

A **SOUTH AFRICAN** **ARCHITECTURAL RECORD**

the architect's house



NOVEMBER 1952

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SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTS, INCLUDING THE CAPE, NATAL, ORANGE FREE STATE AND TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTES AND THE CHAPTER OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUANTITY SURVEYORS

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COVER: Photograph of Le Corbusier's hands, from L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, Special number, April, 1948.

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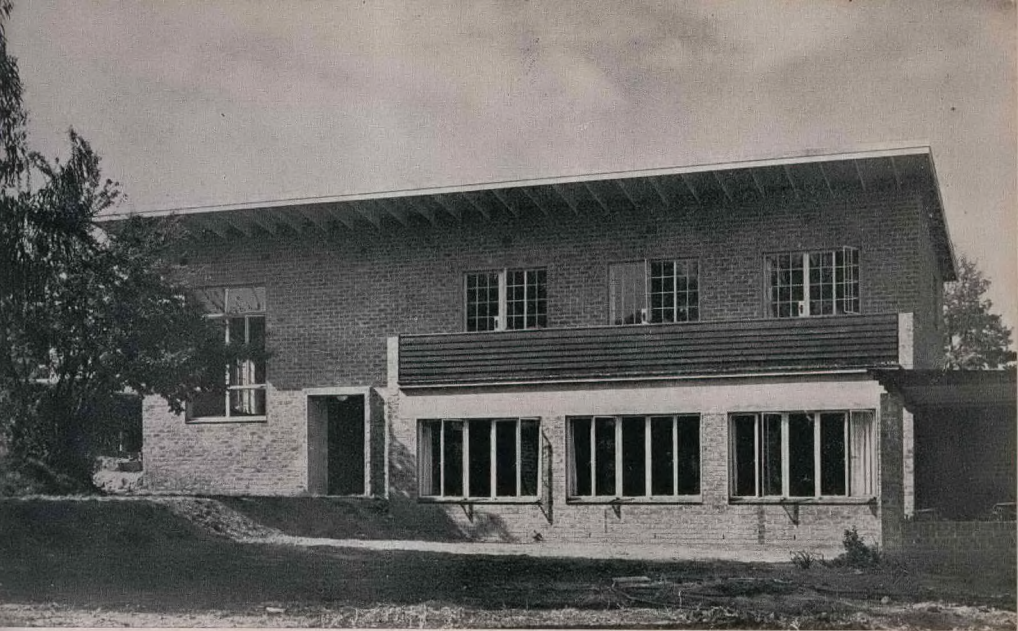
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the architect's house

"The architect's own house," writes Bernard Cooke in this, the Architect's House, issue of the Record, "must be willy nilly, in some degree at least, a confession of faith." The architect's house, in that it by-passes the architectural limitations resulting from the imposition of a client's standards upon the architect, must stand as a statement of the aesthetic aims and ideals of the designer. It is true that the practical limitations, the "obdurate facts," implicit in any normal architectural undertaking are operative also in the special case of the architect's own house. Even in his own house he must fashion a coherent building programme from the diverse and competing needs of his family; he too must be bound by considerations of site, cost, convenience, material; but in his own house the architect is freed from all extraneous limitations, freed from the imposition of an alien aesthetic, and is bound only by those limitations inherent in the problem itself, which exert a discipline within whose limits the architect may find a solution in his own architectural terms. He substitutes for the irrelevant limitations of the client the more pertinent ones of his trained judgment. He finds in himself an exacting taskmaster—his needs are articulate and his standards high. In addition, he is uncomfortably aware that his house is likely to be regarded as the final statement of his architectural attitude and the demonstration of his architectural ability. This awareness may be the spur to great effort and achievement, but it carries with it the danger of self-consciousness, leading to preciousness and that form of over-designing which is the malaise from which architecture tends to suffer at present. In one's own house the temptation to create a tour de force by throwing in everything in the architectural armoury must be very great; and yet it is only by withstanding this temptation that architecture of the highest quality can be created. It is the merit of the five architects' houses illustrated in this issue, that they do not attempt to say too many things, but are all typified by that restraint which is the hall-mark of the mature artist.

These houses represent a wide range in thought and feeling, but they each express in their own way the unified and consistent expression of a dominant architectural intention. That intention may be "to make a place of rest and seclusion out of the site itself," as in the Leith House, or, as in House Cooke, the provision of a home "in a contemporary setting which should add to the excitement of living;" but, however divergent the idea, and the interpretation of the idea in architectural terms, yet there is a similarity in approach in the disciplined way in which in all cases, all irrelevancies to the basic intention are eliminated. A point common to the programme of two houses may demonstrate this point more clearly. It is the intention of both architects to integrate house and site. House Leith is a romantic conception in plan and character, and is moulded to its romantic site chiefly through its form and the use of natural stone in its construction. House Cooke is a formal statement, and relates house to garden through the device of the plate glass transparent screen. Each is true to his own concept. Dr. Leith does not have to resort to the use of plate-glass, which may be exciting but inappropriate; and Mr. Cooke has managed to resist the lure of the rubble wall. This is to say that there are many ways of achieving an architectural objective, and the most difficult task of the architect who "knows all the answers" is to select the most appropriate solution, while discarding firmly the many alluring alternatives. This selection implies a unity of design only realizable through the discipline of an over-riding architectural intention. The houses illustrated here are successful in the extent to which they demonstrate the strength and singleness of purpose which a unified design may achieve. It is encouraging to see that when he frees himself from the shackles of the client, the architect resorts not to the licence of excess, but to the discipline imposed by his own good sense and design integrity.



HOUSE MALLOWS • ORCHARDS

MALLOWS AND MEADLEY ARCHITECTS

Programme :

The house was designed for a family of two to three children with some provision for adult privacy indoors and maximum garden space outdoors. It was decided to have a large Studio or Workroom in place of a separate dining room and enlarge the living room slightly in compensation. Economy in plan and specification was a first priority.

Site :

The site was a 'North approach' site 75' x 200' in a well-wooded part of Orchards, opposite a small poplar plantation. There was a clump of tall blue gums and a large wild plum tree on the site, about half way back, and on the East side an embankment, the remains of an old tennis court, gave a cross-fall to the site of about 6'-0". There was slight fall to the North, the adjacent stands were built up and their houses set well back.

Design :

The house was set back as far as outbuildings would permit, to give maximum garden space and privacy: this position also allowed the house to line with the house to the West and with the space between house and outbuildings to the East. The outbuildings were placed at right angles to the house to give East light and avoid overlooking the house or adjacent stands. To save the expense of a long drive the carport was built into the north end of the old tennis court so that its flat roof forms an extension of it, and gives a useful play area for children. The crossfall, combined with the existing trees, making an L-shaped plan impractical, suggested the bedrooms over the living room, and the studio to the East, with its floor level half way between ground and first floors. This made North aspect possible to all rooms except service rooms. A projection gave a better shape to the living room and provided a small balcony to all bedrooms: and a service

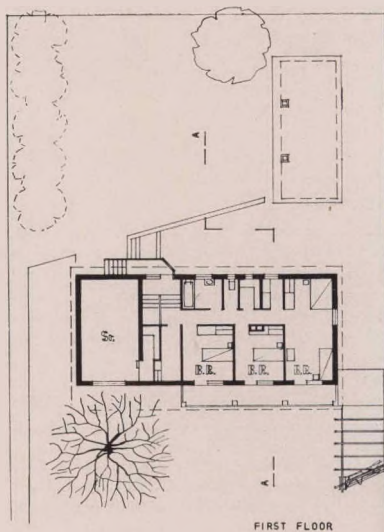
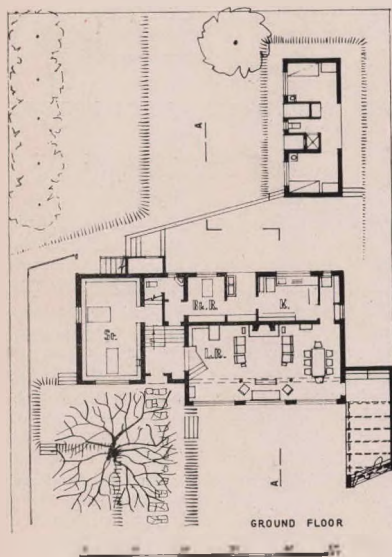
unit behind living room and bedrooms completed the plan. This made the main mass a rectangle of approx. 20' x 50' to which a monopitch roof was the most natural finish: this was projected on the North to cover the balcony and give the usual protection against summer sunshine. The roof was carried through at one level to keep the mass simple and give extra height and light to the studio.

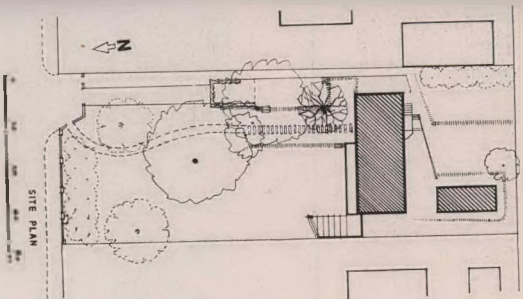
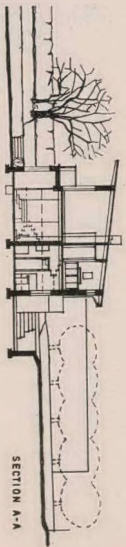
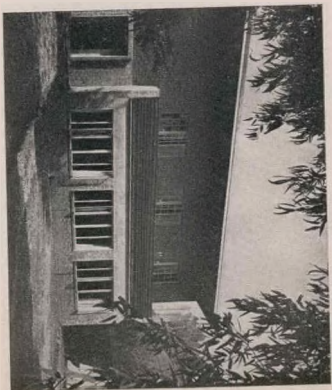
Construction and Cost :

Construction was brick with open joist floor and roof, the joists being exposed in the ceilings in both cases. A 2" space was left between the ceiling (Masonite) and the floor boards as insulation, the floor space being filled with Vermiculite and roof space left a void.

Wall finishes were, externally, fair-faced stock bricks left their natural colour; internally, the same distemper. Floors were quarry tiles throughout the ground floor, and Oregon strip to the first floor; roof was covered with bituminous felt painted aluminium. Burglar bars were limited to the first floor to avoid a prison-like appearance to the living room and studio.

The final cost of the house excluding outbuildings was 39s. (Thirty-nine Shillings) a square foot and the Contractors were Messrs. Holdfast (Pty.) Limited of Johannesburg.





HOUSE TOMKIN • DURBAN NORTH

S. N. TOMKIN AND PARTNERS, ARCHITECTS





The site which is approximately 400 ft. above sea level, is situated near the crest of the Durban North ridge and has a rise of 40 ft. from the drive access to the diagonally opposite corner of the site. This site, which was almost an acre in extent, was covered with wild bush and indigenous trees. The trees were plotted and the maximum number retained in planning and siting the house.

In siting the house it was considered that the maximum sea view and best orientation could be obtained by facing east north east. This aspect is maintained in all rooms with the exception of the breakfast room. The house was built in the time of Building Control and in order to achieve the maximum area in the rooms themselves, the rectangle containing entrance hall, living room, breakfast room and kitchen contains no passage whatsoever; access to the dining room and breakfast room being via the living room. The breakfast room was considered to be a general service room for the purpose of sewing, day nursery, children's dining room and playroom. The study, which forms the link between the rectangle containing the living quarters and the rectangle containing the sleeping quarters, has a flat concrete roof tucked under the eaves of the shingle roofs and has a floor to ceiling height of 8 ft. 6 ins.

The bedroom wing can be closed off from the rest of the house by means of a locking and sliding door.

This bedroom wing is raised above the general ground level as a result of banking up the ground in front of the living area, which is retained by a clinker wall leaving the natural ground line under the bedroom wing. This natural ground line was 18 ins. short of making the whole area below the bedroom wing of a usable height. It was, therefore, considered worth while to excavate this 18 ins. and devote the large space below the bedroom wing to a possible future games room. The roof is constructed of timber trusses with tongued and grooved boarding running parallel with the slope of the roof, painted with red lead and covered with cedar shingles.

The living room chimney stack is built of clay boulders.

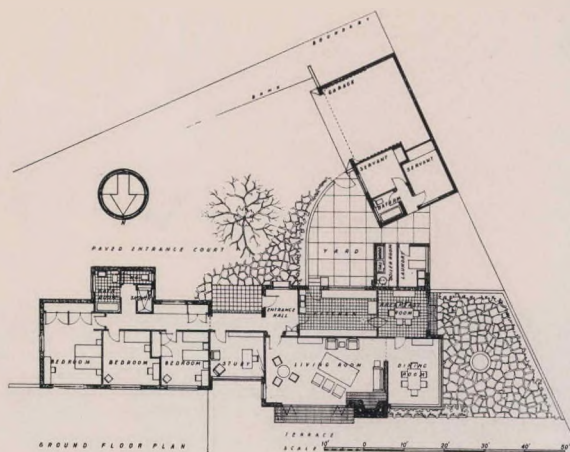
The windows are in Burmese teak.

All doors and door frames are in Imbuia, as is the panelling to the fireplace and the living room. Ceilings are plaster of paris board. Floors are Matumi woodblock with the exception of the breakfast room, kitchen and bathroom, which are asphaltic tiles.

The cupboard in the sleeping wing corridor has a blue linoleum top. The table beneath the kitchen window is white marble.

The study walls are fairfaced stack brick and the long wall of this room opposite the window is fitted with bookshelves from floor to ceiling.

The curved wall obscuring the kitchen service yard is built of bronze facebrick. The motor court abutting this curved wall is paved in slate crazy paving. The wall enclosing the breakfast room courtyard is fairfaced stack brick and the floor of this courtyard is slate crazy paving. The clinker brick retaining walls beneath the bedroom wing are jointed with mortar in which white marble dust was mixed. These joints were not wiped and the mortar allowed to remain as it oozed from under the brick.



HOUSE KENNEDY, LINKSFIELD RIDGE

KENNEDY AND FURNER, ARCHITECTS

The site is on the Linksfeld Ridge range of hills. The house is approached from the Ridge Road which skirts the ridge on its south side, with extensive views along this road towards the Observatory and Kensington valleys and hills.

The entrance drive passes from the Ridge Road through a natural gap in the hills and circles round to the north onto a natural plateau below the ridge of hills. This plateau has been lengthened and widened to form a high walled terrace on which the house has been placed, and is sheltered from the cold winds from the south.

From this terrace the site slopes down northwards to a road below, with extensive views over the northern suburbs and valleys, and towards the east and west, with the Magaliesberg and undulating plains in the far distance.

The site has many interesting and attractive features characterised by massive natural rock formations and indigenous trees and shrubs — the latter being a feature of the northern slope of the hills in this locality. In developing the site these natural features have, of course, been carefully preserved.

Below the upper terrace on which the house is placed, other walled terraces have been built, interconnected with flights of steps and providing interesting walks over the whole of the site and also adding interest from the house and upper terrace. These terraces have the added advantage of conserving rainfall and preserving erosion.

The northern slope above the house and upper terrace has also been developed by terracing and steps, with a tapestry of colour in the shrubs and flowers. Near the house, on the hillside, the servants' quarters are placed — on a small natural plateau screened from the house by huge boulders and trees and approached from the paved yard below by a narrow flight of winding steps.

The garage has been built into the hillside and the stone quarried in the excavation has been used for the stone walling of the house.

Points of interest on the site are also the lily pond with a curving flight of steps leading down to and over a stone arched bridge over the pond, and also the circular flight of steps leading from the upper terrace down to the second terrace and along a paved pathway through an arched passage. This passage was necessitated because of a huge boulder which stood in its way and had to be encircled.

As to the house, all the living rooms have north facing windows and the lounge and principal bedroom with windows also on the east. The verandah projects out from the west and then north over a massive and steep rock formation. The north end has large plate glass windows facing north and west, and there is a door leading from the verandah onto the west terrace. The verandah is enclosed by stone walls on the south and west, and opens on the north and east onto the terrace along the front of the house. The floor is paved with large size quarry tiles.

CONSTRUCTION AND FINISH: The outside walls of the house are of kopje stone, with the dormers in dark brown face brick. The walls of the garage and the outer walls of the servants' quarters are also of stone.

The roofs are of slate of large size and in multicolours — the colouring of the stones of the walls and the slates of the roofs blending with the general colouring of the hills and terrace walls.



The back stoep leading from the kitchen is built into the hillside and has a retaining wall of kopje stone; this stoep leads onto paved yards on the south and west which are similarly backed against the hillside.

Floors of hall and living rooms are of wood block — those on the ground floor being in herringbone pattern from skirting to skirting without margin. Floor of kitchen in battleship linoleum. Tiled floors to bathroom and cloakroom. White glazed tiles to walls of kitchen and bathroom.

Hall and staircase, lounge and diningroom — all wood of kiaat, brought to a polished face; the grain of this wood with its finish is exceedingly attractive. The lounge is fitted with bookcases and panelling in kiaat and this woodwork and the staircase, doors and architraves have been carefully detailed.

All woodwork upstairs is of Oregon pine and oil-painted a light colour.

All other walls, and the ceilings generally, are plastered and oil painted.

Windows are of steel with frames of kiaat. All opening parts are fitted with sliding mosquito screens.

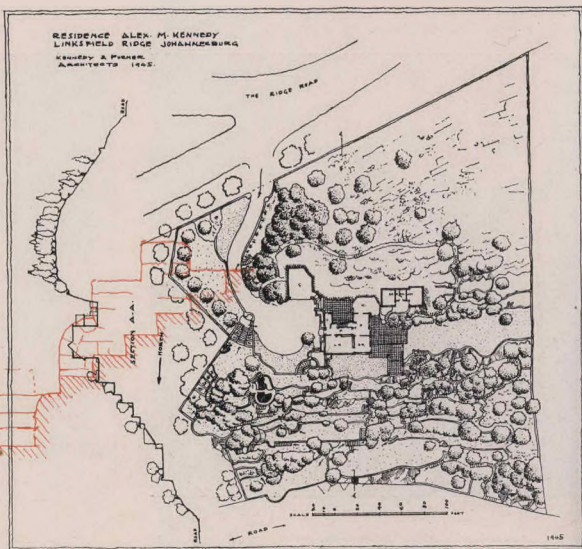
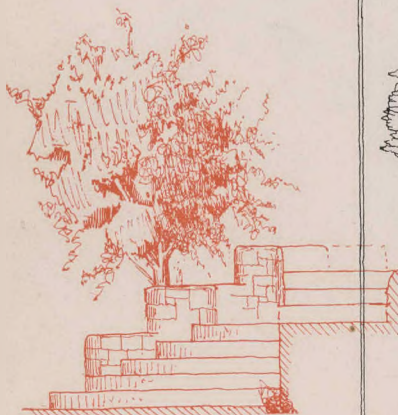
The house was built in 1945-6 and the builders were Messrs. John Barrow.

"... with extensive views over the northern suburbs and valleys, and towards the east and west, with the Magaliesberg and undulating plains in the distance . . ."



AT LEFT: Interior of living room.

BELOW: Site plan showing terracing.



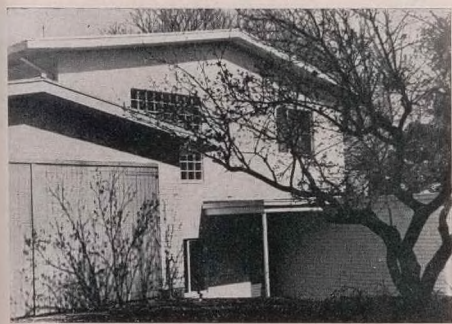


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HOUSE COOKE PARK TOWN

FLEMING & COOKE, ARCHITECTS

2



This house stands in what was originally an old partially developed garden containing many large trees in an established area of Parktown. In order not to disturb the seclusion of this well-wooded site the house is approached by car from a lane on the south. The house is set well back on the site to provide the maximum garden area on the north and to preserve and take advantage of a large jacaranda tree.

The entrance porch on the east side leads directly into the living area. It was desired that this, both in effect and actuality, should be as spacious as possible within the limitations set. To this end, one large area is planned without subdivision, combining living and dining areas, entrance hall and stair. The L-shaped form gives privacy to the dining portion and stair. This form, together with the double height of the

This precept, much stressed in the architecture of the 'thirties, is felt to be most valid. Another precept of that period which it is felt is still valid and indeed forms part of the universal formal architectonic values is the quality of space, the interrelation and inter-penetration of spaces, the relationship of inner and outer space, the modulation of space experienced when passing through it. A contribution of our time to the nature of space is the glass wall and the use of large glass areas.

The use of these under certain circumstances can make of living a fine experience by virtue of an integration with nature, the changing lights on vegetation, the lift and sway of foliage, the changing cloud formations, the rhythm and moods of the seasons or the gambolling of children. All these are set in an architectural frame against the static nature of a room which then becomes a living thing.

In our climate excessive sun penetration and glare must be prevented. In this house this is achieved by the use of the canopy over the ground floor assisted by the foliage of the large tree and the eaves projecting above the upper floor windows.

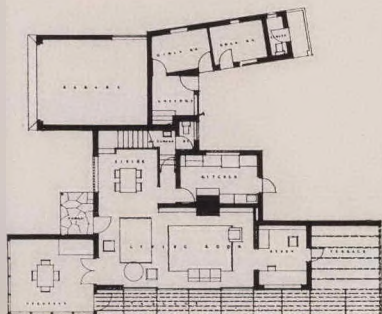
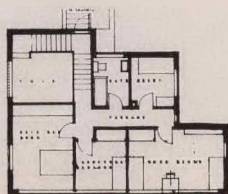
The cubic forms expected of a house of the 'thirties, though

evident here, are thus modified for reasons which are functional in our region. This results in an increase of detail and shadow play giving added richness.

In the 'thirties the enthusiasm for the new forms which were mechanistic in character led to their execution with smooth surfaces which most aptly expressed them. The limitations of an imposed mechanistic character as an environment for living, in view of its detachment from life and nature in the biological sense, are now realised. Thus smooth synthetic surfaces are no longer a necessary part of the aesthetic. Texture comes into play and the expression of materials such as timber, stone or brick begins to emerge in their use in their natural state. As such they can give a warmth of reassurance as opposed to the uncertainty of artificiality. Of the dangers of excessive use of varying textures and materials with resulting loss of unity and simplicity of form much has previously been written.

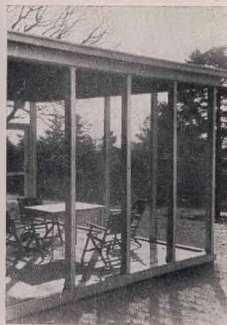
The basic formal architectonic values of form, surface, space, the relationship of parts to each other and the whole, and a unity of all are lodestars for designing a house or a City.

With some such thoughts in mind this house was designed.



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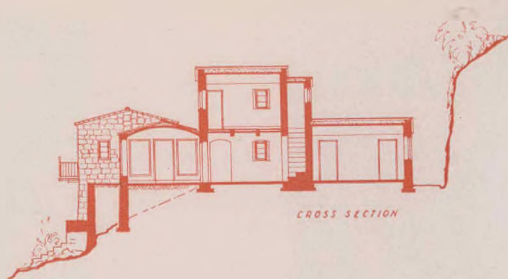


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HOUSE LEITH HOUGHTON

GORDON LEITH AND
PARTNERS • ARCHITECTS





This little house of stone was built on the steep slopes of a kopje at the end of a cul-de-sac—uniquely isolated—yet with a commanding view to the North and with a high protecting ridge to the South.

The underlying idea in the Architect's mind when he started planning was not to exhibit his skill and knowledge of the vagaries of architecture but to make for his wife and himself a place of rest and seclusion out of the site itself.

Thick stone walls, deep window reveals, solid vaults, projecting balconies, shuttered windows, a small atrium, rows of vines in spaliers, cypresses and a magnificent view suggestive of the Castelli Romana were subconsciously in the author's mind.

Such at any rate being the approach, it became necessary in order to achieve the vague idea to create a platform on which to build. By systematic excavation, stone was quarried and sorted into that which was suitable for building and smaller rubble which served as filling behind retaining walls. This work was supervised by a very dear Italian man of stone—Anserino by name—who, with the assistance of two or three natives, prepared both the site and the stone of which the house was to be built, before Mr. John Barrow, Jnr., appeared on the scene to interpret the plans.

As a student of his profession and a good South African the Architect endeavoured once again to build a 100 per cent South African house—the type that would exist had architectural prototypes, building material, and methods of construction not been imported from Europe.

This meant the almost entire elimination of timber in floors and roofs and even precluded the use of timber shuttering, so that the barrel vault (or a modified version of it) was introduced. This, it was decided, should be built of 3-inch brickwork supported on sectional collapsible centering which was reused and modified to suit the different spans as work proceeded.

The author's intention was to dispense with tie rods and to build each room as a square dome having a two centre pointed vault that would give maximum lightness at the crown and concentrate mass and weight on the haunches. These were to be suitably reinforced to take the lateral thrust of the vault. This concept was not accepted by the engineer engaged to provide the steel work who thought the vault should take the form of a catenary curve and have a number of exposed transverse tie rods. A modified catenary curve was adopted and the vaults built, but all except two tie rods in the Lounge were omitted without the engineer's knowledge.

It will be left to the reader to assess the merit of the different curves but, should another vaulted house come the way of the author, a two centre pointed arch will have preference for the following reasons—the crown of the vault will be lighter, the lateral thrust consequently less, the shuttering will be more easily collapsed and reused, the shape will be more attractive and it will be less expensive.

The plan of this little Monastic Retreat consists of a central atrium round which all the rooms are grouped. The atrium makes an ideal open air luncheon and breakfast room; here one

is sheltered from the wind and able to sit in sunlight or shade according to the weather and the season of the year.

From the Hall one enters the Living Room and Study — a passage leads to the Main Bedroom, a marble-lined Bathroom and a Dressing Room.

Another passage from the Hall gives access to the Dining Room, a Visitors' Cloak Room and to the kitchen passage.

A feature of the plan is the provision of a small Guest Room with bath and lavatory over the Hall. This suite is approached by its own little stairway, the guests therefore enjoying absolute privacy, being able to leave or enter the house without disturbing or encountering the other inmates.

The intent to build a Pan-African house could at the conclusion of the work be said to have been achieved.

Apart from some hinges one flushing system, four lavatory basins and pans, the house, including the plumbing work, electric conduits etc., could have been built without the assistance of British or Foreign merchants.

The Kijaat shutters have moveable jalousies (louvres) which may be opened or closed at the will of the occupants. The shutters therefore can be locked at night, the windows opened and the louvres opened to permit the maximum amount of air to be admitted with complete security.



ABOVE: View of the living room, showing the vaulted ceiling.

BELOW: The house, seen from the entrance court.





The terrace, commanding a magnificent view to the north.

The N.E. corner of the house.



The atrium, around which the house is planned.



BOOK REVIEWS

WESTERN PROVINCIAL

AN ALBUM OF PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE, by Désirée Picton-Seymour, with text by R. I. B. Webster.

Maskeu Miller, Ltd., Cape Town, 1952. 80 pages. Standard edition, 26/-; Leather-bound de luxe edition, 45/-.



This book contains 36 paintings and scraperboard drawings by Miss Picton-Seymour, resulting out of what may be regarded as "an unplanned walk around Cape Town, with occasional jaunts to Stellenbosch, Worcester and other Western Province towns". The architectural field covered ranges from Cape Georgian, by way of Cape Regency and Cape Victorian, to Cape Edwardian, and is described in sympathetic vein in the text of R. I. B. Webster.

Miss Picton-Seymour has a fine sense of the decorative value of the free-flowing line which, coupled with a strong patterning of blacks and whites, gives her scraperboard drawings an

attractive liveliness and a visual richness. The artist has an eye for the picturesque composition which parallels the intricacy of her drawing style, and a love of ornament for ornament's sake dominates both her choice of subject matter and the manner of its presentation. Her drawings are delightfully fresh, especially "Culver House, Cape Town", with its gaunt, grotesque trees, and its sinuous foliage; "Kweekskool, Stellenbosch", a fantasia of Mansard roofs, triumphal arch portals, and tropical palm trees; and "Cape Town Station", where the sweep of line and the decorative pattern of curves arise naturally out of the subject matter without that trace of willfulness which is just evident in some of the other drawings. The line-and-wash paintings in colour are excellent. Indeed, in examples such as "Groot Constantia" and "Strand Street", to name just two, there are added those elements of the Cape atmosphere—the crisp Cape air and the bright summer sun—which are somehow lacking in the more mystical, moon-haunted black and white sketches.

While the artist is completely justified in choosing picturesque compositions, in the sense that they are "paintworthy", it is not, I contend, admissible to imply architectural merit for the buildings painted as a necessary consequence. I feel that Mr. Webster, if I may criticise the possessor of so gifted a pen, does just this. He pleads so convincingly, though, that one is soon tempted to agree that black is white and right is wrong. He says of the Cape Town City Hall that "the whole place is quite monstrous, and to those with depraved tastes, quite charming". This is so insidious a propaganda that one finds oneself somehow thinking of monstrosity as a virtue, and the lack of depravity a crime. Amongst the features of the Cape Town Railway Station he lists "high, cast-iron, soot-laden glassed-in arches . . . a handsome street frontage suggesting a Victorian luxury hotel rather than a station . . . grotesque lettering on painted signs"—and all this is put over with such nostalgic charm that when he follows up with ". . . all this is doomed and will yield to a commendably modern and efficient station nearer the foreshore", the impression is insinuated that modernity here is the villain of the piece, and that we should hiss accordingly. This is convincing writing, and most seductive, but I for one refuse to be led up the Primrose path.

However, there is much more to the text than the expression of an attitude of nostalgia to which I confess an antipathy. There is a wealth of information conveyed most succinctly, and with a sharp wit displayed in such gems as: "Perhaps one shouldn't expect every building to have a dramatic history: this particular place [Caledon Square Post Office], after all, has been in the Civil Service all its life".

To sum up: this is a book conceived and executed with gusto and wit, in both line and word. It covers a field relatively untouched, and should be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of architects and collectors of African art.

G.H.

ARCHITECTURAL AND BUILDING TRADES DICTIONARY, by Arthur E. Burke, J. Ralph Dalzell and Gilbert Townsend. Edited by Pearl Jenison. The American Technical Society, Chicago, 1950. 377 pages. Price in South Africa: 51*.

DICTIONARY OF ARCHITECTURE, by Henry H. Saylor. New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London, Chapman and Hall, Ltd.; 1952. 221 pages. Price in U.S.: \$4.50.

The extent of the architect's vocabulary of definitions and terms in its historical, analytical, and technical aspects has long called for some systemization. These two dictionaries attempt that task in a form more pithy and less monumental than an encyclopaedia of building. Although they are designed as handy books of reference, they nevertheless cover an imposing range of architectural subjects. The first named is excellent on the technical side, while the other has a slight bias towards the historical. Both books are illustrated. The Architectural and Building Trades Dictionary amplifies its explanations with photographs and line drawings accompanying the text, and where it deals with technical terms is so generously illustrated that it almost becomes a manual of building construction. The Dictionary of Architecture, whose illustrations are mainly of historical styles and motifs, favours the comparative method, and collects its illustrations in a series of 16 plates at the end of the book. Both dictionaries are American, but the bulk of their information seems readily applicable to South African conditions. Of the two, the first is slightly more comprehensive, but the second has the advantage of being pocket size. Either would be valuable as a reference for architect or student.

G.H.

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THE MODERN SHOP, by Bryan and Norman Westwood. London, The Architectural Press, 1952. 183 pages, with 176 illustrations. Price in England, 30/-.

This book incorporates some of the material used in the author's previous book "Smaller Retail Shops". The whole of the text, however, has been rewritten, new sections have been incorporated, and the illustrations have been chosen afresh to include many post-war examples in Europe generally and England in particular. "The Modern Shop" cannot therefore be called a new edition of "Smaller Retail Shops", but must be considered as a new book in the field of shop design.

Information is presented in a comprehensive, clearly written text, supplemented by many helpful line sketches and detail drawings, and a large selection of judiciously chosen photographs. The subject matter is dealt with very fully. There is a chapter dealing with the site and its relation to sales value. Here the problem of the shopping centre is dealt with, including service, traffic problems, parking provisions, etc. In a more detailed study of the individual shop, planning problems are considered, followed by some consideration of shop fronts, lighting, canopies, and exterior finishes generally. Careful attention is given to the design of lettering and lighting displays, fixtures and fittings. There is a chapter dealing with internal wall and floor finishes, including some interesting tables of current (English) prices. There is a chapter on the design of the self-service shop, a development that is gaining some ground in England and America. The book closes with a technical chapter on heating, ventilating and vacuum services.

The points made in the text are amply illustrated by well-chosen photographs of a wide range of examples. These give the South African architect some food for thought, for they are characterised by a degree of high-quality finish, an attention to detail, and a display of imagination rarely found in work closer to home. Some random thoughts occur, on paging through this book. For instance, how gay and elegant the canvas canopy can be: and in forms such as the retractable "Rectoplan" how much more efficiently does the canvas awning function than its cumbersome concrete counterpart. Then, it is interesting to see that the burglar screen need not be as obtrusively objectionable as we usually think. Shop design approaches the theatre in dramatic presentation—and how apt the rather over-rich patterned tiles, corrugated metals, elaborate light fittings and perforated materials which make up so much of our present-day architectural vocabulary are for showmanship of this sort. And then, the tricks with space: the use of false, accentuated perspective, and of mirrors, to apparently enlarge space, show that architects today have little to learn from the masters of illusion during the Renaissance. And finally, what a tremendous range there is in the design of the shop front, from the two-storey, wall-to-wall plate glass screen of the "Tailleur des Prince" in Paris, to the Frank Lloyd Wright "Gift Shop" in San Francisco, with its solid brick facade unbroken except for the stark, deeply-recessed entrance doorway.

This book is a mine of information most attractively presented. It is a useful acquisition, both for the man seeking detailed design data, and for the man pleasurably browsing.

G.H.

OBITUARY

LEONARD CHARLES SYMES, M.I.A., A.R.I.B.A., of the firm of Corrigan, Crickmay & Partners, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, was educated at the Stationers Company School, after which he entered a firm of structural engineers, at the same time attending the London Polytechnic School of Architecture, where he passed his qualifying examination.

He subsequently worked for several firms of architects in England before commencing practice on his own in London, carrying out interesting housing and flat schemes.

Mr. Symes emigrated to South Africa in 1938 and spent some time in the offices of Mr. Geoffrey le Seur and Messrs. Tomkin & Partners before joining the Natal Provincial Administration, where he held the position of Assistant Architect to the Chief Architect.

He joined the firm of Corrigan, Crickmay & Partners as a partner in 1944 where he undertook a lot of domestic architecture and was very closely associated with large additions to the Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg branch. While in Pietermaritzburg he did work in the provision of homes for Ex-Servicemen and aged couples. During 1945 he moved to the Port Elizabeth branch of the above firm. During his five years in Port Elizabeth he took a leading part in the administration

of the affairs of the Local Committee of the Institute of South African Architects and at the time of his death was the local Chairman. He was the Architects' representative on the Technical College Council and the Joint Town Planning Committee, and was Port Elizabeth's delegate to the Central Council of the Institute of Architects.

Some of the works under Mr. Symes' direction were a new factory for Messrs. African Oxygen & Acetylene (Pty.), Ltd., a large new office building for Messrs. S.A.N.I.A.M., a large proportion of school work for the Provincial Administration, and he was closely associated with the Chief Architect of the South African Breweries and Messrs. Maybaker in some of their local projects.

Mr. Symes was extremely popular in his profession and in other walks of life. He invariably displayed a spirit of co-operation and friendliness to all his colleagues and members of the building industry and his passing was looked upon as a very great loss to the profession and community. His approach to the solution of social evils was an inspiration to all those with whom he came into contact.

He was a very keen Freemason and was a member of the Goodwill Lodge of Port Elizabeth.

Besides his wife, he leaves two children, a son and a daughter.

NOTES AND NEWS

ERRATUM

Your attention is drawn to an error in the table on Hail Tests printed on page 106 of our issue of April 1952.

Under the item "Type: Slate No. 8" the spacing of battens should read $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". This was incorrectly printed as $5\frac{1}{2}$ ".

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

(a) Mr. D. S. Haddon has entered into partnership with Mr. E. F. Allen, M.C.Q.S., under the title of Haddon and Allen, Architects and Quantity Surveyors, and will operate at 49 Central House, Simmonds and Main Streets, Johannesburg.

(b) Mr. A. Isrcel and Mr. L. Bernstein have joined the firm of

Wayburne and Wayburne as partners. The designation of the firm remains unaltered.

MEMBERSHIP

Inter-grade Transfers

From Salaried to Practising Membership

- (1) Mr. L. Bernstein.
- (2) Mr. F. George.
- (3) Mr. A. Israel.
- (4) Mr. L. Roodt.

From Practising to Salaried Membership
Miss M. Frylinck.

Inter-Province Transfer

Mr. T. Saffer [Salaried] from Transvaal Provincial Institute to Cape Provincial Institute.

Resignation:

Mr. T. McVie w.e.f. 1st July, 1952.

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