

ARCHSA

JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

ISSUE
79
MAY
JUNE
2016



ISSN:1682-9387



9 771682 938004

RSA R30.00 (INCL VAT)



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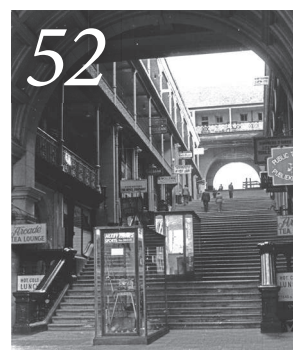
COVER IMAGE

Arched entrance to the stairway of the Mutual Arcade, as viewed from Main Street. By Professor Barrie Bierman

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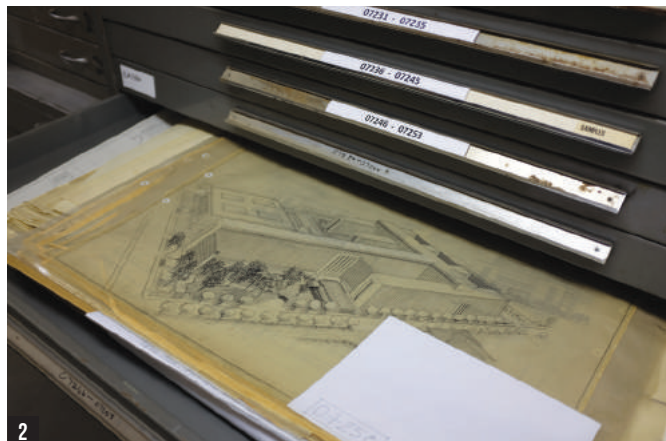
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THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES

'The concept of the architectural museum ... must be almost as old as the profession itself.'¹ Generally speaking, an archive provides a continuous record of the achievements of society over time.

By: Dr Arthur Barker, Ms Karlien van Niekerk and Mr Johan Swart, Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria (UP)

An archive is a reminder of the past, but more importantly, it is a source of knowledge, caution or inspiration for the future. International bodies such as the International Council on Archives (ICA) and locally legislated institutions such as the National Archives of South Africa (NASA) coordinate the management and preservation of artefacts for posterity and future use. Many architectural archives have also been established over the years, some of the most famous being the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, which 'preserves the works of more than 400 designers from the 18th century to the present'², and the archives of the Netherlands Architectural Institute³, which houses collections related to architects such as Berlage, Dudok and Rietveld⁴.

In South Africa, a number of universities house architectural archives, such as the Barrie Biermann Architecture Library on the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the Architecture Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town Archives, which house a separate architecture archive.

Records of architectural production do extend beyond 'dusty old shelves'. Exhibitions such as at the annual Sophia Gray event highlight the work of a local architect or practice, while journals such as *Architecture South Africa* and the annual *Digest of South African Architecture* continuously record important work. However, there is still a dearth of critical engagement with architectural production in South Africa. The limited number of publications and monographic works restrict our understanding of the South African architectural continuum. Architects, as well as public institutions, have often been complacent with their record keeping, and original drawings representing the creative production of our discipline are often hidden or lost. Archival endeavours can assist by encouraging the appropriate placement of existing collections, and facilitating access to material for the purposes of education and critical research.

UP ARCHIVE

The Architectural Archive of UP's Department of Architecture was established around 1966. Having started with only a few drawings and slides, the archive now houses close to 80 significant physical and digital collections. Since securing the Norman Eaton >

1 Slide collection. 2 Proposed Ministry of Transport building, Norman Eaton (Boukonde Archive).

Collection in the early 1970s, staff members in the department – such as Anton du Toit, Professor Schalk le Roux, Professor Roger Fisher, Professor Karel Bakker, Nicholas Clarke and Dr Arthur Barker – have actively pursued or willingly received a range of significant collections. These collections are conserved, curated and continuously utilised under the supervision of the archive committee⁵, which sources, collects, indexes and digitises archival collections related to South African architecture.

The collections of the UP Architectural Archive are unique in that they are representative of a continuum of architectural production and thinking since the turn of the 20th century, and focus on regional thinking. Most of the artefacts are original drawings, and tend to consist of complete portfolios from architectural practices. They are also representative of the architectural 'legends' of their time.

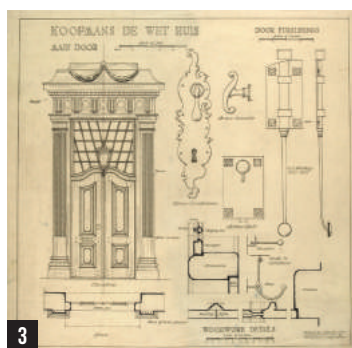
At present, the archive houses the physical collections of architects like Norman Eaton (1902–1966), Gordon McIntosh (1904–1983) including *zero hour* originals (1933), John van de Werke (1904–1980), Philip Nel (1943–), Glen Gallagher (1935–2010), Jan van Wijk (1926–2005), Gustav Schmickl (1903–1977) and Herbert Prins (1927–), to name only a few. Apart from drawing collections, the archive also houses an extensive slide collection, student work, historical research reports and general material about Pretoria.

It is through the UPSpace platform⁶ that the Boukunde Archive achieves the ideal outcome for its endeavours, namely to make material available to the world through an online, open-access platform that can connect scholars to our collections at any time and from anywhere. Recent efforts have also led to the online accessibility of collections such as those of GE Pearse (1885–1968), Gawie Fagan (1925–), Departement Publieke Werken (1887–1900), the paintings of John Fassler (1910–1971) and William Henry Stucke (1865–1931), as well as journals such as *Restorica*, the *South African Journal of Art History* (SAJAH) and *Pretoriana*.

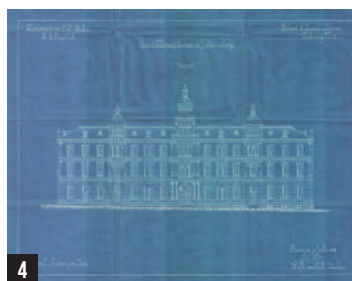
THE WAY FORWARD

Currently, the mission of the departmental committee is to collect, curate and disseminate information on important South African architectural artefacts to interested parties – both locally and internationally. The priorities are to, firstly, protect the valuable drawing collection in appropriate conditions and, secondly, to continue the arduous task of sorting, indexing and digitising it.

At the same time, a concerted effort is being made to make the materials more visible through the digital departmental archive and the online UPSpace repository. The hope is that the archive will continue to play a valuable role in the preservation of artefacts, the promotion of post-graduate research, the teaching of architectural design and history, support for professional practice projects, the training of students in conservation skills, and the fostering of local and



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international heritage collaborations. The committee encourages interested parties to donate important collections and to use archival data for research purposes. Its work is, however, currently limited by time and spatial constraints, as well as rather restricted funding. It is hoped that continued awareness of its work and mission will assist in generating income, information and assistance.

The value of our architectural heritage lies not only in the built environment that surrounds us, but also in the processes and products of important architects who have contributed to the continuum of South African architectural history. It is important that all members of our profession guard – and continuously contribute to – the record of the built environment and, in so doing, support the work of our local architectural archives.

In this way, the value of history can be made more contemporary and accessible. ■

3 Koopmans De Wet Huis, 1933, Pearse (*Eighteenth Century Architecture in South Africa*).

4 Post- en Telegraafkantoor te Johannesburg, 1895, Departement Publieke Werken (*National Archives*). 5 Eskom house, 1935, Fassler (*Boukunde Archive*).

¹ Kotze, P. (1998). 'In memory of Sophia Gray: Store houses of knowledge,' in *Journal of the South African Institute of Architects*, Sept/Oct, 43–47.

² <http://www.design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/about>.

³ <http://collectie.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en>.

⁴ In 2000, an international architectural archives body, the Section on Architectural Records (SAR), was formed under the International Council on Archives (ICA) in Seville, Spain, during the International Congress of Archives. The main objective of SAR is to promote architectural records worldwide (<http://www.ica.org/2623/about-section-on-architectural-records-sar/about-architectural-archives-sar.html>).

⁵ The archive is currently co-ordinated by Dr Arthur Barker and a committee consisting of lecturer Mr Johan Swart, librarian Ms Karlien van Niekerk and co-opted part-time member, Emeritus Professor Roger Fisher.

⁶ UPSpace is the Institutional Repository of the University of Pretoria, and is defined as an open-access electronic archive collecting, preserving and distributing digital research material donated to or created by the institution and its community members (University of Pretoria, 2015).