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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

611, Kelvin House, 75, Marshall Street, Johannesburg.
Phone 34-2921 Volume Twenty Seven, No. Six, June, 1942

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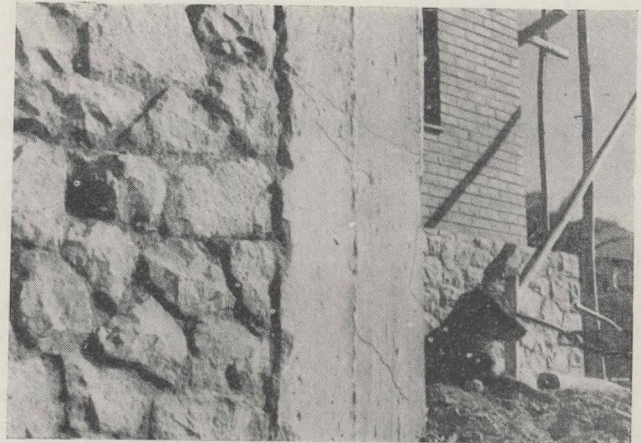


The House at Blue Lagoon

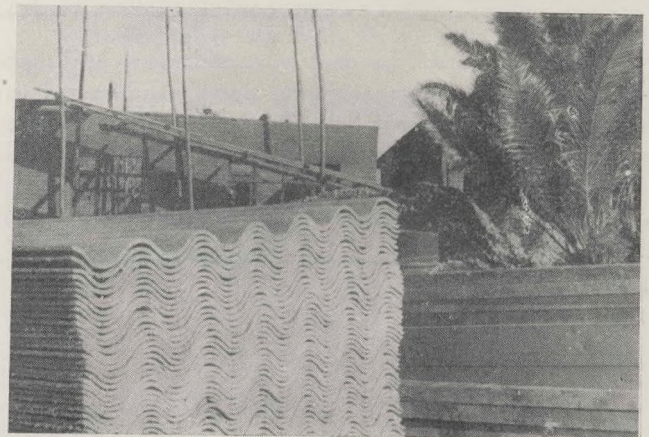


The Beach at Blue Lagoon

Constructional Details



Corrugated Roofing



SOUTH AFRICAN SEA-SIDE HOUSES

by R. E. G. Hope and Shirley Honnet

In his article in the October, 1941, issue of this journal Dr. Martienssen discussed contemporary examples of Mediterranean architecture. In this issue the authors intend to deal with a similar subject against a South African background, and in particular with the holiday type of domestic building, since this forms a large proportion of the architecture of South African seaside resorts, and has certain individual problems which distinguish it from the main body of domestic architecture.

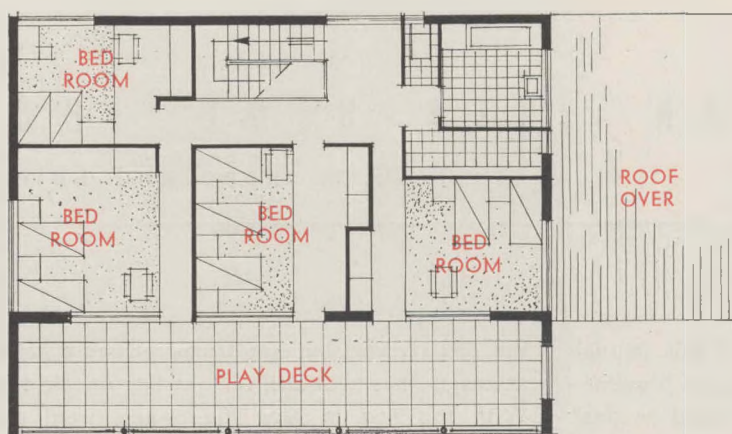
In a cursory survey of local coastal towns it is possible to make a distinction between those which exist mainly for commercial reasons as a result of possessing a good harbour, and those which exist purely as holiday resorts. Those falling within the scope of the latter group, are generally hardly more than villages inhabited by a fluctuating population of holiday makers with a small percentage of permanent residents. It is the domestic architecture of these small resorts which forms the subject of this article.

A drive along the coast at almost any point will provide evidence of the heterogeneous nature of this type of building. The country itself offers an ideal setting to architecture, varying from the gentle cane covered hills of Natal to the dramatic mountainous country of the Cape. It is at all points well wooded—generally with attractive indigenous trees, and was, until about twenty or thirty years ago almost unpopulated by white people except for the few harbour towns. The only habitation was the native hut so that apart from this, no limitations could be placed on architectural expression by existing work. With the popularising of motor car travel numbers of holiday resorts were opened up in places which had hitherto been inaccessible. Hotels and houses were built to accommodate the holiday population and the few permanent residents—generally either retired people or those who relied on the holiday makers for their livelihood—store-keepers, tradesmen and the like. The circumstances would seem to make an ideal opening for the introduction of some new type of architectural expression which would reflect the gaiety and lightness of holiday life as do the brightly coloured villas of the Mediterranean coast. But, as usually happens, no one ever thought of the architecture as a factor which might enhance or completely destroy the quality of

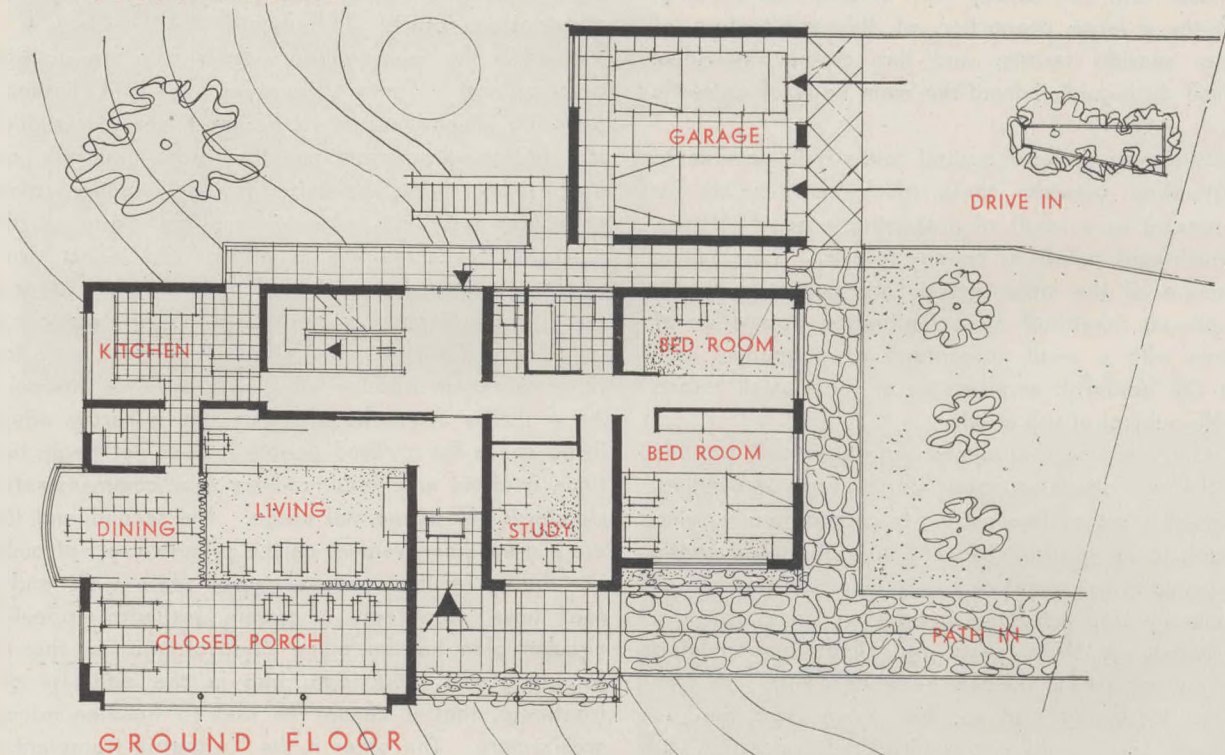
the countryside, but saw it merely as a rather tiresome but necessary means of sheltering a few people from the elements. With this end in view the owners went about the job as expeditiously as possible and produced the horrible conglomeration of seaside houses which confronts the would be holiday maker at any resort.

Roughly the houses fall into three main groups (with endless overlappings). Firstly, the type which is limited by the materials which happen to be most easily transportable—or still better—procurable on the spot—generally corrugated iron, some sheets of asbestos and wooden planks. For economy's sake the windows are cut down to the barest minimum for adequate breathing and doors are omitted wherever decency permits and often where it does not. The result is inevitable. A haphazard nailing together of corrugated iron for the exterior walls and roof, the floor sometimes raised on wooden piles, with asbestos internal divisions. As a shelter from the elements this is hardly adequate—as living space for civilised people it does not begin to function, since it offers amenities nowhere near commensurate with the standards set by normal usage. The second and third types are a great improvement on this primitive sort of building. The one being of the rondavel type—white walls and thatched roof have admittedly a certain aesthetic appeal—but the circular plan has so many disadvantages in the matter of furnishing and subdivision, also in the difficulty of window treatment, that it cannot be said to function adequately as architecture. The other is the "suburbia transplanted" type. This certainly offers the inhabitants all the comforts to which they are accustomed in civilised life so that the criticism is mainly on aesthetic and psychological grounds. A holiday house demands something different in the way of architectural treatment from an ordinary town house—something which will reflect the more informal and leisured type of life which is characteristic of seaside holidays, and also a design which, besides giving the necessary protection from the elements will admit and allow the circulation of as much fresh air as possible. The suburban villa seldom fulfils these conditions and has the added disadvantage of looking thoroughly out of place and uncomfortable in rural surroundings.

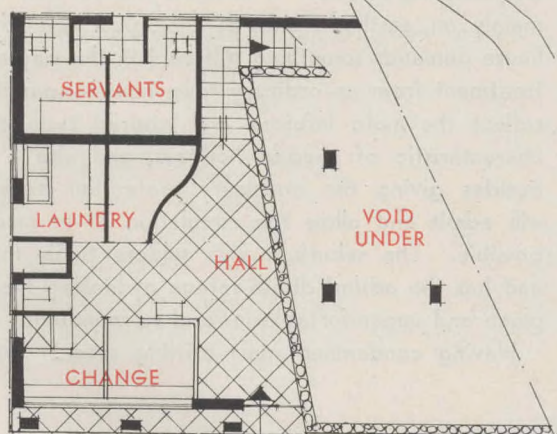
Having condemned most existing seaside architecture it is



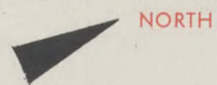
FIRST FLOOR

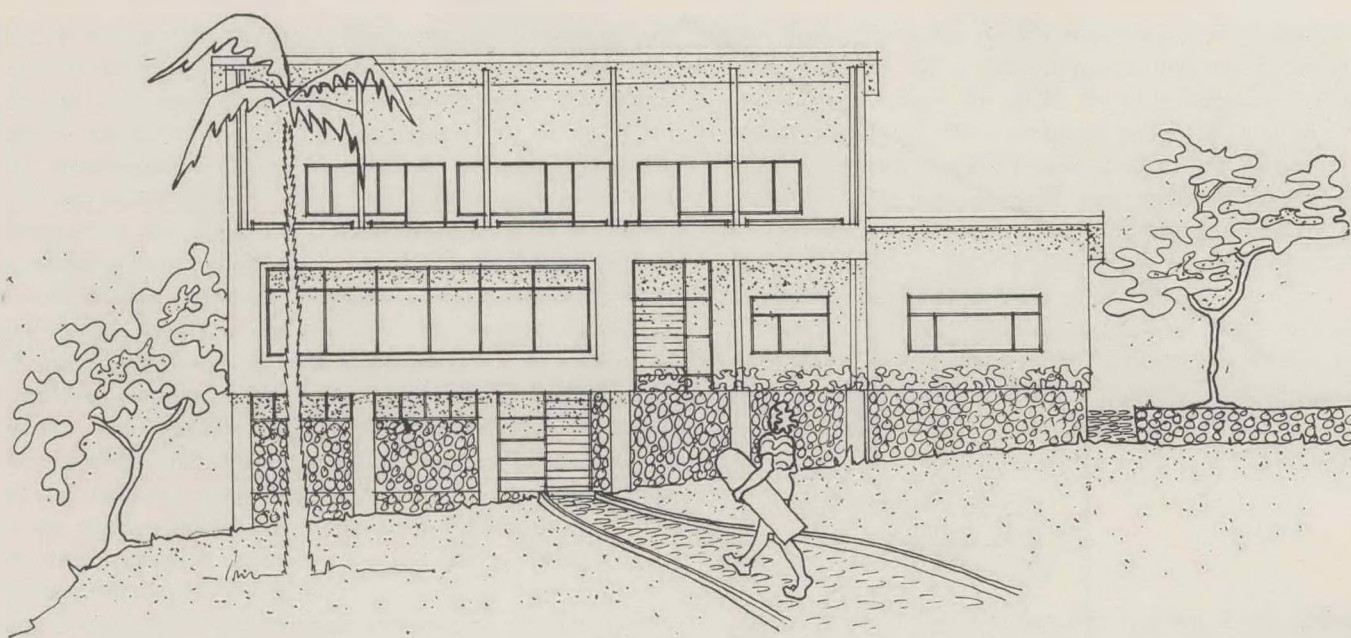


GROUND FLOOR



BATHERS' ENTRANCE





THE HOUSE AS BUILT AT BLUE LAGOON, EAST FRONT

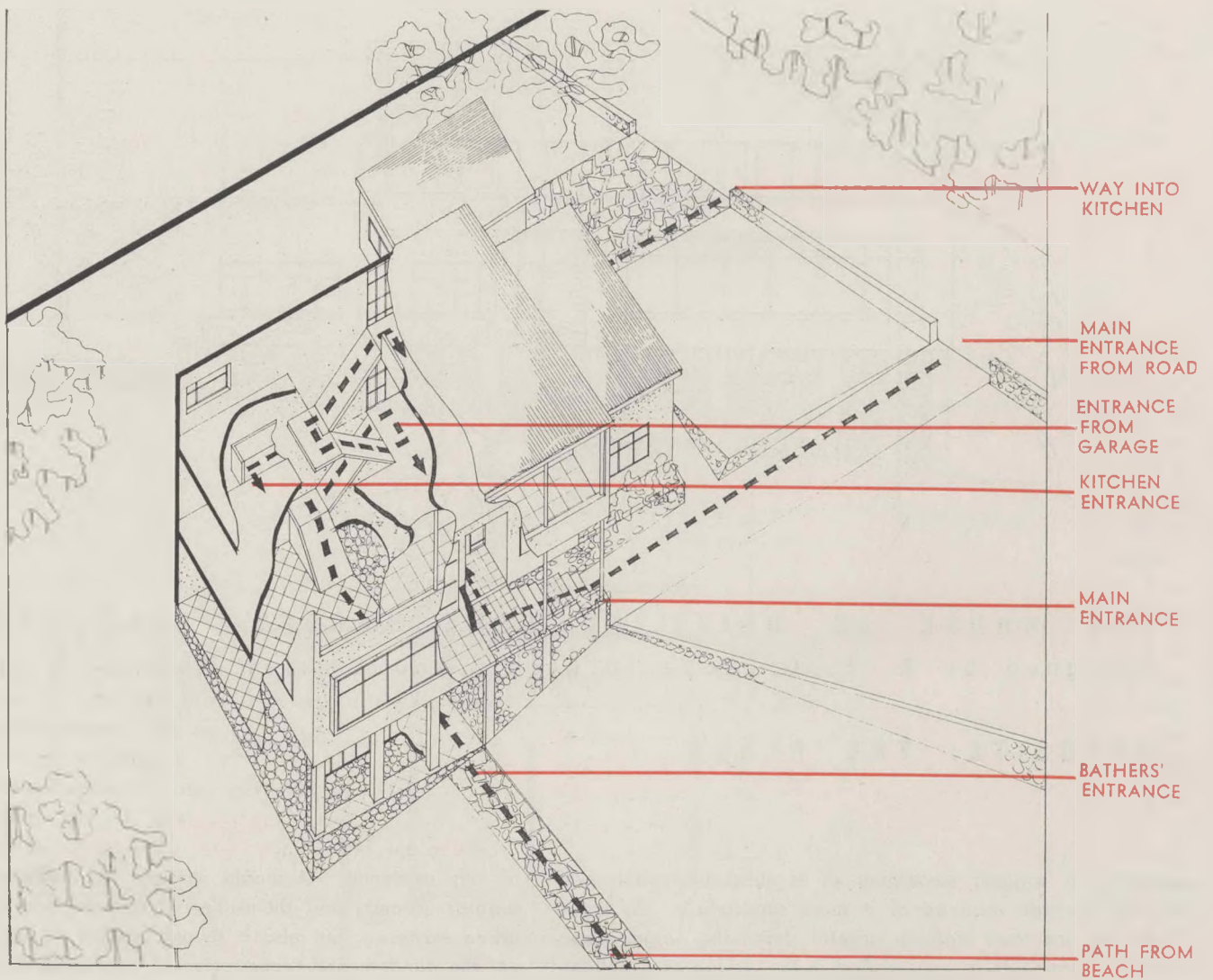
Designed by R. E. G. Hope, B.Arch., and Shirley Honnet B.Arch.

OPPOSITE: THE PLANS

necessary to suggest something as a substitute which will fulfil the purpose required of it more successfully. In order to do this one must state in greater detail the actual scope of the requirements to be satisfied in the design of a holiday house. The stress and strain of normal urban life makes it essential for as many town dwellers as can afford it, to take a holiday some time during the year. These holidays generally last only a brief three or four weeks, during which time the individuals concerned must refresh themselves mentally and physically for another year or more of work. Normal, healthy people do not require rest on a holiday so much as release from the nervous tension set up by urban existence, an increased opportunity to indulge in physical sports and pastimes, and generally a change from their accustomed routine occupations. There is a gay irresponsible atmosphere about a holiday. One romps and splashes in the sea, one eats a lot and laughs a lot and sleeps a lot, and generally indulges in a number of more or less primitive activities which are seldom possible under normal conditions. The house which forms the architectural back cloth should reflect the informality

of this existence. It should not, by its character, seem to suggest urbanity and the rather rigid restrictions imposed by urban existence, but also it should provide as far as possible all the fundamental accessories of civilized living to which town dwellers are accustomed. Above all, if it is to succeed as architecture, it must be in sympathy with its natural surroundings, and within the limitations of providing adequate shelter, should admit as much of nature as possible, so that there is no rigid differentiation between interior and exterior, but rather a suggestion by means of sliding glass screens and semiclosed areas, of the transition from man-made architecture to "nature."

Having postulated in a very general manner the requirements demanded by this type of house the question arises of how best they can be satisfied within the architectural medium. The holiday house, whether owned by town dwellers or local inhabitants, is likely to be occupied for only part of the year, during the remaining time it will be untenanted. For this reason it must necessarily be built in such a manner and of such materials that it will require a minimum of time and



THE HOUSE AS BUILT AT BLUE LAGOON

Drawing showing scheme of circulation

opposite: The North Elevation

money to be spent on upkeep. Also it must generally be built as economically as possible, since most clients are not able to expend vast sums of money on a house which may stand empty for the greater part of the year.

The question of materials and labour is implied in both the foregoing stipulations. Since the scheme proposed must be inexpensive and durable and since, for reasons of economy, local labour will probably be employed, it would seem reasonable to use local materials wherever possible, provided they are of sound quality. The workmen will be accustomed to using this material and as such labour is often of a more or less unskilled variety, there is less likelihood of their making mistakes. The material used will determine the character of the building, and often the use of local materials such as wood and stone will prove more sympathetic in a rural setting than the highly sophisticated appearance of plaster or the rather drab aspect of unplastered brick, and will certainly be easier to maintain than the former.

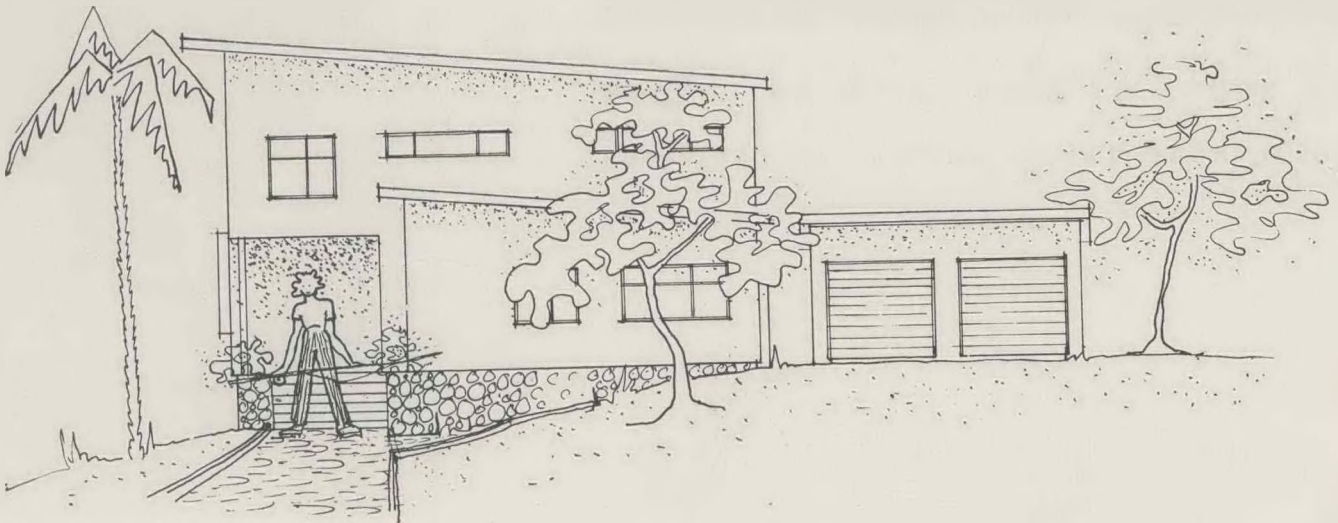
This, however, is a matter which can only be decided in the light of a particular problem, but at all events the materials must be chosen with a view to the fact that they will have to withstand the abnormally moist climate of the seaside, and, for this reason, metal on any exposed surface is not to be recommended, since it will require continual painting to prevent rust. The design of the house should be as simple as possible. The complexities involved in the design of an urban house by the necessity for privacy for individual members are not so apparent in the seaside house since holidays are generally fairly communal affairs during which the desire for privacy is not likely to be so strongly felt. This does not imply

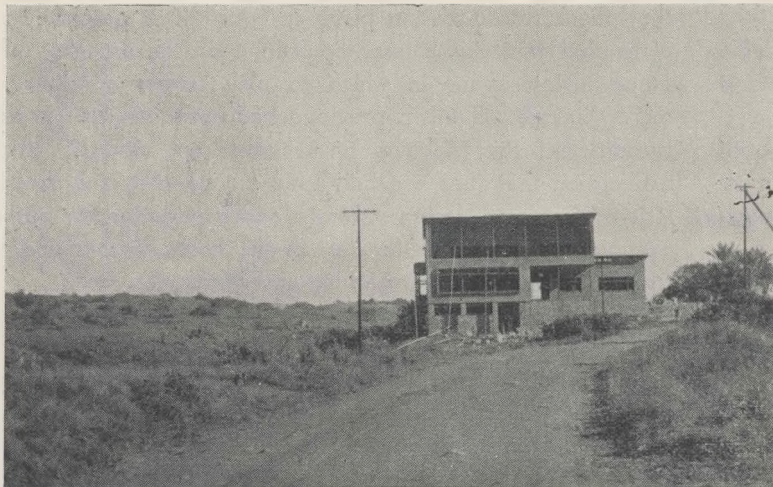
that there should be no place in which it is possible to be alone, but that this is less important than the provision of an ample living space in which to play games or dance, or merely lounge. If this is provided bedrooms may be cut down to sufficient size to house ones clothes and sleep in, on the assumption that they are only used for sleeping and dressing. It is advisable to design separate accommodation for bathers' changing, thus keeping the rest of the house cleaner and free from costumes and other bathing accessories.

Apart from these general stipulations there is very little which can be usefully decided without the statement of a definite problem and so at this point it is necessary to consider the two seaside houses illustrated as demonstrations of the requirements laid down in the first part of this article.

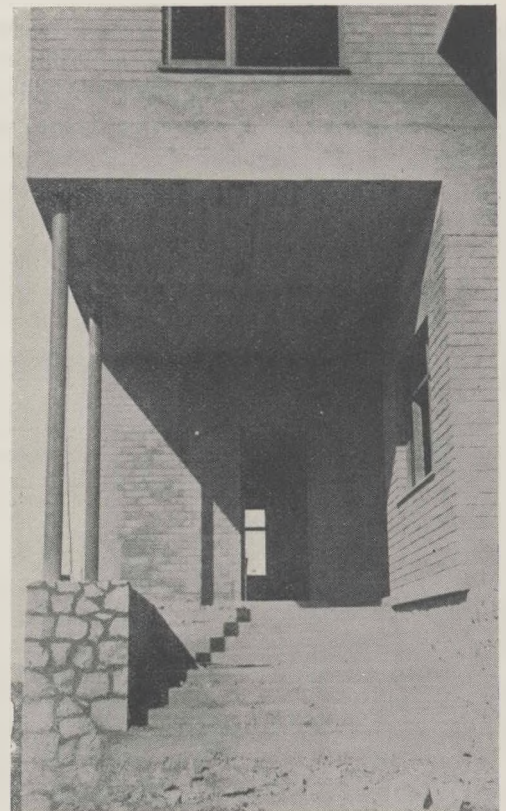
THE SITE

Both houses were designed for the same site which is on the South coast. The country round about is typical of those parts—pale green rolling hills topped generally by a few lofty trees, with rivers running steeply down to lagoons, fairly dense bush lining the banks and a stretch of blue Indian Ocean breaking onto astonishing white sands to the east. The site is situated at the highest point of a minute holiday "resort" known as Blue Lagoon. It has magnificent inland views up a winding valley to the West and an extensive coast and sea view to the East and North East. The ground falls steeply down to the lagoon and river to the South West, and has a slight fall to the East. Blue Lagoon, the town, consists of a





THE HOUSE AS BUILT AT BLUE LAGOON
Photographs taken during construction



handful of rather dour uncompromising stone houses, and three or four suburban-looking cream plastered buildings scattered rather haphazardly on a rise between two lagoons. A branch inland road runs East and West up the hill from the main road, passing the site to the North.

THE HOUSE AS BUILT

The first example is of the house actually built. Owing to the sloping nature of the ground a compact type plan was necessary, but the space required by the client made a single story house such as the second example illustrated impossible.

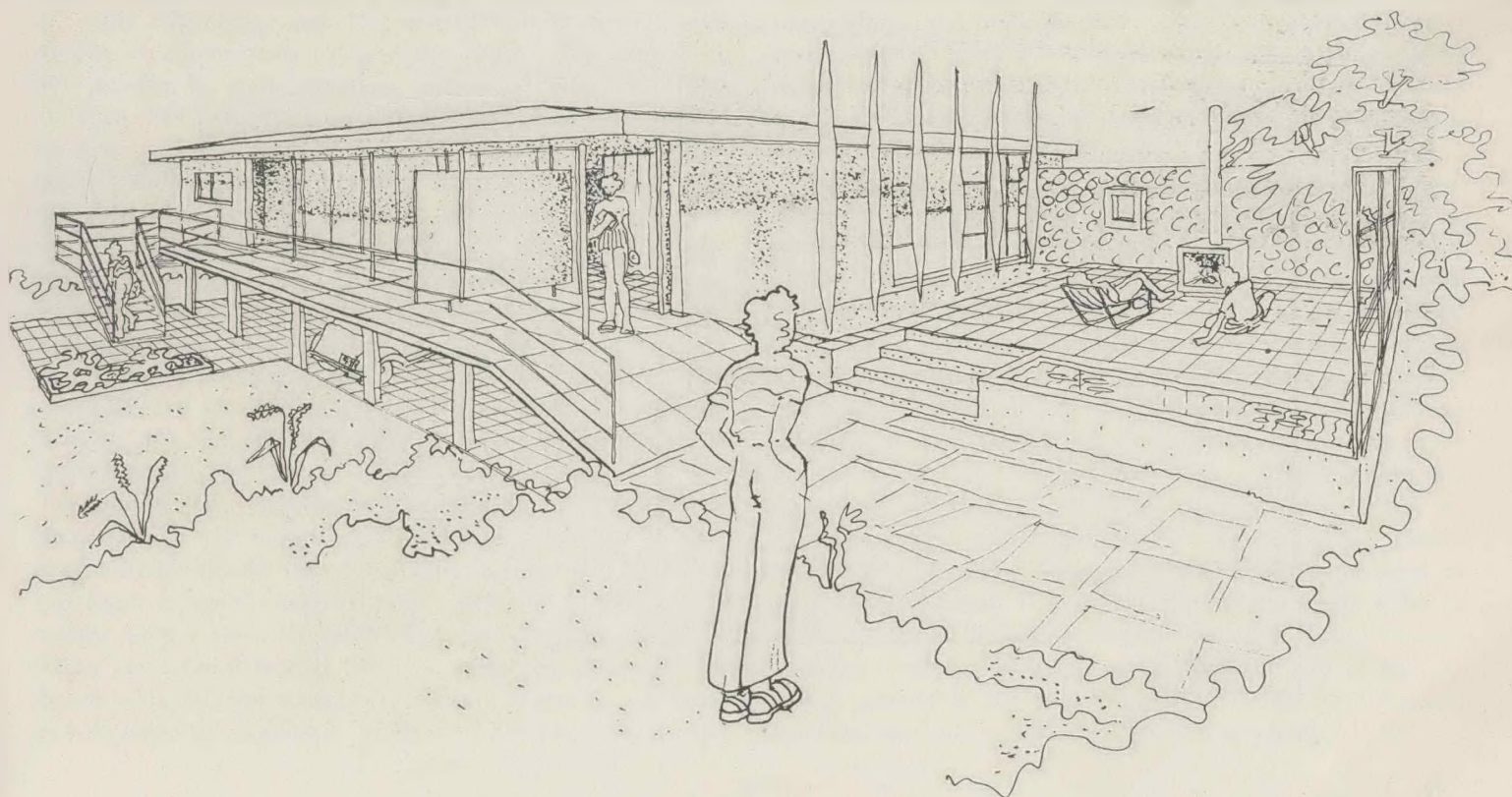
The problem set demanded a house with living and eating space and a study, and six bedrooms to be placed so that two bedrooms, study and living space could function independently, the rest of the bedrooms being able to be shut off if only two or three people should be staying in the house. Further accommodation for boys' rooms, garage and change rooms had also to be provided.

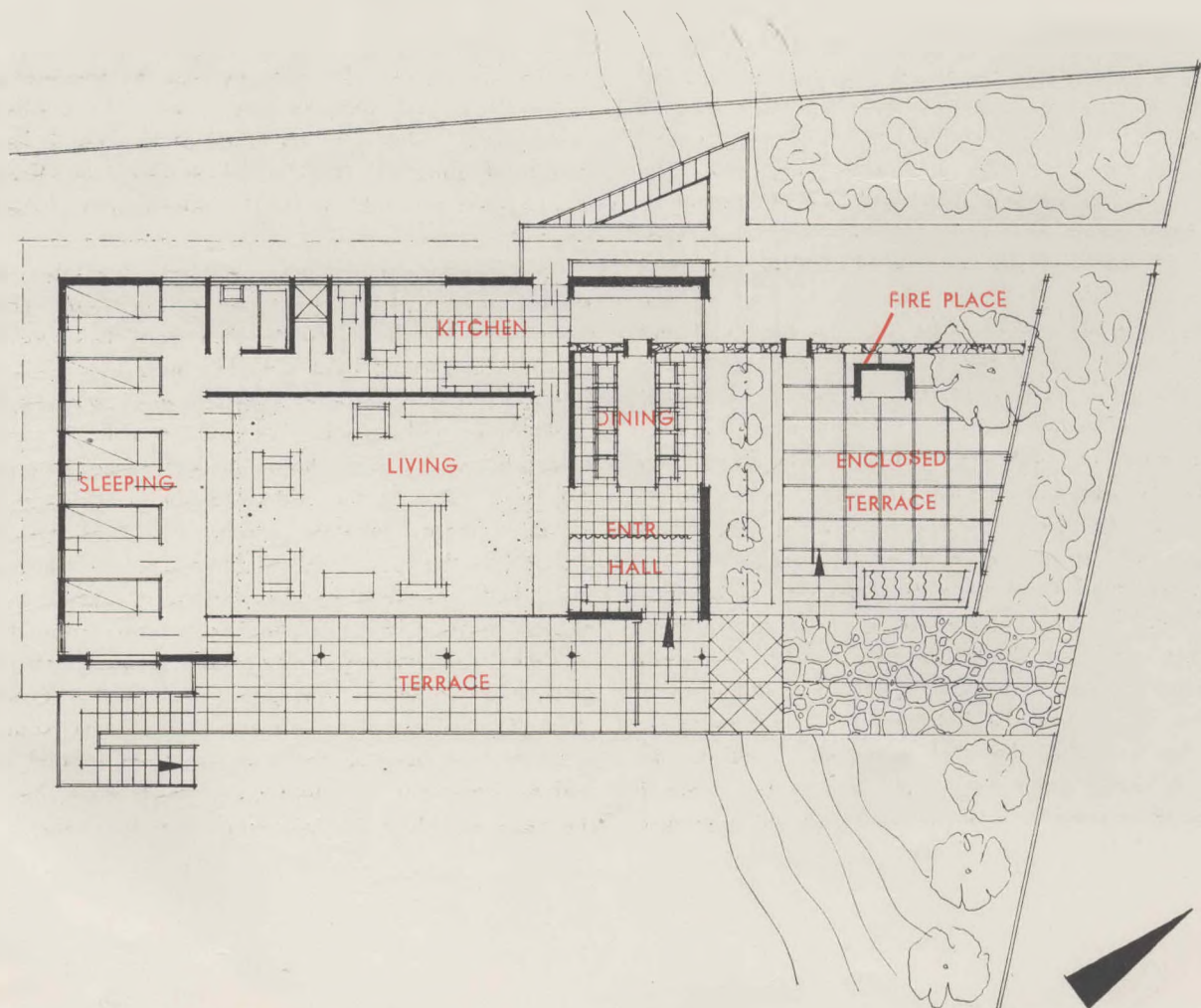
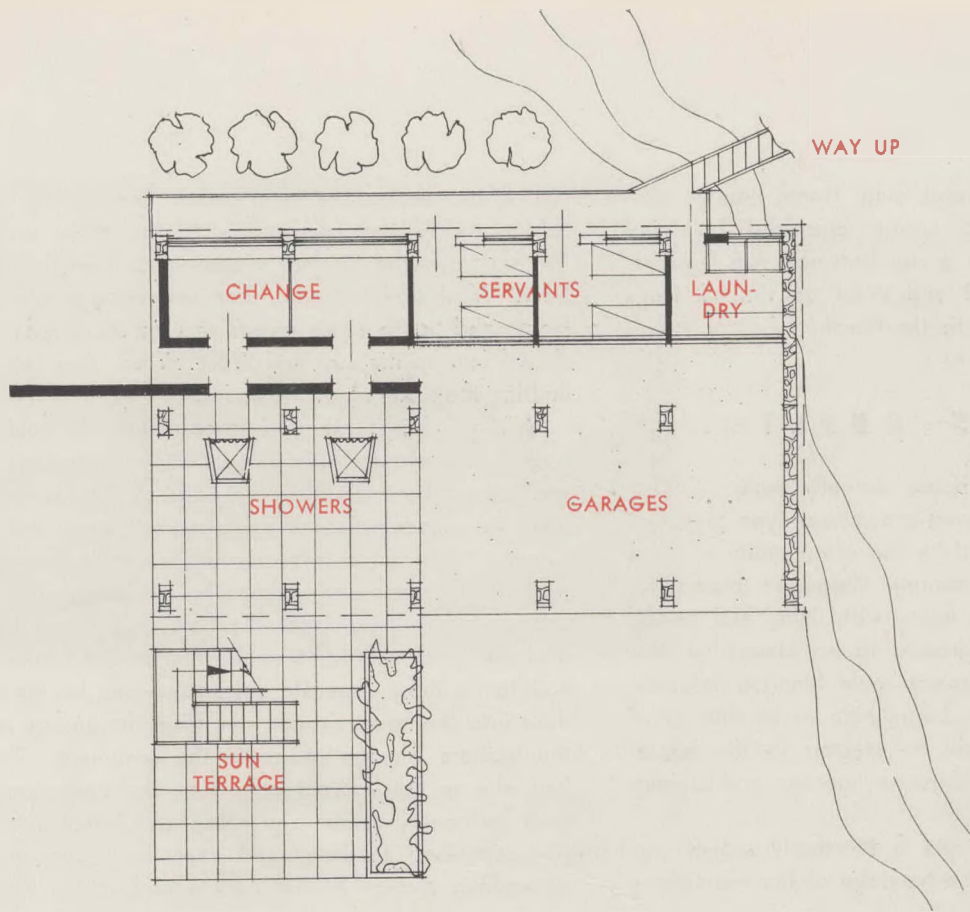
In placing the house on the site a Northerly aspect was sacrificed in order to take fullest advantage of the sea view—

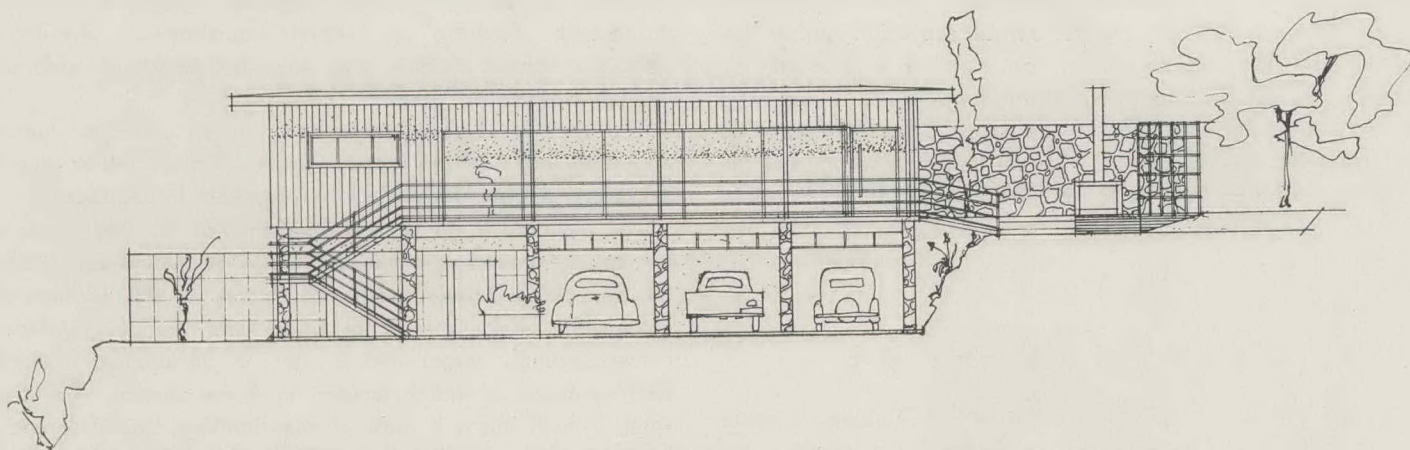
this meant facing the main rooms East, which is quite satisfactory, while the inland view to the West is seen through the staircase and landing window and from the rooms to the South West of the house. The prevailing winds are from the North and South which means that as far as possible windows should face to the East and West. These then were the factors limiting the planning of the house.

Without fairly extensive excavations it would not have been possible to obtain a level site on which to build, so it was judged best to utilize the slope of the ground for a basement to accommodate change rooms, boys rooms, stores and laundry. This is on a reinforced concrete frame and faced with local stone work which is of a high quality. The house proper is of local brick finished with bagged lime. The problem of circulations was the first snag encountered. There had to be three separate entrances—one by the normal front door into the house proper, one from the garage and one from the bathers' change rooms in the basement. The basement had also to have direct access to the bedrooms on the top floor without crossing any other circulation en route. Two bedrooms had to be placed near the living room while the other four, though having easy access to the living zone and

THE SECOND SCHEME FOR A HOUSE AT BLUE LAGOON







The Second Scheme — East Elevation
Designed by R. E. G. Hope and Shirley Honnet

Opposite: — Above: The Ground Floor Plan
Below: The Main Floor Plan

kitchen, had to be designed in such a way that they would be easily locked up and forgotten about if only a small number of people were living in the house. The solution of this problem is quite adequate and works very well. The entrance hall on the ground floor with the stairs off it becomes a focal point of all the circulations. It extends the full width of the house and is entered on the West from the garage and on the East from an entrance porch. The bathers' entrance is also on the East into the basement and access to the four lower and two lower bedrooms is afforded by means of the main staircase which runs from the basement to the top storey. The two bedrooms on the ground floor are in a separate wing, and with the study and living zone form a unity, while the four upper bedrooms, although not interfering in any way with this unity, have easy vertical access to the living room and kitchen. So much for the plan.

In order to take full advantage of the fresh air and glorious views a loggia and open air balcony are provided, one on each floor. On the ground floor the loggia is enclosed to the North and South to avoid wind, and opens by means of sliding glass screens to the East. It is divided from the living room by sliding glass doors, so that the whole area can, if desired, be thrown open to form a single huge room, or can be curtained and screened off forming a living area suitable for a smaller

number of people. The balcony runs the whole length of the upper storey and forms an ideal "deck" for quoits and other such games. Owing to the slope of the roof it has a ceiling height of about 13 ft. 0 in. which gives an effect of great spaciousness and lightness to the balcony and to the bedrooms beyond.

The elevations of the house are, unfortunately, not so satisfactory as the plan. The finish, as previously mentioned, is stone rubble to the top of the basement floor, and the superstructure is bagged brick with the horizontal joints expressed. The roof is of corrugated asbestos and, owing to the height of the house and the semi-skilled nature of the labour available, a lean-to variety was chosen in preference to a pitched or flat type. This has the added advantage of giving the house a lighter, more "holiday" aspect and of opening the upper balcony to the sea. Teak windows are used throughout and these had, unfortunately, for reasons of economy, all to be of stock pattern, thus complicating to some extent the window treatment, and making it impossible to use as large areas of glass as was desired. The great height of the house tends to make it appear rather ungainly. This came about through a desire to place the house on the highest point of the site—thus preventing any excavation which would have brought the basement down to more suitable proportions.

Thus, though the house is successful from some points of view, it does not by any means fulfil all the requirements laid down. It is to begin with far too complex a problem for a seaside house and though an attempt was made to reconcile all the needs of the client with the type of architecture the architects felt was in keeping with the seaside, the scale of the building defeated this end, tending to produce a rather weighty, disproportionate effect out of sympathy with the surroundings.

THE SECOND SCHEME

Having observed the shortcomings of this building, another one was designed for the same site and to accommodate the same number of people, but one which would interpret more closely the architects' theories regarding seaside architecture. This is the second example illustrated. The siting of this house is similar to the first, taking advantage of the sea view to the East for the living room and the inland view for the bedrooms. The materials used are stone for the basement and slabwood for the facing of the ground floor. Slabwood is the waste cut from bulks of wood, is very inexpensive and, if treated and trimmed so as not to give too rustic an aspect to the house, should look quite attractive.

Stone columns, 2 ft. 0 in. x 1 ft. 0 in., reinforced internally with concrete and spaced at approximately 4 ft. 0 in. centres, rise to a height of 9 ft. 0 in. and support a grid of beams and a 5 in. slab. The upper verandah is cantilevered off the main structure as are the external stairs. The slab is turned up 9 in. on all external edges and on this small inverted beam is set the timber framing for the main upper walls.

The external walls are framed up with $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. x $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. timber,

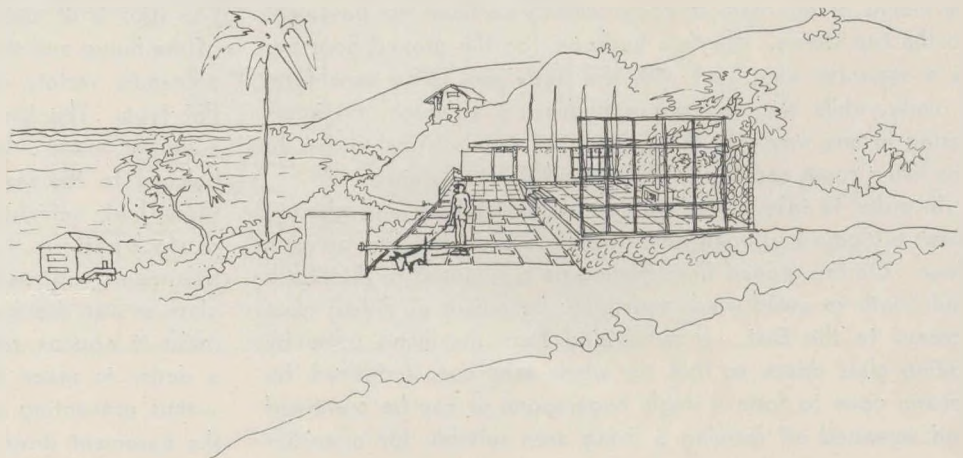
faced on the outside with Malthoid and slabwood and on the inside with "Celotex" or "Insulite Hardboard." The internal walls are framed in the same way, but faced on both sides with an asbestos or "insulite" boarding.

The roof is of sheet metal laid on an insulating material and boarding fixed to rafters tapered either end to give the necessary slope. Teak windows are used throughout.

The planning is far simpler than that of the first house and the upkeep should be much easier. The bedrooms are designed on the cubicle basis suggested earlier in this article—with collapsible bunks instead of beds—and the living space is correspondingly larger and is able to be opened along the East by means of sliding screens on to the terrace. The dining table is built in, as is most of the furniture, and is served by a hatch from the kitchen. Outside the dining room, to the North is an open air terrace partly enclosed on two sides by a rubble wall and glass screen. There is an external fireplace here where meals may be eaten and braaivleisaands may be held.

The change rooms, shower, boys' rooms and garages are under the house but the basement is planned in a far more open manner than previously to provide a play terrace and landing for the stair which leads up to the ground floor.

On the whole it is felt that this type of house comes nearer to fulfilling the requirements stipulated than any other mentioned. It has a quality of lightness about it. It would be in tune with the surrounding country but would not merge into the background as a "rustic" type of building of similar materials would, nor, due to the large glass areas, would it attain the sombre, inflexible aspect that such houses generally possess. It would be inexpensive and easy to erect and should provide a background conducive to a happy and refreshing holiday.



**A Study of the
Second Scheme
from the North**

THE OLD MILL ON WHITNEY FARM, ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT CAPE PROVINCE

by F. OWEN EATON F.R.I.B.A.

"BAYLY. But here is a mill, sir; will you make a note of it upon your plot?"

SURVEYOR. In any case: for it is not the least ornament of a Manor . . . a well-conditioned and a well-wrought mill . . ."

JOHN NORDEN,

The Surveyor's Dialogue (1607)



The subject of "Windmills" calls to my mind a visit to England some years ago, when I was fortunate in being able to avail myself of opportunities to wander about the English country-side and find there so much of splendour and delight to interest me. It was during these wanderings in the country that I became acquainted with the various types of windmills and their construction, and learned, for the first time, something of what little there is to glean of their early history.

It would appear that the origin of the windmill is a point on which those who should be in a position to judge are not agreed. Some claim that they were invented by the Greeks in about the first or second century A.D. Others hold the view that the Crusaders brought the idea back to Western Europe. And then there is the third opinion that they were independently invented in Western Europe.

However, it is not the object of this article to give in detail, or sift, the arguments for and against these three theories, for it seems that even after a considerable amount of research and investigation,

no conclusive evidence is available. Suffice it to say that whereas first mention of a windmill in England was made in about 1190, the oldest known windmill in England, which was originally built as such, is at Outwood, near Reigate, in Surrey. This mill was built in 1655 and was, until recently, I believe, still working.

For seven centuries the trade of the windmill has been of great importance to the population of England, and yet scarcely any histories of them have been written. The day of the windmill is past, even in England where they used to flourish. There are very few working mills now, and of the remainder, many are derelict. However, it is good to know that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has in hand the preparation of a record of all the windmills of which any trace is left in Great Britain.

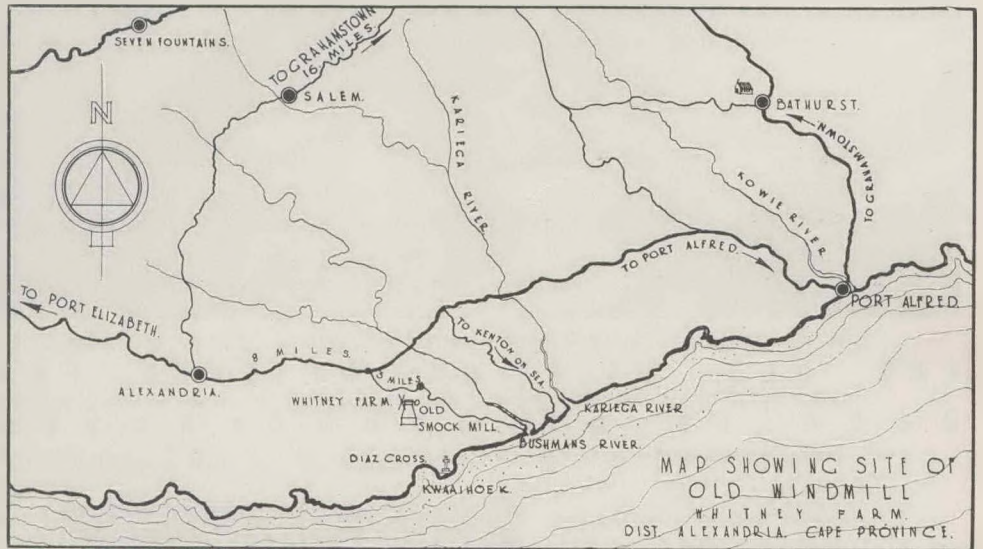
In South Africa, as far as I know, there are only two of these interesting old structures—Mostert's Mill at the Cape, 1796 (restored), and the old mill on Whitney Farm, which it is hoped will also be restored "in toto" to its original condition. Indeed it was this hope that prompted the investigation which made possible the following record :—

WHITNEY MILL

EARLY HISTORY. This windmill was erected sometime during the period 1853-56 by the Reverend Philip Walker Copeman, formerly of Longsutton, Somerset, England, with the assistance of a Mr. John Scott. At the time when the erection of the windmill was contemplated, Mr. John Scott, an ex sailor, was foreman and handyman on the farm Whitney. It is said that the windmill was, in the main, constructed of wood from a ship which was wrecked near Grootvlei, on the coast in the vicinity of Bird Island. From an examination of the structure, this appears to be correct with regard to some of the timbers, particularly the heavier members. Much of the timber used in the construction appears to be indigenous, probably from the Alexandria forest reserve close at hand. The millstones are said to have come from a quarry in Grahamstown. The present owner of the farm Whitney is a Mrs. Copeman, presumably the wife of a grandson of the Reverend Philip Copeman. The question arises as to why the mill was built by a clergyman. The Reverend Mr. Copeman made no secret of the fact that he had become a clergyman at the request of his family in England, and that his personal desires were to be a farmer.



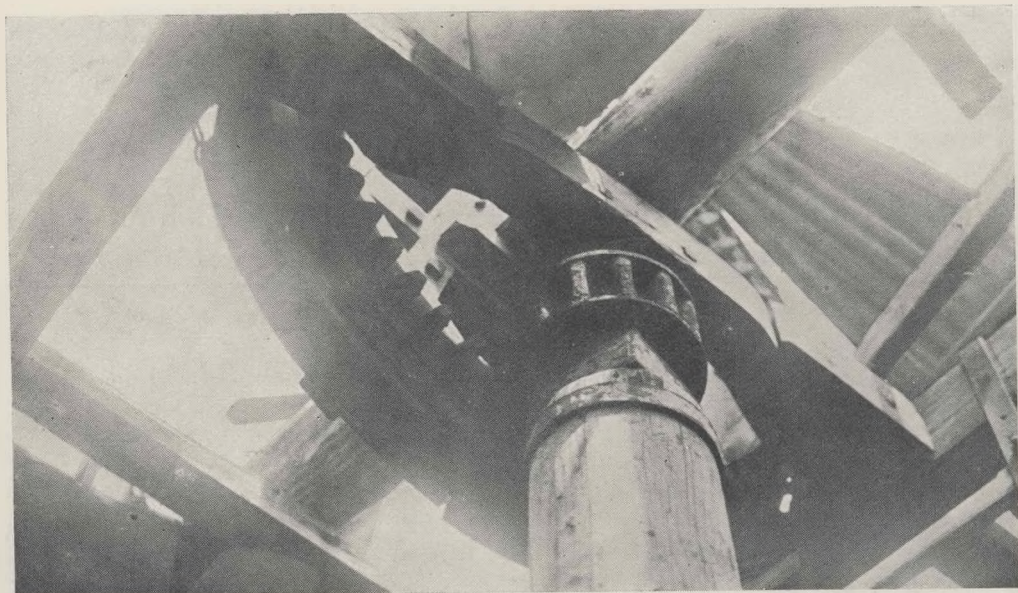
MAP SHOWING SITE OF THE WHITNEY MILL



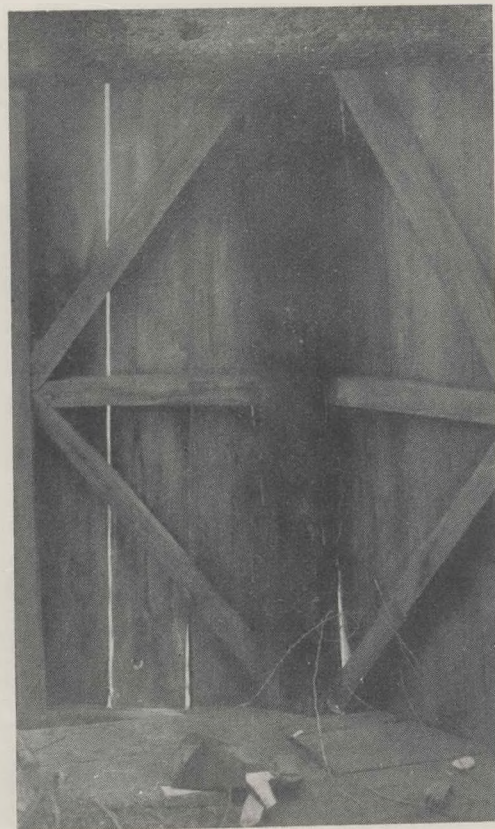
A detail of the Windmill



A General View



THE OLD MILL ON WHITNEY FARM
Details of construction



According to an extract from "Uitenhage Annals," written by the late Reverend J. W. Whiteside, and published in the "Uitenhage Chronicle," in 1904, the Reverend Philip Copeman was appointed Rector of the Anglican Church in Uitenhage in 1847, and was subsequently appointed Colonial Chaplain of Alexandria (by Bishop Cotterill), where he was able to devote himself to the congenial pursuit of farming. Every Sabbath he drove into Alexandria and held morning service in the little church and then drove home again to his farm and busied himself with livestock and crops. The Reverend Philip Copeman died in 1898.

TYPE AND DESIGN OF MILL. There are three common types of windmills; Post Mills, which are box-like structures carrying the sails and all the machinery. The box is supported at its middle, at the top of a single upright post and is balanced so that it may be turned round the post for the sails to face the wind; Tower Mills, which are built of stone or brick and are usually circular in shape; and Smock Mills, which are built of wood and have from six to twelve sides, the usual number being eight. There are other examples of what may be termed "composite" mills, which are variants of the above types. The old Windmill at Whitney farm is an eight-sided Smock Mill, the body of which is constructed of timber. It measures 18 ft. 0 in. overall across the base, decreasing in a straight batter to 11 ft. 0 in. diameter at the "curb" or track, upon which the cap or top of the mill revolves. The height from ground to curb is approximately 21 ft. 0 in. The sides are covered, not with horizontal weather-boarding as one would have expected, but with 11 in. x 1 in. boarding fixed vertically.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS OF MILL. The working arrangements follow very closely those of a typical English "smock" mill. In England, windmill terms differ in various parts of the country: In Anglesey, the sails are called "wings"; in Yorkshire, "arms"; in Kent and Surrey, "sweeps." It is proposed in this report to follow the Cambridgeshire precedent and call a sail a "sail." The mill originally had four "sails." One has completely disappeared and there is very little left of the remaining three sails.

Attached to the "windshaft" is a large, toothed, "brake wheel." The central upright shaft, 12 in. in diameter, is complete with "wallower" at the top and "great spur" wheel at the bottom. There

are two pairs of millstones ; one pair received power from the main or central shaft ; the other pair derived power from some outside source. The pair of millstones which derived power from the main shaft are in excellent condition but the rotating or "runner" stone of the other pair is cracked across the centre. A "Spindle" operated by a lever for raising or lowering the runner stone, exists in the case of each pair of millstones. The "grinding surfaces" of each pair of stones are indented by a regular series of grooves chiselled into the stones. The trough or "shoe," through which the grain passed from the hopper into the cylinder in the centre of the upper stone is intact, but in a poor state of preservation. The toothed "curb" or track on which the cap or top revolved is intact. The "tail pole" by which the mill was turned to face the wind is missing in part. The circular base of the "cap" or top remains, but the actual roof timbers and roof-covering are missing.

PRESENT CONDITION. The framework of the sides of the mill is decaying, as are the flooring and joists, but the "windshaft," "brake wheel," "main vertical shaft," "great spur wheel," "stone nuts," are in fair condition.

The millstones show no signs of decay. With the exception of the roof-covering which is missing, sufficient evidence remains in the old structure to enable it to be reconstructed exactly as it originally existed.

LANDMARK. Situated on the top of a hill, with a commanding view in all directions, it is an interesting "landmark," apparently particularly popular as such with the natives.

WORK OF RESTORATION. The old mill is most interesting and well worth restoring. Let us hope that it may be possible for the Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments, to find ways and means of preserving this old structure, as was done in the case of Mostert's mill at the Cape.

LITERATURE. There is not a wealth of literature to be found on the subject of windmills, but there are two very excellent little volumes, published by the Architectural Press, which I recommend to any reader interested enough to delve further into the subject. These are : "English Windmills," Volume I, by M.

I. Batten. "English Windmills," Volume II, by Donald Smith, F.R.G.S., F.R., Hist. S.

These books were written by the respective authors on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Bennett and Elton published a "History of Corn Milling," the second volume of which was devoted to "Wind and Water Mills." This book is said to be the most correct and detailed history of windmills which has so far been published.

In conclusion I append a short poetical reference to windmills, written by Archdeacon H. L. G. Edwardes, who was not only my travelling companion on the day I visited Whitney to view the old mill, but is one whose company I have appreciated on many delightful country trips :

Blow the wind north or blow the wind South,
Blow the wind east or west—
I trim my sail to each wandering gale
As to ever a welcome guest.
For every wind is a friend to me,
And never a wind a foe,
For every wind makes the sails go round,
And the millstone turn below.
So blow the wind north or blow the wind south
And blow the wind east or west—
But trim your sails to whatever wind blows,
And whatever wind blows is best.

MAP OF VICINITY. Included also is a map of the vicinity on which, it will be noted, the sites of two other subjects of historical interest are indicated: the old Settlers Church at Bathurst which has already been declared a historical monument, and Kwaai Hoek where the replica of the Diaz Cross has been placed.

Just off the edge of the map, but situated not far from either Bathurst or Alexandria is Grahamstown, a place brimful of historical interest and charm.

THE CAPE PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTS

The Committee's Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 1941

MEMBERSHIP

The membership at the close of the year consisted of 114 practising, 39 salaried, 13 retired, 2 absentee and 1 life member, a total of 169 members.

The deaths are recorded with deep regret of Mr. G. Angelini and Mr. Watson Hall.

MEETINGS

One Annual General Meeting, one Special General Meeting, thirteen Provincial Committee Meetings, besides numerous Sub-Committee Meetings, were held during the year. At the first meeting of the Committee, Mr. Hubert L. Roberts and Capt. L. A. Elsworth were elected President and Vice-President respectively for the year under review.

The following is a record of members' attendances at Provincial Committee meetings, showing actual attendances and possible attendances:—

	Attended.	Possible.
K. V. Commin	13	13
R. E. de Smidt	10	13
L. Marriott Earle	12	13
L. A. Elsworth	7	8
Fred. M. Glennie	8	13
J. K. Parker	8	13
A. J. C. Retief	5	13
Hubert L. Roberts	13	13
L. W. Thornton White	6	13

Note:—Captain L. A. Elsworth resigned during the latter part of the year owing to military duties, and Mr. Fred. M. Glennie was elected Vice-President.

FINANCIAL

From the audited Statement of Accounts for the year under review attached to this report, it will be seen that the Income and Expenditure Account shows a surplus of 15/2 as against £43 15s. 6d. in the previous year.

On comparing the figures with the previous year's account it will be noted that Expenditure has decreased by £41 3s. 2d., economies and reductions being effected in Printing and Stationery, Legal Expenses, Grant to Port Elizabeth Local Committee and General Expenses. On the other hand,

Income has fallen by £84 3s. 6d., comprised mainly of subscriptions of members on Active Service waived, reduced Kalendar profit, and heavier Levy to the Central Council owing to collections of subscriptions being a considerable improvement on the 1940 collections. R.I.B.A. Moieties, which had been waived by the C.P.I. for the previous year, re-appear in the 1941 a/c at an estimated figure of £35.

It is gratifying to note that despite the difficult times, subscription collections have actually improved, the outstanding balances at the end of 1940 and 1941 being £243 18s. 6d. and £181 0s. 0d. respectively.

The Capital Account at the end of the year, after addition of the abovementioned surplus, stands at £664 5s. 7d.

CENTRAL COUNCIL

A meeting of the Central Council at which the Institute representatives, Messrs. Hubert L. Roberts, L. A. Elsworth and E. H. Stevenson were in attendance, was held in April last. The meeting lasted two days and as usual a great many matters of interest to the profession were considered and dealt with. The Committee tenders its thanks to the representatives for giving up their time to attend this meeting and for the good work accomplished on behalf of the Provincial Institute.

THE PORT ELIZABETH LOCAL COMMITTEE.

Under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. H. Stevenson, L.R.I.B.A., with the aid of the efficient Honorary Secretary, Mr. F. Owen Eaton, F.R.I.B.A., the Port Elizabeth Local Committee continues to function on behalf of members in the Eastern Province.

THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

The number of students attending the Architectural and Quantity Surveying classes at the University during 1941 was 74. Of the Architectural Students, 15 were first year, 17 were second year, 9 were third year, 11 were fourth year, 8 were fifth and sixth year and 11 were part-time students. Of the Quantity Surveying students, 2 were first year and 1 was a second year student. During the year, 1 student qualified for the degree course and 1 student qualified for the diploma course.

C.P.I. BRONZE MEDAL AND OTHER PRIZES

The award of the 1941 Bronze Medal for the best example of architecture executed within the Province of the Cape of Good Hope will be announced at the Annual General Meeting.

The John Perry Student's Prize of five guineas for the best work done during the third year's course at the University has been awarded to Mr. S. G. Levin.

The award of the C.P.I. Student's Prize of five guineas for the best work done during the final year of the University course has been held over until after the June, 1942, examinations.

CITY OF CAPE TOWN BUILDING REGULATIONS

The Committee regret not being able to report any definite progress as the result of their interviews and correspondence with the City Engineer in regard to the promulgation of the new Building Regulations. The City Engineer, however, has notified the Institute that, owing to the War having depleted his staff to such an extent, he has been unable to devote himself to the task. He has undertaken to expedite progress as soon as he is in a position to do so.

TOWN PLANNING INTERIM DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS.

It is anticipated that copies of the above restrictions, which are now operative, will be made available to all members in the near future. In the meantime members are advised to discuss any important project with the department before embarking on the scheme.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF BUILDING INDUSTRY

As members are aware, on July 10th the Controller of Manpower promulgated regulations controlling the Building Industry. The Institute is represented on the local Advisory Committee by the President, Mr. Hubert L. Roberts.

On 10th October a Special General Meeting of members was held in the Argus Board Room for the purpose of enabling members to air grievances and to make suggestions in order that the Institute could overcome difficulties and give the maximum assistance to the Government, the Profession and the Building Industry. Mr. Lee, the local representative of the Controller attended the meeting, by invitation, and was good enough to explain the functioning of the regulations.

Although permits were issued in the earlier months only for the most essential work, the Committee is given to under-

stand that owing to the bulk of the Defence building programme having now been completed, the restrictions are being considerably relaxed. Members are accordingly advised to make application for building permits irrespective of the size or nature of the work.

The Institute is indebted to our representative for his services on the local Advisory Committee which has taken up a considerable amount of his time.

DEFENCE FORCE LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Institute representatives on the Defence Force Liaison Committee are taking a very active interest in this work. It would be appreciated if any special cases of hardship of members on Active Service or their dependants are brought to the notice of the representatives or the Secretary of the Institute.

PROSECUTION UNDER THE ACT

Members will have noticed recently from the Daily Press as a result of proceedings instituted by the Committee that a certain draughtsman, a non-member of the Institute, was fined in the Magistrate's Court for contravening the Act by signing a plan as Architect.

PETROL CONTROL

Arising out of an Emergency Meeting of the Committee and an interview with the Local Controller of Petrol a statement was submitted on 24th January, 1942, setting forth the reasons for favourably considering bona fide applications for the supplementary allowance made by members carrying on public practice and at the same time offering the full co-operation of the Institute in the necessity for conserving the country's petrol resources. Members are therefore urged to restrict their petrol requirements to the absolute minimum.

MEMBERS ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Members on Active Service who wish to apply for remission of their subscriptions are requested to do so as it is essential that written application be made. On the other hand, those members whose practices are being continued in their absence would be assisting the Institute considerably if they endeavoured to continue the payment of their subscriptions.

The Committee wish to take this opportunity of extending all good wishes to members on Active Service.

HUBERT L. ROBERTS,
President.

THE O.F.S. PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTS

President's Report for the Year Ending 31st Dec. 1941

Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in welcoming you to the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the O.F.S. Provincial Institute of Architects.

MEMBERSHIP, DECEMBER, 1941

Our Membership numbers have remained at 14 Practising, 7 Salaried and 1 Retired Member. Total 22. But in 1942 Mr. Eddy will be transferring to the Province in which he resides—we lose him with regret as he has been a great help to us.

COMMITTEE WORK

The Committee has continued its good work for the welfare of the Institute which—as with the others—is going through a difficult time. The subject of the making of Architectural Drawings by persons outside the Profession has been carefully dealt with and continuing to occupy attention, as also some clearing up of Clauses in the Bloemfontein Municipal Bye-laws.

THE ACT AND REGULATIONS

I would ask members to renew their acquaintance with the Act and Regulations, and if in any doubt as to the meaning of any special Clause the President and Secretary are always prepared to render assistance.

Members of either Class if making a change must notify the Secretary, and Salaried Members are to give notice prior to commencing as practitioners. Regulation 66.

Architects do not always sign drawings which go out to tender or are deposited with Municipalities. Regulation 87c regards such omission as extremely serious.

It should be unnecessary to have to draw attention to Regulation No. 76, yet Central Council has on several occasions been concerned with cases where initials or titles of other Bodies have been wrongly assumed.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF BUILDING.

On July 10th, 1941, Regulations controlling the Building Industry were gazetted, and this has had a slackening effect on private building ventures. We have Mr. W. W. Tonkin as Architect Member on the Committee of the Divisional Inspector of Labour with Mr. F. W. Masey as his alternate.

Quantity Surveyors are represented by Mr. W. Rhodes-Harrison. There is little indication of the restriction being relaxed at present, and I and my Committee note with satisfaction that Central Council is alive to the necessity of Building Materials Stock not being bled to death by the time restrictions are removed.

FINANCE

Revenue and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet have been circulated to all members.

Whereas our books are kept on the Membership and Sums Accrued, our account with Central Council is on the cash basis.

The items of real interest are our Liability to Central Council, Subscriptions in Arrears, and the Sum at our Credit.

We have applied to have £32 11s. 0d. written off as irrecoverable, this will bring our Liability to Central Council down from £56 13s. 2d. to £45 16s. 2d., Arrears of Subscriptions from £78 17s. 6d. to £46 6s. 6d.

The instructions given to our Treasurer last year resulted in an appreciable amount of dues being squared off and our Cash Account of £195 2s. 3d. is extremely satisfactory. The Treasurer is putting a portion of this sum into Union Loan Certificates.

CENTRAL COUNCIL

As hitherto, the cordial relationship between this Institute and Central Council has been maintained and we are greatly indebted to Central Council for its unremitting and valuable work done for our Profession. I once more repeat the request which has been voiced by previous Presidents, i.e., that Central Council Circulars be read, docketed and preserved as and when received.

Central Council has, amongst other items, concerned itself with: Government Control of Building Industry, and Local Advisory Committees. Professional Services of Architects and Quantity Surveyors in relation to Military services. Qualification of Building Tenders. Appeals to Central Council. Architectural Education.

WAR PERIOD AND SERVICE MEMBERS

The devastating War still keeps the world in destructive turmoil. We have two members serving with the Forces—neither of whom have asked for the remission of their Annual

Subscriptions : two others are in the N.V.B. and others have joined the C.P.S.

HONORARY SECRETARY

I would ask members to do everything possible to assist our Honorary Secretary in his work, ours is the only Province which does not possess a rented Headquarters and Paid Secretary, and it is entirely owing to these facts that we have a Credit Bank Balance ; for our Annual Expenditure has at times shown a Deficit on the years of working and usually a Credit of under £25 0s. 0d., a sum quite insufficient for Rent and Paid Secretary.

Subscriptions due Annually on January 1st, are paid in that month by some members without their having to receive an account ; and the re-rendering of accounts which should not be necessary—consumes a large amount of wasted time.

O.F.S. TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Our Hon. Secretary continues as a member of the Committee of the Technical College.

CERTIFICATE BOOKS, ETC.

Standard Progress Certificate Books, 2/6 each. Conditions of Contract Forms, 1/-. Scale of Fees Pamphlets, 3d. Building Variations Order Books, 3/-. The Architects Act and Regulations, 2/6, are all obtainable from the Hon. Secretary.

THANKS

I desire to record my thanks to the Vice-President, Committee Members, and Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, for their ready assistance given to me over the last twelve months, the presence of the President-in-Chief, Mr. W. W. Tonkin, has been most valuable and greatly appreciated. And lastly I desire to record the pleasure it has been to me to occupy the position of your President during the past year.

H. G. E. de la CORNILLERE,
President.



Decoration for Lieut. Robert Edward Cole-Bowen.

News has been received that the Military Cross has been awarded to Lieutenant Robert Edward Cole-Bowen for outstanding coolness and devotion to duty.

The citation says : " On February 12th, when his column was making its first approach to Mekili, Lieutenant Cole-Bowen twice went to the top of ridges to determine the strength of the enemy opposition in the area. He was under heavy shell fire on each occasion, and on the first, according to an eye-witness, he got away with difficulty, being chased by shells for a mile. On each occasion he obtained valuable and accurate information."

With acknowledgments to the " Pretoria News."

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The Editors,
The South African Architectural Record,
Dear Sirs,

Your Commentator remarks on the lateness of the hour at which Mr. Hanson read his paper to our wandering attention; so that it is good to see in print, so carefully prepared an address.

The audience was, by your Commentator, divided into younger and older members. Disagreeable as it is, I find myself in the latter class. Three years' of plaguing the "normal channels" for combatant work, alas, only confirms this. Little as I personally subscribe to the position, therefore, I am an "Elder," an elder of a Junta of one.

This "elders" claim to comment, arises out of the allocation of his productive years—as to 20 per cent. in active combatant service in the main theatre of a large war, and 80 per cent. hard work on continuous and varied problems. Beyond this, the elder has tried to keep his interests and friendships abreast of the current of the times, so that the aspirations of the "young" are felt to be sympathetically understood and, more especially as they grow out of the former cataclysm, in principle, agreed with.

Last time, the issue seemed simpler, and the generous spirit of the young took them unquestioningly into the ranks of the fighting troops. C. E. Montague has written since then; but even if his book is unknown, there are so many complex ideologies exercising frustrations or developing egoism that, although the same simple generous spirit has been evinced, the fact that such a paper could be put forward at this stage of the war by a "younger member" (your Commentator remarks) is scarcely likely to appeal to the authorities. In our case it would be rash and unjust not to accept bona fides without question.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the general body is given so little current information as to what transpires in committee and only knows at the end of the year, in the President's report, all that has taken place: but Mr. Hanson has been in a position to know of the considerable activity that took place last year on behalf of the corporate membership so his charge of apathy seems unfitting.

While we must all deplore the negligent attitude of the Government towards the Institute, its ward under an act of Parliament, we must bear in mind that the Defence Department is a branch of the Civil Service. Consequently the officials, whether frock or brass-hat, naturally turn to their own organisation when advice or work is needed. And no doubt, the same system applies to Municipalities, where such a service has been allowed to develop to any extent.

It is both Human and official that officials should go to the approved official source. The fact that official technical services do not attract the better type of technician is probably true, but the only officials capable of making a sound external choice are those technical officials themselves, and is it humanly likely that they should acknowledge external competence greater than their own; when even practising architects have nothing but the greatest pity and contempt for all but their closest friends.

And so the professional war effort has been met in a natural way by a structure built officially and operated by translated officials. But even so, any younger or older man has been welcomed, who is willing to pull his weight, and one can assume that his experience would be used

as well as his pencil. Is this collective or individual? It is of no consequence: but here was the country's urgent war effort on the architectural front, and I understand it is rapidly diminishing, so isn't it a little late in the day to raise all this bother. The authorities may well say, what have you been doing for three years when we wanted your services; and they may well be suspicious of the belated appeal to suspend all private building, coinciding as it does with the embargo on labour and material. They may well say—for three years you have used valuable building material on unnecessary building, showing thereby little foresight in public affairs—and now you talk of planning. There I suggest is the core of the distrust and dislike of architects that is indicated in the address.

To act collectively it seems, is the prerogative of government. It would seem that our attempts to act collectively result in the formation of small committees. Are we sure the same rocks will not wreck future collective effort, that wrecked the earlier attempt referred to, of co-operation with the C.P.S. We should know more about this occasion to judge if it is a valid objection. And is the new C.P.S. venture working smoothly—the body consists, it is understood, of the entire Institute and several co-opted members—if it is working smoothly then why is Greenside alone according to the wireless announcement "offering complete plans for a few shillings."

It would be wrong to belittle the work that is required under the C.P.S., but as in those former military undertakings, it looks very much as if all the spade work has been done and the job already docketed for distribution. It is sincerely to be hoped that the selected architects will find conscientious satisfaction.

I must say in conclusion, that I feel that the two academic instructions given to the ingoing committee are full of sound and fury and signify nothing except a lack of a sense of reality in the "serious view of the war situation": That in spite of efforts made towards an improvement in public spirit, would a "profession with a status so low" prevail with this or any hierarchy: And how can such a proposition be made, that "It is open to individuals to make their maximum contribution for the defence of this country but their efforts remain individual."

The "maximum contribution" is, as it always was, "in this serious situation," to get behind a gun. Does that "remain individual?"

I am afraid the publication of the address may have done us more harm than good in official circles. Mr. Raikes' wireless address with his clear statement of duty and his reservations—may have some application to us both collectively and as individuals.

Yours faithfully,

C. D. ST. LEGER.

The Editors,
The South African Architectural Record,
Sirs,

Your correspondent, Mrs. Martienssen, has made an attack on my article (published in your January issue), and I feel that a reply is called for from me. As your correspondent has dealt with my article

at length, I am afraid that any reply from me would be, in its turn, lengthy. I hope that you will find it possible to allow me the space for my reply.

In replying to your correspondent I do not intend to follow her method of putting the whole discussion on a personal plane. I do not wish to continue this unsought for, and I might say, quite unfruitful, conflict of personalities. I must draw attention, briefly, to your correspondent's method of reply, but thereafter, I intend to bring the discussion back to a level of non-personal objectivity—the level at which, I can truthfully claim, I believe, my article was initially written.

Your correspondent's frequent irritation with my article arises in some cases out of a lack of clarity in expression on my part and simple misunderstanding on hers. The title of the article, I agree, is rather an unfortunate one; but I did not select it! It was a subject—"The Modern Theorists of City Planning; le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, etc."—set me in a City Planning course at Columbia University, New York. The "quick flip to his Ego" (whatever this might mean) therefore must be transferred to the Professor of City Planning and Housing at this University. The choice of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the restriction of the field to the works of these two figures, despite the "etc.," was also not a matter that was in my hands. I must say, however, that despite the fact that my inclusion of Frank Lloyd Wright can no longer be considered "a reflection on (my) sense of values," I consider that Frank Lloyd Wright is necessary to the discussion on many grounds. Firstly, Frank Lloyd Wright holds an esteemed place in the architectural profession, not only in his native United States of America, but also the world over. But more important for the purpose of my article (which had, for practical reasons, to be confined to a restricted field), Wright represents the necessary diametrically opposed stand to le Corbusier in the field of city planning. In fact, in dealing with these two figures, we deal with the two extremes of modern bourgeois city planning theory; the annihilation-of-the-city theory, and the super-city theory. And by deriving a thesis from an examination of these extremes, we can come to some conclusions about city planning theory in general and we can provide the method whereby the "etc." lying between these extremes can be judged. I have drawn a thesis from these figures, showing their unity of philosophical standpoint despite their antagonistic appearance in practice. This is my thesis—and not a "resentment" against an individual recognising "neither reason nor consistency."

Having, I hope, cleared up the misunderstandings, I can now get down to the task of answering your correspondent. First of all, I must deal with the manner of her criticism, her technique, for her argument relies to the extent of a good 90 per cent. on technique. What does this technique amount to?

1. Your correspondent attempts deliberately to prejudice the reader against myself before the article is argued.

2. Your correspondent employs all the "old and wearying" devices of debating, betraying thereby the weakness of her case.

As an example of number 1: I shall requote only the two salient remarks—"merely a quick flip to his Ego," and "merely a reflection on the sense of values . . ." I think, sirs, you must agree with me that such statements do not help to further the discussion.

Your correspondent's debating technique falls into different categories; it manifests itself in different forms. The first form is to take a portion of the argument apart from the whole, and by concentrating all attention on it, thereby to distort the significance of the whole thesis. In this connection, your correspondent assails me for confining the field of discussion to only two figures; how much more guilty, then, is she

of her own charge, when she restricts the field by a further 50 per cent. to a discussion of le Corbusier alone?

The second form the debating technique takes is to throw a lurid light of personal bitterness on simple and unemotional remarks of mine. My discussion of le Corbusier must be a tissue of "jibes," of "humourless intellectual searchings," of "shuddering reactions," of "mockery," of "frenzy." My appreciation of le Corbusier must be reduced to a "fleeting acknowledgment," a "crumb—of—patronage," and the best thing she can say about this side of my article is "Mr. Kantorowich relents magnanimously." This is necessary in order to maintain the impression that my manner is "testy," and one of "resentment against le Corbusier." I would refer you, sirs, and your readers to the original, and I am sure that you will find my remarks anything but the "illconsidered comments" that your correspondent's distorted vision purports to see.

The third form of the debating technique is plain distortion and/or misquotation. For example, nowhere in my article do I say that "le Corbusier is a Fascist." I am content to record the "distinct trend towards the Fascist camp." An insignificant difference, your correspondent will no doubt claim. But I must state that my interest is not to prove that the individual, le Corbusier, has a swastika band on his arm. For all I know, the present position in France might have arrested and ended this tendency; on the other hand, it might have carried it further to its logical conclusion. My purpose is to point out that any artist to-day who remains a Utopian and refuses to ally himself with the forces of the future must end up a reactionary. But more of this argument later on.

Another example. I am represented as saying "the idea of the regeneration of architecture by means of the reconstruction of the architectural constitution of the city" is "megalomaniac." Far from considering this megalomaniacal, I find little to disagree with this "idea." But what did I say? I quote. "For le Corbusier, the reconstruction of the centres of our great cities is the means whereby war can be averted and society saved." This megalomaniac, when it is considered that it is le Corbusier's plans for reconstruction that are implied!

More examples can be quoted, but there is no reason to waste more space of the journal. I think that your readers will accept my contentions as sufficiently proved.

We must now ask why this particular method of attack was adopted by your correspondent. I think that the answer is clear from an examination of your correspondent's letter. The high esteem in which le Corbusier is held by your correspondent means that any criticism of him must of necessity be an attack on her. Despite her insistence that she will "not play the role of Counsel for the Defence," her letter is all too obviously just what she claims it is not.

There is nothing to be ashamed of in desiring to defend an individual whose work one admires. But your correspondent is doing more than this. She is defending an article of faith—the article of faith of the "Corbu" school. (I use the abbreviation quoted from le Corbusier to point out that he himself gave warning against this very tendency.) If it had not been for this passionate and dogmatic attitude, your correspondent could never have penned some of her passages, which are completely illogical.

For example, she says that le Corbusier's "achievement in the realm of architecture is at least as great as that, say, of Engels in political theory—probably greater since he stands more completely alone." In other words, she would have us believe that one man is superior to another, not on account of his more significant deeds, but because of

his isolation! But, further! On what basis is it possible to compare the "achievements" of individuals in such diverse fields? It is like comparing the usefulness of nails with that of cauliflowers! Another example. In re-quoting a statement attributed to Stalin, your correspondent is convinced that it must imply that "Russia does recognise that what le Corbusier stands for (in general) is the truth (?)." As she points out, this statement was relayed to Frank Lloyd Wright. Then, on what possible logical basis does she assume that it applies to le Corbusier, and not to some other architect, Frank Lloyd Wright for instance, or, what is really likely, to the young developing school of Soviet architects.

For your correspondent, there is one contemporary figure in architecture, and one only, namely, le Corbusier. He is the individual who has contributed "a revaluation of the whole significance of architecture and urbanisation to humanity." And he stands "completely alone." Modern architecture begins and ends with le Corbusier. The future must therefore follow him for, after all, what he has contributed is the "truth," a "truth" that we assume is absolute, and not relative to the present time alone. Architectural criticism is thus simplified. Every work of architecture must be rated as a sort of vulgar fraction of le Corbusier's whole. Your correspondent would even interpret le Corbusier as an unchanging element in the universe of architectural thought—like a star in the heavens. She would have us accept, as a virtue, that le Corbusier "has maintained an unswerving attitude since his first radical thesis," this despite the fact that the face of the world has changed substantially since that time; that his record "is a proud tabulation of lost competitions" the world over.

This attitude of converting le Corbusier into some sort of god is fatal. It is the death-blow to any further advancement of architectural thought on the basis of scientific investigation. This tendency that regards the architectural search as completed with the discovery of le Corbusier; that regards all those who disagree as ignoramuses or renegades, is only to be deplored.

In my article, I attempted to come to an evaluation of le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright to enable our architectural knowledge to be pushed forward to a higher level of cognition and experience. I was conscious that before the time of le Corbusier, there lay a whole history of architecture; that even as a modern architect (as we understand the term), he is a creature of his antecedents, of the pioneers in the modern movement. I am also conscious that there lies a whole history of architecture ahead; and an architecture, what is more, that will derive its impetus from a new and virile form of society, and not from the dogmas, the dying cultural gasps of a decadent and passing society. It is within this larger canvas that I wished to place le Corbusier; to judge him, not in terms of absolute criteria, but within his particular historical setting.

Here at last we come to the fundamental difference between your correspondent's approach to the problem and mine. It is the difference between philosophical idealism and philosophical materialism. I laid considerable stress on this matter in my original article, but evidently your correspondent did not get my point, for she asks what it was I termed the "basic approach." So, let me restate the matter here.

Firstly, let us summarise:

"Man's consciousness determines his social being"—Idealism.

"Man's social being determines his consciousness"—Materialism.

The Idealist attitude assumes that our consciousness is independent of our existence here—it comes to us from without and does not develop as we struggle with our material surroundings. It assumes the primacy

of spirit to matter. Idealism has its reflection in all sorts of philosophical systems—all sorts of deism, solipsism, mathematical mysticisms (à la Jeans), etc. From this point of view, why should not a "great idea" influence human history? After all, if human history is dependent on the working out in practice of man's consciousness, which is assumed to come from without this world, then a "great" consciousness, giving birth to a "great idea" must be decisive! Idealism is, however, completely non-scientific and mystical, admitting of no scientific proof. It has been proved to give no adequate interpretation of the world. In the last analysis, it is purely a fatalistic and passive philosophy.

The Materialist attitude takes the exact reverse stand. It sees in the development of man's consciousness the exact result of man's contact with the real, independently existing, material world. A man's thoughts reflect to a greater or lesser degree of exactness this real material world. To imagine a consciousness or a thought independent of the material world, is impossible. How does this attitude work out in human society? "Man's consciousness is determined by his social being." What determines his social being? The productive forces of society, and the productive relationships engendered by them. Thus man is a social product, not a product of an external consciousness. This is true of his ideas—even of his "great ideas."

Now we are at a point where we can truly appreciate the rôle of the individual in history. Here is a quotation giving the materialist attitude. "In the long run the development of society is determined not by the wishes of outstanding individuals, but by the development of the material conditions of existence of society . . . Outstanding individuals may become nonentities if their ideas and wishes run counter to the economic development of society, to the needs of the foremost class; and vice versa, outstanding people may really become outstanding individuals if their ideas and wishes correctly express the needs of the economic development of society, the needs of the foremost class." To quote Plekhanov, "the character of an individual may become a factor in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it."

It is impossible for me to trace here the full subtleties of this method; this is not a paper on Historical Materialism. However, as an example of this method, let us take the case of Karl Marx, and his alleged "Great Idea," since your correspondent has brought the matter up. I presume that your correspondent means that Marx's great idea was the idea of socialism, the common ownership of the means of production of society. But this was not Marx's "idea"! As Engels points out, in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, ideas of a future society were common before Marx's time. He cites St. Simone, Owen, Fourier, etc., as Socialists before Marx's time. In what respect then was Marx's contribution different? It was in this. The previous socialists were Utopian; their ideas for a better society did not arise from an analysis of society, but arose directly from their sentiments that society needed improving. Marx, however, based his whole theory on a scientific analysis of existing capitalistic society; an analysis that, at the time of the great Utopians, was objectively impossible. This I pointed out in my article. Marx repeatedly recognised that sooner or later the processes of capitalism would have been discovered. Society poses the problems that gifted human beings solve. Marx's greatness lies, not in his bringing a "Great Idea" from heaven-knows-where, but in his solving, in particular, the problem posed.

Now to return to le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. I showed at length in my article how I considered them to be Utopians. I referred to the difference between a Utopian in Owen's day, and a Utopian

to-day. I showed how to be a Utopian to-day means "either to be ignorant, or to be reactionary." Further, I said, that with the persistence of ignorance, then the inevitable reactionary end followed. I gave certain evidence proving this tendency. Your correspondent challenges this and gives counter-evidence. I contend, in my turn, that her evidence, far from demolishing my case, only serves to confirm it. I will proceed to show in what way.

[Two paragraphs of the letter have been omitted at this point owing to the nature of references to certain living persons.—Editors.]

And, lastly, Petain. The quotation given by your correspondent is not the one to which I referred. The one I referred to gave the "qualities of a leader" according to Petain! Petain's reputation does not date merely from the time of the Fall of France. He was well-known there many years before. After all, did he not instruct General Franco in the arts of war? The quotation is apparently of small moment, but does a progressive quote Goering or Hitler on the "qualities of a leader"?

Now as to the arguments around the Moscow plan. Firstly, your correspondent answers the charge of "Bourgeois" laid against the scheme by saying that le Corbusier schemes have also been called "Bolshevik" in Geneva. This does not do away with the initial charge; it only brings in an additional one, and incidentally, confirms my point that le Corbusier's schemes were unacceptable in any quarter. Your correspondent tends to deal lightly with Moscow's criticisms of his scheme. She feels that their rejection of his scheme on the grounds that "their technical resources were not advanced enough to meet his

requirements does not justify the attempt to stamp him as a reactionary." Your correspondent would have us believe that the Soviets were to blame for asking le Corbusier to submit a design in the first place; that they were "surprised" unjustifiably at his scheme. The blame, she feels, must be fixed on the Soviets—not on le Corbusier!

The Soviets were no doubt perfectly aware of the general nature of le Corbusier's works. The Soviets, most probably, noted the progressive phases of his work; the dialectical and revolutionary manner in which he tackled and carried out many of his earlier projects. In le Corbusier's Voisin plan there was a definite advance in city planning thought. The Voisin plan was theoretical, but it nevertheless tackled a concrete ill of Paris. It was theory derived from some practical issue, and it was startling and original theory. But, however, there was another side to the Voisin plan—a "mechanical" side which eventually became the predominant trait of practically all his later work. His later work consists of hardly more than a refinement of the Voisin plan applied "mechanically" all over the globe. The Soviets recognised the weaknesses in le Corbusier's work as direct expressions of, as the crippling effects of, the society under which he laboured. It was French society, not le Corbusier that forced the schemes to remain theoretical. Releasing him from these limitations, the Soviets expected a real flowering of le Corbusier's great gifts. The Soviets were to be commended on being broad-minded enough to ask le Corbusier to compete. It can hardly be counted as their fault if le Corbusier threw away his golden opportunity.

And why did he do this? Why did he reply with the Ville Radieuse plan—an abstract plan which might have been presented for London, Paris, Buenos Aires, New York, Calcutta or Bloemfontein, or for nowhere in particular? Why did he reply with a "mechanical abstraction" having relevance to neither time nor space? Why did he ignore all the stipulations laid down? Because of his "arrogant" attitude to the Soviet peoples—to all peoples in fact! It was not for the Soviet people to pose the problem of their own city! Why should their city have claim to treatment different from any other? It was M. le Corbusier who was entitled to pose the problem, and solve it according to his own conditions, take it or leave it!

It is of no use that le Corbusier denies that he takes a "political stand." ("I am an architect, no one is going to make a politician of me.") He enters all too frequently the field of politics, for how can a city planner remain outside this field if he wishes his schemes to be built? "Politics," after all, "is the art of living with one's fellows." A person takes a political stand either consciously or unconsciously. I would refer your correspondent to Alick West's remarks on James Joyce in "Crisis and Criticism" to show how this is true in other fields besides architecture. As West points out, James Joyce rejects Roman Catholicism, and British rule over Ireland, but in not associating himself with the Irish nationalist movement (such an association would be the logical result of his rejection) he serves what he rejects nevertheless. He is bound to Roman Catholicism "negatively," as West puts it, So with le Corbusier! The rejection of the camp of progress as well as the camp of reaction means ultimately the endorsement of the camp of reaction—the endorsement of Fiat and Ford.

The "tragic" fate of le Corbusier is the fate of one who refused to make the choice that would have saved himself and his city planning. It is the tragic fate that he shares with his native France; in fact, as an individual, he epitomises this fate. For le Corbusier was a significant part of French society, of decadent French culture, which was so convinced that "it can't happen here" that it "happened" with the greatest of ease. We are at the cross-roads of history; a man must choose

his road, otherwise it is chosen for him!

It is by no means "patronage which presumes to conceive le Corbusier's development as partaking of tragedy." Le Corbusier might have been the first architect of the future—such enormous talents as were his required only to be harnessed to the great forward movement of all peoples. But it was not to be. That is the "tragedy." Instead his life work must end in paper-architecture, and latterly he has even retreated from paper-architecture to being a cloistered painter in his studio.

The architecture of the future will be born, is being born, in the crucible of man's struggle to build that future. This is the extraordinary significance of the plan of Moscow that is actually being built. I have no space here to describe this plan. It is interesting though that Frank Lloyd Wright, who, remember, hates the city as such, nevertheless felt constrained to comment that Moscow would be the most beautiful city in the world. Suffice it to say that it fulfilled all the conditions that I laid down in my article, and which le Corbusier ignored. Far from being a succession of "niggardly reforms," it was "surgery," but surgery with this difference; that it saved the patient instead of killing it! This Moscow, of such significance in the heritage of the Soviet people, was not razed to the ground—it was transformed. This is practical city planning. Perhaps in some future issue of your journal, this plan could be described by one of your readers, and fully illustrated.

I now wish to conclude. I am sorry that I have had to write at such length, but I deemed it necessary to deal with your correspondent's attack fully. I feel that the issues that I raised in my article were deserving of a better reception. I am conscious that I have not said the last word on this vital subject, and my purpose in writing this letter is to bring the main issues again into the foreground of the discussion out of which they had been ousted by your correspondent's unfortunate personal method of criticism.

Lastly, I wish to dispel certain impressions which this reply of mine, taken in isolation, might give. In answering your correspondent's pro-le Corbusier case, I am forced into what would appear an anti-le Corbusier stand. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am, however, very certainly "anti" your correspondent's type of appreciation. At best she reflects the weaker side of le Corbusier, and at worst, she misunderstands and diminishes his stronger side. I reiterate the sentiments with which I concluded my original article. There is much in le Corbusier's work that will be of inestimable value to the architecture of the future; there is much that we can learn from him now—from his weaknesses as well as from his strength. Le Corbusier will remain a significant part of the valuable and rich cultural background that the new society, now being born, will inherit from the old.

ROY KANTOROWICH

April, 1942

O B I T U A R Y

NORRIS TYNWALD COWIN

By the death of Norris Tynwald Cowin, M.B.E., L.R.I.B.A., on April 28th, the profession in South Africa has lost a distinguished personality.

Born in Mauritius, he was sent at an early age to be educated in London, and later was trained as a Quantity Surveyor with a leading London firm of Surveyors.

He came to this country during the South African War with the City Imperial Volunteers, and together with his comrades in arms was made a "Freeman of the City of London," a distinction of which he was justly proud.

After demobilisation he commenced practice in Cape Town as a Quantity Surveyor, and later joined the staff of the Public Works Department in Pretoria.

In 1912 he joined the writer in partnership, and commenced practising in Pretoria with the Headquarters Fire Brigade Station which they had recently won in competition. The partnership continued for twenty-five years and during that period was responsible for the New University Buildings of the Witwatersrand in association with the late Mr. Frank Emley, F.R.I.B.A., and his partner Mr. F. Williamson, A.R.I.B.A. Other important works include several Hospitals and Commercial Buildings.

He was for many years closely associated with the Executive side of the profession, serving on the Transvaal Council of the Institute of South African Architects, and Treasurer of the Institute Journal "The South African Architectural Record."

He possessed a strong sense of civil and public responsibilities, and for many years up to the time of his death was a member of the governing body of the Parktown High School for Boys, Johannesburg, also a member of the Cathedral Council of the Diocese of Johannesburg, and in recent years of the Johannesburg City Council.

As a partner he was an excellent associate, bringing a broad-minded outlook to bear on the numerous problems arising in a busy practise, his sincere sense of justice in business and public affairs commanded respect from all with whom he came in to contact.

He was awarded the M.B.E. for services rendered in a military capacity during the last Great War.

He died in his 67th year and leaves two sons to carry on the practice. Captain John N. Cowin, A.R.I.B.A., serving with the South African Forces, and Mr. Douglass M. Cowin, A.R.I.B.A.

ERNEST M. POWERS, F.R.I.B.A.

Journal of the SA Architectural Institute

PUBLISHER:

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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