

RESTORICA

SUMMER 1991 SOMER



- *Conservation priorities of cultural groups in SA*
- *The Civic Spine controversy in perspective*
- *We need to see the present with hindsight*
- *Die media en bewaring*



Thomas Bowler: Botanical Gardens. 1865. Watercolour. 45,7 x 30,5 cm.

An art collection of this size is more than a cultural asset to the community, it is an investment in the future.

Thomas William Bowler is one of South Africa's top pictorial historians, having recorded the people and events of the Cape of Good Hope in the early and mid-nineteenth century. He also travelled extensively, depicting the local scenes of the Eastern and Western Cape and Natal.

The site of his Wale Street studio forms part of Metropolitan Life's head office. The company wanted to retain this link with Bowler by collecting his paintings – today the collection comprises 74 of Bowler's works, making it one of the largest and most valuable private collections in South Africa. The public are given the opportunity to view Bowler's work when the collection is exhibited at galleries around the country.

We at Metropolitan Life see the Bowler collection as an inestimable cultural asset, held in the interests of the people of South Africa. What better investment in the future?



Dynamic answers for real people.

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Stigting Simon van der Stel Foundation

*Ingelyfde Vereniging sonder winsoogmerk ·
Incorporated Association not for gain.*

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Soos water vir die dorre aarde ... Só bring Sanlam se beleggings voorspoed en groei.

Kom ons staan 'n oomblik stil en dink na oor die reën.

Kyk hoe miljoene druppels saamval tot stroompies ... en stroompies saamvloei tot 'n rivier ... wat uitloop in 'n dam ... hoop, groei en nuwe lewe ...

'n Lewende les wat al Sanlam se werksaamhede rig van ons in 1918 tot stand gekom het. Want deur die jare het die miljoene hydraes van ons poliseienaars opgedam tot 'n magtige bron van gemoedsrus oor môre ... van vooruitgang en voorspoed.

Wat Sanlam anders maak as die meeste ander maatskappye. Ons is immers 'n onderlinge maatskappy – sonder enige aandeelhouders. Ons poliseienaars is ons lede en ons mede-eienaars. Net aan hulle behoort Sanlam. En net hulle deel in die winste.

Maar 'n belegging by Sanlam beteken ook 'n belegging in ons land, ons mense, ons toekoms. Want ons rivier van fondse vloei dwarsdeur ons land – tot voordeel van almal wat hier woon. Daarom dra Sanlam vandag by tot groei in bykans elke faset van ons ekonomie. Deur ondernemings te vestig en uit te bou, welvaart te skep – en honderde duisende

werkgeleenthede.

Ons lei water na vrugbare aarde ... en ook waar daar dors is. Só ondersteun ons meer as 120 universiteite, teknikons en kolleges in Suider-Afrika wat ons jeug toerus vir die pad vorentoe. Ons help ook om die wêreld van geletterdheid te ontsluit vir hulle wat nog in die duister leef.

Daarby is ons groep een van die grootste beleggers in die Kleinsake-ontwikkelingskorporasie om belowende entrepreneurs op die been te help.

Ons lewer ook 'n kragtige bydrae om die behuisingsnood te verlig – deur onder meer 'n waarborgfonds wat mense met 'n lae inkomste in staat stel om huislenings te bekom.

Boonop onderskraag ons sowat 30 welsynsorganisasies. En ons bevorder mediese navorsing, kulturele bedrywighede, natuurbewaring, kuns, letterkunde, sport en opleiding ...

Daarom is 'n Sanlam-polis die simbool van ons strewe om u toekoms doeltreffend te verseker – en ook die toekoms van ons land en al sy mense.

Wat 'n mens weer laat dink aan die reën.



Sanlam

Waar u toekoms tel

Redakteursnota

DIE meeste Suid-Afrikaners is diep bewus daarvan dat Suid-Afrika die afgelope twee jaar waarskynlik aan meer en ingrypende veranderings blootgestel is as in enige ander stadium van die land se geskiedenis. Dié snelvuur van verandering het druk bespreking onder Suid-Afrikaners uitgelok. Onsekerheid oor groot en draende waardes wat tot in die hart van menswees gryp, heers oor 'n wye front en word feitlik daaglik gedebatteer.

Terwyl die onderhandelingsproses die politieke gesprek oorheers, sentreer besprekingspunte in kultuur- en bewaringskringe/organisasies om die toekoms van kultuurhistoriese bewaring in Suid-Afrika en hoe bewaring dinamies deel van 'n nuwe Suid-Afrika kan wees. Reeds in 1988 het die konferensiegangers by 'n konferensie oor kultuurbewaring in Kaapstad, 'n verklaring uitgereik waarin sekere algemene beginsels vervat is wat onder meer bepaal dat

- die kultuurerfenis as 'n verenigde krag in Suid-Afrika erken en versterk moet word;
- elke gemeenskap die geleentheid gebied moet word om sy kultuur te bewaar en te ontplooi, sonder dat die een kultuurgroep die ander oorheers; en
- die kultuurerfenis vir almal toeganklik moet wees sodat wedersydse begrip tussen kultuurgroepe bevorder en kulturele interaksie vergemaklik word.

In hierdie uitgawe van *Restorica* vind dié beginsels duidelik weerklank in die aktuele boodskappe van dr. Willem Cruywagen, nasionale voorsitter van die Stigting Simon van der Stel (p4) en mnr. Kobus Meiring, Administrateur van Kaapland (p7), wat die noodsaaklikheid beklemtoon dat daar in die toekoms veel wyer na kultuurhistoriese bewaring gekyk sal moet word en dat alle groepe se erfgoed bewaar moet word.

Maar wat presies is die bewaringsvoorkeure van ander kulturele groepe? Lees gerus wat verteenwoordigers van die PAC, die ANC, asook die Indiër- en Kleurlinggemeenskap daarvoor te sê het (p8).

Die praktiese toepassing van bewaring in 'n nuwe Suid-Afrika word deur mnr. Graeme Binckes, direkteur van *The Cape Town Heritage Trust*, onder die soeklig geplaas in 'n artikel onder die opskrif *Conservation in the New South Africa* (p28).

Ook van besondere relevansie in die huidige tydsgewrig, is die nuttige "vennootskap" tussen bewaring en restourasie aan die een kant, en bruikbaarheid aan die ander kant, soos toegelig deur die Pretoriase argitek, mnr. Albrecht Holm (p30), die stryd tussen kapitalisme en bewaring (p40), die rol wat die media in die bewaringstryd in Suid-Afrika kan speel (p20) en die bydrae van

die private sektor tot bewaring in die Oos-Kaap (p42).

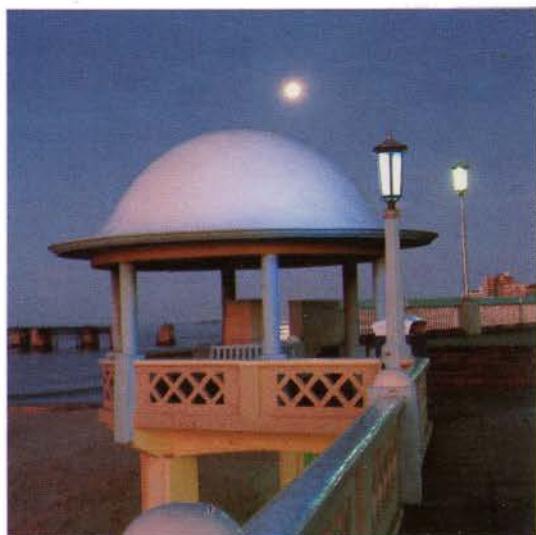
In die lig van Afrikane se gemeenskaplike lotsbestemming, is dit interessant om te weet hoe dit met argitektoniese bewaring in Zimbabwe gesteld is sedert die bewindsaanvaarding van pres. Robert Mugabe. Mnr. Peter Jackson, argitek en ere-adviseur vir die bewaring van historiese geboue in Harare, gee sy mening (p22).

Die 'ruggraat'-ontwikkeling in die Johannesburgse middestad het 'n yslike polemiekketen. In 'n omvattende artikel (p12) word dié ontwikkeling, asook die uiteenlopende menings wat dit uitgelok het, onder die loep geneem.

Argitektuur moet holisties benader word – die verlede, hede en toekoms moet by beplanning en bewaring in berekening gebring word, sê prof. Robert Brooks van die Universiteit Rhodes in 'n artikel onder die opskrif, "We need to see the present with hindsight" (p46).

Ander insiggewende leestof in hierdie uitgawe is die uiteindelijke verkoop van Macrorie-huis (p36), die interessante geskiedenis van die Gandhi-huis in Troyeville, Johannesburg (p38) en die ontwikkeling van woonhuise in die Vrystaat, met spesiale verwysing na die Karoohuis op Smithfield (p32). ■

Voorblad: 'n Gedenkteken aan die seekant in Port Elizabeth – 'n goeie voorbeeld van idiosinkratiese argitektuur.



Stigting Simon van der Stel



Dr. Willem Cruywagen
Nasionale Voorsitter,
Stigting Simon van der
Stel

IN die toekoms sal daar met 'n veel wyer blik na die bewaring van ons kultuurhistoriese erfenis gekyk moet word, meen dr. Willem Cruywagen, nasionale voorsitter van die Stigting Simon van der Stel.

"Daar moet toegegee word dat bewaringsinstansies in die verlede miskien te 'blank-sentries' gerig was. Dit is nie net die blankes se kultuurgoed of sy nalatenskap wat volkseïendom is nie. Daar is baie ander mense wat hierdie bodem met ons deel, wat op hul beskeie manier ook hul eie kultuurhistoriese nalatenskappe het.

"Dit kan 'n swart kaptein wees wie se naam ons dalk nie eens ken nie, maar dáár staan sy huisie en dit beteken vir sy mense iets. Daar is immers die eenvoudige plekkies, die hartbeeshuisies waaruit die Paul Krugers gekom het, in ons geskiedenis. Ons moet ons gesigveld verbreed en meer kennis neem van dít wat bewarenswaardig is in 'n ander kultuurgemeenskap."

Die identifisering van ander groepe se bewaringsbehoefes moet egter met groot omsigtigheid aangepak word. "Ons moet versigtig wees dat óns dit nie gaan identifiseer nie. Ons moet ander groepe betrek, sodat hulle kan deel hê aan die identifisering van dít wat hulle graag wil bewaar, dit wat hulle glo is van belang."

Hy vertel van 'n besoek eenkeer aan die Griekwagemeenskap by Kranshoek, naby Plettenbergbaai. Hy was beïndruk om te sien hoe hulle die graf van die ou stamvader, Le Fleur, in stand gehou het. "Toe sê een van die afstammelinge vir my: 'Meneer, dit hoort so. Want as jy nie 'n come from het nie, het jy nie 'n go to nie.' Nou, dan praat ons mos dieselfde taal."

Hy is egter huiwerig om te veel te roer aan dié saak, omdat dit verwagtinge kan wek wat teleurgestel kan word. Hy meen egter die Streekdiensterade kan dalk 'n goeie beginpunt wees. Almal wat belang het by die gemeenskap – wit, swart en bruin – word immers daarop verteenwoordig.

"Al is daar diversiteit in Suid-Afrika, en al het ek méér gevoel vir dít wat in my eie gemeenskap gebeur het, kan ek nie ontken dat daar ander kultuurgroepe is wat ook hulle kultuurgoed het waaroor hulle meer voel as wat ek voel nie, maar alles saam is dit die totale kultuurbesit van gans Suid-Afrika. Ek sou graag wou hê daardie leiers wat in die Streekdiensterade dien, moet betrek word. Hulle moet sê waar is húl kosbare kultuurgoedere. Ons sal egter die aanskakelplekke moet gaan soek. Dit kan met individue wees, of met organisasies."

Hoe vatbaar is ander bevolkingsgroepe vir die boodskap van die noodsaaklikheid van kultuurhistoriese bewaring?

"Daar is wel 'n mate van antagonisme, omdat bewaring vir so lank 'n blanke kleur gehad het. Maar ek is baie optimisties. Mnr. Mandela het al gesê daar is plek vir kultuurgroeperinge, vir daardie dinge wat jy nie van mense kan wegneem nie.

"Dit ly by my nie twyfel dat dít wat ons tot hiertoe bewaar het, nou sommeer vernietig gaan word of totaal gaan verval nie. Ek glo dat die mense van Afrika al geleer het dat jy nie sommeer aan kultuurbesit moet peuter nie. Maar dan moet ons ook 'n aanvoelbare geloofwaardigheid gee dat ons ook ernstig is oor hul kultuurgoedere. Al is dit ook eenvoudig – dit is maar soos ons ook begin het."

Hoe gaan die vonkie van bewaring aan die gang gehou word in 'n tyd dat daar ander dringende brandpunte soos die onderwys en behuising is?

"Daarmee sal plaaslike owerhede die leiding moet neem, want hulle verteenwoordig tog die gemeenskappe. As ek in 'n gebied woon en ek weet van 'n huis wat bewaar moet word, dan moet ek dit vir my plaaslike owerheid sê.

"Mense moet net wakker gehou word ten opsigte van bewaring. Selfs die landbou-unies kan 'n rol speel. Plaaslike owerhede kan opnames doen van wat bewarenswaardig in hul regsgebied is. Die RNG of die Stigting het nie die mannekrag om dit te doen nie – ons kan net raadgee met vakkundige kennis.

"'n Mens moet kan sê ter wille van my gemeenskap wil ek nie sien dat dit verdwyn nie. Individue moet betrokke raak. En ons sal hard moet werk aan betrokkenheid. Ons sal amper 'n nasionale aksie aan die gang moet kry om mense te laat beseft hulle gaan dinge verloor waaroor hulle agterna baie spyt gaan wees."

Dit is onweerlegbaar so dat ons mense bra onverskillig staan teenoor hul erfenis. Hy het destyds omtrent man-alleen baklei in die stryd om die Wesfasade op Kerkplein te behou. "Ek wou soms huil, want jy weet nie eens met wie om te praat nie. My probleem met ons volk is dat ons wel 'n aanvoeling vir bewaring het, maar ons is onbetrokke totdat die gevaartekens kom. Dan agiteer ons en begin die stem verhef. Maar die stryd moet reeds op voetsoolvlak aangepak word, dáár het ek hulp en betrokkenheid nodig."

En omdat dinge aan die verander is, is 'n mens onseker hoe die gevoel jeens bewaring vorentoe gaan wees. Daarom is groter gevoeligheid op die grondvlak noodsaaklik, sê hy.

Suid-Afrika het egter 'n agterstand by die res van die wêreld wat betref die bewaring van sy erfenis, sê hy. En die klem val ongelukkig te veel op die bewaring van die natuur- en dierelewe, terwyl kultuurhistoriese erfgoed 'n bietjie eenkant

— Quo Vadis?

Wilma de Bruin het met dr. Cruywagen gesels oor kultuurhistoriese bewaring in die toekoms en die rol van die Stigting vorentoe.

toe geskuif word.

So het die bewaring van die swart renoster die verbeelding aangegryp en borge gelok. "Daar is egter geboue wat net so waardevol is soos die renoster en wat vir ewig kan verdwyn, maar dit gryp nie die verbeelding so aan nie.

"Daar is 'n wanverhouding tussen natuurbewaring en suiwer kultuurbewaring. Die twee is aanvullend. Die een is die natuur, deur God geskape, en die ander is deur die mens tot stand gebring. Sy kultuurskeppinge kom plaas hy binne hierdie natuurlike omgewing. Dit het 'n plek daar.

"Maar dié spore wat die mens deur die geskiedenis geloop het, kry baie keer nie genoeg aandag nie. As dit kom by geldskenkings, word veel meer geld vir natuurbewaring as vir die bewaring van ons kultuurhistoriese erfenis gegee. Daar moet myns insiens 'n meer gebalanseerde aanvoeling ten opsigte van die totale omgewing wees. As kultuurbewaring agterbly, moet daar metodes gevind word om dit na vore te stoot en dit meer prominensie te gee."

Sal dié wanbalans nie verbeter as mense oortuig raak van die bruikbaarheid van bewaring nie, soos met die Victoria en Alfred Waterkant in Kaapstad? "O ja, ons moet nie gaan bewaar met die idee hier kom nou nog 'n museum met 'n klomp stoele en jonkmanskaste nie. Daardie goed het hulle plek, maar dit moet benut word."

Hy glo die Stigting het as bewaringsliggaam tot dusver 'n baie belangrike taak vervul. "Die Stigting is darem nou al 'n hele klompie jare gevestig, dus ken hy die speelveld redelik goed. Ek dink 'n mens kan die Stigting versterk, maar nie ten koste van ander instansies nie, want daar is ook baie kleiner bewaringsinstansies en kultuurliggame wat 'n bestaansreg het.

"Ons praat nie daarvan om die Stigting uit te bou en sterker te maak om ander hul plek te misgun nie. Maar dit is nog altyd 'n voordeel as jy 'n groot en sterk, private bewaringsinstansie het, want hy kan met 'n sterk stem praat. In die verlede is die Stigting baie in ag geneem juis omdat hy 'n goeie rekord en 'n sterk stem het."

Hy wys daarop dat die Stigting wel probleme het en dat dit grootliks om geld draai. "'n Mens het probleme om die Stigting in status, aansien en omvang te laat groei. Een daarvan is natuurlik finansies. As dit ekonomies swaar gaan, moet baie van hierdie dinge wat 'n gevoels-, geestelike of kulturele inslag het, 'n bietjie wag.

"Die Staat moet uiteraard dinge teen mekaar opweeg, maar ook in die private sektor is geld skaars. Die ander probleem is dat bydraes vir iets soos sport baie meer blootstelling kry as wat kulturele en bewaringsdoeleindes sou kry."

Wie se verantwoordelikheid is dit om te sorg

dat ons erfenis vir die nageslag bewaar bly?

Hy glo beslis nie dat mense van die Staat moet verwag om alles te doen nie. "Dit is eintlik volkseïendom, daarom moet die burgersy besonder betrokke wees by bewaring.

"Die Staat het natuurlik ook 'n verantwoordelikheid en omdat 'n mens daarvoor begrip het dat dit soms vir hom moeilik gaan en hy prioriteite teen mekaar moet opweeg, dink ek die Staat kan sy taak aansienlik verlig deur geldelike skenkings vir bewaring aftrekbaar te maak van inkomstebelasting. Daar kan sekerlik 'n formule uitgewerk word."

Hy speel ook met die idee van 'n trustfonds vir die Stigting, maar daar moet nog baie dink- en doenwerk in dié konsep ingaan, sê hy.

Het die Stigting 'n rol in die nuwe Suid-Afrika, en hoe lyk daardie rol?

Daar is baie kommer oor die hele kwessie van kultuurhulpbron-bestuur. In hierdie gesprek moet die Stigting egter altyd sorg dat hy by is, glo hy. Die Stigting moet sy plek vind en hy moet volgens sy siening ook insette lewer oor hoe hy glo die beste manier is om dié dinge te bestuur.

Met ander woorde – om die onderhandelingsstafel? "Ten opsigte van kultuurhulpbron-bestuur het ek nog nie duidelikheid oor wie die stem gaan wees wat om die onderhandelingsstafel daaroor gaan praat nie.

"Dáár gaan dit oor politieke partye wees en nie oor kultuurgroepe nie. Die Staatspresident het weliswaar al by geleentheid gesê as dit kom by Afrikaans, laat hy sy stem hoor. Ek weet nie of 'n mens hom met die bewaring van ons kultuurhistoriese erfenis moet belas nie. Maar dit kan ook nie agterbly of weggewens word nie, dit is dáár.

"Daar is selfs op die politieke gebied onsekerheid oor hoe dié kwessie binne die staatsbestuur gehanteer gaan word. Ons sal by geleentheid ook 'n inset moet maak. Ek weet nie of dit genoegsaam sal wees om net by die Presidentsraad 'n stem te laat hoor nie."

Hoe sien hy die Stigting se taak en rol vorentoe? "Ek dink die Stigting moet nog uitgebou word. Sy omvang en finansies moet in pas gebring word sodat hy doeltreffend kan funksioneer. As 'n instansie aansien wil afdwing, moet 'n mens hom kan respekteer. Hy moet 'n stempel van voortreflikheid en kwaliteit hê, anders word hy geïgnoreer. My leuse was nog altyd: Niemand het nog ooit klandisie verloor omdat die kwaliteit te hoog of die diens te goed was nie!" ■

“INDUSTRY HAS THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO LEAD THE FIGHT AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION. FOR FAR TOO LONG, IT’S BEEN REGARDED AS THE ENEMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT. WE MUST CORRECT THIS MISCONCEPTION AND BE SEEN AS THE NATURAL STARTING POINT TO CREATE HARMONY BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IS SOUND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT.”

– IAN MCRAE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE ESKOM



Alle groepe se erfgoed moet bewaar word

'n Hersiene benadering

Suid-Afrika se ryke verskeidenheid van mense het, saam gesien, 'n ryke geskiedenis. Daarom moet ons na die beste van ons vermoë probeer om die erfgoed van *alle* bevolkingsgroepe te bewaar – veral geboue, wat by uitstek 'n weerspieëling is van die tydsgees en milieu waarin dit tot stand gekom het."

Só het mnr. Kobus Meiring, Administrateur van Kaapland, vroeër vanjaar by geleentheid van die algemene jaarvergadering van die Stigting Simon van der Stel gesê.

"Baie van ons het deur die jare beweer dat die instandhouding van ons belangrikste waardes in 'n komplekse land soos Suid-Afrika, net moontlik kan wees deur middel van beskermende wetgewing. Die mening was dat die waardes van die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe só uiteenlopend is dat daar haas geen gemeenskaplikheid is nie."

Sommige Suid-Afrikaners het egter reeds lankal besef of vermoed dat dié mening uit pas is met die realiteite in Suid-Afrika.

"Wat egter belangrik is, is die toenemende aanduiding dat baie van ons ons vergis het – dat Suid-Afrikaners veel meer gemeen het as wat onsself oor die jare heen wysgemaak het.

"Maar, aan die ander kant, het ons hoegenaamd nie sekerheid oor die werklike verskille in waardestelsels nie."

Volgens mnr. Meiring is ons vir seker op pad na 'n samelewing waarin die behoud van ons waardestelsels nie deur landswette beskerm sal word nie, maar sal afhang van ons vermoë om dit lewend te hou. Dit geld alle Suid-Afrikaners oor die lengte en breedte van ons land.

"Ons is besig om weg te beweeg van 'n samelewing waarin waardes sinoniem was met velkleur en ná 'n samelewing waarin waardes sinoniem sal wees met menswees."

Volgens mnr. Meiring lê die implikasies hiervan voor die hand.

Die samelewing van die toekoms sal aandui of die waardes wat ons tot nog toe bely het, werklik vir ons waardes was en sal ook uitsluitel gee oor die ooreenkomste én verskille in die waardestelsels van die onderskeie komponente.

"Dit hoef ons nie as 'n beklemmende bedreiging te beskou nie, maar liefers as 'n bevrydende geleentheid."

Dit lê nie in die verre verskiet nie, het mnr. Meiring gesê, maar is nou reeds hier en dit bestaan daarin dat ons nou reeds vir onself duidelikheid sal verkry oor dít wat werklik vir ons saak maak, wat sin aan ons lewe gee en waarvan ons nie bereid is om afstand te doen nie.

Ons sal nou reeds moet begin om daardie waardes in baie duideliker terminologie as in die verlede te omskryf. So nie, gaan misverstand oor

terminologie vir baie mense groot ontnugtering bring, én kan dit die bouproses van 'n nuwe samelewing onherstelbare skade berokken.

"Dit bestaan, ten derde, daarin dat ons meer as tevore die waardes waarin ons glo, nie net sal bely nie, maar ook sal uitlééf – dit is die enigste wyse waarop ons hul voortbestaan sal verseker.

"As die demokrasie werklik vir ons 'n ononderhandelbare waarde is, dan sal ons soos demokrate moet optree en dan is daar geen plek vir eensydige besluitneming of oorheersing nie. Nie eens op 'n verbloemde wyse nie.

"As die Christelike waardestelsel vir ons ononderhandelbaar is, dan sal ons lewe daarvan moet getuig en dan is daar geen plek vir meerderwaardigheid of vir selfbevoordeling nie. En as vryheid 'n ononderhandelbare waarde is, dan sal ons moet besef dat vryheid nooit onbeperk kan wees nie, en dat vryheid altyd verantwoordelikheid meebring. Vryheid kan nooit wetteloosheid wees nie."

Mnr. Meiring het voorts gesê die Stigting Simon van der Stel is een van dié instellings wat sy stempel op 'n heel besondere wyse op die samelewing afgedruk het.

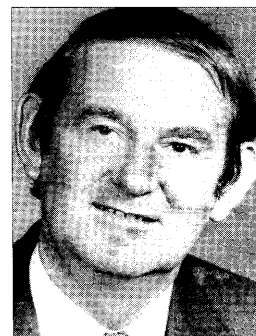
Dit is 'n instelling wat hom onderskei het vanweë sy vermoë om hom besig te hou met dít wat van blywende waarde is, sensitief vir die erfenis van die verlede, en weet dat die toekoms net behoort aan diegene wat geleer het om dít wat mooi is uit die verlede te koester.

Die Stigting het ook die deurstellingsvermoë om andere te oortuig van die verdienste van hul saak, die wil om daadwerklik op te tree en is 'n instelling wat op 'n onbaatsugtige wyse 'n diens aan die gemeenskap en nageslag lewer terwyl hy dikwels nie eers erkenning daarvoor kry nie.

Hy het geen twyfel oor die waardevolle werk wat die Stigting doen nie: "ons geboue-erfenis is immers 'n pragtige en kosbare kleinood uit die verlede, en daarom is die bewaring daarvan so nodig. Tog is dit van die uiterste belang dat ons ook andere van die verdienste daarvan sal oortuig sodat dit ook vir hulle van waarde sal wees én sodat hulle ons pogings sal steun.

"Natuurlik is nie alle ou geboue mooi en bewarenswaardig nie. Die feit van die saak is dat ons al die moontlike moet doen om dít wat wel die goeie uit ons verlede simboliseer, vir die nageslag te behou.

"Dit is te verstane dat hedendaagse geboue moet voldoen aan die vereistes van 'n moderne samelewing, maar dit sou tragies wees indien pragtige ou geboue bloot om kortsigtige en ondeurdagtige redes met die aarde gelyk gemaak word. Ons durf nie 'n nuwe samelewing bou op die puin van dít wat werklik mooi was nie." ■



Mnr. Kobus Meiring
Administrateur van
Kaapland

Conservation Priorities

PAC

THE PAC understands culture as the ideological reflection of the social, political and economical situation in a country. Therefore any cultural work should be linked to the people's material life."

This is the view of the PAC, as explained by Mr Fitzroy Ngcukana, cultural representative of the organization.

Speaking on the PAC's cultural policy and its views on restoration and conservation of historical buildings and monuments, he said "if you have a monument, it should be linked to the population as a whole and not anger a certain section of the population".

"For instance, a lot of black soldiers lost their lives during the Second World War. To tell the truth, they were often used as cannon fodder. But the local monuments to fallen soldiers of the Second World War only bear

the names of whites."

Mr Ngcukana mentioned the example of the 'Mendi', a ship full of blacks on their way to fight on the Allied side during the Second World War, which was sunk in the Atlantic Ocean by the German forces. Today there is no monument of this ship and no replica to be found.

"If the PAC were to build a monument, it would be for the people fallen for liberation," says Mr Ngcukana. "It would show our children that we were part of history and not only spectators."

"In general we believe existing buildings should not just be perpetuated to show that the people who colonized this country, lived here, like the Settlers' Monument in Grahamstown. Those buildings should stay to show our children how our oppressors lived. We will not demolish them, but new buildings and monuments should be erected alongside them to show our side of history and to celebrate our heroes," explains Mr Ngcukana.

Continued on page 10

House of Delegates

CULTURAL items of local (or ethnic) and national value should be preserved, at State expense, so long as they generate solidarity among peoples regardless of their personal political persuasions. That is the cultural and historical policy of the Solidarity Party of South Africa, as put forward by Dr K. Rajoo, Minister of Education and Culture in the House of Delegates.

"At the outset, I must state that the Solidarity Party of South Africa rejects off-hand any form of iconoclasm. Rather, it firmly believes in the restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage of all peoples who constitute the permanent population of this land, namely the major Black groups, the English- and Afrikaans-speaking groups, Coloureds and Indians.

"The restoration and the preservation of cultural items must be seen on two levels. There are worthwhile cultural items dear to specific ethnic groups and there are those items that transcend origins to assume national and international importance.

"In whatever new political dispensation will prevail in the country as a whole shortly, and whichever political or racial grouping may dominate, I believe that the local and the national cultural items of importance or value must be preserved at State expense. Regrettably, this is not the case today.

"In our country, it is a sad fact of history that all the rallying points of national pride are from the perspective of the Whites. Monuments to great leaders and soldiers, names of major cities, streets and airports, school and history books and etiquette – to mention only a few examples – are by Whites for the exclusive edification of Whites.

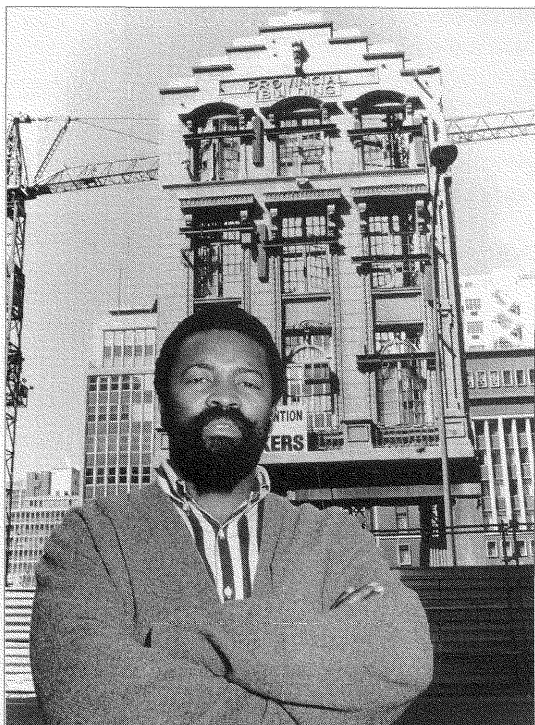
"My Party will consider it an injustice if, on the national level, the ruling political party imposes its cultural and historical conceptions on the rest of the population.

"There is ample evidence of this sad fact in countries across the world over many centuries. The new South Africa will be ideally positioned in both geographic space and time to stop this form of iconoclasm.

"In view of this standpoint, where does the minority group of Indian South Africans stand?

"They were brought to South Africa as indentured labourers from 1869 onwards to help to improve the economy of the country through the sugar industry. A glance at the statistics of

Continued on page 11



Fitzroy Ngcukana of the PAC in front of a building in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, which was demolished but for the the façade, which will be restored and incorporated in the new building

Up to now the preservation and conservation of South Africa's natural and cultural heritage basically reflected the legacy of the white population. In order to establish a just and democratic South Africa, the preservation preference of other cultural groups will have to be incorporated in an encompassing preservation approach. In the following article, spokesmen for the PAC, the ANC, the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates give their views on conservation.

ANC

EVEN much probing could not draw concrete statements from the ANC about its future cultural policy, preferential cultural or historical projects or about the buildings and monuments they would like to conserve or erect.

When approached by a staff journalist from *Restorica* Mr Oupa Ramachela, media officer in the Department of Art and Culture of the ANC replied: "The ANC has not yet got a firm cultural policy. At present, the organization is operating on broad guidelines. A better defined cultural policy will emerge from the discussions which will have to be held with representatives of all the various relevant groups in future.

He added that "the ANC believes that a cultural policy should be informed by democratic, non-sectarian, humanist principles which should not only take local factors into account, but which should also recognize contributions and influences from countries all over the world."

According to Mr Ramachela, guided people will decide which existing historical monuments should be preserved and whether and which buildings and monuments should be erected.

"This needs thorough studies. Any decisions and actions taken will have to be sensitive to the aspirations and needs of the people. It is a question of representing the history and the aspirations of the people," Mr Ramachela added.

Mr Ramachela agreed that different cultural groups have different restoration and conservation preferences and that no single building or monument could represent the history and aspirations of all the different people of South Africa. He added that studies and consultations will have to be done with involved parties to determine the preferences of different groups.

He added that the existing museums have neglected the black history, arts and crafts. A programme to train people from the townships how to restore and conserve these and how to run museums will have to be introduced. Cultural courses at school level should be considered for children in townships to teach them an appreciation for their history, culture, arts and crafts. All these should be done in order to sensitize the black community to the value of museums and to appreciate their own culture and historical background.

Mr Ramachela said there is as yet no law in this country protecting arts and crafts. The ANC will push for such a law which would also make the export of arts and crafts of a certain age illegal. ■

House of Representatives

THERE is no place in a new South Africa for the existing symbols, says Mr Tommy Abrahams, MP for Wentworth. He spoke on behalf of the Minister's Council on this body's view regarding cultural-historical conservation.

If a new, non-racial, democratic society must develop in the creation of a new South Africa, there must be a total break with the racist past, he insists. "A new society will record history differently and it stands to reason that new symbols will arise which reflect the character of the new society.

"The cultural heritage of a society arises from the recorded history of the country. Jan van Riebeeck, therefore, is revered as the founder of South African civilisation and everything that happened before 1652 is blacked out as barbaric and uncivilized.

"Buildings, statues, street-names and other symbols are used to advance the notion that white people nobly braved the stormy oceans to save the indigenous people. The symbols serve to give credence to the false perceptions which exist because of the strong bias with which history is recorded in South Africa.

"Man-made monuments have been created to honour the role played by white people in Southern Africa since their arrival at the southern tip of Africa. Streets, railway stations, government buildings, airports and squares bear the names of people who are seen as heroes by people who accept the history as presently recorded as a true account of our past.

"The hurt felt and the offence taken at the veneration of figures in the past by those who conceive those 'heroes' as oppressors, must be taken into account." ■



Mr Tommy Abrahams,
MP for Wentworth in the
Minister's Council

PAC (continued from page 8)

"In Grahamstown there should be a monument for Makhanda, who fought against the colonialists. He was the first man to be held prisoner at Robben Island, after he handed himself over in the 1850's.

"The prisoners at Robben Island built a statue of him on the island, and one day we would like to conserve Robben Island as a museum. We will rename it the Island of Makhanda."

Mr Ngcukana continues: "We will also try to correct false versions of history. For instance, it is said that Makhanda drowned while trying to escape from Robben Island. But I doubt that. He was a Xhosa Igqirha (medicine man). Most of them can swim well as they often collect

plants and other items from rivers.

"Another aspect of our cultural policy includes the changing of place names to the originals. A lot of whites, like Piet Retief, named places after themselves. Those valleys already had established names, though the cities of today might have been built by whites."

For instance the PAC would like to change the following and others to their original names:

- Pretoria to Tshwane (Pedi);
- Bloemfontein to Mangaung (Sotho);
- Fish River to Nxuba (Xhosa);
- Orange River to Senqu (Sotho) or Gqili (Xhosa);
- Witwatersrand to Gamogale (Sotho);

- Drakensberg to Inndaba Zokhwahlamba (Xhosa); Mathole (Xhosa), Maluti (Sotho) or Gqili (Xhosa);

- Ladysmith to Mnambithi (Zulu); and
- Wenen to KwaNabamba (Zulu).

The PAC would also like to preserve natural phenomenon like caves and the living places as well as paintings of the Khoi-Khoi.

"People who spray paints there, probably want to hide the fact that people lived there before the whites arrived. Like a lot of history books would also like us to believe," Mr Ngcukana remarks dryly.

As far as the erection of monuments is concerned, the PAC would like to see the erection of a monument to honour Steve Biko in his hometown, King Williamstown.

Another possibility to consider, was the erection of a monument to the arts, probably a building, in Sophiatown, to honour the artists who lived and performed in this one-time hub of South African art. Such a building could contain statues or paintings of great artists, living and dead – people like Nat Nakassa, Bloke Modisane, Kippie Moeketsie. It could also be used for the promotion and teaching of art.

The PAC would furthermore consider the establishment of a hero's acre in Pretoria, as many decisions about Apartheid were made in the capital city. "This will of course be done after consultations with all the involved parties," says Mr Ngcukana.

He explains that the PAC has a "universal approach" to race, according to which the white Afrikaners are seen as part of the African group.

"Therefore we will not exclude our racist oppressors from decision-making in future. We will not make any progress if we would try to hunt down people. For the same reason we will not mow down buildings, statues and monuments," says Mr Ngcukana. ■

"My Party will consider it an injustice if, on the national level, the ruling political party imposes its cultural and historical conceptions on the rest of the population."

House of Representatives (continued from page 9)

"The cultural heritage of a society arises from the recorded history of the country... everything that happened before 1652 is blacked out as barbaric and uncivilized."

House of Delegates (continued from page 8)

sugar production in Natal from its inception to date will amply substantiate their yeoman contribution to the economy of the country over the years.

"Sadly, there are other facts that are overlooked by the political decision-makers and writers of school history textbooks of today. For instance, Indians form the last minority political group in this country, yet they are the second largest contributors to tax!

"Subjected as they were on the subcontinent of India to almost the whole spectrum of iconoclasm since pre-Christian times, Indians have survived to preserve and to perpetuate their cultural heritage in countless forms. Will the Indian's cultural heritage survive in the new South Africa?

"Being a descendant of the humble but cultured indentured labourer, the Indian had the resilience to adapt to changing circumstances, politically, economically and socially. Backed by the international recognition of his pristine cultural heritage, the Indian South African appreciates the struggle for similar recognition of his fellow black South Africans. But, there is a caution to be heeded.

"Oppression – political or otherwise – and culture are no match in any duel: culture always survives. Therefore, in the new South Africa, the decision makers will do well to bear in mind the following:

- That names of cities, streets, airports, etc. should not be changed because they were given

by the so-called oppressors;

- That ethnic culture as well as the broad South African culture should be nurtured and preserved, for example, the traditional dress or cuisine of ethnic groups and the national flag or anthem; the mosaic syndrome lends richness to a nation;

- That funding for the restoration and the conservation of all cultural and historical items of local (ethnic) or historical importance be given without prejudice;

- That equity, social responsibility and democracy be the main criteria in determining what is of cultural or historical value worth preserving;

- That iconoclasm or downright vandalism be made legally a serious criminal offence.

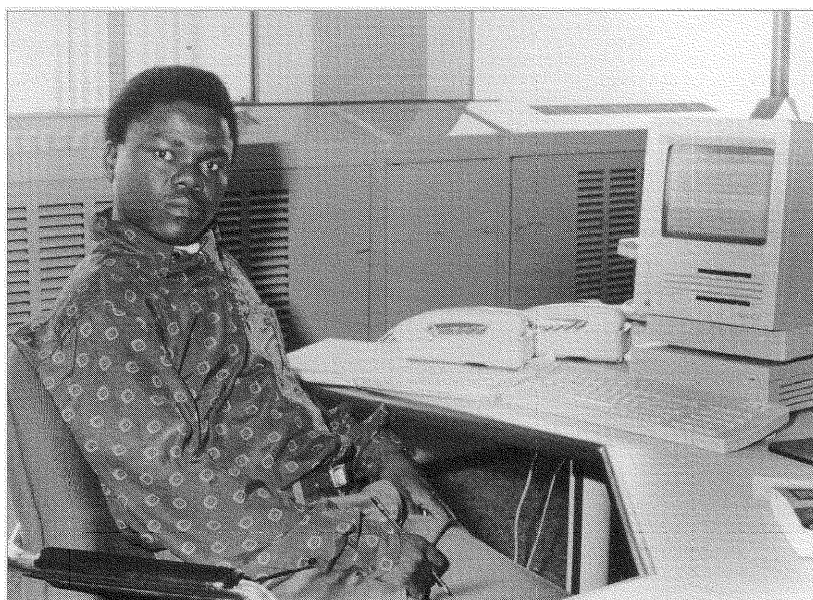
"The new South Africa is going to be generous enough to accommodate all its citizens regardless of race, colour or creed, because the principal protagonists are drawn from the people by the people for all the people of this beautiful land of ours." ■

"There are worthwhile cultural items dear to specific ethnic groups and there are those items that transcend origins to assume national and international importance."

*Mr Oupa Ramachela,
media officer in the Department of Art and Culture of the ANC*

ANC (continued from page 9)

"The ANC has not yet got a firm cultural policy. A better defined cultural policy will emerge from the discussions which will have to be held with representatives of all the relevant groups in future."



The Civic Spine

SELDOM in the history of Johannesburg has a project of a public nature sparked as much controversy as the Civic Spine in the centre of town. Some hate it, others think they may grow to love it...

What it looks like

The Civic Spine project stretches from the Rissik Street Post Office to the City Library. An imposing water feature was erected in the centre of Rissik Street. In the Library Gardens provision has been made for two upmarket restaurants on top of a line of kiosks flanking the gardens along President and Market Streets, where more than 200 trees were planted along the widened and paved sidewalks.

The Civic Spine is intended to give the CBD a tree-lined focal point. It runs from the piazza in front of the Library through extensively re-designed gardens and two new fast food outlets above the underground car park access ramps on either side of the Library's fountain court, past the Cenotaph to the public square with its fountain in front of the City Hall – facing a proposed hotel in the existing Rissik Street Post Office.

Why a Civic Spine development?

The sprucing up of the Spine is part of an overall plan to revitalize Johannesburg's CBD, said Alderman Eddie Magid, the City Council's planning and development chairman, when announcing the R10,5 project.

His dream is to see a lively CBD, to turn downtown Johannesburg into an upmarket residential area, a place where people would want to live, to shop and to enjoy themselves.

He envisages young people returning to the

area, after an ambitious plan involving pedestrian walkways, sidewalk cafes, live entertainment and a new conference centre is completed.

Justifying the project, councillor Magid said major corporations had decided to invest millions of rands in the CBD as a direct result of the decision taken by the Council to upgrade the city spine – otherwise it would eventually have had a depressed appearance compared to the adjacent developments of the private sector.

"The Civic Spine provides an amenity to many who spend their lunch times and free moments in an area that is crowded with high-rise buildings with nowhere else to go at these times. The people for whom it was built, really enjoy the area," he said recently.

CBD chairman Stan Arenson believes the spine is a positive move to create something worthwhile in the CBD. He says some people will hate it initially, but eventually it will be accepted and people will come 'to want it'.

Various calls have in fact been received from organizations and individuals enquiring about the possibility of utilizing the Library Gardens area of the Civic Spine during lunch hours or weekends. Once regular events are being held, it is anticipated that activity in the area will be stimulated and that the Spine will become a true 'people's place', Magid said.

Already Wednesday is the weekly highlight for many an office worker who enjoys music. Various bands, mostly playing African jazz, provide free entertainment from 12h00 till 14h00.

Controversy and criticism

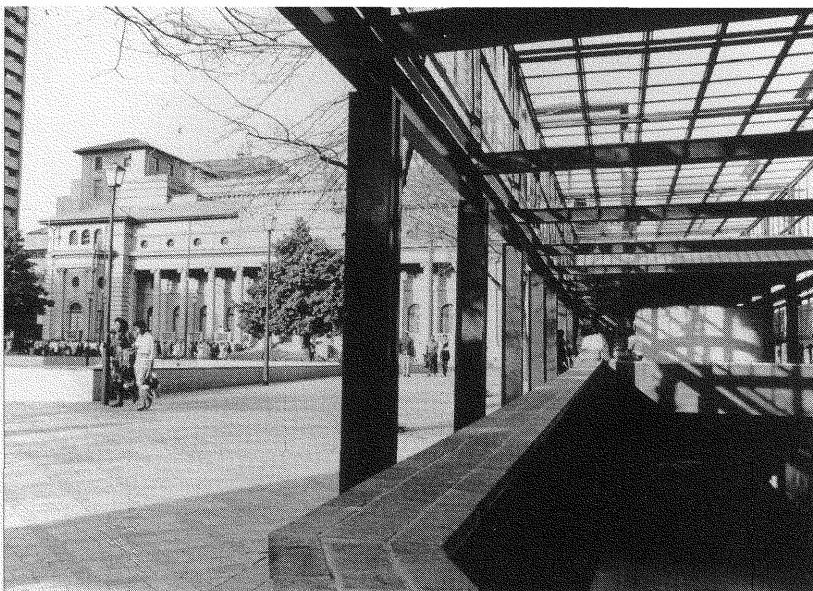
The execution of the project did not always progress smoothly. Shopkeepers, motorists and pedestrians complained bitterly about the disruption while the construction was in process. Shopkeepers and other tenants threatened legal action because of prolonged disruption.

Traditionalists complain that the square had always served as a public square. Old pictures show it littered with wagons and stalls, but always with open ground.

Now shops and buildings on Market and President Streets which once looked on to the Library Gardens face blank walls. The buildings will house restaurants and shops, but one question recurs: Does the city *need* them, and does it need them *there*?

The big yellow walls which bracket a section of the square are sharply criticized by people who want the square scraped bare again. Councillor Rae Graham is one of them, and also dislikes the twin 'spikes' in Rissik Street between the City Hall and the Post Office.

These "industrial sheds" have been fiercely criticized because they allegedly "truncate the west façade of the historic City Hall".



Controversy surrounds Johannesburg's newest addition, the Civic Spine. In a collection of three articles, Restorica examines the arguments for and against

Architect Willie Meyer, of Meyer Pienaar Smith Architects and Urban Designers who also designed the Rand Afrikaans University, is known for his sense of architectural drama.

He defends the high yellow walls saying that they will in time be covered by creepers, so that its texture is immaterial.

Angry motorists complained that they had their cars 'washed' every time they drove past the 'monstrous' fountain, which sprays cars as they drive down Rissik Street. The jets have had to be turned down drastically because of this. Critics maintain this now makes the obelisks appear totally out of scale.

Veterans and ex-servicemen claim that Johannesburg's proud memorial in honour of its war heroes, the Cenotaph, has been desecrated. Servicemen have accused the Council of destroying the area surrounding the memorial and called for the pulling down of the two-storey-high walls and restoration of the gardens.

Conrad Berge, secretary of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Action Group, called the Civic Spine an appalling piece of architectural terrorism and illegitimate planning.

Some people call it an unmitigated disaster. "The Council has wasted resources in mistaken priorities, it is an aesthetic failure and a slap in the face of the black community," writes architect Anthony Lange in the *Financial Mail*, May 1991. He points out that the project fails to take into account that Johannesburg has become an overwhelmingly black city. All the symbolism is borrowed from abroad and is inappropriate for South Africa, he alleges.

He also comments that the scale of the main square has been destroyed, as well as the setting of all the surrounding buildings.

Reacting to the controversy, architects and urban designers Meyer Pienaar Smith say that no journalist has up to now bothered to ask them for their point of view. (See separate article [p15] for the rationale and history behind the project). They put their case eloquently:

"We expected that the spine would raise some controversy. We believe that the extent to which people have become involved is healthy and reflects a successful attempt to identify the Civic Spine as a particular urban precinct.

"People identify with places on a variety of levels, from the profound experience of those who feel at home in the place, to those who have no sense of belonging and feel 'outsiders'.

"Criticism has mainly come from those who visit the city irregularly and relate to the Civic Spine mainly from the outside, for example, not as users but as passers-through. Of course they

are immediately faced with the walls. The Civic Spine is very young – the vegetation and landscaping, vital to the success of the project, has not yet had one growing season. Once the structures are covered with their intended clothing, they will take on their full glory.

"As outsiders, these people are seldom aware of deeper layers of meaning and opportunity associated with the scheme. Several surveys conducted by both the City Council and the press have discovered that the vast majority of the users of the Civic Spine precinct have responded positively to the scheme. It is also interesting to note that the scheme has had the support of groups such as the Central Business District Association while others such as the Parktown Residents Association are objectors.

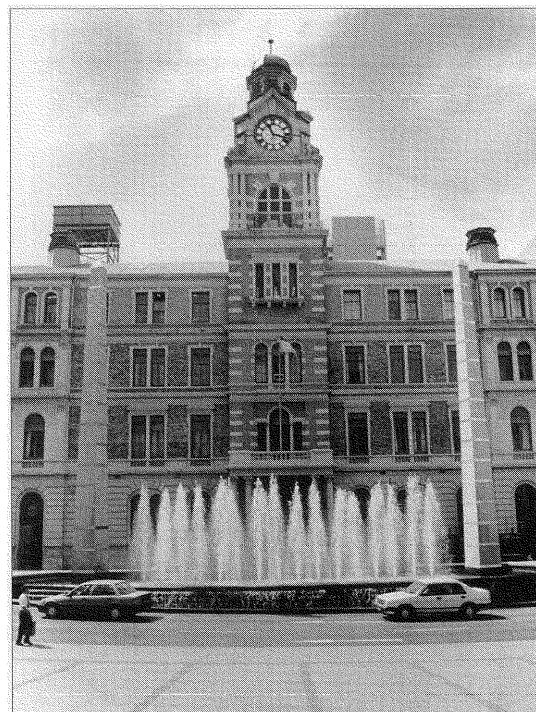
"Johannesburg is characterized more by a sense of change than of permanence, but here in the heart of the city is one of the more permanent districts, with specific and general memories. The Civic Spine has reinforced the sense of permanence through the reinforcement of existing patterns and forms. The introduction of new uses and forms grow from existing patterns and are not a major turn around.

The zoning problem

Now there is another setback for the project. It turns out that the tall structures closing off the Library Gardens on either side are higher than those originally approved by the City Council. It also appears that the site was not properly zoned for the shops and restaurants which were to be an integral part of the new development and there was no environmental impact assessment, raising questions about the procedures applied in granting approval for the project.

The ratepayer watchdog organization, the Northern Areas Group (NAG), was concerned that planning laws were being flouted. They intended legal action unless the Council went through a proper public consultation and planning process before letting the buildings. The planning tribunal has twice deferred a decision.

The Parktown Association also picked up the cudgels. In a sharply worded letter to the acting town clerk, the association stressed the significance of the restrictions in the title deeds. These



The water feature symbolizes the Witwatersrand watershed. The two obelisks which rise from the fountain frame the City Hall and Post Office entrances respectively

The Civic Spine

clearly protected the Library Gardens as open space for Johannesburg's citizens: *No portion thereof shall be used as shops, offices, rooms or flats for any business or residential purpose whatsoever.*

The Council's attitude to these restrictions, says the association, shows contempt for the rights of the ratepayers. It points out that the Council's approval for the "environmental upgrading of the Civic Spine" was radically changed to a commercial project without ever being officially concerned. Nearly R1 million was spent on building shopping space on the square.

Four months after the completion of the buildings, no occupation has yet been taken. And it seems the buck is being passed about whose responsibility the rezoning debacle should be.

Ratepayers' groups called the R788 000 two-storey-high walls illegal and demanded that they be torn down.

"We believe that bulldozing R788 000 worth of Berlin Wall is a small price to pay for getting back Market Square, the city's oldest and most historic place", said Parktown Association representative Flo Bird.

If more space has been developed than originally approved, the whole matter will have to be resubmitted to the full Council for reevaluation before rezoning can proceed. If the city rejects the amendments, it is conceivable that the spine buildings will have to be demolished or modified at the ratepayers expense.

He doesn't think it will come to that, says Stan Arenson, chairman of the CBD. "We will cross that bridge when we get to it, but I don't think it will be torn down," he chuckles. But the legal quagmire may, according to Arenson, last another six to nine months.

Commenting on this hitch, the architects say that the rezoning procedures have been and are the responsibility of the Council. "In our understanding, the issues are really technical. The ground is zoned as public open space, but with the provision that the Council may erect certain structures on the ground. Already the public library books hall, flower sellers and the parking garage had been constructed and the approximately 850 square metres of retail space envisaged will definitely enhance the activity. In order to regularize this situation the Council applied for rezoning. Discrepancies of some 50 square metres appear to have arisen from the use of rough figures. The town planning department of the Johannesburg City Council would be able to provide more detailed information."

What now? Will the Spine eventually be accepted and even loved?

What about the people who actually use the Civic Spine area? Does the public find the Spine user-friendly?

After the first highly successful open book-fair at the precinct on the first Sunday in August, Eddie Magid called the project a triumph. Thousands of people flocked to town on that Sunday, some for the first time in years, to attend the fair, and it is said that not since the area used to be Market Square before World War I, had so many people spent the whole day there.

Public reaction was very favourable after the fair, clamouring for more events in similar vein.

In July this year, the planning director of the City Council, Mr Ian Symon, said that people making use of the Civic Spine were generally pleased with the area and regarded it as a much better facility than before. A three-day survey carried out by the Council showed that many people used the area regularly and others who had visited it for the first time, said it was pleasant and they would come again.

People did, however, suggest that more seating should be provided and empty stalls in the area have confused many visitors. They also mentioned the cleanliness of the area, especially as many have their lunch there, though there was a need for more refuse bins.

The lunchtime music on Wednesdays was popular, but should be better advertised.

"Many people pointed out that this area was more popular in summer. It was felt that the improvement of the facility would lead to crowds frequenting the area as soon as spring started and the days became warmer," he said.

Though shoppers will not be able to make good use of the shops in the development until the rezoning matter is sorted out, Mr Stan Arenson, chairman of the CBD, is happy with the project. "It works, people are going there. To me it signifies the City Council's commitment to the development of the CBD. In time it will have a positive effect on inner city living. Those who dislike it at the moment will become used to the Spine and even grow to love it."

The architects who designed the Spine have the last word: "The improvement has been nothing short of miraculous given the budget. It will provide the robust framework within which a large number of present and future activities can take place, gradually imbuing the Civic Spine with the sense of place which will enable future generations to consider it one of the most memorable places in the city." ■

The Civic Spine

Throughout the row, the voice of the architects was never heard. To obtain the other side of the story, Restorica spoke to the architects

The architects

THIS is the first time that the architects of the Civic Spine, Meyer Pienaar Smith, are putting their case. They explain the rationale behind the controversial project:

Historical background

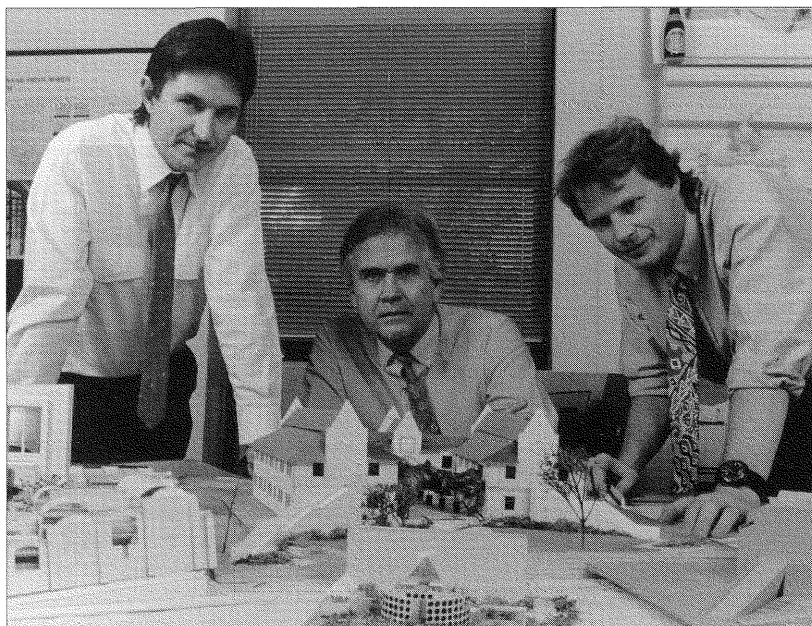
The architects referred to several extracts from the book *From Mining Camp to Metropolis* by Gerhard-Mark van der Waal. These highlight aspects of the history of the Civic Spine and the various shortcomings which the author has noted, have been addressed by the project:

"Of all the squares, Market Square presented the liveliest aspect – through the daily congregation of a mass of buyers and sellers and the visual cohesion of its components – but even this square failed to become a symbol with many references, because its only had a single function. Part of the explanation for this state of affairs probably lies in the fact that Johannesburg's raison d'être lay outside the town – in the mining area. There was in fact no ceremonial or social focus in the town itself. Market Square remained the most important city square. Originally established as a community centre, the square gradually saw its functions scaled down to those of an administrative and service area.

"Until the early 1930's the single mass of the City Hall filled the eastern portion of the square, leaving only a narrow little street parallel to and west of Rissik Street. The row of plane trees on the sidewalk between this little street and Rissik Street failed to transform the space between the City Hall and the Rissik Street Post Office into a square. Until the Cenotaph was built in 1926 on the block west of the City Hall, there was nothing at all to fill the void (a lawn) on the western side – except a shelter for tramway passengers and the little building of the underground public toilets. But even the Cenotaph and the two new waiting rooms which were later built west of the Cenotaph in Simmonds Street failed to establish any visual link between the aloof posterior of the City Hall and the buildings on the northern, western and the greater part of the southern section of the square.

"The winning entry in the design competition for the Cenotaph, organised in 1925, was submitted by J Lockwood-Hall, whose design showed many resemblances to that of the London Cenotaph (1920) by Edwin Lutyens. While it is very tall and beautifully finished, the Cenotaph fails to impress. It is not sturdy enough to form a visual bond between the City Hall and the Library, and it does not stand out well enough against its immediate environment to make a powerful statement. Any kind of screen, such as a fence or hedge of shrubs, would have structured the space around the Cenotaph and given it an identity of its own.

"The fort-like aspect of the Library Building did not relate visually to the environment on either side or behind and, secondly, there was no relationship between the cultural



Architects Francois Pienaar, Willie Meyer and Floris Smith

of Meyer Pienaar Smith Architects and Urban Designers

function of the Library, the square in front or the surrounding buildings. To this day the Library, which should have had the capacity to stimulate cultural activities around it, has failed to exercise any noteworthy influence on the adjacent buildings.

"Hardly any streets form a significant space in terms of visual diversity, cohesion or socio-cultural function. In these circumstances the community expresses itself in terms of individual interests rather than in unifying activities. Thus one searches in vain for a street that could be considered a genuine 'place' in the mining town. The character of the streets was determined by the buildings lining them: in themselves they had no form or space such as that created by islands and broad sidewalks with street furniture or trees.

"While a tree-lined street is usually associated with an avenue, these trees were spaced too far apart to form dense foliage on either side of the roadway. At the same time, this spacing tended to discourage the social usage of the sidewalks. Indeed, the open spaces left by the building programmes of the previous period, were not regarded as social, economic or visual focal points within the community, but were reduced to the exclusive function of the buildings constructed there. The same applied to private sector buildings erected around the squares. Built to serve only the interests of the owners, they were focused on themselves, with no reference to their environment.

"By their very height, the buildings put up around the square were, as enclosures of space and as providers of shelter for human activities, progressively divorced from the street as visual and human terrain. Indeed, there was a polarisation between the buildings as vertical visual statements and cores of activity and the streets as horizontal voids.

"The rows of trees and flower beds on the lawns in front of the Library, which were divided in two by a paved walkway, never developed into a real park but rather served as formal entourage for the dominant Library Building. In

The Civic Spine

any event, it was cut off from the tramway stops, lawns and paving around the Cenotaph by Simmonds Street with its heavy traffic."

The Civic Spine project arises from the Council's desire to acknowledge and enhance the historic elements and to create timeless places for people in the city. The Council appointed Gallagher Aspoas Poplak Senior to study the urban design potential of the city. They identified as the first action area the linear sequence of central city blocks extending from Sauer Street in the west to Eloff Street in the east and flanked by President and Market Streets. Traditionally, this part of the city has been the focus of historic events, civic functions and festive occasions and had the potential to become the symbolic heart of Johannesburg.

A concept plan was prepared by the Urban Planning Branch which explored broad ideas, one of which was to link the area through the use of particular street furniture, pacing patterns, tree planting and lighting, thereby making the Civic Spine distinct from the rest of the city.

The design of the Civic Spine

Each section of the Spine has unique features while simultaneously constituting an integral part of the whole. An opportunity for a private/public partnership is created, and the chance for the owners of buildings along the Spine to make individual contributions to the scheme.

The first phase of the development focuses on

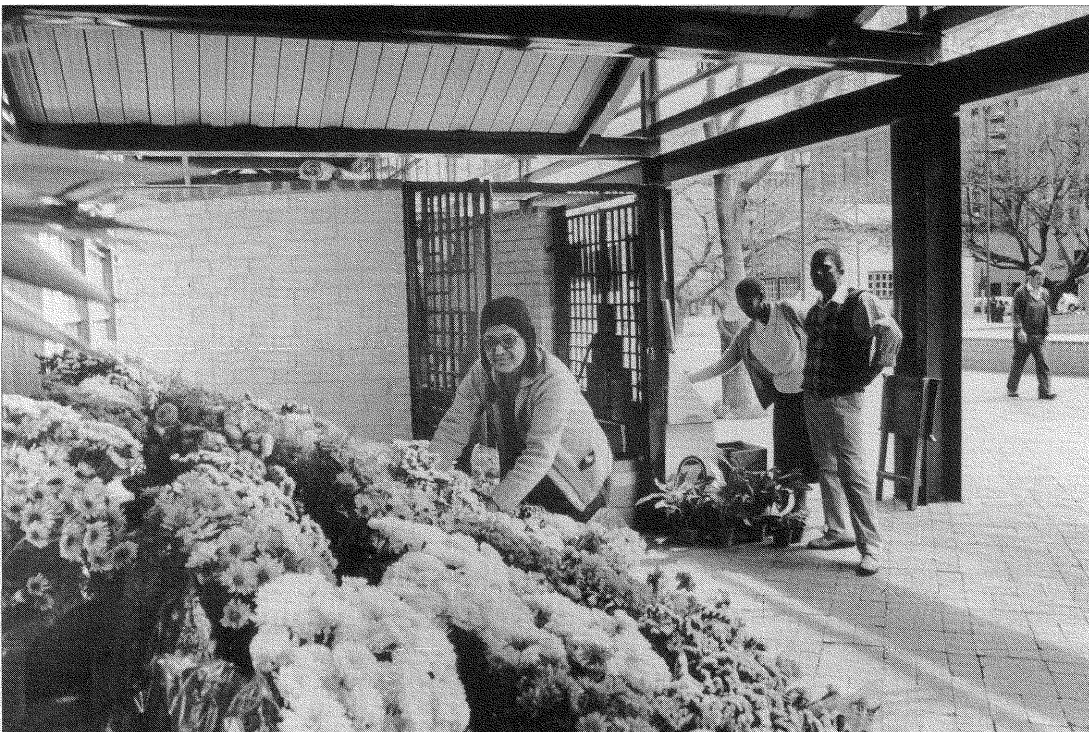
the rim, that is the President and Market Street edges. Environmental improvement includes the redesign of the street space, the upgrading of pavements and signage and the planting of approximately 200 trees to form 'colonnades' which define the boundaries of the Civic Spine.

The city has established that over time there will be increased traffic within the area. Both President and Market Streets will have to cope with this. Our brief was to design within the increased number of traffic lanes required. The sidewalks are widened, creating increased opportunities for socialisation and activity. Trees, and vegetation, are planted at close intervals on both sides of the streets, creating a new avenue through which vehicles move, and a filter which protects the pedestrian and the spaces from the harsh impact of the traffic. An increased awareness of the boundaries, the extent and content of the precinct as well as its civic identity, is thereby achieved. Traffic and information signs have been reduced to the required minimum, clearing the forest of posts that previously existed. All this provides the perimeter, the cohesion and definition of the elements and spaces within the precinct which provide the Civic Spine with its identity as a zone civic activity.

The Civic Square

The historic ceremonial heart of the city is the space between the City Hall and the Rissik Street Post Office. This square is expressed as the

Informal market – appropriate shelter?



'City room'. It is paved and has a major water feature symbolizing the Witwatersrand watershed. Traffic in Rissik Street continues to move through the square, on either side of the fountain. Two obelisks which rise from the fountain, frame the City Hall and Post Office entrances. The elements in the square were carefully proportioned to achieve this and the geometry of the square was studied in depth to locate the fountain in the most appropriate place. The square's levels and the paving patterns have been adjusted to suit the natural slope of the ground in such a way as to focus on the most important historic building in the city – the Rissik Street Post Office, originally the seat of Government of the Transvaal. The result is that the Civic Square embodies the dignity and formality of a memorable urban place.

The Cenotaph and Library Gardens

The major impact in this part of the Spine has been the structures which form the perimeter of this area. The old ramps with their walls and railings which screened the view of the pedestrian and motorist from the space except for the trees, have been replaced by urban scaled garden structures to support a variety of planting. Two types of structure were used to give different effects of shelter and screening – a pergola structure which will be clothed with evergreen, flowering creepers and walls scaled to suit the robust Library building to be covered with the seasonal green, red and filigree of virginia creeper.

The Cenotaph is designed as a quiet green space where people may sit and contemplate. The pergola structures on either side provide the Cenotaph with a setting which has an appropriate scale. The central lawn and the wedge shaped paving provide for the natural diagonal movement of pedestrians and have a quiet centre appropriate to the reverence required for the Cenotaph. The flower-seller and the charity book stall provide appropriate life and colour.

The Library Gardens space has been internalised for pedestrians and designed in such a way as to deflect pedestrian traffic into the area. It was decided to introduce a variety of uses to this space, in the form of small shops, stalls and eating places. Elements of these buildings reflect the architecture of the surrounding civic buildings in a modern idiom. These structures are accommodated on the other edges of the Library Gardens. As this space is subject to heavy traffic noise, high 'city walls' form the outer, or street facing blank façades of the shops, stalls and restaurants. In fact, the walls only run for one third of the space between the City Hall and the



Library. The buildings also accommodate vehicular ramps to the underground parking garage, stairs, mechanical services and public toilets. The upper storey affords views over the gardens and surrounding area. The space in front of the Library is designed as an active people's place with restaurants, kiosks, water features, places to meet, to sit, to talk and enjoy the sunshine in the city.

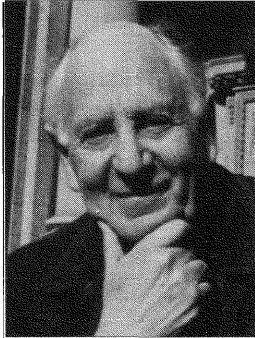
The Civic Spine project has strengthened the legibility of the precinct, enhancing the experience of those who move through it. The outer rim of trees has unified the discrete elements and spaces as a system of significant civic spaces. The spaces themselves have become more positively defined through the use of strong foci together with defined edges. Roads and pavements which were previously merely able to transport people, have become layered with opportunities for shelter and human interaction. Relationships between the inside and outside of spaces have been more defined. The character of the area is enhanced through the overlap of culture, meaning and idiosyncrasy in the expression of the architecture and the use to which it will be put while at the same time the treatment remains 'classical'.

The cost of the project and the legacy for the future

The entire cost of the project, President and Market Streets, the Civic Square and Cenotaph and Library Gardens which was given at R10,5 million, included all costs and fees. A very large proportion, some 45 percent of this cost, was used to upgrade and repair gas, water, sewer and stormwater services within the area. In addition the budget covered replacing the paving all of which would have been necessary within a few years according to reports of the Council. The remaining amount which was in fact spent on the Civic Spine is hardly significant in terms of the city's budget. ■

A carefully chosen photograph which reveals the whole façade of the Library.

The Civic Spine



Mr Herbert Prins

architect and member of the national council of the Simon van der Stel Foundation, thinks the rush to complete the project on time had a negative effect on the quality of the design and construction.

Comment

"I WONDER whether the architects were given enough time to resolve the architectural details of the new structures and their relationship to the historical buildings and the character of the precinct. Judging by the quality of the design and workmanship, it looks very much as if the architects and contractors were rushed."

His main complaint about the project, however, is its failure to reconcile legitimate development and change with the need to conserve what has cultural value. "I believe that the area is significant because it is in the centre of the city, and has important buildings of architectural and historical value fronting onto it.

"The commercial (shopping) centre of greater Johannesburg lies in Eloff Street, close to the Civic Spine. It may be argued that the core of Johannesburg's civic pride is, despite the civic centre in Braamfontein, still the City Hall. The spaces between the old Post Office, the City Hall and the Library are the most important public open spaces in the city.

"A unique character has emerged over many years; it became a landmark. Changes to such a landmark need to be handled with great caution, or the special character of the place may be so changed that the associated history is obscured or obliterated. That is what has happened to the Library Gardens and why I am so concerned about the developments there.

"Consider the broader context of what has become known as the Civic Spine. Market and President Streets, which run in an east-west direction, define the Civic Spine on the northern and southern side. Like most streets in downtown Johannesburg, they are chasm-like.

"Prior to the changes, the Library could be approached through narrow streets from the west until the chasms expanded into what is known as the Library Garden. One experienced the Library Garden, though still in the street, until the space again contracted on the northern and southern sides of the City Hall. After the City Hall was passed the chasm once again exploded to become an urban space in front of the Rissik Street Post Office – very different in size, scale and character to the Library Garden.

"Past the old Post Office, the space is again narrow. Then it opens out to become the Oppenheimer Garden, once again quite different in character to the urban spaces to which it is so powerfully linked by the chasm-like streets. This opening and closing of urban space as one passes in an easterly or westerly direction distinguishes the Civic Spine from other precincts in Johan-

nesburg's central business area.

"The roads that run in a northerly or southerly direction also traverse the Spine, and it is very important that people walking, or in cars, experience the spaces between the buildings as they pass through.

"There has been a conscious effort on the part of the people who built around the open spaces which constitute the Civic Spine, to relate their buildings to the spaces. In turn, the character and scale of the spaces are derived from the surrounding buildings.

"The Oppenheimer Garden is a comparatively recent addition to the sequence of urban spaces in the Civic Spine. Less than forty years ago there was a move to demolish the Rissik Street Post Office and to enlarge and enhance the space on the eastern side of the City Hall by building a new Post Office on the site immediately to the east of the existing building. To achieve this, the old Standard Theatre – a very beautiful old building which stood on this site – was demolished despite a big protest. The battle to preserve the Rissik Street Post Office was more successful. A compromise was reached.

"The old Post Office was allowed to remain and the urban space intended between the City Hall and the new Post Office was created on the site of the old Standard Theatre instead. Thus the east face of the Post Office, which was virtually a party wall, became the defining west edge of what is known today as the Oppenheimer Garden. This rather informal public place has become a popular meeting venue in the city.

"The buildings flanking the Oppenheimer Garden on the northern, southern and eastern sides, define the shape and scale of the garden and the undistinguished western edge is disguised by a shield of tall trees.

"The Oppenheimer Garden on the eastern side of the Rissik Street Post Office has not yet been changed, but the space on the western side, adjacent to the City Hall has been radically altered. I find what has been done acceptable. The scale of the space has been maintained. A major road – Rissik Street – passes between the City Hall and Rissik Street Post Office and divides the space. The architects have deflected the road around a fountain on the east-west axis of the space. This device seems to minimize the division of the urban space by a traffic route through it. The relationship of the buildings on all sides of the square has been maintained. No damage has been done to the relationship between the space and the Post Office, the Town Hall or the buildings on the northern and southern sides. The buildings form the walls of the

The Civic Spine

urban room. In short, the changes made have enhanced the architectural qualities and historical character of the space.

"I question the need for some of the alterations made to walls and steps immediately adjacent to the east entrance of the City Hall and the appropriateness of the obelisks in front of the Post Office. The obelisks are, however, used to define the space and my reservations relate more to the detailing of the elements and their close proximity to the Post Office than to the use of forms which some critics have found to be alien to our culture and environment.

"The Library Garden, in stark contrast to the space between the City Hall and Rissik Street Post Office, is unsatisfactory. The historical context seems neither to have been understood nor respected. The new buildings lining the northern and southern sides of the garden cause the chasm-like quality of President and Market Streets to be extended. This has the effect of cutting the streets and the buildings from the urban space. The historic buildings, which previously defined the urban space and gave it its distinguished character, are now only partially seen across a barrier. Buildings which could be seen in totality, are now fragmented. Fragments of windows, etc. in the surrounding buildings project above the new structures which make a strong visual barrier and now define and lend an unsatisfactory character to the Library Garden.

"What used to be one big space, has now become three spaces – two traffic channels in Market and President Streets (which are too narrow to allow proper perception of the historic buildings), and a totally new and alien space in between the new structures. Unless one gets onto the east-west axis of the Library and the City Hall, the new buildings truncate the façades of these architecturally precious buildings.

"The spatial relationship of the Library to the City Hall and to all the surrounding buildings to the gardens has been changed and in so doing, the historical value and significance of the precinct has been damaged. The space created between the new buildings is in itself divided by a strip of grass. The grass is flanked by two pedestrian paths on each side. The way the levels are handled makes the space in the middle inaccessible except from the west end and creates a most unsatisfactory setting for the Cenotaph – an important historical element and one embodying deeply felt and sacred significance.

"The decision to create commercial functions as opposed to increasing opportunities for informal trading in the urban space, is questionable. It detracts from existing commercial facilities in

abundance all around the Library Garden. Are the proposed commercial uses really needed? It would have been better to have diverted traffic from President and Market Streets and so minimized the dislocation of existing functions which are severed from the Library Garden by heavy vehicular traffic. Now the cloistering of the Garden behind an impenetrable visual barrier has denied businesses on the periphery contact with the Garden.

"I suggest that the changes made to the Library Garden are regrettable. The project is ill-conceived and badly executed.

"The detailing of the new buildings is undistinguished. Lessons which might have been learnt from the historic buildings were apparently not understood. The way the Library is detailed to meet the ground and to touch the sky, is beautifully handled. This cannot be said of the new buildings, to mention but one aspect of design which has been poorly demonstrated."

In judging the success of the Library Garden development, some questions may be asked:

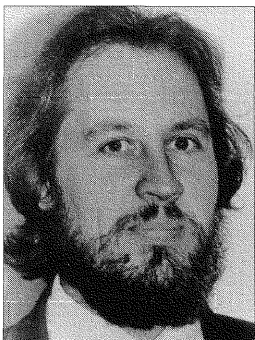
- Has the amenity of the urban space been improved? Is it a better place for people to be in?
- Are the structures and architectural details in harmony with their surroundings?
- Can the buildings and architectural details, seen in the context of their surroundings – or, for that matter, seen in isolation – be judged to be distinguished architecture and of aesthetic value?
- Does the development acknowledge the architectural importance of the surrounding buildings and reinforce the character of the historic precinct?

I believe that the answer to all these questions is an emphatic *no*. ■

The new buildings relegate motorists and pedestrians to a chasm-like space outside the historic precinct of the Library Garden



Die media en bewaring



Marthinus van Bart

Redakteur: Woongids (Die Burger) en ontvanger van die Goue Medalje van die Stigting Simon van der Stel vir uitnemende bewaringsjoernalistiek – 1990/91

SUID-AFRIKA se kultuurhistoriese erfenis, met inbegrip van die argitektoniese erfenis, word dag vir dag bedreig deur sogenaamde ontwikkelaars, skattejagters en fortuinsoekers wat, soos hulle dit ter regverdiging van hul optrede so dikwels eiegeregtig-selfsugtig stel: "Ons oefen gewoon ons regte onder 'n kapitalistiese stelsel uit."

Die direkteur van die Raad vir Nasionale Gedenkwaardighede (RNG), mnr. George Hofmeyr, het die moeilike saak van bewaring in Suid-Afrika by geleentheid uitgespel deur te sê dat die RNG se hande in 'n groot mate gebind word deur:

- die onvoldoende geldelike toekennings deur die Staat vir RNG-personeelaanstellings en werksaamhede;
- wetgewing wat te min mag aan die RNG verleen om sy taak na behore uit te voer; en
- die ongelooflik hoë koste van hofgedinge indien die RNG dit sou oorweeg om 'n oortreder van die Wet op Nasionale Gedenkwaardighede te vervolg, of in 'n siviele geding met 'n kapitaalkragtige ontwikkelaar betrokke te raak in 'n poging om die posisie van die RNG aan die reg te toets.

Dit is onder hierdie omstandighede dat openbare druk 'n alternatiewe uitweg geword het om bewaring in 'n mate af te dwing. Die Achilleshiel van kapitalisme is juis sy aangewesenheid op die markplein waar die algemene publiek verkeer, en waar die sakeman in 'n mate verleë is oor die goedgesindheid van die algemene publiek.

Dit is welbekend wat die Green Peace-organisasie en die Beauty Without Cruelty-beweging vermag het deur die algemene publiek se houding weens gewetenlose sakelui, hul onaanvaarbare handelsmetodes en hul koopware te laat draai. Om hul doel te kan bereik, benut dié bewaringsorganisasies ten volle die geriewe wat die media hulle bied.

Indien bewaringsinstansies soos die RNG, die Stigting Simon van der Stel, die Volksboukundige Vereniging van Suid-Afrika en ander daadwerklik nog wil red wat te redde is, moet hulle die media, en veral die pers, as bondgenoot, as skryfhand, in hierdie stryd betrek.

Dit is verblydend dat daar vandag soveel verskillende organisasies oor die hele land besig is om in die stryd om die bewaring van Suid-Afrika se erfenis te deel. Maar daar is ook organisasies wat onder die vaandel van die bewaringstryd besig is met private tee-en-skinder-partytjies. Hierdie sosiale snob-klubs wat niks daadwerklik vir bewaring vermag nie, doen eerder die bewaringsaak in die oog van die publiek skade aan.

Wat nog meer verstom van diesulkes, is dat

van hulle takke of afdelings van groot bewaringsinstansies vorm en soos die spreekwoordelike vrot appel in die kis tussen die gesondes lê.

Daar is takke met 'n beperkte ledetal met ewe beperkte fondse tot hul beskikking wat alles in die stryd werp en geweldig baie vermag – en dan nog beskeie is oor hul prysenswaardige handewerk. Maar dan is daar weer groot takke met 'n lederegister wat byna soos 'n *Who's Who* lees, wat jaarliks etlike duisende rande hanteer en oor 'n tydperk van byna tien jaar 'n enkele gedenksteen op hul bewaringskerfstok het.

Dit is die plig van moederorganisasies om die misbruik van hul vaandel vir selfsugtige sosiale verkeer deur takke te voorkom. Dit moet met trots wees dat 'n organisasie sy werksaamhede deur middel van die publiek verslag doen – en dit is belangrik dat outentieke bewaringsinstansies hul doen en late deur middel van die media aan die groot klok hang.

Die bewaringstryd, in die geval van ons argitektuur, is oorwegend 'n stryd teen dikvellige materialiste (of Filistyne, soos prof. WEG Louw hulle by geleentheid genoem het) op soek na groter winste vir hul eiendomsbeleggings en wat nie skroom om te sloop wat ter wille van die nageslag bewaar moes gebly het nie.

Daarom is beskeidenheid ten opsigte van dit wat die RNG en ander bewaringsinstansies vermag, misplaas. Aan die publiek moet gewys word wat gedoen word, want dit is deel van die opvoedingsproses wat juis nou, in 'n veranderende Suid-Afrika, ingrypend verskerp en uitgebrei moet word om alle kulture te betrek.

Ten slotte kom die noodsaaklikheid dat bewaringsinstansies en die pers hande vat in 'n verenigde front vir die bewaring van Suid-Afrika se erfenis, baie duidelik na vore in 'n artikel in die September/Oktobre 1989-uitgawe van Argitektuur SA waarin die RNG die totstandkoming van 'n Handves vir Bewaring in Suid-Afrika bepleit.

Die skrywers, RNG-argitekthe Lesley Townsend en Penny Pistorius, sê in dié artikel dat die bewaring van ons erfenis 'n geïntegreerde poging moet wees waarin die publiek en alle vlakke van die Regering deel moet hê. Doeltreffende bewaring is afhanklik van voldoende geldelike skenkings, sowel deur die Regering as deur die private sektor.

Die artikel stippel die volgende doelstellings uit:

- Dit is noodsaaklik dat die gemeenskap aangaande die waarde van ons kulturele erfenis en die doel van die bewaring daarvan, opgevoed word.

- Bewaringswerk behoort in konsultasie met die gemeenskap gedoen te word sodat die kulturele

'n Ondersoek na die rol van die media – met spesifieke verwysing na die gedrukte media – in die bewaringstryd in Suid-Afrika

waardes van die gemeenskap beskerm kan word.

■ Die kulturele betekenis van 'n gebou, huis of wat ook al, moet vasgestel word deur die ontleding van inligting wat ingesamel word by onder meer die publiek, plaaslike gemeenskappe, kulturele liggame en geakkrediteerde bewaringskenners.

■ Besluite ten opsigte van die vervanging van vermiste dele van 'n gebou, moet gegrond wees op historiese inligting, soos argief-rekords en foto's, koerant-artikels, tekeninge en skilderye.

Nie een van bogenoemde doelstellings is moontlik sonder die medewerking van die media, en veral die gedrukte media, nie. En daar moet 'n

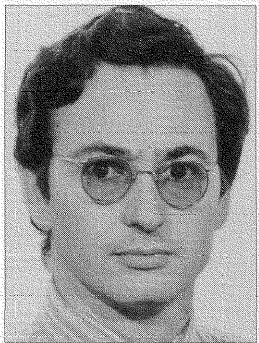
vrymoedigheid by die onderskeie bewaringsinstansies bestaan om bewaringsjoernaliste te nader en op 'n professionele vlak 'n verstandhouding met hulle te bewerkstellig. Hulle moet joernaliste veral in hul vertrouwe neem en hulle nie bloot as 'nuushonde' bejeën en behandel nie.

Bewaringsliggame moet beseft dat joernaliste trefkrag en reikwydte het om impetus aan bewaringsaksies te verleen. Gevolglik moet dié liggame op 'n vaste grondslag met joernaliste as lede van die bewaringspan skakel. Dit is 'n kostbare vennootskap wat opgebou en onderhou moet word, want daarsonder is bewaring, soos alles wat nie in die lig geskied nie, tevergeefs. ■

Quality you can well afford...

WOOLWORTHS

Preserving the architectural



By Peter Jackson

Mr Jackson is a practising Architect and a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. An edited version of this article appeared in "10 Jahre Zimbabwe: Kunst + Geschichte" Exhibition Catalogue, Bremen, West Germany 1990

ZIMBABWE has a modern urban history of only a century, dating from the military occupation of Mashonaland by the British South Africa Company in 1890. The two major cities in the country, Harare (formerly Salisbury) and Bulawayo, are classic examples of colonial settlements in which the Europeans lived and worked apart from the African population. Broad streets were laid out in grid-iron patterns, and building styles evolved from simple corrugated iron and brick structures to elaborate neo-classical façades combined with delicate Edwardian cast-ironwork imported from Scotland and South Africa.

As Dix¹ has noted: "The almost invariable practice of the colonials in designing these buildings as near as may be in the styles of their own lands, represented a desire to have around them buildings in styles that were reassuringly familiar ... when it was built, each building was conserving a concept of 'home' ". In contrast, the African was considered a temporary sojourner in the town, (whose permanent home was rural) required only for cheap labour to serve the interests of the Europeans. Fenced locations with rows of identical and numbered hovels, controlled by curfew, were provided at sufficient distance from permanent settlement "to safeguard the health and security of the European".

The extensive redevelopment which characterised so many cities in Africa during the late 1960's and 'seventies occurred on a much lesser scale in Rhodesia. In 1965 the country illegally declared UDI, and over the following fifteen years poured increasing economic and human resources into civil war, resisting black majority rule. While the fabric of other African towns and cities underwent dramatic renewal and expansion, in Rhodesia urban development stagnated. There was reduced construction in both the housing and commercial sectors until genuine independence was attained in 1980. Thus today, both Bulawayo and Harare possess remarkable numbers of their early buildings, and very well demonstrate the technical and stylistic evolution of colonial architecture in Southern Africa.

Existing legislation

Zimbabwe inherited two Acts of Parliament containing provision for the protection of historic buildings. The first is the National Museums and Monuments Act, which requires that any person who proposes to either demolish or to alter materially any building erected before 1 January

1910, must give notice and details at least fourteen days prior to carrying out such work. The executive director of National Museums and Monuments may, within seven days of receiving such notice, order that the alterations or demolitions may not commence within a further fourteen days. This gives time for a photographic survey, or for a preservation order to be issued. (It has been recommended and is likely to be soon promulgated that this rather arbitrary date be altered from 1910, to become fifty years before the present).

The Act also makes provision for the minister to declare a building a national monument, and if necessary, to acquire it.

The second Act is the Regional Town and Country Planning Act of 1976 whereby a local planning authority may serve a building preservation order on a building owner. The preservation order takes effect immediately, but the building owner may lodge an appeal within one month. The effect of the preservation order is to prevent demolition, alteration or extension of the building unless authorised by the issue of a planning permit. It does not irrevocably freeze development on the site, but rather controls what is carried out, through consent of the local planning authority. The authority may subsequently permit alteration or demolition.

Once a building preservation order has been imposed, the owner may call upon the authority to acquire the land, such acquisition requiring the agreement of a price. If it does not do this within two years, the authority must withdraw the preservation order.

Building preservation orders: Confrontation

Many people expected that Mugabe's government would encourage demolition of those buildings which reflected the country's colonial history. But in 1981 the City of Harare served building preservation orders on two buildings: the 1894 Market Hall, which it owned itself; and on Jameson House, double-storey office chambers erected between 1896 and 1898, and under threat of demolition by the Reserve Bank for their proposed extensions.

The Market Hall, which was in very derelict condition, was extensively renovated and restored to its 1900 verandahed appearance and given new vitality as a 'People's Market' selling vegetables and trinkets. It has provided a significant injection of life into a generally very run-down area, as well as becoming an interest-

Photographs, opposite:

Top: Contemporary view of Robert Mugabe Road, showing the majority of early buildings still standing along the former main commercial thoroughfare. (Photo: Niels Lassen)

Middle: Market Hall, erected 1893-94. A timber verandah was added at the turn of the century. This was one of the main public buildings in Salisbury for many years. (Photo: National Archives of Zimbabwe)

Bottom: Market Hall, restored after Independence as a People's Market. (Photo: Niels Lassen)

¹ Gerald Dix "A Sure & Proper Foundation - Conservation and the future of Urban Design", in "Planning & Conservation", Heritage Trust, London 1987

heritage in Harare

ing tourist attraction as one of the two oldest buildings in Harare.

On the other hand, the serving of the order on Jameson House sparked considerable controversy, and led to the Reserve Bank appealing against its imposition in the Administrative Court. The appeal was lost, but caused a heated debate and left a confused judgment, with the order being upheld on grounds of special historic interest rather than of special architectural merit. (Some 22 persons had been tried and sentenced in the High Court which sat in the building, for their participation in the 1896 national uprising against settler rule).

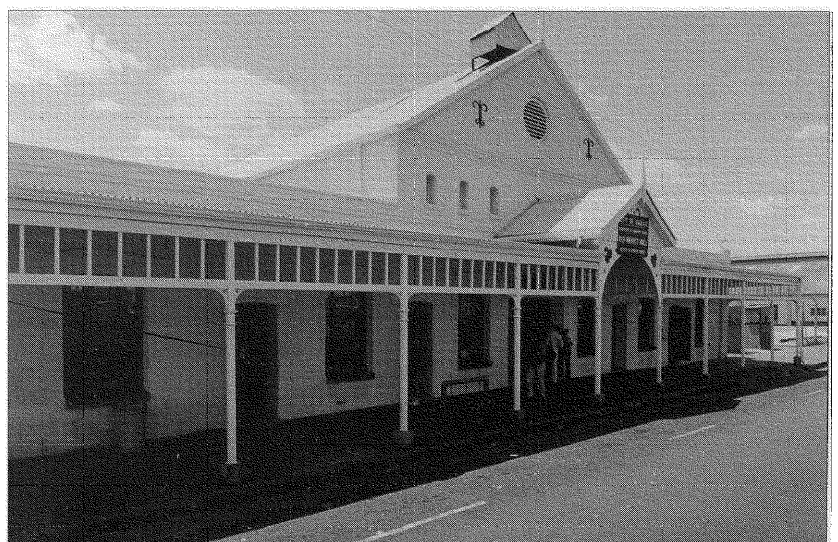
Several important points arose from the case. The first being that the imposition of a building preservation order on an old building was not to be lightly dismissed by even the most powerful developer.

It was only the second of two such orders to be imposed, and if the Reserve Bank's appeal had been won, it would be most unlikely that a local authority would have ever again gone to the trouble of imposing a preservation order, or to the not inconsiderable expense of fighting an appeal against an order.

The second point, of even greater significance, was that the municipal officers during the presentation of the case, agreed in principle to the recommending of compensatory floor area factor (bulk) being permitted by special consent. Although not in a position to assure that this would be granted by the minister, the fact was that a principle had been recognised which might enable a number of older and more important structures to resist the bulldozer of redevelopment.

Although unlikely ever to be in a position to provide compensation in cash, the city could recommend compensation in kind, to offset inconvenience and lost floor area which a developer may face in retaining a historic structure on his site.

The third issue was the strong demonstration of political support to the concept of conservation, clearly stated by the then minister of local government and housing (and minister responsible for administering the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act), Dr Edison Zvobgo MP. He insisted that he be called as an expert witness and stated that it was government policy to preserve such buildings. "Nations who go about destroying their own buildings are in danger of destroying their own heritage." A very important statement, made only two years after independence, which has since been sustained by government support for historic buildings research



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and publication, and for the formulation of a conservation policy.

Confrontation was expensive, time-consuming and ultimately did not save the building. Six years later, after much representation and negotiations by the city planners and architects and their advisors, the Reserve Bank remained adamant in its intention to demolish Jameson House and to fully redevelop the site. Planning consent for redevelopment was eventually granted by the council and Jameson House was demolished in November 1988.

It is to the council's considerable credit that it refused to be bulldozed by the developer, and was prepared to offer considerable planning concessions, and even outline proposals to enable the retention of the Victorian structure within an alternative redevelopment. Possibly if this process had been initiated at a preliminary feasibility stage in the project, (without recourse to the imposition of the preservation order), sensitive proposals could have been developed to fulfil both the bank's needs and satisfy public interest through the retention of an early and unique structure in the city.

Constructive conservation

Learning from this experience, and with the lack of any provision for conservation of historic buildings or historic areas within the existing City of Harare Town Planning Scheme, a committee was formed to examine how a conservation strategy could be accommodated within the new Harare master plan from an early stage in its drafting. The committee comprised representatives of the town planning, city architects and town clerks departments, the regional office of Physical Planning, the National Museums and Monuments, and with the author in his honorary role as Historic Buildings Advisor to the city.

The committee began its deliberations in 1986, and agreed from the outset that Robert Mugabe Road (formerly Manica Road) should be given special treatment when the new Master Plan was formulated.

This was the principle commercial thoroughfare of the early town, and is endowed with a considerable number of attractive verandahed buildings, constructed between 1908 and 1912. It has very special townscape qualities which provide a distinctive character to that part of the city centre, despite some of the buildings having been allowed to deteriorate very badly.

It was also agreed that urgent action was needed to enable the city to encourage conservation in the shorter term, as well as within the long term framework offered by the Master Plan.

Within a few months a draft set of regulations was drawn up, Regional, Town and Country Planning (City of Harare) (Historic Buildings) Regulations. It was envisaged that they could eventually be adopted nationally, but the consultative period would be much shorter if restricted in the first instance to Harare alone. The Department of Works has subsequently decided that the regulations should be incorporated within the new city region Master Plan.

Public meeting

The regulations have yet to be promulgated, but the principles they contain effectively define present municipal policy towards historic buildings. Owners of the sixty most significant buildings, together with representatives of all the estate agents attended a public meeting where proposals were explained and discussed. A number of concerns were raised, largely centred on the issue of property value being adversely affected by the proposed 'listing' of buildings.

The City made it clear that it was to overcome this negative reaction to conservation that the proposed regulations had been drafted. The City proposed a policy which offered positive planning benefits to be obtained through negotiation, which might be able to offset negative financial effects arising from the 'listing' of historic buildings.

In detail, the regulations provide for a register of historic buildings; the appointment of an advisory board; detailed criteria for objectively assessing a building's worth; providing the planning authority with the power to examine preliminary planning proposals affecting registered buildings, and making recommendations as to appropriate planning requirements.

Advisory board and the register

The register would be maintained by the authority in a similar manner as a register for special consents. Application for registration could be made by any interested party in a prescribed form, for consideration by the Advisory Board. Unlike a building preservation order, the registration of a building would not in itself be a mechanism for control. It would be merely a statement by a board of experts as to a building's architectural significance and historic importance, and carry with it certain privileges for the owner with regard to any future applications for planning permission. The Board's responsibility will be the regular preparation of reports of recommendation for each application to the register.

In selecting a building for registration, the

*Photographs, opposite:
Top: FSAD Building, erected 1896-98, the town's first double-storey office chambers. (Photo: National Archives of Zimbabwe)
Middle: Jameson House, formerly FSAD Building, as it appeared in 1949 and up until the time of its demolition in 1988. (Photo: National Archives of Zimbabwe)
Bottom: Store Brothers, a fine example of 1911 colonial commercial architecture in Robert Mugabe Road, poorly maintained. Many other buildings of the same period are in a similar condition. (Photo: Niels Lassen)*

Board would be guided by the following ten criteria, and any which were felt to be satisfied would eventually be specified in the register: historical association, style, workmanship, eccentric qualities, innovative qualities, public appeal, specialist appeal, contribution to environment, integrity and building under threat.

The first buildings likely to be registered will be the sixty or so published by the author in *Historic Buildings of Harare*². This was prepared at the same time as the draft regulations were being prepared. Its intention was to stimulate public interest in the city's architecture, and to show in layman's language which buildings were worthy of conservation, and why.

Planning benefits

The owner of a registered historic building who is considering developing the site will be able, from inception of a project, to approach the planning authority, with his architect, to discuss the feasibility of proposals before large sums are expended on professional fees for what may become abortive work. The authority will have powers to negotiate with the developer from the outset rather than having to later face him in the administrative court.

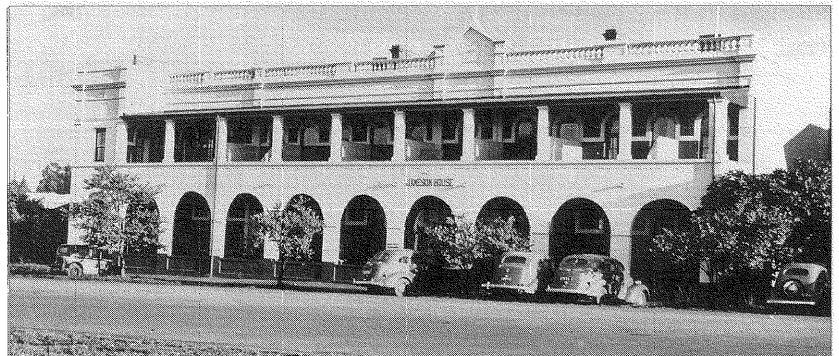
Where the authority cannot afford to offer financial compensation, it will be able to consider offering special planning benefits to a developer, where these would be appropriate.

It is not considered reasonable to expect a developer to incur undue expenses in retaining a historic building or part of such a building and to incur additional maintenance costs, or the incentive to develop will be eroded. Private gain and public benefit might be able to be balanced by the authority being prepared to consider variations to the following controls which pertain to any operative town planning scheme:

- maximum site coverage
- maximum floor area factor (permitted bulk)
- building lines
- specified land-use
- maximum height
- site utilization (parking, unloading, servicing, etc.)

Until the regulations are promulgated within the new Master Plan, it is likely that any significant variations from the existing town planning scheme will require the ministers' specific approval under the relevant provisions of the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act.

The authority will eventually be empowered



² Peter Jackson *Historic Buildings of Harare*, Quest Publishing, Harare, 1986

Preserving the architectural heritage in Zimbabwe

to consider the transfer of the floor area factor to an approved alternative stand unimpeded by a historic building. It may also review the rateable value of a historic building or consider the provision of a maintenance grant where applicable.

Development pressures versus bureaucracy

Zimbabwean experiences in conservation have each arisen through particular and very real circumstances. Strong public support and political will to conserve have enabled initiatives to be taken before significant redevelopment pressures cause irreparable damage to the architectural heritage of our major cities. However, it is now several years since the proposed historic buildings regulations were drafted, yet they have still failed to be formally adopted; the bureaucratic process has failed to respond to the urgency of the situation which they were an attempt to redress.

Robert Mugabe Road seems to have become an extension of the Beira Corridor, with very heavy traffic on the increase down this convenient access to the industrial areas. Within the last year cast iron columns on three important buildings have been demolished by large vehicles, destroying their beautiful cast decorative brackets.

The tarmac extends right up to the line of the Edwardian verandah columns, which now front a noisy, diesel-polluted and dangerous thoroughway, lined by pavements which are far too narrow for the pedestrian population. This depresses the viability of the shopping use for which it is zoned. This – at a time when most other city authorities in the world are attempting to remove heavy traffic out of their city centres. Important historic buildings continue to deteriorate, and

several fine buildings are presently threatened with demolition and redevelopment during an unprecedented period of escalating land values and new building construction in the city.

On the positive side, the city is well aware of these problems and is beginning to consider ways in which to transform Robert Mugabe Road into one of the city's more prestigious streets. There is also now a growing public interest in the architectural heritage of the city, enhanced by publicity and regular city walks.

Any project which might involve the demolition of a significant early building is now discussed at an early stage between the city's department of works, the developer, and the National Museums and Monuments. In two cases, buildings were allowed to be demolished after a full photographic record had been made. The department of works requested council's authority for it to be able at short notice to issue building preservation orders on any of the sixty historic buildings that are intended to be registered, without further reference to the full council, as a means to delay demolition or the sale of the property for the purpose of demolition.

Even after the proposed regulations are formally adopted, in themselves they will not be sufficient to prevent the unnecessary demolition of historic buildings. Their success will rely entirely on their sensitive and creative application by developers and their architects on the one hand, and by the planning authority on the other. It is not the purpose of conservation to turn our towns into museums, but to enhance their character and identify through sensitive and meaningful development. In Zimbabwe, conservation is not an academic exercise. We are learning through our own practical experience. ■



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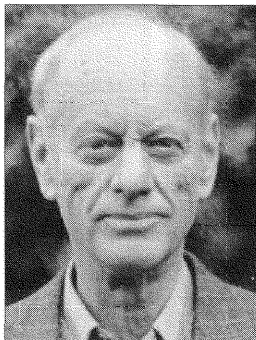
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Conservation in the



By Graeme Binckes

Director, The Cape
Town Heritage Trust

THE effects on the environment of the changes taking place in South Africa should not be underestimated. The institutions of government at the national, regional and local levels are being reconsidered and definitive environmental policies will be required to meet the needs of a broader electorate, added to which rapid population growth and urbanization will result in further pressures on scarce resources. The transitional period will have to be carefully managed in order to ensure the degree of continuity necessary to avoid socially and environmentally disruptive effects of fundamental change.

These factors indicate that in the future, conservation will become of even greater importance than it is today. Moreover, the period of transition is already upon us; if we do not act now to conserve the resources of the total (built and natural) environment, the legacy of the 'new' South Africa will be pitiful indeed. This is not a matter that can be left entirely to the public sector. Particularly where the urban environment is concerned, the measures thus far adopted by the state are inadequate and in view of existing priorities are unlikely to be improved without pressure from the private sector. Indeed the latter cannot avoid a major share of the onus and a lead must be given by the existing national and local environmental organizations.

It is suggested that the action to be taken may be considered under three interrelated headings:

Organizational

■ The environment is an integrated totality and its conservation should be viewed holistically. At present the natural component receives a greater share of attention than the built component. Organizations should interest themselves in both or at least establish links aimed at correcting this imbalance.

■ The existing fragmentation of effort in the private sector indicates the need for a co-operative structure in which organizations can unite in the common interest while yet retaining their individual identities and their autonomy. More local organizations should form regional umbrella bodies (such as Captrust) through which they can be represented at the national level along with national organizations. A National Environmental Alliance was advocated by the writer at the Urban Conservation Symposium held in Johannesburg in July 1990; this would not only provide for cooperation but would also constitute the powerful lobby that is required as no government will act without assurance of public sup-

port. Equally, each organization needs to establish clarity as to its aims in the particular field in which it can operate most effectively, whether this be at the national, regional or local level.

Promotional

A coherent and purposeful organizational structure will provide the basis for the promotion of conservation in the public and private sectors. The issues involved include the following:

■ The widespread view of conservation as a purely aesthetic and elitist activity remote from the daily needs of most people must be dispelled by accentuating its socio-economic purposes.

This view is held by a large part of the general public, particularly the 'under-privileged'; that it prevails in the public sector is evidenced by the low priority accorded to conservation in terms of state expenditure and by the inadequacy of legislation.

■ Constant pressure must be maintained for the restructuring of state departments among which conservation work is at least as fragmented as it is in the private sector. An overall system of environmental management is required, the most appropriate model being that of an independent body reporting to the Office of the State President as advanced by Mr Gawie Fagan.

■ Ways have to be found of involving commerce and industry more closely in the conservation field, both in respect of their own operations and as source of funding. It is recognized that many already contribute liberally to projects regarded as promoting social welfare, but conservation represents a major long-term social welfare concern.

Developmental

The factors referred to above imply the need for a general broadening of interest and action on the part of private sector environmental organizations in view of the pressures on available resources that are now building up. Urban conservation in particular will require a great deal more than its present share of attention when, as will soon be the case, the large part of our population is urbanized. The development in several centres of urban trusts is a positive step in this direction and emphasizes the need for cooperation with local authorities. A brief description of the Cape Town Heritage Trust may be pertinent.

This Trust was established in 1987 by the Cape Town City Council which, with the backing of the Cape Provincial Administration, donated to it fourteen city buildings originally acquired for a road-widening scheme that was later abandoned. All these properties have now been

“new” South Africa

sold, subject to conditions requiring their restoration and conservation which are annexed to the Deeds of Sale so that they will apply equally to all future purchasers.

Having realized this capital the Trust, on the principle of the revolving fund, is now seeking further buildings which by virtue of their historical, architectural and environmental significance require conservation. It is also developing street improvement schemes in the streets where the majority of its properties are situated.

These schemes, which are a co-operative venture with the owners and traders involved and with the City Council, are based upon proposals by architects commissioned by the Trust and are intended to upgrade the areas in order to provide a pleasant working environment and to attract shoppers, including tourists. The Trust has also acquired a centrally-situated building as its headquarters and intends to open a shop based on the theme ‘Cape Town’ in this building; there will be space for exhibitions in the basement.

The Trust is constituted in terms of a Notarial Deed of Trust and has been exempted from income tax, donations tax and estate duty on legacies. It is governed by a Board of Trustees which includes representatives of the Council, of environmentally-oriented organizations and of persons appointed for their special expertise; competent advice on property development, finance, public relations and fundraising is essential. In spite of its origins in the City Council, the Trust is an entirely independent, private sector organization, a status which is of undoubted benefit to both parties.

This article outlines only the most immediate concerns, drawing attention in particular to the growing need for adequate provision for urban conservation which, apart from its inherent motivation, can provide a vehicle for the wider promotion of the issues affecting conservation to which reference has been made. It is vitally important that efforts in the conservation field as a whole be intensified without delay, failing which the ‘new’ South Africa will inherit an environment in crisis. ■



It is vitally important that efforts in the conservation field as a whole be intensified without delay, failing which the ‘new’ South Africa will inherit an environment in crisis.

Restoration and functionality

By Albrecht Holm

Pretoria architect and member of the national council of the Simon van der Stel Foundation

THE concept of restoring an object presumes that this object *can* be restored and *should* also be restored. The idea all started with the restoration of damaged and decayed works of art, artefacts and movable objects of earlier cultures. These objects were regarded as inherently valuable enough to warrant the cost and effort of restoration, while at the same time restoration would add to their value – even to the extent that, in extreme cases, the object would only after restoration constitute a real physical or mental asset.

With this background, restoration of such objects developed into a fine art in its own right, backed by theory and ethical codes. In most cases the restored object would become a museum exhibit or essential link in a study collection and therefore it would very rarely be put to practical use. Functionality in restoration, therefore, was considered only to make the object last while subjected to museum illumination, or in the case of furniture restoration, to some limited application of its original use.

The idea of subjecting an object to a new practical use, was first contemplated when restoration was also applied to buildings, where two new considerations had to be accounted for. Firstly, there was the considerable cost of such restoration that was sought to be set off to some income generated from a practical use of the restored building; and secondly a building is for all practical reasons immovable. It is part of an environment that can change and offer new opportunities or make new demands.

The building also stands on a site which, in commercial terms, constitutes a separate value. This value is to some extent dependent on the building, but not entirely. The commercial value of the site can surpass the commercial value of the building, so that the building itself can eventually become a commercial burden rather than an asset. This puts high pressure on the building to be rehabilitated in the commercial sense, which again in some cases may be impossible without applying the building to a new function. It makes sense to find a new function which is viable in the changed environment of changed demands and opportunities; but at the same time this new function should not diverge too far from the original one to avoid the necessity of drastic physical alterations to the old building. These are both good business and good conservation principles.

It may sound like a tall order to find a new function for an old building other than converting, for example, an old station building into a railway museum, an old court building into a law

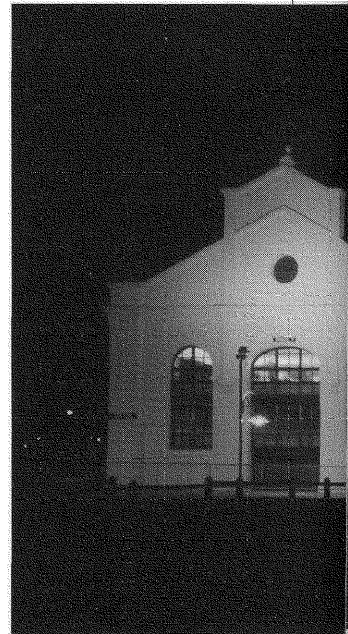
museum, an old fort into a military museum, etc. But then, museums in general are financially not profitable.

One must therefore look at the original as well as the possible new use with a broader view, and realize that a market hall is but a building with large interior spaces where people used to come together in large groups at set times, making much noise – and that this is not very different from a pop concert or a disco. So, with a bit of imaginative adaptation (sound proofing and admission control), the market, for example, can be converted into a concert hall or theatre if these functions are viable in that location.

Large interior space can also be subdivided, even with temporary or movable walls, partitions, floors and ceilings as has been done with large industrial sheds that have been converted into shopping malls. Unfortunately, in some of these cases, the sensation of a large interior space is lost and only the exterior of the buildings, often of less interest, is conserved. Fortunately however, the interior could later again be cleared if shopping malls went out of fashion and other new functions would warrant the use of a large uncluttered space. The exterior of such buildings is then re-used in a new urban design to create new urban spaces.

On the other hand, buildings with small interior subdivisions like schools, office buildings, etc. and those with very specialized designs, are often more difficult to adapt to new applications that require a completely new layout. The reason would be because old buildings often rely on internal walls for structural support, and because quite a lot of detail could be lost with the removal of internal walls. Also because the whole exercise becomes very expensive. Other inherent functional advantages could again be lost as, for instance, the extensive interior building mass that could help create a better thermal and acoustic environment.

In many cases the modernization of old office buildings is confronted with the problem that the marketing for contemporary technology has developed so far that everybody feels he wants



— a partnership



modern technology and cannot do without it. But when it comes to the delivery of the goods, one finds that technology has not yet developed so far that it can be installed in confined spaces. Thus greater floor to floor dimensions are required than those found in old buildings. Even if the old floor could then technically be removed, the new floors would not fit well behind the old fenestration of the façade.

Hopefully further development and technology, or a more scientific approach to the application thereof by applying eco-design principles, will solve these problems in future.

Most revitalization programmes rely on marketing and human conceptions of what is the most attractive and appropriate environment to be in. The need for a human and exciting environment has often been ignored by developers who, in other respects, have meticulously met all requirements of functional developments. It is in this field that recent trends to exploit the latent possibilities of the heritage are best put to advantage.

Anybody involved in modern development on a large scale, will realize what effort goes into designing a humanly pleasant environment which in the case of restoration of an old building is there for the taking. On the other hand, the interest of conservation is also served because the building itself and the mental effort that has gone into its designing, is granted a new life, a new opportunity to make a contribution to civilization.

Whereas the functional approach to the built environment has lately borrowed certain philo-

sophical inputs from the conservationist, it is also true that conservation has gained from the influence of functionality. No restoration work on a building or group of buildings is purely only that. Any restoration takes practical functionality into account and will not just repeat a detail or re-use a material which was clearly a fault in the previous work and will again decay in the near future. Changing environment, changing habits and demands, as well as new appropriate technology, are scrutinized and will in most cases of scientific restoration, reflect in the end result.

Even the research and application of research results have developed into a science and are moving away from the romantic approach and guessing of the past. Restoration in itself has become functional.

To find the appropriate niche for a restoration project on the wide scale, from pure restoration on the one hand to complete recycling on the other, the concept of a restoration policy has been developed. Specialized expertise in the restoration and recycling fields thus find a practical application. After weighing inputs from various experts in their respective fields, this restoration policy document is compiled. It is an invaluable instrument for decision-making, budgeting, programming, planning and throughout the restoration operation and even later for re-adjustments and feedback. ■

*The Workshop in Durban
— a good example of "functional" restoration*

Die Karoohuis op Smithfield

Prof PJ Nienaber

voormalige direkteur van die Nasionale Afrikaanse Letterkundige Museum en Navorsingsentrum

Voorhistoriese tydperk. Die Suid-Vrystaat is ná 1820 deur blanke veeboere besoek. As gevolg van die langdurige droogte in die Kaapkolonie, het blanke boere oor die Oranjerivier getrek op soek na weiveld vir hul vee. Omdat hulle nie beplan het om hulle hier te vestig nie, kon hulle aanvanklik in hul tentwaens woon. Deur verder gebruik te maak van seilafdakke teen die son, rookskerms van matte en pale, en tente, kon hulle 'n paar maande lank redelik gerieflik woon.

Toe die droogte egter aanhou, het die boere meer bestendige wonings nodig gehad. Hulle het meestal, net soos die inboorlinge in dié tyd, van plaaslike materiale gebruik gemaak. Gedurende die voorhistoriese tydperk is tydelike wonings van plaaslik verkrygbare materiaal opgerig: klip, pale, riete, gras en klei. Gewoonlik is 'n raamwerk van latte opgerig wat met riet en gras bedek is. Voorbeelde van sulke tydelike woonstrukture is die sogenaamde kapstyl- en hartbeeshuise. In die Vrystaat was die hartbeeshuis meer algemeen.

Die wa was die eerste woning op 'n nuwe plek en het dit ook gebly totdat 'n beter woonplek gebou kon word.

Ná die kapstyl- en hartbeeshuise het kleihuise ontstaan. Nadat die eerste intrekkers hulle noord van die Oranjerivier gevestig het, het hulle meer permanente, reghoekige woonhuise met kleimure en gewelddakke begin bou. Alhoewel kliphuise voorgekom het, was klei in hierdie tydperk die algemene boumateriaal.

Die klei- en klipmurasies is die enigste oorblyfsels van die vroeë boukuns. Ons moet hulle probeer bewaar en beskerm, soos die Grieke in Athene oor die ruïnes van die Parthenon waak.

Hulle is trots op hul kultuurerfenisse. Ons kan ook trots wees op wat oorgebly het van dié huise soos pres. Hoffman se kleihuis op Hoffmansrust by Wepener. Maar hoe kan ons as ons nie weet van die oorblyfsels van ou pioniershuise nie? Ons moet hulle restoreer of beskerm en moet hulle besoek om te begryp en te waardeer.

Eerw. JP Pellissier van die Paryse Sendinggenootskap het hom in 1833 op die sendingstasie by Bethulie gevestig om die Batlapins daar te bearbei. Nadat hy 'n tydelike kerk- en skoolgebou laat bou het, het hy in 1834 begin met die bou van 'n woonhuis. Die huis is in 1835 voltooi met die hulp van die sendeling-ambagsman, C Gosselin.

Die eerste dorpshuise het soos baie plaashuise gelyk en was meestal reghoekig met gewels en grasdakke. Die Pellissier-huis is 'n goeie voorbeeld van hierdie vroeë dorpsargitektuur. Die oorspronklike woonhuis was reghoekig met twee gewelmure en 'n staandak van riete. Die onderste gedeelte van die mure tot by die vensterbanke is van klip en die res van baksteen. Die stewige, ruim gebou was aanvanklik in sewe vertrekke verdeel. Later, toe die huis te klein geword het, het eerw. Pellissier weerskante nog twee vertrekke met sinkdakke aangebou.

Die Pellissier-huis is vandag die oudste bewoonbare huis in die Vrystaat.

Die murasie van pres. Hoffman se kleihuis op Hoffmansrust naby Wepener (omstreeks 1853) was al baie verweer. Ten einde die gebou te bewaar, is besluit om dit te reconstrueer.

By die Voortrekkermonument en -museum naby Winburg, staan die geboortehuis van pres. MT Steyn op die pioniersplaas Rietfontein. Pres. Steyn is op 2 Oktober 1857 in dié huis gebore.

Buiten die gebou se historiese waarde, is dit ook van argitektoniese belang, aangesien dit 'n belangrike plek in die ontwikkeling van die volksboukuns inneem. Platdakhuis het gevolg ná die hartbeeshuise en kleihuise van die pionierboere.

Soos die gebruik was, is die huis ook van plaaslik verkrygbare materiaal gebou. Die gebou met sy langwerpige vorm, ysterklipmure en platdak spreek van eenvoud. Die binnemure is van roubakstene gebou en die huis het 'n klei- en beesmisvloer met perskepitte waar die vloer maklik uitgetrap het.

Dit is 'n drievreterkhuise met 'n slaapkamer, voorhuis en kombuis. Die vensters met luike en platdak (oorspronklik 'n brakdak), is kenmerkend van die argitektuur van die laat-Voortrekertyd (omstreeks 1850).

Restorasiewerk is in 1978 deur die Vrystaatse Provinsiale Museumdiens onderneem. Die

Bladsy oorkant, bo: Klipgeboortehuis van pres. MT Steyn by Winburg.

Middel: Murasie van pres. JP Hoffman se kleihuis.

Onder: Dieselfde kleihuis ná reconstruksie.



huisie is gemeubileer soos dit waarskynlik in 1857 gelyk het, met 'n hemelbed, tafel, stoele en kombuisgereedskap.

Tussen die harde kliprantjies in die Suid-Vrystaat lê die skoon, skilderagtige dorpie, Philippolis, eintlik die toonvenster van plantdakhuisse in die Vrystaat. Skouer teen skouer, vlak by die straat, staan die huisies met hul platdakke en oop stoepe.

Die negentiende-eeuse platdakhuisse van die Karoodorpe Graaff-Reinet, Victoria-Wes, Richmond en Beaufort-Wes herinner aan die beskeie, ordelike en eenvoudige, dog deftige huise van die agttiende eeu in Engeland.

Talle Kaaplandse boere het, soos gemeld, omstreeks 1820–1839 na die Transgariëp in die binneland begin trek. Ook die tot nog toe nomadiese Griekwas het hulle mettertyd deur bemiddeling van dr. J Philip onder Adam Kok op Philippolis gaan vestig.

Die Griekwas het nie net 'n redelik sterk volksverband gehandhaaf en 'n beskaafde Christelike inslag gehad nie, maar het ook uit hul tradisionele inboorlinghutte 'n eie boustyl ontwikkel wat voorgespruit het uit die Karoo-platdakhuis-argitektuur. Die Kaaplandse boere het reghoekige platdakhuisse met twee tot selfs ses vertrekke gebou: 'n voorhuis, weerskante 'n slaapkamer, en daarby 'n kombuis met 'n vuurherd.

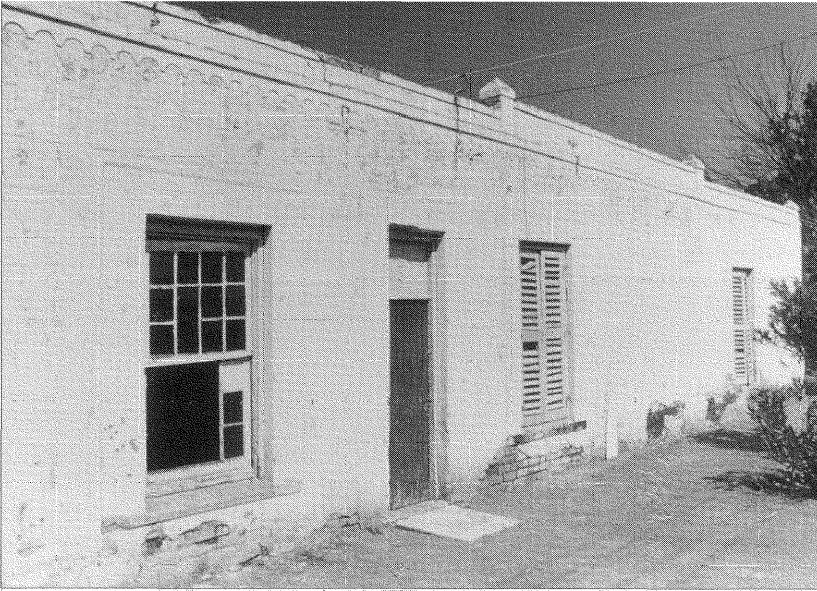
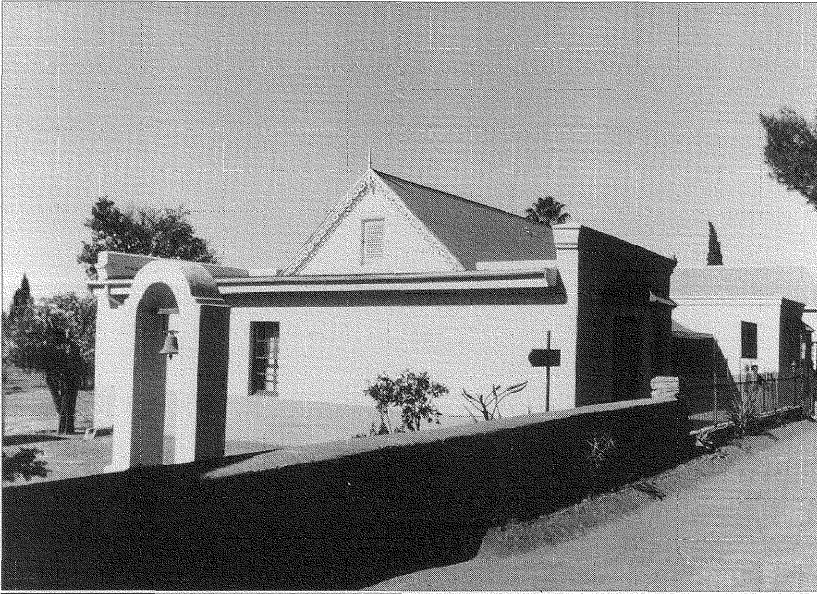
Die vensters is gewoonlik simmetries aan albei kante van die voordeur en in verhouding met die twee buitemure. Die rustige en eensgesinde effek staan bekend as die Karoo-argitektuur. Hortjies wat met 'n vertikale balkie oop- en toegemaak kon word, is later voor die skuifvensters en houtrame aangebring.

Die oop voorstoep wat die hele lengte van die huis beslaan het, het dikwels twee tot drie trappies gehad. Soms is die stoep se kante met 'n klipsitplek en sierlike kleipotte afgerond. Teen sononder was die stoep gewoonlik die fokuspunt van die huis: gaste is onthaal, daar is gerook, koffie gedrink en gesellig verkeer.

Die dakkonstruksie het uitstekend by die Vrystaatse omstandighede aangepas. Dit was 'n platdak met die helling na agter. Oorspronklik was dit met spaansriet of olifantsgras gedek en met brakgrond oortrek. Heelwat later is sinkplate, wat goedkoop en doeltreffend was, gebruik. Die rietdakke moes dikwels vervang word en/of met doringhoutpale gestut word.

Bo-oor die voorste mure is 'n kroonluis. Die aansig op die huisfasade is verder afgerond deur gepleisterde omranding van die vensters en deure. Later is selfs gekapte klippe om die vensters, langs die kosyne en by die hoeke van die





gebou aangebring, maar dit het afbreuk gedoen aan die oorspronklike eenvoud en egtheid.

Die materiaal waarvan die huisies gebou was, moes maklik bekombaar wees, en nie veel ambagsvernuf vereis nie. Die roubakstene is eiehandig gevorm. Klei wat met beesmis gemeng is om stewig te bind, is gebruik om die vloere te smeer. Die mure, onder breed en spits boontoe, het die huis in die somer koel en in die winter warm gehou. Luggate by deure het lig- en lugtoevoer in die vertrekke verseker, veral aangesien die huisies dikwels sy aan sy gebou is.

Die erwe was kleinbeskermd, die straatjies smal met huisies in 'n ry langs mekaar – gesellig en eenvoudig.

Erf 50 in Kerkstraat, Smithfield, is ingevolge 'n grondbrief wat op 31 Maart 1883 geregistreer is, die eerste keer toegeken aan ene Casper Jacobus du Plessis. Dit mag wees dat die erf reeds bebou was voordat die grondbrief opgestel is. Die eenvoudige plattadakhuisie wat in 1888 tot nasionale gedenkwaardigheid verklaar is, het in 1982 die eiendom van die Stigting Simon van der Stel geword en is ná die vloedreën in Februarie 1988 herstel. Tans is dit 'n bewoonbare gebou in, op twee na, die oudste dorp in die Vrystaat en 'n verteenwoordigende voorbeeld van 'n woonhuis uit die tweede helfte van die negentiende eeu.

Soos reeds aangedui, is daar vir die vroegste bouwerk in die Vrystaat algemeen gebruik gemaak van riete en biesies: dit is aangewend vir die byekorfhutte van die Boesmans en die Basotho, die hartbeeshuise van die trekboere, as grasbedekking vir die rondawel-hutte van die Botswana en die reghoekige huise van die blanke nedersetters. In die vroeë jare van die blanke vestiging was die langwerpige woning met 'n steil grasdak dan ook kenmerkend van die plase en dorpe in dié gebied.

Dit het egter nie lank geduur nie of die toenemende skaarste van dekgras het bouers gedwing om alternatiewe te begin soek, en in hierdie stadium het die plattadakhuisie toenemende gewildheid geniet. In die droë binneland van Suid-Afrika het die geboue geen steil dakke nodig gehad om vinnig groot hoeveelhede reënwater te laat afloop nie, en kon volstaan word met 'n effens hellende dak – 'n sogenaamde 'plat dak' – van brakkelei, wat in die omstandighede genoegsame waterdigtheid verskaf het.

Gedurende die vroeë dekades van die Vrystaatse Republiek het die plattadakhuisies dus vinnig veld gewen. Selfs nadat die aanwending van sinkplate as dakmateriaal meegebring het dat die standak in ere herstel kon word, is dit nog algemeen aangetref – so algemeen dat dit beskou kan

word as die tipiese bouvorm van die vroeg-Republikeinse tydperk..

Op verskeie Vrystaatse dorpe bestaan daar nog voorbeelde van hierdie kenmerkende huisies. Al verkeer hulle dikwels in 'n verwaarloosde toestand, moet 'n mens dit verwelkom, aangesien dit beteken dat hulle die vernietigende uitwerking van 'modernisering' vrygespring het.

'n Mooi voorbeeld van hierdie boustyl is die platdakhuisie op Smithfield, met sy simmetries geplaasde deur en vensters (in hierdie geval van houtblindings voorsien) en ekonomiese versiering in die vorm van 'n eenvoudige kroonlids wat van pleister en bakstene bo-aan die vooraansig gevorm is. Aan die voor- en sykante is die mure effens bo die dakvlak verhoog in 'n lae borswering en verberg die dak self, tans van sink, wat met 'n ligte helling na agter afloop.

Voor dié huise is daar dikwels 'n leiklipplaveisel aangebring, maar bou en dakmateriaal vir die konstruksie van 'n veranda het in die vroeë jare ontbreek. Die golwende stoepmuurtjie in die geval van die huisie op Smithfield, is waarskynlik eers later gebou.

Met verloop van tyd is pogings dikwels aangewend om die platdakhuisies in die Vrystaat deur verbouing en verandering deftiger en indrukwekkender te laat lyk. Dit is egter juis hulle eenvoud wat hulle wesentlike kenmerk vorm en hulle 'n onvervangbare deel van die provinsie se kultuurerfenis maak.

Dit is teen dié agtergrond dat die platdakhuisie op Erf 50 van bewarenswaardige belang is: dit roep 'n grootliks verdwene leefwyse en lewensinstelling in herinnering. Insgelyks versinnebeeld dit vergange bouwyses en aanwending van boumateriaal: 'n spontane, dog diepgewortelde ruimtebegrip wat nie net in afsonderlike geboue tot uitdrukking gekom het nie, maar in strate en selfs dorpsgebiede.

Gedurende die afgelope drie, vier dekades word die idille van die plattelandse dorpslewe en boukuns deur veral twee gevare bedreig: die verstedeliking van die bevolking en die gevolglike ontvolking van die platteland tref die meeste dorpe swaar. "Die beskerming wat hierdie dorps-huis deur die verklaring daarvan tot nasionale gedenkwaardigheid geniet, kan in die 'verouderingsproses' alleen tot hierdie gebou se voordeel strek. Maar dan het die gemeenskap ook 'n verantwoordelijkheid: enersyds om die gebou bruikbaar te hou en dus as 'n lewenslement kans op voortgesette lewe te gun, andersyds om in toekomstige omgewingsbeplanning en bebouing die fisieke leefruimte van die gebou te verseker. So kan hierdie platdakhuisie tot waardige simbool en besienswaardigheid in die Smithfield van

die toekoms gedy. (Arie Kuijers in Nuusbrief).

Graag wil die Stigting Simon van der Stel, tak Vrystaat, sy opregte dank betuig aan instansies en persone wat die restourasie en herstelwerk van die Karoohuis moontlik gemaak het. Met die restourasiewerk het kmdt. Jan le Roux Pieterse, voorsitter van die plaaslike bewaringskomitee, en mej. Thariza Smit van die NALN, toesig oor die bouwerk gehou. Die Raad vir Nasionale Gedenkwaardighede het 'n groot finansiële bydrae gemaak. Mej. HH Gous, Vrystaatse verteenwoordiger van die Raad het ook kosbare advies gegee.

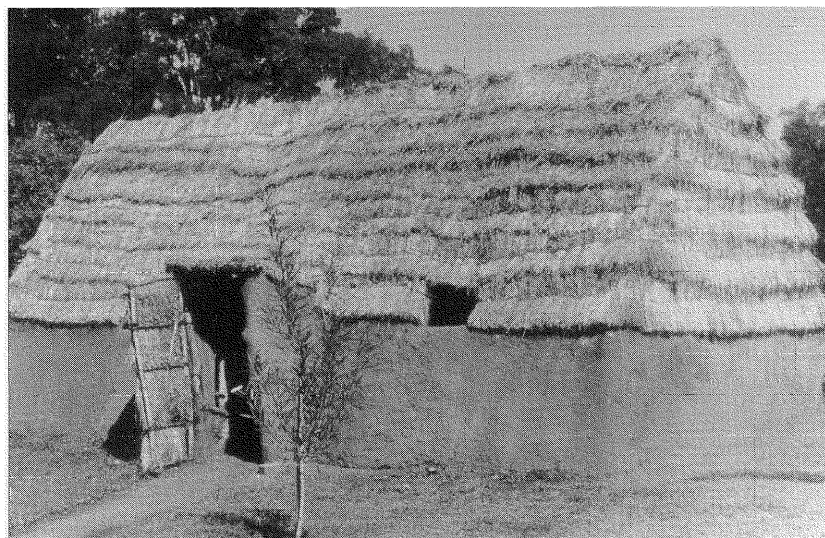
Finansiële bydraes, sommige ruim, is gemaak deur die Stigting NALN, Gencor-ontwikkelings-trust, Stigting Neerlandia, die Munisipaliteit van Reitz en Virginia, die argitekte Hans Koorts en Hatting, Human Motors en verskeie individue soos mnr. ES Serfontein, mev. JS van den Heever, dr. CW Snyman en regter-president FS Smuts.

Die belangrikste aspek van proklamasie is dat 'n huis of gebou of antikwiteit wat tot gedenkwaardigheid verklaar is, deur middel van proklamasie vir die nageslag bewaar word en bewaar móét word. Dit is om hierdie rede dat geen beskadiging, verwydering, slooping of strukturele verandering sonder die Raad vir Nasionale Gedenkwaardighede se toestemming mag geskied nie. 'n Geproklameerde voorwerp bly vanselfsprekend die eiendom van die eienaar en hy behou, nes voorheen, die volkome gebruiksreg van die eiendom. ■

Hierdie bladsy, onder: Hartbeeshuis herbou by Ou Presidensie, Bloemfontein.

Bladsy oorkant, bo: Eerwaarde JP Pellissier se pastorie op Bethulie. Middel: Platdakhuis op Boshof.

Onder: Platdakhuis op Philippolis.



The decision of the National Council of the Simon van der Stel Foundation to sell the historical Macrorie House in Pietermaritzburg, was met with fierce criticism all round.

Macrorie House finds

AFTER numerous attempts to dispose of Macrorie House – the verandahed Victorian house of the Simon van der Stel Foundation in Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg – the historic home of a former bishop of the town has finally found a new owner. Hopefully the discord surrounding its sale will be something of the past.

When the Simon van der Stel Foundation bought Macrorie House (Pietermaritzburg) in 1966, the aim was for the building to be saved.

It is, however, the Foundation's policy to dispose of a property once its safety has been ensured and it has been restored, in order to generate funds for further projects. Attempts to sell Macrorie House on the open market had been met with fierce criticism.

The Simon van der Stel Foundation and representatives of the Macrorie House Museum Trust met in September this year and agreed that Macrorie House would be sold for the sum of R25 000 to the Macrorie House Museum Trust, tenant of the property, on condition that – should the Trust decide or be forced to dispose of the property – the Simon van der Stel Foundation would have first right of refusal to purchase it for the amount paid by the Museum Trust. It was also agreed that the Macrorie House Museum Trust would be responsible for the restoration and maintenance of the property and will be required to report annually to the Simon van der Stel Foundation on its proper maintenance.

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ensured and it has been restored, in order to generate funds for further projects. Attempts to sell Macrorie House on the open market had been met with fierce criticism.

According to a memorandum compiled by the Council earlier this year, "the Foundation saw the potential of the house when nobody else wanted it, and while it had been left derelict.

The Foundation saved the house from decay."

It is also pointed out in the memorandum that the Foundation's main aim in purchasing the house, had been to save the building – while the idea of a museum had been a secondary one, coupled with the objective that the house should be put to significant use.

According to an article in the Natal Mercury, the purchase price and restoration of the property would have amounted to R45 000. The Foundation agreed to give R25 000 towards the restoration, provided that the regional committee raised the purchase price of R15 000.

In October 1965 the City Council agreed to guarantee R15 000 for the Simon van der Stel Foundation to buy Macrorie House for restoration and according to the minutes of the National Council of the Foundation on 28 February 1966, it was resolved "that the Simon van der Stel Foundation purchase Macrorie House for the sum of R15 000" and "that the Foundation borrow an amount of R11 250 to cover the balance of the purchase price..."

There were no conditions attached to the City Council's guarantee of the purchase price with regard to right of ownership or the resale of the property.

The restoration of Macrorie House was completed in 1971 and the official opening took place on 12 February of that year.

According to minutes of the Pietermaritzburg branch of the Foundation, the Macrorie House Museum Trust, which until now has rented Macrorie House Museum from the Foundation, was founded in September 1970. It reads: "Mr Simon Roberts explained that he had drawn up a proposed constitution and that a committee of five would be meeting shortly to finalize the constitution so that the Board of Trustees could come into being and enable them to rent Macrorie House main building. It was further resolved that representations to the Board of Trustees should be made on the basis of two nominees from the Provincial Administration, one from the City Council, one from the Natal Museum and three from the regional committee of the Foundation. This would enable us to have an independent body as tenants of Macrorie House and obtain a suitable rental on a long lease."

On 3 May 1971, a sub-committee of the Pietermaritzburg and Midlands regional committee of the Simon van der Stel Foundation met to consider the draft constitution for the Macrorie House Museum. At this meeting it was agreed that the Macrorie House Museum should be quite separate from the Simon van der Stel Found-

This problem has finally been resolved with the sale of Macrorie House to the Macrorie House Museum Trust, which has been renting the House from the Foundation for the past few years.

a new owner

dition and that the relationship between the two bodies should be one of tenant and landlord, "coupled no doubt with an element of mutual goodwill which does not necessarily always prevail in such circumstances".

In January 1972 Mr ASB Humphreys of the regional committee of the Foundation, requested the permission of the National Council that all furniture which the Foundation had collected for Macrorie House, as well as all funds raised for the project, be transferred to the Macrorie House Museum Trust.

In addition, the Foundation agreed that payment of the rent be postponed to accommodate the Museum Committee. It was also agreed that the remaining balance of the loan at the United Building Society be paid by the Foundation and not be transferred to the Museum Trust.

The Museum was officially opened on Friday, 31 January 1975 and on 18 February 1977, Macrorie House was proclaimed a national monument in the Government Gazette.

Following the restoration of Macrorie House, numerous attempts have been made to sell the property to the City Council of Pietermaritzburg, but to no avail. The Museum Trust was fully aware of the Foundation's intention to sell Macrorie House and maintained a 'neutral' attitude towards the possible sale.

However, a proposal earlier this year by the National Council of the Foundation, that the property should be valued with possible sale to the public in mind, was suddenly met with varying degrees of resistance and opposition by the parties involved, being the Macrorie House Museum Trust, the Maritzburg Society, the City Council, the Natal Provincial Administration, as well as individuals.

The Foundation was even threatened by organizations outside Natal that they would break all ties with the Foundation if it proceeded with the decision of the National Council. This led to a heated debate in the media.

Dr Willem Cruywagen, national president of the Simon van der Stel Foundation, has appreciation and understanding for the fact that it was always generally accepted that Macrorie House would exist as a museum. He says funds for the restoration thereof were raised as well as time and energy spent, by various instances and organizations, among others the Natal Provincial Administration and a number of dedicated individuals.

At the time the project was initiated in the sixties, a branch of the Simon van der Stel Foundation was launched to spearhead it – and there are even opinions that the Macrorie House pro-



ject had been the sole and only incentive for the founding of the branch. Hopefully this whole exercise will serve to resuscitate the Pietermaritzburg-branch of the Simon van der Stel Foundation.

According to one of the original aims of the Board of Trustees of the Macrorie House Museum, "wherever possible..." items which originally belonged to Bishop Macrorie, are exhibited.

It is fitting that the Macrorie House Museum Trust is the new owner of this historical home which remains a 'living' tribute to both Bishop Macrorie, who, it is said, had been a beloved figure in his time, and to an era gone by... it stands for all to see and enjoy, suitably furnished, as a period house of the late 19th century. ■

Macrorie House seen from the street. (Foto: Janek Szymanowski)

19 Albemarle Street, Kensington/Troyeville

The Gandhi House

**Michael J Hart and
Skye Hart**

Co-authors of the publication *The Gandhi House*

The house, surviving time and lives in an area so rich in historic reference and architectural merit, deserves the right to regain its dignity and create an important landmark in the heritage and architectural environment of Johannesburg."

This excerpt is taken from *The Gandhi House*, a publication compiled by architect Michael J Hart and his wife, Skye Hart, describing various aspects of what makes this particular house exceptional.

The restoration of this historical home is due to begin shortly and will take the best part of a year, Mr Hart says.

"The historical importance of No 19 Albemarle Street is that, soon after its erection in 1905, it was the home of the late Mahatma Gandhi, his wife Kasturba and their three children."

The residence is situated on the Kensington/Troyeville boundary. Both suburbs, having been established in the early 1900's as residential townships, contain many typical examples of that period. "The inherent charm of Troyeville, with its Victorian villas, speaks of an affluent age gone by. Its semi-detached dwellings tell of a later period of economic hardship."

Nevertheless, according to the writer, the area today is experiencing an increasing awareness of its architectural heritage, lucky as it is to still be retaining much of its residential suburban character. The result of the awareness is not only the rejuvenation in the form of conservation, but also the transformation of streetscapes into "places of interest".

The architecture of the house reminds one of that belonging to the early twentieth century in Germany, the publication points out.

"Its borrowed idioms reflect the influence of an architect bringing to South Africa the architectural thoughts of Europe at the time.

"The design of the house expresses the dynamism of its site. The plan reflects the triangular irregularity."

The distinctive rounded corner of the house, its most familiar angle, shows clearly the influence of the 'Cafe Neidermeyer', designed by Joseph Olbrich for the town Toppau in 1898. "The plan is typical of the villa type, allowing the garden, although limited in size, to surround the house. The rounded forms of the entrance verandah, the end bay and the main staircase, are expressed as individual elements."

The house was designed by Mr Eugene Chappuis Metzler, for whom it was also built – in 1905. According to documents consulted at the Deeds office in Johannesburg, the house has

since that time changed ownership many times.

Also according to documentation, the Gandhi household was the only Indian one in the suburb at the time – and apparently it was during the time that he was a practicing attorney, with chambers in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, that Gandhi occupied the house. It is said that he was often seen praying from the east side balcony.

The main entrance to the house is from Albemarle Street, with a subsidiary entrance into Hellier Street. The former is centrally located, with a hall covering the width of the building. "The main staircase is framed by moulded arches at the end of the hall. To the left is the drawing room with a bayed window and a wrought iron fireplace. To the right are the dining room and lounge, partitioned with part of the original folding doors containing stained glass panels."

On the first floor are two bedrooms, a study, a bathroom and two balconies – one of which has been enclosed. The roof terrace is apparently reached by a very small spiral staircase, situated at the end of the passage next to the service hoist.

The staircase into the basement is below the main staircase and, typically of art nouveau houses, according to the Harts, the kitchen and its pantry and stores were on this level.

All the living rooms, of which most had fireplaces, have strip timber flooring and high pressed metal ceilings.

"The architecture of the house at the time it was built, was theoretically and physically different to the English Victorian import of architecture in South Africa. Metzler, almost certainly being of European origin, designed this house at the time when his counterparts in Germany, Holland and France expressed very similar architectural ideas.

According to writer Henry F Lenning, by 1905 Art Nouveau architecture had moved towards a simpler classical type of design. He writes that, being a reaction from modern Baroque and the plastic distortions of Art Nouveau, it paved the way for the acceptance of the International Style then being developed in Germany.

The Hart-publication says this deduction places the house in a historical period of transformation and makes it a forerunner of 'modern architecture' in South Africa. ■

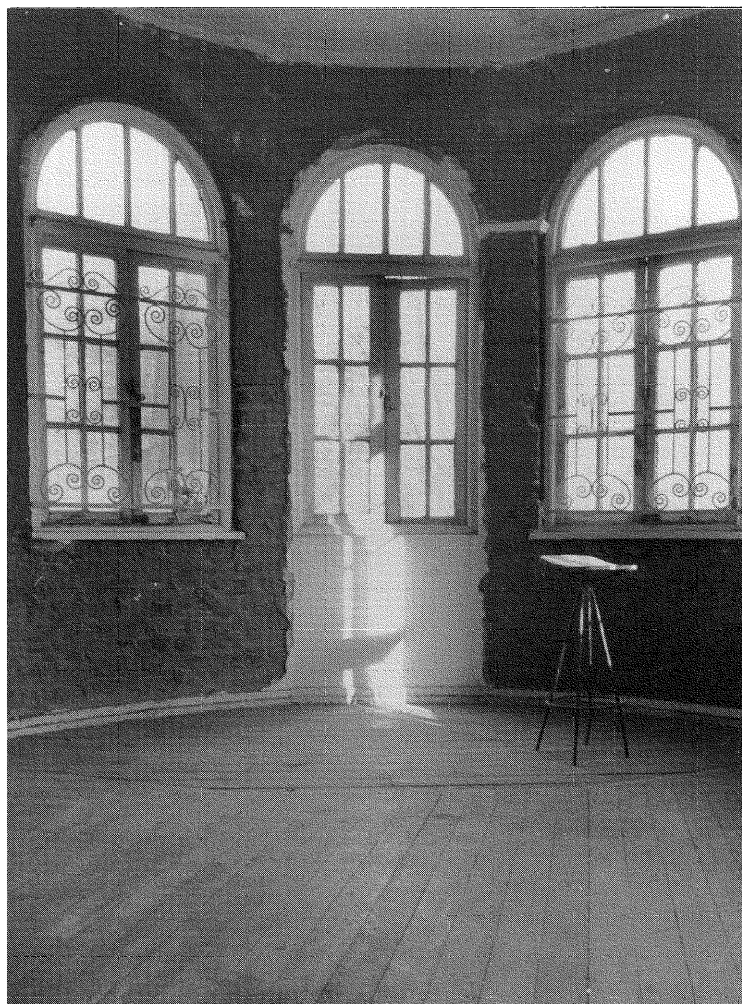
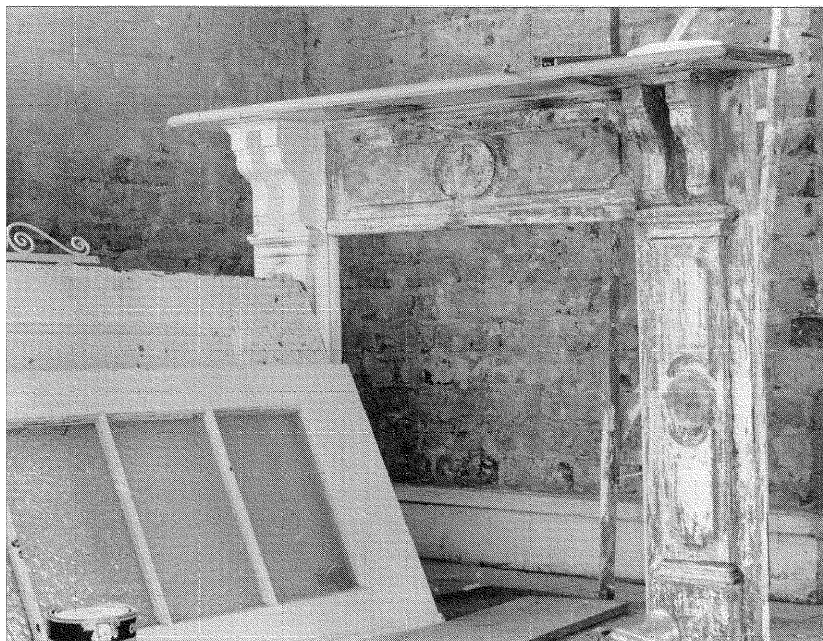
WHEN Mahatma Gandhi left South Africa for good in 1914, Gen Smuts said: "The sacred one has left our shores – hopefully for good".

Though the two men at the time had deviating political views, one wonders if today they might not have been allies...

In an article in Rapport on 18 August 1974, Madden Cole wrote that Mahatma Gandhi would definitely not have been received as a hero in black Africa today. His views on terrorism, majority government, political strikes, communism, birth control and dictatorship would be totally alien to modern African politics, Cole writes.

"At best, he would have a scanty following, because his political philosophy was based on love, absence of violence and realism."

On majority government his opinion was that it was superstitious and ungodly for a majority to govern a minority automatically... Furthermore – "...The leaders of workforces should consider a hundred times before striking..." he is reported to have said. ■



Kapitalisme en bewaring –

ES van Bart

vryskut-joernalis en
korrespondent van
Die Burger oor
bewaring en argitektuur

DIE voorstelle vir die herontwikkeling van die Grootte Kerk-perseel in Kaapstad, wek steeds uit alle oorde kommentaar. Bewaringskundiges, waaronder talle argitekte wat om professionele redes verkies onaniem te bly, maak veral beswaar teen die hoogte en massa sowel as die hiper-moderne ontwerp van die toringblok, wat geheel uit pas is met die elegansie van die ou geboue op straatvlak.

Die dekoratiewe hantering van die venster-detail van die Adderley-straat-fasade van die hooforing-gebou lyk besonder baie na 'n ritsluiting wat daartoe aanleiding kan gee dat *The Adderley* in die volksmond *The Zipper* word soos *The Terraces*, die omstrede ontwikkeling in die Strandstraat-bewaringsgebied, reeds beter bekend staan as *The Mermaid*. Al die prettigheid doen, helaas, nie veel meer as om die somberheid wat die skending van Kaapstad se argitektoniese erfenis omhul, 'n wyle te verlig nie.

Die skuld vir hierdie jammerlike toedrag van bewaringsake word grootliks voor die deur van kapitaalkragtige ontwikkelaars gelê: sommige bewaringsbewustes vind dit verstommend dat ontwikkelaars steeds voortgaan om die Kaapstadse argitektoniese skatte op die altaar van ontwikkeling te offer. Dit is egter nie werklik verbasend nie: kapitaal se krag lê wesenlik juis in die vermeerdering van daardie kapitaal.

Dit is eenvoudig 'n feit dat, uit 'n kapitalistiese oogpunt beskou, die grootste opbrengs op 'n belegging in 'n bepaalde perseel, slegs verkry kan word indien dit optimaal ontwikkel word in soverre soneringsregte dit toelaat.

Indien 'n munisipaliteit se arm gedraai kan word deur nie vae dreigemente dat die bewaring van geboue op die perseel "ongelukkig nie oorweeg kan word indien die ontwikkelaar nie toegelaat word om hoogte- en massabeperkings te oorskry nie", soveel beter vir die belegger – en na die maan met etiese oorweginge.

Ondervinding het egter geleer dat weinig ontwikkelaars bereid is om vrylik die geringste offer op die bewaringsaltaar te lê. Die gevolg is die ietwat patetiese toejuiging van ontwikkelaars wat 'darem' bereid is om 'n fasade of twee te spaar, al word die oue verswelg deur 'n nuwe monstrositeit, van geen argitektoniese meriete hoegenaamd nie.

Tog gaan emosionele aanvalle nie die saak beredder nie. En 'mooi vra' is in die verlede in die oorgrote meerderheid van die gevalle as 'n blote vermorsing van asem bewys.

Solank as wat ontwikkelaars soneringsregte het wat hulle met minder en meer arrogansie ophaal as 'regverdiging' vir die vernietiging van waardige ou geboue – en daardie ou geboue ter-

selfdertyd 'gebruik' om vir hulle regte te verkry wat hulle nooit gehad het nie – sal al die geskiedenis om die 'skande' geen duidelike verskil maak nie.

Daadwerklike optrede is nodig. Ontwikkelaars moet eenvoudig daardie regte ontnem word wat hulle tans vir alle praktiese doeleindes in die posisie stel waar hulle die finale woord oor die voortbestaan van ons geboue-erfenis spreek. Niemand weet beter as die kapitaalkragtige ontwikkelaar dat die Raad vir Nasionale Gedenkwaardighede (RNG) nie oor die finansiële slaankrag beskik om bestaande bewaringswette af te dwing deur in uitgerekte en duur hofgedinge betrokke te raak nie.

Net hier lê die wortel van die 'vat-my-hof-toe'-sindroom, waarvan talle ontwikkelaars onrusbarende tekens toon.

Ten slotte gaan dit egter nie om applous vir of aggressie teenoor ontwikkelaars nie. Bewaring moet op 'n nugtere sake-grondslag geplaas word. Dit beteken dat weer eens indringend na ons bewaringswette gekyk moet word.

Dit wil voorkom asof daar 'n botsing tussen hierdie wette en soneringsregte is, wat skuiwergate vir ontwikkelaars bied om wetlike bepalinge in dispuut te plaas. Daarbenewens moet strawwe vir ootredings veel strenger gemaak word. Die R300-skulderkenning wat 'n oortreder onlangs betaal het, is lagwekkend.

Dit het tyd geword dat kundiges op sowel bewarings- as sakegebiede samesprekings met munisipale owerhede en die sentrale regering voer ten einde te verseker dat ondubbelsinnige, wetlik-afdwingbare voorskrifte vir die beskerming en die ekonomiese sinvolle benutting van historiese geboue met argitektoniese meriete opgestel word.

In die eerste plaas sal na die soneringsregte van toepassing op persele in historiese sensitiewe gebiede gekyk moet word. Sodoende sal die onverkwiklike moddergooiery tussen bewaringsbewustes en ontwikkelaars hopelik 'n einde kry.

Bewaring moet bloot 'n objektief beoordeelbare saak wees, 'n kwessie van die wet sê só en daarmee uit en gedaan soos met alle ander wette. Dan weet beide bewaringsbewustes en ontwikkelaars waar hulle staan.

Tans word tussen die slopingsrommel rondgetas of bloot die hande saamgeslaan oor 'fasadisme' en ander argitektoniese euwels.

Dat samewerking tussen bewarings- en kapitaalkragte tot albei se voordeel moontlik is en, trouens, noodsaaklik geword het, het onlangs weer duidelik geword met die interessante dog omstrede plan wat bedink is vir die insameling van geld vir die restourasie van die vyftiende-eeuse St. Eusebius-kerk te Arnhem, Gelderland,

tweestryd vs samewerking

Nederland.

Volgens 'n berig wat van Sapa-AP ontvang is, is besluit dat enige maatskappy wat bereid is om die R4,3 miljoen wat vir restourasie benodig word, te betaal, op die 96 meter hoë kerk toring sy produkte of dienste mag adverteer.

Nadere besonderhede is nog nie bekend gemaak nie, maar daar kan aanvaar word dat 'n komitee potensieële adverteerders sal keur ten einde 'n moontlik onhoudbare situasie te voorkom.

Die 'probleem' hier, soos elders, sal die sedebewakers wees, wat met of sonder goeie rede glo dat waar kapitaal en die kerk bymekaar kom, die duiwel ronddraai. En geld wat stom is, maak krom wat reg is.

Want wat nou gemaak as 'n adverteerder met 'n Daliiestiese humorsin – en die nodige kapitaal om daarvoor te betaal – sy produkte op die kerk toring wil adverteer met 'n Leda (Gala) op 'n swaan, glas in die een hand en sigaret in die ander, met daaronder die boodskap: "Rook X en drink Y. Wees vrolik en bly, die einde is naby!"?

Die St. Eusebius-kerk is tydens die Slag van Arnhem in 1944 beskadig toe valskermsoldate van die Geallieerde Magte nie daarin kon slaag om oor die Rynrivier te kom en Nazi-Duitsland binne te val nie.

Daar is bereken dat twee-derdes van die aanvalsmag, ten spyte van heldhaftige optrede, vernietig is alvorens die gebied ont-ruim kon word. Hierdie gebeure was die onderwerp van die blitsverkoop-boek en rolprent *A Bridge Too Far*.

Arnhem is na die oorlog sover moontlik herbou, maar soos ook elders in Europa, is die letsels van die oorlog nog op vele geboue merkbaar.

Die St. Eusebius-kerk is genoem na Eusebius van Caesarea of Eusebius Pomphili, c263-339. Hy was die biskop van Caesarea en Palestina (313-314) en later 'n hofbiskop tydens sy goeie vriend Konstantyn se bewind.

As invloedryke teoloog het sy politieke opvattinge 'n belangrike bydrae gelewer tot die vestiging van die Christelike Ryk van Bisantium. Onder sy talle geskrifte is die bekendste sy *Kerkgeskiedenis* in tien dele waarin die ontwikkelingsverhaal van die Christelike kerk tot c324 vertel word.

Alhoewel Eusebius se *Kerkgeskiedenis* geoordeel volgens hedendaagse geskiedskrywingsnorme in baie op-

sigte onwetenskaplik aandoen, (hy het, byvoorbeeld talle van sy bronne sonder verdere ondersoek aangehaal) is hierdie werk die eerste poging om 'n omvattende geskiedenis van die Christelike Kerk te skryf, waarmee hy die grondslag vir toekomstige geskiedskrywing gelê het.

Die St. Eusebius-kerk is derhalwe wat sowel die sekulêre as die kerklike geskiedenis betref, 'n belangrike visuele dokument en derhalwe bewaarswaardig by uitnemendheid.

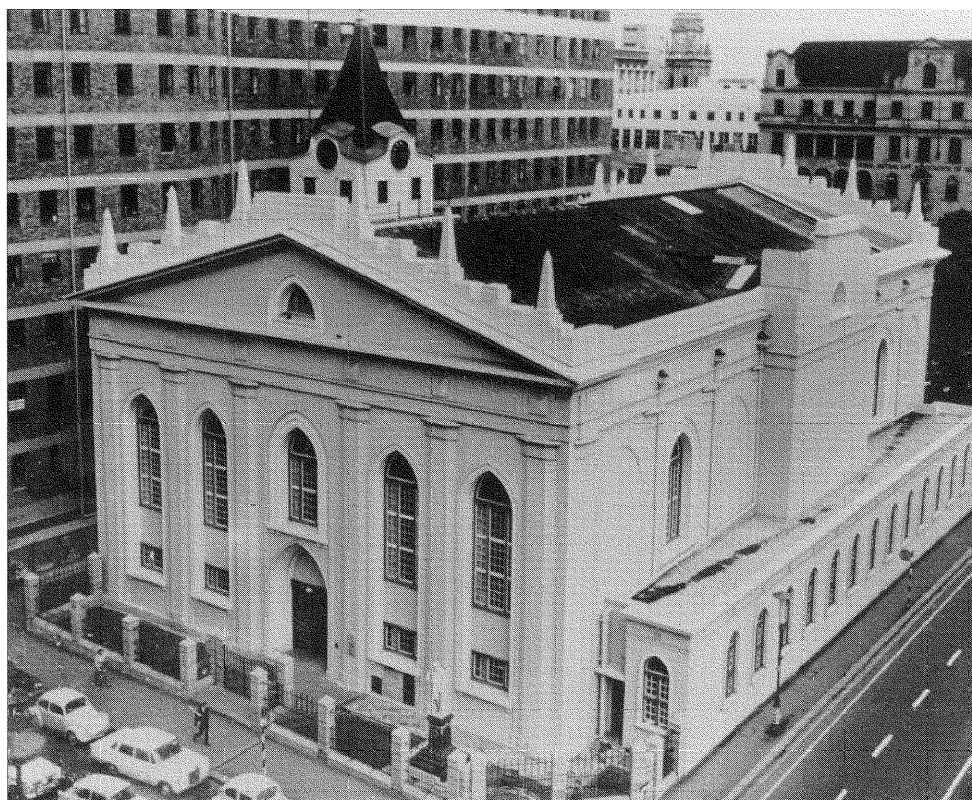
Sou die geldinsamelingspoging vir hierdie doel slaag, sal die kerk minstens die lot van die Keiser Wilhelm-gedenkkerk in Wes-Berlyn gespaar bly. Bouwerk aan hierdie kerk het van 1891 tot 1895 geduur en die kerk is ook tydens die Tweede Wêreldoorlog beskadig.

In 1960-61 het die argitek Egan Eiermann die erg beskadigde toring by sy moderne kerkgebou 'ingeskakel'. Die resultaat is 'n oefening in skrilte kontras, 'n melodramatiese stelling wat apologete vir Eiermann se werk 'n 'waarskuwing uit die verlede vir die hede' noem, daar die toring in sy beskadigde toestand gelaat is ten einde die 'boodskap' te oorbeklemtoon.

Dit is egter geen troos nie dat onsensitiewe ontwikkeling óók in Europa plaasvind soos nou langs die Groote Kerk kan gebeur. ■

Lit: *Woongids: Die Burger*, 24 Augustus 1991.

Die Groote Kerk,
Kaapstad



Conservation and the private sector in

The Eastern Cape

Albrecht Herholdt

Port Elizabeth architect, chairman of the Eastern Cape branch and member of the national council of the Simon van der Stel Foundation.

& Gerda Coetzee

vice-chairman of the Simon van der Stel Foundation

BEARING in mind that Port Elizabeth is the second oldest city in South Africa and that many of our oldest towns are found in the Eastern Cape, conservation is a major issue in this area. Port Elizabeth was founded in 1820, Graaff-Reinet in 1786, Uitenhage in 1804, Cradock in 1814, and Somerset East in 1825.

A rich heritage of buildings still exists in most of the towns as development slowed down after 1930 when depopulation of the rural areas started. This same trend is apparent in Port Elizabeth, where a fluctuating economy has never allowed dramatic development. This has been a saving grace for many of the city's gracious buildings built in the last quarter of the previous century.

The tourist potential of towns where a majority of the buildings are often of historical and architectural merit will hopefully be more fully recognised by the municipalities, towns folk and developers in the immediate future. Part of the success of the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, held annually in Grahamstown, must be attributed to the city's unique collection of buildings ranging from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian eras, which form an appropriate backdrop to the festival.

Graaff-Reinet, a town which celebrated its bicentenary in 1986, is possibly the most outstanding example in South Africa of individual home owners and the private sector working together to create a town of unsurpassable beauty. The Save Reinet Foundation was established under the patronage of Dr Anton Rupert, with 102 private companies contributing to the fund. Historical Homes of South Africa Ltd has since the inception of the Foundation, provided all the administrative back-up, a contribution of which the value can hardly be assessed. Graaff-Reinet to date has more than 400 structures which are

proclaimed National Monuments.

Special attention should be paid to an outstanding example of restoration work, presently nearing completion, on Market Square in Graaff-Reinet. Urquhart House is being restored under the auspices of the Reinet House Committee. The towns people of Graaff-Reinet are contributing handsomely to this project and several companies have made worthwhile contributions. Of the latter, mention must be made of R50 000 donated by Goldfields of SA – the biggest single donation.

Urquhart House, which dates back to 1818, was the property of Jan Greyling, a member of the Heemraad of Graaff-Reinet. Peter Whitlock and Dirk Visser are the architects on the project. On completion, the house will form part of the Graaff-Reinet Museum Complex and it is to be used for exhibitions and a research centre. With a Cape-Dutch design, it has a combined 'voor- and 'agerhuis', two bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen and pantry. The building is being restored to its 1848 appearance.

Grahamstown's conservation record is not quite as impressive as that of Graaff-Reinet, but it boasts a number of significant restoration projects to which the private sector has contributed generously.

Henry Galpin's House in Bathurst Street, today known as the Observatory Museum, was restored in the middle of the eighties with a generous grant from De Beers. The house has many idiosyncratic touches and the 'camera obscura' in the tower is one of the few in existence in the Southern Hemisphere. This building is today a very well-known landmark and tourist attraction in the centre of town.

No 4 Anglo African Street in Grahamstown is a small but charming building, originally used by the newspaper Eastern Star. This building was restored with the generous help of The Star and is now used by the National English Literary Museum as a living museum for printing.

The most recent project carried out in Grahamstown in the field of conservation by the private sector, is the restoration and rehabilitation by Old Mutual Properties of the Muirhead and Gowie buildings in High Street. The architect was Goldswain of Osmond Lange, East London. The once proud drapery store is today again a bustling commercial enterprise.

In Cradock, Sandra Antrobus has done much in recent years to make towns folk aware of the wealth of old buildings in this charming Karoo town. To date her most significant effort has gone into Market Street. Her restoration work in this street has also been an incentive to at least

The warm interior of one of the guest houses in Market Street, Cradock





Above: An example of the renovated cottages in Market Street, Cradock

Below: The charm of the bathroom is brought about by the modern furniture and appliances of yesteryear



two other farmer's wives to become involved in their town.

The Market Street houses today are sought after guest houses. They are furnished with an interesting approach. Originally built as lower side middle class houses, the furnishing is relatively modest in most cases. A hands-on approach is created rather than the formal museum approach often adopted for such dwellings.

Olive Schreiner House Museum, around the corner from Market Street in Cradock was funded entirely by AA Life in 1986.

Another individual who has done much in the Eastern Cape for conservation, is Dr Nick Woolff of Port Elizabeth. He has restored one of Port Elizabeth's most important landmarks to its former glory, namely the Donkin Street terrace houses, overlooking the reserve and memorial. To his credit he has also restored 14, 27 and 32 Constitution Hill, 35 Parliament Street, 8 and 10 Whitlock Street, 18 Gordon Terrace, 8 and 10 Cuyler Street, 24 and 25 Cuyler Crescent and 6 Annerley Terrace.

Like Antrobus, he furnished his houses. His approach is that although these houses were not

particularly important when they were built in 1855 and 1880, they are today. He furnished the houses with pieces pre-dating the building date, as he believes people brought furniture with them when they came to South Africa. Today they boast valuable pieces from the 18th and 19th centuries. Gilded mirrors, chandeliers and paintings from that period complete a very refined picture. The houses are let out as office accommodation and are very much in demand.

However, the total involvement of the private sector in restoration projects in the Eastern Cape seems to be very limited. Mention must also be made of the numerous advocates and attorneys who have restored several houses in the central area, in the vicinity of the new Supreme Court. Much of the restoration work carried out by these legal gentlemen is admirable and sets an example to big companies not only of the extent to which recycling of buildings is commercially profitable, but also of the responsibility which rests on the shoulders of the individual and the private sector, in conserving our architectural heritage. ■

Donkin Street houses in Port Elizabeth restored by Nick Woolff serve as office accommodation



The Owl House

IN bent-wire lettering the words have been carefully traced on the fence of a house in the small Karoo village of Nieu Bethesda. This is the Owl House, gleaning its name from the population of cement owls who, like ever-wakeful guards, sit on the front porch as if protecting the property.

The Owl House was the home of Helen Martins, an eccentric – some say prophetic – recluse. And an artist. She lived alone at the Owl House, in many ways choosing to isolate herself from the village community. She devoted her hours to an undertaking that took over 25 years to execute, and absorbed every cent that came her way.

When she committed suicide in 1976 by drinking caustic soda, her task had not yet been completed. But she was 78 years old and her failing eyesight had made further work increasingly difficult. With single-minded dedication, she had spent long years working at transforming her ordinary little home and backyard into a place of wonder and enchantment.

The yard grew into a sculpture garden, populated with all manner of beasts and birds. A devout pilgrimage of shepherds, wise men and other travellers journey ceremoniously through the garden, as if in pursuit of some divine revelation. They travel towards the East: the mystical source of spiritual enlightenment. But not true East. Rather, Helen Martins had designated her own East with a signpost on the fence. For her backyard had become her own world.

It is a self-contained universe with its very own heaven, created from cut-out metallic stars, suns and moons. These tremble high over the garden on their slender wire stalks. Helen Martins' impulse to create her own alternative world, grew out of isolation and was a projection of her deeply felt yearnings and mystical intuitions. Her consciousness of the ostensible inadequacies for her own narrow life, led her to search for an inner, spiritual fulfilment. It is a search that she recorded in the cement and glass, with which she surrounded herself.

The caustic soda which Helen swallowed in a bid to end her life, was kept on the larder shelf beside rows and rows of preserve jars filled with crushed glass from old bottles. The glass was meticulously graded by Helen according to colour and particle size. She laboriously prepared the glass for an elaborate scheme of interior decoration. For while cement is the chief material employed in the sculpture garden, the interior of the house has been radically trans-

formed through the marvellous and inventive use of the coloured glass.

Helen's world has been preserved and is recognised as a unique part of our South African heritage – an environmental artwork of distinction lauded by art lovers and experts. The house can now be visited by the public.

To the rescue

Pretoria Portland Cement Company Limited (PPC) has come to the rescue of the late Helen Martins' Owl House at Nieu Bethesda by becoming principal patron of The Friends of the Owl House Foundation.

A cheque of R60 000 from PPC was handed over at the world première of the film adaptation of Athol Fugard's celebrated play, *The Road to Mecca*, inspired by the life and works of Helen Martins and screened at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival on Friday, 28 June 1991.

Terry Knight, PPC marketing and development director said: "The Owl House and cement sculptures are in urgent need of restoration. After becoming acquainted with the work of this extraordinary woman through Fugard's play, The Friends of the Owl House Foundation, Simon Ford's screenprints, doctoral theses of Anne Emslie and Sue Ross as well as a visit to Nieu Bethesda, we are convinced that Helen Martins' legacy must be preserved. There can be no doubt as to the relevance and cultural value of her work.

"We have stipulated that our financial contribution not only be used for restoration but also to raise additional funds by encouraging other individuals and concerns to become involved with the maintenance and preservation of the house and sculpture garden.

"We are delighted that Koos Malgas, who assisted Helen Martins with the execution of the cement sculptures, has returned to Nieu Bethesda to restore her creations. In this regard PPC will provide technical assistance."

The Owl House has been provisionally declared a national monument and work is presently under way to establish a trust.

Anyone interested in becoming a Friend of the Owl House, should write to: PO Box 6458, Roggebaai, 8012. ■



"March" from Simon Ford's "Homage to Helen Martins" portfolio, dramatizes the extraordinary world of the Owl House. Screenprint 600 x 850mm.

“We need to see the present

Prof Robert Brooks

Head of the Department of Fine Art,
Rhodes University

My thesis is that we must adopt a holistic approach to architecture – to keep in mind its past, present and future and not be tendentious about it. By now, we have learnt that almost nothing can be understood without reference to almost everything else. As a result, we should be wary of experts.

I should like to begin by quoting an architect (I stand in awe of architects) and by doing so I might find the courage to deal with such an important and often ineffable subject. Architects seem to have a way with words – they are lucid, pithy, apt and entertaining – a way which they often do not have with buildings. Instead of saying that a building is cracking, they say that it is suffering from “structural distress”. Antoine Predock, America’s new *wunderkind*, talks of “site emanations” and having the ability to design “interior ambience” on paper.

By some sort of magic, one can now walk through plans it seems. My quote comes from Berthold Lubetkin – the Russian-born architect who worked in England until 1951 and then in despair gave up designing for pig farming.

“Architecture is too important to be left to architects alone.

Like crime it is a problem of society as a whole.”

The rapid rewriting of theories, history, concepts and technologies, has thankfully made the expert into something of a museum piece. The word for expert in Afrikaans is *deskundige*, which looks it rather neatly into the bureaucratic desk.

To paraphrase T S Eliot: *Experts are people who find the right words to say things which no longer need to*

be said and do not make raids on the inarticulate.” (Four Quartets, East Coker)

Philip Johnson of AT&T fame does not know of a single city which looks better today than it did fifty years ago.

Experts (walking compact discs) are mellifluous, clear, articulate, they do not realize that to communicate you often have to make noises which distort the information in order to bring about creative change.

Our notions of reality continually shift. We have to rewrite the present perpetually. Information Theory (Shannon) and Entropy have blown out absolutes and given us a new parlance and attitude.

Entropy, which is the measure of unused energy in a system, means in the end terminal sameness in the worlds of Art and Architecture. So many artists produce work which is characterized by dulling and deadening similarity. Terminal sameness in the end leads to invisibility. The hot water of architects like Michael Graves is made tepid and bland when poured into the cold world of business. The ordered structure of contrast (hot and cold) become the blandness of random chaos (tepid).

Looking at zoos is very much like looking at architecture. We look at what is there, but we also look at what is not there. This I call the enigma of the empty cage – we have all encountered it. Empty cages have a great charm and are often poignantly and inaccurately occupied by birds and lizards. They indicate pertinently absence of a presence. What happened to the

This page, below: A reservoir fits beautifully into its environment

Opposite page, top:

Ohlsson’s Brewery: a courageous restoration

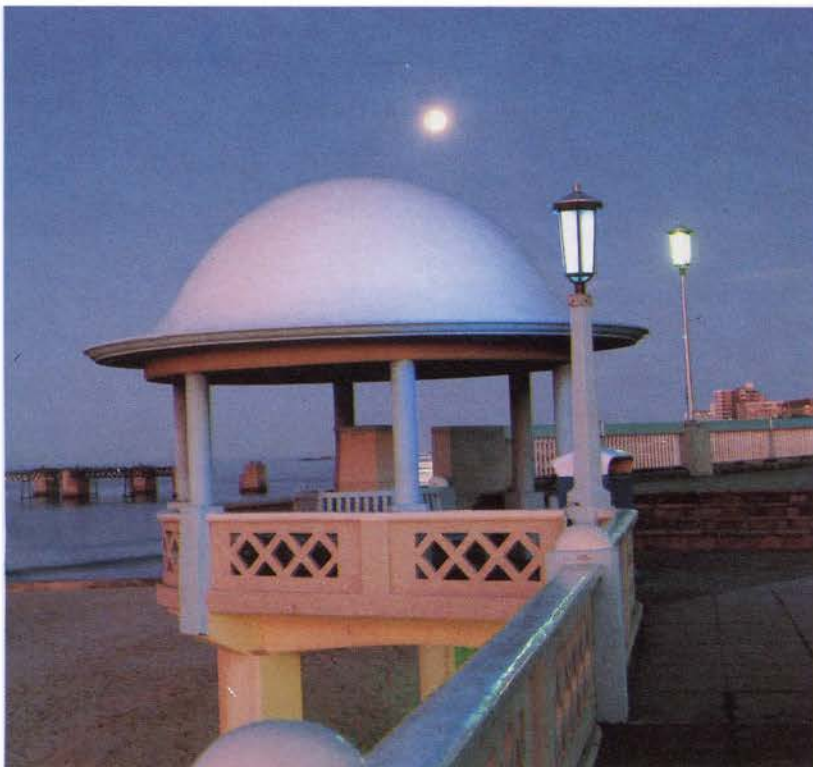
Below left: Memorial on the Port Elizabeth beach front

– a good example of idiosyncratic architecture

Below right: Grahamstown’s SA Perm: good buildings attract people



with hindsight...”



canvas-back duck, the gnome owl, the black and white jaguar? The sign on the cage indicates something which is not there, like a building which hides behind its façade or its sign. Good buildings communicate presence even if it is the wrong presence – the wrong message.

A good building makes a noise *

These days museums look like railway stations and railway stations look like museums.

Cape Town does not have an empty cage, it has an empty zoo; I spent half an hour there before I became aware of the invisible animals. It is a marvellous place to go to exercise one's imagination! A few peacocks strut about and make mournful echoing cries, which brings me to Umberto Eco, who is very good on how others preserve the past – often fabricating it or faking it in order to make it authentic – e.g. Cape Dutch houses; the entire kitsch range, including ducks across the wall. He tells of the famous zoo in San Diego which is so authentic, so real that it no longer serves its function as a zoo. The Koala bear, a shy Australian creature, is given an authentic space, complete with gum trees so dense (in which it hides) that you never see the creature. You have to trust the sign – look at the sign – just as people look at signatures on paintings and never see the work.

I have been to the Addo Elephant Park, twice, and have never seen an elephant – I have a theory that they don't exist. We go there to see the signs – they should fake a few "authentic elephants"!

Singapore City Council is rebuilding its red light district – rebuilding, fabricating or faking the sleaziness which it knocked down two years ago "to bring back the tourists" who want a "genuine atmosphere".

All this leads me to believe that the invisible is as important as the visible – what we do not say, as what we do say; what we do as what we do not do.

Ask our man in the street to describe the buildings he drives past on his way to work and he will flounder. His blindness is a tacit criticism of modern architecture – deliberately designed to be as dull as possible, as bland, as invisible as a Japanese motor car.

We are surrounded by acres and acres of banality

Unusual buildings are treated with suspicion. Grahamstown's SA Perm (South African Perma-

ment Building Society) building is a good example – so are courageous restorations – the Louvre in Paris; Ohlsson's Brewery in Cape Town.

Ugly buildings should be made illegal

Just as we can sue doctors we should be able to sue architects. Helmut Jahn's Civic Centre in Chicago averages 43,5 degrees Celsius in temperature.

Architects should be able to knock down buildings and start again

We are to blame. Buildings, like culture, indicate what a society does, what it is.

"Being an architect must be like a living experiment in frustrations and perversity with white coats everywhere."

This is what Le Corbusier said. "*Sometimes I despair. Men are so stupid that I am glad I am going to die. All my life people have tried to crush me. First they called me a dirty engineer, then a painter who tried to be an architect, then an architect who tried to be a painter, then a communist, then a fascist. Luckily I have always had an iron will – I have forced myself to cross rubicons.*"

Crossing Rubicons has become a part of the South African way of life

Charles Jencks calls architects "the kings of infinite space" (Hamlet had bad dreams). Architecture should be three-dimensional philosophy. It should be and often is full of metaphor. Jencks helped to shift us from modernism to post-modernism by giving us the words. He moved us from perception to language. From immediacy to mediacy. We no longer look innocently; we are "mediated" upon.

According to Anthony Lange of the Financial Mail, architecture has become a glamorous media event – buildings are unveiled like motor cars. Hughes called it "hype".

Lange wants a holistic approach to buildings and cities

We need to move away from the hubris, arrogance and insolence that gave us the disasters of the '50s and the '60s – the gaps and lacunae we call District Six and, far worse, South End in Port Elizabeth: this far better place was destroyed more convincingly.

We have to search for the disasters of now – the coastal conurbation, the cancer of the cluster home, the move from the hinterland.

We need to see the present with hindsight ■
Taken, with permission, from 'Rhodes Review', 1990.

* *The Monument literally and figuratively makes a noise. In the late evening with the wind howling there is no better place to read poetry. It is like a huge ship forever sailing into the sunset even though its bunkers are firmly set on the hill.*





*Elke Sigaret
'n Meesterstuk*