Bloemfontein (1848-2015), mapping eight moments in time: Measuring and appreciating that which is nearest

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Abstract

Maps represent more than physical reality. More significantly, they beckon that which is nearest; the life-care-place totality in which lived space is best understood as place, and lived time is best understood as care. This essay presents eight maps of Bloemfontein which synthesise a range of historical depictions; on the same scale and placed in the geographical and ecological context. The result is a series that traces the historical development of Bloemfontein from 1848 to 2015. However, the aim of composing these maps is not limited to the act of mapping. By drawing on Martin Heidegger's ontological concept of care, or *Sorge*, it is proposed that these maps illuminate the difference between 'history' and 'historicity'. Care draws life and place into contiguity. More than an act of measuring, these maps tell the story of our appreciation of places as regions of concern.

Keywords: Bloemfontein; History; Historicity; Mapping; Care; *Sorge*; Place; Heidegger; Regional history.

Introduction

Bloemfontein is a place easily taken for granted. In 1911 a former resident, Sarah Liebson, described it as "the dorpiest dorp in the Union".[1] Counter-intuitively, it is exactly the way Bloemfontein is often overlooked which provides a good reason to see this small city as a place of consequence. In the words of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger: "What is ontically nearest and familiar is ontologically the farthest, unrecognized and constantly overlooked in its ontological significance".[2] Indeed, the unsung everydayness of Bloemfontein harbours deep lessons about that which is nearest. By returning

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1   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: Die ontstaan van 'n stad 1846-1946* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1980), p. 230.
2   M Heidegger, *Being and time*, translated by J Stambaugh (State University of New York Press, Albany, 2010), p. 43.

to what is "ontically[3] nearest and familiar" this essay aims to appraise the way in which mortal beings, in their concerned historicity, draw near the history of their places as beings of care.[4]

In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger asserted that the "existential meaning" of human beings is 'care'.[5] Not only did he develop the ontological notion of care in order to arrive at a more appropriate understanding of what it means for mortals to live in the world, simultaneously, he also claimed that care grants access to the world of things. Essentially, it is "in taking care", that a mortal being "brings something near".[6] Care draws lived reality near. Spatially, this way of approaching reality implies that people do not inhabit spaces, but places; a lived nearness that the Norwegian architect and theorist, Christian Norberg-Schulz, described by referring to the common figure of speech "life takes place".[7] He saw this everyday phrase as confirmation of the intertwined nature of life and place. While the concept of place, as a concrete lived reality, point toward that which is nearest, it is care that draws life and place into nearness.

One way to investigate the establishment of this nearness is to delve into the cartographic history of a place. In isolation, maps embody a range of assumptions and developments. Instead of being an 'objective historical document' maps portray a moment of intimate nuances and hidden realities. When these moments are developed as a series of maps the isolated efforts of generations blend into a broader story; the historical life of the place. In a more general sense, they call towards and draw attention to that which is nearest. The aim of this essay is not to decipher moments near and dear to any particular individual or group, but in a general sense to illuminate the ontological nature of mortal care within the realm of cartography.

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3   The difference between beings (an ontic focus) and Being (an ontological focus) constitutes the 'ontological difference', which Heidegger saw as the original difference.

4   Heidegger developed an ontological appreciation of history as the happening of Being; a happening that mortal humans can "access" because they exist historically as care. In contrast to modern attempts at presenting history as a progression of events, Heidegger tried to engage with the possibility of drawing near history as temporal beings of care; beings having 'historicity'. Ultimately, he argued that Dasein "is not 'temporal' because it 'is in history,' … on the contrary, it exists and can exist historically only because it is temporal in the ground of its being" (M Heidegger, *Being and time*..., p. 376).

5   M Heidegger, *Being and time*..., p. 41.

6   M Heidegger, *Being and time*..., p. 107.

7   C Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture* (Rizzoli, New York, 1980), p. 6.

Methodology

Historical maps were principally sourced from the Free State Provincial Archive Repository (FSPAR), the South African National Museum, the Fire Station Museum (all in Bloemfontein) and the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM). While the original maps are valuable documents, they present some drawbacks:

- Maps are often not on the same scale and are kept at different locations – which hinder comparison.

- The majority of the maps referred to, especially the oldest ones, pay very little attention to the surrounding context.

- In some instances maps had to be composed by amalgamating various fragmentary maps or photographs. The 1936 map was laboriously pieced together from 108 photographs taken along somewhat erratic flight paths between October 1935 and January 1936. Similarly, the 1971 map was created by digitally merging twenty of the sixty-four maps traced from aerial surveys of Bloemfontein during 1971.

This is not the first attempt to compose such a series of maps. Throughout, I referred to WFS Senekal's study, in which he mapped land uses in Bloemfontein between 1900 and 1970.[8] There are also series by Kobus du Preez and Dr Diaan van der Westhuizen. All maps flirt in different ways with the fine line between inclusivity and clarity, but I believe that the following series – in terms of scope, contextual detail and graphic quality – makes a significant contribution.

It should again be pointed out that this essay cannot claim to investigate any particular concerns in depth, be that power, the influence of the landscape or urban planning approaches. More fundamentally, this series of maps is used to hint at the larger story evolving between concerned mortals and a particular inhabited place. Rather than focusing on individual maps, it is as a series that the twofold value of these maps become apparent. Firstly, and predominantly in this essay, they serve as a case within the larger phenomenological project of understanding that which is nearest as a life-care-place totality. Secondly,

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8   WFS Senekal, "Gedifferensieerde woonbuurtvorming binne die munisipaliteit van Bloemfontein: 'n faktorekologiese toepassingstudie" (ISEN, Bloemfontein, 1977). The maps presented in this paper originally formed part of the 27th Sophia Gray Memorial Lecture and Exhibition (2015), presented by Anton Roodt and organised by the Department of Architecture (UFS). Thus they were exhibited on a much larger scale than publication permits. Unfortunately, the published scale is too small for the land uses, derived from Senekal's work and indicated by a range of red hatches, to be distinguishable.

they provide a general background against which multifarious concerns and narratives, like politics and planning or even the role of the landscape, may be re-imagined in future.

Mapping Bloemfontein (1848-2015)

1848: Founding Bloemfontein

The 1848 map (Image 1) shows Bloemfontein as a pinprick of civilisation within the expanse of the Free State landscape. Bloemfontein was founded in 1846 by Major Henry Douglas Warden on the farm of Johan Nicolaas Brits. The Sotho called the area 'Mangaung'; the place of the leopard.[9] Warden settled on the same piece of land occupied by Brits. A site that today houses the Presidency in President Brand Street.

The siting and development of the city was influenced by four key topographical elements: Naval Hill, Signal Hill, Fort Hill in the south, and the dolerite ridge extending between Signal Hill and Fort Hill. This dolerite ridge created a natural barrier to water draining from the west and resulted in a *vlei* (marsh land) west of the town. In an essay in *The Friend*, JH Malan recalled "an old Griqua woman" named Ouma Grootjie (Great Grandmother) who told him that before Warden arrived in Bloemfontein there was "a wildernis of reeds (fluitjiesriet) in the spruit as far as the old willows, near Park Road, and the place was infested with lions".[10] The pressure that built up in this semi-dammed area fed the original *Bloem Fountain* that drained through a narrow gap in the dolerite ridge, and flowed eastward as *Bloemspruit*.

The ridge also constituted the backbone of Bloemfontein's defence strategy, and all three the forts were built along it. The first, with the goal of protecting the fountain, was built in 1846 and was called Fort Drury. The second, built in 1849, occupied a much more secure location at the top of Fort Hill. This Fort was named Queen's Fort and currently houses a Military Museum. Shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer/South African War there was an attempt to build a fort on top of Signal Hill, but eventually only the road to the fort and the foundations were completed. The settlement patterns depicted in these early maps show that residents tried to create an 'inside'. A place in which, as Gaston Bachelard put it, people may dwell as "half-open being"; as simultaneously visible and hidden.[11]

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9   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein...*, pp. 1-3.
10   JH Malan, "How did Bloemfontein get its name?", *The Friend*, 27 June 1929; FSPAR, ref: MBL 7/27.
11   G Bachelard, *The poetics of space*, translated by M Jolas (Beacon Press, Boston, 1994), p. 222.

Image 1: Bloemfontein and the surrounding topography in 1848

1: The original *Bloem Fontein*. 2: *Vlei* (hatched area). 3: Major Warden's Residency. 4: Fort Drury (c.1846-1861). 5: Naval Hill. 6: Signal Hill. 7: Fort Hill (Queen's Fort was built on this hill in 1849). 8: *Bloemspruit*
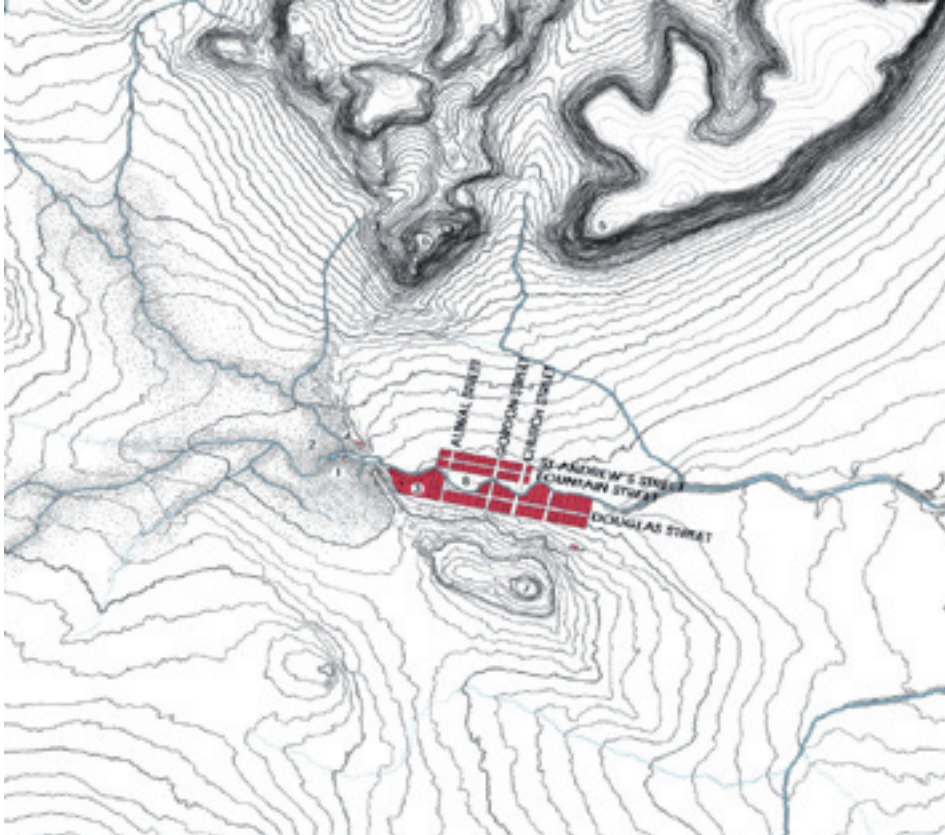
Source: Map by author. Based on the 1848 Map of Bloemfontein by AH Bain (FSPAR, Ref: 1/34) and the map by EN Roberts (dated 28/3/1950) "Physical features Surrounding the Bloem Fontein" (EN Roberts collection at the UFS Sasol Library, PV 522, File 2/1/3).

The early history of Bloemfontein is a story intimately connected with the availability of water. Thus the most immediate determining factor in street orientation was the flow of *Bloemspruit*. Interestingly, this arrangement resulted in what can only be described (in Roman terms) as a fortuitous *Cardo* and *Decumanus*; *Bloemspruit* creating the east-west axis, with the most prominent geological features, Naval Hill and Fort Hill, forming the north-south axis. Despite efforts to create an inside and the fortuitous natural order, Bloemfontein was still a precarious aggregation of small homesteads nestled between what some Free Staters sometimes might describe as mountains.

Following this story of water and hills, the 1850's saw Bloemfontein experiencing a short burst of rapid growth as people from the surroundings explored the chance of building a future there. However, the fledgling town still lacked the self-confidence to venture beyond the topographical inside.

1851-1869: The early years

The 1851 map (Image 2) shows the developing military presence at Queen's Fort and other military activities at the foot of Fort Hill. In aid of this military contingent a water channel was dug in parallel and to the south of *Bloemspruit*. Originally, Brits dug this channel to his house. After Warden arrived, Brits extended this channel to a military water tank that stood on the corner of St George's and East Burger Street.[12]

Another important development is the setting out of Market Square, which is today known as Hoffman Square. The square was dissected by the new axis created by Church Street (today OR Tambo Drive) culminating in the first Dutch Reformed Church. What started as a fortuitous *Cardo* and *Decumanus* had been made explicit. For the time being, Church Street extended only as far as the military camp at the foot of Fort Hill. Bloemfontein now had a more settled air about it; the church and the market square being on the north-south 'institutional axis' with the *watererwe* forming a residential east-west axis along *Bloemspruit*.

The initial impetus driving the growth of the settlement did not last long. In 1854 the embryonic town was hit by its first big political shock when the British abandoned the province and the Free State became a Boer republic. Generally, the settlement hesitantly extended to, and in some cases beyond, the edge of the topographical inside. Examples include the town dam created in the vicinity of what is today Parkweg Police Station and the steam mill erected in 1868 between Fort Drury and the Fountain.[13] In 1871 the Basotho War Memorial was erected on top of Fort Hill and in 1873 Church Street was extended to the top of the hill. However, the routes indicated on the 1890 "*Weilanden Plan*" shows that Church Street was not yet the 'iconic entrance' it later became. Instead, when people neared Bloemfontein from the south they entered through Bastion Square on the eastern side of Fort Hill, or President Square to the west.

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12   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein...*, p. 3.
13   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein...*, p. 43.

Image 2: Bloemfontein by 1850 with further expansion in 1867 (green lines) and 1869 (blue lines)

1: First Dutch Reformed Church and Church Square (completed 1852). 2: Dam used to separate fountain water (channel 8) and surface run-off from *Bloem Spruit*. 3: Market Square. 4: Queen's Fort. 5: Cape Corps Square. 6: Artillery stable. 7: Infantry Square (Officer's Quarters to the east). 8: Channel dug by J.N. Brits. After Warden settled in Bloemfontein, Brits extended the channel to a water tank (9) which supplied troops with water
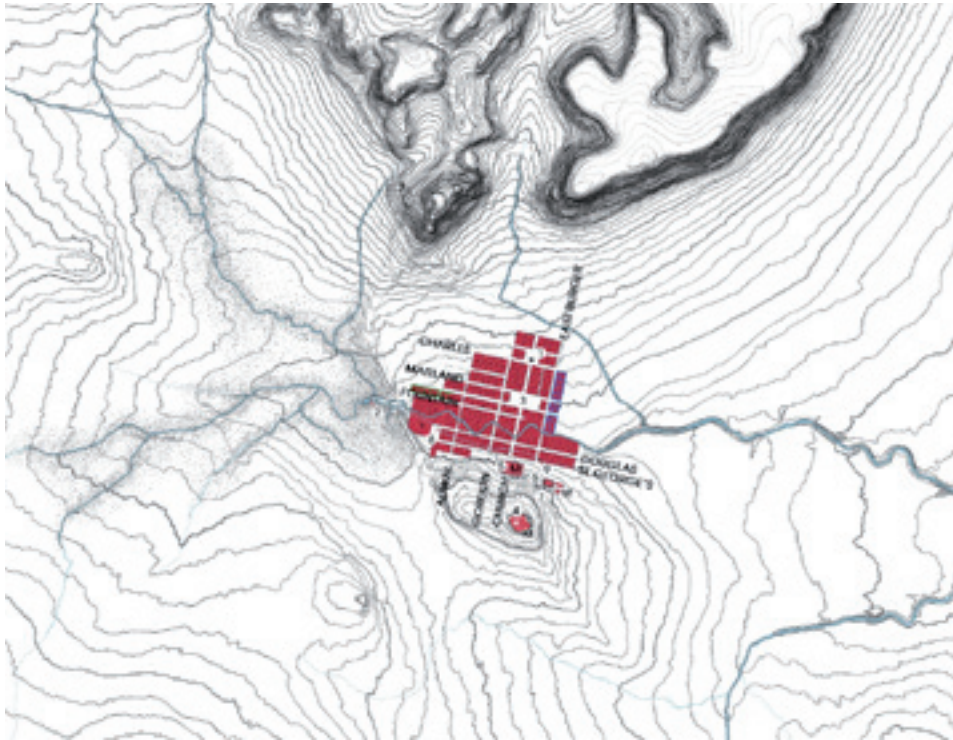
Source: Map by author. Based on the 1850 Map by AH Bain with additions by J Hopkins in 1867 and 1869 (FSPAR, Ref: 3/31).

1880: The republican years

The 1880 map (Image 3) embodies the years of republican civic pride as a story of three squares, three towers and one monument. Bloemfontein was becoming a "strong place".[14] The three squares – Warden, Market and Baumann Square – created a clear urban order figuratively intensified by the two towers of the *Tweetoring* (or twin spire) Church, which was finished in 1880, and the tower of the Government Building, finished in 1876. Between

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14   C Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci...*, p. 179.

the *Tweetoring* Church and the Basotho War Memorial the north-south axis had been transformed into a dignified vista. However, the map also shows the embryo of another north-south route growing in prominence. The choice to construct the Government Building (1876) in this street, and the construction projects completed in following years, would eventually transform President Brand Street into the most prestigious north-south route.

Image 3: Bloemfontein in 1880 (with the 1883 amendment of Queen's Fort indicated in green lines)

1: *Tweetoringkerk* (consecrated 1880) built on the site of the first D.R. Church. 2: After the flood of 1875 the "fountain was enclosed in a rectangular sunken building" (Roberts, 1950: 17). 3: Mill. 4: Basotho War Memorial (1871). 5: President Square. 6: Waaihoek location. 7: Lutheran Church. 8: Trinity Methodist Church. 9: Anglican Cathedral. 10: Catholic Chapel. 11: Cottage Hospital staffed by the sisters of St.Michael's Home (Schoeman, 1980: 81). 12: St Michael's Home which also functioned as St Michael's Girls' School. 13: Government Offices (1878). 14: The *Dames Instituut* which became known as Eunice Girls' School. 15: Greenhill Convent and School. 16: St Andrew's College. 17: Grey College. 18: Town Dam (c. 1870) (Roberts, 1950: 15)
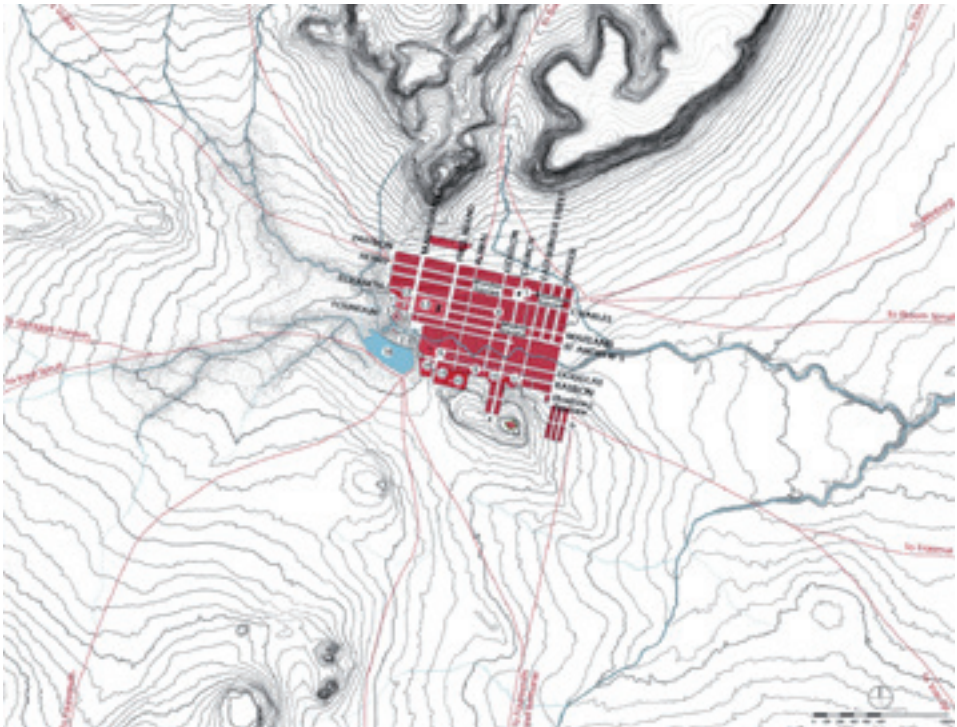
Source: 1880 "Plan of Bloemfontein" (drawn by JM Baumgartner; certified by G Baumann) with 1883 supplement (G Baumann) (FSPAR, ref: 2/158). Routes (red dashes) derived from the 1890 "General plan of Bloemfontein 'Weilanden'" (FSPAR, ref: 2/157).

Significantly, this is the first map showing Waaihoek; a native settlement located east of Fort Hill. It was first referred to in 1864, and by 1880 one can see a formal layout taking shape.[15] The contrasting stories of President Brand Street and Waaihoek speak of the wider development of segregation the city is currently trying to overcome. The evolution of these two spheres of influence is therefore particularly relevant, and will be discussed when referring to later maps.

The 1880 map shows that President Brand Street had not been extended beyond the *Spruit*, and that the seeds of the odd northern culmination had already been sown. At this time, President Brand Street and Waaihoek were very much at the outskirts of Bloemfontein. However, the institutional axis were already taking shape soon the Government Building was joined by the Presidency (1886) and the Fourth Raadzaal (1893).

Bloemfontein was still a small town within the surrounding expanse, but it was also a town that would soon lose its innocence. The South African War (1899-1902) placed Bloemfontein at the centre of one of the most devastating periods in the history of South Africa.

1904: The aftermath of the war and the flood

From 1880 to 1904 (Image 4) Bloemfontein developed far beyond the inside that used to confine it. After the war the British garrison was stationed northwest of the town at Tempe which created a great influx of people. There were also many who fled the wartime devastation of farms and sought a new life in the city. The three squares and the north-south axis of the republican city remained, and were augmented by the arrival of the Railroad in 1890. The building of the railway station at the eastern end of Maitland Street (today Charlotte Maxeke Street) created a strong east-west axis between itself and the government building in President Brand Street; an institutional axis that replaced the earlier prominence of *Bloemspruit*.

While Bloemfontein was expanding beyond its physical 'inside' the symbolic 'inside' was strengthened by institutional bookends to the city's spatial axes. In the expansive landscape the need to create insides endured in Bloemfontein's urban planning. Examples include: Gordon/West-Burger Street culminating

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15   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein...*, p. 35.

in the Anglican Cathedral, Green/Aliwal Street culminating in the Roman Catholic Church, East-Burger Street leading up to the Fort and President Brand Street being hemmed in by Somerset House in the north and the Asylum in the south. Despite these manmade interventions, the greatest change to Bloemfontein's urban fabric was caused by a natural disaster.

Image 4: Bloemfontein after the 1904 flood

1: Fourth Raadzaal (1893). 2: King's Park. 3: Victoria Park. 4: First quarry at Waaihoek. 5: Batho Location. 6: In 1889 the original water channel was replaced with "three inch iron piping, which followed the conduit's original course" (Roberts, 1950: 18). 7: Railway Station. 8: Statue of President Brand. 9: Before the outbreak of the South African War an effort was made to construct a fort on the hill north-west of town. After Bloemfontein fell to the British, a signalling post was erected on the hill; hence the name, Signal Hill (Schoeman, 1980: 140 & 162). 10: The British garrison was stationed at Tempe
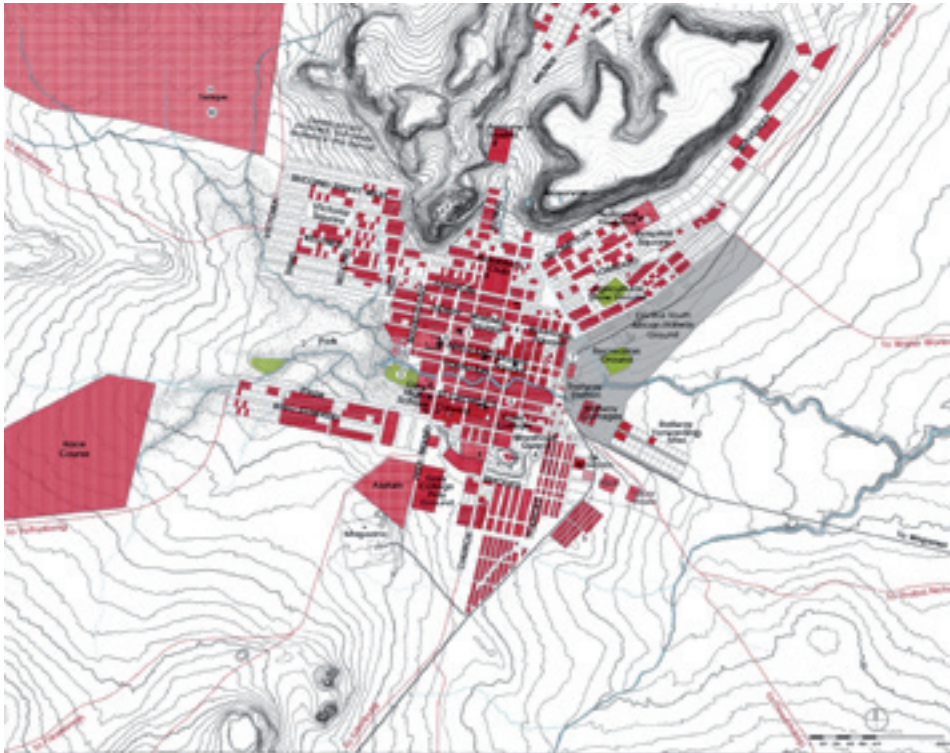
Source: Map by author. Based on the 1904 "General Plan of the City of Bloemfontein" by G Baumann (National Museum).

On 17 January 1904 *Bloemspruit* flooded its banks and destroyed a large portion of downtown Bloemfontein. During the flood the narrow opening through which *Bloemspruit* used to flow was substantially widened and

deepened.[16] The result was that the natural barrier that used to dam the *vlei* was punctured, and that the water table in these western areas was lowered. This made the development of King's Park, Grey College, Grey University College (today the University of the Free State) and the westward extension of Park Road feasible.

By 1904 President Brand Street was more densely populated, and at its north end it culminated in Somerset House. Towards the south the street was extended over the *Spruit*. In front of the Presidency, President Square was formalised, and in 1893 a statue of President Brand was erected in the middle of the road on the east-west axis of Maitland Street. Towards the south an asylum was added which would later become the Free State Psychiatric Complex.

In Waaihoek, the six initial blocks had expanded substantially. Significantly, Waaihoek found itself on the 'right' side of the tracks. In fact, there was only a street between Waaihoek and Bloemfontein. But that was much too close. In 1904 the flood provided the town council an excuse to extend the distance between Bloemfontein and Waaihoek and funnel the transition between the two – already hemmed in by the Fort and the railway – even further. The decision was taken to canalise *Bloemspruit*, and those in charge decided that the best place for a quarry was on the front porch of Waaihoek. The thirty stands closest to the quarry were expropriated, but still there were reports of people in Waaihoek who had boulders crashing through their roofs due to blasting activities.[17] In a sense, a natural disaster served as excuse for a human disaster and inaugurated the steady demise of Waaihoek.

1912: The birth of a union or colonialism come home?

From 1902 to 1912 (Image 5) Bloemfontein experienced rapid growth.[18] The central district of what was now the judicial capital of the Union of South Africa was surrounded by a series of "large land uses". These developments served as catalyst for residential expansion: Tempe, Grey College, the horse racing course, King's Park, the asylum, the agricultural showgrounds, the

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16   EN Roberts, *History of the Bloem Fontein* (1950), EN Roberts collection at the UFS Sasol Library, PV 522, File 2/1/3, p. 24.

17   FSPAR, Correspondence of the Native Affairs Branch, NAB 1 (1905), No. 79/a/05, "Expropriation of ground by municipality at Waaihoek, Petition by Committee".

18   K Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika tussen oorlog en unie, 1902-1910* (Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 2015), p. 168.

National Women's Memorial site, Queen's Fort and the railway grounds to the east. Naval Hill and Signal Hill towards the north completed the new enclosure.

Image 5: Bloemfontein in 1912

1: Wesleyan Church (1904). 2: Wesleyan School (1904). 3: St Patrick's Church (1908-1916, consecrated in 1923) (Schoeman, 1980: 220). 4: St Philip's Church (1893) and School (1895) originally intended for the coloured community (Schoeman, 1980: 132). 5: Second Waaihoek quarry. 6: Main Building of Grey College. 7: Main Building of the University of the Free State
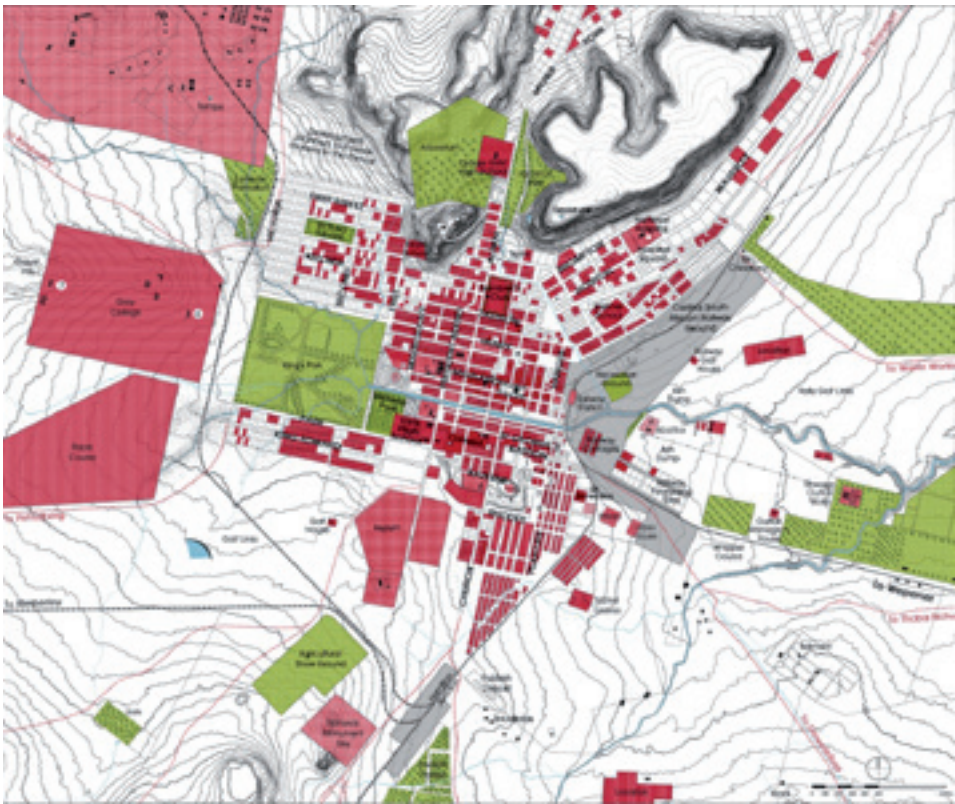
Source: Map by author. Based on the 1912 "General Plan of the Bloemfontein Town Commonage" by G Baumann (Bloemfontein Fire Station Museum).

The most important new developments include the fact that Warden Square was filled with a library and museum and the construction of the Arthur Nathan swimming pool at the northern end of East-Burger Street. Furthermore, the axis of St Andrews Street was extended (as King's Way) through King's Park all the way to the main building of what would become the University of the Free State. In President Brand Street there was the addition of the High

Court in 1906, and the Government Building, which burnt down in 1908, was rebuilt with the tower even higher than before.[19]

In Waaihoek a second quarry was dug north of the original. It is also important to mention the three influential churches of Waaihoek: St Philip's Church and School built in the 1890's southeast of Fort Hill, St Patrick's Church, on which construction was started in 1908 to the east of Fort Hill, and the Wesleyan Church and School (north of St Patrick's) which was completed in 1904. It was in the school building of the Wesleyan Church that, on 8 January 1912, the African National Congress (ANC) was founded.[20] The fact that this was, until recently, a forgotten piece of information, has probably contributed to the miraculous survival of this building.[21]

1936: Gardening and the destruction of Waaihoek

The most striking revelation of the 1936 map/aerial photograph (Image 6) is the opulence and formal rigour of the gardens. From the splendour that King's Park must have been to the various institutional and private gardens, Bloemfontein was interspersed with a wide array of geometrically organised botanical wonder. However, there is also a more sinister 'absence' which stands as accuser against this imperious way of enforcing order.

By 1920, in line with the "universally accepted principle of segregation", the town council decided to develop "the South-Eastern quarter of the town, bounded roughly by the Natal line and the Cape line" into a "hygienic Native township".[22] This signalled the beginnings of Batho location, which was seen by authorities as a more appropriate place to house 'labourers' than Waaihoek. In 1924, three of the six original blocks of Waaihoek were demolished in order to construct a new power station. In the following years the systematic destruction of Waaihoek began in earnest. No further building work was allowed and any new additions were immediately demolished. When owners died or decided to sell their homes to the municipality, these homes were also demolished. In 1941 the last inhabitants of Waaihoek were relocated to

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19 K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein … ,* p. 193.

20 Originally, the movement was known as the "South African Native Congress" (K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein … ,* p. 225-226).

21 For more on the rediscovery of this building see J Haasbroek, "Founding venue of the African National Congress (1912): Wesleyan School, Fort Street, Waaihoek, Bloemfontein", *Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum Bloemfontein*, 18(7), November 2002, , pp.125-160.

22 Mayor's Minute for the year ending 31st March 1920, p. 8, FSPAR, ref: MBL 3/1/19.

Batho.[23] The authorities had wiped Waaihoek from the face of the earth.

Image 6: Bloemfontein in 1936

1: Wesleyan Church. 2: Wesleyan School. 3: St Patrick's Church. 4: St Philip's Church. 5: Quarry indicated on the 1912 map. The western edge of this quarry is still visible. 6: Quarry indicated on the 1904 map. 7: The effects of the systematic razing of Waaihoek location. 8: Bowling green and parkland. Today the sprawling Loch Logan shopping mall. 9: Second Power Station

Source: 108 uncatalogued aerial photographs taken between October 1935 and January 1936. The photographs were found in folder marked "Aerial Survey 1935 BFN" and forms part of the collection of the FSPAR. These photographs were digitally 'stitched' together and 'warped'.

In contrast, during the 1920s and 1930s the institutional splendour of President Brand Street reached its zenith. The Appeal Court was added in 1929, the fire station in 1933 and the City Hall in 1936. Marks of prosperity that make the fate of Waaihoek – the desolate stretch of land southeast of the Fort – seem all the more callous. The systematic destruction would continue. In 1953 St Patrick's Church was demolished in order to make way for a cooling

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23   K Schoeman, *Bloemfontein...*, p. 285.

tower, and the Waaihoek Church and School was converted into businesses. To add insult to injury, Waaihoek was replaced with a neo-classical *Beaux Art* urban layout, with Rhodes Avenue cutting through the heart of it.

1971-2015: The fraying of the urban fabric and efforts at re-integration

The years between 1936 and 1971 were characterised by a westward shift in the institutional centre of the town towards Markgraaff Street which housed new additions like the HF Verwoerd Building (now OR Tambo House), the Civic Theatre and the Free State Stadium. In following years there would also be the Bram Fischer Building, the CR Swart Building (now the Fidel Castro Building), and the Sand du Plessis Theatre.

Image 7: 1971 Map of Bloemfontein

1: The *Beaux Arts* layout that replaced Waaihoek in the 1940's. 2: St Patrick's Church was demolished (c. 1953) to build cooling towers for the new power station

Source: The author compiled this map from a series of 64 maps traced from aerial surveys (conducted 23-25 November 1971). Information obtained from the MMM Drawing Office. The map contains information selected from 20 of these maps and were edited for the aim of this study.

In President Brand Street another government building was built along with Hertzog Square to the north of the Fourth Raadzaal. It is a sign of grave functionalist neglect that the demolition of Somerset House in the 1960's was not seen as an opportunity to provide President Brand Street with a fitting institutional culmination. Instead, the most prominent historical street of Bloemfontein was ineptly 'extended' by adding an oddly curving bypass that merely facilitated the creation of one way traffic flows.[24]

2015-2016: Re-writing history through efforts of re-integration

The 2015 map shows similar urban misfortunes and illustrates the systematic weakening and dissolution of the historic urban fabric and ordering systems of Bloemfontein at the hands of market forces and traffic efficiencies. Green spaces, like Victoria Park, the eastern portion of Victoria Square, the area between Springbok Park and King's Park, the north-eastern corner of King's Park and the whole southern portion of King's Park between Att Horak Street and Park Road, decimated in the name of progress, and suburbs, like Langenhovenpark, Mandela View, Woodland Hills and the developments around Northridge Mall[25] seeking solace in ever-more far-flung gated locations.

On the positive side, there are many efforts at re-integrating that which was once forcibly separated on political grounds. In Waaihoek the Wesleyan School has been restored and other projects like the statue of Nelson Mandela and the planned surrounding park on Naval Hill offer scant, but bright, glimpses of how the city may be able to reclaim lost things. While President Brand Street is still without a meaningful northern culmination, there have been appropriate additions like the new building for the Department of Public Works, which responds empathetically to the historical spatiality, materiality and figural typologies of the street.

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24 Until the 1960s the vista up President Brand Street culminated in Somerset House on erf 602. Erf 603, east of Somerset House, was set out as a triangle which first appears on the 1880 map. The reason for the shape of the erf has not been ascertained, but it seems plausible that the idea was to provide a dignified culmination to the street as was customary in Bloemfontein (e.g. the *Tweetoring* Church, the Train Station, the Government Building and others). This state of affairs is still visible on the 1971 map although Somerset House had by now been demolished. The new bypass (showed in the 2015 map) does not pass east of erf 603 as in the past, but now cuts through erf 602; the erf that was supposed to house a building that could 'bookend' the street.

25 The neighbourhoods mentioned are beyond the borders of this series of maps.

However, it seems clear that this city often fails to think creatively when it comes to matters of built heritage. For instance, observe the fragmentation and systematic destruction of King's Park. One shudders to think of the office blocks and shopping mall that will probably cover the area once the zoo is banished to the outskirts of town. Similarly, the fragmentation of Rambler's Club shows all the signs of the unfortunate cycle which has played itself out many times before. A systematic process of first strangling old buildings and then demolishing them (since they no longer have a 'heritage context') is evident in the 2015 demolition of the Reformed Church on the corner of Zastron Street and Wes-Burger. The cleared area still lies fallow (2016).

Image 8: Bloemfontein in 2015
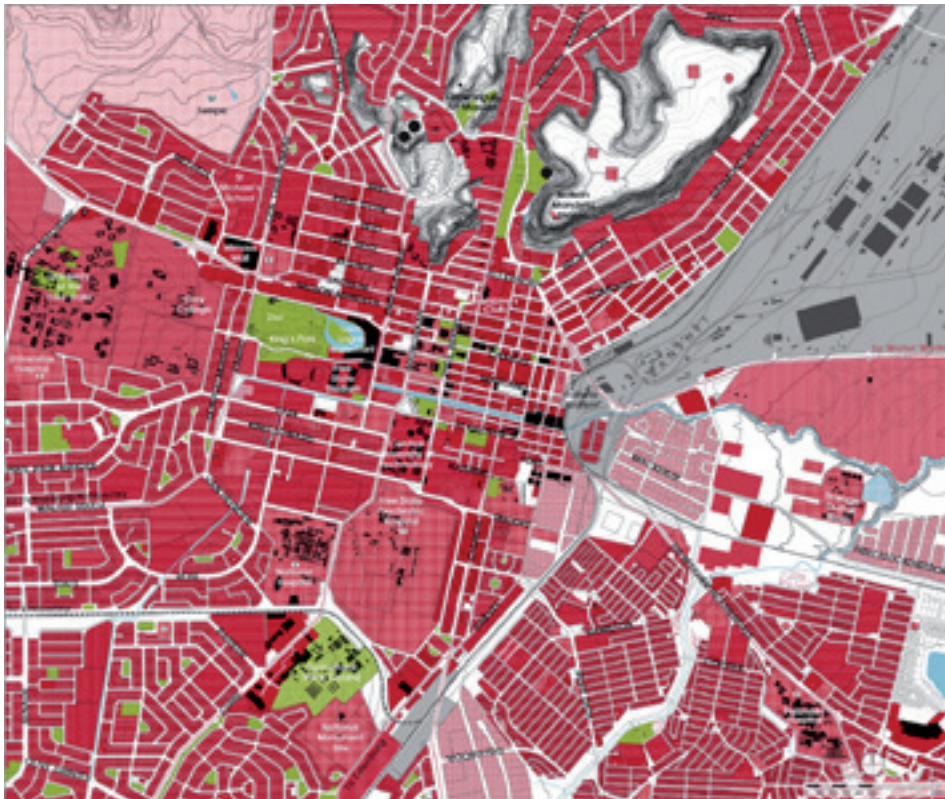
Source: Map by author. 2015 GIS information provided by MMM; 2015 cadastral map provided by MMM; "Bloemfontein", 29°08'21" and 26°13'45". Google Earth. 04/06/2015. Accessed on 06/08/2015.

This is, of course, not a new malady. Think of the moving of the Basotho War Memorial, from where it proudly stood etched against the sky at the

top of Church Street to an obscure overgrown patch next to the Fort. Or consider the dissolution of the St Andrew's Street/King's Way axis which used to culminate in the Main Building of the University of the Free State. A road closed. A mall extended. A roadway made more efficient. But when one think of all Bloemfontein has lost? It seems a bit dispiriting. That, however, alludes to the point that this essay is trying to make. On the one hand this series of maps traces a temporal progression that very precisely portrays what has happened in this small city. But this progressive order is also an illusion.

These maps seem to illustrate the progression of what Norberg-Schulz (following his mentor, the Swiss architectural historian, Sigfried Giedion) understood as "continuity and change".[26] Amid the flux of time, a place is imbued with a guiding spirit that endures. However, such a stance has its own pitfalls. Most significantly, it neglects the countless moments of mortal ecstasy, foolishness, creativity and desperation; choices upon choices upon concerns which maps will never be able to portray in a visual sense. Acknowledging these moments will grant insight into our lived care and reveal the way people appreciate places in unique and hard to decipher ways. Yet the concept of continuity and change has the capacity to grasp and celebrate the enduring topological order, light quality and built heritage that explain the concrete reality of places. On the one side "history", on the other, what Heidegger called our concerned "historicity". In contrast to studying a series of events, historicity aims to engage with the way people live as beings of care; the lived situation which makes something like mankind's grasp of history possible.[27] Instead of only viewing these maps as a series constituted through continuity and change, it is also necessary to look into the ecstatic moments secured in these maps in order to see the mortal engaged in moments of significance.

That which is nearest – A consideration

The fact that people appreciate their places implies that they are somehow "open" (or predisposed) towards such meaningful relationships. People are moved by places. Dwellers draw near places and they matter to them. Lost urban opportunities in Bloemfontein can dispirit later generations. These are instances which reveal people as beings of care or, to use Heidegger's German

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26 C Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci...*, p. 32.
27 M Heidegger, *Being and time*, translated by J Stambaugh, (State University of New York Press, Albany, 2010), pp. 373-377.

word, '*Sorge*'. '*Sorge*' denotes both the capacity to care as well as the way in which people are fundamentally concerned about their existence. Care makes the possibility of something like history, memory and meaning accessible.

Fundamentally, it is most appropriate to think of mortal spatio-temporal existence as a life-care-place totality; a situation in which lived space is best understood as place, and lived time is best understood as care. This kind of thinking leaves room for the continuity and change of concrete places between earth and sky, while acknowledging the concerned ecstatic moments of mortal life between birth and death and divine. Works of architecture and planning need to acknowledge the way in which people ultimately appropriate and 'measure' their places as regions of concern.

It is very fitting that we speak of the environment as an *omgewing* (literally translated from Afrikaans as "caring" if the "wing" is not seriously considered).[28] Ultimately, the environment is that lived reality which is our concern. Care draws life and place into contiguity. It is this life-care-place totality which is nearest. Under the sway of that which is nearest, life becomes most real when saturated with care, and place becomes most meaningful as a region of concern.

This reciprocity is evident in the way early maps of Bloemfontein are filled with stories of water. Later maps tell of the growing military presence and the civic pride of the Boer republic translated into an order-infused urbanity. Maps also reveal the uncomfortable dualities of 1936 Bloemfontein; cultivation of gardens amid the destruction of homes. And people may be wearied by the larger forces of efficiency that seem to have such a firm grip on the current reality.

Human life takes place as care in places delimited by care, and works of architecture and planning have the capacity and obligation to care-fully shelter and dignify our emplaced care. Of course, there are economic, political, material and technical constraints, but fundamentally, building is an act of care which takes place within a region of concern. Amid the precariousness and poetics of mortal being-in-the-world, works of architecture and planning can most appropriately be understood as the concerned and care-infused building of that which is nearest.

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28   The Afrikaans word alludes to the verb '*omgee*' which implies being concerned about something.

Acknowledgements