



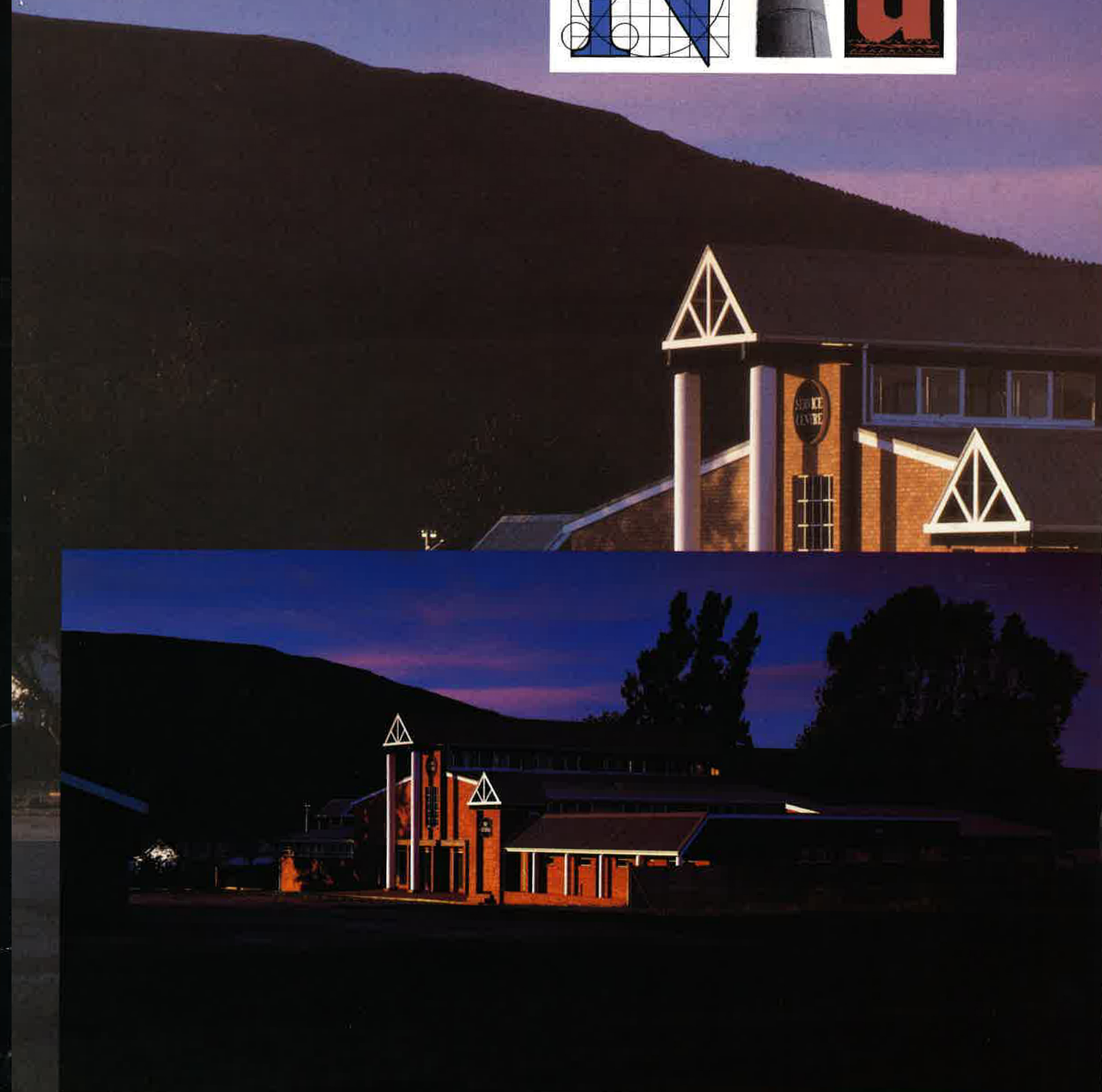
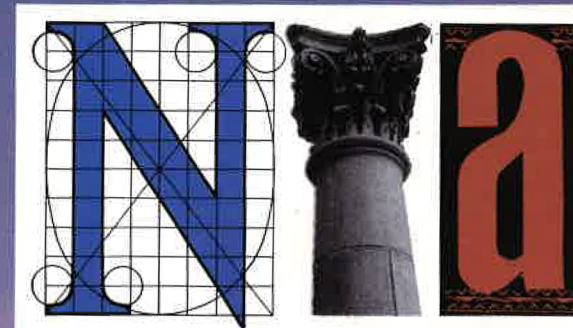
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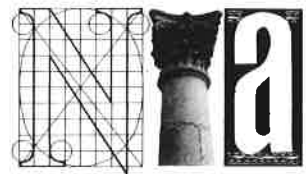
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Community Buildings in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal



NIA JOURNAL • ISSUE 4/1994 • VOLUME 19 • ISSN 0379-9301

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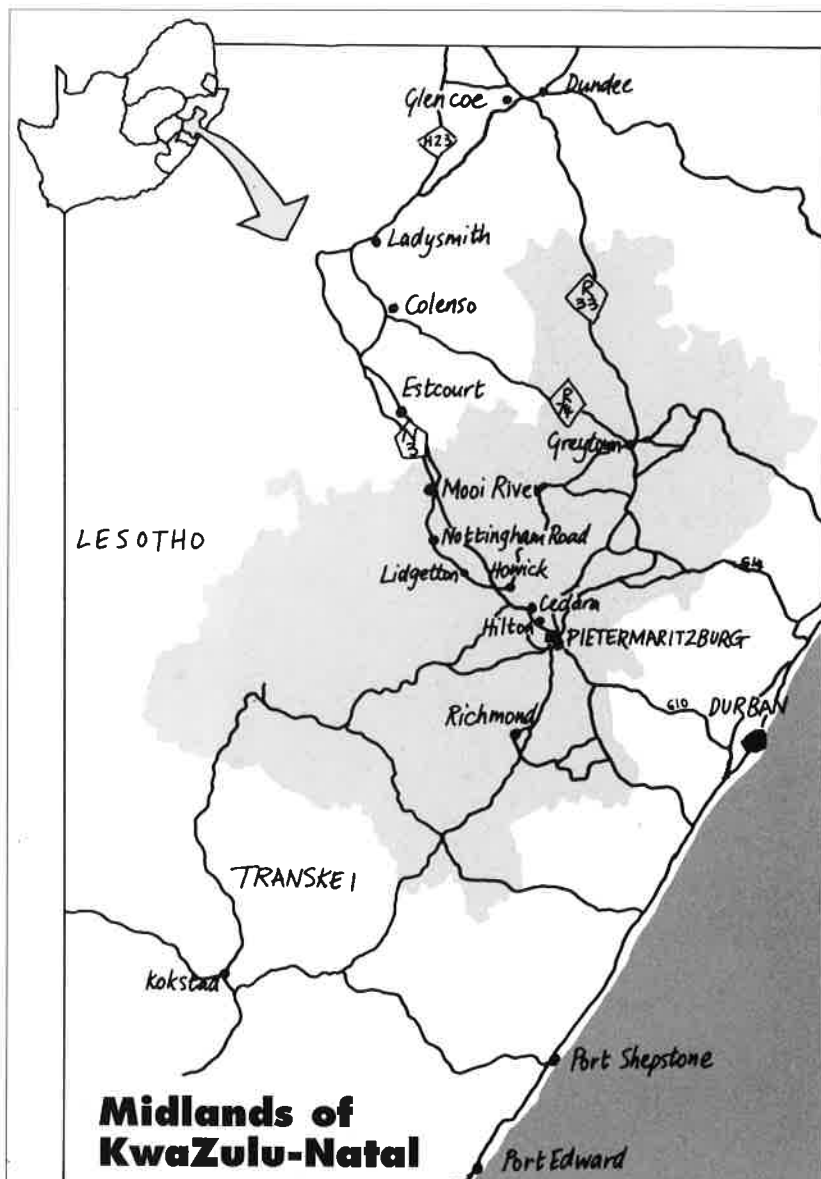


The wide stretch between the coastal region and the Drakensberg range is known as the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, a lush undulating grassy landscape of hills and deep river valleys. Perpetually green due often to misty rains, the altitude provides for a crisp climate, in contrast to the heat and humidity of the coast and the extreme heat of Northern KwaZulu-Natal.

In such a climate, the indigenous Zulu peoples built grass domed shelters that would expand and become impervious when wet. In due course the dome gave way to the rondavel, the roofs covered with thatch and walls built of wattle and daub. Early settlers built their houses of locally available materials with good insulating properties, for instance shale walls and thatched roofs as in Richmond. The development of a clay brick industry saw a pink salmon-brick vernacular emerge with roofs of clay tiles or corrugated iron. English bond or English garden wall bond are as much in evidence as are sliding sash windows. Verandas, the element that gave KwaZulu-Natal architecture a special character, are usually less ornate than their urban counterparts and more often than not are of timber construction with craftsmanship displayed in trellising and fretting.



TOP TO BOTTOM: A rondavel under construction.
Veranda in the Dargle.
Broseley-tiled roof to a shale plinth, quoining and brick infilling – Lilly Dell, Richmond.
St Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond.



RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

British settler construction in Richmond, demolished 1994.

Verandaed and trellised house in lush surrounds, Greytown.

Cottage with fretted fascia on stub Roman Doric columns, Greytown.

Leuchars Memorial Hall (1926), and St James Anglican Church (1913), Greytown.

Commercial buildings – Pine Street, Greytown.



Community buildings in the Midlands

Editorial

BEYOND the bounds of broekie lace and red brick, an increasing number of Pietermaritzburg and Midlands architects are being employed in social upliftment programmes.

This edition is not so much about the realisation of remarkable buildings as about the participation of these architects in the making of small community buildings in the Midlands.

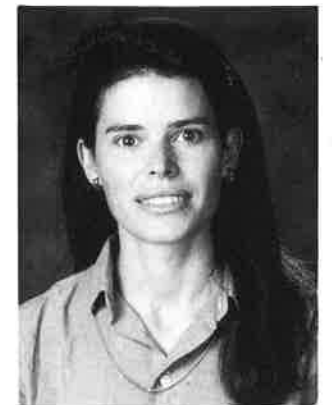
Despite the fact that many of the developments rely on initial subsidies, their management and in some cases their creation, both employs and serves local people. Being in areas which have seen little or no development in the last decade, one hopes that these small structures may act as catalysts for future growth.

It is encouraging to see our participation and relevance in the process of transformation. At a time when doubt hangs over the future existence of the profession, to participate in the Reconstruction and Development Programme should perhaps be viewed as heartening.

It is said that architecture is not a luxury but a social necessity. The challenge lies with us to communicate our skills and services and to be flexible and patient with this broad new client base.

'Well done' to those who have been made this offer to participate and who have succeeded, and may we continue to contribute positively towards our changing environment.

Jane McDonald



Jane McDonald (née Batchelor), a product of Durban Girls College, studied architecture at the Universities of Cape Town (BAS, 1985) and Natal (B Arch, 1987). On graduating she worked in the Durban offices of Stauch Vorster before joining FGG Architects in Pietermaritzburg in 1991, where she became an Associate in 1994. Jane serves on the Natal Architectural Heritage Committee and on the executive committee of the Pietermaritzburg Society.

Community buildings in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

New Oblates House at St. Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, an order of the Roman Catholic Church, was established in Marseilles, France, in 1825 by Bishop Eugene de Mazenod.

Bishop Allard was sent to establish the Oblates in Southern Africa in 1852.

St. Joseph's was established in the 1940s in Prestbury, a suburb of Pietermaritzburg, and

as the order grew in numbers it was moved to Cleland on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg. Finally in 1953 it was established in Cedara, 18 km outside Pietermaritzburg on a farm bequeathed in a private will for the explicit use by the Oblates for the education of student priests of the Order.

Over the years St. Joseph's Scholasticate has become the centre for numerous Orders as an education Centre.

Due to the increasing numbers – in particular of women students (nuns and lay people) – attending the Scholasticate, it became necessary for the OMI's to construct their own "house" as their space within the old Scholasticate building was insufficient as well as impractical.

Planning commenced with a brief to accommodate: 10 priest's rooms with their own private common room; individual rooms for 32 students with their own communal lounges; a reception building for visitors and the Superior's office; a common room where all the OMI students could congregate at one time; and a small private chapel for OMI

priests. All buildings were to be linked by means of covered access and connected to the existing Scholasticate building.

A major design criterion stemmed from the climate. Particularly in winter, the temperatures in Cedara are uncomfortably cold and it was imperative that all private rooms faced north.

The staff accommodation building was designed as a single-loaded passage on varying levels, thus ensuring the rooms of the lecturers or priests faced north and followed the natural topography of the site.

Student buildings are orientated north with a double volume lounge area in each block overlooked by 2 floors of individual rooms.

The reception building and main common rooms are located at the entrance to the complex. Their configuration creates two sides of the entrance courtyard with the covered linkways completing the cloister effect.

The private chapel is located on the main spine from the St. Joseph's Scholasticate and near the priests' accommodation.

The complete scheme was designed to create a community spirit amongst the students and the priests and lecturers without the loss of privacy which is an important factor in any home where workplace and home are combined.

Malcolm McKinlay

Architects: JON Architects Inc. (Joubert Owens van Niekerk Inc.)

Quantity Surveyors: Walters & Simpson

PLAN - KEY:

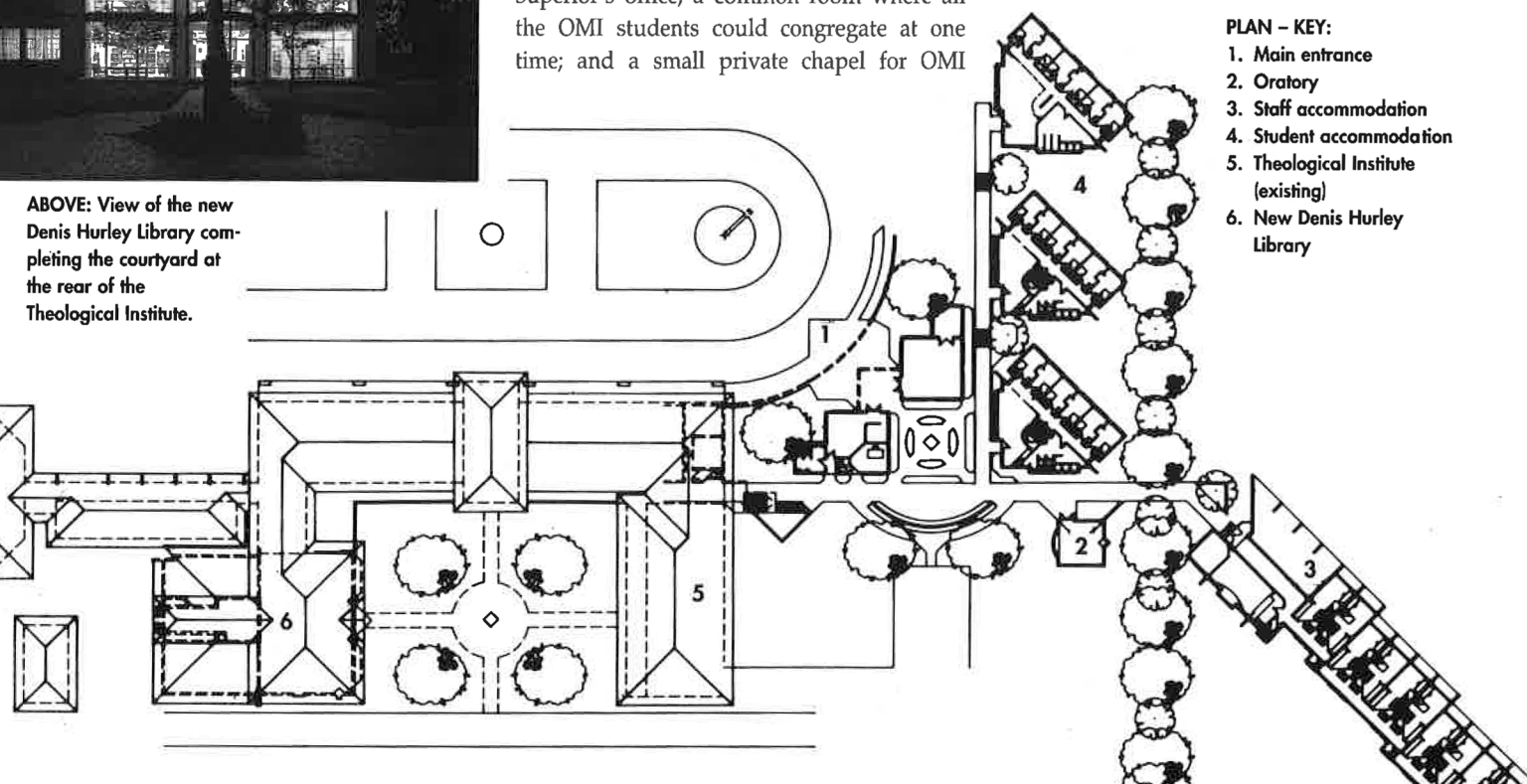
1. Main entrance
2. Oratory
3. Staff accommodation
4. Student accommodation
5. Theological Institute (existing)
6. New Denis Hurley Library



View of roofscapes looking North with main entrance complex in foreground and student accommodation beyond.

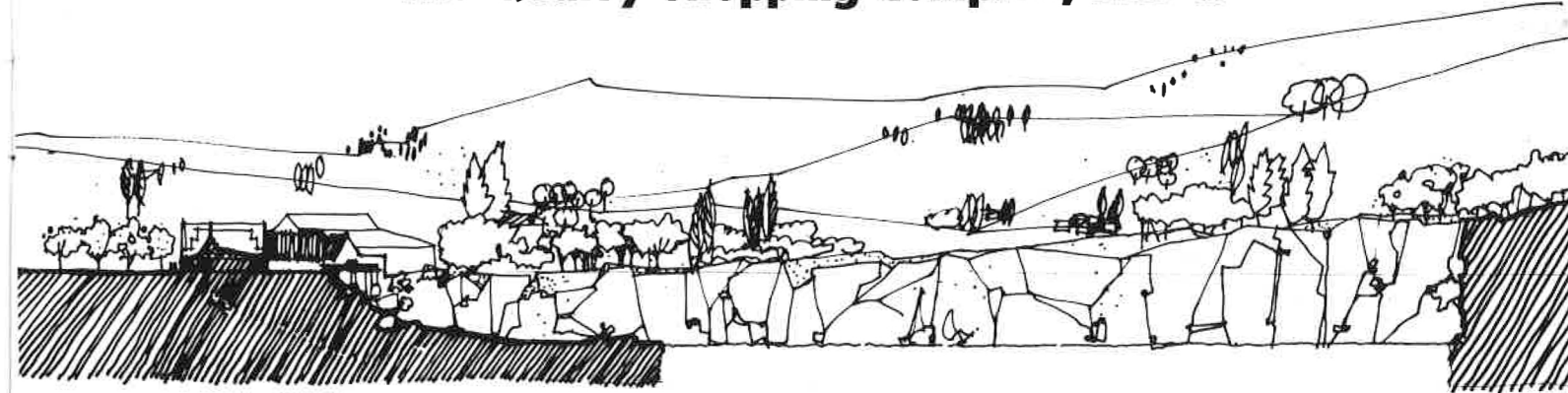


ABOVE: View of the new Denis Hurley Library completing the courtyard at the rear of the Theological Institute.



Community buildings in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

The Quarry Shopping Complex, Hilton



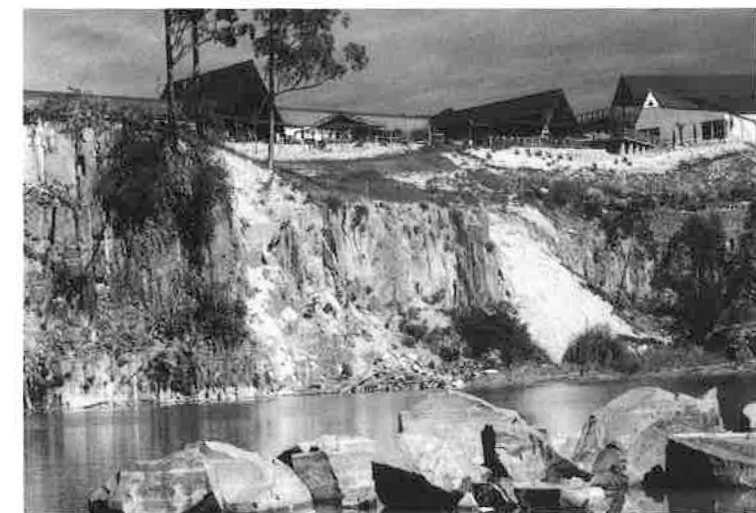
Section - Shopping complex left, disused quarry centre.



When our client, the Collins Group, decided to develop the site adjacent to the old Quarry in the village of Hilton, the local community became involved in the planning process at an early stage.

There was an overriding concern that a contemporary shopping complex – consisting of a supermarket, line shops, filling station and offices – should reflect and enhance the village ambience and that particular care be taken to relate the new complex to its Quarry environment in a positive and sympathetic manner.

Our design approach was to use the traditional farm buildings of the Natal Midlands as



our reference point and this resulted in steeply-pitched, dark green sheeted roofs, walls of light orange-tinged face bricks, prominent plinths and painted timber doors and shopfronts.

A positive relationship to the Quarry was achieved by planning the centre along the Quarry edge and incorporating viewing platforms in a semi-rustic timber construction to project forward and permit panoramic sightings of the rock-faced cliffs and green waters of the old Quarry.

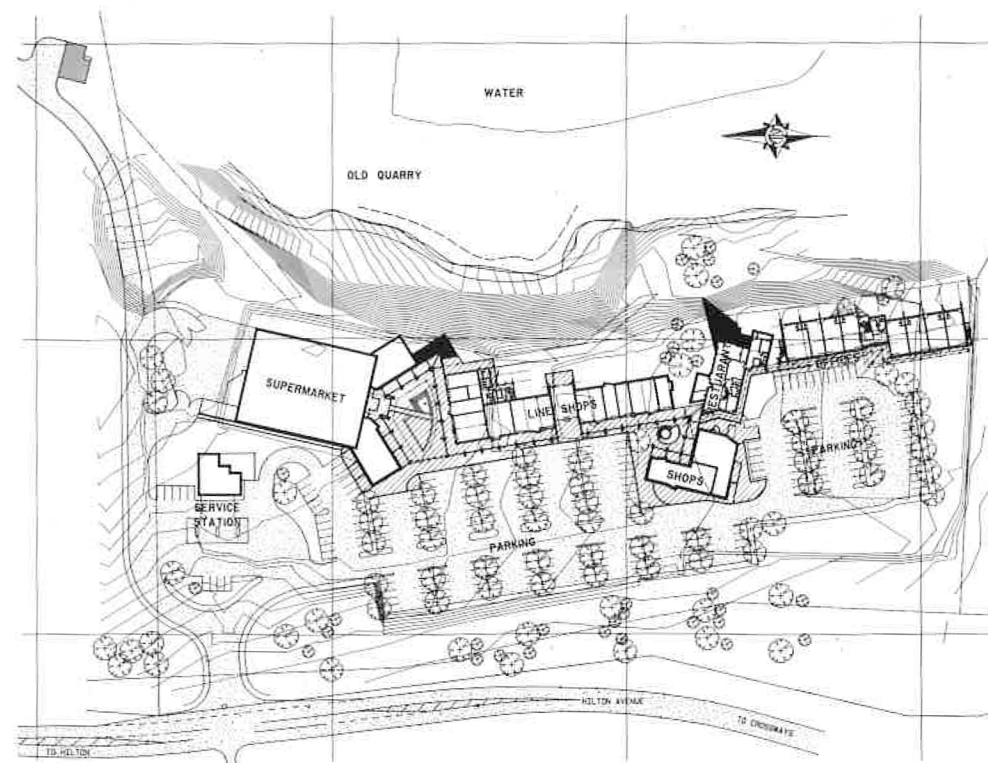
The parking areas are paved in precast road stones, and extensive planting of indigenous trees and shrubs has been undertaken to provide a pleasant natural environment for the buildings.

The Quarry Shopping Complex is not yet complete as the restaurant is still in the planning stage, the office building is currently nearing completion and the landscaping has still to achieve maturity.

We are however heartened by the enthusiasm with which this new centre has been received by the Hilton community, and the weekend patronage in particular has caused this to become one of the regular meeting places of the village.

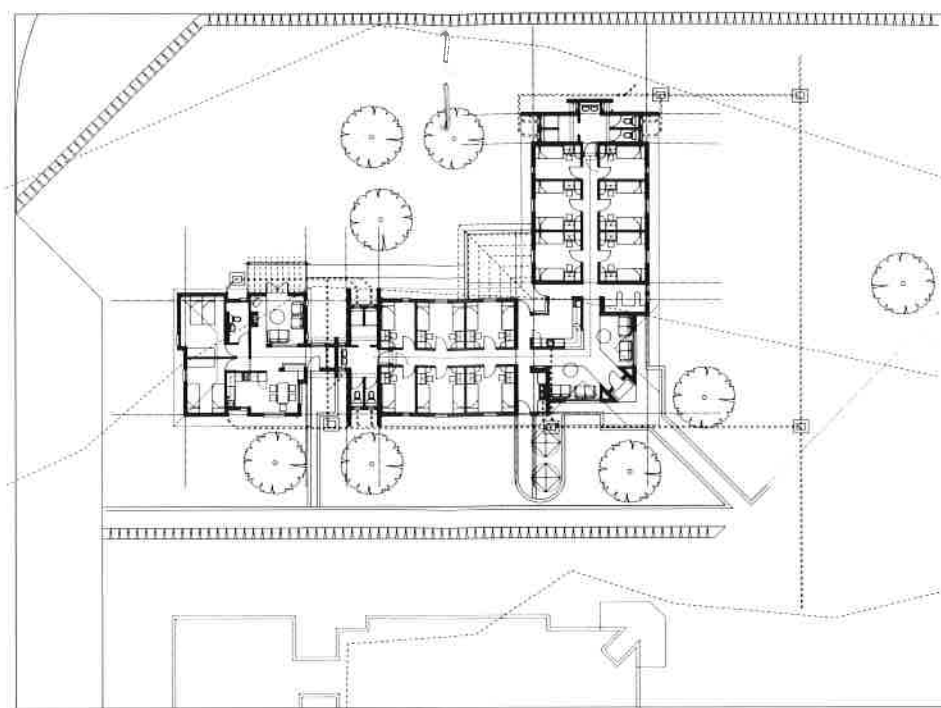
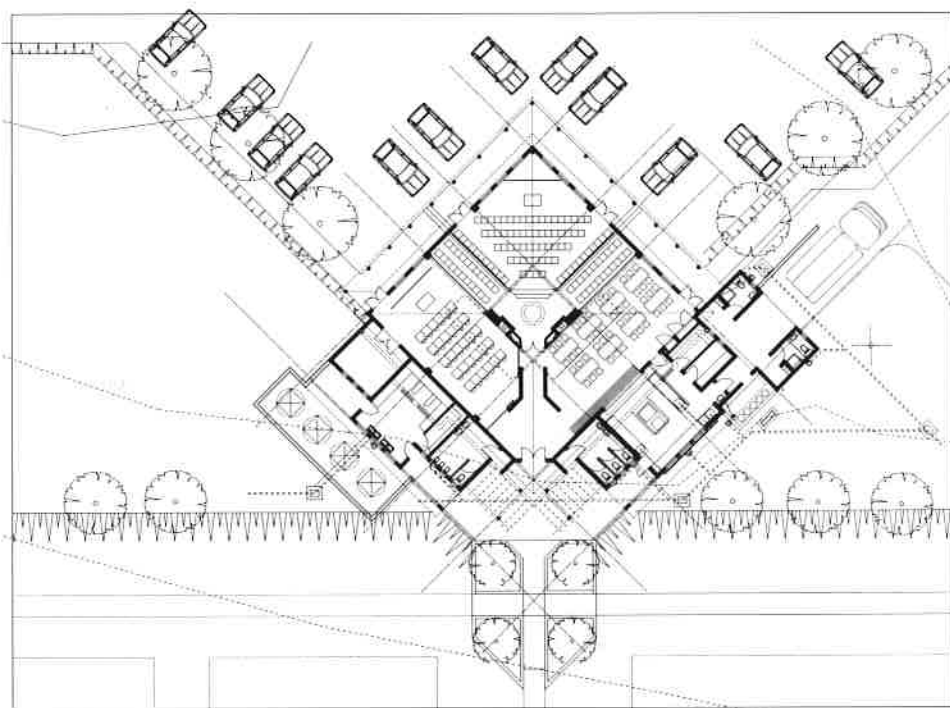
Llew Bryan

Architects: Hughes Bryan Birss cc Architects



Community buildings in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

A Rural Training Centre, Lidgetton



In 1989 Tennant & Tennant were requested to design a new training centre for ACAT (African Co-operative Action Trust) on a tract of land adjoining their existing premises at Crystal Springs in Lidgetton.

The brief which evolved over the next three years was to create a complex that would formalise the existing functions into a coherent campus to fulfil the organisation's objectives which are:

1 To prepare and assist the people of Southern Africa to meet the threat of serious food shortages, and to this end:

- to initiate and take action now;
- to bring home to national leaders and to the peoples of South Africa that the problem is not primarily one of shortage of land, water and other resources, but rather of the right knowledge and expertise;

• to stimulate national and international concern for the problem and to promote appropriate action to assist rural people to uplift themselves materially, mentally and spiritually, and to this end to provide the necessary education and training;

2 To involve the rural people in this action over a broad front, so that the maximum possible benefit is achieved with the minimum of resources of manpower and money;

3 To bring an understanding to the individual rural dweller of how to use money to improve the quality of his/her life;

4 To promote the better utilisation of the human and natural resources of the rural areas.

5 To expose people to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ACAT's successes to date are told by facts and figures as well as by the people themselves: "When my children used to go to the doctor, he said they were not sick, just hungry. ACAT taught me how to grow better crops and now I plant 10 varieties of crops and fruit. Because of our balanced diet we've never been back to the doctor again" says Mrs. Tswana.

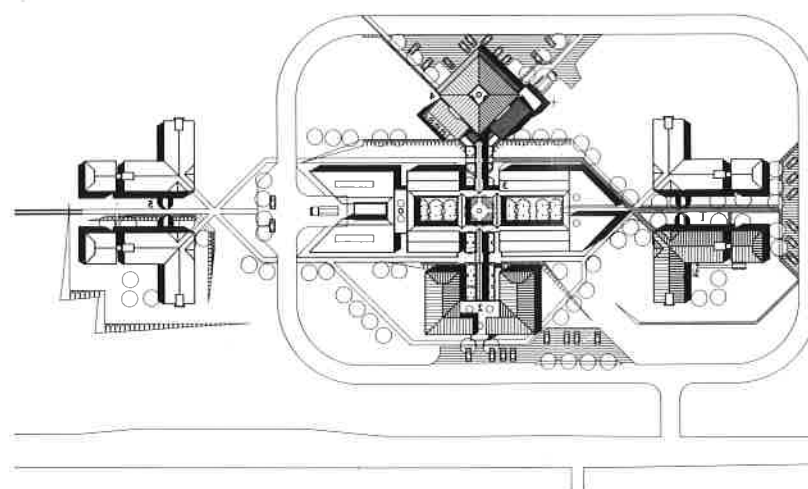
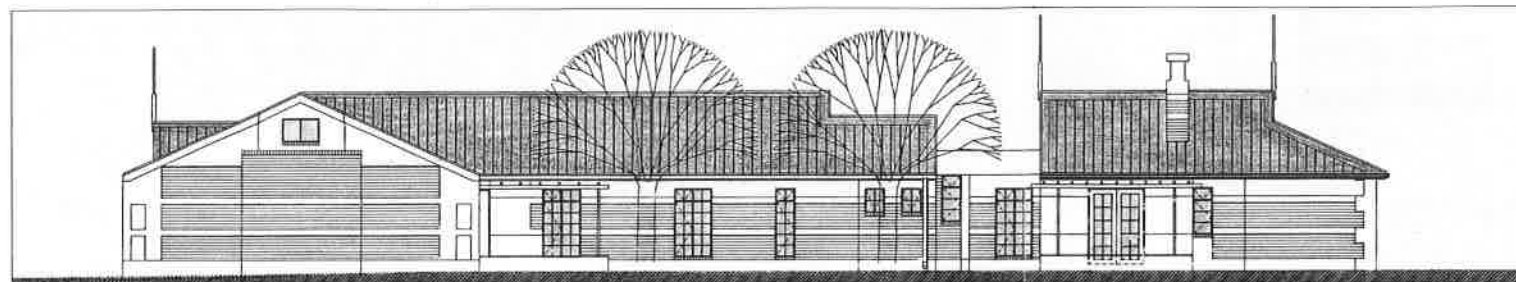
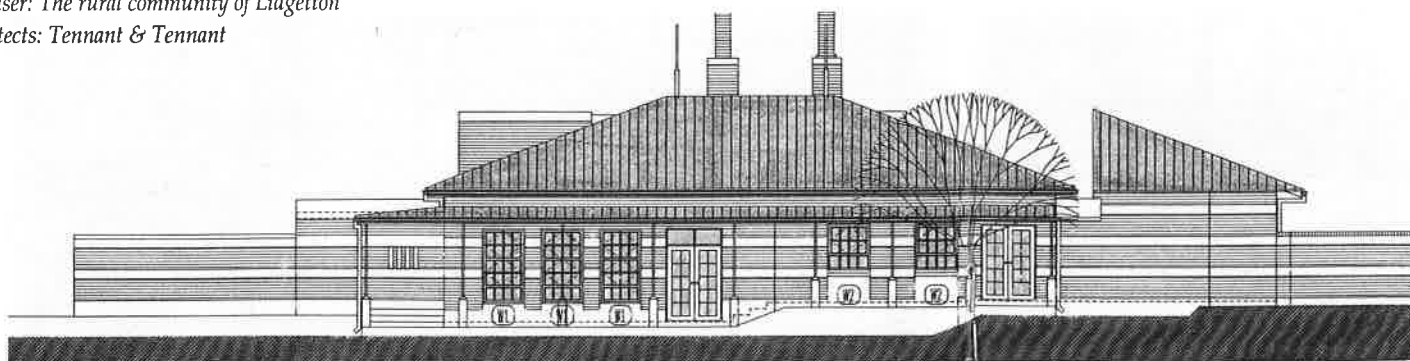
The Centre consists of a multi-purpose hall, classrooms and workshops, an administrative building and male and female residences. The first phase of the centre, for completion mid-1995, has begun on an owner-builder basis.

Trevor Tennant

Client: African Co-operative Action Trust (ACAT).

End-user: The rural community of Lidgetton

Architects: Tennant & Tennant



ABOVE LEFT: Multi-purpose Hall

ABOVE: Women's Residences

SITE PLAN — KEY

1. Women's Residences
2. Administration
3. Classrooms and Workshops
4. Multi-purpose Halls
5. Men's Residences

Community buildings in the Midlands

Centre for the Greytown and District Child & Family Welfare Society

The building programme called for a multi-purpose hall, a kitchen to prepare meals for the aged, a clinic, offices for the Society, a pre-school and an after-school centre. Shortage of funds allowed only one of the four pre-school units to be built at this stage.

The site is a subdivision of a large 'community use' lot donated by the local authority. An agreement was reached with the municipality whereby the driveway serving the Centre could be partly located on the municipality's land and linked up to the existing driveway serving the civic hall and old library. Thus it was possible to

form a loose 'civic square' even if the space is large and suburban. The Hindu Temple on Cathcart Street forms a fourth 'wall' to this

square. The gable of the hall and its porch are an attempt to give a suitable scale to this area.

As most of the building spaces needed to be multi-functional, they were planned to be interconnected and capable of being separated and accessed in different ways.

The construction is simple, consisting of steel frames with fair-face brick infill for the larger spaces, and loadbearing walls for the smaller spaces. All roofs are of corrugated iron.

The building relies for its visual effect on the varied massing of its components and the three decorative entrance porches.

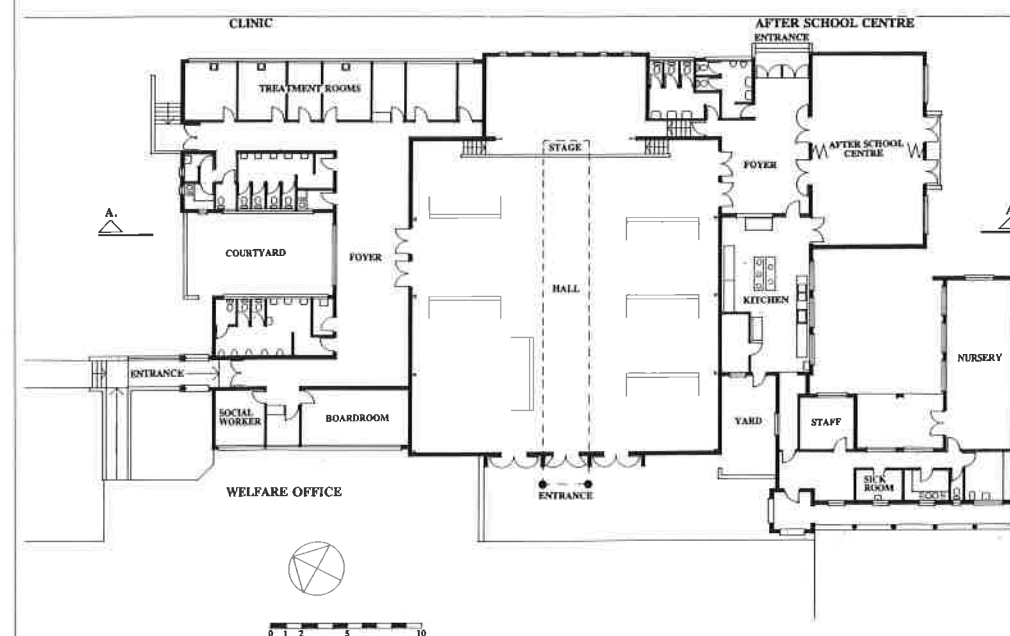
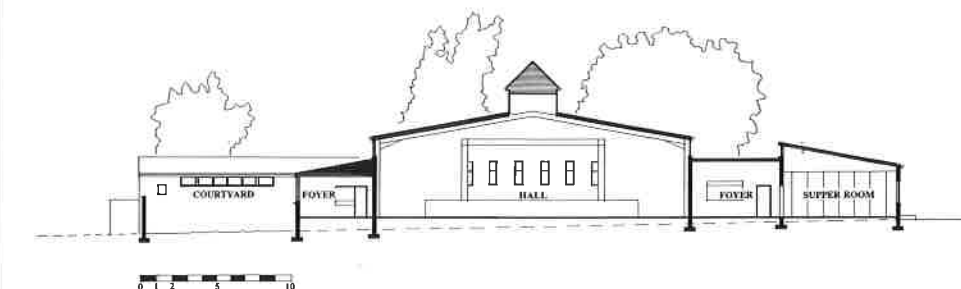
Wolfgang Kassier



Grant order side entrance porch.

Client: Administration, House of Delegates

Architect: Wolfgang Kassier



Community buildings in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

Community Visual Art Centre, Pietermaritzburg



The Presbyterian church in Church Street is one of the oldest buildings in Pietermaritzburg, dating back to 1852. Built in shale, it started life as a simple rectangular structure with a clock tower above the entrance and tall Gothic windows.

Over the years a number of additions and modifications were made, the most drastic of which occurred in 1946 when the Public Works Department converted the church to offices, removing the Gothic windows in the process and replacing them with small sash windows.

In the early 1980s the church and the adjacent old Supreme Court building were given to the Municipality for development into an Art Gallery complex. The conversion of the Supreme Court into the Tatham Art Gallery was completed in 1990 and the second phase of the project is the conversion of the church into a community orientated Visual Arts Education Centre. It is intended that the building be

used primarily for a variety of educational functions – art classes, sculpture workshops, life drawing and exhibitions – but it may also serve as a venue for events such as jazz concerts and chamber music recitals.

Because of the complex history of the building, complete restoration to the original form was not a viable option. Instead it was decided to concentrate on the main volume of the church, which would provide the exhibition/workshop/performance space. All recent additions were removed, including the sash windows which were replaced with pur-

pose-made pointed arch windows to match those shown on the original photographs. One window was extended to form a door to a future courtyard on the side of the building.

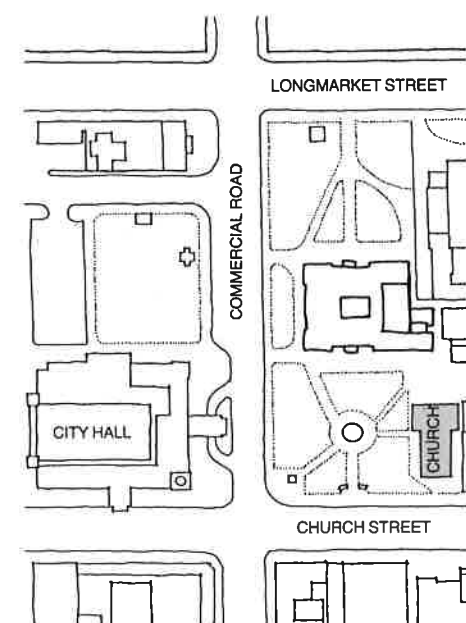
The walls were stripped and replastered, exposing the original shale masonry in the process. For historical interest it was decided to leave unplastered the original shale arch above the new set of doors and the main entrance wall. The ceiling and decorative vents were restored and a new quarry tile floor laid. The rear wing of the building already housed the ablution areas and storage spaces, which

have been retained and upgraded. A mezzanine slab has been introduced above these facilities, providing administration offices upstairs. In order to reduce the visual impact of the new offices, the walls stop short of the ceiling, allowing the eye to read the original cornice and ceiling as floating freely above the newly completed structure. No work is being done to the outside of the building at this stage as the present budget does not allow for this.

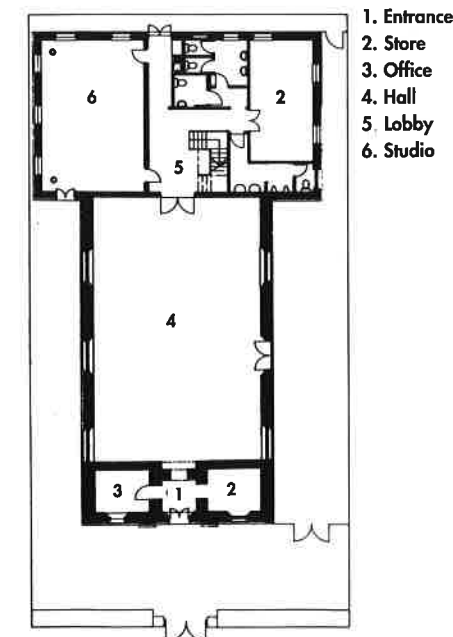
The building was officially opened with the "Fête 4 Africa Jazz Concert" during the first week of October 1994.

Nick Grice

Client: The Municipality of Pietermaritzburg
Architects: Grice, Small & Pettit



Location plan



Urban conservation in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

Remodelling of an existing Shop, Pietermaritzburg

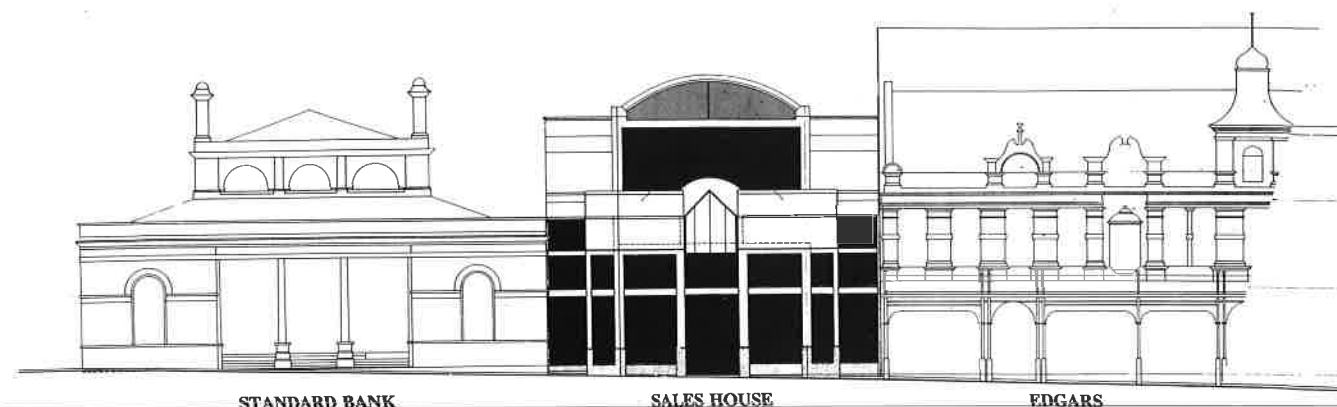
Sales House first opened in Port Elizabeth 45 years ago and was the first major retailer in the country to provide Black consumers with credit. Today its market is the cosmopolitan Black consumer, providing merchandise and service. 95% of current Sales House account holders belong to the Sales House Club which supports an annual R5 million educational bursary programme.

The architectural challenge of the Pietermaritzburg building conversion lay in the treatment of the front facade and its response to its two neighbours – the Standard Bank, a building of classical Palladian proportions on one side, and Edgars, built in the Victorian style, on the other.

The architectural objectives were: to infill in a manner sympathetic to both adjacent buildings; to continue the plane formed by Edgar's cast iron verandah colonnade and trellis work; to acknowledge the movement at the nodal point where the alignment of Church and Timber Street malls and the Standard Bank setback create an urban room; to articulate the massing of the new building in order to allow the original form of the Standard Bank building to be appreciated, ie. the prominent existing cornice moulding on the left hand corner would be repeated and returned around the right hand corner; to analyse the Standard Bank building's system of proportions and apply it to the new building in an abstract manner in order to create a building of urban proportions suitable for the setting; to express in abstract the movement and stratification of horizontal bands common to both buildings; to use materials that would contrast with and/or reflect the building fabric on either side; and to do all this unashamedly in a modern idiom.

Norton Santos

Client: Cenprop
Architects: Interplan Architects



Urban conservation in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal

Architects' Offices, Pietermaritzburg

Norfolk Villa, a double-storey Victorian villa in Loop Street, built 1894/95, is the new home of FGG Architects in Pietermaritzburg.

Many a vestige of Pietermaritzburg Victoriana has been recycled to office usage, but most have had to sacrifice the garden setting in meeting with the stringent municipal off-street parking requirements. In so doing, bay windows have lost some of their meaning, and without the tempering effect of the garden, the interior environment of the building is simply less comfortable all year round.

While FGG Architects were most concerned with the preservation of the external setting of their new home, they decided on a neutral approach to the interiors. Here the large spaces provide the setting for contemporary furniture of natural timbers (to their design) and for works of modern art and indigenous ethnography.

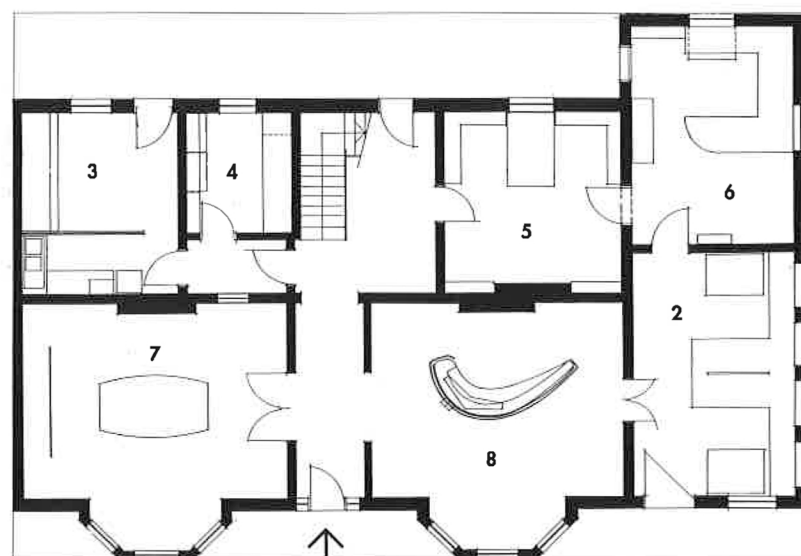
FGG Architects



Upper floor plan
Below: Ground floor plan



1. Office
2. Drawing office
3. Print room
4. Accountant's office
5. Library
6. Office
7. Boardroom
8. Reception



Professional News

KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture

Two important amendments were adopted by the Annual General Meeting of the Natal Institute of Architects held on Wednesday, 23 November 1994:

In order to give effect to a broadening of the Institute's base, it was decided to provide for an Affiliate membership class in order to accommodate the admission of Technikon diplomates. Constituent thereon, and to align the Institute with the new designation for the Province, the Institute will henceforth be known as the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture.

Natal School of Architecture

Prof Dennis Radford has been appointed Head of the Department for a 5-year period beginning 1 January 1995.

Architectural Competition

A competition for the design of the new gallery and workshops building for the Natal Society of Arts in Bulwer Road, Durban, has been announced.

The competition is limited to architects registered with the KwaZulu-Natal Institute and resident in South Africa or abroad, and to architects educated at the University of Natal.

Documents are available at R65 from the Secretariat of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute. Closing date is 10 February 1995.

Professional News

CHANGES IN CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP

AT de Graaf AnT to Ordinary
AC Dold AnT to Ordinary
MJ Fennell, Ms AnT to Ordinary
PN Jackson Ordinary to Retired
Professor Emeritus BT Kearney, Ordinary to Retired

NEW MEMBERS

JL Lees, Ms (AnT) PO Box 30556, Mayville 4058
RJ Ross (AnT) 4 Greenside, 208 Manning Road, Glenwood 4001
EB Orts-Hansen (AnT) c/o 59 Musgrave Road, Durban 4001

CHANGES IN ADDRESS

AD Hume to 403b Windermere Road, Morningside 4001
AG Koekemoer to Pirnnaplaat 13, Meerensee 3901
MG Moore to 4 Magenta Gardens, 19 Park Lane, Kloof 3610
NR Bennewith to 98 Sweetwaters Road, Pietermaritzburg 3201
R Beetge to PO Box 10465, Meerensee 3901

CHANGES IN PARTNERSHIP, PRACTICES ETC.

Upon the retirement of Mr AJ Lubbe, the practice known as AJ Lubbe & Associates was taken over by Leach & van der Walt of Newcastle and will now be known as AJ Lubbe, Leach & van der Walt Architects. Mr Thomas Leach is the resident partner.

RESIGNATIONS

GD Allen · JS Brejowski · AJ Lubbe · JF Richards · M Wassung

Durban City Council Conservation Awards, 1994

The following awards were made at a civic reception held in the Jubilee Hall on 3 November:

Portview, 183 Cowey Road: restored important Edwardian villa with an Italianate character.
Porbandar (Madressa Arcade) 147-153 Grey Street: a well maintained arcaded bazaar of the Union period, important for its architecture, scale and dynamic townscape qualities.

70 Nicolson Road: a carefully maintained Union period villa in the Berea style, notable for its fine timber details, loggias and corner siting.

The Mansions, 535-545 West Street: a refurbished Edwardian commercial frontage with prominent cast iron and wrought iron verandas displaying an appropriate response to climate and street.

Lowry's Corner, 1-2 Silverton Road: a restored Union Period building with an enhanced corner setting in the Berea style with Art Deco characteristics.

127 Bellevue Road: a restored gabled veranda house of the Victorian period with notable face-brick details, timberwork to verandas and a cat-slide roof.

109 Riley Road: a well cared-for Victorian wood-and-iron cottage with characteristic timberwork to the front veranda.

638 Essenwood Road: a relocated and restored Edwardian villa with significant verandas, gables and chimneys.

22 Halford Road: a restored semi-detached house with noteworthy timberwork to its verandas; a surviving remnant of a former Victorian streetscape.

The former Reserve Bank at 325 Smith Street: the adaptive re-use of a building in Union classical style significant for the disciplined expression of rusticated base, giant order and cornice.

69 Wills Road: a carefully preserved Union period house in vernacular style with front veranda.

Old Durban Station Building, 160 Pine Street: a major City centre landmark of the Victorian period in polychromatic brick, plaster and stone, recycled, restored, and integrated in a new development.

The 1893 Durban Train Shed: a recycled landmark City centre structure.

RIGHT, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

1. Train shed (left) connected to the terminal building (right). Photo of 1975.

2. The roof slid north-west by 2 bays and the new vista of Commercial Road extension about to be opened, 1984.

3. 1994: the gable ends enclosed.

4. The building entered from the north-east.

5. Interior of the Health & Racquet Club: space has been preserved.

Architects: Johnson Murray Architects

