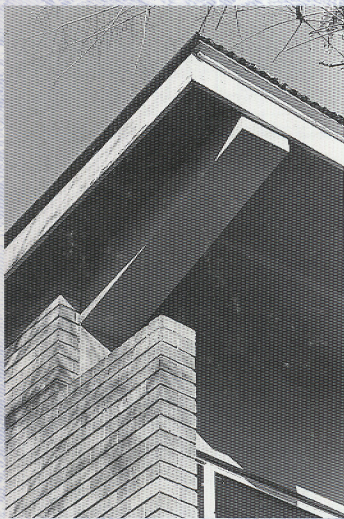


building relates more to the beaux-arts of art deco than to the modernist buildings then rising in the suburb of Brooklyn just down the road.

Moerdyk had received his first private commission in 1917 to design the Dutch Reformed Church in Bothaville, Orange Free State. More than eighty such commissions would follow, ranging from the Cape to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and from South West Africa (now Namibia) to the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). This gave Moerdyk the opportunity to foster an ecclesiastical style for the Afrikaans churches, an ambition reflected as early as 1919 in his privately published booklet on church design, *Kerkbou vir Suid-Afrika*. Interestingly, he eschewed overt symbolism in his churches, whereas his secular shrines to the volk and its accomplishments – the Merensky Library, the Voortrekker Monument, the Reserve Bank in Bloemfontein – are symbolically laden.

Moerdyk has been spurned by South African architectural history, a trend which started even before his death. His obituary in the *South African Architectural Record* was two lines long.³



3 Building in brick

The brick aesthetic has come to characterize the buildings of Pretoria and manifests in all its stylistic variants, from early Public Works Department projects of the South African Republic, through the prevalent modernist work, which shows the expressionist influences of the Amsterdam School, to the current polychromatic postmodern revivals.

For the Boer pioneers, fired-brick dwellings lay at the end of a long progression – from tented wagons and reed *scherm*s (mere screens in the veld copied from indigenous example), to wattle and daub and stone masonry. Brick houses finally proclaimed that the newcomers were permanently settled and in possession of the land.

The Public Works Department originated the brick tradition in Pretoria. The Dutch architects imported by Kruger were well versed in brick architecture, as is demonstrated by such buildings as the *Nederlandsche Bank* on Church Square by Sytze Wopkes Wierda. Looking further back, the tradition and the institution of public works itself owe much to the Prussian state, and specifically to the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

In 1826 Schinkel visited Britain, where the novel construction of industrial buildings astonished him, especially the use of brick on a monumental scale. Industrialization had seemed to him to threaten the very existence of architecture as the art of building within society. He had dreamed of