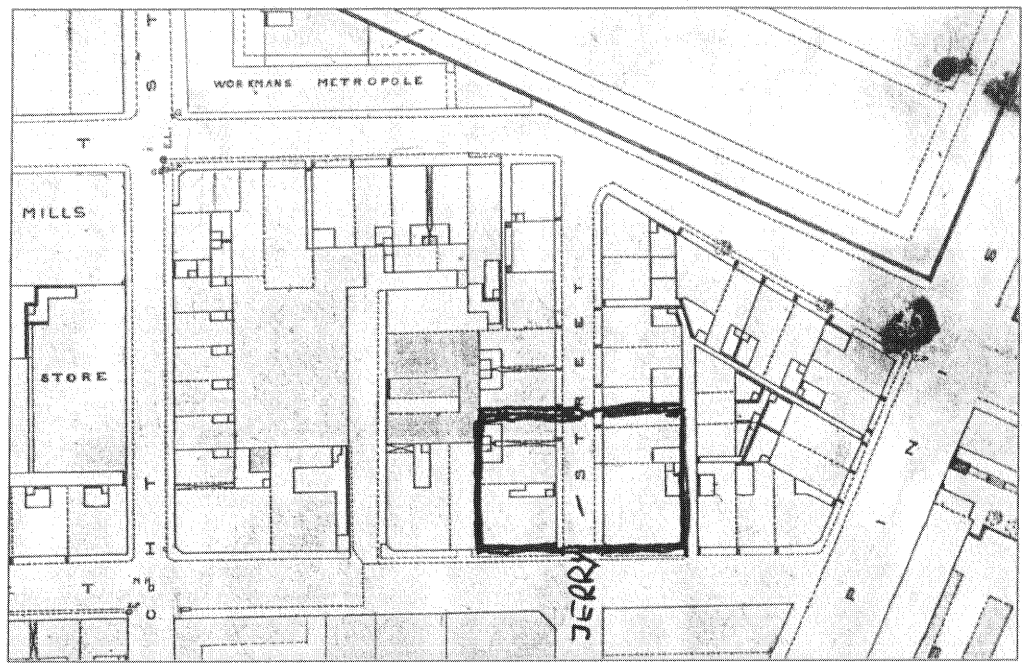


Fig. 5. Location of Jerry Street across erf 742 (highlighted), as surveyed in 1901 by Thom (Reference: Cape Town City Council, Historical Map Section).

Layer 2 – Brown Soil with Red Brick

A loose matrix of brown and yellow soils with pieces red brick. This was building fill, similar to the material encountered in the other holes.

Hole 6 contained the richest collection of artifacts of all the holes excavated. The ceramics recovered included Chinese porcelain fragments, British household ware, domestic animal bones, as well as some bird and fish, some six clay pipe stem fragments and early 19th century building material.

Layer 3 – Brown Soil with Grey Clay

This was similar to Layer 2 but with patches of light grey coloured clay and pieces of ferrocrete. The artifacts unearthed were similar to layer 2.

Layer 4 – Brown Soil with Yellow Clay

Similar to layer 3 but with a matrix of brown soil and yellow clay. The artifacts were similar to layers 2 & 3.

along the northern edge of the hole, as was an old (non functional) telephone cable at a depth of 0,3 m.

Layer 3 - Ferrocrete

A layer of very hard red to brown ferrocrete, encountered at a depth of 0,45 m. This was markedly different from the other holes where ferrocrete was encountered at depths of up to 1 m. This suggests that the ferrocrete layer is nearer to the surface towards the eastern boundary of the site (i.e. in the general direction of the shore line).

The ferrocrete layer was not only extremely compacted but also virtually sterile, with only two artifacts being recovered from the top of the layer. This suggests that it had not been disturbed by earth moving or building operations and probably marks the base of this section of Jerry Street.

Layer 4 – Yellow Clay

The now expected layer of yellow clay was encountered at a depth of 0,75 m. It was completely sterile indicating *in situ* deposit.

2.2 EXCAVATIONS INSIDE THE BUILDING

The two test pits excavated in the conference room inside the building were numbered holes 3 & 5.

2.2.1 Hole 3 – located in the center of the large seminar room.

(Fig. 8)

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of a hard concrete floor above rubble fill.

Layer 2 – Brown Soil

A fairly uniform brown soil with fragments of slate, building debris and chunks of red brick. Layer 2 was building fill, much the same as the material encountered in the four holes excavated in the outside courtyard.

There were no concentrations of artifacts in this layer. Artifact fragments recovered included Chinese porcelain, British refined earthenware and stoneware, bone, mainly sheep and cow with some bird, a few glass shards, occasional fragments of limpet and black mussel and one piece of perlemoen.

Layer 5 – Yellow Clay

Layer 5 consisted of dense, sticky yellow clay. At 1.25 m below surface the clay was damp, indicating the presence of the water table. This yellow clay is part of the underlying geology of the site and was present in all the excavated holes. In hole 6, however, the yellow clay contained a few artifacts whereas the yellow clay layer in the other holes was sterile.

The excavation continued to a depth of 1.5 m at which point a large ceramic storm water pipe was revealed (Fig. 6). The presence of the storm water drain seems to confirm the existence of Jerry Street as shown on 19th century maps. Significantly, the pipe was orientated on the same east-west direction as the street.

The presence of the pipe also explained why artifacts were recovered from the yellow clay. In hole 6 the yellow clay was not *in situ* but had been previously dug into to allow the pipe to be laid.

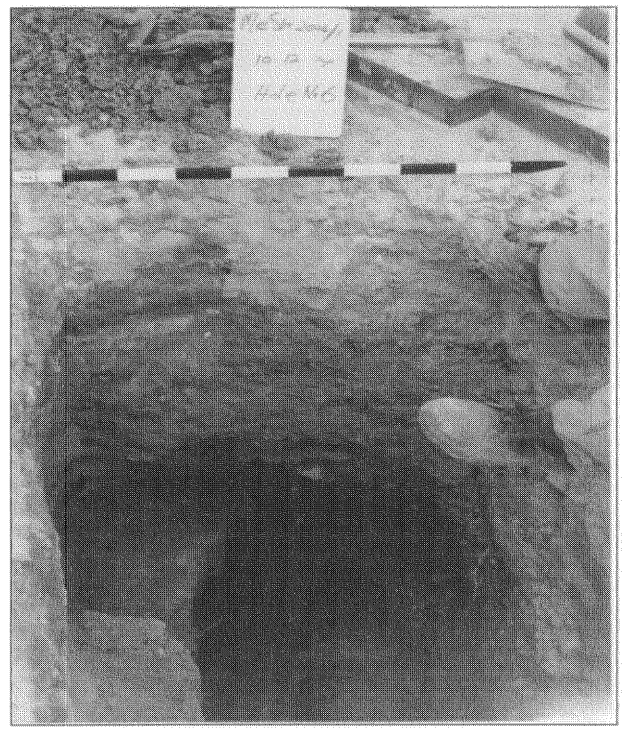


Fig. 6.
Hole 6, stratigraphy and storm water drain at the bottom.

2.1.5 Hole 7 – located on the NE corner of the courtyard area.

Hole 7 (Fig. 7) was placed near to the front door of the existing building and close to the Mechau Street boundary of the property. It was far enough from the building to avoid modern foundations and the roots of the large palm tree.

It is also situated away from the line of the drainage encountered in hole 6. Hole 7 was dug as a 1 m by 2 m long pit orientated north/south to gain maximum coverage of the old road location.

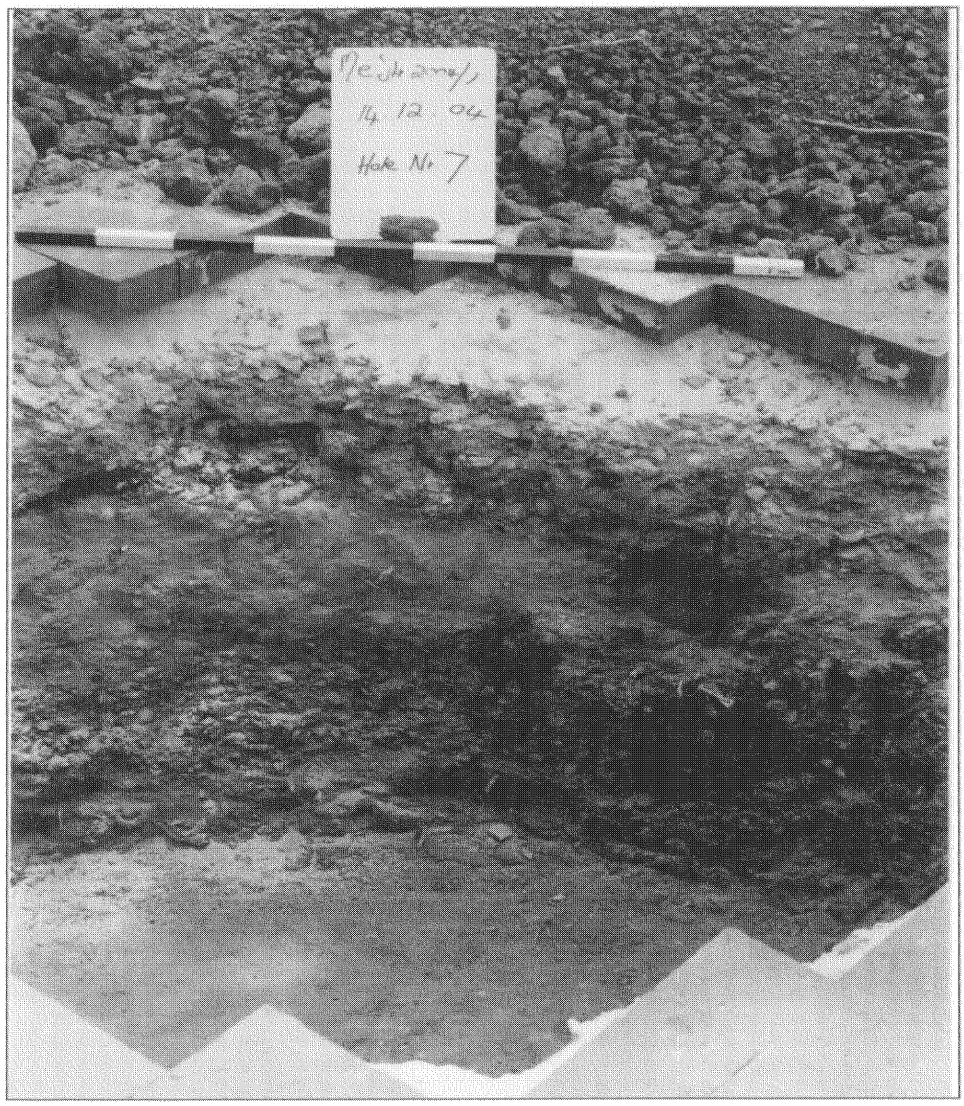


Fig. 7 Hole 7 stratigraphy, 2004

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of red brick paving above a thin layer of white sand.

Layer 2 – Red/Brown Soil

This was an earthy deposit with stone and pebbles. As in the previous holes, this was typical building fill. It contained a very mixed artifact assemblage but less in quantity than from hole 6. A white plastic electricity cable ran east-west

Fig. 8. Hole 3, inside the seminar room, photograph taken without a 'flash'.

Layer 3 – Clay Fill

A mixture of fragments of red brick, brown earth and clay soil was encountered at a depth of 0,75 m. This was also builders fill but lighter in colour than layer 2. There were fewer artifacts than in layer 2.

An interesting feature was the presence of old building foundations. These were situated at the very top of Layer 3, at a depth of 0,75 m on the northern edge of the hole. The foundations were constructed from dressed slate, interspersed with clay and small stones to fill in the cracks. These were similar to, although not as substantial as the foundations recorded from hole 2 in the outside courtyard. The foundations ran in the same east-west orientation as the walls of the currently occupied modern buildings.

Layer 4 – Sterile Clay

At a depth of 1 m the brown earth petered out and was replaced by a layer of very hard grey to brown clay. This was sterile clay with no artifacts. A point of interest was the absence of any ferrocrete in hole 3. Presumably, any ferrocrete that existed was removed when the building foundations were laid down.

Layer 5 – Grey Clay

This was similar to layer 4 apart from the colour change from light brown to grey. A sterile layer with no artifact deposits. Excavation of hole 3 was terminated at a depth of 1.4 m as the deposits were sterile and undisturbed.

2.2.2 Hole 5 – located in the SE corner of the large seminar room. (Fig. 9)

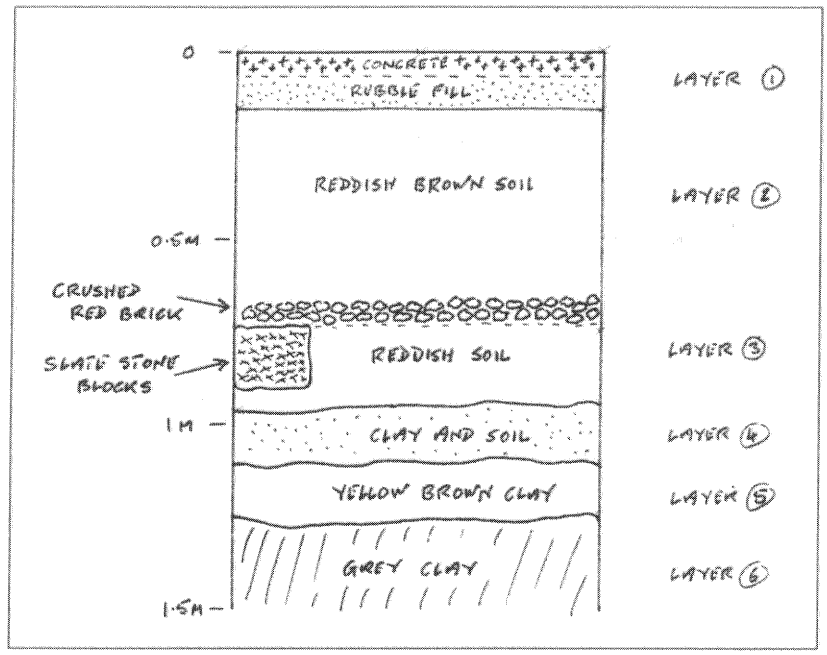


Fig. 9. Schematic diagram of the layers in hole 5.

Layer 1 - Surface

The top 0,15 m consisted of a hard concrete floor above rubble fill.

Layer 2 – Reddish Brown Soil

This is a disturbed layer of builders fill with fragments of red brick. It probably dates to 1993 when the present building was modified. It is also probable that the fill does not originate from the Mechau Street site but was imported from elsewhere. This would be consistent with modern building practice.

There were very few artifacts in layer 2. Items recovered were similar to previous holes.

Layer 3 – Reddish Soil

Between 0,70 m and 0,75 m below surface was a change to a much more reddish matrix. The colour is due to the large amount of crushed red brick present throughout the layer. There were very few artifacts recovered.

A row of dressed stone foundations was encountered at a depth of 0,75 m, similar to the ones uncovered in hole 3, except these are positioned in a north-south direction.

Layer 4 – Clay and Soil

This was a mixture of yellowish clay and brown soil. It is also builders fill and contained chunks of red brick and a few artifacts.

Layer 5 – Yellow Brown Clay

A thin layer of sterile clay with no artifacts.

Layer 6 – Grey Clay

The final layer was sterile grey clay identical to hole 3. The excavation of hole 5 was terminated at a depth of 1.25 m.

2.3. SUMMARY

Apart from some minor variations, the six test pits were all similar in terms of the excavated material and the sequence in which the deposits occurred. The excavations established a basic stratigraphy for the site in which the major units may be summerised in the following diagram:

DEPTH (m)	DESCRIPTION	UNIT
0.15	Brick paving in courtyard or concrete inside building	Unit 1 Surface
0.5 – 0.9	Brown to reddish colour, loose to medium dense soil with sand	Unit 2 Fill
± 1.0	Hard, reddish brown ferricrete	Unit 3 Ferricrete
	Yellow to brown in colour, very stiff clay	Unit 4 Clay

Fig. 10. Schematic diagram of major units from test excavations at erf 742, 31 Mechau Street, 2004.

Unit 1 comprises the present surfaces, modern brick paving above a sand layer in the courtyard and concrete floors in the seminar room.

Located within Unit 2 in three of the excavated holes were the wall foundations of earlier buildings. These were similar in form and occurred at a depth of 0.75 m below the present surface. Most probably they fall within the same construction period. In two of the holes the foundations were orientated approximately in a north-south axis. In the remaining hole the orientation was approximately east-west. These orientations follow the positioning of the walls of existing buildings.

The brown soil in Unit 2 was not an *in situ* deposit but a fill resulting from building operations and contained varying amounts of building rubble. The majority of the artifactual material recovered came from this unit and seem disturbed deposits. Furthermore, the material seems not to derive from the Mechau Street site but was imported from elsewhere during one of the construction phases.

Unit 3 only contained artifacts whenever building operations had disturbed the ferrocrete layer. The artifact composition was similar to that in unit 2.

Unit 4 was composed of a sterile clay / decomposed shale matrix above bedrock encountered at between 1 m and 1,6 m.

WARE TABLE	MECHAU STREET 2004/2	
COUNT	fragments	
	rim	body
Porcelain, Asian		
Chinese export ware, underglaze blue	6	
Asian market ware, coarse		
kitchen bowls	11	2
Asian market ware, fine		
small bowls and cups	17	1
undiagnostic	5	
subtotal	39	5
European tinware		
Porcelain, European		
undiagnostic		
Coarse earthenware		
Stoneware, British		
brown, salt glazed		
clear glazed		
European refined wares		
cream coloured ware		
undecoratad	4	1
shell-edged		
pearlware,		
blue/white underglaze printed	4	1
other coulors, ditto	1	
Willow Ware	2	
Flow-blue ware	4	
other		
Other refined ware		
yellow ware	1	
Industrial slipware		
banded,	1	
subtotal	17	6
undiagnostic		
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL VESSELS		

3. THE ARTIFACTUAL MATERIAL

Compared to other domestic sites in the inner city a relative small number of artifacts was recovered from the six test holes. The majority of the finds were encountered in the Brown Soil Layer / Unit 2, identifiable as building material fill. Artifacts found in the Ferrocrete and Clay Layers – Units 3 and 4 – were intrusions into these layers by later building activity. For the purpose of the ceramic and glass analysis it has been decided to combine the assemblages from each hole.

3.1 The ceramic assemblage

The standardized method of ceramic analysis used here was developed by Jane Klose (1997) during her work on several domestic assemblages from the Western Cape spanning the last two hundred and fifty years[1]. Her Cape Classification System (CCS) was used as to ware types and form and function tables so as to facilitate comparison with other colonial sites. Also included is a Minimum Number of Individual (MNI) fragment and vessel count. The finds from each test hole are illustrated, where appropriate, with a photograph.
A ware table with fragment count and MNI vessels is depicted in Figure 11 on the next page.
It must be noted that cross-mending of shards was only possible in a few cases. The fragments were generally less than 40 mm in diameter and the ratio shards/individual vessels high.
The summery will pull together observations made by fieldworkers and the ceramic analyst as to the composition of the assemblage, individual ware type clusters and, if possible, socio-economic circumstances of the people using the kitchen- and table ware.
Modern sanitary ware, drainage pipe and tile fragments were not collected.

[1] Klose, J. 1997. Analysis of Ceramic Assemblages from four Cape Historical Sites Dating from the late Seventeenth Century to the Mid Nineteenth Century. University of Cape Town: Unpublished MA thesis in Archaeology.

3.1.1 Hole 1

Only three fragments of British refined earthenware, creamware, dating to the late 18th century were found, probably from a large jug and a wash basin (?).

3.1.2 Hole 2

Six fragments of late 18th century creamware and eleven fragments of mid 19th century Willow ware and one of industrial slipware were recovered. All are British mass manufactured. Vessel count = 15 items.

3.1.3 Hole 3

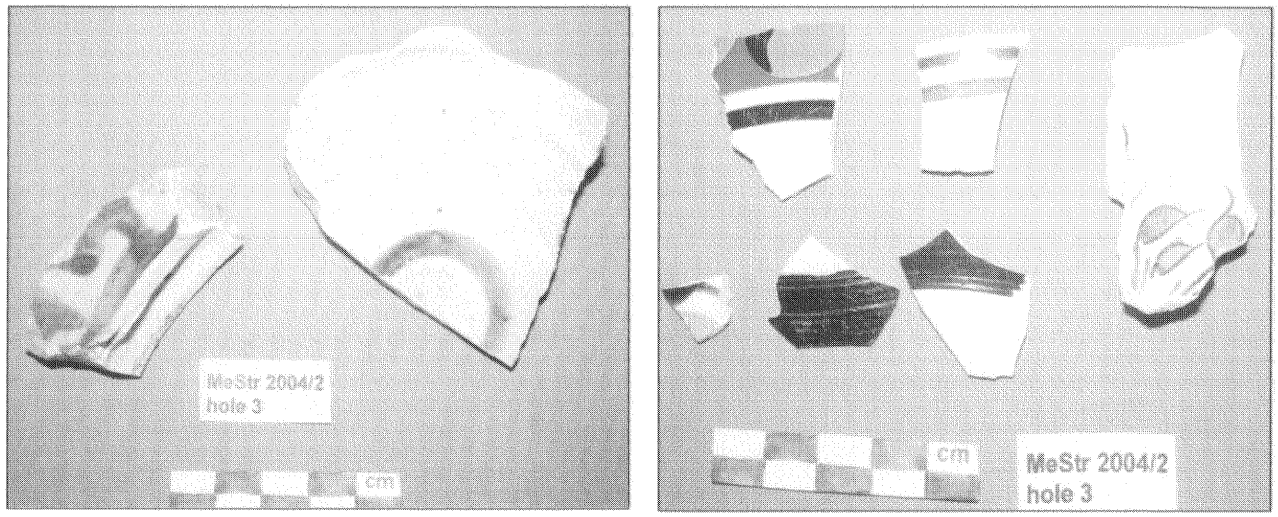


Fig. 12. Hole 3, ceramics. Left: Chinese export porcelain, *grof* or coarse underglaze blue, large kitchen bowls. Right: British refined earthenware, on the left industrial slipware, mid 19th century eating bowls, on the right a hand painted bowl fragment, first quarter 19th century.

Hole 3 contained the third largest individual vessel count of 42 items.

3.1.4 Hole 4

Hole 4 contained one Chinese porcelain bowl fragment, the rest is assigned to early to mid – 19th century British refined earthenware, either cream coloured or blue / white underglaze transfer printed, plus one industrial slipware bowl fragment. There were 12 individual vessels.

3.1.5 Hole 5

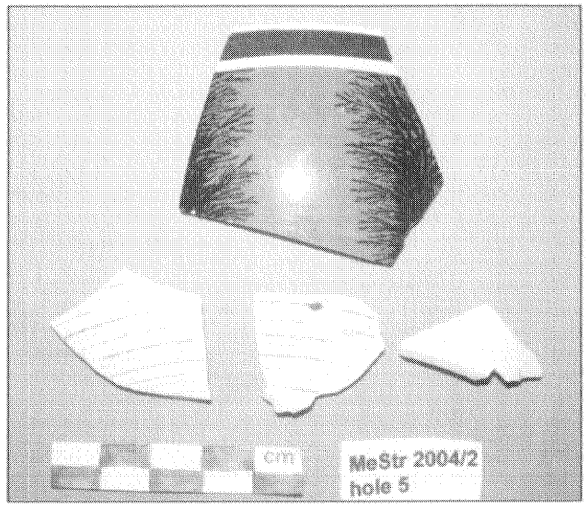


Fig. 13a

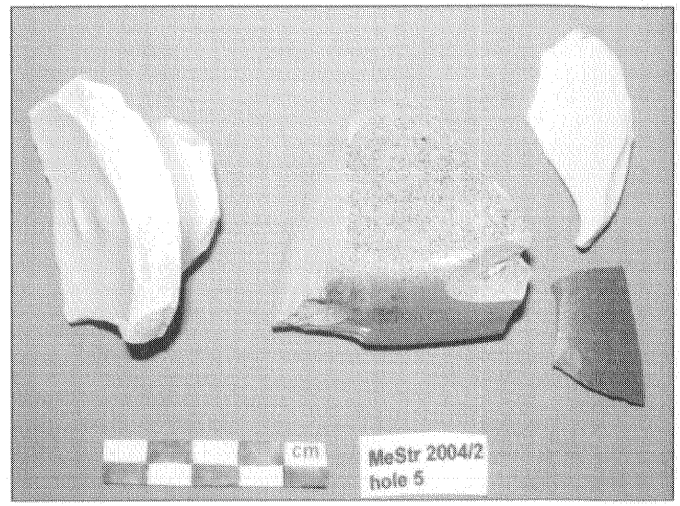


Fig. 13b

Fig. 13. Hole 5 ceramics. Fig. 13a: British industrial slipware eating bowls, the top fragment is known as "Mocha" decoration, dated to the second quarter of the 19th century.
Fig. 13b: left is a fragment of British 'tinware', a coarse earthenware, decorated with a white/bluish tin glaze, tentatively dated to the mid 18th century, a decorative item. Middle and right: British, mid-late 19th century stoneware, salt-glazed, one food storage jar, one beer / ginger beer and one soda water bottle.

Hole 4 contained the second largest number of individual vessels = 50, and similar to holes 3 & 6 in the percentage composition of Chinese porcelain to British refined earthenware of the early to mid- 19th century.

3.1.6 Hole 6

Hole 6 contained 64 individual vessels. Figs. 14 to 18 illustrate some of them.

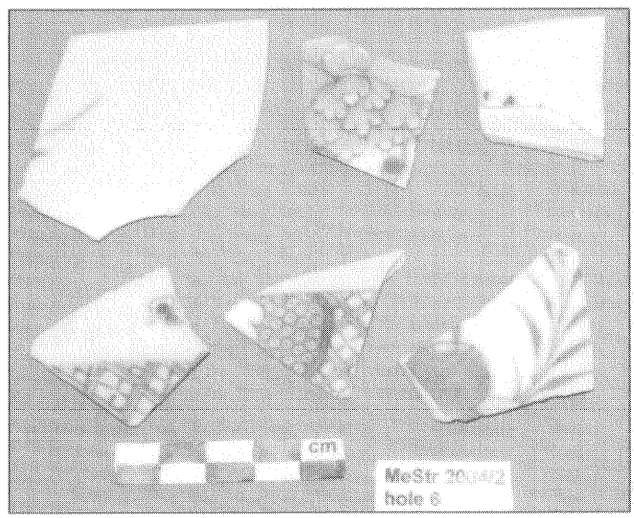


Fig. 14. Chinese fine export porcelain, table ware, ie dinner plate fragments. Probably late 18th / 19th century.

Fig. 15a

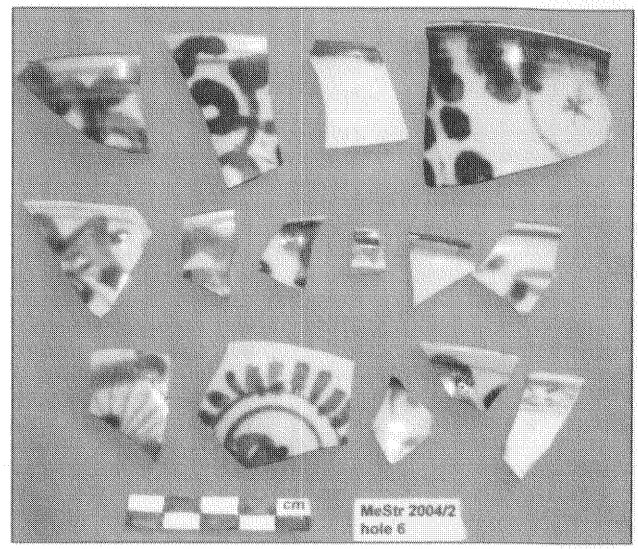


Fig. 15b

Fig. 15a: Asian market ware, *grof* or coarse porcelain, underglaze blue, partially glazed foot ring, large kitchen bowls. Dated to the late 18th and 19th century.
Fig. 15b: Chinese export ware, fine, underglaze blue / greenish, small to medium bowls and tea cups, 18th to 19th century.

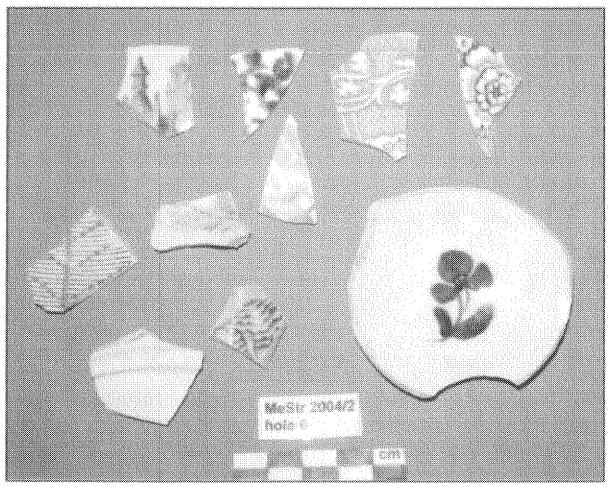


Fig. 16a

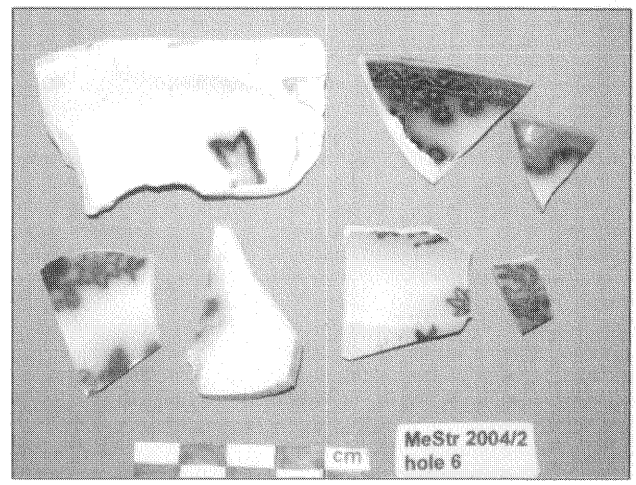


Fig. 16b

Fig. 16a: This refined British earthenware is blue / white underglaze transfer printed. Imported from the Staffordshire potteries it is arranged on the photograph as to date of manufacture from early 19th century to the 1830s. All table ware, ie plates and small bowls
Fig. 16b: Flow-blue British pearlware. Top left is either a tureen lid or a 'potty' fragment. The rest are plates. Dated to the1840s and 1850s, rare in Cape assemblages.

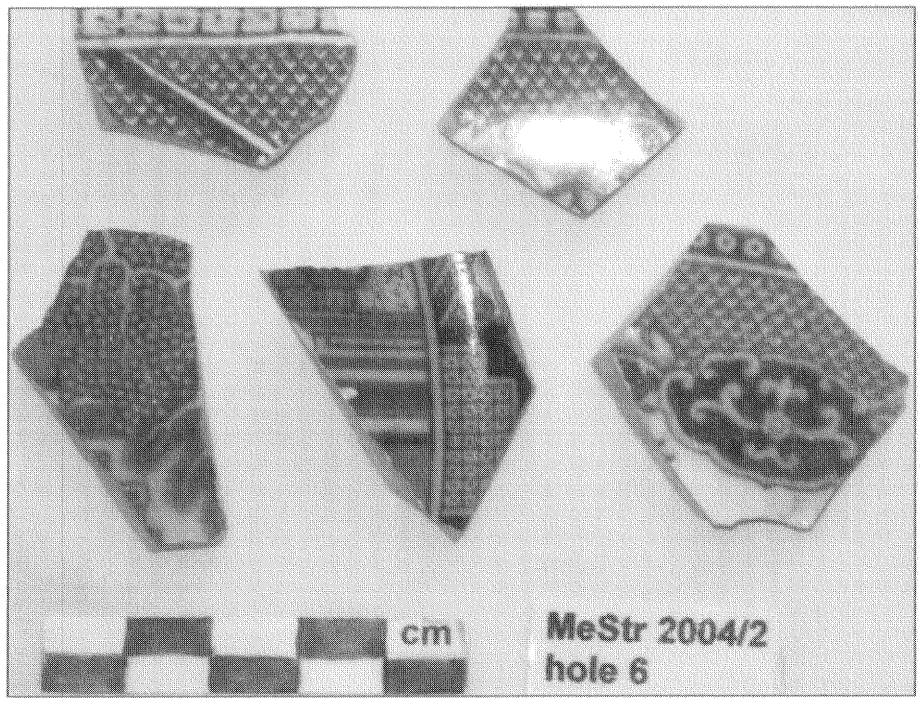


Fig. 17. British pearlware, known as "Willow ware", fashionable table ware, imported into the colony from the 1850s and still manufactured today. Willow ware occurred in all holes, except hole 1.

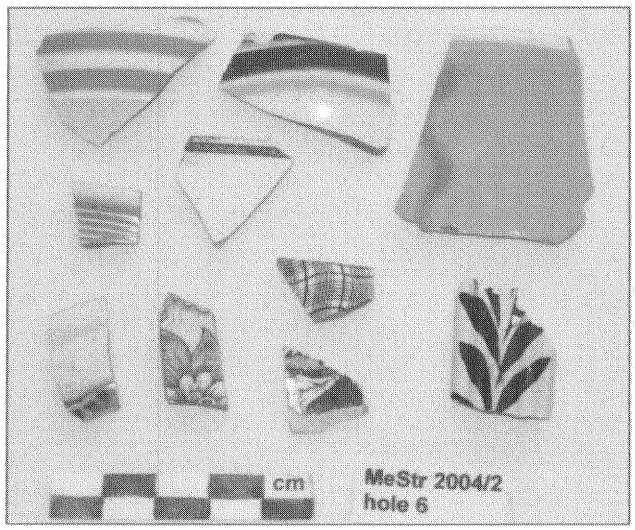


Fig. 18a Fig. 18b

Fig. 18a: This collection of mid-19th century British table ware fragments from hole 6 is indicative of the range of imports, but not of the percentage MNI vessels present in the assemblages from Mechau Street. On the top, from left are three slipware bowls, top right a yellow ware eating bowl. Bottom right, a jug handle, hand-painted.
Fig. 18b: salt-glazed British stoneware bottle fragments, beer or ginger beer, third quarter, 19th century.

3.1.7 Hole 7

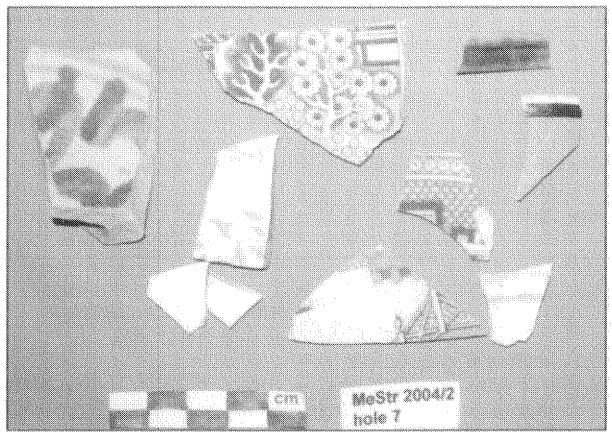


Fig. 19a

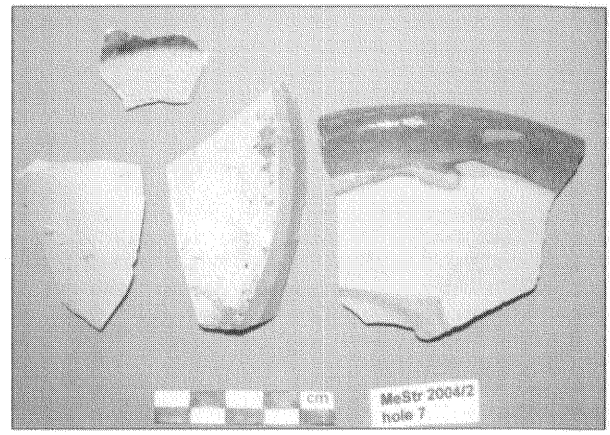


Fig. 19b

Fig. 19a: this collection of ware types is indicative of the other holes as well.
Fig. 19b: British stoneware, two clear glazed food storage containers, late 19th century, top: two-tone salt-glazed vessel, coarse earthenware, right: modern stoneware pot fragment (?).

Hole 7 contained 15 vessels.

3.1.8 Conclusion

If hole 6 is an indication of the distribution pattern of domestic ceramics at the site, than 38% of the MNI is Asian export ware, generally imported into the colony during the Dutch East India (VOC) period, ie before 1795. The British imports (53%) consist of mass produced Staffordshire tableware, clustered around undecorated creamware, blue / white underglaze printed ware, industrial slipware (eating bowls for the general population) and fashionable Willow ware (Fig. 20).

Fig. 21 shows the distribution of tableware, storage vessels and ornamental items, amongst others. A closer reading of the charts is left to interested parties and is not within the scope of this brief.

The artifact collection will be curated by the Iziko Museums.

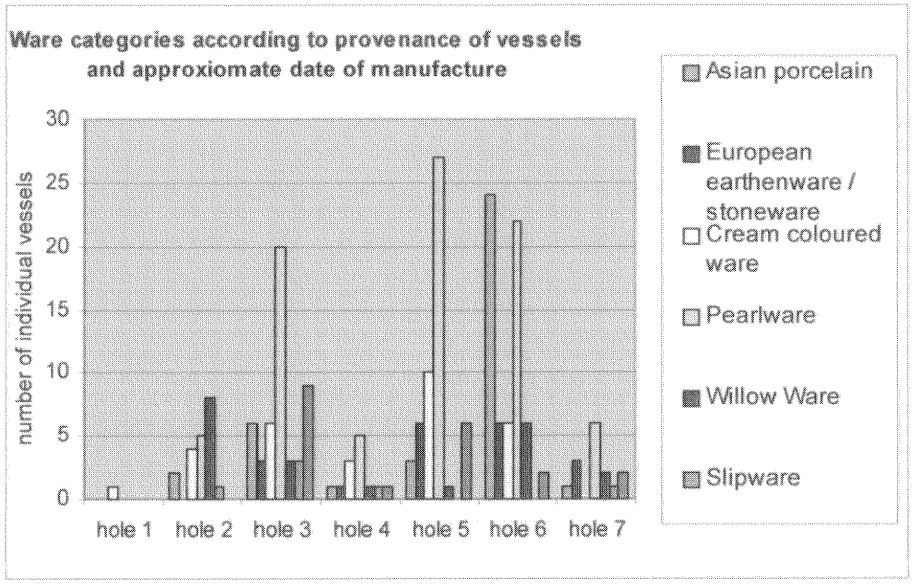
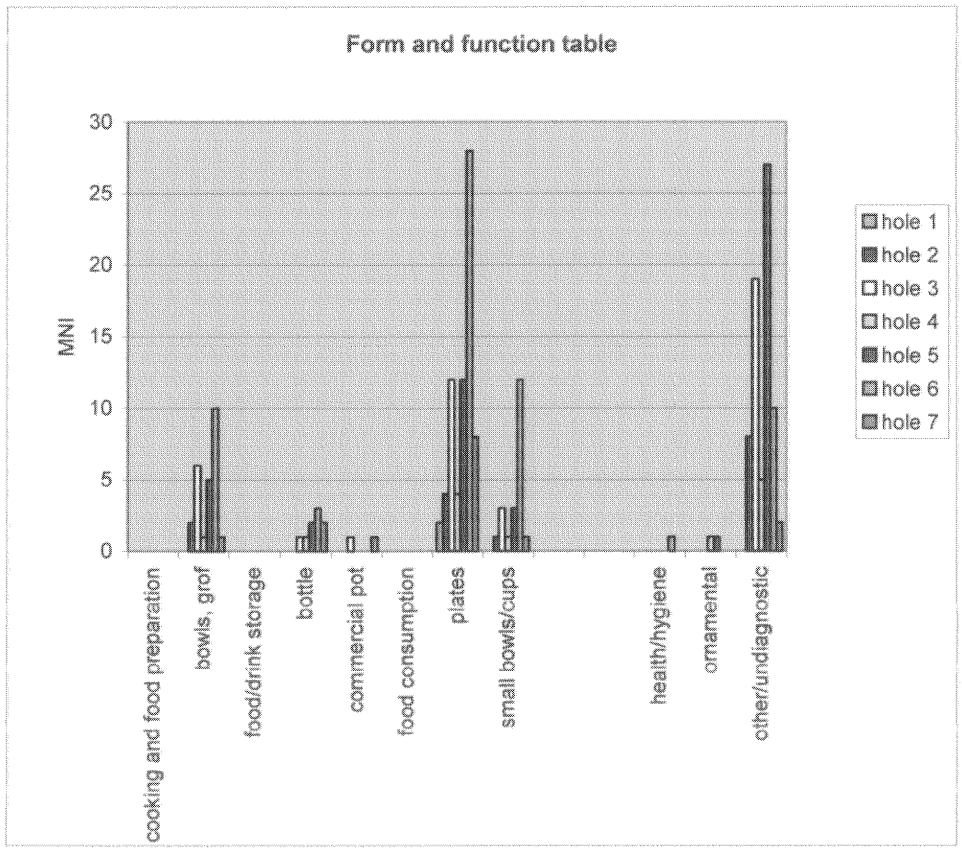


Fig. 20. The distribution of ware types in the excavated holes.

Fig. 21 Form and function table of the ceramics from the excavated holes.



The majority of the items consists of basic tableware such as plates and eating bowls, mass imported from Britain. The kitchenware is almost entirely composed of Chinese export porcelain, *grof* and fine bowls, dated to the late 18th / early 19th century. Very few food storage vessels are present, and so are only a couple of beer / ginger beer bottles. Large tureens and serving

platters are completely absent, as is ornamental ware. It is postulated that the collection is indicative of households of low socio-economic standing. The few pieces of fine ceramics were probably 'hand-me-downs'.
The dates of manufacture of the ceramics are clustered around the late 18th / early 19th century, with another cluster from the middle of the 19th century. Late 19th - and 20th century ceramic items are absent. It seems that this collection was deposited at this site during the second half of the 19th century.

3.2 Glass

The glass collection is best shown tabulated in Fig. 22. No 20th century glass was collected.

description and dating of the glass fragments	hole 2	hole 5	hole 6
"Constantia wine bottle, late 18th century	2 bases	1 base, high kick-up	1 base
Square bottle, or "gin bottle", late 18th century		2 fragm = 1 bottle	
wine glass, hand blown, late 18th / early 19th century	1 plain foot / base fragment		
CODD bottle			4 fragm = 1 bottle

Fig. 22. Distribution of glass vessels.

Note the total absence of 19th century food storage containers, medicine bottles, drinking vessels, ornamental and industrial glass (such as lamp shades etc).

3.3 Clay pipe stems

A total of ten claypipe stem fragments were collected from holes 1, 3, 6 & 7. They are undecorated and all dated to the 19th century according to pipe stem bore diameters ranging from 2.2 to 1.6 mm. Any further deductions are meaningless as the sample size is too small.

3.4 Building materials

A couple of 19th century square nails used in buildings and rusted pieces of iron were found.

3.5 THE MECHAU STREET FAUNAL ANALYSIS

(This report was prepared by Otto H.T. Graf)[2].

3.5.1 Introduction

Six test holes were dug in Mechau Street in December 2004. All the material is considered to be fill material and as the sample size is quite small, it has been decided to deal with all the faunal material as one assemblage, and not as six separate assemblages.

3.5.2 Species identified

In total, at least 8 different species were identified (see Tables 1 & 2). The sample is almost exclusively domestic. Despite an extensive search for other species in the assemblage, e.g. various common ducks, geese, guinea fowl, tortoise, cape hare and turkey, none of these were found.

What follows is a brief description of the skeletal elements that were recovered for each of the species. During the analysis brief notes were taken on butchery evidence, but no emphasis is placed on this as the assemblage is considered fill material and not *in situ.*

Bos taurus (Cattle):- In total 34 NISP specimens were identified. 15 of the 34 fragments come from the skull (10 teeth, 4 skull fragments and 1 mandible), 5 fragments from the vertebral column, 3 from the upper forelegs (radii and scapula) and 3 from the upper hindlegs (femur) and smaller frequencies elsewhere. Interesting in that there was little evidence from the forelegs or hindlegs - no metacarpals, no metatarsals, no tibia fragments. One thoracic vertebra and one rib showed clear evidence of sawing and one femur showed evidence of chopping. Although there seem to be many skull fragments, better "patterning" will only occur with larger sample sizes.

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[2] We thank Otto HT Graf, (MSc Archaeology, University of Cape Town) for the faunal analysis.

Columba spp. (Domestic Pigeon):- The faunal sample includes one radius only. It was compared to both feral pigeon (*Columba livia)* and rock pigeon (*Columba guinea)*, but the bone facets do not agree with either. As the sample size is so low and no direct butchery data, I suspect that the specimen died naturally and thus entered the assemblage.

Diomedia spp:- A single *Diomedia cf. cauta* (?Shy albatross) carpometacarpus was identified. Although this species breeds extralimitally, it is a fairly common non-breeding visitor, especially in winter to southern African seas. As the sample size is low and no direct butchery data, I suspect that the specimen died naturally.

Gallus gallus (Chicken):- Nine NISP specimens were identified in the assemblage, coming from at least one chicken. The various specimens came from the humerus (2), the scapula (1), the sternum (1), the rib (1), the tibiotarsus (2 - one left and one right) and the tarsometatarsus (1). I.e. some thighs, a breast, and some leg. Again the sample size is too small and the larger the sample the better the pattern will be.

Lagamorphia/Oryctolagus cuninculus (Domestic Rabbit):- At least one rabbit was present in the assemblage. A single pelvis was identified. As the sample size is very small, it is difficult to say whether they were butchered for food or not. Rabbits were first introduced by Jan van Riebeeck in *c.*1654 to Robben Island and later "introduced" onto the mainland.

Ovis aries (Sheep):- In total some 174 NISP fragments were identified. 31% of the NISP fragments came from the vertebral column and the ribs. 22.5% from the skull, mandible and atlas/axis region. 15% from the forelimb and 28% from the hindlimb. The lowest frequencies of body parts came from the phalanges (feet bones), and ulna/humerus/ scapula region. Moderate frequencies are from the sacrum, tibia/metatarsal, pelvis, radius/humerus and atlas/axis regions. The highest frequencies were from the skull, femur/pelvis and radius/metacarpal regions. Butchery evidence can be seen in sawing through the skull and thoracic vertebra (part of the vertebral

column), chopping and chop/snapping mostly through the ribs, chopping and sawing though the radius and humerus. In Hole No. 4 there were a large number of skull fragments.

Phalacrocorax capensis (Cape Cormorant):- At single femur was identified. Cape Cormorants are endemic to southern Africa, where they are abundant on the west coast. Current data indicate that they breed on offshore islands, cliffs, rocks and artificial structures such as jetties, platforms and even moored fishing vessels and yachts. Occasionally they will nest on breakwaters and ruins and in estuarine wetlands and coastal sewage works. As the sample size is low and no direct butchery data, I suspect that the specimen died naturally.

Sus scrofa (Pig):- At least 2 specimens were identified as coming from domestic pig. Both of these were teeth, with little skull material attached. It was not unknown for people to purchase pig jowls (i.e. skulls of the pig) and boil the head for eating.

3.5.3 Summery

The faunal species identified are consistent with those found at other historical sites. The avian species seem mostly to be intrusions and I suspect that they died naturally and thus entered the assemblage. The domesticated animals were likely butchered in the local slaughter houses and sold to the inhabitants. Depending on the date of the fill material, a number of butcher's shop were scattered around Cape Town. In the mid-19th century some were near the Castle, across the Parade, etc. Preference in this assemblage is for sheep, cow, chicken and then pig and rabbit. The assemblage is considered to be fill material, and the specimens show signs of post-depositional breakage (and some secondary breakage), root marks, bleaching and spiral fractures. Larger collections may better indicate food choices!

TABLE 1: SPECIES LIST.

Order	Family/Subfamily	Genus, Species & Common Names
Artiodactyla	Bovidae	*Bos taurus* (Cattle)
Columbiformes	Columbidae	*Columba spp* (Domestic Pigeon)
Procellariiformes	Diomedeidae	*Diomedia sp. cauta* (Shy Albatross)
Galliformes	Phasianidae	*Gallus gallus* (Chicken)
Lagomorpha	Leporidae	*Oryctolagus cuninculus* (Domestic Rabbit)
Artiodactyla	Bovidae	*Ovis aries* (Sheep)
Ciconiiformes	Phalacrocoraciade	*Phalacrocorax capensis* (Cape Cormorant)
Artiodactyla	Suidae	*Sus scrofa* (Pig)

TABLE 2: NISP, MNE and MNI info for each species

	NISP	MNE	MNI
Bos taurus	34	17	1
Columba spp	1	1	1
Diomedia spp (?Shy albatross)	1	1	1
Gallus gallus	9	8	1
Oryctolagus cuninculus	1	1	1
Ovis aries	174	83	3
Phalacrocorax capensis	1	1	1
Sus scrofa	2	1	1

3.5.4 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Graham Avery of Iziko: South African Museum, Cape Town, for allowing me access to the comparative collection at the Museum.

3.5.5 Extract from a report prepared by Prof Alan G Morris, Department of Human Biology, University of Cape Town. (see also Appendix I)

"I visited the above site on the 6th, 8th and 13th of December 2004 to confer with the field archaeologist, Tony Manhire. I spent approximately two hours in total time at the site and I looked at all of the excavated material available on each visit.

My observations were twofold:

1. There was no sign of human inhumation, either as primary burial or as secondary deposits of human bone.
2. Small amounts of animal bone were seen from several of the excavated test pits. Most of the bone was consistent with the remains of domestic mammal species (goat/sheep, cow, horse). There was also some bird and fish bone.

Recommendations:

1. It seems unlikely that formal historic burials will be found at this site.
2. Evidence from the nearby Cobern Street site does indicate that Later Stone Age graves are present in the area and these could be exposed during the clearing of the site for development. Such burials would be accidental discoveries and would require Section 36 permits should they be discovered.
3. I would strongly recommend that the site be monitored by an archaeologist during the site clearance and foundation excavation.

I am relieved that the historic burials do not seem to continue on this side of the 18th century burial ground.

Alan G Morris
Associate Professor
Department of Human Biology
University of Cape Town

17 December 2004"

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The absence of any human remains indicates that erf 742 is not part of a cemetery and it is unlikely that formal historic burials will be found at this site. It is still a possibility, however, that isolated human burials may be present at the site.
- The only definitively *in situ* historical remains at the site are the foundations of earlier buildings. These are of interest as they lie in the same orientation as the existing buildings and appear to be on either side of Jerry Road, which ran approximately east-west across the site.
- All the artefacts and faunal remains were recovered from fill used in building operations. The disparate nature of the ceramic assemblage and the very small faunal sample suggest they have little to do with the occupation of Mechau Street.
- The building at 31 Mechau Street is of no historical value.

5. MITIGATION

Although it seems unlikely that any formal historic burials will be found on the site the possibility exists that human remains may be discovered during the demolition of the buildings and consequent earthmoving operations. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that the site be monitored by an archaeologist during the clearance and foundation excavation for the new development. It is recommended that the foundations be recorded and surveyed during the demolition and earthmoving activities as this may shed some light on early 19th century housing.

5.1 – Importance of the finds: low

5.2 – Significance: low

5.3 - Suggested mitigation: supervision of excavation for new development by an archaeologist in terms of Section 35 of the Natural Heritages Act (Act 25 of 1999).

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7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tony Manhire for excellence in conducting the excavation and report writing,
Jack and Ora Prescott, fieldworkers and research assistants, knowledgeable and fun to work with,
Julia Holtzhausen for cleaning and sorting the artifacts,
Otto HT Graf for the bone analysis,
Prof Alan G Morris for observations on the bones,

BESTCAPE's John Taylor and Greg Harvey for awarding us this contract.

Many thanks
Dr Ute A Seemann
Cape Town, January 2005

APPENDIX I

Report on the supervision of two test excavations at 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town, erf 742 conducted on 16 September 2004

Introduction

At the request of BESTCAPE Property Developers, Mr John Taylor commissioned me to supervise test excavations at 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town, erf 742. This was conducted on 16 September 2004.

In my previous pre-phase one historical/archaeological assessment of the property it was established that the property is situated near the Old Somerset Hospital and the Prestwich Street cemeteries. Considering the recent discovery of human remains in the vicinity is seems probable that human remains could be unearthed during demolition and construction work. The site therefore was judged as sensitive. Recommended mitigation was that before development takes place trial test pits at strategic places should be conducted.

The test pits

Two test pits measuring about 1m by 3m were dug by mechanical means to bedrock in the south and southeast corner of the courtyard (Fig. 1). The layers of the deposits were interpreted by Mr John Yates, a geotechnical engineer. A schematic diagram of the layers is attached as Fig. 2 on the next page.

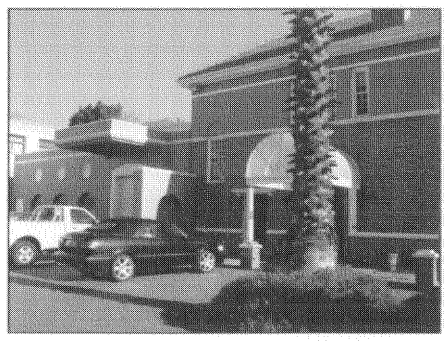

Fig. 1. Courtyard of 31 Mechau Street, Cape Town. Test pits in left corner.

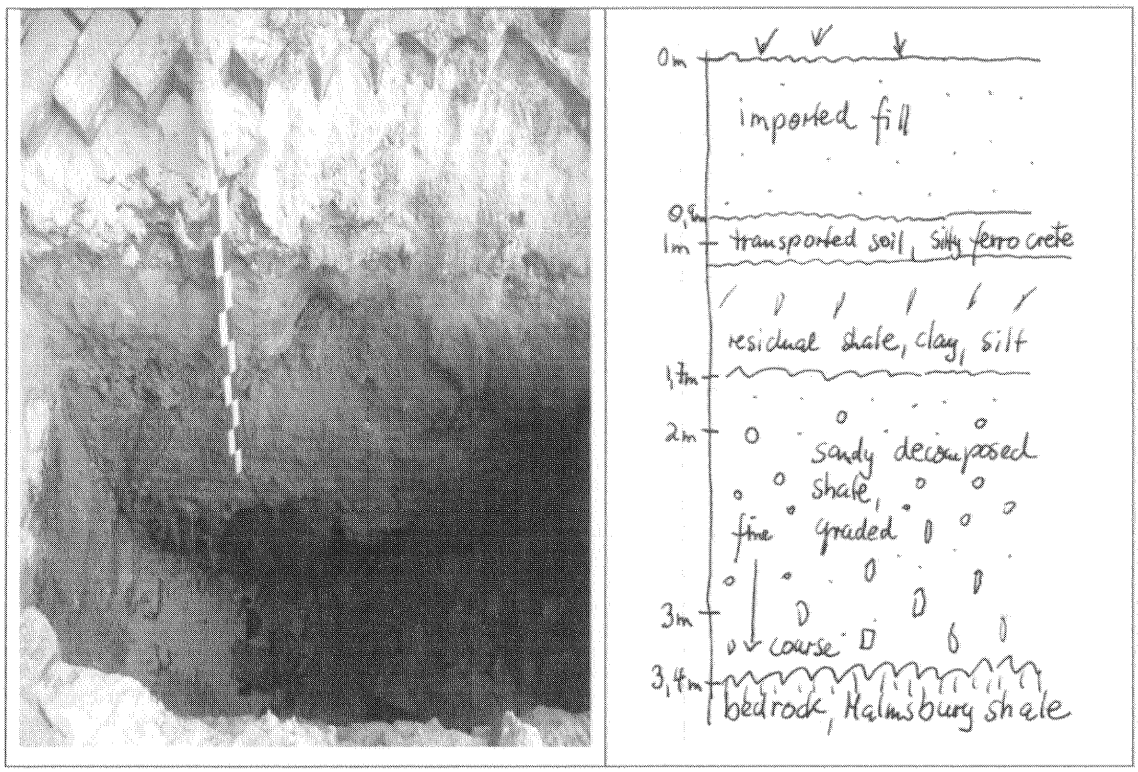

Fig. 2a Test excavation SE corner of yard - Fig. 2b. Schematic diagram of layers

Results

The first 0,9 m deposit below present ground level are imported onto the site. The residual silty, sandy ferrocrete layer, and the residual clay, decomposing shale deposit down to about 1,7 m would have been only marginally suitable for the digging of grave pits and the internment of human remains. However, it cannot be ruled out, that in times of stress (i.e. during epidemics) human burials would have taken place in unsuitable places.

Sensitivity and mitigation:

The sensitivity of the whole of erf 742 is rated medium to low.

The evidence for the presence of human remains is not substantial enough to warrant restrictions to the proposed development. However, it is impossible to exclude the possibility of an accidental find during building activities.

- Excavations on site should be supervised by an experienced archaeologist

- In the event of finding human bone, the find area is left undisturbed and SAHRA is contacted immediately (Mary Leslie at 021 462 4502).
- SHRA should then enact the regulations pertaining to an emergency disinterment permit for human remains, if this has not already been granted. An archaeologist will also need to be contracted to remove the finds.

Although it seems highly unlikely that human remains will be found during construction work because of the shallowness of the rock formation, it is important to be sensitive to the eventuality.

Dr Ute A Seemann
20 September 2004

APPENDIX II