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REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

OF THE VARSCHEDRIFT FARMSTEAD

ERVEN 26126 & 27661

MUNICIPALITY OF CAPE TOWN

**A REPORT PREPARED FOR FAIRCAPE DEVELOPMENT /
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1. THE BRIEF

Following on the initial archaeological survey and assessment for erven 26126 & 27661, Malta Park, Observatory, formerly the site of the Varschedrift homestead and outbuildings, our company was commissioned by FAIRCAPE DEVELOPERS to initiate a phase I archaeological investigation. This commenced in July 2001. The focus of the study was the area under the concrete platforms on top of the mount. The brief required that the archaeological study undertake to:

- augment the database on the historical background of the site,
- identify, measure and draw any early structures found under the concrete base of 20th century (now demolished) sheds,
- establish extent, age and significance of remnant structures, *in situ* features and associated artefacts,
- partially excavate the above,
- record all data,
- analyse a sample of artefacts removed,
- evaluate and recommend preservation strategies of any remains,
- and submit a scoping report.

A map of Cape Town, dated to 1863, highlighting the windmills and locations along the Liesbeeck and Black Rivers mentioned in the following text is shown in Figure 1 on the next page.



WINDMILLS

- Dwaars in de Weg (Groot Zoorf)
- Dur (T'wistwyk)
- Broekmon (Walvergenoegd)
- Salt River
- The Hope Mill
- Nieuwe Molen
- Oude Molen
- Ondermeng Valkenburg
- Mostert's Mill (Welgelegen)
- Clopperton's Mill

Fig. 1. Map of Cape Town, 1863, showing the windmills and locations mentioned in the following text (Reference: Waltons, James. 1974. *Water-Mills, Windmills and Horse Mills of South Africa*. Cape Town: C Struik, p 145).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The farmstead complex (or *werf*) of Varschedrift was probably established during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The farmhouse and additional outbuildings appear as a distinct settlement unit on LM Thibault's map of 1814¹ (Fig. 2) and was inhabited continuously until at least 1901.

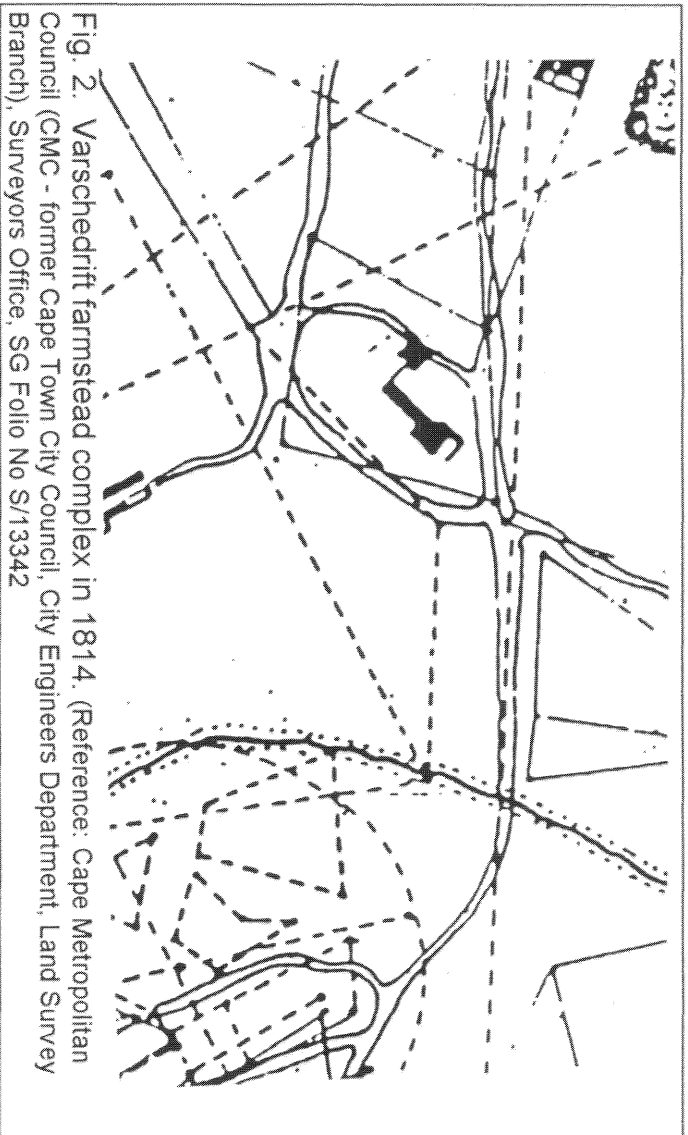


Fig. 2. Varschedrift farmstead complex in 1814. (Reference: Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC - former Cape Town City Council, City Engineers Department, Land Survey Branch), Surveyors Office, SG Folio No S/13342

In 1910 the outline of the Varschedrift werf had changed. On a map of the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town² dated to about 1910 the built environment of the Varschedrift werf has changed size and position, its long axis is now positioned parallel to the railway line fence as opposed to the earlier 45 degree angle (Fig. 3). A map of ca 1920³ indicates the new complex as 'Varschedrift Municipal Stables' (Fig. 4). This then gives us a date of between 1901 and 1909 for the demolition of the farmhouse and associated outbuildings.

¹ Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC - former Cape Town City Council, City Engineers Department, Land Survey Branch), Surveyors Office, SG Folio No S/13342, "LM Thibault's General Plan of Properties along the Main Road from Cape Town to Simon's Town, dated 1812-13. Facsimile print.

² CMC, Surveyors Office, map dated ca 1910. 'Southern Suburbs Guide Comprising Municipalities of Wynberg, Claremont, Rondebosch, Mowbray, Woodstock and Maitland. Cape Town: T Maskew Miller.

³ South African Library, plan of the 'Parliamentary Divisions of Woodstock & Salt River'. No map reference given.

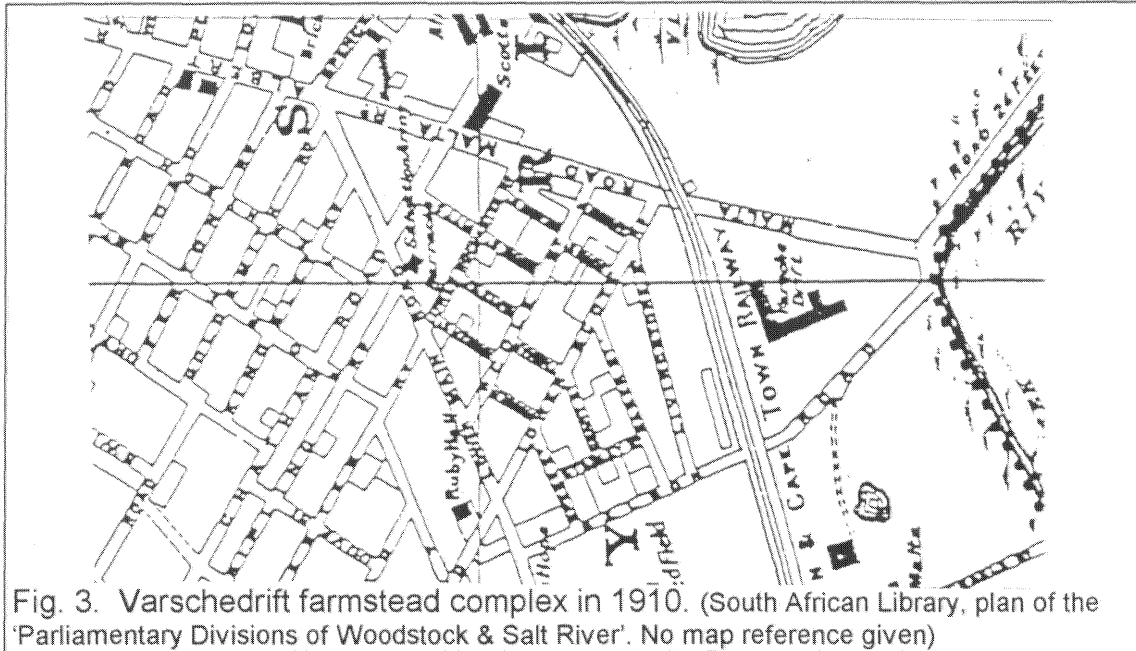


Fig. 3. Varschedrift farmstead complex in 1910. (South African Library, plan of the 'Parliamentary Divisions of Woodstock & Salt River'. No map reference given)

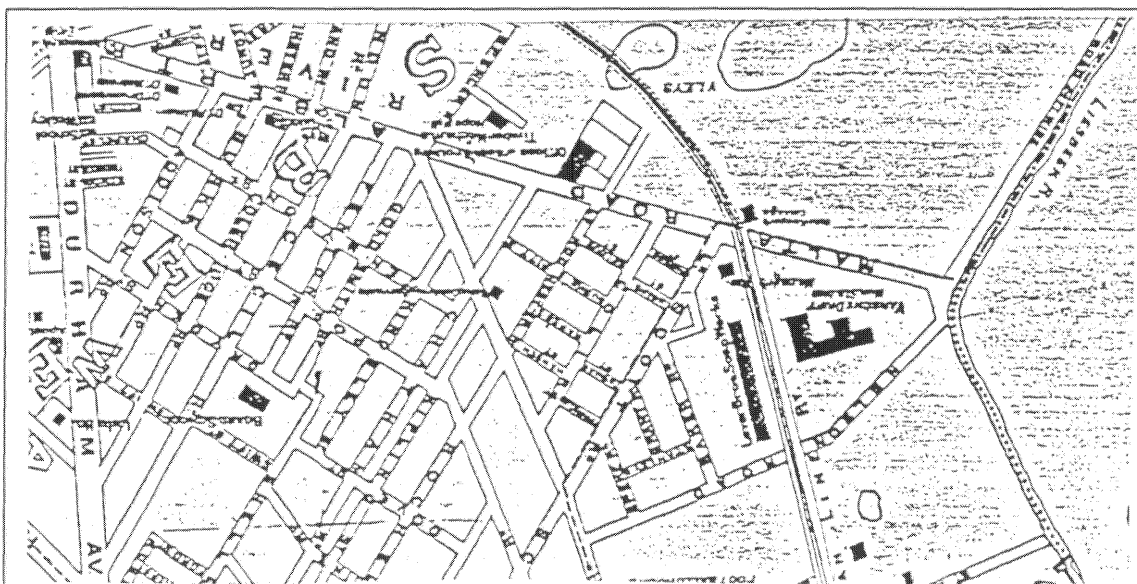


Fig. 4. Varschedrift Municipal Stables, 1920. (Reference: Todeschini, F. & Japha, V. 1986. *Conservation Study of Salt River*. Page 20).

A broad outline of the history of Varschedrift farmstead was given in our first scoping report. Some additional archival information unearthed recently might be of relevance to this report. The earliest history of the land-grants by Van Riebeeck is closely connected with the displacement of Khoi herders from their traditional pastures along the Liesbeeck River and the penetration of the hinterland by freeburghers. The most notable element in the siting of the Varschedrift farmhouse therefore is connected with route systems and

strategic defences. The geographical location of the Varsche Vallei farm together with Varschedrift farmhouse rendered it an important 'junction' in the system of wagon routes and at the same time defined the limits of the first settlement for the next twohundred years.

The rough wagon track was to become the backbone of the Cape's economy. Leaving town this wagon road bifurcated in the vicinity of Roodde Bloem (now Woodstock), one branch proceeding southwards to False Bay (now the Main Road), the other connecting the peninsular settlement system to the hinterland via fords across the Liesbeek and Zwart (Black) Rivers⁴. The owners of Varschedrift farmhouse controlled one of the passable fords on the Liesbeek River. Immediately to the west of the Varsche Vallei (or Vlei) farmlands, abutting what is now a portion of Lower Main Road, Observatory and Malta Road, some settlements are indicated on this map of the 1780s⁵ (Fig. 5).

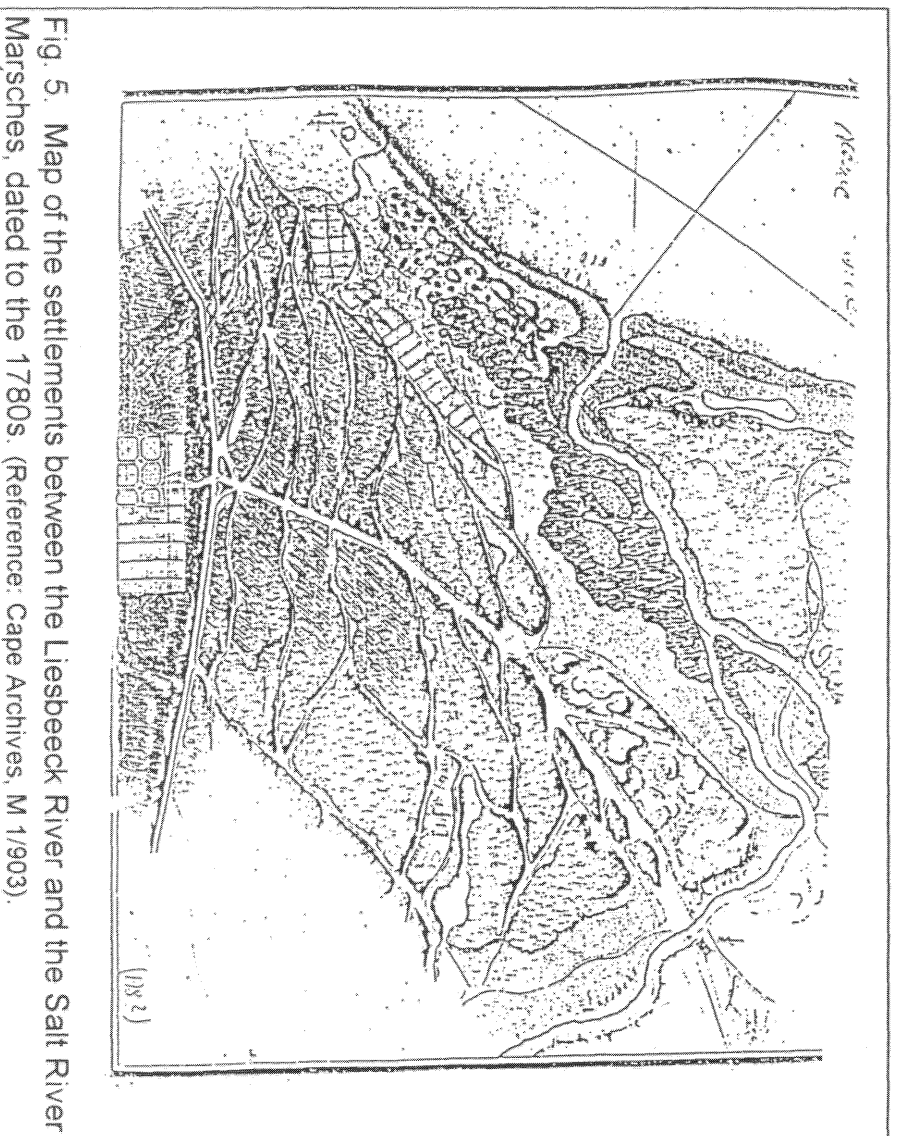


Fig. 5. Map of the settlements between the Liesbeek River and the Salt River Marsches, dated to the 1780s. (Reference: Cape Archives, M 1/903).

⁴ Todeschini, F. & Japha, V. 1986. *Conservation Study of Salt River*. SAHRA library, page 20.

⁵ Cape Archives, M 1/903. Barbier, (1787). "Caart van het zoogenaamde Paerden Eyland na by Goede Hoop".

On Smart's map of 1796⁶ this settlement is annotated as 'J', the 'old corn mill'. Following this, a map dated 1807⁷, the year after the second British occupation of the Cape shows the spatial organisation of this part of the Liesbeeck River settlements quite clearly. The Lower Main Road continues over Varschedrift towards the Campground (Rondebosch Common). Roode Bloem and Hope Mill (the 'old corn mill') are nearby. Thibault's plan of 1814 has been mentioned already⁸ (see Fig. 2), and it is his detailed mapping of the roads, tracks, boundary lines and actual buildings that served as a reliable guide to our investigation.

A few selected drawings made of the area during the nineteenth century illustrate the general barren landscape in and around Varsche Vallei farm and Varschedrift homestead. Ranch's drawing of about 1830⁹ (Fig. 6) shows "... the prominent Oude Molen to the left of the view, the Valkenburg mill and the generally linear scattering of buildings on the western bank of the Liesbeeck River, terminating to the right with the two Salt River mills"¹⁰.

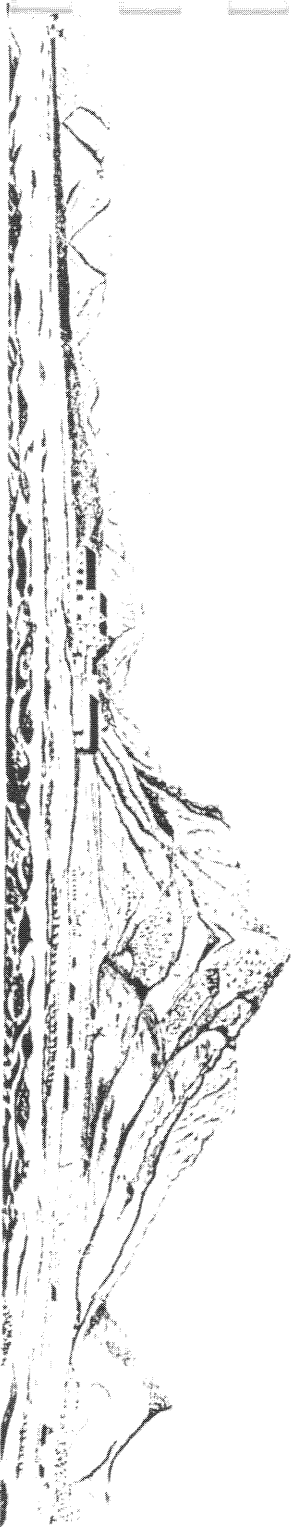


Fig. 6. General view of the Liesbeeck River settlements 1830. Varschedrift highlighted. (Reference: Walton, J. 1974. *Water-mills, Windmills and Horse Mills of South Africa*. Cape Town: C Struik, p 139.

⁶ Cape Archives, M 3/19. Smart, H. 1796. "Cape of Good Hope from Table Bay along the Coastline and including a part of Table Bay".

⁷ Cape Archives, M 2/76, Leeb, J.L., "Military Sketch of the Ground near Rondebosch with the situation of the encampment under the command ... November 1807".

⁸ CMC, SG Folio No S/13342 op cit.

⁹ South African Library. No reference given. "View of the Cape of Good Hope Peninsula Mountains ..." by W Ranch, ca 1830.

¹⁰ Todeschini & Japha, op cit. p 21.

Closer to the Main Road the Ondermeming Mill and Reezight homestead are just visible. This illustration conveys the general sense of windswept wetlands with the farmbuildings and mills crouching low to the ground. In figure 7a the newly built Royal Observatory dominates the horizon, with Valkenburg farmstead and Oude Molen to the left, and the Belleviet farm complex and Devil's Peak on the right¹¹. A view of the southern side of the Royal Observatory (Fig. 7b) shows the Ondermeming Mill and the two Salt River Mills on the left with associated farmhouses and outbuildings.

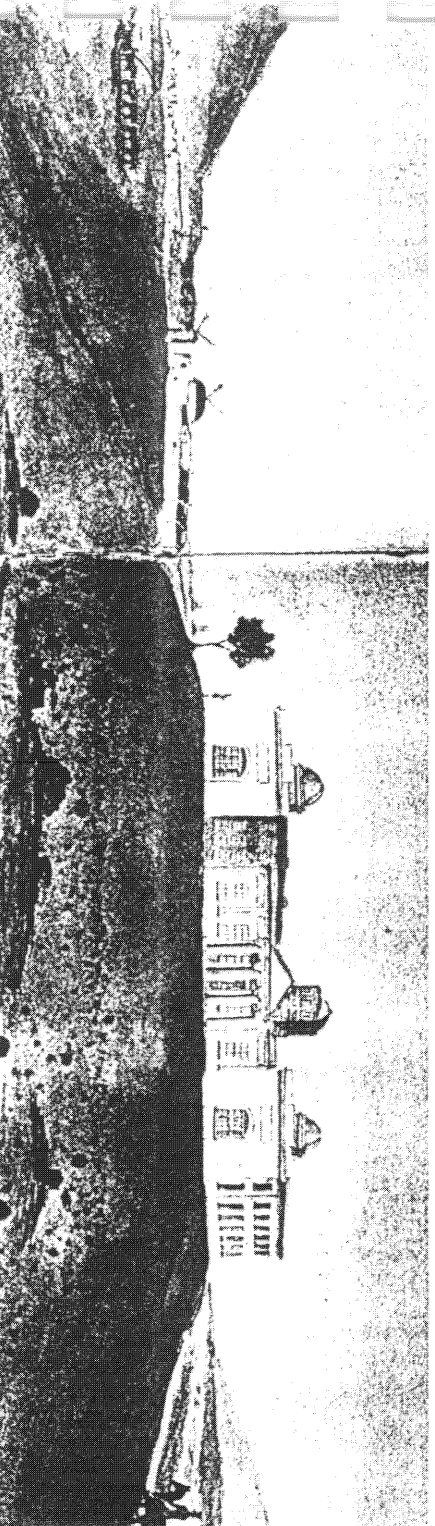
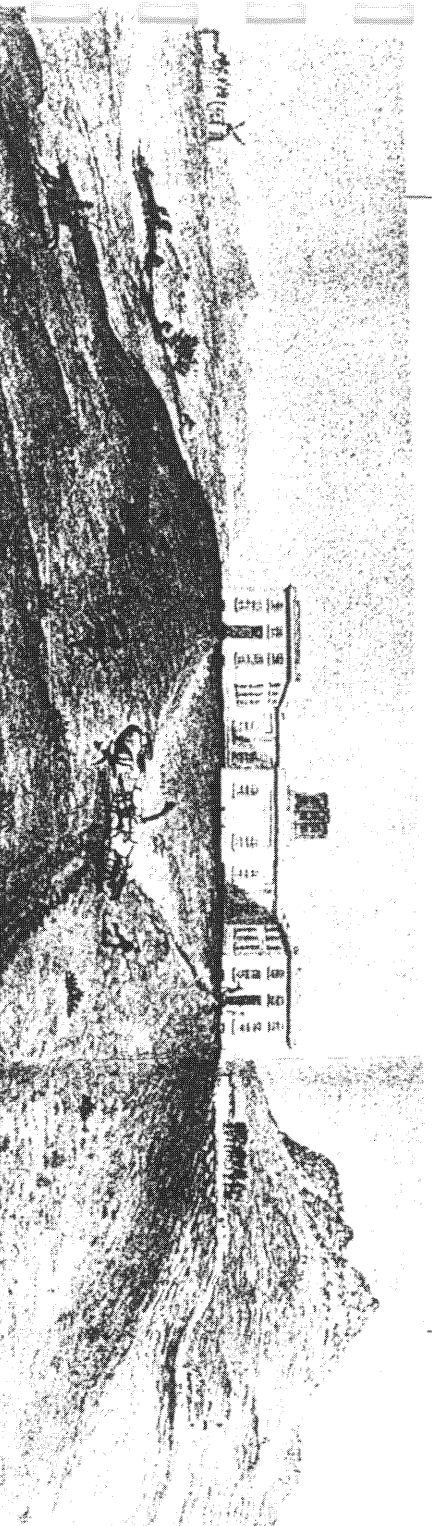


Fig. 7a and 7b. The Royal Observatory with adjacent farmhouses, outbuildings and windmills, ca 1830. Varschedrift would have been situated to the right of the top drawing (highlighted). (Reference: Walton, James. 1974. *Water-mills, Windmills and Horse Mills of South Africa*. Cape Town: C Struik, p 139, unknown artist, ca 1830.

¹¹ Walton, James. 1974. *Water-mills, Windmills and Horse Mills of South Africa*. Cape Town: C Struik, p 139, unknown artist.

The Cape flats seem to have been a favourite hunting ground. Some farming took place, wagonloads were conveyed, drawn by a span of trek-oxen. A closer view of the farm buildings along the northern end of the Liesbeeck River is given in Figure 8¹². Pootermans' painting clearly shows the characteristic built environment of the area: whitewashed walls and thatched roofs of dwelling, barns and lean-to's arranged in linear form.



Fig. 8. The Salt River Windmills, 1844-45, illustrating the built environment of the Liesbeeck River settlements. By JC Pootermans. (Reference: Todeschini & Japha, op cit; illustration A4)

¹² Todeschini & Japha, op cit; p 21 Library of Parliament. No reference given. Pootermans, JC, 1844/5, "The Salt River Windmills".

With the emancipation of slavery in 1834, tracts of land belonging to insolvent owners came onto the market and were sometimes sub-divided and sold¹³. A process of Anglicisation took place on the now smaller estates. British owners modernised their farmhouses and British household wares became the norm. Suburban semi-detached and row housing, as well as suburban villas sprang up to the west of Varschedrift after 1860, when the railway line reached the newly established southern suburbs. Observatory Lower Main Road was connected to the "road to the interior" immediately north of Varsche Vlei in the 1860s. To the Varsche Drift *wert* complex new outbuildings had been added¹⁴ by 1885 (Fig. 9), and clearly seen to be connected by a perimeter wall in 1891¹⁵ (Fig. 10).

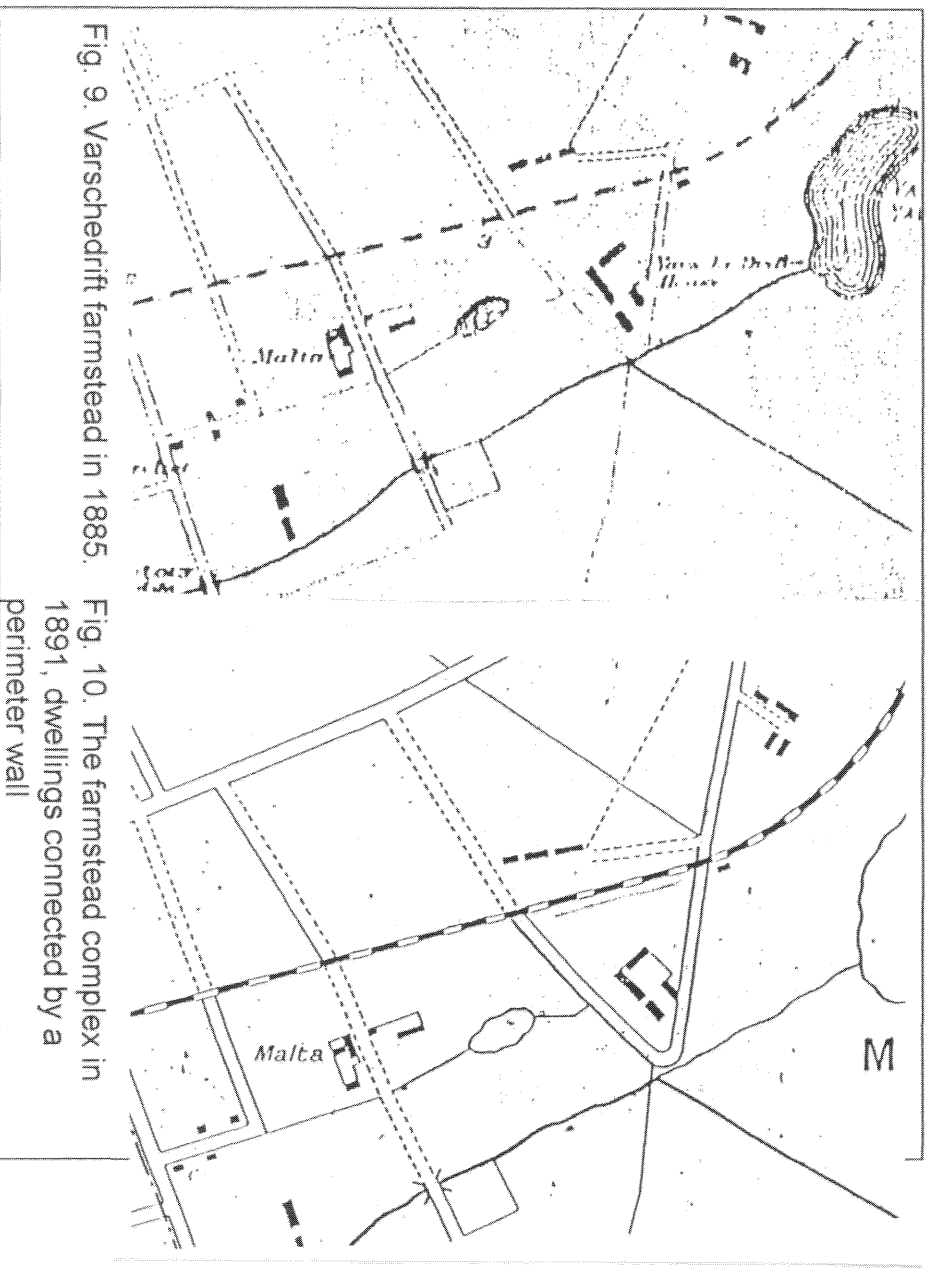


Fig. 9. Varschedrift farmstead in 1885.

Fig. 10. The farmstead complex in 1891, dwellings connected by a perimeter wall

¹³ Todeschini & Japha, op cit, p 21.

¹⁴ CMC, Surveyors Office, Facsimile of a map by Major GE Boyle, dated 1885, "The Southern Suburbs of Cape Town", Cape Town: Richards & Sons.

¹⁵ South African Library, 968-712, and Cape Archives, M 1/236, "Plan of the Proposed Schemes of Sewerage and Sewage Disposal", dated 1891.

Varsche Drift farmlands were still in existence in 1893¹⁶, as were those of Varsche Vallei, nearby Malta House, Reezight and Hope Mill. On a map of 1920 the fields of Malta farm are converted to football grounds and Lever Brothers had established its factory across the railway line from Varschedrift house. The latter is designated as "Municipal Stable" (see Fig. 4). In 1930 railway cottages have been built, surrounding a small mount left on the property¹⁷.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE SITE

Prior to the commencement of the archaeological investigation, the concrete floors on the mount were lifted and removed by an excavator (Fig. 11). The surface vegetation over the remainder of the area likely to contain archaeological material was scraped off to a depth of about 100-300 mm. Remains of a concrete/cement floor and wall footings of two early twentieth century buildings with sewerage disposal facilities were found underneath (marked in Fig. 12 as 'concrete floor' and 'ablution facility' respectively), and identified as matching one of the pre-fabricated buildings in the 1944 aerial photograph¹⁸. An iron pole set in concrete near recent cement steps on the north side of the mount was retained as datum point and a grid established over the site.

The exposed area on the mount was heavily disturbed by twentieth century building activity and previously demolished building fabric used as infill. Pockets of beachsand, cement, stone slabs, red and orange hard fired brick fragments were encountered over the whole site, as were building materials manufactured from plastic, rubber, iron, metal alloys, asbestos and slate, rooftile fragments, electricity and telephone cables, broken sanitary ware.

¹⁶ Cape Archives, M 4/170. Brink, MJ. "General Plan of the Cape Flats (Sheet No 1)", dated 1893. And: CMC, Surveyor's Office, Facsimile.

¹⁷ Cape Archives, map M 3/210, dated 1930. "City of Cape Town and Environs".

¹⁸ Director of Surveys and Mapping, Mowbray, sheet 61/44, No 126.



Fig. 11. The Varschedrift site, concrete overburden removed, 2001.

This jumble of building material was interspersed with eighteenth and nineteenth century soft fired brick fragments and very fragmented domestic artefacts.

Archaeological features unearthed during test excavations¹⁹ can be described as:

- wallfootings,
- several paved areas,
- paved and cobble stone floors in several locations,
- and rubbish pits.

3.1 Walls and wall footings

Following the test excavations, either to bedrock level or by scraping off the top 100 to 200 mm of rubble overburden of semi-exposed wall remains a site plan was drawn and the relevant archaeological features surveyed within the site (Fig. 12). Figure 13 depicts a 1:250 enlargement of archaeological features only.

A line of plaster and cement on one side of a dressed stone wall led us to explore the north end of the study area (Fig. 14). This proved to be an extant wall footing of dressed stone, plastered and whitewashed to a depth of +/- 750 mm on the outer side. The plaster contained no shell fragments, which would date it to post 1830s. Further wall footings at right angles to the perimeter wall were exposed as indicated in the survey diagram. A second wall runs parallel at about two meters distance from the perimeter wall. No plastering was observed on either side of this interior wall. The steep embankment was artificially created using collapsed stone walling, twentieth century brickwall fragments, building cement/iron rubble and soil. The railway fence borders the western edge of the mount and the southern side slopes gently to the present entrance to the property.

¹⁹ Restrictions on the extent of the excavation placed by Ms Mary Leslie of the South African Heritage Agency (SAHRA) prevented a more thorough investigation by Dr UA Seemann (PhD, UCT).

DRAFT SITE PLAN OF ERVEN 26162 & 27661 OBSERVATORY

CO-ORDINATE SYSTEM WG19

NOTES

- (1) THE FIGURE ABCDEFGHIJKL REPRESENTS ERF 26162 IN EXTENT +/- 3,5310 HECTARES.
- (2) THE FIGURE BHMPTEDC REPRESENTS ERF 27661 IN EXTENT +/- 2840 SQUARE METRES.
- (3) THE FIGURE a 5,2m CONTOUR BHC RAILWAY LINE FENCE a IN EXTENT +/- 1,5600 HECTARES.
- (4) ⊙ DENOTES SURVEY CONTROL POINTS.
- (5) T DENOTES TELKOM POLE.
- (6) ● DENOTES MANHOLE COVER.
- (7) ☒ DENOTES MANHOLE COVER.
- (8) ⚡ DENOTES ELECTRICAL POLE.
- (9) ✦ DENOTES LAMP POST.
- (10) BULDINGS DIGITIZED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH.
- (11) NOTE THAT THE ABOVE FEATURES NEED TO BE VERIFIED ON SITE.

Additional Survey by:

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SCALE: 1/1000

Original Survey

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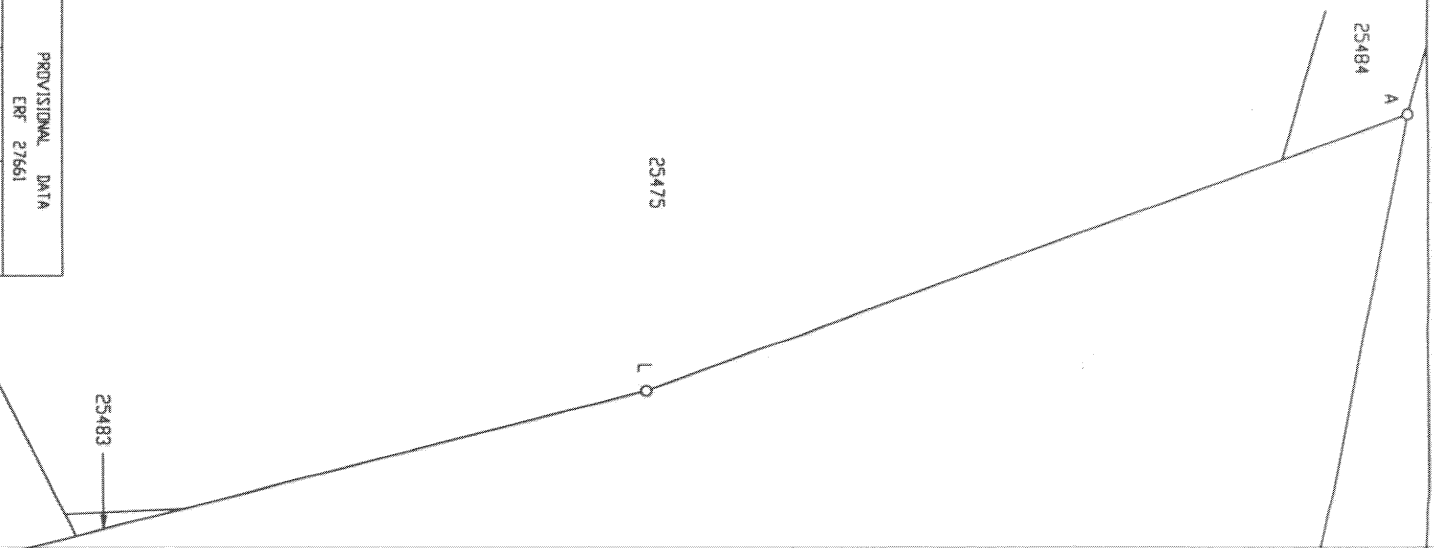
FAK: (021) 461-0066

PREPARED BY: JSTOCKWELL/MC.B.

DRAWN BY: R. CASSIEN

DATE: 28-03-2001

115847



PROVISIONAL DATA ERF 27661		
SIDE	DISTANCES	DIRECTIONS
BH	21,79	281 01 20
HM	160,46	282 09 40
MP	35,29	14 35 50
PG	13,24	44 53 40
GF	46,47	140 09 00
FE	39,56	108 43 00
ED	24,22	125 21 30
DC	75,51	96 53 10
CB	10,24	191 01 20

PROVISIONAL DATA ERF 26162		
SIDE	DISTANCES	DIRECTIONS
AB	107,89	281 01 10
GH	195,17	46 25 40
HJ	31,93	66 23 40
JK	19,83	70 00 20
KL	162,13	165 45 50
LA	105,67	159 40 00

Fig. 13. Varschedrift home

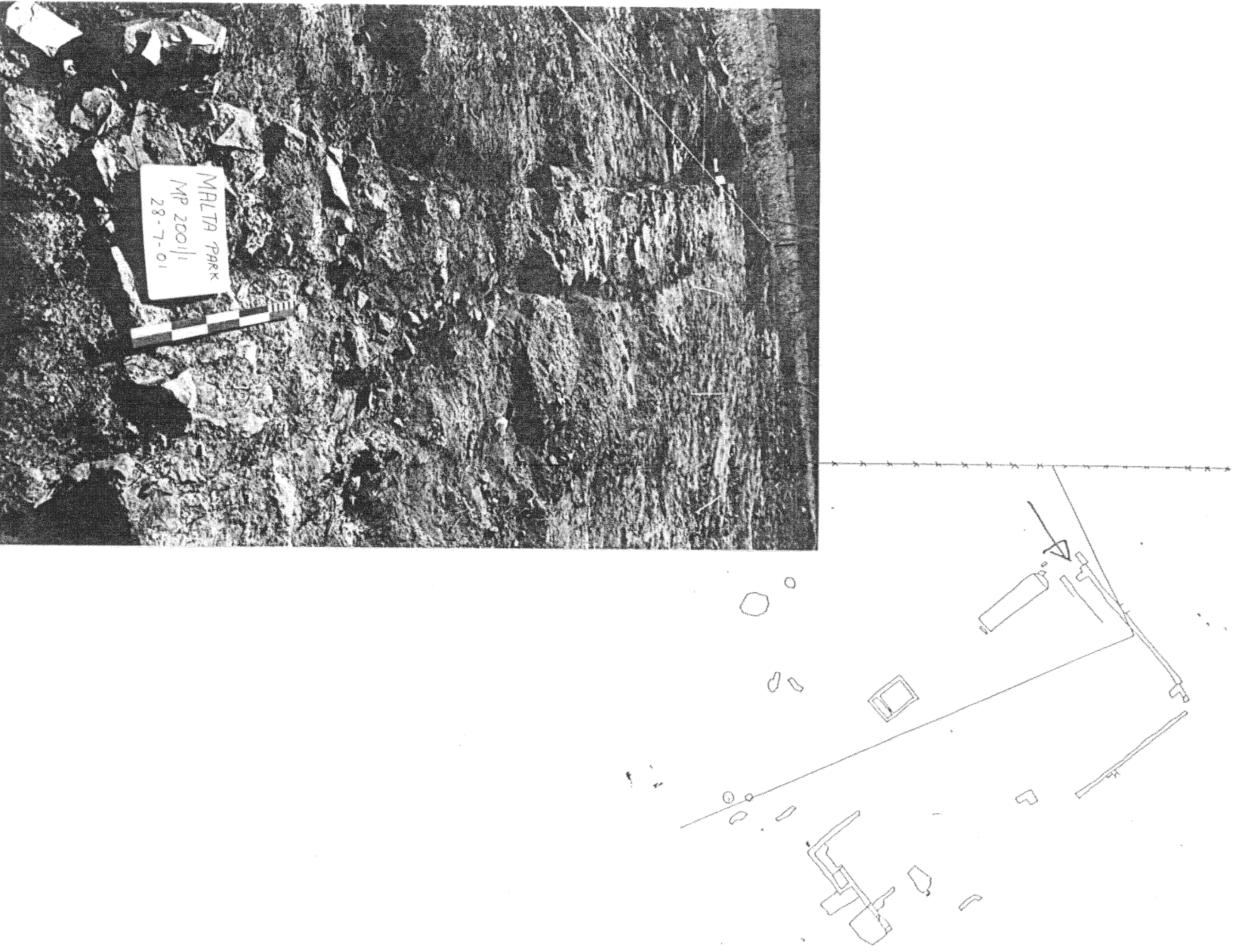


Fig 14. The perimeter wall on the north side of the mount.

Several wall segments, dating to the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, such as that in figure 15, were observed throughout the site.

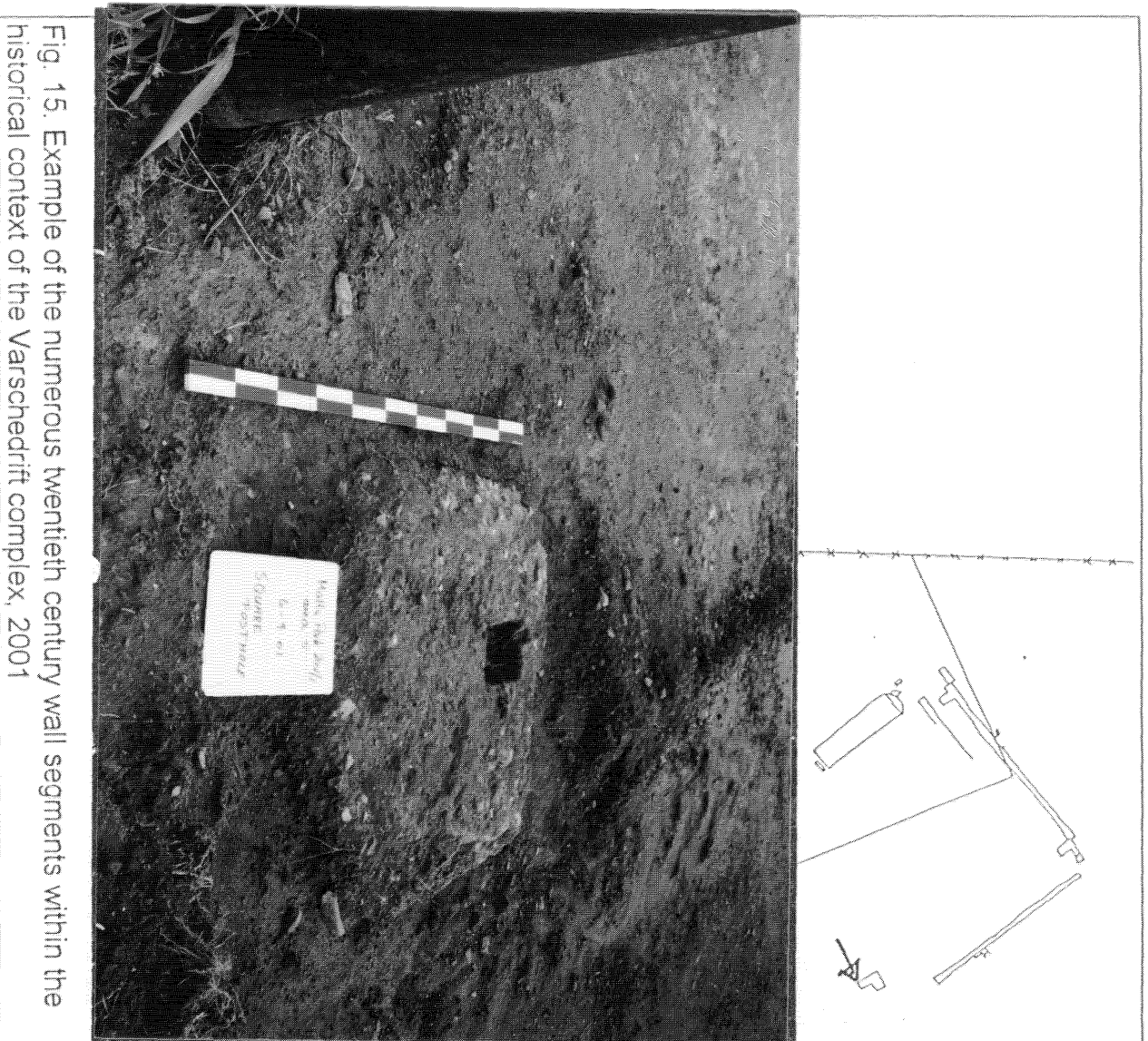


Fig. 15. Example of the numerous twentieth century wall segments within the historical context of the Varschedrift complex, 2001

Turning our attention to the eastern perimeter of the mount, the existing concrete pit, probably built in the 1940s, proved to have bisected the plastered perimeter wall. The construction of this wall is identical to the north perimeter wall. As seen on the survey diagram, the north-east corner of the walls is not well articulated. At its northern end some *klinker* fragments, brickpaving and a stone doorlintel point to the possibility that some kind of stoep paving existed in that area (Fig. 16).

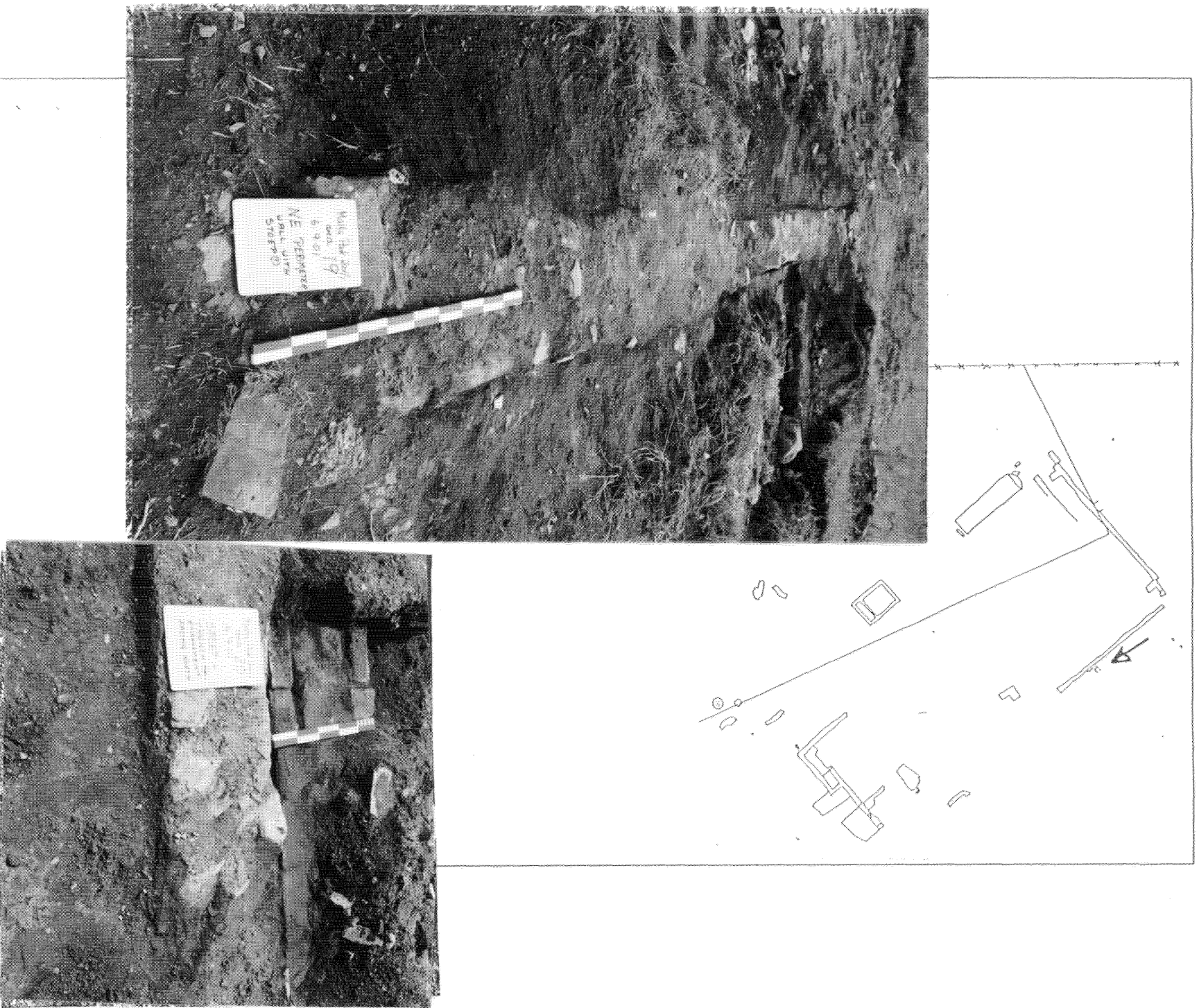


Fig. 16. North-east wall section with paving, possibly steep, 2001

A test trench through this section of the embankment contained no artefacts. The wall foundations found within the perimeter walls of the study area are all of similar dimensions and identical building techniques (Fig. 17). The exposed wall sections were about 600 mm to 700 mm wide. They were constructed of semi-dressed stone and ferrocrete nodules placed in layers with narrow bands of flat shale fragments, clay and pebbles. The loose eighteenth century brickwork (soft orange bricks, fired at low temperatures) found all over the site could not be assigned to any specific wall footing. However, the crushed red brick infill with shale fragments in squares B3b and B4a seem to be in context.

No wall remains were found towards the west and south side of the study area.

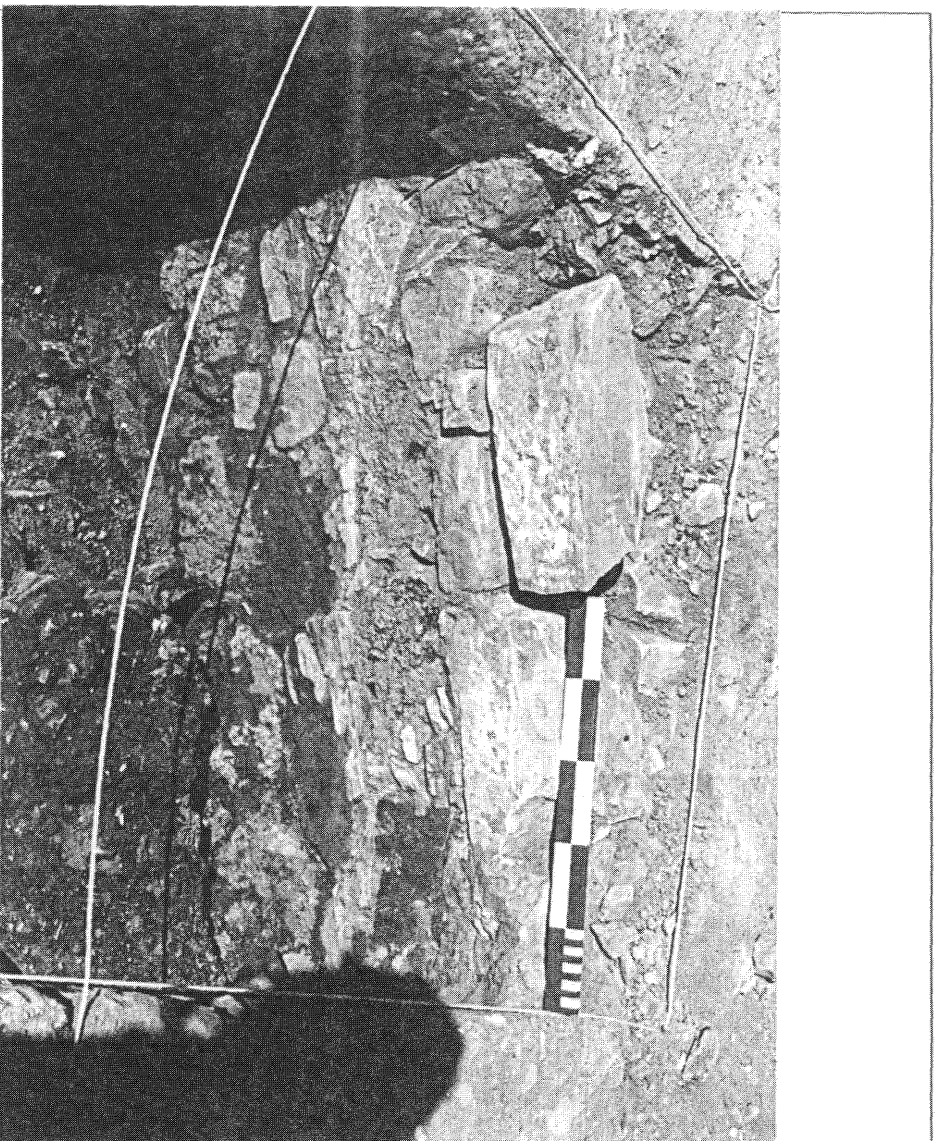


Fig. 17. Details of wall construction.

3.2 The test trench

By excavating a sequence of four testpits across the north perimeter wall it was hoped that possible remains of one or more floor surfaces would be exposed. This proved not to be the case. The photograph (Fig. 18) and section drawings of the test trench (Fig. 19) show that a crushed red brick layer with stone and shale fragments - abutting the perimeter wall - intruded into a black soil layer. Both layers included Dutch *klinker* fragments²⁰. Below the black soil layer a shale fragment / soil layer interspersed with ferrocrete nodules (a naturally occurring iron conglomerate in the area) terminated at between 600 mm and 800 mm on bedrock in the form of decomposing shale. The walls are in primary context and belong to the earliest building phase of the *werft*. All layers contained fragmented artefact material.

Test trenches in the south and south-east of the site (indicated in Fig. 13) yielded no archaeological features and few artefact fragments.

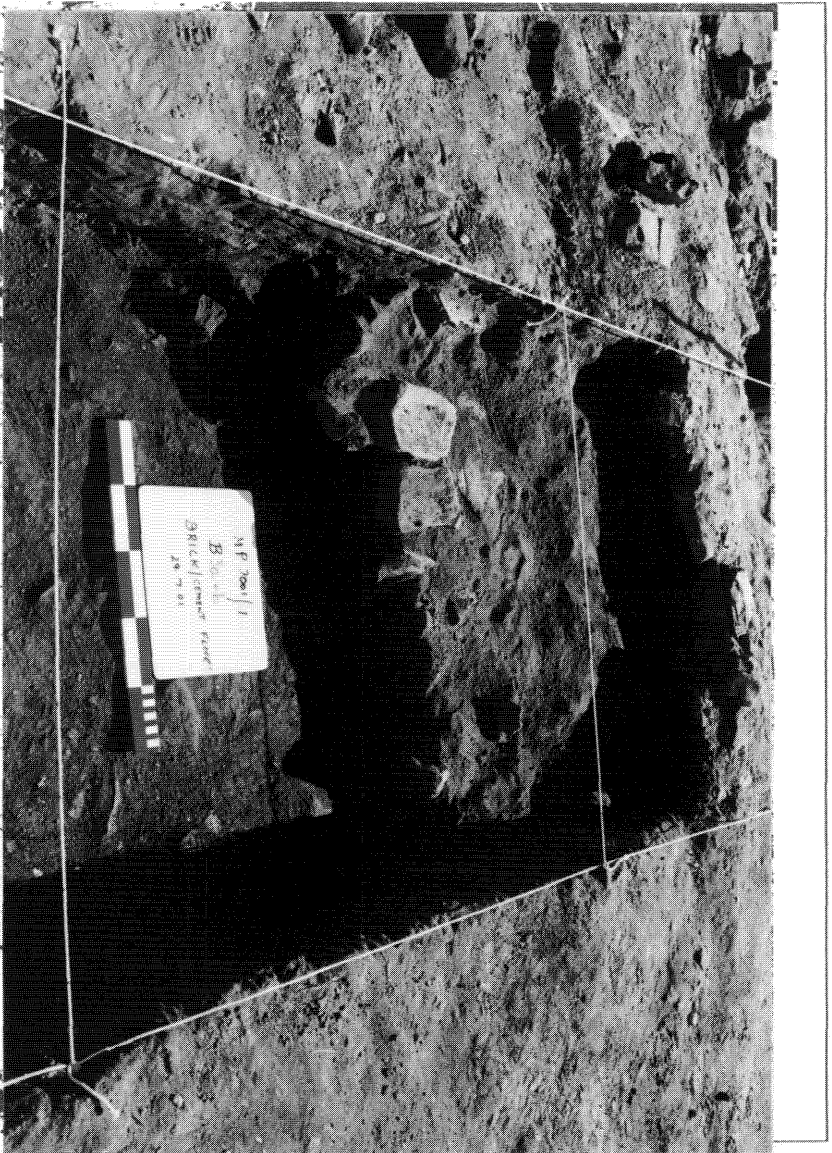


Fig. 18. Test trench across the north perimeter wall, 2001.

²⁰ Dutch *klinkers* are high-fired yellow claybricks used for hard-wearing surfaces such as steps, floors and archways.

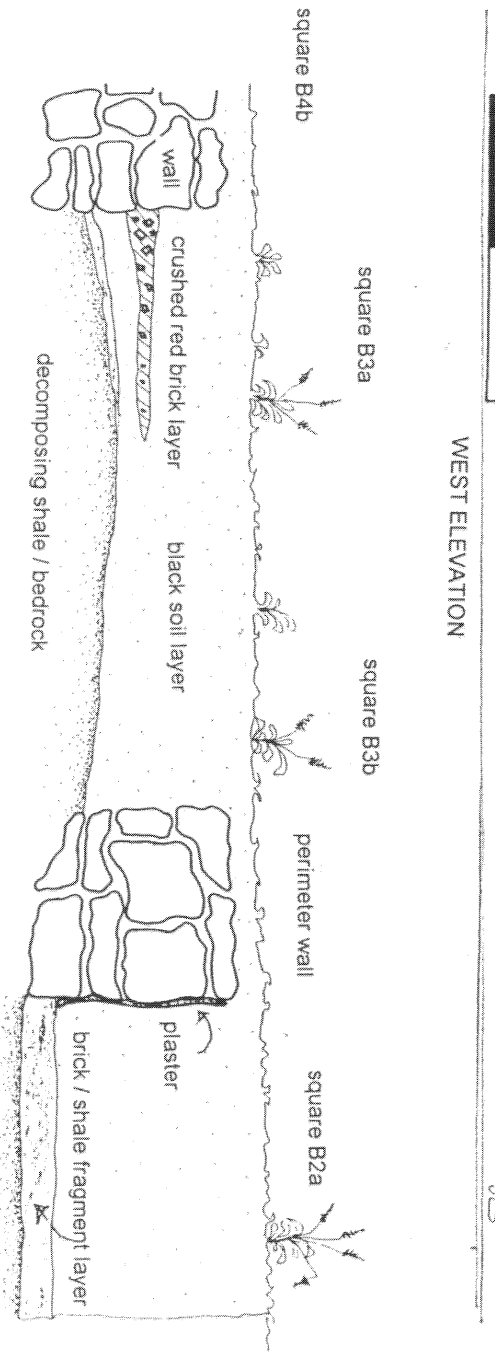
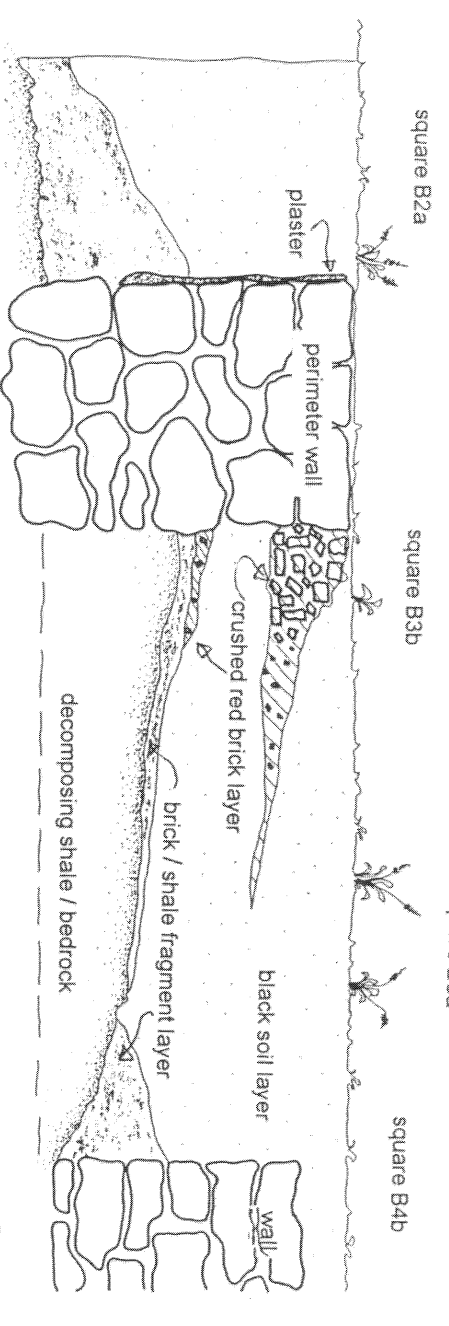
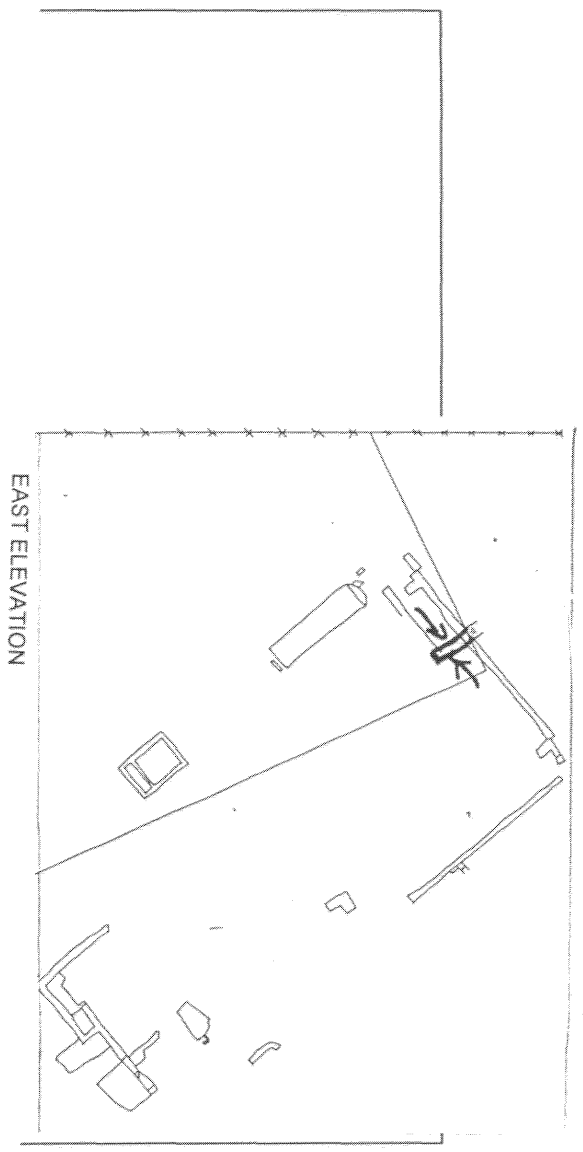


Fig. 19. Test trench across the north perimeter wall, east and west section drawings, 2001.

3.3 The south-east corner - stables, outhouses, cobble stone and paved floor areas.

In several areas at the eastern and south-eastern side of the mount clearly articulated wall footings were unearthed just below the surface soil cover (Fig. 20). In one area an entrance or gateway (?) to the farmstead complex could be postulated. On both sides of the gateway area brickpaving was observed over a considerable area, up to 2 m² in size (Fig. 21). The bricks date from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century, suggesting that the paving was repaired over a considerable time period. It was in this area, that a horseshoe were found, together with a coin dated 1826 and a silver brooch, which probably dates to the late 18th / early 19th century.

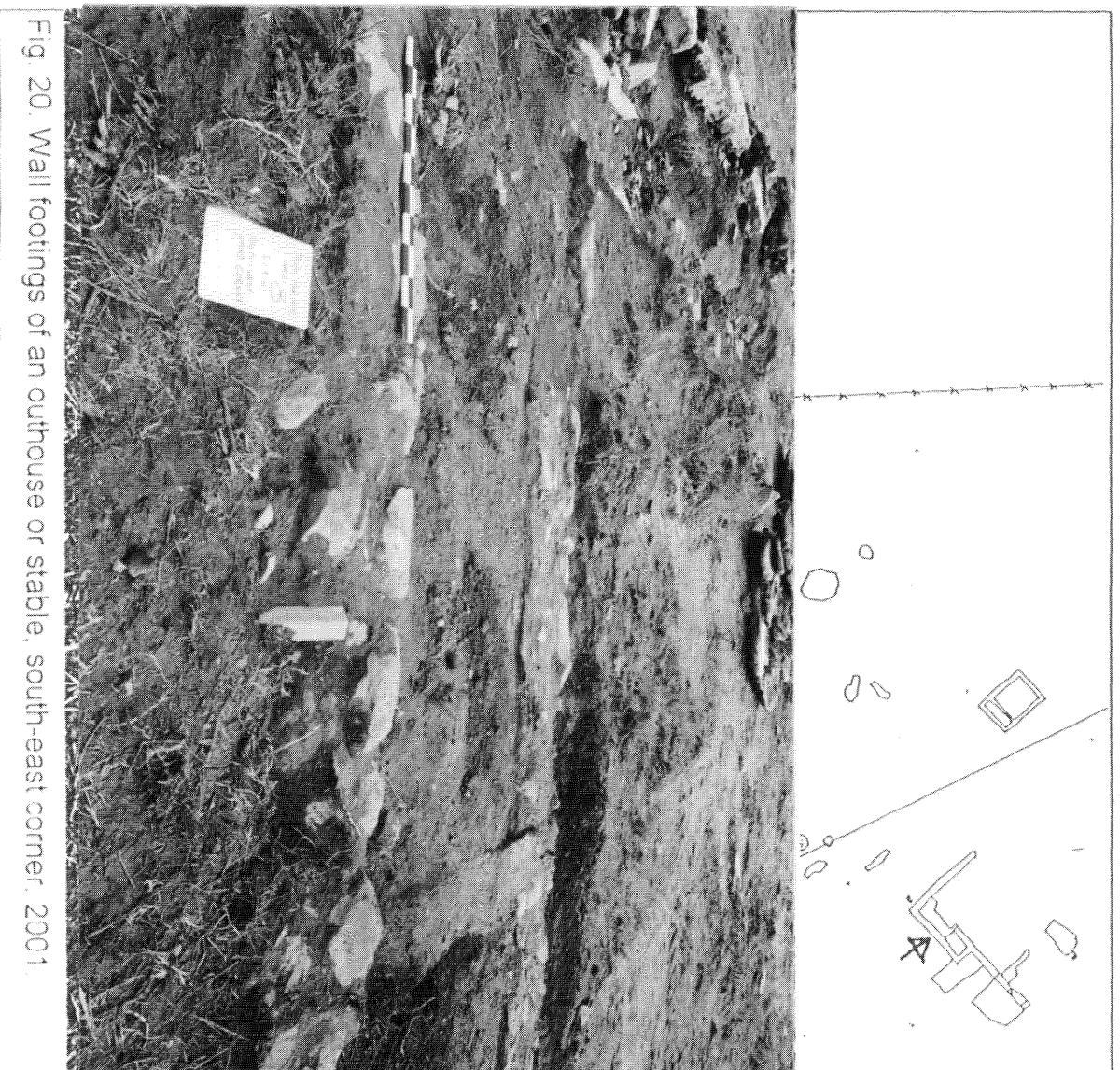


Fig 20. Wall footings of an outhouse or stable, south-east corner, 2001.

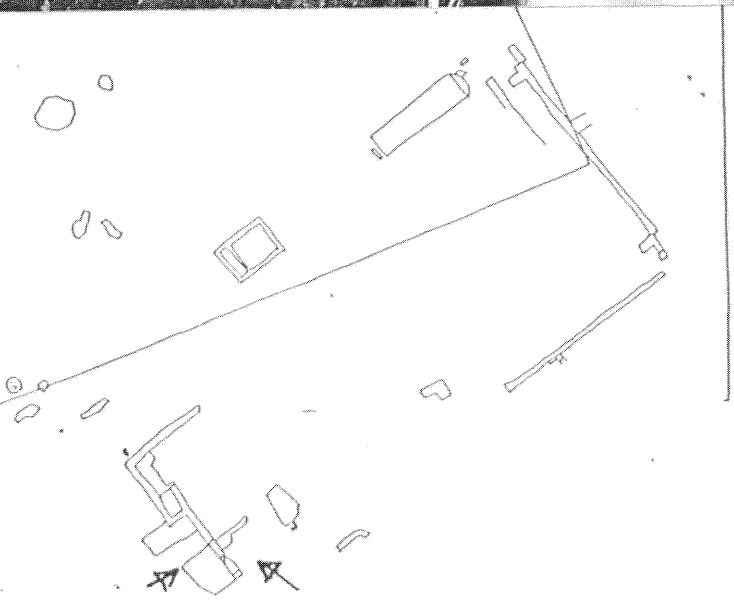
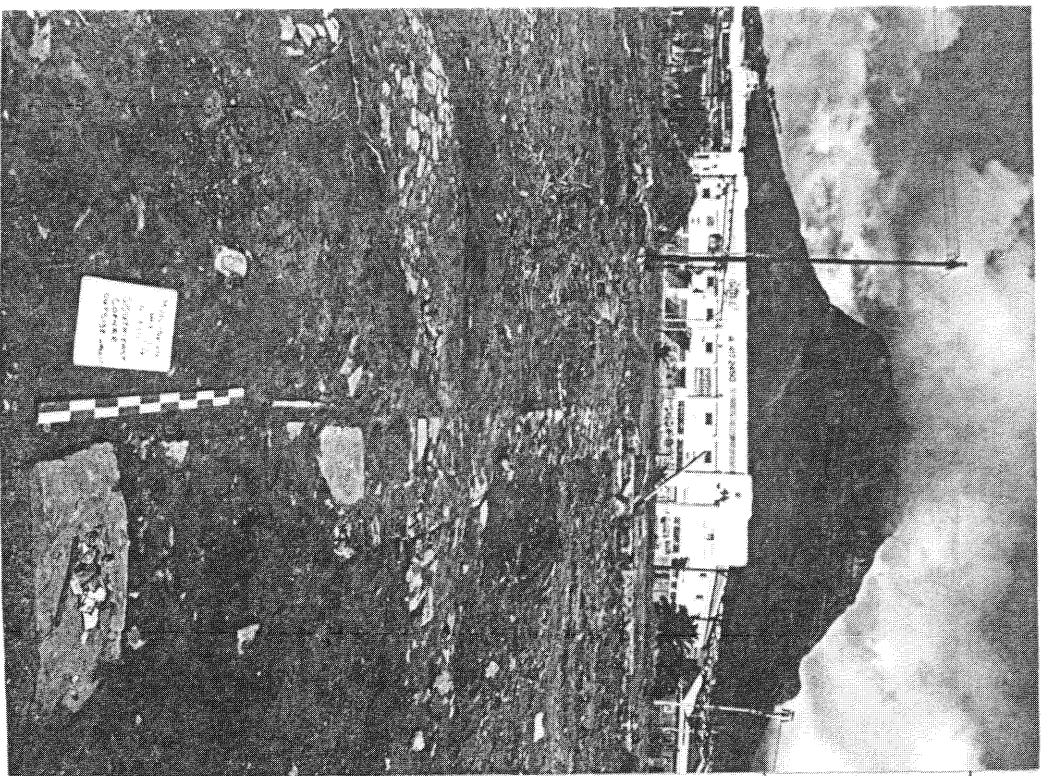


Fig. 21. Above: The south-east wall. Below: Paving in the south-east corner of the homestead, possibly second half of 19th century, photographed in 2001.

Cobbled areas were found in the southern and south-eastern half of the site after scraping off only a few centimetres of soil. They were usually about half to one square meters in size, possibly the remains of outside surfaces, interior cobbled surfaces of stable, outbuilding or shed, or in one case a drain (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22. Above. Cobbled area in the south-east of the mount. 2001.

Due to heavy disturbance of the southern and south-eastern area no further investigation was conducted.

3.4 Rubbish pits

The gentle south slope of the mount is littered on the surface with very fragmented artefactual material. Two rubbish pits of about 500 to 1000 mm diameter were located. From one pit a complete base- and some wall fragments of a five litre hand-blown glass vat was removed for safe-keeping (Fig. 23). The remainder of the artefact deposit was left *in situ*. From the second pit artefactual material, including a British mid-nineteenth century kitchen wall tile was removed (Fig. 24). It seems, that household debris was discarded across the southern slope. As it was also the approach to the pre-fabricated huts during the twentieth century, the artefacts are highly fragmented. They date from the mid-seventeenth to the twentieth century.

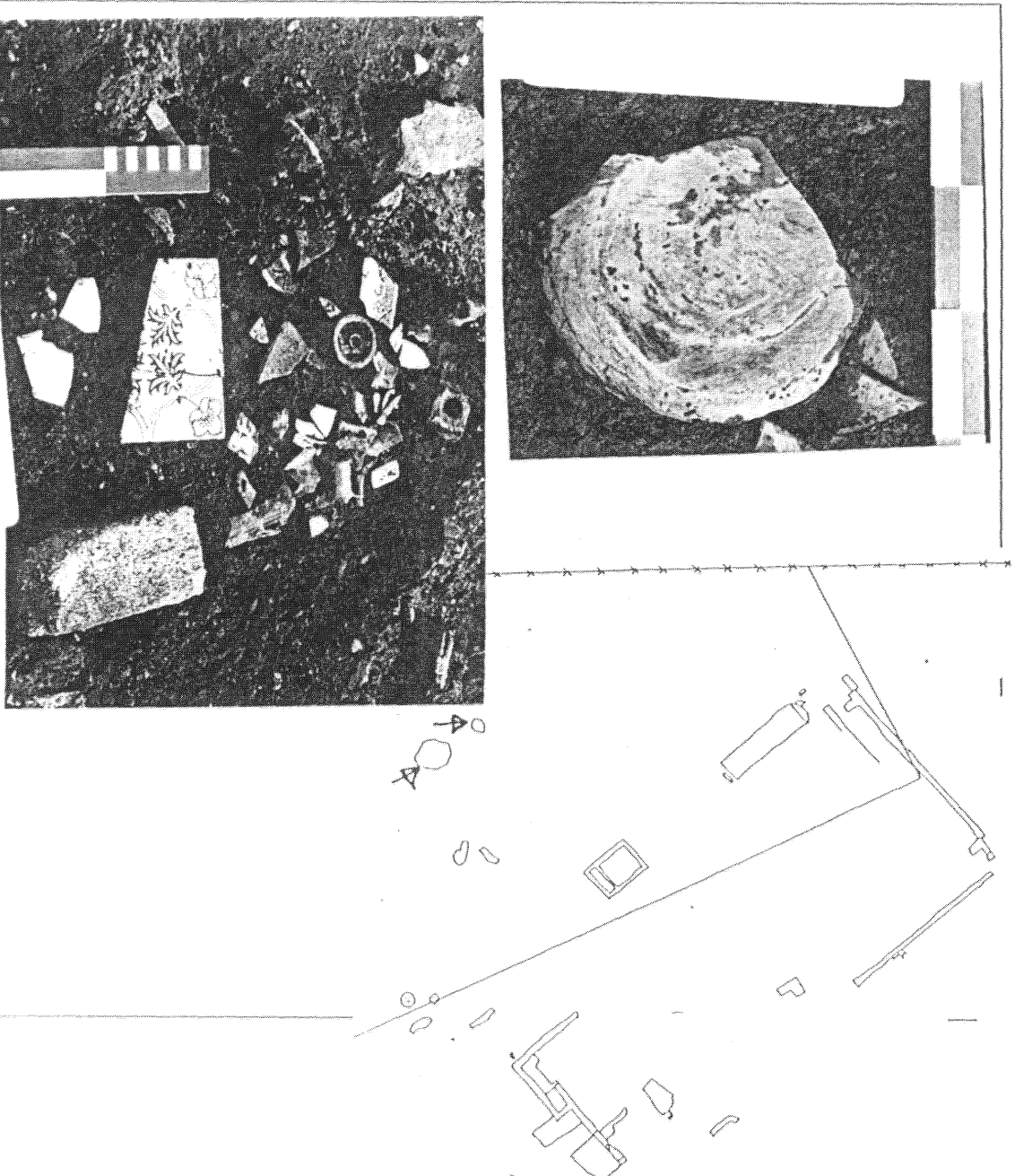


Fig. 23 and 24. Contents of rubbish pit on the south slope. surface area only. 2001.

3.5 THE ARTEFACTUAL MATERIAL

3.5.1 Artefacts from the test trench

The test pit outside the north wall, square B2a, yielded twentieth century building rubble infill, as well as twentieth century metal bottle caps, plastic items, fragments of clothing and bottle glass amongst other household debris. Squares B3b, B3a and B4a revealed several distinct classes of artefacts with no 20th century intrusions: claypipes, ceramics, glass, bones, iron nails and unidentified iron fragments.

Claypipes

The claypipe collection from all three layers is made up of Dutch bowl and stem fragments. No Dutch heelmarks were noticed. Stem fragments are about 10mm to 20mm long, bore diameters range from 1.6 to 2.2mm, which puts the stems into manufacturing dates ranging from the early 18th to late 19th century. Only two British claypipe stem fragments were identified (in the black soil layer), one manufactured from a fishscale pattern mould, the other the letters DANEN? stamped around the mouthpiece.

Ceramics

The ceramic fragments found in all three layers of square B2a were of mixed origin and dates of manufacture. They are all very fragmented, about 5 to 30mm in diameter, kitchen- and tableware. Chinese porcelain, locally manufactured coarse earthenware, British refined wares and vitrified china of the 19th century are found in all layers. The ceramics can be classified as mass produced for the lower end of the market.

The squares located between the perimeter wall and the parallel running inner wall contain a uniform collection of Far East Asian export porcelain. Square B3b contains Chinese *grof* and fine porcelain fragments and three sherds of Staffordshire plain creamware. Square B3a red brick layer contains very fragmented Chinese *grof* and fine porcelain bowl fragments, the black soil layer yielded in addition a base of coarse earthenware cooking pot with yellow glaze

on the inside and the fragment of a Chinese porcelain figurine. A fragment of bakelite® was also found in this layer.

Square B4b: the red brick layer contained Chinese porcelain, the black soil layer yielded a mixed collection of ceramic fragments. Chinese *grof* and fine porcelain bowl fragments are found with British refined ware (creamware), an unidentified fragment of painted plaster and a doll's porcelain leg fragment. The brick/shale fragment layer contains only Chinese porcelain fragments. The manufacturing dates range from the early 18th to the late 19th century.

A selection of Chinese porcelain fragments from the south slope is indicative of the majority of Asian market ware distributed over the site (Fig. 25).

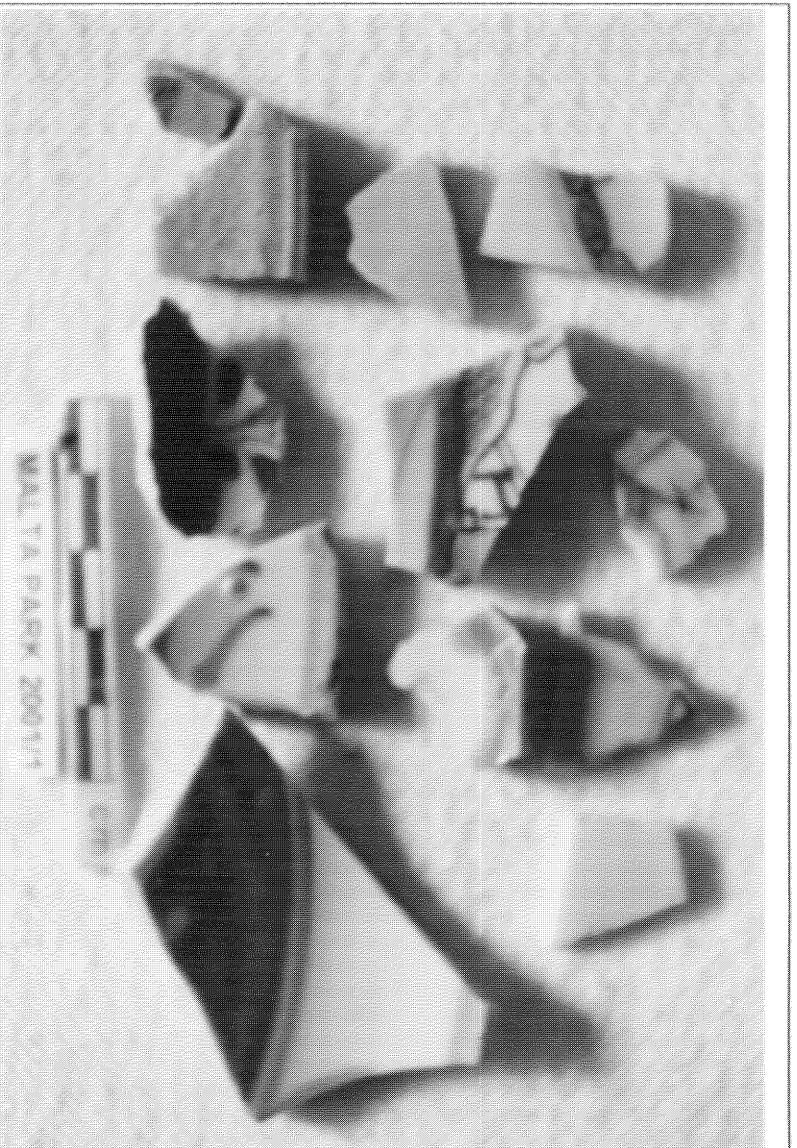


Fig. 25. Chinese porcelain fragments, surface collection, south slope. Late 18th to 19th century.

Glass fragments from the test trench range from bottle fragments, tableglass, windowglass, glass marble stoppers to a decorative coloured glass container fragment. The earliest dated glass bottle fragments found are:

In square B3b, brick/shale fragment layer, a base of a square gin bottle, dated to around 1790 to 1810.

In square B2a, black soil layer, within a 19th century assemblage, a British wine bottle neck with a hand-finished rim, dated to pre-1830.

In square B4b, black soil layer, two fragments of a British / continental wine bottle base, dated to the late 18th century.

The bone collection, about 1200g in total from the test trench, except square B2a, is made up of the longbones, knuckles and other extremities of small game, chicken, bird, sheep and cattle. Fish bones are present as well. The bones are chopped, chop/snapped and sawn.

3.5.2 Artefacts collected from selected areas around the site.

These artefacts have been collected on the surface of the squares in which archaeological features such as walling, paving, cobbled surfaces and rubbish pits were exposed. A diagram of the site to facilitate location of the squares is shown in figure 27 on the next page. The artefact collections have been bagged with the exception of the ironware and twentieth century plastic and glass. A selection of photographs with approximate dating of the ceramics and glass is presented below.

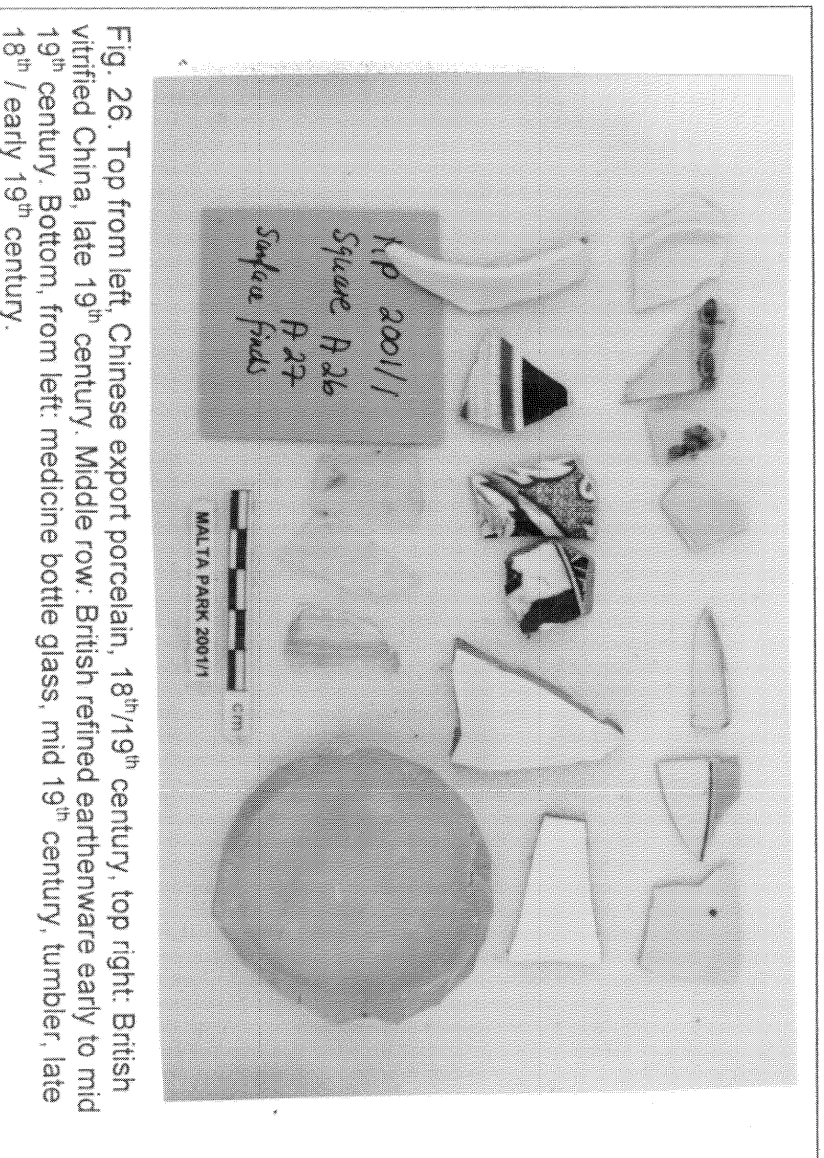
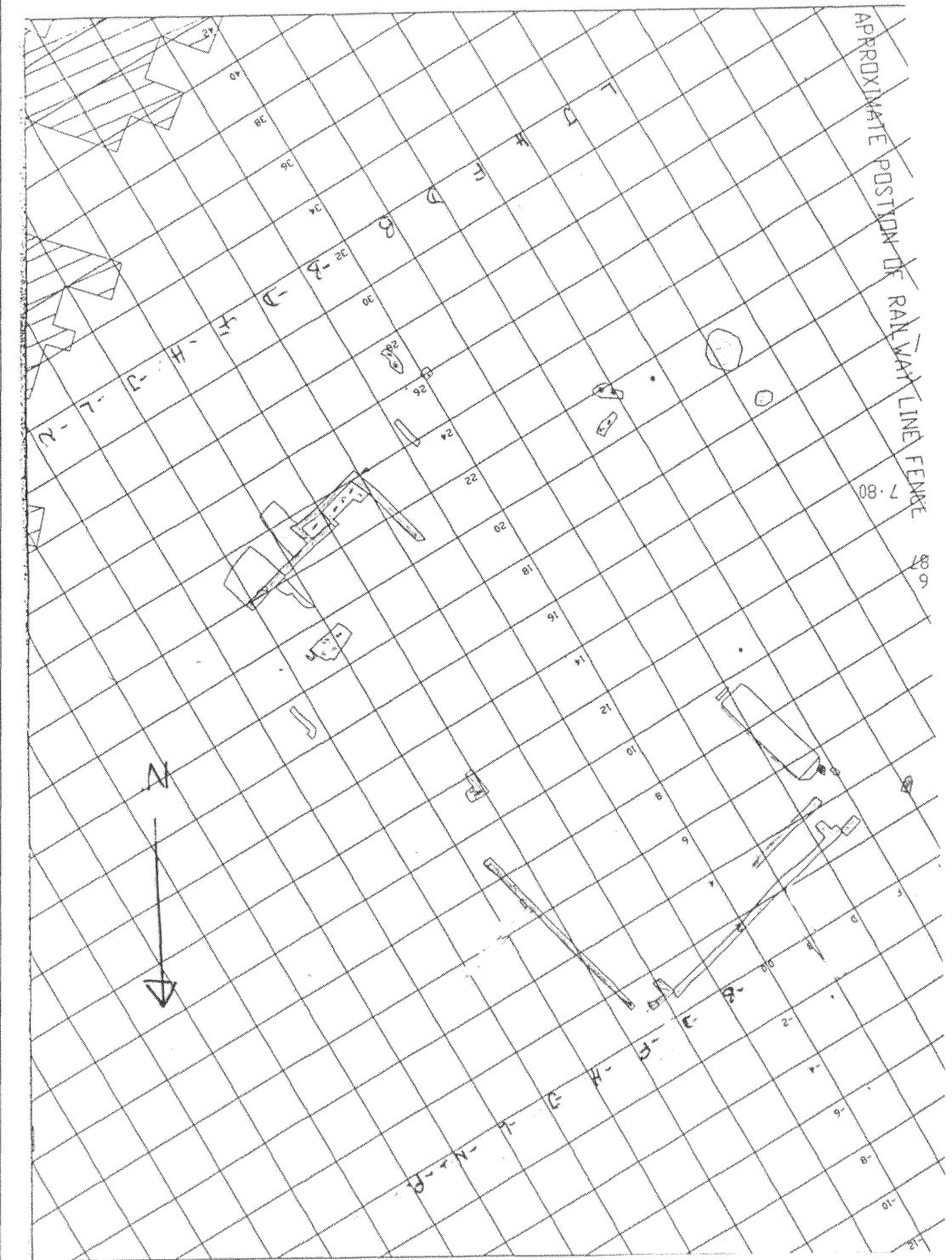


Fig. 26. Top from left, Chinese export porcelain, 18th/19th century, top right: British vitrified China, late 19th century. Middle row: British refined earthenware early to mid 19th century. Bottom, from left: medicine bottle glass, mid 19th century, tumbler, late 18th /early 19th century.

Fig. 27. Location of squares, Varschedriff homestead complex, 2001.



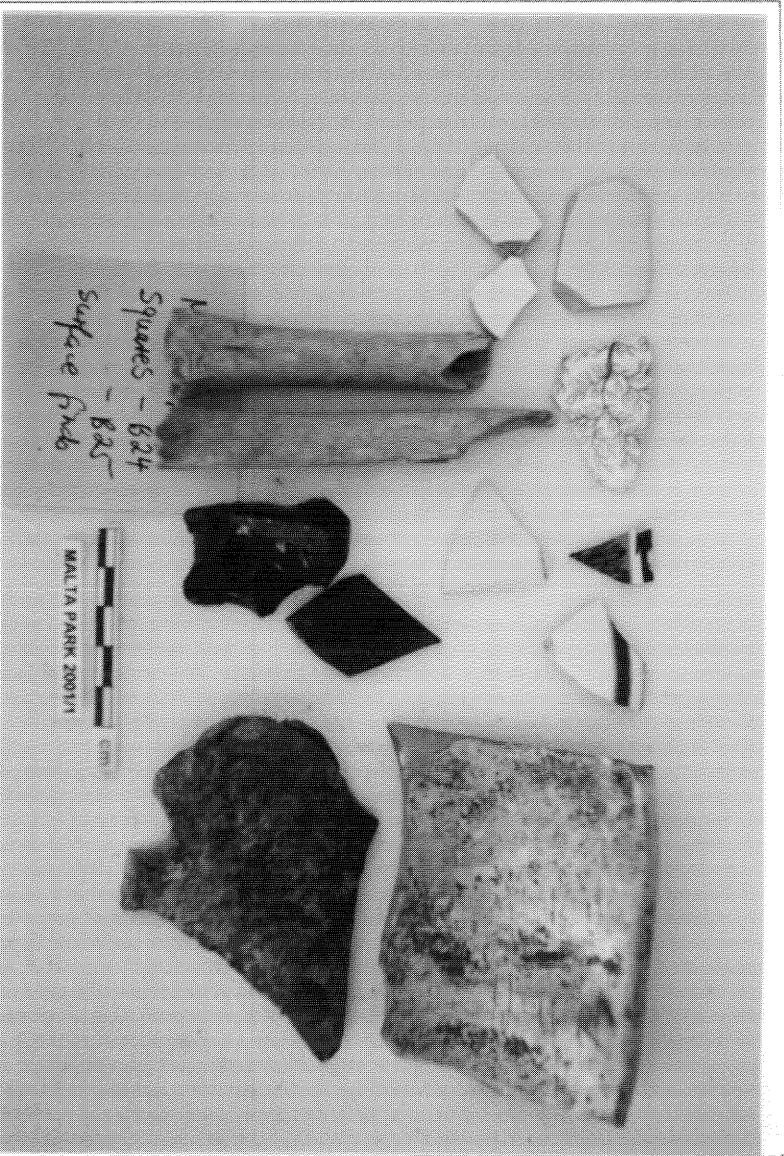


Fig. 28. Top: British, mid 19th century refined ware, top right: earthenware, glazed decorative container, late 19th century, bottom right: British or Continental wine bottle fragments, late 18th / 19th century.

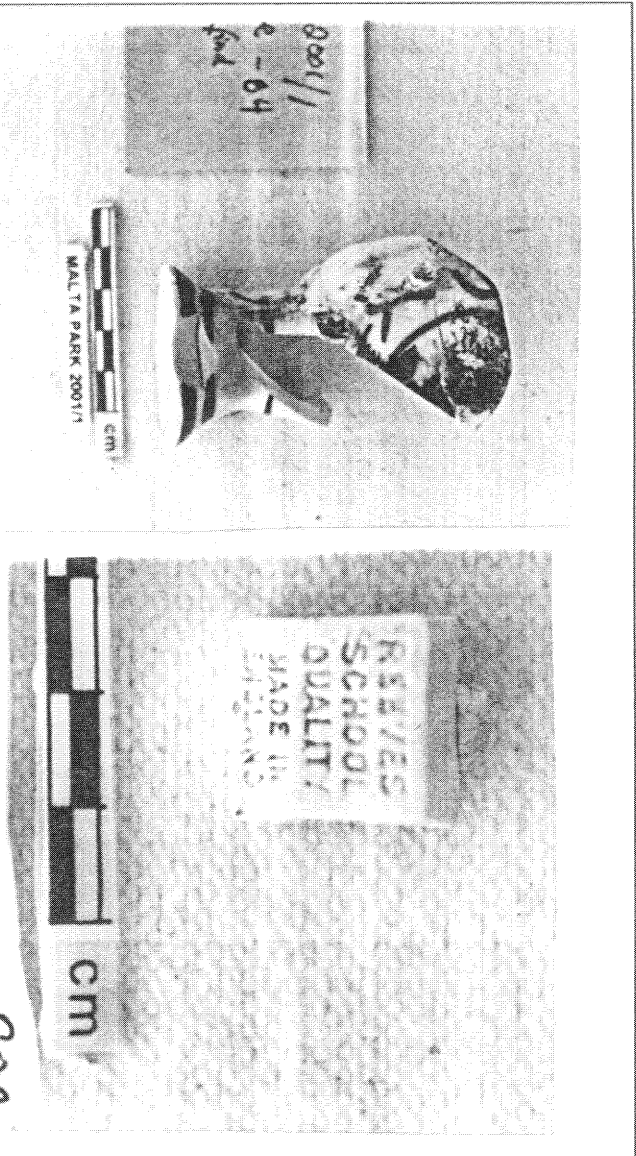


Fig. 29. Left: British porcelain or vitrified china figurine, moulded and painted, probably first third of 19th century. Right: a china tray for watercolour paint; maker: REEVES, SCHOOL QUALITY, MADE IN ENGLAND.

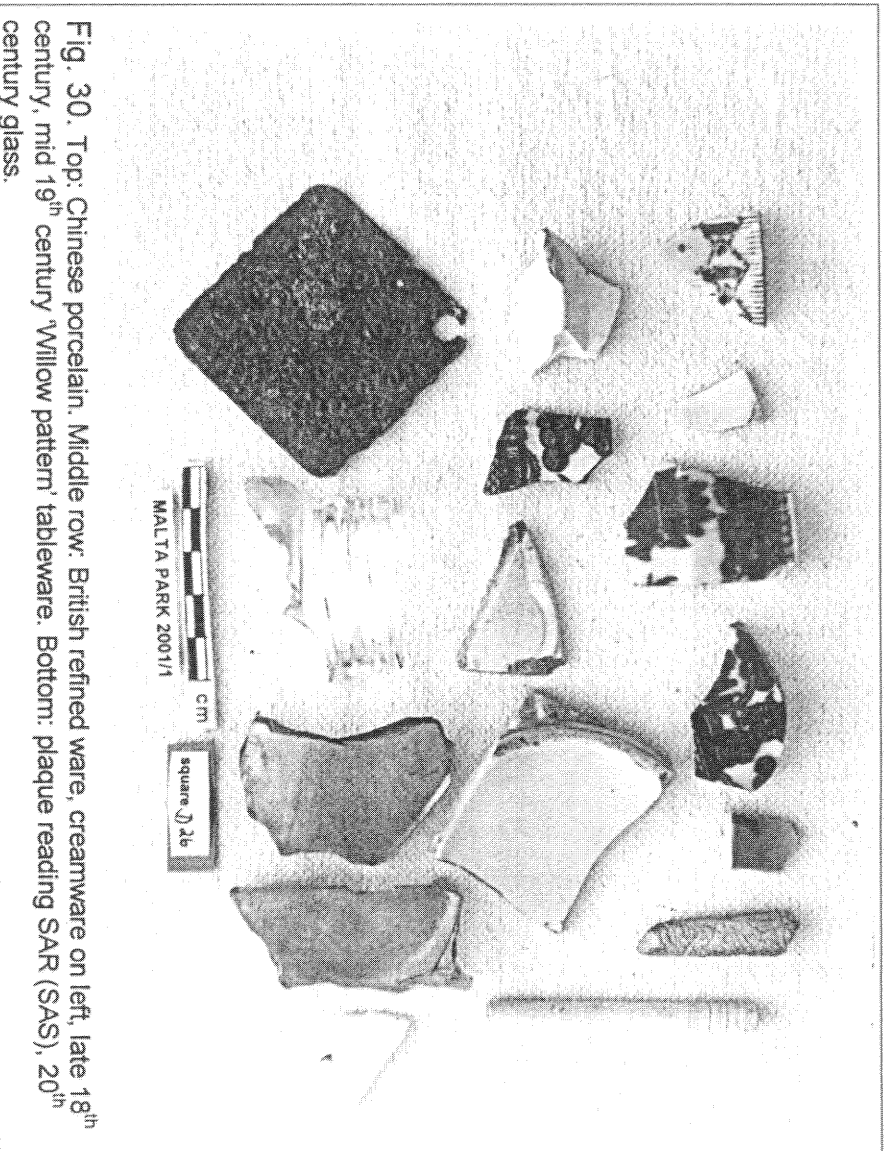


Fig. 30. Top: Chinese porcelain. Middle row: British refined ware, creamware on left, late 18th century, mid 19th century 'Willow pattern' tableware. Bottom: plaque reading SAR (SAS), 20th century glass.

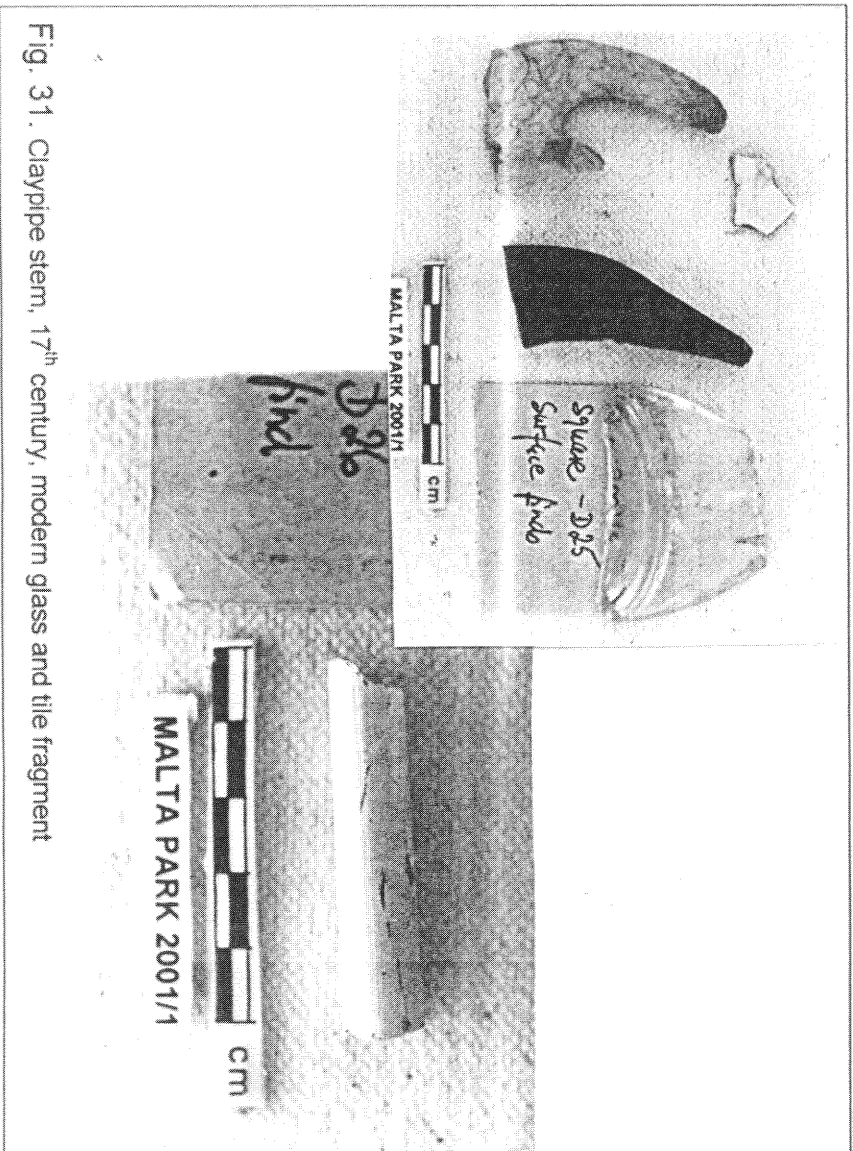


Fig. 31. Claypipe stem, 17th century, modern glass and tile fragment

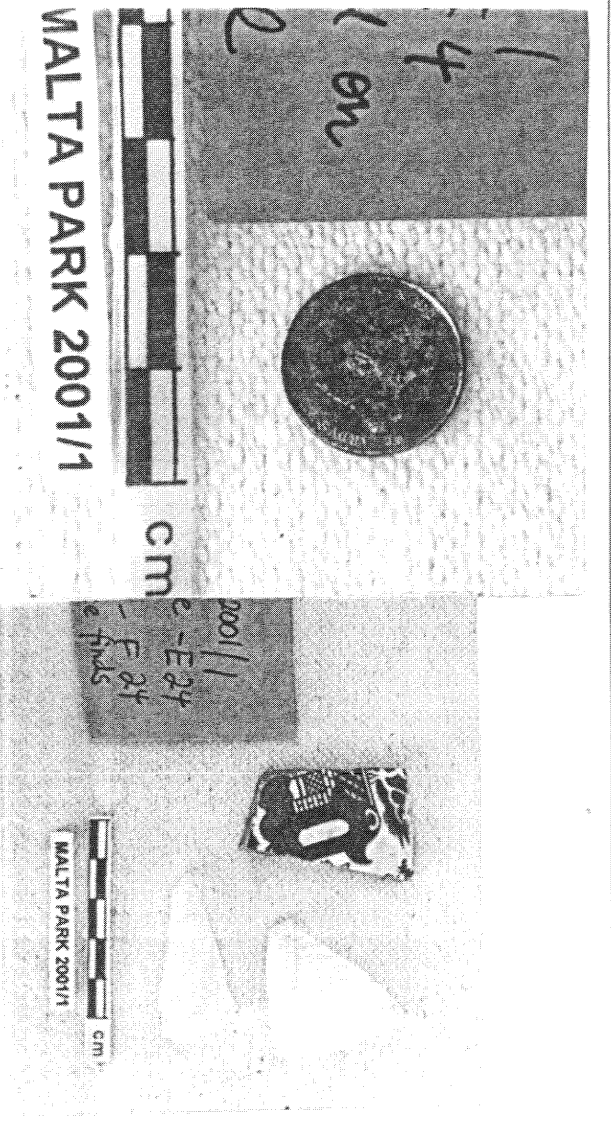


Fig. 32. British coin, dated 1907, found on square –E4, next to eastern perimeter wall with paving. Surface finds south-eastern corner, "Willow ware" and milky lampshade glass, 19th century.

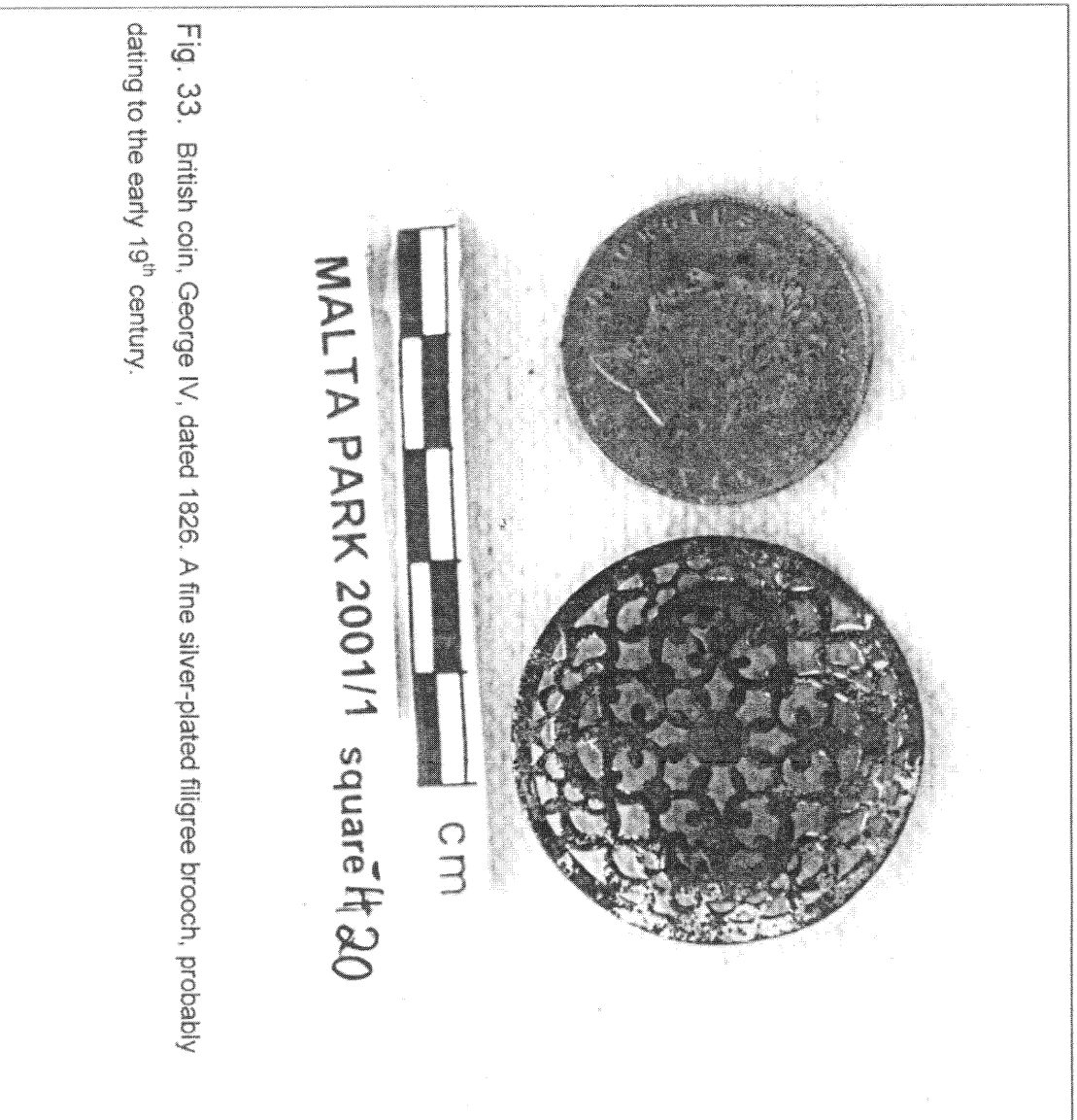


Fig. 33. British coin, George IV, dated 1826. A fine silver-plated filigree brooch, probably dating to the early 19th century.



Fig. 34. A selection 19th and 20th century artefacts, on the left a British wine bottle base fragment, possibly late 18th century.



Fig. 35. Top: British ceramics, refined ware of the 19th century. Bottom left: wine bottle fragments, 18th century, bottom right: 19th / 20th century bottle glass.

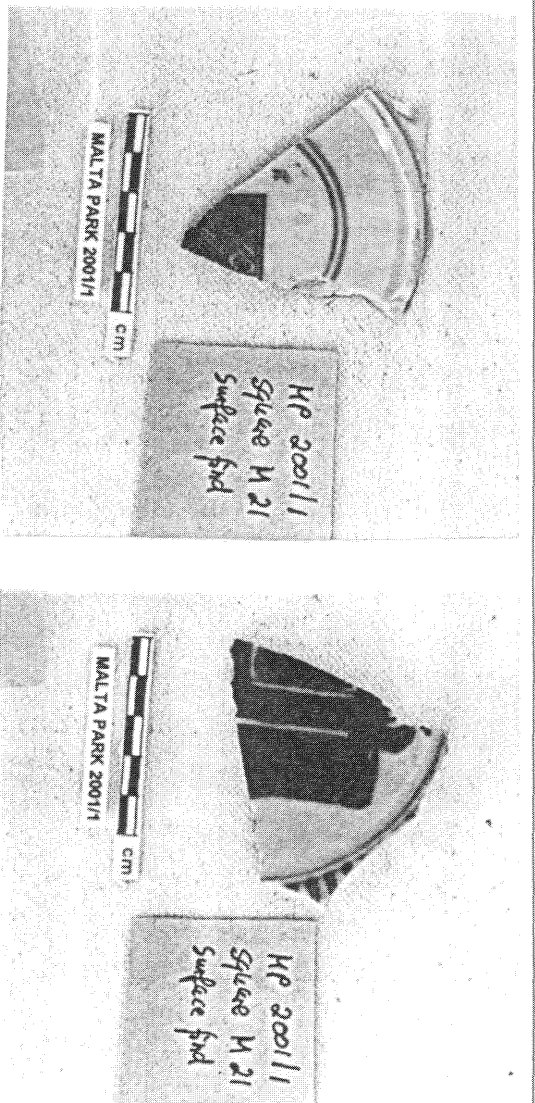


Fig. 36. Chinese export porcelain bowl fragment, with manufacturer's seal and double ring on the base, three ranks of simplified, large, bold Sanskrit characters for Om at the centre of the inside. Dated to ca 1775-1800 (Reference: Klose, J. 1997. 1997. *Analysis of Ceramic Assemblages from four Cape Historical Sites ...* University of Cape Town: Unpublished MSc thesis, page J51.

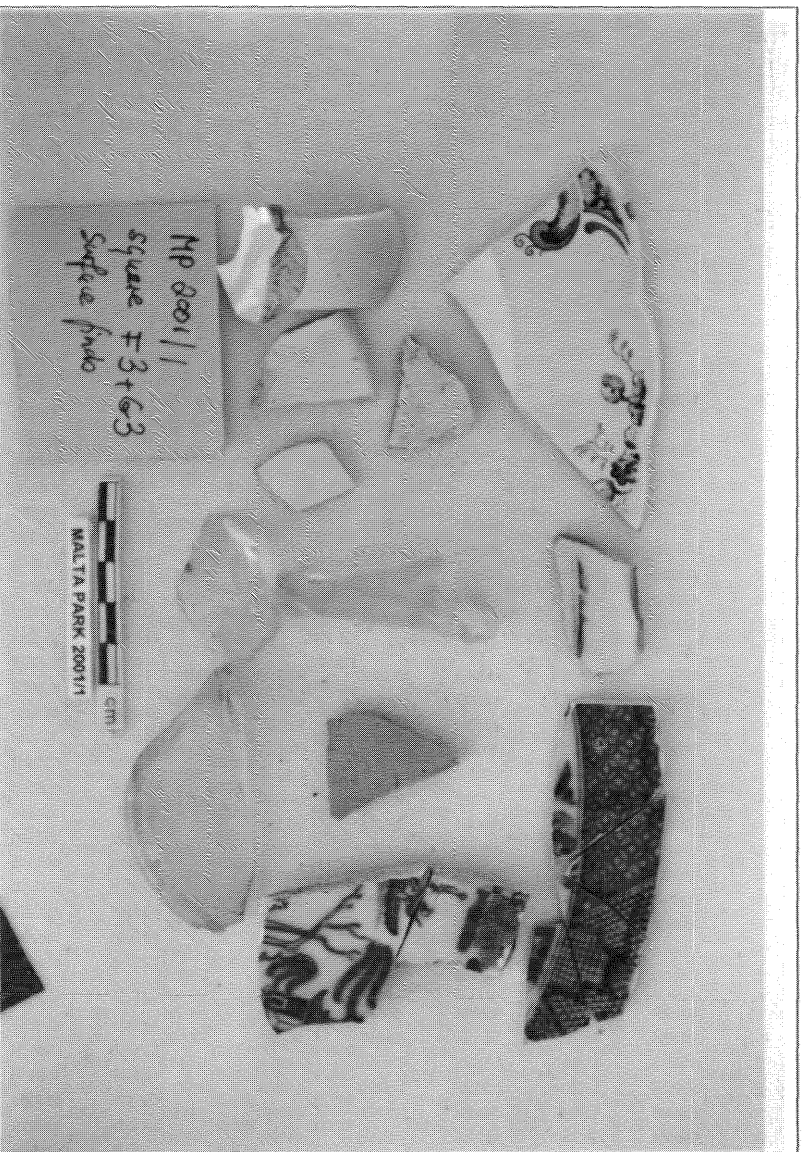


Fig. 37. From the northern perimeter wall. Left: British refined ware, creamware, late 18th century. Top right: white-bodied ware, "Willow pattern", and British salt-glazed stoneware fragment, mid 19th century.

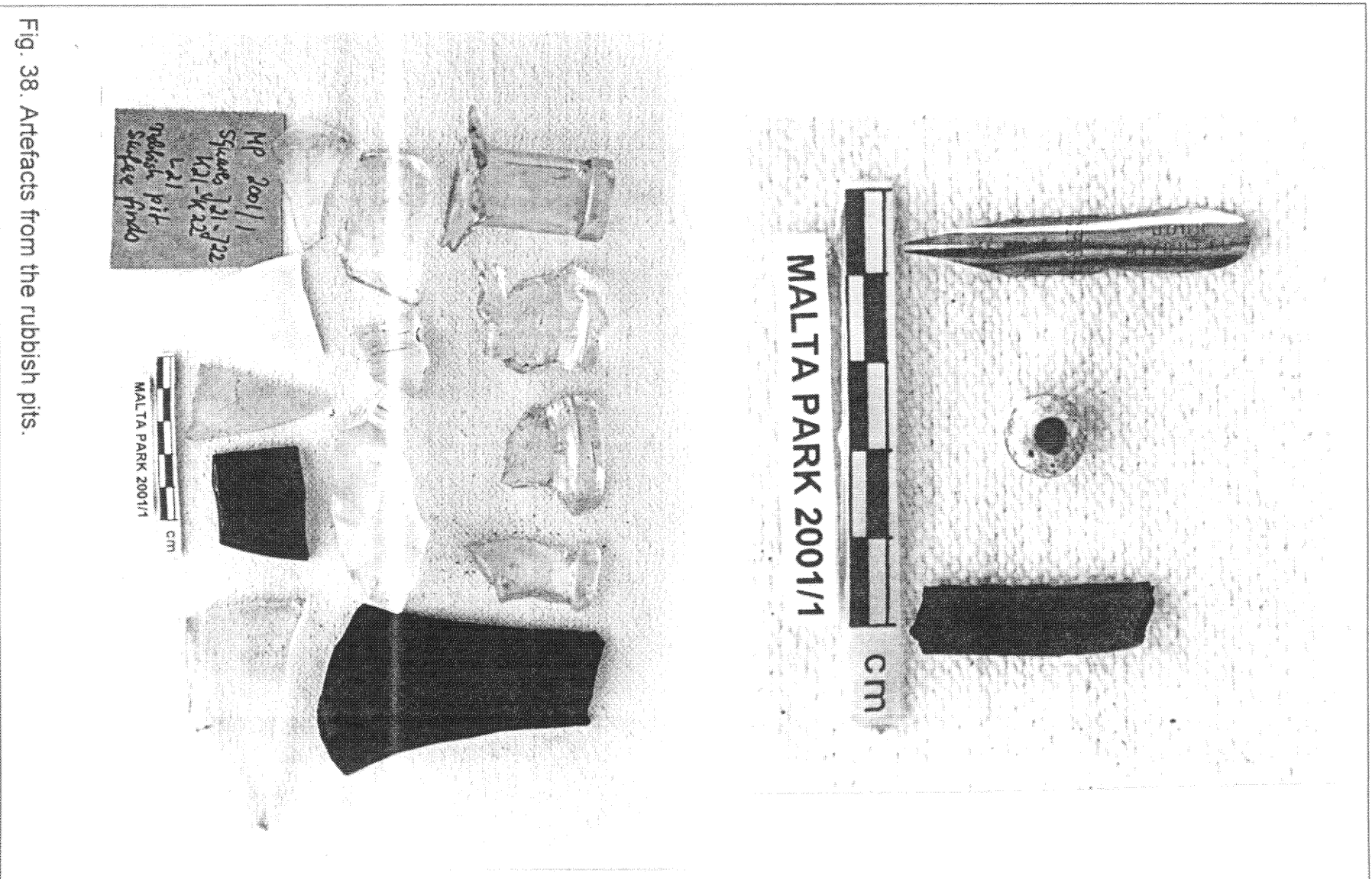


Fig. 38. Artefacts from the rubbish pits.

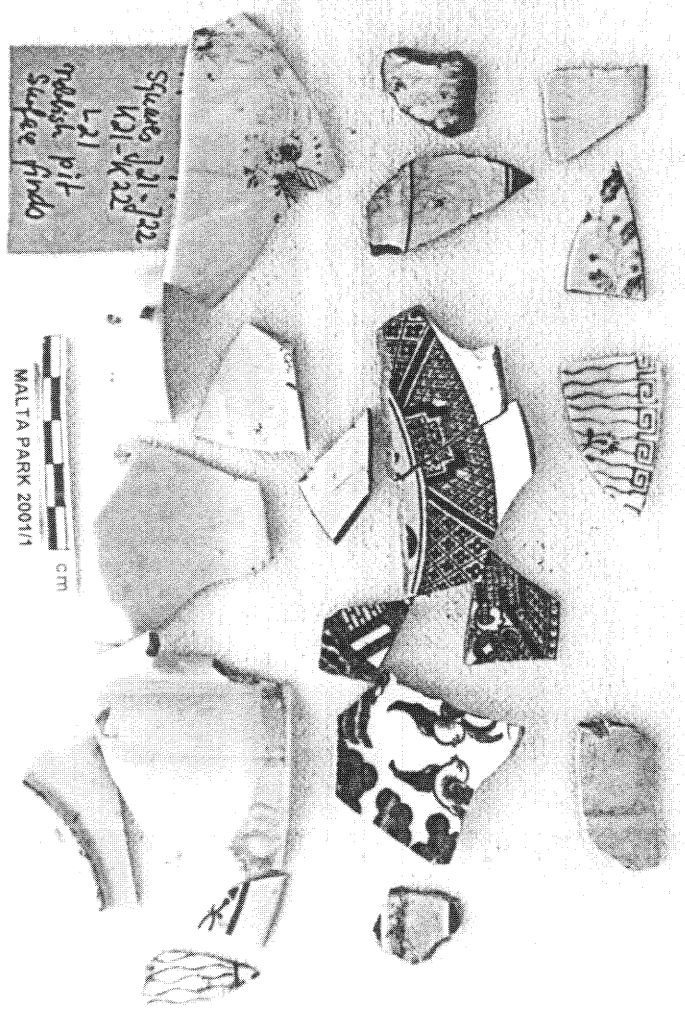


Fig. 39. More artefacts from the rubbish pits.



Fig. 40. A hand-blown base of an approx. 5 litre wine vat, used to be carried in a wicker basket, deep aqua green, pontil scar not finished, dated to the late 18th century.

4. CONCLUSION

The archaeological investigation of the remnant wall structures has shown that an early, possibly eighteenth century farm dwelling with additional outbuildings existed on top of the mount. It appears to have been present in 1786. It is probable that the remaining wall foundations, built on crumbling shale bedrock, are associated with the earliest farm buildings. The 'found' archaeological deposit within the site suggests a late 17th / early 18th century date for the household assemblage to have begun to accumulate.

We were able to "fit" an outline of the north part of the *werft* complex, dating to 1814, within the remaining outline of existing perimeter walls (Fig. 41). The second 'arm' of the L-shaped farmstead complex depicted on Thibault's map of 1814 is represented by paved surfaces and stable or shed wall footage remains. Household rubbish was discarded frequently on the south side of the mount, or buried there in pits.



Fig. 41. Outline of the Varschedrift werft (dated to ca 1860) overlaying the archaeological features excavated in 2001.

The buildings of the werft were probably demolished and/or re-used around 1910 as “Municipal Stables”. In the 1920s a housing estate was erected over the north-east ‘arm’ of the former L-shaped homestead complex. During the 1930s and again in the 1950s concrete platforms for prefabricated huts were erected on the centre of the mount, and by excavating for sewerage pipes and utility cables further destruction of the historical remains was accomplished.

The portable archaeological material, such as ceramics, claypipes, glass, metal objects, beads and the bone fragments fall within the known occupation of the site, i.e. date from the late seventeenth to the twentieth century. However, none of the artefacts are in context, as most of the site is heavily disturbed as detailed in figure 42 below.

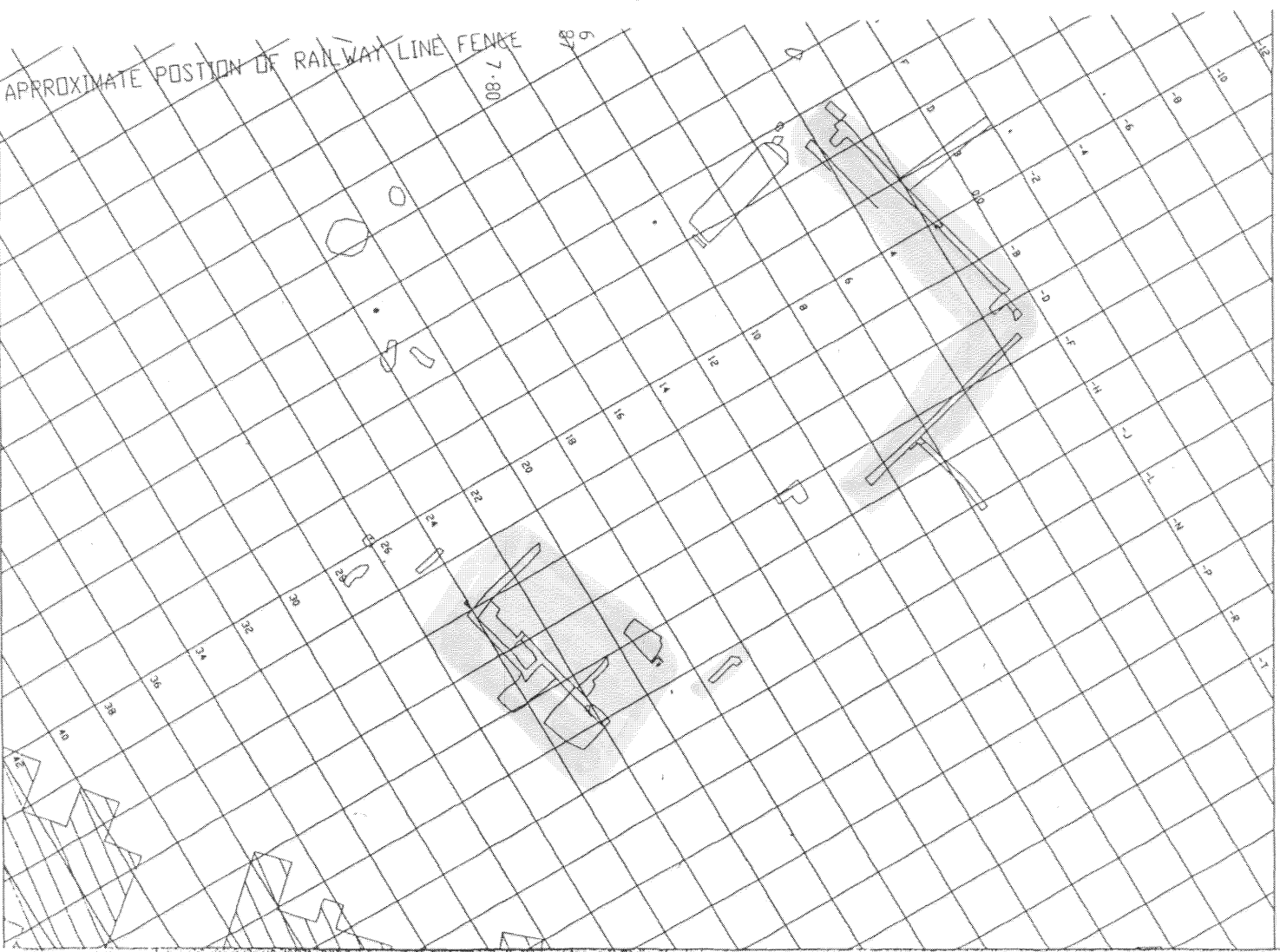


Fig. 42. Remains of the Varschedrift farmhouse. *Conservation* Heavily disturbed areas of the former farmstead complex are highlighted.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it was initially thought that the site of the former Varschedrift farmstead complex had great potential in the context of the early history of the Liesbeeck River settlements, closer archaeological investigation revealed this not to be so. The historical / archaeological potential of the site is limited due to several factors:

- Heavy disturbance of the site by at least three episodes of building activities during the twentieth century, with accompanying excavations for the laying of sewerage pipes, telephone, electricity and other utility cables,
- Shallow deposit - the fragmented shale bedrock was encountered at less than 800 mm from the surface,
- The absence of defined layers of deposit, even in relatively undisturbed areas,
- The very fragmented nature of the artefact material - ceramics and glass are usually less than 20 to 30 mm in diameter,
- The artefactual material, except the north and east perimeter wall remains, is out of context.

If the site is to be developed in the near future the following options for mitigation of the archaeological remains should be explored:

- The historical / archaeological features across the north and north-east perimeter wall precinct can be left *in situ* beneath any future development. This portion of the site can be sealed, built over or landscaped. The revised extent of the sensitive area to be preserved is outlined in figure 42.
- The fact that a portion of the Varschedrift homestead is left to future researchers can be an asset to the development plan and as such acknowledged by a display on a future premise.
- The embankment to the north and east of the mound has been artificially created and has no historical value.
- The remainder of the study area, including the household rubbish pits should be selectively excavated, position and identity of features exposed and recorded. Artefacts to be plotted and removed.

- Any remains of the former homestead complex beyond the mound have been destroyed. However, we would suggest that the demolition of the dwellings on the north-east corner of Nelson Road be supervised by an archaeologist.

* * *

SUMMARY

After careful consideration we would support an application for the release of the site for development with the exception of the north, east and south-east precinct around the existing perimeter wall remains.

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(Dr Ute A Seemann)

20 December 2001

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