SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

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

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JOINT EDITORS: PROFESSOR G. E. PEARSE, W. D. HOWIE.

CONTENTS FOR AUGUST 1946

A PORTFOLIO OF FLATS, by Herold H. le Roith, A.R.I.B.A.,

141	itti il i i controlli — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —	, -				
W	/. D. Howie				191 to	202
1.	Radoma Court, Yeoville, Joha	annesbu	rg.			
2.	Lhenveolan, Killarney Johanne	sburg.				
3.	Dunkeld Mansions, Dunkeld, J	ohanne	sburg.			
4.	Rosmund Apartments, Berea,	Johann	esburg			
5.	5. Harrock Heights, Rouxville, Johannesburg.					
6.	Mount Sheridan, Yeaville, Joh	nannesb	urg.			
7.	"Anlar," Berea, Johannesburg	3.				
THE G	SOTHIC ARCHITECTURE OF	NOR	MAND	Ү, Ь.у	Eric	
N	ewbigging					203
STUDE	NTS' FORUM					205
CONT	EMPORARY JOURNALS					213
NOTES	AND NEWS					214

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ENTRANCE PORCH, "RADOMA COURT"

A PORTFOLIO OF FLATS

HAROLD H. LE ROITH. ARCHITECT

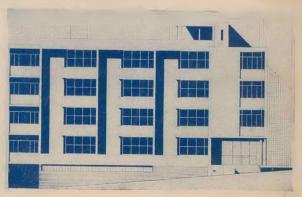
"RADOMA COURT" YEOVILLE, JOHANNESBURG



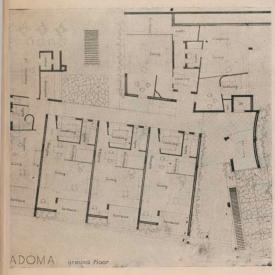
Erected prior to the war, Radoma Court occupies a site with frontages on the south and west boundaries. This situation imposed difficult problems in orientation, out of which emerged the articulated plan and hence the lively three-dimensional composition in which the main theme is the contrast between the sun-soaked western facade and the shaded southern elevation. On the south continuous banded windows were possible, while on the west, the necessity for protection has resulted in a deeply recessed treatment, in which even the balcony fronts lie behind the main face of the building, defined by the broad horizontal bands top and bottom, and the connecting vertical piers. These two contrasting elevations are moulded together in the composition by the soaring stair tower with its sparkling glass brick. Its articulation from the western block gives emphasis to its verticality and its subtle curve ties it to the south wall. The entrance hall may be approached from either street.

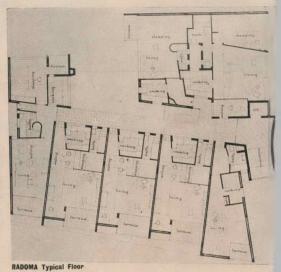
The building comprises 27 flats, of which 4 are two-room and the rest "bachelor" flats, a basement parking garage, and servants' quarters on the roof. In the north-east corner of the site there is a garden court with flower bads and pool, and on the roof a solarium and loggia with planting boxes is provided.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION











A CORNER OF THE ROOF GARDEN SHOWING THE SOLARIUM WALL.

OPPOSITE: A GENERAL VIEW OF THE BUILDING FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

RIGHT: A GLIMPSE OF THE GARDEN COURT ON THE GROUND FLOOR.



CONSTRUCTION AND FINISHES

A conventional reinforced concrete frame is used, with brick panel walling, all of which is plastered and painted. Deep blue facebrick with white recessed horizontal joints forms the wall of the basement garage which is entered at the north-west corner of the site. The balcony parapets on the central portion of the west facade are patterned with coloured squares, the others are of wiremesh in steel frames.

Colour plays an important part in composition of the building and externally it serves to define the forms and give added interest and significance to the surface planes. The balcony recesses are pale blue, with fawn squaring on the parapets, and the wire mesh parapets are white. The South wall is pale blue with white window frames. The entrance porch is in a deep plum colour on a rough textured plaster, on which the name of the building in white lettering is fixed. The squared panel is pale grey, doors are white and the floor black. The Solarium walls are pale "Eau-de-Nil," which, with the strong sunlight and the sharp interplay of shadows, produces various shades of green.





INTERNAL FINISHES

The floor finish in the living and bedrooms is wood block, that in the kitchens and bathrooms is subber between white tiled walls. The kitchens are completely equipped with built-in fittings, electric stoves and refrigerators. The bachelor flats are provided with a specially designed fitting between the living room and bed recess, which allows for conversion according to its function as a dining table or a bed fitting.

The colour schemes in the living rooms, in pastel shades, vary in the different flats. In some cases there is a contrast between pale green walls and off-white ceilings, while in others the walls are pale blue with white ceilings.

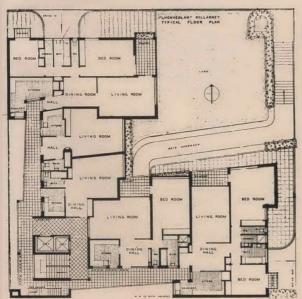
The Entrance hall on the ground floor has a floor of fawn coloured Mosaics. The walls are coloured terra-cotta and lemon yellow, with a contrasting blue ultramarine column. The free standing letter boxes are cream with a tomato red surround. The stairs are finished black with white wire mesh balustrading and handrails.

INTERIORS. LEFT: A view of the north-west flat, looking west, and RIGHT: a view of the north-facing bachelor flat overlooking the garden court. BELOW: The main stair and glass brick wall.





"LHENVEOLAN" KILLARNEY, JOHANNESBURG



This building comprises a block of luxury flats set in the generous northern suburb of Killarney on the outskirts of metropolitan Johannesburg, and is in what has become a centre of luxury flats in this city.

The building has been planned as an "L" along the two sides of the site to obtain the desired north and east orientation for all flats and to make the most of the open space available on the site. As a result of this approach all flats are planned in relation to the north and east aspects and the lifts, stairs, and access corridors are relegated to the south and west sides. A large private parking garage covers the whole site in the semi-basement, the roof of which carries the garden in front of the flats. Servants' quarters are located on the roof, and a squash court is an added amenity.

The five floors of flats containing 25 flats, display a variety in planning and types, including as they do flats ranging from single- to four-room types. It is noteworthy that each of the larger flats has separate shower and W.C. compartments in addition to the other generous provisions.

Access to the flats is by open corridors from the enclosed lift and stair halls. The kitchens are fitted out with cupboards, dressers, electric stoves, refrigerators and work tables, all with stainless steel sinks.



VIEW OF THE LIVING ROOM FROM DINING HALL OF FOUR BEDROOM FLAT, showing glezed screen which defines these two spaces. The locally made light fittings are in spun unpolished stainless steel. The north wall is entirely of glass. Floor: Kieat block; walls, pale green and ivory; ceiling, white.





VIEW OF THE MAIN BEDROOM OF A FOUR-ROOM FLAT, showing the built-in wardrobe and wall fitting. Walls: pale green and ivory.



FINISHES

The internal finishes generally include painted plaster walls in off-white and pale green with white ceilings. The floors to flats are in parquet, with linoleum in kitchens and rubber in the bathrooms. The entrance hall is panelled in marble with a mosaic floor. This panelling extends up the staircase, and the floors of the corridors are finished in non-skid tiles. The external finish generally is oil paint on plaster. The greater part of the wall surfaces is white. The east wall on the street boundary is painted pale "Eau-de-Nile" with pale blue on the balconies. The continuous parapets on the north elevation are picked out in buff painted plaster finished in a square tile pattern.

The squash court walls are painted pale green in differentiation from the ochre which is used on the remaining surfaces of the servants' quarters.

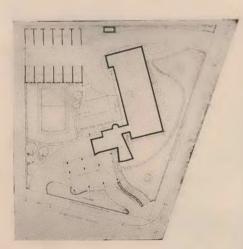
Railings are in sky blue and the wire mesh balustrading is white, while the steel panels of the balconies on the north wing are coloured maroon.

The building has a freshness and sparkle which well suits the sunny climate.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE BUILDING FROM THE ARCHITECTS PERSPECTIVE DRAWING



DUNKELD MANSIONS, JOHANNESBURG



SITE PLAN

Dunkeld Mansions is another block of luxury flats in a park-like setting in one of Johannesburg's outlying suburbs. Only portion of the original design has been carried out, the plans providing for further extensions to bring the scheme to a unified whole.

The building is constructed of a conventional reinforced concrete frame with brick panel walls and is planned in two wings, articulated about the staircase-lift unit.

There are six floors, including the ground floor, which contains an enclosed parking garage. Further garaging is provided in the rear of the site. The entrance hall is approached from the south and contains the lift hall and the stairs. The staircase is an interesting feature of the design in that the case is a free-standing vertical accent, in which the verticality is emphasised by the continuous fenestration, extending the full height, clear of stair landings and forming an emphatic contrast to the horizontal character of the rest of the structure.

Both the south-east and north-east wing consists of three-room flats, each with a living room, dining-room, two bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom with separate shower and W.C. compartments. On the fifth floor, however, the plan varies to provide two-room flats in the former and two-room and bachelor flats in the latter. On the roof is located the servants' quarters, and, on the north-east wing, a tealounge and kitchen adjoining a solarium, with a squash court with change-room attached.

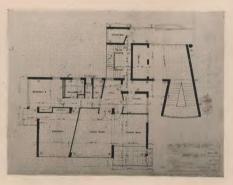


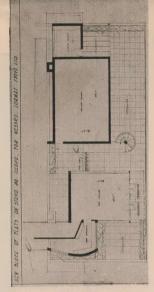
NORTH-EAST ELEVATION



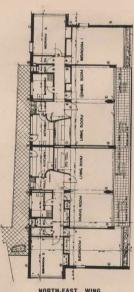
CORNER OF A

The interiors include a variety of colour schemes in pastel shades: parquet flooring with subber in kitchens and bathrooms, and non-skid tiles in corridors. Marbled panelling, parquet floor and teak stairs are included in the entrance hall. Railings are dove grey and the rough textured walls are in dark brown, lemon yellow and meridian. Walls are plastered, with rubble contrasts at the entrance, and glass panelling to balconies which, with the other features, impart a Continental character to the whole composition.





ROOF PLAN

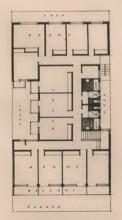


NORTH-EAST WING
TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN



NORTH ELEVATION

ROSMUND APARTMENTS, JOHANNESBURG



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

This is a building comprising single rooms erected on a somewhat restricted suburban plot, the main elevation of which faces north. It is a normal reinforced concrete frame building with brick panel walls, plastered and painted.

In all there are 35 rooms, each with basins and built-in cupboards. Owing to the restrictions of the site, five face north, four south and three face east on each floor. Bath, shower and W.C. facilities are provided on each floor and open on to an area on the west boundary.

The ground floor also includes a reception and enquiry office, phone cubicle, store and linen room. The north facing rooms have the added advantage of large balconies cantilevered over the ground floor. Entry is from the north and is defined by a small pale grey rough-cast flower box in a blue brick wall having white horizontal joints.

The design of the north facade, the only elevation facing the street, is essentially one of simplicity. The upper floors are defined by a generous frame which embraces the balconies and affords a certain degree of privacy. The continuous balcony parapets which impart a firm horizontality to the facade are in white painted wire mesh in steel frames coloured terra-cotta. The balcony divisions are of wired glass.

The frame and walling is painted white, contrasting with the sunblinds which are in terra-cotta colour. The steel windows and doors are painted pale "Eau-de-Nile" green. Light wood panelling is used in the entrance and staircase, with black granolithic flooring which is used also in the bathrooms. Elsewhere floors are of wood block

GENERAL VIEW FROM NORTH-WEST



Photos E. Hobinow

HARROCK HEIGHTS, ROUXVILLE, JOHANNESBURG

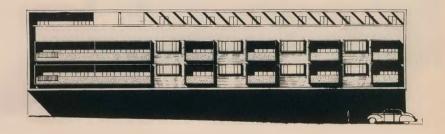
This building was completed in March, 1946. Situated on a site in the northern suburbs, it has frontages to the north and west, the latter being 150 feet in extent on Louis Botha Avenue in Rouxville, on the main traffic artery to Pretoria. The programme called for the entire ground floor to consist of shops, as this particular area is devoid of a "shopping centre." Eight shops have thus been incorporated in the building. The two upper floors consist of 14 flats, of which ten are two-room and the remaining four are three-room flats. All the flats have large balconies, partly enclosed, and the kitchens each have built-in cupboards, ironing boards and electric stoves as well as the other usual facilities. A parking garage is provided in the basement and is approached by a ramp from the north street boundary.

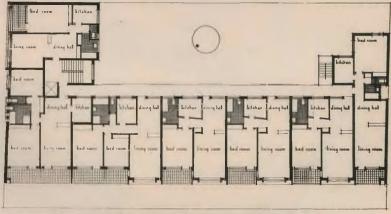
Owing to the fact that the long west front was subject to the direct rays of the hot highveld sun from noon onwards, some form of protection and recession was called for. This is evident in the framed bedroom windows and the recessed balconies, defined by framing which projects slightly from the main facebrick walling. The west elevation thus consists of a series of projections and recessions defined by the frame motif, which presents a formality of treatment, yet resulting in a definite rhythmic whole. The entire composition is unified by the main frame which embraces this facade, and which is continued forward on the roof to form a cantilevered reinforced concrete pergola. An effective result is thus gained by the striking interplay of shadow, which is enhanced by the colour applied to window frames and balconies.

FINISHES

The projecting frames to windows and balconies, and the main frame is painted pearl grey; balcony parapets are in light meridian green and the soffits in pale blue. Window and door frames are painted white and the face brick is golden brown. The wrought iron lettering on the white north wall is red, and that on the west is blue. The plaster squares on the north wall are pale green, and the column in the entrance porch is deep terra cotta. This polychromy, combined with the contrasts between textures as well as tonal values, has resulted in a fresh and lively composition.

The main entrance hall has a terazzo floor in contrast to the pale green roughtextured walling and pale blue ceiling. The stairs are black with terra-cotta coloured balustrading and white handrails. Granolithic flooring is used in kitchens, bathrooms and corridors with parquet elsewhere in the flats.





TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN AND WEST ELEVATION



MOUNT SHERIDAN, BEREA JOHANNESBURG

A black of three-roomed flets with an interesting facade treatment. Reinforced concrete frame, with brick panel walls, plastered and oil painted. Each flat has car-park space in basement, and servant's room on the roof. Face brick is golden brown. Eau-de-Nil tilles at entrance and belcony tile pattern buff.

"ANLAR," BEREA JOHANNESBURG



A block of rooms. Construction is conventional reinforced concrete frame, with brick panel wall. Face brick is golden brown with plaster contrasts. The elevations gain much from simple repetition and the telling articulation of the structural messes.

THE GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE OF NORMANDY

AFTER A RECENT VISIT

By Eric Newbigging

During recent visits to France I have had the opportunity of refreshing my memory on the beauties of French ecclesias-tical architecture. My inspections were very brief, and hampered by military restrictions, I was unable to take any photographs but time permitted a fair survey of the damage. Several churches and cathedrals have been severely damaged, such as S. Pierre at Caen, the cathedral at Rouen, only slight damage to others, Abbaye-aux-Homes at Caen; Amiens is fortunately undamaged.

French Gothic, known to the French as the Style Ogivale, is divided, as in England, into three main periods, (1) Primaire or Gothique a Lamettes; (2) Secondaire or Rayonnant; (3) Tertiare or Flamboyant. English Gothic architecture was an off-shoot of the French Gothic and the French craftsmen who imported their national ideas influenced our early development considerably, our insularity asserted itself and we produced a style peculiarly English. The first distinction between our own cathedrals and the French which strikes one, is the relation of cathedral to town. In England the cathedral stands aloof from the town, approached as a Salisbury, Canterbury and Lincoln from the close or are sited as at Durham, on the river. In France, where the cathedral was more essentially part of town life, surroundings do not enhance their beauty and they are surrounded by narrow streets and small houses: "Whose cramped, ill-featured streets huddled about the Minister for protection."

This is very apparent at Bayeux, the first French town to be liberated, the cathedral does not compare with the beauty of Amiens or Rheims, but it is interesting historically and it is always questionable as to how much has been renovated or rebuilt, as I found the guide books rather silent on this point. The two Norman towers dwarf the rest of the building and it is only when seen from the south-east that one has any feeling of balance of unity. The interior has no appeal of size, the sense of being small and infinitesimal, does not occur here as the eye travels up the nave piers to the vaulting.

Caen, famous for a stone, which was exported in medieval times for the building of Canterbury Cathedral and the Tower of London, is particularly wealthy in ecclesiastical buildings, but the severe aerial bombardment has brought much damage. The Abbaye-aux-Hommes, founded by William the Conqueror and built between 1066-77, comes within the French Romanesque period; this has suffered superficial damage to the roofing and windows. The appeal both externally and internally is one of massiveness, there is not the elaboration or the subtlety of the Gothic, merely a plain statement of fact—

a house of God reaching heavenwards. The strict emphasis on the vertical is apparent in the facade. The planning is based on that of the Roman basilica and the vaulting shows the difficulty experienced in spanning compartments of a plan other than square, without the aid of the pointed arch. It will be remembered that prior to the introduction of the pointed arch, the mason was forced to depress the arch in an oblong bay, with the introduction of the pointed arch a solution to any similar vaulting problem was possible by merely varying the degree of pointing. My visit did not allow sufficient time to visit the sister building, Abbaye-aux-Dames, founded by William the Conqueror's wife Matilda.

S. Pierre (1518—1545) which was noted for its fine turreted tower and the apsidal chapels, showing an early manifestation of the French Renaissance, has been badly damaged. The main body of the church is now merely a shell, but appears solid enough and not beyond reconstruction. The top half of the tower has been completely demolished.



ST. PIERRE, CAEN

Amiens, the finest and most representative example of the French Gothic Cathedral, has fortunately escaped damage. Careful precautions had been taken, the tower part of the western facade has been sandbagged, covering the "Beau Dieu d'Amiens" as well as the choir stalls, the "Bible of Amiens" representing one of the most perfectly executed examples of ecclesiastical wood-carving. I sat on the three steps of the western façade and examined at leisure the magnificence of the composition. The three part composition attracts the eye to the focal point in the centre with its wide doorway and rose window above, although the emphasis is on the vertical, it achieves its unity by the finely articulated galleries running horizontally below the towers, this has an effect of binding the whole, with an unsurpassed subtlety. Upon entering the nave the eye wanders first forward to the choir and then upwards to the vaulting, giving the full impression of the cathedral's overpowering magnificence and one's own humbleness. On each arm of the transept, the ornate marble alters designed by Blasset between 1625-1635 strike a note of incongruity. This brought to mind the unfortunate fact that so many of the French cathedrals abound with tawdry fleshy-coloured efficies which have neither the appeal of beauty or craftsmanship. The flamboyant rose wheels of each transept, containing fragments of the original stained glass are delightful, the one in the north arm is dominated by a delicately tinged pastel blue whilst that of the south, filtering the stronger light contains more vigorous and variegated patterns of fresh green, yellow and red. The choir unfortunately was heavily sandbagged, but I imagine that if they have

not already been moved they will not be there much longer. The cathedral of Amiens dominates the town and from ten miles away I could see it hovering delicately as if independent of the earth.

Rouen, the capital town of Normandy, has sustained damage to its cathedral, the two churches of S. Ouen and S. Maclou, and the 15th century Palais de Justice. The heavy bombardiment of the bridges crossing the Saine accounts for this and at the time of visiting both the cathedral and S. Maclou were closed to visitors. The damage to the cathedral, especially to the nave, was severe. The façade and the flâche remain intact. The façade is more complex than the one at Amiens, the composition conveys a sense of restlessness; it is composed as at Amiens of three units but these are all dissimilar in form, the delicacy of the detailed sculptural work remains an attraction. The plan is a cruciform and the long chapel at the apsidal end is a 14th century addition. The double-storeyed nave arcade is uncommon.

The churches of S. Ouen (1318-1515) and S. Maclou belong to the Flamboyant period, the latter is probably the finest example of this period in France. The roof of S. Ouen was damaged and leaked rather badly. S. Maclou with its pentagonal porch exhibiting the luxuriance of the flamboyant ornamentation has suffered more severely.

The horrid efficiency of modern warfare was never more apparent than in these ravaged buildings, which have stood unharmed through past centuries apitomizing all that is noblest in our civilisation.

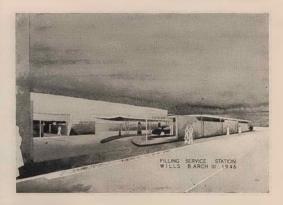


Amiene Cathedral from the South

STUDENTS' FORUM

AUGUST 1946

DESIGN OF THE MONTH - A SERVICE FILLING STATION
O. J. G. WILLS. B. Arch. III



CONTENTS

DESIGN OF THE MONTH.

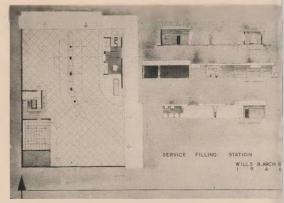
THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF JOHANNESBURG - ESTCOURT BUILDINGS.
CORRESPONDENCE NATIONAL HOUSING.

STUDENT EDITOR

DESIGN OF THE MONTH

The problem of filling station design has become very common in recent years. There is hardly a main street in any city or village without its share of congested cars collected around gaily coloured petrol bowsers. Not many of these filling stations function smoothly, however, while some serve as a veritable shock to the aesthetically sensitive, and others constitute an ordeal in manoeuvering to all but the most skilful drivers. Of course those filling stations which have been conceived in an architect's office are usually recognizable by direct circulations, easy access to services and orderly architectural treatment.

In "Design of the Month" a filling station designed by a third year student of Architecture is featured. It is a very neat and workable solution to the problem. The various elements into which the plan has been resolved are conveniently zoned, facilitating an easy approach and handling of cars without unnecessary crossing of circulations or undue congestion points.



The general architectural treatment, while owing a lot to Mies van der Rohe, shows a very pleasant horizontality in the proportions and a sensitive handling of architectural elements.

THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF JOHANNESBURG

ESTCOURT BUILDINGS

By Cyril A. Stoloff, Dip.Arch.III

Johannesburg was founded in 1886, and its earliest architecture belongs to the periods of "Late Victorian" and Edwardian. From the outset, it must of course be borne in mind that none of the historic buildings of Johannesburg possess any architectural pretensions whatever. They are merely the expression of an age in which most buildings were purely Classical and Gothic Revivals, resulting in a sham and pseudo architecture. Nevertheless they reflect a bygone era in Johannesburg, which was both stormy and colourful. They are a part of the city's tradition, and each has an atmosphere of its own. The point to bear in mind is simply that they are no worse than their counterparts in Europe and America. They all have an appearance of restlessness, and of course, in accordance with Victorian modes and principles, are unnecessarily plicated and fussy in design, with a superfluity of odd bric-abrac and an amazing exuberance of decoration.

One of the symptoms of Mid-Victorian architecture was an urge for the showy display of prosperity, but in Estcourt Buildings (Pritchard Street) which was constructed in the 1890's,



there is a reasonable restraint in treatment, this tending to become a feature of Late-Victorian. There is of course the slightly elaborate cast iron railings feature which is characteristic. Estcourt Buildings is a three-storey structure, with shops on the ground floor, and rooms above. The verandah and balcony parapets are in cast iron, and the roof is of corrugated iron. The central gable to take the name and to act as a focal point in the symmetrical façade is also character-

istic. In relation to the Early Victorian, it is noteworthy that in this building, surface textures are less broken, less dependent upon the plastic effect of orders, mouldings, and other "artificially" projecting and receding elements. On the upper floors, the plain wall surfaces are broken only by doors and large sash windows. The building originally faced on to the famous Von Brandis Square, upon which now stands the Supreme Court Buildings.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,

Students' Forum.

Sir,

NATIONAL HOUSING

I feel it most necessary to protest at the campaign against National Houses that has been conducted by the lay press, and I appeal to you to throw the influence of your journal into an effort to counter this campaign. Judging by the virility and tenacity of the anti-National House tirade, it would seem that this highly promising housing programme is hitting the vested interests of the speculative building industry where it hurts, and has thus provoked this vigorous reaction. It is understandable that the building industry looks askance at an experiment in nationalized housing, especially where control of profits is a feature, but surely, in the present housing emergency, the fulfilling of an adequate housing programme is of more importance to the community than the satisfaction of the desires of the building industry.

And what a campaign of villification this has been, what a frantic search for faults in the National Housing Scheme. What a grasping at straws this has been! "National Houses are too small "- the National House compares in accommodation more than favourably with its American and European counterparts, and is entirely satisfactory by health criteria. "The National House is unsightly, and is the slum of tomorrow" - How often do we see the unusual slated as the ugly; what a pity it is that aesthetics are so often judged by "what has been." To the critics of our lay press, in architecture custom hallows all things, and what is different, is wrong. Finally, their coup de grace, "National Houses are expensive, their rents are too high." A man with a large family who requires a four-bedroom house, cannot afford to pay its rent out of a monthly income of £25. This, say our newspaper logicians, is the fault of the National House. Surely this inability to pay rent is a sad commentary on the inadequacy of income and can hardly reflect on the National House. If National Houses are expensive to build, it is because of the steady and general rise in the cost of living in South Africa, and it is acknowledged that income has not risen proportionately. The National House provides a minimum but comfortable standard of living. The very people who denounce the houses because of their small size, decry equally bitterly their cost, and call for economies. Though it is true that, with the employment of different and more radical building methods and materials, building costs would be cut, it is certain that the costs will remain high, and above the means of the £25 per month income class. To cut accommodation and amenities, and so reduce the cost, would tend to bring the standard of accommodation below a decent minimum; and it is clear that if a minimum satisfactory standard of living is to be maintained, a campaign for an income commensurate with cost of living would achieve far more than a campaign against the National Houses, If, in view of the extereme housing shortage, some National Houses still remain empty because of high rents, that is a strong indictment indeed of our social system.

The National Housing programme, executed by a representative cross-section of the country's finest architects, provided a wonderful opportunity to improve, not only housing conditions, but also the face of our cities. National Housing Schemes, when fully developed and planted, provide a colourful and adequate setting for living far superior to normal, jerry-built suburbia. They are not the last word in housing development, but they are an encouraging beginning. It would be a great pity if this experiment in housing on a national scale should be stifled by public antipathy caused and aggravated by the adverse propaganda of a press campaign. It is up to every architectural journal of progressive outlook to combat this ill-informed and ill-intentioned campaign, and I trust that the Students' Forum will be in the vanguard of this fight.

GILBERT HERBERT.

B. Arch V.

University of the Witwatersrand.



Swedish Row housing, with alternate houses back to front, creating private gardans. This illustration is of a very pleasant housing group, which, though the houses are of a fairly conventional design, they form part of a very small planned community.

From the Architectural Forum July 1945



An attractive group of National Houses in Johannesburg.



Play areas in Baldwin Hills Village, Los Angeles, California.

The Editor replies:

The National Houses are the first post war effort on the part of the South African Government to satisfy an immense demand for housing. In the press and from sections of the community have come bitter attacks, aimed at what they consider an inadequate attempt to provide homes.

It is a pity that those responsible have not started a more vigorous campaign than they have, in defence of their very commendable efforts. National Housing schemes are certainly not entirely free from rather serious defects, but most of the individual houses, architect conceived, achieve a good standard of design. The public outcry has been so insistent, however, that the National Housing Commission, perhaps not quite having the full courage of their convictions, will, in all probability, give in to lay criticism and adjust the designs to conform more with popular taste.

Mr. Herbert has written a letter in defence of National Housing and has raised some very good points, especially those dealing with vested interests.

It is quite in order to defend an existing standard from deterioration, but on surveying the achievements of the Housing Commission in the very broadest terms, it will be noted that there are very definite shortcomings, particularly from the dwelling-types, layouts and social aspects.

The housing body is not a producer that has had to artificially stimulate a demand for their product and then had to maintain it by supplying an article in precise keeping with public taste. The demand for dwelling places exists in proportions almost disastrous to national welfare and it was the business of the housing authorities to satisfy this demand in a way that would also have satisfied the requirements of an adequate and happy environment for the newly housed community. In fact, the National Housing schemes could have been so conceived that they would have served as models for future suburban development everywhere in South Africa.

Where the housing complex was large enough, the neighbourhood unit idea, with its fine social and cultural advantages. could well have been applied. Alternately, working in cooperation with the municipalities concerned, a large number of national houses adjoining existing suburban growth could have been so laid out that together they could be developed into a neighbourhood unit centering around social facilities. These could comprise a properly sited school, where warranted, or simply a community centre where, besides the social and cultural activities indulged in, the residents from the National houses and older suburb could be brought together to form one happy community.

While appreciating the difficulties any change in township layouts would raise it was vitally important that machinery should have been set in motion to produce a good housing scheme layout and not only the basic houses. In certain localities park strips and adequate road circulation could have been left between national houses and older suburbs, both developments gaining thereby.

In spite of public opinion, various housing forms could have been tried. It is a fallacy to believe that S. Africa is fortunate in having its generous share of the "vast open spaces" each family MUST be housed in its own separate house. Well-designed row houses are still waiting to be tried as well as a socially organized, well designed flat block housing complex.

Using an approach such as briefly outlined here, the National Housing Commission might have achieved something really in keeping with post-war hopes, and public criticism then need not have proved such a danger. Whenever and wherever housing has been provided for the lower income groups, attacks of one sort or another have been aimed at the responsible bodies, unless, of course, the housing provided conforms exactly to the standards and forms the public has adopted as part of its environment. Accepting criticism as inevitable then, the housing authorities, being convinced that their approach was a valid one for the mid-twentieth century, could have carried out their task with greater enthusiasm and determination.

South Africa has always lagged far behind European social and cultural developments. When, however, it does come to the fore in the field of housing legislation, (giving the housing authority almost dictatorial powers), the materialization of the possibilities has been so disappointing in terms of the number of houses provided in relation to the number required, and the approach to the whole problem has been so narrow that it can be said that South Africa has not succeeded in solving its crippling housing problem.

S. A. ABRAMOWITCH.

WYTHENSHAWE

AN EXPERIMENT IN TOWN PLANNING

By Norman Jordan Moss

In 1919, the Housing Committee of the City of Manchester was faced with an apparently impossible task. Manchester's soldiers were coming home from the war, building and repairs had been interrupted, costs were high. There was a shortage in the City of 18,000 houses, and an estimated need of over 52,000. Provision had to be made for industrial and commercial expansion. There was simply not enough building land within the City to meet requirements.

The City Surveyor, casting about for suitable building sites, reported that beyond the City's southern boundary lay a tract of undeveloped land, the ancient estate of the Tatton family, which might provide the solution. The more he examined it, the more enthusiastic he grew. Looking across the broad parklands, he began to see it as the potential site of one of the finest garden cities in the United Kingdom; beautifully wooded, near enough to the city, yet far enough from the city's grime, and protected from the city's smoke by the clean sweep of the prevailing South-west winds. But the planning must be first-class. The town must not encroach upon the countryside; the countryside must beautify the town.

The Committee consulted the great housing expert, Professor Abercrombie, and, when they found that he confirmed the City Surveyor's view, determined on a bold step—the step owhich the whole plan depended. The Committee recommended that the land should be purchased, and control of development assured. The recommendation was accepted. In 1927 the Tatton estate was purchased! three neighbouring parishes became part of Manchester by a special Act of Parliament—the Manchester Extension Act of 1930—so that to-day the Corporation owns 4,055 acres, or 73% of the 5,547 acres comprising the district, which they have called Wythenshawe.

This method of acquisition permitted of a scale of planning and a financial outlay which would have been impossible for the authorities of the rural districts which comprised the site. Basic services, roads, sewers, water, gas and electricity mains, even a new bridge over the river Mersey, had to be built before the houses which would bring in revenue in the form of rates.

Mr. Barry Parker, planner of the model town of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Suburb, prepared the plan—a plan which combined the understanding of a sociologist, the accurate foresight of a scientist, the practicality of a technician, and the vision of an artist.

The residential areas were designed to form a socially balanced group—a rough cross-section of the whole community—and included houses for both large and small families. Two, three and four-bedroom types were provided, together with single and two-storey blocks of flats for aged people, and three-storey flats for single people. Bigger blocks of flats house families who prefer flats to houses. In addition, building by private enterprise and by owner-occupiers on land leased by the Corporation and within the planned framework of the scheme, has been encouraged in suitable parts of the estate. Densities are fixed at twelve houses per acre for

Corporation-built and -let houses and ten, eight and six per acre for privately-built houses.

During recent years the idea of "neighbourhood units" has been introduced, each unit or group of houses having its own community and shopping centre and its own schools, churches, cinemas, hotels, health centres, clinics and nurseries, baths and libraries - all planned in consultation with the various bodies responsible for each of these amenities. By September, 1943, well over 8,000 houses had been built by the Corporation for letting (excluding a number of large blocks of flats) and 861 built privately on land leased by the Corporation. In addition, a community centre, eight schools, twelve churches, four hotels and two cinemas have already been built to meet present needs. It is estimated that, when completed, the daughter-city will house a population of 80,000, in neighbourhood units of 10,000 to 12,000 people. A civic centre is yet to be provided, where the main public buildings will be situated, and a new and spacious hospital will replace the existing sanatorium.

The schools, incidentally, form a striking example of the care with which the plan is designed. All of them, the main school, the two junior and infant schools, and the five nursery



The illustration at left shows the wide spacing of the houses and the fine old trees which have been retained.

BELOW, LEFT: Flats for old people. At Wythenshawe many types of citizens can find houses specially designed for their needs. BELOW, RIGHT: The smaller three-bedroom type of houses and their oleastant gardens.





schools, are so planned that the children, on their way to and from home, have no need to cross any main through-traffic roads, or even, with a few exceptions, principal internal roads.

The agricultural belts, in which only agricultural buildings are permitted, surround the estate, thus permanently ensuring access to green fields and preventing the encroachment of the builder. These belts comprise one-fifth of the total area, but in addition, in the planning of the residential sections, woods, spinneys, gardens and tree-lined footpaths have been preserved wherever possible.

Communications are a special feature of the plan. A series of roads traverse the estate at intervals of about a mile. Two main roads, one across the new Mersey bridge, which will be Manchester's main avenue to the South, the other crossing the estate from North-west to South-east, have been developed as parkways on the American principle. Their overall width is 300 feet. Of this, 40 feet represents actual carriageway for vehicles; the adjoining land is free of all buildings, and forms a broad border of wooded parkland through which the public footpaths meander. In this way, even the fast traffic arteries retain the beauty of a country

road, while the houses adjoining the parkway are screened from noise.

But the agricultural belts and the parkways are only part of the plan whereby the country, instead of being driven out by the new town, stays to booutify it. The ancient park and hall of the Tatton estate, comprising about 250 acres, has been left as it stood when the Tattons owned it, and the grounds have been opened to the public. At Peel Hall, another once private park which is now part of the estate, 100 acres have been reserved as a municipal golf-course. In all parts of the estate, open spaces have been left for playing-fields and parks, and, in addition, the spinneys and woods are linked by a field-path system, giving a series of pleasant pedestrian ways through the neighbourhood. Field-paths give access to shops and schools, and will eventually form part of a complete network of such paths, covering the whole estate,

The success of Wythenshawe plan has shown what can be achieved by planning even if the planning is along novel and experimental lines. The lessons that were learnt by the pioneers will now be available to the planners of the new Britain; the Wythenshawe estate is the practical example and model of what Britain can and will do for her citizens.

CONTEMPORARY JOURNALS

"THE ARCHITCTURAL REVIEW," May, 1946.

In "The Architecture of Authority" Lionel Prett shows by analysis of the work of the Nazi regime's leading architects what the choice between death and the end of free development as artists has meant to architecture in Germany.

A building of merit in this issue is the great Söder Hospital in Stockholm, the largest structure in Sweden, well illustrated and with short description. "Housing at Ivrea" reports the housing project comprising a series of flat blocks by Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, designed in 1939 to house the workers of a factory.

Richard Turley records the story in "Early Victorian City Planning" of Georgian planning as it developed at New-castle-upon-Tyne between 1834 and 1860. John Piper in "Colour in Building" discusses the lesson of the old-fashioned market square.

"THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM," May, 1946.

An attractive country house in California by Raphael S. Soriano opens this issue and among others a remodelled farmhouse by Pietro Belluschi and two houses on a steep hillside in San Francisco by Wuster, Bernardi and Emmons are noteworthy.

A project for a new skyscraper adjoining the Rockefeller Centre by Carson and Lundin, architects long associated with the centre, shows a 33-storey structure which is designed to harmonise with the existing buildings of the group. The square topped tower is composed of a series of uninterrupted vertical piers.

"Art of the South Seas" presents Rene d'Hamoncourt's adroit planning and subtle application of colour in a recent experimental museum installation.

Other buildings illustrated include an airline office, offices for a small publishing firm, in which colour reproductions greatly enhance the presentation, which is comprehensive and well detailed, a watch case factory where special measures are adopted to recover minute quantities of valuable metals; and six projects involving remodelling of existing structures for different trade unions.

A highlight of this number is Eric Hodgin's delightful satire, "Mr. Blandings builds his castle"—the sad story of Mr. Blandings' shattering experiences in building a small country house.

"PENCIL POINTS." May. 1946.

The school programmes of two communities are presented; the first, a one-room school to serve the needs of a township in Ontario, accommodates 35 children in all grades. The highly individual solution provides all requirements, including domestic science and manual training as well as providing the only meeting place for the district. The second is the programme for three new schools in St. Louis ranging from a 2,100 pupil high school, which is very fully illustrated, to two elementary schools for 1,000 and 400 respectively.

Richard J. Neutra contributes "Observations on Latin America," having used excerpts from broadcasts and lecture notes made during his recent tour, to which much interest is added by the use of some of the author's sketches.

Materials and Methods" includes a comprehensive article by E. R. Daggy, illumination design engineer, on "Lighting Design and Human Environment" in which he discusses the approach to illumination and its architectural application. The second item is on "Preventing Moisture Condensation in Building Construction" by the technical secretary, Insulation Board Institute, Paul D. Close. The third is by Carrall A. Towne, Department of Regional Studies, T.V.A., on "Housing and Prefabrication in Germany, Great Britain and U.S.A., which is a brief comparative survey of present conditions.

"ARCHITECTURAL RECORD," May, 1946.

The Case for Rental Housing in America is put forward in both the editorial and by Emerson Goble, and eight different examples of rental housing are published.

Building Types Study 113 is on Community Buildings. This is a comprehensive survey, including discussion on preliminary surveys of needs, organisation of basic elements, the provision of necessary facilities and flexibility and the problem of different age groups. Included are plans and illustrations of a number of community buildings of different types.

Under the new title head, "Architectural Engineering," R. R. J. Tinkham contributes a well documented discussion on "Isolation of Sound in Buildings." The second item gives a full and detailed description of the Fuller House.

"L'ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOUR D'HUI," January, 1946.

This issue is entirely devoted to prefabrication and idustrialised building. Much thought has obviously been given to this subject in France recently and a number of systems have been developed. A brief comparative survey of prefabrication in England, U.S.A., Switzerland, Sweden and Russia is included.

NOTES AND NEWS

PROVINCIAL WORK

Sannieshof School Farm: Two Hostels: Erection
Sir John Adamson Junior High School, Improvements
Witkop School 66, Vereeniging: Additions
Gymnasium High School and Mooi Rivier School, Potchefstroom: Sewerage Installation
Central School, Potchefstroom: Sewerage Installation
Senior South School, Potchefstroom: Sewerage Installation
President Pretorius School, Potchefstroom: Sewerage In-

Claremont English Medium School, Hercules: Erection

Hendrik Potgieter Annexe (Potchefstroom), Domestic

Aandster School, Bloemhof: New hostel and additions General Pienaar School Farm: Native Quarters, new Hospital and Laundry

New Bethal Pr Kendal School New Migdel Delmas School Normal Collec Hoer Valkskoo Hendrik Pota Installation Barberton Scho Bloomhof Afrik ations Zwartruggens ing Centr Pretoria Afrika Springs High alterations

stallation

New Florida High School: Erection

Science Additions

The following is a list of the allocation of Provincial work to members of the Transvaal Provincial Institute during the period 1st April, 1944, to 30th June, 1946.

QUARTER ENDING JUNE, 1944,

SERVICE	ARCHITECTS	QUANTITY SURVEYORS	CONTRACTORS	CONTR		
Primary School and Assembly Hall: Erection 11: New Teachers' Quarters: Erection School: Erection: Schweiser Reneke DI: Additions and alterations gee, Potchefstroom: Sewerage Installations DI: Potchefstroom: Sewerage Installations gieter School, Potchefstroom: Sewerage DI: Additions Additions and Alter- tikeans Medium School: Additions and Alter-	Kallenbach, Kennedy & Furner F. H. Moerdyk Green & Hermer Fyvie & Eddy P. R. Nel P. R. Nel P. R. Nel T. N. Duncan	G. B. MacIntosh Farrow & Laing Roos & Roos E. A. Gaisford	W. H. Gresty Peter Robertson & Co. W. E. Scott & Son McLaren & Taylor H. Heukelman H. Heukelman H. Heukelman G. Newlands (Pty.) Lid.	£38,953 2,200 13,630 9,133 1,885 1,827 328 14,841	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0
High School Domestic Science and Train-	S. B. Cunningham	Farrow & Laing	Eloff & Altman	9,248	0	0
re saans Hoer Meisieskool School, Selcourt Township: additions and	Margo, Breedveld & Margo Burg, Lodge & Burg	Ferrow & Laing Borkenhagen & Louw	F. C. Holton Stuart Bros.	6,849 16,194		
ns	Fyvie & Eddy	Roos & Roos	Church & Son	9,786	0	0
			TOTAL	£124,874	0	0
						-

QUARTER ENDING SEPTEMBER, 1944.

-	lorman, Eaton & Fair I. W. Spicer . N. Duncan	Borckenhagen & Louw	Eloff & Altman H. Berryman & Son Badenhorst & Stretton	£26,577 15,577 4,768	0	0
	. R. Nel		H. Heukelman H. W. H. du Plessis	1,473 633		
Р	. R. Nel		A. E. Best	1,080	15	6
A	. R. Nel i. V. Nunn . Bruce	Selkirk & Lane J. S. Hodge	H. W. H. du Plessis G. Newlands J. H. Cuyler (Pty.) Ltd.	1,019 16,475 32,116	0	۵
	R. Nel Joubert	J. H. Labuschagne	H. Haukelman v.d. Leek, Sallmeyer & Co. (Pty.) Ltd.	274 44,232		
5	tegman, Orpan & Porter	Hickman, Bjorkman & Rose- Price	v.d. Spek & Matthyssen	18,995		

TOTAL £163,219 0 0

QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER, 1944.

SERVICE ARCHITECTS QUANTITY SURVEYORS CONTRACTORS AMOUNT White River School, Barberton: Additions J. Ralston Roos & Roos U. D. Verhoeve Letabe: Erection of Offices and Workshop Burg Lodge & Burg W. Campbell 2,339	0 3
Kingswood School: Building for Centralized School S. B. Cuningham — Rabel & Dianes: 3,980 CLord Milner School Farm: Superintendent's Quarters P. Nel — H. F. Clark 2,787 C. High School for Girls, Potchefstroom: Sewarage, Additional School for Girls, Potchefstroom:	0 0
Lydenburg High School: Heating Installation G. F. Sitzgerald Butler & Herbert Engineering	0 0
Justitia Girls' Hostel, Lichtenburg: Alterations, etc. G. Albert A. W. Springthorpe J. R. Rumble 31,300 O Jeppe High School: Conversion of War Memorial to	0 0
Library C. Small — C. Cimma 2,925 0	
QUARTER ENDING MARCH, 1945.	
Pretoria West New Junior Afrikaans Medium High	
School J. B. Day T. J. Clark L. Draper £56,853 0 Christiana School Hostal Superintendant's Residence:	0 0
Erection Stagman, Orpen & Porter — Departmental 3,050 0 Eastmoot (Innesdal) School, Pretoria: New Buildings:	0
Erection Mallows & Meadly Borckenhagen & Louw G. Nawlands 45,657 0	0 0
Heidelberg Normal College: Additions: Women's Hos- tel Corrigall & Brickmay Roos & Roos P. J. Swanapoel 41,282 0 Potehastroom High School for Boys, Drainage and addi-	
tions P. R. Nel A. J. Stender 6,255 0 Yolksrust High School: New Hostel for Boys H. Fyvie & Eddie Puntis Babbs & Lebdon L. Fokkens 44,925 0 Standarton High School: Manuel Training and Domestic	
Science Centres C. Sayce B. MacIntosh W. H. Gresty 9,445 U Paul Kruger School Farm: Two new Hostels E. Todd D. S. Mann J. Zylistra 18,059 0 Dwaalboom School, Zwertruggens: new Hostel and	0
School Burg, Lodge & Burg . D. S. Mann J. R. Rumble 92,798 U Bathal New Primary School: Heating Installation Kallenbach, Kennedy & Furner G. B. MacIntosh Reunert & Lenx 1,571 7 Brits High School: New Buildings Provincial Administration Borkenhagen & Louw van Hearden & Johnson	8
Potgietersrust Junior High School: New Buildings E. C. Gilham J. W. M. Clark (B. A. Gaisford) P. S. P. Lamb 44,998 0	0
Graskop School, Wakkerstroom: New Teachers' Quarters A. S. Murray — W. van Suilchen & Schoonen 2,749 0 Pretoria European, Orthopaedic Centre W. G. McIntosh D. S. Mann & Partners J. R. Dewberry Benoni Domestic Science and Manuel Training Centres Provincial Administration A. R. Wilcox C. T. Oschger 5,772 0	0
TOTAL £463.855 0	0
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QUARTER ENDING JUNE, 1945.	
Middelburg High School Manual Training and Domestic Science Centres: Erection Linden Junior High School: Erection Ceers & Geers Ceers & Goos & Roos & C. T. Oschger College, Prestoria: New Women's Hostel: C. Sayce Geers & Goos & Roos & C. T. Oschger College, Prestoria: New Women's Hostel: C. Sayce Geers & Goos & Roos & Roos Borckenhagen & Louw F. C. Holton 37,989 ONDITIES College, Prestoria: New Women's Hostel:	0
Erection E. Todd D. S. Mann & Partners Engel & Ruyter 54,887 0	0
Stirtonville Indian and Coloured School: Sewerage In- stellation J. E. Fitt C. W. Robins 1.285 0 Vischkuil New School, Springs: Erection J. E. Christiaan 24,000 0	0
Helpmekaar High School Boys' Hostel: Additions and alterations Borckenhagen & Louw A. S. Dunstan 5.044 0	0
Klipriviersberg New English Medium Junior High School: Erection Puntis Babbs & Labdon C. J. Hookham 43.898 0	0
TOTAL E226,019 0	0

QUARTER ENDING SEPTEMBER, 1945.

CONTRACT

SERVICE	ARCHITECTS	QUANTITY SURVEYORS	CONTRACTORS	AMOUNT
Derdepoort School, Pretoria: Additions	P. S. Dykstra	Sincleir & Bowyer	Tvl. Construction Co. (Pty.)	£5,290 0 0
Germiston Afrikaans Medium High School: Erection Wagandrift School, Middelburg: Erection Nelspruit: Erection of Store and Workshop	Fyvie & Eddy Shaw & Philpot Ried & Martin	D. Caplan & Partners A. W. Springthorpe Sinclair & Bowyer	A. S. Dunsten Leemhuis & Sons (Pty.) Ltd. J. Verhoeve	61,944 0 0 20,657 0 0 6,477 0 0
			TOTAL	£94,368 0 0
	QUARTR ENDING DEC	EMBER, 1945.		
Krugersdorp Monument High School: Manuel Training and Domestic Science Centres: Erection Witpoort School, Ventersdorp: Additions and alteration: General Nicoleas Smit School, Pretoriat Additions Villeria School, Pretoriat Additions Villeria School, Pretoriat Additions Branthurst Junior School, Braskpan: Additions Pretersburg High School Manual Training and Domestin	Moerdyk & Watson S. B. Cunningham P. R. Nel P. R. Nel M. L. Bryer	Selkirk & Lane A. W. Springthorpe Sinclair & Bowyer	W. S. Crichton C. J. Hartwell J. Gartsman J. Gartsman W. H. Gresty	£7,741 0 0 8,985 0 0 2,687 0 0 1,679 0 0 4,020 0 0
Science Centres: Erection	J. Vavra	S. P. van der Merwe	W. Campbell	10,534 0 0
Pretozia Normal College: Additions: Women's Hostel: Erection Erasmus Junior High School: Eraction Hermanstad School, Pretoria: Additions	E. Todd & G. W. MacIntosh A. V. Nunn P. R. Nel	D. S. Mann & Partners A. W. Springthorpe	W. Pattison J. H. Boerman & Son D. Veldhuzen	54,984 0 0 44,962 0 0 64,411 0 0
			TOTAL	£200,003 0 0
	QUARTER ENDING M	ARCH 1946		
to the I II' to School Manual Testing and Democking	QUARTER ENDING M	AKO11, 1740.		
Lichtenburg High School Manual Training and Domastic Science Centre: Erection Krugersdorp Road Depot: Extension to Workshops Christiana High School Manual Training and Domestic	S. B. Cunningham Hoogterp	T. Moore A, L. Lefeaux	Pois and van Dyk G. W. Sanders	£7,993 0 0 21,192 12 6
Science Centre: Erection	S. Ahrends	T. Moore & Bell	v.d. Spek & Matthysen	8,447 0 0
alterations Brits Agricultural School: Additions Waterval Boven School: Two Teachers' Quarters: Erection	Fischbeck Barry & Fitzgerald J. S. McFayden	Stewart Ellis E. A. Gainsford	J. R. Dewberry v. Heerden & Johnson R. Kirkpatrick	12,466 0 0 2,717 0 0 5,680 0 0
			TOTAL	£58,495 0 0
	QUARTER ENDING	JUNE, 1946.		
Bedford View School: Witwatersrand East: Additions	W. Whyte	T. J. Clark	W. H. Gresty	£7,554 0 0
Potchafstroom Volks High School Manual Training and Domestic Science Cantre: Erection Pretoria North Afrikaens Medium School: Additions Haidalberg Normal College: Additions Halpmelaer Hoer Meisieskool: New Buildings: Erection Hartebaestspruit School: Pretoria: Additions Regents Park English Medium School: Additions and	C. E. Londt C. E. Marshall Corrigal & Crickmay Stucke, Harrison & Smail P. S. Dykstra	Farrow, Laing & McKechnie Solkirk & Lane Quail & Quail Selkirk & Lane J. W. Cowling & Son	Eloff & Altman S. D. Naude S. J. Labuschagne P. J. Erasmus Pols & van Dyk	4,666 0 0 16,745 0 0 25,032 0 0 63,613 0 0 5,250 0 0
alterations Mayfair Jubileum School: Additions Potchefstroom Normal College Swimming Bath and Fil-	M. L. Bryer C. B. Youldon	Sinclair & Bowyer Roos & Roos	F. T. Cooke (Pty.) Ltd	14,007 0 0
tration Room Rietfontein Laundry Supply and Erection	C. P. Lange W. van Berg	A. J. Lane	C. Barnes & Son	4.948 0 0
			TOTAL	£141,815 0 0

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