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Cover illustration
The recording team at Soutpan in the Bokkeveld, 2006 (see page 33).

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Examples of documents from the Deeds Office and Surveyor-General’s Office in Cape Town. Above: summary of grant and transfers of farm 989 Soutpan; below: copy of survey diagram of farm 660 Groen Rivier, typical of the Calvinia district.
Soutpan – a farm on the edge

Nigel Amschwand

Even in the early years of the Cape the farm Soutpan (or Zoutpan in the original Dutch) was an isolated place and it remains so till this day.

John Barrow’s map of 1798 shows the Bokkeveld Karoo and Tanqua Karoo as being a large empty space. Even in 1850 when a survey was made of the Clanwilliam District, Soutpan is shown as an isolated farm in the Veldcornetcy of Biedouw.

![Map of the area](image)

Figure 1. The modern map above (courtesy of the AA) still shows what an isolated position Soutpan holds.
No loan farm records have been found to indicate that the farm had been granted during the period of Dutch East India Company administration, but there is evidence that in 1811 Jan Harmse Steenkamp was at Soutpan as his initials (J.H.S.K) are engraved on the rock-face behind the farmstead (Fig. 2). The breaking of Steenkamp into two (S:K) has been seen elsewhere\(^1\). This Jan Harmse Steenkamp was from the Clanwilliam branch of the family and is not to be confused with another occupying the farm Bokkefontein further to the north.

We also know from court records that in 1814 Steenkamp was banished for life from the District of Tulbagh and for five years from the Colony, for falsely ordering a Commando to kill stock thieves\(^2\). Nigel Penn has published a complete account of this, entitled ‘The Bokkeveld Ear Atrocity’\(^3\). In the 1818 Opgaafrolle\(^4\), Steenkamp was listed as occupying Soutpan, Klipfontein and Driefontein, together with his wife, two sons and two daughters and ten Khoikhoi servants. Among other livestock he had 20 cattle, 1150 sheep and 1250 goats. Also residing with Steenkamp were Hartwick Flek and his wife Elizabeth Koopman. Flek, who features in Nigel Penn’s account as farming with Steenkamp, had living with him a son and two daughters and seven Khoikhoi servants to look after his 2 cattle, 495 sheep and 113 goats.

Jan Harmse died at the age of 80 three days after Christmas in 1848 on the farm Klipfontein. This farm and Driefontein, mentioned above, are located between Soutpan and the Doorn River, so it is probable that Steenkamp did not reside at Soutpan permanently. Next to Driefontein is a farm called Steenkamps Kloof, but no record of Steenkamp registering this farm has been traced.

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\(^1\) Willemskop in the Onder-Bokkeveld.
\(^2\) Cape Archives (CA): CJ 1814/806.
\(^3\) Kronos: Journal of Cape History 31 November 2005.
There must be a connection (although this has not been found) between Steenkamp and Thomas Petrus Arnoldus Theron as the latter in 1823 had all three of Steenkamp’s farms surveyed (Soutpan, Driefontein and Klipfontein) and was given perpetual quitrent grants for them in 1831. Steenkamp died on the latter seventeen years later.

Thomas Petrus Arnoldus Theron was married to Helena Hendrina Visagie and Heese and Lombards’ Genealogies list them as having one son, Petrus Lodewicus, who was born in 1805, and five daughters. After Helena’s death he was married in 1832 to Elizabeth Maria van Wyk, with whom he had another three daughters and one son.

Sometime before Thomas made his will in 1856 he passed Soutpan to his eldest son, Petrus Lodewicus, as the farm is not mentioned in this document, and he moved with Elizabeth to the farm Hoogrug near Calvinia. On his death in 1860 his estate had a value of Rds 7930 - 5 - 27 (rixdollars – schellings - stuivers). But of this Rds 4032 – 3 – 4 was taken up in repayments of debt. Some of the creditors, who were perhaps friends of the family, waived their interest for the benefit of his dependants.

Petrus Lodewicus Theron died at Soutpan in 1876 at the age of seventy-one having been married three times and fathering nine children. His three wives were all from the locality: Christina Sophia Hough, Louisa Jacoba Burger and the last, who outlived him, Alida Hester Jacoba Strauss. In his will with his first wife, Petrus Lodewicus left Soutpan and Klipfontein plus £100 to his eldest son (another Thomas Petrus Arnoldus) and the farm Driefontein plus £200 to his eldest daughter and her husband. To his other four daughters he bequeathed £200 each. No mention was made of Jacobus Petrus, his second son.

Soutpan was never transferred into Thomas Petrus Arnoldus Theron’s name but in his will of 1879 it was left to his children. In 1895 he took a mortgage of £96 for the purchase of Brandhoek, Cookfontein Extension and Soutpan Extension but two years later the mortgage was transferred Frederick Hendricus Boltman. After Petrus Lodewicus’s death, Alida Strauss married Petrus Jacobus Boltman (her third husband) and in 1897 the ownership of Soutpan was transferred from the Estate of Petrus Lodewicus Theron to Alida’s stepson, Frederick Hendricus Boltman.

Soutpan remains in the Boltman family to this day and their history has been documented in Van Hede tot Boltman Verlede (From the Present to Boltman’s Past), privately published by Ell-Marie Schutte in Pretoria. Boltman ownership did not end the relationship between Soutpan and the Therons as Frederick married Aletta Catharina Theron and the names of three other Therons are engraved on the rock-face behind the farm (see the top left-hand-side in Fig. 2).

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5 Transport Documents for Calvinia District Farms 989, 991 & 982.
6 CA: MOOC 7/1/252 ref 31.
7 CA: MOOC 13/1/189 ref 97.
8 Around this time the rixdollar was worth £0.075 or 1 shilling and 6 pence in pre-decimal currency.
9 CA: MOOC 7/1/250 ref 78.
10 CA: MOOC 7/1/400 ref 91.
11 CA: DOC 4/1/124 ref 0121.
Figure 3. Layout of the werf.
The key to the buildings designated on the plan of the werf at Soutpan is as follows.

A. House
B. An outside kitchen for the farm workers
C. Living space
D. Farm school from about 1924
E. Wagon house
F. Dairy
G. Residence. Later the dairy (F) was incorporated to make a house
H. Three roomed house.
I. Out building
J. Grain store
K. Wagon house
L. Stock-pen
M. Blacksmiths workshop
N. Blacksmith room
O. Stable
P. Barn
Q. Stable
U. Outhouse (modern)
V. Threshing floor
X. Reservoir
Y. Modern house
Z. Pump-house

The key generally follows that of Ell-Marie Schutte.
House A

According to Ell-Marie Schutte, Stoffel Briers built this house for Lettie Briers. There is an inscription dated 1899 reading ‘CJ Briers born 1878’ on the rock-face behind the farm buildings. This is almost certainly Christoffel Jacobus Briers who was married to Aletta Boltman. Aletta was Frederick Hendricus Boltman’s daughter. One can assume that the house was built at the time of their marriage, therefore around 1900.

The depth of the house at about 9 metres indicates a late building but the woodwork looks much older and the ceilings particularly seem to have been reclaimed from elsewhere. It is possible that as Petrus Jacobus Boltman was a carpenter and builder the doors and windows etc. came from other buildings.

Figure 4. Front Door of Building A.
Figure 5. Detail of door hinges made by a blacksmith.

Figure 6. English style fanlight over the front door.
Figure 7. Building A: ground floor and roof plan.
Figure 8. House A from the northeast.

Figure 9. House A from the southeast.
Figure 10. Building A: elevations.
Figure 11. Voorhuis.

Figure 12. David Glennie at work.
Figure 13. Interior rebated door.

Figure 14. Ceiling with pine planks and machined timber beams.
Figure 15. Ceiling with wide planks and hand squared beams in bedroom 1.

Figure 16. Wall cupboard in bedroom 1.
Figure 17. Wall cupboard in bedroom 2.

Figure 18. Ceiling of random width planks in bedroom 2.
Figure 19. Interior view of bedroom 3.

Figure 20. Wall cupboard in bedroom 3.
Figure 21. Building A: longitudinal section and joinery details.
Building B. Outside Kitchen

Figure 22. Building B adjacent to buildings C, D and E.
Buildings C, D and E

This block of buildings comprises a wagon shed/garage and three adjoining rooms. According to Ell-Marie Schutte, two of the rooms at one time were used as a dwelling by the Boltmans. The age of the building is difficult to determine, but the style, width and the casement windows indicate that it could be mid 19th century.
Figure 24. Casement windows into rooms C2 and C1.

Figure 25. End of building E with buildings F and G in the background.
Figure 26. Buildings B, C, D and E.
Buildings F and G

These buildings, the left hand one originally a dairy, have been converted into a comfortable residence for the owners of this part of the farm.

Figure 27. Building G.

House H

This is the oldest dwelling on the farm. The narrow width, combined with the un-planed ceiling beams lead to the conclusion that this was probably the original Theron house dating from the second quarter of the 19th century. It has had later extensions to the front and side enlarging it from its original three-room layout. At some later date a ceiling was fitted and the acacia poles encased to resemble machined ceiling beams. At the same time the beautiful wall cupboard was probably installed. The original casement windows remaining on the east-facing wall have two by three and three by four panes, again hinting at the early date of this house.

Figure 28. House H. The original (thatched) section almost obscured by the later additions.
Figure 29. View from the east showing the smaller (two by three) centre casement window.

Figure 30. Detail of the northeast corner of house H showing casement window and stairs to the solder.
Figure 31. House H. Ceiling in centre room showing boxed-in acacia poles.

Figure 32. This inlaid wall cupboard is typical of the Sandveld. See ‘Cape Antique Furniture’ (2004) by Baraitser and Obholzer, pages 312-315, for further examples.
Figure 33. Plan of the old section of Building H.
Building Complex J to K and U

This set of buildings and stock enclosures varies in age from the store and garage/wagon house (buildings J and K), according the Ell-Marie Schutte probably built by Christoffel Jacobus Briers very early in the 20th century, to the modern garage around the corner from it (building U). Briers was married to Frederik Hendricus Boltman’s eldest daughter, Aletta. Briers helpfully inscribed his name for us on the rock face, giving his date of birth.
Figure 36. Door into building J.

Figure 37. Entrance to wagon house K.
Figure 38. Gate into the kraal showing the holes where three poles can be positioned across the opening to prevent stock leaving.

Figure 39. View from the small kraal showing the stable/store wall added on top of the kraal wall.
Figure 40. Buildings J to O and U.
Barn P, Stable Q and Trapvloer V

The barn and stable were shown on Ell-Marie Schutte’s diagram but the trapvloer was omitted.

Figure 41. Stable Q and Barn P from the northwest.

Figure 42. Buildings P and Q from the East. The remains of the trapvloer can be seen in the foreground.
The previous photographs and drawings cover most of the main old buildings on the werf. Buildings X, Y and Z are a reservoir, a modern house belonging to Boy Boltman and a small pump house.

The only old building on the werf not mentioned so far is Building I, traditionally said to be the original house of Jan Harmse Steenkamp. The building may have been altered over the last two hundred years, but there is no evidence of another window. The walls are around 500 mm thick, which is narrower than would have been expected for a building of this age, and the internal dimensions are 2550 x 5950. This appears rather small for a family comprising a husband and wife and seven children. It is more likely that the building was a storehouse and Steenkamp and his family probably lived on one of his other farms (perhaps Klipfontein where he died) and he only visited in one of his four wagons to supervise the workers.\footnote{In the Opgaaf Steenkamp is also listed as having 4 wagons, 10 trek oxen and 6 horses.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure43.jpg}
\caption{House I, front elevation.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure44.jpg}
\caption{House I, end elevation showing the only window.}
\end{figure}
Structures outside the werf

Upstream from the werf on the other side of the Soutpans River are extensive stone kraals, and nestled against the cliffs are two small shelters that were probably the dwellings of stock herders. There are also traces of earlier inhabitants in the area of the kraals in the form of rock art of the types thought to be associated with Khoikhoi pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. These comprise finger dot patterns and faded human figures.

Figure 45. Stone shelter, probably a stock herder’s dwelling.

Figure 46. The kraals located upriver from the werf.
Acknowledgements

Many people assisted in this survey. First we would like to thank Boy and Gerhard Boltman for permission to go onto the farm and the use of their accommodation. John Kramer took the photographs, Willem Strydom and Joan and David Glennie made measured drawings of the buildings, Tim Maggs drew the *werf*. The measuring team consisted of Pat Kramer, Julia Meintjes, Jane Salmon, Val Taylor, Jenny Viotti, and Mariette van Wyk, who also provided overnight accommodation at De Lande.
The form and layout of early Cape Town households, 1660s-1740s

Antonia Malan

Introduction

When one lands at the Cape one sees an open plain with a good number of houses, nearly all whitewashed and looking attractive and ornamental from the roads … The houses of the town seem unusually low and not at all handsome, since most are of one story only, although when one enters them they are found to be unusually good …

When I came here in 1684 the houses stood pretty far apart, and were very few in comparison with today … In 1714 I myself counted about 254, large and small, at the Table Bay, not counting some public buildings …

Most of them are built of Cape brick, and for that reason are as a rule one-storeyed, since otherwise they would suffer too much from the heavy squalls: as also they are usually roofed with reeds.


While much is known about rural buildings at the Cape, largely because they still stand, less in known about those that were demolished or much altered, and very little at all is known about the original buildings in Table Valley. Only a handful survive, such as in Strand Street, and these were styled in the late 18th century. There was also a distinct trajectory of developments in the design of town houses and rural farmsteads, for instance in response to the obvious differences required for freestanding or closely packed structures. The evolution of country buildings into U, T and H shapes has been well described by Walton (1965, 1989), Fransen and Cook (Fransen 2004) and others. By contrast, there is no work that describes and discusses the progress of Cape Town buildings.

The architectural history of Cape houses has therefore lacked a crucial dimension for understanding how and why the architectures of the 18th century colony emerged. What were the precursors and influences that lead to the Cape styles in the town and the country? By investigating a wide range of resources it is possible to dig a little deeper into the architecture of a period that has left few physical traces in the form of standing buildings.

Cape Town received hundreds of seasonal visitors but they left few accounts of the mundane, physical context in which people lived. Francois Valentyn was at the Cape at the end of the 17th century and again in the early 18th century and made several useful observations, but visitors’ descriptions are more often vague and contradictory.

It was a very small settlement and even as late as 1714 Valentyn (1971:79) only “counted about 254 [buildings], large and small, at the Table Bay, not counting some public buildings”. Two maps (Figs 1 and 2) were drawn up in the 17th century to show the Gentlemen Seventeen in the Netherlands how the settlement was developing and that its layout conformed to their instructions. In 1660 there were a few buildings north-west of the Fort, more or less lined up with Heerengracht (today’s Adderley Street). The free-burgher houses in the vicinity of the Castle were all demolished by the end of 1677. A plan of 1693 indicates that free-burgher developments were taking place in the controlled form of blocks of houses and outbuildings in a grid pattern. The buildings were constructed along the street edges and corners of the plots, with private yards behind.

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13 This research was first published in Contingent Lives (Malan 2006) and revised for Kronos (Malan 2007). My sincere thanks are due to Stewart Harris for reviewing this version. I have built on other people’s hard work, particularly that of Carolyn Woodward (1982), Hugh Fitchett (1996) and Yvonne Brink (1990, 1992).
Figure 1. Plan dated circa 1660: B hospital, S freemen’s houses, Oliphantstraat now Hout Street, Heerestraat now Castle Street (Picard 1968; CA M2/19).

Figure 2. Plan dated 1693: free-burgher plots and footprints of buildings (Picard 1968; original Algemeen Rijksarchief VEL 825).
E.V. Stade

In 1710 the artist E.V. Stade visited the Cape and drew several views of the houses and landscapes of the Peninsula and the Drakenstein, which he took back to Europe. Stade’s images of Table Valley, a view from a ship anchored in the roadstead and one looking down from Leeuwenhof, are an invaluable and detailed architectural record of some of the buildings he saw (Figs 3 and 4).

Figure 3. E.V. Stade’s view of Cape Town in 1710 from Table Bay (CA M1/987, original Algemeen Rijksarchief TOPO 15-86: high resolution image kindly provided by Dr Pieter Koenders of the National Archives in The Hague).

Figure 4. E.V. Stade’s view of Cape Town 1710 from Leeuwenhof (CA M1/985, TOPO 15-87).

His drawings of Table Valley “reveal a variety of house types, most of them very different from the flat-roofed town houses and single-gabled farmhouses of the later 18th century. Monopitched single-storeyed buildings, double-storeyed gable-ended buildings with pedimented façades, and single-storeyed hip-roofed buildings with triple gables all appear … Moreover, only a small number of houses have symmetrical façades, and most of these were those of the Company and its officials” (Fitchett 1996: 219-220).

The variety of architectural forms and attention to decorative detail suggest that Stade drew what he saw, merely shifting some buildings in relation to each other in order to achieve
an unobstructed view and exaggerating the size of the churches (Fitchett 1996: 25-26). For
many years his drawings were considered fanciful because no buildings with these styles
remained at the Cape. However, there is good evidence that features and buildings drawn by
Stade at Stellenbosch really did exist (Smuts 1979: 83). Hugh Fitchett (1996: 235) found a
notable degree of correlation between Stade’s pictures and Valentyn’s descriptions of Cape
Town.

We have no similar maps and plans for the period 1700-50. After Stade there are no
realistic detailed images of the architecture of Cape Town until an anonymous painting that
dates to some time around 1730 (MuseumAfrika) (Fig. 5). Features in the anonymous painting
can be broadly matched to Wentzel’s survey plan of 1750 (Fig. 6). The developing grid of
regular blocks were labelled with letters of the alphabet, and subdivided into numbered lots
(erven). The block and erf numbers link property ownership and land transactions with other
official documents, including inventories of deceased estates.

Figure 5. Detail from anonymous water-colour c1730 (original in MuseumAfrika, Johannesburg).

An alternative source of information about household layout is the series of inventories
taken by the Orphan Chamber that record the location of fixed properties and list their contents
room-by-room. I have been attempting to reconstruct the architectural history of Cape Town
from household inventories. A recent transcription project has provided fresh impetus for
research into the inventories of households at the Cape, as it is so much easier to work at the
necessary level of detail from digitised versions of hand-written documents.

The first grants of land in Cape Town to Dutch East India Company ‘servants’ and free
men were made from 1660. Ed Sparrow’s ‘Plan of Tafelvaley’, compiled in the 1970s from
records in the Deeds Office and Surveyor-General’s Office, maps the location and extent of

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14 Detailed architectural and archaeological investigations of Schreuderhuis were compared to Stade’s depiction and a
room-by-room inventory taken in 1712 (MOOC8/2.71). The building was excavated by Hennie Vos and thoroughly
dismantled and reconstructed by Fagan Architects between 1974 and 1991 (Vos 1993: 185-191). There was no
chimney in the Stade drawing of Schreuderhuis, and there was no mention of chimney chains or a solder in the
inventory. Vos found traces of floor hearths in one of the rooms, the smoke from which would make its way out
through the beams and thatch. At the back of the house a small off-centre lean-to was constructed, which may have
been the afdak mentioned in the inventory.

15 An extensive transcription project (TEPC) digitized thousands of inventories from Orphan Chamber records at the
Cape, enabling systematic computer-aided studies of this series of room-by-room inventories. For the Transcription
of Estate Papers at the Cape of Good Hope (TEPC) see www.capetranscripts.co.za; for the database and associated
information see TANAP web site hosted by the National Archives in The Hague,
www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents. For this article documents were selected from MOOC8 volumes 1 to 6
on the basis of their location, i.e. if the house and plot (huis en erf) was in Table Valley (i.e. Cape Town’s ‘city
bowl’) or the contents of the inventory indicated that it was almost certainly a dwelling or hire house located in the
developed residential blocks. Market gardens (huis en thuijn) were excluded.
early grants in Cape Town. He is seldom acknowledged for this invaluable work. J.L. Hattingh (1985) listed and mapped early grants and land transactions associated with free blacks.

Figure 6. Carel David Wentzel’s plan of circa 1750; Strand Street on right (from Picard 1968).

Fitchett’s analysis of Table Valley houses drawn by Stade, 1710

Hugh Fitchett has provided the most detailed description of Stade’s drawings of Table Valley houses to date. His unpublished doctoral thesis is not easily available and so extracts from pages 214 to 220 are reproduced below, together with details from Stade’s images (Figs 3 and 4). Hopefully, these comments will provoke further analysis and interpretations from other architectural historians.

Stade’s two views dating from 1710 are invaluable in depicting the variety of house types. These fall into three groups: the ‘artisan’ dwellings along the water-front, the larger ‘middle class’ houses along and to the west of the Heerengracht, and the ‘upper class’ residences on the Keizersgracht, facing the Parade.

The first group was located on the seaward side of the Parade between the Company’s equipage warehouse and the Heerengracht. It consisted of three rows of buildings, which vary considerably in form, separated by two streets or alleys. The buildings are small in scale and, with one exception, are designed in a disorderly manner. They were interspersed with other water-front buildings such as the abattoir.

The first block consists of four houses. The front two have shallow monopitch roofs, which are almost certainly examples of the notorious thatched affdacks which constituted such a fire hazard in the town. The two houses behind have pitched roofs with unelaborated gable ends.

Only the first house in the second block can be seen with any clarity. This appears to be a rectangular building with gabled ends and a simple triangular gable in the centre. The potential symmetry of the design is contradicted, however, by a forward projecting lean-to extension to the right. The similar structure to the left of the gable is probably a separate building, but it could be another extension. This building was possibly the abattoir and market.

The first house of the third block is the most formally planned of this group, with an entrance gable placed centrally in a symmetrical five-bay façade. The central bay with its triangular gable is set forward from the rest of the façade, and the roof is hipped. This house is in the same position as the temporary hospital shown on the 1679 plan and could well have been the same building. This would explain its larger scale, greater formality and different roof configuration from that of its neighbours.

The second group comprises the houses on the western side of the Heerengracht, facing the Castle across the Parade. These are double-storeyed with pedimented façades, although the pediments (or dwarf-gables) are not always depicted centrally. In contrast to the later flat-roofed double-storeyed town houses, however, they have pitched roofs with triangular gable ends. The use of two storeys is probably explained by the building regulations introduced on the 1st July 1686, requiring the eaves of thatch-roofed buildings to be 20 feet above the ground.

Although two storeys in height, these houses are comparatively narrow, the largest being only three bays wide. This suggests that although their owners had pretensions to erect more fashionable houses, they did not have the means to build on a large scale. It is instructive, however, that this street edge had been completely rebuilt during the fifty years since 1660,
suggesting a considerable increase in the standard of living. Even Jan van Harwaerden’s house, with its centre gables on two façades, had been replaced.

The view from Leeuwenhof shows two more rows of houses extending towards Signal Hill. Although not depicted as clearly as those seen from the anchorage, their variation in volumetric form can still be discerned. The first block consists largely of gable-ended houses, but one hipped building with a multiple-gabled façade is shown facing towards Table Mountain, aligned roughly with the shorter wing of the hospital. This building must therefore have been on the upper side of Market Square, despite the apparent open space between it and the insignificant building in the foreground.

The houses at the upper end of the outer block are similar to those along the Heerengracht, with double-storeyed gable-ended front wings. These, however, also have extensive rear wings. The first appears to be an L-shaped double storey, with a further single-storeyed rearward extension. The second seems to be a long rectangle with its gabled end facing the street. The diagrammatic nature of this area of the drawing unfortunately precludes any detailed analysis.

The third group of houses is that on the upper side of the Parade. Here again the view from the anchorage is confusing, in that the church (partially obscured by a hip-roofed building without any gables) is set too far forward. Moreover, the first of the two triple-gabled buildings to the left of the church is set back from the second, whereas both of them should have been aligned along the Keizersgracht, facing the Parade. To compound the confusion, the church is located between two triple-gabled buildings in the view from above the gardens.

If, on the other hand, the unidentified hipped building was in fact aligned with the other two (instead of being markedly set forward as depicted), it could have been its rear façade that was shown in the view from Leeuwenhof, to the left of and thus beyond the church. This building could then conceivably be identified as Olof Bergh’s house, which was on the Heerengracht and next to the church. If this were the case, though, Bergh’s house would have faced the church rather than the Parade, given the triple gables shown from Leeuwenhof, but absent in the view from the anchorage. These gables, each of which is lit by a window at eaves height, are all shown as roughly full-height, in contrast to those of the other two houses under discussion.
These two buildings, to the left of the church in the view from the anchorage, both have hipped roofs and triple-gabled façades. Although depicted as single-storeyed, they were of considerably greater width than the houses described so far. The one closest to the church is the less formal of the two, with three asymmetrical positioned dwarf-gables or pediments which do not correspond with the three doorways in the façade. This building might well have been a tavern or lodging-house, given the number of entrances from the street.

The second of these houses is the most sophisticated residential building yet seen in the town, with a full-height centre gable flanked on either side by dwarf-gables. The centre gable is triangular with its edges articulated by a moulding, while all three are separated from the façade below by a cornice which continues the line of the eaves. The façade, however, does not seem to correspond with the symmetry of the roof line. The drawing suggests the presence of a double staircase leading to a landing, but this is displaced to the right-hand side of the façade and the entrance doorway has been omitted. This contradiction is almost certainly a draughting error, particularly since the rear façade has regularly spaced fenestration, in seven bays.

The view from the rear confirms the hipped roof and triple-gabled façade (see also at Constantia). The rear gable, moreover, is shown with a decorative outline. There is also a projecting element on the left-hand side of the roof, omitted in the view from the anchorage. This could have been a sideways-facing dormer, similar to the one at Constantia.

This house, although conveniently located close to the Castle, could not have been the house of the Fiscal Blesius, as it has already been established that this was situated elsewhere. Its most likely owner was Henning Hüsing, whose house together with the Fiscal’s was described by Wilhelm Adriaen van der Stel as being ‘higher and grander’ than his own Vergelegen.

Behind Hüsing’s house are the dwellings extending up the eastern side of the gardens. These are not very clearly depicted, but most of them appear to have gabled rather than hipped ends.

Lastly, the farmhouses in Table Valley must be considered. Not many of them appear in the two drawings, but they are all variations on the house types found in the town. Some have hipped roofs and some have gabled ends, while four have central gables. One of these is shown above the Company’s equipage magazine, while another two appear directly above Hüsing’s town house in Stade’s view from the anchorage. The fourth is probably Leeuwenhof, the garden house of the Fiscal Blesius from which one of Stade’s illustrations was made.

What is of significance is the number of gabled buildings present in Table Valley, at a time when only two existed in Stellenbosch and none at Drakenstein or the Paarl. This supports the thesis presented here that new developments began in the town and gardens before they were disseminated to the inland districts.

Moreover, only a small number of houses have symmetrical façades, and most of these were those of the Company and its officials. This would continue to be the case into the 1760s, as shown by Johannes Rach’s views of the Heerengracht and Greenmarket Square. Conspicuous by its absence is evidence of the basic ‘three-roomed cell’, the so-called forerunner of the Cape Dutch town house and farmhouse. The development of these types resulted instead from the later vernacular simplification of more complex building such as the house of Henning Hüsing.

Although Cape Dutch architecture had not yet been formalized, the elements of the style were already in existence by 1710. It would only be later, however, that these were fused together to create the combination of transverse plan, symmetrical façade with central gable, and gabled rather than hipped ends, that would constitute what is now understood to be the Cape Dutch style.

Experiments in planning, in three-dimensional form and in façade treatment characterized the first sixty years of the architecture of the VOC at the Cape. The codification of these experiments into a consistent language of architecture in the mid-18th century was therefore for reasons other than the culmination of the ‘evolutionary development’ proposed by most of the works on the period.

Towards a typology of Cape town architecture

Freemen have dwelling houses built after the manner like as in Holland but not so high nor so fine (Christopher Fryke, 1681).
The fort is very fine. The houses in the town are thatched with reeds for the most part, but are so clean, so white, that one sees that they are Dutch (F-T. de Choisy, 1685).

The description of this place can be given in a few words. It is just a village, quite small, with very low flimsy houses built solely of brick (Masurier, 1687).

Near the Fort is a small Town consisting of about 100 Houses; strong and neatly built with Stone Walls and pretty Apartments (John Ovington, 1693).

This place looks prettier and more pleasant from the sea than it does when you are on land … the castle is very peculiar … the other houses here resemble prisons (Johanna van Riebeeck, 1710).


Eyewitness descriptions are notoriously untrustworthy, and projecting modern terms into the past is equally dangerous. Before going further, we need to develop a common understanding of the words and definitions used for architectural elements and forms at the Cape.

The buildings that people construct for themselves, without the intervention of architects, are designed according to cultural norms and practice prevalent at that time and place. They are usually built with materials available in the immediate locality and within the constraints posed by those materials. ‘Vernacular’ buildings reflect social, economic and technological contexts – such as the needs and means of the family that builds them, the limitations of the materials at hand, the adoption of indigenous methods that are appropriate to the environment – and the mind of the builder. The shape, dimensions and construction methods comply with what the builder ‘knows’ is right rather than what is drawn on paper – they are ‘thought’ rather than ‘planned’. This rule-of-thumb knowledge is sometimes referred to as ‘building competence’. It tends to be conservative but at the same time is innovative because tried and tested solutions to problems result in new ways of doing things. In this way changes take place or regional architectural styles develop.

A technical issue, when making comparisons with buildings from the same time but different localities, is the variety of building techniques and materials used in different regions of the Dutch colonial world. Where there was abundant or easily available timber, such as in the Netherlands and parts of the East Indies and the Americas, buildings were predominantly timber-framed, roofs could span large areas and town houses could be tall. Apart from exceptional circumstances, Cape buildings were constructed with thick walls of clay, sun-dried or poorly fired brick and/or undressed stone and tended to be a squat single storey structure under thatch. The walls could take great vertical weights but only limited lateral thrust, so the roof span was restricted. Fitchett (1996: 205) also suggests that the pitched roofs with parapet gables shown in the cavalier perspective plan of 1660 indicates the use of brick as building material, whereas a wattle-and-daub construction would require a hipped roof.

‘Planned’ or ‘polite’ buildings are the result of the intervention of a trained architect or a builder who may have a formal education or access to published designs or can understand and copy existing architecturally designed buildings. Official and ritual buildings such as churches, courts and forts, and the homes of the governing classes, tend to follow a limited repertoire of what is regarded as appropriate. Neo-classical or Palladian architecture was the prevailing model for late 17th and 18th century buildings in Europe and the colonies, including the Cape.

Jan van Riebeeck personally determined the position and sizes of the first buildings and cultivated areas at the Cape, making decisions that were based on the different experiences he brought with him from the Dutch East India Company headquarters of Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia) and Europe (Fagan 1994: 9). His successor, Zacharias Wagenaer, was also well versed in architecture and was at one time a master builder in Batavia (Fagan 1994: 77). After the visit of Commissioner van Reede in 1684, the Cape authorities were armed with detailed instructions for orderly, planned building practice. He suggested that Company buildings should
be constructed of local stone and mud walls and “not so many wooden struts”, partly to conserve timber and partly because they could be built by unskilled labour such as slaves and prisoners (Fagan 1994: 117). Governors Simon and Willem Adriaan van der Stel, who completely disregarded this advice, used both the Company’s timber and skilled labour to develop a distinctive country estate style (Constantia and Vergelegen) that was emulated by their senior officials (Leeuwenhof) (Fagan 1994: 177 and 280) (Figs 7, 8 and 9).

Figure 7. Detail from E.V. Stade’s view of Constantia 1710 (CA M1/984, original Algemeen Rijksarchief Topo 91).

Figure 8. Survey diagram believed to be Leeuwenhof (1698 re-grant to Blesius).

Figure 9. Vergelegen and its outbuildings, c1700 (slave lodge bottom right). The two versions were produced by Willem Adriaan van der Stel and the free-burgher farmers, respectively (Smuts 1979).
People brought various ‘building competences’ from their homelands and the colonies to the Cape settlement after 1652, and these could have originated anywhere within a broadly VOC world that encompassed Europe and the East Indies. In a colonial context, the development of a social order in a new location is inevitably associated with gentrification as the ruling class emerges. From the late 17th century the architecture of officials and the gentry was generally expressed in European neo-classical stylistic terms, but with local or regional expression. The symmetrical Cape Dutch style emerged after the 1740s, and surviving ornate gables date from the 1750s into the 19th century.

**Room-by-room inventories**

Inventories are considerably more than lists of possessions. The appraisers of households of deceased estates at the Cape described the position and size of the rooms relative to each other as they listed the contents of a house (for instance, room to left, back room, room above, great room and little room). This Dutch system is unlike most Anglo-colonial inventories of the 17th and 18th century where rooms were named for their function (chamber, hall, bedroom, etc.). Thus, it is possible to schematically reconstruct the layout of many Dutch-colonial period Cape and New World houses (Piwonka 1987).

Despite the potential for reconstructing layouts, there are problems with the translation and interpretation of certain words used for rooms and features of old houses at the Cape. It is important to realise that today’s meanings should not be assumed for the past (Woodward 1982: 12-35; Malan 1993: 40-42 and 2002: 144-146; Fitchett 1996: 225-228). You cannot rely on room names to make deductions about their function, though they do become more standardised later on. Some appear self-evident, such as slavenhuis, kneegtskamer, schoolkamer and slaapkamer, but the contents of these rooms are seldom confined to single purposes so it is advisable to fully and individually scrutinise each document.

The sequence and number of rooms indicate the size and layout of a house. The contents of the rooms are useful for confirming the manner in which individual rooms were occupied. They suggest their dimensions and function, and often reveal the products of the household and activities of the inhabitants. The type and amount of furniture indicates how big the room must have been, and, if listed, the number of pull-up curtains (ophaal gordijnen) indicates how many windows there were in that room. The appraisal of the estate indicates the wealth of the household and the value of individual items or the contents of a room indicates the relative status of the household.

**Room names and definitions**

The upper space of a Cape house was called a solder, which could be roof-space for storage or a more substantial attic with a boarded floor. Earliest houses with pitched roofs just had open rafters for storage. Once there was a separate space or rooms upstairs, or even a full-height second storey, upstairs rooms were called bokamers or took the prefix bo(ven), such as boven galdery, boven voorkamer. You can often tell if the stairs leading to the solder were interior or exterior depending on whether they were listed before or after the kitchen (which was usually the last room appraised within the main dwelling).

A bovenkamer was an upstairs room (reached by internal or external stairs), but an opkamer was not. The latter was usually a room at a mezzanine level, entered from inside the house and built above a cool room or cellar that was usually entered from outside. Cape town houses very seldom had underground cellars dug into the earth beneath them. According to Mentzel’s description of private houses, “all are on the ground floor without either basements or cellars” (1921: 134), but seven records in my sample between 1720 to 1733 had opkamers. An under-floor or cool space could also be created on the down-slope side of a building (Fig. 10).

Opkamers were commonly built in the Netherlands and Batavian colonial Dutch-style town houses. It was also known as a kelderkamer in Leiden and Batavia (Fock 1987: 136-138;
De Haan 1923: fig.8c) but I have seen this word only once in early Cape documents, a bedroom-store on a farmstead in Rondebosch. Obholzer et al. (1989) illustrate an opkamer in their reconstruction of a 19th century Batavian town house, and they label it a ‘cellar room’ (Fig. 11). Jaap Schipper (1987: 174) described a house built in 1623 for a merchant in the Zaan region in North Holland (Fig. 12). It contained front, middle and back rooms. Next to the front room was a cellar which was half underground. Above the cellar was a small room which was used as an office or a bedroom. This mezzanine room (opkamer) could be reached from the front or middle room.

Figure 10. Muller’s house with cellar attached, probably built by Martin Melck in c1745 when he was a knegt at the silvermine, Simonsberg (Lucas 2004: 59).

Figure 11. A ‘Dutch’ town house in Batavia with an opkamer or cellar room (Obholzer, Baraitser & Malherbe 1989).

Figure 12. House in Zaan region with opkamer and rooms extended to the side (Schipper 1987).

There were side rooms (zijkamers) and agterzijdkamertjes listed in Cape houses, and these need further investigation as they may indicate side-aisle construction. An unexpected type of structure with side aisles was revealed by archaeological work on outbuildings built in 1700 at Vergelegen. Excavations by Ann Markell demonstrated that the four main outbuildings flanking
the dwelling house were constructed in a traditional European three-aisled form, known variously as a *hallehuis* or *loshoes* (Markell 1993: 71-83) (Fig. 13). It was also used in 17th century Jakarta for official purposes such as the hospital and storage facilities, and built in the mid-17th century as farmsteads by Dutch settlers in the Albany district of New Netherlands (North America) (Fig. 14). Simon van der Stel’s hospital near the Company slave lodge in Cape Town (1699) was an extended cruciform plan with triple-aisled wings and internal piers (Fitchett 1996: 53). In order to make these buildings in the European style at the Cape the Van der Stels commandeered precious timber, but it was also possible to build similar buildings with stone and brick, and the core of one example survives on the elite rural estate of Meerlust (Fig. 15).

![Figure 13. Preparatory plans for model of slave lodge at Vergelgen, by Peter Laponder.](image1)

![Figure 14. Three-aisled house-barn built in 1641 in the Albany district, New Netherlands (Zantkuyl 1987).](image2)

![Figure 15. The barn at Meerlust (right) was probably constructed in the aisled form, F.C. Friderici 1798 (from Brooke Simons 2003).](image3)
A side room that ran down alongside the building could also indicate that a house was entered from the narrower end. For instance the house of Wilhelmina de Wit and Jacob Pleunis on the corner of Olifants Straat was asymmetrical, perhaps end-entry, with the best front room kamer aan de linkerhand next to the voorhuis in front. There was then a gaderij (eating room), aterkamertije (stores and bed), sijkamer (bedroom with three beds) and combuijs behind (MOOC8/5.4, 1727).

Side rooms were part of the small Batavian townhouse design (Obholzer et al. 1989: 49) (Fig. 11). From the stoep one entered the voorhuis which led into the zaal. Next to the voorhuis was a zijkamer with a window onto the street and sometimes a door into the zaal. Though it probably had a bed in it in the 17th century, it served as a voorkamer / reception room in later houses. Apparently, the zijkamer in “van Riemsdijk’s house on Tijgersgracht had the capacity to hold 30 women in hooped skirts” (De Haan 1923: 48-55).

An afdak in the Cape today is a lean-to or shed attached to the side of a structure, but in the past it was an integral part of the house layout, entered through a door from the main rooms and often used for securing valuables such as guns. In the Netherlands such rooms could be created to one side by extending the core structure with a side aisle (Fig. 16), but until excavations at Vergelegen revealed that early large buildings at the Cape were also built with similar aisled plans (Markell 1993), this design seemed unlikely for more modest Cape houses and has not been seriously considered by architectural historians.

Figure 16. ‘Side rooms’ may refer to the outer aisles of house forms like this, built in 1646 in the Albany district, New Netherlands (Zantkuyl 1987).

The end-entry and transverse house

The description by Valentyn, the plans of the late 1600s, and the drawing by Stade showed that in 1710 there were a few large houses in Table Valley and several smaller rectangular and L-shaped houses built either parallel or perpendicular to the street. The distinction between buildings set at right-angles or transverse to the street is important because the former are associated with ‘end-entry’ houses, a form that matched town houses in the Netherlands, New Amsterdam and other Dutch colonies, but was fundamentally different to the later Cape Dutch architectural style (Fig. 17). Cape Dutch buildings consist of a row of rooms that run parallel with the street, with a kitchen wing behind, and have a symmetrical façade and interior layout (Fig. 19).

The inn of Jan van Harwaerden (ca 1658) was an L-shaped building on two street frontages, with small dormer gables (Fig. 18). Inside, a large tavern room was separated from the courtyard by a passage. By 1679 there were several L-shaped rearward extensions to a rectangular front wing, and a single asymmetrical T-shaped house near the church, but there is no evidence from Fitchett’s sources that the interiors were all symmetrical (Fitchett 1996: 54-55, 71).
Figure 17. End-entry houses in Holland (Jones 1986: 66; Kok in Fitchett 1996: 920), and schematic drawing of early Cape town house showing 1. voorhuis, 2. kamer ter linkerhand, 3. groot kamer, 4. gang.

Figure 18. Schematic layouts of early houses: but were they really symmetrical? (drawings on left and Harwaerden’s L-shaped inn from Fitchett 1996).
Room-by-room inventories can indicate whether the houses from this period are symmetrical or not, and sometimes whether the rooms were set in a row one behind the other or not. It seems that at least until the 1740s end-entry houses could be found in Cape Town inventories, and they disappeared from the records by mid 18th century.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to make a clear distinction. A simple end-entry house could read like this:

- In de agterkamer (a single living room for whole family and several caged birds)
- In de combuijs (cooking only)
- Op solder (stores)
- In ’t voorkamertje (tiny room containing a single kist)

(Simon Witmond, MOOC8/5.74, 1731)

Or like this:

- In de voorcamer (living and eating)
- In de middlekamer (bedroom)
- In de combuijs
- Op de solder (more bedding)

(Johanna Donker, MOOC8/6.77, 1744)

This house would match both Dutch and Batavian ‘Dutch style’ end-entry house layouts, with rooms leading off a long passage:

- In de kamer aen de linkerhand (bedroom)
- In de kamer aen de linkerhand (main bedroom)
- In ’t voorhuis (passage with only 3 planks in it)
- In de combuijs (table and benches)
- In ’t afdakje (bed and weapons)
- Op de solder

(Abraham de Vijf, MOOC8/2.66, 1712)

In this house there were two front rooms, and then a row of rooms behind that led off the gang (passage):

- In de voorkamer aan de regterhand
- In het voorhuis
- In de 1e agterkamer aan de regterhand
- In de 2e agterkamer aan de regterhand
- In de dispens
- In de gang
- In de combuijs
- Op de solder

(Aletta van der Storm, MOOC8/4.75, 1725)

A plan with a symmetrical façade and kitchen added behind may read like this, if the rooms to left and right had more or less the same amount of furniture (an indication of dimensions):

- In de camer aen de linkerhand
- In ’t voorhuis
- In de camer aen de regterhand
- In de combuijs
- Op solder

(Pieter van der Poel, MOOC8/3.14, 1715)

This house would have had two rooms on the street, then a large back room and kitchen behind:

- In de agterkamer (large multipurpose best room, 6 curtains)
- In de voorkamer aan de linkerhand (large bedroom, no curtains)
- In het voorhuis (sitting room, 4 curtains)
- In de combuijs

(Hermina Herwig, MOOC8/5.72, 1731)

This early Cape Town inventory could describe a transverse house with a central kitchen between the large multi-purpose room and a small front room (see Woodward 1982: 18, 67):
In de camer aen de linkerhand (living room with beds)
In de bottelarij (cupboard)
In de combuijs
In ’t voorkamertje (5 chairs, racks of porcelain)
(Anna Maria Dominicus, MOOC8/2.69, 1713)

This house could be transverse, with the kitchen on one end or end-entry:
In de zijd camer ter linckerhand vant huijs
Int voorhuis
In de combuijs
Op de solder
(Manda Gratia, MOOC8/3.96, 1710)

Here was a two-roomed building with a third room attached at the back or side:
In de voorkamer aen de linkerhand (kitchen)
In de voorkamer aen de regterhand (living room)
In ’t afdak (bedroom)
(Margareta Blauwpaeart, MOOC8/2.70, 1713).

End-entry houses were built in Cape Town from at least the 1660s and are occasionally seen on early survey diagrams associated with rural land grants. Some can be recognized in room-by-room inventories but it is often difficult to decide if rooms were built in a transverse or longitudinal row. Dates are important. Though free-standing end-entry buildings are defined here as a previously under-acknowledged early Cape architectural form (in contrast to the front entry transverse house), a similar floor plan under a transverse roof was commonly built as terrace housing in Batavia and the Cape during the second half of the 19th century and should not be confused with the early period.

The voorhuis and galderij

A voorhuis was at the front of the house and was the room entered from the street, whether a full-sized living space or narrow entrance hall or passage, and irrespective of plan configuration.17 It was sometimes flanked by rooms to either side, and sometimes there were rooms running backwards behind it, or there were one or more rooms to only left or right. For example:

- in ’t voorhuis, in de voorkamer aen de regterhand, in de voorkamer aen de linkerhand, in de combuijs, in de bottelarij, int afdakje
  (Johanna Bort, MOOC8/2.73, 1713);
- in de groote kamer, in t voorhuis, in de combuys
  (Simon Faasen MOOC8/3.83 1718);
- in de voor kamer aan de regterhand, in het voorhuis, in de 1e agterkamer aan de regterhand, in de 2e agterkamer aan de regterhand, in de dispens, in de gang, in de combuijs, op de solder
  (Aletta van der Storm MOOC8/4.75, 1725).

The voorhuis does not automatically have a room called agterhuis behind, which itself is a word that has two very different meanings. In the Netherlands the agterhuis was literally a separate structure behind the main house (Zantkuyl 1987, fig.11), whereas at the Cape today the word is used for the room behind a central front room (today usually called a voorkamer, but in inventories it would have been listed as a voorhuis). The word agterhuis was only used in two

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17 Not every inventoried house in this period had a named voorhuis (26% of the sample did not). Maybe it was not listed if the voorhuis was completely empty, but I think it unlikely. For instance, there was a case where the listed voorhuis was empty except for a single hanging lamp. In a few instances what was clearly an entry room was named a voorkamer, in others a living room entered directly from the street was called a voorkamer rather than voorhuis.
cases in the early 18th century inventories at the Cape. The free black carpenter Arnoldus Coevoe had an agterhuis behind the voorhuis in his house, and it was a modest bedroom with a kadel and 13 chairs in it. His main living room was in de kamer aan de linkerhand (MOOC8/5.136, 1735). An agterhuis was listed in the yard behind the house of wealthy widow Anna de Konink (1734), and was used for storing household provisions and 14 chairs. Thus these examples reflect both modern Cape and old Netherlands usage.

The groot kamer and galdery / gaanderij

As you enter, we found on the right side a good parlour, and similarly opposite … behind each room was another, and just inside the front door a large room with wide [open] doors in the Cape style, leading straight through to an extraordinary large salon (Lammens sisters, 1736).

(Schoeman 2001: 409-410)

The form of galdery described by the Lammens sisters as a ‘salon’ is central to the definition of Cape style architecture and colonial domestic life. It was also literally the core room in the house.

By the middle of the 18th century, in Cape Dutch style houses, the galdery was the main eating room positioned directly behind the voorhuis (which was behind the central front door and flanked by voorkamers). Leading off the galdery were back rooms (often named galderykamers) and the kitchen quarters. In rural houses it was inserted in the tail of a T or sat in the middle of an H-shape. In town houses it sat in the middle of a symmetrical rectangular, U or L shape (Fig. 19). It functioned as family room and domestic work room, a strategic spot from where surveillance over the household took was possible, and where the riches of the table were displayed when entertaining guests.

Figure 19. The Cape Dutch house style: interior 1. voorhuis, 5. galdery
(top from Fitchett 1996; left from Brooke Simons 2000: 8).
The early Cape houses also had *gelderijen*, but of different forms and functions to those of the later period. Woodward spent some time debating what the early *galdery* space may have looked like and what it was used for; for instance, was it originally a linking passage, a transverse hall or a gallery surrounding the courtyard between back wings? (Woodward 1982: 29). However, a *voorhuis* and *gelderij* occur together in a quarter of the early records, and this combination would suggest that one space lead into the other, as described by the Lammens sisters in 1736. What is significant is that the sisters found the latter ‘extraordinary’.

It is clear that galleries in Ceylon were open-sided passages or wide and broad verandahs functioning as cool living rooms (Wijesuriya 1996) (Fig. 20). The same style of a central nucleus with flanking galleries was adopted in Curaçao and other Caribbean settlements (Greig 1987; Ozinga 1959; Pruneti Winkel 1987: 14). In 1785 Jan Brandes depicted a formal reception taking place on the front verandah-style gallery of a house in Colombo, where a long line of chairs are arranged along the wall (Veenendaal 1985: 39). De Haan (1923: 47) even suggests that the Batavian front gallery and the Cape *stoep* had the same function, providing an airy space open to public view where friends could gather to smoke and gossip.

Open galleries at the ‘Cape of Storms’ would have been particularly unsuitable for weather conditions in Table Valley, with its high winds, sand and dust storms in summer, and horizontally wind-driven rain in winter. Ambrose Cowley reported in 1686 that: “The town which is inhabited by the Dutch, is but small, and the Houses are built very low, by reason that in the Months of December, January and February they are visited with Great Gales of Wind” (Raven-Hart 1971: 309). Valentyn treated Cape gales with respect: “I can speak from experience, since I was once thus caught in the open with a spry young man, and was forced to sit for a time with him in a deep hollow which we found there, since otherwise we had surely been blown away” (Valentyn 1971: 63).

![Figure 20. Galleries in Ceylon (Wijesuriya 1996).](image1)  
![Figure 21. The groot kamer in a Dutch house, New Netherlands, c1734 (Blackburn 1985: 159).](image2)

The early inventories include rooms that are called *groot kamer* or *groot kombuis*. I believe that at the Cape the function and name of the *groot kombuis*, which refers to a European domestic lifestyle, was replaced by the *gelderij*, which refers to a more Indies (*Indische*) lifestyle that suited extended families and domestic slavery, and the climate.

These European ‘great’ rooms were multipurpose living rooms in which the family also ate their meals (Fig. 21). In Dutch North America the ‘great chamber’ was the most important room besides the kitchen (Blackburn & Piwonka 1988: 169). They had fireplaces or cooking hearths in them. Some of the living rooms in the Cape were similar, including the *groot kombuis*. There was no evidence in the Cape inventories that the *groot kombuis* had a cooking
hearth and the *groot kamer* did not, so I believe the names were synonymous. There are ten records with a *groot kamer / combuis* before about 1730 and only four afterwards. The clues in the contents were hearth utensils or a *schoorsteenmantel* or *schoorsteenvalans* above the fireplace.

There may be some correlation at the Cape between the function of the early *galderij* and that of the European-style *groot kamer / groot combuis*. Rooms that functioned as *groot kamers* were not always named as such. Therefore the function of rooms in each inventory has to be scrutinised in order to properly investigate the role of large multipurpose rooms at the Cape. For example, there was a single record with a room named *galderij* that in fact functioned as a *groot kamer*. It was in the household of a rich old German-born widow, Gertruy de Wit (CA: MOOC8/5.109, 1733).

In Europe it was probably designed to heat as much living space as possible. At the Cape hearths and fireplaces were not found in living rooms in the 18th century, possibly as a result of practical factors, such as lack of fuel, domestic slave labour based in the kitchen, or risk of fire (central chimneys in thatch roofs are an especial hazard). Most people kept themselves warm with a *stoof*, a perforated box or footstool with a *testje* of hot coals inside. Some fireplaces were inventoried in rich people’s living rooms later at the Cape, but rarely. A kitchen at the Cape was almost never a living room, which may be related to the kitchen’s special role in a domestic slave-owning society, though there was very occasionally a bed in it.

The *groot kamer* disappeared from inventories by mid-18th century and one reason may be that it did not fit a Cape Dutch interior. The European-style *groot kamer / combuis* was associated with an asymmetrical floor plan and could be built as large as necessary.

Once symmetry was desired for the interior plan of a house, it was not possible to balance out such a ‘great’ space with an equivalent room. A special-purpose reception / eating room such as the Cape *galderij* fitted well into the symmetrical layout of the Cape Dutch house, did not require a fireplace, and could be kept cool by a through-draught in summer.

**Large houses (heerenhuis and double-house)**

The town has wonderfully increased the number of houses since the Company chose this place for a settlement. … They look very well from far off because of the snow-white lime with which they are plastered outside, and many shine with Dutch neatness; but none more attract the eye of the observer than those of the Fiscaal Joan Blesius, and of the Burgerraad Henning Huizing, both finely built and higher than all the others (Abraham Bogaert, 1702).

(Raven-Hart 1971: 479)

The main architectural features in Stade’s drawings that are unlike Cape Dutch survivals are central chimneys, buildings lying at right angles to the street and entered through the narrow gable end, asymmetrical façades and hipped roofs (Fig. 3). Hipped roofs and mansard-type windows or small gables are seen on the grandest buildings in the town, a survey diagram of Leeuwenhof (1698), and in Stade’s drawings of Constantia and Vergelegen, the homes of the Governors van der Stel (Figs 7 to 9).

The imposing style of the Cape town house probably refers to Dutch architecture for the Netherlands gentry based on the ‘double house’ in towns, while the model for rural estates was the *heerenhuis*. De Haan noticed that Batavian houses showed a great difference between that inside the walls and the *landhuis* outside. The town house followed an enclosed style, like the Dutch town house in the Netherlands, and the latter was based on a ‘Hollandsch’ *heerenhuis* type (“a third rate Baarn or Hilversum for small purses”), but adapted to the humid eastern environment (De Haan 1923: 38-39).
Francois Valentyn described what he called *dubbelde wooning* at the Cape sometime before 1715: “These houses are pretty conveniently constructed, and provided with several very good rooms, a double house having two parlours on the street and various middle and back rooms, also often a large space behind ...” (Valentyn 1971: 81). The term was derived from a Netherlands town house covering two adjacent plots (Fig. 22). Positioning a central door in a double house led to the development of a central passage (*gang*) in the later 17th century and rooms either side were made as ‘equivalent’ as possible. Stairs were located between the side rooms (Kok cited in Fitchett 1996: 224). Examples of these houses were illustrated in *Architectura Moderna*, a copy of which was listed at the Fort at the Cape in the 1660s (Fitchett 1996: 222).

Carolyn Woodward (1982: 27) was probably the first historian to point out that the largest early Cape town houses could have been a type of ‘double house’, based on her investigation of inventories dating up to 1714. Double houses have been illustrated by Zantkuyl (1987: 149) in the context of Dutch settlement in the New World (Fig. 22). There is a surviving example of an early 18th century (circa 1730) double house in Jakarta, known as the Toko Merah (red house) (Fig. 23). It looks like one house, but is in fact two houses under a single transverse roof (De Haan 1923; Heuken 1989: 63-65). By the time Stavorinus visited Batavia in 1770, though, he observed that “very rarely, here and there one comes across a double-fronted house” (cited by Veenendaal 1985: 147).

Valentyn (1971: 81) wrote that though most houses were single storey, several two-storey houses were built by 1685. The first were two were erected side by side by Albert Koopman, who owned property in block K, on today’s Hout Street between Long and Burg. In 1705 Valentyn found “larger, higher and more noble houses”, for example the two built by “Henning Husing, Town Councillor here and one of the richest burghers, standing next to each other on the way to the Fort” ... “and that of the Fiscaal Blesius, also a very fine house, in which (as in that of Heer Husing) there is a double apartment below and above, with a stairway as in the houses of Amsterdam”. Huysing owned two properties, one on the sea side of the Parade and one in block F on the corner of today’s Strand and Burg. The house of Blesius appears to have been on Greenmarket Square, opposite the present Burgher watch-house (Fitchett 1996: 47), and the other “houses of Heer Blesius make up a cross-block by themselves” (Valentyn 1971: 82).

Valentyn also described the street nearest the shore, which was known as ‘the row of Brommert’s houses’. Brommert was the *Equipagiemeester*, and had a “very fine and large house with a staircase”. This was in block E on the bay side of Strand Street, more or less opposite Huysing’s property. The sea-facing side of this block can be seen in the anonymous painting of a later date (Fig. 5).
In contrast with the ‘double houses’ of Blesius and Hüsing, which had narrower entrance halls than the rooms on either side, the Company’s houses in its three gardens (Table Valley, Rustenburg and Newlands) appear to have had a wider entrance hall than the rooms on either side (Fitchett 1996: 56). Valentyn’s descriptions and contemporary drawings of the main dwelling houses at Groot Constantia and Vergelgen were detailed enough for Hugh Fitchett to have recreated their distinctive layouts (1971: 193-195 and 149). Fitchett, Yvonne Brink and Gwen Fagan agree that it was the heerenhuis form that the highest Company officials aspired to emulate at Vergelegen and Groot Constantia (Brink 1992 and 1993; Fagan 1994). The relationship of the house and outbuildings in a square biaxial layout clearly referred to the European heerenhuis, a 17th century architectural model.

The characteristics of these early 17th century buildings were strong symmetry, geometry, balance between stone and brick work, steep hipped roofs and prominent chimneys (‘Mauritshuis’ style, Fig. 24), and the long façade was presented to a lake or canal. They were rectangular blocks of 3-7 bays, with basement, two floors and attic storey, topped by a pediment and dormers in the roof. After 1631 Italianate plastered Palladian villas became de rigeur (‘Huis ten Bosch’ style) (Greig 1987: 79-81). Otto Mentzel wrote that “in 1732 a tailor, by the name of Müller … pulled down his corner house in the Market Square and put up a new three-storied building with a flat roof in the Italian style … many others followed suit to minimise the risk of fire, and houses in the new style were put up by the warehouse-master Swellengrebel, the Dispenser Henning, the Assistant Fiscal Reeder and various rich burghers” (Mentzel 1921: 135).
The following inventories describe two large houses: a single-storey town house with asymmetrical interior built in 1708 next to that of Huysing, and a double-storeyed dwelling with symmetrical interior. Are these grand houses examples of the ‘double house’ and Cape-style heerenhuis, respectively?

Before his death in 1737 Johannes Blankenberg had become a wealthy man who held several official posts and who would have been familiar with comfortable styles of living in Europe. He was born into a family of German-speaking officials and merchants, came to the Cape as a Company soldier and was soon promoted to superintendent of the hospital and married the daughter of the captain of the burgher infantry stationed at the Castle of Good Hope (Brooke Simons 2003: 37). In 1737, the Blankenberg family and household consisted of Johannes, his wife Catharina Baumann and seven children, plus nine slave men and two slave women from India, Ceylon and Indies islands as well as Cape-born, of whom one had five children.

Blankenberg owned a town house in Zeestraat that he had built in 1708 next to the ‘imposing’ houses of Henning Hüsing described by Valentyn, and in 1713 bought the rich country estate of Meerlust near Stellenbosch from Hüsing’s widow (Brooke Simons 2003: 37). His town house was laid out in a similar way to other large homes in Cape Town of that period, but the contents were more extensive and valuable.

What is particularly interesting is the presence of an especially large room in a wealthy house in 1737, and that it was furnished in the style of a European groot kamer, and had a fireplace. This main living room was really a ‘salon’ – large enough to accommodate a concert or a wake. There were 60 chairs there, collected from other rooms in the house. These were arranged alongside a clavercimbel and clavercodium as well as the expected curtained bed, cabinet, chests and tables. The house may have had a regular façade but inside there was the layout of a very asymmetrical interior.

In contrast to Blankenberg’s dwelling, the layout of the large two-storeyed house and extensive outbuildings of Debora de Koning’s estate is strictly symmetrical inside and outside. She was the widow of Jacobus Möller, Company equipagiemeester, and immensely rich. Her home in block S was inventoried in 1748, and you can follow the appraisers through the main ground floor rooms, upstairs and then downstairs again to the kitchen quarters and out into the yard and outbuildings behind. The house had two front rooms flanking a central voorhuis and back rooms flanking the gilderij, and it clearly had two storeys. Block S is in the area of a large house drawn by Stade in 1710.

This could be an early Cape Dutch style town house in plan. The layout and room functions are similar to those of large Cape townhouses of the later 18th century, but we cannot be sure if this was a square or U plan.

The Blankenberg inventory was asymmetrical in interior layout, included a large living room, and fits a double house layout, but we cannot be sure what the façade looked like. The De Koning inventory represents a fully symmetrical house, and the layout and room functions, including a gilderij, matches large symmetrical Cape townhouses of the later 18th century. But did the façade have an ornate central gable?

Building modest lives

“One sees here all sorts of peculiar people who live in very strange ways”
(Johanna van Riebeeck, 1710)

(Worden et al. 1998: 39)

We have images and descriptions of ‘imposing’ houses, but what other sorts lay in between? Little is known about the modest homes and businesses of Cape Town in the period
before 1750. A close reading of selected inventories from the 1730s and 1740s produces a broad picture of households of various shapes and sizes, with a range of occupants and occupations. Are there any architectural patterns to be found, or was there diversity in layout and use of space? Did certain rooms function in predictable ways, or did the nature of the occupants affect the way the house worked? What was the texture of life in these households?

A well-off home, yet scarcely ‘imposing’ as it had only two living rooms, was that of de burgeresse Hermina Herwig and her third husband, Pieter Behrends (MOOC8/5.72, 1731). She left four minor children, and owned ten slave men (one with a young son) and five slave women. More interesting than its lack of architectural discipline is how this house demonstrates the multiplicities of commercial activities that took place in the centre of Cape Town in the 18th century. I have demonstrated elsewhere that many Cape householders were retailing merchandise from their homes, and from their living rooms (Malan 1997: 273-301). This was first revealed by the sheer amount of goods that far exceed household needs.

The family living rooms were a voorkamer and a large agterkamer behind it. Behrends was a silversmith, and the voorhuis must have acted as a ‘front of shop’, as it was smartly furnished with 12 chairs, a standing clock, seven bird cages and a silversmith’s tools, and was decorated with pictures and five porcelain dishes. The kitchen had six chimney chains and two bellows, indicating that smithing activities as well as cooking took place on what was presumably a larger than average hearth.

The Behrends family also ran an extensive shoemakers workshop which was situated beyond the kitchen. This was a luxuriously furnished house, and so it is startling to find that in the back yard there was a tannery, which must have smelled awful. The slaves were definitely working with raw hides, as there were 10 tanning tubs, 11 tanning vats, 24 unprepared hides and 14 unprepared hartebeest hides. Perhaps the tannery was further down wind than the cobbler’s workshop and cellar outbuilding, as the family owned five other houses ‘beside each other’.

Christiaan Paulman lived in a sprawling property beside Greenmarket Square, without a wife (his heirs were overseas) or slaves (unlikely, but none were listed) (MOOC8/6.107, 1746). His house layout is almost impossible to recreate and may be two buildings combined (fixed assets are described as ‘two dwellings with their lots lying in this Table Valley in Block E:E). There were pigs, geese and horses in the back yard.

He supplied his friends, or more probably his customers as we can assume that this was a tavern of some sort, with games and music and plenty of drink. In the large corner room there was a troktafel with 11 cues and 4 balls, along with nine candleholders (for night-time activities), in the middle room were two French horns, two violins, a bassoon and a backgammon board, and in the attic were extra beds and a set of skittles with their ball. 138 empty bottles were stored in a little side room.

There were several other houses which served as taverns and places of entertainment, some belonging to alcohol licensees (pachters) and others perhaps to tapsters (Groenewald 2003). Jan van der Swijn lived in some splendour in Tweedebergdwarstraat but among other properties also owned the aptly named Laaste Stuiertje (Last Penny) in Zeestraat. Some drinking spots are obvious as they have special rooms or bars (schaggereijen) listed, such as Eksteen in Zeestraat, Munnickx or Stavorinus. Steven van den Burg’s home, a hired house, had ‘glasses and other taphouse utensils’ in the voorhuis (MOOC8/5.110, 1732, MOOC8/3.93, 1718, MOOC8/4.1, 1720, MOOC8/4.96, 1725, MOOC8/5.107, 1736).

Others are less obvious and perhaps illegal. They can be identified in the inventories by the presence of long tables and benches, gaming and darts boards, and an overly large number of glasses and bottles and pewter pint measures and tankards. The houses of people who offered skilled services, such as the barber Maurit Duijmeling and the tailor Melchior Hobbelts, were often also well stocked with tobacco, drink and games boards (MOOC8/5.57, 1733, MOOC8/5.25, 1730). Duijmeling also had 24 golf clubs and some balls in his attic.
Some households are not so easy to categorise. Cornelia Lammans was an unmarried free black woman with two daughters (Susanna Coetzer and Josina Loossen) and a son (Willem Loossen) (MOOC8/5.61, 1732). There were three chimney chains in the kitchen (more than usual for a small household like this) and racks of tea and table ware in the multi-purpose front room. These items included 33 porcelain cups and saucers. I can understand the presence of large amounts of robust pewter utensils, and alcohol bottles and glasses, but large numbers of porcelain cups and saucers do not sit comfortably with my vision of a Cape Town tavern or eatery. There are several examples of such teaware collections in my sample. Cora Laan’s study of Dutch taverns during the second half of the 18th century may provide the explanation (Laan 2003: 198). Her archaeological and archival research revealed that during the 18th century warm beverages such as tea and coffee were also consumed in inns, but in more private areas. Alcohol was drunk in front rooms, tea and coffee in back rooms. Chocolate was regarded as a foodstuff, and was suitable for children.

The conclusion that food and drink was being sold and served from within the domestic household fits the inventory of the deceased Anna Jonasz and her husband Jan Joosten (MOOC8/5.60, 1733). The best front bedroom was amply furnished, and there was a considerable amount of porcelain, a set of six Chinese chairs and a pair of stinkwood chairs, and little stinkwood and kiaat tables. The galderij behind was full of tableware and was clearly the family living room (there was a fireplace and the baby’s nappies were drying there). Surprisingly, given the crowded multi-purpose nature of the other rooms, the left-hand room held only three large tables and one small table, a coat rack and a cellaret. I believe this was a public eatery.

Cecilia Davidsz had considerably more porcelain cups and saucers (150), pewter dishes (2 dozen) and spoons (3 dozen) in her house than you would expect (MOOC8/6.23, 1738). Jan Buttner and Engela Laubster, in similar financial and family circumstances, owned a mere 36 cups and saucers, 5 pewter dishes and 6 pewter spoons (MOOC8/5.14, 1730). The household only consisted of Davidsz and her husband Willem Leckerland, her two children and three slave men, but nine beds were squashed into the living rooms to left and right of the voorhuis. Guests were apparently entertained in the voorhuis with food, drink and a backgammon board, accompanied by the music of three violins. The debts and credits of estates often provide helpful clues. In this case, foreign sailors off the Velsen owed money to the estate, which could have been for board and lodging?

These examples show that modest lives were tied up with servicing the needs of the permanent and itinerant population of the town. This broad view is already known, but what the inventories provide are scores of slightly different images of the material stuff of daily life, and where it was enacted, the names of individual people and their relationships with each other and the physical world around them. It is possible to focus on particular people and the places in which they lived.

There appears to be no evidence of distinct quarters for certain types of inhabitants in Cape Town throughout the 18th century, or even that large houses were confined to certain areas. A block could contain large and small buildings, privately owned and occupied dwellings and huurhuise, as well as warehouses and workshops, stables and kitchen gardens. However there were a few street frontages that were more desirable than others, such as Heerengracht, and corner plots always offered the greatest opportunities for architectural display.

Three inventories were taken of households in block G:G in the 1740s. This block is bounded today by Wale, St. Georges, Church and Burg streets. The heads of household are very different men, and though living in houses of similar size next door to each other, we can see how different the layout and characters of their households are.

Jan Jacob Possé, originally from Germany, ended up as Baas Timmerman (MOOC8/6.71, 1744). He is noted as having built an organ for the daughter of Governor de la Fontaine, which was sold to the Cape Church Council and served for sixteen years in the Groote Kerk (Hoge
He married Catharina Margaretha Becker in 1740, and at his death left two small children, Johannes Jacobus (3) and Marthinus (1½). They owned lot 8 and a portion of lot 6 (facing Burg Street), valued at Rds 1333:16 (a standard valuation). There were four slaves: Maart van Bengalen, Rosetta with her child Eva van de Caab, and Rachel van de Caab. This was a family house.

This building was asymmetrical, with the entrance to one side. The left-hand front room was a straightforward best front room, with a single window, and furnished with cabinet, curtained bed, chairs and tables. To the side was the voorhuis, which was a small room furnished for sitting or waiting in. The gadderij behind was the carpenter’s shop, where visitors could sit down at the table for a pipe of tobacco, and then there was the kitchen. The back rooms were linked by a gang, which appears to be a wide passage as it was large enough for a bed and various pots and vats. It led to where a horse and cart were kept. In upstairs rooms were bits and pieces of timber from Europe and the East, some bedding and stores. The bovengadderij was linked to the workshop below, and there were tools and pieces of furniture and bedding and a gun up there. After the slaves, the most valuable item in the house was an *Ambons houte cabinet* in the front room.

Company Lieutenant Pieter Sohiers owned lot 4 (on the corner of Church and Burg) and the other portion of lot 6, as well as another house in block G (MOOC8/6,126, 1747). Corner plots were desirable, as they had two façades. His only heir was an adopted (aangenoomene) son, Abraham, whose age or parentage is not given. Sohiers owned two slave men from Mallebaar, Fortuijn and Jacob. It was a bachelor’s house.

This building had almost the same layout as the previous one: left-hand room, voorhuis, gadderij and kitchen. The best front room had a good collection of furniture, and the clothes appropriate for a military officer and well-travelled man, including two *chitse moorse rocken*. Three curtains indicate that this was the prime corner room, with two windows facing one street and one on the other. The voorhuis and gadderij are virtually unfurnished (all 25 chairs were in the big room), and there is only pewter tableware in the kitchen. There is no sign of the adopted son living there, nor is there a woman’s presence, or a single porcelain cup. The Lieutenant’s silver-handled sword accompanied him to his grave, however, as the appraisers carefully note that it was placed on top of the coffin during the funeral.

Carel Jansz van Bengalen, *den vrijswart*, lived on lot 2 (facing Church Street). The inventory supplies no further personal details, except that his heirs were the two minor daughters van den duikelaar Zacharias Eijkenstroom. However, he owned five slaves: Rebecca van Bengalen and her children Jan and Appollonia van de Caab (who were to be freed), and Anthonij van Coutchin (who was bequeathed to them), and Slamat van Souma. It is impossible to guess the relationships between them all, but there was a collection of women’s jewellery listed in the estate, some of which was linked to Rebecca.

This house could have had a symmetrical façade, lying parallel to the street. The left-hand room was the usual multipurpose bed-sitting room, but considerably less formal than Possé’s. There were four *katel* beds, one of which had hangings. The right-hand room held a single bed, a table and some chairs. In size it could have matched the one opposite, but is more sparsely furnished. In between was a small voorhuis. Behind was a kitchen and yard. Up in the *solder* are some clues to Carel Jansz’s commercial interests: stores of spices, a bag of birds’ nests, a sack of rice, some snuff and some fishing nets. There was a chest of turmeric in the voorhuis. The fishing nets together with a vat of salt and several empty vats in the back yard could point to fish curing activities.

**For further discussion**

Hugh Fitchett suggested that the early Cape had sophisticated architecture by 1710 (‘proto-Cape Dutch’), which was later simplified by the free-burghers (Fitchett 1996: 3-4). His evidence did not rely on surviving buildings but was taken from official records of the VOC, visitors’ accounts and artists’ drawings. To test whether these “finely built” houses of 1710
were indeed a model for the Cape Dutch style farmstead, it was necessary to understand all the elements in their appearance and internal layout, how they worked spatially and socially, how long they survived, or how and when they were transformed. This information can be found in room-by-room household inventories.

Based on my research, I disagree with Fitchett’s suggestion that the larger buildings shown by Stade in 1710 were directly ancestral to the standard Cape Dutch style, but I do concur that both the earlier (pre-1700) and later (post-1740) styles referred to prevailing Palladian principles of positioning, ordered spatial arrangement and symmetry (Berman 2004: 2-8). Rather, the inventories demonstrate that the apparently symmetrical façade of early Cape town houses may have obscured an asymmetrical interior, as in the Dutch ‘double house’ style, and most early houses were asymmetrical in façade and plan. I further propose that by looking inside the houses we have refined our understanding of the implications of spatial changes in architectural design. The replacement of a ‘great’ room with the voorhuis and galdery enabled Cape builders to develop a symmetrical house façade and plan that satisfied their neoclassical architectural aspirations, reflected social relations in a slave-owning community, and suited the local resources and climate. This became the ‘classic’ Cape Dutch style.

Woodward concluded that the late 17th and early 18th century Cape architecture represented by inventories showed evidence of experimentation, and Fitchett interpreted a great variety of residential buildings depicted on the earliest drawings and maps (1996: 201-219). It seems from my current research that this characteristic continued well into the 1730s. Within the diversity of house layout, however, there were certain rooms that were significant indicators of well established styles of living, such as the large amorphous multipurpose living room (grote kamer). This room would disappear from houses that were built to be more strictly symmetrical, which, according to the inventories and physical evidence dating from the 1740s to 1840s, were also more standardised house layouts. Ruth Piwonka (1987: 6) suggested that in the Netherlands by the mid-18th century the groot kamer furniture was relegated to a ‘parlour’ or ‘common room’, while new furnishings were placed in a ‘best room’. Woodward described a similar trend towards a ‘best front room’ at the Cape, but did not explicitly recognise the important link with the old groot kamer (1983: 5-19).

Conclusion

There is a gap of about forty years of architectural developments to research before fully resolving these issues. It would be wonderful to know more precisely who designed and built the early houses, and when. Is there any correlation between type of layout and contents and the origins of owner / builder? It is not known how long the town houses survived into the 18th century in their original double house form, but the heerenhuis at Vergelegen was deliberately broken down in 1706 after Willem Adriaan van der Stel was banished in disgrace from the Cape. This acted as a symbol of displeasure at material aggrandizement by Company officials, as “such buildings which are for ostentation and more for pomp than use have been built by the Company’s servants at the Cape and elsewhere in India greatly to our annoyance, and in a very prominent fashion” (Markell 1993: 72). The first extant rural Cape Dutch ornately gabled house can be dated to about 1750.

The clues from inventories are rich in detail, but also ambiguous. We also need to further critically assess the form and development of smaller town houses from evidence in the inventories. The composition of a household affects the way a house works spatially. There were domestic and artisan slaves and an unknown population of servants around; some heads of families were single men or unmarried women; some families were small and some were widely extended. People’s activities were certainly more diverse than the occupations that appeared in the official records. It appears therefore that each inventory of early Cape houses has to be interpreted in its own idiosyncratic terms.

We face serious challenges when trying to represent (in plan or three dimensions) the evidence from early 18th century room-by-room inventories of house layouts. Architectural
historians study the overall look of buildings and their individual features. They focus on stylistic factors such as the design of the façade and distinctive elements and ornaments of certain periods that can be traced on buildings that have been preserved into the present. Images in the form of maps, survey diagrams and pictures are interpretations of reality by the people who made them, and must be critically analysed by researchers. There are no contemporary illustrations or written descriptions with adequate detail about the interiors of buildings, and archaeological work has not yet produced the necessary evidence.

We can ‘read’ patterned and idiosyncratic households from documents but cannot see what the houses actually looked like. The rare pictures are invaluable resources, but they do not allow us to see inside the buildings (Fig. 25).

![Figure 25](image)

**Figure 25. Clockwise: Stade 1710; Anon c1730; Rach 1762; Brandes 1786 (De Bruijn & Raben 2004).**

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