



Clay face bricks by Corobrik are ideally suited to all the building requirements of a modern society: from homes, hospitals, schools and churches, to mass housing schemes, office blocks, factories and civic centres.

When embarking upon a major project, consider the advantages of clay bricks: their inherent qualities are designed to withstand the ravages of the elements; the costs of continuous maintenance are eliminated, because they're virtually maintenance-free; and their natural beauty adds to the aesthetics of the environment.

Also, the fact that Corobrik supplies a range of clay bricks comprising thousands of different colours and textures, allows for unlimited design opportunities.

For further information contact your nearest Corobrik Sales Office.



# FACE OF A NATION.

**COROBRIK**

**SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE STRENGTH OF COROBRIK.**

A member of the Brick Development Assoc. of S.A.



JOURNAL OF THE NATAL  
PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF  
ARCHITECTS  
TYDSKRIF VAN DIE NATALSE  
PROVINSIALE INSTITUUT VAN  
ARGITEKTE

1-1985



ARCHITECTS' OFFICES



## 1-1985 ARCHITECTS' OFFICES

COVER: Entrance to office block by Johnson Murray Architects.  
Photo by Craig Hudson

## EDITORIAL

### CHANGE

What do the following Durban practices have in common: Maurice Dibb and Associates; Geraghty-Little-McCaffery; H.J. Nel; Johnson Murray; Wynand Claassen & Smuts-Erasmus and McLaren Alcock Bedford + Partners? All have changed premises, either into new, refurbished or re-cycled buildings.

When architects build for themselves, the result must inevitably be seen not only as an envelope for their space requirements, but also to some extent as their image, as a physical embodiment of their particular design philosophy. Hennie Nel has arranged himself around a planted courtyard in an older light industrial area, an area some would consider "not-you", but he may, in so doing, have laid the first steps for a general respectability of the surrounding area. Johnson Murray and McLaren Alcock Bedford + Partners have sited their buildings alongside parks, reflecting possibly the need for close contact between man-made and nature in an urban area. However, changing sites and opting for new self-designed premises cannot only be interpreted as a tangible expression of the desire for a new start, nor simply as a change in design thinking, but certainly also as a visible gesture of commitment to their firms.

Geraghty-Little-McCaffery and Wynand Claassen & Smuts-Erasmus have chosen to invest in a commercial building that was approaching the end of its economic life. Maurice Dibb & Associates have gone to great lengths to avoid the destruction of another piece of Victoriana and have in that process preserved for their office that quality only older buildings can offer: character. But beyond magnanimity, these three firms have subscribed to the maxim that property can only be improved with re-use.

The first architects' office to be published in a South African architectural journal was that of Messrs Hanson & Finkelstein with S.N. Tomkin, in Johannesburg (SAAR June 1932). "Out of a modest space within a conventionally designed office block they created a pleasant interior, with french grey walls, maroon silk curtains and hangings, an abstract patterned carpet in maroon, french grey and parchment chromium plated tubular steel chairs with cane seats based on Mies van der Rohe's design of 1926, simple furniture in waxed caucasian walnut, and a glass figure by Venturini of Venice as a accent. This office" writes Gilbert Herbert, "was to see the production of perhaps the most significant corpus of work of the thirties in South Africa; in the quantitative output of high quality design, it is unmatched in the pioneer days of modern architecture."

Is there a parallel in 1985?

Walter Peters, Editor

## PRACTICE CHANGES

### CHANGES IN ADDRESSES

Mr R C Bartholomew to 253 Musgrave Road, Durban 4001.  
Mr J E Emmett to P O Box 49, Pinetown 3600.  
Mr W J Hopkins to Provincial Building Services, Private Bag X9041, Pietermaritzburg 3200.  
Mr A D Bell to 15th Floor, Albany House West, Victoria Embankment, Durban 4001.  
Mr A W Jackson to P O Box 5048, Durban 4000.  
Mr A V Jarvis to P O Box 789, Pinetown 3600.  
Mr A M Ogilvie to P O Box 1768, Durban.  
Mr P G McCaffery to P O Box 4069, Durban 4000.  
Mr S N Tomkin to P O Box 3478, Durban 4000.  
Mr L R Pietersen to 23 Penzance Road, Glenwood, Durban 4001.  
Mr M A Jackson to P O Box 1768, Durban 4000.  
Mr L R Williams to P O Box 1648, Durban 4000.  
Mr F J Beeslaar, Suite 1201, 385 Smith Street,

Durban.

Mr D E J Watkins to P O Box 6, Winkelspruit 4125.  
Mr J T Hoal to 45 Riebeeck, 208 Cowey Road, Berea, Durban.  
Mr D M Hall to Oliver Cottage, Goose Green, Gullane, East Lothian, Scotland, UK.  
Mr N D Hayes-Hill to P O Box 38, Ladysmith 3370.  
Mr M Dibb, 90 Davenport Road, Glenwood, Durban, 4001.  
Mr B J Becker, 2 Bank Street, Margate, P O Box 1207, Margate.  
Mr J A Cameron, 312 Poynton House, Gardiner Street, Durban, 4001.  
Mr P G Peck, P O Box 613 Umtata.  
Mr P F Pretorius, 14 Davidson Crescent, Malvern, Queensburgh, 4093.  
**CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP**  
Mr M J Schroder transferred from CPI to NPI address: 79 Drake Road, Durban, 4001.

### CHANGE IN NAME OF PRACTICE

Powers Powers & Partners has changed its name to Margoles, Goodwin, Dukes Inc., the directors and associates remain virtually the same with Brian Walters the permanent representative of the firm in Durban.

### NEW MEMBERS

Mr G T Jacques (Ordinary) ZAI House, 245 North Ridge Road, Durban.  
Mr L K Jooste, 140 Umbilo Road, Umbilo, Durban, 4001.  
Mr A P Winters, c/o Stauch Vorster, P O Box 3720, Durban, 4000.

### TRANSFERS IN CLASS

Professor L T Croft - ordinary to retired.

### DECEASED

Mr W H T Llewellyn

## JOHNSON MURRAY ARCHITECTS NEW OFFICES

The decision to relocate our offices from 320 West Street to the suburbs was taken after much site and soul searching. What clinched it for us was the opportunity to build and work in our own example of Architecture; as a growing practice we felt that our best advert would be our own building.

The site between BDG's first building, and a park, held the potential of creating a true "Office Park" situation. The lawns of the park were taken right up to the ground floor window cills and the studio opens directly onto the park, creating an internal working environment that communicates directly with nature.

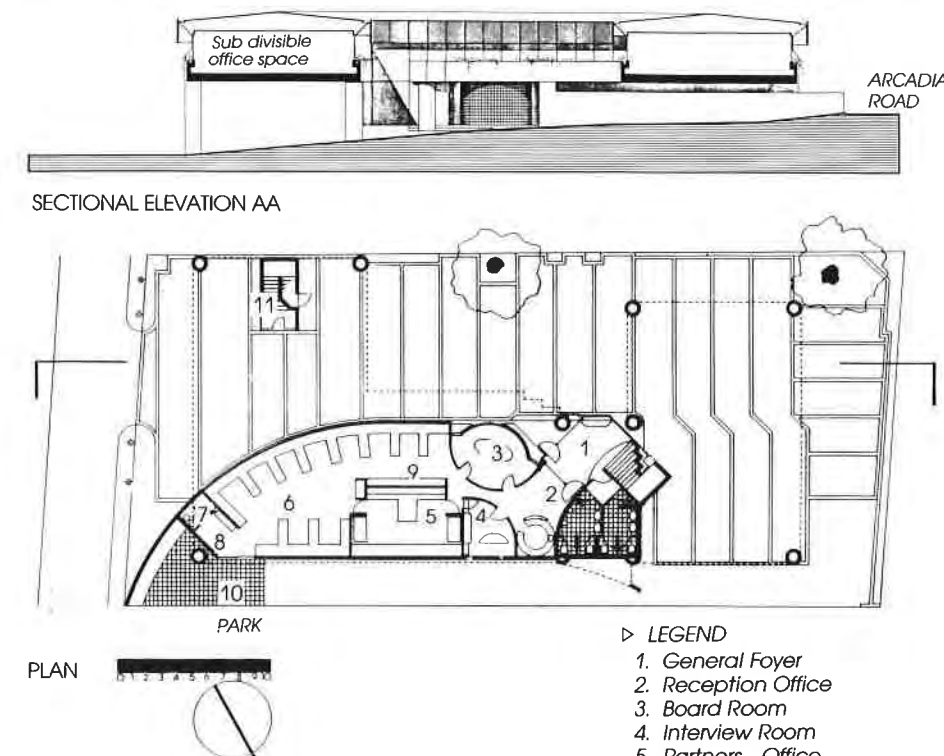
On-site parking was a priority both in terms of the town planning requirements and our needs. In order to develop the site to the full, within a two storey height restriction, the majority of the space was raised to a first floor level allowing the ground below to be used for parking and to permit the feeling of space to flow from the park under and around the building.

The first floor slab is treated as a bridging element supported only at its corners by large oversized circular columns that celebrate and define the corners. The horizontal band of the first floor is softened by the use of an integral perimeter planter. The glazing above sits over as semi-transparent bands that blend with the sky in their reflections of trees and clouds.

The ground floor contains our office. The reception leads off a double volume entrance foyer. The interior treatment of the reception combines the use of bold architectural forms with traditional materials like marble and oak panelling to create a more humanised modern atmosphere. Off the reception is the oval shaped boardroom with its full height curved glass block wall. Opposite is a small interview room that leads to the partners' office. The two partners work together in a shared office and have found this to work well, and steady communication via "eavesdropping" keeps both aware of each others day to day developments of their various projects. The draughting area is arranged in a curved arc of compact built-in work stations. Each station has its own flat layout shelves for everyday drawing storage, as well as standardised colour co-ordinated drawer units and accessories.

The question CBD Architects often ask is will they still be seen to be part of the market place if they relocate offices out of the CBD into the suburbs? Our own experience has proved to be a positive step forward in all aspects especially in terms of staff productivity and job satisfaction as well as practice esteem and growth, and hopefully this will have an impact on the quality of our future work.

Brian Johnson, Andy Murray

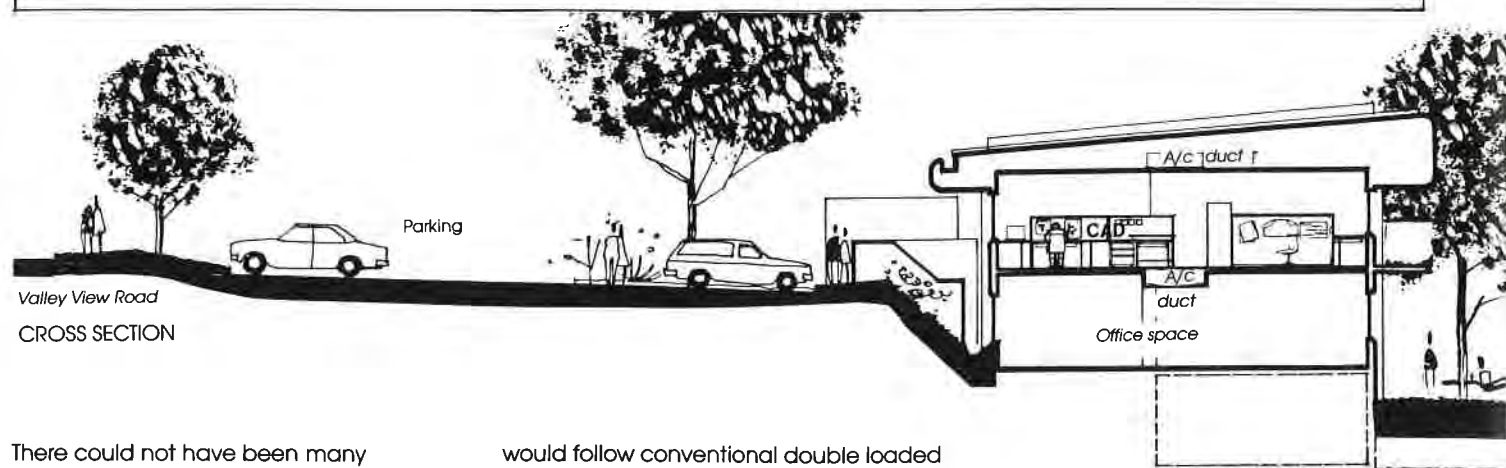


PHOTOS  
Park Elevation  
Corner Detail  
Drawing Office  
Entrance





# McLAREN ALCOCK BEDFORD + PARTNERS NEW OFFICES



There could not have been many architectural practices which had thought of decentralising when we first found offices in Overport Drive on Durban's Berea in 1966. As our practice expanded and as other professional firms moved onto the Berea and built or found their own offices, it was logical that perhaps one day we would either negotiate to purchase the building in which we were tenants amongst others, or perhaps develop our own office building.

The negotiations having fallen through in the seventies, and with suitable sites for exclusive professional office block development on the Berea having become a scarce commodity, we were indeed lucky to have chanced upon the minimum site requirement already with such special consent zoning applied for and granted - in Valley View Road.

Although initially thought to be on the wrong side of North Ridge Road, the magnificent trees, steep slope, handsome elevated and panoramic views across the Umgeni through the trees, and an ideal north/south orientation persuaded us that the 400 m drive westwards from Ridge Road down to Puntan's Hill, was inconsequential to the working environment such a site could offer. Besides, situated at the point where the main and readily accessible North Ridge Road turned towards the sea and Burman Bush, the problems of staff, visitors and clients getting to the property would be minimal. Similarly, our own access to other major roads, freeways, the ring road, downtown, the City Engineer's Department, Westville, Pinetown, the North or South coasts, Virginia and Louis Botha Airports, regional shopping centres, and so on, was not really problematical either.

In December 1981, following a quickly executed feasibility study, an offer to purchase at a most reasonable price was made, and accepted.

The following February, sketch plans were commenced in earnest. Noting the dilemma some of our colleagues had found themselves in when they endeavoured to sell their modern open plan studio type office building on the Berea, we, from a re-sale point of view at the outset, decided that our building

would follow conventional double loaded corridor system planning criteria, within which our offices would be planned on a predominantly open plan arrangement as we had always functioned.

With escalating building costs and high bond rates, it also became clear, as we had always suspected, that in order to build the optimum floor area as the site would conveniently accommodate without major earthworks (but not optimum in terms of PAR or coverage requirements), other tenants and other participating shareholders would have to be sought. This in turn meant that although we were providing our own offices, we were also relinquishing our rights to a certain extent of controlling our own destiny in the project, since, in order to entice participating shareholders, the project also had to show a satisfactory return on capital investment.

Neither the acquisition of tenants, nor participating shareholders in a Company formed for developing the property, proved a problem.

Three professional firms (lawyers, quantity surveyors, electrical consultants) of which two are participating shareholders, are accommodated with us in an initial two storied development which is entirely bond free and on which a bond can now be raised to complete the anticipated future development (in terms of optimising PAR and coverage). This is currently under consideration and envisages a building slightly smaller in scale and area placed lower down the slope on the site, but with similar finishes and identical features.

Like the present building, each tenant will have his own entrance and tea kitchen, and could share the toilet and airconditioning facilities per floor as is the case in the present building.

As many feathered friends have become part and parcel of our existence since occupation in March 1983, not a tree will be moved in this venture. At the same time, the aesthetic handling of the proposed new structure will be in the same idiom as our present building - that is, not overtly over-powering in scale to the residential community surrounding us, or to the park and childrens' playfields adjoining us.

Keith Alcock



East Elevation

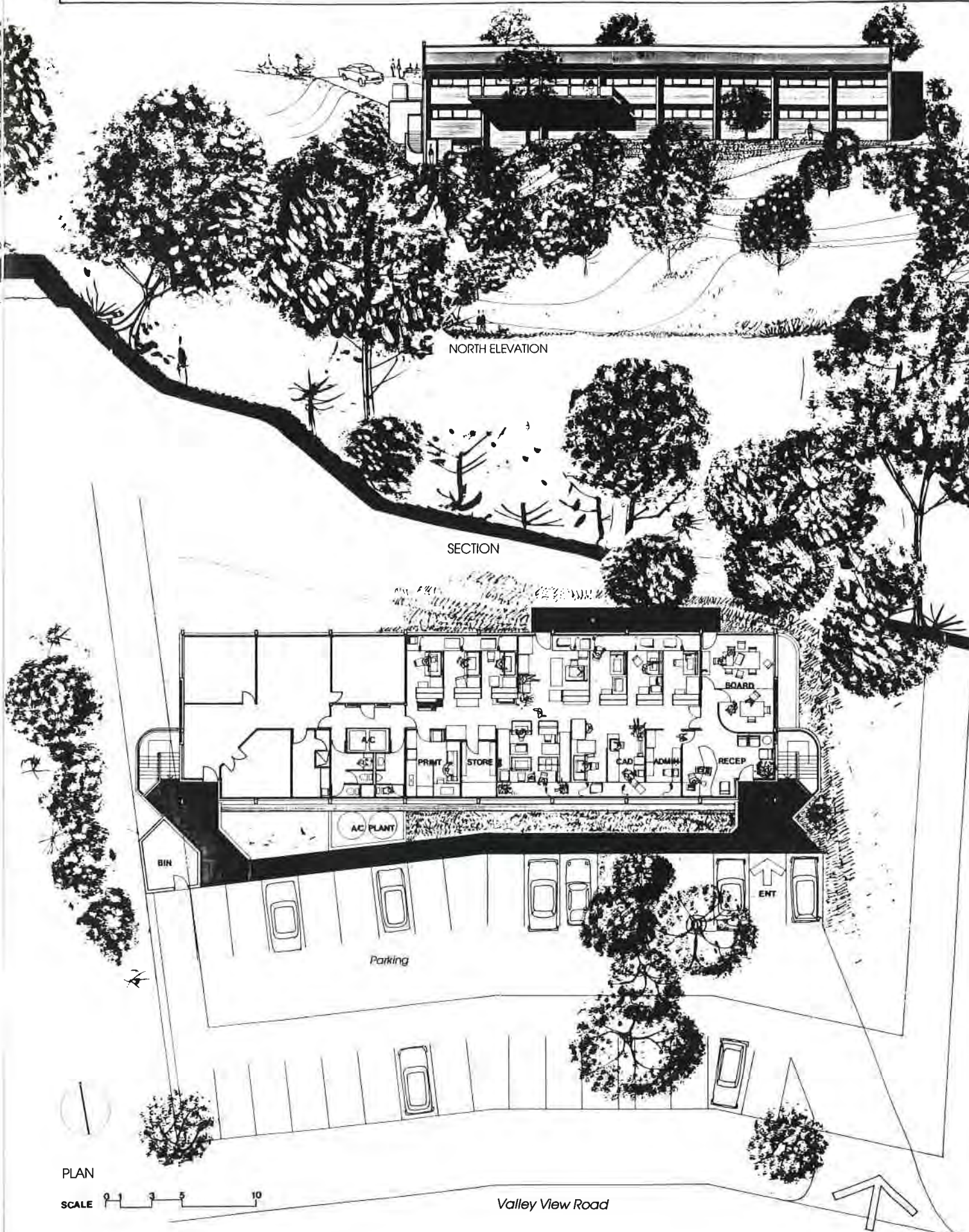


North Elevation



Valley View Road Elevation

# McLAREN ALCOCK BEDFORD + PARTNERS NEW OFFICES





# GERAGHTY – LITTLE – McCAFFERY REFURBISHED OFFICES

Robin, Peter, and myself form the members of a small practice. We believe that with a personal approach we can achieve our clients' requirements efficiently and professionally while at the same time fulfilling our own architectural ideals. We believe we have a friendly enjoyable working environment and as such regard our practice as something personal. As we are all closely involved in the development world we are aware of the benefits of freehold over leasehold in property.

Further, when looking ahead for security and stability it became evident that one of our objectives should be to secure ourselves with a home for our practice. We were renting offices in the centre of town and examined the relevant costs of buying small office blocks in town, or a house in the nearby suburbs. We still cannot decide whether it is better to be in town or decentralised.

At that time, there were no available buildings or sites to enable us to produce or build and/or refurbish offices within our budget. We also had ideals for the character of our future offices to somehow reflect our approach and feeling for buildings. Eventually it became evident, that there must have been other professionals in a similar predicament. When the Art Centre came onto the market it appeared to be somewhat of a white elephant.

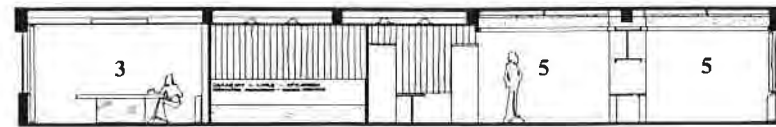
Rents were such that a building such as this one had reached the end of its economic life. The popular development approach of a lick of paint and increasing the rents would still not make it viable. However, if users could be owners and end users, individual floors of the building would make ideal homes for practices such as ours. Hopefully if allied professionals could move into the building, which was centrally placed in an area of prospective growth and with parking close by, the Art Centre could house the full development team.

Thus, with the help of some financial partners, we formed a company, put ourselves into debt up to the hilt and purchased the building.

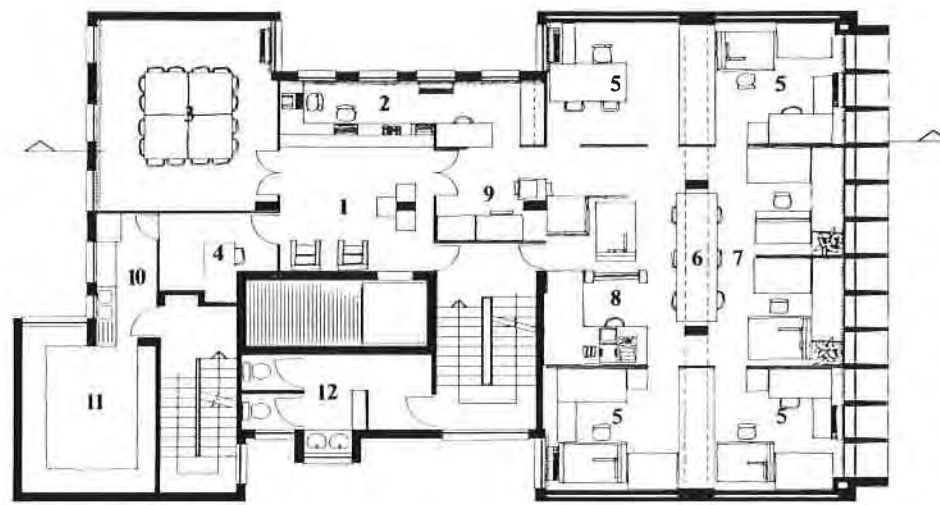
The expected flood of prospective buyers was somewhat in line with the current weather conditions of that time. A huge drought with water rationing.

As the expected profits were to help finance our venture, it became evident that marketing the building was necessary. We gutted one of the floors to demonstrate more visually to prospective buyers the size and potential of the floors. Still no rain. Eventually we realised that only once a floor had been partially renovated, could the potential be seen. Ideally, the gutting of the entire building and partial renovation would have been the best solution. However, our financial dams were well below the acceptable waterline.

Hence one of the approaches to the design of our offices was to create a space that could show the size of the

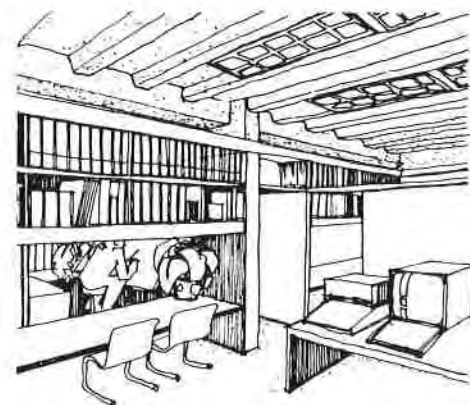


SECTION



PLAN 0 1 2

- KEY TO ROOMS
1. Reception Foyer
  2. Reception/Secretary
  3. Boardroom
  4. Interview Room
  5. Office
  6. Library
  7. Drawing Office
  8. Computer
  9. Filing Cabinets
  10. Tea Kitchen
  11. Store
  12. WC



Library/Drawing Office



office floor and its potential, whilst still being affordable. Primarily however we wanted to create a working environment that was organised, simple and suitable to our particular office attitude, thus we located four offices around a drawing office to maintain personal contact. The existing structure determined that a reference library could also be located centrally with overhead filing running through the entire space, helping to define the four offices.

It was in many ways an ideal exercise for us in terms of both development and in the realisation of our ideals. We take our projects personally, in which way we believe we can both give and receive the most satisfaction to our clients and to ourselves. In this case we are most satisfied both as clients and architects.

Ian Little

# WYNAND CLAASSEN & SMUTS-ERASMUS REFURBISHED OFFICES

## INLEIDING

Na 'n baie klein begin in Mei 1981 toe ek die groot sprong in die diepwater gemaak het, het Tommy hom by my aangesluit in Maart 1982. Beide van ons was voorheen aan 'n groot firma verbonde en as 'n jong firma moes ons albei van heelvoor af leer swem, maar ons glo baie sterk daaraan dat om jou eie argitektoniese ideale tot die maksimum te kan uitleef, is persoonlike kontak van die uiterste belang; nie net in ontwerp nie, maar ook ten opsigte van ons kliënte se behoeftes, en ons personeel. Werkomstandighede moet dus aangenaam, persoonlik en huislik wees.

## REDES VIR VERANDERING

Soos enige jong firma is dit egter bykans onmoontlik om met 'n eie perseel te begin, en ons het voorheen kantore gehuur reg in die middestad. As gevolg van verskeie faktore kon ons egter nie al ons argitektoniese ideale in hierdie beperkte omgewing uitleef nie.

In die huidige moeilike ekonomiese tye, het ons nie alleen die finansiële voordeel besef om ons eie kantore te besit nie, maar dit was ook 'n hartsbegeerte om "ons eie ding te doen". Hoë huurgeld met geen beheer oor stygings nie; ongekende parkeer-probleme; kongestie van sentrale besigheidsdistrik; beperking van binneversiering; hoë koste verbonde aan skermure met beperkings van uitbreiding; was alles bepalende faktore.

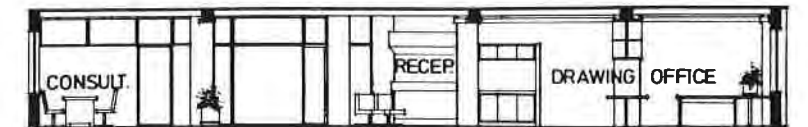
The opportunity arrived in March 1984 to own premises in the Art Centre, in Albany Grove (off Smith Street) and leave all these distracting factors behind. It is not only from an investment point of view, but we now have parking across the road (for staff and clients); are in a quieter and more homely environment, but still within close proximity to the CBD; have our own free choice of interior decor; and we could lease all (or alteration work and furnishings) as a tax relief.

Through experience and research we are convinced that it is more beneficial for a young firm to be as close to the city centre as possible, as opposed to decentralising.

## OUR APPROACH

In our free choice of interior decor and furnishings, colour and fittings, we opted for a more modern architectural approach, not only as a presentation of our practice's image to the public, but also to reflect our own personal approach to design. Our desire for a pleasant working environment was achieved by creating an airy atmosphere in a limited space, by using tinted glass extensively in public and semi-private zones.

The existing floor of "pigeon-hole" type offices was completely gutted to create an open plan type atmosphere where practical. We have done away with the suspended ceiling system to create a greater volume and the visual flow is maintained by stopping the unframed glazing just short of the acoustically treated ceiling.

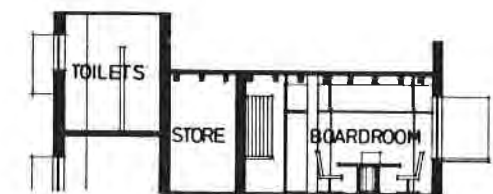


SECTION AA



OFFICE FLOOR LAYOUT

0 1 2 3 4 5 6  
METRES



SECTION BB

## Planning

The general concept was that seldom utilized spaces are proportionally reduced in size to facilitate optimum utilization of high-use spaces, such as reception, foyer and waiting areas as opposed to boardroom, offices and drawing office.

Further interest is obtained with the use of petal pink painted hessian as wall paper, grey mottled carpeting, pearl grey formica worktops and maroon cloth upholstered chairs. The variations to this theme are the pastel lilac to the partners' office walls and the beige carpet in the drawing office.

Wynand Claassen

Drawing Office



# MAURICE DIBB & ASSOCIATES RECYCLED OFFICES

Our practice occupied premises in the C.B.D. for 15 years. The suite was comfortable and conveniently situated relative to traffic routes. It had two parking bays in the basement and was reasonably well serviced with lifts and air-conditioning. The latter, of course, was limited to normal office hours and the need to observe the preferential hours of bulk tariff rates.

About two years ago we needed to expand and were obliged to rent space which, while being on the same floor, was not connected with the main office. This, together with the concern that rentals will be continuously escalated by large corporate owners, prompted us to begin searching for alternative accommodation, preferably de-centralised, and able to be purchased outright.

We found most estate agents to be not very helpful, as they were unable to understand the needs of an architectural practice and seemed reluctant to do the research necessary to locate properties which were correctly zoned in terms of the Town Planning Regulations.

During June 1983, with just under a year of our existing lease left, Colin found a pair of semi-detached 4-bedroom houses in Davenport Road opposite the existing Old Mutual Davenport Centre. They were owned by an elderly lady who was finding their upkeep onerous and wanted to move to a small flat. She was having difficulty selling them due to the amount of maintenance required to put them into good order, and the fact that she had to find an owner prepared to buy both units or go through the process of opening a sectional title register.

The building was erected in 1904 as a speculative development to accommodate lower to middle class families. It has been largely untouched since its original construction. The only modifications made were related to maintenance, such as the re-roofing and the alteration to the front verandah when the original timberwork had fallen into disrepair. The back verandahs had also been enclosed and the kitchen fireplaces modified.

We consulted the City Engineer's Town Planning Department who indicated that the property stood a reasonable chance of being rezoned, so after establishing that our accommodation could be planned within the 250 sq.m. available, we purchased the property for R130 000. A building society was willing to provide a commercial bond which, although carrying a high rate of interest, provided us with a source of finance.

We prepared a sketch of the minor alterations we intended making to the property and a brochure on the restoration required. After an initial setback requiring representation to the City Council Planning Committee, we were granted rezoning for the property.

We applied to the City Engineer during November 1983 for building approval but ran foul of the Department of Community



DAVENPORT ROAD ELEVATION

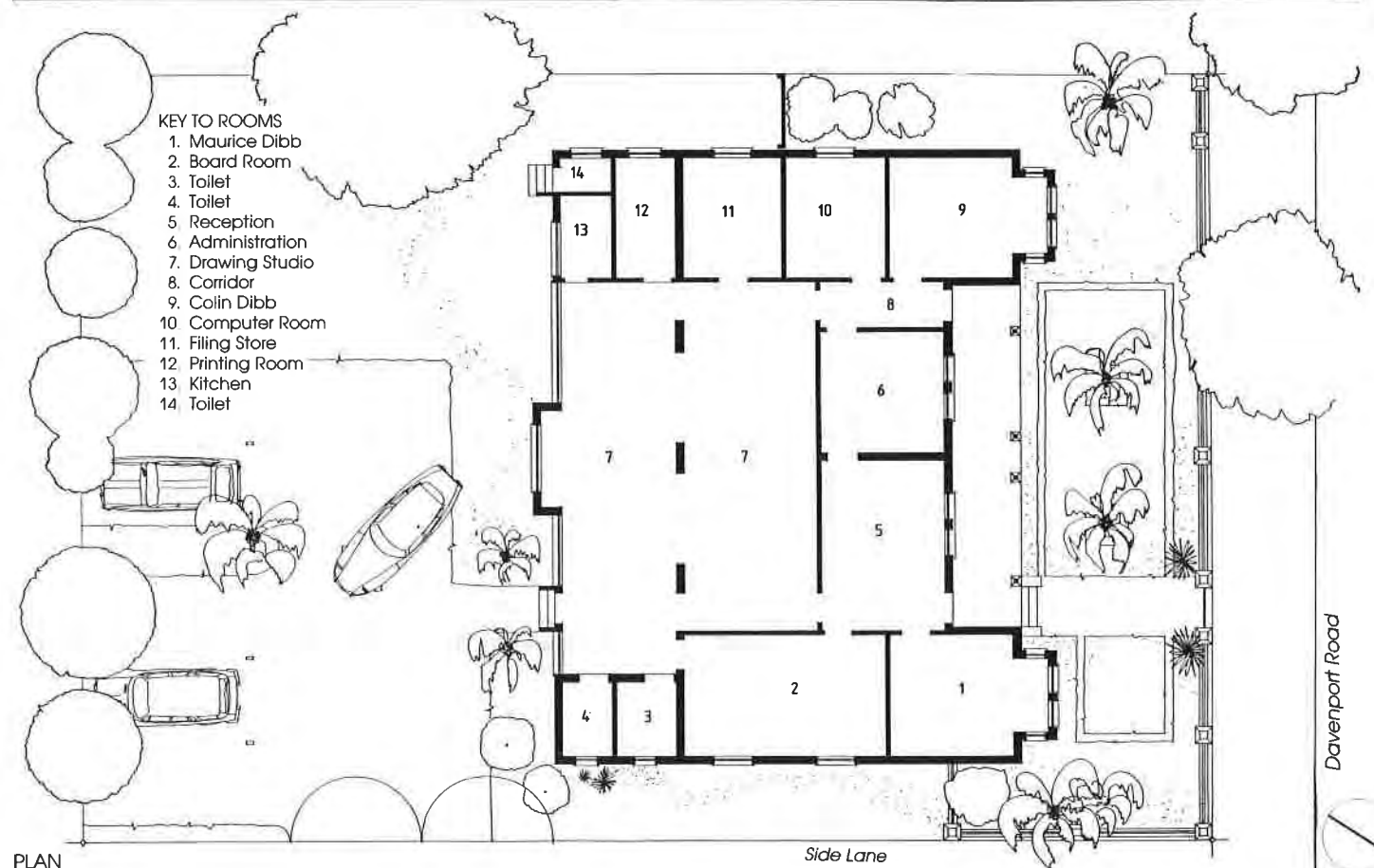


Rear Elevation



Davenport Road Elevation

# MAURICE DIBB & ASSOCIATES RECYCLED OFFICES



Development. They refused to grant permission for the existing domestic accommodation to be converted into offices.

The problem continued until August 1984, the application being turned down each month until we persuaded the members of the relevant committee to meet us on site. The Minister's delegate, who is a Social Science Professor, and two of his committee members, met Colin and me on site to discuss our problem. It soon became evident that all our sophisticated estimates, feasibility studies and carefully worded arguments had not been understood at all. It was only when we talked to them, explaining that no-one could afford to spend the large amount of money necessary to renovate the building, as the return from domestic rentals would invite financial suicide, that they seemed to understand. Furthermore, we emphasised our intention to restore the building and to try and keep it as an example of a Victorian suburban domestic building. Our arguments were obviously persuasive as we received a favourable answer a few days later.

These delays have cost us double rental for an extra year. We set about implementing our alteration and restoration plans and moved into the property during the latter part of November 1984.

The alterations involved very little structural work. We had to remove three walls in the main part of the house and

modify the rear section, removing the kitchens and enclosed verandahs. We also considered it necessary to plan the building in a way that did not limit its use to that of an architectural studio. This was just in case it may be necessary to sell it to some other business in the future.

We were lucky enough to have the co-operation of a local aluminium firm who made the pre-coated aluminium roof sheeting to the profile of the existing corrugated iron. This was very important to retain the character of the building and, we believe, will provide it with a roof for the rest of its useful life.

The old ceilings were not uniform throughout the building, and had been badly damaged by the leaking roof, so we installed a modern suspended ceiling at the same level to retain the character of the rooms. We retained all the existing doors and re-used moulded skirtings and architraves. We serviced all the vertical sliding windows and reglazed the front of the building with laminated glass to help with the noise problem from the passing traffic. We installed a central ducted air-conditioning system and, because the building will be unoccupied for periods, a sophisticated security system.

Because the building was built for the lower to middle income bracket, it did not contain some of the more beautiful finishes of the Victorian buildings higher on the Durban Berea. For this reason, we were unable to expose any of the existing timber both on the doors or floors. We

opted for paint and carpet tiling.

We have done research and have re-constructed the timber columns which originally supported the front verandah, and intend having the fretwork made as soon as possible. We have also re-constructed the front garden wall and done research to determine a type of metal balustrade and gate to suit the building. The landscaping of the garden has been done, bearing in mind some of the planting and formality one would associate with a building of this era.

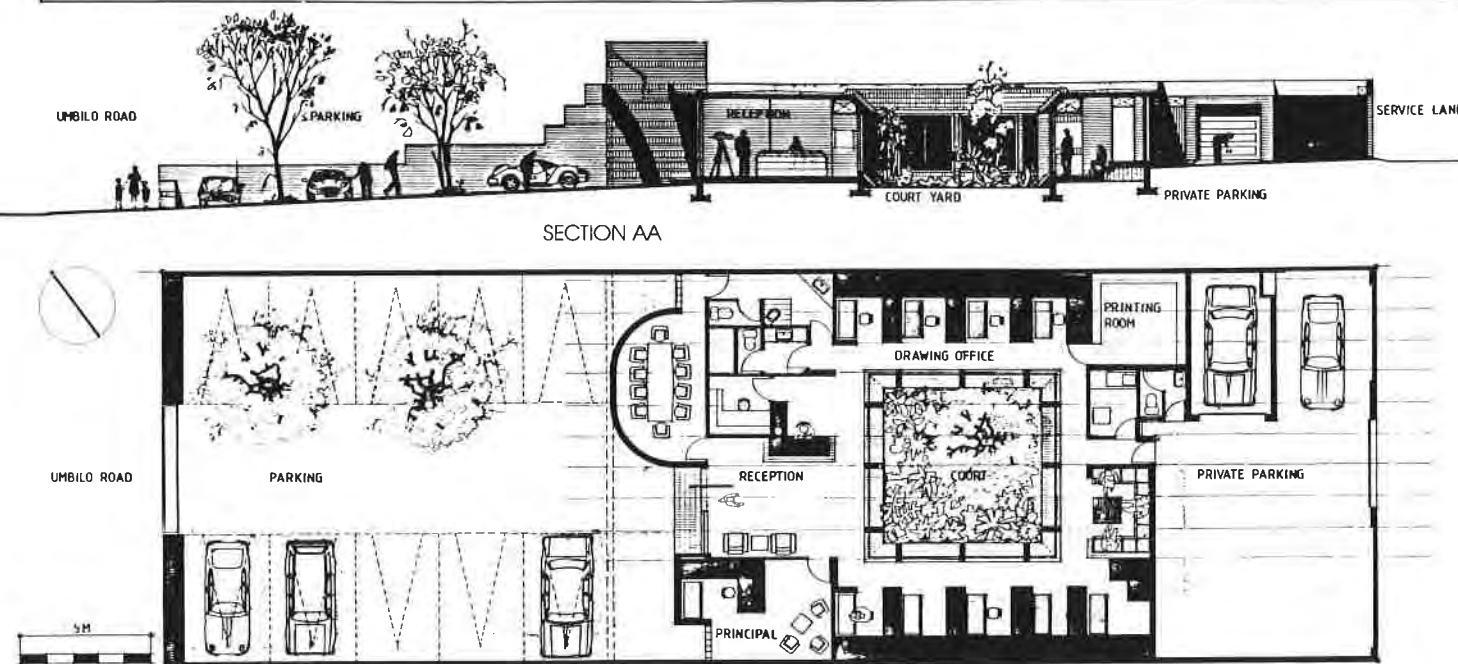
For anyone planning to restore an old building, it is important to note that even though one is careful to try and pre-plan the work, and estimate its cost, there are always factors which are revealed only during the course of the work and which inevitably escalate the costs. We estimate that, together with the furnishings we require, we will have spent approximately R100 000 on the building by the time we are satisfied that it is complete.

The building is proving to be most comfortable, well situated, and very convenient for an architectural practice. We particularly enjoy being able to leave our air-conditioning running whenever we need to work late during summer, not having to bow to times imposed on us by a building owner. We hope in the long run that our location will encourage students to call on us as we enjoy having a link with the School of Architecture.

Maurice Dibb



# H.J. NEL NEW OFFICE



## SITE:

The office is situated within the periphery of Durban's C.B.D. in an area which is currently being upgraded. The site is surrounded by various light industries, flats, wholesale and retail outlets. The move away from the centre was motivated by escalating office rentals, problems of traffic congestion and lack of parking. Ease of vehicular access and the efficiency of modern day communication systems justified the move away from the established business centre.

## DESIGN CONCEPT:

The building is set back, designed around an open central courtyard, turning its back on the noise of Umbulo Road and semi-industrial surroundings, creating a pleasant introverted open office working environment around a lushly planted atrium. The scale of the building was kept low in order to tie in with the surrounding buildings.

Die keuse van boumateriale wat aangewend is in die gebou, was gemaak om 'n lae instandhouding met tyd te verseker. Daar word hoofsaaklik gebruik gemaak van gemoduleerde siersteenwerk en ru-beton wat 'n sterk kontras form met die binne afwerkings van muur tot muur tapete, helder geel gekleurde deure van vloer tot wit gepleisterde plafon en met die verskillende skakerings van groen plantegroei in die sentrale binnehof.

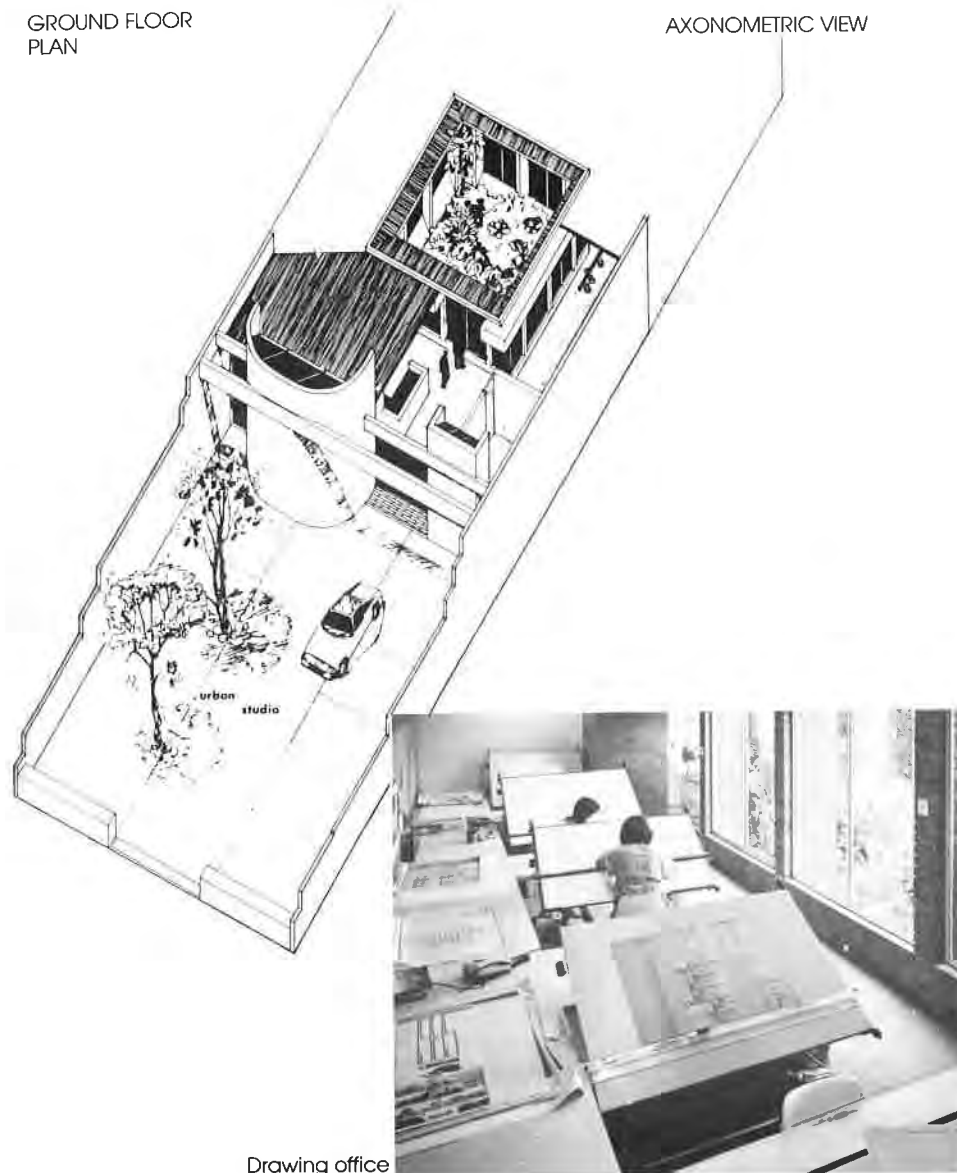
The use of rooflighting in the boardroom provides subtle lighting to the curved walls and emphasises the texture of the brickwork.

Die gebou sal hopenlik as voorbeeld dien vir Kliente van hoe die gebruik van eenvoudige boumateriale, natuurlike beligting en plantegroei 'n aangename bestaans en werksatmosfeer kan skep.

Hennie Nel

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

AXONOMETRIC VIEW



Drawing office

## COMMENT

### CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

By looking at the environments in which architects work, one could gain insight into the changes that have taken place in architectural thinking in the past fifteen years. The journals nowadays often illustrate historic cottages, disused barns, mills and even barges converted into architects' offices.

In South Africa more and more architects are moving into unusual environments. The functionalist rationalist thinking of the 30's made it almost obligatory to work from a neat "functional" office in the CBD. Not many firms are to be found in the CBD's of the three main centres of architectural activity in South Africa today.

In Johannesburg at least three studios are to be found in obsolete church buildings (a new religion of environmentalism?) Many of us have admired Gawie Fagan's recycled warehouse or gaped at Hallen Theron's Spanish extravaganza. Paul Mikula once worked from an exotic hotel (ex brothel?) in Durban. He even tried to buy a synagogue in Johannesburg. (From the ridiculous to the sublime?) More commonly we see architects working from altered houses, old shops, renovated historical buildings and studios attached to their homes.

What does it tell us about changes in thinking? Certainly the old one-dimensional, functional way of thinking about cities - the root of zoning - has fallen into disrepute. There is a move back to richer multifunctional cities with a rediscovering of the pleasures that interaction makes possible. Less traffic or parking problems, a leisurely swim before lunch at home, a walk to the shops in, for example, Melville (a suburban area with perhaps more architects per square metre than any other place in S.A.), enjoying the song of a bird and many other little joys are being discovered. Choices in lifestyle become possible.

Looking at the offices/studios illustrated in this issue, one is aware of tremendous diversity. Modern architecture has become more free. There is a confidence in the handling of language and building type that was unknown in the pioneer phase of the modern movement. Architects are able to plan environments which reflect the style of their management (compare the office of Wynand Claassen and Smuts-Erasmus with that of Geraghty-Little-McCaffery for the same floorplan) as well as to project a specific image. Think of the difference between Maurice Dibb's renovated Victorian office and Johnson Murray's slick workplace on the Berea. What is more, the public starts identifying these structures with their occupants. Interestingly enough, the new environments architects work in influence the quality of the designs conceived in them. Combined with the above is the new awareness by the architects of their inter-relatedness with the environment. The former BDG building is probably the most appropriate Durban building I know - which relates it to the lovely Victorian structures in the city and to Norman Eaton's tree-like bank. Similarly each and everyone of the six structures shown, illustrates an awareness of the physical, natural and urban conditions of its surroundings. The emphasis, however, seems to be on visual integration, (H.J. Nel and Maclaren Alcock, Bedford and Partners), while little effort is made to resolve climatic problems in a natural way. There used to be a strong tradition for the latter until fairly recently.

An awareness of economic realities in the 80's has had an impact on architects. On the one hand there is the need to own your own premises to cushion the ups and downs of the economy. On the other hand, the world-wide tendency for architects to refurbish and recycle buildings, as an important portion of their creative work, rather than bulldozing and rebuilding, is much in evidence. The insight of what can be gained by combining or layering of the old and the new is giving depth to the city.

The interest of architects in sociology and psychology has led to a better understanding of how man lives and interacts with other humans. Furthermore, there is an interest in working together in community with groups from other disciplines, which must lead to much needed intellectual integration. The choice of sites outside the CBD, but within easy reach of the pleasures of urban life, bear witness to the urban dependence of many architects, as much as the sophisticated way in which they are beginning to relate to surrounding institutions.

For the careful observer much can be learnt from the fingerprints of the six architects whose works are illustrated. They say a lot about what they think about themselves, their clients, their city and their environment. The diversity of the work mirror the flux world architecture is in, at present. This observer senses a healthy creativity which will hopefully grow into greater maturity in the next few years.

Bannie Britz

Architect Bannie Britz and his partner Michael Scholes practice from a disused church in Richmond, Johannesburg.  
Editor.

Re: Issue 4 - 84

LISTING BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST IN PIETERMARITZBURG.

Dear Wally,

I read your Editorial with great interest. The purpose of cataloguing the buildings of a city or town is an essential pre-requisite for all aspects of city planning. A catalogue could as easily be a tool for radical replanning and rebuilding as it could be for conservation, depending entirely on the objectives of the authorities. Its great merit lies in its comprehensiveness and objectivity. Confuse it with evaluation, and one inevitably runs into problems of subjective opinion and differences of attitude. Despite this risk, evaluation needs to be made if the object is to conserve - all one advises is that the process of cataloguing not be confused with evaluation if the value of the one function is not to be rejected because of fear of the second. I found Alec Duigan's notes enlightening.

Pietermaritzburg's recent amendments to its Town Planning Scheme in respect of listing and bulk transfer are most progressive and a great example for laggard cities like Cape Town. Bulk transfer has been considered for Cape Town, but as bulk is not often an onerous problem, the success of bulk transfer as a compensatory device for owners of listed or declared buildings would not really help.

South Africa will come of age in conservation policy when the community is prepared to assume responsibility for its cost and stops expecting individual owners to carry the entire cost.

Your journal is always a pithy pleasure to read.

Kind regards,  
Jack Barnett,  
Cape Town.

Dear Dr Peters,

I wish to express my thanks for the copies of the Journal of your Institute which have been sent me over the past few years. As a city councillor I have found much of interest and help in them. Thank you very much indeed.

I have now retired from the City Council and hence I suggest that my name be removed from your mailing list.

Thanking you once again.

Yours faithfully,

H. Lundie,  
Pietermaritzburg.