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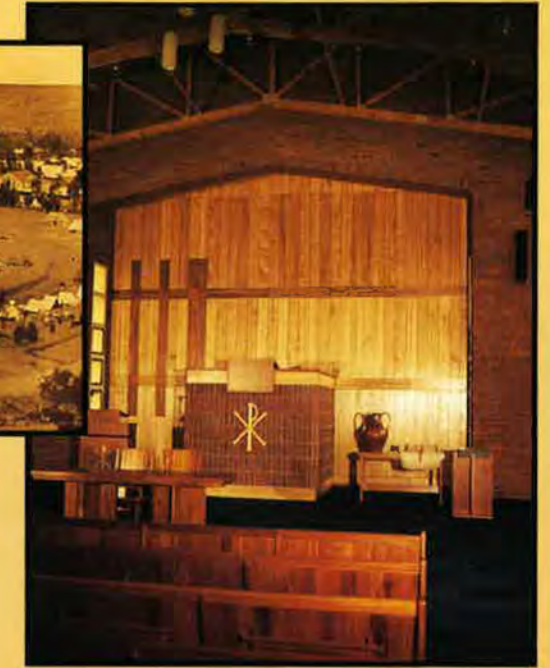
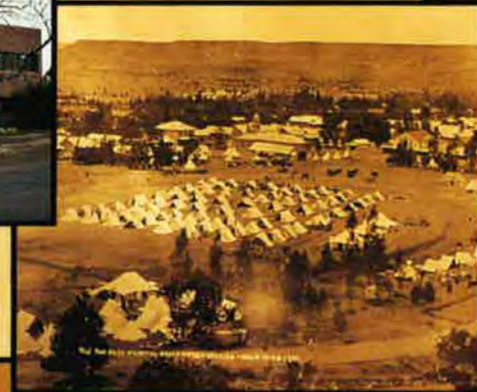
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**NORTHERN
NATAL**

REDISCOVER THE BATTLEFIELDS

A presentation of work by the profession in Northern Natal

GUEST EDITOR
BRUCE TORR



Born 1950, grew up in Natal Midlands, educated at Estcourt High School and graduated with B.Arch at Natal University, Durban.

Immediately on qualifying, settled in Newcastle and began own practice in 1983 where he remains in a one-man practice. An active member and past chairman of local Round Table he serves on the Newcastle Museum Committee. Enjoys golf, fishing and cartooning.

Practice has subsisted mainly on government work such as schools, police stations, hospitals etc, but also commercial developments and the occasional private home.

Isolation, through distance to the main centres, inevitably limits interaction between architects in the Northern Natal region and the broader membership of the NPIA, or for that matter limits access to the stimulation of attendance at exhibitions, lectures or sports events organised by the provincial institute.

Apart from the tenuous links maintained with the mainstream through journals and the regular and delightful ARCHIFLASH, Northern Natal architects have tended to work in isolation with the ever possible danger of evolving along the lines of the unique inhabitants of Lake Sibaya.

Each has his own reason for having located in the area (either natural habitat or pursuit of the promised growth of the early '70s) and the architectural manifestations of these past decisions are as varied as the backgrounds of the authors. This issue of *NPIA Journal* depicts an array of examples from the region.

The recent formation of a Northern Natal Chapter has the potential to promote a new and broader architectural conscience among architects in the region — a conscience embracing not only the immediate task at hand but also a concern for the overall built environment. The Chapter should provide the vehicle for a common voice (or stimulating arguments) in the areas of urban planning, conservation, bye-laws, socio-economic

development and cultural affairs; and should help the fish develop some different colours in an otherwise isolated pond.

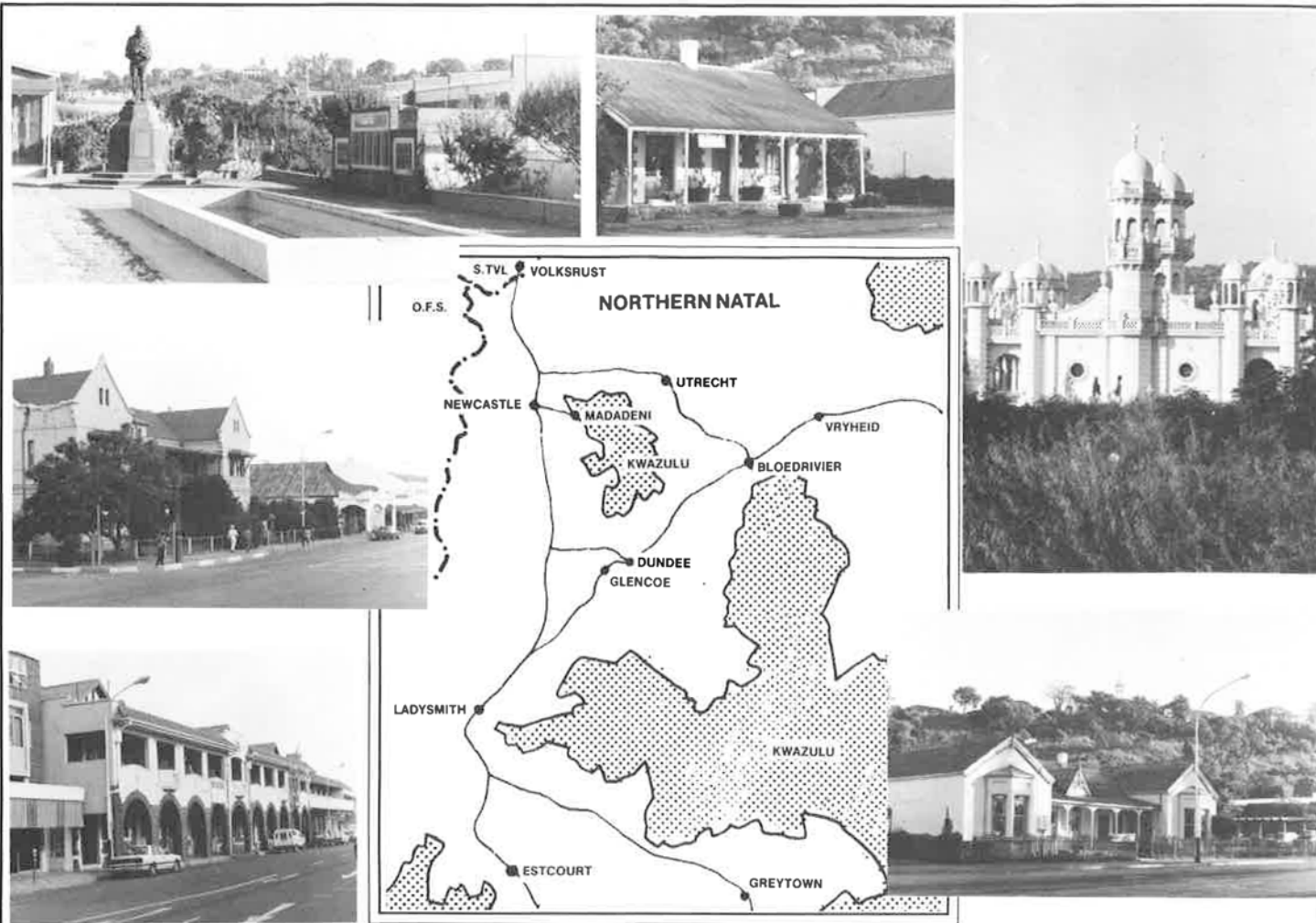
Northern Natal has little in terms of the built or natural environment to set it apart from the rest of the country and classify it as unique. Coal mining could be a passing thought in this regard and the old battlefields may be a factor in the abstract, historic sense.

Towns are all much alike and similar to others found over a far wider area. Buildings pop up from time to time as a result of economic impulses and these are largely shaped by the owner/developer's own hand, guided in turn by similar economic impulses and constraints and using materials easily and locally obtainable. Architects sometimes help.

Houses are usually made of brick with tiled roofs and nice gardens; shops are usually made of steel with steel roofs and with windows at the front; and factories are usually made like shops but with windows in the roof.

When architects have helped, one sometimes finds shops with nice gardens and houses with windows in the roof.

I have no objection to owners building their own buildings with easily and locally obtainable materials, or to architects putting windows in the roofs of houses. The challenge, however, is for architects to rediscover the battlefields, sense the spirit of the region and to fit the bricks and the steel and the windows together to echo them — and to elbow their way to the forefront from whence others may follow!



LADYSMITH IMPRESSIONS
Clockwise from centre top: Restaurant in former cottage, Keate Street, ca 1891; Sufi Mosque across Klip River, 1969; Newspaper offices in former Mission house "Keerweeder", Keate Street, ca 1899; Anglican Church; City Hall, Murchison Street, 1893; Royal Hotel, Murchison Street, ca 1897; Natal Colonial Railways Institute building, Murchison Street, 1903; Statue of Mahatma Gandhi in courtyard of Sanathan Dharma Sabha temple, Forbes Street, 1959. (All photographs by Ric Granville)

COVER (clockwise from top left): 50 Paterson Street, Newcastle; Hospital Camp during the SA War 1899 on the cricket oval, Ladysmith, still in use today (Ladysmith Museum); Hervomde Kerk, Vryheid; Courtyard, Madadeni Maternity Hospital, Newcastle; British infantry in disorder after a further attempt to break out during the Siege of Ladysmith. View from first floor veranda of the Royal Hotel towards the City Hall (Ladysmith Museum).

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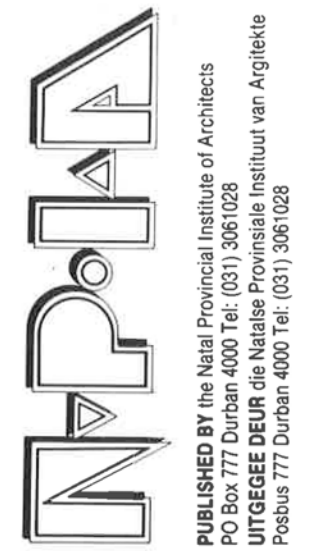
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LADYSMITH — A BRIEF REVIEW

For those who are interested, when next passing Ladysmith on the way to Johannesburg, it might be an idea to by-pass the Harrismith Toll Road and take an extra half hour to drive down Murchison Street, the central street of Ladysmith, and observe this historical place which has recently obtained city status. It will be seen that this is not a place of dust, bakkies, biltong and beer; that is only a veil covering many fascinating historical buildings and places. If a little more time is spent, the details of the town's history can be studied, and development that is typical of a Northern Natal town becomes evident and interesting.

Alongside the City Hall is the Museum; a little Cape shed-type building with low entrance and exit doors, which contains the history of Ladysmith's turn-of-the-century debacle — the Siege. Among the fascinating photographs, drawings and artefacts are many fine illustrations showing how the town was planned and how early development took place.

The images of the City Hall, the Royal Hotel, the Anglican Church, the convent and hospital, and Victorian houses and barns dotted about a most barren and rocky hillside ridge, can be seen in detail. Most of these buildings still exist today without, unfortunately, much recognition of their historical import. There is a fullsize "stage set" of a British ridge-top guard emplacement, with a 360° montage photograph enlarged from the original negatives to form a 5-metre diameter drum, and every tree, building, playing ground,

horse paddock and encampment can be seen.

The photographer responsible for taking these pictures in 1900 was probably unknown, but a genius nevertheless in having the foresight to make such a record. Further on, one sees an illustration of Dr Stark being struck by a shell outside the entrance doors to the Royal Hotel; one can stand on the brass dimple and plaque on the Royal Hotel veranda which denotes the exact spot, and survey the original blue stone rustication, the art deco entrance doors, and see the City Hall from between veranda arches which have long replaced timber posts with "Y" struts, and a chequered grano stoep that has replaced the original oregon pine boarding.

... this is not a place of dust, bakkies, biltong and beer;

This viewpoint is precisely depicted in the famous painting of a very neat and trim General Buller (he was actually extremely obese) leaning from his saddle to shake General White's hand (who was thin due to food rationing at the time) at the relief of the siege. Dominant in the background of cheering soldiers and civilians is the City Hall with its battle-damage proudly displayed. One can almost feel the mud underfoot and smell the scent of horses and dung, as the spaces, light, and shadow are still the same.

The City Hall, which was constructed before the turn of the century, stands defiantly staring at the surrounding later '50s to '80s buildings on the opposite three corners; its rusticated base is built of the local blue stone, representing hundreds of hours of skilled masonry labour; the clock tower is built of mudbrick, and the arches from bricks imported from Pietermaritzburg. This building has been well maintained by both Boer and Brit ever since the Longtom shell split the tower and

removed one corner support, and today it is guarded by the now silent Naval and Boer cannons.

Further down Murchison Street, implementation of the Group Areas Act has actually preserved many buildings developed by the Indian community. These, and the Natal Railways Institute Building, are blighted by non-occupation, lack of maintenance or sheer lack of interest. Through the layers of peeling paint, the plaster relief of architrave mouldings and dates of completion show the attention and pride that this area once enjoyed.

There is the theory that, as the other end of the city is devastated by flood waters, and with the Indian community wishing to re-occupy this upper Murchison Street area, the CBD of Ladysmith might shift: that these old buildings might have modern "guts" installed between the "horns and tail", and that the magnificent Natal Railways Institute Building may be commercially developed into Ladysmith's own mini Workshop complex. There is, of course, the possibility that development will tear out the few remaining trees and cover the unkempt bare ground with tarmac and shade cloth structures for our modern metallic horsepower, but so far the Borough is doing very well in controlling this aspect of our heritage and the future looks promising.

It is in this potential upgrade area that the new Stockowners building is being developed. A 90-year-old butchery was demolished to accommodate this and permission was obtained from the National Monuments Council. The site is directly opposite the Natal Railways Institute Building which is listed, and the design of this modern replacement of the butchery was done with sympathy to the Institute Building, the immediate area and Ladysmith in general. Hopefully this development can act as a catalyst.

Neil Hayes-Hill

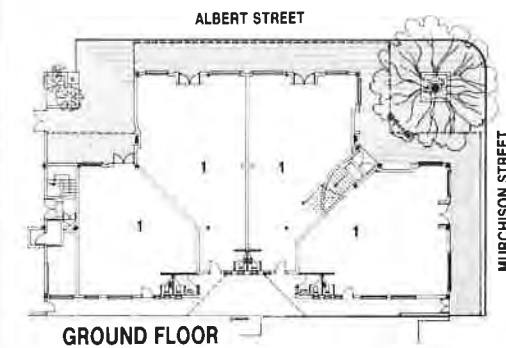
SHOPS AND OFFICES FOR STOCKOWNERS CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED, LADYSMITH

ARCHITECTS: GRANVILLE HAYES-HILL & ASSOCIATES

The client required more lettable commercial than office space which necessitated the office space being placed at an elevated first floor level.

Out of concern for the existing character of the area, a "hip and valley" corrugated sheet metal design was chosen to roof the upper storey, and a "veranda" roof to protect the ground floor shopping pavement, in sympathy with the methods used at the turn of the century.

The recessed "plazas" on the ground floor allow for interesting and usable forms and open space, the importation of a grown tree to add interest to the already prominent corner, and for the roof forms to be reduced in width, resulting in a domestic scale image.



- 1. SHOPS
- 2. RECEPTION
- 3. BOARD ROOM
- 4. MANAGER
- 5. PATIO
- 6. FLATLET
- 7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

NEWCASTLE URBAN ARCHITECTURE

PARTNERSHIP HANS HENDRIKSE

TOWN OFFICES AND RATES HALL

This building was designed as part of a larger civic development, and the basic aesthetic was derived from the existing municipal library. The vertical windows to the double-volume rates hall contrast strongly with the horizontality of the office block.



NG KERK DRAKENSBERG VALLEI

An extremely simple structure met the client's request for a very low-cost building with good acoustics and flexibility of internal spaces. Simple horizontal and vertical elements make a bold statement in this residential suburb.

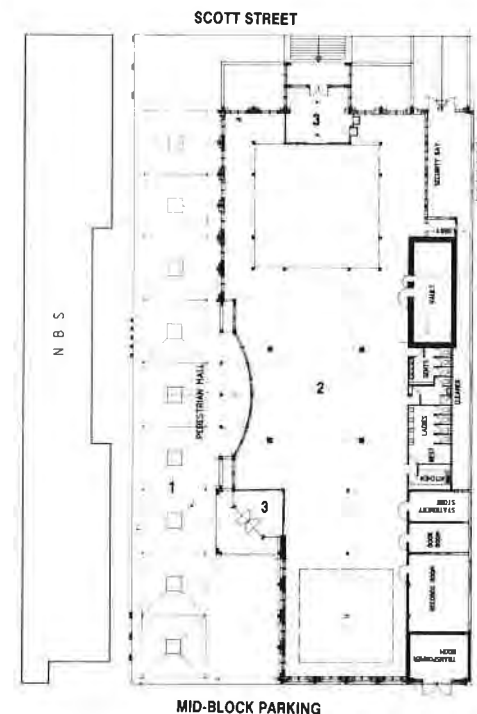
Utilization of the sloping site for tiered seating maximized the cost-effectiveness of the design.



FIRST NATIONAL BANK, NEWCASTLE

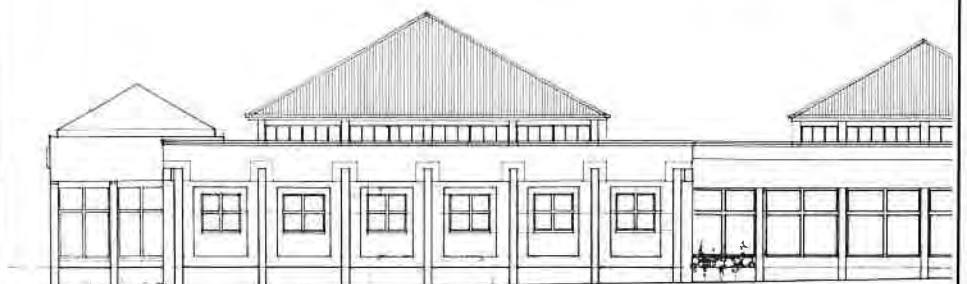
Maximum pedestrian frontage has been achieved in a tight downtown space through the use of a wide arcade linking street front with mid-block parking behind. The contemporary design could be termed "classical-modern" and uses dark red brick with other "earth" finishes.

Priority has been given to a pedestrian-friendly building while retaining the traditional banking aesthetic. Benches and indigenous trees will soften the external spaces. (Building at present under construction).



- 1. PEDESTRIAN MALL
- 2. BANKING HALL
- 3. LOBBIES

MID-BLOCK PARKING



ELEVATION TO PEDESTRIAN MALL



NORTH ELEVATION TO ALBERT STREET



DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN NORTHERN NATAL

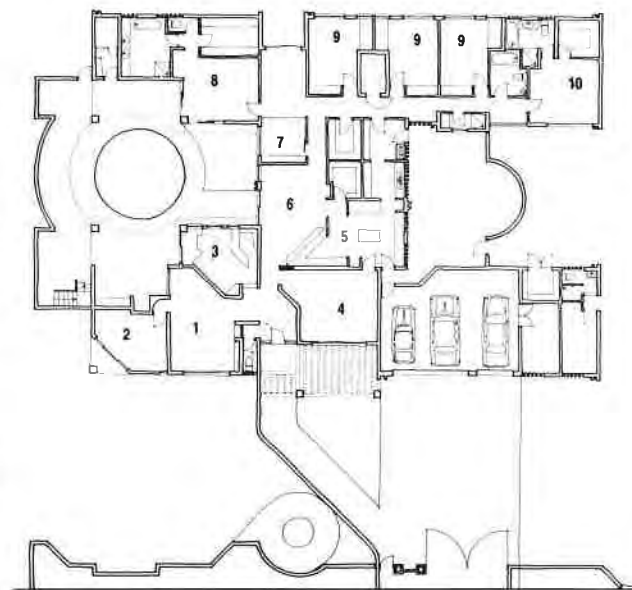
COOTE & CLARKSON, ARCHITECTS

HOUSE WARDE

The site is a typical mid-town, flat, suburban property facing on to a busy street.

The house was sheltered from the street activity by a retaining wall shaped to create inner spaces which extend the enveloped space into the garden and define the boundary.

The house is inward facing, revolving around two courtyards with the bedrooms facing on to the quiet seclusion of the garden.



- 1. LOUNGE
- 2. STUDY
- 3. BAR
- 4. DINING ROOM
- 5. KITCHEN
- 6. FAMILY ROOM
- 7. SEWING ROOM
- 8. MASTER BEDROOM
- 9. BEDROOMS
- 10. GUEST BEDROOM

HOUSE SCHARRIGHUISEN

Our client's brief was to create a landscaped space with a carefully positioned house to afford privacy and generate a relaxed, informal family life, and for a house that suited the harsh Ladysmith climate at all seasons.

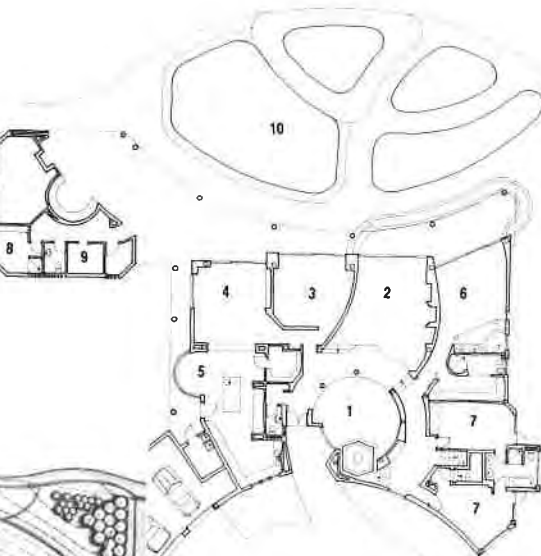
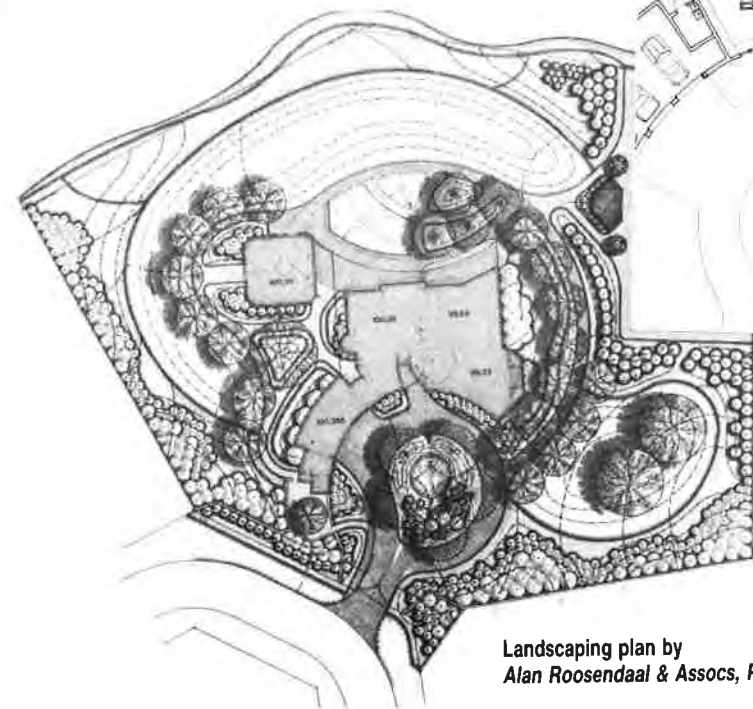
The finishes were to be practical and as maintenance-free as possible.

The site is located on a "bult" projecting into a corner of the golf course, and enjoys majestic views to the north of farmlands and the Drakensberg in the distance. The siting affords complete privacy from the surroundings.

The design is based on the traditional veranda as a bridge connecting the private realm and the recreation area. The open plan and its relationship to the indoor garden reflects our client's interest in plants.

The main intention was to achieve a continuous link between the garden and the Drakensberg beyond and all the living areas and, by careful changes of level, a view through the house itself.

The living areas are planned to provide shelter from the prevailing winds.



- 1. INDOOR GARDEN
- 2. LOUNGE
- 3. DINING ROOM
- 4. FAMILY ROOM
- 5. KITCHEN
- 6. MASTER BEDROOM
- 7. BEDROOMS
- 8. CHANGE ROOM
- 9. SAUNA
- 10. POOL

Landscaping plan by Alan Roosendaal & Assocs, Pretoria

COOTE & CLARKSON, ARCHITECTS

HOUSE HERON

The site is a steeply sloping area at the bottom of the client's existing garden.

The brief called for avoiding a multi-level recreation area and integrating building and site.



HOUSE CERRAI

The brief called for a large house adequate for entertaining extended family, friends and business associates, on a steeply sloping property with breathtaking views from the upper level.

The client instructed that a traditional 30° pitched roof be used.



A FARMHOUSE TRANSFORMED

COLIN GLASSPOOL & ASSOCIATES

HOUSE HUDSON — 1988

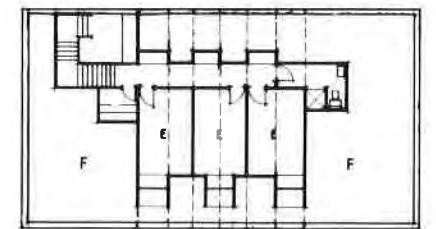
The brief was to incorporate three bedrooms and facilities, for a farmer's three growing sons, into an existing, delightful 100-year-old stone-walled farmhouse in a beautiful valley north-west of Volksrust.

The existing main trusses were re-designed and the suites of rooms were built into the roof space with timber framing and SA pine panelling.

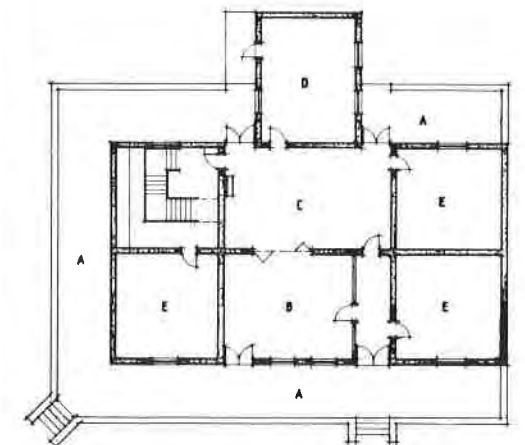
The bedroom dormer windows were cut into the north slope of the existing roof and the south-facing passage, shower, and stair hall are lit by domed fibre-glass roof lights.



FRONT ELEVATION



UPPER FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- A. STOEP
- B. LOUNGE
- C. DINING ROOM
- D. KITCHEN
- E. BEDROOMS
- F. ROOF SPACE

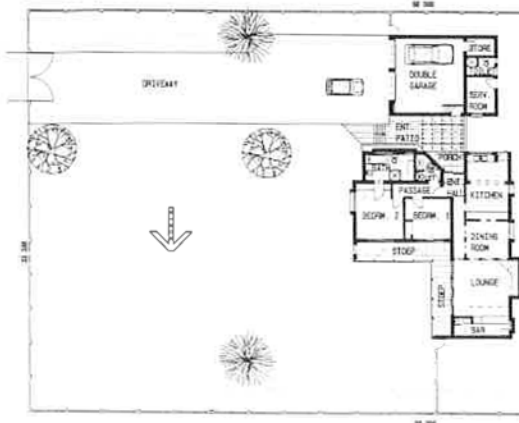
DOMESTIC, CHURCH AND OFFICE

LEACH & VAN DER WALT, NEWCASTLE

HOUSE BOTHA

How do you design a bachelor pad which would reflect the personality of a young successful businessman, but stay away from sombreness or yuppie pretentiousness? A playful and cheerful expression would accurately reflect the client's aspirations without being totally outrageous. The house was to be sited around a pool which never got built, and included a novel wine cellar with stepladder leading down from a trap door appropriately below the bar! Unfortunately a workman stuck a pick through the waterproof membrane just before concreting the cellar. All attempts to plug the leak have so far failed, and the intrepid client is now considering an underground plunge pool as an alternative use.

A veranda with playful fenestration serves as a link, with all the rooms leading out and providing access to the pool area. The monopitch roof of the house acts as a counterpoise to the similar roof of the garage. Red fenestration, white walls and black asbestos tiles reflects just the correct degree of extrovert expression.



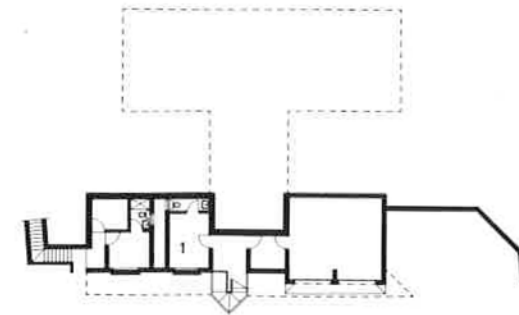
HOUSE PEER

The client, a doctor, had bought a site on a south-facing slope with a magnificent view of the Biggarsberg. The major problem was the steep slope but opportunities also abounded as the site has a commanding position over its neighbours. The other problem was to design a house to meet the client's brief but satisfy his aspirations for the magnificent site within a budget a third of what it should be. The answer of course was that something had to give, and in this case it was not aspirations but the budget.

The concept was to meet the desire for an elegant, bold statement, not ostentatious but equal to the client's professional status in the community, using materials which were earthy and warm. The advantages of the site, such as the view and the prominence, had to be maximised, and somehow the north aspect had to be accommodated. The final result pleases the client no end.



UPPER FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. SURGERY | 6. KITCHEN |
| 2. LOUNGE | 7. FAMILY ROOM |
| 3. STUDY | 8. DINING PATIO |
| 4. PRAYER ROOM | 9. MASTER BEDROOM |
| 5. DINING ROOM | 10. BEDROOMS |

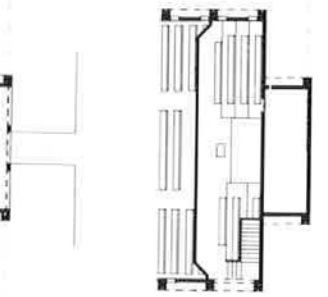
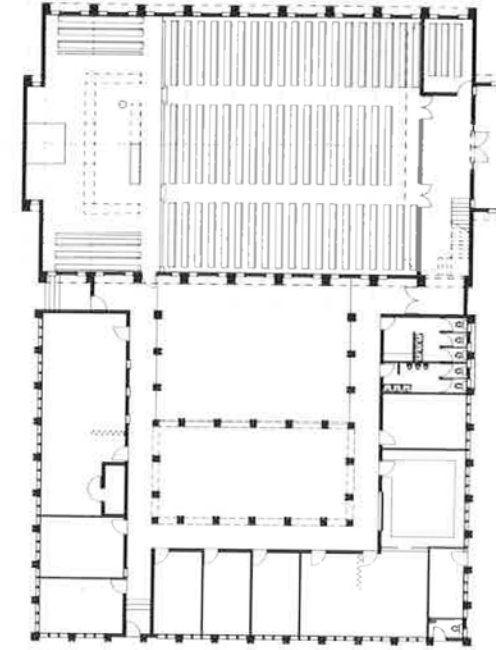
ARCHITECTURE, NEWCASTLE

LEACH & VAN DER WALT, NEWCASTLE

TWEE KERKE

Protestantse kerkargitektuur in Suid-Afrika het al deur vele "Periodes" gegaan. Sommige daarvan was ongelukkige nabootsings van modediere wat van oorsee oorgewaaai het en doellose eksperimente met vormgewing. Gedurende die laaste twee dekades was daar 'n terugkeer na die skrif as norm vir die vormgewing en 'n doelbewuste poging om te voldoen aan die gelowige se behoefte aan aanbidding.

Vandag word daar op sosiaal en maatskaplike gebied geweldige finansiële eise gestel en ons kan die tradisionele konsep van kerkbou met reg bevraagteken. Kerkbou op die platteland word dan veral gekenmerk deur eenvoud van struktuur en materiaalgebruik, wat nuwe eise en uitdagings stel.



REGS: Hervormde Kerk, Vryheid.
LINKS: Hervormde Kerk, Newcastle.

50 PATERSON STREET

A few professional practices scattered around Newcastle decided to pool resources and consolidate into an office block which could act as a symbol and focal point for professional building services in the town.

A narrow site was acquired in the CBD, which had ample space for visitor parking on a quiet tree-lined street as well as vehicle access through a mid-block parking area at the rear.

The brief called for a small office building to house three professional practices, with additional space for other professional tenants. The maximum width of the site had to be utilized to break away from a conventional shoe box design and to allow greater utilization at the rear of the site for parking. A small atrium thus had to be created in the middle of the building to provide light for the interior offices. The entrance narrows down and then breaks out into the atrium, the visual impact exaggerating its size.

The building was constructed with red face brick with a flush glazed facade adding visual interest. Dark glazing and black window frames were used throughout, but the sombreness is relieved by the light airiness of the atrium. It is a "people" building and has drawn much praise from the public.



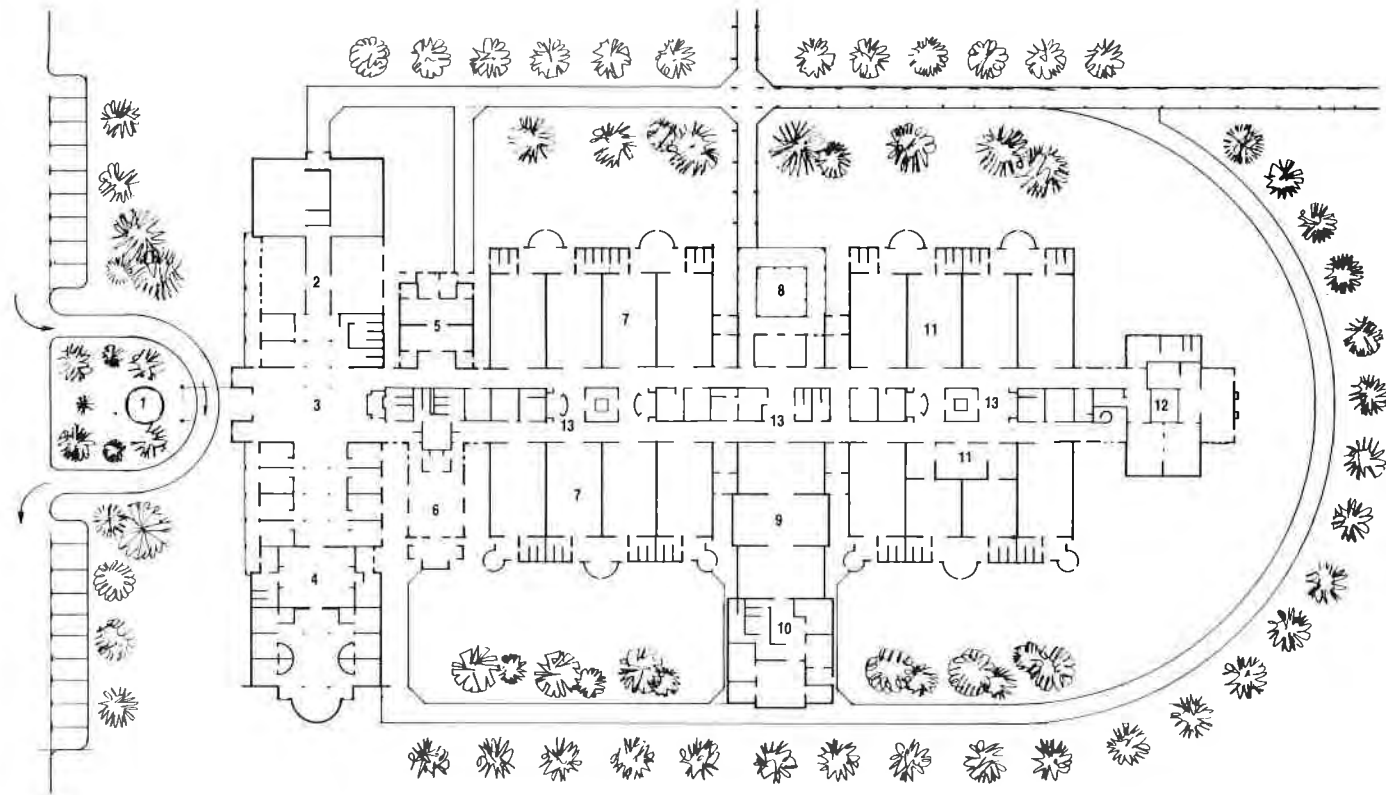
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

MADADENI MATERNITY HOSPITAL

BRUCE TORR in association with STUTTERHEIM, MINA & VICENTE



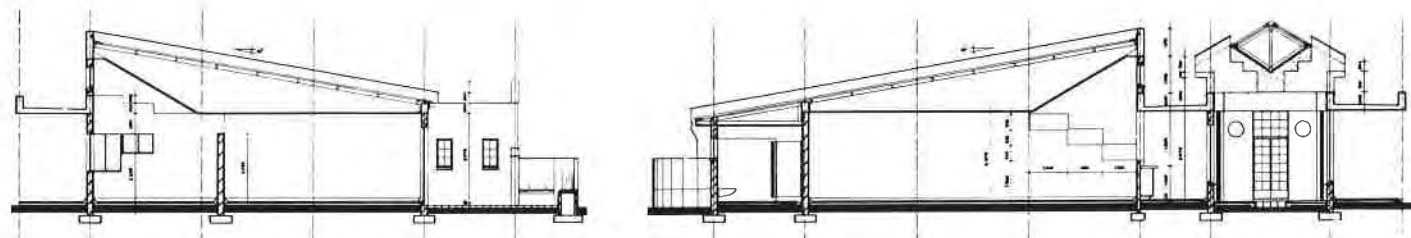
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. WAITING AREA | 6. REST ROOM | 10. OPERATING THEATRES |
| 2. ADMINISTRATION/STORES | 7. ANTE-NATAL | 11. POST-NATAL |
| 3. ENTRANCE FOYER | 8. COURTYARD | 12. NURSERY |
| 4. OUTPATIENTS/FAMILY PLANNING | 9. LABOUR WARD | 13. SERVICES SPINE |
| 5. EXAMINATION AREA | | |

The new Maternity Section at Madadeni Hospital, being a separate and largely self-contained component of the larger hospital, presented the opportunity of breaking away from the simple, utilitarian appearance of the existing building.

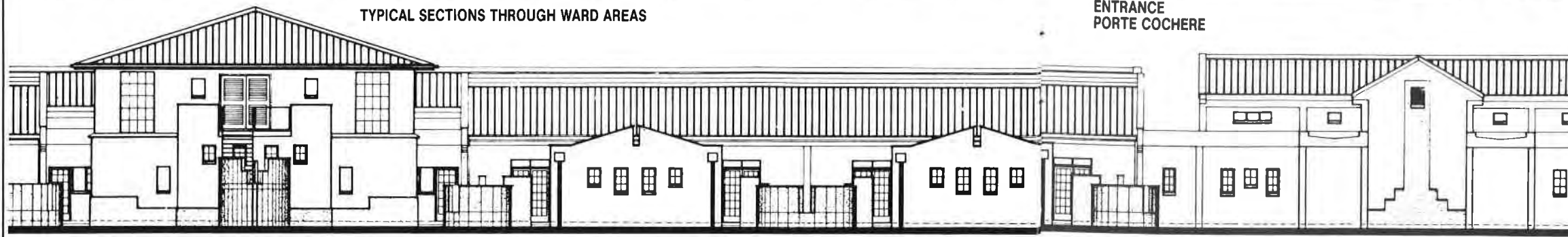
A central spine containing utilities and lit by clerestorey windows is flanked by the main ward areas which open in turn on to small-scale seating areas on the perimeter. The sequential pattern of

procedures is reflected in the planning, from admittance through to the controlled environment of the smaller scale nursery at the opposite end.

Emphasis was placed on scale, and volumes reflect the nature of the corresponding activity. The perimeter of the building is fragmented into nooks and crannies to present a human and domestic scale.



TYPICAL SECTIONS THROUGH WARD AREAS



SOUTH ELEVATION



MAIN ENTRANCE FOYER



DETAIL OF WEST FACADE



ENTRANCE PORTE COCHERE

NEWCASTLE INDIAN LIBRARY

BRUCE TORR, ARCHITECT

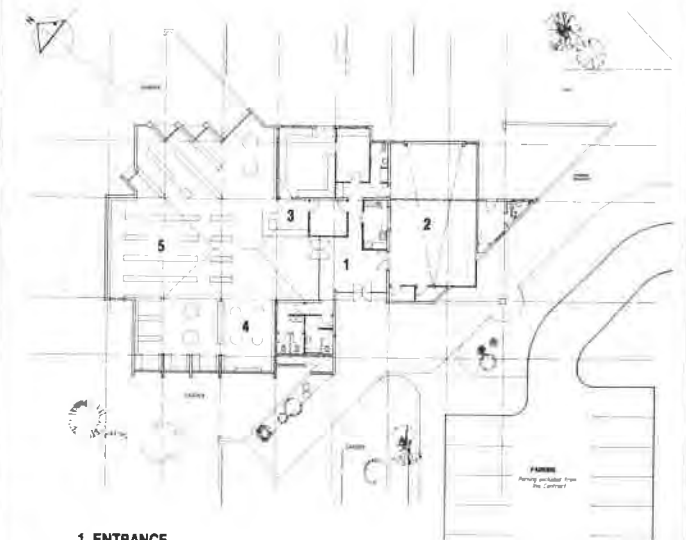
On first inspecting this flat, vacant site, a well-worn path running diagonally from corner to corner was clearly evident. This was the result of a strong link between a busy shopping centre near the east corner and a residential area to the west.

The library was to form the first stage of a series of public buildings planned for the site and the diagonal pedestrian path has been acknowledged and reinforced in the design, while keeping the building square to the boundaries for space reasons. A display window projects into the walkway while the library proper shelters behind diagonal screen walls.

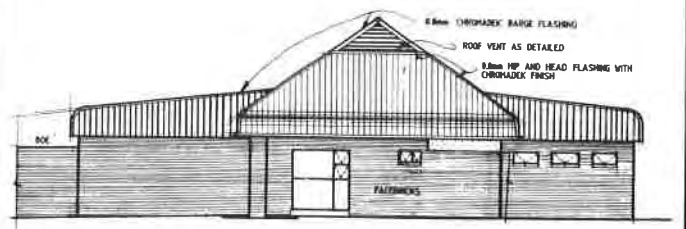
A large roof with "lean-to's" lends a domestic quality to the building.



ENTRANCE



1. ENTRANCE
2. ACTIVITIES ROOM
3. ISSUE DESK
4. CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
5. STACKS



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION