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South African Architectural Record: Journal of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal Provincial Institutes of South African Architects and the Chapter of South African Quantity Surveyors

1941

Institutes of South African Architects and the Chapter of South African Quantity Surveyors

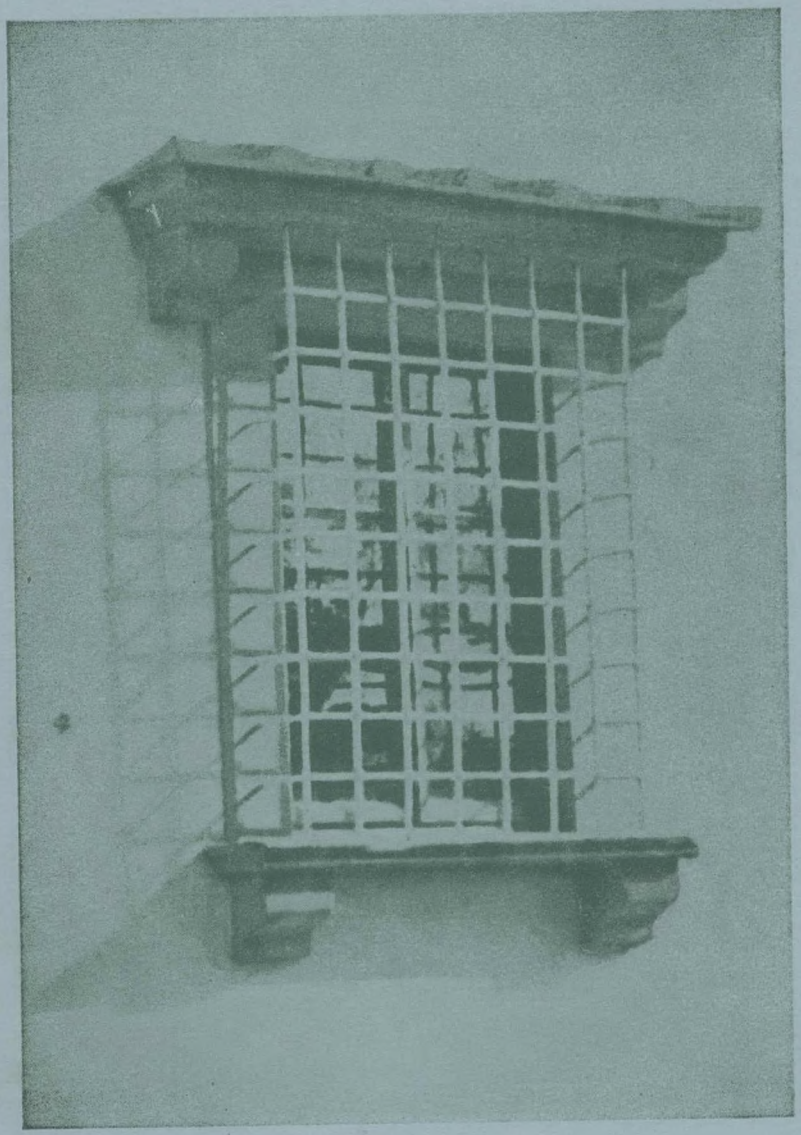
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SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

C O N T E N T S

- Cover Illustration: Ground Floor Window, Cigliano
- Frontispiece: Palazzo Antinori, Florence. Photos by R.D.M.

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THE 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.

202, Kelvin House, 75, Marshall St., Johannesburg. Telephone 34-2921

Volume Twenty Six, Number Five, May, 1941.

The Editors will be glad to consider any MSS., photographs or sketches submitted to them, but they should be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes for return if unsuitable. In case of loss or injury they cannot hold themselves responsible for MSS., photographs or sketches, and publication in the Journal can alone be taken as evidence of acceptance. The name and address of the owner should be placed on the back of all pictures and MSS. The Institute does not hold itself responsible for the opinions expressed by contributors.

Annual subscription £1 - 1 - 0 direct from the Secretary.

HON. EDITORS: G. E. PEARSE, REX MARTIENSSEN.



THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION AND PRIZE-GIVING SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

The Annual Exhibition was held on Friday, April 25th and was attended by a representative gathering of Architects and Quantity Surveyors. Professor Pearse, in welcoming the guests, made the following remarks concerning the School.

It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Staff and Students, to our Seventeenth Annual Exhibition and Prize Giving.

I am particularly pleased to welcome Mr. A. S. Furner, President of the Transvaal Provincial Institute of Architects, who has kindly consented to present the prizes. Mr. Furner has long been associated with the School and, as a colleague, assisted me in its organisation in the early days.

I am very glad to have to report that, since our last exhibition, we have attained a higher status in the University and now have our own Faculty of Architecture.

The School of Architecture was established as a Department in the Faculty of Engineering in 1921, and has grown rapidly. At that time there was one degree student and ten students taking the registration course under the Transvaal Architects' Act. To-day there are over one hundred students.

It was through the generosity of a few Architects, notably Mr. D. M. Burton, that the Chair of Architecture was established. One of the subscribers to the Chair, the late Mr. J. A. Moffat, has left a large sum of money to the University. Since 1921, fifty-five degrees have been conferred and seventy-one diplomas awarded.

Of these past students, many have become leading practitioners in the Union, and members of the Committees and Councils of the Institute. Four are past Presidents of the Transvaal Provincial Institute and one past President in Chief of the South African Institute, whilst others hold high official positions in the Union. In spite of the war, the number of students has not dropped appreciably. This year there are eighty-six students taking architecture and twenty, who were admitted to a special course which was

completed in February. There are twenty-four taking Quantity Surveying and ninety taking Fine Arts, making a total of two hundred.

I wish to thank Professor Bell-John, of Pretoria, for his continued assistance in lecturing here and assisting us in co-ordinating the work of the two schools, Pretoria and Johannesburg.

During the past year thirteen degrees have been conferred, three with distinction, and twelve diplomas awarded. The degree of B.A. with honours in Fine Arts with distinction, was conferred on Heather Martienssen a past student.

Owing to the war and the difficulty of obtaining employment, the fourth year of practical experience has been dropped, thus enabling students who wish to join the forces, to complete their academic courses. Over seventy of our past students are now serving with the forces.

Mr. Hendrikz, our lecturer in Fine Arts, has been commissioned and is now at the Military College. Before asking the President to present the prizes I wish to thank the following donors:—The Transvaal Provincial Institute of Architects, Messrs. D. M. Burton, Gordon Leith, A. S. Furner and Farrow and Laing.

This year we have included in our Exhibition the work of past students which reflects the high standard of work being carried out in this country to-day.

I now have much pleasure in asking Mr. Furner to present the following prizes:—

First Year: 1, R. K. L. Moore; 2, J. P. v. d. Waal (Pretoria).

Second Year: 1, R. L. Niebuhr; 2, Miss M. F. Bothwell and Miss B. Greenman.

Third Year: 1, R. A. Todd, 2, D. M. Calderwood and O. Hurwitz (Pretoria).

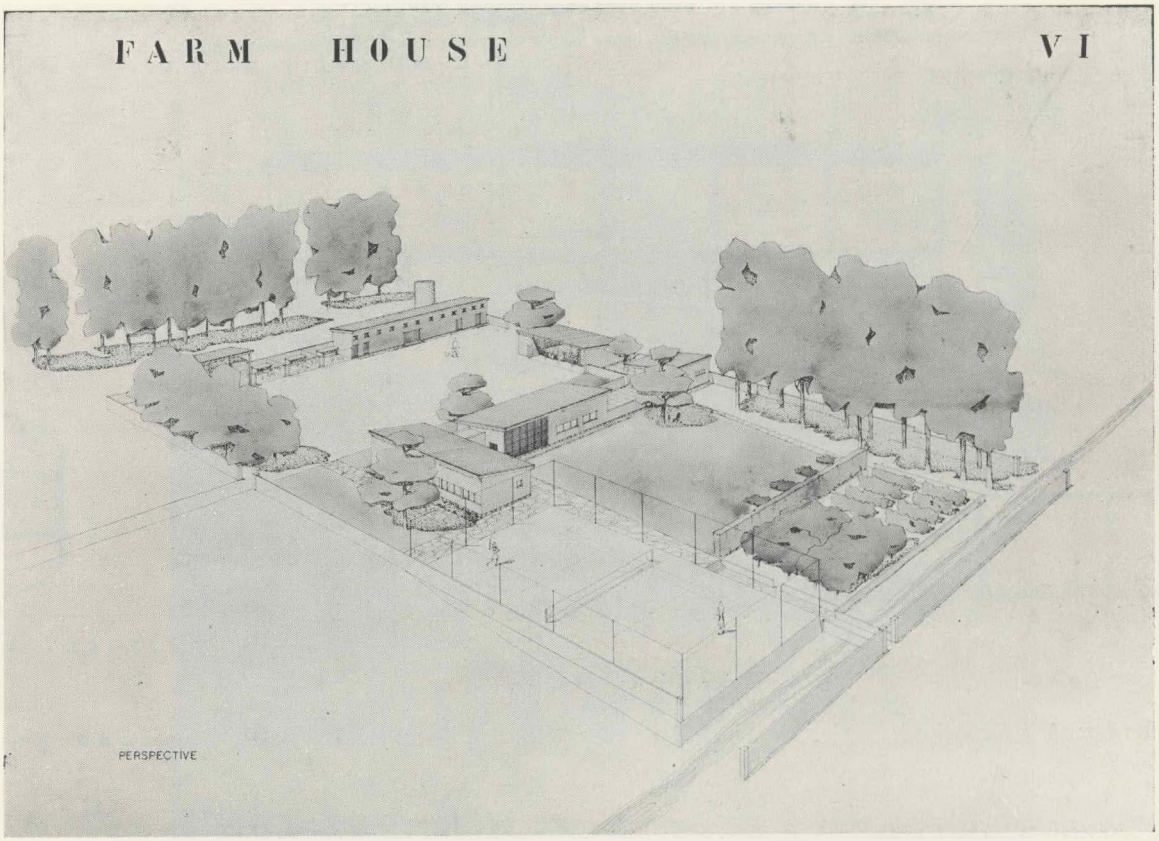
Fifth Year: 1, C. M. Ivo; 2, G. A. Christos.

Special Fifth Year: 1, R. E. Hope; 2, D. Pinshow.

Burton Prize: R. A. Todd.

Mr. Furner then addressed the gathering and referred to the early days in the Tin Temple when accommodation and equipment were very limited. He congratulated the staff and students on their work and wished those who were joining the forces the best of luck in their army and later professional careers.

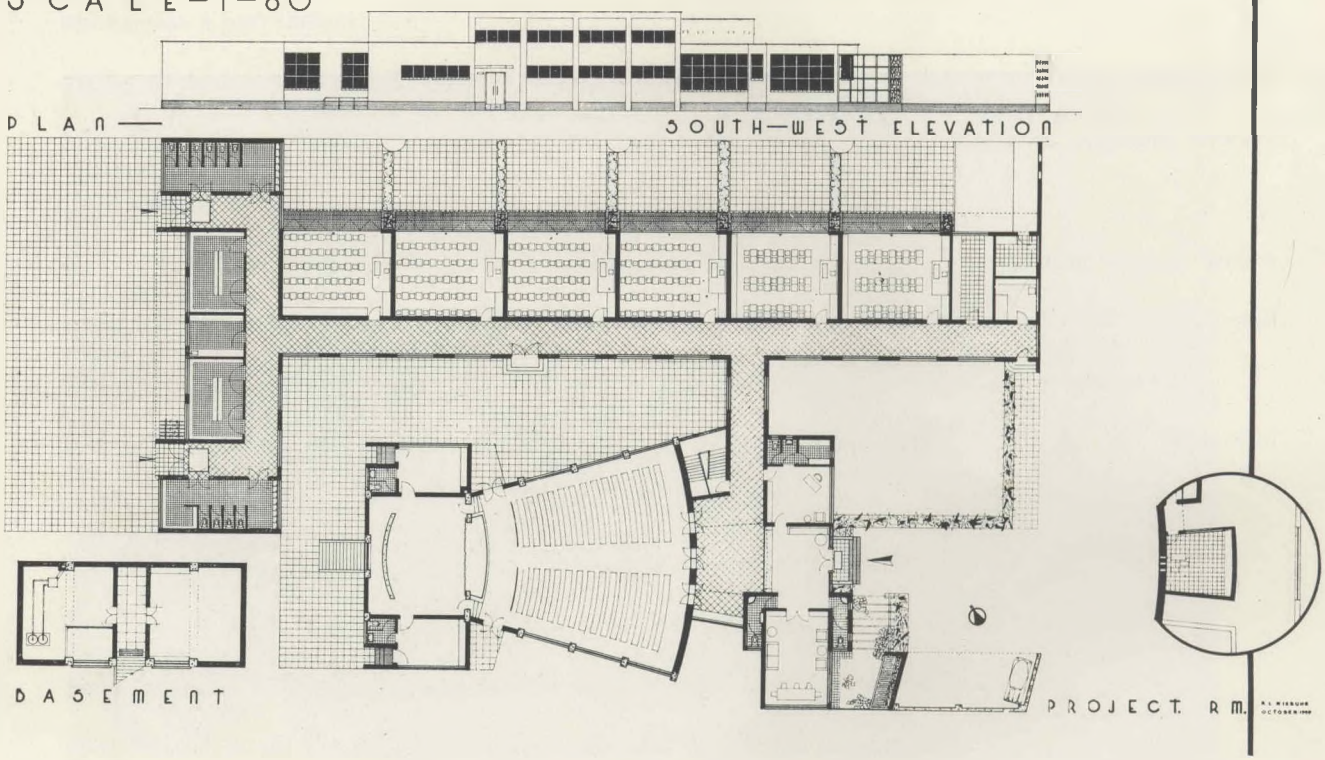
The Principal of the University, Mr. H. R. Raikes, proposed a vote of thanks to the President and spoke of the work of the Faculty within the University.



One of the drawings for a thesis on Farm Buildings
by Betty Spence, Fifth year

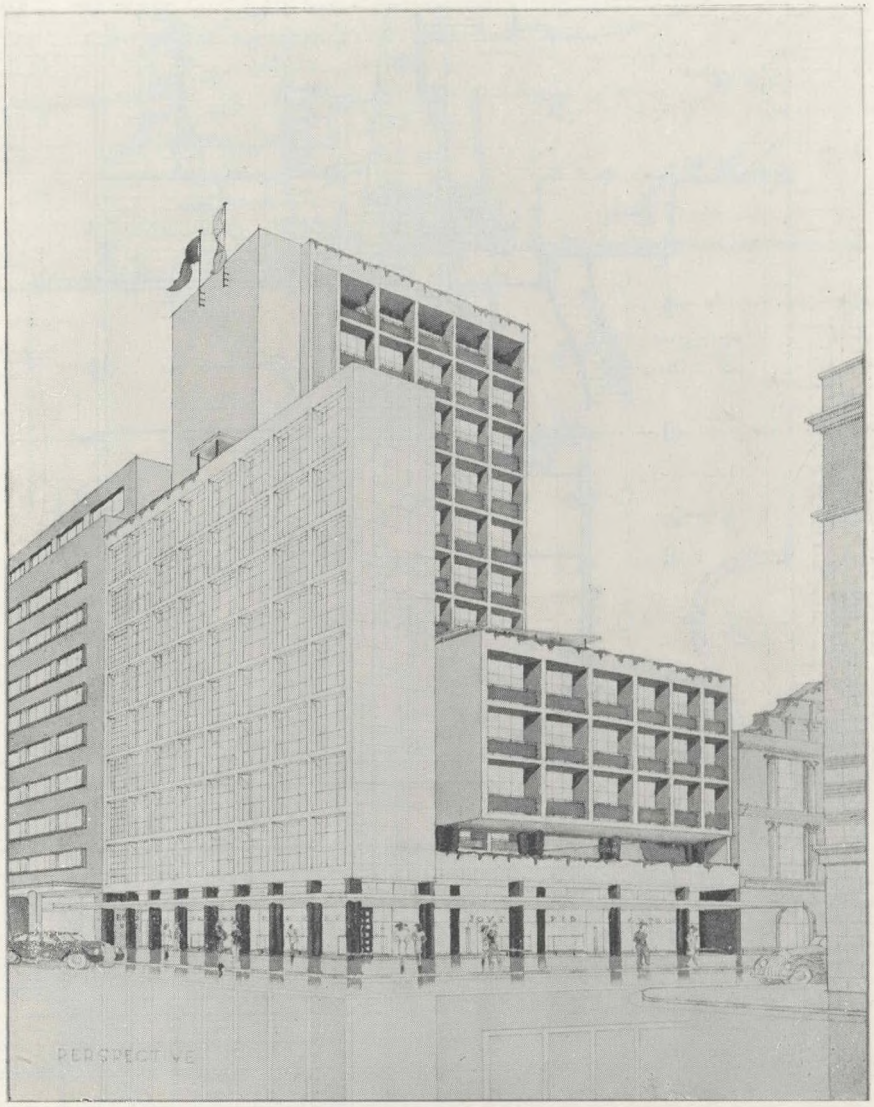
PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCALE—1"—80"

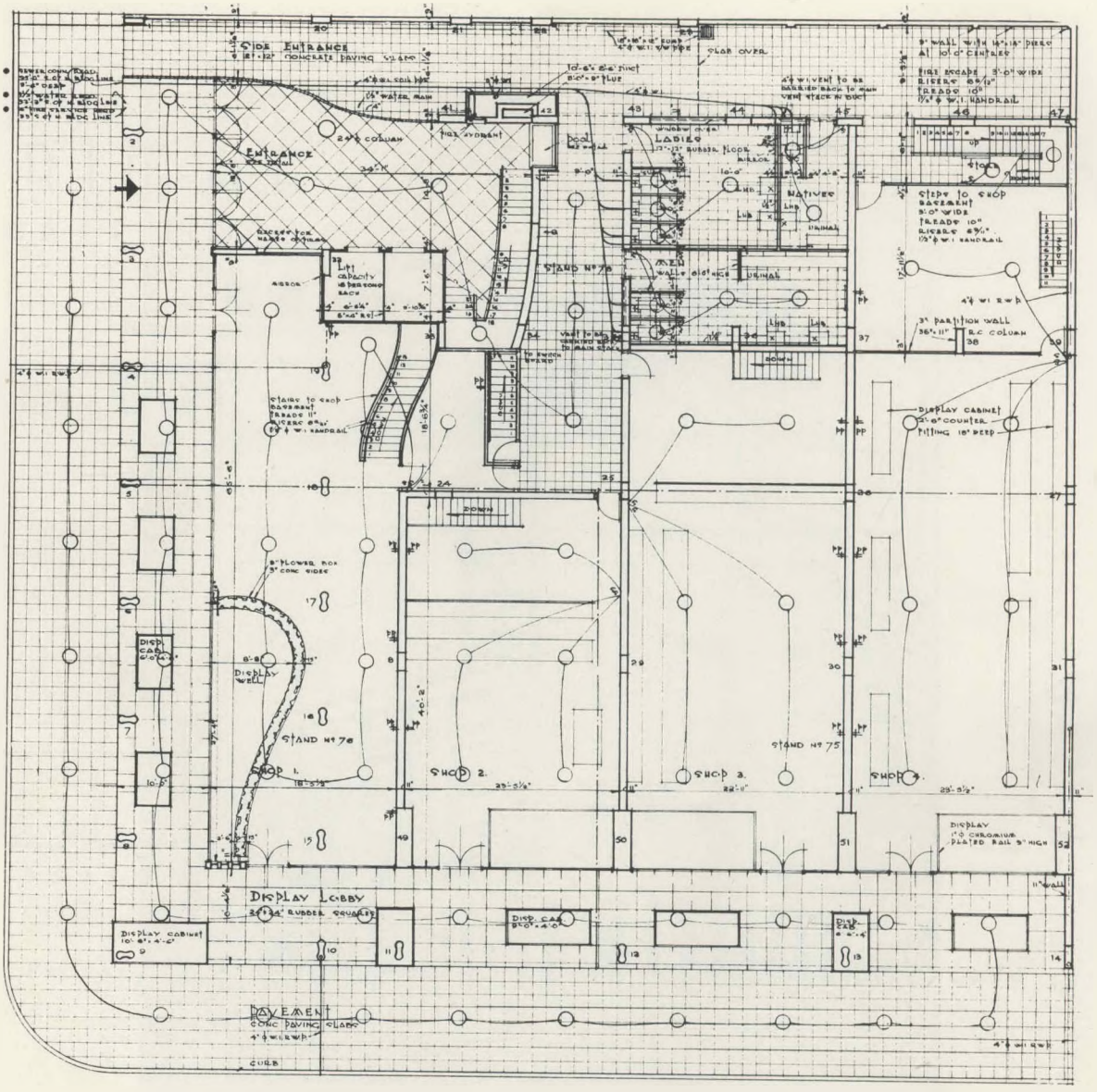


A Primary School

By R. L. NIEBUHR, Second year



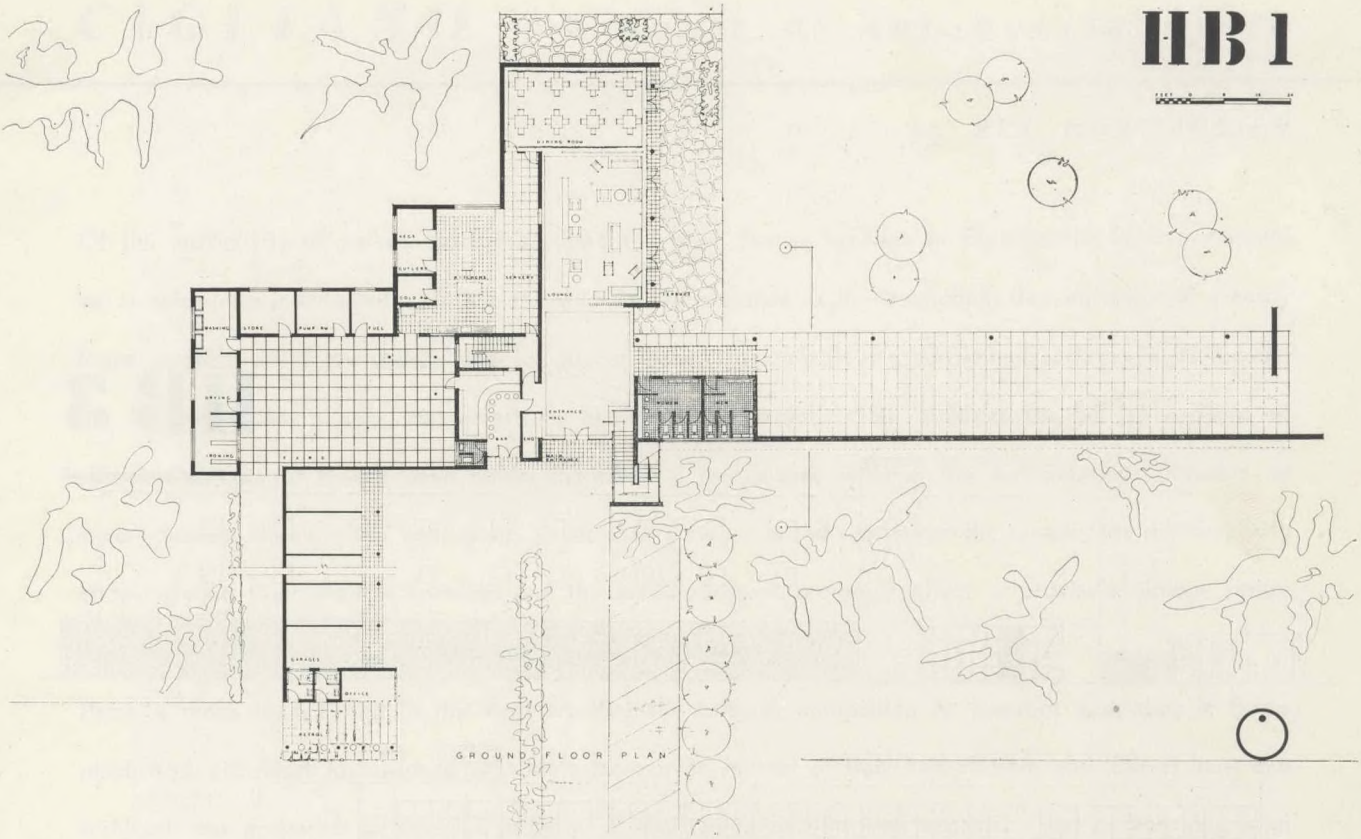
An office building by R. A. Todd, Third year



Above: One of a set of working drawings for an office building by R. A. Todd, Third year

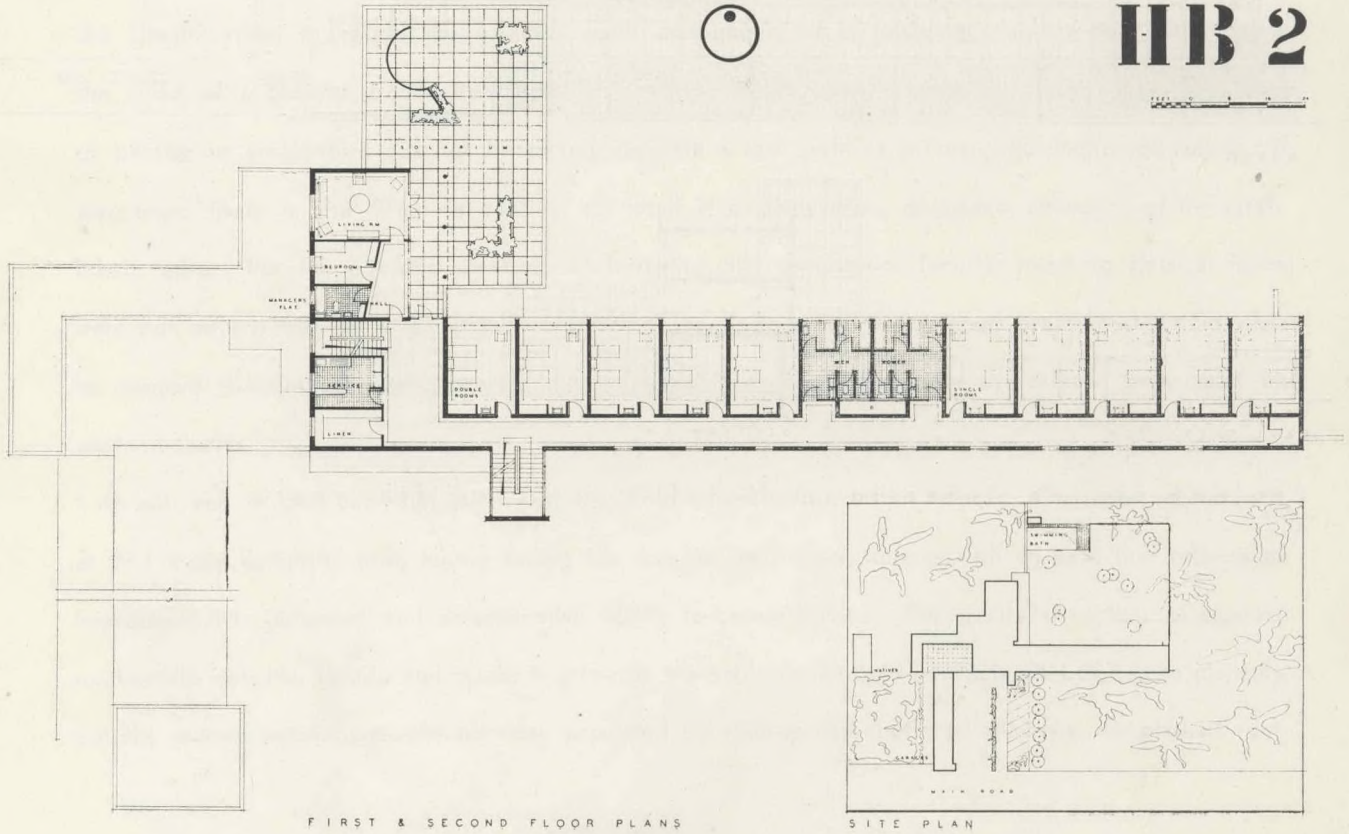
Opposite: Project for an Inter-town hotel—one scheme in a thesis on the Hotel in South Africa presented by the Fifth year

HB 1



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

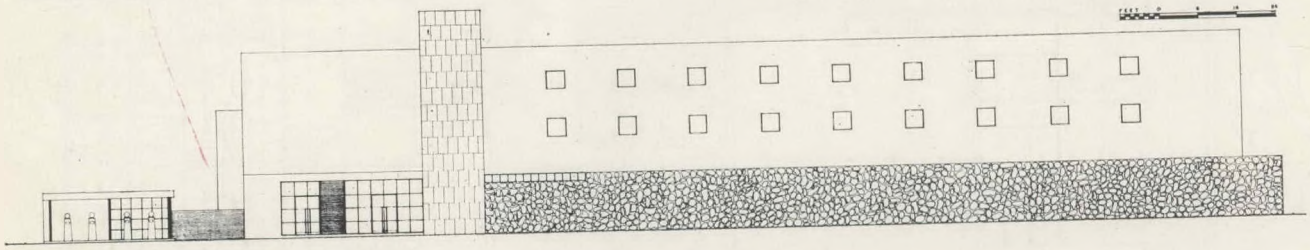
HB 2



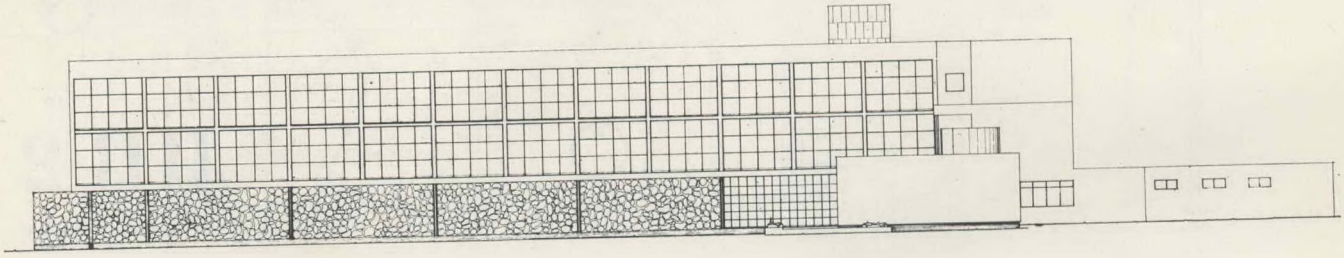
FIRST & SECOND FLOOR PLANS

SITE PLAN

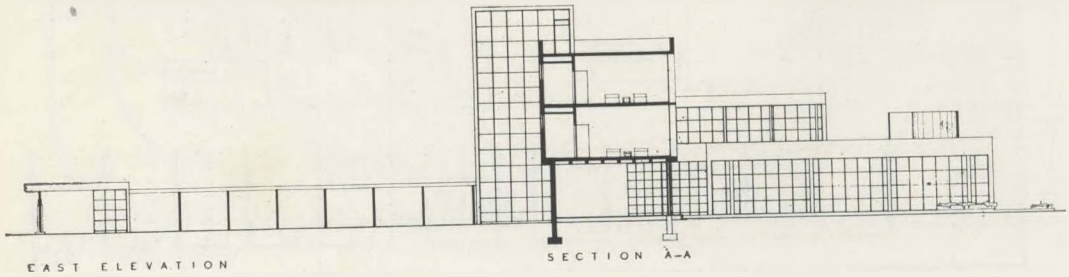
HB 3



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

SECTION A-A

Project for an Inter-town Hotel

Fifth year

CIGLIANO - A HOUSE OF THE QUATTROCENTO

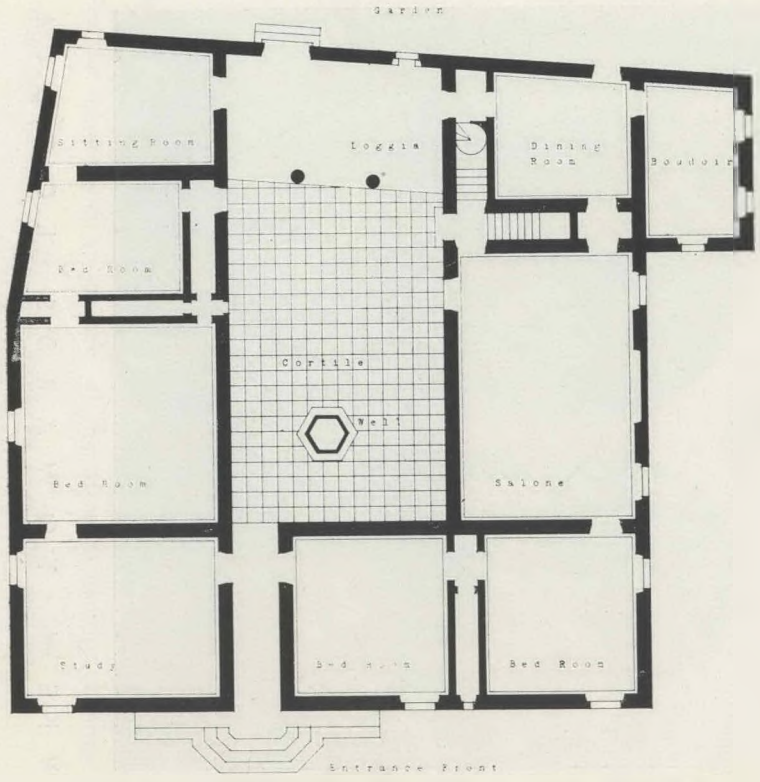
by REX MARTIENSSEN

Of the multiplicity of palace types that share the basic Tuscan heritage in Florence the Palazzo Antinori has a refreshing individuality. While the Rucellai, for example, is the triumphant demonstration of a newly found application of the orders, and the Riccardi shows a meticulous gradation of surfaces in its facade, the Antinori strikes a note that arrests us by its very restraint. This building has an atmosphere of effortless design, of having been boldly shaped in a few planes without the self-conscious intrusion of minor classical detail. The light deep eaves that sketch a broad shadow on the facade, the dry simplicity of the ground floor window openings and the tall unadorned archway reflect a provincial idiom rather than the full-dress richness of deliberate artistic activity.

There is more than a hint in the Antinori that the feverish compulsion to measure and draw in Rome which had attracted Renaissance architects from every corner of Italy had abated, and that at least one architect was prepared to free his surfaces of archaeologically-inspired accents. That he was able (with this simplification) to retain the essential scale and quality of his building suggests clear judgment in the midst of a general architectural activity that has seldom been equalled in vigour. The discarding of pilaster or entablature did not necessarily indicate a safe path to rational and unaffected design ; it was more likely in the fifteenth century to result in an amorphous, degraded, reflection of the established types. For the adopted measures of formality that renaissance facades owed to classical Rome were not so arbitrary as is commonly supposed. The designer of the Antinori broke new ground while he retained the classical " ordonnance " that gave significance to the more overdressed palaces of his contemporaries.

I do not wish to give the impression that the Antinori was unique in this respect. There are, for instance, at Pisa many delightful town houses facing the spacious and silent squares with an ease that reflects an impressive civic judgment and an instinctive ability to create repose. The quality of rhythm, of essential relationship between facade and piazza is primarily traceable to the bold intellectualism of Roman planners, but the second component—the harmony produced by wide-spread shuttered windows, low-pitched roof,





GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF CIGLIANO SAN CASCIANO VAL DI PESA

Above: The North Front, see drawing on page 176 for complete scheme of facade. All photographs taken in 1938.

CIGLIANO

The plan: Based on the drawing in "The Villas of Florence and Tuscany" (Eberlein). The scale of the rooms and the disposition of door and window openings are worthy of note.

generous wall surface—this we must attribute to the gradual intrusion of the country house type within the city limits.

The tradition of the farmhouse planned around a courtyard, and having under its roof not only the owner's accommodation but the rooms of farm labourers, stretches back to classical times. It is even likely that the known examples such as that at Boscoreale near Pompeii have their origins in the Etruscan farm dwellings of a still earlier epoch. The dormant Tuscan tradition was revived with the passing of the imposed mediaevalism of the preceding centuries, and in essence it retained those basic features of arrangement and treatment that have survived until the present day. The Palazzo Antinori with its lofty storeys and



VIEW TOWARDS LOGGIA

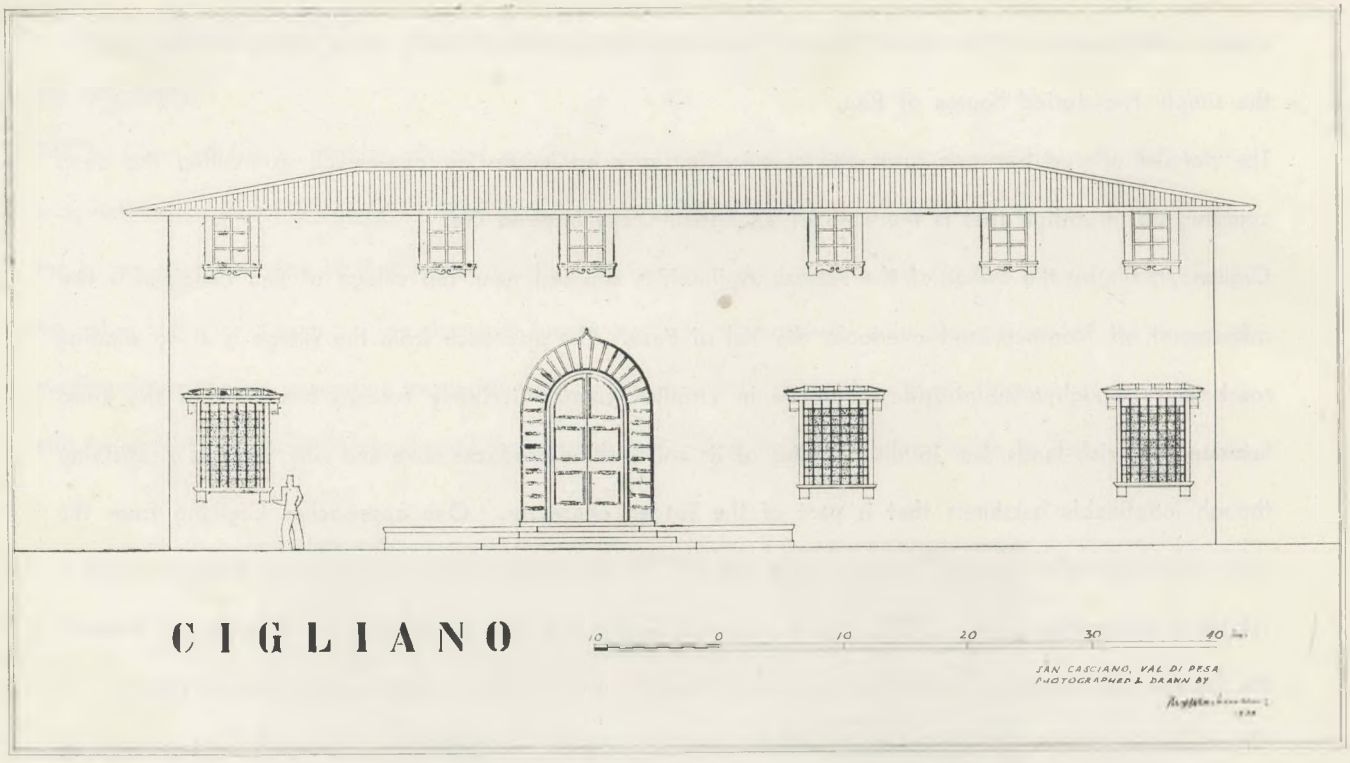
stone walls transcended the literal idiom of rural architecture which clung more closely in the case of the simple two-storied houses of Pisa.

The parallel offered between town and country houses is an interesting one—each exemplifies the deep continuity of tradition that is the core of an agriculturally inspired life.

Cigliano, built by the owner of the Palazzo Antinori, is situated near the village of San Casciano a few miles south of Florence, and overlooks the Val di Pesa. The approach from the village is along winding roads and through a countryside saturated in Virgilian calm. Certainly Tuscany has none of the florid luxuriance of rich lands, but in the " genius of its soil " which produces olive and vine, there is a satisfying though indefinable harshness that is part of the Tuscan character. One approaches Cigliano from the south, past the walled garden and along the east side of the house, finally to reach the front in which is set the great entrance door. This north facade has before it a level stretch of shaded grass, and beyond, the ground falls steeply to north and west. To the east a gradual slope merges with a distant valley.

One's first impression is of an austere cliff-like wall topped by a deeply eaved tile roof, and pierced by a tall doorway and three widely spaced windows on the ground floor. Close under the roof are smaller windows—so close in fact to the roof soffit as to give additional emphasis to the massive continuity of plastered wall surface. The north side of Cigliano measures eighty-four feet in length, and the height of the wall is about twenty-five feet, so that in sheer size this " simple " country house attains a striking grandeur. There are many charming houses in the neighbourhood of Florence ; the Villa Gamberia with its fine western view over the distant town ; Il Giojello ; Il Frullino ; but none achieves the sublime poise of Cigliano.

It is a commonplace to-day that attempts to reproduce the renaissance idiom in public buildings, tend to fail through loss of scale. With the loss of monumental scale, the reflection of " classical " glory fades into a confusion of crowded elements. No classical arrangement was ever conceived to incorporate the complexity of modern requirements, and the attempt to force the adjustment is abortive. So, too, the house in the " Italian Style " that testifies to a misplaced enthusiasm for tradition must fail in execution. The approach to design in a house such as Cigliano is more ruthless, more extravagant in restraint than is usually realized. For the impact with an example of the fifteenth century confirms the startling fact that the Italian house does not follow the rules laid down by academic analysis.



THE NORTH FRONT

From the portone we enter a barrel-vaulted hallway of some length, which opens on to the cortile against its east side. A triple-arched loggia stretches across the far end, and close to the entrance arch a well head with its intricate mechanism provides a foil to the broad planes of wall and paving.

In the east wing are study, two bedrooms, and a sitting room—the latter facing south on to the enclosed garden. The south loggia opens directly on to the same garden, and from this loggia the dining room is reached. The dining room in turn is linked with a small boudoir and the generous salone. The kitchen and store room are situated at the south west corner where the ground slopes steeply, and the first floor of the south wing is occupied by the family. The remainder of the first floor is given up to the contadini who work on the estate, and the servants. The rooms on the ground floor are paved with brick, and the ceilings are vaulted.



ENTRANCE TO THE CORTILE

I shall not attempt to describe the effect of the plastered walls from memory, but Eberlein gives an excellent suggestion in saying that " they are of that indescribable Tuscan villa colour, as elusive as the hues of the sunset clouds. It is by turn grey, brown, buff, yellow or salmon, according to the light and the texture of the masonry. The shutters are painted green and the window and door trims are of the customary brownish grey pietra serena." So much for the illusion of the white-walled farm-house.

What can one say of the general effect ? Perhaps the most significant impression that can be conveyed is that the note struck in the first view of the house from the north is sustained throughout the whole fabric of the building. In cortile and loggia, and in the spacious salone there is repose that echoes a life of calm and leisure. This setting is eloquent in establishing the material values of a bygone era. The great palazzi of Rome and Florence provide a background to the study of great artists. The architect instinctively clarifies his studies on the visible framework that they provide. A building such as Cigliano, though in a minor key, yields no less vital information for our understanding of the revival of learning in Italy. It is an essential link in a stupendous continuity of plastic effort. It is so fundamentally close to life that it has withstood change and fashion. It has weathered the sequence of the years ; the nobility of its forms is beyond decay.

NOTE.

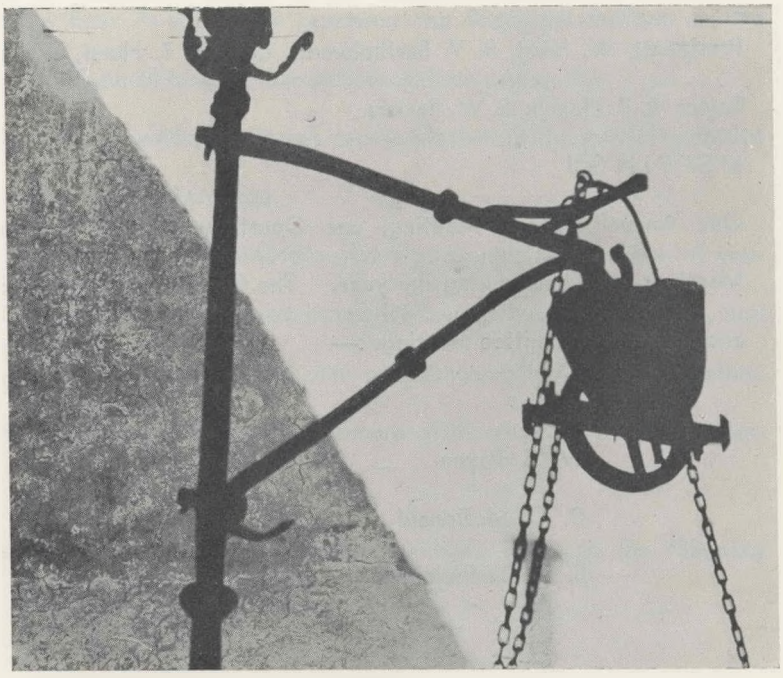
This paper is offered as a footnote to the November, 1937, issue of the Record, which was concerned with the Renaissance in Italy. The photographs may prove useful to students by extending the available material which is occupied for the most part with examples of civic and church architecture. Acknowledgment is made to H. D. Eberlein's work, " The Villas of Florence and Tuscany " (New York, 1925), from which information was obtained for the drawing of the plan and elevation. I need hardly add that I would not have been in a position to visit Cigliano if Eberlein had not " discovered " it.

R. M.



Above: Main Door

Below: Well-head



THE NATAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

ANNUAL REPORT 1940

Your Committee has pleasure in submitting this, the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Natal Provincial Institute of Architects, together with the Annual Balance Sheet and Expenditure Accounts, for the year ended 31st December, 1940.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership at the close of the year consisted of 52 practising, 12 salaried and 5 retired, a total of 69 members.

The new members enrolled during the year were Messrs. R. Oppenheim, N. E. Godfrey, R. F. Kennedy and L. C. Symes.

During the year under review one member has resigned.

COMMITTEE

At the last Annual General Meeting the following members were elected to the Provincial Committee :—Messrs. W. S. Payne (President), D. C. McDonald (Vice-President), W. Hirst, B. V. Bartholomew, Col. G. T. Hurst, Wallace Paton, C. S. M. Taylor, R. P. Hamlin, F. W. Powers.

MEETINGS

One Annual General Meeting, one Quarterly Meeting and fourteen Committee Meetings were held during the year. The following is a record of members' attendances at the Committee meetings :—

	Possible.	Actual.
W. S. Payne	14	13
D. C. McDonald	14	11
B. V. Bartholomew	14	10

F. W. Powers	14	12
C. S. M. Taylor	14	7
R. P. Hamlin (resigned)	7	5
Col. G. T. Hurst	14	10
Wallace Paton (resigned)	5	1
W. Hirst	14	11
Alan Woodrow	7	5
W. Murray-Jones	6	4

During the year Messrs. Wallace Paton and R. P. Hamlin resigned from the Committee, and Messrs. Alan Woodrow and W. Murray-Jones respectively were elected to fill the vacancies.

Mr. B. V. Bartholomew is this Institute's representatives on the Central Council with Mr. D. C. McDonald as Alternate.

Mr. Bartholomew is also the official representative on the Joint Contract Committee of the Central Council.

Mr. D. C. McDonald is this Provincial Institute's representative on the Standing Committee on Education and Examinations with Mr. F. W. Powers as Alternate.

Col. G. T. Hurst has been re-elected to represent this Provincial Institute on the Natal Technical College Council for a further period of three years.

Mr. Wallace Paton is this Provincial Institute's representative on the Art Consultative Committee of the Natal Technical College.

Many matters of importance to the profession have occupied the attention of your Committee, and it has been consulted and its advice sought by various bodies, and every endeavour has been made to justify this confidence, either by co-operation, assistance and advice and in appointing one or more of its members to act on committees.

In addition to the usual business, consideration has been given to the following points :—

Structural Air Raid Precautions.

Official Architects' Committee.

Local Authority Civil Protection Service, etc.

Your Committee has given much attention to amendments to the City Building Bye-laws during the year.

Representations have been made to the City Council urging the desirability of inviting competitive designs from private practising architects, for the Proposed New Traffic Centre on the site of the old Borough Market, and the Proposed New Beach Pavilion.

Representations were also made, through the Central Council of the Institute, to the Railway Administration urging upon them the desirability of promoting an architectural competition for the Proposed New Railway Station for Durban.

INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Your Committee appreciated that the profession has been seriously affected through the outbreak of War in Europe.

The question of unemployment has had the serious consideration of your Committee and steps have been taken to urge the Government and City Council to place work with private practising architects.

A Special Quarterly Meeting of Members was convened particularly to discuss ways and means of approaching the City Council in regard to the distribution of Municipal architectural work; work which had been shelved due to the City Engineer's staff being away on Active Service.

A Committee consisting of three architects, one quantity surveyor, two master builders and one engineer was formed to await on the City Council.

Pursuant to a circular letter issued by the " Architects' Committee on Civil Defence," inviting the co-operation of members in the present National War Effort, 26 members of the Provincial Institute and Chapter have volunteered their free services to co-operate with the Local Authority in the Civilian Protection Services of the City.

A schedule has been drawn up and members have been appointed to their respec-

tive areas in the City.

Thanks are due to those members of the various committees who have given so much of their valuable time to the various matters concerned during the year under review.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

The following members are on Active Service, according to information received :— C. C. Allen, A. G. Alcock, R. C. C. Bennett, W. J. Cornelius, E. S. Cornelius, W. J. Gunn, R. P. Hamlin, J. Meanwell, E. S. Powers, M. Poole, I. Park-Ross, N. Sercombe.

"ROBERT HOWDEN PRIZE COMPETITION"

Hearty congratulations are extended to Mr. Frederick W. Powers, A.R.I.B.A., M.I.A., winner of the first " Robert Howden Prize Competition."

"ERNEST MARSTON POWERS MEDALLION"

The " Ernest Marston Powers Medallion," open to students in architecture attending the Natal University College, has been abandoned for this year, owing to the War.

CENTRAL COUNCIL

The 1940 Session of the Central Council took place in Johannesburg, in April last, Mr. F. F. R. Day, A.R.I.B.A., the retiring President-in-Chief, occupied the Chair.

Mr. B. V. Bartholomew, this Provincial Institute's representative on the Central Council, attended the meeting.

As usual a wide range of subjects of interest to the profession were dealt with, among them being Revision of Examination Regulations for Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors, Recognition of " Practical Experience " under an Architect, Professional Propaganda, the Institute in relation to the War, etc., etc.

The Council resolved—" That the remission of subscription be granted only to such members as were on full-time active service and applied for such remission."

The Central Council has decided to adopt the " quantum meruit " principle of assessing fees in cases of work abandoned at the preliminary stage (on the lines of the new R.I.B.A. procedure) and accordingly to encourage clients and practitioners, where fee disputes occur, to refer the same to a specially selected Taxation Com-

mittee of the constituent body concerned.

Your Committee places on record its deep appreciation of the excellent work put in by the members of the Central Council and for giving so much of their valuable time in promoting the interests of the profession.

FINANCES

The audited Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts for the year, accompanying this report, show the financial position which may be considered as satisfactory.

The Revenue and Expenditure Account reflects a credit balance of £24 15s. 2d., as against a debit balance of £10 5s. 10d. shown for 1939, after writing down an amount of £4 11s. 4d. depreciation on furniture on the debit side of the account, and the suspension of R.I.B.A. moieties from the credit side.

The amount on investment with the Natal Building Society at the end of the year was £403 4s. 10d. compared with £391 10s. 2d. at the end of 1939.

Members are reminded that the annual subscription is due on 1st January in each year and should be remitted as early as possible to the Secretary, and are requested to regard this obligation as one to be discharged without unnecessary delay and thus save much time and expense in the collecting of fees.

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Members are reminded of the facilities afforded in courses of architectural education at the Natal University College.

Full particulars of these courses may be obtained on application to the Secretary of the University, Commerce Building, Warwick Avenue, Durban.

For an architect to enter into articles with a student or pupil who has not passed the matriculation examination of the Joint Matriculation Board, or is not in possession of a certificate of exemption from that examination issued by the said Board, until such student or pupil has been approved by the Standing Committee on Education and Examinations, is an act of unprofessional conduct.

Journal of the SA Architectural Institute

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