

# **COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AS HERITAGE:**

**GERMAN COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE IN POST-COLONIAL WINDHOEK**



by

**Vanessa Jane Ruhlig**

**RHLVAN001**

A 60-credit dissertation (APG5071S)

Submitted to the University of Cape Town

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) in Conservation of the Built Environment

Supervisor: Associate Professor Stephen Townsend

Department of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics

Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

University of Cape Town

**August 2018**

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Name of principal researcher, student or external applicant	Vanessa Jane Ruhlig
Department	Architecture & Planning
Preferred email address of applicant:	vanessaruhlig@gmail.com
If a Student	Your Degree: e.g., MSc, PhD, etc.,
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## **ABSTRACT**

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The rapid post-Independence development of the city of Windhoek, Namibia; and the ensuing destruction of a substantial number of German colonial buildings in the capital city, prompted speculation as to why these buildings are inadequately protected as heritage – and whether they are, in fact, considered to be heritage.

The study explores the issues pertaining to the presence of German colonial architecture, as artefacts of the German colonial period, within the post-colonial context of Windhoek. The trauma and pain of the Namibian War and genocide (1904 – 1908) are recurring themes in the body of literature on post-colonial Namibia; and this informs a wider discourse on memory. Memory is found to play a crucial role in evoking a sense of both individual *and* shared ownership, through its capacity to create meaning, which can in turn ascribe value to a place. Memory is also dependent on visual cues for its continued existence, which suggests the importance of colonial architecture as a material prompt to sustain memory. The research therefore investigates the memories and multiple meanings attributable to colonial architecture in this plural society, and how these meanings can be created, or possibly reinvented, through the continued use of these buildings.

The study is based on an assessment of three halls in Windhoek – the Grüner Kranz Hall (1906), the Kaiserkrone Hall (1909), and the Turnhalle (1909; 1912), all designed by the German architect Otto Busch – which illustrates in part, the need for the development of historical building surveys that assess the social values and significances of these contested spaces; and moreover, the potential that these spaces have to support memory work through their continued use.

## **KEYWORDS**

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COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE / POST-COLONIAL VALUES / HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE / HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEY / NAMIBIA

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## PREFACE

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I lived in the city of Windhoek, Namibia, for more than five years. Surrounded by unspoilt *veld* and rolling hills, Windhoek reveals itself surprisingly, beyond a bend in the long road, or from the crest of a hill. The small cluster of buildings that appears in the distance after an arduous journey is enduringly reassuring, and somehow evocative of what its earlier settlers must have experienced.

Yet, in only five years, that vision of the city has altered significantly. Its edges expand outwards and its centre attempts to reach upwards. The city is no longer the town it once was. The city has experienced over two decades of rapid development, since the country's independence in 1990. While this has been a time of opportunity for many, it has also revealed a general insensitivity towards older, particularly colonial buildings, many of which have been demolished within this period. This has meant that the city is gradually losing its unique German colonial "feel." The fine and richly varied texture of the city is being eroded, to be replaced by large and ambitious structures which do not reflect the city's small scale.

As an architectural professional with an interest in conservation and heritage issues, this situation has formed the basis of my studies towards the MPhil in Conservation of the Built Environment through the University of Cape Town. As such, I have been exploring the shortcomings of Namibia's heritage legislation and the process of protecting buildings in Namibia. In the process, using Windhoek as the *locus* of my research, I have discovered the work of a relatively unknown German architect, Otto Busch, whose fine drawings and decorative style caught my attention one day while at the National Archives of Namibia. His work forms part of Namibia's genre of German colonial architecture, created in the short period of German colonial occupation in the country between 1884 and the First World War. It thus made perfect sense to me to pursue this interest by exploring his work further as part of a case study of German colonial architecture in Windhoek.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>AHD</b>	Authorised Heritage Discourse
<b>BWI</b>	Akten des Kaiserlichen Bezirksamts Windhuk 1893 – 1915 (Acts of the Imperial District Office Windhoek 1893 – 1915)
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>ICOMOS</b>	International Council on Monuments and Sites
<b>KWi</b>	Identification used in Schoedder's surveys to designate location (K denotes the District of Windhoek as per Surveyor General's maps; Wi for the town of Windhoek)
<b>NHC</b>	National Heritage Council of Namibia
<b>NIA</b>	Namibia Institute of Architects
<b>NUST</b>	Namibia University of Science and Technology
<b>RMS</b>	Rhenish Mission Society
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SWAPO</b>	South West African People's Organisation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **assemble**

verb

1. (of people) gather together in one place for a common purpose.

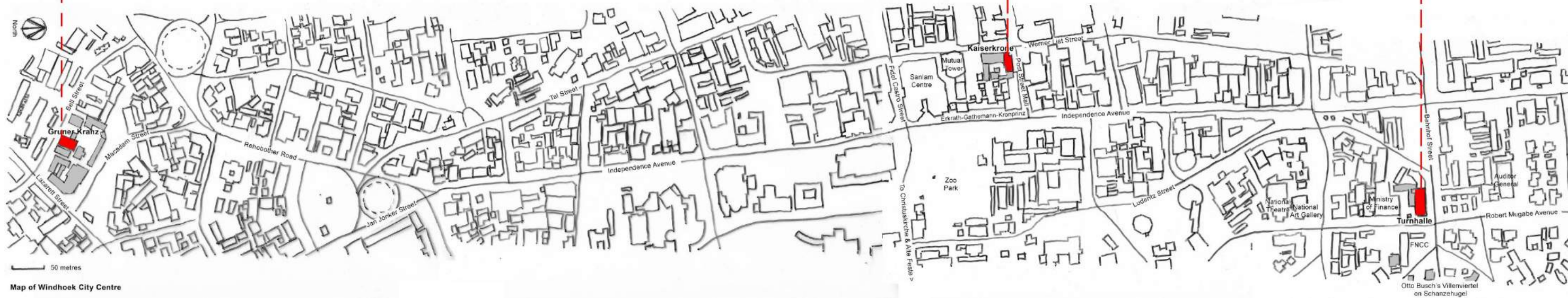
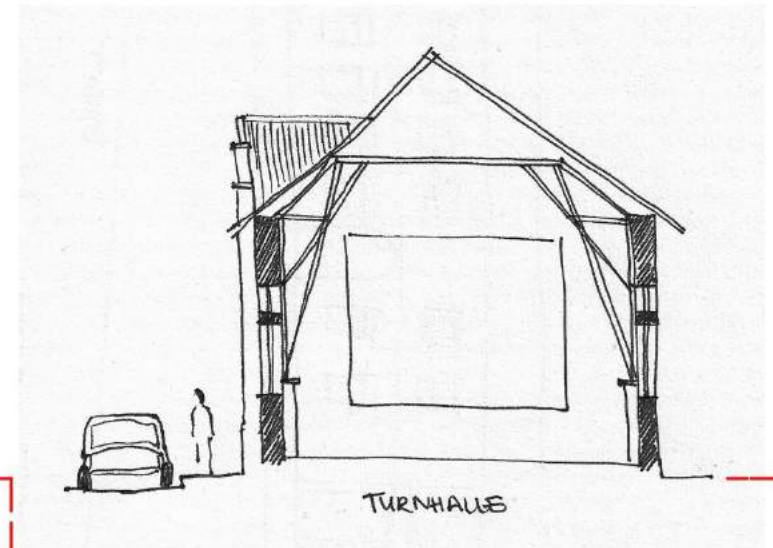
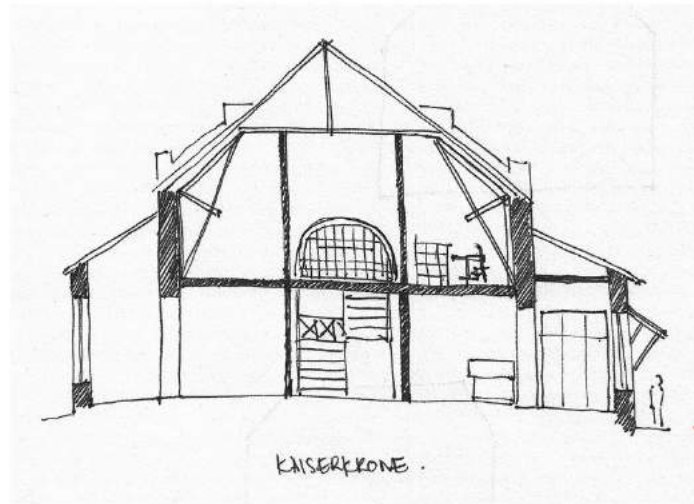
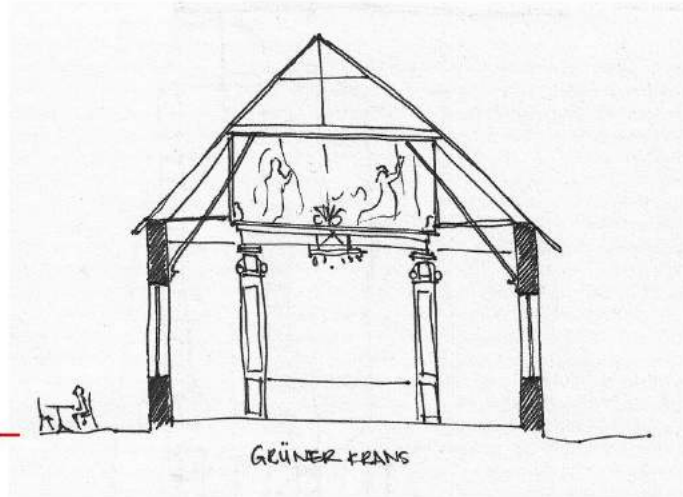
Synonyms: come together, get together, gather, collect, meet, muster, rally, congregate, convene, flock together

2. fit together the separate component parts of (a machine or other object).

Synonyms: construct, build, fabricate, manufacture, erect, set up, join up, fit together, put together, piece together, connect, join, unite, patch up, sew, sew up<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Oxford Living Dictionaries, s.v. "assemble,"  
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/assemble>, accessed 25 January 2018.



# **CHAPTER 1\_INTRODUCTION**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

---

This study explores the issues pertaining to the presence of colonial architecture in the post-colonial city, specifically the German colonial architecture that remains in present-day Windhoek, Namibia. The aim of the study is to critically assess the perceived relevance and significance of German colonial architecture by delving into its history, its architectural merits and its current status in post-colonial Windhoek. The study examines three buildings designed by the German architect, Otto Busch. Although each of these buildings can be regarded as forming part of a certain building typology, each being or containing a hall, they are experienced in different contexts and in varying states of preservation. Their significance and thus their differing heritage values within the city can thus be questioned further in the light of their similarities, so as to explore what makes each of them heritage, or not. For the study to be relevant in the context of present-day post-colonial, post-apartheid Windhoek, it must necessarily be informed by post-colonial theory and the politics of heritage. In so doing, it is hoped that the study can address some of the questions which are relevant to the notion of colonial architecture as heritage.

## **THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

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Living in Windhoek over the last five years, I have become increasingly aware of the frequent demolition of colonial buildings in the city. Although it is impossible to prevent development of the inner city, it has become alarming to witness the general disregard for historical buildings in the city – if not demolished, many are being allowed fall into such a state of disrepair that demolition will become inevitable. I believe that the lack of a general protection clause in the Namibian heritage legislation, such as the sixty-year general protection clause enforced by the South African National Heritage Resources Act (No.25 of 1999), may be one of the causes of this situation.

In this study, I work from the assumption that the lack of adequate legislation for the protection of built heritage must be a symptom of a deeper underlying issue. This has led me to question the perception of architecture as heritage; and more specifically, to question whether the public's perception of colonial architecture has influenced its protection as a heritage resource in the post-colony. This question is relevant in all post-colonies, and while it has been explored more broadly in many studies on the post-colony, I have found that very little has been published about Windhoek's German colonial architecture and the public's perception of it as heritage.

A second question has arisen, prompted by the magnitude of literature that exists about colonialism and its effects – What can be valued in colonial architecture beyond its physical architecture and the events that may be associated with it?

By examining the case of German colonial architecture in Windhoek, the study explores these questions around the perceptions of, and the varying values found in, colonial architecture in the post-colony.

## **HERITAGE AND GERMAN COLONIALISM**

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The literature that forms the background to this study comprises two parts. The body of the text in Chapter 2 is entitled 'Heritage and Memory in the Post-Colonial City' and provides the theoretical background to the study by delving into post-colonial theory, specifically the idea of the post-colonial city and its challenges. The politics of heritage in diverse societies, and the connected theories of conservation, are presented alongside the notion of memory. The theories thus discussed form a valuable forum for further analysis of the case study, based on the various connected threads of contextual and theoretical background.

The second section of the literature informs the context of the study, which is set in the post-colonial city of Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, a former German colony. An understanding of the history of German colonialism in

Africa, and in Namibia specifically, provides a richer contextual background to the development of German colonial architecture in Windhoek. Furthermore, a discussion of the legacy of German colonialism, as experienced in the lives of both Germans and Namibians, concludes Chapter 3 of the dissertation, and provides the background to the analysis of the three case studies.

## **HERITAGE AND MEMORY IN THE POST-COLONIAL CITY**

I make numerous references to *The Politics of Heritage in Africa* (2015), which contains several essays dealing with the contentious issues around heritage and colonial legacies in African countries. Derek Peterson and Litheko Modisane both refer to the writings of Frantz Fanon, who spoke of the “inferiority complex” experienced by the colonised when facing the legacies left by their colonial oppressors.<sup>2</sup> Nick Shepherd sees heritage as a language through which this inferiority complex, among other contested issues, can form part of this dialogue.<sup>3</sup>

The contradictory nature of heritage, with its capacity for being both inclusive and exclusive, is discussed by Tunbridge and Ashworth and Nick Shepherd.<sup>4</sup> Both Shepherd and Modisane emphasise the complexity surrounding heritage in the context of the post-colony.<sup>5</sup> This is the complexity that this study aims to examine in the context of post-colonial Windhoek.

I also refer to the work of Laurajane Smith, and her concept of the Authorised Heritage Discourse.<sup>6</sup> I question the extent to which Namibia’s heritage legislation has been based on this discourse in the past and whether it is relevant to today’s post-Independence decision-making. Moreover, the

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<sup>2</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (New York, NY: Grove, 1967 [1952], 18, in Derek R. Peterson, “Introduction: Heritage Management in Colonial and Contemporary Africa” in *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories, and Infrastructures*, ed. Derek R. Peterson, Kodzo Gavua and Ciraj Rassool (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Nick Shepherd, “Heritage,” in Nick Shepherd and Stephen Robins (eds), *New South African Keywords: A Concise Guide to Public and Political Discourse in Post-Apartheid Society* (Athens, OH and Auckland Park: Ohio University Press and Jacana Media, 2008), 118.

<sup>4</sup> J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996), in G.J. Ashworth, Brian Graham and J.E. Tunbridge, *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 37; Shepherd, “Heritage,” 117.

<sup>5</sup> Shepherd, “Heritage,” 117; Modisane, “Flashes of Modernity,” 236-237.

<sup>6</sup> Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 29.

concept of the Authorised Heritage Discourse prompts the consideration of values beyond aesthetics, artistic achievement and historical significance.

The role of heritage in diverse societies, and its place in the present, is dealt with in *Pluralising Pasts*, where Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge explore it in terms of identity and change.<sup>7</sup> Avrami, Mason and de la Torre also explain that the act of conservation “is shaped by how an object or place is valued [and] its social contexts.”<sup>8</sup> They express a valuable idea, which will be examined in the context of this study, which they formulate as follows: “the unmet need is for research that explains how conservation is situated in society – how it is shaped by economic, cultural, and social forces and how, in turn, it shapes society.”<sup>9</sup>

Lowenthal writes about the difficulties of dealing with heritage in the post-colonial context, one being the sense of disempowerment of the public which is created through the exclusive stewardship of heritage.<sup>10</sup> The Nara Document on Authenticity insists on the importance of respecting cultural diversity by acknowledging “the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.”<sup>11</sup> The Burra Charter emphasises the need to involve people in the decision-making process.<sup>12</sup>

The associations and meanings found in places are entrenched in people’s memories of them. Pierre Nora writes extensively on memory and history, and their relationship to one another. He also writes of the loss of memory and its effect on our perception of the past.<sup>13</sup> His writings on memory are certainly relevant in terms of the memory of places and how this affects people’s perceptions of these places.

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<sup>7</sup> Ashworth et al., *Pluralising Pasts*, 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Erica Avrami, Randall Mason and Marta de la Torre, *Values and Heritage Conservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> David Lowenthal, “Stewarding the Past in a Perplexing Present,” in Avrami et al., 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> ICOMOS, The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994, Preamble, Paragraph 6, <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Conservation* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999), 289.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 2.

## GERMAN COLONIALISM IN NAMIBIA

Itohan Osayimwese asserts in her 2008 dissertation (“Colonialism at the Centre: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828-1914”) that the little writing available on German colonial architecture deals only with the differences between colonial architecture and ‘indigenous’ architecture.<sup>14</sup> While Osayimwese addresses this shortcoming by attempting to uncover how the presence of the colonised shaped German colonial architecture, my study attempts to explore the perceptions of colonial architecture in the present day.

The writings of Perraudin and Zimmerer provide a better understanding of the German colonial era.<sup>15</sup> Tracey Reimann-Dawe explores the period that led to this paradigm, including descriptions of how certain colonial explorers’ beliefs were at odds with those expected to form part of German national identity.<sup>16</sup> Other writings by Zimmerer and Becker on German colonialism, and both Kössler and Melber on the Herero genocide are helpful in contextualising the issues which are still being dealt with in present-day Namibia, and which affect the nation’s perceptions of colonialism and colonial architecture in the country to this day.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Itohan I. Osayimwese, “Colonialism at the Center: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828-1914” (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, “German Colonialism and National Identity” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Tracey Reimann-Dawe, “Time, Identity and Colonialism in German Travel Writing on Africa, 1848-1914” in Perraudin et al, 28.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: Joachim Zeller, “Images of the South West African War: Reflections of the 1904-1907 Colonial War in Contemporary Photo Reportage and Book Illustration,” in *Hues between Black and White*, ed. Wolfram Hartmann (Windhoek: Out of Africa, 2004), 309-23; Reinhart Kössler, “Public Memory, Reconciliation and the Aftermath of War: A Preliminary Framework with Special Reference to Namibia,” in *Re-examining Liberation in Namibia: Political Culture since Independence*, ed. Henning Melber (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2003), 99-112; Reinhart Kössler, “Communal Memory Events and the Heritage of the Victims: The Persistence of the Theme of Genocide in Namibia,” in Perraudin et al, 235-250; Henning Melber, “The Genocide in ‘German South West Africa’ and the Politics of Commemoration: How not to Come to Terms with the Past,” in Perraudin et al., 251-264.

## THE LEGACY OF GERMAN COLONIALISM – FOR GERMANS AND NAMIBIANS

Perraudin and Zimmerer write about the connection between German colonialism and German national identity, and how this has affected Germany's manner of dealing with atrocities it has committed in the past.<sup>18</sup>

Kathryn Jones deals with post-colonial memories of the Herero genocide. She also attempts to highlight “the interplay between official and civil agents of memory and the changing hierarchies of memory.”<sup>19</sup> While the Herero genocide remains a dominant theme in terms of memory, Reinhart Kössler writes, “the very act by which German colonialism cleared the way for what would become apartheid has also had a persistent impact upon peoples’ visions of the past and upon their conception of history.”<sup>20</sup> The aim of this study is to show how this impact is reflected in people’s perceptions of the German colonial architecture they are confronted with on a daily basis.

Henning Melber notes that in post-colonial Namibia, Namibians of German descent are faced with the “challenge of decolonizing their own minds through critical introspection.”<sup>21</sup> This process, similar to what Elazar Barkan terms “a new international morality” forms an important part of the reconciliatory process.<sup>22</sup> In Namibia, this process has involved the contentious construction of commemorative post-colonial sites, such as Heroes’ Acre or the Independence Museum building by the North Korean company Mansudae Overseas Projects. Heike Becker and Megan Kirkwood both explore the contradictory notion of nation-building, without the nation’s input.<sup>23</sup> However,

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<sup>18</sup> Perraudin et al., 1-2.

<sup>19</sup> Kathryn Jones, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française: Post-Colonial Memories of the Herero Genocide and 17 October 1961” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 214.

<sup>20</sup> Kössler, “Communal Memory Events and the Heritage of the Victims,” 236.

<sup>21</sup> Melber, “The Genocide in “German South-West Africa,” 258.

<sup>22</sup> Dominik J. Schaller, “The Struggle for Genocidal Exclusivity: The Perception of the Murder of the Namibian Herero (1904-8) in the Age of a New International Morality” in Perraudin et al., 265.

<sup>23</sup> Heike Becker, “Commemorating Heroes in Windhoek and Eenhana: Memory, Culture and Nationalism in Namibia, 1990-2010” in *Africa*, 80 (4), 2011: 519-43, DOI: 10.1017/S0001972011000490; Meghan L.E. Kirkwood, “Postcolonial Architecture Through North Korean Modes: Namibian Commissions of the Mansudae Overseas Project” (MA thesis, University of Kansas, 2011).

their texts do not cover how existing fabric, colonial architecture, is dealt with in Windhoek's post-colonial context.

Namibia's existing colonial fabric is discussed by George Steinmetz who speaks of the "ruinscape" of German colonial architecture in Namibia, which "haunts" the country.<sup>24</sup> Julia C. Obert also describes Windhoek as being "visibly haunted by its colonial past."<sup>25</sup> This notion of a country being haunted by remnants of its past contributes to the discussion around present-day perceptions in the post-colony.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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The literature studied includes texts dealing with the politics of heritage, as well as the challenges surrounding the pluralities of heritage, seen in light of Smith's Authorised Heritage Discourse. The importance of allowing heritage to evolve, as opposed to remaining static and irrelevant to its future inheritors, has also been widely covered. The study draws on this wider research, which informs and guides the research dealing specifically with heritage issues in Windhoek. The overview of German colonialism and its legacy also provides the background necessary to contextualise the research.

For this study, one of the most valuable works referred to is Walter Peters' *Baukunst in Südwestafrika 1884 – 1914*, which focuses specifically on the German colonial architecture of Namibia.<sup>26</sup> The text is centred on the architecture itself, and is written as a descriptive and historical record of the buildings that define this era. However, Peters does not deal with issues of heritage in this research. Andreas Vogt's research in *National Monuments in Namibia* provides a broad overview of historical sites and monuments in Namibia, particularly those of German colonial origin, but it does not contribute directly to the discourse around heritage and the politics of heritage in

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<sup>24</sup> George Steinmetz, "Harroved Landscapes: white ruingazers in Namibia and Detroit and the cultivation of memory" in *Visual Studies*, 23:3 (2008), DOI: 10.1080/14725860802489890, 224.

<sup>25</sup> Julia C. Obert, "Architectural Space in Windhoek, Namibia: Fortification, Monumentalization, Subversion" in *Postmodern Culture*, Volume 26, No.1, September 2015, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Peters, *Baukunst in Südwestafrika 1884-1914* (Windhoek: John Meinert, 1981).

Namibia.<sup>27</sup> Also, while Osayimwese attempts to address some of these shortcomings in the existing texts on German colonial architecture by attempting to uncover how the presence of the colonised shaped German colonial architecture in the past, this study attempts to bring these texts together to explore the issues around heritage in the present-day, by examining how German colonial architecture is experienced, used and perceived by both the former coloniser and colonised in the post-colonial context of Windhoek.<sup>28</sup>

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CASES

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My curiosity regarding the work of a German architect, Otto Busch, led me to embark on this study, for which I have selected three examples of his work to illustrate German colonial architecture in Windhoek and its possible values as heritage.

The buildings selected as the cases for this study are the Grüner Kranz Hall (Erf 7777), the Kaiserkrone Hall (Erf 1771), and the Turnhalle (Erf 99). These buildings were selected for two reasons. First, all three are the original halls designed by Otto Busch which were designed to have large timber roof spans, and are unique in the city as being the first and last of their kind, the only remaining large halls from that era; and second, although they are of a similar building typology, they are currently being used for divergent purposes, and are thus experienced quite differently. Their different uses also reveal the varying extents to which their original forms and fabric have been conserved. This provides an indication of their perceived significance by their respective owners and allows for further assessment of their heritage significance.

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<sup>27</sup> Andreas Vogt, *National Monuments in Namibia* (Windhoek: Macmillan Education Namibia Publishers (Pty) Ltd, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Itohan I. Osayimwese, "Colonialism at the Center: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828-1914" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008).

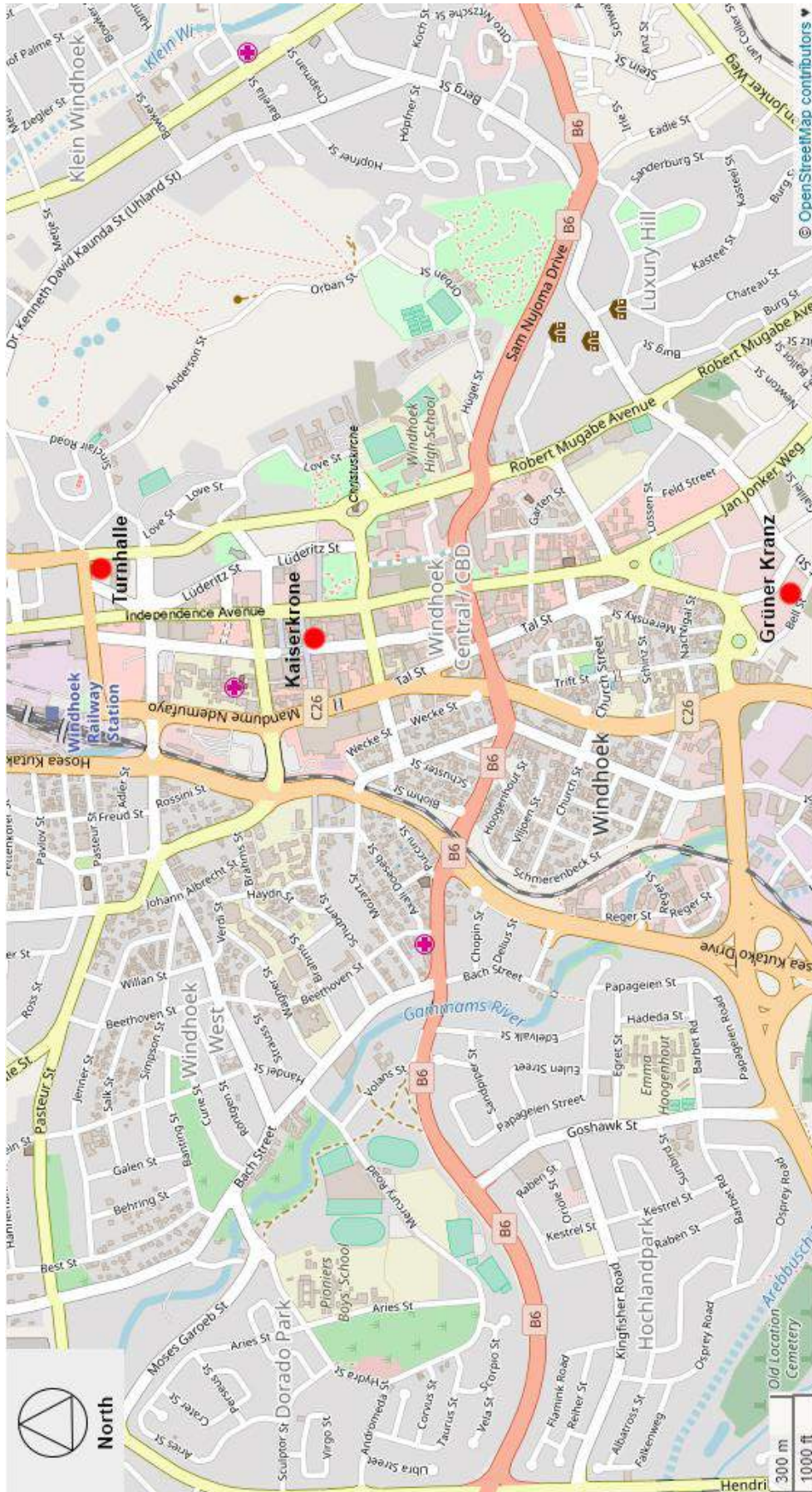


Figure 1 Street Map of Windhoek indicating the three halls in the city centre (edited by author, accessed from <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=15/-22.5693/17.0767>)

The initial investigation for this project has led me to believe that the three buildings represent three forms or levels of perceived significance: significance based on the age and location of the building; significance based on the historical associations as well as the architectural merit of the building; and personal significance of the building for generations of the same family.

The three halls are described briefly below.

### **GRÜNER KRANZ**



*Figure 2 The Grüner Kranz hall is tucked tightly into its site - the former front entrance of the Grüner Kranz Hall is pictured here (photograph by author, 21 July 2017)*

The Hotel Grüner Kranz was built by the innkeeper Rudolf Brüsshaver in 1900. The construction of a *Kegelbahn* (skittle alley) followed in 1905 and the Grüner Kranz hall was built on the property in 1906. Brüsshaver's granddaughter Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener is now the sole owner of the property, and to this day remains diligent in maintaining the buildings and protective regarding their future. The property has remained in one family over three generations,

and is the only one of the three cases which has sentimental value as a heritage resource for a family. Otto Busch designed the hotel's performance hall in 1906.<sup>29</sup> The use of the hall has varied drastically over the years, influenced by the economic situation of the time. More recently however, the space, which is also a café, has become an informal weekly performance venue, which has renewed the hall's original purpose.

## KAISERKRONE



*Figure 3 A view of what used to be the back of the stage of the Kaiserkrone Hall (photograph by author, 19 March 2017)*

The Kaiserkrone Hall was designed by Otto Busch in 1909, on the same property as the earlier Kaiserkrone restaurant. The city block on which it is located comprises seven heritage resources, three of which form part of the Kaiserkrone complex. The Kaiserkrone hall structure has been retained, but the subdivision of the internal volume, to allow for multiple sub-lettings in the building, has altered the original intent of the building entirely. Although it could be argued that the subdivision of the hall has meant that it continues to

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<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder, Edda Schoedder Accession KWi 19-6, -7, -8, -9 (Blue File).

be used, it is my view that this intervention is highly insensitive and not at all appropriate to the building. It is an example of a heritage resource that has been inadequately protected by the National Heritage Act, and this failure raises the question of why it was not protected.

## TURNHALLE



*Figure 4 The Turnhalle (photograph by author, 13 December 2016)*

The 22 x 14 metre gymnastics hall was designed by Otto Busch for the *Turnverein* (gymnastics club) in 1908. The site chosen for the hall was located in the vicinity of several of Busch's residential villas on Schanzenhügel. Although Busch had become locally known as the villa builder, this project revealed his greater skills as an architect, seen in his design of the wide span half-hipped timber roof for the hall, the first of its kind to be built in the colony.<sup>30</sup> Besides the building's architectural significance, it also played a significant role in the decisions made at the Turnhalle Conference leading up to

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<sup>30</sup> Peters, 185.

Independence. The Turnhalle was renovated in 2003 in preparation for its occupation by the newly formed SADC Tribunal in 2005. However, a fire destroyed the court room of the Turnhalle in 2007 before the Tribunal heard its first case.<sup>31</sup> It was reconstructed later that year. What makes this case pertinent to the study is that through all of the renovations that have taken place over the years, the volume of the hall has been retained, while accommodating the building's changing uses. Of particular importance is the decision to reconstruct the building according to its original design after the hall was mostly destroyed by the fire in 2007. This gives a strong indication of the building's perceived significance as a heritage resource, presumably due to the important role it played in the years before Namibia achieved independence as well as its role as the home of the SADC Tribunal.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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While the literature on the politics of heritage, post-colonial cities and German colonialism, provides the theoretical basis of my argument, the study relies on research on a particular architect's work, that of the German architect Otto Busch, whose work falls within the German colonial period in Windhoek. The three cases are situated in the context of present-day Windhoek. The study therefore relies on "context-dependent knowledge" which can only be produced by the case study, and which Flyvbjerg maintains lies at the heart of expert activity.<sup>32</sup>

The three cases selected are of particular interest to me, but their selection also has what Peshkin describes as "another agenda – to learn from the case about some class of things."<sup>33</sup> In this study, the class examined is a class of buildings of the same era. The cases are physically similar, which allows for a comparative analysis of their significance, based on factors beyond their

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<sup>31</sup> Denver Isaacs, "Turnhalle gutted, fireman in ICU," Economic News, *The Namibian*, 19 January 2007, <http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=32801&page=archive-read>

<sup>32</sup> Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five misunderstandings about Case-Study Research," *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 2, April 2006, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Alan Peshkin, *God's Choice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Robert E. Stake, "Case Studies" in *Strategies for Qualitative Enquiry*, ed. Normin K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, Sape, Thousand Oaks/London, 1998), 88.

materiality, and hence it should be possible to draw a broader picture around their significances.

Although Flyvbjerg does not advocate generalisation *per se*, he explains that “the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, the selection of the three cases has been made with a view to being able to use the information gained to make certain observations about German colonial architecture in Windhoek, particularly because each of the cases represents a different form of perceived relevance or significance in the city. Flyvbjerg maintains that using a smaller number of cases is more effective than using a larger selection, quoting Beveridge, who wrote “[M]ore discoveries have arisen from intense observation than from statistics applied to large groups.”<sup>35</sup>

Numerous primary sources of information have allowed for a detailed analysis of the three cases and their relation to the topic. The information was acquired primarily through on-site searches in Windhoek, due to the lack of digitised information. I have therefore followed a systematic process of investigation, in order to collate all information required within the period that I had available to physically access the information sources.

## **ON-SITE DATA COLLECTION**

Photographs taken by myself and others of the present-day buildings and their sites, provide an indication and a starting point for a discussion on the physical and aesthetic state of the buildings, the extent of alterations and interventions visible to the eye, and on a larger scale, the buildings’ settings within the city. A site analysis of each case allowed for the examination of the present-day use(s) of the buildings and the development of each of the sites since their inception, based on the buildings’ actual uses and documentary evidence from earlier years.

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<sup>34</sup> Flyvbjerg, 9.

<sup>35</sup> W.I.B. Beveridge, *The Art of Scientific Investigation* (London: William Heinemann, 1951) quoted in Flyvbjerg, 10.

## **DOCUMENT COLLECTION**

Surveyor General erf diagrams obtained from the Office of the Surveyor General at the Ministry of Land Reform in Windhoek provide sub-division information for the present-day erven and the earlier land parcels. The earlier diagrams often include original owners' names and building outlines, and are helpful in that they indicate previous erf or parcel numbers, which can be used in further document searches.

At the Office of the Registrar of Deeds at the Ministry of Land Reform in Windhoek, the history of ownership of the properties can be traced back to the original owners, as far back as the 1890s, by using the erf numbers, both past and present, as recorded in the register of deeds. Once the original *Parzelle* (land parcel) numbers have been located in the early records from around 1921, it is possible to obtain the original records of ownership in the German *Grundbuch* folios, up to the year 1918. The *Grundbuch* provides valuable insights into the original owners, who are often listed according to their profession, and whose histories may be significant for the study.

## **EDDA SCHOEDDER ACCESSION**

The most valuable collection of information available for the purpose of this study was the Edda Schoedder Accession, housed at the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek. It contains the most comprehensive survey of historical architecture in Namibia, and no such survey has been completed since.

Klaus Brandt, former chairman of the Namibia Institute for Architects Heritage Committee, explains that in response to a UNESCO request in the late 1970s for all institutes, affiliations and professionals to dedicate their work to architecture and heritage that year (he recalls it being 1978) the institute of architects decided to form a heritage committee, with himself as its first chairman.<sup>36</sup> It was decided that a meaningful project would be to compile a heritage register of historical buildings in the country. Edda Schoedder, an unregistered architect, had just completed work for Consolidated Diamond Mines in Lüderitz, which allowed her the time required to complete such an

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<sup>36</sup> Klaus Brandt, Interview with Klaus Brandt, 30 September 2017, Windhoek.

undertaking. Under the guidance of architects Peter Strack and Klaus Brandt, as well as Walter Peters, she compiled a masterplan for the survey and assessments. Her connection with Consolidated Diamond Mines provided the financial backing, without which the project could never have been brought to fruition. The Heritage Committee was able to appoint Schoedder to work full-time on the project. Her keen attention to detail made her the ideal person to fulfil the role. She began by compiling the full survey of Lüderitz, which she knew well from her previous work there. With further donations, the Heritage Committee subsequently had the funding to undertake surveys of Windhoek and Swakopmund, which Schoedder was able to complete in full before she became ill. The surveys for the towns of Karibib, Okambahe, Usakos, Otjimbingwe and Omaruru were started, but never completed before Schoedder died in 1989.<sup>37</sup> The drive to complete the work was lost after her death.

The collection includes the architectural survey assessment sheets, sorted according to numbered locations and filed accordingly in what is known as the *Blue Files*. Large-scale locality plans indicate the heritage resources which were assessed in the surveys. These are shown as coloured numbers, coloured according to the grading which was assigned to them. A large collection of historical photographs taken by Schoedder of the buildings surveyed in the 1980s has been digitized and is available from the National Archives of Namibia and online from the Namibia University of Science and Technology database. Schoedder's assessment sheets include valuable details including dates, the architects or builders who were originally and subsequently involved, the condition of the building at the time of the survey, and unusual or original features. A significant amount of time was spent by Schoedder in collating this information from archival material at the National Archives of Namibia and the City of Windhoek archives. All of these references are included in each individual building survey. These are invaluable for subsequent searches by anyone wishing to see original drawings and documents pertaining to these buildings.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Brandt believes the surveys can be used as an “academic tool,” “a real tool” for doing a thorough job as an architect: “Even though you might find that the building doesn’t exist anymore, you could have access to it.”<sup>38</sup> My search for information on the three buildings in this study, as well as countless others, has been heavily reliant on the references and prior archival research already done by Edda Schoedder, without which, my search would have been frustratingly slow and not nearly as complete. The digitization of these documents remains key to maintaining the accessibility of this information for others, as well as to ensuring their preservation. As Brandt comments, all of these documents are at risk of disappearing, to “the forces of entropy” which are constantly at work.<sup>39</sup>

## ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

The archival references that were painstakingly compiled by Edda Schoedder in the Blue Files, and similarly those found in Walter Peters’ book, *Baukunst in Südwestafrika 1884 – 1914*, together with the old erf and parcel numbers and the original owners’ names, provide the starting point for the archival research on the three cases. The collection of files called *Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Windhoek* (Imperial Office of Windhoek, abbreviated archive reference of BWI) consists of building plan submissions, and comments and approvals which were issued between 1896 and 1915. These files are invaluable as they consist of original drawings and plans, most of which are not available elsewhere. The files contain other drawings and site plans which also fill in the context of the buildings’ surroundings – indicating the existence of nearby structures in a certain year, for example.

Further archival material including early photographs, letters and correspondence, applications and approval records; have been examined to obtain information such as dates, building values, and insights into the original intention of the buildings. The SAW Absentee Estate Nr. 5892/32 (EST), located at the National Archives provides information on the life of Otto Busch himself. The collection of drawings and documents held by the Diener family

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

fills in many of the gaps in the National Archive collection for the Grüner Kranz complex.

Architectural plans, drawings and sketches which represent the current layout of the buildings and recent changes, obtained from the owners, architects who have worked on the sites, and the Building Control office of the Department of Urban Planning and Property Management at the City of Windhoek, provide valuable insight into the changes made to the buildings, as well as their current use. These have been examined closely alongside earlier plans and drawings of the sites as part of the site analysis, undertaken concurrently with the archival research, as the analysis relies primarily on the archival research.

### **TEXTS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE CASES AND WINDHOEK**

Walter Peters' book, *Baukunst in Südwestafrika 1884 – 1914* (1981), is a rare piece of published literature relating to this topic, and remains one of the few texts in existence to focus on the architecture of that specific era, in Windhoek. It is however currently only available in German. Andreas Vogt's research on historical sites and monuments, including his book entitled *National Monuments in Namibia* (2004; 2010), has also been useful for confirming basic building data.

### **INTERVIEWS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

As this research relies on qualitative research to inform the study, it is necessary to be selective when choosing the population to be interviewed. The limitations of this research, being a minor dissertation and a pilot study, also meant that a smaller selection of interviewees was required to illustrate the crucial issues and arguments that arose.

After careful thought was given to selecting the three cases based on their differing uses and their varying significance, it became easier to identify the people who would be able to make valuable contributions to the research in terms of their personal experience with each of the three cases, their insights, or their professional expertise on the subject.

The owners of the three buildings were identified as the first group of interviewees, due to their close connection to each of the sites. In the case of

Kaiserkrone, the complex is owned by O & L Leisure (Pty) Ltd, a subsidiary of Ohlthaver & List Group. Although their connection to the site would seem to be more distant than that of a private owner, they do occupy the original Kaiserkrone Hotel building and part of what used to be the Kaiserkrone Hall. Obtaining information directly from senior management was impossible due to the size of the holding company, which owns much of the inner central business district of Windhoek. A project manager at O & L Leisure provided his views of the Kaiserkrone complex, although these do not necessarily represent the views of the company. The Government of Namibia owns the Turnhalle, and therefore its maintenance and preservation rely on the government's policies regarding heritage and the availability of public funds. The views of the disbanded SADC Tribunal, which occupied the renovated building, could not be obtained. The building is currently temporarily occupied by employees of the Ministry of Justice, from the High Court. Due to the transient nature of the building's occupancy, no official views could be obtained for the purposes of this study. By contrast, the Grüner Kranz is privately owned, by Mrs Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener, whose family has owned the property since the Grüner Kranz Hotel was first built in 1900. A significant amount of time was given to me by Mrs Diener and her son, Ferdinand Diener, during which they shared many personal insights into the use of their property during their lifetimes.

Given the technical and aesthetic values involved in assessing the architectural significance of these buildings, it was useful to direct a set of questions to a relevant group of architectural professionals in Namibia, who would most likely have revealing insights regarding the architecture in question. It was originally thought that a questionnaire, sent out to all of the members of the Namibia Institute of Architects would be appropriate as a starting point, followed by interviews with those who indicated their willingness to be interviewed in the questionnaire. The thinking behind this revolved around the initial idea of gleaning the thoughts of a broader representation of Namibia's population. However, considering that in 2016, only one in eight architects registered with the Namibia Institute of Architects was an indigenous Namibian, and one in four architects-in-training was born in Namibia, this

approach would not have contributed to the research as intended.<sup>40</sup> It would also not have been as effective as a more focused selection of architects. Thus, each of the architects selected for interviews or detailed correspondence, has had a direct role to play in the development or conservation of the three cases. In addition, several other architects were approached due to their known roles in heritage or conservation of the built environment.

While the limited selection of interviewees may seem counter-intuitive in a study which seeks to understand the public perceptions of the three cases, the selection of a smaller group of people with a deeper knowledge and memory of each of the buildings ensures a more accurate analysis of the cases whilst maintaining the focus of the scope of the study. The analysis of their histories, historical use, current use and protection helps to reveal each case's relevance within the community, their accessibility to the public and their use as gathering spaces. These all serve as clues to their social value or significance, and thus their public perception.

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<sup>40</sup> Namibia Institute of Architects, *Namibia | Archaeology of the Future | Tomorrow's Architectural Landscape*. A catalogue of the exhibition presented by the Namibia Institute of Architects, 15 November – 2 December 2016 at the Casa dell'Architettura, Rome. (Rome: Architetti Roma Edizione, Ordine degli Architetti P.P.C. di Roma e Provincia, 2016), 55.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

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The study focuses on three cases as an illustration of German colonial architecture in the post-colonial context of Windhoek. Although references may be made to other examples of German colonial architecture in Windhoek and Namibia, the study is not a study of German colonial architecture, as this has already been attempted in Walter Peters' *Baukunst in Südwestafrika* (1981). The study aims instead to outline the issues of heritage in plural societies; to convey the importance of memory in the post-colonial context; to contextualise these issues in Windhoek; and to explain the current cultural value of these three buildings as heritage, through an exploration of their perceived significances. Although reference may be made to other works by the same architect, the research is not intended to be about the architect: rather, it is about the ways in which his architecture can be seen as heritage in the present day. It is hoped that the examples used can be useful in comparative assessments of other examples of colonial architecture in the post-colonial city. It is also hoped that the study can draw attention to the importance of the work undertaken by Edda Schoedder in contributing to the protection of these buildings, and to the continued access to information.

# CHAPTER 2\_HERITAGE AND MEMORY IN THE POST-COLONIAL CITY

*“The unmet need is for research that explains how conservation is situated in society – how it is shaped by economic, cultural, and social forces and how, in turn, it shapes society.”<sup>41</sup>*

## POST-COLONIAL CITIES

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*“Different sections of the community live side by side, but separately, within the same political unit ... Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways.”<sup>42</sup>*

This study examines three examples of colonial architecture in the city of Windhoek, in Namibia, which was formerly a German colony known as *Deutsche Südwest Afrika*, or German South West Africa before the country gained its independence in 1990. This study is therefore firmly situated in the context of the post-colonial city.

Numerous studies have been undertaken with a view to classifying or defining the colonial and the post-colonial city.<sup>43</sup> Wallerstein’s collection of writings on the colonial situation is one of the earlier attempts to examine the social changes experienced by colonial cities;<sup>44</sup> Ross and Telkamp later compiled a collection of essays on colonial cities;<sup>45</sup> and King attempted to define the traits of the colonial city through a set of suggested differing typologies.<sup>46</sup> More recently, Yeoh is one of many authors to have explored the contested spaces

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<sup>41</sup> Avrami et al., 6.

<sup>42</sup> J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A comparative study of Burma and the Netherlands Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 304-5.

<sup>43</sup> G. J. Telkamp, “Urban History and European expansion. A review of recent literature concerning colonial cities and a preliminary bibliography”, *Intercontinenta 1* (Leiden, 1978): 14-15.

<sup>44</sup> I. Wallerstein (ed.), *Social Change: The Colonial Situation* (New York: 1966).

<sup>45</sup> Robert Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, *Colonial Cities* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985)

<sup>46</sup> Anthony D. King, “Colonial Cities: Global Pivots of Change,” in Ronald Ross and Gerald J. Telkamp (eds.), *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985, 7-32

of the colonial city, and although her study is situated in Singapore, that Asian country's experience is still relevant to the African context.<sup>47</sup>

Several features, seen by Balandier as being intrinsic to the colonial process, distinguish the colonial city: the “dominance by a foreign minority;” “the linking of radically different civilisations in some form of relationship;” “the imposition of an industrialized society onto a non-industrialised one;” and “an ‘antagonistic relationship’ where the colonial people were ‘subjected as instruments of colonial power.’”<sup>48</sup> Namibia can be seen as having experienced the colonial process twice – firstly under German colonial rule, and secondly under the South African apartheid regime. The effects of the apartheid era on the architectural and urban landscape of Windhoek have been studied to a limited extent by writers such as Fatima Müller-Friedman, Guillermo Delgado and Phillip Lühl.<sup>49</sup> Further studies of the legacy of apartheid and its relics in Namibia, especially within the discourse of heritage, are still needed. These studies could be read alongside the already significant body of heritage studies written within the South African post-apartheid context. Although the South African colonisation of Namibia had a profound influence on how the city of Windhoek is shaped today, this study is limited to the German colonial period and its influence on the city's architectural heritage today.

Yeoh writes that “the social, morphological, and functional features of colonial cities cannot be understood apart from their pivotal role in establishing, systemizing, and maintaining colonial rule.”<sup>50</sup> She asserts that “Colonial authorities, through local institutions of urban governance such as the

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<sup>47</sup> Brenda S.A. Yeoh, *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> G. Balandier, “The Colonial Situation: a theoretical approach”, in I. Wallerstein, 34-61.

<sup>49</sup> Fatima Müller Friedman, “Beyond the Post-Apartheid City: De/Segregation and Suburbanization in Windhoek, Namibia” in *African Geographical Review*, Volume 25, 2006, Issue 1, 33-61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2006.9756192>; Phillip Lühl and Guillermo Delgado, “Mass Housing in Namibia – A Chance to Transcend the Socio-Spatial Geography of Apartheid?” in *Digest of Namibian Architecture* 2013, Edition 11, 16-19; Guillermo Delgado and Phillip Lühl, “Financialisation and the Production of Inequality in Namibia: A Socio-Spatial Perspective” in *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik* XXIX 4-2013, 46-66, [http://www.mattersburgerkreis.at/dl/lptmJMlKlOJqx4KooJK/JEP-4-2013\\_03\\_DELGADO-L\\_HL\\_Financialisation-and-the-Production-of-Inequality-in-Namibia-A-Socio-Spatial-Perspective.pdf](http://www.mattersburgerkreis.at/dl/lptmJMlKlOJqx4KooJK/JEP-4-2013_03_DELGADO-L_HL_Financialisation-and-the-Production-of-Inequality-in-Namibia-A-Socio-Spatial-Perspective.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> George Balandier, 34-61; Horvath, “In search of a Theory,” 69-82, Simon, “Third World Colonial Cities,” 493-514; King, 7-32, referenced in Yeoh, 1.

municipal authorities, attempted to structure the urban built environment in such a way as to facilitate colonial rule and express colonial aspirations and ideals.” Colonial landscapes were created to reflect “the power and prestige of the colonialists.”<sup>51</sup> The colonial environment was simultaneously designed to ensure the “subjugation of the ‘natives’ to white superiority” through a system of ranking, based on the assumption of certain “inherent racial attributes.”<sup>52</sup> Yeoh asserts that these assumptions and systems of coercion are also “ideological and cultural impositions which are often inseparable from the material.”<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, Bekker and Therborn explain that the power of a nation state, and its “quest to establish and maintain power” are projected through its urban landscape, “manifested in the capital’s architecture, in its public monuments and the names of its streets and public spaces. These urban symbols of power, of state authority, however, are fluid and subject to change.”<sup>54</sup> Each time there is a change of government, a shift in priorities or agendas, these changes are reflected in the development of the city.

The concepts of power and subjugation, the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, and the transposing of ideas and systems onto the material landscape, suggest the existence of many conflicting or contradicting layers within a colonial city. Furnivall describes it as a place where “different sections of the community live side by side, but separately, within the same political unit ... Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways.”<sup>55</sup> As such, and as a result of the colonial process, the colonial city is distinguished by its “racial, cultural, social and religious pluralism.”<sup>56</sup>

This pluralism is an essential consideration in this study. Through understanding the plural society in which the city exists, a greater

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<sup>51</sup> Yeoh, 16.

<sup>52</sup> D.A. Washbrook, “Ethnicity and Racialism in Colonial Indian Society”, in *Racism and Colonialism* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1982), 143-181.

<sup>53</sup> Yeoh, 11-12.

<sup>54</sup> Simon Bekker and Goran Therborn (eds), *Power and Powerlessness: Capital Cities in Africa* (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2012), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Furnivall, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Yeoh, 1.

understanding of the complexities around the heritage of the city can become possible. A plural society is marked by cultural diversity, but as Ashworth et al. explain, pluralism can also invoke “the idea of ‘multiple cultures’, of ‘standing alone’ or ‘separate development’, in which cultural identity becomes a strategy of resistance to hegemonic state identities.”<sup>57</sup> Pluralism is, therefore, by nature multi-faceted and unique to its physical and historical context, with the implication that many contradictory meanings and associations can be attached to heritage in the colonial or post-colonial city.

Ashworth et al. explain that in plural societies, where the heritage of a minority is no longer valued in the present-day context, this heritage is often rejected through the denial of its existence.<sup>58</sup> A more intentional approach is to eradicate the heritage of a “deviant group.” The destruction of such heritage is often “sealed by the construction of the new order’s sacred places upon their foundations.”<sup>59</sup> However, they argue that “although deliberate destruction has an enormous symbolic impact in demonstrating that change has occurred, disuse and neglect may be as prevalent and effective as deliberate destruction.” They write that “an indifferent neglect by current authorities who have no interest in preservation, will over time be as effective a strategy of obliteration.”<sup>60</sup> This observation is pertinent to the Namibian context, where many German colonial buildings seem to have been left deliberately vacant, slowly falling into ruin with the passing of time, while the rest of Windhoek lives on.

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<sup>57</sup> Ashworth et al., *Pluralising Pasts*, 8

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 103

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 105

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 106

## THE POLITICS OF HERITAGE

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*“Heritage is that part of the past that we select in the present for contemporary purposes, whether these be economic or cultural (including political and social factors) and choose to bequeath to a future.”<sup>61</sup>*

Heritage is seen by many as being representative of history, in the form of historical fabric, such as buildings, monuments and archaeological finds. Davison and Schofield explain that heritage and history are often seen as interchangeable terms.<sup>62</sup> However, Lowenthal asserts that “heritage is not history, even when it mimics history.”<sup>63</sup> Despite both heritage and history’s close ties to the past, Graham et al. argue that heritage is less about tangible material artefacts or other intangible forms of the past than about the meanings placed upon them and the representations which are created from them.<sup>64</sup> If heritage is about meaning, it stands to reason that heritage is emotionally loaded – based on highly subjective ideas of what is deemed valuable, significant, or important enough to hold onto.

Bond and Worthing explain that in order to be “regarded as a heritage asset, an asset must have some meaningful archaeological, architectural, artistic, historical, social or other heritage interest that gives it a value to society that transcends its functional utility.”<sup>65</sup> In a plural society, where cultural values may differ vastly, “any one place in the landscape may hold significance for many different people for many different reasons.”<sup>66</sup> How this significance is identified becomes a key issue in heritage management and decision making. Who decides on this significance? Often, the people who have the closest

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 35

<sup>62</sup> John Schofield, “Heritage Management, Theory and Practice”, 17; Graeme Davison, “Heritage: From Patrimony to Pastiche”, 35, in Graham Fairclough et al (eds.), *The Heritage Reader* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 35.

<sup>63</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121.

<sup>64</sup> Brian Graham, G.J. Ashworth and J.E. Tunbridge, *A geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy* (London: Arnold, 2000); Brian Graham, “Heritage as knowledge: capital or culture?” in *Urban Studies* 39, 2002: 1003-17.

<sup>65</sup> Stephen Bond and Derek Worthing, *Managing Built Heritage: The Role of Cultural Values and Significance*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malaysia: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 6-7.

<sup>66</sup> Jason Ardler, “Forward” in D. Byrne et al, *Social Significance: A Discussion Paper* (New South Wales: National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2003), <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/SocialSignificance.pdf>

associations with this heritage do not have the opportunity to participate in the process of identifying and defining the significance of these places. The criteria for assessing the significance of places are generally set out by heritage professionals within a dominant Western framework, which Laurajane Smith terms the Authorised Heritage Discourse that “works to naturalise a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage.”<sup>67</sup> She explains that this Authorised Heritage Discourse is based on “a range of assumptions...that are linked to and defined by the concepts of monumentality and aesthetics.”<sup>68</sup>

Smith defines the Authorised Heritage Discourse as “focus[ing] attention on aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations ‘must’ care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their ‘education,’ and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past.”<sup>69</sup> Rowlands and de Jong urge a push for an alternative paradigm, in expressing the need to “abandon received ideas about heritage as awe-inspiring monumental architecture” in search of a return to Africa’s origins. Monumentality is thus not necessarily a prerequisite for something to be of significance.<sup>70</sup> Materiality also becomes less significant. They write that “archives require surveys and indexes to decide on principals of inclusion and exclusion.”<sup>71</sup> Until fairly recently, these principals or prerequisites have meant that a large number of heritage sites have been ignored as they do not fall within the notions of the accepted or Authorised Heritage Discourse. Rowlands and de Jong state that since the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage “over fifty national surveys of cultural patrimony have been investigated by various African states. Much of this identification has been far too late in terms of its stated aims to conserve and preserve.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Smith, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Rowlands and Ferdinand de Jong, “Reconsidering Heritage and Memory,” in Ferdinand de Jong and Michael Rowlands (eds.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa* (Walnut Creek California: Left Coast Press, 2007), 21.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.,18.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

It can be argued that Namibia's "heritage discourse" has in the past been based largely on the Authorised Heritage Discourse, one that disregards "other" forms of heritage, and celebrates only the monumental and aesthetically pleasing. The survey of historical buildings in Namibia, compiled by Edda Schoedder, is comprised almost entirely of German colonial buildings that fit within the accepted constraints of age and aesthetics. These buildings were deemed worthy of inclusion in this survey largely because they were considered old enough or beautiful enough. Yet the question as to why the country's built heritage, particularly this colonial heritage, is not protected by such an Authorised Heritage Discourse becomes poignant in this study. Perhaps the authorities in Namibia have already unconsciously rejected this discourse by asserting the importance of 'other' forms of heritage over more traditional Western ideas of heritage? Or perhaps it is linked more closely to how the community feels about these places?

Chris Johnston points out that it is believed by some that heritage professionals "may have lost touch with the sentiments that inspire community love of a place and therefore action for its protection."<sup>73</sup> While Edda Schoedder's assessment examined the historical and architectural significance of the buildings, shown in the higher ratings for buildings that were the sites of historical events or associated with historically important people, this historical significance gives no indication of a place's social significance.

Johnston questions how social value can be considered within the context of the heritage of a culturally diverse community, and reflects on the lack of studies in Australia that have attempted to answer this question.<sup>74</sup> The same can be said for Namibia and its heritage, within its plural society.

Johnston suggests that places can be identified as having social value if they are found to "tie the past affectionately to the present; help give a disempowered group back its history; provide an essential reference point in a community's identity or sense of itself; loom large in the daily comings and goings of life; provide an essential community function that over time develops

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<sup>73</sup> Chris Johnston, *What Is Social Value?* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service. 1994), 3, [http://www.contextpl.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/What\\_is\\_Social\\_Value\\_web.pdf](http://www.contextpl.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/What_is_Social_Value_web.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 16

into a deeper attachment that is more than utility value; have shaped some aspect of community behaviour or attitudes; are distinctive; are accessible to the public and offer the possibility of repeated use to build up associations and value to the community of users; and places where people gather and act as a community.”<sup>75</sup> This list of social traits forms a useful reference point for determining the social significance of a place. However, it cannot be used in isolation from the actual community (and its own set of values) that it is applied to. While a heritage professional could use this list as a tool for assessing the significance of a building, the social significance of the building can only truly be determined through direct contact with the community itself. Byrne speaks of the attachment people have to a place, and writes that “Places are unlikely to be meaningful to [people] unless meaning is permitted to be expressed in terms of attachment.”<sup>76</sup>

This attachment to a place will vary from person to person – while one person may have no emotional attachment to a building, another individual may feel strongly about it. Byrne writes of how the invisible meanings of places are “mapped” in people’s minds in the form of memories.<sup>77</sup> Those with the most vivid memories of a place are likely to have the strongest feelings about a place, which may be positive or negative depending on their own personal experience of that place. All of these sentiments are valid, however contradictory they may be.

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, known as the Burra Charter, was one of the first charters for heritage conservation developed to consider qualities beyond the accepted Western notions of archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historical significance. While it considers the guidelines set out in the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice 1964) and the Resolutions of the 5th General Assembly of the International Council on

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 7

<sup>76</sup> D. Byrne et al, *Social Significance: A Discussion Paper* (New South Wales: National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2003), <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/SocialSignificance.pdf>, 11

<sup>77</sup> Denis Byrne, “The Archaeology of Disaster” in *Public History Review* 5/6 (1996-7), 17-29; Byrne et al, 47.

Monuments and Sites (Moscow 1978), the Burra Charter takes this work further with the inclusion of social or spiritual value as valid considerations of heritage significance.<sup>78</sup> The Burra Charter defines cultural significance as the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations, “embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.”<sup>79</sup> Social value is defined as embracing “the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to a majority or minority group.”<sup>80</sup>

These values will vary between different individuals and groups, and while they may often be conflicting, Byrne et al. write that a wider definition of cultural heritage has the potential to contribute to the process of reconciliation through being more culturally appropriate, and through “focussing greater attention on the heritage of the post-contact years” in order to “convey an understanding of the history of race relations.”<sup>81</sup> Although this heritage may evoke pain, a duality therefore exists in its power to also contribute to reconciliation. Just as Aboriginal communities may experience the heritage of the “post-contact” years in Australia in both ways, Namibians may be able to experience German colonial architecture in the same manner.

The complexities that arise as result of these contrasting emotions and associations require that assessments of significance are made in isolation: “Assessments of cultural significance often require a comparison with other places of a similar type, values, history or associations.”<sup>82</sup> Two buildings may be almost identical in age and scale, and of similar artistic value, but their

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<sup>78</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013, Preamble, 1, <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> *The Burra Charter*, Article 1.2.

<sup>80</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance*, Article 2.5, 1988, [https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-to-the-Burra-Charter\\_-Cultural-Significance.pdf](https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-to-the-Burra-Charter_-Cultural-Significance.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Byrne et al., 10

<sup>82</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance*, Practice Note Version 1: November 2013, Section 4, 6, [http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Practice-Note\\_Understanding-and-assessing-cultural-significance.pdf](http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Practice-Note_Understanding-and-assessing-cultural-significance.pdf)

social values may be widely divergent. These differences in social perception may be seen more clearly when the buildings are assessed together.

This study adopts a similar approach in order to assess and discuss the perceived heritage value of three very similar German colonial halls.

According to Zancheti and Jokilehto, “Conservation is a process that can only exist if society attributes values to the urban structure.”<sup>83</sup> In the context of Australian aboriginal and colonial heritage, Byrne et al. suggest that “a direct link exists between the neglect of social significance in Aboriginal heritage management and the radical under-recording of post-contact heritage places.”<sup>84</sup> The concept of social value or significance is thus integral to heritage conservation, and there is no reason to believe that the same does not apply to Namibian heritage resources. Yet, although a large number of German colonial buildings were recorded in Schoedder’s survey in the 1980s, relatively few sites have been added to the Namibian Heritage Register. Schoedder’s survey remains the only thorough survey of heritage resources completed to date, but it makes no attempt to assess the social values of each building recorded. In the post-colonial context of Windhoek, this may invite and reinforce a tendency to underestimate the social significance – whether perceived positively or negatively – of German colonial architecture.

The Nara Document on Authenticity insists on the importance of respecting cultural diversity by acknowledging “the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.”<sup>85</sup> It suggests that these values are to be judged within a property’s cultural context, and based on the credibility of the information sources about these values.<sup>86</sup>

Failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of differing cultural values inevitably leads to exclusion. Tunbridge and Ashworth explain that “the creation of any heritage actively potentially disinherits or excludes those who do not subscribe

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<sup>83</sup> S.M. Zancheti and J. Jokilehto, “Values and urban conservation planning: Some reflections on principles and definitions”, *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 1, March 1997, 37-51.

<sup>84</sup> Byrne et al., 18

<sup>85</sup> *The Nara Document on Authenticity*, Preamble, Paragraph 6.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Paragraphs 9 & 11.

to, or are not embraced within, the terms of meaning attending that heritage.”<sup>87</sup> In the post-colonial society, there are many opportunities for this sense of disinheritance or exclusion to exist, as a result of the co-existence of the ex-coloniser and the newly de-colonised. This is a symptom of the pluralism that defines the post-colonial city.

In *The Politics of Heritage in Africa*, Derek Peterson quotes Frantz Fanon when he writes, “Every colonised people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilising nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country.”<sup>88</sup> This language, found in the legacies of a colonial past, asserts itself in the form of street names, monuments, statues and buildings. Inevitably, the “inferiority complex” that Fanon speaks of is experienced each time the colonised come face to face with these legacies. Similarly, Litheko Modisane, referring to the writings of Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon, describes the relationship between past and present; the present “which can never be independent of some version of the past;” and how both are “connected by actual anxieties of the here and now.”<sup>89</sup> He goes on to write “In the ‘post-colonial’ context, state and non-state institutions have set themselves the task of addressing some of these anxieties through the cultural apparatus of heritage. Accordingly, ‘heritage offers a language through which to discuss contested issues of culture, identity and citizenship in the post-colony, even as it determines and delimits this discussion in particular ways.’”<sup>90</sup>

Nick Shepherd echoes this sentiment in stating that “it is in the nature of heritage to be torn between the ‘dual valencies of inclusivity and exclusivity ... the forces of memory and forgetting.’”<sup>91</sup> Modisane goes on to say that “this strongly suggests that for every act of reclamation in the name of heritage, there is a counter-memory.”<sup>92</sup> He writes that “the complexity of colonial

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<sup>87</sup> Tunbridge et al., *Dissonant Heritage*, in Ashworth et al., *Pluralising Pasts*, 37.

<sup>88</sup> Fanon, 18, in Peterson, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>89</sup> Modisane, “Flashes of Modernity,” 235.

<sup>90</sup> Shepherd, “Heritage,” 118.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 117, in Modisane, “Flashes of Modernity,” 236.

<sup>92</sup> Modisane, “Flashes of Modernity,” 236.

relations renders the practice of sanctifying historical articles as heritage in the 'post-colony' more challenging than the apparent 'search and find' approach may deem it to be."<sup>93</sup> Thus, both Shepherd and Modisane emphasise that, in the post-colony, each time a place or building is declared to be "heritage," someone else's heritage is undermined in the process.

Laurajane Smith's view is less polarised in this respect, when she writes that "heritage is not necessarily about the stasis of cultural values and meanings, but may equally be about cultural change. It may, for instance, be about reworking the meanings of the past as the cultural, social and political needs of the present change and develop, or it may be about challenging the ways in which groups and communities are perceived and classified by others. Heritage is about negotiation – about using the past, and collective or individual memories, to negotiate new ways of being and expressing identity. In this process heritage objects, sites, places or institutions like museums become cultural tools or props to facilitate this process – but do not themselves stand in for this process or act."<sup>94</sup>

Laurajane Smith describes heritage as being a discourse, a form of "social practice." She writes, "Discourse not only organises the way concepts like heritage are understood, but the way we act, the social and technical practices we act out, and the way knowledge is constructed and reproduced." Heritage is therefore not only conceptual. It has the potential to be active in the way it shapes our perceptions of the past and present.

Smith quotes Thrift, who says "Spaces can be stabilised in such a way that they act like political utterances, guiding subjects to particular conclusions. But as a counterpoint, the fabric of space is so multifarious that there are always holes and tears in which new forms of expression can come into being. Space is therefore constitutive in the strongest possible sense and it is not a misuse of the term to call it performative, as its many components continually act back, drawing on a range of different aesthetics as they do so."<sup>95</sup> The use of colonial

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 236-237.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, 4.

<sup>95</sup> N. Thrift, "Performance and ..." in *Environment and Planning A*, (2003) 35:2019-2024; Smith, 13.

buildings in Windhoek can thus be analysed in terms of their performativity and their ability, or lack thereof, to construct a sense of identity in the city.

In *Pluralising Pasts*; Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge explore heritage's "explicit role as a – perhaps *the* – key factor in creating representations of space as a core attribute of identity, and the ways in which this presents both constraint and opportunity in plural, diverse and fragmented societies."<sup>96</sup> They write further that "heritage is present-centred and is created, shaped and managed by, and in response to, the demands of the present. As such, it is open to constant revision and change and is also both a source and a repercussion of social conflict."<sup>97</sup> It therefore becomes pertinent to assess the manner in which "heritage" buildings are able to address the needs of the present, and if not, to question how they can be adapted to do so.

Avrami, Mason and de la Torre explain that the act of conservation "is shaped by how an object or place is valued, its social contexts, available resources, local priorities, and so on. Decisions about treatments and interventions are not based solely on considerations of physical decay; yet the lack of a coherent body of knowledge that addresses and integrates all three fronts [of physical condition, management and cultural significance and social values] makes it very difficult to assess and incorporate these other, equally important factors in the work of conservation professionals."<sup>98</sup>

They write, "conservation risks losing ground within the social agenda unless the nontechnical complexities of cultural heritage preservation, the role it plays in modern society, and the social, economic, political and cultural mechanisms through which conservation works are better understood and articulated. Thus, the unmet need is for research that explains how conservation is situated in society – how it is shaped by economic, cultural, and social forces and how, in turn, it shapes society."<sup>99</sup> They emphasise how this can lead to a more holistic conservation practice on the part of professionals, by linking conservation closely to its social context. This study therefore attempts to

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<sup>96</sup> Ashworth et al, *Pluralising Pasts*, 2.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>98</sup> Avrami et al., 5-6.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 6.

explore some of these influences on the role of heritage in Windhoek, how it is experienced in the city, and thus how it can be more holistically dealt with as heritage.

According to Avrami, Mason and de la Torre, “Echoing a great deal of social science and humanities research on culture in the postmodern era, heritage should be considered a very fluid phenomenon, a process as opposed to a static set of objects with fixed meaning. Building on this insight, heritage conservation should be recognised as a bundle of highly politicized social processes, intertwined with myriad other economic, political, and cultural processes.”<sup>100</sup> It is possible that the concept of heritage as a fluid process has not yet been embraced in Namibia, which could explain why the concept of colonial architecture as heritage has not been embraced and allowed to realise its potential as an interactive part of the present-day city.

Avrami, Mason and de la Torre note further, “The ultimate aim of conservation is not to conserve material for its own sake but, rather, to maintain (and shape) the values embodied by the heritage – with physical intervention or treatment being one of many means toward that end. To achieve that end, such that the heritage is meaningful to those whom it is intended to benefit (i.e., future generations), it is necessary to examine *why* and *how* heritage is valued, and by whom.”<sup>101</sup> Again, the social value of heritage is presented as a significant tool for conservation.

They express the need for a conceptual framework that outlines “the variety of generalizable social processes that combine to give heritage relevance and currency in societies – and sometimes create obstacles to such processes. They would likely include collective memory; nationalism; constructing identity through art, design and visual media; cultural fusion and other ways of effecting and representing cultural change; market dynamics and commodification of culture; policy making; state politics versus local politics; and so on.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 11.

The challenge of such a framework lies in how it works with the heritage that many post-colonial societies experience as being “laden with sorrow and guilt.”<sup>103</sup> Lowenthal writes, “The past still awakens pride in origins and precursors, but victimhood occupies centre stage. It is often said that history belongs to the victors; heritage is now the special province of the victims.”<sup>104</sup> Thus, the formulation of a conceptual framework for the social processes that give heritage relevance, as proposed by Avrami et al., is fraught with difficulty in the post-colonial context. It may be that there can be no single framework that is fit for such a task.

In plural societies, the dichotomy of the ownership of heritage comes to the fore. In the post-colonial context, does a colonial building “belong” to the coloniser or the colonised? Once built and owned by the colonisers, colonial buildings are often taken over by the post-colonial government. While the physical fabric of these buildings may now belong to the formerly colonised, the question remains whether they themselves regard it as their heritage, whether they come to accept it as their own. Can colonial buildings in Namibia be adopted, or co-opted, comparably to the way people of the Herero ethnic group in Namibia adopted the colonial dress of the German colonialists? Simultaneously, colonial heritage may still be claimed as belonging to the coloniser. For example, the German community of Windhoek may insist that German colonial heritage is their own unique heritage.

Lowenthal argues that “not only is no past exclusively ours, no past people are enough like ourselves to justify essentialist claims to a particular history.”<sup>105</sup> He also deals with the issue of the stewardship of heritage which he warns has become the realm of professionals rather than the public. He explains that heritage “becomes an enterprise of technical expertise; the general public, devoid of professional competence, stands aside.” The public becomes complacent “and sees no need to become actively involved” in the conservation of heritage.<sup>106</sup> He implies that this disempowers the public from

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<sup>103</sup> Lowenthal, “Stewarding the Past in a Perplexing Present,” in Avrami et al., 18.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 19.

making decisions relating to heritage. In a democratic, post-colonial society, this disempowerment contributes to the public's growing disinterest in heritage. It is possible then that the conservation of heritage may rely less on physical ownership than it does on a *sense* of ownership.

Lowenthal writes "A heritage disjoined from ongoing life cannot enlist popular support. To adore the past is not enough; good caretaking involves continual creation."<sup>107</sup> He continues to say that "Heritage atrophies in the absence of public support...Where heritage is defined and run by a small elite, where too few feel a symbolic stake in it, stewardship remains precarious, beset by conflict, fragmented by rivalry."<sup>108</sup> The many vacant and deteriorating German colonial buildings in Windhoek speak of this precarious stewardship and a lack of interest in their existence. Their parlous state raises certain questions: Is it possible for German colonial heritage in Windhoek to gain greater public support? Is it a realistic possibility for German colonial heritage to form an active and evolving part of the city's development?

Heritage can also be considered in terms of human rights, as "the right to culture." With reference to the 1976 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights the United Nations Secretary-General noted, "the right to culture obliges public authorities to create the social and economic conditions which permit the effective exercise of this right."<sup>109</sup> Rowlands and de Jong argue that Africa's "weak states" have "little power to negotiate" the imposed policies set out by the UNESCO World Conventions to achieve this human right.<sup>110</sup> While these policies have been put in place to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage, this control may mean that the powerlessness or the ineffectiveness of the African state in this process may distance it from its own heritage. Rowlands and de Jong comment that this necessitates the question of "how such policies

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>109</sup> United Nations, "Thirty-first Session: Item 83 of the Provisional Agenda: Preservation and Further Development of Cultural Values", note by the Secretary-General, 24 August 1976, UN Doc A/31/111, Paragraph 11, accessed from [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/665692/files/A\\_31\\_111-EN.pdf](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/665692/files/A_31_111-EN.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> Rowlands and de Jong, "Reconsidering Heritage and Memory," in de Jong et al., *Reclaiming Heritage*, 18.

are appropriated by cultural elites and what their implications will be for state-society relations in postcolonial Africa.”<sup>111</sup>

Uffe Jensen echoes the views of Lowenthal, Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge in his rejection of the essentialist view that heritage objects have an inherent value or nature, by stating that “the uniqueness that gives an object its value and makes it a part of our cultural heritage is not something always already in the object; it is grounded in a particular social or cultural setting.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, here again, the Western idea of heritage as in the notion of the authorised heritage discourse is questioned against the value of context. It suggests the possibility that the values assigned to heritage can change, depending on the context within which the heritage finds itself. This context is shaped by the past and the present. The past is only accessible through memory; conversely, memory is prompted by the relics of the past.

## MEMORY

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*“Our historical studies are also images of the present.”<sup>113</sup>*

Lowenthal writes that “the past as we know it is partly a product of the present; we continually reshape memory, rewrite history, refashion relics ... To revise what actually happened, as distinct from our ideas and its traces, is impossible, yet ardently desired.” He speaks of the three main motives for changing history as being the desire “to improve the past itself or the lot of those who live in it; to better present circumstances by changing what has led up to them; and to ensure the stability of the present by altering (or protecting) the past against interference by others.”<sup>114</sup> Yet this desire to change the past, he argues, as we know well enough, is futile.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>112</sup> Uffe Juul Jensen, “Cultural Heritage, Liberal Education, and Human Flourishing,” in Avrami et al., 43.

<sup>113</sup> G.A. de Bruijne, “The Colonial City and the Post-Colonial World,” in Ross et al., 231.

<sup>114</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 26.

Lowenthal writes of the importance of the past, which despite its flaws, despite our longing to change it or to obliterate it, “is integral to our sense of identity.”<sup>115</sup> He reflects on the work of Meerloo and Pascal, stating that “even traumatic painful memories remain essential emotional history; amnesiacs bereft of their past are also deprived of identity.”<sup>116</sup> Lowenthal writes “All awareness of the past is founded on memory. Through recollection we recover consciousness of former events, distinguish yesterday from today, and confirm that we have experienced a past.”<sup>117</sup> He describes how uniquely personal memories are, and how “Memory ... converts public events into idiosyncratic personal experiences.”<sup>118</sup> The nature of memory, in its individuality and its essential contribution to our sense of identity, means that it belongs to each person who has the capacity to remember. Memory therefore plays an important role in heritage, through its potential to instil a sense of ownership of a place through individual acts of remembering.

Nonetheless “many feel an evil past continues to endanger the present,” that its relics are “dangerous or corrupting.”<sup>119</sup> This resonates with the sentiments expressed by Nietzsche, who wrote that forgetting can prevent painful memory from destroying the living, from becoming “the gravedigger of the present.”<sup>120</sup> The past may be dangerous, but no knowledge of the past may be even more so. In the context of the post-colonial city, the words of Santayana are particularly poignant: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”<sup>121</sup> Nora also writes of the loss of memory and its effect on our perception of the past. “The loss of our [national] memory as a living presence forces us to look at it with eyes that are neither naïve nor indifferent. The memory we see tears at us, yet it is no longer entirely ours ... We feel a visceral

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>116</sup> Joost A.M. Meerloo, *The Two Faces of Man* (New York: International Universities Press, 1954), 80-81; Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 1960), 43-52; Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 41-42.

<sup>117</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 193.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>120</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), 7.

<sup>121</sup> George Santayana, *Life of Reason Or The Phases of Human Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905; reprint, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), Volume 1: 284.

attachment to that which made us what we are, yet at the same time we feel historically estranged from this legacy, which we must now coolly assess.”<sup>122</sup>

The associations and meanings found in places are entrenched in people’s memories of them. In his introduction to *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Pierre Nora illustrates the difference between memory and history by distinguishing between lived history and intellectual history. While in English the two concepts share the designation ‘history’, he notes that “German, on the other hand, distinguishes between *Geschichte* and *Historie*.”<sup>123</sup> The first is a story, lived history, the other denotes the academic pursuit of history. A story has connotations of being unique and personal, while history remains distant and attempts to be factual. History has reference points, while a story consists of emotional moments, of recollections.

Nora writes that memory and history are often in opposition to one another. “Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.”<sup>124</sup> Similarly, Lowenthal writes that “History and heritage both refashion the past in present garb. But the former does so to make the past comprehensible, the latter to make it congenial.”<sup>125</sup>

Nora refers to Maurice Halbwachs, in writing that there are “as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple yet specific; collective and plural yet individual.”<sup>126</sup> Memory therefore has the ability to transcend

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<sup>122</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 7.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>125</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148.

<sup>126</sup> Nora, 3.

physical ownership of heritage, for example, by its existence in the minds of all who have experienced that heritage, that place.

Nora writes of places, *lieux de mémoire*, as being “the ultimate embodiments of a commemorative consciousness that survives in a history which, having renounced memory, cries out for it.”<sup>127</sup> He describes *lieux de mémoire* as “bastions” which protect our identities, and would not be needed “if what they protected were not threatened.”<sup>128</sup> It can be argued, however, that these “bastions” may protect only certain identities, while others are ignored.

Nora writes of our disconnection from the past, saying “Just as the future – once a visible, predictable, manipulable, well-marked extension of the present – has come to seem invisible, so have we gone from the idea of a visible past to one of an invisible past; from a firmly rooted past to a past that we experience as a radical break in continuity; from a history that we believed lay in the continuity of some sort of memory to a memory that we think of as projected onto the discontinuity of history ... Given to us as radically other, the past is a world from which we are fundamentally cut off. We discover the truth about our memory when we discover how alienated from it we are.”<sup>129</sup>

Nora describes this search for the past as being a search in history for difference – “and through difference, a sudden revelation of our elusive identity. We seek not our origins but a way of figuring out what we are from what we are no longer.”<sup>130</sup> Nora explains that the *lieu de mémoire* “has a dual nature ... defined by its identity and summed up by its name but at the same time open to an infinite variety of possible other meanings.”<sup>131</sup> Memory is thus a powerful tool in the creation of meaning.

Rowlands and de Jong argue that “studies of memory in Africa have consistently stressed the contested nature of such practices as commemoration, remembrance, and forgetting.” They speak of these as being

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 20.

“situated in a politicized context.”<sup>132</sup> They write that “the tendency for states to create *lieux de memoire* that help nation-building has a wider implication of creating deliberate landscapes of memory that will act as technologies for the reification of pasts and the creation of expectable futures for their inhabitants.”<sup>133</sup>

While the materialisation of memory holds the power to create deliberately emotional landscapes and to “trigger memory-work,” these monuments do not necessarily “bear the burden of memory but [instead] open up spaces for reflexive engagements.”<sup>134</sup> Rowlands writes of how “the materialisation of heritage makes certain memories realisable and authentic and capable of imagining a future.”<sup>135</sup> This engagement with a place is essential in heritage conservation, in its potential to create new meanings and associations, and to initiate a sense of relationship with a place. Although the memories evoked by such places may be contradictory, each is a true reflection of the individual experience. Derrida’s notion of “deconstructing the ‘heritage’ by returning to the ‘testimony of memory’” allows the truthful personal experience of each person’s memory to uncover the social significance of the heritage.<sup>136</sup>

The memory of past events is only kept alive by living people and their recollections. In a sense, memory is therefore as finite as the physical spaces it is experienced in. Nora explains that “Modern memory is first of all archival. He says, “What we call memory is in fact a gigantic and breathtaking effort to store the material vestiges of what we cannot possibly remember.”<sup>137</sup> It would seem therefore that just as heritage needs memory to keep it alive and relevant, memory relies on the conservation of material heritage as the material prompt for its continued existence.

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<sup>132</sup> Rowlands and de Jong, “Reconsidering Heritage and Memory,” in de Jong et al., 13.

<sup>133</sup> Rowlands et al., 15; R. Handler, *Nationalism and the politics of Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); and A. Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>134</sup> Rowlands et al, 21.

<sup>135</sup> Michael Rowlands, “Entangled Memories and Parallel Heritages in Mali”, in de Jong et al, 142.

<sup>136</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Ethics, Institutions and the Right to Philosophy*, P.Pericles Trifonas (trans.) (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 3-4.

<sup>137</sup> Nora, 8.

# CHAPTER 3 \_ GERMAN COLONIALISM IN NAMIBIA

*“Without a conscious process of remembering, without sorrow, without apology, there can be no reconciliation – remembrance is the key to reconciliation.”<sup>138</sup>*

This study examines German colonial architecture as heritage within the context of the post-colonial city of Windhoek. Such a study would be incomplete without attempting to comprehend the effects of the colonial period itself. Without this contextual background, the case studies, with their unique Germanness, would merely appear to be quaint historical structures within the contemporary urban setting of Windhoek.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD

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This text is written with the aim of contextualising the case studies and the emotions and perceptions that revolve around German colonialism in Namibia. While this study does not delve into the pre-colonial history of Namibia, Namibia’s history obviously reaches much further back than colonial writings may imply. Kinahan’s research into the archaeological evidence of the earlier people of Namibia indicates that the earliest rock art found in the country is between 19 000 and 25 000 years old.<sup>139</sup> Although European explorers Diogo Cão and Bartholomeu Dias first saw the harsh Namibian coast, known as the Skeleton Coast in the 1480s, Wallace notes that due to the scarcity of written records, histories of Namibia that explore pre-1730 periods are rare.<sup>140</sup> Thereafter, with settler expansion from the Cape Colony from the late 1700s and the arrival of Namibia’s first English missionaries in 1806, written records

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<sup>138</sup> Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul quoted in Larissa Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften. Wie Deutsche und Herero in Namibia des Kriegs von 1904 gedenken* (Frankfort-on-Maine: Campus, 2010), 283; Reinhart Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past* (Windhoek: University of Namibia Press, 2015), 254.

<sup>139</sup> John Kinahan, “From the Beginning: The Archaeological Evidence,” in Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2011, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2012), 22

<sup>140</sup> Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2011, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2012), 45.

became more widely available, portraying the country from a distinctly Western perspective.<sup>141</sup>

It must also be made clear that Namibia has essentially seen three periods of colonial rule. The first was under Britain when it took the Cape Colony in South Africa in 1806 and later annexed Walvis Bay in 1878.<sup>142</sup> The German colonial period followed from 1884 to 1915, after which the country came under South African rule and the apartheid regime. This study is limited to the effects of the German colonial period, although the legacy of the other two periods, particularly that left by apartheid, is clearly evident in the social and economic disparities found in the country today.

The German-founded Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) arrived in Namibia in 1842, becoming the dominant mission society in Namibia as it grew and developed trade relations in the country.<sup>143</sup> It was, however, the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885 that sealed Namibia's future as a German colony in what became known as the "scramble for Africa."<sup>144</sup> In anticipation of this scramble, Adolf Lüderitz, a German trader, had already begun to buy land in Namibia in 1883 around Angra Peguena (present-day Lüderitz).<sup>145</sup> Wallace writes that "the land purchases in the south gave Bismarck a basis on which to begin the process of installing German authority in Namibia."<sup>146</sup> Lüderitz continued the process of acquiring land, which included portions in Windhoek which he acquired from Jan Jonker Afrikaner.<sup>147</sup> By 1885, the land acquired by Lüderitz amounted to roughly a quarter of the total area of Namibia.<sup>148</sup> In 1889, Germany sent Captain Curt von François and supporting troops, known as the *Schutztruppe*, to control tensions and conflict between Otjiherero-speaking groups and Hendrik Witbooi, and essentially to assert Germany's

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 50-53.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 121.

authority.<sup>149</sup> It was at this time that the fort, *Alte Feste*, was constructed in Windhoek.

Theodor Leutwein replaced von François as the head of the colonial administration in 1894. With the arrival of greater numbers of German settlers around the same time, the colony began to develop its urban infrastructure and governance.<sup>150</sup> Wallace notes that this development was made possible through the employment of locals, including the use of migrant workers from the north.<sup>151</sup> The Kaiserkrone restaurant building (which was the first building in what became the Kaiserkrone Hotel complex) and the Grüner Kranz Hotel in Windhoek are two of the many buildings to have been constructed as a consequence of the increased infrastructure and the need for food and lodging. They were built in 1899 and 1900 respectively. While German settlements developed, the period also saw a series of military campaigns, negotiations and rising tensions largely between the Germans, Hendrik Witbooi's followers, and Otjiherero-speaking groups. Marginalised Damara and San groups were also affected. The fighting which broke out in 1896, and the tragic rinderpest epidemic of 1897 which saw the unequal distribution of aid among communities, increased resentment against the Germans and fuelled armed resistance.<sup>152</sup>

The Namibian War broke out in 1904. Wallace attributes "land loss, disarmament, profit-taking and physical assault" as being at the root of the war.<sup>153</sup> Leutwein failed to defeat the Hereros, and was subsequently replaced by General Lothar von Trotha, whose approach would prove to be far more brutal than that of Leutwein.<sup>154</sup> The efforts of the Ovaherero threatened the power of the Germans significantly, leading to "genocidal action by the colonial power."<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 133-142.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>155</sup> Reinhart Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past* (Windhoek: University of Namibia Press, 2015), 15.

The Germans' strategy at the Battle of Ohamakari forced the Herero fighters, as well as their women and children, to flee into the *Omaheke* desert, which became a "deathtrap."<sup>156</sup> Defeated Herero, Nama and other groups were imprisoned in concentration camps which became sites of forced labour and terrible hardship. Almost half of the prisoners died between 1904 and 1907.<sup>157</sup> It is difficult to reconcile with the fact that while these atrocities were being committed, the *Grüner Kranz Hotel* was being developed further with the construction of a *Kegelbahn* (skittle alley) in 1905 and a performance hall in 1906, both designed by the architect Otto Busch. The *Kaiserkrone Kegelbahn* was also designed by Otto Busch and built in 1906. Although not explicitly mentioned in the available records, these buildings presumably reflect the need for entertainment to boost the morale of the Germans involved in a brutal war.

At the end of the war in 1908, "German colonial authorities imposed punitive control measures" to assert their authority over a diminished and defeated African population.<sup>158</sup> These measures would set the tone for the system of labour, pass laws and segregation of the later apartheid regime.

The *Christuskirche* was built in 1910 by the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchengemeinde* (German Lutheran Church) as part of the establishment of *Deutschtum* (Germanness) and served as a memorial to the Germans killed in the Namibian War. The founding of various sporting clubs and cultural organisations also formed part of the drive for *Deutschtum*.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Wallace, 163.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.



Figure 5 The Christuskirche in its present-day post-colonial setting in Windhoek (photograph by author, 11 November 2014)

The discovery of diamonds near Lüderitz in 1908 led to an economic boom for the colony between 1909 and 1913.<sup>160</sup> Otto Busch designed the Kaiserkrone Hall in 1909, as well as the Turnhalle, which was built in 1909. The Turnhalle in particular, was home to the nationalist *Turnverein* (gymnastics club) and as such reflects both the success of the colony and this search for *Deutschtum*. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought the German colony's brief prosperity to an end. German South West Africa was invaded by South African forces, leading to the surrender by the Germans on 9 July 1915. The country was subsequently ruled by South Africa under martial law, and later came under South African governance in 1921, in terms of a League of Nations Mandate.<sup>161</sup> Thus began a new colonial era, marking the end of the German colonial period in Namibia.

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-206.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF GERMANNESS (*DEUTSCHTUM*)

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Formal colonial rule is noted by Perraudin and Zimmerer as having been in place between 1884 and 1918.<sup>162</sup> Tracey Reimann-Dawe describes the period that preceded this as “a period of extensive internal political turmoil, which saw the unification of the German Reich in 1871 and its emergence as a colonial power in Africa in 1884.”<sup>163</sup> Yet these dates do not reflect the actual state of colonial rule in Namibia. As previously noted, although Lüderitz had acquired large tracts of land, the German presence in Namibia was fragile until around 1894, when more German settlers arrived and the construction of infrastructure became feasible. Even later, despite their position of authority, the power of the Germans remained tenuous, largely due to the rising tensions and the constant threat of conflict. For the German settler attempting to build a new life in Namibia, the situation is likely to have prompted a search for meaning and understanding in a starkly different context to their home country. This search for identity may have resembled the national identity of *Deutschtum* assumed by their compatriots.

Reimann-Dawe provides a significant example of how some colonial explorers' beliefs were in conflict with those commonly thought of as being part of German national identity. Through his studies of African histories and oral culture, the ethnologist Frobenius challenged “Western preconceptions” with the assertion that “oral culture is in fact the superior method of preserving history over written documentation,” stating that “historical awareness was in fact stronger before the existence of the written word,” and that “writing does not merely distort the representation of historical events, but completely destroys human ‘*Gedächtnisarchive*’ (memory archives) and consequently the true nature of historical awareness.”<sup>164</sup> The writings of Frobenius, from his

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<sup>162</sup> Perraudin et al., “German Colonialism and National Identity,” 3.

<sup>163</sup> Reimann-Dawe, 21.

<sup>164</sup> Leo Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach: Bericht über den Verlauf der dritten Reiseperiode der Deutschen Innerafrikanischen Forschungsexpedition in den Jahren 1910-1912* (Berlin, 1912), Volume 1: xiii; Reimann-Dawe, 28.

expeditions in Africa between 1910 and 1912, show that not all colonial settlers shared the same sentiments of Western “cultural superiority.”<sup>165</sup>

The importance of national identity must however be emphasised. Wolfgang Struck discusses the 2000 film *Die Wüstenrose* (The Desert Rose), set in colonial South-West Africa, with a view to analysing its depiction of colonial and post-colonial national identity. He compares it to the genre of cinema of the 1950s and 1960s known as the *Heimatfilm* (and later a series of films entitled *Heimat*), which shows the viewer that “an endangered or even completely lost identity can be resecured by returning to [the notion of] origin,” which German culture calls *Heimat* (Home/Homeland).<sup>166</sup> It could be said that the act of leaving the homeland, can enable this search for your origin. Therefore the search for an authentic identity becomes essential to the colonial agenda. Nationalist sentiments in Germany promoted the colony as “a rural idyll, free from industrialisation and urban ‘moral degeneration.’”<sup>167</sup> Furthermore the concept of Germanness or *Deutschtum* relied on the “purity and superiority of the white, and specifically the German, race.”<sup>168</sup>

German colonialism was essentially a nationalist quest for overseas expansion and for controlling migration by “channelling migrants.”<sup>169</sup> In other words, not only would this controlled migration spread the “pure” German race across the world, it would also ensure Germany’s continued authority over its subjects. South West Africa was the only real “success” for the colonial power, being the only colony to have been found suitable for European settlement, boosted by the discovery of diamonds in 1908. Just before World War I, “all German colonies combined contained less than 20 000 Germans, including military personnel” – South West Africa (Namibia) was home to 12 000 of these Germans.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>166</sup> Wolfgang Struck, “The Persistence of Fantasies: Colonialism as Melodrama on German Television” in Perraudin et al., 227.

<sup>167</sup> Wallace, 194.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Fenske 1991, in Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 50-51.

<sup>170</sup> Reichskolonialamt 1914:8-35, in Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 53.

Kössler argues that the atrocities committed in Namibia, and the way in which these were communicated in Germany “fall into a pattern of radicalising nationalism.” He notes that while the violence experienced by Namibians was a typical feature of colonialism, the manner in which this was accommodated or accepted within the public discourse in Germany, distinguishes the German colonial situation from others.<sup>171</sup>

Perraudin and Zimmerer write that while “some felt encouraged to bring other German atrocities into the limelight ... others have attempted to rewrite Germany’s colonial past by emphasising the exotic aspects of the German colonial undertaking, and by disconnecting the imperial past from the positive strands of German history.”<sup>172</sup> This reluctance to portray the darker side of colonialism is ascribed to the idea that “colonialism was central to Wilhelminian discourse on national identity and to the country’s understanding of itself as a world power.”<sup>173</sup>

The notion of this pursuit for a German identity can be seen in the German community in Namibia, which Kössler describes as having a “high degree of internal cohesion” which can be attributed to their perception of being “in a minority position” not only during colonial rule, but also under South African rule.<sup>174</sup> This can be seen in the numerous *Südwester* clubs and associations, as well as private schools, which have been formed in Windhoek and Swakopmund. Many of these are supported or partially funded by the German state.<sup>175</sup> Kössler argues that these attempts to maintain the German language and traditions in Namibia contribute to a sense of nationalism, a Germanness (*Deutschtum*) within the German-Namibian community, which he argues is difficult to connect to their simultaneous “claim to an African identity.”<sup>176</sup> At the same time, there are many Otjiherero speakers who lay claim to their own German heritage. This is a painful legacy, a result of rape and forced prostitution during the Namibian War, which remains unacknowledged by the

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<sup>171</sup> Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 88-89.

<sup>172</sup> Perraudin et al., 1.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>174</sup> Eberhardt 2007, 66 in Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 111.

<sup>175</sup> Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 111.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

German perpetrators.<sup>177</sup> Consequently, while Namibians born of this history may share the same ancestry, there is a stark contrast between the emotions they attach to their ancestry and those associated by other descendants.

## THE LEGACY OF GERMAN COLONIALISM – MEMORIES AND MONUMENTS

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*Namibians “experience something ‘German’ almost on a daily basis.”<sup>178</sup>*

Kössler asserts that the effects of the genocide “lie at the heart of present-day land problems and inequality in land ownership in central and southern Namibia” and play an important role in the construction of black and German Namibians’ identities.<sup>179</sup> The construction of these identities is influenced strongly by public memory, evoked by the presence of colonial artefacts. Kössler writes that “the view over the capital city of Windhoek presents testimony to the current state of public memory in Namibia. Here, monuments and representative buildings from the colonial era ... still dominate the scenery.”<sup>180</sup> Kössler notes that “memorials and street names are important markers of public memory. Moreover, they figure in the everyday and act constantly, if inconspicuously, on the mind-sets of inhabitants or passersby.”<sup>181</sup> They continuously act as reminders of the past, reminders of present disparities and the undeniable existence of a German community in Namibia and the country’s past as a German colony.<sup>182</sup>

The difficulty of confronting the past, and possibly deconstructing one’s sense of identity, or indeed, a national identity, lies in the painful memory that it evokes. It is a daunting challenge for the leaders of a country to take on this challenge, especially as the perpetrator. Kathryn Jones writes a comparative essay in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, in which she describes varying post-colonial perspectives in Germany and France respectively, both former colonists, and both dealing with the legacies of their pasts in Africa. In

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 99.

this essay she specifically deals with post-colonial memories of the Herero genocide.<sup>183</sup> She also attempts to highlight “the interplay between official and civil agents of memory and the changing hierarchies of memory.”<sup>184</sup> She asserts that in France, unlike in Germany, “there was not a widespread perception that France was morally unencumbered (*unbelastet* is the German term) as a colonial power” for colonial war atrocities in Africa.<sup>185</sup> In 2004, the centenary of the Herero war, the apology made by the German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, for the Herero genocide was seen largely as an individual response, and not one from the country as a whole. This was “reinforced by the lack of national official ceremonies or memorials in the Federal Republic itself in 2004. The German parliament confined its action to a resolution passed on 17 January 2004 that commemorated all victims of the colonial war in German South-West Africa but avoided the term genocide, and expressed regret without offering an apology.”<sup>186</sup> Jones refers to an article by Zimmerer, published in September 2005, in which he “offered a strong critique of the continuity of colonial amnesia and the absence of the colonial past in current memory debates in Germany.”<sup>187</sup> Jones argues that the lack of demands in Germany for the official recognition of colonial atrocities in Namibia may be due to the “absence of a Namibian immigrant community within Germany,” unlike France, which has a large African, particularly Algerian, immigrant community.<sup>188</sup>

Schaller writes that “Elazar Barkan’s assertion that a new international morality conditions the way Western societies nowadays come to terms with the dark sides of their pasts is well founded.”<sup>189</sup> He also writes that “the veneration of martyrdom and victimhood has become important for the construction of collective memories and national histories ... In post-colonial societies, this

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<sup>183</sup> Kathryn Jones, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française: Post-Colonial Memories of the Herero Genocide and 17 October 1961” in Perraudin et al., 213.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>187</sup> Jürgen Zimmerer, “Die verordnete Versöhnung,” *die tageszeitung*, 19 September 2005, 12, referenced by Jones, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française,” 218.

<sup>188</sup> Jones, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française,” 219.

<sup>189</sup> Dominik J. Schaller, “The Struggle for Genocidal Exclusivity: The Perception of the Murder of the Namibian Herero (1904-8) in the Age of a New International Morality” in Perraudin et al., 265.

phenomenon must be understood as a crucial element in the nation building process.<sup>190</sup> Victimhood is possible only with the acknowledgement of a perpetrator.

Wieczorek-Zeul's surprising speech during the 2004 centennial commemorations of the genocide at Ohamakari contradicted previous utterances that Germany would not issue an apology for the genocide. She showed emotion when giving her speech, in which she acknowledged that "the crimes of the *Schutztruppe* and its leadership 'would today be called genocide.'"<sup>191</sup> In doing so, she acknowledged Germany's role as the perpetrator, and thus opened up the possibility of a shared collective memory between Namibians and Germans. She said "I ask you to forgive us our trespasses and our guilt. Without a conscious process of remembering, without sorrow, without apology, there can be no reconciliation – remembrance is the key to reconciliation."<sup>192</sup>

The act of remembering and the interrogation of these memories are thus crucial processes within the context of a post-colonial society such as Namibia. Melber writes that "for the *Südwester*s, who, by origin and tradition, were socialised within a culture of European domination and imperialism, re-examining the colonial past may be particularly difficult. They are confronted with the – possibly very painful – challenge of decolonizing their own minds through critical introspection."<sup>193</sup> Yet he counters this in saying that "originating from a group of erstwhile victims does not protect one from becoming a perpetrator oneself. Those who have experienced discrimination are also capable of resorting to discriminatory practices themselves."<sup>194</sup> This point is a valid concern in the context of the often contradicting processes of nation building and heritage conservation.

Melber notes that "the specific blend of physical remnants from the colonial past and newly emerging symbols of the anti-colonial struggle, which are

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>191</sup> Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, quoted in Kössler, *Namibia and Germany*, 253.

<sup>192</sup> Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul quoted in Förster, 283; Kössler, *Namibia and Germany*, 254.

<sup>193</sup> Henning Melber, "The Genocide in "German South-West Africa" and the Politics of Commemoration: How (Not) to Come to Terms with the Past" in Perraudin et al., 258.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 259.

celebrated in the dominant post-colonial nation-building process, create a rather peculiar public sphere and memory 'landscape' in the country's physical environment."<sup>195</sup> Post-Independence monuments and surviving colonial structures are found to be at odds with each other in Windhoek, each portraying opposing narratives.

Numerous studies have been undertaken which examine the post-colonial heritage of Namibia – the commemorative architectural sites which celebrate Namibia's independence. Becker discusses the narratives found in sites such as Heroes' Acre as being selective in the memories or stories they portray.<sup>196</sup> She refers to the work of Kirkwood, whose unique research on the post-colonial independence sites built by the North Korean construction firm Mansudae Overseas Projects, portrays the conflicting notion of nation-building in African countries, without the input of the nation itself.<sup>197</sup> While these studies convey the current situation in terms of new construction, they do not cover how existing fabric is dealt with or perceived in Windhoek's post-colonial context.

Förster has explored the differing perceptions of Germans and Namibians of the Waterberg battle site. She found that while German tourists showed an "enthusiasm for the military," little thought was given to how the war affected Africans.<sup>198</sup> This finding echoes the generally accepted view that German colonial architecture is valuable for Namibia's tourism industry, which continues to give it sufficient value to be retained. Förster's study focuses on a very specific site within the wild landscape of a nature reserve, and thus cannot easily be compared with structures in the urban environment.

Patricia Hayes' research on both the German colonial period and the South African colonisation of Namibia has contributed to several volumes that deal with Namibia's colonial history, with an emphasis on how it pervades

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>196</sup> Becker, "Commemorating Heroes in Windhoek and Eenhana."

<sup>197</sup> Meghan L.E. Kirkwood, "Postcolonial Architecture Through North Korean Modes: Namibian Commissions of the Mansudae Overseas Project" (MA thesis, University of Kansas, 2011).

<sup>198</sup> Larissa Förster 2010, 103-7, in Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 119.

Namibians' lives in the present day.<sup>199</sup> This is illustrated powerfully through the medium of photography, which has the potential to trigger memory, in *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (1998).<sup>200</sup> The capacity to evoke memories, which in turn give meaning to what is seen, is an important link to consider between visual media (photography) and the physical (architecture), which is also visual.

Nicola Brandt, a Namibian writer and artist, has explored the broader "memorial landscapes of Namibia" through photographic documentation of the relocation of the *Reiterdenkmal* (The Rider or Equestrian Statue), as well as through her photography which she uses to confront the presence of the genocide and colonial violence in today's landscapes.<sup>201</sup>

While much of the available scholarly literature on the Namibian post-colonial landscape focuses largely on the notions of memory, and the politics of reconciliation, several texts deal with the physical or built environment. Itohan Osayimwese's 2008 dissertation entitled "Colonialism at the Centre: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828 – 1914" notes that "the few existing publications that deal with German colonial architecture share one problematic characteristic – they maintain the distinction between colonial architecture and 'indigenous' architecture expressed by German administrators, architects, and ethnographers during the colonial period."<sup>202</sup> While Osayimwese addresses this shortcoming by attempting to uncover how the presence of the colonised shaped German colonial architecture, the study does not answer the question of how colonial architecture is perceived in the present day as a part of Namibian heritage.

Nicola Alexander's dissertation "Kolmanskop: An Industrial Heritage Resource or Only a Tourist Attraction?" (2010) examines the values associated with the

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<sup>199</sup> Patricia Hayes, "A History of the Ovambo of Namibia, c. 1880 – 1935," unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1992, <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/251534>; Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace and Wolfram Hartmann, eds., *Namibia under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment 1915 – 1946* (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1998)

<sup>200</sup> Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester and Patricia Hayes, eds., *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (Windhoek: Out of Africa, 1998).

<sup>201</sup> Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 163; The Ruskin School of Art, Nicola Brandt biography, <http://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/people/nicola-brandt>, accessed 2 February 2018.

<sup>202</sup> Itohan I. Osayimwese, "Colonialism at the Center: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828-1914" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008), 3.

Kolmanskop Ghost Town, near Lüderitz in Namibia.<sup>203</sup> Her study questions the importance placed on the town's economic value and status as a tourist attraction as opposed to its heritage value. Considering that Kolmanskop is a ghost town, however, these values will differ in the context of a living city.

George Steinmetz speaks of the creation of what he calls colonial melancholy through the "ruinscape" of German colonial architecture in Namibia. In quoting Zeller, he goes as far as to emphasise how German-Namibians have contributed to the "haunting of the post-colonial Namibian nation," through the retention of decaying historical buildings.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, Julia C. Obert also describes Windhoek as being "visibly haunted by its colonial past."<sup>205</sup> She refers to Osayimwese's notion of German colonial buildings as being "signifiers of Germanness"<sup>206</sup> and uses the Turnhalle building designed by Otto Busch, as an example of a "distinctive symbol of [the colonial] presence to be beheld with respect and even with admiration by the natives of the country."<sup>207</sup> She describes the building as an icon of colonial dominion.<sup>208</sup> Obert's assertion that the city continues to be haunted by visual symbols of German power is a valid, yet loaded perspective, and while it may resonate strongly with those who vividly recall the period of colonial dominance, I feel that the notion of the haunted city may have been created more through the subsequent use of its buildings and patterns of separated existence - scars of its segregated nature as a result of apartheid planning policies. As already noted in Chapter 2, writers Fatima Müller-Friedman, Guillermo Delgado and Phillip Lühl, have begun to explore the effects of apartheid on Windhoek's urban landscape, yet this poignant aspect of colonial legacy falls beyond the limitations of this study on German colonial architecture.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Nicola Alexander, "Kolmanskop: An Industrial Heritage Resource or Only a Tourist Attraction?" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2010).

<sup>204</sup> George Steinmetz, "Harrored Landscapes: white ruingazers in Namibia and Detroit and the cultivation of memory" in *Visual Studies*, 23:3 (2008), DOI: 10.1080/14725860802489890, 224.

<sup>205</sup> Julia C. Obert, "Architectural Space in Windhoek, Namibia: Fortification, Monumentalization, Subversion" in *Postmodern Culture*, Volume 26, No.1, September 2015, 1.

<sup>206</sup> Osayimwese, 82; Obert, 3.

<sup>207</sup> T. Roger Smith in Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1; Obert, 4.

<sup>208</sup> Obert, 4.

<sup>209</sup> Müller Friedman, 33-61; Lühl and Delgado, "Mass Housing in Namibia," 16-19; Delgado and Lühl, "Financialisation and the Production of Inequality in Namibia", 46-66.



Figure 6 Prior to its removal in 2013, the *Reiterdenkmal* stood in a prominent position overlooking the *Christuskirche*, adjacent to the new Independence Memorial Museum and the *Alte Feste* (image source: [http://www.travelnewsnamibia.com/wp-content/uploads/reiterdenkmalindependence-museum\\_ron.jpg](http://www.travelnewsnamibia.com/wp-content/uploads/reiterdenkmalindependence-museum_ron.jpg))

A brief description of the *Reiterdenkmal* (The Rider memorial, also known as the Equestrian Statue) is useful for conveying some of the emotions that are evoked by colonial monuments in Windhoek, as well as the sense of identity associated with the monument for German Namibians. The *Reiterdenkmal* was erected in 1912 in what Kössler describes as a “triptych of colonial architecture,” comprising the *Christuskirche* (Christ Church), the *Alte Feste* (the old fort) and the *Reiterdenkmal*.<sup>210</sup> In 2009 the *Reiterdenkmal* was removed from its prominent site to make space for the new Independence Memorial Museum, which significantly altered what had always been a “German” site. It was re-erected outside the *Alte Feste*, and thus retained a prominent position in what Kössler describes as Windhoek’s “memory landscape.”<sup>211</sup> On Christmas Day 2013, the plinth of the *Reiterdenkmal* was demolished, and the statue was hidden away in the courtyard of the *Alte Feste*.<sup>212</sup> The secretive manner in which the Namibian authorities removed the statue was the cause of outcry from the German community in particular.

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<sup>210</sup> Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, 148.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

For the Germans, the *Reiterdenkmal* is “a monument of victory” which was erected only four years after the end of the Namibian War. It therefore also reflects the “sense of danger and insecurity” experienced by Germans at the time.<sup>213</sup> For Ovaherero and Nama Namibians, however, it represents the brutality and ruthless domination of the colonial power. The monument also stood on what was once the concentration camp next to the *Alte Feste*.<sup>214</sup> As this is a site of memory and of suffering, it evokes a plethora of conflicting emotions on both “sides” of the story. Thus, as Kössler writes, “in its new spot within the courtyard of the national museum [*Alte Feste*], the statue has acquired a new and quite different meaning. It no longer forms the central part of a colonial monument, but becomes an item of the museum collections.”<sup>215</sup>

The case of the *Reiterdenkmal* is significant in that the statue (except for its stone plinth) was not demolished, but has been subjected to changes which have altered its meaning. Can the meanings and perceptions of German colonial buildings be altered to contribute to a shared or collective memory that forms part of the process of reconciliation in Namibia? And could this inform the relevance of these buildings as heritage?



Figure 7 The *Reiterdenkmal* is now temporarily propped up within the confines of the *Alte Feste* courtyard - the new Independence Museum appears to loom over it victoriously (image source: <https://tracks4africa.co.za/listings/item/w201088/reiter-denkmal-rider-memorial-1912/>)

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-150.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

# CHAPTER 4\_THREE HALLS – PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTIONS

*“All architecture somehow, in a way, communicates the spirit of the times.  
The era that we are practising in as architects, that’s part of our storytelling.”<sup>216</sup>*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECT OTTO BUSCH

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Figure 8 Otto Busch (National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder Collection, Photo 06825, undated)

The Grüner Kranz Hall, Kaiserkrone Hall and Turnhalle were designed by the German master builder and architect, Otto Busch. Busch arrived in Windhoek in 1905 from Port Elizabeth, South Africa.<sup>217</sup> He is not as well-known as his colonial counterparts – namely Redecker, who designed the *Christuskirche*; and Sander, who designed Windhoek’s three castles – despite having

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<sup>216</sup> Marley Tjitjo, interview with Marley Tjitjo, Windhoek, 27 September 2017.

<sup>217</sup> National Archives of Namibia: SAW Absentee Estate Nr. 5892/32, W. Lanwers, letter to The Public Trustee Windhuk, 17 November 1919. EST 251 5892/32.

established a reputation at the time as the master builder of villas in the highly regarded *Villenviertel* (villa quarter) on Schanzenhügel, then known as Boysenhügel.<sup>218</sup>



Figure 9 The villenviertel (villa quarter) on Schanzenhügel (National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder Collection, Photo 09026, undated)

Busch's reputation, which he attained remarkably quickly due to the high demand for housing during this period, can be attributed to the characteristic individuality exhibited by each of the villas that he designed. For example: Villa Kiesewetter (1906) was known for its strikingly decorated exterior, featuring colourful sunscreens and a decorative band of colour encircling the villa's tower; Villa Wasserfall (1907), previously known as Villa Migliarina, was later graded as an A-rated building in Schoedder's survey due to its distinctive architectural features which define Busch's villa typology; and the bright and airy spaces within Villa Lanwers were described by the newspaper *Kolonie und Heimat* in 1908, as "the most beautiful in the South West."<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Peters, 153.

<sup>219</sup> *Kolonie und Heimat*, 22 November 1908, in Peters, 185.



Figure 10 Villa Kiesewetter, before it was demolished (National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder Collection, Photo 04183)



Figure 11 Villa Wasserfall (photograph by author, 11 November 2016)

Peters defines the typical villa designed by Busch as being different from other dwellings of its time. It required a piece of land on the outskirts of the city, elevated above its surroundings, yet enjoying an intimate relationship with its garden accessed from one or more verandahs. The villas were intended to reflect the nature of their owners, through the use of formal articulation of the façades – the gables, windows, turrets and ornamental forms.<sup>220</sup> A single ornate tower distinguished each villa from other dwellings of similar stature. Only four of these villas remain today, namely Villa Wasserfall (1907), Villa Lanwers (1908) and two of Busch’s own villas (both 1911). Three other residential dwellings designed by Busch - which do not have the definitive elevation, ornamentation and towers of the neighbouring villas - can also still be found on Schanzenhügel, making it the site of a collection of Busch villas and dwellings, which can be identified “together as belonging to an era.”<sup>221</sup> Marley Tjitjo explains that for him, “it’s actually not any particular one of those villas. It’s the collection of the villas together that actually creates the

<sup>220</sup> Peters, 153.

<sup>221</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

uniqueness of the environment.”<sup>222</sup> They thus form a unique building pattern in Windhoek, which is subsequently of high architectural significance.

While Busch became known for his residential buildings, he was also appointed to design several commercial and public buildings. Of the eighteen Busch buildings documented by Edda Schoedder in her survey of existing historical buildings in the 1980s, five of these were non-residential. These included the Grüner Kranz *Kegelbahn* (1905), the Grüner Kranz Hall (1906), a commercial building on Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse (1908), the Kaiserkrone Hall (1909), and the Turnhalle (1909 and 1912). Although drawings of several other buildings designed by Busch were found at the National Archives of Namibia, no further evidence of their existence could be found.

The villas designed by Busch sparked my initial interest in the architect’s work. However, it was his three halls that prompted me to examine his buildings beyond their architectural value, in terms of their significance as heritage. The villas are easily identified as having architectural value and artistic merit, and as a collection of individual buildings they contribute to the continuity of their environment. Nonetheless, they represent a building typology that belongs very clearly to the private residential domain. The Grüner Kranz Hall, Kaiserkrone Hall and Turnhalle represent places that are accessible to the public and although two of the buildings are privately owned, they provide the opportunity for public interaction. This offers the possibility to assess these buildings in terms of their social significance within the context of the post-colonial city. Due to the similarities of their architectural forms and articulation, the differences between their social significance can be more clearly identified.

Busch left for Germany on a holiday with his wife Minna Busch (née Schiller) in February 1914 with the intention of returning to Windhoek in September of the same year, but “was prevented from doing so by the outbreak of the war.”<sup>223</sup> His power of attorney, Mr Willi Lanwers attempted to obtain permission from the Protectorate for him to return, but to no avail. Busch never

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> National Archives of Namibia, SAW.

returned to the country, and thus his only Namibian works were all built over a period of nine years before the outbreak of the First World War.

The buildings designed by Otto Busch are therefore a finite collection of works, representing a unique selection of residential and public buildings that were built within a very short period of Germany's limited colonial rule in Namibia. As heritage, their true value can only be understood by examining their architectural and artistic significance alongside their historical and social significance for a plural society, within the post-colonial context in which they are now situated. As such, the case study follows, which examines the Grüner Kranz Hall, Kaiserkrone Hall and Turnhalle in terms of these different values.

## **GRÜNER KRANZ**

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*"You see my mother, I try to do it a little the way my mother wants it,  
because she has got a lot of sentimental...  
Even if she cannot survive tomorrow she would never sell this property.  
Because her grandmother was born here; she has grown up... here,  
and we as children, we are grown up here,  
so she doesn't want us to change the way."*<sup>224</sup>

The hall at Grüner Kranz, although not as famous as the Turnhalle, is an important case to examine for several reasons. It is a fine example of Otto Busch's three halls, and it is the only one which has not been altered significantly over the years. It retains most of its original fabric, with an outstanding original ceiling and roof structure. The principal reason for its selection is the perceived individual significance that it has for the family that has owned it over three generations. This case allows for an exploration of the effect that sentimentality and emotional attachment to a building can have on its significance as a place worthy of preservation.

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<sup>224</sup> Ferdinand Diener, Interview with Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener and her son Ferdinand Diener, Windhoek, 23 September 2017.

## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The hall is situated on the property named *Grüner Kranz* (which means Green Wreath), after the hotel that was first built there in 1900. The original green wreath sign still exists above what used to be the entrance to the hotel, which is now occupied by a bookshop. The property is situated in a semi-industrial area just to the south of the centre of Windhoek; bounded by Macadam Street on the north, Lazarett Street to the east, Bell Street to the South and the adjacent properties on the west. Schoedder's map of historical buildings in the area indicates that the *Kronenbrauerei* (Crown brewery) factory building was built in the block to the north of the property in 1918. An electric power station to power a portion of the centre of Windhoek was established in the *Kronenbrauerei* in 1924.<sup>225</sup> This provides an indication of the type of industrial development that began in this part of the city before the Second World War. The buildings and businesses which are now found in close proximity to the property include a sanitaryware and plumbing specialist; a pool manufacturing company and supplier; a local paint factory and supplier; and a Namibian cleaning product manufacturer. The *Grüner Kranz* complex timidly reveals itself among these industrial structures, rather like a faded jewel.



Figure 12 The *Grüner Kranz* (Green Wreath) sign hangs proudly above what used to be the entrance to the original hotel, now occupied by a bookshop (photograph by author, 21 July 2017)

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<sup>225</sup> National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder, Edda Schoedder Accession KWi 19-3 (Blue Files).



Figure 13 Upon arrival at the Grüner Kranz complex, the hall (far right) is barely visible behind the surrounding structures and leafy garden (photograph by Andreas Hofmeyr, 8 December 2017)

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the family's use of the property and their circumstances over the years provide a greater understanding of the manner in which the rest of the property has developed and responded to its light industrial context.

The German settler, Rudolf Brüsshaver acquired the land on which Grüner Kranz is situated around 1900, although the first record of ownership is found in the form of the registration of the property to "The innkeeper Rudolf Brüsshaver" by virtue of the opening of the *Grundbuch* (land register), dated 9 December 1907.<sup>226</sup> While the present-day setting seems an unlikely choice for a hotel, the site of the hotel Grüner Kranz was originally chosen for its proximity to the *Ausspannplatz* (Windhoek's wagon outspan) and due to the presence

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<sup>226</sup> Office of the Registrar of Windhoek, Ministry of Land Reform, *Grundbuch* Windhoek Town, Volume IV, Folio 115

of a natural spring which remains a source of water to this day.<sup>227</sup> The well itself has not been used for potable water since the First World War, when rumours were spread by guests that weapons had been placed inside it.<sup>228</sup> Plans of the original hotel building which was built in 1900, indicate a large verandah that wraps around the northern and western sides of a humble building. Five guest rooms, a kitchen, pantry and dining room opened out onto the verandah.<sup>229</sup> Schoedder's 1982 survey of the building found it to be structurally sound, and although she noted that the building had been "devalued" by alterations, it was easily adapted into office space which means that it is still usable today. For these reasons the original hotel building was given a high B-rating of 72.<sup>230</sup>

On 11 October 1905, Brüsshaver applied in writing to the office of the Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Windhoek, for permission to build a *Kegelbahn* (skittle alley) to complement the existing hotel and restaurant building.<sup>231</sup> It was designed by Otto Busch and included a two-aisle skittle alley and adjoining toilets. The site plan that accompanied the application indicates the proposed *Kegelbahn*, a store, the original hotel and restaurant building and accommodation wing built around a garden.<sup>232</sup> Edda Schoedder's assessment of the building in August 1982 gave it a B-rating, with a grade of 60. Schoedder noted that the building contributes greatly to its environmental context by offering a sense of continuity to the original Grüner Kranz complex. It was also graded highly due to its adaptability and compatibility for restricted business use.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Ferdinand Diener, son of Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener, informal conversation, Windhoek, 21 July 2017.

<sup>228</sup> Gerda Diener, Interview with Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener and her son Ferdinand Diener, Windhoek, 23 September 2017.

<sup>229</sup> National Archives of Namibia, *Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Windhoek* files, BWi 6 Volume II, Folio 25.

<sup>230</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 19-8.

<sup>231</sup> National Archives of Namibia, BWi 7 Volume V, Folio 8, Reference number 5563.

<sup>232</sup> National Archives of Namibia, BWi 7 Volume V, Folio 10.

<sup>233</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 19-6.

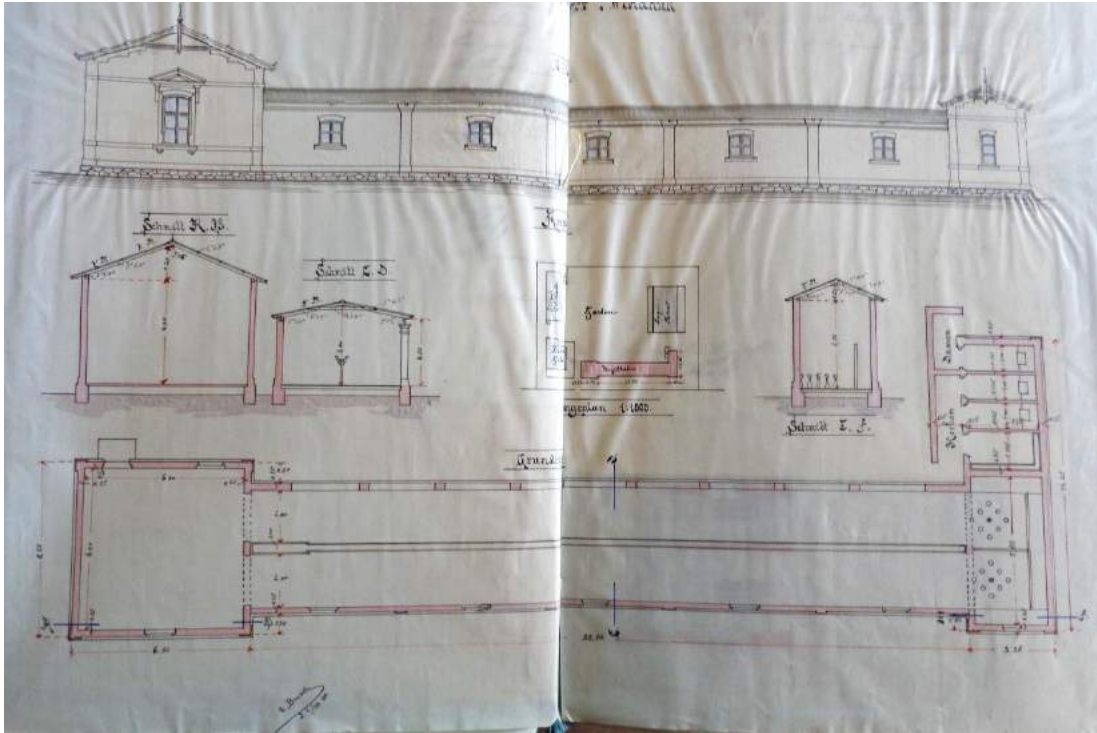


Figure 14 Drawings of the proposed Kegelbahn by Otto Busch in 1905 (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7 Volume V, 8-10)

In November 1905, Rudolf Brüsshaber submitted drawings and an application to build additional accommodation, or a *Logierhaus* (lodging house) on his property. Two verandahs were designed along the length of both sides of the building, allowing each of the guest rooms to open onto the verandah.<sup>234</sup> Schoedder's assessment of the building in August 1982, which gave it a C-rating, noted that it was in a poor condition, although it retained much of its original fabric. Its contribution to the continuity of the Grüner Kranz complex was noted as being significant, despite its adaptability and compatibility with business use not being highly rated.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>234</sup> National Archives of Namibia, BWi 7 Volume VI.

<sup>235</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KW 19-7.

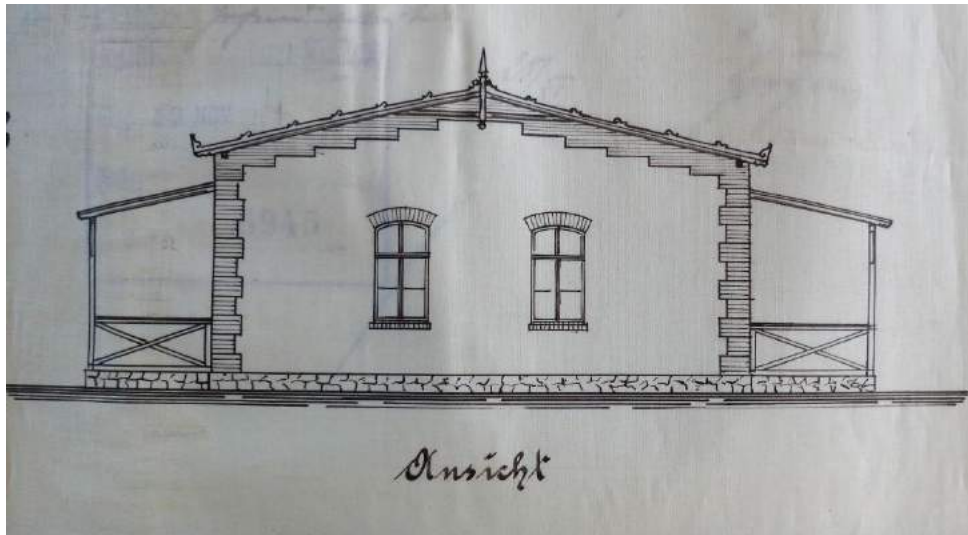


Figure 15 Elevation of the proposed Logierhaus in 1905 – note the verandahs on either side (National Archives of Namibia: BWI 7, Volume VI)

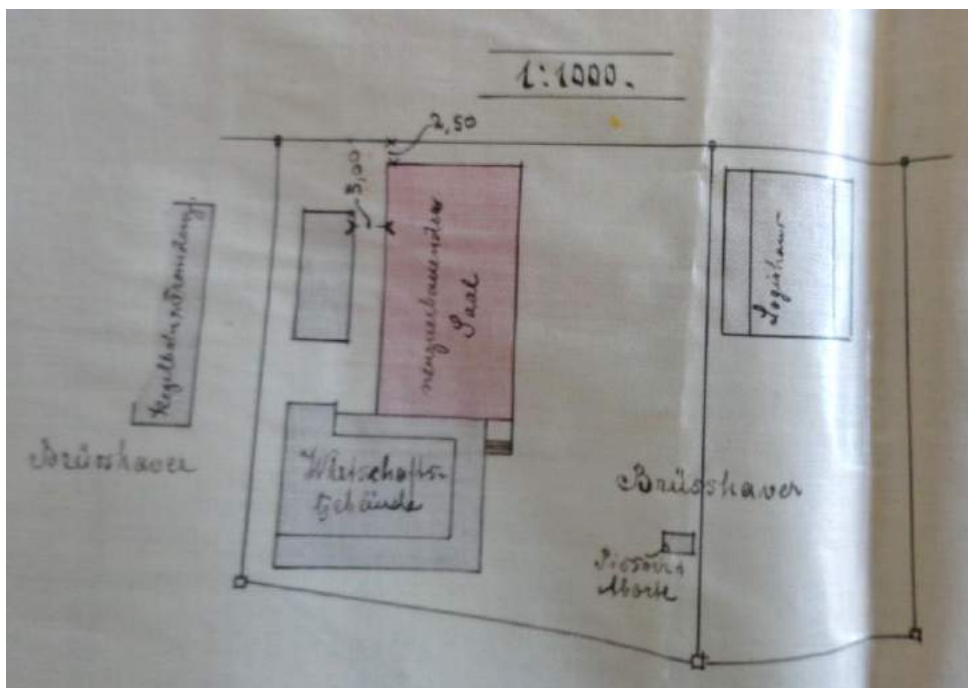


Figure 16 Site plan by Otto Busch indicating the Kegelbahn on the far left, the original hotel building at the bottom, the proposed new hall in red, and the Logierhaus on the right (National Archives of Namibia, BWI 7, Volume VI)

Brüsshaber had married Caroline Herrman on 21 June 1901.<sup>236</sup> Their twin daughters, Auguste Rosine and Anna Lotte were born on 12 December 1906, around the same time that the Grüner Kranz hall was built. Due to the absence of a hospital in Windhoek at the time (the maternity hospital *Elisabethhaus* was

<sup>236</sup> Diener personal collection of files, Grüner Kranz timeline.

only completed in 1908),<sup>237</sup> a midwife was hired by the Brüsshavers and the children were born on the property itself. Rudolfine, their youngest daughter, was born later.<sup>238</sup>

Rudolf Brüsshaver died of a thrombosis while working on the *Kegelbahn* in March 1908.<sup>239</sup> After his death, the Grüner Kranz Hotel was leased to Zabell, during which time Caroline Brüsshaver went to Germany with her three daughters. On their return to Windhoek around 1910, Caroline resumed the running of the hotel, later with the help of Anna Lotte and Rudolfine, while Auguste Rosine worked at a hotel in Seeis. The property was eventually registered under Caroline's name on 15 December 1913.<sup>240</sup>

Auguste Rosine was later called back to help her mother, being the most proficient cook in the family. Anna Lotte got married subsequently and left Grüner Kranz. Auguste Rosine also got married, but remained at Grüner Kranz to run it after her marriage.<sup>241</sup> Auguste Rosine worked hard to run the hotel, and her young daughters Ruth Rosina Elizabeth and Gerda Maria Ferdinande had to help in the kitchen and with serving, at the ages of twelve and ten respectively. Gerda Maria Ferdinande (later referred to as Gerda Diener) commented that people in the local community had been unhappy about how hard the children worked, despite their mother having a reasonable estate to live off. Although Diener cannot recall distinct memories from this time, she clearly remembers the hotel crockery that was stored in a large store room behind the hall.<sup>242</sup> In 1935, Auguste Rosine travelled to Germany with her daughters, while the hotel was run as a pension by a Frau Laeufchen.<sup>243</sup> Gerda Diener was eight years old when they departed. She remembers this trip as coinciding with the year the Olympic Games were held in Nazi Germany, in 1936.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Andreas Vogt, *National Monuments in Namibia* (Windhoek: Macmillan Education Namibia Publishers (Pty) Ltd, 2010), 158.

<sup>238</sup> Diener files, Grüner Kranz timeline.

<sup>239</sup> Gerda Diener, interview.

<sup>240</sup> *Grundbuch* Windhoek Town, Volume IV, Folio 115.

<sup>241</sup> Diener files, Grüner Kranz timeline.

<sup>242</sup> Gerda Diener, Interview.

<sup>243</sup> Diener files, Grüner Kranz timeline.

<sup>244</sup> Gerda Diener, interview.

The Second World War meant that the hotel had fewer guests. Those who did stay at the hotel had to sign in their names in register books, which the police came to check every day. With all of the men sent off to fight in the war, it was a difficult time financially, which ultimately led to the closure of the Pension in 1948. The lack of business meant that Gerda's mother had to stop the cooking or catering, offering only accommodation to visitors.<sup>245</sup>

The business was further restricted by what Diener refers to as the "rent board" which came into effect in the 1950s to control the rent that could be charged as well as to enforce sanitary requirements.<sup>246</sup> The Municipality of Windhoek's requirements for separate "native" toilets that complied with apartheid legislation meant that additional facilities had to be built on the property. This included the construction of new outbuildings; the insertion of a new bathroom and toilet into the verandah of the original hotel building; and additional toilets in the *Kegelbahn*.<sup>247</sup> These utilitarian changes will have inevitably altered the original character and fabric of some of the buildings, and also explain the ad-hoc appearance of the property, a fact which is lamented by Diener's son, Ferdinand Diener.<sup>248</sup>

In 1965, Ruth Rosina Elizabeth and Gerda Diener inherited the property from their late mother, Auguste Rosine. By this time, Ruth Rosina Elizabeth had married Herrn Teubner and moved to his farm, while Gerda worked for the Red Cross before working on the farm Ozenjache. Gerda and her husband, Herbert Diener, later obtained power of attorney to manage Grüner Kranz, during which time they built several new structures on the site.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Gerda Diener, interview; Diener files: Municipality of Windhoek, Public Health Department, Final Notice addressed to Mrs A.R. Wommelsdorf, 5 August 1948

<sup>247</sup> Diener files: Sanitary building plan, 23 January 1951; Amended site layout plan, Aufriss der gebäude auf dem grundstück "Grüner Kranz", 5 November 1951, amended 11 June 1954; Plan, 21 June 1954.

<sup>248</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>249</sup> Diener files, Grüner Kranz timeline.

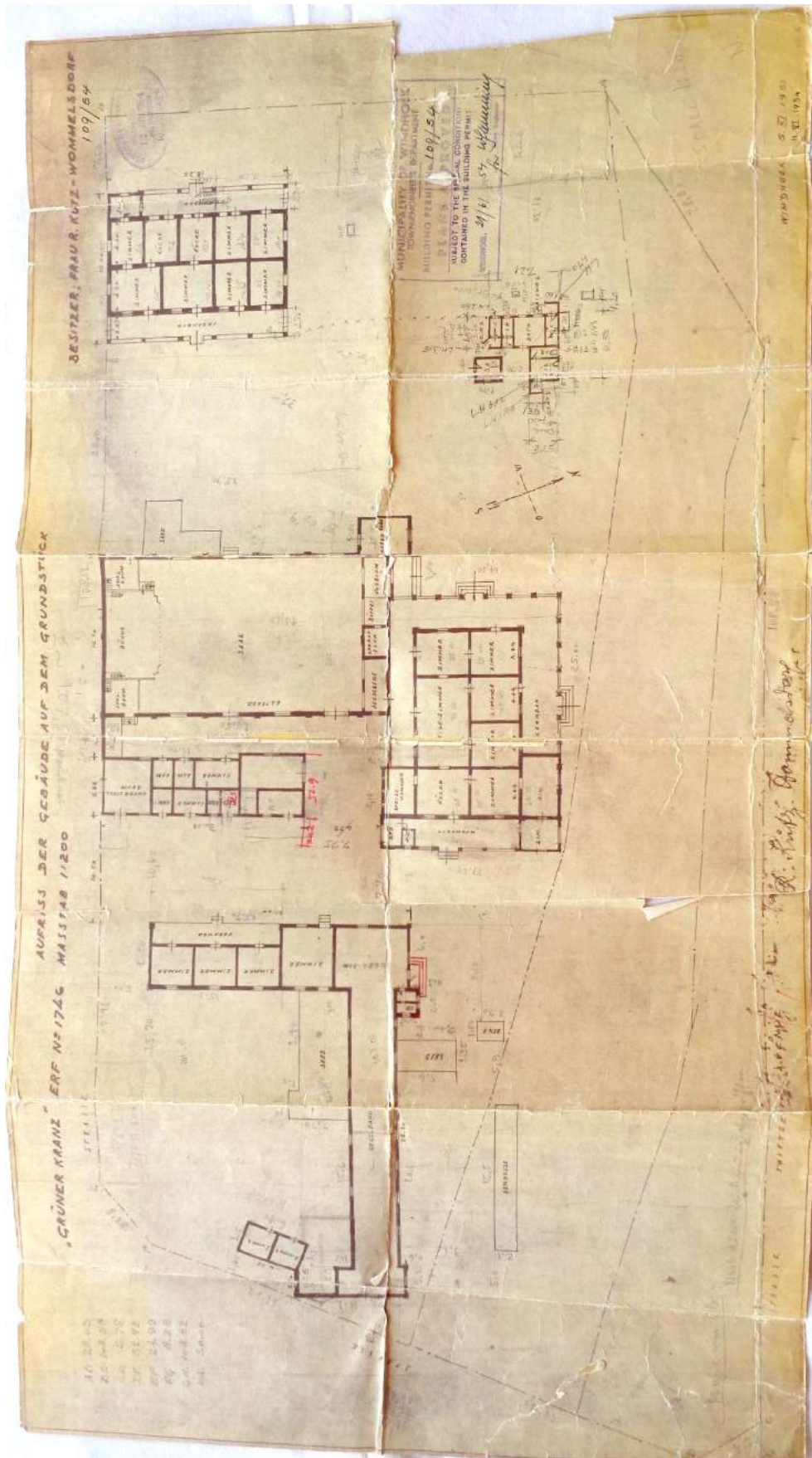


Figure 17 Municipality of Windhoek approved plan illustrates the development of the site to meet evolving needs (Diener personal collection)

The tight controls on accommodation buildings prompted the Dieners to direct their focus onto other sources of income. Renting the spaces out to businesses allowed them to continue to obtain rental income, without any of the issues they had experienced with their residential lettings.<sup>250</sup> Due to the property's location in a light industrial area, this seemed to be an appropriate decision. A joinery workshop, for example, used to be located in the building which later housed the Old Wheelers Club, which is now occupied by a wine bar and private art gallery.

An undated draft letter written by Gerda Diener to the First National Development Corporation of South West Africa, indicated that the property was owned by both Mrs Diener and her sister, Mrs R. Teubner at the time. It can therefore be assumed that the letter was written between 1965 and 1986. In this letter Gerda Diener wrote that Grüner Kranz is situated in the light industrial area and that the hotel rooms had been changed to offices, occupied at the time by electrical engineers. She noted that buildings on the property were occupied by a garage, a vehicle electronics workshop, and a welding firm. Her letter indicated the demand for additional workshops on the site, for which she was erecting a new "Trossbach-hall" (an industrial framed structure) and hoped to complete another one.<sup>251</sup>

Gerda Diener obtained a small bank loan to pay for the construction of a small structure, which was drawn up by her son Ferdinand Diener, because they could not afford to pay an architect for this service. They obtained municipal approval for its construction, and soon it was rented out to a swimming pool manufacturing company. A large sanitaryware and plumbing company later took over this building, which they demolished and replaced with a larger structure to house their warehouse and showroom.<sup>252</sup> Although the initial building process was costly for the Dieners, it has paid off over the years. The

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<sup>250</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>251</sup> Diener files: Gerda Diener, Letter to First National Development Corporation of South West Africa requesting a loan, undated.

<sup>252</sup> Gerda Diener, interview.

warehouse and showroom building brings in the most income on the property, allowing the Dieners to maintain the historic buildings on the site.<sup>253</sup>

Although the hotel business is no longer in existence, the property still has a residential component. The original dwelling house is still occupied by the owner, Gerda Diener, who has lived there almost all her life. Some of the rooms are also rented out. The *Kegelbahn* is no longer used as such, but most of the original fabric has been retained, now rented out as office and commercial space. The current combination of uses - which includes office space, small shops, restaurant and café space, and residential units - allows the complex to enjoy constant use, which keeps the space alive, for the public and the family.

## THE GRÜNER KRANZ HALL

*"It's all the hall..."*<sup>254</sup>

When asked what she thought made Grüner Kranz special, Gerda Diener said simply, "It's all the hall."<sup>255</sup> The hall at Grüner Kranz tells the story of a century of economic change. It tells a family's story: from bold beginnings in the rush of Windhoek's early boom; to financial hardships as the family struggled to keep the hotel open; through to the challenges of meeting contemporary demands in the present day.

When Rudolf Brüsshaver applied to the Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Windhoek on 14 July 1906 to build a hall, for which permission was granted on 20 July 1906, the hotel was already well established.<sup>256</sup> The *Kegelbahn* and additional *Logierhaus* had also been built by this time. An early advertisement for the bar at the Grüner Kranz hints at the demand for hospitality and entertainment in the early 1900s.

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<sup>253</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>254</sup> Gerda Diener, interview.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> National Archives of Namibia, BWi 7 Volume VI.

**An beiden Pfingstfeiertagen:  
Grosses Schlachtfest.**

Morgens von 9 Uhr ab: **Wellfleisch** und **Wellwurst**. Mittags und abends: **Schweinebraten**, Kartoffeln, Sauerkraut, **frische Wurst**. Für gute Getränke ist bestens gesorgt.

Es ladet freundlichst ein

**R. Brüsshaber,**  
„Krug zum grünen Kranz“,  
Windhuk.

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Figure 18 An advertisement for a meat feast where various meats and drinks will be served at the bar at Grüner Kranz (Diener personal collection)



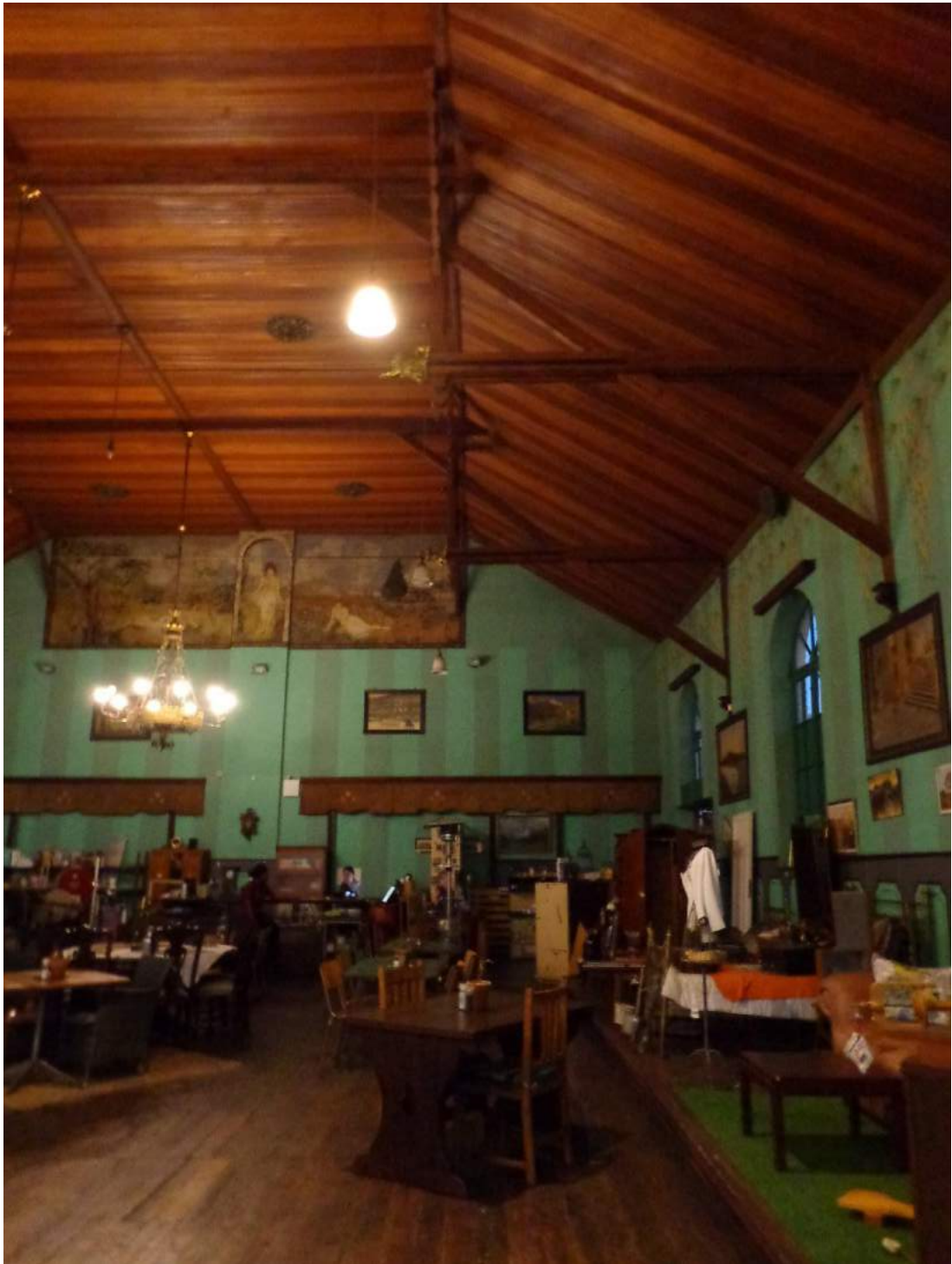
Figure 19 Brüsshaber (front right) and a small team of builders during the construction of the hall in 1906 - note the external decoration of the gable (Diener personal collection)

Otto Busch designed the hall to join the existing hotel and restaurant building, and included a cloakroom, a bar and servery, a stage and two dressing rooms. The design allowed for ease of access for patrons to the restaurant.<sup>257</sup> The hall was used as a performance hall in the hotel's prime years, and later a cinema projector was installed for film screenings. A sense of the original festive atmosphere and the splendour of the space can still be experienced today.

Although the hall is currently entered through a side door, in its days as a performance hall, patrons would have entered from the north, via the original hotel entrance, perhaps after having a meal at the restaurant. They would have left their coats in the cloak room, before entering the grand space, confronted immediately by the large open volume and the ornately decorated stage. A bar area and servery, directly adjacent to the entrance, along the back wall of the hall, would have kept a thirsty audience content.

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 20 Interior view of the Gruner Kranz Hall towards the original bar area (photograph by author, 1 June 2017)*



Figure 21 Decorative finishing of the interior - exposed timber trusses, fenestration and wall decoration (photograph by author, 1 June 2017)

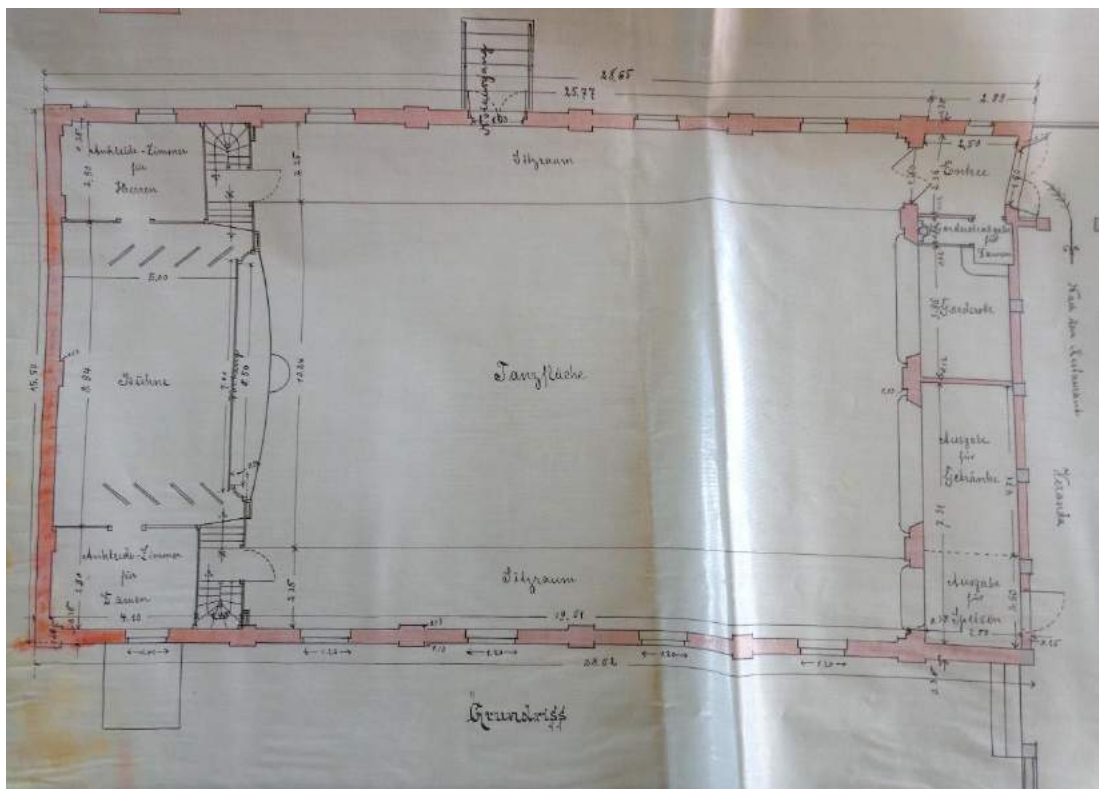


Figure 22 Plan of the hall by Otto Busch in 1906 (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7 Volume VI)

The space must have seemed warm and inviting, even in 1906 before today's advanced options of modern-day lighting technology. The hall was lit at night by three intricately designed chandeliers, each individual lamp powered by gas. The gas supply pipes remain visible to this day, designed to integrate neatly with the exposed roof trusses. Only two of the original chandeliers remain in the hall however. The third was claimed and removed after Gerda Diener's sister Ruth Teubner died, when the assets were divided in half, literally. Ferdinand Diener remarks, "maybe we are lucky these pictures are drawn onto the walls, otherwise they would have been gone."<sup>258</sup>

Here, he refers to the collection of murals that decorate the interior. The gable-end walls are festooned with ornate scenes, painted above the stage and above the bar area respectively. They depict evocative scenes of goddess-like women in nature. Their nude bodies have been painted over to wear sheer flowing dresses that still hint at what they barely cover. Diener thinks there may have been church services taking place in the hall, at which point the images must have been deemed too sensual for the public eye. The side walls are decorated with smaller, framed murals, which Diener believes were painted by an Italian who could not afford to pay his rent and had to do work in lieu of the monies due.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 23 The painted murals, such as the semi-covered nude ladies above the stage adds to the richness of the interior (photograph by author, 1 June 2017)*

The dark wooden floors and varnished wooden ceiling, along with the colourful walls and the fine detailing of the ornamented exposed roof trusses contribute to the ambience of the interior. The wide-span roof structure, combined with the height of the ceiling, creates a lofty space, which still seems intimate due to the presence of the dark wood and colourful walls.

It is hard to imagine the hall being used for anything other than beautiful performances and glamorous evenings, but it has seen more than the costumes of the well-heeled enter its doors. Diener recalls that at some point the lenses of the modern cinema projector, which had been installed on the back wall where the bar was, were stolen from the property, bringing the film screenings to an end.<sup>260</sup>

The Second World War and the eventual closure of the hotel business had a direct impact on the hall. During this time of post-war austerity the family had to find an alternative use for the large space. Diener explains that the hall was

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

first rented out as a storeroom for cars. Later it was occupied by a furniture business, and then used as a store for a food supply company. It was also used as a controlled import store for an office furniture supplier.<sup>261</sup>

It is unclear what sort of loads had to be supported by the floor during this period, and what sort of damage this may have caused to the timber floor and structure. In her 1982 survey of the building, Schoedder noted that the hall is structurally weak, and that “due to deteriorated building conditions an A-rating was not possible.”<sup>262</sup> It was instead given a B-rating of 89. This argument contradicts the purpose of the historical building survey, which, as Brandt explains, was instigated by the NIA with the purpose of contributing to the preservation of historical architecture.<sup>263</sup> Although the condition of the building may have deteriorated, its physical structural condition does not change its original architectural or artistic qualities. Considering that the building was in fact identified as having an “outstanding interior” which was considered valuable enough to give the building an A-rating, this gives all the more reason to enhance its protection by rating it highly, in order to distinguish it from less exceptional buildings. The survey should instead have highlighted the issues that put the building at risk of further deterioration.

This period of use as a grand storeroom was not only detrimental to the building’s condition, but also meant that the beautiful interior was hidden away from the public eye, almost like an overgrown secret garden without a key. The Dieners then realised that there was a demand in the community to see their heritage. Because of the size of the space, and its limitations in terms of weight and access, they decided to keep the rent low, which also attracts tenants. Diener describes this as “supporting the heritage.”<sup>264</sup>

In recent years, the hall was rented out to an antiques shop which also used the space as a café. The following tenant continued the antiques shop and café, but also brought in a new business element by hosting informal music performances to the public once a week. Local bands or performers would

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 19-9.

<sup>263</sup> Klaus Brandt, interview.

<sup>264</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

have the opportunity to play either inside the hall or outside, and this has renewed the hall's original purpose as a performance venue. Since this research commenced, a new tenant has occupied the space. The venue is now used as a café, and as an informal venue for card games, quiz nights and various other games. Musical performance evenings are still a feature in the hall. The Dieners' decision to keep rent low and to allow for the café element (which utilises the original kitchen from the restaurant building) ensures that the hall continues to be used, day and night.

Architecturally, the hall has survived many of the changes that have taken place around it. It echoes the architectural detailing of the earlier buildings on the property. It too was built of unplastered brick walls on natural stone foundations, with a timber roof structure and corrugated iron roof sheeting. The regularly spaced windows along the length of the hall are defined with simple arches in the brickwork. The brickwork on the exterior is laid in decorative patterns in a band across the gable ends. This, combined with the repeating windows and arches, creates façades which seem subtle or restrained in terms of their decoration. The roof structure was distinguished from the other buildings on the property by the external ornamentation of the gables, which defined the importance of the hall above the other buildings on the property. Much of the original external timber decorative work has been lost, which makes the architecture of the hall seem quite understated. This is one example of the deterioration of the building that prevented Edda Schoedder from giving it an A-rating for architectural significance. All windows, doors and floors were however found to be the original timber, except for one door which was a later addition. Although it supports a simple gabled corrugated iron roof, the wide span roof structure, exposed below a varnished timber ceiling, is an outstanding feature of the building, which Schoedder noted as contributing significantly to the building's architectural quality.<sup>265</sup>

This was the first of Otto Busch's three halls, and subsequently, its design must have involved some degree of experimentation. This assumption is made based on the original internal elevation of the stage, which shows the

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<sup>265</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 19-9.

intended roof structure with a central ventilated roof structure instead of a ridge. In reality, the roof was simplified – perhaps due to cost constraints, or perhaps due to the span of the roof. Spanning an internal width of 14.74 metres, the roof is nonetheless a remarkable achievement for the time, with its surprisingly slender flying trusses. The roof design informed the later Turnhalle design; Monica Ochse, the architect responsible for the design of the reconstruction of the Turnhalle in 2007, visited the hall at Grüner Kranz in order to understand Busch's timber roof design.



*Figure 24 The original decorative timber gable finishing has disappeared, additions obscure part of the building (photograph by author, 21 July 2017)*

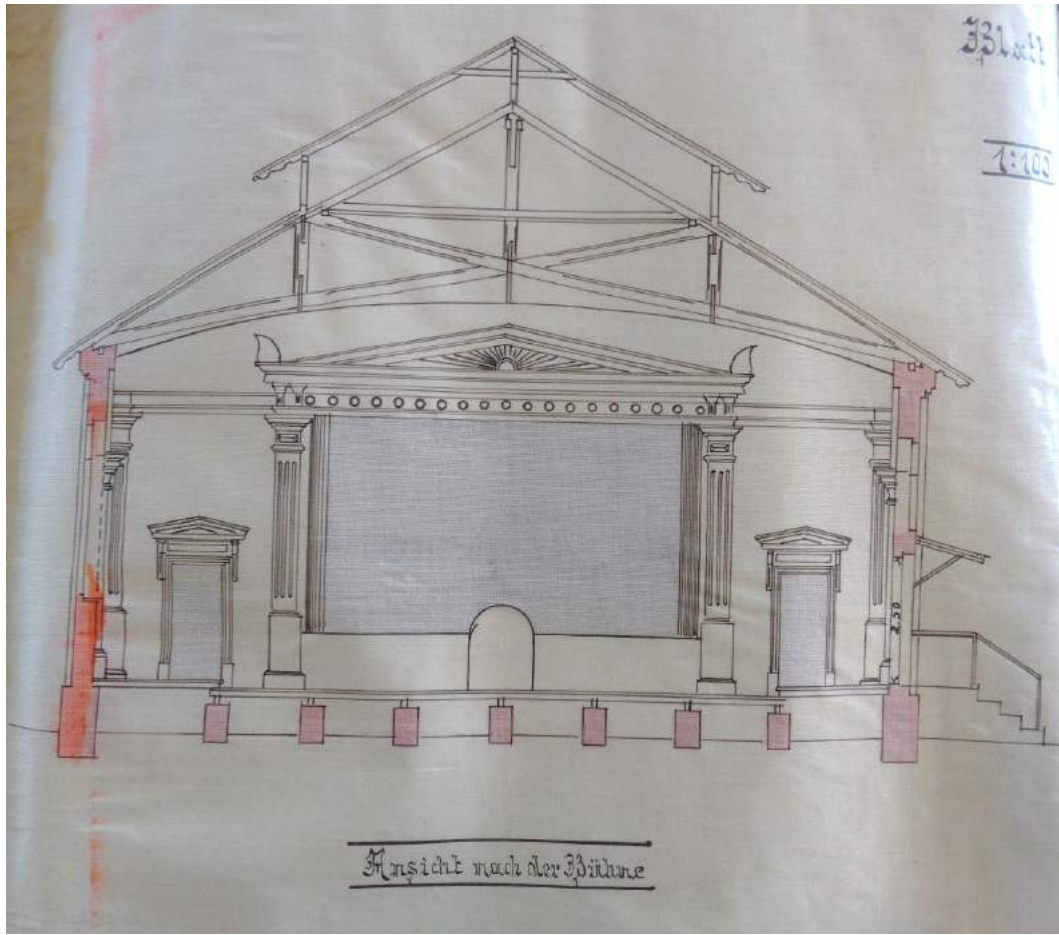


Figure 25 The internal elevation by Busch shows a different roof structure to what was built (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7 Volume VI)

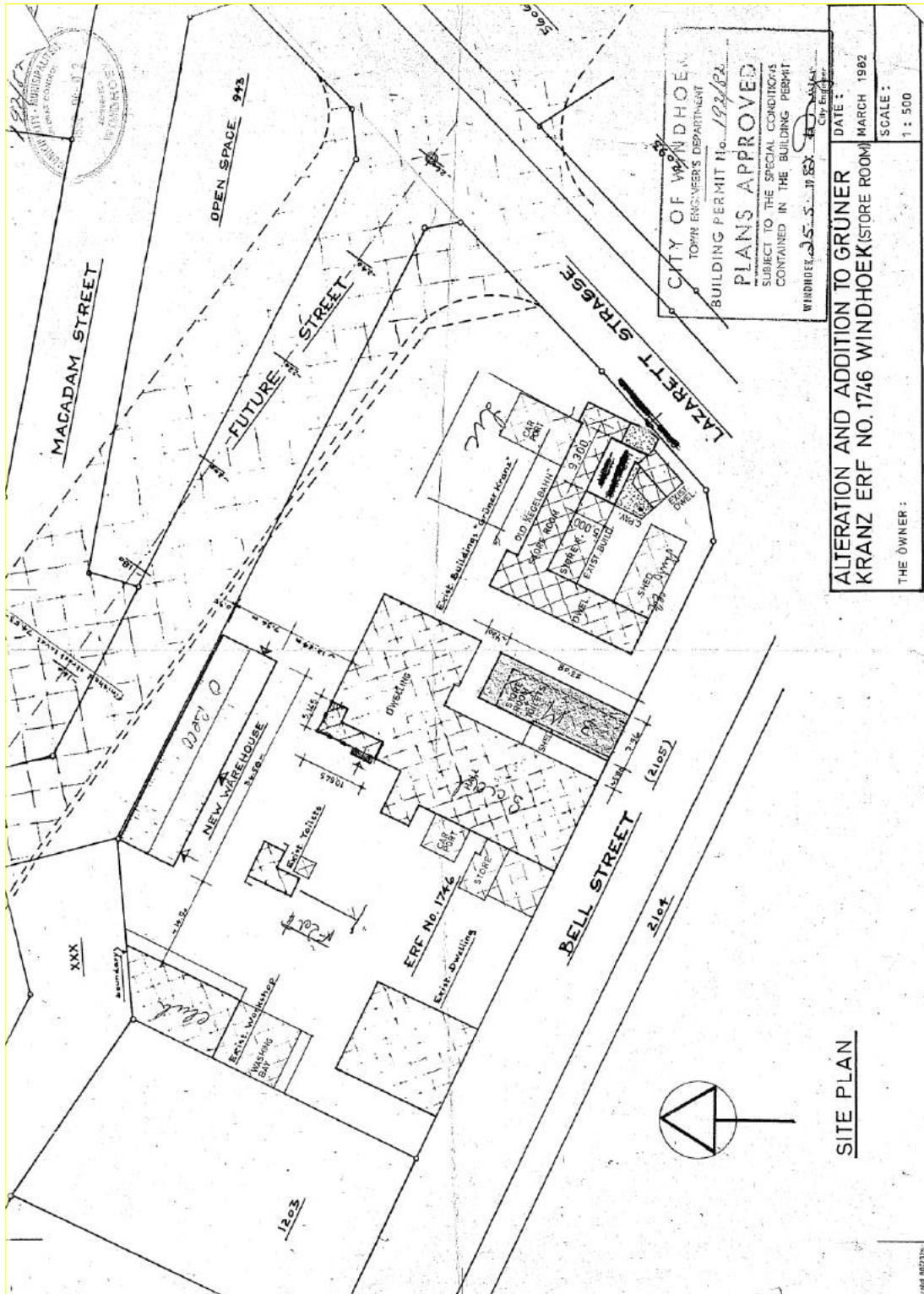


Figure 26 Municipality of Windhoek approved site plan from 1982 gives an indication of the many additions and structures built on the property (Diener personal collection)

While the exterior of the hall is simple and understated, the experience of the building is diminished by various additions that have been built onto it and around it over the years. The site layout for the proposed new hall in 1906 indicates the existing store room, which was already built before the hall came

into existence. The proposed new hall is marked out to be only 5 metres away from it, despite the large amount of space on the other side of the property. It is unclear why the hall was built so close to this building, which hides much of the eastern façade on the approach to the building from the east. However, considering that the hall was entered via the original hotel on the north, it is likely that this was not an important consideration at the time. A lean-to shed has subsequently been built between the store room and the eastern wall of the hall. This rather ill-considered addition has blocked a significant portion of natural light from entering the hall windows. The shed also prevents public access to the well and the cellar below the stage. Ferdinand Diener explains that he has plans to dismantle the shed, with the idea of making a feature of the well, and perhaps making use of the cellar for a wine merchant. He seems inspired when talking about the site's potential. He says, "Just bring in some thought...use the heritage, and use people's needs, and see how you can combine them."<sup>266</sup>

A site plan from 1985 shows several other additions that have been added onto the hall structure since then. A garage, carport and store were built on the western edge of the building, making views and access to the garden impossible from the hall. Ferdinand Diener comments that now they have to deal with the consequences of this in terms of the provision of adequate fire escape routes. An extension was also built onto the original hotel and restaurant building, which may have served a practical purpose in terms of access, but detracts from the integrity of the original north elevation of the building.

The other newer buildings on the property, particularly the spaces rented out to the sanitaryware company, do not relate architecturally to the older buildings on the site. They were built with a practical purpose in mind, and had to be constructed as cost-effectively as possible. The buildings do not pretend to be anything other than what they are - their industrial warehouse functions are expressed honestly – which results in a clean contrast between old and new on the property. Their location on the edge of the property has the effect of

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<sup>266</sup> Ferdinand Diener, Interview.

enclosing the property deeper within its light industrial context, hiding it further away from view. The property still seems to maintain a sense of unity however. Perhaps simply because of the choice of matching paint colours, or perhaps because of the modesty of the later additions.

## **PROTECTION OF THE HALL**

The hall was never proclaimed as a National Monument under the National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1969, nor has it been listed as a Listed Building on the Namibian Heritage Register under the National Heritage Act No. 27 of 2004.<sup>267</sup> The hall, and its surrounding buildings such as the original hotel building, the *Logierhaus* and the *Kegelbahn*, are therefore not protected by Namibia's heritage legislation. No permit is required by law from the National Heritage Council for any demolitions or alterations.

Ferdinand Diener explains that when the National Heritage Council came to discuss the promulgation of the Grüner Kranz Hall as a listed building on the Heritage Register, his parents were not interested. Not because they did not want to protect the building, but because of their perceptions of the costs that arise from owning a listed building. Their rationale was that they would not get any government subsidies, yet they would be forced to maintain the building to certain standards. They were also not sure if they'd be able to rent it out once it was protected as a listed building. He pointed out that the protection of a building by law is theoretical only. In reality, the building will always be at risk of damage or loss. He makes the example of when his aunt, Ruth Teubner, died and the assets were divided in half, literally resulting in one of the three original chandeliers being removed permanently from the hall.<sup>268</sup> The law may exist and act as a deterrent, but it cannot stop a person from physically doing the harm before they face the legal consequences. If Namibia's heritage legislation had a grading system in place, based on Edda Schoedder's B-rating of 89, the hall would have been protected due to its architectural significance.

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<sup>267</sup> National Heritage Council, "NHC List of Declared Sites, 1 July 2016," <http://www.nhc-nam.org/declaredsites>, last accessed 31 January 2018.

<sup>268</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

Despite the lack of protection offered by Namibia's heritage legislation, the hall has been preserved largely due to the fact that it has remained within one family for over a century. Diener believes that if the property changed ownership and fell into the hands of a developer, that developer would scrap everything and build a shopping centre in its place.<sup>269</sup>

The lack of legislation to protect the building has also allowed the owners to make significant changes to the property over the years. The newer buildings may not contribute architecturally to the heritage resources that they surround, but their function as lettable business and storage space has been their greatest contribution to the preservation of the historical buildings on the site. The regular income obtained from the warehouses and rented office space allows the family to hold on to the Grüner Kranz Hall and maintain it to a certain extent.

Gerda Diener says that there is no real change which she regrets. Mindful of the ad-hoc development of the property, the Dieners approached an architect to design a masterplan for the future development of the property. Andy Chase of Stauch & Partners produced a design proposal which retained the hall, *Kegelbahn*, original hotel building and the later warehouse, whilst demolishing the old workshop and Gerda Diener's current residence which was built in 1905. While the design opens up greater opportunities for the site in terms of mixed-use and parking, the proposed changes would be an immense investment for the Dieners, one that does not take Gerda Diener's home into consideration.<sup>270</sup> Such a development takes the family element out of the property, turning it more into a business.

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

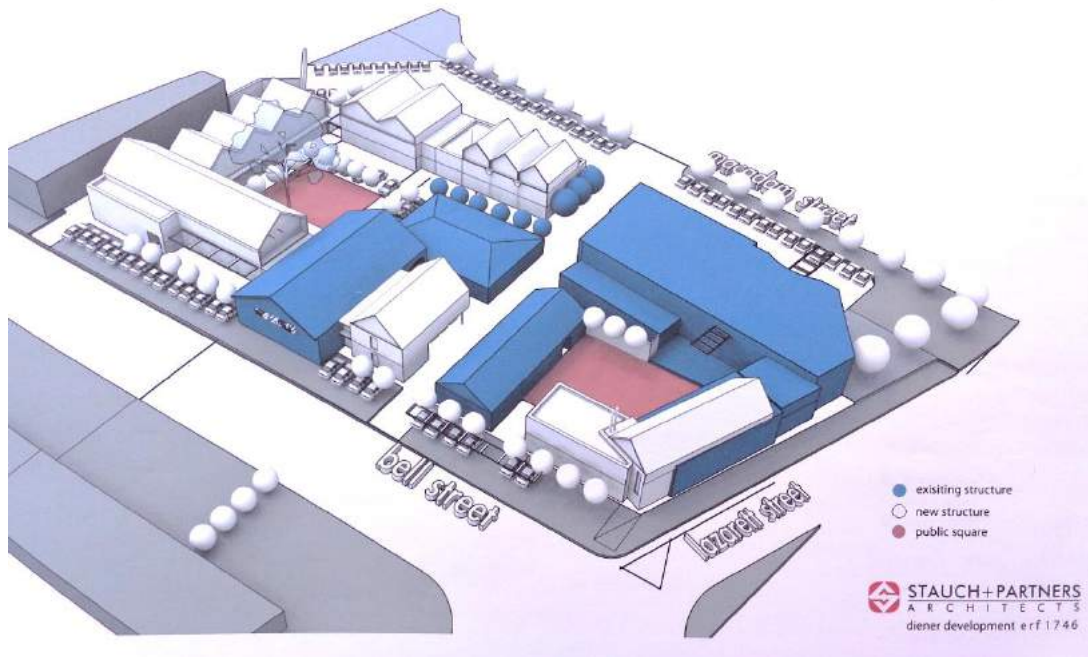


Figure 27 Master plan indicates the destruction of some original fabric and the retention of existing structures, in blue (Diener personal collection)

My objection to this masterplan is that rather than working with the existing buildings, each of varying significance and aesthetic value, the less aesthetically pleasing structures have been removed entirely, except for the lucrative warehouse building. The rationalisation of this decision was not made clear in the proposal. The removal of some of the smaller structures like the lean-to shed and garage that have been built against the hall would however be beneficial. The other structures on the property are not as ad-hoc, nor are they as insignificant as one might think. The original workshop, which used to be the Old Wheelers Club, and is now a trendy wine bar, is a good example. Gerda Diener explains that her favourite place in the Grüner Kranz complex used to be the Old Wheelers Club, because she knew everyone there, and together they would regularly play *Knobel*, a German dice game. For her it's sad that the older people are no longer frequenting the place since the Old Wheelers Club moved, but with the new wine bar and art gallery that have taken its place, the property is now being used by a younger generation of Namibians. She says that old people do not go out at night. With the younger people using the space, the property is used at night, which also

keeps it active and less prone to crime than an abandoned site.<sup>271</sup> Ferdinand Diener commented that there is a demand for places for young people to meet, for a market space similar to the Old Biscuit Mill in Cape Town.<sup>272</sup> In December 2017, just under two months after my conversation with the Dieners, this demand was addressed when Grüner Kranz hosted its first evening market. This event revealed the property's ability to accommodate the contemporary needs of a younger society and its potential to be adapted with very little change to its original fabric.

## THE FUTURE OF THE HALL

*"I've also reached the age of retirement.  
And if you see the handwork which must still be done, it's quite a lot."<sup>273</sup>*

When asked what she would change at Grüner Kranz, eighty-nine year old Gerda Diener says she wouldn't change anything. Her son Ferdinand has a more pragmatic approach. He feels he needs to continue with maintenance, and continue to meet people's demands for lettable space. While much of the work he intends to do is basic maintenance, repair work, and adherence to safety regulations, he also has aspirations for the place. Referring to his ideas for opening up the well to make a feature of it, he says, "You have to use the opportunities. Like the water...So then the *Windhukers* will talk about it...When the games restaurant is here, you play a round of chess next to the water, you will enjoy it, and you meet people..."<sup>274</sup>

Although he has his own ideas for the property, Ferdinand Diener is also mindful of his mother's wishes for the property. "You see my mother, I try to do it a little the way my mother wants it, because she has got a lot of sentimental...even if she cannot survive tomorrow she would never sell this property. Because her grandmother was born here; she has grown up, so to say, here; and we as children, we are grown up here, so she doesn't want us

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<sup>271</sup> Gerda Diener, interview.

<sup>272</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

to change the way.”<sup>275</sup> As long as he holds onto this sentiment, the Grüner Kranz Hall will be protected from damage or destruction. Yet its future remains tenuous. What will happen to the hall beyond the lifetimes of its current custodians? While the memories of Gerda Diener sustain a strong sense of ownership of the hall, which ensures they care for it and attempt to find ways to ensure its continued use, who will share that same sense of responsibility in the future? Ferdinand Diener has no certainty that his children or grandchildren will own the property or take an interest in its preservation.<sup>276</sup> Although it has been effective thus far, future preservation of the hall will rely on more than the personal values of an individual family. The survey by Schoedder does not provide an accurate rating of the building in terms of its architectural significance, nor does it describe the hall’s possible use as a gathering space. Together, the hall and its immediate context (the Grüner Kranz complex) have the potential to create new informal gathering places, spaces of assembly. This potential use of space has the ability to inform the hall’s social significance, and in turn, the possibility of ensuring its continued appreciation by a wider group of people than the Diener family.



*Figure 28 The Grüner Kranz complex as a place of gathering - evening market held in December 2017 (photograph by Andreas Hofmeyr, 8 December 2017)*

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

## KAISERKRONE

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The Kaiserkrone Hall forms part of this study due to its location in the central business district of Windhoek, and its perceived contribution as a heritage resource to its historical context. While the interior of the hall has been altered to a large extent, the building itself forms part of the Kaiserkrone complex, which contributes to its historical setting in the oldest part of the city of Windhoek.

### PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The Kaiserkrone Hall is situated on Erf 1771 in the central business district of Windhoek, in the city block enclosed by Post Street Mall to the north (pedestrianised shopping street); Independence Avenue to the east (Windhoek's oldest commercial street, formerly Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse); Fidel Castro Street to the south (leading to the Christuskirche landmark, formerly Peter Müller Strasse); and Werner List Street to the west (commercial street, formerly Stübel Strasse).



*Figure 29 Kaiserkrone complex as viewed from Post Street Mall in the CDB (photograph by author, 7 April 2017)*

The hall is located on one of the oldest city blocks in Windhoek. These blocks were demarcated in the late 1890s along the edge of Windhoek's first commercial street, which was then known as Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse. The street was renamed Independence Avenue when Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990. The Kaiserkrone Restaurant, erected in 1899,<sup>277</sup> and the Kronprinz Hotel which dates back to 1902, are the oldest buildings remaining on the block.<sup>278</sup> Wilhelm Sander designed the Erkrath building, erected in 1910; the earlier Gathemann building, built in 1913; and the later Gathemann building which was erected in 1927-28.<sup>279</sup> The ground floor of the Kaiserkrone Hotel was designed around the same time by Max Gartze.<sup>280</sup>



*Figure 30 Facades of the former Anna Voegler building, Kronprinz Hotel, Later Gathemann, Earlier Gathemann and Erkrath buildings, undated post 1928 (image source: Du Raan-Yaffee Collection, in Vogt)*

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<sup>277</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-40.

<sup>278</sup> Vogt, 186.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. 184-5.

<sup>280</sup> National Archives of Namibia: KWi 4-38.

After Independence, the large, multi-storey Sanlam Centre and Mutual Tower buildings replaced a number of small, earlier buildings, including two Wilhelm Sander Buildings. The block is therefore richly textured with new and old buildings, unlike many of the surrounding city blocks which have been erased of much of their past to make way for large commercial developments. The Erkrath-Gathemann-Kronprinz façades were provisionally proclaimed National Monuments on 22 May 1987, for their contribution to the continuation of the historical streetscape as a group of buildings, but the proclamation has since lapsed.<sup>281</sup> The continued existence of the buildings is likely attributable to common knowledge of their prior proclaimed (protected) status. Klaus Brandt speaks of how few historical buildings remain in the CBD, describing them as “small little pockets of buildings.”<sup>282</sup> Jaco Wasserfall attributes this phenomenon partly to escalating land values, saying that “the land is...much more valuable in many people’s minds than the heritage buildings.”<sup>283</sup> Considering its location within this context, the Kaiserkrone Hall can be discussed further in terms of its contribution to this “pocket of buildings” in the centre of Windhoek.

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<sup>281</sup> Vogt, 186.

<sup>282</sup> Brandt, interview.

<sup>283</sup> Jaco Wasserfall, interview with Jaco Wasserfall, Windhoek, 3 October 2017.



Leitner by Otto Busch in 1908. In 1928 the dining room was added in the courtyard.<sup>285</sup> The restaurant space gradually moved into the centre of the complex, with the original restaurant building later rented out as commercial space. Schoedder's assessment noted the significance of the courtyard space with its distinctive palm trees, and the building's contribution to the continuity of the hotel complex. It was given a C-rating for its historical significance as the oldest building on the property, and one of the oldest in this part of the city.<sup>286</sup> Since the original restaurant was built, restaurants in various forms had always existed on the property, until the permanent closure of The Gourmet restaurant in late 2016. Thus ended a 117 year pattern of usage which had contributed significantly to a sense of continuity for the site and its surrounding fabric. Without it the property is reduced to a single-use office or business space, accessible to the public only during office hours. The restaurant component is currently being converted into additional office space by the owner.<sup>287</sup>

A *Kegelbahn* was designed by Otto Busch for Max Ruile and Josef Leitner in 1906. The *Kegelbahn*, which was built on the southern edge of Erf 1771, has been drastically altered since it was first built. It is unclear how much of the original fabric has been retained over the years, although subsequent additions were mostly aligned to the original footprint of the building. Schoedder referred to the original drawings for the *Kegelbahn* by Busch in her survey of the original restaurant, but no further details were provided in terms of its condition or use at the time. At present, the building shows only the long narrow form of the original bowling alley, and the positions of the current windows and doors match the original spacing. A second floor was added to the structure, which is now used as rentable office space.

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Hardus Burger, email response to questions, 3 October 2017.



Figure 32 The Kegelbahn is almost unrecognisable today, except in the long form of the building (photograph by author, 22 March 2017)

Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse developed rapidly as the early German settlers established businesses in the centre. Busch designed the Kaiserkrone Hall in 1909, three years after he had designed the Grüner Kranz Hall.<sup>288</sup> Soon afterwards, the Erkrath building was erected in 1910 on present day Erf R/220 as a residence and business premises for the firm *Ein- und Verkaufsgenossenschaft GmbH*. The building was designed by Wilhelm Sander and it was the first secular building in Windhoek to be built of sandstone.<sup>289</sup> The first Gathemann building, situated on present-day Erf 7488, was built in 1913 for Heinrich Gathemann, the Mayor of Klein Windhoek and one of the “founder” members of the town. It was designed by Wilhelm Sander as a combined business and residence. The later Gathemann building was erected between 1927 and 1928 on Erf 223, designed by Sander to link to the

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<sup>288</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-39.

<sup>289</sup> Vogt, 184.

earlier building symmetrically. It also combined business and residential use.<sup>290</sup>

At about the same time, a relatively prominent architect of the time, Max Gartzke designed the ground floor of the Kaiserkrone Hotel on the present-day Erf 1771. The ground floor was constructed in 1927, and a second floor was later added in 1948.<sup>291</sup> A recent tenant of one of the shop spaces at Kaiserkrone and who was also a guest in the hotel as a child recalls the original layout of the hotel as having very small bedrooms set out on either side of a corridor that ran along the middle of the building. Each room had its own window, corresponding with the columns set out on the plan.<sup>292</sup> Schoedder's assessment of the building in the 1980s indicated that it still consisted of its original wooden windows and doors on the ground floor, with steel windows on the second floor which was built later. Schoedder's assessment, which gave the building a C-rating, took into consideration that the building had excellent adaptability, it was unique as forming part of a growing hotel complex, and at the time of the survey, was in a very good condition.<sup>293</sup>

By 1987 however, the complex as a whole had become run-down and undesirable. Recognising the potential that the site had for providing much needed retail and office space in the centre of Windhoek, Kerry McNamara Architects developed a masterplan to revitalise the Kaiserkrone complex, which included the conversion of the Kaiserkrone Hotel into office space. The project was "not intended to be a case of restoration or renovation, but rather a case of recycling the buildings in a highly decorative fashion" with the aim of "achieving meaningful economic use of the buildings within the parameters of the recreation of historical atmosphere."<sup>294</sup> The resulting alterations were

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>291</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-38.

<sup>292</sup> Previous tenant and hotel guest, informal discussion, Windhoek, 7 April 2017.

<sup>293</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-38.

<sup>294</sup> Kerry McNamara Architects, "Kaiserkrone Complex, Post Street Mall, Windhoek: Recycling of a Hotel to a Shopping Centre," brief and design concept document, undated.

designed and constructed between 1987 and 1988, driven by the client's need "to retrieve an asset that had developed into a liability."<sup>295</sup>

As part of the conversion, the individual hotel rooms were demolished and replaced with rentable shops on the ground floor, and office space on the first floor. The first floor currently comprises a large open plan space which has been divided into office space by means of temporary dry-walling. Although most of the internal walls have been demolished, leaving little evidence of the building's previous use, the open plan layout allows for greater adaptability, and is beneficial in terms of being flexible for accommodating contemporary needs. While the interior has been changed almost entirely, the exterior retains much of its original character.



*Figure 33 The Kaiserkrone Hotel building now contains office and retail space (photograph by author, 22 March 2017)*

The refurbishment by Kerry McNamara Architects brought about a renewed interest in the Kaiserkrone complex. Klaus Brandt remembers how the changes made the place desirable: "It was one of a couple of addresses in town that you wanted to be."<sup>296</sup> He fondly remembers many evenings spent

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Brandt, interview.

at the Marco Polo restaurant, which later became The Gourmet restaurant. The refurbishment project also improved the relationship between the Kaiserkrone complex and its immediate context – the design was intended to “extend the existing arcade route through to the areas behind the Gathemann buildings” and to celebrate the façades.<sup>297</sup> Large corporations subsequently developed an interest in the renewed area. The Sanlam Centre was completed in 1990 and consists of 14 floors and three basement levels.<sup>298</sup> The upper floors are staggered away from Independence Avenue to reduce the height at the street edge, but architecturally, this does not contribute positively to the building’s appearance nor to its surrounding environment. The building does however attempt to echo the nearby Levinson Arcade (a semi-covered shopping passage to the north of Post Street Mall) by introducing a public shopping walkway on the ground floor, giving pedestrians more direct access between Fidel Castro Street and Independence Avenue.



Figure 34 The Kronprinz Hotel is dwarfed by the Sanlam building (left) and Mutual Tower (right), (photograph by author, 26 January 2017)

<sup>297</sup> Kerry McNamara Architects, “Kaiserkrone Complex.”

<sup>298</sup> “Sanlam Centre,” <https://www.emporis.com/buildings/171216/sanlam-centre-windhoek-namibia>, accessed 2 April 2017.

Mutual Tower, owned by Old Mutual Life Assurance Company Namibia, and designed by Barnard Mutua Architects, replaced two original Wilhelm Sander buildings in 2009. With 21 storeys, it is the tallest building in Windhoek. Although it was set back from Independence Avenue to create a small courtyard space in front of its main entrance, it invariably dwarfs the Erkrath, Gathemann and Kronprinz buildings that line the street edge. One side of the tower development abuts the southern side of Erf R/222 and forms a hard and impenetrable edge by way of a solid 5-storey wall. The scale of the building mimics that of the adjacent Sanlam Centre.

The construction of the Sanlam Centre and Mutual Tower set a precedent for the development of large-scale high-rise buildings in the CBD. Schoedder's assessment of the Erkrath-Gathemann-Kronprinz buildings had suggested the need for future developments that would respect the scale of the existing buildings.<sup>299</sup> Although the Sanlam Centre was designed in an attempt to stagger it away from the street, the sheer volume and solidity of it do little to complement the existing buildings around it. Despite the continued development around them, the presence of the Erkrath-Gathemann-Kronprinz buildings and the Kaiserkrone buildings ensures the continuity of the streetscape and retains some of the historical character of the inner city.

The loss of the mixed-use component of the Kaiserkrone complex since the closure of The Gourmet restaurant has meant that the need for accessibility to the site has been reduced due to the lack of footfall throughout the day and night. Gates close off access to the courtyard over weekends for security reasons caused by the lack of activity outside of business hours. This approach only worsens the complex's neglected state. According to a previous tenant, the current owners of the property have also increased the rental rates of the units to such an extent, that very few businesses can afford to occupy the spaces.<sup>300</sup> This has led to many of the units being vacated, and to this day, much of the property remains unoccupied. This has served to create an overall impression

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<sup>299</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-43.

<sup>300</sup> Previous tenant.

of isolation and disuse, despite the presence of the pleasant garden courtyard. Hardus Burger expresses the sentiment that “the busy outside seated restaurant is dearly missed.”<sup>301</sup>

## THE KAISERKRONE HALL

*“To remind us of where it all started...  
This was one of the first buildings in the CBD how many years ago.  
We need to keep the way back then look alive.”<sup>302</sup>*

Of all the component of the Kaiserkrone complex, the Kaiserkrone Hall has undergone the most significant changes to its architectural character and function. The hall was designed by Otto Busch in 1909 for Josef Leitner, after the construction of the restaurant and *Kegelbahn*, and before the hotel was built. It was built adjacent to the existing restaurant building, with a shared entrance between them.

Two verandahs were incorporated into the design: one, which opened out onto the road (later called Post Strasse), which was later pedestrianised; and the other on the opposite side of the hall, which opened out onto the courtyard garden. They served as seated areas to the sides of the main hall. The use of this form is important in the consideration of the building’s architectural significance.

Walter Peters describes the verandah as the distinguishing feature of German colonial architecture in Namibia, explaining its importance as a climatic screen for solar radiation and rain, as well as being the most used room in houses of that period. Designed to be accessed from both sides of the building, it would allow for the flow of fresh air into the interior. The creation of a verandah provided direct access to the rooms inside, rendering an internal corridor superfluous, thus saving on internal space. The development of the first verandahs was based purely on functionality, as is apparent in the early *von-Francois Hause* of 1899 where they were constructed of simple brick columns supporting a thin sheet metal roof. While the European verandah was seen

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<sup>301</sup> Burger, email.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

simply as a transitional space between interior and exterior, the verandahs of Namibia filled the role of living and dining space. The verandah of Windhoek was also unique due to the alterations that had to be made so as to avoid damage by termites. The use of bricks and cast iron instead of wood was therefore common. Redecker's verandah for the *Hause des stellvertretenden Truppenkommandeurs* utilises decorated or profiled exposed rafters. These features became definitive of a new vernacular style that developed to suit the harsh Namibian climate.<sup>303</sup>

The verandahs on either side of the hall give the illusion of a much larger space within. Measuring only 9 metres wide and 15 metres long, the interior of the hall is small in comparison with the earlier Grüner Kranz Hall. The placement of the verandahs, with their own roofing, allows for a shorter roof span over the hall, and thus greater freedom in the design of the roof structure. An intimate space was created, with the lowest part of the hall's ceiling at 5.5 metres high.<sup>304</sup>

Schoedder's survey in the 1980s found the building to be in a good condition, although it was neglected at the time. It featured the original natural stone foundations and corrugated iron roof. The original doors and windows had been replaced, and the original floor had been tiled. While the original timber ceiling boards were no longer visible as they had been covered with celotex, the wide span timber roof construction was noted as being significant. The building was found by Schoedder to have excellent adaptability, although this has meant that the building has undergone substantial changes. The hall was given a B-rating with a grade of 60.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Peters, 67-73.

<sup>304</sup> National Archives of Namibia, BWI 7c B.1.b. XI

<sup>305</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 4-39.



floor. The verandahs were enclosed to create additional internal space, although the original colonnades remain visible. The original exposed timber roof structure can still be seen in the office space upstairs, hinting at a once impressive ceiling. The elegant form of the portion of a truss which cuts through into the office area upstairs, seems at odds with the unremarkable, corporate finishes of a contemporary office.



*Figure 36 A new staircase replaced the original stage (photographs by author, 7 April 2017)*



*Figure 37 The original timber roof structure is visible in the suspended first floor office space which replaced the original double volume (photographs by author, 7 April 2017)*

The substantial changes to the hall formed part of the revitalisation project of the Kaiserkrone by Kerry McNamara Architects in 1987. In their assessment of the existing buildings on the site at the time, the architects felt that the Kaiserkrone Hall was the only building that showed some heritage merit, noting its roof structure and the existing light fitting of the cinema projector as being of architectural interest. It was felt that “the original cinema building was only important because it was one of the few remaining examples of buildings erected in the 1920s.”<sup>306</sup> It would seem that the age of the hall was not fully

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<sup>306</sup>Kerry McNamara Architects, “Kaiserkrone Complex.”

appreciated or researched at the time, considering that it was actually built in 1909.

Architect Sue Gay explains that she took over the design development and construction detailing of the project from another architect who had completed the preliminary design concept.<sup>307</sup> Construction decisions and detailing had to be made within a very tight programme. The architects worked within the constraints of the existing building footprint, adding new elements only “when deemed absolutely necessary.” Gay writes that the buildings were in such a poor state that “it felt more like the saving and revitalising of an old bag lady, rather than the honouring of an example of noteworthy Namibian architecture.”<sup>308</sup>

In response to my critical query regarding the manner in which the Kaiserkrone Hall was divided into two partitioned floors, Gay wrote, “This is never an easy choice or process to contemplate or undertake. To have to take a space that has been conceived of, designed and detailed in its wholeness and then try to re-purpose it for occupation by smaller, totally different functions – potentially a recipe for a nightmare. This is made even more difficult when financial constraints come into play and skew the *raison d’être* – those influences of investment over income generated can cause complete havoc for design and architecturally appropriate solutions.”<sup>309</sup>

As part of the adaptation of the verandah spaces for retail area, the original curved corner-section on the corner of Post Street Mall and Werner List Street, was removed and replaced by perpendicular walls, also altering Otto Busch’s original design intent. However, this change has created a more defined entrance to the interior (currently occupied by an optometry practice) on the building’s most prominent corner. Combined with the pedestrianisation of Post Street, this change had the potential to create a more public-oriented building.

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<sup>307</sup> Sue Gay, former partner, Kerry McNamara Architects, email response to questionnaire, 24 October 2017.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

The internal subdivision of the hall does not contribute to this, however. The once lofty internal space has been reduced to a series of small dark spaces. In its present state and use, the building has lost much of its original character and design integrity.



*Figure 38 Corner of Kaiserkrone Hall on Post Street before it was pedestrianised (National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder Collection)*



*Figure 39 Front facade of Kaiserkrone complex on Post Street before it was pedestrianised (National Archives of Namibia: Edda Schoedder Collection)*

Kerry McNamara Architects described their intention for the project (which came about on the cusp of Namibia's Independence) as an attempt to "tap into the prevalent mood of historic nostalgia that had arisen at that time, and which reflected the prevailing mood of a society feeling threatened by destabilising change."<sup>310</sup> This broad statement for "a society" reveals some of the difficulty that arises when certain values are celebrated, and others ignored. As the chapters on post-colonial cities and German colonialism in Namibia have attempted to portray, the concept of a single society has to be replaced by one that reflects the pluralism of the post-colonial city. This design statement refers to a mood of nostalgia – but whose mood? And who in society felt threatened by change, while so many others desperately hoped for it? These questions are not intended to slate the architects' intentions, but this type of critical questioning is essential to understanding some of the issues that arise when one group or entity asserts the existence of certain emotions (which remain valid and true as they are the emotions experienced by some), and fails to acknowledge the emotions of others (which may not be understood, but remain true nonetheless).

The manner in which an architect deals with this challenging dichotomy is critical in such an intervention. Kerry McNamara Architects' brief was thus a difficult one, for which they had to strike a careful balance between creating a renewed space which was appropriate for its time; and which retained the old and familiar. The decision to sub-divide the interior of the hall in order to meet this need, must also be considered in terms of its contribution to the whole. The Kaiserkrone Hall is one part of a group of historical buildings. Sue Gay notes the importance of these changes in terms of what they contributed to Windhoek's broader architectural fabric.<sup>311</sup> The revitalisation of the Kaiserkrone was a project to bring life back into the Kaiserkrone complex, which it succeeded in doing. The integrity of the original Kaiserkrone Hall was sacrificed for this purpose. This sacrifice will have been futile if the Kaiserkrone complex is no longer used or accessible.

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<sup>310</sup> Kerry McNamara Architects, "Kaiserkrone Complex."

<sup>311</sup> Gay, email.

## PROTECTION OF THE HALL

The hall was never proclaimed as a National Monument under the *National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1969*, nor has it been listed as a Listed Building on the Namibian Heritage Register under the *National Heritage Act No. 27 of 2004*.<sup>312</sup> The hall; its surrounding buildings including the original restaurant building; what remains of the *Kegelbahn*; and the hotel building, are therefore not protected by Namibia's heritage legislation. No permit is required by law from the National Heritage Council for any demolitions or alterations to the property.

Despite the lack of legislative protection available to the building, its preservation as a whole entity is due largely to the sensitivity of Kerry McNamara Architects. Although they did not have much knowledge of the history or relevance of the site at the time, they worked actively "within the constraints and the dynamics of the building footprint" in an attempt to respect the "sizes, shapes and nature of the existing building."<sup>313</sup> This illustrates the necessity for the involvement of qualified architectural professionals in heritage-related projects in order to ensure that the design decisions made with respect to a historical building are based on a grounded knowledge of the effect these would have on the spaces and character of the building. A listed building is protected in this manner by the National Heritage Act, which stipulates that the National Heritage Council may require an applicant to "obtain from a person with appropriate professional qualifications or experience, at the applicant's expense, a statement as to the impact the proposed works and activities may have on the place or object to which the application relates and the risk of damage to the place or object."<sup>314</sup>

However, the building is not listed, and thus there was no requirement for such a statement from the architects. Gay does not recall receiving any input or requirements for the project from the National Heritage Council (then the

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<sup>312</sup> National Heritage Council, "NHC List of Declared Sites."

<sup>313</sup> Gay, email.

<sup>314</sup> *Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia*, National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. V, Section 51:3.

National Monuments Council) either. The time constraints of the project also meant that very little time was available to the project team to research the building's heritage context before work commenced on site. Gay was not familiar with Schoedder's survey of historical buildings at the time of the project.<sup>315</sup> Thirty years on, this scenario is still true for many projects in Windhoek.

## THE FUTURE OF THE HALL

*"As long as the CBD develops positively we will have a future and history to show."<sup>316</sup>*

The Kaiserkrone complex had to be resuscitated in 1987 after it had become a neglected and undesirable place in the CBD of Windhoek. It was renewed again by Kerry McNamara Architects, who renovated the restaurant space and incorporated new offices into the disused space. Thirty years later, the complex is once again becoming an isolated and abandoned space after losing the variety of uses it once accommodated. The closing of The Gourmet restaurant has had a profound influence on the use of the site, as has the use of the Kaiserkrone Hotel as office space. Without a rich layering of different uses, the property is at great risk of losing its significance within the central business district. Although the Kaiserkrone buildings have shown that they are physically capable of adapting to changes of use - a quality that is essential to keeping historical buildings alive in their contemporary settings - the change of use in this case has had a negative impact on the significance of the site.

The fine texture of built and outdoor courtyard space created through the gradual evolution of the Kaiserkrone complex over the last century is unique in the fast developing centre of Windhoek. The adaptability shown by these buildings gives them the potential for future development that can save them from demolition. Yet the alterations made to the hall have erased the original intent of Otto Busch through the destruction of the original high-ceilinged

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<sup>315</sup> Gay, email.

<sup>316</sup> Burger, email.

double volume of the hall. Given Edda Schoedder's B-rating of the building's heritage significance, and its rarity as one of the last remaining wide-span timber-roof structure public halls of the period, these alterations are less sensitive than one might think. It is perhaps not only the use of the building, but its character, that brings it to life.

The nuances of character and simple aesthetics are challenging though. On the one hand, the changes to the Kaiserkrone, particularly the sensitive aesthetic changes to the exterior, have contributed to the creation of a tranquil complex in which "you tend to forget you are in the concrete jungle."<sup>317</sup> On the other hand, the internal modernisation of the buildings means that they contain offices that evoke "the feeling of not really belonging to any certain era anymore."<sup>318</sup> Hardus Burger thinks that the "outside look" of the building should be retained, although he added that there is not much else left to protect.<sup>319</sup> So little of the Kaiserkrone Hall remains, that it is barely recognisable as a hall. While its façade may give the illusion of nostalgia - an aesthetic sense of a bygone era - it hides a building that has had everything else removed from it. Considering that memory relies so heavily on material prompts, perhaps the loss of the hall itself can be attributed in part to the wavering interest in the Kaiserkrone complex. Simultaneously, the relationship between the experience of place and memory (both very personal, and both always authentic) suggests that the restoration of mixed-use functions on the property could renew this interest.

## **TURNHALLE**

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Of the three halls studied, the Turnhalle is the most famous in Windhoek, due to its historical association with events that led to the establishment of Independence in Namibia. It was restored after a devastating fire in 2007,

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

which destroyed most of the original fabric of the hall. This prompted a study of its perceived significance as a heritage resource.

## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The Turnhalle building is situated on Erf 99, on a prominent street corner in the central business district of Windhoek, just on the edge of the residential *Villenviertel* (villa quarter) on Schanzenhügel designed by Otto Busch. The site is bounded by Bahnhof Street on the north, Robert Mugabe Street on the east and the imposing Ministry of Finance property to the south. Before Bahnhof Street was widened to accommodate increasing traffic in the city centre, the Turnhalle was set back from the street. Today it abuts the street edge, resulting in a significant change in how pedestrians experience the Turnhalle as well as the manner in which the building is approached. Its position, almost at the foot of Schanzenhügel, is significant in that it marks the edge of Otto Busch's historic *Villenviertel* where it meets the business district, and thus can be considered to physically form a part of that historical environment. This makes it the largest collection or grouping of Otto Busch buildings in the city.



Figure 40 The Turnhalle is situated on a prominent street corner on the edge of the CDB (photograph by author, 26 January 2017)

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), the “*Turnvater*” (Father of Gymnastics) thrilled the Berlin youth with his new kind of gymnastics, which he put into service in the national revival for the fight against the rule of Napoleon over Prussia. In 1811 he opened the first gym space in the Hasenheide in Berlin. Between 1819 and 1842 the practice of public gymnastics was forbidden. It was limited to the confines of a gym and it was during this time that a variety of equipment exercises was developed. After the suspension of the ban, many gymnastics clubs were founded in Germany. In South West Africa, Ortloff founded the first gymnastics club in Swakopmund in 1898 during the construction of the *Mole* (harbour). In 1905, the foundation stone for a gym was laid in the town, but construction was never carried out. In 1914, an architectural competition was advertised, which the harbour technician Meyer won, but the outbreak of the First World War prevented its execution.<sup>320</sup>

The *Turnverein Windhuk* (gymnastics club of Windhoek) was founded on 15 February 1900, and became a legal entity on 4 May 1905, as stated in the book of statutes for the *Turnverein Windhuk*, which was published in 1905.<sup>321</sup>

Walter Peters explains that a building site was acquired in 1905 for the *Turnverein*. It was registered in the *Grundbuch* to the *Turnverein Windhuk* on 21 July 1906.<sup>322</sup> Otto Busch was a *Turnbruder* (member of the *Turnverein*) and designed the 23 x 14 metre gymnastics hall in 1908. The site chosen for the hall was located in the vicinity of several of Busch’s residential villas on Schanzenhügel. After sufficient funds were raised through a *Turnhallenbau-Lotterie* (gym-building lottery), the foundation stone was laid on 6 March 1909.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Peters, 185.

<sup>321</sup> Office of the Registrar of Deeds, Ministry of Land Reform, *Turnverein Windhoek, Satzungen des Turnvereins Windhuk in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 1905.

<sup>322</sup> Office of the Registrar of Deeds, Ministry of Land Reform, *Grundbuch Windhoek Town, Volume IV, Folio 104*.

<sup>323</sup> Peters, 185.

In December of the same year, the finished building was handed over. The *Windhuker Nachrichten* commented that “the gym is the most beautiful building in the northern part of the city.”<sup>324</sup> The gym members were also very proud of their building, and at the request of the German committee for gymnastics, the *Turnverein Windhuk* sent out plans and photographs of its gymnasium for the exhibition of the 1911 international hygiene exhibition in Dresden.<sup>325</sup>



Figure 41 The Turnhalle in 1909 (image source: Restorica)

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<sup>324</sup> *Windhuker Nachrichten*, 1 December 1909, in Peters, 186.

<sup>325</sup> Peters, 186.



Figure 42 Members of the Turnverein, Schanzenhugel in the background (National Archives of Namibia: Photo 05870)

At the time of the exhibition it was already clear that an extension to the building was desired, but its integration with the façade was important in conveying a sense of the desired *Deutschtum* for a building of its stature. For this reason, both Otto Busch and the architect Wilhelm Sander were requested by the association to present proposals for the new extension. The Busch scheme was accepted. On 7 December 1912 the topping ceremony was celebrated, and at the beginning of 1913 the building was used for the first time.<sup>326</sup> The extension contained cloak rooms, a meeting room and office space for the *Turnverein*.

During the First World War, the *Turnverein* managed to avoid having the building confiscated by the occupying forces of the Union of South Africa, by offering it for rent as a club or gathering space for the troops. On 1 January 1920 the *Turnverein* took back their space to continue the gymnastics club. The Second World War saw the hall being used again by army troops.<sup>327</sup> In

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Günther Komnick Studio, "First Things First," in *Turnhalle*, booklet (Cape Town/Windhoek: Günther Komnick Studio, undated), 4-5.

1948 the Turnhalle became state property of the Union of South Africa, transferred to South Africa on 30 April 1948.<sup>328</sup>

By the 1970s, internal protest and possible sanctions on the apartheid government forced it to instigate a process towards South West Africa's independence. This process was widely contested due to South Africa's continued intention to retain a level of control of the country.<sup>329</sup> Nonetheless, in 1975 it was decided that the Turnhalle would be the venue for the Constitutional Conference to decide the future of South West Africa. From July 1975, the building underwent six weeks of renovations and refurbishments to be ready for the start of the conference on 1 September 1975.<sup>330</sup>



Figure 43 Image of the interior of the hall during the Turnhalle Conference in 1976 (image source: Gunther Komnick Studio)

The declaration of intent of the Turnhalle Conference describes the delegates as “the true and authentic Representatives of the inhabitants of South West Africa.” They stated that in the exercise of their “right to self-determination and independence” that they were “voluntarily gathered in this Conference in order to discuss the Constitutional future of South West Africa.”<sup>331</sup> It was also written that the delegates were “resolved to exert [themselves] towards the

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<sup>328</sup> Office of the Registrar of Deeds, Ministry of Land Reform, Register of Windhoek Erven, Book 1, Folio 99.

<sup>329</sup> Wallace, 286

<sup>330</sup> Turnhalle Conference, in *Turnhalle* booklet, 9.

<sup>331</sup> “Declaration of Intent, 1976,” in *Turnhalle* booklet, 2-3.

promotion of and deference towards human rights and fundamental freedoms of all without discrimination merely on the basis of race, colour or creed.”<sup>332</sup>

Subsequently, on 18 August 1976, the Constitutional Committee issued the statement that the date for Independence for South West Africa would be 31 December 1978.<sup>333</sup> SWAPO opposed the Turnhalle process, and Independence was not achieved until 1990. However, the Turnhalle Conference is still seen by many as having initiated the process towards Independence.

Post-Independence, the building was occupied by government ministries, including the Ministry of Information, who used the property mostly for storage. It would seem that the building was not maintained or refurbished during this time, leading to it requiring substantial renovations later.

In 2003, architect Monica Ochse of MonArch Office Concern was appointed by the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication, to renovate the Turnhalle in preparation for its occupation by the newly formed SADC (Southern African Development Community) Tribunal in 2005. Based on her inspections and photographic records of the property, Ochse proposed the demolition of several dilapidated structures on the edge of the site, which had been used as storage facilities by the previous occupants. She found these to be in a poor state of repair and unsightly against the Turnhalle building.<sup>334</sup>

The budget for the renovations was limited, as was the time to complete the work, with the main intention for the spaces to be usable for the SADC Tribunal. Most of the work involved clearing out the storage spaces and cleaning up.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Turnhalle Conference, in *Turnhalle* booklet, 17.

<sup>334</sup> Monica Ochse files, Monica Ochse, Letter to Ministry of Works, Transport & Communication, 24 April 2003.

<sup>335</sup> Monica Ochse, Interview with Monica Ochse, 27 September 2017, Windhoek.



Figure 44 The fire at the Turnhalle on 18 January 2007 (image source: [http://www.namibia-accommodation.com/news/100\\_years\\_turnhalle](http://www.namibia-accommodation.com/news/100_years_turnhalle))

A fire destroyed the courtroom of the Turnhalle in 2007 before the Tribunal heard its first case.<sup>336</sup> The fire broke out on 18 January 2007, found later to have been caused by an electrical spark in one of the mechanical roof ventilators which caught fire and fell to the floor which was also set alight.<sup>337</sup> The report compiled by Justice M.C.C. Mkandawire on 25 January 2007 stated that the damage to the courtroom (the body of the hall) and interpretation rooms above was extensive. All items within these spaces were destroyed. The library room, reception, security office, toilet and staff kitchen were also damaged. The staff offices and the northern wing of the building suffered the least damage, along with furniture and office equipment that could be saved, and the Tribunal members could be temporarily accommodated in the northern wing.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Denver Isaacs, "Turnhalle gutted, fireman in ICU," *Economic News, The Namibian*, 19 January 2007, <http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=32801&page=archive-read>

<sup>337</sup> Ochse, interview.

<sup>338</sup> Justice M.C.C. Mkandawire, Assessment Report on the SADC Tribunal Fire that Occurred on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2007, attached to letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, 25 January 2007, Ochse files.

An undated letter from the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication to the Secretary of the Tender Board of Namibia, expressed the requirement for an exemption to be made by the Tender Board for the appointment of Decora CC to renovate the Turnhalle after the fire, and cited “Article 11” of the Hosting Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a definitive reason for this need. “Article 11” defines the obligations of the member parties, and states “In the event of any interruption or threatened interruption of any service the Government shall consider the needs of the Tribunal as being of equal importance with similar needs of diplomatic missions in the country, and shall take steps, accordingly, to ensure that the work of the Tribunal is not impeded.”<sup>339</sup> It was therefore “in the national interest for the Government to ... maintain the national prestige accorded to the Republic of Namibia by being chosen as a SADC Tribunal host country by SADC member states.”<sup>340</sup> With the requirement to uphold “national prestige” as well as the costs of repairing the substantial damage to the building, the budget for this second renovation and restoration work was considerably higher than that of the first project.

Following the renovations, the building hosted the SADC Tribunal for a short time only before SADC leaders disbanded the Tribunal in 2011 after it had “held that the Zimbabwean government’s land seizures violated the rule of law.” Nathan asserts that this decision by Southern African governments reveals a political solidarity which takes precedence over a commitment to human rights.<sup>341</sup>

This decision also meant that the function of the Turnhalle building became unclear, resulting in it standing vacant after the SADC members moved out. Recent works on the nearby High Court required the Ministry of Justice to

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<sup>339</sup> Southern African Development Community, Hosting Agreement between the Government of Namibia and the Southern African Development Community, Article 11 (Obligations of the Parties), Section 1 (d), cited in E. Akwaake and S.E. Ndjaba, letter to The Secretary, Tender Board of Namibia, “RE: Application for Exemption in terms of Section 17(1)(C) of the Tender Board of Namibia Act 1996 (Act no. 16 of 1996) for the appointment of Decora CC on a negotiation basis to renovate Turnhalle building accommodating the SADC Tribunal Headquarters,” Ochse files.

<sup>340</sup> Akwaake et al., letter to The Secretary, Tender Board of Namibia, Ochse files.

<sup>341</sup> Laurie Nathan, “The Disbanding of the SADC Tribunal: A Cautionary Tale” in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Volume 35, Number 4, November 2013, 870-892, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/524378>

occupy parts of the building and use the hall again for court hearings. It is unclear what the building will be used for after the Ministry of Justice vacates the building at the end of the High Court construction period.

## **THE TURNHALLE**

Although Busch had earned a reputation as the master villa builder in Windhoek, this project revealed his more diverse skills as an architect, seen in his design of the wide span half-hipped timber roof for the hall, which Peters describes as being the first of its kind to be built in the colony.<sup>342</sup> The Turnhalle, with internal measurements of 14 metres by 23 metres, is actually slightly smaller than the earlier Grüner Kranz Hall, which is 14.74 metres wide and 25.06 metres long (including the stage). While the Grüner Kranz and the smaller Kaiserkrone hall both consist of simple gabled roofs, supported by more ornate exposed roof structures, the Turnhalle roof was designed as a half-hipped roof, which responds to the form of the building's original gable end walls. Unlike the Grüner Kranz and Kaiserkrone halls, which were later additions on partially developed sites, the Turnhalle was constructed on an open piece of land, unattached to any existing structures. Each elevation was thus carefully thought out by Busch as an individual façade. This may explain the choice of roof design in terms of its contribution to each façade. With reference to Otto Busch's nearby villas in particular, Jaco Wasserfall explains how Busch "worked from façades." He speaks of how "the very carefully proportioned façades belie the plan of the building behind."<sup>343</sup> Similarly, Busch created façades on the Turnhalle which do not represent the internal spaces behind them. The north elevation of the Turnhalle is a good example of this "quirkiness," as Wasserfall describes it.<sup>344</sup> The original north façade consists of five bays, each defined by an opening. The main entrance to the hall is clearly demarcated as a bay with a large arched doorway and hipped roof extension, located at one end of the northern façade. A second bay (and oddly not the middle bay) is more decorative and accentuated than the entrance. This bay forms what to onlookers might be construed as a face, with wide

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<sup>342</sup> Peters, 185.

<sup>343</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

gaping mouth and two surprised eyes formed by the windows. These are located below the signage for the building and topped with a highly decorated gable end. Surprisingly, although the bay emanates a sense of importance, as though it marks out a significant room within the building, the undivided interior of the hall reveals that it is purely aesthetic. While this face does not hide any internal divisions or functions, its role is significant in creating a unique façade that avoids symmetry or repetition. It also responds to the nearby Busch villas on Schanzenhügel, each designed with their own quirky aesthetic devices, which at the time would have been clearly visible on their prominent hillside.

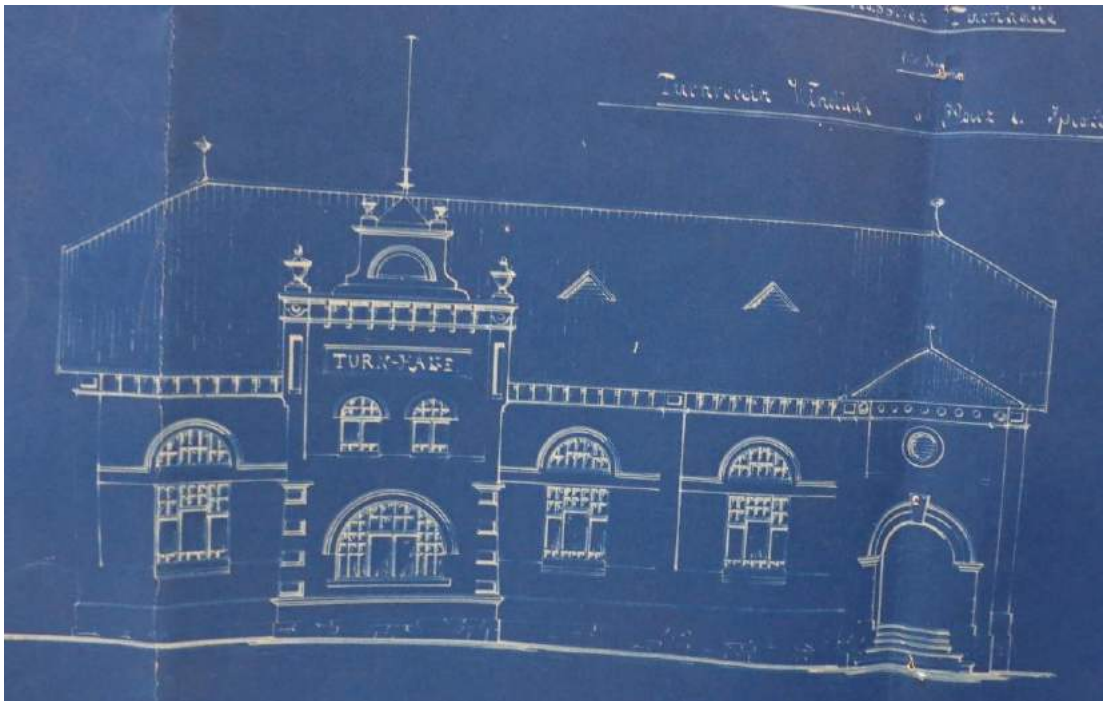


Figure 45 North elevation by Otto Busch in 1908 (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7a Volume VIII)



Figure 46 The "Face" of the North Facade (photograph by author, 29 September 2017)



Figure 47 Inside, it becomes clear that the face is only aesthetic (photograph by author, 29 September 2017)



Figure 48 Interior of the Turnhalle (photograph by author, 29 September 2017)

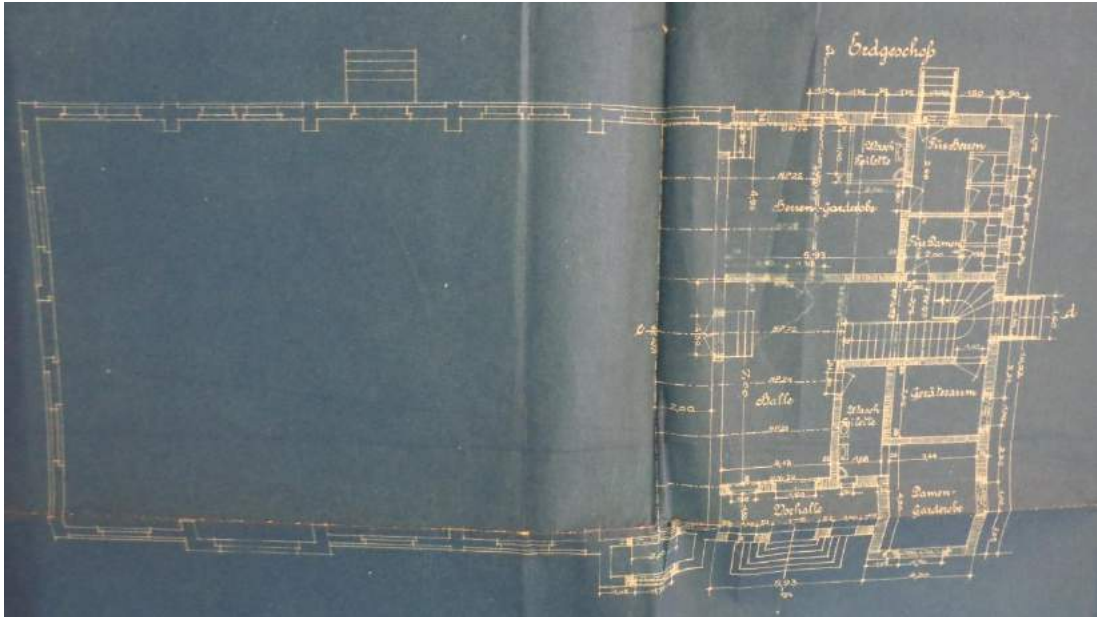


Figure 49 Plan by Otto Busch in 1912 showing the proposed additions (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7f Volume XVII)

The original east elevation, which faced onto the important road that was then known as Berg Strasse, was designed by Busch as a striking gable end wall, defined by the insertion of long narrow windows and openings in the wall, an arrangement reminiscent of the Anhalter Railway Station designed by Schwechten in Berlin.<sup>345</sup> This design is no longer visible, as it was subsequently built onto long after Busch's time, to contain what is now the stage. This addition not only removed a defining feature of the building, it also meant that the space between the road and the building edge was reduced substantially, thus changing the building's relationship with the street edge. This addition also took away from the elegance of the original north façade and the simple half-hipped roof line.

While the structural loading of the three halls is clearly indicated on each hall's plan as piers which correspond with the truss spacing along the length of the hall, this loading is not clearly visible on elevation in the Grüner Kranz Hall or the Kaiserkrone Hall. The Turnhalle on the other hand, reveals the ingenious manner in which Busch achieved the internal height of the hall through the use of these piers to support the ends of the trusses, in combination with a horizontal structural band (visible across the windows along the façade) that tied the curving trusses down. This design resulted in a voluminous space

<sup>345</sup> Peters, 185.

that was defined by a unique and graceful curving roof structure. The roof that Walter Peters refers to as being the first of its kind is not merely the external half-hipped roof visible on the exterior. It is the innovative timber roof structure that is found within.<sup>346</sup>

Images dating back to the Turnhalle Conference show the original curved roof structure as it was designed by Busch. The present-day roof reveals that the design was altered when the roof was reconstructed after the 2007 fire. The curved structural beams have vanished, replaced by more angular trusses that bear a close resemblance to the Grüner Kranz roof structure. Ferdinand Diener notes that Ochse visited Grüner Kranz to understand the trusses in the hall.<sup>347</sup> While the new trusses in the Turnhalle were beautifully crafted, and they imbue the hall with a sense of grace and loftiness, they are not a true reconstruction of the original design intended for the Turnhalle. However, the decision to use the Grüner Kranz hall as a precedent for informing the new design was a sensitive approach that allowed the architect to come up with a solution based on very little information in the time available. This is a useful example of the nuances of reconstruction: something is always lost of the original, but it has the potential to present new opportunities for the building as well.

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ferdinand Diener, informal conversation.

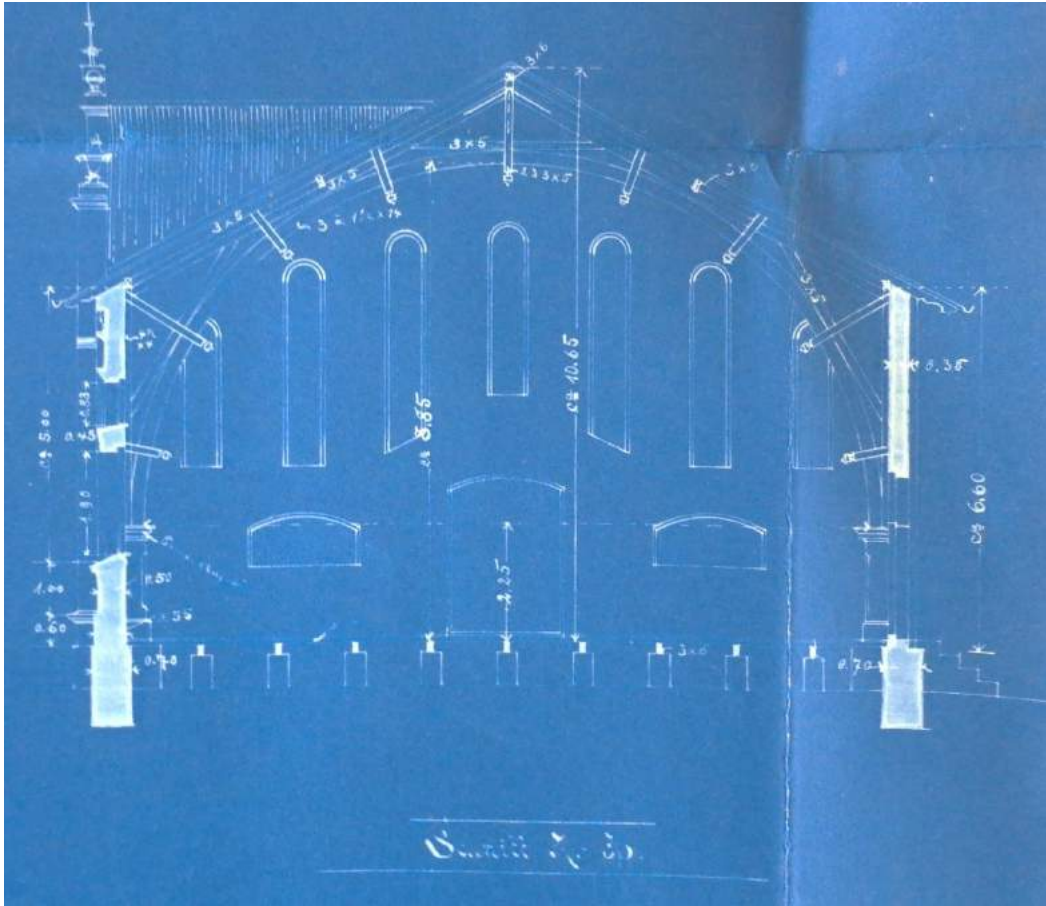


Figure 50 Section drawing by Otto Busch in 1908 showing the roof structure (National Archives of Namibia: BWi 7a Volume VIII)

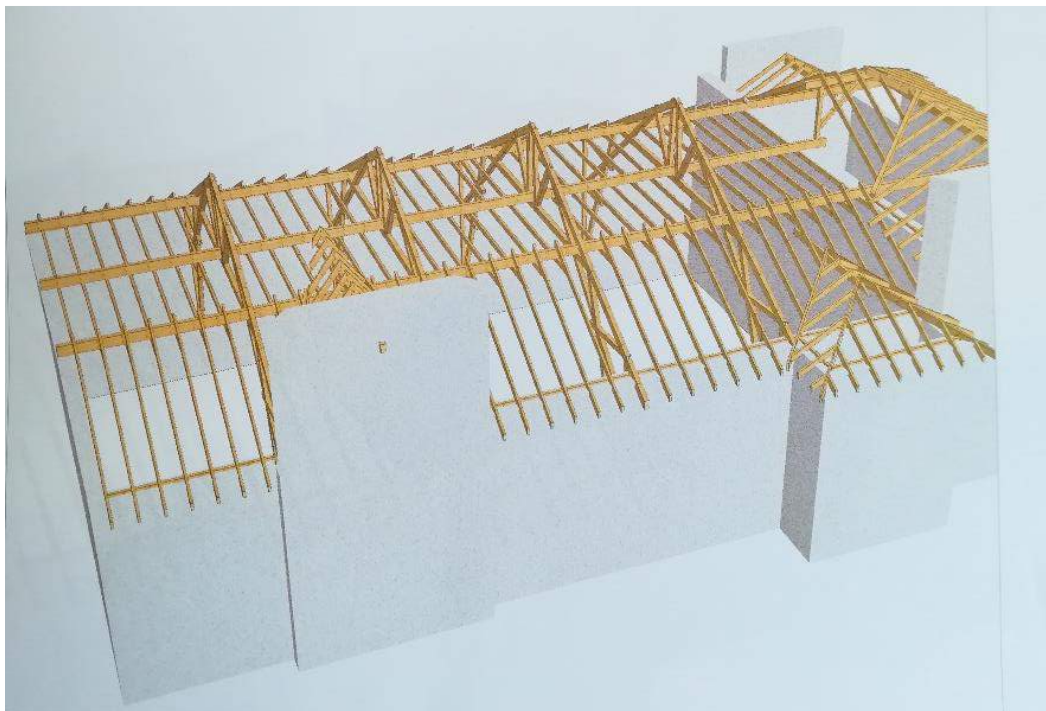


Figure 51 Sketch model of the proposed new timber structure which was used as part of the reconstruction process after the fire (Osche files)

Busch's plan for the 1912 to 1913 extension to the building was designed so that the new construction would not give the impression of being an addition that had been patched onto the existing hall. Busch proposed an extension that uses the entrance porch of the existing hall as the starting point, which was likely the trump card in his winning plan. Walter Peters' criticism of the addition is that it has little of the bold geometric simplicity of the original building.<sup>348</sup> Although the 1913 addition creates a symmetry of the north facade which lacks the "quirkiness" of the earlier asymmetrical façade, it was thoughtfully incorporated into the original design. Busch also designed the new addition to be distinctly different to the original, through the use of alternative window types and spacing as well as a highly decorative gable end above the new entrance. This approach was successful in illustrating the building's development.



Figure 52 Busch's 1912 drawing of the proposed new north elevation (National Archives of Namibia: BWI 7f Volume XVII)

Schoedder's evaluation of the building in 1982 noted that the building was in a good condition, with natural stone foundations and plastered walls. At the time of the evaluation, the original ceiling, timber roof structure and corrugated iron roof sheeting would have still been in existence. Original, as well as new, timber windows and doors were noted. The changes to the interiors for accommodating the national assembly were noted as being architecturally significant. The survey rated the building highly in terms of its architectural and historical significance, with an overall rating of A, a grade of 91. Its

<sup>348</sup> Peters, 186.

excellent condition at the time, as well as its compatibility and adaptability for government use were noted as important factors which contributed to its high rating as an historical building.<sup>349</sup>

The building's highest ratings on the survey sheet were attributed to its historical significance due to its association with an historic event – the first meeting of the National Assembly, or the Turnhalle Conference.<sup>350</sup> As already discussed, the Turnhalle played a significant role in the decisions made leading up to Independence. While the conference did result in the abolition in 1977 of many apartheid policies, such as pass laws, forced removals and the prohibition of inter-racial relationships, it preserved South Africa's control within government, which was proposed as a three-tier system.<sup>351</sup> Despite the controversy behind the South African government's agenda, the conference brought Namibian leaders together under one roof - the curved roof designed by Otto Busch in a very different era.

An evaluation of the architectural significance of the building today would reveal several differences between what Schoedder noted and what can be observed today. The building is still mostly in a good condition, with some exterior maintenance required. The original natural stone foundations and brick walls have survived, although most of the walls were replastered after the fire. None of the original timber work survived. The floors, windows and doors, and the entire roof structure of the hall had to be replaced.

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<sup>349</sup> National Archives of Namibia: KWi 15-19

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Wallace, 287.

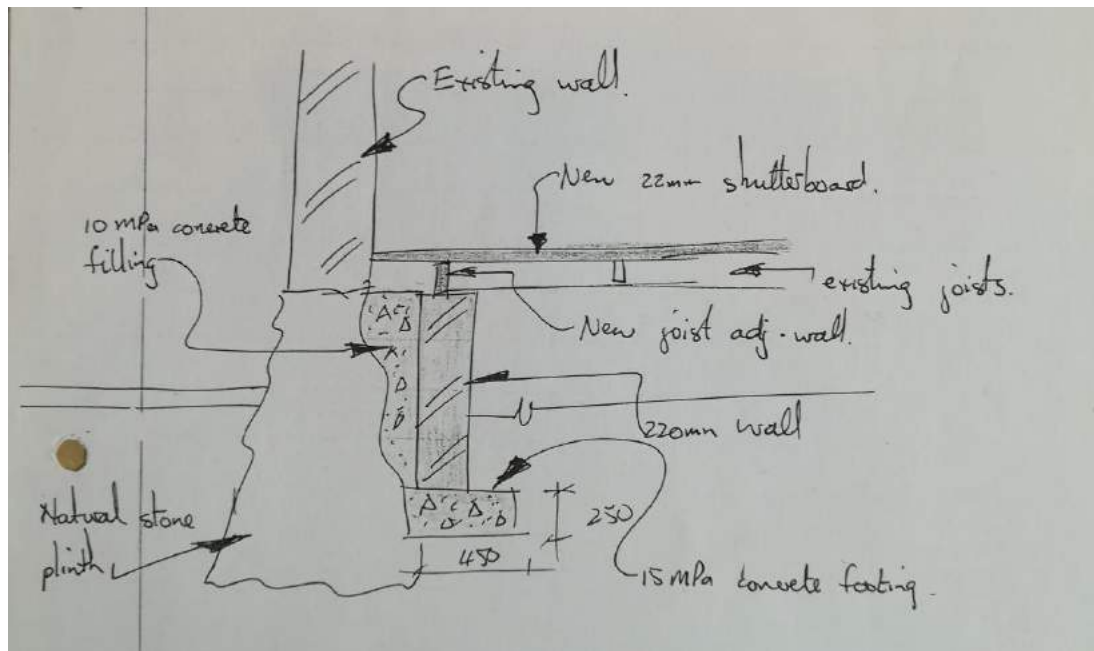


Figure 53 Detail sketch by Monica Ochse of floor restoration to minimise impact on the outer shell/facade (Ochse files)

Ochse believes that the removal of the old, derelict outbuildings around the Turnhalle was one of the changes that added the most value to the building.<sup>352</sup> This can be attributed to the fact that it opened up the space around the building, and served the dual-purpose of providing parking for users of the building. The parking lot itself does not contribute to the aesthetics of the building, but it does give it a sense of space, reminiscent of its early beginnings before buildings developed tightly around it.

The interior of the hall was pared down to a very neutral scheme, with pale walls and grey carpeting. No evidence of the lavish decoration of the Turnhalle Conference period can be found. This simplification of the hall also took away the earlier curved stage opening, which corresponded to the original curved roof structure. However, considering that the stage was not an original feature of the building, and that the roof structure is no longer curved, this alteration does not diminish the architectural significance of the building.

The architectural significance of the hall cannot rely on observation alone. Tjitjo speaks of the importance of the spirit of a building. He exclaims that he has always had mixed feelings about the Turnhalle. He says “Whenever there

<sup>352</sup> Ochse, interview.

comes a big public or civil building, I think something is always lost...it becomes a little bit more rational, stripped of all the...attention...to detailing.” This illustrated by the minimalist interior of the renovated hall and the lack of ornamentation. The excellent quality of the new roof construction makes up for this. Tjitjo believes however that the changes to the Turnhalle over time have “also robbed it of some of its original...spirit.”<sup>353</sup> The assessment of architectural significance can also be subjective – the differing views of three architects indicates this. Tjitjo, for example, does not feel that the Turnhalle is a particularly outstanding building. He substantiates this by explaining that Busch’s villas “exude a whole lot more spirit than the Turnhalle.”<sup>354</sup> Ochse on the other hand is passionate about the building and aimed only to “do the building proud.”<sup>355</sup> Jaco Wasserfall suggests that the north façade is the only remaining façade of architectural significance. It is right on the street edge, which means it has no public interface. Wasserfall explains that for these reasons, he designed the Auditor General’s Office across from the Turnhalle to respond to the north façade by “acknowledging its presence” and setting the Auditor General’s Office as far back from the Turnhalle as possible.<sup>356</sup>

The building’s position on the street edge contributes to the manner in which it is perceived by pedestrians. Wasserfall believes that the 1970s additions, which obscured the original eastern façade have clumsy proportions that emphasise the building’s uncomfortable relationship with the street.<sup>357</sup> This observation by Wasserfall indicates a strong link between the physicality of the building and its social value.

The “face” that can be observed on the north façade of the building can be viewed from vastly differing perspectives. On the one hand, it reveals Busch’s playful manipulation of his façades, and artistically, this contributes to the value of the building. In contrast, although the face could be seen as softening the façade by bringing a human element into the building, by many, this face will continue to represent the face of the oppressor. The Turnhalle was built during

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<sup>353</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Ochse, interview.

<sup>356</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

a period which saw a boom in economic prosperity for the victorious Germans, whose brutal genocidal actions had only recently crushed resistance in the Namibian War. The Turnhalle was built for one of many sports clubs that were created with the purpose of instilling a strong sense of Germanness or *Deutschtum*, which relied on the “purity and superiority of the white, and specifically the German, race.”<sup>358</sup> In this context, only empathy can help to understand the complex emotions that such a building can evoke. It becomes clearer now why Steinmetz and Obert both refer to how Windhoek continues to be “visibly haunted by its colonial past.”<sup>359</sup>

How does one reconcile the trauma of the past with the material objects and places that act as a constant reminder of it? Tjitjo attempts to answer this, with reference to the Turnhalle as one of these reminders. Tjitjo speaks of his perception of German colonialism as a young Herero man, which he feels is probably different to that of other Hereros. He speaks of how Hereros have “actually co-opted a lot of German symbols, symbolism, etc, which makes it easier to tolerate.” He explains that the adoption of German colonial dress by the Hereros was “a reinvention, in a way, of a new identity...and it was a celebration in a way, of the resistance against German colonialism.” He says that that “taints his worldview and that sets [my] attitude towards German colonial architecture, as opposed to German colonialism.” He says that he is able to separate the two, the one being the evidence or artefacts of the time; and the other being an era which has meaning to him and his people.<sup>360</sup>

This approach indicates the possibility of assessing the Turnhalle from multiple viewpoints. Tjitjo suggests that it can be valued architecturally, as an artefact; as well as symbolically, in terms of the various meanings it can project.

## **PROTECTION OF THE HALL**

The Turnhalle was never proclaimed a National Monument under the *National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1969*, nor has it been listed as a Listed Building on the Namibian Heritage Register under the *National Heritage Act No. 27 of*

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<sup>358</sup> Wallace, 194.

<sup>359</sup> George Steinmetz, “Harrored Landscapes,” 224; Julia C. Obert, “Architectural Space in Windhoek,” 1.

<sup>360</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

2004.<sup>361</sup> The Turnhalle is therefore not protected by Namibia's heritage legislation. No permit is required by law from the National Heritage Council for any demolitions or alterations to the property. Monica Ochse was a member of the NIA Heritage Committee at the time of the Turnhalle renovations, and was thus aware of the considerations pertaining to heritage buildings. Ochse explains that the Heritage Committee also stipulated that they could not change the outside of the Turnhalle, except for any cleaning and paintwork required.<sup>362</sup> This type of restriction is only partially helpful in the preservation of a historical building. While it ensures the protection of the façade of the building, it does little in the way of guiding changes to the interior. Which, as can be seen in the Kaiserkrone hall, can have disastrous effects on the way the building is used, and therefore perceived.

Ochse comments that the front façade of the building should continue to be protected, but the rest of the building can be upgraded or changed – this was the approach taken when she worked on the two Turnhalle projects.<sup>363</sup> This approach fails to acknowledge the impressive history of the Turnhalle, which was primarily used as a place of assembly: for German gymnasts within the context of building up the *Deutschtum* of the colony; for leaders of all Namibian groups to meet and decide on Namibia's path to Independence; and for SADC members to convene and judge human rights issues in Southern Africa. Each of these "meetings" would have lasting consequences for Namibians, and they all took place within the hall of the Turnhalle building. The conservation of the significance of the Turnhalle therefore relies more on the preservation of its hall – its voluminous interior – more than anything else.

## **THE FUTURE OF THE HALL**

The physical renovation and reconstruction of the building may have preserved its materiality, which allowed it to be displayed proudly as a symbol of Namibia's achievements, such as reaching Independence; and of Namibia's

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<sup>361</sup> National Heritage Council, "NHC List of Declared Sites."

<sup>362</sup> Ochse, interview.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

prestige as the SADC Tribunal host. This does not differ all that much from the proud exhibition of the Turnhalle as a symbol of *Deutschtum* in 1911.

However, the well preserved exterior has not prevented the building from becoming reminiscent of a “white elephant” which has remained partially empty since the suspension of the SADC Tribunal, despite its acclaimed history of hosting some of Namibia’s most significant assemblies of people.

Common knowledge of the Turnhalle’s historic roles, as well as simply being known as “the building that burnt down” help to maintain its perceived significance in the eyes of those who come across it.<sup>364</sup> However, if the Ministry of Justice vacates the Turnhalle, the building is at risk of remaining empty while the government decides its fate, which could take years. The longer the building stands empty or unused, the less likely it will be maintained, which, as Ochse comments, is one of the reasons many Namibian buildings “suddenly go down.” She advises that the key is to not let the building reach a state of disrepair again, such as it was in 2003 when she first started work on the Turnhalle.<sup>365</sup>

Wasserfall feels that the building’s significance lies not only in its architectural style (as being representative of the Wilhelmine style) and its historical significance, but also in its contribution to what he refers to as the heritage or cultural precinct of Windhoek. This strip along Robert Mugabe Avenue includes the National Theatre of Namibia, the National Art Gallery of Namibia, the Windhoek Museum, and the Franco Namibian Cultural Centre. He proposes an alternative use for the empty Turnhalle by integrating the Turnhalle into this precinct more by changing its use to much needed gallery space for example.<sup>366</sup> As seen with the Grüner Kranz complex, finding new ways of using colonial spaces may be the solution. This possibility also ties into what Tjitjo refers to as “co-opting” the space – making new meanings for the building. The creativity of the Namibian community could transform the space into a relevant and inclusive place. Wasserfall believes that adaptive

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

reuse of the building in this manner, in a way that considers its physical, cultural and social context, is the Turnhalle's "best chance of survival."<sup>367</sup>

The longer the Turnhalle remains inactive in the public eye, the sooner memory of its use will fade. The significance of memory and the role it plays in heritage cannot be overemphasised. "Memory ... converts public events into idiosyncratic personal experiences."<sup>368</sup> This is what has ensured the Turnhalle's continued preservation until now: a rich layering of events that have bestowed a series of different, changing and contradictory meanings on the hall.

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<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 195.

# CHAPTER 5\_ INTERPRETATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

## ASSEMBLING THE FINDINGS

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The three cases – Grüner Kranz, Kaiserkrone and Turnhalle – were selected initially because of their building typology, all three being halls with wide-span timber roof structures designed by Otto Busch during the German colonial era. They were also chosen because of the vastly different ways in which they are being used and perceived today, with the intention of assessing why this is so, and how this affects their significance as heritage.

The Grüner Kranz Hall was selected because of its significance to one family – its sentimental value. Its rare decorative features are also significant. The Kaiserkrone Hall was discussed primarily because of its contribution to the historical precinct in the Windhoek CBD, and it is the building that has undergone the most change since it was first built. The Turnhalle was chosen because of its known historical significance and because it demonstrates a rare example of the restoration (and partial reconstruction) of a German colonial building in Windhoek.

All three cases were examined by considering their corresponding characteristics, the factors which may influence their significance, namely: their physical context; their historical background; the design and architectural merits of each hall which included an analysis of Schoedder's assessment of each hall; the protection available to each hall; and considerations for their future as heritage.

### PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The Grüner Kranz Hall is situated in an area zoned for light-industry where very few buildings of historical or architectural significance remain. The hall itself contributes to the continuity of the Grüner Kranz complex as a hotel complex, where the presence of the original hotel and restaurant building, the *Kegelbahn*, and *Logierhaus* structures create a micro-environment – a unique

precinct that is evocative of the past. The use of the buildings as office and commercial space correlates well with the surroundings.

The Kaiserkrone Hall is on one of Windhoek's oldest city blocks which it shares with the Kronprinz Hotel, the Erkrath Building and the two Gathemann buildings. The Kronprinz-Erkrath-Gathemann façades have been found to contribute to the continuation of the streetscape, and along with the Kaiserkrone complex, they form one of the last remaining pockets of buildings among the mostly new developments in the city centre.<sup>369</sup> The finer scale of these older buildings adds an important layer or texture to the streetscape. Burger notes how important these pockets are in having the capability to "remind us of where it all started."<sup>370</sup> This remark is poignant because it reiterates the important role that the physical environment plays in terms of triggering memory.

The Turnhalle is prominently positioned on a busy street corner: yet, whilst it commands attention due to its unique façade, its position on the edge of the street (which is a result of the widening of the street over the years) creates an awkward relationship between pedestrians and the building, as there is no longer a threshold, or what Wasserfall calls "breathing space," to enhance the approach to the building.<sup>371</sup> Despite the building's proximity to the historical villa quarter on Schanzenhügel, the Turnhalle seems to have turned away from the Otto Busch villa precinct due to the changes to its eastern façade, which have closed it off on one side to an important street. These changes have detracted from the potential for pedestrians to engage with it.

Schoedder's assessment sheets for the three buildings utilised simplified terminology and notes such as "street corner," "growing hotel complex," or that they were "neglected" to describe the buildings and their relationship with their immediate settings.<sup>372</sup> While a great deal of thought and research went into the compilation of these evaluation sheets, these basic descriptors fail to provide a comprehensive picture of the factors shaping these relationships,

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<sup>369</sup> Brandt, Interview.

<sup>370</sup> Burger, email.

<sup>371</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

<sup>372</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 15-19; 4-39.

nor do they give a clear indication of the circumstances surrounding the buildings at the time the assessments were carried out. At present, these surveys are read as individual studies of single buildings. The case of the Turnhalle illustrates how, without an understanding of context, the city can easily encroach upon a prominent historical building, resulting in the loss of its defining threshold as a landmark – the negative space that accentuates its presence – and the loss of its connection to a precinct. There is therefore a need for the expansion of Schoedder’s survey criteria in order to better assess the buildings within the wider framework of the developing post-colonial city. In so doing, these individual surveys can be used as a tool for more holistic development of both German colonial buildings and the new structures around them. When Wasserfall speaks of the potential for the Turnhalle to form part of Windhoek’s “cultural” precinct, he demonstrates the type of performative role that heritage can play in shaping its own context, which is only possible with a wider understanding of its location.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

These buildings were conceived of and built during a time in Namibia’s history that bears a great deal of pain and emotional trauma. The events of the Namibian War between 1904 and 1908 and the horrors of the genocide that took place during this period cannot be ignored when studying the histories of these buildings. These histories cannot be read in isolation; yet when read together, they are jarring. The descriptions of the three buildings in Chapter 4 have been written as separate narratives to illustrate how easily an assessment of architectural or historical significance can be isolated from the wider issues of pluralism and differing social values. Read alongside the contextual chapters on the politics of heritage, memory and German colonialism, these individual narratives reveal the very dissonant experiences of the past and how it is now remembered. Pierre Nora’s notion of distinguishing between lived history, *Geschichte*, and academic history, *Historie*, illustrates how it is possible to have multiple histories. This plurality can be seen clearly by using the example of the three cases.

The history of the Grüner Kranz Hall recounted here is a very personal one based largely on the recollections of two individuals (a mother and her son) and supplemented with their carefully collated paper records. While their collection of documents and old plans is helpful in tracing the development of the property, it is the memories of Gerda Diener that have the greatest value in their ability to convey truthful personal experiences. Derrida's notion of the "testimony of memory," whereby personal experiences can be seen as a true representation of the significance of a place, conveys the importance of individual memory, particularly in the plural context of the post-colonial city.<sup>373</sup> Certainly, Mrs Diener's memories reveal only one lived history of Grüner Kranz, and so they cannot be considered as being representative of public perception of the place. Yet, the true nature of memory implies that each of these memories is a valid and intimate representation of the significance of the place, which cannot be discounted in an assessment of its historical significance. Each of these memories must therefore be valued as being an authentic component of the building's significance. The tabular layout of brief descriptors and numerical ratings in Schoedder's survey is an excellent comparative tool, but it is unable to convey the nuances of emotion attached to these memories – the recollections of the building's history that signify its importance to someone.

By contrast, the Kaiserkrone complex, which has not been owned by an individual person or family since before 1943, is owned by a large corporate entity. This made the task of finding people with intimate memories of the place particularly difficult. While further research may reveal that more people feel a sense of attachment to the Kaiserkrone hall, the available historical information reveals very little interest in the building itself, other than the fact that it forms part of the Kaiserkrone complex as a whole.

The Turnhalle, in contrast, receives its value from the rich layering of collective memories that characterise its development; as a place of historical relevance to a variety of groups of people. The complexity of the building's significance

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<sup>373</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Ethics, Institutions and the Right to Philosophy*, P.Pericles Trifonas (trans.), (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002); Beverley Butler, "'Taking on Tradition': African Heritage and the Testimony of Memory", in de Jong et al., 32.

arises through the multitudinous values attributed to the space by its various stewards over time: beginning with Germany's nationalist aspirations after the Namibian War under the auspices of the *Turnverein*; continuing through to the era of apartheid administration; the Turnhalle Conference and the achievement of Independence. These events have vastly incongruous meanings for different groups, which means that it is also a contested space.

The assessment of the three buildings' historical backgrounds illustrates the influence that the notion of lived history, and hence, the *use* of these spaces can have on their perceived significance. Left unused, colonial architecture is regarded only with apathy. Used and frequented and lived in, colonial architecture has the power to evoke strong emotions, whether it is the contested nature of its *Deutschtum* as in the Turnhalle, or the love that is clear in the Dieners' care for their Grüner Kranz hall.

## **DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL MERITS**

The Grüner Kranz Hall was found to have the greatest artistic value of the three halls: with its spectacular murals which have been preserved on its internal walls; intricate original roof trusses; and an interior that has remained largely unchanged over the years. But it was given a lower rating in Schoedder's survey of historical buildings, wherein she noted that "due to deteriorated building conditions an A rating was not possible."<sup>374</sup> This reasoning might be viewed as being non-conducive to the original purpose of the historical building survey, which was to contribute to the conservation of historical architecture. The building's original architectural or artistic qualities remain valid despite its state of deterioration. The survey might have served its purpose better by rating the building highly to distinguish it from less exceptional buildings, thereby emphasising its need for protection; and by highlighting the issues that put the building at risk of further deterioration.

At the time of Schoedder's survey, the Kaiserkrone Hall was noted to be in a good condition, albeit in a state of neglect, and was subsequently given a B-rating. The building has since been altered to such an extent, that apart from

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<sup>374</sup> National Archives of Namibia, KWi 19-9.

its exterior, the hall is virtually indistinguishable as one of Otto Busch's original wide-span performance halls. Following a similar rationale that led to Schoedder's reduced rating of the Grüner Kranz Hall, one would expect the significant alterations to the Kaiserkrone Hall – and consequent concealment of its historical features – to detract from its claim to a favourable rating. The fact that the historical features, though hidden, are still present (such as Busch's original timber trusses), calls into question the rationale behind ratings based on the apparent deterioration of a building. It is often possible (although not always) to reverse the negative effects of changes made to an historical building, thus restoring it back to its former state. In such a case, the lowered rating would be unjustified.

When Schoedder's survey was compiled in the 1980s, the Turnhalle had already undergone significant internal renovations for the Turnhalle Conference in 1976, which would have altered the character of the interior to a certain extent. Yet the Turnhalle was given an A-rating in Schoedder's survey. This is attributable to its significance as the historical site of the Turnhalle Conference, which factored into its favourable rating. It therefore seems reasonable to assert that the assessment of these buildings' architectural values cannot be read in isolation of other factors and values.

These architectural values – found in the presence of carefully thought out details, ingenious solutions or quirky details such as Busch's playfully deceptive façades – inform the sense of "spirit" (or that which has been lost) in a building, that Tjitjo speaks of when talking about the Turnhalle, for example.<sup>375</sup> The fragility of this spirit highlights the value of assessing a building in great detail, but also the value of evaluating these architectural elements within their context as a measure of how they continue the "storytelling" that, according to Tjitjo, is possible through architecture.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

## PROTECTIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

None of the three halls have been proclaimed as National Monuments under the old 1969 National Monuments Act, nor have they been listed as Listed Buildings on the Namibian Heritage Register under the current 2004 National Heritage Act.<sup>377</sup> The halls are not protected as Namibia's heritage. No permit is required *by law* for any demolitions or alterations to these buildings. However, buildings that were graded with A-ratings in Schoedder's survey are recorded as "heritage consent buildings" by the City of Windhoek.<sup>378</sup> B-rated buildings are also included in this list, but in practice it is unclear whether those buildings listed by City of Windhoek as "heritage consent buildings" are offered any more protection than other existing buildings, or whether this list serves only the purpose of offering incentives to business owners to retain the buildings – through the use of business rights and increased "bulk" potential. Ferdinand Diener explains how his parents did not wish to have Grüner Kranz proclaimed as a Listed Building precisely because of the very few benefits that this would offer to them. It would also have possibly prevented them from making many of the changes to the Grüner Kranz complex over the years – many of which, in fact, contribute to its continued use and viability as a property.

Notwithstanding this precarious situation, Monica Ochse, the architect appointed for the Turnhalle renovations, also happened to be a member of the NIA Heritage Committee at the time of the Turnhalle project. It is therefore likely that she would have been more attuned to any requirements set out by the National Heritage Council for dealing sensitively with heritage buildings (both listed and unlisted). This ensured that there was communication with the National Heritage Council, which, in a letter to the client (the Ministry of Works, Transport & Communication), wrote "The Council ... took note of the fact that this building is grade A 91 which denotes the highest conservation grading any historical building, other than a national monument, can be afforded ... All such buildings are protected by the National Heritage Act (Act

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<sup>377</sup> National Heritage Council, "NHC List of Declared Sites."

<sup>378</sup> City of Windhoek, "Conservation of Heritage Buildings," November 2002, as provided by NIA by email correspondence, 24 July 2013.

27 of 2004).<sup>379</sup> Attached to this correspondence, was a copy of Schoedder's 1982 assessment of the building. This letter represents an interesting situation where there is a disparity between the National Heritage Council's wish to protect the building and the available procedure through which this can be done: The building is not a Listed Building under the National Heritage Act; and the National Heritage Council has stated elsewhere that it does not have a grading system in place, nor does it make use of the grading system which was compiled by the NIA in 1982.<sup>380</sup> This inherent contradiction between what the Council issues to property owners and what system is actually in place reveals a shortcoming in the heritage protection made available to historical buildings, despite it proving beneficial in this instance. This discrepancy may have come about due to misinformation, or possibly a wider misunderstanding of the legislation, the consequence of which has led to the misguided perception that an A-rated building is automatically protected. This could potentially have disastrous ramifications to heritage.

Other perceptions also influence the future of historic buildings in Namibia. Ferdinand Diener explained that his parents had not wanted to have the Grüner Kranz Hall proclaimed because of their perception of the associated costs of owning a listed building; by way of non-existent government subsidies or tighter regulations to changes to the building. Despite these concerns, the Dieners wished to protect the building because of their own personal attachment to the hall. The owner of the Kaiserkrone had felt that it was an asset that had become a liability, which led to the substantial alterations to it in 1987.

The impartial way in which the Kaiserkrone Hall is perceived is largely a result of the alterations which make it barely recognisable as the original hall – formerly a place of cultural engagement. Although the hall itself is used and rented out, the internal divisions and modernisation mean that the building evokes “the feeling of not really belonging to any certain era anymore.”<sup>381</sup> Combined with the loss of a functioning restaurant in the Kaiserkrone complex

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<sup>379</sup> KM Aribeb, Director National Heritage Council, letter regarding “Turnhalle Building” to Mr Shehaleni Ndjaba, Ministry of Works, Transport & Communication , 6 November 2007, Ochse files.

<sup>380</sup> Erica Ndalikokule, National Heritage Council, email correspondence, 27 June 2016.

<sup>381</sup> Burger, email.

which acted as a social nexus for many years, the hall risks being forgotten as fewer and fewer people frequent the site. To echo the thoughts of Marley Tjitjo, “if the buildings are not used, if they fall into disrepair...then they will definitely disappear.”<sup>382</sup>

## **SOCIO-POLITICAL VALUES**

The discussion of the three cases, read both separately and comparatively, has highlighted some of the contradictory emotions associated with German colonial architecture. Read alongside the history of German colonialism in Namibia, they help to illustrate the plurality that exists in post-colonial Windhoek. The use of Schoedder’s assessments in each case also reveals the importance of “the meanings placed upon them” over and above their tangible attributes.<sup>383</sup>

That said, the relevance of their architectural qualities remains key to the appreciation of these buildings. Tjitjo explains that having an architectural education, which also teaches you the history of architecture, makes a person “a whole lot more receptive than a lay person would be.”<sup>384</sup> This, combined with experience gained from serving on the Heritage Council, has made Tjitjo appreciative of the value of historic architecture and aware of its sensitivities. In contrast he refers to how many of his colleagues at the Heritage Council had pushed for the removal of colonial buildings, wanting instead to “establish [their] own legacy.”<sup>385</sup> This prompted Tjitjo to contemplate it further, leading him to the conclusion “that one should actually preserve it and fight for its preservation no matter what your views are about it.”<sup>386</sup> He surmises that the best way of teaching the history of German colonialism, “for people to really believe that that era of German colonialism happened in this country is when

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<sup>382</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

<sup>383</sup> Graham et al, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy* (London: Arnold, 2000); Graham, “Heritage as knowledge: capital or culture?”, *Urban Studies* 39: 2002, 1003-17; Ashworth et al, *Pluralising Pasts*, 3.

<sup>384</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

they see those artefacts.”<sup>387</sup> He believes that this exposure to the artefacts of German colonialism is an important aspect of the storytelling.<sup>388</sup>

The removal of the *Reiterdenkmal* from its prominent position outside the *Alte Feste* (discussed in Chapter 3), however, indicates that Tjitjo’s sentiments are not shared by all. The difference here lies in the use of such artefacts – the *Reiterdenkmal* is a monument, a statue, which serves no purpose other than to visually portray the Germans’ victory. Architecture, on the other hand, is designed to be functional as well as aesthetic. Tjitjo believes that the protection of German colonial architecture is only made possible through its prolonged use. He explains that he learnt this through his work with the Heritage Council, where he saw how the historical houses that were left uninhabited were often the houses that started disappearing. As such, he believes that if an owner approaches the Heritage Council to make small changes, and these changes are denied outright, the owner is “alienated from the house somehow,” and is likely to go somewhere else where his needs would be accommodated. This would ultimately lead to the abandonment of the property, and the Council would have “done more harm than good.” Thus he feels that there should be some level of negotiation in order to strike a balance between changes that would negatively impact the building’s significance, and those that make it usable and liveable, possibly adding to its significance.<sup>389</sup>

This study has found that the buildings that are used and those that are adapted to suit changing needs, appear to elicit a more positive response than those that seem neglected or underused. Tjitjo speaks of the spirit of a building. The Grüner Kranz hall for example, was used for a period as a storeroom, until the Dieners realised that opening it up again to the public would allow people to see their heritage and experience it. This ensured that the hall did not become forgotten and unused, but instead renewed interest in it and the Grüner Kranz complex as a whole, which is now attracting a younger crowd of Namibians.

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

The Turnhalle also illustrates how the events associated with it – the Turnhalle Conference, the SADC Tribunal and even the fire that almost destroyed it – have contributed to its perceived significance as part of Windhoek’s history. However, now that the building is mostly empty, it is unclear whether these memories remain vivid enough to remind people of the significant roles it has played, or whether its visual presence as a relic of Germanness will surpass these memories through disuse.

## CONCLUSIONS

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*“The best way to teach history, for people to really believe that that era of German colonialism happened in this country is when they see those artefacts.”<sup>390</sup>*

I began this study with an assumption that the lack of adequate legislation for the protection of built heritage in Namibia must be a symptom of a deeper underlying issue. This led me to question the perception of architecture as heritage; and how the public’s perception of colonial architecture has influenced its preservation as a heritage resource in the post-colonial city of Windhoek.

I found that very little has been published in terms of Windhoek’s German colonial architecture or urban form and its perception as heritage. Peters’ *Baukunst in Südwestafrika 1884-1914* (1981) is a valuable, if dated, resource as a collation of German colonial architectural works, but it does not attempt to assess the buildings in terms of their value as heritage. Osayimwese’s 2008 dissertation, “Colonialism at the Centre: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform Movement, 1828-1914” addresses the problematic distinction that has been maintained between colonial architecture and indigenous architecture in the past, but the effect this has on heritage values is not analysed. Alexander’s dissertation “Kolmanskop: An Industrial Heritage Resource or Only a Tourist Attraction?” (2010) examines the values associated with the Kolmanskop “Ghost Town,” near Lüderitz in Namibia. Her study initiates a dialogue around the values associated with German colonial

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

spaces today, although the ghost town context of Kolmanskop is rather different from the living, developing city of Windhoek and is thus experienced differently. This study has therefore attempted to broaden the available discourse on colonial architecture and how it is valued as heritage in Namibia.

For architecture to be perceived as heritage, it has to be valued. Seeking out a building's architectural qualities or artistic characteristics is the obvious initial point of enquiry, but as the cases have attempted to illustrate, these qualities alone are not a true measure of a building's significance. Schoedder's 1980s survey points out notable people or events that are associated with a building; and this gives an indication of the building's historical evolution but not necessarily its significance. Brandt suggests that the survey assessment may, for example, have been too generous in rating buildings according to the prominence of their architects, considering that there was only a handful of German architects living in the colony at the time. He also proposes the need for questioning and weighing up the criteria used in the survey.<sup>391</sup>

This study has relied heavily on the immense body of work completed by Schoedder in compiling the historical building survey. Schoedder's survey forms the foundation on which my assessment of the three halls is based. However, in this process of questioning and weighing up, my study has, in part, become a critical overview of the values that are not featured in Schoedder's survey.

The Australian Burra Charter is a useful guide which prompted me to ask further questions. It defines cultural significance as the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual values for past, present or future generations, which are "embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects."<sup>392</sup> The research of Johnston and Byrne et al. helped me to turn my attention to social – or rather socio-political – significance, which reveals a complexity that revolves around memory and its effect on the construction of identities in the plural context of post-colonial Windhoek. The search for socio-political significance presents

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<sup>391</sup> Brandt, interview.

<sup>392</sup> *The Burra Charter*, Article 1.2.

contradicting emotions that are evoked by very personal individual memories or stories (*Geschichte*) of a place, as with the Grüner Kranz Hall; through layers of contrasting experiences that form a shared collective memory such as that found in the Turnhalle; or possibly very few emotions, a sense of apathy, in places where memories are few and faded, seen in the example of the Kaiserkrone Hall.

By reviewing the history of German colonialism and its lasting impact on Namibians, this study attempts to highlight the range of emotions and painful memories that must inevitably be evoked by the presence of German colonial architecture in the city. The atrocities of the Namibian War and the genocide undoubtedly force this type of introspection. The review of Namibia's traumatic history and the politics of heritage may have brought about an improved understanding of some of the complexities surrounding the presence of German colonial architecture in Windhoek, but this does not necessarily answer the question of how the value of a building can be ascertained within this context, and how to acknowledge the legitimacy of these differing values.

The cases do, however, provide some insight into how the context of the building is affected by the building's use; and in turn, how the physical context of the building informs its perceived value – seen both in the Kaiserkrone Hall within the historical streetscape of central Windhoek, and in the physicality of the Turnhalle on the street edge, which alters its relationship with pedestrians. This study shows that the impact on, and of, context cannot be described simply in terms of the material environment, but that it has to be researched in terms of personal and shared associations of the place, meanings, and importantly, use.

Each of the cases is used in a different way, and although the Grüner Kranz Hall revealed a very private, individual history, it was found to be active and alive because of its accessibility to the public, albeit through private commercial use. The Dieners reinvented its use by renting it out as a café and shop. It is a place of assembly, of relaxed gatherings, of people coming together. Diener suggests the importance of “using the opportunities” to

ensure the complex's continued use.<sup>393</sup> In contrast, both the Kaiserkrone Hall and the Turnhalle have reached a point where they are not being used to their full potential. In the case of the Kaiserkrone, it is the complex around the hall that has fallen into disuse; and in the case of the Turnhalle, it is occupied but it is in a state of limbo – what will it be used for once the Ministry of Justice moves out again? Tjitjo emphasised the need to keep buildings in use in order to prevent their disappearance. Will the Turnhalle begin to disappear, in the same way the Kaiserkrone Hall is fading from memory?

Tjitjo speaks of “co-opting” the dress of the coloniser in order to reinvent oneself, as a way of creating a new identity. He explains that this has made symbols of the German colonial period easier to tolerate by giving them new meanings.<sup>394</sup> This concept of reinvention echoes, in a sense, what Lowenthal describes as “continual creation” which is necessary for ensuring that heritage remains relevant and connected to ongoing life.<sup>395</sup> Similarly, Wasserfall feels that the only way a building such as the Turnhalle can survive is through its adaptive reuse.<sup>396</sup> This can only be successfully achieved by ensuring the building's continued presence in the Windhoek townscape; which requires careful consideration of its relationship to its context, as well as acknowledgement of its historical associations and their attached meanings. This process of sensitive adaptation and layering of new and old meanings is essentially one of “co-opting” of the colonial dress.

But the process of co-opting, reinventing, recreating and adapting requires a better knowledge of the current values attached to these buildings as heritage. Edda Schoedder's contribution to the conservation of Namibia's heritage is significant in that she helped to produce a rigorous survey of Namibia's historical buildings, the first and only survey of Namibia's architecture to have been attempted. It is a priceless resource as a comprehensive record of German colonial architecture. However, it was completed in the 1980s, prior to Namibia's Independence, and has not been updated since. An update of

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<sup>393</sup> Ferdinand Diener, interview.

<sup>394</sup> Tjitjo, interview.

<sup>395</sup> David Lowenthal, “Stewarding the Past in a Perplexing Present,” in Avrami et al., 22.

<sup>396</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

the survey is desperately required to include later buildings, and to confirm the continued existence (or demolition) of the buildings that were originally surveyed. Most importantly, there is a need for the survey to be reviewed and revised to expand the assessment criteria – so that the survey can become a tool that allows for a more holistic assessment of values beyond the architectural and historical significance of the buildings, relevant to the post-colonial context.

Through a more comprehensive and descriptive assessment that encompasses a study of context, social values and perceptions based on associations and memories, the historical building survey can become a more authentic measure of the heritage significance of German colonial buildings, by documenting the meanings that give these buildings a value to society that, to quote Bond and Worthing, “transcend their functional utility.”<sup>397</sup>

Wasserfall has been tasked recently with the challenge of proposing changes to renovate the *Alte Feste*. This building, a symbol of German colonialism, has the potential to be connected to the new Independence Memorial Museum – connections that would help to give the building new and positive meanings. However, its dire state of neglect prompted Wasserfall to question how (or indeed if) it is perceived as heritage in its position next to the Independence Memorial Museum. Wasserfall said something that sums up what this study has attempted to answer:

*“What confused us ... it is this perception ...  
of what is the true value of this to Namibia?”<sup>398</sup>*

This study has been unable to answer this question. The plurality that exists in post-colonial Windhoek means that there can be no one answer. The study has shown the role that memory plays in simultaneously evoking a sense of individual and shared ownership of a place through its capacity to create layers of meaning, which can in turn ascribe value to a place. I have also attempted to show how colonial architecture can be a material prompt to sustain memory through a building’s continued use, and conversely, how a state of disuse can

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<sup>397</sup> Bond et al., 6-7.

<sup>398</sup> Wasserfall, interview.

rob colonial architecture of its meanings. The use of these buildings has been the greatest clue in attempting to understand how the public's perception of the buildings is influenced. The study has encouraged my own deeper introspection of the divergent meanings that can be attached to German colonial architecture, in the light of Namibia's traumatic colonial past. The investigation of the histories of the three halls has highlighted the duality of heritage that exists in the post-colonial context: the individual architectural or historical significances of the halls (and for me personally, the beauty of their individual stories as architectural masterpieces) belie the complexities of their socio-political meanings and associations. Further documentation of these meanings and values, and therefore further development of the questions that are currently missing in Schoedder's survey, will be required to complement the valuable work begun by Schoedder, so that a better understanding of the values of German colonial architecture as heritage can be gained. As such, a better understanding of the use and the social value of these buildings can be utilised to find purpose for them within the context of a growing post-colonial city. Until then, the original question put forward by this study (and echoed by Wasserfall), the question of perception, and its effect on the values ascribed to German colonial architecture, cannot be fully answered.

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Edda Schoedder Accession: Edda Schoedder. KWi (Blue Files).

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# **APPENDICES**

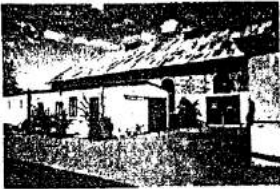
## APPENDIX 1 – EDDA SCHOEDDER SURVEYS

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# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

**KWi** 19 - 9

DISTRICT	Windhoek	
TOWN	Windhoek	
STREET	Bell Street-Macalan Street	
NAME OF BLDG. / FARM	Zum Grünen Kranz (Saal)	
ERF / PLOT NO.	1746	
SIZE	40/54	
TYPE	Hall	
PERIOD	3b	
ARCHITECT / BUILDER	Otto Busch	
ERECTED	1905	for Caroline Brühaver
DOCUMENTS	Archives, Führer 1916, Municipality	
DESCRIPTION		CONDITION structurally weak fairly good
FOUNDATION	natural stone	
WALLS	lime-sand bricks as face bricks	
ROOF	corrugated iron	
WINDOWS	wood, original	
DOORS & GATES	wood, original, one additional	
FLOORS INSIDE	wood, original	
WALLS INSIDE	plastered	
CEILINGS	ornamented wooden roof structure with varnished ceiling boards	
STEPS & STAIRCASES	wooden structure inside, outside cement	
ACHITECTURAL PART.	interior with many very good and outstanding details	
OUTBUILDINGS		
RELATIONSHIP TO ENVIRONMENT		
PROTECTION PROPOSED		GRADE 89 <b>B</b>

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.  
**KWi** 19-9  
APPENDIX NO. 1

ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER  
G.M.F. Diener  
P.O. Box 451  
Windhoek

Evaluation Criteria		E	VG	G	F/P	T
<b>A. ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY</b> Max 35						
1. Style	3b with outstanding interior	25	12	6	0	35
2. Construction	wide span timber structure	15	8	4	0	
3. Age	1906	10	5	2	0	
4. Architect	Otto Busch	8	4	2	0	
<b>B. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION</b> Max 20						
5. Person / group	Caroline Brüsshaber	20	10	5	0	20
6. Event	Hall Grüner Kranz many events	20	10	5	0	
7. Context	Private initiative	10	5	2	0	
<b>C. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTION</b> Max 20						
8. Landmark / exposure		15	8	4	0	12
9. Continuity	Grüner Kranz complex	10	5	2	0	
10. Setting (immediate)		10	5	2	0	
<b>D. USABILITY</b> Max 15						
11. Compatibility	Restricted business	10	5	3	0	15
12. Adaptability	Storage	10	5	3	0	
<b>E. INTEGRITY</b> Max 10						
13. Alterations		5	3	2	0	7
14. Condition		5	3	2	0	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>						<b>89</b>

**NOTES**

Due to deteriorated building conditions  
an A rating was not possible.

EVALUATED BY **Edda Schoedder** DATE **August 1982**

APPROVED BY **Klaus Brandt** DATE **5.10.1982**

**COMMENTS**

## HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

**KWi**

APPENDIX NO. 2

19 - 9

### DOCUMENTS:

Führer 1916: (228)

### Archives:

**BWL. 7.**  
Bd. VI:

Gastwirt Brüsshaber,  
Bau eines Saales, Grundrissplan, Schnitte,  
1 Ansicht, Otto Busch, gez. 15.05.1906,  
gen. 20.07.1906.

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

KWi 4-39

DISTRICT	Windhoek	
TOWN	Windhoek	
STREET	Post Strasse c.Stübel Street	
NAME OF BLDG. / FARM	Kaiserkrone - Saal	
ERF / PLOT NO.	1771	
SIZE	39/24	
TYPE	hall	
PERIOD	4d	
ARCHITECT / BUILDER	Otto Busch	
ERECTED	1909 for J.Leitner	
DOCUMENTS	archives, Führer 1916, municipality	
DESCRIPTION		CONDITION good (neglected)
FOUNDATION	natural stone	
WALLS	plastered	
ROOF	corrugated iron	
WINDOWS	replaced steel	
DOORS & GATES	replaced wood	
FLOORS INSIDE	ceramic floor tiles, new	
WALLS INSIDE	plastered	
CEILINGS	celotex (on wooden boarding?)	
STEPS & STAIRCASES		
ACHITECTURAL PART.		
OUTBUILDINGS		
RELATIONSHIP TO ENVIRONMENT		
PROTECTION PROPOSED		GRADE 60 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">B</div>



ultra cross 25077

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.  
**KWi 4 - 39**  
 APPENDIX NO.

ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER  
 DAMARALAND WINE & SPIRIT CO  
 HOTEL KAISWRKRONE  
 P O BOX 208  
 WINDHOEK

Evaluation Criteria	E	VG	G	F/P	T
<b>A. ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 35</span>					
1. Style	25	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
2. Construction <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Wide span timber roof construction</span>	15	8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
3. Age <span style="margin-left: 20px;">1909</span>	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	0	
4. Architect <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Otto Busch</span>	8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	0	19
<b>B. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 20</span>					
5. Person / group <span style="margin-left: 20px;">J Leitner</span>	20	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
6. Event	20	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
7. Context <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Growing hotel complex</span>	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	0	15
<b>C. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTION</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 20</span>					
8. Landmark / exposure <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Street corner</span>	15	8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
9. Continuity <span style="margin-left: 20px;">In building complex</span>	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	0	
10. Setting (Immediate) <span style="margin-left: 20px;">neglected</span>	10	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	11
<b>D. USABILITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 15</span>					
11. Compatibility <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Business zone</span>	10	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	
12. Adaptability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	3	0	13
<b>E. INTEGRITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 10</span>					
13. Alterations <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Substantially altered</span>	5	3	2	0	
14. Condition	5	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	2
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					<b>60</b>

NOTES  
 Windows replaced, ceiling covered with celotex, floor covered with tiles.

EVALUATED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 APPROVED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

## HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

**KWi**

APPENDIX NO. 2

4-39

### DOCUMENTS:

Führer 1916: (296)

#### Archives:

BWl. 7c.

Bd. XI:

J. Leitner, Bau der Saalanlage, Plan Otto Busch,  
22.09.1909

#### Windhuker

##### Nachrichten:

vom 20.10.1909:

Saalanbau, Otto Busch:

Einweihung am vorhergehenden Sonnabend

Malerarbeiten: Dick

Beleuchtung: Veith

Schreinerarbeiten: Hamann

Wirt der Kaiserkrone, Herr Leitner.

#### Archives:


MUN 1771:

17.04.1973: Umbauten am Saal und an den  
Gaststättenräumen.

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

**KWi** 15-19

DISTRICT	Windhoek	
TOWN	Windhoek	
STREET	Bahnhof Street & Eselwein St.	
NAME OF BLDG. / FARM	"Turnhalle"	
ERF / PLOT NO.	99	
SIZE	9/18	
TYPE	Gymnasium	
PERIOD	4c	
ARCHITECT / BUILDER	Otto Busch	
ERECTED	1909, add. 1911	for "Turnverein"
DOCUMENTS	Archives, Führer 1912, Admin. Works Dept.	
DESCRIPTION		CONDITION wood
FOUNDATION	natural stone	
WALLS	plastered	
ROOF	corrugated iron	
WINDOWS	wood original and new	
DOORS & GATES	wood original and new	
FLOORS INSIDE		
WALLS INSIDE	plastered	
CEILINGS	wood	
STEPS & STAIRCASES	concrete - cement	
ACHITECTURAL PART.	interiors changed for national assembly	
OUTBUILDINGS		
RELATIONSHIP TO ENVIRONMENT		

PROTECTION PROPOSED

GRADE  
91

**A**

ultra press 0806b

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.  
**KWi** 15 - 19  
 APPENDIX NO. 1

ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER  
 SMA ADMINISTRATION  
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Criteria	E	VG	G	F/P	T
<b>A. ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 35</span>					
1. Style <i>Ac</i>	25	12	6	0	35
2. Construction <i>Hall</i>	15	8	4	0	
3. Age <i>1909 and 1911</i>	10	5	2	0	
4. Architect <i>Otto Busch</i>	8	4	2	0	
<b>B. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 20</span>					
5. Person / group <i>Turnverein</i>	20	10	5	0	20
6. Event <i>First National Assembly</i>	20	10	5	0	
7. Context <i>Turnverein + National Assembly</i>	10	5	2	0	
<b>C. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTION</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 20</span>					
8. Landmark / exposure <i>Street corner</i>	15	8	4	0	13
9. Continuity <i>Leutwein Street precinct</i>	10	5	2	0	
10. Setting (immediate)	10	5	2	0	
<b>D. USABILITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 15</span>					
11. Compatibility <i>Government</i>	10	5	3	0	15
12. Adaptability <i>Government</i>	10	5	3	0	
<b>E. INTEGRITY</b> <span style="float: right;">Max 10</span>					
13. Alterations <i>Additions &amp; alterations to interior</i>	5	3	2	0	8
14. Condition	5	3	2	0	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					<b>91</b>

NOTES

EVALUATED BY *Edda Schoedder* DATE *August 1982*  
 APPROVED BY *Peter Strack* DATE *4.10.1982*

COMMENTS

DOCUMENTS

Führer 1916

(95) Turnverein Windhuk

Archives

BWL 7.

Bd. IV (60)

Turnverein (Vorsitzender Thomas, Schriftführer Mayer). 5 x 6m grosser Wellblechschuppen zur Aufbewahrung der Geräte. 1905

BWL 7a.

Bd. VIII (37 - 40)

Anlage eines Aborts auf dem Grundstück des Turnvereines 1908.

Bd. VIII ohne No.

Turnverein (Vorsitzender H. Raupert). Bau einer massiven Turnhalle (Schlechte Blaupause Otto Busch. 13.12.1908). Grosser Turnsaal mit Vorhalle. gen. 17.12.1908

BWL 7f.

Bd. XVII

R.V. Turnverein. Erweiterungsbau. Gr. Blaupause (Arnold). 7.09.1912.

BWL

Bd. 8. B.1.b. (1907 - 1908)

Blaupause schwach. vom 13.12.1908.

ADM 123

4573/225

Aussengebäude (for 'motor') und Duschen 13.01.1919

SVW. S.1.e.

Turnhalle dem Landesfiskus für das Schulturnen zur Verfügung gestellt. Vertrag von 8.08.1910 gegen jährl. Entgelt von 1.200 MK. davon trägt die Gemeinde 600 MK und der Fiskus 600 MK.

(Schöner Briefkopf ues Turnvereins)

1913 500 MK mehr und ab 1913 je 1.000 MK Gemeinde + Fiskus.

Die Turnhalle wurde vom 16.08.1914 bis Januar 1915 nicht benutzt wegen Lagerung von Proviant seitens der Kaiserl. Schutztruppe.

MWL 1011

Baugenehmigungen 1929/1. Turnverein Windhuk. 99. Anbauten an Saal. fertiggestellt 14. Juni 1929.

PWD 4/20

Repairs and Renovations 1948

PWD 4/44

Repairs and Renovations 1954.

Zum Turnhallenbau

Windhuker Nachrichten

6. März 1909 Grundsteinlegung heute abend.

Richtfest 25.06.1909

" 30.06.1909

Mauererarb. Gebr. Ahrens. Kl. Windhuk. Zimmerer Herr Vosse. Dachkonstr. mit Bohlenbinder - zum erstmal im Schutzgebiet.

# HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

REFERENCE NO.

**KWi**

15-19

APPENDIX NO. 3

2.

Der SüdwestboteZum Turnhallenerweiterungsbau

16. Februar 1912

Erdgesch., Garderobe + Aborte.  
1. Gesch. "Turnerheim" (Versammlungsraum)Weitere Ausarbeitung des Anbauplanes hat  
Herr Bautechniker Arnold angenommen.Die Deutschen Afrikanischen Sandsteinwerke  
machen Fliesenbelag in der Empfangshalle.  
Säulen und Ähnliches nach Wahl des Vereins  
zum Geschenk.11. Dezember 1912Richtfest des Turnhallen-Anbaus. 7. Dezember  
1912.

## Weitere Zeitungsartikel

DSWA Zeitung

13. Februar 1909

Windhuker Nachrichten11. September 1909  
1. Dezember 1909  
19. Dezember 1909Der Südwestbote

13. Mai 1911

## Plans at the Civic Affairs Dept.

CW 634

Job. No. 2560

Blue print. 1:100

Gebäude auf dem Grundstück des Turnvereins  
Windhuk.  
(Deutsche Beschriftung jed. Erf.  
Kein Datum.Plan zeigt Erdgeschoss, Keller und Obergeschoss  
des Anbaus. Anbau von 2 Gastzimmern, Veranda  
und Bar nach SW.Die Kegelbahn mit Geräteraum an der West-  
grenze.Pläne zum Umbau der Turnhalle  
als Sitzungssaal für die National-  
versammlung ? 1977

2560 / 8 + 9

/ 101 - 121

/ME 7 / 42

/9/ME 7 / 1 - 3

/ 201 - 203

/ EE 1 + 2

Pläne von Loteryman's Flats.

Unbaupläne Turnhalle + Loteryman Flats

Airconditioning

Airconditioning

Furniture

Electrical Layout

(Brian Colquhoun &amp; Partners. Consulting Engineers

ultra press 626d

## APPENDIX 2 – AN EXPLANATION OF HERITAGE LEGISLATION IN NAMIBIA AND ITS RELATION TO SCHOEDDER’S SURVEYS

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Historical buildings in Namibia are protected under the National Heritage Act No. 27 of 2004. This act replaced the National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1969, which was promulgated in Namibia under South African law.<sup>399</sup> South Africa’s older buildings are protected under the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, which replaced the same 1969 act.<sup>400</sup> Although the present-day Namibian Act followed the South African Act, it seems less comprehensive and appears to offer less protection to historical buildings or places of significance than its South African counterpart.

### SIXTY-YEAR GENERAL PROTECTION

In South Africa, Part 2 of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, offers general protection to structures over sixty years of age. Section 34 states that “no person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.”<sup>401</sup> This general protection ensures that all possibly significant buildings are protected from careless changes or demolition. Their significance can be assessed before any work is done, which allows for the prevention of damaging work, or the proposal of more sensitive alterations.

Namibia’s law does not provide for such a general protection. Many architects, familiar with the South African legislation, or with the 1969 act which notes the

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<sup>399</sup> *Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia*, National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. VII, Section 69. <http://www.nhc-nam.org/about/news/national-heritage-act-gaz-3361-act-27-2004>, accessed 12 April 2016.

<sup>400</sup> *Government Gazette of the Republic of South Africa*, National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, Ch. III, Pt. 2, Section 60. [http://sahra.org.za/sahris/sites/default/files/website/articledocs/Sahra\\_Act25\\_1999.pdf](http://sahra.org.za/sahris/sites/default/files/website/articledocs/Sahra_Act25_1999.pdf), accessed 12 April 2016.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. II, Pt. 2, Section 34:1.

significance of fifty years for wrecks and moveable property, assume that this general protection is also applicable in Namibia.<sup>402</sup>

## CONSERVATION AREAS

The only form of general protection that is provided for in Namibia falls under Section 54 of the National Heritage Act of 2004, which states that “The Council may, by notice in the Gazette, declare any area defined in the notice to be a conservation area on the ground of its historic, aesthetic or scientific interest.”<sup>403</sup> This declaration is entirely dependent on, firstly, the Council itself, which must initiate this process, and secondly, on the agreement of the local authority that would be affected by such a declaration.<sup>404</sup>

To date, the municipality of Swakopmund is the only town which has been declared a conservation area for buildings in Namibia. The only other conservation area is the Buffer Zone of the Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site.<sup>405</sup> Neither Windhoek, nor Lüderitz, which both possess a large number of historical buildings, have had conservation areas proclaimed. Lüderitz, for example, is the home of well over 180 historical buildings, yet only 7 have been listed on the Namibian Heritage Register.<sup>406</sup>

As a consequence, the architectural heritage within a proclaimed conservation area remains at risk due to several weaknesses in the Namibian legislation written for conservation areas. Section 54 describes the work which may not be undertaken in the conservation area without permission from the National Heritage Council, namely: any development which exceeds 10 000 square metres in extent or which is estimated at over N\$ 2 million in costs; the construction of any road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or barrier exceeding 300 metres in length; or the construction of any bridge or similar structure

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<sup>402</sup> *Government Gazette of South West Africa*, National Monuments Act 28 of 1969, as amended by Act 22 of 1970, Act 30 of 1971, Act 63 of 1975 and Act 35 of 1979, <http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/nam126830.pdf>, accessed 13 April 2016.

<sup>403</sup> National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. VI, Section 54:1.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid*, Section 54:2.

<sup>405</sup> Erica Ndalikokule, National Heritage Council, email correspondence, 27 June 2016.

<sup>406</sup> Nicola Alexander, email correspondence, 14 July 2013.

exceeding 50 metres in length.<sup>407</sup> This implies that any other work, any small alteration or addition, may go ahead regardless of how it may impact a heritage resource. The Act does however provide protection from demolition of any structure in the conservation area, stating that the Council may “prohibit that any building situated within the conservation area which is 50 or more years old be demolished without the written consent of the Council.”<sup>408</sup> The protection provided by Section 54 is therefore limited to major works and the demolition of structures older than fifty years.

An Aesthetics Committee was formed in Swakopmund to enforce stricter municipal regulations than those contained in the Act, for the submission of all building plans to the Swakopmund Municipality. The document produced for this purpose requires all applications for any building work within the conservation area, regardless of size or value, to be submitted for approval by the Aesthetics Committee, with the exception of “additions which are not visible from the street and do not affect the integrity of buildings older than 50 years.”<sup>409</sup> Major projects outside of the conservation area are also required to be submitted for approval. All applications must be accompanied by a written motivation; plans and rendered elevations of all façades of the proposed project; the building in its context, including all new signage; and all new heights. Only approved applications may then be sent to the National Heritage Council for approval. In this manner, the town of Swakopmund aims to hold greater control in the protection of its historical buildings.

In Windhoek, which does not have a conservation area, there is no aesthetics committee to review building plan submissions prior to submission to the National Heritage Council. Applicants apply directly to the Built Heritage Committee at the National Heritage Council. However, there does not appear to be any clear guidance available for architects or property owners regarding the process they are required to follow with respect to older buildings.

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<sup>407</sup> National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. VI, Section 54:5-6.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., Section 54:11.

<sup>409</sup> *Procedure for Submissions for Aesthetical Approval Swakopmund Municipality*, <http://www.swkmun.com.na/forms/PROCEDURE%20FOR%20SUBMISSIONS%20FOR%20AESTHETICAL%20APPROVAL.pdf>, accessed 24 June 2016.

A building in Namibia can be formally protected under the Act in three ways: by recommendation by the National Heritage Council for declaration; by nomination by a person or body for declaration; and by its identification as being a listed building in the Heritage Register. National Monuments that were previously declared as such under the National Monuments Act of 1969 were included in the Heritage Register upon commencement of the National Heritage Act in 2004.<sup>410</sup>

#### RECOMMENDATION BY COUNCIL FOR DECLARATION

Section 28 of the Namibian National Heritage Act of 2004, stipulates that a recommendation by Council to the Minister for the declaration of a place or object as a heritage place or object must “be in writing; include a statement of heritage significance...and specify the category and classification in the Register.”<sup>411</sup>

#### NOMINATION FOR DECLARATION

Section 29 of the National Heritage Act of 2004 provides for the declaration of a building through nomination by a person or a body, which must be made in writing, specifying the reasons as to why the building should be declared. A standard form for this purpose is available from the National Heritage Council. This declaration is subject to there having been no refusal to recommend or declare the building by Council or the Minister respectively within the previous twelve months.<sup>412</sup> Should the Council decide to recommend that the heritage place be declared, it must give notice to the owner, the nominator and the relevant local authority at least 60 days before submitting its recommendation to the Minister.<sup>413</sup> Within the 60 days, the owner may “make a submission on the proposed recommendation to the Council” and may “request a hearing in relation to that submission.”<sup>414</sup> In terms of Section 31, the owner must notify the Council, within 10 days of receipt of the notice, of any current or proposed

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<sup>410</sup> National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. IV, Section 25:2

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., Section 28:1-3.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., Section 29:1-2.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., Section 30:1-2.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., Section 30:2:f.

works in relation to the place, and may not allow any works to take place on the site without the approval of the Council.<sup>415</sup> This provides protection to the building in the period between the Council's decision to recommend the building for declaration, and the Minister's actual decision in this regard. The Council may also decide to place a provisional protection order on the building, after considering all submissions from interested parties regarding their proposed recommendation.<sup>416</sup> This protection lasts for six months, or until the building is declared a heritage place by the Minister, whichever occurs first, although this period may also be extended by the Minister.<sup>417</sup> This process is almost identical to that laid out in the South African Heritage Resources Act of 1999 under Section 27.<sup>418</sup>

While the Namibian Act allows the Council to choose whether or not to place provisional protection on a building prior to the Minister's decision, the South African Act automatically places six months' protection "from the date of service of a notice under sub-section (8)(a)," or from the date that the Council notifies the owner and interested parties of its intention to recommend a place for declaration.<sup>419</sup> Therefore, only once a building has been officially declared by the Minister and listed on the Namibian Heritage Register, is it fully protected in terms of the Act. This protection relates to "works and activities that can be carried out in relation to the protected place...without the need for a permit,"<sup>420</sup> and prevents activities that are prohibited without a permit; including removal or demolition, damage or despoiling, development, alteration, or excavation of all or part of a protected place.<sup>421</sup>

## LISTED BUILDINGS IN THE HERITAGE REGISTER

"The Council may identify, and include in the Register as listed buildings, any buildings which are worthy of protection and conservation."<sup>422</sup> The Act does

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid., Section 31:1-2.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid., Section 34:3:d.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., Section 45:1;4.

<sup>418</sup> National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, Ch. II, Pt. 1, Section 27:8:a-c.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., Section 27:10.

<sup>420</sup> National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. IV, Section 36:2.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., Pt. V, Section 46:1.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., Pt. VI, Section 53:1.

not however provide an adequate definition or introduction to explain what exactly is meant by “worthy of protection and conservation.” Although the definition of heritage significance is given as being “aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific or social significance,”<sup>423</sup> and the preamble states the purpose of the Act as being “to provide for the protection and conservation of places and objects of heritage significance,”<sup>424</sup> the Act is missing a key element, which would assist the National Heritage Council in fulfilling its function of identifying, conserving, protecting and managing significant places and objects.<sup>425</sup> That is, a more holistic explanation of why it aims to protect these objects and places.

The “National Estate,” as described by the South African National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, consists of “those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations.” Furthermore, “a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of... [among others] its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa’s natural or cultural heritage; its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa’s natural or cultural heritage; its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group; its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.”<sup>426</sup> This definition, presented at the beginning of the South African Act, allows for a clearer understanding of the term significance, and thus provides a stronger basis for the assessment of which places and objects should be protected, or to what extent they should be protected.

This difficulty in assessment can be seen more clearly in the lack of a grading system for listed buildings on the Namibian Heritage Register. Whereas the

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., Pt. I, Section 1: definitions.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., preamble.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., Pt. II, Section 5:1:b.

<sup>426</sup> National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, Ch. I, Pt. 1, Section 3:1,3.

South African Heritage Resources Agency implements a system of grading for all places and objects which form part of the national estate as per Section 7 of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, the National Heritage Council in Namibia has no officially prescribed or gazetted grading system in place. The South African system involves a three-tier categorisation: from Grade I which includes “heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance;” to Grade II which includes resources which “can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region;” and Grade III which includes all “other heritage resources worthy of conservation.” This grading system is intended to assess the “intrinsic, comparative and contextual significance of a heritage resource and the relative benefits and costs of its protection.”<sup>427</sup> The National Heritage Council confirmed that it does not have a grading system in place, nor does it make use of the grading system which was compiled by the Namibia Institute of Architects (NIA).<sup>428</sup>

#### EDDA SCHOEDDER’S HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEYS

The NIA grading system was created as part of the NIA Heritage Committee’s project in the late 1970s and much of the 1980s to undertake a survey of Namibia’s historical buildings. Edda Schoedder, without whom the work could never have been accomplished, was able to complete the surveys for Luderitz, Windhoek and Swakopmund before she became ill. Surveys for the towns of Karibib, Okambahe, Usakos, Otjimbingwe and Omaruru were started, but never completed before Schoedder died in 1989.

The survey work required a grading system for the purpose of assessing the intrinsic architectural and historical value of the buildings as well as their contextual value.<sup>429</sup>

Nearly forty years later, it remains the only thorough system available to assess the country’s built heritage. The rating sheet that was compiled

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<sup>427</sup> Ibid., Section 7:1:a-c.

<sup>428</sup> Erica Ndalikokule, National Heritage Council, email correspondence, 27 June 2016.

<sup>429</sup> Namibia Institute of Architects, “Grades,” as provided by Klaus Brandt, email correspondence, 29 June 2016.

consists of questionnaire-style response blocks, for the assessment of architectural quality (including rarity of style or construction); historical association (pertaining to important cultural patterns for example); environmental contribution, to the character of a place, or as a landmark; usability (namely compatibility and adaptability to present-day needs); and integrity - how much has the building been changed and how much of its original character remains? Each section is added up based on a numerical score, to give a rating of A, B, C or D.<sup>430</sup> These survey sheets, including archival references, photographs and locality plans, are stored in numerically coded files known as the “Blue Files.”<sup>431</sup>

Believing that buildings form an important physical link to the past, Klaus Brandt explains that during the process of surveying the buildings, the Heritage Committee came to the conclusion that a group or series of historical buildings in a street actually form a neighbourhood or a public space, that individual buildings gain value in a group.<sup>432</sup> This informed the grading process in terms of the importance of assessing the buildings not only in terms of their individual attributes, but also in terms of their contribution to their context.

The surveys resulted in a number of new listings on the Namibian Heritage Register, while the implementation of the grading system meant that in 1992, the City of Windhoek included 169 buildings that were highly graded (A and B ratings) in the NIA grading format, in a list of “heritage consent” buildings. This concept of heritage consent offers the owners of residential heritage buildings business rights, subject to the preservation of their heritage building. Another incentive offered is the exclusion of the floor area of a heritage building from the “bulk” calculations for commercial buildings, allowing owners to build a new building to the “full bulk potential” whilst retaining the historical building on the

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<sup>430</sup> Namibia Institute of Architects, “Historical Building Rating”, as provided by NIA by email correspondence, 24 July 2013.

<sup>431</sup> The “Blue Files” are literally blue lever-arch files, stored at the National Archives of Namibia, and at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

<sup>432</sup> Klaus Brandt, Interview with Klaus Brandt, Windhoek, 30 September 2017.

site. Thus the efforts of the NIA were in fact rewarded with two incentives from the City of Windhoek to preserve the highly graded historical buildings.<sup>433</sup>

While these incentives have been helpful in preserving many of these buildings in the central business district of Windhoek, Jaco Wasserfall explains that the bulk incentive also has its shortcomings. He gives the example of the proposals he opposed for a development on Schanzenhügel, known for its cluster of outstanding villas designed by Otto Busch, and situated on the edge of a residential area on one side, and the CBD on the other. The area is therefore architecturally sensitive, and at the same time, holds a great deal of potential for business and development opportunities due to its location. The proposed development included a residential component, for which the City of Windhoek allowed the applicant to double the bulk as free bulk, as part of their incentive to bring multi-use spaces into the CBD. The City of Windhoek also doubled this bulk because of the proposal to retain the existing house on the property.<sup>434</sup> Wasserfall objected adamantly to this proposal with fears of the detrimental effect the volume and scale of the proposal would have on its sensitive historical context. Although some compromises were made, the building work has commenced, and the building is significantly bulkier than its neighbours. This is one example of how the incentives, although well intended, risk being abused by enthusiastic developers.

Notwithstanding, the NIA historical building surveys produced another tangible result for the protection of heritage in Namibia, albeit over thirty years after they were first begun. The General Notice No. 393, published in the Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia on 1 October 2013, announced in accordance with Section 36(1)(c) of the National Heritage Act of 2004, that the “Blue Files situated in Windhoek, Khomas Region, Omaruru, Karibib, Usakos, Erongo Region and Lüderitz, Karas Region to be included as heritage object” under Section 25(1)(b) and (2)(d) of the National Heritage Act

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<sup>433</sup> City of Windhoek, “Conservation of Heritage Buildings,” November 2002, as provided by NIA by email correspondence, 24 July 2013.

<sup>434</sup> Jaco Wasserfall, Interview with Jaco Wasserfall, Windhoek, 3 October 2017.

of 2004.<sup>435</sup> While this has been generally interpreted to imply that all of the buildings surveyed in the “Blue Files” now fall under the protection of the Act as a result of this notice, it is unfortunately not clear cut. While the heading in the notice reads “Place in National Heritage Register,” the statement for the “Blue Files” reads “to be included as heritage object” and cites Section 25(1)(b) and (2)(d). Section 25(1)(b) in the Act states “A place or object must be recorded in the Register in either of the following categories- b) heritage objects” and (2)(d) states “Classifications...may include parts for- d) protected objects.”<sup>436</sup> It is clear that what is being protected is an object, not a place. It implies that the “Blue Files” themselves (and their paper contents) are now listed in the Heritage Register, and not the places that they describe.

Although this is an obvious mistake and disappointment, and the unlisted buildings contained in the files remain at risk to demolition and alterations, it also shows that the work put into compiling the “Blue Files” was not futile. A protected object may not be removed or demolished, damaged or despoiled, altered or excavated, or exported from Namibia.<sup>437</sup> The invaluable product of years of research, surveying and assessing is at least now protected by law. To echo what Klaus Brandt said, the greatest value in the surveys is that they can be used as an academic tool. The next task is to continue the work done by Edda Schoedder by updating, revising and expanding the surveys to suit the post-colonial context of Namibia.

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<sup>435</sup> *Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia No. 5306*, General Notice No. 393, 1 October 2013, as attached in email correspondence from Nicola Alexander, 22 October 2014.

<sup>436</sup> National Heritage Act 27 of 2004, Pt. IV, Section 25:1-2.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. V, Section 46:2.

## APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEWS

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A small group of interviewees was selected for the purpose of illustrating the crucial issues and arguments that arose in terms of the varying perceptions and values associated with each of the three cases. These people were identified as having personal experience, insights or professional expertise on one or more of the cases.

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### RESPONDENTS

Name	Position	Subject	Date
<i>The following people were invited to participate, but were unable to provide responses for the purpose of this research:</i>			
Hon. Justice Charles Mkandawire	Former SADC Tribunal Representative	Turnhalle	-
<i>The following people kindly responded to my questions by email:</i>			
Hardus Burger	O & L Leisure Project Manager	Kaiserkrone	3 October 2017
Sue Gay	Former Architect at Kerry McNamara Architects	Kaiserkrone	24 October 2017
<i>The following people generously gave their time to participate in a formal interview:</i>			
Gerda Maria Ferdinande Diener, and her son Ferdinand Diener	Owner	Grüner Kranz	23 September 2017
Monica Ochse	Architect	Turnhalle	27 September 2017
Marley Tjitjo	Architect and Former Chairman of NHC Built Heritage Committee	Turnhalle and Colonialism	27 September 2017
Klaus Brandt	Architect and Former Chairman of NIA Heritage Committee	NIA Historical Building Surveys	30 September 2017
Jaco Wasserfall	Owner and Architect	Schanzenhügel Precinct	3 October 2017

All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. Only the most relevant parts of the discussions have been included as verbatim excerpts of the conversations.

## **INTERVIEW WITH GERDA MARIA FERDINANDE DIENER**

### **ACCOMPANIED BY HER SON, FERDINAND DIENER**

#### **The owner of Grüner Kranz**

Interviewed by Vanessa Ruhlig on Saturday 23 September 2017, Windhoek

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Abbreviated names:

VR: Vanessa Ruhlig

FD: Ferdinand Diener

GD: Gerda Diener

[...]

FD: She's just talking about her grandfather...

GD: [German]

FD: He died when he was still busy with the skittle alley building. But, ya...

GD: [German]

FD: In the beginning the wife of the grandfather, she only had a pension, sort of, and then later it was...created a hotel sort of...

[...]

FD: Now what she says, in the beginning when her grandfather was here, his wife...there was no hospital in Windhoek. So he built a small room in the back and the kids were born here. There were three kids, the one had [sic] twin and one, a third kid. And then they appointed a sort of a sister or what do you call it...

GD: [German]

FD: A whoever...assisting doctors or...to catch kids. They appointed her and they assisted. [German]

GD: [German]

FD: She was just talking about...because her mother moved out because she was married and her father was working at the government, but then the other two sisters stayed here, but then they were also getting [sic] their husbands. One was married with Kutz and the other was married with a Goebel. But they could not help with cooking and management of the hotel. They were not really flexible, so they also had to move. But their grandmother didn't want to do it on her own because there were conflicts of interest or whatever. And then she called back the other, her [Gerda's] mother, but in the meantime her father passed away.

VR: Ok.

FD: And then she came here and assisted the mother, the grandmother, but the grandmother then gave her the business, and also moved out.

[...]

FD: In the beginning when the father passed away, her mother had to go and look for work, because the two kids, it was my mother [Gerda] and her sister, she had still to feed them and whatever because the father was not there anymore. But then there was a... Windhoek's community, they were not so happy about the treatment by the mother, because the mother was quite a rich person, she owned farms and other houses...and then she called the kid in here to assist here and to do the business...[German]

[...]

FD: [German]...Ya, it seemed to me the grandmother first moved out, the other two sisters were still here.

VR: Oh.

FD: And then she called the third kid here, that's her [Gerda's] mother, also. So, but then because of the marriage of the other two sisters, their husbands were not happy to stay here. So they moved out, and then her mother was taking over here, so to speak.

[...]

FD: She just goes little bit step affront and said if you want to know what buildings was [sic] built before he passed away, the grandfather. Then she says it was the skittle alley and this kitchen and the house where she stays, in the back.

GD: [German]

FD: This big hall was the last item which he built. So you can see it on the drawing, the skittle alley, the big hall, this area and then in the back this house.

[...]

FD: Of course, then, the grandfather was not there anymore, and then the grandmother took over.

[...]

FD: So there was everything in, and then there was a big room in the back. And then the farmers came with the ox-wagon here...Ausspanplatz and also here.

[...]

FD: See here's a, a pit [spring/well?], it's still running.

[...]

FD: I just asked where they as kids get their water from. So she can only remember that there was a, this pit, and that there were stories that some guests said that when the first world war started that they put some weapons in there...

VR: Oh...

FD: Some says no there's...the hotel put some rubbish in there...so nobody knows where...what is fake news or so to say...or what is going on.

[...]

VR: Perhaps, you could tell me...my next question was, how would you describe your experience growing up here. Maybe, was the hotel still in existence, and running when you were a child? So maybe, what happened here every day, if you can remember, what was daily life like here?

[...]

FD: Ya, she made contact with the tenants who lived here.

[...]

FD: There was a toilet here, but it was, they didn't had [sic] flush toilet like these days, and then the different rooms had a sort of pot below the bed.

VR: Yes.

GD: [German]

FD: Ya, that's ?correct? the labourers were come [sic] from Ovamboland, they were contract people, so they lived here, for a year...whenever their contract expired, then the next one came.

GD: [German]

FD: And you see, when they were still kids, in 1936, they made a trip to Germany. So then she was 8 years old, so...[German]...You see that was the, 1936 was the Olympic Games in Germany.

GD: [German]

FD: Oh, and then that time it was leased out, the Grüner Kranz.

[...]

FD: But that was one generation back, but now, when she's, when she was small, she was also 8 years old, she was also with her mother in Germany. But I don't know for how long. But they also knew there their family, because the one sister who was married to a Kutz, they came from [Ostbruitz?] which was, which today it's Poland. So they also went to that area. See they were there in 1936, there were already tensions whenever you crossed the border. So, she can remember these things a little bit. But from Grüner Kranz...it seems to me there is not too much memory.

VR: Ok. Perhaps an odd question, but what is your favourite place here?

FD: Today?

[...]

FD: [German]...I think when the Old Wheelers were still here, she loved the club. Because there was, she was known, and they know each other and she was also putting, playing *Knobel* and these things together with them. But because now it changed, and now I think the coffee might be her...[German]...

GD: [German]

FD: Ya, because she can drink coffee mornings, and that she likes, and there's no more...because the club has changed now, Old Wheelers is out, and the Wolfshack is more young people, she's not any more...

[...]

FD: Ya, there were, was a time when the tenants had no toilets, they only had this pot in the room, below their bed. The men didn't like it, so, and then they went into the bush. Then her mother didn't like that idea, so they put a central pot here...

GD: [German]

FD: Even when they were kids, they went in the bush, 'coz there were no toilets. Later only, then they built the toilets in the garden.

GD: [German]

FD: And there was a river on that side, and on that side there was also a, what you call a, a place where the people are, when they passed away, when you, a cemet...

VR: Graveyard? Or a cemetery?

FD: Graveyard, ya, there was a small, at the corner there. I think when they built this Obeco building, there were some bones and then the contractor also, I think just informed the police or whatever they were. Some sort of graveyard there. But that is, when you look at the design of the Grüner Kranz, that corner was not part of Grüner Kranz in the beginning. There only was consolidated later with a piece. There were no real diggings made and research so to say, so we don't know which people was buried at the corner. So there might still be on that corner then, in the direction of the street, maybe, you do some diggings there, you might find some bones, I don't know.

[...]

FD: No, she says only before her time, then this cinema or when that hall was busy there was also a bar here.

VR: Can you tell me, take me through the changes that have happened at Grüner Kranz over the years? Maybe it can be physical changes, or parts of the buildings that were demolished?

FD: [German]...and I think it starts with the building where the club is now, it was still built when her mother was...

FD: It was not built as a club, it was built as a joinery [sic]...[German]

[...]

FD: So, I have to go check, I cannot remember, but then, after that, there was a joinery in there, so that building was built when her mother was still there. And then, the next building which was built, was this, where Obeco's store room is now.

[...]

FD: It was first empty and then there was a garage, a [...] garage, because it was also economic bad times, and there was sanctions on South Africa, and all these things.

GD: [German]

FD: Ya. So then when she built that the *Trossbach* guys offered her more steel structures, you know, and at that stage, she got that property together with her sister, and then they had to share, 50/50, and then, because that part didn't bring in that

much money, she told her sister to also take a part of these structures, and this part, now this building where this [mini-max?] is, she built it, for her to rent it out to get some money. And then the other part was this building, which was also restructured and built new because it was all this old sort of buildings which they removed and just built up new one on top. These new three structures were built...[German]

[...]

FD: [German]...I just say, while we're talking of the people who were left with the...once the grandmother passed away or so, but when my [sic] mother passed away that was the two sisters, so she had, and the problem was always, the building approval, it was not easy to get building approval if a sister didn't agree and so on. You could not really develop it. That was one of the biggest...Because Neo Paint also wanted to have a building there, it's always when you have got a sort of...it's not your property and you cannot do whatever...so it was difficult...But what she says now is while we were thinking of the, what do you call it, [naaklasses?], when you have got your, your testament, what do you call it when it's worked out?

[...]

FD: But she says we left out the problems experienced when her, the grandfather passed away. We just told you that her grandmother took over the business. But we didn't tell you what was the property ownership situation. The situation was that when the grandfather passed away, he had indicated in his will that there are four pieces, and that the grandmother gets one piece, and each of the children gets another quarter. And the trouble was that at the end, when the grandmother was left with the business and the management here, she had to pay out the other three quarters and that was why it was a hard time to survive so to say.

VR: Right. Yes.

FD: Ya, that is what she said we left out...because it's easy to say that you have the business and hotel, you can earn money but if you have to pay out...the same goes for my mother. We first built a, in that corner, before LIC went there, the swimming pool business. We first built a sort of small structure there where we took a bank loan and I have drawn the architectural drawing myself, we couldn't afford an architect. So we got a drawing for the steel structure, we put it there. I got municipal approval with my drawings, and then it was rented out to LIC. Then, Obeco, before Obeco came, and they had that idea with the new building, they went to LIC and said to them they will pay them if they move. So they also were paid to move there, to the neighbour. It was open, and they removed that structure and built that new structure. So they, so you see, the whole family business is part of this whole development of the property so to say.

VR: That obviously caused the change, a change in the use of the property quite significantly over the years, because it went from being privately used as a hotel through to being rented out to other businesses...

FD: Ya, you see when...it was a hotel and she had the alcohol licence but when the...during the World War it was not...she had to hand back the liquor licence. So she could not continue with that, so it was only a...

GD: *Pension.*

FD: A pension...

GD: [German]

FD: Rooms and eat. But I cannot place...the First World War. You can see it...the Second World War...I mean we also had this bad time of the repression...and I think also this problem of the paying of the...There was a court case even between the sisters...[German]

GD: [German]

[...]

FD: Because her mother could not pay out everything and the sisters wanted the money, so they went to the legal advice and there was a court case and whatever the case. And then she had a good friend who was a tenant here who assisted her mother. That was, it seemed to me, after the First World War things...everybody wanted their money and what, wanted to [unintelligible]. And then, that was a difficult time but...the Second World War was also...

GD: [German]

FD: In '36 she was in Germany, but then they came back. The men had to go to the camps...concentration camps in South Africa...

GD: Andalusia...[German]...Johannesburg.

FD: But that was still when she was in school.

GD: [German]

FD: But the business, like, change, is that during the second world war there was not so many tenants and, but the hotel sort of business still continued, and I have seen, I don't, I just couldn't find them for you, but somewhere there must all be, we have found them there, I don't know, but there were books where people were, who wanted to stay overnight here, they had to write their name. And the city, the police came every day and controlled who was living here.

VR: Oh.

GD: [German]

FD: You were not allowed to have radios, you were not allowed to have weapons. The police came everyday and looked which people were moving. So that was also a change in your business environment during these war times so to say. But as I say, the first world war, I cannot really...but I can imagine that the second world war that you just have to...you were controlled by the police and the men were out and it was also maybe a difficult time at that stage. So, that was the business and then after the world war, ok, probably it started slowly and I think then came the time when the sister passed away...

GD: [German]

FD: When her sister married, her mother stopped the cooking business, so it was then just only...and then after the First World War, the alcohol stopped, and after the Second World War the cooking stopped. You see then of course, her mother could not continue with that. So the cooking stopped, so you only rented out rooms. And then, I can remember there was a time in the '50s when the rent board came in. So they controlled the rent. And then also the standards. There was no wash basins in

the rooms. Then people came in here and built in wash basins. So then, just to keep on to the municipal standards, you had to change your rooms and your environment so to say. And also your toilets...[unintelligible] at the beginning they charged you per urinal...and it was not like today where they charge water and sewer, whatever you do...it was a different story. They just have to approve the plans...but they really counted the toilets, you had to pay per toilet.

FD: [German]...so that was also a change. And when the rent board came in, the business was not really, 'coz it was...what was the return on your investments so to say. And if you had to bring in any wash basins and toilets and your rental income was capped, so to say, then people started to come in, sneak in, and make their business office, work, at the rooms.

GD: [German]

FD: So the rent board was only concentrating on the residential, so then your opportunity changed again. So we didn't concentrate on residential anymore, so that's why you see lots of offices now. Then that was not controlled by the rent board anymore. And at the end you had a much better income, and you had less problems with people living around here, running to toilets...I think it's still...you see, the thinking, people sometimes they want...there's lots of demand...for what people rent...especially also on dancing schools and also sometimes people wants [sic] to make a gym here...but it's not our business, because if you look at the infrastructure, you need parking, you need toilets and you need showers. And people cannot understand it, because if we rent out a hall or whatever they come, and even a church, they want to come here. And they want to rent, but I say no, and that's also not good for us, I mean, if you have this Obeco store room, for example, they just store their stuff there, there's no people here, there's no parking, you get your monthly income. Maybe not as high as...but it's...you don't have these troubles. So that is how over the years maybe, the business changed. We decided to have a coffee [sic] here, we tried to accommodate them, otherwise...because that one was also a store, but when it was store room there was some furniture. In the beginning there was a, when she was still small, it was a store room for cars, ?Kone? they rented here. Then after, it was...because they stole the lenses from the cinema machine. And then after it there was a furniture place...[German] then it was Brockmann & Kries? with their...

GD: [German]

FD: Tins, all these tins of vegetables and boxes, they stored it here.

GD: [German]

FD: So that was mainly a storeroom, and then even Office Economix, they had to bring in furniture, under the...when you import...you have to have a closed environment when you...and the officers come and check what is your import and export...you may only take out whatever is controlled. So that was a closed shop for Office Economix. Only then, thereafter, that we tried, think we were interested to rent it here and then show the hall to people. Because it was not available for anyone else to see how it looks like also. And then we saw there's a sort of demand for the community to have a look at your heritage as you say. And that is why we don't think to make that a store, but rather maybe at this stage look on the maintenance...because no maintenance was done the last 100 years. So what I'm trying now is...look at maintenance...I, we have to put some funds aside. And the other thing is, you cannot rent it out as a big storeroom because you cannot drive in

with a forklift, and the other thing is also this...you are limited to the weight...what you store here. So it's...you try a sort of combination, like this old furniture people, but the thing is you cannot...if you look at the rent, the square metres, the people here and the environment, they charge today's rent, already around 200 dollar a square metre. That is so...market related...if you look at the shopping centres it's even higher. And we try, because of the old buildings to be lower. So we are at 100 dollar per square metre. But if you look at the hall, I cannot even rent it out for 100...it's about 300 square metre, if you take it, times 100, then it's 30 000 or what. Then people cannot afford that. So we try to support the heritage so to say, that people come in, to bring their rent down, to half of it, or something like that. And also to negotiate with the people how to do their business, and then maybe attract some people, that's also so my mother has the advantage to drink coffee here. It has a price, we can also change, and say no, we only looking at the money, but that's...

VR: Which of these changes do you think has made, added, the most value to the complex?

FD: [German]...But I think it's also a difficult question...because you must say, at what stage, because it was slowly changed. So maybe at my grandmother when she built the club, it was a good advantage, maybe it brings in more money, because these out rooms and so on...would not give you money, and she made the change of the, this new halls, it was also a reason, to get some more money out of the property, so it was this...also for her sister, to say you can get more money if you build something there, just to keep it an open place [unintelligible] and then also when we made the, when...at what time was it, it was when her sister passed away, we took a decision to buy out that portion...[German]...to stay at one property, otherwise the...so that was the best decision we could take.

GD: [German]

FD: But if you look at the...it was not so long ago, and if you look at the property prices, it is quite a huge advantage. So that was a major...and then to pay that off, we built that LIC, which I told you, this LIC, to get some more money to pay it off, because we got a bank loan. And then when Obeco came and had interest we took that LIC off and Obeco even also contributed some money, together with the bank, and I think that today, if you look back, that was the best investment. Because now, in the beginning, the whole property improvements contributed to the income. Because that part didn't really contribute. It was not ours, and when it was ours we had to pay off, so there was no return of investment from that portion. And if you look at today, that portion is bringing in the most money. So we changed it, completely turn around.

VR: So, effectively, the Obeco building is maintaining...

FD: It's giving us money to continue maintenance and all these things.

VR: Fantastic. And if we could think of a change that made a non-monetary...gave it value that's not financial? Which was the best change?

FD: Ya, I think the...[German]...So I think what we have done is...when you see, my mother had the advantage when the Old Wheelers was still there. So she was very...[German]...So she loved the club, and we also assisted the club at that stage, to buy a fridge, and buy...make changes, and built the bar and so on, and so Old Wheelers put some investment there, we put...assisted...so that your return of

investment was really more on the social side...so it was not really that you rent it out like a store room or like a business or office business...so I think that was, if you look at the money, then that was a bad investment. Even today, you see the Wolfshack is here, but if you look at the rent and equipment we put in there, it is not really an investment...You see, they cannot really use the whole hall, that's why they have put in an art gallery now, that's opening next week.

VR: Yes, I'll be there.

FD: But that is where we have to support also, and it helps to keep the property busy, because you see there's break-ins and crime rate, and if things isn't busy, it might also increase, so people are constantly busy, so you can say money-wise it's a bad change there, but it helped, if you see also on the user-friendliness, that we as a property owner assist paying the fridge and some of the equipment is better than when the tenant is buying the fridges, then when they look for a new tenant, then they ask the new tenant to pay out; and that's what's happening here. That's why it was a struggle to get a new tenant here. You see, these...Bianca from La Brocante, you, or she will advertise it, and when you said you want to continue the business, take over, then you say it's ok, here's my name and here's my kitchen stuff, I invest so much, 500 000. Then you say, no, I don't want to pay 500 000. So the question is, when must the owner stop this, and say when one goes out, the other one can go in, because people always come in with their own stuff, they don't want your fridge, or they want to just go in without cost, and that is where you have to think how best can you...

[...]

FD: She says also her age people doesn't go out in the evenings...[German]...Ya, that's, you see, there are a lot of...if you are looking at financial issues, you are looking at social issues and you're looking at age group of...continuation so to say.

VR: Are there any changes that have been made to the property that you regret?

FD: You see my mother says there's no real change which we regret, but to avoid your question, when we built Obeco, what I told the architect, I want a masterplan, to stop patching here and there, and he made a sort of masterplan, but it's only...the problem with the masterplan, it's quite expensive on the one side, and on the other side, my mother is still living there, she will not go out there, so you have certain specifications so to say, you cannot do this until this, and you cannot do this until this, so it's not a matter of we do something so...to avoid your question again...tomorrow we might regret building Obeco because then we said, why haven't we planned before a sort of masterplan? 'Coz it's quite a big investment.

FD: You see at this stage she says no, we don't regret really, but I can just say your...we don't like your question, but your question is justified, and that's why I say we're thinking of a masterplan, but it's not so easy.

[...]

FD: You see that depends on the concept you are looking at, and it depends on the people who are living now, even if you look at the Obeco storeroom, as I told you, it's now easy for us to have a storeroom. We don't need the parking, toilets, but if you think now on the funds, if you make that long storeroom, small stalls where there's a

big demand. This wine, what do you call it, market there, they want their stalls here, and it's like in Cape Town you have this square, market...Old Mill...

VR: Old Biscuit Mill

FD: Ya, that's it. They want similar here. That's what people want...[German]...I've got...you say it's an economic downturn and if you want to rent your house it's difficult to get a tenant. But if you ask me, for this property I've got a long list, even one today.

VR: That's fantastic. That's really good.

FD: They...everybody phones me and says they like the environment, they want to come. And that is these clients, who...even at the breweries...I think things change, and there's a demand for people to get entertainment. Things are...young people, they have communication over whatsapp and computer and whatever, but they don't have the opportunity to meet, and then now, at the end of the month, this games café is taking over La Brocante. And that is also something we have to look now and do some more maintenance here, and I want to open this whole area here...then you can have this whole space here, you can have a water feature there, make use of this tap thing, bring the water out to the people...I think there are...I just have to go back to the question, is that what changes...

FD: My mother agrees with the maintenance, but I mean, if you look at the potential even. I don't know if you have been in the cellar?

VR: Yes, you showed me.

FD: At this stage, we cannot leave it for another 100 years. And if you go down there, it's nice and cool. Maybe you can have a wine cellar or something. Just bring in some thought, and as you say, use the heritage, and use people's needs, and see how you can combine them.

VR: What would you say makes Grüner Kranz special or unique in Windhoek?

FD: My mother thinks the hall.

VR: What are the elements of the property that you think should be protected from future change or development?

FD: It's all the hall, that's what my mother says. Although it is not under, what do you call it...

FD: Because I think there's one book which indicates to the architects what buildings they cannot change, and then there's another sort of regulation where you may not, but which you can do, and ours is in the can do.

[...]

FD: No, when these guys were here, what do you call this team, this legislation, what do you call it?

FD: Sorry, I cannot remember the words. But nevertheless, when they were here, they wanted to put the hall under the list of, to be promulgated, but at that stage when they had an interview with my parents, they say they are not interested to protect it under law because you cannot rent it out, I don't know what the guidelines were at that, if you rent it out, I know in Germany you can rent it out and you get government subsidies, but here you don't get government subsidies. So your income is not there

and then you want to protect it and do maintenance, so who must pay for it? And where does the income come from? That's why my parents were not interested. So it has an economic...but as I say, we still have the interest to protect it but we are not fixed to how to protect it, and put the windows in...and if you see even on the way, when my sister passed away, my mother's sister passed away, then each kid got half of the assets. So you also divide the assets, so that's why the middle one is not there [chandelier]...so what is protection?

[...]

FD: If it's not protected, there's no way, if you don't really put the regulations together, or the rules to link to the regulations, you really have to decide. Because otherwise you take everything out, and you're sitting with...maybe we are lucky these pictures are drawn onto the walls, otherwise they would have been gone.

VR: Then this is maybe another difficult question. If Grüner Kranz ever belonged to someone outside of your family, do you think it would have the same significance as a place, compared to the significance you have with it now?

FD: [German]

GD: [German]

FD: Ya, my mother says she cannot answer and I think also we, the answer will also be who's the somebody else? If it's a developer he will scrap down everything and build the building, what you call it, the shopping centre. If it's some guy with historical priorities, who might do more than we. It also depends how much...if you look at where the Stellenbosch is, at these buildings that all look funny it was built at a lot of money and the owner or developer who was that lady, I think she had the interest to build it that way. So it depends where you come from, what your interests are, and what, I think everybody would do it differently.

GD: [German]

FD: You see my mother, I try to do it a little the way my mother wants it, because she has got a lot of sentimental...even if she cannot survive tomorrow she would never sell this property. Because her grandmother was born here, she has grown up so to say here, and we as children we are grown up here, so she doesn't want us to change the way. Although if you do certain things here, if you break down the hall and build a 5-storey building, you might have a much better turnover, return of investment, and it would have a totally different impact on the residents, on the return, but for my mother, if you are 88 or 90, even if you lend the money from the bank, how long will it take until you get the return. Not in your lifetime. I mean the developer's thinking different. Or you might go to a company for shareholders and bring in money or whatever, and then you don't have a person that touch the money. So I think you need to look at different options and say, what type of companies and person do you get in, and then you can write a story of every option.

VR: So, Mrs Diener, what are your hopes for Grüner Kranz when it is passed down to the next generation?

GD: [German]

FD: Ya, my mother says as it is now, she wants to leave it like that, but she also, it's difficult for her to answer this question...you must tell her also what environment, what

circumstances will we live in 10 years or 20 years. Will there be a political change? Will there be a, you know how...will there be changes in the laws and regulations, will there be a big depression? Will there, in between, will there be, maybe, you see in Mexico you have got the earthquake...So it's not an easy...on a practical side, she likes it, the next generation should take it over as it is, plus minus, but she cannot demand it because maybe they are also under, the next generation might also be under pressure. Then it might not...it depends on the next generation – are they still able to stay in Windhoek, stay here economically, have a job. Can they bring their kids to the schools? Can they have social support, all these questions come up.

GD: [German]

FD: [German]...I say, within the family, my sister has a different thought, or maybe belief or political, then I, and my mother might have a different, and that has also an effect – how do you bring the next generation in? Or do you bring them in at all? Maybe you don't agree with their opinions. And it happens in families where people don't give their children their property.

[...]

FD: Ya, you have to think about all this, and I think at the end of the day, you see, if you look at my age, I've also reached the age of retirement. And if you see the handwork which must still be done, it's quite a lot.

GD: [German]

[sound of water running]

FD: Ya, the water's running from the pit. It reached the level now, and now it's running away. That's why I say we must make a water feature. It runs down...to make a mill. Ya, you've got quite a lot of underground water here. So, its again a difficult one. Because my age is also limited. But if it were for another ten years, if you give me guarantee that I, or I must give myself a guarantee, then if, should I survive for another ten years, then what would I do? Then I think one can only try to ensure every room is maintained and because there's such a high demand, that you do not leave it like, and do nothing. Although it might cost you today more, then you might get in for a year, but you must just say, ok, rather invest 10000 today, and get 10000 back over the next 3 years, that would be good enough. Or what is my guideline. But that is how I calculate. You have the property, and you have the building so to say, and you have to make a calculation. So you cannot just say you want today to invest 10000 and tomorrow you want 10000 back. It doesn't work that way.

[...]

FD: [German]...You have to use the opportunities. Like the water. Do something. Like you say, you want to see the wind mill or water mill running.

GD: [German]

FD: So then the Windhukers will talk about it, they come here...When the games restaurant is here, you pay a round of chess next to the water, you will enjoy it, and you meet people...I think that is...you might even see the advertisement in Air Namibia's catalogue...

GD: [German]

FD: There are lots of opportunities, and you just have to think about these things. And make use of them. Not just go home.

VR: ...Mrs Diener, is there anything else that you thought of during our conversation, that you'd like to add, or any thoughts that you have?

FD: [German]

GD: [German]

FD: My mother just says that she hopes that I be in control of everything and that I control it with the money available, and that we don't take up too much funds in the bank...

GD: [German]

FD: I can rather make...take a loan for other properties, but not for this one.

GD: [German]

FD: And she has a problem with her eyes, she cannot see, and somebody must do it for her. But it's just putting on my shoulders...I don't think there's a contingency plan should I not be there, or not be able...[German]

GD: [German]

FD: ... you need a certain level of trust in a person to continue there. Even sometimes you don't have that level of trust in your own family, but we just hope that there will be someone like that.

VR: You can just hope.

GD: [German]

FD: She says just that whoever is involved should not only get the money out and lend more from the banks and end up bankrupt. That she doesn't want.

## **INTERVIEW WITH MONICA OCHSE**

### **Principal Architect of the Renovations to the Turnhalle (2003) /SADC Tribunal Hall (2007)**

Interviewed by Vanessa Ruhlig on Wednesday 27 September 2017.

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Vanessa Ruhlig How did you get involved with all the old buildings?

Monica Ochse Through Klaus I think. And also I was on Heritage Committee.

Monica Ochse It was always...I've always loved old buildings, yes...

[...]

Monica Ochse ...was for the first one, it was not, it was just you know, get these people to sit down, and they need to carry on, and work needed to carry on, and everything like that. So it was not anything like after the fire, that was great, then we had more money, we had a lot more money, and yes, so that's how it is. I'm trying to see what else we did here...Decora, we also had a very good contractor there. Yes.

Vanessa Ruhlig So, the fire, did it destroy everything or how much did the fire actually destroy?

Monica Ochse It destroyed, in the main hall, all the, what happened is the fire was from the ventilator they think, the ventilator little machines, or something that sparked the fire, and, unfortunately I don't have those lovely photographs with me now, but, and then it fell down and then, on the floor, then it went . And it was the wood, the roof and the floor mainly that part of it you know. So that's what happened.

Monica Ochse And then we were allowed of course, that's why we got to do this nice thing, you could build that up again. And that was great fun. You know, it was a wonderful job, I loved it. You know, and standing there with the cranes and building? all these things...I don't know if you need these?

Vanessa Ruhlig I would love that actually, because I've spoken quite a bit about his, Otto Busch's roof designs. I'm looking, as I mentioned in my email, I'm looking at the Gruner Kranz Hall...

Monica Ochse Yes. That is lovely.

Monica Ochse Beautiful artwork up there. Beautiful.

[...]

Monica Ochse So...it was wonderful, I really had a nice time with the...this was the best building I've ever enjoyed. It was just, everything just went perfect, you know, it just. One of those...not your usual where everybody complains...everybody wanted to help, and friendly, and it was nice. I got along very well with them. Ok, get the project within the budget. Ok the budget was 4.5 million.

[...]

Monica Ochse 26th November 2007? Is it the same? Yes, that's perfect. Ok, Turnhalle floor restoration, of course we had to do the floor again, and restore it without touching the outside of the building. Ok, that was the main thing with the Heritage Committee, you weren't allowed to change the outside. So if there was anything we had to do, is just make sure that we didn't do anything that would upset them.

Vanessa Ruhlig So how did you approach that, with the floor?

Monica Ochse There you go...we had to build up quite a bit. That's the outside, and then they, you know, because of that, we had to build up then...a lot of the floor was there hey. A lot of it was there, and then they just built up little pieces. And then we put slats across, and then we put the floor in...

Vanessa Ruhlig And the actual structure of the walls, the existing walls, all of that was still the original? And that wasn't damaged by the fire?

Monica Ochse The first one, we fixed it all up before the fire. There was a lot of, not damage from the fire, but just degradation, it just crumbled apart, and everything had to be fixed up before that. And you'll see on, you'll see on the photographs, on those photographs, and I went around and I took a lot of photographs of all the corners that were rotting, and this was rotting, and that. And so a lot of the buildings were also demolished at that point hey.

Monica Ochse ...Before we fixed it up. Ok, this is the older one. But it was really, at the back, it was terrible. There you go...so a lot of this was fixed up already...so we fixed up all these things, and then we burnt it. [Laughs] You can see, I mean that, all these, a lot of buildings on the outside were removed, broken down, demolished.

[...]

Vanessa Ruhlig Ok. What are your associations with or your impressions of the Turnhalle building?

Monica Ochse Now?

Vanessa Ruhlig I think, perhaps you could say before and now.

Monica Ochse I would say before, ok, before, it was really, it was just a clean up operation if you ask, it was clean up, and fix up and maintain and there, so that they could carry on with the SADC. They had all the judges coming from Zimbabwe, coming through, and all these people, and they needed to carry on and work. And, yes, it was messy, it was ...I remember under the stage it was, walking under the stage it was this dark place.

Monica Ochse Something like that, yes. And they just used it as a store, you know, it was just, you know, just a mess. Had to get that cleaned, and everything cleaned up so...the first series...the first: Turnhalle 1...Turnhalle, just to get it functioning so that they could carry on. And I think you'll see it on the photographs, that you know, it was just sort of to get it going, so that they could practise, and then of course. The big one came, then the fire.

Monica Ochse And then that was, it was wonderful, you know, it was really nice, because it was this building that we've worked on, we'd all worked there before, and we could all...we didn't have money for the first one hey, no money, so it was just really a patch job.

[...]

Monica Ochse But it was, it was...you know, every time I go past the Turnhalle, I just say, yes please!

Vanessa Ruhlig So, how did you go about the trusses? [ ... ] How did you work out how to do the trusses?

Monica Ochse No. Ok, that that you've got there, we'd got [Mervander?] there, on the existing building, and then we worked out how the existing German trusses would be, and how are they. There was enough information there. Look, it didn't burn down totally. It didn't you know, it wasn't, the roof and that was there, a lot of it, parts had burnt down. So everything was there, and with Decora, Reiner Kittig, he helped a lot. And he said, he's going to get this guy

Monica Ochse And we had a meeting and he said ok, trusses, he can make them, and he can do this, and we worked out costs and everything, so ya, that's how it worked. And then [Mervander?] came up with these funny, fancy little drawings, yes, those things there. So that was all, he then came there and he said he can do these ones and yes...

Vanessa Ruhlig So, how did you approach the design, because obviously the first time was just touching up and fixing...?

Monica Ochse There was very little design to be done, very very little. The building is now as it was there. Look at this. The only thing is we couldn't change any of that, we could take some of these horrible things out and put in, um...but that is as it was, and we had to, we stuck with that all the way. Right till the end. It was only, as you can see now, you've got the different colours, the yellow. And painting of the...it was mainly just the painting that we could do.

Monica Ochse But change of the building, no. Couldn't. Couldn't do that. So it was just. And then it was also inside, we had a lovely little balcony at the top there, that you could look down on all the people you know, just to upgrade everything, and of course we had then...we used wooden flooring...and I think it's just mainly the thing, just make it as...you could see, all of this

Vanessa Ruhlig What is your favourite aspect or element of the building?

Monica Ochse Oh. Fixing it up I suppose. It was just fantastic being there all the time with the trusses, and helping them with the...it was just being part of it, you know, and ya, we spent our time. Because we had to do it so quickly and we spent all the time there, and you know, first thing in the morning to go down and see what's on. I think its just being part of the whole thing, to get it up...

Vanessa Ruhlig That's fantastic. So, I saw now, in your files, that you've got Edda Schoedder's survey in there...So, my question was, were you aware of her survey at the time, and did you refer to her survey assessment for the building during the whole process?

Monica Ochse No I didn't. Let me just think about this. No I did. I think the whole thing, look Klaus, I also chatted to Klaus at the time, and that, and it was the whole thing, just carry on and do the building proud. Do that type of thing, and do it well. Yes, you can put it like that.

Vanessa Ruhlig If you had looked directly at her survey, would it have changed the way you did anything?

Monica Ochse I don't think the survey would have done any change, I think...you know, the only thing that would have done change is if we had more money, that you could actually, you know, do all of the, like you know do all of the aluminium, all in this, just to...every aspect of it you'd do better because you had more money.

Monica Ochse Better wood. Better finishes. I know upstairs and downstairs we could have...and also, there was no way that you could remove all the loos and toilets and all the finishes you know. Only those that were problems. But otherwise, if it worked, it worked, we fixed it up and that's it. But I think if you could have, you'd lose a lot of the building, if you take everything out.

Monica Ochse I think I'm quite happy with the building as it came out. I think so. I think so. I think, you know, not much difference would...we were all happy in the end, that it's done and everything.

Vanessa Ruhlig Which changes over the years do you think have added the most value to the building?

Monica Ochse No. The burn down. That we took...those old rubbish buildings, derelict buildings, away. That was the best.

Vanessa Ruhlig What would you say makes the Turnhalle special or unique in Windhoek?

Monica Ochse Unique, as you see the lady here who said, Oh, the one that burnt down? It was a very big thing when this burnt down. And unfortunately I don't have the damn photographs, otherwise you...you must have seen the photographs?

Monica Ochse Yes, yes. No, it was huge, and everybody knew about this building because it's very central. And it's sort of, it's a, it was really a building that all Namibians sort of related to, they all know the building, you know, it was a big thing. And then they knew that the building had burnt down. And I think that's made it unique, because it wasn't. And it was right in the centre, you know, it was right there. And people relate to the building somehow.

## **INTERVIEW WITH MARLEY TJITJO**

### **Namibian Architect and Former Chairman of the Built Heritage Committee of the National Heritage Council**

Interviewed by Vanessa Ruhlig on Wednesday 27 September 2017.

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[...]

Vanessa Ruhlig Um, what I find quite cool is you've got all of these villas on this Schanzenhugel...

Vanessa Ruhlig With Jaco's villa, and then I think there are about six or seven of them in this part. So, what would you say makes this particular area, and of course Turnhalle is also down the road, what would you say makes this special?

Marley Tjitjo Ya, you know for me it's actually not any particular one of those villas. It is the collection of the villas together that actually creates the uniqueness you know, of the environment. I think one of these would actually be easily lost within, you know, a collection of say new or modern buildings or modern houses around it. But because you can actually identify them together as belonging to an era, you know, that really makes it special. It's really what, you know, that's what adds the value. That they have been preserved, they've been preserved in close proximity to one another, and together they really read well, and communicate that whole atmosphere, the spirit of the times, you know. so to say.

Marley Tjitjo I mean, you know, the other thing also is that when you look at them together, or rather? individually, you discern the different features you know, between the way the windows are say, rendered, either in terms of form or configuration, ?the width within? these windows and openings etc, the verandahs, you know, the fretwork, you know, those that has...So each is really unique and they all are quite rich in their own individuality.

Marley Tjitjo If you really look closely, you study any particular one of them. But for me, you know, the collection of a couple of those together for me has always been, you know, the special part of it. Even when I was in the Heritage Council that is in fact what we tried to preserve at all costs, that, you know, you don't look at the particular house or dwelling in isolation from its built environment or its community of dwellings. Because that really is what needs preserving

Vanessa Ruhlig Definitely. How do you think the Turnhalle fits into that...you know it was designed by the same architect...how do you think that, do you think it fits into that era or do you see it as a completely separate...?

Marley Tjitjo I've always had mixed feelings about the Turnhalle to tell you the truth!

Vanessa Ruhlig I want to hear all of them!

Marley Tjitjo No, I think, you know, I often think that smaller dwellings sometimes gives their authors a whole lot more, you know, opportunity or capital to explore and to really bring it all out and a sensitivity. Whenever there comes a big public or civil building, I think something is always lost. You almost sense a lack of enthusiasm to some extent you know, it becomes a little bit more rational stripped of all the...you

know, the detailing, and the attention, you know, to detailing. The other thing that I know about the Turnhalle as it is now, also is that it has been changed over time, you know, extensively, and I think that has also robbed it of some of its original...you know, spirit. I know they've closed in some verandahs, they've added, you know, onto it, etc So it's difficult to really tell completely what it was as it stood out there, but I've seen older pictures And I do not really feel that that is, compared to the houses, it's a particularly, you know, outstanding, you know, building or outstanding architecture. A lot of the times, [?] author, I think with the houses really, you know, it kind of exudes a whole lot more spirit than the Turnhalle

Marley Tjitjo I think you kind of, with a house you're a lot more relaxed, but I think with civil buildings, the responsibility weigh heavier perhaps on you, and you, and it kind of makes? a? bit? of? inhibition? It becomes, you know, it's a different building...It's a different building. But I've seen it also with the German architecture of the times The civil buildings would always be stripped of a lot of the artistic, you know, rendering, they become very, what would you use, the word, that escapes me now...

Marley Tjitjo Stark is the word. It's a lot more starker. You know, and that to me is, has always also been a kind of a contradiction, perhaps. But not really, I mean one has to also accept on the one hand, it's two different buildings, two different uses, you know, different scales etc

[...]

Marley Tjitjo ...part of architectural education teaches you a lot about historical architecture, or, you know, the history of architecture, and the different styles over the ages etc, so you are a whole lot more receptive than what a lay person would be. And having said that and having served on the heritage council, you also become aware of...

Marley Tjitjo ...got a whole lot more emphasis, it's colonial, why should we preserve it, why don't we establish our own legacy, and because this question was often posed you know, to me, I started engaging with it as well, introspecting about it, just thinking about it, what it really means, what should one do, what should one not do But at the end of the day, my position is that one should actually preserve it and fight for its preservation no matter what your views are about it, because often those who push it, that school of thought, would like it all obliterated, um, demolished or whatever, done away with, and I don't think, I don't know if that is the best way to preserve even history I mean the best way to teach history, for people to really believe that that era of German colonialism happened in this country is when they see those artefacts. So it's an important aspect of you know, the storytelling. It's not just something that you can wish away, it is, history is what it is, it has happened, and preserving these artefacts helps also in the teaching of history

Marley Tjitjo What's the point? because when you look even at, you know...these are period pieces, that's how I prefer to look at it, or architecture generally. That, you know, all architecture somehow, in a way, communicates the spirit of the times The era that we are practising in as architects, that's part of our storytelling, that's you know, our influences etc and world views, that somehow gets expressed in these buildings, so it speaks of our times. And it's important that others who in a hundred years' time would be looking back to our era, should be able to look back and see, you know, and appreciate, and be able to read from what we left behind, what we were about, you know, what we valued. So you know, I think one should actually look at it from a broader historical perspective, not with a narrow mind of

you know, a specific era and what it might mean to you but I think it is the whole of history. That's my approach. But certainly, you are right, you cannot preserve all of it. And even while serving on the heritage council, we've had to give permission or permits for some of these old buildings to be demolished because they could just otherwise cost way too much for the owners to maintain etc. They've basically reached the end of their productive lifespans So, you know, as sad as it is, you cannot keep it all, but that, those that can be kept, that should be kept, should be preserved.

Vanessa Ruhlig Stepping a little bit back, to that question about your relationship to German colonial architecture, my question was: How does your perception of German colonialism affect your relationship with the architecture?

Marley Tjitjo [laughs] That's a good one. My perception of German colonialism especially as a young *Herero* man?

Vanessa Ruhlig Exactly! I have to ask!

Marley Tjitjo No, you have to ask. No, that's alright. Look, my worldview, I think, is really very different from a lot of tribesmen, Hereros, for that matter. But generally, I also think that what my tribe has done with German colonialism, we've actually co-opted a lot of German symbols, symbolism etc, which makes it easier to tolerate, you know, even the architecture, or the artefacts, as opposed to the era, and what it has done. German colonialism was brutal history, we know it has affected us all. To this day we, in many ways we're actually scarred by it, you know. In a lot of aspects, you know, about our lives. But for some reason, when you consider, you have to consider it from the point of view, that Hereros, after the German genocidal wars, actually adopted not so much through force, but a long time thereafter, the dress of their old colonial masters. the female dress code, or even the men, military uniform etc. So these symbols were co-opted, and when you co-opt something you change its meaning essentially, so that it makes or has a different meaning to you. you know, so you're not really taking say all those aspects from the era, and say, I'm cloaking myself into the symbolism of the era, it was a reinvention, in a way, of a new identity, you know, and it was also a celebration in a way, of the resistance against German colonialism. And in a similar manner, I think that also kind of taints my world view, and that sets my attitude towards German colonial architecture, as opposed to German colonialism. I'm able to somehow separate the two. You know, that those are artefacts of an era, I know what that era meant to me, to my people, to...historically, the symbolism of it etc, but the fact that I have this German colonial house here that I can look at makes it so real, it brings it home to me, that it's true, it happened, and you know, this is the evidence in a way. So, the attitude therefore is more, much more, I think it's more one of understanding, engaging with the history. It is not one, like my colleagues, for example, on the Heritage Council, would have been like, 'No, but you know, German colonialism was brutal etc we shouldn't leave one of those buildings standing because they represent an era that was, that did this. Two different attitudes you know, towards that. I don't know if that answers...

Vanessa Ruhlig No, it does! Fantastic. I've always actually wanted to ask about the Herero dresses... was it a gradual thing, or did people decide they were going to do this?

Marley Tjitjo It was a gradual thing, look, after the internment in the concentration camps you know, you cannot talk about it without going a little bit into the history of it. You see, after the wars, all the remainder of the Herero people were all interned into concentration camps in fact, and you know, as soon as the war was done, and

the masters, the colonial masters were happy that there was no more resistance or spirit of resistance left in the people They gradually started releasing them to farmers, specifically farmers, as labour or labourers. And they were then forced to, which is a process that started a bit earlier as well, wear now the colonial dresses of their masters. You know, and it was also part of the whole conversion to Christianity. So, but gradually, because this was actually, it's again that whole attitude of co-opting, that whole thing of you are being forced to do something eventually you actually take it on as your own, you co-opt it. So that it changes its meaning, you know, the symbolism... So it's that same spirit that you can take on something that could be perceived as negative, make it your own So that you change the meaning of that as you...and eventually that's what started happening, because long after the Germans were gone, the Hereros increased this dressing with vigour, and changing it, acting symbolism, you know, so that it became part of the culture. You know, the colours etc. And it was really in celebration of that whole spirit of resistance. To them it was also, it's another way to resist. You know, the feeling, if you think you can change ME to be like you, no. WATCH!

Marley Tjitjo It's a matter of perspective really, it's a matter of perspective, of how people choose to react, you know, against it.

Marley Tjitjo Ya, I believe it's use. Using the building, contemporaneously, you know, if the buildings are not used, if they fall into disrepair etc, then they will definitely disappear. But if they are used either as residential dwellings by people who buy them and live in them, who wants to preserve them, that's one aspect of it. Or even if it's actually used as offices, as is the case with this house, etc, by people who value their preservation. The houses, and that's also what I learnt through working for the Heritage Council, the houses that are left uninhabited are often the houses that starts disappearing, or all those buildings..So, that's been our policy at the Heritage Council as well, that if you allow, or if an owner approaches you for a permit to say, add or change a small aspect of the house, and you deny that owner that , what's most likely going to happen is that the person is going to get alienated from the house somehow, you know, go look for another accommodation, go rent elsewhere, his house might be left standing, and at the end of the day, you actually then, you would have done more harm than good. So, it requires a whole lot more, a spirit of positive engagement with the owner, as you negotiate basically, and that was our approach, that you negotiate these changes with the owners. If you want to put in new modern ceiling tiles, you try and walk them away from that, within reason, you have to hear why they want to change it as such, will it not work better, if you rather preserve or put in, even if you have to rip out the ceiling, put in a new wooden ceiling that relates to the architecture. And I found that that works. Short of that, I mean I've seen buildings that were just left because they could not be used.

[...]

Marley Tjitjo It's relevant, you know, it's really. I find it's relevant, it's how we engage with these things that really, you know, matters, and the awareness that we also raise in the process, you know, aspects around heritage and preservation. I believe that if we do not value what has gone before, we're not going to value what we have now as well. It's got something to do with that responsibility, you know, as actors in the built environment etc, we carry quite a heavy responsibility towards not only the context within which we're working, a particular site of a particular building and the buildings that surrounds it. But also all those you know, historical aspects. And they're also, this project itself, a singular project that you're working on, and what it will mean in 50 years' time. It's all about awareness. Hopefully we get there one day.

## **INTERVIEW WITH KLAUS BRANDT**

### **Former Chairman of the Nia Heritage Committee and Contributor to Edda Schoedder's Survey of Historical Architecture**

Interviewed by Vanessa Ruhlig on Saturday 30 September 2017, Windhoek.

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Vanessa Ruhlig I'll go according to the questions, ya, and then obviously we can deviate as we feel. So how did you become involved with the compilation of Edda Schoedder's survey of historical buildings in the 1980s?

Klaus Brandt Well, in fact, we already got started in the 1970s. In fact it was almost a direct response to a United Nations, what's it, UNESCO request, you know they dedicated a year, I think it was 78, I'm talking under correction. You can call that the year of Architecture and Heritage.

Klaus Brandt And that committee was then formed, and I was the first chairman, for a number of years, during which of course, what made it so interesting and relevant is that we had a core of committed architects, and of course the one that was really committed towards a project you know, a meaningful project, not generally informing and getting involved in the architectural heritage and preservation of buildings, was actually [the] compilation of a register. Because that was a real project.

[...]

Klaus Brandt I think this is a wonderful thing, you asked somewhere what is the most valuable [aspect of Schoedder's survey] - that you have access to it, because they tend to disappear and they get untidy, you know, the forces of entropy are at work, definitely in Africa they're always at work

Klaus Brandt And that's what I enjoyed when Jens said he's going to digitize it. And if he's done that all, ticked it off, then wonderful! Then it can be replicated and you have it. Even though you might find that the building doesn't exist anymore, you could have access to it. So that to me, and of course the archival references and a little bit of history, and all of that, it's an academic tool, it's also a real tool, because you could, when you do restorations, you could actually do some more research, find some more information if you want to do a thorough job.

Klaus Brandt As Edda would have done.

Klaus Brandt ... So that's the other reason, you know, when you sit down and you decide, the building stock is relatively small when you consider how much has been built, and how many buildings there were. And many of them have probably fallen into such disrepair or have actually been demolished, that you would say, listen the building stock is shrinking. To the extent that, in the end, you have the really prominent buildings you know, those that have historical significance, you know, one or other important event has taken place

Klaus Brandt Or they are of exceptional architectural value, that you would actually make a special effort to try and preserve them. So that has always been the attitude, and when we set out the evaluation, that's where the grading all came in.

Klaus Brandt But we all know that when you talk volume, the volume is small, look at Windhoek now. If you fly over it, you will see small little pockets of buildings, and one being the Erkrath-Gathemann facade, you know, and that has always been an argument and the argument was put forward

Klaus Brandt that, I think we must be grateful for, and I think in some part, the Heritage Committee played a part in that. But it also had its own momentum. A general awareness. You see, the other part, apart from having this real tool, you know, a building, a register with the graded buildings that you know the city, the town planners and the heritage council, could now refer to. you also...it also helped to create an awareness.

[...]

Klaus Brandt And they had I think Marco Polo? It was used to be called Marco? Polo? if I'm not mistaken yes. We even had our famous, and just for that reason, famous first architectural, NIA, dinner, with the guests, around about Independence - Hage Geingob was a guest of honour. It must have been that year, or year after. That was held at that building [Kaiserkrone].

Vanessa Ruhlig Oh, ya, that question about do the same elements or attributes still apply now, the ones that you looked at in the surveys that you did, how would you adapt it to today's...?

Klaus Brandt I guess it's debatable, you know, you may say the historical context you know... may have overshoot the mark a bit by claiming or by taking note that the building was designed by one of the you know, dozen or half a dozen of famous architects of the period. Redecker was one of them.

Klaus Brandt And then we always are...well, he's now well-known, therefore it gets an additional point. You may actually...or one or other historical event or...though we also had difficulty at times to decide when it wasn't really a, you know, associated with a government, you know like being seat of the [Landestaak?] you know, the local parliament, or for a time, you had to sort of debate, what do you think - this was now the first of this or the first big shop.

Klaus Brandt Old buildings are included, are part - I mean we cannot just have a functional, industrial complex where humans live - you need to be creat[ive], you need open space, you need...the building, if the city is old, you need to preserve the old fabric. And then of course you get these beautiful examples, like the kind of gems in Europe, like Prague, who were spared by the bombing attacks, who are there for everybody to see, and you can see, you know, how it attracts people, how they're fascinated. Of course, that, then, and we can still justify it has got a value - it attracts tourists. Tourists, you know, find that instead of having just a modern city which you see everywhere, it has some depth.

Klaus Brandt The association with old Windhoek, through its spaces is vistas. That's the other thing that we always tried to argue. I was horrified of course when we discovered that the government had decided to use this very historical open space in front of the Alte Feste. It's historical, as you know. It used to be a concentration camp at some point. It used to be the camping grounds of the invading troops from South Africa.

Klaus Brandt You know, when that was sort of taken away and the Alte Feste was taken away and totally dominated, but there it is, and now we have to live with

it. So there is still, we always felt that, you know because its pretty much the fulcrum of the old government, historical precinct. Which is Leutwein, Mugabe Avenue, the church going down there, the scale of the old houses, you know the old ?bautenhouse?, and of course the Tintenpalast set back, and the Alte Feste, the schools and so on.

Klaus Brandt It would be a good thing. Do an update, and you have...it should be relatively easy. Of course you need man hours, you have go out there and see, well this building is listed, so you actually have to, without having to go back to do research, spend hours at the archives, you can go there and note what the condition of the building is, does it exist, you know, demolished...demolished...you know, so that to me would be very useful. And you can say, well, for whom? Of course for the sake of the body knowledge, you know.

[On the Ministry of Finance building]

Klaus Brandt And that turned out to be very, I'd already got the sketch designs, then I looked at it and said listen, this is just too close. It infringes, we need some space. We need sort of, give an interface between the buildings. And that was...able to do this by just going up. And designing a footprint, a very utilitarian building, you can't sort of claim that that's now an architectural masterpiece, but it's a utilitarian building, supposed to be quite functional, neutral.

Klaus Brandt Not really imposing, and I must say that when I see it, and I often walk through the Turnhalle building, I look at it and say, wow, it actually relates quite nicely, you know. It doesn't impose, it's there but sort of forms a new neutral background, no sort of fancy architecture. So from that point of view I think we kept the integrity of the Turnhalle pretty much in tact. As you know, in any case, it's largely the hall, and then the conglomeration of buildings and wings and so on, which were added you know, periodically over time, and then this other annex which the commercial building, the Lotterman annex which goes around the corner, which Ministry of Finance also took over now. We had some ideas of how we could link and I even thought that they could actually make this available to the Ministry of Finance and then they would have the entire block. And then really fix up the Lotterman corner and create better parking because access to the parking is not ideal, it's from a busy street, lots of cars that back up there and so on. But you know how ministries are, I think the Ministry of Justice got in there, they're desperately in need of courtrooms, and they just claimed this as a court room. But who knows what happens in future. So ya, that's what we did. The building, I'm proud to say, was pretty efficient.

Vanessa Ruhlig Your associations and impressions of the Turnhalle building...

Klaus Brandt Ya, look, I, you like it. Again, it's a corner. It's a corner building, it's a bit of historical architecture, and it's great that they kept it. You can argue about the colour scheme and so on. And amazing, since it burnt down that they rebuilt it again. Which is, look it's worth keeping that corner. Perhaps changing the colour scheme. And then you've got these pretty nondescript buildings inside that you don't even need to comment on - I would have even removed some of the offices and created a bigger parking area. it would have been nice perhaps...but that's you know, if ever there were the demand, and the money was available, say let's go revamp it to say something that's, that would satisfy the requirements of conferencing, in terms of acoustics and so on.

## **INTERVIEW WITH DR JACO WASSERFALL**

### **Otto Busch Villa Owner and Namibian Architect**

Interviewed by Vanessa Ruhlig on Tuesday 3 October 2017, Windhoek.

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Vanessa Ruhlig ...looking at Turnhalle, Kaiser Krone and Gruner Kranz, all by Otto Busch, I thought I'd get your opinion of his buildings in general, as an owner and resident of an Otto Busch villa, what do you say...

Jaco Wasserfall Two actually. I used to own another one around the corner as well, that was my first house in Windhoek. Specifically in terms of the villas? I think it's obviously the very imposing setting on Schanzenhugel, I think it must have been quite a spectacular place at the time with all these villas.

Jaco Wasserfall and Villa Kiesewetter right at the bottom. And then I noted architectural individuality and their sort of ...?? presence. I think it's got to do with that period of history, you know, it was part of the German scramble for Africa.

Jaco Wasserfall But I like attributes such as the elevated location as I said, the very elegant proportion I think that was a major concern to him and it's clear that he worked from facades, you know, he worked on the facades. Distinctive composition of steep roofs, the gable, dome tower, bay window, and what I also quite enjoy is this rather simplistic or I sometimes say, masculine ornamentation and [?]. I'm saying that because you remember it was the same period as the Victorian era, and I think when you compare the two architectures you see that this is a lot more restrained...and to my mind masculine. The other was very ornate and very female and I think it had to do with the you know Kaiser Wilhelm the second versus Queen Victoria. Ya, that sort of takes care of that question.

Vanessa Ruhlig Yes. Ok, so, what is your favourite element or attribute of this architecture?

Jaco Wasserfall I mean, again, I think basically if I look at the villas, specifically, what I quite like is this quirky way in which he, the very carefully proportioned facades belie the plan of the building behind it. So, in the previous house, I'll show you a plan of it. The, on the front facade, you know, you see this beautiful gable, with the little windows - two at the top and three at the bottom - and, you know it looks, the impression it gives you from the outside is, Ok, there's quite an important room behind here, and there's one space behind there. When you get inside the building you discover, you know, this little arrangement of windows is separated by walls!

Vanessa Ruhlig What makes the place special to you?

Jaco Wasserfall There are many things. I've always said that the most endearing feature of our house is this sort of elaborate approach to the house, so you know you start at the bottom, it isn't that pure anymore because the uses have changed, but it's still there, and it's quite a journey, its sort of winding stairs and pergolas and?? and that's quite a way to approach a building and you can't say the same of the Turnhalle. If you look at the early pictures you see there's a vast piece of open land in front of it.

Vanessa Ruhlig Ya, it was a different setting. So I found it quite interesting, I spoke to Marley about that residential development being built next door to your property. Tell me a bit about your approach to, or your opinions on development in an area that is sensitive, such as Schanzenhugel.

Jaco Wasserfall The saving of insensitive developments has been my quest for about twenty years. There's the file. Of all of the stuff that I've opposed. That development being one. And so I rallied up support from all the neighbouring property owners. And so we started by objecting to the application for a higher bulk. And then City Council, because it was approved by City Council without any request or whatever, you're meant to ask the neighbours, or advertise, it was just approved. So we managed to stop it at townships board.

Jaco Wasserfall But then eventually they overruled our objection and granted it and then our only way to control it in a lesser way was to say, to look at the plans and scrutinize the plans. So we forced them, because initially they had a building that sat almost right on the edge and came all the way out. We enforced the building lines which is 3, 5, 7 and a half, so that's why the building steps back. We made them lower the building by a metre and a half. And I made a comment which was not appreciated by the owner, or the architect, that in the plan there are certain spaces that are, I mean there were layouts for residential, so what they did is, you know that when you do a development in the city, in the CBD, at City Council, if you've got a certain bulk, they will double the bulk as free bulk, if that double bulk is residential. And so that's what they did, so not only did they get the higher bulk in a very sensitive area in terms of heritage, they were given that, the same bulk on top of that for residential use, and that's why the building is so big. And then they, I think they only wanted, look, it's really a house for the owner, he's a chinese gentleman, and his two daughters, and then across to the Bahnhof Street side, there's another flat, which in the layout it had no kitchen, it was, I could see it was meant to be an office. So they crooked it, and I know that they were going to, they're going to use it as an office. So they used this pretence of getting the...but if they use it I will go back to City Council

Jaco Wasserfall City Council, in their defence said, ya, but next door they allowed the bigger bulk, it was a mistake but now, you know, there's a precedent. And I said, but come on. But in the end we lost that one. But at least we got them to control some of the building, some of the...so it was actually a lot bigger, they exceeded the bulk and it was a lot closer to all of the neighbour's houses? so they moved it back onto the road, because the City Council allowed them to do that.

Jaco Wasserfall So the problems here is, what these, you know, it's in the CBD, so its escalating land values, so the land is valuable, much more valuable in many people's minds than the heritage buildings. City Council's heritage consent policy I think has helped a great deal and you know what that entails, so you get the free bulk of that heritage building if you go in ?? to restore the building and use it, so in other words, whatever bulk is on the site, your new development can then be the full area, you get the rest for free. I think that's helped a great deal.

Jaco Wasserfall But it's, you know, lately it became important for the city, which I think is also very critical, I mean, it is an important policy, but they never thought of the consequences, so what they did is they, for the past I don't know how many years, probably 5, or maybe even longer, there's this policy of the free residential bulk policy

Jaco Wasserfall So now what happens is that, the site like the one next to me here, they applied to have, to retain the house, in other words they could give that bulk. All of the bulk in all of the centre here is .5 bulk. They then applied for increase to 1.

Jaco Wasserfall which I objected to and won. Plus they applied for free residential bulk. So you see what happens is in the end you sit with a heritage building on a site where they only allowed a certain minimum bulk, for a very specific reason, but now they allow them to double it. So effectively you're sitting with double the permissible bulk.

Vanessa Ruhlig Then looking at Turnhalle, because that's so close, you've designed two buildings at the same street intersection as Turnhalle. How did you approach that design, dealing with the sensitive area, and considering their proximity to, and their relationship to Turnhalle?

Jaco Wasserfall Look, the one thing that I find always [?] about Turnhalle, is that its very existence, and that's just my thoughts, its very existence today, in a way, led to the sacrifice of Villa Kiesewetter. Because Kiesewetter was demolished in the seventies to make way to provide parking for the Turnhalle when they started all the conferences and stuff, all the talks and negotiations. So when we did FNCC we had that corner site empty, the old Kiesewetter site. And if you look at old photographs you can see it had apple gardens, green, that very strange corner

Jaco Wasserfall So FNCC, although obviously there were many other factors that determined the specific way that we resolved that development, but on Schutzen Street at the top we stuck to a single-storey scale, and that equated then to a three storey height on Robert Mugabe which is very similar in height to the Turnhalle. So we did actually try to look at the building in scale, not just on plan but also the footprint of it. So it's not a huge thing that squats, it is similar in size, if you understand what I'm trying to say. So that's the one thing, so it was the sympathetic scale, and then, more importantly, it was giving back to the city, so where Turnhalle, where it is now, you know, it's just a building. And we tried to create generous public space, the green open gardens. It's a pity that they've fenced it in, but you know you can't control it... and it is a beautiful garden.

Jaco Wasserfall So when we did the Auditor General. I mean, the only facade, remaining facade of any significance architecturally is the north facade, you can't see the rest. And it's a pity that it sits right on the street edge. And it faces north, and it has no public interface

Jaco Wasserfall So, I mean, even if you're a tourist and you're wanting to linger, if it's summer, full summer, you're not going to linger there, it's bloody hot and uncomfortable. There's no shade, seating or anything. So I'm not sure what was built on the site opposite, because when we took over that site for the Auditor General it was old government houses, but not very old ones.

Jaco Wasserfall Not...it will be, some, it'll be probably 50s or 60s, so I don't know if there were any buildings across the road, so what we did there is we thought one had to acknowledge the presence, so we moved our building as far as possible to the north, because it is a substantial building.

Jaco Wasserfall we created this parking, there in between that's landscaped and I know at the moment you still see the shade-net structures, but they are only temporary, so they become designed in a way that the trees can grow, and the trees

are growing well, so I'm hoping in the end that they will do what I had always intended, is to remove those structures and then have this beautifully landscaped and treed area. So it's sort of giving a bit of breathing space to that squeezed northern facade, but obviously it's also acknowledging the FNCC's garden and looking at the whole crossing of the corner, the way that the buildings relate to the corner, and it acknowledges the garden of the FNCC

Jaco Wasserfall And we, even though it was a government project, we introduced a public space element along Robert Mugabe, with seating and shading, you know, trees, an avenue of trees and so on. So that was quite, I don't know how it slipped past government, but it was done.

Jaco Wasserfall I think that perhaps summarises our whole approach.

Vanessa Ruhlig Which changes over the years do you think have added the most value to the Turnhalle?

Jaco Wasserfall Only those by Otto Busch. I'm just talking externally, I think...moving onto your next question I think, I find the 1970s additions clumsy in terms of proportions. And it actually had quite an interesting eastern facade

Jaco Wasserfall And it sort of reinforced the feeling that it's squeezed into the site. And, the buildings on the western side, that obscures another, although they're similar in scale, I mean they're almost industrial looking, I'm not sure what they are, are they stores, I don't know

Vanessa Ruhlig Quite an odd combination...What would you say makes Turnhalle special or unique in Windhoek?

00:26:48.150 - 00:26:58.800

Jaco Wasserfall Well, obviously the historic significance in terms of not only being a heritage building and representative of the Wilhelmine style or era, but also it is the connections and the role in the process of independence and the writing of the constitution I guess.

Jaco Wasserfall Also, I think one should say, its contribution to that specific precinct in terms of, or heritage precinct, you can call it that, it's also in terms of Windhoek itself, it's also, this precinct was always the cultural precinct, so that's why FNCC works so well there.

Jaco Wasserfall You've got the theatre close by, you've got the National Art Gallery, and the museum, and jumping to your other question, perhaps that's a possible future use for the building, so in terms of combining and tying it into the cultural precinct.

Jaco Wasserfall Because it's wonderful to see how you know, the collaboration between the art gallery and FNCC for example, in terms of exhibitions, and so I do think that that space is a lovely space and you could use it for something like that. The parking remains the biggest problem. Anyway, I've jumped your question, sorry.

Vanessa Ruhlig ... How does the Turnhalle fit into the context of Schanzenhugel, or do you consider them different, separate historical settings?

Jaco Wasserfall The biggest value, obviously it has value on its own, most buildings then contribute to the overall precinct value, so I think it does belong to

this context. I just find it a pity that when they did the Finance extensions, that there was no attempt at acknowledging the presence of the Turnhalle

Jaco Wasserfall So I know it's probably a different site, but even so, it's the erection of a high parking garage at the front of it, or at the back of it, so it's more, it isolates it more, but it also missed that opportunity of perhaps reestablishing some links with Schanzenhugel and the precinct

Jaco Wasserfall because Robert Mugabe, that portion of the facade is dead. It would be wonderful if you know, if one could open up that portion for example, you know the parking area, obviously it would cause problems in terms of security but you could devise some or other structure to have it opened, just to give the building some breathing space you know.

Jaco Wasserfall And somehow have it reconnect to the east, with the Schanzenhugel precinct.

Vanessa Ruhlig How do you think buildings such as Turnhalle should be protected from change or development?

Jaco Wasserfall To my mind, a building such as this has the best chance of survival, if by way of adaptive reuse, but in an appropriate manner, so one has to think about it carefully, tie it back into its physical context, and then also a cultural context I think, or a social context.

Jaco Wasserfall So, unless we're able to do that, this building will not be here for long. You know, the next time they want to extend the Ministry of Finance, you know, that's the way to go. So...but to convince government to come up with, or to allow people to come up with - I mean we're doing the refurb of the Alte Feste at the moment

Jaco Wasserfall And it's the same thing, there's just no interest. No interest, the budget is meagre, to say the least, and...what I can say is they've said, don't we want to put this thing into a bigger context, and so we've done that. At our own risk. So we've shown how it could tie in with the museum

Jaco Wasserfall and everything else. But I think its, what confused us about it, it is this perception of what is the true value of this to Namibia? So if you go to that building, it's sad. I mean it's terrible to see the state of it.