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Monte Bryer

The Faculty of Architecture of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and its role in the community.

by

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To the late Rex Martienssen and David Haddon
and to Gordon McIntosh, Norman Hanson, Erik Todd and Douglas Calderwood
with whom it was my privilege to be intimately associated over many years

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Monte Bryer
Johannesburg, December 1977

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this monograph is to record in broad outline the development of the Wits Faculty of Architecture and its role in the community from its early beginnings a few years after the commencement of this century up to the present time. There is a brief account of the establishment and growth of the Faculty which appeared in the 1959 issue No. 3 and in the Golden Jubilee issue in December 1972 of 'Convocation Commentary', the official magazine of the Convocation of the University of the Witwatersrand. There are also historical references to the Faculty's Departments of Architecture and Town and Regional Planning in the brochure 'The Golden Jubilee of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg' produced and published by the University's Jubilee Committee in 1972. Furthermore, there are the yearly reports delivered by Professor G E Pearse and, after his retirement in 1947, by his successor Professor J Fassler, at the Annual Exhibition and Prize-giving of the School and, since 1940, of the Faculty of Architecture, which were published in the South African Architectural Record until 1964, and the admirable Reports of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr G R Bozzoli, for the calendar years 1968 to 1974 inclusive, which are invaluable records of the main events and changes in the various Faculties of the University during those years, all of which have been most useful for the purpose of this monograph. But as far as the present writer is aware there is no compendious record as yet of the establishment, development and activities of the Wits Faculty of Architecture and its four constituent departments as a unified whole, or one which can be regarded as being sufficient in dealing with its life and achievements and particularly also with the role it has performed both in the University and in the community which it has served and endeavours to serve.

It is hoped therefore that this monograph will satisfy the need for such a record and that it will be of interest to the Faculty of Architecture and to the University and also to its students, graduates, diplomates and, indeed, all who have derived benefit from Wits educationally and culturally since its inception in 1921. It is hoped, too, that this record will induce others to add to it such information as will enable it to be as complete as possible. But more than that, it is hoped that this record of the best of the Faculty's past will also serve to stimulate the students of today to bold and resolute endeavour so that as alumni of the University of the Witwatersrand and as members of their chosen professions with the education and training of whose entrants the Faculty of Architecture is wholly concerned, they will find in the service of the community their highest life task and in so doing will also gain special distinction for the development of architecture and the human environment as integral parts of our national culture.