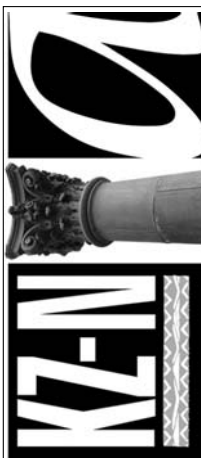




**COROBRIK**

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**Editorial**

**Good Architecture adds Value to Life**

This issue features recipients of the 2003 Awards of Merit by the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture. This was the 14th such biennial programme and covers buildings completed during the calendar years 2001-02.

A few comments may be of interest. Fourteen submissions were received and as is tradition in KZ-N, all sites were visited, resulting in the jury spending three days in the field, and covering over 1500 km. While concentrated around Durban, the buildings inspected were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Province; from Harding in the south, to Cathedral Peak in the Drakensberg, and to Mtubatuba in the north. It was gratifying to see architects involving themselves in exceptional work in rural areas for indigenous communities and, as this is cause for particular optimism for this Province's architectural future, rural architecture is to be topic for an issue of the Journal next year. However, unusually, no residential houses were submitted.

What sparked conversation was the response by users of the buildings. Entrants were to supply names of contact persons who could guide the jury at each site. Surprisingly, and without exception, these people thought a great deal about their architect, the professional service, and the building – and these were unsolicited responses. The public does understand architecture, certainly that good architects, and by corollary, good architecture, adds value to people's lives. This was the message the jurors were delighted to note and one that should rebound across the Province.

Walter Peters, Editor



**COVER MONTAGE:** Clockwise from right: Law Library, University of Natal, Durban; Unilever, La Lucia Ridge, exterior; Unilever Reception Area; Robertsons, La Lucia Ridge; Africa Centre, Somkhele. The photographers are acknowledged in the respective articles.

**KZ-NIA News**



Left to right: Justin Caramanus, Tiffany Murray, Mike Ingram – Corobrik Director of Sales, Rakshni Moodley and Shabbir Ismail.

**2003 Corobrik Regional Architectural Student of the Year**

At a function held in the EG Malherbe Library of the University of Natal, held on Thursday, 3rd July, Ms **Tiffany Murray** was announced winner of the 2003 Corobrik Regional Architectural Student of the Year Award. This is the 17th consecutive year the Award has been made and was for her Design Dissertation with topic ReCreation Station (Recreation Facilities in the Warwick Junction). Second Prize went to Ms **Rakshni Moodley** for her Dissertation *A Place of the Spirit* (A Crematorium and Funeral Complex for Umdoni Municipality); and Third Prize to **Justin Caramanus** for his School of Circus Art also within Warwick Junction. In addition, the *Islamic School for Girls* Dissertation won **Shabbir Ismail** the Prize for the *Best Use of Bricks*.

At the same function, Year2 students **Marko Rimensbeger** and **Ms Nicole Sammons** received the First and Second Prize respectively for their winning submissions for a Corobrik Distribution Centre.

**AUA Council**

At a special meeting of African Union of Architects held at Arusha on 28th February, KZ-NIA Past-President and current SAIA Vice-President Ms **Tricia Emmett**, was elected a Council member of the AUA Southern Region for a 3-year term.

At the same meeting Natal graduate **Khotso Moleko** was elected Vice-President of this region while Prof **Ambrose Adebayo** was re-confirmed Chairman of the AUA BERT Sub-committee (Board of Education, Research & Technology).

**KZ-NIA Chapter of Affiliates**

On 3rd June the following members were elected to the inaugural committee of the KZ-NIA Chapter of Affiliates: **Mike Backler**, Daniel Botha, Pierre Jankowitz, Ms Heather Michael, John Murphy, Ravi Ruthenavelu, John Wallis, David Hamilton and Derek Hauptfleisch.

**Mike Backler** and **Daniel Botha** were subsequently elected chairman and vice-chairman respectively, and the chairman was appointed to represent the Chapter on the KZ-NIA Regional Committee.

**Cato Manor Interactive Centre**

The outcome of the 'Architectural Ideas Competition' set by the eThekweni Municipality for selecting a practice for this complex which is to include a museum, theatre, exhibition space and park, was announced on Thursday, 10th July. Judged on the basis of conceptual ideas, the entry by **Rodney R Chromanski** – CNN Architects, Durban, was declared winner. Second Prize went to OMM Design Workshop, Durban; and Merit Awards were made to both Tazneen Razak with Nicholas de Klerk & Paulo Esteves, Johannesburg; and Nkonyama Okpanum Hewitt-Coleman Architects, Port Elizabeth. *Congratulations!* – Editor

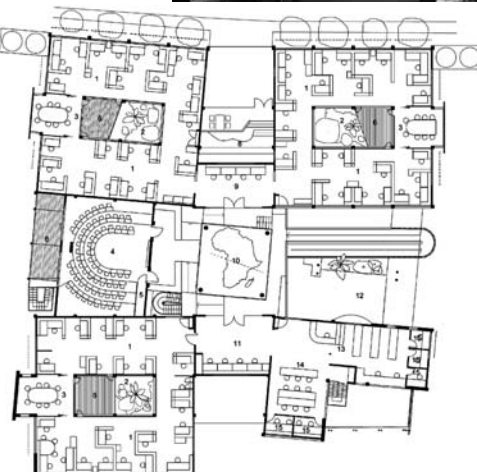
**Royal Architecture**

Leruo Molotlegi, newly crowned king of the Bafokeng nation in North-West Province, holds a 4-year BArch degree from the University of Natal (1997). Significantly the *Kgosi* (king) arrived at his coronation in Phokeng near Rustenburg in a donkey cart, to symbolise his identification with the downtrodden. *Hail Kgosi Lerou!* – Editor

The success of this building lies in its confidence in engaging with the inherent strength of the landscape; the concept which promotes a sense of community among the disparate researchers and staffers; the furnishing to the architects' designs and the innovative detailing. This understated building demonstrates that both efficiency and ambience can be created with the simplest of means. It moreover serves as a fine example of a locally generated design idiom, which is increasingly coming to the fore.

This is a compact design with four squares distanced by an irregular cross. Vertical circulation is concentrated around the many-volumed centre marked by the water tower; the widening arms of the cross contain the entrance with ramp, and the auditorium atop the canteen; and the tapering arms contain foyers which give access to the four squares of office accommodation (pods). Each of these has an atrium or void at its center, and the spaces flow informally around custom-made furniture which encourages integration. –WP  
 Readers are referred to KZ-NIA Journal 2/2002 in which this project was featured. –Editor

UPPER FLOOR PLAN



**2003 KZ-NIA Awards of Merit  
 Africa Centre, Somkhele  
 East Coast Architects, Durban**



Medical research facilities for the Africa Centre for Health & Population Studies at Somkhele, inland from Mtubatuba, northern KwaZulu-Natal. Landscaping was created using planting material indigenous to this region of Zululand and in particular from propagated plants found on site.

BELOW, clockwise: Office spaces with architect-designed furniture surround the atriums. The Entrance converging towards the centre. Horse-shoe seating arrangement to the Auditorium.



Photography: Angela Buckland

2003 KZ-NIA Awards of Merit

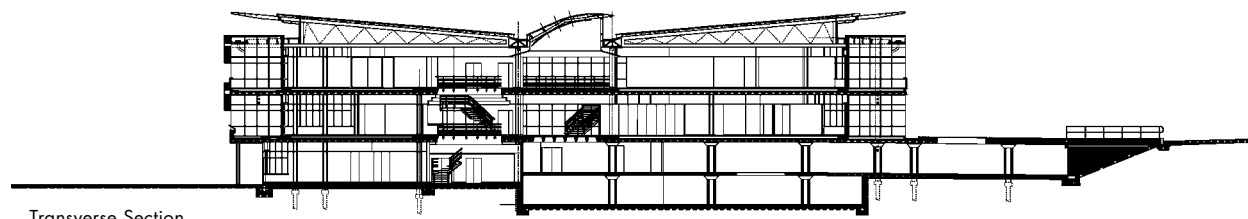
Robertsons, Holwood Crescent, La Lucia Ridge  
Paton Taylor Associates Inc, Durban



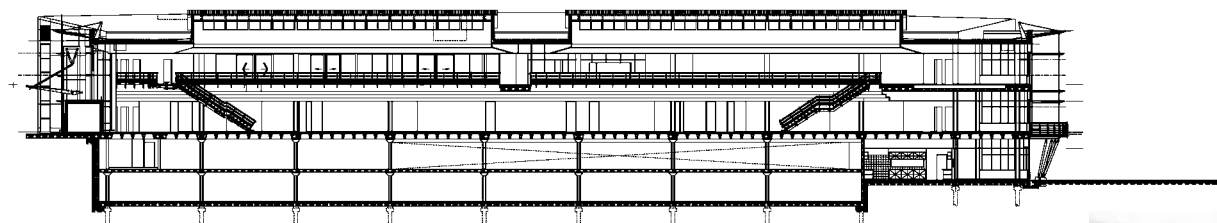
The anonymity associated with corporate office buildings can be countered internally. Within the shiny exterior lies a welcoming working environment astride a permeable double-volume concourse effused with daylight. This environment is characterized by natural materials and a visual and spatial integration, and graphics which remind of the factory origins to this administrative headquarters building. The jury concluded that this building expresses with great clarity the briefed requirement of encouraging team culture.

In 1999 some thirty proposals had been submitted by architects and developers for a new head office of some 7500sq m on a suggested site. The building was to shun ostentation, yet exude the sophistication and dynamism on which the had company based its operations. It should enhance interactivity with a 30:70 ratio of open office to cellular space.

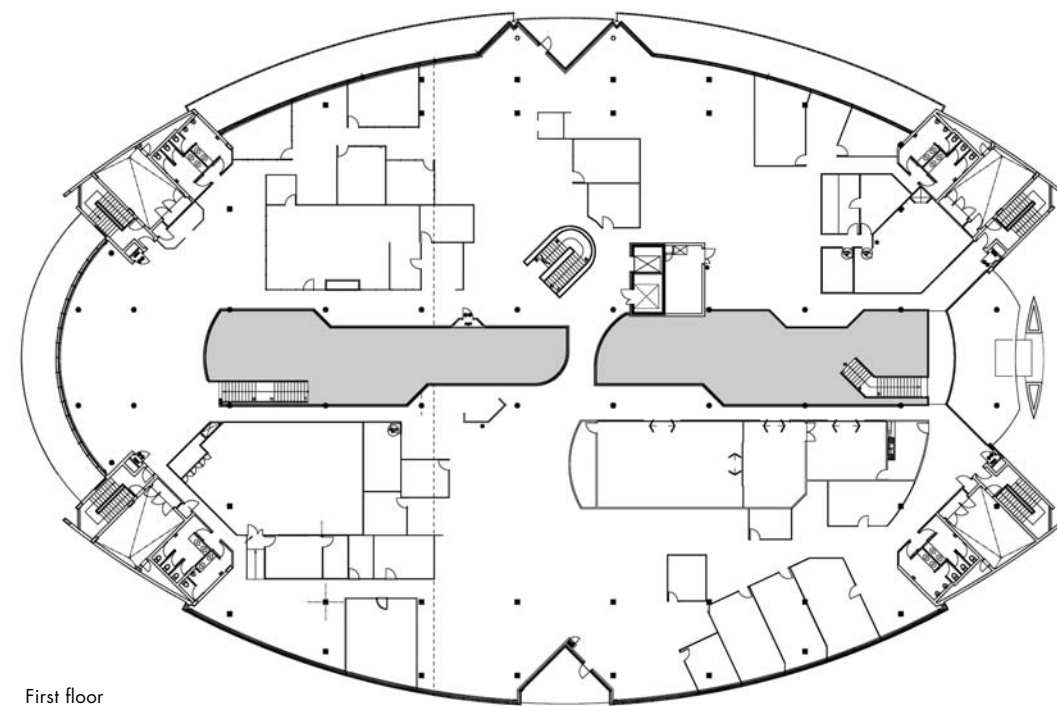
The solution sees the office accommodation dispersed over two floors astride a concourse to encourage interactivity and team culture. On the large site, the plan form is oval with indentations on the eastern and western prows. The concourse sees the public enter on the eastern prow and terminates in the cafeteria. While the exterior meets with the 'tight and white' requirement of the office park, the interior is 'honest and warm' -WP



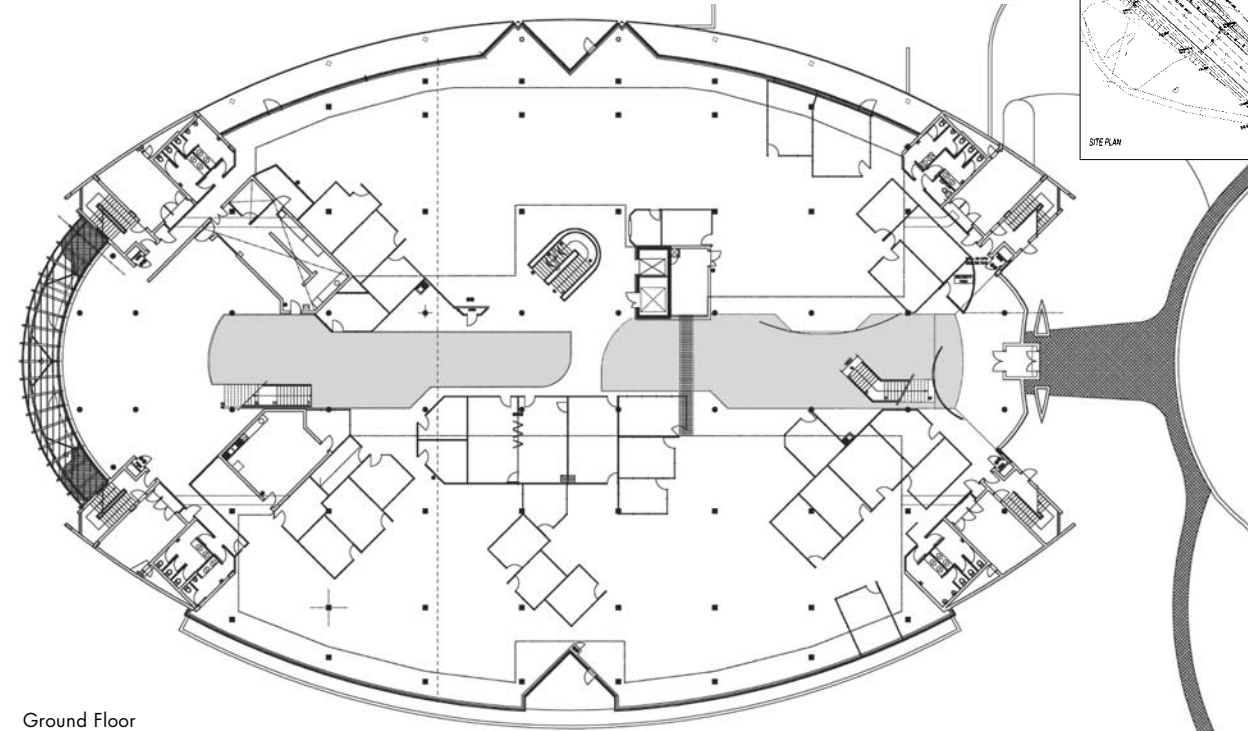
Transverse Section



Longitudinal Section



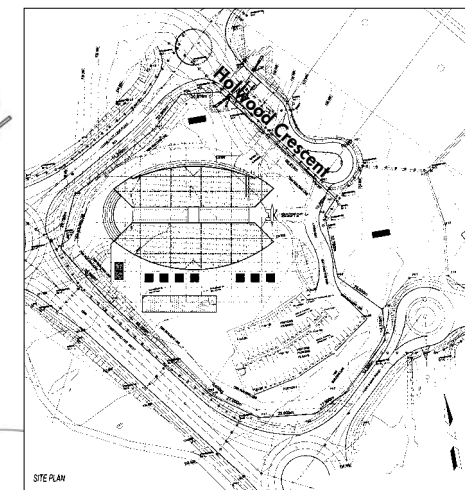
First floor



Ground Floor



The Entrance indented on the eastern prow.

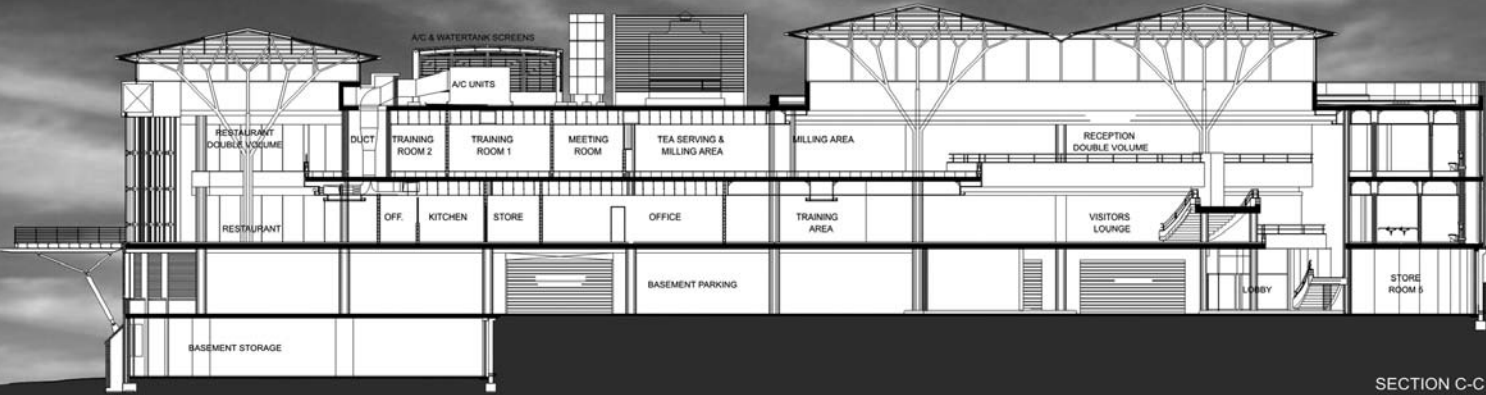


SITE PLAN



2003 KZ-NIA Awards of Merit

Unilever Head Office, 15 Nollsworth Crescent, La Lucia Ridge  
Boogertman Krige, Pretoria; and Urban Edge, Durban

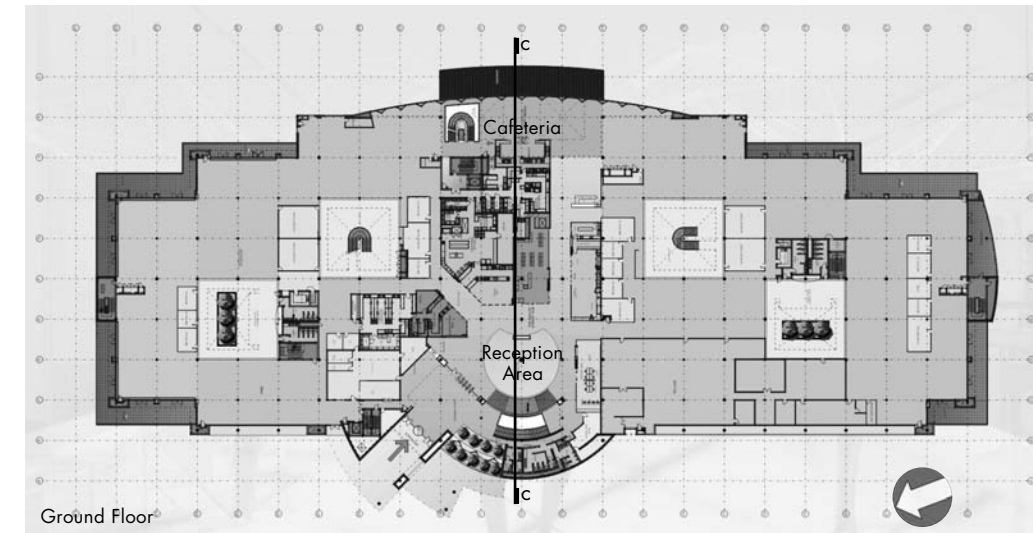
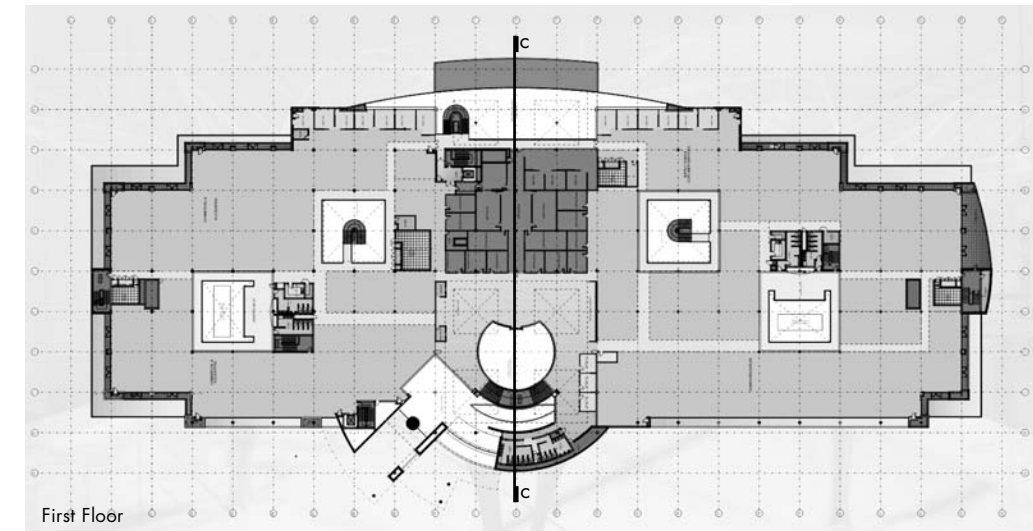


Above: Reception area.  
Opposite: Cafeteria; and below, South-East Elevation.

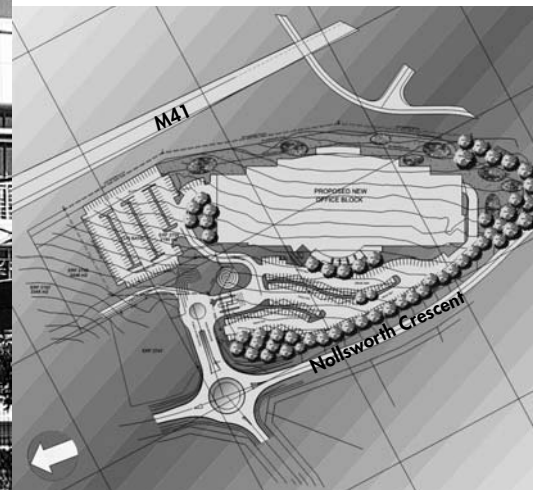
Despite the complex brief for this large building in which the various divisions of the company are consolidated, the planning is simple in its organization. From the design of the large cafeteria and reception spaces – multi-purpose by brief – to the ambience and detailing of the workstations, this building is derived from a real concern for the individual occupant's well-being. This objective is not restricted to the building envelope but extends to the setting of commendable landscaping.

Implicit in the design for this new headquarters building was the creation of an environment for stimulating employees of divisions previously dispersed geographically and now consolidated under one roof.

The concept consists of two floorplates of 10 000sqm each, with the office components, each with an atrium as pause area, to the north and south of the central hub. This hub accommodates large attendances for launches of products, displays and demonstrations on the landward side; with the cafeteria on the seaward side. –WP



Angela Buckland



Commendable landscaping and the start of foliage over strands, with a distant view to the city.



Angela Buckland

### 2003 KZ-NIA Awards of Merit

## GMJ Sweeney Law Library Howard College School of Law Emmett:Emmett Architects CC, Durban

A successful intervention in an historic building is never simple, even one as apparently obvious as this one. Governed by international charters and the scrutiny of the heritage agency, that the intervention should be identifiably new; an interpretation of the existing character; be reversible; and resolve the practicalities of the existing function. In all these aspects, and in the delicacy of its concept and the finesse of its detailing, this is an exemplary intervention.

Howard Davis University College was the inaugural building on the Durban campus of the University of Natal.

Funds were donated by Mr TB Davis, head of a stevedoring firm operating on the East African coast between Durban and Mombasa (Brookes: 30) in commemoration of his son Howard, who aged 21, fell in the Battle of the Somme in 1915.

William Hirst, a former student of Natal Technical College who was in London attaining his Diploma in Architecture designed the building in 1929. Howard College, as the building became known, was opened on 1st August 1931. It is said that Hirst took into account the sub-tropical climate of the Natal coastal region when he

planned the building around two courtyards and a central hall with open arcades (Brookes: 41). To acknowledge its prominence, this building, on the crest of the Berea Ridge, terminates the vista of Howard Avenue and Jubilee Gardens in the newly laid-out suburb of Glenwood.

In 1982, the Faculty of Law relocated to the northern quadrangle of this historical building. In an attempt to maximize its Library space, mezzanine levels were added, but the combination of this insertion and the inadequate seating, rendered the whole too cramped. In 1997, to mark its 70th anniversary, the Faculty put on a concerted drive to expand its Library facility. Due to the restriction of the

**Because of the copper cladding to the domed portico fronting the hall, the Durban campus of the University of Natal is known to Zulus by the name eThusini (where copper is). The building was declared a National Monument in 1986.**



Monument declaration, no external alterations may be made to the building. Thus the most cost-effective expansion was deemed to be a basement, eastward of the historical building. The estimated cost was R4million. Needless to say, the scheme was still-born.

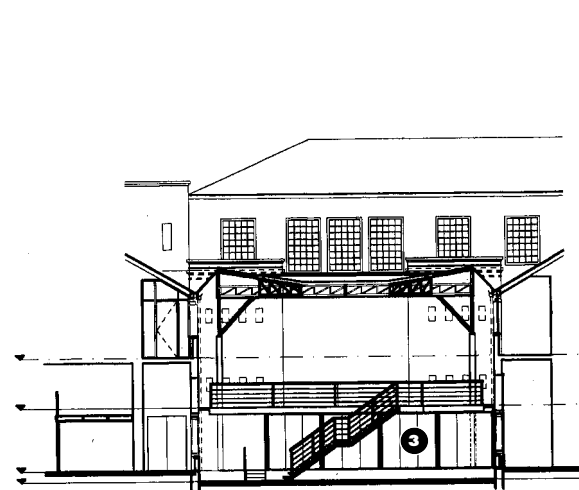


In 2001 the idea dawned to 'fill in' a quadrangle. After a preliminary investigation, the practice of Emmett:Emmett Architects was appointed. A number of submissions were scrutinised by the Built Environment Committee of *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali*, the Provincial heritage agency, before the project was embarked upon. It was carried out in 2002 and, to boot, cost a modest R1.3m incl VAT. -WP

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No Author (1997) *Faculty of Law. 70th Anniversary*. University of Natal.

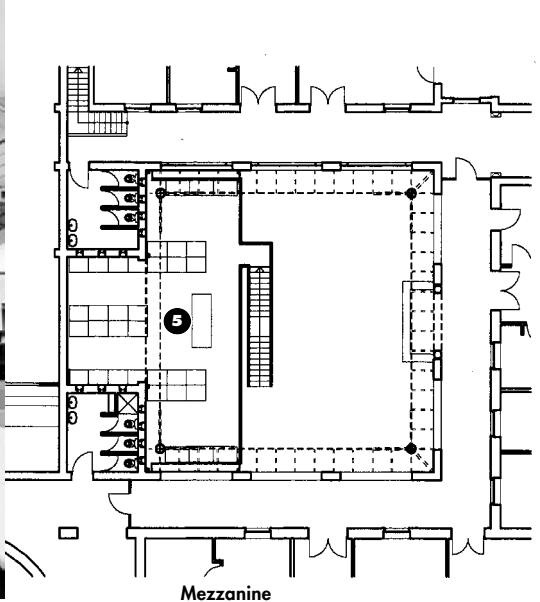


Photography: Craig Hudson



Section B-B

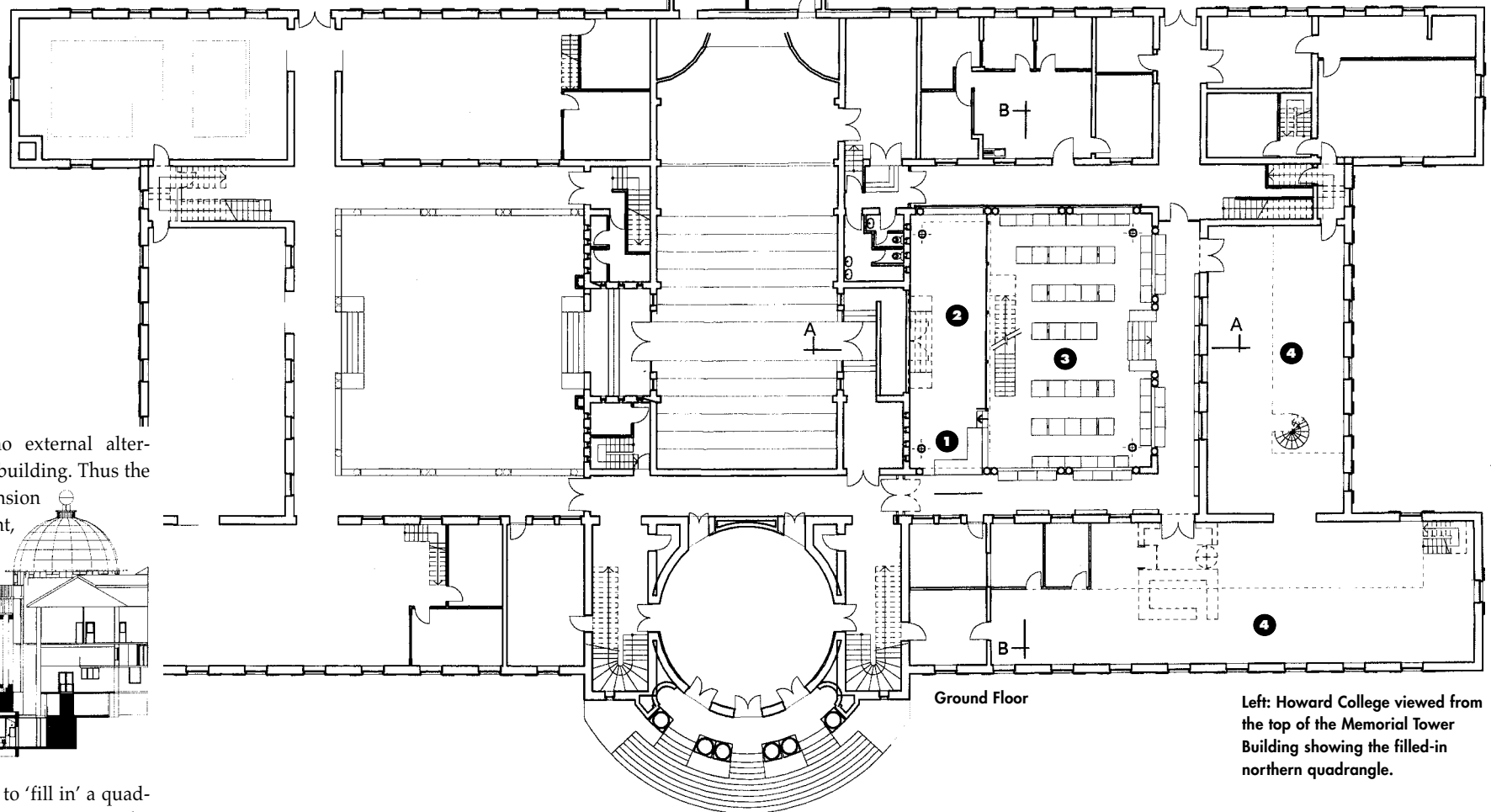
Respect for historic fabric should be counterpointed by a confident yet restrained modern insertion. In this case it consists of a flat roof, freed from the arcaded walls of the courtyard, and a mezzanine.



Mezzanine



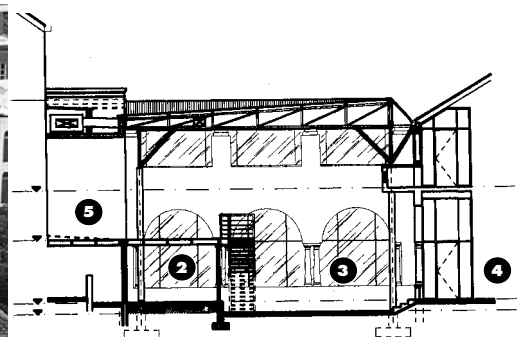
Despite some cavils such as the interruptions to the ceiling plane, the Sweeney Law Library provides a model for emulation.



Ground Floor

Left: Howard College viewed from the top of the Memorial Tower Building showing the filled-in northern quadrangle.

- 1 Issue Desk
- 2 Reserved Books
- 3 Reading Room
- 4 Existing Library
- 5 LAN Station



Section A-A



## 2003 KZ-NIA Awards of Merit

### Relevant or Outdated?

The privilege to have been part of the assessment of this year's Awards of Merit submissions for the Kwa-Zulu-Natal region warrants some general comment. Although I have been involved in a number of these assessments in the past, the peer group review of the bi-annual output of South African architects, reaffirmed – to me, at least – the importance of the programme. On the one hand, it provides all registered members of the South African Institute of Architects with an opportunity to submit work which they consider meritorious to be evaluated by their peers, and if found to be successful, to be rewarded. On the part of the jury, the exposure to a wide range of buildings is a most insightful, if not an educational experience. In fact, it is a highly recommended experience from which all practitioners of architecture could benefit.

#### Historical Origins

Whilst reflecting on the nature of the programme, I suddenly felt that its historical origins also necessitate some consideration. Much to my amazement, it came to light that no-one I contacted (including the inimitable Mr. Martin Knoetze) could inform to me why, or exactly when, the programme was first initiated\*. The commendable compendium *Architecture 2000*, initiated by Llewellyn van Wyk and the late Ivor Prinsloo, serves to date, as the only attempt at listing – albeit not documenting – past award-winning buildings. The "time line" prepared by Inge de Beer, assumes that the first national merit award

was conferred in 1931, to the Johannesburg City Library by John Perry. In the same year the so-called CPI Architectural Medal was awarded to the Standard Bank Building in Cape Town by a somewhat unfortunate practice named Black and Fagg. According to de Beer (2000: 106), the CPI Architectural Medal was awarded annually to the best example of architecture executed in the Province of the Cape of Good Hope.

Given our colonial history, one can only assume that the South African Awards of Merit programme would have originated from the Royal Institute of British Architects. Also, considering that our national Institute of Architects was established in 1927 (although the provincial institutes date from much earlier), it is not surprising that the "official" lauding of architecture of exceptional merit received recognition soon thereafter.

#### Contention & Controversy

However, let's call a spade a spade. Like design competitions, the awards of merit programme is often shrouded in controversy. There are generally-speaking two approaches that can be identified. Foremost, there are those practitioners (granted, often award-winners themselves) who fully support the initiative and graciously abide to the "ruling" of the peer review group – an for euphemism for "judges".

And then there are those (the "losers", perhaps) who in no uncertain terms accuse the initiative of nepotism, provincialism, politick-

ing, and so forth – sadly, confusing constructive criticism with personal vendettas (no different to students, I should add); regrettably, belying the programme instead of the process. Yet surely any scholar of architecture should know that architecture is by its very nature a subjective discipline, which – until such time as consensus can be reached on cohesive design principles that demonstrate the certainties of Classicism – it will remain. Inevitably, the constitution of any assessing panel – regardless of how noble their intentions – would to some degree influence the outcome. It's, simply, a *fait accompli*.

In my opinion, no matter how much one wishes to call into disrepute either the programme or the process, this year's assessment once again taught that we as architects should be less inclined to flaw "the system", but should instead occasionally, and modestly, question our own discretion.

By way of example, one cannot help but to challenge the lack of consideration given to some pretty rudimentary design aspects, such as clear access and entry, ergonomics, orientation, sustainability and longevity. Not being able to find one's way to, or around, a building is annoying. From an ergonomic point of view, it becomes blatantly obvious when the furnishing of vast, predetermined "floor ratios" was left to the mercy of the interior decorator, complete with *faux* waterfalls and dust-collecting pot plants. One also questions misplaced formal gymnastics – particularly with respect to socio-economic projects – where nonsensical and climatically ill-considered structures could have financed addition-



The 2003 KZ-NIA Awards jury with KZ-NIA Executive Officer Mrs Sylvia Grobler (2nd from right). From left: KZ-NIA members Sydney Baillon and Mithulisi Msimang; 'architect from another Province', Prof Ora Joubert, Head of the Dept of Architecture at the University of the Free State; chair and coordinator and hence 'without vote', Derek Sherlock; and lay member Peter du Trevou, Managing Director of Corobrik. Not in the photograph is the 'academic architect' juror, Walter Peters, Professor of Architecture at the University of Natal.

Didima Camp, Cathedral Peak, 2001-02. Design won in competition, 1998. See KZ-NIAJ 3/1998. Clark & Thomas Architects CC, Durban.



Ken McKenzie Hall, Clifton College, Lambert Road, Durban. Pennington Associates Inc., Durban.

Library, Section F, Ntuzuma. Architectural Department eThekweni Municipality.



al utilitarian space; or extensive, west-facing, glass facades that necessitate mechanical ventilation in supposedly eco-tourist environments.

I can continue: the excessive (and unnecessarily expensive) use of different wall and floor finishes resulting in, simply, "too many notes"; disconcerting internal spatial experiences (*rondawels* don't divide well); poorly detailed junctions; awkward formal connections; non-durable choices of materials; and so forth. These, I am quick to point out, are under no circumstances compromises made due to client difficulties, shoddy workmanship or limited resources.

Certainly there are "indiscretions" that do fall outside the scope of our architectural control, illiciting much empathy from the jury. It was perturbing to visit no fewer than three community-oriented projects which were built at considerable cost and with much commitment on the part of the architects, but are completely vacant. Evidently, it is far easier to procure financing to execute projects of this nature, than to make them operational, giving rise to doubt whether funding, *per se*, is the overriding aspect in the realisation of acutely-needed facilities.

It was equally disconcerting to visit a much-publicized competition winner and to realise that the innovation of the architects far surpassed the technological expertise available in

this country, with the correlation with the constructivist fantasies of the 1920s immediately coming to mind. Yet, despite cognisance of the aforementioned, it is worth pondering that competition-winning conceptions do not necessarily guarantee award-winning realisations.

#### Conclusions

On a more positive note: I would be the first to admit that to design a building is no mean feat. To design a good building, and to have it well executed, is even less so. It is noteworthy that despite the mentioned flaws, occupants of submitted projects remarked on the positive impact of the architecture on their daily lives. Hence, I applaud the participants for their commitment to produce architecture of dis-

#### OBITUARY – Derek Alfred Sherlock 1936–2003

On 1st August "dedicated architect, teacher and unforgettable colleague" Derek Sherlock lost the battle to cancer. As it was his wish, 10 days later, friends gathered for tea in the Educational Centre of Durban's Botanical Gardens, a building of his. On behalf of KZ-NIA



President Mohideen Abdul Gafoor and the membership, Rodney Harber, close friend for some 35 years, presented a eulogy, extracts of which follow.

On graduating in Architecture at UCT in 1958, Derek first worked with the practice Myles Faulds & Partners in Lilongwe, Malawi. While in the employ of Sir Basil Spence, 1961–66, he obtained a Diploma in Town Planning at Regent Street Polytechnic. This qualification provided the key for his appointment to the planning consultancy of William Holford & Roy Kantorowich and his dispatch to Durban to work on the Central Durban Planning Project, 1966–68. Thereupon Derek opened a local office of the national partnership to be known as Myles Pugh Porter & Sherlock, and he adopted Pinetown as his home.

Derek was elected to the NPIA committee 1978–89 and as its President 1984–6. In recognition of his services to the profession he was awarded a KZ-NIA Scroll of Honour in 1990, followed by Life Membership in 2001. But the 24 years on the national Practice Committee – up until the present – sum up his special contribution, acknowledged in the foreword of the SAIA *Practice Manual*. Here Derek is identified as the person who "pulled the documents apart and eventually put them all together again". That was the essence of the man. Every task was tackled meticulously.

Derek's standing in the Institute cannot be better stated than in the letter of condolence from KZ-NIA Executive Officer, Sylvia Grobler (with the Institute since 1965) to Derek's widow Verna: "Never have I known a member to be so beloved, revered and respected by all. I don't think he ever made a single enemy in all the time he was one of my 'three wise men'. His name became a byword of honesty, integrity, unbiased judgement and steadfastness. He gave his all to the profession and never begrudged a single minute of the time and effort spent. Derek was one of the 'greats' and will be missed beyond measure".

Latterly Derek shared his extensive knowledge as Honorary Professional Adviser to the Programme in Architecture of the University of Natal where he also lectured part-time in the professional courses. Exemplarily he scheduled his chemotherapy treatments to enable lectures to be delivered as time-tabled. Such selflessness sets the example for emulation.

The members of the KZ-NIA extend their condolences to Verna and the family. –Editor

\* The first call for national Institute Awards was made in 1976 with the conferment thereof in 1977. The earliest Award in KwaZulu-Natal was made in 1936, see KZ-NIAJ 2/2001 for a complete list of all recipient buildings within the Province. –Editor

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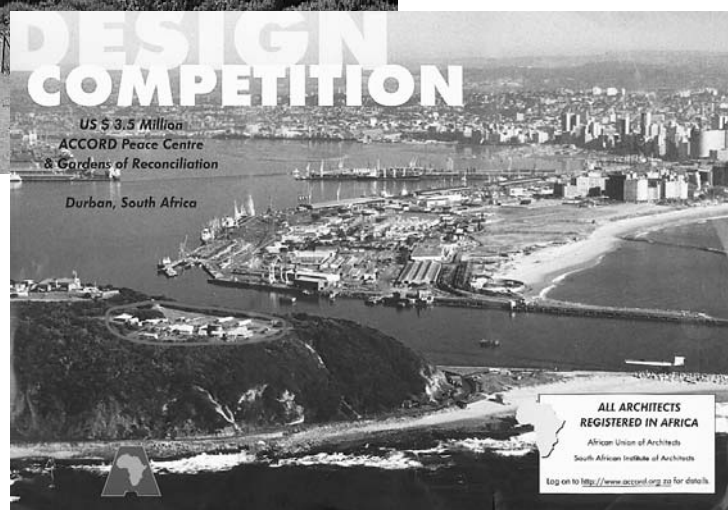
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## Africa Peace Centre Design Competition



Left: The Design Competition site on the Bluff Headland. The flyer shown below best illustrates the spectacular site.

Bottom: Discarded World War II machine-gun pill-boxes. Note their serrated profiles intended as camouflage.



### Accord

This design competition was promoted by the Africa Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in association with the eThekweni Municipality, and was held under the auspices of both the African Union of Architects and the South African Institute of Architects.

ACCORD is a non-aligned, non-governmental organization, which focuses on the prevention and resolution of conflict throughout Africa. It proposed to establish a 'Peace Centre', to be conceived of as a retreat, amidst a group of redundant structures within the restricted military headland on Durban's Bluff, to which conflicting parties from various regions of Africa could converge under

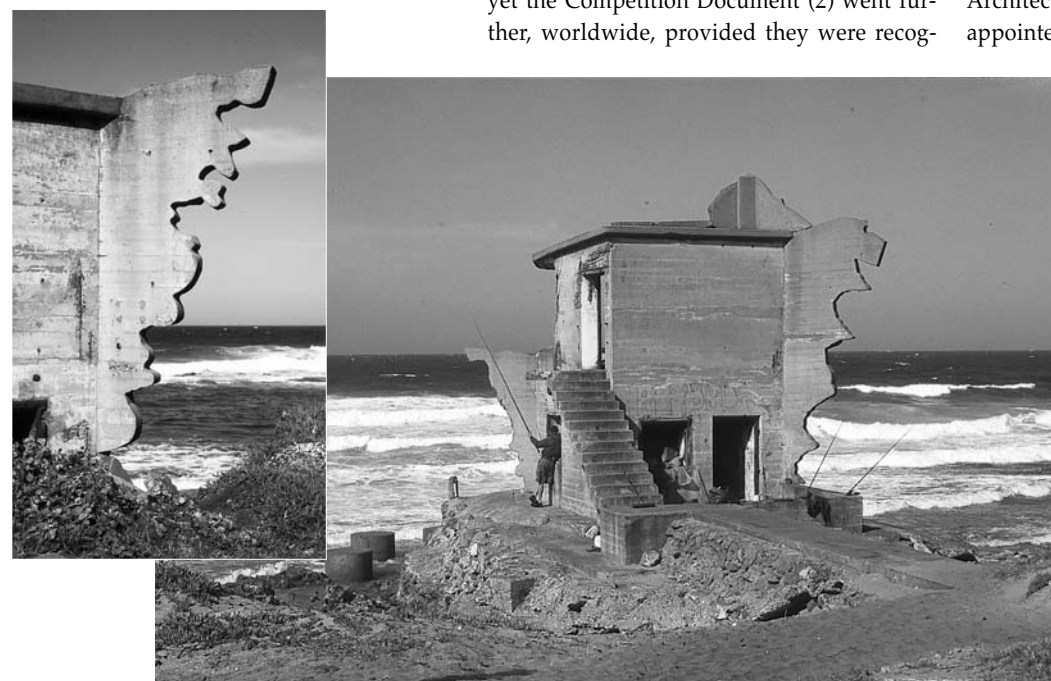
measures of strict security. This Centre should be interwoven with the Garden of Reconciliation to commemorate victims of conflict, which the eThekweni Municipality proposed to build on the same site, and to which the public would have access.

The following points are extracted from the competition brief. This was to be a single-stage competition. While a budget of US\$3.5 million was entered on the flyer (1), the brief was without cost restraint. According to that flyer, the competition was open to "All Architects registered in Africa" yet the Competition Document (2) went further, worldwide, provided they were recog-

nized by professional registration in their country of practice; and the object of the competition was the "selection of an architect with a brilliant concept to take the project to fruition together with the promoters".

Rodney Harber, Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Natal, was appointed Professional Adviser, responsible for preparing documentation. A single site inspection was arranged on 23rd October 2002; and website registration was required by 1st November. The accommodation schedule called for administration, meeting, training and research facilities for the organisation; a conference venue and residential accommodation, a total area of ca7500 sqm. Submissions were due on November 15 and restricted to six A1-sized drawings in landscape format, to scale 1:200.

The assessors were Henry Ssentooogo, AUA representative and its Past-President; Marcus Holmes, SAIA nominee who was elected Chair; Jonathan Edkins,



The site in the shadow of the Millennium Tower. Inset: Millennium Tower, on Durban's Bluff, 2001-02. Design won in competition, 2000. Alex Pienaar with Don Albert of soundspace design cc.

City Architect nominated by eThekweni Municipality; Mr Vasu Gounden, Founder & Executive Director of ACCORD; and ACCORD Trustees Madame Graça Machel, South Africa's former First Lady; and Prof Jakes Gerwel, formerly Director-General in the Office of State President Nelson Mandela, who each shared a vote. First Prize was to be US\$5000 with a further US\$1000 which could be allocated at the discretion of the assessors but, there was "no obligation on the assessors to make an award".

### Discord

Competitions provide a method of selecting an architect on the basis of architectural design skills only. This is a good method especially if the public purse or flagship buildings are involved. Competitions can also provide the fairest means by which a talented young architect can win his first commission and establish a practice. Nevertheless, these noble intentions can arouse passions and few competitions avoid controversy.

In setting a competition a few fundamental items have to be observed. An appropriate length of time must be allocated for the preparation of the design and, within that framework, the product should be achievable. A contract, after all, must be realizable. The question in the ACCORD competition is whether time and timing were appropriate and whether within that timeframe, the product defined as "a brilliant concept" could reasonably have been achieved.

These are the facts: the brief was available on the ACCORD website from 18th October and submission was due three-and-a-half weeks later. The accommodation schedule was vast and the functional requirements complicated, with the provision for conflicting parties and concomitant security meas-

ures, and the public who would visit the proposed yet not designed Garden of Remembrance. While the competition was open to all registered architects only 22 entries were received with a single entry from continental Africa, a practice in Abidjan. Judging took place 5th and 6th of February 2003 - twelve weeks later. For three months the submissions were kept in storage gathering dust, the anxious competitors gradually becoming disgruntled.

One therefore asks why the profession was forced into such a tight jam? Despite appeals no extension of time was granted. Worse, the Report (3) cites that the jury "failed to identify any one 'brilliant concept'; saw itself fit to make no award; lists a dozen shortcomings including a misinterpretation of intention (resort vs retreat); concedes flaws in timing; yet commends the authors of the three schemes here published *notwithstanding fundamental flaws* [sic] in each. Case closed.

Wherein lies the problem? The Institute had given its support and the Competition Document makes clear that the Professional Advisor "is responsible for ... ensuring that all undertakings therein are carried out in the interests of the architects who enter the competition as well as facilitating a fair and efficient judging process". Question: were the interests of the participating architects sufficiently cared for? Was it fair to place this responsibility on a single professional adviser, bearing in mind that the credibility of AUA and SAIA was at stake? Was it fair to expect "brilliance" for such complicated brief within the tight timeframe? Within the time available, would not an Ideas Competition have suf-



ficed? Was the enormous (or limitless) budget secured? Was it "efficient" that the adjudication was delayed by a quarter of year later? Is a jury consisting of three architects and two laypersons the appropriate composition for judging architectural merit?

Why would it not be fair to allow the competitors of the three commended submissions the opportunity to provide the "brilliance" sought, and "...to take the project to

fruition..." for the promoters to achieve the stated objective? Why was this logical and fair step recommended by the Chair dismissed? The answer given was that ACCORD will be assessing all its options and consolidating its fundraising and marketing drives, after which a decision will be taken on the way forward (4). With an unlimited budget is there any need? As long as such issues remain unresolved, it is doubtful whether architects will in future participate in a lottery.

The coverage herein is of the three commended designs, all graduates of the University of Natal, a fact to be proud of. Congratulations!

Walter Peters, Editor

### Sources:

1. Flyer: *Design Competition, ACCORD Peace Centre & Gardens of Reconciliation*. No date.
2. Competition Document *ACCORD Africa Peace Centre Design Competition*. Dated 15th October 2002.
3. Assessors' Report. *Africa Peace Centre*. Dated 20th February, 2003
4. Letter: ACCORD Founder & Executive Director to KZ-NIA Executive Director, dated 31st March 2003.

# Commended Design – Africa Peace Centre

## Kate Otten Architects, Johannesburg; in association with J Whitehead & N Saunders, Durban

EXCAVATIONS  
LANDSCAPE  
SENTINELS

The conceptual genesis for our Peace Centre submission lies in three design generators: that of deferring to the LANDSCAPE, of choosing to EXCAVATE and partially submerge the buildings and to develop SENTINELS as the symbol for the centre and the only visible aspect of the building from the seafront. Themes of REVELATION and CONCEALMENT are repeated throughout the building as metaphors which tie the function of the building to the landscape and inform the design resolution.



An aspect of the process of reconciliation is that of REVEALING the CONCEALED and the almost 'sacredness' of the site calls for CONCEALMENT of this place of REVELATION – the African Peace Centre.

The ENVIRONMENTAL sensibility of the design is reflected in prioritizing low impact on the site's silhouette, utilising the principles of earth cooling appropriate to a sub tropical climate, maximizing the use of prevailing wind to ventilate the building, and utilising 'funnels' to direct natural light to below ground spaces.



Sub-terranean passage between rock face and church wall of Lalibela in Ethiopia.

The current LANDSCAPE of the Bluff has prevailed through time. Historically called *Usubulungu* in *isiZulu* due to the oft-sited shipwrecked Caucasian sailors beckoning ships from the headland, the Bluff is significant as a counterpoint to the rapidly expanding port city of Durban. The design reinforces the natural nature of the Bluff with largely CONCEALED built interventions, and where not concealed they 'touch lightly on the ground'. The GARDENS OF RECONCILIATION reinforce the lush vegetation on the site and the proposal is for works

of art displayed in the landscape to form a living MUSEUM which reflects the history of the site as well as the histories of CONFLICT. Employing processes of EXCAVATION reveals aspects of an archeological approach to the design to unearth the subterranean history of the site and to acknowledge the past yet to subvert the previous military use. Metaphorically processes of EXCAVATION allude to 'unearthing the truth' and searching for TREASURES, in this instance achievements of reconciliation. The design honours the profile of the Bluff, with the SENTINELS the only revealed presence on the site from the seafront view. Prominence is given to the vegetation of the headland. Precedent is drawn from buildings utilizing earth cooling processes, from the rock-hewn excavations of Lalibela in Ethiopia and from buildings which optimize and celebrate the use of LIGHT in contrast to the solidity of the earth.

The seven SENTINELS which run along the CONCOURSE OF RECONCILIATION keep VIGIL over the activities of the Peace Centre. SENTINEL is interpreted as one who stands guard to watch against surprise (Webster).

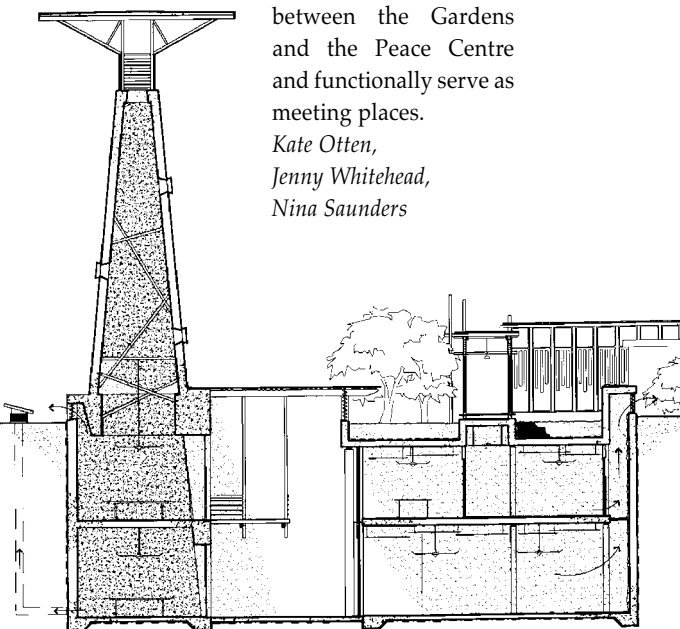


Easter Island figures

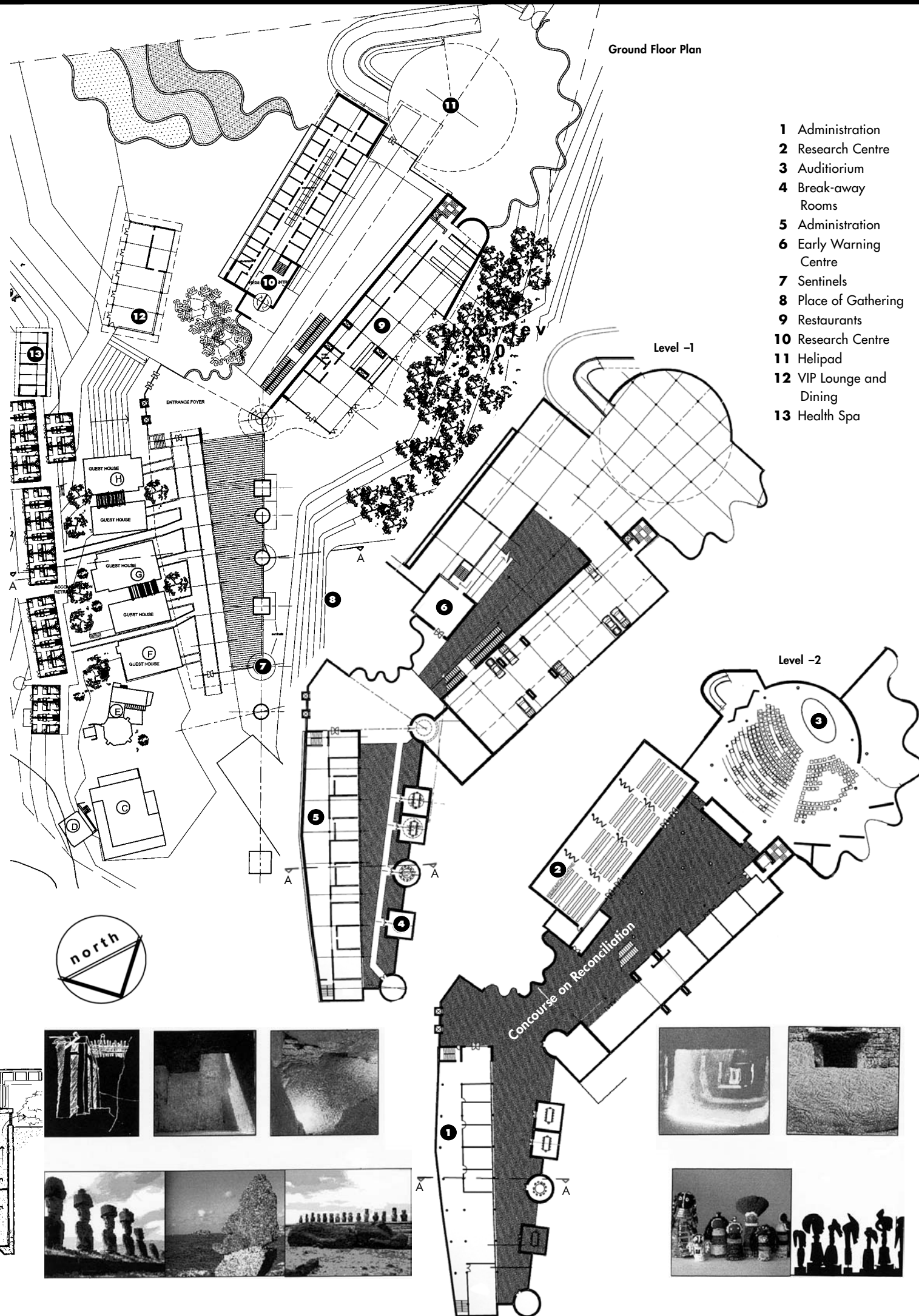
Through its association with military activities and protective vigilance, 'sentinel' thus become the appropriate symbol for ACCORD's activities as keepers of the peace.

The number seven alludes to other significant places, like the Seven Wonders of the World. Drawing precedent from the head-dresses of Zulu traditional wear in their intricacy and delight, and from the solemnity of Stonehenge and the Easter Island figures, the verticality of the sentinels are prominent on the profile of the Bluff without being intrusive. The SENTINELS occur at the interface

between the Gardens and the Peace Centre and functionally serve as meeting places. Kate Otten, Jenny Whitehead, Nina Saunders



Section A-A



- 1 Administration
- 2 Research Centre
- 3 Auditorium
- 4 Break-away Rooms
- 5 Administration
- 6 Early Warning Centre
- 7 Sentinels
- 8 Place of Gathering
- 9 Restaurants
- 10 Research Centre
- 11 Helipad
- 12 VIP Lounge and Dining
- 13 Health Spa

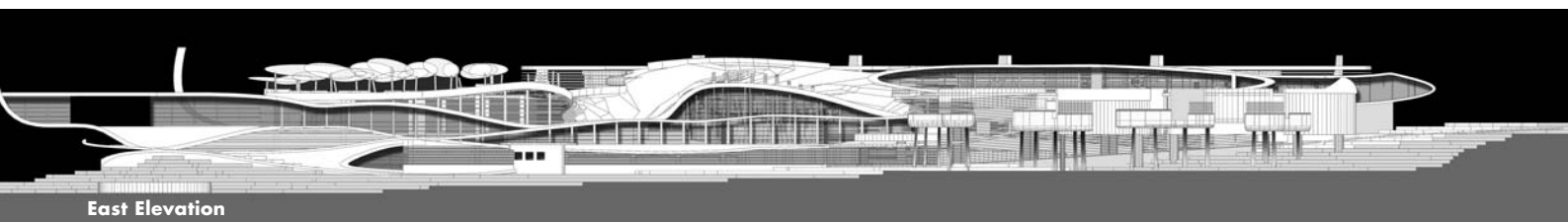


Commended Design – Africa Peace Centre

sound space design cc, Durban



West Elevation



East Elevation

The design of this specialised “convention centre” hybrid needs to diffuse the volatile nature of such meetings yet allow maximum composure and even ceremony, as in the case of traditional leaders and entourage. There is a stage to be set, in some cases grand, in some cases humbling. Using the analogy of a low-pressure weather system (a cyclone) with its high velocity winds spiralling inwards, and its low pressure “eye” in the calm of the storm, we were able to place the conference hall in the centre of the site, literally and figuratively, as a place of calm and decorum.

The site is further zoned into three areas:

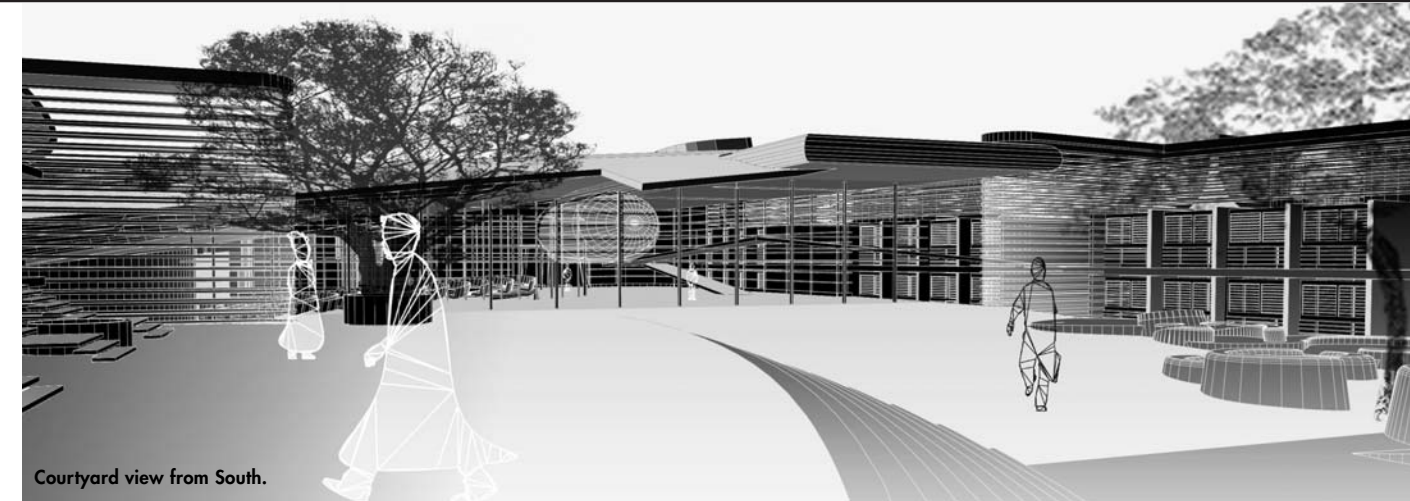
the public zone to the west (the Gardens of Reconciliation); a semi-public zone in the centre (the halls, meeting rooms and restaurants); and a restricted zone to the east (accommodation). The brief had called for a layering of these zones and an incorporation of the public into the heart of the project in order to visibly demonstrate the activities of ACCORD to the public, however without an actual breach to the security of delegates and dignitaries.

The establishment of a peaceful, effective and environmentally appropriate response that deals with severe atmospheric, challenging event-based needs, marketing objectives,

and considerable public interaction, should be informed by an overly legible system of architecture, yet one that weaves traditional African space typologies with contemporary landscape ideas to maximum effect.

It is the ambition of this design to construct an environment of life-enhancing architectural spaces where even the most aggressive antagonists will feel calm and secure enough to abandon posturing and “the strut and trade of charms on ivory stages” and address apparently intractable problems directly and honestly.

Don Albert, Melanie Grant, Yusuf Moolla & Dennis Claude (document preparation)



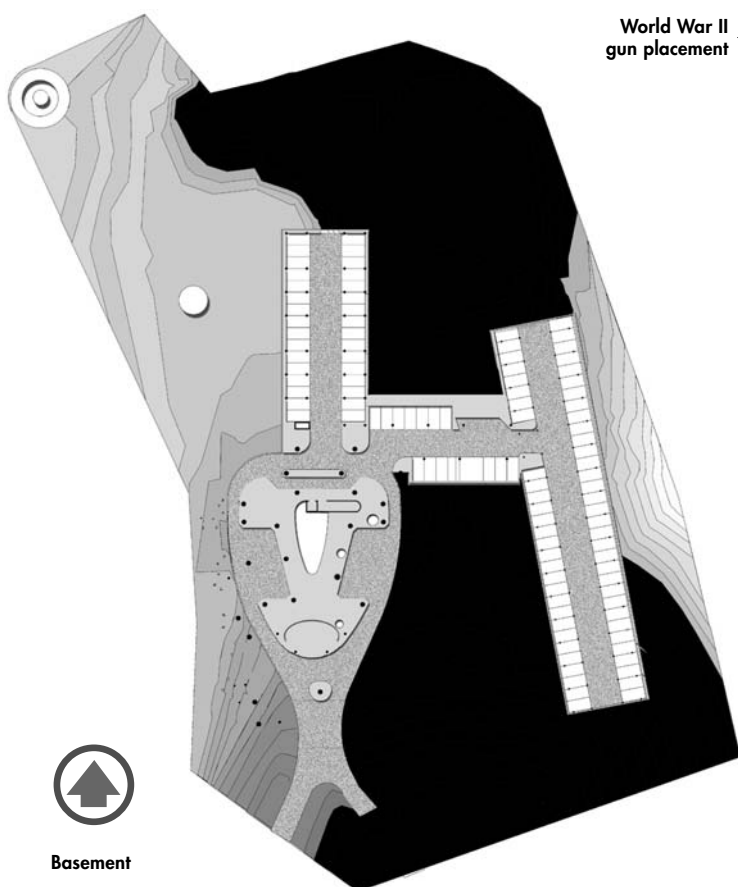
Courtyard view from South.



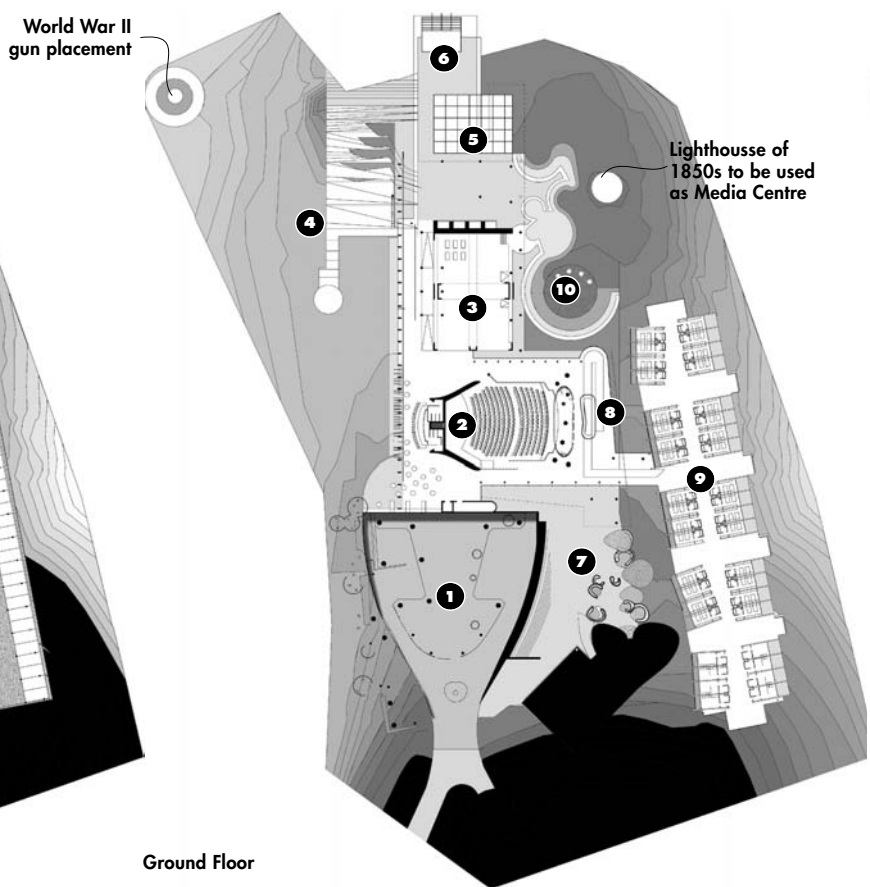
The auditorium captured by nature.

TURBULENCE, CONFLUENCE, RESOLUTION

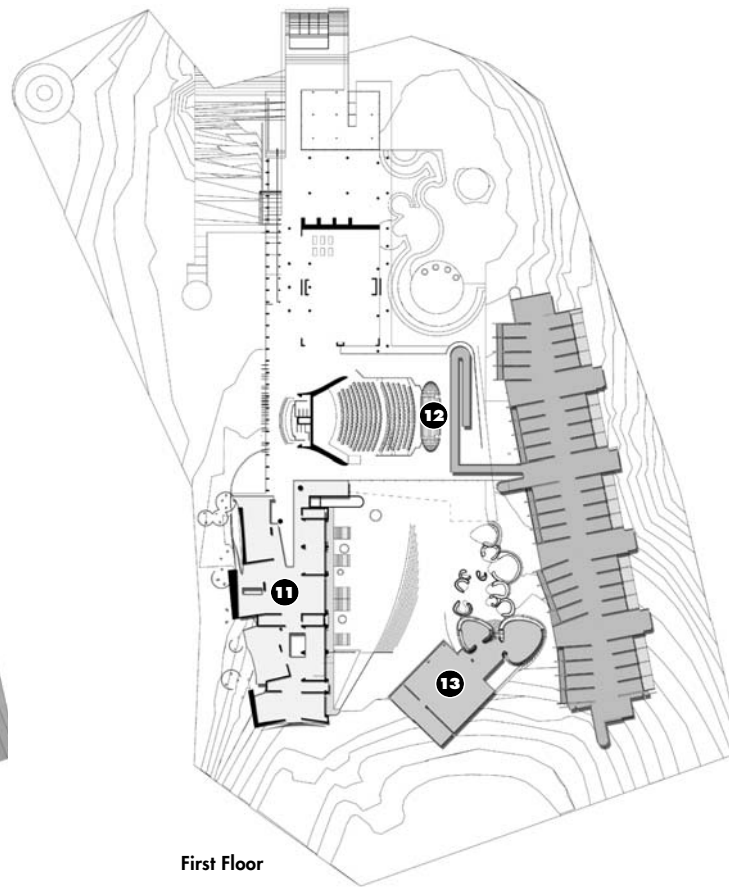
TURBULENCE, CONFLUENCE, RESOLUTION



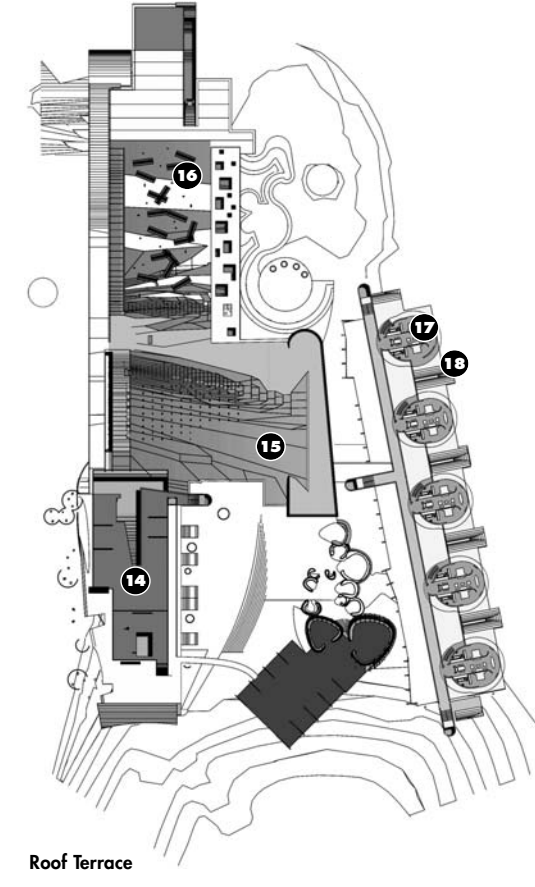
Basement



Ground Floor



First Floor

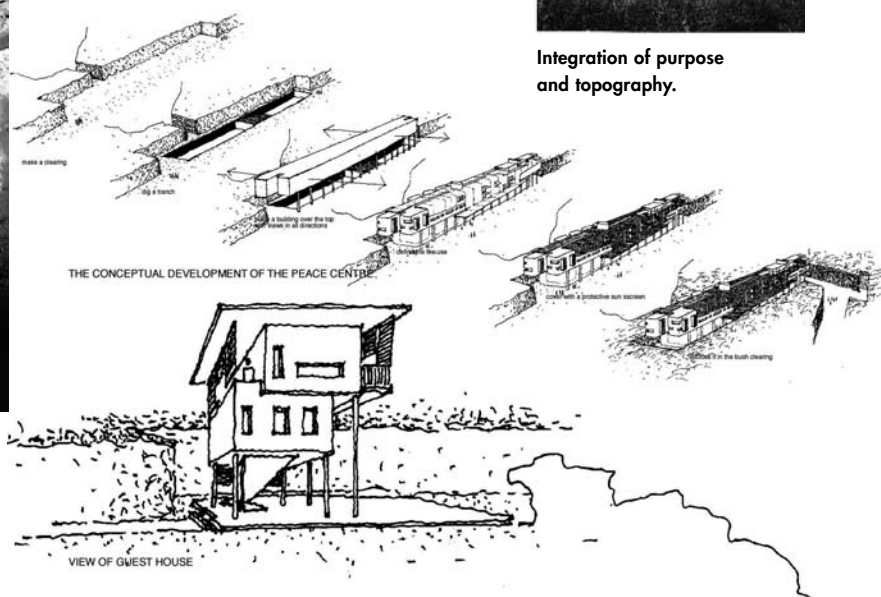


Roof Terrace

- 1 Delegates Arrival
- 2 Conference Centre
- 3 Meeting Halls
- 4 Public Arrival
- 5 Public Restaurant
- 6 VIP Restaurant
- 7 Indaba Bomas
- 8 Reception & ramp
- 9 High-security Hotel
- 10 Okosa Inyama
- 11 Break-away Rooms
- 12 Translators
- 13 Early Warning Centre
- 14 Administration
- 15 Gardens of Reconciliation
- 16 Rooftop Picnic Park
- 17 VIP Suites; Helipads above
- 18 Wind baffles

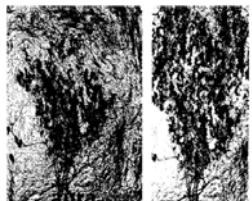
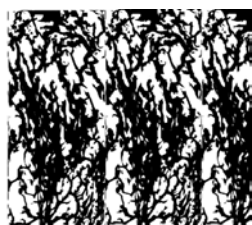
# Commended Design – Africa Peace Centre

## omm design workshop cc architects, Durban



Integration of purpose and topography.

Peace can only be achieved through people making real contact with one another. The proposed ACCORD Peace Centre will be an important venue in both peace research and resolution. The location of the facility on the Durban Bluff is ideal. The experience of being on top of the Bluff with its extraordinary views of the land and sea are awe-inspiring. It is difficult to be there and not feel small but inspired.



Transformation of natural forms of trees to make building screens.

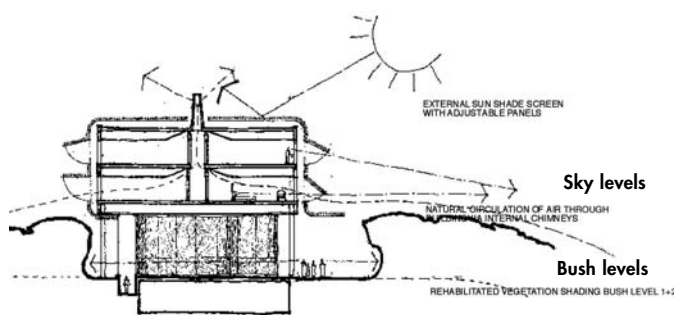
Our proposal for the design of the Peace Centre is to make a building and environment that is based on the lessons of the past but is clearly forward looking, and to amplify the existing attributes of the site. The first strategy is to totally rehabilitate the topography and vegetation on site. The second is to leave a single, simple clearing for the construction of the building. The third is to excavate a long narrow trench to accommodate the auditorium and service areas. The fourth is to construct a building over the trench that has the least possible footprint area. This is achieved by restricting the height to ground plus 4 levels. The ground and first floor accommodation of mostly internally-orientated functions like the foyer, upper level of auditorium, meeting rooms and their related external spaces etc., are protected within bush clearings. The ground and first floors are referred to on the drawings as bush

levels. The top two levels accommodate administrative functions and the hotel. They look over the top of the bush and their experience is hugely determined by the experience of the view. These are referred to as sky levels. Our intention was to offer dramatically different experiences from each elevation. The building is therefore orientated with one long side facing the city and the other the sea. This is the edge of the continent. The fifth strategy is to cover almost the entire external surface of the building with sunscreens that can be hydraulically tipped up. The design of the screens is generated by a digital abstraction of an image of a tree. They would be repetitive panels of light-weight cast aluminium. The quality of light that filters into the internal spaces through the screens will make the association with that common African practice of seeking shelter from the

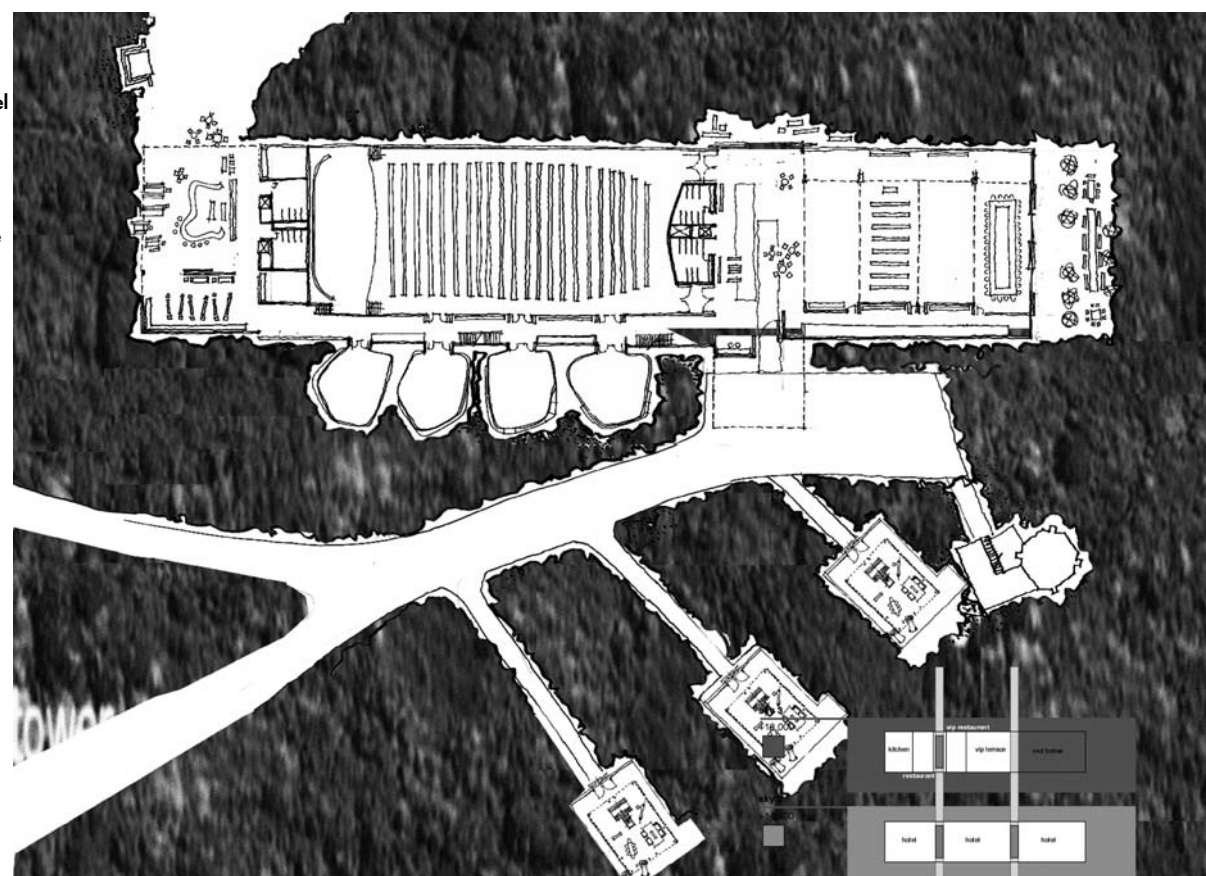
sun under the shade of a tree. Cross-ventilation is ensured by providing external doors to all hotel rooms and office spaces, with relief air evacuated at high level through vents in the roof over the hotel corridor. Air conditioning is provided as a necessity in Durban's hot, humid climate.

It is also necessary to deal with the image and therefore identity of the Centre as viewed from the city. Much conflict arises out of secrecy and hiding from public scrutiny. Exposing the actual activities of the centre and those involved in them is not desirable, but it is necessary for the public to be able to see the venue where peace is being negotiated and feel that it is a positive and open. The shimmering aluminium screens floating over the dark green bush and against the blue-grey sky achieve this lightness.

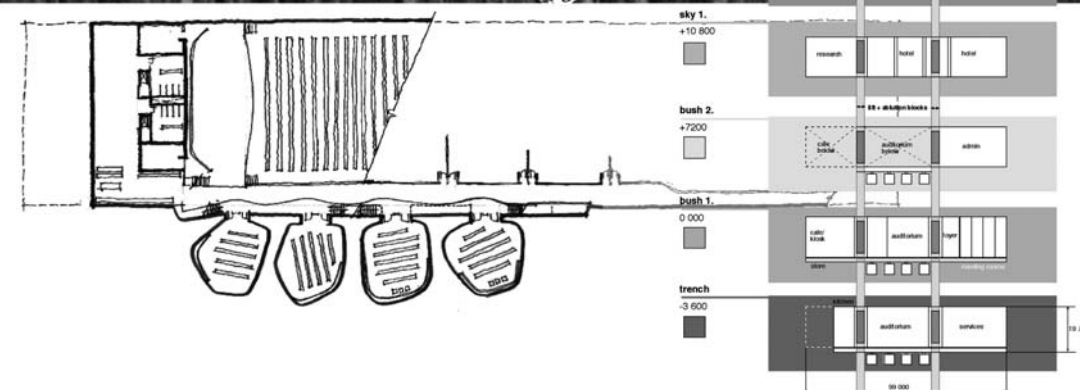
Janina Masojada, Andrew Makin



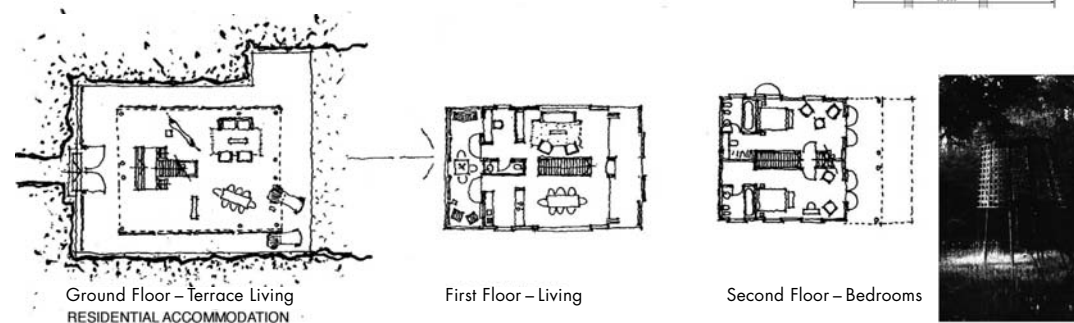
Ground floor plan with café on the left, an auditorium sloping down from ground level into the trench in the centre, with the break-away facilities on the right. The guest houses are built on the surface beds of demolished buildings.



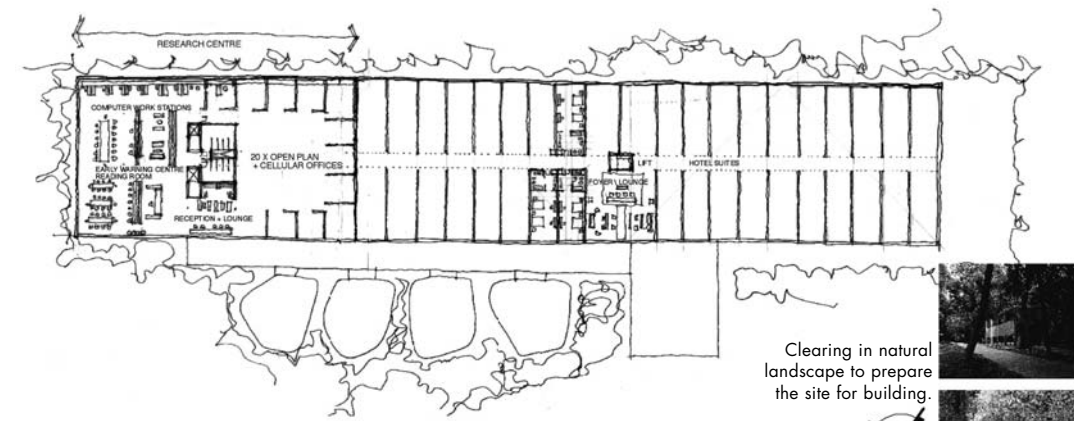
The auditorium slopes into the trench below ground level.



The ground floor open arrival terraces of the houses are protected from the wind by the bush. The living and bedroom levels enjoy the extraordinary views.



Every bedroom, a plush, calm cell, has an incredible view, either toward the city, or the Indian Ocean.



Clearing in natural landscape to prepare the site for building.

