

It was Sandrock who recommended that the new Administration Building be located in the far south-western corner of the campus, in an area known to students as 'Die Gat' ('The Hole'). It was thought at first that the Loftus Versveld rugby stadium would be relocated and the campus expanded to the west, which would have placed the new building at the centre of the enlarged campus, but later it became clear that expansion would happen to the east instead. Nevertheless, the site was retained, on the grounds that it would make the building readily accessible to the public.

The site elicited a delta-form plan, with a windowless 'prow' projecting out towards the junctions of Lynnwood and University Roads. Through the heart of the delta a double-volume hall rises, where students conduct their administrative affairs. This is light, with finely-detailed counters and fittings, and rough-hewn quartzite floor tiling – one of Sandrock's more successful spatial inventions (and possibly a tribute to Alwyn Burger, then head of the School of Architecture, who was project architect). A spiral stair coils up at the prow, grandly conceived but lost in the tight space, leading up into the remote and sombre halls of the rectorate. The whole speaks of another time and another order.

The office accommodation soon proved inadequate as the bureaucracy burgeoned, and the office wing was extended to the east, compounding the labyrinthine extent of passages. The northern façade shows the concern with sun penetration, which is a trade mark of Pretoria architecture: deep-set windows with *brise-soleil* devices, in this case a set of suspended horizontal louvres. In the south the banded windows are flush with the façade and take the corner to emphasize the structural daring of suspended concrete spandrel bands.

As with most buildings in this climate conducive to lush growth, the starkness of the block has been softened by trees, shrubs and creepers. But it still declares its status, announcing that design and control have captured even a remote corner of the campus that was once little more than a dumping site.

Sandrock was a pragmatic man not given to symbolism, as his bas-relief in the Administration Building demonstrates. Although a competition had already been arranged to find an artist for this work, the architect eventually designed a decorative device himself. The story goes that he arrived at the design late one night while trying to retrieve an insect from the plaster-of-Paris presentation model. The massive concrete wall on the western side, structurally suspended on rubber brackets, forms an acoustic shield for noise from the railway line across the road: functionality on a monumental scale.

Brian Sandrock, Administration Building, 1968, main entrance and rectorate with cantilevered pergola.

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