

STAR July 22<sup>nd</sup> '92

## REFORM IN SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

### PIETERSBURG EXAMPLE

During the last days of the term the new English Medium Primary School at Pietersburg has been put in readiness for the official opening which is to take place when the schools reopen after the winter vacation. It is one of the first to be completed under the new system, by which, as a result of the Administrator's decision, the designs for schools in the Transvaal, are being entrusted to private architects instead of being done departmentally. As expected, these schools are entirely different from what we have been accustomed to in the past.

The typical Transvaal school, that square uncomfortable looking brick building, with its rows of uninteresting windows, looks more like a penal institution than a place where happiness lives and high ideals are born. The influence of surroundings upon placid as well as sensitive children has been entirely neglected in the past.

#### THE CENTRAL FEATURE.

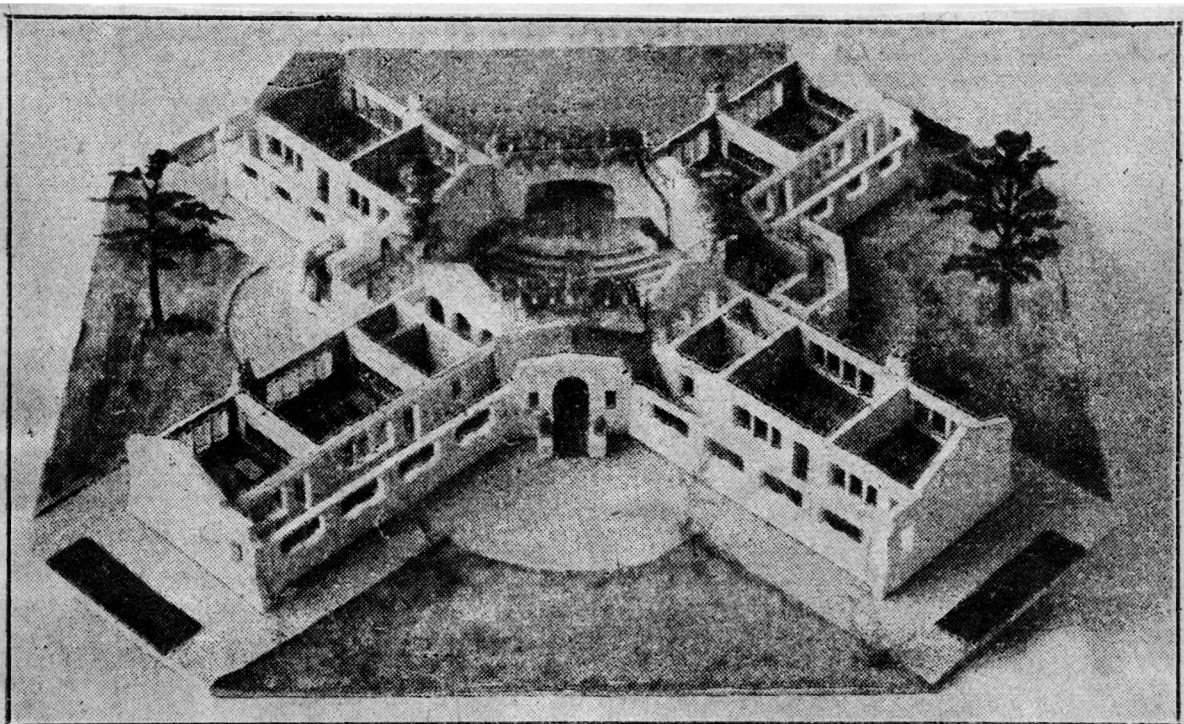
In the design for the Pietersburg school an attempt has been made to combine the useful, the hygienic and the beautiful. The design comprises four wings, radiating from an octagonal open-air amphitheatre. This space was originally intended for a

hall, but as no primary school is allowed a hall, this open-air meeting place was evolved. With its roofed stage, three small columned porticos, which could provide shelter in case of rain, and pergolas covered with bougainvillia, which grows so luxuriantly in Pietersburg, it will be an ideal spot for school concerts and festivities of all kinds.

There are eight classrooms, two store rooms, a staff room and a principal's office, besides cloakrooms and lavatories. There is an entrance for boys and one for girls, under the direct supervision of the principal's office on the one side and the staff room on the other. Water borne sewerage has made it possible to do away with those unsightly little buildings on either side of the playground.

There are four long verandahs which provide covered playgrounds on very hot or wet days, besides sheltering the classrooms from the sun in the afternoon. The building is so placed as to get the maximum amount of air as well as a graded amount of light. Every classroom gets direct sunlight in the early morning, but by 9 o'clock the sun is too high to make the rooms uncomfortable by shining into the long windows, which can, if desired, be entirely opened.

The interior has been made as attractive as funds would allow. The walls of the classrooms have been painted in various pleasing tints, the ceilings too, do not conform to monotonous white. The exterior is plastered in rough stucco, which, with its play of light and shadows, lends a most fascinating effect. And the gables at the ends of the four wings have been based on the "hartebeeshuisie" gables, that form of architecture which the Transvaal may truly call its very own.



CRUCIFORM SCHOOL DESIGN AT PIETERSBURG.

The new English-medium primary school at Pietersburg is to be opened by Mr. Chris Hofmeyer, M.P.C., officially after the present winter vacation. It is one of the first to be completed under the system by which designs for schools in the Transvaal are being entrusted to private architects. Mr. Gerard Moerdyk is the architect responsible for this beautiful and individualistic building, which combines the elements of usefulness, artistic inspiration for scholars and the best hygienic practice of giving as much light and air as possible. The centre of the cross-shaped building is not covered by a roof, and it will form an open-air meeting place.