



The 1st of March 2018 marked the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria. This 75th anniversary publication frames not only the academic and physical development of the department but, more importantly, highlights the contribution its graduates have made to teaching and practice. This publication is a record of antecedents, foundations, pedagogies, memories and future directions. None of these aspects would have been possible without the all of the personalities that have been associated with Boukunde since 1943. It is to all of them that this publication is dedicated.



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BOUKUNDE 75TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA



BOUKUNDE

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Edited by Prof Arthur Barker

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ARCHIVE

By Prof Arthur Barker, Karlien van Niekerk and Johan Swart

“The concept of the architectural archive or museum as a repository of knowledge and reference system must almost be old as the profession itself.”¹ Generally speaking, an archive provides a continuous record of the achievements of society over time. It is a reminder of the past, but more importantly, a source of knowledge, caution or inspiration for the future. International bodies such as the International Council on Archives (ICA)² 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,”³ and the archives of the Netherlands Architectural Institute which houses collections related to architects such as Berlage, Dudok and Rietveld.⁴

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 contain a separate architecture archive. Records of architectural production do extend beyond “dusty old shelves”. Exhibitions at the annual Sophia Gray event, for example, 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

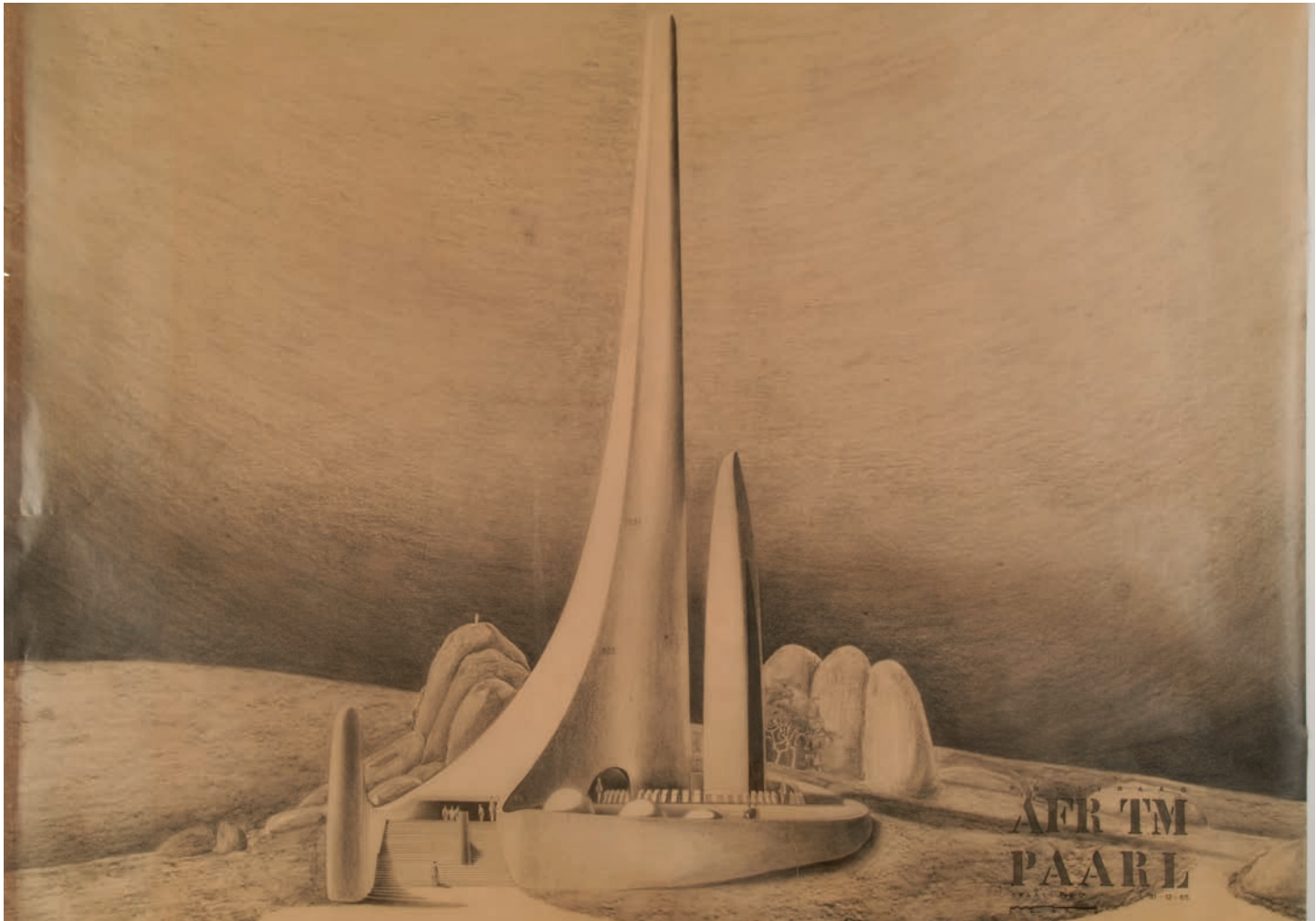
architectural production in South Africa. The limited number of publications and monographic works restrict our understanding of the South African architectural continuum. Architects, as well as public institutions, have often been complacent about their record keeping, and original drawings representing 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.

The Architectural Archive of the University of Pretoria

The Architectural Archive of the University of Pretoria (AAUP) has its roots in the early efforts of Prof Alewyn Burger in the 1960s, aimed at establishing slide collections for use in the Department’s teaching efforts. Having started with only a few drawings and slides, the archive later acquired significant collections such as the Norman Eaton Collection in the early 1970s, and over the years these have grown to almost 80 noteworthy physical and digital collections of different formats and for different purposes. Staff members at the Department such as Anton du Toit, Prof Schalk le Roux, Prof Roger Fisher, Prof Karel Bakker, Nicholas Clarke, Prof Arthur Barker and Johan Swart 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 committee,⁵ which sources, collects, indexes and digitises archival collections related to South African architecture. The collections of the AAUP are unique in that they are representative



Eskom House, 1935. Fassler (Boukunda archive)



Afrikaanse Taalmonument, 1995. Jan van Wijk (Boukunde archive)

of a continuum of architectural production and thinking since the turn of the 20th century that focusses on regional architectural thinking. Most of the artefacts are original drawings, and most often complete portfolios of architectural practices. They are also representative of the architectural 'legends' of their time.

At present, the archive houses the physical collections of architects such as 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), Herbert Prins (1927-), and Samuel Pauw (1936-2016), to name only a few. Apart from drawing collections the archive also houses an extensive slide collection, student work, historical research reports, architectural models, and general material about Pretoria.

It is through the UPSpace platform⁶ that the AAUP 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 led to the online accessibility of collections such as GE Pearse (1885-1968), Gawie Fagan (1925-), the 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

The broader mission of the AAUP is to collect, curate and disseminate information on important South African architectural artefacts to interested parties, both locally and internationally. Currently, the first

priority is to protect the valuable drawing collection in appropriate conditions – to this end the archive spaces are currently being upgraded in line with international archive standards as part of the Boukunde renovations. The archive is also engaging local and international partners, through study visits and workshops that explore best-practice standards related to the preservation and conservation of paper-based collections. Secondly, the arduous task of sorting, indexing and digitizing continues and these are driven by project priorities such as the Wilhemien research collaboration and continuous postgraduate work on architectural regionalism. Lastly, a concerted effort is being made to make the collections more visible through the digital departmental archive and the online UPSpace repository, and through curatorial projects such as the recent *Urban Transformations* exhibition at the AZA18 conference, which saw the first



Zero Hour, 1933 (Boukonde archive)

major public exhibition of a set of original drawings from the archive.

The hope is that the archive will continue to play a valuable role in the preservation of artefacts, promotion of post-graduate research, teaching of architectural design and history, support for professional practice projects, training of students in conservation skills, and fostering of local and international heritage collaborations. The committee encourages interested parties to donate important collections and to use archival data for research purposes. The committee's work is currently limited by time and spatial constraints as well as very restricted funding. It is hoped that continued awareness of its work and mission will assist in generating income, information and assistance. This will be greatly assisted by the extension of archive facilities in the new Resource Centre (old reading room) all part of the recent

Boukonde upgrades.

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 that have enriched 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 contemporary.

Notes and references

¹ Kotze, P. 1998. In memory of Sophia Gray: store houses of knowledge. *S.A. Architect*, Sept/Oct, 43-47.

² 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>)

³ <http://www.design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/about>

⁴ <http://collectie.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en>

⁵ The archive is currently curated by Mr Johan Swart and a committee consisting of Prof Arthur Barker and librarian Ms Karlien van Niekerk, with co-opted and 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).