

# **PHASE 1 CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED WESTLAKE DEVELOPMENT AREA**

Prepared for

**Ningham Shand  
Consulting Engineers**

May 1998

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was commissioned by Ninhm Shand Consulting Engineers to undertake a preliminary heritage assessment of a portion of land at Westlake, Tokai on the Cape Peninsula. The land in question is due for redevelopment and the structures thereon for demolition. Existing structures on the site consist of several hundred military style buildings and bungalows organised on a north-south grid. Many of these take the form of long barracks, individual quarters, while others consist of administrative structures and "hangars". All of the structures are single storied. Since transfer of the property from the UDF (Union Defense Force) the facility has been subject to alternative civilian use. This includes a hospital, a technical college, a mental home and a mission.

### **1.1 Terms of Reference**

The ACO was asked by the client to provide:

- a) An overview of the existing environment
- b) An assessment of its present and potential conservation status in a local and regional context
- c) Identification of potential risk sources and a description and assessment of the potential impacts from the proposed development including professional judgment as to the probability and significance of the impacts.
- d) Where possible outline mitigation measures that could be applied and an indication of any legal requirements which may be applicable.

### **1.2 Restrictions**

Restrictions to the study were encountered. The most serious restriction is the fact that there is no information locally available concerning the military history of the site. Despite, exhaustive inquiries, no records exist at the Cape Archives, the South African Library, the Simonstown Naval Base or at the Castle. Military personnel that were interviewed had no knowledge of the site and suggested that records with respect to the Westlake facility may be stored at the Military Archives in Pretoria. An inquiry has been lodged with the Military archives in Pretoria and the results are being awaited. It may be possible to obtain oral information through advertising but this is not possible in terms of the time constraints and budget of this study.

## **2. SITE HISTORY**

The study of the history of the site has been extremely difficult owing to the lack of documentary information with respect to the period 1942 - 1944 when most of the buildings were erected. Information regarding the earlier history of the property is available at the Deeds Office, Cape Archives and South African Library. Appendix A contains a detailed report on historic sources consulted for the purpose of this study.

The land that makes up Westlake used to be part of an old quitrent grant made to Johannes Godfried Mocke in 1821. He became insolvent in 1823 and transferred the land to Jan Fredrik Serrurier. The house called "Oude Raapekraal" is considered to be the original farm house by Franzen and Cook (1980) although much modified from its early

19th century form.

By 1941 the land had 15 different owners until it was purchased by the Union of South Africa in 1942. Mystery surrounds the circumstances of this period as there is no reference made to any military facility on contemporary or subsequent deeds. It is clear that measures were taken to ensure that information about the area was not publicly available. Martin and Orpen (1979) state that the UDF (Union Defense Force) took over Westlake for the demobilisation of former prisoners of war and "others". What is also clear is that part of Westlake operated as a military hospital. This and other hospitals (Oribi and Howick) were shut down by the War Office in 1944. An informant who was in the Union Defense Force Entertainment Corps who visited the site during the war years remembers performing "in a large hall full of RAF" who were in transit on their way to the far east. Military personnel who were demobilised after the war were permitted to reside at Westlake with their families until they were able to re-establish themselves.

In 1965 the property was granted from the Government to the Municipality of Cape Town and subsequently to the Divisional Council of the Cape between 1970 and 1976. A topographic survey of the Cape Peninsula (1956-1962) shows the present street plan of the site and indicates the presence of a number of institutions. These include "*Dr A.J. Stals Sanatorium, Ambags Skool, Hospitaal, Tronk and Santa*." During the 1960's Westlake continued to function as a medical facility which included a mental hospital for "coloureds" and the Dr A.J. Stals Memorial Sanatorium - a regional hospital with 500 beds for "non-white" patients.

Westlake, since WW2 has been subject to alternative uses characterised by projects of a low budget social welfare nature. Today many of the barrack type buildings are occupied by homeless people attached to the Ark Mission. The tuberculosis hospital continues to operate.

### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Existing environment**

The existing environment is characterised by streetscapes lined with red brick, pitched roof bungalows and barracks. Vegetation and trees are well established but unkempt. A small number of structures have lost their roofs and become abandoned while some structures are occupied by homeless people. A site inspection has shown that there are areas that were once sports/parade grounds but are now in a state of relative disuse.

The general state of preservation of buildings is good. This is mainly because of the low maintenance design of the buildings which are characterised by unpainted red brick, steel framed windows, pitched corrugated roofs and in some instances, simple porches. The interior of the buildings probably reflect many elements of the original design as it is clear that very little alteration has taken place since 1942 when the facility was built.

#### **3.2 Conservation status**

The structures do not rate highly on aesthetics or architectural merit. This is to be expected considering that they were built for a very specific reason with emphasis on simplicity, utilitarianism and group purpose. The buildings are nevertheless interesting from an

historical point of view in that they reflect South Africa's direct connection with the Second World War and certainly reflect aspects of purpose and function of in their layout. It is unfortunate that so little historical information is available that would illustrate the role of the facility more clearly.

Although these structures are drab and unpleasing, it must be considered that decisions to conserve structures are often based on their aesthetic qualities alone. This has resulted in the all too frequent demolition of structures without due consideration being paid to their social or historical significance. It is acknowledged that structures such as these are difficult to reuse on a profitable basis therefore complete conservation is not advocated as a viable option. However, mitigation measures need to be put in place to off-set the potential loss of "history" which will be one of the major impacts of development of the area.

### **3.3 Potential impacts**

Not all buildings will be demolished, some will be reused within the new development while other exist (in an altered state) at Westlake Technical College and within Pollsmoor Prison grounds. However, a significant negative impact of redevelopment of the area will be the loss of original fabric, original structure and spatial arrangement relating to a place of unrealised historical significance. Positive impacts will occur if suitable mitigation methods are applied. Redevelopment of the site could be used as an opportunity to bring the history of the area to the fore.

### **3.4 Mitigation**

- a) An architectural historian should be commissioned to make an adequate record of a reasonable sample of the different kinds of structures on the site. The recording method should utilise video and photography paying attention to streetscapes, the environment, exteriors and interiors of unaltered structures. The National Monuments Council has indicated that mitigatory measures to this effect will be satisfactory for their purposes.
- b) A further attempt should be made to extend the documented history of the site. This can be achieved by placing advertisements for informants, liaison with the Military Archives in Pretoria, and if needs be, overseas institutions (e.g. International Red Cross).
- c) Should any cemeteries or war graves be found on the site during development activities, their presence should be immediately reported to the National Monuments Council who are custodians of War Graves in South Africa.

### **3.5 Legal requirements**

Most of the buildings on the site are technically protected by the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969 as amended). A permit needs to be applied for and obtained to demolish buildings that are over 50 years old. A copy of this report should accompany the permit application. Members of the National Monuments Council have inspected the site and not consider the structures to be conservation-worthy in architectural terms, however they have requested that as a condition issuing the permit, the structures are recorded. The NMC has requested that the client follow the correct procedures and apply for a permit to demolish structures older than 50 years.

War graves are also protected by the National Monuments Act and may not be disturbed without a permit.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The conservation-worthiness of structures at Westlake in terms of socio-historic importance is difficult to judge without access to adequate background documentation. It is apparent that Westlake was primarily a military transit camp and hospital. Towards the end of the Second World War it was used a demobilisation facility for returning troops and POWS. On aesthetic grounds alone, the structures are not considered conservation-worthy but are interesting in terms of what is known about the history of the site. It is suggested that before demolition takes place, a photographic study of the site is undertaken and a copy of the resulting work lodged with the National Monuments Council and The Cape Archives. In this way, a record is available for future interested and affected parties.

#### **4.1 PROFESSIONAL TEAM**

Principal investigator  
Archival research

Tim Hart  
Dennis Neville

## APPENDIX A

### ARCHIVAL SOURCES, SECONDARY SOURCES AND HISTORIC DETAILS

#### 1. MAPS

##### **Deeds Office**

- 1821 Survey diagram of the farm Raape Kraal  
Cape Quitrents 3:29 (Sg. Dgm. No. 91/1821)  
A good, clear diagram of the original farm showing roads, rivers, farm buildings, and neighbours.

##### **State Archives:**

- 1907 'Steenbergen Water Scheme - Locality plan showing watershed'  
M3/432. On this map, the full extent of the farms 'Raape Kraal' and 'Pollsmoor' are indicated.  
Roads and farm buildings are shown. No sign of military facility.

##### **South African Library - Special Collections Department**

- 1930/31 'City of Cape Town and Environs' (1:7400)  
KS.CPE (1930/31) Surv. Gen. - Sheets 13-14  
On sheets 13 and 14, the farm Raape Kraal is indicated as is the Westlake golf course.
- Several roads and a number of buildings (about 15) are indicated in the area of what became the Westlake camp. The street plan of this region does not as yet match that of the current site.
- 1952 - 1969 'Cape Town and Environs' (1:12500)  
KS.CPE (1952-1969) Surv. Gen. - Sheet 11 (W3)  
Sheet 11 of this map is very similar to that indicated above, and indeed was simply an updated version of the 1930 map. No 'military camp' is indicated thereon.
- 1958 - 1962 'Topographic Survey - Cape Peninsula/Noordhoek/Muizenberg' (1:18000)  
KS.CPE (1958-1962) Trig. Survey - Sheet 2  
Indicates the present street plan of the site and labels 'Dr. Stals Sanatorium', 'Ambags School' 'Hospital', 'Tronk', 'S.A.N.T.A.' etc. Rows and a few of these buildings indicated.
- 1963 Topographical Map - 1:50000 (2nd ed.)  
3418AB and AD  
Shows basic street plan as on KS.CPE (1958-1962)
- 1981 Topographical Map - 1:50000 (4th ed.)  
3418AB and AD  
Shows basic street plan with some buildings.

#### 2. Photographs

Searches have been conducted at both the South African library and the Cape Archives for photographs relating to this military base. Neither institution has any. The Military Library at the Castle and the SA Navy museum has also failed to produce any information.

### 3. Deeds Office Information

Below is a schedule of deeds transfers outlining the History of Raape Kraal.

Raape Kraal  
 Farm no. 919, Steenbergen District  
 Extent: 1491m 300sr

1 CQ.3:29 (1.09.1821)	Whole	1491m 300sr	Grant	Johan Godfried Mocke
2 T137 (5.03.1824)	ptn	209m 523 sr	J.F. Serrivier	Johan Heinrich Muller
3 T216 (22.03.1833)	ptn	5m 200sr	H.V.D. Poll	Justus Schwgel
4 T76 (3.10.1856)	ptn	14m 22.5sr	H.V.D. Poll	James Melville
5 T423 (26.02.1859)	ptn	63m 443sr	H.V.D. Poll	Johannes Jacobus Pool
6 T15 (1.02.1862)	Pollsmaar	323m 492.22sr	H.V.D. Poll	Hendrik van der Poll
7 T76 (11.10.1869)	ptn	63m 480sr	J.C. Sem	Jan Willen Eksteen
8 T77 (11.10.1869)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	G.J.C. Sem	Harriet Brown
9 T329 (16.12.1873)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	H. Brown	H.F.E. Gerrigts
10 T406 (20.06.1879)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	H. Gerrigts	Edward Anthony Dolman
11 T2057 (29.03.1917)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	E.A. Dolman	D.F. Hendrikse
12 T4981 (28.05.1925)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	Est. D.F. Hendrikse	Catherine H. Hendrikse
13 T7099 (22.11.1932)	Rem.	810m 536sr 93.5sf	Est. C.H. Hendrikse	Henry Stephen Hendrikse
14 T2785 (31.03.1936)	Lot W,L,G,C	55.3689m	H.S. Hendrikse	Westlake Gold Club
15 T5370 (18.06.1936)	Rem.	755.5255m	H.S. Hendrikse	Union Dominion Trust Ltd.
16 T8201 (p.3) (18.08.1941)	Rem.	755.5255m	Union Dominion Trust Ltd.	Arthur Octavius Edward
17 T12361 (p.3)(21.10.1942)	Rem.	755.5255m	A.O. Edwards	Govt. of the Union of S.A.
18 Grt 89/65 (28.06.1965)	ptn 75	620.4490m	Grant	Municip. of the City of C.T
19 Grt 115/704 (4.08.1970)	ptn 91	1024sm	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape
20 T7403 (p.3) (19.03.1976)	erf 4790	16048 ha	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape
21 T7403 (p.4) (19.03.1976)	erf 4792	9.5921 ha	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape
22 T7403 (p.5) (19.03.1976)	erf 4791	1.7420 ha	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape
23 T7403 (p.6) (19.03.1976)	erf 5895	6.9959 ha	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape
24 T7403 (p.7) (19.03.1976)	erf 5894	1.8959 ha	Grant	Div. Council of the Cape

From these title deeds, it seems that the Government brought a portion of the farm in 1942. Although there are several deeds from 1942 and onwards, none of them had an annexed diagram or any indication of a military base.

Key transfer deeds exist for 1821 and 1942:

TD:	Cape Quitrents 3:29 (01.09.1821)
Next TD:	None given
Prev. TD:	Grant
Erf:	919
Name:	'Rapekraal'
Extent:	1407m 'aan de Steenbergen'
Diagram:	Sg.Dgm. no. 91/1821
Price:	76 ryksdaalders
From:	Grant
To:	Johan Godfried Mocke
Neighbours:	NW - small piece of Govt. land and land of Donnough EW - Keizers Riviertjie, De Zand Valley & land of Mulder SW - Land of Mulder and Govt. round W - A. Smith and land of Rossouw

TD:	T12361 (p.3), 21.10.1942
Next TD:	None given
Prev. TD:	T8201 (p.3), 18.08.1941
Erf:	919
Name:	'Rapekraal'
Extent:	755.5255m
Diagram:	none
Price:	88 000 pounds sterling for this and seven other pieces of land
From:	Arthur Octavius Edward
To:	The Government of the Union of South Africa
Neighbours:	none given

#### **4. Other References to Westlake**

Fransen, H. & Cook, M. 1980. *The Old Buildings of the Cape*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema.

##### **Oude Raapkraal**

[p.123] "Westlake Road - In 1821 a large quitrent grant was made to Johannes Godfried Mocke; this was the old loan-place Raape Kraal, nearly 1500 morgen, together with over 84 morgen of additional erfpaagt land. In 1823 Mocke, who had become insolvent, transferred it all to Jan Fredrik Serrurier. The house now called 'Oude Raapkraal' is probably the original homestead on this farm; it is u-shaped, but is difficult to date because few old features survive. Some sash windows may date from Serrurier's time. The roof is now of iron, all gables have been clipped and there are some later additions including a stoep room with modern gable."

Martin, H.J. & Orpen, N.D. 1979. *South Africa at War*. Cape Town: Purnell.

No other references to the Westlake military base other than what follows:

[p.300] "By 6 April [1944] the War Office had agreed to shut down the Oribi, Westlake and Howick hospitals which had about 2800 beds altogether."

[p.333] "... But authority had been given for the UDF [Union Defence Force] to take over Westlake in the Cape Peninsula, where many former POW's and others were subsequently demobilized."

Potgieter, D.J. (ed.) 1971. *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*. Vol.3 (Cal-Deu). Cape Town: Nasou Ltd.

##### **The Cape Division**

[p.30] "... It [the Cape Division] controls all Bantu affairs in its area outside the Cape Town municipality except in Milnerton, Pinelands, Fish Hoek and Simonstown ... It administers a combined health scheme ... The scheme is headed by a medical officer of health, assisted by ten other doctors and a staff of 500. The large tuberculosis hospital at Westlake, the Dr. A.J. Stals Memorial Sanatorium - a regional hospital with 500 beds for non-white patients - forms part of the system. ..."

Potgieter, D.J. (ed.) 1972. *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*. Vol.5 (For-Hun). Cape Town: Nassou Ltd.

##### **Hospitals**

[p.598] "... The central government controls hospitals for mental patients ... There are also four institutions for the feeble-minded: Alexandra in Cape Town, Umgeni Waterfall in Howick, Witrand at Potchefstroom for whites and Westlake in Retreat for coloureds, accomodating a total of 3138 whites and 815 non-whites ..."

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