

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF A GROUND
FLOOR ROOM (AN OLD COURTYARD) AT 72 & 72a
KEEROM STREET, CAPE TOWN.**

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

Renovations to the two storey building at 72 and 72a Keerom Street, Cape Town (Erf.9794) required that a limited archaeological excavation be conducted in a small room (formerly a courtyard) towards the back of no. 72a (Figure 1). Our brief required that we test the ground prior to the construction of a new drainage system below the floor of that room. Although our brief did not include an analysis of the historical buildings on the site, these buildings are considered briefly below as they help place the archaeological deposit in an historical context. The discussion of these buildings which follows is, however, inconclusive as it is based primarily on documentary evidence, rather than on a structural investigation which was beyond the scope of this brief.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Numbers 72 & 72a Keerom Street are a pair of two storey dwellings which had been extensively renovated prior to 1997.¹ An analysis of the history of the two dwellings provides a basis for not only understanding the nature of the present buildings, but is also useful in providing a context for the archaeological material (artefacts) recovered in the test excavation.

The land on which 72 & 72a Keerom Street now stand originally formed part of a larger plot extending between the present Queen Vidona and Long Streets along the length of the Company gardens (Figure 2).² Archival records indicate that Wouter Cornelis Mostert was the first to gain ownership of this land, as early as 1664.³

By the eighteenth century, this piece of land had already been subdivided and a map⁴ dating to 1755 illustrates that the property was now included in a smaller piece of ground labeled 'Thuyn van Jacob Kloppenburg' ('Garden of Jacob Kloppenburg') (Figure 3).

The land at 72 & 72a Keerom Street was at that date probably utilised as part of a produce garden for the V.O.C. refreshment station. A map from 1767 labelled that section of land as 'Gardens belonging to private individuals'.⁵ By 1785 the garden previously owned by Kloppenburg was being labelled the 'Thuyn van Biele' ['Garden of Biele].⁶ Lourens Biel had arrived from Eisenach, Saxony (Germany) at the Cape in 1740 as a soldier.⁷ In 1742 he married Rachel Kloppenburg, the daughter of Jacob Kloppenburg.⁸ This garden is clearly illustrated on a map⁹ dating from a year later (see Figure 4) and by now it is clear that the layout of the gardens was starting to correspond to the present street grid. Although no buildings were as yet depicted, the position of what became numbers 72 & 72a can now be pin-pointed.

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the centre of Cape Town was largely built up, with residences and businesses taking the place of many open plots of

¹ Rennie, J, 1978. The Buildings of Central Cape Town. Vol. 2 - Catalogue. Cape Town: Cape Provincial Institute of Architects.

² South African Library (SAL) KCA.CT. 1705 -'Cap De Bonne Esperance' (c1705)

³ SAL CT.KC 1660/1703

⁴ UCT HARG (Historical Archaeology Research Group) MAPS - 'Planen Caart Van't Vlekaan Caap' by C.D. Wentzel. (c1755)

⁵ SAL CT 1767/1929

⁶ SAL CT.1785

⁷ Pema, C. 1966. GesJagreq7sfers van die ou Kaspse families, Cape Town.

⁸ Heese 8 Lombard 1986

⁹ SAL KCA. Cr. 1786 -'The Castle and the Town' by Van de Graati; Thibauh & Barbier (178G)

ground. This is evident on a map drawn by P.G. Elemans¹⁰ in 1819 (Figure 5) which indicates that Keerom Street was built up as far as the present Green Street (i.e. the unmarked street crossing Keerom Street furthest from Table Bay). A dwelling, apparently associated with the garden extending behind it, is depicted as lying at the end of Keerom Street. Accepting the accuracy of the map, the present location of 72 and 72a Keerom Street would correspond approximately with the top, right-hand corner of the boundary of the yard containing the house. This bounded yard and the garden extending behind it were apparently all owned by one owner and named 'Overbeil' according to transfer deeds.¹¹ No other information pertaining to the origin of the name is however forthcoming.

Late in 1819, according to a diagram annexed to a transfer deed,¹² this larger piece of land was subdivided although all the subdivisions were only sold off gradually. The subdivision on which 72 & 72a Keerom Street were located was finally sold in February 1862, from when the property passed from one owner to another. These owners are summarised in Table 1 below. Then, a "certain lot of ground with building thereon marked as Lot B situated in Cape Town, at the Upper end of Keerom Street, being part of Lot 1, of the subdivided property called 'Overbeil' " was transferred from the Estate of the late Alate Andries Kirsten to John Warren Glynn.¹³ Glynn paid £250 for the property which then comprised 12 square rods and 97 square feet. The extent of Lot B and its position relative to neighboring properties is illustrated in Figure 6. Although John Glynn owned the property, he seems to have rented it out to others, as a Cape of Good Hope Directory entry for 1873¹⁴ lists his occupation as a clerk and his residence as 'Glynnville Lodge' in Hope Street. By 1885, the Cape of Good Hope Directory¹⁵ was listing J. W. Glynn as a 'coal merchant' residing in Roeland Street. Whether this was the older J.W. Glynn, or his younger son who bore the same name is unclear.

2.1. THE BUILDINGS ON THE PROPERTY PRIOR TO 1860

The precise date when the first buildings began to appear on the present site of 72 & 72a Keerom Street is unclear. A survey done by Snow dating to about 1862 (Figure 7) indicates that the building on the Keerom Street property was evidently not as large as it is at present. The architectural design shown for nos. 72 & 72a in the Snow survey clearly demonstrates that only part of the structure presently on the property predates 1860. This older portion of the structure is illustrated in Figure 8, where the architectural design in the Snow survey has been superimposed over the late twentieth century design.

These pre-1860 buildings were evidently built along the edge of the property line illustrated in the 1819 map (Figure 5). Indeed, the fabric of the ceiling of the ground floor of no. 72a Keerom Street (the shaded area in Figure 8) is indicative of fabric found in buildings dating to late in the eighteenth or early in the nineteenth century. A portion of this old ceiling is shown in Plate 1. It thus seems that part of no. 72a was originally a storeroom, wagon house or barn associated with the dwelling illustrated on the map in Figure 5. This small storeroom seems to have originally extended all the way across no. 72a to the thick wall adjacent to the more recently built staircase although the yellow-wood beams of this ceiling which still exist only extend across the shaded area in

¹⁰ UCT HARG MAPS -'Kaat van de Kaapstad' by P.G, Elemans (1819)

¹¹ Deeds Office (DO) Transfer Deed (TD) 279, 24/12/1853

¹² DO TD249, 6/08/1819

¹³ DO TD 13, 1/02/1862

¹⁴ SAL Cape of Good Hope Directory (1873)

¹⁵ SAL Cape of Good Hope Directory (1885)

Figure 8. The oddly shaped wall at the end of this staircase may have been a corner of this older room. The wall that cuts across the middle of no. 72a on the Snow survey is no longer discernible, although the existence of a buttress at the very place indicated by the Snow survey does indicate that it existed. Whether this room ever extended all the way to Keerom Street is unclear, although such a scenario is likely. In addition, it seems that no. 72a never extended any further back than the shaded area, as, until the present renovations, some of this area still formed a small courtyard. Indeed, the area beyond the old ceiling was still designated as an open space (a courtyard) as late as 1956 according to an insurance survey done by Goad¹⁶ (Figure 9).

Generally, the outside walls designated on the Snow survey can be readily identified on the modern building as they are much thicker than other walls. Precisely when the other parts of the building illustrated on the Snow survey were built is unclear, although the existence of stone walling in several places (Plate 2) do point to a relatively early date. Sections of this stone-walling were revealed when plaster was removed during renovations. It seems possible that the elongated section of the building (in the Snow survey) was built first along the property line indicated in the 1819 map (Figure 5). This building probably housed labourers working in the adjacent house or gardens, and a possible doorway is indicated in Figure 8. The extension closest to Keerom street was possibly built sometime towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

2.2. OWNERSHIP HISTORY INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The remainder of the rooms not indicated in the Snow survey were no doubt built after 1860, and it seems that the second floor of no. 72 was only added after this date. John Rennie¹⁷ in his study of central Cape Town noted that nos. 72 & 72a were only visible as a single storey in the Pocock Panorama (c1884).¹⁸ The current facade, with the central passage and staircase, therefore date to within the Victorian era. Some of these later alterations were possibly made by John Warren Glynn (senior), who died early in 1894, and 72 & 72a were transferred by his Estate to his son John Warren Glynn (junior) in February that year.¹⁹ The property only remained in the tatters hands for two months before being transferred back to his fathers estate in April 1894.²⁰ In June 1894, the property was finally sold to a Mohamed Taleb for £255.²¹ Juta's Directory of Cape Town for 1905²² listed Taleb or a relative going by the name of Emaum Hadji Talip, as the occupant of no. 72 Keerom Street. As early as 1899, Talip had been mistakenly listed by the same directory²³ as residing at no. 75 Keerom Street. By November 1914, Taleb had gone insolvent and his property was hence sold, this time to Henry John Charles Stephan for the sum of £675.²⁴ This price is noteworthy as it had increased substantially since J.W. Glynn paid £250 and M. Taleb paid £255 for the property. The increased price might be representative of an increase in the size of the building situated on that property. The later alterations to the property, including the upper storey, could date to the period of Taleb's ownership. Little

¹⁶ SAL Goad's Insurance Plan 1956:25(379)

¹⁷ Rennie, J. 1978. *The Buildings of Central Cape Town*. Vol. 2 - Catalogue. Cape Town: Cape Provincial Institute of Architects

¹⁸ " This photograph, which offers a panoramic view of the city of Cape Town, provides very little other information.

¹⁹ DO TD514, 5/02/1894

²⁰ DO TD1678, 9/04/1894

²¹ DO TD3086, 12/06/1894

²² SAL Juta's Directory of Cape Town (1905)

²³ SAL Juta's Directory of Cape Town (1899)

²⁴ DO TD9698, 18/11/1914

over a year later, Jassar Mohamed Saadien brought the property²⁵ and he resided there for four years. In March 1919, Saadien sold the house to Suleman Ally Mahomed.²⁶

Cornelius Adrianus Coetzee paid £1250 for nos. 72 & 72a Keerom Street when he brought the property ten months into 1920.²⁷ Two years later, H.R. Stuart, J.G. Kotze and A.A.W. Dichmont, as Trustees of the Stakesby Lewis Hostels paid £1500 for the property.²⁸ The 'Foundation Principles' of the Hostels (annexed to the deed of transfer) stated that the object of the institution was "To provide in Christian, temperance, undenominational homes, free from the many temptations of city life, clean and safe lodgings for respectable Coloured People and Civilized Natives, preferably members of churches and visitors to Cape Town. References required." A second objective was "To assist churches, temperance societies and Christian workers to extend Christ's Kingdom by spreading Gospel, total abstinence and prohibition truths."²⁹ In 1923 another directory³⁰ listed the occupants of no. 72 Keerom Street as 'Coloured'. Under the management of Stakesby Lewis Hostels, nos. 72 & 72a were known as the 'Schreiner Memorial Home'.³¹ An insurance Plan by Goad³² for the same year illustrates the architecture of the buildings at that date (see Figure 11), It is clear that by this date the space behind no. 72a was still an open courtyard. In 1937 the property was again sold, this time to Lawrence's Estates (S.A.) Ltd.³³

A little over two years later, Lloyds R Company (S.A.) Ltd., a retailer of agricultural machinery and implements,³⁴ bought numbers 72 and 72a Keerom Street.³⁵ The building was possibly used as a warehouse or offices, although the company's headquarters was in Burg Street, Cape Town.³⁶ Tobias Jochelson, a grocery merchant,³⁷ bought the land in 1947³⁸ and at his death his relative Astor Samuel Jochelson held ownership of the property.³⁹ Shortly thereafter, in June 1957, Keerom Properties (Pty) Ltd. bought nos. 72 & 72a from Jochelson.⁴⁰ In 1969, the property again passed hands, this time to Vredenburg Lane Properties (Pty) Ltd.,⁴¹ and in 1977 Michael James Calder took ownership⁴² and used the building as offices for his architectural firm. Michael Calder retained ownership of the property until the present owners, Keerom Property Trust, bought the land.

The courtyard behind 72a Keerom Street has therefore formed an integral part of the property for some time and it was therefore deemed essential to carry out a test excavation in this area

²⁵ DO TD7750, 29/11/1915

²⁶ DO TD2486, 28/03/1919

²⁷ DO TD4847, 20/10/1920

²⁸ DO TD2419, 23/03/1922

²⁹ Document annexed to DO TD2419, 23/03/1922

³⁰ SAL Doneldson 8 Braby's Cape Directory (1923)

³¹ Anon. 1937.

³² SAL Goad Insurance Plans 193725(379)

³³ DO TD8001, 3/07/1937

³⁴ SAL Cape Town Cape Peninsula Directory (1946)

³⁵ DO TD13557, 12/12/1939

³⁶ SAL Cape Town Cape Peninsula Directory (1946)

³⁷ ibid

³⁸ DO TO 1932, 7102/1947

³⁹ DO TD2005, 21/02/1957

⁴⁰ DO TD844416, 21/06/1957

⁴¹ DO TD17978/3, 10/07/1969

⁴² DO TO 18320, 25/07/1977

3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

The historic nature of the courtyard at the back of 72a Keerom Street necessitated an archaeological test excavation to ascertain the extent and nature of material of historical interest which had been deposited there through time. Upon investigation, it was discovered that a concrete slab existed over the entire floor of the courtyard. Although two toilets and other small walls evident on the measured drawing (Figure 1) of the courtyard had since been demolished, it was evident that the foundations of these walls extended below the surface, as did several water and sewerage pipes. As any archaeological deposit below the toilets was bound to have been seriously disturbed by their construction, a decision was made to excavate in the adjacent area, that is in the small area between the two toilets and the back wall of no. 72a, where it was hoped disturbance had not been as great (Figure 10). The contractors had already uncovered a large drain junction in part of this area and it was later ascertained that pipes from this junction extended under the foundations of the old toilets, confirming the disturbed state of the ground there.

Test excavation was thus limited to a small section of the courtyard between the old toilet foundations and the drain junction (see Figure 10). The concrete slab was removed and the deposit below was excavated. The deposit consisted mainly of rubble and plaster between which small amounts of bone, ceramics, glass and metal were recovered. These are detailed below. No stratigraphic layers could be identified and it was clear that this deposit had also been extensively disturbed. Several pipes criss-crossed the section being excavated and a large drain pipe crossed the corner of the excavation and extended deep into the deposit (to a depth of 65an). The disturbed nature of this deposit is illustrated in Plates 3 and 4.

The test pit was excavated to a depth of one meter below ground level until hard packed clay, lying above harder shales, was reached. As no artefacts were recovered below a depth of 60 centimeters and because of the nature of the deposit below that, it was decided to halt excavations at that point.

4. FINDINGS

In the course of the excavation, only minimal artefactual material was recovered. Some conclusions can however be made regarding the nature of the deposit excavated at 72a Keerom Street. Information relating to these findings is detailed below:

4.1. CERAMICS

Eleven ceramic pieces were recovered from the excavation, all of which were in a rather fragmentary condition. These eleven pieces are described below:

- A fragment of blue-and-white Chinese export ware, evidently part of a large dish.
- A fragment of refined English pearlware, hand-painted in blue was also part of a dish.
- A fragment of debased scratch blue stoneware, possibly part of a chamber pot.
- A small fragment of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from an unidentified vessel.
- A fragment of cream coloured ware, the rim of a chamber pot.
- Six small fragments of cream coloured ware.

All of these ceramic pieces date to between the late eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century (between approximately AD. 1780 and 1825).

4.2. GLASS

Eight glass fragments were recovered.

- A fragment of dark green glass from a cylindrical wine/beer bottle - dating to the late eighteenth century.
- A fragment of dark green glass from a cylindrical wine/beer bottle - dating to the early nineteenth century.
- A fragment of clear glass, apparently from a bottle that contained mineral water - dating to between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.
- Two fragments of window glass - of unknown date.
- Three unidentifiable fragments of glass.

The glass recovered from 72a Keerom Street therefore dates to approximately the same range as the ceramics discussed above - to roughly between AD. 1780 and 1825.

4.3. METAL

Several metal artefacts were also found during the course of the excavation. These included two handles (shaped like chest or coffin handles); two miscellaneous nails; one piece of metal strapping and five miscellaneous pieces of metal, too rusted for recognition.

4.4. BONE

A small quantity of bone was recovered from both the test excavation and from a small hole dug in the adjacent room. Although this bone is very fragmented, they are clearly the remains of large mammals, including sheep, cattle and possibly also a horse. Beef and mutton were therefore being eaten, although there is no evidence of cut marks on these artefacts. A small piece of ostrich egg shell was also recovered, indicating that ostrich eggs also possibly formed (even a minimal) part of the diet.

The archaeological material recovered from the courtyard in 72a Keerom Street, although minimal in quantity, clearly originated from between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (to approximately AD. 1780 - 1825). Insufficient material together with the poor context make it difficult to come to any other conclusions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The buildings currently undergoing renovation at 72 & 72a Keerom Street therefore have a long and rather complicated history. The core of the building - part of no. 72a and the back portion of no. 72 - probably date back to at least the end of the eighteenth century. The upper storeys and the other rooms, including the present street facade, were progressively added through time. The present facade and present layout were therefore probably in place early in the twentieth century. The closed courtyard in which the test excavation took place was part of a slightly larger courtyard until at least 1956, after which renovations and additions to no. 72a, decreased its size. Insufficient information is available to make any concrete conclusions regarding the building sequence at 72 & 72a Keerom Street. The poor context and small quantity of archaeological material recovered presents a similar scenario, although it is clear that rubbish was being dumped in the vicinity of the courtyard at the turn of the eighteenth century.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEAM

Excavation and report Dennis Neville
Principal investigators Dave Halkett Tim Hart

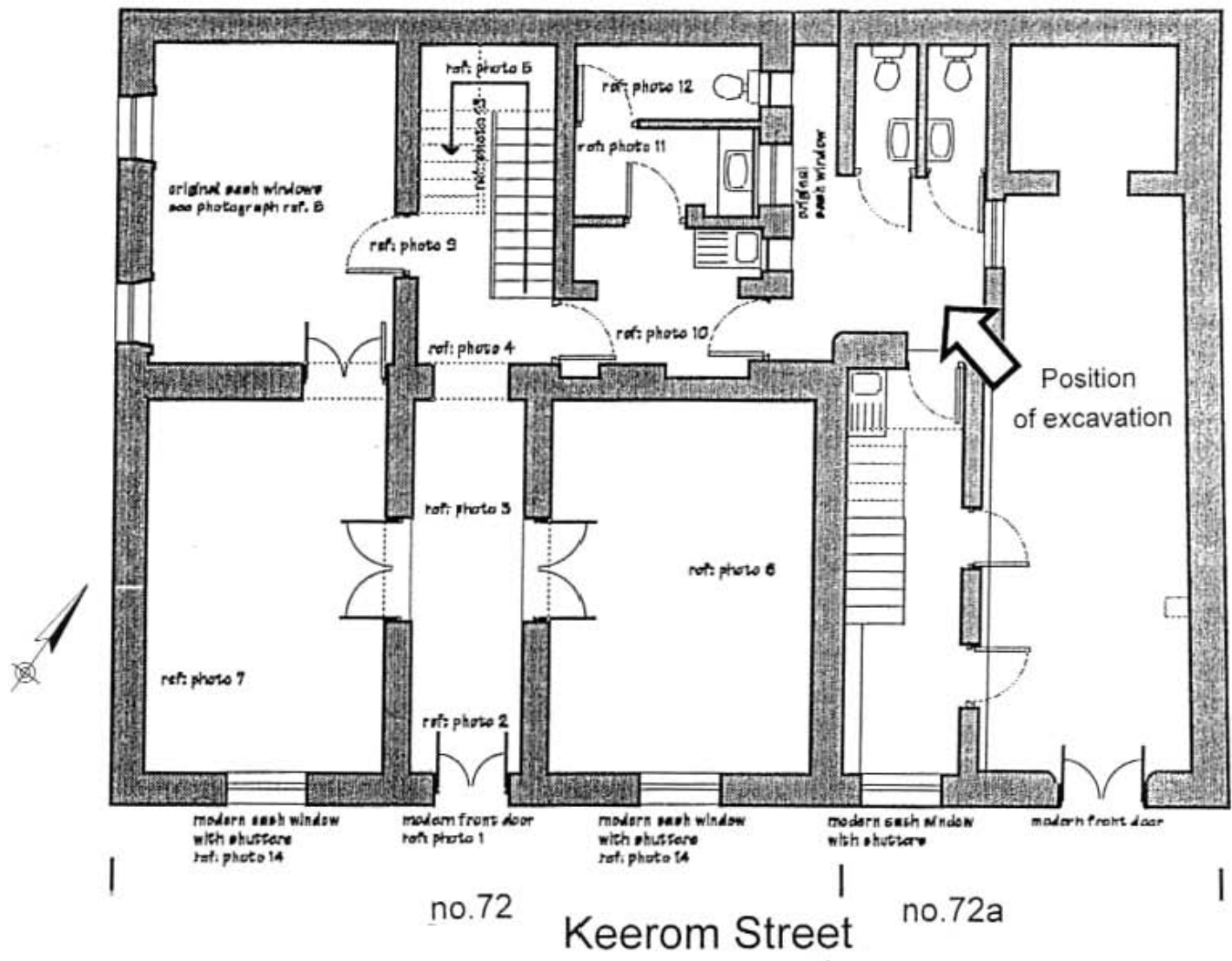


Figure 1: Architects plan of 72 & 72a Keerom Street before the start of alterations and renovations (courtesy of Horne Lutz Architects).



Figure 2: Illustration of Table Mountain and early Cape Town (c. 1705), indicating the Company Gardens (F). The arrow points to the approximate position of the land on which 72 & 72a Keerom Street now stand.

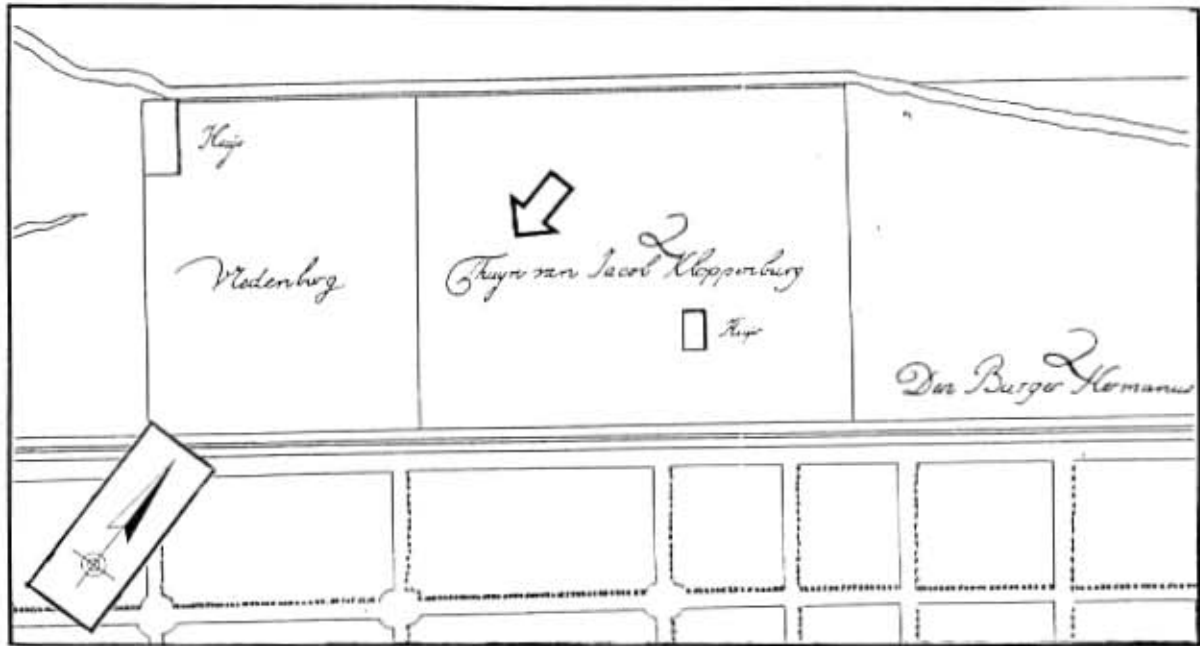


Figure 3: Map dating to 1755 indicating the 'Thuyt van Jacob Kloppenburg' alongside the Company Gardens (at base of map). The approximate position of 72 & 72a is indicated by the arrow.

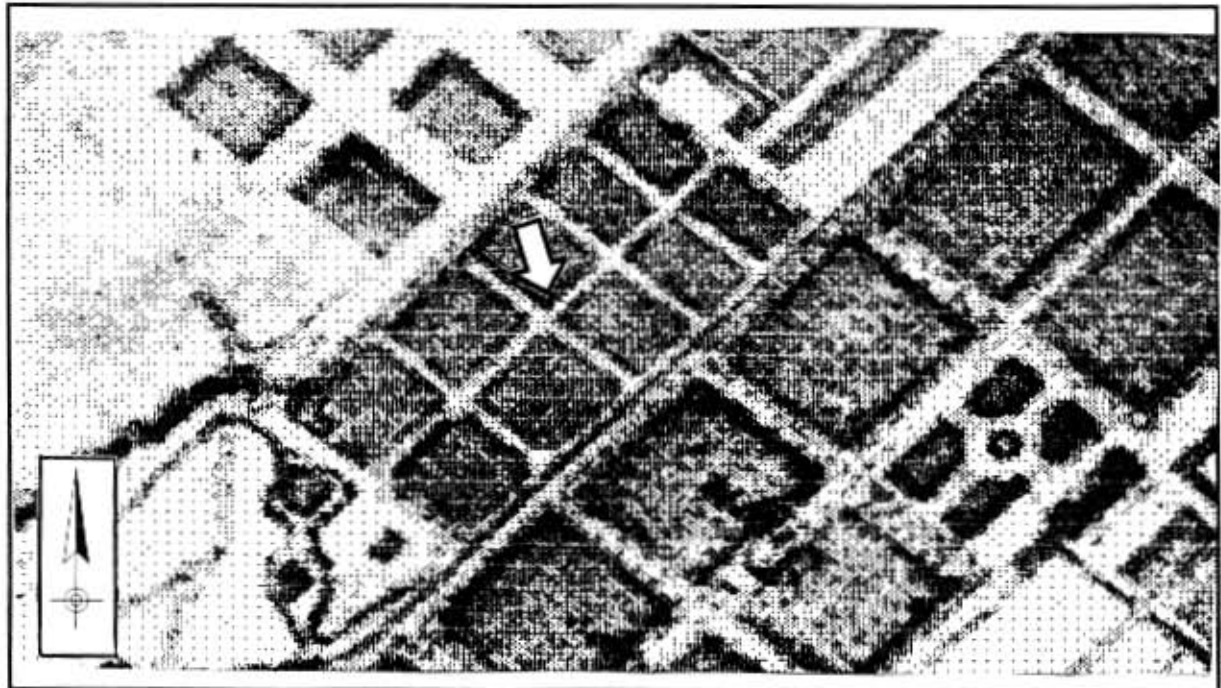


Figure 4: Portion of a map dating to 1786 illustrating the approximate position of nos. 72 & 72a Keerom Street. The street blocks that are darker in colour were evidently gardens, while the lighter ones at the top of the picture, were built up street blocks (Map courtesy of the SA Library).

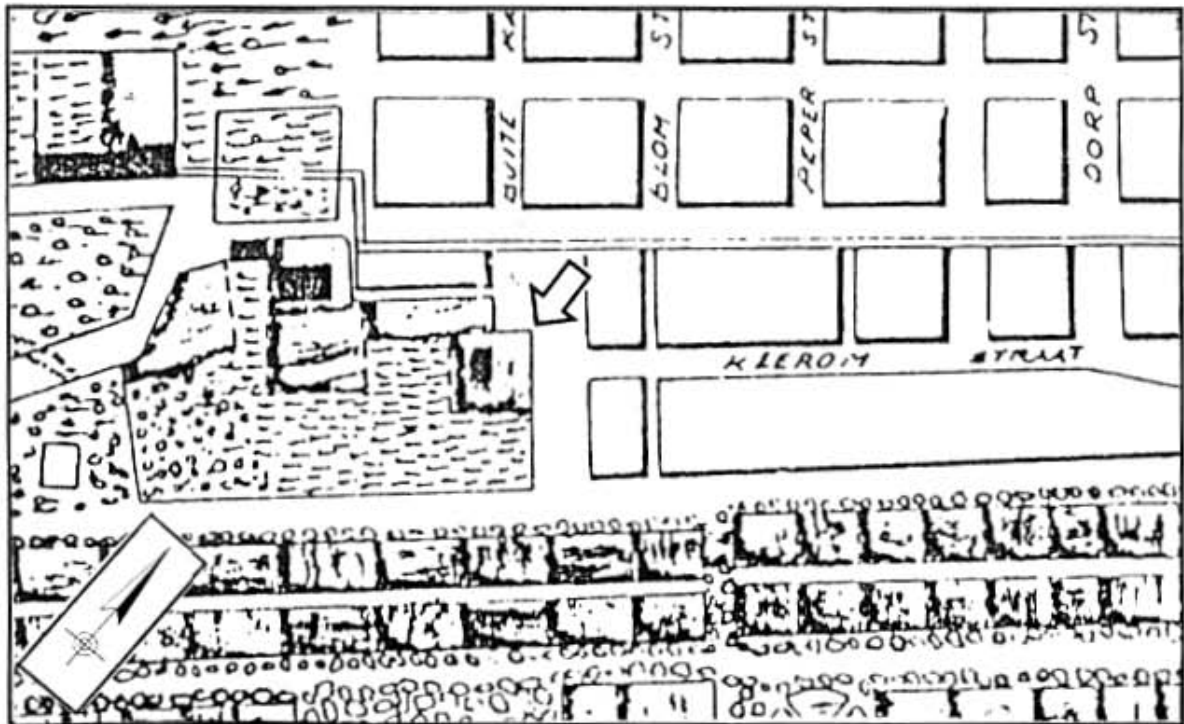


Figure 5: A map dating to 1819 on which the approximate position of 72 & 72a Keerom Street are indicated. Note the dwelling house in the middle of the bounded property (Courtesy of the SA Library).

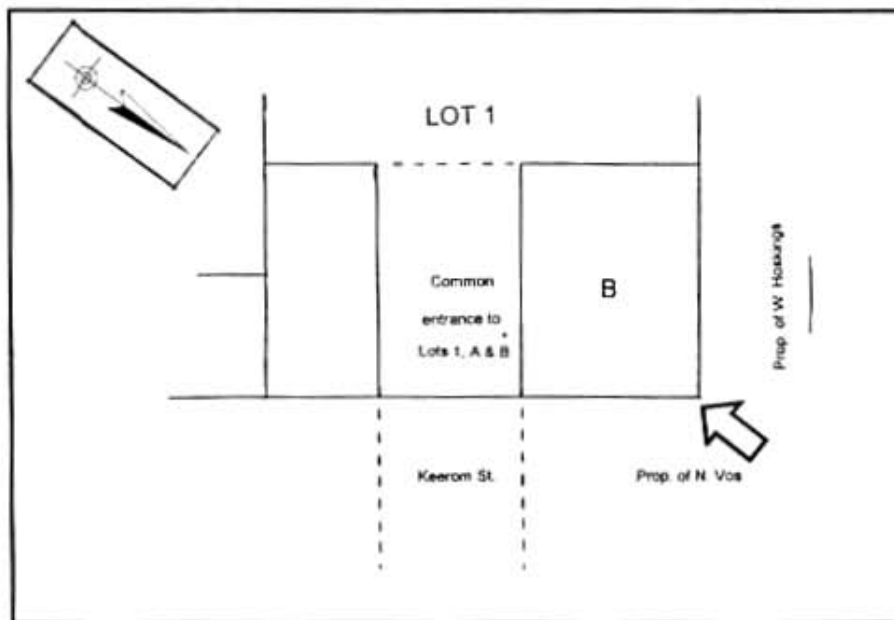
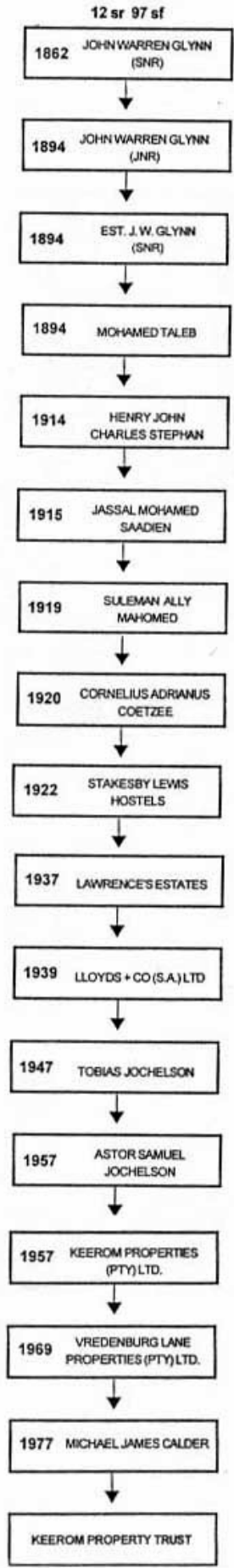


Figure 6: Copy of the original survey diagram for nos. 72 & 72a Keerom Street (Lot B) (c. 1861).

Table 1

**OWNERSHIP HISTORY
OF NO. 72 & 72A
KEEROM STREET,
CAPE TOWN**



KEY
sr = square roods
sf = square feet

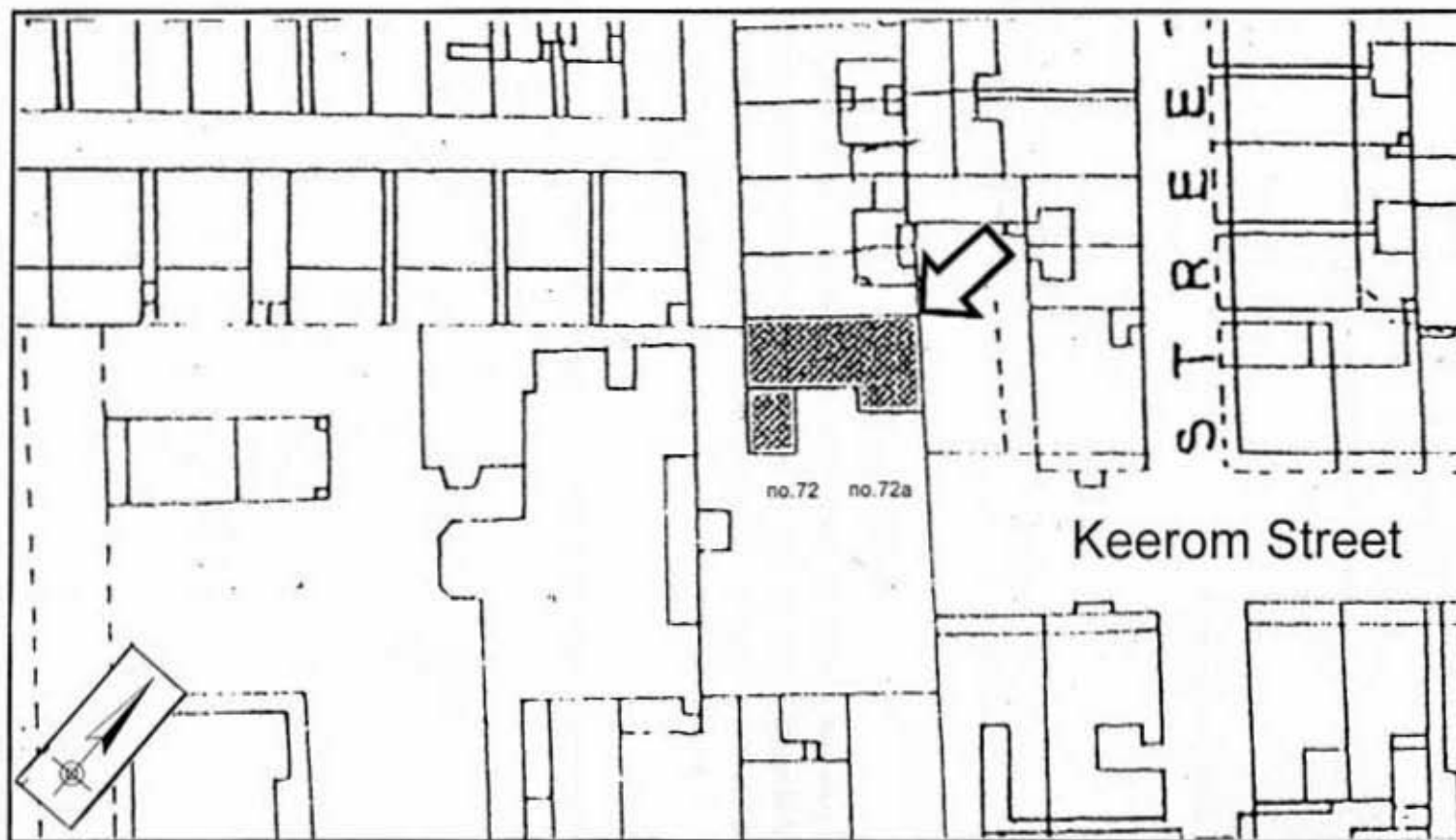


Figure 7: Reproduction of a portion of a survey of central Cape Town done by Snow (c. 1860) in which he illustrates the architecture of the buildings. Numbers 72 & 72a are shaded (courtesy UCT HARG Map Library).

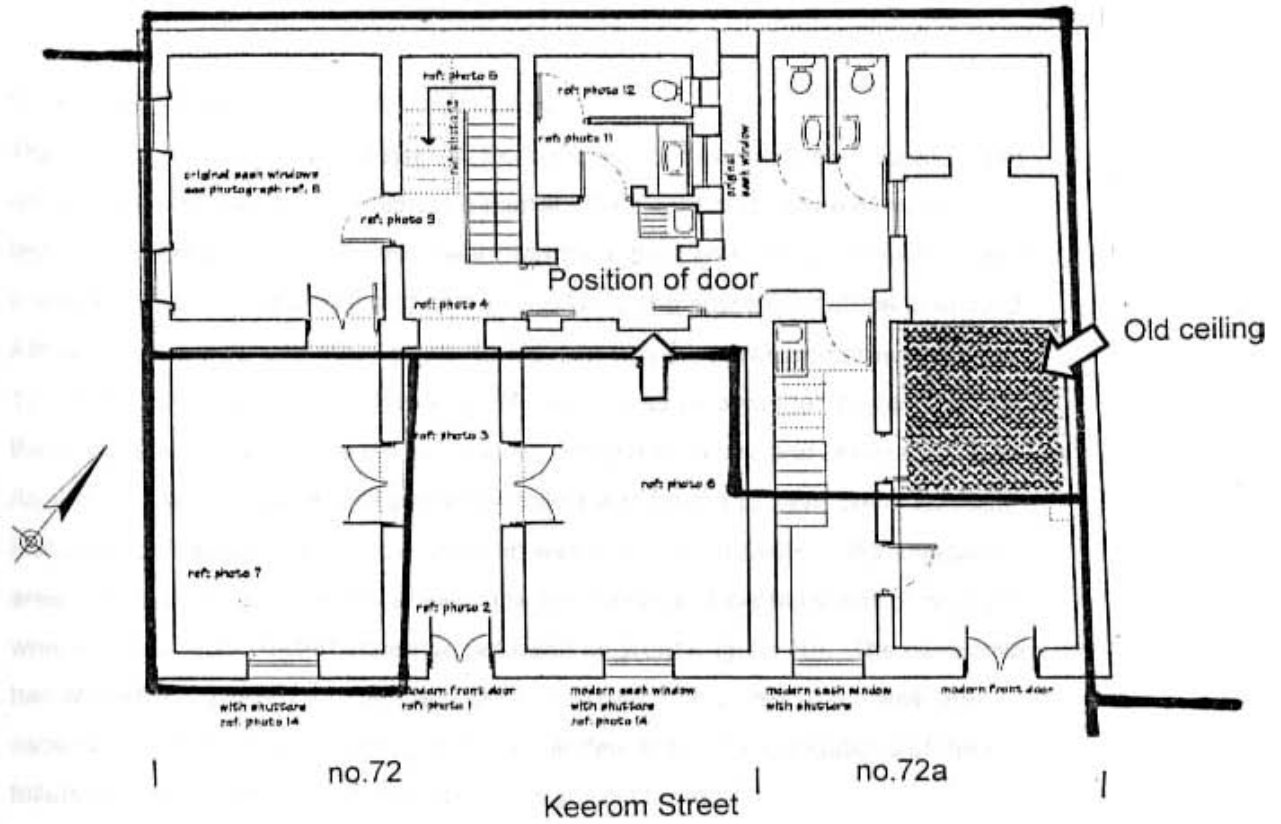


Figure 8: Enlarged section of the Snow survey (c.1860) - shown as a thick dark line - superimposed over the architects plan of 72 & 72a Keerom Street before the start of alterations and renovations. The slight differences between the two outlines probably reflects inaccuracies in the nineteenth century measurements.

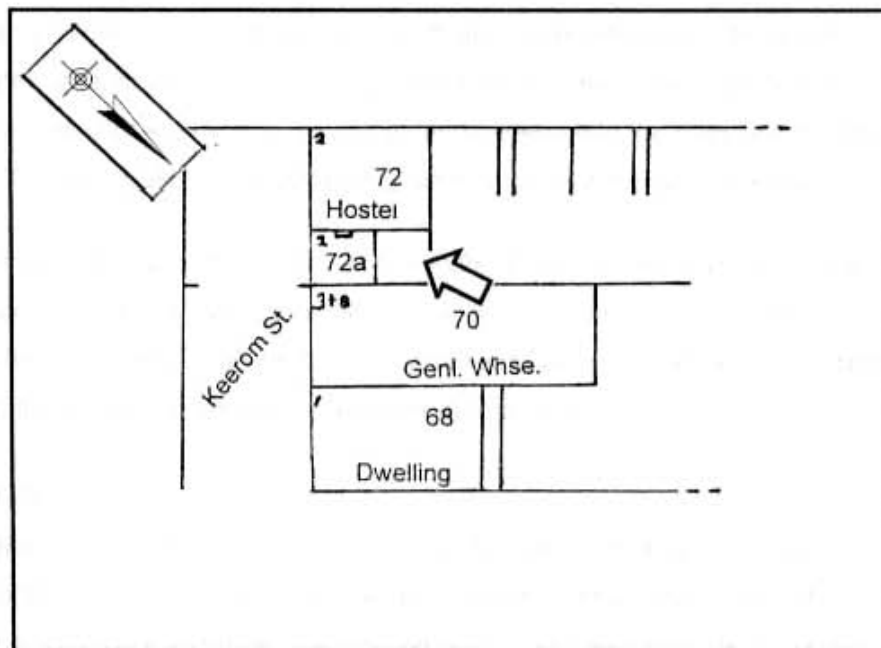


Figure 9: Reproduction of an insurance survey by Goad (1937) of the block containing nos. 72 & 72a Keerom Street (courtesy SA Library).

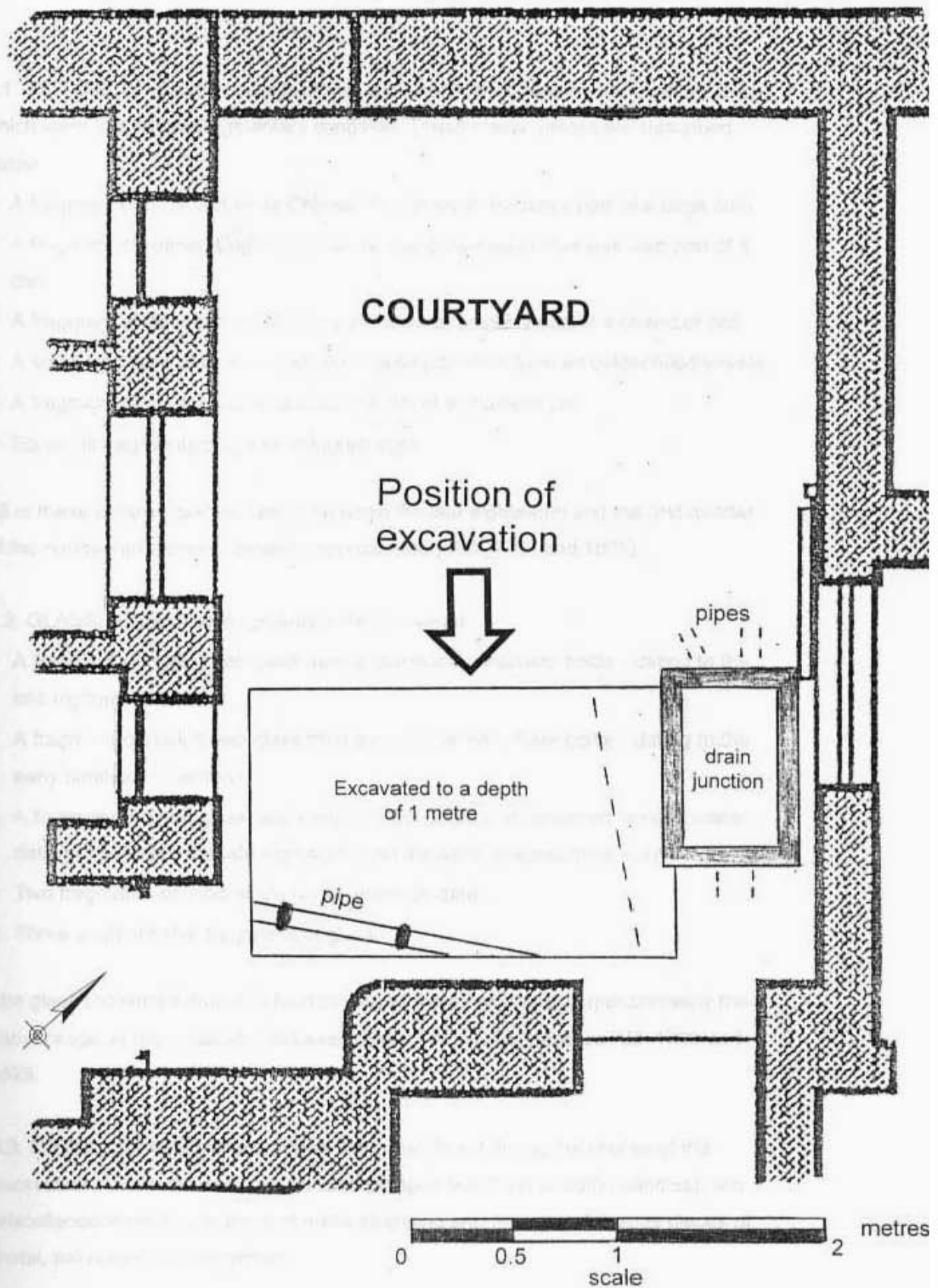


Figure 10: Enlarged diagram of the courtyard area in 72a Keerom Street indicating where excavation took place.



Plate 1: Photograph illustrating some of the yellow-wood beams in the ceiling dating to between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.



Plate 2: Some of the stone-walling revealed in the courtyard area during renovations.



Plate 3: Photograph illustrating the disturbed nature of the deposit. The contractors in the photograph are breaking up the foundations for the toilets built in the courtyard.



Plate 4: The position of the test excavation (parallel to the planks in the photograph). Note the pipes intruding deep below the surface.