building relates more to the beaux-arts of art deco than to the modernist buildings then rising in
the suburb of Brooklyn just down the road.
Moeryd had received his first private commission in 1917 to design the Dutch Reformed Church
in Bothaville, Orange Free State. More than eighty such commissions would follow, ranging
from the Cape to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and from South West Africa (now Namibia) to the
Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). This gave Moeryd the opportunity to foster an ecclesi-
astical style for the Afrikaans churches, an ambition reflected as early as 1919 in his privately
published booklet on church design, Kerkbouw vir Suid-Afrika. Interestingly, he eschewed overt
symbolism in his churches, whereas his secular shrines to the volk and its accomplishments – the
Meerensky Library, the Voortrekker Monument, the Reserve Bank in Bloemfontein – are symboli-
cally laden.
Moeryd has been spurned by South African architectural history, a trend which started even
before his death. His obituary in the South African Architectural Record was two lines long.3

3 Building in brick
The brick aesthetic has come to characterize the buildings of Pretoria and manifests in all its
stylistic variants, from early Public Works Department projects of the South African Republic,
through the prevalent modernist work, which shows the expressionist influences of the Amster-
dam School, to the current polychromatic postmodern revivals.

For the Boer pioneers, fired-brick dwellings lay at the end of a long progression – from tented
wagons and reed shearers (mere screens in the veld copied from indigenous example), to wattle
and daub and stone masonry. Brick houses finally proclaimed that the newcomers were permanently
settled and in possession of the land.
The Public Works Department originated the brick tradition in Pretoria. The Dutch architects
imported by Kruger were well versed in brick architecture, as is demonstrated by such buildings
as the Nederlandsche Bank on Church Square by Sytze Wopkes Wierda. Looking further back, the
tradition and the institution of public works itself owe much to the Prussian state, and specifically
to the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel.
In 1826 Schinkel visited Britain, where the novel construction of industrial buildings astonished
him, especially the use of brick on a monumental scale. Industrialization had seemed to him to
threaten the very existence of architecture as the art of building within society. He had dreamed of