

# A CONSERVATION PLAN FOR EAST FORT, HOUT BAY

Prepared jointly for

Cape Peninsula National Park and Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town was appointed by The Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP) and the Hout Bay Llandudno Heritage Trust (HBLT) to carry out a sensitivity study and develop a Conservation Plan for East Fort situated at Chapman's Peak Drive, Hout Bay, Cape Peninsula. The report was initiated by the Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust and sponsored by them.

East Fort is one of a few surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century fortifications that were established and built during the Dutch East India Company occupation of the Cape. Cape Town and other strategic areas on the Peninsula used to be heavily fortified against sea-borne attack, however by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of these facilities were redundant and were allowed to decay or be demolished.

East Fort is one of 4 gun emplacements to have been built at Hout Bay. The site is well known due to its spectacular position on the famous Chapman's Peak drive. Furthermore, it has been well researched and subject to archaeological investigation. The site itself is complex having undergone multiple phases of development over time and even intermittent "restoration" during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the near future Chapman's Peak Drive will open to the public exposing the site to greater access and situating the place in a prominent position close to the "gateway" to the Peninsula National Park.

East Fort, which lies on state land managed by CPNP, is regularly visited by hikers, tourists and managed without formal agreement by a community organisation, the Hout Bay and Llandudno Heritage Trust (HBHT). To date the HBHT has expended a great deal of effort in caring for the site, bringing the iron cannons into working order and hosting a number of events which include firing a muzzle loading iron cannon on ceremonial occasions. The HBHT has also expressed desire to implement some of its own development plans on the site which it perceives to be advantageous to the regional tourism industry and the sustainability of heritage conservation through development. CPNP who manage the land and carry responsibility have indicated willingness to receive proposals but have requested that the sensitivities, vulnerabilities and conservation issues<sup>1</sup> with respect to East Fort be articulated prior to approval of any development proposal.

## 1.1 Terms of Reference

The Archaeology Contracts Office formulated a Terms of Reference in conjunction with CPNP. These are as follows:

- Understand the material remains of the site and its history.
- Identify and assess the significance of the site within the local, regional and international context.
- Identify the ways in which the site is vulnerable.
- The plan will define issues in terms of the current status of the site - its physical state, ownership, legal status and management issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Malan, A. 2002. East Fort Project Guidelines – Cultural Heritage Conservation Requirements. Report prepared for CPNP.

- The plan will outline scenarios for acceptable intervention in terms of identified significance and vulnerability.
- The plan will set up a conservation policy containing guidelines for alteration of fabric, reconstruction of components, presentation of the site to the public and adaptive reuse of associated structures.
- Depending on the outcome of discussions with the various groups involved, the plan will suggest a way forward in terms of management, heritage contracts and agreements with the property owner.

## 1.2 What is a Conservation Plan and why is it useful?

James Semple Kerr<sup>2</sup> first put the forward idea of a Conservation Plan in Australia. The success of this process and the logic that drives it has seen the adoption of Conservation Plans in heritage management in England, Australia, as UNESCO policy and now increasingly in South Africa. In the absence of locally developed conservation management tools, this particular study draws significantly on guidelines developed by English Heritage for the conservation of historic places<sup>3</sup> as well as the ICOMOS Burra Charter (the key principals of heritage conservation).

A Conservation Plan is a tool that articulates why an historic place is important, the ways in which it is significant and importantly, identifies the way in which a place is vulnerable. It also identifies the issues that surround the conservation of a place and sets out measures that are required to ensure conservation and retention of significance.

In the words of James Semple Kerr

*“The Conservation Plan is a process that seeks to guide the future development of a place through an understanding of its significance. The objective is to evolve policies to guide work that are feasible as well as compatible with the retention, reinforcement and even revelation of significance. These twin concepts of compatibility and feasibility are the bases on which the policies are built”.*

Thus the Conservation Plan is a yardstick to measure the impacts of any development proposal and gauge acceptable limits of change to a place. **It is not inflexible – it’s a negotiated process, which can be reviewed or developed further at any given time to accommodate new on-site discoveries**, changes in perception of significance of a place, or alternative conservation philosophies.

## 1.3 Key role players in the process

**Ownership:** The land on which East Fort lies is Cape Farm 1245, Houtbay which is 6,9ha in extent. Currently the property is owned by the Department of Public Works, but permission has been granted to reserve this Defence Endowment property for South African National Parks (SANParks) for inclusion into the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP). Although the land is not yet part of the proclaimed Peninsula National Park, it is managed by CPNP. Two important conditions apply which are pertinent to the Conservation Plan;

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<sup>2</sup> Kerr, J.S 2000 The Conservation Plan: A guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European cultural significance, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund. 1998. Conservation Plans for Historic Places.

- That the land only be used for conservation purposes and should it no longer be required for conservation purposes, the control thereof reverts to the National Department of Public Works.
- That the construction or alteration of any building on any land allocated to SANParks and the letting of such land / building must first be submitted to the Minister of Public Works for approval.

**The State:** The State as represented by the Department of Public Works has retained ultimate responsibility for the site, and any changes that are to take place to the fabric of site are subject to approval by the Minister.

**Cape Peninsula National Park:** Peninsula National Park (as a part of SANParks) are directly responsible for management of East Fort and are therefore identified as a key role-player in the Conservation Plan process.

**South African Heritage Resources Agency:** Until recently the South African Heritage Resources Agency was responsible for applying the Heritage Legislation as contained in National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. Its powers are limited to grade 1 and declared National Heritage Sites. Issues regarding the jurisdiction of SAHRA over state owned land have yet to be fully resolved.

#### **Provincial Heritage Authority**

Unless East Fort becomes a proclaimed National Heritage Site or the land on which East Fort is situated be proclaimed as such, the Provincial Heritage Authority, Heritage Western Cape, will be the legislative body responsible for application of the National Heritage Resources Act or any other provincial heritage legislation that may be passed. As from March 2003 it will be the compliance authority to which application must be made for permits to demolish or alter the site in any way.

#### **Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust**

The trust is a community-based organization that not only serves as an environmental monitoring group but also has participated in a number of heritage and environment related projects located in the Hout Bay – Llandudno area. The organisation through its enthusiastic and committed membership has contributed significantly to showcasing local heritage. East Fort is one of their key projects with a certain amount of funding already raised to commence implementing development proposals on the site. Although the Trust has been in frequent communication with representatives of SAHRA and CPNP work done at East Fort to date is via informal communication rather than by any formal heritage or planning agreement and has comprised essentially of maintenance to the site to prevent further deterioration.

#### **Chapman's Peak Drive**

The developers of Chapman's Peak Drive, as represented by a public – private venture between the Province of the Western Cape and Entebeni, have indicated that their primary concern is the area of land that falls within the Provincial Road Reserve (12.5m on either side of the centerline of the road) and are not mandated to be part of the East Fort developments.

#### **Organisations**

East Fort is one of the longest actively conserved sites in South Africa with conservation efforts commencing in 1925. Many organizations and individuals have been involved ranging from the Union Defence Force, clubs and societies, local councils and in the recent past, the

Hout Bay Museum. In addition a number of professionals - architects, planners, archivists and archaeologists have done research on the site.

### **The Public**

The site is visited by a small but steady flow of tourists on a daily basis. It is favoured as a quiet public picnic area with free access, particularly on summer evenings when groups visit the Battery to watch spectacular evening sunsets. This applies mainly to the middle and lower precincts. The upper precincts are not normally used by picnickers as the view is largely obscured and the sloping surface is not conducive to picnicking. Access to the site has been unrestricted for more than 100 years (apart from 1940 – 1946).

### **The Community of Hout Bay**

As with the other forts in Hout Bay, informed local residents consider East Fort to be part of their community and part of their heritage which they are perfectly happy to share with the public at large. However, though it has recently been placed in the custodianship of the Park, they feel that as it is part of their heritage, they have a special responsibility towards it, to protect it for future generations. The feeling is in keeping with the spirit of the new National Heritage Act, which encourages the participation of communities in the preservation of their heritage via Heritage agreements.

## **2 BACKGROUND HISTORY**

### **2.1 The Cape Defensive System**

From the very earliest days of the Dutch East India Occupation of the Cape in 1652, the erection of a number of small fortifications to guard the refreshment station from sea born attack as well as marauding Khoekhoen began. Headquarters were at Van Riebeeck's fort located on the western end of what is the Grand Parade today, while a number of earth walled redoubts (Fort Duinehoop at the Salt River Mouth, Fort Coornhoop on the Liesbeeck River and others) were positioned around the edge of lands farmed by the company. None of these early forts have survived today, although archaeologist Gabeba Abrahams-Willis identified the moat of Van Riebeeck's fort.

During the early half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Castle at the Cape of Good Hope (building of which commenced 1666) was not only the seat of government but provided the main defensive capability for Table Bay. Defense of the western entrance of Table Bay was augmented by the "Water Kasteel" (later named the Chavonnes Battery) with its 36 pounder cannons. Escalating political tension in Europe resulted in the building of more defences in later years. By the mid-18th century a sea wall, five batteries and fort Knokke defended Woodstock beach while the massive Imhoff battery strengthened the Castle defences. The Roggebaai battery, Chavonnes battery and Amsterdam battery protected the west side of the bay, while other smaller gun emplacements were built at Green Point, Mouillie Point, Camps Bay, Robben Island and Simonstown. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hout Bay and Muizenberg were also defended. The fortifications were linked by a well-developed signalling system using cannon shots and flags to communicate information about the movement of shipping round the Peninsula, and if necessary raise the call to arms deep into the interior of the Cape. By the time that the British took over the Cape in 1795 after attacking Muizenberg



(the soft underbelly of the system) Cape Town was a heavily fortified city, which was strengthened again by new defences built during the first British occupation.

Before the excavation of the Chavonnes Battery, and apart from the Castle, a fragment of the Amsterdam Battery and portion of the French Lines in Woodstock comprised the only visible remains of the city's early defences. Further south on the Peninsula the remains of batteries at Hout Bay, Muizenberg and Simonstown have survived.

## **2.2 The Hout Bay Defences**

Hout Bay on account of its sheltered position and good anchorage was identified as a strategic landing place and was duly fortified, not only in DEIC times but also during the British occupation and again in WW2. Four defensive facilities were built in the Hout Bay area during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These are West Fort (formerly known as Gilquin), East Fort (formerly known as Sluysken), Klein Gibraltar and Conway Redoubt. Remains of all 4 of these positions have survived. The heavy gun emplacements at West Fort and East Fort were positioned opposite each other at the entrance to Hout Bay – West Fort lies just south of Hout Bay harbour, and East Fort on the other side of the bay, just below Chapman's Peak Drive. Together these batteries were capable of placing a vicious crossfire at virtually any position within the mouth of the bay. Klein Gibraltar, a small emplacement located on the Hillside overlooking Hout Bay beach was strategically positioned to cover any landing of troops on the beach. Conway redoubt, built by the French troops in 1781 after the outbreak of war between France, and her allies, the United Provinces of the Netherlands and Great Britain acted mainly as a signal station and small defensive redoubt to defend the pass at Constantia Nek.

### **2.2.1 The history of East Fort**

Compared with many of the fortifications built around the Cape, the history of East Fort has been well researched by a number of people. Eminent Architect and Planner, Hugh Floyd researched the background history of the site in the 1980's while Ute Seeman<sup>4</sup> conducted a number of exploratory archaeological excavations at East Fort, West Fort, and Klein Gibraltar. The small fort known as Conway Redoubt at Constantia Nek, Hout Bay was researched and subject to exploratory excavations by A.B. Smith in 1978.

East Fort owes its existence to political instability in Europe with war being declared between France and her allies, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. The Cape at the time was a strategic base – who ever controlled it had the capacity to exert hegemony over the Southern Oceans and keep maritime and military forces supplied. West Fort was built in May 1781 at the instigation of Governor van Plettenberg on news reaching the Cape that the Netherlands and Great Britain were at war again. Initially named Guilquin (after Major Guilquin, the Director of fortifications), the Battery was armed with 20 cannons. French forces, the Pondichery regiment under the command of Colonel Conway arrived at the Cape 3 months later in July and so began the "French Period" at the Cape. Conway immediately audited the defenses at the Cape recommending improvements to the signal system (cannons and flags)

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<sup>4</sup> Seeman, U. Forts and Fortifications of the Cape Peninsula. Unpublished MSC Thesis, Department of Archaeology, U.C.T.

and the construction of a small Fort known as Conway Redoubt at Constantia Neck<sup>5</sup>. He also recommended the construction of a small battery overlooking the beach at Hout Bay (Klein Gibraltar). During their two years at the Cape, the Pondichery Regiment did a great deal to improve the fortifications at Cape Town. They built the French Lines (Woodstock), and according to Smith, began the construction of earthworks at East Fort. According to Conway, West Fort was armed with 8 ½ pounders; but he recommended that heavier caliber cannons to fully protect the bay should replace these. The French occupation ended in 1783, after which many of the facilities built by them fell into neglect. Military preparedness fell to an all time low. Rudolf Siegfried Allemans, Captain of the Militia wrote in 1784 that the batteries were miserably manned, and of their crews “*all understand nothing further than how to load and fire a gun, are the only so called artillerymen. Not one of them knows how to light a match, or strike the fuse of a bomb, or much less how to load, elevate or depress and fire off a mortar. The trial of the quality of the powder and the calculation for the quantity of force measured according to the distance aimed at are to them mysterious and unknown secrets.*”<sup>6</sup>

It is not clear exactly when East Fort was built, or the real extent of the involvement of the French forces. Smith indicates that the French began building the earthworks some time during their occupation between 1781 and 1783. Seeman<sup>7</sup> has established that the first archival evidence of the existence of East Fort is plan drawn in 1785. It is possible that the French began building the earthworks but abandoned it before their departure from the Cape leaving the job to be completed by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC).

In a military audit of 1789-90 it was suggested that the Hout Bay batteries were under-armed and needed to be re-equipped with heavier cannons (West Fort was only armed with 8 pounders). In 1793 the political situation in Europe deteriorated with the start of the French Revolution. L.M. Thibault, Director of Fortifications, refurbished the Hout Bay batteries equipping them with 18 and 24 pounder cannons and constructed shot furnaces in preparation for a possible French or British attack (Prince William of Orange had pledged allegiance to Britain). \*(see comment) It was probably during this time that the traversing emplacements were built. East Fort was renamed “Sluysken” and West Fort, “Gordon”. *Hottentot* soldiers of the Cape Corps (Pandoers) were stationed at Hout Bay where they served as orderlies and dispatch riders to the National Regiment.<sup>8</sup>

The British arrived in Simonstown in 1795 with the intention of bringing the Cape under its protection in terms of the allegiance of the House of Orange with the British throne. The local *Burghers* were not in favour of this, some being sympathetic to the ideals of the French Revolution, while the leadership of the Cape was non-committal. Colonel Gordon, commander of the local militia did very little to fortify Muizenberg, and the British after playing

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<sup>5</sup> Smith A.B. The French period at the Cape, 1781 – 1783. A report on excavations at Conway redoubt, Constantia Nek. Military History Journal. Volume 5 No 3.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Smidt, R.E. Defenses at the Cape of Good Hope in Former days. Unpublished manuscript in Parliamentary Library.

<sup>7</sup> Seeman, U. 1992. The Hout Bay Forts 1781-1829. A report prepared for the Hout Bay Museum.

<sup>8</sup> *Comment*. According to Gerry de Vries, prominent authority on smooth bore muzzle loading guns (SBML) there are no known VOC period traversing carriages in South Africa and with the possible exception of Ceylon they were probably never used by the VOC before their demise. It is generally accepted that the British were the originators of traversing platforms around 1793. De Vries argues that if they were in existence during the VOC period they would have been installed at other more important batteries first, e.g. the Castle or the Chavonnes Battery, and only evidence of British traversing platforms has been found.

This means therefore that the gun battery at East Fort in its current form is most likely British rather than Dutch.

a waiting game invaded with ease after a brief standoff in Muizenberg in 1795. Thus began the first British occupation. One of the first things they did on their arrival was to familiarize themselves with the Cape defences; after all, it was important that they should protect their new gains from the French. General Craig saw to it that all batteries that were in disrepair were made good, he fortified Muizenberg substantially, strengthened the batteries around Table Bay, built a system of Block Houses on the slopes of Table mountain and built a new heavy gun battery (Craig's battery) close to or on the site of Fort Duijnhoop near the mouth of the Salt River. The potential strategic position of Hout Bay was taken very seriously and its defences were duly strengthened.

### 2.2.2 East Fort and the British

The British expanded East Fort's capacity substantially. In 1796 they built permanent barracks, a blockhouse or fortified barrack that was three stories high and equipped with a powder magazine and cistern, as well as 5 prefabricated huts, which according to Seeman were probably located at both East Fort and West Fort. The battery itself consisting of 5, 18 pounders on circular platforms were described as being quite complete and new at the time.

East Fort appears to have taken up the principal defensive role, while the 20 cannon battery at West Fort was abandoned.

After the Treaty of Amiens the Batavian Republic allowed the forts to fall into a state of disrepair. The British invaded for the second time in 1806 after a vigorous confrontation with Dutch forces at Blaauberg. Once again the Cape Defenses were re-appraised. Seeman indicates that it may have been shortly after the second British occupation that the Terreplein was built at East Fort obscuring the southern circular gun emplacement. A British report of the time also indicated that West Fort was in fairly good order being equipped with 8, 24 pounder Dutch iron cannons of which 4 were on traversing platforms and 4 on carriages on wood and stone platforms. The batteries were maintained and records kept until 1820 after which threat of European war decreased. A painting by Thomas Baines circa 1850 shows the blockhouse in a good state of repair, however roofs appear to be missing from the Barracks. There is no doubt that during the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century the site was robbed for building materials and other fixtures. Nevertheless, substantial ruins still exist today.

### 2.2.3 East Fort in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The record of communications with respect to the Hout Bay forts housed in SAHRA is comprehensive and come to some 4 volumes of maps, communications and proposals. The record of information housed there begins in 1914 when a proposal was entertained to transfer obsolete cannons to the City of Cape Town to be used as ornaments. Ten cannons are mentioned indicating that 2 may have been removed (8 remain there today).

The old military road to East Fort which passes the Klein Gibraltar Battery, has long since been discontinued since the construction of Chapman's Peak Drive in the 1920's, however the HB&LHT are investigating ways whereby the original route across the "Hanging Meadow" may be used as a walking trail. Regrettably, Chapman's Peak Drive effectively divided East Fort into two precincts – the upper precinct containing the barracks, cook-house and British blockhouse, the lower precinct consisting of the battery, earthworks and powder magazine.

By the 1920's, letters lodged in the SAHRA files indicate at that time concern was expressed about the deteriorating conditions of the forts and their need to be conserved. Proposals were placed to repair broken walls and build new carriages for the cannons. This was carried out in 1929 using Australian hardwoods; the carriages being mounted on specially constructed stone platforms (much of the work was done by the Department of Defence). Both East Fort and West Fort were among the first declared Historic Monuments in South Africa, the declaration being published in the government gazette in 1936. Documentation includes detailed maps of East Fort and West Fort drawn by the Department of Defence in 1935. The records also document a debate over the wording of commemorative plaques to be erected at both sites.

The advent of WW2 saw East Fort equipped with a concrete forward observation post (FOP), while West Fort, being strategically positioned, had some quick firing 12 pounder naval guns placed on the site. Likewise, the site of Klein Gibraltar was also armed. The 1940 application by the Department of Defence to build a FOP and barrack building near the East Fort Battery still exists; the letters indicate their willingness to do this in such a way that interference with the fabric of both sites are kept to a minimum. The application was approved by the then Historic Monuments Commission.

The period immediately after WW2 shows renewed interest in the site and proposals to again make good the collapsing fabric. East Fort then became an informal picnic site on Chapman's Peak Drive, and remained that way until recently. The gun carriages were rebuilt with railway sleepers in the 1970's after a fire destroyed those built in the 1930's.

In the late 1970's academic interest in the site was rekindled. The Hout Bay Museum has been instrumental in negotiating with the Regional Services Council and commissioned studies on the site, the first of which is a well-researched report by Hugh Floyd<sup>9</sup> (Architect and Town Planner) in which he outlined the history of the site and a vision for its future. Ute Seeman<sup>10</sup> followed with a series of archaeological excavations in the early 1990's. In 1994 the Western Cape Regional Services Council<sup>11</sup> commissioned a development plan, which resulted in the construction of set paths, parking areas and informative signage, which exists on the site today.

**The most astonishing revelation of the SAHRA files is that both East Fort and West Fort have been the subject of almost 90 years of pleas, proposals and negotiations with a succession of authorities.** This has involved many people ranging from high-ranking military personnel, respected academics, and officers of government all of whom have contributed to the multitude of *ad hoc* changes have been made to the site in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The documentation contains dozens of proposals for small changes, conservation measures and approvals thereof, all of which has involved rebuilding of crumbling walls, remounting of cannons, references to vandalism. While the compounded effect of the multitude of changes has made it very difficult to distinguish the different layers of fabric in the various elements of East Fort (it is recorded that some contractors tried to use media that mimicked early building fabric), this has resulted in the survival of the ruins in comparatively

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<sup>9</sup> Floyd, H. 1986. Report on the future of East Fort, Hout Bay. Unpublished report prepared for the Board of Trustees of the Hout Bay Museum.

<sup>10</sup> Seeman, Ute. 1993. Forts and fortifications at the Cape Peninsula 1781-1829 a survey of defense works with special references to the Hout Bay forts. Unpublished MA dissertation: University of Cape Town.

<sup>11</sup> Oberholtzer, B, Floyd, H., Knight Hall and Hendry Assoc. 1994. Chapman's Peak Drive Development Plan. Unpublished report prepared for the Western Cape Regional Services Council.

good condition. The periodic painting of the 8 cannons has conserved them and slowed down the rate of oxidation with the result that they are in good enough condition to be fired. Curiously, despite the accumulated effort of so many people to conserve the site over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the SAHRA files contain no concrete proposals to restore any aspect of the site apart from the cannons – the intention throughout has been to commemorate the place and slow down deterioration of the ruins.

#### 2.2.4 The Hout Bay Batteries in action

In 1781, West Fort came very close to engaging with an English frigate that Admiral Johnston had had sent into the bay on a scouting trip. The English frigate made sure that she did not come closer than a large cannon shots distance from the Battery, and the commander of West Fort, wisely, did not open fire otherwise he would have revealed that West Fort was only armed with 8 pounders. Had the English known this, their squadron would have attacked immediately.<sup>12</sup>

The English attacked the Cape in 1795 and secured an easy victory. Part of their strategy was to launch a false attack at Hout Bay. A squadron of ships appeared at the mouth of the bay, and the sloop “Echo” was sent in to alarm the coast and draw enemy fire. Both East Fort and West fort batteries opened fire but failed to score a hit on the “Echo” who made sure that she was just out of range. Having established the strength of the Dutch defenses, the “Echo” withdrew, and together with the rest of the squadron proceeded to support the English invasion of False Bay. In 1995, the Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust “adopted” East Fort, maintained the site and restored a cannon to working order, which is fired on ceremonial occasions.

### 3 CURRENT STATE OF OTHER HOUT BAY FORTS

#### 3.1 Conservation status of 18<sup>th</sup> century Peninsula Batteries

Of the many DEIC batteries that were built around the Peninsula, other than the Castle of The Cape of Good Hope, few have survived. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century was an unfortunate time for local military heritage. This period saw the demolition of Fort Knokke, most of the sea lines and Woodstock beach batteries, the Imhoff battery and the almost complete demolition of the mighty Amsterdam Battery (the only true casement battery built in the Cape). Demolition of the Castle was seriously considered to make way for railway lines. Other batteries in strategic positions were redeveloped during WW1 and WW2 and as a result very little original fabric has survived. These include Fort Wynyard (originally “Kyk in die pot”), and the Simonstown batteries. Un-conserved fragments of the “French Lines” have survived in Trafalgar Park in Woodstock (these are uncelebrated), while recently the surviving remains of the Chavonnes Battery were found under the BOE building in the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. Muizenberg defence lines have also survived but have yet to be conserved and developed for meaningful public access. It is possible that some elements of the Woodstock sea lines and the Roggebaai Battery lie buried under reclaimed land yet to be rediscovered. The 4 Hout Bay sites, although in variable states of preservation, represent the remains of a complete local defensive system.

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<sup>12</sup> Seeman, U. 1992. The Hout Bay Forts. Unpublished report prepared for the Hout Bay Museum.

### 3.2 Conway Redoubt

The site lies entirely on private land and is no longer accessible to the public. Parts of it are visible on the other side of a security fence close to a local hiking trail. The earth walls have eroded heavily, the ditch is no longer recognizable. The redoubt presently takes the form of an earth mound covered with black wattle trees. A cannon commemorating the strategic position of Constantia Nek and the signal post has been placed in a public position in front of the Constantia Nek Restaurant. There are no plans in the immediate future to commemorate the site in any way or open it to the public.

### 3.3 Klein Gibraltar Battery

Remains of this small battery are visible from Military Road, which passes very close to the site. Although Seeman uncovered walling and the foundations of a shot oven, very little of this is immediately apparent, the site being visually dominated by the WW2 ready-use lockers and concrete mountings for the Hotchkiss guns. The opportunity does exist to celebrate the site as a hiking trail passes very close to it. This opportunity is used by the Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust who include the site in their walking trails.

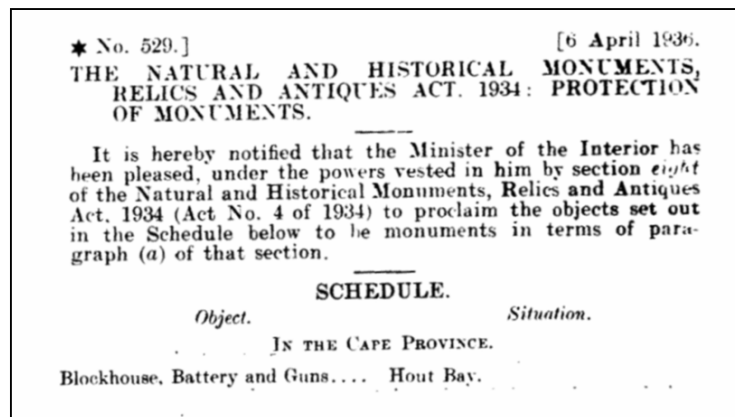
### 3.4 West Fort

Remains of West Fort can be seen to the south of Hout Bay Harbour where buried walling and several cannons still survive. Parts of the site were disturbed during WW2 when light artillery was installed (ready-use lockers and mountings are still visible). Although excavations by Seeman demonstrated that remains of the earthworks and walls, cannons and other features remain intact below the soil surface, the site has never been developed or subject to any form of public interpretation. The area in which the site is situated is degraded public open space. At present it remains unclear who the official landowner is, however, communications held at SAHRA indicate that the site is owned by the State (Defense endowment property) and leased before WW2 to a Hout Bay fishing company.<sup>13</sup>

The cannons are in poor condition and it is unlikely that they could ever safely be fired. However, In 2002 on Heritage Day, the HB&LHT unveiled a restored 24 pdr Cannon which was donated by the V&A

Company and of the same period as those on site. The cannon is in good condition and has been proof fired and licensed. The cannon has been fired on several occasions, notably on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 2002. And 2003.

West Fort was declared a Historic Monument shortly after East Fort



<sup>13</sup> Volume 1 Hout Bay Forts files: SAHRA.

## 4 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

East Fort is effectively bisected by Chapman's Peak Drive, which has separated the barracks and English blockhouse complex (upper fort area) from the battery further down the slope.

### 4.1 Upper Fort Area

This consists of a collection of ruins. Laid out paths and interpretive signs identify the various structures while the well maintained flat open areas in between the various features provide sheltered areas used by picnickers on rare occasions. The British forces built this upper part of East Fort after the first occupation of the Cape in 1795. The surviving elements that make up the upper part of the site are listed below. The site of wooden barracks mentioned in historic documents remains unknown.



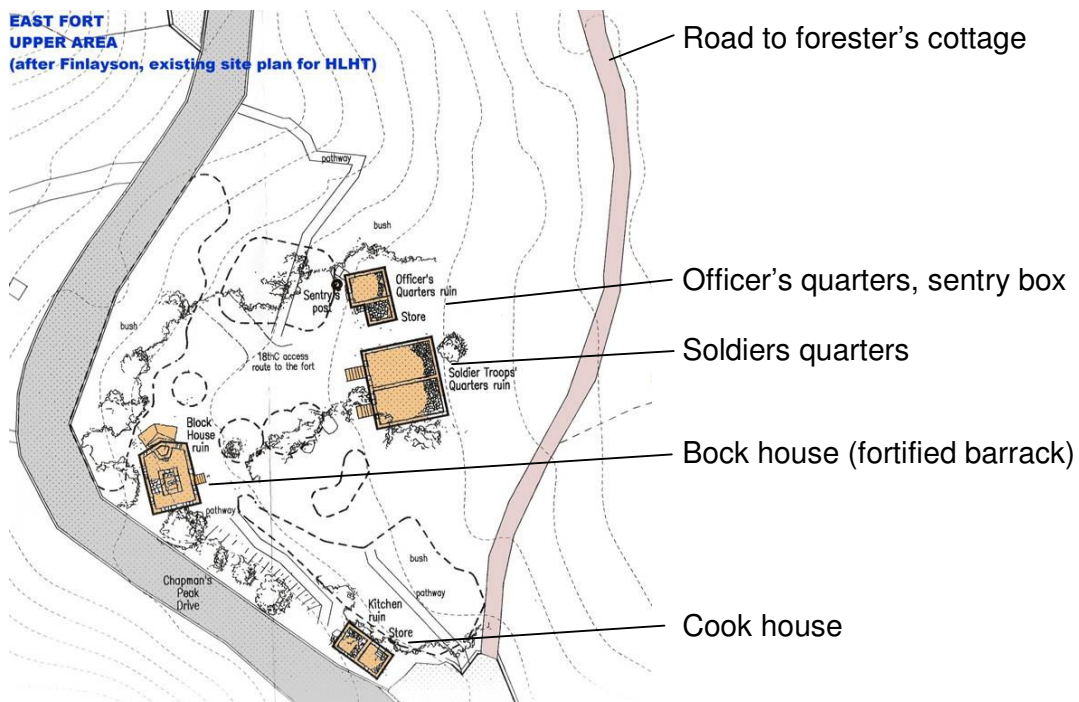
Cook House

Soldiers quarters

Block house

Officer's quarters, sentry box

**EAST FORT  
UPPER AREA**  
(after Finlayson, existing site plan for HLHT)



## Cook House

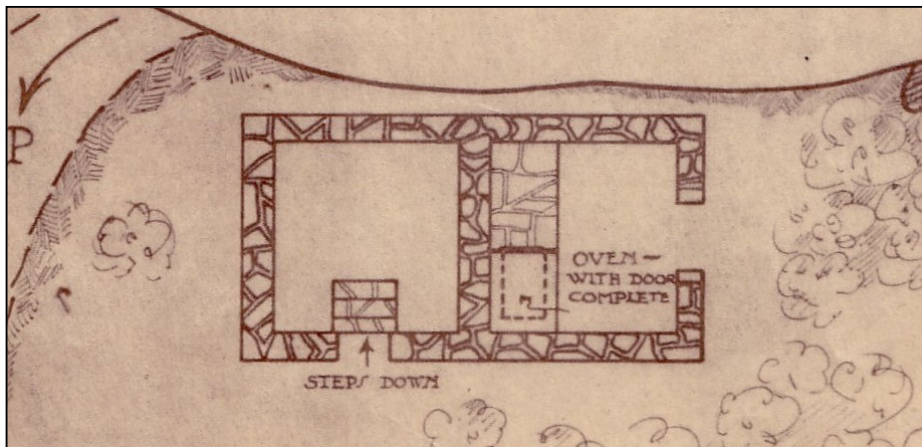
Description: A two roomed stone structure without a roof. A Dutch oven is present in the western room. No joinery has survived.

The building shows that many years of conservations measures have altered the appearance of the fabric – Portland cement has been used and loose available stone has been used to repair walls.

The Dutch oven has deteriorated in since Seeman photographed it 12 years ago. Much of the original plasterwork has been lost and the opening is now square (as opposed to vaulted in 1992). The plan of 1935 indicates that the oven door was still present. There is no evidence of it today.

The short flight of stairs up to the doors of the building is not indicated as being present in 1935. It is not clear from the plan drawn in 1935 whether these existed at the time or were built to facilitate visitor access in preparation for declaration of the site as a Historic Monument.

No artefactual material was noted.



Plan view of the Cook House as it appeared in 1935.

The door of the oven is indicated to be complete.

Steps lead down into the storeroom section, which was slightly sunken.



## Soldiers quarters

Structure consisting of two rooms arranged parallel to each other – each room approached via separate westerly facing entrances and a short flight of stairs. Rooms have flagstone floors; no joinery has survived. Records dating to early 20<sup>th</sup> century indicate that East Fort structures used to be plastered but this has since eroded away leaving the bare stonework.

Inconsistencies in building style show that these structures have been subject to a great deal of modification, most of this taking place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is extensive evidence of rebuilding of collapsed walls, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century fabric has been cumulatively compromised over the years. Use of materials that “mimic” traditional building materials make it very difficult to distinguish old from new.

A patch of Portland cement on the flagstone floor of the southern room of the soldiers quarters are testimony to the *ad hoc* nature of repairs done in the interest of conservation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Stone stairs leading up to the doorways of the two rooms showing evidence of modification and layering. A layer of late 20<sup>th</sup> century stonework and mortar is clearly visible overlying an earlier set of stairs. The existing stairs are steep and difficult to negotiate for an infirm or disabled person.

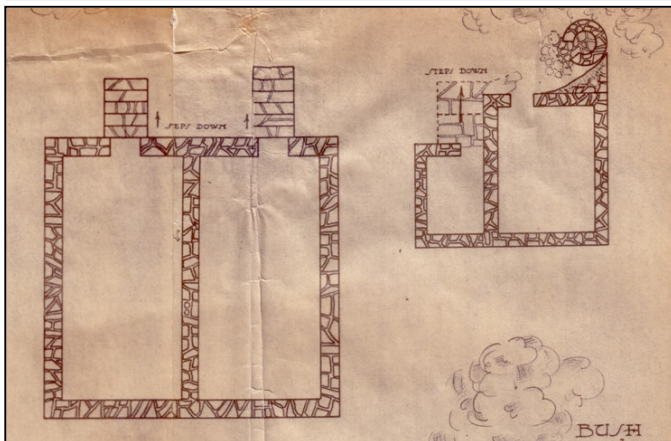


### Officer's quarters and sentry box

The old Military Road approached the fort at a slightly higher elevation than Chapman's Peak Drive today. Officer's quarters and sentry box would have been reached first. The alignment of the road has largely been lost since construction of Chapman's Peak Drive. The arrow indicates the position of the sentry box and officers quarters.

When photographed by Seeman in 1990, most of the front walls stood at full height. The loss of fabric from the two rooms of the Officers quarters in recent years is alarming (see Seeman). As with other structures, no joinery has survived, however early plasterwork still adheres to the areas around the doorways. Modern conservation measures are evident.

The sentry box appears to have withstood the elements comparatively well with substantial amounts of early plaster in evidence. Tops of the wall have been capped with modern fabric to retard erosion of the plaster. Bush growth around the area may have assisted in retarding the erosion of plaster by driving winter rain.



Plan of the soldier's quarters (left) and officer's quarters and sentry box as they appeared in 1935.

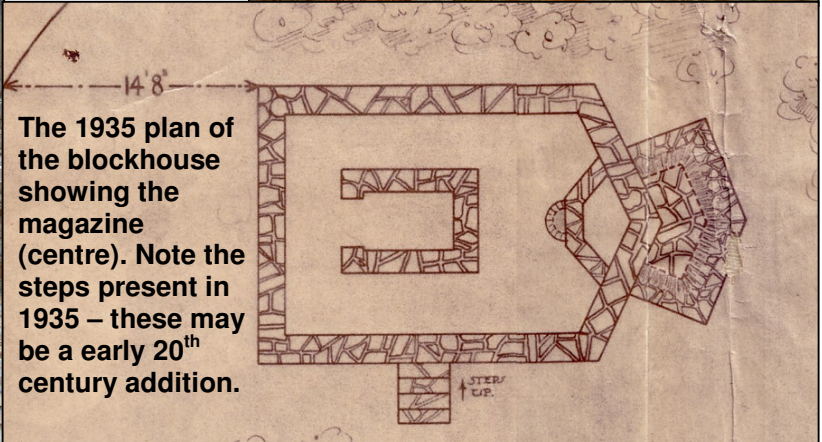
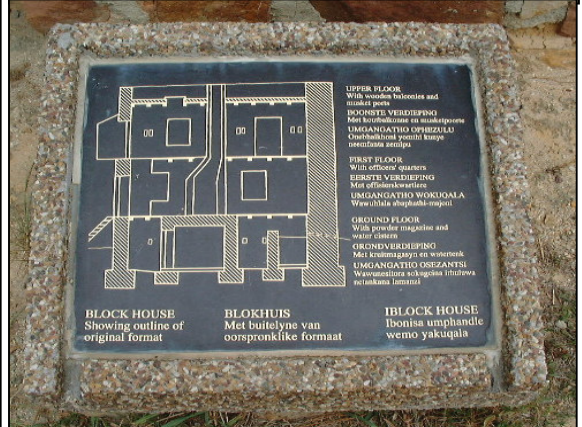
Note steps to the soldier's quarters but the paved floors are not indicated.

## Blockhouse (fortified barracks)

This is one of the more spectacular features of the site with a high portion of standing wall, a sunken interior with features and embrasures (gun ports) just above ground level. Like other structures on the site, it has been subject to extensive *ad hoc* conservation over time, modern fabric is evident in a number of areas. The Hout Bay Llandudno Heritage trust desires full restoration of this structure.

The original form of the blockhouse is well known and has been recorded by a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century artists. The original plans drawn by the Royal Engineers are housed in the Cape Archives. These form the basis of a very useful information sign that adds value to the site by assisting in the interpretation of what is a complicated structure. The blockhouse had 3 floors with wooden parapets erected around the top floor.

Remains of the powder magazine and cistern in the basement have survived well but have been conserved by liberally adding stonework and modern mortar to the top of the walls. This has retarded erosion. The interior of the structure has been cleared of rubble (and archaeological material) on a number of occasions.



The 1935 plan of the blockhouse showing the magazine (centre). Note the steps present in 1935 – these may be a early 20<sup>th</sup> century addition.

## Forester's cottage

The exact age of this building is unknown. The fabric indicates that it was built circa 1920 but was certainly present when East Fort was declared a Historic Monument in 1936. Although the building is largely unrelated to East Fort, it lies on the same defence endowment property. A gravel road extends from Chapman's Peak Drive (immediately South of the Cook House) to the cottage. Adaptive reuse of the site in its current state is limited by lack of parking.

After 1920 when the drive to conserve East Fort gained momentum resulting in declaration of the site, the resident forester took it upon himself to keep a watch over the historic structures.

The abandoned cottage, despite being technically unsafe has attracted graffiti and appears to have served as a "hangout" for persons intent on social mischief.



The forester's cottage is in poor condition since it was gutted by fire in the year 2000. Water damage has weakened the mortar and walls have collapsed in places.

The cost of making good this structure will be considerable and an analysis of the costs of demolishing it versus building an entirely new, but sympathetic structure should be considered.

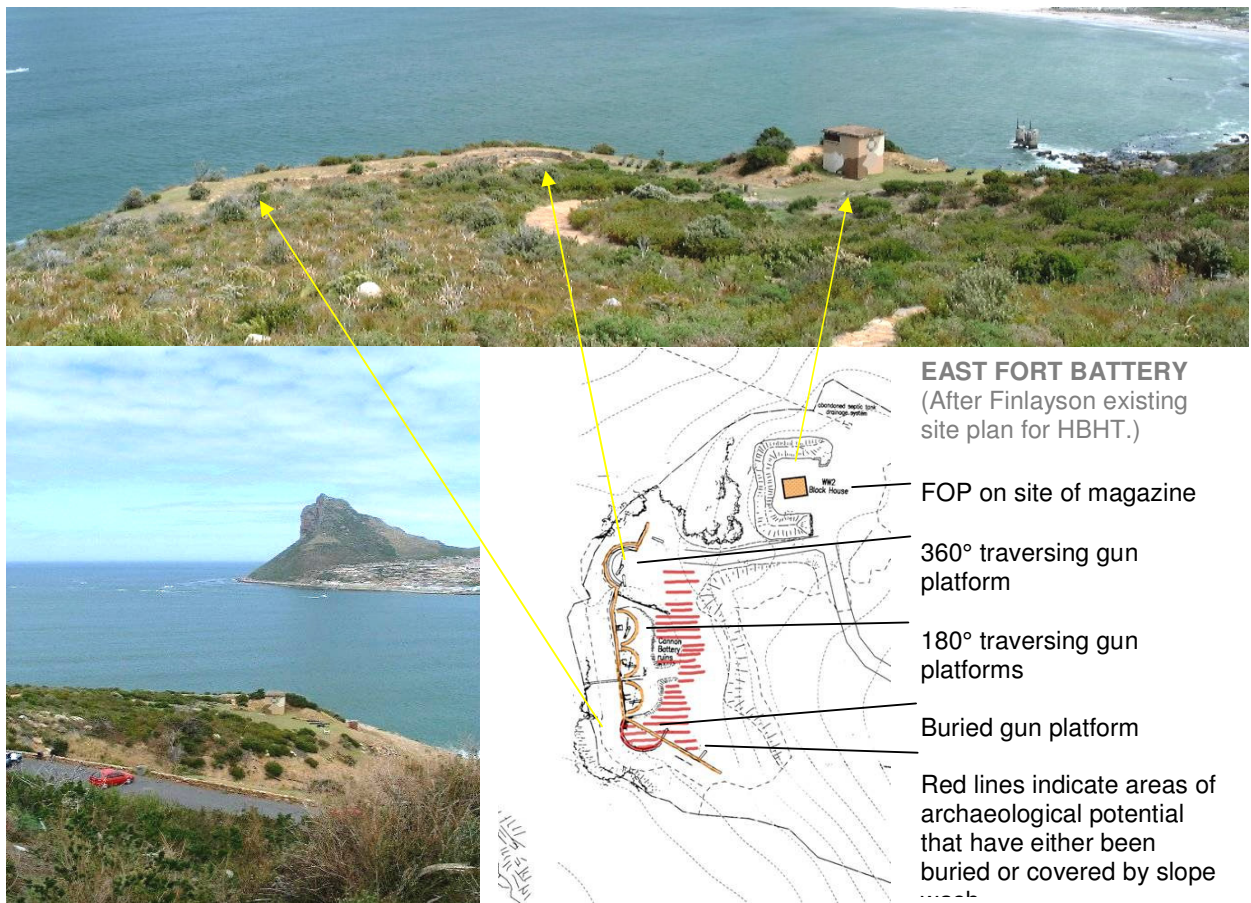
The site is protected by the 60-year clause of the NHRA and will need permission from the regional heritage authority to effect any changes.

## 4.2 The Lower battery area

The battery is situated down-slope of the blockhouse and quarters, below Chapman's Peak Drive which effectively separates the DEIC battery from the largely British built upper complex. A gravel road leads down to the battery, interesting this is on the roughly the same alignment as the road on the 1935 plans and is probably the original DEIC service road. There is a modern footpath with a viewing area adjacent to Chapman's Peak Drive that leads down to the site through indigenous Fynbos. Information boards<sup>14</sup> provide a summarised history of the site and its elements.

This is the oldest part of East Fort incorporating the earthworks started by the Pondicherry Regiment in the 1780's, the battery completed by the Dutch, and modified again in the during the British occupation. In 1940 the Department of Defence applied to the Historic Monuments Commission for a permit to erect facilities at the both East Fort and West Fort due to their strategic positions. The powder magazine was demolished and a Forward Observation Post (FOP) with "quarters" was built on the site making use of the DEIC earthworks for cover. The 8 iron muzzle loading cannons on the site are the original 18 pounders installed by the DEIC prior to the British occupation in 1795.

Elements of the site are described in detail below.



<sup>14</sup> Information boards designed by Floyd and Oberholzer.

## Forward Observation Post

The FOP has been recently painted by the HLHT in camouflage pattern that was based on traces of remains of Defence Department paintwork. A new steel door has been fitted while steelwork on the bottom floor has been made good. A drainage area has been created at the entrance. The observation floor (accessed by a steel ladder) has been left as is. The FOP serves as storage area for gunnery equipment and tools. Note the DEIC period earthworks on the seaward side.

The HLHT has erected a memorial plaque to commemorate persons who have fallen in building the nation. The surrounds are envisaged as a natural memorial garden through which the HLHT wishes to establish a system of paths.

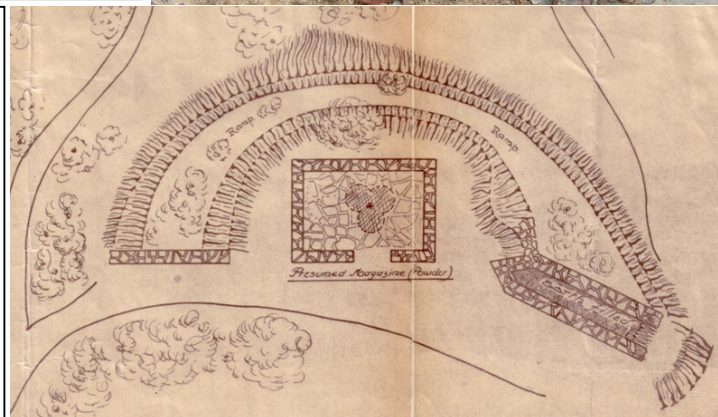
The FOP itself is typical of a number built round the coast of South Africa. The irregular edged concrete roof was a method of breaking up the visual profile of the structure.

The “quarters” which were built in 1940 immediately behind the FOP was demolished to discourage squatters. Its remains lie scattered on the slope below the blockhouse. A toilet, is all that remains. The site of the “quarters” is now grassed over. A working 18 pounder which is fired to commemorate events, has been mounted in this area.



The 1935 plan of the site shows the area before the FOP was built. This was the site of the gun powder magazine, which was demolished in 1940.

The earthworks in front of the magazine have survived, however the stone walled sections of the earthworks have degenerated.



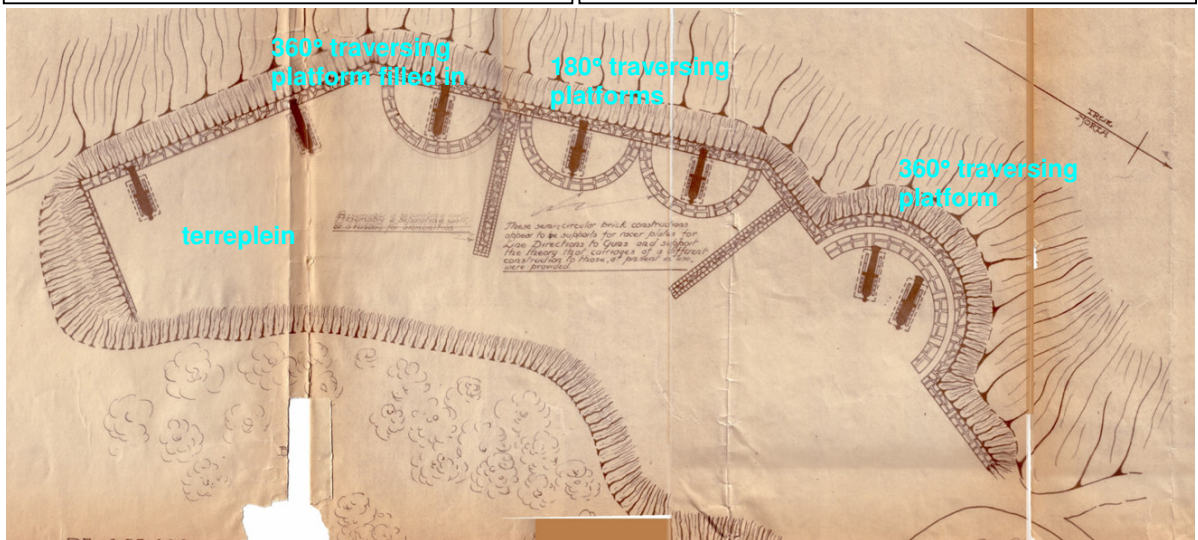


**7. Battery and armaments**

Eight 18<sup>th</sup> century Swedish muzzle loading cannons (18 pounders) have survived. One of these has been mounted on a concrete carriage after being moved from the battery to FOP (above left). It is fired from time to time commemorate various events. The other 7 cannons have been cleaned, painted, proof fired and are now licensed. The two longer cannons probably belonged in the 360° traversing mountings at the battery (left).

The iron cannons are unique in terms of the fact that they are in good enough condition to function and are considered to be one of the most significant elements of the site. The wooden mountings (made in the 1970's) burned in the fire of 2000.

1935. The circular traversing mounting is one of two – the other was filled in by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 3 cannons were placed in 180° mountings while two were placed on the terreplein to the south east. The traversing gun mountings are considered in this case to be very early developments in the history of gunnery.



## 8. Battery walls and earthworks

The battery itself is built with a combination of earthworks and low retaining walls.

Unlike the ruins above Chapman's Peak drive, the battery area (the oldest part of the site) contains the greatest amount of unaltered fabric. Furthermore, slope wash and the fact that the southeast portion of the battery, including one of the two 360° traversing platforms which was filled in during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is the part of the site that holds the highest archaeological potential. It holds the promise of adding significant understanding of the site, especially the traversing mechanisms through archaeological excavation.

Lack of maintenance, vegetation growth and erosion is impacting the stone walls – illustrated (right) is a corner of the remaining circular gun emplacement where fabric has loosened and collapsed out of the wall. The tops of the walls will need to be capped with modern good quality materials, and plant growth in the stonework will have to be controlled.

The battery is a highly significant aspect of the site. This is attributed to the state of preservation of the iron cannons and the unique archaeological signature of the early traversing gun platforms – an attribute shared with West Fort.

The battery has been incised in to the side of the mountain – a level area has been created by cutting away the soft earth as slumped substantially over the years h slope. The cutting at the back of east fort h with eroded material settling behind the battery walls. Substantial archaeological work is needed to remove the slumped deposits and bring the surface back down to "original" levels. The cutting could thereafter be re-landscaped and stabilised.





## 5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The full range of significance and meaning attached to an asset such as East Fort will never be fully understood, as there are always gaps in the history in terms of details of events that will, in all likelihood, never be known. East Fort, in comparison with many historic sites is very well documented thanks to the number of scholars that have taken an interest in the site since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The documentary record of conservation of the site held at SAHRA head office is of exceptional interest, not only in terms of physical interventions to the place, but also in the fact that it reflects the changing attitudes to the significance of the site over time. In assessing significance of a place, it is important to acknowledge that perceptions of significance vary from person to person according to their backgrounds. This is particularly the case in South Africa where the political history of the country strongly influences the values that people put on aspects of the National Estate. Notwithstanding these factors, much is known about the history of the site and it is possible to establish some of the significances involved.

### 5.1 Landmark status

- The Hout Bay Forts were among the earliest structures built on the Atlantic seaboard part of the Peninsula and the military personnel would have been a significant element in the composition of the local population. East Fort is very well represented by artists who visited the site in the past, the English blockhouse being the most prominent element in various depictions of the site. Since its abandonment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century East Fort appears to have been a popular picnic venue. The SAHRA records which date back to 1914 certainly confirm this. While never really being a formal tourism venue, the site is used by the public as a recreational area, especially on warm summer evenings when groups of people venture down to the battery to picnic and enjoy the spectacular views and whale watching that the venue has to offer. In recent years the HBLT through their regular activities, have upheld the landmark status of the place into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Attached to the landmark significance of the site is its strategic significance. The fact that after reconnoitring Hout Bay in the 1940's, the Department of Defence established a FOP at East Fort and Batteries at Klein Gibraltar, points to the fact that these locations were of primary strategic significance in protecting Hout Bay – one of the most sheltered mooring and landing areas on the Peninsula.
- The East Fort site has landmark status other than that of a coastal defence fortress. It is one of the few sites where the vista has remained largely unchanged. Unlike the Castle or even the Chavonnes Battery which are embedded in urban development, East Fort's views encompass the unchanged backdrop which was traversed by the early Portuguese navigators, including Magellan's crew, Vasco da Gama and Bartholomew Diaz. English navigators like Drake and Cook passed that point and it is said that William Bligh beached his ship on Hout Bay Beach to scrape off barnacles ! It is even possible the Phoenician as well as Indonesian ships passed that point.
- There is conjecture as to whether or not Francisco de Almeda, first Portuguese Viceroy to India, who was killed in 1510 along with 64 of his men, many of whom were

captains, were massacred in Table Bay or Hout Bay and there is good modern evidence to support the latter. This event terminated the interest of Portugal in the Cape and subsequently its interests moved further East to Mozambique and eventually Goa.

- East Fort was enlarged by the British to protect the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope which eventually stretched from Cape Town to Albany in the Eastern Cape. Every school atlas throughout the world records the Cape of Good Hope in one way or another and East Fort is one of the most historic places to entrench a sense of history attached to a landmark of world significance.

## **5.2 Association with historical events**

- The cannons of the Hout Bay Forts were trained out to sea and over Hout Bay Beach signifying where the greatest strategic threat was perceived to originate - an attack on the Cape Colony by enemy shipping. The battery was built as a response to European power struggles and reflects the international repercussions of European politics in the context of the strategic importance of the Cape. It saw action during the first British invasion of the Cape and was refurbished each time international politics posed a possibility of military threat.
- The location of the battery was conceived of by the French under Captain Thomas Conway who commenced building the earthworks with Indian troops of the Pondicherry regiment (mercenaries). Construction was completed by DEIC forces under Sluysken with the assistance of slave and convict labour. The Cape Corps (Kaapse Pandoeren) were stationed at Hout Bay and performed duties at the Forts. The British established East Fort as a regional headquarters and took up occupation of the site again in 1806 after the second British occupation.
- East Fort was one of the first places in South Africa to be declared a historic monument.

## **5.3 Social significance**

- East Fort was built by Indian troops of the French Pondicherry regiment and its construction was completed using slave labour, commanded by officials of the DEIC and manned by common soldiers. Within its history is represented the diversity of experiences that epitomizes the history of South African Society.
- The site as it stands today represents the aspiration of the largely European community to conserve what it perceives, as it's past. Initially officers of the Union Defence Force played a key role in the conservation of the site. The interest groups in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century included members of the country's academic elite, notable citizens. In recent years this has included educated and appreciative persons and organizations within the local community. In reality, East Fort was a place with a cosmopolitan history, which rightfully people throughout the world can embrace.
- Built by the French, with Indian soldiers for the Dutch armed with Swedish Cannon which still remain; taken twice by the British, occupied by the Allies in WWII and today forming part of a National Park, it can most certainly be called an "International Historic site".

#### 5.4 Archaeological research potential

- The upper section of the site is of limited archaeological potential due to fact that too much intervention has already taken place there over the years.
- The lower battery area is of high archaeological potential in that the embankment has slumped over the original land surface under which details of the site may remain preserved.
- The southeast portion of the battery including one circular traversing gun emplacement was backfilled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under this are possibly preserved earlier elements of the site as well as aspects of the traversing mechanism for the gun carriage. **This is important information that would inform future educational displays and any planned reconstruction.**

#### 5.5 Educational and recreational value

- The site is situated above and below Chapman's Peak Drive providing spectacular views from both the ruins and the battery. It is on account of this and the peaceful ambience created by the old ruins that it is favoured as a quiet picnic spot.
- The signs that exist on the site today do provide interesting basic information about the history of the fort. This history is also illustrated at the Hout Bay Museum while the HBHT activities have further popularised the site.
- The redevelopment of Chapmans Peak Drive is likely to increase visitor numbers to the site, and **has the potential to broaden the audience that can benefit by sensitive developments of an educational nature.**
- **The history of East Fort is particularly well documented and good records exist compared with other similar sites on the Peninsula.**
- The site is set within an area of bountiful natural history, geology, vegetation and is a good "launch pad" for broadening visitor's understanding of these elements.

#### 5.6 Group value

- The Hout Bay defences were part of a larger network of Peninsula fortifications. East Fort, which is the subject of this study, is an integral part of the Hout Bay defensive network and its significance cannot be appraised in isolation. Much of its importance lies in the fact it has direct linkages with not only historical events, but other places on the landscape (the Castle, Muizenberg, Cape Town, Table Mountain block houses, Simonstown Batteries and Saldanha Bay to name but a few).
- East Fort is a layered site containing components of French, DEIC and English workmanship. The final significant layer on the site are the 1940 additions built by the Department of Defence as well as various conservation attempts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which are now part of the layering of the site.
- The old manganese mine and jetty, although unrelated to East Fort, is located nearby and forms part of the "group" of interesting accessible heritage sites.

## 5.7 Rarity

- East Fort is one of many fortifications built by the DEIC within their hegemony and in this regard is not unique. However, its value lies in the fact that it is part of an intact historical military system in Hout Bay, with clear linkages to other sites on the Peninsula.
- The site is well preserved compared with other similar sites on the Cape Peninsula. Most of the components of its layering through the past survive.
- The fact that the iron cannons have survived in such a condition that they can still be fired places these among the oldest original working examples in the world in their original historical context.
- The traversing gun emplacements are very early examples of this kind of technology, which was to become standard on major batteries throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6 DEFINING ISSUES

### 6.1 Development plans

#### 6.1.1 The vision of the HBHT.

The HBHT's stated vision for the future use of the site is presented below<sup>15</sup>.

- The creation of a "Living Museum" retaining both a French 1781, and a British flavour for the lower section of the historic precincts
- The upper section to have a 1796 British ambience..
- A "Living Auditorium" which will show audio visual presentations on a wide variety of topics associated with Chapmans Peak , the Peninsula National Park and the site.
- A National Park "East Fort Gate" applying the stamp of the Park's conservation and protection ethos.
- A National Park Hiking Node incorporating overnight hiking facilities and connecting to other CPNP trails.

The HBHT has, as a result of the historical interest in the site from the Hout Bay community, informally managed the site since 2000. In fulfillment of their vision, HBHT has already invested a great deal of time as well as sought funding for a number of tasks that they have been completed. To date this includes:

- Restoration, proofing and licensing of the cannons.
- The partial restoration and painting of the FOP.
- Erection of a memorial plaque on the FOP honouring those who have fallen in building the nation.
- Development of a fynbos memorial garden on the slope between the battery and Chapman's Peak Drive.
- Removal of alien vegetation and site maintenance.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.zsd.co.za/~houtbay/military/efort1.htm>

- Staging of regular events involving firing of a mounted working cannon.

The HBHT wishes to undertake further development at the site, their vision for the future of the place is clearly displayed on their website<sup>16</sup>. In summary the proposed future development plans of the HBHT includes:

- Restoration of the remains of the Forester's house. In order to preserve and maintain the long-term sustainability of the site it is essential to have a permanent presence onsite. The restored foresters house could therefore be use for such a permanent presence and administrative building possibly together with overnight hikers accommodation initially. Later an additional building in close proximity could be constructed as a new hikers overnight accommodation.
- Reconstruction of the ruins of Soldiers quarters. These buildings could be used as a small tea/coffee shop and a venue for a multimedia presentation on local history, conservation and natural history.
- Rebuilding of the ruins of the blockhouse. Reconstructed according to original plans (which are available) this building will serve as a vantage point and a museum to house military artifacts..
- Aspects of the lower fort could be restored to c.1796 appearance. This will involve making good crumbling walls, restoring the 5 traversing gun mountings and 8 cannons, archaeological excavation and stabilizing and readapting embankments and open areas.
- The completion of the fynbos memorial garden including a zig-zag access path down the slope.
- The installation of ablution facilities and services.
- Motivate to substantially increase parking close to the site (a site adjacent to Chapmans Peak drive having been identified to this end).

#### 6.1.2 The vision of the Cape Peninsula National Park

The CPNP who control the land, have expressed their willingness to work with the HBHT in the interest of conservation of the site. Their vision for the place is, in some respects different from those of the HBHT. They favour:

- A quiet recreational area with minimal new development.
- No new impacts to the local environment.
- Retention of "sense of place".
- CPNP have indicated that creation of a large new parking area adjacent to Chapman's Peak Drive will not be entertained on account of the visual and physical impacts that this would imply.

#### 6.1.3 The role of Chapman's Peak Drive redevelopment

Chapman's Peak Drive is currently being upgraded and transformed into a toll road after fatal rock falls necessitated its closure. HBHT identified the redevelopment of this popular tourism route as an opportunity to enhance the tourism potential and general value of Chapman's Peak Drive, East Fort and the Cape Peninsula National Park by constructing a gateway to

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.zsd.co.za/~houtbay/military/efort1.htm>

the park just north of East Fort adjacent to a massive boulder with the statement “ YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE CAPE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK’ A positive spin-off for this could be enhanced parking facilities and visitor numbers at East Fort, which would increase the viability of the HBHT vision and expose local military history and our natural heritage to a wider audience.

The developers of Chapman’s Peak drive have indicated that while they are concerned about, and respect conservation issues with respect to East Fort, their area of interest and jurisdiction is strictly the provincial road reserve. The site of the tollgate is still undecided but will almost certainly be higher up the drive south of East Fort effectively excluding East Fort. This means that East Fort will be subject to increased security risks. This emphasises the need for a permanent presence on site.

#### 6.1.4 The role of compliance authorities

In terms of implementation of the NHRA, East Fort was originally a declared National Monument but has defaulted to status of a Grade 2 Provincial Heritage Site. This means that direct jurisdiction over the site falls under the control of the newly formed Heritage Western Cape (Provincial Heritage Authority). The site will only come under the control of the South African Heritage Resources Agency once application for upgrading to a grade 1 or National Heritage Site has been approved by the SAHRA council. In the interim while Heritage Western Cape was being set up, David Hart and Beverly Crouts have provided comment on the site on behalf of SAHRA. They have expressed the view that:

- Extensive reconstruction of ruins is not considered appropriate and is not currently favoured in terms of international best practice, however, every case should be considered on merit and discussed with the appropriate heritage authority.
- While adaptive reuse of the site is favoured, this needs to be carried out in terms of an approved Conservation Plan for the site.
- The relationship between CPNP and the HBHT needs to be urgently formalized.
- A heritage agreement for management of the site is required.

#### 6.1.5 Discussion

##### *6.1.5.1 Land use*

A critical issue that remains unresolved is that HBHT has no formal agreements in place with regard to their rights on the site. There is no lease agreement with CPNP or the state. There are no formal agreements with SAHRA. In reality, the CPNP have direct responsibility for the site and have tolerated the activities of the HBHT with all agreements in this regard being verbal. Should the attitude of CPNP or the state change attitude in the future; the HBHT is susceptible to losing access to the site and its investment in the place. An agreement with respect to responsibilities for the site of the parties involved is urgently required and must be in place before major financial investment is made, and paying visitors are received.

In this context, provision is made in the current National Heritage Act to allow Heritage Agreements with appropriate bodies, at the same time, the Dept of Environment and Tourism is actively promoting the adoption of ECMAs (Environmental Conservation Management Agreements). The legal frameworks provided by such legislation could be ideal for this site.

Close attention needs to be paid to safety issues, and who would be responsible in event of site accidents and public liability.

#### *6.1.5.2 Restrictions to development*

There are a number of material and technical constraints to development activities on the site that the HBHT (or any other developer) will have to take cognizance of in formulating their actions.

- a) The CPNP have indicated that no additional parking will be considered in the vicinity of East Fort. This means that immediate access to East Fort will be limited to hikers pedestrians and a limited number of vehicles.. This will impose a limit on the amount of visitors to the heritage site at any one time, and in turn has an impact on the viability/scale of site museums, events and restaurant. If the HBHT wishes to increase the numbers and safety of visitors it will have to negotiate with the relative authorities for further parking.
- b) One of the primary goals of any development of a heritage site is that respect for the existing fabric and its layering over time must be paramount. The way that adaptive reuse of the site is achieved must incorporate retaining the integrity of historical fabric and significance of the place as its primary objective. This means that there will be restrictions on what a developer is permitted to do on the site. To this end the clauses of the ICOMOS Burra Charter will be a guideline to determining the acceptable limits of change.

## **6.2 Defining acceptable limits of change**

Determining acceptable limits of change to a place is a difficult issue and has been the source of many a debate within professional circles. South Africa as yet does not have its own policy in this regard and very often changes to places are approved on individual merit and without a basic conservation philosophy. This has resulted in unfortunate impacts to heritage sites that have involved loss of “layering” and sometimes the sacrificing of significance of important places and objects to commercial needs. In recent years the ICOMOS Burra Charter, is becoming increasingly recognized by South African professionals as the best possible set of guidelines for helping judge the degree of change that an important place may be subjected to.

### **6.2.1 The Burra Charter – a conservation tool**

The following quote explaining the purpose of the Burra Charter cuts across geographical and cultural boundaries and epitomizes the concerns that communities have with respect to the conservation of important places.

*Many places are important to us because they tell us about who we are and the past that has formed our community and our environment. Almost everyone would agree that some places should be kept as a part of our common heritage.*

*How can we ensure that a heritage place is cared for properly? How can it be handed on to future generations in a way that retains the values which make it important to us?*

*The Burra Charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage places. These principles and procedures can be applied to a monument, a courthouse, a garden, a shell midden, a rock art site, a cottage, a road, a mining or archaeological site, a whole district or a region*<sup>17</sup>.

## 6.2.2 Application of the Burra Charter

The Burra Charter has its origins at an international conference of people involved in conservation in Venice in 1966. A charter was drawn up dealing with the preservation and restoration of historic monuments. In 1977 the newly formed Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) decided to review the *Venice Charter* in relation to Australian practice. Since its publication in 1979 the charter has been revised twice incorporating generations of wisdom of experts. Its principles have been applied by conservation professionals in Latin America, North America, Europe and Asia and have been used as a model for conservation guidelines in Canada and New Zealand. No doubt, in the future South Africa will develop its own conservation charter based on best international practice adapted to our own unique needs, but until this happens, the Burra Charter will be applied to East Fort as the best device available for determining the appropriate conservation policy for the site.

The basic elements of the Burra Charter are included in Appendix A.

## 6.3 Neglected linkages

Although other fortifications in the Hout Bay area are not the direct concern of this particular study, it must be pointed out that the focus of proposed future investment is East Fort – one of 4 early defensive structures in the area. West Fort, is also a declared provincial heritage site and has equal standing as East Fort in terms of the law. Historically, the site is just as significant as East Fort in terms of its history and is archaeologically very interesting. The land that West Fort is situated on belongs to the State (but is not under the control of CPNP). In many ways it is far more compatible than East Fort to development as parking is less restricted, and the site is very easy to access. Unfortunately insensitive development of the immediate surrounds and a poorly cared for local environment means that substantial upgrading of the area will be required to create an attractive destination. The HBHT has signified its interest in pursuing restoration of West Fort as and when funds become available.

It is unfortunate that the location and aesthetics of this important heritage site have disadvantaged its perceived conservation-worthiness and development potential, as it is a very important place on the landscape. A balanced approach that sees equal treatment of East Fort and West Fort as befitting their common heritage significance would be a highly desirable outcome.

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<sup>17</sup> Walker, M. 'Understanding the Burra Charter', Australia ICOMOS, 1996



## 6.4 Vulnerability

East Fort, an exposed heritage site in a public area, battered by the vagaries of Cape storms is ultimately a finite asset with a fixed life span. At best, it is a place that is inevitably subject to change, albeit slow, but significant in its cumulative effect. In the words of Kate Clarke<sup>18</sup> of English Heritage “ruins are difficult to conserve, in the long term they rebuild themselves” – slowly but surely they lose their originality. The only way to extend the existence of such a site is to encase or bury it completely, isolating it from people and the environment. Since heritage is something people identify with, appreciate and use to cement their identity, further their education, the site has to remain accessible and therefore inevitably subject to change. Given this scenario, the challenge is to limit the degree of change and conserve the significance of the place. A step in this direction is to identify the ways in which the site is vulnerable and devise suitable techniques. To enable preservation of an existing structure to be achieved and to resist the elements, modern technology makes this feasible.

### 6.4.1 General condition

- The upper section of East Fort is fairly stable at the moment due to liberal use of modern materials.
- The effects of wind, rain and uncontrolled plant growth will have a continuous impact on the site. In the past, this has been remedied by intermittent clean-ups, rebuilding of collapsed walls and capping walls with modern cement and stone. While this has certainly contributed to the conservation of the site, the ad-hoc and largely poorly executed accumulation of modifications has compromised the originality of the fabric and made the building sequences very difficult to understand and read.
- The battery itself is an area of concern - there is visible deterioration of stone walling. This has been caused by erosion by water of mortar in the stone walling, people walking on the stonework, the action of plant roots loosening fabric.
- The FOP is made of cast concrete and is therefore stable. Corrosion is affecting the steel shuttering over the observation ports on the upper floor of the FOP.
- Vandalism to the site in the form of defacing of signage, spray-can graffiti and from time to time in the past theft of moveable items has and will be a continuous problem. The local authority and the HBHT have kept the site free of litter, which has the potential to seriously impact the ambience of the area and destroy its value and significance.
- The iron cannons are in good order thanks to the work of the HBHT, however, given circumstances that may cause any break in regular maintenance, their condition will deteriorate.

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<sup>18</sup> Clarke, K. Pers comm.

- Veld fires have swept through the site on at least two separate occasions destroying gun carriages and contributing to the degeneration of standing ruins.
- The HBHT has engaged in a number of small modifications to the site, which although are of benefit to East Fort, are not technically legal in terms of the NHRA. These include the relocation of cannons from original position, repainting of the FOP.

#### 6.4.2 Security

The spirit of conservation efforts on the site since 1925 has been to slow down deterioration but keep the site accessible to the public at all times. Since then incidents of vandalism and theft have punctuated the history of the place.

- As East Fort stands at present there is very little that can be stolen with ease. Some signage has already disappeared, as have the National Monument plaques. There is an illegal market for iron cannons despite the fact that artefacts that form part of the National Estate may not be traded. A serious and well-equipped criminal will have no trouble in breaking down the locked gate and removing a cannon.
- Increasing the infrastructure and quantity of target items on the site will increase the desirability of the place to criminals and vandals.
- The current planned location of the Chapman's Peak Drive tollgate leaves East Fort vulnerable. Person's intent of being in the area but wish to avoid paying the toll fee will congregate at East Fort and other accessible picnic areas in the lower segment of Chapman's Peak Drive. This will increase the amount of litter, vandalism and theft.

#### 6.4.3 Safety

At present access to the site is via a service road for vehicles to the battery and marked out consolidated paths. The path has a moderate gradient down to the battery. Disabled or elderly persons will need assistance. Access to the site is at own risk although this is not specifically stated. The site poses few dangers but there are some potential areas of risk.

- Access to the shore on the seaward side of the battery involves steep gradients and large boulders.
- Loose stones in the walls of the battery are liable to pop out if walked on which could result in injury and liability.
- The steps that give access to the soldier's quarters and blockhouse are very steep and could result in injury and liability.
- The walls of the blockhouse are dangerous in that people walking on them could trip and fall into the basement interior.

- The Forrester's cottage is presently a dangerous environment but could easily be rendered safe.
- Explosives (black powder) are used on site from time to time. Cannons are fired. This is a potentially dangerous scenario with serious implications in the event of an accident causing bodily injury to staff, spectators or animals.
- The informal relationship between CPNP and HBHT makes no provision as to who would be liable in the event of an accident caused by deficient maintenance or negligence.

#### 6.4.4 Relevance of display material and changing perceptions of the past

Perceptions of the history and the significance of heritage sites are subject to change depending on prevailing politics, discovery of new information and the background of any historians involved. This is particularly so in the Western Cape where new First Nation interest groups and descendents of slaves are actively exploring their roles in local history and adopting, in many instances alternative interpretations of the past. Any colonial period heritage site may become subject to contestation and re-interpretation by various interest groups. Persons with slave or exile ancestry may perceive the site to be a place with special significance in terms of their particular history. Others will interpret the site as a place of colonial suppression and will contest the emphasis of the way in which a site may be presented.

The significance and fabric of the site may be compromised if the way in which it is presented

- Unjustifiably excludes the heritage concerns of a given community.
- Does not reflect solid historical research and well-argued interpretation.
- Reflects poor layout and workmanship.

## 7 TOWARDS A CONSERVATION POLICY FOR EAST FORT

There is no doubt that East Fort; along with the other Hout Bay defenses have been cherished as special places by certain enthusiastic Capetonians over a number of generations. The ruins have been actively, but intermittently conserved by people who have experienced the same problems year after year, and with the few resources they have had at their disposal, tried to remedy them. Although by modern standards we may be critical of some of the methods used and the result they have achieved, we must acknowledge and be thankful for their foresight as East Fort still stands today for the appreciation of our generation. **Our responsibility is inherited, and the challenge is on to make sure that those walls are still standing for our own children's children.**

There have been no extensive development proposals lodged for the site up to now. Years of conservation effort have been aimed at trying to make sure that the walls remain standing and that the place is accessible to the public as a place of recreation. The most recent

interpretation of the site by Floyd<sup>19</sup> and Floyd and Oberholzer<sup>20</sup> acknowledge the significance of the fabric and continued to support the conservation of the ruins as they stand. Their efforts, together with that of the Hout Bay museum have added considerable value to the place through creating viewpoints, access routes and well-designed information signs. Floyd and Oberholzer proposed sample restoration of parts of standing structures and the restoration of a working gun platform. Phase 2 was to include the creation of more picnic nodes and tentative proposals for restoration of the fortified barrack, however this has not happened but the HBHT wish to continue the good work done by Floyd and Oberholzer and are intent on proceeding.

The vision of the HBHT is that East Fort is to be a Living Museum complete with restored blockhouse, ruins converted to accommodate a small auditorium and coffee/tea shop. The forester's cottage will be restored to accommodate hikers and to act as an administrative building while the lower battery will be restored to c 1796 working condition with live cannon firings and other events. While the concept of a "living museum" is certainly appropriate to East Fort, there are material restrictions that will limit the extent of activities that take place on site. The most profound of these are restricted parking and limitations on the degree of change that the site is able to accommodate without losing significance.

Adaptive reuse of the site is desirable but will have to be scaled to accommodate restrictions that won't be overcome in the foreseeable future as well as directions negotiated with interested and effected parties, in particular the land owners who hold the responsibility for everything that happens on site. This section of the report contains a conservation policy for East Fort. This is not the last word or a definite statement on how things should be done, but it is the baseline principle around which future work should take place. Hence this document is open to revision to accommodate new findings, views and directions in conservation.

## **7.1 Treatment of fabric**

The following four clauses summarized from the Burra Charter are the key guidelines that should govern the treatment of historic fabric at East Fort. In this instance the term "historic fabric" should include not only the standing structures, cannons and the layers of changes and conservation efforts that have taken place, but also the precinct – its ambience, aesthetic qualities and views.

### **7.1.1 Care for significant fabric**

*Changes to heritage places should not distort the physical evidence, or other evidence, it provides. Change should not diminish, destroy or conceal significant fabric (the elements, components and physical material that make up the place). Care for significant fabric requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.*

This means that one should only effect changes where it is necessary. Changes should only take place if they can justifiably contribute to revealing the significance of the site – by this we

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<sup>19</sup> Floyd, H. 1986 Report on the future of East Fort, Hout Bay. Unpublished report prepared for the Hout Bay Museum.

<sup>20</sup> Floyd, H and Oberholzer, B 1994. Chapmans Peak Development Plan. Unpublished report prepared for the Western Cape Regional Services Council.

mean assisting in its interpretation or enhancing its uniqueness. Essential changes are those that are necessary to make the site a safe visitor environment.

Care for significant fabric does not mean that additions may not take place. New fabric may be added. What is important is the way in which it is done (see below).

#### 7.1.2 Reversibility

*If alterations to fabric are permitted they should preferably be reversible.- i.e. The demarcation between original work and additional work should be clearly defined..*

Development plans at East Fort involve future reconstruction of the blockhouse and the quarters. The implication of this is that any reconstruction that is envisaged must be “undoable” without further impacting or damaging the original material. Demolition of any portion of the original fabric is not an undoable action and therefore undesirable. The means that retention of the original fabric is paramount and that adaptive reuse must involve leaving the fabric as is.

#### 7.1.3 Distinguishing new from old

*Changes to buildings, areas and heritage places that falsify the evidence of their history should be avoided. Buildings and structures should not nostalgically create a false impression or interpretation of age or a style. Decorative detail or additions to heritage places should clearly show that they are new elements to the heritage place. To avoid any confusion, the distinction between old and new fabric should be distinguishable. While being sympathetic and respecting original fabric, the detail of new work should, on close observation or through additional interpretation, be identifiable from the old fabric.*

The message here is do not fake. It is important to take heed of the fact that any reconstruction or restoration of an historic artefact is nothing more than a contemporary and hopefully educated hypothesis of something that once existed and is never “the real thing”. It is necessary that future generations are able to distinguish the layering of the site so that they too may be able to understand its development. In practical terms this means that modern materials that are thoroughly representative of our time must be used in any rebuilding or reconstruction where this is deemed necessary. Furthermore, this allows for use of easily obtainable materials while maintaining accuracy in scale and form.

#### 7.1.4 Sympathetic changes

*Generally, new work in a heritage place should be sympathetic to the features of importance in terms of character and context. Matters such as siting, size, height, setback, materials, form, and colours are all important considerations when undertaking new work in heritage places.*

Any additional feature, landscaping, or reconstruction should not detract or obscure or dominate on the site. Practically, these means that any new structures should be low key, sympathetic with, but not “mimic” any original features as this will cause immediate confusion. Ideally, new facilities should be moved away from the immediate historic precinct to create a spatial distinction between the old and the new.

### 7.1.5 Respecting earlier changes

*Changes to a heritage place over time offer evidence of its historical development and may have acquired their own significance. Emphasis should not be placed on one period of a place's development at the expense of others unless that period is much more significant.*

East Fort is a multiple layered site. Not only does it contain at least 4 phases of construction, but it also contains a legacy of cumulative change that has resulted from numerous small conservation attempts. These have now become part of the history of the site. "Restoring" a site to any given time period will inevitably involve down-playing aspects of its history and may even result in the destruction of fabric that is considered irrelevant to a particular time period.

## 7.2 Appropriate development

A key concept in planning the development or conservation of an historic place is to understand its significance; after all it is this (as manifested by the material remains and physical context) that what we are really trying to conserve or better, enhance. In the statement of significance that we articulated, we attempted to define the various ways that the site is significant. The critical question is will any proposed changes to the site "hurt" its significance? To this end we examine two more clauses of the Burra Charter that are critical to this.

### 7.2.1 Retaining context

*The context or setting of a place is often an important part of its significance. Changes to the visual setting and other relationships of a place should be sympathetic to its character and appearance.*

Both East Fort and West Fort, being strategic places are both highly context sensitive and that context needs to be protected. The construction of Chapman's Peak drive is a typical example of a development that has impacted heavily on the contextual significance of East Fort in that it has created a confusing artificial divide between the upper fort complex and the battery. It is this kind of development that needs to be avoided, and in this case needs to be mitigated against. The provision of an alternative road surface in the historic precinct has gone some distance to regaining a lost linkage between the two portions of this site.

### 7.2.2 Compatible uses

*A historic place should preferably continue to be used for the purposes for which it was designed or for a use with which it has had a long association. Otherwise a compatible use should be found which requires minimal alteration to the fabric of the place.*

Activities that take place on the site can detract from its significance. For example, it would be inappropriate to convert the Castle of the Cape of Good Hope into a municipal depot, or rebuild East Fort as administrative offices for the toll road as this will detract from the significance of the place. Notwithstanding this, most heritage sites benefit by sensitive reuse or adaptation. East Fort is a heritage site and has been acknowledged as such for most of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is also an informal picnic site, viewpoint, place of leisure and education and its appropriate that its future use should continue along similar lines.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 General considerations**

The spirit of modern conservation philosophy seeks as far as possible to leave places of significance in a conserved state and un-altered. It strives for honesty in the way in which places are presented and also seeks to protect the context of a place by ensuring that development activities are appropriate and won't diminish significance. In many ways the vision of the HBLT for East Fort is compatible with modern conservation thinking. There are a number of ideas at hand, which need to be encouraged, but also tempered by the physical constraints of the site, and the need to respect original fabric of the place. There are four inescapable areas that will influence the future use of the site.

#### **8.1.1 Visitor numbers**

- Access to East Fort is limited by the amount of parking that will be available. It is unlikely that more than 150 people will be able to gain vehicular access to the site via Chapman's Peak parking at anyone time. This means that development activities need to be adapted around this factor.
- It is un-desirable that East Fort becomes a crowded activity venue as not only does this require major services construction, which will have its own set of impacts and staffing implications but will also detract from the ambience and therefore significance of the place.
- It needs to be noted that heritage sites and museums do not attract large visitor followings – they generally appeal to a specific market of interested people, who come to satisfy their curiosity and increase their knowledge. A small restaurant situated at the site will have patronage but audiovisual presentations are unlikely to appeal to more than 15 people at any given time, unless learners and students are bussed in. A gradual approach to development activities should be considered to tailor activities and alterations to the level of visitor interest. Initially, it would be best to target those elements of the site for adaptive reuse that will cause the least impacts – in particular the more recent structures such as the FOP and the Forrester's cottage.

#### **8.1.2 Acceptable physical change**

- East Fort has been conserved as a ruin, and as such has its own special ambience, interest and mystery. While a certain amount of development of the site may be of benefit, there is a danger that extensive change will result in the visitor experiencing an enforced interpretation of the past. One of East Fort's greatest attributes is that it provokes the imagination; the ruins are fragments of a puzzle, the details of which we can never know, but the promise of the full picture is enticing. If East Fort is over-reconstructed, it will lose these qualities. It is important that the overall identity of

East Fort remain as a conserved ruin so that the visitor to the site still has the freedom to experience the mystery of the place. East Fort is after all, part of the National Estate and not the sole right of any organization to change or interpret.

- Reconstruction over restoration is favoured as this implies an honest contemporary interpretation that embodies the principles of reversibility and respect for original fabric. All new work must be easily distinguishable; no extant fabric is to be demolished.

### 8.1.3 Security

- A further option would be to fence the site entirely and prohibit access outside of set hours. This is an expensive option, which has disadvantages. It will create visual and ambience impacts, attract vandalism and go against the spirit in which the site has been used in the past. Not only will it absorb funds continuously but it will also require a permanent presence on site.
- The proposed location of the tollgate, which excludes East Fort from its boundaries, is a cause for concern, as this will affect the quantity and profile of visitors to the site. East Fort will be in immediate reach of persons looking for free recreational areas who may not respect the site for its historical qualities. Littering, vandalism, theft and graffiti will increase unless there is a permanent presence. The tollgate should be positioned below (north) of East Gate so as to include it within the restricted area, failing this;

### 8.1.4 Agreements and contracts

- The fact that there is no formal agreement in place between parties directly involved in East Fort is a cause for concern and this need to be put right before any further major investment is made. CPNP, HBHT and SAHRA or Heritage Western Cape needs to work out an agreement that covers responsibility and liability, appropriate use of the site and finances. This should perhaps take the form of a Heritage Contract or agreement in line with section 42 of the National Heritage Act and the DEAT Environmental Conservation Management Agreement (ECMA ) current policy.. HBHT has acquire some funding).

## 8.2 Upper East Fort – specific recommendations

### 8.2.1 Forester's cottage

- Development of this element presents the least impact to the actual fort buildings therefore its adaptive reuse is desirable over other ruins on the site. There is an opportunity to convert the cottage into a funds generating facility such as a small restaurant, lodge or even an alternative audio-visual presentation area. It enjoys superb views, and on this account is almost guaranteed to enjoy patronage. There is an opportunity to create more parking close to the cottage by clearing away disused foundations and tidying up the terrace.



### 8.2.2 Cook house

- This structure should be conserved as is.

### 8.2.3 Soldiers quarters, sentry box and officers quarters

- Although the HBHT desires reconstruction of these buildings as a small restaurant and audio-visual presentation area, this is not a favoured option. It will involve undesirable modifications to existing fabric such as cutting of openings. There is no archival information containing plans or detailed drawings of this part of the site so accurate reconstruction is impossible to achieve. Such a facility will require services, delivery access and other peripherals, which will detract from the site, change its ambience and destroy its mystery. If it is absolutely necessary to reuse this area, it is best to do this by erecting very light weight structures over the ruins – permanent awnings or modern imaginative aluminum and glass structures which would encompass the ruins creating useable spaces within.
- As a rule, any future developer is encouraged to leave the ruins as un-altered as possible and focus activities on less historically sensitive parts of the site.

### 8.2.4 Blockhouse

- This was a unique building and makes for an interesting ruin. The HBHT has expressed an interest in “restoring” the blockhouse, however, if funding were to be obtained for a venture of this magnitude, reconstruction in modern media utilizing the principals of the Burra Charter would be preferred. Plans of the original structure do exist so it would be possible to build it accurately in scale and form. It must be noted that reconstruction of this building will be considered controversial in heritage circles, will alter the ambience of the site and tend to be a dominant visual feature. On the other hand it has the potential to illustrate the military history of the site, serve as a venue for static or multi-media displays and generally enhance educational and tourism significance.
- Reconstruction of the blockhouse would balance the proposed reconstruction of cannons and emplacements at the lower battery reflecting both the English and Dutch contributions to the site. If reconstruction of the blockhouse is considered, intervention in other military ruins at the upper fort complex must be carefully considered otherwise contemporary work could dominate and confuse the identity of the place as a historic precinct.

### 8.2.5 Safety

- Intervention is justified in the interests of safety. The steps into the ruins of the Soldiers quarters need to be fitted with a balustrade, or a permit obtained for their demolition and rebuilding.
- Building a safe wooden observation deck against the eastern side of the ruins of the blockhouse should also be considered.

### 8.2.6 Chapman's Peak Drive

- An unfortunate early impact to the site, the road has effectively separated the fort into upper and lower portions – an artificial divide.
- The surfacing of the portion of the road through the historic precinct in a contrasting material was desirable, as this will in some small way acknowledge the linkage between the two halves of the site.

## 8.3 The lower East Fort battery area – specific recommendations

### 8.3.1 Forward observation post (FOP)

- The current use of the FOP as a store and temporary workshop is acceptable as are the minor changes made to this element in the recent past.
- Continued conservation of FOP should be carried out on the upper floor as well.
- Detailed interpretive material explaining the role of the FOPs' and how the WW2 Peninsula defensive system worked would be beneficial. This could be presented on site as a display or included within a secure museum area, or even as an audio-visual theme drawing linkages to the Apostle Battery.
- The flat grassed area where the barrack once stood and the ceremonial cannon is mounted today is an attractive useable space which would be enhanced by covering/removing the rubble on the side of the lower embankment, and landscaping the cutting to form seating terraces.
- A water and electricity connection as a result of the reconstruction of CPD has been made which can be used in the future.
- The old toilet down slope is a WW2 relic and should not be demolished.

### 8.3.2 Armaments

- The eight muzzle loading iron cannons are one of the most significant elements of the site. They are in such good conditions that they are still able to fire, which makes them unique.
- The proposal to remount them on restored traversing gun platforms so as to create a complete working battery would impart exceptional significance and really contribute to the concept of a living museum. Again, the principles of the Burra Charter are applicable – use good safe modern materials, acknowledge what is reconstructed.
- Archival research and archaeological excavation will be needed to obtain information on mounting details if the reconstructions are to be true to scale.

### 8.3.3 Walls and earthworks

- The walling of the battery is relatively unaltered but is deteriorating. The tops of the walls need to be built up by the equivalent of one course of stonework in places, while collapsed areas and missing stones need to be made good with distinguishable modern materials. There are good plans and some photos of the battery, which can be used as guides. Reconstructive work required throughout is comparatively small and will not dominate or obscure original fabric. The stone bases to the traversing platforms will need to be exposed by an archaeologist and strengthened to support the weight of the cannons.
- Plant growth on the walling needs to be controlled as root action is very destructive. It is best to use a herbicide to kill off the plants, and then prune them off rather than pulling them out by the roots.
- A significant area of the battery was filled in to create a *terreplein* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This included on the two circular gun emplacements on the site. Partial archaeological excavation of the terreplein and gun emplacement will reveal the layering of the site, provide new knowledge and add a further dimension of interest to the battery.

### 8.3.4 Embankment

- The embankment behind the battery was originally cut to build a level platform on which to build the walls, gun platforms and working area of the battery. This has eroded gradually filling the area behind the battery walls with some 300-400 mm of sediment, which has obscured original floor levels and changed the appearance of the site. Much of this needs to be removed while the embankment itself needs to be stabilized and landscaped – terraced seating platforms would be a suitable reuse of this. The level area created by this action could be used as a picnic, games area or even double as an out-door auditorium.

### 8.3.5 Access Road

- The access road was present in 1935 virtually on the same alignment as it is today. It is a historic part of the site and needs to be retained. It is best that the gate from Chapman's Peak Drive be kept locked to discourage unauthorized vehicles and theft of cannons.

### 8.3.6 Path and Fynbos memorial garden

- The concept of a natural Fynbos garden on the slope between the battery and Chapman's Peak Drive has not detracted from the historical significance of the place and will be of importance to visitors with botanical interests.
- The existing path designed by Floyd and Oberholzer is in good condition and easy to access by anyone who is moderately healthy and sure-footed. It is probably too steep for unassisted wheelchair access and would pose problems for someone with health problems. HBHT wish to construct a more contoured meandering path through the Fynbos garden to the battery. This would sacrifice gradient in favour of length of the

walk involved and also show case the Fynbos garden. This is unlikely to detract from the significance of the site but does need to be approved by Peninsula National Park and Heritage Western Cape.

- Consultation with the disability unit of the University of Cape Town (or equivalent) is also advised before embarking on this venture.

#### **8.4 Developing display material**

The challenge is to present the site in such a way that its significance is brought to the fore along with its potential to contribute to the South African historical identity. Like many other historic sites, the East Fort is not only about the people who designed it and commanded it, but it is also about the people who quarried the stones, burned the lime cement and laid the stones and bricks. For this reason it is important that any display material be in keeping with the notion that the site is part of the "National Estate" and not the heritage of any one group of the population over another. In essence, themes of displays need to be well balanced, widely discussed and acceptable to the majority of Capetonians.

- The existing signage on site has worked well and increased the value of this heritage asset. It has been the subject of vandalism, which will be an ongoing problem and one that must be planned for by ensuring that signs can be easily replaced. The current ones are reaching the end of their lives (just over 10 years) and are beginning to look scruffy and are due for replacement. Unfortunately it is best that static displays are kept under lock and key. Guided tours (provided that the guide is knowledgeable and enthusiastic) are a way to overcome this problem. Likewise are walk-around brochures, or even audio phone guides should finances allow.
- Historical interpretations of the past change over time as a result of ongoing research, which means that from time to time new information relevant to the East Fort should be presented.
- Comments from the public must be reviewed and where valid, considered and acted on.
- Any new displays must be of a reasonable standard of content and should ideally involve input from a museum consultant.
- In terms of the NHRA act there is a legal obligation to consult with the Heritage Authority with respect to the erection of signage and setting up of exhibitions.

#### **8.5 Services**

There are currently no services at East Fort and visitors are dependent on visits to convenient bushes in times of need. Should visitor number increase, action will need to be taken. Fire has swept through the fort on several occasions destroying gun carriages, the forester's cottage, baking plasterwork and increasing erosion. In the long term provision needs to be made to deal with these problems. Service take off points for water and electricity are now available Chapman's Peak drive. If development activities continue:

- Fire hydrants and power points need to be installed at the battery, upper fort and at the forester's cottage.
- Toilets and sewage facilities will need to be established at the battery, upper fort and forester's cottage.
- Disposal of wastewater at the battery may prove difficult, as this may have to be pumped uphill to Chapman's Peak Drive or treated in local septic tanks and discharged into the sea. In the short term chemical toilets will serve events hosted at the Battery.
- Consideration should be given to sinking toilets into embankments to minimize visual impacts.

## 8.6 Controlling impacts

It is difficult to predict or anticipate all the affects that people and the environment will have on East Fort. This means that continuous vigilance will be needed to identify problems before they begin to impact the fabric of the site. Re-occurring problems will require alterations in management of the site, or physical mitigation.

- In terms of policy, records of situations involving impacts should be kept. A statement of how any changes planned for East Fort (including archaeology) will affect the significance of the site should be kept in a "ships log" for the site.
- Record the site photographically before and after changes are made. Make sure that records are safely stored.
- A qualified professional should evaluate heritage impacts that may result from any planned new additions to the precinct, and reports lodged with the Heritage Authority along with submission of permits to alter the site.

## 8.7 Grading the site

East Fort is a very interesting place, a uniquely complete early fortification in an exceptional setting. It is well researched and its story is fascinating. In recognition of this, the site was declared a Historic Monument in 1936, but like all monuments it was automatically downgraded to a Provincial Heritage Site when the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 was implemented in 2000. While this has not changed the degree of protection offered to the site by law, its national status has been downgraded.

. Applications have already been submitted to SAHRA for Grade 1 status for both East and West Fort., which have to compete for this on a national basis. South Africa has a human associated heritage that is more than 4 million years old – some of the archaeological sites in this country are the only ones of their kind in recorded human history and their significance is internationally exceptional. The notions of national significance have changed significantly

since the site was declared in 1936. The definition of heritage resources has been broadened to include pre-colonial archaeological sites, palaeontological sites, places of environmental importance and the archaeology of African farming communities (previously un-protected).

It is unlikely that SAHRA will afford Grade 1 status to East Fort as an individual site. It stands a better chance if motivation was made in terms of it being part of a group of sites – for example an East Fort, West Fort combination. If the Cape Peninsula National Park were afforded Grade 1 status, East Fort would be automatically included. Until such time that this happens, East Fort is a Grade 2 Provincial Heritage Site under the legislative authority of Heritage Western Cape.

## **9 CONCLUSION**

It is clear that heritage conservation in South Africa is an area of fast development. For the first time this country is equipped with a powerful body of legislation that equips us to conserve that vast repository of heritage that makes up the National Estate. Power is no longer centralized at central government but through the development of provincial heritage bodies, and no doubt in time local heritage bodies. Communities are gaining the responsibility to conserve those aspects of the National Estate that are in their control. Not only is competency growing in professional circles, but well organized NGO's and societies are rapidly taking the initiative to conserve sites that are important to them. Economic benefits are to be gained through the sensitive redevelopment of such sites, but with this comes responsibility. Historical and archaeological sites are finite, un-able to reproduce and once changed, will never be the same again. This means that above all else, the fabric and context of an important place must always be the ultimate conservation priority.

The adaptive reuse and sustainable development of a place such as East Fort involves making some very difficult decisions made more difficult by the constraints of the environment and the need to conserve the place in perpetuity. The key to making these decisions is to have access to the best information, not only about the history of the place, but also to understand the spirit of the law of the land and contemporary conservation philosophy. It is hoped that this document will initiate this process, however the responsibility now rests with the interested and affected parties to refine their development plans, adapt them to the fabric of the place with the final goal of making sure that East Fort is present for the appreciation of future generations.

### **9.1 The possible imminent creation of a National Heritage Trust.**

Reference was previously made to James Kerr, author of "The Conservation Plan: A guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European cultural significance," National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney.

National Heritage Trusts, in one form or another, are widespread across the world and though they have evolved separately over time, they share one common aim, that being to conserve or preserve the natural and cultural heritage of nations.

In the main they are Non-Government, Non-Profit Organisations acting as custodians of their respective nation's heritage assets being committed to the preservation of their national

estate. By distancing themselves somewhat from direct Government involvement they also achieve political independence and thus attract funding by way of widespread membership and endowments. They are also invariably beneficiaries of state lottery grants and also in many cases enable donors to qualify for tax relief.

South Africa already has a National Trust, however, it has been dormant since its inauguration due largely to the pending introduction of the new National Heritage Act. The new Act (Sect 42) allows for the introduction of "Heritage Agreements" which could greatly assist the National Trust in establishing a viable base of Heritage sites in a relatively short period. The HB&IHT is a Founder Member of the Trust being present at the inauguration in Kimberly in 1998.

The national legislation facilitated and applied by SAHRA is to some extent paralleled by DEAT policy applied via ECMAs (Environmental Conservation Management Agreements). It is very likely that together with Heritage Agreements, a satisfactory base can be established to bridge the gap between 'Environment' and 'Heritage' for local participation in National Trust conservation projects.

## APPENDIX A

### Guiding Principles of the Burra Charter

*The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (the Burra Charter) provides the guiding philosophy for the care of important places. The Burra Charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be observed in the conservation of important places. The principles and procedures can be applied to places including buildings, sites, areas, structures, ruins, archaeological sites and landscapes modified by human activity.

The following principles are in part derived from the Burra Charter (revision November 1999). These principles underpin the guidelines for the assessment of a heritage place. The specific guidelines for the assessment of heritage places provide more solid direction on how to apply the general guiding principles.

#### **Care for significant fabric**

Changes to heritage places should not distort the physical evidence, or other evidence, it provides. Change should not diminish, destroy or conceal significant fabric (the elements, components and physical material that make up the place). Care for significant fabric requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.

#### **Reversible alterations**

If alterations to fabric are permitted they should be reversible. Reversible alterations should be considered temporary and should not prevent future conservation action.

#### **Distinguishing new from old**

Changes to buildings, areas and heritage places that falsify the evidence of their history should be avoided. Buildings and structures should not nostalgically create a false impression or interpretation of age or a style. Decorative detail or additions to heritage places should clearly show that they are new elements to the heritage place.

To avoid any confusion, the distinction between old and new fabric should be distinguishable. While being sympathetic and respecting original fabric, the detail of new work should, on close observation or through additional interpretation, be identifiable from the old fabric.

#### **Sympathetic changes**

Generally, new work in a heritage place should be sympathetic to the features of importance in terms of character and context. Matters such as siting, size, height, setback, materials, form, and colours are all important considerations when undertaking new work in heritage places.

#### **Respecting earlier changes**

Changes to a heritage place over time offer evidence of its historical development and may have acquired their own significance. Emphasis should not be placed on one period of a place's development at the expense of others unless that period is much more significant.

#### **Retaining context**

The context or setting of a place is often an important part of its significance. Changes to the visual setting and other relationships of a place should be sympathetic to its character and



appearance.

### **Compatible uses**

A historic place should preferably continue to be used for the purposes for which it was designed or for a use with which it has had a long association.

Otherwise a compatible use should be found which requires minimal alteration to the fabric of the place.

### **Above all - Understand Significance**

An understanding of what is significant about the place, how significant it is, why it is significant and which are the significant components should underpin any conservation or development work. This information should be encapsulated in a Statement of Significance which should exist for most places that are subject to the Heritage Overlay control. Some early listings may not have a detailed or adequate Statement of Significance. Where no analysis of significance has been undertaken, further research may be necessary to establish the importance of the place and to be able to plan any development or works. Major development of places of heritage significance may first benefit from a Conservation Management Plan prepared by a qualified heritage practitioner in accordance with the Guidelines to the Burra Charter.