

CHAPTER FIVE

DISPOSITIONED DWELLING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The very presence of architecture gives it a social impact, so that any 'negativity', any critical capacity within architecture, is all but cancelled by the 'positivity' of its presence. The very physicality of architecture always threatens to install a new *status quo*, and undermines its capacity to be 'subversive' (Leach 1996:9).

This chapter:

- Explores a socio-economic spatial theory of silent-subversive 'freedom' in the dwellings of our agents relative to the subjugated post-war and apartheid socio-political circumstances they found themselves in.

5.2 SELECTED LITERATURE

This chapter selects literature to investigate the fourth sub question:

How did the Silent subversives reconcile their habitus with their habitats beyond stylistic ideologies ?

Although this chapter adopts Bourdieu's theories as methodology, the required additional literature is twofold and specifically chosen to reciprocate the *Fields of power* (social dispositions) of our agents with their *Fields of Structures* (Dispositioned Structures).

5.2.1 Social fields

Firstly, Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and 'Habitus', in *Habitus: A Sense of Place* (2005) give us an overview of his theories. Since Bourdieu's translated text of human behaviour seem 'monolithic, Kim Dovey's 'The Silent Complicity of Architecture' in *Habitus: A Sense of Place* clarifies the possibility of collective dispositions to be influential on a generational *lifestyle* such as that of our agents.

For further clarification, directed specifically to the relationship of home and the lifestyle needs of its various occupants, Agan and Luchsinger's *The House: Principles/Resources/Dynamics* (1965) provides a germane version of mid-century social fields. However, to decode images of domesticity specific to our South African generation, Viljoen's '*Imagined Community*':1950s *kiekies of the volk* (2006) is one of the few situated texts available for our domestic enquiry.

Because of a lack of definite South African books relative to this chapter's aim, particularly popular magazines and journals of the 1960s provide useful articles concerning social domesticity. For instance,

Scott's 'The Servantless House in South Africa' in *Lantern* (1964), Roth's 'Collecting Old Cape Furniture' in *Femina & Woman's Life* (1964) and Harling's *House & Garden: The Modern Interior* (1964) give us comparative data from the same year. These articles were never specific to the architectural field and therefore Douglas Howie's 'Contemporary Architecture' (1958) and Alan Lipman's 'Functionalism in Architecture' (1963), both in *Lantern*; partially make up for the scarcity.

For a rare discernment of a subversive intertextual society during apartheid, we refer to Michael Gardiner's "Time to Talk: Literary Magazines in the Pretoria-Johannesburg Region, 1956 to 1978" in *Donga* (2002). While Clive Chipkin's *Johannesburg Style: Architecture and Society 1880s-1960s* (1993) sets the post-war scene for Pretoria and Johannesburg subversives, Mark Gevisser's *Lost and Found in Johannesburg* (2014) elaborates evidentially. Critically, Tony Morphet's 'Personal traits: The work of Eaton and Biermann in Durban', in Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavić's edited *'blank_Architecture, apartheid and after'* disclose personal dispositions of two of our agents, that other literature avoids. What is clear is limited South African literature surrounding a generational past-war social condition in South Africa.

5.2.2 Structural fields

An invaluable source for this thesis is the University of the Witwatersrand, Council of Architecture Student's supplement to the *S.A. Architectural Record* entitled 'Domestic Architecture in South Africa from 1930-1965' (1965). For this chapter, Edward Teeger's 'Domestic Architecture in South Africa', Don Lennard's 'Today's House' and Hans Berg's 'The use of Materials' are essays that attempted to introduce an "architectural sphere" to the commercialised 1960s that exemplifies domestic architecture of many of our agents and therefore imperative as a source. This supplied content for Chipkin's chapter on 'Patio Houses' that attempts to group houses as a "domestic prototype". Chipkin's later book *Johannesburg Transition: Architecture and Society from 1950* (2008) re-arranges these diverse prototypes into stylistic categories. Although both these sources are viable, they are restricted to the Johannesburg region.

Readings about agents in other regions are: Johan Jooste's article on his father's Pretoria domestic architecture entitled 'Karl Jooste – Architect (1925-1971)' in *SA Architect* (2000); Alan Lipman's account of Revel Fox's Cape houses in 'The Small House in modern South African Architecture' in *Lantern* (1962); and Sabine Marschall's 'Regionalism and a South African architectural identity' in *Image & Text: A Journal for Design* (1998).

Although mostly illustrations, the limited personalised descriptions in Gabriel Fagan's *Gabriel Fagan: Twenty Cape Houses* (2005) and Michael Sutton's *Michael Sutton: Architect* (2015), are worth referencing. John Claassen's 'The Houses of John Claassens. In *Plan 2* (1969) and Van Rensburg's (c1960) personal typewritten texts are workable first hand opinions synthesising social and structured fields.

Then to include as many published articles exemplifying the domestic architecture of lesser-known agents, both the *South African Architectural Record* and the *Architect and Builder* volumes from the

1950s to the 1970s are valuable for this research. Although fragmentary, these features provide common aspects of domestic architecture requiring collation. These houses offer evidential examples for articles such as Barrie Biermann's 'Observations on Fenestration in Brazil' in *South African Architectural Record* (1950).

5.3 SOCIAL DISPOSITIONS

5.3.1 'Single-family'

But a year or two later [1960s], houses were more like compounds, or even hamlets, with living wings, children's wings, and utility wings. Linked in a few cases by bridges and in others, more daringly, by outdoor courtyards. The architects were not only finding ways to spend the owner's obviously lavish budgets. (Hine 2005:21).

The period following World War II was an opportunity for our Silent Subversives to be homeowners. Those were 'fertile years of experimentation' for architects embarking on their careers (Peters 1998:181). Exceptional opportunities arose to be creatively expressive for their own, relatives or client's homes. Due to post-wartime measures in place, people were initially not wealthy. Conversely, their dispositions improved with the new economic boom in the 1960s¹. White prosperity later allowed architects to make extensions to their houses, but also to receive commissions to design houses for the new middle-class professionals and their 'baby boom' offspring².

Discussing the 'Housing Needs of the Mid-century Family', Agan (1965:4) relays that the 'public' order affects an inhabitant's reaction to their 'private' order or dwelling. In 1950s and 1960s South Africa, the apartheid public order was in its heyday. This regime pushed any non-conformist self-expressiveness behind closed doors. Besides an 'underlife'³, *verligte* (enlightened) individuals could find a true self-identity in the private order of 'family life'. Agan (1965: 3-4) explains:

The private order, comprised of the family and the recreational and social activities centered about family life, has as its concern the satisfaction of the whole [wo]man – answering [her]his need for social life, [her]his desire for love and affection ... The most important influences in life are shaped by intimate relationships. The home, because it fosters such relationships between its members, is the prime conditioner of our way of life. It supplies potential for resourceful living and self-fulfilment, creating channels for finding satisfaction in meaningful pursuits.

¹ See chapter 2.

² The 'Baby boom' generation is the cohort following the 'Silent Generation'. See "Baby Boom", in *Time*, February 9, 1948.

³ See chapter 2. In particular, *Silent subversive-ness*.

5.3.2 Everyday life

“Everyday life” refers to dull routine, the ongoing go-to-work, pay-the-bills, homeward trudge of daily existence. It indicates a sense of being in the world beyond philosophy, virtually beyond the capacity of language to describe, that we know simply as the grey reality enveloping all we do (Lefebvre 1971: vii).

Besides the “large number of diverse architectural influences” coming “together to form a new domestic vernacular architecture” (Chipkin 1993:294), one argues that social identities also had a major role to play in the ‘domestic’ dispositions of a Transvaal dwelling in the 1950s and 1960s. This is no place to elaborate on the ‘origins of domesticity’, but one can surmise that any passing on of endemic domestic practice⁴ to *Trekboers* would be via females. Considering the fact that indigenous domestic architecture was essentially a “feminine occupation” (Prussin 1995:xvii) and that bourgeois European domesticity was exemplified by female Dutch Burghers (Rybczynski 1988:51) (Fig. 5.1. Left), this claim may be true.

Everyday life in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century reflected the traditional bourgeois virtues – an unruffled moderation, an admiration for hard work, and a financial prudence bordering on parsimony ... and evolved conservative manners ... The emergence of the family home reflected the growing importance of the family in Dutch society..the feminization of the home...was one of the most important events in the evolution of the domestic interior. It had several causes, chief among them the limited use made of servants (Rybczynski 1988: 54, 72).

Of importance, is how the post-war South African public realm changed the idea of feminine domesticity? We have seen⁵ the role of the *Volksmoeder* and the AVV with regards supporting the male-constructed National ideologies to alleviate Afrikaner poverty. Viljoen (2006:21-23) tells us that it was within the “sphere of the domestic” that white Dutch-Afrikaans woman participated in the patriarchal system for “an imagined community”⁶. Idealised DRC magazines and *Die Boerevrou* highlighted distinct gender roles related to fervent domesticity (Du Tot 2010:15-17). However, the 1950s liberated the *Volksmoeder* image, albeit subversively. For instance, in the 1950s issues of *Huisgenoot*, the *verkrampste* (conservative) woman “who still hankered after a sedentary rural family seat” (*heimwee*) (Fisher 1998:125), but situated in the suburbs, was not depicted as a “robust *plaasvrou*”, but for instance, an innocent “cultured” woman with flowers. Viljoen (2006:23) decodes an image of “white arum lilies, indigenous to South Africa, [to] connote the role of the feminised South African landscape in narrating Afrikaner identity”.

Many advertisements were of modern’ urbanised⁷ femininity not depicting a *Volksmoeder*, but rather a globalised *fraai* (picturesque) identity (Fig. 5.1.Middle). Seemingly, content with everyday housekeeping⁸,

⁴ See chapter 4.

⁵ See chapter 4.

⁶ For further reading, see Anderson, B. R. 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

⁷ By 1950, the majority of Afrikaners were urbanised (Viljoen 2006:22).

⁸ Employment of domestic help for housework and sometimes a man for gardening was commonplace (Peters 1998:176)

the notion of “*verfraaing* (decoration) easily slips into the practice of decorat-*ing* taxonomy of the woman as homemaker” (Viljoen 2006:21-23). By the 1960s, rife with ‘avocational’ special features, the English-speaking magazine *Femina & Woman’s Life* went beyond the traditional activities associated with Moerdijk and Baker’s women⁹. For example, Roth (1965:64-68) suggested that collecting and restoring antique Cape furniture was “a rewarding hobby” that extends into other activities such as reading and visiting museums and private collections¹⁰.

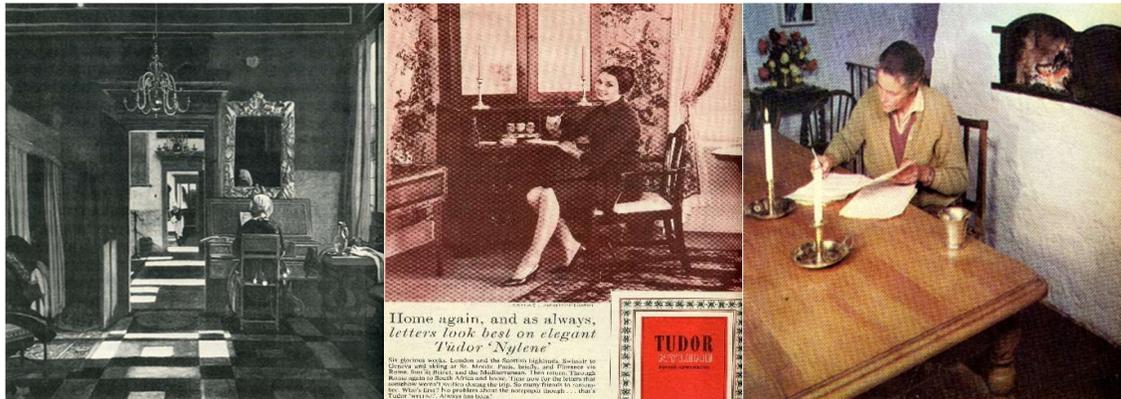


Figure 5.1.Left: Dutch Women sweeping in background. Emanuel de Witte, *Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals*, C.1660 (Rybczynski 1988: 50). **Middle:** Advertisement for *Tudor 'Nylene'* notepaper. The image depicts an elegant woman catching up on writing following a six-week trip to Europe (*Femina* 1964: 60). **Right:** Suzanne van Rensburg working at yellowwood refectory-style dining table (Roth 1964: 65).

Incidentally, the architect Piet van den Berg¹¹ photographed the images for Roth’s article in the Pretoria home of one of our agents, architect Jack van Rensburg, The furniture restorer was van Rensburg’s wife, the celebrated radio presenter and Afrikaans writer, Suzanne neé Swart (1919-1974) (Fig. 5.1. Right). Exemplifying a post-war change in the social circumstances of shared domestics and hobbies for all family members, Jack van Rensburg switched gender roles by doing all the household cooking¹². The freedom indorsed for the post-war ‘Mother’, affected the disposition of dwelling to augment the ‘domestic experience’. Jackson (1994:88) writes:

These benefits may appear of negligible and dubious importance today, but in the 1950s, when the role of the middle-class housewife was ambiguous, it meant that although women had taken on many of the household tasks formerly undertaken by domestic servants, they need not necessarily be hidden away and taken for granted in the way that the latter had been. The open-plan kitchen/dining room therefore, could be seen as an acknowledgement of the more prominent and assertive role that women would seek to play in the future both in the home and in the workplace.

⁹ See Chapter 4, In particular, *First Juncture: 1850s to 1920s*.

¹⁰ Typical “anti-boredom” hobbies of the 1950s and 1960s for all family members was for instance: collecting stamps, bird eggs, records, and so on. “This required family rooms, attics or basements where creative efforts of family members may be undertaken without affecting the serenity of the lives of others” (Agan 1965:6).

¹¹ Piet van den Berg studied B.Arch at the University of Pretoria from 1952-1957.

¹² Suzanne van Rensburg's radio talks, at the South African Broadcasting Corporation occurred between 6 March and 8 May 1968 as compiled in her book *Soet Anysberg*. (Marre, B. 1976. *Hoofstad*. November. 21). Jack van Rensburg presented talks on cooking in 1957. See Kannemeyer’s *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse literatuur* History of Afrikaans Literature. 1993:306.

We have discussed¹³ the NP's 'Bantustan' policies which had engineered the move of blacks to 'homelands' which lessened the availability of domestic 'servants'¹⁴. In addition, our 'liberated' women were following vocational paths and necessitating more leisure time and less domestic hours daily. Therefore, the Department of Community Development supported research into 'servantless' home planning. From Western sources, researchers considered the "unconscious solution of the problem of the servantless house" for South Africa (Scott 1964:60-62).

In South Africa servants have for generations been a feature of the typical household, but this picture is changing rapidly and White South Africans can expect to be part of a virtually servantless society in the near future. It would be wise, therefore, to consider what influence this change will have on the planning of houses and develop plans which will take into consideration the changing accommodation requirements and relationships during the lives of the houses we are building now (Scott 1964:59).

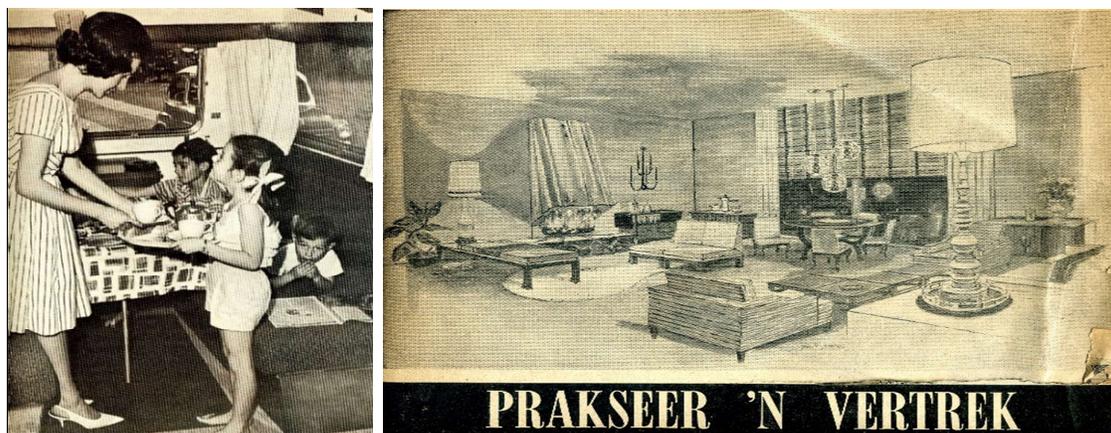


Figure 5.2. Left: Shared family domesticity in a caravan (Dunn 1964:41). Right: How to plan an 'open' room in *Huisgenoot*: (Botes 1958: 69).

By the 1960s, middle-class families saw everyday domesticity as a social "creative experience" that all members participated in, but that required "companionship" (Fig.5.2. Left). The practice of *sitkamersitters*¹⁵ in formal lounges and separate study parlours to receive important guests was no longer relevant. Instead, the social space for both the family and their friends, shifted to the 'living room' or 'family room' (Agan 1965:5). The notion of *geselligheid* (sociability) replaced *ordentlikheid* (good behaviour). The decorator's important focus was not on stylistics, but the dispositions of areas in one large room (Fig.5.2. Right). The situation was international. Even the grandeur of the English sitting room that the Afrikaners emulated¹⁶, transformed by the 1960s. Harling (1964:43) writes:

¹³ See Chapter 2. In particular, *Career dispositions: 1940s to 1960s*

¹⁴ A Survey of Family Expenditure carried out in November 1955, revealed that wages had exponentially increased by 1964 due to "Influx-control legislation", 'industrial expansion', reduction in "gap between skilled and unskilled wages", "fixing of minimum wages", "Westernization of the Bantu" and the "growing tendency for Bantu servants to live in their own townships" (Scott 1964:60-61).

¹⁵ See Chapter 4. In particular, *First juncture: 1850 to 1920s*

¹⁶ The Afrikaner emulated English 'grandeur' as *ordentlikheid* in order to appear superior. Extracted from a seminar conducted by Professor Christi van der Westhuizen: 'Ordentlikeheid in the Making of White Afrikaner Women in South Africa', February 2017. Department of Sociology. University of Pretoria.

Some people – a diminishing, older, nostalgic social group – call them drawing-rooms, but the label has a touch of grandeur, with a hint of terraces and so forth beyond the French windows. Others call them sitting-rooms, a pleasantly descriptive and evocative label, carrying intangible overtones. A pity the term falls gradually into desuetude, for it is a positive word in a frenetic, negative world. Nowadays, the description is more likely to be a living-room, an exact description of the centre of the home. Here we all meet, talk, read, relax and, on occasion, even eat. Here is the nexus for the family's multitudinous ways.

5.3.3 'Household' types

In the sixties, after a failed two-year marriage, I belatedly enjoyed sowing a few wild oats. It was the time of the hippy- flower power – Timothy Leary – joss sticks – “joints” – yoga (Sutton 2015:10).

The definition of a 'normal' mid-century family might differ from that of any other age. Agan (1964:14-23) spells out the various “life cycles” of a typical 1960s family with “stages” that would vary from a “Beginning family” to the “Expanding Family”, and so on, up until the “Old Age Family”. Each of these stages, he said, required different “Housing Requirements”. Nevertheless, the idea of building one family house that extended over time to suit a growing family was commonplace¹⁷. However, when speaking of post-war ‘families’, the assumption was that a heterosexual couple commanded ‘households’ and the expectation was therefore for one to marry.

Other persons may live alone, or a group of unrelated persons may share the same living accommodations as partners. These persons are considered households but not families. Thus a household includes, in addition to related families, all persons, related or unrelated, who occupy a dwelling unit. Hence, all primary families are households but some households do not contain a family (Agan 1965:12).

In his biography on Eaton, Harrop-Allin (1975:123) avoids the word ‘homosexual’ by noting: “He never married and lived alone in Pretoria”. Considering that authorities outlawed homosexuality until the 1990s the topic of sexual preference was silenced (Gevisser 1995: 73). In the case of Eaton’s reclusive marginalisation, Pienaar (2017:41) mentions that homosexuality “was against the law at the time” (apartheid, 1948). In this regard, Morphet (1998:152) writes:

To be homosexual in South Africa in the 1960s was to be under constant threat. Inevitably homosexual practice was against the law and, with the police able to raid any premises at any time without a warrant, there was a direct risk to any form of homosexual relationship. Prosecutions were in fact rare, but the danger of public exposure and vigilante hounding was palpable and permanent. The risk to the interior life was perhaps even more intense, since to many denial, refusal and repression came to seem the only way of achieving even a degree of normal protected personal and social life. To pursue any kind of expressive public life required not only heroic internal discipline but a wariness and skill that would be able to deceive and inform at the same time. The cultured and the clever could use irony and wit to sustain and defend themselves’ for many others their lives were split apart and lived in separate places and ways.

¹⁷ Fagan, Van Rensburg and TC Nel reveal the idea of building a home for future extension (Steenkamp interviews 2001).

With regards homosexual subversive-ness after 1950, we notice what Gevisser and Cameron call *Defiant Desires* (1995). Gevisser (2015:159) tells of the 1950s and 1960s newspaper clippings varying from police raids on parks (“cottages”) to the sub-text of ‘gay’ society-pages. Photographs of the fifties and sixties often showed Batchelor’s Cove, Clifton Beach, Cape Town where inter-racial ‘queer’ men would gather on the rocks at the end of the day to swim, to talk, cruise, and bathe naked”, but oblivious to most people of the time (Gevisser 2015:159-162) (Fig. 5.3. Left). Many of these men led double lives and as Gevisser (2015:151) writes:

...long before I knew a closet was a place where you put things away, I thought of it as a place where you hid something. And I thought of it, spatially, as being underground¹⁸. This gave it an infernal dimension, although I cannot remember whether I thought it was homosexuality itself which put you in hell, or the concealing of it, or both.



Figure 5.3. Left: “Bachelors”. From the Joe Garmeson album, Durban, 1951 (Gevisser 2014: 161). **Middle:** Ambiguous forms. Norman Eaton, Architect’s house *Cul de Sac*, Pretoria, c.1960 (Pienaar 2017: 45). **Right:** Defining the entrance to a private house. Barrie Biermann, Architect’s House, Durban, 1962 (Beck 1985: 46).

Due to silent subversive homosexuality after the war, the situation for our agent Barrie Biermann was not quite as repressive as say for Eaton whose “life remains shrouded in secrecy and ambiguity” (Fig. 5.3. Middle). Although Biermann was ‘out’ to friends, he was ‘closeted’ in the seemingly dominant heterosexual profession (Morphet 1998: 152-153). He remained therefore ‘intensely private’¹⁹ as reflected in the ‘underground’ house he built, which Morphet (1998:152) “linked to the marginality imposed on homosexual identity in the 1960s” (Fig. 5.3. Right).

Biermann’s house is more radical in every sense... He was building for himself and his lover alone, and he was free to make the full range of his imagination and his learning visible and real. The only direct limits that he had to recognize came through the site and the available finance. The site was a sloping piece of ground ... It had not been suburbanized yet and offered seclusion ... It is a secret, hermetic house when viewed from without...it is not possible to see in from the outside. Screening

¹⁸ For further reading, see Leach, N. 2006. ‘Drag Spaces’, in *Static* (4). The London Consortium.

¹⁹ “Biermann lived and died an enigmatic figure. He was notoriously absent from staff meetings [he had a] knack of disappearing into thin air after you followed him down a corridor. He also shied away from the duties of overt leadership. Still his presence and his influence permeated the school” (Hallen 1991:9).

walls block the line of site. The house gives the sense of having been designed and constructed to make the private life safe and secure against the outside world ... is more or less invisible from the street and neither invites attention nor offers display. – the exact reverse to the prevailing suburban forms ... The sense of secured freedom is the dominant feeling (Morphet 1998:157).

5.3.4 Intertextual community

There is only one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, live and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual (Fromm 1942:30).

A cultural and social field consists of many 'players' each with specific dispositions and thereby "differential stances". This notion of *intertextuality* between positions makes the field dynamic. Bourdieu (1993:16-17) describes the interaction of orthodox traditions challenged by "new modes of cultural practice" as "position-takings" (*prises de position*). Our Silent Subversives were not many. In order to understand their dwellings dispositional, we need to take into account their intertextuality with other producers of cultural forms – their community. The small post-war South African cohort through partnerships, marriage and local journals was interwoven. In the case of a small magazine mediating cultural fields in Johannesburg in the late-1950s and 1960s, Gardiner (2002:7) writes:

Through the magazine *The Purple Renoster* the editor Lionel Abrahams established a network of writers, painters, architects, dramatists and literary figures in the Johannesburg area, a high proportion of whom went on to become the editors of magazines, to publish collection of poetry, short stories and plays, to compile anthologies and to be active in education, political movements and churches, as journalists and reviewers and in other ways to provide validity and substance to South African indigenous cultural life.

We exemplify some Silent Subversive architects and their relationships with other *intelligentsia* in Johannesburg. Jack Clinton had a close friendship with the sculptor Micky Korzennik (Chipkin 2008:202). Andre' Hendrickz was the brother of the sculptor Willem de Sandres Hendrickz (Chipkin 1993:295). Donald Turgel connected with the sculptor Cyril Kumalo and the artist Cecil Skotnes who both taught at the Polly Street Art Centre in Johannesburg (Alexander 1990:21) (Fig. 5.4. Left). Often these artists were sources of the acquisition of the architect's private collections of art, sculpture and textile wall hangings. Otherwise, the architects commissioned these agents to carve entrance doors or wall panels for houses and churches (Chipkin 1993:296, 298) (Fig.5.2.Middle). In addition, Jack van Rensburg often commissioned their friend the studio potter and ceramicist Esias Bosch (1923-2010), whose house *Die Randjie* Eaton designed²⁰, for surface tiling on buildings or as inserts in floor finishes (Fig.5.4. Right). Van Rensburg formed an architectural partnership with John Claassens, whose wife Valerie was a professional potter submerged in the pottery community. Alternatively, an architect like Michael Sutton (1928) renovated several homes together in the late-1950s with the film and *Star* newspaper critic, Tom Russel (Sutton 2015:9).

²⁰ "A regional ethos spread to the Lowveld – in the atelier of the master potter Esias Bosche [sic]" (Chipkin 2008:379).

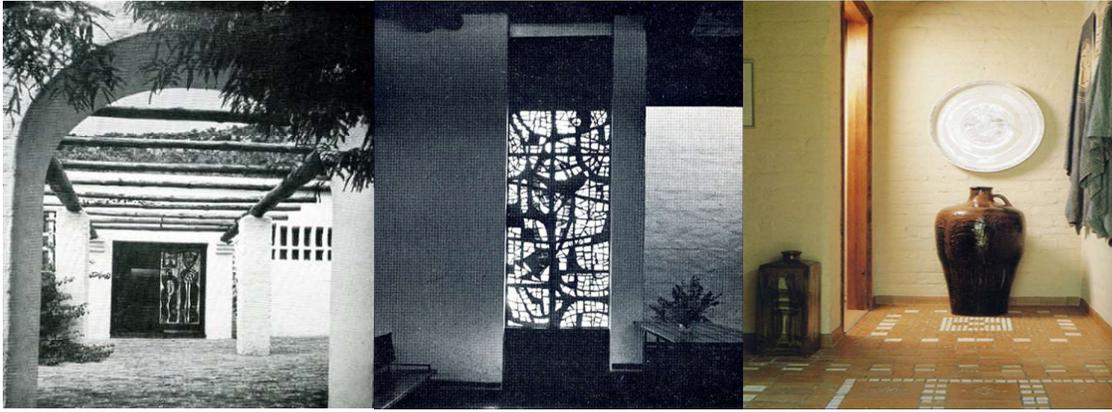


Figure 5.4. **Left:** Cecil Skotnes carved door, Donald Turgel, Egon Guenther Gallery, Johannesburg, 1965 (Chipkin 1993:299). **Middle:** Leo Theron stained glass panel, Daan Kesting, Park street church, Pretoria, 1965 (*Lantern* 1967: 41). **Right:** Esias Bosch stoneware floor tile inserts. Norman Eaton, De Randjie, White River, 1960 (Bosch 1988: 58)

The *South African Architectural Record* regularly published articles on artists in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, Cecily Sash (1925) was a favourite feature due to her commissioned mosaics in public buildings (Alexander 1990:119). The cultural journal, *Lantern*, albeit limited, published articles by architects as an attempt to inform a larger South African audience on modern post-war architectural topics. For instance, W.D. Howie published *Contemporary Architecture* (1958) and the architect Alan Lipman (1925-2013) wrote *Functionalism in Architecture* (1963). Yet by the 1960s, the architectural profession was concerned about the limited public knowledge of architects and architecture²¹. Reporting at a *South African Institute of Architects* conference Fassler (1964:7) commented:

Now magazines and newspapers circulate widely...Here again the public at large and particularly the interested part of it, hears about international spy rings and many other aspects of daily life, many of them shady, but there will not be any references to architecture, still less to architects. Up to date architects do not rank as artists of any consequence in South Africa. The names of painters and sculptors are far better known: Jean Welz, Lippy Lipschitz, Maurice van Essche, Maud Sumner, Moses Kotler, Walter Battis, Alexis Preller, Cecily Sash and many others...Yet the public does not know and furthermore has no chance of knowing, the names of men and women who are important to architecture in South Africa at the present time.

In the post-war years, Johannesburg and Pretoria agents interacted increasingly as a closed circle. Chipkin (1993:278-279) tells how Johannesburg architects commuted to view the “amazing new buildings of Pretoria” and discuss them at places like Café Riche. Besides, the café on Church Square in Pretoria and the coffee shop decorated by the young architect and photographer Wim Swaan (1927-1995) in Hillbrow, a “café society” was absent in the two cities (Chipkin 1993:299). During the heydays of apartheid, eating out for most white Pretorians was a post-shopping grand affaire confined to the interior of the

²¹ Charles Swanepoel's cartoons for the *Journal of the Institute of SA Architects* aimed at deflating the profession's occasional pomposity and self-importance (<https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=2509>).

tearooms of *Uniewinkels* or *Ackermann* emporiums²². Sidewalk or public cafes were non-existent. Other places of interaction between the agents from the two cities were at Gallery 101 in Johannesburg or the Transvaal Academy of Arts in Pretoria where they exhibited or frequented in the 1960s (Gardiner 2002:9). Mostly, the silently subversive intellectuals socialised in the comfort of their private dwellings (Fig. 5.5. Top left). Chipkin (1993:209) tells:

They built their own avant-garde houses in the low-density, white suburbs. They met regularly, not in shanties or secretive shebeens, but at each other's houses or flats or even (in the post-war era) around Gordon McIntosh's tennis court in Pretoria on summer days.



Figure 5.5. Top left: Post-war social space for all races. Gordon McIntosh, House McIntosh, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1936-7 (Cooke 1983: 46). **Top right:** "Farewell party for a Pretoria Artist". Hosts Suzanne and Jack van Rensburg with architect Lourens Fourie. Attendants included Uys Krige, Robert Hodgins, Christine Scully and newly appointed head of architecture at Cape Town University, Professor Strauss Brink (SA Tatler 1964: 6). **Bottom:** Gabriel and Gwendoline Fagan family visiting Jack and Suzanne van Rensburg family at *Binnehof*, Pretoria, 1960s (Fagan 2016: 60).

Perhaps the best example of dwelling as a social 'public' place in Pretoria was the home of Jack van Rensburg his wife Suzanne van Rensburg.. The unpretentious couple²³ were important as a catalyst for bringing together the who's who of South African architects, artists and literati of their generation at parties held in their home *Binnehof* (Fig. 5.5. Top right). Amongst others, they befriended the prominent

²² For further reading, see <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/11437/vol3nr1%20%2807%29%2012-15.pdf?sequence=5>

²³ Gwen Fagan referred to the Van Rensburgs as 'Onopgesmukte mense' or Unadorned simple people (in conversation 2017)

artists of the 1960s, for example, Jean Welz²⁴, Johannes Meintjies, Robert Hodgins, Marjorie Wallace, Alice Goldin, David Goldblatt, Bettie Cilliers Barnard *et al.* The van Rensburg home allowed a sense of freedom from the stifling conservatism posed in the streets of apartheid Pretoria.

Pretoria is a city of extremes, and not just of temperature. It's a capital known for its conservatism and academic flavour, yet the undercurrents ebb and flow with incidents that would set the city forefathers spinning in their graves (Bagley 1987:168).

Known for his culinary skills, Van Rensburg often hosted parties that brought together prominent names in the art and architectural circles in the 1960s (Anon, *SA Tattler* 1964:6). Suzanne, known for her flamboyancy²⁵ and expressive Afrikaans language typical of the subversive literati formed the intertextual relationships between the Transvaal and the Cape via the South African Broadcasting Corporation and her contacts with the radical Afrikaans literary group known as the *Sestigers* (Sixtiers)²⁶. They all socialized in their homes with Barrie Biermann (1924-1991) from Natal and Gawie Fagan (1925) and his wife Gwendoline from the Cape (Fig. 5.5. Bottom). Fagan (2015:60) recalls:

Now we had lovely parties at their [Jack and Suzanne van Rensburg] place because the couple were both gregarious and Susan knew everyone who was anyone in Pretoria. Jan Rabie [*Sestigers*] and Marjorie Wallace, only just back from their stay in Greece, stayed some time and provided much pleasure. They never bathed and one day I heard Susan scolding them: "Go bath! Sis, you stink!"

Basil Hugh South (1915-1952) or as his students called him, 'the honey' was a favourite amongst the architectural students at the Pretoria School. He often invited students to his farm near the Pienaars river for "listening to gramophone records" and for social interactions where "South relayed his philosophy that everything happens in a context, and that architecture, music and art are interlinked" (Steenkamp 2003:5). The Fagans entertained "plot people" and their architectural colleagues on the plot *Langgeluk* at Kameeldrift which they bought following from South's estate sudden tick-bite death (Fagan 2016: 32, 38). Gwen Fagan (2016: 60) once more elaborates:

There was certainly no shortage of guests. Karel and Sylvia Jooste, Fekix and Daphne Viljoen, Richard and Toos Mönning, with their children played on the lawn outside, we elders talked architecture – about each other's work and about Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe or Oscar Niemeyer, as new books about their work got published.

In writing a tribute, one of our agents Hans Hallen (Artefacts 1991) reminds how his business partner Biermann "saw architecture as a broad and complex intertwining of the arts". Furthermore, he saw architecture as an extension of landscape and urban design shared in expressing the "many cultural drives of a society" with art. As was the case with so many of the other Silent Subversives, Biermann

²⁴ Jean Welz was also an architect and influential in the Revel Fox practice (Fox 1998:27)

²⁵ Gus Gerneke (conversation 2015).

²⁶ See Chapter 2.

connected with artists such as Andrew Verster and Aidan Walsh and all the other agents that came together in the 1960s (Morphet 1998:152). Often Biermann would entertain his students, architects and artists in his Durban house with his “unique brand of hospitality” (Kamstra, Artefacts).

The acts of apartheid ensured a contrived intertextuality between races. However, there was some common ground between the post-war generations of the same age in white suburbia and the black townships. For instance in the black township of Sophiatown an intertextuality between “artists of various disciplines”, exemplified by the photographers and writers of the *Drum* magazine (Fig. 5.5. Left), came about with a certain freedom of socialising so typical to our white generation (Chipkin 1993:208). This study suggests that there were some parallels with the Silent Subversive dwellings of suburbia and the underground places during apartheid approximating “the secret shanty booze-joints” of Sophiatown or Hillbrow which was known as the ‘white Sophiatown’ (Chipkin 1993:209).

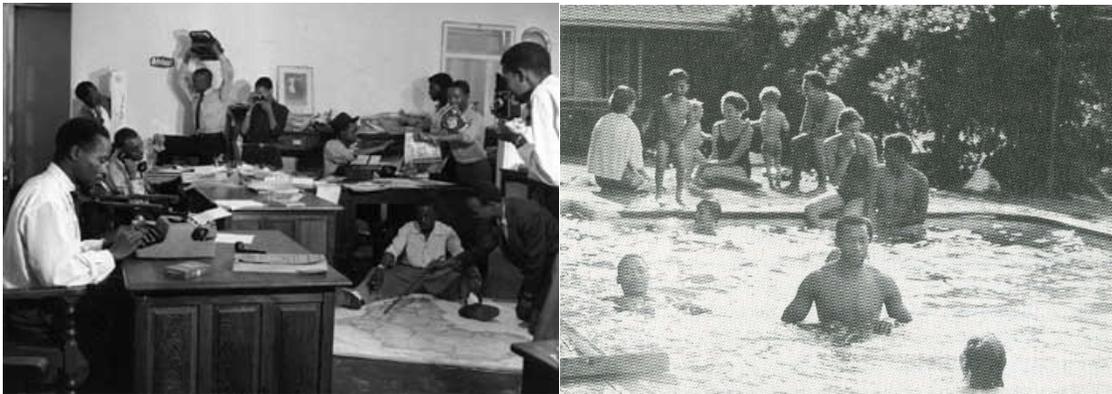


Figure 5.5. Left: *Drum* magazine writers and photographers. ‘Drum Magazine’ from *South African History Online*, 1950s (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/drum-magazine>). **Right:** ‘Fringe Country’, swimming pool in suburban Johannesburg, from Bailey’s African History Archive, ‘No Colour Bar: 1961’ (Gevisser 2014: 113).

Beyond their protective enclosures, *dispositioned dwelling*, for most of our Silent Subversives meant a place, not unlike the notion of an underworld that could open up to a place of social *freedom*. This would manifest in a particular spatial conception, which we will discuss later in this chapter. Nevertheless, these private dwellings were, in an “Un-Private” way²⁷, the public places absent in the apartheid cities (Fig. 5.5. Right). This study does not suggest the risky intertextuality between races in all the dwellings of the Silent Subversives, but Chipkin (1993:210), when he cites Stephan Clingman, highlights the “hallucinatory quality in the separated worlds” typical of subversive societies during apartheid,:

But Stephan Clingman, reflecting on Gordimer’s work in the 1950s, talks about the ‘black intellectual and cultural elite – typified by the journalists who worked on *Drum* magazine and the *Golden City Post* - who from their base in Sophiatown, penetrated the parties, living-rooms and beds of a similar white elite in Johannesburg. The distinct cultural renaissance in these years’, he [Clingman] observes, was partly defined and energized by its multi-cultural aspects, for ‘this was the time when

²⁷ The term borrowed from Riley, T. 1999. *The Un-Private House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams and The Museum of Modern Art.

“township jazz” took on a sudden fascination for whites ... a symbol of inter-racial collaboration and the embodiment of a Euro-African cultural synthesis ... We shall notice these affinities, too, in the architecture of the post-war period.

5.3.5 Silent transcendence

The sense of living on borrowed time, of being strangers in a world that was not-quite-real, of living from day to day without seeming to be going anywhere, turned even moments of almost sublime beauty, discovery or happiness into glimpses of mortality, of absurdity. I no longer needed to *read* Camus, or Sartre for that matter, or even Marcel (I was still very religious), to understand what existentialism was all about: I was *living* it every waking and sleeping moment of my life... Inevitably, I was driven to existential questioning of *myself* (Brink 2010:137).

Stemming from Europe, we have seen²⁸ how in the 1950s and 1960s existentialist writing (Camus, Fromm, Rasmussen and Sartre) inspired social concerns beyond a world of imposed ideologies. Without implying that all our Silent Subversives subscribed to these theories, one could argue that any ‘subtle’ transcendence from a restrictive ‘situation’, such as apartheid, unconsciously subscribed to existentialist philosophy. With regards Nobel Prizes²⁹, any curious intellectual of the time, would have known Albert Camus (1913-1960) and Sartre (1905-1980). Alternatively, some of our generation would have been familiar with their compatriot Nadine Gordimer’s (1923-2014). Her novel *A World of Strangers* (1958) referends “the state of being an outsider in the society that he or she inhabits” as seen in Camus’ *L’Étranger* (1942) (Chipkin 1993:293). According to Gevisser (2014:101), Gordimer “had her first encounter with literary cosmopolitanism” in Johannesburg’s Vanguard bookshop³⁰. Gevisser (2014:101-102) writes:

By the early 1960s, Vanguard had become ‘a haven of non-racial creative energies in a fiercely segregated city’ ... It is here that the young Nadine Gordimer ... fell in love with literature. [and] her then boyfriend, Phillip Stein; Stein, who worked at Vanguard, recalls ... two piles of ‘subversive’ literature for distribution beneath the counter – one political and the other pornographic ... Several of Johannesburg’s black intellectuals worked in the bookshop too; they were part of what became known as the ‘Drum generation’ ... Nat Nakasa...published an article in Drum entitled ‘Fringe Country’ ... It documented what he called ‘that social no-mans land, where energetic, defiant, young people of all races live and play together as humans..Those who live on the fringe have no special labels. They see it simply as LIVING.

By virtue of intertextuality or sheer pragmatism, of which they had first-hand experience during the Depression, the War and then apartheid, several of our agents were aware of their personal responsibility for ‘freedom’ in difficult circumstances. This aligns with Sartre’s thinking in *La Transcendance de l’ ego* (The Transcendence of the Ego, 1936) and *L’Etre et le néant* (Being and Nothingness, 1943) whereby ‘consciousness’ is meaningless (nothing) unless we transcend our

²⁸ See Chapter 3. In particular, *Fourth stylistic situation: 1940s to 1960s*.

²⁹ Camus received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957. Due to his revolutionary politics, Sartre refused the award in 1964 (Mautner 1997: 84, 501).

³⁰ Our generation purchased their architectural books mostly from Vanguards in Johannesburg or Van Schaiks in Pretoria.

dispositions beyond constricting circumstances (being) such as politics or economics (Mautner 1997:500).

On researching the early graduates of the Pretoria School of Architecture, Steenkamp (interview 2017) was despondent with her interviewees 'silence' towards her attempt at framing an underlying 'theory' of architecture. One can argue that, the very 'Silent Complicity of Architecture' that Dovey (2005:283) speaks of, was the silent subversive theory. Dovey refers to Bourdieu's (1977:188) quote that "the most effective ideological effects are those that have no words". Taking into account that we firstly 'silently' embody and then only look at architectural imagery reflectively, Dovey (2005:283) questions the reconciliation of "everyday life with architecture as discourse". Biermann and Sutton, provide possible answers:

Within the imposed limitations, there is clearly nearly always enough choice in the disposition of elements to allow for the effective operation of 'theory of architecture..In this context 'theory' is best understood not as a system of abstractions so much as an empirical body of experience in what makes for a pleasing result (Biermann 1985:46).

My architectural philosophy (or whatever you call it) is best stated by Sri Lankan architect, Geoffrey Bawa: "I have always enjoyed seeing buildings but seldom enjoyed explanations about them – as I feel, with others, that architecture cannot be totally explained but must be experienced" (Sutton 2015:10).



Figure 5.6. Left: Glamorous flying, 1959 (Llewellyn 2017: 8). **Right:** *Karanja* ship in exotic Zanzibar, 1957 (Chipkin 1993: 289).

Another form of Silent Subversive transcendence was travel, which "was how many sensitive people escaped the stifling provincialism of white society in the south" (Chipkin 1993:289). Known as 'the golden age of flying'³¹, the 1950s and 1960s made accessibility to 'exotic' destinations affordable and easy (Fig. 5.6. Left). The film industry³² screened "globe-trotting exploits" as fashionable. For those allied in the

³¹ The *Lantern* (1964) magazine published articles on airplane types such as the Boeing 707, which appeared in 1959. "Flying was considered glamorous: smoking was allowed, plenty legroom, beds were made, one luxurious class, framed pictures on the walls, endless free drinks, socialising in the cocktail bar, air hostesses were like movie stars..." (Llewellyn, M. 2017. What Flying was like in the 1950s and 1960s compared to now', in *Escape Travel News*).

³² For instance, James Bond, or Brigitte Bardot in the 1956 film *And God Created Woman* filmed on the Cote d'Azur St. Tropez. In addition, Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca* (1948) made Morocco appealing.

war, favourite destinations, were amongst others, the South of France, India³³ and “North Africa’s adventure playground”, Marrakesh in Morocco. Particularly for counter-cultural creatives³⁴, common to these places, was the Bohemian attraction (Anon 2015 in *The Telegraph*).

Although by ship, the artist Irma Stern (1894-1966) had set the precedent before the war for travel to Zanzibar, returning with “evocative, tactile artefacts” such as ‘a carved mahogany lintel” and “Zanzibar door” which she incorporated into her “exotic Africa” home in Cape Town (Chipkin 1993:289-290) (Fig. 5.6. Right). Stern considered South Africa “a provincial prison” which led to “her exoticizations of ‘the native’ (Herwitz 1998:407). Following Stern, Eaton too removed doors from Zanzibar³⁵ to prompt his expression for ‘an African quality’ (Harrop-Allin 1975:9, Chipkin 1993:290). However, on acquiring two Zanzibar doors, an agent André Hendrickz read the displacement as “Africa of the past returning to modern Africa of the present” (Chipkin 1993:296).

One could argue, rather than a conscious “inscribing” of “African Identity” (Pienaar 2015:39) for both Eaton and Hendrickz, a “restless preoccupation with a special gentle quality, the flamboyance, the coastal gorgeousness and exotica of an Africa with Islamic fringes”, was a sense of transcendence. A position we suggest our Silent Subversives adopted rather than “desperately seeking Africa”³⁶. Chipkin (2008:377) clarifies:

That much-quoted statement by Eaton regarding the achievement of a visual quality which bears reference to things peculiar to Africa, hovered over many of the generation of architects working in the 1950s and 1960s [a] “powerful African presence ... relating to common humanity in the midst of Apartheid. The regionalist architects of Pretoria as well as a smaller group in Johannesburg had learnt these lessons. The starting point was biological veracity together with the use of indigenous materials that possessed historical resonance. It required, too, an awareness of Africa’s fleeting presence outside the walls of suburbia and beyond the stereotyping of black societies and communities.

More concerned about the ‘Modular’ than a “stylistically bound” regionalism, Karl Jooste (1925-1971) travelled in 1964 to meet Le Corbusier (Jooste 2000:48). Also inspired by mid-century ‘pilgrimage’, the Fagans travelled Europe in a rented *Deux Cheveaux* Citroën (Fig. 5.7. Left). We clearly see mirroring of a pattern, when in the 1950s Donald Turgel travelled from France, to the French colony of Morocco in his second-hand Citroën (Fig. 5.7. Right). Regarding transcendent travels reconciled with producing architectural imagery, Chipkin (1993:297) confirms Turgel’s position:

³³ “His [Walker] command of the office allowed me to travel overseas often, including 6 months in India and Nepal. Then I went on my own following a sadhu on foot, train or bus from Kashmir to Rajasthan, sleeping in caves, shrines, on station platforms” (Sutton 2015:10).

³⁴ For example, ‘Beat Generation’ members, exemplified by Jack Kerouac, interested in Buddhism in the mid-fifties, travelled to bohemian places such as Paris, Mexico, Marrakesh and Tangier (Phillips 1996: 179). Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *The Transcendentalist*, Picasso, Matisse and Le Corbusier had made many of these places romantic for the post-war generation.

³⁵ “Some of these doors – icons embodying a tangible African ‘feel’ – were bequeathed as legacies or acquired by architect colleagues” (Chipkin 1993:296).

³⁶ “It has become fashionable and politically correct to emphasize a building’s ‘African’ qualities with results that sometimes border on the absurd” (Marschall 2001:139-140).

Turgel has argued that there is not any conscious or direct copying of African or Mediterranean stylisms on his own work. 'The style'. He is on record as saying, 'is one developed according the dictates of our sunny climate and the want for a great deal of comfortable outdoor living' – and a great deal of careful attention to costs as well.

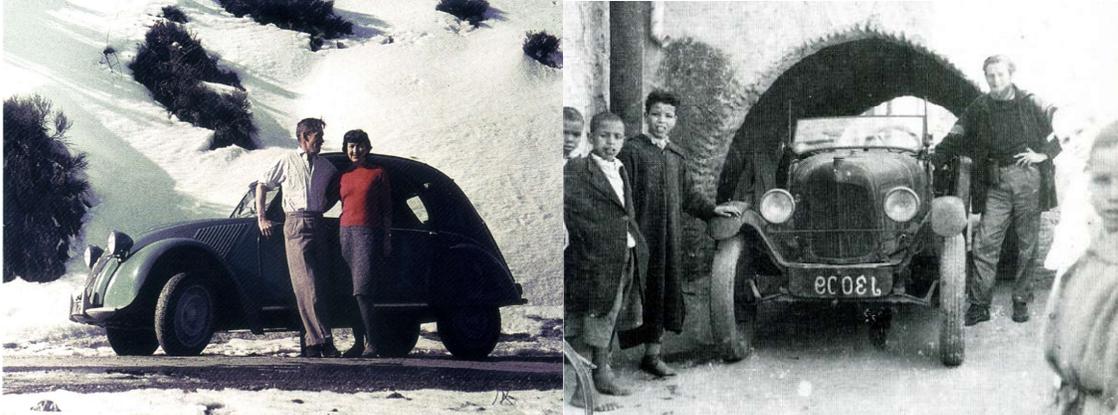


Figure 5.7. Top Left: Fagan's Citroën (Fagan 2016: 61). **Top Right:** Turgel's Citroën (Chipkin 1993: 297).

5.4 DISPOSITIONED STRUCTURES

The connection of habitus to architecture lie in the connection of habitus to habitat; the way in which space frames social practice...The social divisions and hierarchies of the habitus (gender, class, ethnicity, age) [and sexuality] become evident in the ways space is divided into suburbs, kitchens, playgrounds...and bathrooms. And it is evident in the ways time intersects with such spatial divisions forming situations or events such as ...dinner parties...the 'social logic of space' (Dovey 2005:285).

So how did intertextuality influence the domestic designs of the Silent Subversives? How did these architects reconcile social living (experiential) with the structures (habitat) that various dispositions (habitus) informed?

5.4.1 Suburban situation

The selection of the location and environs of the home is a serious matter not to be decided on the spur of the moment. Whether the home is owned or rented, the comfort and happiness of the family, and the education and future friends of the children are at stake. If owned, the safety of the largest family investment depends on the soundness of the decision. Since our population is more urban than rural, a clear understanding of the structure of the operation of cities is desirable as a basis for house selection (Agan 1965:53)

Following the unsuccessful ‘Bantustan’ strategy³⁷, the Group Areas Act, forced removals, ‘native’ townships and the baby boom white suburbs, the “grand apartheid” planners in the 1950s were “sitting on an urban volcano” (Chipkin in Fisher 1998:158-159). Similar to Europe and the USA, there was no “pliable set of rules for putting together towns” (Curtis 1982:471) and often the understanding thereof was a Corbusian-like understanding from an aircraft³⁸. Early 1950s aerial photographs of Lake Success, Levittown, New York (Fig. 5.8. Left) or Meadowlands³⁹, Soweto, Johannesburg appear the same (Fig.5.8. Right). Besides particularities of place and society, pre-war modernist urban planning mutations were oblivious to a collective habitus of those who were to occupy them. Although, South Africa did not require war reconstruction, British new towns⁴⁰ were models. Mabin (1998:270) writes:

Consider these post-war examples: the new company towns of Vanderbijlpark (Iskor Steel), Welkom (Anglo-American gold) and Sasolburg (the Sasol-oil-from-coal plant) were planned in the image of new towns in Britain and America; the plans for the Cape Town foreshore replicate features drawn directly from the reconstruction of bombed cities like Plymouth. Apartheid itself borrowed extensively from the modernist rhetoric of urban planning, as it strove to create new (segregated) neighbourhood units and to encourage urban renewal in (mixed) inner-city areas. Apartheid used the images of modernism to enormous effect. The apartheid government employed the planning institutions created by the modernist reconstructionists of the forties to achieve its extraordinary reshaping of urban space by the 1950s and 1960s.



Figure 5.8. Left: Levittown New York, 1949 (Jackson 1994: 45). Right: Meadowlands Soweto, 1954 (Gevisser 2014: 96).

Just as Lewis Mumford had criticized the “archetypal suburban refuge”⁴¹, Eaton criticized these industrial company towns and their expectations of a “European way of life”. Eaton’s concern was “the widening gap between ‘architecture’ and ‘living’”. In his article entitled *Native art and architecture* (c. 1950s), he suggests the “simple human living” of the Ndebele as lesson for “an honest South African Architecture” (Harrop-Allin 1975:67-68). His 1951 diary entry, questioned the relationship of both the

³⁷ See Chapter 2. Verwoerd announced the Bantustan policy in 1959.

³⁸ See Le Corbusier’s book called *Aircraft* (1935). “The eye of the airplane is pitiless” (Gevisser 2014:96).

³⁹ See (Chipkin 2008:239) for photographs of Meadowlands (1956) and Soweto under construction (c.1956). For photographs of KwaThema new Native Township, Springs (c.1955) see (Japha 1998:433).

⁴⁰ Incidentally, one of our generation, Herbert Prins worked between 1951 and 1954 on English neighbourhood units (Chipkin 2008:274).

⁴¹ See Chapter 3. In particular, *Fourth stylistic situation*.

white new towns (Vanderbijlpark) and black townships (Atteridgeville) with “Native art and architecture” (Pienaar 2017:42). One queries Eaton’s implication that if planners adopted an anthropological ‘style’ then a decent urban life, for the diversity of all, would be the reflex thereof. According to Marschall (2001:143) the post-war linkages of Eaton to ‘Africanness’ along with a multitude of other influences, was more a question of ‘craft’ than a literal implication for housing forms.

The shift from Eaton’s pan-African, atemporal focus on tradition and his fascination with craft and its association with atemporality, ‘undisturbed’ traditional culture, ‘primitivism’ and a rural setting to these architect’s [for instance Wibo Zwart and Donald Turgel] interest in contemporary art, by contrast associated with a changing, hybrid, contemporary urban culture, is important. It signifies a step away from the essentialist search for some idealistic, timeless African principle, or deep-seated archetypal notions of ‘pure’ Africanness, towards the recognition and embrace of contemporary South African culture (Marschall 2001:145).

Similar to Eaton, Biermann drew stylistic inspirations from the rural Ndebele-Pedi settlements on the eastern perimeter of Pretoria⁴² (Chipkin 1998:162). As exemplary for a South African housing problem, Biermann proposed, not Cowan’s ‘ideal home’, but the mud built “flat-roofed houses of the Free State to the houses of Egypt and the Middle East” and “the richly decorated flat-roofed housing clusters of the Ndebele” (Morphet 1998:151). In *Boukuns in Suid-Afrika* (1955) Biermann (1955:81) describes the eclecticism of the Mapogger tribe⁴³ with borrowing as diverse as Nguni to *speklaag* (speculative) houses of white Pretoria built under Dutch influence.

Nevertheless, the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) employed Barrie Biermann and Betty Spence in 1949 by to develop housing ideas. (Chipkin 1998:165). As a member of the Liberal Party, Spence subversively “stood outside of the programmes’ value system” by condemning them “as a ‘short-sighted policy’⁴⁴ (Chipkin 2008:237). Following up on Spence’s (1940:387-391) article on ‘Native Architecture’, Biermann together with Spence influenced several of our Silent Subversives with their *Architectural Review* article (1954) on the art and architecture of the “M’Pogga” people (Fig. 5.9. Left).

Regarding an absence of a Pretoria “Regional urbanism”, Fisher (1998:139) remarks, “the very lack of a sense of urbanity might be what allows for the possibility of an emergence of an appropriate African Urban form”. However, what is becoming clear is the dominance of ‘form’ over the more urgent understanding of urban habitus for expressing the diversity of contemporary post-war societies. Highlighting aesthetics, but encouraging urban sprawl, a non-architect Chaffy (1967:16) in 1967 wrote the following to *Architect and Builder*:

Every country has a character of its own, which is faithfully reproduced and expressed in their architecture – not only their private homes, but their public buildings and city buildings. But South

⁴² For further reading, see Bierman, B. 1955. ‘Die Boukuns van die Bantoes’, in *Boukuns In Suid-Afrika*. 78-83.

⁴³ ‘M’Pogga’ is the name derived from the chief Mabogo (Biermann 1955:81).

⁴⁴ ‘Betty Spence, one of the early planners of the Architectural Division of the NBRI, writing [critically] in 1965 as the South African correspondent of the *Architectural Review*, reported on progress in what she called the experiment in Johannesburg” (Chipkin 2008:237).

Africa? Of what can her architects and builders boast? Of giant matchboxes with very few exceptions! For that is what nearly all new buildings – 99 per cent of them – remind one of. No individuality, no national characteristics, no imagination, no beauty, no space, nor colour. Not always to protect against weather! Just a bunch of upended giant matchboxes. This is a country abounding in apace – yet new buildings are cramped and low-ceilinged. They give the impression of having been built as economically and as quickly as possible...Use colour – texture – space – and light?

The post-war character of four of South Africa's cities, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, varied in urban dispositions (Fig. 5.9. Right). For instance Fisher, Le Roux, Murray and Sanders (2003:68-75) each relay the Modern Movement narrative of the four cities from the 1930s to the 1970s. The administrative capital, Pretoria ironically utilized the International Style - not 'Pretoria Regionalism' - to express "the Nationalist government's aspiration to become a progressive New-World nation-state". In the 1950s, Pretoria practices ascended as a response to public sector work, which was open to Grand Apartheid experimentation (Chipkin 1993:278). Essentially, Afrikaans middle-class whites essentially occupied the leafy suburbs of the 'mushroom capital' of Pretoria (Peters 1998:175)

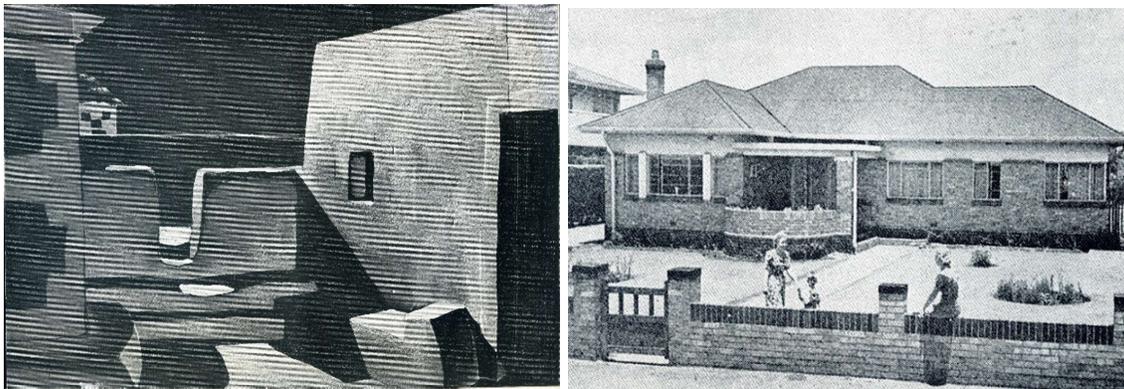


Figure 5.9. Left: Barrie Biermann painting of Mapogger tribe flat roof courtyard house (Biermann 1955: 81). **Right:** Typical post-war suburban house with hipped roof, Springs, 1950s (Hartdegen 1988: 251).

For young Pretoria architects, favoured suburbs were Brooklyn, Waterkloof or Hatfield in Pretoria East. We have already noted⁴⁵ how McIntosh built his mutated modernist house in Brooklyn and how Hellmut Stauch built "modern burgher houses" in Hatfield. However, after the war these suburbs with their large plots became densely populated. So for instance when John Claassens, built his house in 1968, 'panhandle' subdivided Brooklyn plots were available (Anon c.1968:12). Designed by John Claassens, Houses Claassens, Van Biljon and de la Harpe were all "on half-stands in built-up inner suburbs of Pretoria (Claassens 1969:20). Waterkloof sites overlooking the Magaliesberg were expensive due to rocky groundworks and therefore available for innovation such as seen in Button's House (Button 1967:2).

⁴⁵ See Chapter 4.

Similar to Waterkloof in Pretoria, some Hyde Park sites were vacant due to the difficulty of building on rocky outcrops. Nevertheless, Sutton built House Goodman in 1963 on a “plot that nobody wanted” (Sutton 2015:24). For a mountain view, Roman (1967:24) built his own in 1967 House on the ridge at Fernwood. The motivating advantage was the good location relative to schools and shops. However, when Sutton built House Biesheuvel in the territory of the Baker School crafty villas, the “modern interpretation of a Cape Dutch” on the Parktown kopjes “raised eyebrows in that staid suburb” (Sutton 2015:14).

Less “institutional”, Johannesburg continued its “speculative residential and corporate” type. Chipkin (1993:243) conveys how Berea, Yeoville and Bellvue were the suburbs “where several young architects of the 1950s first cut their teeth”. Our generation first embraced urbanity in the “flat downtown or on the edge of downtown” in the “Hillbrows of all the capital cities” as the first step in becoming a “member of society” (Mallows 1965:20). The dense Hillbrow expanded towards Berea requiring Sike Margoles to design in 1960 “duplex” units⁴⁶ (Chipkin 1993:241). Bremner (2006:169) writes:

After the second world war, the high density residential neighbourhood of Hillbrow, much lauded for its gritty, speculative modernity by architectural critic, Nicolas Pevsner, mushroomed, serving as a point of entry for European immigrants. Then followed the great apartheid building boom of the 1960s, in which a frenzy of building – tall buildings, motorways, broadcasting towers, hospitals, universities – projected the city’s image as a wealthy modern one against growing condemnation of the racist policies of the apartheid state.

5.4.1.1 Car culture

How the motorcar and driveway historically affected the site planning of dwellings is a topic that one can elaborate on in future research. Of interest for this thesis is to note how the disposition of housing the car changed after the war⁴⁷. For modernist architects, it was Le Corbusier (1986:128-148) who embellished the “standards” of automobiles in relation to the “problem of the dwelling”. We have seen⁴⁸ how Martienssen and Eaton translated the Citrohan house as representation of the Citroen car for South Africa. For his own house in Greenside, Martienssen refers to a ‘car shelter’, which is accessed past the main house to the back of the site (Fig. 5.10. Top left). As mentioned above we have noted the appropriation of the Citroen by Turgell *et al.*

One observes⁴⁹ how *industrial invisibility* required an outbuilding for those of the *haute bourgeoisie* that could afford vehicles. In addition, the typical *Boerevrouw* arrangement (for example Moerdyk’s Farmhouse Smit, Klerkdorp, 1920) houses the car in a structure (rondawel) separated from the house (Fig. 5.10. Top right). Moreover, the garages of the Transvaal pyramid-roofed houses (for example DeZwaan speculative houses, Waterkloof, Pretoria) zoning separated as flat-roofed garages positioned

⁴⁶ Cecil Behrmann commissioned the older Stauch to design, what was by the late 1960s fashionable, duplex apartments at Brookwood (Chipkin 2008:380).

⁴⁷ Although the first ‘horseless carriage’ was exhibited in 1896, Berea Park, Pretoria, it was in the 1920s that the South African car ‘boom’ occurred.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 3. In particular, *First Stylistic Situation: 1850s to 1920s*.

towards the back of the site requiring long driveways (Fig. 5.10. Top right). Depending on the cost bracket, the typical 1930s (Fig. 5.10. Bottom left) and post-war 1950s 'Ideal Homes' for the suburbs connected the garage and 'servants' rooms⁵⁰ to the house with an enclosed service yard (Fig 5.10. Bottom right). Peters (1998:176) contextualizes:

The acceptable relationship of servant's quarters to the house was across a kitchen court which would provide the back or servant's entrance. Servant's quarters would be grouped with the motor garage, both of which could be constructed ceilingless and of half brick walls.

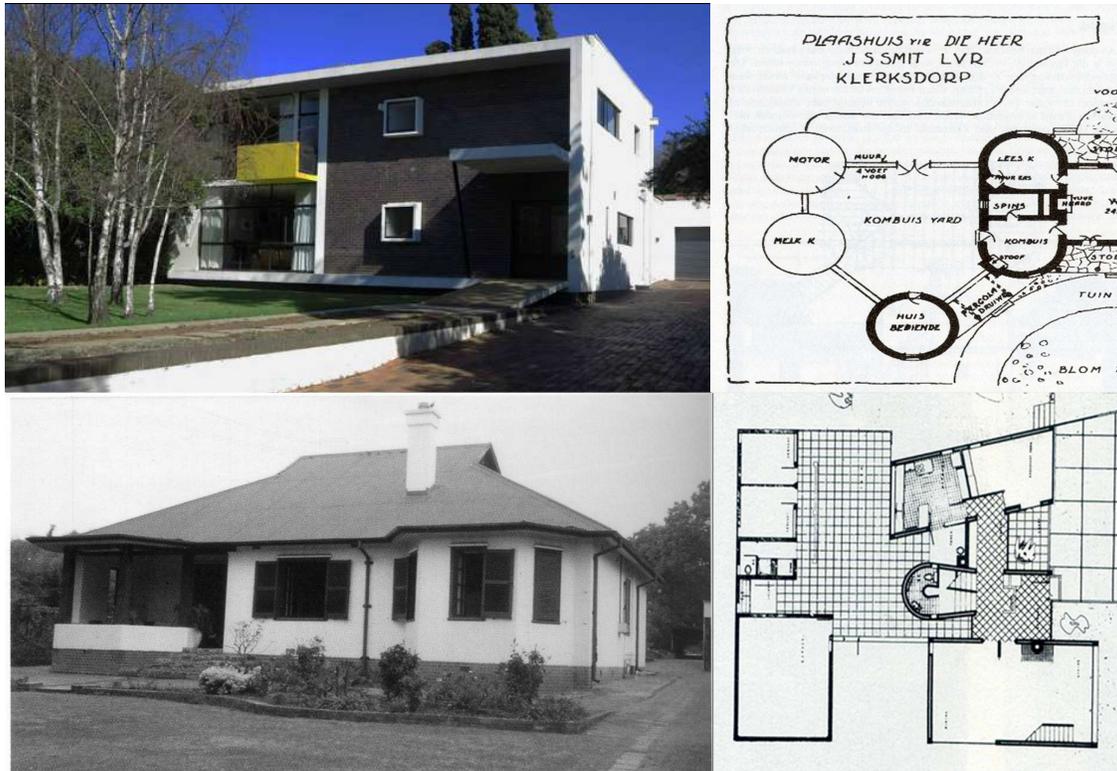


Figure 5.10. Top Left: Driveway past façade. Rex Martienssen, Architect's house, Greenside, 1939 (Potgieter 2016). **Top right:** Rondawel for 'motor'. Gerhard Moerdijk, Farmhouse Smit, Klerksdorp, c.1920 (Fisher 1989: 10). **Bottom left:** Driveway access past house to garage. DeZwaan, Highveld house, Waterkloof, early 1900s (Bakker et al 2014: 204). **Bottom right:** Garage and "servants" separated from house with a yard. Norman Hanson, House Hanson, Houghton, 1938 (SAAR February 1937).

In 1953, South African engineers attempted to design a tiny car (called Dart) and then in 1960, an affordable mass-produced small car to move beyond bicycles. However, after General Motors introduced Vauxhall components in the late 1960s, South Africans preferred American cars with "powerful engines. Chrome grilles, fabulous fin tails" (Farber 1994:9). We have mentioned above Coltman's concerns with regards the problem of traffic. In turn, Fish (1964:39) emphasised the "fascination for the modern motor car "as a "highly complex problem", but acknowledged the essentiality

⁵⁰ See Chapter 4. Douglas Cowin *et al* labelled outbuildings in 1934 for the Rand Daily Mail Ideal Homes Exhibition plans as: 'native's rooms', 'boy's room' or 'native girl's room' (Herbert 1975:104).

of post-war suburban “personal transport”. Nevertheless, the 1950s and 1960s fascination with cars brought about a new approach to housing them – the carport.

Furthermore, the direct sheltered connection of the carport, or if a garage, to the house took priority. Often the carport would become the covered entrance. The 1953 house in Pine Park, Johannesburg by Carl Pinfold and Betty Spence is exemplified as “an early car-port entrance house” (Chipkin 1993:270) (Fig. 5.11. Top left). Another good example is House Stone (1968) in Hyde Park by Jack Clinton, Johannesburg where the “entrance porte-cochère acts as a transition between the public road space and the private domain beyond” (Chipkin 1993:302). The carport to the Saxonwold house (1962) by Marcovitz and Margoles is celebrated as a pavilion (Fig. 5.11. Top right).

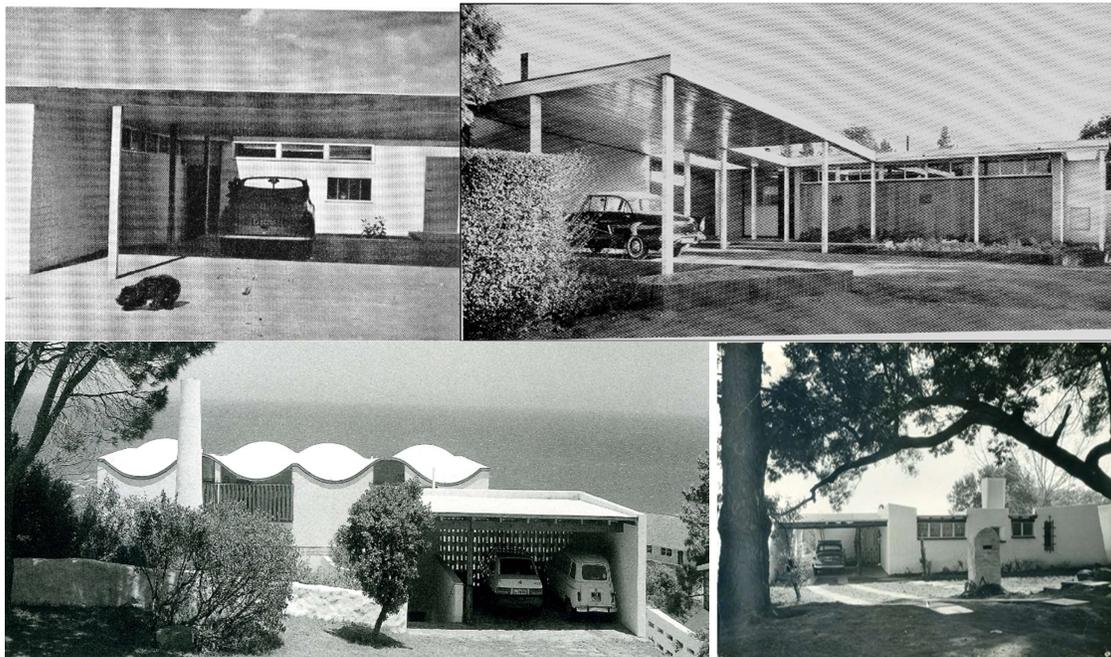


Figure 5.11. Top left: Carport entrance. Betty Spence and Carl Pinfold House, Oak Avenue, Pine Park, 1953 (SAAR April 1954). **Top right:** Pavilion carport. Marcovitz and Margoles, Saxonwold House, Johannesburg, 1962 (*Architect and Builder* May 1962: 3). **Bottom left:** Upper level *Motorafskuiling*. Gabriel Fagan, *De Es*, Camps Bay, Cape Town, 1965 (Fagan 2016: 41). **Bottom right:** *Binnehof* carport entry. Jack van Rensburg, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 1958 (Photo: Gawie Fagan).

The early houses of Gabriel Fagan⁵¹ indicate carports (*motorafskuiling*) attached directly to the house and despite steep topography his own family house ‘Die Es’ (1965) exemplifies a covered staircase link from a flat roofed carport on the street (Fagan 2005:41) (Fig. 5.11.Bottom left). In the case of “The Small House”, Revel Fox’s Worcester houses in the Cape (1960s) differ from the 1930s houses in that the carport, although linked to the ‘servants’ rooms, are directly linked to the entrances across “articulated open spaces” and “one is invited into the house by its recessed entrance and garage” (Lipman 1962:18-21). The carports of the early suburban houses of John Claassens lead of motor car courts with walls enclosing other adjacent service yards or courtyards (Claassens 1969: 20,22,24). In the

⁵¹ With regards Fagan’s houses, this study is limited to his domestic architecture in the 1950s and 1960s.

case of Jack van Rensburg's own 1958 carport-entrance house (Fig. 5.11. Bottom right), Wim (1961:29) writes:

Die ingangsdeur is strategies geleë- langs die motorafdak en die kombuis, en naby die vrou se werkplek. As 'n mens in die gang afstap na die woongedeelte, kan jy die binnehof deur twee stele glasdeure sien, en die person wat van buite af inkom, is meteens in 'n ander wêreld.

[The entrance door is strategically positioned – next to the carport and the kitchen and close to the woman's work area. If a person walks down the corridor to the living area, then one can see the courtyard through two sets of glass doors. The person entering from outside is suddenly in another world].

In contradiction with the openness of the carport, the rest of the house was extremely private when viewed from the street. As the above quote suggests and as alluded to earlier in this chapter⁵², the space beyond the entrance would allow a certain subversive social freedom, which the apartheid cities never allowed. For instance, the “main design objective” of the Van Biljon and de la Harpe houses by Claassens was “privacy from the street and neighbours” (Claassens 1969:20). For House Claassens, Brooklyn, Pretoria (1968) this “secluded and private” aim the architect achieved by a purchasing a subdivided panhandle site for his family home (Anon 1968c:12). To create extreme privacy and quietness from the street, Wibo Zwart eliminates a door handle to the “fortified” entrance door of his 1968 house in Corlett Drive, Johannesburg (Anon 1968b:22).

5.4.1.2 Conditioned walls

Open grille-work screens were another recurring device to allow ventilation but ensure privacy and security from the street (Chipkin 1993:295) (Fig. 5.12. Top). The built-in brick screens left un-plastered or roughly bagged were for “providing privacy and a break in flat surfaces” (Tieger 1965:7). This is exemplified in Sutton's (2015:22-23) House Berning, Dunkeld (1963) (Fig. 5.12. Bottom left), Claasens' (1969:20, 24) House Doppelt, Pretoria (c1969) and Turgel's Egon Guenther Gallery, Emmarentia, Johannesburg (1967). As seen in Turgel's house *Marrakesh*, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg (1960), the extension of the window screen as a grille wall provides “privacy areas secreted from the street” (Chipkin 1993:298) (Fig. 5.12. Bottom right).

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the post-war Bohemian attraction (Stern and Eaton) to exotica beyond provincial suburbia and the reflection thereof in the imported entrance doors from 'exotic Africa'. As Chipkin (2008:377) noted the African “fleeting presence” was more about “relating to common humanity in the midst of Apartheid” than a “stereotyping” of Africa. In light of this, we read the Silent Subversive “chevron-patterned grilles in their brickwork” to “exude a robust African spirit without sentimentality” (Chipkin 1993: 298-299)⁵³. It is possible that Eaton's “rectangular wall recess, arranged in repetitive ranks” as seen in the Anderssen house (1949-1950) may have inspired his younger scholars

⁵² See also Chapter 2. In particular, *Silent Subversive-ness*.

⁵³ An academic of Archaeology at the University of Witwatersrand, Professor van Riet Lowe delivered a lecture entitled *Pre-European Stone Structures in South Africa* to the Architectural Student's Society in March 1944. Therein, van Riet Lowe reinforces the “African ethos” of the ‘Elliptical Temple’ of the Great Zimbabwe with its dry-stone construction with “six principle types of wall

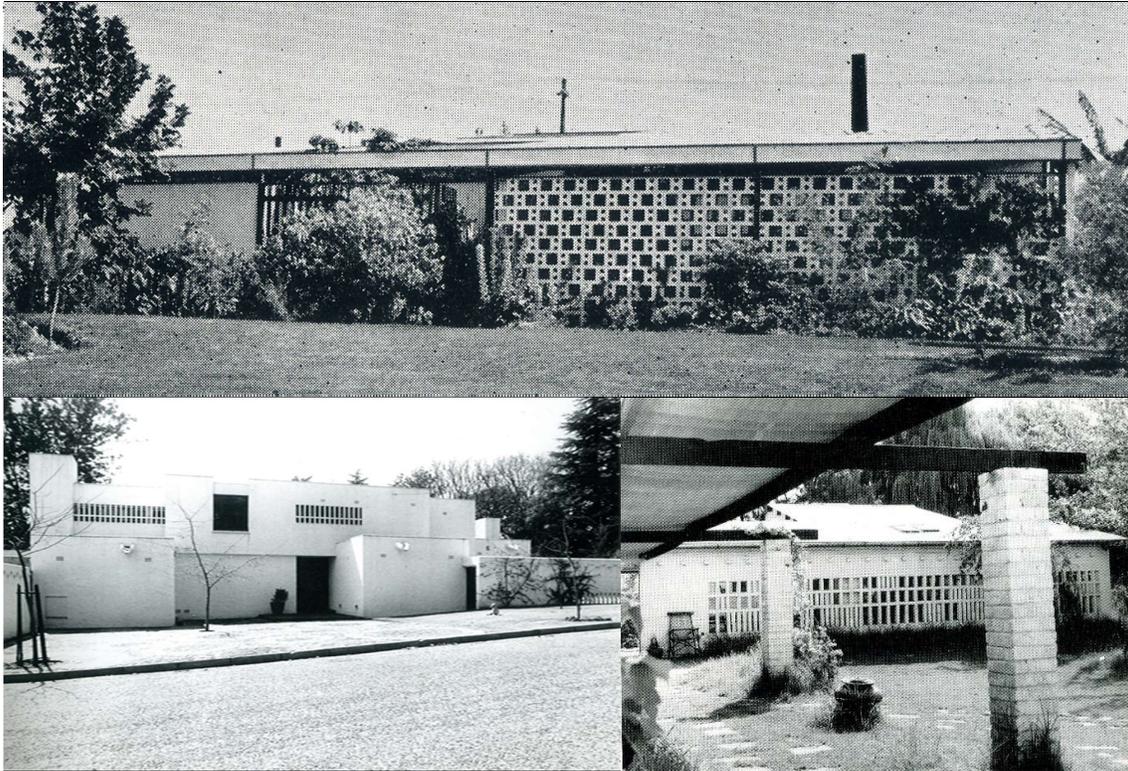


Figure 5.12. Top: Conditioned grille-block wall. Colyn and Meiring, House Van Niekerk, Durbanville, Cape, c.1959 (Wale 1959: 17). **Bottom left:** Street elevation to provide privacy. Michael Sutton, House Berning, Dunkeld, Johannesburg, 1963 (Sutton 2015: 23). **Bottom right:** Chevron patterned grilled brick screen walls. Donald Turgel, *Marrakesh*, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg, 1960 (Chipkin 1993: 298).

However, the brick screen of to the dining room of the Moolman house, Waterkloof Ridge, Pretoria (1961-62) or the entrance wall to the Van den Berg house, Lynnwood Pretoria (1964) occur at the same time as those of our generation. Nevertheless, Pienaar's (2017:40) suggestion that Eaton's "textured planar fields" and "material patterns" as "representational of African symbols to present new meanings or imbue alternative forms of identity" is of interest with regards the notion of subversivity. Pienaar (2017:45) notes:

In *Architecture and modernity* (1999), Heynen takes a political position in terms of architecture and its representational aspect. Her argument is that if architecture can engage mimesis, it may find moments of subversive intensity. In this way, built space may reveal subjugated aspects of building, creating fissures that encourage us to question what we are in danger of forgetting. Heynen argues that there is always a moment of artistic autonomy that provides the architect an opportunity to fulfil the brief of the client but also to signal something that could undercut or even negate the legitimate rhetoric...[for instance] a metaphor of woven African pattern to give new meaning to surfaces...Was

construction". Importantly, the underlying message of this lecture was to counter the European claims that were "without substance" (Van Riet Lowe, 1944: 195-207). Interestingly, Dr. Bruwer in his book *Zimbabwe: Rhodesia's Ancient Greatness* (1965), who after the war served on various government bodies, challenges what he termed "fashionable theories held in some circles that some unnamed indigenous African tribe was responsible" for constructing the Zimbabwean Temple, and rather claimed that it was Phoenician building.

this a moment of artistic autonomy? Could this have been a form of subversive metaphor that undercuts the official narrative?

Instead, one argues that the subtly subversive screen walls of our generation's domestic architecture during the heyday of apartheid was more about the private activities the walls were screening, than the representation of the wall itself. Whereas the traditional house and the pre-war aestheticized modernist houses, irrespective of orientation to the street, presented a façade⁵⁴, the domestic work of our cohort turned its back to the street. Fisher (1998:136) mentions that "Le Corbusier's *brise soleil* was to become the hallmark of the regionalist aesthetic as a climatic responsive device", and another device "to move away from street-directed designs" that "had less regards for the street image" due to "a climatically favourable site orientation relative to North". In the case of south facing sites, Van Rensburg (c1960:18) writes:

Maar dan kry ons erwe wat suid front op die straat, en omdat ons vandag bewus is van die voordele van die noorde son, moet die huis op so 'n suidelike perseel as't ware omgegooi en so beplan word, dat dit belangrikke vertrekke – veral die slaapkamers en woonkamer, noord kyk. Die maklikste manier om 'n suidelike erf die maksimum noordelike son te gee, is dan ook om die huis om 'n binnehof te beplan.

[But, then we get sites that are south facing onto the street and because we are conscious of the advantages of northern sun, a house on such a southern property should in fact be swung around and planned in such a way that the most important rooms – especially the bedrooms and living room face north. The simplest way to ensure maximum northern sun exposure, is then also to plan the house around a courtyard]

Therefore, where sites had northern entries, screen walls and car courtyards occurred. For instance, Classen's own house and House van Biljon in Pretoria are accessed from north, but through the use of blank walls with window grilles privacy was ensured. By referring to the Brazilian influence regarding wall grilles known as "conditioned walls", Biermann (1950:158) expounds:

What comes about is the fusion of window and wall. Walls are not to keep the roof up they are a protective element (not structural) ... keep people out (cage like bars) ... keep weather out ... keep sun out ... keep prying eyes out ... contrasts of light and shade to outside viewer filters glare from inside and preserves the view for the interior ... Solid walls are for stopping bullets. Conditioned walls ... a refuge against a hostile environment.

⁵⁴ For example, both Case Bedo and Martienssen's Greenside house present street facades. See Chapter 4.

5.4.2 Structured situation

The public or Social zone may encompass activities ranging from the most public, to those which are semi-public, or even semi-private. Rooms which are likely to constitute this zone in any home are entrances, rooms devoted to the group life of the family, those used for entertaining, and those in which recreational activities of the family, alone or with friends, take place (Agan 1965:84).

Once beyond the entrance door one finds the earlier discussed social non-conformity expressed spatially (Fig. 5.13. Top left). The Silent Subversive architects demonstrated the various 'family' social dispositions as a continuous 'free' spatiality. So for instance in the Button House, Waterkloof, Pretoria (1967). An "illusion of free flowing and interpenetration of spaces and volumes of the various living zones and courts" comes about (Button 1967:2) (Fig. 5.13. Top right). In the case of Roman's 'Atrium House', Fernwood, Johannesburg (1967) "from living room to dining room to kitchen to study cum rumpus room", is an unfolding of "one sweep" of continuous space "once through the front door" (Roman 1967:24). Claassens (1969:20) describes the effect as "varied spatial and visual effects while progressing from the entrance of the site to the living-room and from there a view of the garden not seen or only glimpsed before".



Figure 5.13. Top left: From entrance door to court to patio. Gabriel Fagan, Keurbos, Bishops court, Cape Town, 1951 (Fagan 2005: 12). **Top right:** From entrance portico to court to garden. Phillip Button, Button House, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 1967 (Button 1967:6). **Bottom left:** From Living room to dining room to court. Marcovitz and Margoles, Saxonwold House, Johannesburg, c.1959 (Wale 1959: 5). **Bottom right:** Continuous communicative space. Pieter Hattingh, Lombardy East House, Johannesburg, 1964 (Anon 1964:5).

The task for the post-war architect was how to achieve a “sense of openness and airiness, even when the house itself was not very large” (Jackson 1994:79) (Fig. 5.13. Bottom left). The criteria of creating one communicative social space for the notion of *geselleigheid* and family companionship was the challenge (Fig. 5.13. Bottom right). For instance, the brief for House Bryer, Waverly, Johannesburg (1957) was to aim for “freedom for all the family users” (Anon 1957:36). In designing his own house in Corlett Drive, Johannesburg (1968), Wibo Zwart pointed at a “collection of spaces for various living functions...confirmed liveability” (Anon 1968b:22). Theoretically, Gideon’s ‘Space-Time’ conception suggesting an interpenetration of volumes and space would have served as a source for post-war architects, including South Africans⁵⁵ (Jackson 1994:79-80). For homemakers, a 1950s article in the popular magazine *Die Huisgenoot* provided advice to readers on how to ensure that the family space was to be open and interactive whilst at the same time defined as separate areas (Botes 1958:69-71).

Wat vir my van ons hedendaagse manier van huisversiering en –inrigting al interessanter word, is dat ons al so goed daarin kan slag om woonkamer, eetkamer en studeerkamer alles in die een vertrek te kan saamvat, ‘n groot geheel so rustig en verkwikkend dat jy dadelik voel: Hier word geleef! (Botes 1958:69).

[What interests me in the contemporary manner of house decorating and arrangement is that we can already succeed well in bringing together the lounge, the dining room and the study in one room, a large restful and comforting whole that one immediately feels: Here living takes place

5.4.2.1 **Open plan**

The plan is as a musical score. Whereas the lines, bars and notes abstract the disposition of sound through time, the plan is the abstraction of the disposition of elements through space (Fisher 1991:35)

We have discussed the traditional simplistic plan arranged around a central room⁵⁶. It was Lloyd Wright who extended this conventional “centrifugal” plan “outwards from a concentrated focal point – the hearth” to become an “elongated uni-directional ‘megaron’” (Padovan, 1981:360), so often seen⁵⁷ in the work of Eaton.

At the end of the eighteenth century the pavilion-model, symbol of the Romantic ideals of closeness to nature, personal freedom and romantic love, was transformed into the picturesque suburban villa, and has remained the dream and often the reality of the modern house throughout the world. The continuity of this ideal can be traced through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to Wright (Padovan 1981:360).

Then, the Amsterdam School (Berlage and Dudok)⁵⁸, De Stijl (Van Doesburg), and Neo-plasticism (Van der Rohe) can trace their spatial concepts and “open expression” directly to Wright’s Prairie

⁵⁵ See Chapter 2. In particular, *Student Dispositions: 1940s to 1950s*. See also (Steenkamo 2003:6).

⁵⁶ See Chapter 4.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 4.

⁵⁸ In 1911, Berlage made a trip to the United States. “[It was] through Berlage’s impressions that Wright’s architecture came to have such a powerful effect on Dutch architecture” (Mallgrave 2005:242). Furthermore, the 1910 ‘Wasmuth’ papers *Ausgefuehrte*

pavilion houses (Padovan, 1981: 359, 362, 364) (Mallgrave, 2005:220). Thereafter, van der Rohe introduces “the pavilion contained within the court” (Barcelona Pavilion, 1929) and Le Corbusier “the court contained within the pavilion” (Villa Savoye, 1929), which Padovan (1981: 366) suggests culminate in a synthesis for the quintessential modern movement house before the Second World War. In his essay tribute to Barrie Biermann, Fisher (1991:35-37) confirms a “genealogy” of Biermann’s own house plan as a “cultural continuity” by looking backwards via van der Rohe, De Stijl and Wright confirming Padovan’s sentiments (Fisher 1991:36). Citing Van Doesburg, Padovan (1981:368) concludes:

The new architecture has disrupted the wall and in so doing has destroyed the division between inside and outside...As a result a new open plan has been created, differing completely from the Classical plan in that internal and external space are interpenetrating.

One acknowledges Teeger’s (1965:6) observation that post-war South African architects based their domestic architecture planning criteria on the revolutionary style of the 1930s, albeit adjusted for “home living” and “utterly liveable homes” of the 1950s and the 1960s. However, except for stylistics and materiality, Teeger neglects to elaborate that the social dispositions of the ‘contemporary’ plan differs from that of the predecessors.

Even the most radical architects of the 1920s and 1930s – including those such as Mies van der Rohe who had pioneered the introduction of Modernism – still clung to some of the old conventions of house design...many felt obliged to install lightweight foldaway walls as temporary subdivisions within larger rooms, for example, not for justifiable practical reasons, but simply because of convention. Thus, an accordion-type wall might be pulled across the room during the meal time in order to separate the living area from the dining area. Furthermore, although the Modern house of the 1930s was likely to contain a combined open-plan living room/dining room area, there was still resistance to the idea of opening up the partition between the kitchen and the dining room. In middle-class households the kitchen was still perceived as a place for the servants and it was not considered socially desirable to connect the dining room with the kitchen (Jackson, 1994:83).

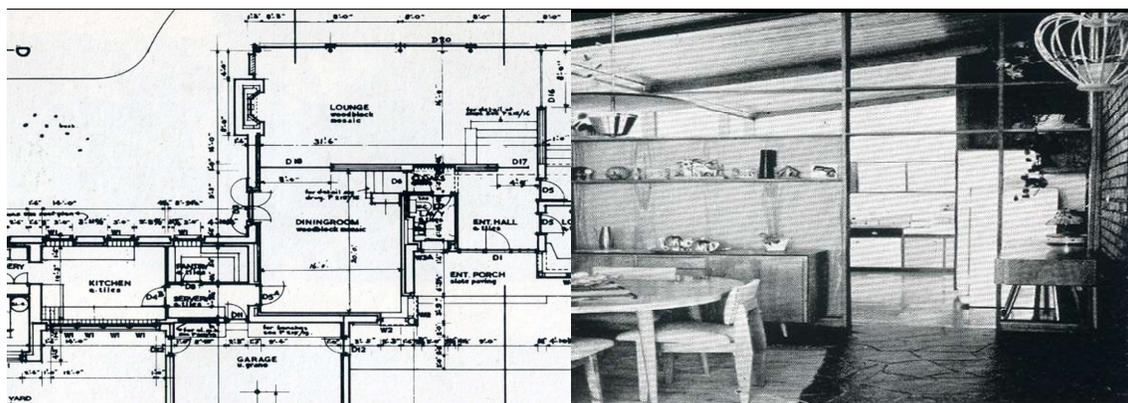


Figure 5.14. Left: Kitchen separated from dining room. Norman Eaton, Anderssen House, Pretoria, 1949-50 (Beck 1985: 23). Right: Screen dividing dining room from kitchen. Colyn and Meiring, House Van Niekerk, Durbanville, Cape, c.1959 (*Architect and Builder* July 1962: 15).

Bauten and Untwuerfe von Frank Lloyd Wright, with an Arts and Crafts basis, served as progeny for Mies van der Rohe’s brick country house (Fisher, 1991:36).

The Silent Subversive open-plan space conceptions of the late 1950s and early 1960s differs from both that of the pre-war 1930s interpretations of Marrienssen, McIntosh and Cowin and the late 1940s by Eaton. Let us consider Eaton's Anderssen and Greenwood houses (1949-51) for example: The former house has pocket sliding doors between the entrance hall, dining room and the study. The dining room to the latter house too can be isolated from the lounge with a pocket sliding door. The kitchens to both houses, Eaton separates entirely by lobby or server spaces and doors (Fig. 5.14. Left). While in the houses of our cohort, for instance House Wibo Zwart, Corlett Drive, Johannesburg (1968), kitchens have direct access to the family room (Anon 1968n:22) Du Toit (c1960:26) describes the typical open serving kitchen (Fig. 5.14. Right).in relation to the social dispositions of the 1960s contemporary family room:

As "n gesin se leefwyse basies informeel is, is daar geen groter gerief as 'n vriendelike oop kombuis nie. Die ,oop' kombuis is een wat direk skakel met 'n eet-of leefruimte, met die vertoonbanke van die kombuis as skeiding. Dit vorm gewoonlik die middelpunt van die huis, die spil waarom husimense en inval-kuiergaste draai. Dit het verskeie voordele: Dit skep gesinskotak tussen voorbereiding- en eetplek; ideal vir infomele onthaal; Maklike bediening; Gesselligheid; Funksioneel en practise, veral in 'n huis waar geen bediendes is nie. Die oop kombuis het sy oorsprong in Amerika en vind toenemend byval in ons land.

[If a family's lifestyle is basically informal, then there is no greater comfort than a friendly open kitchen. The 'open' kitchen is one that links the dining or living space directly with the kitchen display cabinet acting as a divider, which forms the pivot of a house from which the inhabitants and their guests revolve. It has several advantages: It creates family contact during preparation; Sociability; Functional and practical, especially in a servant-less house. The open kitchen has its origins in America and is increasingly been approved of in our country.]

Whereas we shall see, the international post-war trend for the younger architects in the 1950s, "embraced the concept of the open-plan idea more wholeheartedly and comprehensively" (Jackson, 1994:83) (Fig. 5.15. Left). One argues that the typical post-war 'contemporary' plan divided into areas of activity, was clearly distinct from Fisher's (1998:125) *traditional plan-forms* attributed to his 'Third Vernacular'. Often the various areas, if separated, architects defined by changes in levels (Fig. 5.15. Right). Rather than traditional plan forms, the spatial needs, as determined by the array of 'Everyday Life', 'Family types' and 'Social relationships', informed the planning disposition. The notion of 'the brief' as first seen⁵⁹ in the American Case Study Programme also applied to the Southern hemisphere. Citing Danie Theron, Peters (1998:187) wrote:

...the houses of the 60s liberated the architect from the rigidity of a tyrannically tight and simplistic plan, offering a greater margin of play in designing the specific needs in a personal way.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3. In particular, *Fourth Stylistic Situation: 1940s to 1960s*.



Figure 5.15. Left: Open plan with suspended fireplace demarcating areas. Nic Meyer, House Meyer, Camps Bay, Cape Town, 1964 (*Architect and Builder* September 1964: 6). **Right: Split levelled** open plan with fireplace room divider. Jack van Rensburg, *Binnehof*, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 1959 (Photo Gawie Fagan. Author's private collection).

5.4.2.2 Regulated dimensions

When the range of options open to architects is limited by the building budget, their function as designer is limited to identifying the cheapest workable answer to every successive problem. Design becomes increasingly an impersonal process, and necessity replaces whim in determining the resultant form. This does not have to retract from the quality of the end result. (Biermann 1985:46).

As Fisher (1998:135) implies, the economic circumstances⁶⁰ of the Great Depression and the wartime measures⁶¹ would have been “turned to virtue through the invention of the designer”. A good example of “extreme” economic planning is Roman’s ‘Atrium House’ in Fernwood, Johannesburg (1967) achieved by a “house of virtually no barriers”. For instance, besides circulation a study link is also a place where “children play, eat and virtually sleep” (Roman 1967:24). The idea of linked pavilions was already evident (Chipkin 1993:276) in Monte Bryer’s Abbotsford house (1949), whereas Wibo Zwart gets rid of any passages completely (Anon 1968b:22).

An article⁶² in the *Architectural Forum* (1951) studied and suggested ways that architects could “improve the low cost house” with efficient circulation considered the “basic requirement” of the contemporary house in contrast to that of the traditional plan (Stanton 1951:196-200). Moreover, as exemplified by the Button House, Waterkloof, Pretoria (1967), the house was required to be a “compact functional living unit – easy to run and maintain” without domestic help (Button 1967:2). We notice how in Fox’s ‘small house’ typology in the Cape, “the accommodation is compactly arranged, making the most of the space available on limited budgets” through the employment of rectangular modulated plans (Lipman 1962: 18-19) (Fig. 5.16. Top left). What were the construction devices that could ensure the post-war economic plan and still fulfil the criteria of the social and spatial open plan?

⁶⁰ Here one is not referring to the economic hardships of the Great Trek as relevant for this discussion.

⁶¹ See Chapter 2.

⁶² Jack van Rensburg’s copy in author’s collection.

Organization aside, one argues dimensioning regulated the mid-century plan economically⁶³. We have seen⁶⁴ how Stauch influenced domestic dimensional planning in South Africa by utilizing a lateral module (Fig. 5.16.Top Right), which he in turn inherited from the Itten School and Frank Lloyd Wright, passed to our generation of the Pretoria and Johannesburg Schools (Fig. 5.16. Bottom left). For example in Pretoria, Cole-Bowen, collaborating with Eaton, “used the standard steel windows as a module for his rafters, combined with space-saving” in a simple three dimensional way, to satisfy clients “limited budgets (Tieger 1965:7, Peters 1998:184). Van Rensburg’s *Binnehof* exemplifies modular coordination of steel windows with pole roof rafters (Fig. 5.16. Bottom right). Steenkamp (1993:6) relays how “within the module careful planning and economy of space generated a simple, uncomplicated plan”.

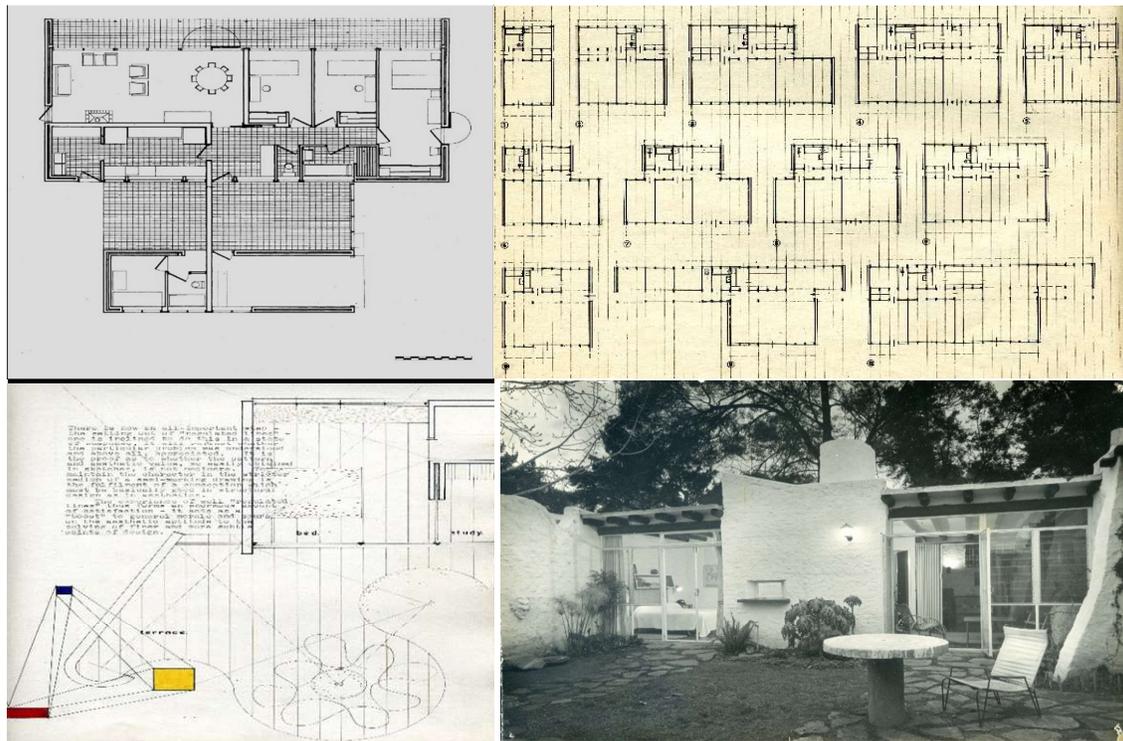


Figure 5.16. Top left: Economical modulated plan. Revel Fox, Fox and Ross Houses, 1955 (Lipman 83). **Top right:** Economical repetition of rafters in equal units for future extension. Helmutt Stauch, Economical Structural System (Stauch 1945: 208). **Bottom left:** “Regulated Lines”, Jack van Rensburg, Method of Design project, Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria, 1946 (Author’s private archives). **Bottom right:** Modular coordinated pole rafters. Jack van Rensburg, *Binnehof*, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 1959 ((Photo Gawie Fagan. Author’s private collection).

In Johannesburg, Button (1967:2) too establishes a modular system for the rafters and posts of the “main structural elements of the ground floor living area”. In Cape Town, House Meyer, Camps Bay (1964) exemplifies the use of a five-foot module in two directions “to evolve a unit system whereby a maximum part was premanufactured” (Meyer 1964:2, Anon 1971:13) (Fig. 5.17. Left). Incidentally, in Salisbury (now

⁶³ Modular building became popular after the Second World War when there was a need for the rapid construction of buildings (in particular dwellings) to replace bomb-damaged buildings and to accommodate returning troops. They were initially well-received, but as they often remained in use well beyond their design life (for example, 'temporary' classrooms, some of which are still in use), and were sometimes aesthetically less attractive than traditional buildings, they fell out of favour.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3.

Harare) the same approach applied as shown in the Greendale House (1967) where the architect employed an eleven-foot module to regulate his entire house (Anon 1967:8). Although not all-domestic architecture appeared strictly regulated, one can argue that dimensioning was not arbitrary. Such a case might be the Wits graduate Manie Feldman's designs, but he synthesises European modern movement scales (Le Corbusier and Goldfinger) and 1950s British Welfare State modernity (Smithsons) of "modular beam-and-post construction" with Brazilian forms (Chipkin 1993:300) (Fig. 5.17. Right).



Figure 5.17. Left: Gridded patio plan. Nic Meyer, Architect's Atrium House, Camps Bay, Cape Town, c.1094. (Meyer 1964:4). **Right:** Regulated Brazilian forms. Manie Feldman, House Jaffit, Hyde Park, Johannesburg, 1960 (Chipkin 1993: 301).

With regards the Pretoria proponents, Steenkamp (2003:7-8) distinguishes between two approaches towards dimensional systems which "established a strict discipline in the work of the graduates". The first "rational, pragmatic and functional" method, as described earlier, of the 'module' synthesised with local influences, which Fisher includes as 'Pretoria Regionalism' (Steenkamp 2003:8). The second "more dynamic and organic" approach that is "less restrictive, prescriptive and formal", certain Pretoria graduates⁶⁵ based on Le Corbusier's *modular* and Hambidge's *The Elements of Dynamic Symmetry*⁶⁶. In a student project, Van Rensburg (c.1950) reasons:

There is now an all-important step - the setting out of "regulated lines" – one is inclined to do this in a state of suspense, it will reflect whether the particular problem was understood and above all, appreciated. It is the proof as to whether the pattern, the aesthetic value, so easily obtained in sketches, is not mediocre. To maintain the character in the stricter medium of a semi-working drawing is the fulfilment of a conception which must basically be good in structural design as in aesthetics. The experience of well "regulated lines" thus forms an enormous amount of satisfaction – it acts as a "boost" in general morale and spurs on the aesthetic aptitude to the solving of the finer and more subtle points of the design (Van Rensburg c.1950).

⁶⁵ Steenkamp (2003:8) suggests that the *modular* approach could be either 'sculptural' or 'mathematical'.

⁶⁶ Basil South introduced Hambidge's book *Practical Applications of Dynamic Symmetry*, to Pretoria graduates who purchased the third 1949 printing from Union Booksellers, 256 Church Street, Pretoria. Otherwise Teague's (1940: 142-161) *Design This Day*, available from Van Schaik's Book Store in Pretoria covered Hambidge's 'Dynamic Symmetry' in detail.

Of importance to note is that the New York lectures (published posthumously) of Canadian born American Jay Hambidge (1867-1924), was an Americanised simplified version of the Fibonacci series with the aim “to encourage creative originality, not to impose personal opinion” (Fig. 5.18. Left). As his wife, Mary Hambidge (1949: xii) wrote:

In his approach to dynamic symmetry the student should first free himself from the fear of mathematics involved [...]The mathematics of dynamic symmetry are exceedingly simple and herein lies their value to design. Out of this principle of structure, simplicity will emerge, not the simplicity of barrenness but the simplicity which has sloughed off the superfluous and retained only what is necessary to enriched development.

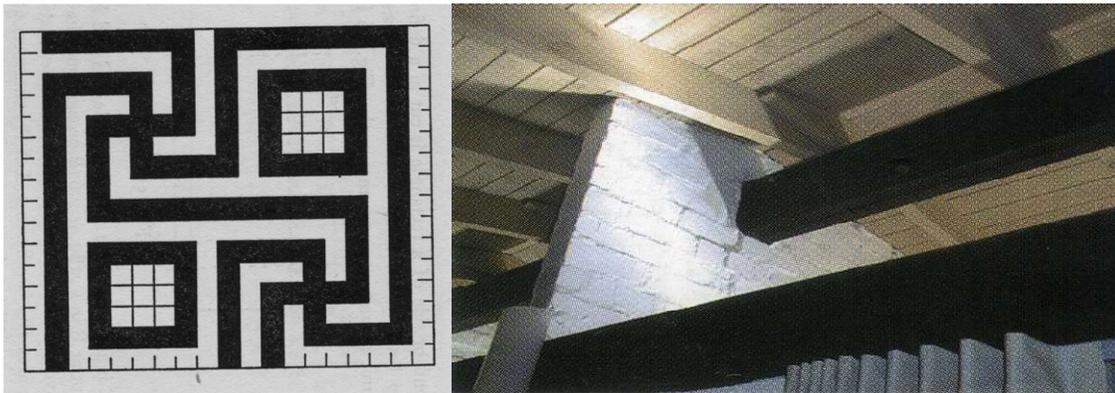


Figure 5.18. Left: Double meander pattern study from the Parthenon frieze. From Jay Hambidge’s *Dynamic Symmetry* (Hambidge 1949: 87). Right: Hambidge’s lessons applied in holistic construction. Karl Jooste, House Brink, Pretoria, 1966 (Jooste 2000: 47).

From this basis, one could argue that Fagan⁶⁷ or Jooste could develop own proportional systems based on Le Corbusier’s regulating lines and *modular* combined with Hambidge’s lessons adjusted to the actual construction situation (Fig. 5.18. Right). Therefore posed by Steenkamp (2003:8), the *mathematical* subdivision of the *modular* approach, Jooste, for example, could adjust simplistically and economically in order to achieve dimensions that “were related and harmonious to the whole”. Significant, is how in light of post-war feminine domesticity, Jooste, alters Le Corbusier’s ‘ideal’ modular man to acknowledge the dimensional dispositions of his wife as the ‘ideal’ for his own house in Aries Street, Pretoria (1967), (Jooste 2000:49-50).

Jooste and his associates (Carl Genecke, Willem Steyn, Fekix Viljoen, Goerge Wilsenach and Anton du Toit) studied the work of Hambidge and Le Corbusier’s Modular and they developed their own proportional system⁶⁸ [...] This fascination with exact measurements is prevalent in Houses Haak (1960), Oosthuizen (1961), Pieterse (1961), Jordaan (1964) and Brink (1966). However, the

⁶⁷ For example, applied in Fagan’s own house *De Es*.

⁶⁸ “The dimensions and scale of each building were based on this system of an 1800mm “ideal man”. When Jooste designed his own house, 381 Aries Street, the ideal was his wife. For example masonry joints (28mm rather than 10 to 12mm) at his own house were larger than the norm (85mm) to reflect the ideal” (Jooste 2000:48).

empirically generated “exact measurements” were rounded off to the nearest “proportional dimension”, for construction purposes. (Jooste 2000:49).

5.4.2.3 Outdoor rooms

“n Binnehof is baie soos die longe van ons liggaam waarmee die huis kan asemhaal en te meer noudat lang gange al hoe meer uitgeskakel word en die verskillende vertrekke nou om die binnehof gegropeer word (Van Rensburg c1960).

[Very much like a bodies lung, a courtyard allows the house to breathe. In addition, now that long corridors are eliminated more and more and the various rooms are grouped around the courtyard

The history of courtyard domestic typologies⁶⁹ is vast and not the task of this thesis, but will briefly be dealt with in the next chapter. Notwithstanding, the Pompeian house with its central court (*Impluvian*) was historically relevant to the mid-century family’s social dispositions. Whereas, the Roman courtyard house was dominated by the central court with the peristyle “giving emphasis to the importance of the family as a whole” (Rashmere 1965:11), the “private realm” of the Silent Subversive house allowed habitation particularly for the density of 1960s group housing (Lennard 1965:15). Similar to Roman life, the intentions for the post-war home was, as we have discussed, focused on companionship for all the dwellings inhabitants.

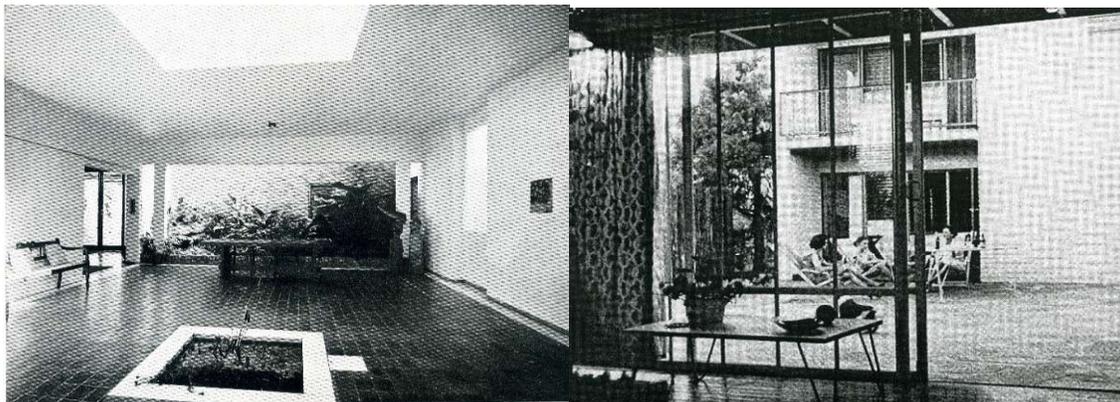


Figure 5.19. Left: Hearth of the family house. John Claassens, Architects own house, 1969 (Claassens 1969: 20). **Right:** Sociological extension of the living room. Robert Cole Bowen, Lazzarus House, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 1952 (Cole Bowen 1957: 49).

To establish his theoretical approach, Steenkamp’s interview with Claassens (2001) did single out the influence of his visit to Pompeii and his interpretation thereof in the design of his own house organised around an atrium in Brooklyn, Pretoria (1968) (Fig. 5.19. Left). For Claassens, the atrium acts as the family hearth of the house linking all the other living areas (Anon 1968c:12). Claassens (1969:20) specifically called the Van Biljon House, de la Harpe and House Claassens with their separate courts

⁶⁹ For example, Aalto’ summerhouse at Lake Päijänne (1953). “The outdoor room suggests a Pompeian atrium or an Italian piazzetta with a rich pattern of paving that is centralised by a square fire pit. A gap in the perimeter wall allows a view to the lake beyond ensuring the “symbiosis of nature and culture” (Weston 2005: 114-121). Also, see (Lennard 1965: 14-15), (Curtis 1982: 482) and (Steyn 2005: 106-117) for various examples of courtyard typologies from different cultures and from various regions that show similarities.

for motor cars, entrances, living and services – courtyard houses. As exemplified by the. Button House, Waterkloof, Pretoria (1967) the open relationship of even the service areas to an internal court was important (Button 1967:2).

In his “Courtyard Theory”, Cole Bowen (1957: 48) confirms the “sociological patterns” that the contemporary courtyard defines “as an open-air extension of the Living Zone” for its inhabitants (Fig. 5.19. Right). Through the example of his Lazarus house (1957), he shows how the “open air room” links the dispositions of the rest of the house (Fig. 5.19. Right), but more importantly how the house was “designed around the client’s many whims, fancies, idiosyncrasies as can be reconciled with the composition” (Cole Bowen 1957:49). As was the case in the Courtyard House, Parow North (1965) “for an open-minded client” (Anon 1965:14) or in the Pinfold House, Johannesburg (1953), outdoor courts were also designed for bathing. In the latter example, “there was element of explicit sexuality in the outdoor bedroom court, which had an exterior shower, designed specifically for sunbathing and nudity” (Chipkin 1993:271). Within the aim of making a smaller home feel spacious, the courtyard was ambiguous with regards what was ‘inside out’ (Fig. 5.20. Left) or what was ‘outside in’ (Fig. 5.20. Right). Van Rensburg (1979:34) best describes the courtyard as an outdoor social room:

Patios and courtyards are the most useful “rooms”/living areas. They are cheap areas – the cost of a floor and pergola gives home a central core – around which the rest of the house can revolve. Not only do you have the pleasure and usefulness of such a living area but there is also security – to this I can testify, having lived in such a house for twenty years. When my children were small this was the area in which we entertained – serving buffet suppers to perhaps 100 people – and braais or just simple sundowners in the cool evening under the vine is far more pleasant than any type of indoor space because courtyards enrich and enhance your life style. Ideally kitchen service should be direct and easy for normal day to day meals. The courtyard must also connect to the main indoor living areas. The bedrooms should have immediate access. The patio/binnehof must truly be the heart and focal point of the house.

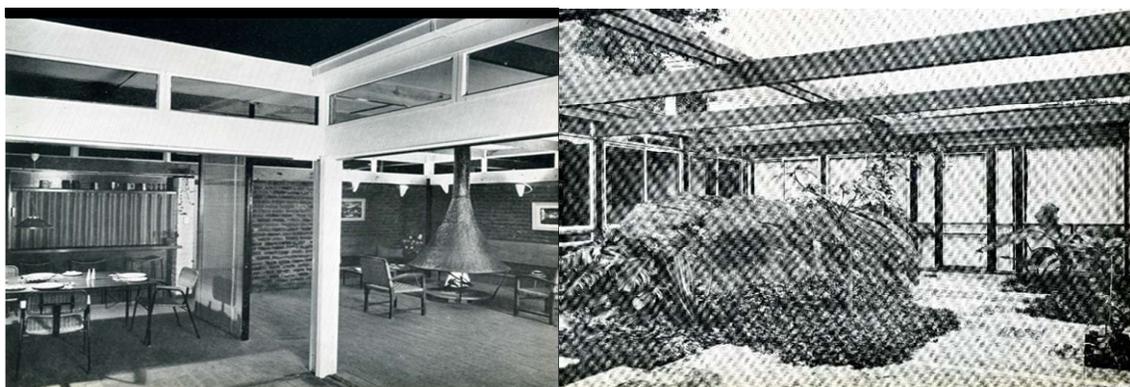


Figure 5.20. Left: Courtyard as extension of living room. Wibo Zwart, House (*Architect and Builder* July 1963:3). **Right:** Courtyard as dispositional link. Nic Meyer, Atrium House, Cape Town, 1964 (*Architect and Builder* November 1964: 2).

Van Rensburg named his own Pretoria house *Binnehof*. (195?), which Wim (1961:29) in an article in the *Sarie Marais* magazine⁷⁰ suggested subtly exposed the secret-ness of the house. Referencing the private courtyard to each of the units, Sutton (2015:58-61) named his Craighall Park townhouses (1865) - 'The Courtyards'. Nevertheless, Chipkin (1993:294) in naming the post-war Johannesburg domestic architecture "Patio Houses" tells how Don Lennard reluctantly introduced the term 'The Patio' that "usurped the courtyard's name". To contextualize, Lennard (1965:15) was referring to a misinterpretation of South African post-war patios as "forced and selfconscious" unintegrated additions for fashionable display rather than for "private family living". A patio is historically an inner courtyard implying a communicative space⁷¹, which the Western (American) suburban landscape approach, changed to become a private terrace for outdoor living (Sunset 1965:5).

Ask half a dozen neighbours to define a "patio", and you will probably get a half dozen different answers. One or two might agree with the dictionary that it is an enclosed court, walled-in by the house, and open to the sky. Someone else will tell you it is a roofless play room located next to the house; and another will contend it is a room of the house itself, with an outer wall missing. Another neighbour may insist that it is a separate structure altogether, placed by itself in the garden, and filled with barbecue gear. Your sixth friend (who probably just moved in from some remote party of the country) may not know what you are talking about. A patio? Never heard of it (Sunset 1965:7).

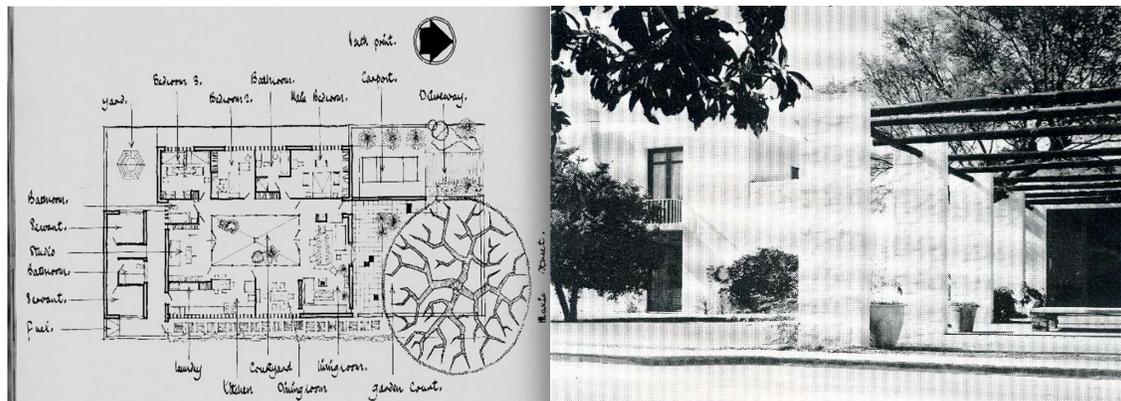


Figure 5.21. Left: Tree defining courtyard. Jack Roman, Atrium House plan, Fairwood, Johannesburg, 1967 (Roman 1967: 26). Right: Pergola covered terrace. John Claassens, House Claassens, Pretoria, 1969 (Claassens 1969: 21).

Including his own house Anthill, Lennard (1965:15-16) provided "well integrated and satisfying examples of contemporary patio houses in South Africa". In defining what he meant, he emphasised the often "tree bound" patio being "an indoor-outdoor spatial concept". We see for instance how Roman's Atrium House, Fairwood, Johannesburg (1967) includes a garden court with Jacarandas (Roman 1967:24) (Fig. 5.21 left). In his courtyard house, Biermann (1985:46) considered the "established trees" by integrating them "into the overall design". The disposition of House Bryer, Waverly, Johannesburg (1957) and McLellan's House Villa is determined in relation to "large suburban trees contained in brick floor

⁷⁰ With photographs by Gawie Fagan.

⁷¹ The origins of the word patio derive from the Latin *patitus* and *patere* that denotes 'an agreement' and 'to lie open'.

surrounds” (Anon 1957:36, Chipkin 2008:197). For House Smithers, Dunkeld (1968), Sutton (2015:76) establishes patios “without disturbing the trees”. Chipkin (1993:303) writes:

The residence at No.26 Loch Avenue was Michael Sutton’s first house after qualifying ... The sloping site ... was dominated by a historic campher tree, a landmark in Loch Avenue, famous among local horticulturalists ... The house that Sutton built there was the house ‘under the tree’: a simple domestic solution based on a mono-pitch corrugated –iron roof shapes with exposed rafters to form clerestory windows in order to avoid the tree’s umbra and at the same time to create unexpected changes of internal volume.

We have discussed⁷² how with references to Lloyd Wright, Stauch utilized extended roofs in the form of pergola terraces over window walls. This trend continued in the patio houses where trees were absent. Good examples are; the living room leading out to a pergola covered courtyard in the Parow North house (1965), and the pergola covered outdoor area of House Claassens, Pretoria (1968) (Anon 1968c:12) (Fig. 5.21. Right). Chipkin (1993:294) describes the silent seditious approach with regards choosing vegetation:

There were Brazilian infusions, which staked out warm corners in outdoor patios made luxurious with subtropical vegetation, challenging the dominant herbaceous culture of the English garden in South Africa.

5.4.2.4 *Interiorised landscapes*

This principle of least disturbance is carried further by non tampering with the site profile more than is necessary to establish floor levels; and its economy is effectively demonstrated in a roof line running parallel to the original site profile. In theoretical terms this cheapest workable answer results in a basic concord of landscape and architecture (Biermann 1985:46).

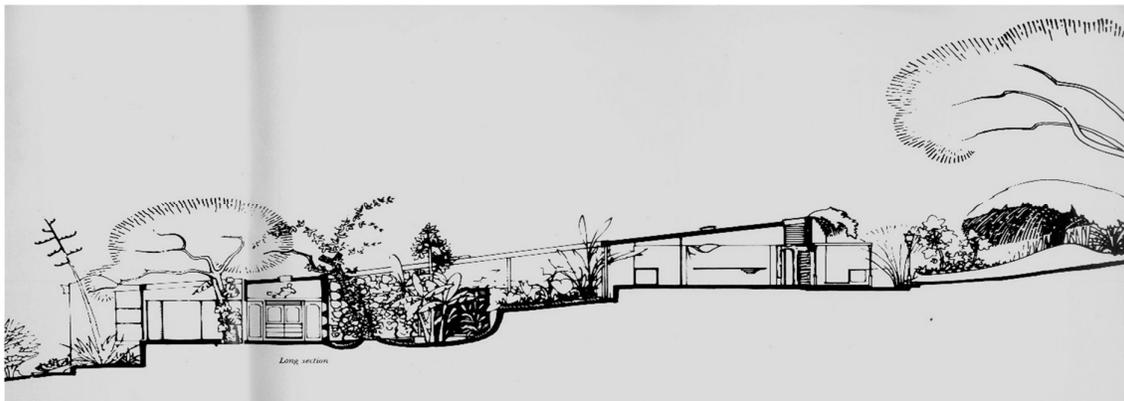


Figure 5.22. Economical roof profile to site profile. Barrie Biermann, Architects own house, Durban, 1962 (Beck 1985: 46-47).

Having chosen a ‘secretive’ sloping site in Durban, Biermann (1985:46) considers the economy of siting that “imbues the design with a hidden logic, an air of inevitability” resulting in an economic section that

⁷² See chapter 4.

follows the landscape (Fig. 5.22.). For his house in Waverly (1957), Monte Bryer too avoids expensive excavations by conserving the natural sloped ground line as far as possible (Anon 1957:36). After entering a steep Magaliesberg view site at the upper level, Sutton's (2015:68) House Daniel, Houghton Ridge (1966) is "on a series of levels due to a minimum of excavations". On a rocky steep site overlooking the Magaliesberg, House Button allows the multi-level section to follow suit (Button 1967:2). Similar to Stauch' introduction of slip-jointed split-levels⁷³, we notice how in these houses a hierarchy of spaces comes about. If not sloped with the site, the roof in order to "enhance interior space", still needed to reflect both "topographical and climatic sensibility" (Chipkin 1993:303).

Therefore, the generalised pre-war debates surrounding flat roof versus slope roof were secondary to the response of a situated spatial context within the economical means of available technology. Exemplified by the Turgel House (1960), the introduction of the Inverted Box Rib (IBR), supported by "ponderosa pole rafters" allowed a lowered roof profile⁷⁴ (Chipkin 1993:298). In addition, Eaton's flat roof methods⁷⁵ opened up experimentation with alternative horizontal roofs. Exemplified by House Feldman (1957) (Fig. 5.23. Left), House Roman (1967), House Button (1967), House van Biljon (1969) and Fagan's Keurbos House (1951) , insulated boarded ceilings or exposed timber rafters⁷⁶ would monodirectionally be "continuous from interior to exterior space"(Chipkin 1993:302, Roman 1967:24, Button 1967:2, Anon 1968c:12, Fagan 2016:8-17) (Fig. 5.23. Right). The Cape Town Nic Meyer House (1964) achieves spatial continuity by 'floating' roofs over lowered or shadow lined recessed walls and/or low built-in space dividing furniture (Anon 1965:14, Meyer 1964:2, Agan 1965:144).

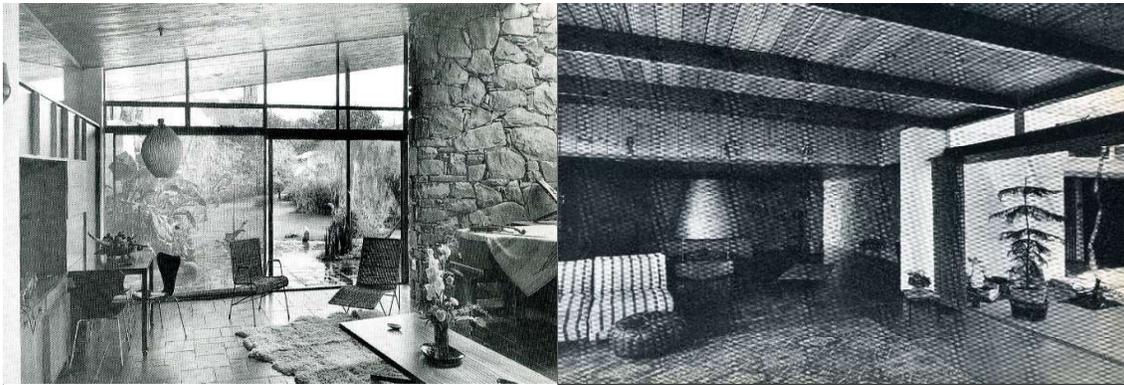


Figure 5.23. Left: Floating roof plane over built-ins. Manie Feldman, House Feldman, Parktown North, Johannesburg, 1957 (Chipkin 1993: 302). **Right:** Floating roof rafters. Wibo Zwart, Senderwood House, Johannesburg, c.1959. (Wale 1959: 71).

As mentioned⁷⁷, contemporary architects were stylistically free to vary roofs forms depending on the situation and clients brief. Besides using alternative techniques for flat roofs⁷⁸, Sutton, for example,

⁷³ See chapter 4.

⁷⁴ The minimum slope for IBR roofs introduced in the 1950s was six degrees (Chipkin 1993:298, Chipkin 2008:448).

⁷⁵ See chapter 4.

⁷⁶ In the 1960s timber was readily available replacing the need of having to use poles as rafters (Teeger 1965: 7-8).

⁷⁷ See chapter 2 and 3. In particular, the discussions on diverse house roof forms.

⁷⁸ For example, Sutton (2015: 68, 20) used poles and timber ceilings as permanent formwork for the 1960s Johannesburg houses, Daniel and Berning.

employed mono-pitch clay tiles “around a central courtyard” (Estate C. Griffith, 1966), or for Greek inspired clients (House Gage, Ripe Park 1967) “irregular domes over which were fixed chicken wires and netting” and “concrete was applied” (Sutton 2015:62, 80). In response to the Table Mountain backdrop on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other side, Fagan’s family house (*De Es*, 1965), utilizes pine strips as permanent formwork⁷⁹ for a waterproofed sinuous roof that “rocks over a central beam, rising to display a view of the sea or mountain from within the house” (Fagan 2016: 26, 34). For a neutralised response to the surrounding Cape Mountains, Revel Fox resorts to the flat roof. Lipman (1962:18) contextualises two of Fox’s 1960s houses in Worcester:

With these two houses the wheel has turned full circle and we are back at the flat roof of the house of 1933 – but used here with more realistic adjustments to our climate. The waterproofed top surface is covered with hollow tiles which permit nature’s own insulator – an air pocket – to form between the roof and the tiles, a system of insulating flat roofs that goes back to ancient Mycenaean and Egyptian architecture. Such a technical solution is only part of Fox’s handling of the roof; he takes even further the ease which a flat roof can project where desired. The plane of the roof no longer serves as a rigid horizontal nor a vertical accent – but caps...courts with L and U-shaped recesses...Thus the flat roof, so long thought of as a rigid element...has been liberated and its potentialities increased.

Perhaps the most important structural contribution allowing one to “sit inside yet feel outside” was what Biermann (1950:151) described as the “evolution of the neutral frame”. Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the ‘conditioned wall’ that the Silent Subversives used to ensure privacy. We also established⁸⁰ the genealogy of the window wall from Lloyd Wright, to Neutra to Stauch. Structurally, both these ‘wall types’ were dependent on fenestration in traditional mass construction in relation to the depth of the lintel⁸¹ (Fig. 5.24. Left). As Biermann (1950:151) explained:

When the construction technique changed by being able to remove the deep lintel...due to post and beam, the window jambs could extend from the ground practically to the roof. The lintel could actually be the top frame of the window.

In the post-war dwelling, large sliding glass doors fill the structured opening and achieve the social aim of allowing the living room, dining room and bedrooms to open onto courtyards, patios and gardens (Chipkin 1993:295) (Fig. 5.24 Middle). For instance in the Button House (1967), sliding doors allow outdoor areas “to be used as one large entertaining area” linked to a “circular conversation pit” around a “revolving fireplace” that could serve as heating for either indoors or outdoors (Button 1967:2). For his house, Manie Feldman introduced “black-painted window walls” consisting of “giant single-pane, plateglass sliding-doors” linking to exterior spaces (Chipkin 1993:302). Also for his house (1957), André Hendrickz uses “sliding-folding timber doors” to attain “an idyllic relationship between indoor and outdoor space” (Chipkin 1993:295).

⁷⁹ Inspired by Barrie Biermann, Fagan (2008:1) surveyed the flat roofed houses and their relevance to the dry Karoo landscape with the hope of completing his doctoral entitled *The development of the flat-roofed building in South Africa*.

⁸⁰ See chapter 3.

⁸¹ Biermann (1950:151) exemplifies traditional construction by referring to 18th century Cape Farmhouses and traditional Brazil fenestration in solid walls.



Figure 5.24. **Left:** Clerestory window detail with roof beam as shallow lintel. Karel Jooste, House Oosthuizen, Pretoria, 1964 (Becker *et al* measured drawing. UP archives: file 06678/06779). **Middle:** Sliding glass door neutral infill between inside and outside. Elk and Fisher, House Percy Elk, Johannesburg, c.1959 (Wale 1959:1). **Right:** Skylight over barrier-free courtyard. Gabriel Fagan, Hillside House, Bishops court, Cape Town, 1959 (*Architect and Builder* 1959: 37).

In the post-war dwelling, large sliding glass doors fill the structured opening and achieve the social aim of allowing the living room, dining room and bedrooms to open onto courtyards, patios and gardens (Chipkin 1993:295) (Fig. 5.24 Middle). For instance in the Button House (1967), sliding doors allow outdoor areas “to be used as one large entertaining area” linked to a “circular conversation pit” around a “revolving fireplace” that could serve as heating for either indoors or outdoors (Button 1967:2). For his house, Manie Feldman introduced “black-painted window walls” consisting of “giant single-pane, plateglass sliding-doors” linking to exterior spaces (Chipkin 1993:302). Also for his house (1957), André Hendrickz uses “sliding-folding timber doors” to attain “an idyllic relationship between indoor and outdoor space” (Chipkin 1993:295).

In the design for *Keurbos* (1951), Fagan (2016:10-15) introduces a skylight covered interior garden, making it difficult to distinguish inside from outside and allowing the elimination of a sliding door altogether (Fig. 5.24. Right). To guarantee the continuous reading of indoor and outdoor under Fagan’s undulating roof the frame is entirely neutralised. Similarly and within the metaphor of cave as “backdrop for family life”, Jooste eliminates the window frame for the glazing under the vaults of his own house (1967), by fixing glass to walls with brackets and bolts (Jooste 2000:51).

Consequently, the architect’s choice of materials for the other “surfaces as independent planes” needed to support the socio-spatial concept (Biermann 1985:46). Legitimized by economic inevitability, availability, maintenance and “socially acceptable” robustness, finishes traditionally associated with outdoors, architects like André Hendrickz used indoors (Fig. 5.25. Left), to construct “a unity of interior and exterior surfaces” (Chipkin 1993:299, Teeger 1965:7, Anon 1968b: 22) (Fig. 5.25. Right). Whether in the Transvaal (House Hendrickz, 1957) or in the Cape (House Meyer, 1964) we see clinker, rough semi-face commons, semi-face and fare-face bricks been used both externally and internally as walls and floors (Chipkin 1993:295, Meyer 1964:2).



Figure 5.25. Left: Robust interior finishes. André Hendrickz, Architect's House interior, Melrose North, Johannesburg, 1957 (Chipkin 1993: 296). **Right: 'cultivated nature'.** André Hendrickz, Architect's House exterior patio, Melrose North, Johannesburg, 1957 (Teeger 1965: 7).

Unlike the pre-war neglect of materiality in favour of obsessions with form, the post-war reaction “was not merely a more honest expression of materials present but a conglomerate of different materials vying for effect” to such a degree that Pevsner called rubble walling in the Transvaal, “a menace to domestic relaxation” (Teeger 1965:7). Nevertheless, Cole Bowen’s influence of using a number of “easily available natural materials” is evidential in his collaged sectional perspectives (Chipkin 1993:295, Cole Bowen 1957:50, 51, 53). Typical natural flooring was square-cut or if off-cuts random pattern slate used throughout as used in Roman’s (1967:24) House (1967); Button;s (1967:2) House (1967) and Van Rensburg’s house (1957). Sealed red- or dark quarry tiles were the other popular natural floor paving used in the Swart House (Anon 1968b:22).

Despite the South African plaster tradition (Chipkin 1993:295), more than often the new generation roughly bagged and whitewashed bricks internally and externally as seen in the Parow North house, Sutton’s (2015:38) McWilliam Smith house (1964) and the Roman’s house. In the case of Van Rensburg’s *Binneho*⁸², Fagan’s *Keurbos* and Sutton’s *Biesheuvel*, the whitewashed and bagged walls are an honest expression and “modern interpretation” of the cape whitewashed tradition (Sutton 2015:14). Inspired by Steffen Ahrends’ lesson of using a “few honest materials”, Sutton (2015:24), selects bricks for walls and internal stretcher bond floors to match the tones of the surrounding rock outcrop for House Goodman, Hyde Park (1963) . Like Sutton’s *Courtyards* (2015:58, Chipkin 2008:197), Ian McLennan leaves the bagged walls for sculptor Eduardo Villa’s House, Kew (1968) unpainted. Probably inspired by Eaton, Brazilian-Scandinavian-Africanism⁸³, brick patterned floors would extend from inside to brick-paved courts and atriums (Fig. 5.25. Right) for free “comfortable outdoor living” (Chipkin 1993:295, 298) and indoor ‘cultivated nature’ within the restrictions of an apartheid suburb.

⁸² See chapter 3 for discussion of textured whitewashed walls

⁸³ See chapter 3

5.5 SUBCONCLUSIONS

This chapter has revealed the socio-economic dispositions of the post war architects, their clients, their social group, other races and family types in relation to the dispositions of domestic architecture during apartheid. Relative to the public apartheid city order, this part of the study highlighted the social private realm, which allowed a sense of freedom for all its inhabitants and their social interactions within the confines of the structured dispositions. What came to the fore was how aspects of everyday living, domesticity and post war sentiments liberated from traditionally accepted conservative practices and gender roles affected the experiential aspect of a dwellings arrangement. This chapter delved into changed social practices rather than stylistics informing the idea of various living activities in a communicative room. What we indicated was flexibility of these homes to accommodate a diversity of household types and for various family stages. Although shown, many of the houses were for the architects themselves, an intertextual community's contribution as sources for architectural production was evident to such a degree that the public referencing to architecture *per se* became indistinct. We saw that post-war public social facilities in apartheid cities were limited and therefore social interaction of like-minded people, often across racial divides, took place to various degrees socially rather in the private realm of dwellings. We found that in certain cases dwellings ironically became the extensive 'public urban design' allowing a sense of subversive freedom that the conservative cities never allowed. Therefore, we suggested parallels of suburban dwelling with secretive social places during apartheid informing a spatial conception of silent existential transcendence beyond a situation of imposed ideologies. In our search for an underlying theory, we sub conclude that for our Silent Subversives, a silent embodied everyday life *is* the architectural discourse. In order to counter the mundane, we advanced that travel to exotic bohemian destinations was a form of transcending the apartheid suburbs, bringing into question any notions of provincialism. We noticed how these artists and architects imported ideas and artefacts, not stylistically, but to enhance a sense of transcendence in the comfort of their own homes.

We then reciprocated the social dispositions of the cohort with the dispositions of Silent Subversive domestic structure for an understanding of the logics of social space. Firstly, we highlighted the importance and planning flaws of the post-war context with regards contemporary suburban culture, which signified a shift from essentialist cultural stylistic searches. We illustrated that positions taken by several of our agents were subversive with regards sprawl, housing and byelaws indicating a clear sense of urbanity. We exemplified situations where agents after having occupied dense suburbs, investigated alternative unpopular sites for building non-conformist starter homes. We identified both international and local critiques with regards suburban freestanding houses and their distances to city centres leading to the densification typologies of duplexes, group housing and townhouses. We saw how the suburbs brought about the need for highways and automobile transport, which propagated by the Americans, resulted in an increase in car ownership. The car culture changed the nature and disposition of vehicle housing towards the exposed carport as the entrance threshold between public and private domains. Our investigation demonstrated, rather than stylistic metaphor the importance of secreted privacy from the hostility of street achieved by conditioned screened walls with small grille

openings. Irrespective of house size, this chapter exemplified a social activity zone beyond the entrance expressed as continuous internal and external spatiality.

The purpose of the social zone we described as a communicative space for the free expression and everyday liveability of its users, which the architects evidentially achieved with the open plan as device. We traced a genealogy of plan that disclosed the historical transition from traditional to pavilions to space-time conceptions of the contemporary court plan that confirmed the destruction between inside and outside to ensure liveability and serviceability as distinct from the forerunners. By synthesising socio-economics with spatial organization and regulated spatiality, this chapter informed a spatial conception established with construction devices interpreted individually by various agents. Shown was the recurring socio-spatial theme of outdoor spaces such as central courtyards and patios as an economical way of extending the illusion of space to enhance social inhabitation through integration. Through various examples, we noticed how the architects supported by social acceptance chose limited internal materials and honest finishes that were traditionally associated with the outside to reinforce the spatial conception. We acknowledged the influence of the split-level and suggested here that besides economics topographical sensibility enhanced a hierarchy of internal space. By experimenting with available technologies, the liberated roof forms reinforced an internal continuous spatial response to the external landscape rather than a preconceived stylistic application. The study drew from a fenestration theory to understand an evolution of the structured opening that cases indicated as non-divisive between internal and external social spaces deeming suburban culture as inhabited landscape.

Within an idea of inhabitation free from authoritarian impositions, the next chapter crystallises the thesis theoretically with the aim of contributing to future housing debates.