

CHAPTER FOUR

EMERGENCE RE-EVALUATED

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Whether this will lead to a rejuvenation of a flagging tradition or whether the historical programme of actively developing an “Afrikaner culture” was in any way cardinal to the emergence of a Pretoria Regionalism so as to deny it a continuity as a Third Vernacular has yet to be seen (Fisher 1998:140)

He [Fisher] later introduces a surprisingly apt phrase derived from Frampton which has general application: “Modern tempered by critical regionalism”. He introduces too, the concepts of identity and “sentiment”, an 18C term, like the word sublime, which alerts us to the fact that we are in the presence of a myth – in the 19C, the myth of utopia; in the 20C the myth or myths of nationalism and the misreading, if not deliberate falsification, of history (Chipkin 2008:377).

This chapter:

- Re-evaluates the accessible historical continuum and stylistic labels assigned to the ‘emergence’ of our generation.
- Re-thinks the local stylistic context and situation pertinent to our agents.

4.2 SELECTED LITERATURE

This chapter selects literature to investigate the third sub question:

What were the local stylistic constructs that formulated an emergence relative to our generation?

The introductory quotes imply a literary opposition surrounding regional labelling which sources tie to our generation. In the book he co-edits, *Architecture of the Transvaal*, Roger Fisher’s essay ‘The Third Vernacular: Pretoria Regionalism – Aspects of an Emergence’ is the first essential source for the critical discourse analysis required for this chapter. If Fisher (1998: 124) postulates, “Afrikaner origins seem to have been pivotal in the emergence of a Pretoria Regionalism”, then Herman Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (2003) is the most recognised and viable source to assist in a critical re-evaluation of that hypothesis.

In the preface to the Roger Fisher, Schalk Le Roux and Estelle Maré’s edited *Architecture of the Transvaal*, Dame Jane Drew (1998: XV) observed a coherence across the various essays. In this book, Gus Gerneke’s ‘From Brazil to Pretoria: The Second Wave of the Modern Movement’ and Walter Peter’s ‘Houses for Pretoria: An appreciation of the Houses of the 1950s by Hellmut Stauch’, are relevant to test any complementary or contradictory stance to Fisher’s construct. As Fisher (1998:123) opens his previously mentioned essay by quoting sentiments, regarding post-war influences from Pretoria in *Johannesburg Style: Architecture and Society 1880s-1960s* (1993), the use of Clive Chipkin’s book is

obligatory. Although, Fisher labels some of our agents as 'Regionalists', Chipkin (1993: 294-304) affords us the most ample explanation entitled 'Patio Houses' of the domestic architecture of our Johannesburg agents, of which he was one. However, in his later book *Johannesburg Transition: Architecture and Society from 1950* (2008), Clive Chipkin elaborates and includes more agents but more importantly refutes any claims (as evidential in the above quote) Fisher might have for a 'critical regionalist' labelling'. These sources therefore reveal dichotomies worth investigating.

A similar literary polarisation occurs between Gilbert Herbert's *Martienssen and the International Style: the modern movement in South African architecture* (1975) on one hand for Johannesburg and an 'International Style' and Clinton Harrop-Allin's *Norman Eaton: Architect* (1975) on the other hand for an 'African regionalism' in Pretoria. Along with the stylistic context established in the previous chapter, these dichotomies allow a critical discourse for this chapter. Harrop-Allin's hypothetical prejudice, however, results in an exclusion of case studies, which Marguerite Pienaar's unpublished, masters dissertation *The Norman Eaton Legacy: A Critical appraisal of the documentation of his domestic oeuvre* (2013) and related article 'Eaton for Africa – 50 Years Later' in the *ArchSA* journal, update in line with Fisher's labelling enabling a well-rounded selection of literature for our re-evaluation.

4.3 FIRST JUNCTURE: 1850 to 1920s

4.3.1 Appliquéed shacks

The arrival of settlers in a country sparsely populated by people of a markedly different culture must bring about interaction, change and, perhaps, conflict. Ideally, when there is an abundance of available space, a common way of life should slowly emerge as the groups gradually accept one another, begin to mix and evolve as a community. Unfortunately, this does not seem to happen very often without some degree of domination of one group by the other (Verbeek 1982: xxiii).

The Cape of 'Good Hope' was the place of optimism for the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Many of the soldiers and sailors that joined the VOC settled as Burghers and not as Afrikaners. After cutting European connections, they needed to "develop a distinct sense of self-consciousness" (Giliomee 2003: xiv). They wanted to "make the new land their own" and therefore they freed themselves as farmers. However, the British who considered them degenerate, unskilled and unfair towards their slaves conquered the Cape in 1795, which sparked off the 1830s Great Trek (Giliomee 2003: xiv).

Historians¹ speculate that through "pragmatic practice", the semi-literate *Trekboers* passed on the local materials and techniques of endemic cultures (Fig. 4.1. Left and Right) to become a 'tradition' of a Transvaal Afrikaner 'style'. Once they had escaped the "imperial yoke" of the Cape, The *Trekboers* settled in the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR). Labuschagne (1998:26) describes the materials and borrowed techniques:

¹ See Elize Labuschagne's essay: 'From Trekboer to Builder' (Fisher 1998:25).

Voortrekkers, in settling the various regions of the Transvaal, were to a large extent dependent on local materials and their own resources when constructing their first dwellings, since the terrain was rugged...The Transvaal has a wide array of types of stone suitable for building, the Bushveld Igneous Complex with its diversity of natural rock lying at its centre. There are granites, marbles, sandstone and slate, each characterizing the style of building.

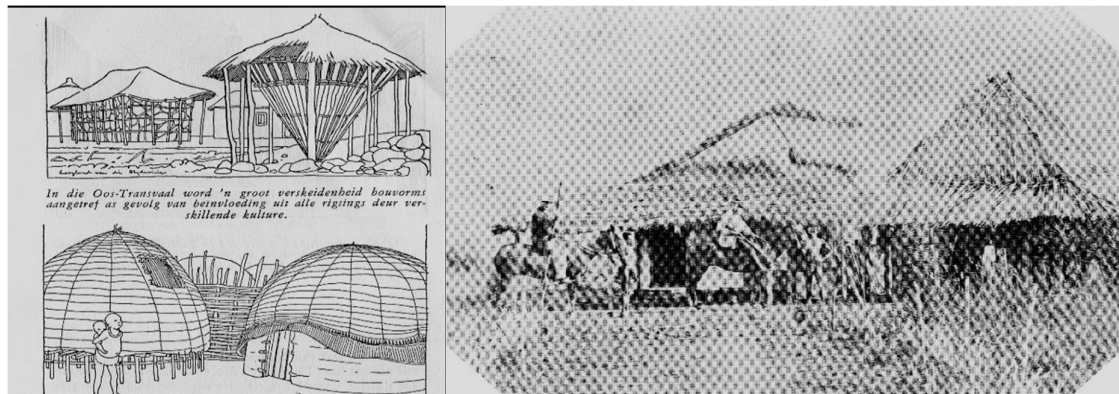


Figure 4.1. Left: Variety of endemic eclectic building crafts, Eastern Transvaal (Biermann 1955: 83). **Right:** Settler semi-detached thatch huts that used halved gin cases covered in calico for windows (Verbeek 1982:5).

The naturalist Eugene Marais' (1871-1936) wrote about the Afrikaners traditional connection to the *platteland* (rural land) (Fisher 1998:138). By way of a 'Third Landscape' of "liminality" to "sublimity" to "magical realism", Raman (2009:3-15) too provides a description of Afrikaner naturalisation in the Free State. Despite the encroachment of indigenous territories and the Anglo-Boer Wars (1899-1902), which killed a tenth of the trekking Boers, these romanticized ideals abound. In contrast, the writer Nicolaas P. van Wyk Louw (1906-1970) was perhaps more realistic about Afrikaner life as more urban than rural (Giliomee 2003:348). Allow Chipkin (1993:27) to provide us with a 'realistic' description of the next leg of the trek, the *Trek to the Towns*:

The Afrikaner tide, as we have seen [1890s boom and great depression], brought in destitute *plattelanders*, who clung to the boundaries of the inner city [of Johannesburg] ...refuge areas for *plattelandse* Afrikaners in an English sea. The small, rented veranda houses of the Afrikaner poor were located wherever cheap ground values obtained on the urban rim, or further afield on smallholdings held by...*kwasi-boere*. Squatter settlements sprang up in the Brickfields area: narrow passages separated the shacks, and pools of stagnant rain-water ponded in the clay excavations.

We noted from our *first stylistic situation*, the British dislike of the visibility of industrial iron materials. Irrespective of region, they saw these mass-produced components only fit for use on working-class Victorian houses and industrial buildings. Chipkin (1993:39) cites Sir Herbert Baker's (1862-1946)

critique² of what he called the undignified “Victorian colonial architecture” of Highveld *dorps* with their “flimsy appliqué” that “disgraced the South African house”. Holm (1998:71) describes that typical Victorian residence:

People lived in a barren male world of work and retired to a female paradise world of recreation; a private world of the nuclear family. This lifestyle was reflected in the single family residence. Typically the private house would be detached and isolated in the middle of the garden; detached from the street, but also detached from its neighbours. A residential suburb was a group of unrelated houses inhabited by individuals of roughly equal financial standing – that being about the maximum base of communality.

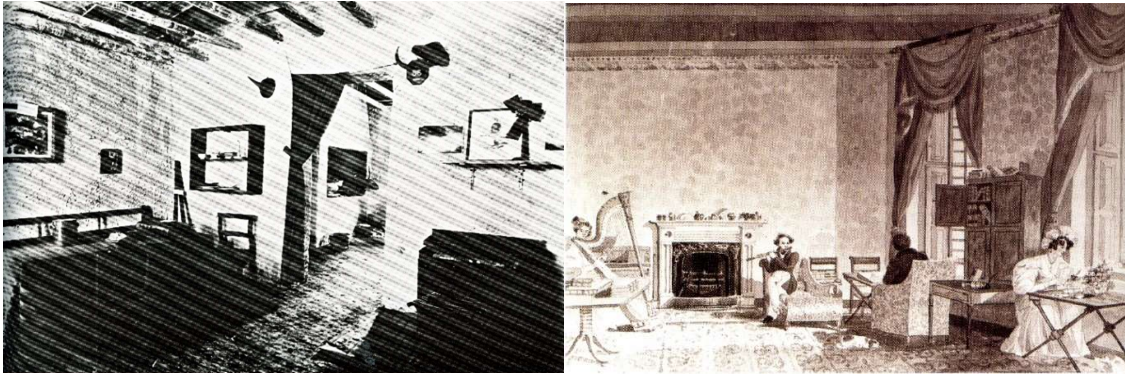


Figure 4.2. Left: ‘Room in a Boer House’, Paris Exhibition, 1900, (Verbeek 1982). Right: “The Cape interior regencyfied” (Viney 1987:18).

Corrugated iron was the ready-made material for the shanty settlements and Victorian mining compounds of Johannesburg. The nineteenth century Afrikaner farmhouse too was characterised by an industrialised aesthetic of a pitched corrugated iron roof with surrounding veranda. Therefore, albeit stripped due to economy, the “iron pyramid-roofed house” of the Free State, Natal and Transvaal, is arguably not specific to the Pretoria circumstances as Fisher (1998:124) might claim, but typical of the Empire colonies³. Labuschagne (1998: 44) suggests that plan forms determined roof-shapes and therefore not always hipped pyramid roofs but may also include gables or even be flat “contemporaneously in the Transvaal”. However, the Gerhard Moerdyk (1890-1958) argues against the use of corrugated iron in the women’s periodical *Die Boerevrou* for his invention of an *Afrikaanse woning*. In 1923, Moerdijk (1989:22) wrote:

Dis met die dak wat ons nog die meest foute maak. Die algemene gebruik van sink is iets wat oorgebly het van die dae toe ons alleen maar tydelike geboue opgesit het. Dit word nou darem tyd dat ons die ding nou heeltmal laat staan. Die voordele daaraan vebonde iword geheel oorskadu deur die nadele. Dit is lig, betreklik goedkoop en maklik om op te sit, maar dis ook al. Aan die ander

² Baker’s critique was addressed to a “conference of teachers from the Transvaal and Orange River Colony at the Wanderers’ Hall” on Friday, 4 July 1902 (Chipkin 1993:39)

³ For instance, the Australian Empire Style. For further reading, see Fermor-Heskith, R. (ed.) *Architecture of the British Empire*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

kant is dit geen goeie beskerming teen hitte of koue nie, dit le ken roes gou end it lyk baie eentonig en lelik...soew 'n blik affére.

[It is with the roof that we make the most errors. The general usage of iron remains from the days when we constructed temporary buildings. It is high time that we dropped iron completely. The disadvantages overwhelm the advantages. Although light, reasonably cheap and easy to erect, that is about all. On the other hand, it does not insulate against heat and cold, it rusts rapidly and it looks monotonous and ugly...such a tin affair].

4.3.2 Crafty villas

Thousands of miles away from home, colonists were reminding themselves of who they were by the shape of the houses that they built. What began as a technical and pragmatic issue became ideological and emotional (Sudjic 2005:137).

Interestingly, Baker's villa designs were not without criticism. For instance, Sir Llewellyn Anderson considered Baker's design for his Parktown mansion as pretentious. Common critique was that Baker's windows were "too small for the heat and bright light of Africa". Instead, Dolobran appointed J.A.Cope Christie for the "romantic mixture of medievalism and the Queen Anne Style" complete with imported materials from London (Picton-Seymour 1989:157) (Fig. 4.3. Left).

The *first stylistic situation* highlighted the hypocrisy of nineteenth century designers. Sentimentalisms of craft, made the realities of poverty invisible. This is evidential in early Johannesburg where the arts and craft residences turn their backs from the "pestilential embarrassments of the 'Coolie location" and the 'Kaffir' hovels" of the mining settlements (Chipkin 1993:30). These sentiments were ubiquitous on the Parktown *kopjes* (ridges) of Johannesburg. Chipkin (1993:31) describes the new class society:

These remote house-owners with their pampered families and favoured guests could sit on their broad, raised stoeps (with private continental views to the north), contemplating the 'primordial mysteries' of the land...-hearing from the distance the noise of the stamp batteries on the Rand 'like far-away drums.

These 'New English' manor houses with their tall chimneys faced northwards towards the distant Magaliesberg range. They were mostly designed by Herbert Baker (1862-1946) and his followers. Chipkin (1993:54) confirms the connection of Baker and Edwin Luytens (1869-1944) to the Arts and Crafts movement and particularly to the "modernity" of the work of Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941). Irrespective of place-specifics, one could argue that the arts and crafts approaches were internationally similar.

Baker's indebtedness to the Arts and Crafts movement can be repeatedly noticed in the use of materials: rough-cast and tile-hung gables at Northwards, weather-boarding at Glenshiel. Even the quartzite kopje stone quarried from the site for use in its foundations, plinths and walling – which became Baker's strongest characteristics – derives from the same source. Edward Prior, for instance, working in the English counties, used stone dug out of the site together with pebble inter-

lays; and Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin spoke of houses linked to their 'house-place' by the use of local stone. And there are those marvelous Luytens precedents with Baragate blocks or rubble stone with garreted joints and quarry-tile inlays (Chipkin 1993:54).

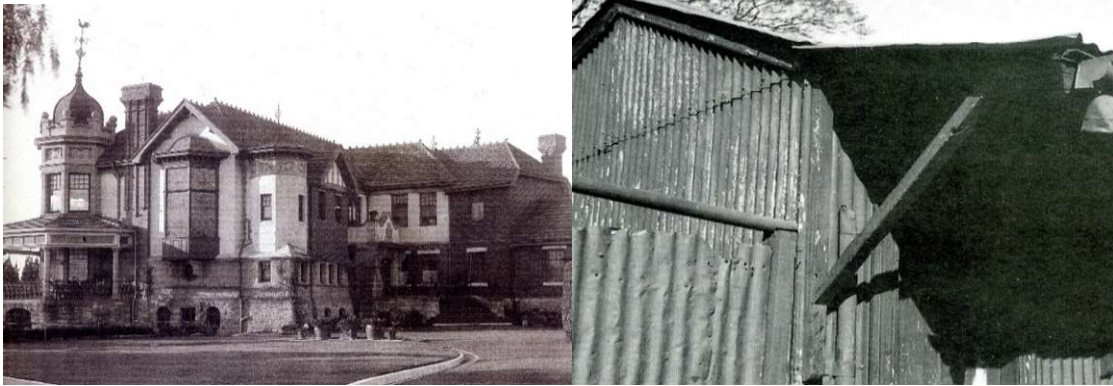


Figure 4.3. Left: 'Tuscan' entrance, cast-iron finials and stone base. J.A. Cope Christie, Dolobran house, Parktown, Johannesburg, 1901 (Viney 1987: 233). Right: "Corrugated-iron vernacular", Jeppestown (Chipkin 1993:23).

By virtue of the Arts and Crafts movement, the Englishness of the *Boerehuis* and the attempts to deny these origins in favour of unique Afrikaans regional aspects is of interest. Although this study does not focus only on the Pretoria region, we re-evaluate the Leith-Eaton-Jooste chain. When extending the professional chain backwards one could argue it as Moerdijk-Leith-Baker-Luytens-Voysey-Ruskin and thereby terminate with the English Arts and Crafts movement. One could postulate that the projection to Eaton links to Frank Lloyd Wright and thereby again to the Arts and Crafts movement. The continuity via Eaton to Jooste as representative of the Silent Subversives, we will deal with later.

First, we need to consider the influence of Baker's residential work on his protégé Gordon Leith. Although Fisher (1998:127) traces the "continuity of tradition" to Pretoria, it is in Johannesburg where we find the Leith link⁴ of the professional chain. Clarke (2011:22) correctly suggests one can find the Pretoria School's origins in Baker and "the tradition he was educated in". Notwithstanding, one could argue that the same could apply to the Johannesburg School. It is debatable whether "innovative, climate responsive architecture grown from its own soil with a tradition of craftsmanship and expressive materiality" (Fisher 1998:127) is unique to Pretoria.

Although Fisher (1998:127) highlights Leith's Afrikaner ties⁵ to the *Hoog Hollands* Staatsmodel School in Pretoria where he was educated, he was born to Scottish parents in Knysna⁶. The Herbert Baker Scholarship for his essay *The Principles dominating Architectural Design in South Africa* (1911) and the subsequent studies at the British Schools in Athens and Rome strengthened his European and English

⁴ Leith taught at the University of the Witwatersrand where Norman Eaton was a student. The alternative professional link is therefore: Baker to Leith to Eaton (Clarke 2011:23)

⁵ For further reading regarding studying Drawing and Modelling by van Wouw, Painting by Oerder, see Eaton, N. 1965. 'Obituary of George Esselmont Gordon Leith', in *South African Architectural Record*. Vol.50 No 5, 12 & 47.

⁶ Fisher (1998:127) mentions Leith as common to Eaton and Jooste by virtue of being Pretorian.

ties. His architectural training at the Architectural Association London exposed him to the “ideology of Empire” (Chipkin 1993: 132). On returning to work for the Public Works Department (PWD) in South Africa, Leith applied the “Wren style” to the design of the Johannesburg King Edward VII School (1908-11) (Chipkin 1993:58). As friends contributing to the *Boerevrou* in the 1920s, Gerhard Moerdijk, Gordon Leith and Jacobus Hendrik Pierneef (1886-1957), later diverge. Leith’s development leaned towards Baker and British Imperialism as opposed to that of Moerdijk and Pierneef’s⁷ constructs for a national “Afrikaner-African idiom”. Chipkin (1993:133) writes:

The clearest enunciation of this position in *Die Boerevrou* was made by Pierneef. In 1920 Pierneef was describing the development of ‘*n egte Afrikaanse boustyl*’ - a genuine Afrikaans building style – not based on the curves and gables of Cape Dutch architecture (which surprisingly is ‘*on-Afrikaans*’). At the same time he rejected what he called the inauthentic national style concocted by Cecil Rhodes and his architect Herbert Baker, whose Union Buildings [which Leith worked on] Pierneef regarded as ‘*die boustyl van die vyand*’, the building style of the enemy’.

Baker fused the arts and crafts tradition, Mediterranean influences, and local building methods, in villas built on the *kopjes* (hills) of Johannesburg⁸. Ironically, these houses influenced Moerdijk’s *Boere villas*. These Highveld homes incorporated details requiring artisanship imported from the very different Cape region (Clarke 2011:22). In contradiction, Fisher (1998:124) tells how Moerdijk “expounded upon an architecture distinct from Cape Dutch”.

For purposes of a re-evaluation, we will briefly weigh up on one end of the scale, the “English norms” of ‘villas’ and ‘manor houses’ designed in the school of Baker⁹. On the other end of the scale, we consider the larger *Afrikaanse woonhuis* as set out in the periodical *Die Boerevrou*¹⁰. Our investigation adopts Gordon Leith (1886-1965) to be representative of an architect for the Baker school, with Gerard Moerdijk (1890-1958) as appropriate for the latter. We can legitimize their selection based on their inclusion as part of the historical continuum said to lead to our Silent Subversives as a ‘Third Vernacular’.

To illustrate this, we consider three houses. The first (Fig. 4.4. Top left) is a house for the controversial Cecil John Rhodes in Cape Town named ‘Groote Schuur’ (1897) and Baker’s “most magnificent of his South African houses” (Chipkin 1993:56). The second (Fig. 4.4. Top right) is a residence called ‘The Huts’ (1929) reflecting “English norms and respectability”. Leith’s design is for the owner of the department-store empire, Manley Anstey (Chipkin 1993:64). The third house (Fig. 4.4. Bottom left and right) is Moerdijk’s design for a “Suid-Afrikaanse huis” (South African house) as published in the *Boerevrou* (1923).

⁷ For instance, Pierneef’s Kraal house at Elangeni illustrated in (Meiring, H. 1981:110-111).

⁸ Like Baker, Gordon Leith’s work, for example House Esslemont (1946) on the Houghton Ridge, indicate Mediterranean sensibilities (Chipkin 1993:459).

⁹ See (Chipkin 1993: 30-35) and (Keath 1998:78-93).

¹⁰ See (Fisher 1989:31), (Fisher 1998:124) and (Gillomee 2003:375).

Notwithstanding the variations of place, occupants, size and details, one notices the stylistic similarities of the three house. Without delving into the history of the original *de schuur* (the granary), or becoming technical we generally notice in all three houses the gables, “simplified from rococo”, flanking a covered stoep. The windows in the gables are sash casements with shutters to the lower halves-typical of the Cape. The roofs are steep and tiled with tall chimneys piercing them characteristic of the designs of the arts and crafts proponents such as Voysey and Baker’s compatriot, Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944).

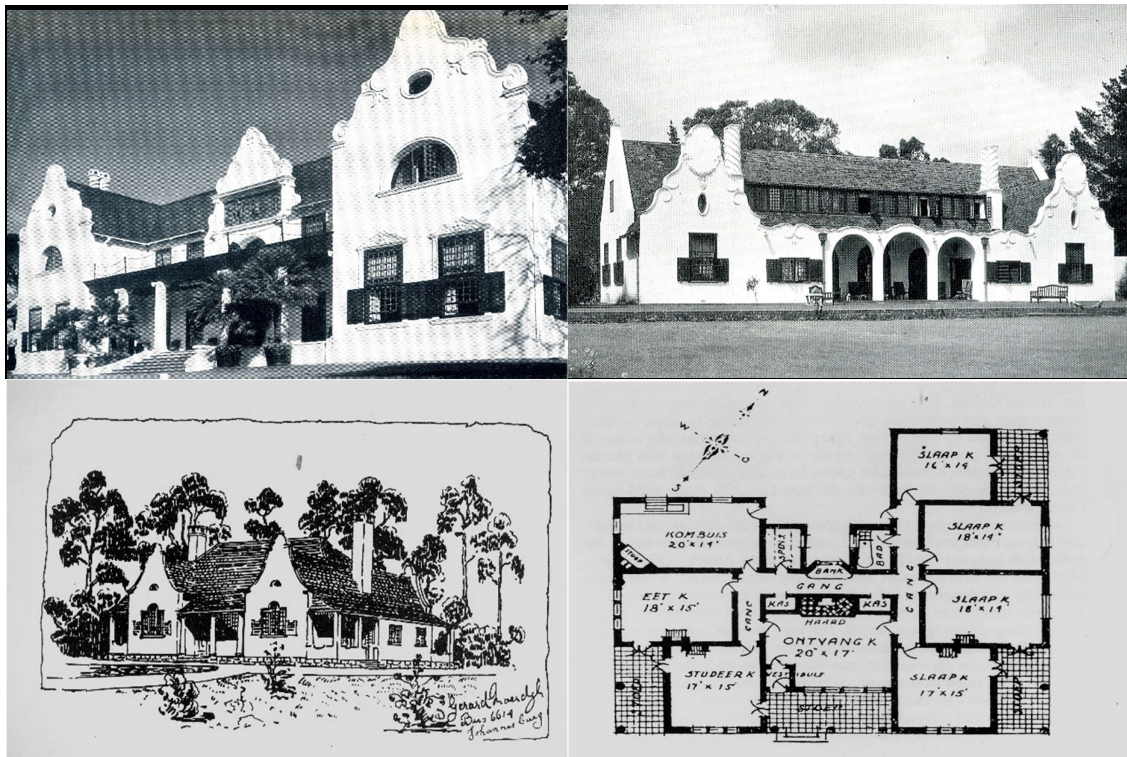


Figure 4.4. Top left: Herbert Baker’s redesigned ‘Groote Schuur’, 1895-1901 (Le Roux 1970:23). **Top right:** Gordon Leith’s ‘The Huts’, Riviera, 1929 (Chipkin 1993:64). **Bottom left and right:** Gerhard Moerdijk’s ‘Afrikaanse Woning’, 1923 (Fisher 1989: 20, 21).

Despite the Groote Schuur project importing many materials from England, Baker under the influence of William Morris, believed in the use of local “inferior materials” by “unlearned craftsmen” in their adopted countries. However, Baker’s design for Groote Schuur was required to express Rhodes’ ideas of imperialism, with Baker admitting that “domestic considerations were subordinated to political and architectural idealism” (Le Roux 1970:13). Baker’s stylistics were nonetheless adapted to suit the imperialist programme as acted out in the colonies of South Africa or India¹¹.

Moerdijk had the same arts and craft sentiments of using materials and skills subject to local availability. Whether plastered brick, stone, thatch or slate these materials would be acceptable. Yet, the industrial sheet metal of Victorian industrial technology was taboo. Contradictory, ‘malthoid’ and metal sheeting

¹¹ See (Chipkin 1993:56) with regards Baker’s collaboration with Luytens on Viceroy’s house in New Delhi.

to valleys between composed thatched rondawel roofs he approved. Moerdijk emphasized the arts and crafts idea of embracing the natural character of materials without smoothing them, in order to give nature and opportunity to express itself (Fisher 1989:22).

Although, Moerdijk was exposed via Bannister Fletcher's 'comparative method' to Ruskin (Chipkin 1993:132), he seemingly never acknowledges these and Baker's influences on his ideas for '*n eie boustyl vir Suid Afrika*' (an own building style for South Africa). While he introduces a bay window seat, (see Fig. 4.2. Bottom right) as per Baker, he suggests they are included for the homemaker where she can sit and do needlework and still keep an eye on the domestic help (*diensbode*) in the kitchen without having to endure the heat (Moerdijk 1989:23)

Fisher (1998:136) emphasizes the stoep as a "distinguishing feature of Pretoria Regionism". However, the 'stoep' underwent several transformations: from the Cape homesteads, to the English colonial veranda, to the Baker School covered *loggia*. Although Fisher (1998:135) acknowledges the English associations, it is difficult in the case of our three houses to separate Moerdijk's stoep as an element unique to the Transvaal. The difference as Moerdijk mentions is that the stoep should not be a narrow sheet metal clad corridor, but an open room (Fisher 1989:22). Similarly for Baker (1900:2-3) the 'stoep', in its broadness, needs to be "adapted for primitive life and open hospitality", albeit in response to more than one regional climate:

The local [South African] climate was eminently suitable for the arcaded collegiate cloister, the columned peristyle or the employment of 'what the Italians called loggia or portico and they in Africa the covered stoep. He praised too, the pergola, provided it was integrated with the main design. Warming to his subject, Baker spoke of an appropriate style of architecture, of cool recess, of void and spaces, and plain surfaces in deep shadow', of the necessity 'of preserving balance, symmetry and dignity of plan (Baker 1900:2).

Similar to Baker and Leith's *kopje* houses, Moerdijk's Afrikaans houses grow out of a *koppie* (hill) and are orientated towards the northern view of the land (Fisher 1989:23. Moerdijk). Nevertheless, it is in the plan that we see differences (see Fig. 4.4. Bottom right). Unlike a Cape house where "the bedrooms and kitchen lead directly off the hall" (Baker 1900:3), Moerdijk's design separates rooms with a servant's corridor which one reader of the *Boerevrou* commented was dark¹². Nonetheless, the central reception room (*ontvangskamer*), the formal dining room, and most importantly the stoeps connecting to the garden were the social spaces in most colonial houses irrespective of region.

One could argue that any Afrikaans 'cognitive' domestic style was limited only to "Afrikaners from Transvaal *dorps* who were rising into the middle and professional classes". Therefore, one could hardly say any desired Afrikaner regionalism was representative of the cultural expression of all Afrikaners. Chipkin (1993:27-29) highlights the anglicized Afrikaner presence in the suburbs of Parktown and

¹² The *Boerevrou* invited readers to ask questions and provide tips (Fisher 1989:26). Fisher (1998:124) suggests that skylights for natural light due to the deep 'stoep' were typical of the Transvaal house. Whereas, (Chipkin 1993:54) mentions that sculptural roof lanterns were derived from Voysey.

Westcliff in Johannesburg. Moerdijk also suggested that a non-degenerate Afrikaner that lived in an undesirable neighborhood strived for a “*beter omgewing*” (better environment):

Wat is die oorsaak hoekom sekere buurtes van 'n dorp of stad veragter, terwyl ander gedeeltes meer gewens word? Dit is nie altyd die skuld van die natuur nie. Diit kan wees dat 'n paar lelike huise die begin gemaak het van die agteruitgang, of dat 'n paar mooi, deftige geboue hulle aantrekkingskrag laat gelde het, en so het die een tot na- en die ander tot voordeel van die hele buurt gedien. Ons vind gewoonlik dat die misdadigers of kwaaddoeners uit die slegte buurte kom, terwyl die mense wat die meeste bydra tot die opbou en vooruitgang van 'n nasie, gewoonlik uit die beter omgewing afkomstig is. Daar is groot mense wat deur omstandighede, in minderwaardige buurte opgegroe het, maar hulle eerste strewe is altyd om weg te kom van die terneerdrukkende invloede. (Fisher 1989:20).

[What is the cause why certain neighbourhoods of a town or city deteriorate, while other areas become more desirable? It is not always the fault of nature, but it is perhaps that a few ugly houses caused the diminishment or that a few elegant buildings allowed their attraction to prevail so that the former unlike the latter leads to the advantage of the entire neighbourhood. We usually find that the criminals or wrongdoers hail out of the bad areas, while the people that contribute the most to the upliftment and progress of a nation, usually come from better environments. There are adults that due to circumstances live in inferior suburbs, but their first pursuit is always to get away from oppressive influences].

4.4 SECOND JUNCTURE: 1920S to 1930s

4.4.1 National moderne

There was little appreciation for 'old' (pre-Modern Movement) architecture, although students [Silent Subversives] enjoyed studying the history of architecture. Herbert Baker's work was thought outdated and over-designed. Moerdijk, who had been instrumental in establishing the school, was considered too traditional. We [Silent Subversives] considered Moerdijk's work as 'way-out', we knew his churches and obviously the library but thought we knew much more than him. We did not appreciate him. We were revolutionary and Le Corbusier was our hero (Steenkamp citing Van Kerken 2003: 6).

We recall¹³ the weakened political position of the Afrikaner after the First World War and their subsequent attempts “on becoming a *volk*”. We also remind of the split between the 'liberal' Cape and the 'provincial' Transvaal intelligentsia. The prime differences between Afrikaners was their stance in relation to the British Empire. As seen previously, English capitalism exacerbated any inferiority the Afrikaners already had. This brought about the conscious constructs of an Afrikaner nationalist identity in an attempt to rival the dominance of the English-speakers in the fields of economics and culture. In

¹³ See Chapter 3.

light of this, this section focuses on the junctures of South African local constructs within the internationalisms of the *second stylistic situation*.

Due to an unprecedented boom, post-depression Johannesburg inherited the skyscraper. The local engineers replaced the skeletal steel frames of Chicago with concrete frames waiting to be clad with a 'South African' cloak (Chipkin 1993:94). By the late 1920s and without principled knowledge, South African architects had several 'modernistic' fashionable themes from which they could choose. The interest in modernism, modernistic and Art Deco was primarily one of form and aesthetics. Often practitioners and consumers alike unwittingly fused styles (Chipkin 1993:90).

The editor of the *South African Architectural Record* Stanley Furner (1892-1971) questioned the relevance of the latest European thinking to a late 1920s South African situation (Herbert 1975:22). The architectural academia had differing opinions on whether local architecture should follow the national or international route (Vermeulen 1999:120). Herbert (1975:22) writes:

He [Furner] engaged two architects in search of a South African architecture in a dialogue. The one is a protagonist of the continuance of the Cape Dutch tradition, who, recognizing the absurdity of building like England or France in a new, hot-climate land, sees the work at the Cape as the only tradition indigenous source from which to derive a South African architecture. His opponent points out the futility of trying to adapt the architecture of "a hundred or so odd farmhouses built under a Dutch government" a thousand miles from the Witwatersrand to the realities of the new world of concrete and steel; let us not vainly seek a colonial solution, he pleads, but turn once more to Europe, as done...in America.



Figure 4.5. Left: Various 'Golden Jubilee' posters for the Empire Exhibition, Milner Park, Johannesburg, 1936, (<http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/johannesburg-1936-keeping-eye-out-souvenir-survivals>). Right: The South African Cape Dutch 'pavilion' around courtyards, John Albert Hoogterp, Empire Exhibition, 1936, (<https://johannesburg1912.wordpress.com/2015/04/29/history-of-braamfontein-pt-4-rand-show-wits-nunnery-brewery/>).

What style would express the national culture of South Africa in the 1930s? For clues, we refer to another exhibition, this time the Empire Exhibition of 1936 in Milner Park, Johannesburg (Fig. 4.5. Left). Besides the many pavilions for the British Dominions and African colonies, we are attracted to the South African government's pavilion (Fig. 4.5. Right). In mind of an International versus national dialectic, we

see “a self-conscious national style” represented by a Cape Dutch House furnished with Africana and complete with trees to represent a Cape ambience, albeit in the Transvaal. After all, we have seen that the Afrikaner idea of an appropriate architecture for the Transvaal should be distinct from that of the Cape. Nonetheless, this ‘Cape Dutch’ group of buildings that John Albert Hoogterp arranged around a courtyard was also distinct from the other ‘modernistic’ pavilions typical of Johannesburg at the time (Chipkin 1993:108).

Still, it was the other quasi-futurist buildings or ‘Empire Style’, mediating the industrial and the decorative, that the graduates from the Wits school would consume for their designs of flats in the growing middle-class suburbs. Due to the incoherence of principles for the fashionable ‘modern’, practising architects aestheticized themes (Chipkin 1993:90). For instance, four “features” of this “surrogate architecture” (Chipkin 1993: 126) were; flat roof slabs with parapets (Fig. 4.6. Top left); Dudok-like horizontal reinforced concrete cantilevered projections and jointing (Fig. 4.6. Top right); Mendelsohn-like rounded corners and semi-circular balconies (Fig. 4.6. Bottom left); and Wrightian-like motifs on pilasters (Fig. 4.6. Bottom left). Particularly the latter feature, Moerdijk adopted in his Afrikaner nationalist style.

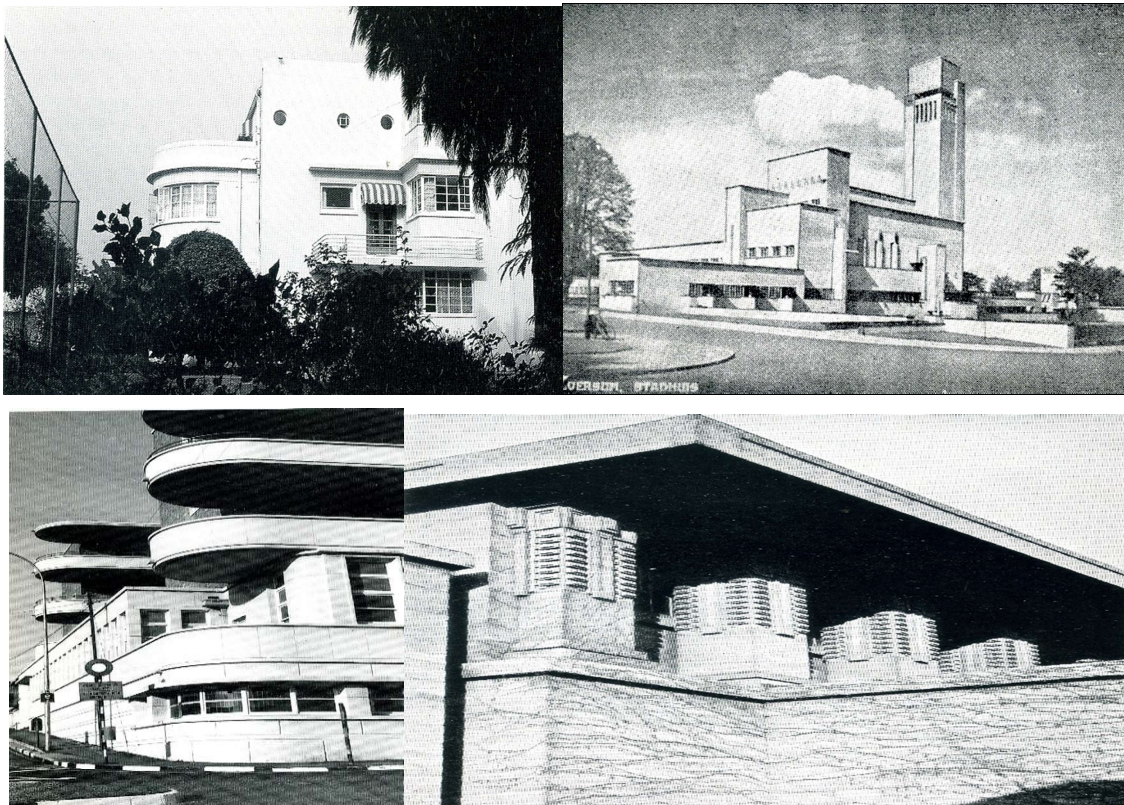


Figure 4.6. Top left: Flat roof with parapets: Trevail’s ‘modernistic’ House Bon Accord, Houghton, 1936 (Chipkin 1993:165). **Top right:** Projections. Willem Dudok, Town Hall, Hilversum, 1924-1931 (Van Niekerk 1941:148). **Bottom left:** Mendelsohnian forms: Gordon Leith’s Queen Victoria Hospital, Braamfontein, 1936. **Bottom right:** Pier ‘capitals’: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Church, Oak Park, 1906 (Hitchcock 1942: 123).

Inspired by the Art Deco skyscrapers in New York, 'Modernistic Capitalism' emphasised Frank Lloyd Wright's indigenously influenced motifs. Following a six-week visit to America¹⁴ Moerdijk acknowledged the American source for his Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Vermeulen (1999:140) quotes Roger Fisher's assertion that Moerdijk's "secular shrines"; the Bloemfontein Reserve Bank (1935), the Merensky Library (1937) and the Voortrekker Monument (1938), "represent a third group of stylistic expression" which can be partially "allied to the art deco" which Fisher terms "Boere Deco".

Still, historians equate Moerdijk's geometrical Art Deco zigzag patterning¹⁵ to Mapungubwe, the Great Zimbabwe ruins and Egypt. Nevertheless, a cause of concern for Moerdijk's critics was the *Völkershlachtdenkmal* (1900-1913) in Leipzig, Germany as a model for Afrikaner Nationalist buildings representing white domination at the dawn of the Second World War, (Vermeulen 1999: , Chipkin 1993:278). We do not necessarily negate Fisher's (1999: 142) defence of Moerdijk's contributions, but rather one could disagree with the Silent Subversives being borne along with Moerdijk in terms of an emerging style. When questioning whether Moerdijk left a style legacy for the future, his daughter *Irma Vermeulen (1999:143) agrees with the critics: *Hy het nie 'n "styl" nagelaat nie* (He refrained from handing down a "style"). Chipkin (1993:282) reinforces this position when he writes:

An observer looking at the building [Voortrekker Monument] when it was brand new in 1948 (on the eve of the Nationalist election victory) would be forgiven if he or she saw his as the future house style of emergent Afrikaner capitalism. Such an assumption would prove to be incorrect. It would not take into account the expectations or yearning for modernity of the new generation of architects who loosely constituted the Pretoria School.

4.4.2 Aestheticized modern

The International Style had some adherents who only partly understood the underlying principles, and who adopted the forms as a new external dress. In such cases, modern forms became a sort of packaging, a cosmetic application, rather than the expression of deeper meanings or the disciplined result of attention to the functional discipline suggested by a task. This was one of the dangers of speaking of the new architecture as a 'style' at all: it suggested that a set of visual formulae could be picked up and then applied. The work of the Dutch architect Willem Dudok supplies an example of this competent 'stylism'...capable of making a modern reductivism a sort of pleasing simplicity, which none the less lacked the transcending visionary content of the authentic modern movement (Curtis 1996:266).

With regards, the first three mentioned "features" of the *surrogate modernism* we need to refer to another exhibition held two years before the Empire Exhibition – The Rand Daily Mail Ideal Homes Exhibition (1934). Our aim is to uncover and critically analyze another attempt at constructing what Herbert (1975: 255) refers to as an "emergence of a South African idiom". Gilbert Herbert (1975) has covered the route prominent to the exhibition. Therefore, we hedge to the *Rand Daily Mail* newspaper

¹⁴ Vermeulen (1999: 104) relays how Moerdijk had a very good knowledge of American architecture derived from illustrated American architectural magazines.

¹⁵ Vermeulen (1999: 105) recognises several of Moerdijk's work exemplary of Art Deco in South Africa.

competition winners, who in 1934 built their prototypes at the *Rand Easter Show* at Milnerpark, Johannesburg. In third place was the Scotsman Kenneth MacKenzie, second place was the Scottish born architect Gordon McIntosh (1904-1983) and in the first place was the Englishman Douglass M. Cowin. Mediating between the other awards, the winning scheme was a fusion of the architectural and public opinion in South Africa at the time.

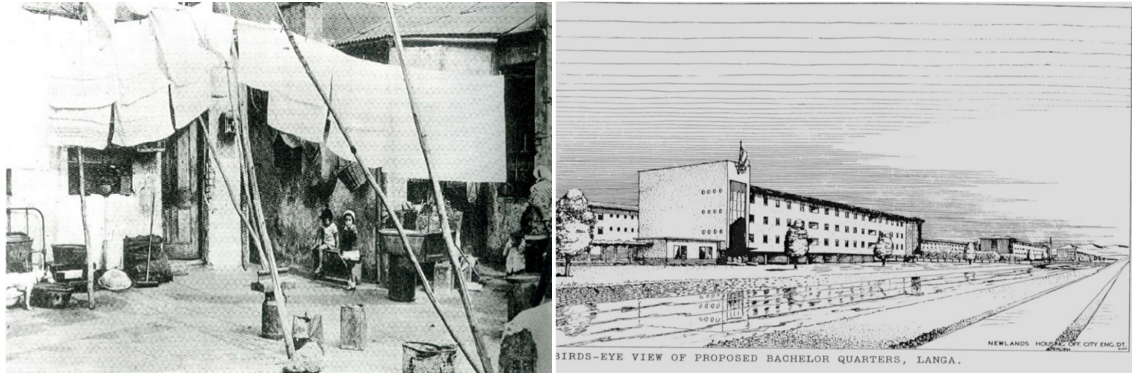


Figure 4.7. Left: Slum yard for Afrikaner female workers, Vrededorp, Johannesburg, c.1930s (Giliomee 2007: 264). **Right:** ‘Bachelor quarters’ for Langa, Cape Town Housing Department, c.1936 (André van Graan: https://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/2009_UnlovedModern_Van-Graan_AndreColonial-Modernism-in-Cape-Town_Paper.pdf).

The Ideal Homes exhibition occurred in the same year that the Union decided to leave the gold standard to alleviate Great Depression poverty and boost employment for unskilled whites of which the Afrikaner were many. We recall that 1934 was also the year that Verwoerd publicly relayed his ideals of favouring the white over the black poor. It was the year the Slums Act programme was to re-house poor whites and re-settle blacks in townships (Fig.4.7. Left). Therefore, the exhibition-opening speech downplayed the housing shortage relative to Europe due to South Africa’s “smaller population”. When the competition organisers were speaking “ideal home” for a “more buoyant national spirit”, they were of course referring to a South African product as a solution for the slum problem, albeit for whites only. Therefore, the main emphasis was twofold: hygiene and labour saving for the “mothers”. The former to be resolved with ventilation, sunshine, and the latter with mod cons and servants¹⁶ (Pearse 1934:253).

For their post-slum South African *minimum dwelling*, the winners ironically derived their ideas from Europe. Coates *et al* (1934:271-272) delivered a paper *The Slum Problem*, which besides local quantities and costs, consisted entirely of ideological quotes from Gropius and Le Corbusier. Pearse’s (1934:261-265) paper *The Evolution of the Home* briefly starts with origins of “primitive” home building of endemic cultures, but instead he shelves these influences favouring origins of the “small house” to England when he writes:

I do not propose to deal with these primitive buildings...but rather to concentrate on those of north western Europe which were the prototypes of the majority of our homes in this country. The small

¹⁶ The South African Ideal homes include a “native”, “boys” or ‘servants’ room.

house, as we know it to-day, can be traced back to the twelfth century. Interesting examples are to be found in Lincolnshire...The development of the roof is particularly interesting and is most likely derived from the booth type...building known as Tea-pot hall...These spreading roofs often covered large areas.

Due to Nazi race laws, the German Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983) moved to England in the 1930s. In his, book *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1936), he peculiarly shifted the origins of 'Social Modernism' from Europe to England (Mallgrave 2005:313). Concurrent with the migration of Gropius, Breuer, and Mendelsohn *et al* to England, Yorke's books highlight the mutation of modernism¹⁷. The influence of an English *migrated modernism* on South African architectural thinking then, was evidential in the Ideal Homes competition.

Both the winner, Cowin and the third placement, MacKenzie qualified at the University College of Liverpool where Maxwell Fry, Gropius' English collaborator, also qualified. The Liverpool School of Architecture was mostly a centre for Arts and Crafts training. The head of the school Herbert Reilly (1874-1948) who retired the year Cowin qualified (1933), straddled ideologically between the traditions of the arts and crafts and the modernity of steel framed Americanisms.

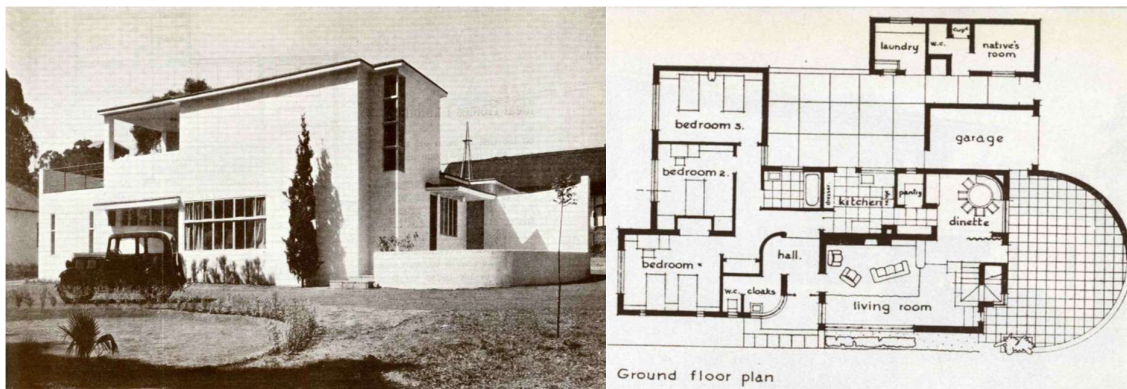


Figure 4.8. Left and Right: Rand Daily Mail minimum ideal dwelling. Winner Douglas Cowin's flat roofed entry, 1934 (<http://openarc.co.za/sites/default/files/Attachments/Modernism%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf>).

Following Maxwell Fry's criticisms, Reilly later embraced modernism and went as far to "warmly welcomed Mendelsohn to England" (Chipkin 1993:185). Cowin was educated in an eclectic English architectural milieu¹⁸ that he reflected in his South African prototype house (Fig. 4.8. Left). The three important aspects that Cowin emphasised were the justification of the flat roof; the disposition of rooms; the integration of furnishings and the use of colour¹⁹. Cowin (1934: 255) writes:

The adoption of the flat roof has allowed of [sic] great freedom in planning; a freedom which is absent when the size of and position of the rooms is largely determined by the pitched roof above

¹⁷ See Chapter 3.

¹⁸ There was a strong Liverpool connection in South African architecture as maintained in Cowin's architecture (Chipkin 1993: 185).

¹⁹ One is reminded of Le Corbusier's influence regarding the use of colour.

them. From the flat roof naturally evolves the roof garden, a portion covered and a portion open, to suit the varying moods of our climate.

Cowin hints at two of Le Corbusier's five points of architecture, the roof garden and the free plan. However, the "awkward planning and naïve aesthetics" (Herbert 1975:105) with traditional loadbearing walls indicate a lack of understanding of the principles of modernism for the sake of stylistics – hence *aestheticized modern*.

Although, Cowin generalizes²⁰ the European modernist's use of large windows as inappropriate for South Africa, his prototype has no sun-control to its largest northern window and tall north-west stairwell window. Yet, Cowin suggested that the South African climate required an "open type of house – with doors opening on to big verandahs" (Herbert 1975:105). Besides the small door leading out to the roof garden, the ground floor plan shows a single door leading out to an uncovered patio surrounded by a low semi-circular Mendelsohnian wall (Fig. 4.8. Right).

As a Dudok "stylism"²¹ the horizontal cantilevered hoods serve only as rain protection over doors. Curtis (1996:330) tells how in the late-1920s the "watered down versions of modern architecture" of Dudok and Robert Mallet-Stevens in particular "received attention in Britain". Willem Dudok (1884-1974) of course in turn was "strongly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright"²² whose "horizontal layering" contributed to the Art Deco aesthetic (Mallgrave 2005:242). One could argue that Cowin diluted these influences as a South African version. Cowin (1934:255) himself exposes the notion of the utilitarian made aesthetically 'beautiful':

To appreciate this house, and understand why it is so different from the accepted idea of what an "ideal" home should be, one must first grasp the underlying principles of modern architecture. It is not, as many people think, simply an attempt to evolve something novel or original, but a serious effort to arrive at a type of building suited to our rapidly changing outlook on life and mode of living. The underlying principles of modern architecture, stated very broadly and briefly, are beauty and comfort. Beauty is found, by the modern architect, not in ornament but in the proper handling of the masses, proportion, form and colour. Comfort is found in intelligent planning and in the adoption of devices to save labour.

²⁰ For instance, Mies van der Rohe's Tugendhat house with projected awning or his Barcelona pavilion with broad overhang, albeit flat.

²¹ Herbert (1975:105) suspects the influence of Dudok.

²² Herbert (1975:146) confirms the indirect influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Wasmuth papers* via Holland.

4.5 THIRD JUNCTURE: 1930s to 1940s

4.5.1 Modernist translations

But in South Africa he [Baker] was to survive even the modernist onslaught of the 1930s, to the extent that even the principal pioneer of South African modernism, Rex Martienssen, was an ardent admirer (Keith 1998:79).

Dominated by the trio of Hanson, Martienssen and McIntosh the most severe criticism of Cowin's winning scheme, as devoid of understanding and "weakened by ambiguities", came from the Witwatersrand School of Architecture (Chipkin 1975:108). With the introduction of the Modern Movement to post-depression South Africa, we had two groups. On one hand, those considered the 'revolutionary' pioneers and on the other hand the 'evolutionary' reactionaries. Despite the hegemonic group's criticism, one could argue both sides were borrowing international ideologies for the "emergence of a South African Idiom", albeit aestheticized mutations.

Although lacking "the pristine simplicity" thereof, McIntosh' second place entry was based on his 1933 design for the Zerohour House (Herbert 1975:104). Superseding their short-lived elitist attempt called the *Alpha Club*, Martienssen, McIntosh and Hanson founded the Zerohour group in 1932. The Zerohour principles for "the creation of a living architecture in south africa²³" was essentially a critique of the architectural approach of senior members of the profession and the necessity to gain the favour of the public. Their one and only propagandistic publication appeared in 1933. Titled *Zerohour*, the aim was "to show the continuity of development from Europe to South Africa" (Herbert 1975:94-96).

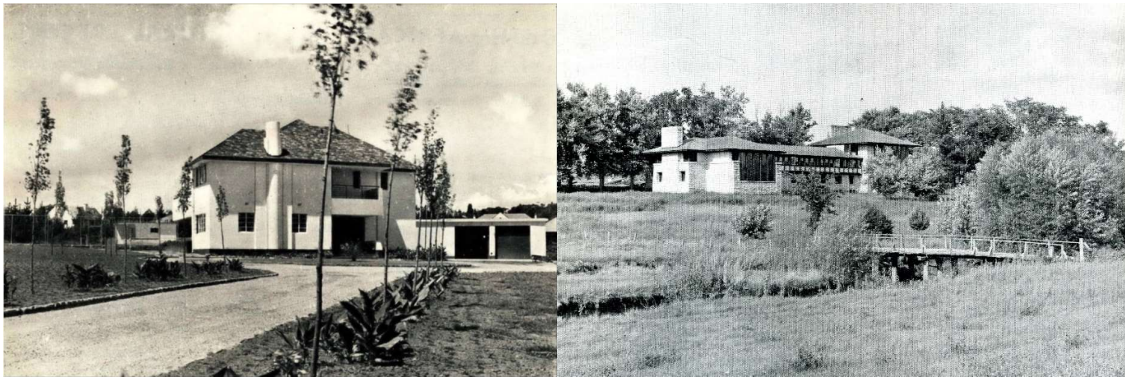


Figure 4.9. Left: 'Heavy' steep roof. Douglass Cowin, House Waite, Saxonwold, Johannesburg, 1934 (Pearse 1935: 56). Right: 'Light' low-pitched prairie house roof. Frank Lloyd Wright, Hillside Home School, Sprong Green, Wisconsin, 1902 (Gössel 1991: 22).

For local architects and academics, the outcome of a somewhat "superficial debate between pitched roof and flat", would largely constitute a "South African Style" (Chipkin 1975:167). The irony is that, despite examples of his steep pitched roofs (Fig. 4.9. Left), historians²⁴ would credit Cowin, for the low-pitched

²³ Note that the letters are all in lower case as was characteristic of zerohour font.

²⁴ See (Gerneke 1998:211).

roof as suitable for the South African climate. Rather, Herbert (1975:157) advocates that the Martienssen group, that included Fassler and Cooke, “pioneered the idea of the low-pitched roof for domestic work” and that the variations of form, Cowin and other architects developed. One could argue that the Martienssen variation of the low-pitched roof “in its definitive form” that “follows a well-defined system involving the relationship of roof, eaves and window”, Wright, we have seen²⁵, had already developed for his prairie houses (Fig. 4.9. Right). Inconsistently, Cowin (1934:101) writes:

Although this article is intended to deal primarily with the technical side of the new construction of flat roofs in domestic architecture, in view of the opposition offered to their adaption by architects of the older or traditional school, it would be as well to answer a few of their objections first, from the aesthetic point of view. In truth there is nothing modern about the flat roof, for if we turned back to the time of the ancient Egyptian empire, we find the flat roof extensively used, as it has been for generations in the South of Italy and Spain, The pitched roof, as we know it to-day, is the product of Northern Europe, where heavy snowstorms are experienced during the winter months, and was put into use there, as the most logical method of preventing the heavy weight lodging on the roof. It seems natural, then, that here in South Africa, where we seldom have snowstorms of severity, we should follow the example of the hot, snow-free countries such as Egypt and Italy.

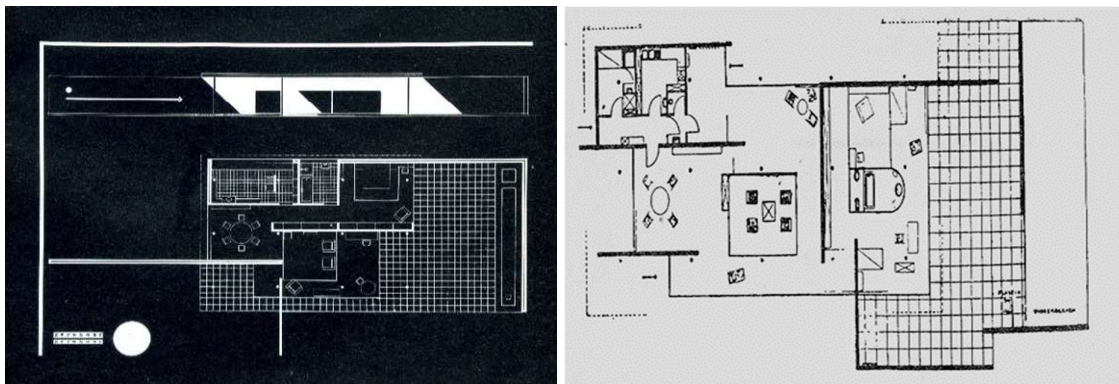


Figure 4.10. Left: Miesian mutation: Gordon McIntosh's Zerohour House, 1933 (Guedes 1983: 37). **Right:** Mies van der Rohe's Berlin Exhibition House.1931. From Yorke: *The Modern House* (Herbert 1975: 106).

Possibly seen in Yorke's *The Modern House*, the Zerohour House (Fig. 4.10. Left) was primarily a modern mutation of Mies van der Rohe's Berlin Building Exhibition House (1931) (Herbert 1975:106) (Fig. 4.10. Right). The flat roof of van der Rohe's pavilion extends far beyond the glazed walls, which the loadbearing steel column system allowed. Whereas, McIntosh has provided a covered 'stoep' extension for South African internal living externalised. Although, this design never materialized, McIntosh was the first to build a version of the congenital Modern Architecture as inspired by Gropius– House Munro (1932) - not in Johannesburg, but in Pretoria (Fig. 4.11 Left). Cooke (1983:32) writes:

He [McIntosh] and Rex Martienssen had previously designed a house for Mr Krahan, but this was never built. In one bold gesture House Munro breaks almost entirely with tradition and with great confidence establishes a completely new architectural philosophy and idiom, of considerable

²⁵ See Chapter 3.

maturity. It is the handling of the exterior massing and the elevational treatment which is so revolutionary. Only the plan remains fairly conventional as does the structural concept of wall over wall and the upper floor conforming exactly to the ground floor. A loosening up of plan forms and a greater modulation of space was to follow later.

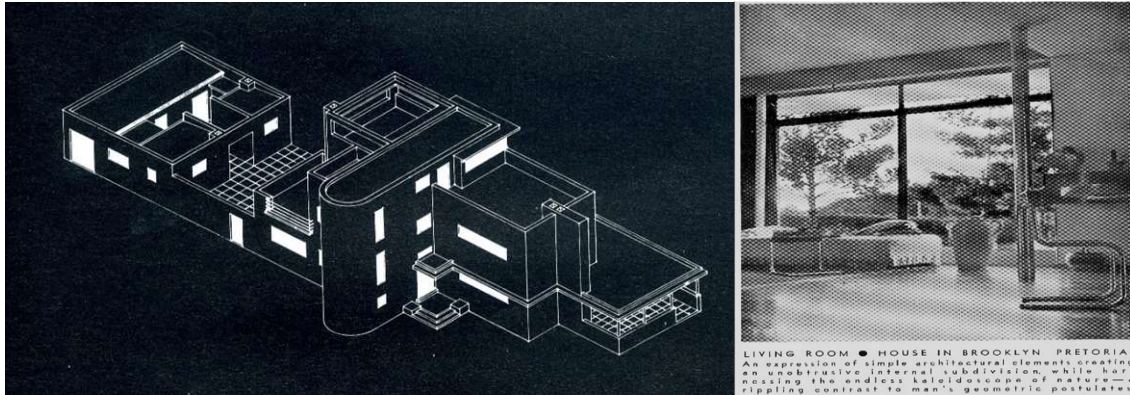


Figure 4.11. Left: Drawing of first built Modern house in South Africa. Gordon McIntosh, House Munro, Pretoria, 1932 (Guedes 1983: 37). **Right:** “Unobtrusive internal subdivision”, Gordon McIntosh, House McIntosh, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1936 (Hanson 1938: 140).

Firstly, McIntosh was English and a graduate from the Wits school²⁶. Nevertheless, Fisher (1998:124.127) includes his contribution to the emergence of an Afrikaans ‘Third Vernacular’. McIntosh’s own ‘romantic’ home in Brooklyn, Pretoria (1926-1937) (Fig. 4.11 Right) Fisher suggested, “was already applying a rustic interpretation” of the *zerohour* initiatives. Secondly, McIntosh was associated with the Transvaal University College Pretoria²⁷. Thirdly, the Wits school influenced Pretoria architecture in the mid-1930s. With regards House McIntosh, Herbert (1975:149) writes:

In terms of the International Style which McIntosh helped to introduce to South Africa, however, this house must be considered not typical but an important mutation. Its painted but unplastered stock brick walls, with raked joints, and its rough exposed concrete surfaces, are more consonant with local romantic practice than with international trends; and the hood over the living room window is a recognition of the fierceness of the Pretoria sun...Its urbane forms and rough textures...unite most appropriately in the Pretoria landscape and the Pretoria sunshine, to make this a house of great interest.

The polarization and paradox of machine aesthetics versus textural artisanship persisted. In 1930s Britain, Yorke’s influential books had already highlighted the ‘New Aesthetic’ as a textural shift showing exposed or painted brickwork similar to House McIntosh²⁸. In addition, Le Corbusier’s Swiss pavilion, Paris (1930) had exposed concrete (*beton brut*) *pilotis* and a curved wall of stone. Besides his Errazuri’s house (1930) that “confronted by the new technical and climatic problems of Chile” (Herbert 1975:166),

²⁶ McIntosh was the second student to graduate from Wits in 1928.

²⁷ McIntosh was a part-time lecturer and external examiner in Engineering, Pretoria School of Architecture. Incidentally, he attended Pretoria Boys High School.

²⁸ When McIntosh and Martienssen arrived in England, the charms of English Architecture conditioned their receptiveness (Herbert 1975:27).

his own 1933 apartment and his weekend houses in Le Celle-Saint Cloud, Paris (1935) and Les Mathes, La Rochelle (1935) incorporated stone and clinker bricks (Boesiger 1995:70-71) (Fig. 4.12. Left). Curtis (1996:320) writes:

Climate became a major preoccupation of Le Corbusier's in the 1930s, perhaps because he had to consider the problems of constructing in North Africa, Brazil, the tropics and the Mediterranean. The architect travelled a great deal in this period and from his sketches and notes one realizes that he was increasingly interested in folk forms, and in the harmony between people, buildings and landscapes which he sensed in the vernacular.

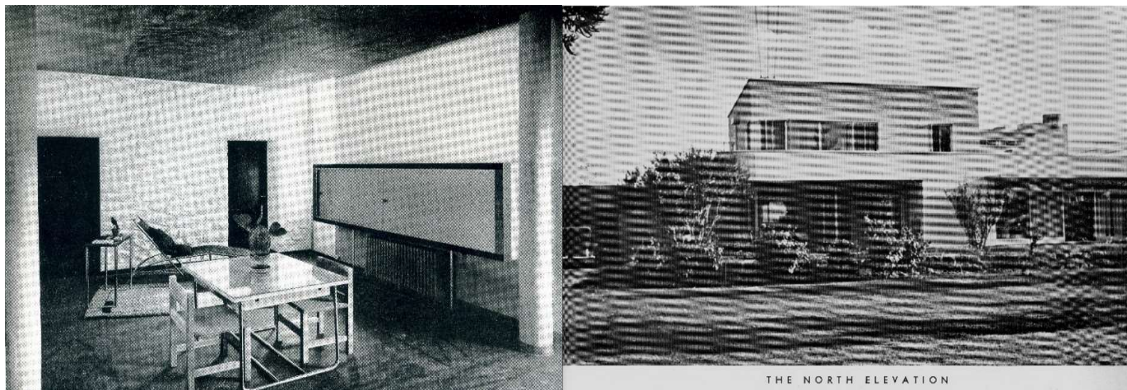


Figure 4.12. Left: “Influential combination of rough and machine-smooth materials”, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Weekend house, Hyères, France, 1930s (Mock 1946: 64). **Right:** ‘New Aesthetic’, Gordon McIntosh, House McIntosh, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1936-7 (Hanson 1938: 143).

A closer observation of the black and white photographs of the International Style (1925-1940) reveals not only a host of textural elements, but projecting sun-control hoods, pergolas, awnings and verandas (Leuthäuser 1990). Herbert (1975:52) wrote how “canvas awnings were not unknown to the Modern Movement in Europe at the time”. In light of one of the aforementioned characteristics of *surrogate modernism*, one could therefore question Fisher’s (1998:125,130) implication that either rustication or a projecting hood, as exemplified in House McIntosh, was in opposition to the so-called “severity” of the International Style, particular to a Pretoria Regionalism (Fig. 4.12. Right). Chipkin (2008:03) reflects:

Modernity in the UK in the 30s was predominantly an émigré affair: Lubetkin, Goldfinger and Chermayeff; Gropius and many others; Pevsner the émigré intellectual who would lecture a Wits on The Englishness of English Art; Connel and Ward – from New Zealand; Well Coates from Canada – the list is considerable. There was nothing in Britain (nor for that matter in the Cape or Natal) as widespread and consistent as the indigenous Modern Movement in (what was then) the Transvaal, which, in less than two decades, created the norms of a modern vernacular.

With regards the emergence of a Transvaal vernacular in the 1930s, we cannot ignore the interconnectedness of Pretoria and Johannesburg. Furthermore, we should recognise that the post 1936 houses in Durban were also “slightly on the heels of the Transvaal Group” (Fisher 2003:70).

Although, the core of the *le Groupe Transvaal*²⁹ was the Wits School of Architecture, there were not only “reciprocal relations of the Transvaal, Natal and the Cape Province” but “South Africa was swept from the backwaters of architectural provincialism into the mainstream of the International Style” (Herbert 1975:1). Fisher (2003:69) confirms:

The first formal links between South African architects and the international Modern Movement were established by the “Transvaal Group”, informally led by Rex Martienssen (1905-1942). An outstanding student and lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and editor of the *South African Architectural Record*, he investigated and promoted modern architecture amongst his colleagues. Thanks to Le Corbusier, Martienssen was invited to join the CIAM in 1937, but the budding international links withered following the outbreak of war, and Martienssen’s tragic early death.

The Wits connection is relevant for the re-evaluation of a tradition for our Silent Subversives. Villas with projecting hoods, porthole windows and semi-circular wings and swimming pools by Le Roith, Cowin, Trevail, were emerging in the new-rich suburbs such as Lower Houghton, Parktown and Westcliff, Johannesburg and McIntosh and Eaton in Brooklyn, Pretoria (Chipkin 1993:164-166). Since South Africa “was culturally dependant on Britain”, the borrowing leaned more towards the migrated Gropius. In the case for Martienssen’ Curtis (1996:384) writes:

...the strong South African sunlight provided dramatic gashes of shadow in the voids cut through the taut planes of the walls. Martienssen understood the classical and Mediterranean echoes in Le Corbusier’s work, and in his own architecture celebrated the sensuous qualities of the South African climate, vegetation and landscape.

Eaton, McIntosh and Martienssen graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at the Witwatersrand University under, “the intensely practical”, Pearse and Furner in the late-1920s. The teachers at Wits cultivated an “affection for the English House” derived from Baker’s, Arts and Crafts³⁰. These sentiments contributed largely to the School ethos (Herbert 1975:28). Moreover, the 1928 student tour to Cape Town highlighted the School’s interest in the traditional Cape architecture, albeit a Baker interpretation thereof. Nevertheless, the surveying and draughting contributions of, amongst others, Leith, Eaton, McIntosh, Martienssen, Hanson and ironically, the Architectural Association graduate, Moerdijk contributed to Pearse’s 1933 book *Eighteenth Century Architecture in South Africa* (Pearse 1933: vii).

Concurrent with historicism, the School encouraged modern expression and experimentation, which “made possible the radical thinking which was to reshape South Africa’s architecture” (Herbert 1975:32). Along with segregation of white versus black, skilled versus unskilled labour, English versus Afrikaans,

²⁹ Le Corbusier derived the label (Chipkin 1993:89).

³⁰ See Chapter 3. In particular, *first stylistic situation* and *first juncture*. The *Studio*, Frank Lloyd Wright’s preferred magazine, which Martienssen had “immersed himself in” on his trip to England 1926 dealt primarily with the English country house. The teachings of Gordon Leith reiterated the Arts and Crafts movement and as Herbert (1975: 28) relays, “this tradition, was a paradoxical thread in Martienssens’s tangled skein of influences”.

Cape versus Transvaal, Smuts versus Hertzog, universalism versus localism³¹, graduates faced the continuous historical dualisms of tradition versus modernity. In Martienssens case, he “was wrestling with the raging dichotomy between romance and reason, which was never completely to leave him” (Herbert 1975:43).

One could argue that also Eaton experienced these dualities³². Although, Eaton qualified in 1928 before the ‘revolution’ at Wits, Harrop-Allin’s (1975:17) claim that Eaton “was never to subscribe wholeheartedly” to the new architecture for the 1930s is questionable. Albeit echoing Gropius’ ‘total philosophy’ or Smut’s *Holism and Evolution*³³, Norman Eaton wrote to Martienssen from the British School in Rome with regards universalising modernism. Herbert (1975:72) cites the letter:

In Architecture, I am convinced, will be found the solution to most problems affecting the present worldwide unrest, since it is the thing most intimately bound up with life of each one of us mortals. It will organise the necessities of present day living into one great synchronised whole...I see in the future – simple elements of buildings, buildings as the elements of cities, cities – of a nation; nations – of the world. These combinations, dictated by the problem limited by resources and willed by the artist, while producing an essential uniformity will induce within it an infinite variety.

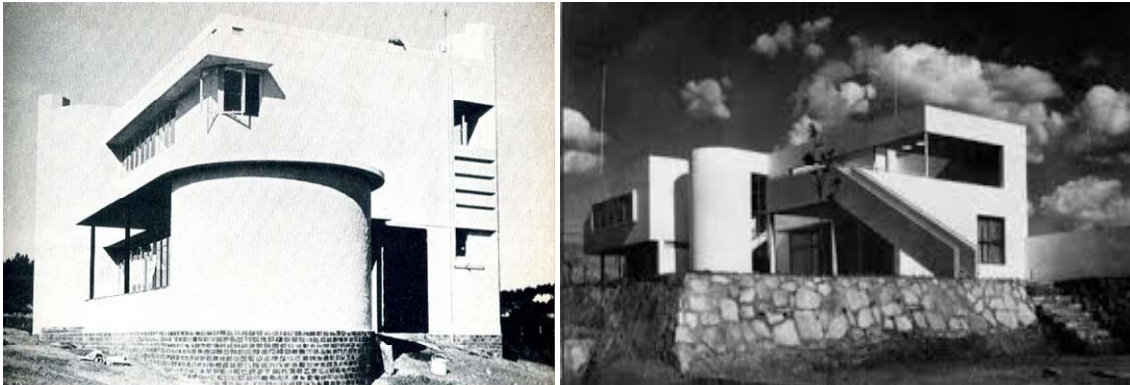


Figure 4.13. Left: White painted bagged walls on exposed brick plinth. Norman Eaton, Boyes house, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1933-4 (Harrop-Allin 1975: 27). **Right:** White geometric forms on stone base garden terraces. Martienssen, Fassler & Cooke, House Stern, Houghton, Johannesburg, 1934-5 (Chipkin 1993: 168).

Except for Eaton’s Miss Boyes House, Brooklyn, Pretoria (1933-1934), Harrop-Allin (1975:17) opts to exclude most of Eaton’s modernist houses of the 1930s. However, Pienaar’s (2013) dissertation unpacks approximately a dozen³⁴ Eaton white-cube flat-roofed early houses during the period 1933 to 1934 in Pretoria³⁵. The suggestion that the “clear expression of the brick character in the bagged finishes, the rough exposed bricks of the raised foundations and the use of floor tiles” (Harrop-Allin 1975:27), as seen in House Boyes (Fig. 4.13. Left), as “less doctrinaire” (Pienaar 2013:39) than say that of

³¹ See Chapter 3.

³² Both Eaton and Martienssen worked for Gordon Leith. Leith’s influence on Eaton was immense (Harrop-Allin 1975:19, 22).

³³ The fusion government “represented a triumph for the principles of universality steadily progressing in the world” (Gillimee 2007:285).

³⁴ The quantity of houses are based on a keyword system for the ‘Modern movement’ and ‘Moderne streamlined’.

³⁵ Eaton established a private practice in Pretoria in 1933.

McIntosh and the other members of the *Transvaal Groupe* can be refuted based on the aforementioned arguments. Moreover, Harrop-Allin (1975:12) invites refutation to his “subjective interpretations”.

Fisher (1998:125) points out that the Pretoria clients were not as “financially proficient” as their “Rand counterparts”. Due to economics and labour, the post-depression Pretoria houses would need to resort to techniques such as bagged brickwork (Pienaar 2013:17). As far as the practical use of rougher plinths³⁶ for white buildings were concerned, we witness for example in Johannesburg the stone base of Martiessen, Fassler & Cooke’s House Stern (1934-1935) (Fig. 4.13. Right). Also Le Roith’s Radoma Court, Yeoville, Johannesburg (1937-1938) sits on a face-brick plinth (Chipkin 1993: 145,168,174).

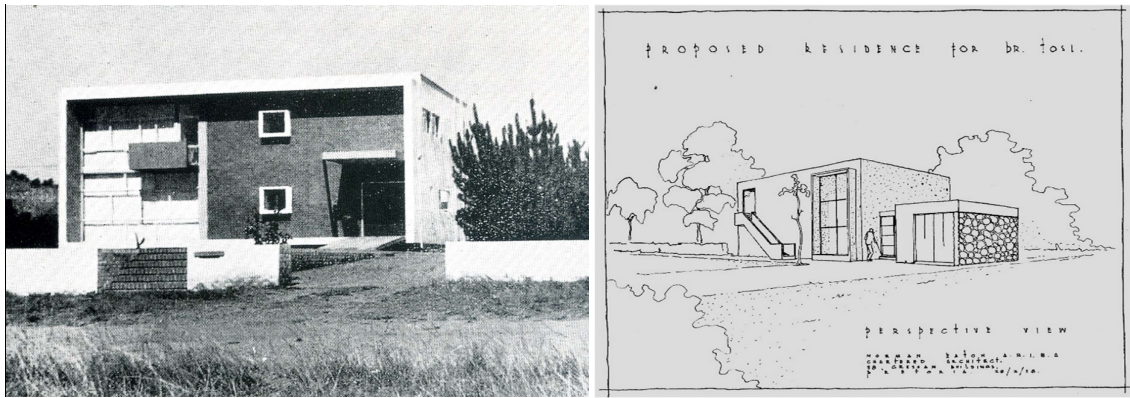


Figure 4.14. Left: “Citrohan window-wall derivate”. Rex Martiessen’s House, Greenside, 1940 (Chipkin 1993: 184). Right: Citrohan aesthetic translation. Norman Eaton’s Dr Tosi House, Westend, 1938 (Pienaar 2013: 64).

To summarise the Transvaal translation of 1930s modernism³⁷, we weigh up two houses: House Martiessen. Greenside Johannesburg (1940) (Fig. 4.14. Left) and the unbuilt Dr Tosi House, Westend (1938) by Eaton (Fig. 4.14. Right). Both remind of Le Corbusier’s Maison Citrohan (1922) (Chipkin 1993: 181). Similar to the mass production of Ford vehicles, developers were to mass-produce Le Corbusier’s Citrohan based on *L’Esprit Nouveau* principles³⁸. Le Corbusier intended the Citrohan as a unit for social housing blocks to resolve slum conditions in industrialised regions (Curtis 1996: 241-248).

Yet, both Martiessen and Eaton project their houses as freestanding suburban dwellings. Both houses were modernist translations essentially “biased towards aesthetics” (Barker 2012: 79). Stylistic debates and contradictions revolving around as to why Eaton’s house has more “regional tempering” (Pienaar 2013: 65) than Martiessen’s “untenable cubist forms” (Barker 2012: 79) seems ostensible in relation to the pressing housing issues of the time. The modernist courts and flats by Le Roith, Cooke and Hanson *et al* in Johannesburg at least addressed the urban influx demand, albeit for middle-class whites only

³⁶ “Face brick is a traditional South African material” (Herbert 1993:145).

³⁷ Barker (2012:77) refers to *Transitory* modern.

³⁸ For example, the Mediterranean inspired prototype housing an industrialist eventually built in 1924 at Pessac (Curtis 1996:170-171).

(Chipkin 1993: 169-177). Referring to Martienssen and Hanson's 1930 visit to the Stuttgart exhibition, Herbert (1975:51) writes:

There is no mention of the important social theme, of housing for all economic levels, which motivated the exhibition. And there is no comment on the advanced concepts: the emphasis on standardization and prefabrication in the houses of Gropius and Poelzig, and the system of flexible subdivision in the flats of Mies van der Rohe, concepts which indicate the technical novelty, the inherent forward-looking quality of the new housing. Martienssen, we must assume, was responsive at this stage neither to the advanced technology, which was the keynote of the exhibition (Herbert 1975:51),

4.5.2 Ideal homes

It is perhaps most truthful to say that there is no such thing as South African architecture. What does exist is an alternatively fascinating and repugnant interaction of influences, both foreign and indigenous that have been absorbed, into a South African context (Slessor 1995:)

What is an 'ideal' home'? Deborah Sugg Ryan provides some light on the topic in her 1995 thesis: *The Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition and suburban modernity, 1908-51*. Therein, she informs about the interwar norm of a new English suburban class and their domestic ownership. Ryan (2018) follows up on the notion of the 'ideal' home in her 2018 book *Ideal Homes: Domestic Design and Suburban Modernism 1918-39*. She dialectically weighs up the interwar home as "both modern and nostalgic" and at the same time a "retreat from the outside world" but also "a site of change and experimentation". In addition, her investigation reinforces gender identities in the decoration of the home. Homemakers sought inspiration³⁹ at displays such as Heath Robinson's Ideal Home (1934) held at the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home exhibition founded in 1908. Moreover, the London newspaper competition invited readers to submit 'ideal homes' which were selectively manifested at that exhibition (Angex 1990). What is an ideal home for South Africa?

Similarly, the English concept of the 'ideal home' provides the background for both the previously mentioned South African Rand Daily Mail 'Ideal Homes' competition of 1934 and the Argus 'Ideal Homes' Competition of 1937. Since winning the Witwatersrand competition, Cowin and his partner Ellis, developed the populist flat-roofed 'ideal' South African home, not as the *existenzminimum* (subsistence dwelling) the competition brief intended, but for large Gropius-inspired private houses⁴⁰. The suspected influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's horizontality (Herbert 1975:145-146) becomes clearer as exemplified in Cowin's House Kalt in Observatory, Johannesburg (c. 1935).

Although considered 'ideal homes' for the public, the professional inner circle dismissed Cowin's work as 'modernistic' (Herbert 1975:146). We have previously pointed out that the Martienssen group introduced Wright's low-pitched roof with overhangs to South Africa. Therefore, when Cowin designed

³⁹ See (Mallgrave 2005:185-188) for the background to the Interior Decoration profession in America and the impact of the *House Beautiful* magazine on public opinion with regards nineteenth century architecture.

⁴⁰ For example, "Residence Kottler for the well-known South African sculptor" (Herbert 1975:145). The irony is that Chipkin (1993:186) writes how "Cowin, Powers & Ellis, with Douglass Cowin in attendance, was averse to designing flat-roofed Houghton villas".

the steep pitched heavy slate roof for House Waite, Saxonwold, Johannesburg (1934), the “*Record’s* criticisms were well-founded” (Herbert 1975:146). Taking heed of the criticisms, Cowin designed his own house, Casa Bedo (1936-1938) in Waverly, Johannesburg (Fig. 4.15. Left and Right),

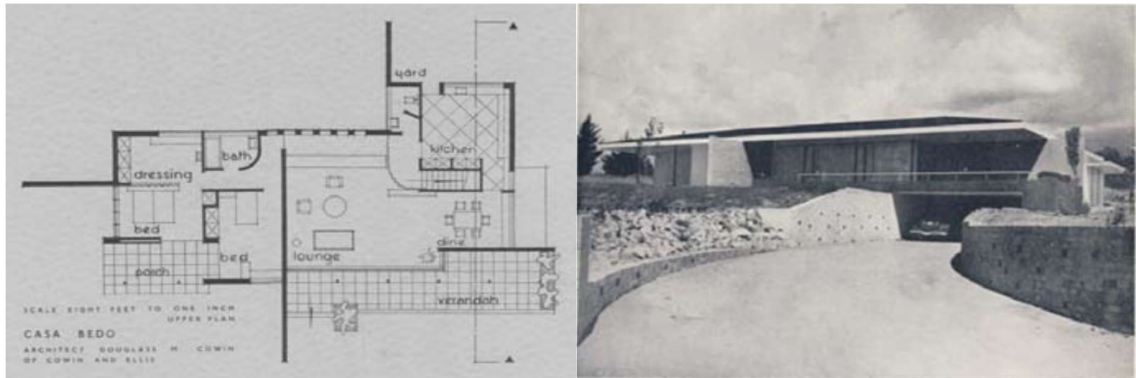


Figure 4.15. Left: Quasi-Miesian plan: Douglass Cowin’s Casa Bedo, 1936 (SAAR, November 1938). **Right:** Quasi-Miesian pavilion: Casa Bedo with white fascia and black roof (SAAR, November 1938).

Here he resorts to the Groups idea of the pitched roof as “low as possible” as a ‘lid’ to the Miesian inspired floor plan which smacks of McIntosh’s zero ‘ideal’ house. What is of interest is the desire for a flat Miesian roof slab. Due to poor South African construction skills at the time, Cowin achieves an illusion of a flat roof by utilizing a broad white painted fascia concealing a gutter projecting visually forwards beyond a receding black painted low pitch roof (Chipkin 1993:186) (Fig.4.15. Right).

The combination of smooth white plastered and raked joint brick walls on black painted and face-brick plinths, one argues, is a Wrightian mutated modernism for the Transvaal (Herbert 1975:147, Chipkin 1993:186). Casa Bedo with its large full height glass windows leading onto a veranda⁴¹, became the Transvaal pre-war ‘model’ of “modern domesticity, modest in scale, economic in cost, optimistic in feeling, rich in local materials” (Chipkin 1993:187) Irrespective of its imported genesis, regionalists consider Casa Bedo the ‘ideal’ emergence of a “Transvaal suburban vernacular” (Chipkin 1993:187).

For an interwar domestic ‘ideal’ that Sugg Ryan speaks about, it is Norman Eaton, in the period 1930s to 1940s, who provides us with a synthesis of tradition (Cape) and modern (Transvaal). Eaton tries to please all. As protégé and apprentice⁴², Gordon Leith exposed him to what Barker (2012:54-55) terms the third Cape vernacular, which linked the Cape via Baker to the English Arts and Crafts movement. Leith also introduced Eaton to Moerdijk and Pierneef’s ‘regionalism’.

Cape referencing is obvious in both Leith and Eaton’s work. It is particularly Leith’s 1928 article *Die Afrikaanse boer as argitek en boumeester* (Fisher 1989:40-44) that one could argue becomes the model for Eaton’s thatch roof forms with exposed pole structures as exemplified in House van Wouw⁴³ (1937-1938). This house and studio synthesises the traditional Cape (shutters, built-in seating and thatch) with

⁴¹ In 1955, a conversion altered the veranda into an enclosed room (Chipkin 1993:187).

⁴² Eaton’s father died when he was 16 and thereafter, Leith partially filled the void of a father-figure (Harrop-Allin 1975:19)

⁴³ The sculptor Van Wouw was an Afrikaner Nationalist.

the modernist Citrohan-like double volume. Once more, we notice “Wrightian manifestations” of elongated plans as applied in his flat-roofed houses (Pienaar 2013:62-63). Although Wright is common ground, Eaton’s thatch roof (Fig. 4.16. Left) is different from Cowin’s borrowed low-pitched roofs (Fig. 4.16. Right). Yet both are paradoxically considered “appropriate architecture for the Transvaal” and by extension “Pretoria Regionalism” (Pienaar 2013:63).

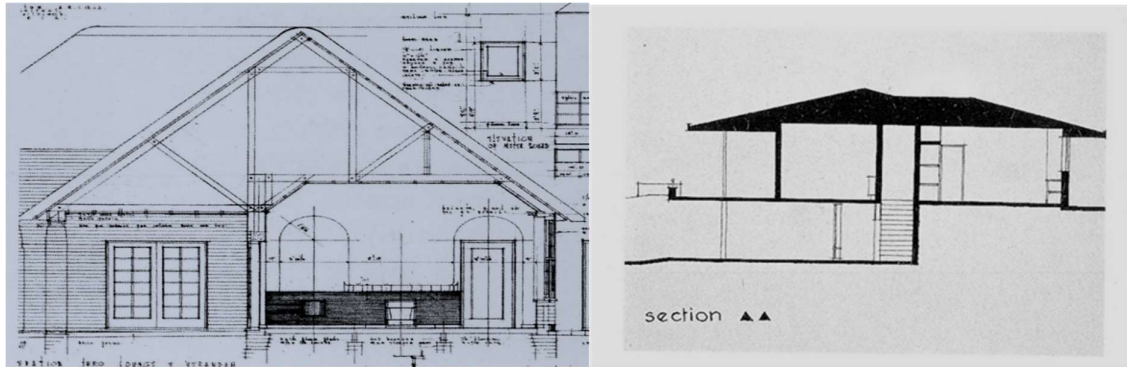


Figure 4.16. Left: Cape referencing for thatch roof shortly before the war. Norman Eaton, Van Wouw house, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1937-8 (Pienaar 2013:62). **Right:** Borrowed low-pitch roof. Cowin & Ellis, Casa Bedo, Waverly, Johannesburg, 1936-8 (Chipkin 1993: 185).

Pienaar (2013:63) observes that Eaton’s “design of the Van Wouw House and studio, Houses Theron, Rawlins and Homestead Cooper, all happened at the same time as the Argus Ideal Homes Competition”. She, however reinforces Barkers (2012:90) unsupported claim that this 1937 event “was launched in an attempt to popularize the International Style home in South Africa”. Instead, the Institute of South African Architects (ISAA) as representative of South African architects from all provinces co-operated with the Argus Printing and Publishing Company to promote the limited services of the profession to the public. Therefore, the participation was rather “professional propaganda accompanying the “Ideal Homes” competition”. Since entries within three cost categories and from “three zones: Transvaal – O.F.S.; Cape; and Natal” would be published monthly, publicity would be continual (Herbert 1975:160). Adjudication would be fair to determine widespread professional and public attitudes as Herbert (1975:161) explains:

By the system of the Greek Vote we may gain an insight into the kinds of domestic architecture most acceptable to the majority of the entrants; we may assess the state of architectural aspirations, if not practice, in South Africa in 1937. And while there are obvious differences between the provinces, yet there is sufficient consistency to begin to foresee – we can put it no stronger than this – a South African attitude emerging.

The allied newspapers, the Johannesburg *Star* and the *Cape Argus* published a variety of seventy ‘Ideal Homes’. The minority of submissions were an assortment of unapologetically “pretty” traditional styles or ‘modernistic’. Other designers aligned to the synthesis of ‘modern’ and ‘conventional’. The remainder of entries sided with the modernist mutations of either the Martienssen or Cowin school of thought. As Wits alumni, the ‘Pretoria Regionalists’, Eaton and Cole-Bowen preferred the Johannesburg School entries. The Greek Vote revealed the designs of Marwick and Telford as the most popular. The former

representing the “low-pitched roof idiom” and the latter the flat roof Usonian-type house as inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright (Herbert 1975:162-163).

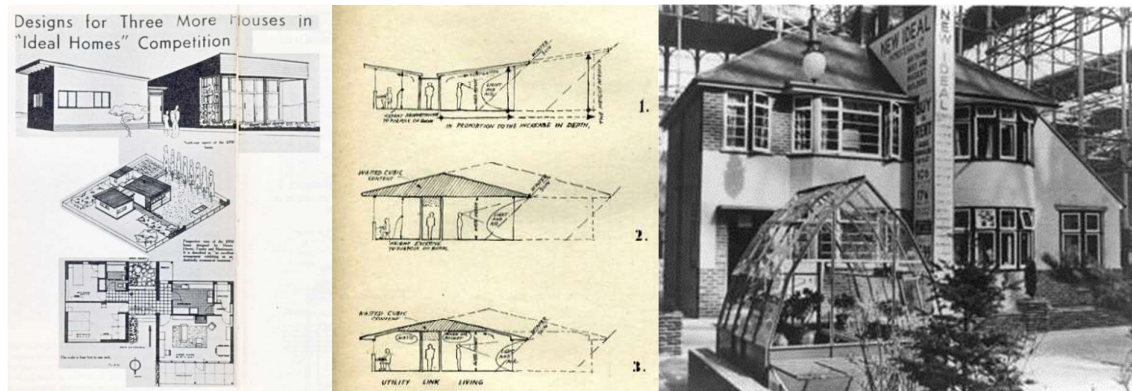


Figure 4.17. Left: Monopitch roofs. Martienssen, Fassler, Argus Ideal Homes Competition, 1937 (Herbert, 1975:160). **Middle:** Double lean-to roof experiment. Helmut Stauch, (Stauch 1945: 207). **Right:** New Ideal Homesteads, largest house developers. South London Exhibition, Crystal Palace, 1936 (<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/bromley/assets/galleries/crystal-palace/exhibition>).

Herbert (1975:164) points out that Martienssens infrequent mono-pitch entry (Fig. 4.16. Left) was blind to Hellmut Stauch’s lean-to experiments (Fig.4.17. Middle). Typically of Sugg Ryan’s observations of ‘Ideal Homes’ exhibitions, the successful schemes tended to be more “conservative” rather than “the ethos of a brave new world” (Fig. 4.17. Right). On the cusp of the war in 1939, Furner would confirm this “modern but not avant-garde modern” approach as “appropriate architecture for Johannesburg” (Chipkin 2008:458). Nevertheless, ignorant of the slum clearing completed at the time (Chipkin 1993:204-295), entrants considered their own designs as an “Ideal Home” for South Africa. Herbert (1975:165) explicates stylistics over social concerns:

The Star considers the entries which incorporate such elements as the hovering, spreading low roof; the flower boxes, trellises and pergolas; the tradition hallowed textures of rich facebrick or limewashed stocks. It sees these in conjunction with “clear, simple arrangements of plan”, and a careful consideration of climate. And it concludes that there is the emergent style of architecture appropriate for South Africa.

4.6 FOURTH JUNCTURE: 1940s to 1950s

4.6.1 Germanic systems

For the essential characteristics of its buildings to be isolated and autonomous in a way that South Africa was under apartheid. In those years, attempts to define or develop a regional architecture often issued in a parochialism that said more about the country’s distance from other architectural centres than about some inherent difference (Judin 1998:28).

It is interesting to discern how the Germanic émigrés underwrote post-war regionalisms in the United States of America⁴⁴. There are parallels with the situation in South Africa⁴⁵. The Viennese Schmickl and the German Stauch were prominent émigré architects in Pretoria. As non-Afrikaans tutors, Fisher (1998:128) seemingly underplays⁴⁶ their roles as originators for an emergence of a *Third Vernacular* or 'Pretoria Regionalism'. Although nearly twenty years older, Barker (2012:63) groups the German immigrant Pahl with Fox and Fagan as a *Fourth Vernacular* or Cape regionalists. Besides the complexity of "number classifications" for South African vernaculars⁴⁷, it is curious to note the influence of the German lineage also on the *First Vernacular* at the Cape (Barker 2012:51).

The Berliner Steffen Ahrends settled in Johannesburg in 1936. Within an extension of the Arts and Crafts nuances, Ahrends created a Johannesburg "congenial vernacular" for the post-war years (Chipkin 1993:306). Incidentally, it was Bernard Rudofsky (1905-1988), a graduate from the Viennese *Technische Hochschule* (TH Wien)⁴⁸, who was first to use the term 'vernacular' in relation to architecture when he wrote *Architecture without Architects* (1964):

For want of a generic label, we shall call it vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous, rural, as the case may be.

A contemporary of Rudofsky, Robert Gustav Schmickl (1903-1977) qualified as an architect-engineer at TH Wien⁴⁹. After an economically challenging youth in Vienna, he endured employment dismissals due to "the vagaries of his Germanic origins" in Johannesburg and Durban during the war. Out of necessity, he founded a practice in Bureau Lane with Eaton, Cole-Bowen and Stauch in Pretoria (Fisher 1998:128,134). The war exemplifies a "change in circumstances" affecting the aspects of a regionalist architecture. Fisher (1998:123) alludes to the idea that such factors "lead to a change in the manner of this response, and that a different regional building character or "style" will emerge". In light of Fisher's (1998:125) identifications, we therefore cannot singularly ruminate "low-pitched iron roofs", as characteristic of a Pretoria Regionalist roof-type⁵⁰. Fisher (1998:134) writes:

When the quality of galvanising declined in the course of the war and cut timber became scarce, local architects turned to poles and thatch for roofing. Eaton considered Schmickl the master of this construction. Other materials would also prevail. Over-fired and misformed bricks, discarded as "useless", and first used as desperate and cost-cutting measures for financially strapped home-builders, became fashionable through the use of the likes of Schmickl and Eaton. The local Pelindaba⁵¹ slate used rough or cut was likewise raised to respectability.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 5, In particular, *the fourth stylistic situation*.

⁴⁵ We therefore question Fisher's (1998: 124) claim that "Afrikaner origins seem to have been pivotal in the emergence of a Pretoria Regionalism".

⁴⁶ Perhaps their Germanic origins were in conflict with the pivotal aspect of Afrikaner in the emergence of Pretoria Regionalism. However Fisher refers to Peter's (1998:175-189) essay on Stauch's 'Houses for Pretoria'.

⁴⁷ The complexity of "number classifications" for vernaculars in South Africa become apparent (Barker 2012:49). Barker (2012:49) proposes an alternative to Greig's third vernacular as 'Natal Vernacular'. We therefore have in addition to Fisher, three third vernaculars.

⁴⁸ Over and above sarcastic writings about fashions, Rudofsky obtained two master degrees and a doctorate based on the 'primitive' building methods of Santorini and the Mediterranean. He immigrated to New York in 1941.

⁴⁹ Richard Neutra was a graduate of TH Wien.

⁵⁰ However, Fisher (1998:124) also refers to the iron pyramid-roofed house as evidence of an emerging Pretoria Regional architecture in response to local circumstances.

⁵¹ Pelindaba slate came from uranium quarries as supplied to the USA for nuclear programmes. See Chapter 2.

Synchronised to the cyclic movements of the world's finance markets, the stylistic situation in South Africa was characterised, by “the sequence of booms and slumps (Chipkin 1993:10). Therefore, in addition to Leith's thatch roof model, Schmiki's “Viennese finesse to the use of alternative materials” such as thatch contributed to the so-called “Africanisation” of both Eaton's and Stauch's thatch roof forms (Fisher 1998: 134, Peters 1998:177, 179). Since Schmiki was involved as external examiner at the Pretoria School, Silent Subversive students would have noted his fundamental functionalism, aversion to ostentation and houses merely as backgrounds for living (Du Toit 1989).

While Fisher (1998: 129) suggests that Pretoria's early tutors were “all born and bred either in the Platteland or Pretoria”⁵², Hellmut Wilhelm Ernst Stauch (1910-1970), was however born in the automobile industrial town of Eisenach, Germany. Gerneke (1998: 214) rectified Herbert's (1975:150) assumption that Stauch had “some education” at the Bauhaus⁵³. One of our agents, Shelagh Nation (1985:7) pointed out that the *Ittenschule* in Berlin, where Stauch studied for a while from 1926, was unknown to South Africans and therefore Stauch impartially spoke of being a student at the Bauhaus.

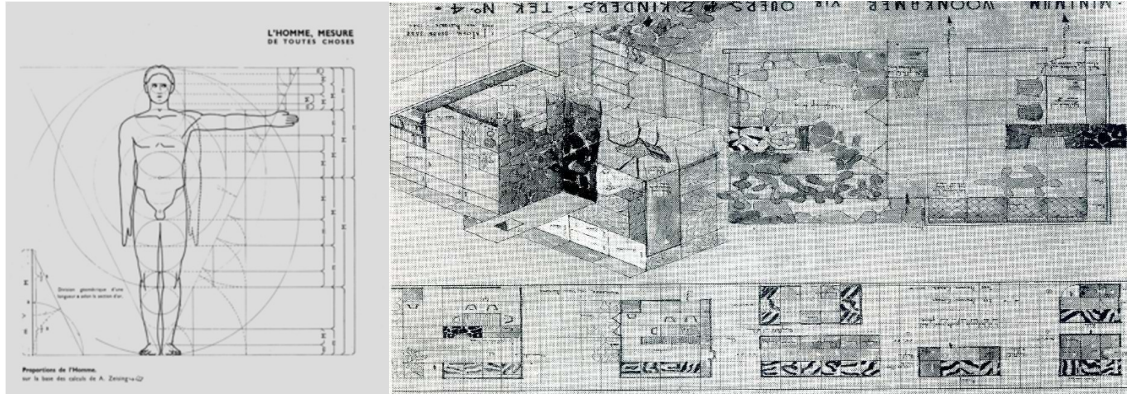


Figure 4.18. Left: The measure of the human body, from Ernst Neufert's *Bauentwurfslehre*, 1936 (<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/people/51688229/objects/designer>). **Right:** *Study for Minimum Livingroom*, E.J. Bloem, Third Year student, University of Pretoria, 1946 (Fassler 1946: 229).

The Swiss expressionist painter Johannes Itten (1888-1967) was associated with the Bauhaus (1919-1922), but due to differences⁵⁴ with the director Walter Gropius regarding mass-production he resigned (Schmitz 1999:238). Consequently, in 1923 Itten started his own private school in Berlin, which Stauch attended. Of importance to this study is Stauch's formative architectural training and referencing to Professor Neufert. After having assisted Gropius as his technical director in 1924 and taught at the Bauhaus, Ernest Neufert (1900-1986) moved on to head the Department of Architecture at Itten while Stauch was at Itten (Nation 1985:7). The world's architectural profession knows Neufert for his rationalising and standardization of construction methods (*Bauentwurfslehre*) (Fig. 4.18. Left). The studies he compiled in the reference book *Architects Data* (1936) (Jones 1980: ix). After furthering his studies at Itten and the Berlin *Technische Hochschule* (TU Berlin), Stauch had “varied experience” with

⁵² Stauch would later build his house 'Kiepersol' on a farm at Kammeldrift, north-west of Pretoria (Peters 1998:178).

⁵³ Chipkin (1993:284) points out: “there were small biographical inconsistencies in the various accounts of his early years”.

⁵⁴ Itten was inclined towards psychoanalysis, expressionism and esoterics and was an eccentric, a Mazdazhan prophet, wore a monk's habit and had a shaven head. He was particularly known for his colour spheres and form contrasts (Schmitz 199:232).

Alfréd Forbát (1897-1972)⁵⁵ and Marcel Breuer. His *Bautecchnische Physik* learnt at Itten (Peters 1998:182) combined with Neufert's 'Daylight Data', enabled Stauch's analytical studies of "modular planning and system building" for Windhoek (Herbert 1975:151). One of our agents, Sheilagh Nation (1985: 15) includes Stauch's "minimal study requirements for a "2x2x2 metre space", in her thesis. One notices similar projects undertaken by Stauch's students at the University of Pretoria (Fig. 4.18. Right).

In 1929, an interruption in Stauch's studies took him to the German colony known then as South West Africa (Namibia). Coinciding with the beginnings of the Great Depression, in Dordabis, Stauch built "the first example of the modern International Style of architecture in the whole of southern Africa" (Peters 1998:176). Contradictory to what Herbert (1975:150) assumes was Bauhaus or Miesian rationality, we suggest the influence on Stauch's first small house was derived from Wrightian principles⁵⁶. The department of architecture at the Bauhaus was only set up in 1927, and van der Rohe's influential works⁵⁷ were then still under construction (Fiedler 1999:216).

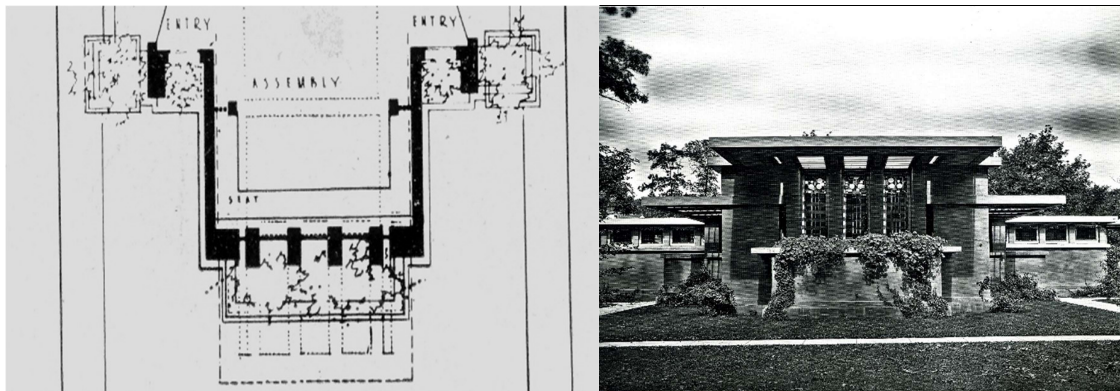


Figure 4.19. Left: Window wall. Frank Lloyd Wright, Avery Coonley Playhouse, Riverside, Illinois, 1912 (Hitchcock 1942: plate 136). Right: Stained glass window wall and pergola. Frank Lloyd Wright, Avery Coonley Playhouse, Riverside, Illinois, 1911-1912 (Gössel 1991: 77).

De Stijl influences aside, Mies' "flexible space" in his unbuilt Brick Country House (1923) evolved from Wright's germinal forms at the turn of the century. The "ample German publications" (Hitchcock 1942:59) of Wright's early houses emphasized the core principle of 'de-cellurization' of the plan, which Wright had grasped in Japan⁵⁸ (Peter 1994:18). The principle was to free the living room interior with a mullioned (concrete, masonry or wood) window wall or 'screen' to break down the barrier between interior and exterior (Fig. 4.19. Left). The mullions create a peristyle of equal rhythm rather than a module. Vandenberg (1998:5) explains:

Here only bedrooms and bathrooms are enclosed in traditional box-like fashion by four walls, the living spaces being relatively open and interconnected. Wright was a virtuoso of spatial composition. His 'open plan' designs, with their flowing interiors and their sense of interior space

⁵⁵ Forbát was a Jewish-Hungarian that worked intermittently with Gropius (1920-1922) and taught at the Bauhaus (1932-1934) on housing. He joined the left wing *der Ring* in 1926.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 3. In particular, *second stylistic situation*.

⁵⁷ For instance, the Barcelona Pavilion (1928-9) and Tugendhat house (1928-30). For further reading, see (Carter 1999: 23-29).

⁵⁸ Wright initially denied the influence (Hitchcock 1942:26).

thrusting out from the cave-like core of the house to the outer landscape, electrified European architects who encountered them in the Wasmuth portfolios of Wright's drawings published in Germany in 1910.

Stauch's Dordabis interpretation was "a loadbearing brick structure with a series of reinforced concrete piers on a modular basis on the window wall, which punctuated a continuous band of windows". This Herbert (1975:150) claims, was "a clever adaption to colonial needs of the Bauhaus aesthetic". Wright's window walls were sun controlled with broad overhangs (Fig. 4.19. Right). Alternatively, as was the case in Wright's Coonley Playhouse, Illinois (1911-1912), with perforated pergola trellises (Gössel 1991:77) Stauch's Southwest African house was shaded with a pergola complete with fly screens (Herbert 1975:150-151).

A closer examination of the late 1930s plans of Cowin and even that of the Transvaal group indicates an arbitrary application of dimensioning. Although said to implicate Miesian planning principles (Chipkin 1993:186), Casa Bedo clearly lacks an understanding of the relationship of column and wall to module as mastered in Mies' Berlin Exhibition House (1931)⁵⁹. Although, McIntosh strives for these principles in his zerohour, his Gropius-like houses for Pretoria show no modular discipline. One could argue that a move away from the "purity of style" (Herbert 1975:152) was merely aestheticized imagery of tile patterns showing a lack of substantial comprehension. It was Stauch, after moving to Pretoria in 1935⁶⁰, who significantly influenced domestic dimensional planning in South Africa. Peters (1998:176) writes:

Typifying Stauch's work of the 1930s were rectangular plans, orientated due north, that structure and manipulate space in the Miesian manner and seek contact between interior and exterior. Smooth white-washed plastered planar walls, or facebrick panels with windows that reached to the soffit between a rhythm of reinforced concrete columns, capped by low-hipped corrugated iron roofs that deeply oversail, would recall the floating aesthetic of the Barcelona pavilion or the Wrightian prairie house.

Stauch would have shared these Miesian and Wrightian principles with his close friend Eaton who, as we have seen, was open to eclecticism. Eaton's Children's Art Centre (1940) (Fig. 4.20. Left) and 1940s Landbanks with vertical brick panelling forming a "continuous band" with windows, have a striking resemblance to Wrightian window wall principles (Fig. 4.20. Right). Harrop-Allin (1975:39) notes how both Eaton's De Loor and Van der Merwe houses have a relationship to the Children's Art Centre that is "immediately apparent". Moreover, Eaton's Van der Merwe house (190-1941) serves as an example of Wright's "integration of architecture and site" (Harrop-Allin 1975:32).

The expressive horizontality of the built-up masses, the deep protective eaves, the blending of house and surroundings, the projecting terraces with their pant boxes and the careful and subtle avoidance of an abrupt transition from man-made contributes towards an impression – though in a

⁵⁹ For example, see Brussels pavilion (1934) (Carter 1999: 23-34), or late-1930s Miesian projects published in Yorke's *The Modern House* (Herbert 1975:106).

⁶⁰ Stauch first collaborated with McIntosh. In Pretoria, he associated with Aubrey Nunn. The first projects have clear references to Wright in the "vertical windows separated by an unbroken rhythm of brick piers" and in House Steyn where "the structural system of piers between windows is insistently regular" (Herbert 1975:151).

quieter and less dramatic way – of the Prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright. The approach and underlying philosophy are the same: Wright’s early houses evolved in response to the open prairie of Illinois, Eaton’s to the Transvaal Highveld (Harrop-Allin1975:36).

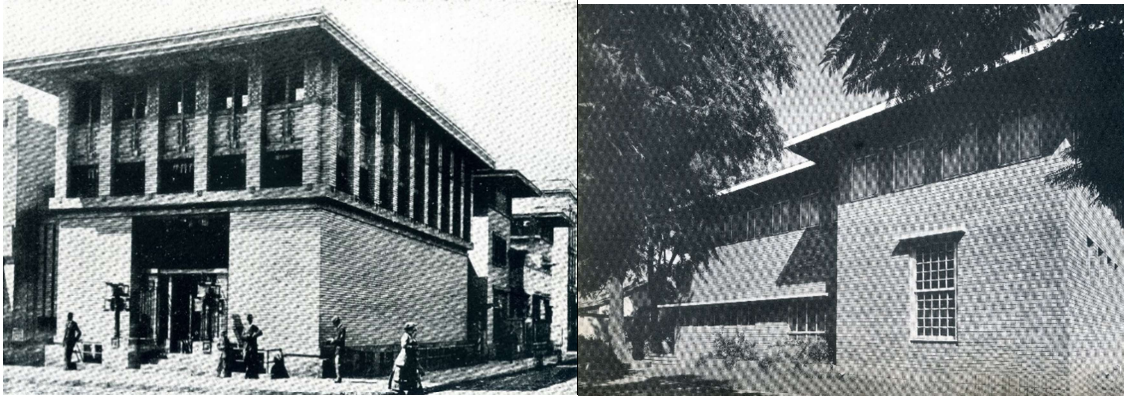


Figure 4.20. Left: Upper level window wall, Frank Lloyd Wright, City National Bank, Mason City, Iowa, 1909 (Hitchcock 1942: plate 168). **Right:** Vertical brick between upper level continuous band windows. Norman Eaton, Children’s Art Centre, Pretoria, 1940 (Harrop-Allin 1975:40).

Stauch also aligned with Richard Neutra’s Californian experimentations⁶¹ (Fig. 4.21. Left). Neutra had adapted Wright’s window wall predispositions to be lightweight⁶². For his Lovell Health House (1927-1929), Neutra had employed two grids of which the secondary one was of “steel sash casement windows in gangs of three, which were slipped into the larger column-and-beam grid system” (Lamprecht 200:24). Stauch too replaces Wright’s heavier pilasters for a lighter more economical system for the window plane of the Winckley House, Pretoria (c. 1941) (Fig. 4.21. Right). Peters (1998:184) clarifies:

Gradually, he came to realise that slender steel posts could be integral with the window wall and, if co-ordinated correctly, the intercolumnation could coincide with rafter spacings and the modules of standard steel windows...hence, a lateral modular planning grid based on the standard building components. Stauch’s early designs are based on a 3”3” grid the imperial translation of the metre which he would have been accustomed to in Europe⁶³, Later the grid corresponded to the repetitive use of double-stock window units to become another Stauch hallmark, that of the “steel window aesthetic”.

⁶¹ During his student days in Germany, “Stauch had acquired a copy of Neutra’s first book, *Wie Baut Amerika?* In 1929 (*America Builds*, Volume 1:1922, Volume 2:1929) (Peters 1998:185). On 28 November 1946, Gordon McIntosh purchased a copy of *L’Architecture D’ Aujourd’ Hui* featuring Richard Neutra at Vanguard Booksellers in Johannesburg (receipt of purchase and signed copy in author’s archival collection).

⁶² In his 1930s book *Amerika: Die Stilbildung des neuen Bauens in den Vereinigten Staaten*, Neutra labels the circus tent, in its lightness of construction, to represent the promise of American technology (Lamprecht 2000: 22). Peters (1998:179) justifies the lightweight structure as “congenial to the climate of Pretoria”.

⁶³ Steenkamp (2003:6) refers to the grid being 3’4’ (three foot four-and-a-quarter inches, or 1022mm) “generated by standard steel window and the distance that a purlin can easily span”. Neufert converted imperial dimensions to suit the International System of Units (SI) to meet countries like the USA and South Africa at the time.

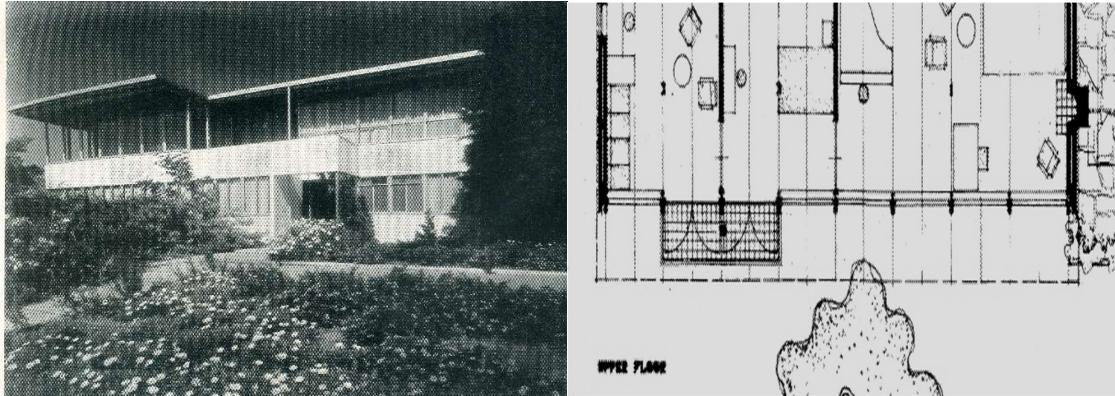


Figure 4.21. Left: Metal framed window walls, Richard Neutra, V.D.L. Research House, Silver Lakes, California, 1931-1932 (Lods 1946: 4). **Right:** Integrated window wall with grid. Hellmut Stauch, Winckley House, Villieria, Pretoria, c.1941 (Stauch 1945:210).

Comparable to Wright, Stauch's earlier houses had elongated plans for flat sites, but like Neutra's, were set out strictly according to the lateral module that generated the spatial configuration (Lamprecht 2000). In order to resolve light influx to the deep space of his 1930s 'outdoor' school projects, Neutra resorted to lean-to roofs offset from corridor walls. The other side would open up through sliding glass screens, protected by overhangs, to patios and lawns. Corresponding to the sloped roof, the "ceiling aids the downward reflection of the diffuse light into the classroom" (Anon 1946:27-28).

When Stauch confronted a sloping site and an extension to the "attenuated plan", he experimented with the 'double lean-to' supported by steel posts centred on a double module with corresponding beams as seen in his house in Villieria (Fig. 4.22. Left). Echoing Neutra (Fig. 4.22. Right) but in two directions, Stauch's roofs are sprung from a supporting circulation route. The full-length extension thereof, allowed for Miesian "fluid contiguity" (Peters 1998:179). Concerning the influx of light, Peters (1998:181) explains:

The positioning of clerestory in the living areas could contribute to habitability in different ways. In House Dr Van der Merwe, a general improvement in the level of day-lighting would undoubtedly enhance the quality of the deep living/dining space. In House Wooll, were both living and dining spaces face north, the line of the clerestory is positioned midway along the depth of the rooms, a position which resulted in a reflection of daylighting from the backing slate wall as well as a concentration of warmth around the hearth during winter when the sun's rays would reach deep into the area.

As far as topographical slopes were concerned, Stauch introduced the split-level, "slip-jointed at the staircase", that allowed a hierarchy of spaces to come about (Peters 1998: 178-179, 180). The system permitted linkages to terraces. Absent is "a deep verandah or 'stoep'" that Fisher (1998:124) lists as one aspect of Pretoria Regionalism: Peters (1998:176) relays Stauch's early approach regarding stoeps:

Life in South Africa is spent out of doors, traditionally the stoep or veranda was used more than any other room in the house. But gradually this mode of living was questioned. It became structurally possible to open the lounge widely to the garden and socially acceptable to finish the

lounge with hardy materials rendering it informal, as a semi outdoor room. One could then “sit inside yet feel outside”.

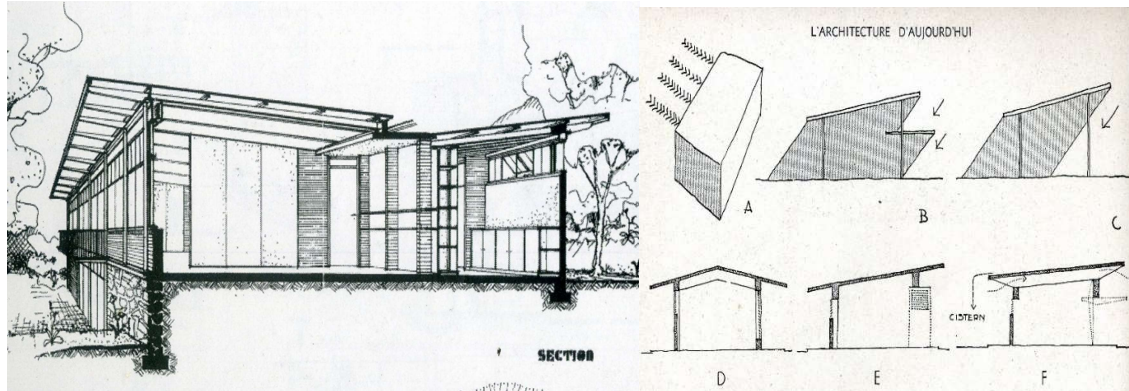


Figure 4.22. Left: Double lean-to roof section. Helmutt Stauch, Wincley House, Pretoria, c.1941 (Stauch 1945: 211). **Right:** Light influx and ventilation studies. Richard Neutra, Outdoor Grade School, 1932 (Persitz 1946: 28).

Stauch was influential in both Pretoria and Johannesburg (Peters 1998:177, Chipkin 2008:380). Many adopted his precise systems, which colleagues and students could easily reproduce, but Peters (1998:186) maintains they, “rarely matched his distinctive style”. Academics⁶⁴ credit, particularly Cole Bowen, for sharing Stauch’s climatic principles, low cost materials, economics⁶⁵, rationality, pragmatics, functionalisms, precision and dimensional coordination.

Norman Eaton, collaborating with Cole-Bowen, later utilized disciplined three-dimensional grids determined by standard material modules and rhythms (Peters 1998:184). These strict disciplines were associated with the functionalism of the ‘International Style’ yet conveniently incorporated for the “myth” of a Pretoria Regionalism (Chipkin 2008:376-377). Stauch’s systems culminate in his Brookwood duplexes (1967), as “neither Eurocentric nor Afrocentric, but heliocentric” (Chipkin 2008:381).

Regionalist architecture is not a question of style. Regionalism has to do with a sense of place and belonging. This was not the basis of Stauch’s training which would have emphasised the functional and rational: functional aiming at efficiency, rational at universality. But in an article on Regionalism Peter Buchanan postulated that true functionalism would always have been to some extent regional. Accommodating local lifestyle and exploiting climate, local technology and materials should always have resulted in a form of regionalist expression (Peters 1998:187).

⁶⁴ For instance, Fisher (1998:128) and Steenkamp (2003:8).

⁶⁵ Cole Bowen would go so far as to “work out brick coursing to eliminate cut bricks” (Steenkamp 2003: 5, 7). Fisher (1998:228) relays how in Cole-Bowen’s economical courtyard houses he “advocated accuracy based on detailed anthropometric data - sizes for furniture and sanitary fittings, the size of folded sheets for linen cupboards, the minimum height required to hang a long evening dress”.

4.6.2 Peripheral landscapes

In the South African context nothing is straightforward. It was only members of a new generation that were attracted to Brazilian modernity, but there were also middle-aged pioneers in Pretoria who were busy creating their own territory outside the purview of the small, introspective anglophone architectural establishment in Johannesburg (Chipkin 1993:225).

We have seen from our *fourth stylistic situation* that in countries marginalised from the war, a 'landscape' of 'liberty' came about. In the Arizona desert at Taliesin West, we noted how Wright settled an earth hugging relationship with the landscape. We described the hovering planes of his Kaufmann house as a repose to forest, rock and stream. Lloyd Wright's 'Fallingwater', that MoMA, *Life* and *Time* exposed in 1938, proved to be the greatest source for Alvar Aalto's renowned design for Maire Gullichsen on the Noormaku estate in peripheral Finland⁶⁶. Aalto's persuasions for his clients to purchase a site over a stream at Ahlström was however ineffective.

After a 'Proto-Mairea' developmental phase, the Villa Mairea was eventually built between 1938 and 1941. Although, the design avoids 'artificial rhythms' by varying the grid, "the whole plan is regulated by a series of squares" (Watson 2005:81-90). The evocation of the forest landscape infiltrates the garden room of the strict organisation of the white lime-washed modernist box. Watson (2005:90) describes the integration of house with landscape:

The garden room, with its delicate glazed screen and Katsura-inspired shelves, for example, and details such as the paving and stone bases to the columns under the entrance canopy are clearly indebted to traditional Japanese architecture. The exquisitely refined sauna likewise suggest the inspiration of tea-houses, most obviously in the elaborated entrance transition and sub-divided door. Settled by the plunge pool, it recalls...a vernacular sauna near a lake. Although we should remember that such a pool, with its shimmering blue water, was as fashionably *modern*⁶⁷, and American, as the jazz to which the Gullichsens' and their guest danced the night away.

Shortly before building Mairea, Aalto won a competition to design the Finnish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair (1937). Not being fond of folksy or National Romanticism or obvious identifications with 'Finnish nature', Aalto found a personal way of representing the culture of Finland. The thought was to integrate interior with exterior space realised through partial enclosures and courtyards. Aalto reinforced the spatial integration with "a promiscuous array of columns that included lashed bundles of sapplings" that implied "the experience of being in a Finnish forest". Other columns were ironically clad in literal Finnish birch-bark or those poles at the entrance "inspired by African vernacular buildings" (Weston 2005:107-110).

⁶⁶ See (Gideon 1967:645-649)

⁶⁷ The kidney-shaped pool at Neutra's Hoffman House, California (1937) predates Mairea. The Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* credits the landscape architect Thomas Church (1902-1978) for introducing his friend Aalto's kidney-shaped pool to California in 1948, making it "an iconic symbol of the good life" (Winston 2016).

Again, Aalto wins a competition⁶⁸ for a Finnish pavilion, this time (1939) at the New York World's Fair (Fig. 4.23. Left). The *parti* within the rectangular exhibition stand was simple. Aalto juxtaposed an "ideograph" of two lines, one straight and one a suspended a sinuous line that extended diagonally across the box (Weston 1995:112). The undulating line was an Aalto 'leitmotif' as was already exemplified by the ceiling⁶⁹ of the lecture hall at his Viipuri Library (1927-34) (Gideon 1967:633). The straight wall was "visually dissolved by a vast aerial photograph of typical Finnish lake-and-island landscape"⁷⁰. Aalto's "symphonic structure" metaphorically suggested "the broken terrain and varied surface of the forest" and a 'lake' in the choice of materials for the 'terraces' on the various levels. Aalto's photographs linked the undulating line to Finnish lakes (Watson 2005:113). Gideon (1967:633) pronounced it as "the most daring piece of architecture" at the Fair. However, Weston (1995:113) describes another appraisal:

...surprisingly, the editors of *The Architectural Review* – normally amongst the most enthusiastic supporters – had difficulties seeing the symphony for the notes, and wrote that too much had 'been crammed into too small a building', creating 'a general confusion'.



Figure 4.23. Left: Sinuous line versus straight line. Alvar Aalto competition perspective for Finnish pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1938 (Weston 1995: 108). **Right:** Free-Form contrasting rectilinearity. Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, New York World's Fair, 1939 (Underwood 1994: 43).

Although, "laymen did not tally", those architectural critics applauded⁷¹ Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian representation (Gerneke 1998:200). The Fair allocated their pavilion on a curved corner site. To denote "the tropical exoticism of their homeland" they adopted the Corbusian *promenade architecturale* in the form of a curved ramp that contrasted with a rectilinear modernist elevation (Underwood 1994b: 40-43) (Fig. 4.23. Right). On the other side, a glazed façade juxtaposes an organic shaped lily pond in a tropical garden complete with orchid house and snake pit (Underwood 1994a:46). The straight line in dialogue with the sinuous line is a similar concept to that of the Finnish pavilion.

However, the difference is that while Aalto refers to the landscape beyond, Niemeyer follows its outline (*mariage de contour*). After several visits to and inspired by Rio de Janeiro's curved Sugar Loaf

⁶⁸ The Aalto's submitted three entries of which all took the prizes (Watson 2005:111-112).

⁶⁹ Gideon (1967:632) equates the undulating ceiling to the Roman vault.

⁷⁰ Aalto's father was a land surveyor who mapped the Finnish landscape (Weston 2005:8).

⁷¹ Ironically, critics also referred to Niemeyer's work as "formalistic" (Underwood 1994b:39).

Mountain and Latin-Indian-African fusion, Le Corbusier's⁷² work shifted towards free-forms and the 'Law of the Meander'. Underwood (1994b: 24) explains:

As a metaphor for the creative process and social problem solving, the Law of the Meander aptly anticipates the Brazilian free-form approach that came to characterize the work of Niemeyer. In social and artistic terms, the Brazilian counterpart to the law of the Meander is the *jeito*, an irrepressible method that deals with obstacles by going around them.

The combination of Le Corbusian influences and personal reaction to modernist rigidity⁷³ culminate in Niemeyer's complex in Pampulha (1940s). After technical difficulties for an unbuilt hotel on the mountain, overlooking Belo Horizonte, Niemeyer shifted the location to Pampulha. As nucleus for the industrial *nouveaux riche*, Niemeyer built a casino 'playground' on the suburbs artificial lake. Other buildings included a restaurant cum dance hall (Casa do Baile, 1942), a yacht club (1942), a house for the mayor (House Kubitschek, 1942) and a chapel (St. Francis de Assis, 1943). Although, the forms of each component differed, the unifying element was the lake (Underwood 1994b:44-56) (Fig. 4.24. Left).

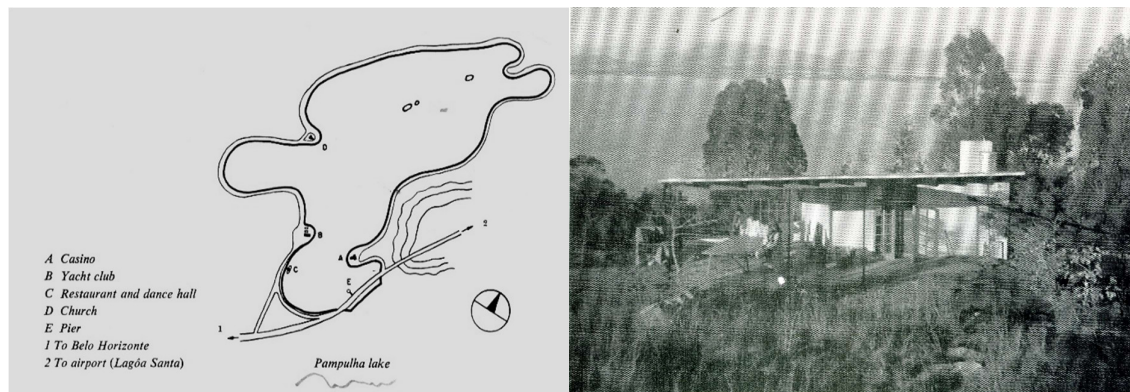


Figure 4.24. Left: "Carnival of forms". Oscar Niemeyer, Lake Pampulha, 1940 (Underwood 1994: 44). **Right:** Yachting weekend cottage. Hellmut Stauch, Hartebeespoort Dam, Brits district, 1940s (Peters 1998: 193).

Ironically, the use of free-forms are most evident (on plan) in the Latin '*joie de vivre*' of the dance hall and (on section) the 'moralistic' catholic chapel which are said to respond, with the help of the landscape architect Robert Burle Max (1909-1994), to the contours of the lake. Both the yacht club and weekend house recall the butterfly roof of Le Corbusier's Errazuris House in Chile (1930) (Underwood 1994a: 50-68, Underwood 1994b:44-56). Two years after Frank Lloyd Wright's *Nature of Materials* exhibition at MoMA, the New York Museum presented *Brazil Builds 1652-1942*⁷⁴. Marginal to the International Style, this exhibition sparked another international style known as the 'Brazilian Second Wave' (Gerneke 1998:203).

⁷² Le Corbusier visited Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay first in 1929, then lectured in 1931, 1934, 1936 and 1937 (Damaz 1963:42). His Re-urbanisation plan for Rio responds to contours (Underwood 1994b:24).

⁷³ The Avandia Presidente Vargas (wide boulevard) with tall block buildings either side as "symbols" of national modernization (Underwood 1994b: 28-29).

⁷⁴ Gerneke (1998:203) omits to mention Wright's exhibition at MoMA as the "the first architectural exhibition there after the acclaimed International Style on of 1932".

Overlooking the Hartebeespoort Dam, the yachtsman⁷⁵ Stauch built an economic weekend cottage (1940s) with 'second wave' influences (Fig. 4.24. Right). The profile of the house corresponds to its terraced site. On the lower level, he incorporated a kidney-shaped pool that defines the edge of the terrace (Peters 1998:183, 192). We suggest that Alto's Villa Mairea (Fig. 4.25. Top left) and the pavilions of the New York Fair inspired the landscape for this design. After exposure to *Brazil Builds* in 1948, Stauch eventually managed to travel to South America to view Niemeyer's buildings, which clearly affected his and others post-war work in Pretoria (Chipkin 1993:279). However, when Pevsner equated 1950s Hillbrow as "Little Brazil of the Transvaal" (Peters 1998:218), he was referring to the antithesis of Brazil free-forms, the modernist multilevel buildings as seen on the Avenida Presidente Vargas (Chipkin 2008:108).

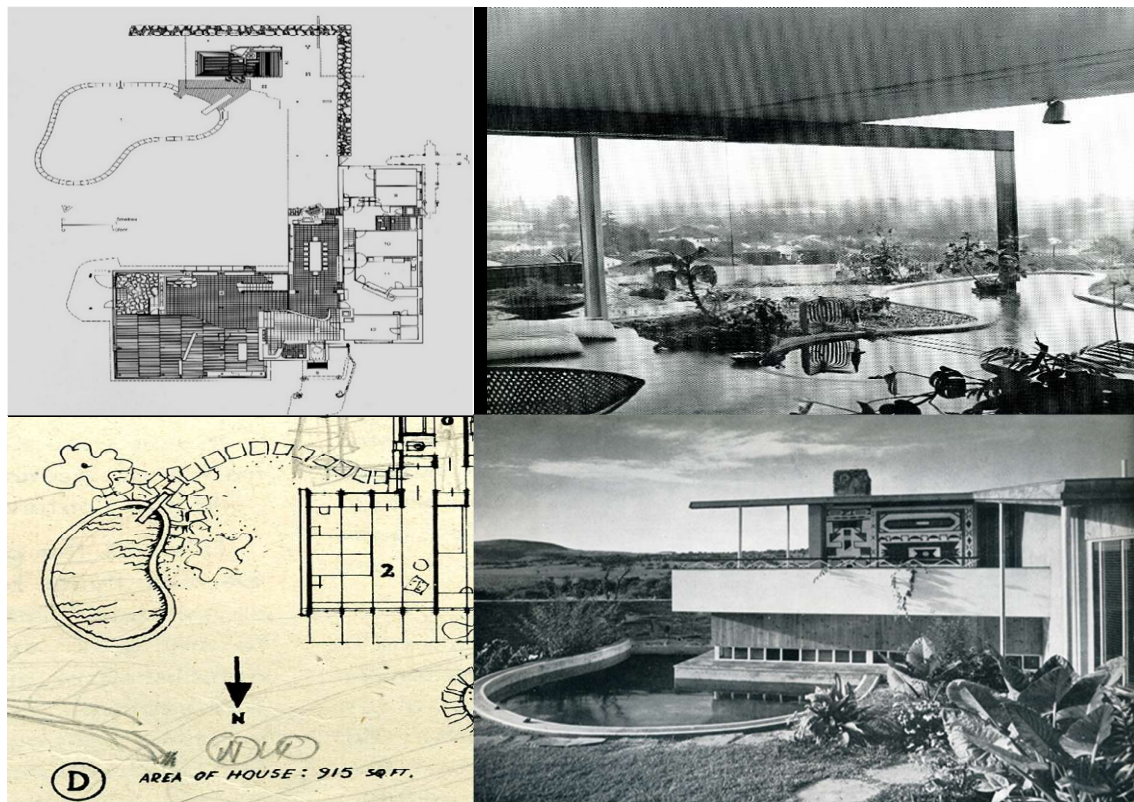


Figure 4.25. Top left: Kidney shaped pool, Alvar Aalto, Villa Mairea, Noormarkku, Finland, 1938-1941 (Weston 1995: 86). Top right: Integrated house and garden pond. Richard Neutra, Nesbitt House, Los Angeles, California, 1941-1942 (Lavin 2004:41). Bottom left: Kidney shaped pool for the Dundee Scheme, Hellmut Stauch, Sub-economic house, Town Council of Dundee, Natal (Stauch 1945: 215). Bottom right: Interlocking upper and lower pools. Helmut Stauch, Hakahana, Hartebeespoort Dam, Brits district, 1952 (Stauch 1959:12).

Whereas the hearth was the nucleus for Wright, it was the terrace for Neutra (Lamprecht 2000:52). Neutra's terraces and water bodies do not conform to the "Law of the meander". For instance, the artificial free-form lily pond consciously attached to the Nessbit house (1941-42) "slips under the glass wall to the interior entry" (Lamprecht 2000:165) (Fig. 4.25. Top right). By the 1950s, Neutra's "relaxed"

⁷⁵ Stauch started yachting at Olympic level in Germany (Chipkin 1993:284). In the 1950s, he also designed yacht a club on Ebenezer Dam (Peters 1998:182).

houses extend “spider leg” columns through mitred glass corners⁷⁶ resting in pools of water. The organic shaped pool of Neutra’s Perkins House (1955) drifts from the suggested interior ‘source’ to the exterior. Neutra’s presentation drawings for his ‘sensoriums’ express in detail the texture of materiality indoors and outdoors representing his notion of ‘biorealism’⁷⁷. Neutra’s “therapeutic dimension of psychologised environments” along with Brazilian influences emerged internationally for the mid-century (Lamprecht 2000:68, Lavin 2004:40-45).

Drawn to rural land in 1944, Stauch built himself another house in the Pretoria district called Kiepersol. Substituting a stoep, the plan integrates a tree for shaded outdoor living. The developed plan (1945) opens up from a stone paved ‘garden’ room to a terrace. The “vernacularized” referencing is Taliesen West (Peters 1998:178). This time he attaches the kidney-shaped pool to the end of the addition. Stauch even used the kidney shaped pool for his sub-economic houses in Dundee, Natal (Fig. 4.25. Bottom left) Stauch’s own house, Hakahana near Hartebeespoort Dam (1952) (Fig. 4.25. Bottom right) not only exemplifies the image of the Pampulha house and yacht club, but also the materiality of Wright (Peters 1998:184). Similar to Neutra, the “subtleties of design in enriching not only functionality but also the human psyche” occurs. Peters (1998:183-184) explains:

At Hakahana the pool interlocks meaningfully with the house on both of its levels. The upper pool is related to the level of the initial building and Stauch’s bedrooms; the lower surrounds the living room and the stoep. When the water overflows from the upper to the lower pool, the gushing sound psychologically affects the ambience of the living room. In summer the sound would effect a cooling sensation, in winter, a sensation of cosiness as one would huddle around the hearth... The effects of water on human comfort and psyche are thus brought directly into the architectural composition.

Similar to Stauch, Eaton also travelled to Brazil. He went to investigate precedent for his (unbuilt) Ministry of Transport Building in 1945. Costa and Niemeyer collaborating with Le Corbusier had completed the Ministry of Health and Education Building in 1943. We cannot over emphasize⁷⁸ the Brazilian influence on Eaton as “one of the most important representative of the Pretoria regionalists” (Fisher 1998:124). Burle Marx’s “painter-conception of landscape” and three dimensional *azulejo* (glazed ceramic) relief murals served as a point of reference (Damaz 1963:84). For both his roof and courtyard gardens, Eaton borrowed Marx’s sinuous lines and plasticity of design (Fig. 4.26. Left). As Gerneke (1998:213) pointed out: “The strong likeness to these [Brazilian] prototypes is no coincidence”. The landscape at Eaton’s Greenwood House (1949-1953) exemplifies Brazilian free-form modernism (Fig. 4.26. Right).

⁷⁶ Lavin (2003:42) describes Neutra’s Perkins House as “empathetic eros” in opposition to the analysis of modern space.

⁷⁷ Neutra defined his approach to design as ‘biorealism’ based on Wilhelm Max Wurd’s Principles of Physiological Psychology (1874) that he read in the Viennese Technische Hochschule library as a student. Thereafter he called his houses ‘sensoriums’ (Lamprecht 200:42).

⁷⁸ In his hypothesis to ‘Africanize’ Eaton’s work, Harrop-Allin (1975:48) mentions the travels to the Americas, but avoids naming Niemeyer or Burle Marx as influencing the Ministry of Transport Building in Pretoria. However, Gerneke (1998:212-213) and Pienaar (2013:97) recognize the Brazilian notions in several of Eaton’s projects such as the Pretoria and Durban Netherlands Banks



Figure 4.26. Left: Garden as free-form painting. Roberto Burle Marx, Private garden project, 1940s (Damaz 1963: 80). Right: Free-form pool terrace. Norman Eaton, Greenwood house, The Willows, Pretoria, 1949-51 (Harrop-Allin 1975: 75).

While Eaton situated the “country residence” at the foot of a ridge above the area known as ‘The Willows’, the site is naturally level (Harrop-Allin 1975:72). Dividing the ‘Springbok Flats’, the east - west ‘linear’ Magaliesberg is the reference to the horizon. The horizontality of the main house is three dimensionally modular and clearly resembles Wright’s Usonian ‘unit system’ houses (Pienaar 2013:101). Wright’s Usonian houses seem suitable as precedents for responding to the Highveld and the Magaliesberg range. The flat stone retrieved from the site reinforces the horizontality of the walls while the split-level plan corresponds to the ‘cultivated’ terracing.

While Pienaar (2013:99) suggests the walls and terraces of Greenwood “seem to follow the natural curves of the site”, they nevertheless seem more about Burle Marx’s “site bounding” Casa do Baile influence. The service outbuildings and ‘servants’ quarters are dissolved into the natural surroundings. Harrop-Allin (1975:73) surmises that the ‘servants “village” in the form of a ‘kraal’ points to a “Zimbabwe-like African atmosphere”. Chipkin (1993:293) reinforces our previous sentiments⁷⁹ of “estrangement” or “the state of being outsiders in the society that he or she inhabits” that require naturalization, albeit borrowed from elsewhere. In turn, Bunn (1998:115) critical⁸⁰ of Eaton’s “primitivist nostalgia” writes:

Much of South Africa’s modernist domestic architecture, including Eaton’s own, mourns the passing of organic community and the sensory acuity he imagined was still visible in certain African village forms. Eaton sought to draw the African monumental past into his designs. His brick paving, reminiscent of Iron Age wall patterns, is one aspect of this urge. But the memorializing tendency is perhaps most visible in the complex surrounds and exterior landscapes of his domestic architecture in Pretoria...This monumental referencing to village life and lost civilizations reaches a bizarre conclusion in Eaton’s Greenwood House.

⁷⁹ See chapter 5.

⁸⁰ Although Pienaar (2013:101) counter-acts Bunn’s criticism, Pienaar’s (2017:46) observations of Eaton’s translation of Brazilian motifs as “a metaphor of woven African pattern” seems to reinforce Bunn’s argument.

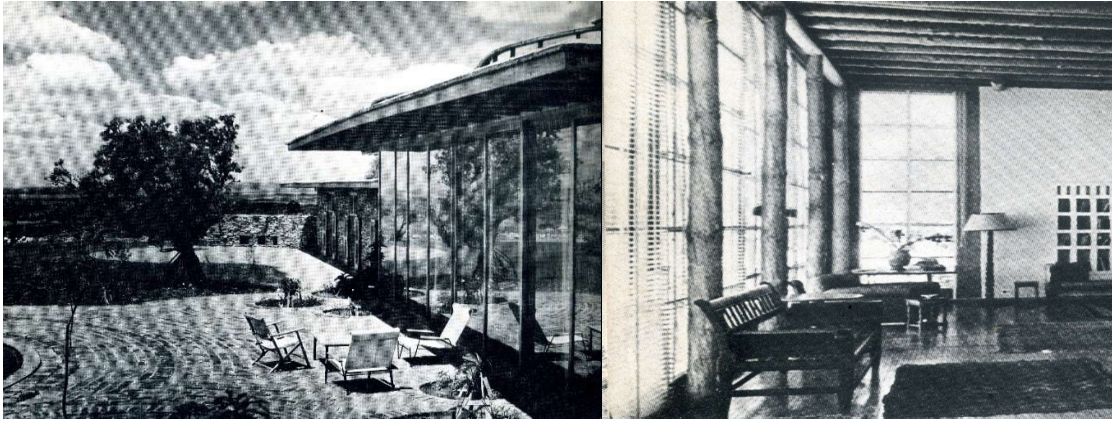


Figure 4.27. Left: Highveld horizontality. Norman Eaton, Greenwood house, The Willows, Pretoria, 1948-53 (Harrop-Allin 1975: 74). **Right:** Window wall with poles. Norman Eaton, Anderssen house, The Willows, Pretoria, 1949-50 (Harrop-Allin 1975: 80).

Eaton's landscape walls imply the 'Law of the Meander' as they respond to a kidney-shaped pool and a tree on a lawn terrace. We have discussed the origins of the kidney shaped pool⁸¹ at Villa Mairea as reminiscent of Finnish lakes. In addition, the development thereof in California we mentioned. Therefore, we now question Harrop-Allin's (1975:73) suggestion that the pool is "shaped rather like an African calabash". Similar to Finnish and Brazilian concepts at the New York Fair, Greenwood house juxtaposes the straight line as artifice with the sinuous line as 'cultivated nature' (Fig. 4.27. Left). Pienaar (2017:41) elaborates:

With few exceptions, Eaton seldom applied African organic form-giving in the overall architectural massing of his work, rather translating organic form to planar fields. When he did apply African form, however, allusion to the African homestead would be offset with rigid standardised structures. Similar to his contemporary Alvar Aalto...Eaton recognised that by making and juxtaposing forms that are more individual, the rigours of didactic form give way to warmth, richness and emotion. While this sinuous line was an initial African translation of Brazilian influences, he later transformed the sinuous line to a disciplined geometry...as exemplified in all his final house designs.

For the Anderssen house (1949-1950) Eaton applied a Wrightian window-wall freed from supports to enhance a Japanese-like indoor-outdoor relationship⁸² (Fig. 4.27. Right). Due to the scarcity of structural timber, he employed poles reminding one of Aalto's columns. Due to the height of the north facing glazed sliding doors relative to the width of the eaves, solar protection is not entirely adequate but since there is no stoep, the garden room comes about. The timber on floors and wall along with brick floor patterning linking indoors with outdoors is not unlike that of Villa Mairea.

Despite all the deliberations about the low-pitched roof being more appropriate than a flat roof for the Transvaal, Eaton ironically resorts back to the flat roof. Harrop-Allin (1975:72) suggests the re-use of the flat roof as a return to the "earth hugging horizontality" of his early houses. Seemingly, the

⁸¹ Pienaar (2013:97) reinforces the referencing to the kidney-shaped pool at Villa Mairea.

⁸² Similar to Wright, Eaton travelled to Japan. The Japanese quality is evident in both architects work.

Greenwood and Usonian resembling Andersson house (1949) do not tick most of the listed characteristics that Fisher (1998:125) posited as Pretoria Regionalism. Notwithstanding, Stauch, Cole-Bowen, Eaton and their international and peripheral influences would be reflected in the post-war work of our Silent Subversives, not only as a "Pretoria Regionalism", but for the entire country (Chiokin 1993:288). Chipkin (1993:294) writes:

In the 1950s and 1960s a large number of diverse architectural influences came together to form a new domestic vernacular architecture in Johannesburg suburbs. There is a seminal post-Bauhaus component to this architecture derived from the work of Gropius and his firm... In the 1950s they designed simple, low-profile houses with clearly articulated well-defined bedroom and living-room wings related to form distinct outdoor spatial zones. These domestic prototypes were based on the captivating doctrine of the 'ultimate simplicity of means'

It is possible, and indeed there is sufficient evidence available in the executed work to-day, to suggest the emergence of an approach to design which may more positively and more truthfully be called contemporary architecture of South Africa (Howie 1958:336).

4.7 SUB CONCLUSIONS

This chapter commenced by re-evaluating 'Pretoria Regionalism' as an emergence for a Third Vernacular with Afrikaans origins to which our generation of architects were linked. Following a brief investigation, we observed the historical sequence of Afrikaners, from Burgher settlers in the Cape to Trek Boers to mine workers in Johannesburg. Concurrently we read how borrowed techniques from endemic cultures and connection to rural land contributed to their built tradition. However, we identified how the borrowed colonial Empire's corrugated iron and the realities of the Victorian shanty compounds of Johannesburg interfered with any romanticized ideals of developing a distinctive Afrikaner architectural style. In line with the Victorian hypocrisy of a first stylistic situation of the previous chapter, we see in this chapter the paradox of Arts and Crafts social aims equated with the new rich patrician class mansions of Johannesburg that turned their backs on the Victorian industrial corrugated iron houses of the working classes. In addition, we detected the paradox in the conscious constructs for a Transvaal *Afrikaans Woning* that too argued against the use of not only English imperialist corrugated iron but also a distinction from Cape influences. Dialectically we traced, albeit it denied, the larger *Boerehuis* with ideas on expressive materiality and craft to the Englishness of the Arts and Crafts movement that proponents spread internationally and thereby not unique to the Pretoria region nor representative of the culture of all Afrikaners. Furthermore, we remarked on how the *stoep*, albeit transformed, was not unique to the Transvaal climate. One therefore concluded that any earlier technical and pragmatic matters became ideological and emotional productions.

Next, we re-evaluated contradictory positions with regards an emergence of an ideal South African idiom that seemingly formed the stylistic discourse for our generation. What became clear was the unlike post-depression stances regarding local architecture professing to either follow national or

international directions. The various responses shown all indicated a fusion of fashionable international aesthetic themes, albeit parcelled to the public as local. We highlighted five positions: Empire style mediating the industrial with the decorative; Modernistic Capitalism combining Art Deco and modernist construction; Afrikaner nationalist ideology uniting American Art Deco motifs with African misinterpretations; Surrogate Modernism diluting modernism with public opinion; and Mutated Modernism translating the revolutionary Modern Movement aesthetically as a Transvaal modernism. We relayed that debates legitimizing an emergence of a South African idiom around the polarized and paradoxical topics of pitched roof versus flat roofs or machine aesthetics versus textural artisanship, were posturing in relation to the Slums Act minimum dwelling programme at the same time. In light of the above and by enquiring into the English concept of the small ideal home, we critically analysed any 'ideal' emergent conclusions of a Transvaal or for that matter South African suburban 'Ideal Homes' or proto-type vernacular. Our findings do not confirm such a thing as one clear South African architecture and therefore question the precise legacy of a pre-war emergent for the Silent Subversives.

Lastly, we re-evaluated an historical stylistic continuum closer to our post-war generation. Exemplified by our generation's mentors, their personal historical dualisms of tradition versus modernity and romance versus reason. Regardless of important social themes, we mentioned how regional historians intensified polarities of regional soothing versus untenable international forms. We discerned the influence and parallels of Germanic émigré architects on post-war circumstances in the United States and in South Africa that underwrote alternative materials, standardisation of construction methods, climatic analysis, linkages to gardens and new opinions regarding emerging regional styles. On further investigation, we included the influences from the extreme geographic locations of Scandinavia and Brazil influencing the work of our generation's mentors, bringing the notion of a straightforward regional emergence once more into question. Besides juxtapositions of straight lines equated with international modernism versus sinuous lines equated with settler's attempts at naturalization, we identified the more important post war contribution of enriching the human psyche.

Along with chapter one and chapter two, our re-evaluation has questioned a stylistic regional emergence but acknowledges the diverse historic stylistic influences on the local and global domestic architecture particular to the 1950s and 1960s , which the next chapter will explore.