

NATIONAL MUSEUM, BLOEMFONTEIN



# Heritage Impact Assessment of proposed development of the new Free State Reserve Bank, Bloemfontein

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With regard to archaeological/architectural/cultural and intangible  
heritage

**Prepared by Loudine Philip and Marianna Botes**

**5/31/2016**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report was prepared in request of Roodt Architects on behalf of the South African Reserve Bank in support of a Section 38(1) application to be lodged with the Free State Heritage Resources Authority for the demolition of all structures on Erf 37103, a subdivision of Erf 24722, the original declared site of the Old Presidency in Bloemfontein, Free State [Gazette no. 12214 dd 1989-12-15]. This report should be read in conjunction with an earlier Phase I Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment dated 28 March 2007, prepared by Mr Cobus Dreyer. The purpose of this report is not to replace Mr Dreyer's report, but to clarify aspects that were not adequately addressed for the purpose of a Built Environment and Archaeological assessment. This in particular refers to the requirement of a more detailed description of the history of the original site of the Old Presidency for a better estimate of potential sub-surface finds in terms of the archaeological component.

It is concluded that there is no reason to assume that the section referred to as Erf 37103 which was part of the original declared Erf 24722, would have contained any structures of importance that could be linked to the Old Presidency. It is accordingly unlikely that any archaeological material that could be associated with the Old Presidency would be found in this area. All the corrugated iron structures as well as the building referred to as the Caretaker's House in Dreyer's report were less than 60 years old and would not have required a permit to be demolished. It should be pointed out that Mr Dreyer's report covers the whole original Erf 24722 which was subdivided in 2002 and accordingly does not make a distinction between Erf 37103 (the new development area) and Erf 2/24722, (the section where the Old Presidency is situated), in his reporting on finds.

It is recommended that the development may proceed provided that the recommendations and mitigation measures as stated in this report are adhered to.

# INTRODUCTION

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This report is an assessment of the potential impact the erection of the new Free State Reserve Bank might have on existing archaeological/architectural/cultural/intangible heritage on and in the immediate environs of the site of the new development. This study was commissioned by Roodt Architects on behalf of the South African Reserve Bank and carried out in accordance with applicable law as set out below.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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### **NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCE ACT, NO 25 OF 1999: [NHRA]**

This development triggers Sections 27, 30, 34, 35 and 38 of the NHRA which would require a permit for the demolitions and development to be obtained from the applicable heritage resources agency.

Section 27(19)(a): The responsible heritage authority of a declared heritage site is responsible for the safeguarding of such sites from destruction, damage, disfigurement, excavation or alteration. [Read with following Section 30(a)].

The subject site was originally part of consolidated Erf 24722 which was declared a heritage site on 15-12-1989 [Gazette Number: 12214; Gazette Description: Old Presidency, President Brand Street, Bloemfontein]

Section 30(a): Special consent of the applicable heritage authority is required for any alteration to or development affecting a place listed in the heritage register.

All declared sites are automatically entered into the national heritage register and is this section, accordingly, also applicable.

Section 34: Any structure or part of a structure older than 60 years may not be demolished without a permit from the relevant heritage authorities.

The subject erf contained structures that were erected post 1965 and were accordingly not older than 60 years old.

Section 35(a): No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb an archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite.

As the place of origin of Bloemfontein, and due to its long period of occupation, this site might contain subsurface archaeological material. In terms of palaeontological material, this site is situated in a highly sensitive palaeontological zone that requires prescribed procedures to be adhered to.

Section 38: (1)(c) any development or other activity which will change the character of the site –

(i) exceeding 5 000 m<sup>2</sup>

Must at the very earliest stages of initiating such a development, notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.

The subject property is 13,797 m<sup>2</sup> in extent and accordingly Section 38(1)(c)(i) will be triggered by any new development.

## **MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT, NO 32 OF 2000**

In terms of section 23 of this act Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is defined as one of the core functions of a municipality in the context of its developmental orientation. In terms of section 35(2) a Spatial Development Framework (SDF) contained in a council approved IDP prevails over a plan as defined in section 1 of the Physical Planning Act, 125 of 1991.

Section 27(1)(b) states that land use should be in accordance with the applicable regional or urban structure plan and can only be used for the purpose it was used immediately before that date or the purpose for which it is zoned in terms of a town planning scheme "which is or may become binding in that area".

The developer obtained the required approval from Heritage Free State for rezoning of the subject erf (Permit 1/566/15 – Refer to Attachment A) and subsequent to that from the Mangaung Metro Municipality. These requirements have, accordingly, already been met.

## **MANGAUNG SDF AS REFLECTED IN THE MANGAUNG IDP OF 2015/2016:**

The relevant sections in the above-mentioned IDP are: "[that] areas in the CBD with particular historical value, such as the Bloemfontein Railway Station Building, Maitland Street, Pres Brand Street, Church Street and St George Street, be developed as a historical precinct and buildings in this area should be conserved [p252]..... The Old Presidency be maintained as a historical site [p252]....The Bloemspruit canal through the CBD be developed into an asset for the city. It is proposed that it be developed into a water feature that stretches from the Loch Logan Waterfront in the west to the Central Park bus station and shopping complex in the east [p252]. Planning be conducted to formalize parking area on the northern side of the "Old Presidency" site which should serve as parking to the magistrate court, with the provision that a management plan be developed to preserve to historical site [p257].

The proposed development will have no negative impact on any of the aforementioned development plans.

## **PHYSICAL PLANNING ACT NO 125 OF 1991**

Section 27(1)(a) similarly states that land should not be used for a purpose other than that it was used for immediately before, or the purpose for which it is zoned in terms of a town planning scheme which is or may become binding in that area.

The proposed development is not contrary to the zoning for the area of Markgraaff Street and/or the CBD of Bloemfontein that it forms part of.

## **OBJECTIVES OF REPORT**

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The objective of this report is to :

- provide an assessment of the heritage value (cultural/architectural/archaeological/ intangible) of the subject property as a whole and to note all heritage attributes and other character defining elements found.
- Identify and assess any other unique attributes of the site and surrounding area that may contribute to the heritage value of the subject property (e.g. cultural landscapes, natural heritage features, archaeological potential, integration with the streetscape or area, etc.)
- Outline the rationale of the development proposal that might impact heritage resources (e.g. demolition of buildings and construction of new buildings)

- Outline and recommend appropriate mitigation to loss, encroachments or other proposed actions that might impact heritage resources found on the subject property.
- Identify required short-term site conservation, site security and building stabilisation measures as might be required to protect any significant resource during the interim period of demolition and construction
- Recommend site planning and landscaping measures that may be adopted to help ensure significant resources are effectively protected or enhanced on the even subject to redevelopment.

## METHODOLOGY

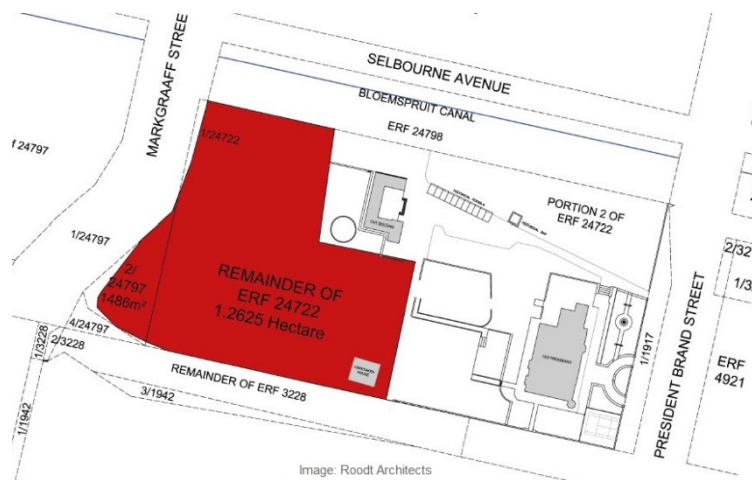
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1. Known information was gathered about the subject property and environs through:
  - a. Documents relating to all heritage assets in the St Georges and President Brand Street historical precincts as well as Markgraaff Street
  - b. Photographs, including historic photographs
  - c. Maps (both historic and current)
  - d. Title Deeds and Surveyor Diagrams
  - e. Other sources such as published books, articles, street directories, genealogies, newspapers, archival records, and consultation with local historians
  - f. Site visits and reconnaissance of the development area
2. Heritage assets were identified and listed.
3. Recommendations for mitigation as well as interim measurements for protection of the heritage resources during development phase were made based on the information obtained through the research.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

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The objective of the development is to erect the new Free State branch of the Reserve Bank on Erf 37103 (a consolidation of Remainder of Erf 2/24797 and Remainder of Erf 24722), at the corner of Markgraaff and St Georges Streets, Bloemfontein.



**Figure 1: Proposed site for the new Free State Reserve Bank.**

## SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

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Name of Property:	Site of New Free State Reserve Bank (originally part of site of Old Presidency)
Owner:	National Government of South Africa
Erf/Erven:	Erf 37102 Bloemfontein
Physical Address:	Corner of St Georges and Markgraaff Streets, Bloemfontein
GIS coordinates:	29°07'08.61"S / 26°12'50.09"E
Total area of property:	13,797 sq/m
Local Municipality:	Mangaung Metro Municipality
Present Use:	Vacant land

## DESIGN AND SCOPE OF WORKS

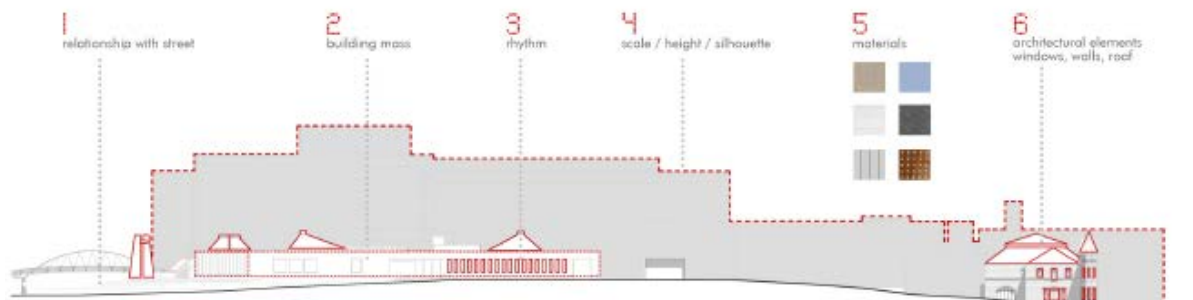
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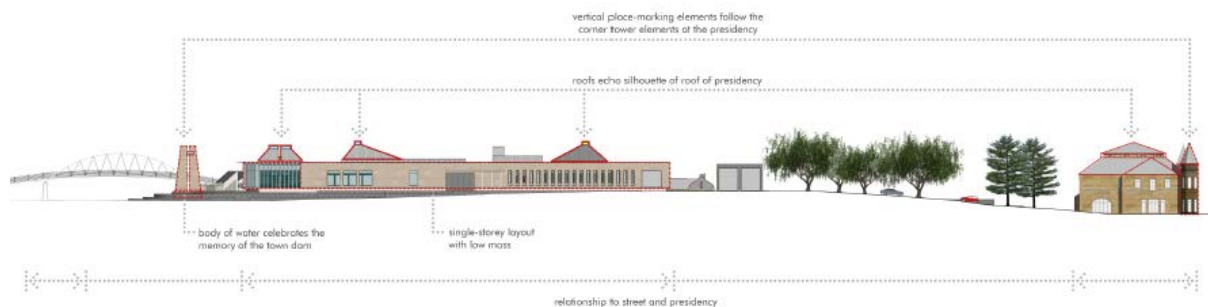
**Figure 2: Proposed design of the new development sharing the visual space with the Old Presidency - view from St George's Street with Markgraaff Street on the left and the historic Old Presidency on the right [Image: Roodt Architects]**

## BUILDINGS

The proposed new development was designed in line with ICOMOS regulations in terms of respecting the authenticity of the nearby historical buildings (in particular the Old Presidency) and the avoidance of imitation thereof. Particular attention was paid to its relationship with the street, building mass, rhythm and positioning of openings, scale in terms of height and silhouette, materials to be used and architectural elements such as windows, walls, roof, etc. The following illustrations in Figures 3 and 4 adequately illustrates that it does not subtract from the value of the adjacent Old Presidency.



**Figure 4: Relationship with the street (1), Building mass (2), Rhythm (3), Scale, height in relation to the skyline (4), Building materials (5), in relation to the architectural elements of the Old Presidency [Image: Roodt Architects]**



**Figure 3: View of proposed development from St Georges' Street [Image: Rood Architects]**

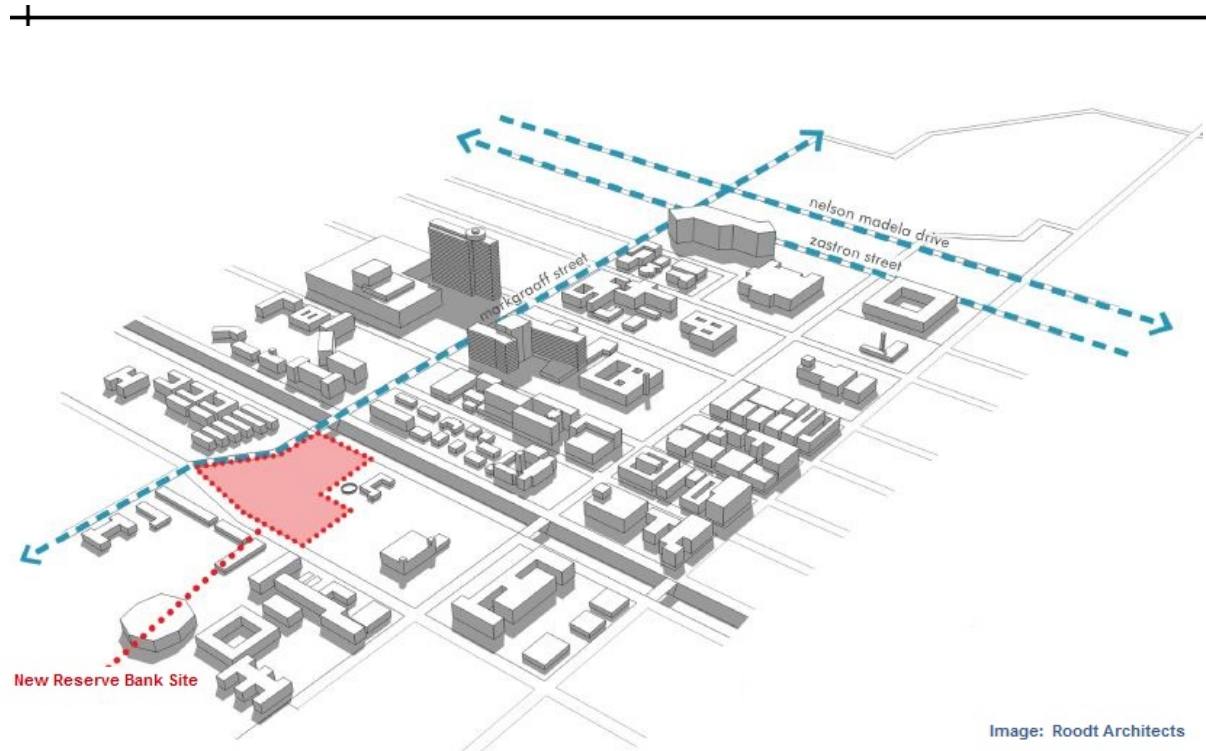
## LANDSCAPES

There is little or no formal landscaping in St Georges Street which mostly consist of lawns with large trees (in the case of schools and churches) whereas President Brand Street has formal landscaping only (and also large trees). The majority of buildings in Markgraaff Street have paved areas facing the street.

The formal landscaping intended for the new development ties in with that of the Old Presidency that faces President Brand Street. The canal on the northern side [refer to Figure 1] separates both the Old Presidency and the new development respectively from President Brand and Markgraaff Streets that they are part of. It is, accordingly, preferable that the landscape of the new development ties in with that of the Old Presidency to form a coherent whole.

The proposed design of the buildings and landscaping is not contrary to any of the requirements of the area and will be an asset to this section of the CBD.

## CHARACTER OF ENVIRONS



**Figure 5: The immediate environment of the proposed site of the new Reserve Bank includes St Georges Street, President Brand Street and Markgraaff Street**

**ST GEORGES STREET** To gain full understanding of the importance of this section of the city where the subject site is situated, one has to return to the very beginning of the Free State. The site of the Old Presidency is literally the hub around which not only Bloemfontein but eventually the Free State, first as British colony, then as individual Boer republic and eventually as province of South Africa, developed.

This is the place where the first British resident, major Warden, established his British garrison in 1846 and St Georges Street accordingly formed Bloemfontein's first main street.



**Figure 6: Photograph of St Georges Street c. 1860 with low wall surrounding the old presidency in the foreground [National Museum Archives]**



These early couple of streets were mainly named after the Warden family namely Henry, his wife Elizabeth, and their three children Douglas, Charles, and George. Apart from Green Street that was named after Henry Green (who followed Warden as British resident in 1852) as it ran past his house, Fraser Street too was named after the garrison doctor as it ran past his house. For some reason, however, George Street became St George and eventually St Georges Street.

**PRESIDENT BRAND STREET** is named after the fourth president of the independent Boer colony, the Orange Free State, and contains mainly government buildings such as the Bloemfontein Magistrate, the High Court of the Free State, the Fourth Raadsaal, the Supreme Court of Appeal, the historic Fire Station, the old Government building (today utilised as the National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre) and the City Hall. Contrary to that of St Georges Street, it has a formal character with its stately buildings and formal garden lay-outs. Although several of the buildings in this street, to include the Old Presidency, are individually listed as formally protected structures, the section of President Brand street from the intersection with St Georges Street in the south up to the intersection with Zastron Street in the north, is a declared conservancy and are all the buildings within this area accordingly also enjoying formal protection under the National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999.



**Figure 7: Examples of buildings in Pres Brand Street Conservancy (Clockwise from the top left is the Supreme Court of Appeal, the Free State High Court, the Old Presidency, The National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre, the City Hall and the Fourth Raadsaal)**

**MARKGRAAFF STREET** has a more eclectic appearance than both that of Pres Brand and St Georges Streets and contains both historic and modern buildings, multi-storey (including high rise buildings) as well as single storey buildings, residential, business and government buildings; and the Sand du Plessis theatre.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SITE (OLD PRESIDENCY)

[PREPARED BY MARIANNA BOTES]



### INTRODUCTION

The site of the Presidency is the place where Bloemfontein came into existence. This is an extremely important area for our city's history. The area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers, initially known as the Trans Gariep and later as the Trans Orangia, was at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the hunting grounds of groups wandering

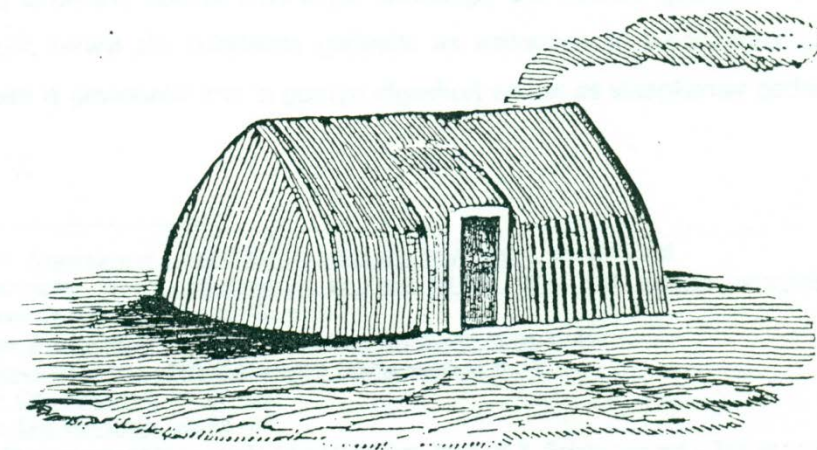
Bushmen. Bloemfontein has its roots in the growing disputes over territory as various population groups in the early nineteenth century almost simultaneously began to penetrate the region. These population groups, inter alia, included trekboers from the Cape, Griquas led by Adam Kok II and the Basotho headed by King Moshuehue (in English known as Moshesh).

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FAMILY BRITS ON THE FARM BLOEMFONTEIN

Among these trekkers were Rudolph Marthinus Brits, also known as "the Old", who settled between 1820 and 1825 in the region beyond the Orange River, in a convenient location with plenty of water in the form of a strong, permanent spring. Rudolph Marthinus' cousin, John Nicholas Brits, joined him at the fountain between 1825 and 1826. At the top of Bloemspruit, today marked with a concrete pillar, near the current Presidency, is the fountain from which Bloemfontein got its name. When Rudolph Marthinus moved away a year or two later, Johan Nicolaas Brits stayed at this spring and settled there permanently. It is said that this place at the fountain originally was a meeting place for hunters and black people called the place Mangaung (place of the big cats or cheetahs). At the time Brits settled here, it became known as Bloemfontein. When Brits settled on the spot, the fountain was surrounded by flowers (apparently wild clover) and the family Brits probably gave the place the name Bloemfontein. About the origin of the name Bloemfontein there are several theories, but most likely it is simply a descriptive name that refers to a natural phenomenon, namely flowers around the spring.

Johan Nicolaas Brits built a house for him and his family near the fountain. This was probably a hartebeest house. The trekkers initially built hartebeest- or kapstyl (roof) - houses and a little later, clay or stone houses were built (Walton 1955, p. 7). George Horatio Warden wrote in his memoirs that his father, Major H. D. Warden, bought the farm Bloemfontein in 1846 from J. Britz (sic), "die toen er woonde in een hartebeeshuis" and also gave a description of a hartebeest house: "een hartebeeshuis is paalen of sparren ingeplant met rieten gedekt en gepleisterd binnen en buiten en lyke na een dak van een huis op de grond geplaats." (Van der Bank 1985, p. 3).

It is unlikely that Brits' house was a kapstyl (roof) house. According to J. Walton, an expert in Free State pioneer architecture and the famous traveller James Backhouse, who travelled through the Trans-Orangia in 1839, the hartebeest house was more common in the Free State and it was the typical dwelling of the early white Free State settlers (Walton 1955, p. 7). Backhouse gives the following description of the shape and construction of a hartebeest house: "... they are usually built of reeds, and are sometimes plastered with mud; they are in the form of roofs, but the lower part of their sides often approaches toward perpendicular. Some of them have holes in the roof to let out the smoke"(Backhouse 1844, pp. 357-358). A hartebeest house looked like an overturned boat [Refer to Fig 8].



**Figure 8: Drawing of a hartebeest house by Backhouse. (J. Backhouse, A narrative of a visit to the Mauritius and South Africa. Londen: 1844, p. 358).**

It could not be determined exactly where the house of Brits was located other than that it was situated in the vicinity of the current Presidency and was located near the fountain. According to E.N. Roberts, who conducted research on the original fountain in 1950 from which Bloemfontein got his name, Brits built his house about 300 meters from the fountain (Roberts 1950, p. 8). Through archaeological excavations it may be determined exactly where the house was located, but because kapstyl- and hartebeest houses do not have foundations, there probably remains very little of the original structure.

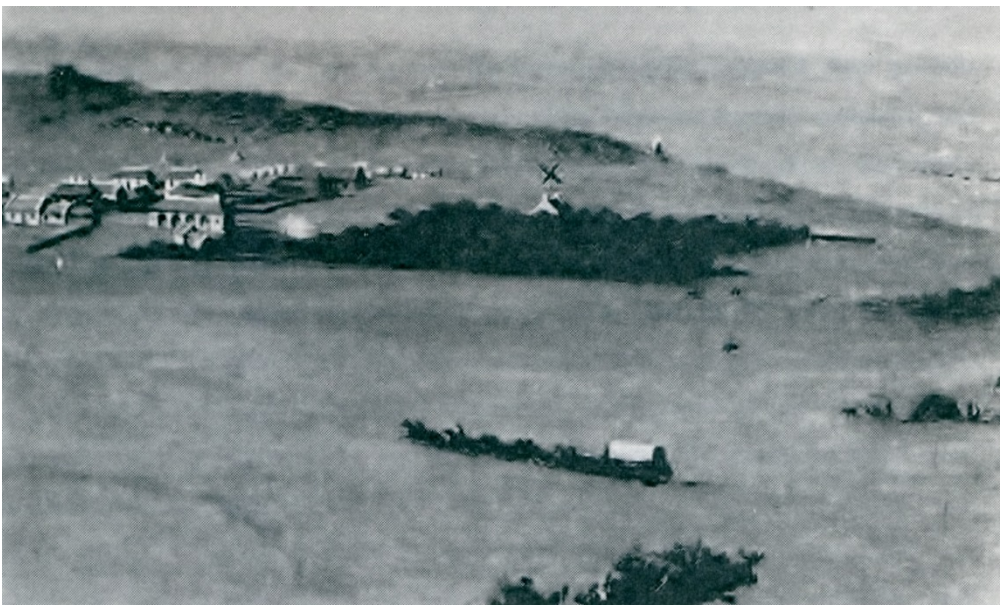
Near the house of Brits was a flower garden and a fruit orchard watered from a furrow that drew its water from the fountain. Apparently Brits's wife planted a small flower garden in front of their house. In his memoir Charles Warden wrote that when his father, the British Resident, Captain (later Major) Henry Douglas Warden, took over the farm "Bloem Fontein" from Brits in 1846, there was a garden with some fruit trees on the farm (Warden 1989, p. 16).

In 2007 there were still two old saffron pear trees which were planted according to tradition in 1832 by Johan Brits. (These pear trees since died). The pear trees were most likely part of Brits' orchard and planted about 300 meters from the fountain. The former Free State Provincial Museum Service erected a bust of Brits near the pear trees in the 1980's.

Although hartebeest houses were not very durable, according to W.W. Collins, the house of Brits still stood in 1851, when Collins arrived in Bloemfontein (Collins 1965, p. 18). Warden's Residence was located close to Brits' house. When one looks at Thomas Baines' painting of Bloemfontein from Signal Hill in 1851, a structure, which may have been a hartebeest house, is visible next to Warden's Residence [Figure 10]



**Figure 9: Some of the pear trees, allegedly planted by Johan Nicolaas Bits (photo: Cobus Dreyer, 2007).**



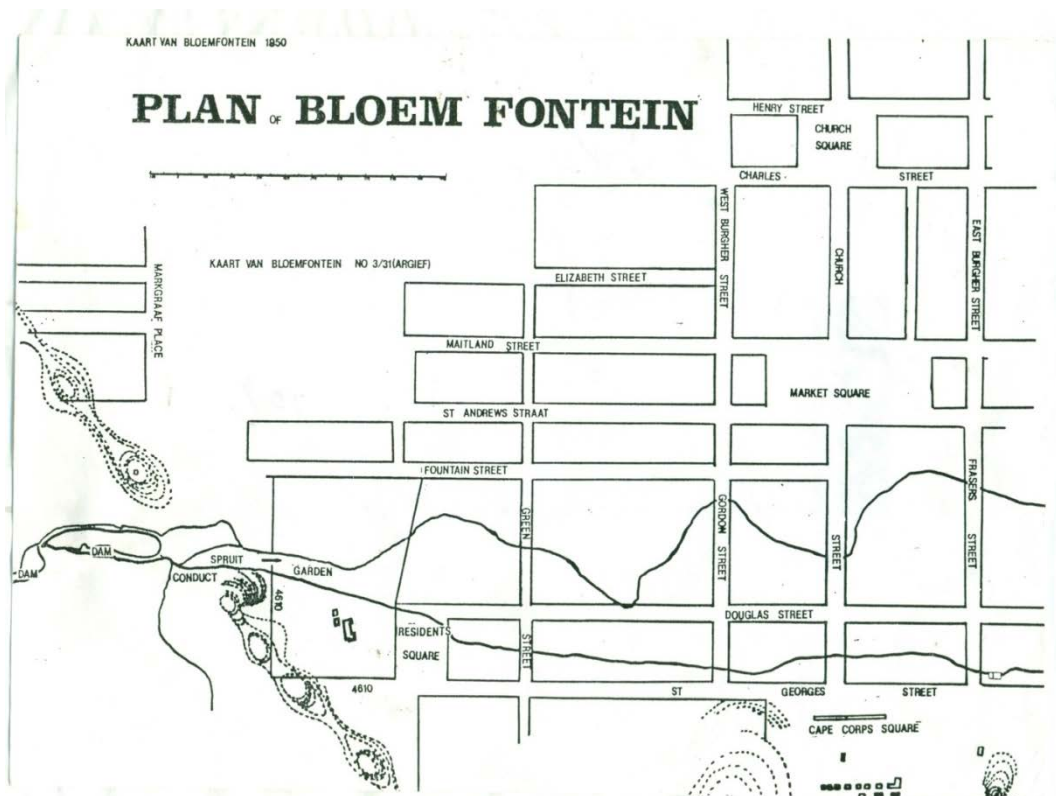
**Figure 10: Thomas Baines' painting dd 1851**

## WARDEN'S RESIDENCY

In 1846 Henry Douglas Warden was appointed as British Resident in the Trans Orangeia with the difficult task to keep the peace between the different population groups and to establish a Residency at a central location. In March 1846 Warden settled with his band of soldiers, the Cape Mounted Riflemen, on the farm 'Bloem Fontein' (Flower Fountain)<sup>1</sup> of farmer Johan Nicolaas Brits near a strong, permanent fountain and a large spruit.<sup>2</sup> The farm 'Bloem Fontein' was chosen because it was so central and had plenty of water. When Warden arrived early in 1846 on the farm 'Bloem Fontein' (as he spelled it), the family Brits lived in a hartebeest house near the fountain. According to Warden it was a "small mud house" (Cape Provincial Archives (CPA) GH10/1: Warden – B. Maitland, 1846-04.02). In front of the house was a flower garden and a fruit orchard watered from a furrow dug between the fountain and the garden.

After Warden's arrival a division of the Cape Mounted Riflemen immediately began with the construction of a Residency or official residence for him. The Residency, which was completed a few months later, served as home for the Warden family and several of the Resident's children were born in this simple house. Warden lived in this house until he left Bloemfontein in 1852.

The Residency was located at the top of the current St. George Street and close to the fountain, where Bloemfontein got its name from. Exactly where on the site the Residency was, is not clear, but apparently it was near the home of Brits at the canal or sluit dug by Brits from the fountain in the current Bloemspruit. On the earliest two street plans of Bloemfontein (1848 and 1850), three structures are visible on the southern shore of Bloemspruit, just south of the water furrow that Brits dug from the spruit [Figure 11]. One of the structures was possibly the house of Brits, as this was still visible in 1851. The other structures were probably the Residency with its outbuilding.

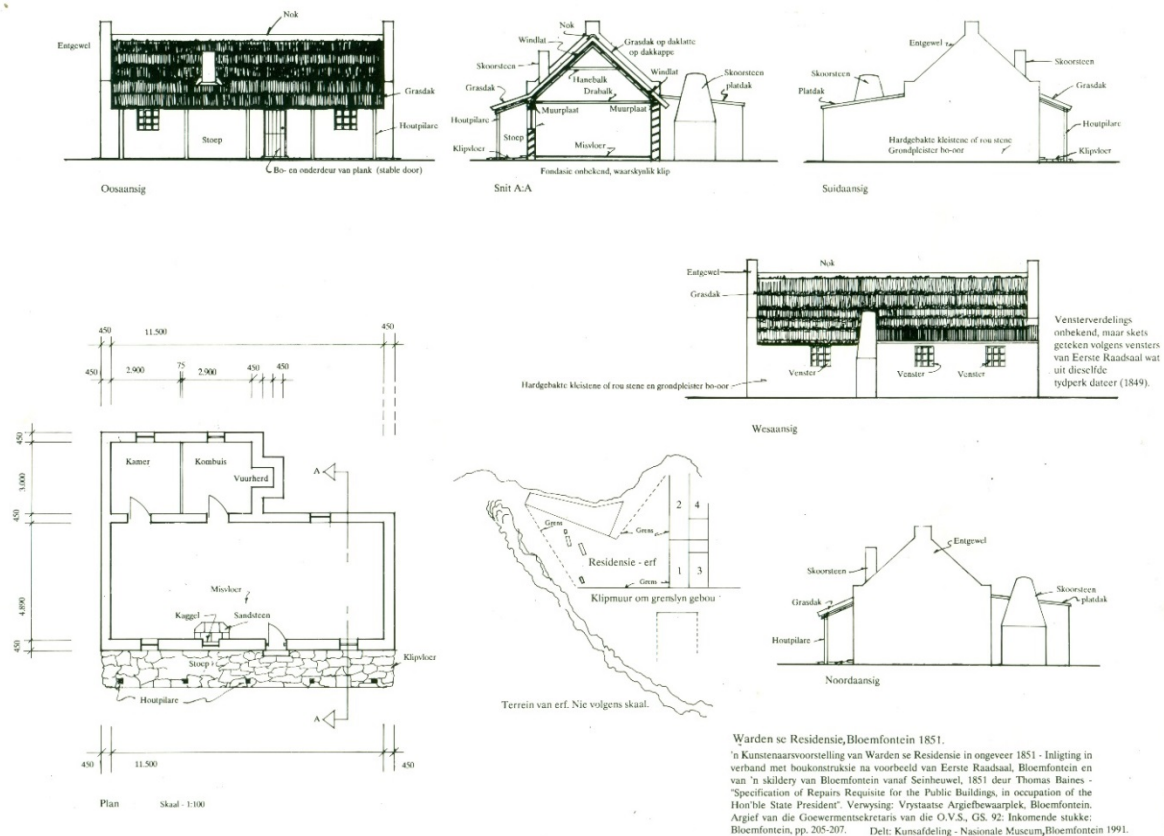


**Figure 11: Street plan of Bloemfontein by J. Hopkins, 1850 with the three structures visible on the large erf on the left near the fountain (Free State Provincial Archives, VAB3/31)**

<sup>1</sup> It was probably a descriptive name that refers to the soil conditions, namely the flowers (wild clover) that grew around the fountain.

<sup>2</sup> This spruit later became known as Bloemspruit.

No description, photograph or sketch of the Residency from the earliest time (1846) could be traced. The only visual representation that apparently exists, is a number of paintings by Thomas Baines depicting Bloemfontein in 1850 and 1851, showing the Residency at a distance, between a number of trees. In these paintings, the Residency is a rectangular structure with a pitched roof and gable ends ('tuitgevels' in Dutch) [Figures 12 & 13]



**Figure 12: An artist portrayal of Warden's Residency in 1846, according to descriptions, archival documents and the building style of the First Raadsaal, Bloemfontein (Dealt: Cess Bleeden, Design Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 1991).**



**Figure 13: Detail of a painting by Thomas Baines 'Bloemfontein in approximately 1850'. A cross marks Warden's Residency. The gabled building next to the Residency was probably the stable and coach house (Oliewenhuis Art Museum, B87/30).**

The building materials used for the earliest buildings in Bloemfontein were mainly locally sourced and most structures were built with raw clay bricks. At the beginning of the 1850s, most houses in Bloemfontein were simple, rectangular, one-storied structures with unplastered, sun dried brick walls or burnt clay bricks, with thatched roofs. Later buildings were whitewashed with lime. Roofs were covered with grass, rushes or reeds, but because grass was plentiful, it was widely used in Bloemfontein. Because timber was not readily available and had to be transported from the Cape by wagon, it was usually used only for roof construction, as well as for doors and windows (Schoeman 1982, pp. 35-40).

The house of Joseph Allison, Warden's clerk, was apparently very close to the Residency and even located on a part of the Residency's grounds. A portion of Allison's house next to the Residency served as government offices. Allison's house was located on lot no. 2, Residents Square, i.e. just next to the Residency, but according to the records of the Registrar of Deeds a portion of Allison's yard stretched deep into Major Warden's garden (VAB: AKT2/3/3/6, p. 3: Transportakte nr. 374, 15-11-1848).

In 1856 there were also a stable and barn on the northern side of the Residency. This building was probably built in the same period as the Residency. On Baines' painting of Bloemfontein in about 1850, two buildings with end gables is visible next to each other (fig. 13). One of these buildings was the Residency and the other was possibly the stable and wagon house. The Residency was repaired and improved several times.

Despite Warden's efforts to keep the peace in the Trans-Orangia, the problems between the different population groups persisted. To try and solve the ongoing problems in the Trans-Orangia, Sir Harry Smith, governor of the Cape Colony and British High Commissioner, proclaimed this area as British territory in 1848 under the name Orange River Sovereignty. The Sovereignty would be managed by the British Resident and a Legislative Assembly, with Bloemfontein as seat of government. In 1852 Warden was succeeded by Henry Green as British Resident.

Green purchased Warden's Residence and property from him, and in 1853 the property was transferred to Green. According to the deed, the property was the piece of ground located in Residents Square marked lot no. 1 on the old plan of Bloemfontein. The original property on which the Residency was built was 148 square feet (44,4m<sup>2</sup>) large and the borders were as follows:

On the northern side - Bloemspruit.

On the southern side - the extension of St. George Street

To the east – Residents Square and lot no. 2.

To the west - town lands (today Markgraaff Street).

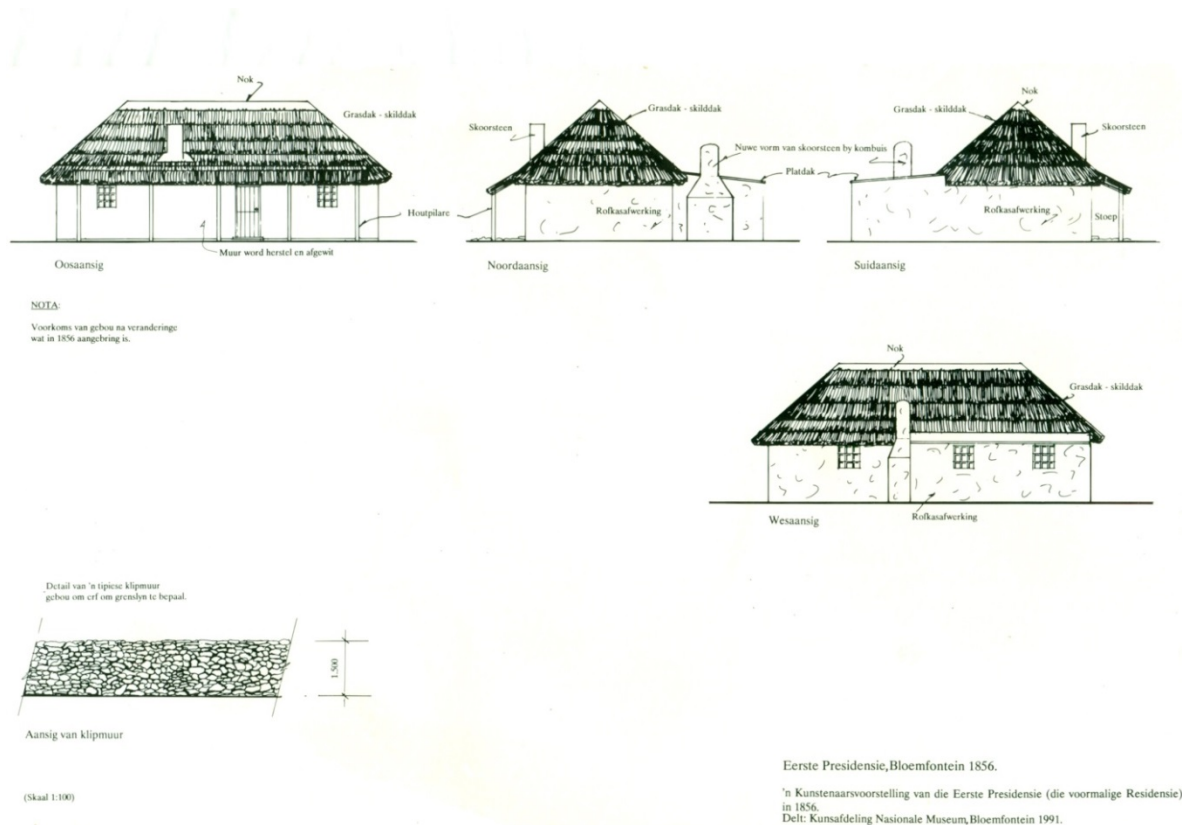
Due to the ongoing problems in the Trans Orangia and the huge cost to administer the area, the British government decided in 1853 to withdraw from the area. On 23 February 1854 the Bloemfontein Convention was signed, under which the Trans-Orangia gained independence, with J.P. Hoffman as the first president. The official name of the new republic would be "Orange Free State", and Bloemfontein became the capital.

## **THE FIRST PRESIDENCY**

Warden and Green's former Residency and property were purchased by the government of the new republic in 1854. President Hoffman moved into the former Residency which then became the First Presidency. Initially the First Presidency had a thatched roof with two end gables. The roof was apparently a pitched roof with 'tuitgevels'. A section of the building, near the southern gable, had a flat roof. The section with the flat roof, which included the kitchen, was at the back of the building. The walls of the former Residency and First Presidency were built with "burned bricks", probably burnt clay bricks. In 1861, when the Second Presidency was built, these bricks were used again. In 1856 the exterior walls were roughly plastered with lime, while both the inside and the outside walls were whitewashed with lime in 1857. The kitchen, with its flat roof and chimney, was apparently a

separate room, but built as a lean-to building against the rest of the house, as typical of the period. In 1856 there was a verandah in front of the former Residency.

Hofmann resigned in February 1855 and was succeeded by J. N. Boshoff as president. In 1855, the First Presidency was in a very poor condition and in 1856 extensive repairs were made to the building. The kitchen chimneys, flat roof, walls, floors, ceilings and fireplaces of the Presidency were repaired, while both end gables and a portion of the gable walls of the northern and southern side of the house were torn down, and the walls rebuilt. Instead of the original pitched roof with its 'tuitgevels', the roof was now converted into a hipped roof of grass, i.e. a pitched roof consisting of four inclined roof planes [Figure 14].



**Figure 14: An artist portrayal of the First Presidency (the former Residency) in 1856, according to descriptions and archival documents (Dealt: Cess Bleeden, Design Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 1991).**

In the 1850s, the First Presidency had a big garden with lots of fruit trees. There were apparently several peach trees and a variety of grapes in the Presidency garden. The Presidency was surrounded by a stacked stone wall.

In 1856 there was a stable and wagon house on the Presidency site, which was located on the northern side of the Presidency. The outbuilding was built of burnt clay bricks that were roughly plastered and had a thatched roof. Part of the stable and wagon house had a pitched roof with two 'tuitgevels', while the rest of the building had a flat roof. Between 1856 and 1857 the stables and wagon house was repaired thoroughly and altered. Instead of the original 'tuitgevel', the roof section to the northern side was converted to a hipped roof, just like the Residency.

## SECOND PRESIDENCY

After President Boshoff resigned in 1859, M.W. Pretorius was elected president. In 1860, the First Presidency was in such poor condition that it was decided to build a new official residence for Pretorius. The plan of the

Second Presidency was included in the map collection of the Free State Provincial Archives, but unfortunately disappeared. In the register or index it is indicated as missing.

The Second Presidency which was completed in 1862, was a simple, symmetrical flat-roofed house with a small verandah between two wings and a corrugated iron roof and sliding sash windows made of wood. The new Presidency was built in the shape of a stoep room house, which was a typical development in the Free State architecture of that time. Two stoep rooms were extended slightly to the front, and a porch or verandah was formed between the two rooms [Fig 15]. The Second Presidency faced east.



**Figure 15: The Second Presidency, c. 1870s**

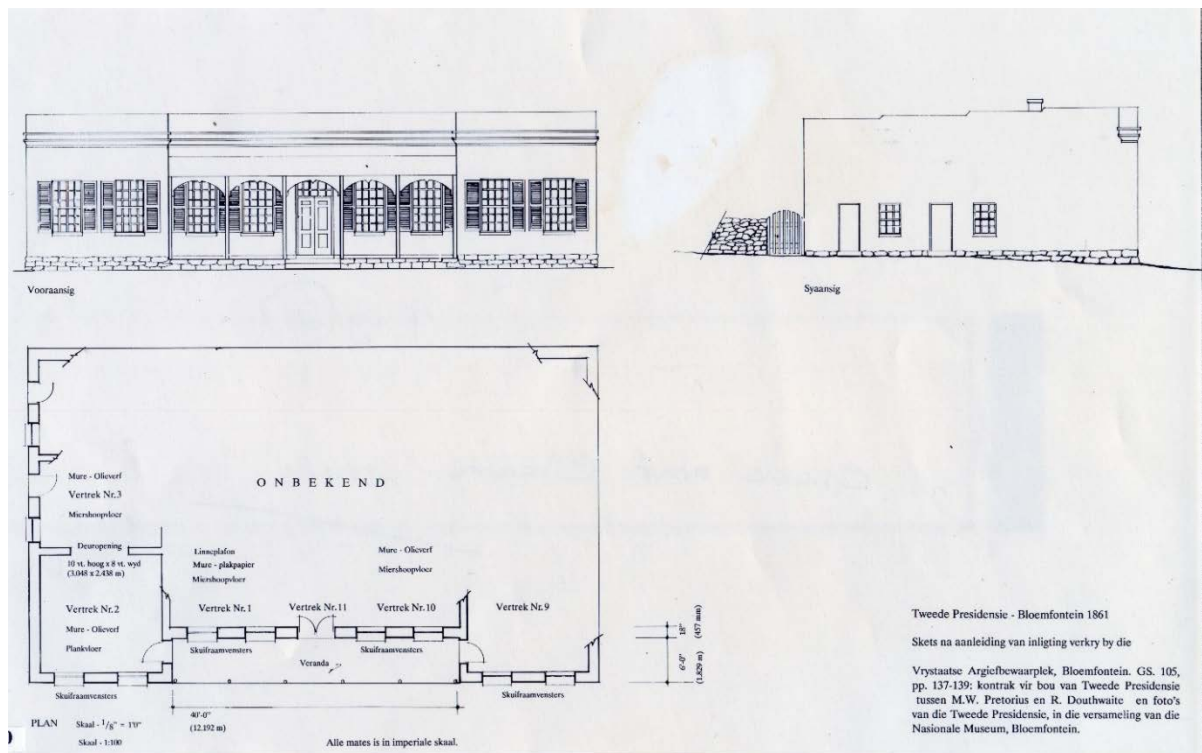
The foundations of the Second Presidency were constructed of stones with a thickness of about 30cm. According to Prof. Leon Roodt, the architect who was involved in the restoration of the Third or current Presidency in the 1970s, the foundations of the Second Presidency were still visible during the restoration of the Third Presidency and consisted of dolerite stones. It was left undisturbed and just covered with paving (Interview with Prof. Leon Roodt, 10-06-1992). If the foundations can be uncovered through archaeological excavations, more information about the Second Presidency is likely to be added to the archival material. Perhaps a complete floor plan of the building can then be drawn up. The exterior walls of the Second Presidency were evidently built from burnt clay bricks, while some of the interior walls were built of raw clay bricks. Raw bricks became surprisingly hard in the dry climate of the Free. The Second Presidency originally had 11 rooms, but was enlarged in the 1870s. Initially all the rooms had a mixture of ant hill and cow dung floors, except the President's study, which seems to have had a wooden floor [Figure 16].

After Pretorius's resignation J.H. Brand took over the reins of the Orange Free State in 1864 and was re-elected five times as president until his death in Bloemfontein in 1888. During his period of office of nearly 25 years, the Free State and therefore Bloemfontein experienced an unprecedented boom and prosperity in nearly every sector and the Orange Free State has developed into a 'model republic'. In 1880 Bloemfontein reached a population of 2,567 and fully attained municipal status, with Robert Innes as first mayor.

During the sojourn of President Brand at the Second Presidency (1864-1886) mention is made of stables, a wagon house and a cow-shed on the site. In 1906 there were two outbuildings on the site of the Presidency, namely the "old stables" and the "new stables". The old stables, on the northern side of the property, had 8 rooms, namely a servant's room, a wagon or coach house, a storeroom, a stable and 4 other rooms. It is possible that the "old stables" were the original outbuildings of the Second Presidency, but it could also have been the outbuildings of the Third Presidency, that was built in 1886.

Through the years parts of the large Presidency erf were sold. In 1863 a piece of ground at the corner of the Presidency erf (4,5m by 10,5m) was donated to the parish of the Dutch Reformed Church. They needed the ground for the erection of a new parsonage.





**Figure 16: Artist drawing of part of the ground plan of the Second Presidency, according to archival documents and photographs (Dealt: Cess Bleeden, Design Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 1991).**

During the restoration and refurnishing of the Third Presidency in 1982-1985, several old fruit trees were found on site. Except for the 2 big saffron pear trees that was supposedly planted by the original owner of the farm Bloemfontein, Johan Nicolaas Brits, pomegranate trees, a pergola of vines, an apple tree, a mulberry tree and a quince hence was found on the erf of the Presidency. The Presidency also had a vegetable garden.

The garden of the Presidency was watered by a water furrow that ran from the fountain in Bloemspruit through the erf of the Presidency and over President Square. In 1874 the Bloemfontein Municipality recommended that the water furrow between the fountain and the Presidency should be strengthened with stone masonry. The water furrow apparently ran parallel to the vine pergola.

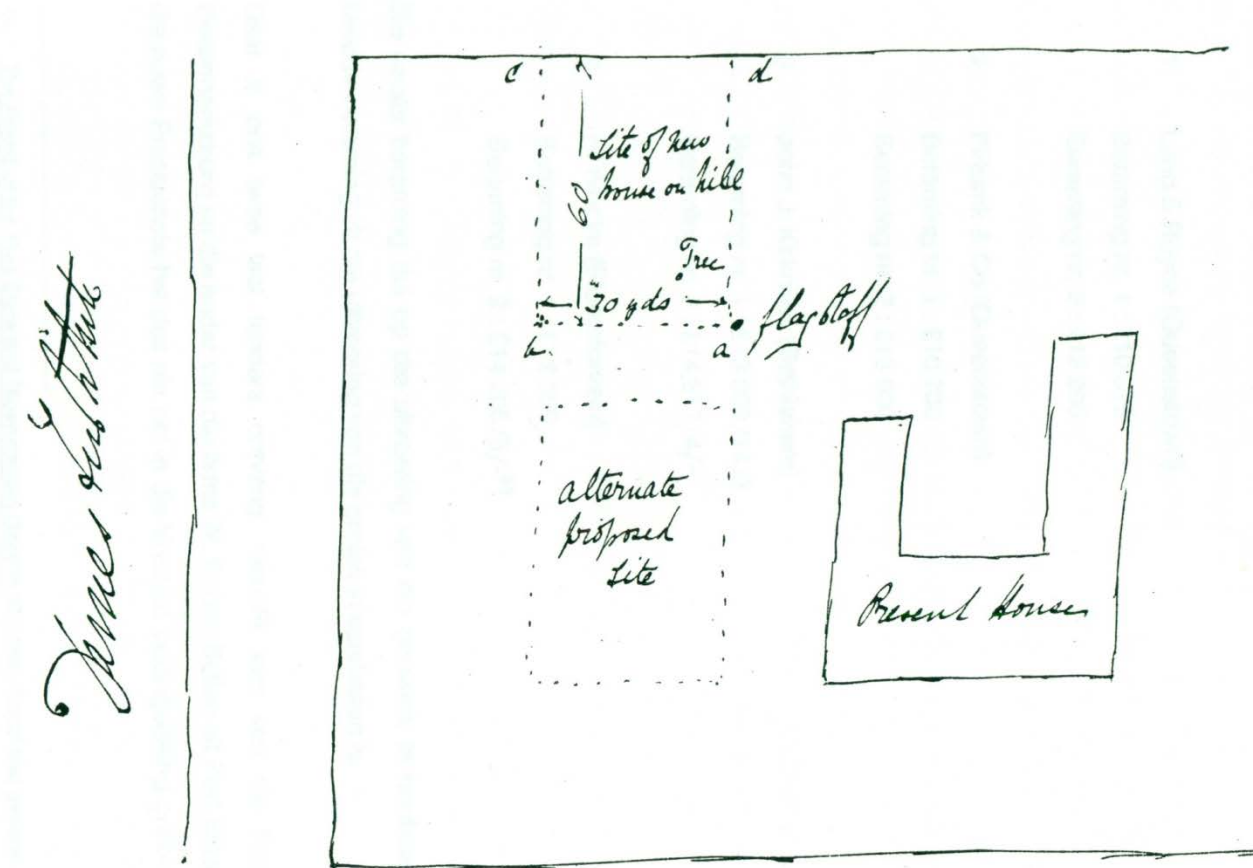
The Presidency was surrounded by a stone wall, as typical of the period. In 1881 tenders were asked for the following work on the grounds of the Presidency:

- The erection of a stone wall next to the spruit.
- The erection of a wall made of stone and lime mortar between the garden of the Presidency and the adjacent Dutch Reformed Parsonage.
- The erection of a water tank, made of stone, lime mortar and cement.

### THIRD PRESIDENCY

In the 1880's the Second Presidency was in such a bad state that the Free State Volksraad decided to build a new official residence for the president. A competition was held in 1884 for the design of a new Presidency and the prize for the best design was given to the British architect, Francis Lennox Canning. Due to a lack of sufficient funds, Canning was requested to simplify his original design. To save money, a part of the Second Presidency was converted into a kitchen and pantry for the new Presidency, and some of the service rooms close to the kitchen were simplified. The planned conservatory and decorations to the facade were also omitted.

President Brand wanted the new Presidency to be erected at the back of the Second Presidency on the hillock on the Presidency-erf. However, as the unevenness of the site would need extensive excavations as well as more work and building material and there was insufficient funds available, it was decided to erect the new Presidency lower on the site adjacent to the Second Presidency, but a little more to the south [Fig 17]. The kitchen part of the old Second Presidency was redesigned in an effort to fit in with the design of the new building. However, the old kitchen section still appear inferior to the new, grander Presidency [Fig 18]. To save money, the old building material of the Second Presidency, for example windows and doors, were re-used in the rebuilding of the kitchen section. As the door frames of the kitchen section are a lot lower than in the new Presidency, it is detrimental to the northern facade of the building. Apparently the old kitchen section was rebuilt, but as the foundations of the previous Presidency were re-used, the two sections are not squared.



**Figure 17: Sketch of possible positions of the new Presidency on the site. (Free state Provincial Archives, GS1115, p. 138).**

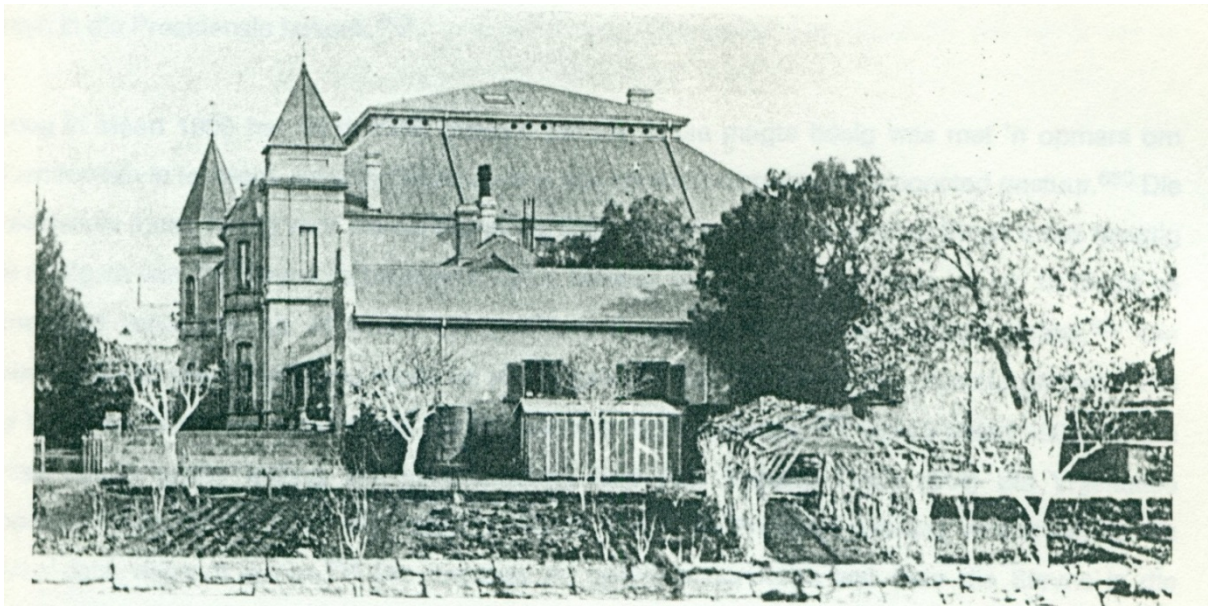
Originally the Third Presidency did not have any toilets and bathrooms, and in 1886 there was no running water. The toilets were outside. As the original toilets were insufficient, new toilets were built in 1897 and later modernized. In this year the exterior toilet building was also connected by a passage to the Presidency. The Presidency only obtained running water in 1889 when the Sannaspos water scheme was completed. In 1900 a bathroom was added to the first floor.

Before 1900 the residents of Bloemfontein obtained water from wells and fountains. The Presidency had its own well on the erf, which was apparently dug in 1891 by bandits. Water for the president's family was also obtained from the fountain and rainwater tanks.

During the occupation of the Presidency by president Brand and his family, the Presidency had a pergola of vines, a vegetable garden, walnut trees and an orchard with various fruit trees [Fig. 18]. Special mention was made of the large pear trees that were apparently planted by J.N. Brits.



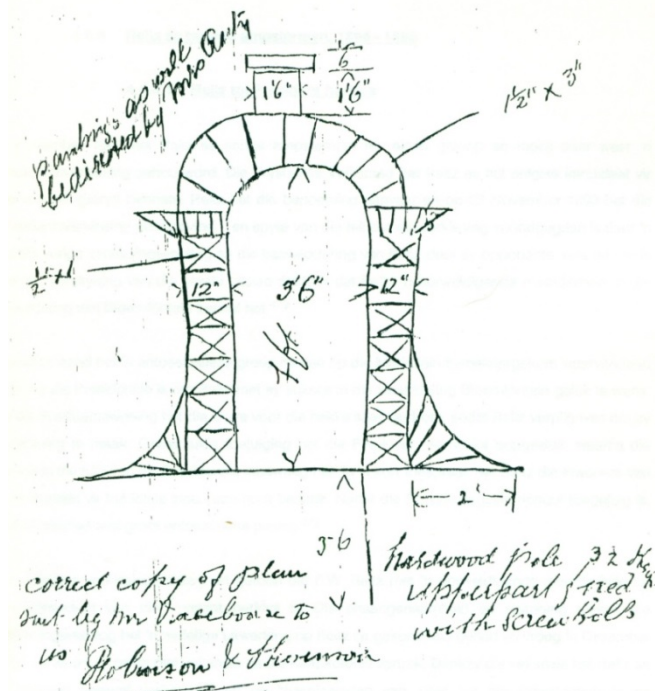
**Figure 19: The third (current) Presidency just after completion, c. 1886**



**Figure 18: Northern facade of Government House (former Presidency), c 1902, with part of the fruit garden and pergola of vines visible in the foreground. The part of the building closest to the camera was designed by the well-known architect, sir Herbert Baker, and built in 1902.**

On 14 July 1888 President Brand died in the Third Presidency after suffering a heart attack and in December 1888 President F.W. Reitz was elected the new State President of the OFS. During the occupation of the Reitz-family, several changes were made to the erf of the Presidency.

Between 1892 and 1893 two wooden arches (painted green) were erected in the garden in front of the Presidency [Fig. 18]. It was used for climbing roses. In 1894 a pedestrian bridge, for the private use of the President, was erected at the Presidency. The bridge was linked to President Brand Street by a small pathway. There were 3 turnstiles on the Presidency site, a gate in the vineyard and a gate above the bridge, as well as a tank to store fountain water.



**Figure 20: Architect J.E. Vixseboxse's drawing of the wooden arches to be erected in the garden of the Presidency, 1892 (Free state Provincial Archives, PWD2).**

There was a tennis court on the south-eastern part of the Presidency erf. The garden of the Presidency consisted of gravel walks with flower beds on each side, as well as big trees and shrubs. With the big flood in Bloemfontein in 1904 there were a brick wall on the bank of Bloemspruit, a servants' room of wood and galvanised iron, a palm greenhouse, a well, a small, square swimming bath [Fig. 20] and a small bath house on the erf of the Presidency.

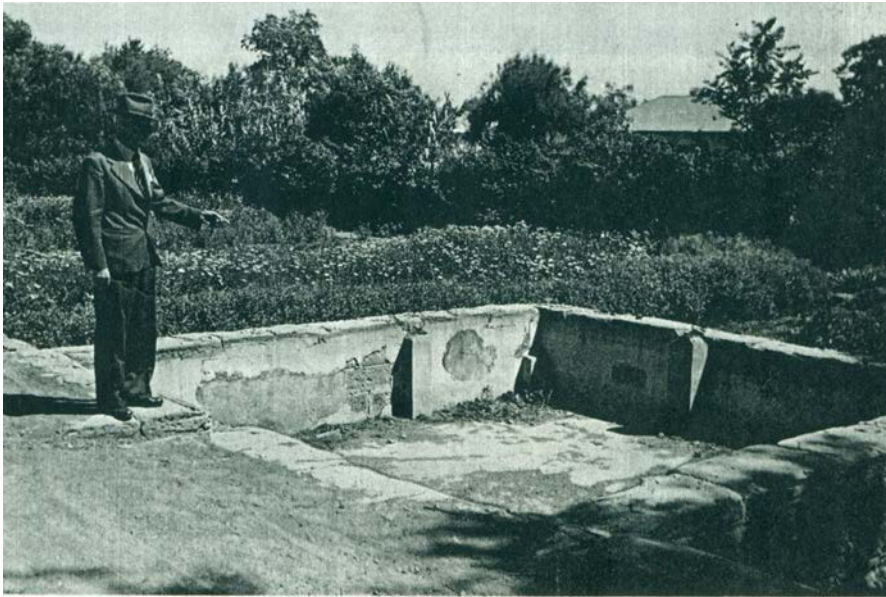


**Figure 21: Bloemfontein in the 1890's, with Markgraaff street leading to the town dam just south of the Presidency.**

In October 1899 the Anglo Boer War started and in March 1900 Bloemfontein was occupied by British troops and the former Presidency became the Government House, occupied by the British military leaders and their staff. During the stay of the British military a veranda of wood and galvanized iron was built onto the

In December 1895 President Reitz resigned due to bad health and in February 1896 M.T. Steyn was elected as the last President of the republic of the Orange Free State. During the time of the republic the environment of the Presidency was still very pastoral. To the east was the open piece of ground which was known as President Square. West was the large garden of the Presidency which stretched into the veld and on the southern side was Bloemfontein's large storage dam [Fig. 21]. Until recently, parts of the old dam wall were still visible on the western side of the garden of the Presidency. On the northern side Bloemspruit twisted through the veld. During the big flood of 1904 Bloemspruit overflowed its banks with the result that the course of the spruit changed. Bloemspruit was only canalised and straightened after the big flood of 1904. In this process another part of the Presidency erf was lost.

western side of the former Presidency to keep out the summer sun. A bathroom was added to the top storey of the Presidency and the building was supplied with electricity.



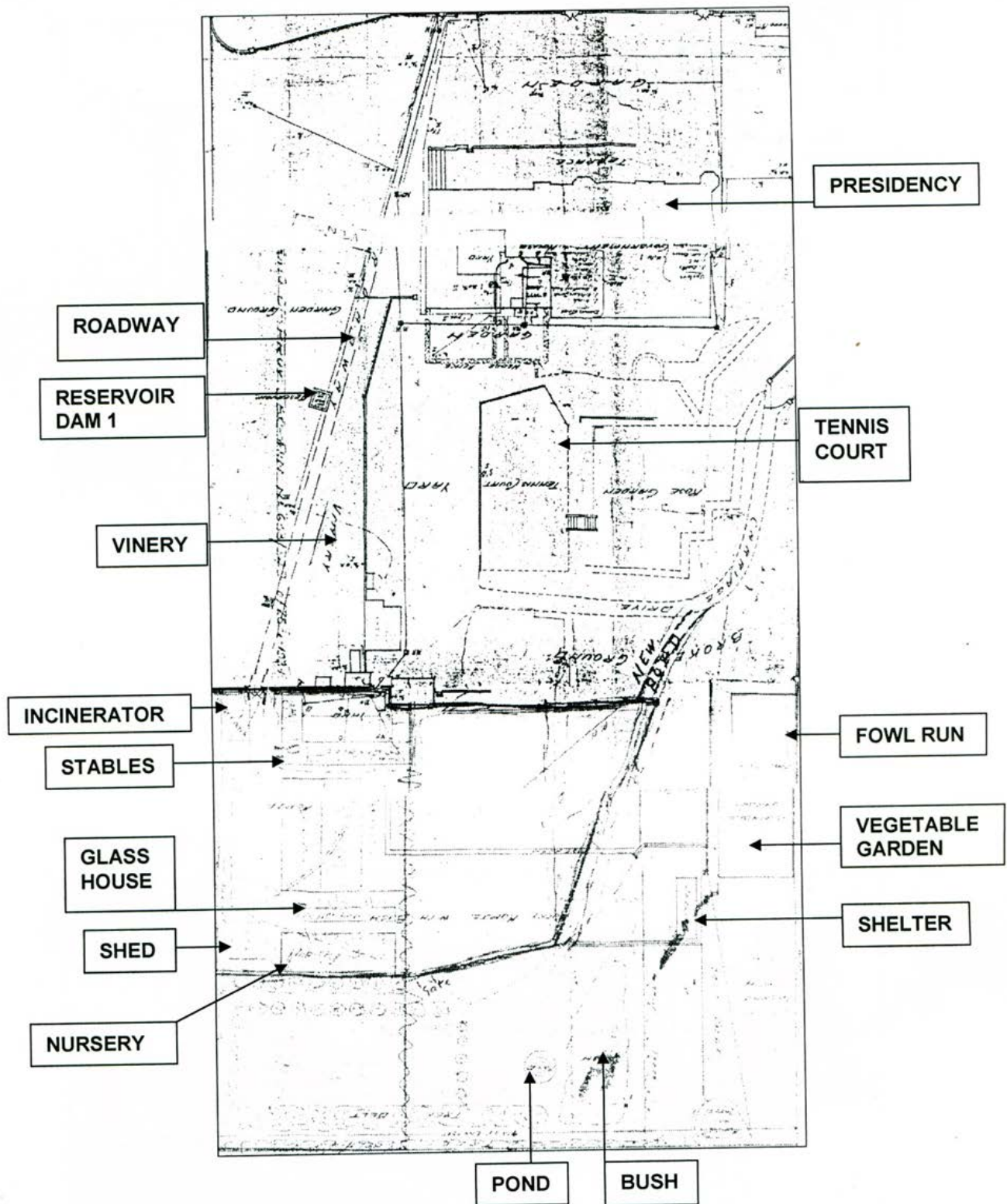
**Figure 22: Mr G.J. Reitz pointing to the old, square swimming bath in the garden of the Presidency, built during the occupation of president Reitz. (Free State Provincial Archives: The Friend collection, A566, vol 441).**

On 24 May 1900 the Orange Free State was annexed as British Colony and renamed to Orange River Colony. Government House was now occupied by the British military Governor, General Major G.T. Pretzman and his wife. In February 1901 Pretzman was succeeded by sir Hamilton John Goold Adams. In 1902 a building was designed by the well-known architect, Sir Herbert Baker, and built on the northern side of Government House, right next to the kitchen. It is

not clear if this was the new servants' quarters that was added to the northern side of the Presidency during the stay of Goold-Adams. During 1905 – 1906 new stables and a coach house was erected at the back of the Presidency (western side) [Fig. 21]. These stables were a few years back used as a restaurant and recently converted into an Information Centre.



**Figure 23: Left: The 1905 stables behind the Presidency with the grape vine at the front. The stables has since been turned into an information centre. Right: Part of the 1905 stables, which could have been the coach house. The windows and doors was replaced and modernised.**



**Figure 24: Site plan (1912) Eunice High School Hostel (former Presidency) stand no 1917 & 1918 (Free State Provincial Archives: DOW1/2 no 6003/8 File B5/4595) (Postscripts: Cobus Dreyer) NOTE: Site of the new development is below the stables on the bottom half of the plan**

After the big flood in Bloemfontein in 1904, Bloemfontein was straightened and laid out with sandstone blocks. As a result of this, a part of the Presidency erf was cut off, but later on a piece of ground to the east of the current Markgraaff Street was added to the Presidency erf. During the Anglo Boer War a small Guard House was built close to the gate of Government House on the eastern side. In 1905 water pipes were laid on to the

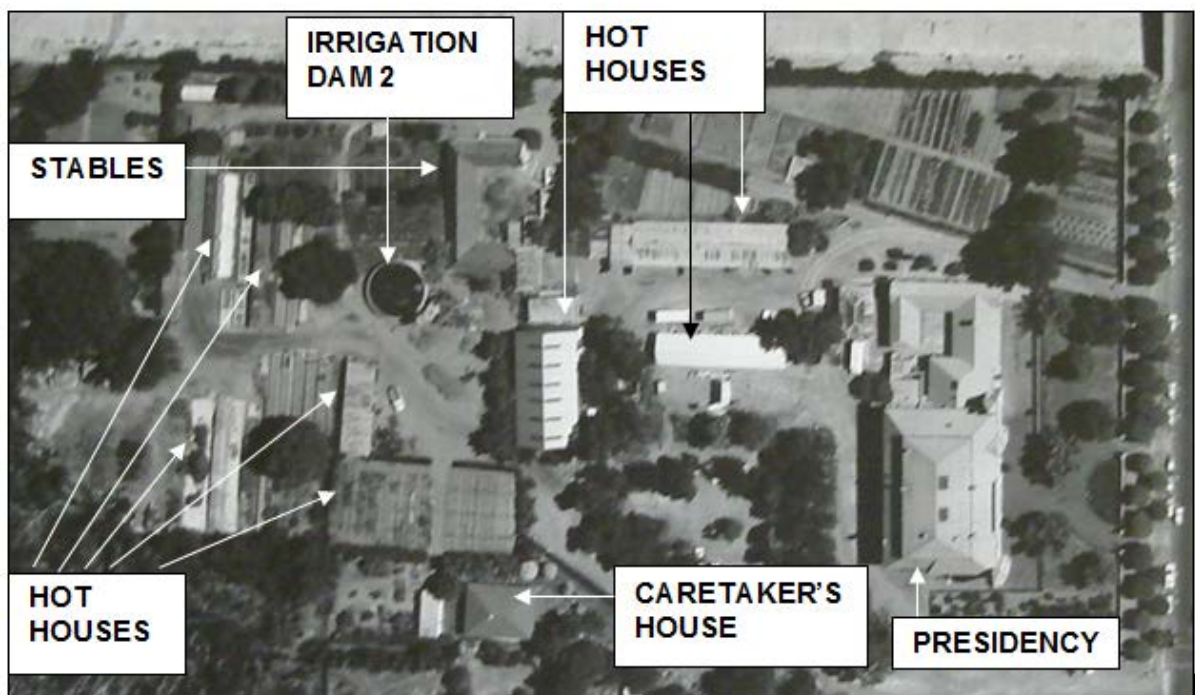
Presidency garden and in 1936, when President Brand Street was broadened, the old stone wall, the guard house, as well as the wall and gates that dated back to the time of the Orange River Colony were removed. With the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the former Presidency lost its status as official residence. After 1910 the building was used for various purposes. In 1911 a military school was opened in the Presidency and since 1914 until 1939 the High School of Eunice used the former Presidency as a school and hostel. During this time the Department of Public Works laid on a nursery on the site of the Presidency and as a result buildings such as a glass hothouse and a shed were erected on the site [Fig. 24]. The nursery was separated from the school ground by a fence.

In October 1940, during World War II, the Department of Defence commandeered the Presidency for military purposes and the building became the headquarters of the State Command. During the war years, the large trees at the front of the building and the old stone wall on the east side, which disappeared with the broadening of President Brand Street, has been replaced with a decorative brick wall that was replaced again during the subsequent restoration process in the 1970s.

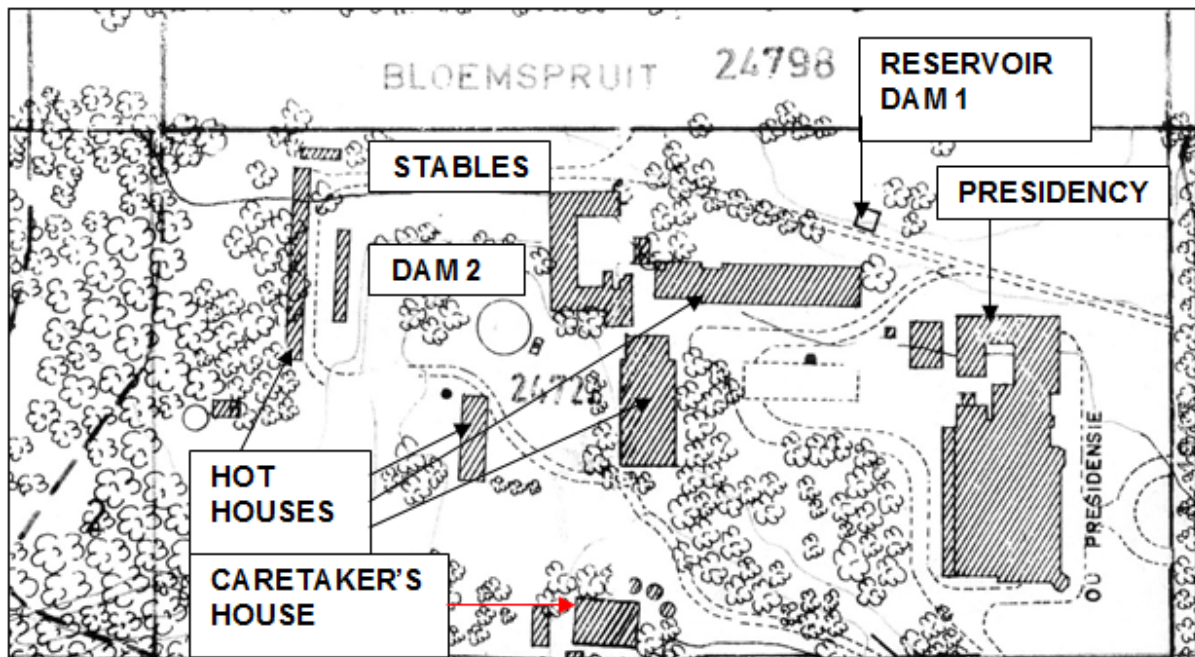
Since 1956 the former Presidency was used as a hostel by the Normal College (later Bloemfontein Teachers College). Hereafter the building was used by the Free State Provincial Administration - first as a center for the Free State Provincial Library Service and then as offices. Each user has made his own alterations and changes to the former president's home according to their own needs, with the result that it has suffered a lot of damage and losses over the years.

The last resident of the Presidency up to 1972 was PACOFS, who used the building as office space, while the ballroom was converted into a small theatre. During this time significant changes were made to the building. On 12 July 1972, a fire broke out in the small theatre of PACOFS, apparently due to an electrical short circuit. Although the fire was quickly extinguished by firefighters, it caused a lot of damage.

The premises at the back were alternatively used as a kraal for horses, vegetable gardens, and sports facilities, a nursery of the Public Works Department (PWD) and more recently, a storage place for vintage agricultural equipment.



**Figure 25: Aerial photograph of the Presidency taken in 1968 (Bloemfontein Townplanning Dept.) Postscripts by Cobus Dreyer.**



**Figure 26: Site plan drawing dating from 1971 (Bloemfontein Town Planning Department). Postcripts by Cobus Dreyer.**

A site map, dating from 1912 when the Old Presidency had been in use as a hostel by the Eunice School for girls [Fig. 24] and a site plan, dated 1971 [Fig. 26] provide an indication of the buildings and structures at that specific time.

An aerial photograph taken in 1968 [Fig. 25] clearly indicate the features and structures used by the PWD nursery. These activities were discontinued in 1982 to make way for the Museum.

## CONCLUSION

On 27 January 1938 the Presidency and the site on which the building stands, was declared as a national monument by the then Council for National Monuments. The declared site consists of plots 1917 and 1918. Ever since 1924, several persons and organizations began campaigning for the preservation of the Presidency, but the mere declaration could not halt the deterioration of the building. Only in 1972, a sum of money for the restoration of the Presidency was appropriated by the former government. On 1 September 1972, the Presidency was transferred to the Department of Public Works, which would conduct the restoration. Prof. Leon Roodt of the firm Roodt Architects and Planners was appointed by the Department to undertake the restoration work, in consultation with the Free State Provincial Government and the Council for National Monuments.

The Presidency has been restored over a period of 10 years from 1973. Because the building was dilapidated in places, parts of the structure had to be rebuilt. It was, therefore, a very large and difficult project. Through this massive rescue operation, one of the most important historical buildings in the Free State was preserved. After the completion of the restoration the Presidency was refurbished as a presidential residence and in February 1985 the Museum Old Presidency was officially inaugurated.

The site on which the Presidency stands, is for the Free State and especially Bloemfontein, of particular historical interest. The site is closely interwoven with Bloemfontein and the Free State's founding history. On this site, the capital of the Free State had its origin when Major Warden in 1846 took over the farm 'Bloem Fontein' from the first permanent resident, J. N. Brits, and built his Residency here. With the establishment of the republic of the Orange Free State in 1854 and the erection of the successive presidential residences, this site was the epicentre of the political and social events of Bloemfontein and the Free State until 1910, with the establishment of the Union of South Africa, when it lost its significance as official residence. The site is currently a provincial heritage site.



# SITE VISIT REPORT

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The site for development of the new Reserve Bank (Erf 37103) was visited on 18 May 2016. This report should be read in conjunction with an earlier report of Mr Cobus Dreyer as the site has already been cleared of all vegetation and the surface levelled at the time of the site visit. Refer to figure 27 which is a Google image dated 23 January 2016. Mr Dreyer visited the site on 27 March 2007 as well as 2 April 2007 which is prior to the clearance of the site.

The site visit was, accordingly, focused on heritage effects on the section of the Old Presidency that might potentially be negatively affected by building activities. Only one possible midden close to the building line has been identified in the north-western corner of Erf 2/24722 (marked with an X on the image below) which might be associated with the old stables (also indicated on image).



**Figure 27: The area of the original declared site, Erf 24722, of the Old Presidency is the entire block which is bordered by the canal on the northern side, President Brand Street on the eastern side, St Georges Street on the southern side, and Markgraaff Street on the western side. The area enclosed in the red line is the existing site of the Old Presidency [Erf 2/24722] with the remainder the site for the new development. [Google image dated 23 January 2016]**

The earliest Google Image of this area dates to 2002 and shows that all the hothouses, as can be seen on Image 25 on page 22, were already demolished and only the foundations remained by 2002. The 'caretaker's house' was demolished post 2007, i.e. after Mr Dreyer visited the site. The desktop study, however, indicates the remaining structures to be less than 60 years old.

The subject site is, however, located in highly sensitive palaeontological area. The clearance of the surface precludes the possibility of the required field assessment and protocol for finds and is it accordingly recommended that a qualified palaeontologist be on site during the excavation of the foundations to inspect the excavated soil and make the necessary recommendations if required.

## IDENTIFIED HERITAGE RESOURCES & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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All potential heritage resources identified during the historical background phase fall within the current portion of the Old Residency site, i.e. Erf 2/24722, and are already formally protected as part of the Old Residency. No structures worthy of protection or older than 60 years in the proposed development area has been identified via the desktop phase.

The historical background study indicates that the original hartebeest structure was most likely close to the site of the current Old Presidency building and is the likelihood of any subsurface archaeological finds relating to this period unlikely to be found on the site of the proposed development.

The site of development is, accordingly, not viewed as of historical importance other than having been an extension of the original larger erf of the Old Presidency.

## IMPACT & MITIGATION

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Proposal	Fabric affected and significance	Potential impact	Mitigation
Development of new Reserve Bank	A midden in the adjacent Grade II protected area	Its close proximity to the border will cause it to be completely destroyed by the excavations of the foundations for the structures immediately adjacent the fence.	Apply for an archaeological permit for an auger test to determine its origin and possible date. Depending on the outcome of the auger test a rescue excavation of the midden might be required. Excavation permit to include this possibility.
	Sub-surface palaeontological material	Complete destruction of any potential palaeontological material on account of excavation of sub-surface storey.	Palaeontologist on site during excavations to identify any possible palaeontological material and advise mitigation measures if required.
	Building complex indicated as 'the stables' in the Grade II protected area of the Old Presidency, including the adjacent reservoir (dam)	The close proximity of construction activities might cause damage to these structures in the case of possible blasting activities	All possible precautions should be taken by the developer to prevent damage to these structures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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It is recommended that the new development be allowed to continue provided that the necessary mitigation measures are adhered to.

Please note that no work can commence without a valid permit from the Heritage Free State Permit Committee and that plans for the new additions will have to be approved by them prior to submission for approval by the Municipal Planning Division.

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VAB1/35: Street plan of Bloemfontein by A.H. Bain, 1848.

VAB3/31: Street plan of Bloemfontein by J. Hopkins, 1850. VAB: DOW1/2 no 6003/8 File B5/4595: Site plan (1912) Eunice High School Hostel (former Presidency) stand no 1917 & 1918.

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