

**COROBRIK®**

**KZ-NIA'S MEDALLISTS**

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## Editorial

### Striking Gold and other Distinctive Medals

The South African Institute of Architects has available 6 categories of Awards for conferment. The first two are for a lifetime's achievement in architecture. The Gold Medal is made "in recognition of an outstanding contribution to architecture"; and the Medal of Distinction "in recognition of an outstanding contribution through distinguished service to the profession and for architecture". The Patron of Architecture Award is made to an individual, or an organisation in recognition of sustained promotion of quality in architecture; and the Critics & Writers Award "in recognition of a dis-

tinguished contribution to architectural criticism and/or writing". The bi-annual Awards of Merit and Conservation Awards are for new and restored buildings respectively, and become eligible for the Award of Excellence.

This year the SAIA honours KZ-N members Brian Johnson with its Gold Medal and Rodney Harber with the Medal of Distinction. Previous KZ-NIA recipients of Gold were Sonny Tomkin (1965) and Hans Hallen (1980), and of Distinction again Sonny Tomkin (1982).

Despite the prefatory explanations, the distinction between the criteria for the Gold Medal and the Medal of Distinction is not obvious. But, in this case, Brian Johnson has Awards of Merit and national leadership to his name; Rodney Harber has distinguished himself as a spokesman for architecture, both nationally and internationally, and thereby has made a particular contribution to the culture of our time.

To mark the national honours bestowed upon two KZ-N members, the current issue is dedicated to their respective oeuvres.

The Awards were conferred at the SAIA convention held in Bloemfontein on Friday, 1st September. We congratulate the KZ-NIA recipients as well as SAIA Past-President Brian Pringrove who, with Rodney, received the Medal of Distinction.

Walter Peters, Editor



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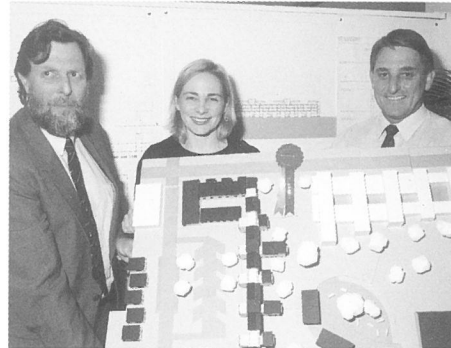
#### Editorial Board

Brian Johnson (Chairman) · John Frost  
Paul Sanders · Paul Mikula · Nina Saunders  
Editor Walter Peters  
Assistant Ted Tollman  
Design Maria Criticos

### 2000 Corobrik Regional Student of the Year

Georgina Walker was announced winner of this accolade for her Design Dissertation entitled Urban Centre for Mandini. Mike Ingram, Corobrik Director of Sales KZ-N, made this announcement at the exhibition of the Dissertations of 2000 held in the Foyer of the EG Malherbe Library of the University of Natal, Durban, on Monday, 19th June.

Second Prize went to **Marcus Beirowski** for his Inner-City Mixed-Use Activity Centre; and Third to **Zunaed Ballim** for An Adults Empowerment Centre in Pietermaritzburg. **Andrew Stokes** received the Prize for the Best Use of Clay Masonry for his Mixed-Use Urban Traders' Centre for Warwick Junction, Durban.



From left to right: Head of School—Dennis Radford, Georgina Walker and Mike Ingram.

### AU REVOIR TO JOHN FROST

Former NPIA President and KZ-NIA Editorial Board member, John Frost, has decided to take a 2-year sabbatical from the practice he founded 35-years ago, Interarc. He and his wife, Moira, will be 'packing for Perth', Western Australia. We wish the couple well.

Editor

### SAIA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Durban's International Convention Centre has been awarded the SAIA Award of Excellence, the first time this Award has been made for a building in KwaZulu-Natal.

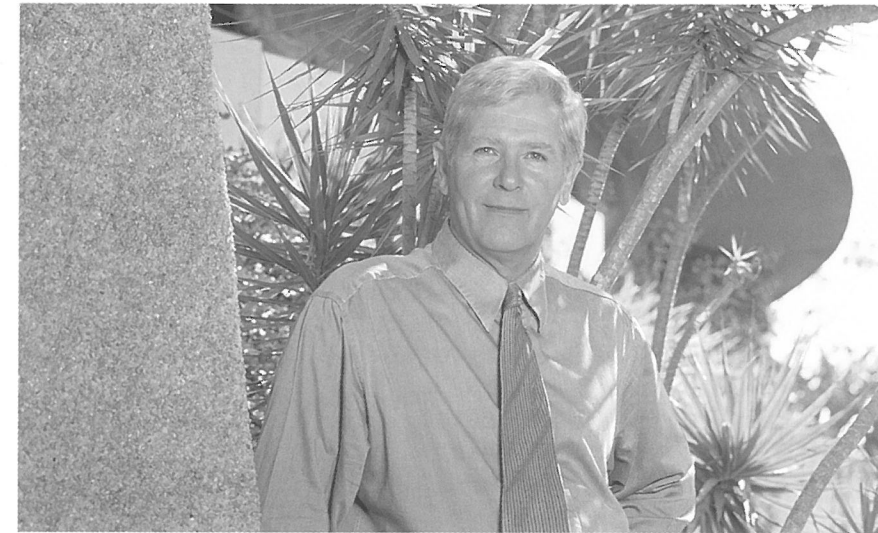
Congratulations to the team: Architects in Association: Stauch Vorster, Hallen Custers Smith, Johnson Murray; the Consultant Architect Philip Cox of Sydney, Australia; and the Project Managers Andrew & Boule (Pty) Ltd.



Craig Hudson

### SAIA Gold Medal

#### Brian Johnson



Craig Hudson

#### Citation

Brian Charles Johnson (b. Bath, England, 1941) is a designer of integrity who demonstrates a mastery of his art. In a body of work characterised by organic and geometrically-derived architectural statements he seeks modern ways of attuning human and universal spirituality.

Following on from his immigration to South Africa in 1968, Brian Johnson began his practice in Durban with a series of lauded private houses, a continuing *metier* of his. Since his collaboration with Andrew Murray and the establishment of the practice Johnson Murray Architects in 1981, numerous architectural awards attest to the level of achievement maintained by the practice. The first award from his peers was for the building owned by the practice and in which it is located, Arcadia Park, on Durban's Berea, built 1985. Since then Johnson Murray Architects carries the riposte: design skill, business acumen and rigorous practice.

However, Brian Johnson's stature is not based solely on his practice credentials. He served as President of the Natal Institute of Architects 1990-91. He then advanced to the vice-presidency of the Institute of South African Architects before being elected its President for the period 1994-96, Brian Johnson being one of only a few incumbents to have served not a two-year, but a consecutive three-year term of office. During this time he facilitated the transformation of the Institute of South African Architects from a compulsory to a voluntary body, which included the re-drafting and adoption of the new national Constitution for the restyled South African Institute of Architects. He

negotiated the re-entry of the South African Institute into the Commonwealth Association of Architects and its admission to the African Union of Architects. To his credit, Brian Johnson continues to serve as Vice-President (Southern Region) of the latter organisation, a position he has held since 1995.

For over a decade Brian Johnson has chaired the Editorial Board of the KZ-NIA Journal and continues to serve on various committees of the regional Institute. One of his presentations on behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture, led to the formation of D'Urban Changes Forum, a multi-disciplinary body of professionals whose voice is widely accepted as that of custodian of Durban's built environment. A further achievement of Brian Johnson was the chairmanship in 1998 of the combined 5th Triennial Congress of the AUA and the SAIA *ArchAfrica* Conference, hosted by the KZ-NIA and held in Durban.

Brian Johnson has been involved in architectural education, briefly as a lecturer, but more often as a visiting critic, or as a speaker at conferences and convenor of workshops. Much of his work has been published and he has contributed to various journals including those of the Anthroposophy Society, to whose ideals he subscribes.

Few other architects balance design creativity, good practice, and sustained service to their Institute and the community, while excelling in each. By his example Brian Johnson has given renewed embodiment to the status of the architect and it is for this reason that the SAIA Gold Medal is the appropriate acknowledgement.

#### OEUVRE: Education

1961-65: "My architectural education started rather badly after being given the outdated advice by my school career's master that only architect's sons could become architects and that architectural education was taught through serving articles within a practice.

After securing a job in a small practice in Bath, I attended the local school of advanced Technology one day per week to develop a basic grounding in architecture. After two years I realised that this was not leading to a full education in architecture and obtained a scholarship from the Wiltshire County Council, where I lived, and attended the newly formed Bath University of Technology as a full-time student in Second Year.

Our year was the first to complete the architectural course for a degree and required us to sit the RIBA examinations in London. It was still, however, a further two years after passing all the academic examinations that the University finally decided what degree it would confer upon us and having moved and working in London, I was never able to attend my graduation ceremony".

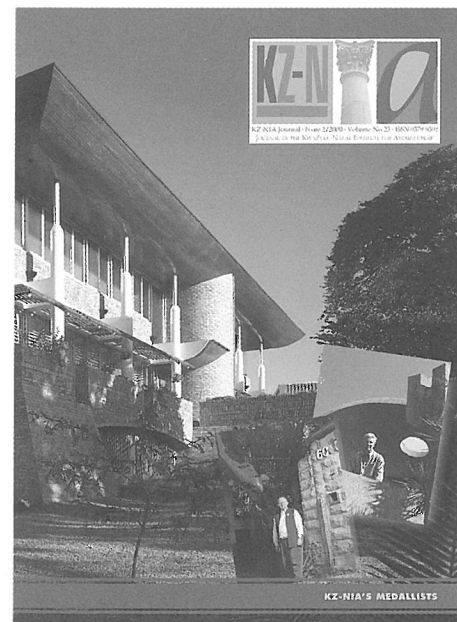
1968: "I immigrated to SA on what was then to be the first leg of an exploration of the world. After working in Johannesburg for five months, I moved to Durban and have settled there ever since".

1976: "I became a committed Anthroposophist and this has had a profound and developmental influence on my work. I believe that the art of architecture is instrumental in helping to shape the inner life of the individual and the evolutionary destiny of humanity. Architecture is therefore a crucial intervention into our lives and places an enormous responsibility on the architect to develop his awareness of its finer implications. My studies in Anthroposophy are therefore aimed at building up an holistic picture of man and an understanding of the natural environment in which we work".

**Anthroposophy** is based on the premise that the human intellect has the ability to contact spiritual worlds (*anthropos* = human; *sophia* = wisdom). It was formulated by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher, scientist, and artist, who described it as "spiritual science". He founded the Anthroposophical Society in 1913, based in Dornach, Switzerland, and the pedagogy of the Waldorf schools in 1919 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

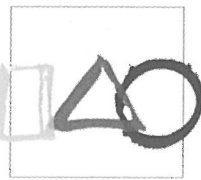
#### OEUVRE: Practice

1971: Established own Practice -  
Brian Johnson Architect, Durban



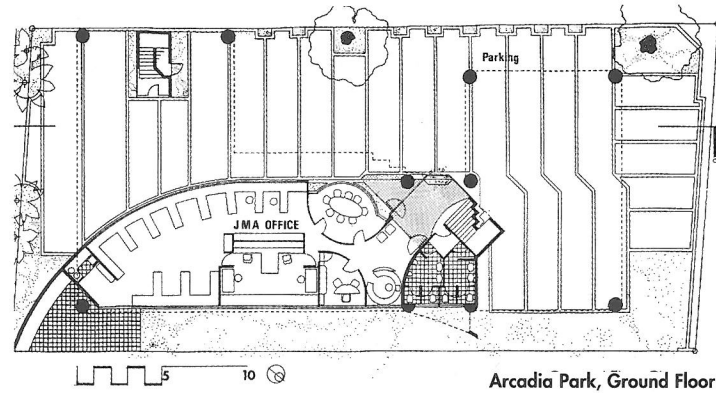
COVER: Natalmed, Amanzimtoti. Johnson Murray Architects, 1999. Photo inserts: Rodney Harber (left); Brian Johnson (right). Photography by Craig Hudson.

**1981: Partnership with Andrew Murray: Johnson Murray Architects founded.**



**JOHNSON MURRAY ARCHITECTS**

The practice chose as its logo a Japanese Zen-caligraphic drawing showing (from right to left) 'creation' through the simple progression from the unity of the circle, through the triangle, to the manifest form of the square (Ref. Lawlor, R Sacred Geometry. London: Thames & Hudson, 1982)



Arcadia Park, Ground Floor

**1983: Arcadia Office Park, Durban**  
1985 ISAA Award of Merit  
(NIAJ 2/1986)

**Citation:** *The office block succeeds in presenting facades to public view which set off the natural surrounding of the adjoining park, establishing a presence on the entrance elevation to the street, and striking a nice balance between maintaining privacy and security for the office while enhancing the street scene with a generous entrance court.*

**1984: House Thorpe, Durban**  
1991 ISAA Award of Merit  
(NIAJ 1/1992 and 3/1993)

**Citation:** *The jury appreciated the design sophistication employed to achieve the apparent simplicity and transparency of this building, the quality of craftsmanship especially in the staircase, and the manner in which the landscaping reinforces the architectural concept.*

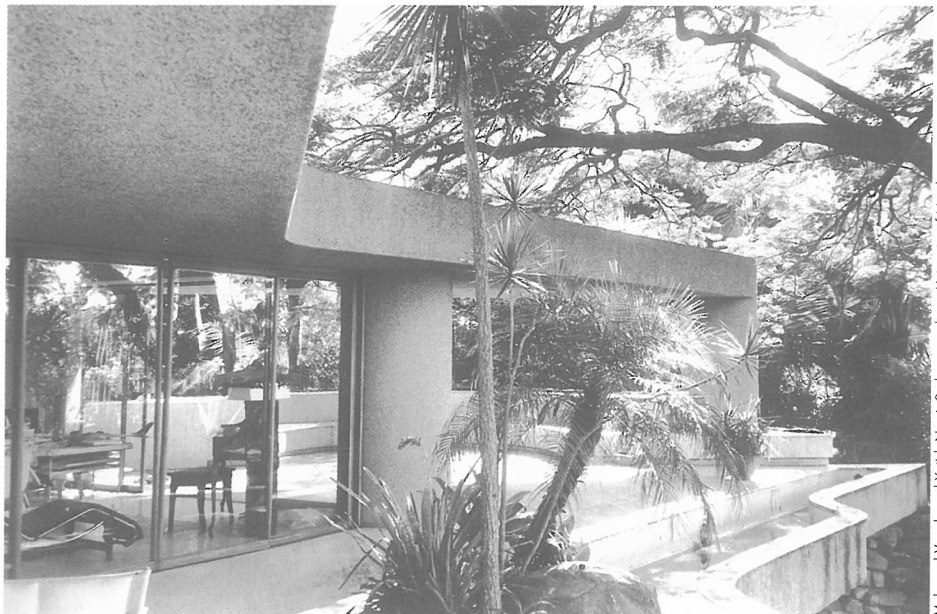
Johnson markedly changed his architecture during the late-1980s. These changes involve substituting "Euclidian geometry with projective geometry", the moulding of space and changes in finish, away from the smooth plaster to rich textures often including natural rocks. The most vivid break was House Pattendeen in which Johnson absorbed the setting and created a sculptural response to the site.

**1986-87: House Johnson, Westville**  
(SA Architect, July 1998)

This plan of concave and convex incisions on the terrain, virtually an abstraction of landscape contours and tropical plant forms, captures the distant view to Durban to the south, and borders the moated pool on the north. A transparent living core on ground floor staked out by a "network of columns"; the bedrooms are in a troglodytic semi-basement arrangement opening on grade.

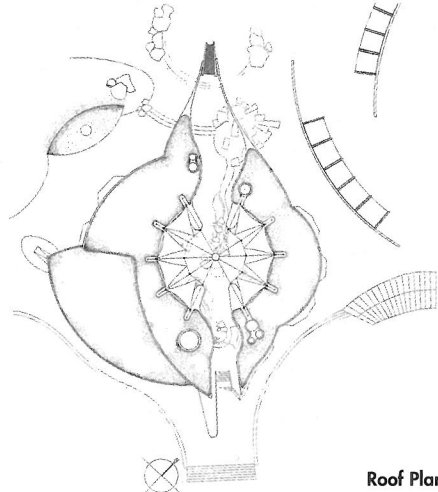
**1992: House Pattundeen, Westville**  
1993 ISAA Award of Merit  
(NIAJ 3/1993) *see cover insert and p1*

**Citation:** *This is an example of organic and caring architecture, a house which embodies values much deeper than functionalism. The jury acknowledges this building as an outstanding work of architecture. Every aspect has been thought through and integrated to create an art, and an architectural and landscaped environment exactly suited to its purpose*



Mohammed Voneda and Yashish Nersis, 2nd year students, University of Natal

**1992: Tongaat Beach Amenities, KZ-N (project)**



Roof Plan

**1994: Novalis-Ubuntu Teacher Outreach Centre, Wynberg, Cape Town**

"Although unfinished, I consider this to be my most important building to date, as much for the method of working as for the architecture which, when combined with the work and presentations within the Centre, brings it the closest to the striving for a total work of art.

The design process was punctuated by workshops of painting, clay modelling, vision building etc so that everyone connected with the building could take ownership and share in the conceptualising. It was a privilege to work with a group of dedicated human beings who gave so much input and yet allowed me the freedom to orchestrate the forms into architecture which aims to express and nurture their work".

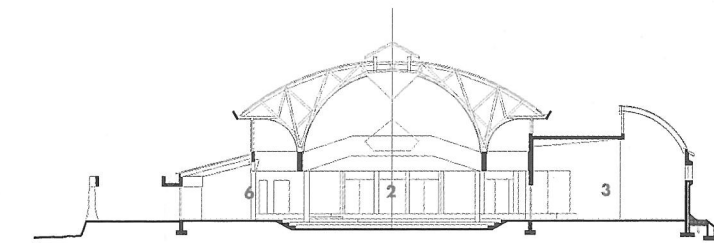
*For too often in the past, impoverished communities have been given impoverished buildings through impoverished thinking which might serve the needs of protection from rain and cold, but do nothing to lift the human spirit. (Ithemba, Nov. 1994)*

*Dr Rudolf Steiner, the innovator of anthroposophical or human-scale architecture, commented at the beginning of the century that the uglier and more soulless our built environment becomes, the greater will be the rise in violence and crime concurrent with the decay of our social life.*

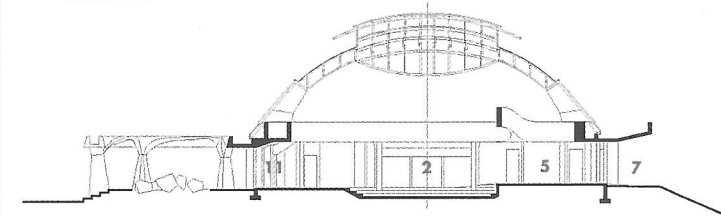
*In a multitude of ways, architecture shapes human behaviour. As Winston Churchill observed, "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us".*

A geomancer (diviner) was commissioned to survey the site for adverse or negative earth energies, termed geopathic stress spots. After identifying some adverse such areas on the site, "harmonic adjusters" were built and later cemented into the foundations of the building.

Geomantics have re-emerged in recent times as effective professionals in the prevention and treatment of Sick Building Syndrome by the correct siting of buildings. Foster's Bank of Hong Kong and Shanghai was sited and adjusted by geomancers (*The Novalis-Ubuntu Centre*).



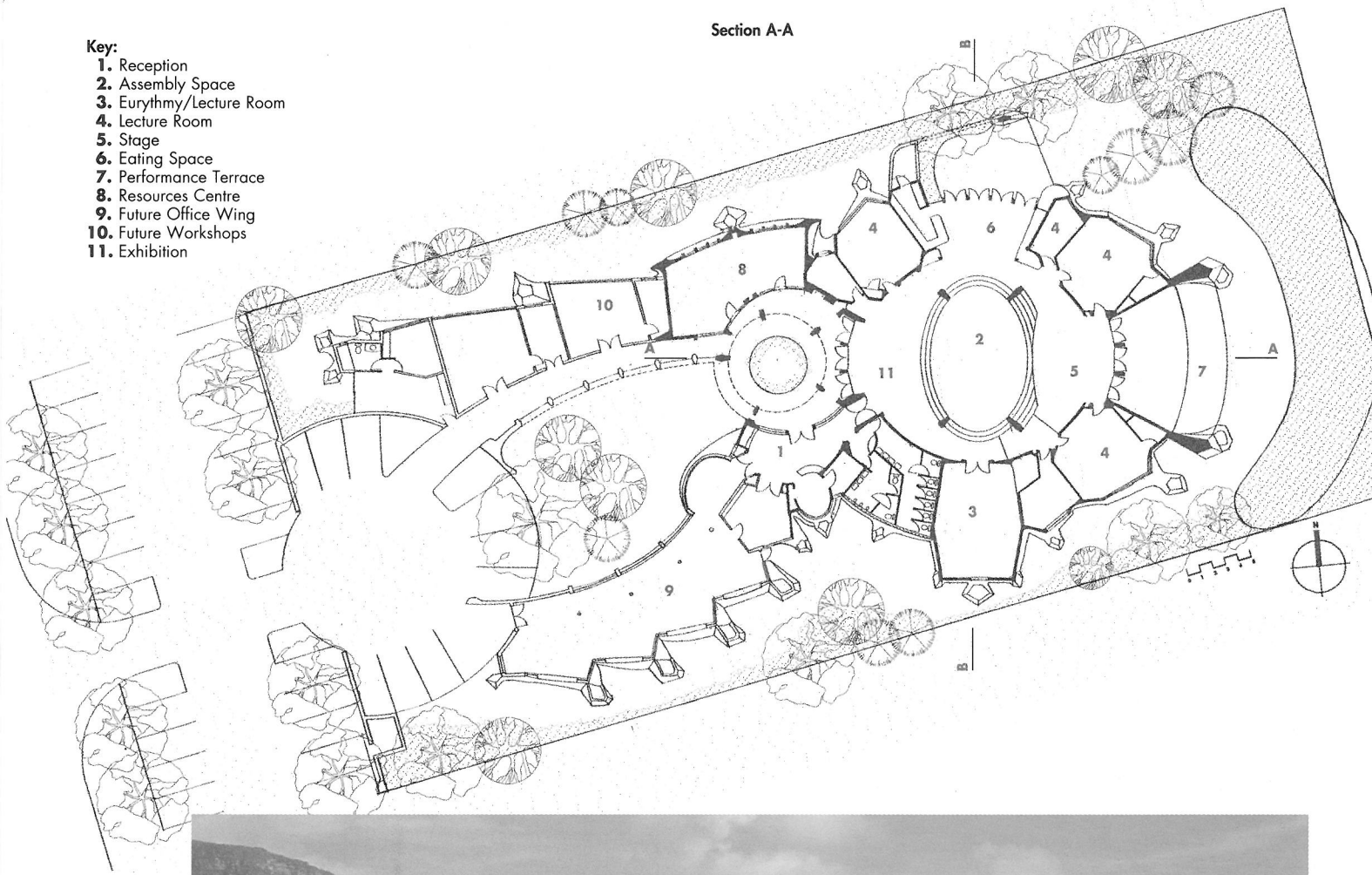
Section B-B



Section A-A

**Key:**

- 1. Reception
- 2. Assembly Space
- 3. Eurythmy/Lecture Room
- 4. Lecture Room
- 5. Stage
- 6. Eating Space
- 7. Performance Terrace
- 8. Resources Centre
- 9. Future Office Wing
- 10. Future Workshops
- 11. Exhibition





### 1996: Rudolf Steiner Anthroposophical Centre, Johannesburg

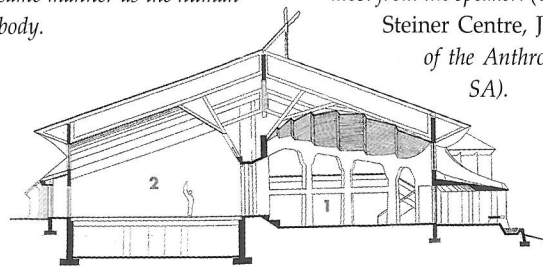
In accordance with the principles of thinking, feeling and caring, the building is divided into 3 main parts. The east side consists of the library, offices, book shop and group room and hence

deals with the intellectual needs of people (thinking); the central part contains the meeting hall, stage and Eurythmy area, and deals with the social needs of people (feeling); while the west side consists of the art room, kitchen and refectory area and the caretaker's flat, to serve the physical needs (caring).

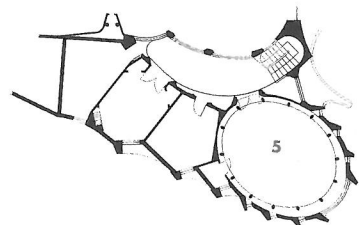
The shapes of the rooms are determined by the functions of the rooms and the need to nurture the type of consciousness that will work most effectively with the activity within the room. The forms of the central part are rounded to help people move easily within the space towards each other so that a socially interactive way of working is generated. The forms in the other parts of the building are more angular and sharp in keeping with the intellectual thinking associated with debate and study that needs to be generated in these spaces. There are virtually no right angles in the plan as these relate more to the earth and rigidity than to the human being, and the rooms are not arranged in any regular manner such as a grid. The walls of the rooms are either smooth curves (eg meeting room) or sharp and angular (eg the library). Very few of the interior planes are flat since all types of angles activate the imagination. However, despite this apparent irregularity, the building is strongly symmetrical about its central

axis. The building's main symbolic function is to house the word and the spirit of wisdom and to nurture the study of the healthy spiritual human being and his relationship to the cosmos. The human body, which houses the spiritual human being and allows him to experience the earth, is symmetrical about its axis yet has many diverse forms and irregular shapes. By imitating this feature, the building is responding to its task as the physical carrier of a spiritual impulse in the same manner as the human body.

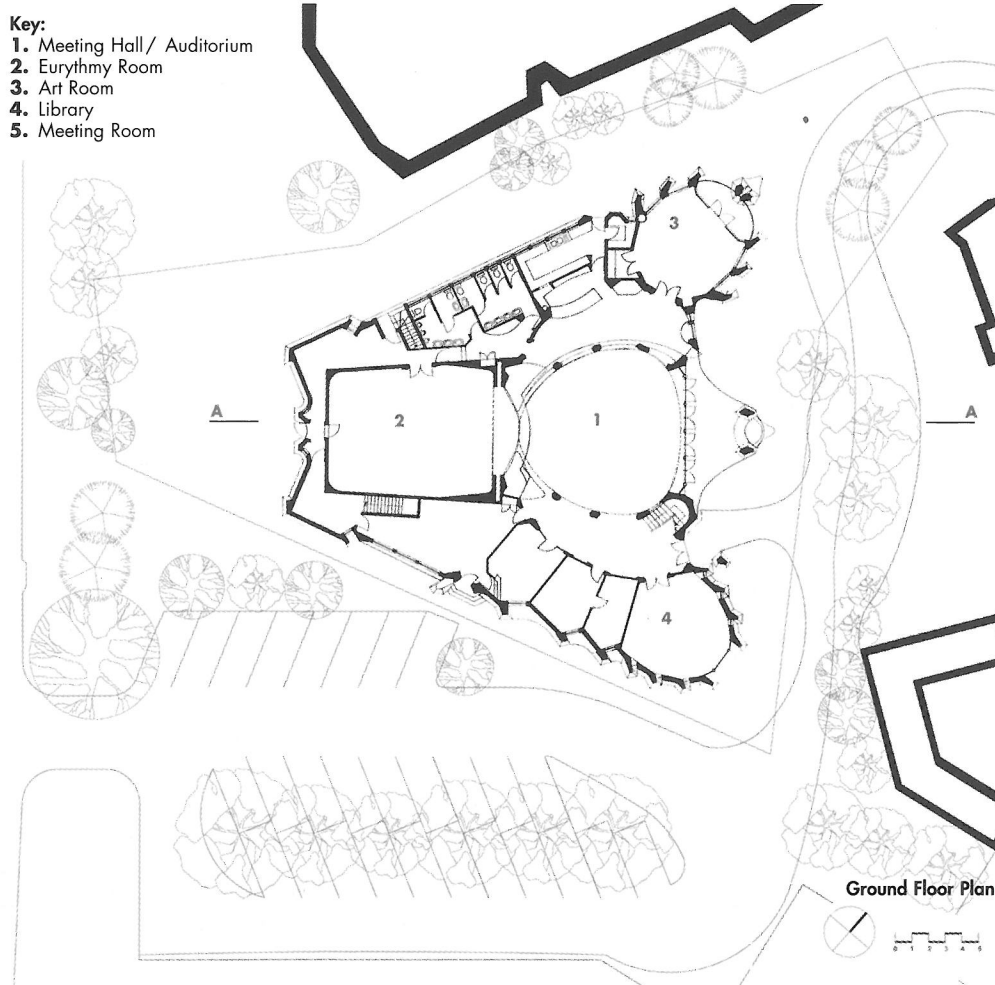
For instance, the central meeting room has a form similar to the rib cage which shelters and protects the human heart; the point on the extended terrace has a similar form to a vertebra; the arcs formed by the pillars can be seen as ribs and the two side wings are reminiscent of two arms, the gesture being that of an embrace, with the hands meeting at the back stage door. The shape of the central part of the building is roughly a figure of eight which is also the symbol for eternity. If a line of people were walking in a figure of eight, the point of chaos would be where the two lines cross over, in this case at the front of the stage where the speaker would stand. Points of chaos can be seen as learning points and it was therefore the intention that by designing the building in this way, people would learn the most from the speaker. (Turner, A: The Rudolf Steiner Centre, Johannesburg. *Journal of the Anthroposophical Institute in SA*).



Section A-A



First floor Plan

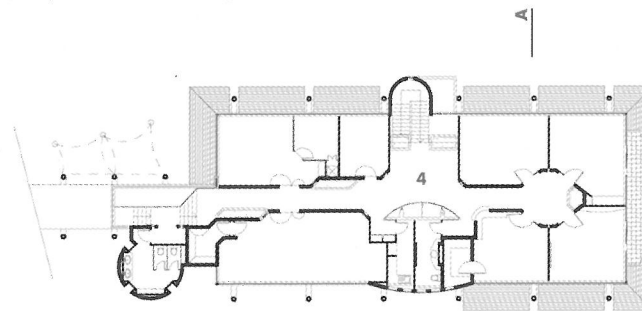


Ground Floor Plan

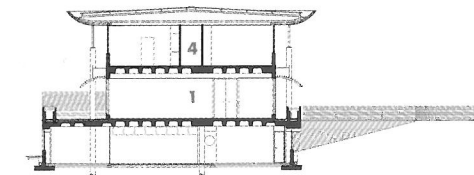
- Key:**
1. Meeting Hall / Auditorium
  2. Eurythmy Room
  3. Art Room
  4. Library
  5. Meeting Room

### 1999: New Office Wing, Natalmed, Dan Pienaar Drive, cnr Kort Street, Amanzimtoti, KZ-N

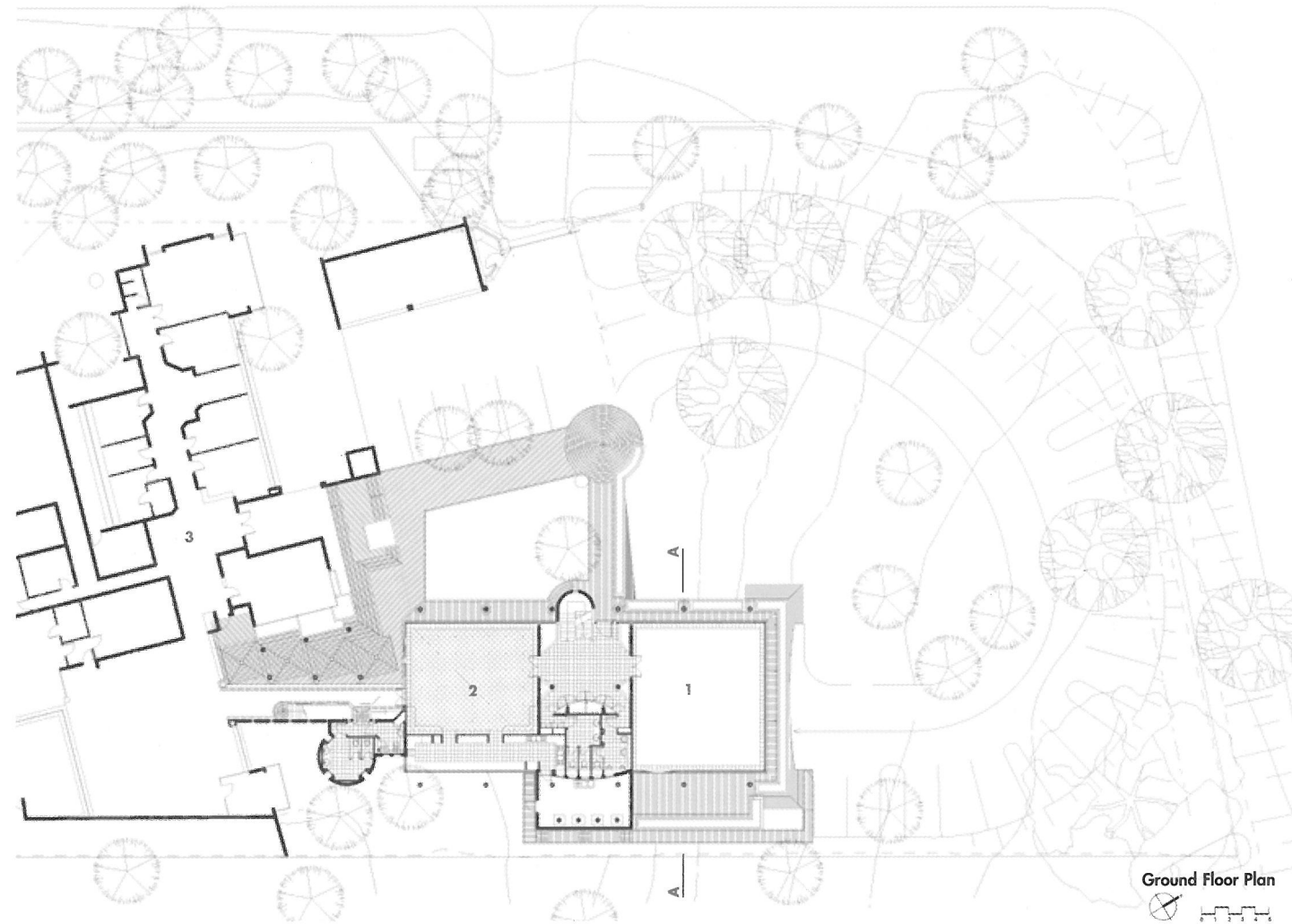
- Key:**
1. Boardroom
  2. Canteen
  3. Existing Offices
  4. Executive Offices



First Floor Plan



Section A-A



Ground Floor Plan

#### PUBLICATIONS BY JOHNSON

Healing Architecture: An Anthroposophical Approach to Design for the Third Millennium. *The Novalis-Ubuntu Centre. A building for the Human Soul*. Wynberg: The Novalis Institute, nd, pp23-28  
Network of Columns. *SA Architect*, July 1998, pp47-49

#### PUBLICATIONS ON JOHNSON

Johnson Murray (House Aziz Dada, Westville). *UIA International Architect*, Issue 8, 1985, pp42-43  
Mwanga, C House Pattundeen. *South Africa. A Guide to Recent Architecture*. London: Ellipses, 1998, p318-19  
Sharp, C Dynamic Design in Durban (Arcadia Office Park). *Habitat No65, 1984*, pp44-49  
'Human Scale' Architecture for new Novalis /Ubuntu College (Wynberg). *Supplement to Ithemba, Newsletter of The Novalis Institute*, November 1994, pp1-4  
Turner, A The Rudolf Steiner Centre, Johannesburg. *Journal of the Anthroposophical Institute in SA*, No 2/98,

December 1998, pp3-5.

Wigand, M A Home for Anthroposophy: the Rudolf Steiner Centre (Johannesburg). *Anthroposophy Worldwide* 7/1999, p8.

#### CONFERENCES CONVENED

*Archafrica*, 5th Triennial Congress of the AUA and SAIA Conference, Durban, October 1998.

#### LECTURES GIVEN BY JOHNSON

Spiritual Values in Architecture, Tunisian Order of Architects Conference, *Values of Architecture and Architecture of Value*, Tunis, May 1997.  
*Responsibility for the Built Environment*, Annual Discourse, Faculty of Architecture & Allied Disciplines, University of Natal, Durban, June 1996.  
*An Organic Approach to Architecture for the Third Millennium*, ISAA Africa 2000 Congress, Cape Town, April 1995.

#### PERSONAL AWARDS

1998: African Union of Architects: Presidential Certificate of Commendation "in recognition of effort in the pursuit of the development of Ideals of AUA and the profession of Architecture"

2000: KZ-NIA Certificate "in recognition of service to the profession of Architecture over many years"

2000: SAIA Gold Medal

Compiled and edited from a curriculum vitae and other material supplied by Johnson, and assistance from Gopal Naidoo and Lynda Johnson.

Walter Peters

## SAIA Medal of Distinction

## Rodney Harber

## Citation

Rodney Roy Harber (b. Pietermaritzburg, 1940) has distinguished himself as an architect, architect-teacher and architect-planner but notably in the role of ambassador for the built environment, in which he has promoted, either directly or indirectly, the understanding of Architecture among a wide public.

On graduating in 1965, Rodney Harber worked for Hallen & Dibb, the leading design practice at the time, before accepting an appointment to the teaching staff of his *alma mater*, the University of Natal in Durban. He then attained a qualification in Planning, awarded in 1987, and subsequently developed a keen interest in alternative yet sustainable construction, in low-income housing and in the conservation of historical architecture – all this in addition to his long-standing interests in Islamic and Hindu architecture. Deservedly he was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 1992.

To Rodney Harber practice and teaching are two sides of the same coin, a fact borne out by the many local and international students who pass through his office. There is a warmth and breadth of approach in his work, in concordance with his own personality, and the work is marked by a willingness to experiment stemming from an intense understanding of the building process. Because of this his buildings and projects have been widely published and exhibited both nationally and internationally. As he is concerned with people first, his forte is in community work, and his understanding of the current needs of contemporary society.

He is an inspiring teacher with a natural gift for communication. He is much in demand as an external examiner and as a speaker at conferences, and hence has participated in both roles in many corners of the globe. He is co-author of the book *Hindu*



Craig Hudson

*Temples in Natal* and has contributed to numerous publications on a fascinating range of subjects usually alternative in focus: indigenous architecture; housing the marginalised, upgrading informal settlements etc.

Rodney Harber is much admired for the multiplicity of his skills which have seen him represent the KwaZulu-Natal Institute on various local and provincial committees, most notably, the Durban

City Planning Committee. He served as President of the Institute for an unprecedented 5-year period (1994–5; 1996; 1997–98) during which time the Institute broadened its base by providing for affiliate membership and hence the change in name from Institute “of Architects” to Institute “for Architecture”. He chaired the KZ-N Architectural Heritage Committee during 1989–1997; was appointed a Council member of *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali* (Heritage KwaZulu-Natal) in 1999, and a year later, as the solitary architect-member of the Council of the South African Heritage Resources Agency. He has served as Director of the African Art Centre, 1983–88, and had conferred upon him the title of Honorary Patron in 1997. He served as President of the Natal Society of Arts 1974–78; and Vice-President of its national counterpart, the South African Arts Association, during 1979–82. As a planner, he held the Chair of the KwaZulu-Natal Branch of the South African Planning Institute, 1993–94.

Like most architects Rodney Harber enjoys travelling yet he thrives equally on showing visitors his hometown, Durban. He has a contagious enthusiasm for architecture and this has been sustained over many years and in many fora.

It is because of his outstanding work as a roving ambassador for Architecture and the respect and affection he has so earned, that the SAIA Medal of Distinction is being awarded to Rodney Harber.

## OEUVRE: Education

High School: Maritzburg College  
1965 Awarded degree B Arch (Natal)  
1971 Appointed Lecturer/Studio Master (full-time), School of Architecture, University of Natal, Durban. Promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1983 and Associate Professor in 1992. Teaches Design and Construction, Urban Design and Housing, and Vernacular Architecture.

Founder member Built Environment Support Group (BESG), 1982.

Visiting lecturer to all SA Schools of Architecture, Kumasi in Ghana; AA, Oxford Brookes & Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK; Weimar, Germany; Rotterdam & Delft, Netherlands; Trondheim, Norway; Geelong, Australia; and Rizvi College, India.

## OEUVRE: Practice

## 1966-8: Convent for the Society of St John the Divine, Wentworth

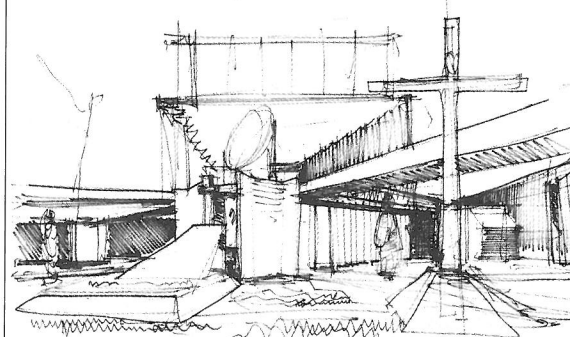
Architects: Hallen, Dibb & Partners.

Job Architect: Rodney Harber

“This project involved the relocating of the Convent from Pietermaritzburg to Durban. It was a long story full of indelible memories but I wish to relate one lifelong lesson.

Hans Hallen asked me to come in on a Saturday morning. He called for a thick pen and a sheet of sketch paper which he placed over the site plan. The North point was first, followed by statements of constraint and opportunity, trees, levels, views etc. In no time a bold responsive design emerged, in plan and in section only, which remained virtually unchanged from that day onwards.

Nobody had before demonstrated to me the importance of committing an early drawing of the total setting of a project to which a concept could be superimposed, interrogated, adjusted and very thoughtfully detailed. This was in contrast to the painful process of planning (beware of cross-circulation), elevating, fenestrating and finally fitting the roof. With Hans the section came long before the elevations”.



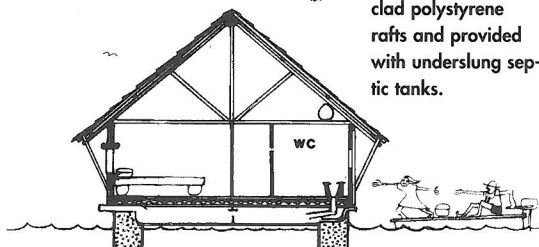
Conceptual sketch by Hans Hallen

Conceptual sketch by Hans Hallen

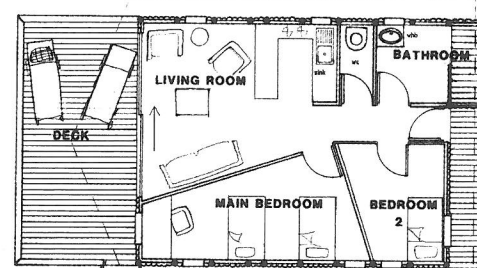
## 1997-98: iPhiva Camp, Eshowe, KZ-N



Chalets supported on pairs of fibreglass-clad polystyrene rafts and provided with underslung septic tanks.



Section A-A



FLOOR PLAN



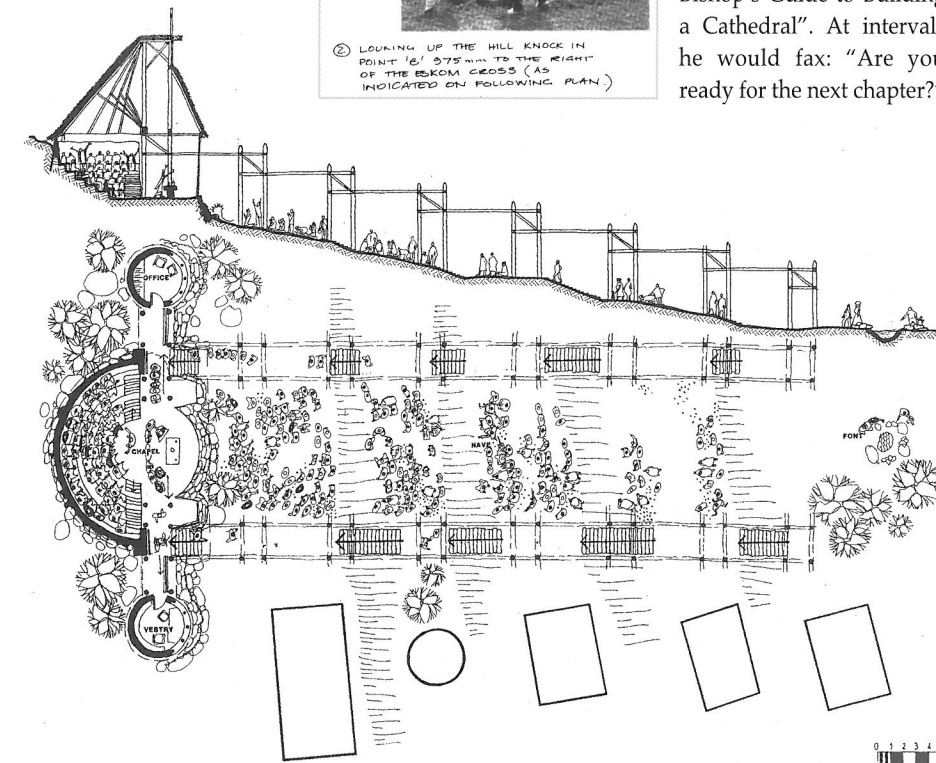
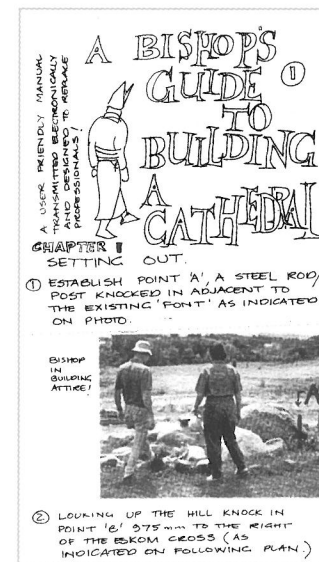
This was a joint eco-tourism venture between the Mpongose Tribal Authority, the Provincial Dept of Nature Conservation and the private sector, on the shoreline of the 1200 hectare Goedetrou Dam on the Mhlatuze River, north of Eshowe. Situated within the Mhlatuze Community Conservation Area, it is stocked with waterbuck (*iPhiva*), giraffe, warthog, zebra, Kudu & Impala.

Accommodation consists of 5 floating chalets (floaters) with private motor-skiffs; tented units under canvas; and land-based chalets with canvas walls and ‘Somali’ roofing (coconut palm fronds). All lighting, water heating and pumping is by solar power. Although anchored in position on the dam, the floating chalets can rotate up to 360 degrees, while skiffs provide for birdwatching.

## 1998-2000: Glenthorne ‘Cathedral’, Kokstad

Client: Bishop of Umzimvubu, Glenthorne, Kokstad. Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Anglican)

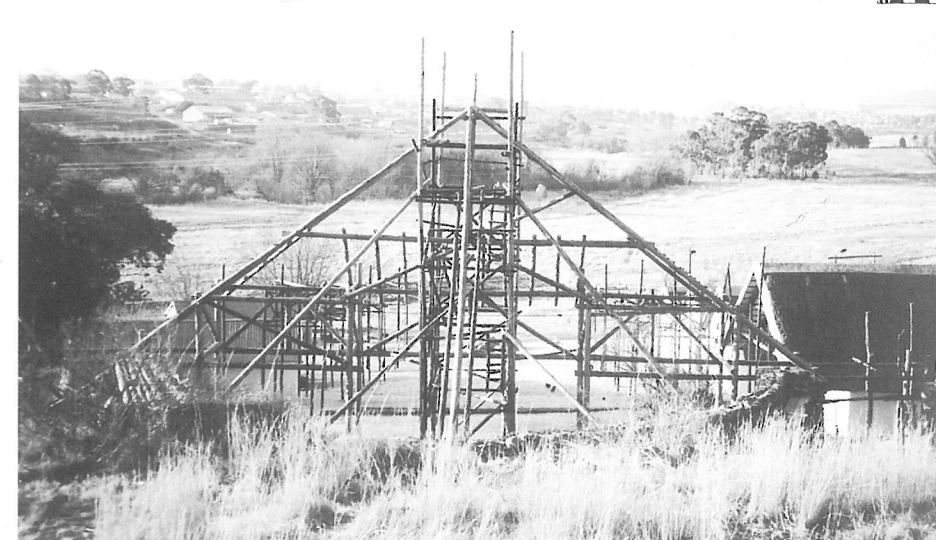
“The greater portion of my projects have been in rural areas with inadequate budgets. The only solution is to utilise local materials, traditional builders, and well tried technology. Some buildings are only implied, like the ‘cathedral’ at Glenthorne. Here the ‘choir’ of dry stone walling and thatched roofs is used for regular services while the ‘virtual’ nave is defined by a row of poles on 7 platforms which symbolise the ‘stations of the cross’, and is only filled during major festivals.



It stretches to the front at the bottom of the site, and is normally a pond. Sources such as John Fitchen’s *Building Construction before Mechanisation* become the inspiration for an entirely different communication system which is rooted on a detailed site model”.

Between trips to Namibia, eastern Germany, Pretoria and India, Harber was forced to explain his proposal to the Bishop in writing. In underscoring his proposal, Harber explained that “the result will challenge the best fan vaults in England”. Following the Bishop’s reply, Harber retorted: “You seem to be very keen to downgrade from High Gothic to Gothic!”

Once approved, Harber composed the construction details by way of “A Bishop’s Guide to Building a Cathedral”. At intervals he would fax: “Are you ready for the next chapter?”





of Sarvodaya.

The first development meeting was held in a container with both parties arriving in armoured cars. At one meeting the chairperson, in a businesslike manner said 'Will the committee please rise, our vice-chairman was killed last night'.

After 14 years of negotiation, a development committee is in place, basic services have been provided, housing is underway, and the community has agreed to move off the historical apex. One morning we received a telephone call to say Sarvodaya must be reconstructed for President Mbeki to open it 14 days time!" (on 27 February 2000).

1999-2000: Phoenix Settlement, Inanda

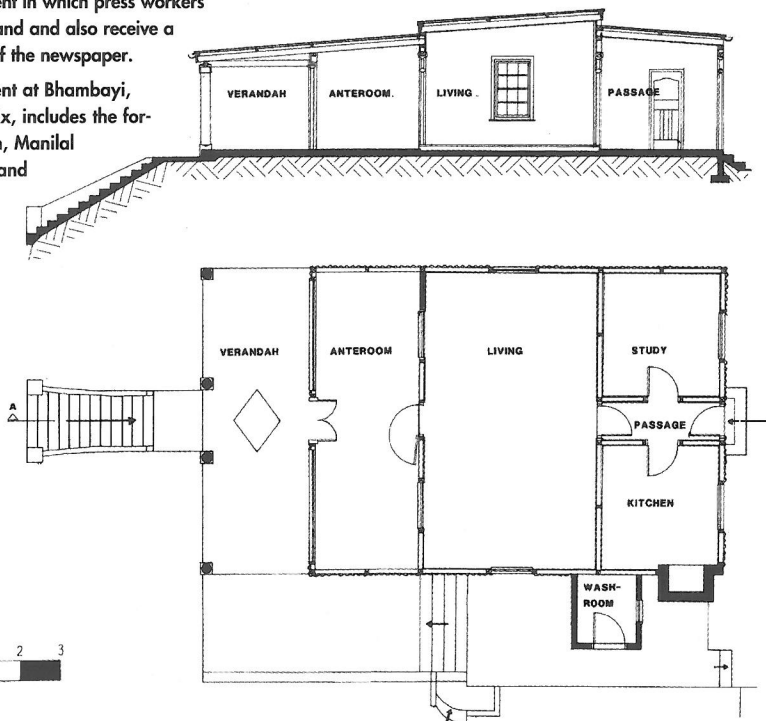
"My involvement at Phoenix Settlement goes back three decades when the former building housing Gandhi's Printing Press (above) was converted into a fully equipped art school for the edification of the surrounding people. A site visit three months later revealed that the building was full of manual typewriters. These were obviously perceived by the community as the only way to escape their cycle of poverty! Rule No.1: Listen so hard that you even hear what people are not saying!

The site was altered to serve as an outstation for the University of Natal's Medical School, but totally destroyed during the 1985 Inanda land invasion. Mahatma Gandhi's humble cottage, Sarvodaya, was pulled down as was even the Kasturba Gandhi Primary School which provided bricks for mjon-dalas. The 18 houses on the 100-acre site increased to 1800 within weeks to form an exceptionally violent battleground leading up to the 1994 elections. I witnessed a horrific lynching within meters

In 1904 Gandhi relocated Indian Opinion, the newspaper he had established in 1903 to a farm of 100 acres called Phoenix. The idea was to have a communal settlement in which press workers would cultivate the land and also receive a share of the profits of the newspaper.

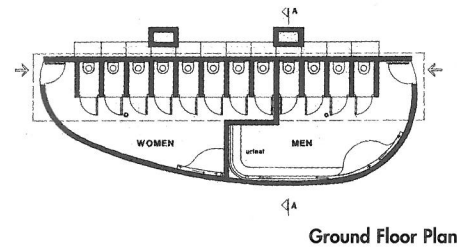
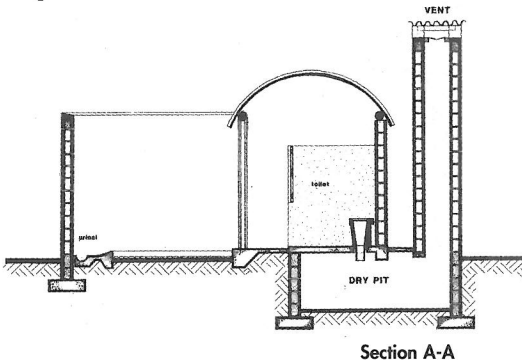
The Gandhi Settlement at Bhambayi, bordering on Phoenix, includes the former house of his son, Manilal (top right), restored and recycled to provide accommodation for researchers, and Gandhi's printing works which is to become a small business centre, amidst the ruins of the school which the Phoenix Settlement Trust intends to rebuild.

ment committee is in place, basic services have been provided, housing is underway, and the community has agreed to move off the historical apex. One morning we received a telephone call to say Sarvodaya must be reconstructed for President Mbeki to open it 14 days time!" (on 27 February 2000).



1998: Ablutions, Second Beach, Port St Johns, Eastern Cape

"My involvement with Port St Johns goes back many years with a major input when 23 buildings had fallen into total disrepair after the belated incorporation into Transkei. The Town Hall, Library and Municipal Workshops were re-commissioned but it became clear that new approaches were essential. In the case of the public ablutions, dry pits were recommended to bypass management problems. Architects have the responsibility to ensure that even at low cost, utilitarian buildings are attractive and robustly detailed to resist what is, sadly, inevitable vandalism and neglect. The ventilation stack is designed to act as a regional fly-trap!"

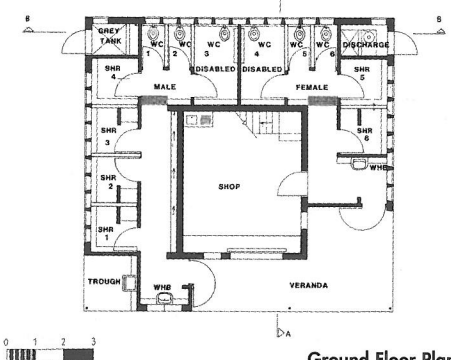
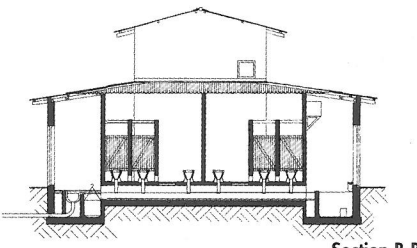
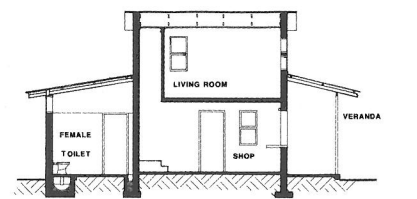


PORT ST JOHNS UPGRADE



1999: Public Facility, Mandini, KZ-N

"Urban design sometimes involves years to resolve conflicting interests and it then takes as long to execute the ideas from depleted municipal budgets. Design decisions can be a tussle between groups of traders and can sometimes only be resolved with models utilised for gaming. The toilet depicted on the model (bottom right) has now been built as an aqua-privy that flushes with the used shower water".



Ground Floor Plan

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East Griqualand. Building in a Marginalised Setting. NIA Journal 1/94
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Other Paradigms. KZ-NIA Journal 1/98
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The Juggernath Puri Temple. Credo, April 1967, pp1-2
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ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE
Perspekta: Islam in Suid-Afrika. Plan 4/1974, pp2-12
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Another Perspective on Industrial Architecture. NIA Journal 4/1991, p5
HISTORY OF SA ARCHITECTURE
Duadic Construction - the Work of Canon Edgar Rose (with B Kearney) Building 29, April 1991, pp26-31
Union Style. NIA Journal, No 3&4, 1992, pp7-8
COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE
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Zwei Bürgerzentren in Mtumbane und Mbazwane, Südafrika & Bürgerzentrum in Nthlungwane, Südafrika. Architektur + Wettbewerb, September 1995, pp 2-4
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In Search of the African City, CAA NewsNet, Issue No 7, June 1999, p4
ENCYCLOPAEDIA ENTRIES
South Africa: Architecture (Vol 29:104-107); Pretoria (Vol 25, p565-6); Cape Town (Vol 5, p667-8). Macmillan: The Dictionary of Art. London 1996

- BOOKS REVIEWED
Focused on F.A.R. FARMAX Excursions on Density by MVRDV 010 Publishers. SA Architect, Sept/Oct 1999, p57

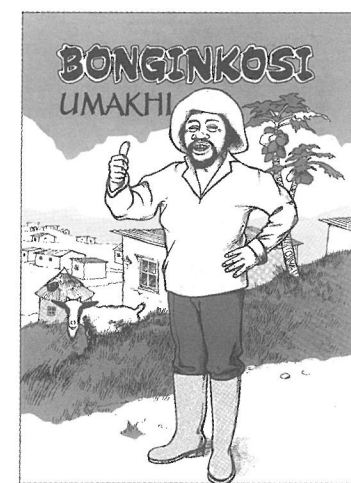
- WORK EXHIBITED
Public Architecture and Settlement, Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, 3 October -11 Nov 1995

- SYMPOSIA CO-ORGANISED
African CBD, African Cities Workshop, Durban, 25-30 April 2000

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- (Selected from a vitae of 59!)
1973: Success or Failure in the Selection of Architectural Students (with B Kearney), Architectural Teacher's Seminar, Durban
1983: Indian Architecture in SA. What happened? Congress of the ISAA, Cape Town.
1989: Designing for the Poorest. Quality in the Built Environment Conference, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1990: Traditional Temples in SA. Conference: 300 Years, Calcutta
1993: Building Communities with Public Buildings. 19th WEDC Conference, Accra, Ghana
1994: In Situ Upgrading at Bester's Camp. 6th International Conference on Housing, Beijing
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- 1998: A Million Houses by April 1999. And the next 5 Years? Keynote address: Institute for Housing of SA, Durban
1999: Architecture and Conscience. Netherlands Institute of Architecture, Rotterdam
1999: Brave New Frontiers - Housing Challenges of the Future. Keynote address: Developing Housing Environments for the New Millennium, Nelspruit, Mpumalanga



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Joubert,O Afro-Pean Axis. Reflecting on South African Architectural Expression. World Architecture, Issue No 12, 1991, pp70-77
Strauss,P Post-Azarian Eclectic. Africa Style in South Africa. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994, pp150-1

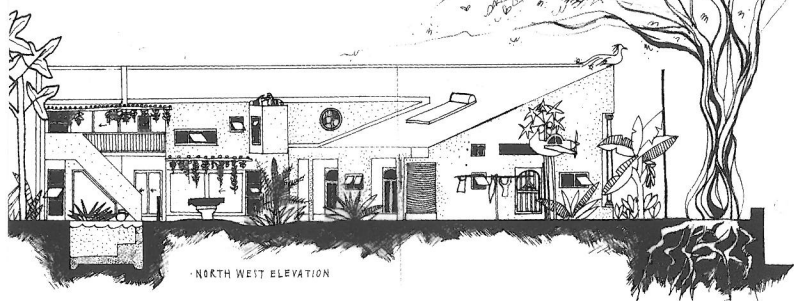
- Slessor,C Narrow Margins: Mbazwane Resources Centre & Nthlungwane Community Centre. The Architectural Review, March 1995:42-45
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Melvin,P & De Beer, I Country Report: South Africa. World Architecture, No 50, October 1996, pp38-43
Mwanga,C Mansel Road Development, & House Williams. South Africa. A Guide to Recent Architecture. London: Ellipsis, 1998 pp 240-3 & 328-9.
Sanders,P Defining a Relevant Architecture in South Africa. ARQ, Vol 4, No 1, 2000, pp67-79

- PERSONAL AWARDS
1996: 25-Year Service Award, University of Natal
2000: KZ-NIA Certificate "in recognition of service to the profession of Architecture over many years".
2000: SAIA Medal of Distinction

## DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

In applying for accreditation to a Design Review Panel of a private estate, and for a copy of the appropriate Development Manual, Harber listed 3 published or lauded examples of his domestic work, and waxed lyrical over his repertoire:

*iBhanoyi*, the Harber family home, Overport, Durban 1990. The Zulu connotation *iBhanoyi* is taken from the model aircraft at the gable end of the drawing by Elena Pascola.



"Plus over 30 houses: seriously wealthy or dirt poor high in the Berg and on the shore; transformations or spanking new Christian, Parsee and Jew; timber, stone, brick, block work and stabilised earth four floating, and one in faraway Maine of immense girth; Please supply the 'rules of the game' (Let's hope it doesn't make them all look the same!)"

(Rustomjee File, Letter dated 17 April 2000)

### 1971: Established own Practice

"Besides dozens of students, local and foreign, I have professionally collaborated with Gernot Ehrlich, Jessie Birss, Adrian Masson, John Wilkins, Sally Adams, Carol Vos, Joanne Lees, Kenny Webster, Trevor Pierce-Jones, Tressan Sullivan, Kirk White, Nina Saunders and Michael Krause; and been more than ably assisted by Sonja Roffe, the late Suzanne Russell, and Helen Labuschagne". Compiled and edited from a curriculum vitae and other material supplied by Harber, additional research, and the assistance of Roz Harber.

Walter Peters

## Tributes to Rodney Harber

### Sartorial Kindness

It is always gratifying when a colleague receives the recognition of his peers and especially so when he happens to be a friend of long standing. However this is even more gratifying when the award is for a lifetime's achievement, in this case for Rodney Harber's devotion to Architecture in all its various forms; teaching, practice, conservation and many more.

In an age, which increasingly emphasises and rewards the specialist, Rodney remains the generalist with an interest in all things architectural. In this he is not unique as this was very much the tone of the School of Architecture in its earlier years, something very much fostered by the staff of the time. Much of that still survives in the continuing expectation that all staff teach in the studio and still make contributions to the lecture courses. Obviously the underlying rationale is that architecture cannot and should not be neatly cut into small chunks, that it exists as a body of knowledge.

So it is and has been for Rodney, driven by his great enthusiasm for our discipline he has measured temples in Durban and caves in Lesotho, he has designed and built robust buildings without much regard to the niceties of passing fashions as well as inspiring several generations of students with his pithy and direct comments. His sartorial elegance is also legendary, however for me one characteristic shines through and this is his kindness and generosity. Almost all of us who know him, particularly his students, have experienced this. Acerbic he might be but this is so alloyed with kindness that it just becomes an endearing characteristic. All that remains is to salute Rodney, the architect and the man for his contribution to Architecture in South Africa.

Dennis Radford, School of Architecture University of Natal

### Peppered Human Spirit

The Purpose of my first meeting with Rodney Harber, in 1992, was to ask for his help in drawing up plans for the High School at Ndumo., Rodney duly went to Maputaland and provided me with plans, based on which the initial funding for the project was eventually raised, and the P.E.A.C.E. Foundation was founded.

On my first trip to Maputaland with Rodney, to get the project started, I armed myself with a pillow, expecting to spend some time sleeping on this long haul. That was the first and last time that I took a pillow with on any of my trips with Rodney, and there have been many to the most remote regions of three Provinces all of them memorable with Rodney providing an inexhaustible amount of information on an extraordinary variety of topics, peppered with his unique sense of humour.

Rodney's appreciation of people and their idiosyncrasies as individuals as well as in groups, his sensitivity to and extraordinary knowledge of the environment and natural history, aside from the body of knowledge which makes him a superb architect, make him a worthy recipient of any Award which celebrates the uniqueness and superb quality of an exceptional human spirit.

Nora Tager, P.E.A.C.E. Foundation

### Rodney on the Rural

I regarded most opportune, a trip to Maputaland with Rodney, or more appropriately 'Cuz' as I knew him as a fellow student. Due to such remoteness, construction methods involved the use of labour, materials and components of local origin.

Even more important than his ability to generate fine buildings from limited resources, is his unique sense of humour which automatically defuses any situation of potential conflict or tension, and makes the often long and arduous

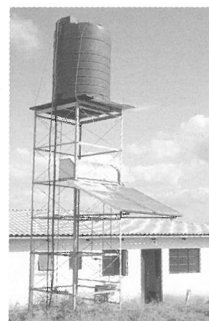
days associated with rural work bearable.

There have of course been moments of extreme anxiety and one that comes to mind occurred when Nora Tager of the P.E.A.C.E. Foundation and I were travelling with him between sites in Maputaland. After some four hours of travel in the Harber Land Rover, I took over the driving and Cuz lay down in the back and went to sleep. Imagine our consternation when after a further two hours he suddenly rose up behind us with glazed eyes and body the colour of boiled haddock. We thought that we had cooked him via the heat generated by the Landies exhaust which is located just below the metal base. Not wishing to have to face Roz and the Harber siblings by returning him in this state, we plied him with fluids both externally and internally, and after about twenty minutes, we had him back as near to normality as Cuz will ever get, and he survived the day to be able to receive this Award, which is being made to a recipient who I believe to be most worthy of such honour.

George Norval, School of Construction University of Natal

### 1992: Ndumo High School, Maputaland, KZ-N

"In the remote Makatini Flats, new schools such as Ndumo High School have been centered about towers with photo-voltaic-powered pumps to header tanks, that water is available for block-making facilities, and panel collectors for heating and lighting. The panels were subsequently stolen so the community has a 'monument to 'high tech'!"



## KZ-N Institute for Architecture

### Book Review • Letters • Obituary

#### BOOK REVIEW

**On Technique and Understanding**  
A review of Alaric Napier's *Enviro-Friendly Methods in Small Building Design for South Africa*

The distinction between the technical and theoretical aspects of our activities has been thrown into contention by a series of recent developments, both global and local. The global emphasis on "outcomes" in education has, in some quarters, tended to support research into and teaching of applications rather than theory. This is consistent with one of the central beliefs of neo-liberal society that all activities should "pay their way" and that activities which are too theoretical to sell should be proscribed. Locally, educational policy has also been directed to establishing the equivalence of what was previously "technical" education with academic education through the National Qualification Forum and other policies.

In the workplace too, the distinction between technical and professional activities seems to be weakening in many cases and even to have fallen away in others. This tendency can be seen in Architectural education where courses of study which were previously technical are now being seen to vie with the universities in the preparation of professionals and graduates of previously technical courses are being admitted to senior professional degrees.

At first sight it may appear that a tactical response to the changes above would be to concentrate on those aspects of our discipline most likely to bring in immediate return and to train technical specialists who can occupy lucrative consulting positions in the economy.

As attractive as this may appear, certainly in the case of Architectural design, it is an unworkable approach.

No matter how competent a technician or other specialist may be, the vision of a generalist is needed to call them up at the appropriate time and to the appropriate purpose. In building design, this supervening function is provided by the architect. Analytical problem-solving techniques and algorithms work well in the analysis of existing decisions, and can be carried out by technical spe-

cialists of one kind or another. Without building designs to analyse, architectural designers must be guided by an understanding of the issues involved which transcend any of the finite entailments of their decision making. One can leave the development of this understanding to the analysis of precedent or whatever other factors constitute "intuition", provided that the design being created is not intended to be a significant departure from existing practice. In our attempts to recover a more ecologically sound integration of architecture and environment after the disaster of modernity we will have to take many such departures. Under these circumstances, the understanding which we would wish to find in our designers should accrue from an understanding of the principles involved, and training can less than ever be considered to be a viable substitute for education.

At this time, then, Alaric Napier's explicit decision to focus on detail rather than principle in his *Enviro-friendly Methods in Small Building Design for South Africa* can be questioned, despite its apparent congruence with an educational policy which supports applicability. In a world which no longer accepts a clear distinction between architectural designers and the technicians which support them, it is essential that all aspirant designers should understand the principles which underlie the technical details with which they are acquainted.

This said, I should make it clear that Mr Napier's book is not by any means devoid of fundamental principles. It is a veritable tour de force, being an amply illustrated and well written description of an extremely wide range of issues affecting the relationship between

buildings and their environments. The writing and the drawings are highly original, effective and to the point, and many of the treatments presented in detail are not, in my experience, to be found elsewhere and could be publishable separately as research.

Each chapter has a set of problems and exercises in which the author's teaching experience is evident. The work is provided with an index. Technically, the book is marred by a complex page numbering system and more seriously by the complete absence of

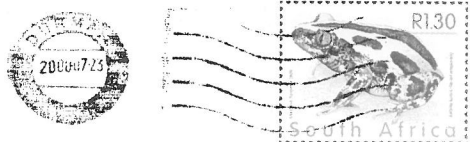
references and acknowledgements. Although the work is original, the origins of some of the ideas should be acknowledged, and a bibliography would allow the interested reader to consult other relevant material.

I have no hesitation in recommending this book to all designers of the built environment, undergraduates, graduates and professionals. The worked examples and tips will provide useful prototypes and ideas in the development of a more environmentally responsive approach to the design of buildings.

Readers should be aware, however, that an encyclopaedia of ideas is no substitute for the understanding of principle to which this book can contribute.

This book has been published and is being distributed by the author, A. Napier at 125 Rif Road, Manor Gardens, Durban 4001, telephone (031) 261-2461. At the time of going to press it is priced at a very reasonable R65.

Derek Trygve Wang  
School of Architecture, University of Natal



#### LETTERS

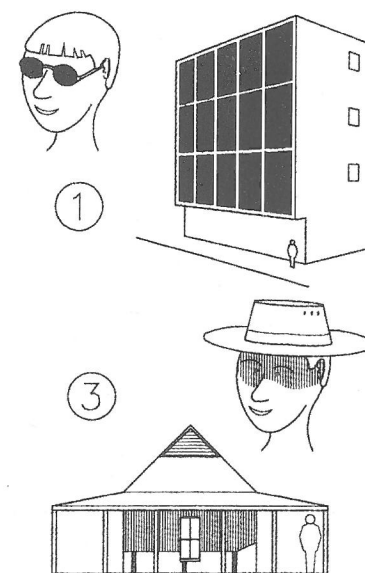
### Ahead of his Time

I am tremendously touched by the article you printed about my father, Michal Zakrzewski. As you say he was neither an architect nor a member of KZ-NIA but you were generous enough to mention that he had impact on the built environment of 20th century KZ-N.

He would be so pleased to know that you wrote about him and recognized his contribution. When he was appointed to design and develop the Ocean Terminal, he employed Jurek Warunkiewicz to work on the project with him. The architectural community at the time frowned upon this, they did not feel it was right that an engineering firm should be employing architects, that it should be the other way round. He was ahead of his time in this respect as ZAI went on to employ many other architects and became a multi-disciplinary firm accepted by Durban's architectural community. He would be very happy to know that the architectural community honored him in this way. He would also be *absolutely* delighted that the Ocean Terminal came 6th in your Best Buildings of the 20th Century in KZ-N.

I thank you on behalf of my father, his family and the many people whom he inspired.  
Magda Zakrzewski, Atlanta, USA

CLOTHES AND BUILDINGS  
for human comfort: 1-4



## Factual City

Terrific issue. Congrats. [KZNAJ 1/2000]

I notice that the editor refers to Philip Dudgeon's 'central Post Office'. This is not entirely factual as it was originally designed as the Durban City Hall. I have an idea that the conversion was carried out by the PWD. I did certain subsequent work on it in the later '70s and had sight of the old blueprints.

Louis Bouwer, Pretoria.

*The former use of the Post Office building was acknowledged twice in the article. But, to stay factual, only in 1935 did Durban achieve city status.*  
Editor

## No File 13!

As a concerned professional, not young, I feel compelled to make comment on several related issues which were brought up in the 1/2000 issue of our excellent Journal.

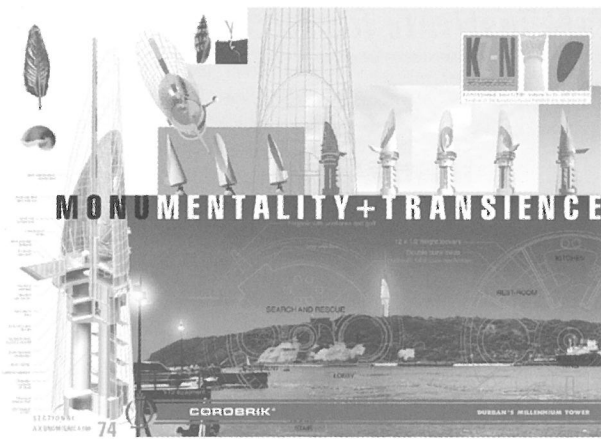
I'm pleased to note that young Don Albert is also a crusader, albeit his crusading is about 'musty attitudes'. His winning design for the Tower is exciting, dynamic, fantastic. Attaching to Wally Peters' comments on the Romanising of Durban, and now, with the advent of the Tower, the 'African Renaissance' (it is a word I myself like using in my crusade). I believe that all buildings except those exempted in terms of the NBR should be democratised by being accessible to persons in wheelchairs, especially if they are new buildings. The Tower already suffers from not being available to the public, why make it inaccessible to the worker in the wheelchair?

The reason given to me by Pat Raw for this omission was the all round visibility required at the Operations Room level. I think this is a 'cop-out'. The lift going to the top floor, making the toilet facilities suitable, and adjusting some of the other detailing will not affect the budget, or the view, and in any case I don't think this is an either-or situation at all. It's just a negative attitude (as opposed to a musty one). The lift going to the Operations Room level will also be useful when the valuable equipment installed up there is moved or replaced.

*Portnet* is probably one of the largest employers in the country, and as such will want to set an example of compliance with the Employment Equity Act.

I hope this letter is not going to be put in File 13, as this really is an important aspect of this important project, not compliance with the Act so much, as being in tune with the African Renaissance.

Joan Seirlis, Durban



Port Engineer Pat Raw replies:

It was a requirement of the ultimate tower user, the Port Captain, not myself, that there be all round visibility. This was a primary requirement and a lift shaft and toilets on that floor would have severely compromised that requirement.

*Portnet* is certainly not one of the largest employers, but yes, we are subject to the Employment Equity Act, and most certainly we are doing all we can to set an example. We have installed wheelchair lifts in some work locations and are in the process of installing one in our conference centre.

But, the good news. Having discussed the issue with the Port Captain, he acknowledged that the Port Control function was suited to wheelchair-bound persons. We then challenged the professional team to find a solution, and I am pleased, although not surprised, that they have found a solution without compromising the all-round view requirement. The toilets remain on the floors below.

## OBITUARY

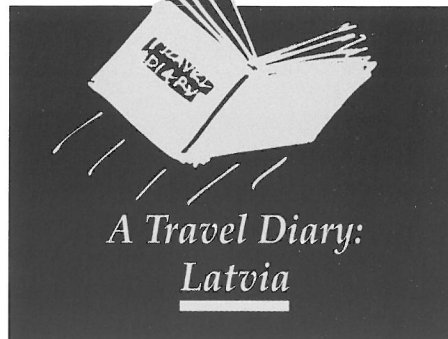
### FW (Bob) Powers 1911-2000

Following in the footsteps of his father Ernest Marston, Frederic Walter (Bob) Powers served as NPIA President, 1942-43.

Bob and his brother Ernest S, joined the practice founded by their father, Powers & Powers. In 1975 that practice amalgamated with a Johannesburg practice in which Bob's son Michael was a partner, The Gluckman De Beer Margoles Partnership. On retirement, Bob was made an ISAA Life Member.

Powers & Powers designed Memorial Tower Building (1947) on the Durban campus of the University of Natal. On completion, the architects were nicknamed 'Towers & Towers' and the building 'Taj Malherbe', after Dr EG Malherbe the University Principal of the time.

During 1951-59, the School of Architecture was accommodated in MTB. The building was declared a National Monument in 1986.



On Lewcock informed me of a conference on Art Nouveau in Riga, the capital city of Latvia, which central district had just been entered on the World Heritage list. This appealed to me and I submitted a paper on the Jugendstil architecture of Lüderitz, Namibia, probably the only centre of Art Nouveau in Africa.

My paper being accepted and funding granted, I knew the December conference meant winter. But, other than Baltic Pines (which forests still abound) and a Latvian b&w film screened at the 1999 Durban International Film Festival, I had no association with Latvia nor was I sure of its exact location. I then came across an article 'into the frozen unknown' in the SAA inflight magazine, *Sawubona* (July 1999) wherein the author Stephen Siebert coined the term "mega-cold", and concluded that "nobody in their right minds visits Riga in winter". But he added that the "architecture is stunning" and advised that vodka wards off the cold.

Latvia lies on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, between Estonia and Lithuania and is bordered on the east by Russia and Beloruss. The country was Russian until 1918, and then enjoyed independence until 1940. After the 2nd

Below: Apartment building, Kalēju iela (Road) 23. Architect Paul Mandelstamm, 1903.

Right: The most elaborate Art Nouveau buildings are in Alberta iela, New Town.



world war, which badly damaged the capital Riga, Latvia came under Soviet control until 1991 when the collapse of the USSR resulted in its independence. Free parliamentary elections have been held, and while the country remains poor, it appears to be developing a stable economy with the Lat, par with the £UK.

Visas are issued at the airport and, following on from a delay (due to the condition of my passport, as the chief eventually explained), I boarded a taxi for the 20 minute trip into the city. Riga lies inland of the Daugava River mouth and on crossing the river I could appreciate the striking medieval skyline of the city which will celebrate its 800th anniversary in 2001.

Suddenly a boom control: only certain taxis or cars with special passes are allowed into the historical core of town where streets are for pedestrians only, many cobbled. Old Town Riga is relatively small so exploration on foot would in any event be best. Vestiges of the medieval wall remain and the public squares are alive. On one of them, to my surprise, I saw a McDonalds outlet, where due to the possibil-



ity of indicating my order, I patronised, and soon I found an internet café too. Little English is spoken but, despite the recent liberation from the communist world, there appears to be a spirit of enterprise and Riga has rapidly westernised.

I arrived on a Friday with the Saturday for personal exploration before the inspection of Old Town Riga on Sunday

as a preface to the conference. I decided on a train trip to Majori, a village of many collectively known as Jurmala on the Gulf of Riga, to walk along the beach and visit the timber architectural heritage. To get to the station, I passed the Market halls of the 1930s, structurally impressive, but more obvious were the queues of people lining the route, much like Jehovah's Witnesses stand at street corners. These people were braving the icy cold hoping to sell woollen gloves, pieces of amber, or leather craft - poverty in those extreme conditions takes on a particular challenge.

I boarded a tough-looking train with wooden seats for the 25km trip. Due to its mild climate, spa water and medicinal mud, Majori became popular as a resort, and summer houses began to appear as did sanatoria and convalescence homes, many of timber. Exploiting these aspects, after WWII, Russians sent their soldiers there to convalesce, and to accommodate their numbers, foisted monoliths in reinforced concrete on to the townscape. Abandoned now and desecrating the environ-

Majori on the Gulf of Riga.



ment, Majori is nevertheless marketing itself with much upgrading and refurbishment including a pedestrianised promenade linking the main cultural venues and shops.

The most striking of Riga's architecture is Art Nouveau. During a boom mid 19th century, Riga expanded by a ring of boulevards and a canal. In the Old Town but mainly in New Town, architects had a field day constructing Art Nouveau streetscapes and districts between 1896 and 1913. A characteristic of the Art Nouveau movement was that it flourished on the periphery rather than in the major centres: in Glasgow, Barcelona, Darmstadt and Antwerp. Riga was a part of this diffusion and locally trained architects executed these heritage districts. The Latvian School of Architecture is over a century old.

Mainly through the efforts of Jānis Krastiņš, architectural historian at the Latvian School and author of books, this architectural heritage is well documented and entered in the Latvian National DoCoMoMo Register.

Old Town Riga suffered neglect during the Soviet era but restoration and recycling is the order of the day. Reinforced concrete utilitarian buildings by the Russians are being demolished and even replication is acceptable, eg House of Blackbeards with its stepped renaissance gable of 1224, destroyed during WW2, is being rebuilt in 2000!

I was accommodated in the well restored (1966) Konventa Seta hotel, a derelict former convent built during 13th century, right in the heart of Old Town. Once outside the historical core it was very cold. It snowed every night but by noon the sun had penetrated to render the town magical. I needed no vodka but bacon, beans and vegetables, the mainstay of the Latvian diet, and a modest measure of locally brewed beer, kept me well propelled. The Latvians I made contact with were most warm and helpful, especially Jānis and his wife to whom I owe more than just the resolution to my passport problem.

Walter Peters