

'Sillery Furrow'

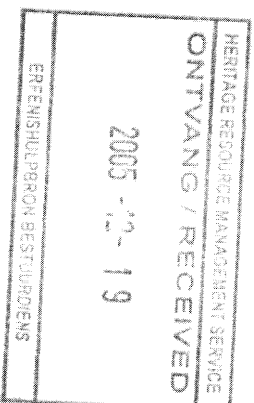
Erf 2274, Constantia

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Report Prepared for Doug Jeffrey Environmental Consultants

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Executive Summary

Cape Archaeological Survey was approached to confirm the alignment of the historical furrow (leiwater) at Sillery, Erf 2274, Constantia. This furrow was identified during the course of an Environmental Impact Assessment as having historical significance. Two test excavations were dug, in addition to the one made by the Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) in January 2004. These excavations confirmed that the furrow runs along the northern edge of the erf and is closely associated with a row of oak trees. The furrow is an informal earth ditch.

Background information

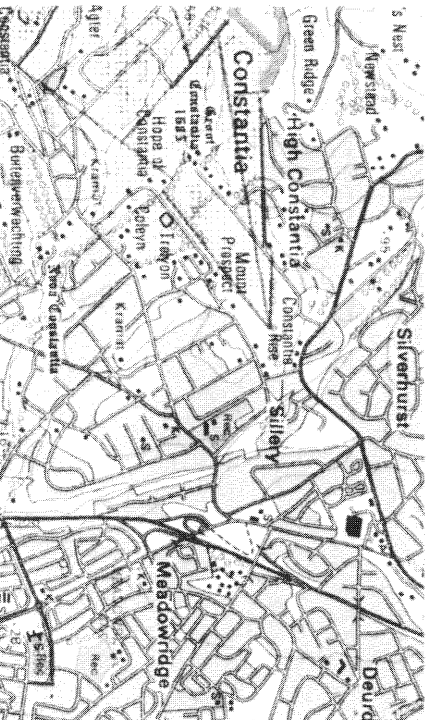


Figure 1: Locality plan showing the position of Sillery (1:50 000 3418AB & AD Cape Peninsula)

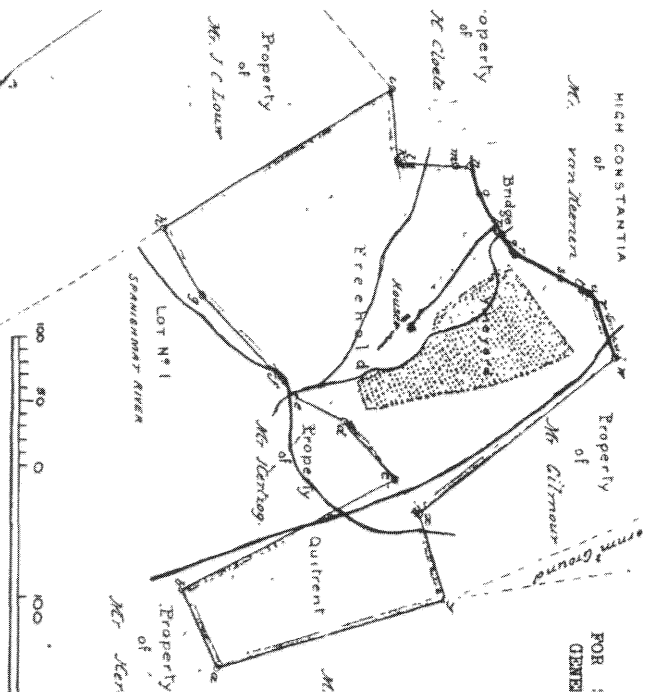


Figure 2: Survey diagram 272/1880

Sillery has its roots in the early Constantia farms of Bergvleit and Witteboom. In 1716, JS van Reenen applied for and was granted a portion of quitrent land, which together with the portions of land from the above mentioned farms, formed the farm, Sillery. In 1880, it was re-granted to William George Bronger and measured 120 morgen and 252 square roods. This re-grant was essentially a consolidation, as Bronger had purchased the various component parts of Sillery between 1869 and 1873 (Figure 2).

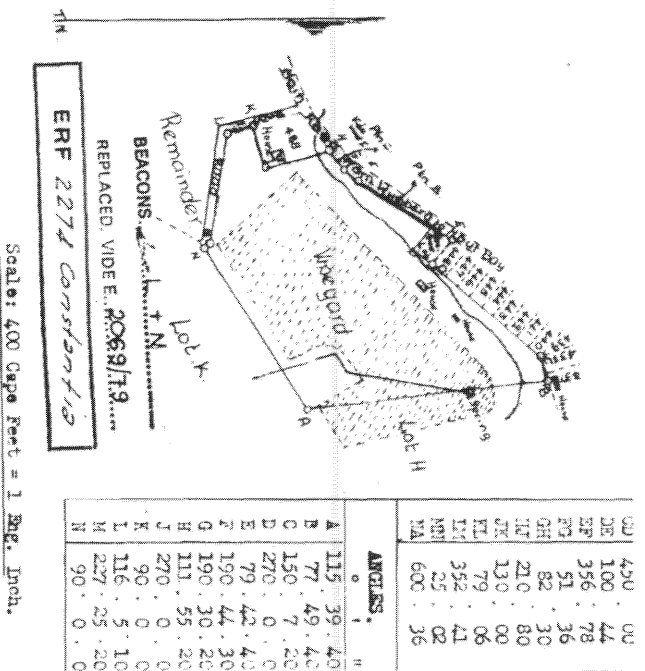


Figure 3: Survey diagram 4200/1902

In June 1902 Sillery was subdivided and sold by public auction. Until this point, Sillery was owned and farmed by Gottwald Albrecht, who died at his home, Sillery on 9 December 1901 (MOOC 6/9/41). Advertisements for its sale were placed, amongst others, in the *Wynberg Times* and the *Peninsula Herald*. Erf 2274 was purchased by Doet Sadien (Figure 3), special conditions attached to the transfer include that the slit (furrow) from the spring should remain unchanged and that the owner of Lot K should have free access to it (TD 13429, 12/12/1902) (Baumann & Winter 2003).

Methodology

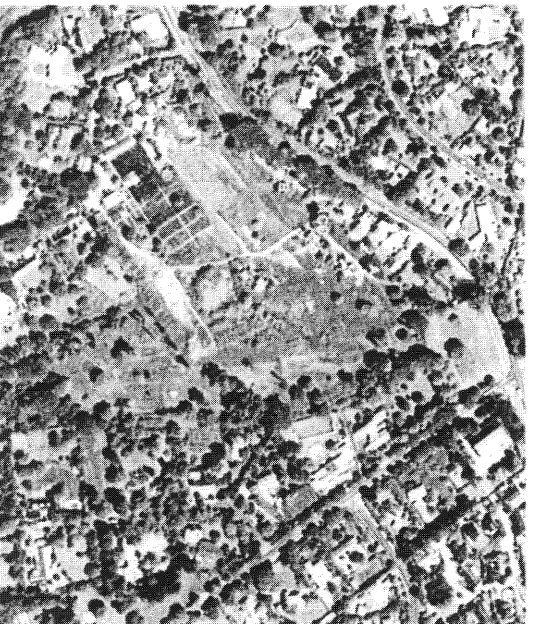


Figure 4: Aerial photograph showing position of the test trenches.

A trial excavation by ACO (Orton & Hart 2004) confirmed that the furrow was still extant, but was filled with 20th century building rubble and debris. Our brief was to confirm the alignment of the furrow through two additional trial excavations. The area along the northern boundary was investigated by foot. The trial excavations were placed as close to midway between the ACO trial excavation and the ends of the furrow as were possible (Figure 4). A steep embankment to the west of trial excavation B effectively obscured the furrow. No oak trees have been preserved along this embankment.

Excavation

The trial excavations were dug with the help of Mark Smith and Grenville Williams, two men who grew up and lived in the labourers' cottages on Sillery.

Test Trench A: (A in Figure 4)

Test trench A was situated midway between the ACO test trench and the known edge of the furrow. An area 1.3m wide, from the foot of the embankment to the foot path, was cleared. The vegetation was removed as well as the loose modern garbage and rubble which lay on the surface. A test trench 50-60cm wide was then dug across the area where the furrow was estimated to be.

In the northern part of the test trench, the soil was dark and silty and full of modern rubbish; plastic bags, bottles, blankets, a part of a mattress and a 1964 ½ cent coin. Underneath this dark soil, was a red compacted clay. The furrow at this point, formed a rather shallow ditch (Figure 5 and 6). The ACO test trench was covered with a lot more building rubble. The furrow may have appeared more V-shaped owing to the build up of the soil and rubble around it. Mark Smith remembered, as a child, walking in the furrow during summer, when there was little water in it. His recollection was that the furrow was quite shallow near their houses, but deeper towards the Lady's Mile Extension and the Old Sillery farmhouse.

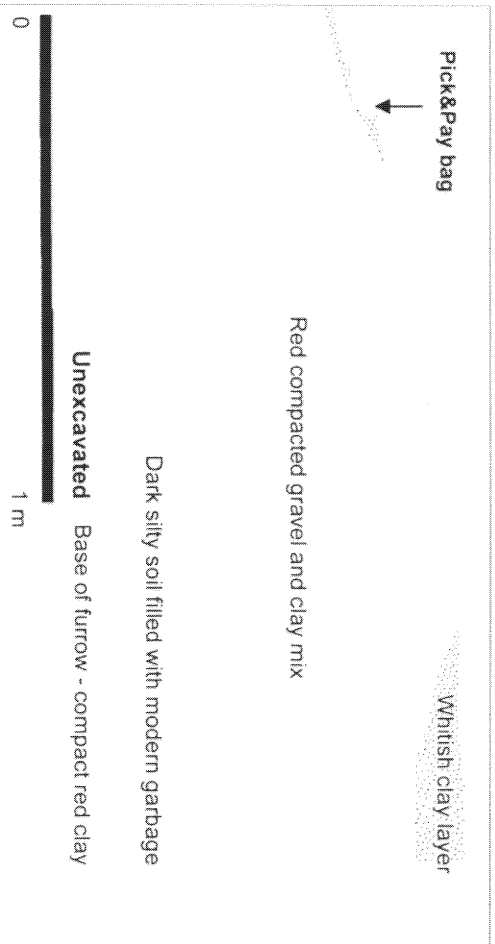


Figure 5: Western section of a portion of Test trench ~~B~~ A. (The straight line through the centre of the sketch is the line level.)

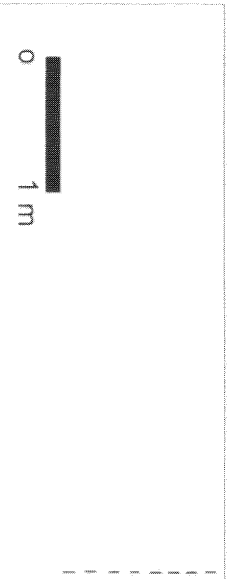


Figure 6: East-west profile of the furrow at Test trench A. The straight line is the line level.



Plate 1: View across test trench, looking northward. The yellow clay at the bottom of the plate is the furrow embankment.

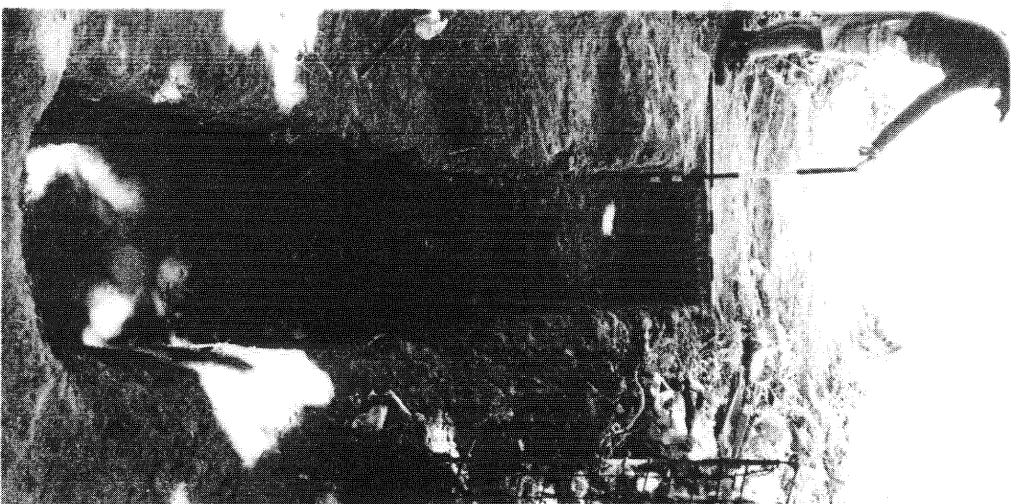


Plate 2: View across test trench, looking southward.

Test Trench B: (B in Figure 4)

An area just south of the oak tree was cleared of vegetation and loose building rubble. A test trench 50cm wide was then dug. Underneath the loose rubble was a reddish orange clay layer about 10 cm thick. Immediately below this was a whitish pink clay layer. Below these clay layers was a reddish sandy layer about 20 cm thick. Directly beneath it was a yellow silt layer which was only present in the northern edge of the trench closest to the tree, representing the middle of the furrow. The furrow embankment presented as a hard reddish layer of very dry, but fine grained soil. The base of the furrow, underneath the yellow sandy silt, was formed by a hard compact yellow very fine grained soil, again, very dry (Figure 7 and 8).

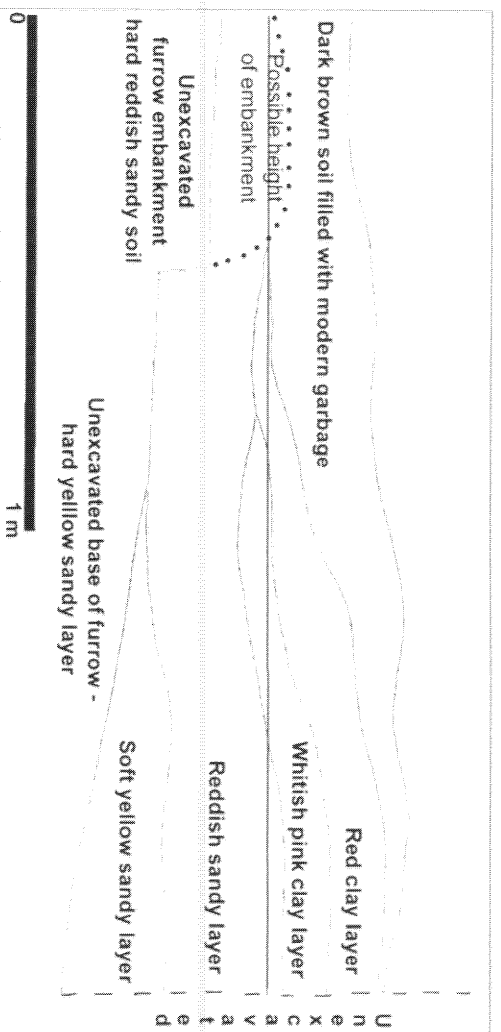


Figure 7: Western section of Test trench B. (The straight line through the centre of the sketch is the line level.)

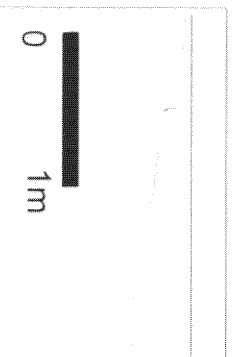


Figure 8: East-west profile of the excavated portion of the furrow at Test trench B. The straight line is the line level.

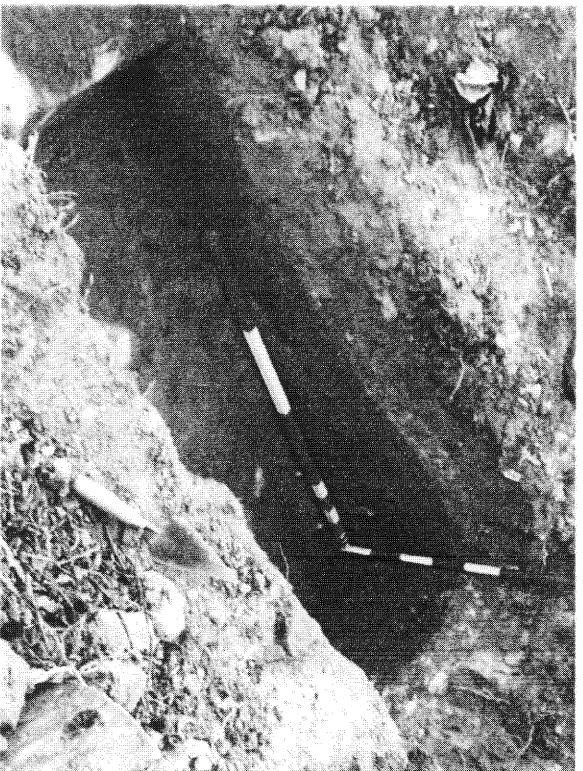


Plate 3: View of the test trench. The furrow embankment is visible on the bottom left of the plate.

Conclusions

This report supports the findings of the ACO report (Orton & Hart 2004) that the furrow is an 'unspectacular structure and fairly informal'. The furrow would have been more visible when in use, as men would have had to regularly dig out the silt, which would then be deposited on the embankments.

The furrow lies close to the northern boundary of the erf and the oak trees are growing virtually on the northern edge of the furrow. Figure 9 (detail from the Development Proposals Figure 8.1) shows the location of the test trenches and confirms that the dashed line described on the original as the 'approximate alignment of the furrow', is indeed an accurate reflection of the alignment of the furrow.

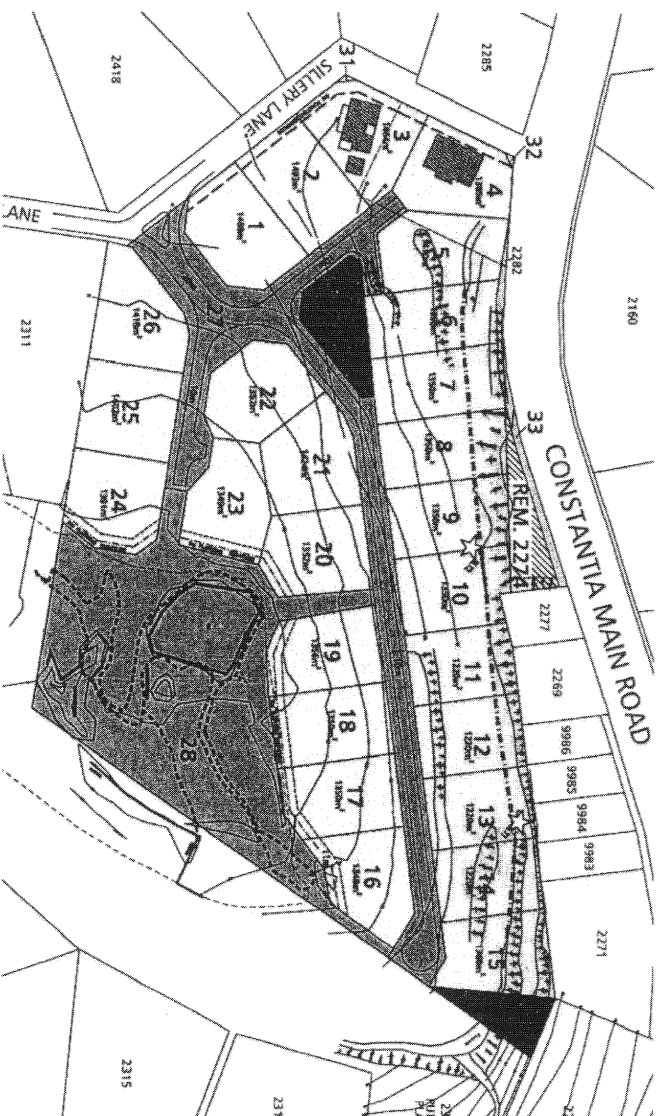


Figure 9: The white stars indicate the position of the two test trenches (Figure 8.1: Development proposals - Proposed Subdivision of Erven 2274 & 2286 Silery, Constantia 2004)

Following the recommendation by the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Sport and Recreation, relating to the EIA for the proposed subdivision of Erven 2274 and 2286 (Stali 2005), it has been agreed that a servitude should be registered over the furrow and that it be provisionally protected under the National Heritage Act (25 of 1999).

- Alignment confirmed

References

- Mark Smith 2005 Personal Communication
- Baumann, N & Winter, S 2003. Heritage component of an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed rezoning and subdivision for Sillery, Erf 2274, Constantia. Unpublished report
- Orton, J & Hart, T 2004. Trial excavation to examine state of historic furrow (leiwater) at Erf 2274, Sillery, Constantia, South Western Cape Province. Unpublished Report prepared for Doug Jeffrey Environmental Consultants.
- Stall, ZC Letter dated 25 April 2005. Ref K9: RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION OF ERVEN 2274 AND 2286, CONSTANTIA: SILLERY ESTATE

Acknowledgments

Field crew: Grenville Williams and Mark Smith.