

NOTES ON THE ARCHITECT AS EDITOR AND THE ASSOCIATED SA JOURNALS

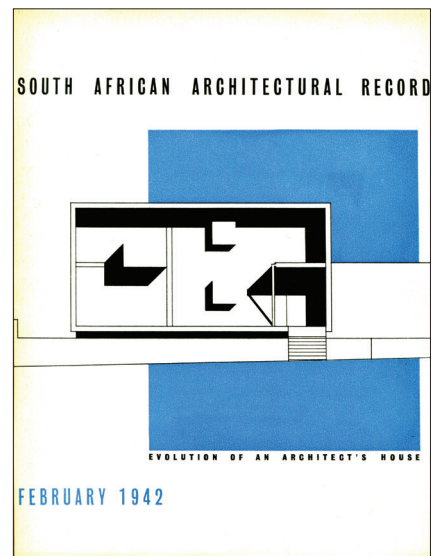
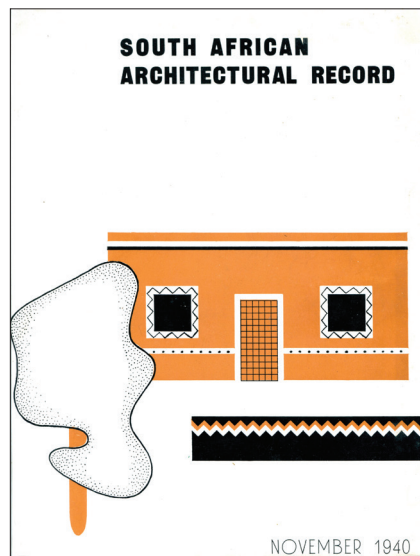
(THE EARLY YEARS UNTIL 1932)

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WITH THIS ISSUE of *Architecture South Africa*, we take leave of Julian Cooke as editor of both the magazine and the journal of the South African Institute of Architects. Julian Cooke's first stint commenced with the May/June issue of 1983, until his last of Sept/Oct 1987, twenty-seven issues in all.

He was approached at the 1983 Congress, of which he was convener, and vacated the position due to increasing administrative commitments at the School of Architecture of the University of Cape Town – where he later became Professor. His second term was in his retirement from full-time academia, from Sept/Oct 2003 until May/June 2015, which accounts for nigh on 70 issues. Julian started that term as a stand-in for the then editor, Piet de Beer, as caretaker, but in response to an advertisement of the post by the then Institute of South African Architects, filled it permanently. The end of his term ends a generational connection through his father, to the long tradition of the publishing of architecture in South Africa, its pioneering years of the Modern Movement of the Transvaal Group and the role of the *Journal's* predecessors, in directing the course of South African architecture.

Architecture, as a formalised profession in South Africa, was championed late in the C19. The designation of being an architect was firmly established through its recognition as a category of employment in the newly created departments of Public Works, both in those of the Colonies of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal, and the Boer Republics of the *Oranje Vrijstaat* (Orange Free State) and *Zuid-Afrika* (Transvaal). Architects sought to establish their professional identity by creating professional associations, the first of which was formed in the Cape



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in 1898. The naming of the Societies went through several iterations, initially the African Society of Architects, but once charter was obtained the name was changed to the African Institute of Architects.

The Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) then intervened. It was only on 30 December 1901 that it was proposed that the society be called The Cape Town Institute of Architects. However, the name was changed in July 1902 to The Cape Institute of Architects. The Transvaal, rapidly transformed through the Anglo Boer War (1899–1902), was the first to promulgate legislation for the formal recognition of the professional architect. Journals dedicated to the works and activities of practitioners soon followed the forming of the Union (1910).

The first of these was the *African Architect*, commencing publication in June 1911, and in print as a monthly until December 1914. It would seem that the advent of the Great (First World) War intervened and disrupted its publication. These are valuable, but scarce,

research sources (as are all such journals). When publishing recommenced towards the end of the War, the journal appeared under the banner of *The Architect and Builder* (August 1917–July 1918). Although it was a propriety journal, it had the official sanction of the Cape Institute, unsurprisingly with its president as editor. William John Delbridge (1878–1946) helped found the magazine and was assisted by Alfred Snape (1886–1941), as co-editor of the periodical, when the title was changed to *The Architect, Builder & Engineer (A,E&B)* in August of 1918.

Snape, at the time, was professor of engineering at the University of Cape Town, and his teaching and technical ability laid the foundation for, and established the form of, future professional engineering training in SA, as well as representing the institu-

1. Cover designs of the *South African Architectural Record*, ancestor of *Architecture SA*, from the period of Rex Martienssen's editorship

tion at the Architectural Educational Congress in Durban of 1923¹. Publication ceased in the War years, with the October to December issue of 1941. Delbridge was closely involved in founding the School of Architecture in Cape Town, and under his editorship the *A, E & B* became the leading professional journal in South Africa. In 1923, he represented the Cape Institute of Architects at the Durban Conference on Architectural Education. Walker² quotes him as follows:

‘Delbridge wrote a number of editorials, which provide some insight into this period. A sensitive if reactionary, critic of art and architecture, he rarely failed to speak out on a considerable variety of subjects and his views probably reflected certain colours of opinion during the first half of the 20th century in Cape Town. He ... found it hard to appreciate the new design, such as that displayed at the Paris Exhibition of 1925, which “filled him ... with a sense of restlessness and alarm... [The buildings] were much worse than the extreme vagaries and vulgarities of the so-called new art movement, which began little more than two decades ago.” He singled out the Czechoslovakian Pavilion, likening it to “a worm in a fit”³. He was articulate and defended what he valued.’

The journals somehow also seem to follow the north-south divide of South Africa. Herbert⁴ writes that the ‘state of dynamic tension between the Cape and the hinterland, in the case of the architectural journal, paralleled that which existed in education.’

The Association of Transvaal Architects published their own journal, *Building*. Joseph Michael Solomon (1886–1920) became the first editor in February 1916. This differed from the circumstances at the Cape, as the institute owned the journal and ploughed back the revenue generated. It served not only the Transvaal, but Natal, the Free State and the eastern regions of the Cape. Solomon soon resigned, in 1916, as both editor and councillor of the Association of Transvaal Architects, in protest over the proposed registration of architects, of which Delbridge in the Cape was a staunch supporter.

Edward Henry Waugh (1872–1948) succeeded Solomon as editor, considering his predecessor a destructive critic. He was the author of numerous articles, on a variety of subjects, published in contemporary professional journals.

Waugh had an exceptionally long career in the municipal hierarchy and, for about 30 years, hardly a municipal building decision was taken without his being in some way involved. He assisted in the foundation and administration of the Architects’ Benevolent Society, initiated by HG Veale after the depression of 1906 to 1908, and was member of numerous other societies⁵.

Building was published from 1918 until 1925, when it was replaced by the *South African Architectural Record*, a name change proposed by the Journal Committee and under the editorship of Ernest Marston Powers (1877–1956). This was done after discussions at the 1923 Architectural Education Congress in Durban led to the committee passing a motion that there be a single journal for the Union. The Cape resisted this, but the Transvaal profession took their lead from a position of strength. In 1925 the then editor, Powers, moved to Durban and resigned from the Association of Transvaal Architects and from the editorship of the *South African Architectural Record*, of which he had edited only the first edition.

Herbert⁶, whose narrative I have used to further this outline, considers that contrary to the tradition of quality that stamped *The African Architect* under Solomon’s regime, the *South African Architectural Records* of 1925 were a low ebb, lacking clarity, precision or direction. All this was to change.

Arthur Stanley Furner (1892–1971) was officially appointed full-time senior lecturer in July 1925, at the School of Architecture of the University of the Witwatersrand. Early in 1926, he was appointed editor of the *South African Architectural Record*, on the resignation of Waugh. Contributing articles on various subjects but focusing on town planning in South Africa, Herbert considers his early published paper ‘The Modern Movement in architecture as the landmark of South African Architectural journalism’ a significant piece of work⁷. He remained editor for three years, and resigned towards the end of 1928, when he resigned from the University to enter into partnership with Herman Kallenbach⁸. The stage was set and revolution was in the air.

Furner had written ‘Wherever we look ... we can see signs of impending change, a change which seems to be revolutionising the whole spirit of architectural design’. As Herbert notes, Furner argues rather than de-

claims, for he is a scholar and not a demagogue.

Geoffrey Eastcott Pearse (1885–1968), chair of the School of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand, followed Furner as editor, and served in this capacity for 20 years, although he had others – like Denis Lefebvre (an artist and critic) – take the position of joint acting editor with RD Martienssen between 1931 and 1934. Pearse was awarded a Carnegie grant in 1931 so, in pursuit of his commitment to architectural education, he paid a visit to Europe and North America to study the education of architects in these countries. He took six months’ leave from the University, leaving Furner and Martienssen to take care of the School in his absence, as well as his editorship. This delegation of responsibilities had a dramatic effect on art and architecture in South Africa. Martienssen’s personality dominated that of his co-editor, Lefebvre, and he gave him short shrift in the realm of decision-making. Lefebvre objected, but Martienssen brushed him off. As Herbert⁹ notes, the January 1932 issue (which had been renamed the *South African Architectural Review*) rocked the establishment.

As with any change there is backlash, which the old guard were not going to accept without a fight. But, to give Herbert the last word: ‘*The South African Architectural Review* stood alone, in form and content, after the revolution of 1932: and the stature of its achievements is enhanced by comparison with the other South African journals of its day’¹⁰.

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