

. . . Some twenty miles further we ran into fine mountain scenery, where a new macadamised road wound through a picturesque pass. Forbidding cliffs of stone marked the path of a little stream meandering along their base. At one point these faces approached so close to one another that the roadway, following the river, was tunnelled through the outflung spur. Shortly after this pass, we reached Montagu, where, coming upon an hotel which looked clean and inviting, we stopped for lunch.

On resuming our journey we passed through undulating country, typical of the southern parts of the Cape. Here, little white farmsteads were scattered widely and indiscriminately over the broad landscape. They were usually to be found nestling in the shade of a few tall trees, compelling, by reason of their very whiteness and the accents they formed.

Many of these little homesteads were of the simple double gable type, with their small, well placed windows often flanking a central doorway. Others were of a more austere character, of which the building illustrated is a good example. This building seems to serve a variety of purposes, that of post and telegraph office, general store and petrol filling station, and farmhouse. The majority of these larger buildings had quoins, window and door architraves, string courses, and flat-roof copings raised slightly from the gleaming white of the main wall surface, and these features were painted a grey or buff colour. In both these types one can trace the direct influence on the "Cape-Dutch" architectural tradition, which, during the early colonisation, was developed by men like Thibault from the Baroque prototypes in Europe. These farmsteads, while indicating their origin, have been greatly adapted and simplified—in many cases to a crude degree. They seem, nevertheless, to retain an attractive character, possibly by reason of their setting, placed as they are—flecks of white on a tremendous and at times forbidding canvas.

W O R D S A N D P H O T O S B Y D U N C A N H O W I E



TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE

Minutes of the Twelfth Annual General Meeting of Members held in the Assembly Hall, Kelvin House, Johannesburg, on Tuesday, 14th March, 1939, at 1.30 p.m.

P R E S E N T

The President, Mr. D. S. Haddon, in the chair, and 19 other members as shown in the attendance book.

The Chairman declared the meeting duly constituted.

The Notice of Meeting was taken as read.

E L E C T I O N O F C O M M I T T E E

The Chairman asked if all members present had voted and then declared the ballot closed.

Messrs. P. Berold, J. H. C. Hofmeyr, B. W. Middleton and H. R. Skelly were appointed Scrutineers to conduct the ballot.

The names of all members who had voted were called over and checked with the register, the total number being 142.

A D J O U R N M E N T

The meeting was then adjourned until 8 p.m.

R E S U M P T I O N

On the resumption of the meeting at 8 p.m., the President took the chair and there were 22 other members present as shown in the attendance book.

C O M M I T T E E F O R 1 9 3 8 / 1 9 3 9

The Chairman received the report of the scrutineers and declared the following members elected as the Provincial Committee for the ensuing year: Messrs. N. T. Cowin, S. C. Dowsett, N. M. Eaton, D. S. Haddon, R. Howden, G. E. Gordon Leith, W. Gordon McIntosh, A. J. Marshall, Rex D. Martienssen, D. L. Nurcombe, Professor G. E. Pearse and Mr. H. G. Tomkyns.

Mr. A. Leitch challenged the election of the Committee as two members had stood as "practising" who should have been classed as "salaried" members. He referred to regulation 63(2) and contended that regulation 65 was ultra vires the Act. It was agreed that these points be left to the Provincial Committee to consider.

The Chairman thanked the scrutineers for conducting the ballot.

M I N U T E S

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 10th March, 1938, were taken as read and confirmed.

C O M M I T T E E ' S A N N U A L R E P O R T F O R 1 9 3 8

This report, which had been circulated to members, was taken as read.

A C C O U N T S F O R T H E Y E A R 3 1 s t D E C E M B E R 1 9 3 8

Mr. N. T. Cowin, Chairman of the Finance Committee, in moving the adoption of the accounts, copies of which had been circulated to members, addressed the meeting as follows:—

It is gratifying to note that we have a substantial surplus for the year of £186 14s. 9d. in spite of larger expenditure due to an increase in the

number of our members. At the same time our establishment charges have not increased which is a tribute to the efficiency of our Secretary and his assistant.

With an addition of £100 from this year's surplus our reserve fund would stand at close on £1,000. This sum appears to me excessive to hold as capital and together with the payment we may expect from the Central Council for the purchase of the "Record" we shall accumulate a sum of money larger than we need in reserve. What, one may ask, is the best way to utilise it?

Kelvin House provides us with a comfortable home and we should make more use of it; there is no reason to spend money in fostering club life as we have these facilities already.

I think money would be well spent on an architectural library to be housed at Kelvin House under the supervision of our Secretary or alternatively a grant might be made to supplement the architectural library at our University and a vote for £100 for that purpose might be agreed to at this annual meeting.

If other suggestions are forthcoming they will be well received and considered, but it is clear to me that a large reserve fund is not called for and is inimical to our interests.

Once again I must stress the slackness of some of our members in regard to their subscriptions, and urge them to face up to their obligations. I am glad to say that a substantial amount of arrear subscription has come to light and my Committee appreciates these efforts to square the bill.

Fortunately we are not relying on any surplus from the "Record" to balance our budget and so we have no cause for complaint that little profit has accrued in this connection owing to the high cost of production which is the price to be paid for an excellent journal.

My ideal for our Benevolent Fund is that we should be able to meet the calls on it from interest without drawing on our capital. This has not been possible this year so we may still appeal to the benevolence of our members to remedy the position.

I am pleased to record my thanks to the members of my Committee and the Secretary for their support and co-operation.

The motion for the adoption of the accounts was seconded by Mr. Tomkyns and carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. Cowin, seconded by Mr. Spicer it was agreed to make a donation of £100 to the architectural library at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Professor Pearse, on behalf of the University thanked the Institute for this generous gift. He pointed out that the architectural library at the University was available to members at any time.

On the motion of Mr. Cowin, seconded by Mr. Sinclair, it was agreed to make a grant of £50 to the Benevolent Fund of the Architects of the Transvaal.

A U D I T O R S

Messrs. Alex Aiken and Carter were re-appointed auditors and their remuneration for the past audit was fixed at ten guineas from the Institute account and twenty guineas from the "South African Architectural Record" account.

A D D R E S S B Y T H E P R E S I D E N T

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you here to-night to the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Provincial Institute of South African Architects. The Provincial Committee at this meeting introduced an innovation by fixing the time for 8 p.m. in the hope that full discussion of the year's activities would result. Our experience in

previous years, when the meeting has been held at 5 p.m., has indicated that discussion has been curtailed, as the time available before dinner has proved too short.

I do not propose to review the whole of the year's work of the Committee, but to confine myself only to some items of importance.

S M A L L H O U S E S E R V I C E B U R E A U

A great deal of work has been put into this bureau by the sub-committee dealing with it, and the organisation is now practically complete. One further meeting of the sub-committee should suffice to finalise matters. In broad outline this sub-committee has invited members of this Institute to submit drawings for three different standards of houses, and has received in all some 17 designs, all of which have been accepted. At this stage of the Committee's deliberations it became apparent that a great deal of thought would have to be given to the question of the respective responsibilities of the architect, the Bureau, and the purchaser of a plan, it being quite clear that all of the responsibility to local authorities and for the safety of the structure and its proper completion would have to remain with the purchaser of the plan. This is not such a hardship as it appears at first sight as the object of the Bureau is to provide the public with clear and well designed plans and specifications and if required minimum supervision leaving the public in no worse a position as regards responsibility than if a jerry builder had been engaged in the first place. It has also been necessary to very fully discuss the type of plans and the essential information required thereon for which purpose the committee has delegated two of their members to prepare a model set of working drawings to which standard all working drawings must conform. Final terms of reference with regard to the Bureau's duties to the public and the duty of the architect to the Bureau are in the course of preparation and will be available to members shortly. In passing I would like to convey the Committee's thanks to Mr. Rush, an American architect visiting this country for the very valuable advice and insight into the American methods which he so kindly gave us.

F E E S .

I do not propose to expound my personal views about the fees-dispute, which this Institute and the Central Council submitted to the Supreme Court in Pretoria for decision during the year. I have made myself sufficiently clear I hope in the January issue of the Journal, but I would welcome a discussion of the whole question during this meeting should any members desire to express their views on this matter.

R E G I S T R A T I O N .

This brings me to the question of the value of our Act. As you are aware this act is primarily intended in its present form at any rate to govern the professions of architecture and quantity surveying. Many of us hoped that it would do more and govern the relations of the building public with ourselves. It is apparent to the Central Council and your Committee, that this latter point has not been gained. However, in the past few months interest has been awakened in Government circles over the reasonableness of registration of all professional bodies and it appears to me that our support must not be wanting when our friends, the engineers, discuss this matter with the Government.

It is their intention to advocate what might be termed an omnibus bill embracing at least all the engineering professions. Should this bill come to fruition it would in my opinion remove all opposition to Clause 3c of our original draft which Parliament refused to include in our Act. At the very least, we must be prepared to be incorporated in an omnibus bill and assist in every way possible in obtaining protection of the work of architects.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Your Committee has felt during past years and is likely for some years to come to feel that the profession is not getting due consideration from public bodies in the matter of large housing schemes and other similar works. The notable exception to the attitude taken up by the Government and the Municipalities is, of course, the Provincial Administration and thanks to their good offices an opportunity now exists to illustrate the value of the public work carried out by private practitioners. It has, of course, been a little difficult to start things off but the results in the shape of the many fine schools built by private architects have without a doubt justified the step taken by the Provincial authorities and with their goodwill it will be possible in the future to persuade municipalities and others to at least seek our advice and criticisms.

In this connection I make bold to say that the time has come for the Institute to press for the separation of the departments of architects from those of the respective City Engineers throughout the country. It is only natural that City Engineers have their time fully occupied with roads, surveys, sewerage, power distribution, etc., and do not give their architectural assistants sufficient freedom of action in their own work. I have no hesitation in saying that the Municipal Architect should be in an independent position and responsible only to his Council. This statement I know will be severely criticised, but I feel it my duty to make it.

UNIVERSITY.

To my great regret I was unable to attend the annual prize-giving and exhibition of students' work during the past year, Mr. Nurcombe deputising for me, and I am therefore unable to criticise or praise the students' work, but I wish them well and trust that they will flourish mightily in the future.

GENERAL.

I would like here to remind the Trustees of the Herbert Baker Scholarship Fund that the time has come to hold another competition and if possible within the next few months.

I might briefly mention that the Joint Committee of Architects and Quantity Surveyors still flourishes and has had many discussions with the builders to their mutual advantage.

I must indicate that the architectural medal proposed by Mr. N. T. Cowin at our last annual general meeting has been dealt with by your Committee and has resolved itself into a scheme for honouring the architect and his building by attaching a plaque to the building. This proposal should reach finality very shortly and the first award should be made this year.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the members of the Provincial Committee and the Advisory Committees on finance, practice, the Journal, the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund and representatives of the Central Council for the very valued assistance to me and the profession generally during my year of office. I must also record my thanks and the Institute's appreciation of the services of Mr. A. S. Pearse, its secretary, and of Miss Hookham, who acted during his illness. Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. Sinclair, referring to the Registration Bill, said that the matter was being very seriously considered by the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies with whom this Institute was affiliated.

They had interviewed the Minister and it had been decided not to take any further steps until the motion regarding an Estate Agents Bill had been dealt with by Parliament.

HERBERT BAKER ARCHITECTURAL SCHOLARSHIP

In reply to Mr. Eaton, who asked for information regarding this Scholarship, Mr. Howden reported that it was quite possible that another competition was due,

Mr. Fleming expressed his pleasure at hearing this and suggested that at least once a year Sir Herbert Baker be informed of the position of this Trust.

C O N G R E S S A T P O R T E L I Z A B E T H

The Chairman said he had received enquiries from the Hon. Secretary of the Port Elizabeth Local Committee as to the number of members of the Transvaal Institute who would be attending the Congress. He felt it would be a sad reflection if the Transvaal was represented by its Central Council members only. He hoped that as many as possible would go to Port Elizabeth.

On the motion of Professor Pearse, seconded by Mr. Howden, it was agreed that an amount of £50 be set aside towards assisting delegates from this Institute to attend the Congress.

It was further agreed that the President should address a circular letter to all members enquiring as to whether they were attending and advising that the Institute would assist financially to a certain extent any members who contemplated proceeding to Port Elizabeth for the Congress.

I N T E R N A T I O N A L C O N G R E S S A T W A S H I N G T O N U . S . A . S E P T E M B E R , 1 9 3 9

The President referred to the notices which had appeared in the Journal regarding this Congress and expressed the hope that some members of the Transvaal Institute would attend.

It was recorded that this matter would be dealt with by the Central Council and the Congress at Port Elizabeth.

P R A C T I C A L T R A I N I N G A T T H E U N I V E R S I T Y

Mr. A. C. Fair addressed the meeting as follows :—" He who is theoretic as well as practical, is therefore doubly armed ; able not only to prove the propriety of his design, but equally so to carry it into execution."—Vitruvius.

Walter Gropius, in his statement before the American Institute of Architects on the subject of Creative Design, has given us a masterful lead in the direction of sounder and more practical training for aspiring Architects. Whether or not his contentions are applicable to local education is a matter for investigation, but they certainly issue a challenge to the system pertaining at our University.

On the subject of design as expounded to students at our University, I have little to say. I feel that the " oneness " of style must indicate a common approach by common consent. There must be many senior practising members who are in a position to discuss this side of the question with a background of ability, individuality and balance which are indispensable in such a subject as design. What is alarming is the low standard of training in what Gropius refers to as the " Art of Building." I do not wish to give undue emphasis to this aspect of architectural training, but rather to draw attention to the underestimation of its importance. To quote the statement referred to : " architectural education has to cope with two entirely different problems. The art of building . . . and the art of architecture. Thus the latter is more comprehensive than the first. The architect must master both. He cannot be a good architect without being a skilful builder."

I have had occasion to examine drawings issued to builders by architects and am amazed at the lack of knowledge displayed in matters which should be regarded as elementary. Discussions with engineers, quantity surveyors and builders have confirmed this fact, that architects are too often uncertain and sometimes entirely lacking in their ability to supply detailed information in building. " That's the builder's worry " is not an uncommon phrase in our building world. It appears that " building " subjects are

taught to newcomers by lecturers whose everyday experience is limited and whose brilliant abilities are theoretical rather than practical. It does seem strange that, with numbers of experienced architects in this city who could supply that freshness of day to day experience to classes at our University, the authorities should see fit to limit the student's practical training to that supplied by those who seldom go beyond the text books which they themselves expound.

An understanding of construction is to an architect what a thorough grounding in grammar is to a writer. The use of standard text books in training is essential but these fundamentals taught therein should be regarded as a preliminary to fresh thought and discovery which can only be reached by day to day contact with those who are using materials. The practising architect, engineer or quantity surveyor would appear to be the ideal man for such training, but this seems to be overlooked.

Building construction is a three-year course, and includes the subject of "Materials" which seems to be limited in scope.

Surely a continuous study of the art of building parallel to a study of the art of architecture should be carried through to the final year of training? No matter how inspired an architect's design may be, its eventual fulfilment depends upon the co-operation of the builder, craftsmen and sub-contractors. How to win this co-operation is the problem confronting the architect: surely through an understanding and appreciation of the work of these men. We are facing, to-day, a very serious challenge. The present-day specialisation in all branches of architecture will, if not countered, eventually reduce the architect to the very doubtful position of "sketch designer." We have in our city firms practising individually as engineer architectural designers, interior decorators, plumbing specialists, shop window specialists, building consultants, heating consultants, electrical consultants, lift engineers, etc. These callings all centre around the building industry, and yet how limited is the training a student receives in almost all these subjects. Many of them may be included in the syllabus, but it is quite apparent that the newly qualified architect, unless he be the part-time product, is sadly lacking in practical knowledge.

What is wanted is a continuous study of the "Art of Building" under the guidance of practical men drawn from the various callings together with more frequent visits to jobs where everyday construction is being carried out.

Walter Gropius has dealt with the subject in such a way as to require no further repetition at this stage.

One other suggestion I would make. On leaving the University with the Degree or Diploma tucked safely under the arm, the student is at liberty to let himself loose on the public. No one would deny him this right, but will it do the profession as a whole any real good to have inexperienced architects gaining their experience at the expense of the client? To obviate this, why not insist on post-graduate courses for all qualified students before permitting them to practice under their own power? I feel that such subjects as professional practice, advanced design and construction, and a study of materials would form a sound basis for such post-graduate study.

An alternative system might be the division of the whole course into two sections, the first qualifying the student as a certificated architectural assistant and the second, obtained after two years' practical work in an office with the addition of the abovementioned post-graduate examinations, qualifying the student as an architect. The entire course should take from six to seven years to complete and would result in an architect with greater confidence and perhaps finer ideals in his work.

Mr. Fair said he felt that with regard to such subjects as air conditioning, lifts and other practical subjects these might be very easily taught by experts.

Mr. McIntosh pointed out that arrangements were being made at the University for experts to give lectures on these subjects.

Mr. Spicer suggested that Mr. Fair's paper be published in the journal. He stressed the importance of students requiring more knowledge of construction in dealing with questions of design and detail. Great difficulty had been experienced in getting students to take a proper interest in construction and much depended on the student himself. In America experts on heating, ventilation, lifts, etc., spent much time in architects' offices and thus assistants obtained considerable experience. He expressed great confidence in Professor Pearse's methods at the University in view of his visits to schools of architecture in other part of the world. He felt that architects needed to protect themselves against the encroachment of specialists.

Mr. Berge said he considered that students should have included in their course six months training in one of the building trades which would be of great help to them in meeting the builder on the site.

Mr. Howden pointed out that some architects employed all these specialists and he referred to men from overseas posing as experts in designing lifts, concrete construction, etc. The question was: did architects intend to confine themselves to design and leave it to the experts to carry out the construction and special work.

Mr. Eaton agreed that a lot of architects were experiencing difficulty at the present time in not having had sufficient training in construction. He thought something could be done through the Master Builders' Association to obtain more practical building experience.

Mr. Maxwell expressed the opinion that Mr. Fair was confusing the issue. It seemed quite impossible to train a student in five, seven or ten years to be a fully qualified architect but the function of the University was to give a student sufficient knowledge to assimilate further knowledge later.

Mr. Fair emphasised that although these subjects were receiving attention it was more in the nature of an innovation, than a serious course of study, and they were not compulsory.

Professor Pearse congratulated Mr. Fair on bringing up this matter. It was a very good sign to see members criticising architectural education. Possibly Mr. Fair was not fully conversant with the work being done to-day in the School of Architecture. The training of diploma students had been a very difficult task. As regards degree students, what Mr. Fair had suggested was actually being done. Lectures were being given by engineers and others on lifts, air conditioning, heating and ventilation, electric lighting, etc., and the students themselves were very keen on obtaining this special knowledge. They had also arranged for building trades representatives to give lectures on various subjects.

He thanked Mr. Fair for bringing this matter to the notice of the Committee which had resulted in a very helpful discussion. He gave a general review of the training at the School of Architecture and said that if any members would visit the University they would see how the subject of "construction" was now being taught.

"COST-PLUS-PROFIT" CONTRACTS

Mr. Leitch enquired as to whether there was any standard form of cost-plus-profit contracts. The Chairman replied that this matter had been discussed at a joint meeting of architects, quantity surveyors and builders and the conclusion come to was that each individual case required its own terms of contract and these could only be drawn up by the individual architect concerned.

VOTE OF THANKS

Mr. Sinclair moved a hearty vote of thanks to the President and expressed the appreciation of all members of this Institute for his outstanding services in the interests of members during his year of office.

This was carried with acclamation.

Mr. Haddon thanked members for their expression of appreciation.

The meeting terminated at 10.15 p.m.

PROFESSIONAL NOTES AND NEWS

SUMMARY OF CENTRAL COUNCIL MINUTES, APRIL, 1939.

The Summary of the Minutes of the recent meeting of the Central Council held at Port Elizabeth will appear in our next issue.

R. I. B. A.

The following copy of a letter received from the Honorary Treasurer, Royal Institute of British Architects, is published for the information of members of the Transvaal Institute:—

Thank you for your letter of the 24th March, informing me that the Transvaal Provincial Institute have agreed to forego for three years the rebate in respect of subscriptions of members of the Transvaal Institute who are members of the R.I.B.A.

I shall have pleasure in reporting to the R.I.B.A. Council the very generous action of your Committee and I am sure it would be their wish that I should convey to you and the members of your Institute their very sincere thanks.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following extracts from a letter from Mr. A. O. Coltman, a member of the Transvaal Institute, of Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States, are published for the information of members:—

EXHIBITION: INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS OF MALAYA.

Under the auspices of the abovenamed Institute an Exhibition is to be held in Singapore about October next.

At a meeting of the Council held on March 6th last, I suggested that perhaps the South African Institute might be willing to assist us with this exhibition by loaning to the Malayan Institute any plans, drawings or photographs of work of merit that may be available.

The intention would be to have a purely South African Section and any form of exhibit your Institute would be willing to let us have would be of intense interest and very greatly appreciated.

The Council requested me, as a member of your Institute, to approach you and this I now do.

In the event of assistance being forthcoming, might I suggest that the other Provincial Institutes in South Africa be similarly approached by you and further that the Chair of the School of Architecture be also notified of our intentions.

I may say that we hold a very high opinion of both past and current Architecture in South Africa and I am quite certain that exhibits of any kind from your part of the world would not only form a most attractive section of our exhibition, but would contribute greatly to the success of it.

The Institute of Architects of Malaya would, of course, defray the cost of plans, documents and photographs which you might be able to send.

re: MALAYA EXHIBITION.

The Central Council has decided that the Provincial Institutes and the two Schools of Architecture be asked to forward a set of suggested exhibits to the Central Council Executive Committee before the 15th July. The Executive Committee will choose from these what to send to Malaya.

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The attention of readers is drawn to the letter which we print below.

The Editors,
"South African Architectural Record,"
New Kelvin House,
Johannesburg.

Dear Sirs, You will, I feel sure, be interested in the proposal to acquire and present to the nation the late Mr. Arthur Elliott's unique photographic collection, reproductions from which were so much admired when recently exhibited in Cape Town.

Among many fine examples of Dutch architecture and art, dating from the early 17th century, are Africana of great value which would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace. A vivid and moving story of patient heroism amid dangers and difficulties can be gleaned from the authentic historical notes which amplify the pictures. In them those who care may trace the beginnings of a culture which should inspire in our children the spirit of their pioneer heritage for all time.

At present the pictures are exposed to the risk of destruction by fire in a small house in Dorp Street, and it is now proposed to acquire and present them, for safe keeping, to the Archives, Cape Town.

The proposal is fully approved by the Historical Monuments Commission, which first approached the Government for the funds needed—up to now without success. The Commission endorses this appeal. Its Chairman, Senator the Right Hon. F. S. Malan, P.C., believes that the public will come to its aid by contributing the sum of £5,000 required, and in the enclosed letter commends the project to your sympathy. The accompanying note will explain it more fully.

I hope you will concur in my Committee's aims, and contribute towards their realisation. Cheques or postal orders should be crossed and made payable to the Elliott Fund Committee, please.

Yours faithfully,

F. K. KENDALL, Chairman,
Elliott Fund Committee.

●

With effect from May, 1939, Mr. J. W. Cowling, Quantity Surveyor of Pretoria, has taken into partnership his son, Mr. John A. Cowling. The partnership title will be "J. W. Cowling and Son."

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In the house designed by Mr. Brendan J. Clinch, described and illustrated in this issue, the cement coloured tile was supplied by Tuscan Tiles (Pty.), Ltd. All plastering was executed by Plastering Industries (Pty.), Ltd.

Journal of the SA Architectural Institute

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