



KZ-NIA Journal • Issue 1/2002 • Volume No 27 • ISSN 0379-9301

## EMERGING ARCHITECTS



**Journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture**





This journal, now in its 27th year of publication, has since its inception been sponsored by Corobrik.



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## Emerging Architects

### Editorial

*Architecture as a profession is fascinating and fulfilling; as a business it is demanding and difficult.*  
Morris Lapidus (1902–2001)

**D**espite such a clear description of architectural practice, some graduates are not deterred from taking the leap, and that at a juncture in our history when practices are closing and architects are leaving for greener pastures.

As if to acknowledge such 'daredevils', the Editorial Board of this journal decided to promote the work of members who recently embarked upon private practice by dedicating an issue to their projects. 41 members who might fall within this category were written to, but only 10 responded, a fact that could well be due to work pressure. At the time of the invitation, it was even deemed probable that a selection would be necessary in order to contain coverage within these few pages, thus all responses received were included\*. That is pleasing, for an Institute exists to serve all its members. It is also gratifying that both the academic article and the travel page are written by emerging architect-academics.

Sometimes the work of an editor is particularly interesting and this is a case in point. The work and the *curriculum vitae* submitted made for fascinating reading: jumping from the security of a large practice to go it alone; living in exile; the insatiable need for architects to travel etc. Equally significant, no contributor has mentioned the weathering of professional risks; keeping the bank manager at bay; nor revealed much of what makes it worthwhile? But, to be consistent, neither has anyone confessed that their teachers had much influence on them, let alone inspiration. And, having taught most of the contributors to this issue at some time or other, that's 'real tough'!

Walter Peters, Editor

\*One entry is thematically more appropriate in the next issue and is to be featured therein.

## News

Photographed at the *Architecture & Poverty Workshop*, from left:

UIA-President Mr Vassilis Sgoutas; AUA-President Mr Taoufik El Euch; South African Housing Minister Ms Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele; AUA Council Member Mr Francis Sossah; and fellow AUA Council Member and convenor of the Workshop, Prof Ambrose Adebayo, Head of the School of Architecture, Planning & Housing, University of Natal.



### UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTS: Workshop

*ARCHITECTURE & POVERTY: Housing for the Poor and the Role of Architects* was the theme of a workshop held on the University campus on Thursday, 14th March 2002.

Besides local and national speakers, South African Housing Minister, Ms Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, spoke on the *National Perspective*; UIA-President, Mr Vassilis Sgoutas asked: *What is the Role of Architects?*; and AUA-President, Mr Taoufik El Euch, reported on *Housing for the Poor and the Role of Architects in North Africa*.

### Council for the Built Environment

In January 2002 the Minister of Public Works announced the appointment of the 20 members to the CBE. Representing the SA Council for the Architectural Profession are Malcolm Campbell, who has also been appointed Chair, and Khotso Moleko (a Natal graduate!).



COVER: Architectural competition winner, *Intothuko Junction-Cato Manor*, in balmy winter afternoon sunlight. Photographed by Angela Buckland



Peter de Trevou, Corobrik Managing Director, congratulating the 2001 'Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year', Bernard Viljoen of the University of the Free State.

### Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year 2001

A JURY consisting of architects Ms Linda Mvusi, Naren Mistry, Chris Malan (Meyer Pienaar), and Malcolm Campbell (President: SA Council for the Architectural Profession) declared **Bernard Viljoen** of the University of Free State 'Architectural Student of the Year 2001'. Viljoen's design dissertation '*n (9) Museum*, (along the N9 arterial road between Aberdeen and Graaff Reinet), questioned the concept of the 'traditional' museum and made him the 15th recipient of this annual title. The banquet was held at the Sandton Convention Centre on Friday, 8th March. —*Veels geluk!*

### OBITUARY:

#### Ted O'Brien 1930-2002

AFTER A LONG ILLNESS, Ted O'Brien, retired Professor of Building Management; past Dean of the Faculty of Architecture & Allied Disciplines at the University of Natal; and past-President of the SA Institute of Building, died on 6th April, a day short of his 72nd birthday. —RIP



## News

### Natal School of Architecture

#### 2001 SIMULATED OFFICE PROJECT

The 2001 Simulated Office Project Exhibition and Prize-giving ceremony was held at KZ-NIA house on 21st November. The event was generously sponsored by *TotalCAD*.

The following awards were made:

The **KZ-NIA Prize for the Best 'Practice'** in SOP went to the 'architectural practice' Three Degrees (Ms **Sandi Nortje**, **David Louis** and **Ian Sibisi**) and the collaborating 'quantity surveying practice' *Triquant* (**Molefe Mphofe**, Ms **Sameera Paruk** and Ms **Humayra Vahed**).

The **Aluminium Federation of SA** Prize went to *Billboard Arch CC* (**Tafadswa Bako**, **Roland Adrio** and **Bertrum Stoffels**) and **CAS** (Ms **Shalina Chettiar**, Ms **Natasha Singh** and **Ismail Agjee**).

The **ArchiCAD** Prize for the Best Architectural Student went to **David Louis**; while the Prize by the **KZ-N Chapter of the Association of SA Quantity Surveyors** went to the 'practice' *JMG Consultants* (Ms **Nishani Gungapersad**, **Mthokozisi Jiyane**, **Darroll McKeown**).

#### 2002 PRIZE-GIVING & ANNUAL DISCOURSE

The Annual Discourse was delivered by 'architect' Mr **Louis van Loon**, ('architect' and engineer) who spoke on the topic *Honest-to-Goodness Design. Zen in the Art of Architecture*. This was preceded by the awarding of KZ-NIA prizes (all to female students!) by the President, **Tricia Emmett**:

##### ■ Bachelor of Architectural Studies

Year 1 **Barrie Biermann Prize**:

Ms **Paulette Barbeau**

Year 2 **Gordon Small Prize**:

Ms **Kim Meyer**

Year 3 **Calvert McDonald Prize**:

Ms **Melanie Grant**

##### ■ Bachelor of Architecture

Year 1 (4) **Clem Fridjhon Prize**:

Ms **Leonie Mervis**

Year 2 (5): **SN Tomkin Prize**:

Ms **Sandi Nortje**

The SAIA and Association of SA Quantity Surveyors **David Haddon Prize** for the Best Student in the subject Professional Practice was shared between architectural students **David Louis** and (Bertram) **Albertus Stoffels**.

#### O'BRIEN-BROWN MEMORIAL FUND

This Fund was established in 1989 after the death of the widow of Institute member **Desmond O'Brien-Brown** (died 1975) who had bequeathed the residue of his estate for the creation of bursaries for students of Architecture. This year bursaries have been made to second

year students **Miss Linda Danisa** and **Andy Nziweni** as well as third year student **Sibusiso Dladla**.

#### GEOFFREY LE SUEUR SCHOLARSHIP

This prestigious Travel Scholarship endowed by the donor and first conferred in 1981, was awarded to both BAS-graduate Ms **Melanie Grant** who intends studying aspects of Social Housing in the Netherlands; and to BArch-graduate Ms **Sandi Nortje** who will be studying Spanish architecture.



Donor of the **Sherwood-Bond Architecture Bursary**, Mrs **Hazel Bond**, flanked by the first recipients **Naeem Cassim** (left) and **Nangamso Nkumbuzi** (right).

#### SHERWOOD-BOND ARCHITECTURE BURSARY

This annual bursary, donated by former **Biermann Architecture** Librarian (1971–93), Mrs **Hazel Bond**, is to assist deserving students who have good academic records and demonstrated diligence, and are preferably in their final years of study. The inaugural recipients are Messrs **Naeem Cassim** and **Nangamso Nkumbuzi**, both in the final year of the BArch degree.



Inaugural recipient of the **Brian Bernstein Memorial Travel Scholarship**, Ms **Mizan Rambhoros**, with Associate Dean of the Faculty of Community & Development Disciplines, **Dr Fekile Mazibuko** (right).

#### BRIAN BERNSTEIN TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

This memorial Scholarship which commemorates the life of architect **Brian Bernstein**, is awarded to the student who has demonstrated 'most promise at the end of the BAS degree', as well as 'social commitment in a practical form'.

On behalf of the Bernstein family, Prof **Ted Tollman** presented the Award to Ms **Mizan Rambhoros** who has been raising funds for the **Feed the Babies Fund** over many years.

Ms **Rambhoros** intends studying projects in urban regeneration in Australia.

#### 2002 GRADUATION

At the ceremony of the Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines held in the Durban Exhibition Centre, Aliwal Street, on Thursday, 18th April, the degree PhD in Architecture was conferred upon **Kudakwashe Mucharambeyi** for his thesis *The Effects of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes and the Shelter Development Strategy on the Housing Construction Industry in Zimbabwe*. The degree M.Arch was conferred *in absentia* upon Ms **Deborah Whelan** for her thesis *Indigenous Vernacular Architecture of Msinga*.

The degree BAS was conferred upon 36 students. The degrees of Misses **Poovashini Pather** and **Mizan Rambhoros** were awarded *cum laude*, and that of Ms **Melanie Grant**, *summa cum laude*, the only student in the Faculty to obtain this appellation.

The degree B.Arch was conferred upon 16 students. The degrees of **Nicholas Darby** and Ms **Sandi Nortje** were awarded *cum laude*; and a posthumous degree was awarded **Mahendran Govender** who died of cancer in his final semester.

#### VISITOR TO THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Visiting the School during the first Quarter of 2002, was Dr **Dianne Smith**, Senior Lecturer in Interior Design, Queensland University of Technology. With this specialist skill available, an Elective course was offered all Final Year students.



#### NEW BOOK

KZ-NIA member **John Bizzell** has just released his book *Blueprints in Black and White. The Built Environment Professions in South Africa - an Outline History* (132p). It is available at R125 (VAT & postage inclusive) from Solo Collective, 4 Elgin Drive, 3610 Cowies Hill, Tel: 031 266-5178; Fax: 031 266-1100.

A Review is to be published in the next issue of this *Journal*.



## Emerging Architects

### Corobrik @ 100

This year marks the centenary of Corobrik, sponsor of this Journal for the last 26 years. To mark the event, we include a brief history of the company and its commitment to Architecture, and, as an act of homage, feature the use of facebricks in the advancement of architecture over many decades in KwaZulu-Natal.

As an industry in KwaZulu-Natal, brickmaking begun with the arrival from Australia of the British national Robert Storm, and his four brothers George, William, Jack and Arthur. The brothers set up a brickworks at Clairwood Flats in April 1898 where bricks were hand-made. After weathering the exigencies brought about by the Anglo-Boer SA War, the company R Storm & Co moved their plant to Briardene where operations commenced mechanically on 10 August 1902 with a newly imported brick-press for extruded wire-cut bricks. To note the change in production and its timing, the brothers re-named the company *Coronation Works*, a name prompted by the simultaneous coronation of the immensely popular monarch, Edward VII\*.

During the War of 1914–17, restrictions were imposed on the use of iron. This prompted the



decision to manufacture roofing and flooring tiles, and the consequent qualifying change in the name to *The Coronation Brick & Tile Co. Ltd.*

Thereafter, the senior Storm brothers, Robert and William, acquired, amalgamated or absorbed their competitors, and equipped their brickworks with continuous kilns, to become the largest brick industry in the Southern Africa by 1936! That trend continued until in 1969 the KZ-N-based Tongaat-Hulett group acquired a controlling interest. However, that did not stop expansion, for in 1978 the Transvaal competitor, *Brickor*, was acquired and advanced *Corobrik* to 2nd largest brick manufacturer in the world.

With the dawn of the new millennium, ownership of *Corobrik* changed from local to international, with the acquisition in May 2001 by the Danish company Scandinavian Building Systems. But, it's 'business as usual' for the sole national manufacturer of clay-masonry products, with its factories operating according to international standards governed by ISO 9002.

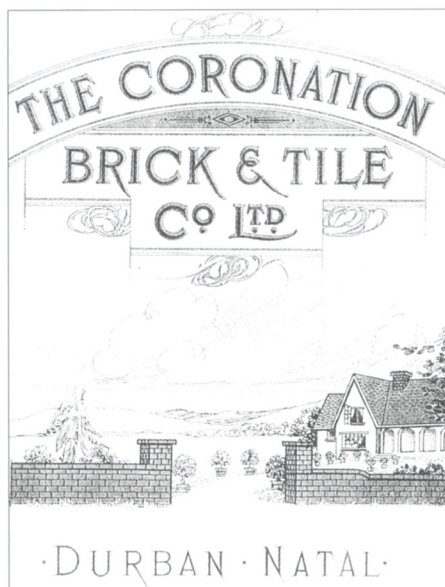


With the ushering in of the new name *Corobrik* in 1976, begun its sole-sponsorship of this journal, the only journal of a regional Institute of Architects in South Africa. A decade later, *Corobrik* embarked on encouraging and advancing architectural design among students, when in 1986 the company initiated the prestigious annual 'Corobrik Student of the Year' prizes, which are awarded at regional level and finally at national level. Similarly, architects' and architectural students' congresses, as well as special functions such as the KZ-NIA Centennial Banquet in 2001, have been sponsored. In turn, in 1996, the title Patron of Architecture was conferred upon *Corobrik* by KZ-NIA, an honour followed by the national counterpart SAIA in 1998.



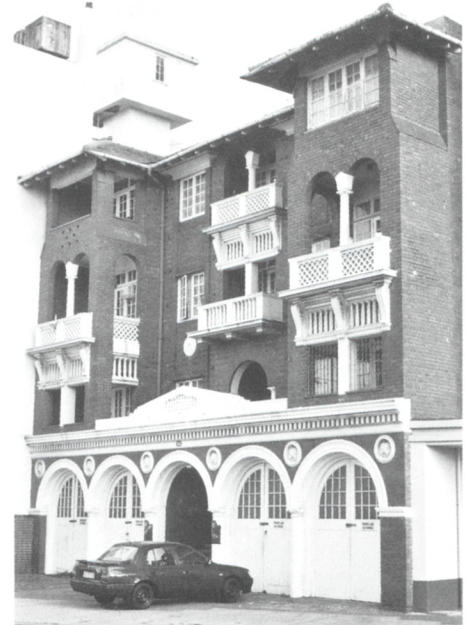
On the occasion of the centenary of *Corobrik*, President Tricia Emmett, members of the KZ-NIA and the secretariat, congratulate the brick-makers, admire and thank them for their support of the Institute and the promotion of Architecture, and wish them well in all future kneading, moulding and bonding.

Walter Peters, Editor



\*On the death of Queen Victoria on 22nd January 1901, her oldest son Albert Edward (1841-1910) acceded to the throne as Edward VII, King of Great Britain & Ireland. When at last the Anglo-Boer South African War came to an end in May, the coronation was set for 26th June 1902 but, for reasons of health, it had to be postponed to 9th August 1902. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Being non-monumental in appearance, yet durable, brick is especially desirable as a facing material.



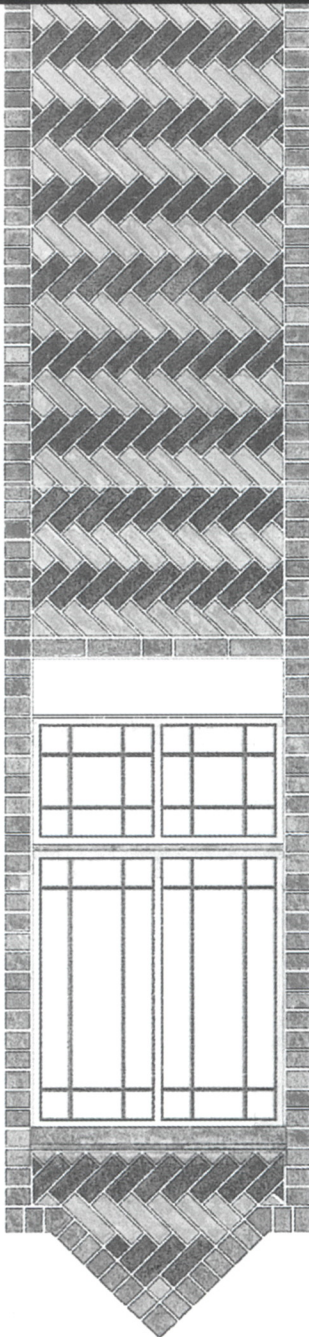
▲ **UNION PERIOD** An expanse of English bonded facebrick with accented colonettes, a pediment, arches and medallions: *Doddington*, 160 Victoria Embankment, Durban, 1926. Architect: AA Ritchie McKinley



▲ **INTERNATIONAL STYLE** Sun screens in concrete project from the brick walls. Deeply recessed joints and flush perpends to the brickwork emphasize horizontality: *Thompson Savage* building, 2 Baker Street, Durban, 1941. Architects: Chick Bartholemew & Poole

► **ART DECO** (Right) Multi-coloured (polychromatic) bricks in fields of chevron pattern, with 'candy-striped' pilasters: *Jubilee Court*, 83 Clarence Road cnr 7th Ave, Durban, c1935. Architect not determined.





► **MODERNISM** Sun screens in brickwork characterise the *Municipal Offices* in Church Street, Pietermaritzburg, 1964.

The competition-winning architects successfully motivated for the use of specially imported bricks to continue the particular characteristic of the historical Pietermaritzburg salmon bricks, which warm, soft-textures unified the whole of the city.

*Architects: F Lamond Sturrock & J Barnett, Associated Architects, Cape Town.*



► **BRUTALISM** Brick panels of stretcher bond with 'bucket-handle' joints used as infilling to the expressed reinforced concrete framed structure with, in the foreground, hard landscaping in brick.

*Denis Shepstone Building, University of Natal, King George V Ave, Durban, 1971-2.*



Craig Hudson



▲ **POSTMODERNISM** welcomes ornamentation and takes motifs from the canon of classical architecture, eg the cylindrical forms, and the columns to the clerestory: *Electricity Sub-Station, St Thomas' Rd, Durban, 1997-8.*

*Architect: Roy Farren*

► **MODERN**

**HINDUISM** reinterprets traditional forms and details in facebrick: *Ramakrishna Temple and Ashram Complex, Glen Anil, Umhlanga Rocks, 1994.*

*Architects: Naren Mistry & Vikram Desai*



Measured and rendered elevation by Yr2 student Erica Coskey, 2002.





## Emerging Architects

### Cathedral at Cliffdale

Willams Associate Architects



With barely 20 houses at Cliffdale, and a congregation of some 300 souls, a cathedral with seating for 2500 is a contradiction in terms. However, the African Congregational Church of South Africa already owned the land and a large house, occupied by its President, and it was argued that with the high accessibility and visibility from the N3 highway, the cathedral should cater for regional church functions eg the annual conference, large weddings and funerals, as it now does.

Traditionally, Christian churches were cruciform in plan, with priests 'the professionals', up front, 'doing all the work' while the congregation was seated in a long, thin nave extending away from the priest down the long leg of the cross. But, today's theology espouses a 'priesthood of all believers', hence church designs have tended to be semi-circular in plan, which too was the brief for this cathedral. However, the brief also called for the church to 'look like a cathedral' and to be identified by steep roofs and flying buttresses, not the characteristics of a circular plan.

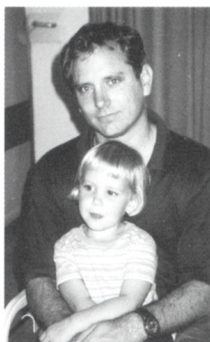
These requests resulted in the subterfuge of steep slate concealing a shallow-pitched steel sheeted roof, and concrete columns as translations of flying buttresses, structurally active only at the rear. The circular theme pervaded all design decisions, including furniture and fittings, and the words of Barrie Biermann still ring in Bill's ears "if you draw it on plan, draw it in elevation".



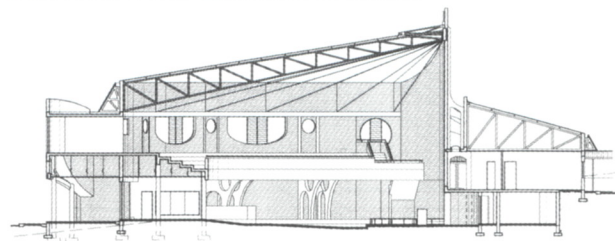
Bill Williams graduated at Natal in 1993. He designed this cathedral while managing the Durban office of the practice Leach & Van der Walt, Newcastle. Following the fatal motor accident of Tom Leach in 2000, and an economy in which architectural practices in KZ-N were closing and architects leaving in droves, Bill too was seriously looking abroad and almost ended up running an Irish office in Moscow!

While worshipping incognito in a sister congregation, a member who could not have known Bill was contemplating acquiring a practice, spoke prophetically to him, saying God would bless his business and it would prosper. This blessing and the old adage to 'buy when everyone else is selling' prompted negotiations which resulted in Bill's purchase of the office – without incurring debt, from the profits accrued to the practice!

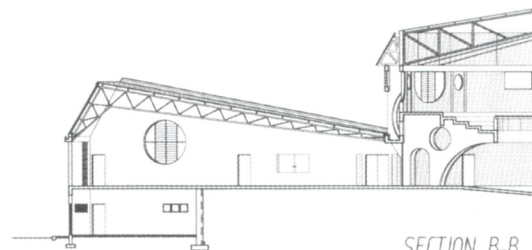
"And now, after a year of practising as Williams Associate Architects, I must admit that my practice has prospered!"



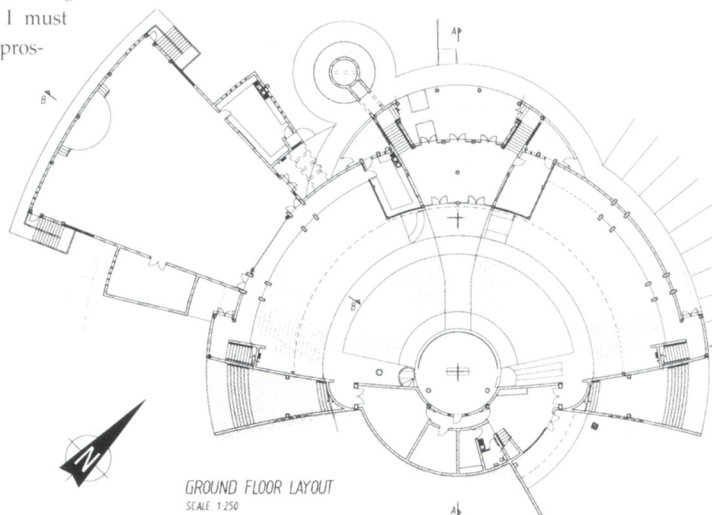
Bill with daughter Katya.



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B



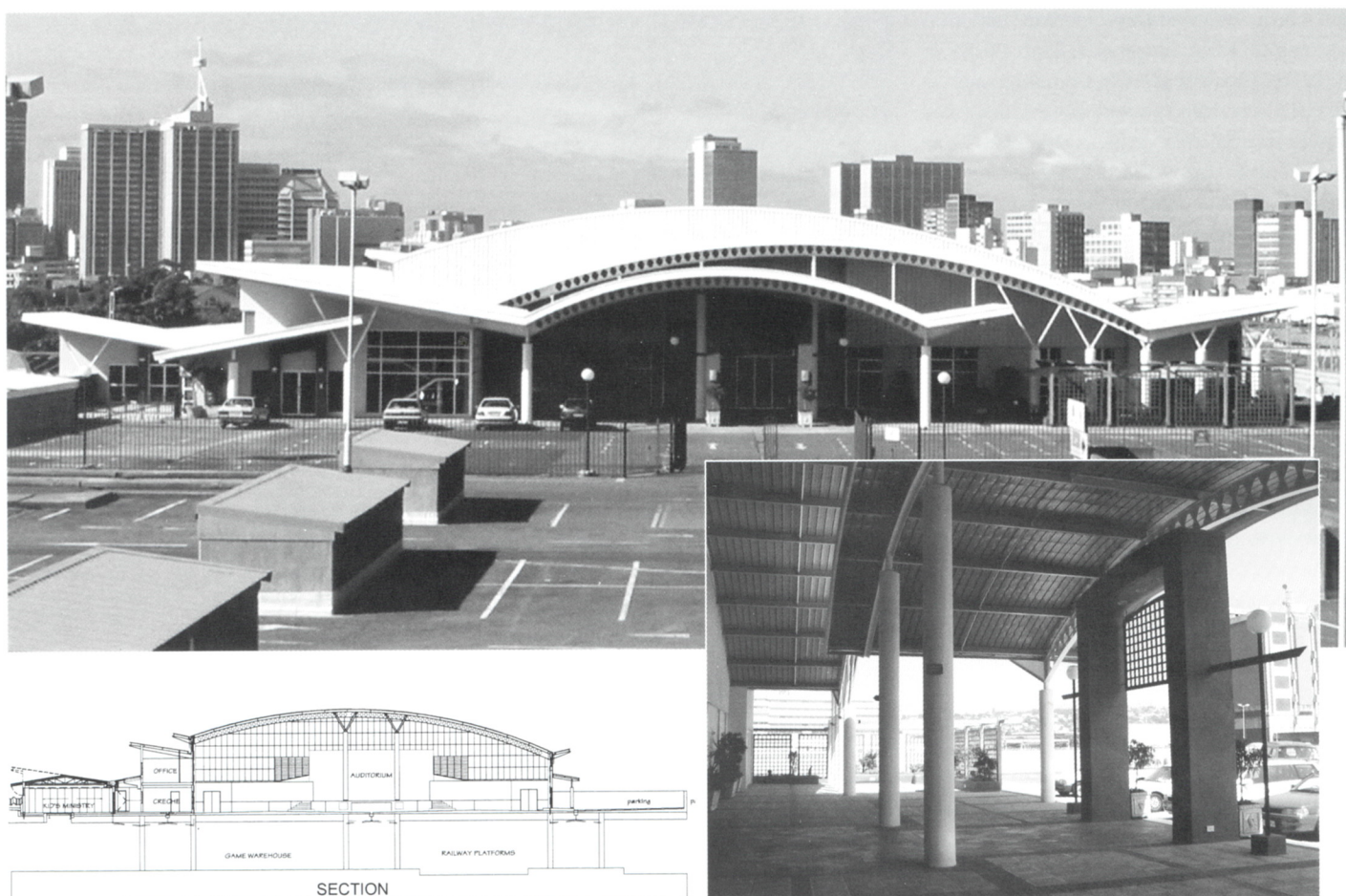
GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT  
SCALE 1:250



## Emerging Architects

### Glenridge Church International, Durban Station

PSA Architects, Durban



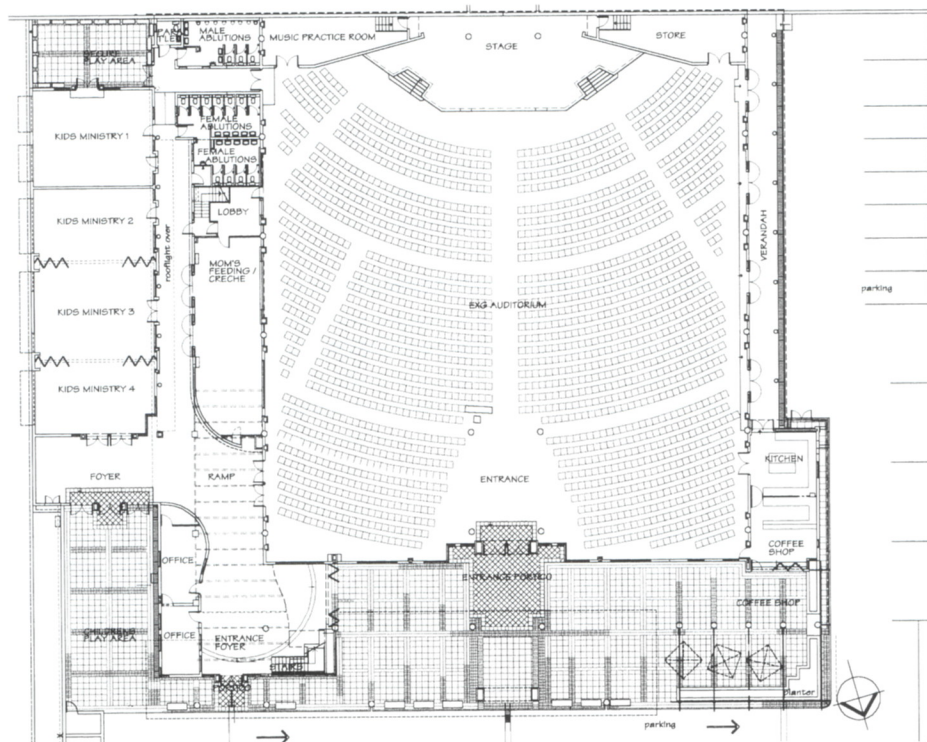
After various moves from a garage to a drill hall to a marquee, this church (founded in 1983) was wanting to locate close to the city centre permanently. Unable to purchase land, members explored the possibility of building on the underused parking area atop Durban's railway station.

Constraints included adhering to the structural grid with that of the platforms below; and adapting the budget based on warehouse design, to liturgical use. Thus the auditorium is a large rectangular space, preceded by a verandahed forecourt and an entrance lobby, and on one side, seminar and group spaces with offices above.

The vaulted roof was both spatially appropriate and the most cost-effective, and was 'tipped on its side' to permit views from the offices into the auditorium.



Peter Schwerzel graduated at Natal in 1989 with the degree B.Arch. After working with Bruce Stafford Associate Architects in Durban for a number of years, Peter 'phased himself out' dur-



ing the period 2000–01, a move prompted by a combination of 'boldness and faith' as well as a desire to pursue his own direction in architecture. But, winning the KZ-N Wildlife tender in May 2001 for a new

luxury hotel to replace the redundant Royal Natal National Park Hotel in the northern uKhahlamba-Drakensberg, confirmed Peter's decision to 'paddle his own canoe'.



## Emerging Architects

### Arts & Crafts Centre, Empangeni

Charles Taylor Architect, Empangeni

The Local Economic Development Fund aims to establish self-sustaining facilities which, in turn, will stimulate economic growth, especially of disadvantaged sectors. This facility called for the provision of stalls where artists and craftspeople could both work and display their creations, within an environment inviting and safe for tourists and visitors.

The initial idea, by a sponsor, to build a large thatched hut was abandoned once the spatial implications became apparent. Instead, the nature of the site, on the corner and opposite the existing museum, and the prevalence of circular forms in indigenous architecture and layout, suggested the concept of stalls on the perimeter of a public space.

Located at the main entrance to town, at the gateway to Zululand with its battlefields and game parks, the provision of a tourist office with ablutions and a food outlet became obvious components of the brief. Fortunately, these facilities could be accommodated within the existing museum.

The entrance to the Centre integrates an amphitheatre for dramatic productions, while providing a shaded seating area when not in use. On the floor of the central space is a 'walk-on map' of KwaZulu-Natal, marked out by pavers and tinted grano, with aluminium ingots to identify towns and resorts.

The circular form called for the resolution of some unusual technical problems, particularly of the roof. This is covered with corrugated sheets of zinc-aluminium-alloy and alternating flat panels, which fall internally to a circular



box gutter in reinforced concrete. Any doubts about the effectiveness of this essentially 'funnel' design were dispelled after the roof resisted a sub-tropical downpour of 340mm in 24 hours.

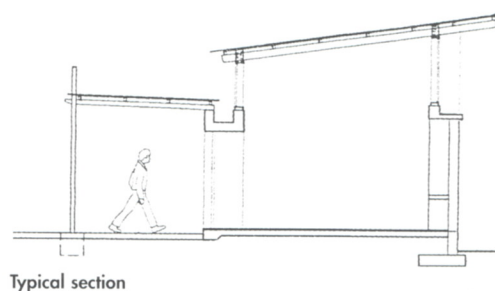
Charles Taylor graduated from the University of Port Elizabeth in 1991. After gaining experience in the practice of Schmidt, Hicks & Van der Walt in Port Elizabeth, he migrated to KZ-N and established his own office in Empangeni in 1994, surviving initially on a contract appointment from Interarc Architects.



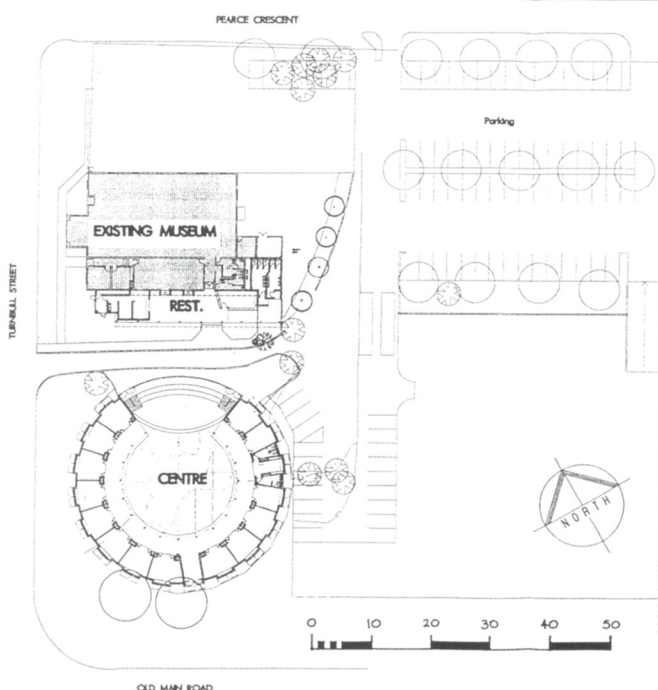
In this remote location, architects gain all-round experience without specialization in any one building type, and to counter the fluctuating economic cycles, website development and furniture design

have become part of the practice repertoire.

Craig Harris, Natal graduate of 1991, administered the contract for the Arts & Crafts Centre.



Typical section

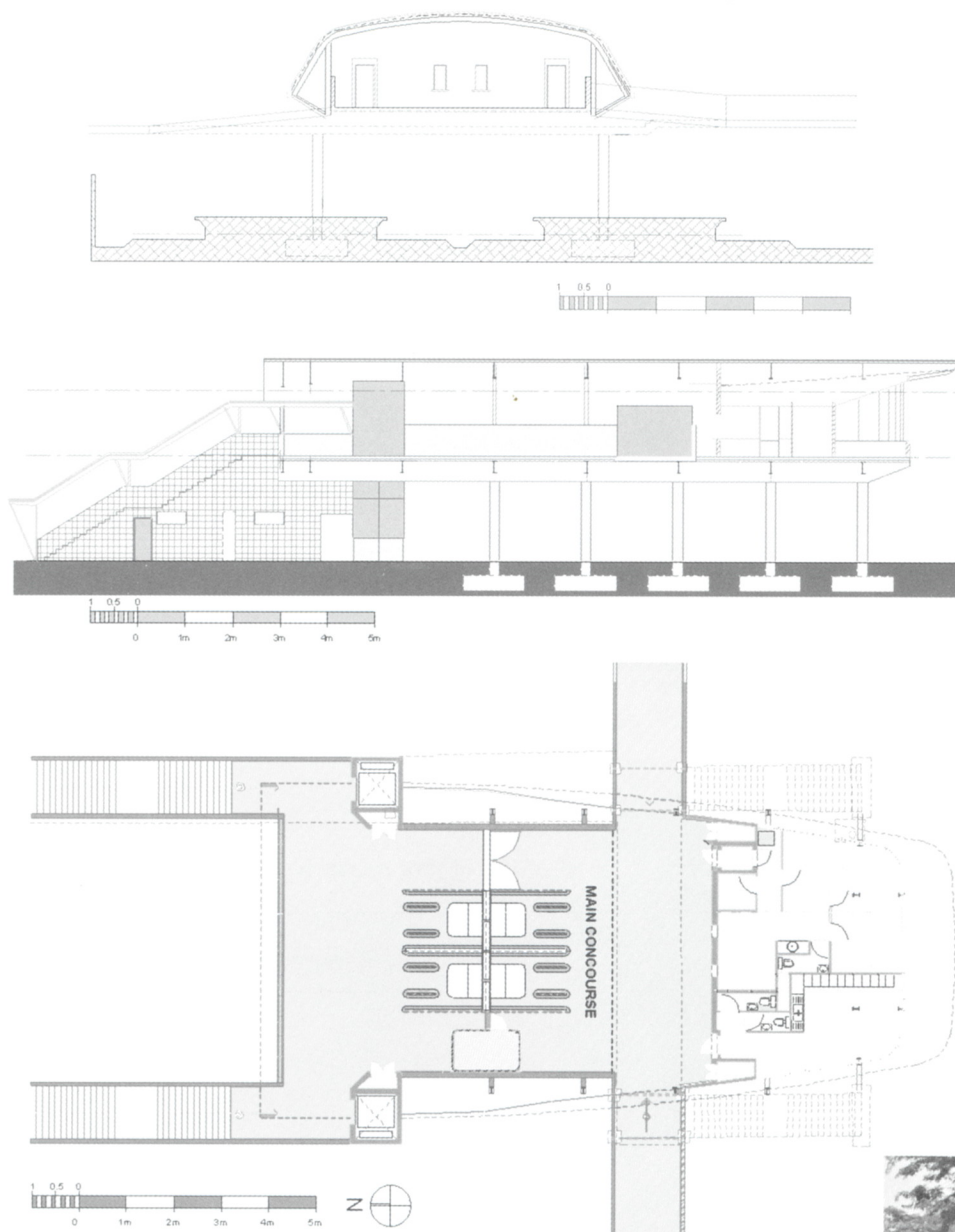


Detail of 'walk-on map'



## *Emerging Architects*

### **Umbilo Station Upgrade** *Langa Makhanya & Associates*



The brief for this suburban station called for an upgrade. Yet, Mino questioned the brief and convinced the client body, Intersite, that nothing less than a thorough re-conceptualising was required, hence the title for the project changed to 'Major Upgrade of Umbilo Station'. However, as a design had been supplied and the commission was to begin with Work Stage 3, the redesign was undertaken *pro deo!*

A new train shed suspended over the tracks was built and accessed by the existing bridges from both sides. Besides ticket sales, public waiting area and turnstiles, the shed accommodates the stationmaster's offices and staff facilities. While both gable ends overlooking the tracks are fully glazed and protect the facility from driving rain, cross-ventilation is induced through the design of the cross-section where the eaves oversail the structure.

The station with its faceted shed roof, partly 'slipping off' the building and accentuated by the ochre yellow fascia (livery of *Metro Rail*), has become a new reference point along the Southern Freeway. In his design, Mino has created a 'place' from what was a siding.

**Minenhle (Mino) Makhanya** graduated at Natal in 1997. While at University he gained experience with ZAI Architects, and met fellow Durbanite, **Ndabezinhle (Ndabo) Langa**, who simultaneously graduated and worked in the Durban offices of Stauch Vorster.

After participating in the Third International Masterclass (with Lebbeus Woods as tutor) hosted by the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam in 1998, and despite a firm job offer with a Dutch

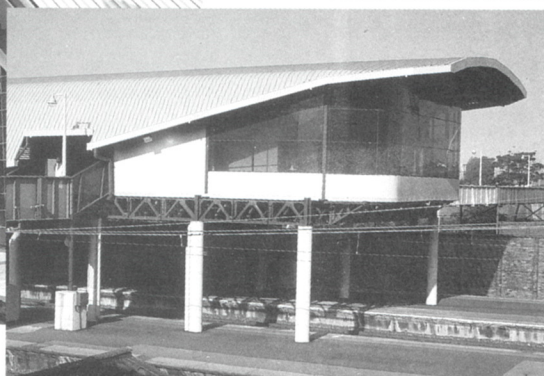
practice, Mino returned to SA for family reasons and to set up practice in Durban with Ndabo in September 1998 – with, as yet, no substantial commissions!

But, the experimental approach encouraged by Woods left an indelible mark.

Three-and-a-half years on and the practice has flourished, with an office in Johannesburg too. To keep their design skills honed, the partners (and occasionally senior staff) make annual architectural pilgrimages of about a fortnight's duration, keeping close contact with Woods's associate in Bern, Guy Lafranchi, as well as

inspecting new signature buildings in Europe and Scandinavia.

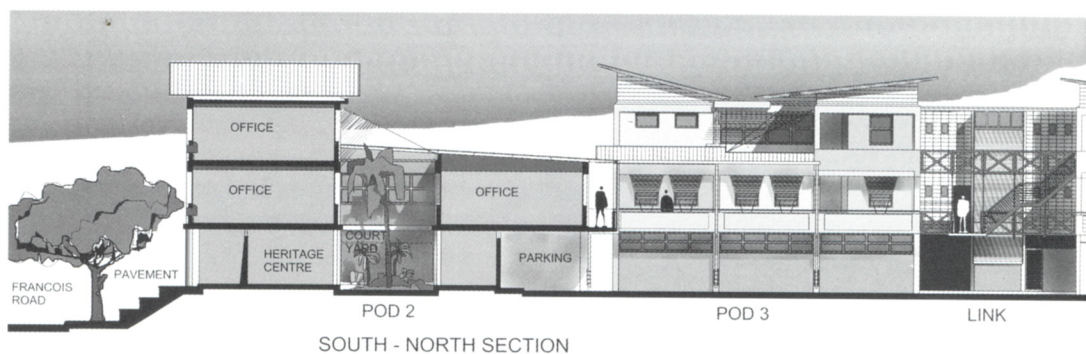
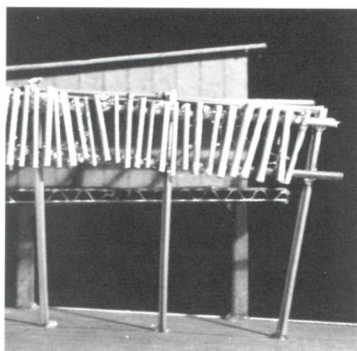
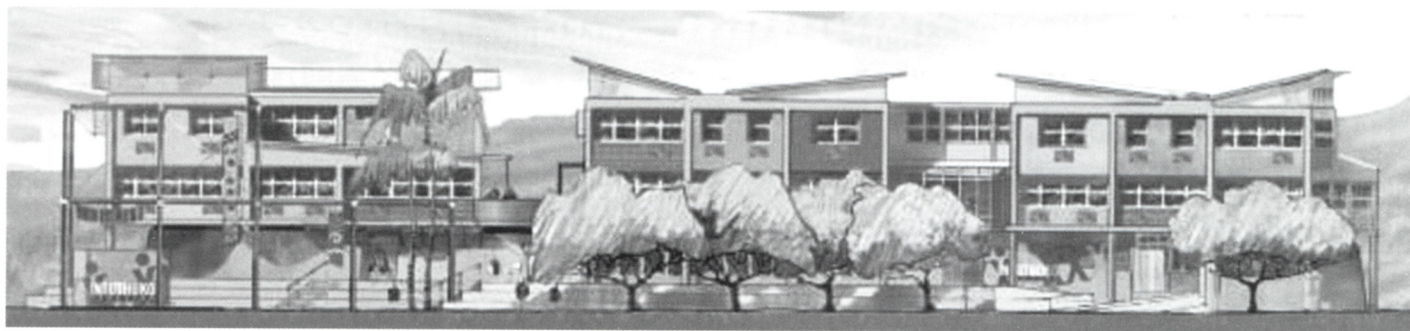
Mino was elected to the KZ-NIA Regional Committee in 2000 and served as a juror on the 2001 Awards of Merit programme.





## Emerging Architects

### Intothukho Junction, Cato Manor, Durban East Coast Architects



This project resulted from winning the design competition called for by Cato Manor Development Association in 1999, the first notable achievement of the practice. The brief for the 'Administrative Support Centre' was for the provision of office space for the Association and other NGO organisations, with limited commercial accommodation on the corner site.

The design addresses the following issues:

**Form:** The massing is variegated with a number of units, informally aligned, making reference to the tapestry of housing in the area, both formal and informal. The mono-pitched roofs serve to express that simple urban vernacular.

**Grain:** Colours and finishes reflect the varied nature of local building, as do thatching laths used as sunscreens to the windows. 'Card-board' housing of the area is reflected in the thin metal sheeted roofs.

**Public-Private interface:** The office space is elevated on pilotis allowing for an incremental expansion of the commercial spaces at street level. A battered serpentine wall snakes continuously under the office floors marking a clear distinction between the public pavement and the private parking spaces. The wall is ruptured in places to permit vehicular access and controlled visitor entry points.

**Street-square:** At the corner, the building units are set back to provide a setting for a public square for meetings, gatherings, events and exhibitions. This area can be temporarily roofed or screened for semi-private functions.

**Working environment:** Each office floor is per-

forated to permit a view of the central landscaped court-yards. These court-yards provide visual relief, act as light wells and give access to fresh air.

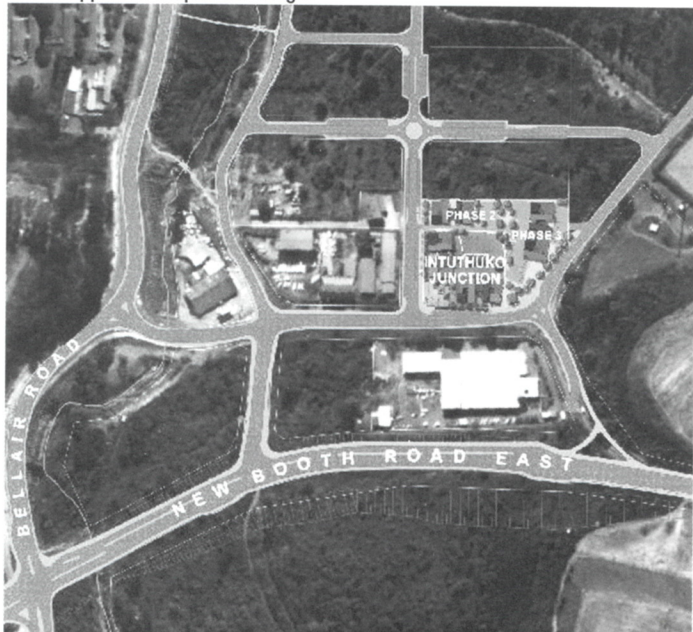
**Urban design:** This concept with a hard edge or barrier to the street and a soft, secure core, is appropriate to any urban block.

**Complexity & dialogue:** The development explores, and attempts to make explicit and legible, a dialogue between the diverse poles of disparate and divided communities in Durban. This includes the often discordant tension between formal and permanent, informal or temporary, between cheap and loud, or polished & polite.

**Loud & proud:** The building aims to express the confidence



Tower support for suspension bridge.



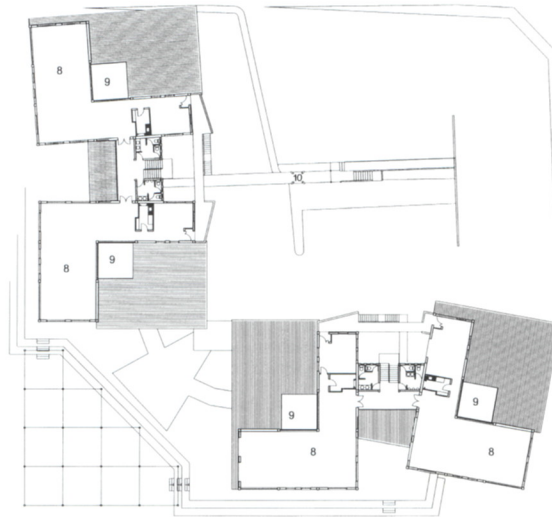


of both developers and sponsors (EU) and the setting of the example for appropriate development within a loose, urban framework.

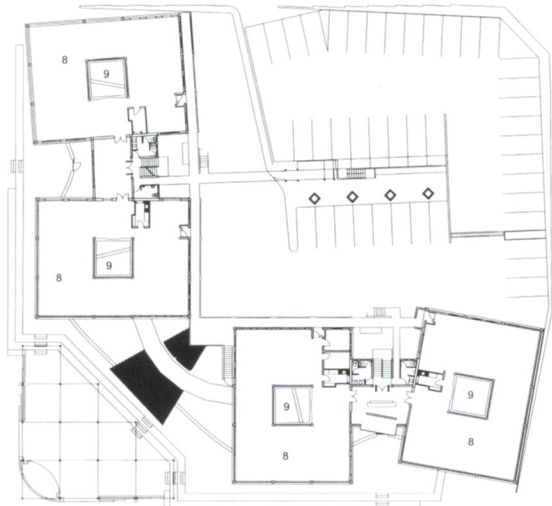
In conclusion, the building is almost fully let at competitive rents. Consequently, two further units with commercial and office space are to be built on the northern boundary

Dissatisfied with his qualification as an electronic technician (Technikon Natal), **Dave Barrow** enrolled for Architecture at Natal, to graduate *B.Arch cum laude* in 1992. There upon he became employed in the limited practice of his teacher, Derek van Heerden, before emerging as a partner in East Coast Architects, formed in 1998 with Derek, fellow Natal graduate **Steve Kinsler**, and **Coy Dlamini**.

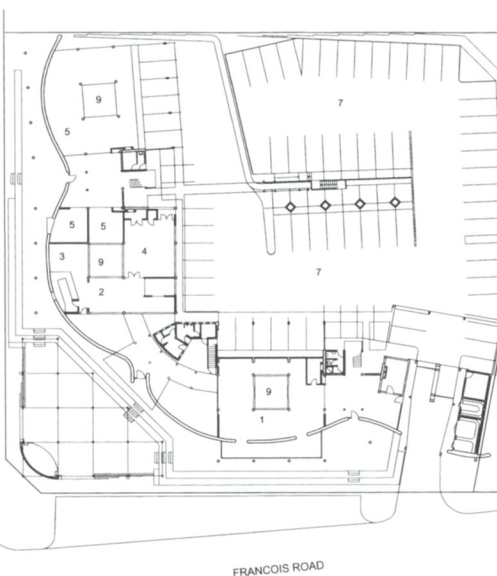
Derek van Heerden graduated with a B.Arch degree in 1982, and joined the architectural office of the Urban Foundation before entering into partnership with fellow Natal graduate Ms Jenny Whitehead in 1985. After joining the full-time staff of the University of Natal as a Lecturer in 1994, Derek maintained a solo practice.



Second floor



First floor



Ground floor



Francois Road entrance.



Corner Francois Rd and New High Street.



Angela Buckland



NEW HIGH STREET

FRANCOIS ROAD

1. Interpretative Centre
2. Tourism Office
3. e-Café
4. AV Room
5. Shop
6. Public square
7. Parking
8. Office spaces
9. Courts
10. Suspension bridge



CATO MANOR ROAD

ABOVE LEFT: Note thatching laths as sunscreens.  
LEFT: Note the built-in seats along open passages.



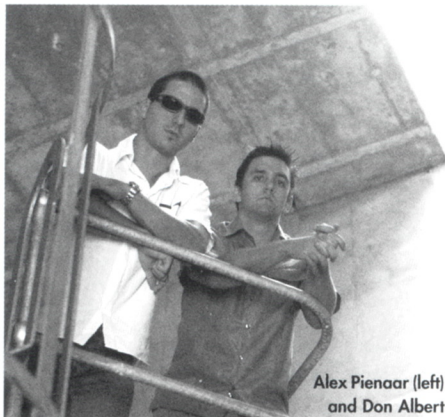
## Emerging Architects

### ICON Institute of Professional Rugby, University of Pretoria *soundspacedesign cc — Architecture & Urban Design, Durban* *in collaboration with KWP Architects\*, Pretoria*

*\*formerly Kemp Wegelin & Partners (Architects of Record: KWPSSD)*

Don Albert was contracted as conceptual designer for this Hi-Performance centre on the off-campus sports grounds of the University of Pretoria, in Hatfield. The brief called for a gymnasium, a sports science suite, an auditorium, teaching spaces, boutique-hotel accommodation, restaurant and bar, an administration building and, in Phase 2, dormitory accommodation and a grandstand.

In conceiving his design, Don sought a commonality between the abstract notions of sport, institution, media and campus. The expressive qualities of these notions informed much of the formal dialogue of the buildings, as did a 'functional symbolism' rooted in the early modern tradition that has thrived on the 'Tuks' (University of Pretoria) campus and surrounding suburbs. Here can be found a modern regionalism, one that echoes the heroics of an international agenda.

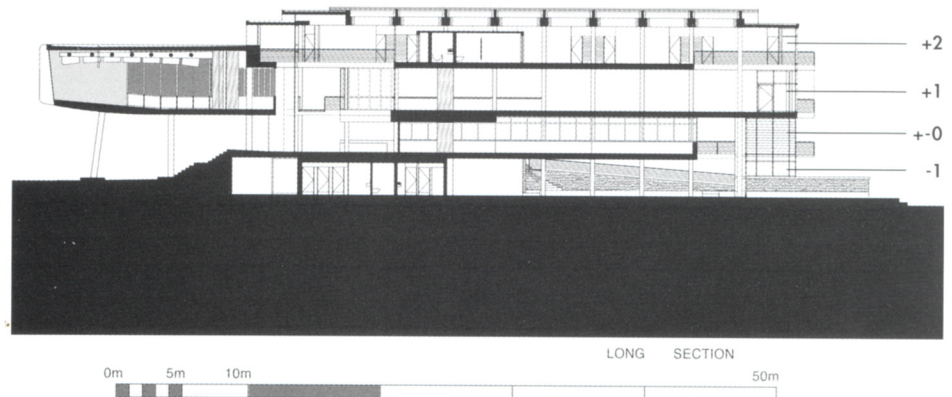


Alex Pienaar (left)  
and Don Albert

Don Albert graduated at Natal (B Arch *summa cum laude*, 1993; PG Dipl in Architecture (with Distinction), 1994; Le Sueur Travel Scholarship, 1993) and proceeded in 1996 on a Fulbright scholarship to the University of California, Los Angeles campus (UCLA), where he gained the degree M Arch (Urban Design) in 1998. Subsequently, Don became employed in the offices of his mentor, Barton Myers, himself a former student and collaborator of Louis Kahn and AIA Gold Medallist. Here Don worked on the adaptive re-use of two 1960s Beverly Hills landmarks, the one (9350 Santa Monica Boulevard) winning first prize from the annual Beverly Hills Architectural Committee; the other, second prize!

Together with fellow Natal graduate Alex Pienaar (B Arch, 1994; B Arch (Adv), 1996) their practice *soundspacedesign cc* won the design competition for the Millennium Tower for *Portnet* (see KZ-NIAJ 1/2000), under construction on Durban's Bluff.

In September 2000, uniquely, the practice launched 'on-line house design algorithms in beta format', a venture which has spawned a number of designs, including a house in Plettenberg Bay, currently under planning review. And, as though time were no criteria, Don teaches digital design part-time in the 3rd Year studio.



Almer du Pisanie



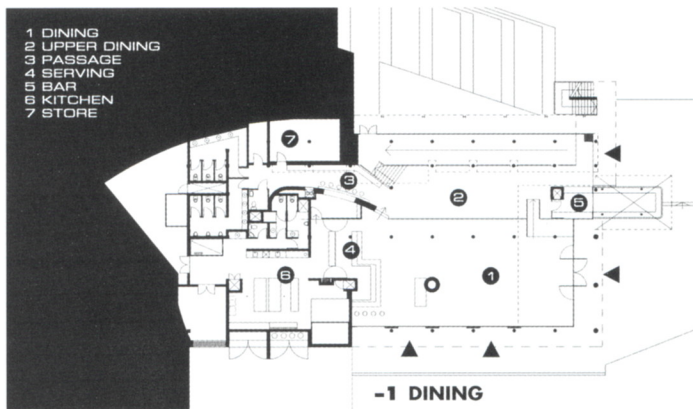
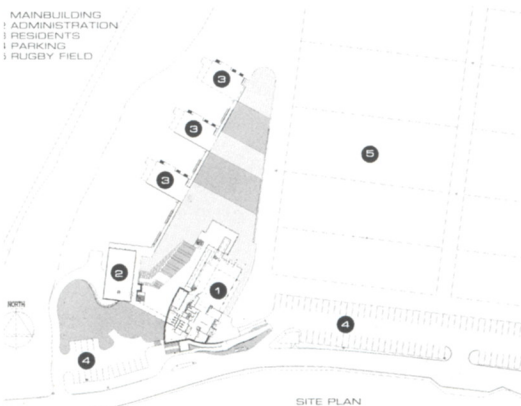
Almer du Pisanie

The main building is entered under the *portico*, created by the auditorium on tilted pilotis.



Almer du Pisanie



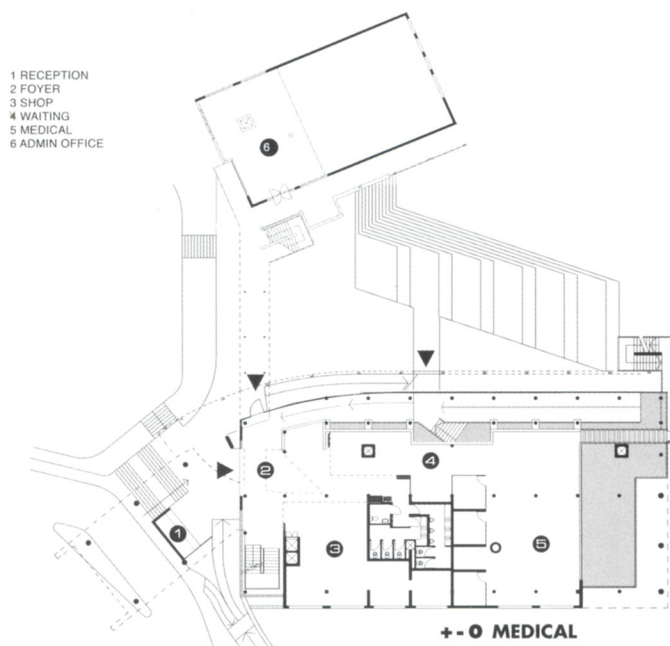
**PLAN -1**

The split-level arrangement of the dining room serves to maximize views out to the fields. Dining and bar areas are connected visually and volumetrically to the medical floor.

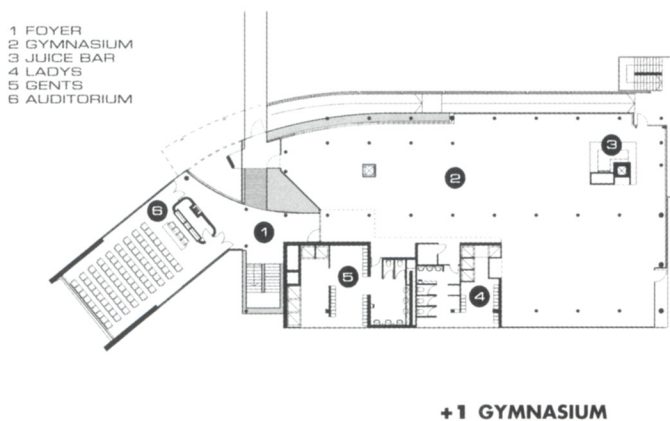
**PLAN + - 0**

The main building is accessed beneath the auditorium,

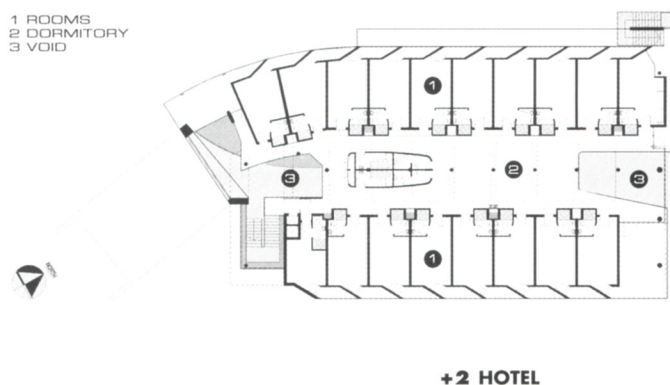
in the form of a *porte-cochère*. On this level is the sports science suite. Ramps descend to the dining level, or ascend to the gymnasium level.



**PLAN +1** The auditorium at left; and the gymnasium which commands extensive views to the rugby fields and the vlei beyond, captured by floor-to-ceiling glass walls, and tempered on the west by dense aluminium louvres. Gymnasium and hotel are connected spatially to maximize views and the ambience.



**PLAN +2** Boutique hotel accommodation for visiting sports teams. Every room has a private balcony. The fin walls shield the rooms from undesirable sun, while focusing views to either the fields or the river. A vaulted common area was created between the parallel rows of bedrooms, as was a large balcony to facilitate recreation of visiting teams.



**SITE PLAN** The wedge-shaped site provided cues for the spatial planning. The main building lies closest to the street, the administration building alongside. Access to the site is between these two buildings which 'acts as a literal and figurative fulcrum in the prospective sport-star's journey to the top'. Three dormitory units (Phase 2) are located alongside the river, 'as a pastoral gesture to make students feel comfortable, yet spartan enough to reinforce the notion of a training academy'.

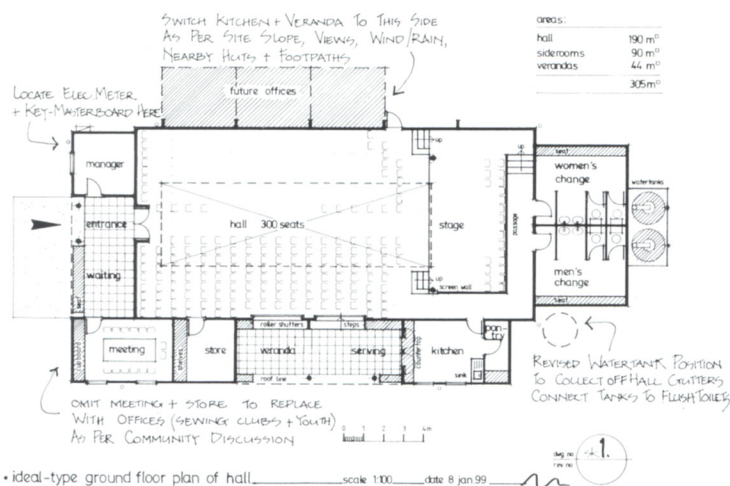
0m 5m 10m 50m



## Emerging Architects

### eMakhosi Community Hall, Ulundi District

Kirk White Architect, Durban



areas:	
hall	190 m <sup>2</sup>
side rooms	90 m <sup>2</sup>
verandas	44 m <sup>2</sup>
	305 m <sup>2</sup>

Kirk White began his studies in Architecture at Natal in 1975; spent a 'practical decade' from 1981-92 in exile in Zimbabwe; and returned as the politics in SA were changing, to complete his B.Arch degree in 1996.

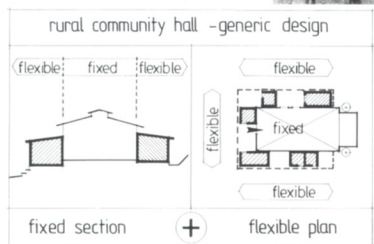
In 1997 Kirk began to practice on his own, working as a consultant within the NGO-sector in low-cost housing; for the KZ-N Provincial RDP Office on its community hall programme; and taught part-time at the University.

Political change in post-1994 South Africa brought with it new types of projects and also the chance for a new style of practice.

Architectural practice could move beyond social advocacy to working with and within NGOs and CBOs (community-based organisations) to build the brave new world. In this context, empowerment has meant heated discussions over rainwater tanks, and why less cement is sometimes better than too much. It has meant that project meetings compete for attendance against unscheduled cattle dipping programmes or infrequent taxi-bus timetables, and project shut-downs while remote roads dry out after the rains.

The community hall at eMakhosini, some 20 km west of Ulundi, is a prototype design (one of 4 sites within KZ-N) built to a fixed budget and time-frame, but with an open or flexible brief. At the inception, a generic design was presented (imposed) by the architect, respect-

The design committee.



fully accepted *in toto* at first, then gradually modified through community discussions in the meetings ahead. For this commission, the design resolution comprised a loose-fit plan with fixed section (see diagram). Additional floor-space was traded off against better quality finishes or on-the-job skills-training. Building solutions varied from site to site with differing physical conditions and according to the distinctive social composition of each community. The participatory decision-making process was useful to both the project definition and the committee experience.



Angela Buckland

This project for a new headquarters called for an administrative section which distinguishes between KZ-N and national freight operations; a regional collection, distribution and warehousing facility; a servicing and maintenance section for the truck fleet; and, in addition to the functional requirements, the building was to lend a new image to the company.

The level and highly visible site enjoys views to the south-west. To provide a sense of presence and of openness for new customers, the office section fronts the access road, is glazed and separated from the warehouse to which it provides a foil. The ground floor caters for freight in KZ-N; the upper level, reached via the double helical staircase within the rotunda, for national destinations. However, this staircase cannot be considered simply as a means of passing from ground to first floor, the space of the rotunda serves to volumetrically link the two operations.

Trucks round the warehouse, reverse up to the various doors for loading under the jagged canopy, and are serviced and washed at the rear. Coarse finishes were applied to vehicular areas, smooth or tactile finishes where human circulation occurs.

Designing the building was an interactive process in which the client felt that he had been a participant. As a result, the end-product well fulfilled his original intentions or, to paraphrase his words "at the end of the day", he "got a lot of bang for his buck".



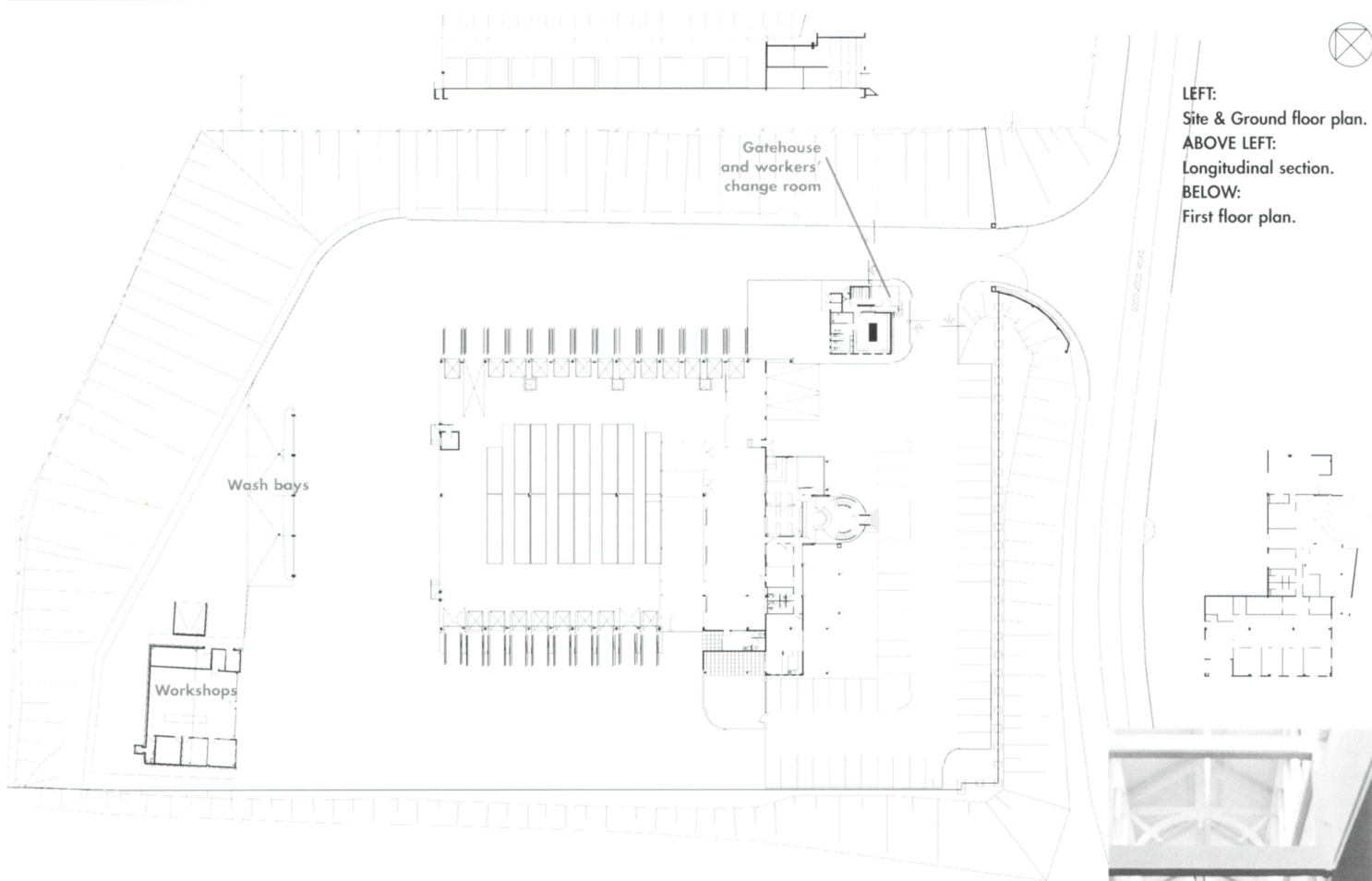
## Emerging Architects

### Bigfoot Express Freight, Westmead

Adrian Carter Hallam Architects (now H<sub>2</sub> Architects), Durban



Angela Buckland



LEFT:  
Site & Ground floor plan.  
ABOVE LEFT:  
Longitudinal section.  
BELOW:  
First floor plan.

**Adrian Hallam** graduated at Natal in 1991. After two years in the offices of Kerry McNamara in Windhoek, Adrian joined Elphick Proome Architects in Durban, to become an Associate. An offer in 1997 to collaborate with a Johannesburg-based practice in upgrading supermarkets in KZ-

N, saw Adrian enter into private practice.

In April 2001, together with his University contemporary, **Eerhard Huizinga**, they founded the practice H<sub>2</sub> Architects, with offices across the harbour, in Point Rd.

Eerhard graduated in 1992, and worked

for Maria Albüch in Vienna before establishing Du Rand Huizinga Architects, with his wife Jane, fellow Natal graduate, in 1994. With the formation of H<sub>2</sub> Architects, Jane is concentrating fully on her mosaics studio, located within the same office space.

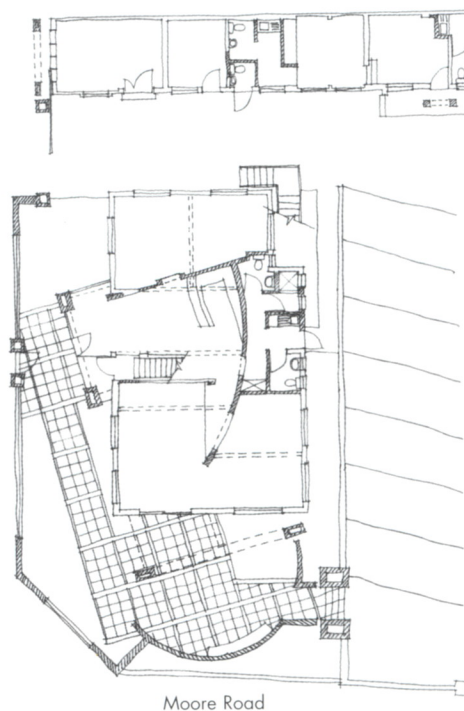




## Emerging Architects

### BLS Marine, Durban

Pedro de Mello Machado Architects, Richards Bay



BLS Marine opted to relocate and begin operations in its own premises. Proximity to the harbour and related services led to the purchase of a 1950s double-storey residential building with porch at the corner of Moore and Bulwer Roads. Because the building had no particular architectural character to conserve, it was decided that remodeling would be the appropriate approach.

The brief was to accommodate the company operating initially from the ground floor only with the upper floor available for tenants. This was achieved by creating a dual entrance and separating the stair by means of a glass wall. Once the company occupied the entire building, the secondary entrance and the glass wall alongside the stair would be removed.

"It is heartening to know that there are still clients willing and flexible enough to allow the architect some experimentation and design freedom'.

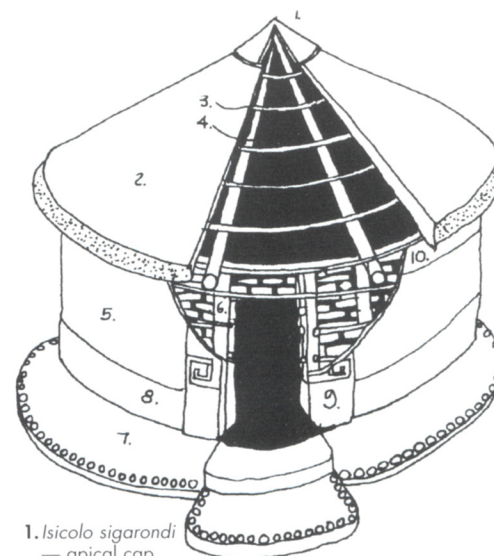


**Pedro de Mello Machado** was born in Lisbon, Portugal. His family relocated to Lourenco Marques (Maputo) in 1970, and on the Independence of Mocambique in 1975, moved to Richards Bay where Pedro attended high school.

He enrolled at Technikon Natal to acquire a Higher National Diploma in 1989.

Following a period of military conscription, he resumed his studies in Architecture at University of Port Elizabeth obtaining the degree BArch in 1996.

After practical training with CSKO Architects in Richards Bay, he established his own practice in that town in 2000.



1. Isicolo sigarandi — apical cap
2. Thatched roof
3. Wattle purlins
4. Wattle/gum-pole rafters
5. Plastered wall
6. Structural post/gum-pole
7. External stoep
8. Painted dado
9. Plastered decorative band
10. Open/plastered & painted eaves shadow detail

Typical stone-packed dwelling in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal

AS A NATION the Zulu people rarely decorate their buildings. A grass building tradition makes it difficult to integrate pattern into the form, save the incorporation of chevron shapes in the decorative rope-work that may characterise some Zulu buildings reflecting a strong Swazi influence. Thomas Baines mentioned in his travels in the 1870s, a grass-built tradition incorporating a form of decoration. This was on the inside of the hut on a plastered upstand some two or three feet high at the point where the grass meets the floor. This area was occasionally decorated with the application of pumpkin seeds which were then removed, leaving a shiny depression in the wet mud.

The tradition of the grass built dome, the beehive hut or *iqhughwana*, persisted widely in KwaZulu-Natal until relatively recently. Anthropologists such as Knuffel tackled the conundrum of the domical buildings, dispelling myths as to their simplicity and documenting their complexity. James Walton also widely studied these indigenous building types, adding to the sparse history that we have of these buildings. Support for this 'modest' building type to be classified 'architecture' came from Biermann who reinforced the 'complexity' of the building design.

Msinga is a region central to the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Its surprisingly barren landscape supports little in terms of viable agriculture, yet this area is home to some 161 000 people belonging to 6 different tribal groups. Poverty, faction fighting, absenteeism and infertile landscape form the backdrop to an area that is surprisingly rich in material culture: headrests, beadwork, ear plugs (as collected by Jolles, Mikula and Raats), ceramics and woodwork. An important component of material culture in any society that is often neglected is the architecture.

Grass buildings dominated the barren and rocky landscapes of the Msinga district until relatively recently. They are mentioned by



## Msinga Architecture

### The Emergence of a Decorated Vernacular Architecture amongst the Mthembu and Mchunu People of Msinga

Chatterton, a magistrate at Tugela Ferry in the 1950s. Cyril Ovens, a trader selling cloth to trading stores, recalls them in the 1950s as well, together with decorated *rondavels* in the Pondo tradition, that were embellished with etched figures similar to the forms found in the extraordinary beadwork of the area. People living in Msinga recall a consistent grass building tradition until about 25 years ago, that was replaced rapidly by the more sturdy Pondo-style *rondavel*.

The reasons for the disappearance of the labour and material-intensive grass-building tradition, appears to be manifold. Underlying the rationale are the basic principles of sustainability. The population is too large to be supported adequately by the land. The situation is so dire that women resort to cutting thatching grass on the verges of the N3 motorway, where cattle have no access. They may also purchase thatching grass from local European farmers.

Another reason for their demise is that the *rondavel* buildings, although thatched, are not as incendiary as the beehive, which burns quickly and smoulders for days. One of the chief characteristics of the social environment at Msinga is the prevalence of faction fighting which dates back to before the turn of the last century, and manifests itself in sporadic outbreaks of violence, particularly between the Mabaso and Mthembu clans.

This change over the last two decades to a cone-on-cylinder building type, slowly superseding the grass built tradition, is the epitome of the emergence of an *indigenous vernacular* building type. This is based on the principle that 'tradition' embodies that which is taught by one's elders, and is perpetuated unquestioningly. An indigenous vernacular, however, is a new building type, one that embraces some of the fundamental principles of the meaning behind the traditional structure, but interprets it in a wholly new fashion. In addition, the indigenous vernacular is constantly mutating, incorporating new materials and means of expression which enrich our architectural record.

Msinga, particularly the Mthembu and

Mchunu clan-areas, is noted for decorated buildings. Study has isolated six different broad categories of decoration in a temporal range. This shows that the new architecture encapsulates a contemporary decorative expression using a broad range of colours, yet graphically is still embedded in the traditional culture using the strong influence of the locally manufactured beadwork. The type of decoration is usually determined by the womenfolk, who paint in the absence of their men, who are based in Johannesburg and other urban areas for large parts of the year. Decoration may often be seasonal where the homestead is painted before the migrant labourers arrive home at Christmas.

The earliest wall decoration appeared in the late 1970s where Frescura noted a chevron type pattern to the flanking doorways of houses in the area. This superseded a simple dado and door-architrave plaster band which is reminiscent of Hlubi\* buildings. The chevron pattern developed into the *isimodeni* style, a basic design rationale which is still followed today, whether directly or in principle. The *isimodeni* followed closely the principles of beadwork design and worked around a basic 4 colour pattern which was closely adhered to. This is still practised periodically.

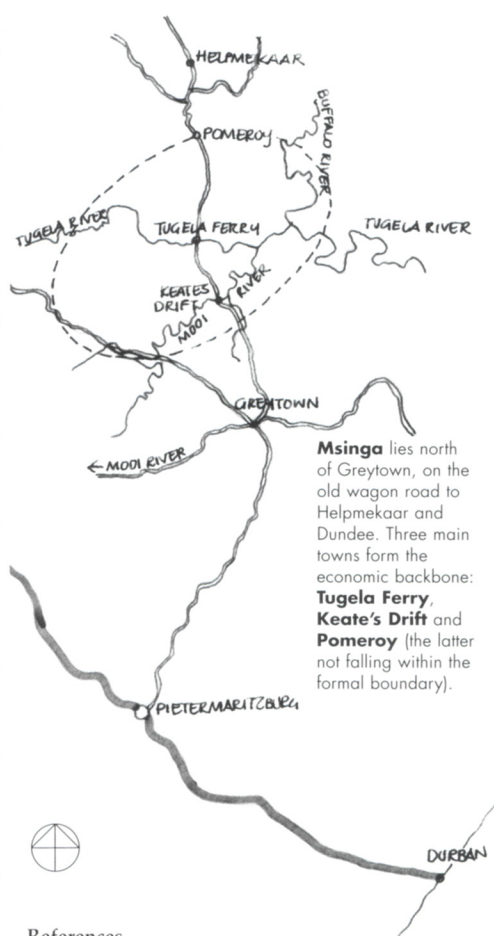
To reiterate, an important theme is the inability to isolate architecture from other material cultures that exist in the region, as one finds a plethora of cross-overs, particularly between such crafts as beadwork and ceramics, where the same motif repeats itself with regularity.

A more embracing approach to decoration of buildings has appeared in the last 5 years, where the entire building is covered in simple geometric designs, with panels echoing the door-flanking plaster bands, and a strict adherence to the principles of expressing the dado. This style co-exists with a more graphic, contractor-produced style, which is much bolder, has much more plaster relief work, and a variety of loosely represented organic objects such as chickens, trees and mountains. This level of specialisation itself is important as it conveys the importance of the decorative work in the

area, and at the same time, creates a decorative cul-de-sac as the possibilities of expression are more limited.

The Msinga buildings are a critical study in the emergence of new vernacular buildings in rural contexts.

\* The Hlubi people are members of the Southern Sotho language group who settled across along the Buffalo River c1880 in the Estcourt-Dundee area and at Nondweni near Nqutu.



Msinga lies north of Greytown, on the old wagon road to Helpmekeer and Dundee. Three main towns form the economic backbone: Tugela Ferry, Keate's Drift and Pomeroy (the latter not falling within the formal boundary).

#### References

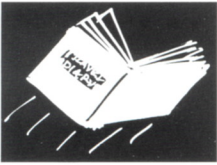
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Deborah (Debbie) Whelan graduated at Natal in 1986 with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Architecture. After gaining experience in the offices of Robert Brusse Architect (1986-89) and the Built Environment Support Group (BESG) of the University of Natal (1994-96), Debbie joined *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali* (Heritage KwaZulu-Natal) 1997-2001. During the latter period she served a 3-month internship with *Cornerstones Community Partnerships*, a US/ ICOMOS sponsored project in adobe building restoration in New Mexico. In 2002 she was awarded the degree M.Arch for her thesis on the indigenous architecture of the Msinga Valley, KZ-N, and joined the Department of Architecture at ML Sultan Technikon, Durban, as a Lecturer.







## Emerging Architects

### A Travel Diary: China



1 6 1 2 0 1

Dear Walter,  
Nihao from Zhong Hua - the Middle Kingdom as China is known in Mandarin. Travelling in the southern provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan. A lone trip will take us north to Beijing. Entered China at Shenzhen, the base of the Pearl River Delta. Rushing into a capitalist future, the area is China's economic boom zone. Seeing cities which could not be more international and villages which could not be more medieval. Travelling on buses which become moving menageries with bleating goats tied to roof-racks and silent trucks resolute beneath passenger seats. Destinations are announced on systems with a karaoke treble echo.

星

KZNIA Journal  
Durban  
South Africa

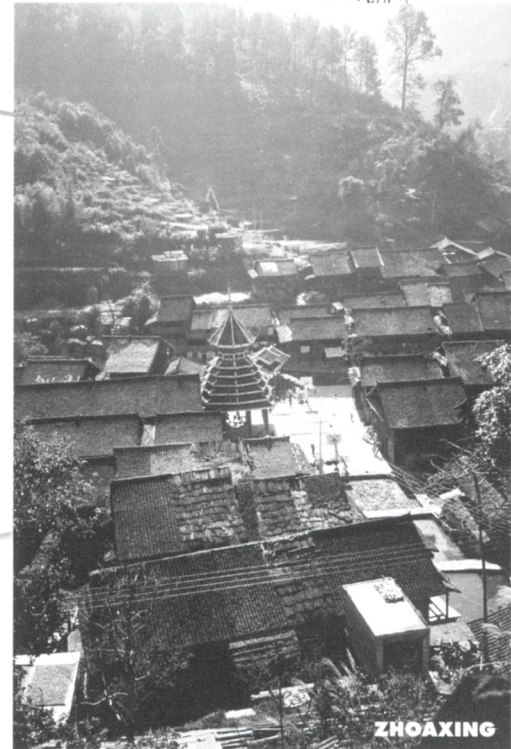
Unparalleled scenery of Lijiang Ba Lakan  
이강산수경관하 이가림  
漓江出版社  
LIJIANG PUBLISHING HOUSE

2 3 1 2 0 1

Dear Walter,  
In Zhaoxing, a traditional village of the Dong minority group, the public and private seamlessly blend. Houses form street edges and all domesticity adds to the activities of the town. Even a long-drop over a fallow paddy field stands in public view. The spatial organization of the town is highly articulate with 5 drum towers marking the areas of various clans in the village. Formerly surveillance posts, the timber towers are today gathering spaces of old men in indigo blue Mao suits either playing ma jiang or tending babies in papoose pouches. Each tower is preceded by a wind and rain bridge and significant towers face open squares where audiences gather for performances on raised stages.

神

KZNIA Journal  
Durban  
South Africa



ZHOAXING



Shangrila

04.01.02

Dear Walter,  
Travelling north of Zhongdian one reaches the Jietang Songlin Monastery. Home to 400 Buddhist monks the monastery is a vertical rise of temples and monk's quarters, fringed with stupas, prayer flags and glistening bronze sculptures. The crimson-erise and saffron of the monk's robes is electric against the uninterrupted blue of the Tibetan winter sky. In small rooms cloistered in the prayer halls monks make green tea between issuing blessing, and pay homage to an image of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. At midday in the main court the monks swirl hypnotically in the midday sun to the sounds of cymbals and horns.

白塔前朝殿前，青衲寺院高平。  
white monastery in a good repair, and lamas happy looks in the open air.  
秋波 攝



KZNIA Journal  
Durban  
South Africa

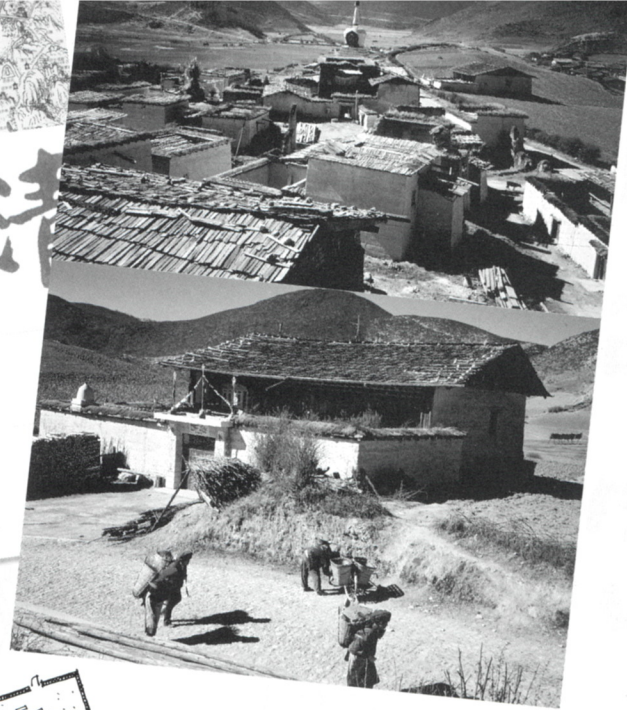
香格里拉



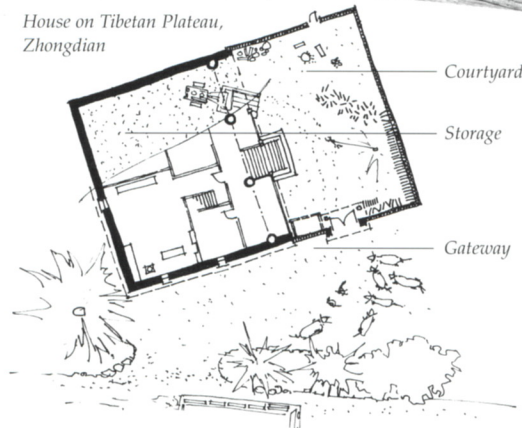
0 5 0 1 0 2

Dear Walter,  
Moving north of Kunming, the City of  
Eternal Spring in the Yunnan Province,  
we have reached the Tibetan Plateau  
and are nearing the source of the  
Yangste, called Jinsha Jiang in its upper  
reaches. Traditional adobe houses  
with battered walls of lime-washed  
white stand isolated on this landscape  
of distant horizons. The windows are  
small exquisitely framed punctured  
openings. Here the rural towns seem  
monuments to brutal communist-  
modernism with traditional houses  
relegated to the outskirts. Entry into  
these introverted houses is through a  
walled court stockpiled with reserves  
for winter. The robust walls belie the  
intricacy of delicately carved timber  
interiors, dimly lit.

KZNIA Journal  
Durban  
South Africa



House on Tibetan Plateau,  
Zhongdian



Courtyard

Storage

Gateway

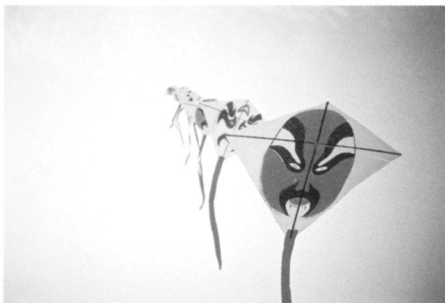
Stage

Drum Tower

Wind and Rain Bridge

Line drawings by Paul Dekker

ZHOAXING



1 1 0 1 0 2

Dear Walter,  
Beijing is a city woven together by  
fragments of imperial past; socialists  
sense of the civic and 21<sup>st</sup> century  
aspirations. Tian An Men Square of early  
morning kite flyers and dawn military  
parades at the raising of the red flag is a  
vast civic space. Private spaces contrast  
in their minuteness like the intimate  
courtyard houses along the city's  
hutongs old alleyways. The handover of  
Hong Kong in 1997 saw the 'window  
dressing' of prominent Beijing city block  
perimeters with modern concrete and  
steel high-rises. A small detour along  
the China of *guangliang* gates  
decorated with plum blossoms,  
dragons and seahorses.

同魅力 摄影 - 徐勇  
THE CHARM OF BEIJING'S HUTONGS BY XUYONG

POST CARD

KZNIA Journal  
Durban  
South Africa

貴

邮政编码:

On graduating at Natal  
(B Arch 1993; PG Dipl  
1994), **Nina Saunders**  
worked with Harber  
Associates before joining  
the Built Environment  
Support Group of the  
University of Natal in  
2000. In 1999 she was  
appointed jury member  
to both the SAIA KZ-N  
and OFSIA Awards

Programmes, the year in  
which she began part-  
time teaching at her *alma*  
*mater* and external exam-  
ining at Free State. In  
1998 she co-ordinated  
the SAIA *Archafrika*  
Conference, and was  
elected to the KZ-NIA  
Regional Committee for  
1999/2000 and again  
2001/02.

Nina has traveled  
widely. Kenya,  
Mocambique and  
Tanzania in Africa; UK,  
Czechoslovakia and  
France in Europe; and in  
Asia, India, and, at the  
turn of 2001/02, China,  
together with contempo-  
raries **Paul Dekker** and  
**Ian Hamlington**.





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**COROBRIK**  
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