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KZ-NIA Committee 2005-06

At the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th of November, the following members were appointed to the **Regional Committee**: Kevin Bingham, John Bizzell, Bruce Clark, Dennis Claude, Ivor Daniel, Patricia Emmett, Mohideen Abdul Gafoor, Mthulisi Msimang, Iqbal Naroth, Walter Peters and Kirk White. It was resolved that Bruce Clark would serve as President and Mohideen Abdul Gafoor as Acting Vice-President.

KZ-NIA President 2004-06

**Bruce Clark** (b.1963)

studied Architecture at Natal 1982-88. On graduating he worked for Stauch Vorster before establishing his own practice in 1991. During 1999 year he was first elected to the regional committee, which successfully nominated his appointment to the SAIA Practice Committee.

Much of his work is in collaboration with other practices, including the Media Centre of his *alma mater*,

DHS, which won for the associated practice a KZ-NIA *Conservation Award* in 2001.

UKZ-N School of Architecture

■ **Exit degree in Architecture**

Permission has been granted for the upgrading of the exit degree in Architecture from B.Arch (Adv) to M.Arch with effect from 2005.

■ **Simulated Office Project 2004**

The following prizes were presented at a function sponsored by Otis (Pty) Ltd and held on Howard College campus on Tuesday, 16th November.

The **KZ-NIA Prize for the Best 'Practice'**



was presented to a 'practice' styled Nascent. The project with Barry Gibbon as client-architect was for a Mixed-Use

Development in Stamford Hill, and the members of the 'practice' were **Mizan Rambhoros, Anand Govender and Sudeshna Nair**. The Prize by the **KZ-N Chapter of the Association of SA Quantity Surveyors** went to the collaborating quantity surveying

'practice' styled C&G with members Ntokozo Chiluvane and Derek Goodwin.

**First Prize by Otis (Pty) Ltd** for the most innovative incorporation of a 'vertical people transportation system' went to the practice styled *Level 9*. The project was a Human Rights Court; the client-architect Ruben Reddy. The architectural students were **Mathew Moul, Ross Dovey and Julia Schneider**; the quantity surveying students of the 'practice' *Quest* were Dorothy Shikuma, Visham Rambridge and Shandini Moodley.

**Second Prize by Otis** went to the practices *Nascent* and *C&G*.

The Prize by the **Aluminium Federation of Southern Africa** in which aluminium 'was most appropriately selected and applied' went to the practice *Triptych*. The project was an Office Park in Hillcrest; the client-architect Patrick Smith; and the students **Alexandra van der Stoep, David Dent, Greg Wilson**. The collaborating quantity surveying 'practice' was *BBL* with Khulile Lukhele, Bianca Brisset and Chuma Banjwa. respectively.

This issue of the *KZ-NIA Journal* is focused on KwaZulu-Natal practices working on projects outside the borders of South Africa, within the African continent and as far a field as the Middle East and the Gulf States. I have personally been involved in this activity for the past couple of years and am, therefore, able to share with the membership some of the experiences involved in this aspect of practice. As guest editor for this edition, I believe that the timing and exposure to the various aspects involved in this facet of architectural practice are worthy of featuring, as the issue of increasing globalisation in architectural practice effects our work both at home and abroad. There are multi-faceted aspects to be aware of and, as increasingly, members of our Institute become involved in operating in areas outside our borders, the need to share our experiences takes on greater importance.

The projects covered in this issue are diverse in both content and location and include a hospital in Uganda, a factory in Turkey, a Safari lodge in Kenya, an Equestrian Centre in Saudi Arabia and a major Administration Office Complex in Ras al-Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates. All these projects have in common the logistics involved in realising buildings at formidable distance from the respective offices based in KZ-N. Besides the logistics of communication and the transmutation of designs and documentation in order to carry out these projects, there is the challenge of establishing a contextual basis for architecture. The practices who have been involved in such projects are thus particularly challenged in meeting with the needs of being global rather than purely local or regional.

### Responding to both regional and global factors

The environment in which architects operate is generally filled with a certain amount of uncertainty, usually caused by economic or political factors largely beyond the control of the architectural fraternity. The cyclical nature of regional or national and international economies is well known to architects, and as local practices have recently experienced, when the KZ-N development climate stagnated, the Cape and Gauteng economies flourished. Also, as far as architects are concerned, this cyclical phenomenon involves an outsourcing of skills-based needs from high value economies to areas which have a high-level of skill yet relatively low currency values. Within this amalgam of economic factors the need to practice architecture at a high level, both at home and abroad, is critical to the maintenance of consistency of workflow and a high standard internationally.

The world in which digital technology is utilised, and in which architects operate, enables us to respond to a global environment

## Guest Editorial

### KZ-N Architects Building Abroad

quite naturally. This, coupled to meeting with market imperatives, prompts us to re-evaluate the norms by which we as architects operate. The lack of adaptation to regional or local context saw the demise of the so-called International Style as developed in the post-WWII period. Such dangers and pitfalls exist within the globalisation trend of architecture. The current appetite for reproduction of vernacular architecture, without reference to local needs and usage, is equally inappropriate in achieving architectural integrity. An intelligent balance is needed in arriving at architectural solutions which match the client's image ambitions against the imperatives of climatic and concomitant regional demands.

#### Entering the cauldron

Viewing from the aircraft window, on approach to Dubai at night, one looks over a sea of shimmering lights spread out across the desert, strung together with sulphur-orange chains of small jewel-like lights, leading to a crystal hub which is this City State's centre. This view is like all magical scenes, a little dream-like when examined in the cold light of architectural reality. "All that glitters is not gold" applies well to this unique area of our globe.

Nevertheless it is exciting to venture into this vortex and to pit your architectural skills against some of the world's top competition active in this hot spot of global development. You also have to ask yourself why we need to do this when we have so many challenges locally in our vibrant economy here. There are many reasons why we as South African architects have found this challenge to be both complex and rewarding!

The challenges are immense as are the rewards, and both of these aspects need to be put into context in order to be of value within the community of architects:

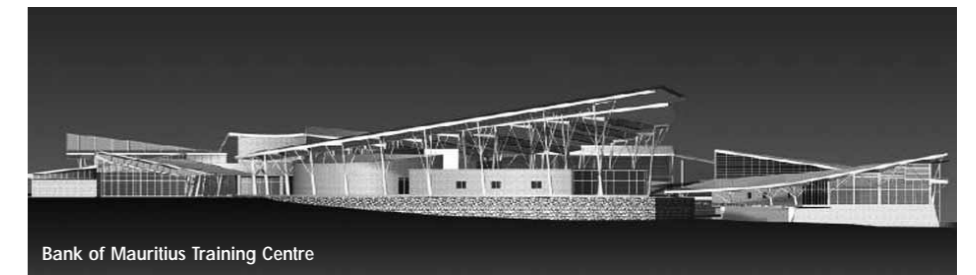
- The acceptance of South Africa into the community of nations has opened up opportunities within the past 10 years. Not only is there now acceptance, but more importantly, a belief that South African trained and experienced architects are more than equal to architects from the developed countries of the world, such as America or Europe. This is facilitated due to South Africa's political status as a model democracy and as a leader of the non-aligned nations.

- Architects from South Africa have had a good deal of experience working in an environment of scarce resources, as well as in a climate of fast-track development, in addition to the intrinsic value of their design skills.

- The converse to this is that there is still a perception that South African architects are naïve within the global competitive environment.
- Parts of the rewards of working internationally are due to the relative cost-differential in carrying out projects abroad from a South African home base. Due to the costs involved in travelling, and staffing project-work abroad being high by South African standards, it is preferable to carry out the design and development stages within the South African home base. The obvious advantage is that the scale of most of these projects enables us to maintain South African expertise and provide opportunities for the development of these skills within an international context.

#### Practising outside the borders

Stauch Vorster became involved in working outside our borders some years ago working jointly with locally based practices. These projects would arise when we were identified as having the requisite expertise and design skills to complement the local practice. This has proved to be a formula for skills transfer. Our involvement in offshore projects in Mauritius a few years ago, were carried out on



this basis In Mozambique we became involved as specialist Health Care architects for the World Bank, and due to the limited number of architects in the country with whom we would be able to associate, we opened an independent

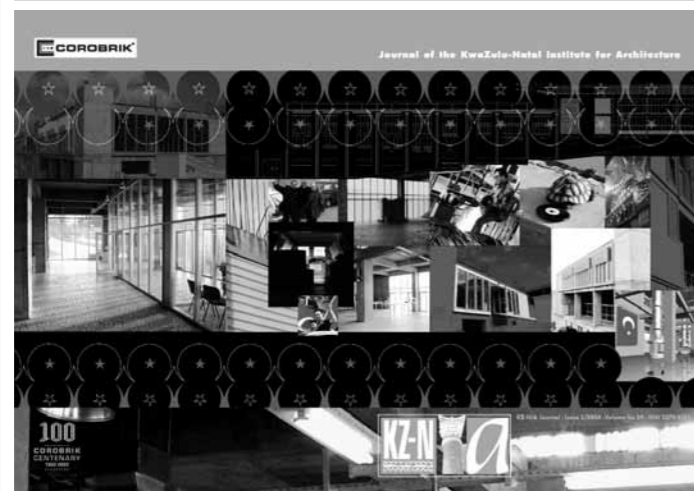
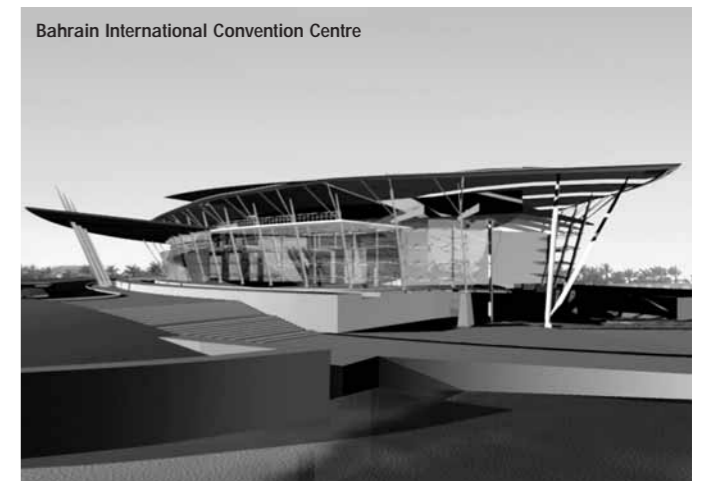
office in Maputo. This was the first office established outside the borders of South Africa and has been operating successfully for the past five years with the main logistical support being provided from our home base.

In December 2000, we were invited to Bahrain to undertake the design of an International Convention Centre for the government of this

Gulf State. This invitation arose from the publication of the Durban International Convention Centre in the international architectural press. The need for a convention facility was a response to the urgent need to provide a suitable venue for the rejuvenated Arab League Summit, which was to be held in capital, Manama, in 2003. Whilst the eventual relocation of the event to Lebanon caused the project to be put on hold indefinitely, the opportunity of working with internationally renowned consultants over a period of six months provided us with a platform to operate in an environment where we were considered an international practice. The benefits of this was that clients regarded the expertise that we could provide as specialist consultants and were, therefore, considered to add a 'status-value' to their projects. The flip side of this new found status was that we found ourselves in competition with major 'signature architects' of the world who operate in the region.

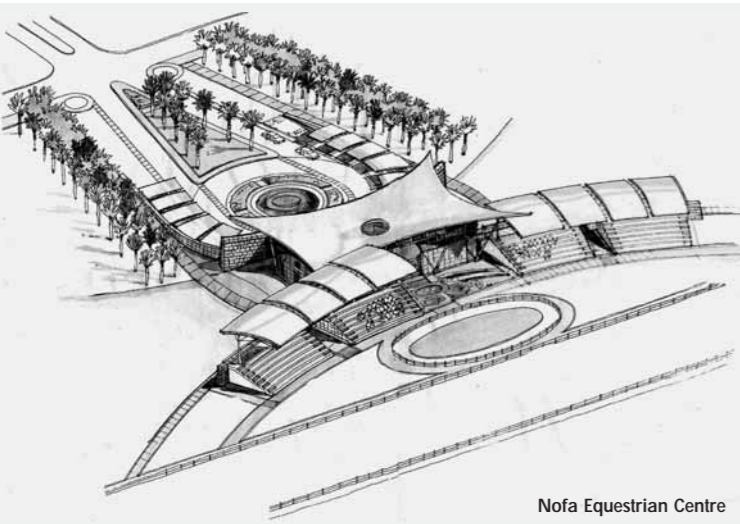
In the period of working on the Bahrain ICC we developed a close working relationship with Buro Happold, the renowned British-based consulting Engineers, who also operate an office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They were appointed as overall consultants for a major private Equestrian Centre at Nofa, Saudi Arabia, and appointed us as the consultant architects for the focus of the development, a private grandstand for the main racecourse. The development of an appropriate design

solution, and the integration of hi-tech materials and systems, was greatly assisted by their intimate knowledge of local materials, customs and climatic needs based on their 30 years of operation in the region.



COVER ILLUSTRATION: *Talking Turkey in Istanbul*: Montage by Don Albert of the Barrow's Surtas architectural design project.





Nofa Equestrian Centre

production being carried out by the Durban office.

Co-ordination with the local contractor included the requirement of providing a turnkey project, based on a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) Contract. The value of this system is the acceptance of a value engineered GMP and as such it was intended that renewal of our appointment be made a part of the overall contract value. In addition to this

scenario, the contractor was required to invest a substantial sum in the project in order to negotiate the contract. Our appointment for the initial stages was on the basis of a partial fee, which would form part of the overall fee package. We received payment for part of our fees but currently negotiations between the client and contractor have broken down and therefore our future involvement in the project is uncertain.

#### Life beyond baptism

Having established a presence, and in order to maximise the available opportunities, we

#### Birth of a new office

In travelling through Dubai for the projects in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia we were introduced to the promoters of a mega development known as the "Dubai Pearl". We were asked to submit our credentials for selection as architects for the centrepiece of the overall mixed-use development, a 55-storey, five-star hotel, valued at approximately \$150 million. We were asked to prepare an initial concept proposal, which was evaluated against submissions received from a number of international practices such as Ellerbe Becket, WATG and Chapman Taylor. Our concept was accepted and we were commissioned to proceed to full design development stage (equivalent to our Stage III or detail design concept stage). The structure of the team was based on the previous relationship with Buro Happold as our structural engineers and Davis Langdon Quantity Surveyors, based in South Africa, and their Dubai office of HL Technik from Germany. At the initial stages of the project an association with a local Dubai practice was established, but terminated on the client's request. He insisted that we establish an office in Dubai ourselves in order to better co-ordinate with the client, operator and project manager and, accordingly, we obliged.

The entire design process was carried out in our Durban and Johannesburg offices with the design and cost co-ordination being managed through workshops held in Dubai and South Africa. Weekly teleconferences were held to deal with overall co-ordination but, most importantly, our web-based FTP (File Transfer Protocol) site forms the backbone of the transfer of digital drawings between Durban, Johannesburg, Riyadh and Frankfurt. This required adherence to strict protocols and data management systems, with final co-ordination and



Dubai Pearl Hotel visualisation  
Below: Ivor Daniel with the model



proceeded to establish a Dubai 'Base Office' which operates as an office of an international company, without diminishing our design and documentation capacity in South Africa. This has proved to be a lot more difficult than it appeared in terms of the procedural guidelines set by the authorities. Besides the voluminous legal documents required for authentication and certification by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs and the UAE Embassy, a service agreement had to be entered into with a UAE-national. The requirements for an architectural licence are regulated by the number of professional architects within the practice, the practice's past project experience and a minimum period of 15 years of practice in the country of origin. The normal bureaucratic procedures and delays impacted on the period for the application, however this is absolutely essential to setting up office to open bank accounts, enter rental agreements, obtain telephone connections and residence permits for staff.

Having gone through the process of setting up and registering in Dubai, we are also developing major architectural and urban design projects in Ras al-Khaimah, the most northerly Emirate in the UAE. The new Government Administration Office Complex together with an urban design framework for the overall city precinct is now being documented (see article) for tender early in 2005. The office is currently commissioned to carry out a number of separate urban design frameworks in RAK City and has the appointment for several other architectural projects. A sub-office has been set up in RAK and a separate licence was obtained from the RAK Emirate.

We have just completed the first anniversary of our establishment of an office in the Gulf, now starting to bear fruit. Fee-earning prospects have also developed and, although it has been a difficult and sometimes a daunting year, the excitement of being able to carry out architecture of integrity on projects of scale, within an internationally competitive environment, is very exciting.

Ivor Daniel — Guest Editor

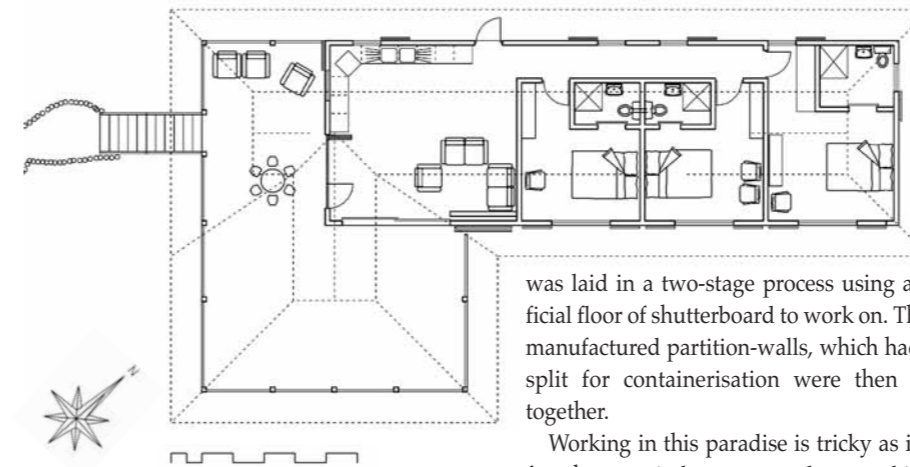
Ivor Daniel, Managing Director of Stauch Vorster Architects, Durban, and National Director of Stauch Vorster Architects, graduated with a B.Arch degree at the University of Natal in 1975. He began practice as Daniel & Associates in 1976 and integrated his practice with Stauch Vorster Architects in 1985. He is responsible for the co-ordination of the national practice's marketing portfolio and the setting up of the international practice of Stauch Vorster Architects.

## Building Abroad — Bruce Clark Associate Architects CC

### Two Veranda Houses in the Seychelles



Detail of timber-framed structure with weather-board cladding.

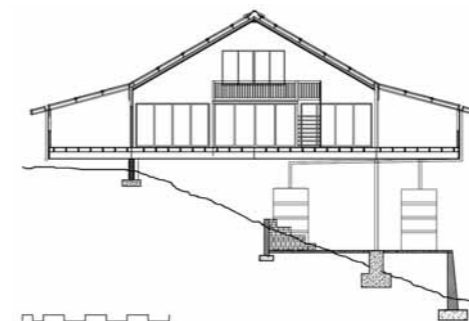


was laid in a two-stage process using a sacrificial floor of shutterboard to work on. The pre-manufactured partition-walls, which had been split for containerisation were then bolted together.

A Seychelles national living in South African, and who returns to the Indian Ocean islands for his annual holiday, came across a very hard wood called *fastigiata* in KwaZulu-Natal. With the cost of building in the Seychelles being about three times that of SA, it made sense to ship a house across the Ocean in kit form and erect it there.

Unfamiliar with timber-framed technology, I sought advice from my colleague Gary Pallatt who had gained experience locally at Prince's Grant. Planning had to be on a modular basis like the traditional Japanese house but, the restriction I had was the fact that all components had to be containerised, and I had to ensure that loose timbers and framed partitions would fit into the container. Bearing in mind the environmental laws of the Seychelles the *fastigiata* timber had to be treated by dipping, as other methods proved inadequate. Paint was then applied to seal the poison.

The concept has the frame built on stilts to minimize contact with the ground as the surface is mostly rock. The floor



Working in this paradise is tricky as it rains for short periods on most days, making for slippery and moist conditions. With these conditions in mind, it was necessary to get the walls up as quickly and easily as possible, and to have the roof to provide a shaded working area for the balance of the contract.

This unit was planned for the family, but with the luxury of having all the bedrooms en-suite, thanks to the suspended floors.

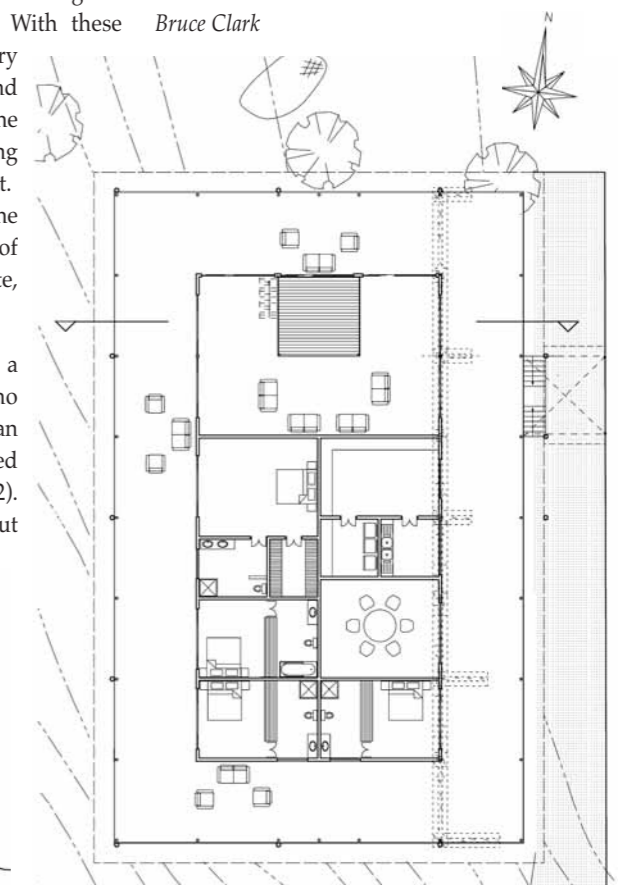
The second house (below) is for a resident of the Seychelles who called at my office after reading an article on the above timber-framed house in *House & Garden* (Jan. 2002). He presented me with a plan but

wished to build in steel to avoid the need for poisonous treatments and the uncertain life expectancy of the timber. All the steel was galvanised here and shipped across in containers, the total amounting to nearly 40 tons.

This house is located on the mainland in an area as yet unserved and this necessitated the collection of water for drinking and ablution purposes. The paints on the roof elements had to be carefully considered as most paints would leave a residue in the tanks. A system of filters and pumps was installed to circulate the water to solar heaters, and pressurized to supply balanced water to showers.

The veranda is an outdoor living area in the trees, and serves also as the circulation space for the house.

Bruce Clark





# Building Abroad – Stauch Vorster Architects

## Administrative Building, Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates



Above: Long exposure aerial photograph of Dubai by night. Right: View of the site at present as seen from the bridge. Below right: the desert transformed.

The new administrative building for Ras al-Khaimah, the fastest growing of all the Emirates, has the potential to provide a meaningful and powerful landmark. The building being the seat of the ruler and crown prince, is intended to reflect both historic cultural influences and modern progress.

The philosophy of the design is directly related to the inherent geometry and culture of traditional Islamic forms and spaces and the building is designed with many layers of integrated geometry.

### The brief and site

The brief called for a building which sits proudly on its site, has a compelling image and should be as transparent as possible. Eventually the building is to form part of an administrative precinct set in a public park. The use of clear glass and passive shading was selected for this proposal. An 'operable' wall system, using simple technology eliminates the need for mirrored glass to prevent heat loading. This allows for a break from the shimmering tower aesthetic so prevalent in the Emirates.

The client expressed a desire for transparency due to the site's position on an open peninsula (the building should take advantage of its prominent position within the city and of the distant views) as well as symbolism of the governance of the region. The design reflects the inherent dualities of government, namely transparency and solidity.

The site is positioned in the most prominent position in the Ras al-Khaimah estuary called the 'Khor'. It lies directly adjacent to the main transit link between the Old Town and new Centre. The proximity to the bridge gives the visitor an elevated perspective of the precinct and allows the development to be viewed as a whole. The relationship to the water's edge and the views to the conservation area across the Khor give it further prominence. After a detailed site analysis a comprehensive urban design was undertaken for the new government precinct. This project is earmarked as the catalyst for development that will eventually extend along the full water frontage. The proposed park provides the desired setting where the building is placed with a strong axial positioning between the water and the road.

### Design Features

The building has a solid-framed base where public facilities occur and a transparent upper tower where the administrative functions are located. The solid base has a broad view through to the water with a gallery to link the transverse circulation system.

The tower comprises a fifteen-storey office block around an atrium that allows natural light through to the core of the building. The upper floors are set back proportionally, and the top floor of which is dedicated to the Ruling Crown Prince. The tower is a translucent modern structure that serves primarily as administrative offices.

The four-storey podium houses the main public interface departments of the municipality. These are also grouped around internal courtyards in line with traditional Islamic design, providing cooled interstitial spaces for public gathering and circulation.

In order to handle the extreme environmental conditions

where the air is humid and temperatures soar, the building is fully air-conditioned. The use of large expanses of glazing has resulted in the use of passive shading devices.

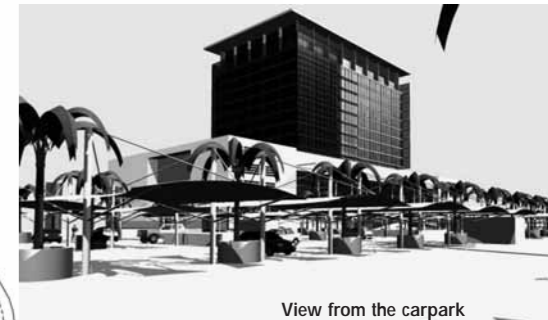
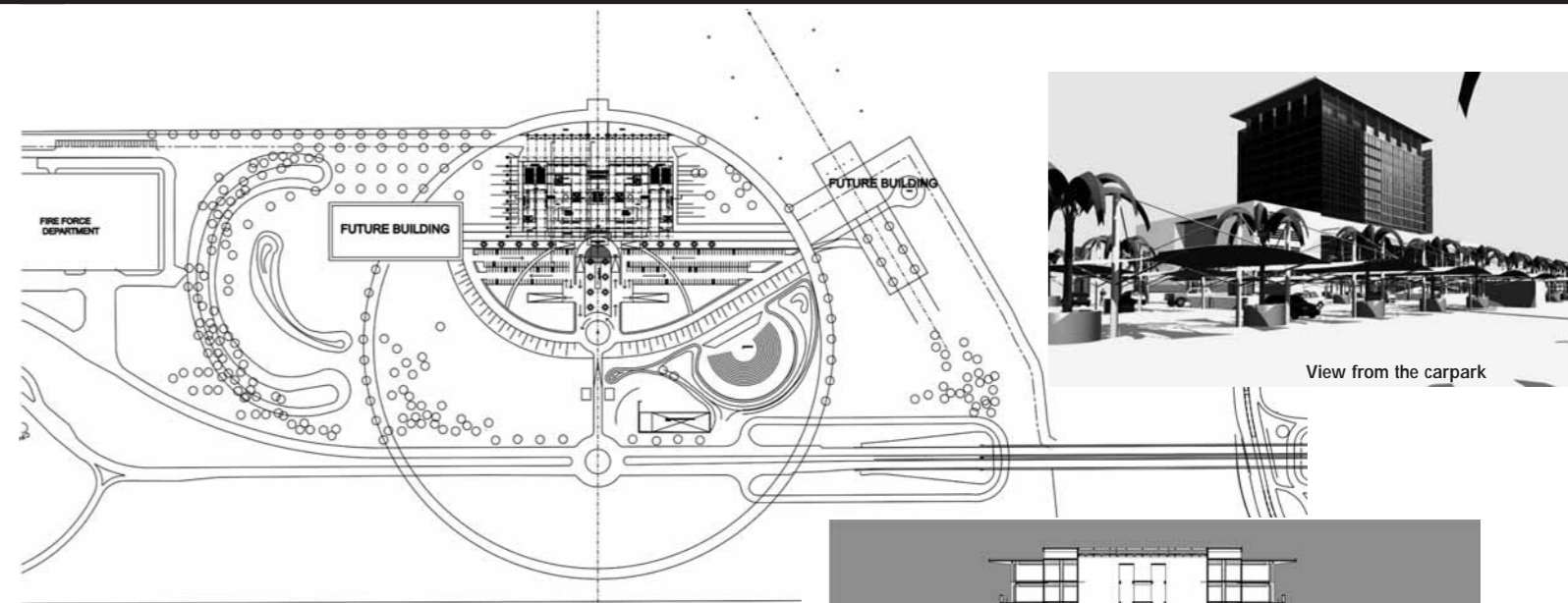
The building is orientated north-south and large elements shade the plinth while the overhanging roof plane and the protruding wing to the west shade the glazing for most of the day, except in the early morning and late evening of mid winter.

The most significant solar modifier is the 'operable' wall, the glazed façade of the office tower, double-skinned with adjustable louvres within a glazed panel, and which creates a thermal flue on the extremities. This 'operable' wall also serves a dual purpose of shading the building while still allowing it to remain as transparent as possible to views of the surrounding park precinct.

The design rationale for cooling the building uses the outer skin to deflect as much of the sun's heat as possible. Using carefully placed openings within this skin, air that is allowed in between it and the main building skin is suctioned up the building by ambient winds - hence cooling the cavity between the two skins making the air conditioning within the building more effective. This in turn will assist in controlling the long-term maintenance and running costs of the building.

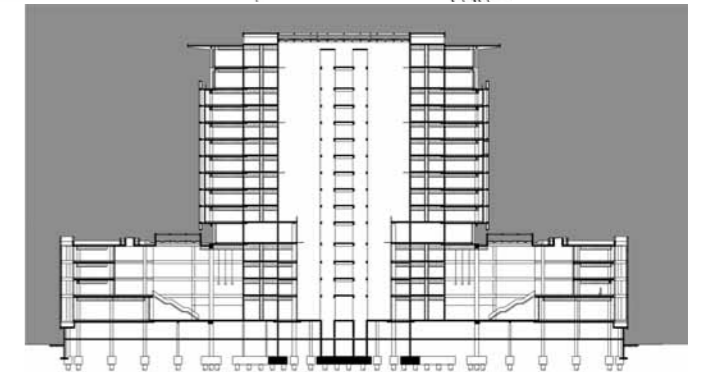
Other advantages gained by the use of this system relate to glare-free views and serviceability of the external outer and inner skins (due to the structure required for the facade). Further, openable sections within the inner skin, make possible the introduction of natural ventilation to the offices, primarily as a source of fresh air supply to the interior and not for internal comfort.

Georgina Walker

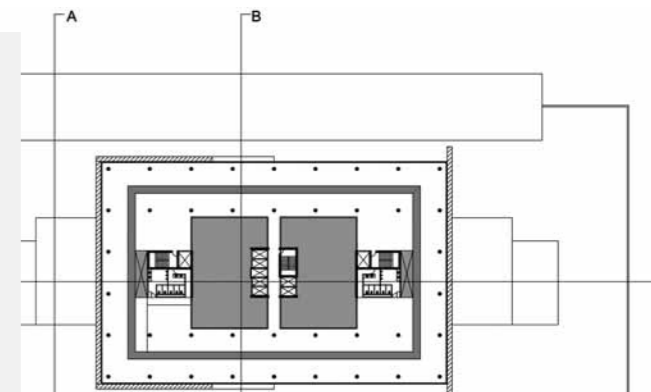
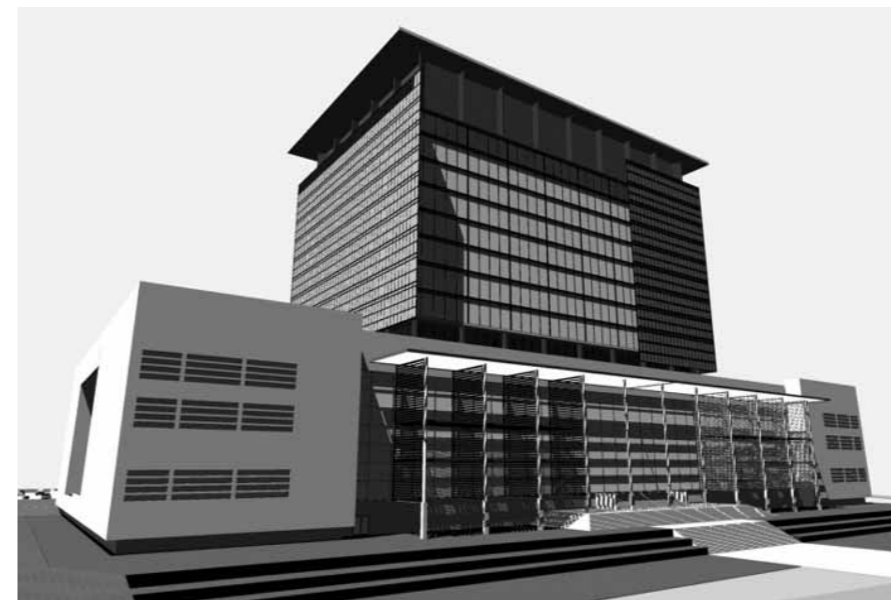


View from the carpark

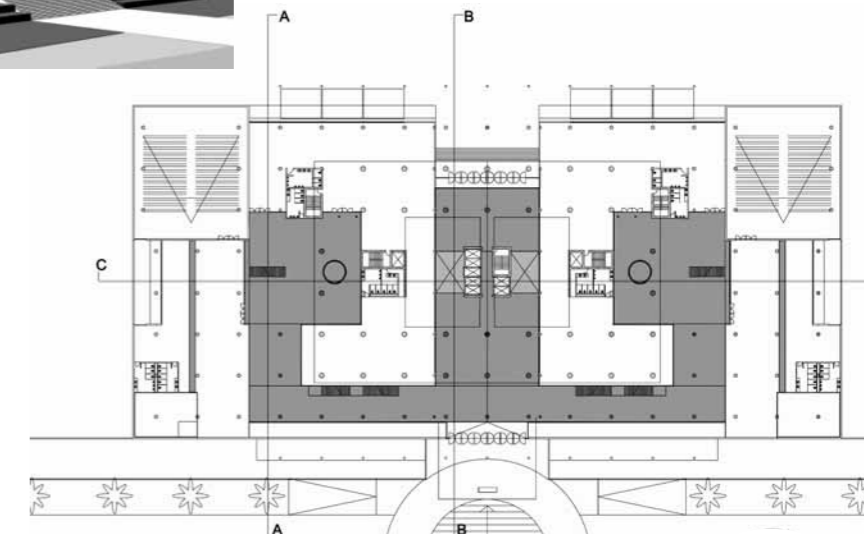
Owner: Ras al-Khaimah Government  
 Location: The Emirates of Ras al-Khaimah; United Arab Emirates  
 Latitude: 25 N  
 No. of Storeys: 15 floors  
 Start Date: January 2004  
 Gross area excluding site & parking: 52 895m<sup>2</sup>  
 No. of parking bays: 600 open bays; 600 bays in semi basement.  
 Architect: Stauch Vorster Architects Durban.  
 Design Team: Natal graduates – Franco Coppola, Ivor Daniel, Melanie Grant, Brandon Robertson, Georgina Walker and Murray James (UIPE)



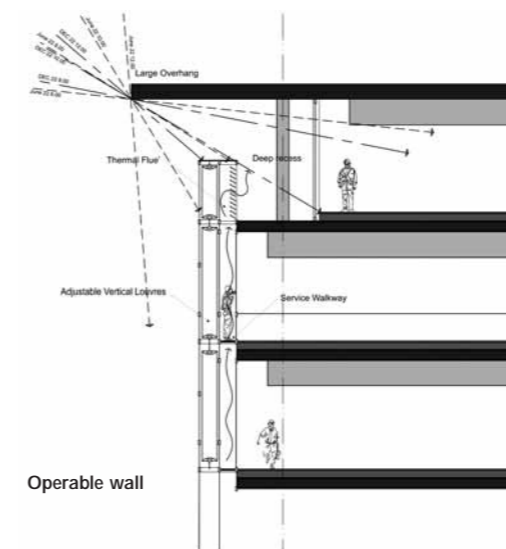
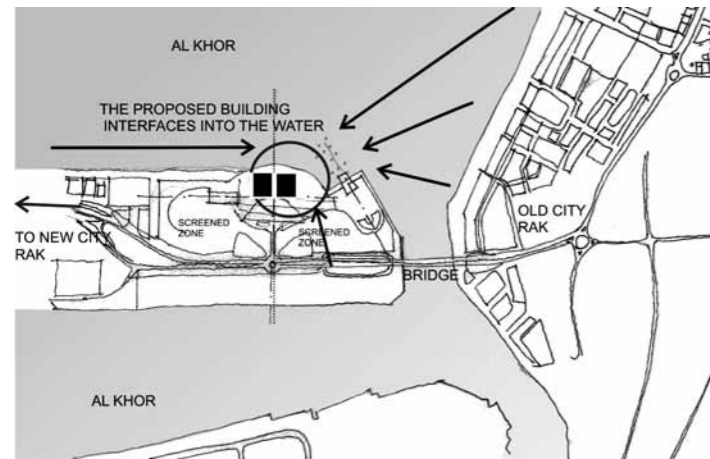
Section C-C



Typical tower plan



Typical plinth plan

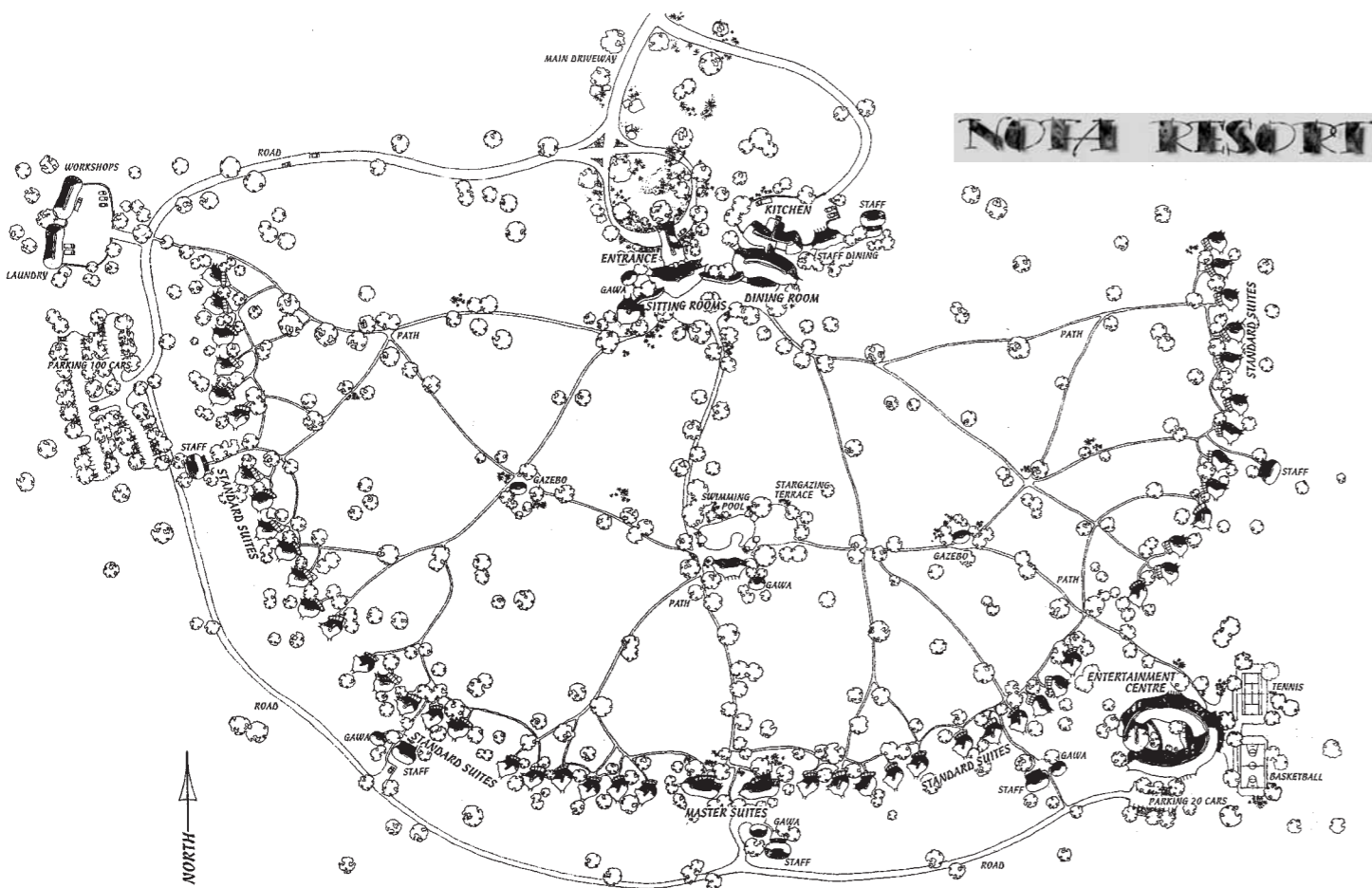


Operable wall



# Building Abroad – FGG Architects

## Nofa Resort, Saudi Arabia



LAYOUT PLAN

### THE CLIENT

A wealthy Saudi Prince (aren't they all?) passionate about fishing, horse and camel racing, hunting anything that moves with anything that kills, and parading his wealth.

### THE HISTORY

Having stayed in a modest fishing lodge on an island in Lake Victoria, he summonsed the owner to Saudi and asked him to build him a lodge in the Desert.

On a Saturday afternoon in November 2001, at a point of no hope in the Test match between the Boks and England, I received a call from the lodge-owner asking me to help with the project.

### THE BRIEF

An A5 piece of notepaper with a few lines and circles. The inspiration was the Kenyan fishing lodge, thatch roofs, stone walls, African hardwoods and trees, and palm matting.

### THE SITE

The Desert. Nearest water—50m underground.

### THE CHALLENGE

Transporting an African Safari concept into a hostile desert environment and incorporating everything that isn't rustic African, like air conditioning and double-glazed windows, Ten Pin bowling, indoor and outdoor Olympic-

sized swimming pools, sushi dining room, lounges for 25 to 200 guests, a beauty salon and an ice rink.

The building sizes range from 25m<sup>2</sup> to 600m<sup>2</sup>. The contractor is Irish with a team of Chinese labourers, and we had to get them to accept the rambling, organic style of building.

### THE CONCEPT

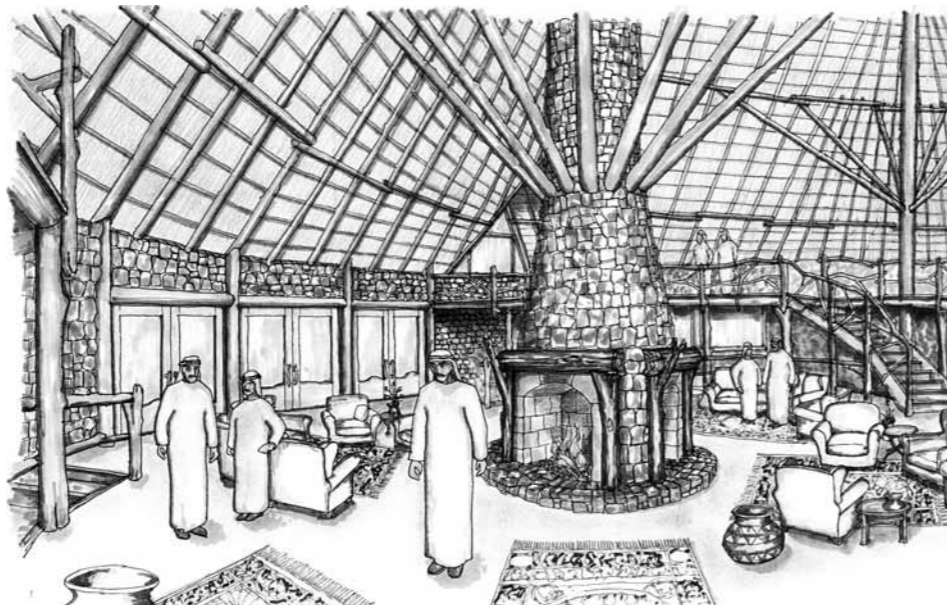
Because of irrigation constraints, the resort is

an inward-looking oasis around a swimming pool.

Outside the ring of buildings, hills have been formed to screen views beyond the perimeter of the 2000ha farm, and the animals are prevented from entering the oasis by ha-ha.

### MATERIALS

Thatch and gum poles, insect and flame-



Sitting room at entrance

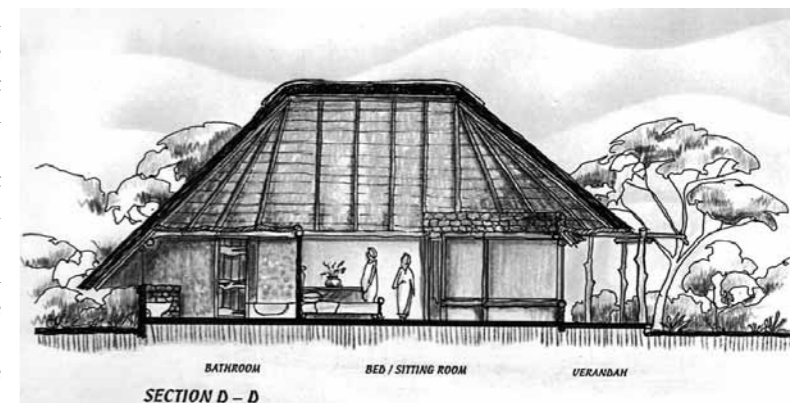
treated, bundled, palletted and containerised in South Africa and shipped to Saudi Arabia, cleared through Customs at the coast (they are a little sensitive about alcohol there, so it can get quite messy when they start looking for the Southern Comfort in a container of thatch) and hauled 600km overland to the site.

Sandstone is imported from India, the local stone, whilst plentiful, is bland and characterless. Blackwood, Ironwood and Cedar comes from Kenya.

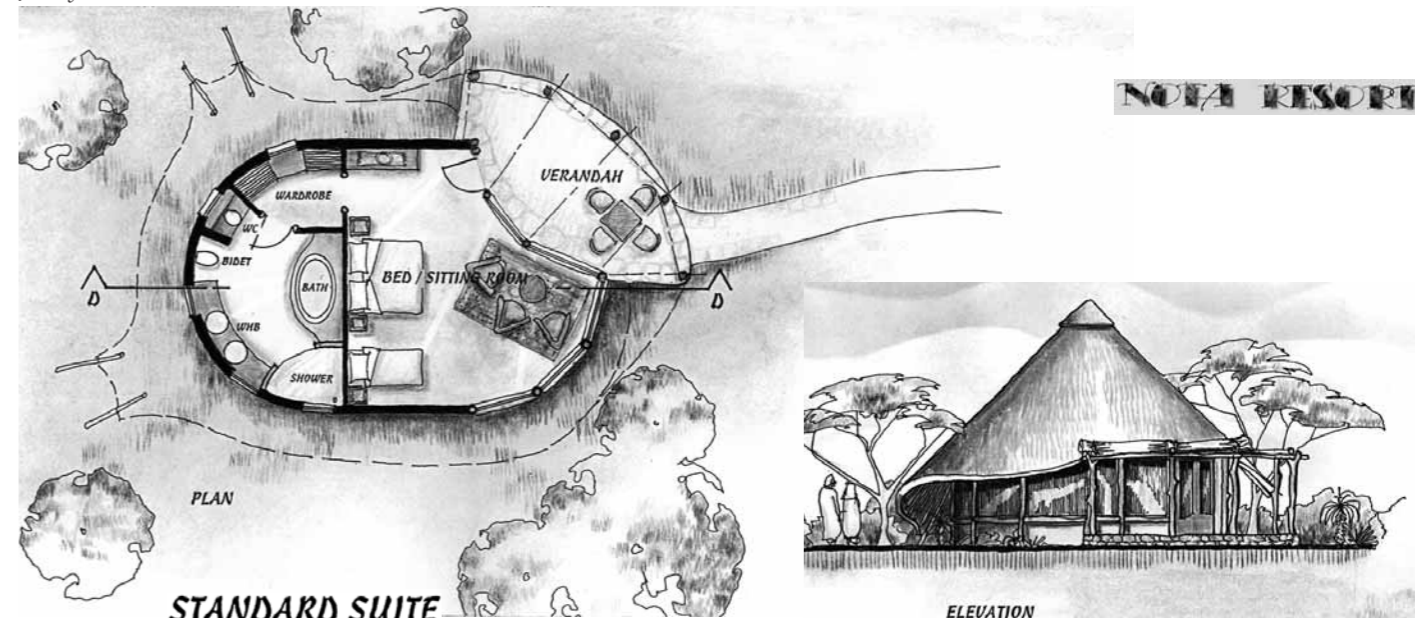
There is also a two-hectare aviary, an indoor tropical garden and the 2000ha reserve for animals, which is surrounded by the 24km long and 4m high wall.

This development is a private weekend getaway for the Prince, his family, and 200 of his closest friends!

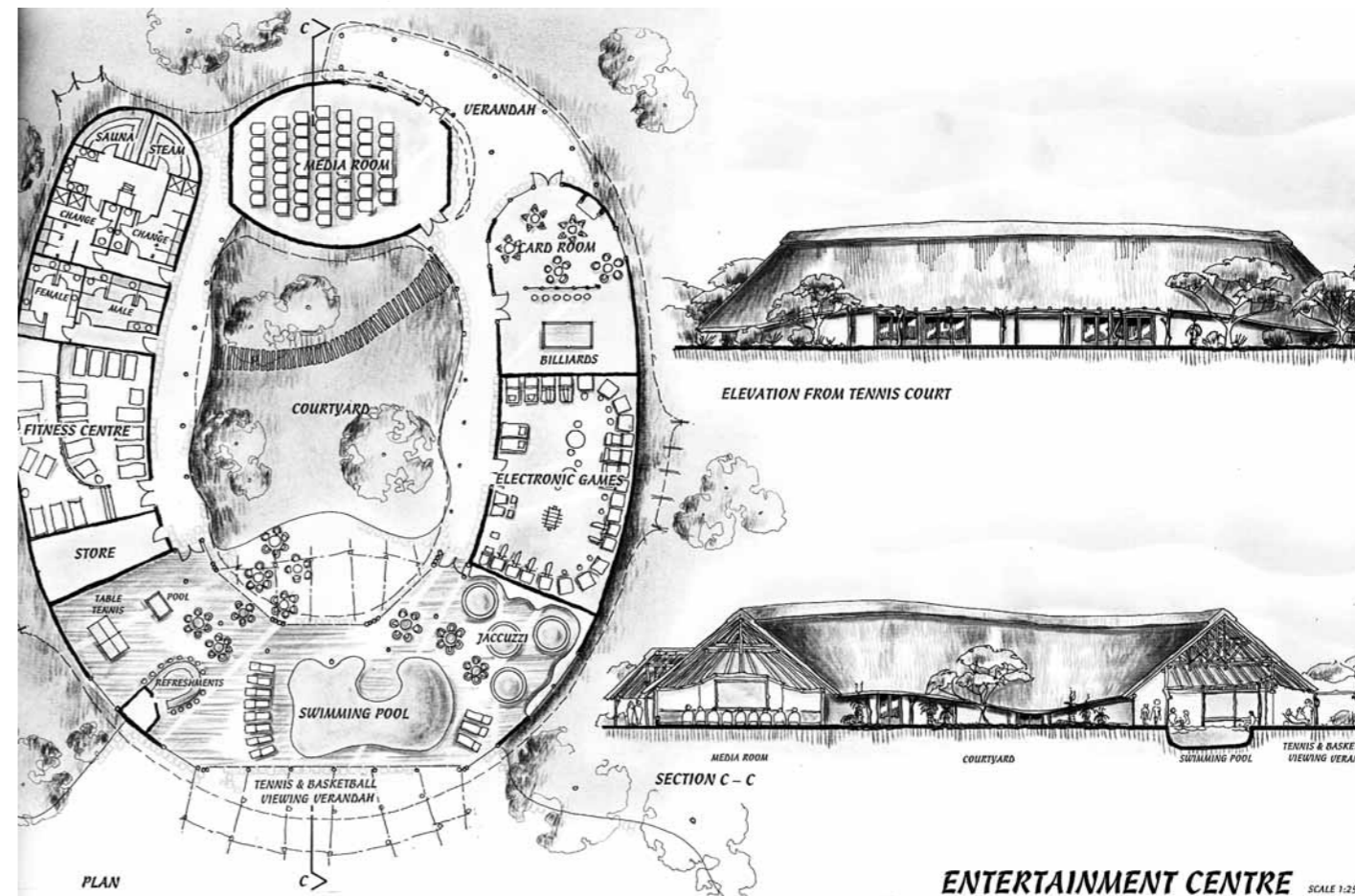
Jeremy Hathorn



SECTION D - D



STANDARD SUITE



PLAN

ELEVATION FROM TENNIS COURT

SECTION C - C

ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE SCALE 1:250



## Building Abroad – OMM designworkshop

### International Hospital, Kampala, Uganda



A new 230-bed private hospital is taking shape in a residential suburb on the hills above Old Kampala. The hospital is the brainchild of Dr Ian Clarke, an Irish medical doctor, resident in Uganda for the past 15 years, having initially arrived on a missionary posting.

The new hospital will be the first of its kind in Uganda, setting the standard for private medical care in the country by providing high quality healthcare to middle and upper income groups, and specialist services previously only available in far off countries such as Egypt and South Africa.

The hospital forms part of a broader group of medical services initiated by Dr Clarke, including a medical insurance scheme and international air and ambulance services. The Ugandan government plans to introduce compulsory medical insurance within the next few years. The drive is on to develop medical services beyond the basic healthcare currently provided by government and mission hospitals.

OMM designworkshop was approached by Dr Clarke in September 2002 to design the new facility, based on a budget of US\$ 2 400 000 (excl. furniture and equipment). The brief called for a comprehensive range of specialist departments from outpatients, accident and emergency, radiography and maternity to surgery and intensive care, as well as accommodation for 230 inpatients. To address a high local demand for patient privacy and sleep-in relatives, inpatient care was to comprise 50% 4-bed wards, and 50% one and two-bed private wards, with a small number of executive suites for dignitaries.

To accommodate the planned 7000m<sup>2</sup> facility on a four and half acre sloping site, a multilevel solution proved to be the most appropriate in

terms of circulation efficiency. It also created the opportunity to exploit site elevation for views, create a strong public facility with presence in the surrounding residential area, and distinguish it from the low-level mission hospital norm synonymous with lower income healthcare.

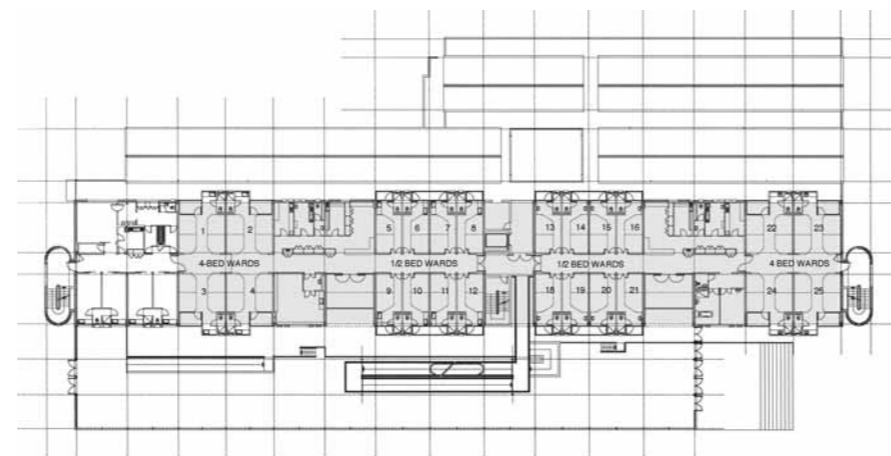
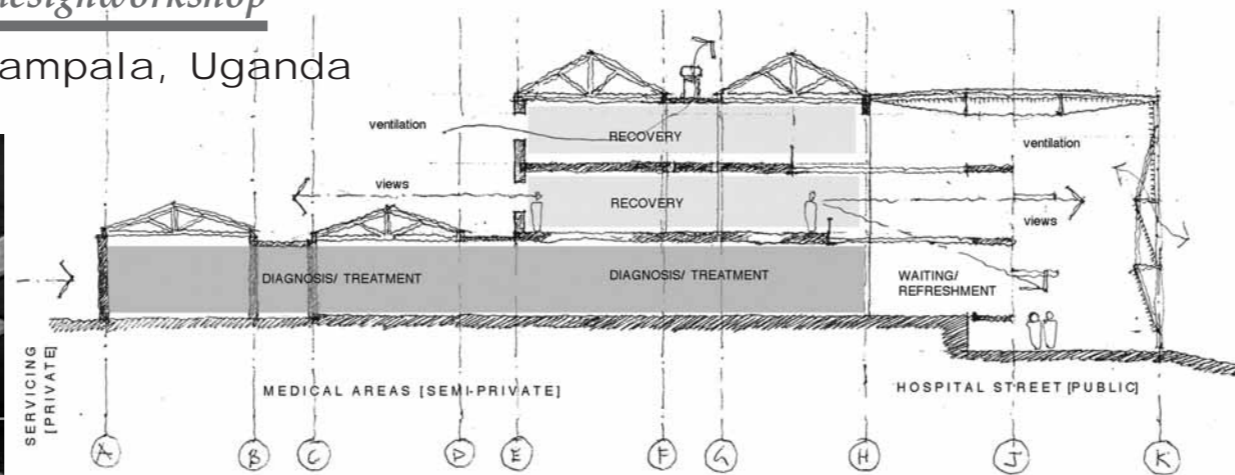
Developed in conjunction with client input, the design approach was twofold: providing a building shell capable of delivering high quality diagnostic and treatment areas, using high specification medical equipment in line with international standards; and taking a humanistic approach to patient recovery areas, to create a naturally ventilated, comfortable environment, domestic in scale and feel.

Wards were located on the upper floors of the building, each with a balcony and view over the surrounding hills to enhance the psychological recovery process, and utilise high level air movement for cross ventilation. Although located on the equator, Kampala enjoys a mild temperate climate due to its high altitude, and temperatures remain at comfortable levels for most of the year, making it possible to dispense with artificial cooling, other than in selected treatment rooms.

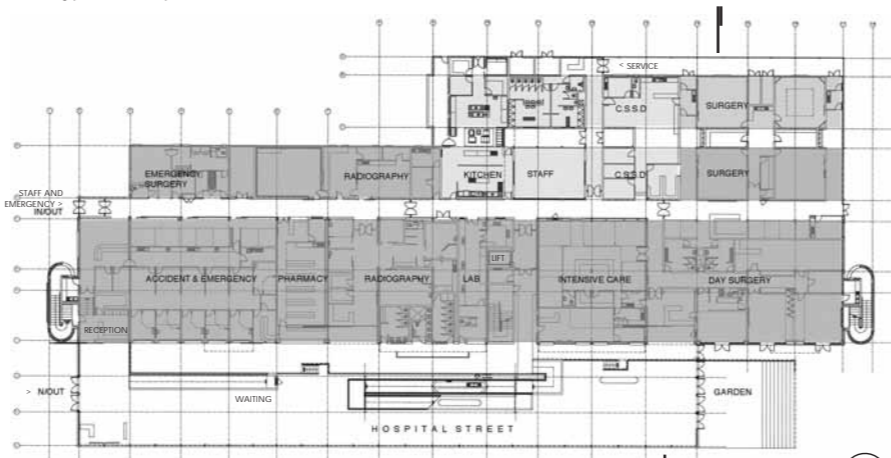
All diagnostic and treatment areas were located on the ground floor, expanding as required into simple single-storey components along the rear. The layout was developed with emphasis on maintaining a simple and clear

access system for all patients, visitors and staff alike.

A three-storey linear courtyard, naturally ventilated but enclosed in clear polycarbonate sheeting and shaded with timber laths was designed as the main point of entry for public and patients, and gives access to all departments much like a street. It is a generous space containing waiting, refreshment and vending areas for patients and the numerous relatives that accompany them. Through its analogy with a street, it plays a key role in translating a huge, sophisticated, unfamiliar hospital environment into a familiar and more easily accessible one. The street is also



Typical floor plan



Ground floor



overlooked by wards above, enabling inpatients to remain connected with the outside world. Due to the prohibitive costs of lifts and associated maintenance problems, the floors were linked by ramp, with a single bed-lift for emergencies.

The detail design was developed in consultation with Robert Johnson Architect & Associates and was based on South African hospital standards. Throughout this process the client remained involved in tailoring the design to his specific requirements. The intention from the start of the project was that he would also be responsible for the procurement and construction stages, monitoring costs locally, based on availability of materials and labour.

To this end the South African design team



was augmented by a Ugandan quantity surveyor, structural engineer and site architect.

OMM designworkshop drawings served as 'design intent' with the site architect becoming instrumental in translating them into reality. We commend the local team for doing this job particularly well, given that the conditions proved challenging particularly in relation to cost, the devaluation of the dollar and, as the site photos attest, the scaffolding techniques looked perilous at times!

Materials and fittings were sourced both locally and abroad, the latter proving to be generally better in price and quality than locally available alternatives but requiring more forward planning and longer lead-times. This proved to be problematic from time to time as procurement options were only carried out when construction was well under way.

The building shell comprises a reinforced concrete frame with concrete blockwork infill, the quality of concreterwork being generally good in Uganda, and the quality and supply of blockwork being more consistent than clay. The floors were designed as flat slabs with locally available clay 'formers' to achieve a flush soffit. The supply of these however proved problematic giving rise to delays and additional costs and causing the redesign of the third floor structure to a thinner slab and beam system during construction. The roofs were designed as a series of double pitches to reduce overall spans and proved to be more cost effective in standard steelwork sections than in timber. It transpired that larger steel sections imported from South Africa are generally 30% more expensive in Uganda, causing the subsequent redesign of the steel-framed ramp by the local team to reinforced concrete during construction.

Quality timber properly seasoned is difficult to find in Uganda. Timber was procured in Sudan and seasoned on site over two to three months. All joinery and fittings were assembled in a dedicated site-workshop,

with the supplier of *Formica* laminates assisting in training. Doors and windows were likewise assembled on site using standard steel sections. A wider profile was used for the windows to simulate aluminium framed windows at the client's request, as steel window frames in Uganda are generally seen as synonymous with less aspirational environments.

Dubai proved to be a cost effective source of sanitaryware, ironmongery, tiles, suspended ceilings, luminaires and stainless steel for kitchen and medical fittings, although some problems did occur in supply and delays in transit.

Due to the 'design and build' nature of the project, the client's team was instrumental in keeping control of the costs, with only a detailed estimate prepared at Stage 3 for reference. Drawing on previous building experience, and ingenuity in the procurement of materials (even managing to obtain tax concessions from the Ugandan President on the grounds of the hospital being a pioneering project in Uganda), the client has managed to keep the project within budget.

The first 120 beds and 70% of the ground floor area are due for completion at the end of the year, at which time the hospital will open primarily for outpatients and maternity services. We understand that the construction of the hospital street been delayed due to constraints in the budget, but will get underway shortly.

Anna Sarnowski

**Professional team, South Africa:**

Architects: OMM designworkshop in consultation with Robert

Johnson Architect & Associates

Quantity Surveyor: EC Harris

Structural & Civil Engineer: Jennings Naidoo

Mechanical Engineer: Delen Oudkerk CC

Electrical Engineer: BFBA Consultants

**Professional team, Uganda:**

Client: International Air Ambulance

Site Architect: Angus Cowie

Site Manager: Jim Sleath

Quantity Surveyor: Kavuma Investments

Civil Engineer: Zziwa Baker



## Building Abroad – soundspacedesign cc

### Barrow's Surtas – Talking Turkey in Istanbul



In July 2002 *soundspacedesign* were appointed by Surtas (Barrow's Turkish Point of Sale manufacturing partner) to perform a limited architectural design service to their new 12000m<sup>2</sup> factory in a nascent industrial area west of Istanbul. Two floors of the building had already been constructed, to an engineer's brutally "rational" design, and the following two floors comprising *Barrow's* operations and *Surtas'* administration level were still to be designed and constructed. Given that *soundspacedesign* had designed *Barrow's* Durban operations (see *KZ-NIA* 2/1999) and been involved with the concept and branding, it was logical to accept the commission in the interests of their international expansion. Working in a place as culturally exciting as Turkey was also a challenge that the architects readily accepted.

#### Site and location

The site was a triangular shaped, steep, abandoned piece of ground that one finds between road intersections throughout the world – not ideal for a modern factory. Given the steep topography, the context of the building is thus rather bleak, having two full floors submerged below grade, and being approached from a higher level posed a difficult design problem. Not quite the "Greek Approach." Furthermore, the building is surrounded by bland industrial buildings (with powder-coated blue window frames!) which are certainly not designed by architects, and this, coupled with a rather Turkish attitude to public space in general, posed considerable problems in "fitting in", or standing out for that matter. It was like trying to design a building in a rubbish heap. Getting international clients like *Gillette* and *Duracell* to the front door, would in the opinion of the architects, have to be either by helicopter or

blindfolded!

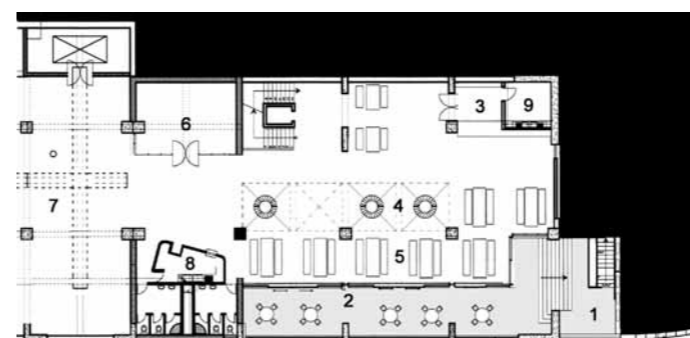
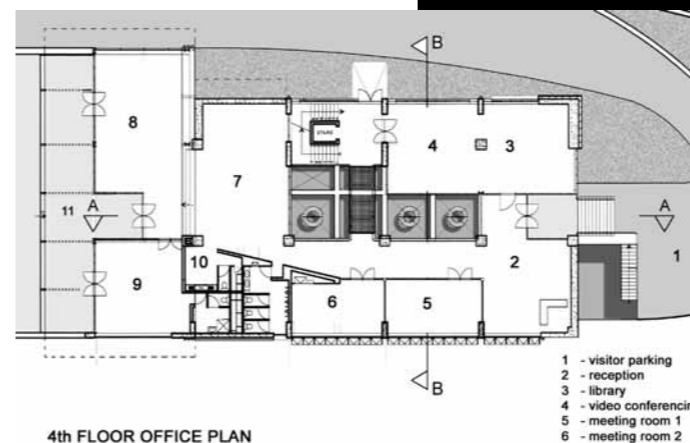
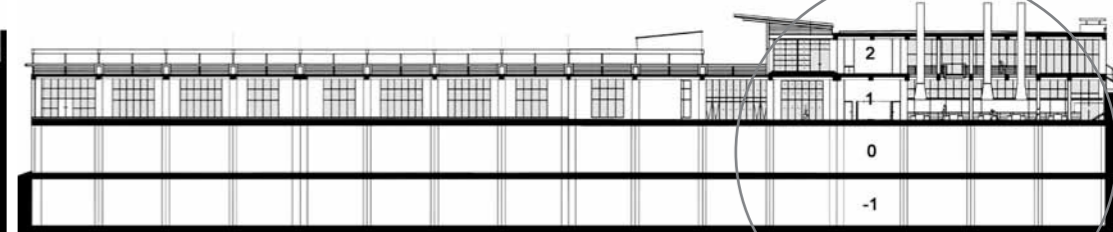
#### Concept

When the architect arrived on site *Surtas* were already operating on the lower floor of the building, and the scene was Dickensian - dark and gloomy, with poor ventilation, and generally appalling working conditions. As a starting point the architect tried to convince the client, that like *Barrows* in Durban, a more utopian and social environment would improve productivity and loyalty. Furthermore, opportunities for social interaction between workers and management would need to be created to instil a culture of innovation and transparency in the company, and that these environments would have to be accessible by all, especially clients, as a marketing exercise. Having design, sales and manufacturing departments open to client scrutiny is a powerful marketing tool as clients can see at first hand the scale of operations, the people and processes involved, and develop a system of trust, essential for lucrative global contracts where product and money are crossing borders.

#### Design

For these reasons the building had to be revised as a more vertically integrated one, and the first proposal was to create a workers canteen on the third floor, which had double volume penetrations to the administration level above, linked by large gas hearths where Turkish coffee would be on the boil. By manipulating the flow of air through the upper volume via dampeners on the flues, the architects believed that a fair degree of passive comfort control could be achieved in both winter and summer.

The next consideration was getting as much daylight into the building as possible and the third floor had a US\$1,2m double-glazing system installed, which was one of the most successful sub-contracts and painless working experiences that *soundspacedesign* have had to date. The level of service by the glazing installers was highly competitive and would give South African suppliers a serious wake-up-call. Two-thirds of the lower portion of the 5m high perimeter windows are laminated sand-blast-effect glass, to prevent views to the grim industrial landscape beyond, and the



-1 METAL WORK  
0 PLASTICS  
1 BARROWS LEVEL  
2 ADMINISTRATION

1 - visitor parking  
2 - reception  
3 - library  
4 - video conferencing  
5 - meeting room 1  
6 - meeting room 2  
7 - lower accounts  
8 - upper accounts  
9 - MD  
10 - tea kitchen  
11 - admin balcony

1 - TERRACE  
2 - BALCONY  
3 - KITCHEN  
4 - GAS HEATERS  
5 - DINER  
6 - PRODUCTION OFFICE  
7 - BARROWS FLOOR  
8 - SCULLERY  
9 - PANTRY

upper portions of the windows are transparent to allow views of the moving clouds above. The effect is somewhat surreal.

In terms of the aesthetic, the architects persuaded the client not to plaster and paint the reinforced concrete frame of the building. The robust "bunker" nature of almost all concrete buildings in Turkey is a reaction to the devastating effects of recent earthquakes in the

were many contractual obstacles that precluded any real architectural control – the contractor was after all, already on board. *Soundspacedesign's* scope therefore was to design and manage the glazing, electrical, painting and plumbing contracts, with a limited input into the landscaping and civils. In total there were only six site visits, and whereas the architects were promised a project

area, and perhaps an over-reaction but given the rational grid and appealing simplicity of this particular structure, the architects believed that a simple industrial aesthetic of standardised clip-on elements would least detract from the monumentality of the concrete.

After considerable deliberations over the cost of having 6000m<sup>2</sup> of epoxy laid on the new floors (at US\$25/m<sup>2</sup>!), the architects enquired about the cost of laying typically Turkish chunky white marble terrazzo. It came in at US\$8/m<sup>2</sup>, a bargain! The thought of laying 6000m<sup>2</sup> of terrazzo in a South African factory is laughable.

#### Execution

The architects experience of working in Turkey cannot be inferred as typical as there were many contractual obstacles that precluded any real architectural control – the contractor was after all, already on board. *Soundspacedesign's* scope therefore was to design and manage the glazing, electrical, painting and plumbing contracts, with a limited input into the landscaping and civils. In total there were only six site visits, and whereas the architects were promised a project manager to assist with daily monitoring on site, this person didn't materialise. Some instructions, would happen at the first instance of suggestion, and others were politely ignored. A major disappointment was the client's reluctance to spend on the gas-heating system proposed for the canteen area, the true social element of the

design where coffee was to be prepared and shared.

It is confusing to the architects that the client was happy to pay an exorbitant amount of money for natural daylight, adequate fees, international flights and 5-star hotel accommodation, but reneged on paying for the only element that would promote any "structural" change to the business.

In the end the canteen was moved, by the client, to a less "public" location in the building, almost as if he didn't want the workers to catch up with him.

#### Lessons

In Turkey 'yes' does not necessarily mean 'yes' and suggesting to a client a certain strategy or design specification, is not the same as actually convincing a client of the same, even if budgets are approved, plans signed and all is confirmed in writing.

There are huge social inequities in Turkey, (one of Europe's poorest "developing" countries), and after one year working in Istanbul, the architects' conclusion is that Turkey is more like the Apartheid-era South Africa than the New. Ideas of inclusiveness, transparency, democracy and benevolence are simply quite foreign, and no amount of talk was going to convince *Surtas* of the benefits of transformation, or that architecture could perform a role therein.

The importance of 'buy-in' during the design process cannot be overstated, and the difficulty of communications on this project, not only in terms of language barriers, but cultural too, were ultimately insurmountable. The architects capitulated on certain issues, and acknowledge that perhaps a more realistic approach to Turkish business culture would have prepared them better.

That is not to say that all is lost. The client is happy and the building works well, however there has not been a quantum leap in the business philosophy of *Surtas*, that neither supported true innovation in architecture, nor could be supported by the architecture, and as a result, the project is for the architects bittersweet, but a huge lesson in the politics of global investment all the same.

Don Albert

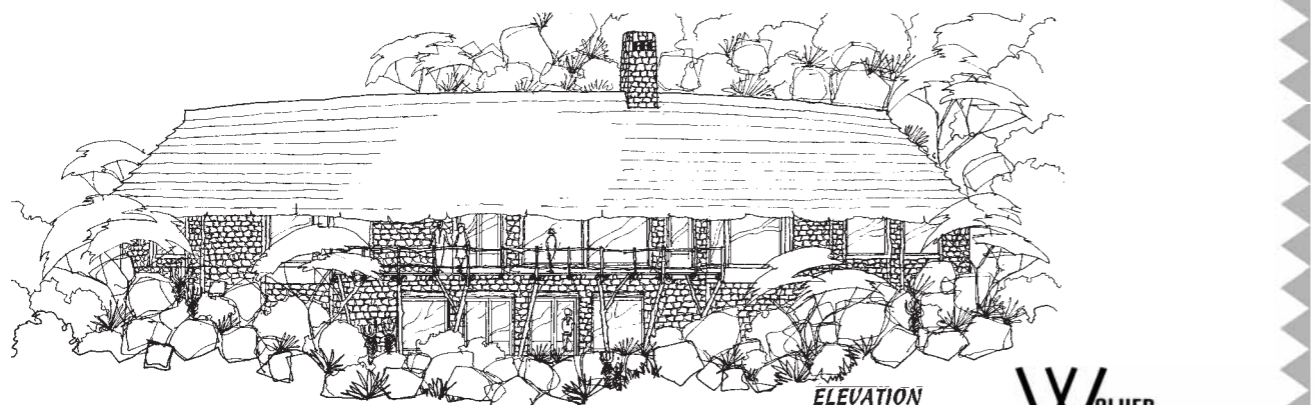
Don Albert Principal Architect; Melanie Grant and Yusuf Mullah Design





### Building Abroad – FGG Architects

## Walker House, Manda Bay Seaside Resort, and Kifaru House – Kenya



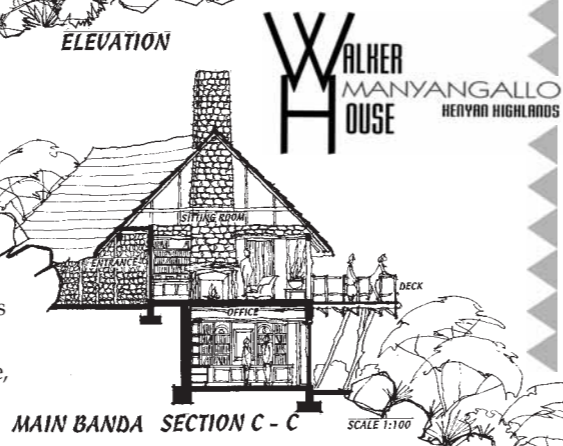
Walker House, Kenyan Highlands  
The site is a horseshoe-shaped rocky hill with spectacular views North over the Kenyan highlands.

The lodge is being built for use by a Safari Club and comprises six single bedroom-suites and a two-bedroom donors' suite which is set into the rock face and has its own private spa built into the rock at the top of the hill.

The approach road is up the hill from the lodge and is only visible on arrival. As one

arrives, the view, which is framed by two large Acacia trees, is over the 25m long heated 'horizon' pool and across the plains to the distant mountains.

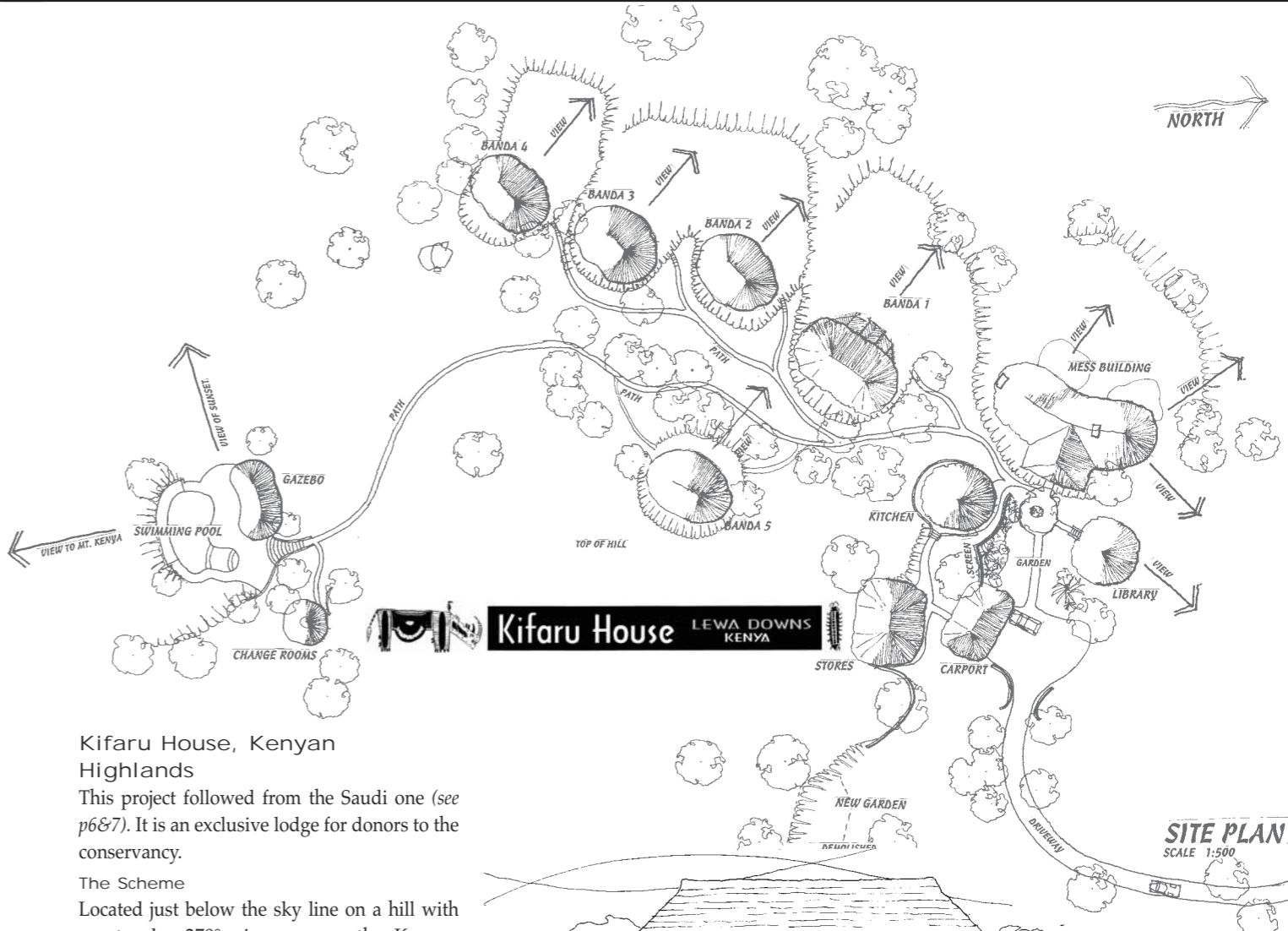
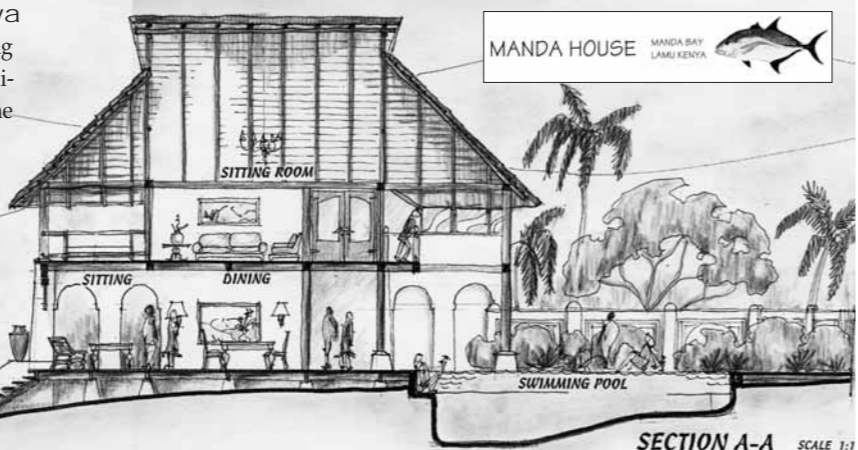
Makuti thatch roofs, local sandstone, Cedar and wild olive make up the range of materials.



### Manda Bay Seaside Resort, Lamu, Kenya

The island town of Lamu on the Kenyan coast has a strong Arabic heritage which is reflected in much of the old architecture, wood carving and furniture. Mixed with this is the African architecture (with possible European influence) with its steeply pitched woven palm leaf-tiled roofs on timber posts and woven palm mat-walls.

The mix of these two genres make an elegant expression for this exclusive beach shack on the adjoining Manda Island.

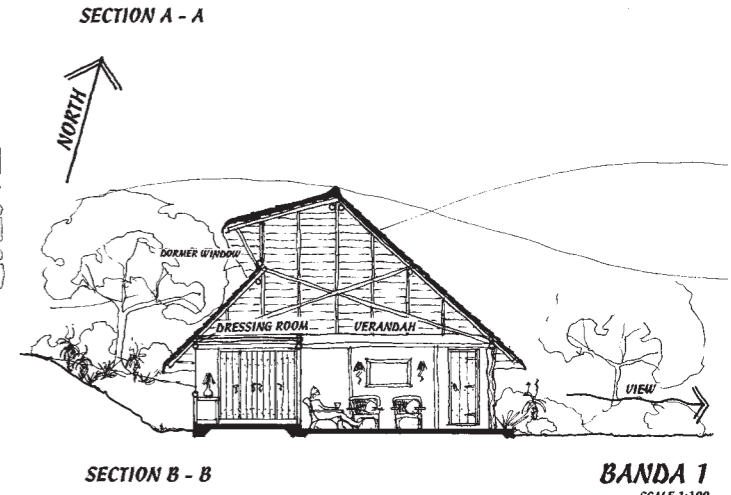
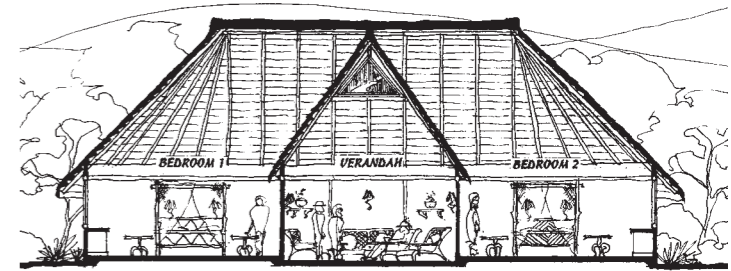
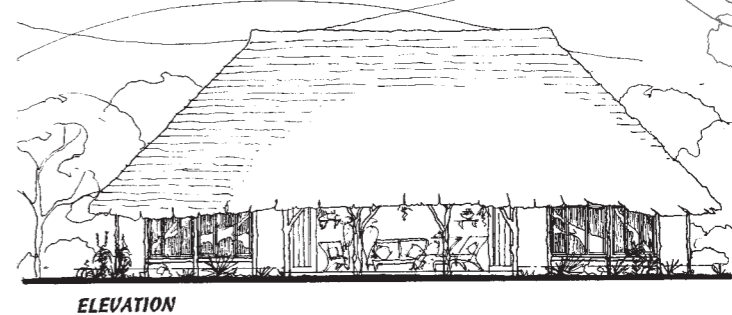
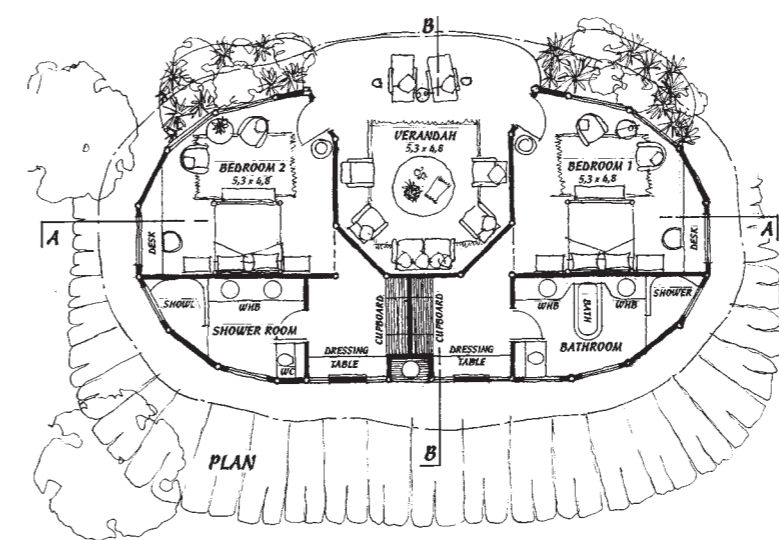


### Kifaru House, Kenyan Highlands

This project followed from the Saudi one (see p6&7). It is an exclusive lodge for donors to the conservancy.

The Scheme  
Located just below the sky line on a hill with spectacular 270° views across the Kenyan highlands, the 'House' consists of a 'Great House' or Mess building comprising sitting and dining spaces, separate kitchen and stores (colonial ways are still alive and well here) and five individual bedroom suites know as bandas. These buildings are laid out around the hill, each with different views, climbing gently from the 'Great House' up to the swimming pool and gazebo which has spectacular views of Mount Kenya beyond, a wetland with Fever trees, and a resident herd of elephants.

Jeremy Hathorn





## Book Review

### Urban Reconstruction in the Developing World

**Urban Reconstruction in the Developing World. Learning through an International Best Practice.** Editors: Peter Robinson, Jeff McCarthy, Clive Forster. Sandown: Heinemann, 2004. 436pp. R285, paperback.

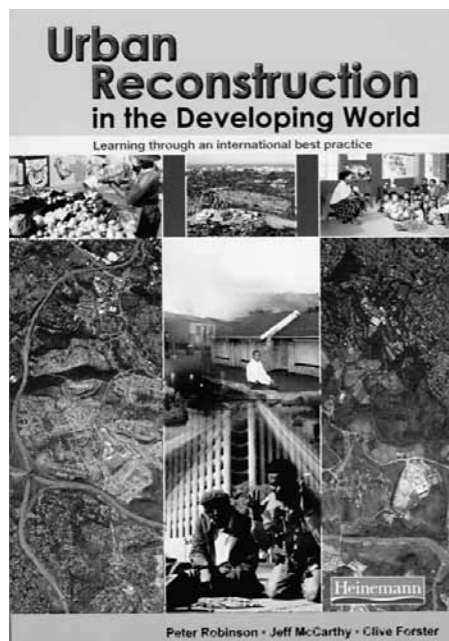
Restructuring the apartheid city has long been under debate amongst South African urban designers and planners. The writings of Dewar and Uytendogaardt et al from the late 1980s spring readily to mind. A tailor-made opportunity to turn talk into action arose in Cato Manor in the early 1990s, while the old order died and the new slowly emerged.

By 1963, Cato Manor had been effectively 'cleansed' of its black and Indian citizenry. The land lay fallow – an urban quarter 'in limbo' until the 1990s. Land invasions and shackland settlements on this 1800ha of prime real estate, 5km from the city centre and right in the backyard of middle-income suburbia, catapulted the area onto the development agenda. The Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) was formed in response, to manage this process. This book is *their* account of that urban reconstruction experience. It coincides with the Association's dissolution in 2003, whereupon Cato Manor was once more formally absorbed into the fabric of Durban's metropolitan government. As the book's title indicates, the project was designated an International Best Practice by the UN Commission on Human Settlements. It is worth noting at the outset, though, that of the area's 85 000 residents, some 72% still live in the informal settlements seen today.

The book is an outcome of an international conference on urban reconstruction held in Durban in 2003. It targets students, professionals, and development activists for its readership.

#### Format

The format of the book calls for brief comment. At 346 pages arranged in five parts – with 32 chapters and 40 contributors from a broad spectrum of the development professions, this is a serious read. Each of the five parts succinctly introduces the overall theme for its set of chapters. First up is an introduction, or global view, followed by three parts zooming in, in classic planning fashion, on context and history, then on institutions and processes, before moving on to development issues and sectors, to end off in Part Five by considering lessons for the future. The chapters vary in length from under 10 pages to just on 35 pages. This highly compartmentalised structuring lends itself particularly to students of planning wanting a 'quick read' on a specific topic, but



stronger editing should have cross-referred and linked overlapping themes more creatively. The contributions lack a sense of dialogue with each other – of particular relevance where so much of the business of planning deals with co-ordination and trade-off, or sacrificing some issues to promote others.

#### Global

In Part 1, global pedigree is provided by the doyenne of Anglophone planning critics, Sir Peter Hall, who kicks off with an engaging account of his prior survey of the 'three city-types in the world' as projected to the year 2025 (p15). With the broadest of brushstrokes, he paints SA cities in a group 'going through every stage of economic development at once'. Distinctive to SA cities though, he notes, is our extreme division and inequality separating parts – "a huge gulf" (p16). This, he seems to consider, is our urban planning imperative. The strength of his account lies in his breadth of perspective which regrettably only hovers overhead, never quite descending to the scale of this urban project, or to refer to the title of this book – to matters of urban *reconstruction*. As fascinating as the urban mega-projects of east Asia are, his contribution to the book's topic is uncertain.

Surely securing tenure for the poor in a good urban location was what warranted an International Best Practice for urban reconstruction?

#### Spatial

In Parts Two–Four, 'restructuring SA cities in the post-apartheid era' (p374) comes across as a somewhat covert agenda when dealing with funders, technocrats and marching commu-

nities. Instead, the reader has to glean ideas from the book in indirect ways – from the earliest vision for Cato Manor to be 'a city within a city' (p6), to later outcomes which attempt 'integration between races and income groups' (p98), where 'activity corridors, nodes and precincts' make it possible to 'live an urban life ... without needing to own a car' (p61). The only graphic evidence for this vision is found in the diagrammatic Structure Plan (p103), which lacks a key for closer examination. More detailed Precinct Plans are referred to, but not published (Ch8). The architectural reader will search this book in vain for further diagrams or plans, with the general lack of graphic content a major shortcoming of the publication. The concise metropolitan maps (pp57 and 58) simply underscore how much a visual record is missing. For an architectural account of Cato Manor, the reader is referred to *KZ-NIA Journal* 3/2000, with accounts by Kaplan, Lipman and others. Contained in these designs lies the kernel of an alternative vision for building cities.

The merits of a spatially-biased Structure Plan in order to achieve consistency and coherence over time and through turbulence are described (Ch7), with useful planning definitions of what is meant by 'integration' (p98). The land invasions of 1993–5 and land claims of 1996–7, which threatened to halt all development are cases in point (Ch28). The complete absence of private sector buy-in into the project and how this impacted on the Structure Plan deserves more consideration than is granted by the book (p202).

Moving from rhetoric to reality, a visit to Cato Manor after 10-years of development begs the question of whether the project is in fact more than another native (*sic*) township, albeit in a favourable place? What is seen are dormitory suburbs with high quality public buildings in internal locations –not on the edges or along the 'access corridors' as indicated in the Structure Plan (Ch7). These incipient nodes are embedded on hilltops of hillside precincts of low-grade dwellings or 'housing opportunities'. Streetscapes are unimaginative with meagre public space-making, indicating the low planning status afforded this land use – 'a luxury?' (p139). With poverty levels in Cato Manor such that the average household lacks the resources to meet their own needs (p258), small or steep residential plots further constrain households from exploiting their 'opportunity' (p142). In contrast, the early writings of Dewar and Uytendogaardt, referred to at the beginning of

this article, describe the value of public spaces as forms of investment in social infrastructure, critical to the life of the urban poor (SA Cities: A Manifesto for Change, 1991; UIA International Architect, 1985).

The quality of the environment and the levels of urban design achieved are vigorously critiqued in the book by Dewar and Kaplan in referring to social facilities (Ch10); by Boaden referring to resource utilisation (Ch20); and by Nell, Charlton and Maxwell (Ch27) who focus on the housing sector. These chapters are especially noteworthy for not pulling punches. The novel co-authoring method for all the book's chapters – whereby CMDA personnel partnered with independent researchers for the most part achieved the necessary critical distance for worthwhile debate (p243). Missing overall though is the voice from below – the residents of Cato Manor. Precedent and standards for this approach have already been set by Maylam and Edwards in their published history of Cato Manor (*The People's City – African Life in 20th Century Durban*, 1996).

#### Economy

In defence of the project, planning initiatives are described which target Local Economic Development (LED) for Cato Manor (Ch26), but these have met with limited success. Private sector investment has shown no signs of attraction to the project, although it is still

too early to expect much. Will the nodes and development corridors of the Structure Plan forever remain as ideas on paper? This lack of a commercial or industrial base for Cato Manor results instead in income transfers out of the area (p250). Does the answer lie in more 'ice-breaking' public investment to boost business interest along the activity corridors as suggested (p137 and p426), or could it be that the many LED-initiatives that have taken place are still too highly geared and inappropriately targeted? This begs the question whether planners and architects can do much for LED?

Possibly planning method itself is in need of critical review. The emphasis on land-use in South African remains prescriptive and aggravates the very problem we wish to address (p142). Instead, land-use focus could be substituted by a system concerned with the structure of public space hierarchies – the very way heritage districts in the First World and urbanism in 'old Africa' evolved. Household survival has an opportunity for collective action and spatial relief in these environments. These places assist in generating economic momentum from the smallest scale upwards.

#### Area-based management

Part Five concludes the book by considering international trends toward more but smaller urban reconstruction projects, and how phased development over 20–30 year time frames are

required for optimised results (p425). This requires either special development institutions, such as the CMDA, or area-based management by local government or a combination of both. A clear account is given by Turok of the pitfalls and merits of Area Based Policies (ABP) in cities (Ch29). In this he redeems the contributions of international researchers to the book.

The Cato Manor project was influential in the eThekweni Council's setting up of 5 area-based planning structures for the broader metro region. What has fallen from favour nationally and locally is the special purpose development vehicle, such as the CMDA was. The emergence of a comparable institution in future is unlikely, despite the book's editors call for the contrary (p427).

Now that CMDA has handed over the baton to the eThekweni metro government, continuity in their developmental legacy becomes an open question. Shifts in outcome are already discernable in Cato Manor. By whatever institutional arrangement, removal of the urban blight visited upon us by apartheid awaits all SA cities – Durban's block AK in downtown Greyville must surely be next. This book is an invaluable precursor of times to come.

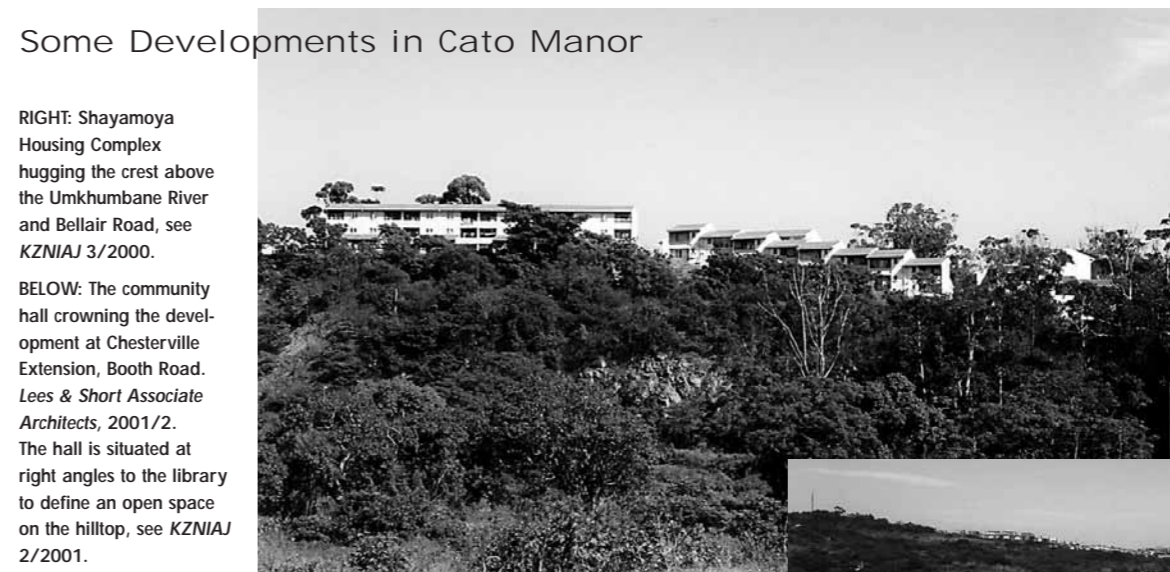
Susanna Godehart and Kirk White

Susanna is an urban planner and Kirk an architect, and both are based in Durban. –Editor

### Some Developments in Cato Manor

RIGHT: Shayamoya Housing Complex hugging the crest above the Umkhumbane River and Bellair Road, see *KZNIJA* 3/2000.

BELOW: The community hall crowning the development at Chesterville Extension, Booth Road. Lees & Short Associate Architects, 2001/2. The hall is situated at right angles to the library to define an open space on the hilltop, see *KZNIJA* 2/2001.



BELOW AND INSET: The maisonette was added to the housing typologies of Cato Manor Wiggins, 2004.



Kosovo is one of the few places in the former Yugoslavia where a native European Muslim heritage dating back more than 600 years has survived, although this heritage suffered massive destruction during the war which began in early 1998. About ninety per cent of the population (about two million) are ethnic Albanians while ten per cent are Serb and other minority groups.

For Serbs, Kosovo had become the heartland of Serbian nationalism after the defeat of Serbian forces there in 1389 by the Ottoman Turks. This epic battle known as 'The Battle of the Blackbirds' became symbolic of the fall of the Serbian empire and led to Turkish domination of the Balkans. When the Serbs reclaimed Kosovo in 1912, Kosovar Albanians, whose ancestors had converted to Islam under the Turks, had to face relentless attempts to expel them from their homeland that



culminated in the institutionalized oppression of the Milosovic era. The conflict escalated when NATO began its bombing campaign against Serbia on 24 March 1999. Milosovic used the bombing as a pretext for the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, through the destruction and burning of settlements and the mass deportation of the Albanian population.

By some estimates, more than 600 Ottoman and Albanian-style buildings were damaged or destroyed by Serb nationalists between 1998 and 1999. After the war, ethnic Albanians retaliated by destroying churches and monas-



Main entrance of a kulla at Carrabreg—the rural area between Peja and Djakova. (This is the kulla into which we were taken.)

Top: Kulla at Carrabreg—women's entrance.



## A Travel Diary

### Kullas of Kosova

teries sacred to the Kosovan Serb Orthodox Christians.

I went to Kosovo at the invitation of Kosovar Albanians who my wife had followed, through her documentaries which recorded the lives of the people who fled to refugee camps in Albania during the 1999 NATO bombings, and their return to a land strewn with unexploded ordnance including hundreds of cluster bombs dropped by US planes.

An Albanian family, of which an architect is the head, had asked her to be the godmother (*kumbar*) to their daughter. In order to fulfill her duty, the South African *kumbar* was to attend a ceremony in Peja that involved the symbolic first cutting of the infant's hair.

In Pristina, the capital, where they live and he practices, I encountered a city occupied by NATO peacekeeping forces; after the war the UN set up a civilian administration, UNMIK. (Kosovo is still legally a province of Serbia and is becoming increasing unstable due to its unresolved status).

War damage in the capital was largely limited to a handful of modern government buildings, including the Serbian police headquarters and the post and telecommunications centre, which were hit by NATO air strikes. The NATO bombing did

comparatively little damage to civilian property – rather the weapon most responsible for the destruction was the match or cigarette lighter.

Other 'war victims' were the unique Albanian-style stone mansions built between the 18th and early 20th centuries, known as kullas. Of the 500 kullas existing prior to the war, 450 suffered damage by Serb paramilitary forces intent on eradicating all traces of Albanian culture in Kosovo. Designed as fortresses and built in a style which evolved over centuries, they are considered an important symbol of Albanian cultural and historical heritage. Due to the nature of their construction, and in spite of the ravages of the war and their generally neglected maintenance in the decade of conflict preceding it, few were entirely razed to the ground.

Most of the kullas are located in and around the western towns of Djakova and Peja, in the Dukagjini Plain, which lies in the shadow of the Accursed Mountains near the borders to Albania and Montenegro. These traditional Albanian dwellings were built for extended families that occupied them for generations. Particularly in rural areas the tower was part of a complex of 'settlement' buildings including granaries and corn-sheds within a stone-walled enclosure

Generally square in plan, with one or two floors above ground level where the animals were housed, they are a direct response to the social, cultural and climatic needs built by craftsmen with available materials to a traditional pattern.



Construction was of locally obtained stone and sometimes brick external walls up to 1m thick. Interior walls were constructed of mud bricks, and occasionally timber. There are some examples of the Ottoman influence in the top floor; where the construction of a 'porch' is entirely of timber, where the rooms cantilever out over the lower stone walls and the roof projects beyond the external timber walls.

Floors were made of tree trunks and the upper floor ceilings covered with decorated planks. The buildings were commonly roofed in stone slate.

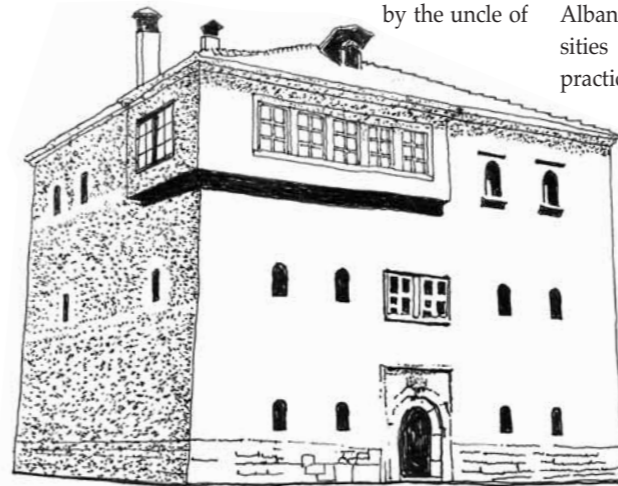
The small windows (*fringji*) in rather massive elevations provide both privacy and were used defensively for firing artillery.

External decoration is generally limited to symbols carved in stone around the entrance doors.

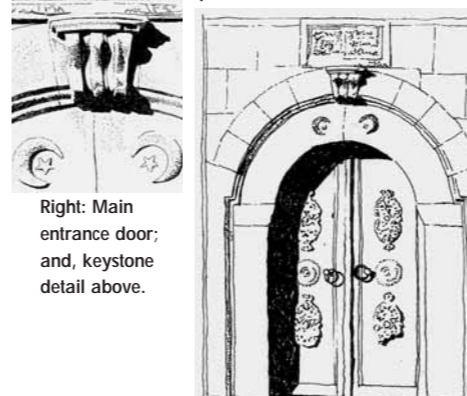
The men of the family used the kulla, while women and children were accommodated in an attached annex of the same number of floors, or less. There were usually two entrances and staircases, one for guests from the main entrance, leading directly to the upper floor and the guestroom without passing through the private family parts, and another for the women, from the side entrance.

With cold and harsh winters and extremely hot summers, the thick masonry walls with small openings, and the high insulation properties of the roofing material, the buildings are extremely well suited to cope with Balkan climatic conditions.

We were privileged to be invited into a kulla by the uncle of



Jashar Pasha kulla 19th century, Peja. An urban kulla with a stone 'porch'.



Right: Main entrance door; and, keystone detail above.

a boy who, through the death of his father and elder brother in the war was now, at the age of twelve, head of the household.

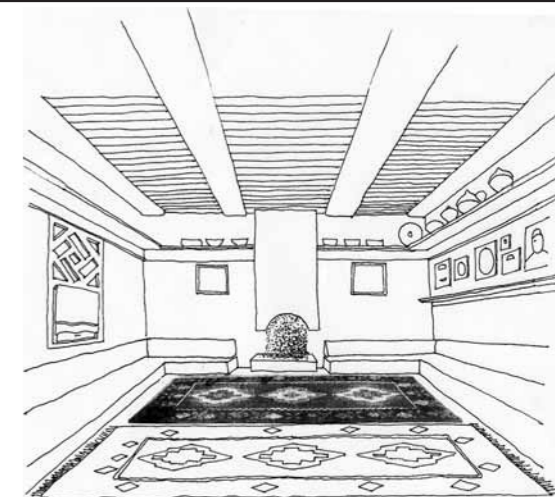
After entering through the arched doorway we were led up a narrow timber stair to the *oda* (guest room) on the first floor where traditionally men only are received. This room was cool and dim, once my eyes adjusted to the light from the tiny windows I was able to take in my surroundings – the floor covered in oriental and tribal Albanian rugs, the cushions on either side of the fireplace where the guests are seated – guest of honor to the right, second guest to the left, hosts along the remaining walls. On the mantelpiece were displayed artifacts, trinkets and pictures of the family, the muskets of long departed heroes mounted above their portraits.

Superb Turkish coffee was served and our hosts tossed cigarettes to us. In Albanian culture, the giving of fire (lighting a cigarette) is known as *besa* – a symbol of protection, friendship.

The reconstruction of kullas was overlooked in the international community's efforts to rebuild Kosovo: amidst the human drama of the post-war return of refugees, the immediate need was to provide shelter before the onset of winter. The fate of Kosovo's heritage was not foremost among the concerns of the international organizations active in Kosovo.

During the decade preceding the war (1989–1999), Kosovo was effectively cut off from access to international professional literature and contacts, while Kosovar Albanians were excluded from the universities and most were unable to practice their professions. There

Right: Hysen Haxhijaj kulla, c.1826, lower Carrabreg, Dukagjin Plain, West Kosovo. A rural kulla with timber 'porch'.

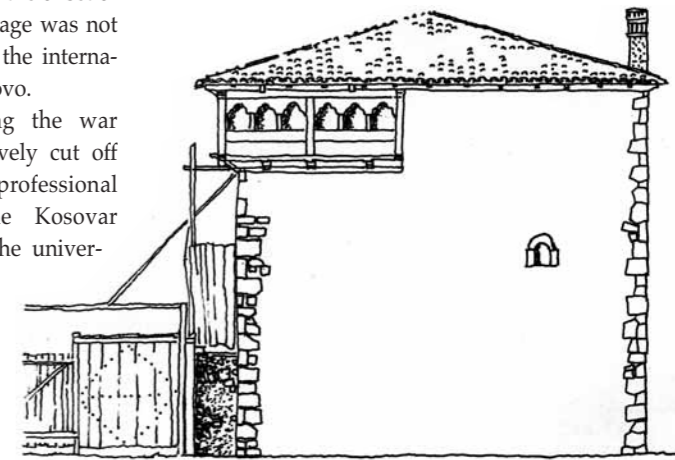


Oja (guest reception room) at the Carrabreg kulla.

are many motivated people in local institutions that have an interest in heritage preservation, but many of them lack adequate training. Even trained professionals need to update their skills and introduce new methods and approaches to conservation.

Robert Johnson

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View of Peja rooftops in the shadow of the Accursed Mountain.

