"The King's (Chetshwayo's) Kraal": The Graphic, 22 February 1879.

"Zulu kraals under Zwaart Kop near Pietermaritzburg": The Graphic, 22 February 1879.
contemporary drawing, the quarters of the King and of his wives. Before them was an enclosure which held a small number of cattle and on either side of the royal quarters, curving into the full circle, ran the regimental barracks. Entry to the circle was gained in the side opposite to the Royal quarters. The Royal herd was seldom kept near the King in any large number, usually being farmed out to the care of various chiefs and headmen who were accountable to him for their welfare and numbers.

The Zulu homestead. The Zulu kraal consisted of a circular central cattle enclosure in which would also be buried the communal granaries. About this would be arranged the huts of various members of the household, the status of each person within the household or community being reflected by the position of the hut. Thus the headman's hut was always at the crown of the circle and directly opposite the one and only entrance point. The young men's huts would be close to the gates in case of attack. The head, second and third wife all had huts of their own which occupied certain predetermined locations on the perimeter of the kraal. Zulu rural life was and in some cases still is governed by strict custom, usage and taboos and this high degree of order is reflected in the strict layout of the household.

The Ambo Village - Namibia. The complex nature and relationships of Ambo life are reflected in the planning of their village enclosures and although this example falls beyond the geographical perimeters of this study, it is worthy of inclusion in this chapter to show the sophistication of planning possible in rural society and architecture. One can do no better in this case than quote directly from Walton's "African Village":

"The whole kraal was surrounded by a thorn bush hedge or stake fence and a second inner concentric fence provided a wide entrance passage which led to the cattle kraals, oxen, cows and calves being housed in separate kraals. The boys' sleeping huts were built in the passage so that they could be in position to guard the cattle. Just inside the main entrance an oval enclosure was reserved as a stamping place where the women gathered to pound, or stamp, maize.

The centre of the kraal was occupied by a circular meeting place, 'olupale', and the space between the passage and the meeting place was subdivided into a series of enclosures containing the huts of the chief and his wives, connected by an intricate series of meandering passages. Around the perimeter of the 'olupale' were placed logs and tree stumps on which the men sat and a number of shelters provided
protection from rain and sun when the men gathered to drink their beer.

The most important feature of the meeting place was the sacred fire which was regarded as being symbolic of the life of the chief and hence of the tribe itself. Should the fire be allowed to burn out disaster would undoubtedly follow and consequently two old men were detailed to watch the fire and add fresh supplies of green mopane wood as required. When the chief died the fire was allowed to die with him and a new fire was kindled with fire-sticks by the new chief. All the fires throughout the tribe were re-kindled from the chief's fire, the headmen taking fire in order of seniority. The first wife's bedroom was also situated within the meeting place and at night or in rainy weather the embers of the fire were taken into the hut. Nearby was a rack on which the horns of sacrificed oxen were preserved.

f. The "Resettlement" plan. This is included into this section not so much to record an interesting rural settlement form, which it is not, but merely to record that it does exist, and that although it may be found in many parts of the country it should in no manner be believed to be of "rural" origins.

The plan of "resettled" communities usually takes the form of a central road access spine from which branch off on either side any number of secondary roads and footpaths. It can be recognized by the fact that generally the village area has been fenced or contained in some manner and normally has only one entry/exit point. It should also be noted that in a number of cases resettlement has resulted in a haphazard settlement with no real patterns being discernible. Neither of these settlement forms was considered worthy of study, being the result of externally imposed conditions.

Homestead settlement patterns

a. Bilobial dwellings I. Buffelshoek 471 IQ

The construction and planning of the Iron Age bilobial dwelling shows a very high degree of sophistication despite the limitations imposed by materials and technology.

The hut was usually located in the middle of two lobes, the fore-lobe being the smaller of the two. The approach to the hut was through a low semi-circle of stones which were set edge-on into the ground to define the front lobe. Although there is no archaeological evidence to support this it is unlikely that the outlining of the lobe stopped at the setting of a few stones into the ground and it is far more feasible that it
also included a reed screen such as it found presently in some South Sotho dwellings.

The purpose of a fore-lobe or court was probably twofold:

- It established a territorial imperative over this area and extended the area of the hut's private space into the outside.
- It provided the private space of the hut with an area of transition linking the "public" space of the settlement as a whole with that of the private family group. It becomes therefore a semi-private semi-public space which imposed obligations of trespass upon the visitor whilst at the same time it housed some of the household functions of the family and allowed it to socialize with the community. This is evidenced by the discovery of grindstones in such areas.

The hut itself was built as follows: the hut perimeter would be established and a channel dug along it a few centimetres deep; the main structural elements, probably reeds or saplings were set vertically into the channel and a low earth kerb built up to a height of approximately 150 mm; horizontal bracing was then secured to the vertical members probably with bark strips or grass ropes. The doorway was probably a reed or grass wove screen which slid along a
channel set into the floor, which was lubricated from time to time, probably with animal fat. The form of the hut itself is open to debate but in all likelihood was either a beehive cone or a cone on cylinder, there being at this stage insufficient evidence to support a case for either.

The rear court or lobe was accessible either through the back of the hut itself or by a gap left between the hut and the stone wall of the rear lobe. The court itself was defined by a dry-stone wall of about 1,650 m high, the quality of the masonry generally being of a high standard and including the detailing of such problem areas as the conjunction of walls and the provision of outlets for surface water runoff. Wall ends were neatly pointed and returned.

The function of the rear lobe was to provide the family unit with a private outdoor space. The granary was usually located here as were also the grindstones indicating that it may have doubled as a family relaxation as well as a work space.

b. Bilobial dwellings II. Further development.

Although the bilobial theme has been dated back to Southern Africa's Stone and Iron Ages, its development did not cease then and it has emerged in the present time as one of the strongest features of the rural architecture of some regions. It appears from travellers' accounts that what evolution did take place was at first limited to the house form as it moved from the beehive hut through to the verandah house based on the cone on cylinder. In the process the unwieldy construction of a stone rear lobe wall was replaced by one of timber or of a reed screen as recorded by Burchell in 1812. However the basic theme of having a house central to two lobes appears to have been left untouched until well into the present century when the rear lobe begins to encompass the side space of the dwelling and as the rear or side spaces also begin to acquire dwellings of their own. Further growth occurs when family units allied to the original begin to build alongside and courtyards common to both households appear, often having a common function. Such units are still found today in parts of the northern Cape.

c. The Ndebele bilobial

The Ndebele are generally recognized to be a Nguni immigrant group who moved into the Transvaal probably during or immediately after the Difaqane years. Their exact place of origin or the mechanics of how they came to immigrate are not known. Once in the Transvaal they seem to have come into touch with the Tswana people and thus with the bilobial housing form which they have absorbed and made into their own. They have adopted the theme of the forelobe as a territorial
a. Analysis of Ndebele bilobial settlement.
b. Ndebele settlement plan: Bronkhorstspruit-Grobblersdal Rd, Transvaal.
The first territorial statement is made when the visitor steps onto a lightly stepped shelf which does not enclose space but by virtue of being hand-crafted heralds that a dwelling is being approached. We then pass through a small set of gate posts and a low wall beyond which is a wide seat used at times by the women of the household to conduct various household chores, supervise children and socialize with the settlement. This statement will then be repeated once or twice more gaining height as we approach the front court itself which is finally gained by passing through either an arched gatepost or, more simply, a high wall framed by monolithic posts. The courtyard itself will be surrounded on three sides by walls and seating with the dwelling taking up the fourth. Entry to the dwelling is on the main axis of the household and may first encompass passage through a low enclosed veranda before the main dwelling chamber is reached. The rear court or court I. e accessible via a small gate set in the wall to one side of the main dwelling and will usually feature buildings of their own, being either a kitchen or a dwelling for the eldest daughter or a grandparent.

Other and more complex households have been recorded where the principle of interleading courtyards has been used to link the private spaces, dwellings and kitchens of the head of the family, his three wives, one grandparent as well as those of the household's children.

Whether the Ndebele bilobial is the result of cultural contamination or just the evolution of a household form which responds to environmental conditions and just happens to resemble that of another group we shall never know. Certainly since the commercialization of Ndebele art and its emergence as almost a "Tourist Board Baroque", any traces and clues which may at one time still have existed must by now have been trampled in the stampede to take colourful snapshots.

d. The Pedi bilobial

This household form does not necessarily follow strict bilobial patterns, often not having a recognizable rear lobe. It does however make use of interleading courtyards having specialized functions and as such belongs to current patterns in bilobial living.

Entry is gained through a pair of massive and decorated gate posts which are a feature of the architecture of western Lebowa. The main courtyard will have the residence of the head of the household on the
b. A Zulu Kraal: Tyler (Forty years among the Zulus 1891).
central axis of the group with the wife and children having separate dwellings on the two sides of the court. The kitchen court will give onto the main court through a small entrance to the side of the main unit and will usually be faced with the kitchen unit in the form of a cone on cylinder. In some recorded examples, entry was made to one side of the courtyard while others made use of two fore-courts before the main dwelling unit was reached.

e. The South Sotho household

A wall with a doorway set in its centre is built on the main axis of the dwelling some four or five metres before it. A high reed screen is then arched back from the entry towards the two corners of the unit thus forming a forecourt. Often however two buildings set at an angle to each other will be joined at their corners by a reed screen or wall whilst a similar entry and courtyard as previously described will be used to enclose the area before them.

f. The Zulu kraal

Although with time we have seen the circular Zulu kraal form passing into disuse, the general theme of a central enclosure surrounded by dwelling units can still be found in parts of KwaZulu albeit in a much smaller scale. The average size of a small Zulu homestead recorded was four dwellings set in a half circle about a small animal enclosure although larger examples may still be found.

g. The Thonga household

Although this form is typical of the Thonga, it may also be found to a certain extent among their northern neighbours, the Venda.

The household is normally based about a square outlined by a series of low walls which can vary in height between 0.600 m and 1.500 m. A dwelling will usually be sited on each corner of the square with access to the central court being set in the perimeter wall centrally between the kitchen and one of the bedroom units, the former usually being on the left. The other two units are the father’s dwelling and that of the wife respectively. Although the entire floor of the court will often be raised as a packed earth shelf periodically replastered with dagga, this is not always the case as low shelves will be used to define the kitchen and the external cooking area, the father’s seating and eating area as well as that of the wife. The walls are also decorated both with mouldings on top and paintings on the sides while formal seats are often built into their surface. The usual pawpaw trees found in such settlements as well as the place where libations to the ancestral spirits
are made, are each formalized with a little earth kerb set about their base. The granaries may be brought into the wall perimeter as is the case of the dwellings but more often are sited just to one side of the household.

In some of the larger examples recorded, more than four units could be found and in such cases either the walls were done away with either partly or wholly, or the central courtyard took on the form of a pentagon or hexagon. These examples however were few and scattered.

Some general conclusions

In architectural terms, this has been an important chapter, for two major concepts have emerged from it. Firstly the concept of the bilobial house with its hierarchy of public and private spaces is important for it is indicative of a rural lifestyle which is ordered and makes use of architectural forms to establish its territorial imperatives. This is a statement which is made in various forms and ways in the architecture of almost every rural group in Southern Africa and it may well be a lesson worth remembering when considering the failures of this country's present mass housing policies.

The second concept lies in the definition of the word "house". The rural house is often entered before access is gained to any one of its components; the household is often the "house" as a whole and just because an area is not bound by a wall or is roofed over, it does not detract from its qualifications as "house".

A factor which has not been mentioned up to now and yet is a vital one when dealing with settlement patterns is that of orientation. This does not mean that there is no awareness of orientation in rural architecture, it merely means that there do not appear to be any hard and fast rules relating to it, changing from region to region, settlement to settlement and even household to household. Despite this it is possible to draw some general norms. It would appear that in the area between the Drakensberg and the sea, dwelling orientation is to the north-east. On the Transvaal and Orange Free State highveld and the northern Cape, orientation is to the north whereas little concern for it was shown in the northern Transvaal.

The reasons for this seems to be largely environmental. In the Ciskei, Transkei and KwaZulu, orientation is linked to the thermal role of the house through the day; on the highveld orientation is linked directly with the direction of the cold winter winds which the area is subject to; and in the north of the country, the weather is usually so mild throughout the year that orientation of a dwelling ceases to be of concern.
Chapter 20:
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF RURAL BUILDINGS

Much of this subject has already been dealt with in preceding chapters. This study being primarily an architectural one, did not set out to seek information of an anthropological nature but inevitably some aspects of culture and society as related to the rural dwelling did emerge.

Approach to the household and etiquette
The visitor approaching a household space made loud noises, clicking sounds with his tongue or clapped his hands to attract attention. Once on the edge of the first territorial statements, the gates or a brushwood fence or even a slightly stepped-up shelf, he paused and awaited to be asked in. In some cases entry was accompanied by praise-words or the hands being clapped lightly as thanks from the visitor. Once inside the visitor was offered a seat according to his adjudged status, the higher the seat, the higher the status. The offer of a drink of beer was also received with praise words and the light clap of the hands. A small libation to the ancestral spirits was often poured to the ground before the first sip was taken. When departing the visitor paid his respects to the head of the household and then left. In Zulu society it is considered a slight upon the host to exit from the hut back first.

Ancestral spirits
In some societies such as the Venda, the place where offerings to the ancestral spirits were made was formalized into either a plant or a stone. In others however a wider attitude was taken and could manifest itself in any number of small ways. Among the Zulu after a meal, some corn was deliberately left on the cob and was placed in the roof of the hut, usually over the doorway. Similarly the beer pots were left at the rear of the hut with their lids slightly off to allow the family's ancestors to partake of the food and drink.
Protective medicine

In Zulu society medicine designed to strike dead enemies of the house who may pass through, was either buried under or embedded in the thatch over the doorway.

Division of space

A division of the hut space between the man and his wife is still found to the present day among the Zulu. The man's side was on the right and it was deemed that that is where he was able to commune with his ancestral spirits. The woman was only able to intrude upon this space in the course of household duties. This custom seems to be disappearing as more Zulu families now follow the pattern of other rural societies where the head of the household has a dwelling of his own separate from that of his wife. Among the Venda and Thonga the dwelling of the father is usually recognizable by the fact that the wall on either side of the doorway had been raised in a broad band which in turn had been decorated with various patterns sunk into the wall and painted red, blue or black.

Division of labour in house construction

In most rural societies it was found that a strict division of tasks existed where the construction of the house was concerned. Generally the making of sun-dried bricks, the packing of earth into a timber frame, the plastering and replastering of the walls and the floor were considered to be women's tasks whereas the men made the roof-frame and the thatch cover.

The converse however was found to be the case in KwaZulu where, in the traditional beehive hut, the men made the sapling framework and the women were responsible for the thatching.
CHAPTER 21: WALL DECORATION

The decoration of the dwelling's wall surface was found to be a feature of most rural societies in Southern Africa.

Techniques of wall decoration

a. **Hand-patterns.** This is done during the course of the final plastering of the walls. The designs are usually coarse and rarely are other than a simple pattern of wavy lines.

b. **Inscribed.** Done whilst the wall plaster is still wet, the artist is able to use almost any sharp point at hand, a twig or a comb. The designs are now capable of achieving fine detail but due to the scale of their size they are limited in size. The forms are usually geometric.

c. **Impressed.** Patterns are created through the regular imprinting of a found object into the wet plaster. The object could be a tree seed, a bottle top or a discarded tin. This is usually found in conjunction with inscribed line patterns.

d. **Painted.** This is perhaps the most common of the methods of wall decoration although it is not unusual to find a combination of both inscribed line and paint in the same design. Similarly a dwelling's facade may be decorated with painted designs while the other wall surfaces are inscribed with line patterns only. The colours used vary and can include the full commercial range, as amongst the Ndebele, but are usually limited to those found in the natural environment. Thus the browns of the soil are in the predominance with shades being possible through the addition of white, obtained from lime or bird droppings, and black, obtained from charcoal. Paint can be applied with animal hair brushes, twigs where the ends have been pounded and chewed into fibres or just with the hands. Other means such as toothbrushes have also been recorded.

e. **Relief sculpted.** This has only been recorded in Venda where a form or design is shaped in plaster on the side of the wall.
f. Bas-Relief sculpted. Recorded in Venda and Gazankulu it involves the scooping of the design out of the wet plaster. The designs recorded were usually either the diamonds or spades of playing cards or other geometrical patterns.

g. Mosaic stone. Recorded in Qwa Qwa and in the Orange Free State highveld region; pebbles or stones are embedded into the wet plaster; patterns are produced either by the use of differently coloured stones or by leaving the plaster to show through in predetermined areas which are then painted.

It should be noted that in many of the cases recorded the walls themselves were of such a texture, through the very nature of the materials used, as to make further decoration unnecessary.

Decorative themes

Much of the decorative element in rural architecture is derived directly from nature and many of the patterns recorded were plainly stylizations of natural themes such as leaves and flowers. The use of some geometric designs was also widespread both on their own and in combination with other nature-originated themes.

Perhaps the most widely known design is the so-called "razor-blade" pattern of the Ndebele which however bears a nature and variety that it is difficult to judge today whether it was inspired by the modern razor blade or whether their form inspired some journalist or traveller to name them thus. Judging by the existence of similar drawings among other groups it is probable that the latter case is in fact correct.

Other designs and patterns have been recorded variously. In one case in Venda a lion had been painted on the inside and outside of a dwelling. Unfortunately it was not possible to discover at the time whether it was a totem to that particular group. In other cases we saw the assimilation of various elements of life into the decorative: one Ndebele dwelling at Winterveld featured male and female fertility symbols whilst yet other houses in Lebowa, Qwa Qwa and KwaNdebele sported renditions of motorcar number plates, lamp-posts and even a motorcar hub cap set into the pediment over a doorway.

It was not within the scope of this study to discover whether various decorative patterns, shapes and colours of wall decoration have any meaning within rural society. Certainly it is known in Zulu bead work that the combination of certain colours and shapes are designed to convey various messages, usually between courting or married couples, but
Xhosa wall decorations: Ciskei.
whether this was also the case in wall decoration it was not possible to ascertain.

The highveld wall cupboard

No chapter on wall decoration could ever be complete without a mention of the wall-cupboards built by the Sotho women of the Highveld region. Unfortunately no drawings or words can give full justice to these creations which like ugly ducklings emerge from the mud wall behind as small clay projecting shelves and then blossom forth with all the colours imaginable, a mixture of a 1950's American chrome kitchen and a peacock; the creation of rural woman's ambition for a better lifestyle and bourgeois materialism tempered by the cheap knick-knacks available from the local trading store. Were it to be described merely as clay shelves projecting from an interior wall surface of the dwelling, painted and decorated with plastic, glass and tin artifacts, that would be grossly misleading.

Decoration and house function

It is difficult to state with any certainty whether the inscribing of decorative patterns into a wall surface plays any role in strengthening the plaster, although the rough surface thus created would be of help in binding the next seasonal coating. Wall decoration does however play, in some areas, an indirect structural and a direct environmental role.

Like so many other features of rural architecture, the decoration of the wall is usually based upon sound functional usage.

Firstly in rural architecture the painted surface is seldom brought below 0.600 m above ground level. This accounts for the inevitable fact that in a rainstorm, mud and dust from the house surround will be splashed up onto the wall and this area will therefore require constant maintenance. Secondly, the door and window surrounds as well as, at times, the area above the lintel are usually left unpainted. In a packed earth or wattle and daub technology the corner is usually weak and liable to flake; the lintels and sills are subject to cracking. Left unpainted, such areas will not show such unsightly wear and tear and thus will not require constant maintenance.

Lastly we find that the rural house is orientated mostly to the north-east. The area to either side of the door will be painted, usually white, but the sides and rear will be left untouched and in some recorded cases even be daubed with a darker clay. This means that the morning sun will be reflected off the light surface leaving the dwelling comparatively cool.
during the day; in the afternoon the darker surface to the north west of the dwelling will be allowed to gain the afternoon heat in preparation for the cooler night; by morning the house has cooled again for the whole cycle to restart.

In architectural terms the decoration of the wall surface is important from the point of view of aesthetics lending much to the character of our rural vernacular, breaking up and giving texture to wall surfaces which would otherwise be flat and unexciting. The eye is not allowed to rest upon the imperfections of a rural building technology but is coaxed, nudged and induced into reading the rural form and its textures and identifying with the nature of the materials used.
CHAPTER 22: "THE BIRDS ARE BACK"

A REVIEW OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN THE LATE 1970's

"The Government is like a man who has a cornfield which is invaded by birds. He chases the birds from one part of the field and they alight in another part of the field... We squatters are the birds. The Government sends its policemen to chase us away and we move off and occupy another spot. We shall see whether it is the farmer or the birds who get tired first..."  
Oriel Monongoaha  
Pimville squatter leader circa 1946.

A short history

South Africa's urban housing problem can be traced back to the early days of industrialization when a combination of poor crops and the lure of higher wages began to attract the rural worker, black and white alike, into the major industrial areas. This had the effect of almost immediately creating a housing shortage and while municipalities took almost immediate measures to relieve the plight of white residents, little was done in the case of the black population, now growing at an almost exponential rate. Thus by 1902 in the municipal area of Johannesburg alone lived 72,000 blacks; by 1922 the figure had risen to 116,000 and by 1945 to 395,000. At this stage official figures reveal that 9,573 houses had been built and housed an estimated 50,000 persons.

Under these circumstances, people were forced to live in the open veld and make do with whatever became available. In this way large areas were created which were, at the time, called "shanty-towns" but which we today would probably regard as "squatter settlements". The mid- and late 1950's saw massive Government-sponsored housing programmes which largely wiped out the accumulated backlog of the previous fifty years.
Since that time however, housing activity has largely been suspended as the South African Government stresses increasingly its "homeland" policy as a solution to its so-called "Urban Black Problem". As a result today, the housing backlog is once again as great as it was in the 1950's and for the first time in nearly 25 years squatter camps are once again springing up around South Africa's major industrial areas.

The places

Generally four major squatter areas have arisen today. Crossroads is a community of some 25,000 persons who were settled on duneland some 15 km east of Cape Town; Malukazi is sited just south of Durban and is of similar size to Crossroads; the greater Winterveld area north of Pretoria has been estimated to house over three hundred thousand persons although the actual Winterveld camp only houses some 40,000; and Kromdraai was a community of some 16,000 persons 60 km east of Bloemfontein. There are also numerous smaller squatter settlements in the eastern and western Cape and on the Witwatersrand.

The interest of this study in squatter settlements does not lie in the complex mechanics of squatting, a subject worthy of a dissertation in its own right, but in the quality of life achieved in such camps: the squatter represents the link between the rural and urban, and his house form and constructional methods have had to adapt to a new environment and, often, new materials.

The communities

Crossroads arose when, as a result to the demolition of such squatter settlements in the western Cape region as Um-bell, Wekpanot and Modderdam some years earlier, the blacks in those areas were directed by officials to the Crossroads area where an emergency camp was established. The spirit of Crossroads is best represented by its women who comprise the major part of the population and who are entitled to live in the Western Cape but for whom the Government has not provided "official" housing. However even the ones who, under the country's influx laws are in the area illegally, feel that morally they are entitled to remain there. Their husbands work in Cape Town and they argue that they cannot be expected to live as widows for eleven months of the year. They wish their children to grow up with the benefit of paternal guidance within a nuclear family. The women as well as the men have organized themselves into committees and together they run the affairs of the community.

The area of Malukazi at present falls under Durban municipal control although it lies literally one road's width from KwaZulu. The official
a. Sophiatown (source unknown).
b. View of Crossroads, Cape Town.
c. View of Malukazi, Durban.
d. View of Krondraai, Thaba 'Nchu, Bophuthatswana.
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