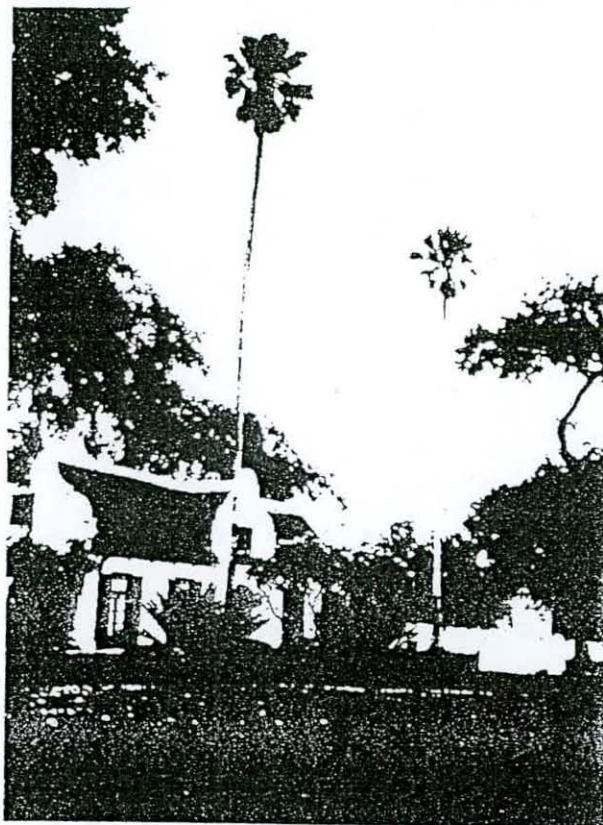


MEERRUST ESTATE: SIMONDIUM



HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

March 2003

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This T shaped building is located on the north side of the werf but does not really define the edge of the werf because of its orientation and shape. The section of the building with the buttresses has 70cm thick walls built of river stones (some dressed) with grey clay mortar. This is an early labour-intensive building method requiring slave labour. The roof is a typical C19 structure. New double casement windows are recreated in a 18C style. A modern simulated clay floor (Terrasol) has recently been installed. External window cills and drip mouldings (similar to Baker cottage?) are not appropriate; nor are the new drainage channels skirting the building. The building is painted in 'broken white' which is acceptable, however the joinery here as elsewhere in the complex should be painted. We noted two 18C doors and a mid 18C shutter stored in the shed. These should be reused and used as a model for additional joinery. An archeologist should be consulted for further investigation.

7.3.4 Gable House (termed 'former cowshed')

This is a holbol gable longhouse 7m wide and 31m long which is located on the west side of the werf. Its entrance fronts on the fields, its 'back' side with 1 lean-to structure (formerly two) faces the werf. It has a late 19C corrugated roof with a 30° pitch. There are also cast iron ventilation grilles from that period. The gable mouldings are similar to the Manor House. The main gable is dated 1903. The front door has an unusual fanlight (possible early 19C) which may well be recycled from the main house. The motif is similar to examples illustrated in R Lewcock's *Early 19C Architecture in SA* Balkema 1963 in his section on Geometrical Fanlights pg 44, catalogued R6F6 (Loop Street CT) and R6R7 (Strand Street CT).

The front double doors are recent and inappropriate as are the two metal windows on the right hand side on this façade. Changes to the building should take into account the 'quirky' qualities of the fenestration and doors. The building is generally in a poor condition. A trench should be dug in order to pick up possible earlier water channels, and should be co-ordinated with those dug around the 'mill' building.

7.3.5 'Baker Cottage'

This name was created by Munnik Visser Architects and although Baker had been involved in Pickstone projects no documentary evidence has been found to confirm that he was involved in alterations to this building. The building with its 19C front garden originally faced the central avenue. It backs on to the water furrow, yet appears to jut into the werf space (it is not in line with the cellar building, probably due to the alignment of the furrow). It is a small building, only about 160m in extent, with 2 hipped end bays with a covered lean-to verandah. The walls on the stream side are 18C with typical 18C windows, cills, lintels and shutters. Frames show evidence of fire. There is an 'arts and crafts' style interior with red brick fireplace and chimney. This could be the work of Baker. It would make sense to maintain this style in the refurbishment and further building work.

The building requires maintenance. The gutters should be cleaned. The shade-clothed roof is unsatisfactory. The adjacent oak trees need to be trimmed of their dead branches as this poses a danger to the structure.

7.3.6 'Mill House'

The 'mill' lies at a lower point outside the werf space. This may be a clue that its location was dependent on a position alongside a watercourse, not on the formal requirements of the werf geometry. The walls can be dated both to the 18 and 19C (thickest 62cm).

Research should be undertaken to determine whether it was an over or undershot mill. The assumed alignment of the furrow would suggest that it was an undershot wheel. The plaster should be stripped to locate the holes for the fixing of the machinery. Trenches should be dug at right angles from the building to find the old water furrow. All this work should be carried out by a professional archaeologist with a permit from Heritage Western Cape.

7.3.7 The Packshed

Although there is evidence that a structure has been on the site of the packshed for most of the 20C, the process of continuous repair, replacement, alteration and additions has left the current structure with little or no integrity. It is felt that it could be rebuilt or even removed.

8. Issues

In the preceding section of this report the landscape setting of Meerrust and the site itself was analysed. This analysis raised a number of issues related to the conservation and enhancement of the heritage resources.

These are discussed below

8.1 Cultural Landscape

In Section 6 of this report the setting of Meerrust was described. It was shown that Simonduim and the Groot Drakenstein valley has been transformed from a primeval natural landscape with few marks of human modification to a mature rural landscape with its key framework elements; the wooded riverine corridors, tree lined roads and irrigation furrows, windbreaks, patchwork mosaic of orchards and vineyards and carefully placed groups of buildings, and scattered labourers cottages.

It is essential that Meerrust continues to contribute to this cultural landscape. This can be achieved by reinforcing the existing framework elements and ensuring that new interventions are consistent with these elements.

8.2 Traditional Continuity/ Genius Loci

As concerns have grown relating to globalisation, ecological and sustainable economic development, the focus of the conservation of cultural heritage has shifted towards protecting cultural diversity and living cultures. This concern is reflected in the National Heritage Resources Act which moves away from earlier legislation, where the protection of structures was emphasized, toward the protection of cultural identity.

Farming of this valley has been going on for about three hundred years. This has transformed the landscape as described above. Farming activity, fruit and grape farming in particular, is

As has been shown, the Meerrust complex displays this layering not just in its buildings but in the landscape itself. It follows then that new interventions should reflect their contemporary nature yet be sympathetic to the complex which has been developed over 250 years. This to some extent has been successful in the alterations and additions to the administration buildings. While the interior alterations make use of contemporary lighting and joinery and clearly contrast with the original fabric of the building, the extensions are almost identical to the original 'T' shaped building. Thick buttresses have been used in the new extension in imitation of those supporting the north-east wall of the original building. Buttresses were rarely ever an original element of construction and were usually only introduced to support a wall which was beginning to fail. In other words, the narrative of the development of this building has become confused particularly as there is no distinction in most respects between the original and new.

Any further interventions at Meerrust should be more rigorously analysed. Also of importance is the question of the removal of elements. We have already seen how at some point after 1985 the enclosure around the manor house was removed. The notion of 'restoring' the place to some imagined past must be handled with extreme care.

8.5 Capacity

The issue of capacity for development is crucial. Traditionally the werf complex was a modest developed island in a rural and wild landscape. Excessive development could destroy the delicate balance of homestead dominance hierarchy, built to cultivated and natural environment. Essentially the homestead complex is a tiny white framed rectangular form within a green large landscape. It is vital that an appropriate scale is maintained. Too much additional development could dilute the effect of the homestead complex in its setting. There is still capacity as the werf is very loosely arranged. The conference center does not have a large impact on the werf space. Opportunity for further development can occur on sites of earlier perimeter werf buildings. Location and scale are important factors in determining possible development opportunities. Extending the werf is not a desirable option, nor the introduction of additional mini werfs.

8.6 Social Issues

Historically this was a private farm and was not open to the public. An entry to this effect is listed at the end of the description of Lekkerwyn, Meerlust and Delta (Zandvliet) Phillida Brooke Simons'.

A concise guide to Cape Dutch Houses Struik 1987. With development and change of use to a conference center and accommodation there will be increasing public access. Local people and tourists will benefit from the exposure to and use of an interesting example of the local Cape vernacular architecture, setting and landscape. With the changes in farm practices and changes in use of farm buildings it is inevitable that employees on the farm may have to be accommodated elsewhere. It should be noted that farming is not being curtailed, and that the new uses will in fact generate more jobs. It is recommended that oral histories be taken from the local farm employees to record the social history of the farm.

8.7 Parking and Access

The impact of parking areas for cars, buses and deliveries can be detrimental to the setting unless carefully handled. Formal parking areas should be small and kept to a minimum. These 'pockets' of parking should be screened on the perimeter with fruit trees or vines as well as planting on the aisles between back to back bays. The restaurant parking area among rows of vines at Steenberg is a good example. Small fake werfs are not recommended. A nearby grassed field can be planned to cater for overflow parking for large events as at Boschendal. Discrete parking can be planned inside the werf, as the presence of motor cars is not necessarily detrimental. In fact a mixture of controlled vehicular traffic, pedestrian and seating activity may contribute to a more active, positive, lively place as opposed to many current sterile empty examples of werf places. The werf should have a relatively continuous perimeter, and parking areas accessible from the werf are not desirable. The werf should not be surrounded by parking. Parking areas could lead off avenues at non strategic points, and where parking is required it should be considered as a subsidiary element in the composition.

Surfaces used in parking areas should be appropriate to the farm context – surfaces such as gravel or laterite are thus more suitable than finishes such as brick paving.

The current access arrangement with the road looping to the north of the manor house provides the defining view of the complex and should be retained. Subsidiary access roads to the various elements will need to be carefully planned to be unobtrusive, and should not cut up werf space.

8.8 Farm Buildings

The integration of a new complex of farm buildings into the Meerrust landscape presents particular problems. It is understood that the development of new processing facilities is to be implemented incrementally over several years. This provides an opportunity to provide screening with traditional windbreaks of pines, gums or polars which can be established immediately.

8.9 Other

Signage and lighting will have to be carefully considered. Low levels of lighting are appropriate. Only discrete signage should be permitted.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adaptation: Modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.

Archaeological: Material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and which are older than 100 years, including artifacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures.

Authenticity: Genuineness, or original as opposed to copy, real as opposed to pretended. It relates to the design, material, workmanship and setting of the site, as well as its physical, social and historical context, including use and function.

Compatible use: A use that involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, change that are substantially reversible, or changes that require minimal impact.

Cultural significance: aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.

Consultation: (a) opinions (b) advice (c) information. There are a variety of groupings and occasions for soliciting opinions and information or presenting research and proposed plans: eg. Members of the client organisation, the local planning authority, neighbouring landowners/stakeholders, statutory bodies, advisory bodies, community groups, local societies, specialist groups or individuals, etc.

Conservation: All the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstance, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation, and will commonly be a combination of more than one of these.

Conservation Plan: Provide a framework to establish policies that will guide the future care and development of a place - a strategy for managing change. Major elements are the need to retain or reveal significance, identify feasible and compatible uses; meet statutory requirements; work within procurable resources and to anticipate opportunities and threats. It integrates, among others, archaeological, architectural, historical, landscape, art historical, countryside, museum, collections, and technological and ecological issues. A CP would include: purpose, background to site and context for plan; objectives; content; further work; procedures; products.

Cultural Landscape: The term embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environments. Landscape designed, improved, or at least affected by human activity - whether deliberate or incidental. The traditional European image of 'improvement' of nature, but for instance in Australia ancestral being created patterns and plus modifications from management practices, eg. burning. When a landscape is invested with cultural meanings for its inhabitants the consequence can be strong and positive - they 'belong to' the place, they do not 'own' it. See 'Sense of place'.

Cultural Significance: The historical, social, scientific, linguistic, architectural, political, aesthetic, technological or spiritual value for past, present and future generations. It is embodied in the place itself, its fabric and setting, its use, associations, meanings, records and associated places.

Heritage Areas: Protected places of environmental or cultural interest.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Undertaken before any changes made to natural or cultural environment, particularly within zones of high sensitivity.

Heritage Impact Statement: Comments on proposals for change. Identifies and assesses parts of aspects of a place that will be affected by proposals; recommendations for acceptance, conditions, rejection of proposal. Allows developments to proceed without uncertainty about whether work will have to be stopped if a heritage resource is discovered.

Heritage Registers: An inventory of heritage resources with statements and levels of significance.

Heritage Resource: A place or object of cultural significance.

Historical Environment: All the physical evidence for past human activity, and its associations, that people can see, understand and feel in the present world. It is the habitat that the human race has created through conflict and co-operation over thousands of years, the product of human interaction with nature; it is all around us as part of everyday experience and life, and is therefore dynamic and subject to change. At one level it is made up entirely of places such as towns or villages, coast or mountains, and things such as buildings, buried sites and deposits, fields and fences; at another level it is something we inhabit, both physical and imaginatively. It is many-faceted, relying on an engagement with physical remains but also on emotional and aesthetic responses and on the power of memory, history and association.

Historical Layering: Helps gain a sense of chronological depth and continuity / change through time; identifies areas of rich / complex history and levels of significance.

Living heritage: The intangible aspects of inherited culture, including cultural tradition, oral history, performance, ritual and popular memory.

Maintenance: The continuing, protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.

Management: In relation to heritage resources, includes conservation, presentation and improvement.

Moveable objects: Archaeological and palaeontological objects, objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage, ethnographic art and objects, military objects, objects of decorative or fine art, objects of scientific or technological interest, and books, records, documents, graphics, etc., excluding those that are public records as defined in the National Archives of SA Act, no 43 of 1996.

National Estate: In terms of the NHRA - heritage resources of cultural significance for the present community and for future generations must be considered part of the national estate and fall within the sphere of operations of the heritage resources authorities. See further NHRA principles in Appendix D.

Oral History: Summary or narrative based on spoken evidence or memory.

Oral Testimony: Signed and dated transcriptions or notes from an interview/view/meeting, etc.

Place: Includes a site, area or region; a building or other structure and associated furniture and fittings; a group of building or structures; an open space such as an urban square, street or park; and with respect to management, includes the immediate surroundings.

Preservation: Maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Reconstruction: Returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state, and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric.

Restoration: Returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of a new material.

Sense of Place: Important to recognize sense of places with a dominant function or feature, places evocative of an event or association, places with a dominant function or feature, places with sensory quality, places with local traditional social value.

Sensitivity: Judgment allied to significance, but includes vulnerability.

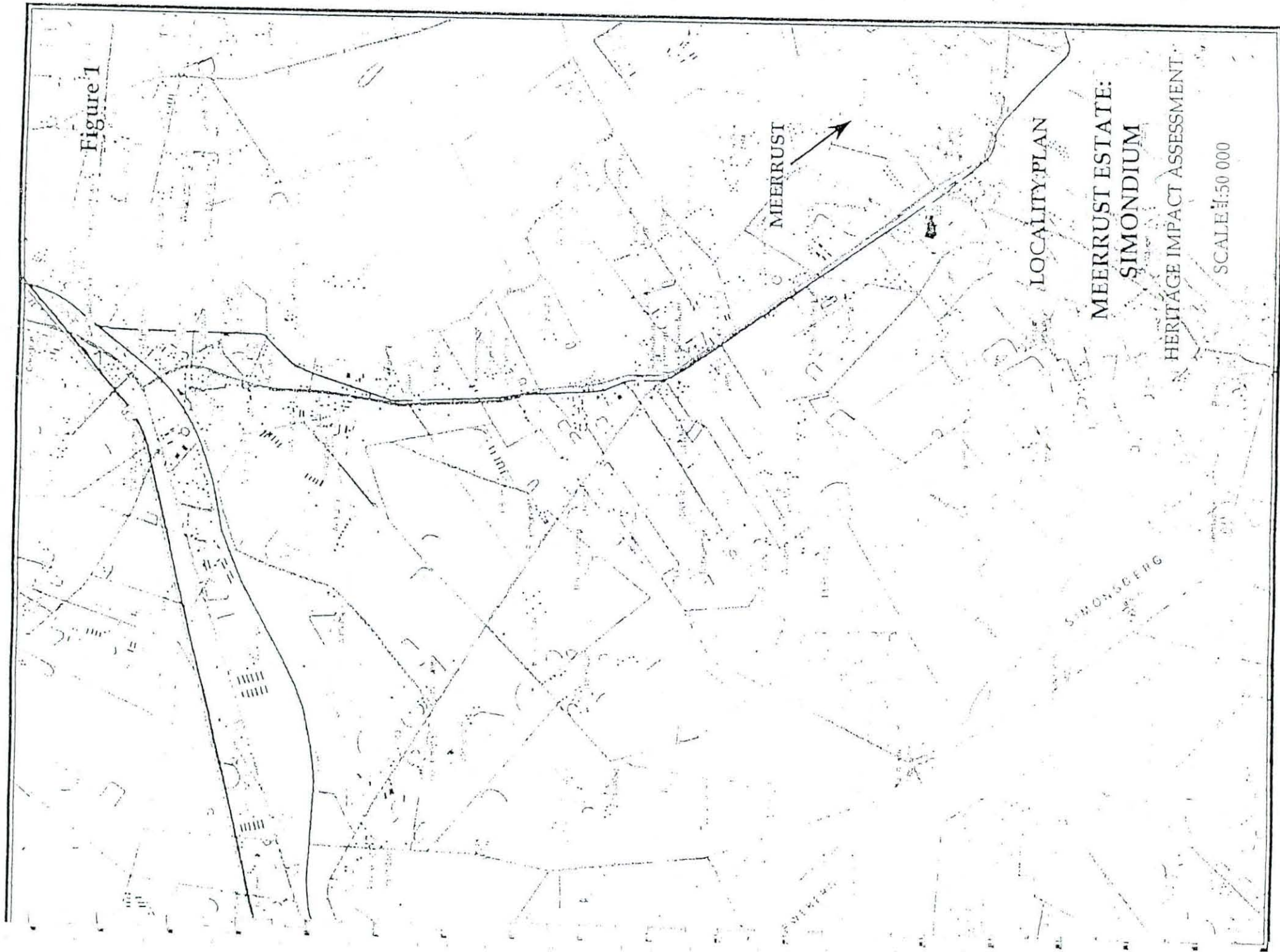
Significance: A complex notion that can be multi-layered according to assessors and criteria used.

Structure: Any buildings, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith.

Urban Edge: A policy of the Metropolitan Development Framework to contain and consolidate urban development and prevent encroachment.

Vulnerability: Pressures and actions that may injure the significance of a place. Policy should include provision for continuity of aware management and conservation advice; agreement on decision making process; continuity of funding; correction of unreal expectations; programmes for mitigation of natural disasters; reduction of vandalism, theft and overuse; planning against intrusive new development and facilities; prevention of alienation of land significance to the place; avoidance of incompatible uses and interpretations.

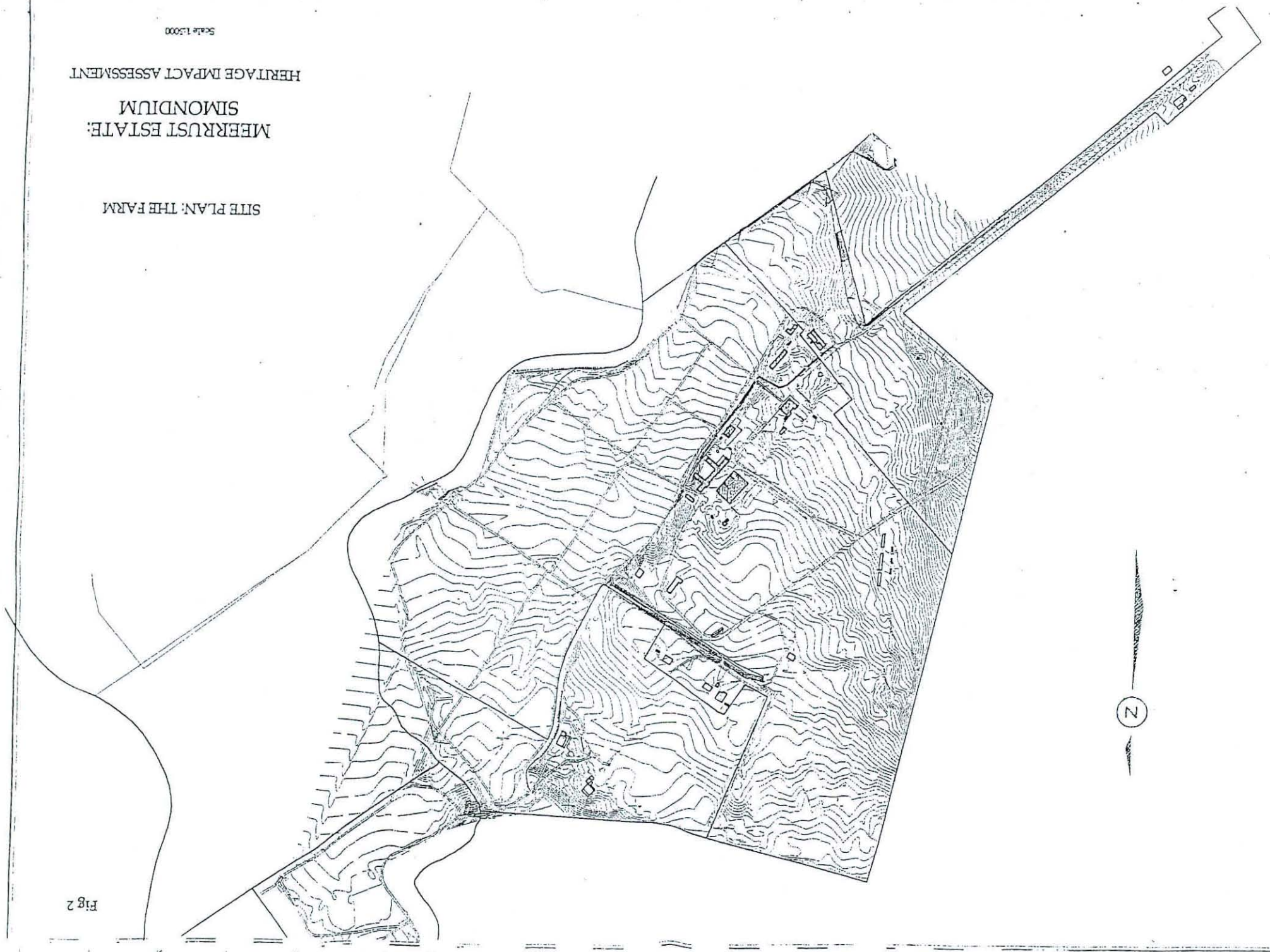
Figure 1



MEERRUST ESTATE:
SIMONDUM
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Scale: 1:2000

SITE PLAN: THE FARM



2

Fig 2

Fig 3



THE WERF

- 1. Manor House
- 2. Old Cellar
- 3. Administration Building
- 4. Gable House
- 5. Baker Cottage
- 6. Mill House

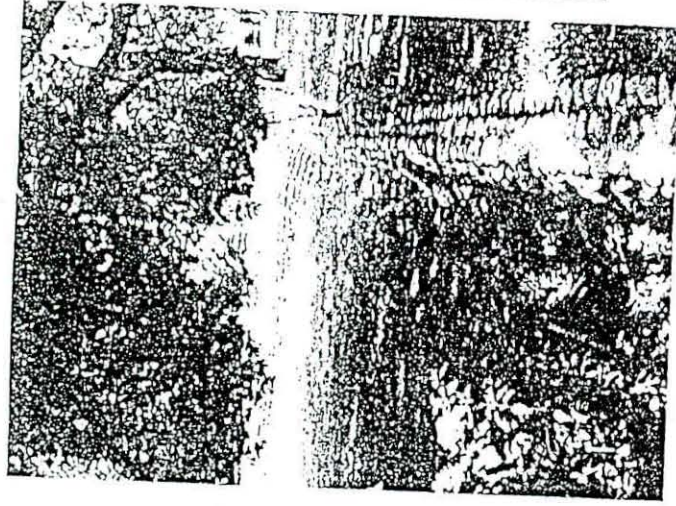
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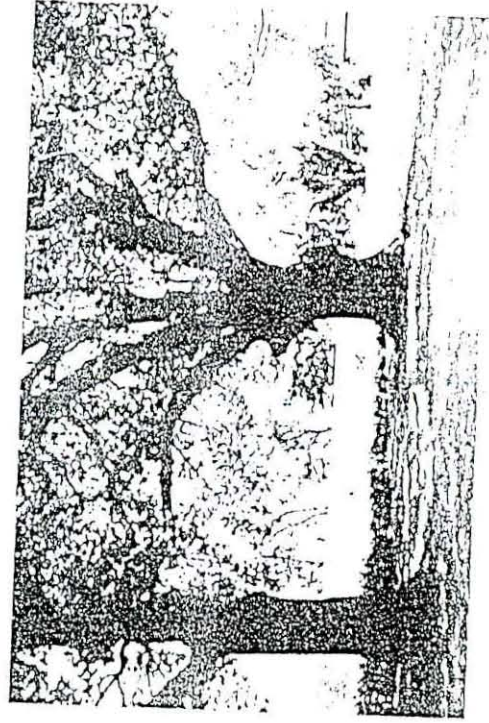


Figure 4

Figure 5,6,7



Cobble Stone Channel and Terracing

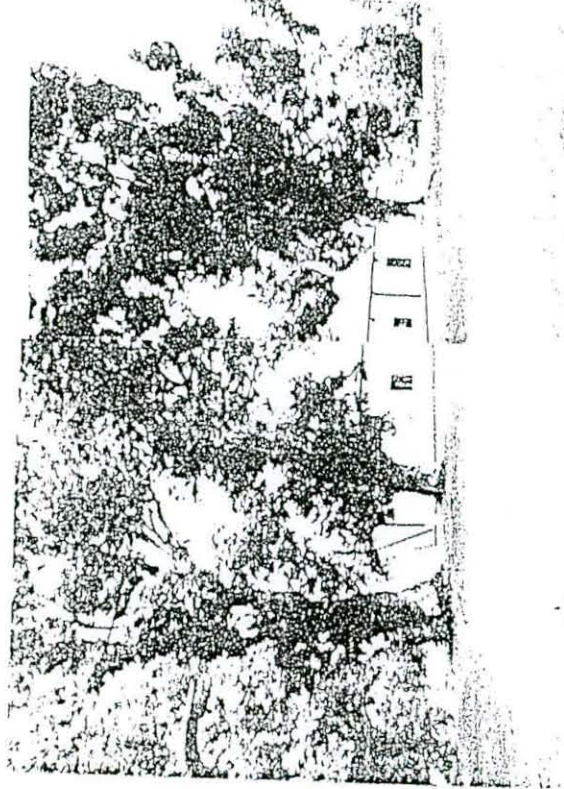


Oaks

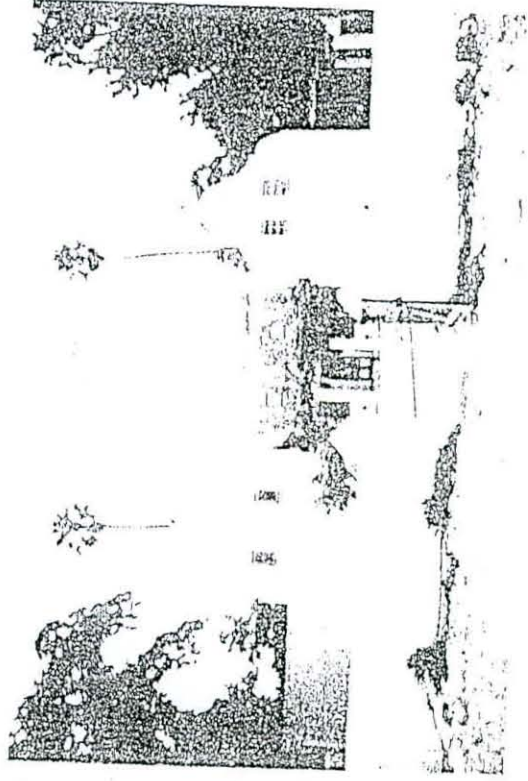
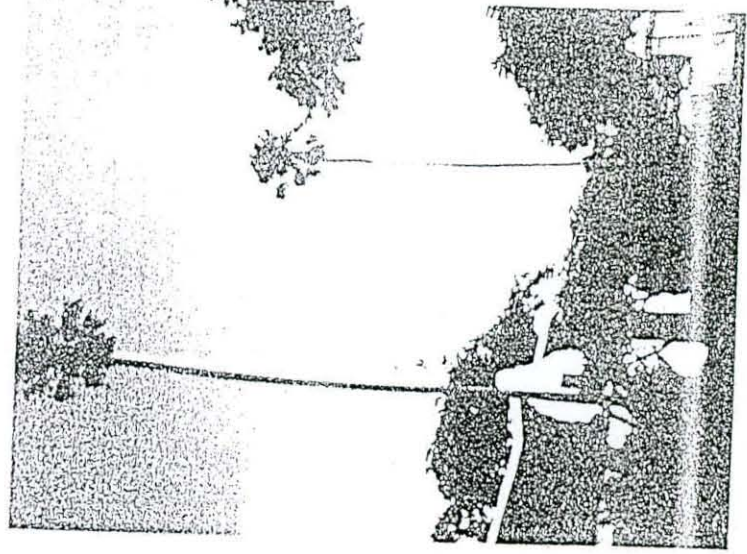


Big Oak

Figure 8,9

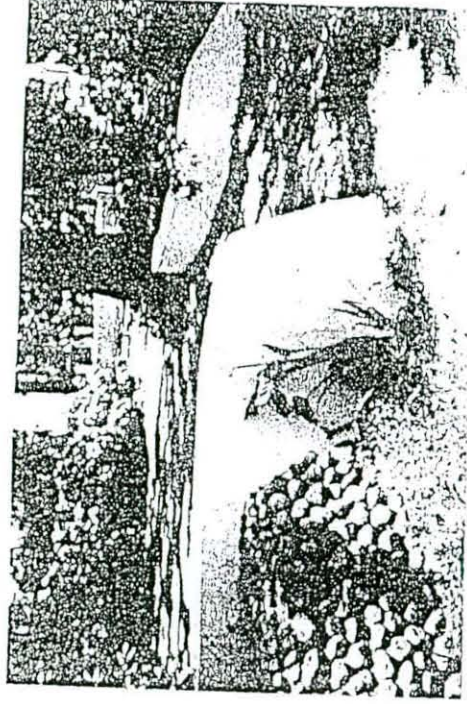


Gums

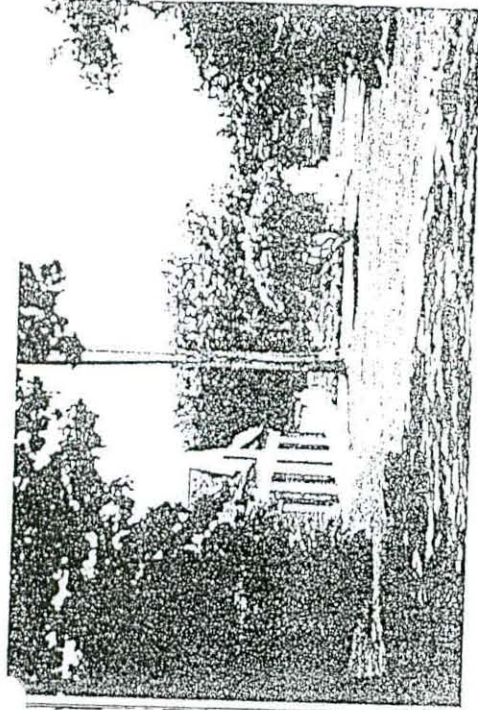


Washingtonia Palms

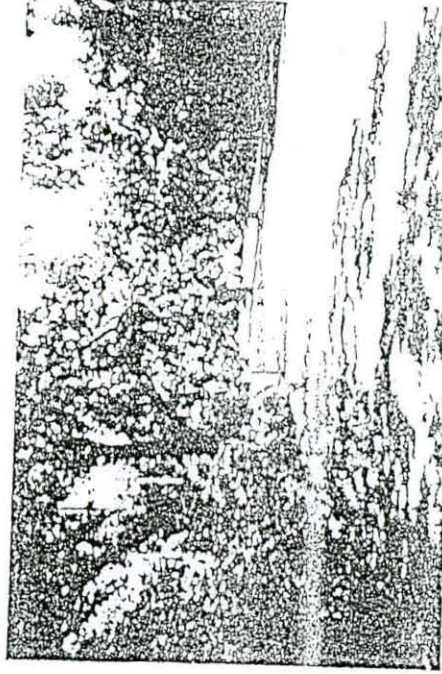
Figure 10,11



Flower Border

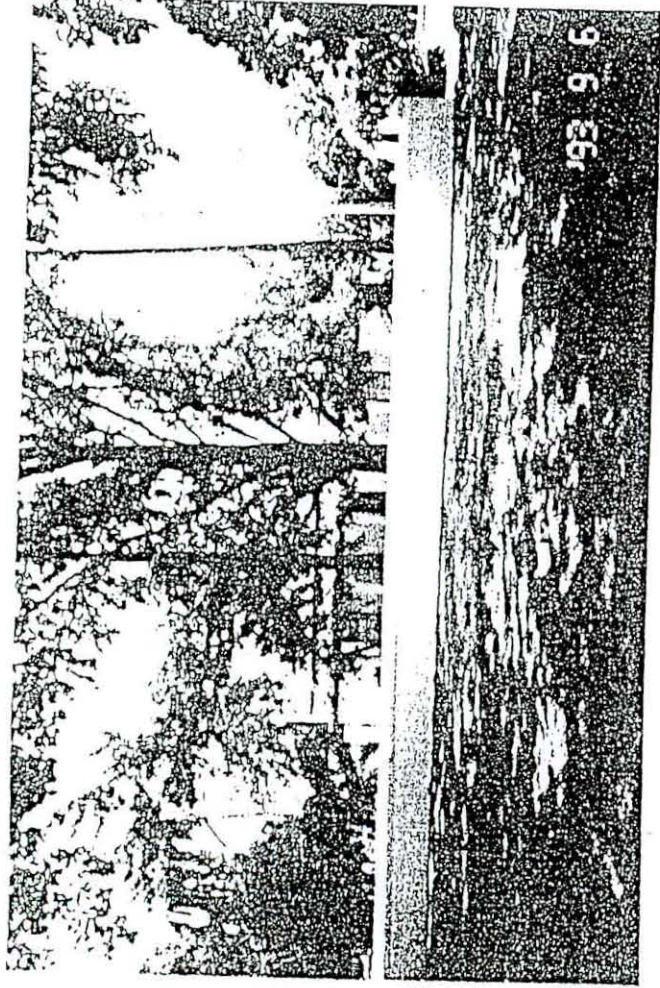


Grassed Werf

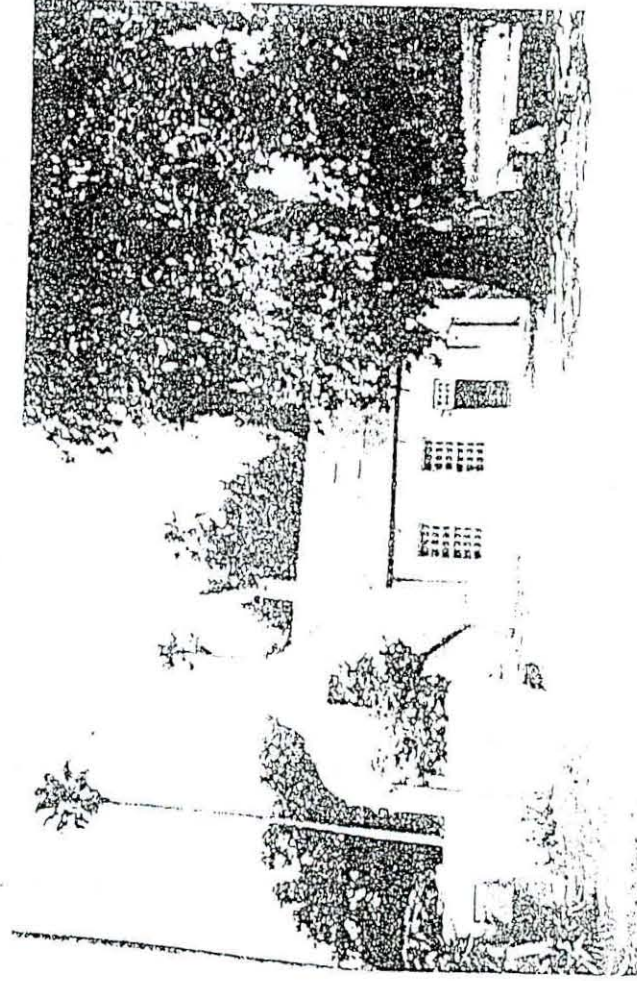


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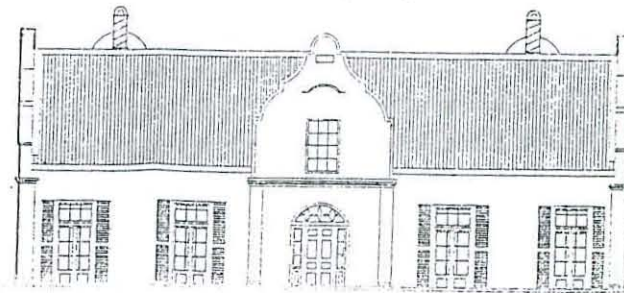
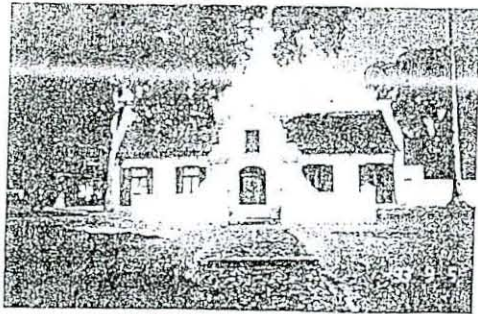
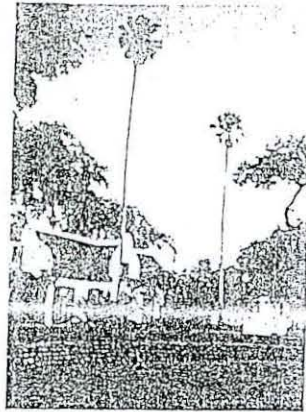
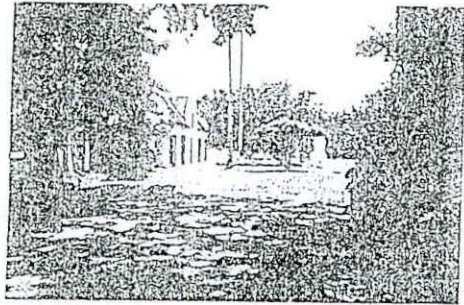
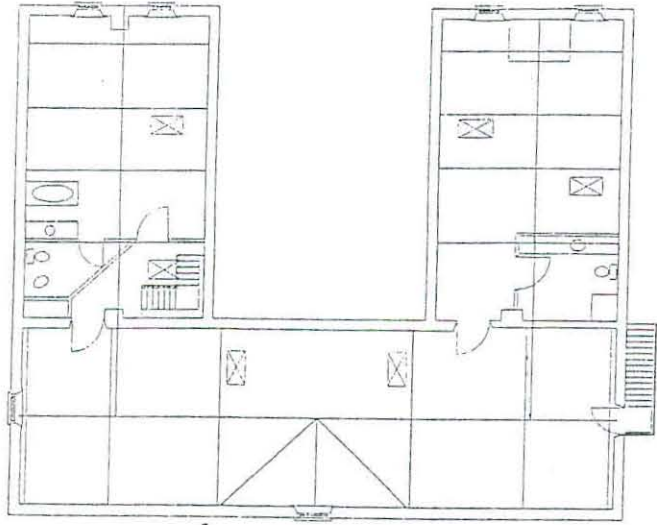
Figure 12



Werf Walls



Werf Walls



PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS
OF MANOR HOUSE

MEERRUST ESTATE:
SIMONDIUM

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Scale 1:100

MEERRUST ESTATE:
SIMONDUM
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Scale 1:10 000

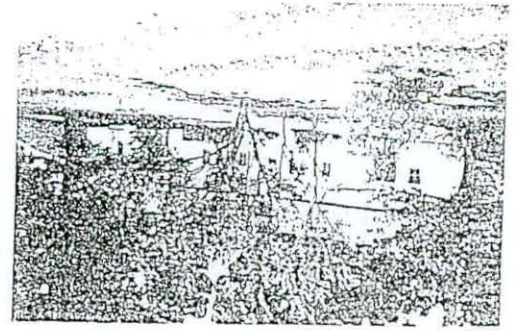
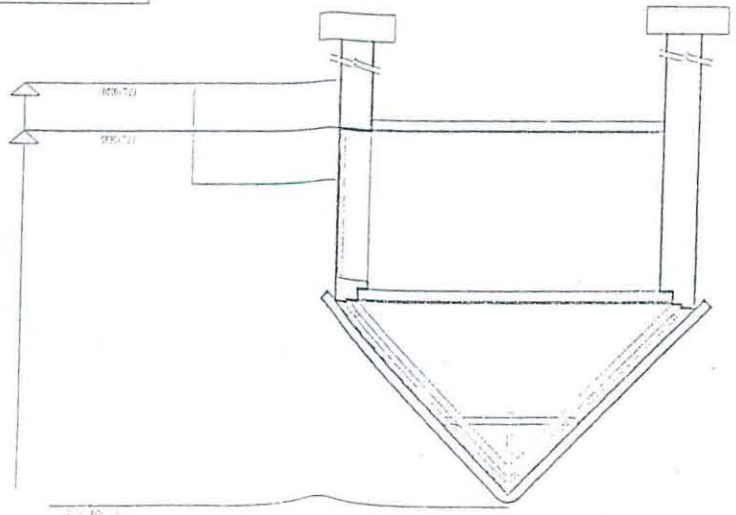
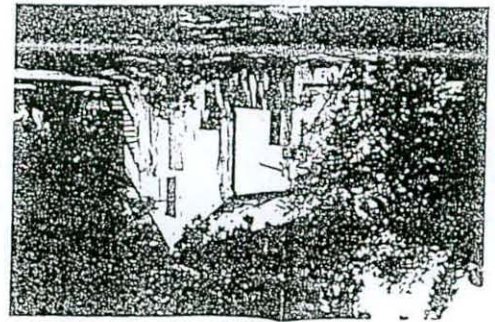
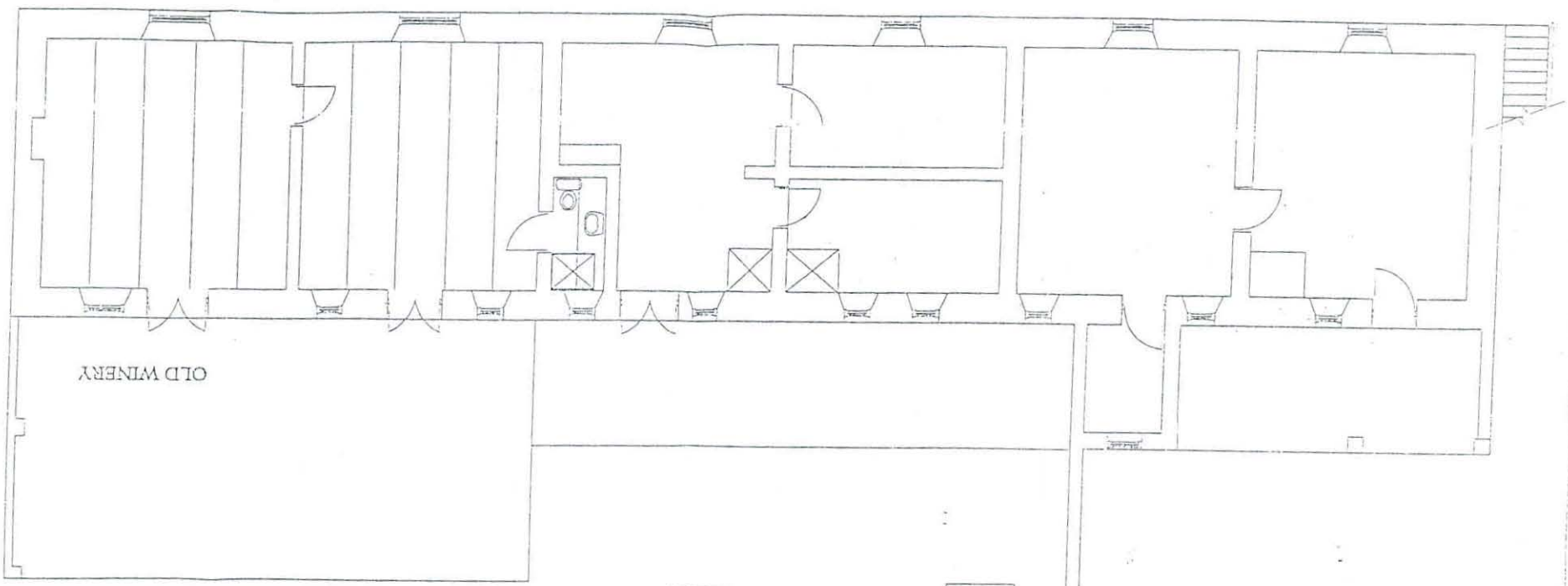


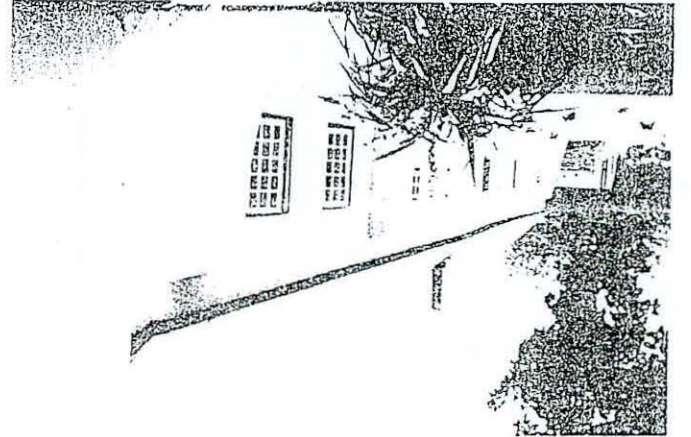
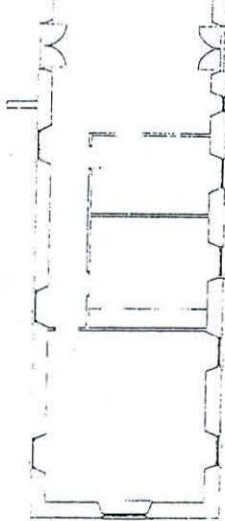
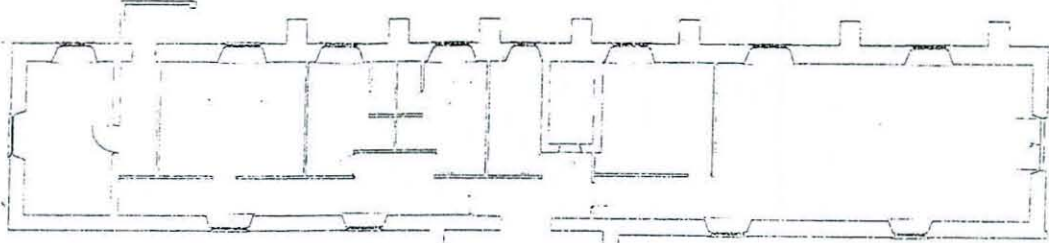
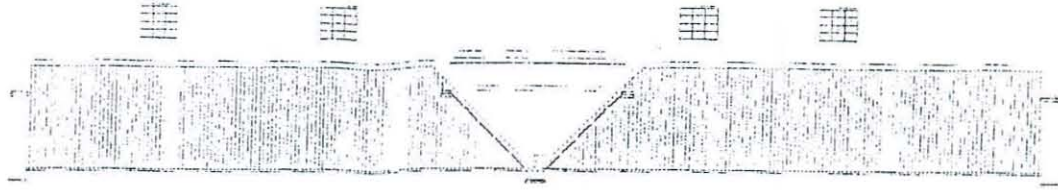
Figure 10,16

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HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MEERUST ESTATE:
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ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MEERRUST ESTATE:
SIMONDIUM

CABLE HOUSE

Scale 1:150

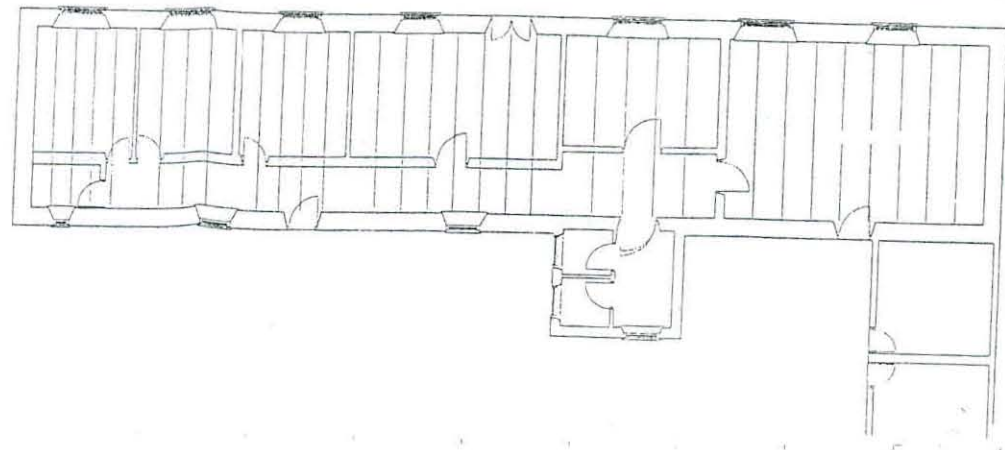
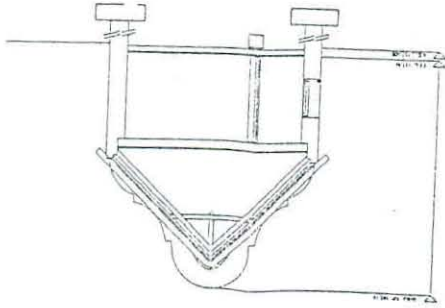
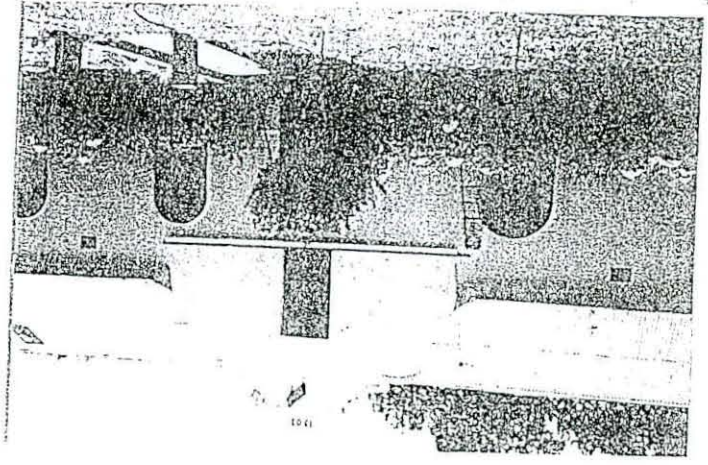
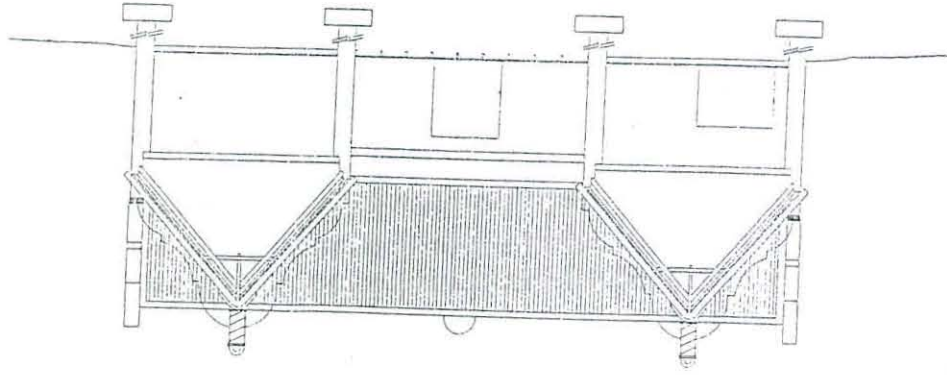
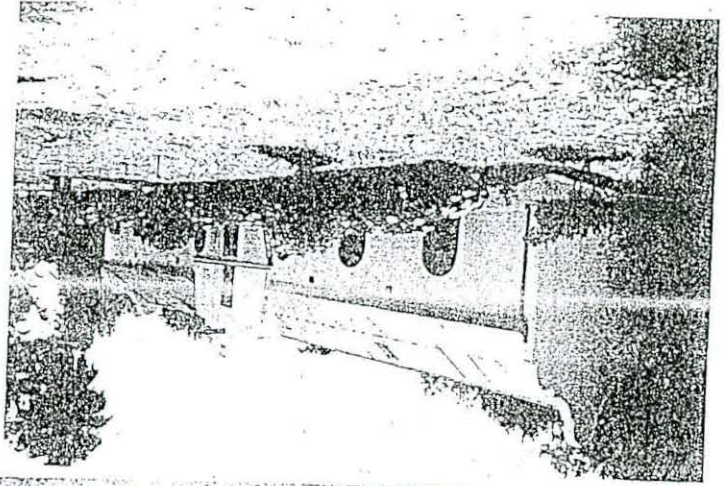
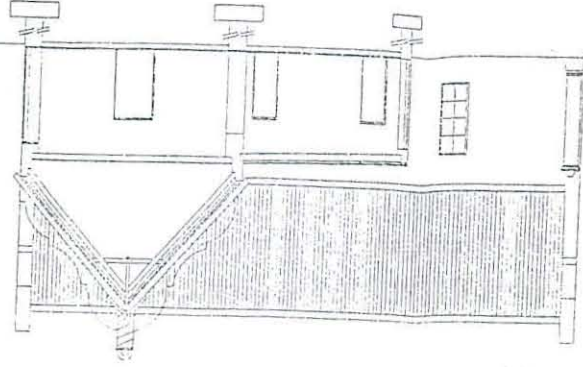
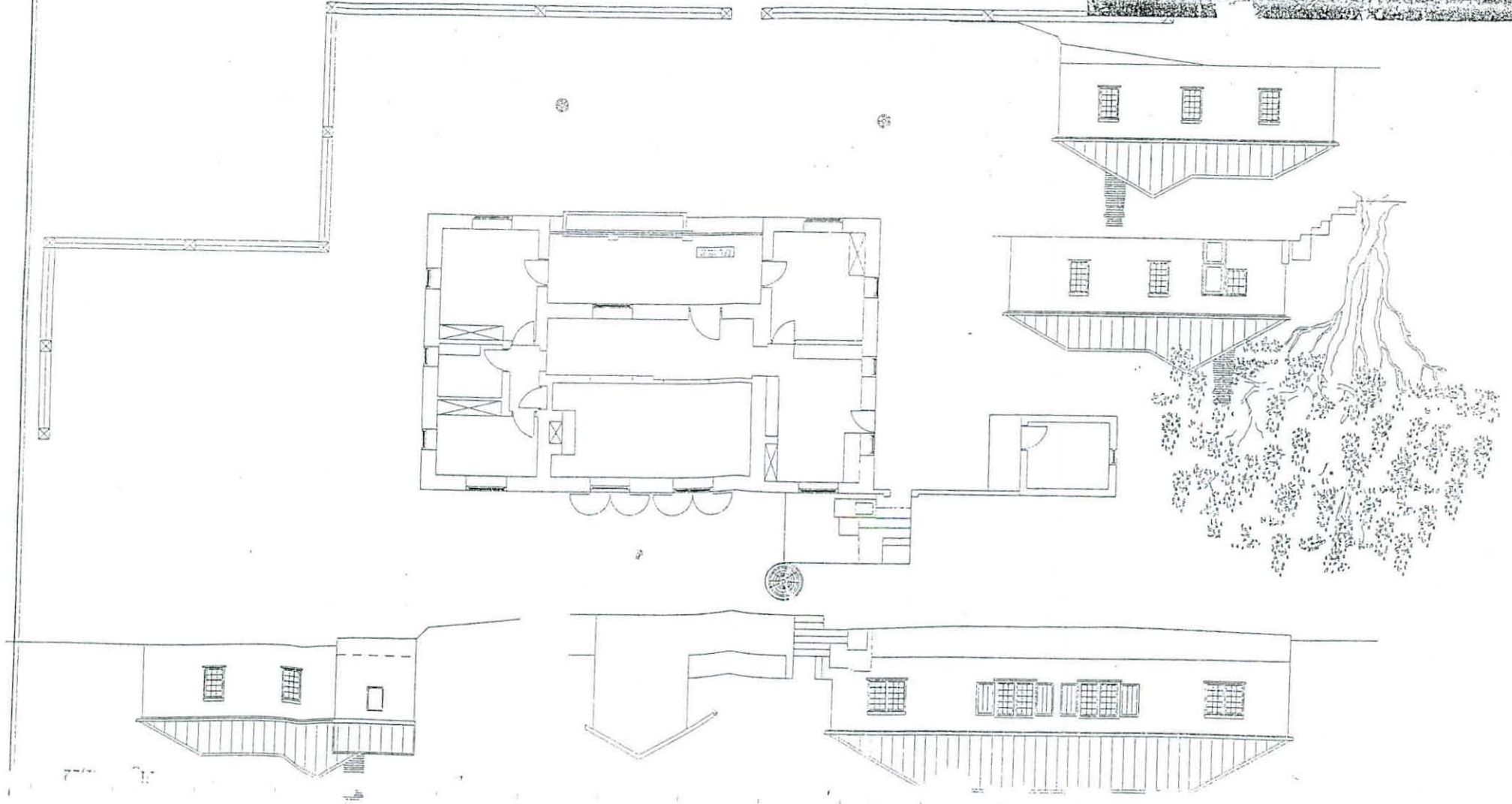
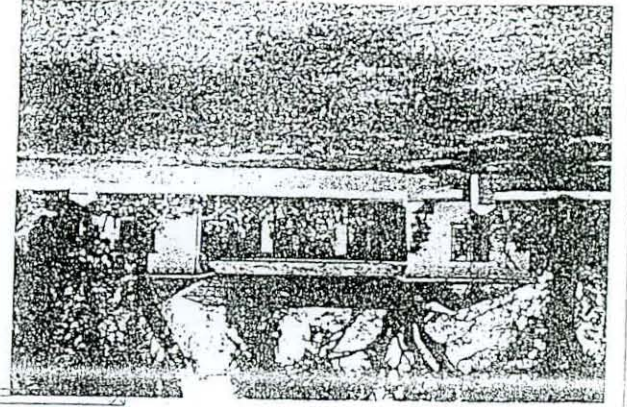
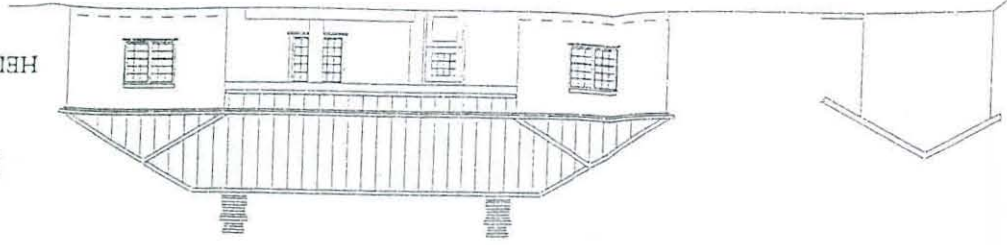


Figure 19/20

BAKER HOUSE
MEERKUST ESTATE:
SIMONIUM
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Scale 1:150



HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MEERKUST ESTATE:
SIMONDIVUM

MILL HOUSE

Scale 1:100

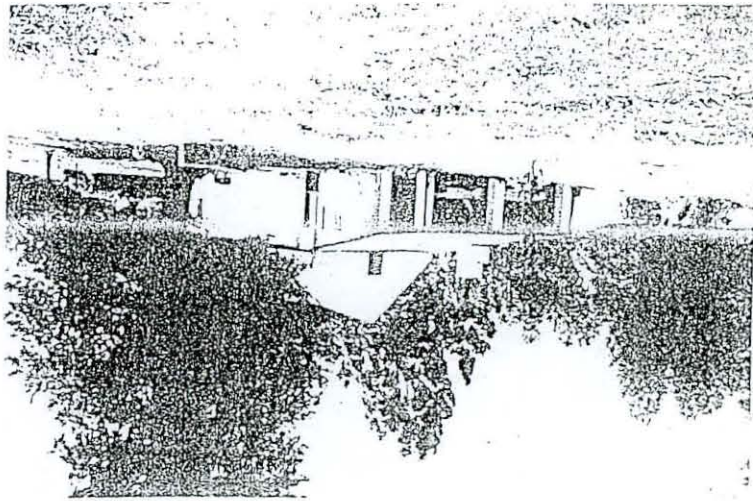
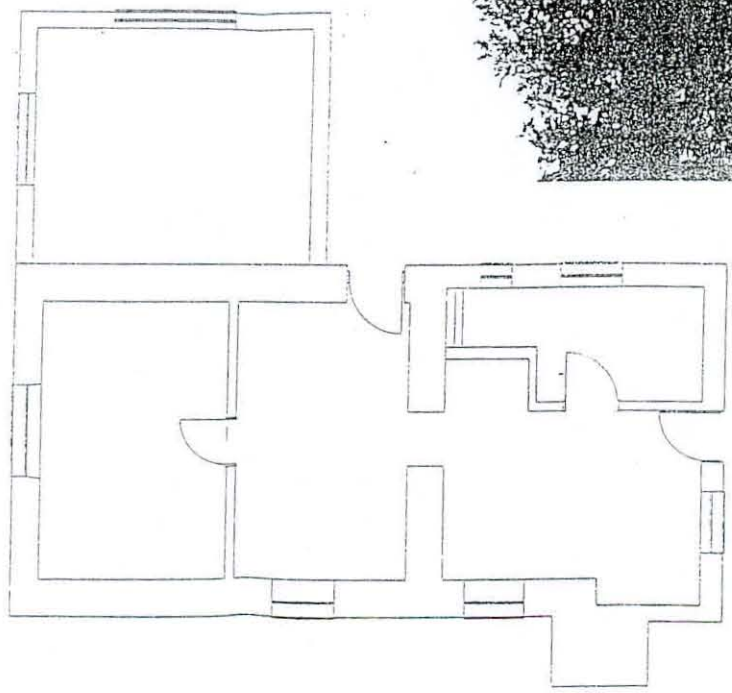


Figure 23, 24