SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

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EDITORIAL

In the November issue of the "Record" we published a review of "The Cape Town Foreshore Plan", an excellent presentation of the Final Report of the Cape Town Foreshore Joint Technical Committee, which was presented in June, 1947. Our reviewer, Professor A. L. Meiring, well qualified to speak, praised the publication, and interspersed his acclamation of the Foreshore Plan with some critical comment. Elsewhere in this issue we publish a letter from Mr. Kantorowich, the Town Planning Officer, in reply to and amplification of the points raised by Professor Meiring. This discussion naturally presupposes that the protracted, painstaking and not inexpensive planning process which produced the Plan would not be wasted effort. At present this would seem to be an alarming possibility.

Under a Cape Town date line the "Star" of Friday, 22nd. April, carried the statement that "An important decision on the Cape Town Foreshore development scheme is expected to be taken 'within the next few days' . . . It is not known what the decision will be, but it is generally felt that an announcement cannot be made too soon as there has already been a considerable amount of shilly-shallying."

After drawing attention to the fact that the only results to be seen after two years "are the reclamation of about 350 acres of land and a series of concrete platforms that in time may become the new goods yard"; and after pointing to the fact that experts have been imported from overseas, and that the scheme over a period of years, has been discussed in all its aspects, the press report continues, "wrangling and bickering began and now at least five important items have been scrapped or shelved . . . The pretentious Maritime terminal plan has been shelved and the building of the grand van Riebeeck Hotel has been postponed indefinitely. The construction of the Castle Bridge road, most important goods circulation road in the scheme, is unlikely to be built, and the elaborate boulevards linking the suburbs on the Sea Point side to those south of the city are endangered by dozens of applications, some of which it has been decided to recommend for permission to build in the path of these major highways. The flyover bridge, to carry traffic along Strand Street over Adderley Street and St. Georges Street, is also endangered."

The possibilities implied by this news report are little short of devastating both to the scheme and to those who see it in the unique and magnificent opportunity to construct the "gateway to South Africa" on the scale and clothed with the monumentality which its superb historical and topographical setting demands.

The tortuous route by which the final scheme arrived is ample proof of the thought and care and the skilful planning which gave it shape. It is a scheme which, in the boldness of its conception and its monumental scale, whatever the forms minor criticisms may take, is for these very reasons, rendered particularly susceptible to attack and destruction by those who cannot or will not focus their attention on the importance and significance of this farsighted plan. It would appear that parts of the plan of manifest importance to its success as a solution of a major traffic problem are already endangered. Their elimination would be a serious reflection on the perspicacity of those responsible.

The manner in which the many and diverse planning problems have been resolved has made the plan not only unique in this country but deserving of a better fate than piecemeal destruction. It is a master plan for a new and revitalised Cape Town.

South Africa has little enough in the town planning field of which to be proud. With the superb opportunity offered by the reclamation scheme, it will be nothing less than a national disgrace, if, for economic expediency or parochial wrangling, this ambitious project "should vanish into the dust of the wilderness at the foot of Adderley Street."

An important decision on the fate of the scheme is awaited. It is to be hoped that those in whose hands its fate lies will be able to see beyond the present limited horizon. The Minister of Lands, Mr. Strydom, whose department now has charge of the scheme, bears a great responsibility towards Cape Town and South Africa.

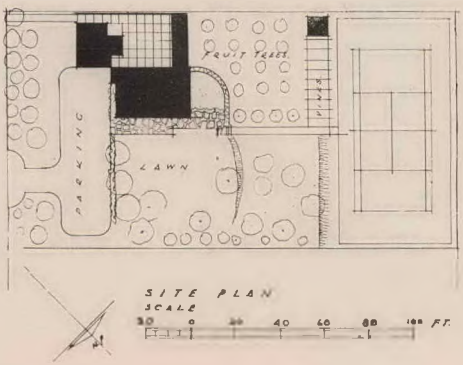
Photos: Prager Studio

View from the east corner of the site showing the entrance and main north-east garden frontage

A Residence for the Architect at Sandringham. Johannesburg

By F. O. Muller, M.I.A.

With land values and building costs at their present high levels, a large proportion of the public is finding it increasingly difficult to acquire homes. A direct result has been the reduction in the size of the home in order to bring cost within the range of the average income. While it is true to say that the accommodation standards usually demanded in this country are rapidly assuming the character of luxury, it is also apparent that these may be greatly reduced without detriment to the comfort and convenience of the occupants. By skilful planning and rational and effective use of basic materials, costs can be radically reduced.



The architect owner of the house under review set out to prove this contention, and has designed a house for a family of four within a total floor area of 1,425 super feet.

The site is 100 by 200 feet with a road flanking the Royal Johannesburg Golf Club on the south-east boundary. To take advantage of this country-like setting the house has been placed to one side of the site, the main garden facade facing north-east parallel to the side boundary and 50 feet away from it. The result is a spaciousness and continuity of garden area which belies its actual size. While the house is orientated away from the direction of prevailing rain, the mass of the building throws a welcome shadow over the greater part of the adjacent lawn terrace—the outdoor living space—early in the afternoon.

The external walls are in dark blue facebrick to lintol level, above which white plaster is set projecting 2 inches.

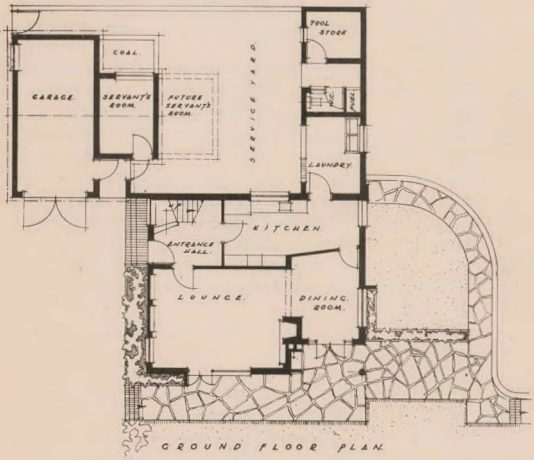
The entrance on the street facade is protected by a 3-inch slab and screen walls. The windows in this elevation have been carefully proportioned to give a well-balanced effect. The openings to the ground floor living area are protected by a similar slab projection which

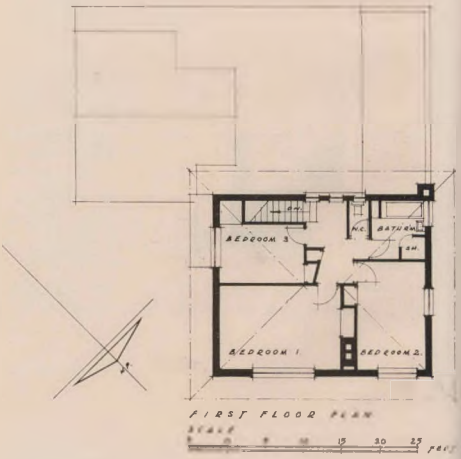
The road on the south-east boundary flanks the Royal Johannesburg Golf Course. To take advantage of this setting the house has been placed to one side of the site with the main frontage facing north-east, overlooking the adjacent lawn terrace. This arrangement has contributed to the generous garden area and to the successful relationship between indoor and outdoor living areas. While the main orientation is away from the direction of prevailing rain, the house casts a welcome shadow over a good portion of the lawn in the afternoon.

BELOW: The plans illustrate the skilful use of space, which with a total floor area of only 1425 superfeet, provides comfortable accommodation for a family of four. They demonstrate what economical planning may achieve an adequate family residence to meet the limitations imposed by the present high level of building costs.

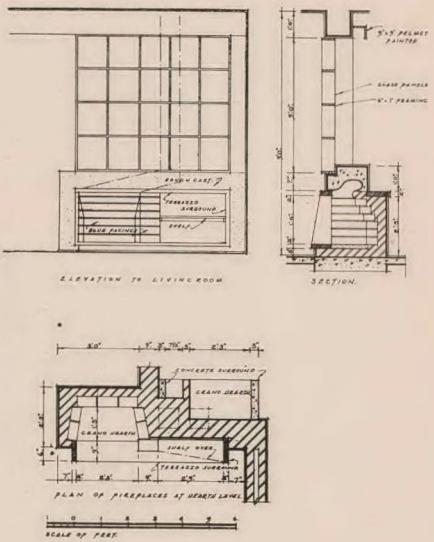
repeats the motif at the entrance. The first floor windows which directly reflect the functional requirements of the plan are protected by the 3 feet eaves projection.

Colour has been used effectively both internally and externally. The golden brown eaves facia enhances the pale blue colour of the steel windows. Walls and soffits within the projecting concrete frames at ground floor are light terra cotta, with the face of the frame in pale





The fireplace with its glass backed display frame gives definition to the living area without disrupting the spatial continuity.



The living room with glazed door leading directly to the garden. Feature on end wall includes view window, cocktail cabinet and bookcase.

blue. The steel windows and doors, also the column, at ground floor are dark brown.

A pleasing effect is evident in the living area. The inner wall surfaces (south-east and south-west) and the ceiling are finished in warm peach colour, while the remaining surfaces are in pale blue, blending with the sky beyond.

The limiting of bedrooms to practical dimensions has resulted in the provision of a living/dining space of generous size. The sense of space is sustained by the transparent display frame over the fireplace which defines the two areas, and by the introduction of extensive and attractive views to be seen through openings in each of the three external walls. This apparent spaciousness is further accentuated by the arrangement of the main openings leading to porch and lawn, all at practically the same level, which intimately relate the indoor and outdoor living spaces. Emphasis is given to this latter consideration by the provision of a fireplace on the porch.

The treatment in the living-room stimulates a diversity of interest while the features serve decorative and functional purposes.

Within the maroon-coloured frame at the end (south-east) wall three squares comprise a view window, a cocktail cabinet and a bookcase. Opposite, a 6 by 1 inch

display frame over the fireplace is picked out in pale blue with maroon edges. With a few pieces of pottery and some flowers, this fitting affords an effective display. Below this fitting a 2 inch slate surround embraces the hearth and bookshelves.

The placing of the fireplace permits people to gather round in a semicircle, and in order to retain the uninterrupted view over the fireplace, the gathering is arranged almost horizontally to the vertical flue at the side.

A coffee table and sideboard are designed to leave a continuous floor surface; the former having a glass top, the latter being free standing and supported on chromium-plated legs. Both fittings are in kiaat to match the floor.

To facilitate the moving of furniture up the stairs, the balustrade is in the form of an iron grille screwed to the rising curb and to the soffit of the first floor beam, and like the short balustrade at first floor, can be easily removed.

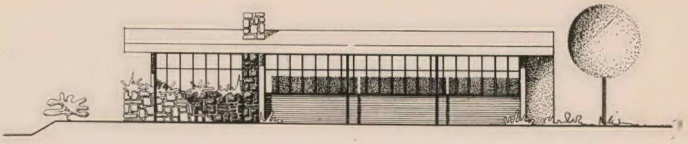
The house is constructed of load-bearing brick walls, reinforced concrete slab at first floor, and has a low-pitched corrugated iron roof. Vermiculite insulation is laid on the hardboard ceiling protecting the interior from temperature fluctuations and reducing noise arising from rain and hail.

The winter garden on the north-west side with lawn terrace seen beyond.

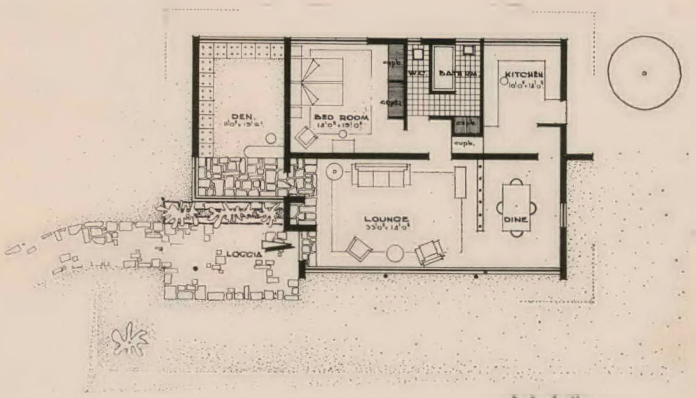
THE NEWELL RESIDENCE, STIRLING EXTENSION, EAST LONDON

LANE, OSMOND AND ALBERT, MM.I.A., ARCHITECTS

Photos: Jack Ramsay



·ELEVATION·



·PLAN·

The problem facing the architects in the design of this new residence for N. H. Newell, Esq., at East London, was to provide an inexpensive home for a married couple which would at the same time provide facilities for the entertainment of the owners' numerous friends.

The house is located in a suburb of small stands on a site without any important views.

* * * * *

The architects in their approach to this interesting problem, decided to design the house on the basis of a flat, with large lounge, a small bedroom and bathroom unit, a den which could be used as a guest room, a small kitchen with the dining space incorporated in the lounge.

In order to simplify the roof construction — in the interests of economy — the plan was organised within the limits of a rectangle. The requirements of the owner have been resolved in a delightfully simple and workable plan with the complete elimination of waste space, which in turn has given rise to an elevation of charm and effective but simple modelling.

Externally the plaster surfaces are colour washed white, except for the green wing wall to the kitchen; the tubular steel columns are painted deep maroon.

Internally colour has been used to accentuate the different wall surfaces. In the lounge the two end walls are pale lemon, the main back wall is pale green and the window wall pale grey. Doors generally are deep maroon and the door frames grey.

* * * * *

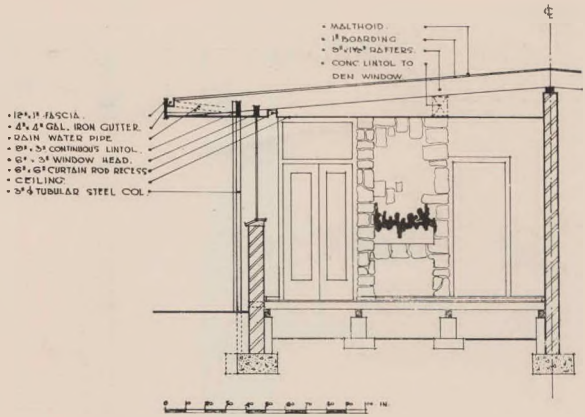
The roof is finished in asphalte sheeting laid on boarding, the rafters being supported on the main central wall and on a continuous wooden beam over the lounge windows. This beam is carried on the three steel columns.

The eaves soffit is in the same plane as the ceilings, with the gutter concealed behind the fascia. The curtains to the lounge window run in a ceiling recess.

Normal 11-inch cavity brick walling is used externally and all surfaces are plastered. Floors are wood strip, and slate paving has been used on the loggia, hearth and den entry. The fireplace is constructed of rough dressed unpainted stone, which contrasts strongly with the plastered flower-box set in the breast.

The home has an area of 1,400 super feet and was completed early in 1948.

Like the planning of the house the structure is extremely straightforward. Economy of material and method mark the construction which is otherwise normal. The steel supports give effective punctuation to the main elevation.

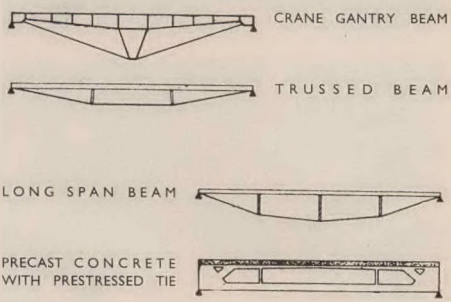


BELOW: General view across the living room. An effective interior has been achieved with remarkable restraint. The broad sweep of uninterrupted window lends spaciousness to the room. Accentuation of the surfaces is achieved by the use of varied colours, pale lemon on end walls, pale green on main rear wall and grey under the windows. The rough stone fireplace with flower box provides a point of focus in the lounge and the stone shaft a major accent of the elevation.

THE WORLD OF ARCHITECTURE

By DONALD PILCHER

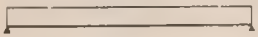
FORCE AND FORM



On February 15 a talk of special interest was given at the R.I.B.A. in London by the engineer, Mr. Felix Samuely. This lecture, which is reported in the "Architects' Journal" of March 3, 1949, bore the title of "Force and Form" and the subtitle "The Aesthetics of Stress Distribution". It made no attempt to deal with the controversial issues of functional design, but set out to answer a simple question. As it was put by Mr. Samuely—"All that interests me is this: if someone wants to show the structure, the stresses, how is he to do it, and if someone wants to hide them, how is he to do that?" On the latter issue there was little to be said in the case of contemporary design. The architect to-day who wishes to conceal structure simply covers it up. In historical instances, however, the concealing of structure was not always such an easy matter and here the author made many penetrating comments on Gothic structure, which in certain periods and in specific instances, he maintained, set out to detract from the effect of structure and to dissipate the apparent lines of stress. The illustration above, a detail from Wells Cathedral, is not one of those used to illustrate the lecture, but it shows a clear instance of arch forms being as it were so dismembered that the effect is one of breaking up the apparent lines of stress. On the left are shown, by contrast, modern forms of trussed beam, expressive structural forms which have been arrived at by emphasizing the actual lines of stress. The way in which the appearance of forms such as these relate to lines of stress in the members is discused in the summary of the lecture which is given on the following pages.

THE WORLD OF ARCHITECTURE

TRAJECTORY OF PRINCIPAL STRESSES

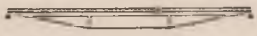


FLANGED BEAM

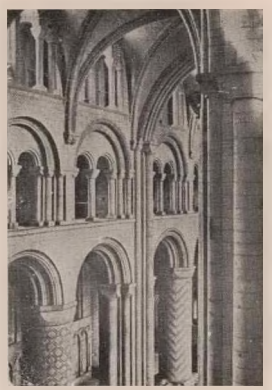
LATTICE GIRDER

GIRDER WITH CURVED BOOMS

TRUSSED BEAM

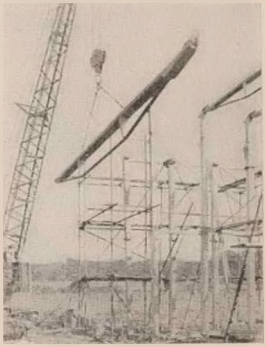


In his historical analysis Mr. Samuely distinguished a variety of aesthetic objectives in Gothic architecture. First of all he emphasized the nature of the Gothic arch as being unsuitable for expressing the stresses of a distributed load, but was able to point nevertheless to the Doges Palace as an instance in which such a form of expression had been successfully managed. The nave of Lincoln, **above, top,** was quoted as a fine instance of the forceful emphasis on lines of stress made in the Early English Gothic. In the triforium the weighty clusters of piers are deliberately placed centrally over the arches below, an arrangement which expresses exactly the nature and direction of the stresses in this form of structure. By comparison, the Romanesque triforium of Durham, opposite comes badly out of the analysis, as the columns centrally placed over round-headed arches detract from the special



A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Line drawings, illustration on right and bottom illustration on p. 82: *The Architects' Journal*, March 3, 1949. Remaining photos: Alinari.



nature of the stresses in this type of structure. In fact Mr. Samuely proceeded to express the opinion that Romanesque architects deliberately set out to detract from the expression of lines of stress in their structure. The making of incisions into the faces of arches, as in the Galilee at Durham, left, was quoted as an instance of this, as also was the treatment of Saracenic arches in the Alhambra. Certainly nothing could detract more from the taut outline of an arch, considered as an expression of stress, than these deep incisions into its face.

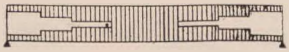
For an understanding of the final phase of the Gothic in structural terms it will be necessary first to consider Mr. Samuely's diagrams illustrating the expression of lines of stress in contemporary structure. The first of these diagrams, shown on the left of the facing page, shows the main stresses in a beam, these being plotted in the form of "Trajectories of Stress". The lines of stress are shown thicker or nearer together where the stresses are larger, thinner, or dotted, where they are smaller. The types of beam below give various visual interpretations of these lines of stress: first, the steel beam whose top and bottom flanges express the greater, parallel, stresses at top and bottom: second, the lattice girder expressing the 90° intersection of the lines of maximum stress: third, the fish-bellied truss which expresses the fact that the lines of stress are not actually parallel, and finally a trussed beam which consists of a concrete member and steel ties which, in their outline, approach a parabolic form. A view of one of these trusses, designed by Mr. Samuely for the new Hatfield Technical College (architects J. Murray Easton and Howard Robertson) is illustrated on the right. Comparison with the diagrammatic trajectories of stress

PRECAST CONCRETE FRAME

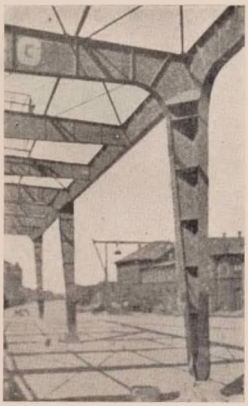
will show the clarity and elegance with which this beam expresses the stresses which are resolved in it.

Above are illustrations of a system of precast concrete construction which again uses a composite concrete and steel beam. The tie member can, however, be designed equally well in pre-stressed concrete and so given approximately the same appearance.

FORCE AND FORM



ANTI STRESS LINES



The diagrams above were referred to by Mr. Samuely as Anti-stress Diagrams. They represent as it were the actual trajectories of stress in reverse. The largest stresses are represented by lines which are dotted or far apart, and the smallest stresses are shown by thick lines or lines close together. The diagrams, of course, do not illustrate anything which could occur as a matter of scientific fact, but visually, they show the lines which would have to be emphasized in a beam structure if attention were to be distracted as much as possible from the actual lines of stress. And this, Mr. Samuely maintained, was exactly the procedure which was followed by architects of the late Decorated and Perpendicular periods. Henry VII Chapel, with its stalactite vaulting was quoted as an instance of this, but here, **above**, King's College Chapel is shown as an example in which the fan vaulting follows very clearly the "Anti-Stress" lines illustrated in the first of the diagrams on the left.

After completing his historical analysis along the lines indicated here, Mr. Samuely proceeded to review various types of contemporary structure from the point of view of their appearance in expressing lines of stress. Rivetted steel structure was taken as the point of departure and its negative value emphasized in that it fails to give any adequate expression of lines of stress. The new Howrah Bridge at Calcutta was illustrated as an example and this bridge may well become a historic example of ineptitude in structural design. By contrast various types of expressive and elegant welded structure were illustrated, as well as an example of shell concrete. One of the examples of welded construction is shown on the left.

The Charm of *GROOT CONSTANTIA*

By C. A. Stoloff

There is an enchanted spell over "Groot Constantia" — one can visit the place a hundred times, yet never tire of it. There is always something of interest to discover or to enjoy anew.

Postcards of "Constantia" are now somewhat hackneyed, and photographs of the old homestead have appeared rather incongruously on bizarre commercial calendars. However, "Constantia" is a gem of early Cape Dutch Architecture, and a perfect example of the much-needed preservation of our cultural tradition.

RIGHT: A view of the Homestead from the entrance to the Wine Cellar.
BELOW: Entrance to the Slave Quarters below the Homestead, in a semi-basement. In most of these quarters there was no natural light, and very little ventilation. Slaves entered this basement through long narrow tunnels, about two feet high.

Much has already been published about the old homestead and the sculpture of the wine cellar, but there has been very little on the interior, which contains a fine collection of old Cape furniture, pictures, china and other "objects d'art". There is also a wealth of information on early Cape history to be found in framed manuscripts and maps.

The original farm of Constantia, which consisted of about nine hundred morgen, was granted by the Lord of Mydrecht of the Dutch East India Company to Governor Simon van der Stel in recognition of his good and faithful services rendered in the promotion of agriculture. Here he built himself a residence in 1685, and laid out vineyards and orchards. He successfully carried on farming, and, on his retirement as Governor in 1699, went to live at Constantia. After his death in 1712 the place was subdivided, a fourth of which is now known as "Groot Constantia".

"The property changed hands several times after the sale of the Governor's Estate, Captain Olaf Bergh buying it in 1716. In 1770 Mr. Jan Serrurier sold it to Mr. Hendrik Cloete, a big landed proprietor, and

CONSTANTIA VALLEY

"It is a prosperous and lonely valley in which these old homesteads lie half hidden beneath their great oaks. A mellow charm rests on the landscape, whether you will see it when the vines are bursting into leaf or in the drowsy warmth of Summer or clothed in its autumn robes of yellow and russet and deepest crimson. It is all very beautiful, the grey of the tree trunks, the gold of the leaves, the sheen of the sea. And behind all and above all the great purple mountain that draws the hearts of its children—and the children of its adoption too—until they learn to love it with a passion, the strength of which no stranger can measure . . . . . "

Dorothea Fairbridge

notable burgher, when it began, as it were, a new era in its history. Mr. Cloete paid £4,000 for the place, a considerable sum in those days. He found the homestead in a ruinous condition, and set about having it restored. He erected a large wine cellar at considerable cost and obtained the services of the renowned sculptor, Anton Anreith, to execute the beautiful pediment over the entrance in 1791. Groot Constantia remained in the possession of the Cloete family for over a century when it was sold to the Cape Government as an experimental farm in viticulture."

("Groot Constantia", by C. Graham Botha, Cape Town, 1933.)

After a fire in December, 1925, which destroyed much of the furniture, Mr. Alfred de Pass gave much time and careful thought to judiciously selecting furniture and pictures which eventually comprised the magnificent collection that graces the interior of the house to-day.

It is a sheer delight to wander through the reception halls and bedrooms of Constantia — it is always fresh and cool, and the kitchen sparkles with a brilliance unequalled by most of our contemporary efforts.

"Sit on the stoep or in the shade of the oaks, and if you can forget for a while the modern winemaking machinery near at hand, you may see the shadows of the past, you may share the old Governor's pride in his beautiful house as it rises from the ground, and you may join in the stately revels that the large rooms must have witnessed in those pleasant, leisurely days."

("Old South African Homesteads", by Dorothea Fairbridge, 1911.)

ABOVE: Die Jonkers Huis. BELOW: Entrance Gates to the Constantia vineyards, with the False Bay in the distance. "Through the leaves gleams the tawny yellow of the autumn vine-leaves; and far away on the horizon shines a line of burnished silver, as the blurred sunlight catches the distant waters of False Bay."

LEFT: Wardrobe in north bedroom, of yellow-wood stained brown, from the descendants of Olaf Bergh's family at Malmesbury, probably formerly at Groot Constantia before the fire of 1925. RIGHT: The Kitchen, one of the most charming rooms in the homestead. The walls are snow white, timber beams highly polished, the brass and silver-ware sparkling in the afternoon sun. In the centre is an oval gate-legged table and four stinkwood "slave chairs". On the left is an oak brass bound butter tub, on the right is a teak and yellow-wood cupboard. On the hearth is a magnificent collection of old Dutch kitchenware, including two "kolwyntjie" cake pans, and nine Wedgewood green plates and dishes. Door at right leads to the oven room.

GROOT CONSTANTIA

Photos: C. A. Staloff

THE STUDENTS' FORUM

Two-thirty on Thursdays, is discussion time for the Wits architectural students. With almost poignant reluctance they leave their drawing boards to gather in the lecture theatre, where in an atmosphere of erudition their right hands (liberated for a while from the tyranny of the draughting pencil) saw the air in lyrical accompaniment to an unwonted verbal expression of their architectural aims and conundrums. Discussion is initiated by the senior design lecturers, and has up to now ranged from a philosophical interpretation of monumentality and architectural education to a rather more parochial consideration of acoustics and illumination.
The following article written by a final year student, emerges from a discussion, the first in the series, entitled "Towards a New Monumentality".

TOWARDS A NEW MONUMENTALITY

By W. H. SAVAGE

The discussion "Towards a New Monumentality" was, as one would have expected, controversial. It was, also, however, sadly indicative of our times in that it was all rather vague and showed clearly that we had no idea to what a monument should now be erected, nor what ingredients should be used.

It was established that a monument could only exist as a symbol of something greater than man; his aspirations; or at least equal to the greatest in him. This was, I feel a very strong point; more powerful than others which implied that architecture and monumentality should not grovel to the public. The measure of success in this field is connected with the emotional impact a project has on society as a whole.

The point was also raised that a monument should be to some myth, as the fine Gothic Cathedrals were. The fact that, to the people of that time, divine bliss and hell fire were no myths but the most certain of realities was overlooked completely, and bears out the point of a later speaker who queried the motive behind establishing a new mythology and then proceeding to enhance it by the erection of strange, little-understood shapes.

Let us be rational. We have been reared into an extremely realistic era in which everything must serve a purpose. The main thought for the last century has all been scientific; the demands and proofs, factual. Even human thoughts and actions have not escaped the coils of science. We are now analysed in much the same way as chemicals or phenomena of the physics laboratory. That is how things are and the state is one to which humanity has been moving from the beginning of time. In spite, however, of the despairing romantics, woeful wails, humanity has aspirations and ideals and most of them are good. We now aspire to produce, possess or understand — they are equally important — that which is morally or scientifically the best of which we are capable.

In parenthesis, I might add that the scientific, or material best is no more easily attained, nor less worthy of pursuit than the myths previously mentioned.

The architect, in spite of his views to the contrary does not really control architecture, let alone the society that pays for it.

Science demands the most of its materials and the best of those who use them. Society demands to feel, when viewing a building or project, that scientific processes have been used and that the project fulfills its duty.

The architect cannot change these fundamentals, they are the problems he has to reconcile and are inherent in any structure. It is therefore his duty as a sensitive member of society to build into all projects that quality which will lift them out of the realm of ordinary thoughts. He can, by his own specialized knowledge, so define, confine or mould his volumes, that the emotional impacts of the buildings will be those desired. (It is important that these be understood by all.) The demands of higher modern life are the recognition and enhancing of the dignity and freedom of modern man; peace aided by scientific achievement, beauty in relation to that which is correct by the highest moral concepts. These must be evident in a monument.

But, as previously stated, the architect has certain conditions of mind and progress laid out before him which he cannot hope to eradicate in favour of his own ideas. His course lies in continually demanding of science greater efforts to produce the results or materials he desires, and continually delighting or educating society

with the beauty and/or daring of the latest project. In this era, however, these essays must not be without purpose or in spite of all else they may possess, they will not be monuments of our time. In architecture, aesthetic grounds are by all means valid, being considered important due to a building's civic position and responsibility.

Buildings, or projects, undertaken in this spirit, demanding as much of the designer and the beholder as each can give, will be monuments in the true sense of the word, indicative of our continual aspiration towards blending material requirements, scientific facts, aesthetic and moral stimulants into a beautiful justified portion of our civilization.

These efforts when they are surpassed, as they certainly will be, will remain as mile stones beside the path we have traversed, passing on their information and messages to those who would read or study.

The Pyramids and Gothic Cathedrals, recognized the world over as great monuments are no more than this.

* * * * *

As a brief summation, and to pick out the constants which must remain I submit that a monument can only result, when an occasion man gives society of his best for the common good.

CORRESPONDENCE

Cape Town,
The Editor, March, 1949.

"THE CAPE TOWN FORESHORE SCHEME"

It has been suggested to me that I should reply to Professor Meiring's review of the Cape Town Foreshore Plan, published in the November, 1948, issue of the Record.

I should like to say at the outset that I deeply appreciate Professor Meiring's remarks, not only for the pleasure of receiving the praise they contain, but rather for the stimulating effect of his criticisms, leading me to a re-examination of the scheme many months after its completion.

Professor Meiring is, as he says, an old Capetonian, and his remarks stem from a real knowledge of the Mother City and a genuine affection for her traditions. Anything that he has to say on the subject is therefore worthy of the most careful consideration.

Most of the criticisms centre on the Monumental Approach from the sea, and the way in which this feature has been expressed in a dual form (a) by the so-called Park Approach, and (b) by the drive up the extension of Adderley Street.

Firstly, Professor Meiring is correct in deducing from the earlier plans for the Foreshore, that the Monumental Approach had become a basic requirement to be met by the planning. With the requirement as such, I fully agreed, provided, of course, that the will was there to construct and complete such a monumental project, and in particular, that there was a real likelihood of the buildings at either end of the Approach (viz., the Maritime Terminal, and the new City Hall) being built.

The planning problem then was how best to give expression to this requirement within the limits of the "fixed" elements in the plan (such as the agreed position and form of the railway works, the layout and disposition of functions in the old city, the nature and level of the terrain, etc.).

In the first place, the idea of a continuous open vista from the Duncan Dock to the present City Hall site, and thence to the mountain, was favoured rather than the alternative (a feature of some of the previous proposals) in which an intermediary focal point between the Grand Parade and the sea was introduced in the shape of a Civic Centre. The latter proposal was rejected for the reason that a Civic Centre in such a position would be functionally cut off by the raised deck covering the railway station platforms from the established and historic civic and government areas. No acceptable means of uniting the old civic area with the new had been devised nor did it seem possible upon analysis that it could emerge.

Thus, with the principle of consolidating and re-constructing the present civic area accepted, visual interruption of the vista by any other large and important building became most undesirable. The Foreshore Committee felt that the view from the point of disembarkation should focus, without interruption, on the most important civic group in the City.

The vista was then designed to be, and in fact could only be, effective at a level some twenty-five feet above ground level. From such vantage points as are provided at the City Hall and the Maritime Terminal, the vistas would present unified pictures despite the fact that at ground level the Approach consists of differently treated spaces. Thus, unity exists visually at the upper level; it does not appear at ground level within the Park, nor was it intended that it should.

The title, "Park Approach", admittedly somewhat confusing, thus refers to two simultaneous but quite separate functions. The "Approach" is entirely visual at

the long range upper level; the "Park" is a string of parks, and not a ceremonial walk of three-quarters of a mile, and is designed for those working in the Foreshore on a scale similar to that of the prototype Gardens at the head of Adderley Street.

I remain convinced that, despite the length of the vista from Docks to City Hall, the new City Hall is capable of fulfilling the role of a monumental end to the vista. The perspective illustration referred to was in no sense "cooked", but was accurately set up. Proof of this can be obtained by referring to the photograph on the dust jacket, taken from a position in the Docks approximating closely to the station point of the perspective. In this photograph, the grubby, dull-coloured, and small-scale present City Hall is clearly visible. How clearly the suggested new complex of buildings would appear can be gauged by looking at the dominating mass of the post office to the right of the City Hall in the photograph. The new City Hall group would be both broader and taller than the present post office.

I have yet to deal with the "wrong premise" upon which the whole idea of the double approach is alleged to exist. With Professor Meiring's point that Adderley Street does **not** provide an open view of Table Mountain, I agree. But it once did. It is a fact that if the axis of Adderley Street is extended, it meets not Table Mountain, but a point somewhere near Kloof Nek. However, the axis is but the centre line of the most typical and best remembered pictorial composition presented by the mountain amphitheatre, extending, from left to right, from a portion of Table Mountain, across Kloof Nek, to Lion's Head. This picture is reproduced on the front page of the dust jacket, and in Mr. Cooke's perspective, and this was what was intended to be encompassed by the open vista described in the report, and was seen from old Adderley Street.

Present-day Adderley Street and its extension can never recapture this essential feature of the early Dutch plan for Cape Town. The necessary development of high commercial buildings flanking the thoroughfare blocks out the mountain almost completely. If the dominating axis of the early plans is to be re-created in the new scheme, (and I think it is most important that it should be) then it can only be done if shifted to the left towards Devil's Peak. This argument then has determined the line of the visual approach passing through the centre of the Grand Parade, and focussing on the City Hall site.

Adderley Street, as the Report indicates, retains the other necessary function of the modern ceremonial driveway into the heart of the city, a function that could not be alienated from it, (and furthermore there are no good reasons why it should be). This is how the duality in the approach came to be incorporated in the plan.

On the question of architectural "collaboration" rather than "control", I shall not quarrel with Professor Meiring. We both, I am sure, share the same end-objective of a proper architectural realization of the plan, and our differences are largely terminological.

On the other hand, I have no desire to defend the names of streets and squares selected. These were chosen purely for ease in describing the plan. The final choice of names will, I hope, not be inhibited in any way by some of the admittedly unimaginative planning-office-labels affixed. I personally like Professor Meiring's suggestions for names and hope that they will be borne in mind when the time comes.

As far as the traffic proposals are concerned, these are the key items which can make or break the plan, depending upon whether they are carried out or not. The future construction of the Grand Boulevard and other important traffic links with the old city depends upon the early acquisition of all properties lying in the path of these new roads.

So far, depressingly little has been done to implement the proposals, although nearly two years have elapsed since the Final Report of the Foreshore Committee was completed and presented. Worse still, there are signs that "compromise" (or, in a free translation, "the ditching of proposals for opportunistic and other similar reasons") is threatening, amongst others, the very proposal for Strand Street Bridge which Professor Meiring finds so attractive.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Cape Town Foreshore Plan hangs unsafely in the balance through lack of speedy and courageous action by the responsible bodies concerned. This situation will I trust arouse a concerted reaction, not only from the citizens of Cape Town, but also from the architectural profession, whose interest in the visual appearance of our cities is recognised, and carries much weight. Such a professional reaction could lead to the necessary official action!

It remains for me to thank Professor Meiring once again for his kind remarks, and to hope that what I have written above has met his arguments to his satisfaction so that he can lend his valuable support to the struggle to see the "Foreshore Plan" realised.

Roy Kantorowich.

BOOK REVIEW

ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTION. By Theodore Crane, Professor of Architectural Engineering. Yale University. Published by John Wylie and Sons, New York, and Chapman & Hall, London.

In truly functional Architecture the "aesthetic" and so the satisfaction "le esprit" depends primarily on the expression of the structure of a building.

Most of our South African Architecture suffers from the choice of a structural system which is inappropriate, redundant, or even outmoded.

Mr. A. S. Stewart in his recent editorial in the July, 1948, issue of this journal very ably condemns the note of New Empiricism that the English Architectural Review is now publicising. New Empiricism is, however, not our malady in South Africa. What then is our disease? Why is our present day Architecture, in spite of the fact that it is clean and healthful and bright, relatively insignificant in the world field?

I say, emphatically, that it is because we know and use only one form of structure for city building — the concrete beam, slab and column skeleton expressed externally with a projecting concrete picture frame, exploited and hackneyed ad nauseum. One sees windows, doorways and balconies all expressed with projecting concrete surrounds, all within a projecting surround as an expression of the complete frame. No experimentation — no advance — no significance; not even New Empirism; only the hackneyed use of a contemporary technique.

The value of the information in this book "Architectural Construction" to the South African architect is inestimable. I will go as far as to say that this book, if widely read, may serve to hoist Architecture in South Africa out of the limbo of repetition into a new world of adventure into structural possibilities.

"Architectural Construction" sets out with clarity and precision to analyse the multifarious systems of construction that are available to the contemporary architect. The choice of a structural system depends primarily on the geographical conditions, the site conditions, economy and the type of occupancy and equipment. In this light the author examines all the more important systems of construction for the major elements of building; the frame, the foundations, the floors, the roof, and the walls and partitions assembly.

Having analysed the possibilities and limitations of concrete, steel and timber as framing materials, the author goes on to examine the special consideration of expansion, location of columns, workmanship and heat, sound and damp insulation. One remarkable surprise in this book is among dissertations on concrete shell construction, timber balloon construction, and steel trust construction, the discovery of an elaborately detailed drawing showing the method of hanging marble slabs on a steel frame dome as used at the Neo-classical Jefferson Memorial. This, however, is the only lapse in this excellent treatise.

The book follows American practice, but is nevertheless applicable in the main to South African conditions. It is intended primarily for practising architects and engineers, but will also prove invaluable to advanced students.

This book "Architectural Construction" by Theodore Crane comes to the aid of South African architects at a time when, without conscious realisation of this information, we cannot hoist ourselves out of the present rut.

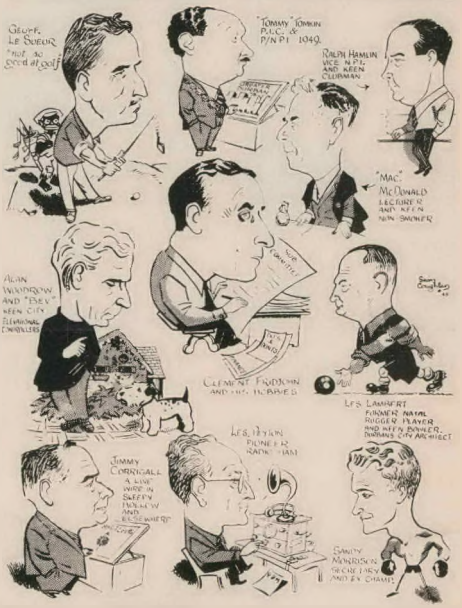
J. M. S.

APOLOGY

With reference to the action for damages for defamation of character instituted against me by Mr. Jan Gliksman, Architect of Johannesburg, arising out of certain defamatory statements alleged to have been made by me of and concerning him to Messrs. H. E. Ziman and G. Ziman of Pretoria and Johannesburg, I, PIET BREEDVELD, whilst denying that I made any such allegations, nevertheless insofar as I might have been understood to have said anything derogatory of the said Mr. Gliksman, do hereby unreservedly withdraw any such allegations and apologise therefor.

JOHANNESBURG, this 19th day of April, 1949.

(sgd) P. Breedveld.



THE N.P.I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1949-50