



2-1978

QPL newsletter

beachfront redevelopment



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- a report on the work of the final year students at the School of Architecture, University of Natal, Durban, for their urban and landscape design programme this year.
- an edited memorandum submitted by the Subcommittee on Planning of the Natal Provincial Institute to the City Engineer in regard to the proposed redevelopment and rezoning of the Area south of Bell Street, Durban.
- Natal Provincial Institute Committee items.
- changes.

For their urban and landscape design programme lasting eleven weeks, final year students at the School of Architecture at the University of Natal did a redevelopment scheme for the Durban beachfront. It was the first time that a comprehensive planning and development exercise for this beachfront was undertaken since the Holford Kantorowitz proposals of 1968. These latter proposals are now not only outdated, but also contained certain destructive ecological recommendations, especially with regard to the Umgeni Estuary.

The project area extended from the harbour entrance in the south to the Umgeni estuary in the north. The beachfront was sub-divided into eight project areas and 27 students worked on the scheme. The area is a particularly relevant and topical one at present. In many respects it is the only international urban beach in the country catering for increasingly larger numbers of foreign visitors. Because of the unstable political situation elsewhere on the East African coast, Durban is also becoming more popular for yachts from Indian and Pacific Ocean regions.

Priorities for the redevelopment of the Durban beachfront could be categorised as follows:-

Firstly the total and comprehensive development of the entire beachfront offering as wide a range of choices as possible. The entrance to the harbour is to be doubled in width in the next five years; the provision of a marina and international yachting and boating harbour opening onto the ocean side is becoming increasingly urgent as bay yachting facilities are becoming more overcrowded and as popularity of offshore racing, especially during the winter months, grows.

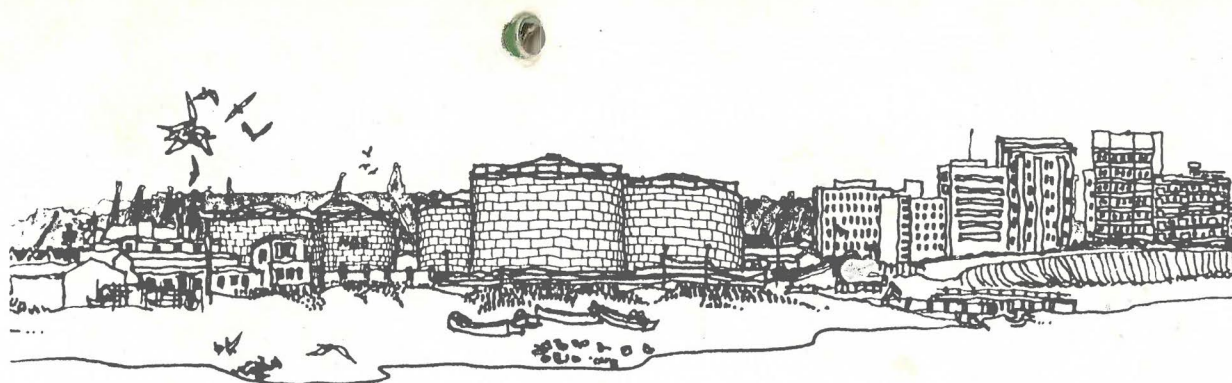
Development proposals by the students envisage the redevelopment of the entire south beach area; the redevelopment of the north beach area as a highly sophisticated urban beach served by many urban facilities; the improvement of restaurant facilities on the north beach area; the further development of the sunken garden area in front of the Elangeni and

Maharani Hotels, and the creation of more urban beachfronts from Battery beach onwards to Umgeni mouth area the creation of public beach parks and the reinstatement of natural dune formations and vegetation, as well as the provision of lower profile beach facilities in this area. Thus the marina would be the focus for boating, entertainment, fishing and walking, with an urban beach adjacent for swimming, surfing; the first of a series of urban beaches along the south beach area are developed for swimming, entertainment, organised fun and surfing, walking, leading to natural beaches for more leisurely activities, less heavily serviced and mainly for recreational picnic and entertainment purposes.

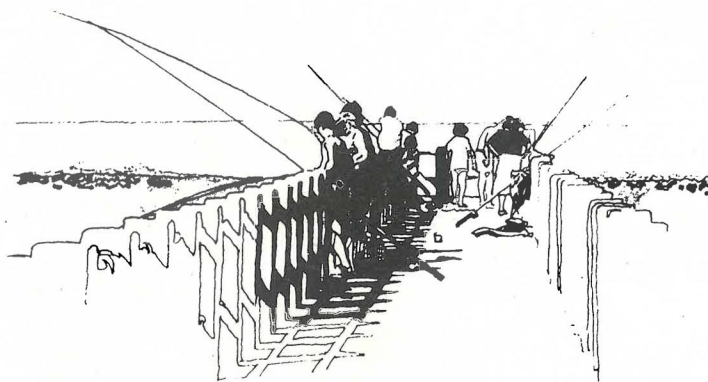
Proposed for the entire beachfront is a promenade to link all the various entertainment and leisure activities from the marina to the Umgeni estuary - varying in character but providing a continuous pedestrianised walkway.

The second series of priorities concern buildings adjacent and parallel to the beachfront: the removal of many of the railway utility buildings along the Point area, which will be phased out in any case because of declining harbour activities and the development of this area as a recreational area. Proposed development is of a low density to preserve the open vistas of the present situations; existing built-up areas are re-activated and historical buildings are carefully integrated with the new proposals.

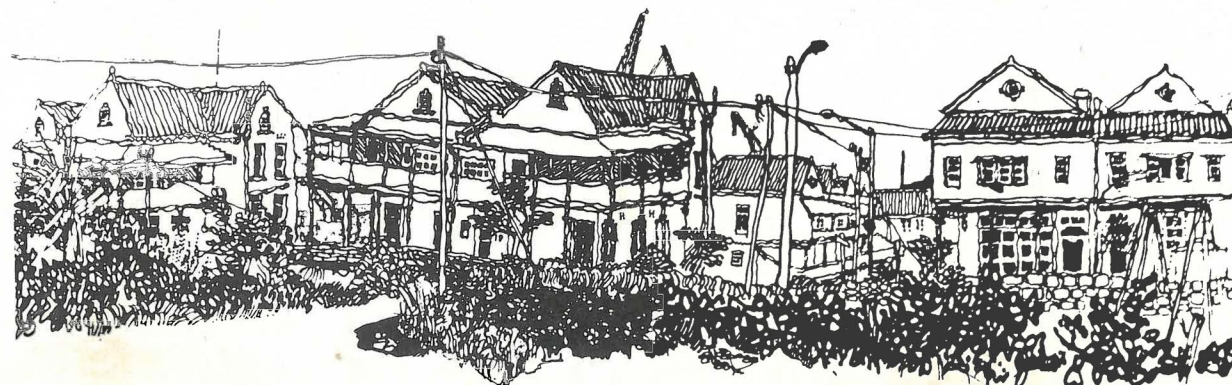
The redevelopment of the Bell Street area (at present under consideration by the City Engineer's Department) ensures the gradual rise of buildings from the beach to high rise blocks on Point Road, preventing the isolation of the hinterland of the Point from its beach areas. In the South Beach area, the students did a revaluation of existing buildings and attempted to especially improve lateral, visual and physical links between the built-up areas and the beach. Important design priorities in the North Beach area were the linking of Victoria Park in an integral way with the beach entertainment facilities; the linking of



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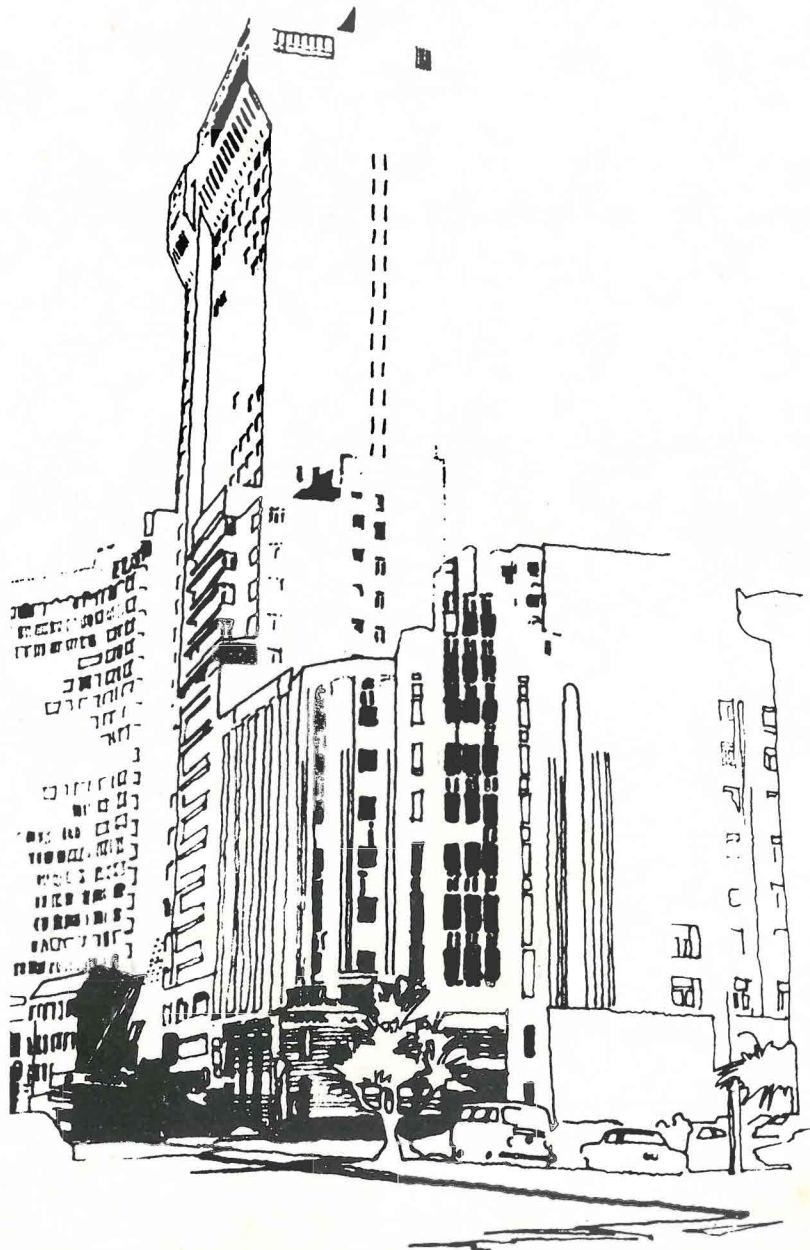


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1. Storage tanks along the South Beach.
2. Fishing from the jetty.
3. Erskine Terrace.
4. Proposals for the site north of Argyle Road.
5. Redevelopment, Erskine Terrace.
6. Redevelopment, Umgeni Estuary.

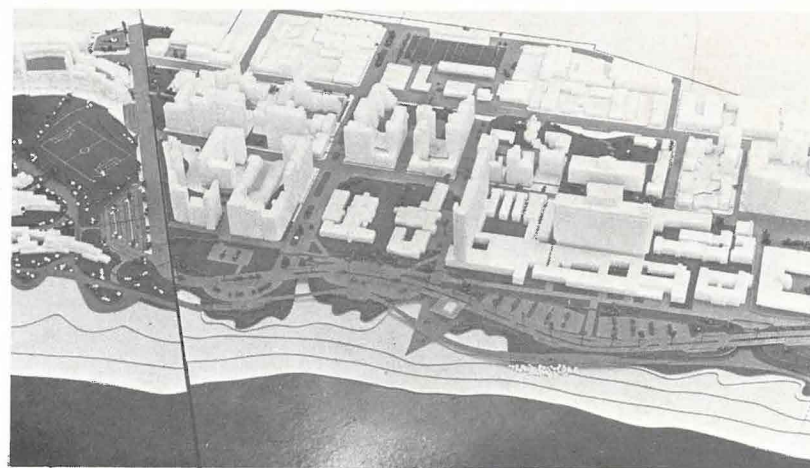
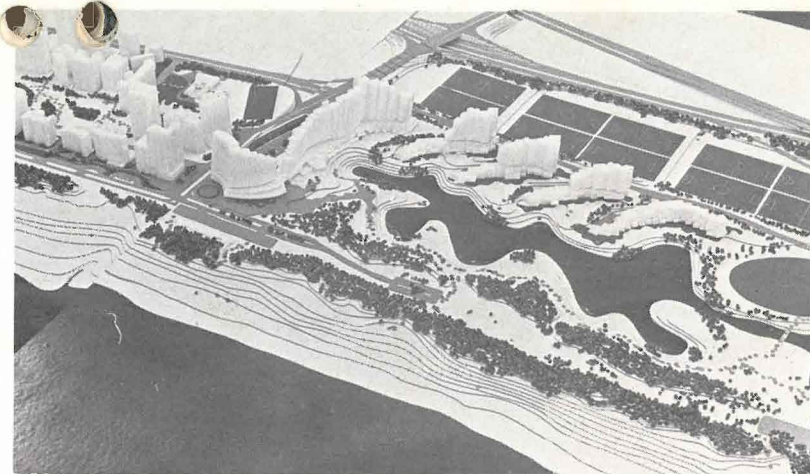


international hotels, like the Elangeni and Maharani, to the open recreational facilities such as the sunken garden and beachfront and the re-designing of the Sol Harris Crescent area into a more humane environment. The removal of the Defence Headquarters which, at the moment, is acting as a buffer to further development along the beach, created the opportunity for additional residential development, and the formation of a comprehensive parks system, extending from Argyle Road towards the Umgeni estuary.

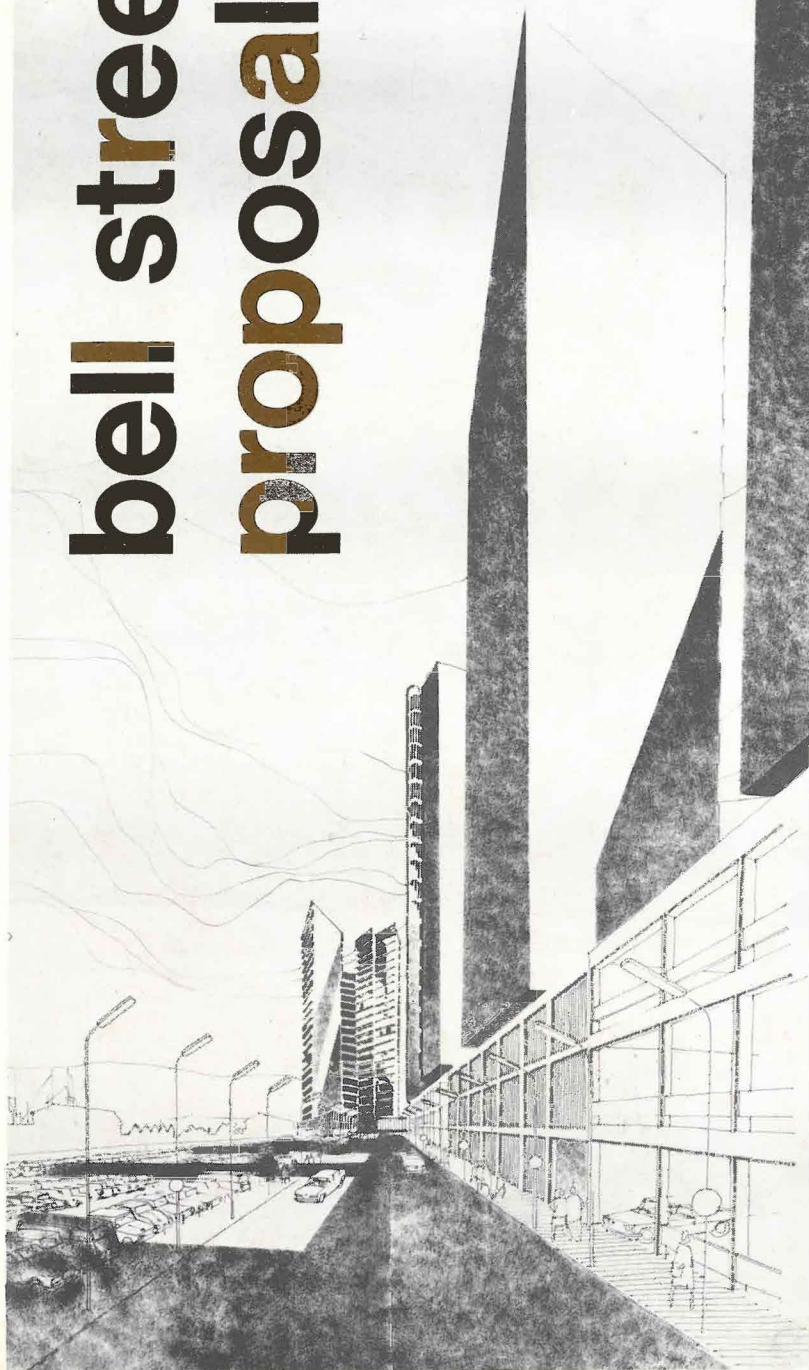
A third series of concerns relate to the de-emphasising of the arterial function of the upper Marine and Snell Parades by diverting the north coast traffic by means of an elevated park highway to link up with the proposed Leopold Street/south and western freeway systems thus turning the Marine Parade into a local access road. Road proposals also involve the rerouting of Marine Parade to create more boulevard and terrace space on the North Beach area, especially adjacent to the hotels. Beyond Argyle Road Snell Parade is discontinued, terminating in a parking area for the public beach park. Marine Parade and Erskine Terrace in the South Beach area are likewise rerouted to create more park and garden space to the residential areas and to the Addington Hospital building. Point Road is re-activated as a dynamic and lively street culminating at the Marina. Smaller side streets are closed to traffic and are pedestrianised.

During the course of the students' investigations, surveys were carried out and many persons and instances were approached for advice and assistance. Much of this work will now be on exhibition to the public, not only as an alternative development option, but also to gauge public reaction and to use the feedback of information thus obtained for future development studies.

For the students the exercise provided a valuable opportunity to look in depth at a problem area well-known to them, and to participate in a highly relevant and topical project of a regional scale.



bell street proposal



In scrutinising the City Engineer's replanning proposals of the area south of Bell Street, on the Durban Beachfront, the Natal Provincial Institute of Architects supports the Department's objectives that the development should be:-

1. of high quality,
2. co-ordinated and harmonious,
3. attractive to private enterprise.

However, it feels that the proposed development site constitutes one of the prime areas in Durban and it is strongly recommended that all options be fully explored in order to arrive at an optimum development form, before embarking on detailed proposals for a specific and isolated site.

The Institute questions the provision of 10 development sites of approximately 2 000m² each permitting a P.A.R. of 7 with a parking ratio of 1 car/unit. It believes that this will generate a very poor residential environment that will fail to achieve the Department's objectives.

From visual studies made by the Institute it is clear that the major defect in the development of the Marine Parade (i.e. the continuous wall of development) will be perpetuated.

The Department's proposals are questioned in further detail in respect of the following:-

1. As the proposals stand at the moment there can be no visual or physical links between the recreation and parking areas to the South of the proposal development and the public beach area. Any proposals should allow for physical and visual linkages to avoid the type of development that has taken place in the North Beach area. Both the location and form of the parking are regarded as unresolved.
2. The site area of 2 000m² allowed per site seems to be an arbitrary one and may unnecessarily restrict flexibility of development. A larger variety of site areas and bulk controls should be considered.
3. The parking ratio of 1 car/unit at a P.A.R. of 7 does not permit resident's parking to be located largely at basement level - con-

sequently the lower floors of each development will comprise a parking garage. This is considered to be a rather hostile environment within a residential quarter. Parking should be basement parking to allow living units to have direct access to the ground and to maximise ground space for the use of people.

4. The hexagon shaped sites do not permit optimum advantage to be taken of the available orientation and view conditions. The building forms should be determined, not by arbitrary geometric forms, but by consideration of orientation and micro-climate. Some of the aspects to be considered under this heading should be:-
 - 4.1 Shadow lines of the proposed buildings onto the open spaces to the south, onto adjacent properties, as well as onto the public beach.
 - 4.2 Views to the north and to the north-east for each flat should be desirable.
 - 4.3 Wind directions and turbulence implications should be thoroughly investigated.
5. The shopping element should be located so as to serve the needs of the adjacent beach and residential zones.
6. The proposed forms of tower block are uneconomic in their structural and services design particularly in regard to the integration of the parking structure with the super-structure. It is considered that structural and lift cost will make development non-feasible with similar results to those previous attempts by the Council to attract private enterprise.

Proposed Guidelines for Development Policy:

In view of the above the development proposals for this area must form an integral part of the overall South Beach area and Point area development proposals, and must be viewed in this context.

The development of the Beachfront area is of vital importance to Durban and must be developed as a continuous recreation and entertainment zone. The development of the Bell Street area cannot be separated from development of the Beach area and related facilities.

In an endeavour to provide guidelines for a redevelopment policy diagrams have been prepared indicating the form of the present proposals in plan and sections of an alternative form. The essential principles which should be complied with in any proposed development of this area are emphasised.

Recommendations:

The Institute recommends:

that there should be a more integrated relationship between the planned residential and recreational areas so that "a mutual enhancement of amenity is achieved".

that the extent of land for residential development be increased and the intensity of housing development be graded so as to create optimal environmental conditions within the area.

that the area bounded by the beachfront, Point Road, Bell Street and Camperdown Road be planned and developed comprehensively in order that the full potential of this unique site may be realised.

The Institute is of the opinion that the planning and development of this area of the city is of such importance that it recommends the design be the subject of an architectural competition. The Institute would be pleased to make its services available to the Department in order to bring such a competition to fruition.

● **an edited memorandum submitted by the Sub-Committee on Planning of the Natal Provincial Institute to the City Engineer in regard to the proposed redevelopment and rezoning of the Area south of Bell Street, Durban.**

Sketch, by John Frost, illustrates the physical implications of the Corporation proposals.



Provided Railway Line to Victoria Embankment

A reply dated May 1, 1978, had been received by the Action Committee of the Natal Institute from the General Manager of the S.A.R. & H. From the letter it is apparent that the S.A.R. had provided a branch line provision at the new Berea Road Station for a future line on the Esplanade but have assured that this provision is solely in case a future railway line is requested by the Durban City Council. The S.A.R. were not actively pursuing the proposal for a new railway line unless the Council requested it.

Sub-Committee on Corporate and Independent Advertising

As a result of the Special General Meeting held on February 23, 1978, a memorandum was prepared by this sub-committee. The Provincial Committee resolved that the first part of the memorandum, dealing with corporate advertising, be forwarded to National Board. The relevant recommendations read as follows:-

1. The appointment of a highly skilled Public Relations Officer/Advertising Manager to market the image and services of the profession on a national scale (film, television, radio, national press, conferences, general liaison) and to advise provincial committees on local marketing and advertising campaigns.
2. The budgeting by each local Provincial Committee for a planned advertising campaign (television and radio interview, local press, liaison work, yellow pages) integrated with the national campaign.
3. Each Provincial Institute to maintain a small permanent exhibition space easily accessible to the public for exhibitions.
4. The redesign of the architects notice boards by a commissioned graphic designer to improve its design, appearance and legibility.

The recommendations of the sub-committee on independent advertising were not approved by the Provincial Committee and would be referred back to a Special General Meeting to be held during the latter half of the year. The recommendations not approved read as follows:-

1. A space would also be made available to practising architects for private exhibitions for a small fee on a strict roster basis.
2. That Natal be allowed for a trial period, to allow its members to advertise in the local press. These advertisements would appear in a specified format under the seal of the Institute.

Submission of Plans, Durban Corporation

In view of correspondence received in regard to difficulties experienced in the submission of plans to the Durban Corporation, the matter was discussed by the Provincial Committee. It was advised that should any difficulties be encountered in this regard, Messrs Laxson and Margitts at the Corporation would be available to assist.

Natal School of Architecture/ Natal Provincial Institute of Architects Liaison Committee.

Concern has been expressed over the poor attendance of members at functions arranged by the liaison committee. These functions are arranged and aimed to attract the attendance of members as well as students. A great deal of enthusiasm and work is put into the arrangements of these functions and it would be appreciated if more support could be forthcoming from members. The committee consists of members of the NPia, staff and student representatives from the Natal School of Architecture. At present the NPia is represented by Mr. S.N. Tomkin, Mr. G. Seitter and Mr. M. Dibb. The terms of reference of the Liaison Committee are to foster understanding and co-operation between students and the profession in matters of common concern and interest: primarily the responsibility for involvement in the design of the total environment and secondarily in the general welfare of the members in their constituent bodies. The student society, is given a grant each year by the NPia as a contribution to its operating costs. Many functions are arranged by the students such as an annual fancy dress ball and Institute members are more than welcome. The majority of functions are organised by the Liaison Committee and consist of lectures, seminars and exhibitions.

Shannon

Changes in address

G. Carter-Brown to 190 Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg.

G. Ehrlich – Kuckucksweg 15, 6920 Sinsheim-Reihen Germany.

N. du Preez – P.O. Box 2024, Pietermaritzburg, Green's Chambers, Chancery Lane.

V.N. Cook – 82 Glenashley Heights, Glenashley.

G. Salt – 7 Ridge Gardens, Ridge Road, Berea.

D.A. Sherlock – 101/102 Knowles Centre, 22 Chancery Lane, Pinetown. P.O. Box 102.

J.A. Duvenage – 212 Costa da Sol, Umhlanga Rocks.

L.R. Stapleton – Seaglen, 44 Netford Road, Brighton Beach.

J.S. Brejowski – 741 Musgrave Road, Durban.

T.A. Cowper – 14 Glenart Road, Kloof. P.O. Box 225, Gillitts.

G.G. MacFarlane – P.O. Box 8081, Causeway, Salisbury.

T.T. Mommsen – 911 NBS Building, Smith Street, Durban.

The Umhlali office of Short and Dwyer has closed and the practice will continue to operate from the Durban office at 702 Ulundi House, Gardiner Street, Durban.

P.M. Perold – 1005 Sanlam Building, Smith Street, Durban.

H. Rodda – 20 Cedar Road, Westville.

Changes in Partnerships

R.P.R. Porter has retired from the Republic offices of Myles, Porter, Pugh and Sherlock with effect from 28th February 1978 but will be retained as a consultant. New address Quilter House, 3 Braby Place, Cowies Hill.

Mr A. Giantsos has entered into an association in Natal with Meyers, Rix and Partners of Johannesburg.

Mr D.G. Horne (a consulting engineer) has retired from the multi-disciplinary practice of Horne Glasson and Partners and Mr A.F. Tomkins (also a consulting engineer) has been admitted into the partnership.

Mr T.N. van der Walt has entered into partnership with Messrs. A.A. Richter, G. Wilsenach and E.J. Bloem and will practise in Natal under the style of Van der Walt, Richter, Wilsenach en Bloem.

Transfers in Class

R.E. Chadwick – ordinary to retired.

G. Ehrlich – ordinary to retired.

D.C. McDonald – ordinary to retired.

G.H. Ehrlich – ordinary to retired.

L.R. Stapleton – retired to ordinary.

Changes in Membership

E.J. Clemence – NPI to CPI.

C.S.P. Wouda – NPI to TPI.

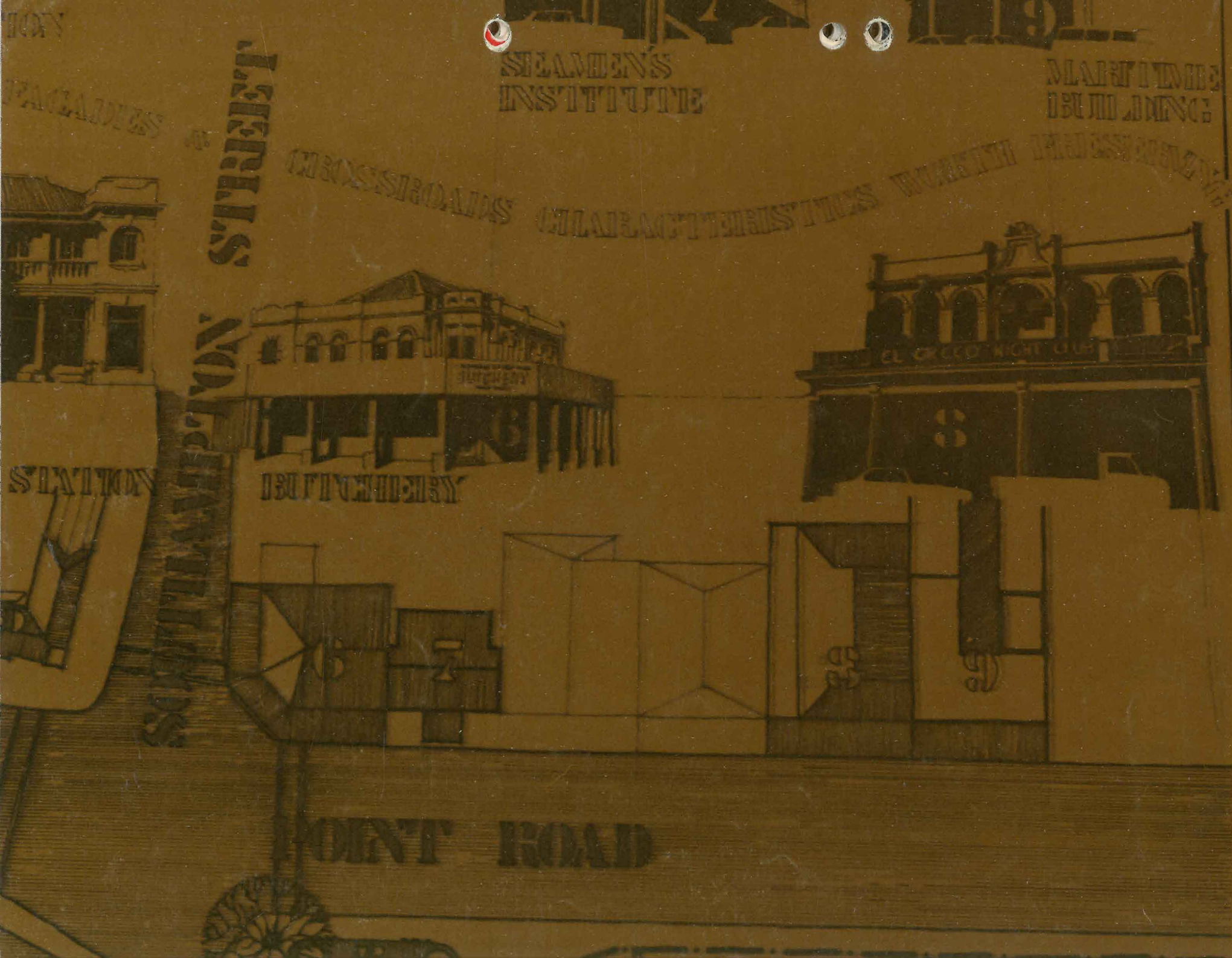
F. Abel – CPI to NPI.

B.R.H. Knuppe – NPI to CPI.

New Members

J. Pitout – P.O. Box 200, Richards Bay.

T.T. Mommsen – 14 Arc Royale, Point Road, Durban.



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