

SAIA-KZN



Journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Region of the South African Institute of Architects

2017 SAIA-KZN Awards for Architecture



NEWS

2017 Woman in Architecture: Karuni Naidoo

The winners of the fifth annual Women in Construction Awards were announced at a gala dinner held in Johannesburg on 24th May. SAIA-KZN members Karuni Naidoo and Monique Gillespie were included in the ten nominations received for the 2017 Women in Architecture category, of which Karuni went on to be declared winner. The award was sponsored by the South African Institute of Architects. Many congratulations! *Editor*



Karuni Naidoo and Monique Gillespie at the Women in Construction Awards ceremony held in Johannesburg in May.

In 1988 Karuni was the first black woman architect to graduate at the University of Natal, now UKZN. The busy practice she heads, CNN Architects, was established in Durban in 1995, 22 years ago. But, it's not only practice, Karuni provides ongoing academic support to both DUT and UKZN, and drives the national SAIA Women in Architecture initiative.

To keep fit the day begins with meditation, there are regular sessions at the gym, and as often as possible Karuni applies her skills as a ceramicist.

UKZN Graduation

The graduation ceremony of the UKZN College of Humanities took place on Monday morning, 3rd April, in the Sports Centre of Westville campus.

Besides the conferment of 53 Bachelor of Architectural Studies degrees and 30 Masters of Architecture, a Master's degree by research was conferred upon staffer Naresh Singh and the degree Doctor of Philosophy on staffer Yashaen Luckan.



Newly graduated Dr. Yashaen Luckan with his PhD certificate.

For his dissertation, Naresh chose the topic *Historical developments in transformation of Hindu religious architecture*, while the thesis of Yashaen is entitled *The transformation of architectural pedagogy and learning space development. Towards a new model for architectural education at universities of technology in South Africa.*

Exhibition: The architecture of Trish Emmett

To mark 26 years of the practice Emmett : Emmett Architects, and to celebrate women in Architecture during August, Women's month, SAIA-KZN is hosting an exhibition which focuses on the work of Trish Emmett, appropriately in the Bond Shed at 12 Browns Road, a building she rejuvenated and incorporated in a new development at the Point. The exhibition opened on 18th August and the event is sponsored by Corobrik. With her distinguished service to the profession at national and international levels, it is easy to overlook her achievements in practice, but Trish has been project architect or collaborator in no fewer than 7 awards! So, it's time to reflect. *Editor*



Trish Emmett

Photograph: Jethro Snyders

In Memoriam

Peter Howe (1940-2017)

I remember Peter as helpful, kind and modest, and employed within the Building Services division of the University of Natal. From this position the topic of his M.Arch degree by research, awarded 2003, was wisely chosen, *The adaptive re-use of university buildings*, for which he subjected four buildings on the Pietermaritzburg campus to scrutiny. On retirement Peter practised from his home in Hilton. *Editor*

EDITORIAL

2017 SAIA-KZN AWARDS FOR ARCHITECTURE.

Spaces worth living in go beyond function.

This issue of the Journal features the first phase of the biennial Awards programme hosted by the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) in which regional Awards are made; in our case KZN Awards for Architecture. Awarded buildings are then submitted to national level where a jury scrutinises them next year alongside their counterparts from the other regions for SAIA Awards of Merit or for Excellence.

The jury composition is prescribed by SAIA as is the criteria for assessment, namely the Vitruvian triad of commodity, firmness and delight, dating from about 25BC. Keyan Tomaselli, distinguished professor at the University of Johannesburg served as the 'lay person who is required to have some eminence and interest in architecture'; Mike Louw, senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town served as both the 'architect from another region' and the 'academic architect' while Vash Connoosaumi, Ken Lever and Alethea Duncan-Brown represented KZN architects. The jury elected Alethea as its chair, and the co-convenors were Sydney Baillon and Walter Peters.

This time the invitation was open to buildings constructed during 2015-16 for which 25 KZN entries were received. One was abroad and had to be virtually inspected by DVD; all others were inspected *in loco*, a great privilege but that took the usual three full days.

A few issues emerged. One, the observance of the construction period, which at least one entrant overlooked; two, to assess commodity, the building has to be furnished and in use; three, the building must be accessible.

Buildings have to be compared within the crop of their vintage, which should go without saying. While the *in loco* functional check-up is important, spaces worth living in and looking at go beyond function, and visiting a building always brings unique experiences

not possible by studying the submissions or looking at the accompanying photographs, like workmanship, a general concern.

But, with security looming large, accessibility has become progressively more difficult and time consuming. One way might be to insist that either the architect or a representative of the practice be at the site awaiting the jury, having already instigated the entry formalities. This policy is not yet insisted upon by the regions but certainly at national level. No guided tour is wanted; the architect would only be present to ensure full accessibility and for answering any questions that may arise. What should, however, be clearly understood by all parties is that to carry out a full and effective inspection, and to compare the merits with other submissions, it is absolutely normal for a jury to be armed with clipboards and cameras. Of course, where reasonable, dissemination of images could be prohibited, but that would require substantiation, best with the submission.

Despite the issues raised, the Awards programme is popular and well subscribed. Unlike other regions, KZN does not ask for the preparation of posters as SAIA insists, but only sufficient information for the jury to understand the brief, resolution and location.

Another particularity KZN has upheld outside the SAIA ambit of awards is the conferment of Special Mentions. In the past this designation was mostly used in the case of an emerging practice, a distinction the current jury did not observe and instead opted to give its stamp of appreciation where warranted.

However, wherever decisions have to be made there is, unfortunately, room for controversy. I am thus sure the outcome will not leave all entrants happy. It takes courage to submit a building to the scrutiny of one's peers, and I offer my special congratulations to all entrants, and particularly to those projects going ahead to national level, for which jury the citations are included.

Walter Peters, Editor

SAIA-KZN Award for Architecture

**Bluecrane, Curry's Post
Koop Design**

Bluecrane is the name given to the house situated in an idyllic setting in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands, built by the owner over a period of five years. The bold and key feature of the house is its setting, being daringly built over the edge of a dam. The house has a generous circulation spine, a veritable breezeway, which serves the various internal living spaces leading off this linear element and includes alternating courtyards to create private and more intimate outdoor spaces that overlook the dam. These courtyards also provide a respite from the wind.

In plan, its simplicity is deceptive and the complexity of the construct is simplified by a steel framed structure. This is offset by the repurposing of reclaimed and salvaged timber including indigenous Yellowwood and Oregon pine, the use of which became a feature of the home. The interior timberwork and furniture was designed and crafted by the architect. In particular, the stair as a central element in the design is noteworthy both as a linking element and for the superb

craftsmanship of its design and construction. Not only is the timber a feature of the home but added to this is the expansive use of glass to enhance the relationship between the dam and house which at times seem to merge into one. The exterior use of the rough-hewn stone both as dry stack-walling and the coursed rubble masonry in contrast to the transparency of the glass enhances these elements and further grounds the house to the site.

The inclusion of the 320m² solar array and 60 000lt of water storage in insulated tanks allows for cooling or heating of the house through an underfloor reticulation system. Using these passive systems the house remains cool or warm depending on the season. The solar gain created by the extensive glazing is managed with solar blinds. All water is heated by the solar system and temperature maintained with local gas heaters at the point of consumption.

The design of this residence is inclusive of passive energy use, hard landscaping and the extensive use of up-cycled materials. These elements, the uniqueness of the home in its setting and the inclusiveness of the clients' hands-on involvement is reminiscent of the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement, all of which contribute to making the building worthy of an Award.



Photography: Roger Jardine

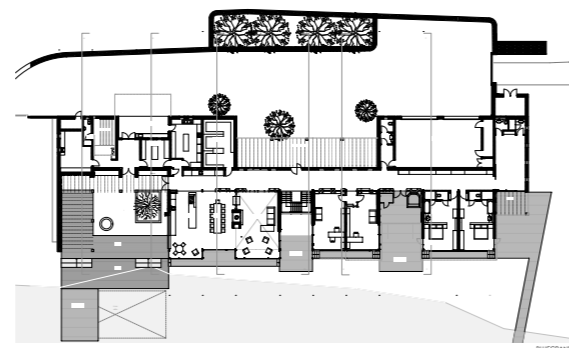
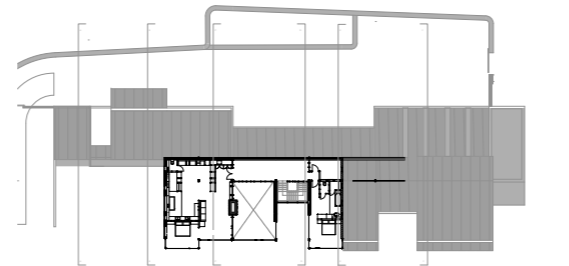
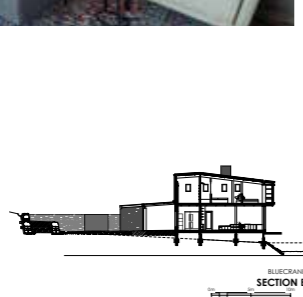
View from north. Outdoor area at left is recessed to shield it from wind.



View from sitting area to dining-kitchen and to the outdoor beyond.



Staircase up to main bedroom. Note the delicacy of the balustrade stepped in parallel with the risers.



SAIA-KZN Award for Architecture

**Container Traders' Shelters, 2 Kelly Road, Hammarsdale
Architecture Department, eThekweni Municipality**

The Hammarsdale container traders' shelters are an exuberant activation of a previously unremarkable streetscape. It provides the necessary improved infrastructure for traders who used to run their businesses from sub-standard facilities, but it does so in a way that markedly differentiates it from other similar interventions.

Its manipulation of the ground plane on a steep slope is exemplary and the provision of a series of sheltered public spaces must be commended. Shading, insulation, ventilation and water harvesting have all been effectively addressed and the positive comment received from a longstanding trader acknowledges this.

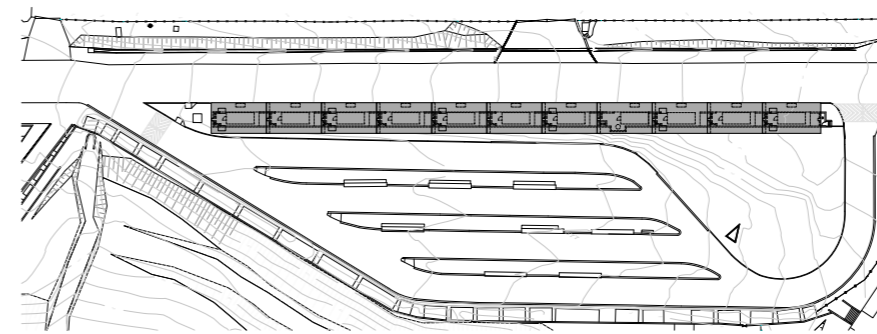
The provision of planters around the water tanks for the planting of vegetables is also an interesting addition. The cost of piling and the use of a steel structure could be questioned, but in the same vein this investment in terms of robustness and increased lifespan demonstrates a commitment from the municipality.

This intervention exceeds the requirements of commodity, firmness and delight: the patterns on the container walls and the supporting steel structures mimic the late-afternoon shadows of the row of trees on the other side of the street and, besides the activity of traders and passing pedestrians, many people can be found sitting and socialising underneath this new artificial canopy of trees. The intervention invites interaction and the overall impression that one is left with after visiting it is that of a general feeling of joy.



Photography: Jon Iwins

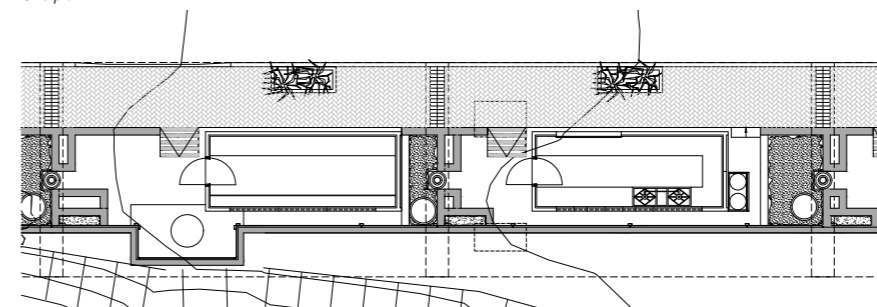
View down Kelly Road from east to west.



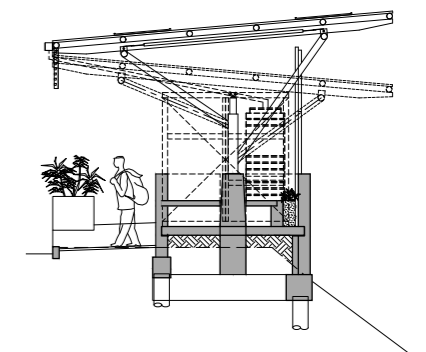
Site plan.



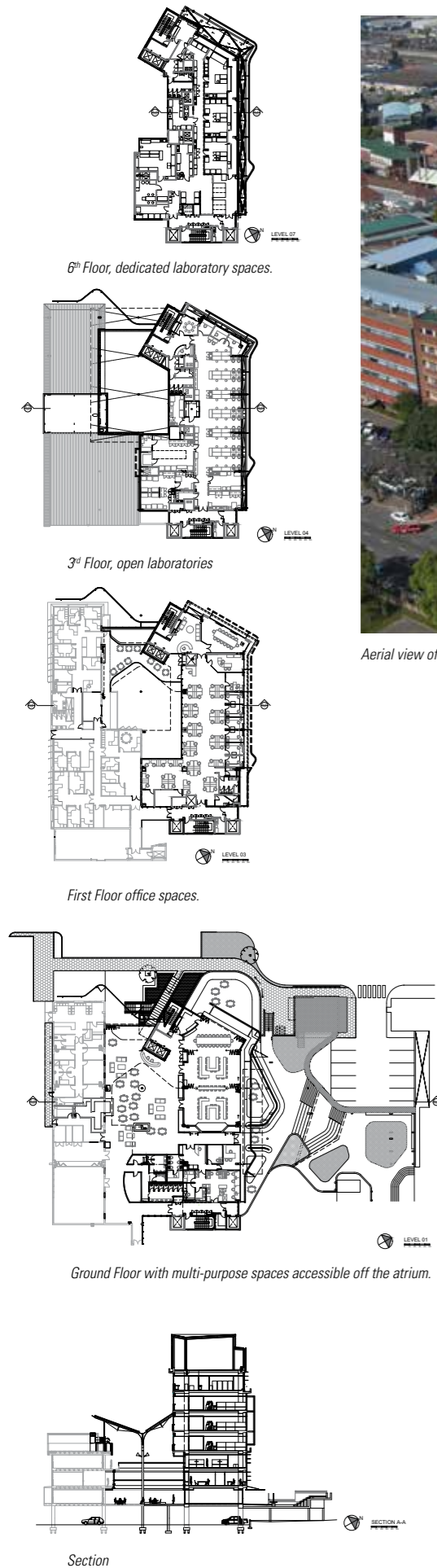
Detail view of one trader container in use.



Detailed plan.



Detailed section.



Aerial view of the dense campus environment along Umbilo Road with Maydon Wharf in the distant background.



Entrance gateway



Photograph: Baker Sky Imaging

Photograph: Roy Reed

SAIA-KZN Award for Architecture
K-RITH tower building, 719 Umbilo Road, Durban
FGG Architects

The mission of the KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV (K-RITH) is to conduct scientific research and translate the findings into new tools for the control of these diseases. This tower is located on the UKZN Nelson R Mandela medical campus where it acts as a landmark and anchor for unifying the existing facilities and buildings.

The plan is essentially a U with at its heart a four-storey-high atrium covered with an iconic inverted roof symbolic of US aviator and philanthropist Howard Hughes (1905-1976), whose legacy Medical Institute sponsored the building.



Photograph: Roy Reed

North-facing tower.



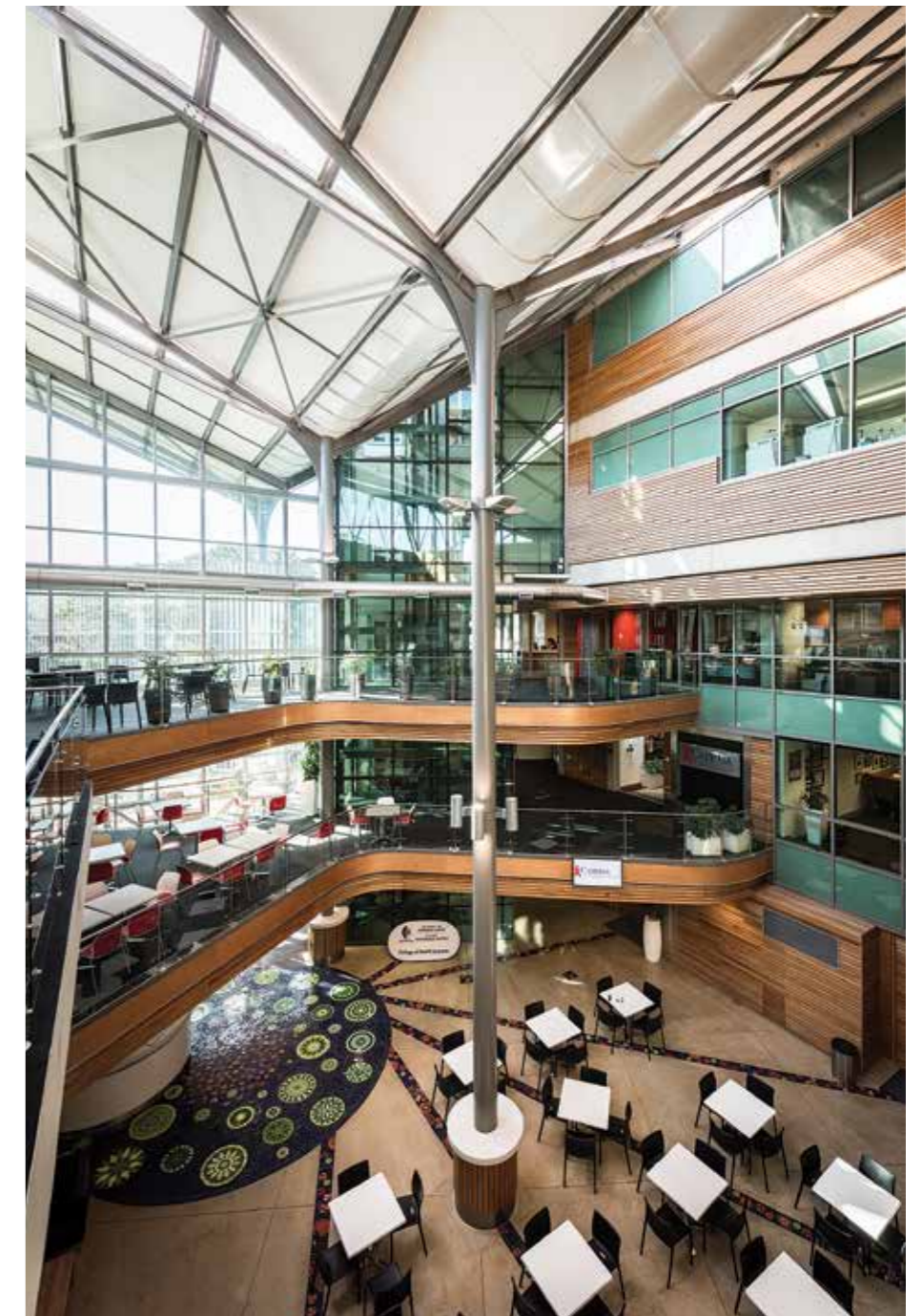
Photograph: Roy Reed

The iconic front with wing or inverted roof.

Left: Ceramics inside and outside staircase by Jane du Rand. The designs were inspired by healing and medicinal plants, and were executed in collaboration with patients of Siniktemba clinic and McCords Hospital, many of whom were living with HIV.

On the ground floor direct access is given to flat-floor multi-purpose spaces opening to the breakaway court on the north-east. Office spaces for various divisions take up the first and second floors, while laboratories, on the northern wing only, mark the topmost four floors of the tower and conclude with a floor dedicated to services. The splayed northern corner with expressed sun control elements contains the vertical circulation, board rooms and executive offices. Parking is corralled in a basement beneath the ground, between K-RITH and the neighbouring building. This is roofed and landscaped to allow the space to link various buildings on the tight campus.

The architects were commissioned with the design of a highly serviced building on a tightly constrained site, and have succeeded in creating a convincing architectural statement, both sensitive and sophisticated, and capable of responding in a rational, modest, yet vital manner.



Interior of atrium with inverted roof. Floor ceramics by Jane du Rand.

SAIA-KZN Award for Architecture

Pixley House, 396-402 Dr Pixley KaSeme Street, Durban
 designworkshop : sa

Pixley House, like Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme* after whom it is named, is a pioneer. While there are a number of other South African inner city office buildings that have been adapted to residential use, Pixley House does set a precedent within its own context and admirably so on a very limited budget.

To keep rents low enough for its target market required compromises, like the finishes in the public areas, which may be considered as too unrefined by some, but the design team managed to offset these through innovative bespoke design solutions, particularly for the fittings and finishes in the apartments. The building's spatial reconfiguration is highly successful and it allows for a balanced mix of tenancies with new open circulation areas around the inner courtyard.

The building began its life as Payne Bros department store, noted architecturally for its skyscraper office tower with façades and crown designed in a series of setbacks. In repurposing the building, the Art Deco characteristics have been re-emphasised and the central closely-spaced continuous vertical piers and embellishments accented from the corner buttresses and building generally.

As a pioneering example of repurposing downtown office space to residential use while sustaining and enhancing Art Deco heritage value, the boldness and bravado of Pixley House is commended as an inspiration for the regeneration of similar buildings within our evolving city centres.

*South Africa's first black lawyer and a founder of the ANC.



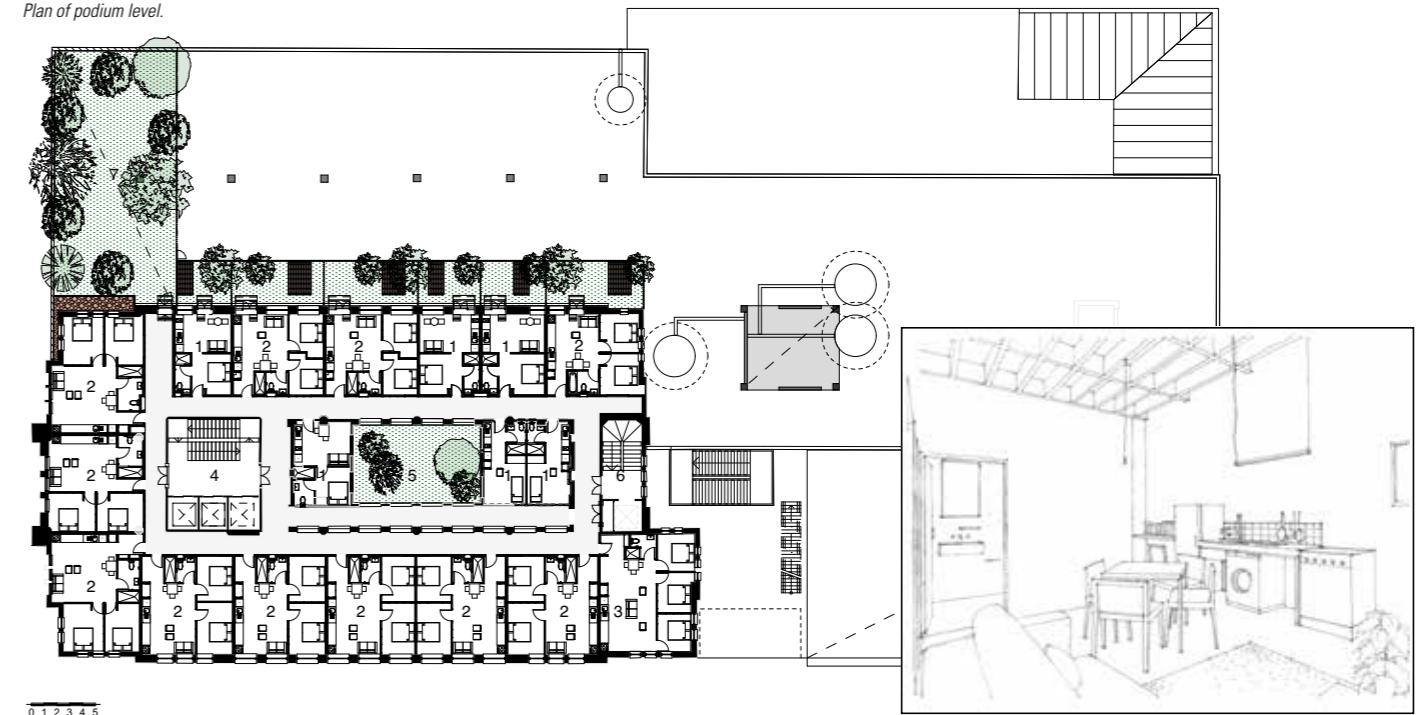
Looking east along Pixley KaSeme Street.

Photography: Dennis Gilbert



Pixley House literally in the centre of the central business district of Durban. View from south-west.

Plan of podium level.



0 1 2 3 4 5 6

LEVEL 03

Sketch of the two-bedroom unit



Isometric sketch of the 1-bedroom unit



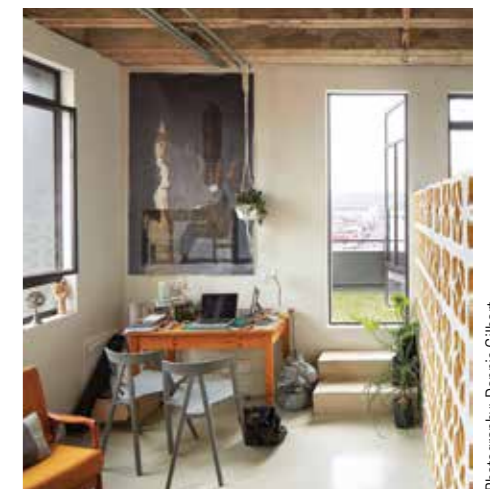
Isometric sketch of the 2-bedroom unit



The existing staircase.



View out from a unit.



Interior of a corner unit opening to the stepped outside of the tower.

Photography: Dennis Gilbert

SAIA-KZN Award for Architecture

RCL Foods Offices, 10 The Boulevard, Westway Office Park, Westville
Elphick Proome Architects (EPA)

Construction of a semi-basement for a generic office building by one architect was already well underway on the awkwardly orientated, steep site when the developer approached EPA for a bespoke design.

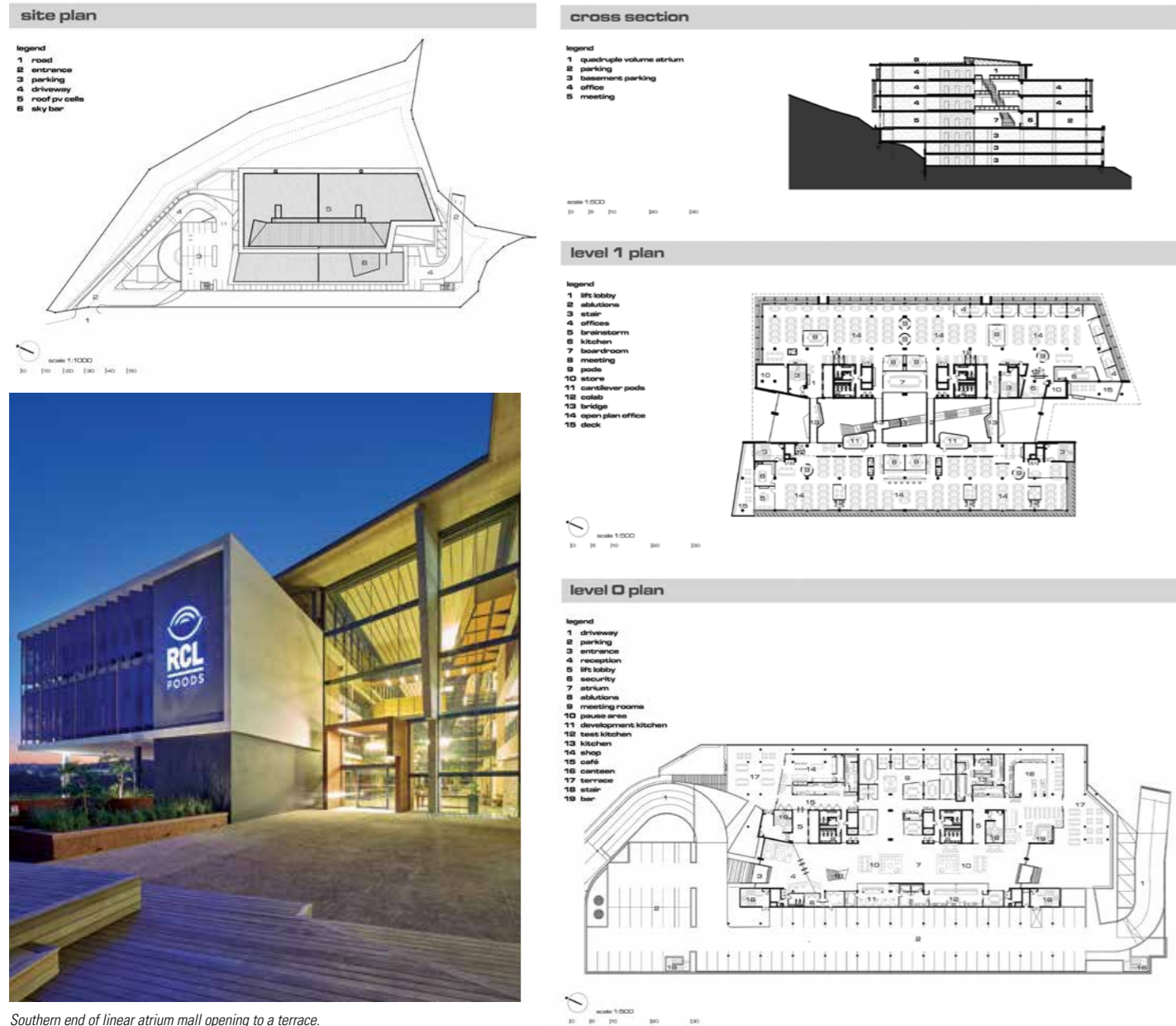
The new building would now be the home of an amalgamation of five corporate acquisitions. The design was to acknowledge that "people were the business" and their "workplace environment" should serve to "attract and retain the best human resource talent available", and to these ends the architects were to collaborate with a "branding alchemist". As 700 people were to be accommodated, the emphasis fell on a focal and legible public interface, spatially connected workspaces, a multiplicity of different conference and meeting spaces and functionally usable external spaces.

The concept sees office floors astride a central linear atrium stacked atop parking floors. Access is gained from the north, on the podium between the parking and

office floors, while the outdoor areas on the south enjoy the views. A principal stair cascades at an angle along the length of the atrium, bridges connect the two sides and meeting spaces project, making this space the pièce de résistance. Deeper office spaces are accommodated on the favourable north-east, while those on the south-west enjoy views into the abutting nature reserve and across the city towards the Indian Ocean.

The exteriors are designed to endure and each elevation is architecturally treated to appropriately reduce energy. The interiors are characterized by a 'funky-raw' with exposed services and colour enlivening the otherwise off-shutter, fair-face and sawn finishes. Water is supplied by boreholes, while recycled water curtails their use. Rooftop photo-voltaic panels together with the principle of 'energy wheel recovery' reduce overall energy consumption.

Designing a large building is always demanding, but when the execution of one building has already begun on an exceptionally difficult site, the custom design to follow is particularly challenging and shoe-horning is in this case a not incorrect description. To nevertheless conceive of a design spacious, durable and delightful is an achievement, resonant with meaning and lifting to the users' spirits.



Southern end of linear atrium mall opening to a terrace.



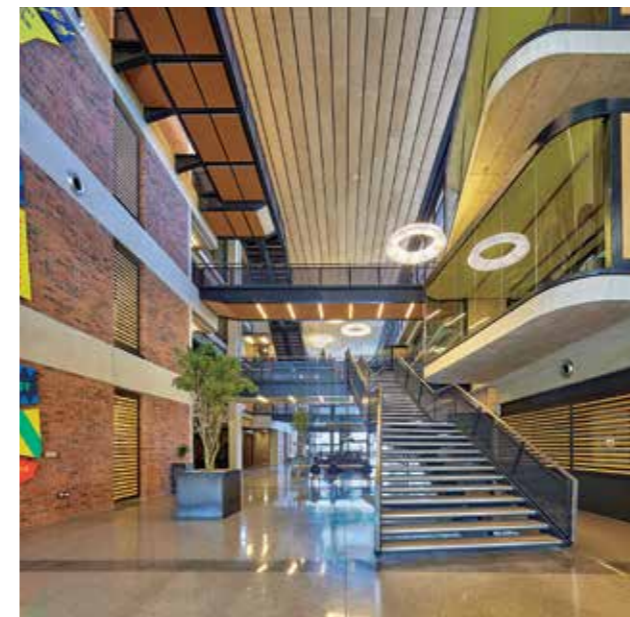
The building from north-west within the constricted site on The Boulevard, with office component articulated from the parking levels. Note the closely spaced fins on the office floors to mitigate the influence of the west sun, and the colouring thereof from the blue on the end towards the ocean (right) to the green on the inland (left).



Articulation of the south-east with horizontal baffles and widely spaced angled fins. This façade acknowledges the orthogonal exterior of the adjacent building, Westside office park, which landed for its architects, Jay & Nel, a Special Mention in 2013 (see KZNIA Journal 2/2013).



The office component on the podium.



The ascending principal stair from the entrance. Note the cantilevering meeting pods at right.



View from within the linear atrium to the entrance on the north.

SAIA-KZN Special Mention

**Pre-cast yard and building services centre, Springfield
Architecture Department, eThekweni Municipality, in association with
Michael Watts Architects**

The pre-cast yard and building services centre is sited within eThekweni municipality's Springfield complex. The primary function of the centre is two-fold: to provide a pre-casting facility and to house a building services division of the municipality. The two main functions of the building are delineated by a

covered central spine and the administrative aspects of each respective facility are located on either end of the spine with communal activities positioned in the centre. The logic and order of the concept is clearly defined in the design and execution, and in the use of materials. The latter were selected and crafted to enhance the particular use of each core function. The installation of energy and water saving devices is to be commended.

This pre-cast yard and building services centre is hardy yet friendly and the overall workmanship and construction of the building is commendable.



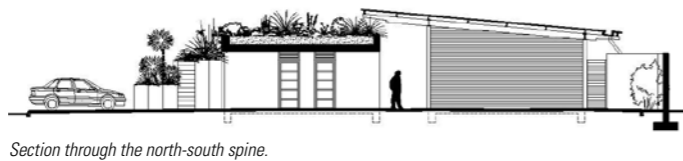
Well greened north elevation.



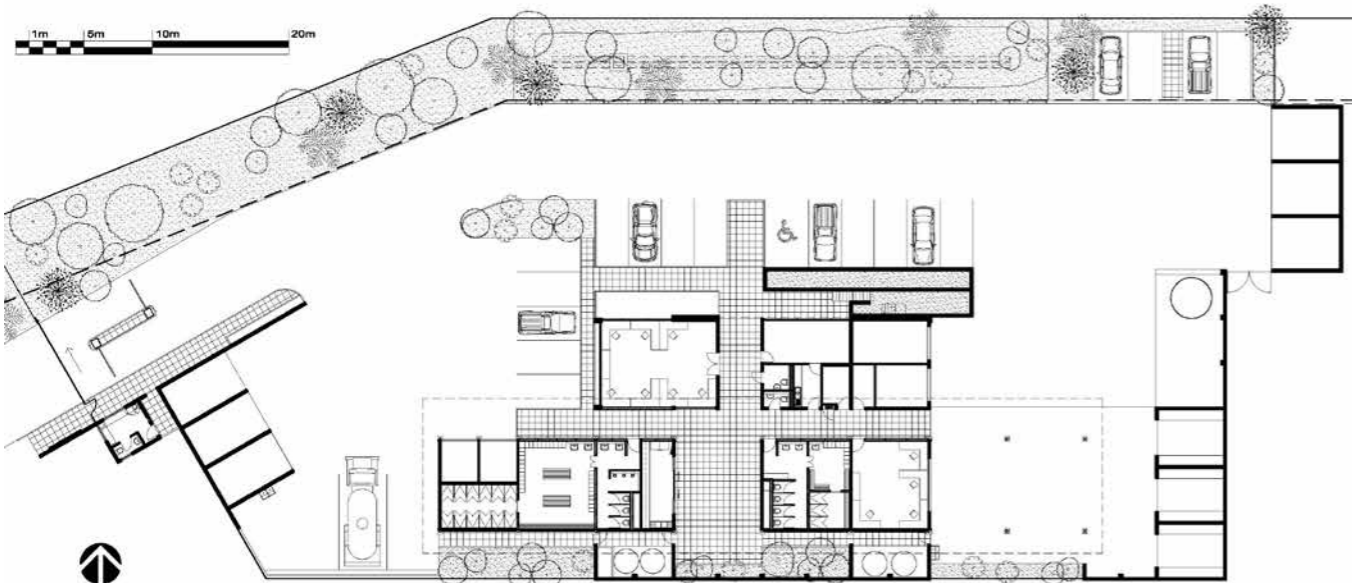
Communal facilities of light-weight construction.



Administrative component from north-west.



Section through the north-south spine.



The building services yard is at the left, which the administration overlooks, and the pre-casting yard at right. The east-west spine gives access to the ablutions and staff facilities.

SAIA-KZN Special Mention

**RBIDZ Entrance gate, Midway Road, Richards Bay
Jeremy Steere Architect**

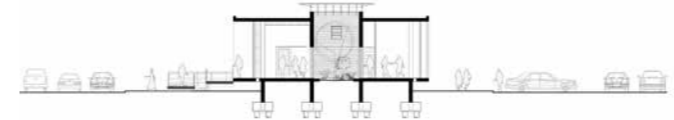
Established to attract export-orientated investments, Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone required a landmark gateway, environmentally sensitive and architecturally daring. A first attempt by the architects was dismissed as not being sufficiently bold.

Thus followed the fluid concrete structure inspired by the fish eagle, the emblem of the municipality, uMhlathuze, which is also the name of the river that meanders through the area and symbolically unifies towns, suburbs and traditional areas. But, the form was deliberately chosen in counterform to the rigid, orthogonal

geometry of the typical industrial shed which will most likely be the predominant form within the estate.

The gateway is raised off the ground to allow for air below the floor slab, which, by using the planted courtyard as the building's thermal chimney, promotes passive cooling. However, the courtyard also provides the building's organisational structure around which office, boardroom and reception area are grouped and visually connected. Rainwater collected off the roofs is harvested and stored in underground tanks while grey water is used for flushing toilets and the garden.

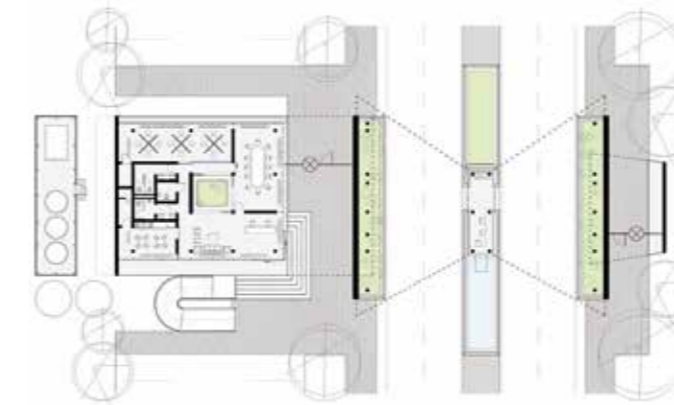
As the symbol for the development zone, the gateway works. It's robust, open, exuberant and joyful, and brave for the area.



Cross Section



Longitudinal Section



Ground Floor Plan



View from south-east with ramp at right.



The sun's rays enlivening the rear wall of the general office area.



Looking across the administrative entrance foyer to the gateway.



View of RBIDZ gateway from the east.

SAIA-KZN Special Mention

House Hoal, 15 Python Place, Hawaan Forest Estate
Dean Jay Architects

This villa is positioned in the north-eastern corner of the residential estate and the site offers views directly into the abutting nature reserve. The sloping terrain facilitated the concept of the upper living area opening seamlessly to the terrace and the favourable north orientation, with the lower bedroom area opening to

east and north. Sliding timber shutters ensure ventilation on warm summer days. Privacy is ensured by the solid wall to the road, and the roof floats daringly over the habitable spaces all of which open fully to the landscape.

Not without reason, the architect termed the pavilion a "symphysis of client, [design] code and context". The jury was impressed by the pavilion as a synthesis for human habitation and the technical finesse demonstrated.



The pavilion opening seamlessly to the terrace and pool. At the extreme left an indication can be got of the bedroom area below.

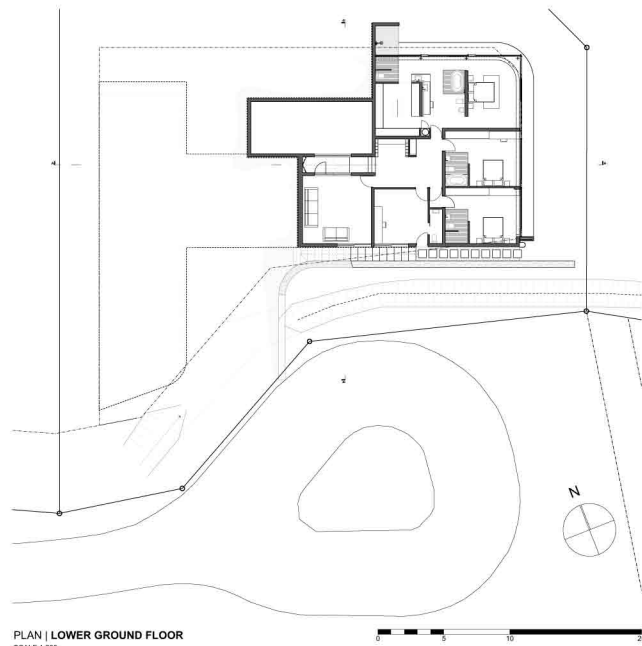
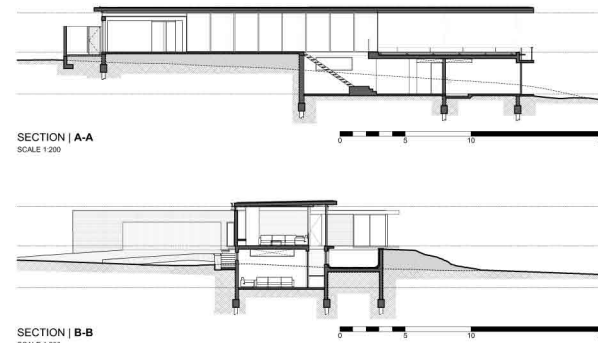


Junction between roof and wall is handled deftly with a slight gap so that a crack in daylight gleams through; what seemed solid from outside becomes planar and thin from within.

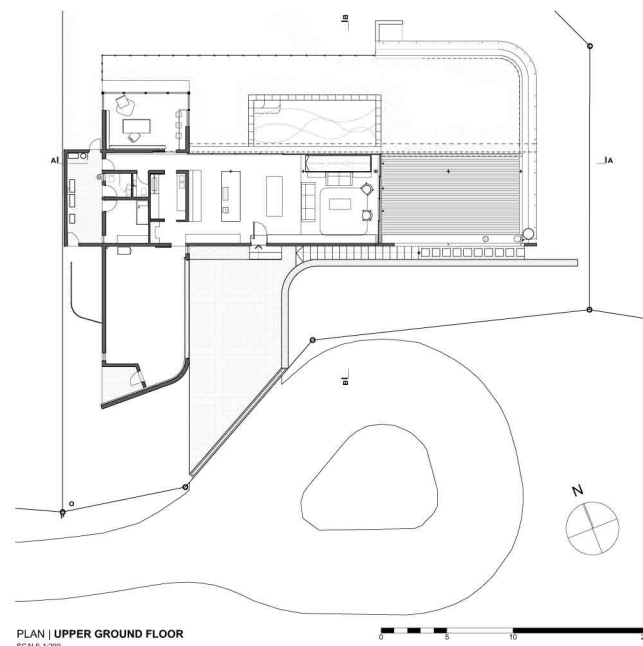
Photography: Richard Holgate



Even though the site is located in a residential estate, the villa is experienced in complete solitude with nature.



PLAN | LOWER GROUND FLOOR
 SCALE 1:200



PLAN | UPPER GROUND FLOOR
 SCALE 1:200

SAIA-KZN Special Mention

Ad Coelum, Durban North
Architecture Fabrik

The house is located well up from the road, but, typical for its vintage, faced south to capture the view. The architects were asked to adapt the family home, in which the owners have been living for well over three decades, to continue to accommodate the couple into their old age. This was done by creating a new centre for the home around a clerestory-lit open plan living area, opening to a pavilion and new pool on the north, accessible by wheelchair from the garage. The original pool was repurposed as a subterranean reservoir for the storage of storm-water for irrigation.

The clients wrote: "But far more than a refurbishment has taken place. Lifting the building to the sky brings light and warmth into the whole house. We now look up at trees and sky, eat meals and entertain with dappled sunshine and patterns made by green foliage falling across the table. The architects called the project Ad Coelum (for whoever owns the soil, it is theirs up to Heaven). We can't think of a more appropriate description".

Adjusting a house to changing family circumstances often leads to a maze of internal passages and dark rooms as had happened here. What was needed was a reconsideration, which the architects in this intervention ably demonstrated by capturing light and sun in the heart of the house and opening this to a private garden and the favourable orientation.



View from new pool to pavilion.



The new centre for the home around the clerestory-lit open plan living area.



The shutters of the pavilion open to the north (left) and to the pool ahead.

Photography: Angela Buckland

SAIA-KZN 2017 Awards for Architecture

One juror's KZN design experience



The 2017 SAIA-KZN Awards jury: Vash Connoosaumi, Prof Keyan Tomaselli, Ken Lever, chair Alethea Duncan-Brown and Mike Louw.

As the 'non-architect', my job was to "keep the professionals on the straight and narrow". Actually, it was the ghost of my father who was in attendance. He had taught the discipline for a long time at Wits. The evaluative brief was derived from the mists of Grecian antiquity: commodity (perfectly fitted to site, fit-for purpose); firmness (durable, sustainable) and delight (harmony of details).

Social context and security were not criteria, but were omni-present as we negotiated access and applied the three Vitruvian criteria. The houses were like those in Garden and Home, and the magazine was strategically placed throughout some of them to drive the point home. How does one control the variables: extreme wealth vs the public purse; exquisite design and construction vs rigidity of brutal concrete or container construction to protect state assets; invisible but elegant engineering solutions vs the instantly visible aesthetic wow factor on first sight; unlimited budgets vs value-for-money cost-effectiveness; client briefs vs architect advice. Everything is a trade-off.



Staircase in the courthouse at Verulam. Urban Architects.



Unite building, Howard College campus, UKZN. Walker Smith Architects.

All the buildings were structural engineering feats. Most were well kept, but the Courthouse at Verulam was extremely grubby and poorly maintained, undermining the open space lightness and brightness of the design. At a waste services facility, a worker at my request assessed the men's locker room: no shower ledges to place soap, a non-working tap, a leak and nowhere to sit in the foyer adjacent to the kitchen. Lost opportunities occurred where the interior organisation lacked integrity.

The UKZN Unite building was quirky, questioning design expectations held by township students used to dowdy official squares like schools and RDP houses. K-RITH resolved connections between old and new, offering a sculptural outside with mosaics of viruses (ironically, quite beautiful), an atrium and some science fictionish medical research.

The Midlands' Bluecrane house brings the horse barn theme into the interior looking over a dam. Where we had viewed the suburban houses in the stark brightness of the mid-day sun, here we arrived at dusk, so the aesthetic tranquility of the sunset emphasized both location and design features.

The star of the show was the RCL Foods Offices in Westville. Described by one juror as a 'happy building', in contrast to some others who's magnificent detailing was insufficient compensation for 'sad' interior working spaces. In the former, staff are interconnected, networked, flexible, organized by deep space (atriums) and the environment is designed for human enjoyment rather than for bean counters. RCL's design was partly intended to attract young innovative professionals from other cities. The atrium offered a spectacular public space, and the work galaxies encouraged interactivity. In other blocks, layouts were one-dimensional; just work spaces, not humanized cosmoses enabling the circulation of people and ideas. The RCL internal design was an interpretation of the firm's business philosophy. The block has a 360 degree view of the environment, adding symbolic value to the underused Roosfontein Park, bordered by the Westville Prison on the ridge in the distance – an asset criminally squandered by the adjacent Pavilion shopping centre.

Like with the quirky warehouse, such buildings offer destinations. Another was Pixley House, a refurbished downtown office-to-apartment block. Re-purposed and refitted, this heritage building proves that small budgets compensated by funky design and raw detailing can result in well-located affordable inner city housing that attracts young professionals.



Station traders' market, KwaMashu. ABA with City Architects.

The informal sector was represented by two street shed markets: KwaMashu station traders' market is harsh, durable and functional, but the mood is dour, with little concession to humanistic interaction, pedestrian flow or livability. In Hammarsdale, friendly, attractive, durable, joyous, street-lined stepped container-based kiosks, harvest not only water but passing pedestrians. Both sites used perhaps over-specified materials. But security and durability are key in a country where whole schools have been stolen overnight!

New phrases coined included 'brand alchemist', 'pause areas', 'meeting pods', and in the digital age, 'phone booths'! Not being Spanish, there were no sleep pods though the offices and golf estate clubhouse sport small gyms, coffee and refreshment areas. We were all learning a new design language that thinks of employees as creatives, needing quiet times, which constantly shape and shift one's environment with soft-play areas. This alchemy set such offices apart from other blocks that placed car parks on prime entrance and courtyard potential. Architects can provide a solution for every problem, but what makes the difference is how spaces are used. That's where the people factor comes in. For the people on the jury, exhausted, stimulated and needing time in the gyms we visited, all came together at the presentation led by Wally Peters whose affirmative descriptions of every building encompassed the three Vitruvian criteria.

Keyan G Tomaselli

A Distinguished Professor at the University of Johannesburg since 2014, Keyan is Professor emeritus and a Fellow of UKZN where he established the Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) in 1985, and served as its Director for 29 years. *Editor*

UKZN student declared Corobrik Architectural Student of 2016 title



Jean-Pierre Desvaux de Marigny proudly holding the trophy as Architectural Student of the Year 2016.



Corobrik executives with the winners of the regional 2016 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year awards. Standing from left: Commercial Director Musa Shangase, Managing Director Dirk Meyer, Kenneth Main (University of Cape Town), Darren Sampson (University of Johannesburg), Marketing Officer Thilo Sidambaram, Jean-Pierre Desvaux de Marigny (UKZN), Mario van Wyk (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and Chairman Peter du Treuou. Sitting: Lana Bramley (University of the Free State), Kim Geldenhuis (Tshwane University of Technology), Yvonne Bruinette (University of Pretoria) and Katherine Dewar (University of the Witwatersrand).

At a function held in Sandton on Wednesday, 10th May, Jean-Pierre Desvaux de Marigny of the University of KwaZulu-Natal was announced winner of the 30th Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year competition. This is the first time that the coveted title was conferred upon a UKZN student since Elena Pascola won in 1995, two decades ago.

The topic of Jean-Pierre's dissertation was 'Design for [bio] diversity'. In this he explored the potential of architecture for ecological conservation and proposed an environmental awareness and water research facility in Springfield industrial park on the uMgeni River catchment area in Durban. The project was supervised by lecturer Bridget Horner and co-supervised by Dr Cathy Sutherland of the Development Studies discipline within the School of the Built Environment.

The competition, which has now spanned three decades, has seen considerable changes in the choice of topic and emphasis. Innovation with a view to lightening

the footprint of the built environment together with an innate understanding of social and cultural imperatives within South Africa of today are just some of the reasons that this year's judges singled out Jean-Pierre's dissertation.

Jean-Pierre was one of eight regional winners from each of the country's accredited Architecture learning sites who competed for the national title. As the national winner, he collected the prize of R50 000 from Corobrik managing director, Dirk Meyer, who went on to thank this year's judges for their invaluable input. These were Andre Eksteen, co-director of Earthworld Architects & Interiors, Pretoria, Tunde Oluwa, founder of Odyssey Architects SA, Johannesburg, and Tanzeem Razak, director and founding partner of Lemon Pebble Architects, Johannesburg.

1995 Corobrik architectural student of the year



Errol Rutherford, Corobrik executive chairman, handing the trophy 'Corobrik architectural student of the year' for 1995 to Elena Pascola of the University of Natal, now UKZN. Elena's design thesis was entitled 'culture as a tool for urban regeneration'. See KZNIA Journal 1/1996.

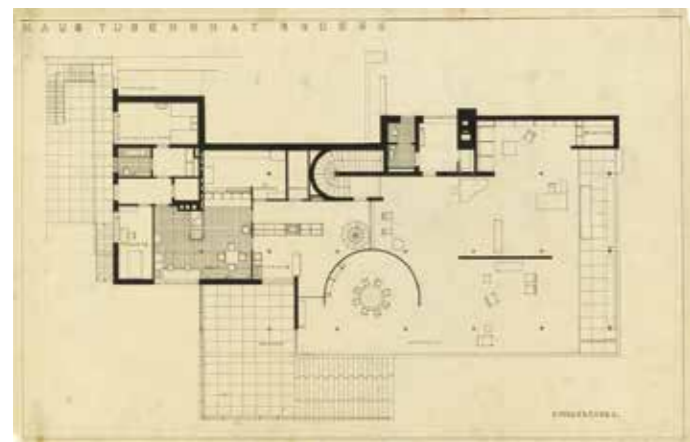
TRAVEL DIARY

Mies's Tugendhat villa and Barcelona pavilion.

In October 2015 I was able to travel to Europe prompted by my participation in a conference in Valencia. The trip began in Vienna with a visit to Gerald Seitter, whom KZN members will know repatriated to his Heimat after spending his career in South Africa. Across the border, literally a stone's throw away lies Brno in the Czech Republic, and with that, the possibility of visiting a landmark long on my agenda, the Tugendhat villa by Mies van der Rohe, 1928-30.

Tugendhat villa

While studying in Germany, Grete learnt of Mies whom together with her husband, Fritz Tugendhat, they briefed in Berlin in 1927. The next year Mies came to Brno to inspect the site, steeply sloping and enjoying the most favourable orientation, due south, with panoramic views of the castle and old town. Grete's parents had given the land, a portion of their own, below, and paid for the building – costing 30x an average house!



The middle, living floor with dining area defined by the semi-circular partition, the sitting area separated from the study by the onyx partition, which survived, and the conservatory at right facing east.

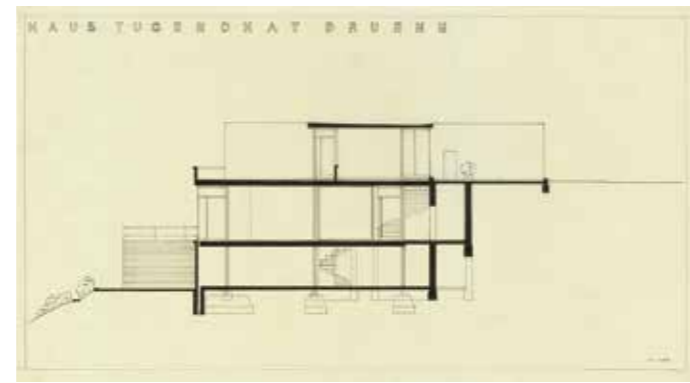


South elevation where a group was admiring the open portion of the glass wall, as the large format pane of glass had been lowered to convert the lounge into a belvedere or veranda.

Mies conceived of 3-storey building of which only the top storey is visible from the road. This contains the garage and service wing on one end, and separated by a void and forecourt, the bedroom wing on the other. The entrance is located in the void on the bedroom storey.

The middle storey is the large, iconic open space known to all architects, defined by a variety of use areas. The study-library, on entry, is separated from the sitting area by a polished onyx partition, and the dining space is defined by the semi-circular partition of Macassar ebony veneer. All of this space is enclosed by a large expanse of glass, floor to ceiling; the narrow eastern side with conservancy while the long southern, on an elevated plane, enjoys a strong visual relationship with the garden. What is more, a portion of glazing can be mechanically lowered to render the sitting area as a veranda, which is demonstrated, and protected from the sun by a retractable awning, also by Mies. The west opens to a terrace and at 180 degree turn, to a monumental staircase descending to the garden.

The villa is constructed of a steel-framed structure, perhaps the first for a residence, and the open space of the middle storey is interrupted only by columns, cross-shaped and chromium-plated, at 5m intercolumniation.



Bedrooms atop the elevated middle or living floor, and the basement in which the recess for the retractable glass pane can be clearly seen.

The floor is of white linoleum, hence all visitors are first equipped with vacuum-sealed over-slippers. All the furniture is by Mies, replete with Tugendhat and Brno chairs of chromed steel covered with fabric and white vellum respectively, recliners in ruby-red velvet, and Barcelona chairs in emerald green leather, which surprised me but I was assured is correct. The table leg is built-in and the circular table surface is actually extendable. The semi-basement storey contains cellars, and accommodates the technical and operating equipment, and today an exhibition room with bookshop.

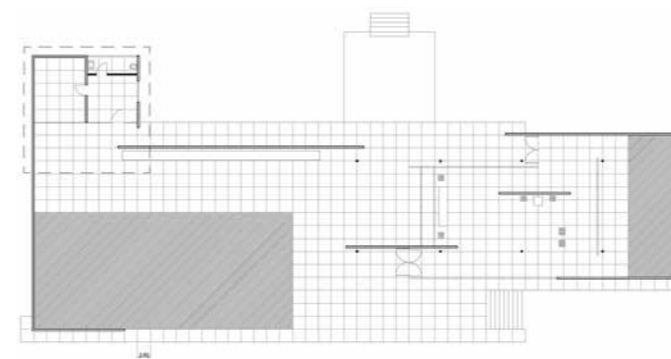
Given the rise of fascism in Europe, the Tugendhat family fled the Nazis for Venezuela in 1938, whereupon the villa was subjected to desecration and various uses until restoration 1983-85.



The dining alcove defined by the semi-circular partition of Macassar ebony veneer, partly original, and the table of stained pear wood veneer surrounded by replicated tubular steel Brno chairs in vellum. In the foreground: a recliner (chaise longue) with red velvet upholstery.



Main living area, formally grouped. In the foreground replicas of Tugendhat armchairs upholstered in a silver-grey fabric; in the background Barcelona armchairs in emerald green leather upholstery, designed by Mies and Lilly Reich, 1929-30.



Plan of the Barcelona pavilion.



Barcelona chairs integrated into the design, and matching ottomans along the polished onyx slab.



View of the pavilion from the service building, today a dedicated shop, along the long travertine wall and bench flanking the main terrace and the reflecting pool.

Barcelona pavilion

With the conference in Valencia, I could visit the Barcelona pavilion after the Tugendhat, opposite to the way I taught, although designed simultaneously.

Mies had been commissioned by the Weimar Republic to design an 'architectural space to be expressive of the industrial potential' of the new Germany, for the 1929 International Exposition. The pavilion had no functional use to cater for and 'nothing to show except itself'.

When the Exposition closed eight months later, the pavilion was demolished. The working drawings had long been lost, yet in 1986 the pavilion was replicated on the original foundations, principally from photographs.

Today's roof is of reinforced concrete, and the chromium-plated, cross-shaped columns are now of maintenance-free polished stainless steel. The floor is of travertine, with slabs of Algerian onyx, green Tinian marble, etched glass, and a grand red curtain, and the Barcelona chairs and stools in white leather remain as its only furnishing.

It might be the exact original siting and as faithful a replica as possible but the confident empty architectural box I have in my mind I did not perceive. The scale is different from the image created by the black and white photographs; the detailing appears to lack the precision, the spaces casual and the inclusion of entrance doors most unfortunate. Tugendhat went through many uses and misuses, but it is a restoration, and it retains its simplicity, which stuns, still today. *Walter Peters*

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