

KZ-MIA JOURNAL SPONSORED BY



Journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture

# Aspects of Heritage Conservation

# KZ-NIA



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ABOVE: KZ-NIA President Nina Saunders with Bruce Clark and Bharti Vitthal.

ABOVE RIGHT: The function was attended by honorary member Sylvia Grobler who served as KZ-NIA Executive Officer 1987-2007 though her association with the Institute actually began in 1965. Sylvia is here seen with Bharti Vitthal and past-Presidents Ivor Daniel and Bruce Clark.

RIGHT: Past-President Rodney Harber and Roz Harber.

**■ Farewell to Bharti Vitthal and Bruce Clark**

At a function held at the KZ-NIA on Friday, 1st June, members bade farewell to KZ-NIA Vice-President Bharti Vitthal and past-President Bruce Clark who have since emigrated to Canada and Australia respectively. The Institute took the opportunity not only to wish these members well but to confer upon

them scrolls of honour for their dedicated services to the profession.

**Bharti Vitthal**

Soon after being elected to the committee of the KZ-NIA in 2008, Bharti Vitthal became active in the Communication and Promotion of our Institute as a vehicle for architectural culture.

Her dedication has

served to expand the network of people who share a common vision and interest in promoting the profession and broadening its accessibility while her enthusiasm has infused the membership at regional and national levels and even touched on the international.

**Bruce Clark**

Regional committees are the pillars of our Institute, which are given their solidity by the dedication and integrity of individual members such as Bruce Clark, KZ-NIA-President, 2005-6.

More than that, members need to be contin-



uously involved in honing their professional skills and responsibilities central to the construction process. Bruce committed himself not only to matters educational in nature but initiated and largely single-handedly carried out a complete revision of

the national Practice Manual.

**■ In Memoriam**

KZ-NIA Journal has learned with regret of the death of retired member **Rodney Cooper** (1929-2012) of Pietermaritzburg.

**THE INTEGRATION OF SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE: murthi spotting**



A *murthi* is the Hindi word describing a sculptural representation of one of their pantheon of Gods. These sculptures act as a prayer intermediary. For the uninitiated observer, a *murthi* also serves as a useful indicator of what type of Hindu temple is represented.

This article will only deal with Garuda, a man/kite and transporter of Vishnu. In a classical representation, such as on the Shree Ambalavanar Alyum (Second River) Temple in Cato

Manor (1947), where the *murthi*'s were sculpted by craftsmen from India, we see Garuda in detail as a rather fierce, moustached man, seated in a yoga position on the corner of the building. He has a conical headdress, a kite's beak for his nose, arms folded in the prayer position and backed by sturdy wings.

A feature of *murthis* is to note to what



extent they are integrated into the fabric of the actual building. At Kristapha Reddy's, Newlands Narainsamy Temple (1908), Garuda and others are part of the overall structure and in the case of SP Chetty's Cato Manor



Hindu Temple (1932), the Garuda is moulded directly into the plasterwork as a bas-relief, contrasted with large areas of smooth plaster. On the other hand, at the folk constructed Tinley Manor Subrahmanya Temple (1924), Garuda has broken free and is seated on the pediment, with striped wings, like an exotic bumble bee.

The latter example introduces another dimension to the representations.

With the distance from Durban, as well as the cultural isolation from India, the strict rules became dissolved.

At the extreme, Garuda, at Sandfields Temple in Tongaat (1981) made by the Late Behari, is consequently depicted as a happy, cherub-like figure, standing upright, with embryonic wings and outstretched arms, as if he is about to launch himself free of the building and time honoured rules.

Rodney Harber

## EDITORIAL

# Aspects of Heritage Conservation in KwaZulu-Natal



Architectural conservation in the realms of practice is often viewed as a curse or a passion. One is either enthralled by the prospect of a journey of discovery and problem solving or is annoyed by the interruption to a streamlined process. Unfortunately legislation has created the impression that it will be a journey of frustration, but there are still those of us who look beyond this for the satisfaction of regenerating and bringing to life a place of beauty.

The presence of a built heritage in a city or town is a constant in everyone's eyes as buildings take on landmark status or are merely markers for directions. Few people have acknowledged how their built environment contributes to their lives or the significance of a place to them, be it visual pleasure or an intangible importance associated with the presence of a place, but once a part of this is lost it cannot be replaced.

Architects who take up the challenge to preserve, repair and conserve our built heritage certainly have a 'calling' and often go beyond the expected commitment in researching and implementing their new lease of life for a building or place. We are honoured to have such architects in our midst who bring a wealth of knowledge of past building practice and architectural styles. In this issue we feature a number of such architects who have that passion and are making it their life's work.

In writing this editorial we revisited some previous issues of the *Journal* featuring conservation and Architectural Heritage. The city's introduction of Listed Buildings being allowed to have a change of use in the 1980s brought a wave of conservation of residential buildings and the introduction of businesses into residential streetscapes. With this came parking and logistical problems, but for the most part a successful move towards architectural conservation. Unfortunately the areas of lesser economic importance suffered the most and illegal alterations and demolitions are rife. It is sad to look at buildings that were featured in previous issues



Durban City Hall restoration began in May 2008. Photographs by Shelley Kjönstad, courtesy of Independent Newspapers.

that have not been protected and have suffered due to economic change or just through ignorance.

In addition, the decentralisation of businesses from the CBD to the suburbs has had an impact on the older fabric of the suburbs either by demolition for modern development or by modernisation of existing structures. Homeowners have also played a part in the transformation as lifestyles have changed making it a challenge to live in an 'internally compartmentalised' house that faces the street.

Parallel to these changes has been the introduction of the National and Regional Heritage Acts put in place to control the impact of development on the older built environment and to prevent loss of important buildings. Like most legislations its intentions are well-meaning but fall down on implementation. It delegates powers to local authorities to manage their heritage and to enforce the law. This has pre-empted the authorities to prioritise and identify 'heritage' within the planning authorities, no easy task but at least a start in recognising the need for protection. Political changes to the municipal boundaries and economic changes have precipitated previously rural/agricultural properties becoming 'urban' and undergoing changes of use. It is fortunate that these previously purely functional and unknown buildings can be restored and recognised in a new role.

The Act has also introduced the concept of Cultural Heritage encompassing all cultures and

origins, making Heritage research an important part in the process of planning.

*Lindsay Napier & Debbie Whelan, Guest Editors*

Lindsay Napier graduated from the University of Natal in



1992 and registered as a Professional Architect in 1994. She works closely with Sally Adams while also operating an independent practice and consulting on projects of heritage value. In 2001 she

participated in an ICOMOS graduate exchange programme and did an internship in the USA with the National Parks Service and the Historic American Building Survey. She chairs the KZ-NIA Heritage Committee and is a member of the Amafa eThekweni Coastal Built Environment Committee.

Debbie Whelan works as an architectural researcher and land claims specialist under the name of Archaic Consulting, and is based in Pietermaritzburg. She has extensive experience in the heritage field, was an ICOMOS intern in El Paso, Texas in 2000, and for a time served on the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architecture. She holds an M. Arch Degree from the University of Natal and a PhD in social/historical anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. She chairs the Midlands Built Environment Committee of Amafa and teaches part-time at DUT in the Department of Architectural Technology.



## ASPECTS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

# First Church at Centocow Mission:

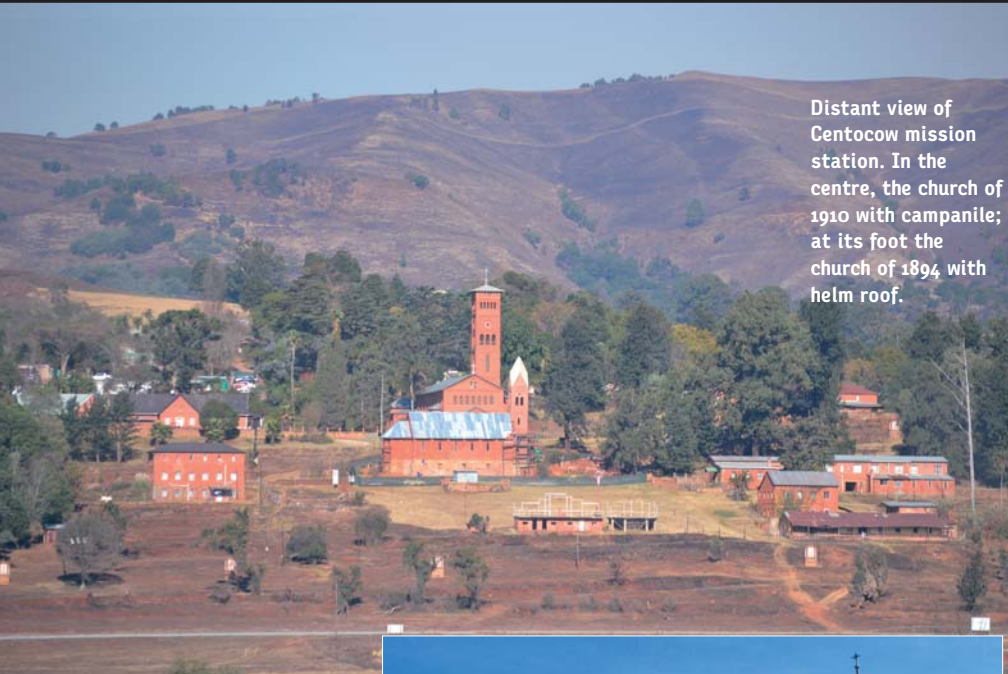
## Renovation and conversion to the Gerard Bhengu Gallery and Museum

The project consists of the renovation and conversion of a small church building at Centocow mission station, built about 1894. The object is to create a stable building that will house a local museum celebrating the culture and life of the Bhaka and Xhosi people of the district, the endeavours of the local missionary community and the life and work of Gerard Bhengu. Bhengu was born at the mission, and later spent some time in the mission hospital as a patient, where the mission doctor, Max Kohler, discovered certain latent talents in the young boy. He was given paper, pencils and paints with which to keep him occupied. Bhengu went on to work with Kohler recording aspects of Bhaka and Xhosi culture and preparing illustrations for Kohler's articles for various anthropological journals.

Bhengu then moved to Pietermaritzburg and later Durban where he was commissioned by Killie Campbell to illustrate aspects of the Bhaka and Xhosi culture. Independently he started doing his own work and selling it, both on land and on the mail ships. His works appear to have travelled around the world. He died some years ago; there was a major retrospective of his work at the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg a decade ago, and his works have gained enormously in value.

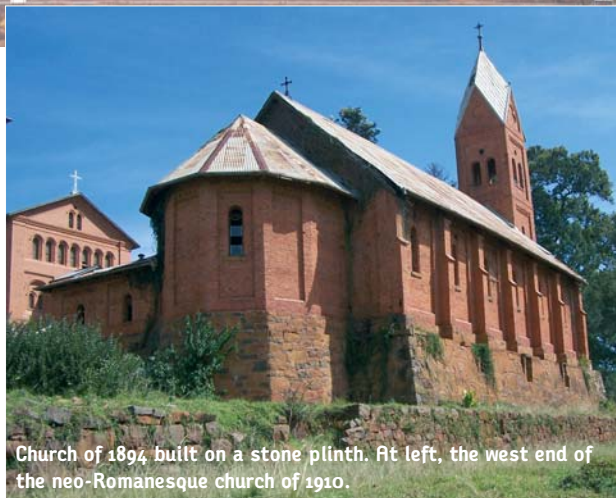
Ingwe Municipality (Creighton) has undertaken this project as part of their wider economic development initiatives. It has raised the funding from a number of private and public bodies and has engaged in partnerships with the Catholic Diocese of Umzimkulu, University of KwaZulu-Natal's Killie Campbell Collections and the Provincial Department of Arts and Culture (Museum Services). The Campbell Collections have identified the project as a base for potential outreach research projects and have agreed to a long term partnership which includes loaning works to the gallery on a rotating basis. The Provincial Museum Services see it as a pilot project for their 'provincialisation of museums' programme and have agreed to fund the administration and curatorship of the gallery. The Diocese of Umzimkulu has gladly consented to a lengthy lease of the building.





Distant view of Centocow mission station. In the centre, the church of 1910 with campanile; at its foot the church of 1894 with helm roof.

NOTE. Work on the conservation of other mission stations by the Mariannahill order have been published in this journal. St Joseph's cathedral in Mariannahill, **Maria Ratschitz** near Ladysmith and **Reichenau** between Bulwer and Underberg were featured in *NPIA Journal* 4/1986. **Maria Linden** in the Matatiele District, **Emaus** in the Umzimkulu District and **Kevelaer** at Donnybrook featured in *NIA Journal* 1/1994.  
–Editor



Church of 1894 built on a stone plinth. At left, the west end of the neo-Romanesque church of 1910.

From a conservation point of view there were two principles that needed to be carried out:

1. the stabilisation of a historically important element in the mission environment; and
2. the retention of as much historical fabric as possible, while taking judicious decisions as to where to make structural interventions to provide necessary stabilisation. Beyond that there were the normal tasks of repairing, replacing and restoring decayed fabric.

To achieve the required stabilisation of the remaining building it has proved necessary to carefully dismantle about one-third of the nave wall and the ground and first floors to insert foundations under these elements as well as the splicing in of missing timber into the termite infested rafters, the repainting of various types of brickwork and stonework, and the re-galvanising of the original corrugated iron roof sheets and re-affixing them in their original positions. Finally there was the usual planning and integration of modern services necessary for a museologically sound environment in a historic building in a rural location.

It was expected that the project would take approximately seven calendar months to complete, with alternate progress and technical meetings every fortnight. The contract started in November 2011 and is scheduled for completion in September 2012.

The rather unique nature of this project promised to provide the professional team with some unusual challenges. It was therefore decided to offer willing architects an opportunity to follow the project as a sort of internship to share in the experience and gain an insight into how an 'older generation' applied its years of experience – a handing on of some of that knowledge which comes from practical achievement.

The internees were advised that internship was a serious undertaking, whereby the interested parties (internees) commit themselves to follow the work from beginning to end, and prepare a record of what they see and experience on site as a reference document. Site meetings were open to

the internees. Input was always welcome, however a certain professional respect was expected from the internees – they had to understand that there is a special relationship between client and architect that they were privileged to experience. Beyond this, I believed that they would be exposed to a range of philosophic, technical and practical issues that may be unique in KwaZulu-Natal.

*Robert Brusse*

### Experiences by interns

I DEVELOPED AN INTEREST in heritage issues and the conservation of old buildings at university so when Robert put forward the opportunity for interns to follow one of his upcoming projects I jumped at the chance!

There have been so many fascinating technical processes that have taken place in order to restore the church. Most dramatically of course being the underpinning of the tower and the deconstruction and reconstruction and repair of the brickwork. Restoring all the old timbers has also been a large task that I have found particularly interesting to observe.

Most of the original Yellowwood trusses were eaten through by termites at the wall plate, some so badly that the trusses were hanging from the purlins. The trusses were all taken down to be refurbished and have new ends attached.

To refurbish the trusses they were first stripped of dirt using a piece of glass, which stays sharper than a metal scraper; sandpapering by hand is not advisable as it can deform the original shape of the truss. The trusses were then treated with wax, 'timber treat', camphor and linseed oil. All the refurbished wood in the building was treated in this way.

New ends were then attached to the old trusses with iron plates. These iron plates seem quite brutal and obvious when looked at close up, and as observers we have had much debate about them.

An interesting point that Robert pointed out was that the trusses were not numbered, as in the tradition of Mariannahill monks, which suggests that the trusses were built on site with timber from the forest.

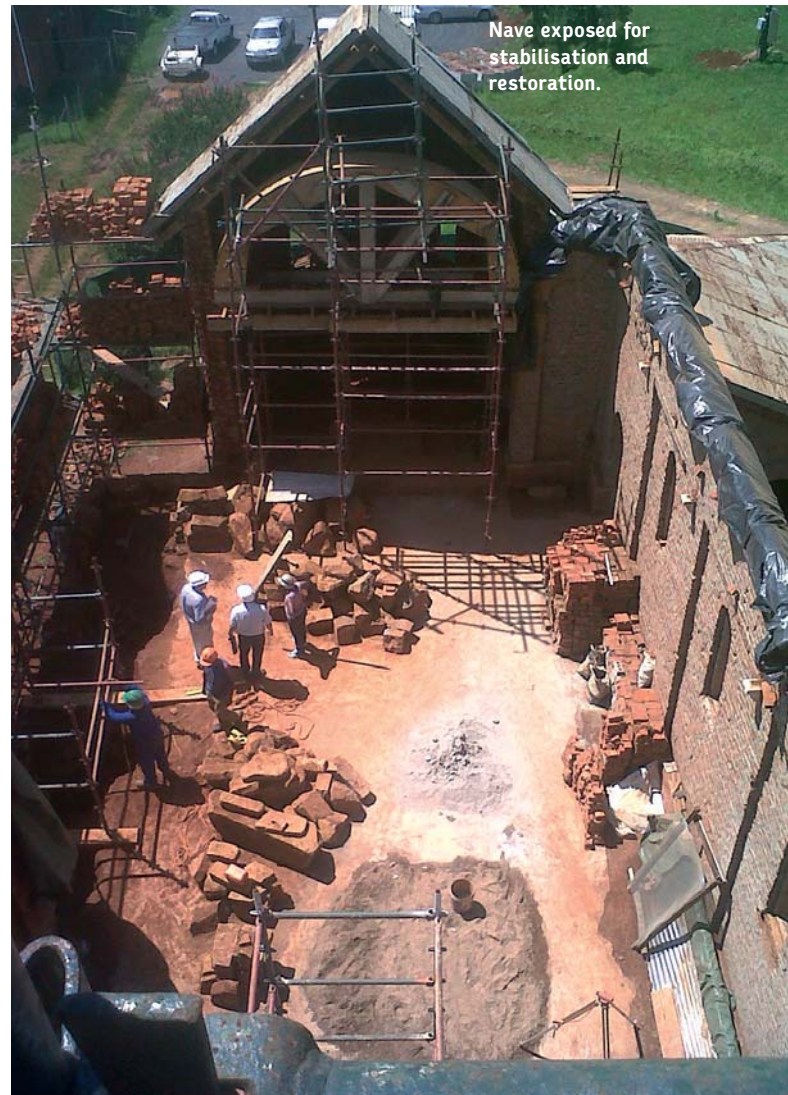
Following the progress at the Centocow mission over the last 8 months has been so rewarding and I have learnt so much on so many levels; apart from the technical aspects of the project, observing the

Interior of the 1894 church prior to restoration. Inset: Truss bases lost to termite action.





Bottom half of the tower shaft dismantled for rebuilding while the top half is propped up.



Nave exposed for stabilisation and restoration.

functioning of the professional team has also been a valuable learning experience. Learning about conservation architecture in this way could not possibly be duplicated in a classroom and I feel truly privileged to be involved with a project like this. I am so grateful to Robert and engineer Hugh Bowman who were always open to questions and debate and have been so enthusiastic about sharing all the knowledge they can with us.

*Tracy Leigh Barnes*

WHEN ROBERT FIRST MENTIONED the opportunity of a possible heritage internship from a practical perspective, I immediately indicated my interest as this would enable me to observe the process first hand rather than attending a seminar that documented the completed process. This has proven to be invaluable in that as complications and issues have arisen, I have witnessed the decision-making process first hand which has added significantly to my learning experience. I have felt part of the process rather than being an interested onlooker. This is credit to Robert, the professional team and the contractor.

Possibly one of the most exciting and dramatic aspects of the restoration of the church has been the tower. The tower was leaning and it was discovered there were no foundations. From a practical perspective, the required construction

of new footings could be undertaken in a similar vein to the north wall, that is, dismantling the tower and rebuilding it with the original material. The fabric of the tower had also been compromised by a lightning strike. However, the restoration philosophy adopted for the project as a whole has been to retain not only as much of the original material as possible, but also the original built structure. The professional team worked closely to ensure the integrity of the tower and to limit remedial work to that which was absolutely necessary. The solution adopted was to 'clamp' the existing tower at a suitable level while dismantling the brickwork and stonework below, and to construct the new footings and rebuild the brickwork to the clamped level. This solution, although a more expensive alternative, ensured that as much as possible of the original material and structure was retained.

Tower in mid-air awaiting re-building of its base.



It has been a privilege to learn from not only an experienced heritage architect but also an experienced, innovative engineer. No amount of questioning or commenting has lessened the enthusiastic teaching we have received from both the architect and engineer. I thank them both sincerely for their selfless dedication and time in imparting their knowledge to us.

Janet Forster

I SAW THIS AS A FANTASTIC opportunity to learn from an experienced heritage architect.

My fascination lies in the sensitive balance of technical and historical solutions.

The irony of this particular church is that it was built without foundations which had led to cracking in the brickwork, the full extent of which was only revealed on excavation. The second issue was the repointing of the existing mortar joints which in itself is a laborious and time consuming task and should be done every 50 years with maintenance. The resulting building restoration will always be an issue of debate as the solutions are relative to each heritage architect's experience and preferences.

It must be noted that in a heritage building of this nature the architect, engineer and contractor are integral in the project's success. The team required to restore and repair a heritage building is one of skill and passion.

I can confirm from first-hand experience points from the ICOMOS Charter 2003.

- Restoration of the structure is not an end in itself but a means to an end, which is the building as a whole.
- the necessity of a multidisciplinary team with a full understanding of the structural and material characteristics of the building.
- Historical, qualitative and quantitative approaches to the building restoration process.
- The design intervention should be based on a clear understanding of the kinds of actions that were the cause of the damage and decay, as well as those that are taken into account for the analysis of the structure after intervention.

For me as an intern, the opportunity to learn from an experienced heritage architect with the added benefits of a highly skilled and experienced engineer and contractor cannot be matched. When discussing the education of architects on heritage architecture with the KZ-NIA Heritage Committee, I rallied the idea of an 'apprenticeship' where appropriate skills could be passed on from the 'masters'. I believe this has been achieved at Centocow. I am very appreciative of this opportunity and thank Robert for his time and dedication in passing on his knowledge to us.

Michelle Quarmby

Professional Team

Architects: Robert Brusse

Engineers: LSC Brunette cc

Quantity Surveyors: Andrew Crossby & Associates

Contractors: MJL Projects cc

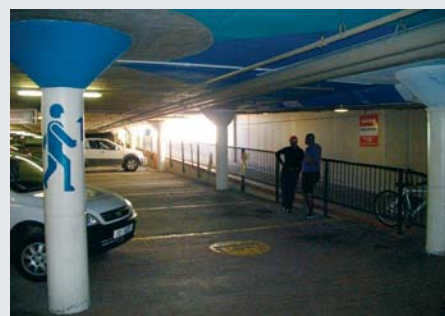
## Accessible Environments

**W**hen is a building new? When is it old? These are subjective words; but in architecture, every building old or new deserves respect. Every building also wants to serve a purpose for as long as possible. These days conservation, heritage and legacy are priorities in our industry. So if a new building can be made accessible in every sense, so can an old one.

*De senectute* by Cicero analysed all the advantages of old age, though he might easily have applied his logic to our environment. Even in our legislation, the words 'if possible' are inserted here and there when it relates to accessibility, as if it is an optional extra. It is hard work, even on new buildings to achieve seamless accessibility, which is the key to universal design, and still make a piece of good architecture. There are many iconic old buildings which it seems would be impossible to make accessible, without sacrificing something, but it has been done and in a way which is almost indiscernible even in places like Oxford University.

Why would we architects, want it otherwise? To exclude people from our buildings and spaces is not an option. In some cases the intervention of an accessible route has become the general way of observing antiquities, and artefacts. So accessibility is integrated into the building's external area to suit everybody.

It is quite difficult to persuade people that conservation does not mean not upgrading conveniences, and one of these in South Africa is access for everyone. This would also make business



The Workshop, Durban, built as a workshop for the railways in 1904, and recycled as a shopping centre in 1986. Architects: Bentel Abramson & Partners in association with Hallen Theron & Partners. Signage: Monica Göbel.

sense as punted these days by *Architectural Record* 'good buildings mean good business'.

In Durban several of our harbour buildings have been successfully made accessible and safe, and more importantly usable and sustainable by the interventions done on them. For me the Workshop shopping centre is one of the most successful recycled buildings in Durban. The way-finding is better than at Pavilion or Gateway and it has retained its historic character. Way-finding, of course, is one of the common fundamentals of good architecture and universal design. The Promenade on the beachfront is also one of our oldest built elements, and it has been drastically changed twice while I've been in Durban, but still retains its ethos and many of its memories, even though some of the 'clutter' that I liked did not survive FIFA.

What is really clear is that conservation and accessibility are often considered as contradictory; just as safety and security interventions in buildings also defeat each other. Safety requires that an external door be left able to be exited from inside, and security says it must be locked and not be usable from outside or inside. In high-end buildings this can be achieved with electronic controls, but for everyday restaurants, suburban supermarkets, and so forth this is too sophisticated. One sees the older buildings in New York with metal fire escapes tacked onto the outside, because they have been updated and now satisfy safety legislation. One doesn't fancy having obvious universal access elements intruding in fine old buildings, but if architects can apply themselves to the notion that no sacrifices should have to be made by anyone to satisfy the needs of all of us then it is a win-win situation. It is not acceptable to perpetuate the parts of older buildings which do not allow all of us to continue using them with safety.

Joan Seirlis

Left: Views to ramp and parking garage.



## ASPECTS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

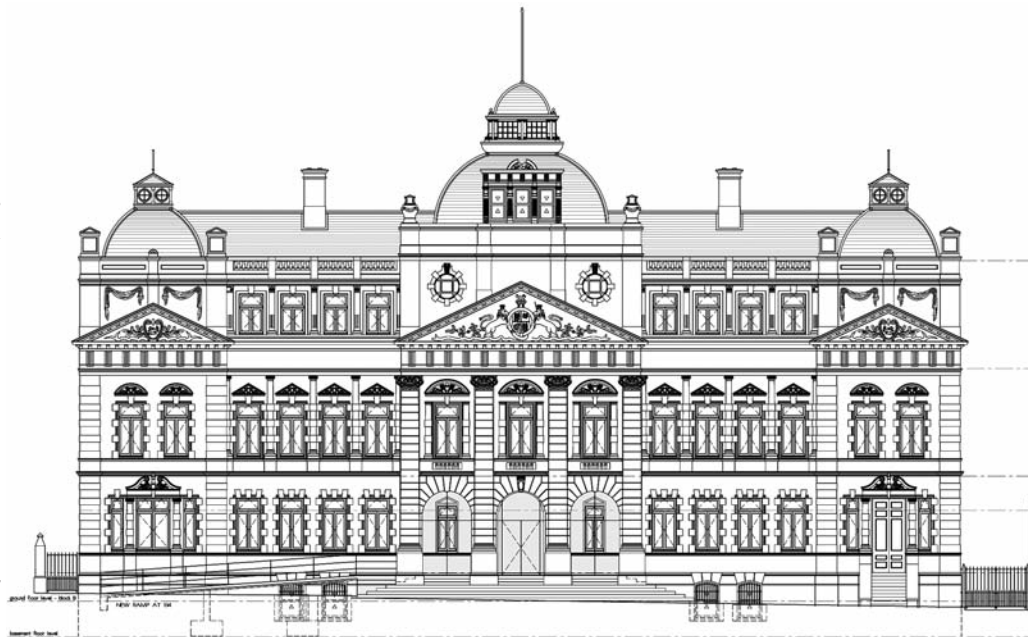
# Re(a)dressing the old dames of Pietermaritzburg:

## The repair and restoration of buildings owned by the KZ-N Public Works Department

For many years, iconic buildings in Pietermaritzburg lay waste. They shared an owner, the national Public Works Department, who, even though they had a competent architectural conservation staff, seemingly let them fall by the wayside with its new management and altered priorities. Not helping the situation was the removal of Parliament to Ulundi, forcing a new focus on the Zululand town and leaving Pietermaritzburg in its wake. Ironically, all of these buildings had been declared National Monuments, as they were classed then, affording them both status and protection. This nomenclature did not assist them as for most of the last two decades they have remained largely empty or partly occupied, and over the years have been vandalised and stripped. Not assisting was a rapidly deteriorating civic climate, so much so that officials and politicians were disinclined to intervene.

Other factors contributed. Long before the 1994 elections, the Deeds Office and Surveyor General moved out of the Colonial Building and the magistrates' offices vacated the Old Magistrates' Courts constructed in the late 1930s. Both moved into the new Magistrates' Courts and Deeds Complex in Pietermaritz Street, leaving the two buildings exposed to various occupants. In addition, Modernism and modernisation have threatened effective and meaningful reuse of old buildings simply by the provision of contemporary accoutrements such as air-conditioning and electronics.

It is also important to note that public buildings, particularly, are visual manifestations of power, and the ones in Pietermaritzburg are no different. At the time of the construction of the parliamentary complex and the subsequent Colonial Building, the Colony of Natal was firstly motivating and then celebrating its quasi-independent rule from the Cape Colony in the form of the quirkily named 'Responsible Government'. These two buildings embodied the timelessness of classicism and the (hopeful) power of the new government. Not much has changed; in recent years the post-apartheid government has sought to follow suit by constructing new civic monuments such as



COLONIAL BUILDING

CHURCH STREET - SOUTH ELEVATION

municipal buildings, and, indeed parliaments, to again reinforce the power of control and assert its position in urban and monumental fabrics.

This article deals with a theme rather than presenting a series of completed projects. It must be stressed that after consulting a number of different secondary sources and finding vastly conflicting information, rightly or wrongly, the information with the most back-up from archival sources was chosen.

Furthermore, the intention of this short article is to provide an overview of the processes at play, and to present some of the complexities which are involved in the repair of what were originally old, but after 20 years of abandonment and neglect, seriously degraded buildings.

**Colonial Building, 241 Church Street**  
(declared a National Monument  
27 December 1991)

*Grice, Small & Pettit*

This structure was commenced in 1895 and the upper floors were completed in 1901. It was intended to accommodate departments of the new Natal Colonial Government formed after Responsible Government was conferred in 1893. It took four years to complete, and its architect, W H

Powell, died during construction.

The building comprises a mixed architectural idiom which is at the point of being over-rich, so much so that it defies absolute categorization – a late English Renaissance in its symmetry and organisation, together with a more recent Georgian Revival style, and strong hints of Palladio. Dennis Radford proffers that it was considered as the “first built example of Edwardian Imperial Baroque in the city”. Gordon Small and Jon Williams described it as “in the French taste of the Second Empire”. Nevertheless, it is an imposing structure and, as Radford further describes, has a “character which can hardly be called timid” [Radford, D (2002) *A Guide to the Architecture of Durban and Pietermaritzburg*. Cape Town: David Philip].

In its history it has accommodated, amongst others, the Colonial Offices, the Old Umgeni Magistrates' Courts, the Deeds and Survey Department and the Research Section of the Natal Museum. When the latter moved out in the late 1990s the building was abandoned and partially stripped, particularly of lead on the roof, the absence of which caused great damage to the interior.

This building has been fully repaired and redeployed, not without mishap!



**Boys Model School (Boys Preparatory School) 310 Jabu Ndlovu (Loop) Street** (declared a National Monument 20 May 1988)

*Grice, Small & Pettit*

'Boys Model School' was the forerunner of Maritzburg College and operated as Pietermaritzburg High School until the premises in College Road were acquired. After it moved, the site was occupied by Boys Model School, an institution which had been formed in 1849 and remained at the premises until the early 1980s when it closed. For a short time the complex housed a remedial school which shut down in the late 1980s. After this it was never re-occupied and since then has remained an unsecured shell. Most of the windows and doors, floors and ceilings have been removed: this extensive damage in itself is a challenge.

Alfred Singleton designed this complex, and it was constructed by builders John Baverstock and Johan Winter who began work in 1866. It is constructed of the salmon Pietermaritzburg brick, in a restrained Collegiate Gothic Revival style, with a Brosely tiled roof which is punctured by what Brian Kearney refers to as 'dormer' ventilators.

In recent months funding for the repair to this complex has been awarded with a view to its accommodating offices of the Department of Health. GSP are the commissioned architects. The project is to take place in 3 phases – the first to rehabilitate the roof, the second to complete repairs and restoration to the building, and the third, in the future, to construct an additional building on the large piece of open land adjacent to the building. At this stage, Phase 1 is being implemented.

In conclusion, whilst it is a tragedy that an unaccountable public department has allowed these structures to decay, it is reassuring that they have finally come to the party to repair and reoccupy them. Departments of government are the new tenants in all of the structures, and it is hoped that this ethos of repair and restoration will continue to prevail.



Magistrates' Court.



Fire damage.

### **Magistrates' Courts, 122 Chief Albert Luthuli (Commercial) Road**

*Ismael Cassimjee Architects*

Pietermaritzburg had been the capital of the Province pre-1994. It lost that status to Ulundi after the first democratic elections but regained it in 2004. As a result, institutions were relocated to Pietermaritzburg, resulting in a demand for space. The positive result of this was that historic buildings which were previously overlooked now became worthy of restoration.

The Magistrates' Court, built in 1938 at the corner of Inkosi Albert Luthuli (Commercial) Road and Pietermaritz Street had lain vacant after the court functions moved to the new Complex in Church Street in the late 1980s. Little information as to its architect and builder exists, or indeed any of the original plans, but it is generally understood that all of the sculptures on its façades were completed by Mary Stainbank. As for social history, the court is well known as the place where President Nelson Mandela was incarcerated after his capture in Howick.

Since the removal of the occupants in the 1980s, the building has stood empty. During this time the building was vandalized and sections burnt down. It was extensively damaged with its fittings removed, particularly the brass ones.

With the need for a family court, the restoration of the court complex was sanctioned in 2004. Construction commenced in 2009 and was completed in 2012. This was the first restoration project that the contractor had carried out, and much was learnt along the way by both parties. Part of the challenge was adding a holding cell between this building and the adjoining Colonial Building, which were restored in tandem.

### **Old Supreme / Native High Court, College Road** (declared a National Monument 12 September 1997) *Mthulisi Msimang Architects*

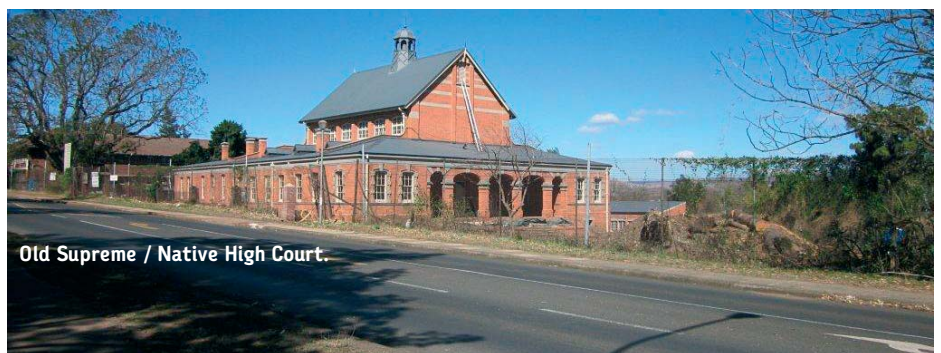
This building was designed by AE Dainton and was constructed of salmon facebrick under corrugated iron sheeting between 1899 and 1900. It has a prominent central clerestory, housing the double-volume court room, with a skirt of rooms running around its base, forming an H in plan. Dennis Radford described it as a "very direct piece of planning". The main entrance is through an open loggia which leads onto the legs of the 'H'. It is characterised by many roof fittings, particularly a central flèche and a series of ridged ventilators along the long elevations.

The Old Court overlooks the Msunduzi River, and is situated directly opposite the entrance to Maritzburg College, meaning that it sits in a suburban context.

This structure housed the Native High Court, and unlike many of the other examples has an important social history associated with it. During the Anglo-Boer War, Maritzburg College used the space as a hospital. It was also the site of a number of apartheid era treason trials, as well as that of aircraft hi-jacker 'Mad' Mike Hoare in 1982, before being bombed by the ANC in 1983. After its days as a court, the Police Services occupied it for a time. However for the last decade at least, the building has remained empty.

Nigel Smith of Mthulisi Msimang Architects is the project architect. Currently, most of the restoration has been completed, and the building is to be appropriately used by the Department of Justice. Significantly, issues raised in the renovation of the building are the insertion of a mezzanine level in the double-volume court room, and the intervention through the provision of air-conditioning systems. The latter involves the provision of roof access and crawl space which has proven problematic. Also, the position of a number of established trees, both indigenous and exotic, has to be resolved.

*Debbie Whelan*



Old Supreme / Native High Court.

## ASPECTS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

# Colonial Building, Church St, Pietermaritzburg



Designed in 1895 by Henry Powell and completed in 1901, the Colonial Building represented a high point of 'Edwardian Imperial Baroque' architecture, and has been one of Pietermaritzburg's landmark buildings ever since. For 60 years it accommodated the provincial government offices until they moved across to new premises in Pietermaritz St, and from there to Natalia. It also housed the Deeds Office and Surveyor General until they too moved out in the mid 1980s.

Owned by the state at a difficult time in South Africa's history, there followed an extended period of indecision about its future. Proposals were made to turn it into Security Police headquarters, new Magistrates' Courts, an upmarket 'colonial' hotel and even a theatre and opera house complex. While competing ideas were debated and rejected, the building remained largely empty and neglect set in.

Security was lax and a blind eye was turned while vandals steadily removed whatever items of value could be carried away. Whole cast iron fireplaces were stripped from the offices leaving gaping holes in the walls and copper pipes were stolen from the bathrooms causing extensive flooding of the ground floor and permanent damage to much of the parquet



flooring. Copper linings to box gutters and lead flashings on the domes were crudely ripped off leaving the roof defenceless and allowing water to penetrate the building and steadily destroy moulded ceilings and Oregon floors. Cast iron downpipes were stolen where they could be reached, leaving the rainwater to soak the external façades, while the internal courtyards became overgrown with vegetation.

In 2002 a decision was finally taken to re-develop the building as offices for the Master of the Supreme Court. There followed an extensive survey and documentation process (as well as a few funding delays and contractual dramas) before GVK-Siya Zama were eventually – in June 2008 – awarded the contract to restore and refurbish the Colonial

Building, as well as build an adjoining four storey parking garage (total contract value = R 80 057 049, contract period 24 months)

#### Scope of Work

Apart from the obvious need to waterproof the roof and repair all the damage that had occurred both internally and externally, the Colonial Building also



needed to be upgraded to meet modern office standards. Access for the disabled needed to be considered (new ramps and lifts), security needed to be provided in line with other Department of Justice buildings, and complete new electrical and mechanical installations had to be introduced in a way that did not detract from the historic fabric of the building. On the adjacent site, a four storey parking garage was to be built, designed to take a further six office floors, all of this connected to the Colonial Building

and the old Magistrates' Courts via a secure overhead walkway across Galway Lane.

A year into the contract, the scope of work grew dramatically as a fire, which started on the roof of the Colonial Building, destroyed the central dome and two smaller domes in the front part of the building, burning down two floors before it was stopped. The damage was extensive, but could have been much worse. The design of the roofs, with their surrounding box gutters and parapet walls, meant that the fire did not spread sideways and, though the domes were lost, the marble entrance stair was saved.

#### Changes to Circulation – ramps, lifts and stairs

One of the notable features of the Colonial Building is its staircases, from the small, beautifully detailed internal stairs made from timber, to the grand classical marble stair in the entrance foyer. But despite its good looks, the building was inaccessible to the handicapped, and as a public building for the 21st century this had to be addressed.

To allow wheelchair access at the front and back entrances, ramps were introduced, expressed as simple modern structures which did not compete with the existing architecture. Internally, a level change of 1.3m between the front and back buildings posed a second problem. Our solution was to introduce a new steel-framed ramp into the central passage, suspended above the stairs and free of the walls, leaving all the associated wall and floor finishes untouched. With its steel balustrades and black rubber floor finish the ramp is intended to read as a modern intervention within the restored fabric of the old building.

Lifts were also required. In Block A, a new steel and glass lift was constructed in an existing light well, servicing four floors without requiring any changes to the existing structure. Large new openings in the passage walls connected the new

lift lobbies to the existing circulation at each level, and the new black and white encaustic tile floors provided the continuity. In Block B the lift was positioned in a new freestanding brick structure, turned on the diagonal. Existing arched openings on each floor were adapted to give access to the glazed lift lobbies, with the original external facebrick and plastered mouldings retained as an 'internal' wall finish.

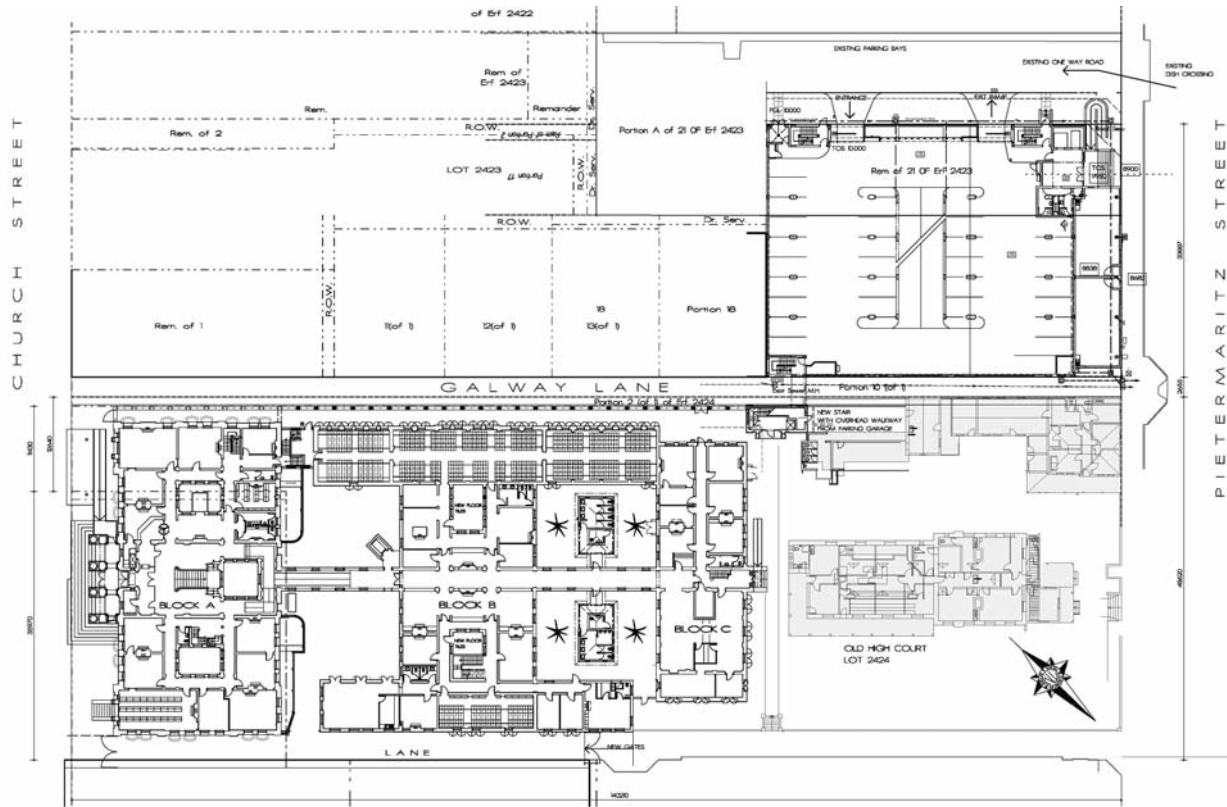
#### Security Considerations

Security has been upgraded on two fronts, firstly with the introduction of a new and almost invisible camera surveillance system, and secondly with the introduction of formal access control. The classical arched portico facing Church St, which had become a sleeping place for local vagrants, has been enclosed with frameless glass, giving the tenant proper control of their environment. The main foyer has been divided with a similar frameless glass screen, to provide an entrance lobby in which security staff process all people entering the building, without spoiling the dramatic first view of the entrance hall and stair.

#### Integration of new services

In 100 years of its life the building had accumulated extensive surface pipe work and conduits, much of it non-functional. The decision was taken to remove all this and start again. After considering the options, it was decided to generally strip the old tongue and groove ceilings and introduce all the new lighting, fire detection, and air-conditioning from below. All ceilings were then re-instated to match the original. In addition it was agreed that passages should be used for the reticulation of services – for this reason these ceilings were set at a lower level and treated as skimmed ceilings with removable panels to access air conditioning equipment and cable trays.

Flat roofs adjacent to light wells were converted to concrete slabs to form external plant room areas for air-conditioning equipment. The light wells made access easy for servicing and also provided routes for the vertical reticulation of pipe work. Internally, air conditioning equipment was accommodated in passage ceilings with horizontal slots cut through the load-bearing brickwork into offices for supply and return air.



New regulations required the building to have a 48-hour stand-by water storage tank which was integrated into the basement under a new fire escape stair and a pressure pump was installed to run the system.

#### Repairs to roof and rainwater goods

Before going too far with the restoration of internal finishes, the major water penetration problems had to be resolved. First the box gutters were completely overhauled. Old malthoid (which had replaced the stolen copper) was removed, rotten boarding and timber framework were replaced, and finally the repaired box gutters were lined with fibreglass. In discussion with Amafa it had been agreed that as the box gutters were not visible, a contemporary product (fibreglass) could be used in place of the original copper. Also on the main roof, a second process was taking place. The ribs of the domes, and the rectangular structures supporting them, were all made of timber and clad in lead, a costly system, no doubt aimed at reducing long term maintenance. With no respect for history, much of this lead at lower levels had been ripped off by metal thieves, in some cases leading to damage of the exposed timber itself. Carpenters were employed to make good the timber details and specialists brought in to dress new lead over the ribs and mouldings.

On the outside of the building the cast iron rainwater goods were taken down and cleaned up. Samples of the decorative rainwater heads and holderbats were used to make new moulds and replicas were made in cast aluminium to replace all those that had been stolen. New downpipes were made up in powder coated aluminium to match the outward appearance of the original heavy cast iron pipes.

#### Restoration of decorative ceilings

The Colonial Building had magnificent examples of decorative moulded ceilings on all three levels of the entrance foyer, and in what has become the boardroom. The gypsum mouldings had been formed in-situ on panels of expanded metal lath, on a timber sub-structure. Over the years, and with the recent wide-spread water penetration into the ceilings, the metal base had rusted badly. Some sections of ceiling had already collapsed and nowhere did the structure look sound.

With Amafa's consent, the decision was taken to remove the old ceilings and re-build them, having first taken accurate measurements of the profiles and details, including forming a fibreglass mould of the heavily embossed anaglypta wall paper fitted to the ceiling panels. A new timber framework was erected, with a basic profile formed in gypsum plasterboard, and the purpose-made gypsum mouldings



were then fixed to this framework. Embossed fibreglass panels completed the restoration.

#### Reconstruction after the Fire

The fire completely destroyed the central dome of the building as well as the two smaller domes on the south-west side. The roofs in the affected area and the timber floors at second and first floor levels below them were also destroyed. Window and door frames were burnt out, but strangely, masonry was hardly affected. Chimneys remained standing reaching into the sky and even fireplaces survived the fire unscathed!

Re-building roofs and floors and ceilings was hard work but not complicated, as there were plenty of precedents to show what they should look

like. Even rebuilding the two small domes was not that difficult as there were two matching domes still standing which could be copied. The main dome however provided a challenge. Its footprint remained, and the spiral stair leading up to the attic remained, but nothing else. Fortunately, with it being such a central feature of the building, there were lots of record photographs available from which we could prepare accurate construction drawings.

The original domes were supported on a massive arrangement of load-bearing timber posts and beams. In discussion with the engineers and Amafa it was agreed that the replacement structures would be manufactured in steel, with the curved profile of the domes formed in timber and clad in slate to match the original. The 'lantern' structures above the domes had to be remade in timber, with all their components and mouldings individually made to match the originals, clad in lead, and carefully re-assembled in position.

On the main dome, one of the biggest challenges was recreating the decorative panel below the lantern. Running around all four sides were three-dimensional carved panels, three meters long, clad in lead. It was difficult to create two-dimensional working drawings for these panels and it was equally difficult to conceive how these would be constructed. The problem was eventually solved by the use of computer technology, with a local specialist generating a computer 3-D model to our approval, then using a modelling programme to mould a polystyrene mock-up, and finally creating the finished product out of laminated timber. This was then clad in lead to match the original.

#### Conclusion

The restoration of Colonial Building, damaged first by water and then by fire, has been a huge learning experience for all concerned, for the consultants, who were constantly required to be creative in finding solutions to unexpected problems, and for the contractor, GVK-Siya Zama, who was constantly challenged to find people with skills to match the craftsmanship of the original builders. Despite the disaster of the fire, the project has been successfully completed and one of Pietermaritzburg's finest old buildings has been given a new lease on life.

*Nick Grice*

Professional Team

*Architects:* Grice, Small & Pettit

*Quantity Surveyors:* Davis Langdon

*Structural & Civil Engineers:* SSI Consulting Engineers

*Electrical Engineers:* EG Africa

*Mechanical Engineers:* Dhlase

*Contractors:* GVK-Siya Zama



## ASPECTS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

# Durban City Hall:

## Restoration of the external façades

Durban's City Hall was the result of a competition won by Johannesburg architects Woolocott, Scott & Hudson in 1904. Their Edwardian Imperial Baroque style entry was supervised by Hudson. The building was opened on 12 April 1910 having been delayed by a labour strike at the Greytown sandstone quarry. The cost was £300 000, about 20% more than the tender amount of the appointed contractor, Cornelius & Hollis. The building is declared a National Monument.

The façades of the stately administrative and community centre of the City are clad with sandstone from Greytown for two floors with a string course and with stucco rendering and mouldings to the upper two floors, terminated by a cornice ledge and a balustrade with precast concrete balusters.

**Re-opened sandstone quarry on Nomalanga farm near Greytown.**



Significant features are its carvings, motifs, decorative string course with volute mouldings and statuettes grouped around the corner copulas. Most prominent is the copper clad great dome 48m high above the main entrance pediment and *porte-cochère* supported by grand Corinthian columns.

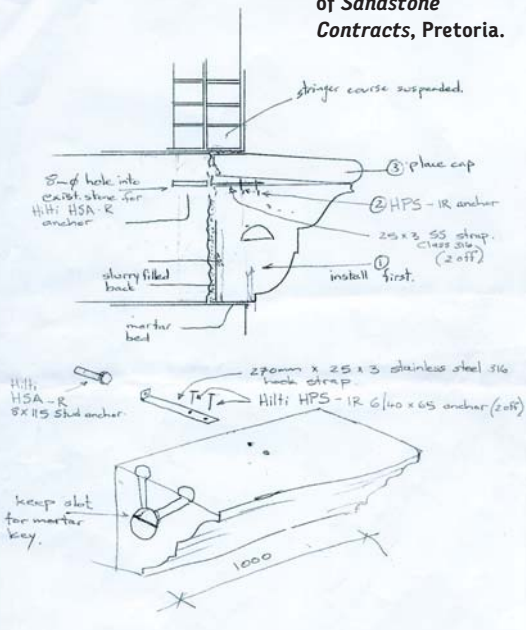
The ravages by natural elements and ever increasing vehicular and industrial pollution amplified by the south-easterly wind off the Durban Bay have taken their toll on the fabric of the building resulting in exfoliation and delamination of the sandstone ashlar blocks and elements. The erosion of drip moulds on window cills, the string course, balconies and arches exacerbated the disintegration of sandstone mouldings. The plinth blocks and lower ashlar blocks suffered further from rising damp, and water ingress affected the stucco rendering of the upper floors. Eroding mouldings, cills and ledges (and dripping condensate pipes from air conditioning window units) all resulted in saturation of the walls' substrata causing unsightly discolouration and staining. Cracks in precast concrete statuettes and balusters caused corrosion of mild steel reinforcing, spalling and eventual falling off of appendages and features.

Before commencing the restoration 4 x 200mm diameter cores were taken from the lower level ashlar blocks. Two samples were delivered to Drennan, Maud & Partners for visual hand specimens and petrological description and for laboratory testing to establish the mechanical properties of the sandstone, classified as a quartz arenite bonded with siliceous cement.

We visited Nomalanga, the farm outside Greytown where the stone was recorded to have been quarried, and were taken to numerous hill sides where quarrying activity had taken place; loose blocks were retrieved and sent for testing. At the time, the logistics of re-opening the quarry necessitated a mining permit and with the added obstacle of an impending land claim on the farm, the option was considered not to be viable. Other sources of sandstone from the Ficksburg formation were explored but no functioning quarries with matching silver grey (10YR8/0) stone were found.



Sketch by Roel Jansen of Sandstone Contracts, Pretoria.



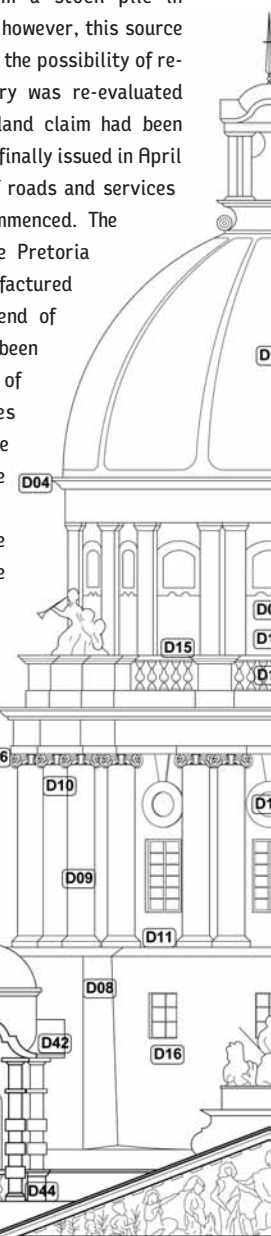
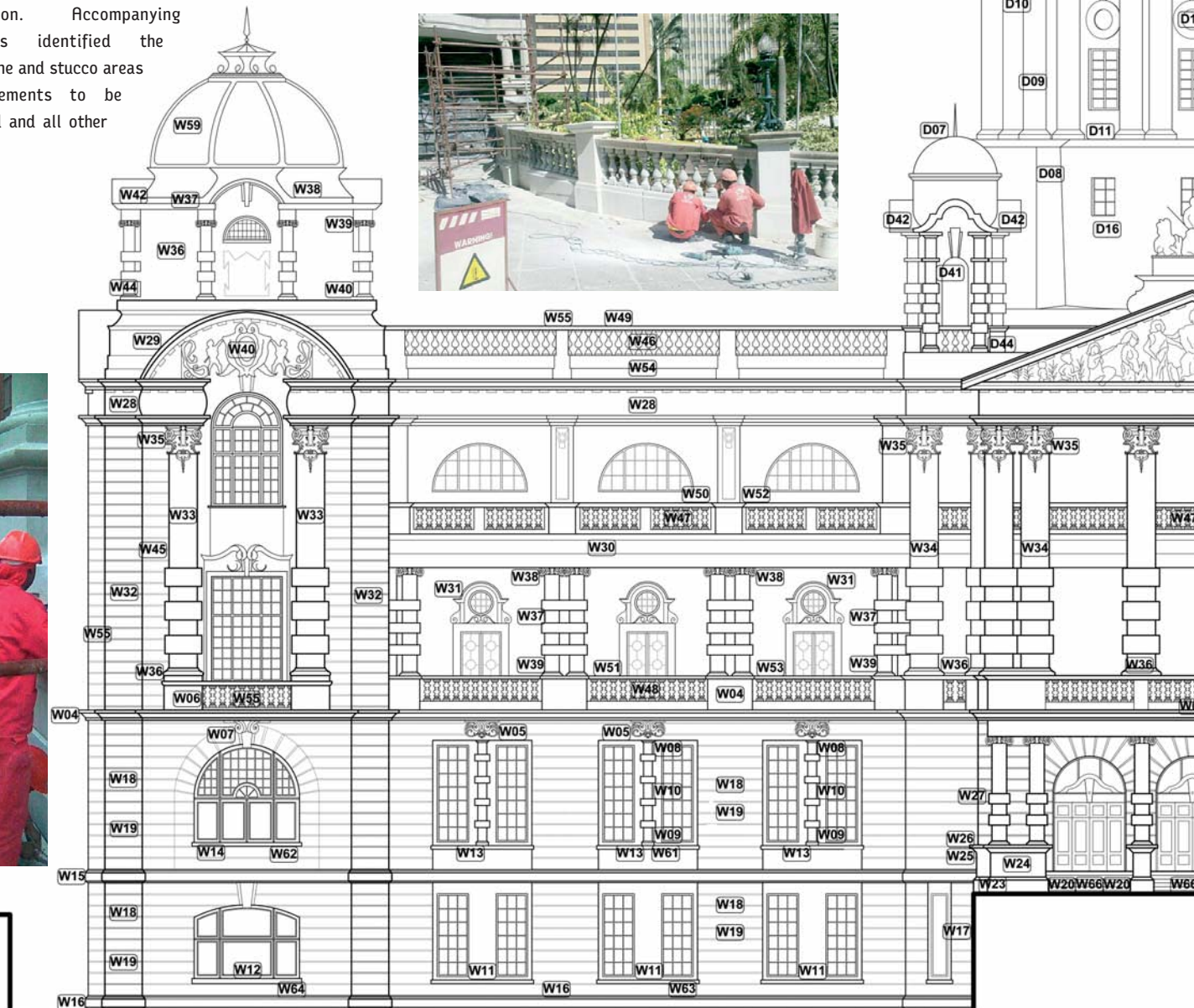
The stone to be used was from a quarry at Alcockspruit with some from a stock pile in Pretoria. For various reasons, however, this source proved problematic and finally the possibility of re-opening the Nomalanga quarry was re-evaluated when it was found that the land claim had been resolved. A Mining Permit was finally issued in April 2010 and the establishment of roads and services to the abandoned quarry commenced. The first delivery of stone to the Pretoria yard was in July 2010 and manufactured blocks were on site by the end of August 2010. Records have been kept of the location of batches of stone quarried, and samples tested and recorded to ensure the stone being used is of the prescribed quality.

The construction programme was revised with the restoration of the stucco surfaces and elements and all other areas of renovation continued independently of the sandstone work. The

Tender documents were prepared stating the physical and chemical properties and the appearance required of the replacement sandstone and samples were available for inspection. Accompanying drawings identified the sandstone and stucco areas and elements to be replaced and all other

external components that were to be renovated.

Restoration commenced in April 2008, GVK-Siya Zama being the principal contractors, with their sub-contractor Pretoria-based Sandstone Contracts.



specified treatment of the stucco, a combination with cementitious *Sika* coating however did not achieve the desired result, as after a few months the damp discoloration re-appeared.

A process of experimentation with numerous cementitious products and combinations followed to achieve a uniform colour and texture, and some areas had to be stripped and re-coated to achieve the correct original colour. The main criteria was that the coating must be cementitious, to be compatible with the stucco. The eventual application chosen was two coats of *Sika Cemflex*. Ledges and cills were coated with an additional semi-permeable waterproofing application.

The sandstone restoration commenced on the north façade facing Dr Pixley Ka Seme (West) Street. On removal of the string course, the contractors cut back into the existing stone by 100mm and commenced replacement with new elements, counter-balanced and mechanically fixed with Grade 316 stainless steel straps and HPS and HSA anchors.

The majority of the string course volute mouldings were replaced and fixed with stainless

steel dowels. Delaminated ashlar blocks, column and window pilaster bases, column block and capitals were chopped out and exactly replaced in segments.

Special expertise was provided by the sandstone sub-contractor for the method of replacing and fixing elements of the curved corner balcony string moulding and slab soffit, and for the two north façade and two south façade entrance arches without removing sound stone unduly. Unexpectedly the four arches were found to be dimensionally fractionally different requiring skilled masons and artisans to achieve a perfect result. The top surfaces of the arches and ledges were clad with lead sheeting to protect them from water ingress. Caps, bases and faces of the moat wall pillars have been replaced where they have delaminated or been damaged by passing traffic. The balustrade coping and base elements to the entrance 'twist ramp' required on site masonry work to achieve the compound curves.

Statuettes and motifs were restored by re-moulding appendages and replacing them with stainless steel dowels, joints and cracks were filled and sealed with epoxy grout and all coated with *Cemflex*. The option of removing the worst groups, taking a mould and recasting and then lifting them back into place was explored with a sculptor but could not be justified.

The two Durban coat-of-arms motifs on the *porte-cochère* are presently being crafted in sandstone to complete what has been a most interesting and satisfying project.

Frank Emmett



Restored entrance portico (see cover).

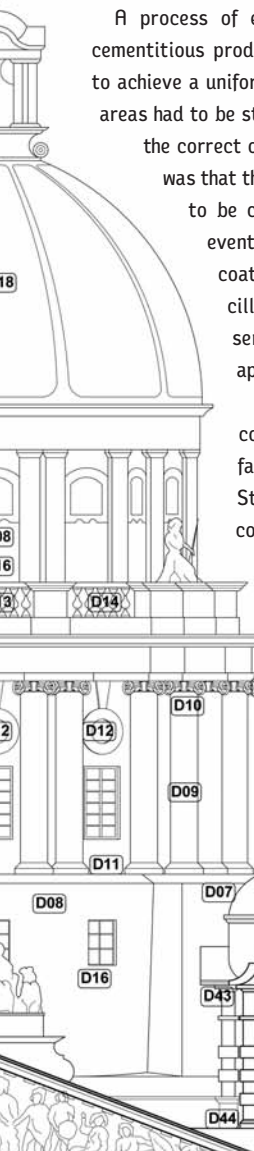
Client: eThekweni Municipality, City Architects' Department.

Architects: Emmett : Emmett Architects cc

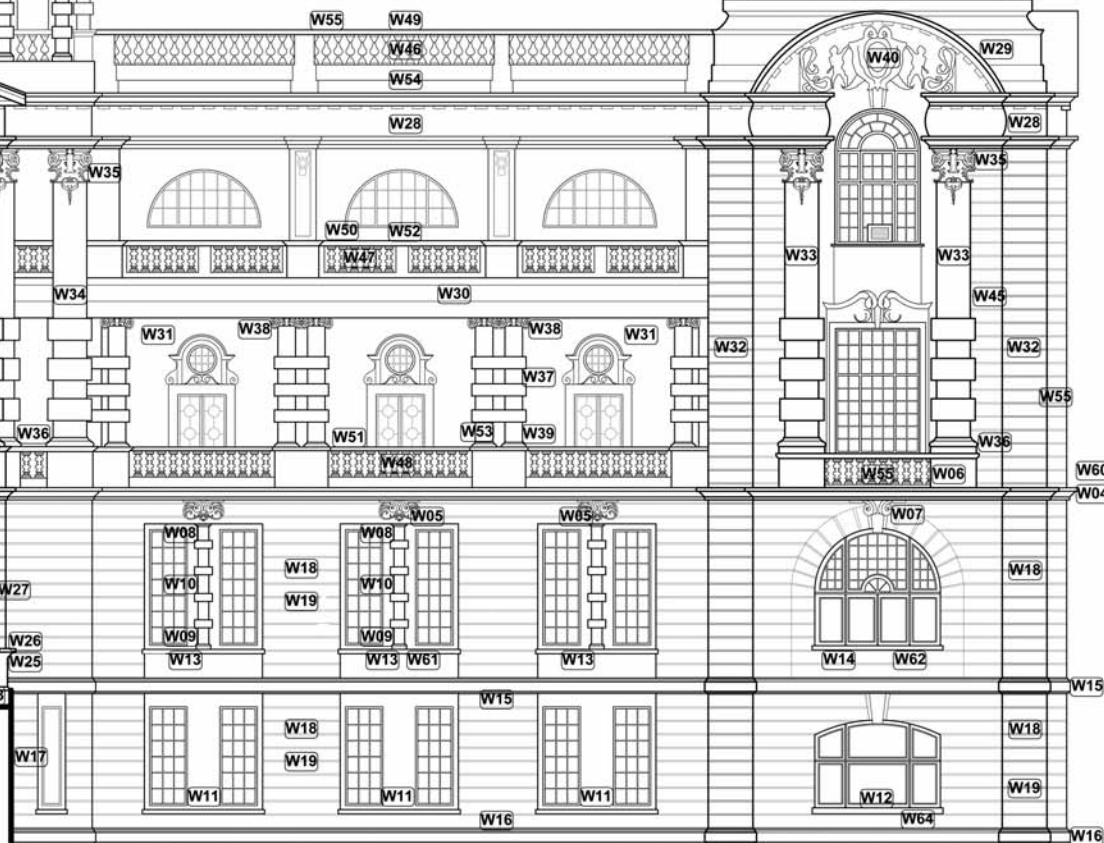
Quantity Surveyors: Mbata Walters & Simpson

Structural Engineers: Arup

Contractors: GVK-Siya Zama



West Elevation to Francis Farewell Square.





## ASPECTS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

# Natal Command Headquarters building: Slouching\* along Oliver Tambo Drive (Snell Parade), Durban

Conserving old buildings faced a conceptual shift with the adoption of post-apartheid legislation in 1999 when the *National Heritage Resources Act* replaced the *National Monuments Act*, 1985. Replacing "Monument" with "Heritage Resource" encapsulated this shift. Regrettably, this shift is frequently dismissed or poorly considered by many architectural practitioners and the public. In this article, the fate of the long vacant Natal Command headquarters building on Durban's Battery Beach (Fig.1) is explored through the lens of the new Act.

The site and its structure/s are identified for their cultural, and not just their material, significance. Overtly, Natal Command embodies both a military history and the visual imagery of western neo-classicism implanted on sub-tropical shores. In retaining such sites, do we conserve to guard memory against forgetting? To what purpose? And further, how helpful is the new Act to progressively determine the value of such sites of contestation and contradiction within our post-apartheid cities? Accepting that the mural of the Province of Natal (Fig.2) is of some material significance, what then of its social and political significance?



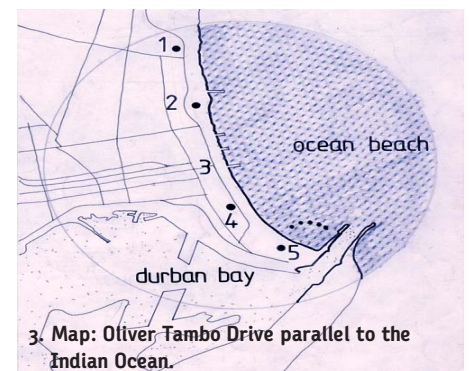
2. Province of Natal, Mural. Stucco panel in bas-relief in entrance portico.

As practitioners, sticking our toes over the line of the strictly technical does, however, expose us to these contested social and political domains. With reference to current debate, there is certain merit in the cautionary by Jo Noero, to "understand the limits of architectural action" upon the world. But, as Jo explains, this should be counter-posed by the professional ethics we espouse in determining the "nature of the brief we accept and act upon" (Noero, 2012:6). Recognising both the limits and consequences of our actions is the decidedly social and political step we all must take.

Ascertaining these limits and consequences is not helped by the "extraordinary claims" (Shepherd &

Robins, 2008:117) that form the two short paragraphs of the Preamble to the new Act. Paragraph one asserts that "Our heritage ... lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character". Paragraph two asserts that "Our heritage ... educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others". Below the surface of such an instrumentalist declaration, lies a less strident and more nuanced call, namely to negotiate, rather than to authorise, significance. This is another significant departure from the old Act.

Establishing the heritage resource value of the Natal Command site with its structures would be a way of negotiating the "nature of the brief to accept and act upon". This negotiation would be informed by, if not necessarily start with, an evaluation of the urban context.



3. Map: Oliver Tambo Drive parallel to the Indian Ocean.

1. Natal Command HQ, c.1937.
2. Sunken Gardens, 1932, and relocated 'Festival of Britain' pylon, c.1965.
3. Dr Pixley Ka Seme (West) St.
4. Addington Children's Hospital, 1926.
5. The Point, 1880s onwards, and Vetch's Pier, 1862.

The consolidation of Durban's beachfront as a leisure facility followed upon the loss of the city's premier beach in the bay in the early the 1930s. Up till then, south and north beaches were the back-beaches, a strip of mostly service facilities (Fig.3) with Natal Command occupying the northern end of this strip. The twin-gun emplacements in front of the building (Fig.1) have now become part of the Battery Beach car park. Only the plinth of a single gun can be seen on today's promenade (Fig.4) with



1. Natal Command, 1937. Demolition of the Central Tower was undertaken in WWII to avert U-boat surveillance.



4. Portico: Tuscan-in-the-Tropics. Mediating between memory and social change?

the underground inter-leading communication tunnel blocked up. Little else of historical fabric, particularly of a civic nature, exists along this section of the city's beach. The site and structure/s of the Natal Command building are considered a heritage resource of some significance in the cityscape of Durban.



5. Old South African coat-of-arms. The stucco bas-relief emblem over the entrance pediment contains the state emblem *ex unitate vires* (Strength comes from Unity) which served South Africa from the formation of Union in 1910 until it was replaced in 2000.



6. Commemorative Coelacanth plaque, 1952, on north wing stairwell.

Whilst evaluating urban context appears generally unproblematic, this is not the case for some of the imagery associated with the building. The old South African coat-of-arms, axially aligned with the (now demolished) central tower, can be seen in Fig.4. The stucco of the emblem is robustly contoured and catches the sun in a lively and bold manner (Fig.5).

As a conscientious objector to the apartheid army, and to millions of South African citizens, it stands as a reminder of the horror of the recent past. Its presence tests my capacity "to empathise with the experience of others" and to have any wish to "affirm our diverse cultures", as cited in the Preamble to the Act. But would its removal allow me to understand the sweep of history over the site, to know the building for what it was, and would removal strengthen my resolve to believe "never, never, and never again..."? Of lesser gravity, is the loss of the brass plaque commemorating the overnight stay, en-route from the Comores to the East London Museum, of a fresh coelacanth specimen, which was housed in room 47 of the north wing (Bergh *et al*, 1992:20). The plaque (Fig.6) was removed when the military vacated the premises in 2001, and now most likely adorns a knotty-pine bar in Durban North. Unlike the mural, the plaque has no intrinsic value, but it documented a layer of the history of the building, a layer now 'scrubbed away'.

Of lesser gravity, is the loss of the brass plaque commemorating the overnight stay, en-route from the Comores to the East London Museum, of a fresh coelacanth specimen, which was housed in room 47 of the north wing (Bergh *et al*, 1992:20). The plaque (Fig.6) was removed when the military vacated the premises in 2001, and now most likely adorns a knotty-pine bar in Durban North. Unlike the mural, the plaque has no intrinsic value, but it documented a layer of the history of the building, a layer now 'scrubbed away'.



7. South courtyard.

During the tenure of the military, the building was much altered. The north courtyard was closed-in although the south courtyard was retained (Fig.7). All the major entrance gates were replaced and lean-to structures were added over time. None of the alterations from this period were of architectural merit. Some fine Dept. of Public Works detailing is apparent in the timber work (Figs.8 & 9). Upon the military vacating the 21 hectare premises of barracks, drill halls, and mess rooms, most but not all of the brass ironmongery and service fittings were illegally removed, whilst most timber casement windows remain intact.

As most of the old material and the defining attributes of the original are intact, and as strong expressions of public support had been received, the provincial authorities deemed the site to be a heritage resource of architectural significance. The Natal Command building,



8. Entrance Lobby.



9. Mess.

together with its attached perimeter walls, was declared to be protected. With the exception of the chapel at the far end of the grounds, the city authorities who own the land were permitted to clear the site of all other structures. Some of these structures can be seen in Fig. 10.

From the account described above, it is apparent that the determining administrative interventions on heritage resources continue to be based largely on material, not cultural, evidence as projected in the new Act. Countervailing voices, articulating positions other than the merits or demerits of material significance, were never heard in the debate over the future of the Natal Command site. For the heritage resource practitioner, the issue to hand was not whether to demolish or to retain structures; the issue was one of cultural interpretation of a site and its structure/s saturated in political symbolism contradicting everything that means being a South African today. That is what the new Act clumsily espouses, and it is something the architectural profession is reluctant to face.

Kirk White



10. Aerial view from the south, 2011, before demolition of secondary structures.

\*The title was inspired by the words concluding the third stanza of Yeats, W (1919) *The Second Coming*: "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

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 Noero J (2012) Letters: Architecture Today. *Architecture SA*, June/July, p6.  
 Shepherd N & Robins S (2008) *New South African Keywords*. Ohio University Press & Swallow Press.

# SRI LANKA – A TRAVEL DIARY 1919–2003 HOME OF GEOFFREY BAWA



**G**eoffrey Bawa's work has always inspired me and I have been determined to visit his homeland and see for myself this great architect's work.

In March 2011, my wife and I left for Sri Lanka on a planned excursion to visit as many as possible of Bawa's projects. An Indian-based Travel Agency with whom I had planned previous sub-continent trips put in place my request to visit his hotels, houses, commercial buildings, institutional buildings and those of his associates and contemporaries.

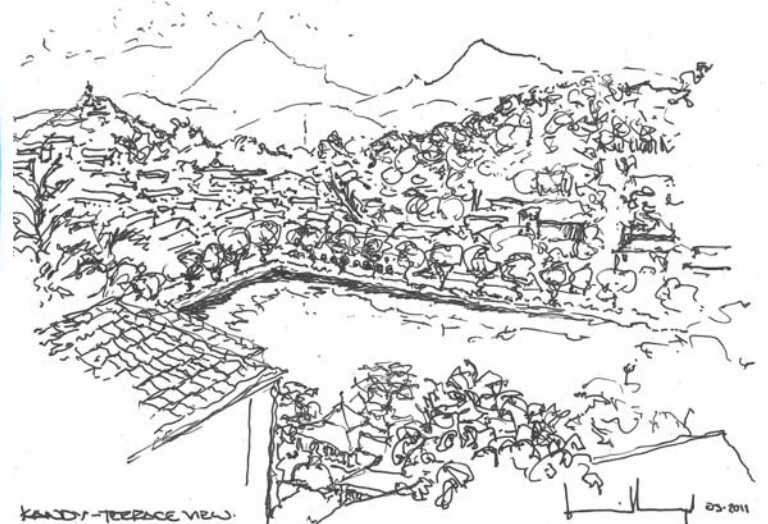
We landed in Colombo and were driven to Dumbulla and the Kandalama Hotel. This is a modular concrete-framed building clinging to and

carved into the rock face overlooking the man-made lake. Built in 1994 with planted roofs and vertical gardens on the elevations, it is evidence of Bawa's foresight and his belief in appropriate architecture for the Tropics. This project is to me one of his best works.

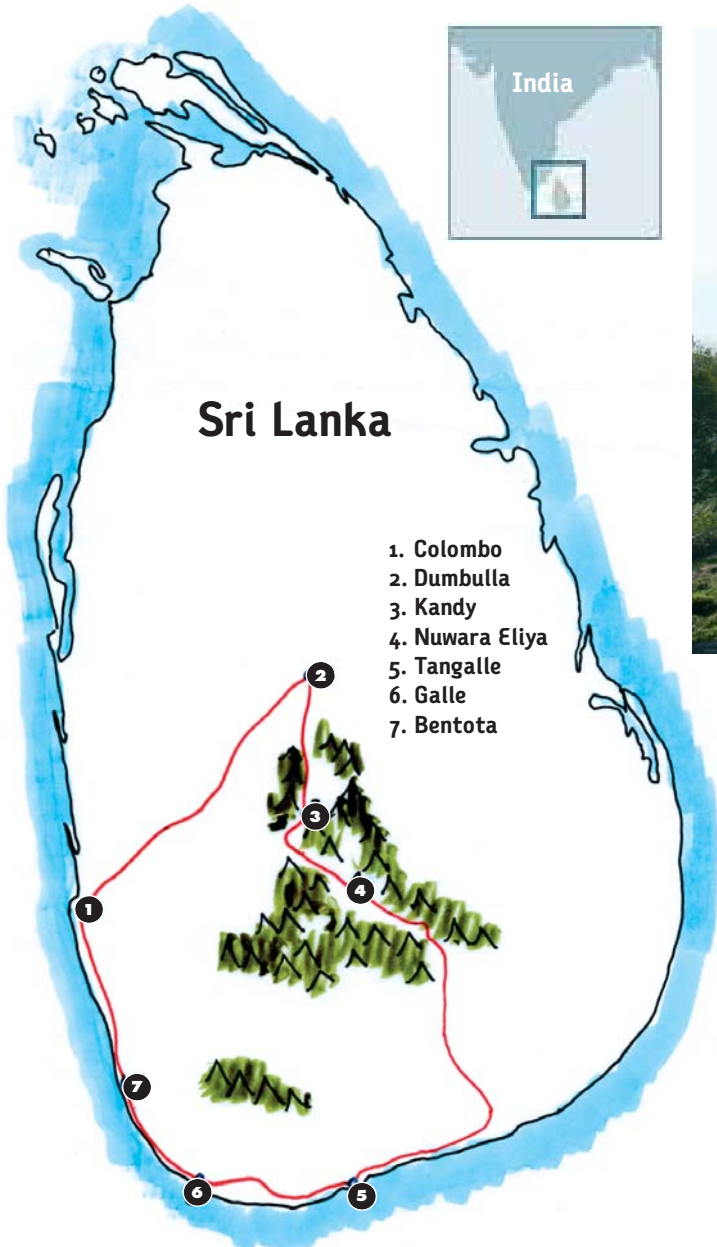
Three days later we left for Kandy and Nuwara Eliya in the central mountainous area. The climate change is dramatic with tea plantations and vegetable gardens on the steep slopes covered in mist and cloud. Nihal Bodhinayake was the architect who, with his client Mr G.C. Wickremasinghe, converted an old corrugated iron-clad steel-framed tea factory into an amazing boutique hotel with a colourful interior retaining the materials and



Kandalama Hotel.



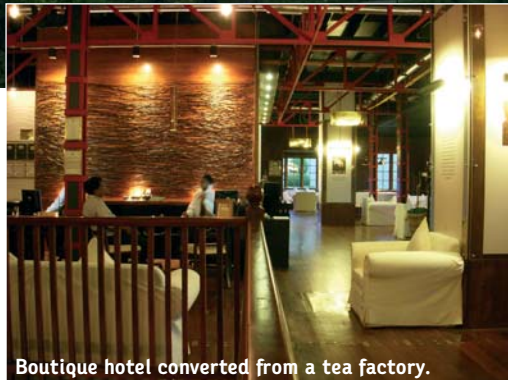
KANDY - TERRACE VIEW



India

Sri Lanka

1. Colombo
2. Dumbulla
3. Kandy
4. Nuwara Eliya
5. Tangalle
6. Galle
7. Bentota



Boutique hotel converted from a tea factory.

details of the original factory plus using the imagery of the tea industry to decorate and theme the hotel.

The architecture in this area is typical of the hill stations in India and the Tropics. The English colonialists left their mark with typically imperialist architecture of their home country. The locals have embraced this together with the style of life and continued the tradition.

We drove down out of the hills to Tangalle on the coast to one of the two Aman Hotels on the island. The Amanwella was designed by Kerry Hill in 2004. Bawa was a friend of Kerry Hill and the client,

Adrian Zecha, and was influential in putting the two together. Amanwella is a tribute to Bawa, but is also a highly original essay in Minimalist Modernism. The architecture is cool and the palette of materials restrained.

Bawa was an architect who had a gift of putting together architects, artists, academics, craftsmen and builders to create and achieve the architecture he was commissioned to undertake. Bawa's circle of friends included artist Donald Friend, Ena de Silva, Barbara Sansoni who set up 'Barefoot' craftware, Laki Senanayake, Peter Muller, Ulrik Plesner, C Anjalendran, Channa Daswatha, Ronald Lewcock and David Robson.

The city of Galle has some good architecture which survived the Tsunami – Amangalle, Lighthouse Hotel, Sun House, Dutch House, Beach House.

Between Galle and Colombo is the town of Bentota where the following are found: Blue Waters Hotel, Bentota Beach Hotel, Serendib Hotel, Club Villa, Lunuganga and Brief gardens and houses.

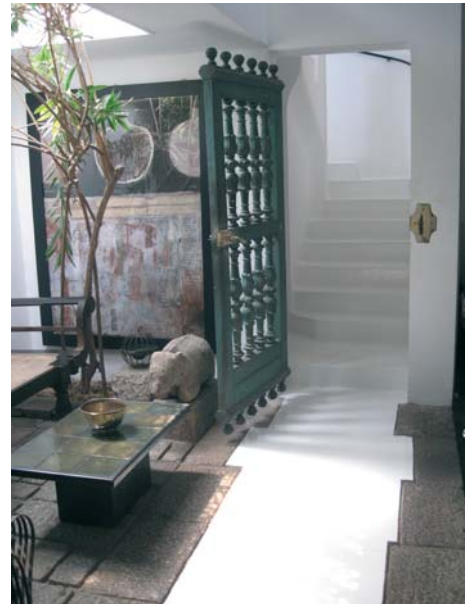
Should anyone visit Sri Lanka, Bawa and his brother's own garden and house (below) has to be experienced. We spent two nights and days in his house at Lunuganga and the opportunity to live in his world for two days was truly moving.



We returned to Colombo and had managed to get permission to view original drawings of his projects at his offices (below) and house in 33rd Lane. Many of his other buildings were visited including a memorable meal at Paradise Road house which is now a restaurant and shop.



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The tour was rounded off with the attendance at the Cricket World semi-final between Sri Lanka and New Zealand in Colombo. The atmosphere, hospitality and friendship experienced watching the game with so many Sri Lankans was a fitting end to a two week visit to a beautiful country and people.  
Kevin Lloyd



Amanwella Hotel.

Readers are referred to the monograph by Lewcock,R Sansoni,B & Sananayake,L *The Architecture of an Island: The Living Legacy of Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Barefoot, 1998. -Editor