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PHASE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS: NORTH EAST WERF  
VALKENBERG

Prepared for  
The University of Cape Town  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The first phase of archaeological investigations at the historic Valkenberg farm *werf* were undertaken by the Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape town in June 1990 at the request of Masterprop. These investigations evaluated the archaeological potential of the *werf* and resulted a number of findings and subsequent recommendations.<sup>1</sup> The second phase of excavations described in this report were commissioned in partial fulfillment of the recommendations of the first phase investigations. This report should be read as a sequel to that of 1990.

## 2. THE BRIEF

The findings of the 1990 report were that the south east portion of the *werf* (originally the male quarters of the old Valkenberg Hospital) had been disturbed to the extent that no further archaeological investigations were considered necessary. The preliminary excavations indicated that the structure known as "the barn", the female wing of the old hospital complex, and the precinct of the main house should be considered sensitive and be subject to further investigation should any development be planned. The Archaeology Contracts Office was instructed by the University of Cape Town Planning Unit (the current lease holders) to:

- a) Examine and document the fabric of the "barn" as well as conduct test excavations in its interior.
- b) Examine and document the fabric of remains of the eastern gate and standing portions of the northern perimeter wall.
- c) Excavate in the area east of the National Monuments Council boundary adjacent to the northern perimeter wall that was found to be archaeologically sensitive as a result of the Phase 1 investigation.
- d) Continue the above mentioned excavation across the boundary fence into the National Monuments Council property subject to permission being granted by that organisation.
- e) Produce a report detailing the findings of the investigation.

## 3. HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The Archaeology Contracts Office was not requested to undertake archival research as part of the first or second phases of excavations. Previous work by Margaret Cairns<sup>2</sup> comprises the bulk of what is known about the site. The Archaeology Contracts Office commissioned further limited research to assist with the interpretation of the finds. At present a complete archival documentation of the site does not exist. What is known is summarized below.

The land grant that made up the core of the Valkenberg estate was first granted by the Dutch East India company in 1661 to Pieter De Jongh and Willem Willems van Deventer. Cairns has indicated that the land grant underwent a complex series of transfers, grants and regrants. These have not been documented as the focus of Cairns' research has been the ownership of the buildings. Inventories made after the

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1 Hart, T.J.G. Valkenberg Manor House: phase 1 archaeological investigation. Unpublished report, Archaeology Contracts Office, University of Cape Town.

2 Cairns, M. 1986. Valkenberg. *Some notes on its early history with particular reference to the building complex*. Unpublished report.

deaths of a number of owners of the property are an indicator of the development of the farm *werf* through time.

The first written record indicating that a dwelling was present on the site is the deceased estate inventory of Dirk Geysbertz Verwy which was compiled in 1713.<sup>3</sup> The inventory describes a simple dwelling consisting of

a *combuis*,  
*boetelary*,  
*kluyne kamer*,  
*afslakje* and second *afslakje* and *agter afslak*.  
Outbuildings at this time consisted of two *hoks*.

A description of the property is again presented in the inventory of Cornelius Valk's estate which wound up in 1721. This also describes a simple dwelling with *afslakies*.<sup>4</sup>

By 1774 considerable development had taken place in the *werf* of Valkenberg. The inventory associated with the death of Cornelius de Waal in 1774 shows that the currently existing lay-out of the main house was in place at this time.<sup>5</sup> It is probable that between 1746 (when de Waal bought the property) and 1774, the *werf* underwent a number of modifications that involved reassignment of, and additions to existing buildings to make up the homestead and the longitudinal arrangement of buildings to the east. In addition, a number of out-buildings existed at this time including a *slavenhuis* and *wagenhuis*.

A further inventory dated 1807 compiled after the death of Jan van Schoor<sup>6</sup> indicates that by this time the homestead had developed to its present form. The *werf* enclosed a variety of buildings including a *kelder*, *slavenhuis* (for 33 slaves), *winkel*, *paardestal*, *wagenhuis* and various stock enclosures.

Thibault's survey of 1812<sup>7</sup> (Figure 3.1) shows the Valkenberg *werf* together with the *werf* wall and a number of structures. The buildings now known as the barn and Wild Fig were in existence as was a long building along the northern perimeter of the *werf* adjoining the rear of the homestead. A building (now demolished) orientated on a north south axis existed in roughly the position of the Stellenbosch Farmers Winery building. A further building was situated along the south side of the east gate in an analogous position to the barn. The *werf* wall encompassed the complex with access to the *werf* being via the eastern gate (a portion of which still exists) and the existing north west and west entrances. Figure 3.2 depicts the *werf* in the latter half of the 19th century before the building of the hospital.<sup>8</sup> Additions have been made to the homestead and an elongated structure has been erected across the northern half of the barn.

The Mostert family owned the property throughout most of the 19th century until the farm was purchased by the Colonial Government in 1881 for use as a reformatory. In 1891 modifications were made to the *werf* and existing buildings to accommodate the needs of the first 250 psychiatric patients housed at Valkenberg Hospital.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cape Archives MOOC 8/3.24 1713

<sup>4</sup> Cape Archives MOOC 8/4.69 1721

<sup>5</sup> Cape Archives C.J. 2672 1774

<sup>6</sup> Cape Archives MOOC 8/26.24 1807

<sup>7</sup> SG 9817

<sup>8</sup> Cape Archives C.O.1470

<sup>9</sup> Laidler, P.W. and Gerretz, M. South Africa. Its Medical History 1652-1898. A Medical and Social Study. Cape Town: Struik.

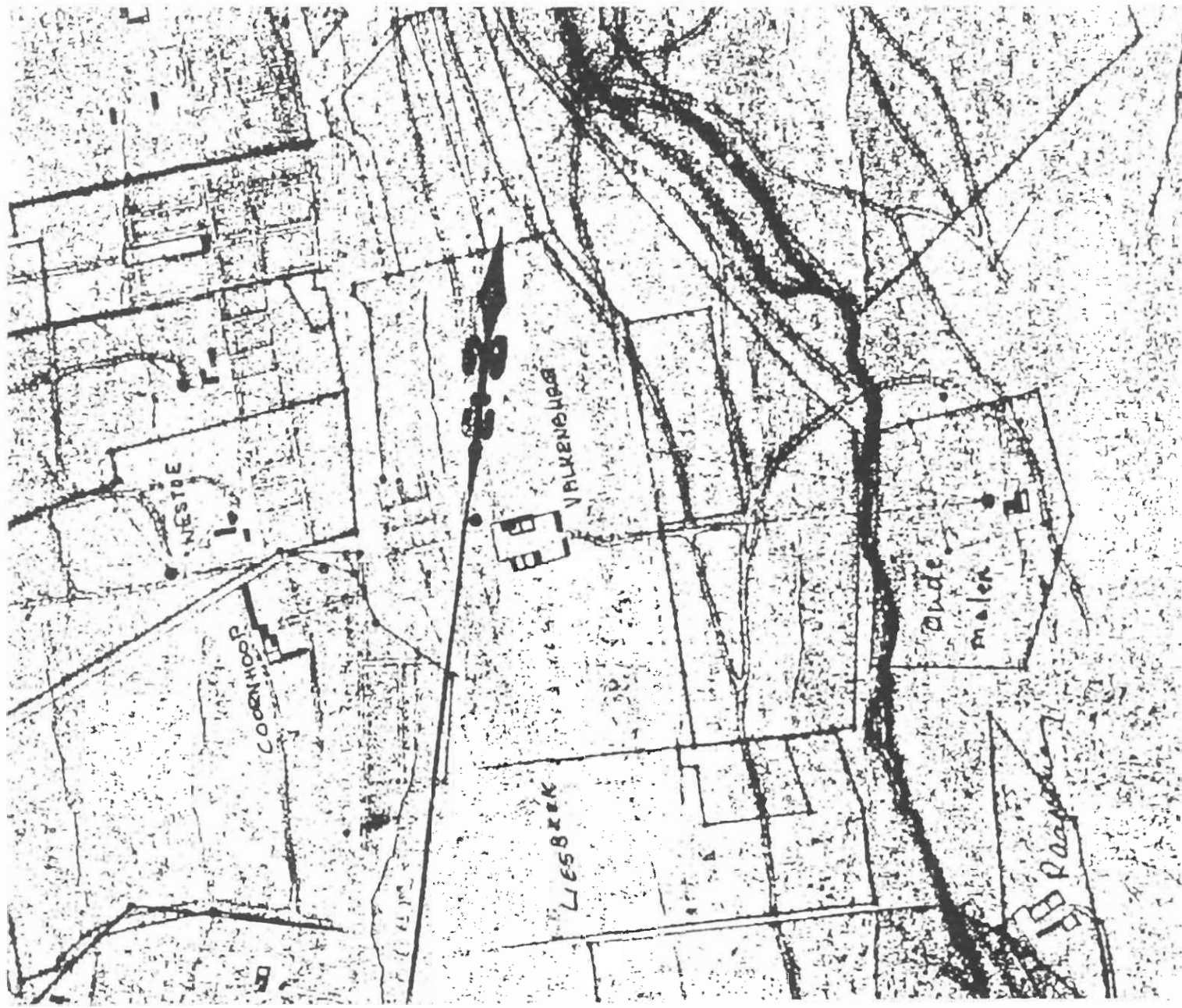


Figure 3.1



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.1

The first phase archaeological survey showed quite conclusively that at the time of the construction of the hospital, farm buildings were added to, renovated and included within newer structures of the hospital complex. The most serious destruction of the *werf* took place in the 1970s when much of the complex was bulldozed flat after being razed by a fire. The south east portion of the *werf* was destroyed to the extent that no original foundations remain. On the northern side, the barn, parts of the perimeter wall, some foundations and the homestead were spared.

#### 4. INVESTIGATION OF STANDING STRUCTURES

Although the deceased estate inventories have recorded the presence of named standing structures through time, maps of the positions of these structures were not provided with the documents. Consequently, it is very difficult to assign identities to the standing structures that have survived on the Valkenberg *werf*. The Phase 1 investigation report suggested that the Valkenberg *werf* developed from humble beginnings through a process of expansion which involved construction of new buildings and assigning of new purposes to older ones. The original dwelling house at Valkenberg was probably a Dutch long house, the remains of which may have been incorporated into the later structures of the female wing of the old Valkenberg hospital. The presence of stone wall foundations discovered during the first phase of excavations led to the recommendation that further study should take place here before any new building operations commenced.

##### 4.1 Structure B (the barn)

The first phase investigation showed that the structure B (Figure 4.1) had undergone at least 3 stages of modification. An excavation against the foundation produced artefacts dating to the late 18th or early 19th century which led to the structure B being provisionally dated to that period. This date has been partially verified by the presence of the structure B on Thibaults plan of 1812 (Figure 3.1) but it is possible that the structure may have been built in the 18th century. Second phase investigations involved further plaster removal, excavations in the interior of structure B and against the foundations of the southernmost wall.

Plaster removals previously showed that the original fabric of structure B still exists in the northern portion. The southern portion appeared to be a later brick addition. The latest investigations have revealed that the building sequence is rather more complex. Extensive plaster sampling in the northern section of structure B (Plate 4.1) shows that the bottom 2.3 m of walling consists of undressed shale and mud mortar. Fragments of slime plaster adhere to the stones. The upper 85 cm of wall consists of crude brick work cemented with mud mortar. On the eastern side the bricks are mostly unfired while those on the west side are equally rough, but fired. This crude brick wall supports a surprisingly sturdy 19th century ceiling of Oregon pine (flush fitting boards) supported by heavy beams with fluted edges.

None of the windows in structure B are original although their positions are asymmetrical. Plaster removal close to the window frames has shown that these were inserted into the walling at a later date.

The southern section of structure B is built entirely from fired brick and mud mortar (Figure 4.2) except for the foundations which are of large undressed shale slabs. A compacted lime plaster and crushed brick floor, which has survived under the broken stoep along the southern edge of structure B, is an indicator that although the walls of this section of structure B are fairly recent, the foundations date to an earlier period.

### 5.3 Structure DK (day room and kitchen)

Permission was granted by the National Monuments Council to continue the excavation in a westerly direction to examine the foundations of structure D, but time constraints limited the extent of the assessment of this area.

Much of structure DK (Figure 4.3) has been demolished while other portions have been incorporated into the restored homestead complex to the west. Sections of the north wall and what was once the north east corner of structure DK still stand (Plate 5.1).

The northern perimeter wall abuts the north east corner of structure DK but does not lock, indicating that the northern perimeter wall postdates this building. Excavations exposing the eastern foundation wall (Plate 5.2) revealed a heavy footing (thickness of 95 cm) as well as some remains of the wall that it supported. The heavy foundations suggest that this end was gabled. On the west side of the wall the excavation revealed the presence of an archaeological deposit covered by the cement floors of the hospital complex. A small sample of deposit was removed for inspection. The artefactual material consists of a few British period glass fragments and a small amount of ceramics. The bulk of the material consisted of remains of foodwaste - the bones of fish and domestic animals. The context of the finds probably relates to the period when the structure was used as a hospital kitchen. The 1812 plan (Figure 3.1) indicates that structure DK was present at this time. Since the investigation has shown that the remaining sections of structure DK do not lock into the northern perimeter wall, it may be suggested that this represents the remains of an early building that predates the construction of the north perimeter wall and probably structure B. Furthermore, it may be hypothesized that structure was built in the 18th century and may pre-date the homestead itself.

### 5.4 Structure BS (bathroom and stores)

Figure 3.2 plan indicates the presence of a narrow building aligned on a north to south axis at 90 degrees to the south east corner of structure BS. The 1903 plan shows that this building was utilised as a store and bath-house complex in the female wing of the hospital. Test excavations to locate the structure in 1990 produced only building rubble leading to the conclusion that the main portion of the building had been demolished to the extent that no sub-surface remains existed. The current excavations confirmed that a building was present as its north east and north west corners were located (Figure 4.3). The north west corner (and previously the west wall) is on alignment with the east wall foundation of structure DK. It is not clear whether the corner locks with structure DK as the stone work has either been disturbed or was crudely constructed. Structure BS pre-dates structure PS which has been appended to the ends of structures DK and BS.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Figure 6.1 indicates projected positions of structures revealed in this investigation. The oldest (18th century) building erected in the study area is structure DK. It is possible that the excavated portion of structure DK is the east end of an elongated building that continued into the area where the homestead stands today. Unfortunately this hypothesis cannot be tested without an intensive examination of the homestead itself. A low *weyf* wall and barn were added at a later date but probably before the 19th century. Structure BS was built during the 19th century, before 1891. During the 19th century the *weyf* wall (north perimeter wall) was heightened, but not before structure B had been subjected to a further building phase to raise the level of the roof. Structure PS was the last stone building to be built on the Valkenberg *weyf* which took the form of a large *afdak* *agassier* the northern perimeter wall and into the recess formed by the junctions of structures DK and BS. When the hospital was built

be tested for archaeological deposits. A possible option would be to expose the foundations of structure DK for use as an open site display.

#### 7.6 Archival research

If further research is to be undertaken on Valkenberg a thorough deeds and archival search should be commissioned. Besides providing an interesting history of the property, such a study would help explain the development of the *werf*.

#### 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### 9. INVESTIGATION TEAM

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