

PRETORIA NEW STATION

COMPLETED FOR TRAFFIC

The construction of a new station at Pretoria was decided upon by the Transvaal Government in 1909, and the foundation stone was laid by the Hon. H. C. Hull early in the following year. The site is a happy one, as the building terminates a vista of nearly a mile through Market Street and Church Square to the valley and distant hills on the north.

The building, of which Mr. Herbert Baker is the architect, is three stories in height; built on the outside entirely of Flintpan (a sandstone from the Orange Free State). The roof is covered with red "Italian" tiles manufactured at Vereeniging, on the Vaal River (this is the first time these tiles have been used on a public building in South Africa), crowned by a central clock tower also of stone. The dominant architectural notes are the arched porte cochere to the main entrance on the ground floor, with a long arcaded loggia on either side, and the deeply recessed colonnaded features in the centre of the three principal façades. The deep overhanging eaves protect the walls and windows from sun and rain. The west elevation contains covered main exit porch with granite columns.

The railway enters Pretoria by a curve through a deep valley, and the most difficult part of the problem before the engineers and the architect lay in the fact that the site necessitated the railway lines coming into the station at an angle of thirty degrees, with the axis of Market Street, which leads from the station to the principal square of the town. The

greater number of lines coming to Pretoria from Cape Colony, Natal, and Delagoa Bay are all terminals, but there is one through line to Pietersburg in the north. These facts dictated the plan of the building, which consists of the main entrance front, at right angles to the axis of Market Street, with the two wings on either side at an angle of sixty degrees with the main front of the building. Thus the terminal lines run into the centre of the building parallel with the eastern wing, while the through-going northern line runs past the end of the western wing.

There is no big roof spanning all the lines, it being thought necessary to have covers over the narrow platforms only which run out to a distance of about eight hundred feet, and no roofs actually over the railway tracks. Consequently, the dominant feature of a colossal arch, which has dictated the external architectural treatment of a great many famous railway stations, such as King's Cross, in London, and the Gare du Nord in Paris, did not exist in this case. The only features which the outside of this building could express were the arched porte cochere, the big windows of the booking hall running up to two stories in height, and the long range of arches to the entrance arcade, protecting from the weather the luggage and waiting rooms on either side. Above these the building consists of two floors divided into offices, which are honestly expressed on the outside.

As the railway tracks are not embraced in the scheme of roofing, it was not necessary to have a big iron-and-glass roof over the inner or platform hall. Such a roof, moreover, was considered very unsuitable

to the climate of Portona, and would only convey an impression of heat and glare. Therefore, the architect endeavored to give expression in the big hall to a cool, shady, and inviting welcome to those arriving at Portona. The roof of this hall is of reinforced concrete, carried on concrete columns with granite bases, and contains no horizontal lighting. Ventilation and lighting are mainly obtained by a high arched and vaulted clerestory over the centre of the hall, with high side vertical lights protected from the rays of the sun.

The main entrance to the station is right opposite Market Street through the porte cochere and across the loggia into a large entrance or ticket hall fifty-seven feet long, the walls of which are faced with red Warrumbungle sandstone, and the roof is domed-shaped in reinforced concrete and supported by four large columns of an excellent local red granite, used here for the first time. This entrance hall is separated from the zone or platform hall of the same size (having a similar lighting track), by the low screen of the booking office only, which is thus most conveniently placed and approachable from both sides. It contains, besides a guards' and examiners' room, a large fireproof safe.

To the left of the entrance hall, and accessible from it, are two large waiting rooms, one for the general public, and the other (with lavatory accommodation and retiring room in connection with it) is the ladies' first-class waiting room. The walls of these rooms are faced with a simple and inexpensive marble, used mainly with the utilitarian object of cleanliness. The cost of this cheap marble is little more than that of teak or oak paneling, and the superiority of a material which is clean, cool, and fireproof cannot be exaggerated. The ceilings are grained in concrete. They, in common with the ladies' second-class waiting room (which is similarly treated, but with local slate instead of marble on the walls), are all served by one tea-room, thus reducing the cost of service and administration to a minimum.

The dining-room, serving, and bar have been placed in the east wing, with access from the outside road as well as from the platform, thus ensuring best possible ventilation and the utmost convenience. The dining-room is a large room with green marble-covered walls and grained plaster ceiling, which should be extremely effective as well as a great aid and incentive to cleanliness. In fact, the general effect that the internal finish of the station should produce will be that of space and coolness.

The whole of the main block to the right of the entrance hall has been given over to the baggage and parcels department, and for inward baggage is directly accessible to the public from the loggia, and from the main exit wing for outward baggage. It is connected by lift to large storage in the basement, and to similar accommodation in a mezzanine floor for the parcels department; the whole administered from a large clerks' office in the corner of the building. A mezzanine floor is also utilized for stores rooms and chef's offices in connection with the dining-room. In the basement accommodation has been provided for a large number of bicycles, with access by a sloping subway both from the platform and from the outside roadway.

Main Exit.

The main exit discharges in the centre of the west elevation, and provision has been made in setting out the approach to the station for accommodation for cabs opposite the exit. The remainder of the west wing on the ground floor is occupied by station-master's and inspectors' offices, with access to platform and accommodation for their staff; also by a post office and provision for incoming and outgoing mails, and a large store for bedding, linen, etc., in use on the trains.

At a right angle to this west wing, well removed from the main platforms, it is intended to build a covered platform for natives with separate entrance and lavatory accommodation; a store is provided for

food and blankets, etc., which will be a great convenience to natives in their long waits between trains. The whole of the platform floors and the surrounding walls, dado high, are to be lined with local slate. These slate dados make it possible to wash out the platforms with a hose without spoiling the walls. There are permanent book and fruit stalls in the centre of the platform.

Provision has been made in recessed panels on the walls for railway notices and advertisements, and it is hoped thereby to restrict somewhat—at least in the station buildings proper—indiscriminate placarding with hideous posters. Advertisers will, it is hoped, realise the value of small, neat advertisements placed in new surroundings.

The two upper floors above are reached from a principal staircase in the north-east corner of the building with access from the main loggia; and there is also an auxiliary service staircase in each of the wings. The rooms and corridors on the first and second floors are both well lighted and ventilated, and will provide accommodation for at least two Government departments. The building is of fireproof construction throughout, the floors and ceilings being of concrete, reinforced with wire-woven fabric.

The whole of the furniture for dining and waiting rooms, etc., has, as far as possible, been made of South African woods by Messrs. Garney and Co., of Johannesburg. The contractors for the whole building were Messrs. Prentice and Mackie, of Pretoria.

It is intended to lay out a considerable portion of the ground in front of the station with formal avenues, fountains, grass lawns, combined with ample space for the approach of the new electric tramway service and all wheel traffic.

The Railway Workshops and Staff.

The Mechanical Department of the South African Railways is controlled from Pretoria, where the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. D. A. Hendrie, is stationed, governing the works at Pretoria, Durban, Salt River, Bloemfontein, Uitenhage, and East London, each of which is under the supervision of a mechanical engineer directly responsible to the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Particular care is exercised in training up the Colonial-born youths in the various trades, and technical education is encouraged to a very great extent amongst the apprentices in all the large centres, attendances at the night classes being in many cases compulsory and fees for instruction remitted to students showing special aptitude. The Pretoria workshops are controlled by Mr. G. G. Elliott, mechanical engineer.

SYMBOLICAL STATUARY.

For the Sir Alfred Jones Memorial Committee, Liverpool, Sir George Frampton, R.A., has prepared designs for a group of symbolical statuary, and these have been accepted. The question of a suitable site is still under discussion. The Liverpool Architectural Society recommends that the approaches to the pier-head should be laid out in such a manner as to afford sites for this and other works of monumental statuary, and this suggestion has commended itself to the favour of the memorial committee. It remains now to be seen what attitude the Corporation of Liverpool will take towards the proposal.