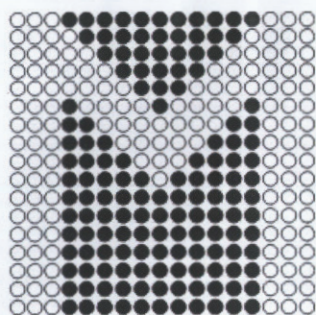


# ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION

IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994: 100+ PROJECTS

CONVENED AND EDITED BY ALBRECHT HERHOLDT





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# TUDOR CHAMBERS CHURCH SQUARE, CBD, PRETORIA

## GAPP ARCHITECTS AND URBAN DESIGNERS



**Project Address** 229 Church Street  
**Completed** 2008  
**Architectural Team** Teresa Frank  
**Heritage Consultants** Cultmatrix CC (K. A. Bakker & Nicholas Clarke)  
**Client** Alec Wapnick, for Burcade Properties  
  
**Contractor** AJ Renovatum  
  
**Photography** Karel Bakker, Nicholas Clarke  
**Website** [www.gapp.net](http://www.gapp.net)

Overlooking Church Square in the Pretoria CBD, Tudor Chambers was originally built in 1903. It was designed by John Ellis, a Scottish-born architect, who lived and worked in South Africa in the early 1900s. Coach magnate and businessman George Heys, commissioned it to function as a retail and office building (Mathews: 302). At the time of construction it was the tallest building in the city. Due to the disrepair that the building fell into, the City Property Group, being the owners since 2007, commissioned GAPP Architects and Urban Designers together with Cultmatrix to implement its restoration.

The main publically visible alteration to the building is the new tower on the northwest corner of the roof. The original tower fell over in heavy winds, thus the new structure is made of steel, being lighter and less affected by winds. It stands out as a new interpretation of the old, providing the building with the necessary visual height as originally intended, and fitting in with the building's design in a contemporary way. The original finial was placed on top of the new tower.

The restoration affected all of the building's elements, including repair of the internal walls, some of which were damaged by rainwater, the plaster work on the exterior, and restoring the original colour that had faded over the years. The timber frame windows were replaced with aluminium frames, with the same composition as the original frames, and the interior spaces were not only returned to their previous grandeur, but also well researched and documented. Alec Wapnick of the City Property Group (who was also a keen art collector) had Heys' office replicated at his private gallery, with the original furniture and photographs.

Many challenges had to be faced during the repair of Tudor Chambers. New mechanical systems had to be installed, for which the building was not originally designed, and its structural stability had to be established. Materials and skills specifically suited to this project were hard to find. However, many interesting facts were discovered about the building's initial construction, like the original specifications and the bill of quantities (Ibid.).

This project, with its Victorian Tudor-Revival style and Art Nouveau details, is not only a prime example of buildings from the early 1900s, but also an excellent example of how meticulously these old buildings should be looked after and, if needed, be restored.

Nicholas Clarke, Technical University of Delft, Netherlands

### References

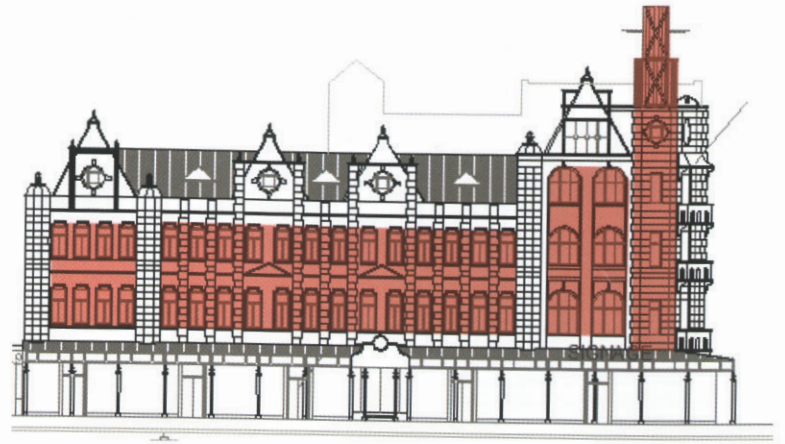
Mathews, P. 2010. *Contemporary Capital*. Pretoria: Visual Books.



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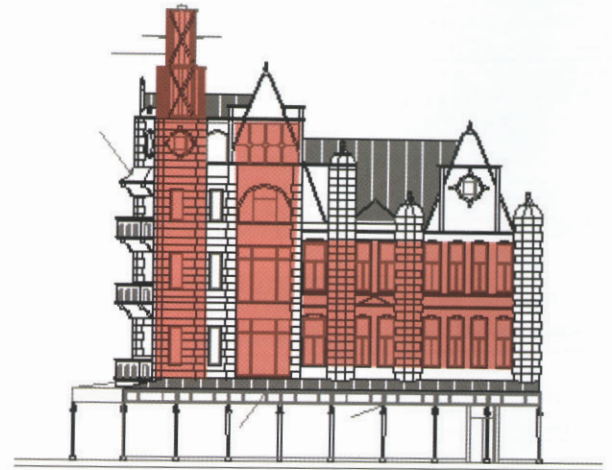
North elevation showing context



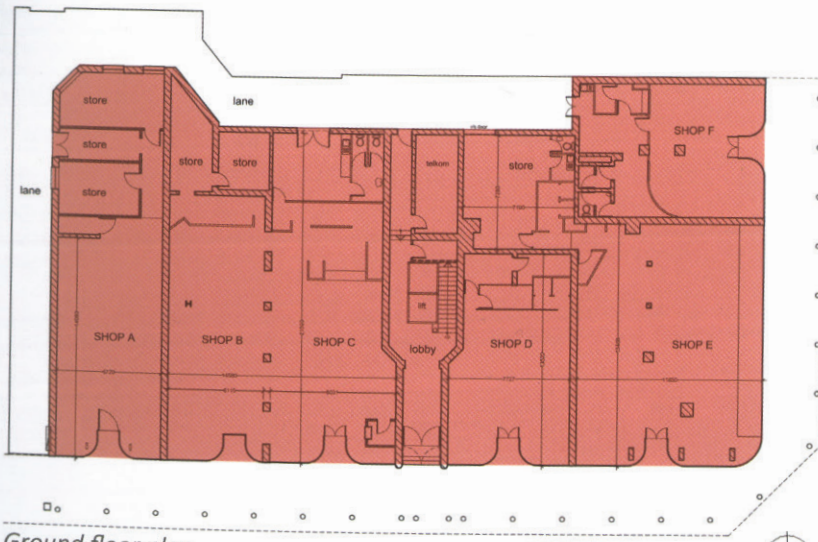
North elevation



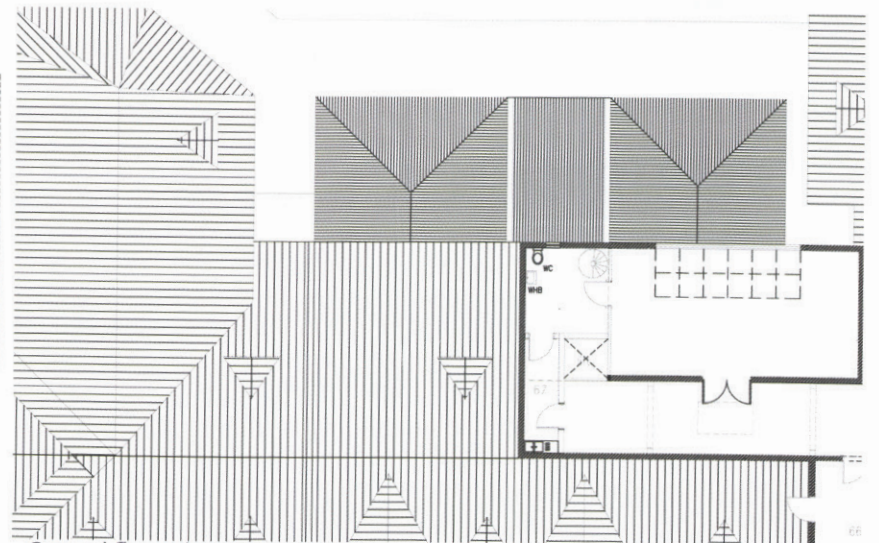
South elevation



West elevation



Ground floor plan



Ground floor plan

