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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

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VOLUME 36

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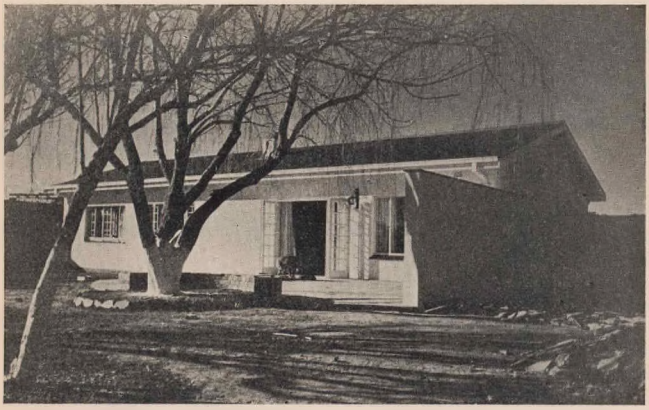
RESIDENCE RAIMONDO

AN OLD



View from the North-west

ARCHITECT: UGO TOMASELLI A. R. I. B. A.

An old farmhouse on a large site was purchased with a view to renovating, remodelling and adding to it to suit the needs of a young family, whose interests, apart from the usual city toil, included the running of a small farm. A guest room was also required to accommodate occasional visiting friends and relations.

The Site. A five acre farm site sloping gently to the north was acquired, with roads on the west and south boundaries. The existing building was sited in the south-west corner and the remainder of the lot was used for general farming, with the outbuildings on the north boundary some distance from the old farmhouse, and the garage zoned to the east of the house.

Solution. All the rooms of the existing house were arranged to face the wrong way. The kitchen opened out on to the lovely north section of the garden and was orientated on the north-west corner; the living room faced south with a vista of the boundary roads.

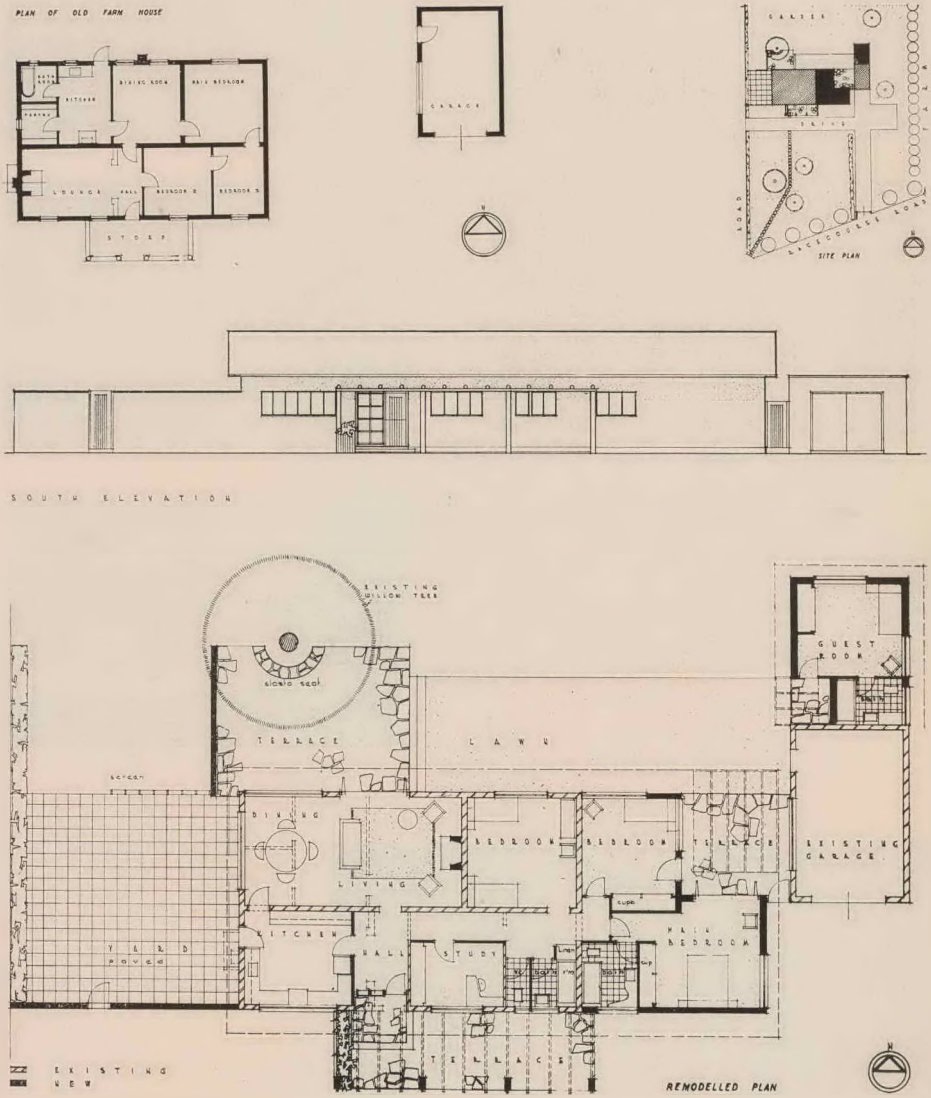
Drastic alterations were required to make a liveable proposition of the building, and the first essential was therefore to convert the house completely, using as many of the existing walls as possible, so that the kitchen be zoned on the south, with bathrooms and services on the south. The living room was located in the north-west corner in place of the old bathroom and kitchen, and the bedrooms were all designed to face north, with a terrace off the main bedroom and children's bedroom on the east.

The garage was left to act as a screen for the bedroom terrace and as a buffer between the garden zone of the house and the farm section to the east. The guest wing was added at a later stage and provides a further buffer between the garden proper and farm.

A maximum visual spaciousness, within a limited budget, was required by the clients, and to give effect to this standard double doors, in two pairs, for the lounge and main bedroom, were designed to fold open, giving a vista of the large north garden and existing willow tree, which forms a stop to the terrace in front of the lounge, and provides adequate shade in summer.

The old corrugated iron roof was removed and a new double pitch roof was constructed, using as much of the existing materials as possible. The kitchen and bathrooms are well finished and generously fitted, and are a feature of this average sized house.

FARMHOUSE REMODELLED TO GIVE CORRECT ORIENTATION





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1. View of old farm house from north-west.

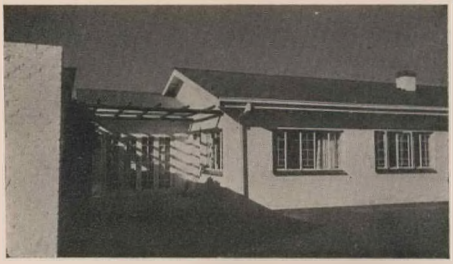
2. View of old farm house from north-east.

3. View from the south-west of old farm house, showing commencement of alterations. The new windows to kitchen and study and new entrance doors have been built-in.

4. View of remodelled house from north-east.

5. Close-up of remodelled house from north-east.

6. View of remodelled house from north-west.



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Photography : Aldo Tomaselli.



ARCHITECT

A. AXELROD

RESIDENCE STEWART, BLACKHEATH

This Blackheath house offers a textbook solution to the north-east orientated site, separating the living and sleeping areas in an L shaped plan. The monopitch roof to the bedroom wing and the "butterfly" roof to the living wing give expression to the neatly articulated plan.

The house is sited well back on the stand in the S.W. corner with the outbuildings tucked away behind. This afforded maximum garden area on the north and east. The approach is from the east, with the entrance well defined by an arrow-shaped flower box.

Although the accommodation is generous the plan is simple and compact, and designed to keep cost down. The living room is spacious, with the dining room forming an alcove on the south. The north wall of the living room is almost completely glazed, thereby establishing a close relationship between garden and house. It leads out by way of a glass sliding door on to a pergola-covered terrace, which is protected from the west by an eight foot wall. The fireplace is carefully detailed and includes built-in seats and bookshelves. The fireplace opening is surrounded by a thin concrete frame, and is built out of klompje bricks. The gently curved chimney breast and the "Slasto" hearth add the finishing touches to a delightful winter setting.

The south wall of the dining room is again completely of glass and leads out on to a shaded back lawn, which serves as playground for the children and an outdoor private retreat

for the whole family. The dining room is separated from the living room by a curtain under a concealed light trough. A light trough with concealed fluorescent lights also runs along the north wall of the lounge.

The kitchen is entered both from the entrance hall and dining room and is a compact expression of modern cooking requirements. This leads out onto the backyard, which is completely sheltered by the outbuildings on the south, the garage on the east, and a seven foot high brick wall on the West.

The bedroom wing is separated from the rest of the house by a communicating door and faces east. The garage is specially designed so that it may easily be converted into another bedroom in the future: in which case the garage will be moved further south and will conceal the outbuildings from the street.

A face-brick panel on the north elevation forms a solid contrast with the glass of the living room and adds a vertical element to the facade. The bedroom wing is of stock brick, with the joints horizontally raked, and lime washed.

The colours employed warrant special mention. In the living room the west wall is grey, the east wall off-white, and the south wall lemon yellow. The ceiling is blue and the exposed beams brown. The fireplace surround is grey, the fittings cream and the chimney breast Burgundy red. The window frames are blue, the pergola is cream and the curtain pelmet between the living and dining room cream. The bedroom fittings are green with cream walls, blue ceilings and brown exposed rafters.

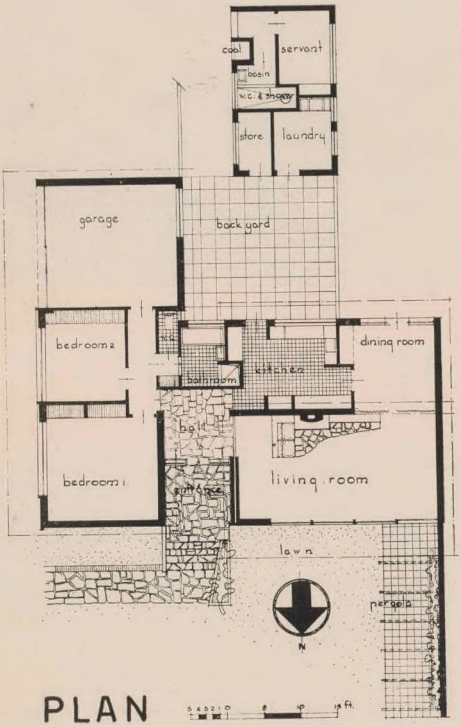
Externally all walls are white, with the underside of the eaves blue. The rafters are brown with a white facia board.

The brick joints in lounge, entrance hall and dining room have been raked out and the walls have been distempered without a bagging undercoat. The contrast of the rough finish of the walls with the more sophisticated elements such as windows, fireplace and even the highly polished floor creates a pleasant textural balance.

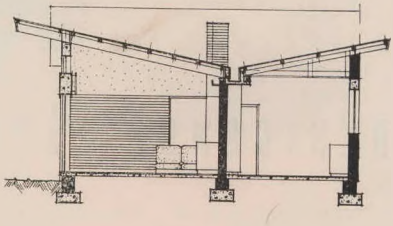
* * * * *

In conclusion, the house handsomely meets the needs of the family and achieves a high degree of aesthetic appeal coupled with intellectual honesty in its design.

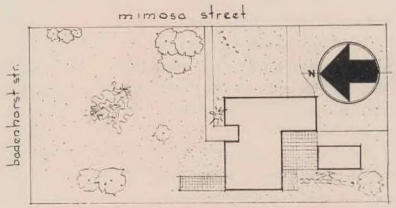
Photography: Aldo Tomaselli.



Section

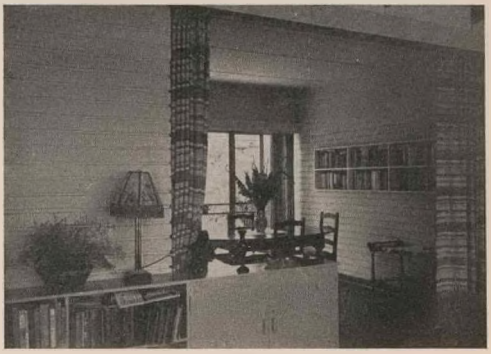


Site plan





View from the north-east.



View from the living-room looking towards the dining-room.



Interior of living-room showing detail of fireplace and fittings.



Photography : Aldo Tomaselli.

RESIDENCE BUCH

ARCHITECTS: AXELROD AND SIEW

Le Corbusier coined the phrase that a house is a machine for living; and although this residence in Oaklands would hardly fit the Le Corbusier stereotype, it is nevertheless a machine for living, and a very sound one at that.

The house evolved out of close co-operation between client and architect.

The house and outbuildings occupy the south-west corner of a large site sloping gently towards the east. Adequate room has been provided for a large garden and a future tennis court and swimming bath leading off the terrace, as indicated on site plan. The approach and drive are on the west, ensuring complete privacy.

The plan is essentially simple and well articulated with the three sections of the house, i.e., living, sleeping, and service, forming three wings of a "T" shape. The living zone is separated from the bedrooms by a study and passage. The tortuous "T" shaped passage was unavoidable as the requirements of the clients, namely direct access from the main bedroom to the study, bathroom and walk-in closet, dictated this arrangement. All bedrooms face north and there is further room for another bedroom on the west in case of expansion.

The living room floor has been dropped by 18in. firstly, to follow the slope of the actual site, and, secondly, because the feeling of "looking down" from the entrance hall and then stepping down three "Slasto" steps increases the visual appeal of the whole composition. The complete north wall of the living room consists of purpose-made glass sliding panels.

The dining room being the same floor level as the entrance hall is separated from the living room by a "Slasto" flower box and vertical steel columns which carry a light trough with concealed fluorescent lights. The kitchen is modelled on the pattern that is fast becoming universally accepted in this country.

It is efficient, neat and pleasant to work in. The breakfast nook, with an industrially manufactured standard table and seats, and the scullery with its stainless steel sink and vegetable cupboards underneath adjoin the kitchen.

The garage is joined to the main house by a pergola.

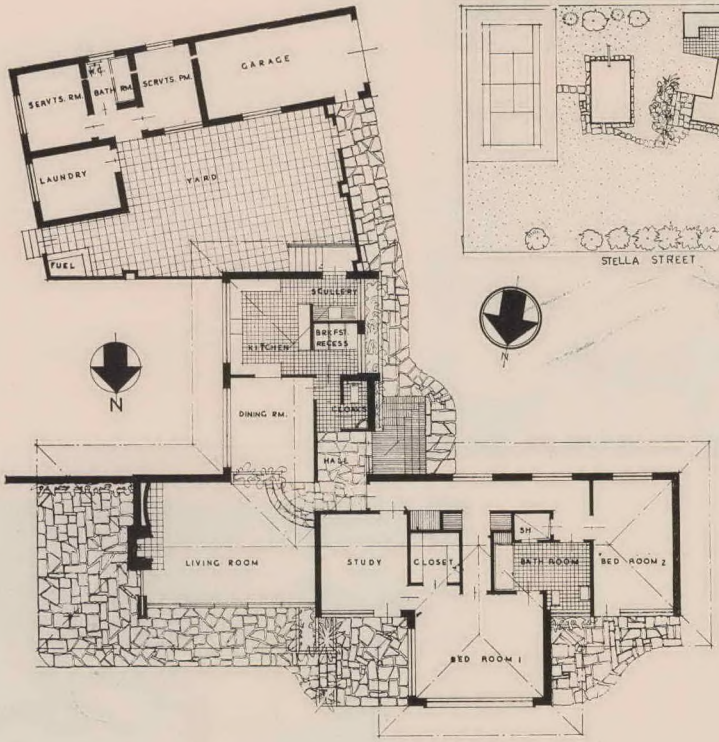
The shingle roof is simple, the ridges of the different wings being on the same level. The elevations are a straightforward expression of the internal arrangement of the rooms and fit happily into the whole site, especially on the east, where the terrace is surrounded by a very pleasant rockery.

It is worth mentioning the internal lighting of the house. Great use has been made of the concealed light trough, which occurs in the dining room on the east wall and over the flower box, in the living room over the glass door, in the study, over the north window, and the main bedroom over the north wall.

* * * * *

A polychromatic colour scheme has been applied internally and externally, achieving very pleasant effects.

The furniture, curtains and carpeting form an organic unity with the house and play no small part in its success.



BLOCK PLAN



View from the South-west showing the entrance porch.



View across the living-room, showing dining-room screen.



Interior of living room.

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN. 1951

L.C.C. CONCERT HALL

R. H. Matthew (L.C.C. Architect)
J. L. Martin (Deputy Architect)
Edwin Williams (Senior Architect)
S. H. Smith (Principle Asst. Architect)
Peter Moro (Associated Architect)

"Dark, satanic mills are making way for a New Jerusalem of the mind, a building consecrated to the art of music. Here an older generation of music-lovers will renew the aural pleasures of former days, whilst for our musical youth, new sounds will charm

" magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

This hall, then, will have a communal function, to unite young and old, friend and stranger, in civil celebration of great music In this peaceful bringing together of men it can but hasten that time of which Confucius spoke in saying: " When Music and Courtesy are better understood, there will be no more War."

—Felix Aprahamian.

BACKGROUND

The L.C.C. Concert Hall, now in the latter stages of construction, stands on the south bank of the Thames, an area whose dismal and depressing aspect has long been a matter of concern to all those who hoped and planned for a more beautiful London. In 1935, Mr. Herbert Morrison, then leader of the L.C.C., said: "Our present vision is of an enbankment promenade between Westminster and Waterloo Bridges, where people will be able to walk and enjoy the view on the opposite side of the river. . . ." After the war, the County of London Plan had this to say of the South Bank:

"Cleared of its encumbrances, equipped with a continuous strip of grass and a wide esplanade . . . this area might well include a great cultural centre embracing among other features a modern theatre, a large concert hall and the headquarters of various organizations."

By 1945 the broad outlines of a new South Bank had already emerged. By 1948, although the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced that the British Government would finance the erection of a National Theatre on the site, it still seemed unlikely that the L.C.C. would be able to start the South Bank scheme for a long time to come. Then, with dramatic suddenness, the opportunity to build a first-class modern concert hall presented itself. Knowing that the Council had in mind such a building as part of the re-development of the South Bank, the Government asked if the Council could build it in time for the Festical of Britain, and promised full co-operation. This idea was enthusiastically received.

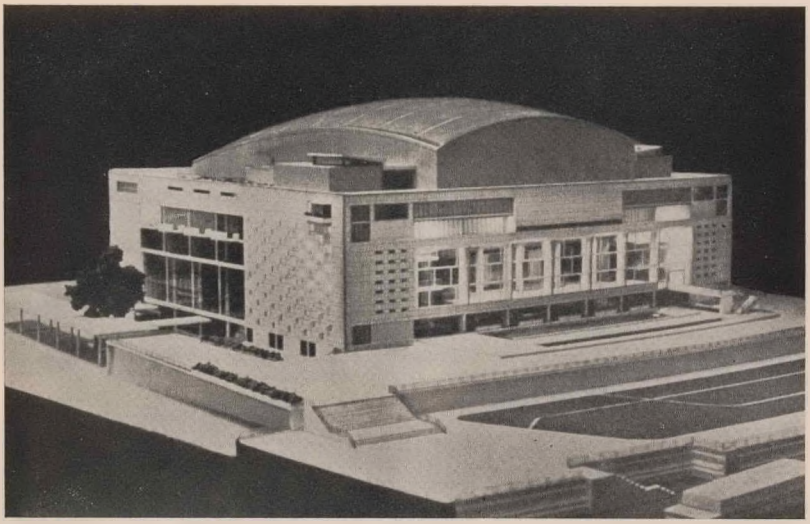
The London County Council does not envisage merely a London hall. The aim of the designers has been to create a concert hall to which the whole of Europe will look as an outstanding example of contemporary architecture. It will be a worthy setting for the conductors and orchestras of international repute who will be seen and heard there.

THE SITE

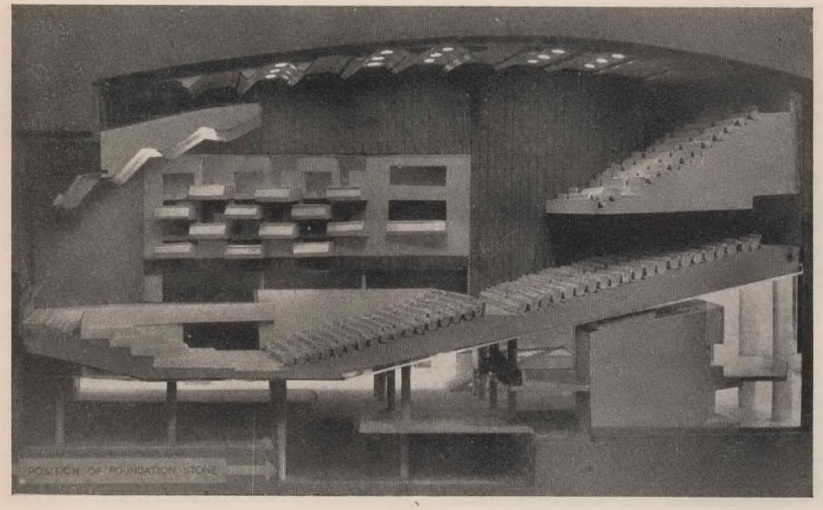
The site for the concert hall was considered in relation to the development of the South Bank as a whole. The new river wall, sweeping round from the County Hall to Waterloo Bridge, will regain many acres of land, and will transform this length into a continuous stretch of garden. The concert hall is sited between Hungerford Bridge and Waterloo Bridge, and will have the advantage of this new garden frontage. Its position at the Hungerford Bridge side of this area allows room for the development of the National Theatre building. In order to take advantage of the views of the river the main foyer of the concert hall is raised well above the existing South Bank level. It will be possible to walk from the reception foyer, through the restaurants, out on to the terrace and into the garden.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE PLAN

The siting and the new levels created by the gardens vitally affect the general arrangement of the plan. Within the site area available it has been found difficult to plan the two principal auditoria with all their emergency exists, foyer space, etc., on one level, but they can be brought into relationship if they are planned at different levels and approached from a foyer space at an intermediate level. This arrangement can best be visualized if the main foyer is thought of as a plane placed at the level of the new gardens. Above this plane is the main auditorium and below it, at the Belvedere Road end of the site, is the small auditorium. This arrangement also makes it possible for pedestrians to enter the building both from the Belve-



VIEWS OF THE WORKING MODEL, INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR.



dere Road approach at low level, and from the high level Hungerford Bridge approach. It also provides, at terrace level, an extensive circulation and reception area which is centrally placed and convenient to all parts of the building.

This description gives the general position of the three main elements of the building : the concert hall, the reception foyer and the small hall. A building of this kind, however, must also provide a large amount of ancillary accommodation, and in addition there are special requirements of exhibition space and meeting room space.

The general plan of arrangement for this accommodation has been to place it around and about the main concert hall itself. This not only has advantages from the point of view of convenient planning, but the advantage of a surrounding envelope to the main concert hall plays a most important part in dealing with the problem of external noise. In fact, the concert hall itself becomes an inner core to the building, protected on all sides by its enclosing envelope, and poised above the main reception and circulating area.

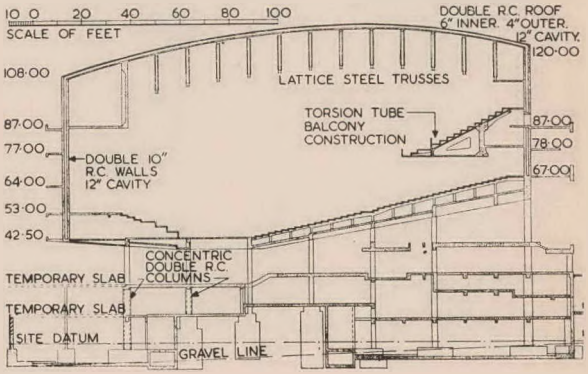
This arrangement of inner core and outer envelope, with the main foyer running under the main auditorium, makes it possible to have simple and direct access to the auditorium from side galleries. It also becomes possible to arrange, on the river front, an upper and lower restaurant within the main foyer space which would have extensive views across the river.

SOUND TRANSMISSION AND ACOUSTICS

It should be realised that problems of sound fall into two distinct categories. First, there is the problem of internal acoustics, which would arise in any large auditorium: second, there is the problem of dealing with internal room to room noise and external noise—this obviously would arise in any concert hall plan, but varies according to planning and siting.

These two problems have received expert attention from specialist consultants. With regard to internal acoustics, a shape has been chosen for the concert hall which is likely to give rise in the first instance to the least number of defects, and which includes a number of positive advantages, such as the raked floor, the special ceiling shape and the main orchestra reflector. An opportunity at the end of the construction will also be provided for tuning the hall by the use of different types of internal finishing so that the best possible acoustic solution can be obtained.

The second problem of sound transmission within the building and the reduction of external noise has been approached in the following way. In the first place, the main sections of the building—the large auditorium and the small auditorium—although part of a single unit, are structurally isolated and independent from each other, thus preventing the internal transmission of sound between these parts of the building. Special rooms, such as the orchestra practising rooms, meeting rooms, etc., are again isolated from the main structure to form "a room within a room." The ventilation and heating services are again specially treated, the sound being absorbed from the air intake before it actually reaches the ventilation plant.



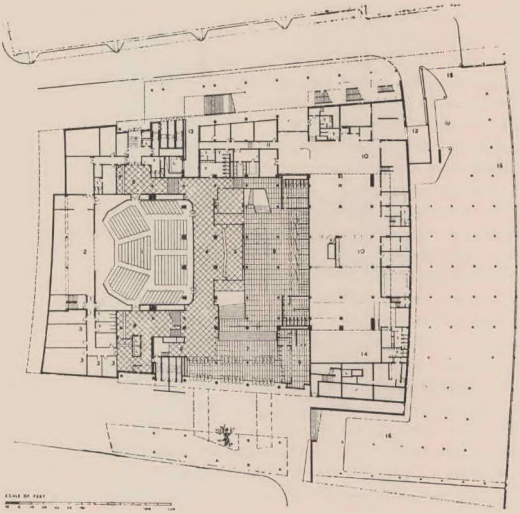
SECTION

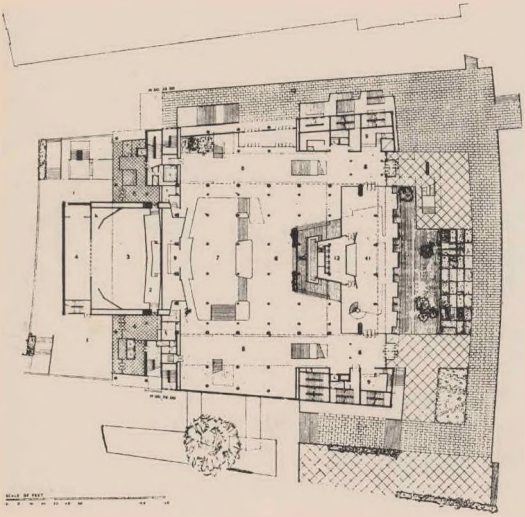
key of plan at 12 ft. level

1. theatre
2. stage
3. changing rooms
4. theatre foyer
5. theatre cloaks
6. theatre bar
7. lower foyer
8. concert hall cloaks
9. ticket office
10. kitchen and stores
11. kitchen staff
12. goods entrance
13. instrument entrance
14. plant and services
15. car entrance park
16. car park

T. toilet

L. lift





key of plan at 28 ft. level

1. terrace
2. theatre balcony
3. upper part of theatre
4. upper part of stage
5. entrance hall, artists
6. entrance hall, theatre
7. sunken foyer
8. main foyer
9. cloaks
10. bar
11. restaurant
12. restaurant service
13. terrace

T. toilet

L. lift

The main problem of noise transmission is the exclusion of all external noise sources from the concert hall itself.

This has had an important bearing on planning as well as on constructional method. The disposition of the concert hall as a central nucleus of the plan within an enclosing envelope has already been described. By surrounding the central nucleus with a very heavily built double-skinned wall and roof an inner fortress against sound has been provided. This double-skinned wall has been carefully arranged so that it is not penetrated at any point, even by the heating and ventilating services. The only penetrations are the access doors to the concert hall itself, which are all in themselves screened by the external envelope to the structure.

ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT.

The foregoing considerations of siting, internal planning and acoustics have given rise to a simple and direct architectural form. The main external shape contains a large window area overlooking the river so that views can be obtained from the restaurants and foyer. Side windows also give fine views across Waterloo Bridge to St. Paul's Cathedral. Within this external shape the main auditorium is clearly expressed. The whole of the structure will be of reinforced concrete, but will be faced externally with Portland stone. Internally, as well as externally, special attention is being given to the quality of finish, and it is hoped that the building will be enriched by the work of outstanding contemporary painters and sculptors.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is given in the list below. One or two general points should be specially mentioned. A main feature of the plans is the ease with which sections of the building can be used for different purposes, and are complete with their own special entrances, lifts, lavatories, exits, etc. Another feature is the high standard of changing and rehearsal room accommodation which has been visualized for the performers. Much of the information used has been gleaned from questionnaires circulated to leading orchestras, and from consultations with leading figures in the musical world. The ease of access to promenade space and refreshment bars during intervals is particularly notable, as is the arrangement of restaurant accommodation.

The general accommodation is as follows :—

The main concert hall — Seating accommodation is provided for approximately 2,900 in two main tiers consisting of the main floor of the auditorium, which is ramped to provide adequate sight lines, side boxes and a gallery; in addition the choir seating for approximately 250 will be available to the public on many occasions; and there is a standing space in the side galleries for approximately 300, thus giving total accommodation for 3,450. A Royal Box with a separate approach has been planned, and full facilities for the B.B.C. are provided.

Special consideration has been given to the problem of sound transmission. The auditorium is constructed within an acoustic box with walls of double thickness surrounded by an envelope containing access stairs, galleries and foyers. The roof is also of double thickness and openings through the walls are limited to the necessary access and exit doors which are specially designed to exclude external noise. The interior lining itself is a separate shell adjusted to the internal acoustic requirements.

The platform provides for an orchestra of 100, a choir of 250 and a full concert organ. Backstage accommodation is planned for the needs of the artistes and the large number of performers, complete with practising rooms, including a full scale reproduction of the concert platform for rehearsals, and refreshment facilities.

The promenades surrounding the concert hall give an opportunity for a variety of interest in their architectural treatment, and will offer magnificent views of the River, across Waterloo Bridge to St. Paul's. Users of the concert hall will have easy access to the restaurant and the terrace.

The small hall — The small hall, in which seating accommodation is provided for 750, with separate access, is planned for chamber music, cinema projection, dramatic performances, recitals, etc., and has a stage platform with proscenium opening and a hanging loft for the quick disposal of scenery.

The main foyer — This is planned as promenade space, equipped with its own bar, and may be used either for concert hall purposes or for other uses such as receptions and dances. It has a large floor area, some considerable part of which could be treated as a dance floor.

Restaurant — Adjoining the main foyer and overlooking the river, is restaurant accommodation on two floors for 700 people, with serveries connected with the kitchens planned on a lower floor. It is so arranged that if the whole area is not required simultaneously, various portions can be used separately; for example, a restaurant for 300 and a small dance floor could be made available for letting, while a separate restaurant serving meals to the general public was kept in operation. Separate access can be maintained for the various users.

Both foyer and restaurant has direct connection with the new terrace and riverside gardens, and an open-air service of meals could be provided in suitable weather.

Exhibition suite — The whole of the top floor over the backstage accommodation is reserved for exhibition space amounting to about 7,200 feet super, and consisting of a suite of specially lighted rooms intercommunicating and having separate staircase and lift access.

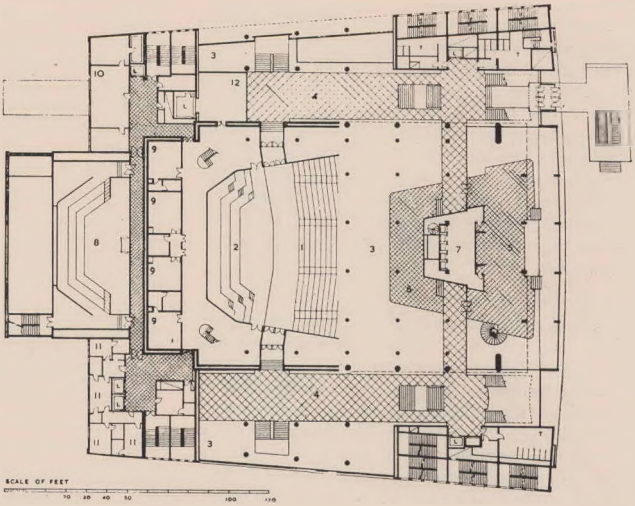
Meeting rooms — Adjacent to this are two meeting rooms which could be used for lectures and other purposes, one seating 200 and the other 100 persons. In addition, two further reception suites when not in use for other purposes, could be made available for letting.

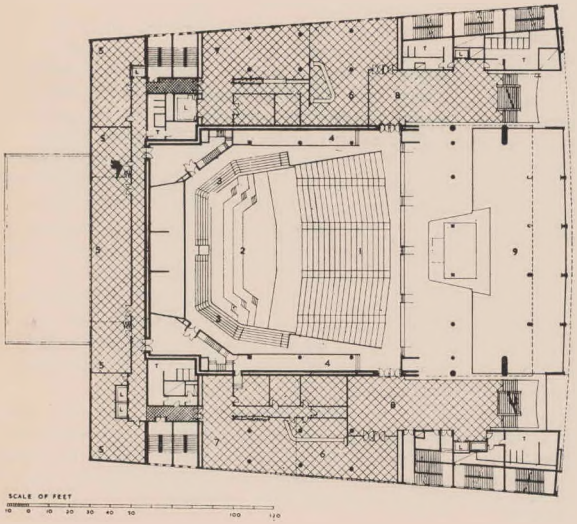
key of plan at 40 ft. level

1. concert hall
2. platform
3. upper part of foyer
4. promenade.
5. upper restaurant
6. balcony buffet
7. restaurant service
8. orchestra practice room
9. practice rooms
10. library
11. conductor and soloists
12. instrument store

T. toilet

L. lift





key of plan at 53 ft. level

1. concert hall
2. platform
3. choir seating
4. promenade
5. changing rooms
6. bar
7. orchestra and choir lounge or meeting room
8. upper foyer
9. upper part of restaurant

T. toilet

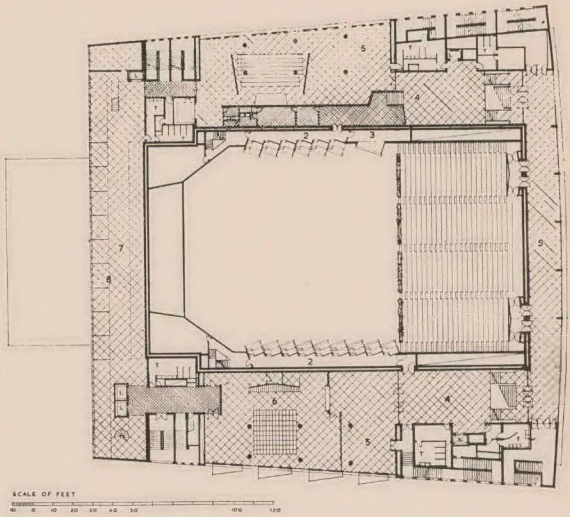
L. lift

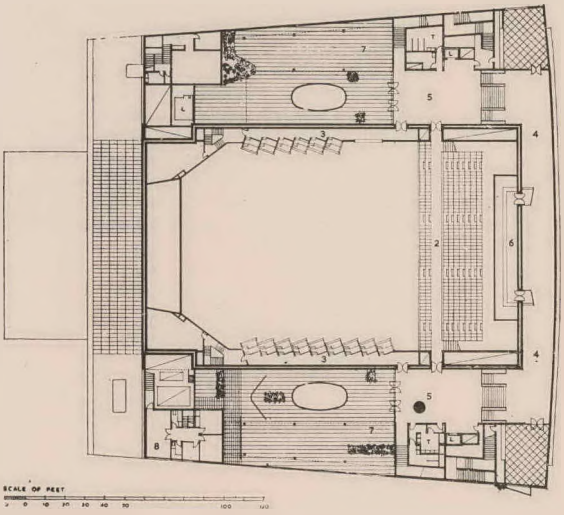
key of plan at 64 ft. level

1. concert hall
2. boxes
3. royal box
4. foyer
5. promenade
6. meeting hall
7. exhibition gallery
8. balcony over exhibition

T. toilet

L. lift





key of plan at 78 ft. level

1. upper part of concert hall
2. concert hall balcony
3. boxes
4. promenade
5. foyer
6. cloaks
7. terrace
8. caretaker's flat

T. toilet

L. lift

ENGINEERING SERVICES

The appropriate provisions for lighting, power, telephones, clocks, sound amplifications for speakers, emergency lighting and street lighting in the vicinity are being made, together with provision for B.B.C. sound recording and television. Cinema equipment is being provided in both halls, and two portable 16-mm. projectors for use elsewhere in the building.

Lifts are planned, including one for the handling of heavy equipment and bulky musical instruments. Passenger lifts will be distributed throughout the building; two at the concert hall auditorium end serving the accommodation on all floor levels and others behind the concert hall serving the small hall, exhibition space and backstage accommodation for performers and management. The lifts will be required principally from a management point of view in connection with running the establishment where large numbers of persons will necessitate such facilities at peak periods. They will also be used for disabled and infirm members of the public and distinguished visitors, as required.

The main concert hall and small hall will be warmed and air conditioned by the downward discharge system and extracts under the auditorium floors and balcony. If it should be found necessary to cool the building in summer, provision is made in the structure to allow of an installation to be inserted later to safeguard the auditorium conditions at peak periods.

The foyers, exhibition space, meeting rooms, choir practise room, etc., and the restaurants will be plenum heated with supplementary direct heating by radiators and floor panels. Other associated rooms will have direct heating by means of radiators, and mechanical ventilation as and where necessary; the kitchens will have mechanical extraction and a warmed fresh air supply. Hot water supply to the kitchens will be from part of the central plant. Careful consideration has been given to the type and number of boilers required for the heating of the building and it has been decided that boilers of the vertical gas-fired type would be the best, having regard to efficiency and space savings.

GARAGE AND CAR-PARKING ACCOMMODATION

It is regarded as of the highest importance that there should be adequate car parking facilities within the curtilage of the building. The time factor, which makes it essential to reduce site excavation to a minimum, precludes the provision of substantial car parking facilities under the concert hall building itself, but an underground car park to accommodate about 50 cars will be provided beneath the terrace. During the period of the Exhibition, though the public will have direct access to the concert hall by car, the use of this park will necessarily be confined to staff, artistes and important visitors, as general parking will not be possible within the Exhibition area. Parking facilities for concert hall visitors during the Exhibition period will, therefore, be provided in surface parks in the immediate neighbourhood of the Exhibition. When the Exhibition is over, surface facilities will be provided next to the Concert Hall pending the provision of more adequate underground accommodation.

CONSTRUCTION IN TWO SECTIONS

Whilst there is every reason to expect that the concert hall itself can be completed by the specified date, difficulties in regard to steel supplies mean that a large part of the building must be constructed in reinforced concrete, which will make completion of the whole building by May, 1951, impracticable. The plans therefore provide for the building to be constructed in two sections; the first section only being completed by May, 1951. This first section, comprising five-sixths of the total cubic capacity, will include the concert hall proper (with temporary changing rooms for performers).

The temporary changing rooms for performers and accommodation for the administration will be located in areas which will in the completed building be allocated to refreshment bars and promenade foyers on the upper floors. It will also necessitate a temporary pavement area next Belvedere Road on the site of the second section which will be used by the Festival Authorities, together with a temporary ramped approach to the main entrance and foyer. The plans provide for a satisfactory architectural treatment of the temporarily unfinished end of the building. The small hall, stage block, dressing rooms, exhibition suite and permanent accommodation for the administration, changing rooms for soloists, orchestra and chorus, and the workshops for technicians, will all be comprised in the second, or remaining, section of the work which will have to be left for completion after the close of the Festival of Britain Exhibition towards the end of 1951.

THE STUDENT'S FORUM

THE COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

The following is extracted from the Chairman's annual report to a meeting of the Council:

The Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Although the public functions of the Council have not been as numerous this year as in some previous years, some much-needed re-organisation has been achieved. The Council, previously known as the Architectural Society, had existed for many years in a very loose form, and indeed its position had become anomalous. Accordingly it was re-constituted, the Fine Arts Students' Society was incorporated, and it emerged as the Council of Architectural Students. These changes have considerably widened our scope, and it is to be hoped that full advantage will be taken of this in the future.

The most important of our regular public functions are the lectures given by various personalities to the Council. These did not seem to be as popular this year as in previous years, and the attendance at them was generally very discouraging. Of the six held in the first term, only the two given by Professor Fassler and Mr. Pinfold respectively, were well attended by students, and although there was a good attendance at Mr. John Paris's, very few students were present, members of the general public making up the bulk of the audience. All the lectures were given in the evening, as this would enable members of the public to be present, and would not limit the lecturer's time as would be the case with lunch-hour lectures. In view of the fact that better audiences would be gained if the lectures were given in the lunch-hour, I would recommend to the new Committee that this practice be followed next year.

Although no major exhibition was presented this year, several minor ones were organised. The work of Christo Coetzee, one of the Fine Arts Students, was exhibited, and aroused considerable interest. This was followed by the display of the circulating exhibition, an exhibition of the work of all the Architectural Schools in the country, which is sent from University to University, each centre renewing its share as it receives it. This exhibition enables us to assess the type and extent of training received by students in the various Universities and proved to be of quite as much interest to the staff as the students. Owing to sundry hitches, the exhibition did not function as efficiently as it might have, but it is hoped that it will be running smoothly next year.

We had hoped to feature as our major exhibition, an exhibition of original contemporary works of art, but we discovered that the cost of insurance was far beyond our means, and the matter was regretfully shelved.

The Council has two publications: the "Column," a faculty newspaper, and "The Students' Forum" in the "South African Architectural Record." One issue of the "Column" appeared this year, and proved to be very popular, but owing to the difficulty of finding anyone with sufficient time, energy and interest to prepare the second issue for publication, one issue was all that was forthcoming. "The Students' Forum" was less successful, and failed to make an appearance. It has always tended to be a one-man affair, and should the Editor fail in his duties, the feature lapses. It is to be hoped that it will receive more support from the students next year.

The Annual NUSAS Congress was held in Grahamstown this year, and was attended by four delegates from the Council. A very extensive report on the proceedings has been drawn up, and our delegates returned well pleased with their work. The contact with other students and the exchange of ideas that such a conference gives is very stimulating, and it is there that one realises how much we lose through having so little contact with students from other Universities.

Such contact with other people interested in Architecture is gained also through the help of the V.L.T.F. (Visiting Lecturers Trust Fund). Last year the fund enabled us to invite Mr. A. Chitty, the British architect, to visit us for three months. This year our invitation was to Mr. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, who was unable to accept. Negotiations are now under way to invite Dr. Nikolaus Pevsner to visit us next year.

Turning now to the lighter aspects of our activities, I must mention several highly successful sporting fixtures. Successful, that is, from the social point of view. We again lost to Pretoria at Rugby. The second-year students challenged the staff to a tennis tournament and were well beaten; the staff then challenged the third-years and were in turn beaten, but it must be admitted by a very narrow margin. These matches were very popular, and improved student-staff relationships considerably. The examinations prevented any further challenges being issued.

The Annual Architectural Ball was, as usual, highly successful (again, from the social point of view; our financial losses have not yet been assessed), and was attended by a record number of people. Our thanks must go to the people who tirelessly organised the affair down to the smallest detail.

Before concluding, I must say a few words about the apathy of the general students. This is a subject that seems to call for comment year after year. Almost all the work of the Council has been carried out by a few energetic students, and appeals for help have met with no response. Not only have we received little help in the running of the Council, however, but our functions have often received very little support, with the inevitable result that these functions became less numerous as the year wore on. Students do not seem to realise the great value in such activities, and until they do, it is unlikely that the Council will ever really cover itself with glory.

In conclusion, may I express my thanks to the Committee that so ably assisted me during the past year, and wish the new Committee the best of luck for the following year. E.N.F.

BOOK REVIEW

THE STUDIO YEAR BOOK OF DECORATIVE ART, 1950. Studio Publications, London and New York. Editors: Rathbone Holme and Kathleen Frost.

If the present issue of the Studio Yearbook is an indication of current design in industrial and hand-made articles from Britain and the Dominions, Holland, France, Italy and America, we cannot but be disturbed by the generally low level displayed in all but a few examples. We are tempted, however, to conclude rather that this collection of illustrations is neither representative nor well chosen.

If, on the other hand, the examples are chosen as representing what the editors consider good design, we can well be alarmed at the preference towards precious, sentimental, shallow and over decorated objects, intended, perhaps, to decorate the rather pretty interiors of pseudo modern middle class homes. Little did one suspect the possibilities of a Victorian revival in the post-war world, although in retrospect one can see all the reasons for such a disaster.

On the other hand there are a few examples of unchallengeable quality which indicate without a doubt that there are still in this century those who, having transcended Victorian sentimentality and withstood the ravages of Neo Picturesque, can yet please the eye with designs appropriate to a generation that draws its very life blood from industry and scientific method, a generation that must needs symplify its complex surroundings or be lost in a world of values so diffuse as to be worthless.

We are grateful then for the inclusion of two Neutra Houses, one at Santa Barbara and one in the Colorado Desert. These houses have been illustrated and described elsewhere, but the present photographs make a worthy addition. We have it on hearsay that these houses suffer rather badly from the low level of craftsmanship accorded them, judged by standards elsewhere. Neutra houses succeed in achieving a rare combination of simplicity and richness. There is functionalism (Neutra prefers to call it "Rationalism") and there is an impeccable taste in the choice of materials, and this taste is interesting in its strong masculinity as opposed to the profuse effeminacy of most contemporary decorative art.

The house by Girard is also commendable but does not escape the rather uneasy resemblance to stage sets common to much recent American architecture. Architecture shown from the Dominions is characteristically raw, while the examples from Scandinavia and Britain are singularly dull.

Turning from architecture to furniture, good examples should have been easy to find (note recent copies of Furniture Forum, Arts and Architecture, Bauen und Wohnen and Domus). Advance in this field has met with less opposition than in architecture and many examples are now available which compare favourably with the best in tradition and antiquity. With few exceptions, such as the mahogany chests by E. J. Wormley, of Dunbar Furniture Manufacturers, a smoking chair by Bernard Durussel and Borge Morgensen's sitting room furniture, the remainder of the illustrations are typical of the opulent and expensive work that one saw in Italy before the war, and seems to derive its vulgarity from the trite combination of light and dark timbers with metal trimmings.

To turn lastly to the less utilitarian objects displayed in this volume, two vases and a glass dish are of outstanding merit. One of these vases by Leerdam is of very chaste line reminiscent of early purist painting. The other vase in ceramic combines an elegant functional shape with rich pattern and texture, hand-made and exploiting the technique to its full.

Fabrics are indifferent without exception. No more the brilliant designs of Piper and Moore, only a nondescript series of meaningless patterns of anonymous origin.

The Studio are to be highly commended for the quality of production in this book and for the inclusion of a few colour plates.

They have prefaced it with an article by F. R. Yerbury on building a house in Britain to-day. This seems to be a most hazardous adventure, fraught with numerous restrictions, official and inherent.

Such a magnificent effort of editing and all that goes into the making of a book of this quality at an extremely reasonable price might well, we hope, be similarly expended in the future on more worthy material. H.C.P.

SPECIFICATION FOR ZINC OXIDE FOR PAINTS.

The paint industry of South Africa is in a fortunate position in that many paint pigments are obtained locally. Among these pigments is zinc oxide which is one of the most important basic white pigments for use in gloss paints and enamels owing to its remarkable brilliance of colour and fine uniform particle size. Its good hiding power and wetting properties also make it suitable for a wide range of paints such as oil paints, flat paints, primers, roof paints and structural steel paints.

At the request of producers of zinc oxide and of paint manufacturers, the Standards Council appointed a committee to prepare a quality specification for zinc oxide for paints. This specification has now been published and should greatly assist paint manufacturers in obtaining a uniformly good product of a known standard. Copies of the specification priced at 5/- per copy, post free, are obtainable from the South African Bureau of Standards, Private Bag 191, Pretoria.

Producers of zinc oxide manufacturing to the Council's specification, who are desirous of establishing the quality of their products, may by permission of the Standards Council apply the S.A.B.S. ellipse mark to their zinc oxide for paints. This mark is evidence that the product conforms to the specification and that compliance therewith is ensured by tests and inspections carried out by the South African Bureau of Standards.

In the Council's specification, the dry zinc oxide pigment used for making paints is divided into three grades according to purity of colour. Physical requirements covering colour, reducing power, sieve-grading and oil absorption are stipulated as also the chemical requirements. The specification includes methods of sampling, physical tests and chemical analysis.

It should be especially noted that the standardization mark will be applied only to zinc oxide pigments of which the colour and reducing power conforms to the standard pigments to be held by the South African Bureau of Standards.

QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS FOR LINSEED OIL.

Three specifications for linseed oils for use in paints covering raw linseed oil, refined linseed oil and boiled linseed oil have been published by the Standards Council and are obtainable at a cost of 5/- per copy post free from the South African Bureau of Standards, Private Bag 191, Pretoria.

The specifications drawn up by a Standards Council committee representative of producers and users of linseed oil lay down thoroughly practicable and acceptable quality standards for the three types of oil. Specification S.A.B.S. 86-1949 covers only one kind of oil, namely raw linseed oil for use in paints while S.A.B.S. 87-1949 provides for acid refined and alkali refined linseed oil for use in paints and S.A.B.S. 88-1949 makes provision for pale and dark boiled linseed oil for use in paints.

All three specifications lay down physical and chemical requirements which ensure that the oils shall be thoroughly suitable for the manufacture of various types of paint of which they form so important a constituent. Adulteration of the linseed oils by fish oil is precluded in the three specifications by a clause which stipulates that there shall be no indication of the presence of fish oil. Detailed clauses dealing with sampling are included in the specifications and cover sampling procedure for consignments transported in tank cars and similar large vessels and for containers of capacity up to and including 45 gallons.

Methods of testing colour, specific gravity and refractive index are covered in the specifications for raw and refined linseed oils and that for boiled linseed oil further includes a drying time test. Detailed physical test methods and methods for chemical analysis are published in S.A.B.S. 86-1949 and referred to in the other two specifications.

These three specifications do not cover blown linseed oil or linseed stand oil, but it is anticipated that the preparation of specifications for these latter two types of linseed oil will receive attention at a later date.

As the quality of a finished product is so dependent on the quality of the constituents of which it is made, it is most important to the paint industry to be able to obtain linseed oils of the required standard and the Standards Council's specifications will be most helpful to paint manufacturers when ordering their supplies of raw, refined and boiled linseed oils. Oil expressers producing linseed oil to the Council's specifications may by arrangement with the Standards Council apply the S.A.B.S.-ellipse standardization mark to their products as evidence that the oil conforms to the relevant specification and that compliance therewith is ensured by tests and inspections carried out by the South African Bureau of Standards.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR TWO TYPES OF PAPER-INSULATED ELECTRIC CABLES AND FOR POLYVINYL CHLORIDE (P.V.C.) INSULATED ELECTRICAL CONDUCTORS.

The Standards Council has recently published two specifications for paper-insulated electric cables and a further specification for polyvinyl chloride (P.V.C.) insulated electrical conductors.

The specifications for paper-insulated electric cables—one for cables for heavy duty and the other for cables for general purposes—make provision for dimensional and constructional requirements and lay down performance standards and tests. Such properties as conductor resistance, the quality of the paper insulation and the metal sheath, the dielectric strength of the insulation and the mechanical strength of the armouring are specified. Furthermore the insulation resistance, the electrostatic capacity, dielectric loss, ionization and the non-bleeding properties of drained cables are dealt with.

The specification for polyvinyl chloride (P.V.C.) insulated conductors covers flexible cords, solid and stranded copper wires such as are used in house installations and the wiring of switchboards and apparatus, and hard-drawn copper conductors for use in overhead house service connections. It lays down requirements for the electrical and the mechanical properties of the conductor, the insulating compound and the sheath. Mechanical strength, flexibility and resistance to aging, deformation, abrasion, extreme temperature, oil, water and fire, are among the aspects which are included in the specification.

Many P.V.C. insulated cables have been tested in the laboratories of the Bureau, and although a high standard of quality is laid down in the specification, it has been found that these South African products can comply with the requirements.

NOTES AND NEWS

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION.
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL.

The promoters, Coventry Cathedral Reconstruction Committee, invite qualified architects who are British subjects, Commonwealth citizens or citizens of Eire, wherever resident, to submit designs in competition for the *New Cathedral Church, Chapel of Unity,* and *Christian Service Centre,* proposed to be erected on a site in the centre of Coventry, in accordance with the conditions and instructions submitted to competing architects.

The promoters have appointed Sir Percy Thomas, LL.D., D.L., P.P.R.I.B.A., Mr. Edward Maufe, R.A., LL.D, M.A.(Oxon.), F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. Howard Robertson, M.C., A.R.A., F.R.I.B.A., S.A.D.G., to act as assessors and the premiums for the first three premiated designs shall be £2,000, £1,500 and £1,000. The closing date for the competition is 2nd July, 1951, after which no designs will be accepted.

The following documents are issued with the conditions and are available for inspection at the Institute Offices, Kelvin House, Johannesburg :

(1) A plan of the site indicating the position of the original Cathedral and the surrounding buildings, and also shows the new Town Planning Scheme for this portion of the city centre.

(2) A drawing of the Tower to scale.

(3) Photographs showing the existing state of the Cathedral, a number of the adjoining buildings and sketches of buildings to be erected in the new city, near the Cathedral.

(4) A copy of the "Guide to Coventry Cathedral" (1949).

TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE

New Registrations :

Salaried : I. Balkind.

Practising : J. C. van Wyk, E. J. Bloem, A. A. Gordon, C. R. Monnig, R. K. Walker.

Transfers from one class of membership to another .

From Practising to Absentee Practising : R. Wigmore Barlow.
From Absentee Salaried to Salaried : W. J. Parker.
From Practising to Absentee Salaried : D. E. Clark.

From Salaried to Practising : I. Balkind, P. Kent, W. F. Waldeck, H. B. Horrell.

From Salaried to Retired: C. Fletcher, A. B. Bradley, R. C. McKillop.

From Practising to Retired : Miss N. Dalton.

Transfers from this Institute to another Provincial Institute :

To Cape Provincial Institute : J. A. O. Watson.

Partnerships :

Erik Todd and Horrell. Formation of partnership Jan., 1951, and practising at 45, Prudential House, Pretoria.

Alan Fair & Sievewright. Formation of partnership, Jan., 1951, and practising at 23, Netherlands Bank Buildings, Fox Street, Johannesburg.

Deceased :

M. J. Harris, G. J. C. Bernhard and G. A. Stewart.

CORRECTION

In the December issue of the Record the design of Pan African House was attributed to Messrs. Harris and Fels. This should have read : Harris, Fels & Partners.

PROVINCIAL WORK

LIST OF ACCEPTED TENDERS FOR PROVINCIAL SERVICES FOR QUARTER ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1950.

No. SERVICE	ARCHITECTS	QUANTITY SURVEYORS	CONTRACTORS	AMOUNT
1. Johannesburg Normal College New Men's Hostel.	Messrs. Gordon Leith & Partners	Messrs. Farrow, Laing & McKechnie	Mr. L. Westly	£45,180
2. Villieria South Primary School Pretoria : New Building.	Departmental	Departmental	Mr. V. Moore	£25,600
3. Wonderboom South School, Pretoria : Additions.	Messrs. Bosman & Neethling	H. Muller	Messrs. Kemp & Zuidwyk	£23,024/3/11
4. General Brink School, Pretoria : Additions.	Mr. G. E. Fitzgerald	Messrs. T. Moor & Bell	Messrs. D. Velthuysen (Pty.) Ltd.	£12,985/12/1
5. Johannesburg General Hospital Conversion of old Workshops into X-Ray Department.	Messrs. Gordon Leith & Partners	Messrs. Farrow, Laing & McKechnie	Mr. C. G. W. Brandt	£8,148

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