





# 10 *Wilhelmiens aftermath and legacy*

The diaspora of practitioners and hybridity of later styles

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## Preamble

The age of enlightenment brought together the knowledge and intelligence of disparate disciplines, and in the era of European colonialization, a concern with the collection and identification of the alien and then naming and classification of the exotic. By the end of the C19 that project was nigh complete, and Europeans relocating to distant climes brought with them their thinking. This is equally so for the practice and discipline of architecture.

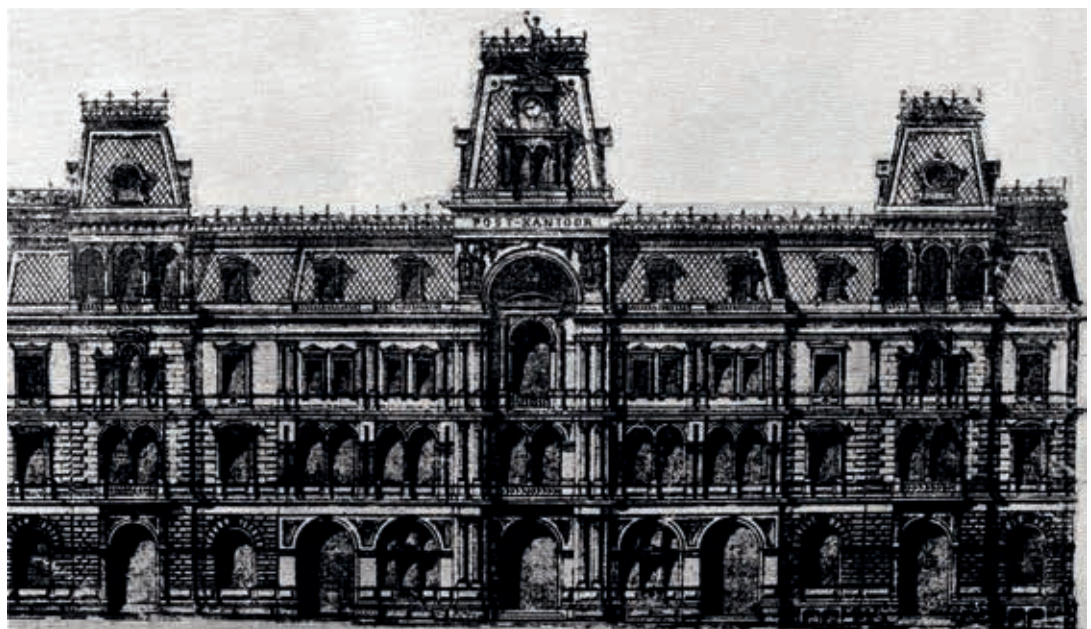
Architecture as discipline was omnivorous in its appetite to ingest all the achievements of its age – the products of industrialization and of styles, not only as

an amalgam of many periods and places in Europe, but also incorporating those of the cultures of their colonies.

The Netherlands, although in its waning years after four centuries as once the most powerful of the European trading nations, then of the richest Protestant nations, was still a cultural force at home and abroad. The Dutch, when citizens in distant climes, were not only those possessed of skill and talent, but of tenacity, resolve, the so-called 'Protestant work ethic' and a Dutch sense of frugality and lack of ostentation. So too their architects.

**10.01** (Left) First the Natural History Museum then South African Museum, now the Iziko Museum, Cape Town, 1893, Vixseboxse & Wentinck.

**10.02** (Right) General Post Office, Johannesburg, 1897 as originally conceived by JE Vixseboxse while under Wierda in the DPW, executed to Wierda's sensibilities!



## Dutch architectural immigrants

While few Dutch professionals came to the then ZAR to enter directly into independent private practice, many circumstantially found themselves as private practitioners in the short final decade of C19 of the ZAR before its demise as an independent republic after the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902).

The thirteen years after the arrival of architectural practitioners in the ZAR and later *Oranje Vrijstaat Republiek* (OVR) changed the mode of the provisioning of buildings for the general public. For example, *Nederduits Gereformeerde* (Dutch Reformed, NG) church communities had used Cape based architects for their professional services, for example Otto Hager (1813–1898) in Middelburg and Witbank or British emigrant architects such as Veale (1868–1924) with Bisset (1835–1919) for the NG Church in Heidelberg. With the arrival of the Dutch their services were required by private clients or communities, so there was a lure to leave civil service and enter private practice, which some did. Many also took on citizenship of the fledgling Republic, so that when war was declared against the British Empire the Boer Republics on 11 October 1899, deliberately and auspiciously the day after President Paul Kruger's birthday, they fought on the side of the Boer Republics as *Burgers* (citizens). To this end the Hollander Corps was established and Van Rysse voted Lieutenant of Platoon V, which seems to have been manned by many from Public Works. They suffered the vagaries of war, as combatants, fallen, wounded, captured, deportees and prisoners of war. In fact the Second Anglo-Boer War was directly responsible for the end of many of their careers in the Republic or the beginning of another era for many practitioners as independent professionals after the War. Those who had become citizens and taken up arms in defense of their newfound homeland, if captured, were taken as prisoners of war and not repatriated as their compatriots who had remained in civil service but deported to the exile camps in distant colonies. Inevitably the experience seems to have heightened their sense of camaraderie and patriotism, so, on their return after the War, to throw in their lot with whatever the uncertain future held for the nascent southern African nations. Those that returned and stayed were to find themselves citizens of a changed world. Here are some of their stories, and we examine the careers of such practitioners so as to distinguish trends, both professional and stylistic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Hollander Corps see: Ferreira, 1977; Ploeger, 1954; Ploeger, 1957; Ploeger, 1990, Schoeman, 2011.



**10.03** (Top) Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 1897, JE Vixseboxse. It is in Flemish Renaissance Revival style with its polychromatic 'streaky bacon.'

**10.04** (Center) The Dutch 'spout' gables did not last, either through damage or changing fashion, and were substituted with small pedimented cappings.

**10.05** (Bottom) Later still, the upper-gables were given a given more 'Cape Baroque' styling, the entire building being painted over an even white. The museum was razed by fire in September 1941.



<sup>2</sup> All biographies presented in this essay take the core information from the website [www.artefacts.co.za](http://www.artefacts.co.za), initially researched by Joanna Walker for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) as part of the Dictionary of South African Biography endeavour, later continued by her at the Pietermaritzburg Office of the National Monuments Council (NMC), with contributing researcher Gerhard Mark van der Waal, amongst others. These have been augmented by the works of Ploeger and De Kok (1989) and Ploeger (1994).

<sup>3</sup> Walker, 2011: 4–5.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, 2011: 12–14; Walker, 2012: 57–59.

## From civil servant to private practitioner

The first of these<sup>2</sup> is the peripatetic Johannes Egbertus Vixseboxse (1863–1943). Initially an immigrant architect employed in Public Works, first that of the ZAR then moving on to that of the OVR, his was a colourful contribution to the South African architectural scene. His design for the Johannesburg Post Office (figure 10.02) was too ebullient for the dour Wierda's taste who himself seems to have toned down its external styling. When Vixseboxse moved on to the Free State he did numerous buildings but most can only be ascribed, the Post Office there (demolished) and the Magistrate's Court and Offices in Ficksburg (now a museum). He left for the Cape on taking first prize for the competition for the new Natural History Museum which was built in what is termed Flemish Renaissance Revival, submitted in association with Dirk Egbert Wentink (1867–1940) (figure 10.01).

## Vixseboxse and the Cape sojourn

In the Cape Vixseboxse was party to the professionalizing the architectural discipline, and listed as one of those architects at the first gathering of architect practitioners in the meeting to professionalise the discipline in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> He is recorded as doing various private commissions in Muizenberg, some still extant.<sup>4</sup> There are gaps in his record as he moves from place to place. He is next found in Oudtshoorn in the time of the ostrich feather boom, servicing these *nouveau riche* farmers with extravagant homesteads, come to be known as the 'Ostrich Palaces'. Many of these are still extant and declared heritage structures, for example Pinehurst (figure 10.06). He also designed the hall for the Oudtshoorn Boys' High School (figure 10.07), now part of the CP Nel Museum complex. Unexpectedly, and recently, it has been discovered that he designed the first Albany Museum building in

**10.06** (Right) Pinehurst (House Edmeades), 1911, Oudtshoorn, JE Vixseboxse. Of the opulent 'Ostrich Palaces'. It was sold to the PWD in 1926 as a Training College hostel for women, later a men's residence. It was declared a National Monument in 1966, now (1999) a Provincial Heritage Resource.

**10.07** (Far right) Boys' High School Gymnasium, Oudtshoorn, 1912, JE Vixseboxse. The Girls' and Boys' High Schools amalgamated in 1963 to form the Oudtshoorn High School, now part of the CP Nel Museum.

**10.08** (Right) Now the 'Albany Museum Natural Sciences Building', Grahamstown, Farrow and Stocks of East London, 1945. The reconstruction, while it is evident of the original building was retained, is in the Cape Dutch Revival style, the 'in-house' style of the Union PWD.



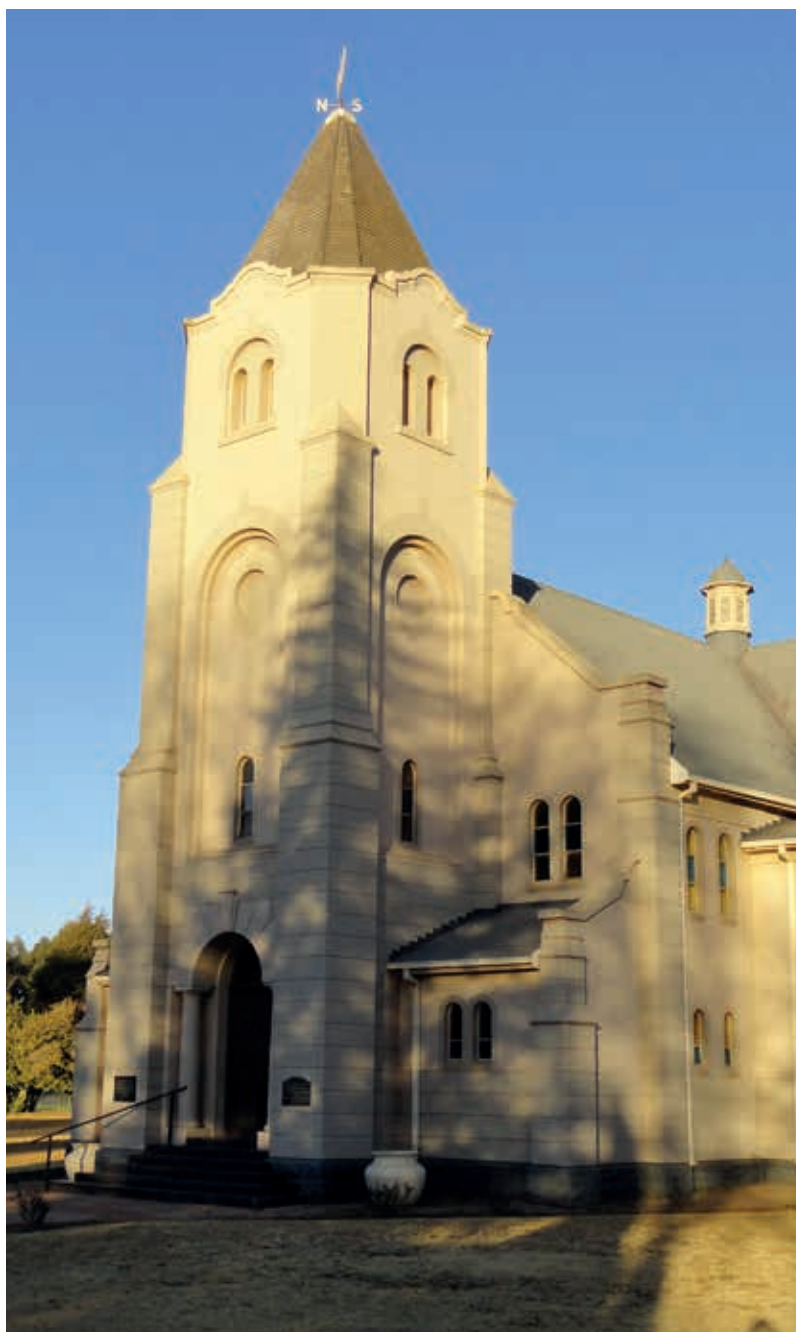
Grahamstown (figures 10.03–10.05). This European eclecticism must have been strange amongst the more sober Georgian and English Arts and Crafts style that distinguishes the architecture of Grahamstown. As fate would have it the building was razed by fire and reconstructed by Public Works of Union, under whose auspices it then fell, in what was then the *de rigueur* style of early Union, Cape Dutch Revival of the Baker School (figure 10.08).

It is also on record that he spent a period of his time in Port Elizabeth, and this would explain his access to Grahamstown. How he was awarded this commission has not been established, but it would seem to have emanated from as consequence of his winning the competition for the museum in Cape Town, a model his Albany Museum project followed closely.

## Two Pretorian Dutch immigrant private practitioners

Wilhelm Johannes De Zwaan (1867–1948) is a difficult career to follow, since his sister, on his death, burnt all his personal papers. It is not clear whether he immigrated as a private practitioner or to a post in the ZAR DPW. A number of payments for travel were paid to him by the Department. He remained in Pretoria all his working life. His obituary notes that he had worked there for sixty years, although the record shows him as one of the deportees to the Netherlands when the British took Pretoria in 1901. However he must have returned soon after the peace, since he is found again working in partnership with F Soff (see later) which he had done from about 1895 up until about 1923 in Pretoria, after which he seems to have practised on his own account.

François (Frans) Soff (1867–1936) came from the Netherlands, where he had been born in Amsterdam. His training has not yet been established, but he came to work in the South African Republic in about 1890. He settled in Pretoria where he practised for the rest of his career.<sup>5</sup> They were certainly both part of an artistic circle in pre Second Anglo-Boer War Pretoria, which included JH Pierneef (1886–1957), the painter and Anton van Wouw (1862–1945), the sculptor. Soff was an active member of the Association of Transvaal Architects (ATA) and on resigning his seat on the Council of the ATA in 1926, his dedication was gratefully acknowledged as his *unselfish devotion to duty*.<sup>6</sup> He never married and latterly he lived in the Pretoria Club, dying in the Pretoria General Hospital. His brother and sister lived in Amsterdam.



## From Émigré architect to patriot *Johannes Rienk Burg*

Johannes Rienk Burg (1874–1960) emigrated to the South African Republic aged 21 in 1895 to work for the *Nederlandsch Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij* (NZASM, the Netherlands South African Railway Company). During this period he designed several small stations on the Lourenço Marques railway line. (Rex lists him as first working for the ZAR DPW).<sup>7</sup> During the Second Anglo-Boer War he fought for the Republic, was captured and spent four years as a prisoner in India at Fort Abnednagar. Conditions there were so bad that he designed plumbing, toilets and showers for the camp. He earned enough money through woodcarving to pay for his own ship passage back at cessation of hostilities.

**10.09** Dutch Reformed Church, Dullstroom, 1919, JR Burg, in Neo-Romanesque styling with Cape Dutch Revival pedimented cappings to turret.

<sup>5</sup> Pretoria News (28.6.1979).

<sup>6</sup> AB&E 1926: 12.

<sup>7</sup> Rex, 1974: 375, lists him as first working for the ZAR DPW.



<sup>8</sup> Ploeger & de Kock, 1989: 140–141.

<sup>9</sup> Ploeger, 1994: 89.

<sup>10</sup> Schoeman, 2011: 188.

<sup>11</sup> Burg, 1989, personal communication with Joanna Walker.

**10.10** (Below) Pretoria Club (2nd, demolished), Campbell & Emley. Here they adopted Flemish Renaissance Revival styling to serve their Dutch constituency in Pretoria.

**10.11** (Bottom) Pretoria Club East Wing addition (demolished), 1903, Soff & De Zwaan. Even in the years after the war the styling was of continental revival derivation. The fashion for Cape Dutch Revival was soon to supplant this.

## Hermanus Cornelius Luitingh

Hermanus Cornelius Luitingh (originally spelt Luijtingh, 1860–1926) was from Leeuwarden, Friesland, Holland, born in Garijp, Friesland. His occupation is recorded as beer trader. In 1862 he married Hiltje Hendrina Alkema with whom he had eight children.<sup>8</sup> He served in the Department of Public Works of the South African Republic in 1895 being recorded as Supervisor appointed in temporary capacity to district works at a salary of £25 per month, although he is no longer on record in this capacity by 1897. He appears to have carried out some private work, based as he seems to have been, in Potchefstroom. Longlands Directory of 1899 records him as being The Head Overseer (Chief Supervisor) of Public Works in Potchefstroom.

During the South African War he fought as Adjutant Lieutenant under General JC Smuts and was wounded at Frederikstad in 1901, captured and deported as prisoner of war to Shahahanpur, India. He was awarded the *Republiekeins Lint voor Wonden* and also the *Dekoratie voor Trouw Dienst*.<sup>9</sup> After the War he was appointed Town Engineer of Potchefstroom, a position he held until age 60.<sup>10</sup> He was placed second in the competition for the Potchefstroom Town Hall in 1907. In 1909 he was practising in Ockerse Street, Potchefstroom. He was an active supporter of Louis Botha's *Het Volk* Party.

## Burg, the War and aftermath *In the Transvaal*

Burg returned from banishment as prisoner-of-war in India to Pretoria where, after a stint at the Transvaal Colony Department of Public Works, he set up practice in 1903 and married Marie Stadler of Stellenbosch the same year. In 1904, he entered into an association with J Lockwood Hall (1873–1941) with a view to partnership at no 4 Alexandra Buildings, Church Square (present site of First National [formerly Barclays] Bank). He suffered at the time under the discrimination against Afrikaners and Hollanders. After nine months each went their own ways as 'their temperaments differed too much'.<sup>11</sup> In 1905 he commenced practice on his own account in Alexandra Buildings, Pretoria. He was given houses to do by the builder J Corbishly; one Ellis also gave him houses and he designed a number of these in the expanding suburbs of Waterkloof and Brooklyn, Pretoria. He was, alongside De Zwaan, also involved in the development of the Pretoria Country Club area of Waterkloof by South African Townships Company, who were encouraging building in the area. He began



to get commercial buildings in Pretoria and opened an 'office' in Johannesburg (in 1925) which he visited twice a week on his motor bike. He built a garage for the Standard Motor Co and after the building was completed he closed the office. Burg designed several churches for the Dutch Reformed Church community (figures 10.12–10.14).

In January 1920 *Die Boerevrou* published his *plan vir 'n plaashuis* (plan for a farmhouse), a rather staid work in brick and stone. In about 1925 Burg was commissioned to design a hospital for poor Afrikaners (to be the *Zuid-Afrikaanse Hospitaal*, figure 10.16) funded by the Netherlands Government; the building was begun by Burg but not completed by him as funds ran out. It was subsequently completed by Pieter Simon Dykstra/Dijkstra (1884–1968) a Dutch born and trained architect who emigrated to the Union of South Africa in 1927. In 1936 Burg asked his son JS Burg (1874–1960) and CS Lodge (1910–1967) to join him in Pretoria. These two had just started in partnership in Springs at the time but Lodge went to help in Pretoria and a partnership was formed styled Burg, Lodge & Burg. JR Burg was on the Board of the Pretoria Zoological Gardens and was involved in the design of some of its buildings. He retired in 1942 to Somerset West, opening a practice there before returning to Pretoria circa 1945/1946 where he worked in the office before retiring again in 1957. He died in Pretoria.

### *An enduring Eastern Cape legacy*

Hendrik Siemerink (1870–1940) came to South Africa from the Netherlands where he had qualified, perhaps as an architect although his training is still obscure. He worked first in SW Wierda's office in the service of the PWD of the South African Republic from 1895 to 1900 in Pretoria and is recorded in group photographs of Wierda's staff. During the South African War he served in the Hollander Corps under Van Rijnse although was not engaged in active battle. He is a rare example of a Dutch immigrant of the ZAR period returned to Public Works. After the War he swore an oath of allegiance to the crown and so he remained in the public service in Pretoria, employed as a draughtsman with the PWD of the Transvaal Colony from July 1902 and promoted to chief draughtsman in July 1904. In 1910 he was made acting assistant engineer and district engineer in April 1912. Siemerink apparently played a key role on the construction site of the Union Buildings where, *roads were built by the PWD under the control of Mr Siemerink who was placed in charge of the whole site and the building operations as district engineer.*<sup>12</sup> In his time of employment with the PWD he made application to be in private practice. By 1915 he had been transferred to Port Elizabeth as district engineer and in 1925 retired from public service to enter into private practice in Port Elizabeth, apparently taking over the practice of W White-Cooper (fl 1883–1935+) in Port Elizabeth. In 1927 he formed a partnership with HAH Walker

12 SB Cunningham, (Pretoria News 25 Oct 1955: 7)

**10.12** Dutch Reformed Church, Dullstroom, 1919. JR Burg demonstrates how soon the Cape Dutch Revival influences supplanted the Dutch Wilhelmiens Eclecticism in the then Transvaal of the Union of South Africa.







**10.13 and 10.14** (Above and below) Dutch Reformed Church, Belfast, 1914, JR Burg with a later addition of the tower by GLP Moerdijk, stylistically stripped and severe rustic regionalism.

(c.1890–1968) styled Siemerink & Walker, had a branch office in Cape Town. In 1930 the partners were joined by CG Lane (c.1900–1963) who ran the East London branch office, styled Siemerink, Walker & Lane in Port Elizabeth but continued as Siemerink & Walker in Cape Town. The partnerships were dissolved in 1935, each partner continuing to practise on his own account: Lane in East London, Walker in Cape Town and Siemerink in Port Elizabeth. In about 1935 Siemerink entered into partnership with his daughter, Geertruida Brinkman styled Siemerink & Brinkman.

## Contribution and Legacy

A complete inventory of Dutch émigré architects in private practice in South Africa after the Anglo Boer War is not possible here. We may, for instance, consider the contribution of F van der Benn (?–1915), credited with the design of the Chalet Style Erasmus Castle (figure 10.17) and the Burgers' Park Caretakers house in Pretoria (figures 10.18 and 10.19), Pieter Oranje's (*s.a.*, another who entered Public Works) post-war contribution to the development of Barberton, Mpumalanga; the still relatively unstudied contribution of Johannes Kraan (1865–1932) and Jan Wijers (1865–1953) whom, apart from their well-known post-war churches in Pretoria–Bosman Street NG Church (figures 10.20 and 10.21) and the *Hervormde* (Reformed) Church in Du Toit Street (figure 10.22) – the Pretoria-based practice designed

many commercial projects in their home town and churches in other place. One NZASM employee, Leendert Geers (1877–1957) built a very successful practice with his son, Geurs Geerts (1909–1945), their contribution especially felt in the development of church design in South Africa.

When the Dutch immigrant architects arrived the Transvaal was a rustic backwater of farmer citizens as uncomfortable neighbours with local tribes, these being kept at bay. But the gold industry that generated the wealth of the model republic also brought its own changes. Mud and thatch dorps turned to stone, brick, mortar, iron and steel civic cores. The demands of the PWD architects created need for and promoted the development of local industries and supply of quality material. Two manufactures names became synonymous with their products Kirkness Bricks and Potteries and Pretoria Portland Cement. However much by way of building elements and decorative finishes were imported and these created the faience of Wilhelmiens eclecticism. The war ended this – that and the arrival of Baker, with his predilection for Arts and Crafts, and its particular South African emanation, Cape Dutch Revival. The change in fortunes of the various Dutch immigrant practitioners that stayed or returned after the War also reflected in the architecture. While Vixseboxse had taken his Continental eclectic sensibilities to the Cape, the architectural styling on the Highveld



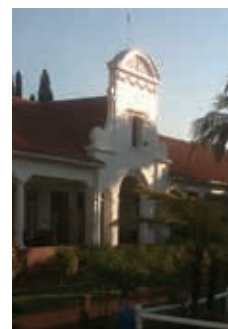


became more stripped and direct. Simultaneous with Vixseboxse's last flowering of eclectic ebullience for the wealth brought by the ostrich feather industry in a remote Oudtshoorn, De Zwaan was building sensible iron pyramid roofs over wide verandahs for the newly established suburb of Waterkloof, Pretoria (figures 10.23 and 10.24). This, it can be argued, was the start of the Pretoria Regionalist legacy, reverting to farm-style indigenous typologies for domestic urban living. The Dutch were also active in professionalising the practice of architecture, many being founder members of the Institutes for Architects established immediately prior and after the War, for instance Vixseboxse in the Cape and Soff in the Transvaal.

Professional expertise was called in for deliberation, the thorny issue of the Union Buildings being a specific instance, where De Zwaan's council was sought



**10.15 and 10.17** (Above and below) *Erasmus Kasteel*, now part of Denel, Pretoria, F van der Benn (attributed) for Simmonds. Contemporary *Jugendstil* at the turn of C20.



**10.16** Zuid-Afrikaanse Hospitaal, Muckleneuk, Pretoria, 1905, JR Burg.







**10.18 and 10.19** Caretaker's Cottage, Burgers' Park, Pretoria, 1905, F van der Benn.



for Baker's proposals, particularly for the central amphitheatre – adjudged, now in hindsight wrongly so – an unnecessarily expensive and unheard of thing!

Speaking of monumental architecture and the architecture of the void, a particularly poignant and enduring monument was created by Soff in Bloemfontein for the women and children victims of the concentration camps (figure 10.37). It is considered of the earliest of the anti-monuments, an architectural attitude at the fore, ever since the atrocities of the Second World War and beyond.

When in private practice, the Dutch were contemporary, innovative and keen to test modernity. Burg's firm created many 'firsts' – the first basement building for the Koedoe Arcade, the first use of an escalator, of the earliest Deco then Streamline Moderne there. Many of these edifices persist into the present creating the mix and amalgam of the character and identity of the city.

De Zwaan was responsible for two of the buildings on Church Square, Pretoria, the old President Hotel (renamed The Grand Hotel, demolished and replaced by the Standard Bank) (figure 10.25), a three-storeyed building with verandahs on each floor, and the well-known Nederlandsche Bank Building (now a

Provincial Heritage Resource). This is part of the collection of buildings, including those of the Law Chambers (1893, figure 10.28) and Reserve Investment building (1905, figure 10.27) including Café Riche (see later) of the western façade of Church Street earmarked for demolition in the early 1970s to make way for two tower blocks flanking the western exit of Church Square, namely one for the Department of the Interior on the south western corner and the Post Office tower opposite (figure 10.38). Both were built much as conceived, but elsewhere in the city. The public outcry and unusually, protest that followed led to a rethink and the protection of the character of Church Square through an act of Parliament (the so-called Church Square Act). Many buildings of the time carry De Zwaan's stamp of probable authorship and he, in private practice, seems very much to have set the commercial character of Pretoria Central at the turn of the C19, then a distinctly Neo-Flemish banded brick-and-plaster or- stone with strong Lowland character of stepped gables. Of these few remain, the most notable being what is called Metro Cycle House (figure 10.29). He is said to have been the architect for Sammy Marks' house at Zwartkoppies with one Van Dyk in around 1898 – with whom he is listed in partnership in the General Directory of South Africa for 1898–1899 (Van Dyk & De Zwaan). The Nellmapius House at Irene is of the same emergent informal colonial style, verandahed

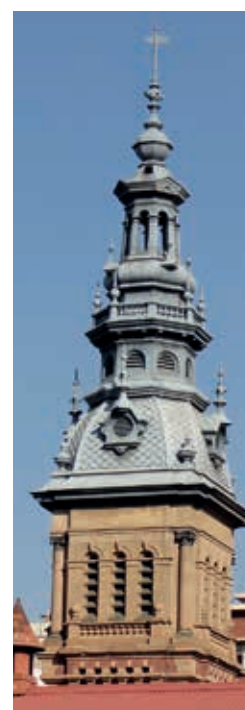


with large, high rooms under pitched corrugated iron, as was his style. De Zwaan was the architect of two 'summer houses' at Zwartkops, south of Pretoria for the families Van Boeschoten and Lorentz. House Van Boeschoten is surrounded on three sides by a wide, columned stoep, two Dutch gables at roof level define the shape of the house. Its proportions and generous if eccentric planning provide an atmosphere of serenity and space which sooner or later becomes a trademark of a De Zwaan house.

Soff's best-known work in Pretoria is the building on the corner of Church Square and Church Street West: the Reserve Investment building (1905) where the well known Café Riche had its premises on the ground floor corner onto the square; the relief

sculpture on the corner was executed by Van Wouw. The building is notable for its fine stone reveals around the windows and the gable stonework, the flatness of which is reminiscent of Scottish architects such as CR Macintosh and the *Jugendstijl*. Both De Zwaan and Soff are recorded as members of the Pretoria Club in 1903 and were jointly commissioned to design the additional wing to the Vermeulen Street facade (figure 10.11), eastwards extension, demolished.<sup>13</sup> Burg, De Zwaan and Soff all seemed to be involved in projects associated with the social needs of the Afrikaner people, as noted earlier Burg with the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Hospitaal* (figure 10.15), Soff & De Zwaan the Louis Botha Memorial Home for Children (1923), now part of the Tshwane District Hospital precinct. The nearby Moedersbond Maternity

13 Atkinson, 1969



**10.20 and 10.21** *Grootte Kerk* or Bosman Street Dutch Reformed Church, Pretoria, 1905, Kraan & Wijers with K van Rysse, reputedly designed prior to the Second Anglo-Boer War before the deportation of van Rysse after the occupation of Pretoria in the War.





**10.22** *Hervormde Kerk* (Reformed Church), Pretoria, 1904, Kraan & Wijers, a post Second Anglo-Boer War construction for the worshipping Dutch congregation of Pretoria, which also displays a memorial plaque to the Dutch fallen of the Second Anglo-Boer War, amongst which the brothers of the more renowned artists, Mondrian and Van Gogh.

Hospital by Burg followed in 1931 (figure 10.34), an enterprise of the Vroue Federasie to ensure that mothers of the city could offer safe delivery of their babies, and that young women could be trained in the skills of midwifery to be of service in the Platteland, all with a view to reducing the number of deaths through unattended labour in what was then an impoverished rural Afrikaner community. This was an enduring and persistent consequence of the scorched-earth policy in the guerilla faze of the Anglo-Boer War, exacerbated by the depression following the Great (First World) War (1914–1918), creating the so-called poor-Afrikaner ‘problem’. While it is not surprising that the most enduring legacy of the Dutch immigrants in private practice should be in Pretoria we cannot neglect those further afield. Both museums, the Iziko branch in the Gardens in Cape Town and

the Albany in Grahamstown still do service, that in Cape Town retaining much of its original character, that in Grahamstown, while much changed in style, on closer analysis retaining some of the original fabrics and elements. Many of the Ostrich palaces are retained in Oudtshoorn some restored and part of the architectural patrimony of the place. Of Soff’s enduring legacy is the *Vrouemonument* (Women’s Monument) in Bloemfontein (1913, figure 10.37), of the early monuments to the tragedy of the concentration camps of the Anglo-Boer War, and considered to be of the first Anti-Monuments where the evils of war are memorialized rather than victories celebrated.

Most of the examples cited here are declared heritage resources and thus a cherished part of the national estate of the Republic of South Africa.





## Enduring practices

At least two practices established by protagonists of this essay have endured to this day:

### *JR Burg*

In 1935 JR Burg asked his son, JS Burg (1907–1989) and his son's partner, CS Lodge (1910–1967), to assist with the large amount of work in his Pretoria office. Lodge came to assist and never left. A partnership was formed in January 1936 between JR Burg, CS Lodge and JS Burg, with offices in Springs and Pretoria. The Springs office was closed in 1941 for lack of work and thereafter they worked only from Pretoria. The buildings they designed during the latter half of the 1930s were Streamline Moderne and representative of the period. Their numerous commercial buildings set a stamp on the centre of Pretoria which helped give Pretoria a character of its own; domestic in scale and low rise in contrast to the taller and larger blocks of Johannesburg. Pretorius, Schoeman and Church Streets in Pretoria still have excellent examples of the work of Burg, Lodge & Burg, in particular the Libri Building and Salisbury House in Church Street. With the practice flourishing in the late 40s and early 50s, 'Old Man' (as was his affectionate soubriquet) Burg left Jimmy at the helm when he retired in 1945. Continued expansion saw Anthony Carden (Tony) Doherty (1930–2010) joining the firm in 1953 and becoming a full partner in 1960, with the resultant name change for the practice to – Burg, Lodge & Doherty. The practice persists today by its acronym BILD, of the oldest Pretoria-based architectural firms.

### *Siemerink*

The Port Elizabeth based practice of Siemerink & Brinkman was continued by Geertruida in conjunction with her husband, JF Brinkman, after Siemerink's death which occurred in Port Elizabeth. The firm retained the name Siemerink & Brinkman. It persists as a multi-disciplinary practice to this day. In 1947



the firm became Siemerink Brinkman & Van Rooyen changing to Brinkman Van Rooyen & Browne in 1964 and Brinkman Van Rooyen Browne & Sutton in 1981.

Brinkman Ndayi McAll cc is an amalgamation of Brinkman Van Rooyen Browne Sutton cc Architects, Rousseau Phipps McAll Inc. Quantity Surveyors and Superb Properties. In 1999, the three companies were involved in operation clean-up, an initiative by Transnet Housing to alienate superfluous property. This evolved into a joint venture in 2000. This finally was formalized into Brinkman Ndayi McAll cc in 2001.

## Return to the Netherlands

When in the Second Anglo-Boer War the British entered Pretoria, Sytze Wierda was dismissed from public service and Pretoria and set up a private practice in Johannesburg and later in Cape Town.<sup>14</sup> Klaas van Rijse, his direct deputy, had joined the Hollander Corps as a lieutenant at the start of hostilities.<sup>15</sup> This unit, composed of Dutch volunteers loyal to the ZAR, was practically eliminated at the Battle of Elandsplaagte (21 October 1899) and of the employees of the ZAR DPW and other Dutch émigrés here met an early death. As result Van Rijse (himself not present at that battle) and his comrades who survived Elandsplaagte were deported in the War and after a sojourn in Brussels, where a compensation was paid out to him by the British, returned to the Netherlands. Here he eventually settled himself as a private architect in the quiet suburb Velp, near Arnhem where he served on the town council for a period.<sup>16</sup> On his return to Dam Square after fifteen frantic years of building the South African Republic and transforming Church Square, he must have felt that time had stood still.<sup>17</sup> Dam Square, in Van Rijse's eyes, was 'delineated without any taste' and above all, it was small and cramped, with the Royal Palace towering above it. Van Rijse was definitely not the only architect making plans for Dam Square at this

**10.23 and 10.24** Type houses for the emerging suburb of Waterkloof, early 1900s, DeZwaan. Tropical varandah bungalows of the Dutch colonial traditions adapted for Transvaal Highveld living, an emergent regionalism.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1892> (4 June 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Schulten, 1998: 110–124.

<sup>16</sup> For biographical information on Van Rijse see H.M. Rex, 1953: 26–31; [www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/articles.php?artid=379](http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/articles.php?artid=379) (3 May 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Van Rijse jr, 1906.

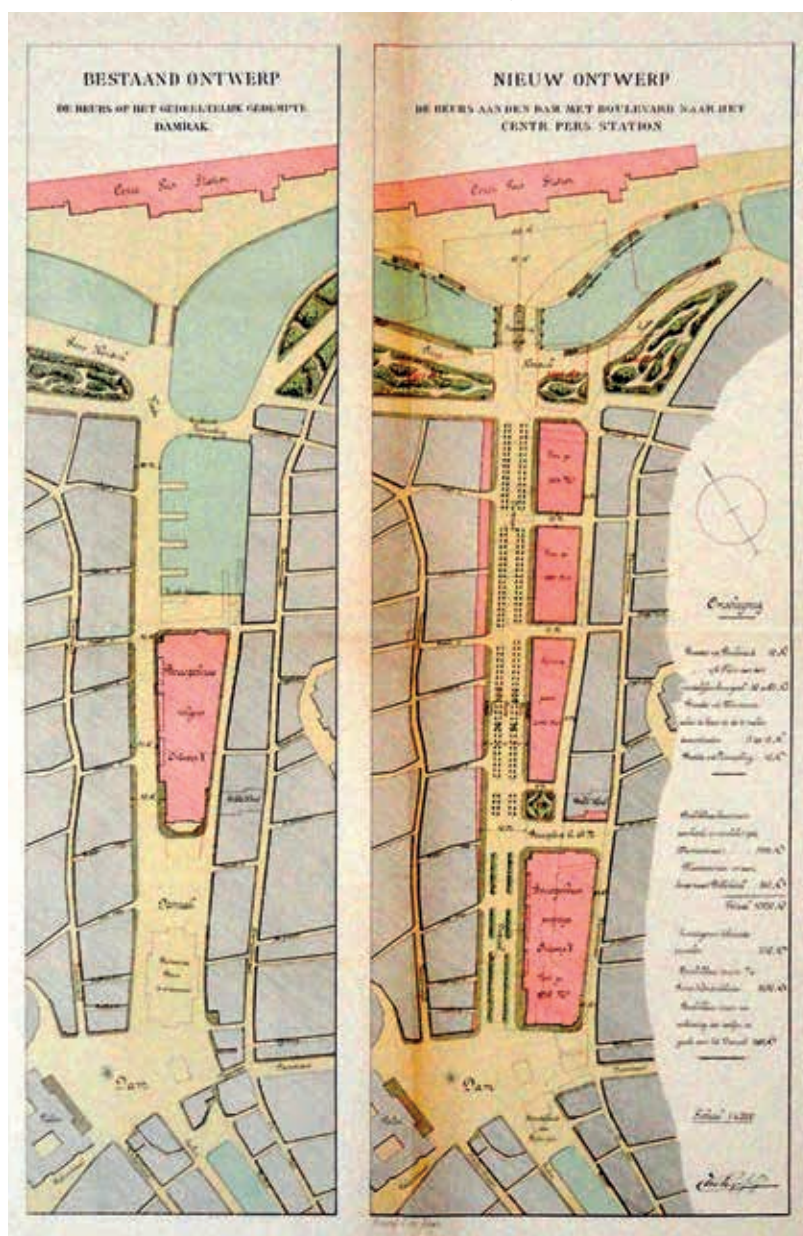
<sup>17</sup> See about Van Rijse's 1886 scheme for Amsterdam Central Station and Dam Square (which he sent to Mr P van Eeghen, the banker and City Councillor who was also the instigator of the Vondelpark, with a letter of recommendation): Amsterdam City Archives 184, inv. No. 7 (P van Eeghen).





10.25 (Above) The President Hotel, later The Grand Hotel, Pretoria, c.1890, De Zwaan. Central Pretoria.

10.26 (Below) Klaas van Rijssen's urban design for the Damrak, Amsterdam; a grand scheme for the main entry into the city which remains problematic to this day.



time. But unlike his colleagues, who in his view cast aside the necessary improvements to Dam Square as pious hopes, he was ready to effect radical change. Van Rijssen did not believe that their 'solution for the Dam question' was a real solution. He stood for more drastic interventions. He wished to enlarge Dam Square and its access roads by implementing a master-planned design (figure 10.26), so as to improve accessibility and thereby make Jacob van Campen's 'mighty creation' stand out in a new, dignified environment, much as did the Raadzaal and Palace of Justice and Van Rijssen's own *Staatsartilleriegebou*, (Army Headquarters). Back in The Netherlands, Van Rijssen, like Wierda before his departure to South Africa, tried to create a new, stately setting for Amsterdam's Royal Palace, through integrating Dam Square and the Central Station in a master plan. In doing so he continued where he and Wierda had left off twenty years earlier. Van Rijssen, who had lived the dream of any architect, the freedom of designing and building a virgin environment, creating a new reality, must have found the strictures of his home country a limiting. He set out big schemes and showed little inclination to take into consideration the small-scale local interests that were of great influence in the slow and complex processes that were typical for the planning of Amsterdam, all issues addressed in Chapter 2, *The lure of the 'Golden Republic'*.

Van Rijssen, settling in Velp, built himself a house named 'Pretoria' (figure 10.31). This was a commercial venture, as the duet dwelling allowed him to either rent or sell one half of the property, while living in the other section. He continued his role of architect-developer, designing two more houses in the same street (figure 10.30) – these now forming an ensemble of shared South African-Dutch heritage, protected as municipal monuments in the Netherlands. 'Pretoria' with its stepped re-brick gables reminds strongly of Van Rijssen's work in the ZAR, notably the *Staatsartillerie*, although it is a much more restrained design, responding to its conservative upper-middle class environment.

Victor van Lissa (1863–1947), Chief Architect for the NZASM, also returned to the Netherlands. He is recorded as having settled in Rotterdam in 1903 where he spent the rest of his life. He entered the employ of the boomtown City of Rotterdam in 1905 as *Hoofdopzichter Publieke Werken* (Chief Inspector for Public Works), and is listed as *Architect, Gemeentelijke Werken* (Architect for Municipal Works) of that city in 1915, a time during which Rotterdam was expanding rapidly and starting to experiment with new and innovative housing infrastructure. In this capacity he must have worked with various well-known Rotterdam architects such as JJP Oud, Michiel Brinkman, Grandpré Molliere and P Verhagen. He remained in service with the City until 1924, a year in which he is recorded as City Architect – the equal of Wim Dudok in Hilversum and, unofficially, Hendrik Berlage in Amsterdam! Yet no information has yet been found



about Van Lissa except entries into address books<sup>18</sup> and a short 1947 death notice in the *Rotterdams' Jaarboekje*:

*Having reached the age of 84, former architect of the municipality, mister V.A.H.C. van Lissa passed away here [Rotterdam].*<sup>19</sup>

No projects have yet been identified that can be attributed to Van Lissa and he is unknown in the Dutch architectural literature. Van Lissa retired from architecture in 1929/1930 after which he focused on acting as translator of works into Dutch, English and German, an activity he had already been engaged in since 1925. By 1939 he is listed as *zonder baan* (unemployed, the authors assume pensioned). No trace has yet been found of his whereabouts for a period during the Second World War (was he in hiding?), but we can imagine that for an old man, having experienced the destruction wrought by both the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War, the bombing of his city on 14 May 1940 must have been a highly traumatizing event. He remains an enigmatic person, an architect who held high position, left a lasting legacy, not in his personal capacity, but in service of the NZASM and the City of Rotterdam.



**18** All the information regarding Van Lissa have been extracted from the *Rotterdamse Adresboeken* for the years 1903 – 1939.

**19** *De Rotterdams' Jaarboekje*: In de ouderdom van 84 jaar overlijdt alhier de heer V.A.H.C. van Lissa, oud-architect der gemeente; Wiersum, 1947: 58.

**10.27** (Left) Reserve Investment Building housing Café Riche at Street Level, 1905, F Soff, designed in the fashionable contemporary Continental *Jugendstijl*, a haunt for the Pretoria's then socialites. In the early 1970s it, with the Law Chambers and *Ou Nederlandsche Bank*, were threatened with demolition as part of the Church Square Western Façade redevelopment proposal (see figure 10.38).

**10.28** (Below) The Law Chambers, 1893, Philip, Carmichael & Murray, (right) and *Ou Nederlandsche Bank* (left), Pretoria, 1898, WJ de Zwaan. In the early 1970s these, with the Café Riche (above) were threatened with demolition as part of the Church Square Western Façade redevelopment proposal (see figure 10.38).





**10.29** Metro Cycle House (was the Gundelfinger Building), 1903, Pretoria, WJ De Zwaan. Built for the magnate, Sammy Marks, and retained, restored and adaptively reused with the development of Sammy Marks Square in the 1980s.

## The Eclectic Wilhelmiens tradition

One of the great legends of South African architectural history is the tale of how, in 1892, while horse-riding early one morning, a politically ambitious *Midas*, then premier of the Cape Colony, encountered a young architect hiking along the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town and commissioned him on the spot to

‘restore’ a two-hundred year old dwelling to its former glory for his own residential use.<sup>20</sup> The politician, Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902), arch-enemy of Paul Kruger, must have been aware of the large-scale construction of Government Buildings in the ZAR, notably the *Raadzaal* on Church Square. As founder member of the Rand Club in Johannesburg he might have seen, if not used, the imposing ZAR DPW Johannesburg Post Office. The ZAR, with the Free State Republic, were





Rhodes' greatest hurdles in achieving a Pan-African British hegemony. These Wilhelmiens buildings were symbols of an independent, functioning, prosperous and growing state.

Rhodes was keenly interested in the arts and architecture. As an adult he attended Oriel College, Oxford, and, it is said, attended the inaugural lecture of John Ruskin there. Rhodes, a parsons son, was keenly aware of the value of architecture as a symbol of nationhood as highlighted by the, then subsiding, Battle of the Styles, the architectural conflict over the appropriateness of the Neo-Gothic versus

Neo-Classicism as a national British expression. The construction of the Wierda and his ZAR DPW-designed monumental buildings in the ZAR as symbols of its independence must have taken his keen interest. His chosen architect, Herbert (later Sir) Baker (1862–1946) shared Rhodes' imperialist ambitions. To the great consternation of the elite at the Cape, Rhodes commissioned Baker to restore the house at Groote Schuur (figure 10.35) to an appearance of an earlier Cape gabled house as built by predominantly Dutch settlers during VOC rule, the architecture of the Cape Boers. Was this Rhodes' architectural response in answer to the more general Renaissance Eclecticism



**10.30** Velp, the Netherlands. Housing designed by Klaas van Rijsse, today municipal monuments.





**10.31** Velp, the Netherlands. A duet house called 'Pretoria' designed by van Rijsse for himself. This too is a municipal monument.

**21** His own home in Pretoria was quite unpretentious and easily accessible from the street. Kruger was known for receiving people on his front porch.

**22** The spelling on the tympanum is equivalent to C17 Dutch, but also resonates with the antiquated Dutch as in use in the ZAR. Exactly one year after the occupation of Pretoria in June 1900, the conquering British replaced the ZAR tympanum, the first important public commission for Dutch born-and trained sculptor Anton van Wouw, with the British Coat of Arms. A copy of the original tympanum was restored to the building c.1952. The slogan *L'union fait la force, Eendracht maakt macht*, remains as the Belgian National Motto, adopted after its 1830 liberation from the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

of Wierda? It is commonly accepted that he saw it an appropriate architecture under which he could build his vision of a future South Africa, united under British Rule but grown from African soil. This style, later called Cape Dutch Revival, was to become the official style of the united South Africa after Union in 1910, replacing Wierda's ZAR DPW eclectic Wilhelmiens as the style of the Union of South Africa.

But what was the role of the ZAR DPW Eclectic Wilhelmiens in the growing nationhood of the Transvaal Boers? The Paardekraal Memorial (figure 10.36), though not of great architectural interest, was a defiant symbol of nationalism, memorializing the moment of decision of the Transvaal Boer revolt against British rule. Paul Kruger's continuous return to the cairn of stones shows that he, like Rhodes, understood the potency of structures in establishing identity.<sup>21</sup> That the *Raadzaal* was conceived as more than a purely functional building containing government offices and meeting rooms is evidenced by its location and its architectural expression. The

tympanum contains the shield of the ZAR and its slogan, *Eendragt maakt magt* (figure 10.33), notably the same as that of the Dutch Republic, often used in its Latin form *Concordia res parvae crescent* (By concord small things flourish).<sup>22</sup>

Domestic architecture proves to be more resilient to change than even institutional governmental building and so it is especially here that the residue of the Dutch Chalet Style remained in vogue for a considerable period of time. This is subject is ripe for study and much still needs to be understood of the many houses designed by Dutch immigrant architects and draughtsmen which silently bear testimony to the aspirations and contributions of the middle class to the development of the country (figure 10.41). In the design and building of the Church Square ensemble and a great many other state buildings, Wierda and Van Rijsse's Public Works Department has played a key role in the architectural exchange between the Transvaal and Europe. They proved their ability to navigate between ideologies and their architectural



representation, and to lend the right character to these buildings, which for a large part are still in use to this day, and more than many other complexes that are described as such, are true examples of mutual cultural heritage.

## A plethora of monuments

To understand and appreciate the C19 Wilhelmiens as declared heritage it must be remembered that Pretoria was and remains a capital city, (South African Republic, 1856–1902; Transvaal Colony 1902–1910), thereafter Administrative Capital of the Union (1910–1961), a status retained for the Republic of South Africa (1961–1994) and thereafter for the full democracy (1994–). This means that much of the legacy of the built environment and infrastructure

represent the activities of governance, and much of that covered by the so-called 'sixty-year clause' of the NHRA done through the offices of the Department of Public Works.

In the previous dispensation the then Nationalist Party government were not keen on having buildings and fixed resources declared as National Monuments. Hence relatively few of the building stock in the national estate came with this designation. However, much by way of relics from the ZAR era came to be recognized as evidence of an earlier independence, and a once independent Republican status as a desiderata for the South African State and so a new wave of declarations, especially of obsoleted or redundant structures followed. We can cite examples. While two of the ZAR PWD bridges were proclaimed National Monuments in the time of Union, namely

**10.32** The General Post Office, Johannesburg, 1897, DPW. The greater urban context of the Post Office in the early years after the Second Anglo-Boer War. It is said that Johannesburg has been rebuilt some six times. The Post Office is of the few ZAR DPW survivors of this era here and now abandoned and derelict.



*Johannesburg, look*



the *Begin-der-Lijn* and Grobler's Bridge (see Chapter 5, *Road bridges of the ZAR*), both in 1955, many further proclamations of ZAR PWD structures were subsequent to the proclamation of a Republic and leaving of the British Commonwealth in 1961, for example the Old Government Buildings (*Raadzaal*), the Meyer Bridge, Middelburg, Transvaal, (now Mpumalanga) and the Joubert Bridge, Pilgrim's Rest, Transvaal (now Mpumalanga), (see Chapter 5) all in 1968. The new National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999) was a change in attitude by government to their own heritage resources and is explicit in requirements of the State to be custodians of and protect those heritage resources in their possession. This means that many more structures of the period still in commission are part of the national estate, not only as property but as national heritage resources. Many can be cited, including many of the Magistrate's Courts throughout

the once Transvaal, but Pretoria, as centre of the ZAR DPW endeavours has a cluster of these, including the Government Printers and Old Government Offices and the Old ZAR Museum.

## The NZASM and its enduring legacy

When it comes to relics of the NZASM endeavour we (Clarke and Fisher, Clarke and Swart, and Clarke and Bakker) undertook extensive road journeys to follow the various lines in search of what remains of the original structures. While many of the lines have been realigned, some more than once, often much of the original fabric such as bridge supports, culverts and aquaducts are extant, although the stonework often disguised or subsumed into the



ing East





10.33 Tympanum,  
*Raadzaal*, with the motto:  
*Eendragt maakt magt*.



**10.34** Moedersbond Maternity Hospital (now the Lebone College of Emergency Care), Pretoria, 1931, JR Burg.



**10.35** Groote Schuur, 1896, Cape Town, HJ Baker. The Transvaal saw the Cape Dutch style subvert other stylistic influences there and become the 'in-house' style of Public Works in the Union of South Africa in its early years.



**10.36** Paardekraal Monument, Krugersdorp, 1891, the only monument erected by the ZAR DPW.



**10.37** (Far right) The Vrouemonument (Women's Monument), Bloemfontein, 1913, F Soff.

subsequent works, often in concrete. Dwellings and station facilities, when abandoned in the veld as the railway lines followed new routes, still do service as rural dwellings, and small villages have a new set of occupants. The railway housing and service buildings of the period still do service, for example in Volksrust or Waterval-Boven, most, while still the property of the Rail authorities, have tenant occupants. Many stations, where extant, are refurbished although others have been stripped (Elandsrivier) or become derelict and ruinous (Volksrust). Most are in desperate need of maintenance and repair but their continuing service is testimony to the rigour of the specifications and quality of the then NZASM architects and engineers. A unique survivor where much of the extant material dates from the late C19 is the Barberton-Kaapmuiden branch line. It serves an area of the country of dramatic scenery of mountain beauty and deep valleys







traversed by this remarkable piece of engineering achievement. The worry is that the infrastructure is in a sad state of neglect and repair and any ambitions for upgrading such infrastructure will destroy the legacy. Where sections of the once Eastern Line have become redundant they have been declared as National Monuments (now Provincial Heritage Resources), such as the NZASM Tunnel, Waterval-Boven, Transvaal, (now Mpumalanga) proclaimed in 1962, or the Five Arch stone bridge over the Dwaalheuwel Spruit, Waterval-Onder, Transvaal (now Mpumalanga), (see Chapter 6, *The genesis and development of type*) proclaimed in 1963, but there is lack of direction or management and it is unsafe to stop along these routes. It is hoped that the heritage and tourism authorities recognize the universal values of these assets and that serial declarations with concomitant heritage management plans be put in place by the authorities, preferably at national level to recognize, develop, maintain and manage these resources for economic upliftment and realize their full tourist potential.



**10.39** Even the ordinary takes on distinction through association with its Chalet Style Wilhelmiens legacy. This 1907 house is the place where this book was made!



10.38 (Left) The proposed redevelopment of the Western Facade of Church Square, 1970s, presentation watercolour perspective by CB (Swanie) Swanepoel.

23 Many names of the built environment practitioners have entered into the public domain through the naming of streets and places. In Pretoria we have the instance of the Wierda Bridge, accessed by Wierda Road nearby where we also have Wierda Park. The suburb of Groenkloof has its Middelberg Street; Philip Nel Park to the west of Pretoria has street names after architects, many of them of Dutch origin, namely Sytse Wierda Street, Charles Obermeyer Avenue, Jan Heukelman Avenue, Gerrit Heyink Place and JG Kraan Place. Johannesburg has a Wierda Valley.

10.41 The writing on the wall – graffiti record of the incarceration of Struggle Leaders in the holding cell of the Palace of Justice, Pretoria.

## A cultural legacy

Not only did the C19 built environment practitioners of Dutch origins leave a legacy of structures and buildings, but there is also an enduring cultural legacy by way of, for instance, Middelberg<sup>23</sup>, the Chief NZASM engineer, and later his son. He was responsible for the success of the company through his astute administrative abilities, level-headedness, efficiency and canny insight into local politics. During his directorship the Delagoa line was completed, the link-up with the Free State Republic as well as Natal affected, and a westerly line to Krugersdorp and Potchefstroom constructed. He retired in 1898 at a relatively young age, as the NZASM began to prosper. While he served the material world of his age, his own inclination was to meditation, possessed of sincere religious conviction. He had been more at home with the conservative, religious life of the Boers than the material opulence of his age in Europe. He served as member of the commission of the *Volkshospitaal* in Pretoria (1898 and 1899) and as one of the curators of the *Staatsgymnasium* (State Gymnasium, see Chapter 7, *Lost Wilhelmiens*) where his son was schooled. He served as chairman of the *Nederlandse Vereniging* (Dutch Association) in Pretoria from 1897 until 1899. He was also curator of the School of Mines established in 1896. He returned to the Netherlands in 1899, where he served as chairman of the *Nederlands Zuid-Afrikaansche Vereeniging* from 1899–1911, a position taken over by his youngest son, LR Middelberg (1881–1963).



10.40 The impress of WJ de Zwaan.

## *Dramatis personae exeunt*

And yet, as we take leave of the C19 Wilhelmiens eclectics, we do not say 'Farewell' to the Dutch. The C20 Wars and economic vagaries of Europe and established cultural bonds saw successive waves of emigrants coming to South African shores, some to pursue the legacy, some to establish the spirit of the modern project of which the Dutch were progenitors at home.

## Reflection

On the wall of a holding cell in the basement of the ironically named 'Palace of Justice' is inscribed the graffiti of a version of The Freedom Charter – that document that has established the moral compass of a fully democratic South Africa. It is a silent and not much visited or viewed testimony to the complexities of memorialization and celebration of a fraught past. This is our challenge...

