

requires light and a particular form, it will of necessity express itself in such manner on the exterior. In this we have no choice, this just happens”.

“You might be asking what this has to do with building material. Precisely this, every one of the various materials was tested in advance for its acoustical absorption qualities, the ash blocks in the cloister walls and ceiling, as well as the staircases, furthermore the wire-cut side of the brick, the texture of the off-shutter concrete as it appears etc. All these materials are porous. If painted or varnished, the texture would change immediately, reduce the acoustical absorption capacity and as a result prolong the reverberation. Doing this will irreparably impede the acoustics”.

“Give the church with its original materials the opportunity to answer and ful-

fil the inscription in the narthex ‘To God be the glory’. Roelf S Uytenbogaardt”.

Although the missive might remind historians of Alberti’s argument of 1454 “if you alter anything you will spoil all that harmony”, the argument succeeded over 500 years later, for the *kerkraad* resolved not just to accept but to frame the letter and mount it in the *consistorie* (Uytenbogaardt Papers. Meeting of the *kerkraad* 6 Dec 1965). The realisation of the building as designed was now in sight.

In collaboration with the consultant Udo Klop (*Gedenkblad* [vi]), the walls were acoustically damped with a quilt of fibreglass insulation sandwiched between the outer stretcher-bonded imperial bricks and a perforated inner skin. For the latter Uytenbogaardt designed panels with three courses of wire-cut

stack-bonded brickwork laid on edge, alternating with a header course tied back to the outer skin. Laying bricks on edge exposed the three core holes and wire-cut texture, and the stack-bonded bricks had continuous open perpend, the widths of which were determined by the position of the panel (Fig 15).

Interestingly, in dealing with the acoustic qualities of the auditorium Uytenbogaardt mentioned neither floor surfaces nor furniture. Timber strip flooring on battens was chosen for the floors covering the areas designated for seating including the stalls on the gallery, seating banks and nave, the *consistorie* and *oppersaal*. In the nave, this encompasses the central aisle, coverage of which reached to the dais where the *nagmaal* table and font would be accommodated when not in storage in the two rooms beneath the seating banks. In all other areas the concrete floors were merely polished, carpeted today.

The principal items of furniture in any church are the pews and those at Welkom-Wes follow the precedent of Ronchamp. The pew ends are of concrete and, consistent with the design of the baldachin and lectern, have a split down the centre, which in the unequal heights distinguishes backrest from seat. A timber rail inserted in the split provides the basis for the seat, while the backrest consists of an angled plank which at its rear accommodates holders, alternatively for hymn books and communion glasses. This basis was then adjusted for the stepped circumstances of the bleachers and galleries, with raked profiles to the pew ends and a dedicated rail for book and glass holders. Heating was later affixed to the side of the timber rails and the seats were given cushions (Fig 16).

“LET THE ROOM INSIDE BE THE ARCHITECTURE OUTSIDE”

But for the *oppersaal* the building is windowless, and the wall surfaces of flush-jointed facebrick or concrete cast on smooth formwork with chamfers to all edges, render the exterior a fortress, even more solid than Wright’s prototype.

Uytenbogaardt had taken Wright’s desiderata “Let the room inside be the architecture outside” (McCarter, 2005: 79) a step further in that the

