**Historical Victoria & Alfred Waterfront & Cape Town’s link to the sea**

The charter agreement between the V&A Waterfront (Pty) Ltd and the City of Cape Town started with a simple goal: “To make the V&A Waterfront a very special place for all Capetonians.”

Before the Waterfront

Cape Town grew at a rapid clip in the years spread across the 16th and 17th centuries, when traders from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) arrived. They came in search of a safe anchorage. Before a safe anchorage could be found, the Dutch authorities knew a man-made harbour had to be built. Cost was a major reason for this was the need for a solid rock base from which a harbour could be constructed. It had been discovered by Simon van der Stel in 1687 and was aptly named ‘Tafel Baay’ – Table Bay.

The first step towards protecting ships against the harsh winter weather and the dreaded northwester, which threatened them if they were stuck at sea for too long, was to provide them with an anchorage place to port. In 1689, the Dutch VOC established a fort at the mouth of the Adderley River. By 1692, the Portuguese had also arrived and built their own fort on the site of the present-day Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. The first structures built around Table Bay during both Dutch and British rule; this gave birth to the port city of Cape Town.

Under British Rule

The Cape was the first British penal settlement, with the site of the present-day Cape Town being chosen by the British authorities in 1795. The British prison was known as the Breakwater Prison, and was located at the mouth of the Adderley River. It was built with blood, sweat and tears. The authorities realised that it would be too expensive to hire labour so they turned to convict labour. The first convicts were housed in a large wooden pier that was built in 1857. The prison was not a success, and it was only after the South African War (1901) that it was decided to close it and use the site for the V&A Waterfront. The prison was later converted into a housing estate.

The Breakwater was turned into a fish market in 1860, and the V&A Waterfront was only established in 1991, when the site was redeveloped. It was closed to the public in 2004, and the buildings were renovated and restored. The site now serves as a cultural and historical landmark.

**GATEWAY**

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The story of the Fish Market can be traced back to 1882 and the first Fish Market in Cape Town was located at the mouth of the Adderley River. The market was established in 1882, and was managed by the Fish Market Board. It was the first Fish Market in South Africa to be managed by a municipal body.

In 1882, the Fish Market Board was established, and its first meeting was held on 12 April 1882. The Board was responsible for managing the Fish Market, and it was the first Fish Market in South Africa to be managed by a municipal body.

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The Victorian era saw a period of rapid change, brought about by technological advancements and industrialization. The construction of the Ship Canal at Iimifrac in 1882 significantly reduced the size of the ships that could use the Cape Harbour, necessitating the development of a new harbour to cater for larger vessels. This led to the construction of the Victoria and Alfred Harbour in 1885.

The harbour was designed by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George De la Beche, who was also responsible for the design of the Cape Town Waterfront. The harbour was built on a man-made island, with the ship canal connecting the new harbour to the old one.

The harbour was used for a variety of purposes, including shipping, industry, and entertainment. The old millwright’s saw was the site of the demolition of the pier, the loss of Roggebaai and Woodstock. This area was redeveloped in the mid-19th century, with the prominent buildings being the Island Dock and the Robinson Dry Dock.

The harbour was also the site of the Demolition Dock, where ships were broken up for scrap. The last ship to be broken up in the harbour was theSS Nomadic. The dock was later converted into a Diwan and is now part of the V&A Harbour.

The harbour was also home to a number of other important buildings, including the Cape Royal Observatory, which was used to monitor the ships’ movements, and the Cape Town Post Office, which handled the mail for the Far East.

With the growth of tourism in the 1980s and 1990s, the harbour was redeveloped into a popular tourist destination. The old workshops and warehouses were converted into shops, restaurants, and galleries, and the harbour was transformed into a vibrant and bustling area.

In 1996, the V&A Harbour was sold to the Transnet Pension Fund, which undertook a major redevelopment program. The old industrial buildings were converted into offices, restaurants, and shops, and the harbour was transformed into a modern and contemporary destination.

Today, the V&A Harbour is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Cape Town, with over 10 million visitors a year. It is home to a variety of restaurants, shops, and galleries, and is a popular spot for families and tourists alike.

For More Information

http://www.waterfront.co.za

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