

STEENBRAS DAM – Faithful supplier of water & power

It was consulting engineer Thomas Stewart who first investigated possible dam sites in the Steenbras River in the late 1800s for water supply to the municipalities of Mowbray and Rondebosch. It was only when seven municipalities amalgamated in 1913 to form the Greater Cape Town, however, that the Steenbras Dam was constructed. Completed in 1921 the

first Steenbras Dam, set against the slopes of the Hottentots Holland mountains, was a modest masonry structure, impounding 27 000 m³ behind an 8-m high wall. In 1916, the dam was raised by 13 m to meet the increased demand for water in the City. The entire original structure was enveloped in the new dam wall, which increased the capacity of the reservoir by some 60%. In

the 1970s, Steenbras Dam became part of the first pumped storage scheme in the country. The dam, now known as Lower Steenbras Dam, is used as the lower dam, with the Upper Steenbras Dam constructed in 1977.

Source: In the Footsteps of Giants – Exploring the History of South Africa's Large Dams



City of Cape Town

The two Steenbras dams as seen from the air.