THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CAPE COLONY

FROM 1795 TO 1837

VOLUME II

RONALD BENTLEY LEWCOCK

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CAPE COLONY FROM 1795 TO 1837.

VOLUME II

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, NOVEMBER 1961.

Ronald Bentley Lewcock.

University of Cape Town

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EIGHT :

THE 'VERANDA' AND THE 'VERANDA HOUSE'.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE VERANDA AND THE 'VERANDA HOUSE'.

' "Verandah" or "Veranda", a roofed gallery or portico, etc.... the word in English is comparatively modern, having only been included by Todd in his edition of Johnson's "Dictionary" in 1827. But it was known earlier in India, and the occurrence of the word in modern Hindustani (VARANDA) and Malayan (BARANDA) has led some etymologists to connect the word with the Persian BARAMADAN, to climb. It is, however, certainly of European origin, and was taken to the East by the early Portuguese navigators. It is to be found as early as the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th in Spanish and Portuguese (so Minshen, "VARANDA, railes to leane the brest on") and apparently is to be referred to Latin "vara", a forked pole or rod. '

(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911).

....

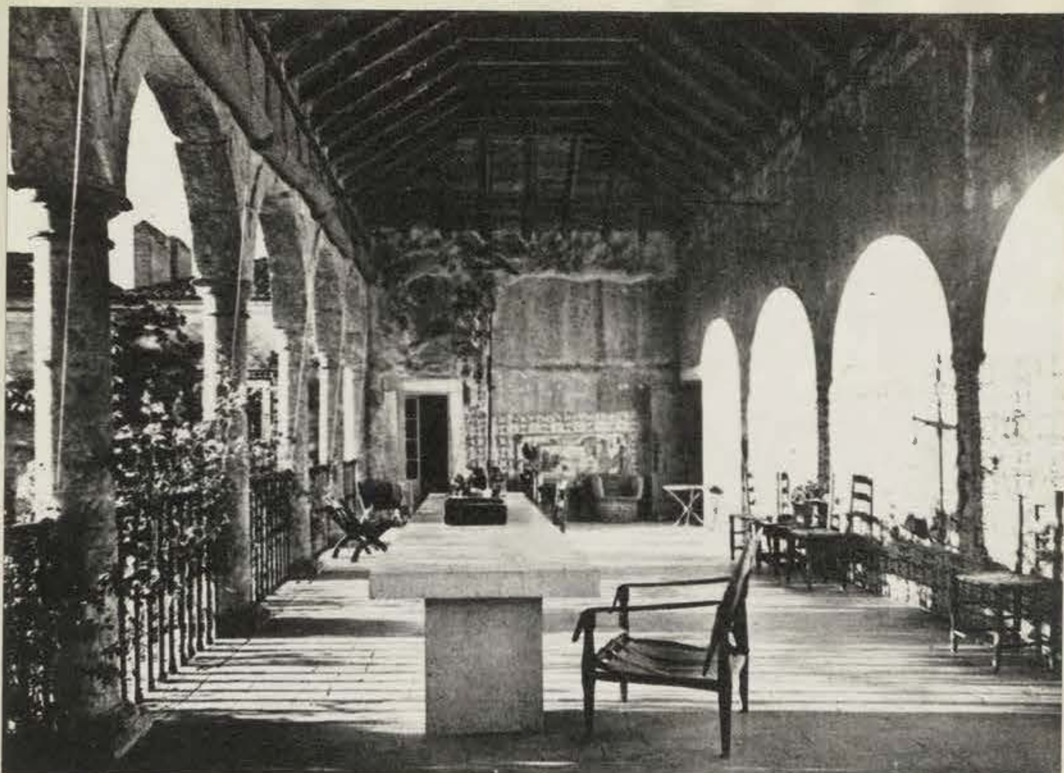
The late Mediaeval houses of the northern provinces of Portugal such as Entre Minho e Douro, and Trás-os-Montes, were built of stone or stamped earth, and had thick walls (often plastered) and small openings as a protection against the heat and glare. They belong to a

1. Typical dwellings of the villages of northern Portugal, of a type which dates from the middle ages.

A. Paúl Covilhã.

B. Beira.

2. Balcony of the Tower at Belem, Tagus Estuary, Portugal. ± 1520.



2A. The central gallery of a typical sixteenth century Portuguese 'solar', the Quinta da Bacalhoa.

2B. Side gallery of the Quinta da Bacalhoa.

2C. 'Varanda' of a 'solar' at Guarda.

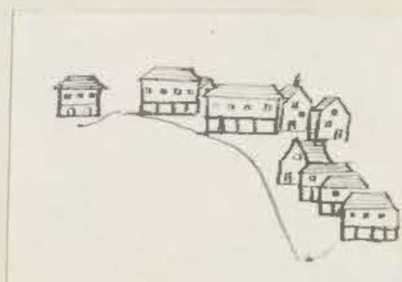
tradition which is shared in common by all the coastal regions of the Mediterranean and by the whole of the Iberian peninsula as well. Yet in some respects these northern Portuguese houses are unique. (Plates 1, A+B) Instead of a central enclosed courtyard onto which the rooms could open, while preserving a blank protective exterior, often these village houses each have a raised 'varanda' under the main roof, lightly constructed of wood, which contrasts strangely with the massive strength of the rest of the structure and appears to be derived from a blend of the Mediaeval timber framing of Northern Europe with the Moorish 'Mucharaties', or screened balcony. In the same region of Portugal and in the neighbouring Spanish provinces, raised wooden 'varandas' were often built as separate structures to preserve the grain from the weather (known as 'Espigueiros' in Portuguese or 'Horreos' in Spanish), and the relationship of these constructions to the Northern Mediaeval tradition appears even stronger.

It seems, then, that the 'veranda' as we now know it, is derived not so much from India and the Far East, or from the colonnades of the Ancient World, as from the empirical combination of two opposed types of architecture in a border region, midway between the Mediterranean and the great Mediaeval tradition of the north.[1]

The Portuguese 'varanda' is further defined as a 'projecting platform on the facade of a building, surrounded by a rail or balustrade and communicating with the interior by one or several openings' and as a 'light gallery built along the whole length of the building...'.[2] The emphasis placed on light construction, on the fact that the platform is raised and that it projects from the facade all seem to conform well with the supposed derivation from the Latin, and with those 'varandas' which still survive from Mediaeval times.[3]

1. Sacheverell Sitwell, 'Portugal and Madiera' (London,1954.) ,23.

* Augusto de Lima Jnr. observed that the interior mountain villages of Brazil are replicas in their entirety of regional prototypes in Portugal. ('A capitania das Minar Gerais', Rio., 1943).



3. from Franz Post: 'Brazilian Scene' (oil painting - Mauritzhuis, the Hague, ± 1645).
4. Planta da baia de Ana de Chaves, 1644.
5. Trujillo, Peru. Casa de los Herrera. Early 18th c.
6. Lima, Peru. Torre Tagle Palace, early 18th c.

Portuguese colonisation began with the establishment of a fort at Sao Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea in 1471. By the end of the sixteenth century, well before the Dutch came on the scene, the Portuguese colonial empire included the Azores, Sofala, Mozambique, Mombasa, Muscat and Ormuz in the Persian Gulf, Colombo in Ceylon, Diu, Cochin and Goa, the Spice Islands and Timor, Macao in China, Brazil.

Of the later Baroque buildings in Brazil, Sitwell[1] observes that they are 'closely related in style to the buildings of Minho and Tras-os-montes, and are clearly influenced by emigrants from Northern Portugal'. So, undoubtedly, was Portuguese colonial architecture from the earliest times, for these northern provinces were the most populous regions of the mother country.* Two early representations of Brazilian scenes well illustrate the type of architecture; the houses are often raised up, with shaded terraces at ground level and an occasional 'varanda', either projecting from the building as a type of porch, or included under the main roof in a manner typical of its country of origin (Plates 3 and 4).

In the same way, the Spanish colonies in the West Indies early adopted those forms of its own regional architecture which were most suitable for the heat, humidity and high rainfall of a sub-tropical climate. The veranda was thus established, from its very inception, as a basic characteristic of colonial architecture in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, particularly in tropic and sub-tropic countries. Like so much else that was originally Iberian in colonial architecture, it was afterwards adopted by the inheritors of the Portuguese and

Spanish colonial Empires : Dutch, French and British alike.[1] (Plates 56, 9-14 etc., and Plate 11 on page 678).

From the West Indies the veranda spread northwards to the French and British Colonies on the North American east coast. 'The porch was to become more and more the hallmark of the type or locality (of North Carolina) but it is obvious that all porches had their inception in the coast towns, to which they came from the West Indies. Of the houses in New Bern William Attmore of Philadelphia wrote in 1787, "There are to many of houses Balconies or Piazzas[2] in front and sometimes back of the house, this Method of Building is found convenient on account of the great Summer Heats here....". He had in mind stoops and long-galleried porches....'.[3] Examples of this North American type of veranda are to be seen not only in North Carolina (Beaufort - 'Porches are seen in the form most reminiscent of Nassau, St. Kitts, and Bridgetown, the Duncan House in Front Street, Plate 10 being a good example,.... the posts are in the form of crudely-turned Doric columns, not unlike those seen in some of the Spanish islands'[4], and Somerset....'the delicate porches give strong Bahamian flavour....'[5]) but also in South Carolina and Georgia ('Before the advent of the Greek Revival portico, the typical "plantation plain style piazza was a simple stoop covered with a shed roof."[6] 'By 1720 the Charlestonians were using balconies to shade the western side of their dwellings, a device they had learned from the Barbadians....'.[7] 'Another type of piazza, found also in the West Indies, at St. Kitts, and at Bridgetown, is the beautiful two-storey verandah.... It consists of a series of segmented arches supported on delicate square columns on pedestals.... it thus defines the railing, supported by a

1. T.T. Waterman 'Some Early Buildings of Barbados'. The Art Bulletin, XXVII, June 1945, 146.

2. '[Covent Garden] there were probably 18 houses on the north and east sides, each entered from a front door in the arcades (which by colloquial stupidity came to be called the "piazzas" the name belonging by right to the layout as a whole)...'. J. Summerson 'Georgian London'. (London, 1945), 15.

3. T.T. Waterman & F.B. Johnston 'The Early Architecture of North Carolina'. U. of N.Carolina Press, 1941 and 1947, 41.

4. Ibid., 42.

5. F.D. Nichols, 'The Early Architecture of Georgia' (U. of N.Carolina Press, 1957), 131.

6. F.D. Nichols, 'The Early Architecture of Georgia' (U. of N.Carolina Press, 1957), 131.

7. Ibid, 129; and Carl Bridengaugh 'Cities in Wilderness' (New York, 1938.), 150.

7. Madame John's Legacy, New Orleans, early 18th c.

8. Darby House, Wilmington, North Carolina; third quarter of 18th century.

diagonal trellis, which stops against it...'[1]).

Among other North American colonies which favoured the use of the veranda in the eighteenth century were Louisiana ('Madame John's Legacy,' c.1750 (Plate 7) and 'Trepagnier' near Norco, c.1770 (Plate 9)[2]). Alabama, Florida, Virginia, New England, Massachusetts and New York,'... a covered veranda with a longitudinal range of light posts or columns. We have noted the prevalence of this form in New York before the Revolution and its introduction into Boston by Copley.[3] It remained characteristic of the vernacular style about New York...Here its position was along the front, perhaps along the rear also, under an extensive main roof... In New England the customary position was along the sides of the building...' - Plate 12).[4]

One remarkable use of the veranda should be noted before we leave the American Colonies, important because it was the progenitor of the later nineteenth century 'veranda house' : that is, a house surrounded by verandas on all sides. Of the Orphan House at Bethseda (Georgia) built by Whitefield in 1741 - 2, he himself wrote that it had 'a Piazza of ten Foot wide built all round it, which will be wonderfully convenient in the Heat of Summer.'[5] (Plate 11).

One of the earliest recorded instances of the veranda in England took this form, and is, not suprisingly, called the 'American Cottage' - '... the East, West and South aspects have a piazza round them.'[6] (Plate 15).

The adoption of the veranda as a feature of fashionable architecture in Britain and on the Continent followed rapidly. In 1801

1. F.D. Nichols 'The Early Architecture of Georgia' ,130.

2. C.J. Laughlin. 'Plantation Architecture in Louisiana', Architectural Review. 1948.

3. '... I shall add a peazer when I return, which is much practised here, and it is very beautiful and convenient.' Letter from John Singleton Copley to a friend who was supervising the erection of his house in Boston, New York, 14 July 1771. In another letter Copley adds '... 3 or 4 posts added to support the front of the Roof, a good floor at the bottum, and from post to post a Chinese enclosure about three feet high. these posts are Scantlings of 6 by 4 inches Diameter, the Broad side to the front, with only a little moulding round the top in a neat plain manner. ... these Peazas are so cool in Sumer and in Winter break off the storms so much that I think I should not be able to like a house without... I have drawn them in the Plan.' from 'Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society' Vol. 71 (1914) , 131-137.

4. F. Kimball 'Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic.' New York,1927, 222-3.

5. G. Whitefield 'An account of... the Orphan House... (London, 1741 p.3) quoted by F.D. Nichols 'The Early Architecture of Georgia' ,48-9.
Cf. Fiske Kimball, 223: 'In the far South there could not be too many verandahs, and we find them even encircling the house at every storey.'

6. Plans 'Ferme Ornee' (London,1795.) Plate 17.

12. (Top left). 'Thornton', New York State, late eighteenth century.

13. (Below left). Nelson's house, Antigua, West Indies; before 1786.

14. (Above right). 'Clarence House', Antigua, West Indies; before 1787.

15. (Right). 'American Cottage', from Plaw's 'Ferme Ornée, London, 1795.

(Side Views)

American Cottages.

Pantry

Wash & Bake House

Pantry

Living Room

Living Room

Porch

Feet

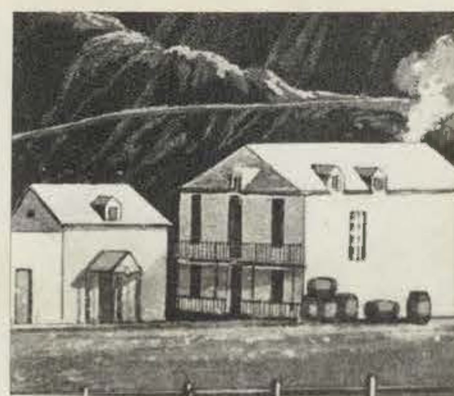
1. Clifford Musgrave, Director, The Royal Pavilion, Brighton.

2. The oldest surviving examples, e.g. The Rum Hospital, Sydney (1811) are clearly Colonial in style, and it is believed that the buildings of the settlement were given verandahs from the first years in accordance with the previous experience of the older colonial administrators. v. Raymond McGrath 'Australian Early Colonial'. Architectural Review. July 1948.

3. See Chapter 2 page 16 and Chapter 3 page 59 .

4. 'Cape Town must have been a wretched place when every street was blocked up with miserable Thatched Pent houses projecting from the principal buildings where the Idle and disolute regularly assembled with considerable danger to the Inhabitants from the Slaves, Hottentots and Sailors smoking under these places they were originally built to shelter passengers in rainy weather or perhaps to shade them from the Sun however Government took the matter into consideration and found the benefit by no means compensated for their inconvenience and danger they therefore ordered the whole to be taken down...' Samuel E. Hudson 'Journal - Building' (mss.) Acc. 602 No. 9 (Written before 1808.)

5. At any rate in the country houses, which were nearly always more pretentious than the town buildings. Examples of the use of the veranda in other Dutch colonies are readily found in Indonesia and Curacao. (Plates 5, p.674, 9 ... page 678)



16. 'Ultimo', New South Wales, Australia. Print of 1813.

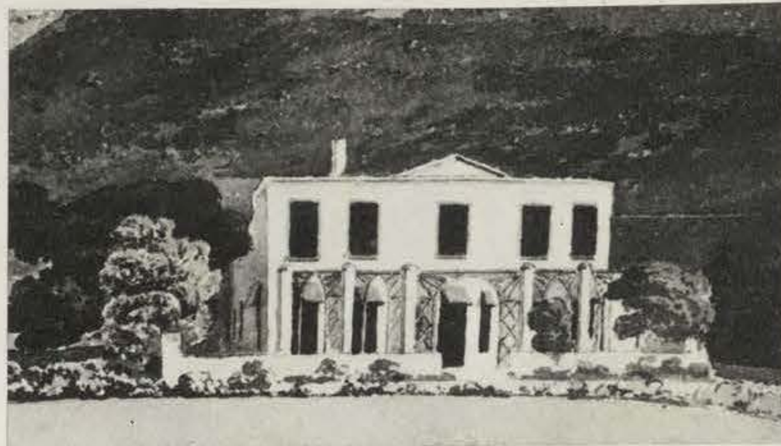
17. Verandas in St. Helena. Lithograph of 1815.

the Prince Regent had them installed at the Brighton Pavilion, and in 1805 Mrs. Fitzherbert built a house in Brighton with a two-storey veranda on which the Prince was often to be seen breakfasting with her.[1] In 'Persuasion' (published 1818) Jane Austen introduced a cottage with a 'verandah, French windows and other prettiness.' By the period of the Regency they were at the very height of fashion, and had begun to appear (especially in the form of roofed balconies) in Bath, Cheltenham, and even London itself. (Plates 45, 22, 53).

Yet there is no doubt that the veranda was 'par excellence' a colonial importation into the mother country, and examples in even such new settlements as Australia(1788 - Plates 16 and 66) appear to antedate the great popularity of the device in Europe.[2] And when the exile of Napoleon brought St. Helena into prominence in 1816, and resulted in many published engravings of the island, the veranda already figured prominently on many of the buildings there. (Plates 17 and 52).

At the Cape the earliest verandas in the true sense date from the first British Occupation, though in the years immediately preceding 1795 there had been a fashion for classical porticos,[3] and at an earlier date covered footways had existed in Cape Town.[4] But on the whole the Dutch do not appear to have considered the climate sufficiently extreme to warrant the persistent use of a device which they had adopted with such complete alacrity in Batavia and elsewhere.[5]

1. v. Chapter 7 : Plate 21 on Page 154.
2. C.O. 391/161 15th Nov. 1831 'Colonnade in a bad state of decay and shored up.'
3. C.O. 391/105 14th July, 1831 'To take down ... the colonnade in front of the Building.'
4. C.O. 175/14 6th April, 1822 'Painting and Colouring ... veranda...'
5. Watercolour. Sir L.Brenton, 1815-16. Fehr Collection. Watercolour. Mary Brenton, 1816. Africana Museum 50/1682. C.O.321/73 19th Jan. 1827 'To take down the Portico...'



18. 'Annandale', c.1805-6 (No.50);
19. 'Leeuwendaal' (No.56); both from Burchell's panorama of Cape Town in 1815. (Africana Museum).
20. 'Admiralty House', Simonstown in 1815. Watercolour by Sir J.Brenton. (Fehr).

Andrew Barnard's 'Vineyard' had a veranda (Plate 59 on Page 71) which was probably typical of the type built during the First Occupation. The Neo-Classical porches of 'Rust-en-Vreugte' 'Rustenburg'[1] and 'Groote Schuur' also probably date from this period or soon afterwards. 'Annandale' (Plate 18) can reasonably accurately be presumed to have been built soon after 1805.

By the early years of the Second Occupation it was becoming common for stoeps to be enclosed under a low-pitched boarded or metal roof and thus converted into 'colonnades', 'porches' or 'verandas', as they were variously called. Many of the Simonstown buildings which were erected at this time, or adapted from the old Company's buildings, were given these protective verandas, notably the Public Offices,[2] Custom House,[3] and the Commandant's House.[4] The Resident Commissioner's house was given a decorative timber trellis work between the original brick and plaster piers (Plate 20).[5]

The first 'veranda house' in South Africa, and the prototype of thousands of later houses in this country, was Lord Charles Somerset's 'Newlands' designed in 1819. The record of this house is one of the most fascinating and best documented of any of the architectural accounts that have come down to us.

The original 'Nieuweland' was a lodge built to the new Company's garden by Willem Adriaan van der Stel c.1700. By the second half of the 18th century it had become a favourite country resort of the Dutch

1. It is believed that the building was actually rebuilt by Ryk Tulbagh in 1771, v. 'Rondebosch Down the Years'.... and Menzel 'Description' I, 121, in which he comments 'it is a more comfortable and more imposing structure than the one at Rondebosch.'

2. C.O. 58/82. 21st Oct. 1814. Requisition of H. Schutte for an advance of 2,000 Rds. 'on account of the new buildings now erecting at Newland.'

3. C.O. 113/12. 17th Aug. 1819. Report of J.W. Melvill, Inspector of Buildings, & E. Durham.
Mrs. Eaton, in 1818, admired this building as 'a most beautiful place, surrounded with wood, gardens & vineyards...' Journal of S.N. Eaton, 24 Oct. 1818. MS. S.A. Public Library.

4. John Melvill, a young man whom the Earl of Caledon asked Thibault to train as a Surveyor, probably began work under him before or during 1810, and was afterwards appointed his assistant. He was the subject of a number of scornful letters from Thibault to the authorities, especially scathing when young Melvill announced that he had detected a shift in the position of the magnetic poles by comparing old survey diagrams with his own. Thibault contemptuously attributed this to Melvill's inaccurate surveying. '...Mons. Melvill's presumption, exaggerated beyond words, has no limits. That his protectors should herald him as a Master Astronomer, a Professor of Physics, a Great Observer - there's nothing better, if such be their pleasure. But that this young man should think himself the first to discover...Mons. Wernick and I were surveying when he was in the egg'. (C.O. 53, Jan. 16th, 1813). For further information on the relationship between Thibault and Melvill v. de Bosdari 'Anton Anreith', 30 - 32; C.O. 43, 27th July, 1811 and 4th Aug. 1812.

5. C.O. 113/12. 17th Aug. 1819. Report of J.W. Melvill.

6. A Cape legend has it that he exclaimed, on seeing Government House for the first time 'Government House?.... it. I took it for a dog kennel'.
(Theal, 'History of South Africa' I, 264. Note.)

21. Thibault's drawing of his proposals at 'Newlands'.

Governors, though the building was in rather a dilapidated state and was always in need of repair.[1] Finally, in 1791, 'Nieuweland' was sold by the Dutch East India Company, and passed into private hands, where it remained for some years, until it was returned to the Government (now British) by exchange in 1806.

Sir John Cradock toyed with the idea of renovating the house, and actually commissioned a design from Thibault, which is one of his finest surviving drawings (Plate 21).

But it was not until the arrival of Lord Charles Somerset in 1814 that work was started in earnest on 'Newlands'. The Governor favoured the erection of a second storey upon the existing walls.[2] But as these were only of soft brick and constantly damp, the loads proved too great, and during a great storm on the night of the 12th August 1819 a substantial part of the (as yet unfinished) structure collapsed.[3]

The Government Inspector of Buildings, J.W. Melvill (who had succeeded Thibault to the post in 1815)[4] reported 'that it is our opinion that it will be found necessary.... to take the whole of the principal building down, the interior walls and chimneys not excepted....'[5] We may be certain, from his previous remarks about the accommodation for the Governor at the Cape,[6] that nothing can have delighted Lord Charles more than an opportunity to completely rebuild his country residence. There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Governor took more than a cursory interest in architecture and building. In almost the same breath as he reported on the damage at 'Newlands', Melvill complained of the extensive repairs and alterations at Government

1. C.O. 113/14 21st Aug. 1819.
2. C.O. 156/1 17th Jan. 1821.
3. Presumably teak.

22. A carriage arriving at a Regency house in England; contemporary print.

House as 'having been done without my knowledge and completed before I was called in to examine it.'[1] Eighteen months later Melvill was complaining about the same kind of practice at 'Newlands'. '...The Plan being exceedingly defective and there being no drawings of the finishing we can only state that in general, the Plan, such as it is, has been followed, and the work is said to be done according to verbal instructions received from His Excellency Lord Charles Somerset...'.[2] From this we may conclude that the design of 'Newlands', complete with its elegant veranda, was certainly not the work of the Inspector of Buildings or of any of his staff. In fact, he does not appear to have been consulted about its design, which probably means that the Governor considered himself a finer arbiter of taste in architectural matters than his Government architect, whom he treated with a good deal of contempt.

Nevertheless, it was Melvill who, in his official capacity, approved the 'Estimate for... the rebuilding of the Government House at Newlands' on 30th Sept. 1819, prepared by the Contractor E. Durham, which was clearly based on the design actually executed. It includes such items as :-

'----Turned columns[3] with base and capital	810 Rds.
3395 Feet boarding for roof of portico	1060 "
31 Sash frames (with) sashes, shutters, locks and Elbows, architraves, lintels, glass etc.	8750 "
15 Casement sashes	1200 "
14 Chimney pieces	420 "
5 circular Bulls Eyes and frames	250 "
2 pair Mahogany folding doors, venetians frames etc.	650 "
2 pair ditto with fanlights	750 "
1 pair Deal with fanlight	200 "

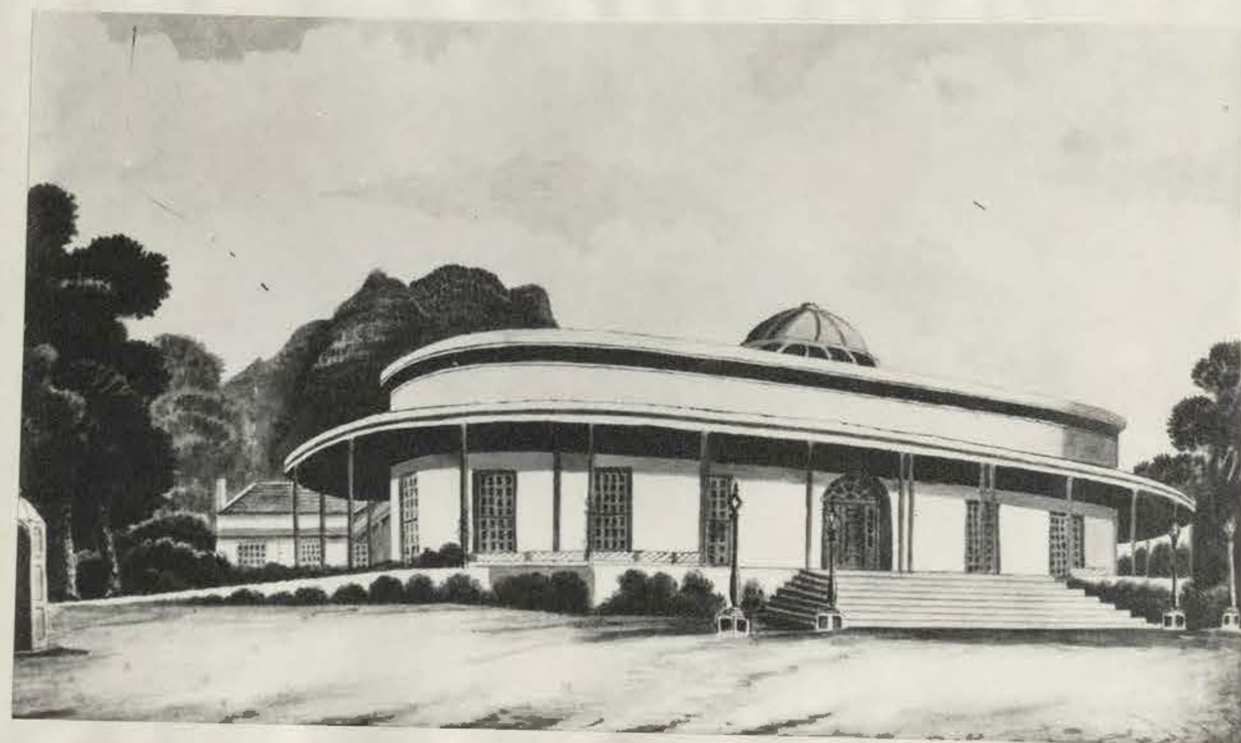
1. C.O. 113/20. (enclosure). The Contract did not prove to be legally binding, the Governor amending his instructions at will with written 'Memoranda' to the Inspector of Buildings or the Contractor, a procedure which was followed during his tenure of office by Sir Rufane Donkin. (C.O.250/113. 20th Dec. 1825).

2. C.O. 113/20

3. C.O. 123/40 26th April, 1820

4. C.O. 187/13 27th Feb. 1823

5. C.O. 123/82 27th Sept. 1820



23. 'Newlands'. A watercolour from the Hiddingh Album, 1824. (Fehr.).

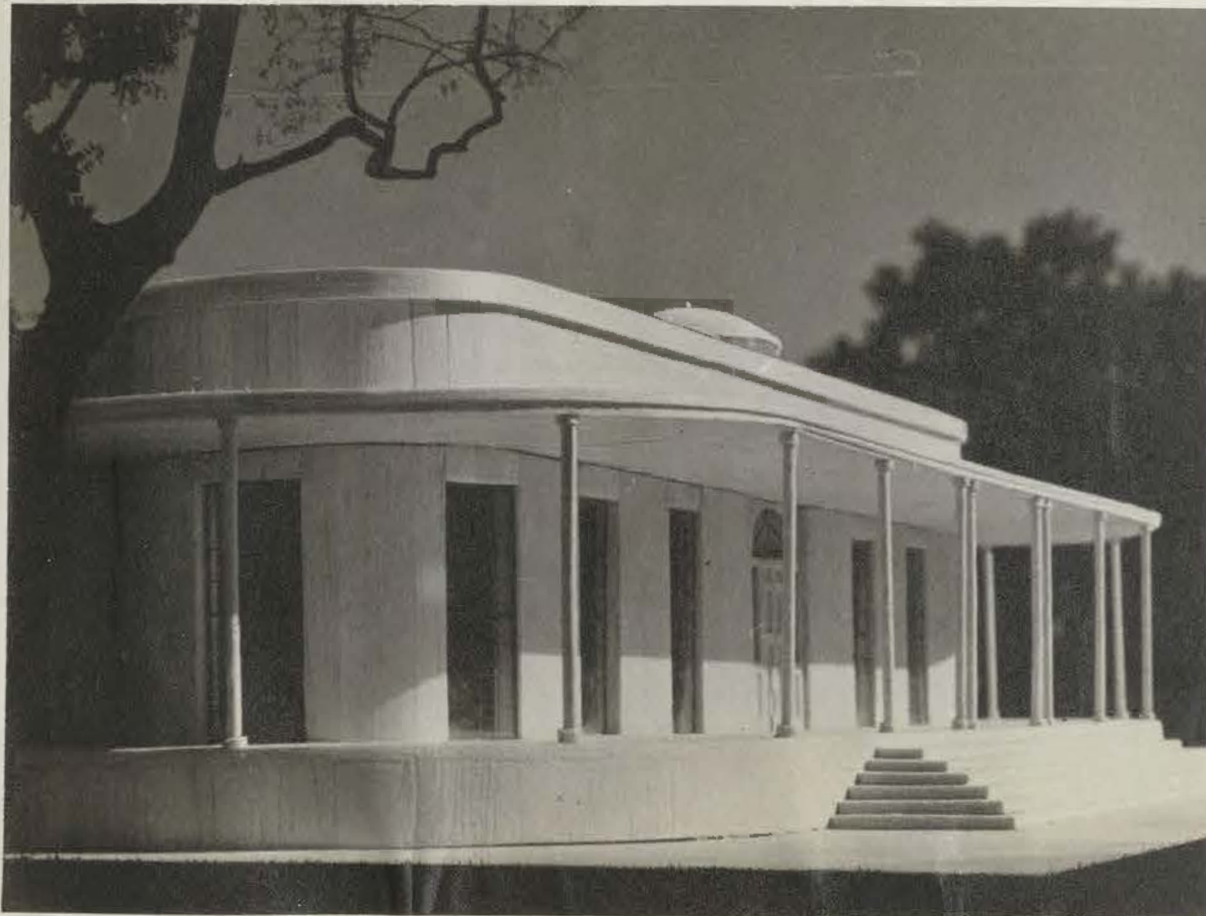
Sheet lead for portico	2585 Rds.
Shingles	2500 "
Steps slate 18" wide	... '[1]

All the rooms were to be ceiled and 18 feet in height, the principal rooms (two of which had bow fronts) wall papered or painted, the remainder whitewashed.[2] Edward Durham afterwards wrote that '...when the new buildings were first projected his Lordship repeatedly impressed upon me that unless they could be done on the most economical manner they could not be commenced for some time on account of the heavy expenses Government had been to on the Frontier, and when the present plan was decided upon his Lordship said he should not require any cornice, skirting, surbase moulding or anything which could be despensed with.... I wrote to England for various articles which were wanted and which I hapen to import from England considerably less than they could be purchased in this Colony, but having been dissappointed in receiving the quarter part of them in the proper time I did not hesitate to purchase upon the best Terms I could, rather than stop the Buildings...'[3]

The shingles, of teak, were ordered from Mauritius, and arrived in April of the following year.[4] The slate paving for the veranda, steps and courtyard was eventually prepared by the convicts on Robben Island, but only after considerable trouble had been taken to train them for such skilled work.[5] Eventually, they were able to make even the slate surrounds for many of the fireplaces. (Plate 28).

Meanwhile, in January 1820 Somerset sailed for England, leaving as Acting-Governor Sir Rufane Donkin. Somerset had charged Melvill 'to watch

1. G.H. 26/13. No. 211 Report of Lord Charles Somerset to Earl Bathurst, 31st July, 1825.
2. G.H. 26/13 No. 211. Report of Lord Charles Somerset to Earl Bathurst 31st July, 1825.
3. C.O. 250/113 22nd Dec. 1825. Letter to the Commissioners of Enquiry.
4. This was Somerset's explanation of the breakdown of the Contract to Earl Bathurst. (G.H. 26/13 No. 211). But, from the questions of the Commissioners of Enquiry (C.O. 250/113, etc.), it seems clear that Donkin was continuing a practice already begun by Somerset.
5. G.H. 26/13 No. 211. 31st July, 1825.



24. 'Newlands', a reconstruction from measurements of the surviving building. (R.B. Lewcock; model B. Kearney).

the progress of the Building when [he] was absent in England'.[1] But the Acting-Governor soon interfered, requesting that 'a certain portion of the House' be prepared for his reception,[2] and issuing 'Memoranda' on his requirements to Melvill and the builder,[3] (the latter afterwards arguing that his original Contract had thereby been infringed and annulled.)[4] The front part of the main building was completed at this time 'in so hurried and superficial a manner as to render it necessary to do the work again', Somerset afterwards complained.[5]

The elegant veranda, so important a characteristic of the house, was erected only after the front rooms were complete and habitable. It was constructed of teak and yellow-wood, the boarding being plastered over and painted with Tar (as a waterproofing) above, with a lath and plaster ceiling fastened underneath. At the ends of the main block it curved around in two hemicycles to embrace the bow fronts of the drawing room and library. The entrance hall, between the two rooms, was crowned by a lead cupola, with a decorated ceiling internally.

The subsequent history of the completion of 'Newlands' is one long series of incompetencies, misfortunes and recriminations. But it is worth considering briefly in passing, as it gives both a very typical picture of the building conditions of the period, and an insight into the reasons for the colossal building expenditure of Lord Charles Somerset. (The latter contributed in no small measure to the eventual establishment of a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry in 1823-25). In addition, the personalities associated with the scandal of 'Newlands' form a fascinating group, some of whom have a place in history far

1. C.O. 156/1 Jan. 17th 1821. 'Report of Survey taken this day of the Buildings now erecting at Newlands for the Residence of His Excellency the Governor.'
2. C.O. 187/13 Feb. 27th, 1823.
3. C.O. 156/2 Jan. 23rd 1821. He returned to his duties as Inspector of Buildings for a few weeks at the end of 1821 but relinquished the post in Jan. 1822.

Interiors in 'Newlands':
25. Doorway in the Hall.
26,27. Cornices in Bedrooms.

beyond that merely due to them in a study of South African architecture.

Durham executed the first part of the works so inadequately that Melvill reported (17 Jan. 1821) that the whole of the flat lead roof would have to be relaid with stouter lead or covered with a shingle roof. 'This alteration the Contractor proposes to make at his own expense.' The floors also would have to be taken up and relaid with straighter jointing and stronger joists. Much of the joinery (especially the architraves round the doors) was considered shoddy in execution, and 'A modern Pillaster would look much better in those Rooms and would not be more expensive to the Contractor. It is also highly necessary that those two Rooms should have a cornice round them and a blank Door introduced to be uniform with the one into the adjoining Room. We would also recommend a skirting round those rooms: none, however, is intended, it not being required, it was said, by the Contract.

' The Shutters and Doors are only intended to be moulded with a reeded Astragal on the Pannels....'[1]

'From the time the Buildings were commenced Mr. Melville, (sic) was in the habit of inspecting them frequently, and I requested him to point out anything he could wish altered, and instantly attended to his suggestions...' wrote Durham.[2] But early in 1821, Melvill, who had always been a deeply religious man (and a close friend of the members of the London Missionary Society at the Cape), asked permission to go to the country 'for the benefit of his health' and, obtaining it, left for a missionary station in Griqualand in February.[3] His leave was granted conditionally upon his 'finding a suitable person to perform the duties

Continued from previous note.

builder, Pendrill, in London, in whose company he was first brought into contact with Radical conspirators. Terrified of becoming involved in near-treasonable practices, Jones offered his services to the Government as an informer, and it was while on a mission of this nature to detect the tenor of feeling in the north that his identity was discovered and published by the editor of the 'Leeds Mercury'.

The 'Mercury's first article was read in the House of Commons within two days of its publication. To extensive criticism, the Government replied that it had been essential to discover the criminal designs of the Radicals, and that Oliver was a respectable builder who had solicited no terms for himself and received no reward (which was apparently true).

Although Oliver's name became notorious throughout Britain (it was actually used as a bogey to frighten small childred for years afterwards) he managed to keep out of sight until arrangements had been made for him to settle in another country.

On 13th October, 1819, Under-Secretary Henry Goulburn wrote to Lord Charles Somerset desiring him to make a grant of land to Mr. W. Jones 'whose object in proceeding to the Cape of Good Hope is to settle in that country.' The Under-Secretary furtively obtained a passage for Jones, his wife and child, from the Commissioners of the Navy, and furnished him with a letter of strong recommendation to Lord Charles Somerset (which Jones was unable to present until the return of Lord Charles to the Colony in November 1821.)

At the time he began acting as Deputy for Melvill, Jones had already been in the Colony at least six months without presenting his credentials. He arrived equipped with a 9 inch theodolite and other instruments, and presumably applied for, and received, permission to practice as a surveyor, for he thereafter signed himself as 'Sworn Surveyor' (c.f. C,0, 199/5 18th Feb. 1823). He was evidently a trained draughtsman to judge by his rendered plans in the Archives (e.g. C.O. 199/19 20th July '23).

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Much conjecture arose, and has persisted to the present day, about the identity and origin of this person '...a somewhat mysterious agent who called himself William Jones but was better known as "Oliver the Spy ". He served the country as Inspector of Public Buildings and was occupied chiefly with the extensive building operations at the Governor's House at Newlands. With this office he is alleged to have combined that of spy on behalf of Lord Charles Somerset....'[4]

'Oliver the Spy' was the nickname by which Jones was afterwards commonly known at the Cape, but it is only recently that convincing evidence has been produced to show that he was really the same Oliver ('The Spy') who became the anathema of England in 1817 for his part in the Huddersfield Riots.[5] It seems certain that at the time of his first arrival at the Cape neither Melvill nor Donkin then had any idea of his true identity.

Jones threw himself into his work with tremendous vigour. He had already associated himself with Melvill's Report on the workmanship of 'Newlands' on 17th January (which he signed below Melvill as 'Surveyor'),

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1. C.O. 156/2 23rd Jan. 1821.
2. Ibid.
3. C.O. 5963.
4. G. Cory. 'The Rise of South Africa.' II, 274.
5. As a result of the temporary suspension of civil rights in Yorkshire from 1812 - 1817 '... a number of designing men, seizing the opportunity, did not hesitate to inculcate the opinion that nothing short of a revolution could terminate the general suffering.

'That a bloodless revolution could have been effected is, to be sure, a supposition too gross to be entertained... but Mr. Oliver, it seems, had the address to persuade the leaders that a project of this kind was practicable, and his dupes were so utterly ignorant as to adopt the absurdity... the notorious Mr. Oliver...at breakfast, among other inflamatory conversation said "They are all in readiness in London. There is no occasion for bloodshed. We have only to seize the military and the thing is done."
'...it is much to be regretted that the persons apprehended... have, for the most part, been, at most, merely the dupes of the leader of this miserable conspiracy, and that the instigators, including Mr. Oliver, the London delegate, have been suffered to escape.' 'Leeds Mercury' Leader, 19th July, 1817. British Museum.
'...the whole [plot] was got up under the instigation of an agent from London... the principal offender has been allowed to escape with impunity...Mr. Williams stated...that a person of the name of Oliver called upon him about 2 months ago, and introduced himself as a Parliamentary Reformer sent from London to ascertain the dispositions of the people in the country. This man he describes as a person of genteel appearance and good address, nearly 6 ft. high, of erect figure, light hair, red and rather large whiskers and a full face, a little pitted with smallpox. His usual dress, he says, was a light, fashionable coloured brown coat, black waistcoat, dark blue mixture pantaloons and Wellington boots. The description of such a character is important, and may form a clue to further discoveries connected with his proceedings in other parts of the country...

'Why such a wretch...was allowed to escape is more than we can say.'

'Leeds Mercury' Leader, 14th June, 1817.

Professor Battersley ('Oliver the Spy and Others', Pietermaritzburg, 1959) has shown that William Oliver Jones was born c.1776 in Pontesbury in Shropshire. He was early apprenticed to a carpenter, and later acquitted of intending to defraud another carpenter, Restall, of £300. He became accountant to a

(see attached page)

and during the year he submitted a number of memoranda on this and other government buildings. By the time Somerset returned (after an absence of nearly two years), Jones had won a high regard for his knowledge of construction and had been commissioned to reconstruct the main wharf in Table Bay. But already rumours of his identity with 'Oliver the Spy' (which were to haunt him for the remaining years of his life) appear to have spread.[1]

Somerset's return, his high-handed treatment of Donkin,[2] and his increasing fury as he discovered the extent to which his wishes had been ignored, are well known. His dissatisfaction with affairs at 'Newlands' was extreme. He ignored Jones, and demanded an immediate report from Melvill,[3] who in turn did not escape his wrath: '...in consequence of no Person being employed to watch the progress of the Building when I was absent in England,' he afterwards wrote,[4] '(the Inspector of Government Buildings, Mr. Melville, to whose strict charge I had permitted it, having, very shortly after my departure, received Eighteen Months leave of absence (sic!) to proceed to the Griqua Country) the work was badly executed, and much dissatisfaction and dispute arose between the Government and the Builder after my Return here, respecting the workmanship.'

At this opportune moment (for him), Jones presented his original letter of recommendation,[5] and Somerset, deliberately overlooking the fact that Goulburn insisted that 'he is no architect but merely a builder', appointed him 'Inspector of Government Buildings' only four weeks after resuming the government.[6]

Just what happened between Somerset and Melvill is not known.

1. C.O. 147/67. Wharf Office, 9th Nov.1821.
To the Colonial Secretary, Lt.-Col. Bird:
'May I presume to beg the favour of Some Sugestions of yours that may tend to Pacify the Public mind at Present so much prejudiced against me.
I foresee unless something is done I shall forfeit the friendship of Messrs. Collison & Co. and the result will be that I am immediately called upon to liquidate the demands they have against me - which I shall not be prepared for unless Mr. Melville settles with me and that will be but a small portion towards the same.... '

2. He rose early, after his ship had anchored, on Nov.30th., and rode post haste to Government House:
He refused to speak or meet with Donkin, but demanded that he evacuate Government House instantly, so that Donkin was forced to leave his breakfast unfinished behind him and beat an undignified retreat to lodgings in the town.

3. Report submitted 5th December 1821. C.O. 156/17.

4. G.H. 26/13 No. 211 31st July, 1825.
Lord Charles Somerset to Earl Bathurst.

5. Goulburn wrote : 'This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. Jones, a builder, who proceeds to the Colony for the purpose of carrying on his trade there. He is a very intelligent man in his line and bears a very good character here: and, taking a very considerable interest in his behalf, I cannot remit taking the liberty of bringing his name under your notice in the hope that you may be able to assist him by your recommendation, if not to employ him on behalf of the public. I ought to add, in order to prevent mistakes, that he is no architect but merely a builder and, in that capacity alone, do I presume to recommend him.'
Hattersley 'Oliver the Spy & Others'.
Pietermaritzburg. 1959.

6. 5th Jan. 1822. C.O. 5963.

No letter of Melvill's resignation survives, but his own version as given to Thompson was that he voluntarily resigned from the position of Inspector of Buildings in order to be free to take up missionary work.[1] Yet in fact Melvill may have been just another to fall a victim to Somerset's acrimony against all those who were suspected of having befriended (or of having received favours from) the Acting Governor. (The list of such people eventually extended to the Colonial Secretary himself.)[4]

By March 1822, William Jones had a scheme for further additions to 'Newlands'. He designed a 'Colonnade' 'with Canted Cullums and Crocked rafters for canvas', which was erected in the back courtyard of the house.[2] Such a 'rustic veranda' was the acme of fashion during the Regency. Though nothing remains of the one at 'Newlands' we may probably form a reasonable idea of what it was like from the pattern books to which Jones could have referred for his model. (e.g. Plate 36)

Soon afterwards the problem of waterproofing the flat roof of the main veranda was reviewed. The illogical method of construction (plaster on boarding) first used had proved inadequate, and the eventual solution was found only by the expensive expedient of relaying the whole of the boarding to a slope, and covering it with lead sheeting.[3]

The method of waterproofing veranda roofs continued to perplex designers right up until 1850, when the importation of the revolutionary new material, corrugated galvanised iron, solved the problem once and for all. It is interesting to note, in view of this, that the 'penchant'

1. He was appointed Missionary of the London Missionary Society in the Bechuana country, where Thompson visited him in June 1823: 'He formerly held an easy and respectable situation under Government in Cape Town, namely, that of Inspector of Public Buildings, etc. with an income of about 7000 rix dollars per annum; but being a religious man, and zealous for the civilisation and conversion of the heathen, he applied to the Government for his present appointment, and voluntarily resigned for it his lucrative situation, with the benevolent purpose of promoting Missionary operations..

'How far Mr. Melvill justly estimated his own qualifications for the arduous task of influencing a semi-barbarous people, may well be questioned, on witnessing the unhappy results of his interference with the affairs of the Griquas; but his praiseworthy motives and generous self-devotion must ever be respected. He now receives, as the Government Agent here, a salary of only 1000 rix dollars (£75); besides which he occupies a small house belonging to the London Missionary Society, has a garden well-stocked with fruit trees and vegetables, and cultivates corn sufficient for the consumption of his family. And, except for the unfortunate disturbances among the people, he appeared to live quite contented in this remote seclusion,' where, save his wife and children, and a German missionary, he has no other society than the rude and untutored native...'

Thompson's 'Travels'. I, 147 entry of 9 June 1823.

Melvill afterwards played a leading part in the Battle against the invading Mantatees.
Later we hear of him again in a letter of Dr. John Philip (21 Nov. 1838, 'Index to Unofficial Manuscripts' Una Long , 152-3). 'The present state of Hankey is another illustration of how much depends on the character of the missionary and his wife. Poor (J. Melvill) reduced the Institution to a perfect wreck. Before he left it the schools, the place of worship, the Institution were deserted....' (John Melvill served at Hankey from 1831 to 1838.

2. C.O. 175/15 21 March, 1822.
11 April, 1822.

3. C.O. 199/5 18 Feb. 1823.

4. Somerset dismissed Major Jones, Landdrost of Albany, within a week of his return.

for the veranda reached its height long before a really satisfactory method of constructing it had been found. Adapted from countries and colonies in which the rainfall was low and rarely protracted, when used in unsuitable climates it proved either expensive (zinc, lead, or copper roofing) or the source of continual trouble. Of course, if the designers were content with the relatively steep roofing provided by thatch, shingle or slate, the veranda was unlikely to leak or deteriorate. (Hence the early incorporation of the veranda under the main roof - e.g. the Marine Villa at Camps Bay). But as long as the fashion for light, elegant verandas with low pitched roofs persisted, the constructional problems they presented were a constant source of concern.

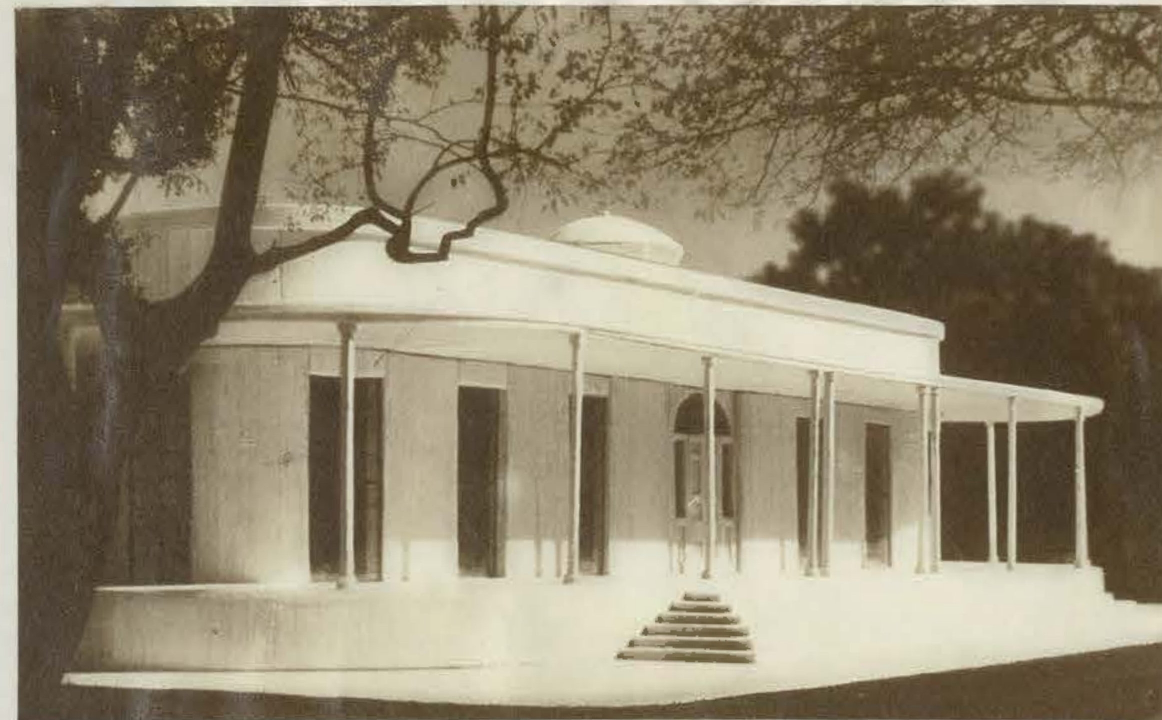
In July and August, 1822, the Cape was ravaged by a succession of very violent rain and wind storms which, at 'Newlands' '.... devastated all the Outbuildings (which had been entirely neglected for three years) and generally injured the New Building. The Roof leaked, the Colonade (which went round the House, it having no upper storey) so nearly fell in, as to render it necessary to take it down and rebuild it, to prevent its endangering the House....' [1]

The rebuilt veranda, with its lead roof, was condemned within six months. The contractor (Durham) then announced that he considered 'experience has now shown that lead is not to be depended upon for Roofing in this climate. The great Heat which it holds warps the boarding which again bends the Lead and by the changes of climate it breaks perishes and

28. Slate fireplace surround in 'Newlands'.

1. (G.H. 26 / 13 No. 211. 31st July, 1825. Lord Charles Somerset to Earl Bathurst.)

We need not presume poor construction to explain the damage done at 'Newlands'. In the same storms, (the 'Great Tempest') every building in Tulbagh was either destroyed or rendered uninhabitable: At Simonstown, the Barracks, built only five years before, fell in, and at Stellenbosch ninety-four, and at Paarl sixty-nine, buildings were damaged. v. Cory, 'The Rise of South Africa', II , 161.



29. 'Newlands': Interior of Hall, showing its great height and width.

30. 'Newlands': General view.

31,32. 'Newlands': LouisXV marble fireplaces.

1. C.O. 187/13 27th Feb. 1823.

2. C.O. 210/128 30th March 1824.

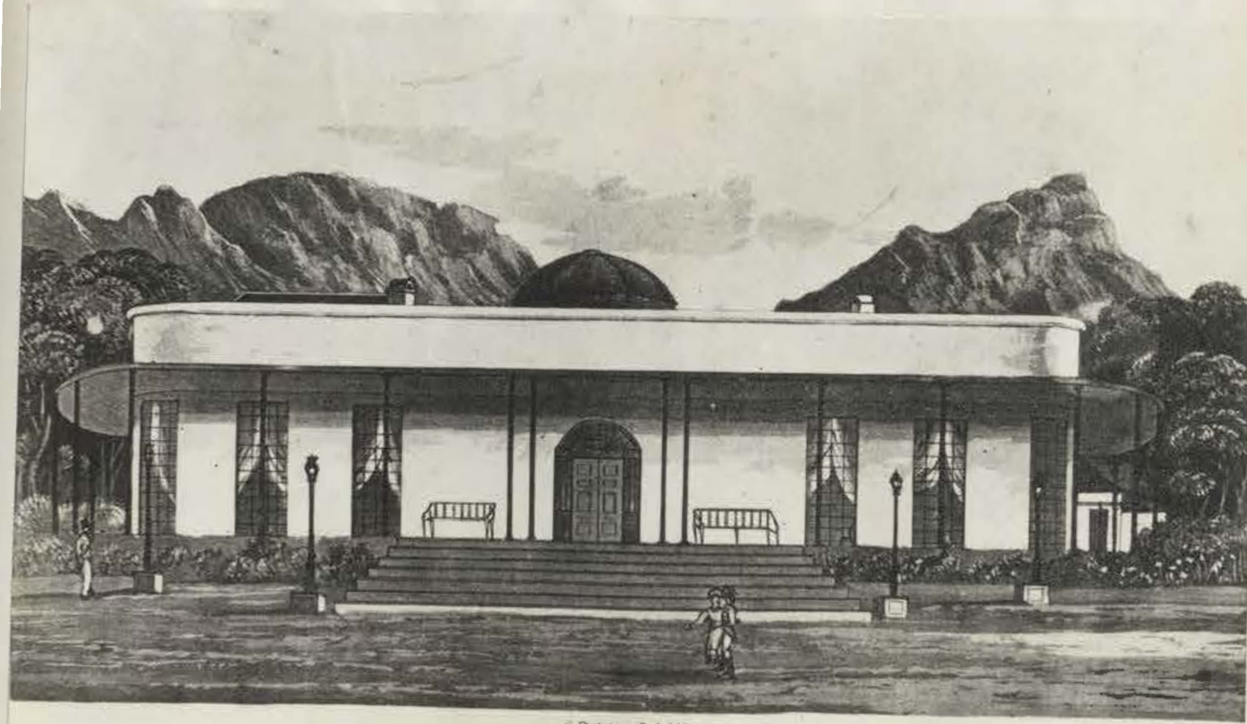
3. C.O. 175/33. 16th Nov. 1822.
(This bill for 1020 Rds. is presumed to refer to these two chimney pieces as there are no others which could have cost anything like this amount.)

4. C.O. 344/17. 23rd Feb. 1828 etc.

5. C.O. 344/16. 21st Feb. 1828.

6. There were also three Waterclosets and 2 baths, with hot and cold running water. Ibid.

7. C.O. 187/13. 27th Feb. 1823.



33. 'Newlands', etching from Thompson's 'Travels', London, 1827.

requires perpetual repair.' He proposed a return to the traditional Cape flat roof of 'thin hard burnt Bricks or Tiles and plastered with good Lime', or a flat roof of 'English slate, well beded in Lime, for the lightness and durability of which I beg to refer to similar Roofing at Colonel Bird's, Major Roger's and the Public Library....'[1] But his suggestions were ignored and the veranda roof continued to leak.

In March, 1824, the contractor signified that 'Newlands' was at last complete.[2] It then contained such luxuries as two imported marble Louis XV fireplaces (which together cost over £200, or £1,000 by today's reckoning).[3] The Library, like a number of other rooms, was elegantly wall-papered, the wallpaper being normally given a base bordering and a frieze, and edged in panels with such Greek patterns as Egg and Tongue. (Among the inventory of the Government Stores of the period is wallpaper of yellow and gold, Crimson and gold, Pink, striped green and lilac, pink plaid, light blue and yellow, and of a white ground with stars in blue and gold. Wallpaper is mentioned from England, France and China.)[4] All the rooms had lead or plaster ceiling rosettes and hanging chandeliers, elaborate curtains, drapes and green roller blinds.[5] The front rooms interconnected by means of large, polished Mahogany folding doors.[6]

But the saga of 'Newlands' was not yet over. The contractor, who had all along been made to wait the Governor's pleasure for payments due to him, and who had already in February 1823 been faced with 'total ruin... for want of means and the heavy losses I am suffering...'[7] was still waiting to be paid in June 1824, when he wrote to the Colonial Secretary saying that the unsettled 'Newlands' account was 'the only

thing that keeps me in the Colony...'[1] In October he was still unpaid and begging for some money as he had 'already suffered so great a loss'.[2]

Meanwhile the Inspector of Buildings was having considerable difficulty arriving at a just settlement 'as I cannot possibly admit it myself that the Building can be considered finished in that substantial manner of Construction it ought to have been according to my conceptions of the general tennor of the contract entered into by Mr. Durham tho' in great measure it exceeds his own proposal and particular of the provision made by him...' .[3] The negotiations dragged on, with Somerset railing first at the Contractor and then at his Inspector of Buildings, who was continually forced to justify his actions.[4]

The reasons for Somerset's alarm and hesitancy about paying his accounts may be appreciated when it is realised that the sum spent on the building since 1814 was already more than £20,000 (roughly equivalent to £200,000 today), and that he had absolutely no authority for any of this expenditure.[5]

At the eleventh hour, before his actions should become known in London, Somerset wrote to the Parliamentray Commission of Inquiry :

> 'A conversation I had with Mr. Goulburn when I was in England having impressed me with the conviction that Earl Bathurst's sanction to the rebuilding of Newlands had been sent here during my absence from the Government, I have inadvertently been led to authorize from time to time the expenditure incurred therein... I was not aware of the error I had committed until a few days since... I discovered that no specific authority had been received and that consequently I had involved myself in a very heavy responsibility... Under the circumstances it is an object of great importance to me that testimony other than my own should satisfy Earl Bathurst that neither ornament nor embellishment have been introduced in the buildings at Newlands and that the nature and extent of them (if even considered adequate) do not exceed the measure of proper accommodation for the Government of this Colony ....'[6]

1. C.O. 211/88 11 June 1824.
2. C.O. 211/199 14th Oct. 1824.
3. C.O. 210/128 30th March 1824.
4. C.O. 221/30 10th June, 1824.

   Private letter from W. Jones to Lord Charles Somerset vindicating his conduct. 'it ever have been my chief study to save the government every profitable expense that could be avoided', and adding that he has 'not recovered from the late remarks and severe retort of your Excellency.' He offers to have his conduct investigated by an impartial judge to prove that he has not made any profits other than his salary.

5. The sum total of expenditure on the building from 1st April 1814 until 31st December 1826 was calculated by Cory to be £28,226.6.2¾ (Cory 'The Rise of South Africa' , II , 312).

   Theal considered the final amount spent on the main house by Lord Charles Somerset to have been 'at least £30,000 - or £150,000 by today's 1890 standards.' (Theal 'History of South Africa' , I ,336 - 7).

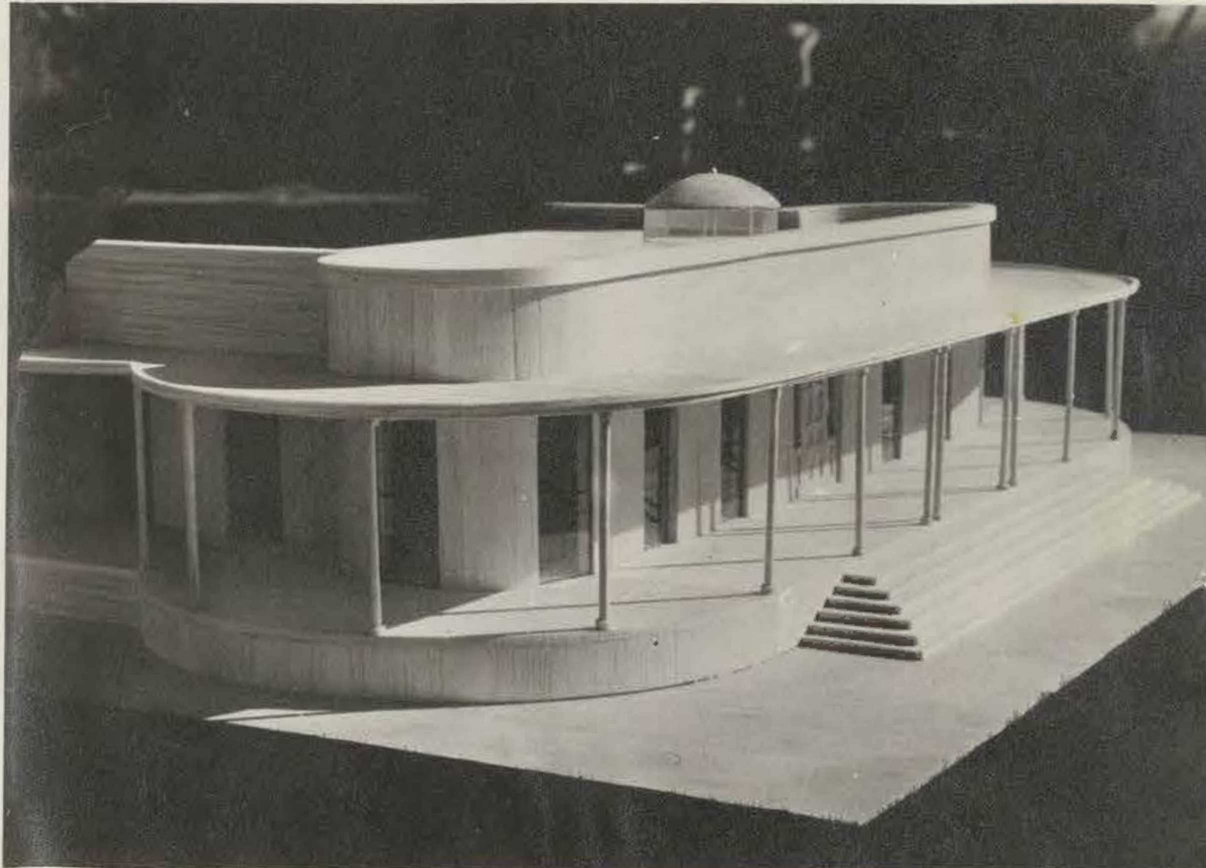
6. G.H. 26/13 No. 211.

   Lord Charles Somerset to H.M. Commissioners of Enquiry dated 'Newlands' 6th June, 1825. It is interesting to note that less than a fortnight before Jones had submitted to the Governor a detailed estimate of the cost of the new portico to Government House, then barely begun. C.O. 247/37 24th May, 1825.

1. G.H. 26/13 Enclosure to Dispatches of 31st July.

2. 'From the commissariat chest sums amounting altogether to £37,262 were drawn on loan, and when this source of supply was exhausted, on the 30th June 1825 the governor borrowed from the agent of the East India Company £18,750 at four per cent yearly interest...'
Theal 'History of South Africa' I, 266.

3. In the original document the signature of the authority making the report is missing.



34. 'Newlands', a reconstruction from measurements of the surviving building. (R.B. Lewcock; model B. Kearney.).

After a tour of inspection of the house the Commissioners generously replied :

'...the Exterior is constructed according to the Custom of the Country of Stone and Brick covered with Plaister and with a less degree of decoration in cornices and finishing than we have usually observed in the Country Houses of the Inhabitants. The Addition of the Verandah we conceive to be calculated to protect the Building externally from the Effects of the Weather - the two principal apartments on each side of the Entrance Hall do not exceed the Ordinary dimensions of these generally found in the Residences of Country Gentlemen in England, and the execution of them as well as of the other Apartments of the House is in a style that is perfectly plain and unbellished.

'The accommodation that the Offices afford is we think rather limited for a large Establishment, and the Stables with the accommodation annexed to them, although extensive are not disproportional to the scale of the principal Building, adverting to the necessity of providing for the horses and carriages of visitors.

'As a Country Residence for the Governor of the Colony, where he is accustomed to receive Strangers of rank in the Summer and Autumn on their passage to distant stations, and frequently to entertain the Civil and Military Officers of the Establishment. We think that the House at Newlands barely contains the accommodation required for those purposes.' [1]

But even this did not satisfy the Earl of Bathurst, who had meanwhile discovered that the financial affairs of the Colony were in a most serious state.[2] He instructed the Commissioners of Enquiry to investigate the whole building programme at 'Newlands', and on October 8th, 1825, he ordered the suspension of all public works in the Colony.

In one of the subsequent reports furnished by the Commissioners[3] it was observed :

'The neglect of the Inspector to keep his accounts in the form required, renders it impossible to ascertain with precision the exact expense of each distinct Service - all therefore that can now be ascertained - and which has been ascertained is - that the Workmen were employed in the public Service for the period

specified, and that the materials were furnished and expended in the Government service.

'The Government Inspector of Buildings having no office or Workshop in Cape Town, his Establishment of Artificiers, Workmen, Teams etc. etc., was placed at "Newlands" to perform these several works, as the most convenient as well as the most economical plan...'[1]

Probably as a result of this report, and perhaps to make of him something of a scapegoat, Somerset discharged William Jones from the post of Inspector of Government Buildings on July 31st (but quickly created a new post for him, that of 'Government Overseer of Works').[2]

Though Somerset left the scene in March 1826 (when he returned to England to answer his detractors there), 'Newlands', so inadequately designed and poorly constructed, continued to be the centre of building operations. In May extensive repairs were carried out on the veranda and main roof, which had to be repeated in July.[3] By August the condition of the building was causing grave concern.[4] In September it was suggested that the characteristic parapet of the building be removed and the shingle roof extended to protect the walls (of poor quality brick and mortar) from the weather.[5] For some reason this work was never completed, with disastrous results, for the next winter the parapets of the right wing collapsed, and the front exhibited a 'state of total decay both of the walls and the Timber.'[6]

The Inspector of Buildings also reported that 'From the numerous cracks in the other parts there is no doubt that the rest will soon follow...it will be immediately necessary to dismantle the front rooms...namely the Drawing Room, Hall and Dining Room.'[7] In the months that followed this advice was carried out,[8] and the house assumed the form it has retained to the present day.[9] So

1. C.O. 113/after 19.
2. In self-vindication, Somerset wrote that he 'was a good builder' and ' may be useful as an overseer of work; but cannot be regarded as a responsible officer to superintend all buildings and be responsible for the whole management.'
   Hattersley 'Oliver the Spy & Others'.
3. C.O. 272/72, 74, 86 & 95.
4. C.O. 272/157 14th August 1826.

   'The Parapet Wall...has too heavy a cornice for the material it is built of, and cracks continually by its own weight. It is hardly susceptible of permanent repair. It ought to be taken down, for should there be any sudden heavy fall of rain...the Parapet would in all probability fall, and the consequence be ruinous.'
5. C.O. 272/158, 12th Sept. 1826. '...also, from the great weight of the timbers and plaster, the said verandah is separating from the walls'.
6. C.O. 321/100 30th July, 1827.
7. Ibid.
8. C.O. 321/111 etc.
9. Although considerable shortening of the back wings has taken place, and many of the outbuildings have gone.

35,36. The 'cottage ornée'. Two plates from Papworth's 'Rural Residences', London, 1818.

disappeared the handsome bow-fronted rooms, with their polished mahogany screens and marble fireplaces, and with it vanished, after only seven years in existence that elegant Regency veranda, a strange precursor of what was eventually to prove one of South Africa's most characteristic architectural features.[1]

'Newlands' was but one of a number of extravagant building projects conceived by Lord Charles Somerset. Other buildings which were extensively renovated for his personal use, and in some cases entirely rebuilt, included the 'Marine Villa' and the 'Round House' at Camp's Bay; Government House, Cape Town; the Government Cottage in the Gardens;[2] 'Oatlands', Somerset West;[3] and the shooting box at Groote Post.[4] More than once the Governor seized on the excuse of damage done during the 1822 'tempest' to justify tearing down old buildings and erecting new ones on an enlarged scale. And whenever adequate records survive of the work executed on these buildings for Somerset the veranda plays a prominent role, so that we are left with the impression that adding them to buildings was a favourite hobby of his (as it was, indeed, of the Prince Regent's. 'Men who are fond of building are their own undoers and need no other foes'. Crassus quoted by Plutarch).

One of the most characteristic innovations of the Regency was the so-called 'Cottage Ornée'. Villas there had been in the Palladian England of the eighteenth century, but the ornamental cottage with its picturesque rural air was something rather different. Arising as an offshoot of the Landscape Garden

1. 'Newlands' was sold by auction in March 1828, for £3,205, about 1/10th of the amount Somerset had spent on the main building alone!

2. The site of the 'Government Cottage' in the Gardens has never been established, nor its exact function. We learn from Theal's 'Records' (XXIV, 199) that the cottage was originally prepared for Major Fitzroy (Somerset's Aide-de-Camp) but was subsequently required 'to supplement the accommodation at Government House'. It was probably converted from an old building, had one of the earliest shingle roofs in Cape Town (C.O. 175/22 & 23, June and July, 1822) and was extensively renovated in 1822 & 23, if not completely rebuilt (C.O. 175 many references, C.O.199/15, 17th June, 1823). Work continued on the building intermittently throughout Somerset's period of governorship, and George Gilbert was the Contractor for at least part of the time. (C.O. 235/92, 21st June 1825. C.O. 247/94. 17 Nov. 1825).

3. 'Oatlands' Somerset West, probably dates from 1822, when the town plan was prepared with it as a focus, and the town received its name. But the governor had been for hunting trips in the area long before this time. (Theal's 'History of South Africa', I, 259 - 60).

4. 'Groote Post' had been a Government possession since the Company's time, and a Government Farm since the Administration of the Batavian Republic. In Somerset's time, Thompson wrote of the place: 'There is a pretty comfortable house on this farm, which the Governor usually occupies as a hunting-lodge in the sporting season'. ('Travels...' London, 1827, II, 107-8). The building referred to is a traditional 18th century Cape farmhouse, with the main gable dated 1806. It was extended and refurnished for Somerset. The whole property was divided and leased after Somerset's resignation, in October 1827. (Theal 'History of South Africa' 336-7).

1. Francis Goodwin: 'Domestic Architecture...' London, 1833.
2. Papworth. 'Ornamental Gardening' London, 1823.

37. A suburban 'villa'. from Papworth's 'Rural Residences', London, 1818.
38. Regency Drawing Room, Bromley, Kent; contemporary watercolour.

ornamental cottages gained new popularity with the Romantic admiration for the 'simplicity' of country life. Following the precedent of Marie Antoinette, who built her own plaything village of such structures at Versailles, they became a regular fashion in Regency England. A rich patron with a 'penchant' for the 'Picturesque' might spend a small fortune on one of these miniature residences, which was seldom used except as a week-end retreat or as a curiosity. An integral part of the 'Cottage Ornee' was its setting; books and magazines of the time were full of descriptions such as this of J.B. Papworth ('Rural Residences' published in London in 1818) of the house shown in Plate 35: '...embowering it with shrubs, creepers and flowering plants...renders it highly interesting, provided the design is favourable, and the situation appropriate to its object...thatched with reeds, as the most rural and picturesque covering: the brown tints of its surface oppose the various greens of the foliage by which it is accompanied, and give a neatness of effect that is very prepossessing, which may be improved by the colour given to the walls, should they be built of materials which do not harmonize with them...'

In such buildings the veranda played an important role, especially in linking the living rooms of the house to the garden. 'The verandah may be said to take the room itself abroad, for when rendered...attractive...it would frequently seduce the work-table or the reading table into its own neutral ground between the house and the open-air.' [1]

To provide easy access between the garden and the house the low-cilled Regency windows here became French windows: 'The chief apartments' says Papworth [2] 'are now...placed on the level of the ground, and have free access to the lawn or terrace by casements that descend to the very floor. This has

1. 'It is at this time of the year that we wish that our ancestors...had built a veranda...One veranda, dear to memory, encircles the whole curving front of a tiny house on a hillside and has always a dry spot. There never was such a place for looking lazily at the rain ...' Leader in 'The Times' October, 1958.

2. W.J. Burchell. 'Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa'. (First volume, London, 1822).

   'In the bay there is only one house, but it was in a very neglected and dilapidated state; yet, surrounded by lofty mountains, its situation deserves a better edifice, and might well be the site of an elegant villa. A slave, who had charge of it, permitted us to spread our dinner in one of the rooms...' (Entry of Dec. 27th 1810).

   The building had been rather cursorily prepared for occupation by the Governor in 1817. (C.O. 97/18, 29th Sept. 1817).

3. Despatch 13th July, 1825. G.H. 28/11.

4. C.O. 221/46 7th Oct. 1824 etc. The contractor was again E. Durham. C.O. 2467/185.

5. C.O. 199/14 & 22. 17th June & 18th Aug. 1823.

been attended by the introduction of colonnades and verandahs that throw agreeable shade on the apartments and which become new ones for reading and study.[1]

The French Window thus enabled the landscape to become a garden for living-in, instead of a scene framed by the drawing room windows. The lawn becomes a more important feature than before, extending right up to the verandah - and if there is none, to the French windows themselves - and replacing the gravel drives and paths which formerly encircled the house; '...in fact, the lawn has become a favourite auxiliary to every room in the house.' (Papworth 'Ornamental Gardening' London, 1823).

A fine example of such an ornamental cottage, complete in every detail is provided by Lord Charles Somerset's 'Marine Villa' at Camps Bay, rebuilt in new form in 1823.

Immediately after the storms of 1822 a plan was prepared by William Jones for wholesale alterations to 'the Government Buildings at Camps Bay'.[2] According to Somerset, they were 'unavoidable Repairs', in which delay would have led to extensive dilapidation.'[3] He did not define exactly what he meant by 'repairs' and clearly he used the word in a very broad sense. During 1823 and 1824 additions and alterations were carried out on the unpretentious farmhouse, which converted it to an 'elegant villa' of the type Burchell had envisaged for the site. Besides reflooring and receiling the entire house with stinkwood,[4] installing five fireplaced with surrounds of Robben Island stone,[5]

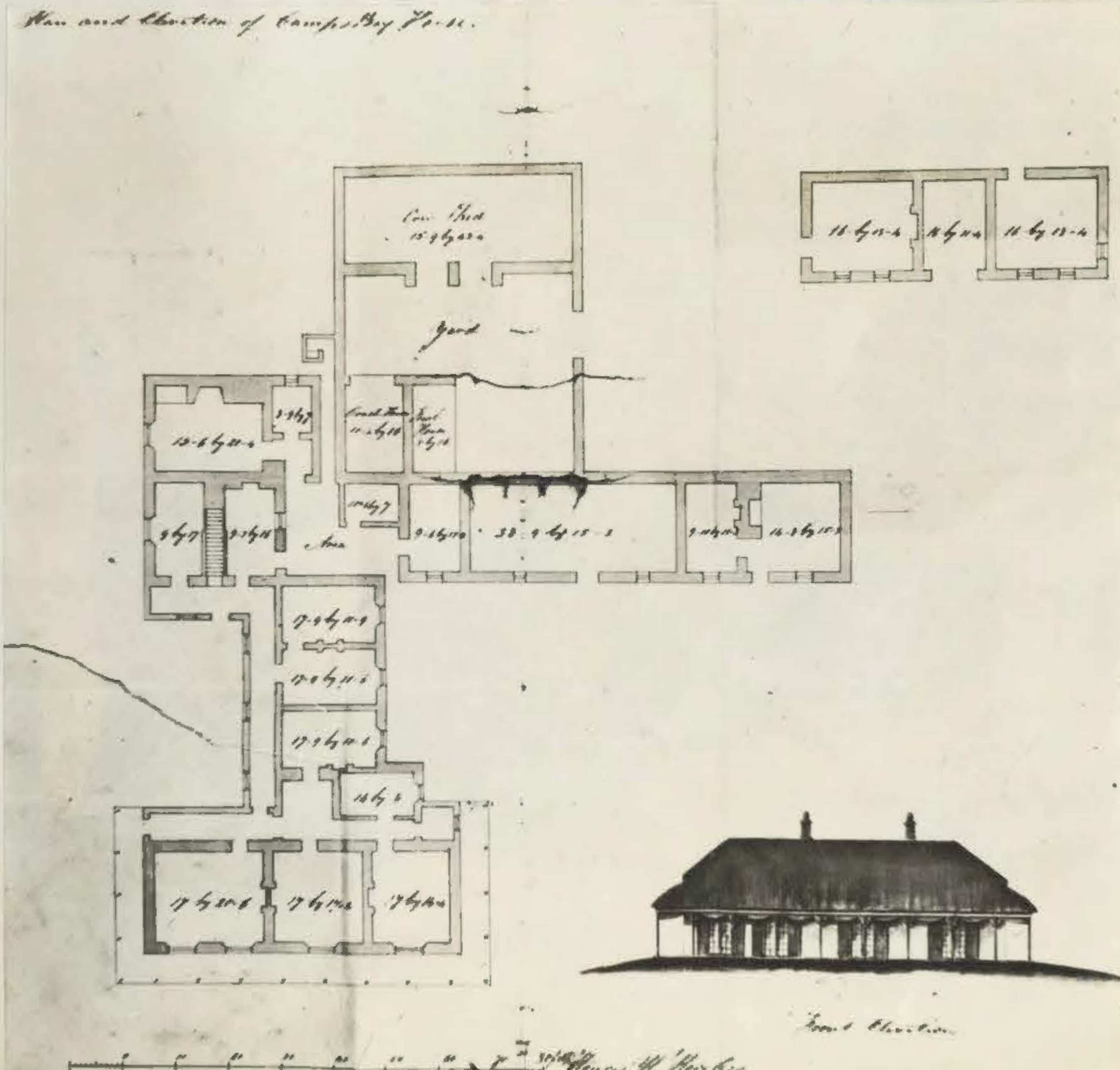
1. C.O. 275/86 repairs to W.C!s 24th June, 1826; confirmed by reference to the plan.
2. C.O. 199/14 & 22 17th June & 18th Aug. 1823.
3. c.f. earliest water colour of Marine Villa, by Susan Cornelia Hiddingh drawn 1826 or earlier. (Elliott 2088-used as the source for Plate 41, the woodcut in Thompson's 'Travels', London 1827).
4. Papworth 'Rural Residences' London, 1818, 57.
5. George Thompson thought it so elegant that he published a view of it: 'Travels & Adventures in Southern Africa.' 2 vols. London, 1827.

39. 'Marine Villa', Camps Bay. (Elliott).

and one of marble, Somerset had two bathrooms[1] added to the plan, and French windows knocked through the walls of the main rooms which faced on to the sea. The entire building was rethatched, and dormer windows placed over the back of the house to provide servants' accommodation on the upper level. Extensive slate paving was laid around the villa,[2] with kerbed paths leading into an ornamental garden planted with firs and silvertrees between the buildings and the sea (Plate 41).[3]

The main wing was surrounded on three sides by a veranda (Plate 43) onto which French casements opened, with Venetian louvred shutters to protect the room from the afternoon sun. The veranda was incorporated under a single thatched roof giving the house a simple appearance '...designed to harmonise with garden scenery, and to afford a degree of embellishment by its verandahs and the variety of shadow which they project... The cottage roof is well fitted to assist in this endeavour, as its over-hanging eaves produce a picturesque effect, and give a considerable shelter to the house. On the pleasing variety of shadow resulting from this design, its pretension to notice would principally depend, for the parts themselves are perfectly simple and unaffected...'[4] Observe how well this description by Papworth of one of his own houses, suits the South African example.[5]

Prophetic as the basic design of this 'veranda house' may seem to us today, an even more remarkable feature is the patterning of the fascia. The veranda at 'Newlands' was simply an extremely light classical colonnade. But in the 'Marine Villa' the designers have hit upon the idea of obtaining a permanent festive 'seaside' effect by a bold shaping of the bargeboard. To find the origin of this idea we need look no further than the Prince Regent's 'Royal



40. Early Photograph (S.A.P.L.)

41. Print from Thompson's 'Travels', London, 1827.

42. Detail, showing the original Venetian shutters, shaped barge-board and dormers.

43. Plan and Elevation. A copy of the original drawings made in 1827 (G.H. 26/17, No.45).

1. The 'Marine Villa' was sold by auction for the benefit of the Colonial Treasury in July 1828. (v. correspondence G.H. 26/17 No. 45, etc.) It was demolished c. 1955.

2. J. Barrow, 'Travels...' London, 1804, II, 227.

3. P.W. Laidler. 'Growth & Government of Cape Town'. Cape Town, 1939, 401.

44. The 'Round House' at Camps Bay. (Elliott).

Pavilion' at Brighton, though the pattern of our example is clearly that of the drapes of a canvas awning, rather than of an Oriental tent. In both design and method of execution the South African veranda is largely original, and the first representative of a style of fretwork ornamentation which was still in vogue only forty years ago.[1]

The 'Round House' on the slopes of Lions Head above the 'Marine Villa' was acquired by Lord Charles Somerset for use as a hunting box, probably in 1817. When John Barrow wrote of the Cape in 1803, he mentioned that besides the government cottage there were only a 'few small batteries'[2] and it was clearly on the foundations of one of these simple circular outposts (dating from the Company's time) that a burgher named Horak first erected a lodge. According to Laidler,[3] Lord Charles Somerset enlarged this building to its present size. These enlargements appear to have consisted mainly in the addition of an elevated curving veranda around the side of the circular redoubt facing out onto the sea (Plate 44). And, although it has been several times damaged by fire, the 'Round House' probably stands today substantially as Somerset knew it, complete with elaborate double folding French windows to close in the deep, shaded verandah from the extremes of the weather.

'...a verandah adapted to a balcony (is)...an useful and ornamental appendage to a London dwelling. No decorations have so successfully varied the dull sameness of modern structures in the metropolis, as the verandah, the lengthened window, and the balcony; they have produced an intrinsic elegance. ...The verandah would long ago have taken a substantial and architectural character, but that an Act of Parliament is more than impliedly fatal to the erection of them in streets and squares; but the

magistrates, and indeed the surveyors of the districts, with much good sense, have hitherto permitted them to be projected in the light manner in which this design bespeaks them to be executed. They are sometimes made of metal in this character, and it would be incongruous to give them a more solid appearance, where a seemingly adequate support could not be erected beneath. It is not improbable that at some future day the verandah and piazza will form a considerable architectural beauty in this metropolis, and that they will be constructed in a way suitable to the nature of our climate.'[1] (v. Plate 53).

In thus giving us the tenor of architectural opinion in 1818, Papworth does much to explain the popularity of the town house verandah, and also the background for the peculiar character it usually assumed. Let us consider one of the earliest examples in South Africa:

Somerset seems to have lavished at least as much attention on the refurbishing of Government House as he did on any of his other buildings. The warrants for expenditure during the period of his rule (and we must assume these to be but a scanty record) reveal an almost unbroken succession of redecorating projects at Government House.

The garden front of the building may be seen in Plate 5 on Page 16 . It was a variation on the 'stoepkamer' type, with an early classical colonnade built along the stoep. One of Somerset's first schemes was the complete reconstruction of the roof of this colonnade in teak and yellowwood, and the reroofing of the whole building with a flat brick and plaster roof on boarding.[2] The Drawing Room ceiling, (of canvas) was repaired, and four months later the whole building was repainted.[3]

Cory records that during Sir Rufane Donkin's administration of the affairs of the colony the quarterly[4] expenditure for the maintenance of Government House was cut to one fifth, which gives some idea of the extravagance

1. Papworth 'Rural Residences' (London, 1818), 103.
2. C.O. 97/4. 16th Feb. 1818.
3. C.O. 91/145, 8th July, 1818.
4. Cory 'The Rise of South Africa', II, 120.

WEST COUNTRY MAILS AT THE GLOUCESTER COFFEE HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

45. A contemporary print showing the Regency veranda.

of Somerset's building projects.

He had not been back in the Colony very long, however, before he was calling for advice as to the best material for yet another complete re-roofing of the building.[1] (Both slates and painted shingles were suggested by Jones, the latter eventually being chosen.)[2] At the same time he began a grandiose plan for the demolition of the low wings (the 'stoep-kamers') and the erection of an impressive ballroom on the site of one, and a new double-storey bedroom suite in the position of the other. Even Wilberforce Bird, who in 1822 published an account of 'The State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822' thought the house in need of some such alteration: 'This abode might be thought handsome for a high and mighty mercantile body, but is not on a scale becoming the representation of the British King, on the outwork of his eastern empire. It is also considerably out of repair.' (P.157).

The ballroom (Plates 49, 50) was seventy seven feet long and thirty four feet wide,[3] (compared with 33' x 18' for the old dining room which it replaced.) At the entrance end, mahogany folding doors opened into it from the lobby, while at the far end of the ballroom a semicircular apse (made by projecting a bow end from the building) housed a stage, with a gallery over it. The whole interior was most lavishly decorated with a modelled plaster ceiling[4], lead chandelier roses and cornice, and two marble 'statuary chymney pieces' in one of the long walls.[5]

The other wing was rebuilt, with two storeys and a basement, to house the Wine Cellars at basement level, with His Excellency's Dressing Room (later his office) and his Secretary's office on the entrance level, and a bedroom

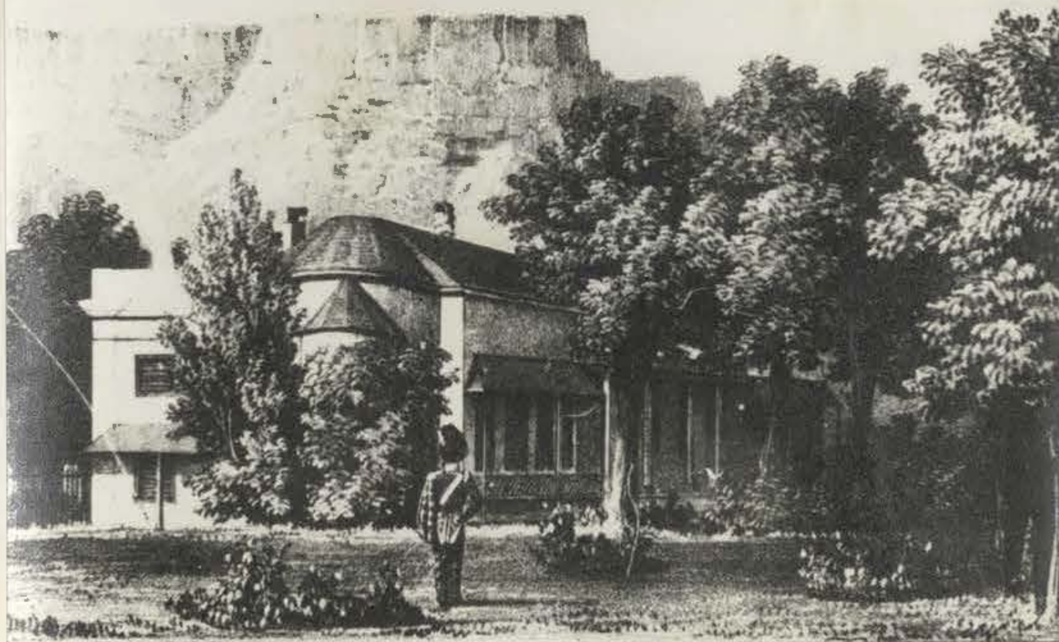
1. C.O. 175/41 Aug. 1822.

2. G.H. 26/12/118 9th Oct. 1824. Dispatch of Lord Charles Somerset to Earl Bathurst (by which time most of the work was nearing completion). 'The Roof & Timbers are now become so decayed as to render parts of it dangerous to inhabit. Indeed only a short time since I had a most providential Escape: a portion of the Roof having fallen in, in my own Sitting Room [the North West wing] soon after I had quitted it upon the very chair I had occupied for several hours. The two wings are now supported by props in the Rooms'.

3. It was later shortened by 15 feet in length and the bow projection removed 'owing to improper foundations' (G.H. 28/20. p. 634 - 9. 30th Nov. 1842). It was subsequently altered yet again, in the late nineteenth century.

4. It had to be removed in 1842 (G.H. 28/20. p. 634 - 9). 'The plaster is cracking owing to the want of insufficient hair, and too great proximity of the laths preventing sufficient keying and the weakness and construction of the ceiling joists.'

5. C.O. 221/63. 6th Dec. 1824.



46. Government House, Cape Town, by de Meillon. Printed 1st January, 1832.

1. C.O. 247/17 2nd March 1825.
2. Ibid.
3. G.H. 28/20 p. 634 - 9.
4. C.O. 221/51. 2nd Oct. 1824.
5. Report on the estimated cost of the structure (it was already begun and the materials ordered). C.O. 247/37, 24th May, 1825.

47. The Regency verandas to the new side wings of Government House, added in 1825.

and dressing room on the top level. New fireplaces were put into the main rooms, and in these the entire surround and hearth were worked in Robben Island slate.[1] A crowning feature of the redecoration was the ornamentation of the doorways leading from the central colonnade to the new wings. These were elegantly designed with sculptured Adam radiating patterns in the blank panels over the doors (Plate 47).

Along the full length of both of these new wings Somerset added raised verandas in the very latest English fashion.[2] They were given delicate cast iron railings, slate paving, slender teak uprights[3] and scalloped bargeboards, and were covered with curving tentlike zinc roofs. These verandas were among the most elegant of which we have knowledge ever built at the Cape in the Regency style (Plate 47).

In keeping with the taste of the time, all the rooms opening onto these new verandas communicated with them by French casements, each protected from the afternoon sun (for it was the west face of the building) by 'Venetian Shutter Blinds'.[4]

The new verandas only served to point out the incongruity of the original colonnade between the wings, (which was probably very nearly eighty years old by then) with its heavy Tuscan columns and plaster balustrade. Somerset's final gesture in Cape architecture was to order the reconstruction of the whole colonnade with elegant [illegible] Ionic columns and a light entablature of teak reinforced by 'Brissumer Girders' of Memel Timber.[5] Above there was designed a light veranda using the teak lattice-work then popular in Brighton

and Cheltenham.[1] This type of veranda probably owed its character to the influence of trellised arcades in the contemporary landscape garden, the 'trillis' as Pocock called it 'to support the shooting tendrils of the vine and gay luxuriance of the passion flower'. (W.F.Pocock: 'Architectural Designs for Rustic Cottages, Picturesque Dwellings, Villas, etc.' London, 1807). It represents a definite attempt to link the house to the garden, an attempt which is reinforced by the tentlike forms of the roof. Such a veranda was, as Loudon said 'calculated for being decorated with ivy and creepers'. (Loudon 'Country Residences' London, 1805). Opening onto the Government House veranda, and the one below, more French casements and louvred shutters were installed (Plates 48 & 51).

The whole project must have cost the Government a considerable sum. But whatever the Home Government's reactions, successive Governors could at least be grateful to Somerset, who, having found the building a decaying structure in an outmoded idiom, left it a stylish gentleman's mansion, well worthy, as he himself would have said, to be 'the residence of a governor'.

The Government projects carried out by Somerset undoubtedly gave enormous impetus to the wide-spread adoption of Regency fashions at the Cape.[2] Major Fitzroy, the Military Secretary to the Governor, added an elegant curving veranda to his cottage in Wynberg in (or before) 1825 (Plate 54).[3] Several of the oldest stoep-kamer houses in Table Valley were redecorated at about the same time and the opportunity was then taken to add to them new portico and light latticed upper verandas with curving zinc roofs. (e.g. Plate 69)

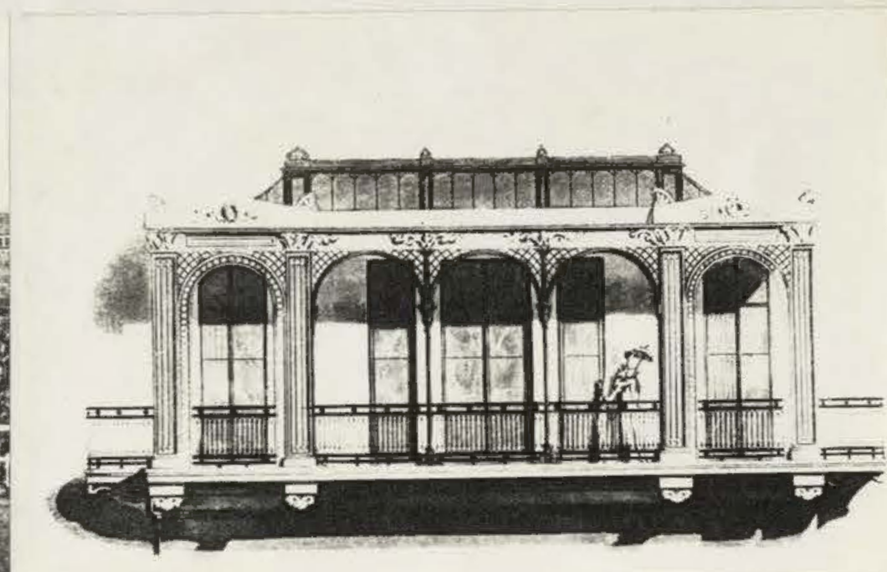
1. The ceiling was plaster on lath, and the roof plaster on boarding. C.O. 247/37 24th May 1825. The plaster roof was soon afterwards replaced by painted (or tarred) canvas on boarding (G.H. 28/20) which henceforth becomes the standard veranda roofing material for low pitches. (C.O. 374/124 23rd July 1830 etc.)

2. Among other Government buildings of this time which were given verandas, although not always on their front facades, were:

   The Drostdy at Bathurst (1820 - 24).
   The Drostdy at Grahamstown (1822 - 5).
   The Colonial Office, Cape Town (c. 1820 - 22?)
   (C.O. 374/124, 24th July, 1830 - repairs to).
   The Gaol, Grahamstown (1825 - 6).
   The Government Cottages, Simonstown (1825).
   The Wharf Offices (1831)

3. Cape Archives, Map 18, Wynberg Map Collection, entitled 'Plan of a Cottage at Wynberg occupied by Major Fitzroy' and enscribed '...additions made by Major Fitzroy'. Fitzroy was promoted to Major in June 1825 and to Lieut.-Col. in October, 1825 (Theal, 'Records', XXXIV, 71).

48. The garden front of Government House, after Lord Charles Somerset's alterations of 1824-6. (Elliott).



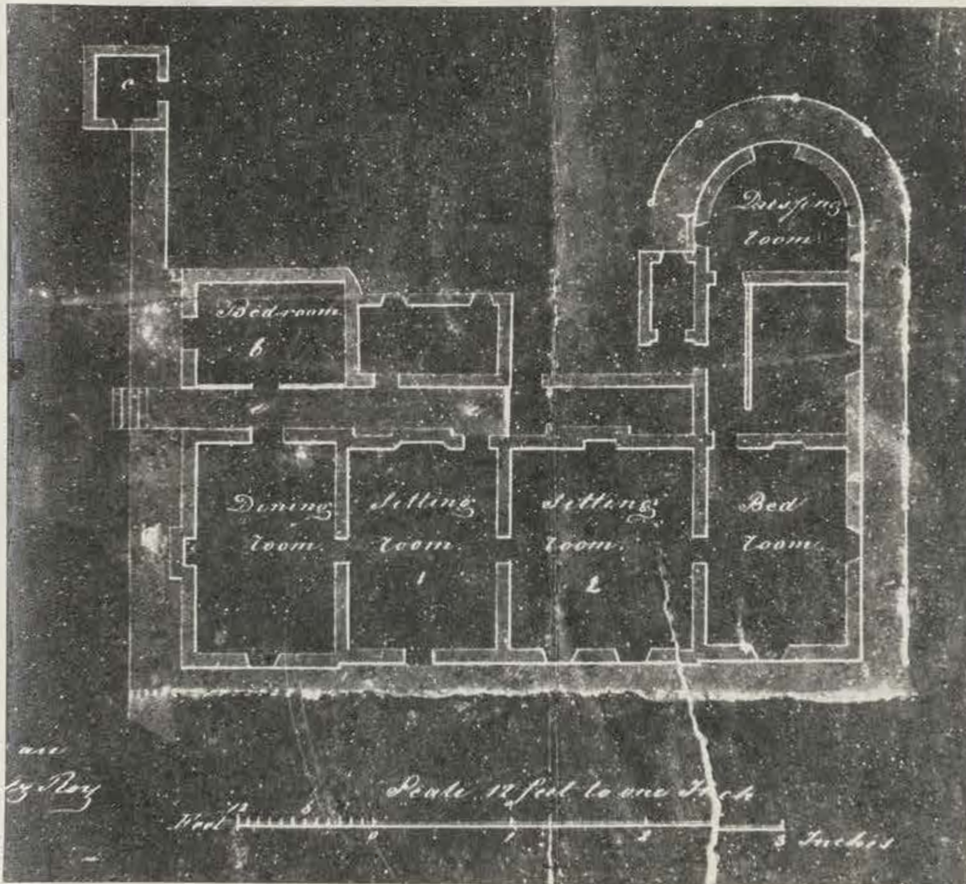
49,50. Government House Ballroom. Added c.1824. The original appearance of plate 49 was somewhat different, a large semicircular apse for the orchestra existing behind the gallery.

52. 'Longwood'; Lattice-work veranda, c.1815, St. Helena.

51. Upper veranda of Government House, Cape Town.

53. Plate from Papworth: 'Rural Residences', London, 1818.

1. C.O. 245/23.



54. Plan of Major Fitzroy's house, Wynberg, c.1825.

Indeed, contemporary records, like the sketch books of Sir John D'Oyley, (1832), show that the veranda was fully established as characteristic of Cape Town's architecture by the late twenties and early thirties (Plate 55). Such verandas as those of Church Square shown in a photograph of c. 1850 (Plate 57) appear to date from this period.

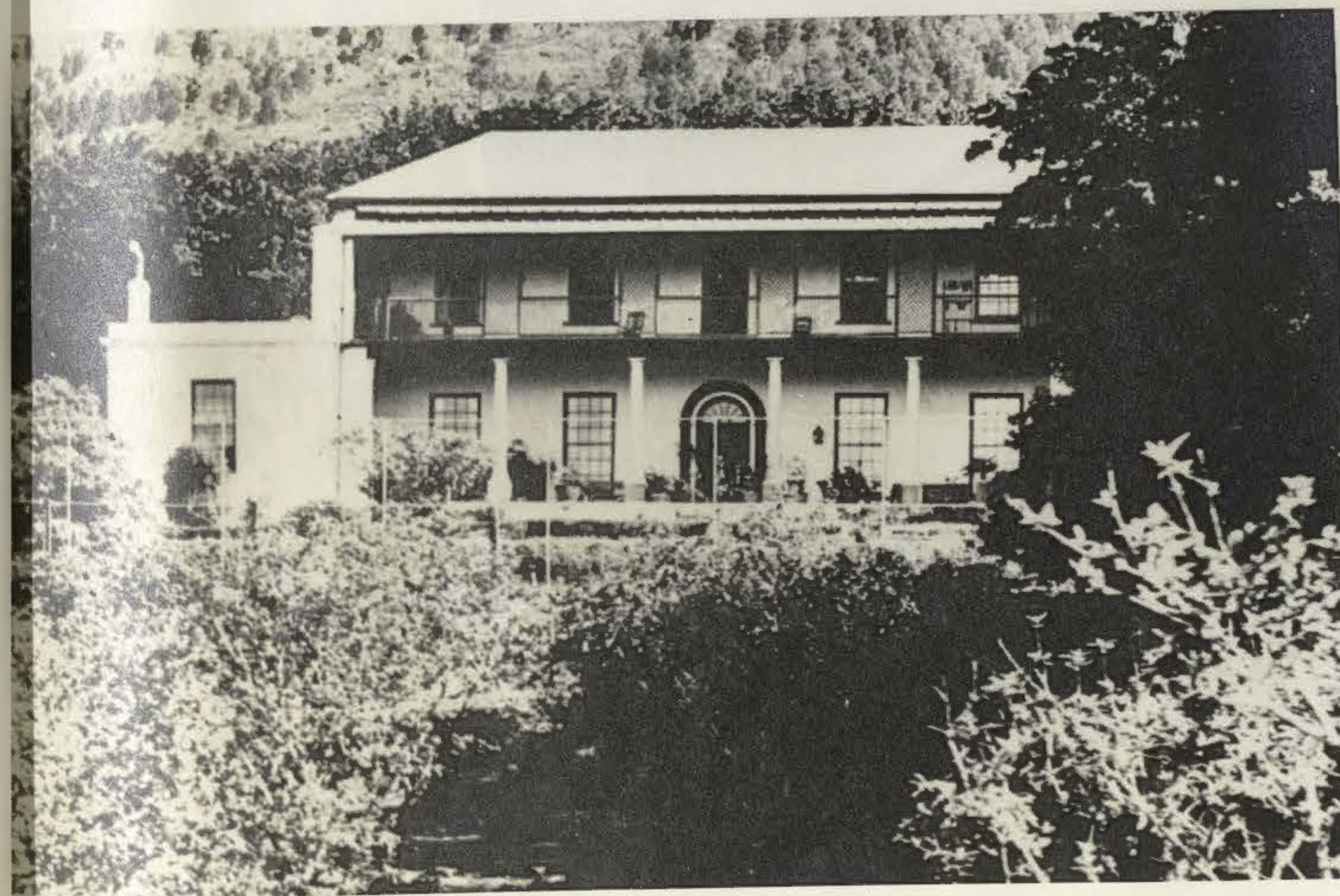
Verandas were also being increasingly used in exposed situations: 'Report on the houses built for the Government at Simonstown, March 6th, 1825: ... Another improvement seems necessary to secure the front from the effects of the rains... With this in view I would recommend the removal of two of the three projecting windows from the front thatch (and) extending this thatch a few feet forward in form of a veranda'.[1]

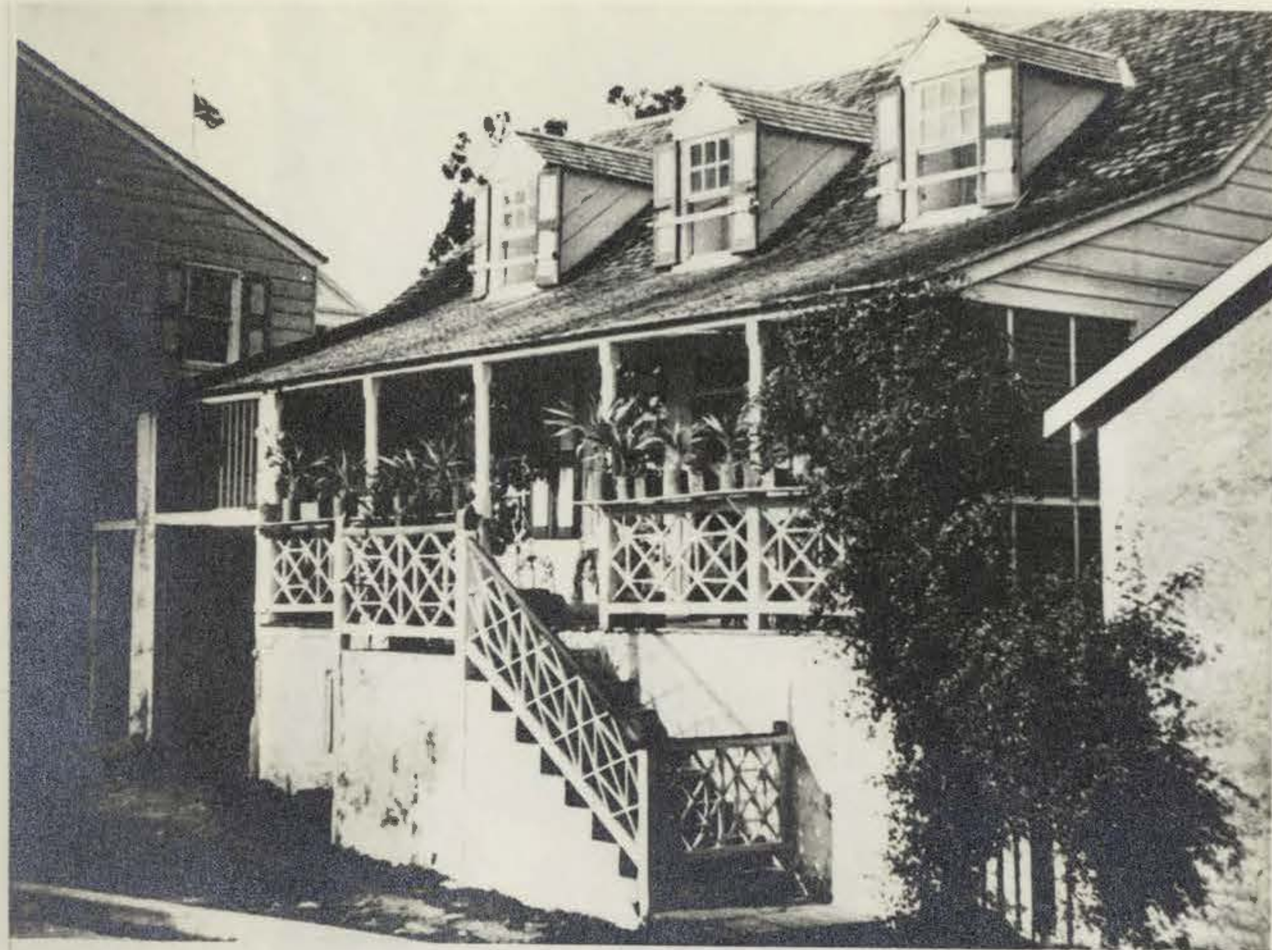
Dormer windows were continually causing trouble because they were so difficult to waterproof in thatch. (cf. Chapter 7 Page 147). In areas where thatch persisted as a roofing material in preference to shingles (e.g. Paarl, Stellenbosch, Worcester, Swellendam, George etc.) three alternative methods of allowing light to reach the centre of the loft above the veranda roofs were adopted, all of which were practical and waterproof.

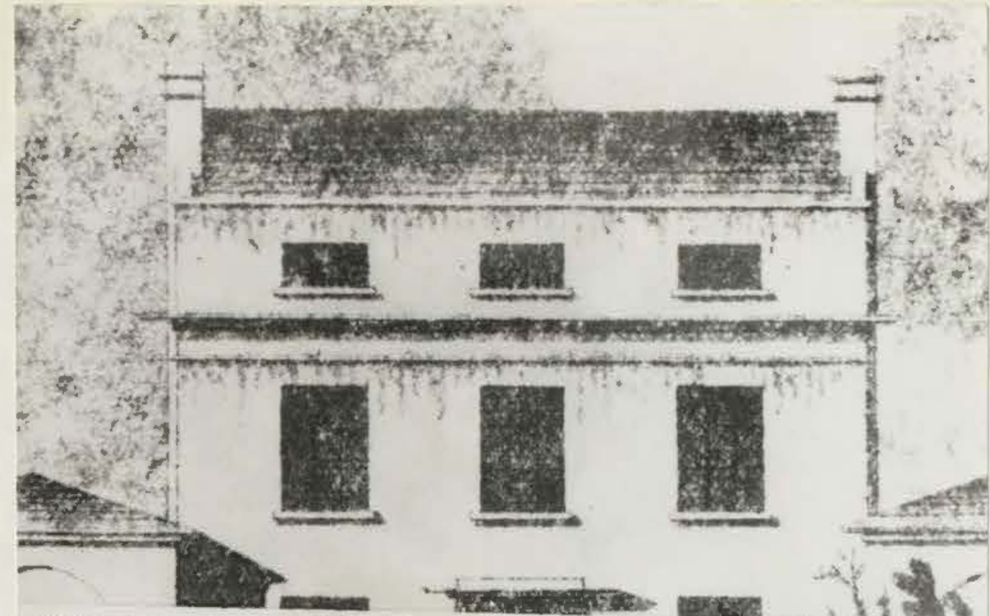
(a) The conservative method, which was frequently adopted, was by the erection of a gable over the centre of the facade following the eighteenth century pattern but with modified Neo-Classicist or Gothic embellishment (Plate 59 on page 232).

Opposite:

55. Veranda in Cape Town. Drawing by Sir Charles D'Oyley dated 11th May, 1832. (Cape Archives).
56. House in New Providence, Nassau, Bahamas, third quarter of 18th c.
57. 'Oranjezicht', Cape Town. A light latticework upper veranda of the Government House type. (Elliott).
58. 'The Deanery' Orange Street, Cape Town.







The influence of the veranda on traditional architecture:

59. A late example of the centre-gable in Paarl.

60. Typical houses in the Swellendam district; an example from Heidelberg.

62,63. Attic windows instead of gables to ventilate the loft; houses in Paarl.

61. Palladian attic storey from Plaw's 'Rural Architecture', London,1785, 1804, &c.

1. Exactly the same development took place in the American colonies after the introduction of the veranda there in the mid-eighteenth century. (H.D. Eberlein 'The Architecture of Colonial America'. Boston, 1925, 30).

64. 'Oatlands', Grahamstown. Interior of the (mid-Victorian) veranda.

(b) A more fashionable method, after the advent of the veranda with its long horizontal lines (which tended to spoil the effect of central gables) was the introduction of a row of attic windows above the veranda roof. This was widespread in its applications after the veranda was accepted in the country districts,[1] (c. 1825). (Plates 61, 62 & 63).

(c) In the Swellendam and George districts, a third treatment was especially characteristic. In this type the centre part of the thatch was raised in a low sweeping convex line to allow the insertion of a single long fanlight, usually of the segmental radiating kind, over the veranda roof. (Plate[illegible] 60).

In the centre of Cape Town more and more stoeps were being covered in. The simplest way in which this could be done was by the erection of a light iron framework for stretched canvas which created the characteristic tent-like shape often copied in roofs of more permanent materials. (Plate 68). Many of the early verandas (such as that of the 'Masonic Hotel' in Darling Street) were so extremely light in their construction and so elegant in their simplicity that they look quite modern to eyes attuned to contemporary architecture (Plate 65). Others of the same period, with the elaborate Chinese patterning then fashionable ('the Old Deanery' Plate 58, is a fine example) belong unmistakably to the early nineteenth century. The flowered veranda, the trellised balustrade, colonnades with filigree tracery hanging between them - covered with ivy and climbing creepers it will be observed, even in

OPPOSITE:

65. Masonic Hotel, Darling Street, Cape Town. (a delicate tent-like zinc veranda roof on light pipe supports).

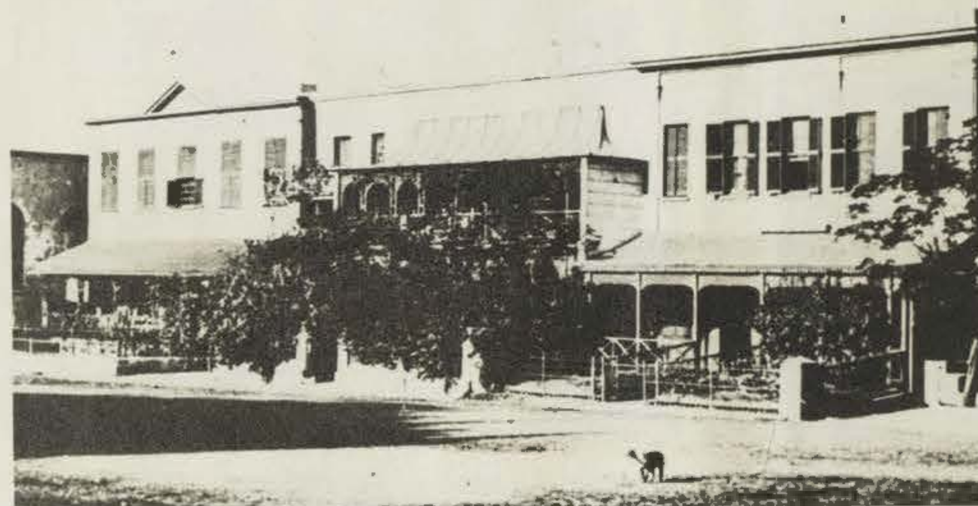
66. House in Windsor, New South Wales, Australia. c.1810-20.

67. Verandas in Church Square, Cape Town. Photo taken 1850-60. Note the climbing creepers and small enclosed gardens cut out from the area of Church Square. (Elliott).

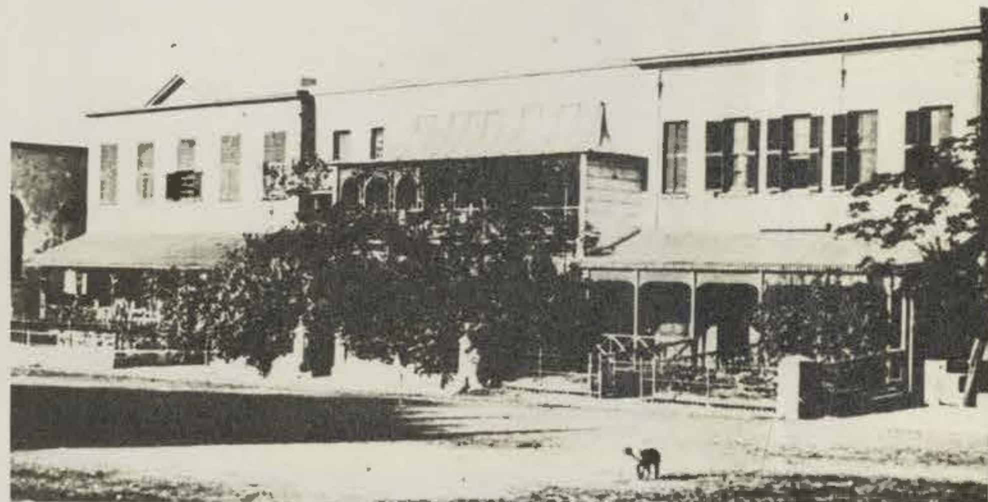
68. St. George's Hotel, St. George's St., Cape Town. (retouched to suggest original canvas covering to the veranda framework). (S.A.P.L.).

69. Villa in Wynberg. Note the trimmed hanging canvas pattern reproduced in the wooden bargeboard.

70. House in Port Elizabeth, converted into the Post Office by the time this photo was taken in the sixties. (Africana Museum).



MASONIC HOTEL



St GEORGE'S HOTEL.

W. BELDON.
WHOLESALE & RETAIL
POST OFFICE.

1. True fretwork begins to be found only after the machine for cutting it was invented in America in the late 1840's. It was mass produced according to standard patterns which could be chosen from published pattern books. The most elaborate were afterwards imported into South Africa from America and Scandinavia.

71,72. 'Northdene', Natal, 1890.

Adderley Street (Plate 55) - these are the ingredients of the new style, which brought a reconciliation between 'Art' and 'Nature' and carried the French window (and its associations with open air life) into the heart of the city.

In 1798 James Malton's 'Essay on the British Cottage' has much to say about 'the rude orders of Hindustan' influencing British taste. Indian influence is visible at the Cape in some of the arched shapes (like those of the flattened ogee arch of the 'Old Deanery') and in the patterning of barge-boards. Moorish, Turkish and Gothic forms also crop up frequently in veranda design. Later woodwork patterns are based on the traditional timber architecture of Scandinavia, Bavaria and Switzerland, and are the result of the extensive travel on the continent then fashionable for the well-bred Englishman.[1]

In out-lying areas (such as Wynberg, the country districts and eastern Cape towns) verandas had at first a charming restraint in ornament (Plates 67 & 70). As the Victorian era approached, even these regions could not escape the growing taste for ostentatious and unnecessary decoration for which the veranda provided the ideal vehicle. But at its best (Plate 64) the mid-nineteenth century veranda was a triumph of controlled pattern, filtered light and dappled shadow. Eventually it came to be such an integral part of the South African scene that today it would be inconceivable for us to imagine nineteenth century architecture without it. On the farms it gave rise to the typical post-trek farmhouse-encircled (or at least fronted and backed) by low lean-to roofs; in the towns it blossomed forth in tier upon tier of colonnades and lace-like tracery.

NINE :

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE EIGHTEEN TWENTY SETTLERS -
(1) FARMHOUSES.

1. Thatched cottage, St. Donats, Glamorgan, Great Britain.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE EIGHTEEN TWENTY SETTLERS - (1) FARMHOUSES.

PHASE I : 1820 - 1823.

During the first half of 1820 the Eastern Cape was transformed by the arrival and settlement, over a widespread area, of between 4,000 and 5,000 assisted emigrants from the British Isles.

In Britain the Napoleonic Wars had had the effect of quickening the pace of the Industrial Revolution. When the Wars came to an end there was an attendant drop in the demand for manufactured goods and this, coupled with the return of thousands of soldiers to civilian life, led to a serious economic depression.

The Home Government was therefore in no mood for the expenses of the cam-

1. Some idea of the history of the area in which the new British emigrants were to be settled and of the frequency of the native raids may be gained from the following:-

In 1793 an overwhelming horde of natives swept across the limits of white settlement as far as the Zwartkops River near the site of Port Elizabeth , almost completely wiping out the farmers and their families. Of the 120 farms that had existed in the area, 116 were subsequently left without tenants or completely abandoned.(Cory.'The Rise of South Africa.' 5 vols.London 1910-30.I,74).

In 1799 the Xosa invaded the area even further west (as far as the Gamtoos) and twentynine people were killed. Only a handful of houses were left standing and nearly all the horses, cattle and sheep were stolen. (Theal, 'History of South Africa etc. 1795-1834'.London,1891.45).

In 1802 marauding Hottentots, pushed in front of the Xosas, laid waste all the farms as far west as the Kaaiman's River, near the present village of George.

In 1804 Commissioner-General de Mist travelled to the east to review the situation and was horrified by the number of empty farmhouses in various stages of demolition, with their gardens destroyed-'sad records of the ruinous visitations of both Kaffirs and Bushmen.' (Cory, I,136).

In 1810 almost every farm east of Uitenhage had to be abandoned, the people moving to new locations further west. As soon as the places were vacated the natives seem to have plundered all the moveable material and set fire to thatched roofs (Ibid,225).

In 1811 the Landdrost of Uitenhage reported that there was only one farm still occupied east of the Drostdy (Theal,156).

In 1816 further raids began. The Governor reported (April 1817) that '...of 145 families which have been established in Albany, ninety have been forced in the last eighteen months to abandon their dwellings', and it was probably (terror was so general) the remainder should shortly fly.(Cory,I,303).

In December 1818 Ndlambe at the head of an organised invasion force, drove as far as the Sundays River. Seventeen white people and four Hottentots were murdered.(Theal 'History of S.A. since 1795,I,276) London,1908.

2. 12 July, 1819. Motion by the Chancellor of the Exchequer passed by the House of Commons for a sum not exceeding £50,000 to be spent on assisted emigration to the Cape of Good Hope (G.M.Theal. 'Records of the Cape Colony,1793-1831.36vols,X11,250-253, 259-262).

3. £10 deposit for each family unit of man, wife and two children. Another £2.10.0 was required for each additional child under 14 and £5 for each additional person between 14 and 18 years.

paigns against the natives on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, in the years following Waterloo. British troops had already had to be used several times to suppress the incursions of the Kaffirs across the Great Fish River. Yet as soon as the natives sensed that the strong armed-force had been withdrawn they once more began raiding the frontier farms, burning dozens of thatched homesteads to the ground, murdering their inhabitants, and returning to Kaffirland driving thousands of stolen cattle before them.[1] In 1819 there was even a concerted attack on the military headquarters at Grahamstown which was repulsed only with great difficulty.

By this time the British Government had been brought to the belief that widespread colonization of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape by colonists who were known to be loyal would lead not only to the greater security of the Colony, a reduction in military expenditure, and the satisfaction of the demand which then existed for farm labourers and craftsmen, but would also assist in the relief of unemployment at home.

Accordingly, they instituted in 1819 a policy of state-aided emigration to the Cape, followed in July by the vote of £50,000 by the House of Commons from which the passages and initial provisions for an experimental settlement could be defrayed.[2]

The terms offered to the emigrants were to be conditional upon their laying down a deposit of £10 for each family,[3] of which one third would be returned on their landing at the Cape, another third on their arrival at their allotted location, and the remainder three months afterwards. The passage and provisions of the voyage to the Cape were to be free. Each adult man was to be allocated, on his arrival, one hundred acres of land at

1. Three years' residence on his location would entitle the settler to receive permanent title to his land, at a quitrent not exceeding £2.10.0 per hundred acres.

2. The figures quoted are the most accurate available, but may well be wrong, for some of the lists are incomplete and the records often conflicting. (cf. Una Long: 'Goldswain's Diary', I, Van Riebeeck Society pulications 27, Cape Town, 1946. Note, p.1).

2. 'The Cottage Fireside' c.1800. W.R. Bigg. R.A.

a quitrent which was to be remitted for the first ten years.[1]

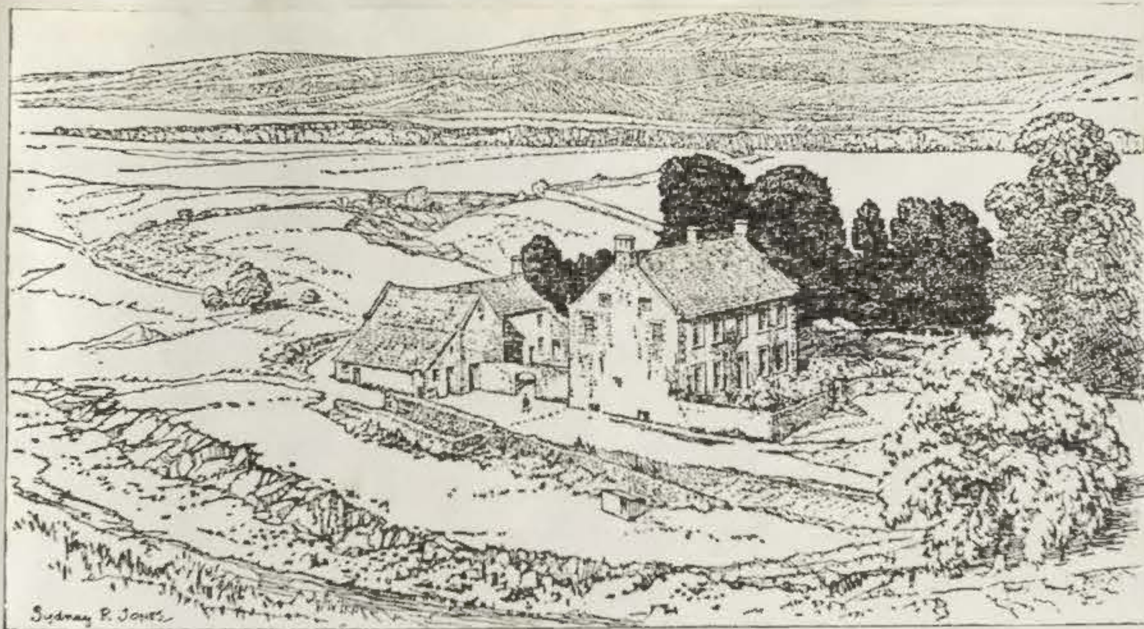
The publication of the immigration scheme was attended in the popular press by the most wild and fanciful exaggerations of the fertility of the countryside and of the ease with which a livelihood was to be obtained, and warning voices (such as that of Cruikshank, in a celebrated series of cartoons) were soon drowned in the clamour of public approval. The immigration officers found themselves deluged with applications for free passages to this new Garden of Eden. Some 90,000 enquiries poured into the Colonial Office, a number far in excess of that anticipated, or practical. Only a relatively small proportion of the applicants were accepted under the scheme.

The British Government favoured the settlers banding themselves together in large parties each under the leadership of one responsible man, and in order to encourage this they announced that any hundred families of one religious denomination would be allowed to take with them a Minister, whose expenses and salary would be the responsibility of the Government.

The Settlers sailed in the winter of 1819-20, in twenty-four ships. They numbered about 4,500 in all, 24 from Scotland, 334 from Ireland, 682 from the North of England and Wales, and the remainder from the South of England and the area round London.[2]

The Governor at the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, was on leave in England when the settlers arrived. It was left to the Acting-Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, to carry out his policy, and to welcome the settlers, a task he performed with the greatest enthusiasm.

The description by Thomas Pringle of the scene at the embryonic village of Port Elizabeth, soon after the disembarkation, gives some idea of the varied background of the settlers. It bears witness also to the straits of the British



3. Moorland House, Lee, North Lancashire.

middle class at that time. Many of the leaders of parties were military officers of quite high rank, whom the cessation of war had left without any means of livelihood. Others were one-time prosperous farmers and squires who had been badly hit by the Industrial Revolution, yet had managed to bring their farm-workers and servants with them:

'... I then strolled along the beach to survey more closely the camp of the settlers, which had looked so picturesque from the sea. On my way I passed two or three marquees, pitched apart, among the evergreen bushes which were scattered between the sandhills and the heights behind. These were the encampments of some of the higher class of settlers, and evinced the taste of the occupants of the pleasant situations in which they were placed, and by the order and neatness of everything about them. Ladies and gentlemen, elegantly dressed, were seated in some of them with books in their hands; others were rambling among the shrubbery and over the little eminences, looking down upon the bustling beach and bay. One or two handsome carriages were standing in the open air, exhibiting some tokens of aristocratic rank or pretension in the proprietors. It was obvious that several of these families had been accustomed to enjoy the luxurious accommodations of refined society in England. How far they had acted wisely in embarking their property and the happiness of their families in an enterprise like the present, and in leading their respective bands of adventurers to colonize the wilds of Southern Africa, were questions yet to be determined. Foreseeing, as I did in some degree (although certainly by no means to the full extent), the difficulties and privations inevitable in such circumstances, I could not view this class of emigrants, with their elegant arrangements and appliances, without some melancholy misgivings as to their future fate; for they appeared utterly unfitted by former habits, especially the females, for roughing it (to use the expressive phrasaeology of the camp) through the first trying period of the settlement.

'A little way beyond, I entered the Settlers' Camp. It consisted of several hundred tents, pitched in parallel rows or streets, and occupied by the middling and lower classes of emigrants. These consisted of various descriptions of people: and the air, aspect and array of their persons and temporary residences were equally various. There were respectable tradesmen and jolly farmers, with every appearance of substance and snug English comfort about them.

'There were watermen, fishermen, and sailors from the Thames and English seaports, with the reckless and weatherbeaten look usual in persons of their perilous and precarious professions. There were numerous groups of palevisaged artisans and operative manufacturers, from London and other large towns, of whom doubtless a certain proportion were persons of highly reputable character and steady habits, but a far larger portion were squalid in their aspect, slovenly in their attire and domestic arrangements, and discontented and discourteous in their demeanour. Lastly, there were parties of pauper agricultural labourers, sent out by the aid of their respective parishes, healthier perhaps than the class just mentioned, but not apparently happier in mind.'[1]

1. Thomas Pringle, 'Narrative of a Residence in South Africa' London, 1824,11.

1. R.Godlonton: 'Memorials of the British Settlers'. Grahamstown, 1844, xii.

2. Reminiscences of Mrs. Cawood, daughter of Wiliam Pike, 'Nottingham' party. Cory, 'Souvenir in commemoration of the centenary of the 1820 Settlers of Albany', Grahamstown, 1920, 47.

3. Reminiscences of Elijah Pike, brother of Mrs. Cawood. Ibid.

4. Colin Campbell: 'British South Africa'. London, 1897, 49.

5. C.O.132/65. 11th Nov.1820. et.seq. v.Chapter 10 Page 316

4. One-roomed Cottage, Cardiganshire.

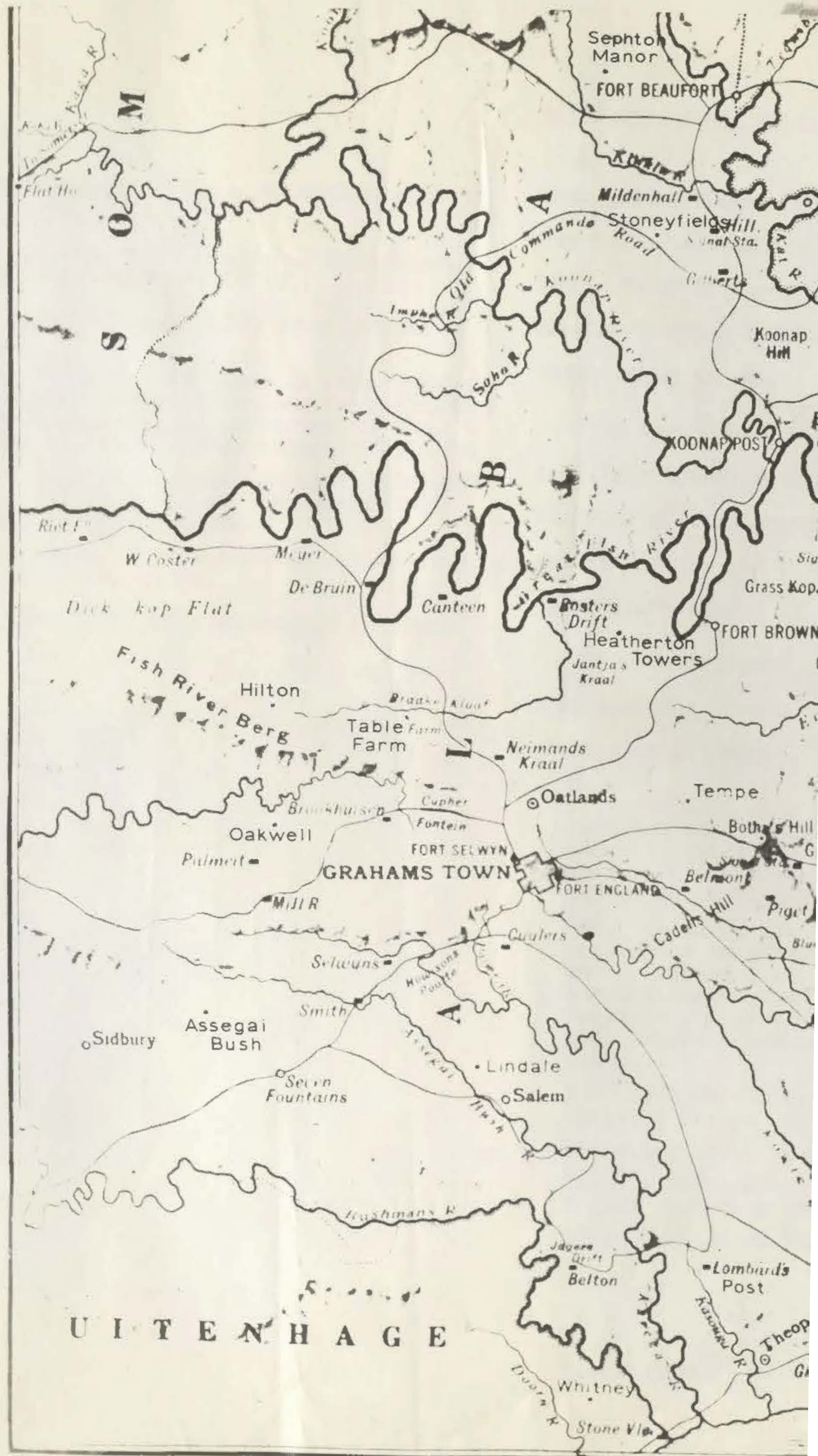
Within a week or two of their arrival the settlers were dispersing to their even more lonely locations inland. All their possessions had to be transported by Boer trek wagons, which, together with their owners as drivers, had been hired by the Government. Eventually, after travelling for as long as fourteen days, often forced to hew their way through virgin scrub with axes, they reached their destinations.

'Well does the writer remember the moment when the kind-hearted Dutch farmer - the owner of the wagon which conveyed him and his family to the spot intended for their future home - bade them, in a tone of mingled compassion and surprise, farewell - leaving them without the smallest shelter from the weather, with their luggage strewed upon the long grass, themselves friendless, unknowing and unknown...'[1]

'...While the waggons were being unloaded, promted by curiosity, I ran down to look at the small river which was near, and on my return found my mother sitting on a large box and crying. On asking her what was the matter, she said she was afraid, she thought the tigers and wolves would come that night and eat us up.'[2]

'We pitched our tents... It seemed very lonely to us when the waggons went away and left us all alone among the thorns and bushes...'[3]

In such circumstances the tents lent by the government seemed but the most meagre protection, and the immediate and urgent concern of settlers was the provision of some less flimsy form of shelter. Somerset had anticipated the difficulties the settlers might experience in endeavouring to build in a strange environment from his knowledge of the new settlements in North America. Accordingly he left instructions, before his departure for England, 'that to each party of settlers some intelligent soldiers or non-commissioned officers should be attached for the purpose of instructing them as to hutting, or otherwise providing the necessary covering for themselves and their families, and that some officers should have the general command and direction of persons so selected.'[4] But from the settlers' accounts we know that this was seldom, if ever, done. Wooden prefabricated huts were designed for the Settlers in England, and sent out with the immigrant ships,[5] but few references to suggest



4.A. Map of the Albany District, Eastern Cape Colony, showing the sites of the principal farms discussed in Chapter Nine.

Sephton Manor
FORT BEAUFORT
FORT HARE
Lovedale
FORT COX
FORT THOMPSON
Burns Hill
FORT WHITE
Mildenhall
Stoneyfields Hill
Howses
POST VICTORIA
Koonap Hill
Bothas Post
BOTHAS POST
KOONAP POST
TOMLINSON POST
FORT WILLSHIRE
Mission
Adams Heights
FORT MONTGOMERY WILLIAMS
Breakfast Vlei
Committees Hill
Grass Kop.
DOUBLE DRIFT
Somerset Mountain
De Bruin
Canteen
Fosters Drift
Heatherton Towers
FORT BROWN
COMMITTEES DRIFT
Dik kop Flat
Fish River Berg
Hilton
Table Farm
Neimands Kraal
TROMPETTERS DRIFT
Koodoo Kop
FORT PEDDIE
Oatlands
Tempe
Bothas Hill
Governors Kop
Frasers Camp
Oakwell
FORT SELWYN
GRAHAMS TOWN
FORT ENGLAND
Belmont
Cadells Hill
Waai Plaats
Sidbury
Assegai Bush
Lindale
Salem
Seven Fountains
New Bristol
Mt Donkin
CAWOODS POST
Old Post
Doorn Kop
Bathurst
Ft DACRE
Waterloo B.
Crauses B.
Tharfield
Thornhill
Greenfountains
Belton
Lombards Post
Theopolis
Baruille Park
Reit Fontein
Glendower
Port Frances
Whitney
Stone Vlei
Petty Font
UITENHAGE
Q U

1. A.Keppel-Jones. 'Philipps, 1820 Settler.' (Pietermaritzburg,1960) 85.

2. Manuscript in the possession of Miss Pigot Moodie of Melsetter, Rhodesia, 28th July, 1820, to 8th December. 1821.

3. Pringle:Letter to Sir Walter Scott, 22 Sept.1820 (Manuscript, National Library of Scotland.)

This type of house, closely related to the 'Kapsteilhuis', which probably dates back to the early eighteenth century in the west, was early used on the eastern frontier, and persisted in the early Voortrekker dwellings of the northern republics (Plate 7).

Walton 'Homes of the Early South African Stock Farmers' 'Africana Notes and News' VIII,No.2, 51-54. And Walton 'Homesteads and Villages of South Africa'.Pretoria,1952,50,92-5.

The name arises from the hard reeds, 'harde beisies' which were used in the construction of these buildings.

4. Extracts from Thomas Pringle 'Narrative of a Residence in South Africa', 40 - 43.

5. Charcoal Burner hut, South Yorkshire. A modern survival of a type of primitive dwelling common in medieval Europe.

that any were ever actually used by the Settlers on their locations survive. One is to be found in the passing remark of Thomas Philipps made in February 1821, 'Many of our neighbours are still in tents or wooden houses,'[1] and others in the diary of Sophia Pigot,[2] where it is evident that the Pigot family at first lived in one.

As the lack of tools and adequate preparation in most cases precluded the immediate erection of permanent structures, most of the settlers contented themselves for the time being with thatched shelters more or less after the native fashion, of a type then known on the frontier as 'hartebeest huts' or, correctly, 'hardbieshuisies.' (Plate 8)[3]

In the writings of Thomas Pringle we have an excellent and detailed description of the building of one of these huts in the first days after the arrival at a location:

> 'Monday, July 3rd.(1820). All hands mustered this morning to begin erecting our temporary huts...One party appointed to cut willow poles, another to cut reeds by the river, a third to carry the materials to the spot. Peter Rennie and myself left to guard the camp, for fear of a surprise from native banditti...Our camp alarmed by a lion at midnight.
>
> 4th. Continue our labours vigorously; but the want of cattle and wagons to convey the materials proves a great hindrance; the wood and reeds require to be carried two or three miles on men's shoulders. The necessity of keeping two sentinels all night is an additional hardship....Heavy clouds begin to collect above the mountains. Great apprehensions that the weather will break before our huts are ready. Our provisions are also getting short...
>
> July 10th and 11th. Working at our huts....A lion seen today by the reed-cutters; but he walked off quietly without attempting to molest them.
>
> 13th....Divided the garden ground and commenced cultivation.
>
> 14th....Our tents leaky, and far from comfortable. Several of the females rather seriously unwell.
>
> 15th. Pressed on the thatching of the huts.[4]

'...The site which I had selected for my residence was about 3 miles distant

6. Thomas Pringle's bee-hive hut. From the title page of the first edition of 'African Sketches', London, 1835.

7. Typical 'hartebeest' hut; from Backhouse's 'Narrative of a visit to the Mauritius and South Africa'. London,1844.

from my relatives on either side; Mr.Rennie being on the stream above me, and Captain Cameron below, with rocky heights and clumps of shrubbery intervening. I selected an open grassy meadow, with a steep mountain behind and the small river in front, bordered by willow trees and groves of thorny acacia. It was a beautiful and secluded spot; the encircling hills sprinkled over with evergreens, and the fertile meadow-ground clothed with rich pasture, and bounded by romantic cliffs covered with aloes and euphorbias. As the hut I was about to erect was only intended for a temporary residence, I adopted, with some variations, the mode practised by the natives in constructing their simple habitations. Drawing a circle on the ground of about eighteen feet in diameter, I planted upright round this circle, about twenty tall willow-poles; digging, with an old bayonet, holes in the ground, just large enough to receive their thicker ends. I planted a stouter pole exactly in the centre, & drawing together the tops of the others, I bound them firmly to this centre tree with thongs of quagga's hide. With the same ligature pliant spars or saplings were bound round the circle of poles, at suitable intervals, from bottom to top; and thus the wicker frame or skeleton of a cabin was completed, exactly in the shape of a bee-hive or sugar-loaf [Plate 6]. It was then thatched with reeds, the ends of the first layer being let about a couple of inches into the earth. Spaces were left for a door and a small window; but neither fireplace nor chimney formed part of our plan. A convenient door, to open in two halves, was soon constructed out of boards of some packing cases; and a yard of thin cotton cloth stretched upon a wooden frame formed a suitable window.

'With the assistance of my Hottentot servants I then proceeded to plaster the interior to a height of about 6 feet. The plaster was formed of fresh cow-dung mixed with an equal portion of sand, a composition almost universally in use in the interior of the Cape Colony, where lime is scarce and expensive, and where, from the dryness of the climate, this substitute serves for every ordinary purpose almost equally well. When the plaster was dry the whole was washed over with a sort of size, composed of pipe-clay and wood-ashes diluted with milk, forming a handsome and durable greyish stone colour.

'Thus secured externally, the next part was to lay a dry and firm floor below foot; and, in this, as in many other points, I thankfully received instruction from the Hottentots. Following their advice, I directed a dozen or two of large anthillocks, of which there were hundreds within view, to be broken up and brought into the hut, selecting those that had been previously pierced and sacked by the ant-eater ('aardvark') and which were generally destitute of inhabitants. This material, from having been apparently cemented by the insect architects with some glutinous substance, forms, when pounded and sprinkled with water, a strong adhesive mortar, which only requires to be well-kneaded with trampling feet for a few days in order to become a dry and compact pavement, almost as solid and impenetrable as stone or brick.[1]

'With the aid of my native assistants I had thus obtained a commodious African cabin, about eighteen feet in diameter, and nineteen feet high in the centre. In that serene and mild climate this was sufficient for shelter; but for comfort something more was necessary. Except cooking utensils, travelling-trunks and some cases of books, I had brought with me nothing in the shape of furniture; nor was it possible to procure any nearer than Graham's Town at the distance of 130 miles; and even then, such was the scarcity or the idleness of the mechanics, that one might probably be obliged

1. Rev. William Shaw tells us that the anthill floors of these early huts 'were kept in order by being often smeared over with a mixture of fresh cow-dung and water - a mode of securing clean and comfortable earthen floors...' 'Story of My Mission etc.' (London, 1860), 40.

Dr. Mackrill (of Somerset Farm) wrote of these floors, '...literally to make a House in Africa clean, you have only to beshit it all over with manure (Margaret Kannemeyer: 'Dr.Macrill's Notebook', 'Africana Notes and News', VIII, No.2., 1951).

8. Hut on the Duivehoks Rivier, Cape.

9. Hut at de Hoop, Ladybrand, O.F.S. Both illustrations from James Walton's 'Vroeë Plase en Nedersettings in die Oranje Vrystaat', Cape Town, 1955.

to wait twelve months for the execution of an order, besides paying an extragant price for very common articles. Luckily I had brought out a small assortment of carpenter's tools, and was not altogether unacquainted with the use of them, for I had been, when a boy, particularly fond of observing mechanics at work, and of amusing myself by cabinet-making on a small scale.

'Diligently applying myself to the use of hatchet, saw & augur, and stimulated by necessity, "the mother of invention", I contrived, in the course of a few weeks, to have my little cabin commodiously and completely furnished. Firstly, I partitioned off the outer apartment a small bed-room, so contrived, that, by drawing a curtain or two, it could be lighted and ventilated at pleasure. In this I constructed a bedstead; the frame being formed of stout poles of wild olive from a neighbouring thicket, with the smooth shining bark left on them; and the bottom to support the mattress, consisting of a strong elastic network of thongs of bullock's or quagga's hide interlaced. With similar materials I made a sofa for the outside apartment, which also served occasionally for a sleeping couch; together with the frame of a table, (the top being of yellow-wood plank,) a few forms and stools; and lastly an arm chair, which I considered by chef d'oeuvre. Not one of these, excepting the table, had the touch of a plane upon it. But they looked nothing the worse for that; and the cabin and its rude furniture had something of the aspect of a rustic summer house or grotto. My books, ranged high on a frame of spars over the bedroom, with a couple of fire-locks slung in front, a lion's and leopard's skin or two stretched along the thatch above, with horns of antelopes and other country spoils interspersed, completed the appropriate decorations of my African cabin.

'A few huts, of similar but still ruder construction, were erected behind my own for the accommodation of my native domestics and herdsmen, and for a store-room and kitchen. When these and the folds for the flocks and herds were finished, the establishment was considered, for the time, complete.'[1]

Besides the circular beehive huts of the type described by Pringle, 'Hartebeest Huts' were also commonly built which were rectangular in plan, 'that is a kind of thatched roof standing on the ground with the ends closed'.[2] Such houses often had doors of rough wickerwork, and only a few small openings to admit light and air. Internal partitions were simply made of rush mats suspended from the beams.[3]

At the lowest end of the scale were temporary shelters such as those described in after years by the Rev. William Shaw, made by settlers 'digging out holes, and burrowing in the ground, and placing a slight covering over their excavation, while others again filled up interstices between perpendicular rocks,

1. Thomas Pringle: Article 'A Settler's Cabin in South Africa' from 'The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge'. London, 1833, 282-3.
2. Cory 'Rise of South Africa', IV, 355.
3. cf. Thompson 'Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa' 2 vols. (London, 1827), I,11 etc.

and thus obtained very substantial, but rather cold and uncomfortable quarters.'[1]

Dugmore speaks of 'A young brotherhood of batchelors' who 'built for themselves a booth of leafy branches, after the manner of the Israelites of old. An economist of materials dug his house out of the bank of a river.'[2]

Every encouragement was given to the settlers to provide more permanent dwellings for themselves. On May 24th, 1820, circular letters had been issued giving them permission, during the ensuing twelve months, to cut any wood or thatch which they might require for building purposes.[3] While many contented themselves with buildings of the most temporary sort, like those described above, until fire, flood or decay forced them to consider something more substantial, many other settlers attempted to erect permanent dwellings from the beginning, with varying degrees of success.

The indigenous methods of construction among the frontier 'boers' generally took three forms. Roofs were almost invariably of thatch, but walls might be built up of wattle and daub, superimposed layers of mud,[4] or of stone.

All of these constructional methods were used in parts of Britain, and all were among those adopted by the settlers, although a preference for one or another might depend as much upon the availability of materials on the location as upon local building practice in the country of origin.

The Boer farmhouse on the frontier, as described by George Thompson at the time of the arrival of the British Settlers 'resembles a large barn divided into two or three apartments. One of these is the kitchen, which also

1. William Shaw 'Story of My Mission'. Page 42.

2. Dugmore. 'Reminiscences of an Albany Settler', (London 1871),11.
The reader may wonder that mention is seldom made of the use of native or coloured labour for building. In fact the settlers were prohibited from employing slaves under an order of the Colonial Secretary's; meanwhile 'Hottentots were not to be had' according to Theal ('History of S.A. since 1795', I, 313); and no natives were at that time settled within the frontier. 'The chief complaint of the settlers who remained on the locations was the want of labourers' (Ibid,330).

3. Cory, II, 53.

4. 'The process of making walls of this kind (i.e. of mud) is extremely simple, though not expeditious; and can only be practicable where earth of a suitable quality is found. This, if too clayey, shrinks and cracks: and, if not sufficiently so, crumbles and moulders away: but, with a good proportion of sand or grit, added to some ferruginous particles, it forms a wall not much less durable than those which are built of bricks. For this purpose, it is made into a mud, which must be well tempered, and sufficiently thick to remain in layers of about a foot in thickness, without falling out of shape. No kind of mould or form is used in this process; but the earth is merely laid on with a spade, and, when half dry, the sides are pared smooth. When one layer is perfectly dry, but not sooner, another layer is laid on; and thus, from time to time repeating the operation, the wall may be carried up, to the height of a second storey, while, at the same time, the thickness for supporting that weight need not be greater than one-half more than is generally requisite for a brick wall of the same height. These operations can only be carried on in the dry season of the year. Such materials, it may be remarked, cannot be used with advantage in climates where the thermometer sinks much below the freezing point; as alternate rain, frost, and thaw, would occasion a wall of this sort to crumble away in a little time. When such buildings are white-washed, which I have often observed in other parts of the colony, they look very neat, and are not easily to be distinguished from those which are made of bricks and stuccoed.'
W.Burchell; 'Travels etc.', 2 vols. (London,1822-4) I, (Entry of 14th April,1811),87-88.

10. Cottage at Skebost, Isle of Skye.

serves for the sitting and eating apartment. In the others the family slept; while, in the outer one...visitors and travellers are accommodated with a rush mat, a feather bed, and a coverlet spread on the clay floor...'.[1]

Another type of frontier Boer farmhouse, described by Burchell in 1811 (Plate 11) had the kitchen separated from the main house, which he described as a small oblong low hut built of rough bits of rock; rudely thatched with reed and sedge; having no windows, excepting one small opening covered with white linen, instead of glass; and the doorway but half closed with a clumsy panel of reeds.[2] The inside corresponded exactly with the exterior, and was divided into two apartments, serving for sitting-room and bed-room, which last was also the store-room. No other furniture was to be seen than a table and three chairs, or rather stools. Near to this hut were two outbuildings which at a little distance might be mistaken for hay-cocks; one of them was the store-house or barn, as it might be considered, and the other the kitchen. In this the fire was made in the middle, on the ground; and the smoke escaped either out at the door, or through the ill-thatched roof. Every part of the hut within was stained like ebony, of a glossy jet-black, the effect of long-continued wood smoke. At a little distance from the building, or on the werf, as the space immediately surrounding a colonist's dwelling, is termed, was a very large sheep-folded, hedged round with branches of Karro-thorn....'[3]

Elsewhere Burchell remarks that the above forms a typical description, but observes other types; in some 'the rooms in the principle house being... three (i.e. one in the middle in which the family sit and take their meals, and a bedroom at each end)...[4] while in others 'the whole house formed but a single room; and in this a large fireplace at one end served for kitchen, where slaves, and some Hottentot maids, sat within the chimney, cooking both for the company and for themselves. At the other end a screen of mats parted off a

1. Thompson's 'Travels', I, 82-3. Thompson is referring specifically to farmhouses 'in the Sneeuwberg, and in most of the colder districts of the Colony,' but I have not been able to establish any substantial difference between the descriptions of Thompson and Burchell and what we know of Boer farmhouses in the Albany district.

2. The settler Thomas Philipps observes that the frontier Boers used the excuse that 'the Kaffirs might return and force the family to quit' as a justification 'for not building good Houses.' (Keppel-Jones 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 183).

3. W.Burchell 'Travels', I, 169-70.
In the small frontier farmhouses cooking was done in the open air, behind a simple screen shelter, or 'skerm'.
c.f. Walton: 'Homesteads & Villages of S.A.' 95.

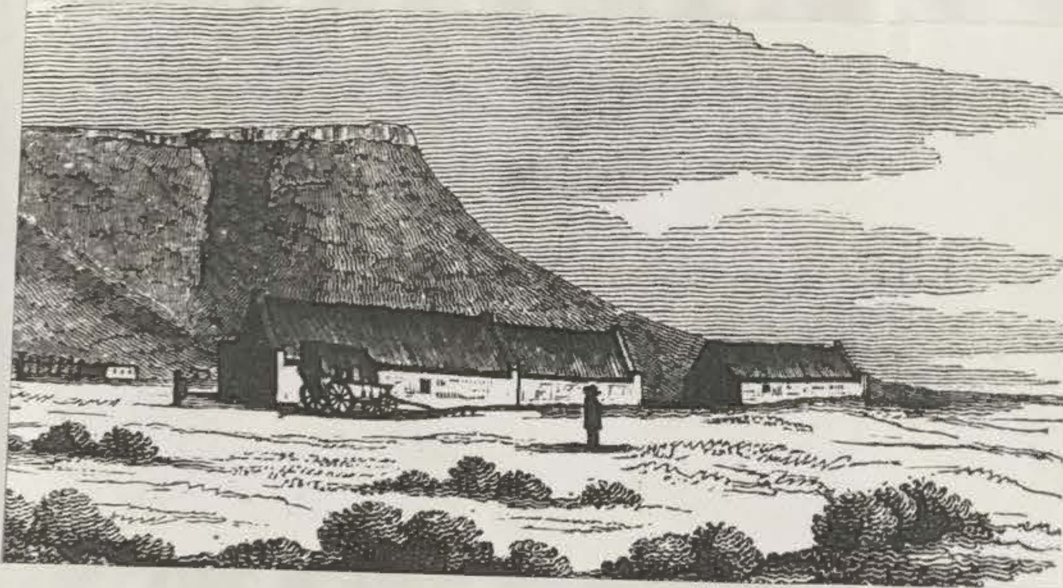
4. W.Burchell 'Travels' I, 169-70.

11. 'Boer' house in the Roggeveld-Karroo in 1811

(from Burchell's 'Travels').

1. Ibid, 87-8. Entry of 20th March, 1812. That this was really typical of the frontier farmhouses at the time of the arrival of the settlers may be confirmed by reference to Thomas Philipps description, which, though shorter, parallels Burchell's so closely that it might be of the same building.
   (Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 56). Single room dwellings were still a common-place in the country districts of Europe at this time. In Graaff Reinet and Uitenhage districts surviving buildings suggest that early farmhouses were sometimes built at one end of the barn or wagon house. c.f.Walton, 60.

2. Una Long 'Goldswain's Chronicle', I, 21.



12. 'Boer' house in the Sneeuwbergen in 1811 (from Burchell's 'Travels').

13. 'Kruis River' near Port Elizabeth. c.1790-1800.

bedroom for the female part of the family; while a few blankets or mats on the floor, between the supper table and the fire, formed the only sleeping place for the ... young men, and for any casual visitors.'[1]

The above descriptions are important to us not merely for their value in indicating the type of local precedent which the settlers were bound to observe, and which doubtless had repercussions on their ideas of what would be most suitable for the local conditions in erecting their own permanent habitations; even more significant is that fact that a number of the settlers had the good fortune to find the ruins of old Boer farmhouses on their allotted locations, dating in some instances as far back as 1790, but in nearly all cases now only blackened burnt-out shells serving as grim reminders of the insecurity of frontier life.

Some of the ruined farmhouses, never very pretentious, had been built of wattle and daub, and were, of course, beyond repair. Jeremiah Goldswain describes seeing such a ruin on first arriving at William Wait's location: 'This had been a Dutch farmers place: thear ware meney of the postes of the Cattle Kraal still standing and the postes of the dweling House: they ware more or less burnt but we did not know the meaning of them been burnt at that time but we found out afterwards that the Kaffers had merderd they farmer and all his famley and had taken a way all his Cattle.' [2]

Those fortunate settlers who found the stone or layered earth walls of earlier buildings on their properties set to work with a will, reconstructing the roofs with timber hewn from nearby kloofs, rethatching and closing in the gaps where once there had been windows and doors, and in a short time restorin the houses to something of their former comfort, and of course, with the origi

14. 'Table Farm' near Grahamstown.
A reconstructed Boer dwelling.
Painting by Thomas Baines.
Africana Museum.

nal plan arrangements.

Within the first months of the arrival of the settlers these widely scattered and hastily repaired Boer farmhouses formed the finest dwellings in the whole district, outside of the towns, and in their turn served as models for at least a few of the new farm buildings. [1]

'My chief study was now to build a House,' wrote Thomas Phillips, 'we had two wet days which sickened us of tents, after various plans of temporary Huts of Wattling to be plaistered all over which is the general one, I examined the old Walls, part were perfect, and I soon decided on building them up.[2] The common earth well-watered makes a most excellent mortar, wonderfully adhesive, a layer about a foot deep is made all round and the Sun and the Wind dries it so fast, that by the time the last layer is finished the first is dry... My Carpenters are busy cutting timber for the Roof and the rest cutting Rushes for thatching, they grow very long, above six feet.... In a fortnight's time it was so covered that I talked about going down to the Bay.' [3] Philipps then returned to Port Elizabeth and brought back with him his wife and family:
'My dear Wife hung on my arm, and when the roof of our humble cottage first appeared in view,... I was well rallied for my description of the cottage by all. The comparison I had made with the one at Assegai Bush made it appear so superior, but it is really a neat tasty building, and my men being well accustomed to thatch, it is done exceedingly well. Edward found a stone-coloured clay with which he had the walls washed. Altogether it was so much better than when I had left it that I was deceived myself.... I have the best House in the Colony of Emigrants amidst 3,000 acres.' [4]
February 16th, 1821: 'The House is still in the same state, no additions excepting a Kitchen, no improvements as yet, nor is the permanent house begun, but our cottage is so comfortable and so secure from the rain and the winds

1. We must not presume that these Boer farmhouses had originally been well-built. Philipps (Keppel-Jones:'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 183) mentions that the Boers on the frontier used the 'excuse for not building good Houses' that 'the Kaffirs might return and force the family to quit.'

2. The walls were part of the house of 'Baron' de Linderque, built c.1785. It had been blown up in a gunpowder accident, re-occupied, then burnt by the Kaffirs.

3. 'Philipps, 1820 Settlers' (ed. Keppel-Jones) 15th May, 1820, 54.

4. Ibid, 64. The farm 'Lampeter' still bears its original name but the house has disappeared.

15. Cob and thatch houses in Minehead Old Village, Somerset, England.

that we do not find it necessary to have any immediate change. Many of our neighbours are still in tents or Wooden Houses. It is built of mud walls, as a barn would be with you, only the windows are large and airy - I have no glass, but pannels which pull up and down, when the wind blows too roughly they are closed on that side, and sufficient light is admitted by the others. In the centre of our sitting-room is a long table made of sneeze wood, which admits of a high polish;... on each side are two long forms of the same wood - Mrs. P. and myself sit at the ends on stools... The roof is covered with rush which grow here remarkably long and large, under this is a slight species of bamboo reed, and by way of Wadding the couples, an immense large and neat mat is spread the whole length. The bedroom is partitioned off with sawed boards and our bookcase covers one half of it, the pianoforte under it, on one side is a comfortable little stove, the chimney pipe goes out through the wall, and is safe from setting fire to the thatch, the sofa stands near this on the opposite side of the wall, the whole of which is coloured with a stone colour resembling paint. On the left as you enter is the kitchen very large and partitioned off by a mud wall, the fireplace built regularly of stone, on one side a boiler, and the other an oven - this I have done to avoid fire for the loss from this destructive element has been very great;... on one side of our tiny cottage but not adjoining to it, stands the Men's House, very comfortable indeed, they have a fireplace but they dine in the Kitchen... In this mansion we all live as comfortably as if we had 20 rooms in England. Such is the difference of climate a House is not the same necessity, it is only wanted for sleeping in...'[1]

Reconditioned Boer buildings also included the houses at 'Table Farm' (Plate 14), 'Burnt Kraal', 'Cypherfontein', 'Assegai Bush' etc., and the house

1.'Philipps. 1820 Settler' (ed.Keppel-Jones), 85 et seq.

which was used as the first church at Salem.[1] Most of these had walls of either layered mud or rough stone laid in mud mortar, and earthen floors. For, as Burchell remarked a few years before '...the force of custom and habit is remarkably exemplified by the fact, that even those boors, who dwell in the vicinity of the forests, still prefer an earthen to a boarded floor....'[2]

It is interesting to note that there were also a small number of houses in the district which had been erected in the previous decade by British Army officers stationed on outlying forts. Several grants of ground had been made to such men, generally as a reward for devotion to duty, and in some cases their wives had even been brought up to live with them. Thus Rev. John Campbell, describing a visit to the frontier in 1813, mentions 'Lombard's Fort, commanded by Lieutenants Gare and Laycock, whose Lady was the first I had seen in the district... Lt. Sutherland's post...his house not being finished, he lived in a comfortable tent...'[3] Sophia Pigot describes the home of Lieut. Saunders in June 1820 as being a 'very comfortable house, more like England.'[4]

Houses which were entirely built by the settlers in the early months after their arrival, and which may have been influenced wholly or in part by the boer farmhouses included the farm 'Glen Hope' near Bathurst, built of mud blocks and 'pise de terre', and the Rev. William Boardman's farmhouse, 'Pinedon', built of layered earth.

The great majority of those settlers who desired to have permanent houses in the first months after their unceremonious deposition on their locations were not so fortunate as to find ruined buildings there before them. They had perforce to use what ingenuity and building knowledge they could muster - and the latter was often sparse enough. Many mistakes were made, especially by

1. Others included Daniel Mills' house on the Kasouga (Campbell, 'British South Africa', 214).
2. Burchell 'Travels' Entry of 12th April, 1812.
3. J.Campbell 'Travels in South Africa' London, 1815.
4. Manuscript Diary in possession of Miss Pigot-Moodie. Wed.21st June.

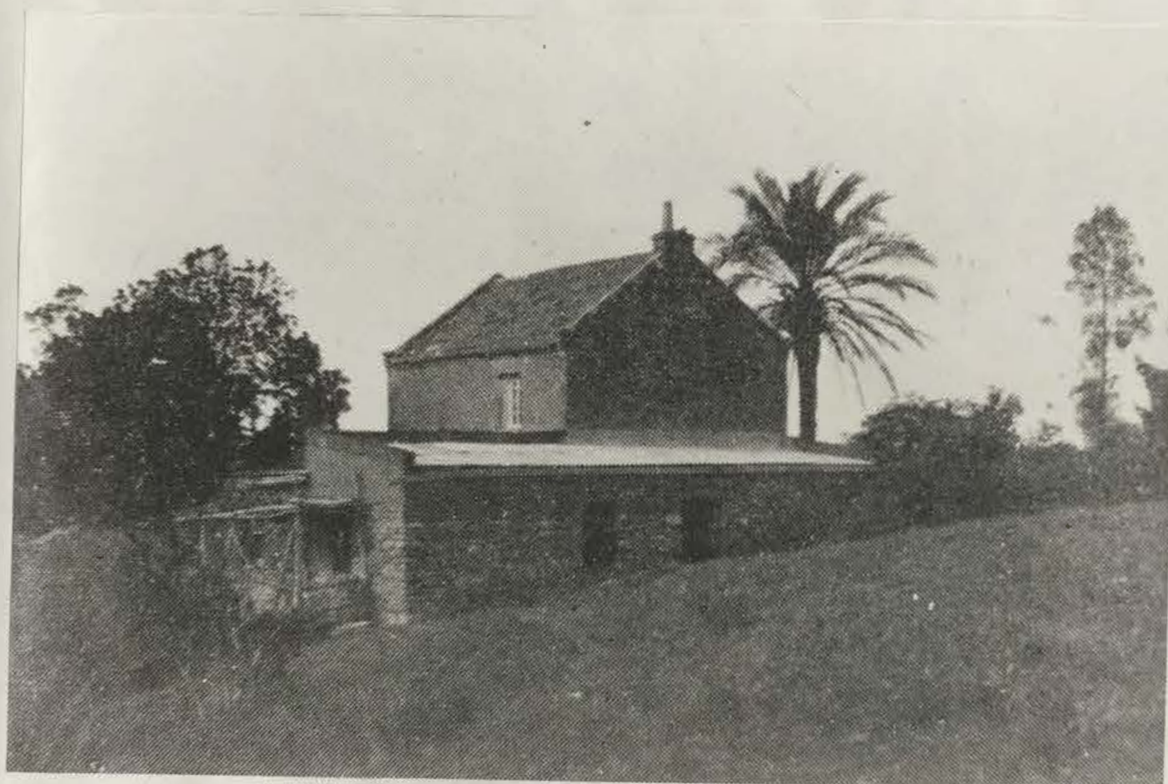
16. English mediaeval cooking fireplace, Stratford-on-Avon.
17. 'Swanston' near Edinburgh, Scotland.

1. C.O. 165/102.

2. Cory 'Rise of South Africa' II, 53 and 58. 'Stone and brick were among the visions of an advanced order of things belonging to the future.' (Dugmore, 'An Albany Settler's Reminiscences', 11). However, there seems to have been a communal brick kiln somewhere near 'Pigot Park', to judge by 2 references in Sophia Pigot's diary (20th Jan. 1821 and 1st October, 1821).

3. This is the first reference we have had to double-storeyed farmhouses in the eastern part of the Colony. Since they were from the first popular with the 1820 settlers - where they could afford and construct them - it is interesting to speculate what advantages they may have offered. The most obvious benefit is, of course, the added security of the upper floor, but added considerations may have been the simpler roofing and familiar pattern of living provided by the double-storey house.

4. Cf. W. Bain Lanham and E.R. Willmore, 'The 1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains and Salem'. (Grahamstown, 1959) 25.



18. House built by Robert Dickason, of Norman's party.

those who had come from the cities. The architecture which resulted was as widely diverse in character as their backgrounds and capacities, and the methods and materials of construction as varied as the range of natural materials allowed.

To establish generalities out of this complex picture is no easy task. At least half of the settlers, and probably a good many more, came from regions in Britain where brick was in common use - and brick was the one material which was out of the question on most of the locations in the early years. Unburnt bricks were generally found to be quite unsuitable, the variable composition of the clay causing them to shrink and crack or to crumble in a few weeks, while the proper firing of bricks was a skilled business requiring a carefully constructed and expensive kiln, unthinkable except in the towns or large mission stations like Theopolis. Even where burnt bricks were available, (at Salem, Uitenhage, and afterwards at Bathurst, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth) brick construction was always prohibitively expensive, being four times more costly than good stonework in Grahamstown in 1822.[1] And then there were transport costs to the farm locations to consider in addition, and they were extraordinarily exorbitant at first. The result was that up to the middle of 1823 only fifteen brick farmhouses had been erected in the entire Albany district.[2]

One of the few brick houses that was known to date from this period, (Unfortunately now destoyed) was that built by the settler Robert Dickason, a cabinet maker and building contractor of Sussex, who came out with Norman's Party and erected a double-storeyed house of burnt bricks on the west bank of the Sevenfountains stream.[3] It was said to have been extremely well-built, and was even roofed with pantiles which, together with the bricks, were made and fired by Dickason himself on the premises (Plate 18).[4]

1. Dugmore, 'An Albany Settler's Reminiscences', 11.

2. The clay was well saturated with water, as in brick-making, and generally mixed with chopped straw or grass. It was laid in layers about six inches deep, and in some cases not stamped at all, but left for several days to dry in the sun before another layer was added - a variation on the old Boer type of construction. W. Bain Lanham and E.R.Willmore 'The 1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains and Salem.' Grahamstown, 4, 5.

3. Ibid.

4. It appears that 'Pigot Park' had walls of rammed earth. c.f.Sophia Pigot's diary, entry of 12th September 1820: 'The people prepared for ramming. The door posts put up.'

5. For the first year or two the lime quarries were not commercially developed, and during this period the most easily accessible lime was that burnt by the mission-stations and sold to the settlers. Eventually quarries were opened up at Tigerspring near Bathurst, and at Clumber, and Grahamstown. 'Preston' near Bathurst, by Isaac Lenham, 1822 'Myrtle Grove' by Charles Cockcroft. 1827

6. Scott's Barracks in Grahamstown had to be built with mud mortar 'because of the great expense of lime.' (G.H./enclosure to dispatches, 5th. Feb. 1820).

7. Another possible contribution to the decay of cob walls was their attack by termites. Barrow 'Travels etc' (London,1804),I,65.

8. E.H.Burrows: 'The Moodies of Melsetter', Cape Town, 1954,75.
   In the Moodie's time the farm was known by the name 'Long Hope'. In the storms of 1823 the southern gable of the house and the chimney at the other end fell, but the main body of the house survived. (Letter from Lt.Moodie to his brother at Cape Town, 29th October 1823, Notes to Thomas Pringle 'Some Account of the 1820 Settlers.' Hiddingh Reprint.)

19. Cottage in Mickleton, Gloucestershire.

Another of these early brick houses was 'Whitney' (Plate 34), built by Captain Benjamin Moodie. Although not an 1820 Settler, Moodie moved into the Albany area in 1822, 'set the servants ... to the ... task of felling trees ... chopped the wood for his own house as well.' He lived in a reed hut while the double-storeyed brick building, 'the first of its kind that had been built in this part of the district,' was completing. [8]

'... the Devonshire Cob was rarely ventured upon at first...'[1] Experimenters early discovered that 'Devonshire Cob' was an unsuitable material for walling unless undertaken by a skilled hand. 'Devonshire Cob' differed from the indigenous layered mud wall construction of the Boers mainly in that the clay was strongly reinforced by an admixture of straw or cowhair and gravel and was trodden down or rammed into a framework.[2] But the process was a slow one, and the clay often unreliable, so that cracks and crumbling corners probably in many instances discouraged the work before it was half complete. Even so, a considerable number of such farmhouses were actually built, sixtyfive by June 1823,[3] most of them presumably by men who hailed from the country districts of the south and east of England, where this type of construction was indigenous (Plate 19).[4] Cob walling is especially vulnerable to damage in heavy storms unless it is entirely coated with such impervious materials as lime plaster or tar. Although lime burnt from shells could be made on the coast, and there were even outcrops of limestone along the coast and at one or two places inland,[5] there was still the difficulty of transporting the quantities necessary for the plastering,[6] so that many of the cob houses were still unprotected during the great storms of 1822 & 23, which probably accounts for the gradual fall from favour of 'Devonshire Cob' as a building material.[7]

1. W. Bain Lanham & E.R.Willmore '1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains & Salem', 15.

2. Una Long: 'Goldswain's Chronicle', I, 47.

20. An Albany Settler's house, drawn by a military officer. (Elliott Collection).

21.A. Early house on 'Glen Avon', Somerset East.

Today hardly a Cob building survives in the Eastern Province.

Early buildings in packed mud, brick or cob had extremely thick walls, those on the outside seldom being less than two feet, and often considerably more. By contrast, internal partitions were sometimes extraordinarily thin, especially where they were independent of any roofing members.

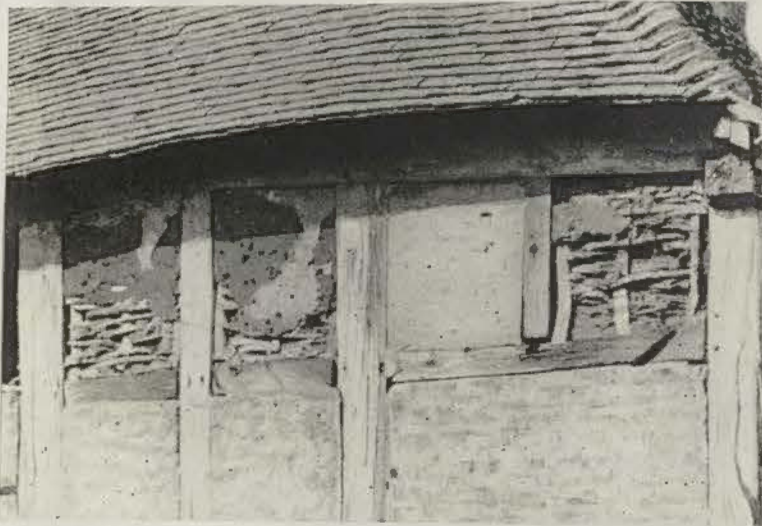
There are yet two possible types of wall-construction which were familiar to the emigrants from the British Isles, and which we have barely touched upon. One, stone, had the great disadvantage that working it was extemely laborious and prolonged, and neither the labour nor the time was available during these early months. By mid-1823 only twenty-seven of the farmhouses are listed as being of stone, and a number of these were old Boer homes reroofed. Yet this material was eventually to come into its own, and is today the one we think of as most characteristic of Settler architecture.

Settler houses of the first phase built in stone includedthat on 'Sevenfountains' built by the Devonshire silk-weaver William Norman in 1820, with walls which were far from straight, and a roof thatched with mountain rushes ('incaluka').[1] Another is mentioned by Goldswain: 'Free Stone Farm' near Bathurst, where he recorded that 'Mr. I.Debnam was Building a House' in 1822.[2]

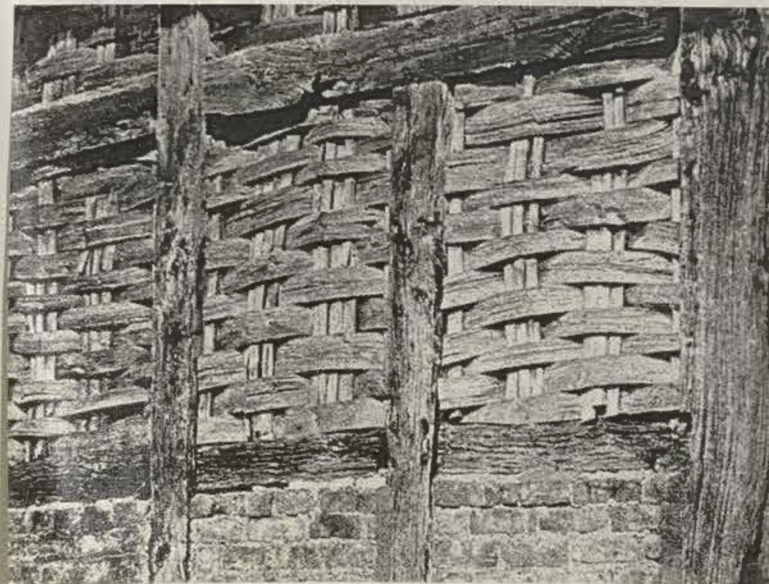
In the meantime some other fairly permanent quick building technique was needed, and it was found in the half-timber construction indigenous to Northern Europe since ancient times (Plates 22 and 23). In this tradition a stout, cross-braced timber framework of the whole house was first erected, and afterwards the interstices were filled with a kind of wickerwork of stripped branches or canes which could then be plastered with clay and waterproofed on the outside with a coat of lime plastere - if it were available. At its best this

construction was a highly-skilled process resulting in fine durable architecture. At its worst, it produced buildings only a shade better than the 'Hartebeest huts' of the type erected by Pringle, and equally vulnerable to decay. 'A great variety of fragile and grotesque-looking huts and cottages' as Rev. William Shaw described them.[1] 'The wattled framework of two or three square rooms looked, in the eyes of some, like the founding of a mansion. Many a father and son, with axe on shoulder, ranged the wooded kloofs in search of door-posts and rafters; and many a mother and daughter cut wattles and thatch nearer home for walls and roof; aye, and many a back ached under successive loads, borne toilsomely from tangled thicket and rushy swamp...'[2] 'A space of ground was marked out, according to the views of the future occupants of the structure, large enough for one or two rooms. The best generally were designed for two rooms of about 10 feet by 12 feet each, forming a building of 10 feet by 24 feet. Strong upright posts were planted all round the building about 2 feet apart; these were firmly fixed in holes dug in the ground to a depth of 18 inches - 20 inches to receive them; they rose to a height of 6 feet above the ground; thinner poles were planted between the stout posts and then a quantity of small wood, slender branches of trees or shrubs was cut, and used for the purpose of wattling all round the building. When this was completed, it had the appearance of a great wicker vessel or basket. A wall-plate, being generally a large pole squared by the adze, was nailed to the tops of the upright poles on each side and end of the building. A roof, consisting of as many rafters as were necessary, all of poles, was securely nailed to the wall-plates. On the rafters were nailed, or sometimes tied, laths at proper distances, to which the thatch of rushes or reeds, cut from the bank of the river, was fastened by means of cord made from the rushes. When the whole was covered, the walls were usually plastered over, inside and out, with clay mixed and pre-

21.B. Early settler cottage (c.1820-21) in A. Barker's Sketch Book, S.A.P.L.



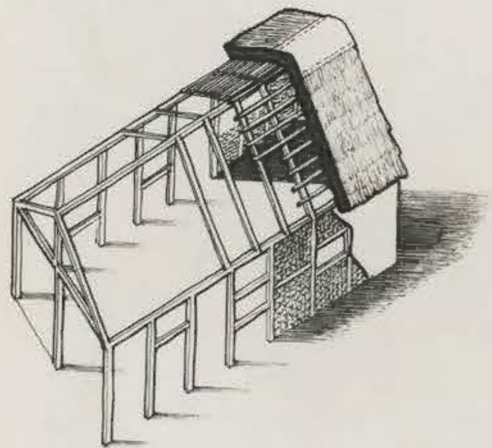
22. Wattle and daub construction, West Burton, Sussex.



23. Wattle hurdling, Warminster, Gloucester.

1. William Shaw: 'Story of My Mission'. 40.
2. Dugmore 'An Albany Settler's Reminiscences', 11.

1. William Shaw, Ibid, 41.
2. Cory, 'Rise of South Africa', II, 160.
3. The earliest houses in Durban and Pietermaritzburg were of this type. c.f. Walton: 'Homestead & Villages of South Africa', 80-83.



24. The construction of an early settler farmhouse in wattle and daub.

25. Timber framework showing in the barn of 'Greenfountains'; the infilling is raw brick, and may be a later replacement. (Poor photograph retouched).

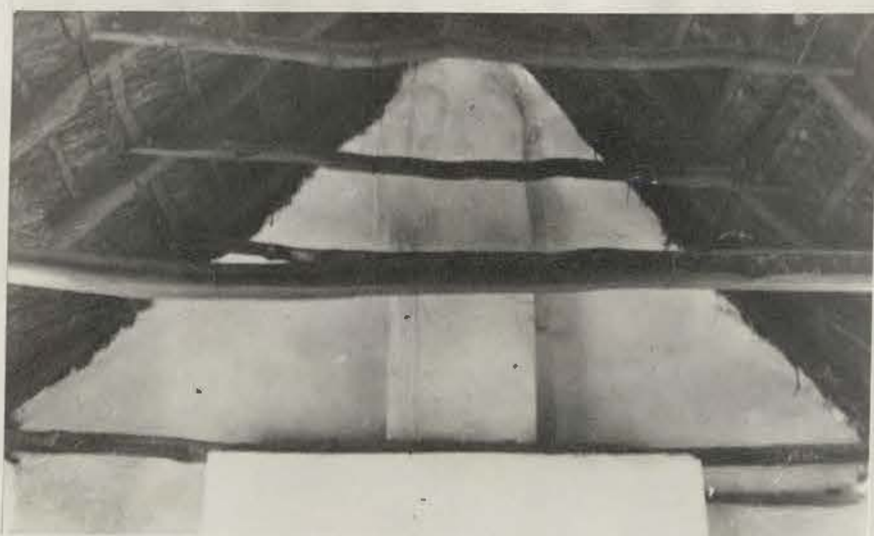
pared with water, and tempered by treading with the feet in the same manner as brickmakers prepared clay for bricks before pugmills were invented....'[1]

It was in this technique that the majority of the settlers houses were erected during the first three years, two hundred and sixty seven of them being recorded in June 1823.[2] To this day a few of the finest homes in the Eastern Province preserve a core of this type of construction, as strong and as durable as the day it was built, one hundred and forty years ago.[3]

Most of the timber work of the walls was constructed of the very hard and durable sneezewood, hewn in nearby kloofs, adzed to a roughly rectangular form and jointed as stoutly as possible. The roof and ceiling rafters were shaped from either willow or yellow wood, which were both ideal for the purpose, being available in longer lengths and easy to work, though they were unfortunately subject to decay if used in any exposed position. After the wattling had been tied vertically across the battens between the uprights the plaster was daubed onto it, hence the name usually given to this construction, of 'wattle and daub.' In order to make the construction as permanent as possible, the plaster was usually carried across the uprights on the outside, and sometimes on the inside as well, so that they were often indistinguishable from plastered brick, stone, or cob houses when completed.

Another variant on the wattle and daub house (built immediately after arrival on location) is described in Goldswain's 'Chronicle': 'imploid som in faling Timber: one pear of sawyers ware set to work in sawing timber for making of plowes and harrowes and Quartring for doores and window frames and also bord for doores and windowe sheters: and they remainder of the men sum digen post holes and cuting postes and sticks for wateling to make a watling and dorbd House and for sheathing the House we cut long Grass out of the flaes [vleis] and it was not Long before we had the house finished... [&] we saw

1. Una Long : 'Goldswain's Chronicle' I, 22-23.
2. Ibid I, 39.
3. MS in the Albany Museum.



26. Interior of an early thatched roof at 'Thornkloof'.

27. 'Lindale' near Salem, an early photograph showing its original condition (poor photograph clarified).

Mr. and Mrs. Wait comfutley situvatied in thier new Howes...'[1]

In another place Goldswain mentions Mr. Joseph Weakly's house (Hyman's party, Kowie River): 'The House was maid of watled and dorbed with mud and the Gable end was wattled with broom that groes in the rivers....'[2]

Another kind of construction is described in a manuscript of reminiscences of Bertram Bowker. Here the mud for the walling seems to have been packed between two external skins of wattling: 'set to work to cut wood to build a house... with three rooms : it took a long time to build, I think about three months - I could build better now in 3 weeks: the walls were made first, posts set as wanted to form three rooms, then long sticks about as thick as rakes handle Nailed and tied on to both sides, about 2" a part, and filled between with very stiff mud: the walls were not so bad: then some long poles choped flat for the wall plating - no planks in those days in Lower Albany: the roof was made of the same round poles, and long slats to sow the thatch on too; it was thatched with long Grass and sewed on with a kind of string which we made from a kind of rush that grows in all rivers in the country, and very much used by every one both black and white. My Brother William was the thatcher, and very well he did it, as many a one said that saw it after it was finished.'[3]

A characteristic of English half-timbered constructions in some regions was the infilling of the timberwork with materials other than wattle and daub. One fine surviving example of such a method of construction is 'Lindale' near Salem (Plate 27), which has a baked-brick infilling between sneezewood poles on the outside, and soft brick between the uprights in the interior walls. The fire-place hearth and fireback are made of large single stones. The house is also interesting for the curious way in which the fire-place flue curves as it rises so that the chimney will not occur under the centreline - and thus

28. 'Greenfountains', distant photograph. The thatched roof survives under later galvanized iron. The photograph has been retouched to show the original appearance.

interfere with the thatch - a common roofing problem. The doors are of plank.

Another remarkably preserved farm house in which burnt brick and lime is used as the infilling in the timberwork is 'Greenfountains' near Port Alfred (Plates 28-30). The nucleus of this house, is thought to have been originally only one of a group of timber and cob houses built by members of George Smith's party from Lancashire around a small stream which runs near the present house. Such banding together of the settlers in a small community for mutual protection and encouragement was common at first and only disappeared when the land was subdivided in later years.[1] Large outbuildings of cob or brick and poles were also built at 'Greenfountains' (Plates 25 and 80A), while the kitchen, which may not be much later than the rest, is entirely built of shale. The whole house preserves, under galvanised iron, its original timber roof construction and early thatch.

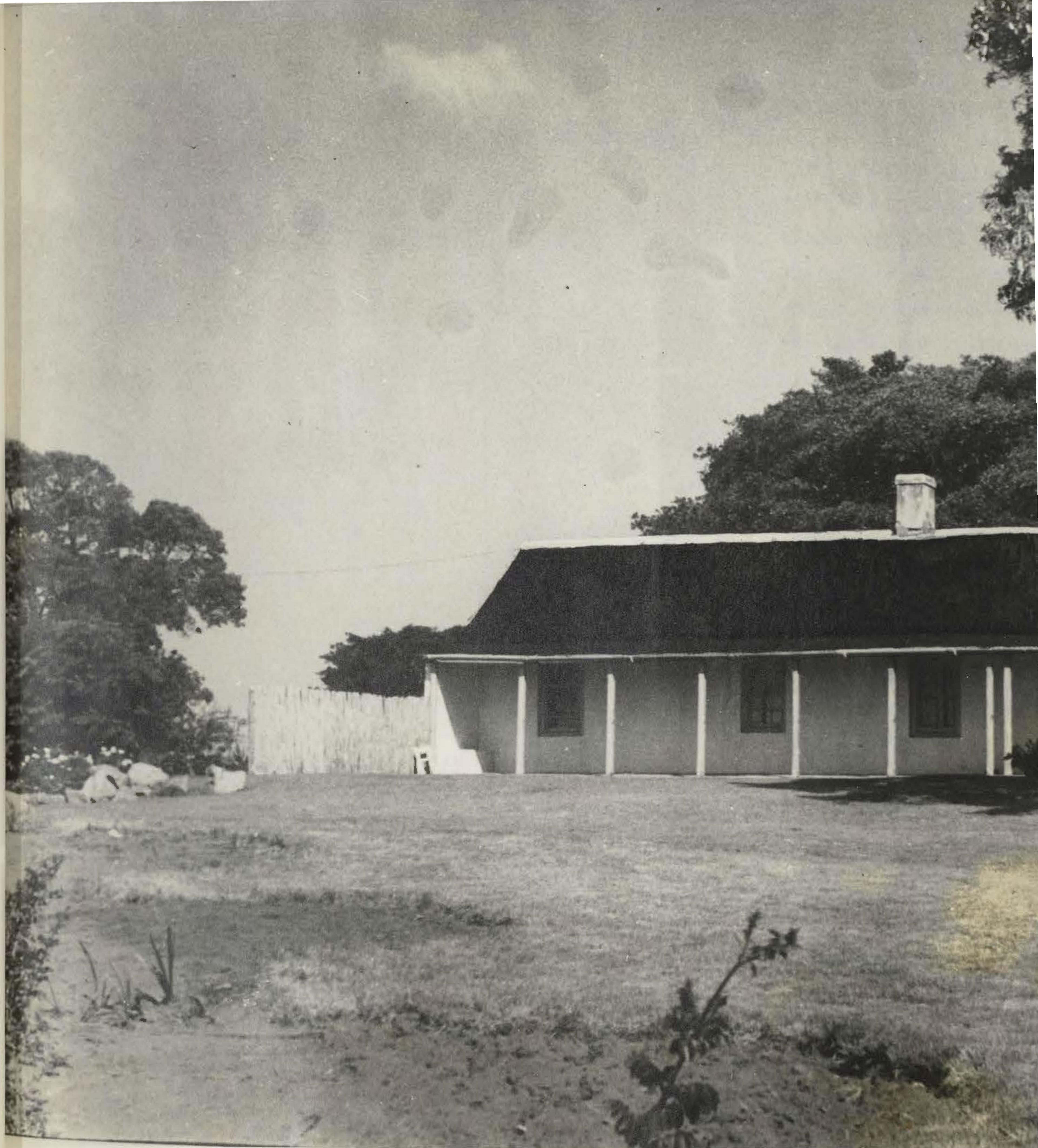
An interesting - though necessarily rare - early farmhouse type was that built entirely of timber. The house built by Charles Wood on his location near Salem was such a case. Wood had been a skilled carpenter and joiner in London, and had even qualified as a staircase maker, a special trade in itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have chosen to erect a wooden house from whatever timber he could find in the kloofs and on the kranzes. Only the fireplace was constructed of fireproof materials.[2]

Most of these early houses were extremely simple, being at first single-storeyed, with one, two or at the most three rooms, generally ten feet by twelve feet each. There was but one fireplace in the whole house, which served both for cooking and as the centre of social activity. As families grew in size other rooms might be added (Plate 31). Often cooking activities were removed to a separate hut, or to a lean-to at the back of the main building. Sometimes an additional wing was added at right angles to the old, con-

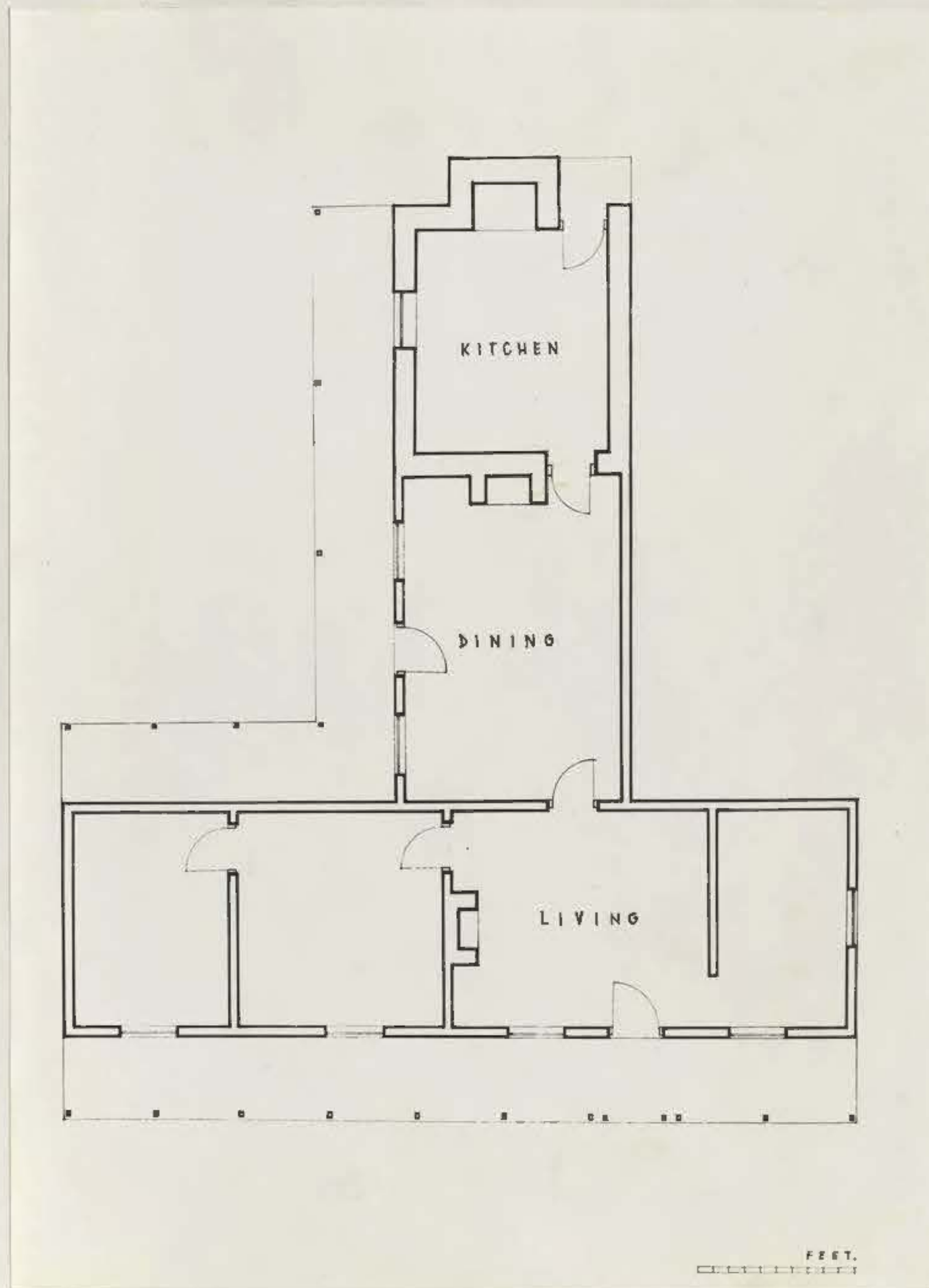
1. In this way arose also the villages of Salem, on H.Sephton's location, Clumber on the Nottingham party's location, Guylerville on J.Bailie's location, and Sidbury near Capt. T.Butler's party. Refer. Hockly, 'Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa' Cape Town, 1949, 69.

2. E.R.Willmore, in 'In the Land of the Settlers', Grahamstown, 1956, 41-42.

29. 'Greenfountains'. The thatched roof survives under later galvanised iron. The photograph has been retouched to show the original appearance.



1. 'The Story of My Mission', 41.
2. Ibid.

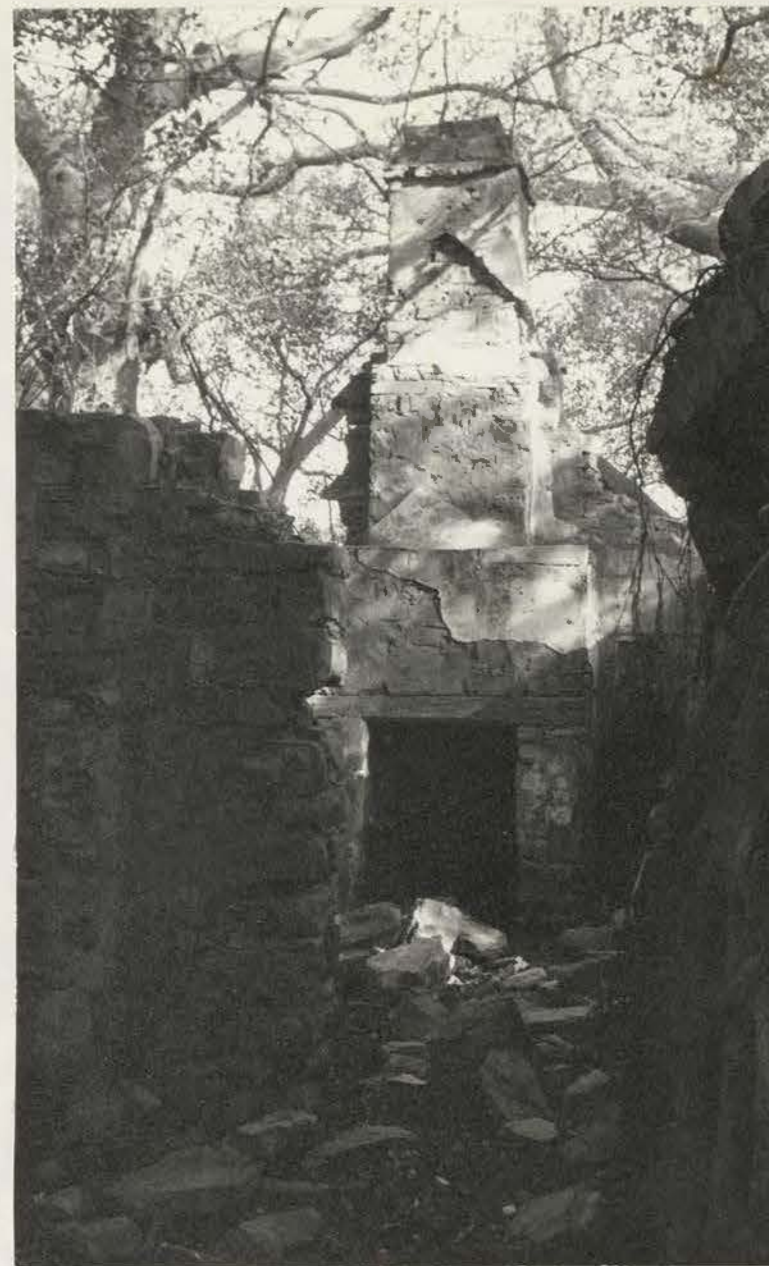


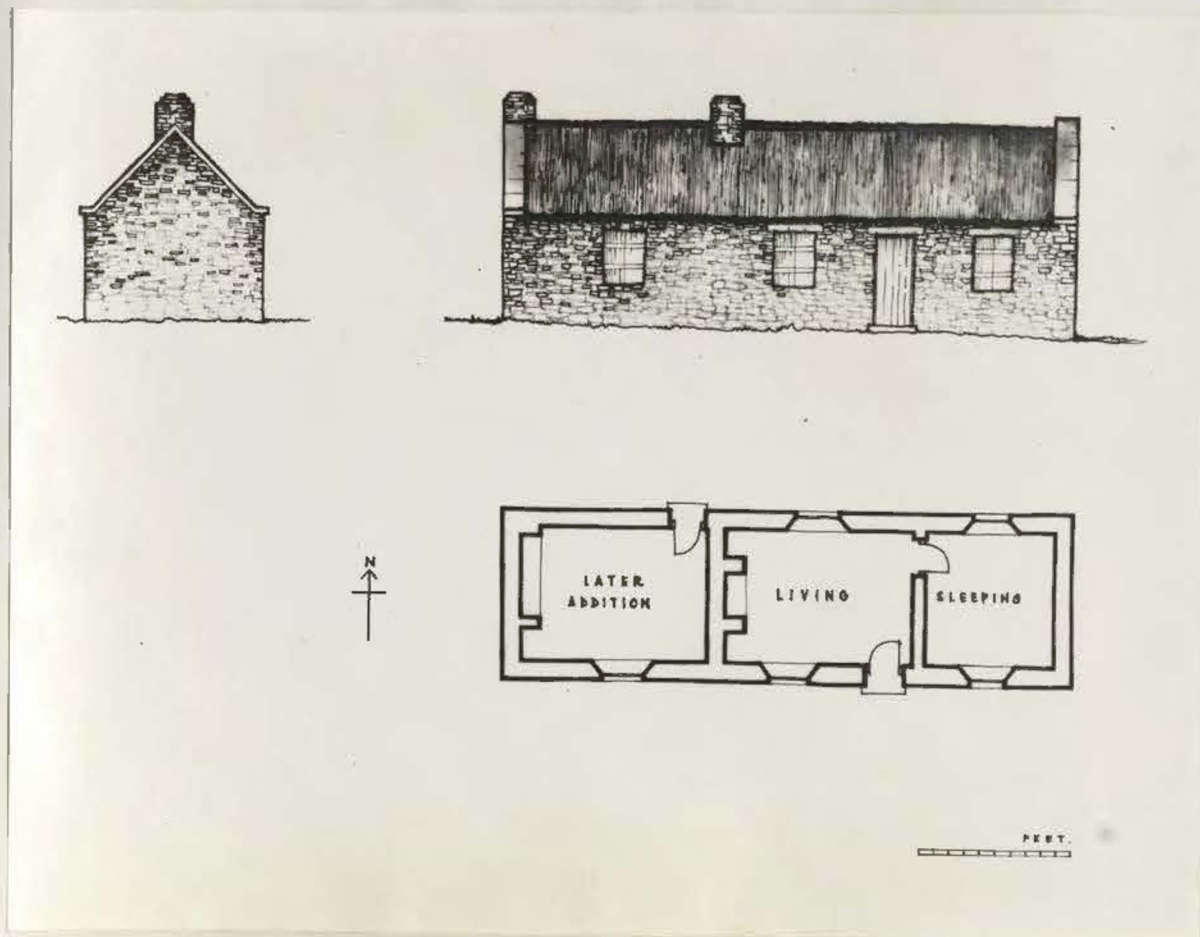
30. 'Greenfountains' plan. The timber framed walls are thinner than the stone wall of the kitchen. The two rooms at lower right were probably built first.

taining two or three extra rooms. But the most common practice was to extend the house lengthwise, so that eventually there might be five or six rooms strung together in a straight line, with a single pitched gabled roof running from end to end. There were generally no private corridors, passage from one end of the house to the other being possible only through all the rooms. This was mainly due to the severe limit that was placed on the span of the roof, both by the restricted size of the timbers and the considerable weight of the roofing material. In after years lean-to verandahs were often added along one side of the building and doors broken through, where windows had formerly been, to serve as points of access. 'The floors of these buildings were usually made of clay.' (Rev. William Shaw).[1]

In the simplest cottages, proper doors and windows being unobtainable, makeshift rug or mat doors and calico or gauze windows had perforce to be accepted. 'At first there was no plank for doors, or glass for windows; hence a mat or rug was usually hung up in the void doorway, to do duty for the one; and a piece of white calico, nailed to a small frame of wood, and fastened into two or three holes left in the walls for the purpose, admitted light into the dwelling during the day, when the wind rendered it convenient to keep these spaces open.' (Rev. William Shaw).[2]

But the constant presence of the natives and of wild game soon led the settlers to consider means of providing stouter protection against theft and attack. Doors and solid shutters for the windows were then made of locally adzed timber planks nailed to cross pieces or a frame. Sometimes lattices were made of twigs and branches to secure the window openings. After December 1821, when those settlers who wished to were at last permitted to leave their locations and to settle in the nearby towns, crafts and trades were establish-





FLETCHER HOUSE AT CUYLERVILLE.

31. Two elevations and plan.

32,33. Views in the surviving ruins.

ed and it began to be possible to secure well-made doors and windows for the farmhouses. 'After a while those who aspired to neatness and comfort found pipe-clay, and at length limestone, from which they obtained lime, and thus they were enabledto whitewash their tenements, which gave them a more cheerful and greatly improved appearance.' (Rev. William Shaw) [1]

Glass, imported through Algoa Bay or the Kowie, was available in only limited quantities and was extremely expensive.[2] It is a mistake, however, to suppose that.the window panes had of necessity to be small, for the Bathurst Drostdy was designed to have panes as big as 20" by 11" in 1820.[3] Nevertheless, Settlers' windows, when glazed at all,[4] seem generally to have been many-paned, doubtless both for economy and added security.

By January, 1821, that is, after most of the Settlers and their dependants had been on their locations for six months, some were already far-advanced in creating permanent and comfortable establishments for themselves and their stock. Cypress Messer, bailiff to the leader of one of the parties, wrote to William Jones in Cape Town on Jan.21st, 1821: 'I have three huts complete and a well I sunk at the top of the garden, which has plenty of excellent water. I have felled sufficient timber to build General Campbell's house ['Barville Park'] and the men are digging stones for the walls. I have made a large kraal for the cattle; all that have seen it say there is not its equal in the Colony.' [5]

Two years later George Thompson saw the same place: 'Passed the location of the late General Campbell... which is now occupied by his widow, an elegant and accomplished lady. The natural features of the country are here exceedingly beautiful, and Mrs. Campbell's neatly ornamented cottage... had a most pleasing and picturesque appearance, surrounded by luxuriant woods and copses

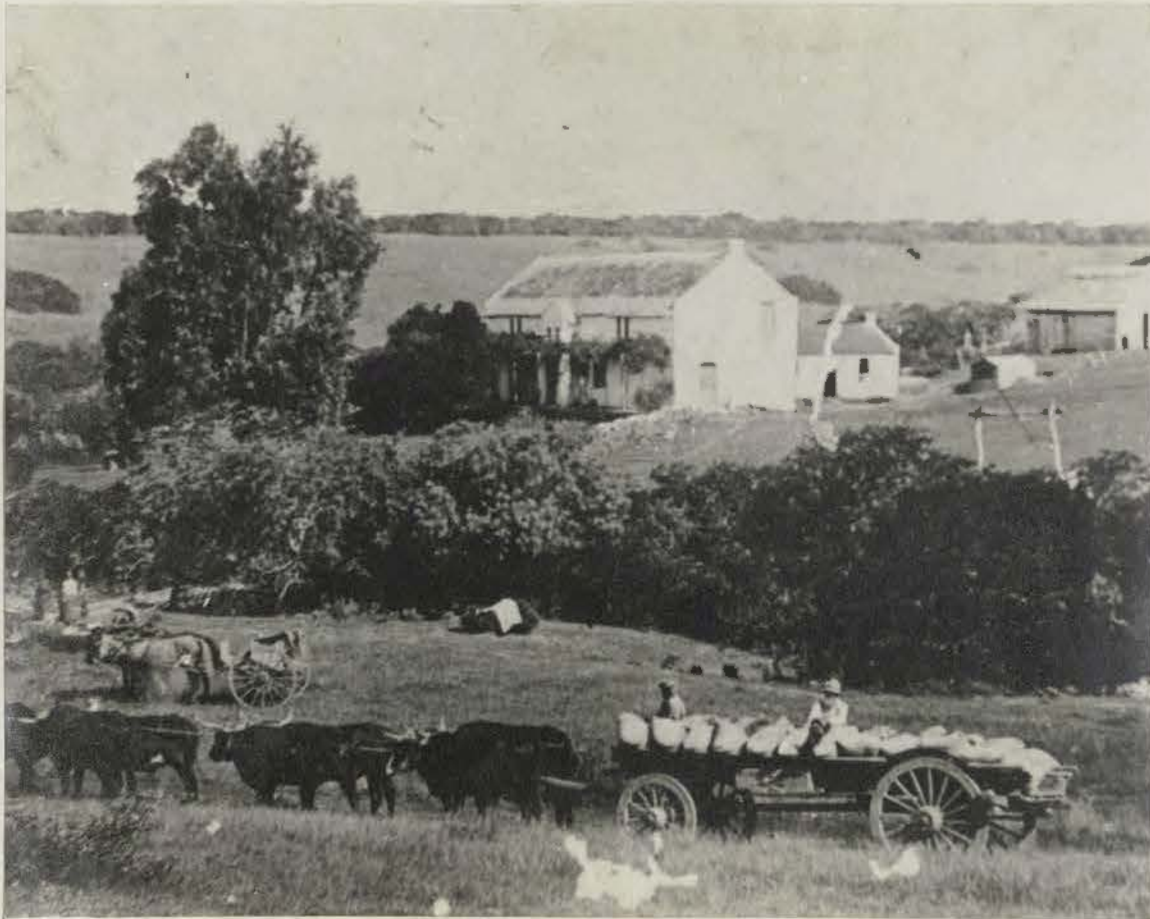
1. Ibid.

2. Glass was being put into Uitenhage Courtroom, Secretary's House and Messenger's House as long before as 1813.(C.O.2586/22) 'new Castle Crown Glass' was specified for the new Barracks in Grahamstown in Feb.1820 (G.H./enclosure to dispatches.)

3. C.O.2742/47.

4. It is recorded that a glazier, Richard Prior, in Sephton's party, was unable to ply his trade for lack of glass. (E.R.Willmore from 'In the Land of the Settlers', 40.) Other glaziers among the settlers included Joseph Wilmot, of Sephton's party, etc.

5. Lieut. Gen. Sir Rufane Donkin: 'Letters to the Earl of Bathurst'. London, 1827.



34. 'Whitney' near the Bushman's River - an old photograph.

1. G. Thompson, 'Travels', I, 32.
2. Theal. 'Records' XV, 402.
3. Una Long 'Goldswain's Chronicle' I, note 23: and Graham's Town Journal, 16 Jan.1834, advertisement for the sale of property.
4. Colin Campbell 'British South Africa', 198.
5. G. Thompson, 'Travels' I, 32.

35. 'Thornhill' near the Kowie. From Thompson's 'Travels', 1827.

of evergreens, in the disposal of which the wanton hand of Nature seemed to have rivalled the most tasteful works of art.'[1]

In the interval that has passed since those first months of 1820, many of the settlers had completely rebuilt their houses. Goldswain's employer, Wait, the erection of whose wattle and daub house we have already seen described, had rebuilt his home entirely in stone by the time he wrote mentioning it to the Governor on 23rd April, 1823.[2] The new structure had two rooms, a hall and a kitchen on the ground floor, and two large garrets on the upper floor. There was also a dairy.[3] Major George Pigot, an ex-cavalry officer, had spent £3,000 'in building a fine house and enclosing his cultivated lands.. which he called Pigot Park'.[4]

Visitors were, indeed, everywhere impressed by the husbanded beauty of the farms and the transformation that was taking place in the landscape. '13 May, 1823: This morning I set out... to visit the mouth of the Great Fish River... On our way we passed through several locations of settlers, with the appearance of which I was much pleased. The hedges and ditches, and wattled fences, presented home-looking pictures of neatness and industry, very different from the rude and slovenly premises of the back-country boors.[5]

But all was not as well as it seemed. The siting of the dwellings was often open to question. 'The nervous looked out for defensible positions. The men of sentiment sought pictureque spots, where the beauties of nature might be seen to advantage, forgetting, however, sometimes to enquire whether they were within reach of water or not. More practically, the sober father of a family of healthy lads from the rural districts examined the soils and fixed on a homestead in the midst of his prospective corn-fields.' (Dugmore, 'An

1. Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 50.

2. G.Thompson, 'Travels', I, 35.

36. 'Belmont, also known as Oak Valley', near Grahamstown.

Albany Settler's Reminiscences', 10 - 11).

Gentlefolk among the Settlers, bred in the traditions of the English landscape garden, were impressed from the first by the natural beauties of the Albany countryside: '...the whole scene continued lovely, repeated clumps of Shrubs, the distant ground on every side appeared to be a Park, and the road was so tastefully planted out that it was in vain persuading some of the party that we were not approaching a Nobleman's residence' (Thomas Philipps, describing the journey to the locations, June 1820.)[1] Some of them, anxious to achieve the fashionable 'distant prospect', situated their houses on heights, like those described by Thompson at 'Thornhill' on the Kowie (Plate 35): 'In fixing his dwelling, the proprietor and his son-in-law, Lieut. Gilfillan, have not failed to avail themselves of the most favourable situations. The cottage of the latter especially, which, with its little garden, crowns the summit of a small green mount, commands a prospect scarcely, I think, to be rivalled in Africa for rich and romantic scenery....'[2]

But the majority of the settlers chose valleys for their houses. Not only was water ready at hand, without the expense and difficulty of digging a well, but the soil was richer and the land more sheltered.

In July, 1821, Thomas Pringle, accompanied by Robert Hart, the superintendent of Somerset Farm, made a journey through the whole of the frontier down to the coast:

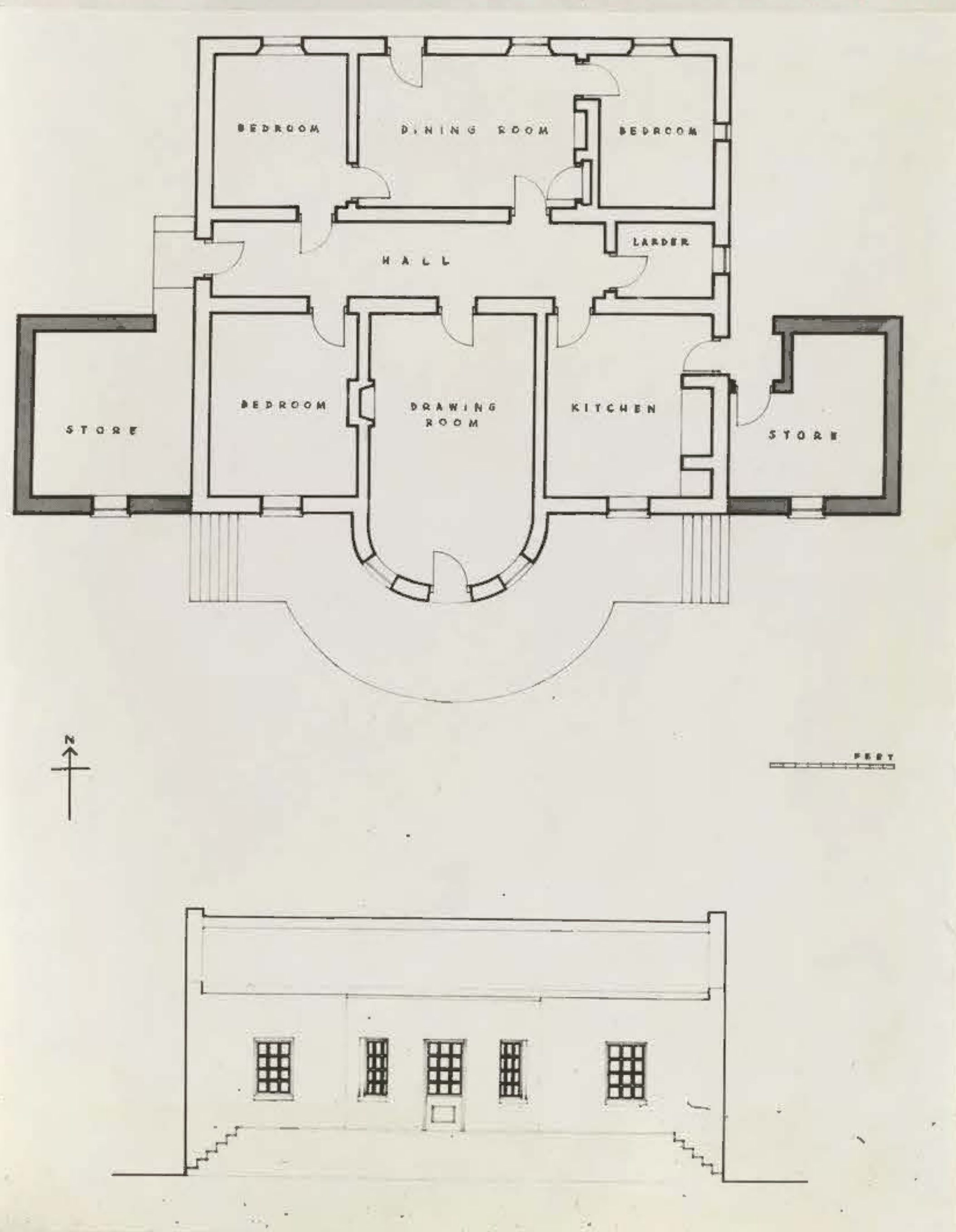
'On surveying the Locations of the English Settlers during the journey, my companion was strongly impressed with the conviction that many of them had fixed their residence too near the course of streams or torrents... and he pointed out to me, and to several of themselves, the marks of former deluges on the trees and banks, higher than some of the huts they inhabited, or the fields and gardens they were cultivating; but as these vestiges of destruction appeared

1. Thomas Pringle; 'Description of the Zuurfeld'. South African Journal No. 1, 6th March, 1824.

2. Letter of 22 Sept. 1820. 'Africana N.& N.', VI, No.2, 54.

3. By May 1823, of the 1,004 adults, i.e. males of 18 years or more, who were originally entitled to 100 acres of land each, only 438 were still in occupation of their locations.
Cory, 'Rise of South Africa', II, 137.

4. Quoted by Cory 'Souvenir in Commemoration of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers of Albany'. Grahamstown, 1920, 50.



37.A. 'Belmont', near Grahamstown. The later additions are shaded.

old and indistinct the notice of them did not seem to produce any strong impression.'[1]

This was an ominous note to the sounded by one so experienced with farming in the district as Robert Hart. In the winter of 1822 the first heavy rains were experienced, and some damage was done, but unfortunately not enough to convince the settlers of the folly of their choice of sites.

During the early months after the arrival of the Settlers almost everyone had been filled with optimism. '... we find ourselves much more comfortable than we could have anticipated in so short a time. Our "Hartebeest Huts" are both roomy and neat. Our gardens are plentifully stocked...' wrote Thomas Pringle to Sir Walter Scott.[2] Then, early in 1821, the first of a long series of calamities occurred: the wheat crop failed owing to attack by rust. The crops again failed at the end of 1821, and yet again in December, 1822. Meanwhile, heat and drought were taking their toll of the cattle, and the government supply of emergency rations was almost exhausted. A drift from the locations to the towns had already begun[3] and in Cape Town a 'Distress Fund' was opened for the relief of the Settlers.

It is this background we must keep in mind if we are to appreciate the culminating horror of the Great Storm of 1823.

PHASE II - 1823 - 1834

The drought broke at the end of September in that year. For months there had not been, according to the graphic description of one settler 'the least appearance of verdure as far as the eye can reach.'[4] The rains began as a light drizzle, and then for days in succession a continuous downpour fell as

37.B and C. Two views of 'Belmont', from the South East and the North East.

heavy as at the height of a thunderstorm. In every gulley appeared a frothing torrent, streams became roaring rivers swirling with mudladen water, and rivers rose over their banks to flood the surrounding districts for miles on every side. Such a storm had never been known in that part of the country before. Almost all the houses built in the valleys were attacked by the raging water, and nearly half of all the settler huts, orchards and cornfields were entirely swept away.

> '... it rained more or less for forteen days. Verey meney fields of corn was quit distroyed: Houses was under minded and fel doun and som of them caught fier and burnt and disstroid everey thing that was in the House and in one House not fare from ous in Mr. Holders partey before the pearants could git out all the children they House fell on them and the House caut fier and one of the Children could not be got out but was burnt to death. The rain had contunerd about nine days: my wife had jest got every thing on the fier for dinner wen the end of the House fell in: all the dinner was spilt: the fier was quit put out and everey thing in the House was so weat that I was forst to go more than a Mile waiding thrue a stream of water up to my midde to git a stick of fier... meney a poor famley had not adrie place to sleep in. Sum Houses was washed down the rivers and not an arcle left them. Soon after they flood we had our hous robed...' (Goldswain's 'Chronicle'.[1]

Many of the poor settlers escaped with nothing but their lives and the clothing they were wearing. At Theopolis Mission Station 100,000 bricks waiting to be burned were destroyed and two out of the four brick kilns were flooded and washed away.[2] Scarcely a farmhouse in the district escaped serious damage. Throughout the frontier wattle and daub cottages which were beyond reach of the flood became dangerous, and some collapsed, as the heavy downpour soaked the thatch of the roofs, and the additional load caused the supporting structure to bulge and crack. Persistent driving rains washed the clay plastering out from between the sneezewood poles and the wattled lattices. Houses built with cob walls were even more seriously affected, and many settlers were chagrined to find the whole structure of their dwelling disintegrating into a disheartening sticky mess. 'Major Pigott's ["Pigott Park"] has been

1. ed. by Una Long, I, 54.
2. E. Morse-Jones.

materially injured and cannot be repaired under the expense of 7000 dollars; this is a most serious loss after the great expense he was at in building it.' (Thos. Phillips.)[1] Philipp's own house, 'Lampeter', '... withstood it all, scarcely a drop coming in on us'.[2] Before the rains had ceased in the middle of October the whole district had been plunged into the most abject distress and suffering, and the settlement scheme thrown into a state close to that which had existed in the first weeks after the arrival of the settlers.

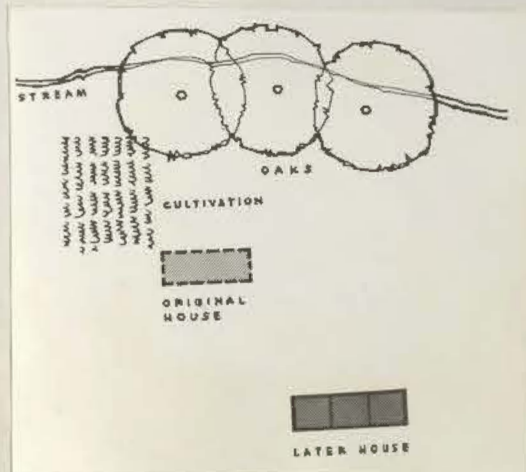
Very early, the settlers were learning that South Africa was a most difficult place in which to build. Not only was the climate deceptive and extremely variable, but the natural building materials were scanty and unreliable. The clay soil was poor, much of the timber untested and subject to rapid distortion and decay. It was found that unless wood was allowed to season in the sun for a considerable period before use (and this was not always possible) changes in humidity rendered timberwork well-nigh useless within three or four years.[3]

With these lessons in the fore-front of their minds, the settlers set about making good their losses in the last months of 1823. 'The October rains taught the necessity of building more substantial houses, and the people built them.' (Dugmore 'An Albany Settler's Reminiscences', 27.)

The first consideration was the choice of a new site for the homestead and farm buildings. There was naturally some hesitancy about building again in the valleys, at any rate near the streams. A typical example of the influence of the floods may be seen on the farm 'Tempe' where the platform of the original house is clearly discernible under some oaks near the stream, about 50 ft. in front of, and fifteen feet below, the ruined stone walling of the post - 1823 buildings. (Plate 39). In such a case the preference of the

1. Letter of Oct. 27th, 1823. Keppel-Jones: 'Philipps, 1820 Settler' 183. In another letter Philips adds 'they were up all night expecting to be crushed: flat roofs will not do here....' (21st.Oct.1823. Notes to Thomas Pringle 'Some Account of the 1820 Settlers' Hiddingh Repr.)
2. Ibid.
3. cf. 2705/323. 7th June 1828. Report on the dangerous condition of the roof of the prison in Grahamstown...'the Beams and the plankings of the Roof are almost wholly decayed, which, as this Building has not been finished four years, may be attributed to Green wood having been used by the Builder.'

58. Settler walling on the farm 'Mount Pleasant'.



39. Plan of the farm 'Tempe' near Grahamstown, showing the apparent positions of the dwellinghouse before and after the floods of 1823.

40. 'Tharfield', Kleinemonde, back facade.
41. 'Oakwell', near Grahamstown - a sheep farm.

owner of the location for agricultural rather then pastoral pursuits, and the extreme fertiility of the flood plain, presumably led to the choice of the valley for both houses.

But a survey of the area today suggest that an important effect of the floods was the great increase in the number of houses situated on hills and high points, and the expanding use of welled water supplies. Undoubtedly an added factor in this trend was the incipient awareness of the danger of native raids, and of the need for farms to be able to communicate readily with one another.

Although the War of 1819 had brought to an end for a time for constant depredations of the Kaffirs, isolated raids began again during 1822, and were increasing in frequency by late 1823. The direct reason for the resumption of the raids was the growing number of sheep and cattle on the farmers' locations. After the wheat crop had failed for the third time at the end of 1822, it became clear that time and trouble would be better spent in sheep and cattle farming than in agriculture, and those who had the necessary capital embarked on this new venture, thus removing the need for their farm buildings to be situated in the valleys. The floods served to precipitate the move; and the fear of flood, coupled with the need to guard their stock against theft by the Kaffirs, made it doubly desirable that the pastoralists' houses should be situated on higher ground.

As an example of this trend it is only necessary to say that the dwelling on 'Tempe' was moved again, to the highest part of the farm (half a mile from the stream) sometimes within the eleven-year period now under discussion.

'Boer' farmhouses were for preference situated in valleys or shallow basins, and where fortuitously situated on rising ground seem generally to have

1. Even the name 'Uitkyk' seems generally associated with houses that are relatively late in style.

2. It is also probably that the supplies of local timber, never abundant, were becoming seriously reduced.

3. Fragmentary evidence resulting from alterations in some of the farmhouses seems to suggest that this was done in two or three surviving cases.

4. T.Pringle 'African Sketches', 339 - 342.

5. It is amusing to compare this fact with the näive explanation of the orientation of the Royal Observatory, Cape Town, Chapter Eleven, page 411, n.1.

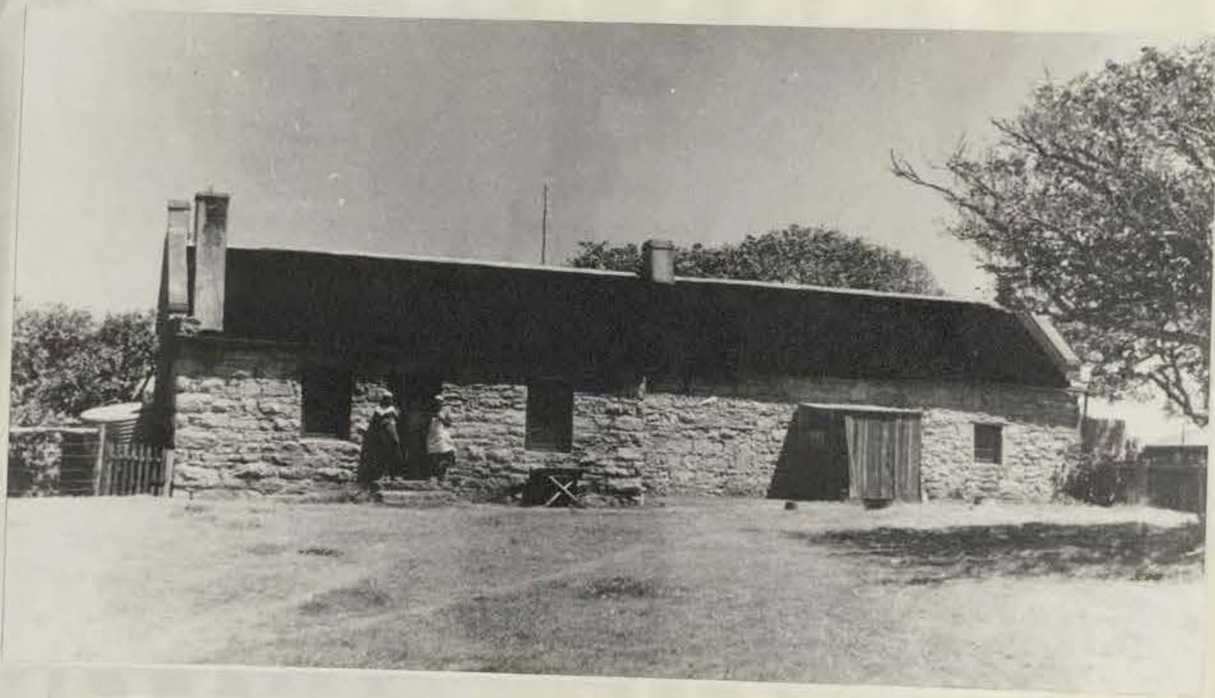
42. 'Eildon', Baviaans River. The substantial house which replaced Thomas Pringle's beehive hut, the latter thenceforth serving as the kitchen.

regarded an east or north orientation as of greater consequence than the view.[1] The hill-top settler farmhouses of the Albany district are therefore unique as a group, and it is interesting to notice that with them greater importance is always attached to the view than to the orientation, and that, where prospect allowed it, a south orientation was generally preferred to any other (Plate 42 - 5).[5]

The Boer, used to the heat of the summer but unaccustomed to artificially heating his living rooms in winter, sought the sun. The Englishman, adept at handling the cold, turned his back on what, to him, were the searing rays of a sub-tropical sun; yet he was prepared to sacrifice even that comfort for the greater attraction of an 'elegant prospect'.

The Great Storm must have considerably reduced the enthusiasm of the Settlers for wattle and daub and cob.[2] The new buildings were mostly in stone, but occasionally in burnt brick, now that that material was beginning to be extensively manufactured in the towns and on the mission stations. Occasionally, where the old site was considered satisfactory, the wattle and daub structure was preserved as the necleus of the house and protective outer layers of stonework carried up around it.[3] But more often the house was entirely rebuilt in stages with 'freestone' (soft sandstone or limestone) or shale, quarried on the farm.

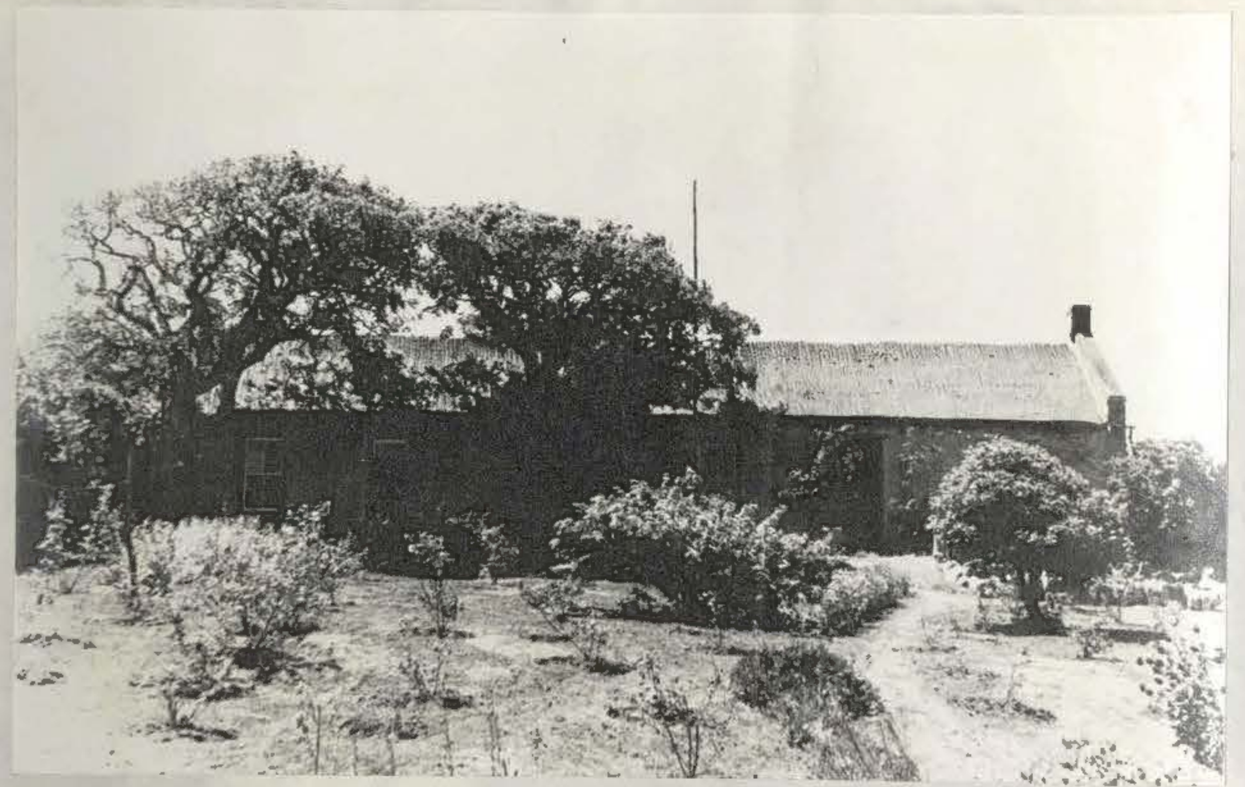
In 1825 Thomas Pringle returned to visit the frontier. He found that, in the Baviaans River Valley, 'my brother at Eildon had erected a commodious farm-cottage of stone and brick' to replace the beehive hut erected by Thomas himself (which now served as a kitchen) and that it had 'a chimney in the chief apartment - being the first chimney that had yet been built in the subdistrict or field cornetcy.'[4] This house faced south, and had originally only two rooms, a bedroom and a living room. Within a few years a third room was



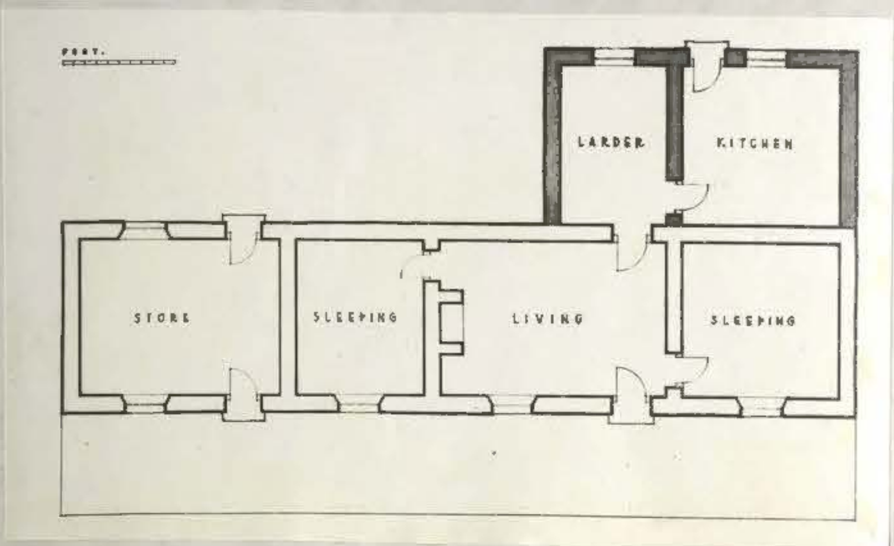
43.A. 'Tharfield', Kleinemonde. North facade. The roof, originally of thatch, has been restored in the photographs.

1. Information supplied by Mr. A.A.W. Pringle. The house was demolished only a few years ago.

2. G. Thompson, 'Travels', II, 215.



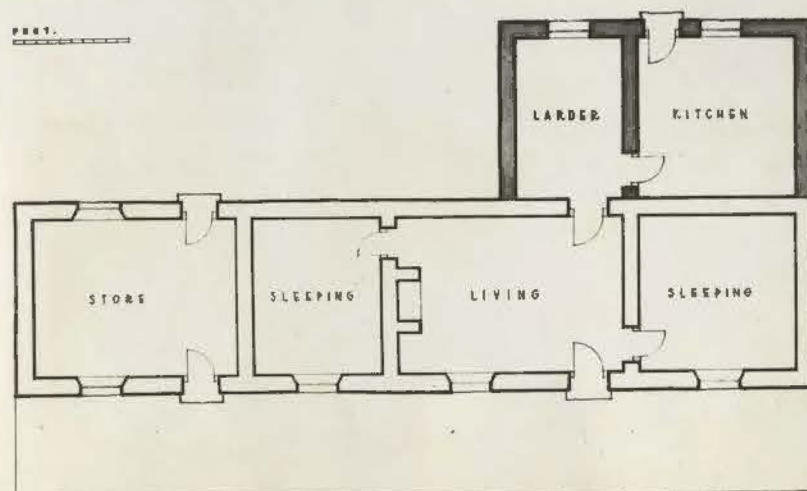
43.B, 44. 'Tharfield', Kleinemonde. South facade and plan. (The later additions are shown shaded).



1. Information supplied by Mr. A.A.W. Pringle. The house was demolished only a few years ago.

2. G. Thompson, 'Travels', II, 215.

43.B, 44. 'Tharfield', Kleinemonde. South facade and plan. (The later additions are shown shaded).



added in line with the others, and afterwards a wing at right angles at the back (Plate 42). The walls were of freestone, laid in mud mortar, and the roofs thatched at first with grass and later with wheat straw. Only the interior walls were of brick, unburnt.[1]

George Thompson was enthusiastic in his praise of the movement to erect more permanent farmhouses of stone. He cites the case of a settler who 'with the help of only one English servant... has erected a commodious stone house of three apartments, rudely but snugly furnished by his own work....' [2]

Fortunately, much of the local stone proved sound and durable. The shale, dark grey in colour, was easily broken along its bedding planes, yet otherwise remarkably tough. The 'freestone', in spite of its name, was harder to quarry but proved the more attractive and permanent building material. It was especially popular where it occurred on the surface in weathered outcrops and required little shaping before use. 'Freestone' was the term loosely used to describe any building stone which was smooth-faced and fine-grained and could be relatively easily shaped if desired. Both the limestone and the sandstone of the district ranged from golden-brown to cream-coloured and white. The farmers, even those who had had no previous experience of it, set about erecting their stone dwellings with the determination to put up, this time, durable and worthy buildings on their property. Among the settlers were men from Scotland, Lancashire, Cardigan, the Cotswolds, Cornwall and Wales. They vied with each other to produce the finest stonework in their district. Others, using their work as a pattern, learnt as they built. Some found it such a satisfying occupation that years later they turned to it as a favourite hobby in their old age. Soon stonewalls of the highest quality were to be seen all through the frontier.

By far the majority of the walls were of uncoursed random rubble, of the

45. 'Tharfield', Kleinemonde, from the North West.

46. Squared coursed rubble stonework, Cradock.

47. Shale walling, roughly coursed. 'Stoneyfields'.

48. Snecked rubble, 'Greenhills'.

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31 - 33). Men from the n
hills were skilled in the

type which is common for rough masonry all over the British Isles. For these the stones were seldom quarried, a sufficient supply being available scattered on the veld, in kranzes, or in the beds of streams. Boulders were broken up before use so that they presented a fairly smooth face to the outside of the wall. In work of good quality the stones of different size and shape were often fitted together with marvellous ingenuity, especially in field walls left as 'dry walls', that is, without mortar. Indeed, in first-class work, mortar was unnecessary for adhesive purposes and if any packing was used between the stones of buildings it was only to keep out draughts and damp (Plate 48). For this purpose mud was perfectly adequate if the stonework was afterwards to be painted or plastered. Where the stonework was to be exposed, however, as it was in the majority of cases, the stonework was either laid in, or pointed up with, lime mortar. An interesting alternative mortar sometimes used was made of a mixture of cow-dung and clay, which possessed considerable durability.

The experienced stonemason generally preferred to show his skill in more elaborate walling than in uncoursed random rubble. He might use roughly squared stones of almost equal size, with level joints, and perhaps some attempt at coursing, as at 'Barville Park' (Plate 133) and 'Glen Avon'. These walls were often originally left dry on the outside and filled internally with rubble, sand or clay, in which case they were more than two feet thick. Alternatively, if squared blocks of reasonable size were rare, the mason might reserve these for the window lintels, cills, jambs, and quoins, and fill in the remainder of the walls with random rubble, a traditional Cotswold practice, e.g. (Bathurst English Church; and Fletcher House, Cuylerville - Plates 31 - 33). Men from the north of England, the Border moors and the Lakeland hills were skilled in the peculiarly beautiful dry 'rag-masonry' so suited to

1. Matjes goed. Cyperus textilis (or typha Australia in some districts. (R.Marloth. 'The Dictionary of Common Names of Plants.' Specialty Press. Cape Town. 1917)

2. 'Tambookie' grass. Also known as 'tambootie' grass. Hyparrhenia spp. or Cymbopogon spp. (Chippindall, L.K.A. 'The Common Names of Grasses in S.Af.' Dept. of Agric. Bot. & Plant Pathology Series.No.7. Bulletin.No.265.Pretoria.1946-7)

3. In the exposed positions of many of the new houses on the tops of the hills the durable qualities of the materials were severely put to the test. This probably largely explains the great preference for stone in the later farmbuildings, and the complete absence of facebrickwork from even the most fashionable of the Georgian farmhouses. If brickwork was used it was invariably plastered. (For the same reason the joinery of windows and outside doors was most carefully executed to prevent deterioration with time.)

4. 'Incaluka' or 'Mountain rush'. Bobartia spp. cf.W.Bain Lanham & E.R.Willmore '1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains and Salem',15. The appearance of the locally executed thatched roof was often of high quality: cf.Philipps' description of Bethelsdorp: 'the thatching is really handsome...' (Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 62.)

49. Squared coursed rubble stonework,Cradock.

shale (Plate 47), which might at its best be laid to a smooth face (e.g.houses in the Bathurst district.) At the top of the scale were such types of stonework as squared rubble, coursed and uncoursed, for which every stone had to be shaped (e.g. Plate 46 'Oakwell', and 'Upper Gletwyn') and ashlar, with its fine straight joints and smooth face (e.g. Grahamstown military buildings).

But many of the farmers, unable to afford or secure the services of a skilled mason, and too anxious or occupied to attempt more ambitious work, fell back in the erection of their new dwellings on that unpretentious kind of random rubble which is known by the descriptive name of 'pudding-stone', i.e. the rough surface stone of the district collected at random and laid as it was found. Since it was generally covered with many successive coats of whitewash or rough plaster, the inadequacies of this kind of stonework were seldom noticeable.[3]

In their planning and arrangement, these cottages were subject to the same limitations as those of wattle and daub, mainly owing to the inability of their builders to roof them to a thickness of more than one room. Extensions were achieved either by the addition of lean-tos, by means of a wing at right angles, (as at 'Eildon') or by lengthening the main block.

The gable-ends were generally built up solid to carry the roof-tree, and only on isolated farms- mostly of later and more sophisticated style - are hipped roofs to be seen.

The roofing material was still generally thatch, made from 'matjes goed' reed[1] - where it was available - or from cultivated grasses, wheats, oats and rye, reaped with a sickle to prevent damage to the fibres. Experiments were also tried with veldt grasses, but their shorter life rendered them unsatisfactory, 'tambookie' grass[2] being the best of them. "Mountain Rushes"[4] ('incaluka')

50. (Left). Freestone wall at 'Assegai Bush'.

51,52. (Above). 'Mill River'. An early post-house on the road between Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. The roof, originally of thatch, has been restored in the photographs.

53. (Right). 'Woodlands' near Southwell.

54. Early farmhouse at Klu Klu, near Fort Beaufort. (Cory Library).

55. Stoneslating at Cerist, Merionethshire, Great Britain.

1. Estimate for Scott's Barrack's, Grahamstown. (G.H./Enclosure to Dispatches. 5th Feb. 1820) The eventual execution of the building was sub-contracted by Pieter Retief to one of the Settlers, named Hanger, a carpenter by trade. Perhaps it is no reflection on the material that the roofing proved inadequate during the storm of October, 1823, for a large part of the stone-walling also collapsed. v. Chapter 11, p. 393.

2. C.O.136/132.

3. C.O.2637/19. 19th Feb. 1821.

4. C.O.2653/90. 31st July, 1823.

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are also mentioned. The thatched roofs were often given the characteristic whitewashed lime-mortar ridge covering of the Cape Dutch farmhouses, one of the few concessions made by the English settlers in this second phase to the indigenous traditions. But some of the farmhouses appear (from old photographs) to have boasted the carefully stitched thatch ridge of the English Midlands.

Second in importance to thatch as a roofing material for the stone farmhouses were probably stone slates cut from the local shale. We do not know just how extensive their use was, but bearing in mind the fact that stone slating was the predominant method of roofing in the stone-building areas of Britain at this time, there are just sufficient references to 'slating' in the settler writings of the period to suggest that its use may have been quite widespread.

Indeed, the idea of quarrying local slate for use in roofing was contemplated by an English officer in Grahamstown even before the arrival of the settlers: 'The attempt to procure Slates for the Roofs of Buildings in the neighbourhood of Grahamstown affording prospects of success, this estimate allows for the use of that material, it being obviously much to be preferred to the usual one, that of thatching with straw... Quarrying and forming Slates for Roofs, and laying the Same: Rds. 1,725.' [1]

In October 1820 it was specified that a new Government Store in Port Elizabeth was to be 'covered with good Slate', [2] and in February 1821 the estimates for the Drostdy at Bathurst included a schedule of Slater's work for the quarrying, shaping and laying of a slate roof over the whole. [3] Finally, in July 1823, a reference was made to a tender-price for the new St.George's Church, Grahamstown, being low 'provided that it is not under a slate roof.' [4]

It must be remembered that the material in question was not slate proper,

1. Estimate for Scott's Barrack's, Grahamstown. (G.H./Enclosure to Dispatches. 5th Feb. 1820) The eventual execution of the building was sub-contracted by Pieter Retief to one of the Settlers, named Hanger, a carpenter by trade. Perhaps it is no reflection on the material that the roofing proved inadequate during the storm of October, 1823, for a large part of the stone-walling also collapsed. v. Chapter 11, p. 393.

2. C.O.136/132.

3. C.O.2637/19. 19th Feb. 1821.

4. C.O.2653/90. 31st July, 1823.

1. Sophia Pigot refers to a 'Slate quarry' near her home at 'Pigot Park' (Entry of 9th August 1820) and of Colonel Wiltshire riding to 'the Slate quarry'. 28th Aug. 1820). On 13th July 1821 she records that 'One of the men found a Slate quarry'.

2. E. Morse-Jones.

56. Stoneslating in England. Monsal Dale, Derbyshire.
57. Stoneslated parapets on 'Howard', near Grahamstown.

from which the hard thin blue-grey modern slates are made, but shale stone. Shale slates were much rougher, more varied in colour and texture, and nearly half an inch in thickness.

The sites of the stone quarries from which the stone-slating was taken have long since been forgotten.[1] But small zones of fine-grained planar shale occur throughout the shale region, which extends right across the Albany District, almost to the coast. There are early references to a fine spotted 'slate' from the farm 'Whitney' on the Bushman's River.[2] But the quality of the shale from the different quarries must have been highly variable.

At the Bathurst Drostdy the respected settler John Shepstone worked as slater. But in spite of his efforts the quality of the slate proved a disappointment '... the stones or slates have failed in the expectation of their stability as a covering of Roofs...the slates are broken to an extent, that it is useless to attempt repairing.' (C.O.2682/124. 27th August.1826. Report of George Gilbert.)

It is therefore unlikely that new stone-slate roofs were laid much after 1826. But, to judge from the extensive building operations of the years before, there were probably a number of farmhouses on which the material was used, and the more fortunate may have retained their stone-slate roofs until the advent of Welsh slate in the 1840's. The effect of shale roofing above stone walls must have been extremely harmonious and pleasing, the rough texture giving rise to dappled shadows and a surface encrusted with lichens and moss. A stone-slate roof, such as can still be seen in parts of England today (Plates 31 & 32), has a subtle undulating irregularity which blends well with the landscape, so that the buildings seem to grow out of the hills themselves.

Stone-slate roofs required stronger roof timbers, and more care in fixing,

58. (Above). 'Cawoods Post' from the west.
59. (Above). 'Cawoods Post' from the east.
60. 'Howard', Belmont Valley near Grahamstown. c.1829.
61. Thomas Baines' painting of 'Hounslouw', near Grahamstown. (detail).

1. C.O.2682/124. 27th Aug. 1826. C.O.2692/101. 16th Oct. 1827. C.O.2705/323, 7th June 1828.

2. J.E.Alexander, Supplement to the 'Grahamstown Journal' Aug.20th 1835: (Plate 96).

3. Robert Dickason, of Sevenfountains, a Sussex building contractor, fired his own tiles as early as 1820, for the roofing of his farmhouse. (Lanham & Willmore - '1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains & Salem.', 25). Goldswain mentions carrying 'a Load of tiles for the barrix' to Clay Pits in 1822. (Una Long: 'Goldswain's Chronicle', I, 43). But it is not possible to determine whether these were flooring or roofing tiles). More specifically, Sophia Pigot made a reference in her diary (7th Dec.1821) 'Papa rode to the tile-man...'

4. Ibid. Sir James E. Alexander ('Excursions in Western Africa', London 1840) mentions visiting a farmer near Uitenhage in 1834, who said 'You see this tiled roof: I have just put it on instead of the old thatched one'.

5. Grahamstown Drostdy had stonework as far as the beams of the lower rooms, with the upper walls, interior and external, of brick. C.O.2645/97. Contract, 8 July, 1822.

62. 'Rietkuil' near Uitenhage, roofed with tiles.

the slates diminishing in size towards the ridge; generally, a roof of low pitch was necessary in order to prevent them dragging away the pegs which held them. As a result these roofs were difficult to waterproof at the best of times, and recourse was often taken to stopping up leaks with mortar. It is interesting to note that when the Bathurst Drostdy roof was replaced with the thinner and lighter imported Welsh slates in 1827 (at huge expense) the ridge of the roof was raised four feet.[1]

It is also likely that, in view of the widespread use of shingle roofs in the towns during the period in question, at least a few of the farmbuildings were given them. George Gilbert, the leading contractor in the district, felt them to be highly suitable for that purpose, (See Page 173) and Kaffirboom shingles are spoken of as if they were in common use in 1835,[2] but no examples are known to survive. Tiled roofs, apart from their isolated manufacture by skilled settlers,[3] seem to have been mainly restricted to the immediate surroundings of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage (Plate 62), but are mentioned in 1835 as generally recommended roofing materials for the whole frontier.[4] They will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Stone cottages were generally of one storey, more rarely of two. Occasionally for greater stability a two storey dwelling would be built of stone up to window-head or window-cill height on the ground floor, and of baked brick above, the brick enabling the upper walls to be thinner.[5] Another method of achieving secure stability was to reduce the height of the upper storey, as in the Bathurst Inn (Plate 91 on p.351), where the windows occur almost at floor level and the ceiling height slopes down to five feet at the walls (c.f. 'Bellevue', Plates 63 - 70).

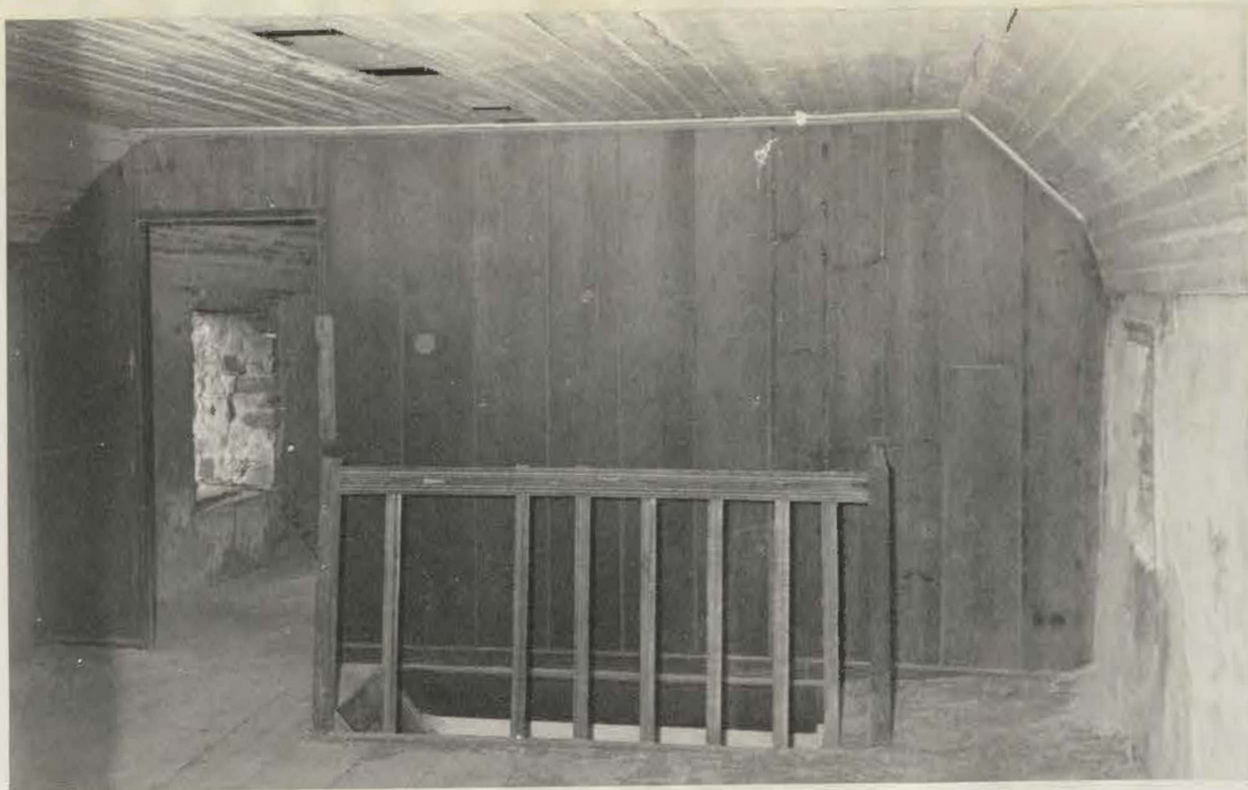
The planning of these houses was very similar to that of the temporary houses of the early years. The limited spans available in timber tended to

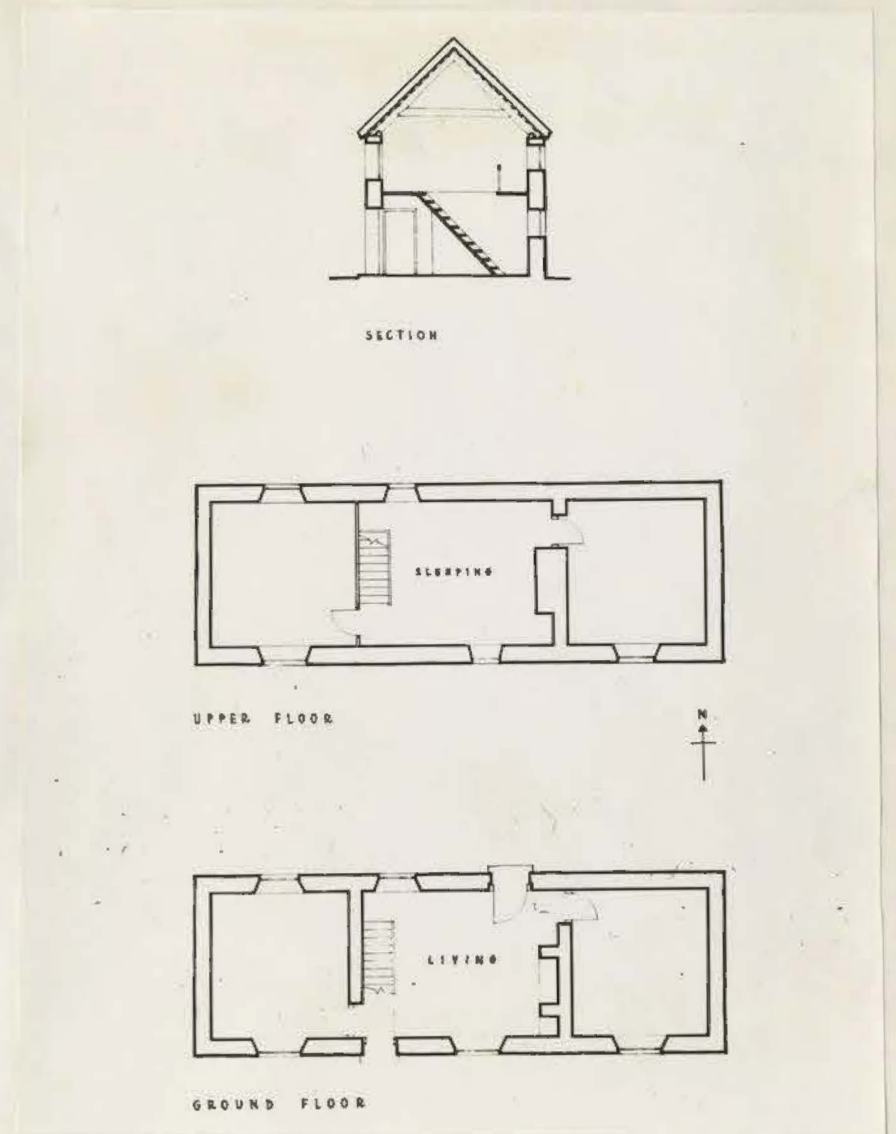
63. 'Bellevue' near Cuylerville, distant view.
(The roof was originally thatch).

'Bellevue'.

64. (Left). Facade; the roof was originally of thatch.

65. (Above). Gable end.





'Bellevue' Interior.

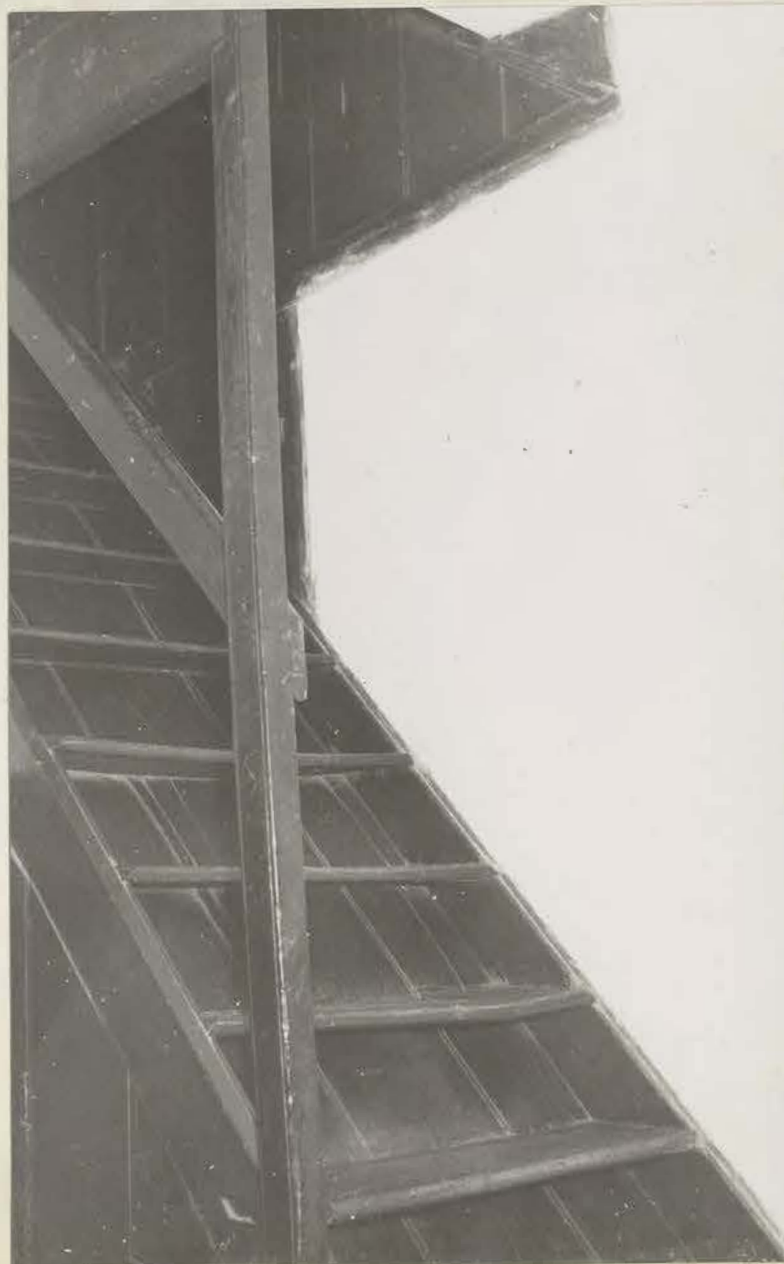
66. Stairhead in sleeping space.

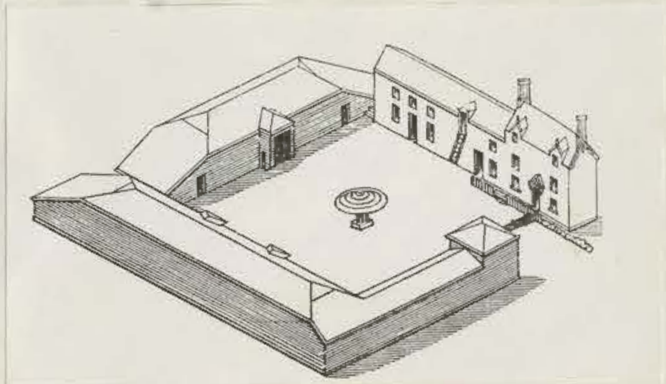
67. (Right). General view of sleeping space.

68. Plans and section.

69. Staircase, identical with this in Richard Cush's home, Salem.

70. Fireplace in the Living Room.





71. Typical Buckinghamshire farm; from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', 1833.

72. 'Glendour' near the Kowie from Thomson's 'Travels',1827.

limit the breadth of rooms to twelve or fourteen feet. In cottages the rooms were arranged in a line without a corridor, inter-leading doors between the rooms providing access from one end of the plan to the other. The front door generally opened directly into the living room.

In two-storey buildings the yellow-wood stairs usually ascended from the living room in the centre of the house straight into the master bedroom. It must be admitted that however one may admire the charm and compactness of the planning of the farmhouses, they were seldom very convenient. There were few or no storecupboards, seldom any larder, and rarely any attempt at an internal bathroom or lavatory. (Earth closets, referred to as 'privies' were located in the smellier parts of the farmyard.) Partition walls were made of yellow-wood planking on a framework, while yellow-wood floors were either carried on joists from wall to wall, or rested on stout beams spanning centrally across the rooms, often without relationship to the position of doors and windows. The ceiling of the ground floor rooms was simply the exposed floor construction of the level above, and in consequence the achievement of reasonable privacy in such a dwelling was well-nigh impossible.

Of the houses built within a short time after the 1823 flood, one of the best documented was 'Glendour' near the Kowie, built by Thomas Philipps in 1824 (Plate 72). 'We are really in a very comfortable temporary dwelling made by the Hottentots under the supervision of Edward. It is very superior to the one at Lampeter, we have two sitting rooms and an entrance room, five bedrooms, the kitchen is not yet erected and the cooking is at present done all in a place cut in the thick bush near the house, and you can have no idea how well they manage. The fire is lighted near a large tree on the ground. A pole is slung from this to a post placed opposite, and to this pole are hung the pots and kettles. All our roasting is done in Camp Ovens' (elsewhere he refers to

74. (Top left). Dining Room of Richard Gush's house, Salem, 1832.

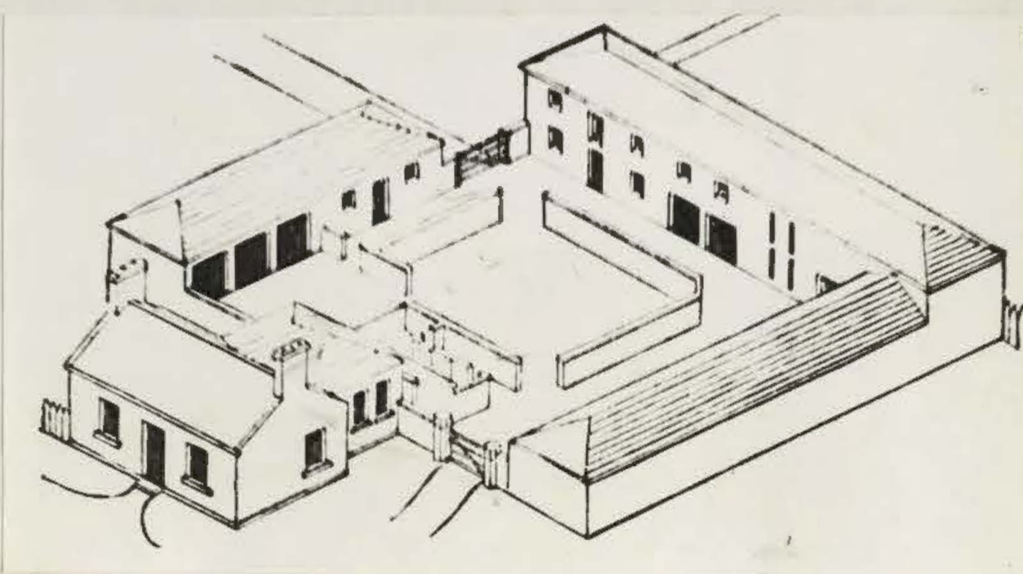
73. (Above). Drawing Room of 'Assegai Bush'.

75. (Bottom left). Fireplace and removable fireplace screen, Clergyman's house, Baviaan's River, c.1829.

76. Drawing room of 'Oakwell' (Plate 41).

1. Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 232, Feb.1825. A year later he said (p.313) 'we still continue in our little cottage of reed and plaster.'

2. C.O.2563/18 25th Feb. 1823. Contract for the Grahamstown Prison: '...mixed mortar, formed of clay, lime, Bullock's Blood in proper proportions...'



77. Dining room of 'Belmont' (v.Plates 36,37). The cupboard on the right was probably originally fitted with a door to match that on the left.

78.A. Farm at Ingleston, Scotland, from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', 1833.

using an ant-hill as an oven).'... They are now laying out the garden...'[1]

The ground floors of these houses were usually stone-flagged or laid with a composition made of clay, manure, ox blood, and lime.[2] Brick and tile floors were occasionally used. By 1829 boarded floors were beginning to replace composition floors, even in the farmhouses, and then composition, stone flagging, and brick or tile flooring was used only in the kitchen, larder and store-rooms. But even in such a pretentious house as the Bathurst Drostdy three of the bedrooms were paved with tiles, while the kitchen and stores were paved with brick.

Composition flooring produced a remarkably hard and durable surface, as is evident from the fact that it has survived down to the present day in many houses (Plate 77). Instead of clay, powdered ashes were sometimes used in the mixture, as in the following recipe recommended for farm floors in England: '... a stratum of a mixture of gravel and newly slaked lime, to the depth of six inches... after it has dried a week... cover it, to the depth of two inches, with a composition of equal part of quick lime and powdered smithy ashes, brought to the consistence of mortar by the addition of bullock's blood, stale milk, oil, or any other description of greasy matter... if immediately well and long rubbed with coarse woollen cloths, it may be brought to a high polish. The colour, when bullock's blood is used, is at first brown, but after some weeks it changes to light grey...' (Loudon, 'Encyclopedia of Cottage,Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture...etc... London,' 1st.ed.1833,280)

In order to retain the brown colour it was the practice on many of the farms to rub the floor with fresh bullock's blood every fortnight. Afterwards it was discovered that wax polish could be just as effective. Some of the composition floors have been polished in this way for nearly one hundred and forty years, and a good one has a lustre and colour comparable only to old

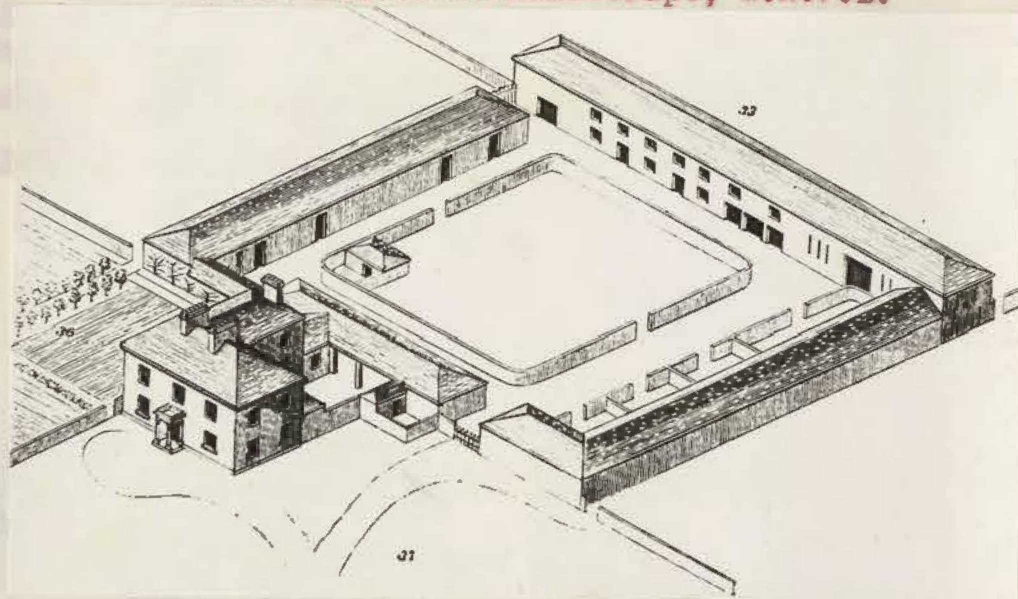
78.B. Farm at Gatestack, Scotland, from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', 1833.

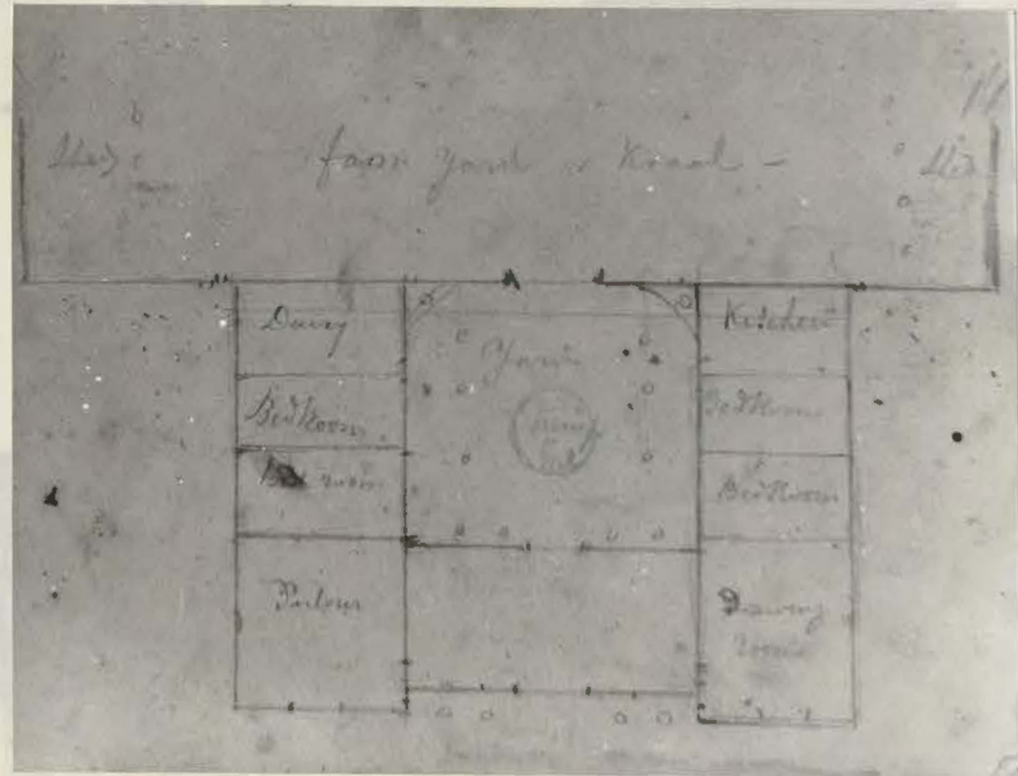
78.C. Sketch of his proposed farm from the notebook of the Albany Settler, Arthur Barker, 1820. (S.A.P.L.).

78.D. Sketch for a barn from the same source.

1. 'We found a neat whitewashed and one-storeyed house in a valley... the house was very clean, consisting of a large hall and side rooms, the floors of all of which were shining with black polish.' Sir James E. Alexander. 'Excursions in Western Africa', London, 1840, I, 338.

2. Arthur Barker. 1st Notebook. Manuscript, S.A.P.L.





1. 'We found a neat whitewashed and one-storeyed house in a valley... the house was very clean, consisting of a large hall and side rooms, the floors of all of which were shining with black polish.' Sir James E. Alexander. 'Excursions in Western Africa', London, 1840, I, 338.
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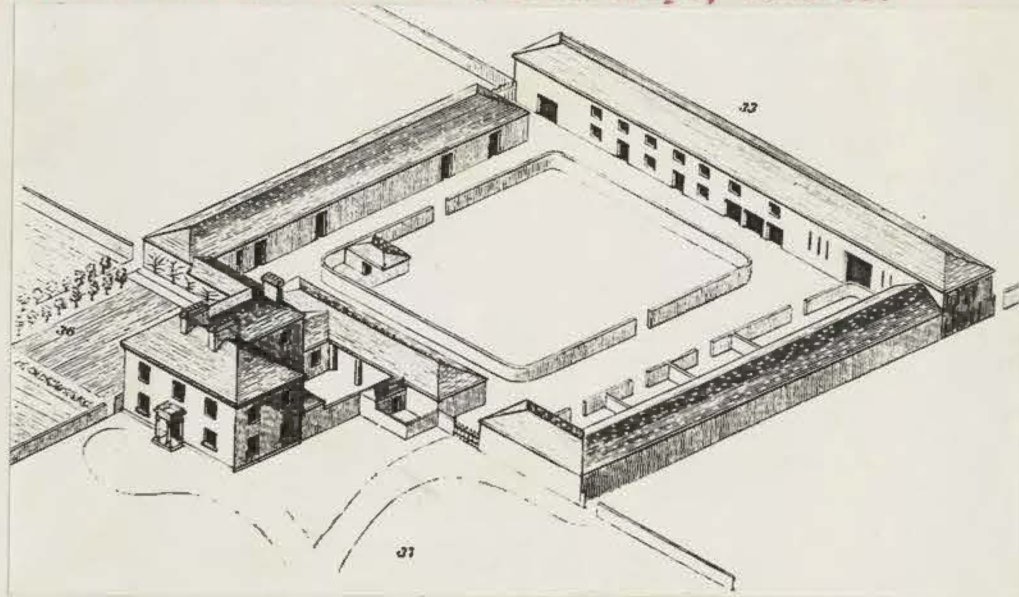
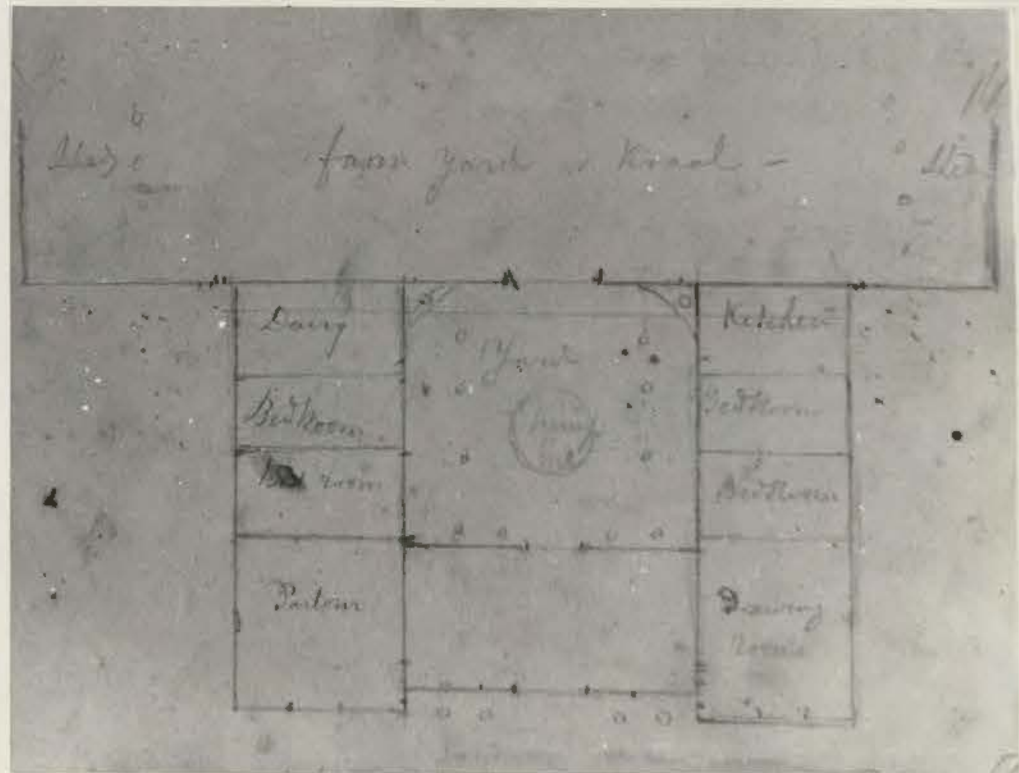




mahogany, for which, at first sight, it might easily be mistaken. (e.g.'Assegai Bush' Guest Farm). Others were shined with black polish.[1]

Doors and windows continued to be made of yellow-wood for many years, although teak and deal were also used for the purpose. Joinery which required skilled workmanship was increasingly pre-fabricated in Grahamstown or one of the other frontier towns.

The layout of the farm buildings around the house seems to have followed closely the practice in Britain at that time. Of course, the poorer establishments seldom had much more at first than a lean-to stable on the back of the house and a cattle-kraal made native-fashion of thorn-bushes and loose stones. But even in 1820 such settlers as Arthur Barker were projecting fully-fledged homesteads for themselves, 'with parlour, drawing room and four bedrooms, a kitchen and a dairy arranged around a yard with a well in the centre'. (Plates 78c. & 80c).[2]

The yard referred to was really the 'dung-yard', one of the two necessary enclosures adjacent to the farm buildings, the other being the 'rick-yard'. The former, according to a manual of the early thirties, 'ought to be central to the stables and cattle-houses, for the reception of the dung produced in them as it is daily wheeled out. The common position is the centre of the farmery, where it is enclosed by a wall, against which, in large farms, there are frequently open low sheds for cattle, and pigsties for swine (Plate 78). Both these animals, as well as poultry, are allowed the run of the yard over the dung, to which they do good rather than harm. The surface... ought to slope towards one centre, or towards one point which ought to be the lowest...' (Loudon, 408) 'The rick-yard is behind the barn.' (Ibid). It was suggested that it should be in

1. It was not built until 1862, but used the parts of an older mill at Salem. It was 8-sided, 21 ft. high from the ground to the kerb on which rested the revolving cupola. The base of the mill had a diameter of 18 ft. tapering to 11 ft. at the kerb. (from 'Eastern Province Annual 1942', article by S.du Plessis.)

2. This one is thought to have been used as a fort during the Kaffir Wars.

   There is another surviving mill at Trappes Valley.

3. Goldswain's 'Chronicle' (ed. Una Long.) I, 123.

79. Windmill on 'Whitney'; from an old photograph.

80.A. Windmill tower near Fort Beaufort.

80.B. Windmill at Halnaker Hill, Sussex.

the most windy situation for drying the corn when it is newly stacked. 'The orchard and garden are behind the stable and dwelling house ... Pigsties lean against the end of the house or stable.' (Ibid). Dairies were usually placed in a position sheltered from the weather, with windows on the south side and wire screens over the windows and doors against flies. Cross ventilation and cleanliness were given great emphasis, and the floor was generally paved with stone flags or brick, and carefully drained.

The barn was usually placed on the exposed side. As it was the biggest building it sheltered the others and the farmyard.

A dominant building in some farm groups was the mill. The ruins of small watermills are still to be seen on many of the locations. But even more prominent was the windmill, built of stone on the pattern of those in England, or with a weather-boarded upper section which was able to turn (a type known as the 'smock mill'.) A splendid example of the latter stood, until recently, on the farm 'Whitney', near Alexandria, (Plate 79[1]) while one of the former still stands, minus its sails, alongside a road near Fort Beaufort.[2]

The cattle-yard - the 'kraal' - was enclosed with walls of cob, rubble stone or timber. Goldswain talks of his kraal fence being 'maid of posts and rales mortised into the posts'.[3]

Complete farm groups such as these were built, or were being built, all over the Albany district before the outbreak of the Sixth Kaffir War, e.g. the Southey farm on the Kap River, where George Southey 'had nearly completed the erection of commodious and extensive farm premises when the war of 1835 broke out.' (Colin Campbell, 'British South Africa', 212)

Cross ventilation was an important factor in many of the farm buildings,

1. London 'Encyclopedia' 1833, 93.

80.C. Dairy at 'Greenfountains' (see Plates 18,28-30).

81. 'Assegai Bush'. The original thatch roof has been suggested in the photograph.

and the need to provide it resulted in those splayed vertical slots in the stone walling which have so often been confused with firing ports. (Though doubtless the need to use them as such must have arisen on some of the farms more than once.)

Cellars were provided under the living space, or, in other cases (such as 'Gletwyn') as free-standing buildings sunk in the ground.

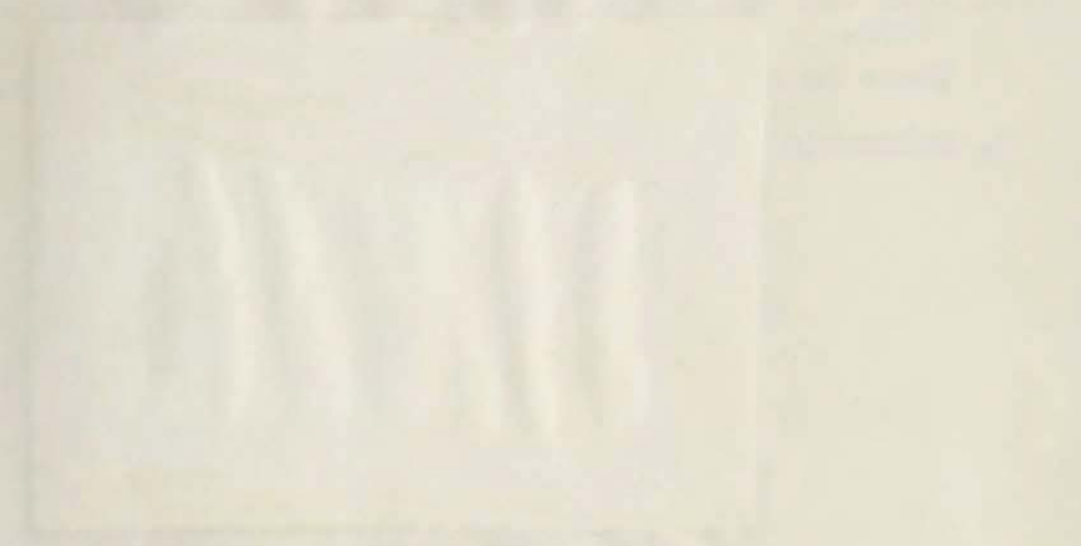
Cleaning and drying space was at a premium, and this must early have encouraged the addition of verandas to the farm cottages. In view of the hazards of weather, Loudon recommended '...a long broad portico, well adapted for drying clothes under, and protecting the children from the sun or rain while at play...'[1]

Internally the farm cottages seem mostly to have been whitewashed, though this was occasionally varied by the addition of cheap powder or earth colours. Curtains, if only of the cheapest calico, were hung in the windows.

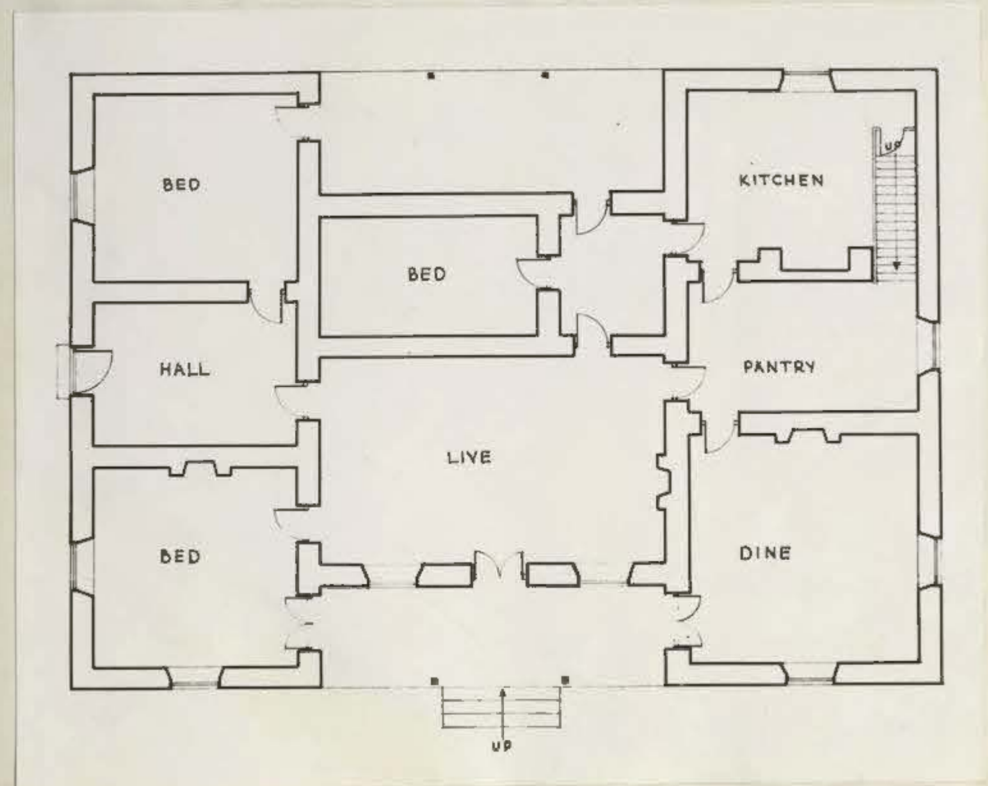
Fireplaces were generally large and open-hearthed, with high mantle shelves, so that they could be used for both cooking and warming the rooms. Only in the largest farmhouses did the presence of a formal reception room lead to the inclusion of a smaller fireplace with a lower mantle, and even then grates were very seldom provided (Plates 73-6).

Above the fireplaces rose square or rectangular chimney stacks, which projected into the room in order to preserve the simplicity of the gable end, and broke through the roof on the ridge line.

The massive simplicity of these stone chimney stacks, unrelieved except for an occasional drip-moulding or crisp-cut course, is one of the most attractive features of the old cottages.



82. Plan of 'The Retreat' at 'Glen Avon'.



'The Retreat' at 'Glen Avon', Somerset East.

83. General view of the front (South) facade.

84. Detail of a column capital on the veranda.

85. The front entrance.

86. The back of the house.

'The Retreat' at 'Glen Avon', Somerset East.

83. General view of the front (South) facade.
84. Detail of a column capital on the veranda.
85. The front entrance.
86. The back of the house.

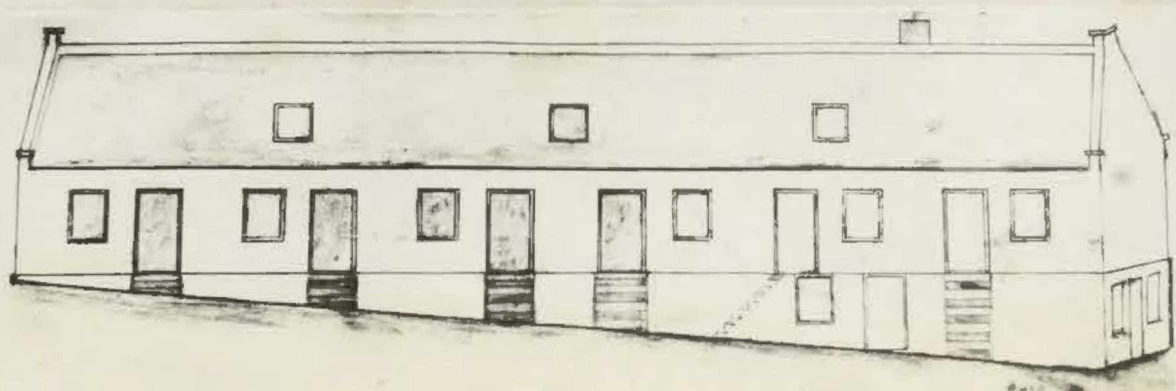
1. C.O.2653/47. 12th May, 1824.

2. Probably built c.1821-26. The lands were granted in 1821 (Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 199.) and Hart went to live permanently on the property in 1825, after serving as Superintendent of the Somerset Farm and Acting Landdrost of Somerset East. The house, 'The Retreat', was probably built during his tenure of public office. It shows a fascinating blend of influences, the U-plan and rear gables have a decidedly Cape flavour the veranda incorporated under the main roof evidencing Colonial influence while the internal and external finishes, mouldings and character are all predominantly English.

3. C.O.222/16 22nd May, 1824.

87. 'Southwell', Schoolhouse and chapel (originally thatched).

88. Farmbuildings at Somerset East, drawing possibly by Robert Hart, 1824.



Always short of room for storage, and seeking it in the roof space, some of the English settlers experimented with dormer windows in the thatch or stone-slate roof. Two drawings of farm buildings on Somerset Farm, to the design of Robert Hart, show them,[1] and a number survive on his own house at 'Glen Avon' (Plates 88, 81-6).[2] The early Customs buildings at the Kowie also had dormer windows,[3] as had the original 'Oatlands' in Grahamstown, and we may take these examples as evidence that their use was more widespread. But it seems that, as in the Cape, the waterproofing difficulties they introduced proved insurmountable, and very few of them remain.

We have now brought the settlers up to the year 1834. The wool trade was expanding, several good seasons had introduced a note of prosperity into the district, and those hardy settlers who had clung to their locations through all the hardships and discouragements of the early years had good reason to congratulate themselves on their perseverance. Throughout the Albany district the farms were well-stocked, farmhouses gleamed in new paint and fresh thatch. Trees had grown up around the farmyards, sheltered the white cottage windows and threw patches of cool shade across the carriage tracks leading up to the houses. Gardens had been planted, such as that of Philip Lucas at 'Rietfontein', who 'had splendid walks cut out ... in the bush in front of the house, ... and a maze in which the children could easily lose themselves for a time.' (Colin Campbell: 'British South Africa', 198)

Then, in December, 1834, at a time when the district was thriving, the most disastrous misfortune enveloped the frontier. Without warning twelve thousand natives suddenly swept across the Kaffirland border, laid waste the whole of the country from Somerset East to the sea, and 'demolished in one short week the

90. House originally attached to
'Sidbury Park' estate.

91. Kitchen at 'Willowglen', Belmont Valley, near Grahamstown.
A typical Settler kitchen.

entire labours of fifteen years, [and] wantonly murdered upwards of forty of the peaceful inhabitants...' (Rev. William Shaw. 'The Story of My Mission', 164) Grahamstown itself was barely saved from attack, after a remarkable six-day ride by Colonel Harry Smith from Cape Town to take over the command on the frontier. It is said that it was his horror upon seeing the desolation wrought by the raiders that determined the Governor, Sir Benjamin d'Urban, to press the pursuit of the invaders far into their own territory, where their chiefs were finally brought to retribution early in 1835.

The Kàffir invasion is graphically described in the diaries of the time. Jeremiah Goldswain - who had built a double-storey stone house for his new wife near Bathurst after 1833 - had frequently to leave his family alone while he made urgent deliveries of lime for the Defence Works at Grahamstown. His account of his wife's adventures, in the company of another family sheltering in the house, tells us, incidentally, a great deal about the buildings of the period:

'We left one Morning for Grahams Town and about Nine oclock the same night the Kaffers came to the House: the two women heard them walk rownd the Hows and pulling the blind a little one side Mrs.Goldswain saw the Kaffers: they went rownd the Howse untill they came to the Kitchen door: they tried the latch but the door was fast: they could not open it...Mrs.Goldin wished to scream out to friten them away for she was afraid that they wold set the House on fier and then they wold be burnt to death: but Mrs.Goldswain wold not alow her to do it for if they did sit the House on fier they cold git the Children down steares and all of them could go into the Kitchen and the other little rome and be safe: as the Kitchen was a flat rufe maid with Stone and Lime and the wood had no communication with the timber belonging to the other part of the House and they wold be quit safe all tho they mite be a little ill-convenced by the smoke. Everey Night after this my Wife tuck her Gun upstares with her determine that if the Kaffers did com that she wold trie and shoot the first that entred into the House and then to put all the Children out at the window on to the flat roof and having a parapet wall rownd it so that if they all laid down the Kaffers could not see them. About this time Capt. Forbes came out from Bathurst and finding that I had left for Grahams Town and at this time thear ware onley my wife and five children at the House he ordred them that moment to go over to the Mill. My wife informed him that she cold not do [it] : he stormed and soore that she should go but she got the day... "Well, since you are so deturmned not to leave the house I see that you have got a winow in the end of your House now if aney Kaffers coms or you hear aney thing wich you think is Kaffers you hang a light out of the window and I will order the sentry to give a

1. Goldswain's 'Chronicle' ed. Una Long. I. 119-120.

2. The burning of the farmhouses was not always as calamitous as it sounds. e.g. The double storeyed stone farmhouse on 'Sharon' ('Vlak Plaats') had its thatched roof set on fire, but it burned out 'without serious damage to the yellow wood ceiling', or the walls (W.Bain Lanham & E.R.Willmore (The 1820 Settlers etc.', 27.)

3. These figures of the Report of the Government Commissioner are quoted by Rev. William Shaw in 'The Story of My Mission', 164.

4. Colin Campbell, 198, 208, 212 and 220, in some cases only the thatched roof was burnt.

5. Although J. Backhouse ('Narrative of a visit to Mauritius and South Africa', London 1844) believed that the natives burnt the houses because they might be used by the military.

92. Room in Southwell School. (see Plate 87). Typical of the interiors of the late eighteen twenties.

good Loock out and if he sees your light I will send you asistance."'[1]

PHASE III - POST 1835.

The sad survivors among the settlers, returning to their farms from their refuge in the towns, were confronted with appalling destruction and staggering losses on every side. Altogether, 455 farmhouses had been sacked and burnt,[2] while 111,418 cattle and even a greater number of sheep had been driven back to Kaffirland.[3]

'... all the property of the settlement, in crops & stock, was destroyed and carried off, reducing the District to a more ruinous state than that in which it was found by the Emigrants on their arrival in 1820.' (Ref. John Ayliff: from Godlonton, 'Memorials of the British Settlers', Grahamstown 1844). The Bailie homestead at Cuylerville was one of those destroyed, 'the large and expensive residence which [John Bailie] erected on his farm was burned to the ground and the whole estate laid waste.' (Colin Campbell, 'British South Africa', 56). Almost all the well-known houses in the district were burnt, among them 'Belmont', 'Greenfountains', 'Glendower', and 'Pigot Park'.[4]

One thing was certain: the settlers had learned a bitter lesson and they were not anxious to let the same thing happen again. In spite of warnings from the veterans of 1819, most of the settlers' homes had been totally indefensible, so that they had had no alternative but to fly.[5] Not only had few proper precautions been taken for the safe kraaling of the livestock on the farms in such an emergency, but the cattle had actually been stolen by the raiders from a communal kraal next to the Bathurst Church which the men had been unable to secure.

1. It was afterwards printed as a pamphlet.

2. The forts were usually square, only the larger of thm having projecting embrasures in the sides as at Lombards Post. The stone for their construction was gathered on the surface and generally rather roughly laid, by the soldiers themselves, in mud mortar, so that few have survived except as mounds of rubble. Small, lean-to rooms were sometimes built against the inside of the walls for the accommodation of men and horses. Only in a few cases was the central space open enough to serve as a parade ground or mustering area. Upper Kaffir Drift Post (1817 Plate 94), one of the largest forts, which preserved a clearly recognisable ground plan up to Cory's time, was described by him ('Rise of South Africa', I:309) as having 'an outer stone wall beyond the walls of the enclosed buildings, thus forming a passage round the fort. At the corners of the outer walls were bastions on which field pieces could be, and probably were, mounted... The accommodation for the men and horses was fairly extensive. Outside the fort were several isolated buildings, one of which was evidently a bakehouse.' In a contemporary drawing, (by H.Foley, Africana Museum) Kaffir Drift Post is shown with a high palisaded fence as part of the defences.

Another large fort of which a plan has been preserved was the pentagonal Fort Willshire (Funah's Kraal) begun after the 1819 War on the instruction of Lord Charles Somerset (Plate 98). It was designed - by Major Holloway of the Royal Engineers - as the strategic rallying point on the Keiskama, and was in consequence of considerable size. Every available man was employed on its construction, and the five bastions were well advanced when the Sir Rufane Donkin (who had meanwhile become Acting Governor in Somerset's absence) stopped the work and ordered the removal of building operations to a lower site half a mile nearer the river, giving as his reason his belief that the structure was too expensive for the requirements of a frontier post. (Theal, 'History of S.A.' I:218-9, 234-6)

Unfortunately the square fort he erected instead cost more than would have been required for the completion of the original structure, which did not add to the enthusiasm with which Somerset received the news of the frustration of his plans. An enquiry commissioned by Somerset afterwards reported that in addition the position of the new barrack was bad from a military point of view, since it was overlooked from the other side of the river, and too low and cramped for the health and convenience of the troops. Whether Somerset or Donkin was right on this issue is another of those aspects of the dispute between them which is certainly no clearer through the mists of 140 years.

Donkin's fort consisted of four long rows of low buildings forming a hollow square, and defended by stone walls. There were 'six small rooms for twenty sergeants, one room for Sergeant-Major, one room for Quarter-master sergeant, eleven rooms for privates, each to accommodate twenty-five, a guard-room, a bake-house, two rooms for the commissariat store-keeper, a room for hospital, a surgery, an orderly room, stables, 534 feet by 18 ft. wide, and

Continued./

Captain J. Alexander, aide-de-camp to the Governor, was one of those who felt keenly the need for more defensible architecture in the area. On 12th August 1835 he wrote a report to the Governor which the latter caused to be published (together with his own admonition to the settlers to take the advice seriously) as a supplement to the 'Grahamstown Journal' (August 20th, 1835, No.191) Plate 96.[1] The editor of that newspaper further recommended the article with the comment that 'It is just as easy to erect a dwelling capable of being defended as it is to construct it in such a way as to tempt ... the commission of outrage. One of the best preventive measures against aggression is to show that you are prepared to resist it.'

Alexander's provocative thoughts drew an immediate response from George Gilbert, then one of the most distinguished building contractors in the Colony, who wrote to the Governor describing the design of his own house (afterwards built near Fort Beaufort and named 'Sephton Manor'). This the Governor also caused to be published, both in the 'Grahamstown Journal' (of 10th September, 1835) and as a Government Notice (Plate 97).

In spite of continued native incursions, there were, prior to 1835, remarkably few examples of fortifications of any kind in this exposed frontier area. Apart from the fort and blockhouse at Fort Elizabeth, erected in 1799 (Chapter 3), there were, in the whole Eastern Province, no more than a dozen stone-built, defensible forts, all but one or two of which were simple rectangular enclosures of low loop-holed walls.[2] For the rest, the defences of the frontier had frequently been referred to as inadequate and defective, consisting as they did of forts comprising a few thatched huts, barricaded by walls of pointed poles. (e.g. Rev. John Ayliff in Godlonton's 'Memorials of the

Continuation

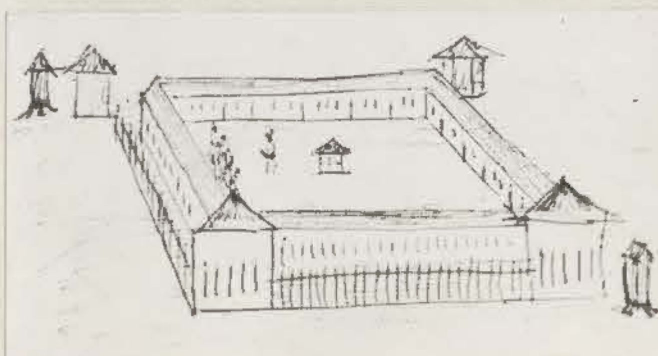
a magazine'. (Official report of 1826, quoted by Cory,II,178. et seq.)

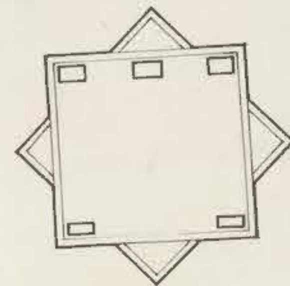
Fort Willshire became the focus of a great trading fair with the natives, at which many of the settlers carried on a lucrative trade in ivory, skins, cattle and sheep.)

The use of fortifications in European warfare had slowly died out with the growth of the power of explosives in the eighteenth century. But against the natives on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony - unskilled as they were in the arts of aggressive warfare - traditional fortifications remained effective for many years.

1. John Campbell 'Diary of Travels in South Africa',238. MS.S.A.Pub. Lib.)

2. H.Lichtenstein 'Travels in Southern Africa'.(London,1812), 253. Compare this description with that of Farewell's house at Port Natal (D'Urban) in July 1826 '... Within the fort he keeps his cattle, of which he has a good stock. It is of a triangular form - at each angle one gun is to be placed. The house is built of wood, about sixty feet by twenty, and has six tolerably good rooms...' (G.Thompson 'Travels' 1827, Appendix V)





93. View of Kaffir Drift Post, contemporary drawing. (Albany Museum).

94. Kaffir Drift - sketch from F. Ross's Journal. (S.A.P.L.).

95. Original plan of Lombard's Post (from the Title Deed Survey).

British Settlers', 19)

Though this kind of fortification was patently inadequate against the assegais and fire-brands of the raiding hordes, it was all most of the garrisons had to protect them, and it was also employed, after 1819, for the defence works of Mission Stations, such as Theopolis, which John Campbell described very precisely in his diary:

'... in consequence of the repeated attacks of the Caffres they resolved to fortify a piece of ground to which thewomen and children could fly for refuge and where all their cattle and sheep could be taken when in danger of being carried off. For this purpose they surrounded about a square acre of ground with strong palisades 7 or 8 feet high - these being chiefly composed of what they call the Caffre tree, are growing and send forth shoots which will render it more impenetrable and likewise permanent, as the ends stuck in the ground will not rot like other timber - as each post is two or three inches separate they can fire through betwen them with their muskets... they have form a projection from the middle of each side from which they can fire upon such as may advance up to the fortification.'[1]

It is noteworthy that the plan adopted by this palisade was basically that of Wellington Barrack, recommended by Alexander for adoption by the farmers.

Yet another of Alexander's proposals, that of erecting defensive sod walls around the farmhouses, had been anticipated years earlier by the frontier Boers before the great depredations of the second decade of the century had driven them from the area. Lichtenstein, who visited the Eastern Cape in 1803, described

'... the precautions which had been taken against the inroads of the Caffres. They consisted in high earth walls, run up all around the house at a distance of five or six feet from it : at the four corners were a sort of tower with port holes for guns, resembling bastions, which gave the whole the appearance of a fortification: the opening opposite the house door could in time of danger be barricaded. Many farmers by this kind of fortification saved their houses....'[2]

Such a defensive system appears to have existed around Cawood's Post, with strengthened stone embrasures at the corners. Doubtless earthen or sod walls, temporary or permanent, were employed on an extensive scale around farmhouses fortified after 1835, but many of them were presumably replaced in time with

ON THE MEANS OF DEFENDING FARM-HOUSES.

The following observations, containing easy, cheap, and effective methods of defending Farm Houses against Savages and other Robbers, are most earnestly recommended by the Governor and Commander in Chief to the attention and observance of all the Frontier Farmers.

Graham's Town, 13th August, 1835.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. SMITH,
Acting Govt. Sec. in attendance.

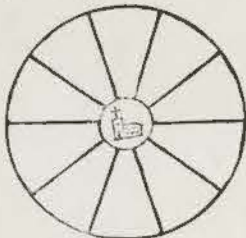
On the occasion of the late Kafir Irruption, it appears that the Settlers on the Eastern Frontier were completely taken by surprise,—none of them having ever made any preparations for defending their dwellings against a sudden incursion of an active enemy. Yet such precautions are ever necessary in countries so situated, and were accordingly observed, at no distant date, by the British Settlers in America, and also by the Dutch Farmers in South Africa.

After the dearly bought experience of the impropriety of constructing dwellings, in the neighbourhood of savages, with no better means of defending them than is to be found in farm houses in the mother country, it behoves the Settlers of Albany and Somerset to pay some attention to the various simple means—*attended with small expense*—which will enable a few resolute men to defend themselves for a considerable time against a multitude, whether civilized or barbarian. The means for doing this are at hand every where, and doubtless their application has only to be pointed out to be readily adopted.

While the government establishes additional posts, and provides a more suitable force than formerly for the defence of the Frontier, it is not unreasonable to expect, and self-interest must assuredly dictate, that the colonists will also *assist* to defend their own property by fortifying their houses in a simple manner. They will thus lessen the probability of another Irruption, by shewing the savages that they are not slumbering, as hitherto, in fancied security, but are prepared to repel treacherous and unprovoked aggressions; and let the Frontier be where it may, such measures are indispensable to security, since a small party of savages—yet quite adequate to the plunder and murder of a family—may, in such a country, at any time, penetrate many miles beyond any given frontier line.

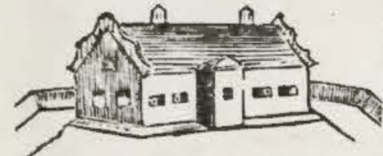
The following are among the simple, cheap, and ready, modes of defensive building above adverted to:—

After the French acquired Canada, their system of defence against the Indians was an easy and a most effectual one. A fortified church was placed in the centre of a small district, (see diagram subjoined) and from it the farms radiated



When the Indians attacked any part of the location the alarm bell was rung; the settlers immediately repaired to their rallying point—the church; from whence, in a body, they were able to act with effect on the enemy.

For houses already built, (see sketch,) the addi-



tion of a porch on the front and back would give a destructive raking-fire along the principal walls; while the windows of the ground floor in the gables, being blocked up, and one left open above, would enable all parts of the exterior to be defended without exposing the defenders. As houses are now built on the frontier, the inmates are obliged to go outside to fire with any effect, thus exposing themselves to great personal and unnecessary risk.

To secure the roof against the fire-brand is an important point. Thatch ought never to be used on the frontier, if tiles, or Kafirboom shingles, can be obtained. There is also abundance of zinc in the colony; a roof covered with plates of this metal is not expensive, (in a town it is even less so than thatch,) and cannot be set on fire. The difference of insurance is also to be noted: for zinc roofs 2s. 6d. per cent is charged, for thatch 15s.

If sod walls, six feet high, were to be built round farm houses, and at a little distance from them, with an interior step to enable one to fire over the wall, and an exterior ditch all round, farms would be rendered as secure as military field works usually are.

For a cattle kraal, not liable to be set on fire, a raised pulpit or sentry-box (see sketch) in the centre,

or at the gate of the kraal, is the best manner of defending it. The raised sentry box is thus constructed:—Four stout trees are cut to the length of 21 feet, let into the ground, 8 feet apart, and 18 feet above ground. At the height of 12 feet there is a platform of boughs bound to the 4 posts by thongs of leather; on this one or more sentries stand, defended from the weather by a slight roof, and from bullets or assegais by hide or other side screens.

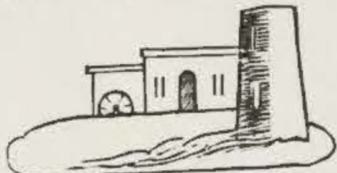
A useful lesson may be learnt from the Kafirs themselves for the defence of kraals. They keep one or more large bundles of dry mountain-grass near their kraals, and when danger is supposed to be near, the bundle is lighted; it burns for a considerable time, throwing a brilliant light for many yards round, and discovers the enemies.

The Cossack look out houses on the north side of the Caucasus, to observe the approach of an enemy during the day, are merely platforms raised on posts. In this country cattle grazing in the field would be tolerably secure, if look-out-houses of turf or posts were constructed at different commanding points on a farm, while signals might be made by blowing horns, smoke, &c.

The most economical way for rendering a house defensible is building it on the Spanish plan, that is, of 2 or more stories, (see sketch) the lower are

occupied by horses; access is got to the upper by a wooden stair, which can easily be withdrawn; while a verandah projecting from the first floor gives a vertical fire; thus man and horse are secured under one roof.

In Persia the mills at a distance from the village are each provided with a tower (see sketch) 30 feet high,



(like one of the ancient peel houses on the borders of England and Scotland). Into this the miller and his men retire when the mill is attacked, and from it are able to fire with effect on the assailants. The tower is generally at a little distance in front of the mill.

The plan of the new 'Wellington Barrack' (see sketch) is excellent; for thus every barrack or house

may be made a strong post: between every window is a loop-hole, closed with an inside shutter when not required; a loop holed wall 10 feet high surrounds the yard, with towers at the angles, or its line so broken as to give a flanking fire. Firing from a window exposes the person; while loop holes between the windows secure the defenders.

Hand grenades are of great use in defending a dwelling; the best for a farm-house are those on the percussion principle. The grenade is surrounded with strong paper, (see sketch) tied, to make it resemble a shuttle cock;

it is then filled two-thirds with powder,—the orifice is closed with a cork covered with paper; through a hole in the cork (when the grenade is required for use) a nail is introduced, thicker in the middle than at the ends, to prevent its falling out; on the point of the nail is a percussion cap. If the grenade is held up by the ends of the paper and dropped from a window, the head of the nail invariably strikes the ground, whilst the cap inside ignites the powder, and the grenade generally bursts in 15 or 20 pieces. A box of these grenades, or of the common grenades, with fuzees, were recommended for the defence of farms in Ireland, and were found of considerable service.

The bell mouthed blunderbuss, or a musket, loaded with loopers or slugs above the ball, are excellent weapons to be used at the loop holes, and for short distances.

As in India, hedges of aloes and prickly pears might be introduced here, with excellent effect as defences, as they grow readily and cannot be burnt down. A careful night-watch, assisted by dogs, ought never to be dispensed with. With these and other simple means of defence, the enterprising farmers of the Frontier will labour in peace, sleep in security, and with the assistance of the regular force, defend their property against all hostile inroads.

J. E. A.

Graham's Town, 12th August, 1835.

Extracts from English Papers.

Cape Papers have been received to the 5th of February. The accounts by them are altogether favourable, and the alarm in some measure had subsided. The *South African Advertiser* of the 4th says, "No intelligence had been received from the Frontier since the last post. Though the alarm has now nearly subsided, the public ought not to expect immediate tranquility, nor, if the war be carried into the enemy's country, uniform success." At Bruintjes Hoogte, on the 21st of January, the inhabitants had enjoyed perfect tranquility for several days, and the enemy had not attempted to cross the great Fish River above the farm of Pierre Gousen. Some Kafirs continued in possession of the forests in the vicinity of Kaga Berg, but the crops and buildings on the Mankazana had not been destroyed, and some of the inhabitants who fled from the enemy were returning.—*Patriot, 15th April.*

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

Advices have been received from the Cape of Good Hope to the 21st of February. They confirm the previous information of the successful operations of the military and the Burgher forces in expelling the Caffres from the colony. It is stated that some time since the chiefs of the tribes beyond the frontier complained to the Colonial Government that hundreds of the colonists had invaded their country and were laying it desolate. The reply was, that the Colonial Government did not approve of such conduct, but could not prevent it, as the jurisdiction of the Courts did not extend beyond the boundary. This, it is asserted, was one of the principal causes which have led to the incursion of the savages. The efforts of the troops in driving the Caffres into their own territory had been most successful, and with comparatively little loss of life. A party of troops and burghers had pursued the Chief Eno and his followers and completely destroyed them, Eno himself only escaping death by disguising himself in his daughter's dress, while she put on her father's Kaross received three shot wounds before her sex was discovered. A Government notice had been issued detailing the movements of Col. Somerset and Major Cox, in clearing the colony of the Caffres, and confirming the adhesion of the Chiefs Pato, Cobus, and Kamp, to the colony. *The war was, in fact, at an end!—Ibid, 29th April.*

BARBADOES.

Advices have been received from Barbadoes, which contain a despatch sent from the Colonial Office to the Governor, respecting the making a provision for the maintenance of the children whom the negroes were unwilling to put apprentices. The despatch is as follows, and is couched in somewhat strong language:—

"Downing-street, Jan. 1, 1835.

"SIR,—I received your despatch, dated the 30th of September last, enclosing a copy of the message which you sent to the Council and Assembly of Barbadoes, respecting the provision which you thought it desirable to have made for the support of young children, whom their parents might be

96. Supplement to the 'Graham's Town Journal' 20th August, 1835.

97. Page from the 'Graham's Town Journal' of 10th September, 1835.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

WITH reference to the observations on the Defence of Farm Houses published in the Journal of the 20th ult., His Excellency the Governor and Commander in-Chief has since been favored with the following letter, enclosing and describing the plan of a farm house, which appears to him at once so simple, practicable and effectual, that he is induced to recommend it to the attention of the frontier farmers.

Graham's Town, 3rd September, 1835.
By His Excellency's Command,
(Signed) W. SMITH,
Acting Gov. Sec. in attendance.

To His Excellency Major-General Sir BENJAMIN D'URBAN, *Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, &c. &c. &c.*

"Your Excellency having been pleased to recommend to the frontier farmers certain plans for the building and improving of their houses, so as to enable them to defend the same without incurring risk of life from the attack of the Kafir savages or robbers;

"I beg leave to enclose a plan of a farm-house and kraals, which had been designed by me to be built on a farm near Fort Beaufort, just before the commencement of the Kafir Irruption; and which, as soon as circumstances will permit, I intend to carry into execution. If this should meet with your approbation, as one worthy of being acted upon by my fellow colonists, I shall feel great pleasure in offering my mite for the public welfare.

"The plan, as designed, is capable of being extended or diminished, so as to meet the finances of the farmer. It is also adapted for the residence of two families; and it might also be constructed with equal protection, by only building the front and back walls of it, as, in many instances, the house, according to the plan, would be too large and expensive.

"The sub division of the sheep and cattle kraals is not necessary to be shewn, but the communication from the kitchen to the cattle kraal is indispensable, from the lateness of the hour milking takes place, which operation may thus be carried on in safety, after the kraal gates are well fastened.

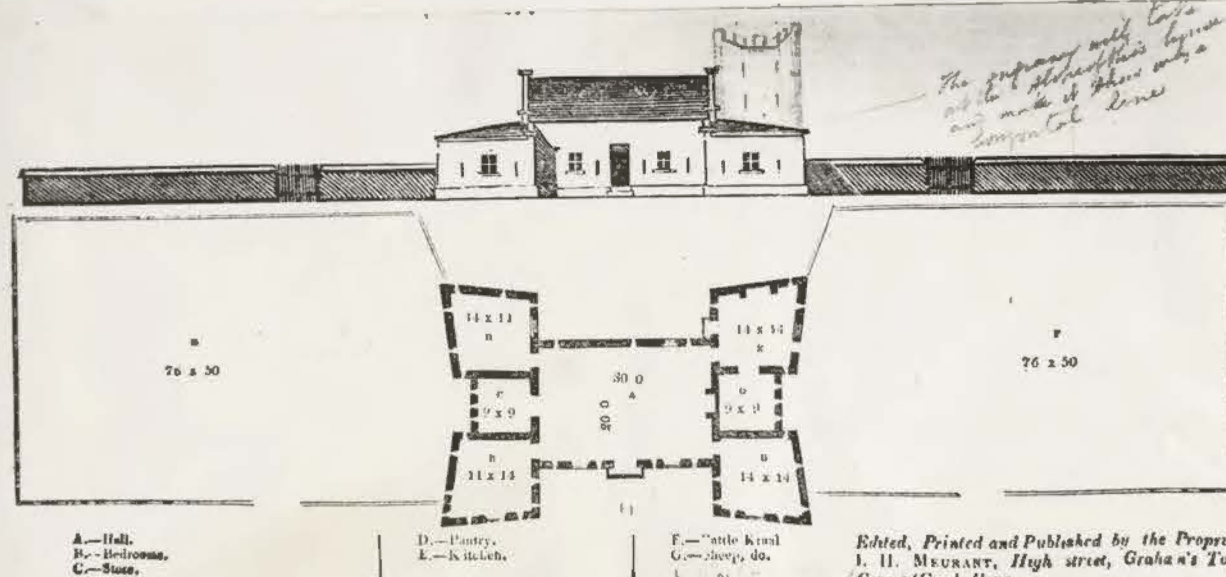
"The roofs are intended to be covered with paper, as more easy of being kept in repair; and over the room A, will be the granary, accessible from the room by a step ladder. The glass windows to have shutters outside, and bars of iron fixed in the frame. The doors also to have bars of iron across inside, and the loop-holes to be provided with a frame and shutter to each, built in the wall.

"The walls may be built of sod, stone, or brick, as may be most convenient. The house may also be built two stories high.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE GILBERT."
24th August, 1835

(See Sketch below.)

DISTRICT ORDERS.



A.—Hall.
B.—Bedrooms.
C.—Store.

D.—Pantry.
E.—Kitchen.

F.—Cattle Kraal
G.—Sheep, do.

Edited, Printed and Published by the Proprietor L. H. MEURANT, *High street, Graham's Town, Cape of Good Hope.*

98. Fort Willshire, original design.

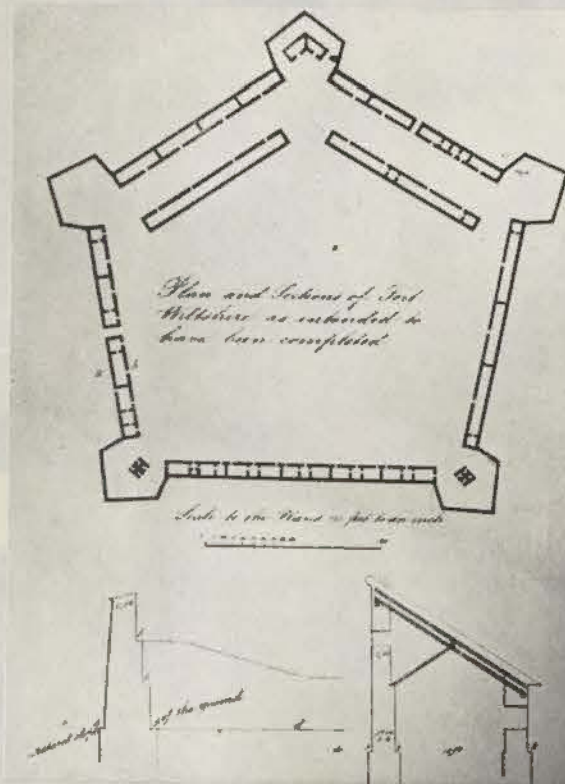
99. Fraser's Camp Tower.

100. Trumpeter's Drift Fort.

2. Also sometimes spelt "Septon" or "Sipton"

1. There is no record of 'Sephton Manor' being attacked in the 1846 war, but in 1852 Gilbert was forced to abandon it without a fight after he had been deserted by all his servants. In September of that year a column of Highlanders rested at the farm, and found that the house had been sacked and burned out. (Cory: 'Rise of South Africa', V, 332,406)

Archdeacon Merriman visited the house just before its desertion, and described it as 'more like a fortress than a private dwelling' and observed that the tower was 'armed with three pieces of small cannon, not for ornament ... but for use; a wooden barricade before the entrance.' ('Passages of missionary life from the Journals of ven. arch. Merriman', London, 1853, 102).



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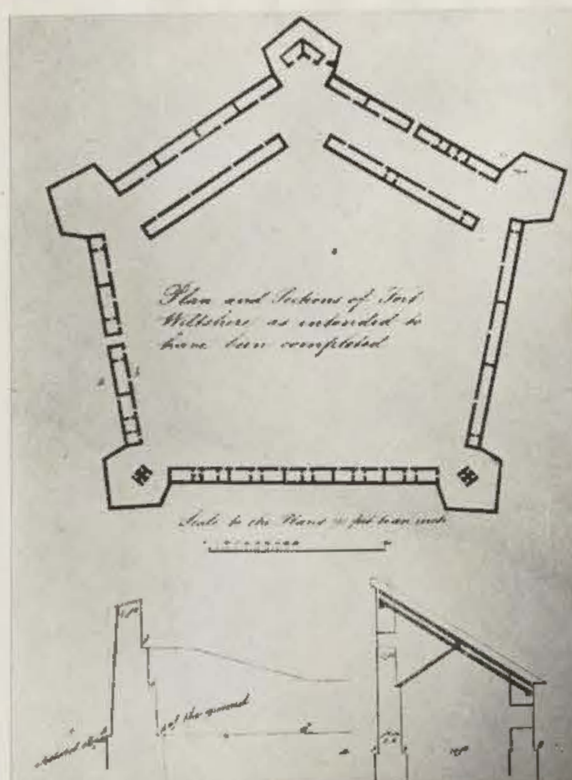


the loop-holed stone walling so much in evidence now, and the remainder have decayed and been washed or ploughed away.

Wherever stone fortifications occur on farmhouses in the Albany area they can usually be dated to the post-1835 period. They range in type from simple walled enclosures for cattle and sheep adjoining the houses (with loopholes spaced at regular intervals along the stonework walls), to elaborate hilltop fortresses embracing house, barns, lookout towers and kraals such as 'Barville Park' and 'Sephton Manor'. In between the two extremes are a large variety of fortified houses, towers and defensible farmyards of which only the more remarkable are cited below.

George Gilbert appears to have begun the construction of 'Sephton Manor' (Plate 101) soon after the publication of his letter in Sept. 1835. In spite of subsequent alterations it is today preserved in a form substantially like that of the plan and elevation in Plate 97, the main difference being that the stoep-kamer walls are not splayed outwards as shown on the plan and that an entablature has been added to them, probably by Gilbert himself (the verandah is considerably later in style). The loopholes between the windows have been plastered over on the outside in recent years, but are preserved, complete with their neatly moulded doors, on the inside.

The most interesting feature of the farm is the addition to the sheep and cattle kraals adjoining the side of the house of a very large square defensible farmyard the full width of the house and its two kraals. Onto this fortified enclosure open all the farm buildings, and the whole is surrounded by an eight-foot stone wall with loopholes pierced through it at regular intervals (Plate 105). At a short distance from the house is the double-storeyed lookout tower (Plates 102-4 which is also loop-holed on both levels, and has on the top a flat signal platform.[1]

'Sephton Manor' near Fort Beaufort.

101. Main house.
102. Stables, barn, and signal tower.
103. Interior of signal tower.
104. Fortified wall enclosing the entire complex.
105. A firing port in the signal tower.

1. The first of the signal station blockhouses was Fraser's Camp, erected in 1835 (Plate 99). Others included Piet Appel's Tower and the Watchtower at Peddie (1841). Signal Towers and blockhouses of this type were patterned on those which formed a part of the military framework of defence on the Indian North-West Frontier. It is interesting to notice how often this type recurs at the Cape : first in 1795, under General Craig, and at Algoa Bay in 1799. Then there is a considerable gap during which nothing quite approaching the blockhouse was built in the Colony, until the end of the 1835 war, when D'Urban embarked on a policy of erecting them. In 1843 an even more concerted attempt to build up a signal system dependent on blockhouses was instituted by Sir Peregine Maitland, when such landmarks as Governor's Kop and Botha's Post Towers were erected (all still relatively well-preserved). Unfortunately, the signal station scheme was a failure owing to the prevalence of mist in the area. Blockhouses - of a form which had hardly changed at all in over a hundred years - were resorted to again in both the Zulu War of 1879 and the Boer War, when they were built in many outlying parts of South Africa.

106. Tower of Double Drift Fort.

Communication between these widely separated farms and military posts on the frontier was considered one of the major problems of the defensive system at that time. It was probably no coincidence that the Governor's aide-de-camp advised the settlers to construct signal towers at the same time as the policy of building blockhouses at the military forts was instituted. A good example of the latter may be seen at Fort Brown, and bears a close resemblance to the 'Sephton Manor' type (Plate 111).[1] The farm 'Bucklands' close to Fort Brown also has a detached double-storeyed fortified tower on the same pattern.

A curiously annotated copy of the 'Graham's Town Journal' for 10th Sept. 1835 exists in the Cory Library (Plate 97). On the elevation of the design for Gilbert's fortified farmhouse is drawn a castellated tower in pencil, and the inscription 'the proposal ? will take out the slope of this terrace ? and make it shew only a horizontal line', referring to the need to make some concession to the line of the roof of the other stoep-kamer in the otherwise symmetrical facade. The interest of this document is heightened by the pencil inscription at the bottom: 'Plan and elevation of Mr. Gilbert's House - 1st Stage'.

Whatever the meaning of the conflicting evidence about 'Sephton Manor' itself, one thing is certain: here was a design, and an early one, for a lookout tower as an integral part of a farmhouse. To find a contemporary example of this design we need go no further than twenty miles to the south of Gilbert's farm.

'Heatherton Towers', as its name suggests, had not one but two such corner towers, in place of 'stoepkamers', on a plan which otherwise is substantially that of Gilbert's (Plates 109, 110). Indeed, the design of the towers is very similar to that on the enigmatic drawing.

'Heatherton Towers', on the evidence of the present owners, was actually built during 1835, the former homestead having been totally burnt out in the last days of 1834.[1] The present building probably incorporates some of the old walls, but the whole concept of the design is quite different from anything of the pre-1835 period. By far the most prominent feature of the exterior are the massive loopholes and projecting castellated balustrading to the flat signal platforms at the top of the towers. These towers are accessible only from inside the house, and the roof platforms by ladders from the rooms below. The windows of the main house had heavy solid internal shutters, which could be barred in a closed position, and were provided with vertical firing slits.

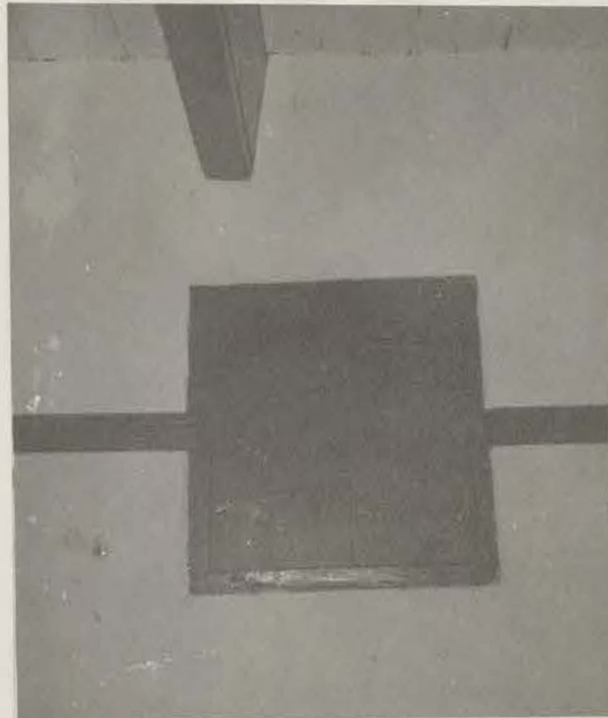
The back of the house was entirely enclosed by outbuildings and barns to present a blank solid stone wall to the attacker, broken only by the regular rows of loopholes. And then, as a first line of defence, the entire home and its outbuildings, yards and kraals, were enclosed by a magnificent loopholed stone wall, for some parts of its length more than ten feet high.

'Heatherton Towers' belongs to the fortified farmhouse type 'par excellence', and there were, by all accounts, many others of the same genre. Several were illustrated at the time in books and periodicals. A few survive, generally in considerably altered form, in various parts of the Eastern Province.[2]

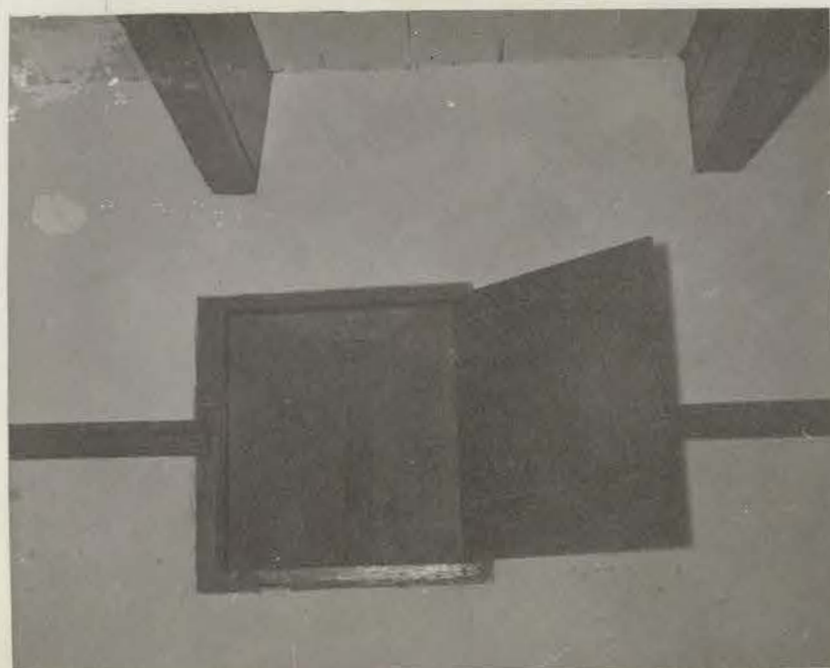
Scattered in the area between 'Heatherton Towers' and 'Sephton Manor', i.e. the region which was rendered more secure and hence desirable as a result of the military measures taken after the war of 1834-5, there remain today a number of magnificent houses of which the finest is 'Stoneyfields' (Plates 116-122). All of these houses were fortified to a greater or a lesser extent. Most of them had small walled-in back courtyards on to which the dairy and sheds opened, and which provided sheltered daylighting to the rooms. The result was that on

1. It was built by Mr. Arthur Douglas, many years later the author of 'Ostrich Farming in South Africa'. London, 1881, who proudly illustrated the house in the background of one of the plates in his book.

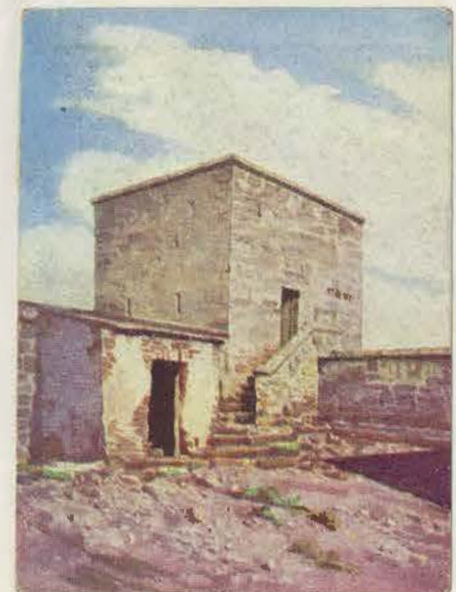
2. Those in the King Williams Town and East London area are mostly of later date, but are almost identical in basic design.



107,108. Interior of Firing Port, with Door closed and open.



109,110. 'Heatherton Towers'. c.1835.
111. (Below). Fort Brown, Signal Tower.



'Stoneyfields'.

112. From the South East. 113. From the South West.

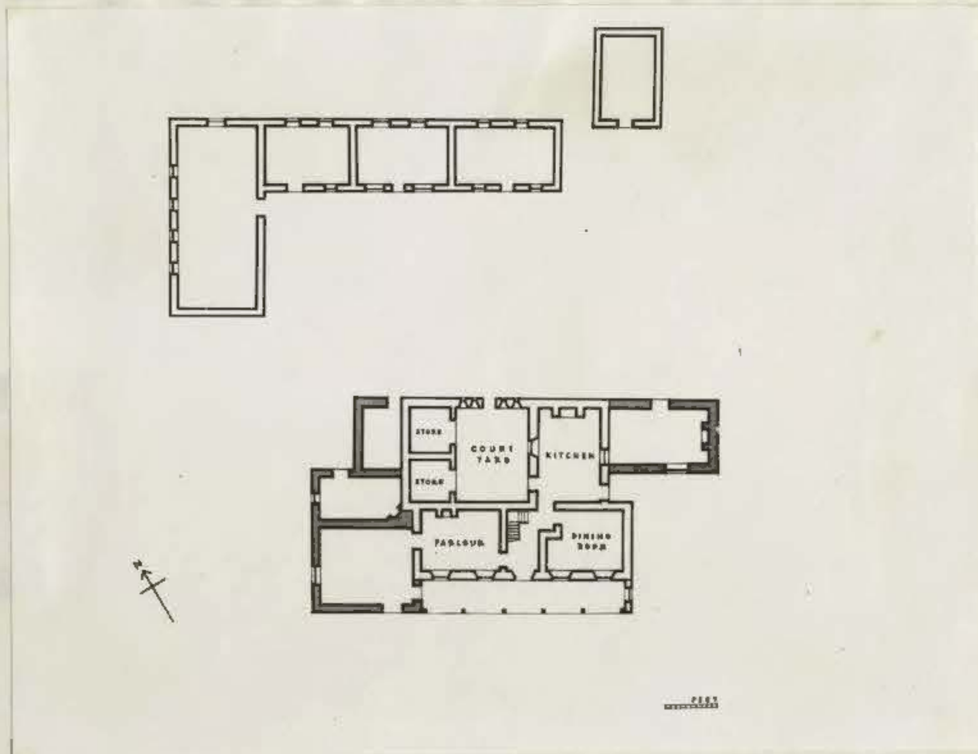
three sides of the house there were absolutely no visible windows, the only openings being a rare loop-hole and the heavy door into the yard. On the fourth side, the front, the windows were reduced to a minimum both in number and size, and heavily shuttered on the inside.

Parallel to the main block of the house, and thirty or forty paces from it, was the long range of the barn, stables and farm sheds, which sometimes returned down one side of the farmyard to form an L-shaped block. This was originally linked to the house by walls, six to eight feet high, broken occasionally by the vertical slits of the loop-holes. The space enclosed served both as a farmyard and as a kraal for the livestock in times of emergency.[1]

The front of 'Stoneyfields' was treated as a raised rectangular level garden, laid out in the formal Italian manner then so fashionable (Plate 120). The garden is connected visually with the house by means of a veranda, which appears on inspection to be contemporary with the original building. The peculiarly precise mouldings of the veranda bargeboard are typical of the late eighteen thirties, and may be seen on many other farmhouses in the area, some of which, like Robert Godlonton's house 'Hammonds', a neighbour of Gilbert's, also have original verandas dating from this period. At 'Stoneyfields' we see the peculiar marriage of the English farmhouse with the Portuguese-American colonial tradition. Seen from one side it is indubitably the first, from the other very much the second, yet the blend of the two has been effortlessly and gracefully achieved.

Moving further south, to the area of the first settler locations, we find one of the most elaborate of all the defended farmhouses in 'Barville Park', near the coast (Plates 123-144). Like most of the farmhouses extensively fort-

1. James Walton ('Homesteads & Villages of South Africa', 68) describes how one of these farmhouses, 'Rietfontein', was defended also from the front by a large kraal surrounded by a high wall pierced with defensive openings.



114. Plan of 'Stoneyfields', as it exists. The barns were apparently linked to the house by stone walls which have since been demolished for their material. The areas shaded dark are later additions.

115. 'Stoneyfields'. The house from the farmyard.

'Stoneyfields'.

116. The house from the farm-yard.

117. The back of the barns.

'Stoneyfields'.

118. General view from the North West.

119. The front of the house.

120. The fireplace in an outside room.

121. The symmetrical pattern of the flower beds and paths in the front garden.

122. The house from the South East.

ified at this time, 'Barville Park' is largely built of stone. Goldswain informs us that, immediately after the cessation of hostilities in 1835, there was a 'great cale for free Stone my Quarey being the onley Free Stone quarrey in this part of the cuntrey and in culler it is much like the Bath Stone onley thear is verey hard semes in it so that the toles will flie one laer off of it.[1] The quarrey was found on a level flat so that when you have taken one laer off it is quit level anof for a house floer. The laers of stone veres in thickness from one inch up to two feet: ... this stone is yoused for building Tomb head Stones and Colloms, etc. ....'[2] 'Barville Park' was built of this same stone, a vein of which extends along the coast and periodically outcrops on the coastal farms. In this case it is not the farmhouse itself which is fortified. That is a double-storeyed building with a character so remarkably similar to the farmhouses of Cumberland and Northumberland that one is left in no doubt as to the origins of its builder, if not of its owner. But entirely surrounding the house, and always at some distance from it, was a defensive wall originally six to eight feet high, enclosing the farmyard, barns and outbuildings, and, it appears, a water storage tank or well of considerable size. The entrance to this enclosure was defended by a double-storeyed barn, in the position recommended for the sentry-box in Alexander's article. Besides being loop-holed on both floors, this barn had a projecting loading platform on the upper level which may have been intended to allow raking fire down the wall across the gate in the manner mentioned by Alexander when describing his 'Spanish house' type of defence. (The problem of fire-proofing the original thatched roofs of the buildings was probably solved in the manner observed by a visitor in the Baviaans valley: 'the roof was rendered fireproof with sods.'[3])

The homestead at 'Barville Park' is situated on the top of a gently sloping hill, and dominates the surrounding countryside from what is obvious-

'Barville Park'.

123. General View from the north.

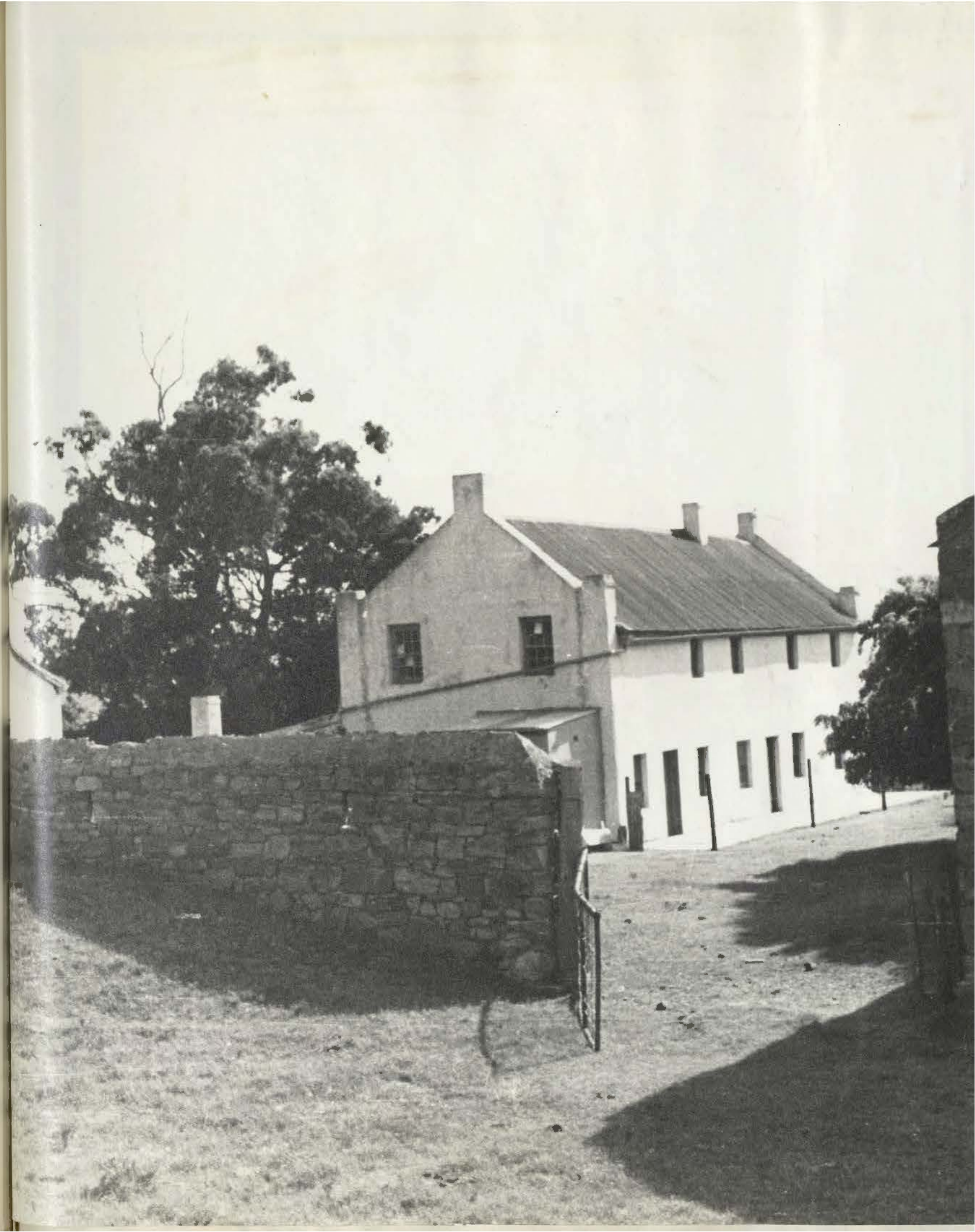
124. The barn and the entrance to the farmyard.

1. This stone was Bathurst limestone, which may be seen in the tower of the present Grahamstown Cathedral.

2. Goldswain's 'Chronicle', ed. Una Long. I:122.

3. Anon. 'Four Months in the Cape Colony'. London, 1846, 32.

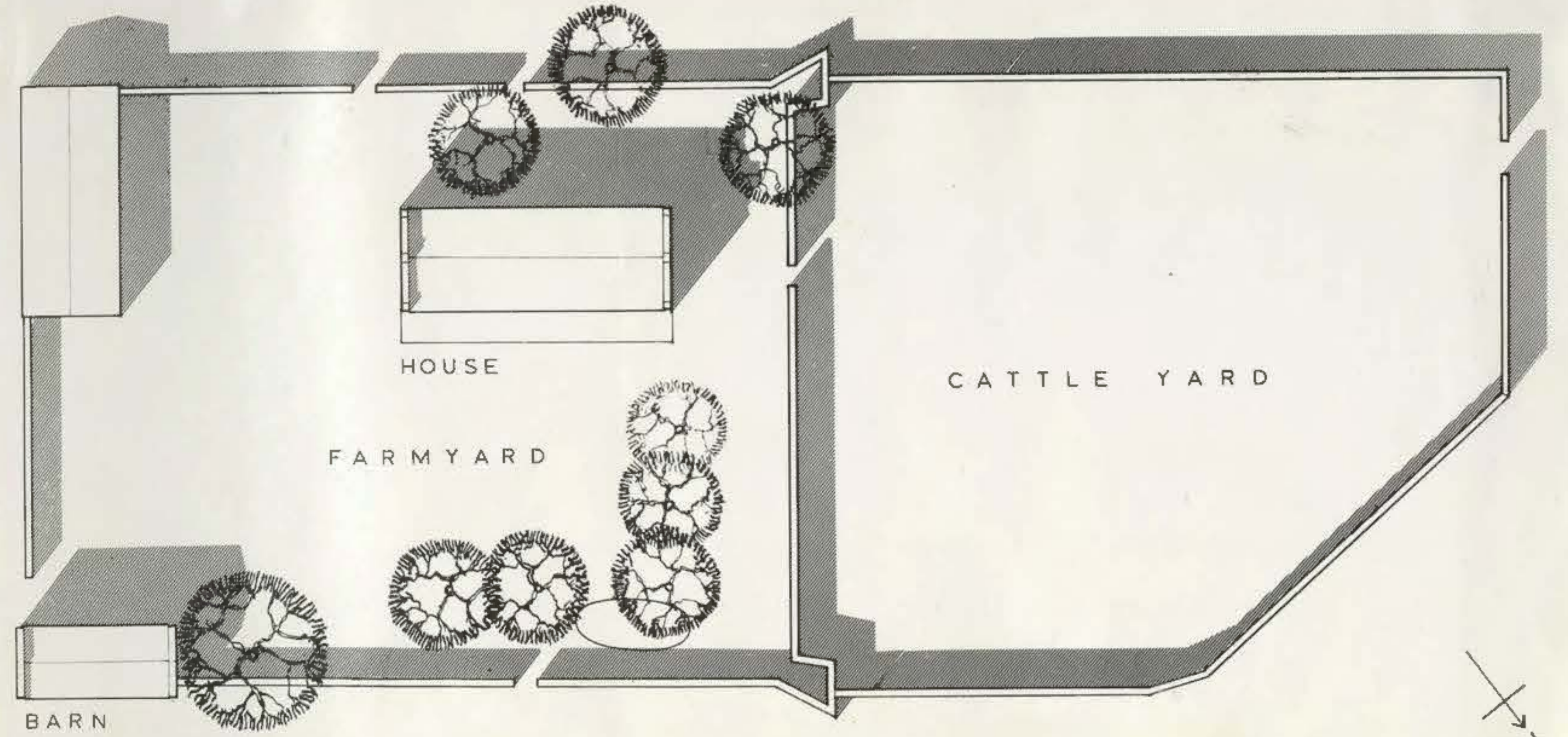
125. 'Barville Park'; Looking into the farmyard from outside the entrance.



'Barville Park'.

126. The farmbuildings and their walled enclosure from the north-east.

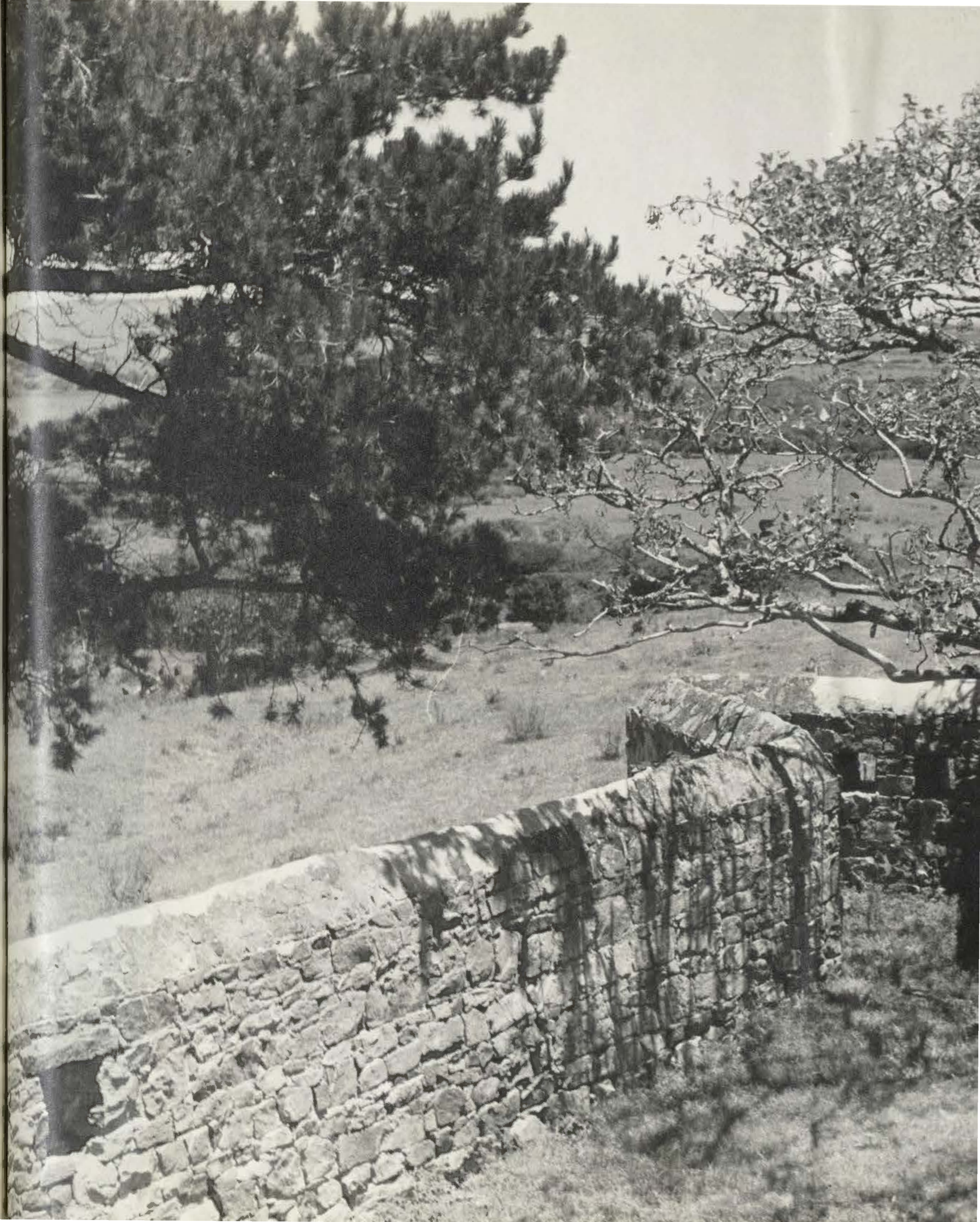
127. General view.



Plan.

'Barville Park'.

129. The interior of a corner bastion.
130. The farmhouse seen from outside the fortifications, with a bastion in the foreground.
131. A bastion, detail.
132. The cattle yard before restoration.
133. The loopholed wall of the cattle yard.



134. 'Barville Park'. Looking down at a bastion from an upper window.

Previous pages: 'Barville Park'.

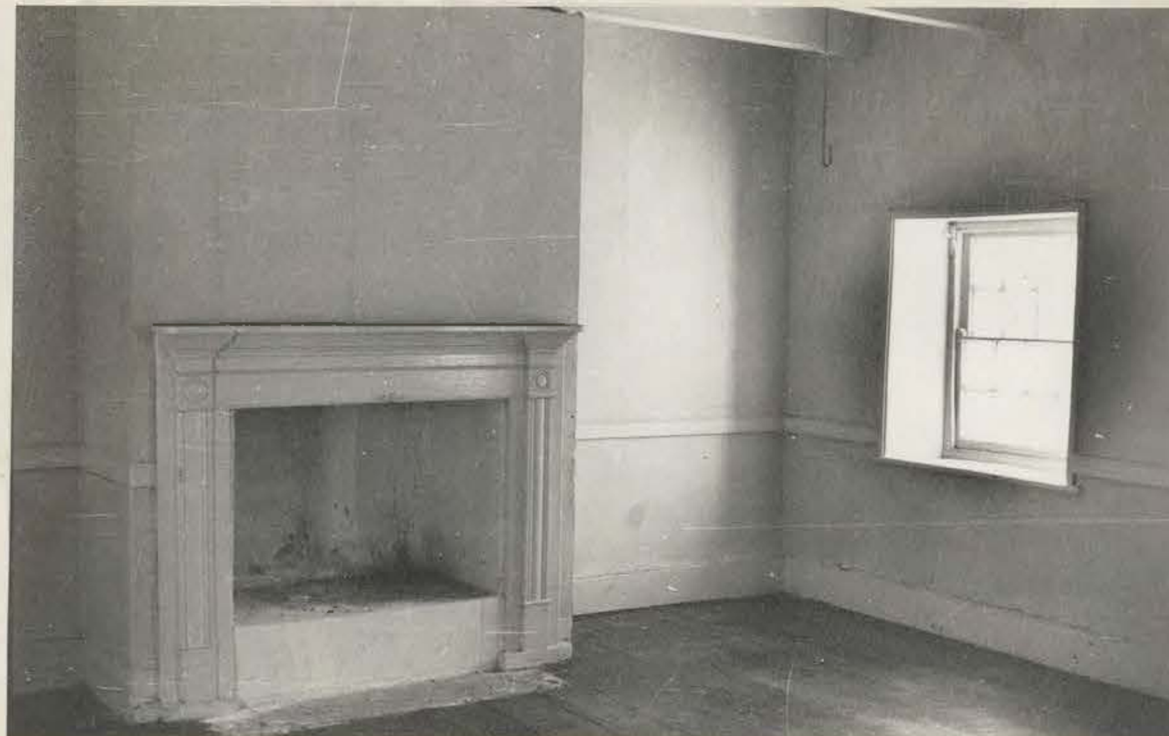
135. (Above). General view of the cattle yard, as restored.

136. The outside wall of the cattle yard, before restoration.

137. The house from the cattle yard.

'Barville Park'.

138. The facade of the house.
139. The interior of the house before restoration.



ly the most strategic position in the area. Adjoining it on the ridge of the hill, but slightly below the farmyard, is the cattle kraal, in the same relationship to the first enclosure as the bailey had to the motte in a Norman castle. The kraal was surrounded with higher and stronger walls than the farmyard, - one appreciates the extreme difficulty of defending such a great periphery with only a few men. The walls were loopholed so as to provide a "line of fire down the slope of the hill. To obtain flanking fire elaborate trapezoidal shaped embrasures projected out in the centre of the long sides of the overall plan, from the wall separating the kraal from the farmyard; these embrasures could thus be used to defend both the cattle and the farmyard from attack.[1]

From a distance the whole group seems to breast the crown of the hill like a ship riding the swell, while as a self-contained fortress it manages to borrow something of the charm of its great ancestors in Europe and the Middle East.

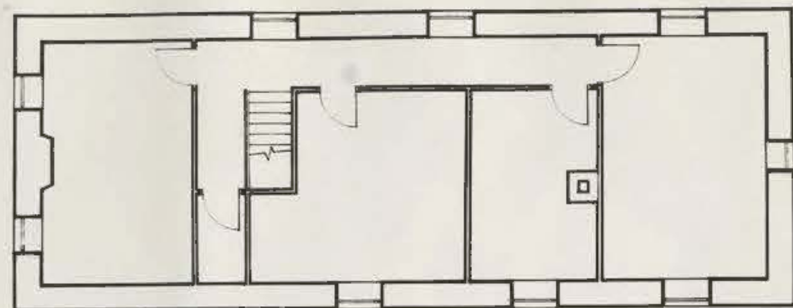
North of 'Barville Park' lies 'Lombard's Post', not a farmhouse in the strict sense of the word, but a garrison post on a farm with more of the character of a fortified dwelling place than the more easterly blockhouses (Plates 145-152). Part of its unusual character may be due to its history, for Lombard's Post was first established in 1812 on a spot a few hundred yards below the surviving buildings (Plate 95),[2] and was originally granted to the officer of the garrison in Grahamstown as a farm.

After the 1835 War the post was rebuilt on its present site[3] and a permanent garrison of 25 men and 25 horses established there, together with their officers, more as a police force to scour the surrounding scrub than for

1. There is a rather oblique reference in 'The Narrative of Private Buck Adams' (A.Gordon-Brown Van Riebeeck Society. 22. Cape Town, 1941, 135) which suggests that 'Barville Park' then owned by E. Dell, was burned, and all the cattle driven off, in 1846. It is the only mention of an attack on the house in any of the records. v. M.Kannemeyer,'Africana Notes & News', XI. No.7: 257-262.

2. E.Morse-Jones.

3. Ibid.



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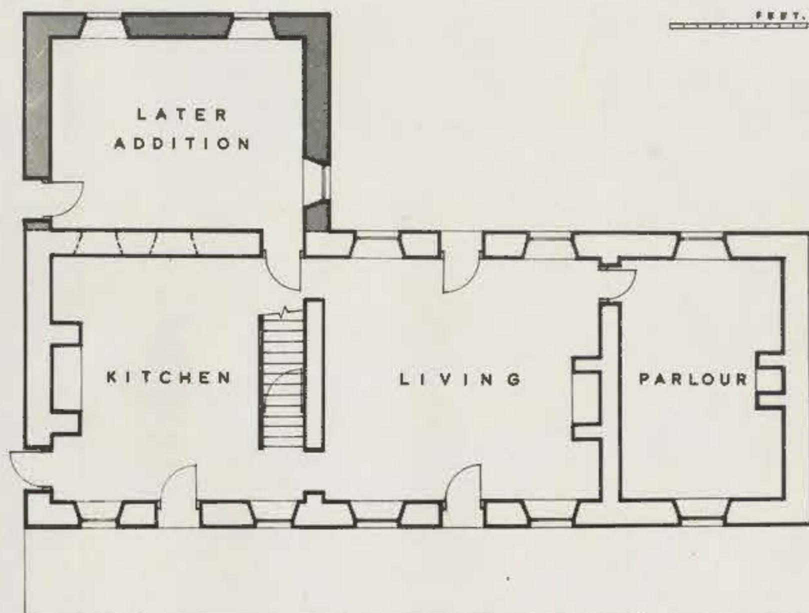

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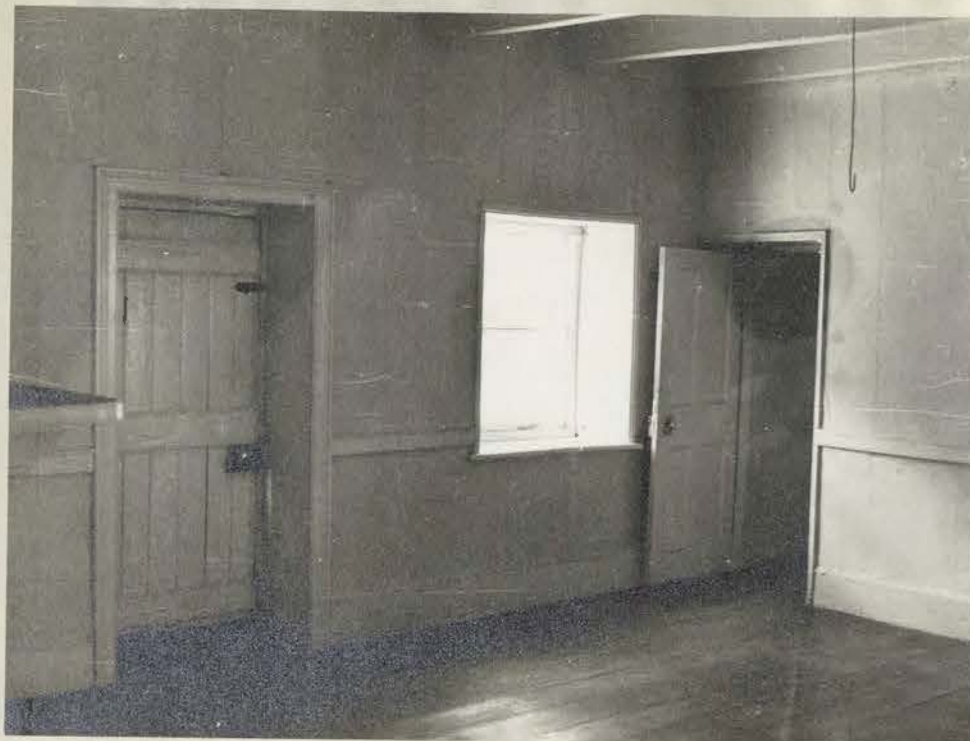
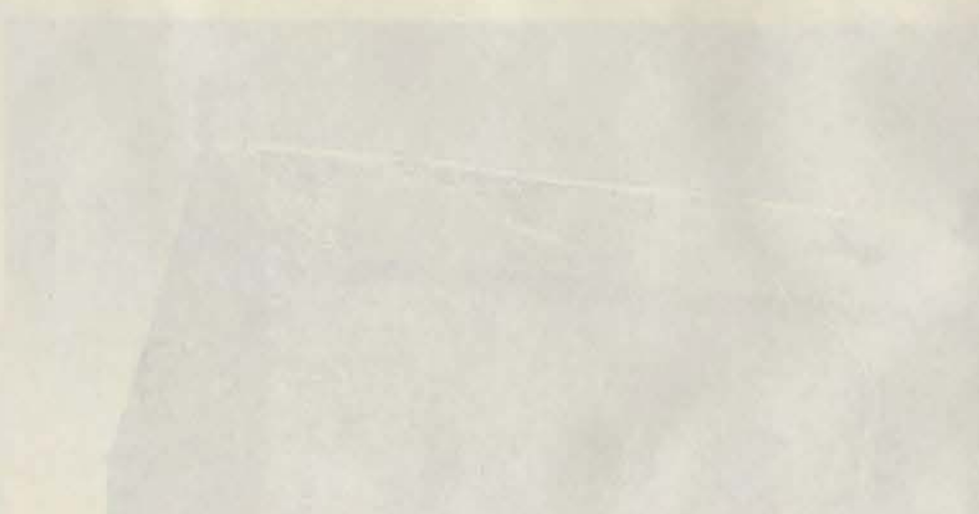




'Barville Park'.

139.A. (Left). Plans of the house.
140. (Above). Interior of the living room before restoration.
141. The fireplace in the living room.
142. The enclosed staircase leading up to the bedrooms.
143. The dining room fireplace.
144. The parlour (?) fireplace.

'Barville Park'.

139.A. (Left). Plans of the house.
140. (Above). Interior of the living room before restoration.
141. The fireplace in the living room.
142. The enclosed staircase leading up to the bedrooms.
143. The dining room fireplace.
144. The parlour (?) fireplace.

145. 'Lombard's Post'. General view. (Model by C.Hardman).
146. 'Lombard's Post'. The Barracks.

1. W.Bain Lanham. 'In the Land of the Settlers', 25.

defence. The surviving group of buildings comprises the barracks, with accommodation for horses and men, and the officers' and N.C.O.'s houses. The four main buildings are arranged in a roughly polygonal plan, with linking walls taking the shortest distance between them, and enclosing a central mustering yard which was reasonably defensible - though from the accessibility of the houses this does not seem to have been regarded as a matter of great moment.

It remains to discuss a number of prepossessing farmhouses built on the old Settler road between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown. This was an area which, lying close and sheltered by Grahamstown, always felt more protected from Kaffir attack than the rest of the district. It was also a region which quickly became wealthy following the early experiments with sheep-rearing.

Here were built a group of houses which resembled much more closely the fashionable Regency country houses of England than the architecture of the rest of Albany district. It is obvious that more emphasis was placed on style and elegance in them than on strict suitability to purpose, and that no money was spared in their construction.

'Sidbury Park', the first and largest of these houses, is supposed by tradition to have been built by the men of the party of Lieut. Daniel, R.N. (who had brought out 32 settlers at his own expense in 1820, and was responsible for the foundation of the village of Sidbury, and the erection of the church). At least a part of the house dates from the twenties. Some of the work is said to have been done by Hottentot labour.[1] But it is clear that a certain amount of subsequent alteration and extension took place, the house probably achieving its present form in the late thirties (Plates 153-164). It has a symmetrical double-storeyed facade, with an early veranda, behind

147. (Opposite). 'Lombard's Post' from below.

'Lombard's Post'.

148. (Opposite). Approaching the group,from above.

149.(Left). The Barracks, exterior.

150.(Above). The Barracks. Fireplace in a guardroom.

151. The interior of the lower entrance.

152. Model of whole group. (restoration by R.B. Lewcock, model C. Hardman).

'Sidbury Park'.

153. From the south-east.

154. From the north-east.

which lie no less than eighteen rooms, two of them parlours with fine woodwork and (originally) moulded plaster ceilings. There was also a large ballroom above the kitchens in a back wing. That some measure of protection was felt necessary is witnessed by the enclosed farmyard behind the house, the outbuildings being linked to the main block by high stone walls.

At 'Hilton', a neighbour of 'Table Farm' near Grahamstown, Lieut.Cummings built the magnificent double-storeyed bow-fronted house which has survived to the present day (Plates 165-173). 'Hilton' was only one - the best preserved - of a number of bow-fronted farmhouses which once graced the immediate vicinity of Grahamstown. Other survivors are 'Belmont' (Plates 36-7) and (probably dating from this time) 'Fairlawn'. Semi-circular or semi-elliptical bow-fronts were the height of architectural fashion throughout the late Georgian period. (One has only to remember that they were the prominent features of the original Brighton Pavilion to appreciate their significance. With their graded effects of light and shade and their soft forms they did much to introduce a note of graceful sophistication wherever they were used, and particularly on farmhouses at the far-distant Cape frontier.

'Hilton' is also remarkable for its complete disdain of attack, no attempt whatever having been made to protect it, the ground floor windows each having an area of glass nearly ten feet high by more than four feet wide. There is not even an enclosed yard to afford shelter at the back of the house. This seems to offer convincing proof of the family tradition that the house was erected before the 1835 War - in 1828 in fact.

Internally 'Hilton' has a splendid oval entrance hall with wall-niches for decorative sculpture or vases in the best Classical manner, the rooms

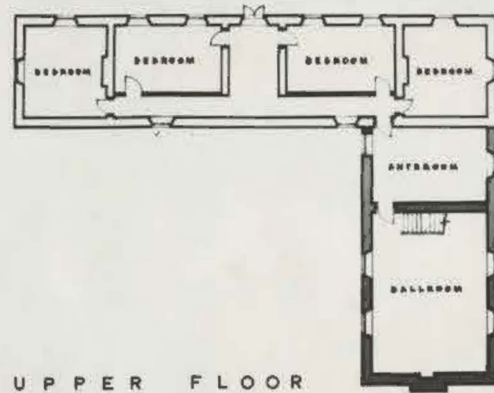
'Sidbury Park'.

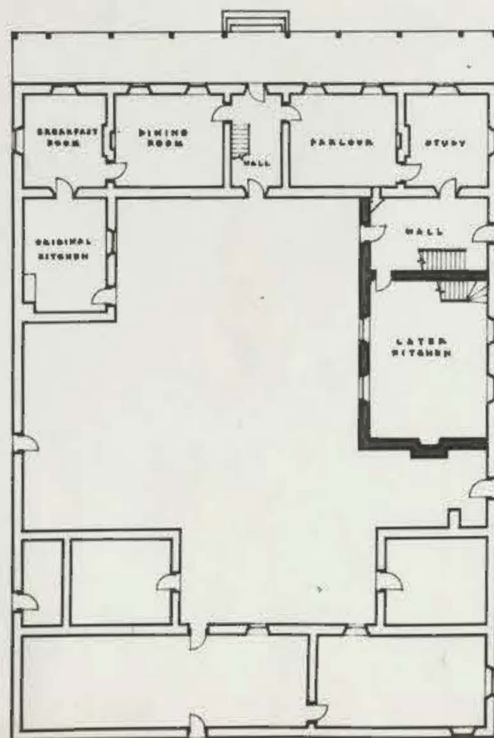
155. General view.

156. (Right). Entrance.

157. Entrance hall.

158. (Top right). Upper stairhall.





'Sidbury Park'.

159. Farmyard, from an upper window.

160. Moulded plaster cornice. All that remains of the original ceilings.

161. Staircase from above.

162. Plans.

163,164. Interiors of the main rooms.

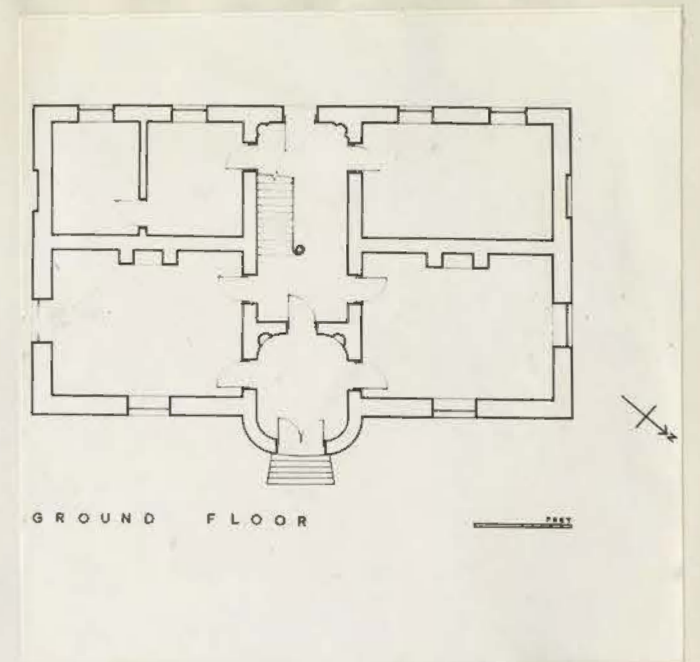
165. (Opposite). 'Hilton', General View.

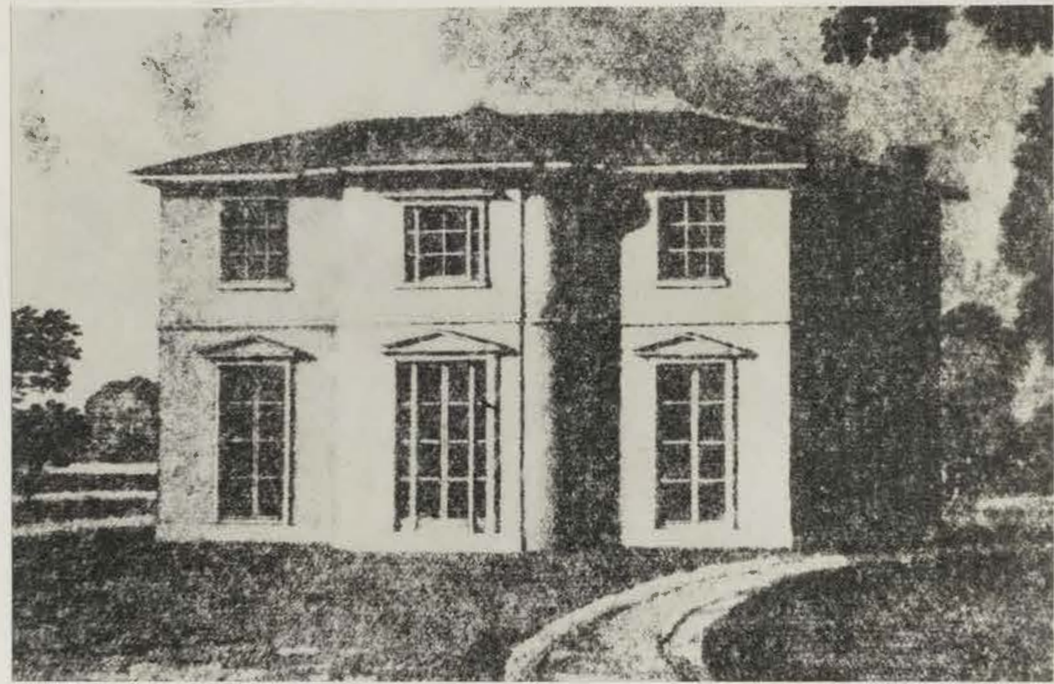
166. (Above). Detail to show eaves.

167. Side view.

are high and spacious, and the staircase one of the most gracious surviving in the country.

In this house is revealed the changing nature of the times. It looks optimistically forward to a life of security and grace on the frontier, a state of affairs that was not destined to be finally realised until after the War of 1851. And at the same time it looks backward to the elegance of eighteenth century England thirty years and six thousand miles away. It was an atypical kind of architecture which could not often be repeated, the last aristocratic swan-song of the old order before the new took its place - first the fortified house, and then, as memories of the war of 1835 faded, that broad, low, veranda-encircled Colonial building, which to us is the epitome of the nineteenth century South African farm.





'Hilton'.

168,169. 'Hilton' compared with Plate 6 of Busby's 'Designs for Villas and Country Houses', London, 1808.

170. The ground floor plan. The upper plan is identical, with the position of the vestibule occupied by a dressing room.

171. The back of 'Hilton'.

172,173. The entrance vestibule and stairhall.

TEN :

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE EIGHTEEN TWENTY SETTLERS - (2) EARLY TOWN DWELLINGS.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE EIGHTEEN TWENTY SETTLERS

(2) EARLY TOWN DWELLINGS.

'three thatched houses and one or two wooden houses brought out from England...'. So Thomas Pringle described the embryonic town of Port Elizabeth when the settlers disembarked there in April 1820.[1] A few weeks later it had changed to '...the populous and somewhat noisy parallelogram of Settler's Town...'.

The immigrants, whose path lay inland, stayed but a few weeks, and were housed for the most part in tents. But the port had been born, and as succeeding months brought more transport into the Bay the town began to grow on a more permanent, if equally haphazard, basis: '...[houses] are up like mushrooms in a night and the Building mania pervaded all ranks, some for comfort some for necessity, but more for speculation, the consequence is scarcely one House can be called decent - miserable huts run up without taste or convenience for every Man who has built a Hogstye in England considers himself capable of planning and erecting a House at Port Elizabeth... Buildings are running up in every direction but I am sorry to say without any Idea of Convenience, regularity or stability, a parcel of miserable Huts huddled together

1. 'Craig Cottage' by S.E. Hudson (c.1822) showing Donkin's memorial to his wife. The buildings are probably those of the original military encampment. (Archives).

1. Thomas Pringle 'Narrative of a Residence in South Africa'. London, 1824.

1. Samuel E. Hudson 'Journal'. Acc. 602 Document 8 (thought on circumstantial evidence to have been written during 1822. v. Cory 'The Rise of S.A.' London 1910-30, II:205).

2. 'Memorials of the British Settlers' (Grahamstown 1845). Address by Rev. John Ayliff.

3. 'Journal' Acc. 602. Document 8.

4. C.O. 132/65. 11th Nov. 1820. T.Evatt, Commandant. '...an account of the expenses attending the transport of the Wooden Houses from here to Bathurst, the amount is so enormous, even exceeding the price they are to be sold for that I have directed the Commissary not to send off any until Your Excellency's pleasure is known.... Price for which two wooden Houses are to be sold £80. Required for their conveyance, 11 waggons at 96 Rds. £100.'

5. T. Pringle 'Narrative of a Residence in South Africa'. London, 1824.

6. C.O. 132/51, 11th Sept. 1820. T. Evatt, Commandant.

7. C.O. 132/59. 10th Oct. 1820. T. Evatt, Commandant.

8. It is interesting to speculate whether this move on the part of the Colonial Office was made in the light of an earlier, more successful experiment, such as the prefabrication of an entire hospital, designed by Jeffrey Wyatt (later Sir Jeffrey Wyatt) for erection at Sydney Cove in 1790. (M. Herman. 'Early Australian Architects and their work', Sydney 1954, 8). It must, of course, be remembered that the first blockhouse in Port Elizabeth had been pre-fabricated in Cape Town. (Chapter 3.)

9. C.O. 132/70. 13th Dec. 1820.

10. C.O. 245/63. 17th May 1825.

and gives the Bay much the appearance of a Village of better sort of Hottentots...'.[1]

The houses which had existed before the settlers came were built of stone[2] and thatched, and many of the new buildings followed this pattern. One of the original buildings, the Commandant's House (see Chapter 3 Page 41 and Plates 2 & 4) was described as still 'the only decent House' by Hudson several years later.[3] The wooden houses mentioned by Pringle had been sent out from England by the Colonial Office and were originally intended for sale to the settlers as farm houses. They were pre-fabricated and demountable into small sections, but even so the costs of transferring them by ox wagons to the locations (or even to Bathurst as temporary offices and houses for the Drostdy staff[4]) were generally found to be prohibitive. The first to be received in Port Elizabeth were commandeered for use as 'the offices of the commissaries and other civil functionaries appointed to transact the business of emigration...'[5] and for 'the Stores, and a small one as a Barrack for the Men...'[6] But they and subsequent shipments were not to be put together without much difficulty, and eventually a carpenter from Cape Town had to be written for '...as I cannot find anyone here who understands erecting [them]'.[7] Thus this interesting early attempt at pre-fabrication proved a failure in more ways than one.[8] The remaining wooden houses, of which there seem to have been quite a number, were mostly erected in Port Elizabeth and used for such purposes as stores, and as houses for government employees: e.g. the Boatmen's House[9]. Two others were utilised for Port Elizabeth's first church and school buildings (Plate 5.)[10]

At least one request was received from a private citizen for permission to purchase one of the wooden houses for erection in the town, and it is probable that a considerable number were disposed of in this way; special sales of them were held in 1825 and 1829.[1]

To judge from the accommodation which they were expected to provide (e.g. by the Landdrost of Bathurst, and in their functions as church and school) as well as by the charges for transporting them, the pre-fabricated wooden houses must have been of a considerable size, capable, if desired, of being divided into at least three rooms.[2]

They had both walls and low-pitched roofs sheathed in weatherboard. For insulation and the protection of the exposed woodwork against decay some of them seem to have been given thatched roofs over the boarding, or canvas painted with tar.[3]

Another early account (Sophia Pigot's) refers to an 'iron house' at Port Elizabeth in 1820, and we are left to conjecture that this was another kind of prefabricated structure, and probably made up in flat cast iron sheeting.[4]

Port Elizabeth developed round two centres; one, at first the more select as a residential area,[5] included the military buildings near the Donkin Memorial Pyramid at the top of the hill, which were originally built as quarters and stores for Fort Frederick. The other, the town proper, centred around the Commandant's House and the old Blockhouse near the beach, and extended along the foot of the hill parallel to the sea.

1. C.O. 2712/59. 6th March, 1829. '... now rapidly falling into decay... recommend that they be sold forthwith by Public Auction...' Other evidence of the fate of these houses is preserved in F. Ross's 'Journal of South Africa' (MS. S.A.P.L.) which shows what appears to be one of them at the Second Military Post, Great Fish River (1825) and the reference to Farewell's first house in Durban (1826), which seems to have been another.

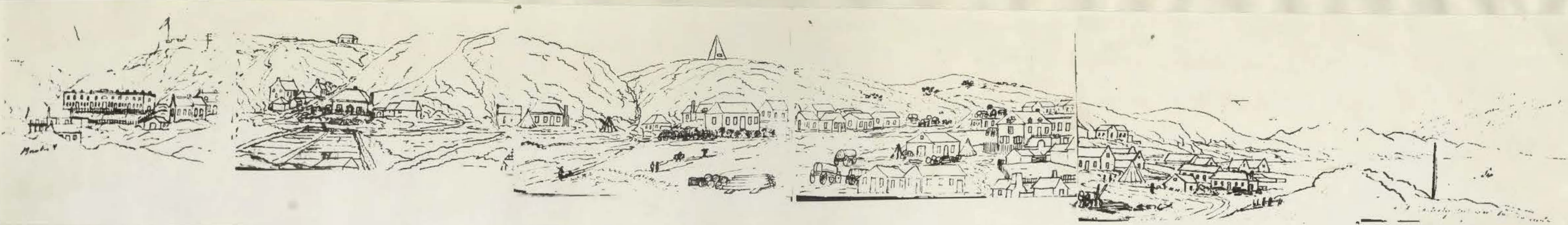
2. c.f. Drawings of Cornfield and Piers.

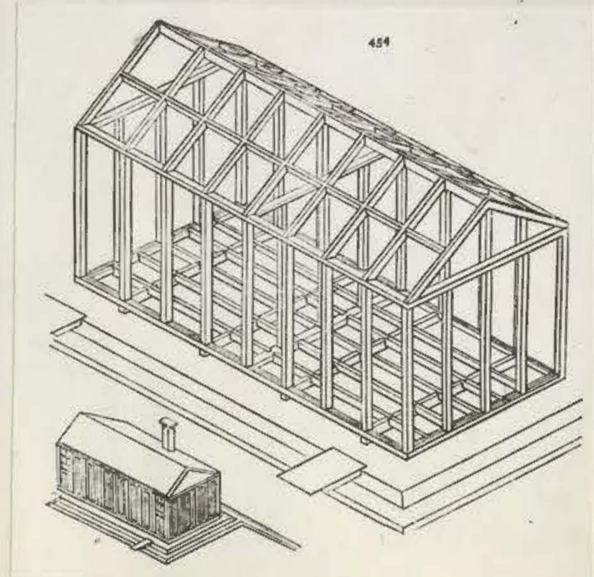
3. Ibid.

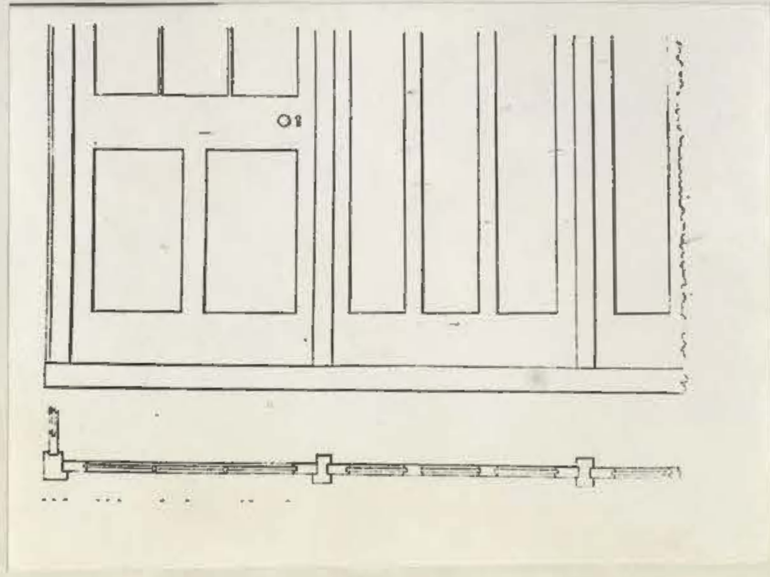
4. Diary of Sophia Pigot. Entries of May 5th & 7th (Manuscript in possession of Miss Pigot-Moodie of Melsetter).

5. e.g. 'I wish to retire from public life and am building myself a cottage near the Pyramid...' letter of N. Hidge to the Colonial Secretary 25th May, 1824. C.O. 211/71.

2. Detail of Hudson's panorama of Port Elizabeth (Plate 3) showing the Commandant's House.







3. S.E. Hudson's panorama of Port Elizabeth c.1822, from the sand dunes above the landing place.

4. (Right). Port Elizabeth. (An anonymous drawing, dated at the top 1832, but comparison with Plate 5 reveals the more likely date to be 1823).

5. (Left). Port Elizabeth by Comfield. A print published in 1823.

6, 7. Prefabricated wooden houses of a later date. From Loudon, 'Encyclopaedia', 1st Ed. 1833.

The Commandant's House, known to the Settlers as 'Government House' was described by Thomas Philipps as 'a neat thatched cottage' and was fronted by an 'old' garden![1] On the left of it S.E. Hudson reported that 'A new boarding House upon a large scale is begun, and many other buildings are in great forwardness. The said Government purposes building new Houses and magazines and an extra Hutment of differ't offices as at other out parts of the Colony...'[2]

The Boarding House was 'Markham House' afterwards the 'Hope Hotel'. Originally built by Captain Moresby and the first building in the New Port Elizabeth[3] it was a long double-storey structure facing the sea between the Commandant's House and the Block House. (Plates 3 & 8). In character it was essentially English, with a string course separating the two horizontal ranges of windows, a straight cornice, and a skyline broken by a series of parallel chimney stacks. Yet even here Cape influence was firmly established - as can be seen by the small relic of a stepped gable over the entrance, and the absence of a pitched roof.

Besides buildings in stone (which was either left bare or plastered and whitwashed) there were others in brick, and even some, at first, in wattle and daub. But this latter material was soon found unsatisfactory; as the Landdrost reported in 1823 'Mud and straw houses do not answer at this Bay in consequence of the Sandyness of the Soil with which they .... have to be made.'[4]

Bricks were early manufactured by the Settlers in Port Elizabeth. These were not the poorly fired soft Cape bricks, but hard-burnt kiln bricks of the English type as the Commandant, Captain Evatt, pointed out[5] when, in 1822, he sent a sample to Cape Town[6] in an endeavour to establish the first export industry in Port Elizabeth.

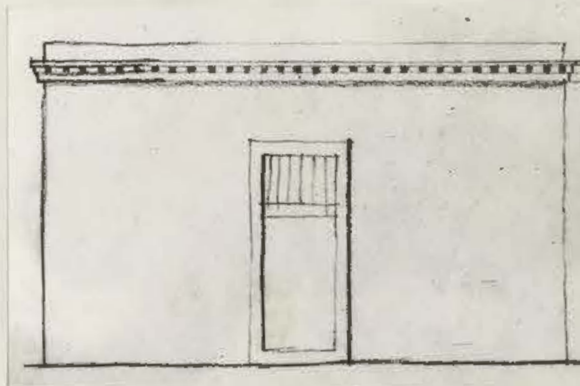
1. Thomas Philipps 'Letters' ed. A. Keppel-Jones, 1960, 46 & 48.
2. S.E. Hudson, 'Journal - Improvements' 1821. Acc. 602. Doc. 9A.
3. It was named 'Markham House' in memory of Lady Donkin, who was the daughter of George Markham, Dean of York. Sir Rufane Donkin granted the land and laid the foundation stone with considerable ceremony on 6th June 1820. v. Pringle, 'Narrative of a Residence in South Africa' and Redgrave, 'Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days' Wynberg 1947, 22.
4. C.O. 2650/23. 12th Feb. 1823. Letter from Colonel Cuyler to Col. Bird.
5. C.O. 174/15. March 19, 1822. '...not ever having found any manufactured in this colony of so good a substance, being equally hard as English...'
6. In this he succeeded, if at all, for only four years after which Wynberg bricks satisfied the Western Cape demands. Port Elizabeth bricks were found to be 'well made, but they absorb an immense quantity of water...' (C.O. 275/71. 8th May 1826).

8. Another Hudson drawing of 'Markham House', otherwise known as 'Hope Hotel'.

In spite of the availability of good brick, however, there was a strong conservatism on the part of the established contractors in favour of traditional materials of construction, notably the use of raw bricks[1] or stone for walls[2] which, latter in consequence, were usually of the order of one and a half to two and a half feet thick.

Many of the earliest roofs of these Port Elizabeth town buildings were of the type common in the Western Cape since the eighteenth century; that is built-up roofs of bricks and lime mortar finished with large flat tiles or Robben Island slate slabs (Plate 9).[3] But the English, with their conservative preference for pitched roofs, early adopted 'water rush' thatch[4] as the characteristic roofing material even in the town houses.[5] Here we are probably safe in assuming that the entry in Hudson's 'Journal' on this subject reflects the opinions he heard expressed by the settlers in the town: '... [thatching is] by far that most convenient mode for all the comforts attendant upon a small tenement, the room above giving ample room for throwing away the various necessaries not immediately wanted which in a Flat-roofed House must have a room particularly set apart for this purpose. They are cooler in Summer and warmer in winter than Flat plaster roofs upon which the sun has a most powerful effect however lofty they may be built...'.[6] The interiors of these thatched roofs were lined with straw mats to provide a neat ceiling.[7]

A fortunate chance has preserved full details of one of the earliest substantial houses to be erected in Port Elizabeth after the arrival of the settlers (Plate 10). This was a building erected by Nicholas Hidge on a site 'ir

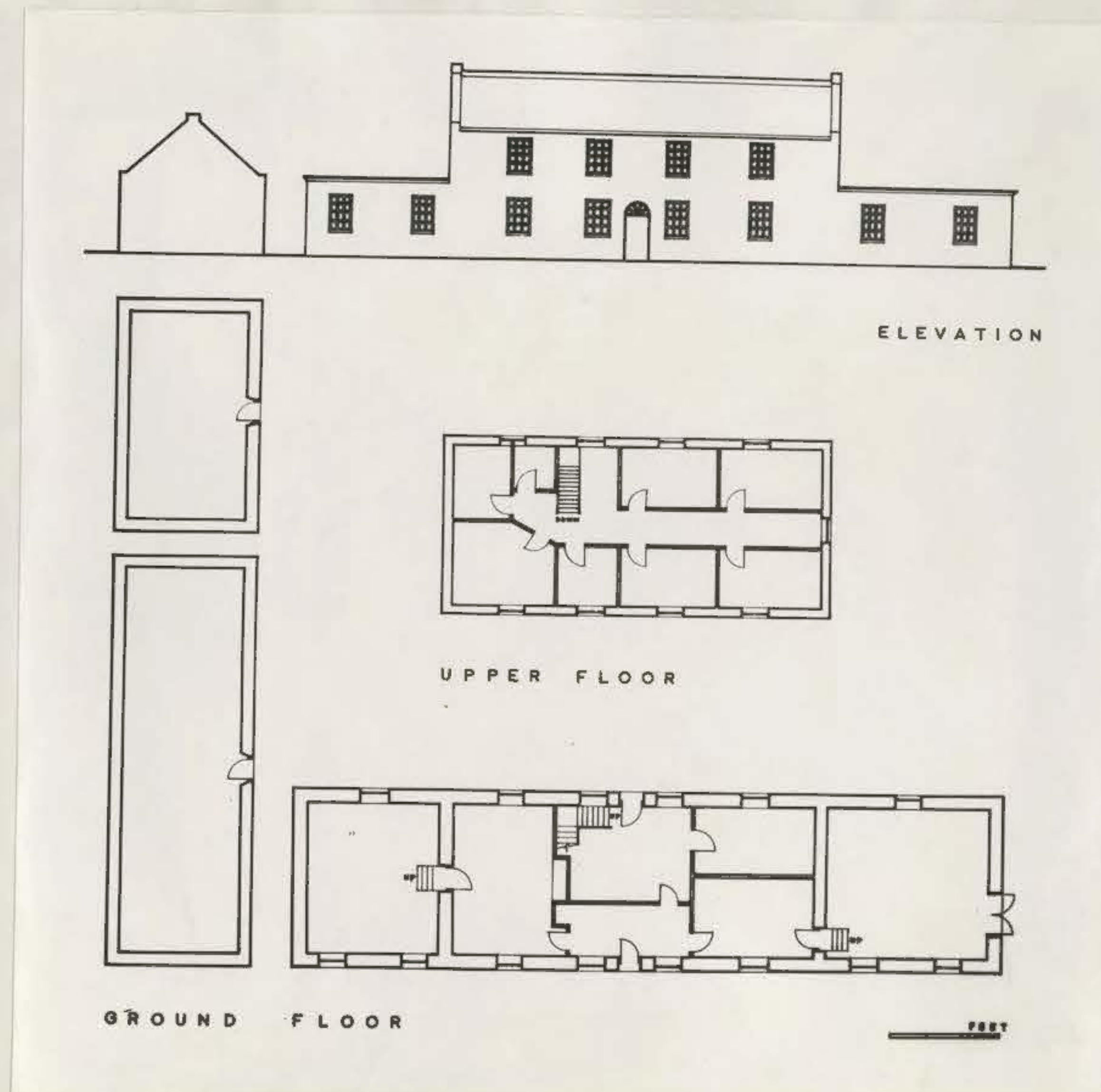


9. Sketch for converting the old Block House into a prison, 4. April, 1822, showing the flat roof of typical Cape type. C.O. 2642/54.

1. C.O. 2650/28. 12th Feb. 1823.
2. e.g. Herman Schutte. C.O. 164/10, 25th Feb. 1822.
3. C.O. 136/132. 12th Oct. 1820 and 'Markham House' q.v.
4. Probably 'matjes goed'.
5. '(The Houses) are all under thatch...' S.E. Hudson 'Journal' Acc. 602. Document 8 (entry under Port Elizabeth c. 1822).
6. S.E. Hudson.
7. Ibid.

1. C.O. 211/71, 25th May 1824.

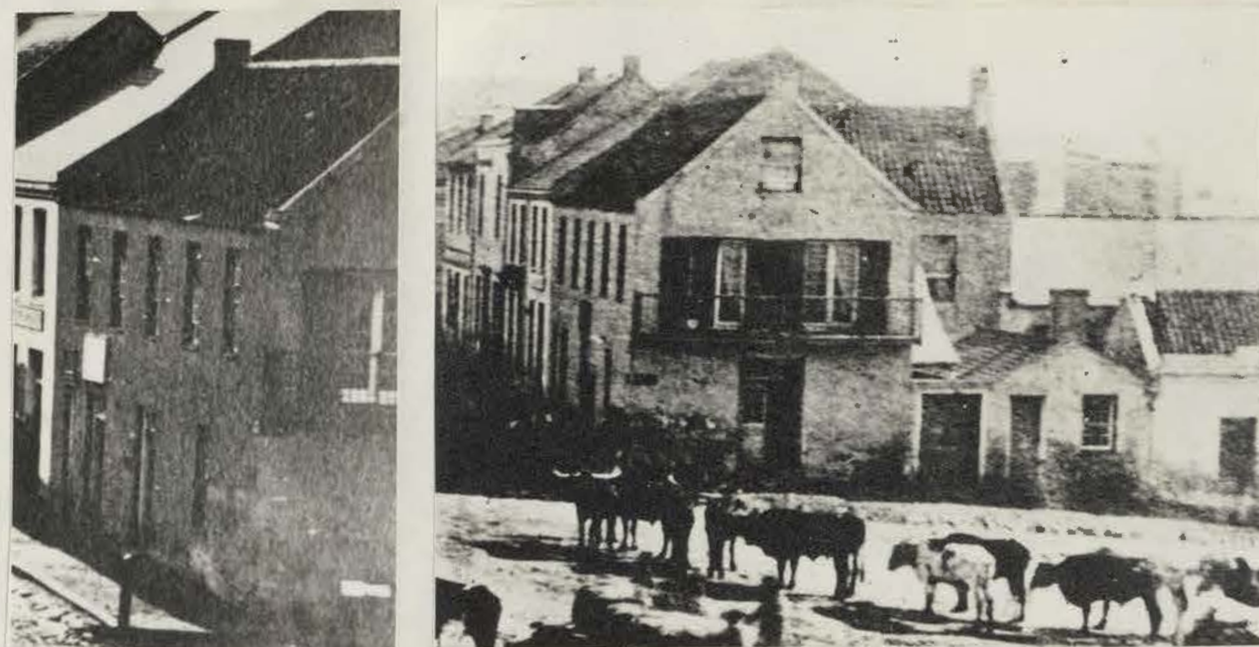
2. Ibid. The house cost 15,000 Rxds., with the owner working on it himself. In 1824 (C.O. 2659/71, 30th July 1824 etc.) the Government appear to have rented the house as temporary quarters for the Customs House and Public Offices, and probably continued to occupy it until a special building was erected for the purpose in 1837. Hidge's Inn was situated in Damant Street near the site of the present City Hall.



10. Plans and elevation of Hidge's Inn, one of the first buildings in Port Elizabeth, taken from C.O.211/71 and C.O. 2659/71, both 1824. (The elevations in these two drawings differ, that shown agrees with the plans).

the front of the street contiguous to the landing place and to the Market' which was especially donated by Sir Rufane Donkin, it being stipulated that the recipient 'was to build an Inn which might prove a decoration to the Town.'[1] The Inn, which had for its sign a Red Lion, comprised a stone double storey thatched block flanked by two flat-roofed side wings of single storey height. There were eight 'sleeping rooms' upstairs, separated from one another by light yellow-wood partitions, and 'six large rooms' at the entrance level. The roof space was said to be 'suitable for sleeping rooms or dry store'. An open staircase connecting the floors rose up from the back parlour. The main building was flanked on one side by a range of small sheds enclosing a yard 'which is accessible to Wagons' and containing 'an entrance to the store which is under the principal part of the house.'[2] This building was unique in having a Mansard roof which shows in many early sketches and photographs. This may be the reason for the representation of the hotel in the early Cornfield print with Cape Dutch end-gables, which it does not ever appear to have had - in fact the end gables were straight sided, with that peculiar bend in the middle of the sides associated with Mansard roofing. (Four dormers on each side of the roof, which do not show in either Hidge's elevation or Cornfield's sketch, appear in subsequent drawings and photographs).

Another prominent building dating from the earliest phase of Port Elizabeth's development was one which stood at the corner of the market square and the main street. This house was quite similar in design to the 'Red Lion', and the two may be taken to constitute a type, for this seems to have also had a double storey central block flanked on at least one side by a low wing. On the other side a railed balcony was accessible from the first floor rooms by French windows with shutters (Plates 11 & 12). The balcony may perhaps



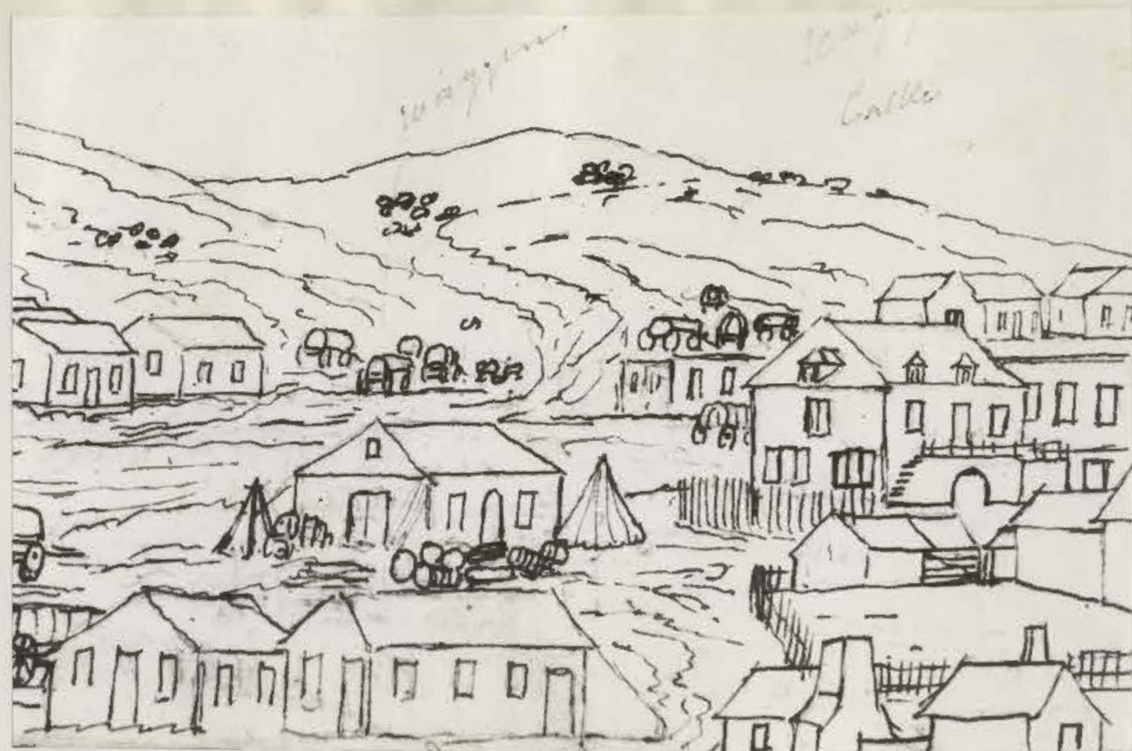
11, 12. Building at the corner of Main Street and Market Square, Port Elizabeth.

be a substitute after the original wing on that side was removed when a formal street line was fixed (c. 1822).

A curious anomaly of this house is that in the earliest drawings of Port Elizabeth it seems to adopt several roofing expressions. It is shown without gables but with a hipped roof and dormers, in Hudson's panorama (Plate 14) and with straight-sided English gables in Slater's sketch of c.1830 (Plate 15) and the earliest photographs.

As we have no reason to distrust the basic accuracy of Hudson's drawings, we must assume that, for some reason, possibly because the building was built by an immigrant from England,[1] or because a gable was felt to be unsound, the building was originally roofed with a hipped thatched roof broken by dormer windows. Two other houses in Hudson's (incomplete) panorama (Plate 3) are shown with dormer windows, so that this was apparently an early fashion in the town. Only one of the dormers (in Main Street, Plate 13) survived until the early days of photography, and few were left by the time Piers made his sketches in 1842. From this we may conclude that dormer windows especially those in thatch performed no better at Port Elizabeth than they had at Cape Town, Simonstown and Wynberg (v. Page 147). By the time of Slater's drawing the house at the corner of the main street had been reroofed, this time with straight-sided English gables and an unbroken pitched roof. Before 1829 clay pantiles had become the most generally accepted roofing material in the town (Plate 15). Many buildings were re-roofed with them, and this among them. This one building was thus roofed twice in less than ten years. And lest one should think this example far-fetched there are many others to testify to the highly charged re-building mania of the nascent years of the Eastern Frontier towns,

1. However, since the erven on which the building was erected became the property of Pieter Retief in 1821 (J.J. Redgrave), it is just conceivable that he erected this building as a speculation.

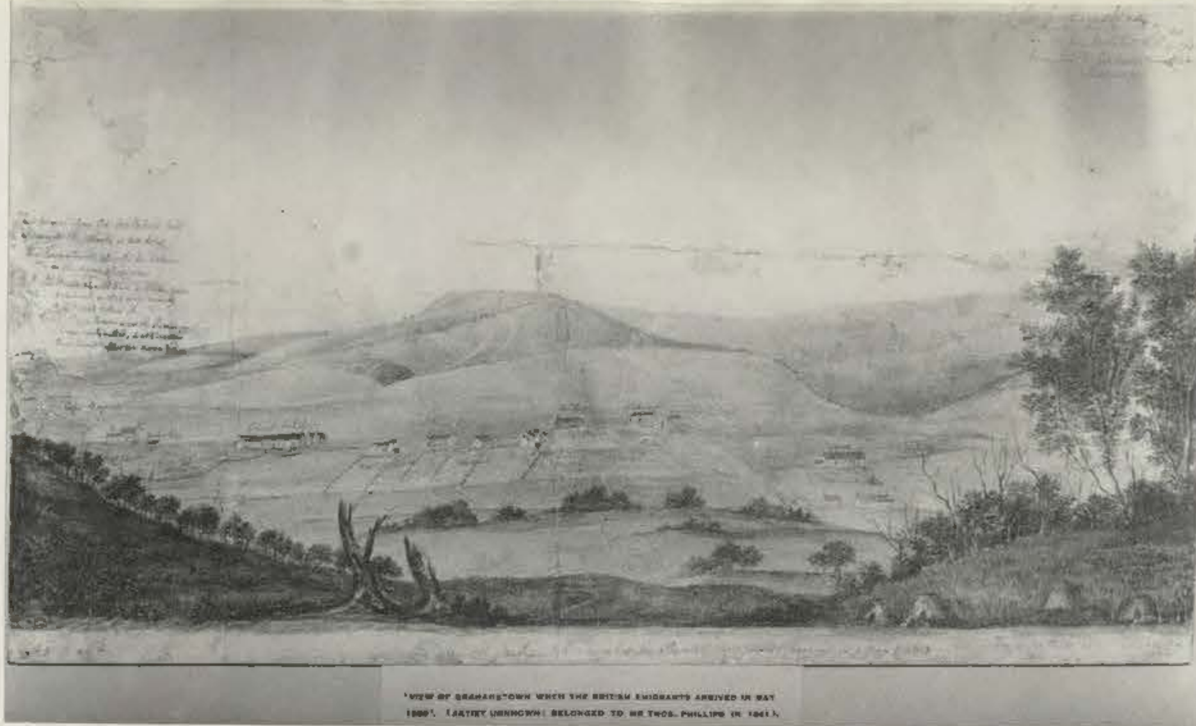


EARLY PORT ELIZABETH.

13. Building at the corner of Main Street and Market Square, Port Elizabeth; from Hudson's panorama (Plate 3).

14. House in Main Street. (S.A.P.L.).

15. General view c.1829-30. Watercolour by Slater.



16. Grahamstown in 1820. The gaol and messenger's house are grouped right of centre, with Retief's house in front of them. (Albany Museum).

17. Dietz's house, High Street, Grahamstown, as it appeared in the early days of photography. (Cory Library).

1. Knobel 'Report on the situation of Graham's Town, v. Cory 'Rise of South Africa', I; 267-72.

when commerce boomed and towns doubled their population every year, while the capriciousness of the climate and the limitations of the building materials were often only inadequately appreciated.

Graham's Town was already a well-formed village when the settlers first set eyes on it in 1820.

Founded in 1812 as Military Headquarters for the Frontier, during the early years it consisted merely of a reroofed boer farmhouse (in the centre of the present town, on what is now Cathedral Square) which served as the officer's mess, surrounded by a rough triangle of thatched reed huts (v. Page 51-2)

At the end of 1812 the new Deputy Landdrost, Major Fraser, had been instructed to select suitable sites for houses for the deputy landdrost and the messenger, and for a prison. The two latter were not finished until 1818, while the former had barely been begun by the time the settlers arrived.

At the beginning of its existence, Graham's Town was purely a military and civil establishment, but in January 1814 Government Surveyor J. Knobel, (formerly Secretary to Uitenhage) was sent to survey the layout of a township with the aim of encouraging the growth of an independent population.

Knobel fixed on a line running east-west for the main street of the town, connecting the messenger's house and gaol (then only unfinished shells) with the triangular space of the military encampment, which he recommended might eventually 'allow a very convenient situation for a church or any public building.'[1] The Drostdy House he intended should dominate the other end of

the street, and, as no progress had been made on the building at that time, this plan was eventually carried out.

On May 8th, 1815, the first erven were sold by public auction, the chief condition of sale being that a good house should be built upon the proper line for the High Street within eighteen months. By 'good house' it was to be understood that the dwelling was not to be less than 30 feet long, 13 feet deep and 8 feet high, and the walls were to be of a sound material such as stone, brick or mud.[1]

At the same time it was decided to remove the military camp from the immediate area of the town, and this was accordingly done during the following months.[2] A new group of military barracks was built about one and a half miles from the High Street further down the river valley, and called the 'East Barracks' or 'Wit Rug Kamp' (later known as 'Fort England'). Doors, windows and other joinery were sent up from Uitenhage for these buildings, which appear to have had walls of soft bricks.[3]

When the 1820 settlers arrived in Graham's Town they found 'thear were not more than twentey or twentey five Houses in it that was worthey to be called Houses'[4] and even doubted if the town 'was worthey of that name', although Town Regulations had already been promulgated in 1819.

Most of the houses (Plate 16) were single storeyed, white plastered and thatched buildings, so irregularly arranged that the borders of the High Street - a sandy track which ran between them - were barely discernible.[5] Only a few of the buildings were more pretentious. Pieter Retief's house on the north side of High Street had a double-storeyed wing with the flat brick-and-

1. Cory, I; 267-72.

2. cf. C.O. 2603 Uitenhage/10.

3. Ibid, and v. Chapter 11 Page 406. 'There were other barracks at that time located on the rear of the site now occupied by the Market-square...There was also a mud fort, or redoubt, on the slope somewhere near or behind the present residence of Mr. John Webb, another in the town...and one the Oatlands side of the Kowie stream...' (Sheffield, 101).

4. Una Long. 'Goldswain's Chronicle' I: 24. V.R.S. No. 27. Cape Town, 1946.

5. 'When the first Settlers' wagons arrived... they outspanned where High Street now is ...[there] the Settlers' oxen grazed, and they drank at the morass...on the low grounds [in Somerset Street] and at the reedy pools on the river banks at the back of New-street.' (Sheffield 210).

18. Captain Page's house (left), High Street, Grahamstown, (originally flatroofed and then thatched).

lime plaster roof indigenous to Cape town-houses. (Part of this building appears to be still standing at the back of the 'Drostdy' shop, though considerably altered).

Arnoldus Bernadus Dietz, on the opposite side of the street, had built for himself in 1818 a large single storeyed Cape Dutch farmhouse dwelling and shop, with typical T-shaped plan (Plate 17).[1] His next door neighbour, Captain Page, owned a respectable flat-roofed house[2] at right angles to the road (1818 Plate 18) which was bought in 1820 by the Government as a residence for the Anglican clergyman and army chaplain, and was only demolished in recent years.

Grouped around the nucleus of this tiny town, at a little distance from the High Street, were the finer houses of the senior military offices, for the most part only recently completed or still in course of construction. A range of these ran parallel to the High Street along the hill to the south, so that the houses looked towards the town across the stream which ran at the foot of their grounds.[3] Other such dwellings lay on isolated properties to the north and south-east.

Of the style of these houses, built for English officers with some pretensions to social dignity, a little may be gleaned from the evidence which has come down to us. At least two of the houses, that of the Commandant on the Frontier in the High Street (Plate 19), and one to the south, on what is now the corner of Beaufort and Hill Streets (which we shall call 'the Huntley House') included main reception rooms which were fronted with bow windows like those designed by Major Trappes for the Bathurst Drostdy,[4] The (Page 384 f.)

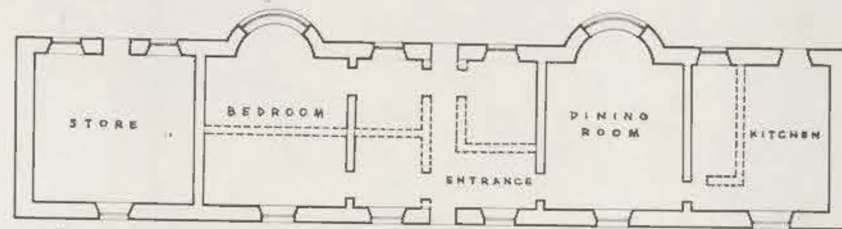
1. Dietz's house was, according to Sheffield, 'a rather pretentious building for those times... Standing beneath those giant Kaffir boom trees...stood the fine old mansion, with its stately Flemish gable, its thatched roof, huge windows, thick mud walls, and homely stoep...'

   (It will be noted that he confuses the house of Dietz with the original loan place farmhouse of Lucas Meyer).

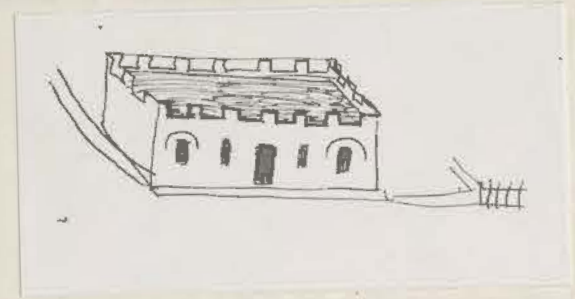
2. C.O. 2653/112; 17th Oct. 1823.

3. T. Sheffield. 'The Story of the Settlement', Grahamstown, 1884, (2nd ed.) 102.

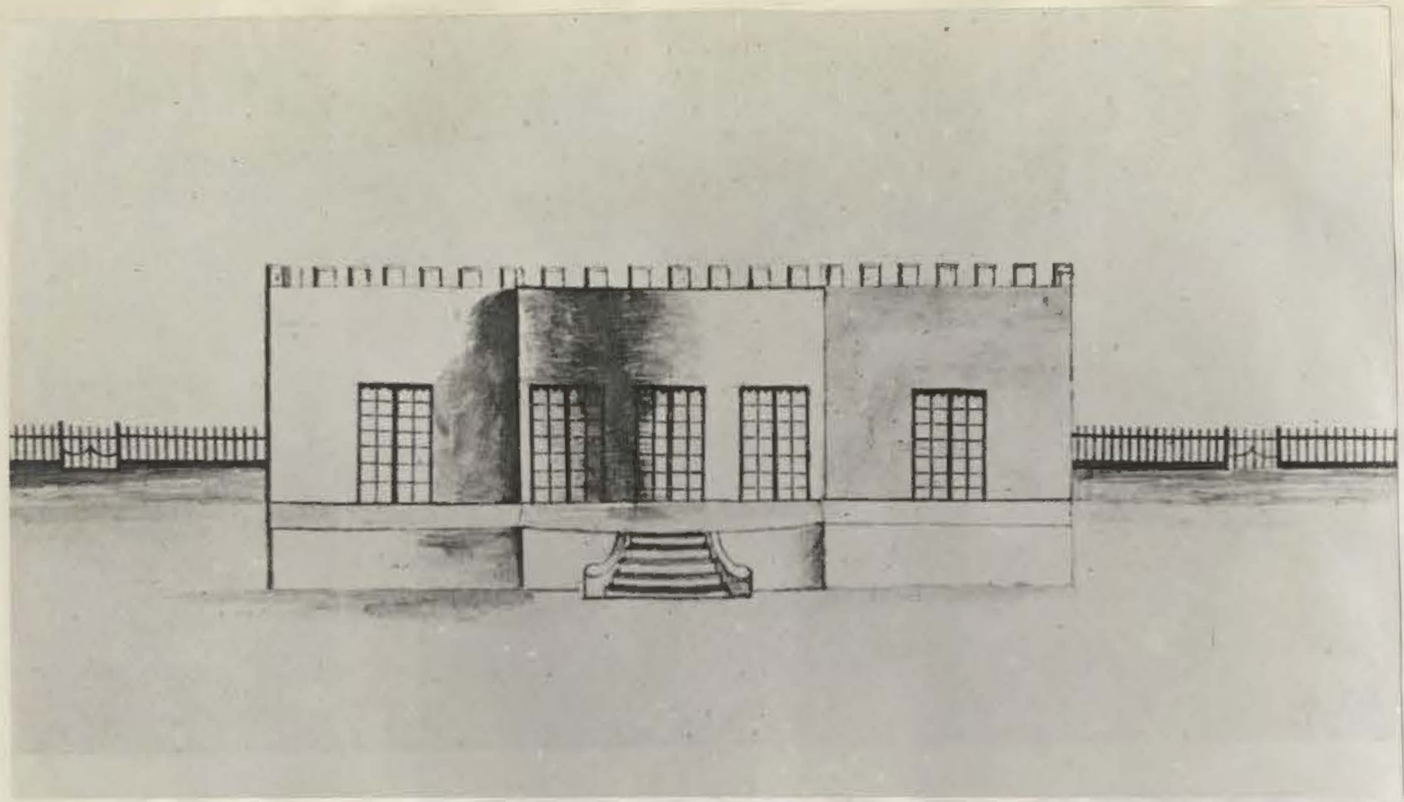
4. Major Trappes appears to have built a large house in Grahamstown on the property adjoining the Huntley House. Unfortunately, nothing is known of its design.

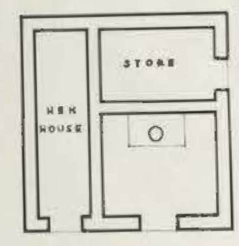


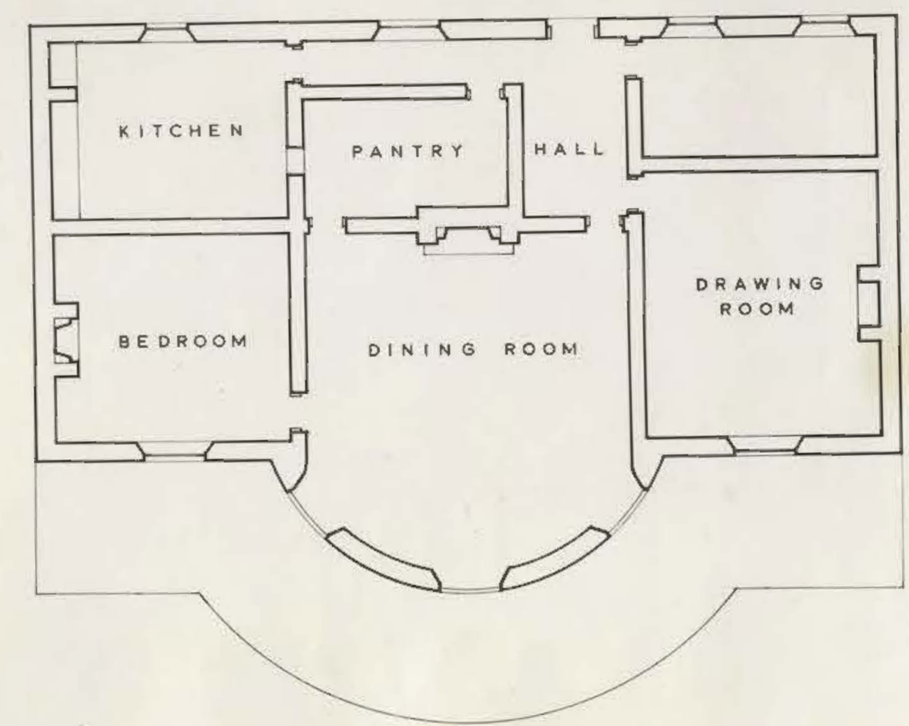
19. Plan of the house of the Commandant on the Frontier in 1822. (Taken from C.O. 2645/28, 12th March,1822).



24. The Huntley House, as it appeared in Ross's drawing of 1822. (Manuscript S.A.P.L.).







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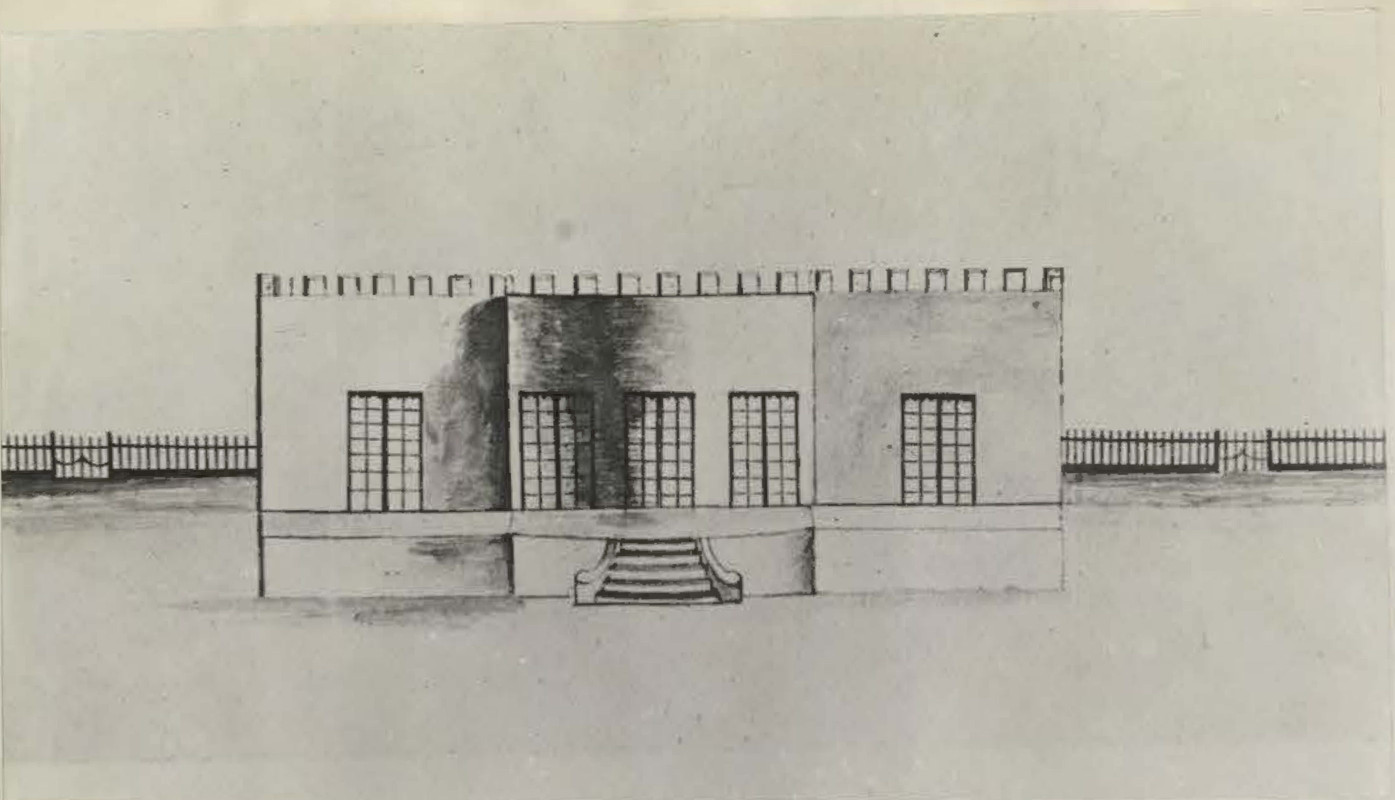
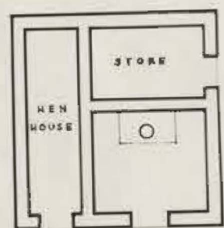
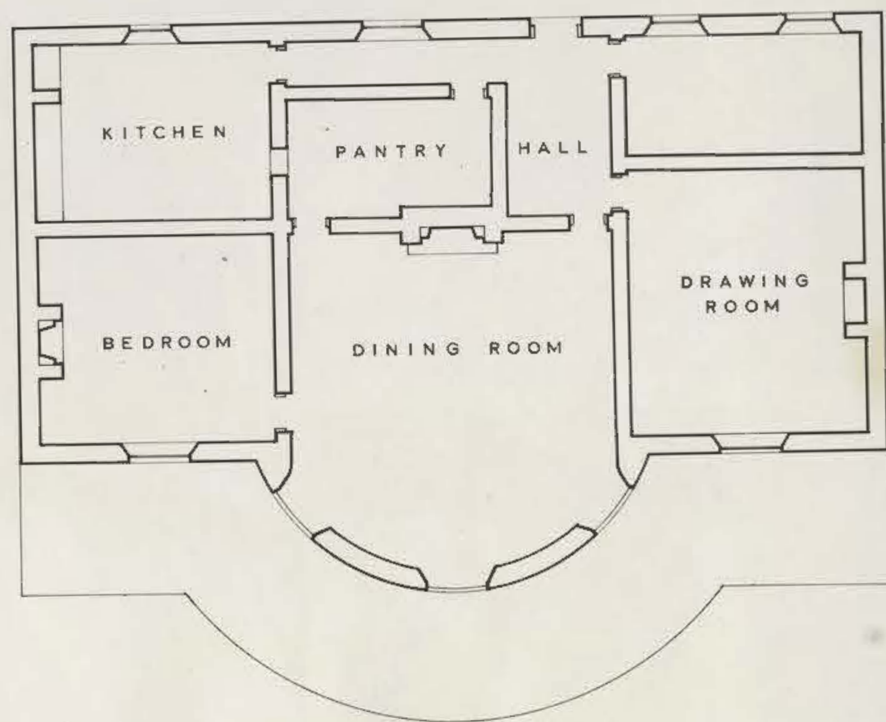






The Huntley house, Hill Street, Grahamstown. c.1818-19.

20. Elevation from C.O. 166/93; 18th November, 1822.

21. The Dining Room. With the exception of the plaster ceiling and fireplace almost perfectly preserved. Note the reeded chair-rail visible on the left.

22. The plan, from C.O. 166/93.

23. The house as it survives, considerably extended and with a pitched roof.

bow window, always an elegant form, was one of the hall marks of the Regency style with which these houses clearly associated themselves, albeit constructed of limited materials and of restricted size and accoutrements.

The Huntley house, built before July 1819, is especially interesting, not only because it is possible to reconstruct with complete accuracy its original appearance, but also because the actual rooms, with fireplaces, doors and joinery, are preserved almost intact within a bulk of later additions. (Plates 20 - 24.)

A plan and main elevation of the building were included in a letter written by H.(ugh) Huntley in November 1822, in which he offered to sell the house to the Government. (It was not bought, but rented for many years as the residence of the District Secretary).[1]

Huntley described the building in these terms: 'It is fitted up inside in the best style of English materials, the Rooms are all ceiled, and the two principal ones cornished, the floors are all boarded, with base [skirting], surbase [chair rail], etc. Box Window Shutters and handsome six panelled doors, the Dining and Bed Rooms are painted with oil Colours and the Dining Room papered... The Erf is well laid out and planted with fruit trees...'[2]

The Commandant's house, like most of those built at this time, was roofed with thatch,[3] but the Huntley House was flat roofed, with a castellated parapet in the fashionable 'Gothick' manner which is discussed in a later chapter. Both were built of stone and plastered externally. Interior walls were of soft brick.

1. C.O. 2653/37; 22nd April 1823. C.O. 2692/101; 16th Oct. 1827, et seqq.

2. C.O. 166/93; 18th November 1822.

Huntley, a ~~Captain~~ Lieutenant in the Royal Africa Corps, was not, as Colin Campbell claimed, killed in the Battle of Grahamstown in 1819 (Colin Campbell, 'British South Africa' London, 1897). But the property ~~appears to have been~~ was held in the name of Major Jackson until June 1820, so that the dwelling may have been built by him and passed into the Huntley estate subsequently.

Sheffield ('The Story of the Settlement' Grahamstown 2nd Ed. 1884, 232-3) confirms that Captain Huntley 'was one of the officers who took part in that memorable battle [of Grahamstown]. The house in which he lived at the time...was one of the few standing on the arrival here of the Settlers, and it stands yet, enlarged perhaps, but in many respects the same as it was.' Elsewhere (111) Sheffield describes how, during the Battle for Grahamstown 'Scattered parties [of natives] made their way into the village, and under shelter of its few houses and the mud forts the gallant defenders made a fierce fight with them for victory...' (The identification of the house with the surviving one under discussion is confirmed by other references in Sheffield).

Early views of the house are to be found in several watercolours of Grahamstown, notably in F.Ross 'Journal of South Africa' (Manuscript S.A. Public Library 'taken in 1822'). One of Huntley's sons, Charles Hugh, afterwards Resident Magistrate and Civil Commissioner of Grahamstown, believed that he had been born in the house. (He was born in November 1819 - cf. Sheffield 206-7, who obviously had his information at first hand, since Huntley was Resident Magistrate of Grahamstown at the time he wrote.)

3. For this and other information on the Commandant's House see C.O. 2645/28; 12th March, 1822 and C.O. 2721/37; 18th Dec. 1829.

1. Keppel-Jones 'Philipps 1820 Settler', 50.

2. 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 79. 'lots which before could be had for £50 have been sold for £200. And House rents most enormous...'

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

25. Early Settler house near New Street, Grahamstown; from a photograph c.1850. (Albany Museum).

26. Thatched houses of the type first built by the Albany Settlers in Grahamstown.

27. Early flat roofed buildings near the Market, Grahamstown. Probably attached to the military fort in this position. (see Map Plate 20 on page 652).

Other respectable buildings in the town were the original Deputy Landdrost's House in Somerset Street, afterwards apparently demolished to make way for the new gaol, the Royal Engineers' Establishment in what is now Prince Alfred Street, and a small number of merchants' homes, such as that of Mr. Driton at which the settler Thomas Philipps was entertained on his first arrival in Grahamstown. [1]

But from the settler accounts we know that the number of good houses was relatively few, and we must presume that the remainder of the buildings were but rough hovels, sheltering the temporary labourers and Hottentots of the town, such as had to serve some of the poorer settlers themselves in later months.

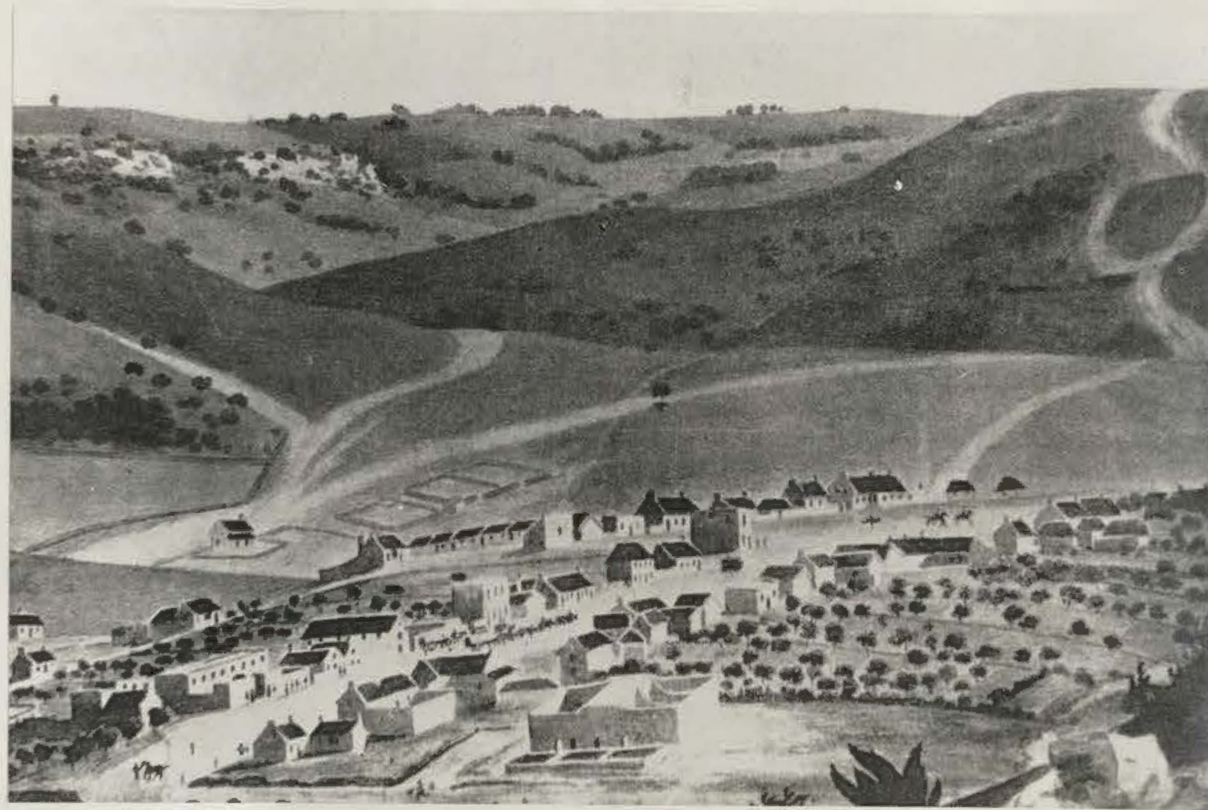
It is no wonder that when the settlers reached Grahamstown in May and June 1820 they found that 'if we had our pockets ful of money thear ware no place that we could get aconation [accommodation]...' (Goldswain 'Chronicle' - ed. Una Long. I; 25).

But by November the effect of the settlement of the 4000 settlers in close proximity to the town was everywhere in evidence. Land values and rents had soared [2], and a small but steady stream of settlers were making their way from the locations to take up residence in Grahamstown. '...a shed which in England would not let for 20/- a year, has literally been occupied at that rate per week...' [3] The demand for building labourers was naturally high: '£6 a month is the common rate of pay for Capenters and Masons...' [4] and more and more of the trained craftsmen among the settlers were tempted to leave their lands and migrate to the towns.

1. Hockly 'The British Settlers of 1820...' Cape Town 1949. Migration during 1820, 71 and 75.

2. Theal, 'History of S.A.', I, 268.

3. Ibid.



28. Grahamstown in 1824. From the hill behind the Drostdy house.

At first the Government set its face firmly against this practice, but they were never able wholly to prevent it, and before 12 months were out had capitulated to the length of allowing tradesmen permanent passes to settle in the urban centres, provided that they were able to show that they were not needed on the location and were not indebted to the heads of parties or to the Government.[1]

Skilled labour being thus available, though expensive and in constant demand, the erection of good and permanent buildings in the towns went on apace.

Those of the more wealthy immigrants who intended to have erected for themselves residences of the type to which they had been accustomed in England were among the first to take advantage of the increasing availability of tradesmen. A case in point was Mr. Bishop Burnet[2] who erected during the latter half of 1820 'an ornamental building' for himself and others for his workmen, as well as 'embellishing the grounds about...'[3] on his estate on the outskirts of Grahamstown.

So fervent did the building mania become that even farmers or traders such as Pieter Retief and Arnoldus Dietz considered it expedient to join in the boom, and were soon using their capital to set up as building contractors, employing settler craftsmen and labourers either as paid assistants or as sub-contractors. (v. Page 393).

The migrants from the agricultural locations to the towns included not only carpenters, masons and other building tradesmen, but also cobblers,

tailors, bakers, smiths and so on, many of them in such straitened circumstances that it was out of the question for them to employ tradesmen to erect their buildings, or obtain materials other than those which could be had at hand for next to nothing.

Thus from the first two kinds of building activity went on simultaneously (often side by side; one patterned on the town buildings of Britain or the Western Cape, and the other the makeshift architecture of the locations transferred to the town.

In both, stone was for many years preferred to brick. Not only was it much cheaper (1822: 'the expense...of stone is probably not one fourth of the expense the Brick would have been...'. C.O. 165/102; 4th Nov. 1822. Report on Scott's Barracks, Grahamstown), but, as the District Surveyor wrote in 1823: 'no dependence can be placed either in the Bricks or in the method of laying them in mud, as is generally adopted in this town.[1] Bricks, then, there were, but not of the well-burnt durable variety which the settlers had been accustomed to in England. These were to come later. In the meantime Dr. Campbell, when he wanted burnt bricks for his house on the corner of Bathurst and Beaufort Streets, had to import them from Salem by waggon. (v. page 357).

The stone built cottages of the poorer tradesmen (Plates 30-1, 33-5) had generally two rooms, with rough rubble walls limewashed or plastered. The ceiling height was low, and the small windows were inserted directly under the eaves of the high-pitched thatched roof. Houses were narrow and long, the rooms small and cramped, with the entrance directly into the living room which

1. C.O. 2653/112; 17th Oct. 1823.

Above : GRAHAMSTOWN.

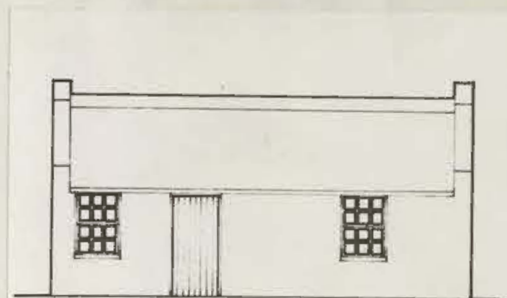
29. Early two-storey house in the High Street.

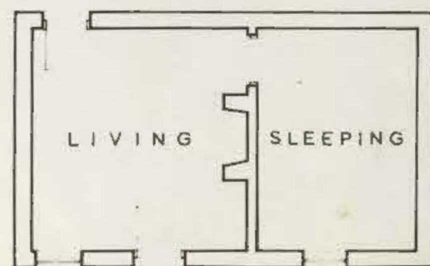
30,31. Two views of a Settler cottage near the Market; originally thatched. c.1820-3.

32. 64, New Street. c.1820-3.

1. C.O. 2720/35; 6th March 1830.
2. 'Roman Catholic Centenary Souvenir'. Grahamstown, 1944.
3. Thomas Philipps: 'Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Cafferland', London, 1827, 79.
4. A wattle and daub house which survived into the 1880's and had actually been built before the arrival of the 1820 settlers is mentioned by Sheffield (207).

33,34,35. A typical settler cottage near the Market, Grahamstown. c.1820-23.





also contained the only fireplace, if there was one at all, in the house. The floors were of earth, or, at best, of composition. Ceilings to the rooms were generally formed of exposed joists or beams with an infilling of linen, calico, cotton or reed mats.[1] Dr. Griffith, the visiting Roman Catholic vicar, described the house he stayed in as 'indifferent enough with thatched roofs and mat or cotton ceilings and the rain today pouring or pattering through a thousand apertures...'[2]

The furniture, apart from that imported from England in cedar or mahogany, was, as Philipps tells us 'generally made of 'sneeze' wood, which admits of a very high polish; this and the yellow wood tree is the only wood I have seen used for that purpose...'.[3]

There were also at first a considerable number of cottages of the same basic plan with walls of wattle and daub instead of stone (Plates 25-26). But these were generally intended merely as temporary dwellings, and were soon replaced, in the prosperous years which followed, with more permanent structures.[4] A few of the stone-built houses on this model have survived, and may be seen (now covered with corrugated iron) in the back streets of Grahamstown.

Next in social importance were the small village homes of the more prosperous tradesmen. These were either single or double storeyed and were generally built on plots with relatively narrow frontages, so that they abutted one another. In this way there was quickly created, in some corners of the town, an environment as built-up, nay congested, as any the settlers had left behind in industrial Britain.

Lining the narrow streets the tradesmen erected as motley a collection of building types as it would be possible to imagine in a society composed not

Opposite: Grahamstown single-storey houses, an early Settler type.

Top: 36. Corner of Bartholomew and Cross Streets. ± 1822.
37. Macdonald Street.

Bottom: 38. Laurence Street.
39. Cross Street.
40. Chapel Street. ± 1822.

only of men from the north and south of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, from village, city and farm, but also from Holland, the Western Cape, the older towns of the Eastern frontier, and Germany (Plates 36 ff.)

For some years a dispute existed as to whether thatch or the traditional flat plaster roof of Cape Town was more suitable for roofing the town buildings. No other material was then available, if we discount stone slating of which we know little, and which in any case was quickly discredited. (v. Page 389).

The Cape contractors - Retief, Dietz and Carl Friedrich Pohl - naturally favoured flat roofs, and there was no reason why the city dwellers from Britain should object to them, especially since they had the obvious advantage of fire-resistance. But an equally strong partisanship grew up among the ex-farmers and immigrants from the smaller towns in favour of pitched roofs, as more familiar to English eyes and more efficient in shedding rain-water. That inflammable thatch was the only suitable material at the moment was an inconvenience, but steps could soon be taken to put that right.

In the end, the pitched roof advocates prevailed. After the great storm of 1823 the Surveyor of Albany, John Hope, reported of Government property in strong terms that 'the flat roofs of all the buildings are rendered quite useless, and should be replaced by thatch...'.[1] (But those flat-roof partisans who remained unconvinced had their day, when in 1834, the inhabitants of the town flocked to the brick and plaster roofed buildings for protection during the scares of the Sixth Kaffir War.)

1. C.O. 2653/112. 17th Oct. 1823.

A few months later we find Pohl rather surprisingly recommending that the flat roof of Retief's Drostdy should be replaced by a pitched thatched roof - v. page 399.

Philipps, writing after the October storms, says that 'Grahams Town has also suffered greatly, scarcely a house standing uninjured...' (Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 183).

Above: Grahamstown double-storeyed houses of the 'twenties.

41. Beaufort Street, Photograph of c.1800.
42. T. Baines painting of High Street.
43. T. Baines painting of Hill Street.

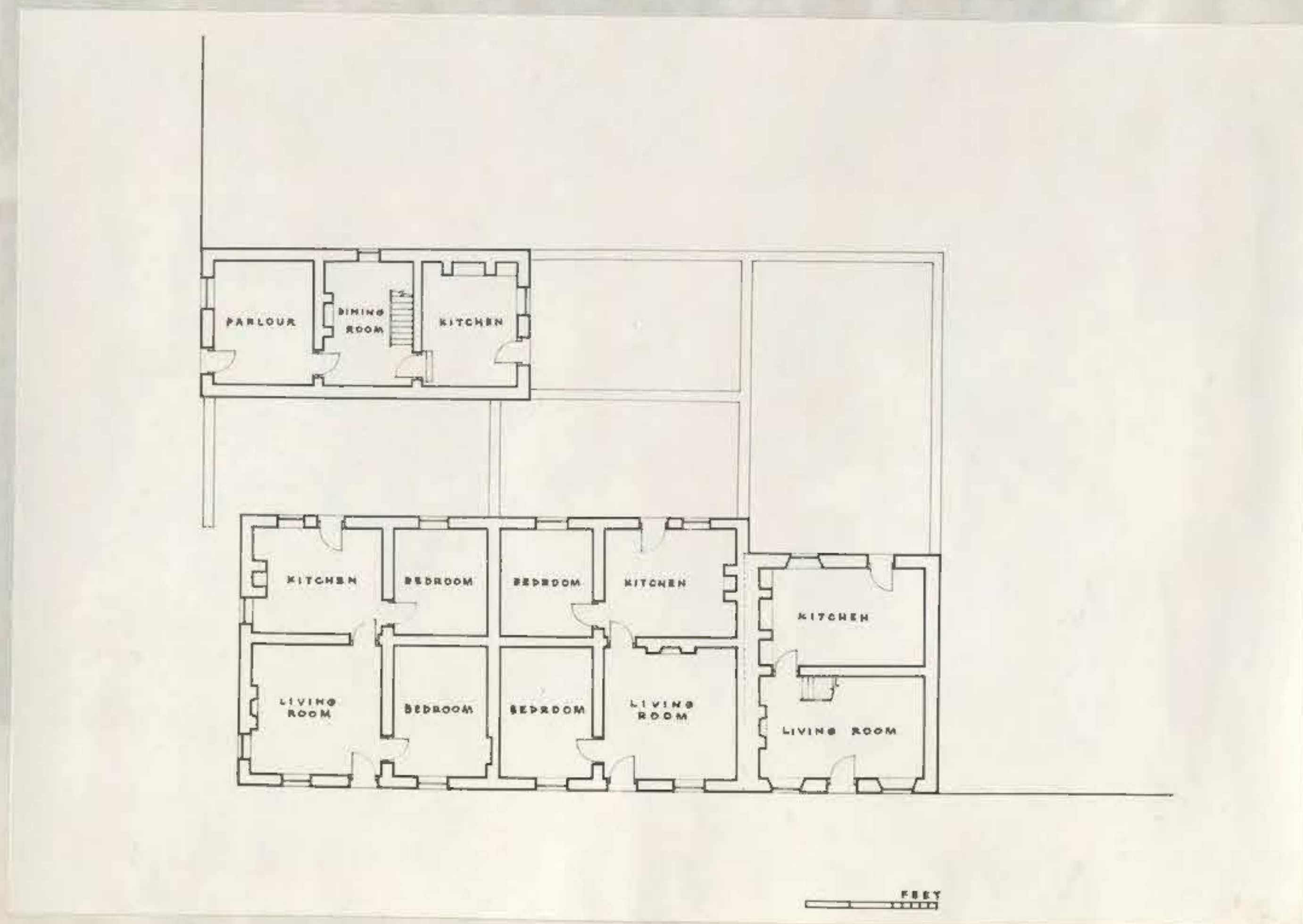
44,45,46. Houses on the corner of Market and Bartholomew Streets; a typical cross-section of Settler architecture in early Grahamstown.

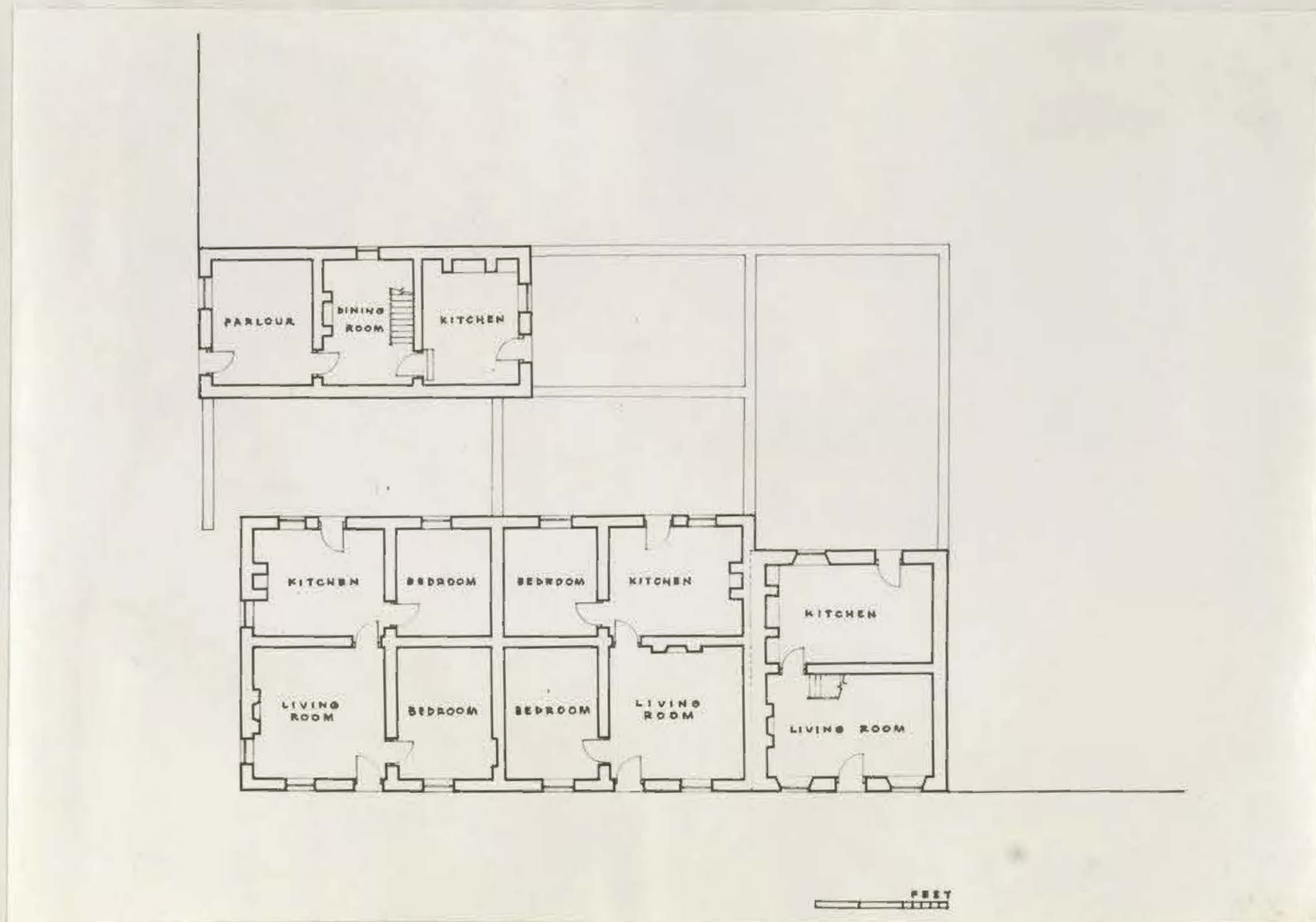
Opposite: the houses in the previous plates examined in greater detail.

47. No.15, Market Street and the side of No.17, Bartholomew Street.

48. Nos. 17,15 and 13, Bartholomew Street.

49. Plans of ground and first floor levels.




PARLOUR
DINING ROOM
KITCHEN
KITCHEN
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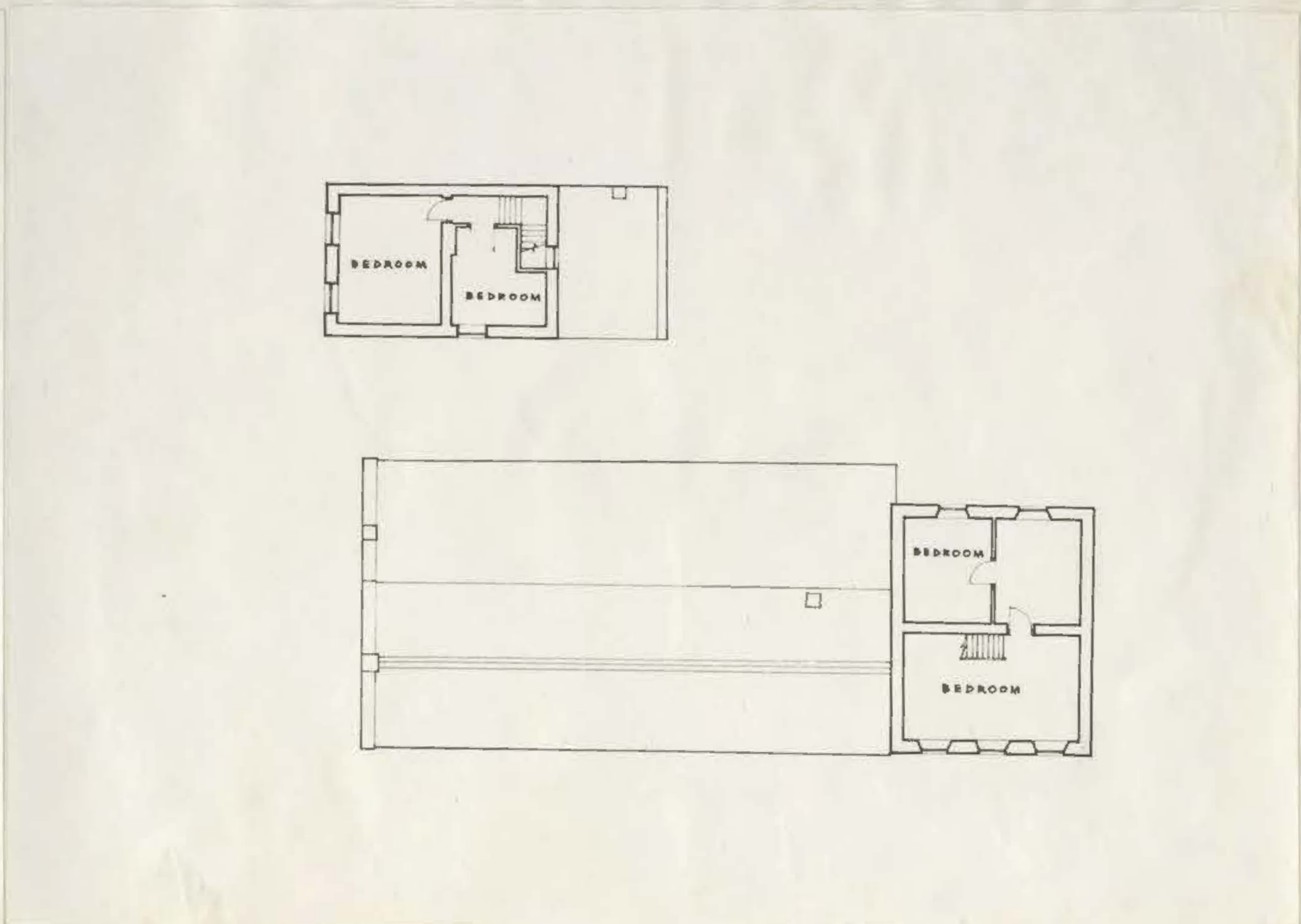

BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM

50,51. Pavilion house in Oatlands Road, Grahamstown.
52. Warehouse in Church Square, Grahamstown.

The most conservative of the houses, especially those built in the Cape tradition, had windows with very small panes some of which were even built flush with the walls in eighteenth century fashion and a number had stoeps with 'stoepbankies' or end benches, many of which survive to the present day (Plate 64). A few of the houses were even of the 'stoep-kamer' type with corner rooms enclosing the stoep in front of the main block to create compositions vaguely reminiscent of Palladio (Plates 50-1).

Cape influence is evident in some of the flat-roofed double-storeyed dwellings, with their low parapets and large squat windows (Plate 46). Other double-storey houses have a strong British character, with taller and narrower windows, larger panes of glass, and, in most cases, pitched roofs. Free-standing houses sometimes have hipped roofs, but the majority are given projecting gables which enclose the roof and served originally to protect the ends of the thick thatch from the attacks of the wind.

Conflicting influence is also seen in the design of such features as chimneys. Flat-roofed houses generally have spirally fluted chimneys, a bold Baroque touch (Plate 56) or they are separated from the main block altogether, the kitchen being an outbuilding, with a projecting oven and high straight flue.

In the British house, on the other hand, the chimney is usually a solid feature breaking the pitched roof at the ridge, and generally built as part of the gable end. Its proportion is a classical one, the 'golden mean' or something near it, and the mouldings which express the coping tend towards the profile of the classical cornice. (Plates 58-9).

53. Old houses in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown, with a carriage-way leading to a back courtyard.

54. Carriage-way in Somerset Street, Grahamstown.

55. Early terrace in Somerset Street, Grahamstown, showing indigenous Cape influence.

56. Spiral chimneys on a house in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown, which has a strong eighteenth century character, in spite of its exposed stone walls.

One of the finest of these early houses, the old Toll-house, now part of St. Andrews, Grahamstown, reveals an interesting blend of influences (Plates 63-4). In all other respects a splendid late Georgian house, it has the stoep and stoepbanks of the typical Cape farmhouse, and the inevitable pair of oak trees planted symmetrically on either side of the front door, and as close to the building as possible, so that they cast their deep dappled shadow over the whole stoep during the summer. There are enough similar examples in Grahamstown to permit us to conclude that the stoep was one indigenous Cape architectural feature which had almost universal appeal to the immigrants.

The largest houses were, like 'Oatlands', wealthy officers' homes built in park-like estates, or like 'Graham House', large bow-fronted free-standing Regency villas. 'Oatlands' was built during 1823 by Captain Henry Somerset, son of the Governor. The enormous estate on which it was built was granted 'under some mistake'[1] to Somerset during his father's absence on leave. The house seems to have been a rambling 'cottage ornee' with one large salon which is still preserved, and some castellated chimney stacks! The building, 'embowered in mimosas', was, with its gardens, regarded as among the most attractive in the district.[2] It appears to have been originally thatched, with flashings and gutters of lead.[3]

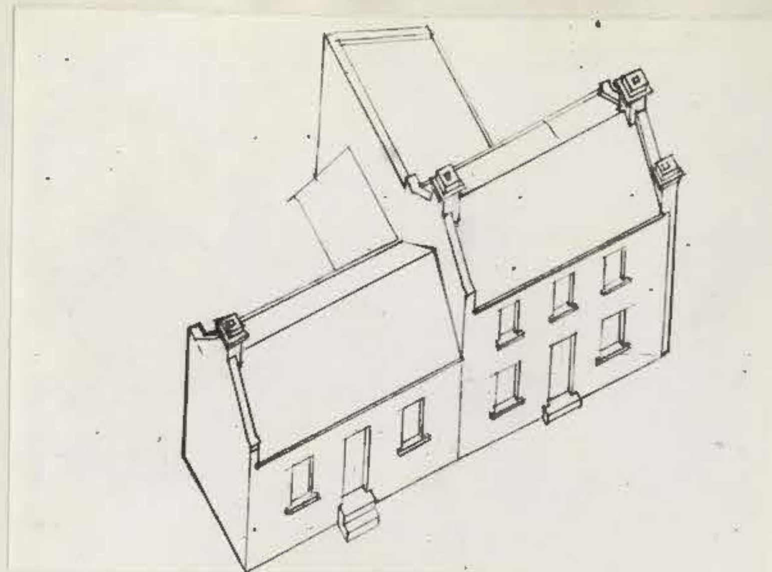
'Graham House' (demolished 1955) was typical of the wealthy town 'villa' set on a fairly restricted site in an encircling landscaped garden. It was double-storeyed, with a semi-circular bow-front in the centre of the main facade running up the full height of the building. It had a flat lime plaster and brick roof, with a corniced parapet (Plate 65).

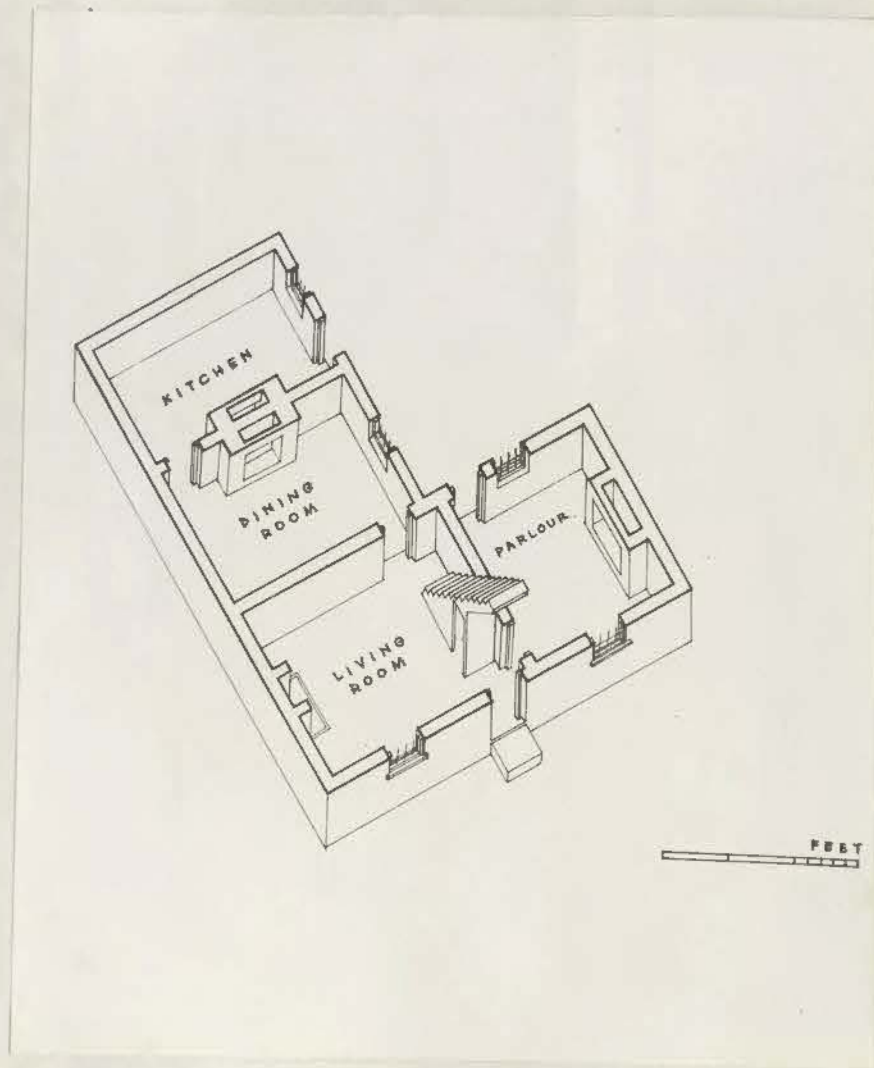
57. Projecting kitchen chimney in Queen Street, Grahamstown.

58. Chimney in Laurence Street, Grahamstown.

59. Chimney in Chapel Street, Grahamstown.

1. Cory in 'Souvenir of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers' Grahamstown, 1920, 11.
2. D.H. Thomson, 'A short history of Grahamstown, Grahamstown, p. 21.
3. C.O. 221/34. July 1824.

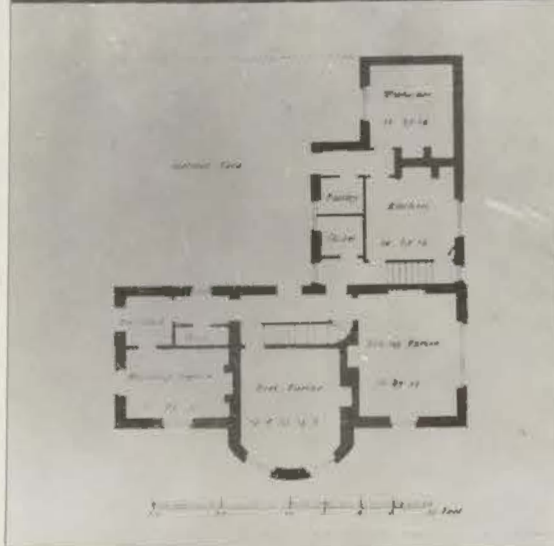




60,61,62. Axonometric plans, view and photograph of a house in Cross Street, Grahamstown, typical of the houses in the artisan's quarter.

63, 64. The old tollhouse on the north road, Grahamstown. Essentially English in character, it has in addition a stoep with stoep-banks on the front facade.

65. 'Graham House', Prince Alfred Street, Grahamstown. An early house with Regency bow front and a Cape flat roof. The windows are later alterations; (recently demolished).



66. Page from Plaw's 'Ferme Ornee', London 1795, 1813, &c.

67. Comparison with 'Hilton' (Chapter 9) and the suggested original appearance of 'Graham House'.

From the early drawings which have come down to us we can form some idea of the plan of these houses. Most of the better dwellings had an entrance hall, and often a separate passage linking the rooms. There were usually both a Parlour (or Drawing Room) and a Sitting Room, the former for entertaining and the latter as a living room. In addition there was generally a separate Dining Room, sometimes given the most important position, as it was in the Huntley house. The kitchen was usually within the plan, not an outbuilding. At least one of the bedrooms - 'the best bedroom' - was placed on the main facade, either by being situated over the living room or dining room, or a-long-side with the entrance hall serving as an intermediate lobby.

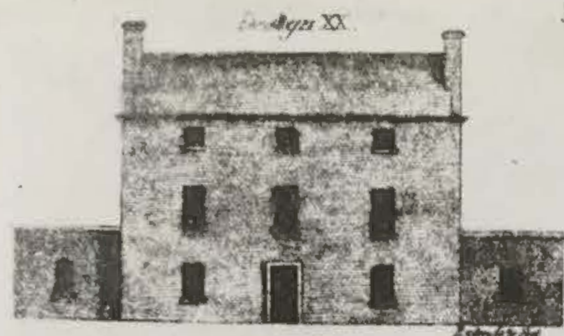
The Civil Commissioner's House, which we have met before as the house of the Commandant of the Frontier, was described in 1820 as having '4 bedrooms, 2 Parlours, 1 storeroom, 1 cellar and passages in front. In the rear is the Kitchen, Servants Hall and Pantry and small lobby all adjoining. Detached from the above is the Stable, Water Closet, and 2 other rooms for servants all under one roof.'[1]

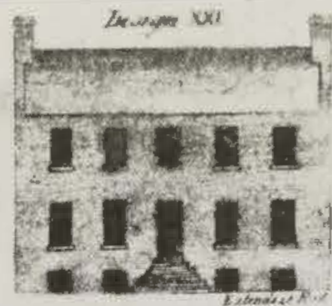
The drift of settlers from their original locations to the towns, and especially to Grahamstown, was accelerated by the successive crop failures of 1821, 22 and 23, and by the great storm of October 1823.

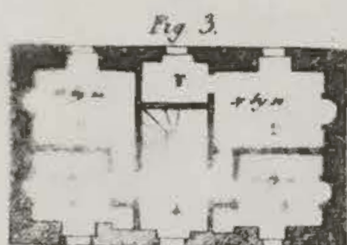
The figures for the growth of Grahamstown are startling enough:

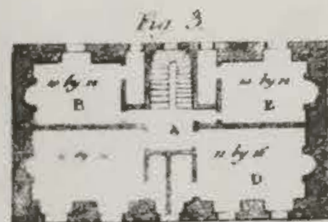
June	1820	:	20 - 25 houses [2]
January	1821	:	80 houses.[3]
May	1823	:	300 houses.[4]

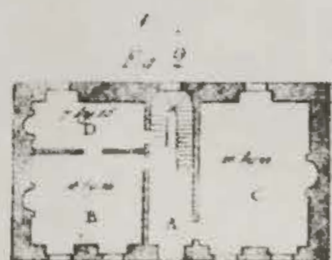
1. C.O. 2705/176; 1st August 1829.
2. Most settler sources are agreed about this figure, although they usually specify 'houses worthy to be called such'.
3. Thompson, 'Travels', London, 1827, 1,44.
4. Ibid.

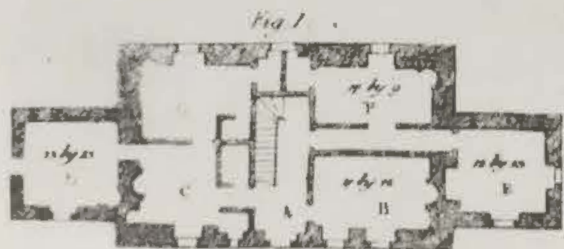


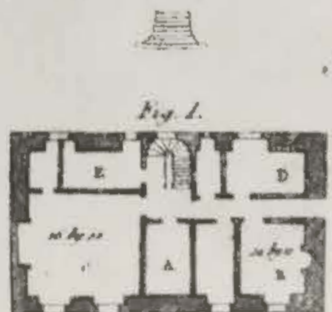


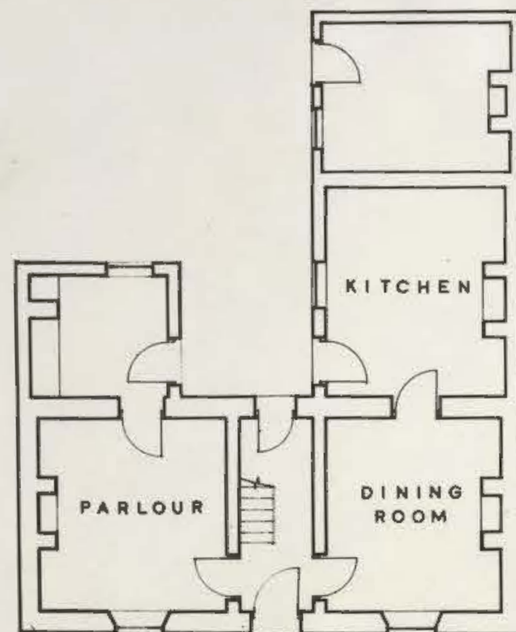


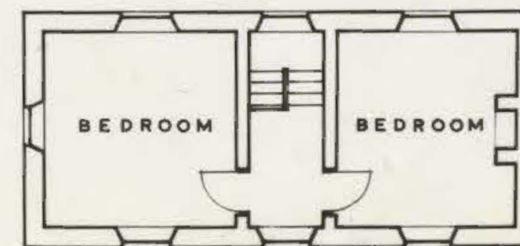












68. '3rd and 4th rate houses'. Plate XXI from 'Rudiments of Architecture, London, 1773.

69,70. 6, Cross Street, Grahamstown.

1. Cory, 'Rise of S.A.', II, 137.
2. G. Thompson 'Travels', I, 44.
3. G. Thompson 'Travels', II, 170.
4. Dugmore, 'An Albany Settler's Reminiscences' Grahamstown, 1871, 18.

71. (Top left). Early hipped thatched roof house off New Street, Grahamstown, from a photograph of c.1860.

72. (Below left). From the same photograph, an early building in Church Square, Grahamstown.

73. (Right). Early hipped slate roof house in York Street.

By the later date, of 1,004 males above eighteen years of age who had originally received grants of land in 1820, only 438 remained upon their locations.[1] By January 1826 the population of Grahamstown was about 2,500, the vast majority of them English[2] and Thompson records that 'The great demand for labour, and the high wages given by the Government contractors, and others, who were erecting buildings at Graham's Town, attracted thither great numbers of this class; and all of them who were industrious earned a competent livelihood, and many saved money and built houses for themselves; so that that village...now [1826] contains about one half of the emigrants originally located in the district, and is, (in population at least) the second town in the Colony.[3]

Dugmore also commented on the attraction to Grahamstown of bricklayers and carpenters:

'The infant metropolis gave them more remunerative employment than the "location". Indeed the tradesmen soon built a distinct "quarter" for themselves in the embryo city, and thus "Settlers' Hill" and "Artificers Square" received their inhabitants and their names'.[4]

The Government Inspector of Town Buildings, Hermann Schutte, who visited Grahamstown in December 1823, was not very impressed by the building techniques of the Settlers and asked, through the mediation of his superior Jones, for permission to visit Grahamstown for a longer period:

'While at Grahamstown he had an opportunity of Observing their mode of Building...he was soon convinced that a much readier method was to be adopted in accomplishing Business and therefore requests that permission should he be

1. C.O. 199/31. Cape Town. 24th Dec. 1823.
   Unfortunately it is not possible to trace Schutte's movements with sufficient accuracy to ascertain whether he did, in fact, spend any considerable time in Grahamstown.
2. Although a further hundred houses were built during the five years following 1823 (Shaw in 'Memorials of the British Settlers', edited by Godlonton, Grahamstown, 1844) this was nothing like the rate at which houses had been put up before that date - one hundred houses a year!
3. Now in the Surveyor-General's Office, Cape Town, these maps show a remarkably accurate outline of every building. There is an invaluable one showing the town in 1823-4.

74. Wesleyan Parsonage, High Street, Grahamstown.

75. House on the Market Square. (Ions).

so fortunate that would Enable him to Convince the Builders of Grahamstown what can be done...'[1]

George Gilbert arrived in Grahamstown from Cape Town in the latter part of 1824 to begin work on St. George's Church, and found there a ready market for his talents and experience. He remained to make his fortune on the frontier.

After 1823 there was a steady improvement in the standards of building. Better bricks began to be available, and more and more imported materials were brought into the district through the ports of Port Elizabeth and the Kowie.

But the bulk of the building needed to house the inhabitants of Grahamstown had already been done. The rapid expansion of the town was over, and so was the incredible building boom.[2] To this day the majority of the buildings in the early parts of the town have stone walls of pre-1823 date, and the number of buildings which can be seen from the detailed early maps[3] to have survived almost intact from this formative period is explicable only by the slow rate of expansion in the succeeding years.

It might give many contemporary critics cause to hesitate, were they to observe how well the building methods Schutte criticised have stood the test of one hundred and forty years!

'The establishment of the town of Bathurst...was of the most material service to the settlement, as from its situation in the centre of the smaller parties it served to sustain in its vicinity a denser population than the circumstances of the country could otherwise induce; ... its superior advantages of

Grahamstown houses:

Left: 76. Chapel Street.
77. Corner of Hill and Market Streets (now demolished).
78. Military officers' houses on the Market Square.

Above: 79. York Street.

Right: 80. Laurence Street.

81,82. Bathurst, house on Buckley's Estate.

soil, its vicinity to the only part of the coast found capable of communicating with the sea, and the erection of the residence of the chief Magistrate at the public expense, ... induced many individuals to expend their means in establishing themselves there...' (Memorial of the 1820 Settlers to the British Government. 10th March, 1823'. Quoted in Hockly 'British Settlers of 1820...' Cape Town,1949: 105-6).

Bathurst was laid out by the Land Surveyor of the district of Uitenhage, Mr. Knobel, in August 1820. The Acting-Governor envisaged great things for thetown, which was accordingly planned on a grand scale. The design was ready and approved on September 9th, and in order to encourage the immediate erection of the first houses the Acting-Governor authorised the granting of eight building plots free, on condition that houses were built upon them with in a limited time. The first auction sale of the building lots was a great success, and soon a number of houses were in course of construction along the newly surveyed roads, the settlers dwelling in the meantime in tents. (Wm. Shaw, 'The Story of My Mission'. London, 1860). But, because most of the plots were inordinately large (2 acres)[1] the houses when finished were generally free standing with a considerable amount of open space on either side, so that Bathurst never achieved the character of Grahamstown or Port Elizabeth, with streets framed by walls of houses.

In the meantime, the pretentious Drostdy, Messenger's House and Barracks were being built, and in September 1820 John Jarman of T. Wilson's party was selected by the Provisional Magistrate to keep an inn, he 'having means to erect a commodious House for such purpose, and intending also to build Subscription Rooms for the sole use of Gentlemen only...' (C.O. 2629/10. 2nd

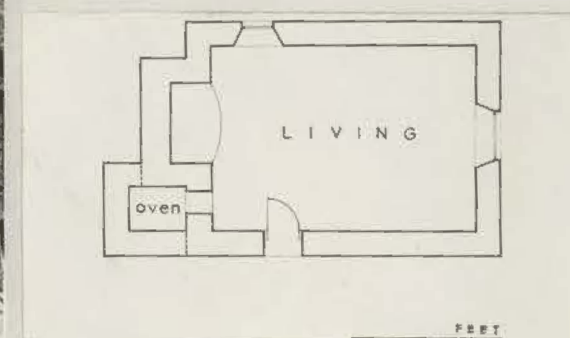
1. There were also a few half-acre plots set aside for 'mechanics'.

Sept. 1820). The inn was soon built, but not, according to the original plan on the site of the present 'Pig n' Whistle'.[1]

During the year 1821 approximately twenty small houses were erected in the village by settlers living on near-by locations (Philipps, letter of 14th Dec. 1821. Keppel-Jones, 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 112). In Jeremiah Goldswain's words: '...meney tradesmen that had left thear locations for to settle them selves in Bathurst had bult them little Houses: sum of the Houses was bult with turf others was built with postes and watled and daubed with mud: sum few with brick and stone and thatched with long grass...'[2]

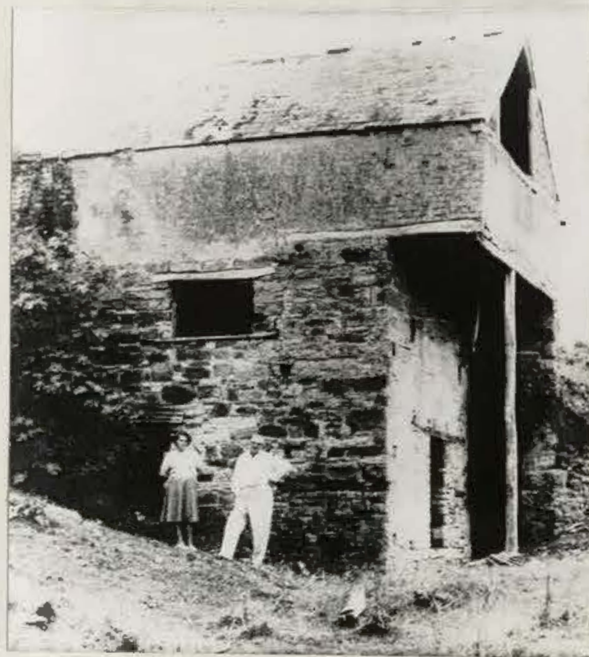
One of these houses has survived (Plates 81-4). It was originally on a part of Buckley's estate and is now owned by Mr. H. Timm. It is a tiny double-storeyed house with thick stone walls. There was only one low room on each level, and the only windows were small openings fitted with single 6-paned yellow-wood casements and closed by solid shutters. At the end of the ground floor room was a large cooking fire-place, and flanking it on the left the iron door of a large stone-built oven which projected alongside the chimney on the exterior of the house. The material of the original roof is not known, but as it is now slated it is conceivable that it was roofed, like the Drostdy, with locally hewn stone slates. The pitch was certainly extremely low for thatch. (v. pages 276 and 390).

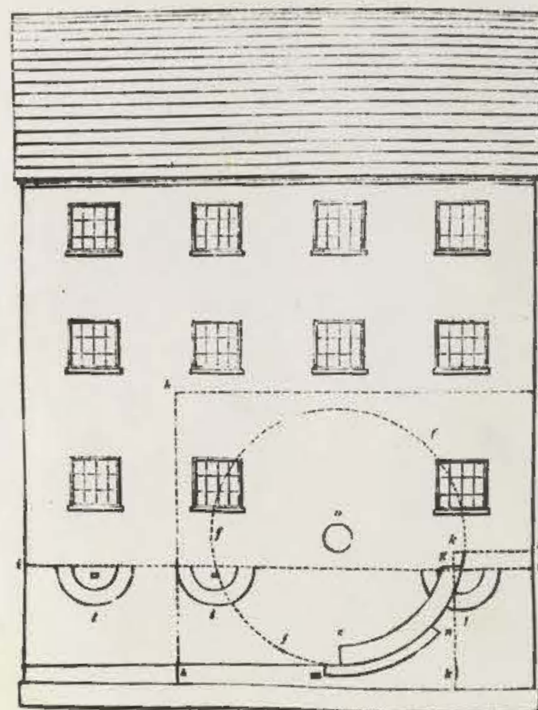
In this same year (1821) a start was made on the first industrial building in the settler district.[3] This was no less than a mill for processing wool and 'the manufacture of blankets'. Designed by Samuel Bradshaw it was a



83,84. Bathurst, house on Buckley's Estate.

1. 'Peg and Wassail' i.e. Peg and Bowl. The researches of Mr. E. Morse-Jones reveal that an early inn was built on the corner diagonally opposite to the present inn site.
2. Goldswain's 'Chronicle'. ed. by Una Long. I: 50.
3. For this and the information which follows v. 'Proceedings of the Lower Albany Historical Society' No. 2, Jan. 1959.





1. Rev. M. Saddler.

Above:

85. Stone cottage in Bathurst.

86. Bathurst mill.

87. Watermill from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1833.

double-storeyed building in the valley of the stream below the Drostdy. (It is now a Historical Monument). The lower level housed the water wheel, of roughly 18 ft. in diameter, and the upper floor, approached by a stone stairway, held the wool processing equipment, worked by power transmitted vertically from the wheel below. Stone for the mill was obtained at the freestone quarries near Bathurst, and yellow-wood and sneezewood were cut on the site, which was at that time thickly overgrown.

At this stage in the development of industry, water power was all-important, even in Europe. Had it not been for subsequent set-backs (in March 1835 the mill was burnt by the Xhosas, and, although rebuilt, did not long compete with imported manufacturers) it is not too much to suppose that Bathurst might have developed into an industrial town on the pattern of Bradford and Manchester, which began their industrial development in the same way. For a time, Bathurst blankets and 'Kersey' woollen cloth made from locally grown wool were in use throughout the frontier.

During 1821-22 a temporary Methodist chapel was built; a thatched wattle and daub structure[1] and the erection of an English church was contemplated in the near future.

Then, in February 1822, the seat of the Magistracy was unexpectedly removed from Bathurst to Grahamstown, causing great dismay to settlers in the whole area, but especially to those who had invested in property and business in the town.

This arbitrary step, taken by the unpopular Governor, Lord Charles Somerset

1. Goldswain's 'Chronicle'. ed. Una Long, I, 50.

2. T. Phillips, 'Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Cafferland'. London, 1827, 81.

3. Hockly 'British Settlers of 1820', 131.

88,89. (above). Weakley house, Bathurst.

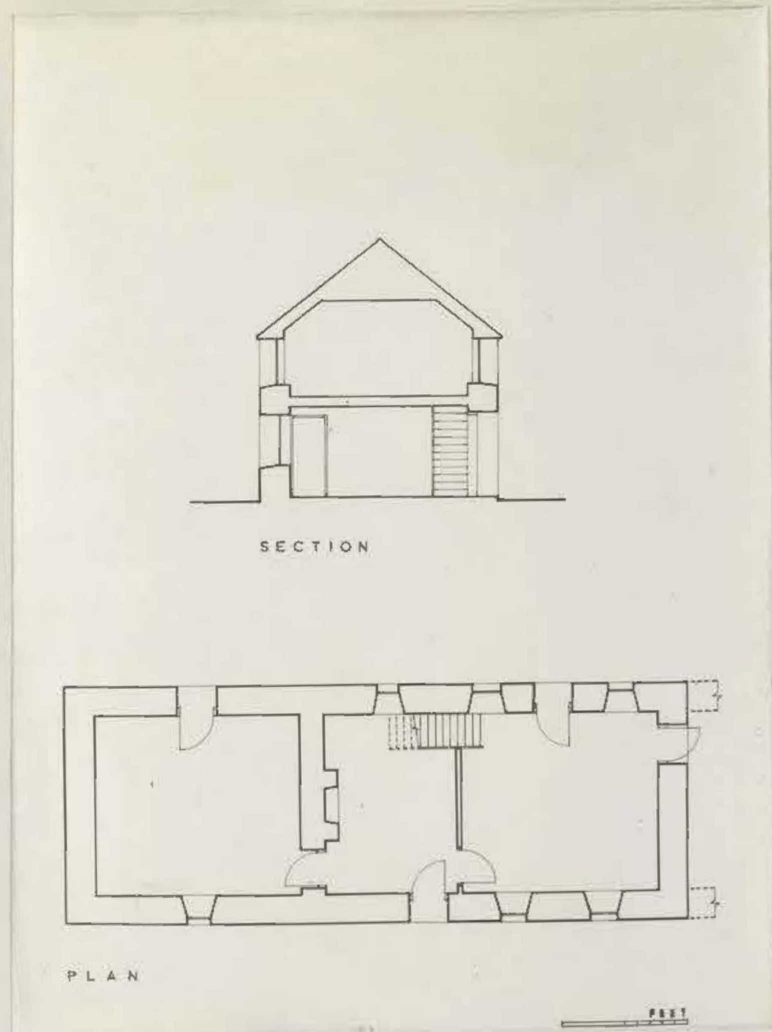
was one of the main reasons for the drafting of the Memorial to the British Government which was presented in 1823: '... the removal of the seat of magistracy, and the withdrawing the troops and government support from a town upon which they had fixed their first hopes, and upon which depended all their future prospects of a market, has been productive of the worst effects upon the interests and prospects of the settlement in general; as besides its directly ruinous consequences to individuals, it has drawn away the population from the nucleus of the settlement, and created a general distrust of the stability of the measures of the government.'

The effect of the transference of the Magistracy on the growth of the town is related in Goldswain's Journal:

'Wile they troops and the govement-department and head Quarters was at Bathurst they people was doing well but as soon as they was removed to Grahams Town, Bathurst was forst to be derset by tradesmen and labours and the Land which had been builded on, it had to be sold for a mear trifel genrely for not more than the land was worth.'[1]

Thomas Philipps further relates that the owners 'subsequently pulled down many of the houses they had built, and sold the materials.'[2]

But the construction of the Drostdy was continued, and the building served for a time (from January 1825) as a fine schoolhouse. Although the town went through a bad period after 1822, Somerset eventually endeavoured to encourage its rehabilitation. While on a visit in 1825 he offered free grants of land to persons undertaking to build houses of approved design and value.[3] Since about 25 grants on these conditions were subsequently made, we may assume



'Pig n' Whistle', Bathurst.

90. Exterior.

91. Plan and Section.

92. Upper rooms.

93. Lower rooms.

that a considerable amount of building activity followed, now of more permanent materials and generous design than in the earlier phase. In September 1826 Bathurst was made a Government Chaplaincy.[1]

A visitor's impression of the town at this time (as described by Thomas Phillips) was that 'It stands on two undulating hills, extremely fertile, with a few detached houses, surrounded by gardens, and presenting the appearance of English villas. They have been built in a part intersected with bush, and have a very picturesque effect.' [2]

The accurate dating of buildings in Bathurst is not easy, but on stylistic grounds it seems likely that, in spite of the subsequent burning of the town by the Kaffirs during the 1834-5 War, a number of the houses remaining in Bathurst today date from the late twenties. It must be remembered that neither the Drostdy nor Goldswain's house were damaged by the natives, and Goldswain reported that on January 9th, 1835, he 'road into Bathurst and saw sevrel Houses that had been burnt down and most of they Houses had been broken into and a great meney of them had most all the things distroide.'[3] But houses which were strong enough to resist attempts to set them on fire were clearly of stone or brick and well-roofed. Some, apparently, even escaped being broken into. This was not, then, an architecture of shacks and huts, but of well built stone houses such as survive to the present day.[4]

Of these, the finest include the Methodist Manse, the house of Joseph Weakly (Plates 88 and 89), part of the present Inn (Plates 90-3), and the house of Thomas Hartley (Plates 94-6). The Weakly house is in a splendid state of preservation, inside and out, although the external plastering may

1. 'Proceedings of the Lower Albany Historical Society'. No. 1 Oct. 1959.

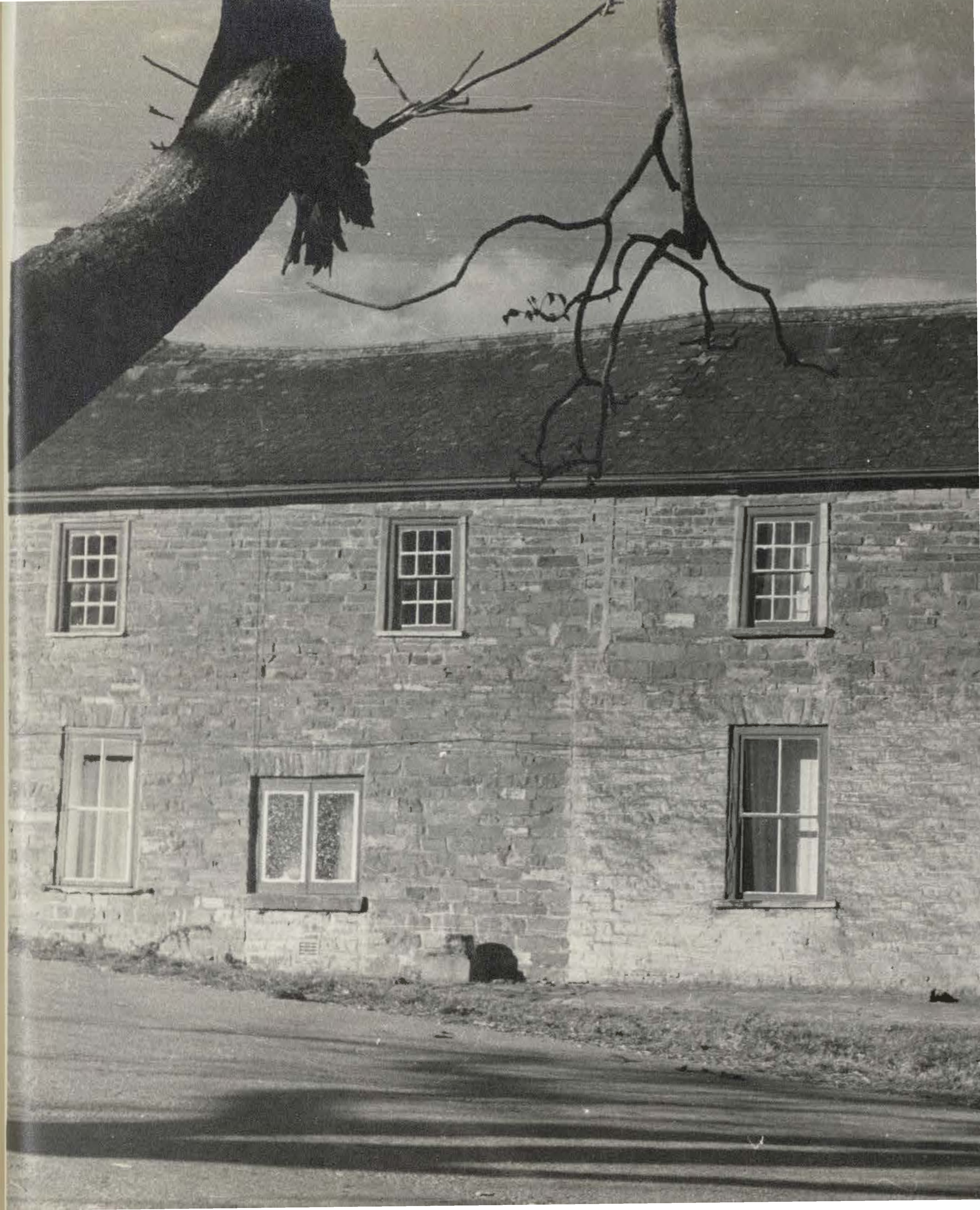
2. T. Phillips 'Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Cafferland'. London, 1827, 80.

3. Goldswain's 'Chronicle'. ed. Una Long; I:83.

4. An idea of the quality of the houses may be gauged from the fact that some of them were built by such men as former heads of parties; e.g. James Greathead, a surveyor from Worcestershire, erected one in which he was living at the time of his death in 1830. (Colin Campbell 'British South Africa', London 1897, 216).

94. Bathurst, Hartley house.

95. Opposite. Bathurst, Hartley House.



96. Bathurst, Hartley house.

have been subsequently added. The old part of the present inn is a fascinating example of an early building in which economy was achieved at the expense of ceiling height, reminiscent of the farm 'Bellevue' at Cuylerville (Plate 70 on page 278). The Hartley house is externally one of the finest settler houses anywhere preserved. The quality of its stonework was seldom equalled, and its character speaks eloquently of an owner born and bred in rural eight-eenth century England. The house seems to have been built in two stages, the stonework of the lower right section being earlier in style than the rest. It is shown roofed with slate in an early sketch.[1]

The Kowie, or, as it was subsequently known, Port Francis, (re-named 35 years later Port Alfred) was early developed as the port of Bathurst and Grahamstown. Speaking of events during and following 1820, Goldswain recalled that 'Government begun to send Vesels round to the Kowie River Leaden with thear horsestores wich coused a great ster at that place. One Compney of Soulders was sent thear and two wooden Houses to recve thear stores and at the same time a large Custom House and two Large Goverment Houses was built: all this drew meney of they Setlers thear to seek for work. Soon after the Veseles begun to com to the Kowie Goverment sold a number of Hervings of Ground at a Great price; meney good and substantial Houses was built and a large weslinyen chaple was built by subscription...'[2]

This activity was brought to an end by a decree of December 1827 which closed down the whole of the government establishment at Port Francis. Little

1. Copy in the possession of the author.
2. 'Chronicle' ed. Una Long. I, 51.

Salem. Early houses in the valley.

97,98. Front. 99. Back.

is known of the character of the early town, although a small number of isolated buildings, including part of the church, remain. From the descriptions of the official buildings and houses (page 383) it would seem that the buildings were generally of stone, whitewashed or plastered, with thatched roofs, and that dormer windows were much in evidence.

After the closing of the port, the town remained to a large extent neglected for twenty years, until the enthusiastic championing of the port's economic possibilities by William Cock brought renewed prosperity and a different architectural style in the late eighteen forties.

Salem was founded as a village community by Sephton's party in 1820. It's name, meaning 'perfect' marks the enthusiasm with which they set about creating an English village in the winding green valley which formed the principle part of their location. '...The tents were very hot during the day and cold at night. They were not always a protection from the occasional heavy showers of rain, and in the frequent high winds they were anything rather than safe and secure dwellings. Hence everyone was soon busily occupied in cutting poles, and conveying them to their respective homesteads, or handling the hatchet, the adze, the hammer and nails and other implements and materials required for building operations...The floors of these dwellings were usually made of clay. Ant-hills, which had been deserted by the ants, were used for this purpose; and, when properly laid, they made hard and level floors, which were kept in order by being often smeared over with a mixture

of fresh cow-dung and water, - a mode of securing clean and comfortable earthen floors...' (Wm. Shaw 'The Story of My Mission', 40).

These houses were, of course, mere temporary shelters, many of them probably being 'hartebeesthuisies'. It is recorded that the glazier, Richard Prior, one of the party, left the location because there was no glass with which to ply his trade.[1] Within a few months, though, when the first crops had been planted and the settlers firmly established, steps were taken for the improvement, and often complete rebuilding, of the houses.

An old ruined boer farmhouse, which formed the nucleus of the village, was patched and used as a town hall, church and store for commissariat supplies. But this, being of wattle and daub and badly built, was subject to rapid decay, and measures were soon taken to replace it with a more permanent building.[2] The latter, erected during 1822, tells us something about the Salem settlers and their attitude to construction; for, as very little money was available for the new building, the settlers decided to erect it in such a way that even the most poor and unskilled could help by giving their labour, and the walling accordingly, was in rammed earth.[3]

Rammed earth construction was very common for settler buildings before the 1823 floods, and doubtless many of the Salem houses, since lost, were built in this way. But we know that by this time, 1822, a number of other constructional proceedures were being used as well.

The Rev. William Shaw, chaplain for Sephton's party, built with his own hands his Manse of stone.[4] It was a double-storeyed building with a tiny one-room plan, and must have been very like the surviving early houses of the same date at Bathurst, described above (Plates 81-4).

1. For this and much of the subsequent information, v. article by E.R. Willmore in 'In the Land of the Settlers'. Grahamstown, 1956, 39-51.

2. Wm. Shaw, 40.

3. 'The walls, which were to be about two feet thick, and solid, were constructed of pounded clay, slightly sprinkled with water; the prepared clay was shovelled to a depth of a few inches into a moveable wooden frame about six feet long and one foot deep, where it was then beaten, or rammed down, by paviours, an instrument which was used to ram down paving stones, a fairly heavy block, having a flat lower surface and a heavy broomstick-like handle attached to the upper side. When the wooden frame was filled and the clay had remained a short time therein it acquired consistency, being bound together by constant sprinkling of water during the beating and ramming part of the process; the form was then removed further on the wall, to repeat the operation. The result was that the walls were built in great blocks of earth.'

(W. Bain Lanham 'The 1820 Settlers of Sevenfountains and Salem'. Grahamstown, 1959, 4.)

4. 10th Oct. 1821 'I am working with my hands, when at home, at our dwelling house.' Shaw, 87.

100. Salem. Early house. (cf. Plates 102,103).

101. The Salem Academy from the Green.

1. Kirby: 'James Hancock China Painter', Africana Notes and News', XIII, No. 1.
2. Shaw, 87, 12th Oct. 1821.
3. Hockly, 69.

102,103. Salem; an early house (cf. Plate 100).
104. Salem, house at head of the valley.

Charles Wood, a skilled joiner and 'staircase maker' built his house entirely of timber, with the exception of the fireplace.

Meanwhile, the potter, Hancock, had built a kiln and in 1823 sold a load of bricks to Dr. Campbell of Grahamstown,[1] so that a demand for burnt bricks must at this time have existed among the Salem settlers, and presumably some of the Salem houses were built with them.

In October 1821, Rev. William Shaw noted in his journal that 'Salem continues to be the most promising settlement in the whole district.'[2] Within a year of its establishment there were no less than seventy-five houses, many constructed of stone, and a number double-storeyed.[3]

But the size of the village gradually decreased as skilled workers, discouraged by the failure of their crops, left for the bigger urban centres to practise their crafts. By the middle of 1822 the party was reduced to less than a third of its original size, and the village had shrunk accordingly, the remaining houses being scattered over a wide area.

In character, as one would expect, the dwellings were very English. Sophia Beddoe, visiting Salem in 1862, remarked that they were 'whitewashed, and some... thatched and the village altogether has an English look about it.'

A second phase of building activity followed during the economic boom brought about by the growing wool industry. Many Salem houses date from this period, a number indeed, from the same year, 1832.

By now the settlers had consolidated their building techniques into stone or brick walled, thatched roofed structures with gable ends, such as

105, 106, 107. Salem, Rev. W.H. Matthews' house, 1832.

the house built by the joiner Richard Gush. But it is interesting to find instances, even at this late date, of the effect of the indigenous traditions such as produced the Matthews' house (Plate 105-7).

Salem escaped damage in the 1835 Kaffir War, but in 1846 several of the houses were burnt by the natives and had to be rebuilt. On the whole, though later additions to the town are few, and in the neighbourhood of modern Salem may be found some of the most picturesque and evocative examples of Settler architecture in the Albany district.

Other settler villages of the Salem type were established at 'Greenfountains' and Cuylerville'. The latter '...established at 'Korn Place' and named after Colonel Cuyler...was never destined to become anything more than a village of a few houses. It stood too near to the Kaffir haunts in the Fish River Bush, and was too early left without protection, to grow into a town'. (Sheffield, 153). The tiny settlement of Greenfountains was burnt in the 1835 Kaffir War and was afterwards disbanded.

Uitenhage, the oldest town in the Eastern Province, was transformed by the influx of disaffected settlers, a movement which began soon after their first arrival on the locations;

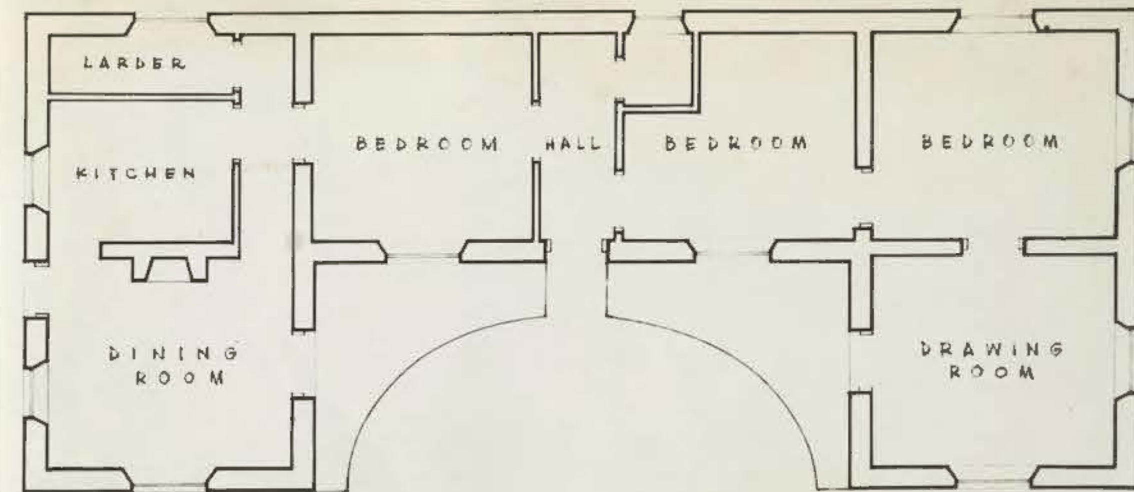
'...Population is making hasty strides at this place and whichever way you turn your eye Houses are rearing their red walls and thatched roofs, tho' money is so scarce still the Inhabitants are most of them employed in errecting new dwellings Wharehouses & every other conveniences. The first consideration they lose sight off [is] that of securing to there nice erections Water which I am of the opinion is paid very little attention to...' (Samuel Hudson, 1822. 'Journal' Accession 602. No. 8).

Hudson's reference to 'red walls' suggests that even by this date burnt bricks were available in Uitenhage. These were probably the bricks praised by Captain Evatt, which were being made in Port Elizabeth at this time (v. Page 319).

Hudson himself built a house in Uitenhage (Plates 109-112)[1] and a fascinating study it makes. An immigrant of 25 years standing, Hudson had arrived in South Africa during the First Occupation as head servant to the Barnards, and had lived most of the time in Cape Town, so that his house represents a grafting of Cape Town building methods, English Adam influences as he remembered it, the frontier vernacular, and settler craftsmanship. The use of a

1. Full elevations, perspectives and a plan are to be found in Hudson's Notebooks, Accession 602 No. 8.

108. Panorama of Uitenhage in 1822 from S.E. Hudson's 'Journal'.



1. It was sold two years later for only 1,800 Rds. 'such is the effect of Sherif's Sale' (Ibid).

Above: Hudson's Cottage, Uitenhage. c.1820-22.

112. Plan; drawn from that in Hudson's Notebook.

109, 110, 111. Front, Entrance and Dining Room Side, from Hudson's Notebook. (Archives).

Palladian 'stoep kamer' plan (but without a covered stoep) is supplemented by the Classical pediment which crowns the central block of the facade. Venetian windows with semicircular arched heads and Adam doors are combined with solid shutters of Cape type. But instead of enclosing only the lower sashes, the shutters are carried to the full height of the window, excluding only the fanlight. The parapet to the flat roof is stepped in a manner which is normally associated with 18th Century Rococo, but the main character of the house is that hybrid Classicism which suggests Thibault's late work, influenced by English pattern books.

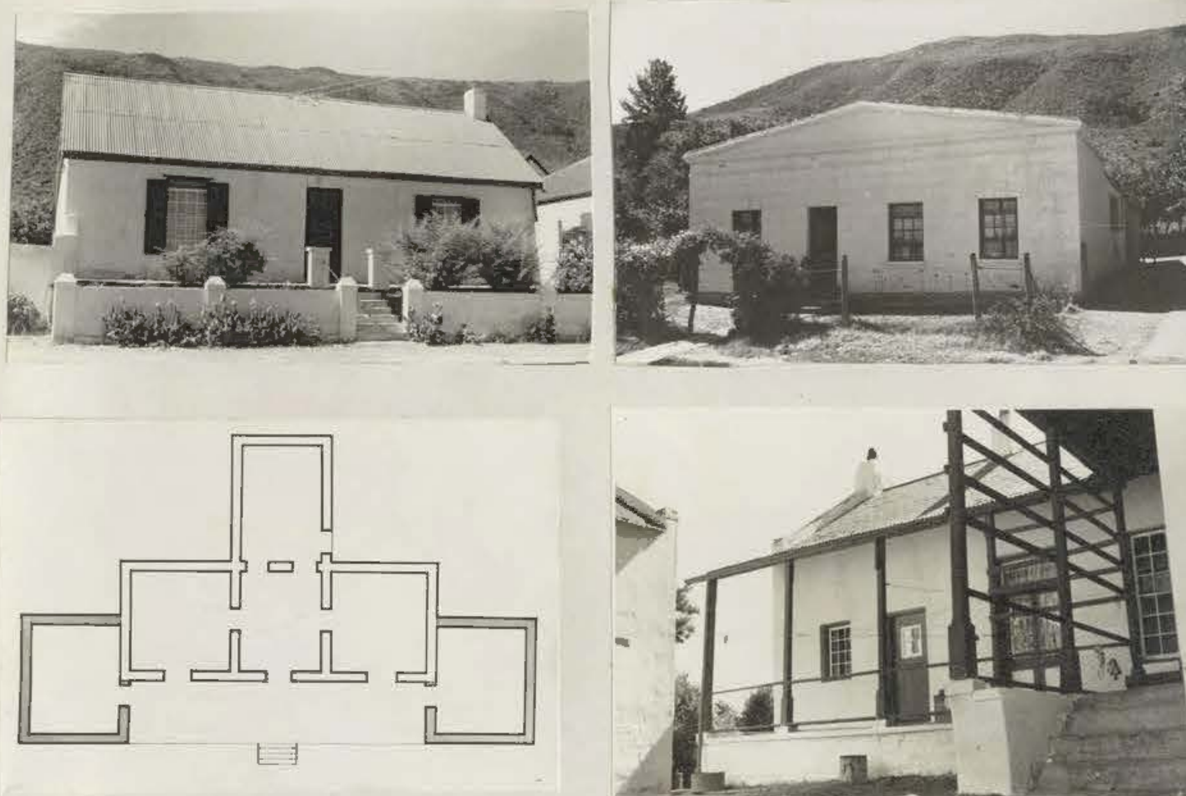
The strangest feature of the house is the plan. Though generally the main rooms occupy the central block and the bedrooms are approached from them, in Hudson's house the Dining Room and Drawing Room were placed in the 'stoep-kamers' so that communication between them had generally to be made across the open courtyard space (stoep is too formal a name for it). 'Pavilions' they certainly were, surrounded by windows on three sides and projecting out towards the orchard. The bedrooms were placed in the central block with an access hallway between them. A bedroom in one corner of the house was so placed that it was accessible only from the Drawing Room or through another bedroom. The age when the removal of structural limitations was to enable these severe restrictions on planning efficiency to be overcome was still far off in the future!

Hudson's house was probably one of the finer Uitenhage houses. He tells us that it cost 12,000 Rds., a considerable sum of money in those days.[1] It is one of the most interesting examples of the unique Cape style produced by

1. 'Philipps, 1820 Settler'. Keppel-Jones: 62

2. 'There is a very excellent quarry of stone in the neighbourhood for building or flooring of red granite works well and very durable'.

Hudson. Acc. 602. No. 8.



Somerset East.

113,114. Early houses in Paulet Street.

115. Plan of the District Secretary's house, showing 'stoep-kamers' proposed in 1826. (C.O. 2683/55).

116. Building believed to have been the original officers' barracks.

the fusion of British and Portuguese-Dutch Colonial architecture.

Much other good building must have been going on in Uitenhage in these years. Thomas Philipps mentions in one of his early letters a friend Fleischer who was 'living in a small temporary cottage while a larger House was completing.'[1]

Besides burnt brick we know that red granite was commonly used as a building material.[2] Houses were generally thatched for some years to come, although new materials from Port Elizabeth gradually made their appearance as they became available. (v. Page 369).

Early in Lord Charles Somerset's period of administration an enthusiastic American botanist, Dr. Mackrill, was instructed to undertake a tour of the east with a view to making recommendations to the government on the agricultural potentialities of the country, and if possible to select a site for an experimental government farm. By October 1814, Dr. Mackrill had submitted his report - a glowing account of the wealth of much of the countryside - and had chosen two loan farms which he wished the government to resume for the farm. Acting on his recommendations the farmers were paid for the buildings and crops then standing on the land, and the whole was amalgamated into one property, Somerset Farm. Dr. Mackrill was appointed its first Director and took up occupation on January 1st 1815.

Standing on the newly formed property were two long low mud-houses and

117, 118. Early buildings in Charles Street.

a small water-mill. Dr. Mackrill quickly set about the erection of more commodious buildings, stores, barns, tradesmen's workshops, living quarters for all the personel, and barracks for the detachment of the Cape Regiment who were stationed there to protect the place from attack. All the new building work appears to have been in stone, and during 1817 a commodious stone house was completed for Dr. Mackrill and his family (C.O. 66. 1st Jan. 1817 et. seqq.).

Four other houses were built for the staff of the establishment, and before long the central part of the farm took on the settled and ordered appearance of a small community. The farmhouse dominated the whole, nestling into the side of the Boschberg, while the majority of the farm buildings were grouped in a row in front of it, or on the line of the oak avenue which ran, at right angles, straight through the cultivated lands in the valley to the opposite hill. Just below his house Dr. Mackrill built a watermill which was worked by a stream rising behind his house which ran downhill alongside the oak avenue. At various points it was joined by a series of parallel irrigation canals, before it flowed into the main stream in the centre of the valley.

With the strengthening of the garrisons on the frontier after the 1819 War the Somerset Farm greatly increased in importance as a source of fruit, vegetables and fodder for the forces. Its role was further supplemented when the farm, now under the direction of Robert Hart, was called upon to assist in the provision of supplies to the Albany Settlers during the first few months after their arrival.

The government now found itself with a large establishment to maintain, and were only able to do so by ensuring that the Somerset Farm had a virtual monopoly of all the supplies to the military. This rapidly became a cause

Old Mill-house, Somerset East.

119. Entrance hall.

120. Oven and kitchen chimney.

121. General view from the north.

of bitter complaint from the Settlers, so that by the time of the arrival of the Commissioners of Enquiry the Governor felt disposed to close down this experiment of his own (which he had but inadequately reported to the Colonial Office) and to 'disguise' this extensive farm as a township in embryo.

Accordingly, the Cape Gazette of 14th February 1825 announced the dissolution of the sub-drostdy of Cradock and its removal to 'Bruintjes Hooghte on the spot heretofore known as the Somerset Farm'.

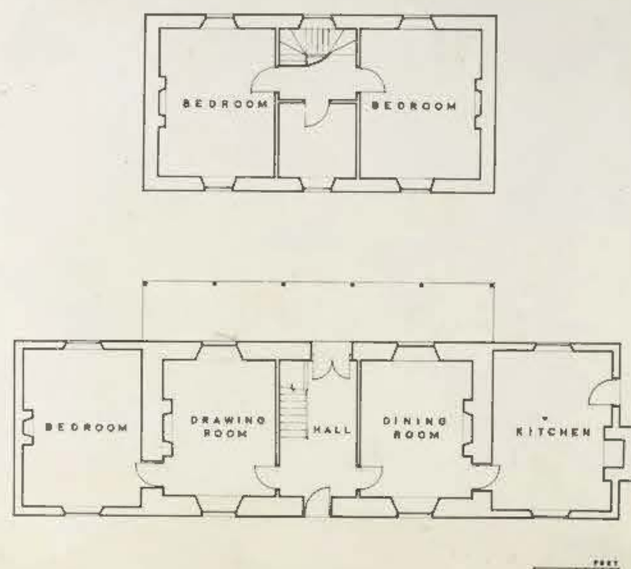
The conversion of the farm into a town was achieved with the greatest facility. The residence of the former superintendent made an eminently suitable Drostdy [1], dominating the town as it had once commanded the farm. From it roads or irrigation furrows already ran across the valley and others at right angles to those made up a rectangular pattern which easily extended into the grid of a street plan.

Thomas Philipps wrote of the nascent town in December 1825: 'The Public Offices as well as the Prison have been made out of the buildings of the Farm and are very tolerably commodious, so that at present very little money has been expended.' The Business House was converted from the Tannery, the Prison from the wagon-house, the church was converted from a large store, and the school was created out of an old out-house. [2] On the 13th and 14th of April 1825, eighty-three erven were sold, and the village of Somerset East was born.

From the drawings that have come down to us it seems that the prevailing character of the later farm buildings at Somerset were not unlike that of the Settler architecture, both being, in the main, adaptations of English

1. Keppel-Jones 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', 260.
2. Cory II: 214-7

122. Old Mill-house, south side.
123. Old Mill-house, plans.



124. Somerset East Drostdy, facade.

farm building methods to the local conditions. Besides the stone walls, thatched roofs and solid gable ends we have come to expect, the Somerset buildings seem to have been notable for their extensive use of dormer windows in the thatch to light the storage lofts above the ceilings. The tannery which was converted to the Business House had the peculiarity that it was flat roofed and battlemented. (C.O. 2713/223. It was thatched in 1829-30, with a hipped roof).

Of the style of building at the time of the establishment of the town we may gain some idea from the government works. The Secretary's house was extended with stoepkamers built of 20" brick walls (presumably unburnt clay bricks) and was plastered internally with a sand, dung and clay mixture which was afterwards whitewashed. The roof was thatched with 'good straw or Matjes goed thatch' and the ridge made of 'burnt brick chipped and plastered with lime.' All good Cape details, these. But the house also incorporated that essential English luxury, a watercloset.[1]

The exact form of the original farmhouse is unknown. During its short history as a Drostdy it seems to have been considerably reconditioned, redecorated and parts of it rebuilt. A complete new roof was put on it during 1827-28.[2] In 1829 it ceased to function as a dwelling house, and it was proposed to convert it for the use of the public offices and magistrate's court.[3] This was eventually decided against, however, and the building was given to the Methodist Church for the purpose of erecting a chapel.[4] Short of funds, they contented themselves with making a temporary chapel by knocking down cross walls in the back part of the building and retaining the double-storey part in front as a dwelling for the Minister.[5]

1. C.O. 2672/79; 26th Dec. 1825 & C.O. 2683/55, 13th May, 1826.
2. C.O. 2705/323.
3. C.O. 2712/108; 29th May, 1829. Somerset East was reduced to the rank of a sub-district in 1834. (Theal's 'History of S.A. 1795-1834', London 1891, 392.)
4. Title Deeds, Surveyor-General's Office and C.O. 2728/43; 27th May, 1831.
5. Ibid and Title Deeds, Surveyor-General's Office.

125,126. Somerset East Drostdy. Plan and back facade.

127. 'Craigenputtock', Scotland.

128. Somerset East, double-storeyed house.

Eventually, on the Methodists acquiring land elsewhere, the house was granted as a Dutch Reformed pastorie[1], which function it served until well into the present century. It is now in private hands.

Failing other evidence, one is hesitant to ascribe the whole of the surviving building (Plate 124-6) to the original date 1817. However, it is notable that the entrance doors (Plate 11 on page 88) are remarkably similar in style to those of the Uitenhage Drostdy and are obviously of early date. The upstairs fireplaces (Plate 71C on Page 181) and a considerable proportion of the internal finishing probably date from no later time that its redecoration as a Drostdy in 1825-8, and may even be earlier, while the downstairs fireplaces seem to date from the 1825-35 period.

By 1825 the pattern of Settler architecture in the Eastern Cape towns was fairly established, and its influence was spreading rapidly to the West, where it produced the hybrid houses types known as 'English'.

External walling was still usually of stone, the cheapest and most readily available material in much of the settler country. Burnt brick was now becoming generally available but remained expensive. Internal walling techniques included unburnt brick, plaster on lath, and yellowwood partitioning.

Good stonework was often expressed as such. The rougher work was whitewashed every year, or in better houses lime-plastered and painted. Oil painting was reserved for the woodwork, the plaster being either yellow or whitewashed regularly[2] or given a permanent coat of 'quick-lime and sharp sand' which set in a hard impervious surface.[3] An alternative finish common in

1. In 1856. Title Deeds. Surveyor-General's Office.

2. 'the buildings, with yellow and whitewash, have a gay appearance at a distance.' Description of early Grahamstown from Sir James E. Alexander's 'Excursions in Western Africa' London, 1840, I, 363.

3. For this and other recipes of building finishes in the country districts of England see Loudon's 'Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm & Villa Architecture & Furniture etc...' London. 1st ed. 1833.

the country districts of England, and still surviving in the Cape, was 'glutinous colour' formed by mixing unclotted bullock's blood, stale milk or vegetable oils with either quicklime or cement, with the addition of ground earth colouring matter.[1]

Early outside doors and windows were made of whatever local timber was available,[2] but it was soon found that besides stinkwood, sneezewood was the only really durable material, and this proved extremely difficult to shape.[3] Yellowwood was sometimes used in an extremity, but had to be painted with at least three coats of oil paint to protect it from the weather;[4] and even then it was subject to decay. Stinkwood floors and windows were used for the Grahamstown Drostdy.[5] Eventually teak, Baltic deal and even American redwood, imported through Port Elizabeth and Port Alfred, were procurable.[6]

Windows gradually increased in size and height as glass (which had to be imported from Europe) became more readily available. So rapid was the expansion of the settler towns that at first linen and even oil paper had to serve as a substitute until glass could be obtained to fit the window frames. Green gauze cloth was used to form a fly screen on windows.[7] Internal folding shutters were a standard feature on the better houses, while solid external shutters made their appearance at an early date. Venetian or louvred shutters were certainly common by the late twenties.[8] For many years houses continued to be provided with both internal and external window shutters.[9] Hinges, catches and door handles were of brass or wrought iron, the latter being, of course considerably cheaper.

Thatched roofing continued to be predominant in most of the eastern towns until after the 1835 war. All kinds of material were used for the thatching, even wheat straw and local grasses being common. (v. Page 271). But the

1. Blood had to be kept stirred until cold, to prevent clotting. It was said by Loudon to be nearly as effective externally as oil paint. (263).

2. C.O. 2613/84; 27th Nov. 1818. Contract for completing the Drostdy at Grahamstown: 'sufficient beams and other woodwork to be of the best quality that can be procured in this neighbourhood.

3. More often than not it was used with only the roughest shaping, which limited its scope to cills, hidden lintels and posts in wattle and daub construction.

4. The colour was generally green. C.O. 2671/172; 24th Oct. 1825.

5. C.O. 2645/97; 8th July 1822. C.O. 2671/172; 24th Oct. 1825. They do not appear to have been painted at first, but oiled.

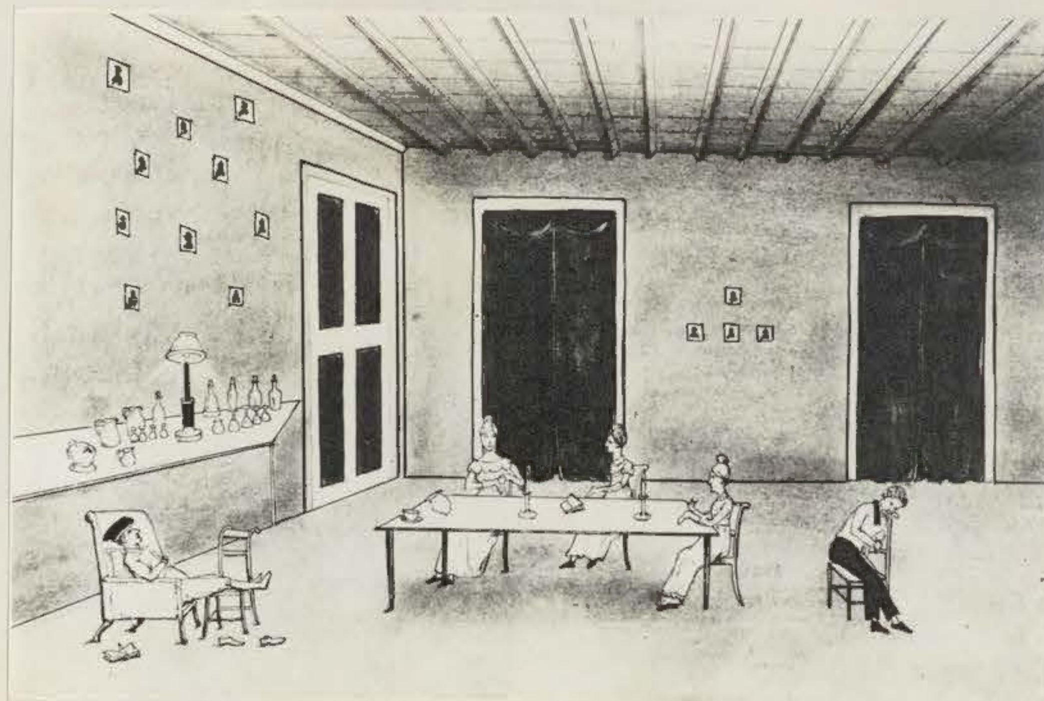
6. It should be noted that some of the officers and wealthy merchants were able to import English materials at quite an early date; e.g. Huntley's House in Grahamstown. C.O. 166/93; 18th Nov. 1822.

7. 'Index to Unofficial, Privately owned, Manuscripts relating to the History of South Africa, 1812;1920'. Una Long, 213, Cory Library.

8. I'ons anti-Stockenstroom cartoons of 1836 show both solid-panelled shutters on the lower half of Grahamstown windows and full-height louvred shutters.

9. e.g. C.O. 2721/37; 18th Dec. 1829, which mentions both for the Civil Commissioner's House, Grahamstown, and Huntley House, Grahamstown, (which was provided with external louvred shutters to the French-doors - which already had internal shutters - in 1827.

1. C.O. 2467/136; 7th March, 1826. Spanish Reed was grown at the Somerset Farm, but by this time it had passed out of Government hands.
2. Page 402. Many other references exist, such as the proposal for the Grahamstown Market House by Duncan Campbell: 'which I would recommend to be covered with Shingles instead of Thatch.' C.O. 2712/101; 8th May 1829. Shingles could be, according to George Gilbert, 'obtained at this place without much difficulty.'
3. A clue that suggests that roofing tiles may have been made in Grahamstown as early as 1823 is contained in the estimate for the Prison. C.O. 2653/18; 25th Feb. 1823.
4. C.O. 284/35; 16th May, 1826.
5. Kirby, 'James Hancock...', A.N. & N. XIII: No. 1, p.8.
6. C.O. 370/76; 26th April, 1829.
7. C.O. 2711/110; 15th May, 1829.



129. Interior of an early house in Grahamstown. (note curtaining). (Morrison).

latter cannot have been very satisfactory for we find in 1826 the Secretary of Uitenhage asking for a supply of Spanish Reed for thatching to be brought all the way from the Government Farm, Groote Post, in the Western Cape.[1] Painted shingle roofs rapidly replaced thatch for the larger or more elegant buildings[2], and must have been a very common and attractive sight until slate roofs in turn replaced them in the forties. Zinc and lead, laid in sheets with roll joints, were also frequently used, although relatively expensive. (Plate 130).

Pantiles and Roman tiles were both manufactured in Port Elizabeth after 1825. Pantiles are first mentioned in a letter from the Commandant, Captain Evatt, to the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town in 1826, in which he says that he is sending 'Sixteen tiles of my invention which I beg to submit to the Inspection of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor and the Public: if properly applied, I make no doubt they will answer the purpose intended, and ensure the impossibility of the heaviest rain penetrating...they are of course to be masoned in with good lime...'[3] He also mentioned that Herman Schutte, the Inspector of Town Buildings, had seen and discussed the tiles with him.[4] It is not known who manufactured these at first, but they, or tiles like them, were soon to be seen all over the district. James Hancock, who settled in Port Elizabeth in 1827, made both tiles and bricks.[5]

The Uitenhage Drostdy was reroofed with 'Pantiles made at Port Elizabeth' in 1829[6] special angle tiles being made 'in the form of Gutter Tiles, and cut so as to fit the angels'. Not only were the units laid in lime mortar, but they were 'afterwards painted in such a manner as to ensure the same being waterproof'.[7] Many thatched town buildings were re-roofed with tiles:'... they have proved a good substitute for thatching in Port Elizabeth ...which

fashion is spreading to Uitenhage.' (Cape Almanac' of 1830). The use of Port Elizabeth pantiles continued even after imported slate began to be available in the 1830's.[1]

Roman tile roofs are also to be seen in old photographs (Plate 133). Special hemi-cylindrical ridge tiles were also manufactured and used on slate and probably shingle-roofs.

Internally the houses were well finished, with boarded floors, 4- or 6-panel doors of stinkwood or yellow-wood,[2] and simple but elegant staircases of the same material (Plate 152). Internally, wood was very seldom left unpainted. Even the splendid stinkwood staircase of the Grahamstown Drostdy was originally painted.[3] Doors were fitted with brass handles and locks, and finger plates were in evidence from quite an early date.[4] The walls of the main rooms were often wall-papered in the better houses, but in general were painted with a tinted lime wash.[5] Ceilings, where it could be afforded, were of plaster on battens, with moulded cornices and centre roses.[6] The alternative was close boarded ceilings painted white or possibly a very pale tint. (Plate 150).[7] The roof beams or floor joists of the floor above were often exposed and given roll mouldings on the underside as decoration. (Plate 148).

Fireplaces became increasingly common. They were specified for every major room in the Grahamstown Drostdy House in 1822, but the contractor Pohl found it impossible to procure grates of English manufacture. These may have gone down in a shipwreck in Table Bay in which he lost much of the material he

1. e.g. Public Offices at Uitenhage, 1834. C.O. 2748/91. Prison at Port Elizabeth, 1833. C.O. 2741/46. Public Offices at Port Elizabeth, 1835. C.O. 2755/80 et. seqq. They survive on a number of buildings in Uitenhage, and on the 'Drift Inn' Sundays River. (Pamela ffolliott and E.L.H. Crotf-'One Titan at a Time'. Cape Town, 1960, 153 - mention that at 'sometime in the 1830's' tiles were manufactured at 'the factory of Mr. Frost at Uitenhage'.)

2. C.O. 285/6. Port Francis Harbourmaster's House 1826.

3. C.O. 2645/97; 8th July, 1822.

4. Ibid.

5. 'the colour is...varied by the addition of the black of Charcoal..., or by yellow ochre, by verdigrise, or any cheap pigment.' (Loudon's 'Encyclopedia...etc.' London. 1st ed. 1833; 274).

6. 'The cornice, where there is one, forms a member of separation between the wall and the ceiling, and being always an architectural object, should for that reason, generally exhibit some colour belonging to stone, such as white, or some shade of yellow, grey or brownish red.' (Ibid.)

7. 'As a general rule, the ceiling should be a lighter colour than the walls...a small portion of any... colour may be mixed with the white, and Dutch pink is not infrequently used for the purpose'...(Ibid.)

ROOFING:

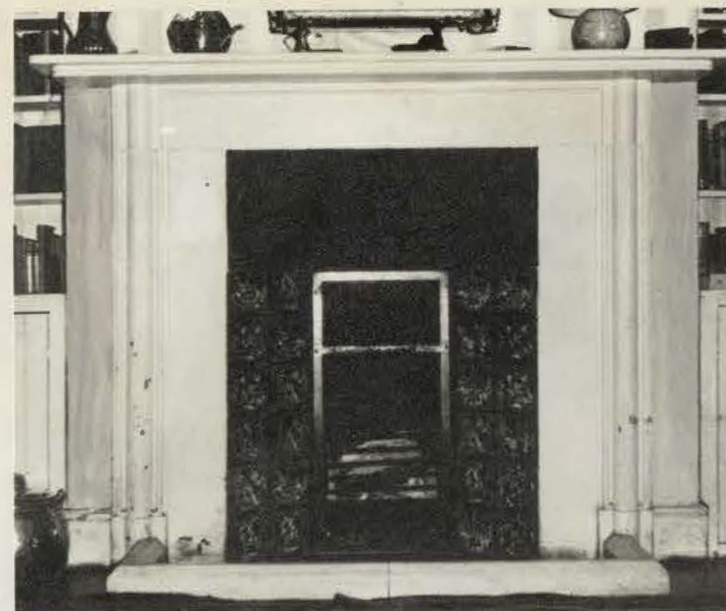
130. (Top left). Zinc sheeting on boarding and wooden roll strips on Charles Levy's house, corner of Chapel and Queen Streets, Grahamstown, from an old photograph.

131. (Above). Tile roofing in Main Street, Port Elizabeth; from an old photograph.

132. (Left). Slate roofing in Main Street, Port Elizabeth. (Note the character of the early shops, with dwellings above). Early photograph.

133. Roman tile roofing in Market Square, Port Elizabeth. Early photograph.

134,135. Early pantile roofing in Uitenhage.



Grahamstown Fireplaces:

136. Corner of Hill and Somerset Streets. c.1823?

137. Corner of High and Somerset Streets. c.1823?

138,139. 'Hilton' near Grahamstown.

1. C.O. 2671/29; 24th Feb. 1825.
2. Final report on the building. C.O. 2704/96; 4th March 1828.

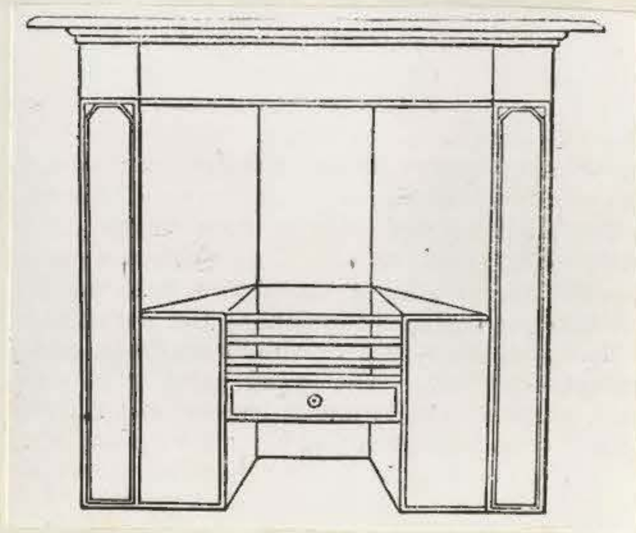
140. **Fireplace in an early house on the Bathurst road, Grahamstown.**

had ordered for the building,[1] so he put in wrought-iron fire-grates of local manufacture instead.[2] By the end of the decade imported materials of all types were available, fire-grates among them. The fire-place surround was in nearly all cases locally made of yellow wood or deal, with the shallow refined Regency mouldings then still in vogue (Plates 136-144, 147-9). Imitation marble or stone fireplace surrounds were also occasionally seen.

Interior decoration at this time laid considerable importance on window curtains: 'Window curtains give such an air of comfort to a room, whether it be to the spectator from without, or to the occupant within, that we could wish no cottage, however humble, to be without them. For the same reason, we should wish cottage windows to be large, that the curtains may be displayed without too much obstructing the light.' (Loudon 'Encyclopedia...', 338).

Early views of Grahamstown houses (Plate 129) show these heavy curtains, often elaborately hung and gathered in festoons, which were a major characteristic of the interiors (Plate 146).

One other interior feature of these houses remains to be mentioned. This was the water-closet. The amazing persistence with which the British officials and wealthy settlers insisted on taking their luxuries with them to the far ends of the earth cannot but command our admiration. And luxury a water-closet certainly was in those days when only the larger English towns were able to provide for them. The effort and elaborate maintenance which must have been associated with water-closets in these frontier towns, devoid of piped water supply or drainage, defeats the imagination. Yet they were evidently accepted as a prime requisite for civilised life by the Colonial Office in



141. Fireplace in 'Glen Avon - Retreat' c.1822-3.

142. Fireplace in an early house on the Bathurst Road, Grahamstown.

143,144. Fireplaces c.1830; in a house on the corner of Prince Alfred and Somerset Streets.

145. Illustration from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia'.

Cape Town; not only could every Drostdy boast one[1], but also the public offices and even the secretary's[2] and clergyman's houses.[3]

With the increasing prosperity as the first decade of Settler influence came to a close, we note a trend away from the cramped cottage-like town houses of the earlier years, towards small free-standing stucco villas in which shape and spacing determine the effect. One feature which never grows tiresome is the Regency bow front, which we have seen to be the characteristic of some of the earliest officers' houses on the frontier. Another is the encircling veranda onto which large pairs of French double doors give access.[4] Projecting balconies from the upper storeys were sometimes to be seen executed delicately either in wood[5] or in wrought iron.

All these late Georgian buildings have in common their direct simplicity. Decoration is restricted of necessity to smaller features such as balconies, windows and fanlights. The character of the architecture is throughout determined by restraint - clear plain surfaces, effective forms, and refined detailing.

1. e.g. Bathurst Drostdy. C.O.2629/8; 28th Aug. 1820.
2. e.g. Somerset East Secretary's House. C.O.2672/79, 26th December 1825.
3. C.O. 2705/176. 1st Aug. 1828. Grahamstown's Clergyman's House.
4. The Grahamstown Drostdy had 'low French windows' in both the Dining and Drawing Rooms, 'opening to the verandah' C.O. 2645/97; 8th July 1822.
5. v. F. I'ons painting of Bayes Corner, Grahamstown (copy in Albany Museum).

146. Window in a house on the corner of High and Somerset Streets, Grahamstown, which at one time served as the Lieut.-Governors Offices.

Interiors of the early eighteen 'twenties:

147. Fireplace in an early inn on the Peddie Road.

148. Fireplace in 'Waterloo Farm', Grahamstown.

149. (Above,right). Ceiling in a house in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown.

150. (Below). Wall cupboard in a house on the corner of New and Somerset Streets, Grahamstown.

151. Dining-room fireplace in an early house on the Bathurst road, Grahamstown.

152. Staircase in a house near the Donkin Reserve,
Port Elizabeth.