

## NOTES ON THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NEWLANDS SPRING

### 1. General historical background

The streams and springs of clear water have long been recognised as being a key factor in the history of the development of Newlands, and in the history of brewing in South Africa.

The early Newlands settlements and estates were dependent on the springs and streams for domestic and industrial use. The first brewery licence granted in 1694 was at Papenboom in Newlands and utilised the Papenboom Spring for a supply of clear water for the brewing of beer. In addition the streams and springs provided water to drive the watermills that existed along the banks of the Liesbeek River and its tributaries in the mid 19th century. These included Cloete's Mill, Dreyer's Mill and Letterstedt's Mill, or the Josephine Mill.

By the late 19th century there were a number of breweries in Newlands using the springs in the vicinity. They were Hiddingh's Cannon Brewery, Ohlsson's Newlands and Anneberg Brewery and Letterstedt's Mariendahl Brewery. These were all acquired by Anders Ohlsson between the years 1888 and 1889, when he consolidated his property and commercial interests into Ohlsson's Cape Breweries. This was later to be incorporated into the S A Breweries with the headquarters at the former Mariendahl Site.

In acquiring these properties Ohlsson also acquired the water rights associated with them, and by 1888 was in a position to establish the Cape Town and District Waterworks Company to supply fresh water to the smaller municipalities in the Southern Suburbs that suffered as a result of water shortages or water pollution.

### 2. Position and site history

The Newlands Spring on erf 97563 is situated between the Papenboom or Lekkerwater Streams and Kildare Road, adjacent to Springs Street. It is currently the property of S A Breweries who use the spring water for the brewing of their beer. The Newlands Spring is situated on a property formerly known as Meerlust, a small piece of land between the Spring and the Liesbeek River, chiefly significant for the spring it contained.

At the time of L M Thibault's Survey ie 1813, it was owned by Frederick Dreyer. Through ownership of this spring, Dreyer laid the foundation of a brewery later called the Mariendahl Brewery now part of

South African Breweries. Dreyer's properties, including rights to the spring, were acquired by Jacob Letterstedt through marriage. Letterstedt further developed the Mariendahl Brewery and developed a water course whereby water from the spring was led across the Liesbeek stream and the adjacent property of Sans Souci, under the Main Road to Mariendahl House, the brewery and the distillery. The 'Plan Showing the Watercourses and Pipes and on the Estate Mariendahl' (sic) by Willem de Smidt in 1863 remains, and gives a clear explanation of the watercourses from the Newlands Spring to the Mariendahl mill and brewery. (See Appendix 1.)

In addition, water from the spring was led over the Papenboom Stream to drive the mills of F Dreyer and D Cloete situated in the present vicinity of Main Street, Newlands.

Meerlust was incorporated into the portion of the Newlands Estates owned by L P Cauvin by 1852 and subsequently subdivided. The subdivision diagram (see Appendix 2) clearly shows the spring surrounded by a substantial berm. In addition it shows the watercourses leading from the spring to Cloete's mill and Letterstedt's mill as well as significant evidence of avenues of trees.

A contemporary description of the Spring by Letterstedt's nephew, per Oscar Hedelius in 1841 confirms this. He described the Newlands Spring as 'one of the most wonderful and beautiful places I have seen. The road there is unusually beautiful, it first runs through the garden of an elegant country house, across a stream, and then through some avenues. The spring itself is in a round hill, so that when you stand on the hill you see the well. 6 - 7 farnar (10 - 12m) down the hill, where the spring water is bubbling like a pot when boiling. There is no water from any stream, only from the spring, of which Uncle owns half. The other half goes to a neighbour's brewery and mill (Cloete's Mill) but still there is so much water that we have sufficient for the house, then for the brewery and the malt mill there and then for the new mill (ie Josephine Mill)'.

Anders Ohlsson used the water from the spring to supply the Anneberg Brewery which he built in 1881. (See Appendix 3: Illustration of the Anneberg Brewery and Newlands Spring, South African Illustrated News 28 June 1884.) The brewing industries of the end to late nineteenth century provided employment for the people who established themselves along the banks of the Liesbeek and its tributaries. This settlement forms the basis for the area now known as Newlands Village. The availability of water, the development of early industry and the early history of Newlands are therefore inextricably linked.

3. Conclusions

The Newlands Spring may be considered one of the key historic landmarks in Newlands because of the significant role it played not only in the development of Newlands but the development of brewing in South Africa.

The berm which surrounds the spring is known to have existed at least in 1841 when described by Hedelius, possibly earlier, when the spring was first used for commercial and industrial purposes and was built around the spring to protect the water supply. It is therefore of considerable historical significance and is a significant part of the landmark quality of the spring.

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7 FEBRUARY 1994



# P L A N

SHOWING THE WATERCOURSES AND PIPES  
TOWARD THE RESERVE

MAILED 1863

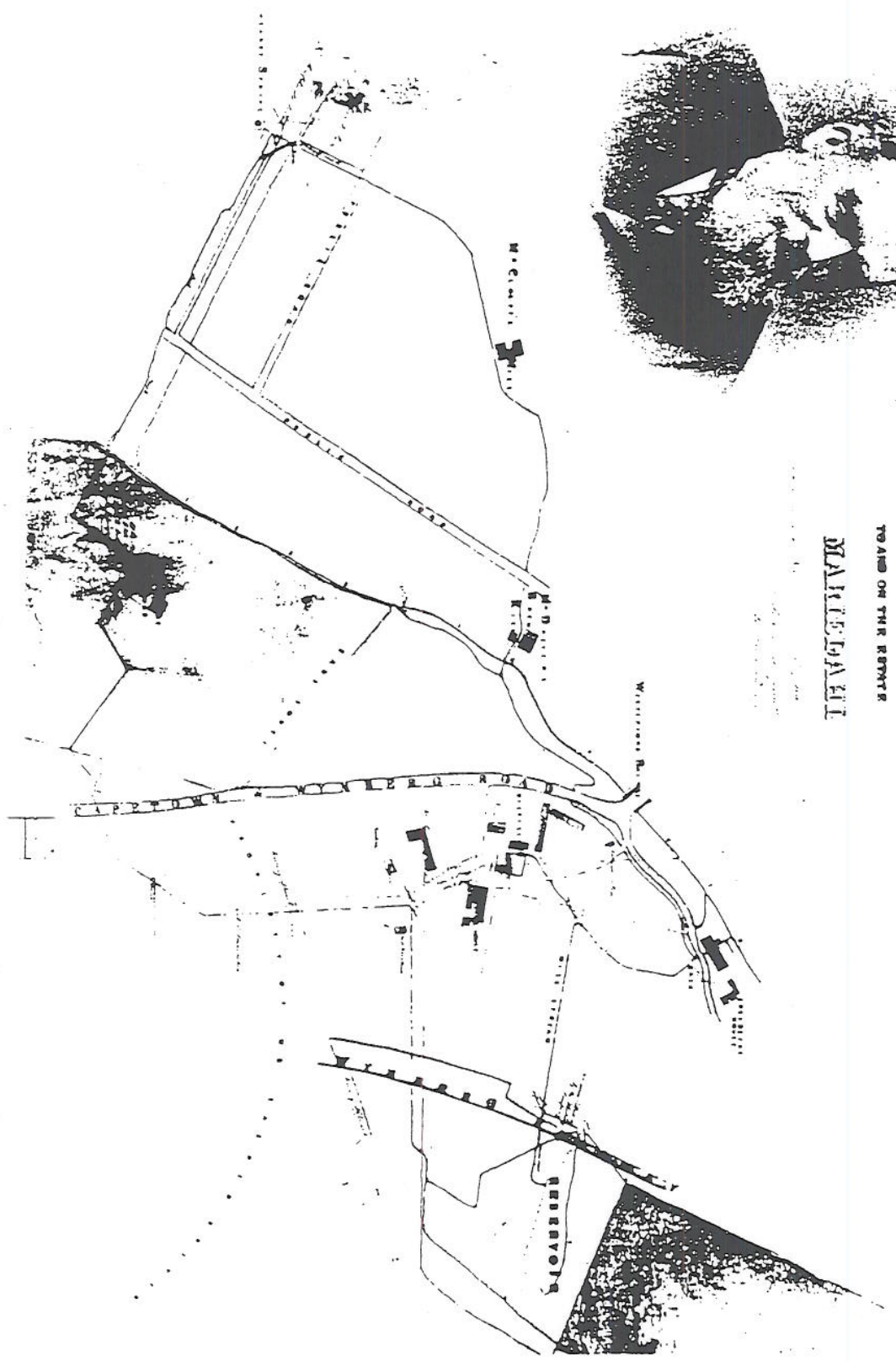


Fig. 19 Plan showing the watercourses and pipes to and on the estate  
Mariedahl (Mariedahl) June/July 1863, by Willem de Smidt Junr  
(by courtesy of Mr Rupert Hurly) Inset: Willem de Smidt 1833-1899  
(Photograph by J E Brulton, Co. archives AG129)

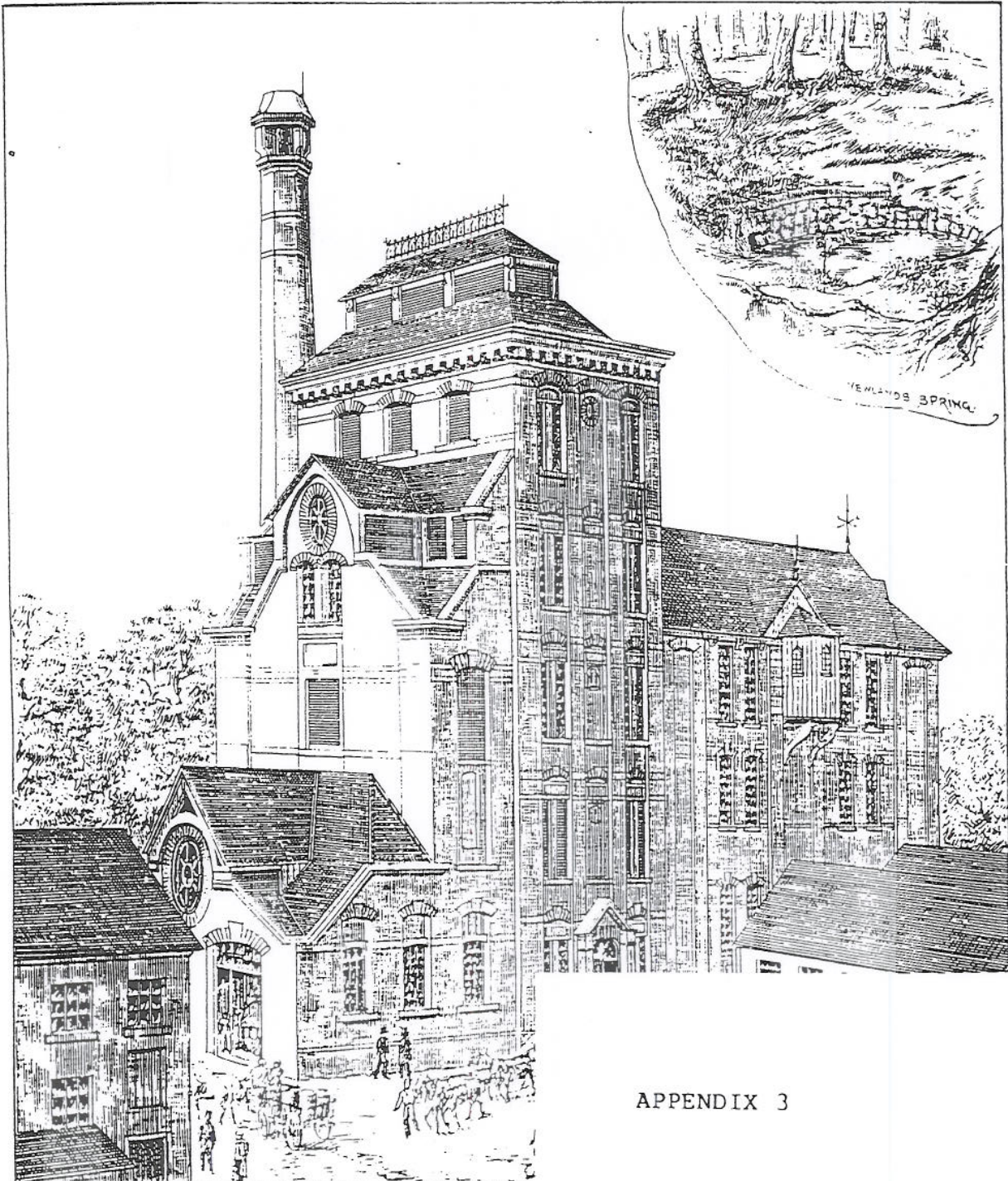


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APPENDIX 3