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NPIA

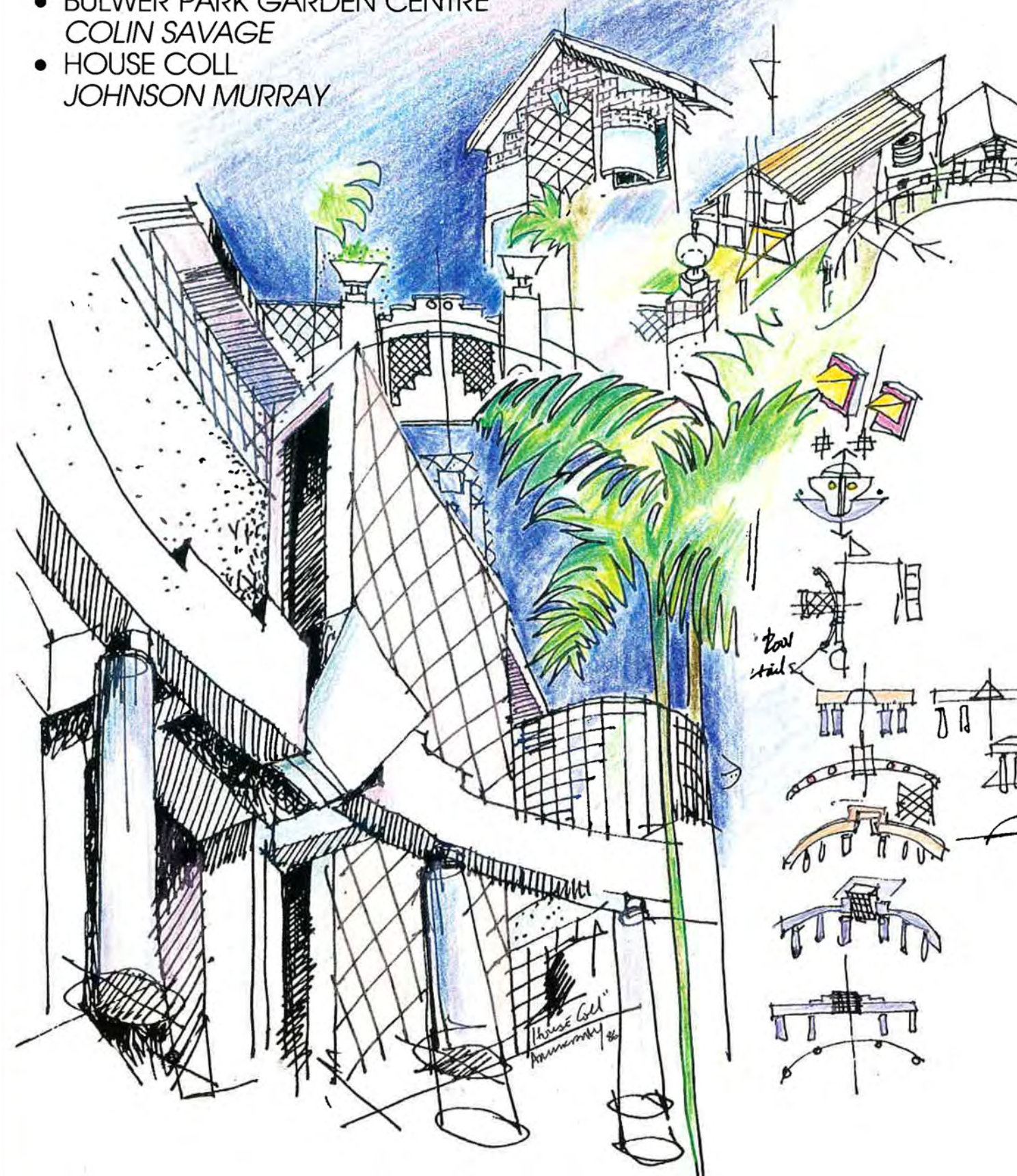
JOURNAL OF THE NATAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
TYDSKRIF VAN DIE NATALSE PROVINSIALE INSTITUUT VAN ARGITEKTE

ISSN 0379-9304 ISSUE 3/1987 • VOLUME 12

UITGAWE 3/1987 • JAARGANG 12

RE-MODELLING BUILDINGS

- BULWER PARK GARDEN CENTRE
COLIN SAVAGE
- HOUSE COLL
JOHNSON MURRAY



EDITORIAL COMMENT

MAKING MORE OUT OF LESS

Re-modelling is the term used to describe changes made to a building without any particular regard to its history or original form. Michelangelo re-modelled the Palace of the Senators on Capitoline Hill, Palladio re-modelled the Basilica in Vicenza. There is ample precedent for a project in re-modelling or transformation — the greatest of our profession were involved in such work. In fact, any critics may in time concede the positive contributions of re-modelled buildings such as those presented in this issue.

It was a pleasure to observe Andrew Murray's House Coll and Colin Savage's Bulwer Park Garden Centre taking shape, the one a transformation on a classical theme, the other involving a change of use. But observation did not occur without some questioning.

When Colin began by changing the faceted roof at the corner of Bulwer and Davenport Roads to a hipped roof, and the pavement canopy became decorated with pediments, I imagined that a clipped-on post-modernism would result. Likewise, why should the inoffensive '50s House Coll be dragged into the '80s by being fronted with a colonnade and oversized keystone? or the gable end be faced with staggered tiling? After all, the Moderns under whose influence I was trained, spent most of their time promoting a "less is more" approach.

But, as the buildings progressed the inventive and piquant additions — seen in the accompanying illustrations — began to ring true. And though fountains, stepped windows, trellises, and arch and stagger motifs are devices used by Terry Farrell, Charles Moore, Michael Graves and others, it is largely in the attention to detail that the enthusiasm of Colin and Andrew shows through.

Andrew has succeeded in setting an example of refined post-modernism and Colin of a novel hybrid, fun to use and look at. In addition, the public gets two stylish landmarks until they are overtaken by weathering, a change in ownership or another *remodelling*!

Walter Peters, Editor

OBITUARY

BILL VOS 1931-1987



Francis "Bill" Vos died on Sunday the 9th of August, aged 56. He had driven home after having had a ride on his bicycle, and suffered a coronary in his car. Some of us had spent the previous Friday afternoon with him at a meeting of the Provincial Committee on which he had served for some six years. He was then his usual immaculate and enthusiastic self with no hint of ill health.

Since his death I have spent some time assisting the executor in Bill's office on the 35th floor of 101 Victoria Embankment, with surely the best view in Durban of the harbour and the Yacht Basin where Bill spent many hours sailing his Finn.

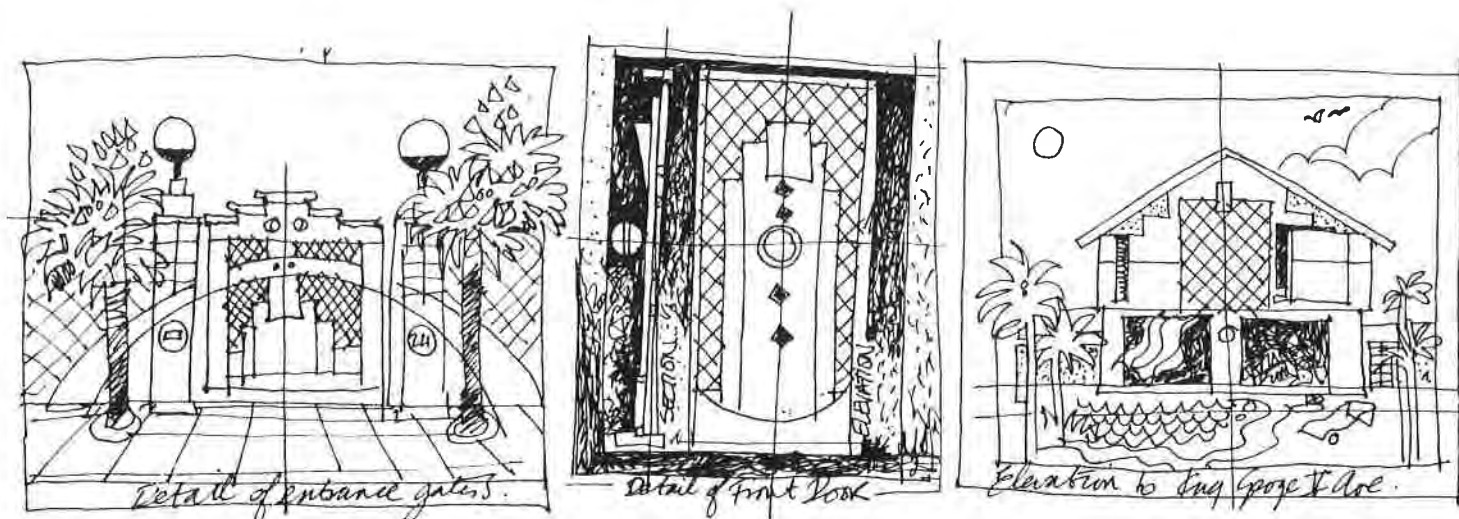
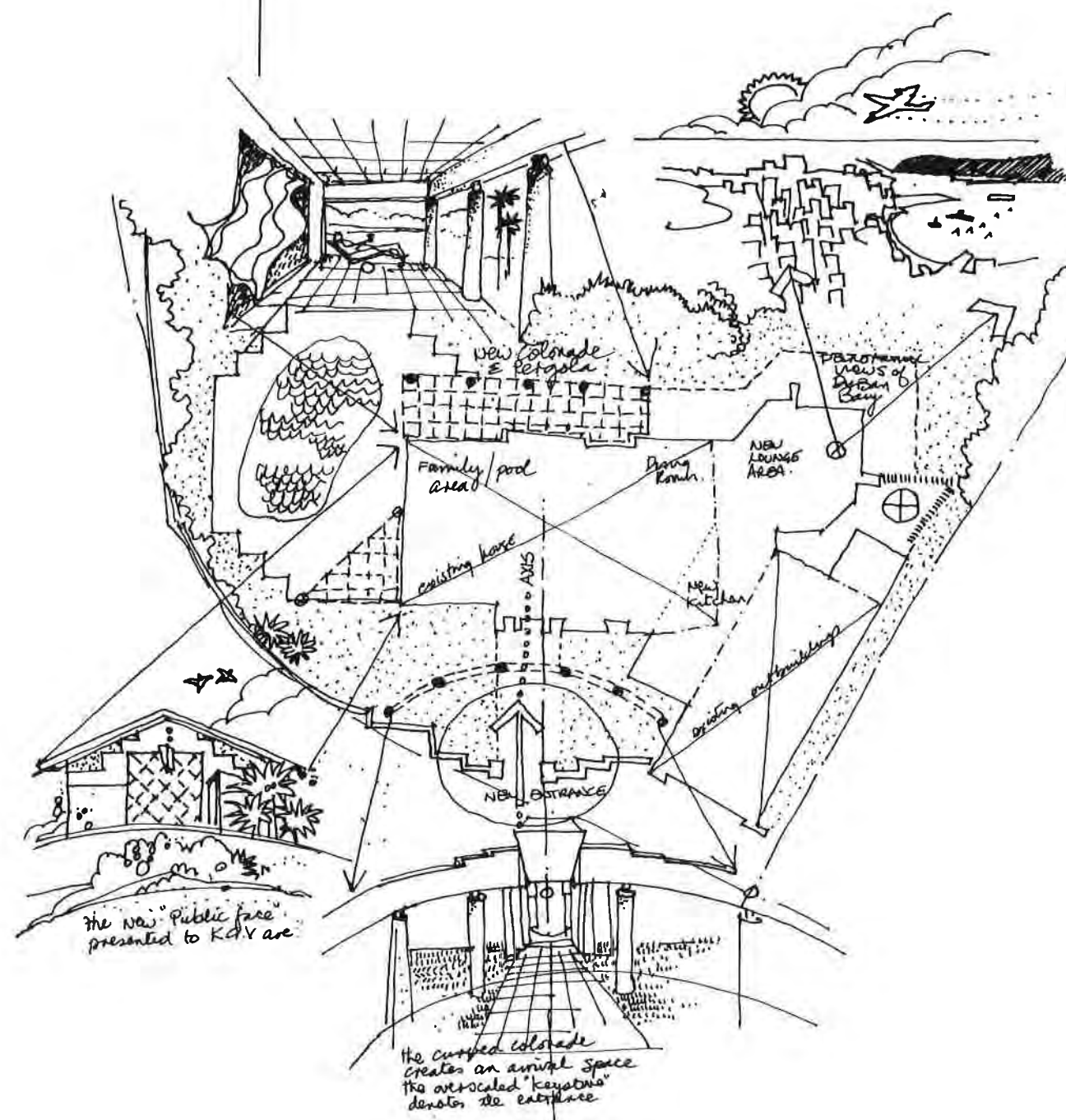
Next to his drawing board is a beautifully constructed model of his house. Having survived the calamity of having his home completely destroyed, Bill was in the midst of reconstruction to new designs. The shell of the house is complete. He was very proud of it and excited about it, and with the sadness of the family left behind there is also the sadness of the unfinished realization of what was obviously his dream.

Going through his papers one realizes how meticulous he was, and is impressed by the enormous amount of work he got through almost single-handedly. His continued interest in the art of architecture after 30 years in the profession and his awareness of his responsibilities to the profession are evident in everything he has recorded and drawn. Our thoughts are with his wife Adrienne and his children.

Derek Sherlock

HOUSE COLL

JOHNSON MURRAY



The original Coll House built in the early 50's was typical of much of the architecture in Durban of that period in that its bland, austere functionalism represented an emaciated modernism, lacking in charm and character. Ironically, this was an ideal situation — unconstrained by its lack of architectural merit, it nevertheless presented clean cubic forms with a neat pitched roof around which to work and metamorphose into a full and complete architectural statement of the 80's.

Internal replanning

In order to place the final development in context, one must examine the original house and identify the issues that were of concern to the client and architect in terms of location, layout and use of rooms, handling of external space and architectural expression.

The major problem with the siting of the house was that the view of the City and Durban Harbour had been unkindly obliterated with the subsequent erection of a two storey house directly in front of the living areas. In order to take advantage of the spectacular views, it was necessary to add a two storey extension on the southern side that would also satisfy the present owner's additional requirements of a separate formal lounge and enlarged kitchen. The old lounge and dining room were combined into a large "L" shaped family room with sliding doors leading on to the north facing pool area. A colonnaded verandah was added to the east face and a pergola to the north

in order to provide protected outdoor living areas as transitional spaces.

The existing kitchen was widened and converted into the dining room to complement the formal lounge, while a new extended kitchen, pantry and laundry were squeezed into the awkward junction of the garage and the main house. The first floor was similarly modified by moving the main ensuite bedroom to above the new lounge and converting the old main bedroom into two smaller bedrooms. The entire interior was stripped and refinished with new skirtings, architraves, doors, tiling, sanware and lighting.

External treatment: the public realm

The Coll House presents two public "faces" to the outside world. The position of the house at the confluence of three roads, on the crown of a hill, required that it act as a strong visual focus. This visual and aesthetic responsibility to the greater urban landscape generated an approach to the design of the facades. The treatment, utilising textures, applied grids and certain classical elements, attempts to create a grander, perhaps more formal, language that relates to the distant view as well as imparting a feeling of scale and order at a pedestrian level that works to humanize and enrich the otherwise austere forms.

Place of arrival: entering the private realm

The entrance space plays an important role in identifying the actual entrance on the boundary and then introducing the visitor to the experience of the house

by way of an entrance court. The space has been defined by a softly curved colonnade that has been playfully split on the main axis to the front door with a wedge shaped, deco keystone that focuses the axis and sets up a centrality towards which the space is drawn.

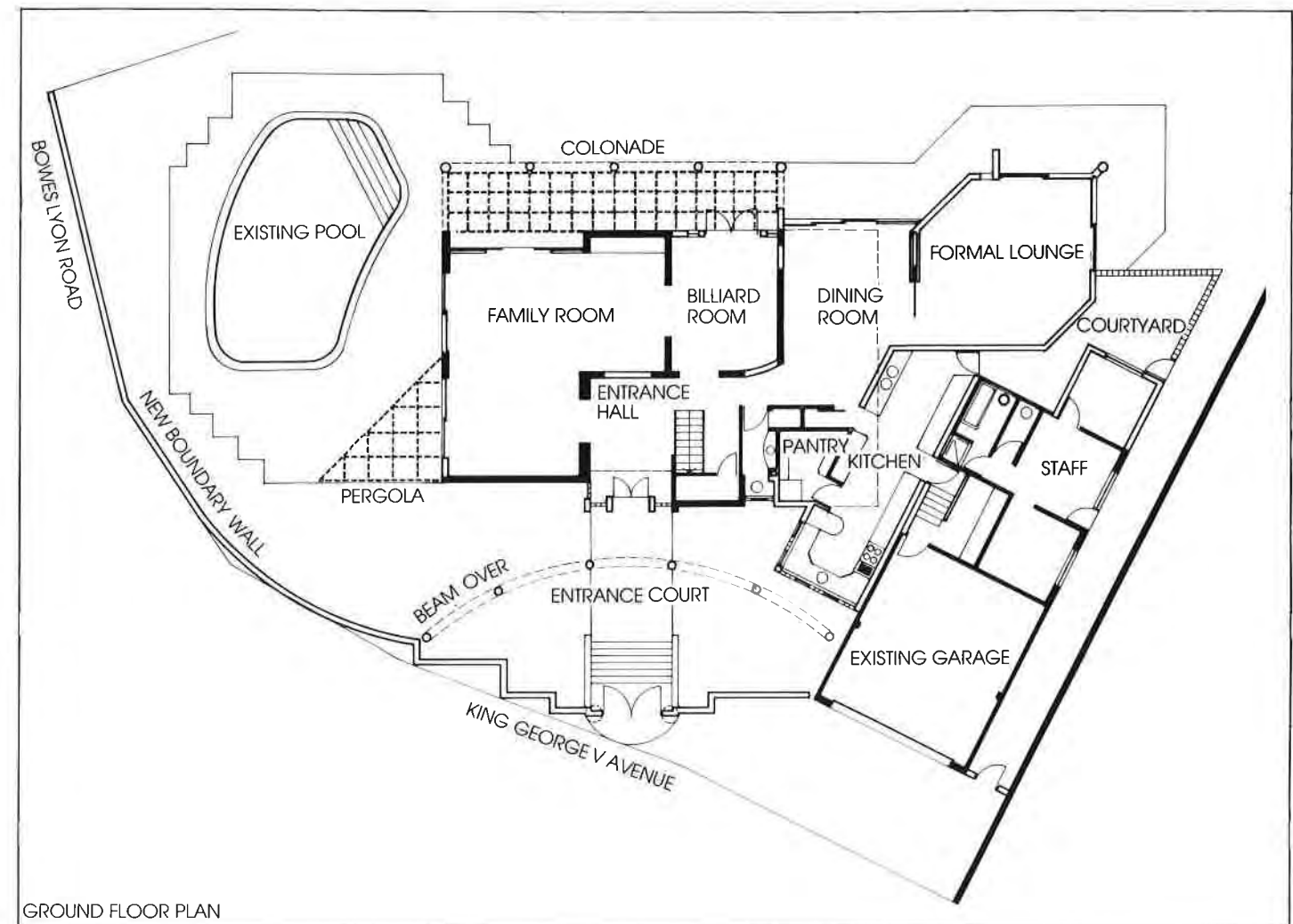
The colonnade performs another function, that of acting as a visual foil to the elements of disharmony created by the oblique angles of road, house and existing garage, in that the curved form becomes the dominant element with its receptive sweeping gesture that holds the various disparate forms together.

Concluding thoughts

To completely re-model one's house with detached objectivity is not for the sentimental and, of course, not always appropriate.

The advantages can be summarised briefly in terms of : firstly, prime location — the scarcity of good central sites for development is a problem; secondly, the economic advantages of using an existing structure must be recognised, particularly the time saved in not having to come out of the ground; thirdly, the discipline of working within and around a given framework can give rise to unusual solutions with exciting juxtapositions between the old and new. However, perhaps the most important aspect of all is the achieving of a coherent totality of effect and treatment that results in a unique addition to the urban fabric.

Andrew Murray



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



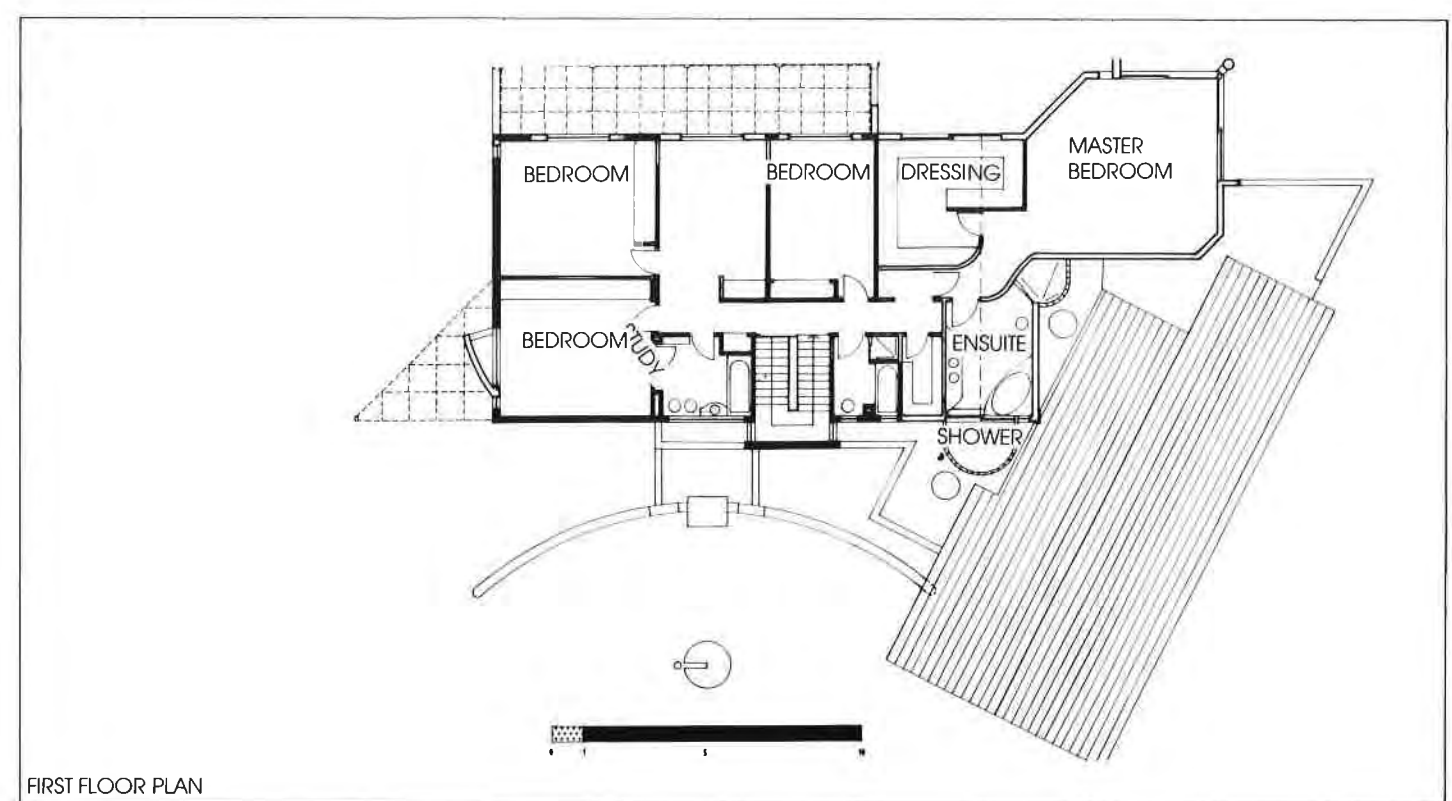
The curved beam and colonnade ties the various forms together.



The double storey extension to the south containing the new lounge with master bedroom over.



View of the entrance hall. A large square white tile was used throughout to enhance the quality of light and to set off the owner's collection of antique furniture.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

BULWER PARK GARDEN CENTRE

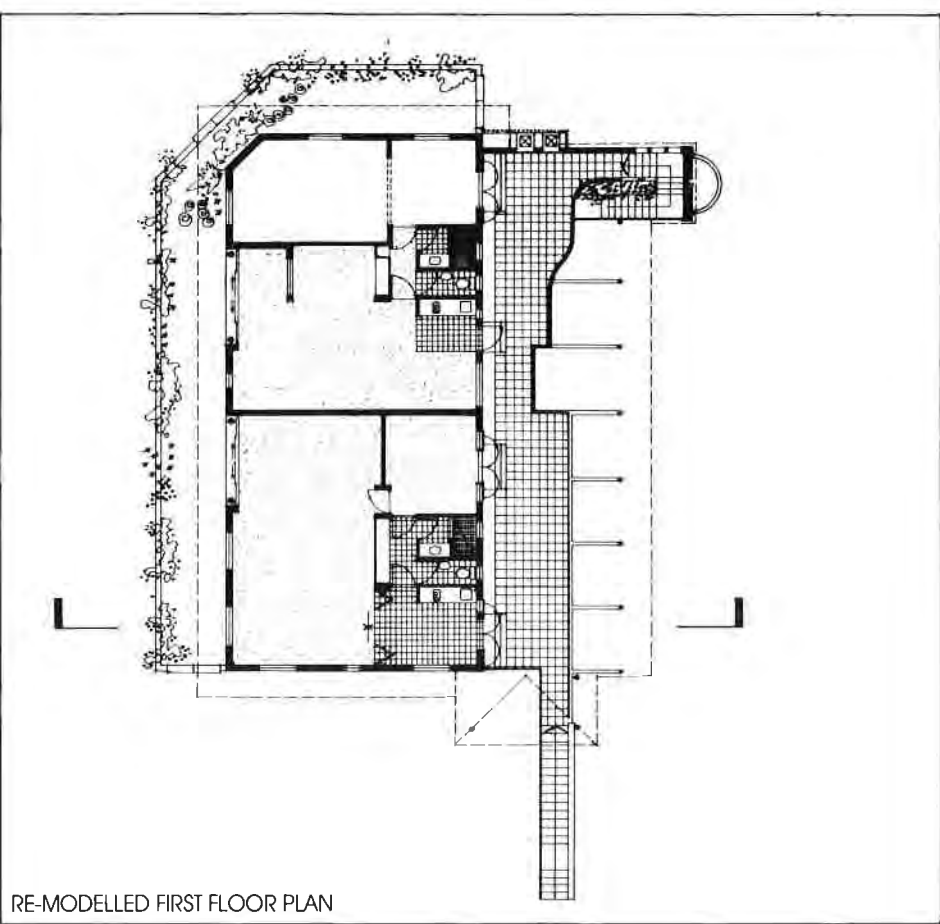
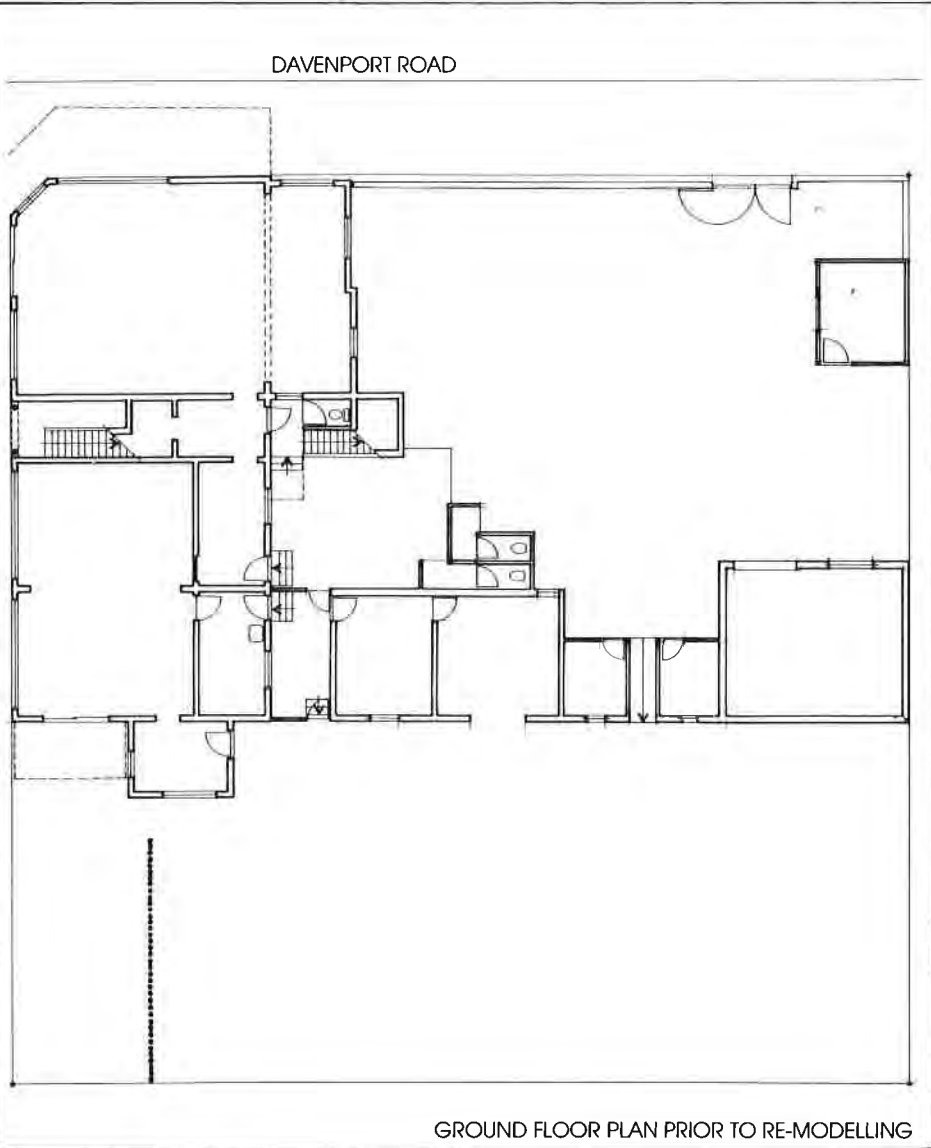
COLIN SAVAGE

Background
Early in 1985, I was approached by Jeremy Byrd and Wilfred Grey, partners in *Tropical Plants and Gardens*, a business that, over the years, had established a reputation for selling excellent quality plants from various locations. Their idea, at that stage, was to create a new image for their company — an image that would reflect their style of business both through a new corporate profile and their buildings.
The initial commission involved their Sherwood site which was a large piece of leased land on Jan Smuts Highway. The location was ideal, sitting between the Berea and Westville residential areas.

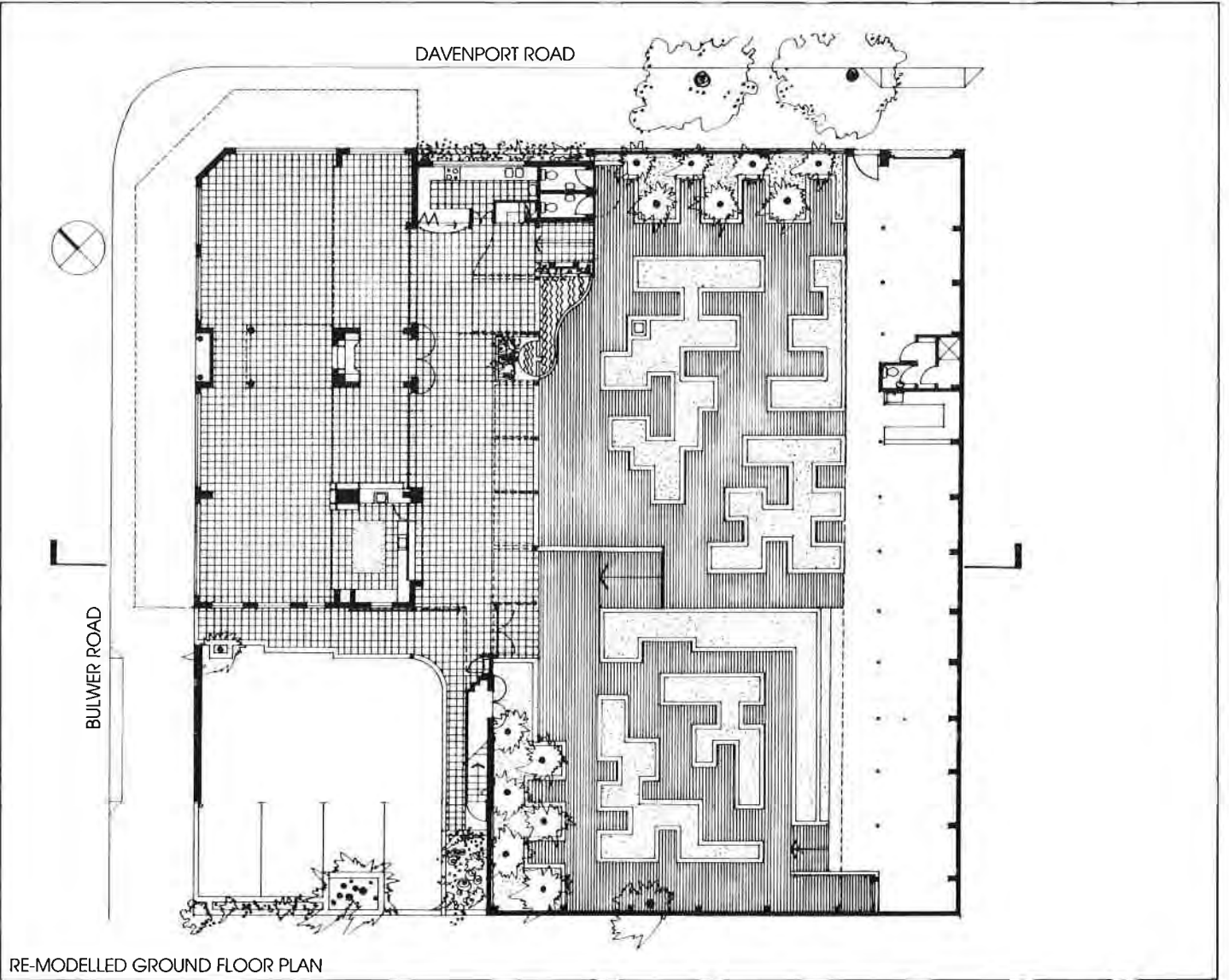
Translation of the images for the Sherwood site.
Indonesian images to which the clients aspired.



The corner of Bulwer and Davenport Roads before remodelling. Note the faceted hip and straight canopy.
The same view now: hipped roof without facet and pediments added to the canopy.



Client: Tropical Plants & Gardens (Pty) Ltd
Structural Engineer: L S C Brunette & Partners
Quantity Surveyors: Randall & MacLennan
Advertising: Stable Graphics
Contractors: Standard Builders



BULWER PARK GARDEN CENTRE

COLIN SAVAGE

Photos by Peter Newman

The brief

My clients had travelled extensively in the East while collecting plant stock for their nurseries. These visits had exposed them to the delight of Indonesian architecture. The brief was basically a pile of photographs and slides of buildings which had impressed them — buildings which were somewhat foreign to our culture but appropriate to their ideas of a place for the sale of their plants.

Concept

From the clients' brief I was slightly apprehensive about translating directly these very beautiful and rich buildings into something that could be built with local materials and skills. Very quickly I realised that their dreams were not totally foreign to our context. The excitement of the commission then took hold. I had been working on another commission in the area which was in concept a Verandah house. It has

always bothered me that our Natal Colonial heritage had used verandahs in both domestic and commercial architecture, but these clear architectural elements coping with our environment had been lost, forgotten, or maybe jettisoned in later years for cost reasons. The concept began to grow a concept which was a pavilion or a gatehouse which formed the entry to the wealth of plants beyond. A verandah would then provide generosity of spatial interaction between the interior and exterior — a feeling that engenders the customers' comfort, a particular concern of the clients.

Priorities

Very soon after this commission began, the clients' priorities changed. Their property in Bulwer Road was sadly in need of improvements and expansion. My advice to them was to delay until the Sherwood sketch design had been completed, so that concepts developed

could then mature without the restrictions of an existing building. These ideas then could be translated into the Bulwer Road refurbishment maintaining continuity of corporate identity.

The existing building

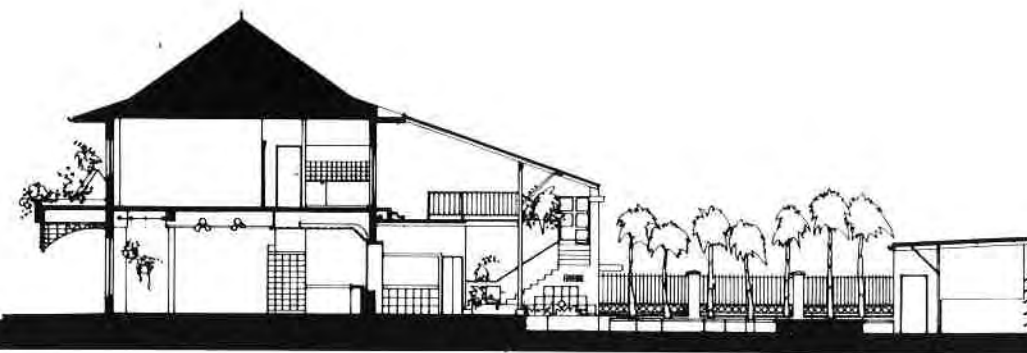
On the corner of Bulwer and Davenport Road, opposite Bulwer Park, was a 1920's brick-under-tile double storey building. On the ground floor was a small "corner cafe" and on the south was the original garden shop in a converted butcher's shop. Part of the site was used as plant storage as well as for various coldrooms and outbuildings. The first floor had two flats with a central access stairway from the pavement entrance foyer, and a rear fire escape.

The building was in a sad state of repair but basically of solid construction.

The garden centre

The idea was to completely gut the ground floor and convert it into one large shop. The old "back yard" was to

BULWER ROAD



SECTION THROUGH RE-MODELLED BUILDING

become a plant storage garden. The linkage between shop, garden and parking area to the south was to form a wide, covered verandah extending the full length of the building. At the end of this verandah is a small tea kitchen serving directly on to this space. This was for use by staff or for serving customers with light refreshments while seated next to the fish pond and overlooking the garden, beyond — a welcome breather for confused customers.

The first floor flats were to be converted into multi-use spaces, but with the options being kept open for use as flats. Access was then from the upper storey balcony with staircases at either end. The roof was the dominant element in the Sherwood sketch designs and I decided to keep the idea going in Bulwer Road. Eaves were then raised and extended to keep this idea constant. It so happens that the adjacent public toilets in Bulwer Park

have a similar architectural language.

Plants as merchandise

The display of plant material to passing traffic and to the individual customer was an important factor in developing the "see through" shop conversion and the planting displays. The up-and-over panoramic door along the verandah ensured total transparency between shop interior and garden beyond.

The shape of plant displays was to maximise exposure with ease of movement but without supermarket rigidity. The height was designed to accommodate varying plant heights and ease of transport for customers' trolleys. Specialist areas such as books, seeds and hanging plants were designed to expose customers to a whole variety of gardening experiences.

Corporate image

In the early stages, the services of our

advertising agency were engaged to develop the corporate identity in conjunction with the building. After many ideas and discussions an Eastern market was used as the central graphic. The names of the various centres were developed around the image and location of the various sites. Colours were then chosen to suit both the graphics and building, both complementing each other as an integrated whole.

The building process

The clients insisted that the existing shop continue business seven days a week. The successful tenderers, Standard Builders, are to be complimented on the way they respected this condition of contract. Apart from minor disruptions and dusty plants, the building process was achieved without inconvenience to the clients or customers.

Colin Savage



View from Davenport Road showing new wrought iron fencing; staggered "winbloks" and a part of the airy double-volumed veranda/access balcony.

Detail of fountain and fluvial shaped pond.



Entrance from the parking area off Bulwer Road.



The interior book display fixture by the architect.



Detail of cresting added to ridge.

Translucent lean-to roof with exposed first floor structure extending beyond the line of the access balcony.

● ISAA mid-career Design Seminar

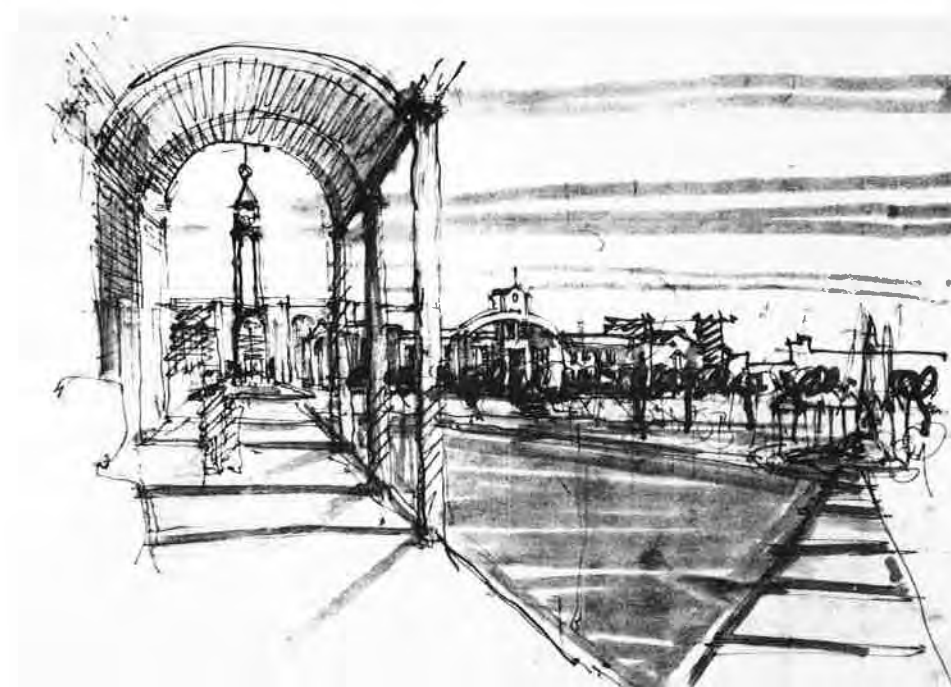
An ISAA Design Seminar was held at the Natal School of Architecture 3-5 July 1987 under the direction of Hans Hallen and Ron Kirby. The Seminar, which focused on Urban Design Proposals within the Durban Centrum and the provision for an art gallery, a library and a natural science museum, was introduced by the Chief Town Planner, Garth Williamson. After a site inspection, the 21 participants worked in groups, their progress being stimulated by lectures given by Lance Smith, Wally Peters, and the artist Clive van den Berg. The seminar concluded with a summing-up on the third day, attended by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Beach and City Steering Committee, Councillors Neil McLennan and Garvin Bernstein.

Illustration by one of the participants showing a proposed development along the northern edge of the site

● Retirement at the Natal School of Architecture

A retirement ceremony for Senior Lecturer, Jessie Birss was held at the Natal School of Architecture on Friday, 26 June, 1987. Before presenting Jessie with a parting gift, Dr Errol Haarhoff, Head of the School, thanked her for her past contribution to teaching in the school, and especially for her constant vigilance over the maintenance of rigorous standards. In her response, Jessie thanked her colleagues and students for their support and friendship, and concluded with a plea to continue with "the struggle" — to persuade the students to spell "accommodate" with two c's and two m's!

Jessie Birss admiring the gift of books from her colleagues and students, with, at right, Dr Errol Haarhoff, Head of the Natal School.



● Baxter Theatre ten years old

Corobrik have agreed to a sponsorship of R10 000 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Baxter Theatre, the busiest on the African continent which has presented over 10 000 performances to more than 3 million patrons over the past decade.

The dignified face brick building, designed by well known Cape Town architect Jack Barnett, has been described as an architectural triumph and one of the first buildings of its kind in the world.

"It is with pride that we associate ourselves with the Baxter Theatre, itself a project honouring all those involved in its creation," said Errol Rutherford, managing director of Toncoro. The Corobrik sponsorship will go towards the production of a special commemorative book titled "Theatre Alive".

Below: The Baxter Theatre by Jack Barnett.



● Vacancy for teaching post

Applicants are invited from suitably qualified persons for appointment to the post of:

LECTURER

Applicants should hold a degree in Architecture, offer special skills in Architectural Design, and provide evidence of professional experience in this field. Experience in teaching and/or research will be an added advantage. Application forms, further particulars of the post and conditions of service, including details of fringe benefits, are obtainable from the Personnel Section, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban, 4001 (Telephone 816-3378), with whom applications, on the prescribed form, must be lodged not later than 30 September 1987, quoting the reference D72/87.

PRODUCT NEWS

● Fastrak set to revolutionise SA building industry

A new bricklaying system, called Fastrak, is set to revolutionise the building industry in South Africa and make clay brick as economical to use as any modern industrial building system. Builders who have tried the new system of bricklaying and site control, suggested by the Fastrak system, are reporting productivity improvement of 35 to 50 percent, and resulting cost savings of up to 35 percent.

"In the past, individual bricklayers have laid between 800 and 1000 bricks per day. But with the new method, up to 1000 bricks are being laid in an hour, by teams which have been trained in the new approach," says Mr Nurcombe, national marketing manager, Toncoro.

Fastrak was developed in order to improve productivity in bricklaying.

"It was brought to our attention that a lot of subcontractors were leaving the building industry due to low profitability," says Mr Nurcombe.

"As bricklaying is a major part of building a house, it was felt that new techniques could lead to better profit margins. We joined forces with the National Association of Home Builders to study the problem. It was soon revealed that low productivity in bricklaying was one of the main problems. So we called in the National Productivity Institute," he says.

What emerged from the combined research was Fastrak, a scientific management approach to subcontract bricklaying, in which bricklayers and their assistants are divided into teams which carry out specific tasks.

Over 300 houses were built over a two year period in order to test new methods. Fastrak is particularly valuable in the low cost housing market where streamlining and efficiency are critical. In spite of large cost savings, houses can still be designed on an individual basis.

"It has been proved that the mass housing designs of yesteryear, consisting of row upon row of identical houses, are unacceptable in today's market" says Mr Nurcombe. "That is one reason why we place such importance on this breakthrough. People can be provided with houses of individual character and still stay within the contractor's budget."

Corobrik is making training programmes on the new system available to subcontractors. The programme covers such topics as planning, programming and cost and profit estimating. Workbooks are also available to builders and subcontractors. A video, demonstrating the new technique, has also been produced by the NPI. This video is available in Beta and VHS formats. Fastrak at present applies to solid wall single and double skin construction using the standard imperial brick.

According to Mr Nurcombe, the programme is being extended to incorporate cavity walling using larger building modules such as the Maxi brick and the Fastwall system, within the next few months.

Mr Nurcombe says that Corobrik considers itself very much part of the construction industry and as such takes responsibility for ensuring that the best methods are applied in the use of its products. This, he says, will also ensure continued popularity of clay masonry for all types of housing.

PRACTICE CHANGES

● Changes in Address

Adkin, A B to 112 Silverton Road, Durban.
Buck & Whitehead to Suite 509, Musgrave Centre, 115 Musgrave Road, Durban.
Hope Clark Associates to 30 Silverton Road, Durban.
Gertenbach, P C V B to Suite 509, Musgrave Centre, 115 Musgrave Road, Durban.
Jackson, M A to 26 Dudley Road, Cowies Hill.
Kerr, W M to 30 Silverton Road, Durban.
MacGarry, K I to 6008 Tower Block, Overport City, Ridge Road, Durban.
John Newton to 13 Hilldene Road, Hillcrest.
Stanbridge, J W to 1 Kloof Falls Road, Kloof.
Dibb Skordis Associates to 90 Davenport Road, Glenwood, Durban 4001.
Gourlay, Moore, Harris, Fels & Partners to 907 Newspaper House, 85 Field Street, Durban 4001.
Keith Gow & Howes to 643 Currie Road, Berea, Durban 4001.
Keith Breetzke to 90 Davenport Road, Glenwood, Durban 4001.
A Falkson to 21 Westville Centre, Westville 3630.
Colin Savage to 6008 Tower Block, Overport City, Ridge Road, Overport, Durban 4001.
J Levy to 26 Beachway, Durban North.
G J Davis to 10 Robin Street, Mt Lawley, Perth, Australia 6050.
P C Wilkinson to 41 Cedar Road, Umbilo, Durban 4001.
S V Stanley to c/o Anderson & Anderson, PO Box 911, Gaberones.
P J Ries to PO Box 9011, Umtata, Transkei.
B A Jenkins to PO Box 50056, Musgrave Road 4062.
G T Downes to 1278 Pacific Beach Drive 4, San Diego CA92109 USA.
M G Grant to 4 Portland Place, Durban North 4051.

● Changes in Partnerships, Practices etc

Kerwan and Buccellato — partnership dissolved. Pedro Buccellato at 142 Vause Road, Durban, and P Kerwan at 50 Pinedale Road, Queensburgh.
Scherer, Moull & Levick — partnership dissolved. K P Moull is now a partner in Pfeiffer, Marais & Moull at Fassifern, 35 Ridge Road, Durban.
D N Parks is now a partner in ZAI Inc, Lot 265 Rheingold Street, Melmoth, KwaZulu.
O L Pretorius has retired from the partnership of Olaf Pretorius, Smith & Poole partnership but remains as its consultant.
M Dyer will be entering into partnership with Corrie Verbaan under the title Dyer, Verbaan Associates, operating from their offices in Pietermaritzburg and Durban respectively.
R C B Bartholomew will no longer act as consultant to the practice Chick Bartholomew & Poole, Architects.
From the 1st December N du Preez will be practising on his own account as Neville du Preez, Architect, and no longer styled as Norman H Brown and Du Preez. His postal address and office addresses will remain unaltered.
U Potter has opened up a new practice and will be practising as Uwe Potter, Architect, at Suite 509, Musgrave Centre, 115 Musgrave Road, Durban 4001.
From 1st March 1987 A Falkson and A Barnard entered into partnership under the style of Falkson Barnard Architects at 5 Westville Centre, Jan Hofmeyr Road, Westville 3630.
R H Coombes, S A Hayman, P Thompson, F Tonetti and J H M Winter, formerly practising under the style of Coombes & Winter Partnership, have re-styled their practice C H T Architects.

● New Members

Mr A Gibb — Ordinary — PO Box 633, Hilton.
Mr R W Herbert — Ordinary — No 5, Sherwood Park, 115 Forty Fifth Avenue, Sherwood, Durban 4001.
Mr K W Morris — Ordinary — PO Box 315, Westville.
Mr S V Stanley — Ordinary — 16 Newstead Avenue, Glenmore, Durban.
Mr W L Nel — AnT — 10 Milton Road, Westville.
MR D N Parks — Ordinary — 22 Lonsdale Drive, Durban North 4051.
Mr J E M Barnes — Ordinary — PO Box 48171, Qualbert 4078, Natal.
Mr J G Pillay — Ordinary — c/o Seitter Boyd Architects, 245 North Ridge Road (ZAI Building), Durban 4001.
Mr G D Farrell — AnT — 12 Silvermist, 9 Dairy Road, Pietermaritzburg 3201.
Mr N C Grice — Ordinary — c/o Small, Pettit & Robson, 157 Pietermaritz Street, Pietermaritzburg 3201.
Mr R J Farren — Ordinary — 11 Holland Place, Berea, Durban 4001.
Mr P M Duigan — AnT — 7 Alamein Avenue, Kloof 3610.
Mr G D Farrell — Ordinary — PO Box 1152, Pietermaritzburg 3200.
Mr K R Froise — AnT — 28 Colesburg, 36 Sixth Avenue, Durban 4001.
Mr W A Bush — Ordinary — PO Box 570, Kloof.

● Changes in Membership

Mr J A Church — from NPI to CPI.
Mr G J H Combrink — from TPI to NPI — 6 Pinewood, 326 South Ridge Road, Durban.
Mr M A Nakhoda — from CPI to NPI — PO Box 249, Stanger.
Mr P G S Peck — from NPI to Border.
Mr P I Tasker — from NPI to TPI.
Mr J H M Winter — from NPI to CPI.
Mr D R Webster — from TPI to NPI — PO Box 408, Westville 3600.
Mr E J Bain — from NPI to TPI.
Mr F Fisher (retired) — from TPI to NPI — PO Box 163, Umdloti 4350.

● Changes in Class

Mr M Hallen — from AnT to Ordinary.
Mr J A Smillie — formerly AnT, now Ordinary — c/o 245 North Ridge Road, Durban.
Mr F D Spencer — formerly AnT, now Ordinary — c/o Suite 1, Arcadia Park, Arcadia Road, Durban.
Mr A Lloyd Spencer — formerly Ordinary, now Retired.
Mr W M Gow — formerly Ordinary, now Retired.
Mr P T Fourie — formerly Ordinary, now Retired.
Mr A C McDonald — Retired.

● Resignations

Mr P B D Jones

● NPIA AGM

The annual general meeting of the NPIA will be held at the Durban Country Club on Thursday, 22 October 1987 beginning at 12 noon. At this meeting the committee for 1988/89 will be elected.