THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CAPE COLONY

FROM 1795 TO 1837

VOLUME III

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C O N T E N T S O F V O L U M E I I I

ELEVEN :

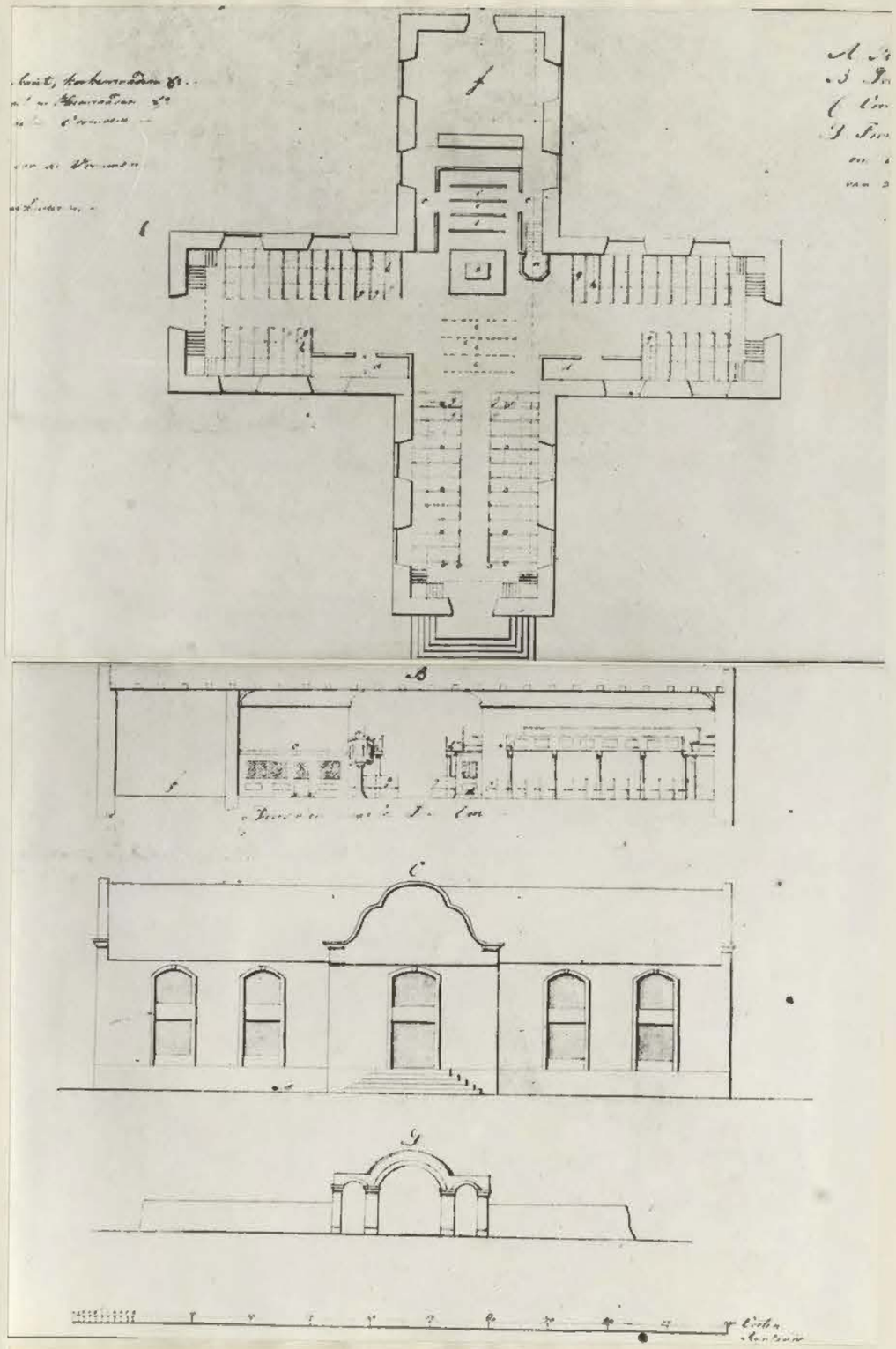
OFFICIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE EASTERN CAPE : 1820 to 1825.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

OFFICIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE EASTERN CAPE 1820 - 1825.

'It is much to be regretted that in this Colony scarcely a public building is to be found worthy of the purpose they are appropriated to - at Cape Town the Exchange has some pretention to taste and Elegance but 'tis the only one and even that has nothing very particular to boast off. One general heavy plan pervades the whole, Public and private...' (Samuel Hudson, Feb.1822. 'Journal' Accession 602 No.8). This probably expressed the feelings of a great many Englishmen of the period. The work of Thibault, executed as it was with due regard to the availability of materials and limited craftmanship of the Cape, was of a massive character by now altogether out of date. Adobe walls and crude plaster work, unrelieved then by the dappled shade of full-grown trees, stigmatised the architecture of the frontier districts as coarse and primitive. To eyes used, as Hudson's had been, to the splendours of late Georgian England, and

1. Pohl. 2. Samuel Hudson. Feb 1822



1. Plan, Section and Elevation of Uitenhage Church, by the District Surveyor, Swann.

unfamiliar with European Rococo, the architecture of the Cape was unsophisticated and unimpressive. Surprising as it may seem today, this was undoubtedly the attitude of nearly all the Regency Colonial officials, to whom the architectural heritage of Company days was worthless and even ugly, or, at the very least, in 'bad taste'.

But there was more for Hudson to condemn than simply the rustic frivolities of olden times. With the infiltration of new influences from the Continent, the Colonies and the Orient, the English architect was discovering an eclectic virtuosity which enabled him to select as the most suitable style for a particular purpose one which might come from any place or period.

Where religious architecture was concerned, Hudson clearly assumed, conforming with contemporary English popular opinion, that the Gothic style was the most suitable. When he wrote the above he had just been hearing of the designs for the proposed Dutch Reformed Church at Uitenhage (Plate 1). 'The Plan it seems is one of Mr.Swan's, the Government Surveyor, and report speaks very unfavourably of it. Pole[1] the builder wished to put in Gothic Windows - at least a more sightly form than those Barn looking things-but he was overruled and we are to have the old work over again the Surveyor abominating every appearance of Innovation upon Systems time and custom have rendered sacred...' (Ibid).

Thus we find ourselves launched on the 'Battle of the Styles' - a feud that was to rage faster and more furiously as the century lengthened.

Many of the officials at the Cape were of by no means humble origin. They followed the prevailing fashion of considering themselves 'men of taste',

and embarked on the post-Napoleonic era with a determination to establish an 'Age of Elegance' in South Africa. This was certainly the case with Lord Charles Somerset, as has already been seen in the work on his houses in Cape Town, and it was to be equally the case with such lesser- but no less discriminating - men as Captain Trappes (the Landdrost of Bathurst and afterwards of Worcester), Captain Huntley, Harry Rivers (the Landdrost of Albany) Francis Hope and many others.

In order to appreciate to the full the changes which were coming over architectural tastes at this time we must first re-examine the situation as it existed in South Africa in the early 1820's:

At the time when Hudson wrote, Classical architecture had been in favour at the Cape for forty years - since the advent of the French Troops in the 1780's. (This was, of course, the second period during which architecture of Neo-classical style had been built at the Cape - for it had been much in vogue in the first settlement under Van Riebeeck.)

Yet there was considerable difference between Classical architecture as it was understood by the traditionalists (who drew their standards of taste from Palladio and Philip Vingbooms) and by the earnest arbitors of the fashionable 'Neo-Classical' taste in Regency England and on the Continent. The two were worlds apart; as far indeed as the 'corruption' of Roman culture from the 'purity' of Greek. The Regency Neo-Classicists looked to the temples of ancient Hellas as their guide to an architecture that was honest and truthful, pure and good, just as the growing supporters of medieaval architecture looked to the great cathedrals. The two points of view, Greek Revival and Gothic, were irreconcilable, but at least they had one thing in common - together they ex-

Thirty miles away, at Port Elizabeth, Donkin had in 1820 erected a civic monument to his wife, after whom the town was named. The monument, the first of its kind in South Africa, stands on a hill overlooking the harbour and takes the form of a pyramid or cairn built of cemented sandstone blocks. It was completed in Feb. 1821.[1] Meanwhile the arrival of the eighteen-twenty settlers brought a measure of prosperity to Port Elizabeth. Besides the inevitable unimposing storehouses, and the temporary wooden structures previously mentioned (Chapter 10 Page 316) the Government was forced to contemplate the expenditure of considerable sums of money on additional public offices, customs house, prison, churches and schools. But as Uitenhage, the seat of the Landdrost, lay only three hours' distant, the authorities were naturally reluctant to duplicate facilities, and not only provided the minimum of civic amenities, but seem to have gone to some lengths to discourage the growth of the town.[2]

The old blockhouse on the shore was converted to make the first prison. Its timber upper storey, suffering from the severe exposure (and, one presumes, a lack of adequate maintenance during the previous twenty years) fell in early in April 1822, without, it seems killing any of the inmates.[3] The upper storey was then removed and the stone lower level reroofed with a thatched roof, after which, it was once more used as a prison.[4]

Towards the end of 1823 Herman Schutte, who, as Inspector of Town Buildings,[5] had now some direct responsibility for the maintenance of high standards of construction throughout the Colony, travelled from Cape Town to prepare designs and estimates for a new Customs House at Port Elizabeth. While he was engaged on the work, however, word came that he was to abandon the project at Port Elizabeth and proceed to the mouth of the Kowie River.[6] There the same funds

1. Ibid, 205 - 6.

2. C.O.246/246: 20th Dec.1825. Letter of William Dunn. 'If facilities had been given to Builders at Port Elizabeth, it would have contained many hundreds of Houses - not a twentieth part of the ground is occupied, yet many a family have I seen quit this place for want of land to build on.'

3. C.O.155/26, 3rd April; 1822.C.O.2642/54,24th April,1822.

4. C.O.2755/80; 20th June, 1835.

5. A post quite distinct from that of Inspector of Buildings. Schutte's responsibilities as Inspector of Town Buildings seem to have been roughly equivalent to those of the Municipal Building Inspectors of today. Schutte was appointed in 1821 ('African Almanac', Cape Town, 1821).

6. The site of the present Port Alfred.

were to be expended on the immediate erection of a Customs House, Harbour-master's House, and many other buildings.[1] Port Elizabeth had to be content with only temporary accommodation for its Customs and Port Offices until 1837.

The first buildings used for a church and a school were two of the temporary wooden structures sent out from England with the Settlers (Plate 5 on Page 318).[2]

It was not until 1825 that steps were taken for the replacement of these buildings with more permanent ones, and it was only in 1831 that the new St. Mary's was ready for consecration.[3] Thus the expenditure of public money on this rapidly growing town was reduced to a minimum while an extravagant and sometimes futile investment was being made in other centres.

The mouth of the Kowie River was recognised as a possible harbour even before the arrival of the 1820 settlers. Sir Rufane Donkin established a pilot there in June 1821, and authorised the erection of a small house for him.[4] But nothing was done after Somerset's return, and the pilot and customs officers had perforce to live in tents.

Then in 1823, Lord Charles Somerset instructed the Government Land-surveyor at the frontier, Mr. Hope, to select sites for the erection of residences for the harbour-master, chief officer of customs, and for storehouses; which he did on the east bank of the river. John Hope also prepared the design of the houses (Plate 2) 'upon as moderate a scale as I considered adequate for the accommodation of these officers...'[5] The plan is a typically English one, forming a shallow U with the entrance into a narrow corridor instead of a voorkamer, and the main reception room off to the right, in the position which would have been

1. C.O.185. Many references. Schutte was already working at the Kowie in November 1823.
   It should be remembered that Donkin (after Somerset's return from England a complete anathema to the Governor) had always shown a great interest in the fortunes of Port Elizabeth, to the extent of naming it after his wife, so that the town undoubtedly shared with the town of Bathurst the antipathy of Lord Charles Somerset.
2. C.O.245/63. 17th May 1825. v.Chapter 10, Page 316..
3. See Page 435.
4. Cory II, 88.
5. C.O.2653/47;12th May, 1823. Letter of Harry Rivers, Landdrost of Albany.

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1. The contract was signed with Messrs. Roberts & Tainton, for the sum of Rds.6,700 and both the houses were duly completed.

2. MS. Albany Museum. C.O. 2705/199; 29th Aug. 1828.
The Custom House afterwards became the Port Alfred 'Pavilion' and as such continued in use until the end of the century, when it fell into ruin.

3. C.O.235/48; 28th April, 1825 and C.O.2671/198.

4. C.O.235/48. Letter of F.Hope, Acting Landdrost.

5. ~~Ibid.~~

occupied by a minor room in a traditional Cape plan. The relationship between the rooms is notable for its convenience and commonsense. Externally, the houses were of white plaster, with thatched roofs broken by three dormers.[1] Dr. W.G. Atherstone recalled in his 'Journal' the great impression these buildings made on him as a child: 'Commodore Nourse...invited us to stay with him in his big double-storied house. He showed us another large house near his which was also double-storied. It was filled with all kinds of stores for the settlers...'[2]

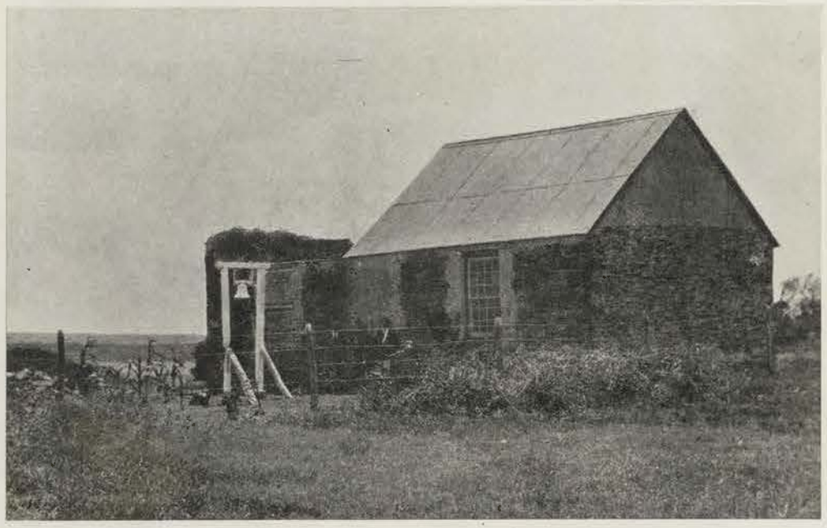
Meanwhile, at the end of 1823, Herman Schutte arrived at the river to begin the erection of the Custom House. We learn, from his subsequent report, of the great difficulties he encountered: 'In the original plan...the foundation was stated at 4½ feet, but I have been obliged on account of the sandy ground...not only to sink it considerably deeper, in some places even eleven feet, but also to lay a foundation of hard timber logs taken from the adjoining woods below the stone one....'[3] All the joinery work, of doors, windows and fanlights, was prepared in Cape Town from Baltic Fir and brought to the site by ship. The building was thatched with reed, which was obtained only after great difficulty and delay, due to 'the great quantity of Thatch required for so extensive a Building...' Most of it was eventually bought from the Settlers.[4] The erection period became so protracted, and the unanticipated difficulties so great, that Schutte afterwards found that he had lost £630 on the contract. Even so, the building had to be braced with iron ties three years later by the Cape Town builder George Gilbert (in 1828), the gables removed as dangerous, and the building recovered with a hipped thatched roof.[5]

A company of soldiers was also stationed at the Kowie, and two large wooden buildings sent to house them and their stores. These were clearly some of the pre-fabricated wooden houses originally provided for the settlers, for

1. Goldswain's 'Chronicle', ed. Una Long Van Riebeeck Society, 27 Cape Town, 1946, I, 51.

2. Cory, II, 89.

3. At the same time it seems to have been intended that the original Harbourmaster's house should revert to another purpose, for tenders for a new house for him were called at the end of January 1826. C.O.285/6.



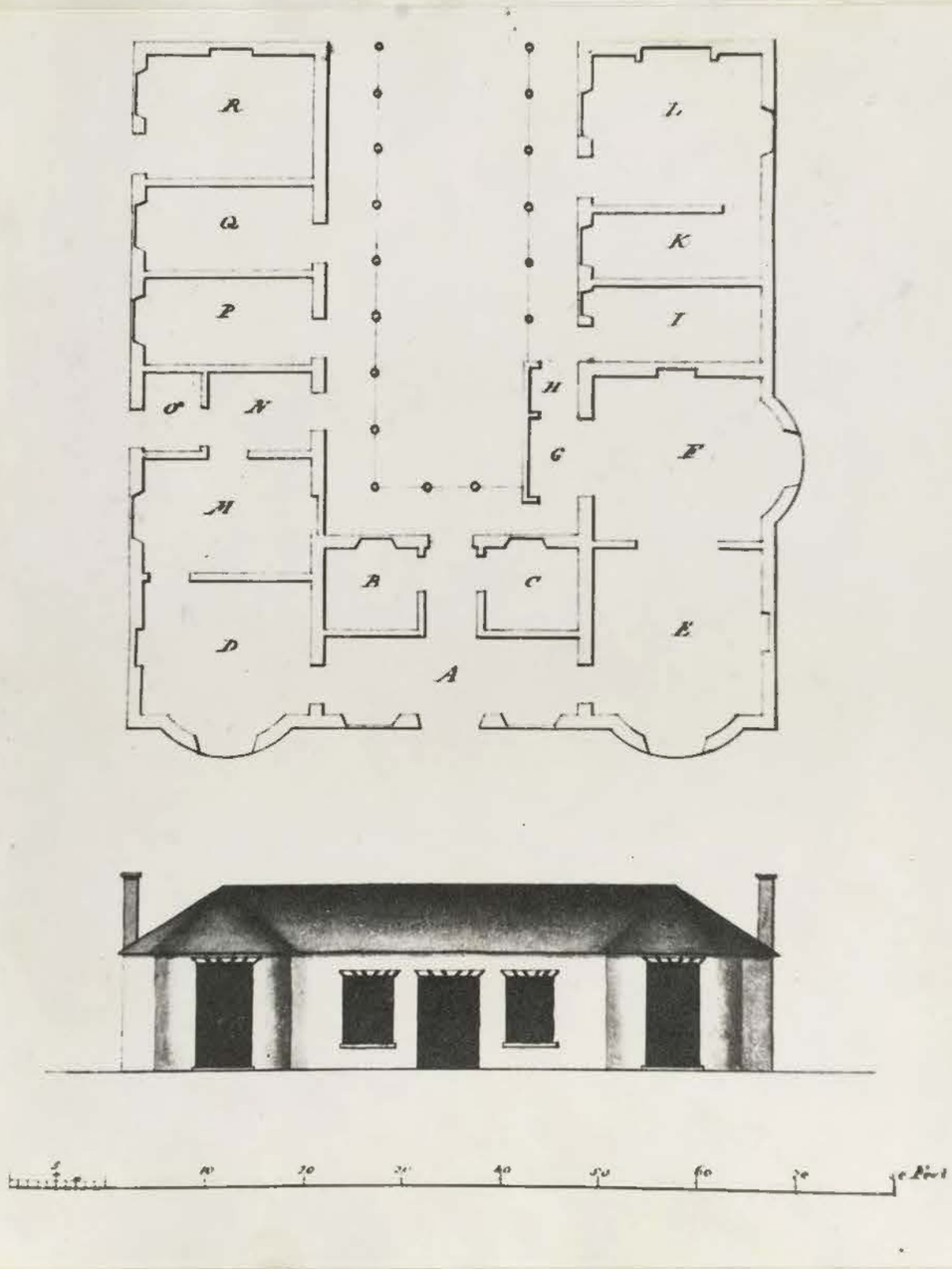
3. Wesleyan Church at the Kowie, 1827.

it is as 'Houses' that Goldswain describes them.[1]

As the nucleus of a village began to spring up on the hill behind these buildings, a Civil Commissioner was appointed and the sum of Rds.7,820 (£560) put aside for the erection of public buildings. Of these the most prominent was the Courthouse, but only a little is known of its appearance, for of it, and of such other public works erected at this time as the Resident Magistrate's house, the Secretary's house and the Messenger's house, hardly a trace remains. The little township was named Port Frances in Feb. 1825, on the occasion of the visit of the Governor, Frances being the Christian name of his daughter-in-law, (whose husband, Captain Henry Somerset, was Commandant on the Frontier.)

The Courthouse was complete by August of that year.[2] It appears to have been a single storey building with dormers in the thatch. These last gave incessant trouble and within a little over two years the last of them was removed altogether. (C.O.2692/96; 9th October 1827). At the same time the roofs of the Harbour Master's and Customs Officer's houses were causing concern; firstly, because of their U-shaped plans, too much water collected in the back areas, which were therefore covered in with wood flats, waterproofed with tarred canvas, the laps of the canvas being covered with two inch battens. (C.O.285/32; 3rd July, 1826); then there was the problem of the leaking dormer windows, which were eventually replaced by building up first storey walls, and reroofing the buildings with low pitched roofs of tarred canvas on boarding.[3]

The first church building in the embryonic town was obtained in an interesting way. During convalescence after an illness, the Rev. Samuel Broadbent was asked to hold a church service at the Kowie. The only suitable building at this time was a large private barn. During the sermon amusement and embarrassment were caused by the loud cackling of a hen in a corner of the building. Emerging from



4. Plan and Elevation of the Drostdy at Bathurst. (C.O. 2629/8. 28th August, 1820).

1. Broadbent, 'Narrative of the First Introduction of Christianity etc.' London, 1865, 147.

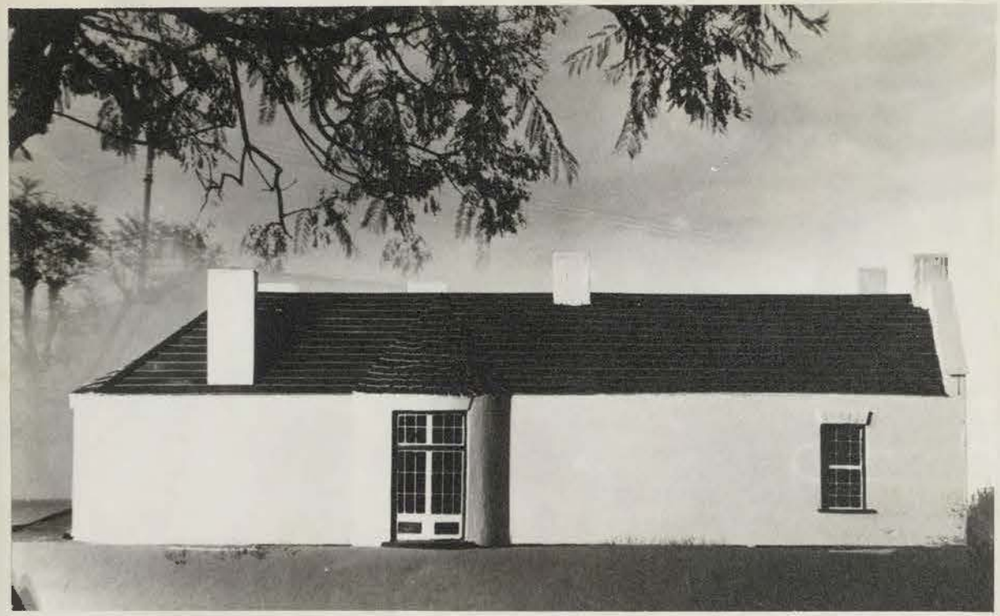
the barn the congregation apologised and expressed their regret that a more suitable House of God could not be provided. Pointing to one of the temporary wooden barracks on the hill, someone remarked that that was the kind of building that was needed. Whereupon, fired by the idea, and knowing that the barrack was disused, they set about obtaining permission and moving the building to a more eligible site, all of which was accomplished within a fortnight, so that the Rev. Broadbent was able to consecrate it before he left the district. (April 10th, 1825).[1]

A permanent Wesleyan church was erected in 1827. The building, part of which is still standing, was originally a simple rectangular stone-walled thatched building with few architectural pretensions (Plate 3).

Then suddenly without any warning, in December 1827, only seven months after Somerset's resignation as Governor, the whole of the Government establishment at Port Frances was closed down, with the exception of the Customs and Harbour Master's departments, which continued until 1831, when the last of the Government buildings was sold into private hands.

* * *

Bathurst, eight miles inland from Port Frances, was founded by Sir Rufane Donkin as the centre for the main district in which the British immigrants had been located, and in May 1820 made the administrative seat of the Resident Magistrate of the Sub-Drostdy of Albany. By August of that year the new town had been surveyed and a site fixed for the residence of the magistrate, who was meanwhile living in a marquee. The magistrate, Captain Charles Trappes, was a remarkable man, fiery and sympathetic by turns, but on the whole not very popular with the settlers. His ability as an administrator has been questioned, and it seems that his talents blossomed forth in other directions; the course of this chapter will show that he was the inspirer, if not actually the



5. North facade of the Drostdy, Bathurst, (restored R.B. Lewcock, model, J.Y. Murray).

designer, of at least two of the finer government buildings of the period.

Of the first, the Drostdy at Bathurst, he appears to have been actually the designer, for his correspondence on the subject has a peculiarly personal note: 'I estimate that the total expense will not exceed twelve thousand Rix dollars; ... I have continued to make Bricks and shall be ready to commence building whenever orders to that effect shall be received...', he wrote, in transmitting the 'improved plan' (Plate 4) to the Acting Governor. (C.O.2629/8; 28th August 1820). The sum mentioned, 12,000 Rixdollars, was a considerable sum for those days, equal, as Cory points out,[1] to the amount which was considered sufficient for the erection of all the government buildings in Grahamstown only six years before. Clearly the Acting Governor and Major Trappes envisaged an administrative centre of no mean importance in Bathurst. And the house was to cost a great deal more than estimated before it was finished.

In October 1820 Col. John Graham was appointed Landdrost for Albany with the seat of his Drostdy at Bathurst, and henceforward the house in course of erection was intended for him.[2] At this time Major Trappes made his abortive request (C.O.2629/12; 15th Aug. 1820) for some of the prefabricated wooden houses which had been intended for the settlers for use as temporary shelter for the Clerk of the District, Offices and Constables. (The reason why he never received them are outlined in an earlier section. Chapter 10 page 316). In the meantime he set about the construction of a building for the Offices in brick and thatch, so that he might have a more secure place in which to live while waiting the completion of the Drostdy house, and - only after that - an adequate house for himself.[3]

The design of the Drostdy house, which was executed with only the slightest modifications of the plan, allowed for fourteen rooms of some size, the parlour,

1. 'Rise of South Africa' II, 91.

2. Col. Graham died in May 1821, without ever having been fit enough to take up his duties. Major James Jones was then appointed Landdrost in his stead.

3. C.O.2629/23. It was intended that this building (still standing) should 'afterwards... become an outhouse to the permanent residence of the Magistrate.'

6.A. (Above). 'Klein Gustrouw', Stellenbosch.

6.B. (Below). Entrance (East) facade of the Drostdy, Bathurst (restored R.B. Lewcock, model, J.Y.Murray).

dining room and drawing room being provided with bow windows, moulded plaster ceilings and yellow wood flooring; two of the bedrooms and the kitchen being paved with bricks, and the entrance hall and the two main bedrooms with tiles. The windows were without exception to be large, the size of the glass panes, 20" high, being the largest recorded in the frontier at that date. And the Drostdy was not to be without such modern conveniences as a bathroom and Water-Closet.

The laying of the foundation stone took place with great ceremony on 9th November, 1820. Construction was entrusted to Mr. John Mandy, the leader of one of the parties, but Captain Trappes retained a considerable share in the control of the work.

The Colonial Office must have been horrified by the receipt of a letter from Captain Trappes written a fortnight after the laying of the foundation stone, announcing that the work was already involving the expenditure of money at a faster rate than had been anticipated: '...as all the materials are paid for on delivery and the Workmen settled with Weekly, I calculate that I shall be in want of a supply by the time I have your answer...' ('C.O.2629/21. 21st Nov. 1820) It was not a good augury for the future.

Besides the burning of the bricks which took place on the site, the 'best seasoned wood in the Neighbourhood' was bespoke for the construction. There were Lime-burners, Sawyers, Lath Renders, Turners and Blacksmiths to pay, besides the Slate Quarriers, who were engaged on shaping slates made from local stone for the roof, and the Plumbers, who were to make the lead gutters and flashing. The expense mounted, until by mid-March, four months later, Mr. Mandy had already exceeded the estimate by a thousand Rixdollars - and the roof and interior finishing not yet begun.

Poor Mandy took the full blast of the blame for this extravagance, al-

7. West facade of Drostdy, Bathurst, showing the interior Court and the veranda. (restored R.B. Lewcock, model,J.Y. Murray).

though it is by no means clear that it was entirely his fault, since he does not appear to have been responsible for, or legally bound by, the original estimate.

Nevertheless the work was taken from him and entrusted to Mr.T.Mahoney, also the head of a party, who guaranteed 'to finish and complete the Magistrate's house in Bathurst in a respectable manner, for the further sum of Rds.10,000'.

There is insufficient space here to even begin to do justice to the inadequacies of Mr. Mahoney, or the intensive hail of complaints and threats which failed to disturb his unruffled calm as the roofing and finishing of the building dragged on for three and a half years.

Meanwhile, in June 1821, the contract was signed for a gaol at Bathurst, to be of two storeys, with thick walls (nearly two feet thick on the first level, and eighteen inches thick above).[1] It was to have had cells at ground floor level and accommodation for the constables on the first floor. This contract also went to Mr.Mahoney, who does not seem to have been any more diligent in this work than he was at the Drostdy, for the building was eventually completed by someone else, with walls of stone laid in lime and sand mortar 'worked fair inside and outside and the walls Lime whited',[2] which shows how far Mahoney had proceeded with his brickwork. He is reputed to have answered all criticism with the laconic statement that he was 'getting on nicely and the house will soon be ready for occupation.'[3]

In October 1821 the Judges on Circuit held Court in Bathurst, but there was still no building sufficiently complete to provide a large room which could be used for the proceedings, so that these had eventually to be held in the open air.[4]

1. C.O.158/101; 9th June, 1821.
2. C.O.2713/182; 14th Aug.1839. This building had floors made of 'flat stones laid in clay or sand' and was thatched. It appears to have been single storeyed.
3. Cory. 'Rise of South Africa', II; 93-4.
4. Cory. II, 134.

The Drostdy, Bathurst (restored R.B. Lewcock, model, J.Y. Murray).

8. View along the stoep.
9. General view of entrance.

1. Ibid, 93-4.

10. View of the back of the Drostdy, Bathurst, from the South West. (restored by R.B. Lewcock, model by J.Y. Murray).

When, on 8th Feb. 1822, Somerset summarily suspended Bathurst as the seat of the magistracy, and removed the Resident and his administration to Grahamstown, the gaol and the Drostdy were standing half completed, and only a few small houses of wattle-and-daub and the inn marked the site of the town.

The Landdrost, Harry Rivers, was posed a difficult problem. It was at length decided that the gaol and Drostdy, on which work had been suspended, must be completed, the latter to be used for a Government School.

It was at this stage that Mahoney's procrastination began to exasperate the authorities. By the beginning of 1824 things had come to such a pass that when Herman Schutte visited on a tour of inspection he reported that much of the structure of the Drostdy had fallen into a bad state of repair due to exposure in the unfinished parts of the building; the expenditure of yet a further sum (Rds.8,723) would be necessary on this account.[1] All was not entirely Mahoney's fault, however, for the locally-hewn slate was already beginning to prove defective, and when the winter rains came, further damage was done '...in consequence of the bad quality of the slate used in the roof the ceilings and rear buildings have suffered considerably.' (C.O.2662/58; 25th May 1824)

At last the building was completed and handed over to the authorities, in December 1824. It was not, however, occupied as a school until August of the following year, and, following the death of the schoolmaster, it became the residence of the government chaplain, one which was even more magnificent than the Pastorie of the fortunate clergyman at Graaff Reinet. Indeed, there was certainly not a residence to equal it in the eastern part of the Colony, either in comfort or in 'haut-monde' elegance.

But difficulties almost at once arose. The stone-slate roof failed completely in the storms of 1826, and George Gilbert, called in to report on the

problem, concluded that '... the covering requires to be removed...' (C.O.2682/124; 27th Aug. 1826), and recommended that imported slate from the Welsh quarries, which was probably just then beginning to make its appearance in a small way in the Western Cape, should be imported for the reroofing of the building. As an alternative he suggested that if thatch were used the Ridge of the king post truss roof would have to be raised four feet higher. In the end both his suggestions were adopted, the pitch of the roof being raised to provide a better fall of water, and thin, lighter imported Welsh slates put on '...at a considerable cost... and the house placed in such a state ashot to be liable to further dilapidation from the weather.'[1]

At this stage the Government clearly intended that the building should be the permanent residence of the chaplain, thus ensuring that the forty thousand Rixdollars (roughly £3,000, or £20,000 of today's purchasing power) which had already been spent on it, should not be entirely wasted.

But Gilbert, when he surveyed the building, had sounded a grim warning that the foundations of the columns on the courtyard veranda, and their entablature, were inadequate, and that the King Post trusses of the roof were incompetently constructed '...when yellowwood had not been used the worm or maggot has attacked the members.' Some of this work had undoubtedly been redone when the roof was replaced in 1827, but when, in 1833, it was discovered that the walls were crumbling, and part of the house actually in danger of collapse, the fate of the building was sealed.

'The construction ... was originally defective, the Stone foundation not having been carried high enough to preserve the bricks from coming in contact with the earth, and the bricks being of the worst description the whole house, and especially the wing most exposed to the weather, is in a very insecure

1. C.O.2705/323. 7th June, 1828. - referring to work done 'during the last year'. From C.O.2692/101; 16th October 1827, it appears that the work, directed by Gilbert, was completed just early in October.

1. 31st March, 1848. Manuscript 'Account Book and Records of Thomas Hartley Junior' in possession of Mrs.Norman Tarr.

2. Pieter Retief, born in the year 1780 on the Retief farm at Groenberg in the Western Cape, is first mentioned as having been in Grahamstown at the time of the 1815 sale, when he bought two erven. At various times he owned a large number of properties in the town, and was owner and proprietor of the only windmill (which ground all the flour of the town until 1827). In addition he is said to have been a general dealer, acting as butcher, baker and auctioneer.

At the same time as the suggestion was made that the Government should buy his property for the Scotts Barracks, another adjoining erf of his was sold to the Government agent. Mr. Robert Hart, for the erection of the Commissariat Stores, a long double-storeyed structure at right angles to the High Street.

11. Condition of the Drostdy at Bathurst c.1910.

state' (C.O.2742/47; 12th July, 1833, letter of D.Campbell, Landdrost.)

The government wasted no time in making up its mind. Within a month the building was up for sale, and it was bought by a Settler in September, together with eleven acres of land, for the sum of £255! In 1848 the final degradation of the Drostdy occurred when the front and right wing, containing the large bow windows and the most valuable materials, were sold for demolition on behalf of the estate of T.J.Biddulph.[1] At the same time the outbuildings, gates and gateposts were sold, and the Drostdy left in the sadly truncated form (Plate 11) in which it survives today.

Although the removal of the seat of the Magistracy of the Albany District from Grahamstown to Bathurst in May 1820 appeared to deal a serious blow to the future of the former, it was agreed that much of the business of the Drostdy should continue to operate from Grahamstown until adequate accommodation should be erected in Bathurst.

In the meantime Grahamstown was still the Military Headquarters of the frontier, and plans for the erection of permanent Barracks in the High Street originally proposed in February, went ahead during the latter part of 1820.

Scott's Barracks, for such they came to be called, were the result of a curious bargain struck between Colonel Scott and Pieter Retief.[2] Following the Battle of Grahamstown, Scott, the Commandant, was of the opinion that it was militarily expedient that the headquarters should be within the village itself, and not distant one and a half miles from it, as they were at the East Barracks (Fort England). Pieter Retief took the opportunity of pointing out that this might be achieved if the government would buy his two adjoining erven and the

1. The money came from the proceeds of the Somerset Farm, (Cory II, 214)

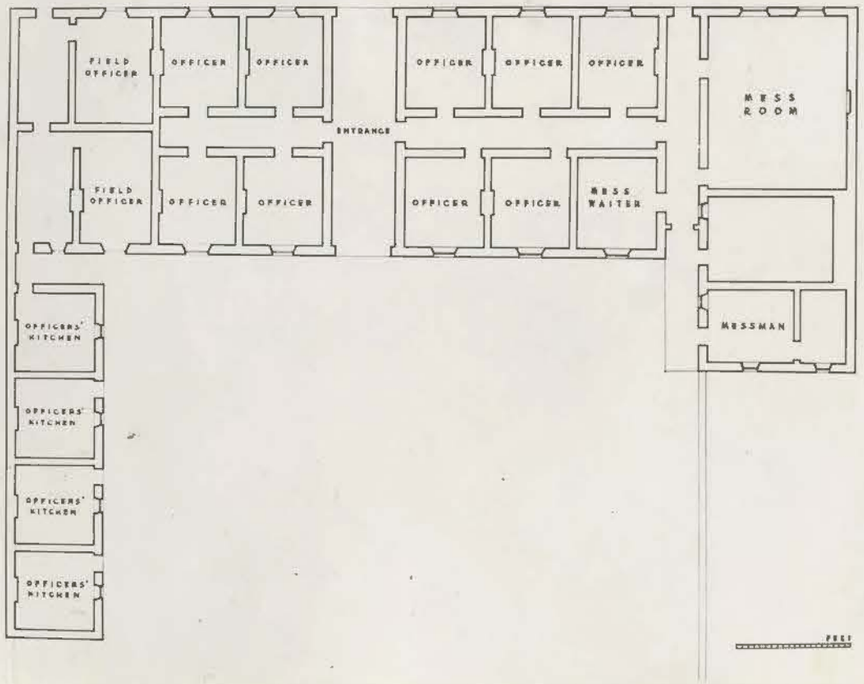
2. 7th May, 1820. Cory II, 183.

3. 5th Feb. 1820. Estimate. G.H.Enclosure to Despatches.

4. It is not known whether this was ever obtained, or indeed whether the suggestion was a practical one.

5. 5th Feb. 1820. Estimate. G.H.Enclosure to Despatches.

6. Ibid.



12. Plan of the Scott's Barracks, Grahamstown. (taken from C.O. 186/28. February,1823).

two-storeyed house he occupied, at the same time giving to him the contract for erecting the necessary additions for the provision of a suitable barracks.

Colonel Scott drew up a design for the Barracks (Plate 12), estimated that they would cost Rds.40,000 complete, (about £3,000),[1] and submitted the scheme to the Governor with strong recommendations that it should be carried out (G.H. enclosure to Despatches. 5th Feb. 1820).

Lord Charles Somerset accepted the proposal and the contract was signed with Pieter Retief in May.[2] It called for a large group of buildings surrounded by a high wall which enclosed the whole area of one erf. The largest of the buildings was to be two storeys in height and to cross the full width of the site. Construction was to be in stone, using mud mortar instead of lime, owing to the 'great expense' of the latter,[3] but all the buildings were to be plastered 'with lime mortar or pointed with cement from the Ordnance establishment at Harwich[4] which last method is recommended strongly both on account of durability and Economy'.[5]

Roofs were to be of 'Slates quarried locally' (Chapter 9 Page 273), and floors were to be of earth. In all, accommodation was to be provided for six officers, 180 rank and file, 12 horses, a powder magazine and commissariat stores.

It is interesting to note that 'Cast Iron Grates for the Officers' Quarters'[6] were included in the specification (prepared by Major W.C. Holloway, the officer commanding the Royal Engineers).

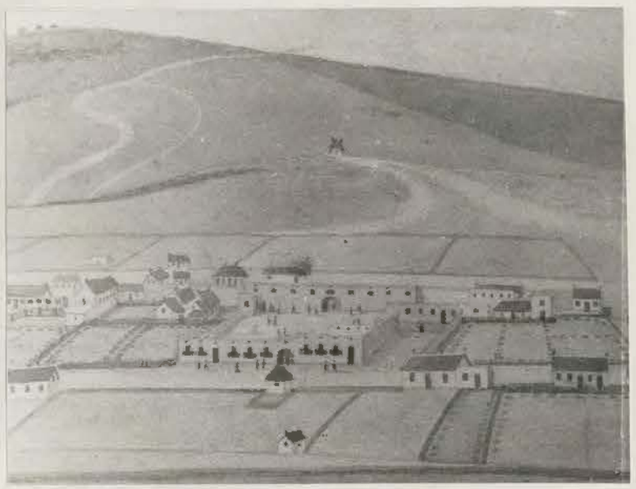
Although work on the barracks was begun immediately, Retief appears to have come to the conclusion that the estimate he had agreed to was too low to cover the costs of the construction work, and he attempted to withdraw from the

1. cf. Cory II, 183.

2. e.g. C.O.165/102; 4th Nov. 1822. 'I had no reason to find fault with the Mason's work, which is very creditable, but the greatest, to find fault with the Carpenter's works...' H.M.Scott.

T.Sheffield, writing long afterwards, observed of Scott's Barracks that 'On this work some of the Settlers were engaged, Mr. Foxcroft among them. Square men got into round holes in those days, and those employed in building these barracks proved to be rather inexperienced as stone masons. They put too many "shiners" in their work, and down came a good portion of it one day.' It certainly is interesting to note that the stonework did eventually collapse.

3. Cory II, 184.



13. View of Scott's Barracks, Grahamstown, from a contemporary watercolour. (Albany Museum).

contract before the Governor had ratified it.[1] Colonel Scott would not agree to this, however, but made the concession that military labour would be available to Retief to assist him in bringing down the costs of the work.

Retief therefore embarked on the erection of the building aware that any extravagance might lead to his financial ruin, and the whole spirit of the subsequent work was coloured by this fact. Retief carried out the stone work, which was afterwards regarded as perfectly adequate, but engaged a carpenter named Edward Hanger, a newly arrived settler, to execute the woodwork. It is evident that Retief can have known little more about Hanger's capabilities than Hanger knew about the characteristics of the wood he was expected to use, and the timberwork soon became the focus of a torrent of criticism from the ever-zealous military authorities.[2] Matters were not improved by the unavoidable absence, from August 1822, of Retief on commando against Maqomo, a marauding native chief. (Retief was at this time Field Commandant of all the Albany Burghers.) He returned to find that the payment of the second instalment of the contract money had been stopped, and prolonged and heated negotiations were necessitated before, in January 1823, the due money was by mistake paid twice into Retief's account. This did not improve matters, and long wrangles about finance, the interpretation and the intentions of the plans and of the contract ensued before the building was finally finished on April 6th 1823 (Plates 13, 13A, and Plate on page 330).[3]

Unfortunately for Retief, the Great Storm of the following October, a severe test for any building, caused extensive damage - foundations sank, walls cracked and in several places collapsed, and the low-pitched slate and plaster roofs began to fail. Retief, bound by the original contract to make good any damage or defects which became apparent in the first twelve months after the

13.A. General view of Grahamstown from the north-east in 1824. (Albany Museum).

completion of the barracks, was called upon to rebuild the damaged parts of the structure. When he refused to do this the matter was taken before the Circuit Court in December 1823, where the action went against him.

Meanwhile, owing to the rapid decay of the buildings, it had become necessary to evacuate the troops from the barracks and find accommodation for them elsewhere. And by the following April, less than a year after the barracks had been handed over by the contractor, it was estimated that it would be uneconomical to attempt to repair them, as new and better ones could be built with less expenditure. After remaining abandoned and in constant danger of collapse for another eighteen months, they were eventually sold (at a ridiculously low figure) by public auction, when a large part of the structure was demolished to make way for new buildings.[1]

Of the barracks, a number of isolated parts remain. Besides sections of the flanking walls and out-buildings, parts of the original main block are thought to be preserved.

Lord Charles Somerset, on resuming Governorship from Sir Rufane Donkin, declared that the establishment of Bathurst was a mistake in policy, and in Feb.1822 decreed that henceforward the civil administration of the Drostdy of Albany should revert to Grahamstown. The result was that the Landdrost, Harry Rivers, found himself with a fine but unusable Drostdy House nearing completion at Bathurst, and no Drostdy buildings whatsoever in Grahamstown. He accordingly made arrangements to live temporarily, pending the completion of a Drostdy House, in the building in High Street which had originally been erected as a military hospital and had lately served as the dwelling of the Commandant of

1. Mr. Rafferty, a tanner, bought part for £493, and Mr.George Gilbert, the town's leading building contractor, the remainder for £700. (Cory, 'Souvenir of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers', Grahamstown, 1920, 11).

1. C.O.2645/28 12th March, 1822. This building is referred to in contemporary documents as either the 'Government Offices or 'The Government House in the High Street' since it frequently served as an important residence. It was known by the former name in 1820 and again in 1835... (Cory, I, 387 note) and by the latter name in1822 (C.O.2645/28) and 1847.

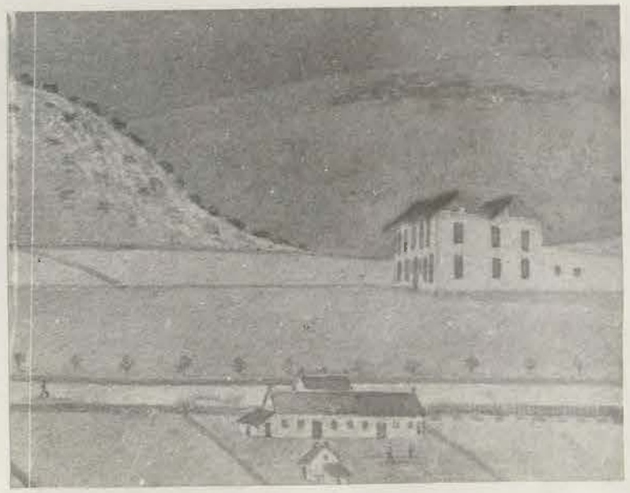
2. C.O.2645/29. 19th March, 1822.

3. 26th March, 1822. The drawings were unfortunately detached from the file and are no longer in existence.

4. C.O. 2645/50: 22nd April, 1822. Rivers to Col. Bird.

5. Ibid.

6. C.O.2645/29. 8th July, 1823, says that the contract was signed 'according to the plan and estimate transmitted in my letter of 26th March'. (It is unlikely however, that Retief forbore the inclusion of some characteristics of Mr.Jones' design, especially when it is remembered that he was Inspector or Buildings.) Mr. Rivers asked for the design of the Court Room and Offices to be prepared and sent to him by Mr. Jones.



14. Side view of the Drostdy House, Grahamstown, originally drawn with a flat roof, later skillfully altered to show the addition of thatch; from a contemporary watercolour. (Albany Museum).

the Frontier.[1]

On March 19th he wrote to the Governor suggesting that the construction of a Drostdy House upon a new plan should be undertaken on the site allocated it at the end of the High Street,[2] and included with his next letter a drawn-out design and estimate, both the work of Pieter Retief.[3] Somerset, never at any time difficult to persuade into building operations, approved of the project and the Colonial Secretary replied on April 22nd 'stating that H.E. had previously under consideration Mr. Retief's plan for a Secretary's House and Office including a Courtroom, and transmitting a plan framed thereon by the Inspector of Buildings [William Oliver Jones] made that Mr. Rivers might see what His Excellency considered necessary to be provided for....'[4] Mr. Rivers in his reply stated that '...although the plan formed by Mr. Jones is extremely well calculated for the object it embraces, it does not provide for the whole of the accommodation required, which consists, in addition... in Offices for the Landdrost etc....' and suggested that the Courthouse be omitted from the plan, that the Drostdy should be purely a residence, and that the existing house should eventually serve as Offices, with the addition of a Courtroom 30'x20'x16' high' on the same erf, which is a corner site.'[5] The recommendation seems to have been accepted, so that we are left to presume that the final design was an adaptation by Retief of a design by Jones adapted from one by Retief. Only this could serve to explain its peculiarities. Considering the circumstances of its history it was a matter for congratulation that it was no uglier than it turned out.[6]

Pieter Retief had entered into his agreement with Colonel Scott for the erection of the barracks only two months before, and was still on good terms with the authorities. Why he, a relatively inexperienced contractor and no

1. Before being raised to the position of Landdrost of Albany Mr. Rivers had been wharf-master at Simonstown.

2. C.O.2645/97; 8th July, 1822.

3. The contract price was Rds.23,000 (About £1,875 in 1822).

15. The Drostdy House, Grahamstown, with the portico removed; (side lights to entrance hall restored to their original condition in the photograph).

tradesman himself, should have tendered for the contract for the Drostdy building as well, is not known, but it is not difficult to guess. It must be remembered that at this time Retief had come to the conclusion that the figure for which he had agreed to erect the Barracks was too low, and he had even tried to have the contract annulled. Failing in this he probably tried to recoup his losses by balancing the Drostdy contract against the Barracks one. If he had intended to make more than a fair profit out of the new building he reckoned without the Landdrost, Mr. Rivers, who in subsequent disputes made it clear on more than one occasion that he was steeled for his pound of flesh.[1]

The contract was signed with Retief on 6th July, 1822,[2] but within a month he was ordered out on commando (Page 393) and was away for many weeks. Most of the available workmen were already engaged on work at the Barracks, and their diligence was not improved by his absence. When Retief returned he found both an angry Landdrost and thoroughly dissatisfied military authorities awaiting him, one building barely begun and the other largely condemned.

His troubles were not mitigated by the short time he had allowed himself for the building of the Drostdy in the contract. He had undertaken to erect it in fourteen months, an exceedingly unrealistic time under the conditions then prevailing on the frontier, and it was by no means a small building. Two storeys in height, it was to have lower walls of stone and upper walls of brick or stone, four living rooms (2 Sitting, 1 Drawing Room, 1 Dining Room) 8 bedrooms, kitchen, pantries, servants' and store rooms, all elaborately finished, with fireplaces in all the habitable rooms, 'handsomely finished' stinkwood staircase, windows and doors, and both an entrance portico and side verandas.[3]

(Lord Charles Somerset, on visiting the Drostdy House in Feb.1825, 'declared that no man unless he had an income of £10,000 a year ought to inhabit it, and

1. Philipps Letter. (ed.Keppel-Jones 'Philipps, 1820 Settler' Pietermaritzburg, 1960, 231.)

2. For this and other statements which follow refer Cory II,185. Such a mass of legal documents (in the Cape Archives) on Retief's building activity are involved that it is impractical to quote them all. Cory's accuracy in this case has been thoroughly checked.

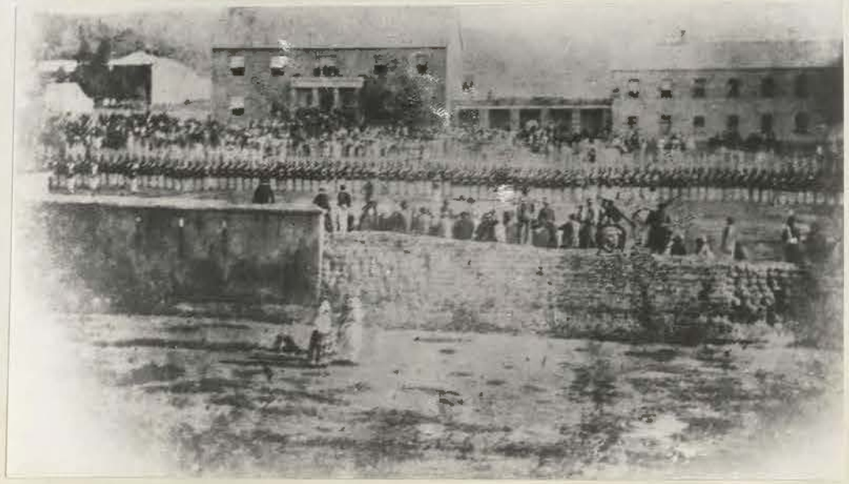
3. Cory II, 185.

4. On the testimony of Cory it was still standing 'strong and good' at the time of its demolition in the 1930's.

5. Cory,II, 185.

16. A very early photograph of the Drostdy House, Grahamstown, with Fort Selwyn on the hill behind. (Albany Museum).

16.A. A later photograph of the Drostdy House, Grahamstown, with a military parade in the foreground. c.1860. (Cory Library).



that it must take at least 3 years income of the Landdrost to furnish the principal rooms. Mrs. Rivers seemed to be the accused on this extravagant plan.'[1])

Under the circumstances it is hardly surprising that, although Retief was temporarily free of responsibility at Scott's Barracks after handing them over in April, the Drostdy was as yet an empty shell when the completion date arrived in September 1823. Only the outer walls and the flat roof had been finished. (Plate 13A).[2]

Furious at what he considered Retief's irresponsibility, Rivers called in one of the Royal Engineers to inspect the work and chose - of all people - Colonel Scott, now experiencing his first troubles with the barracks. He reported that 'the work done on the Drostdy is in every way faulty and executed without attention to common principles.'[3] That the unreinforced shell withstood the subsequent Great Storm without developing a single crack went hardly noticed in the acrimony which rained down upon Retief's head.[4]

In addition, the inspecting Engineer expressed the opinion that 'the contractor had exhibited want of proper forethought and arrangement and that the means employed were inadequate'[5] and it was on these grounds that the Governor decided to institute legal proceedings against Retief for breach of contract. The case came up before the Circuit Court in December 1823, at the same time as the other concerning Retief's refusal to make good the damage done to Scott's Barracks in the Great Storm. Retief lost both cases, and was condemned to pay Rds.5,000 indemnity on behalf of the first, and full costs in both suits.

Claiming that a prime cause of his failure had been the unwarranted interference of the Landdrost, Harry Rivers, who had developed a great personal ani-

1. As the contract time drew to a close the Landdrost, understandably, grew recalcitrant. An incident arose following a quarrel in which Rivers for a time denied Retief access to his piled-up building material, and Retief stopped work in retaliation.

2. September 1825. The contractor George Gilbert and the Surveyor John Bailie, head of a party of 1820 settlers, were the arbitrators. Settlement was that Retief should be paid Rds.6,000 on condition that he renounce all further claims. Retief was prepared to agree to this but the Government deliberated for two years longer before coming to a decision and did not pay Retief immediately.

3. Bankruptcy papers attached to Title Deed of Erf 51, Grahamstown. Register of Deeds, Cape Town.

4. 17th June, 1824 (equal to about £1,500 at the current rate of exchange.)

17. The Drostdy House, Grahamstown, c.1860. with the Parade Ground in use. (Albany Museum).

mosity towards him,[1] Retief sued Mr. Rivers in December for full settlement of the damages he had been obliged to pay, and lost the case, again with costs.

Pieter Retief now found himself in a precarious financial position. Had the Government paid him the amounts yet due to him on the two buildings he would probably have been able to survive. But as it was, with no money and a court order awaiting payment, Retief's affairs were placed in the hands of the sequestrator, measures were taken to seize and sell all his property, and he was forced to retire to his farm 'Mooimeisiesfontein'. From there he carried on a prolonged legal wrangle with the authorities which eventually won him some satisfaction. It was at length acknowledged that it was not clear that the breach of contract might not have been initiated by the Landdrost, and Pieter Retief was paid a token sum in settlement.[2] But it was too little and too late to save Retief, who was finally declared insolvent in May 1834,[3] and at the end of 1836 left the Colony to become famous as leader of all the Voortrekkers, and to meet his death within fifteen months at the hands of the Zulu chief Dingaan.

The empty shell of the Drostdy House remained untouched for nearly a year, and its subsequent history is a most involved and sorry one. It makes interesting reading, however, if only because of the extent to which it reveals the difficulties encountered by both client and contractor on the frontier at this time. The Royal Engineer officer who had inspected the Drostdy House in the previous September had estimated that Rds.20,000 would be required to complete it, and whether by coincidence or not, when the project was put to the tender, the sum closed for was Rds.19,500.[4]

The successful contractor, Carl Frederick Pohl, was a respected German then

18. Early photograph looking down the High Street towards the Drostdy House, Grahamstown. (Albany Museum).

farming outside of Grahamstown. We have met him before in connection with the construction of the George Court Hall and Offices and the District Surgeon's House, and of work on the churches in George, 1816, and Uitenhage, 1820. In the latter case he had been accused of shoddy masonry in the foundations, and work had actually been suspended on the church two years before (pending litigation against him in Cape Town) at the time when his contract for the Grahamstown Drostdy was accepted.[1]

Pohl in turn appears to have employed a sub-contractor, a settler named Biggs, to carry out the work under his occasional direction. At first things went uncannily well. Although the construction was to have been finished within six months the authorities listened kindly to Pohl's excuses about delays, and in February, 1825, the District Surveyor, Francis Hope, submitted a glowing report on his behalf '...I have inspected the House, which he is finishing in a very workman-like manner, - in a style much superior to any I have before seen in the Colony...the Memorialist [Pohl] suffered by a Ship being wrecked in Table Bay which had a great deal of the material on Board that was to be used in the Building...what has been done by him has been in a very Masterly style and would be highly creditable to any Contractor.'[2]

In his original estimate for the work Pohl had expressed the opinion that '...the Roof is useless, and...I recommend a thatch Roof to be substituted, and put over the present, which former can serve as a security against fire, so as to prevent any damage to the Building itself...'[3], and in the latter part of 1825 this was actually done,[4] together with the same roofing on the outhouses,[5] a further excuse for delays (Plate 14). Then, sometime during the rainy months that followed, the first of a series of mishaps occurred which were to rapidly change the attitude of the authorities towards Pohl. The main

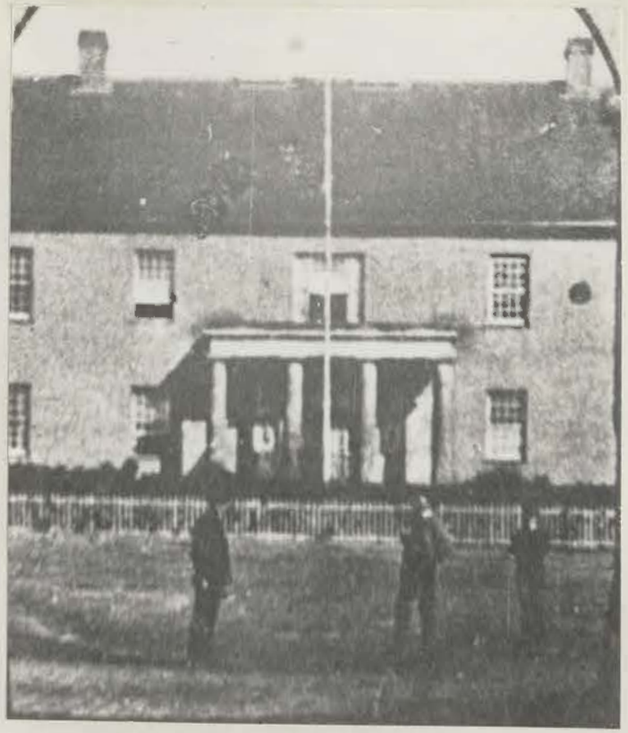
1. Although he had just given satisfaction as sub-contractor for A.B.Dietz on the new prison, p. 402.

2. C.O.2671/29; 24th Feb. 1825.

3. C.O.2662/55; 15th Aug. 1824.

4. C.O. 2671/172; 25th Aug. 1825. Additional expenditure of RDS.3,915 allowed.

5. C.O.2671/105; 28th June, 1825. The re-roofing of the outhouses was done at the request of the new Landdrost, W.B.Dundas '... my conviction of the insufficiency of flat Roofs constructed with the wood found in this part of the country.'



18.A. Photograph of the Drostdy House, Grahamstown, through the Drostdy Arch.1889. (Cory Library).

portico of the house (which had a flat roof carried on four columns in the front) collapsed and was totally ruined. 'To give a fall for the water from the Top of the flat roof it was necessary that the centre should be raised... which was done by means of stones laid in mud, and this covered over with common lime not shell lime as the contract required. The consequence was that after a rain of 3 to 4 hours the Top became saturated and consequently overloaded; the foundation of one corner giving way the whole fell to the Ground... The height of the shaft of the column was given at six diameters which I certainly consider to be a just proportion....'[1]

And when, it spite of the impending October rains, little progress had been made with the new roofing and the old work was still unfinished, the authorities became impatient, and Pohl received an abrupt note from the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town: 'So many delays and difficulties have occurred in the performance of your contract that His Excellency cannot but approve of the Landdrost having determined to take measures for setting it aside altogether.'[2]

But this was not so easy to effect as it seemed, for Pohl had only received authorisation to proceed with the roof at the end of August, and two months was too short a time in which to expect completion. All the efforts of the Court of Circuit and the Fiscal in Cape Town failed to find any legal solution which would allow Pohl to be paid off and the work given to another contractor. By this time the rival claims of the two parties (most of them inadequately recorded) had become extremely complicated and matters had perforce to lapse in the hope that the Contractor's eventual completion of the work - no matter how overdue - would solve many of the legal problems.

This hope unfortunately proved a vain one, and after the building had re-

1. Ibid.

2. 23rd October, 1825. cf. Cory II:190.

1. Pohl immediately appealed to arbitration and eventually in 1832 it was found that he was not entirely at fault and the Government paid him a token sum, as it had done Retief, in final settlement. Cory II, 190.

2. C.O.2704/96; 4th March, 1828 et seq.

19. The Drostdy House, Grahamstown, c.1890. (Albany Museum).

mained in an incomplete state for nearly another year Pohl was dismissed. A further twelve months passed before legal proceedings were begun against Pohl, the outcome of which was that he lost the case. Being unable to settle the claim and legal costs he was declared bankrupt in 1828.[1]

In the meantime the Drostdy house was in a sorry state after two years without occupants or maintenance, some of the incomplete work falling into ruin for lack of attention. George Gilbert, the Cape Town contractor who had undertaken the construction of the Grahamstown Church in 1824, offered to finish the building for the sum which remained from Pohl's contract.[2] This he seems to have satisfactorily accomplished, for we do not hear of any litigation concerning him. The Landdrost, who did not choose to occupy the building in an incomplete state, allowed Dr. John Atherstone to live in it during these operations (until 1829, while his own house was being built). In 1830 it was used for the accommodation of the Judges on Circuit, but the Landdrost seems to have resisted any suggestion that he should live in it, being perfectly comfortably accommodated in the old High Street property. Acting on his suggestion it was agreed that the Drostdy should be used to house the public offices and to provide a permanent place of accommodation for the Judges on Circuit. But before this could be implemented the Sixth Kaffir War intervened, the house was appropriated as the centre of the military headquarters and adapted to serve as the officers' quarters (which it did from 1835 until 1873).

It is thus extraordinary but true that neither of the two houses which were built as Drostdies in the Albany district at enormous expense and the cost of four contractors' reputations, was ever occupied by the Landdrost.

1. Tender submitted 18th Sept. 1822. C.O.2645/140.
Contract signed 15th Jan. 1823. C.O.2653/18.

2. April 1824.

3. Original wording of the Contract. C.O. 2653/18.

4. C.O.2671/219; 4th Oct., 1825.

5. Gilbert had already had some experience of shingles, since it will be remembered that he worked on the Government Cottage in the Cape Town Gardens (which had a singled roof) during the previous year. C.O.235/92; 21st June 1825.

20. The New Gaol, Grahamstown, 1823, as it survives.

A new prison for the district, which had been recommended by Rivers in 1822, was begun to a design by William Oliver Jones in 1823.[1] Here the Government was more fortunate, for the contractor, Arnoldus Bernadus Dietz, was a more astute man than either Retief or Pohl, and struck a firmer note in the terms for which he undertook the building. Not only was the contract price adequate to cover the work (Rds.70,000 - about £5,250 - nearly twice the sum for which Retief was currently erecting the much larger Scott's Barracks), but Dietz also had permission to buy materials at cost from the Government stores in Cape Town and transport them at Government expense as far as Algoa Bay. Small wonder then that the building was completed by the due date,[2] to everyone's mutual satisfaction (Plate 28 on page 330). It could accommodate as many as 200 prisoners at one time.

The new prison, which is well preserved, had originally 'good Watertight flat roofs, plastered and finished with shell lime, except the rear Building, having a half-pitch roof, which... was to be covered with thatch or tiles....'[3] But in Jan. 1825 Landdrost Rivers was transferred to Swellendam and his successor W.B.Dundas, convinced of 'the insufficiency of flat Roofs constructed with the wood found in this part of the country', and doubtless prompted by necessity here as he had been at the Drostdy, asked the contractor George Gilbert to submit estimates for the cost of adding a pitched roof. At first Gilbert tendered for thatching the building,[4] but later he changed his mind. The letter in which he does so makes interesting reading, for in it he compares the relative merits of thatching and shingling, and comes to the important conclusion that shingles is eventually the cheaper roofing material, in spite of its high prime cost:[5]

'Thatch for 50 years/

1. C.O.2682/62; 5th April, 1826. See also his comments taken from this source and quoted Chapter 7, Page 173

2. C.O. 321/113; 10th September, 1827.

3. cf. Chapter 9, Page 292

4. Although Mr. Lucas, a Sergeant-Major in the Cape Corps Barracks 'was already building himself a house outside the walls of the garrison and took care to have one large room in which a considerable number of persons could assemble to hear the gospel preached.' Shaw, 'The Story of My Mission', London, 1860, 98.

5. 5th December 1821.

21. The Methodist Chapel, Grahamstown, 1822.

'Thatch for 50 years (100 superficial feet)

first cost		£2. 5. 0.
4 times renewed	35/-	7. 0. 0.
casual repairs	equated with painting below	
		£9. 5. 0.

'Shingles for 50 years (100 superficial ft.)

first cost	£5.12. 0.
12 times painting	
Difference	£3.13. 0.

'The expense of painting shingles 12 times during the 50 years ... ought not to be taken into account, but allowed as a set off against the repairs of the Ridges in the thatched Roofs.'

'From the above calculation it appears that Shingles are considerably cheaper than Reeds for the 50 years ... These shingles ... made from American stave ends ... may be obtained at this place without much difficulty.'[1]

The government after due deliberation agreed to Gilbert's recommendation[2] and the prison (Plate 20) was then roofed with shingles, a material which Gilbert continued to advocate for many years.[3]

In the early months after the arrival of the settlers the Rev. William Shaw, the Wesleyan minister of Sephton's party, held services at the East Barracks, and later at the old Officers' Mess House in the centre of the town. But when this building was sold Mr. Shaw had difficulty in finding accommodation for his growing congregation,[4] and decided upon the bold step of laying the foundation stone of a Wesleyan Chapel,[5] the first church in Grahamstown, although '... I had but half-a-crown in my pocket, and only a number of promises of support, which were yet to be realised... While the building progressed I

was often in great straits to find money to meet the just demands of the builders. I frequently had to pay the cost of materials out of my own small allowances and thus deprive myself and family, for a time, of what are called the necessaries of life.[1]

The site on which the small stone church was built was one of the smaller settler allottments, approached down a lane[2] from the main street, and so narrow that the chapel had perforce to be built sideways on to the lane (Plate 21). This was a far cry from the kind of site the Governor had in mind for the government-sponsored Anglican church. It is hardly surprising that the Wesleyans developed that dogged persistance and determination which soon resulted in a rapid growth of the Wesleyan church on the frontier.[3]

At Salem they were more fortunate. Within a month of laying the foundation stone for the Grahamstown church Rev. William Shaw laid another at Salem, the centre of Sephton's party;[4] up until this time the settlers in this area had worshipped in the repaired ruin of an old Boer farmhouse.[5]

After a few months the new church was complete,[6] a fine thatched mud-block building looking out onto the town commonage.[7] The method of construction had been determined by the shortage of trained artisans, and many of the settlers took part in the building operations, which were directed by the carpenter Richard Gush.

The Wesleyan movement grew rapidly among the settlers, uncomforted as they were in their hardships by Anglican ministers.[8] Rev. William Shaw rode everywhere, holding services and encouraging the establishment of Wesleyan church communities. 'On my earliest visits to the various locations, we worshipped God under the shade of the spreading trees...wherever the company was too large to find room in the settler's hut or tent. Gradually the people

1. Wm.Shaw 'The Story of My Mission, etc.' The builder was W.J.Shepstone. The church cost approx. £500 of which £250 was raised in subscriptions,'almost every settler contributing something' the remainder being borrowed on interest. The chapel was finished and opened on Nov. 22nd 1822. Cory II,204.

2. Chapel Street.

3. The debts incurred in the building of the church were paid off with amazing speed, and in 1823 the roof was taken off, it was enlarged and a gallery added. (Cory II,204).

4. 1st Jan. 1822.

5. '...its earthern floor and unceiled roof, thatched with reeds, and open at the ridge poles, -its reed and mud-plastered walls, through which several holes were opened to let in light and air, - and its dimensions, say sixty feet by 12 or 13 feet, brought painfully to the minds of the people the greatly altered circumstances under which they now offered their prayers and praises to the God of heaven.'(Shaw. 'The Story of My Mission' 87).

6. 31st December, 1822.

7. For a description of its construction, v.Chapter 10 page 356. The commonage was known as 'The Green'. The present church building was erected on the same site 10 years later. (Opened 9th November, 1832).

8. There was only one among the settlers, Rev. W. Boardman, and he, acting as head of a party, felt himself unable to minister beyond a very limited area.

22. The church at Baviaans River, with the original appearance with a thatched roof suggested.

Baviaans River Church.

23. Interior.

24. Exterior.

The original appearance with a thatched roof is suggested.

1. Shaw. 'The Story of My Mission', 94.

2. Ibid, 98. 3rd Jan. 1821.

3. Ibid,115. Neither of these two survive.

4. Goldswain, 'Chronicle'. (ed. Una Long) I, 58.

5. Its ruins, 30' x 16' in size, have recently been found on the left of the road between Bathurst and Port Alfred.

6. The church at Cuylerville which survives is the third on the site, was designed in 1839 and opened on Sept. 15th, 1840. It served as school, church, and dwelling house for the school master. (E.Morse-Jones).

built more or less commodious dwellings for themselves...and in several places they erected buildings of similar materials for the purpose of public worship. There was very little money among them in those days. Hence the original chapels, which served their purpose very well for a time, were generally erected by the joint labour of their own hands. As the settlers rose to circumstances of greater comfort, and built more substantial dwellings for themselves, they began to feel that it was not seemly for them "to dwell in ceiled houses" while "God's House" was comparatively a "waste"...The result was that in course of years the Methodist settlers...erected at considerable cost and labour, a number of substantial chapels in various parts of the settlement: ...they were generally well placed in elevated and picturesque spots...at Clumber, (Nottingham Party), Green Fountain, Ebenezer (James' Party), Trappes Valley, Bathurst, Port Frances, Reed Fountain, Collingham, Manley's Flat, Seven Fountains.'[1]

The earliest of these chapels actually seems to have been that on Philipp's farm 'Lampeter', known also as 'New Bristol'.[2] The chapel at Greenfountains was built in mid-1823 under the guidance of Richard Walker.[3] That at the Clumber between 1825 and 1827. '...sum Gave bricks: sum beems and rafters: others wood for doors and windows: others gave thatch and labour so that with the subscriptions the Chaple was not much in depte... The Chaple wold hold about two hundred and it was well filled and meny came from Grahamstown...'[4] The Ebenezer chapel was built of burnt brick and well thatched.[5]

At Baviaans River the Scotch party, after petitioning the Government, were able to have a Scotch chapel erected in 1827-9. It has an interesting T-shaped plan which allowed a large congregation to be seated within a fairly short distance of the pulpit (Plates 22-4).[6]

1. Sheffield 'The Story of the Settlement'. Grahamstown, 2nd Ed. 1884, 211.

2. Nelson (Godlonton) 'Memorials of the British Settlers'.

3. The former has reverted to religious use. It is now roofed with tiles. The latter is now used as a store and has a galvanised iron roof in place of the original.

4. G.H.26/12. Letter of James H. Rutherford. 28th Sept. 1824.

5. Philipps Letters. 'Philipps, 1820 Settler', ed. Keppel-Jones, 299.
Feb. 20th, 1826. 'On the 15th of next month the Cape Corps give a very grand ball at the opening of their new Mess Room, and the Somerset have made a point of us all taking up our quarters at their House.'

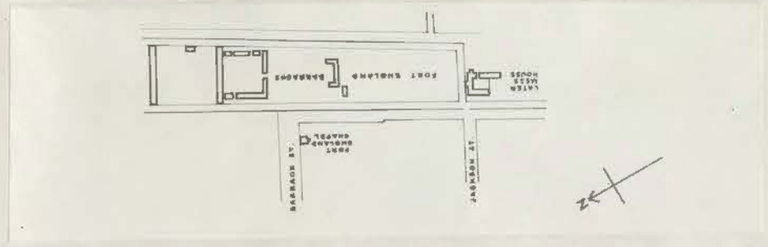
6. G.H. 26/12. Enclosure to dispatches, 27th Nov. 1824.

25. Independent Chapel, Grahamstown. 1825.

A year after the erection of the Wesleyan chapel at Grahamstown the Baptists commenced one also, in St. Bartholomew's Street.[1] Two years later the Independents followed with the erection of a church in Dundas Street. Both of these buildings were simple halls with thatched roofs, and were superseded by more substantial churches in the early 1840's.[2] (They are both still in existence in remarkable states of preservation. (e.g. Plate 25).[3]

During 1815 it had been decided to move the military encampment out of the centre of Grahamstown and a new camp was accordingly built which afterwards came to be known as the 'East Barracks'. In spite of Col. Scott's recommendation that the barracks should be moved back to the High Street in 1820 the East Barracks were never entirely abandoned, and after the failure of Scott's Barracks the demands on the East Barracks were such that steps had to be taken both to enlarge them and to render them more permanent. This was done during 1825.

The new buildings, which appear to have been designed by Lieutenant James H. Rutherford, comprised two long single-storey ranges of barrack buildings, built of brick and roofed with thatch,[4] and a new mess-room.[5] The arrangement of the plan was a strictly classical one, the buildings being linked by a strong major axis which passed through the centre of each block (Plate 26). These buildings survive, incorporated in later additions to the Fort England Infirmary. An interesting sidelight on building conditions in the Eastern Cape is shown in Lord Charles Somerset's request to Earl Bathurst, in connection with these barracks, for a detachment of 'Military Artificers' to be sent from England '...owing to the scarcity and exorbitant price of Workmen on the frontier...'[6]



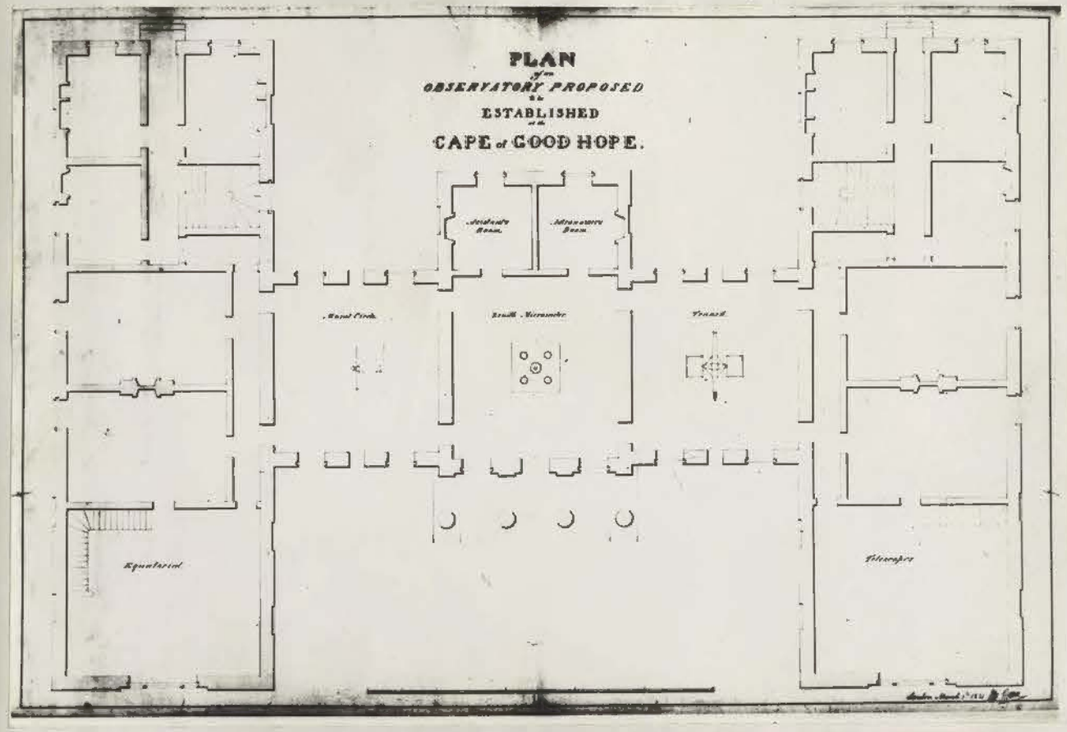
26. Fort England Barracks. Probable developed plan,c.1830.

But even as Somerset wrote, although he did not predict it, conditions in the eastern Cape were rapidly becoming more stabilized. The drift of settlers from the locations to the towns had ceased, and those who remained on the land had adjusted themselves to the unfamiliar problems of farming at the Cape, and by a process of selection and consolidation were laying the foundations of a considerable agricultural prosperity.

Architecture, too, had become more stabilized. The first mad rush to build was over. Prices dropped, skilled workmen became available, competition improved standards and the increased shipping trade along the coast made it possible to obtain or import, at not too exorbitant a cost, a wide range of building materials and manufactures. From this period the history of the development of architecture in the frontier districts - at any rate in the towns - joins the main stream of that in the rest of the Colony, and there is no longer any point in considering them separately.

TWELVE :

OFFICIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS : 1820 to 1837.



1. John Rennie's plan of the Royal Observatory, Cape Town, dated March 1st, 1821.

CHAPTER TWELVE

OFFICIAL ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS : 1820 - 1837.

THE GREEK REVIVAL.

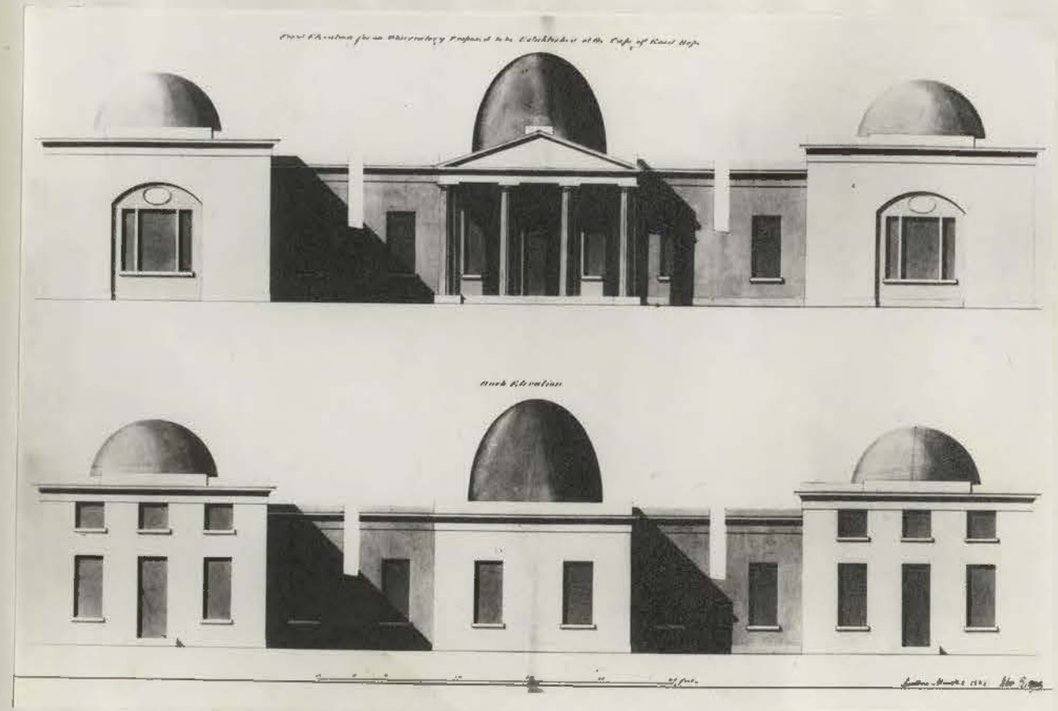
The 'Neo-Classicist' movement, originating in the mid-eighteenth century, took its name from the new spirit of enquiry into the ancient world which evolved in Italy, England and France at this time. Fostered by the work of archeologists and scholars such as Winkleman and Piranesi, it soon conquered all before it. But the term 'Neo-Classicist' makes no distinction between Roman and Greek. While Piranesi looked entirely to Rome as his mentor, the Adam brothers, under the influence of Winkleman, drew equally from Roman, Greek and Etruscan art.[1] This eclecticism was, by its very nature, unsatisfactory; as the older generation of archi-

1. Winkleman had, in 1755, published 'Gedanken uber die Nachalmung der griechischen Werke', in which he recommended the use of Greek instead of Roman procedure as the basis for contemporary design. Sir John Summerson ('Architecture in Britain: 1530 - 1830. London; 1953, 239) cites the Abbé Langier (Essai sur l'architecture', Paris, 1753) as a major influence on English Neo-Classicism : 'Langier of the new rationalism and the sense of truthful, economical expression....'

1. Summerson, op.cit. 289 - 90, makes 1804 the critical date, when Thomas Hope published his 'Observations on the Plans and Elevations designed by James Wyatt, Architect, for Downing College, Cambridge...', 'in which he went a step further than his predecessors in preferring absolutely the Greek orders to the Roman.'

2. H.M.Colvin 'A Biographical Dictionary of English Architects, 1660 - 1840'. London, 1954, 486-8.

3. A.E.Richardson, and C.L.Gill. 'Regency Architecture in the West of England', 1924, 59-63.



2. The front and back elevations of Rennie's design for the Royal Observatory, Cape Town.

tects was replaced, a reaction set in against it, and equally against Palladio and Roman Classicism. Eventually, by about 1800, Greek architecture was considered to hold first place, with the Parthenon and the Erectheum the true exemplars of the real classical idiom, and Roman architecture began to be relegated to the position of a poor provincial relative.[1]

In the second decade of the century the Greek vogue in all things reached major proportions. While Lord Elgin was engaged in bringing the Elgin marbles to London, chairs, couches and tripod-stands were designed in the ancient Attic style; there were even 'Hellenic'modes in dress. And with the enormous popularity of all things Grecian, many of the serious architects (some of whom had studied Attic originals) turned to the task of improving the current style by stressing simplicity and the use of accurate Greek rather than Romanized forms.

Ever since the Napoleonic Wars the Commissioners of the Admiralty in London had been contemplating the establishment of an astronomical observatory in the Southern Hemisphere. In 1820 it was decided to proceed with the plan at once, Cape Town being the site chosen. The Engineer to the Admiralty, the famous John Rennie, was commissioned to prepare a design for it, but it seems likely that the drawings (signed John Rennie and dated March 1st 1821, Plates 1, 2, 8) are actually the work of his younger son, for the elder Rennie is not known to have engaged directly on any architectural work;[2] on the other hand, his son (later Sir John Rennie) was in the vanguard of the Neo-Classicists, and his Royal Victualling Yard at Stonehouse, near Plymouth, is regarded as 'amongst the finest works of the engineer-architect in England.'[3] The younger John, upon his father's death in October 1821, succeeded to the post of Engineer to

4

6

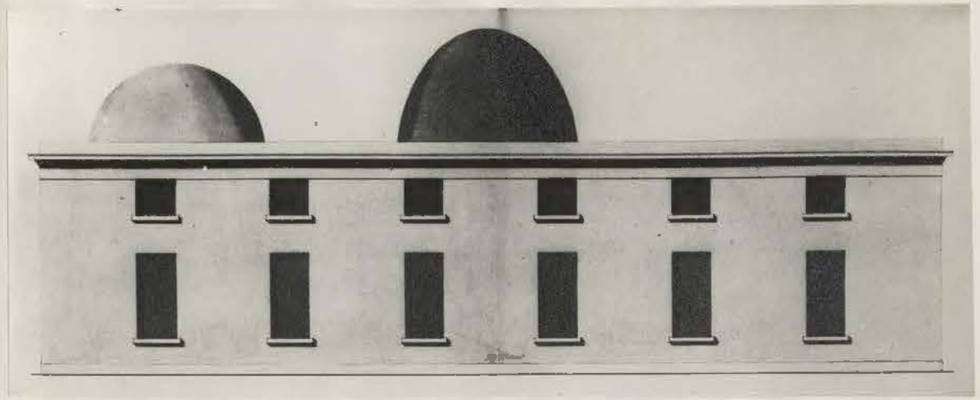
3

Royal Observatory, Cape Town.

3. (Lower left) Fireplace.
4. (Upper left) General View.
5. (Lower right) Entrance portico.
6. (Upper right) Side.

5

1. The legend which has since grown up, that the curious orientation of the building, with the main facade to the south, was due to a failure on Rennie's part to allow for the conditions of the Southern Hemisphere, is patently wrong. At this date south, being the coolest side, was universally favoured by the English in the colonies of the Southern Hemisphere.



Royal Observatory, Cape Town.

7. Side elevation; original design drawings.

8. The flanking wings.

the admiralty, so that he was clearly in the position, only a few months before, to have been entrusted with the design of the Observatory.

The Royal Observatory in Cape Town is a large building originally designed to incorporate all the necessary instruments (including three large telescopes), as well as a number of offices, generous dwelling quarters for the Astronomer and his family, and another identical section which was capable of being subdivided into dwelling quarters for his assistants.

The two sets of dwelling quarters formed double-storeyed wings flanking a central block which contained the bulk of the instruments. The wings were projected on the front facade in the form of two large rooms of double height which contained the large telescopes, opening to the sky by metal domes in the flat roof above them. Another similar dome in the central block served the Zenith Micrometer. [1]

The plan is thus essentially Palladian, but there the resemblance to eighteenth century architecture ends. Instead of the pilastered richness of the earlier style, this building is notable for its stark stucco surfaces defined at the bottom by small plinths and at the top by plain Doric cornices. Except for two shallow semicircular mouldings over the windows in the wings (an Adamesque motif which repeats the form of the dome) all the attention of the main facade is concentrated in the central portico, an archeologically accurate reconstruction of the facade of a Greek Doric temple (Plate 5). The precise arrises of the mouldings, the rhythmic beauty of the fluting of the columns, the mathematical proportioning of solid and void, these dominate the bare functional forms of the rest of the building, and dictate its character. The handling of the whole is essentially sculpturesque and produces, as Donald Pilcher said of Rennie's work in England, 'a more truly "monumental" effect than was

9. Royal Observatory, Cape Town. Front elevation of one of the flanking wings.

ever achieved by the adherents of "taste". In such a group of buildings the Picturesque comes into its own. It not only outlines their general arrangement: it is also responsible for a sense of completeness throughout the scheme which extends even to ... details ...'.[1]

The erection of the Royal Observatory was not begun until 1825,[2] the Astronomer in the meantime having to be satisfied with temporary quarters in one of the pre-fabricated wooden huts originally sent out for the use of the Settlers.[3]

The contractor for the new building was John Skirrow, who seems to have come out from England especially to execute the work. It was built of plastered brick, with a lead roof, and was occupied in 1827.

'The interior is English of the respectable class and well furnished. The Observatory rooms are captivating in the extreme, owing in some measure to the mixture of mahogany and cedar. The close, well-jointed floor that defies on close inspection the discovery of a joint, shows how well it has been laid down and the quality of the timber.... In fact, the workmanship of the whole building is excellent. The passages are rather narrow but not inconveniently so.... [a] beautiful Observatory. I say beautiful because it is in my opinion unequalled...it is well-built, well-planned and as far as the mere building goes a most comfortable residence.' (Thomas Maclear, Royal Astronomer. Jan. 1834)[4]

The Royal Observatory was the first building in the Greek mode designed for South Africa. It has also the distinction of being, since the lamentable demolition of St. George's, the finest example of the style extant in this country.

1. D.Pilcher 'The Regency Style'. London, 1947, 111.
2. C.O. 209/141, 22nd Dec. 1824.
3. C.O. 144/82, 29th Sept. 1821; and Theal 'History of South Africa', 1890, I:257.
4. Thomas Maclear: letter of 8th Jan. 1834 ('A.N.&.N.', X, No.1, 5.)

1. Tender dated 2nd Nov. 1821 (C.O.156/13) signed by Herman Schutte. It must be remembered that Donkin had already caused the erection of a monument, the Pyramid, at Port Elizabeth, in tribute to his deceased wife.

2. C.O.156/13, 3rd Nov. 1821.

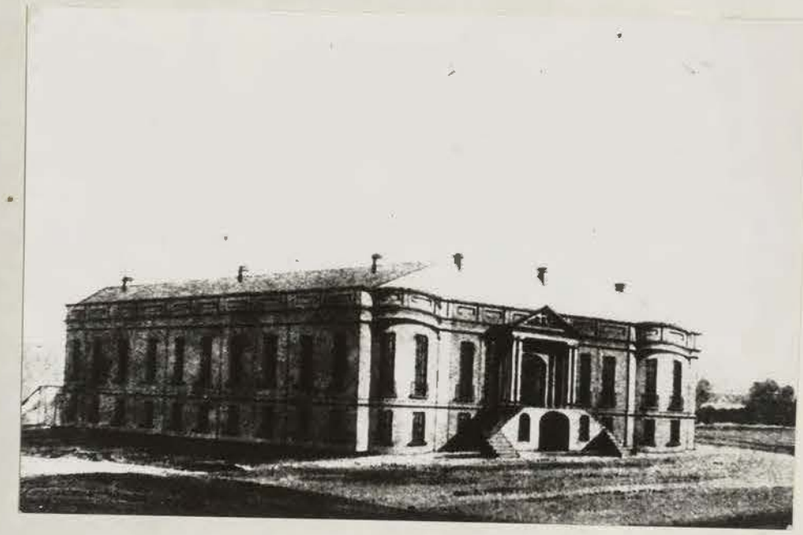
3. 'Notes & Queries' in the 'Cape Monthly Magazine', April, 1857.

4. It is possible that it was moved to 'Protea' ('Bishop's Court'.) v. 'A.N.&.N.', II, No.3, 99-100.

5. Cape Archives.

6. Cape Town Municipality.

7. 'The plans will be ready in a few days for your further inspection...' William Jones to the Colonial Secretary, 24th Sept. 1822 (C.O.175/29).



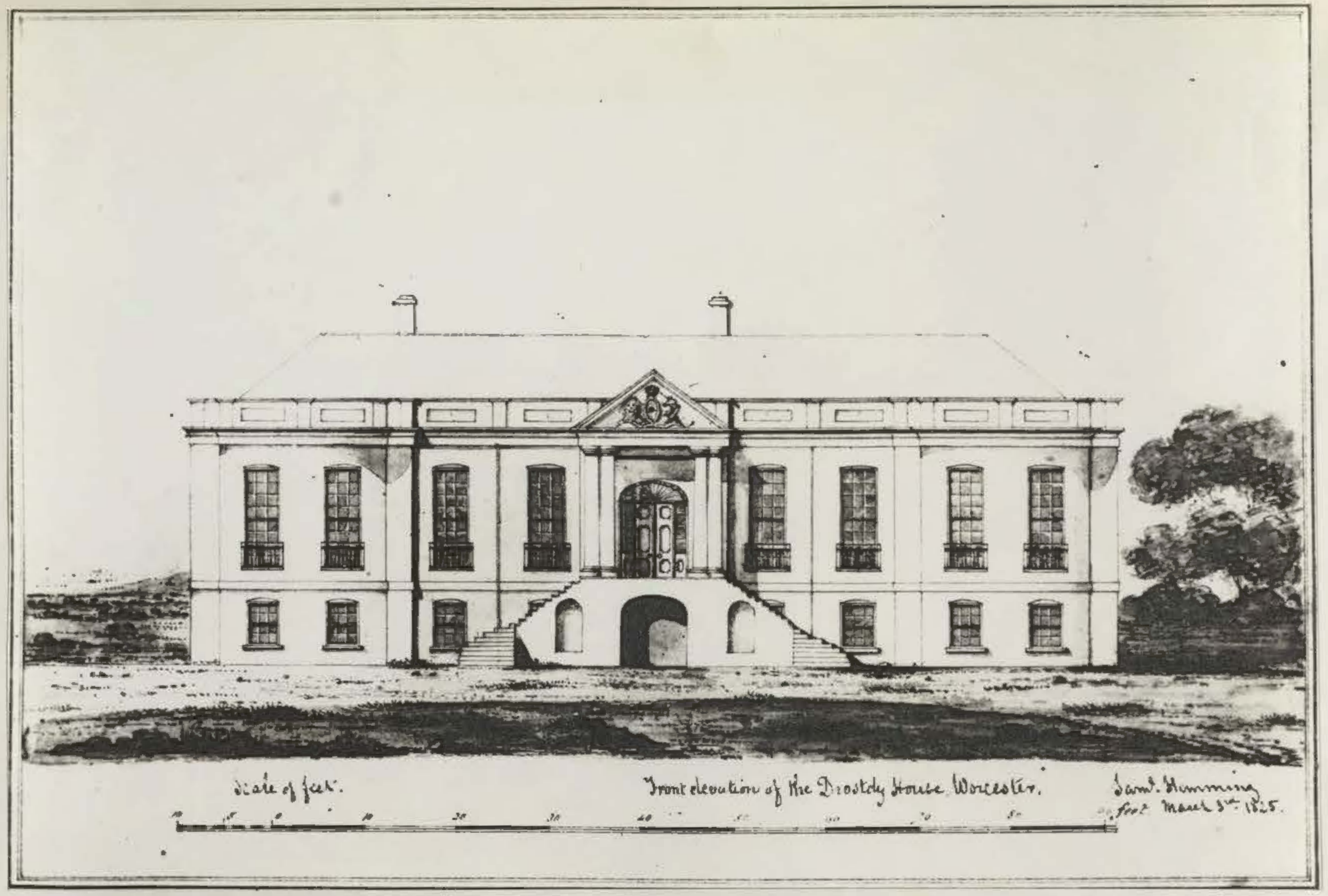
10. (Left). The sundial column erected on the Parade in front of the Commercial Exchange by Sir Rufane Donkin.

11. Perspective of Worcester Drostdy in 1825, drawn by Samuel Hemming. (British Archives: C.O. 48/78 No.53).

During his tenure of office as Acting-Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin began the erection of a Neo-Classicist monument as an embellishment to the Parade in Cape Town.[1] It was designed by J.W.Melvill[2] as a squat plain (Roman) Doric column on a square base (Plate 10), and was to have held 'a gigantic dial plate' for a sun-dial, had not Somerset's return interfered with its completion.[3] The podium and Column were of European brick, plastered, while the sun-dial was to have been of Robben Island stone. The column seems to have stood in an unfinished state for about ten years before being removed.[4] It is clearly visible in a number of early drawings, e.g. S.E.Hudson's sketch of the Parade[5] and de Meillon's drawing of Greig's Booksellers.[6]

In July 1822 a great storm ravaged the Western Cape, and messages reached Cape Town that the Tulbagh Drostdy House had suffered irreparable damage. By the time the reports were found to have been greatly exaggerated the Governor had already embarked on plans for the removal of the Landdrost of Tulbagh to the sub-Drostdy centre of Worcester, there to administer the whole district. The necessary proclamations were ready in October, and in November the name of the district was changed from Tulbagh to Worcester. A carefully considered town plan for Worcester was prepared, and the plans for the new Drostdy House were ready even before the Governor's intentions were made public.[7]

Designed by the Government Architect, William Jones (and his major surviving design) Worcester Drostdy is the most splendid Regency building at the Cape. Of palatial size, and dominating the town down the full length of the main street, the facade of the Drostdy House (Plate 12) is flanked by two projecting bow fronts running through the full height of the building, which ex-


Scale of feet.
Front elevation of the Drostdy House Worcester.
Saml. Hemming
feet
March 5th 1825.

1. C.O.2669/89; 14th June 1825, and C.O.2707/241; 21st March 1828.
2. Theal 'Records etc. 1793-1831, Cape Town, 1897-1905, XXI, 72.
3. C.O.2660/38 et seq.

press the side wings. Recessed between them is the main block, with a projecting portico in the centre approached by two generous curving flights of stone stairs. The pediment of the portico, originally decorated with the coat-of arms of Great Britain, is supported on four plain ironwood Tuscan columns coupled in pairs at the corners. The oval curve of the bow-fronts is delicately repeated in the fanlight of the entrance doors, the stairs and the niche beneath them, and the curved window heads.

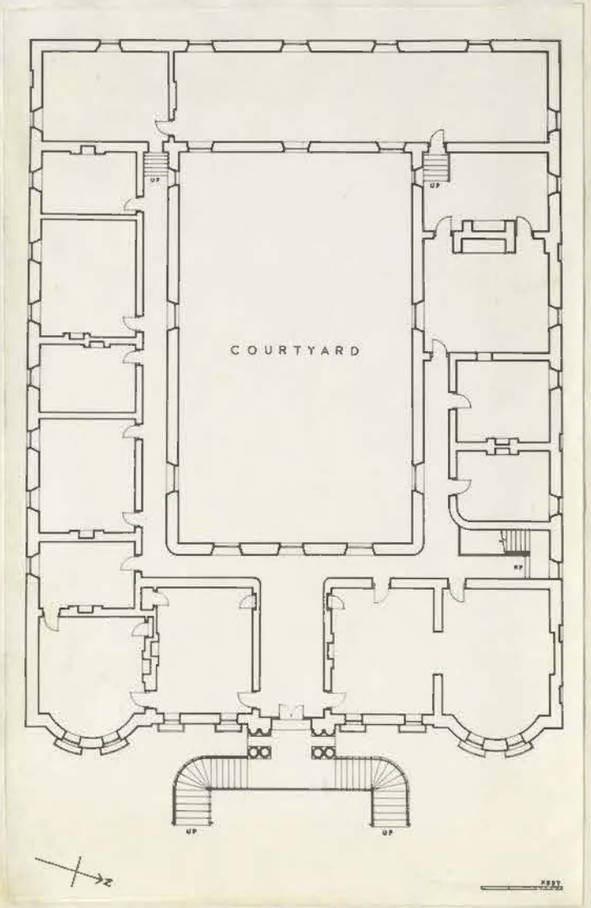
The windows on the upper, main storey, nearly twelve feet high, reach down to the floor level of the rooms behind, and are provided with decorative wrought iron balconies (Plates 17-22). The roof was generally of thatch.[1] The plan (Plate 20) bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the Bathurst Drostdy. (But perhaps not quite so remarkable when it is observed that Colonel Trappes had been Landdrost of the district since May 1821! One is tempted to believe that Trappes is closely connected with the design of this building, as he had probably been with the Drostdy at Bathurst.)

The Drostdy House, originally intended only as a palatial residence for the Landdrost, eventually included accommodation '...in the Basement floor [for] the whole of the Public Offices, viz., a Court Room, Landdrost's, District Secretary's and District Clerk's Offices and a Waiting Room...'. The tremendous expense of the undertaking had finally forced the Landdrost to make some economies, but the inclusion of this important accommodation was only made possible by 'an alteration in the height of the rooms of the basement story...'.[2]

So grand was the conception, and so insistent Colonel Trappes upon the highest standards of comfort, that before the building was half completed the original sum allocated for it had already been spent.[3] When the first drawings

Worcester Drostdy.

17. The portico and stairs.
18. Interior of a balcony and the stairs.
19. Fireplace in a reception room, with a Louis XV style cast iron grate.
20. Detail of the facade.
21. The plan at first floor level.



1. C.O.175/29, 24th Sept. 1822. C.O.2651, 13th Jan.1823 et.seq. 'All contracts and purchases of materials were placed in the hands of the Landdrost...' (Theal, 'Records'. XXI, 72).

2. C.O.2651; 13th Jan.1823. '...as the Education of Mr.Sam.[1]Hemming has fully qualified him for such an undertaking...' The Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry describes Hemming as 'a gentleman who had formerly served in the engineer department of the East India Co. in Bombay, and who resided in the Colony on account of his health.' (Theal, 'Records', XXI, 72).

3. e.g. C.O.2660/38; 16th March, 1824 et.seq. in which Jones is refused permission to travel to Worcester to inspect the work.

4. They estimated that the completed cost of the Drostdy ('not less than Rds.90,000') would be so great 'that the remaining portion of the sum advanced (for separate magistrate's courts, public offices, messenger's house, gaol, church, etc.) will be utterly insufficient to meet the charge of any other building.' (Theal, 'Records', XXI, 73).

   Anthony Trollope ('South Africa', London, 1878, 2 vols.) mentions a rumour that Lord Charles Somerset had meant the Drostdy as 'his shooting box, built at the expense of the Crown...It is an enormous mansion...approached through a portico of most pretentious and unbecoming columns...There was something magnificent in those old, brave, unhidden official peculations by the side of which the strict and straight-laced honesty of our present Governors looks almost mean'.

5. C.O.2660/34, 9th March, 1824.

22.A. and B. Worcester Drostdy, details of wrought ironwork.

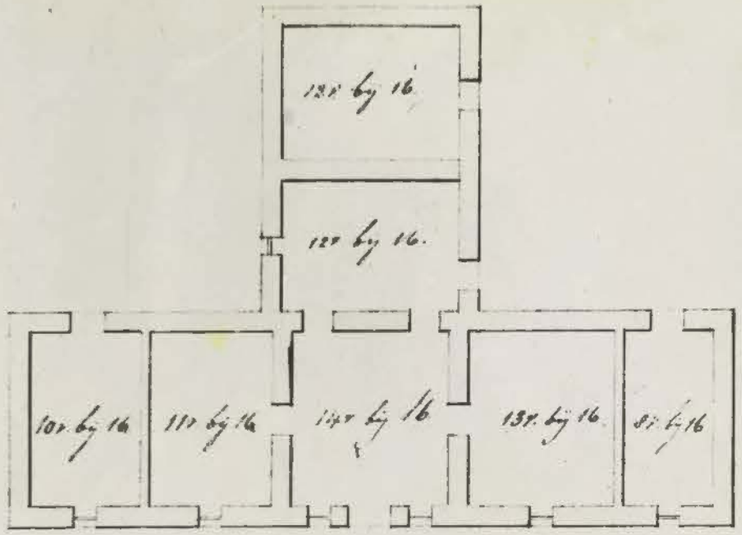
were prepared William Jones had roughly assessed the cost at 68,000 Rixdollars, but, in spite of repeated requests, he persistently neglected to present a detailed estimate to the Governor.[1] Colonel Trappes, meanwhile, had managed to obtain permission to appoint as supervisor of the erection of the Drostdy a man of his own nomination, Samuel Hemming.[2]

The building was completed and occupied towards the end of 1824. When Somerset discovered the exorbitant over-spending on the Drostdy he vented his rage largely upon William Jones, although, apart from neglecting to furnish a detailed estimate in the first place, the Inspector of Buildings seems to have had very little personal connection with the building operations.[3] But this was just one of the many instances of general incompetence in Somerset's administration which led to endless recriminations during the Inquiry of the Commissioners in 1825.[4]

While the Worcester Drostdy was being erected the town was developing rapidly. In 1824 the Landdrost forwarded to Cape Town a set of three drawings which give a revealing insight into the transitional state of architecture then current on the Platteland.

The first, a design for the Dutch Reformed Church, is purely Gothic in style and remarkably accurate in detail. It is discussed in the next chapter.

The other two drawings are alternative designs for the same building, the Dominee's house. One, (Plate 23), is a fascinating and accurately dated example of the late Western Cape farmhouse of a type particularly common in Worcester, and the surrounding district. The Dutch gable has shrunk to a pathetic travesty of its former character - it is now merely a dormer only as wide as the

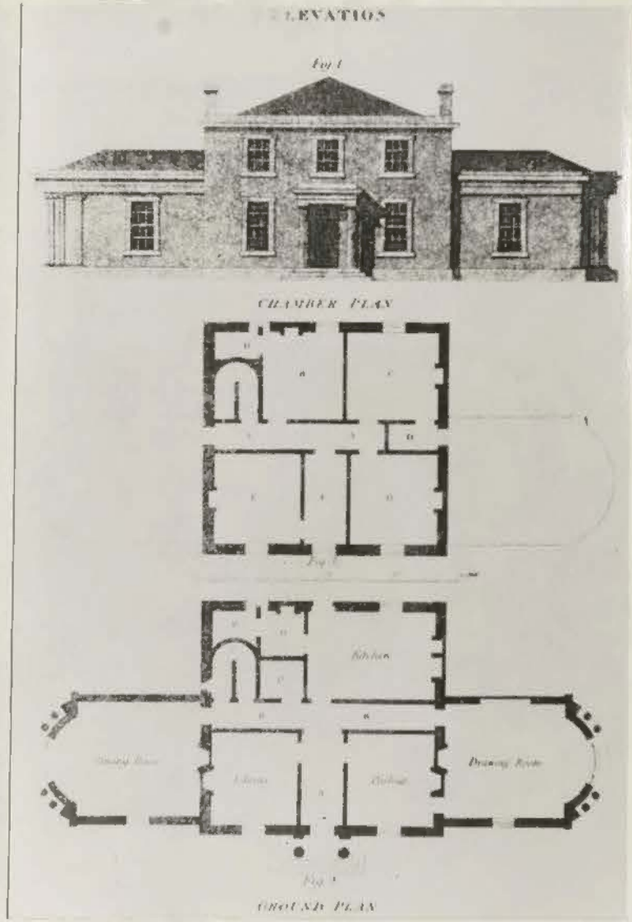


23. One of the alternative designs proposed for Worcester Pastorie, 8 April, 1823. (C.O. 2651/54).

doorway. The semi-circular cap on the gable is a Thibaultesque touch, derived from the Tulbagh Drostdy andperhaps from classical gables of his in the district, since demolished. (A semi-circular or curved shape, either crowning the gable or incorporated in it,may be found on many of the surviving Worcester gables.)

Plate 24 is by contrast the design of an Englishman, possibly Colonel Trappes himself. Nothing could be more different than the two houses. The first has a T-plan, a voorkamer and all the characteristics of white walls and heavy thatch that we associate with eighteenth century Cape architecture. The second is a double-storeyed Georgian town house with projecting single-storey wings terminated in polygonal ends. A classic portico frames the door, which is approached up a flight of steps. The entrance hall is narrow and connected to a transverse corridor for circulation through the house. A graceful curved stair links the two levels. The main rooms are all provided with fireplaces, and chimneys in consequence form a major feature of the exterior. The house is, in fact, very close to that described as a gentleman's residence and published in Nicholson's 'Practical Builder' in London in 1820 (Plate 25), but considerably improved by someone in Worcester; (for instance, the inclusion of natural light into the corridor.) It is unfortunately not known whether the 'dominee's' house was actually built to this design. But the drawing does show that English ideas and pattern books are likely to have had a far greater effect on Western Cape architecture, even in the Platteland, than is generally assumed.

During this period, that is, in the early 1820's, a number of new churches were built in the Colony, but our knowledge of them is in most cases rather



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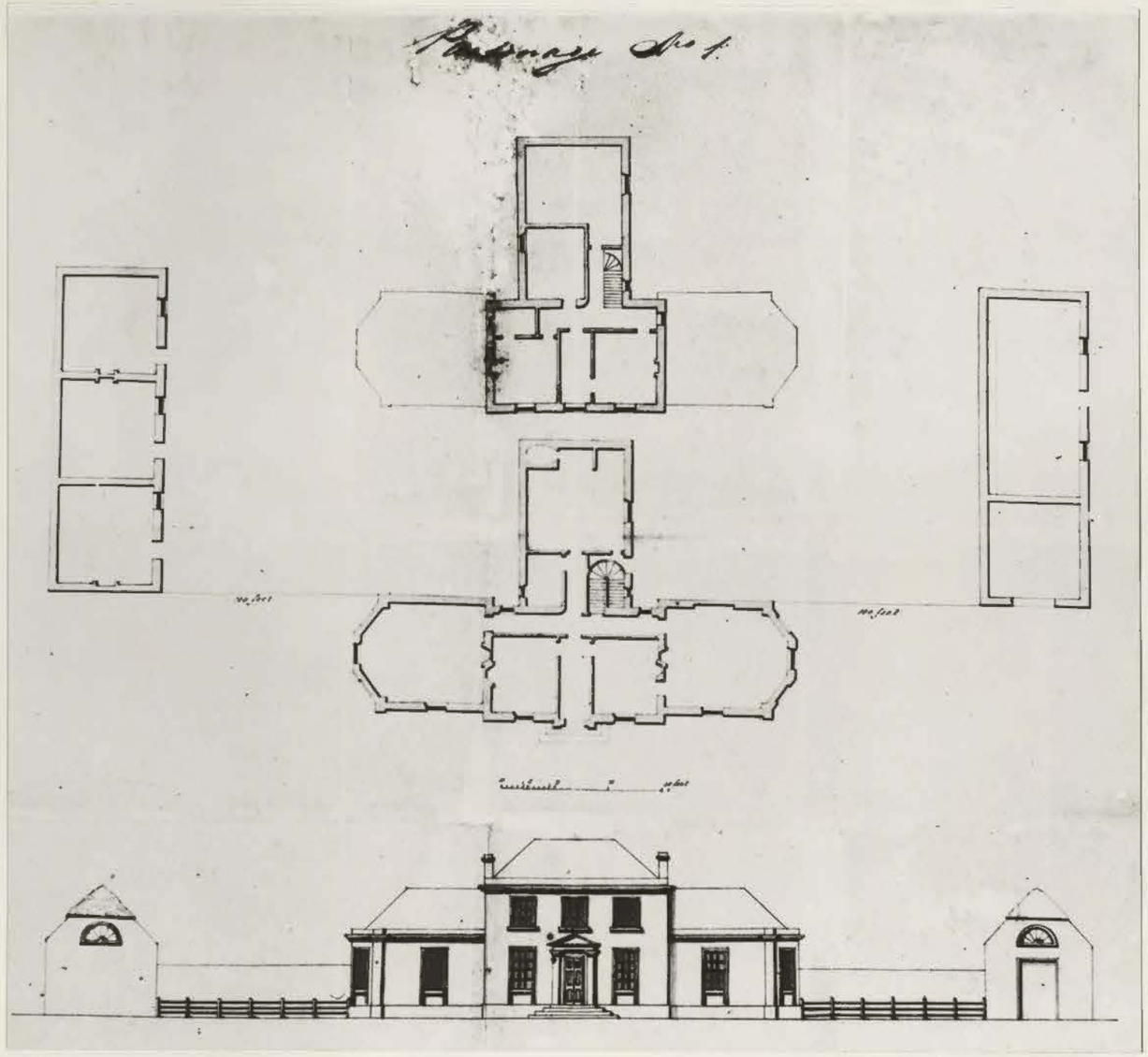
24. The second of the alternative designs proposed for Worcester Pastorie, 8 April, 1823, compared with: 25, a plate from Nicholson's 'Practical Builder', London,1820.



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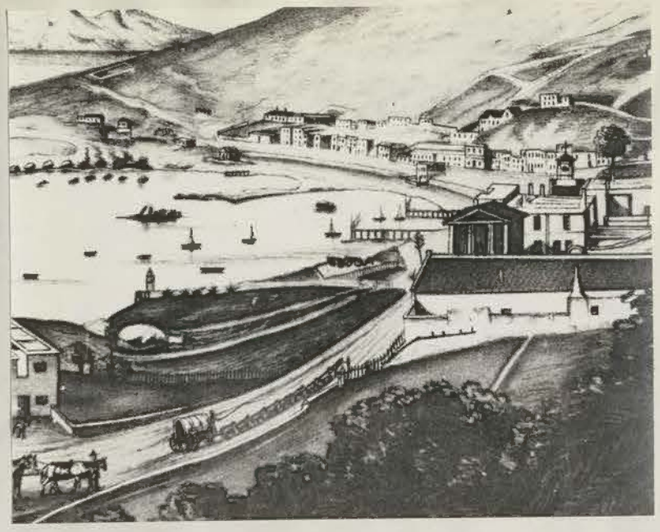


1. C.O.142/21; 28th Feb. 1821.
2. C.O.220/126; 9th October 1824. This chapel is still in use.
3. C.O.220/127; 9th October 1824.
4. Africana Museum 1069 (unidentified aquatint).
   Africana Museum 53/611 (drawing of Simon's Bay by Capt.Haverfield).
   It is conceivable, indeed likely, that the design was afterwards modified by H.W.Reveley, who was Engineer at the Cape at the time it was built.

scanty. Amongst them were a new English Chapel (1824) and a Wesleyan Chapel (1822) at Simonstown, and a Wesleyan Church in Barrack Street, Cape Town (1822).

The old English church at Simonstown, converted from a warehouse by Thibault, had been partly demolished in 1819. A design for a new building (the work of Melvill ?) was sent to the Colonial Secretary in Feb. 1821, but nothing came of it.[1]

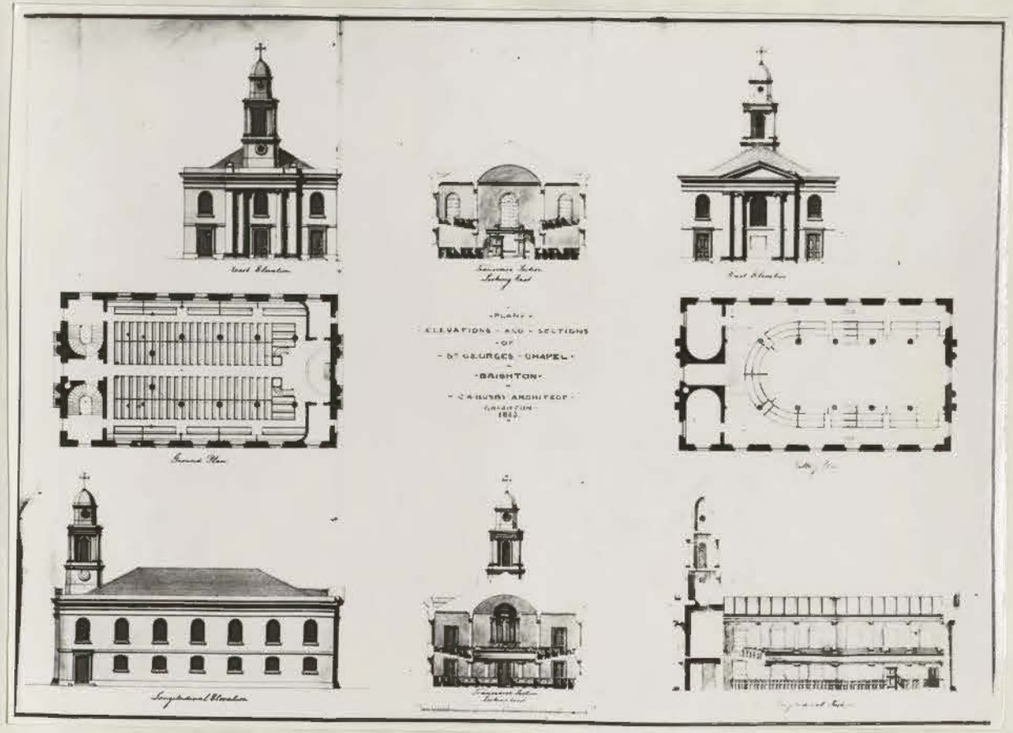
Further collapse of the old church during the following years rendering it completely unserviceable, & a church was temporarily 'fitted up in a Room in the Dockyard, with a sail locker next door.' (Plate 26)[2] At the same time plans were sent to the Colonial Secretary, drawn by the Resident, H.Scott, as a guide to W.Jones for the design of a church without a spire, as that would cost 'one fourth additional expense.'[3]

This design, erected eventually in 1828, was Jones' only essay in the pure Greek revival style of which we know anything, and a splendid building it must have been. Since a Gothic church without a spire was inconceivable, Jones designed the whole building as a simple rectangular Greek temple, with plain plastered walls punctuated by neat semi-circular-headed windows, a low-pitched zinc roof, and a temple portico as the main facade.[4] For many years after it was built a visitor to Simonstown, arriving by road, saw (probably to his amazement) at the entrance to the town, and facing down the road towards him, an almost perfect Greek temple, distyle in antis, with fluted Doric columns and a bare, undecorated pediment (Plate 27). (Unhappily the church was reconstructed in the Gothic style when a spire was added forty years later, and one wall with a window is all that remains of the original building.)

1. Morrison Collection 415.

2. Cf. W.M.MacMillan: 'The Cape Colour Question' in which he cites a letter from J.Mackintosh in England to Rev.John Philip, 10th April, 1822, 'You have got Lord Charles again - at which I dare say you have no great cause to rejoice - and another valuable acquisition to your society in the person of Oliver.' The printer, L.H.Meurant, no friend of the Governor, wrote ('Sixty Years Ago', Cape Town, 1885) that Jones collected the names of Cape radicals for inclusion in Lord Charle's black book'.

3. Sir Rufane Donkin on his return to England expressed his 'abhorrence of the system of espionage that has been established at the Cape'. (Hattersley 'Oliver, the Spy and Others', Pietermaritzburg, 1960)



29. St. George's Church, Brighton. Plans, Sections and Elevations. C.A. Busby,R.A., Architect,1825.

While Somerset was in England during 1821 he endeavoured to obtain a sum for the construction of an Anglican church in Cape Town. This failing, however, the citizens of CapeTown formed a church committee. By 1824 this was in a position to propose the erection of a church, the cost of 112,000 Rixdollars to be raised as a loan, the annual interest of which would be paid by the sale of pews.[1] Accordingly, William Jones was commissioned to design the building, the designs being ready by January 1825.

There is some evidence that at this time Jones was engaged in other activities besides architecture. The increasing arbitrariness of Somerset's behaviour since his return from England and his quarrel with Donkin was generally thought at the Cape to be strengthened by an extensive intelligence system.[3] Since Jones was known by many to be the notorious 'Oliver the Spy' he was naturally suspected of being the leading element in this secret service - although whether he really was is unknown to this day.[2]

Yet it will be remembered that Jones was recommended as his successor in the post of Government Inspector of Buildings by John Melvill, a close friend of the leading members of the London Missionary Society, and, of course, subsequently a missionary himself. If Jones, on arriving in Cape Town, had gone out of his way to strike up a friendship with Melvill in order to obtain work as a contractor or surveyor (as he was most likely to do), he may well have had to mix in missionary circles. With this in mind, the text of a dispatch marked 'Secret and Confidential' from Somerset to Bathurst, at the time of the launching of his attack against the missionaries in July 1824, becomes doubly sinister:

St. George's Church, Cape Town:

30.A. Column capital in interior.

30.B. General view of interior.

'I would rejoice in an opportunity to expose Philip and Wright, but though I am aware of all they do by secret intelligence upon which I depend, I should, if I were to bring their conduct forward, disclose the only source of intelligence upon which I depend and which I consider of too much importance to the safety of my Government to give up.' [1]

However this may be, Jones' design for St. George's was the work of a man whose heart was not in his profession (Plates 20f. on page 458). Combining Gothic and Classical details in an even more arbitrary and tasteless fashion than in the design of the Grahamstown church (Plates 13f. on page 454f.) the building bears a vague but inferior resemblance to the rebuilt parts of the Lutheran Church in Strand Street.

The grotesqueness of the design could hardly have failed to cause adverse comment. The proposals of the church committee met with a noticeable lack of support[2] and Jones himself was rapidly falling out of favour. In July 1825 he was peremptorily dismissed from his position as Inspector of Government Buildings, and reduced to the rank of 'Government Overseer of Works', a post more in keeping with his abilities.[3]

Jones' successor (the post was now termed 'Superintendant of Government Buildings') was Lieutenant Francis Hope, Royal Engineers, who for a short time had been Acting Landdrost of Albany:[4] 'The Governor's Orders to me were to hurry to Cape Town as fast as possible, as the duties of the Office were so important that it was requisite to have a person of responsibility at the head of it.[5] Francis Hope, appointed 1st August, 1825, was the first of a series of capable and efficient Government Architects who did a great deal to improve

1. Duplicate Dispatches, 18th July, 1824.
2. Hattersley. Article in 'Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library.' XXII, No.4, 143-59.
3. cf. Laidler 'Growth and Government of Cape Town', Cape Town, 1939, 228-230, where Somerset's motives are misinterpreted.
4. C.O.235/48, 28th April, 1825.
5. C.O.275/29. Report of 20th March, 1826. He had previously been asked to superintend the erection of St. George's church, Grahamstown, on behalf of the Government (June, 1823. Cory 'Rise of South Africa', II, 204).

1. C.O.2467/ Page 192. 2nd May, 1826.

2. v.Skirrow's 'Report', 11th July, 1826 in 'Letters of R.Bourke' MSS. Afr. t 7/3 Bodleian, and Hattersley 'Quarterly Bulletin of South African Library'. XII, No.4, 154.

3. C.O.323/144; 3rd May, 1825.

4. Theal. 'Records'; XXVIII. Enclosure, Lord Charles Somerset to R.W.Hay Esq., 10th Sept. 1826.

5. C.O.321/75, 20th June, 1827.

6. The evidence that it was Reveley's work is contained in his Memorial to the Government. (0.344/92, 20th Sept. 1828).

7. C.O.344/67, 25th June, 1828.

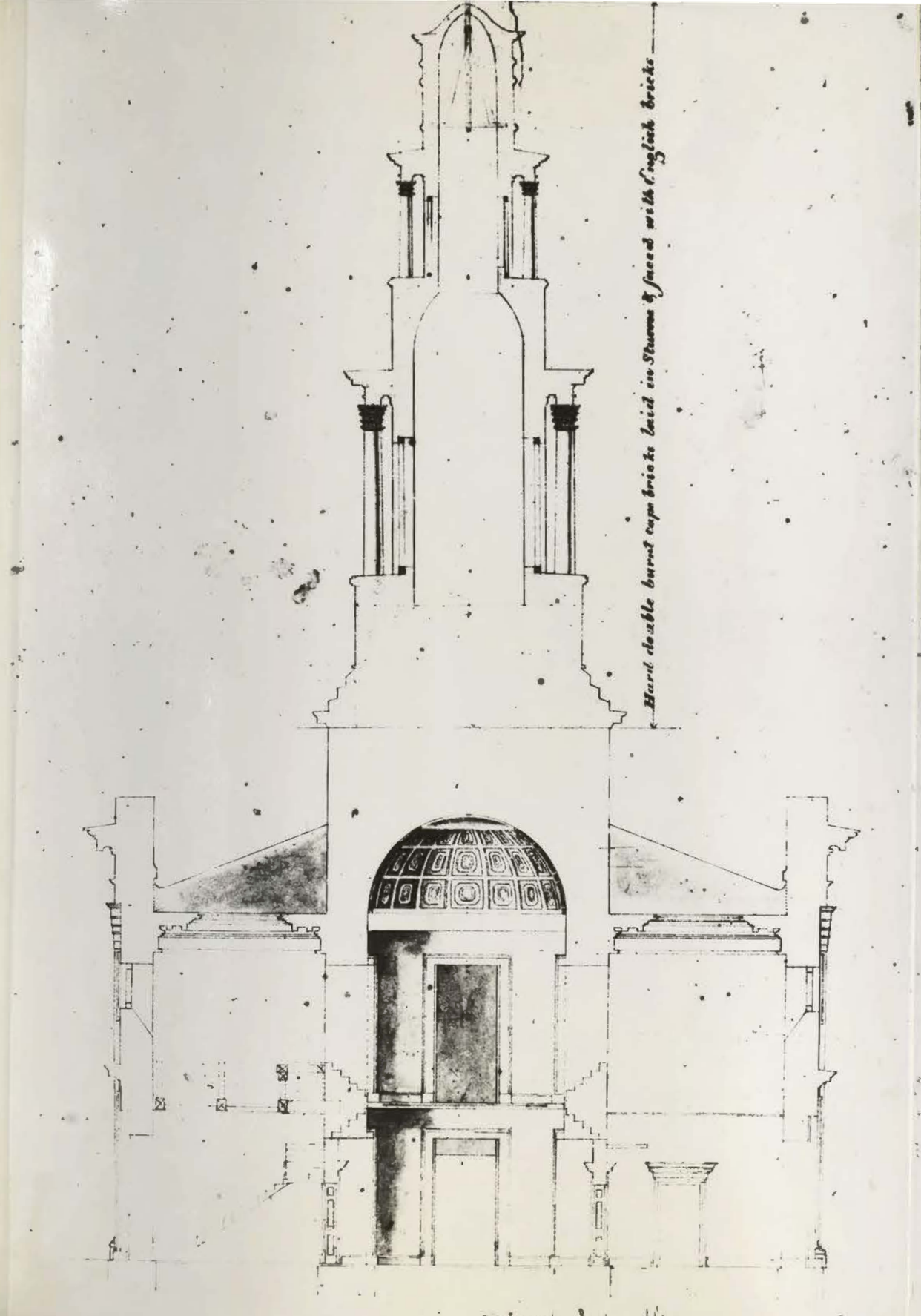
31. St. Pancras, London. W. and W.H. Inwood, 1819-22.

the standard of Government work in the succeeding years.

Jones' scheme for theAnglican Church having been dropped, Commissioner Bigge suggested the conversion of the Commercial Exchange to serve as a church for the Anglican community.[1] John Skirrow, contractor for the Observatory, was asked to examine the proposal and pronounced it impractical, because the existing walls were not strong enough to support a superstructure.[2]

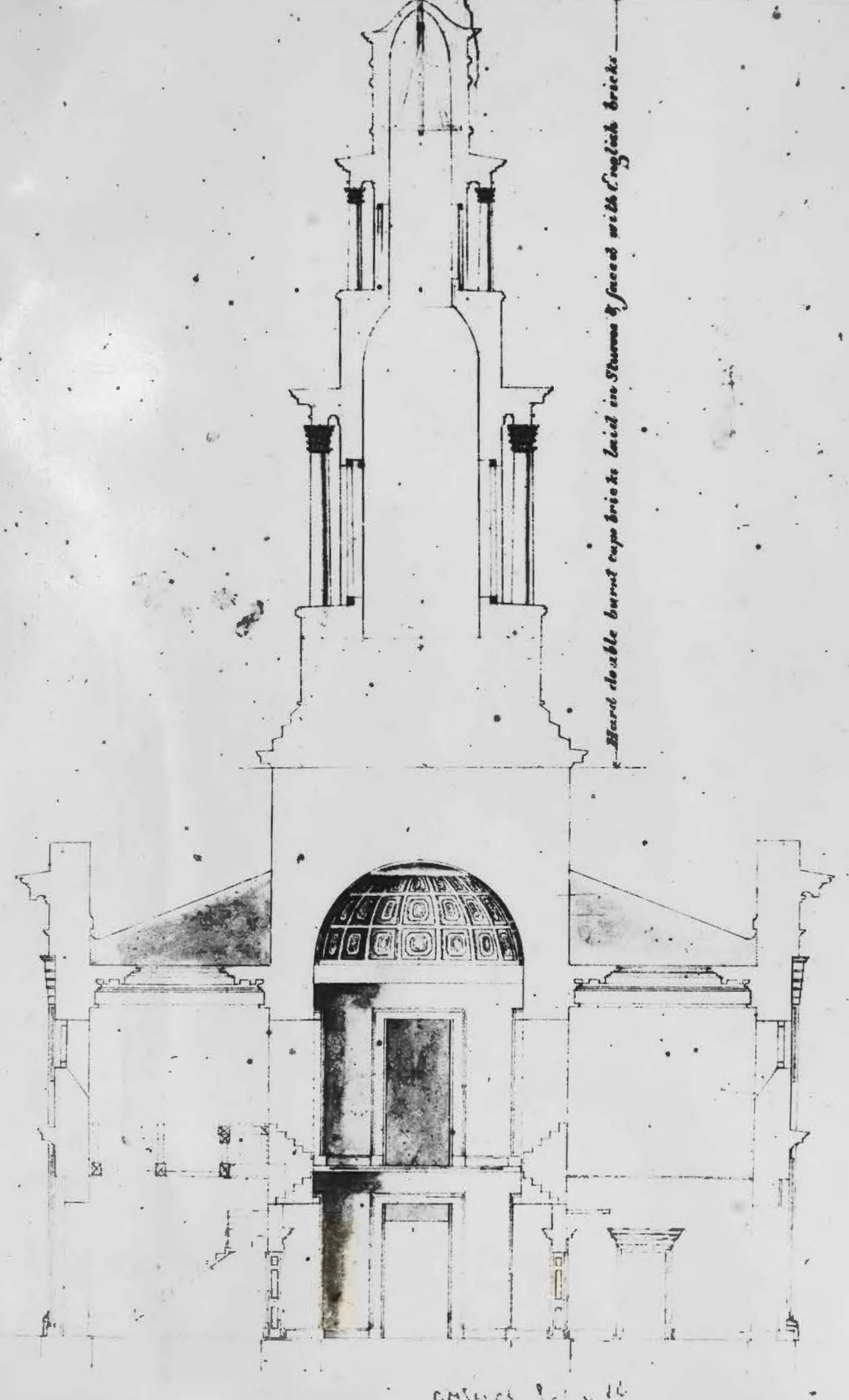
In March 1826 Somerset returned to England (although he had not yet resigned his post). While holidaying at fashionable Brighton in the spring, he noticed a new church, St. George's Chapel, which seemed to him ideal in size and character for the projected church in Cape Town. Applying to the architect for copies of the design drawings, he sent one to the Colonial Secretary at the Cape[3] and another to the Colonial Office in London (Plate 29). St. George's, Brighton, designed by C.A.Busby, Royal Academician, was a severe but well-proportioned classical building in the Ionic style.[4] Although it was never accepted as the basis for the Cape Town church, its character may have had some influence on the minds of the church committee, who were eventually persuaded to accept the much more radical and modern design which was eventually built.

Before this happened, however, yet another scheme was submitted to the committee, designed by the recently arrived Henry Reveley. Reveley was appointed in London to the new post of Civil Engineer at the Cape, and arrived in November 1826 (thus superseding Francis Hope as Superintendant of Government Buildings).[5] Nothing is known of the character of his design,[6] except that Skirrow, called upon by the committee for his opinion, gave out that he thought it proposed too many constructional problems, and that a smaller church with 700 in the nave and 300 in a balcony would accommodate the same number in a more practical way.[7]



32,33. Section and elevation of St. George's Church, Cape Town. Original drawings. (by kind permission of Mr. L. Marriott Earle).

Hard double burnt cupe bricks laid in Stucco & faced with English bricks

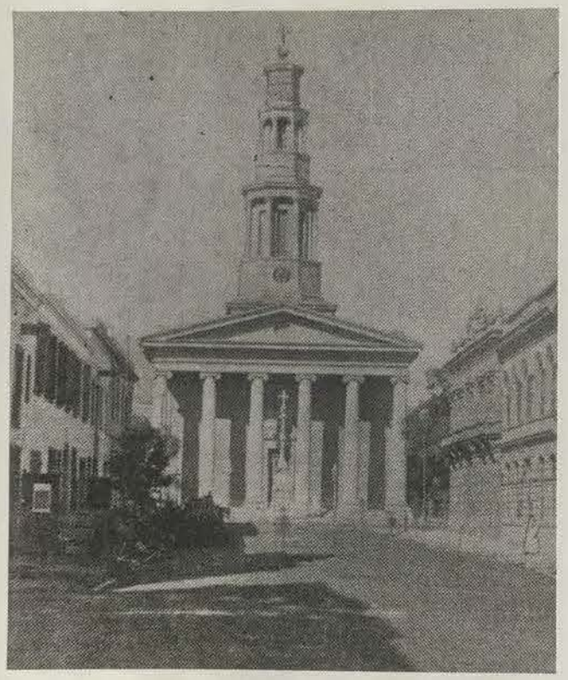


1. C.O.433/44. 26th Aug. 1834. The design must have been ready in April, 1829. v.Skirrow's report: C.O.370/78; 28th April, 1829. It had apparently been suggested that the covering of the Roofs should be 'rough Robben Island stone, instead of the usual mode of Teak boarding', for Skirrow commented that he did not approve of the idea 'a method, which I am of opinion has not been long enough in practice in this Colony... to warrant its adoption, on so large a building.' This reference is also interesting because it makes clear that the surviving drawings (Plates 32-3) were the ones submitted for his inspection. 'The Steeple above the first offset, should be built of Dutch Clinkers, or English bricks, instead of Cape bricks, as specified.' - a note which is also written on the drawings.

2. Pevsner. 'London'. ('Penguin: 'The Buildings of England'. Harmondsworth. 1952, 204).

3. J.Summerson 'Georgian London'. London, 1945, 201.

4. Only one major difference between the two may be discovered - the omission of the two doorways flanking the central door.



34,35. Two early views of St. George's, Cape Town.

But Henry Reveley was an enthusiastic exponent of Grecian taste in design, and it is not difficult to imagine that his church was a great deal purer than Busby's, and perhaps incorporated a full Ionic temple-front like that of the design which was eventually built.

Meanwhile the zeal of the English inhabitants of Cape Town in the matter of their projected church had received new encouragement by the visit of the Bishop of Calcutta, who prevailed upon the Acting-Governor to grant an acre of ground in the lower part of the government garden in October, 1827.

A subscription list was opened, the Secretary of State promised financial aid, and in September 1829 an ordinance of the Governor-in-Council gave official sanction to the plan, the design being an adaptation by the Colonial Secretary (no less!) Colonel Bell, from another set of drawings sent out from England.[1]

The fortunate choice of a model in this case was St. Pancras, London, designed by W. & H. Inwood in 1819, and completed in 1822 (Plate 31). This church was 'the earliest in London in a pure neo-Grecian style'.[2] Of its designers the younger (Henry) visited Greece, and Sir John Summerson is of the opinion that 'it is to the genius of this young man that we owe this skilful and mature work.'[3]

The Cape Town church, as it was eventually constructed, was almost identical with St. Pancras, London in the design, the proportioning and the detail of its western front.[4] Only the plan and the east end were noticeably changed, the plan being slightly longer, with the apse and vestries contained within a simple rectangular shape. The Caryatid side porches of St. Pancras were omitted.

The foundation stone of the new church (St. George's) was laid in April,

1. C.O.433/44; 26th Aug. 1834.

2. Schutte lost £2,520 on the contract. ('Catalogue of Rare Books... etc. in the Estate of the late Mr.S.O.H.Schutte'. Item 102).

3. The deeply overhanging mouldings were cored out in slate or stone slabs.

4. J.Summerson 'Georgian London', 202.

5. Report on the building graciously furnished to the author by the architect responsible for many years for its maintenance, Mr.L.Marriott Earle.

6. C.O.433/9th December, 1834. Up to that time £11,500 had been expended and £2,000 more was required to finish the tower and internal fittings. (Theal 'History of S.Africa'.II,367.)

36. View down St. George's Street to the Church.c.1860.

1830. The specification included a clause that 'the Working Drawings should be drawn and made by John Skirrow Esq., the Architect, or by the Architect for the time being, until the said church shall be erected and completely finished.'[1] It was built of plastered brickwork, with a low-pitched roof, and could accommodate 1,150 persons. The contractor was Herman Schutte.[2]

The execution throughout was of the highest order, the mouldings being precise and subtle, the plaster anthemion and pine-cone ornaments of the tower bold and well-proportioned (Plate 37), and the elaborate Corinthian capitals of the tower and the Ionic ones of the portico beautifully proportioned and sculptured.[3] The main entrance under the portico led first into a circular domed narthex (Plate 32), from which two flanking rooms opened, one of which contained the stairway leading up to the gallery. The interior of the church was perfectly rectangular, with a square east end, the chancel lying behind a colonnade of two Corinthian columns and two pilasters which spanned the full width and height of the church (Plate 30). The ceiling was flat, as was the common practice at the time, due, no doubt, to the availability of big timber from the Baltic which made it unnecessary to introduce nave arcading or vaulting. But the result was here, as in the parent church in London, to introduce 'a bareness, an "institutional character" which has done more than anything to make early 19th century church architecture disliked.[4] But again the sculptured ornament and mouldings were exquisitely executed, 'the ceiling of lath and plaster with fibrous plaster enrichments, some of considerable size and weight.[5] The church was ready for use on 9th December, 1834.[6]

Stylistically, St. George's church was undoubtedly the most perfect building in the pure Greek style ever erected in South Africa. Indeed, in the opinion of Professor Nicolaus Pevsner, it was (albeit a copy) among the two or

37. The tower of St. George's, Cape Town.

three finest examples of Neo-Grecian architecture in the British Empire at the time of its demolition. The main portico was a close copy of the east portico of the Erectheum in Athens. The main doorway (like the portico, ex-St.Pancras) was based on a famous example from the same building, while the tower was an adaptation of the Athenian Tower of the Winds 'free and astonishingly successful, for whenever Inwood leaves his avowed prototypes he shows himself possessed of a power of invention which is always fresh and appropriate...Inwood's flair for recapturing that nervous intensity one finds in Greek architecture of the 5th century is very remarkable.'...[1]

The tower was further carefully prevented from giving an appearance of riding over the portico by being set well back over the entrance wall and raised on a stepped podium. The main differences between Bell's design and that of Inwood lay in the vertical proportioning of the tower, the height of each storey being slightly reduced (Plates 33-8). The effect was an interesting strengthening of the relationship of the proportioning of the tower and the portico, a point in which St. Pancras was thought by some to be weak. On the other hand the topmost moulding of the tower of the Cape Town church is rather too definite, a strong cornice instead of the delicate acanthus mouldings of St. Pancras. And it is a great pity that economy forced the omission of fluting from the columns of St. George's. Nevertheless, St. George's was, in South Africa, as St. Pancras was in Britain, 'the queen of early nineteenth century churches.'[2] A visitor to Cape Town after its completion described the effect it produced in the architectural framework of its time : ' I am enchanted with the beauty of this building...both inside and out it seems perfect....'[3]

* * *

1. J.Summerson 'Georgian London', 202-3.
2. Reginald Turner, 'Nineteenth Century Architecture in Britain', London, 1950, 36, quoting Sir John Summerson.
3. T.H.Duthie, Journal, Dec. 1837. (Una Long: 'Index to Unofficial MSS', 118).

1. Quotation from J.Nichols 'Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century': IX, 148-50. 1815.

2. For this, and other information quoted about Reveley, v.D.H.Varley 'Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library', XII, No. 3, 118-121.

3. A.Jardine's 'Fragment of Church History at the Cape of Good Hope'. 1827, 62-63. The foundation stone was laid on 24th Oct. 1827. (Theal, 'History of South Africa', I, 366.) It was opened for worship on 24th May, 1829.

38. The facade of St. George's immediately before demolition.

Henry Reveley was the only son of Willey Reveley, a leading architect of his generation, and editor of the third volume of a standard work on Greek architecture, Stuart's 'Antiquities of Athens'. (His work was said to be 'of great beauty and elegance' but most of it has suffered at the hands of time, his last surviving large building, the Church of All Saints, Southampton, being destroyed in an air-raid in the Second World War.) Willey Reveley died 'in the prime of life'[1] when Henry was only ten years old, his widow marrying John Gisborne and living henceforward on the Continent. Henry obtained the bulk of his engineering training in Italy. From 1818 until 1822 the family lived in Leghorn and Henry became an intimate friend of the poet Shelley, whose life he is reputed to have saved during a swimming accident. At the time of his appointment to the post of Civil Engineer at the Cape, which he obtained on references from Sir John Rennie, Marc Isambard Brunel and other leading engineers of the day, he was working in London.[2] But it is not known that any architectural work of his survives in Britain.

Reveley's major architectural design during his short stay at the Cape was for the first Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's, in Cape Town, towards the cost of which the British Government had in 1825 promised one third of the expense (Plates 39-43). Reveley executed the design in the latter part of 1827, but it appears that his scope was limited, for the specification had already been prepared by the contractors, Skirrow and Schutte. Nevertheless, he 'submitted a plan upon which tenders were called for and finally accepted....'[3]

The resulting building, large enough to hold 500 in the nave and 300 in the gallery, is of simple rectangular interior form with probably originally a flat ceiling above a dominant Doric cornice (Plate 42). The gallery is supported on imported cast-iron columns.

39. The facade of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town,1827-8.

Externally, all the interest of the building is concentrated in the entrance front, a well-proportioned Doric facade, with columns and pediment engaged to the wall behind. It is perfect in its Classic Greek detail but Palladian rather than Greek in its overall composition. Instead of four evenly spaced columns, the portico has two closely coupled columns on either side of the entrance door. The portico does not extend the full width of the facade, as it did in St. George's and the Simonstown church, but covers only approximately half its area, the remainder of the facade being modulated back to emphasise the central bay. The reason for all this probably lies in the extent to which the church had already been designed before Reveley was able to begin on it. Working within a restricted framework he did the best he could, scaled the Doric order to the height of the facade and the doorway to the size of the columns. As the columns were not to be free-standing,he was unable to make the doorway any larger for fear of overcrowding the central bay, and in consequence restricted the width of the portico. Nevertheless the design is surprisingly unconvincing. How could an architect with such an archeological approach to the accuracy of Doric detail do such things to a Doric colonnade? The answer probably lies in Reveley's avowed interest in engineering in preference to architecture. His talent was rational, not creative.

The end of Reveley's career at the Cape is marked by scandal, which turns to minor tragedy when the truth is known, as it eventually was only eighteen months after he was ignominously dismissed. To fully appreciate the circumstances which led up to his dismissal we must turn back to William Oliver Jones.

The conditions under which Jones was replaced have been clouded by the years, but it does seem that a policy of calumny against him was pursued by a number of his employees in the last months. Those of his letters which have come down to us justifying himself against these false charges are the best

1. 'I beg leave to add (tho' Wilson's previous conduct to me deserved no encouragement) after he left the hospital his frame seemed so impaired as to crave pity when I saw him. I occasionally offered him some nourishment, which he seemed eagerly to embrace, and be very thankful....' (Jones to the Colonial Secretary. C.O.247/19. 14th March, 1825.)

2. 'I am well aware he is not alone among the many that would wish to injure my character had they it in their power to do it. Privately, from the hospitality I have shown the man...I consider him an ungrateful hypocrite...' (Jones, to the Colonial Secretary. C.O.247/42, 6th June, 1825.)

3. 'Mr. Jones... (who with that liberality gave him from his own Table such as necessity required)... he was also part of the time continued on the pay list - but Mr. Jones was mistaken in the Man, and instead of being an acquisition he proved to be the reverse...'. (George Gilbert to the Colonial Secretary, C.O.235/92; 21st June, 1825.)

4. C.O.321/116; 2nd October, 1827. It is not known whether the charges were true or false, or whether the Government acted upon them.

5. C.O.321/133. 10th Nov. 1827.

6. He left at the end of May, 1828. (C.O.344/49)

40. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town, engraving by de Meillon, 1832.

testimony we have as to his real character, and certainly call forth a sympathetic response. Among those who testified or reported against him were a workman, Wilson,[1] George Barker, a sick carpenter,[2] and Barry, the chief clerk in the Inspector of Buildings office.

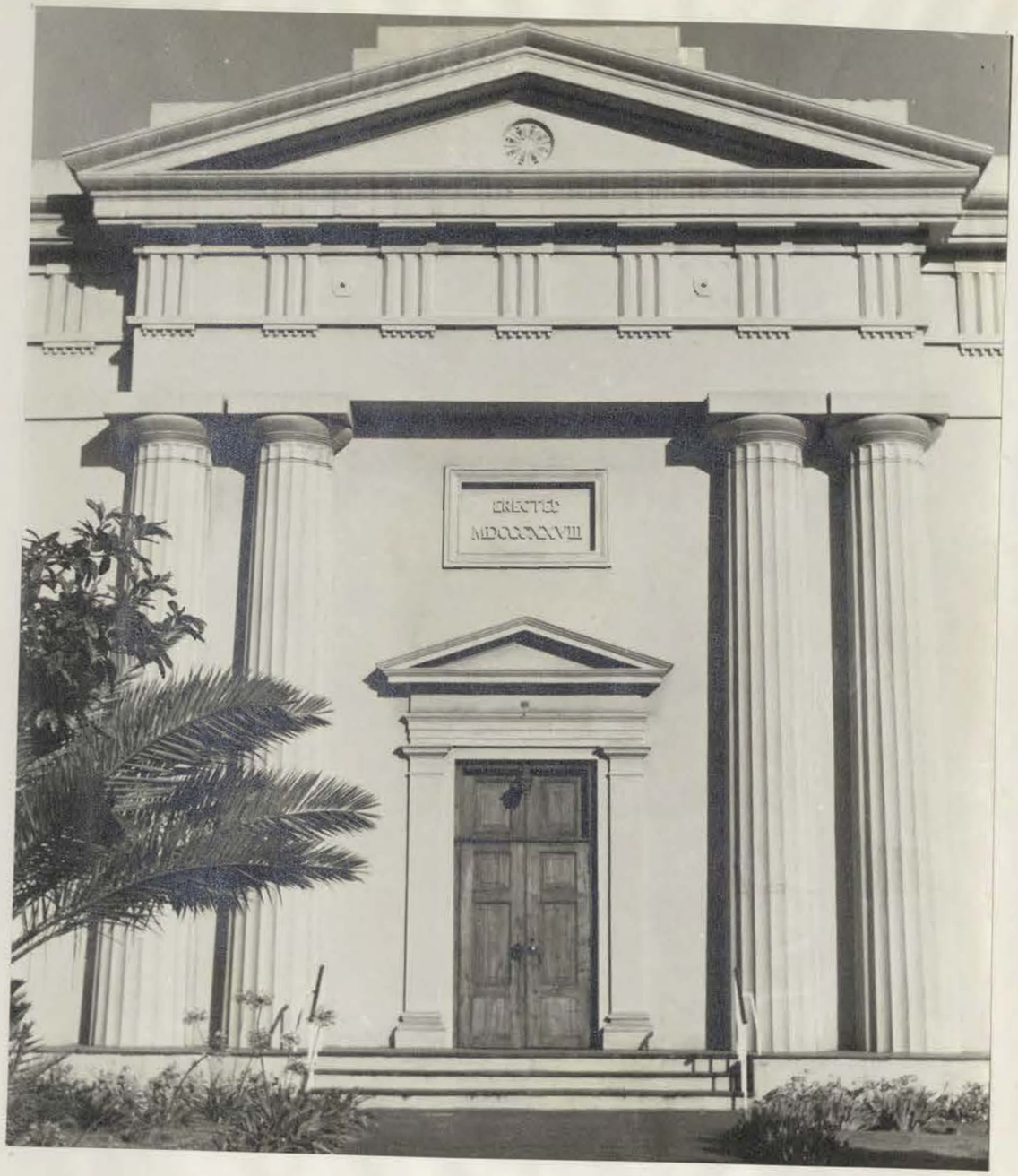
Of them all, Barry was the most insidious. George Gilbert hastened to substantiate Jones' word against Baker,[3] but it is doubtful if either of them realised just how dangerous a man Barry was. It was only later when Jones was dismissed, that Barry came out in his true colours and charged him with dishonesty. When Jones died insolvent in January 1827, he turned his attention to Jone's widow and testified to the authorities that many of the effects she was trying to sell were actually Government property.[4] For a time Barry's word was accepted without question, and the next unfortunate victim of his apparently guileless informing was Henry Reveley, less than a year after he had arrived in the country.

On November 10th, 1827, Reveley was relieved of his duties in an unheralded letter from the Colonial Secretary, in which it was stated that his dismissal was the result of allegations by his clerk that he had appropriated to his own use various loads of old timber, the property of the Government.[5]

Even if subsequent events had not revealed the character of his accuser, Reveley's behaviour would do much to vindicate his honour. Never for a moment did he act like a guilty man. He wrote soberly to the Governor refuting the charges and stayed on in Cape Town expecting daily to be reinstated. When no attempt was made to give him a fair hearing, he wrote to the Secretary of State in London, and afterwards sailed for England.[6] The British authorities were less gullible than those at the Cape, and soon he was back in the Cape on his way to Perth, in Western Australia, there to take up the post of Colonial Civil

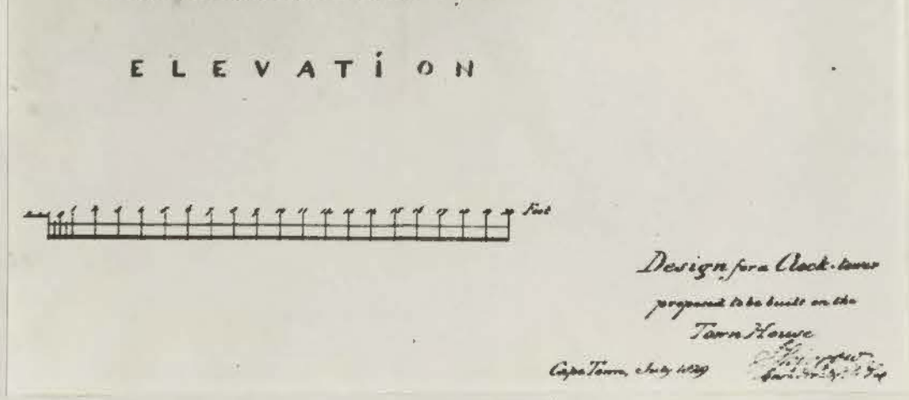
41. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town, the side and back.

42. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town, the interior; the later ceiling has been removed in the photograph - it was probably originally relatively plain.



43. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town. Part of the facade.

ELEVATION



44. Skirrow's design for the clock-tower on the Burgher Watch House, Cape Town.

1. In West. Australia he is remembered as the builder of the Round House at Freemantle and the Old Court House at Perth. He also erected the first steam mill in the Colony. He later returned to England and died at Reading, Berkshire, in January, 1875. (D.H.Varley,'Quarterly Bulletin of the S.A.Library.' XII,No.3; 118-21.)

2. C.O.370/128; 13th July, 1829.

3. C.O.370/141; 27th July, 1829.

Engineer. For years afterwards, however, he continued to demand an enquiry into the false allegations against him in Cape Town, without, it appears, ever achievany success.[1]

Reveley's successor to the South African post was Thomas Skirrow, contractor for the Observatory, who in June 1828 was appointed Government Architect. It was he who finally succeeded in exposing Barry's duplicity, and in having him dismissed. '...Barry falsely charged the new foreman Mr. Stillwell with underhand dealings...it appears that this is only part of Mr. Barry's system of raising his own reputation for honesty, by insinuating against the probity of others...false and malicious....'[2]

Skirrow's work as Government Architect was mainly confined to supervisory affairs and minor alterations. One important design was the original cupola of the old Burgherwachthuis in Greenmarket Square, which he built in July 1829 to take the clock from the Dutch Reformed Church (Plate 44). (The clock was afterwards placed in the tower of St. George's Church.)[3] Skirrow's cupola was unfortunately replaced by one of a different design at the beginning of this century. It was in a restrained Classicist style, and reveals its architect as capable but strictly limited to the contemporary idiom in his work. No concession whatever was made to the waltzing rhythms and pompous pleasantries of the building he had to match. Such were the pedantries of the Classical Revival.

While such Neo-Classicist innovations were becoming commonplace in Cape

Opposite:

45. Original drawing of Colesberg Church design, 1829-33.

46. Original drawing of Beaufort (West) Church design, 1826.

1. C.O.2672/17; 27th May, 1825.

2. C.O. 283/10; 11th Feb. 1826.

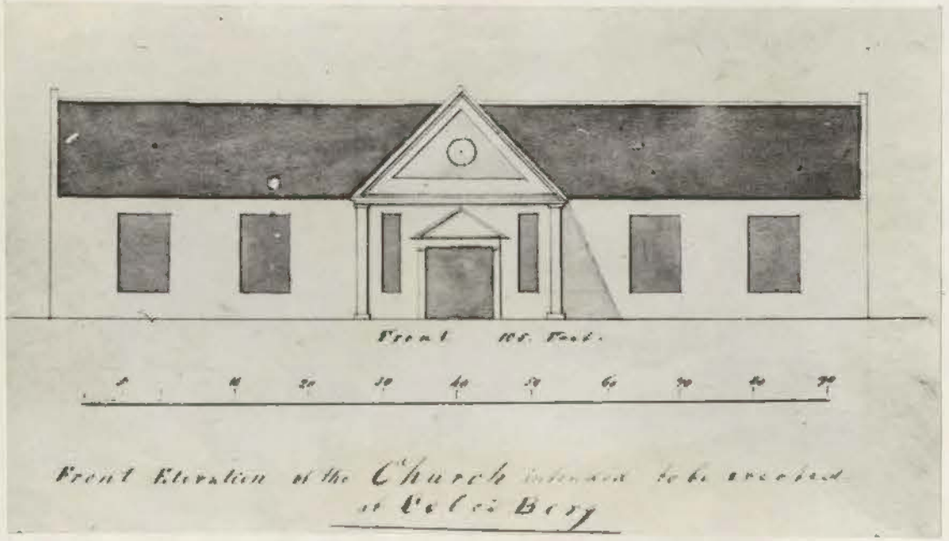
3. See Chapter 18, page 597.

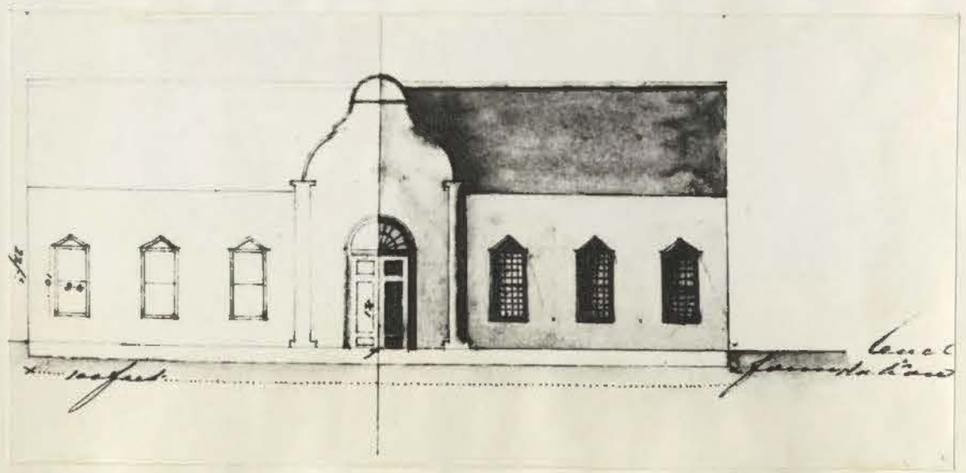
4. The tower fell in 1905 and has been rebuilt more or less on the original pattern.

5. The windows were stinkwood, the main door teak and the remainder stinkwood. The walls were plastered externally with shell lime and internally with mineral lime. The clay was puddled by oxen hired to tread it, and only towards the end of the work was a clay mill used. (D.M. de Jager 'Gedenkboek van die gemeente George, by geleenthuid van die Honderdjarige Herdenking van die Kerkinwyding, 1842 - 1942.)

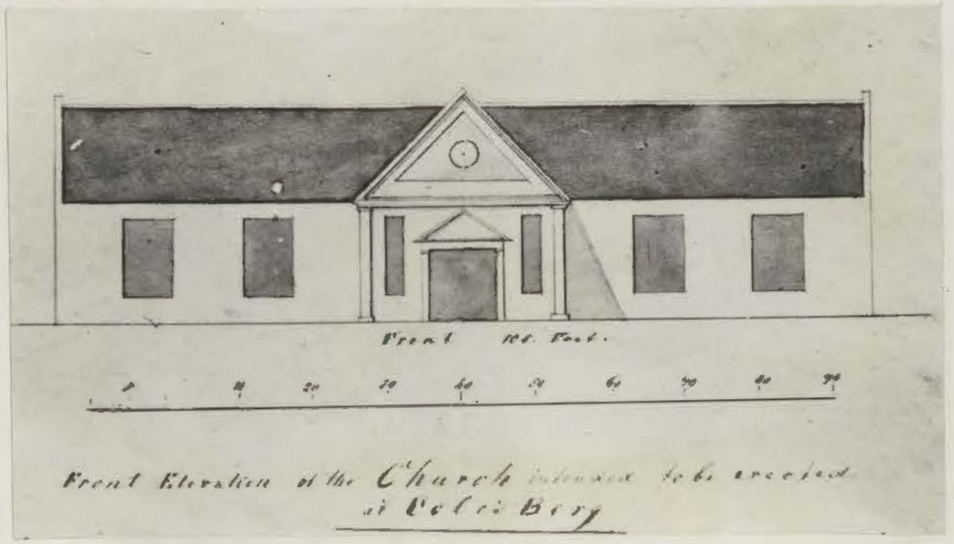
6. Morrison Collection 415.

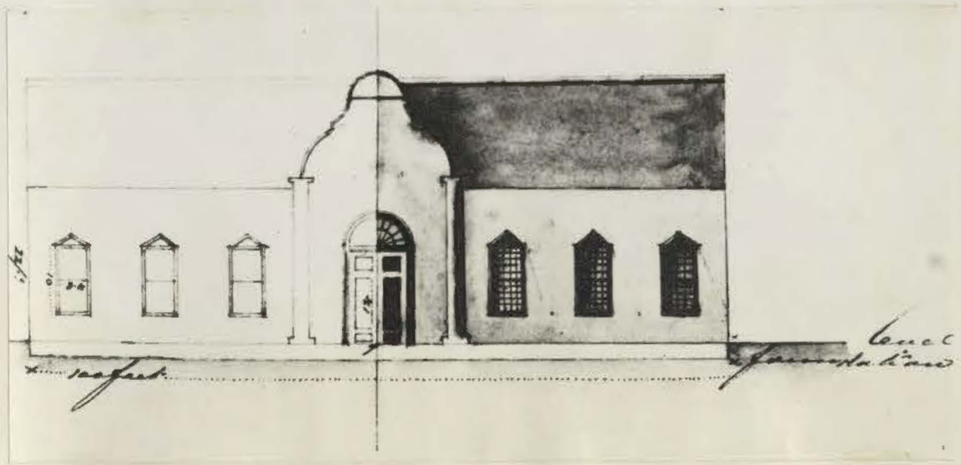
7. Cory. 'Rise of South Africa', IV, 222.





1. C.O.2672/17; 27th May, 1825.
2. C.O. 283/10; 11th Feb. 1826.
3. See Chapter 18, page 597.
4. The tower fell in 1905 and has been rebuilt more or less on the original pattern.
5. The windows were stinkwood, the main door teak and the remainder stinkwood. The walls were plastered externally with shell lime and internally with mineral lime. The clay was puddled by oxen hired to tread it, and only towards the end of the work was a clay mill used. (D.M. de Jager 'Gedenkboek van die gemeente George, by geleenthuid van die Honderdjarige Herdenking van die Kerkinwyding, 1842 - 1942.)
6. Morrison Collection 415.
7. Cory. 'Rise of South Africa', IV, 222.





Town, it is perhaps not surprising that their influence had yet to be felt in the outlying districts, especially in the West.

The churches of Somerset East (1825, Plate 23 on page 459)[1] and Beaufort West (1826, Plate 46)[2] were little more than late eighteenth century barns with thatched roofs and late Rococo centre gables. (The former was originally intended to have had, in addition, a tower.)

The new D. R. Church building for George, of 1828, (the fourth in less than twenty years) was probably based on drawings by Herman Schutte of Cape Town (Plate 47).[3] It is a Classicist design (with the exception of the ugly debased Rococo side gables) which seems to reflect the influence of Reveley's Scotch Church in St. Andrew's Square, and possibly also of the Commercial Exchange. The Neo-Classical tower, a rather unusual problem in Cape churches, is handled in a series of stepped octagons, faintly reminiscent of St. George's Cathedral but with a boldness and originality the former could hardly claim.[4] Yet the roof was thatched and the construction and finishes essentially traditional.[5]

The foundation stone of this church was not laid until 1832, and owing to innumerable delays (see Chapter 18) it was consecrated only in 1842.

The original design for the Dutch Reformed Church at Colesberg (1829 - 33) has survived (Plate 45)[6] and is possibly the work of Schutte or Skirrow. It was a long thatched whitewashed building, with large windows. The entrance was under a classical gable in the form of a triangular pediment carried on unfluted Doric pilasters. The foundation stone was laid in August 1830.[7]

Even in Cape Town itself the old architectural vocabulary was still to be

47. Dutch Reformed Church at George, 1828-42.
48. Wesleyan Church in Burg Street, Cape Town, 1828-9.

WESLEYAN CHAPEL, CAPE TOWN

found mixing with the new. In 1828 the Commissioners of the Wesleyan Church in Cape Town embarked on yet another building, a more central church in Burg Street (Plate 48). Here a Rococo gable, crowned with a festooned urn, rises from a classical pediment carried on Ionic pilasters, which in turn frame Gothic doors and windows. What a joyous confusion this is! The material in which it was all done was whitewashed plaster, and the festooned Ionic capitals were the same as those used by Thibault in the Old Supreme Court. The lyrical sweeping eighteenth century lines of the silhouette, the delicate grace of French classical order, and severity of Methodist Gothic were somehow blended together to produce a building, though bizarre, in its own way quite unified - and as Capetonian as the snoek-horn or the Malay cart.[1]

Wesleyan churches were also being built in other parts of the colony at this time. Most of these were unpretentious bare rectangular halls, thatched and whitewashed. That at Wynberg (1829 - Plate 50) was a typical example, a slight neo-classical quality being given to the form by the treatment of the two end gables as high pitched temple pediments. A very similar church was built at Simonstown in the same year.

In the Eastern Province the original crude shelters which had served as churches were gradually being rebuilt. In Bathurst a new stone Wesleyan church was built (1829-32)[2] in front of the old, which henceforth served as church offices.

At the same time the erection of an ambitious new Methodist church in Grahamstown was undertaken. This time a generous block of land was acquired on the High Street, and a large hall-like classical church erected there (Plate 51). Entered through a portico of four Tuscan columns the interior was a double volume, surrounded on three sides by a light gallery approached from the

1. It was begun in October 1829 and opened for public worship in February, 1831.
2. Opened 8th May, 1832.

1. Opened 16th Dec. 1832. It is still standing, in greatly altered form, as the 'Shaw Hall'. It originally accommodated 800 and cost about £3,000 to build. The original building was, at the time of its erection 'considered...pretentious' according to Sheffield. ('The Story of the Settlement' Grahamstown. 2nd edition, 1884, 212).

2. Goldswain. 'Chronicle' (ed. Una Long) I, 66.

3. Opened c.1832.

4. Pamela ffoliott and E.L.H.Croft 'One Titan at a Time' Cape Town, 1960, 62.

5. Cory 'Rise of S. Africa'. II, 210.

6. C.O.2472.

51

Above: 51. New Wesleyan Chapel, Grahamstown, 1832, later the 'Shaw Hall'.

Below: 49. Independent Chapels, Grahamstown. The first (1825-right) and the second (c.1832).

50. Wesleyan Church at Wynberg, 1829. (? - I have been unable to confirm that this watercolour is correctly identified). (Elliott).

49

50

back, with a plain east end relieved only by the pulpit.[1]

The Independent Church, afterwards absorbed into the Presbyterian, was also engaged in a rebuilding programme at this time. In Port Elizabeth the disadvantages of the temporary accommodation which had been used since the early days are graphically described by Goldswain: '... the following night Mr. Satchell had agreed to preach but just as he named his Text thear came on such a hevey thunder stowm with strong wind that the rain was driven thrue the Roof of the Chaple so that evrey Candle in the Chaple was put out but two and most of they congregation was wet thrue...'[2] The Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown churches were rebuilt soon afterwards, the Grahamstown one, a portion of which is still standing, was another with a T-plan (Plate 49).[3] The Port Elizabeth church (called the Union Chapel because of the unity of effort that went into its erection) was built between 1824 and 1828. A witness of the opening ceremony pronounced it 'neat'; a considerable part of it survives today, though much altered.[4]

The Anglican church in Port Elizabeth, housed at first in a temporary wooden structure, began the erection of a permanent building, St. Mary's, on the same site sometime after 1825.[5] This church was another functional hall, a pure rectangle in shape, with little external embellishment. It was first used in 1831 and officially opened in 1834.[6] A decade later the short Gothic tower was added to the west end.

Almost the only church in this area with any real pretensions to genuine architectural character (and certainly the only Anglican one with any just claim to it) was St. John's Church at Bathurst, designed by Major Mitchell of the

1. C.O.370/166; 28th Aug. 1829. Skirrow after examining the Plans and Specifications, recommended among other things, 'that a flat ceiling be substituted for a circular one; being easier of construction, more secure, and less expensive. "Yellow wood is mentioned for the shingling, it is an improper material for the purpose."'

2. 14th October, 1831. (Proceedings of the Lower Albany Historical Society, No. 1) All authorities are agreed in ascribing the design of the church as erected to Major Mitchell.

3. C.O.403/81; 4th July, 1832.

52,53. St. John's Church, Bathurst,1829-38.

Royal Engineers in 1829 (Plates 52 - 9).

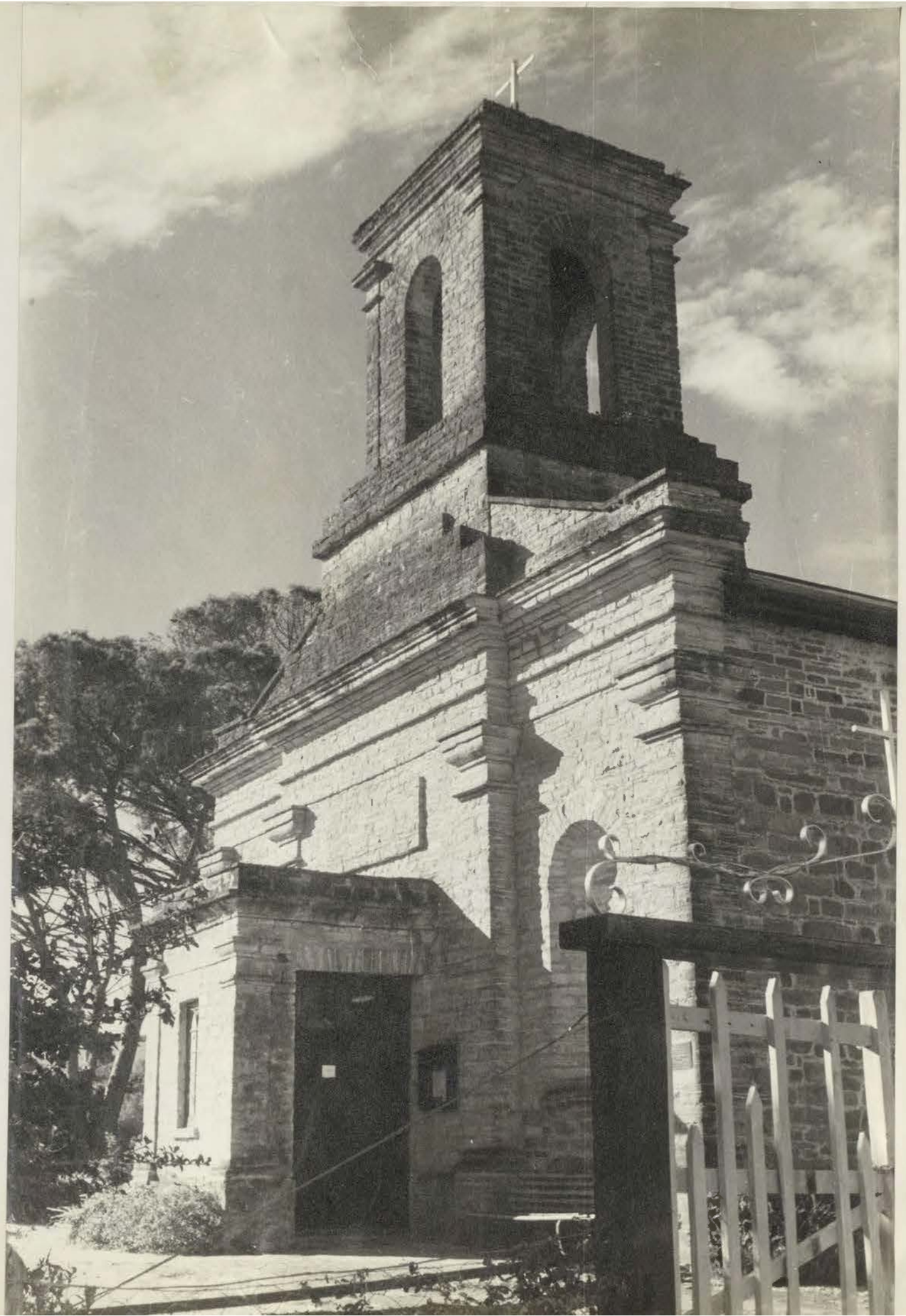
The site originally fixed for the Bathurst Church was on the north side of the town, at the foot of the central hill. But the growth of the town being halted after the removal of the magistracy to Grahamstown in 1822, the majority of the houses were on the south of the hill. When proposals for the erection of a church were quite far advanced, in 1830, Governor Sir Lowry Cole visited Bathurst and granted a new site for the church in a position dominating over the existing town, on the brow of the hill. From the scanty evidence that has come down to us it seems that the church was at this time already designed,[1] and that the original design was fairly strictly adhered to when the church was built on the new site.[2] Mitchell, now Surveyor-General and Government Architect in Cape Town, contented himself with recommending 'the expediency of requiring the services of one of the Frontier Officers of Engineers or such other Engineer as H.E. may be pleased to command upon that service, and that he may give such information after a proper survey and section of the place as may enable the Committee to perceive what sort of work will be within the means of the subscription raised, and possess a solidity adapted to all the peculiarities of the spot.'[3]

Funds for the building were obtained partly by the sale of 104 £5 shares in the church, interest to be paid from the pew rents and offertories! The contract for the stonework was signed on Dec. 21st, 1831, with the Settler Samuel Bradshaw. He undertook to build the walls and the tower for £390. The masonry was completed by May 1833, and tenders were then called for the carpenter's work in the roof, that accepted being for £156. In December 1833 the bell was hung in the tower. The contract for roofing the building with zinc sheeting was signed in November, 1834.

St. John's Church, Bathurst.

54. Measured drawing of the facade. (D. Claude).

55. General view of entrance.

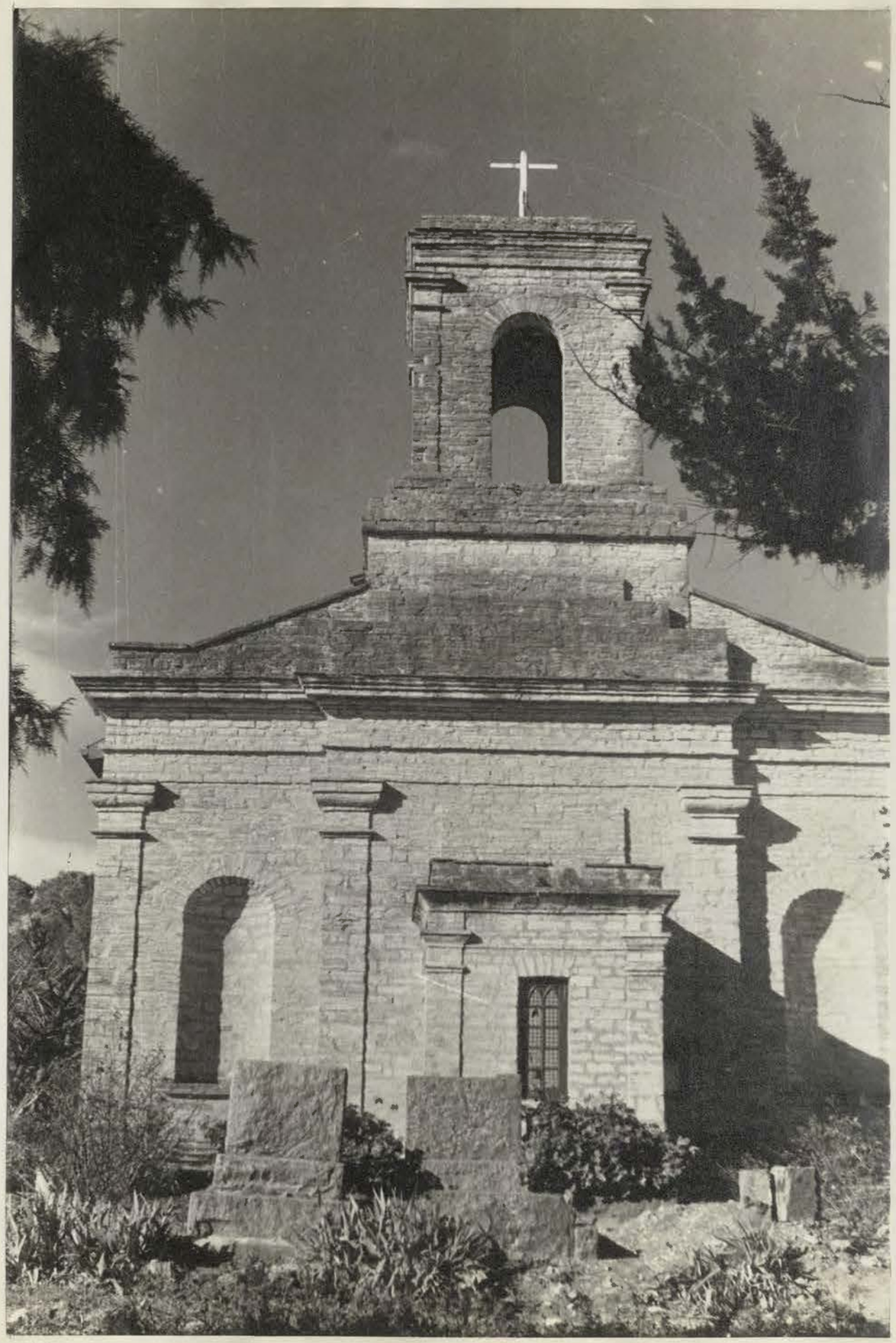


56. St. John's Church, Bathurst, Detail.

When the sixth Kaffir War broke out in December, the Bathurst church, in spite of its unfinished state, became a centre of refuge for hundreds of people from the surrounding district. On Christmas Day an attack was made on the church and the kraals which had been built around it, by a large force of natives. But the settlers and the reinforcement of troops sent from Grahamstown succeeded in resisting the attacks on that and the two successive days, before Bathurst was eventually abandoned on orders from Grahamstown. Three weeks later the church was re-occupied as a military post on which punitive patrols were based. But the building continued to be attacked, a fierce struggle taking place on February 6th. After that the natives were gradually driven out of the district, and with the signing of a peace treaty on Sept. 17th it was possible to reconsider the question of the completion of St. John's.

The roofing, glazing and internal fitting out of the building took place during 1836 and 1837, and the church was opened for worship on 1st Jan. 1838.

The chief pride of the Bathurst church lies in its western front and tower. This remarkable design is, in spite of its basically contemporary character, reminiscent of the designs of Nicholas Hawksmoor and the early Vanbrugh. There is the same firm handling of form, the same delight in contrasts of light and shade, straight lines and curves. It is interesting to conjecture whether in designing it Mitchell did not have in mind some particular church in England, or at least some aesthetic quality which he admired in the buildings of that time. Yet St. John's has also much in common with the later work of George Dance the younger and the Neo-Classicists. While the detail of the pilasters and entablatures is freely interpreted, the orders frame sculpture niches, and in the tower, arcades.



59

57

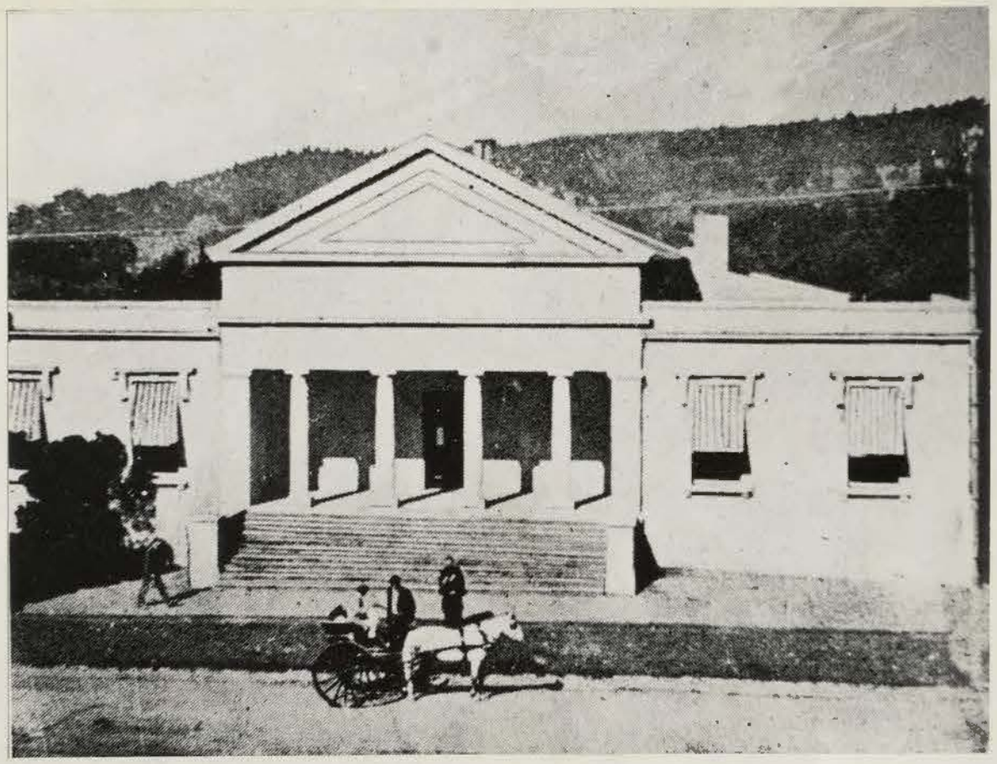
St. John's Church, Bathurst.

57. (Above). Looking up at the tower.

58. (Right). Interior looking east.

59. (Left). The facade.

58



60. The Commercial Hall, Grahamstown, 1832-6.

Only in the execution is the design wholly unconventional. For here the material takes command, the rough golden freestone rubble running continuously from column to niche, plinth to cornice, welding the facade with a dappled texture the varied richness and beauty of which contrasts magnificently with the implied geometry and sharp arrises of the Classicist mouldings.

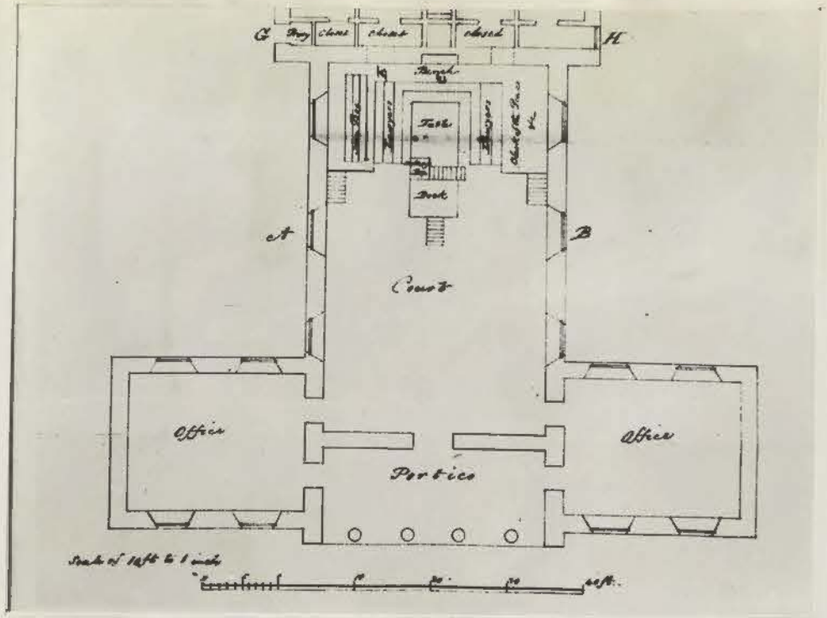
That its beauty did not go unappreciated by the settlers is borne out by many contemporary journals and records, from which I have chosen that of Rev. William Shaw, Wesleyan missionary: '... erected on a conspicuous and well-selected site ... it is built with such just proportions, and in such an appropriate style of architecture ... that this village church, together with the character of the surrounding scenery and buildings, serves to remind an Englishman of many a rural spot in his own country of surpassing beauty ...'[1]

By 1830 Grahamstown had so grown that the citizens petitioned the Governor for the establishment of a municipality, and although this was not effected until 1837, a considerable sum of money was sanctioned for the improvement of the town, the provision of watercourses, bridges and the planting of trees.[2]

This civic spirit was further exemplified in the proposal in 1832 for the erection in Grahamstown of a Commercial Hall, on the pattern of that in Cape Town, that is, to serve as an exchange, public assembly rooms, reading rooms, and theatre. Financed by shareholders among the public, and situated on land granted by the Governor for that purpose in the High Street, the foundation stone was laid with great ceremony in March 1833. It was opened for use in September 1836.[3]

The architect of the Commercial Hall is not known. But it seemsquite

1. Wm. Shaw. 'The Story of My Mission'. London, 1860, 192.
2. Cory, II, 433.
3. Cory, II, 434.

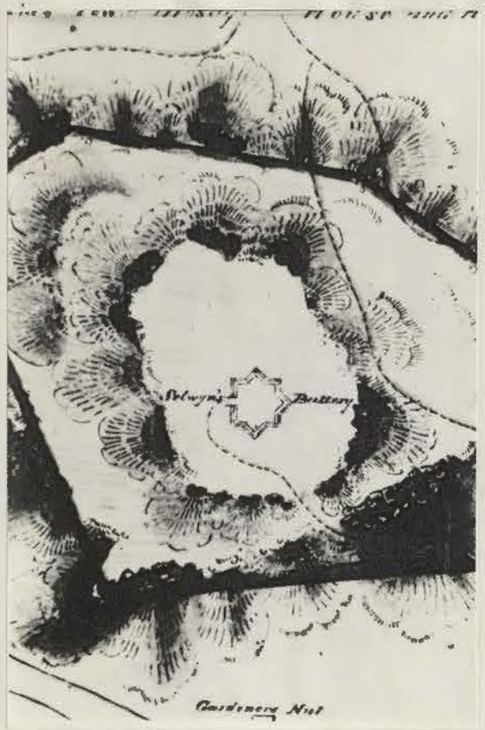


61,62. The Commercial Hall, Grahamstown, 1832-6.

possible that the contractor, George Gilbert, was also the designer, since he was by this time a man of considerable reputation in the district. The building (Plates 60 - 62) certainly shows a curious mixture of influences, and is unlikely to have been the work of a trained architect. A large flight of stone steps led up to a Tuscan portico of four columns 'in antis' which was flanked by two solid wings, containing offices. The whole building was raised on a rusticated plinth, which returned on either side of the central steps to form two wing walls. The windows of the flanking wings were given Greek Ionic hood mouldings, which seem to have been so out of character that one is tempted to suppose that they were of later date, although all the records point to their being original. But it is in the handling of the central portico and its entablature that the really jarring note was sounded. For the columns of the portico were patently too small for the height of the building, and badly out of scale with the side windows.[1] And to make the discrepancy more obvious the pediment was not allowed to sit directly on the entablature, for that would have made the interior of the hall too low. So a second entablature and frieze was inserted above the first, and decorated with a Thibaultesque pattern in plaster. For many years this building has formed a prominent feature of Grahamstown, being converted into the Eastern Districts Court after its usefulness as a Commercial Hall declined. But, considering its design, the demolition of its main facade thirty years ago can hardly be regarded as a great loss.[2]

While the Commercial Hall was being built a number of other public works were planned for Grahamstown. New Barracks for the Constables were built in 1834, designed by George Gilbert.[3] The Sixth Kaffir War, occurring at the end of that year, resulted in a great increase in the military establishment in

1. cf. the adulation of Sheffield who called it 'a building of wonderful elegance and beauty.'
2. A fine front was afterwards built in its place.
3. C.O.2756/123; 11th Dec. 1835.



63,64,65. Selwyn's Battery, Grahamstown.

the town, and in a corresponding stimulus to the economic recovery of Grahamstown after the signing of the peace treaty. Among military buildings erected during or just prior to this war was Selwyn's Battery on the hill behind the Drostdy. This was a star-shaped fort that was meant to protect the town by artillery fire over the periphery, but was never in fact put to the test (Plates 63-5).

The ground between this fort and the High Street, including that on which the Drostdy stood, was early in 1835 sequestered by the military, on the Governor's instructions. The Commanding Royal Engineer (Major Selwyn) was instructed to prepare a design for new military barracks adjacent to the Drostdy, which were begun before July 1835, but only completed in 1838. The Drostdy House was also on the Governor's instructions, converted to serve as officers' quarters, and an arched loggia was built linking it to the new barrack buildings. The latter (which are still standing) are neat, unpretentious stone buildings, two storeys in height, with finely proportioned windows and woodwork (Plates 66 and 68). They have roofs of imported Welsh slate, which must be amongst the earliest used in the Eastern Cape.

Later an impressive Gateway was built between the military parade ground in front of the Drostdy, and the High Street (completed c.1842). The gateway (Plates 67 and 69) incorporated military guard rooms, sentry posts and later a fine wrought-iron lantern. Well proportioned, and probably another work of Major Selwyn, who may have designed all the military buildings in this group, it has survived intact.

In 1836 - 1838 the Military Provost, or Prison, was built (Plates 70-1). In this ingenious design the cells are grouped around a semi-circular courtyard,

66

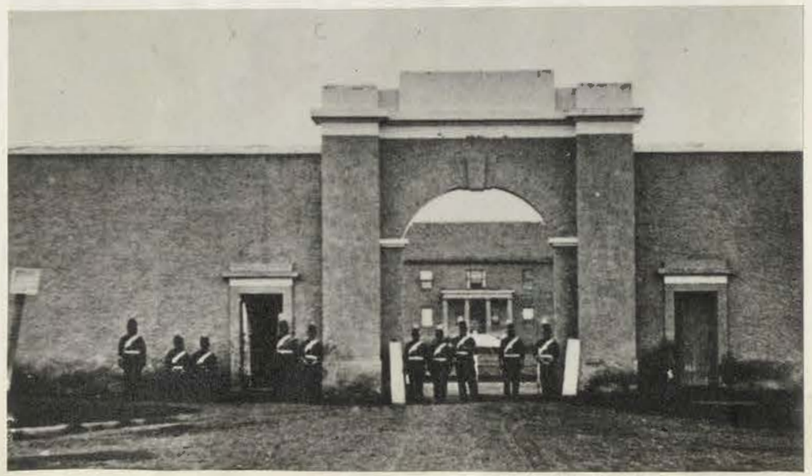
67

68

Military Buildings, Grahamstown.

66,68. Barracks attached to the Drostdy.

67,69. The Drostdy Arch, the latter from a photograph c.1860.



69

1. The building was complete when Piers drew the town in 1840.

Military Buildings, Grahamstown.

Above: Military Gaol. 70. Interior showing cells.
71. Exterior.

Below: Military Hospital: 72. Interior.
73. Entrance.

which has a high tower at the centre of its radius, forming a physical and visual dominant to the building. In the tower were the guard room and gaoler's quarters, from which it was possible to see directly into the cells across the courtyard, and also to command the entrance and approach to the prison.

At a slightly later date the Military Hospital was erected (Plates 72-3), a long low building surrounding three sides of a courtyard, entered through a finely proportioned pair of stone gateposts.

Altogether a vigorous and stimulating group this, spoilt by the demolition of the Drostdy House itself to make way for the main building of Rhodes University.

Port Elizabeth had long looked with envious eyes on the project to build a Commercial Hall in Grahamstown. Before it was completed a move was on foot to erect a similar building in Port Elizabeth. And, probably during 1837,[1] a grant of land was obtained on the Market Square from the Government and work commenced. The building, possibly designed by the Surveyor-General, Charles Mitchell, was a fine exercise in the neo-Grecian style (Plates 74-5) and showed what an opportunity was missed in the Grahamstown Commercial Hall.

Two pedimented corner pavilions flanked a broad Doric portico in the centre. In spite of the lack of fluting on the columns the Doric order was striking in its effect, heightened by broad archaic capitals and the emphatic placement of triglyphs only over the columns. The positioning of the windows is also worthy of note, the cills almost resting on the plinth, thus leaving a large bare wall-space above the window heads to set off the mouldings of the

1. Ibid (See Note 1 - previous page).
2. C.A.Map, 162.
3. Laidler. 'Growth and Government of Cape Town,' 287.

74,75. Commercial Exchange, Port Elizabeth; from early photographs.

pediments.

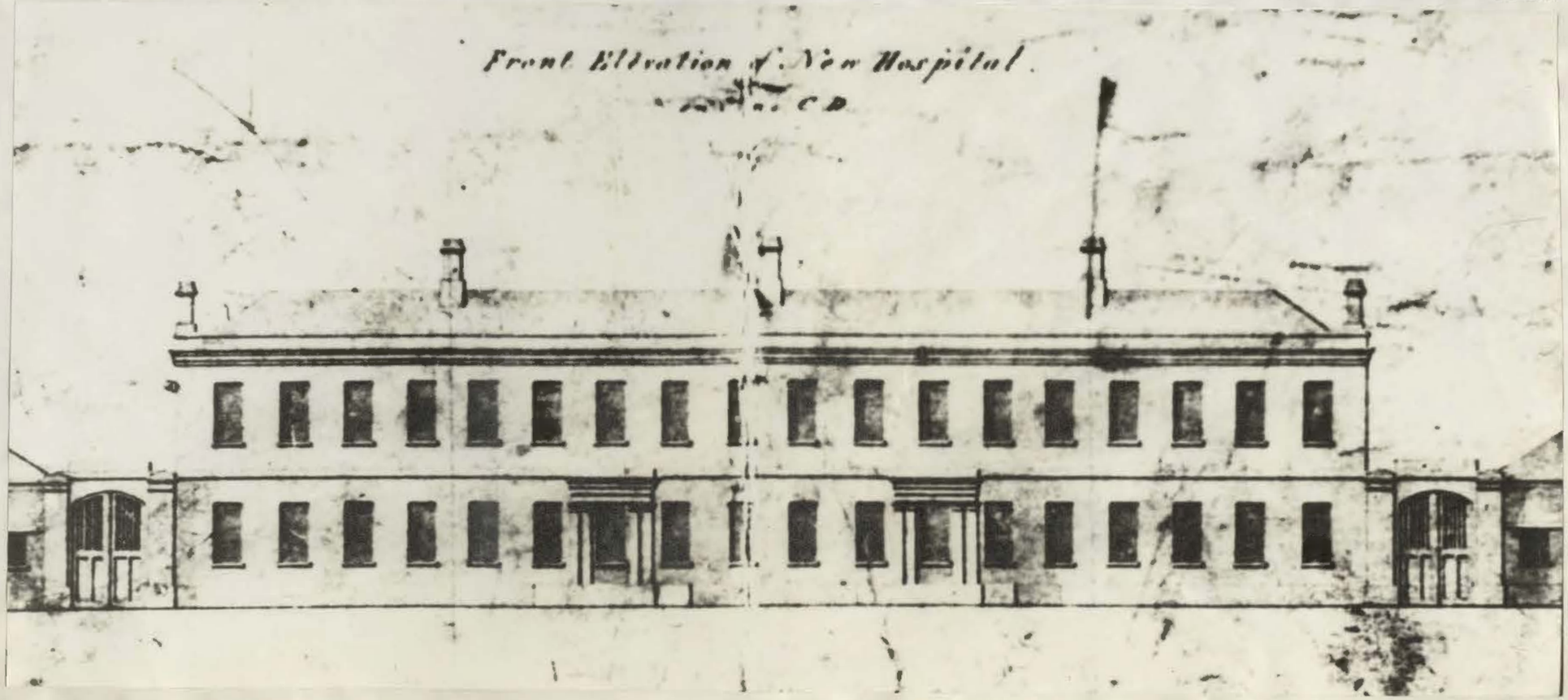
One last building must be mentioned in conclusion, and that another Military one. From the time of the First Occupation the main Military Hospital in the Colony was a long low building near the lines at Woodstock. But the 1834-5 War showed the inadequacy of this structure, and in April 1835 the Military Board resolved upon the erection of a new building on the same site.[1] Designed by Colonel Lewis, Royal Engineers,[2] the new,impressive,double-storeyed block (Plates 76-8) more than doubled the accommodation of the hospital, and was, according to Laidler, 'hailed as a public ornament'.[3] Roofed with slate, its entrance protected from the south-east winds by enclosed Doric porticos, its parapeted silhouette crowned by rows of massive chimney-stacks, this building, although built for the military, serves as a fitting final demonstration of the extent to which Georgian architecture, with all its refinements and its pedantry, dominated the Cape scene by 1837.

Military Hospital, Woodstock. (now demolished).

76. In a Bowler watercolour. (Morrison).

77. Early photograph.

78. Measured drawing of 1844.



THIRTEEN :

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.

1. Groote Kerk, Cape Town, in 1781, drawing by Howard.

Even in the eighteenth century the Gothic style had not entirely died out in Europe. In spite of the vigour of Renaissance ideas it was difficult to ignore the tremendous architectural achievement of the Middle Ages and impossible to replace it entirely with new work. Whenever cathedrals and churches required maintenance or alteration, later architects were confronted with aesthetic theories differing from their own. It was a hard-headed stylist indeed who could ignore the character of the mediaeval buildings in making new adaptions, and generally even extreme classicists (like Wren and Hawksmoor in England) felt obliged to match the character of the new work to the old.

Thus the style was kept alive, and Gothic churches and cathedrals continued to predominate, especially in England, France and the Low Countries. At the same time, Gothic methods of construction survived in use in a natural and unobtrusive manner.

In this way the religious architecture of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries preserved essentially Gothic forms and detailing, in

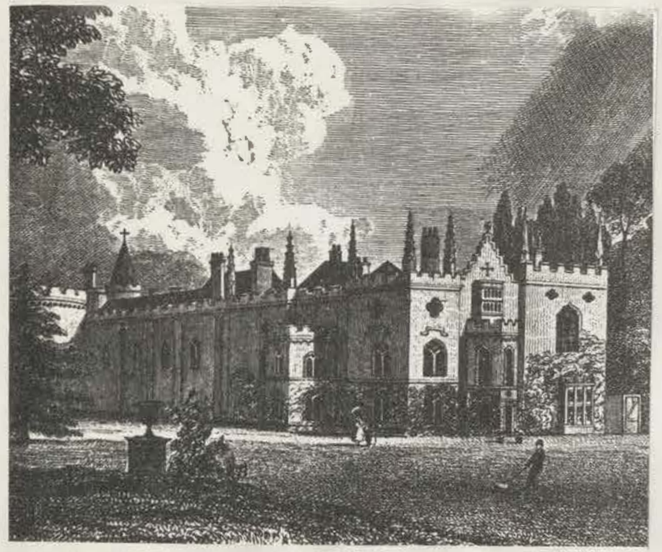
OPPOSITE:

2. Horace Walpole's Gothic villa: 'Strawbury Hill'.

3. 'Panshanger' Herts.; a 'Gothic' house with a Grecian interior. William Atkinson, architect. c.1812.

1. Almost the whole building, (rebuilt in the 1830s) was in severe Renaissance dress, yet the semi-circular headed window openings were sub-divided by curving mullions to form pairs of Gothic pointed windows. Insufficient evidence exists for us to determine whether the windows date from 1704, or from the time of the redecoration of the church in the 1780s. (v. Stavorinus 'Voyages to the East Indies', London, 1798, 550).

2. Designed by Anreith in 1791.



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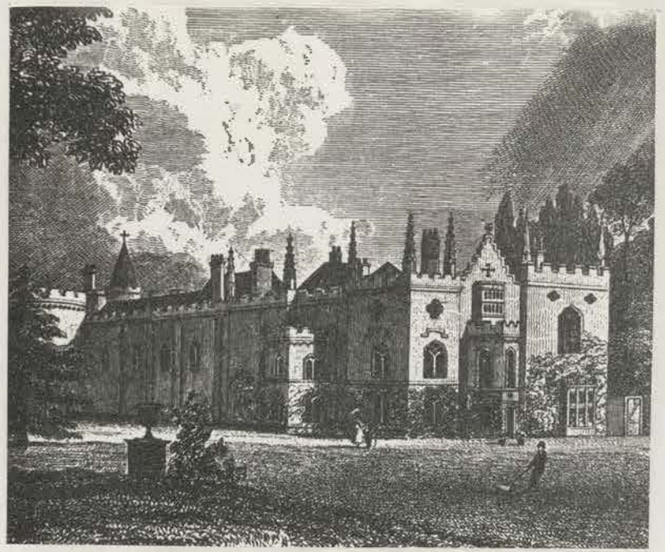


combination with current styles. The pointed arch never lost its emotive value, even in combination with the more static forms of the Renaissance and Classic Revival. Thus we see in such far-flung examples as the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town (built in 1704 - Plate 1) mediaeval window lights in classical frames,[1] and in the late eighteenth century Lutheran church similar windows in a Rococo facade.[2]

Yet the Gothic Revival, as a vigorous stylistic movement (with its ambition the revival of the characteristic atmosphere of mediaeval architecture), had its origin in quite a different way.

To understand the reason for the curious renaissance of interest in mediaeval civilisation we must turn to the British writers - especially the poets - of the early eighteenth century. Oppressed by the narrow classicism of the Georgian Age these men began to look for inspiration further afield than the plains of Arcady, and - turning their attention to the countryside around them - found their imagination stirred by glowering castles, soaring cathedrals and deserted ruined monasteries.

> 'The Column grey with Moss, the falling Bust,
> The time-shook Arch, the monumental stone,
> Impaired, affect'd, and hastening into Dust,
> Unfaithful to their charge of flattering fame.'
>
> Davis Mallet, 'Excursion', 1726.

From this it was but a short step to that fashion we call the 'Gothic mood' which involved poets, novelists and playwrights in a seemingly inexhaustible enthusiasm for all things mediaeval.

4. 'Fonthill Abbey', designed by James Wyatt for William Beckford.

5. St. John's College, Cambridge. The New Buildings, 1825. Thomas Rickman and Henry Hutchinson, Architects.

It is fascinating to observe that the most important link between the 'Gothic mood' and reality was architecture. Those very buildings which were the inspiration of the poets were also the most tangible evidence they had of the character of the mediaeval world.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that the literary dilettantes of the mid-eighteenth century combined a passion for poetry with an antiquarian's interest in architecture. Reacting strongly against the rigid Classical tastes of their time, they began in a small way to dabble in amateur architecture in the style which gave them so much pleasure. Of these men by far the most important was Horace Walpole (author of the sensational Gothic novel 'Otranto') who in 1753 rebuilt his home, 'Strawberry Hill' at Twickenham, in Gothic dress - and in so doing was instrumental in launching the Gothic Revival (Plate 2). Walpole spoke with glee of 'the satisfaction of imprinting the gloom of abbeys and cathedrals on one's house'. But that he himself regarded this practice as not much more than an amusing game is shown by his reference to 'Strawberry Hill' as his 'little plaything house'.

For many years after this Gothic tended to be used only at the whim of literary or antiquarian patrons, no architect taking it seriously. But its growth, encouraged by the spate of Gothic novels, was inexorable, and by the end of the century so many houses, pavilions and gardener's cottages had been wholly or partly 'tricked out' in this fashion that it began to be a force to be seriously reckoned with.

Yet Gothic might have remained a curiosity rather than an accepted style

6. A Commissioner's church in Birmingham, 1823. (Holy Trinity, Bordesley, Francis Goodwin, Architect).

had not one or two of the leading professional architects taken it up. Even then the architecture they produced was a sad travesty of true Gothic. The professional men remained content to use it, as Walpole had done, as a romantic veneer grafted on to functional Classicist architecture. In the landscape garden it became a theatrical effect in the picturesque sense, and a number of houses which were 'Grecian' internally were fitted out at great expense as Decorated manor houses on the outside. 'A closer view', wrote Avray Tipping of such buildings, 'reveals forms and outlines that are not mediaeval, but are Georgian bodies dressed up in Plantagenet clothes.' (Plate 3.).[1]

Yet the enthusiasm of its promoters eventually brought some improvement. The great interest in Gothic led at last to serious study of mediaeval buildings, and illustrations and well-documented articles on the characteristics of genuine Gothic began to appear in popular magazines. In 1805 ancient churches and monasteries formed practically the only illustrations of the London 'Gentleman's Magazine'.[2] This was naturally followed by a reaction against the Neo-Classical churches of the day, which were said to lack devotional atmosphere.

Soon a movement began for the re-introduction of Gothic into religious architecture, which reached its climax with the Commissioner's churches of 1818, when for the first time Gothic was generally acknowledged a practicable and desirable style for church buildings.

The Commission, established as the result of an Act of Parliament in 1818

1. Quoted by Kenneth Clark 'The Gothic Revival', London 1928, 117.
2. Ibid.

7. Roman Catholic Chapel, Cape Town, 1821. (de Meillon - S.A.P.L.).

were granted a million pounds to be spent on church buildings in populous districts in Britain. Gothic having been fixed on as the most economic style, since it was acceptable in brick, which Neo-Grecian was not, 174 of the 214 churches eventually built by the Commissioners were in the Gothic style (Plate 6). Henceforth, whether they liked it or not, architects were forced to take the Gothic Revival seriously.

The change to Gothic went deeper than mere whimsy or decorative detail. It was a sign of the times - in English domestic architecture a symptom of the aspirations of a middle class rising to nobility; on the European continent, part of a religious reaction after the horrors and devastations of the Napoleonic Wars. At the Cape its impact was amplified by the zealous exertions of the new missionary movement.

The first example of a church built wholly in the Gothic style in South Africa was the Roman Catholic Church erected near Caledon Square,[1] in 1820 - 21 (Plate 7). The chapel and clergyman's dwelling house were built partly by subscription, but chiefly by loans of money from the government bank. The church was, for economic reasons, of simple rectangular form, but boasted a fairly accurate buttress and pinnacle construction, while the walls were castellated at the top. Lancet windows, quatrefoil clerestory lights, ogee-arched doors and a low fleche completed the mediaeval effect.[2]

But this was by no means the only building at the Cape in the early twenties with some pretension to the Gothic. As early as 1802 the Graaff Reinet church bell was housed in a Gothic structure,[3] while several battlemented buildings of this period are recorded.[4] During 1822 the London

1. On what later became Harrington Street.

2. The church fell in during a heavy storm in July 1837 and was afterwards replaced by the Trinity Church of England Chapel.

3. William Somerville, the Inspector of Buildings, was Assistant to the Landdrost for a considerable period, and was probably responsible for the rebuilding of the church and its appendages. The watercolour of this bell in the Africana Museum (No. 2107) dating from c. 1802, may even be his.

4. e.g. outbuildings at Somerset Farm and the Huntley House, Grahamstown.

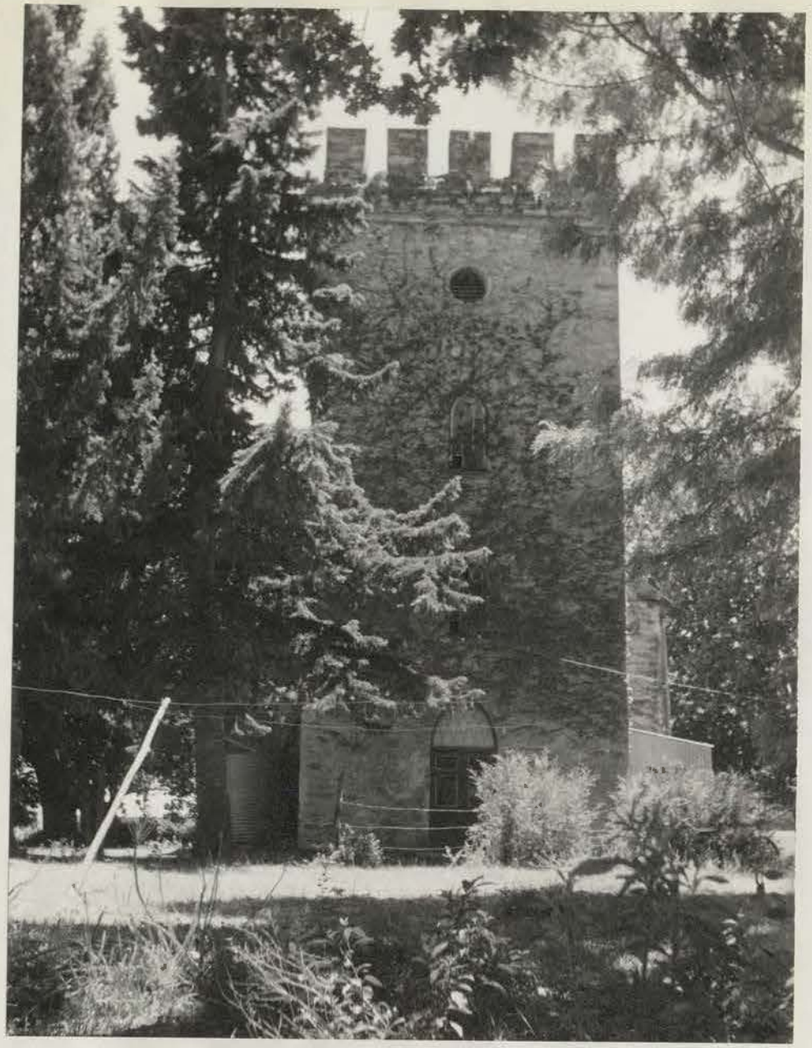
1. D.M. de Jager: 'Gederkboek van die gemeente George, by geleentheid van die Honderdjarige Herdenking van die Kerkinwyding, 1842- 1942', 17.
2. Ibid.
3. Cory 'Souvenir of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers' Grahamstown, 1920, 12.

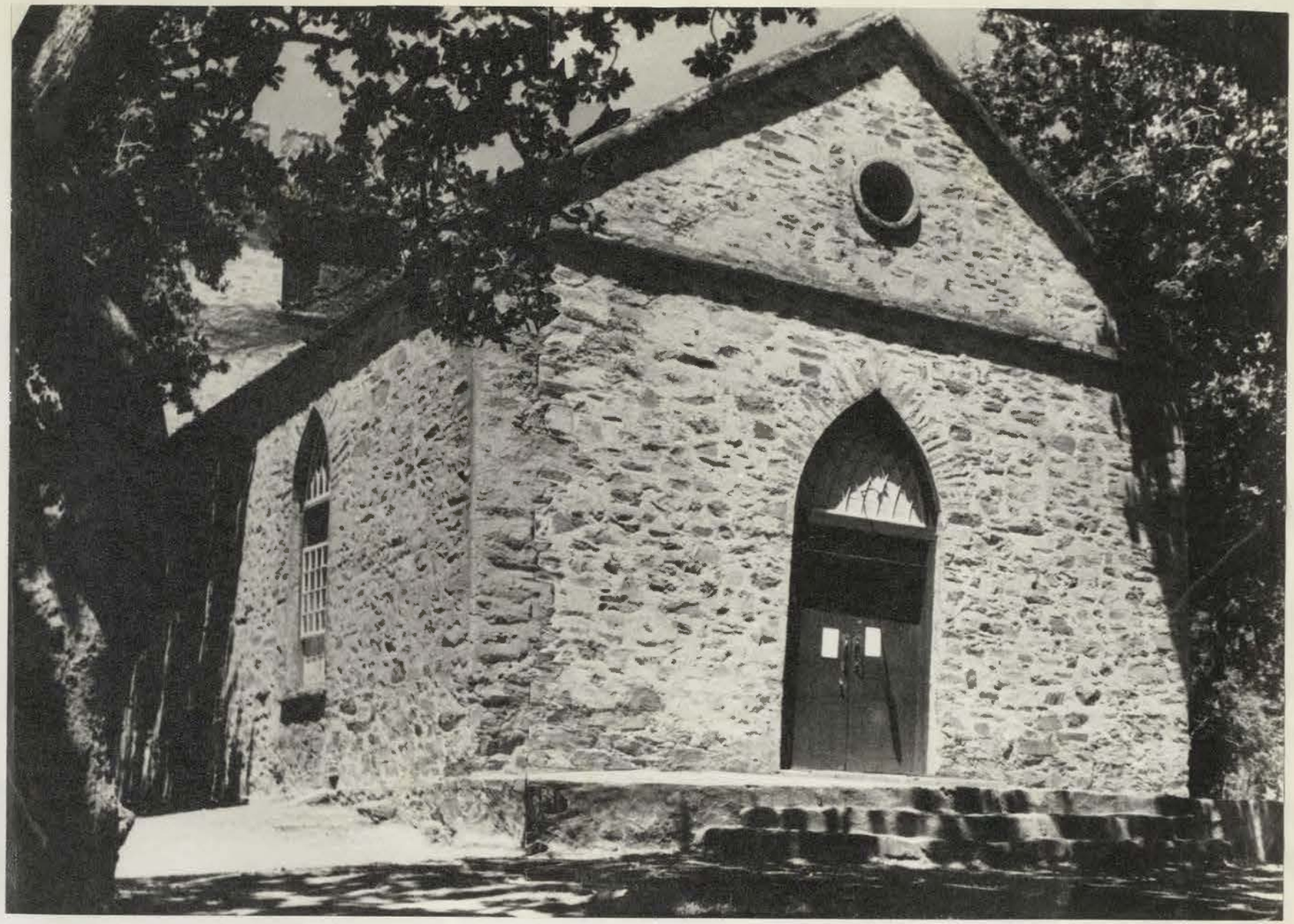
8. Union Chapel, Church Square, Cape Town. (Elliott).
9. Pacaltsdorp Mission Church, 1822-5. The east end and tower.

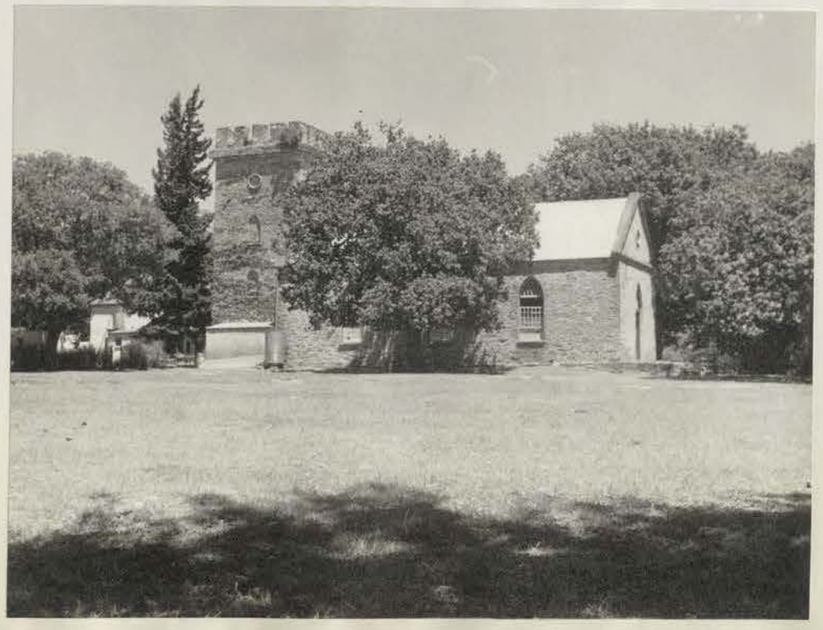
Missionary Society erected its Union Chapel on Church Square, Cape Town (opened in December) which, although partly hidden, had a strong Gothic character with its large pointed windows and doorway (Plate 8).

On the mission station of Pacaltsdorp near George the London Missionary Society began in the same year, 1822, the construction of a permanent stone church which is the finest surviving early Gothic Revival church in South Africa (Plates 9 - 12).[1] Dominating the east end is a large square rough stone tower fifty feet in height with a battlemented parapet. Built by the Hottentots of the Mission station the building is entered from a stone terrace at the west, and approached up a shallow flight of steps. The window heads and fanlights are magnificent examples of craftsmanship in wood, being entirely made up of intersecting glazing beads following parallel Gothic curves. Although austere, and with hints of the Classical in the pediment of the western facade, this building has a frank directness which blends well with the Gothic style to produce an effect of sincerity, even a certain humble beauty, missing in many a more archeologically accurate building. It was consecrated in June 1825.[2]

While Lord Charles Somerset was in England in 1821 he approached the Society for the Propagation of the Bible in an endeavour to obtain assistance for new church buildings in the Colony. He reported that he had 'succeeded in squeezing out of them £500 for the erection of a church in Grahamstown' (although he had found that these 'over-righteous people were great plagues')[3]. In itself this was a small sum, but Somerset never-the-less went ahead, on his return, with his plans to erect a church, and commissioned the Inspector of







Pacaltsdorp Mission Church. 1822-5.

10. (Left). The East End tower.

11. (Above). The West End.

12. (Left). General view from the North.

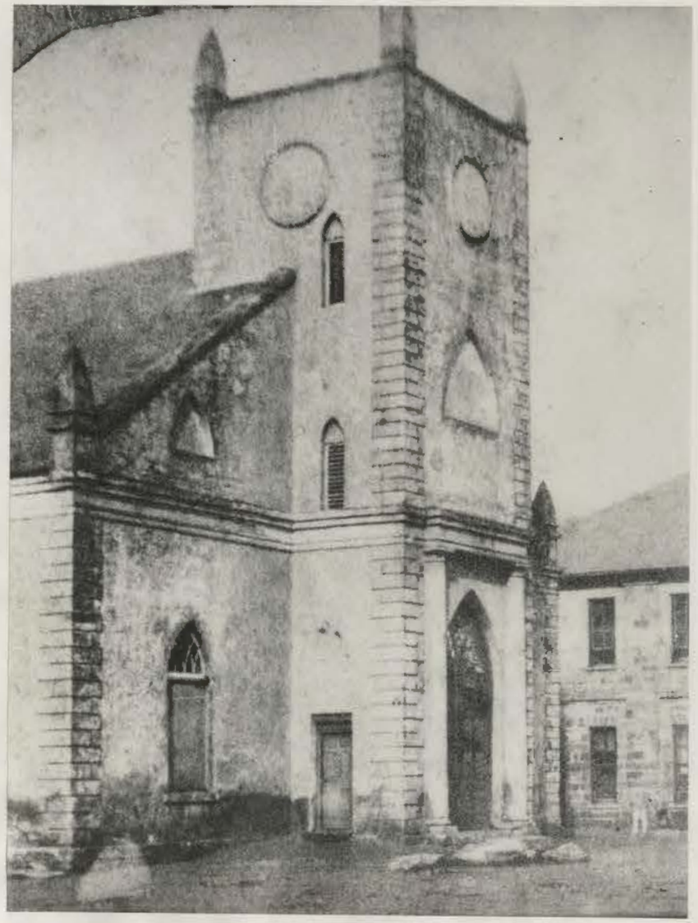
13. St. George's Church, Grahamstown, West End; an old photograph. (Cory Library).

Buildings, William Oliver Jones, to design the building.[1] When the Grahamstown Chaplain (the cantankerous Mr. Geary) saw the drawings he reacted violently, whether at the building's appearance, or because it was 'very inadequate to contain the congregation that would attend' (as he said) is not known. But the immediate result was that he asked Colonel Scott of the Royal Engineers to submit an alternative design.[2] This drawing has been lost but some idea of its character may be gauged from Col. Scott's comments that 'It has been suggested by Mr. Geary and Mrs. Rivers that a spire would be an improvement but in my humble opinion the simplicity of the building would be spoilt by it and there are many objections against lofty structures in this part of the world. The dangers to be apprehended from Winds and Lightning, the bad workmanship and want of a well-qualified architect to direct the building, and what I feel would operate most against it would be the very increased expense, for ornaments, not utility. The scale I have given the interior will permit a very great addition of accommodation for an increasing population...'[3]

Jones' plan was, however, generally preferred, although we don't know to what extent it was modified by Scott's suggestions. Tenders were then called for the accepted design, being received from, amongst others, H. Huntley of Grahamstown.[4] But it seems that these were considered too high by the Governor, for Herman Schutte (then engaged in the repair and construction of government buildings in the Eastern part of the Colony) was instructed to proceed to Grahamstown for the purpose of preparing an estimate for the church.[5] Even Schutte's estimate appears to have been unsatisfactory, for in the end, after many delays, the contract was given to George Gilbert of Cape Town,[6] on

1. Ibid. The balance of the final cost came from the Government Treasury (Charles Gould. 'Grahamstown Cathedral' Grahamstown, 1924, 21).
2. C.O. 186/68. 20th May, 1823.
3. C.O. 186/68. 20th May, 1823.
4. C.O. 2653/90. 31st July, 1823.
5. C.O. 199/31. 24th Dec. 1823.
6. Cory. II, 204.

1. 9th Sept. 1824. The contract price was Rds. 54,000 (approximately £4,050 considerably less than had been spent on the gaol!)
2. C.O. 221/8. 16th Dec. 1823.



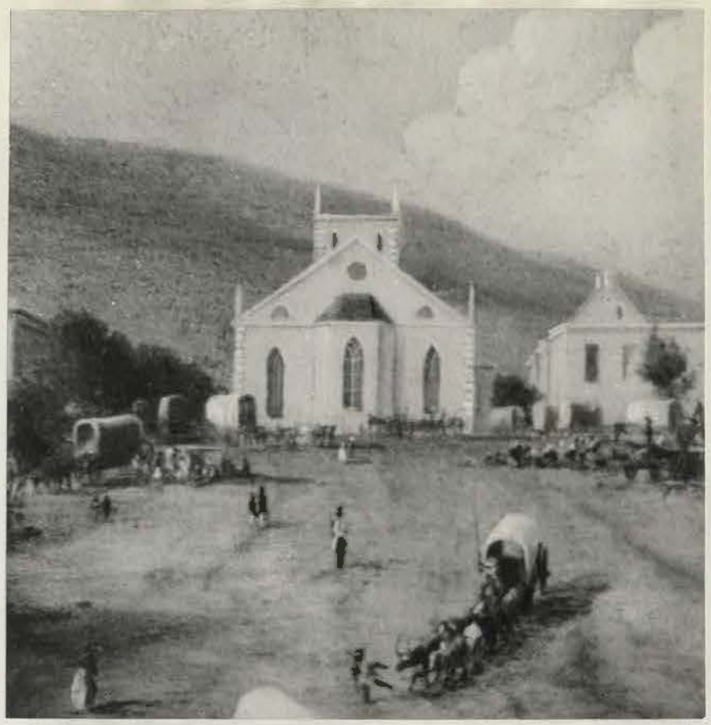
14. St. Georges's Church, Grahamstown. West End; an early photograph. (Albany Museum).

the understanding that Lieutenant Hope of the Royal Engineers should superintend the building on behalf of the Government, and that the best craftsmen among the settlers should be employed on the work.[1]

The building (Plates 13-19) rose in that commanding position in the town which had been indicated for it in Knobel's plan of 1814. Although most of the original church has since been replaced by the Gilbert Scott building, one side, including the complete side gallery, is preserved. With the aid of this fragment, old photographs and Jones' description[2], it is not difficult to reconstruct its original appearance.

St. George's Church was over one hundred feet long, and sixty-five feet wide. At the west end was a projecting tower twenty feet square and over fifty feet high. The walls were of stone three feet thick, plastered on both sides and jointed on the outside to imitate stone, with 'the external angles rusticated'. On one side there was a projecting porch to shelter the north door. The roof was originally intended to be of thatch carried on a 'strong framed roof.'

Internally the building was Classicist in style, with a level plaster ceiling throughout, except over the altar, where there was a semi-dome. The ceiling was neatly framed, where it joined the walls, with a moulded block cornice. There were flanking galleries on both sides of the central space 'with framed front and mouldings, etc.' of yellowwood. The pulpit, reading desk and balustrade were all of varnished stinkwood. The chancel had a boarded yellowwood floor, while in the body of the church the floor was of stone flags, with raised enclosed yellowwood pews with their own wooden floors.



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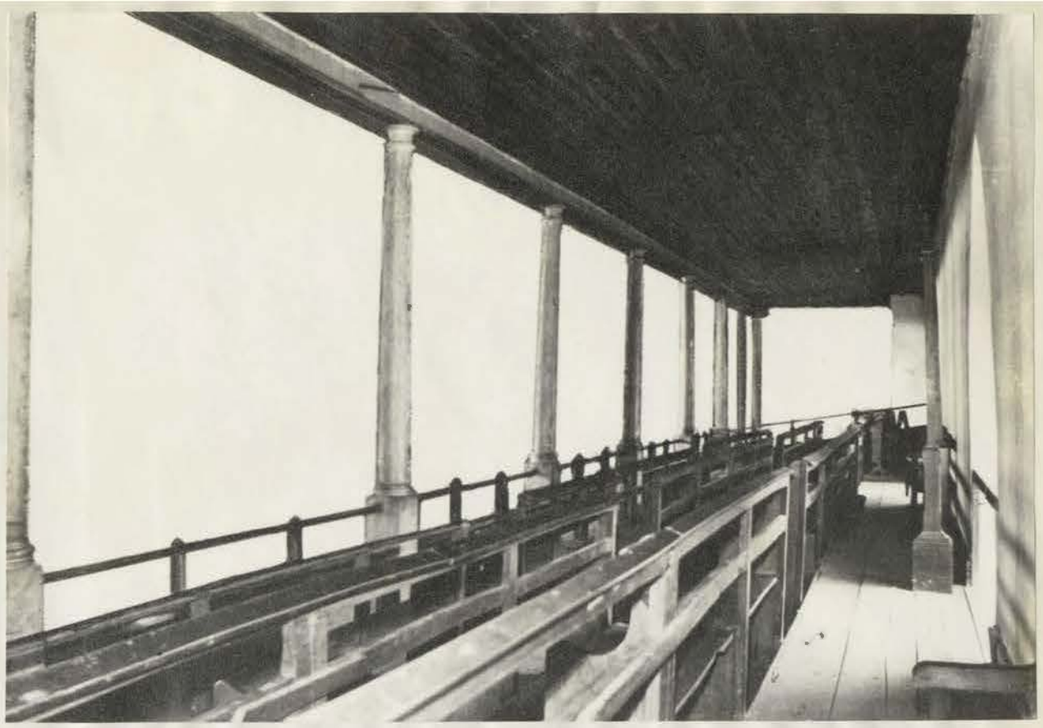


18

15

St. George's, Grahamstown.

17. (Above left). East end.
(Baines).

18. (Above right).Inside the gallery.

15, 16. The gallery.

16

1. C.O. 221/8. 16th Dec. 1823.

2. Zinc sheeting should also be used instead of brick and lime plaster over the flats.
C.O. 235/33; 29th March, 1825. Additional cost: Rds. 4730.

3. C.O. 2682/27; 14th Feb. 1826.

4. '...in about 1837 the Government consented to hand over the fabric and the title to the Church Committee, on condition that this Church Committee should put a new roof on the building, place and keep it in repair...' (Sheffield 'The Story of the Settlement', Grahamstown, 2nd ed. 1884, 230).
By this time imported slate was becoming available and the inflammable shingles were out of fashion.

5. C.O. 2682/164; 19th Dec. 1826.

19. St. George's Church, Grahamstown. General view of the exterior from an early photograph.
(Cory Library).

The whole building was 'enclosed with posts and a chain with a pair of neat folding gates in the centre.'[1]

During the course of the work Gilbert pointed out that a thatched roof would not only look odd on such a large building (an indication of awakening critical comment in the new town) but would also become extremely heavy during prolonged rains, and might endanger the stability of the whole structure. As an alternative he suggested the use of painted shingles, flashed and ridged with zinc sheeting.[2]

This was accordingly done, the shingles being cut from American cedar.[3] The zinc was originally ordered from Europe, but fearing delays it was eventually obtained from the Government Stores, Cape Town.[4]

Nothing more is needed to convince us that Jones was no architect than the design of this building! There is evidence that even before it was finished its appearance was the cause of some concern, for in December 1826 extra expenditure was certified for the addition of 'two Frames and Sashes, Glazed, to be fixed in the blank reveals of the West Front. Also for adding two Gothic ribs and Sashes, Glazed, to be placed over the West Front folding doors...'[5] But camouflaging devices such as these could do little to save the appearance of a building so fecklessly formed, with Gothic arches and Classic orders mixed in such unhappy confusion.

After further delays and revisions the church was completed and began to be used, although still unconsecrated, in 1828. But in 1829 the final Inspection of the Royal Engineers took place, and it was then decreed that the building

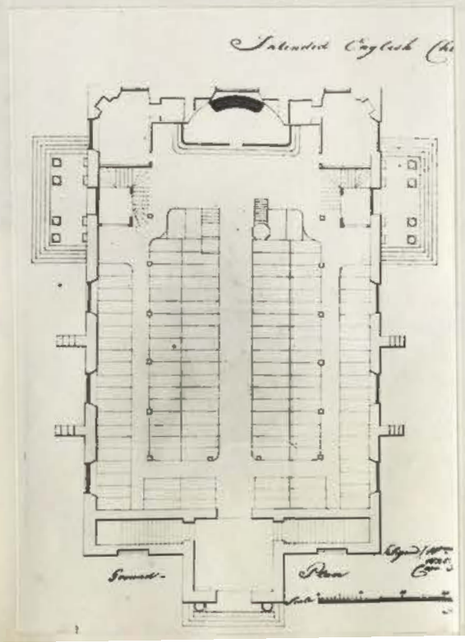
1. C.O. 2712/118; 12th June, 1829.

2. Cory, II, 204.

3. 'Grahamstown Journal' 1845-6. cf. Osbert Lancaster 'Pillar to Post', London, 1938.

4. C.O. 247/10; 28th Jan. 1825.

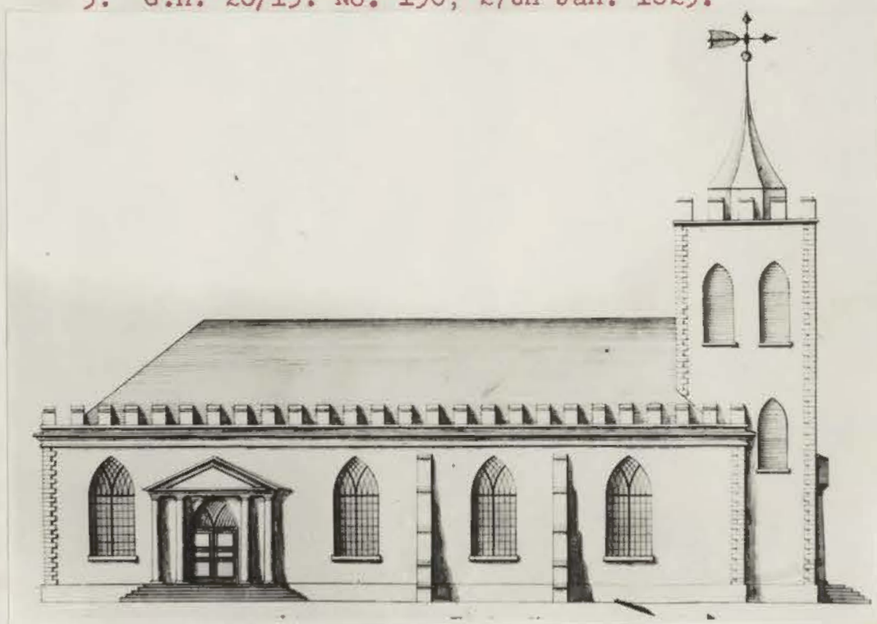
5. G.H. 26/13. No. 150; 27th Jan. 1825.

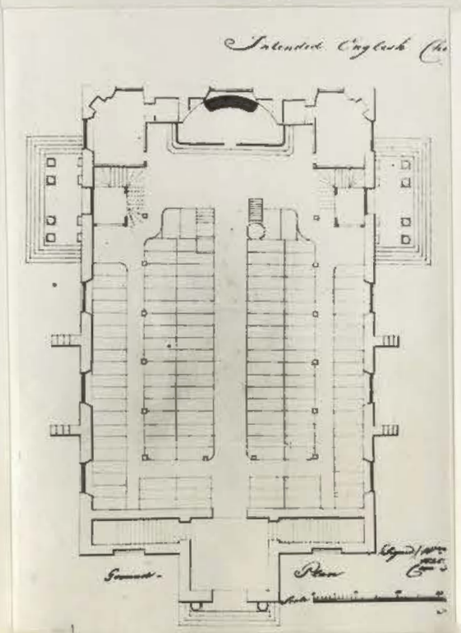


Opposite:

20,21,22. William Jones' design for St. St. George's Church, Cape Town.

1. C.O. 2712/118; 12th June, 1829.
2. Cory, II, 204.
3. 'Grahamstown Journal' 1845-6. cf. Osbert Lancaster 'Pillar to Post', London, 1938.
4. C.O. 247/10; 28th Jan. 1825.
5. G.H. 26/13. No. 150; 27th Jan. 1825.





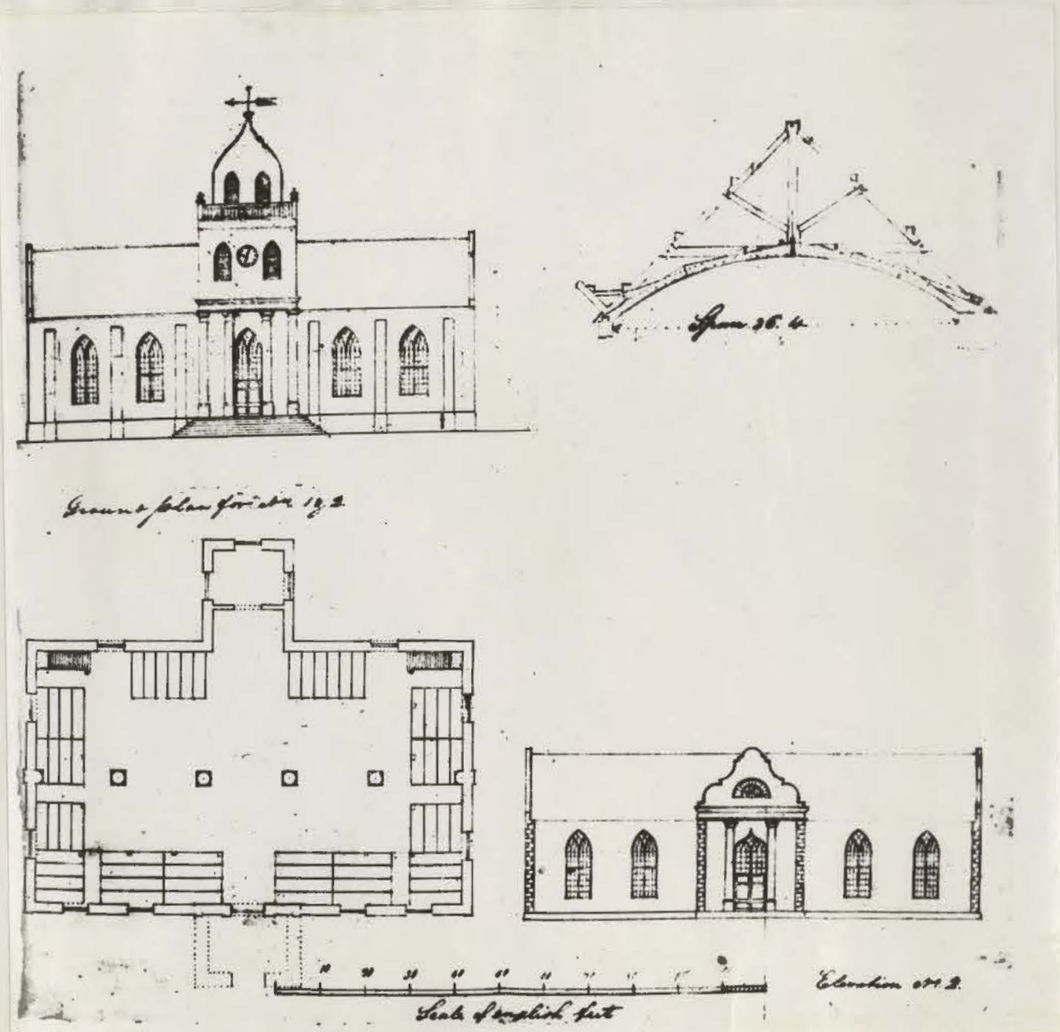
was unsafe until the roof trusses had been strengthened.[1] It was at length consecrated in 1830.[2]

Eighteen months after he had designed the Grahamstown church, Jones was commissioned to design the Cape Town Anglican church.

It is difficult to imagine a more incompetent or vulgar interpretation of Gothic than is to be found in these two designs of Jones', In the Cape Town church (Plates 20-22) rows of mediaeval battlements were linked to the tower by Baroque scrolls; a Roman Tuscan portico framed a pointed Gothic fanlight over the side door, and a Baroque arched entablature framed the Gothic fanlight of the main doors. The Gothic windows, without hood mouldings, were set in walls rusticated at the corners; while the windows were not central in their bays on the front, nor was the side door symmetrically placed in relation to the windows on either side of it. It was a style well worthy of the term 'Hottentot Gothic' which the Settlers invented to express their feelings about it![3]

The only aspect of the design of the Cape Town church which is of interest to us was the boldness of its construction and finishes. The roof and gallery were to be supported by imported cast iron columns and the windows were to be 'Gothic head cast iron windows' from England. The carpenter's work was all to be of imported Baltic wood (from 'Christiana', 'Petersburgh' and 'Riga') and - the width of the church being rather large, 63 feet - Jones suggested that 'a very light cast iron roof...sent out would be very desirable for the sake of durability.'[4] Jones also intended that the roofing material should be slates imported from Wales,[5] with lead gutters. These

1. C.O. 2660/34; 9th March 1824. Samuel Hemming signed the reasonably competent drawings of the Worcester Drostdy submitted to the Commissioners of Enquiry in 1825.



23. Design for Somerset East Dutch Reformed Church. (C.O. 2672/17. 27th May, 1825).

suggestions show the architect in the more favourable light of a progressive innovator.

The design was received with little enthusiasm, either in Cape Town or London, and we must be grateful that Jones' abrupt removal from office, together with the inevitable delays associated with this kind of project, spared Cape Town of such an aesthetic atrocity. It was a narrow escape - and one which, instead, gave us the splendour of Colonel Bell's St. George's.

An infinitely more competent design in the Gothic style than any of these was that for the Dutch Reformed Church at Worcester (Plate 24). This was probably the work of the landdrost, Colonel Trappes, or of his Overseer of Works, Mr. Samuel Hemming. The drawings of 1824[1] are unsigned, but reveal a considerable familiarity with English Gothic of the late Decorated period. But the design suffers from severe clashes in scale between the tower and the wings; and between the entrance doorway and the windows. The embellished centre portion is patently out of scale for the size of the building and gives a ridiculously pretentious quality. Nevertheless this is an important example if only because it demonstrates the extremely early date at which true Gothic Revival designs made their appearance in South Africa.

Even in such out of the way places as Somerset East the influence of the new movement was making itself felt. The proposal of the local heemraden to

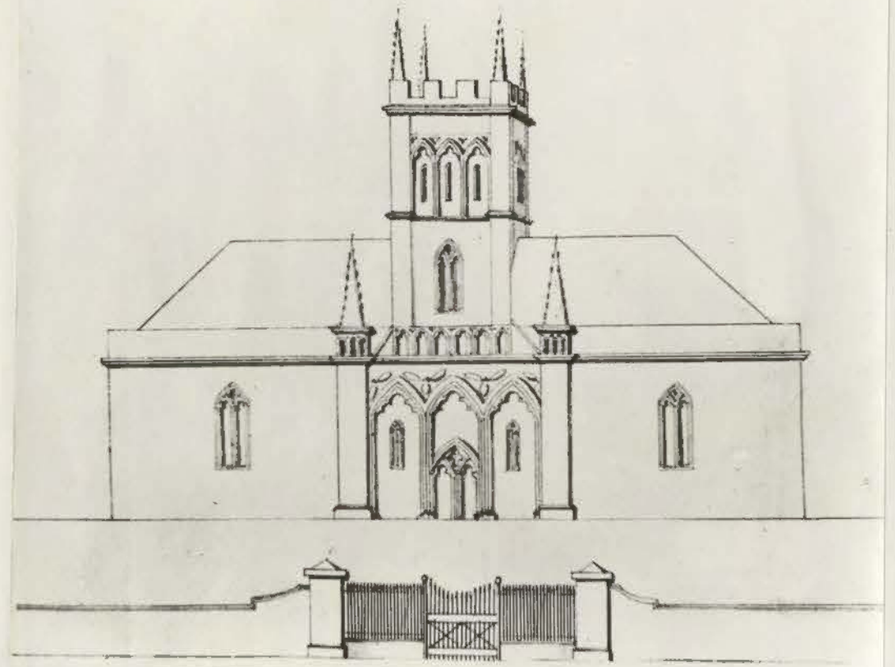
Opposite:

24. Design for Worcester Dutch Reformed Church, 1824.

25. Design for the Scottish Church in Greenmarket Square.

1. Morrison collection 'Catalogue', Cape Achives.

2. C.O. 2460/119, 25th April, 1826.
   (1,200 sq. ft. of polished stone
   2,000 sq. ft. of unpolished stone).



1. Morrison collection 'Catalogue', Cape Achives.
2. C.O. 2460/119, 25th April, 1826.
   (1,200 sq. ft. of polished stone
   2,000 sq. ft. of unpolished stone).

erect a Dutch Reformed Church there in 1825 was accompanied by the submission of a design (Plate 23) in which Cape Dutch and Gothic were cheerfully blended, the east facade having a Dutch Renaissance tower (carried on a classic order) rising from a convincing Gothic nave (albeit thatched), while the end gables and that on the western front are pure Rococo. Logic was hardly a strong point with the designers in those days, especially in conservative minds exposed to new, and barely understood, foreign influences.

With the Scottish church in Greenmarket Square we return to academic Gothic (Plate 25). A great mystery surrounds the erection of this church. Morrison, who seems to have taken considerable trouble to investigate its history, could only ascertain that it was never finished. 'Before completion it was sold to Messrs. Landsberg and used as a store. It was subsequently destroyed by fire.' [1]

Examination of the records in the Archives reveals the clue that the Presbyterian Church committee were bringing stone from Robben Island throughout 1825, and that by April 1826 they had received a tremendous quantity of polished and rough stone.[2] The church in Greenmarket Square, shown in an early watercolour, was clearly built of bluestone. But then there is the enigma that the Presbyterians had embarked on the erection of another church by October 1827, when the foundation stone of Reveley's Doric building in St. Andrew's Square was laid. Whether it was their intention to have two churches in Cape Town - a plan which afterwards proved extravagant - or whether we have here an early instance of the battle of the styles, a Doric building committee eventually proving victorious over a Gothic one, does not seem to be recorded.

26,27. St. Mary's Anglican Church, Port Elizabeth; two views taken from early photographs.

1. v. Chapter 12, Page 435.
2. C.O. 411- 1st Sept. 1832.
3. C.O. 433/10. Feb. 1834.
4. 'The Cape of Good Hope Almanac', 1845. The stone porch was added in 1844.

But the Gothic church in Greenmarket Square certainly seems to have been built, for it, or part of it, shows in more than one contemporary drawing, though it cannot have stood for very long.

The design is a fine example of the late Perpendicular style. Unlike the Worcester church this one shows care in the handling of the scale of the tower, the nave windows are proportioned to the building as a whole and of studied accuracy in style. The entire concept, with its triple nave and collegiate tower, appears the work of a trained architect thoroughly familiar with the best in English Gothic architecture.

St. Mary's Church, Port Elizabeth, (Plates 26-7), first used in 1831,[1] was another essay in the Gothic manner and, if we accept the tower which was added to it as part of the original design, a fairly creditable one. It was - at least - restrained and pure in style, albeit a rather strange Cape version in brick and plaster. Lancet windows make their appearance in this tower, and an attempt seems to have been made here to capture the massive dignity of late Norman.

In the early thirties two significant Anglican churches were built in the Western Cape. The first of these, St. Paul's Church at Rondebosch, begun in 1832[2], and opened in February 1834[3], was designed by the Surveyor-General, Lt. Col. Mitchell, who here turned from the Classical style he had handled so well at St. John's, Bathurst, to experiment with Decorated Gothic.[4] The new church (Plate 28) had many characteristics in common with the Bathurst one;

28. St. Paul's Church, Rondebosch, 1832-4. An early lithograph. (Africana Museum).

there is the same deep-rooted appreciation of the material used (stone) and a determination to allow it to speak for itself; the same restraint in the treatment of openings and mouldings, and a careful consistency in style and character throughout the church. Mitchell even made an attempt to introduce the whimsical humour of Gothic craftsmen into his building; the corbel stones of the windows are sculpted as grotesque heads, each different from the next. It is evident that the design is the outcome of a thorough study of Gothic, unusual in that age even in England.[1] This is not to say that the building is flawless, for the tower is clearly a compromise, and the windows are generally too small for the late style they were patterned on.

Begun in 1833[2], St. John's Church in Wynberg was apparently the work of some other architect, though who this was is not recorded.[3] In the early Perpendicular style, this building (Plate 29) had a splendid East window surmounted by a corbelled tower with elaborate pinnacles.[4] The plan was a Latin cross, with long transepts and a short chancel.

In spite of these object lessons in the success of the purist approach to Gothic, many Cape architects continued to mix the style indiscriminately with Classical detail. Not only was the Wesleyan church in Burg Street, Cape Town (1829 - Plate on page 434) an extraordinary blend of the two, but in many essentially Classicist churches Gothic windows and bar tracery continued to impart a note of supercilious concession to the exponents of the opposite school of thought. Among the latter buildings were the Wesleyan Church at Bathurst (1829), the new Wesleyan Church at Grahamstown (Shaw Hall - 1832) and the

1. In 1832 Augustus Welby Pugin was only 20, and had yet to begin his crusade against inaccurate Gothic.
2. C.O. 413/176; 30th Nov. 1833. It was completed in 1839.
3. Comparison with the Greenmarket Square Scottish church suggests that they may have shared the same designer.
4. Plate shows the second stage of their construction. Originally they were less elaborate and the window below them had a pointed head.

1. Theal, 'History of South Africa 1795 - 1834', London, 1891, 368.
2. Theal 'History of South Africa 1834 - 1854', London, 1893, 219.

29. St. John's Church, Wynberg, 1833-9; the tower was originally a simpler gable. (U.C.T. Library).
30. The Wesleyan School, High Street, Grahamstown, 1838.

School House (1838 - Plate 30); the Neuwe Kerk. Bree Street, Cape Town (foundation laid 1833)[1] and the rebuilt Groote Kerk (1836 - 41).[2]

In the case of the Neuwe Kerk (Plate 31) and the Groote Kerk (Plate 32) we must remember that precedent for this kind of compromise extended back into the eighteenth century. Indeed both churches are reminiscent of buildings dating from that period in the Netherlands. But there remain important differences.

The Groote Kerk had as its architect Herman Schutte, and there seems every reason, on stylistic grounds, to suppose that he designed the Neuwe Kerk as well. Herman Schutte had been closely associated with the Classical Revival for almost his entire career at the Cape, first as contractor for Thibault, and later in association with such men as Skirrow and Reveley. The notable characteristic of his two churches is that their Classicism seems strongly influenced by the Greek Revival, in particular by Reveley's Scottish Church in St. Andrew's Square (cf. the pediment, stepped parapet, gable fanlight and the suggestion of triglyphs over the pilasters in the Groote Kerk). The similarity runs even to the interiors, which share a characteristic classicist functionalism. The facades of both the Dutch Reformed Churches are bold and vigorous. The Neuwe Kerk suffers from a weak central focus, but its enormous vertical Gothic windows are felicitously proportioned and positioned. The Groote Kerk, of confident simplicity, is unhappily rent assunder by the mixture of the two styles, each Gothic window being flanked by classic columns, the Greek pediment surmounted by pinnacles, mediaeval in

31. The Neuwe Kerk, Cape Town, 1833-44. (Africana Museum).

32. The Groote Kerk, Cape Town, 1836-41; Church Square facade. (Measured Drawing by H.N. le Roux, U.C.T.).

1. 'A deplorable style, half Greek, half Gothic' quoted by Dorothea Fairbridge in 'Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape', Oxford, 1924.

33. Francis Hope's house, 'Hope Farm', near the Kowie.

concept but Classicist in detail. 'Un style d'architecture deplorable, moitie grec moitie gothique'[1] wrote the French Consul when it was finished, and the essential justice of his view is inescapable.

The adoption of Gothic in domestic architecture was an English fashion; one which was slow in gaining popularity anywhere else, and consequently made a late appearance in South Africa. Furthermore it was a fashion at first favoured in Europe for specific reasons, most of which did not strictly apply in the Colonies, and this naturally tended to retard its arrival there.

'Gothick', as it was fancifully called in the eighteenth century, was used for its scenic effects in the picturesque landscape garden, for romantic associations near genuine Gothic ruins, or to encourage an owner (and his neighbours) in the pretence that he lived in an ancestral home. None of these would really hold at the Cape. But by the early nineteenth century Gothic had become so entrenched in Britain that further justification was without difficulty found for its use. The popularity of Sir Walter Scott's novels of chivalry and romance in the Middle Ages created a large public prepared to welcome 'good old English' architecture. Assured that English Gothic, especially the Perpendicular and Tudor aspects of it, was the only true national style, and attracted by a misty vision of the 'good old days', they began to build houses in Gothic dress, or at any rate to raise battlements over their suburban villas. In this way the emerging upper middle classes were able to lay subtle claim to respectable heredity, and at the same time display their stylishness and sensibility.

1. Admiralty Museum, Greenwich.

2. There is considerable doubt as to its history. Mr. Morse-jones regards it as dating from after the 1835 War, while the owners believe that it was built c.1828.

3. C.O. 374/65. 2nd April, 1830.

34. Green Point Lighthouse, from the original design drawings. (Admiralty).

This, later movement, which followed the fashion for battlemented and turretted castles of the turn of the century by about twenty years, reached South Africa at almost the same time as it appeared in England.

Early examples of this style are to be seen in several buildings already considered. Huntley's house in Grahamstown (c. 1819-21) was castellated, as was at least one of the farm buildings at Somerset East. The original Green Point lighthouse (probably designed in England - 1821) was also given a battlemented parapet (Plate 34).[1] Among the 1820 Settler buildings at least one, Francis Hope's homestead at the Kowie, was designed in this early Gothic Revival style (Plate 33).[2]

It must be noted that all these buildings were strictly Georgian except for their treatment against the sky. In those days a 'Gothic' house was simply a contemporary style house with just enough of the scenic elements of Gothic to lend it a mediaeval quality. The relative absence of old models for country houses left the designer free to interpret the new fashion in any way he thought satisfactory and economical. This usually meant the merest overlay of mediaeval detail, and the cheapest device was the battlementing of the parapet.

The earliest attempt to do more, and this curiously enough without battlementing, was a design by Surveyor-General Mitchell for a toll-gate on Sir Lowry's Pass (1830-Plate 47).[3] Here the door and window openings were framed at the top with late Gothic label mouldings and the door was panelled with tre-foil tracery.

Francis Goodwin's book of designs 'Domestic Architecture', published in

London in 1833, helped develop the popular taste for elaborate Gothic in house design (Plate 36). The first building which might have been based on it at the Cape was 'Selwyn Castle' in Grahamstown, was erected within a year or two of its appearance.[1]

'Selwyn Castle' (Plates 35, 38, 40-6), is not only the first serious domestic essay in the Gothic style in South Africa, but it is worthy of study as a rare example of an English country house (in the fast vanishing tradition) at the Cape. Erected in spacious grounds near the Royal Engineers' establishment, the building was sufficiently a gentleman's residence to warrant adoption as the Eastern Cape's Government House by Sir Andries Stockenstrom in 1836.[2] Its design was probably the work of the owner, Captain Selwyn, Commandant Royal Engineers, who, during 1835, was Town Commandant of Grahamstown.[3]

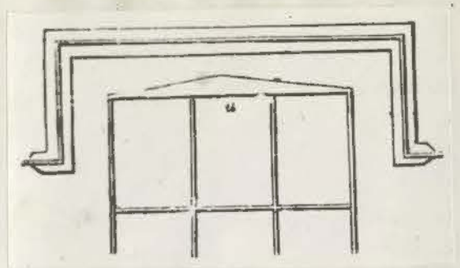
A double-storey central block, crowned with low battlemented gables on all four sides, is flanked by two single-storey wings, one of which contained the original dining-room and kitchen.[4] These wings, which would have been considered excrescences on a 'Grecian' building, were, in this type of design considered advantageous, because of the Picturesque quality they imparted. Outbuildings in the same style included the carriage house and stables, following the precedent of Humphrey Repton who '...brought the offices from their accustomed seclusion into view, because of their usefulness in increasing the richness of the composition, and to lead to and support the chief building, by giving it accompaniments of its own kind and character.'[5]

Large windows with lancet tracery give an authentic Tudor air to 'Selwyn Castle', which still stands (dilapidated and disfigured with excrescences) in the grounds of Rhodes University. It is interesting to note how, in conformity

1. The exact date is uncertain, but it was definitely built before 1836. There is a letter in the Cory Library which suggests that in 1835 Major Selwyn was defending himself against allegations that he had been using government men and materials in the erection of his own private house. (It is interesting to speculate whether the charges arose from envious complaints of those who resented the pretentious nature of the work). Selwyn does not appear to have lived long in his new house. Perhaps the jealousy of his fellow-officers and neighbours proved too much for him and he deemed it advisable to offer the house for the use of the Government. Sir George Cory in his 'Souvenir of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers' tells how Stockenstrom came to Grahamstown in September 1836, and, after staying for a short time at Ayrton's Hotel in New Street, 'he moved to the house belonging to Major Selwyn now called "Selwyn Castle" which was enlarged for his accommodation. He appears to have stayed in 'Selwyn Castle' for two years before returning to England.
2. 18th September 1836. Cory 'Souvenir of the Centenary of the 1820 Settlers', Grahamstown, 1920.
3. Major Charles Selwyn (v. 'Grahamstown Journal' 29th April 1848. Selwyn's Obituary Notice).

   Charles Jasper Selwyn was born in 1793. He entered the Royal Engineer Corps in May, 1811, receiving his commission as Lieutenant within two months. He served at the attack of Guadaloupe in 1815 and was made Captain, Royal Engineers in March, 1825. In 1834 he was appointed as Commanding Engineer in the Eastern Province and served as Town Commandant of Grahamstown in 1835. He played an active part in the Kaffir wars of 1834 to 1835, and afterwards began that series of forts of which that most adjacent to Grahamstown bears his name. He is known to have designed Fort Hare and Post Retief, and drawings in his hand (in rather amateurish draughtsmanship) are to be found in the Cory Library. He was also responsible for undertaking the construction of an efficient system of roads throughout the Eastern Colony. In this work he was fortunate in the enthusiasm and skill of his Superintendent of Works, Andrew Geddes Bain, with whom he constructed a road connecting Fort Brown, Fort Beaufort and Grahamstown in 1837 (and which is still in use). In 1838 he was in part responsible for the design of a new road linking Port Elizabeth with Grahamstown, leaving the latter at West Hill and passing through Howison's Poort. In June 1838 Captain Selwyn received his Commission as a Major but by this time it is probable that he was no longer living in Selwyn Castle, which had been occupied by Sir Andries Stockenstrom since the 18th September 1836. Major Selwyn appears to have bought a farm near what is now the native location in Grahamstown. This farmhouse still stands and it is possible that this property was handed down to his children after he left Grahamstown. Major Selwyn is almost certainly connected with the design of the Roman Catholic Church, Grahamstown, in 1841, and with the enlargement and equipment of the Library which was begun in the same year (D.M. Thomson in his 'Short History of Grahamstown' states that he 'planned and superintended' the renovations).

   In 1842 Major Selwyn also supervised the despatch of the troops for the relief of Natal. In the same year he was recalled to England on leave and then sent to Canada. He was



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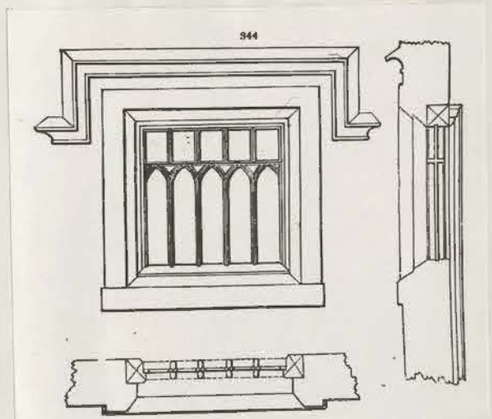

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'Selwyn Castle, Grahamstown.

Right: 35. 'Selwyn Castle'; view from the south-west.

36. Plate from Francis Goodwin's 'Domestic Architecture', London, 1833-4.

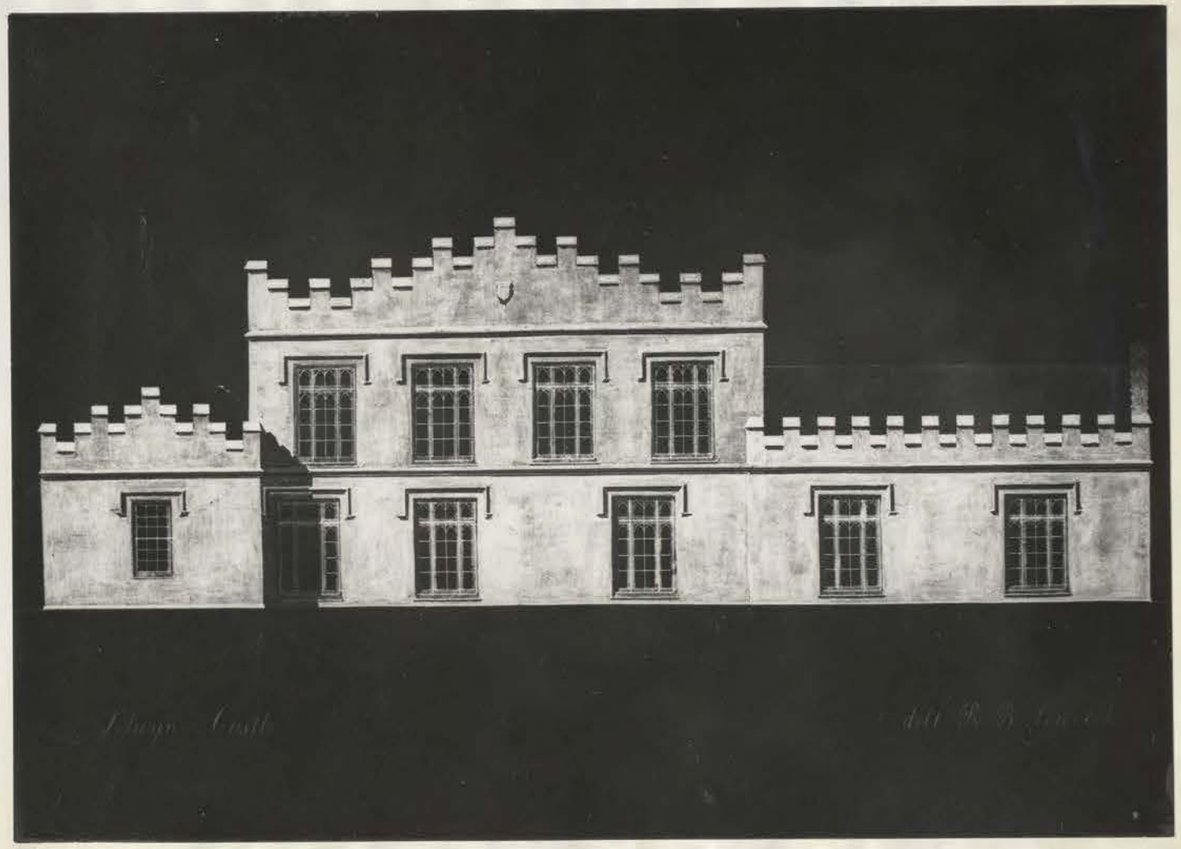
38. Measured drawing of the north-west facade of 'Selwyn Castle'.

Left: 37,39. Gothic windows from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London,1833.

40. Window of 'Selwyn Castle'.

35

36



38

Notes 3,4 & 5 continued from previous page.

3. promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in 1846 and died in Montreal on 12th December, 1847; lamented in the 'Montreal Herald' as 'much esteemed as a public officer and greatly regretted by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.'

4. The house is said to have been 'enlarged for his (the Lieutenant Governor's) accommodation'. It is probable that the new kitchen wing, which now extends from the back of the house, was added at this time. A double-storey wood and iron veranda was probably also a later addition to the front of the house; it was rendered necessary in order to protect this essentially English building from the rigours of the Cape afternoon sun. The dining-room was the scene of an unusual series of events in Nov. 1837. Sir George Cory tells us that 'the Lieut-Governor Sir Andries Stockenstrom lost no opportunity of conciliating the Kaffir chiefs. He welcomed them to his house in Grahamstown and had them sit at his table with him.' Cory. 'The Rise of South Africa'. III, 420.

5. J.B. Papworth 'Ornamental Gardening'. London, 1823.

1. After the recall of Sir Andries Stockenstrom in 1838, Colonel Hare became Lieutenant Governor and continued to live in Selwym Castle. On July 22nd, 1840, Selwyn complained to the Government that he had gone to considerable expense to put the house in suitable order to serve the Lieutenant Governor's needs. Major Selwyn added that the house was now so large and the outlay on it so great that he was not likely to get a fair return for it from any private individual. At some time Selwyn Castle appears to have been sold to the Government and it is probable that this sale took place when Selwyn left the Cape in 1843. The house continued to be the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor, and it is recorded that here on December 8th, 1847, Sir Henry Pottinger received a deputation of Grahamstown citizens and was presented with a farewell address (Cory IV. 96). By the 1860s, however, the building had become a private residence and was subsequently altered on several occasions.

This building has great interest, both architecturally and historically, and if it could be restored to a semblance of its original character it would add nearly a century of tradition to the University of which it is a part.

with the Romantic taste, the windows are no longer symmetrically ordered on classical lines, but are irregularly placed so that they command the best prospect from the interior. They are crowned by roll mouldings forming labels, while the gables originally carried plaster coats of arms.

'The Eating Parlour' is so placed that it commands a variety of views. It rounds off a house which could take its place happily in the irregular English landscape garden while itself enjoying the varied prospects of its surroundings. To this aesthetic justification for the Picturesque plan the Regency architects of England added such utilitarian arguments as that 'it is desirable to group together their little appendages... because the combination is calculated to give consequence to a habitation that would otherwise appear insignificant. Irregular buildings convey the appearance of a greater magnitude than they actually possess, by the successive disclosure of their features to the view'. (Thompson, 'Retreats', 1835).

Internally, two fireplaces are all that remain of the former splendour, They are both interesting examples of the Gothic style, among the earliest of the type recorded in South Africa.

'The rich man in his castle' went a popular hymn of the day, and that is where most people in England would have looked for him first. The castle, albeit small and of unconvincing authenticity, conferred dignity, respect and a certain social position. The erection of such a building at the Cape seems a remarkable example of the pugnacity of the British character and of the power of fashion;[1] its choice as his official residence by Stockenstrom, newly elevated to the British nobility, is less surprising.

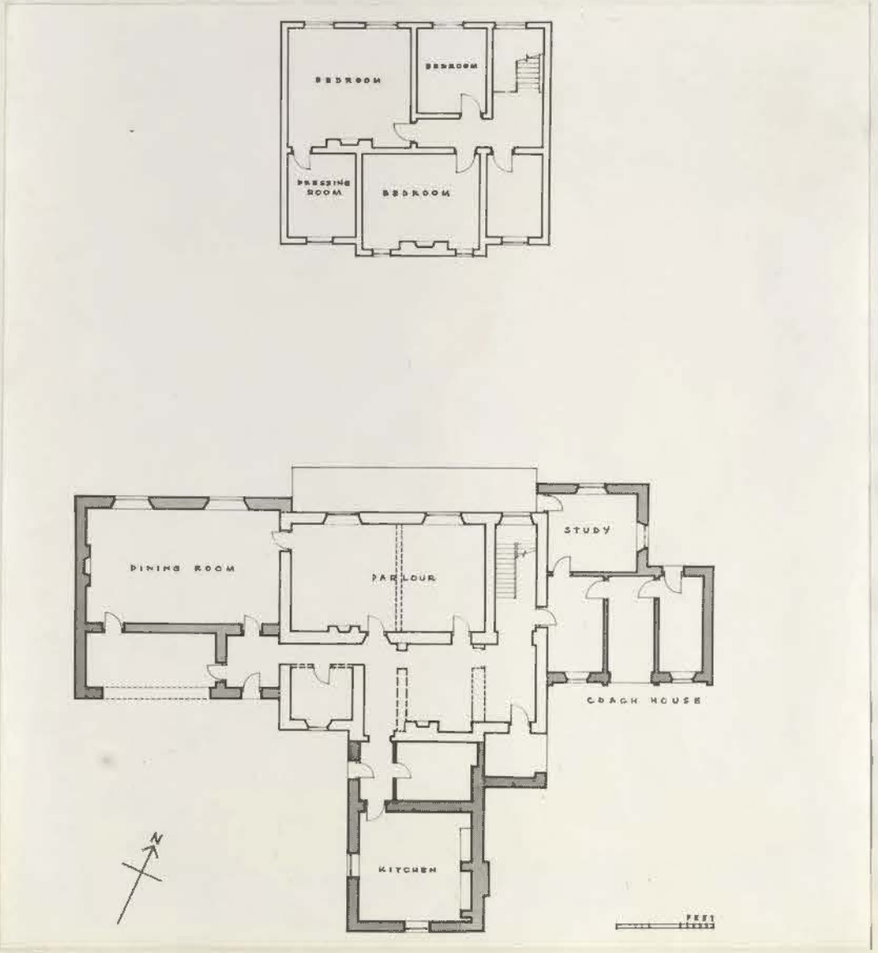
'Selwyn Castle', Grahamstown.

41. (Top right). View from south.
42. (Bottom right). Doorway.
43. (Top left). Fireplace in an upper room.
44. (Bottom left). Fireplace in a lower room.
45. (Bottom centre). Plans.

43

41

44



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42

1. Letter of Col (later Sir) John Bell, Secretary to the Cape Government, to Colonel Lewis, Royal Engineers, Chairman of the Library Committee, 18th February, 1838. Quoted by Varley 'Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Public Library'. I; No. 2, 30.

2. Ibid.

46. 'Selwyn Castle', general view from South.

With the erection of this building and its occupation by one of the leading men in the land, the Gothic style may be considered to have become a force seriously to be reckoned with in South Africa. By the same date a number of good ecclesiastic examples in the style could be seen in different parts of the Colony. And now the battle of the styles began in earnest. Some of the shrewder architects turned eclectic, like Michell, and produced Gothic or Classical Revival on demand. But the majority were partisan; tempers flared and life-long friendships broke over the conflicting merits of the ogee and the volute, the pointed arch and the 'golden rectangle.'

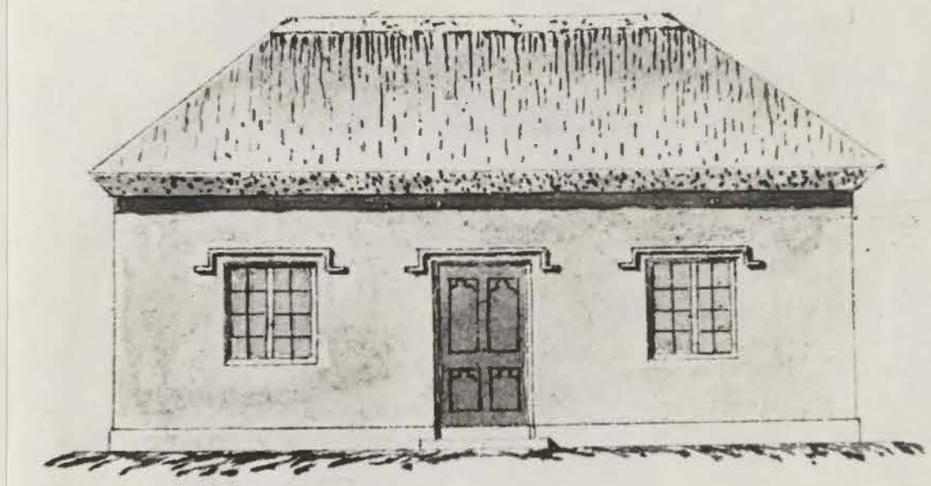
A fascinating instance of this occurred when a Committee was formed in 1837 to consider the erection of a large building for the Public Library on a site donated by the Governor at the bottom of the Gardens in Cape Town. It was proposed that the new building be in the Classic style, but Col. Bell, Secretary to the Cape Government (who, incidentally, furnished the Greek design for St. George's) objected on the grounds that

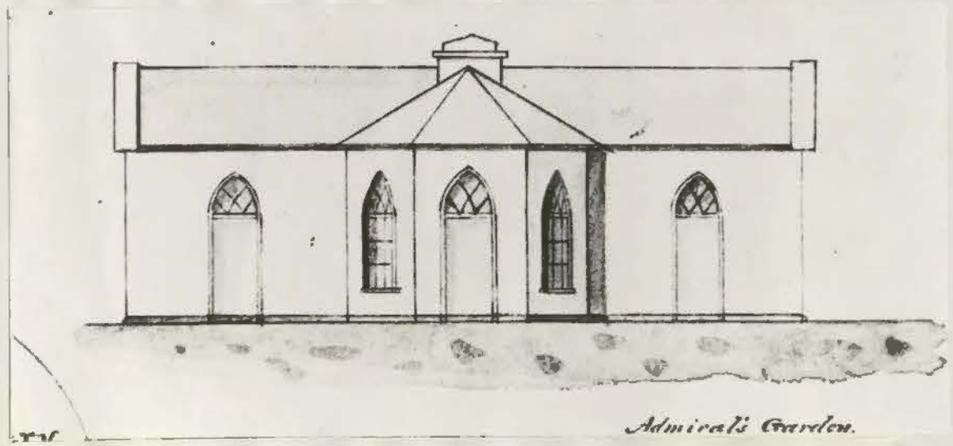
> 'the site of the proposed building...is not favourable for display; and the portico of St. George's Church would, by its dimensions alone, squeeze to death anything that the Library could pretend to show in the line of Wale Street.... Therefore I say, get rid of all Grecian Architecture in the design; for if unseen it would be useless as well as expensive, and if seen, overtopped by its neighbour. ...And now comes the question, what shall the outside be? Not a barn, warehouse or wine store-looking concern, certainly, but (say I) a substantial, olden-time, English-looking building, ornamented just so much as to show that it is of a public character and no more.' 1

Whereupon he goes on to describe a remarkable building with three main ranges, a Tudor Hall, mullions, turrets and an Entrance Porch on the Wale Street frontage, the whole of which he sums up as being in 'a style somewhat resembling that of Queen Elizabeth's time.' 2

1. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia'. London. 1st ed. 1833, 198.

2. Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Public Library. I, No.2, 30.





47. Tollhouse, Sir Lowry's Pass, Charles Mitchell, architect. (C.O.374/65, 2 April 1830.).

48. Tollhouse, Simonstown, 1838. (C.O. 467/78, 12 April 1838). Charles Mitchell, architect.

To which Colonel Lewis, Chairman of the Committee, and himself a trained Engineer, might well have replied by quoting direct from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia' of Architecture', the second edition of which had just appeared (1836):

> '...there is a great prejudice in favour of Gothic buildings of every description...arising from the associations of reverence, antiquity and chivalry, which are connected with them. Maturely considered, however, we cannot help sometimes doubting whether the existing prejudice in favour of Gothic architecture does not reflect more discredit than honour on human nature; at all events, it is a prejudice unworthy of an age of rapid improvement like the present...simplicity is one of the last refinements men arrive at, not only in the progress of the arts, but in the progress of opinion...we have little doubt that much of what is now considered beauty, both in art and literature, will, by the next generation, be neglected; and as the French characteristically express it, 'reduit au merite historique'.[1]

At any rate, when a design was finally accepted, it was based on George Basevi's Corinthian Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.[2] The Gothic cause was lost, but survived this fight to wage many another battle, with frequent success, throughout the Victorian Age.

Before concluding this chapter let us consider briefly a few subsequent examples of Gothic.

In 1838 a new Tollhouse for Simonstown was begun by Charles Mitchell in a Regency-influenced version of early Gothic (Plate 48). Here pointed windows and fanlights were used for the first time on a secular building, a practice which was to become commonplace by the 1860s.

In 1841 the Honourable William Cock built 'Richmond House', his 'Castle'

49. 'Richmond House', the Kowie, 1841.
50. 'Canigou', Rondebosch. c.1835-40.

overlooking the Kowie, a castellated poor relation of 'Selwyn Castle' (Plate 49). 'Canigou', Col. John Bell's house in Rondebosch also dated from this period (Plate 50). It was a splendid steep-roofed Tudor building, authentic in style, as might be expected, and contained a great hall with a hammer-beam truss roof, decorated with hunting trophies.

These, and buildings like them, had great influence on domestic and public architecture of the following years, which began, in form, detail and mouldings, to increasingly favour Gothic taste. Mass produced windows, fireplaces, railings and veranda decoration further spread the fashion. They were made of cast-iron imported from abroad or cut in fretwork patterns from wood.

In 1836 Pugin published, in London, at his own expense, 'Contrasts, or, a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and the corresponding Buildings of the Present Day; showing the Present Decay of Taste,' an explosive attack on everything in architecture which was not Gothic. Reprinted many times, its influence was widespread. Pugin's work was largely responsible for the Gothic Revival entering its second, more archeological phase, which made its appearance in South Africa in the 1840s, became enormously popular, and persisted, in church and school, almost to the present day.

FOURTEEN :

THE LATE GEORGIAN TOWN HOUSE. 1820 to 1837.

1. 128, Hatfield Street, Cape Town.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE LATE GEORGIAN TOWN HOUSE. 1820 - 1837.

In the seventeen-year period we are now going to consider, domestic architecture at the Cape went through a considerable change. In 1820 Regency gaiety and elegance were at their height, by 1837 a more sober mood prevailed. In clothing, straight lines and sombre colours gradually replaced the frivolity, the joyous curves and brilliance of Regency fashions, a trend clearly reflected in furniture and buildings.

Population figures at the Cape show a steady growth in the number of white inhabitants after 1795, with a sudden leap at the time of the arrival of the 1820 Settlers, and a fairly rapid annual increase thereafter. Before 1820 the number of British immigrants (as distinct from army, navy and government officers more or less permanently stationed at the Cape) was not great. But the 1820s saw a steady rise in this immigration and a consequent strengthening of

1. W.Bird 'The State of the Cape in 1822'. London, 1824, 155.

2. Theal 'History of South Africa 1795-1834' London, 1891, 387.

3. Ibid., 368.

4. Ibid., 427-8.

5. Theal. 'History of South Africa 1834-54'. London, 1893, 167.

6. After 1820 there followed a general depression lasting three to four years. In 1821 the reduction of the garrison from 4,000 to 2,500 men was 'immediately and severely felt'. de Kieweit. 'A History of South Africa, Social and Economic', Oxford, 1941, 36.
M.H. de Kock, 'Economic Development of South Africa'. London, 1936, 24.

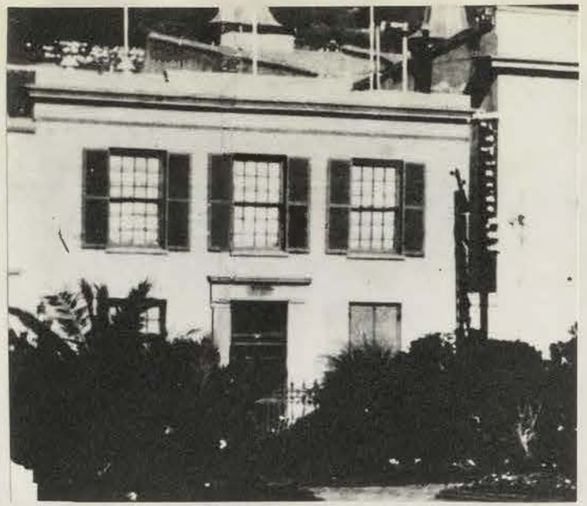
2. Roman Catholic Manse, Roeland Street, Cape Town. ± 1850 ? (Africana Museum).

British influences in the West as well as in the East of the Colony.

But the immigration figures alone do not accurately reflect the degree of British influence. An important cultural factor which lasted for many years, was the presence of Indian visitors (i.e. holidaying British officials and their families) who, Bird reported in 1822, 'exceed every other single class in number, as much as they surpass in talent.'[1] We have already seen how one of them was connected with the erection, and possibly with the design, of public buildings at Worcester.

Economically, 1820 brings us into the middle of the post-Waterloo boom, still influencing the colony from Europe.[6] 1826 was a year of intense depression, following the reduction in the wine tariffs into Britain which had previously favoured the Cape.[2] But by 1828 a degree of prosperity had returned, and Theal makes the significant comment that 'a great many dwelling houses were erected, or rebuilt in the modern styles' in the period 1828 - 33.[3] Then followed a severe economic recession, triggered by the abolition of slavery, but of the kind experienced everywhere when revenue falls short of expenditure, when taxation is severely felt, when debt is increasing, and when even the most necessary public works cannot be undertaken...'[4] The Sixth Kaffir War brought a brief respite, especially in the Eastern Province, where a considerable amount of subsequent building activity took place. But with this exception depression was widespread and lasted into the early 1840s.[5]

The character of town architecture in 1820 reveals ambivalent trends. The eighteenth century town house, so firmly established and predominant in the townscape, continued to exert a profound influence; while at the same time the

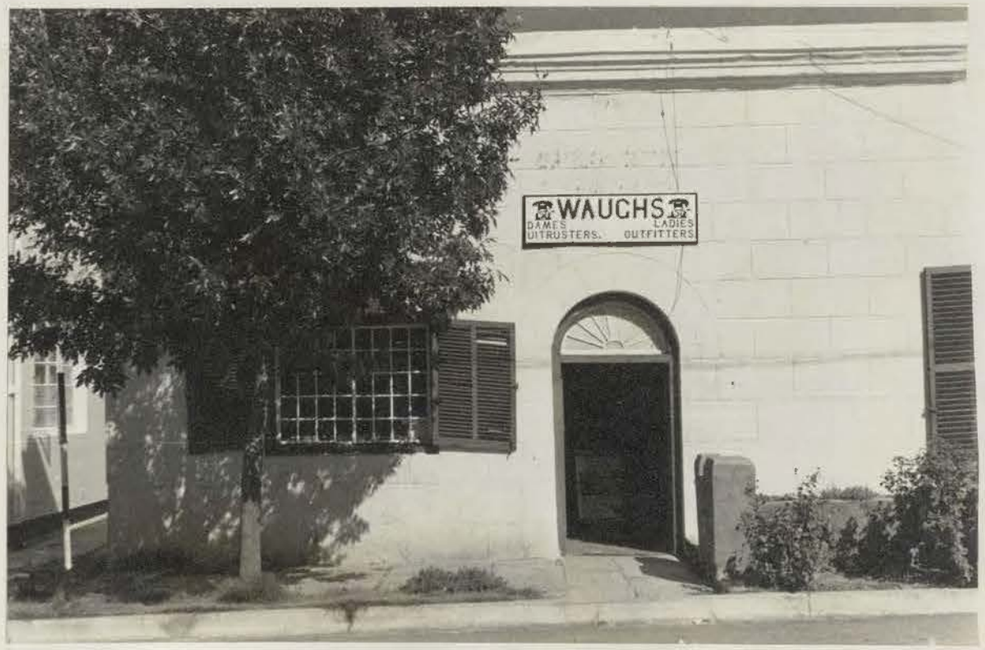


The persistence of the Cape flat roof tradition:

3. House in Parliament Street, Cape Town; now demolished. (Africana Museum).
4. House in Colesberg.
5. House in Colesberg.
6. Houses and shops in Bathurst Street; now considerably altered; (Albany Museum). Grahamstown.
7. House in Plein Street, Cape Town. (Elliott).

1. In Jan.1828 the upper sashes of the Supreme Court were made to open by pivoting (C.O.344/2. 14th Jan., 1828). In Dec. 1829 those of Government House were similarly treated. (C.O.370/215. 14th Dec. 1829). Two years later they were made to slide by scooping out the frames to admit weights (G.H. 28/15. 28th Sept. 1839).

2. I have been able to find no government specifications of such a treatment before the early eighteen forties, and the earliest water-colour which shows brown woodwork on Cape buildings appears to be 'J.W.'s of Greenmarket Square (Plate 40 on page 63) c.1835-40. It seems therefore that this development resulted from the preoccupation of the Romantic movement with natural materials, which became especially significant during the early Victorian period.



8. House in Colesberg.

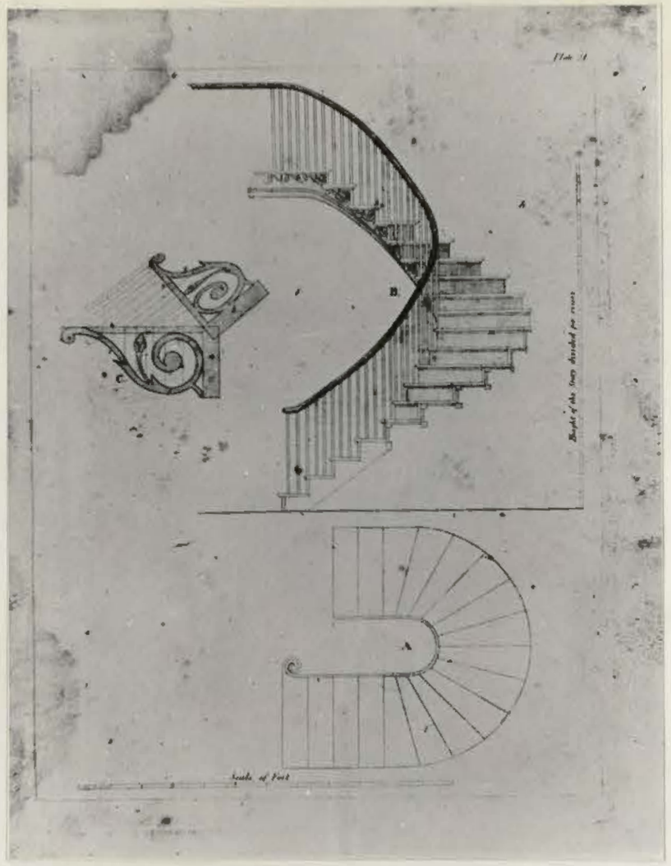
increasing stream of British pattern books, furniture, wrought and cast iron and other manufactured goods which flowed into the country set up new standards and created new tastes. For many years the two influences persisted side by side, mingling and separating according to the whim of individual owners or builders.

On the whole, though, British characteristics predominate more and more as the years pass and the ties are loosened with Continental Europe. Reactionaries sometimes built houses as late as the 1850s, such as the Roman Catholic Manse, which was essentially of the Philip Vingboom's type originating in sixteenth century Holland (Plate 2). But already by the 1820s the flush eighteenth century Cape window was no longer considered fashionable and the fixed upper sashes of the existing ones were frequently being adapted so that they could slide or pivot.[1] Everywhere the recessed English window, with two sashes sliding past each other, was being put into new work. And towards the end of this period a new factor made its appearance, the treatment of the external woodwork with clear linseed oil instead of opaque oil paint.[2]

The significance of the influx of English pattern books is nowhere better illustrated than in the design for the Dutch Reformed Church Parsonage at Worcester (1824. Plate 25 on page 419), based on Nicholson's 'Practical Builder'; London, 1820. Many other examples may be cited such as the bow-front houses of Grahamstown district (Plate 165 on page 313 and Plate 65 on page 341), which bear resemblance to designs in Plaw's immensely popular 'Ferme Ornée'. In joiner's work the use of British pattern books was probably even more widespread; doors, ceilings, fireplaces, and staircases all follow closely English prototypes (Plates 9 - 11).

The resulting quaint admixture of influences often produced surprising ef-

9. Staircase in the Royal Observatory, Cape Town, 1827.



10. Page from Owen Biddle's 'Young Carpenters Assistant', 1810.

11. The staircase in 'Bloemendal', Mowbray. Showing the same kind of stringer decoration. (Elliott).

1. v. V. de Kock 'Our Three Centuries'. Cape Town, 1952, 117. (Drawing by G.Duff).

2. Backhouse 'A Narrative of a Visit to Mauritius and South Africa' London, 1844.

12. 'English houses' in Graaff Reinet. (Elliott).

fects. In town streets parapet houses jostled those with eaves overhangs. Some had pitched roofs, others flat. Internally, traditional Cape finishes vied with the latest British fashions in joinery and decoration. Mutually debilitating, of the two influences only one, the British, was continually being regenerated; the Cape traditions gradually lost their vogue in the cities, were adulterated, and finally, though a few linger unobserved, cease to be obvious after the 1850s. In the farming districts,the small towns, and the northern Boer republics, however, eighteenth century building methods persisted and carried the old Cape architectural character down almost to the present day.

A typical effect of British architecture on the town house may be seen in the Uitenhage Dutch Reformed Church parsonage which was a double-storeyed Georgian house with a hipped low-pitched roof and four chimneys.[1] In 1840 Backhouse described Swellendam with 'neat white houses, some in the English and others in the Dutch style'.[2] By the 'English style' he was presumably referring to the box-shaped double-storey Georgian houses which may be seen in Swellendam's streets to this day. Similar houses were becoming common during the twenties and thirties in most of the outlying towns, as Plate 12, an early photograph of Graaff Reinet, makes clear.

The use of face-brick persisted in Cape Town for the more Georgian of the dwellings, but generally plaster or stucco prevailed, linking the elegant Regency fashion to the eighteenth century environment which still predominated in the town. Indeed tight family ties bound even the early Victorian town house with houses dating from before the 1770s and ensured a uniform character throughout Cape Town which remained until the late nineteenth century.

During the 1830s ashlar stone-work began to make its appearance in town

OPPOSITE:

13,16. 'Bertram House', on the Avenue; a typical late Georgian brick house in the Gardens, Cape Town. (13. has been retouched to show the original upper windows).

15. One house of a terrace in Upper Canterbury Street, Cape Town.

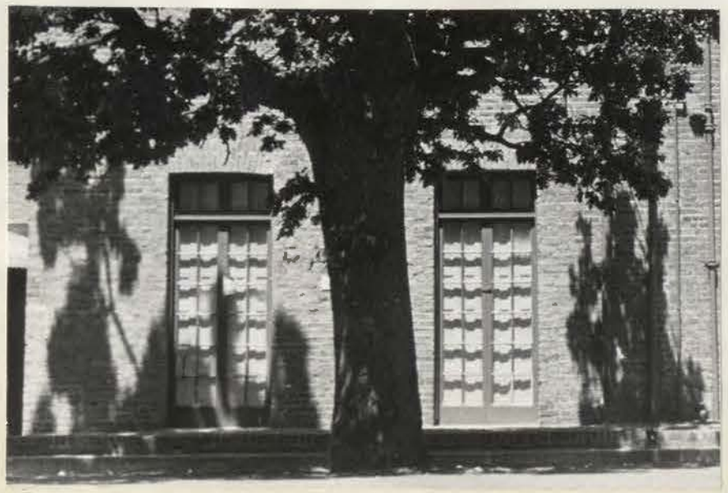
14. (Top right). Cornice of a brick house in Selkirk Street, near the New Market, Cape Town.

17. Brick cornice in Plein Street, Cape Town.

18. Brick cornice in Grahamstown.

13

15



16

19,20. Stone houses in the Market Square, Grahamstown.

houses, the most notable surviving example being the home of (Sir) Anthony Oliphant, Attorney-General, in Harrington Street (c.1834. Plate 56-8).

Adaption to the Cape climate brought modifications to the form of houses - or rather the selective use of features from English Georgian, such as the entrance porch.

In 1825, in a report on houses for government officials at Simonstown, the Resident Commissioner recommended '... to secure the front from the effect of the rains ... the removal of two of the projecting windows from the front thatch, extending this thatch a few feet forward in form of a Veranda and defending both front doors by a plain brick porch'.[1] The projecting enclosed porch to act as a wind lobby against the South-Easters, thus made its first appearance in the early 1820s, and was common for about twenty years.

In addition to their utilitarian advantages these porticoes had the additional aesthetic appeal that they broke up the large flat surfaces of Eighteenth century architecture, introducing a 'Picturesque' quality. Examples are to be seen in the surviving house of the Roeland Street terrace (1823. Plates 27-8) and in 'Bertram House' in the Gardens (Plates 13 and 101 - 8). But many others once existed, such as those of the original 'Mount Nelson' and the Military Hospital at Woodstock. (Plates 76-8 on page 446).

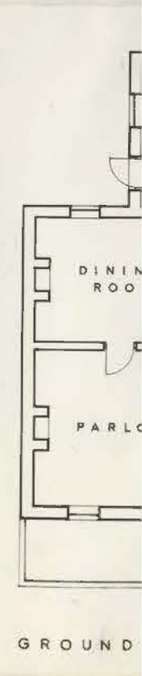
In the Eastern Province, where English influence was strongest, porches also made their appearance in early houses and public buildings (Plate 77 on page 346). Georgian architecture was here even more directly a transplantation of that in England. A number of faced stone houses on the market square in Grahamstown are splendid examples of this (Plates 19-24). Later Grahamstown houses sometimes even had basement kitchens with railed light wells, on the pattern of Bath or London (Plates 63-6).

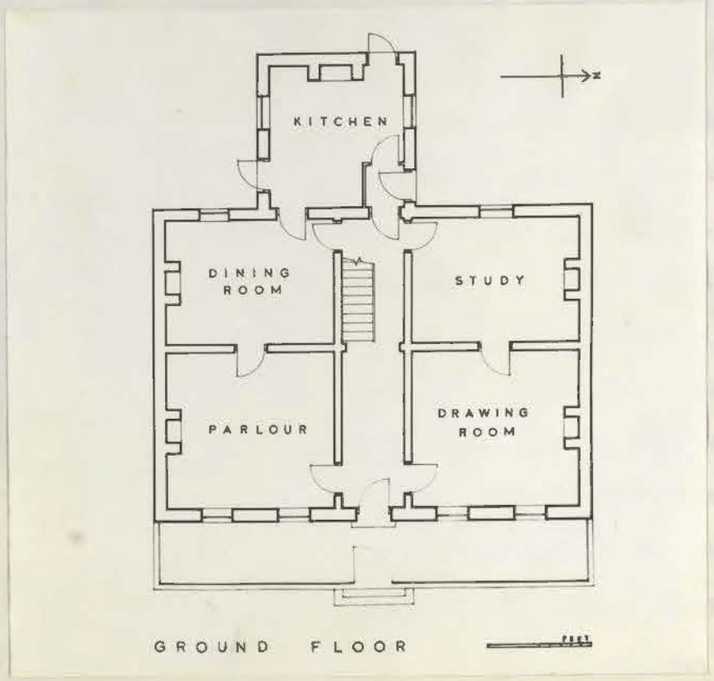
1. C.O.245/23. 6th March, 1825.

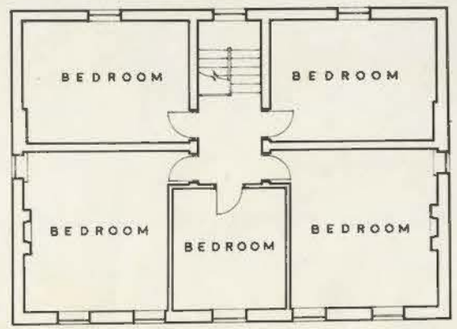
OPPOSITE: Houses in the Market Square, Grahamstown:

21. House in Beaufort Street.

22,23,24. No 21, West Street.



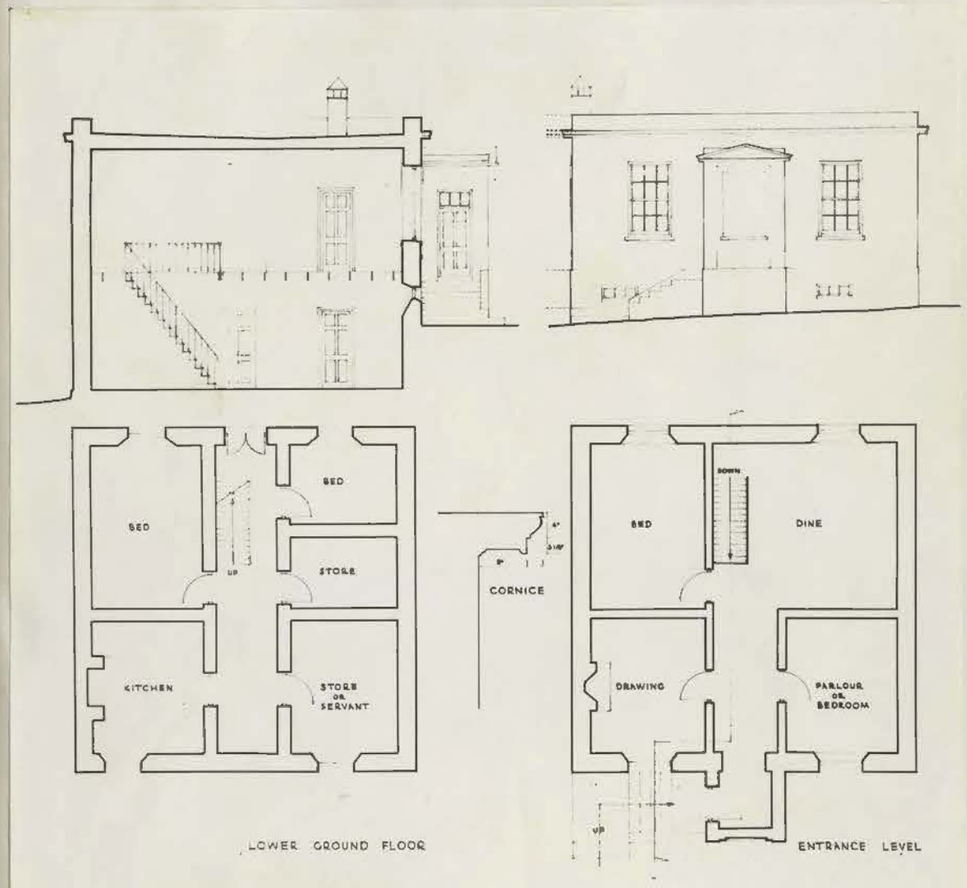

KITCHEN
DINING ROOM
STUDY
PARLOUR
DRAWING ROOM
GROUND FLOOR


BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
UPPER FLOOR

25. Terrace housing in Bree Street, Cape Town.
26. Terrace housing in Upper Canterbury Street, Cape Town.

As the increasing variety of styles and materials threatened to disturb the unity of the street scene which, during the eighteenth century, had been a natural product of limited building materials and techniques, the more enlightened among the public realised that deliberate steps would have to be taken if the restful harmony of the townscape was not to be lost. With the speculative terraces of Georgian England as their models, owners and architects sometimes agreed to forego the design of buildings as isolated entities, and, instead, to link them together to establish a fine general effect. In this way some of the best of the Cape's Regency and Early Victorian terraces were achieved.

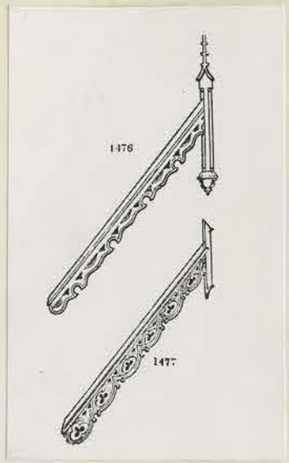
In Roeland Street a terrace with projecting porches was built on land subdivided for the purpose in 1822 (Plates 27-8). It is possible, judging by the title-deeds, that the originator intended to extend the scheme further, but only three houses were actually built. With a continuous cornice, elegant Doric character, and strong formal modulation, they made a most elegant group. The porticoes added a note of individuality to each house in the terrace, possibly a concession to the aspirations of a society unused to terraces. Another stucco terrace, in Bree Street (Plate 25), dates from c.1827, judging by the title-deeds. Here the houses step down the hillside, with a broken cornice line and staggered stoeps. The effect is spoilt by an unfortunate break in the centre of each free-standing and symmetrical block. Subsequent terraces (like those of Upper Canterbury Street - Plate 26) were longer, with strong unity induced by a continuous cornice and repetitive window patterning, but were almost too neutral in treatment - they verge on the banal. In many later streets of Port Elizabeth and Cape Town the verandaed terrace became a characteristic feature (Plates 27-8 on page 540). The rhythms set up by the stepped verandas relieved the monotony they would otherwise have possessed, and, indeed, often

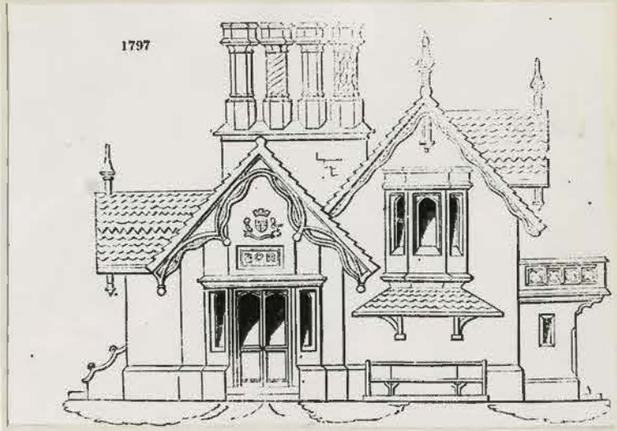


Terrace housing in Roeland Street.

27. Section, Elevation and Plans of one house.

28. Photograph retouched to show original appearance. (Elliott).





29,30. Illustrations of bargeboards and other details with a Gothic character, from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 2nd Edition, 1836.

31. A house in 'Waterloo Place', an early terrace in Port Elizabeth.

1. The verandaed terrace principle was observed until the 1920's and even now survives, in altered form, in many balconied flat developments.

1A. Kata Phusin: 'The poetry of architecture' in 'The Architectural Magazine and Journal', V, Feb. 1838, 56.

led to striking effects, while the railing of the veranda lent itself to continuous variety in detailed treatment without interfering with the overall unity. But most of these latter belong to the succeeding age, to the forties, fifties and even later decades. [1]

Another instance of the same kind of community spirit is to be seen in the attitude of many architects to the design of many individual buildings in the town scene. Not only did they frequently acknowledge the character and scale of the neighbouring structures, retaining the same cornice line and height of storeys, but where the building occurred in an important position, such as on a street corner, an attempt was usually made to acknowledge it. This is the reason why many of the older houses in South African towns have splayed corners, containing the main entrance door and a window (or blank window opening) above. (Plates 32 - 5).

The Gothic Revival developed the taste for ornament in other styles besides its own: '... the carved oaken gable and shadowy roof of the Norman,.... the black crossed rafters and fantastic projections which might delight the eyes of the Germans;.... the Moorish arches and confused galleries which mingle so magnficently with the inimitable fretwork of the grey temples of the Spaniard...' [1A] The Prince Regent's own 'Brighton Pavilion', finished in 1822, set a standard of eclecticism for all to follow, with its Indian exterior and Chinese interiors. Yet neither of these two particular fashions persisted very long, and it was the architectural philosophy expressed in the Pavilion, rather than its style, which had the greatest influence.

The Late Georgian acknowledgment of the street corner:

32. House on the corner Buitengracht and Bloem Streets, Cape Town.

33. House on the corner of Bree and Buiten Streets, Cape Town.

34. House on the corner of Beaufort and Bartholomew Streets, Grahamstown.

35. House on the corner of Spring Street, Mossel Bay.

1. v.Kenneth Clark 'The Gothic Revival' London, 1928, 154-5.
2. 'London & Westminster Review', London, 1836. XXV, 420.

36,37. George Perrins shop, Cape Town. Fine examples of Neo-Grecian detailing in the window surrounds. (S.A.P.L.).

38. Doric house in Strand Street, Cape Town, by Sherwill. (Elliott).

Henceforth it was considered perfectly justifiable to use historic or exotic detail to clothe a structure, and decoration became richer and more varied.

When the new British Houses of Parliament were being put out to competition in 1836, the rebuilding committee decreed that they must be in the Gothic style,[1] to match their neighbours and because 'it was the national style!' But the planning remained firmly classical, with only a top-dressing of the mediaeval, much to the horror of the Classicists. 'If it is necessary to copy, why not copy from Nature, as did the ancients before us? The first pillar of the Grecians was the trunk of a tree; and the leaves of the acanthus are said to have originated the Corinthian order' wrote an outraged competitor in the 'London and Westminster Review'.[2]

In Cape Town the Classical Revival led the field for many years: Thibault was not long dead, and Neo-Classicism, in various forms, was well-entrenched. But to keep pace with the growing taste for ornament the Neo-Grecian and Neo-Roman styles had to develop surface richness. This they did by elaborating detail and broadening their mouldings. Where, before, a cornice over an opening was an indication of its importance, - and consequently was used only above the entrance doors, - cornices or decorative ancones now appeared over every window (Plates 40 and 46). (It will be noticed how these parallel the label mouldings of Regency Gothic, then just coming into fashion. In the same way the elaboration of the classical cornice with guttae and delicate frieze mouldings added richness where Gothic had the broken silhouette of battlements, etc.)

The Greek Revival, especially, continued long in favour at the Cape. After its initial appearance in the Observatory and the early churches, Doric was eventually transferred to the pilaster house of the old Neo-Classical Cape tradition,

39

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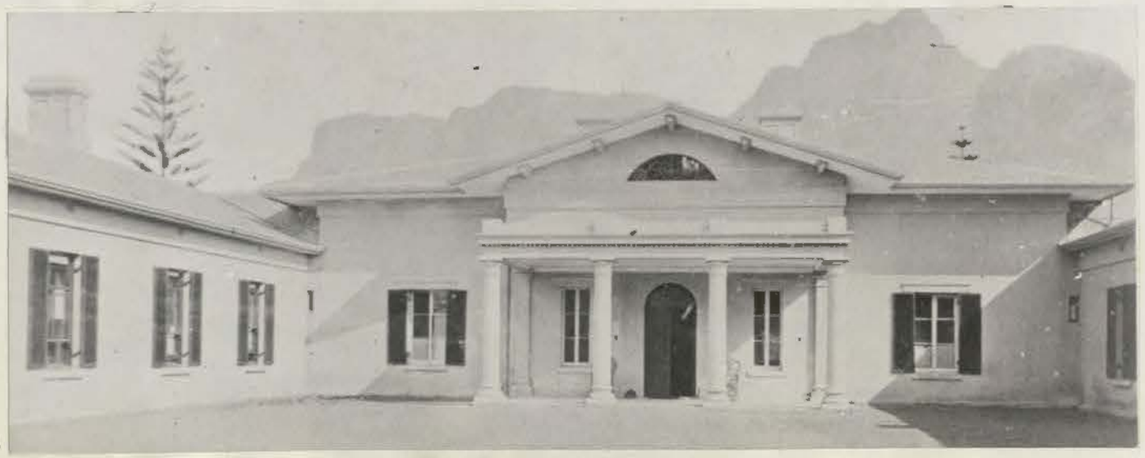
Neo-Grecian domestic architecture at the Cape:

39. 'Belmont', Rondebosch. West facade. c.1835.

40. Window console of the 'Round House' annex, Camps Bay.

41. 'Belmont', Rondebosch. East facade.

42,43. 'Belmont', Rondebosch. The sides.



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43

44. House on the new Market, Cape Town.

to produce a new type of Neo-Grecian house facade which does not seem to have been duplicated anywhere else in the world. (Plate 38). Greek pedimented houses also began to be a fashion in the outlying towns of the Karoo and the eastern frontier.

In the larger towns, porticoes or door surrounds in the pure Greek style began to make their appearance. They were often most beautifully executed reproductions of Ionic or Doric in plaster or stucco (Plates 47 and 63). At the same time cornices began to incorporate 'egg and dart' mouldings (Plate 45) and even shop windows were framed in Greek detail (Plates 36-7).

The finest of all the neo-Grecian houses was perhaps 'Belmont', built at Rondebosch by J.B.Ebden (c.1835) using materials from 'Harrington House' in Simonstown. This was a strictly symmetrical building with a high central block fronted by an archaic Doric portico with two columns 'in antis' and the large eaves overhang associated with the style (Plates 41-43).

An unfortunate result of the popularity of Doric was its expression of massive strength, which was too often confused with brutality. Before long the revolt against eighteenth century elegance led many designers, using Doric as their vehicle, to shun refinement as a thing of the past, effeminate and weak (Plate 48). The effects of this lack of logic were incalculable. There grew up in the mid-thirties a taste for crude and massive mouldings, clumsy proportioning and ponderous forms.

Rustication began to be exaggerated, the expression of stonework, especially in the lower storey, being thought in character with the expression of weightiness (Plate 44). In the same period thick frames of smooth plaster or

The Greek Revival in Cape Town:

45. Egg and Dart moulding on the cornice of a house in Longmarket Street, Cape Town.

46. House in Church Street, Cape Town.

47. House on the corner of Parliament Street and Stal Plein, Cape Town. Note the precise detailing of the portico.

colour around the windows were used to assist in creating this impression of strength. The latter were particularly favoured in the outlying districts,[1] where both town houses and farmhouses were often decorated with them.

Rusticated quoins and lintels were also much in vogue. Over the windows projecting voussoirs sometimes added richness to the openings. Square brackets helped support the window cills.

48. Neo-Classicist house in Prestwich Street, Cape Town.

49. Walker's Boarding House, 49 Long Street, Cape Town.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the late town houses is the curious stepping of the parapet above the cornice (Plate 49). This, too, probably has its origin in Neo-Classicism, being patterned perhaps on such buildings as Thibault's Customs House of 1814, which has a similar stepped parapet flanking the pediment. In any case it is certain that it was introduced to give an impression of depth and weight to the centre of the facade, which fitted well with later developments.[2]

At the end of the Georgian Age the challenge of Gothic led to the strengthening of the forces of the Classicist movement. Late Roman and Renaissance forms were reintroduced to bolster the appeal of Classicism, and widen its scope. This step immeasurably enhanced the facility with which it was possible to introduce elaborate ornament externally. At the same time the type of decoration used at the Cape was often dependent more on Thibault and the French Classicism of Gabriel, introduced in the 1780s, than it was on Barry and Burton, and we often find French influence cropping up at a late stage in a Greek or Roman context.

Thus we have seen how the desire for more ornament externally led to the

1. Dr.B.E.Biermann has pointed out that a very similar effect was created, probably on the precedent of seventeenth century Classicism and Baroque at the Cape, in the farmhouses of the Groenekloof (v.Gordon's drawings, Rijksarchief, Amsterdam.) It seems likely that it had never completely died out between the 1780s and 1830. Something of the kind appears to have been intended in the contract for the Uitenhage Secretary's House, 1813 (C.O.2568/22). In Graaff Reinet the device was very common in the nineteenth century.

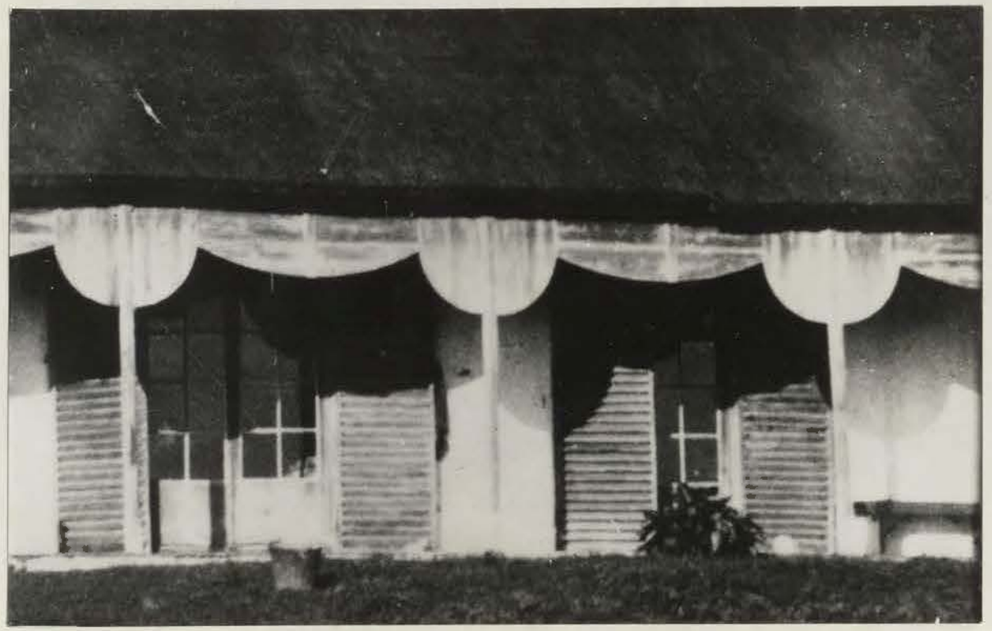
2. An intermediate stage may be observed in the stepped parapet of the Doric St.Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Plate 39 on page 429.)

50. (Top). House on the Market Square in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown.

52. (Bottom). House in Main Road, Paarl.

51. (Top). 'Prince Alfred Hotel', Wynberg.

53. (Bottom). Houses in Cradock.



54. Early veranda house in Beaufort Street,Grahamstown.
55. The Venetian shutters of the 'Marine Villa' at Camps Bay, 1823-4.

1. v. Chapter Twenty-One.

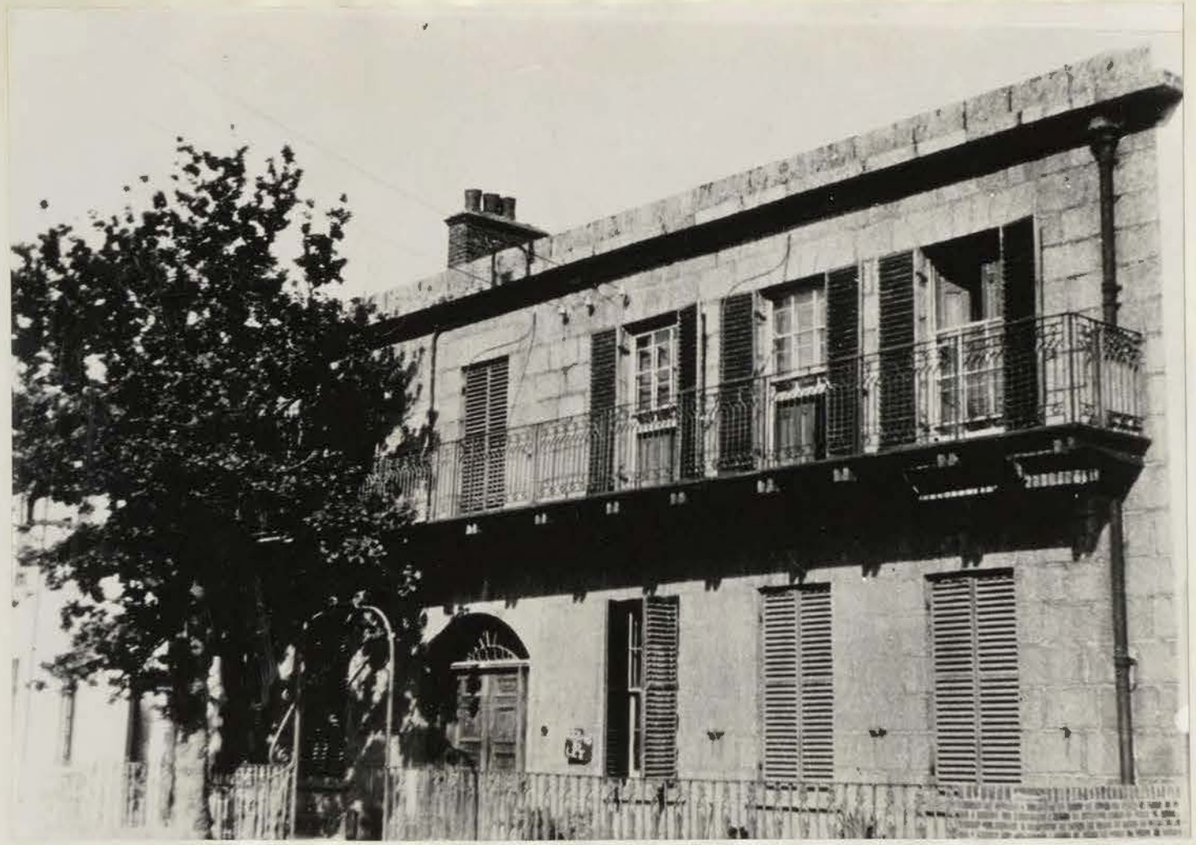
introduction of new styles, the embroidery of the old, and the eventual tossing overboard of those very qualities, restraint and logic, which had made the old worthwhile.

On the other, eclectic side of the 'no-man's land' which lay between the two styles, Gothic and Classicist, there were also many new fashions on the scene. The Gothic style was infiltrating everywhere, into mansion and cottage, but associated with it were such styles as the 'Swiss Cottage', which introduced the taste for fretwork in bargeboards and verandas, the 'Egyptian', 'Turkish' or 'Moorish', from which the enthusiasm for latticework was probably derived, besides which Gothic itself was now seen as having a number of quite different facets, each of them a style in its own right.

In addition to all these there was the style of the veranda and the Venetian shutter, the 'Colonial Style', never acknowledged as such, but surely a truer style, in the best sense of the word, than any of the others, since it had its origin in practical exigencies.[1]

With the Colonial Style as a basic skeleton the typical town house of the 1830s was formed (Plate 54). For the veranda and louvred shutters now became the necessary adjuncts of any fashionable home. The other, imported, styles mainly served to embellish, to add a touch of Gothic, Swiss or Mohammedan character.

It is here that we observe a curious anomaly in the application of Gothic. The great strength of the Classicist Revival lay in the existence of strict 'principles' of design which determined once and for all the 'purity' of the style, and the 'correctness' of its application. One of the reasons for the hesitant and confused growth of the Gothic was the absence of any such clearly formulated rules. The 'principles' of design were for many years a matter of



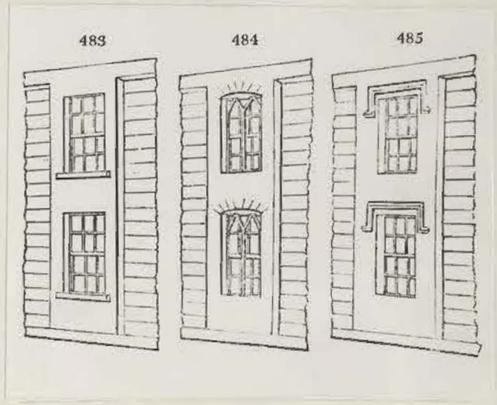
109, Harrington Street, built by Anthony Oliphant, H.M. Attorney General at the Cape, ± 1835.

56. The entrance hall and staircase.

57. The facade as it was originally.

58. The entrance doors today.

59. A stone house of about the same period in Milner Street, Grahamstown.



60. House in Rondebosch.
61. House in Wale Street, Cape Town.
62. Illustrations from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', 1st Ed., 1833.

personal opinion, and it was only slowly that an archeological approach was achieved. With the 'Swiss Chalet', 'Egyptian' and 'Moorish' styles the situation was even worse. British architects never succeeded in deducing any satisfactory 'rules', and these styles gradually lost their identity. By 1835 they had begun to merge, together with shades of the Hindu and Chinese, into a polygot style which slowly evolved round the Colonial.

Thus, while we will continue to find some houses strictly classical, with Greek or Roman colonnaded porticoes, and others Gothic, with light medieval cloister detail, the majority (at any rate in their verandas, and these set their stamp on the whole house,) belonged to neither of the two warring camps, but were somewhere in the middle, their Chinese pagoda veranda roofs, Swiss fretwork bargeboards, and Oriental latticework proclaiming their adherence to the new mid-nineteenth century Romantic style which was still in course of formation. These houses, too, might have Gothic chimneys and gable roofs 'terminated in an interesting and romantic manner at each extremity, in a tooth-pick', as one disillusioned critic of the time phrased it.[1] But their windows were almost always Georgian, and the interiors symmetrical and classical (Plates 67-75).

As part of the penchant for elaboration, contrasts in materials were introduced and a new type of facade made its appearance in Cape Town, half brick and half plaster (Plate 61), which seems to have owed its origin to a plate in Loudon's 'Encyclopedia of Architecture' published in London in 1833 (Plate 62). This kind of building belonged essentially to the Cape classicist tradition, in which the treatment of the two-storeyed front was that of a composition in low relief, crowned by a cornice.

1. Kata Phusin. 'The Poetry of Architecture'. 'The Architectural Magazine and Journal'. V, London, Feb.1838, 56.

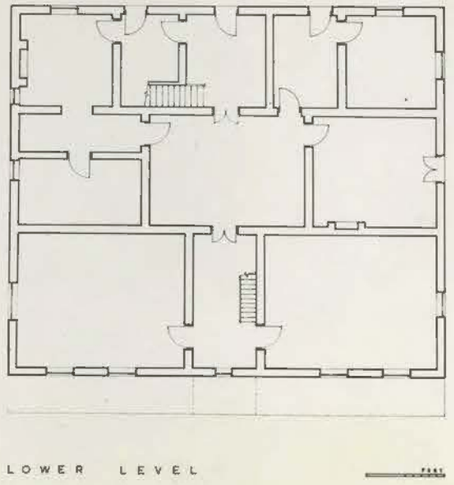
Opposite: House in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown. ± 1840.

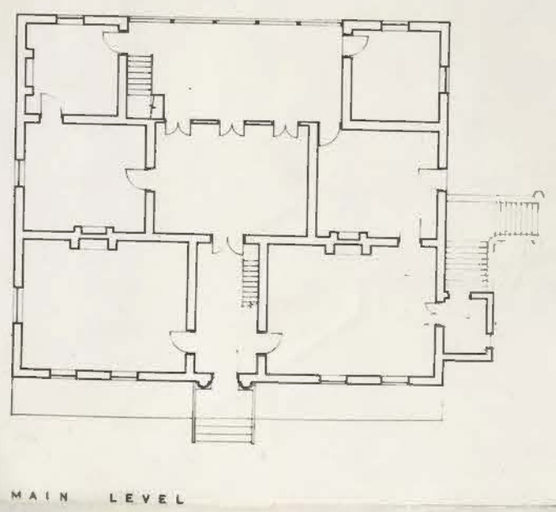
63. Entrance portico.

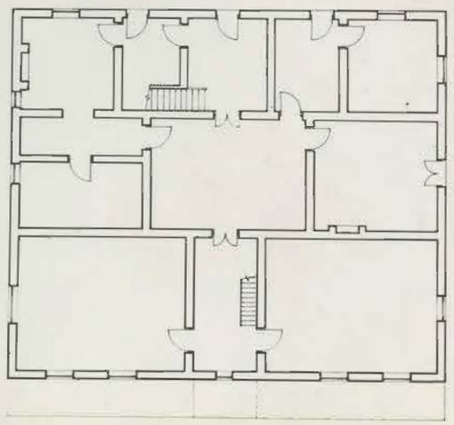
64. General view, from a photograph c.1860.

65. The entrance, showing the light well to the kitchen and service rooms.

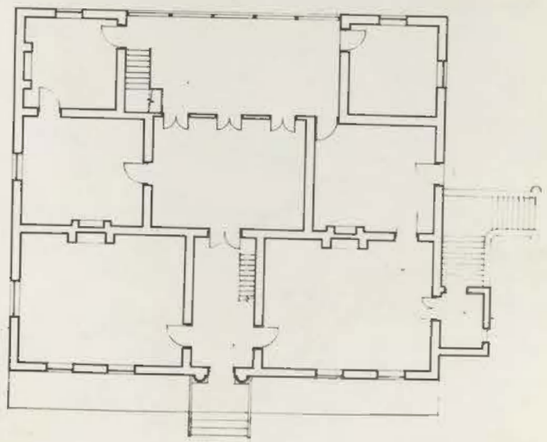
66. Plans. Although the form and character of the house are essentially English the plan shows surprising Cape influence (cf. Plate 6 on page 107).







LOWER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL

67. Veranda in Rondebosch.

68. Veranda in Wynberg: 'Major Rogers' house, 9th July 1832', Sir Charles D'Oyley. (Cape Archives).

Where a single or double-storeyed wood and iron veranda was introduced, the house was usually given a relatively plain wall treatment, all the interest of the facade being concentrated on the elegant curving forms of the veranda roof and the intricate patterning of its balustrade. (The main roof of the house was generally expressed by a shallow eave projecting over the wall to cast a shadow and parallel the horizontal line of the guttering of the verandas.) The contrast of the strict severity of Georgian with the graceful forms of the veranda gave the tension and slightly bizarre quality the Regency liked so much.

One of the peculiar ramifications of the Picturesque was the gay abandon - almost frivolity - with which architects of the age approached the design of these appendages. The supports for the veranda canopy might take any form, semi-circular if the house was classical - in which case a vague attempt might be made to achieve an arcuated expression - Mohammedan (flattened pointed), Indian (ogee), or Chinese (reverse curved, liked draped curtains). The infilling panels were at first made of lattice work, regular bannisters, or 'Chinese pattern' woodwork, and only later, under the influence of the Swiss Cottage, of fretwork. Wrought and cast iron railings were also available and becoming increasingly popular.

During the eighteen twenties the town house ~~at last~~ began to lose its popularity in favour of the suburban villa, largely as a result of the English fashion introduced by Nash in his Regent's Park development of 1812 - 1827 - though we must remember that a tradition of retiring from the hot Cape Town summer to country houses at Rondebosch, Newlands and Constantia had created local prece-

69. (Top). Neo-Classicist railing in the 'Round House' annex, Camps Bay. ± 1830.

70. (Top). Gothic veranda to a house in Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1833.

71. (Top). Fretted veranda and gable barge-boards with a vaguely Swiss character on the old Officers Mess (?), Jackson Street, Grahamstown. ± 1840.

72. (Top). Latticework veranda on a house said to have been Colonel Henry Somerset's shooting box, 'Oatlands' Estate, Henry Street, Grahamstown.

73. (Bottom). Wrought iron veranda in Main Road, Rondebosch.

74. (Bottom). Prefabricated iron work veranda in a simplified Hindu character on the same building.

75. (Bottom). Another view of the veranda in 74.

1. W.J.Burchell 'Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa' London, 1822-4, 56.

76. A villa in Main Road, Wynberg; the porch is contemporary with the house, which is probably ± 1835.

dent for the villa concept since the seventeenth century. In 1811 we find Burchell writing with admiration of the 'great number of elegant villas ... scattered about between vineyards, plantations and groves of trees.'[1] The English officers of the First Occupation had undoubtedly done a great deal to boost the vogue (e.g. Barnard's 'Vineyard') but many of Cape Town's citizens and officials had long been living permanently on farms in Oranjezicht, Driekoppen, Rondebosch or the surrounding area. Yet only in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the large vineyards and orchards of Table Valley and the Simonstown Road began to be broken up into smaller-sized parcels of land, did the Villa movement begin in earnest. The distinction between the eighteenth century farmhouse and the Regency villa was an extreme one. The former, Baroque, Rococo or occasionally Neo-Classical, was symmetrical and impressive, a free-standing formal box; while the latter was, by definition, modest in size and informal in planning and character.

Extremely fashionable small villas, of the 'ornamental cottage' type, took a delight in deep thatch and a vaguely Gothic air (Plates 76 and 84) while larger, more commodious villas were generally of sophisticated Regency style, with lattice porches and sweeping verandas (Plates 67, 68, 80 and 81).

'The broken line must be considered peculiarly in character for a Picturesque Cottage, whether it be the habitation of a gentleman or a peasant...' wrote Robert Lugar ('Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings and Villas' London, 1805) but it must 'arise from apparent wants...A lean-to closet, a bow-window, a pent-house, chimneys carried high and in masses, or gable-ends' are 'suitable Picturesque objects', which 'will generally produce the wished-for effect.' (Plate 94A).

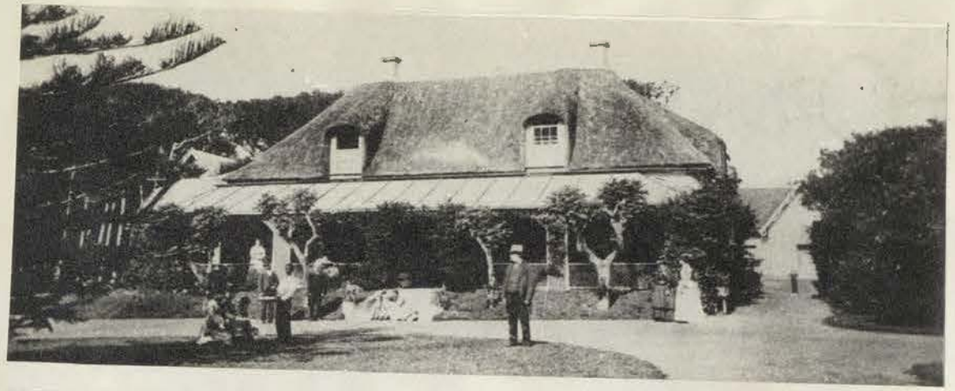
In similar fashion the planning and overall massing of the house was essen-

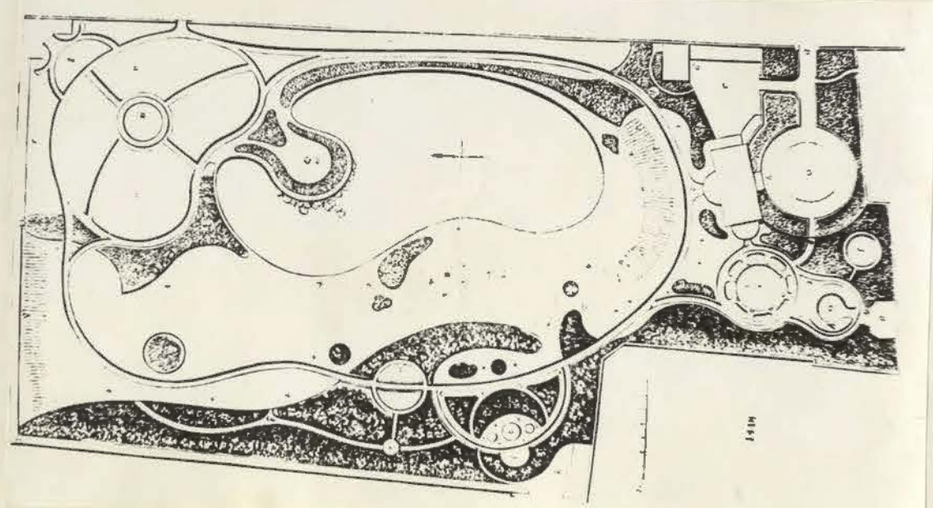
Opposite:

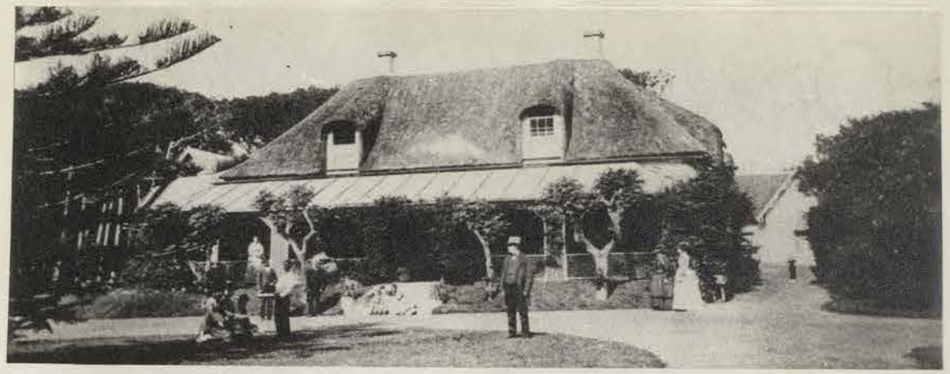
77. Villa in Rondebosch, fron an old photograph. (U.C.T. Library).

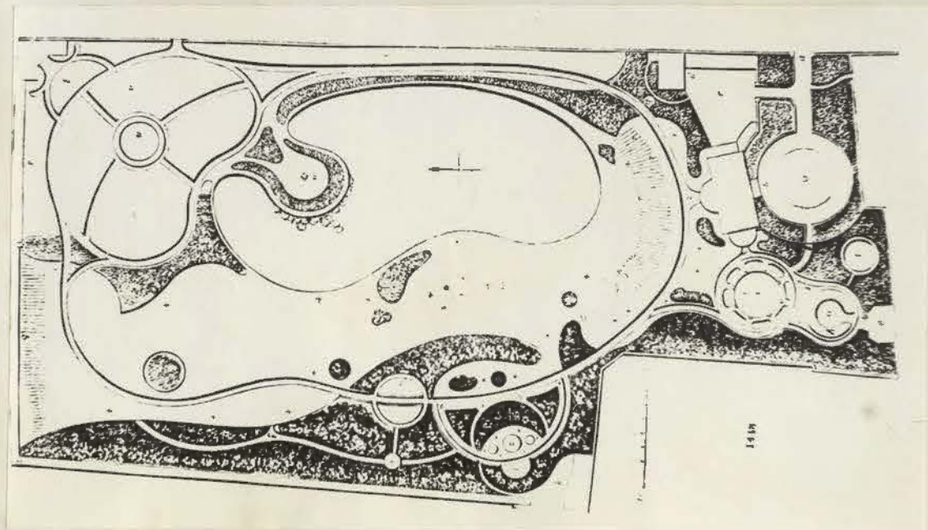
78. The gardens of 'Feldhausen', Newlands, c.1835. (camera lucida drawing by Sir John Herschel).

79. Plan of a typical early nineteenth century English garden, from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1833.









tially free and informal, a definite irregularity being the ideal to be striven for - but always with the proviso that it must be consistent with the practical functioning of the plan. Frequently we find that the hallways and corridors disappear, and that the rooms open freely into one another. From the main living rooms immediate access to the garden could be obtained through French windows which give directly onto green lawns, or onto verandas which led to them.

A particular importance of the villa to the South African scene was that it brought with it the English gardening tradition (or, rather, that part of it that had survived the hand of Humphrey Repton). For its setting was one of the most striking attributes of the new villa. In place of the eighteenth century formal garden leading the eye along tree-lined vistas to the distant farmhouse, was a scattered overgrown landscape, at first sight seeming to be purely accidental 'nature unadorned' as its protagonists framed it, but on closer inspection too perfect in its arrangement and convenience, too trim and well-cared for, to be wild (Plate 78). Through this Elysium of flowering shrubs and sheltering trees wound unobtrusive paths, which at last led casually to the thatched villa with its rose-trailed trellis work and shuttered French doors (Plates 80-1). And sometimes even the house was lost in vegetation: 'Suffer the tendrils of ivy', wrote Edmund Bartel ('Hints for Picturesque Improvements in Ornamental Cottages', London, 1804) 'to mantle luxuriantly over the windows, opposing its transparent varnished leaves to the too-powerful rays of the Western sun' (Plate 77).

The only facet of the garden which seemed a little out of place (and this the contribution of Repton) was the intrusion of small formal flower-beds near the house, brilliant with tropical flowers and exotics, and bordered with river stones or hoop iron. But these were generally sufficiently limited in extent to

80. 'Quereus Cottage, Wynberg. 22nd May, 1832', by Sir Charles D'Oyley. (Note in the artist's hand: 'Porch added since drawing made'). (Cape Archives).

81. 'Mr. Carey's Cottage, Wynberg, 9th July,1832', by Sir Charles D'Oyley.

82. Sir Lowry Cole Street, Cape Town, by Poortermans showing the enclosed gardens to each house. (Africana Museum).

83. 'The Vineyard', Newlands, after a second storey had been added. c.1835.

84. Gothic cottage window in Wynberg.

avoid spoiling the casual informality of the whole effect. Wood paling or lattice work fences or gates separated the garden from flanking roads and fields, so that it formed a private world aloof from its neighbours.

So inextricably linked was the garden with the suburban villa - and hence with the Regency manner of living - that at last even the citizens of the centre of Cape Town could not imagine their home complete without one. (Plate 85). By 1835 we begin to find tiny gardens in front of terrace houses (e.g. those of Sir Lowry Cole Street, Plate 82), and soon afterwards even the old town houses in Church Square were provided with gardens by railing off part of the pavement in front of the stoeps, which were than covered with verandas [1] (Plate 57 on page 231).

So the villa way of life, established to provide an escape from the town, eventually had its impact on the town house - the wheel had run full circle. And the town houses themselves were already doomed; the villa proved victorious, in the long run giving rise to the monotonous acres of endless detached cottages we associate with sub-urban life today.

Much of the charm of the villa lay in the informal grace of its forms. Here, bow-fronts came into their own, and we find many otherwise undistinguished cottages in Wynberg, Rondebosch and Newlands which have them to this day. Economy sometimes suggested this decoration in form when little other ornament could be considered. For the curved end was actually cheaper to roof with thatch than a rectangular shape. Indeed, the character of these houses is often as much the product of utilitarian design as anything in the twentieth century. For the same reason, what little ornament there was became concen-

1. Two of these houses changed hands in 1837, so the alterations mentioned probably date soon after this time. (v. Cape Town Gazette advertisement of the sale of Estate of E. Durham.)

..J.W.", del[1]

Met vriendelike vergunning van die Parlementere Biblioteek, Kaapstad.

Gedruk vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Permanente Bouvereniging, November 1959, deur Galvin en Sales (Edms.) Beperk, Kaapstad.

WAALSTRAAT, KAAPSTAD (CIRCA 1839)

85. A house in Wale Street, Cape Town, showing the growth of the 'villa' concept even in the centre of the towns.

86. Bow-fronted villa in Colesberg; a blend of English and Cape influences.
87. Bow-front of 'Fairlawn', Grahamstown.

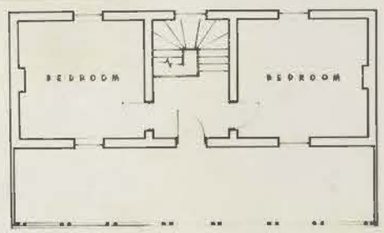
trated in the veranda or porch, where it cost little and told to maximum effect. (After the Napoleonic Wars there were many officers on half-pay to influence the course of architectural design.)

The bow-front is a shape which never losses its appeal, whether segmental or semi-hexagonal, single-storeyed or double. Its use became so widespread in the thirties that examples are found as far afield as Colesberg and Grahamstown (Plates 86-7). In the Western Cape its impact was felt even in the farming districts - where eighteenth century traditions were much more firmly entrenched than in the towns - and farmhouses began to appear with the form, such as 'Klein Gustrouw' in the Stellenbosch district (Plate 6A on page 386).

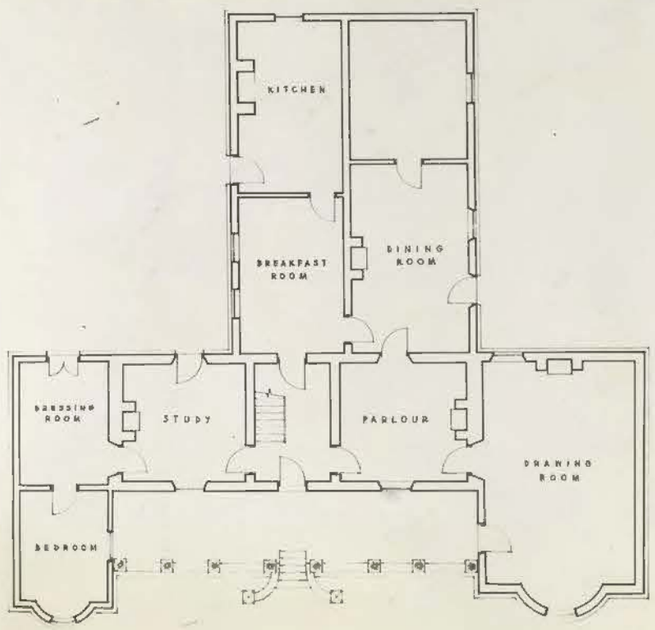
In Grahamstown an interesting survival of the architectural fashions of the late 1830s (Plates 88-93) has two bow-fronted pavilions framing a recessed centre block, with a double-storeyed Chinese latticed veranda. Both the bow-fronts and the veranda have graceful curving pagoda roofs in rolled zinc, which bring shades of Kew and the Brighton Pavilion into the back streets of the South African provincial town.

A cursory glance at the area around the new market in Cape Town (developed after 1812) and in District Six (1820 - 1840 - Plate 94B), both among the most popular suburbs at that time, provides convincing evidence of the rate at which pitched roofs were gaining ascendancy over flat roofs at the Cape.

But the old problem of finding suitable materials persisted. The shingle roof seems to have been by far the most widely adopted, but the fire-risk also associated with thatch still remained, and the great popularity of fireplaces



UPPER FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

Pavilion house, 56, Beaufort Street, Grahamstown.

88. Side elevation as it exists, showing the Chinese bow projections.

89. Photograph c.1860 of the condition of the house as completed c.1835-40.

90,91. Details of the door and window cornices, supported by stilted consoles on pilasters.

92. Plans, showing the brilliantly disguised assymmetrical pavilion additions to the earlier house.

93. Detail of the right hand pavilion.

1. See Chapter 10, page 368-9.

2. Mentzel 'Biography of Rudolph Siegfried Allemann'. (1784) Reprinted Van Riebeeck Society. They were used on the roof of the Groote Kerk. v. Accession 9. Hudson's Journal, 1808.

94.A. Villa in Rondebosch. c.1835-45.

94.B. Darling Street, Cape Town, showing in the foreground the general character of the expansion, c.1815-40. (S.A.P.L.).

in all the houses meant the ever-present danger of general conflagration. The more cautious continued to prefer flat roofs until the end of the period we are considering. Yet they were far from ideal, reactionary in style and a constant source of trouble due to leakages.

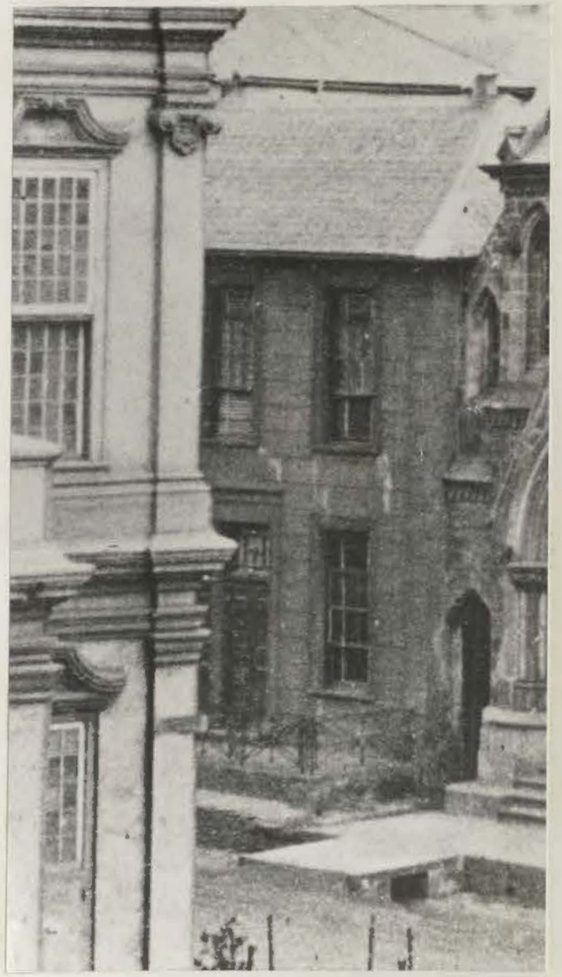
During the late 1820s experiments were conducted in different parts of the Colony to find more suitable roofing materials.

We have already seen that, in the east, a number of trained potters and brick-makers who came from England among the 1820 settlers were making efforts to discover suitable clays for the manufacture of tiles. At least some of them succeeded and, following the precedent set by Captain Evatt, the Commandant of Port Elizabeth, who in 1826 designed some pantiles himself, James Hancock, among others, manufactured them there for many years, whence it appears that some of them, at least, were exported to Cape Town. Both pantiles and Roman tiles also seem to have been made, and were extensively used, in Uitenhage and places further afield.[1]

Meanwhile, in Cape Town, there was a growing demand for slate for roofing from Robben Island. Robben Island slate, in thick slabs 18" square, had long been used for paving flat roofs,[2] but in 1829 the Commandant of the Island wrote to the Colonial Secretary: 'In obedience to the commands of H.E. the Governor, I have the honour to forward two specimens of slate formed from the refuse stone of the quarry, and to state that one man can prepare from 15 to 20 per day, each slate being 18" x 6" or 12" x 6", which at 1.1/4d for the former and 0.3/4d for the latter will enable each prisoner to earn 1/6d per day.

'These slates in forming a covering for Houses, will, I consider, prove

1. C.O.366/44, 16th March, 1829.
2. C.O.370/78, 28th April, 1829.
3. C.O.445/98, and 206. 24th May and 23rd Nov. 1836.
4. v. H.Batsford & C.Fry: 'The English Cottage'. London, 1938, 66.
5. In 1833 Loudon ('Encyclopaedia', London) repeatedly describes houses roofed with them.



95. House in Burg Street, Cape Town, in an old photograph; it had a fashionable railed stoep and a pitched Welsh slate roof.

more durable, and less expensive than the present flat roofs, and would cause the upper appartments to be equally cool, with those of the ground floor, and with these advantages there can be little doubt of a general demand for them....

'Mr. Fitzpatrick ... has continued orders to large amounts, which from lack of regularity he cannot complete. If the quarry was thrown open to the public, it would, I feel confident, prove a great convenience to the Inhabitants generally, and a source of revenue to the Government ....' [1]

A month later it was suggested that 'Robben Island stone' should be used for the roofing of the new St. George's Church, 'instead of the usual mode of teak boarding' (i.e.shingles), but the Government Architect, Thomas Skirrow, replied that that type of roofing 'is a method, which I am of opinion has not been long enough in practice in this Colony, to warrant its adoption on so large a building.' [2]

Just how extensive the use of Robben Island slate became on Cape Town houses is not known, but it is likely that it was thick and clumsy when compared with the precise Welsh slate which soon after began flooding the British Colonies, and that its life was limited. At any rate no roofs of local slate are known to survive at the Cape. It seems that it was still being used in 1836, when the Free School in Keerom Street and the Robben Island buildings were re-roofed,[3] but thereafter imported slate surplanted it.

The mechanical splitting of Welsh blue slates was one of the by-products of the Industrial Revolution, and began fairly early in the nineteenth century.[4] They were machine sawn to regular size, less than 1/4" in thickness. With the rapid expansion of railway transport, mass-produced slates had soon conquered the whole of the British Isles,[5] and the manufacturers, looking fur-

1. T.H.H.Hancock 'Coleman of Singapore'. Article in 'Architectural Review', London. March, 1954, 177.

2. Cape Archives.

3. C.O.366. 13th March, 1829. Welsh slates had of course been specially imported for the Bathurst Drostdy in 1827, see Chapter 11, Page 390.

4. G.H. 26/13/150. 27th Jan. 1825.

5. Cape Archives Museum and Theal 'History of S.Africa, 1795-1834', 369.

6. Cape of Good Hope Almanack, 1834.

7. All the latter from Theal 'History of South Africa, 1834-54', 217-8.

8. Fire protection had been a matter of serious consideration from the earliest times, as has been shown. Measures for the prevention of the spread of fire included small fire-engines sold by the Company to private citizens in 1706 (Laidler), and a permanent firefighting establishment near the Castle (mentioned by Mentzel 'Description...' 1, 132). In addition, measures were constantly being taken to inspect and control chimneys and fireplaces, and to keep houses from becoming too congested. In 1809 a fire engine at Wynberg was placed in repair and readiness for an emergency. In 1826 fire engines were ordered for Graaff Reinet, Somerset East and Grahamstown. (C.O.2682/129 and 2683/45.

9. 'Cape of Good Hope Almanack' Cape Town, 1834 and 1835.

96. Typical slate-roofed cottage of the late thirties and forties in Grahamstown. (African Street).

ther afield for their markets, began exporting them to the Colonies. By the 1830s they were already distributed to such distant outposts as Singapore.[1]

The earliest record of the importation of British slates into South Africa was in 1816, when they appear in the Import Lists in small quantities.[2] In 1825 William Jones suggested Welsh slates for the large roof on his proposed St. George's church, and Lord Charles Somerset supported him in this application to the Colonial Secretary.[3] But the scheme fell through, and the first record of a substantial shipment of Welsh slates was in 1829, when the Military Ordnance Department imported them into Cape Town.[4]

In March 1831 the first Fire Insurance Company ('The South African Fire and Life Assurance Co.') was opened in Cape Town.[5] Other insurance companies quickly followed: the 'Alliance British and Foreign Fire and Life Assurance Co. of London' (c.1833),[6] the 'Cape of Good Hope Fire Assurance Co.' (1835), the 'Protecteur Fire and Life Assurance Co.' (1838), and the 'Eastern Province Fire and Life Assurance Co.' (1839),[7] and together they introduced another factor leading to the widespread adoption of imported slate roofs.[8]

A significant item of their charges for fire insurance was that no distinction was made between shingle and thatch. In fact, the latter, with a brandsolder, was at first rated safer than shingles - though within a few years the preferential scales for brandsolders were dropped.[9] Roofs of metal, tile or slate were generally rated at about one-sixth the premium of either thatch or shingle.

Owners of houses with shingle roofs were naturally alarmed at the hazardous risk their roofs were judged to be, and, intimidated by the expensive insurance necessary to protect themselves. Import agents discovered a ready market for

1. G.H.28/20; 30th November 1842. In the same year the Public Works Department, on behalf of the Govt., who had leased the building, re-roofed 'Groote Schuur' in slate. (v.Dr.Mary Cook, 'Africana Notes and News', V, 36-9. Johannesburg.)

2. C.O.257/119, 9th Oct. 1826, and C.O.321/37, 21st April, 1827.

97. 'Reinet House', Newlands, a late Georgian villa.

the recently available Welsh slate, and soon houses throughout the country were being re-roofed in the new material, a fairly simple operation since the shingling battens could generally be re-used for the thin, light slates. When, at length, the shingles were in 1842 stripped off Government House and it was re-roofed in slates, the seal was finally set on the new fashion.[1]

The loss of the subtle texture and colouring of shingles was a sad blow to the character of the Cape Georgian town house and villa. Remorselessly the drab mechanical grayness of slate crept over the rooftops signalling the demise of the old era and the beginning of the new.

At about the same time as slate was beginning to be available in the Colony, i.e. in 1835, zinc was recommended by J.E.Alexander, the Governor's Aide-de-Camp as a fire-proof roofing material in the 'Grahamstown Journal' (20th Aug.).

'There is abundance of zinc in the Colony. A roof covered with plates of this metal is not expensive (in a town it is even less than thatch) and cannot be set on fire. The difference in insurance is also to be noted; for zinc roofs 2/6 per cent is charged, for thatch 15/-.'

His suggestion was readily adopted (where zinc was not already in considerable use) and many rolled zinc roofs remain in the Eastern Cape which date from this period.

Roofing paper is first mentioned as 'sheathing paper' in work for Robben Island in 1826.[2] It was presumably tar-impregnated and enjoyed a considerable reputation. Thus it was suggested as the best roof for the Anglican Church at Port Elizabeth in 1831: 'roofing paper, manufactured expressly for that purpose in England,... which ...the Committee have ascertained, has been found to

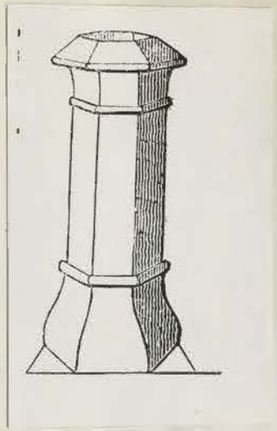
have resisted the influence of the weather during a period of 30 years....'[1] And in 1835 George Gilbert, a shrewd judge, recommended it as the roof he intended to put on his fortified farmhouse 'as more easy of being kept in repair.' (Plate 97 on page 292).

For flat roofs, tar or canvas on boarding continued to be used, the latter painted to increase its efficiency.[2] Brick and plaster flats of eighteenth century tradition generally ceased to be used after 1825.[3] Metal flat roofs are found instead on the best work.[4] Guttering was now everywhere employed, generally made of lead,[5] zinc,[6] or tinned copper,[7] but occasionally still in the eighteenth century fashion of tarred wood.[8]

Chimneys (Plates 99A-H) were more in evidence as fireplaces became more common. They were regarded as objects on which particular care in design should be lavished. It was thought that they should be 'admired and justly appreciated by every artist and by every man of sensibility and taste' in accordance with the degree to which they presented 'elegantly varied and picturesque forms in harmony with the surrounding scenery.'[9] They should 'rise boldly in the air above the roof, and...form a conspicuous feature in all the outlines of the building against the sky. As a palliative for the evil of a stack of chimneys being too short, architectural chimney pots may be employed.[10] There were clearly two schools of thought about this - as there were about most facets of architectural design at this time - for in February 1838 we find an article in 'The Architectural Magazine and Journal' condemning 'very long chimneys, covered with various exceedingly ingenious devices for the convenient reception and hospitable entertainment of soot supposed by the innocent and deluded proprietor to be "meant for ornament"'.[11] But such well-intentioned functional criticism fell on deaf ears, if we may judge by the results, and

1. C.O. 398. 27th May. 1831.
2. C.O.285/32; 3rd July, 1826. C.O.445/188, 21st Nov. 1836; C.O. G.H. 28/20, 30th Nov.1842.
3. The last recorded use for government work is the replacement of the roof of the prison at Rondebosch in 1832 (C.O.403/55, 31st April, 1832). In 1833 it was proved conclusively that canvas was considerably cheaper than brick and plaster, as well as more durable.(C.O.413/32, 27th Feb.1833).
4. Lead: C.O.2467/8, 9th Aug. 1826; and zinc: C.O.374/44, 5th March, 1830.
5. C.O.247/10, 28th Jan. 1825; C.O.27488/91, 5th July, 1834.
6. C.O.403/138, and 167, Nov. 1832.
7. C.O.344/73, 17th July, 1828; C.O.275/111,12th Sept. 1826.
8. C.O.321/46. 10th May, 1827, and C.O.2711/110, 15th May, 1829. Although the latter were generally being replaced by metal ones. C.O.391/73, 30th May, 1831. C.O.403/43, 14th April,1833.
9. Papworth 'Rural Residences'. London, 1818, xxx.
10. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia'. London, 1833, 32.
11. Kata Phusin 'The Poetry of Architecture', 'Architectural Magazine & Journal', V, 56.

98. House in Newlands of the late Georgian 'villa' type.



99. Late Georgian chimneys.

A. An example from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia'.London,1833.

B,C. Lawrence Street, Grahamstown.

D. Donkin Street, Grahamstown.

E. Fort Brown.

F. Lawrence Street,Grahamstown.

G. Chapel Street, Grahamstown.

H. 'Oatlands', Grahamstown.

varied chimneys continued for many years, as they had in Elizabethan England, to provide a joyful relief to the monotonous skyline.

Chimney design naturally reflects the wide diversity of current styles. There were basically two types, the Classical and the Gothic. But within the aegis of the former came severe Doric, elegant Ionic and Corinthian, Roman, or Renaissance, all of which may be recognised by their characteristic mouldings; while the latter has associated with it all sorts of exotic styles, Turkish, Hindu, Moorish and many others. The chimneys of the period alone form a fascinating study.

From Georgian to modern times we may trace a steady growth in the sizes of panes of glass in the windows. Government tenders of 1826 called for glass sizes up to 22" x 16".[1] But panes as large as this were seldom found in private houses before the end of the period we are considering.

Glazing beads gradually became deeper and sharper to compensate for the loss in strength due to the increased size of the glass. They were usually either 'ovolo' or 'astragal and hollow' in shape.

Windows were often more generous in height, and French casements increasingly popular. External louvred shutters gradually became more common until by 1837 they were in general use in new buildings, throughout the Colony.[2] Instead of venetian shutters, fixed or retractable awnings were sometimes introduced over windows as a protection against the heat of the sun.[3]

Externally, buildings were becoming more varied in colour. When Wilberforce Bird described Simonstown in 1822 he mentioned 'irregular houses, white, with

1. C.O.275/89, 12th July, 1826.

2. v. Chapter 7 page 163. Also contemporary drawings, especially those of D'Oyley,Ions etc. (Plates 80,&c).

3. V.Chapter 7 page 163. Also contemporary drawings.

100. Persisting Adam influence in the nineteenth century entrance hall.

A. 'Greenfield House', Claremont, Cape. c.1820-30.

B. 'Bowood' Wiltshire, by Robert Adam.

C. 'Lansdowne House', Berkeley Square, London, by Robert Adam.

1. W.Bird 'State of the Cape in 1822', 88.

2. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia...' London, 1833, 263.

3. The plaster piers of the fence of Government House were painted 'stone colour' in 1826. (C.O.275/12).

4. C.O.133/21, 1st May, 1820: (Customs House, Cape Town) and C.O.156/17, 5th December, 1821 ('Newlands').

5. C.O.370/233, Feb. 1829.

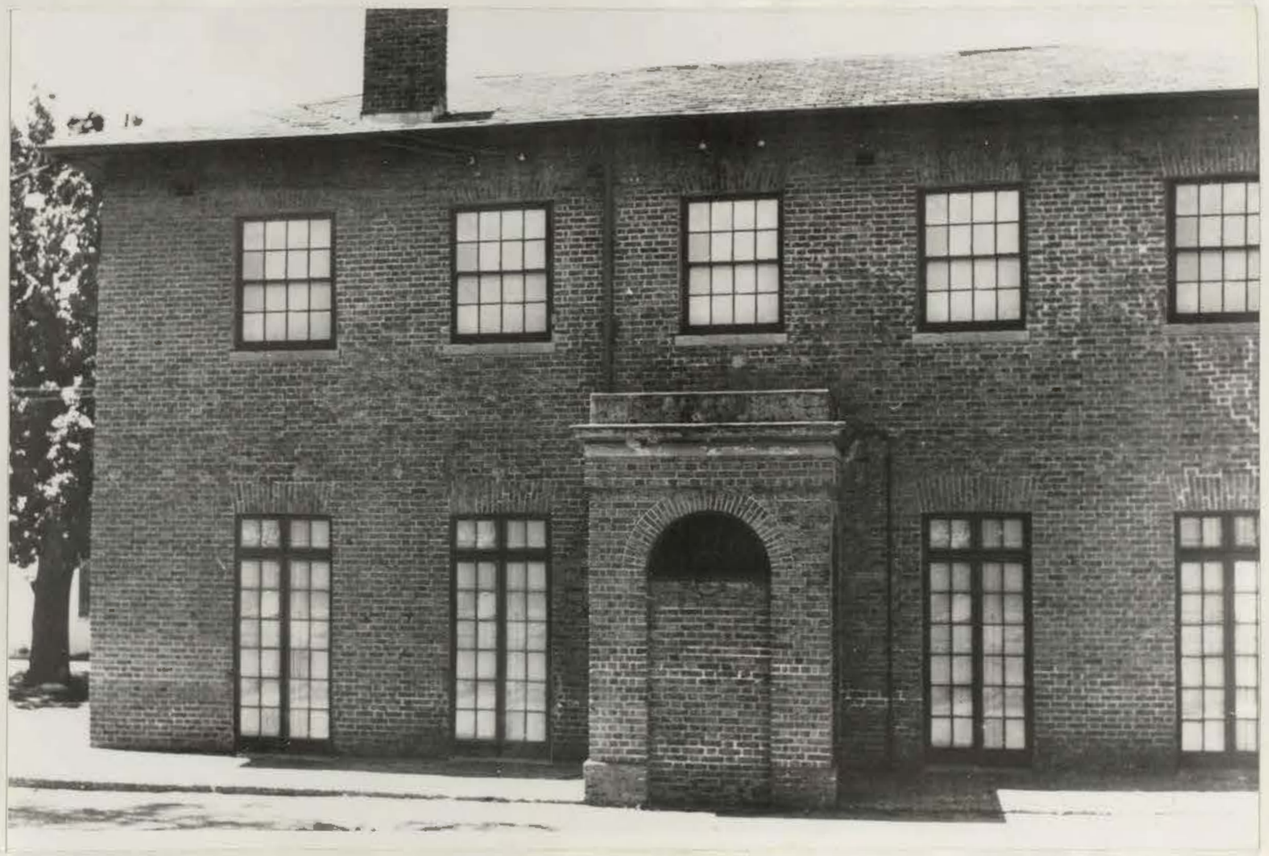
6. C.O.321/72, 15th June, 1827.

7. See Chapter 2, page .

1. W.Bird 'State of the Cape in 1822', 88.
2. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia...' London, 1833, 263.
3. The plaster piers of the fence of Government House were painted 'stone colour' in 1826. (C.O.275/12).
4. C.O.133/21, 1st May, 1820: (Customs House, Cape Town) and C.O.156/17, 5th December, 1821 ('Newlands').
5. C.O.370/233, Feb. 1829.
6. C.O.321/72, 15th June, 1827.
7. See Chapter 2, page .

green shutters and doors, as is usual with most of the Cape houses,[1] and we have innumerable early sketches to bear him out. But the British had other ideas: 'The kinds of colours most suitable for exterior walls should generally be such as belong to the stones or bricks of the country in which the dwelling stands,' wrote Loudon in 1833.[2] Earth and stone colours rapidly came into use.[3] Already, by 1820, cream and yellows had made their appearance on Government buildings.[4] Greys, yellows, browns and reds began to replace whitewash on the houses, and with them a greater variety of oil colours were used on the woodwork. The windows of Government House were painted black in 1829,[5] while it is recorded that 'lead colour' was used extensively on the outside of the prison in 1827.[6] Numerous shades of grey and ochre on windows are discernible in the water colour sketches of the period. Externally the colours were seldom bright; they were not as vivid, indeed, as during the Rococo period and its aftermath.[7] But the diversity of shades and tones allowed a greater individuality and enabled rusticated buildings to simulate stone more exactly. It is doubtful, though, whether the drab colour schemes which resulted were always an improvement on those they replaced!

Internally, Adam influence continued to pervade much of the design in an adapted form. Thus the typical entrance hall of the 1830s owed to the earlier style its mouldings, panelling and the arches which divided its length into pleasant proportions (Plate 100). Staircases, though often pushed towards the back of the hall, generally retained something of the spatial handling of their Baroque ancestors (Plates 123-5), in association with the slender elegance in detailing of Adam (though his intricate Etruscan or Hellenic detail was now re-



'Bertram House' on the Avenue (the Gardens), and Orange Street, Cape Town.

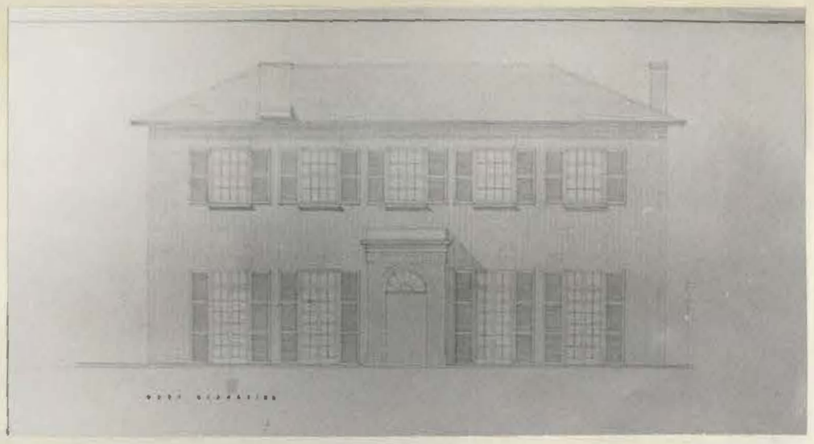
101. Fireplace in the Drawing Room.

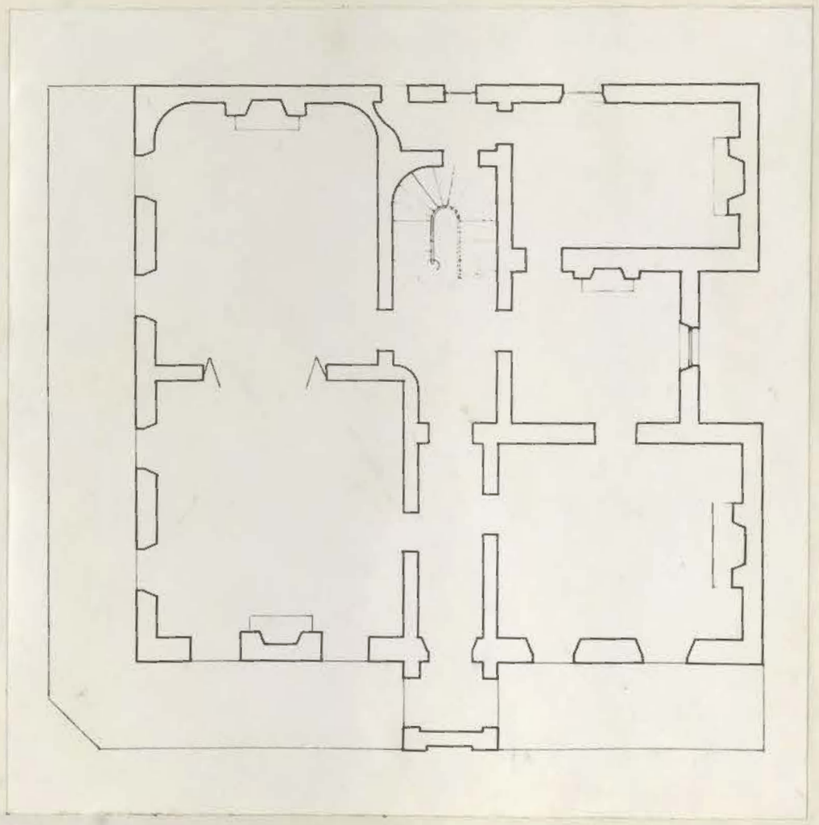
102. Ceiling of the Drawing Room (the original ornamented plaster ceiling was replaced within living memory.).

103. Fireplace in another main room.

104. The facade, restored in the photograph to complete the windows in their original condition.

105. The entrance porch.





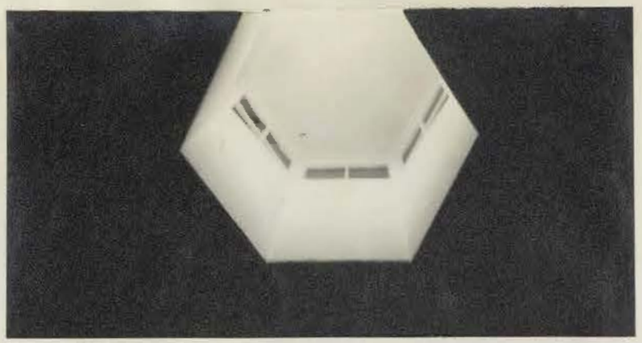
106,A. and B. 'Bertram House' on the Avenue (the Gardens) and Orange Street, Cape Town. Elevation and Plan.

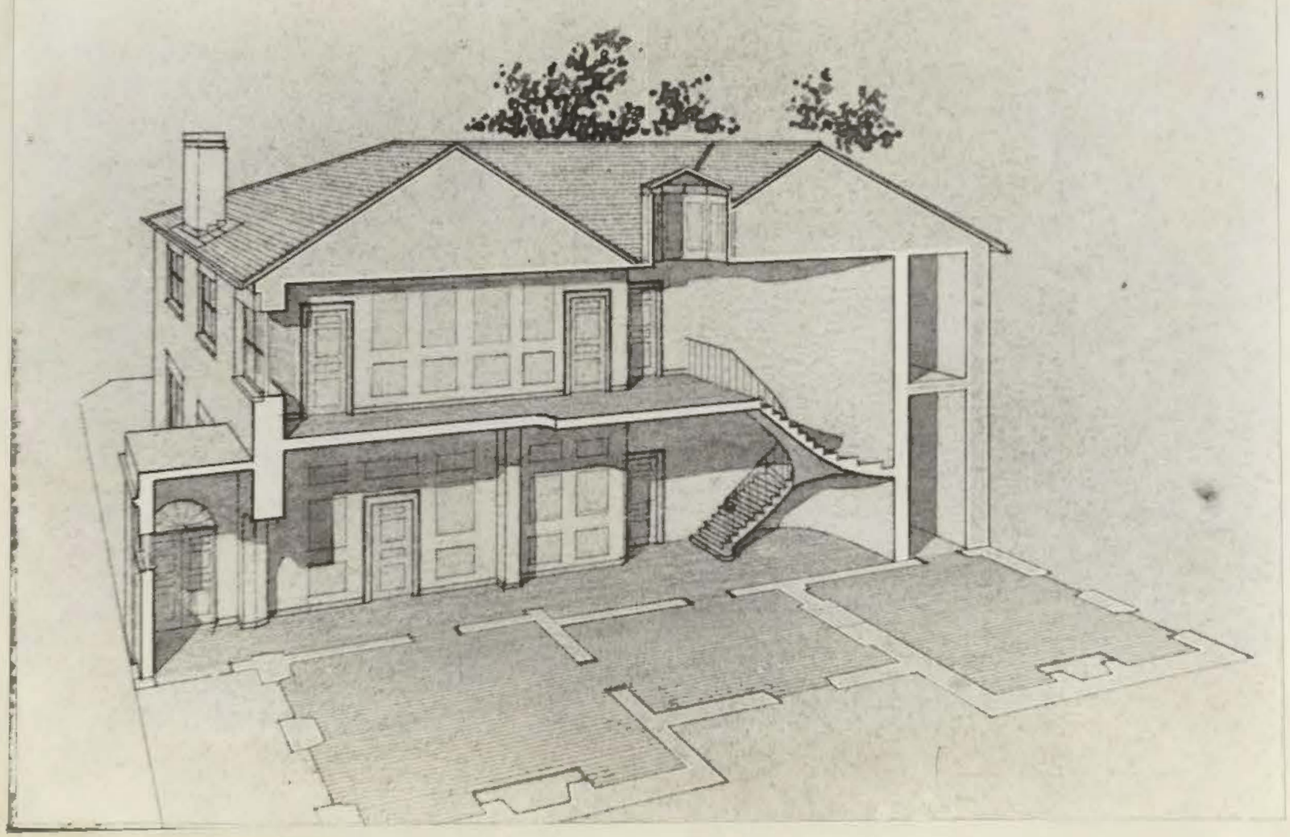
In 'Bertram House', the porch, hallway and staircase link up to form a strong visual and physical focus to the whole building, which is disposed symmetrically on either side of the central axis formed by them.

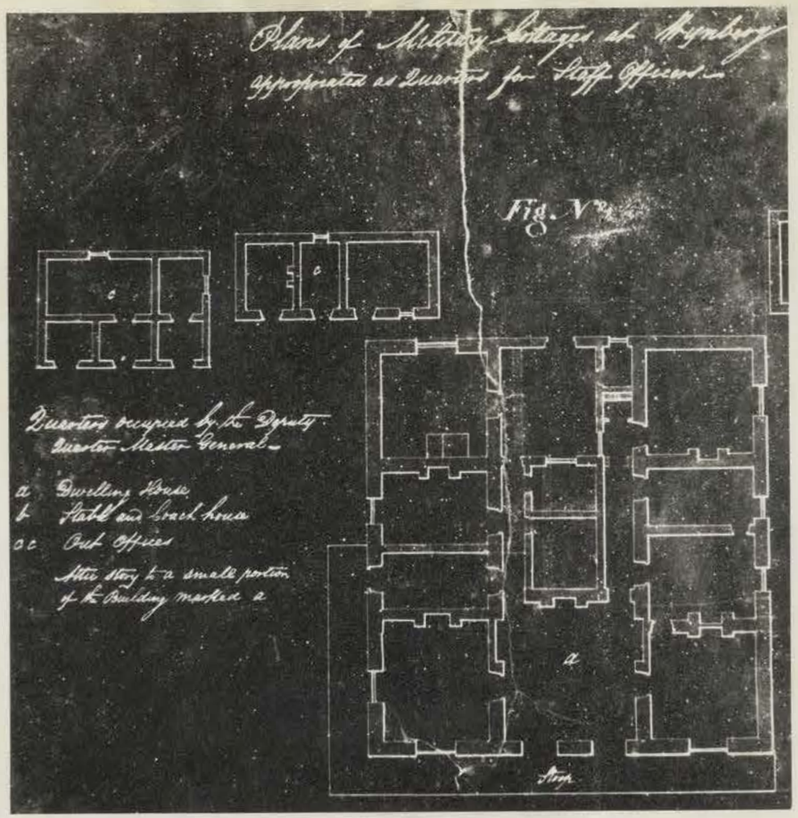
107. Octagonal skylight above the upper stair landing, which serves as a vertical emphasis of the spatial qualities of the stairs.

108. Sectional perspective through the Entrance Hall and Stairs.

109. The staircase.







110. Plan typical of a number of houses in Wynberg, and comparable with that of the 'Vineyard' (Plate 57 on page 70). Generally dates from c.1800-1820. (From a survey conducted before 1825. Cape Archives).

placed by austere simplicity - Plates 111 - 3). Houses were still in the main symmetrical, with the staircase the visual and physical focus of the building.

Imported furniture carrying with it the German 'biedermeyer' characteristics of homely simplicity in mouldings and forms may also have influenced the architects of the age. (In 'Bertram House' - Plates 101 - 9 - the forms taken by the curves of the corners of the drawing room harmonize perfectly with the 'biedermeyerish' furniture flanking the fireplace.)

The main rooms of the house were generally arranged 'en suite': another heritage from Adam. This kind of informal planning, in which one room led into another through wide folding doors, was the result of the elegant mode of living of the period, which encouraged ladies and gentlemen to mix freely in everyday life, instead of segregating them for much of the day as they had been in earlier houses. In formal homes the 'en suite' rooms often took up only half of the plan on the ground floor (on one side of the entrance hall) in order not to interfere with the symmetry of the whole. In the villas, however, which were naturally more informal, the British and the Cape traditions sometimes combined to produce a plan in which the en-suite rooms ran across the centre of the building, and the private rooms of the houses were accessible only through them. (Examples of the latter still survive in Wynberg - Plate 110). Such ingenious, often difficult, planning was naturally the work of an architect, as indeed were probably most of the better-class Regency houses at the Cape.

The main rooms, with magnificent waxed yellow-wood floors, high ceilings and decorative wallpaper, were entirely conceived for visual effect. Decorative plaster ceilings reached the zenith of their popularity during the twenties, the central chandelier roses in plaster-of-paris, lead or papier-mache[1] being sometimes imported from Britain, and the remainder of the ceilings decorated in

1. Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia...' London, 1833, 273-4: 'ornaments suitable for the purpose have recently been manufactured by Messrs. Bielefelds and Haselden, at a very low price, of a description of papier mache. They are perfectly light and strong, and may be sent to any part of the world... In all cases of introducing such ornaments, due preparation should be made for them, by raised borders or mouldings, which should enclose them in a sort of framework.....'

The late Georgian staircase: a superb example of craftsmanship in joinery, and the boldest architectural feature in the building.

111,112. The Royal Observatory, Cape Town, 1821-7.

113. The entrance hall of a house in Rondebosch.

1. C.O.145/66; 1st November 1821 et seq. v.also Chapter 7, page 176. The last of the decorated plaster ceilings in 'Bertram House' was removed within living memory (1929), but unfortunately no photographs or drawings of any South African examples are known to survive.

2. In thatched dwellings, cotton, rush matting, or Spanish reeds were often used for ceilings. C.O.2720/35; 6th March, 1830 etc.

3. See 1 on previous page.

4. C.O.275/90, 14th July, 1826. Freight cost £25.10.0. in addition. The finances of the Colony were just then at their lowest ebb, the Commissioners were in Cape Town, and Lord Charles Somerset paid for the wall-papers out of his own pocket.

5. C.O.166/93, 18th Nov. 1822. The Huntley House in Grahamstown, by no means a humble dwelling, had wall-paper only in the dining-room.

6. C.O.344/17, 23rd Feb. 1828.

114. The late Georgian interior:
Sir Lowry Cole in the Drawing Room of Government House, Cape Town, 1832, by Charles Bell (?).

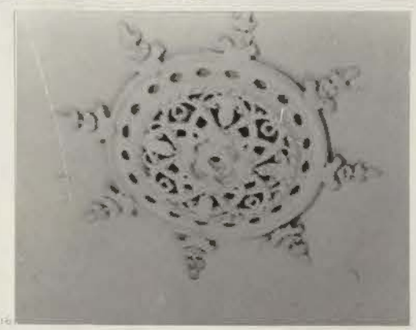
situ from English pattern books (Plates 115-20).[1] In lesser rooms, plain ceilings were sometimes made of canvas, calico or linen instead of plaster.[2]

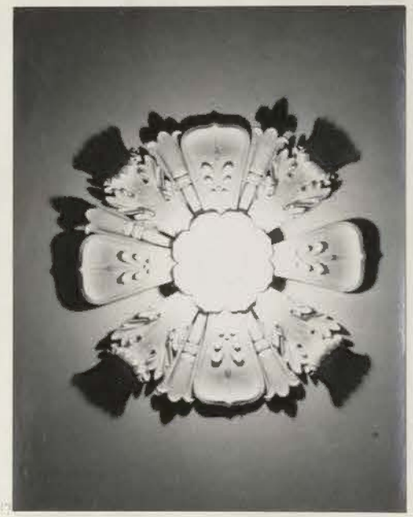
> 'Plaster ornaments on Ceilings have not hitherto been much introduced in cottages, on account of the expense. We scarcely think cornices with foliage or other cast ornaments desirable in plain cottages; but a rose or other flower, in plaster or composition, might often be introduced, at very little expense, in the centre of a cottage parlour. There is scarcely any part of a house in which a single ornamental form produces so much effect as in the centre of a ceiling.' [3]

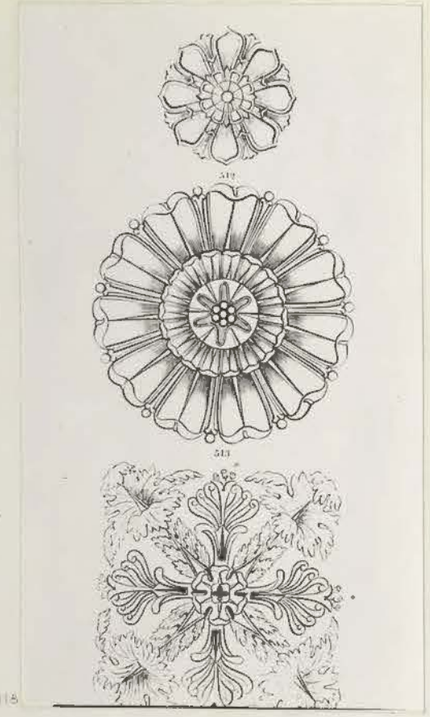
At the same time there is an increase in the taste for pattern. Interior decoration was characterised by rich decorative wall-papers, floral upholstery and elaborately draped curatins (Plates 114, 122 and 130).

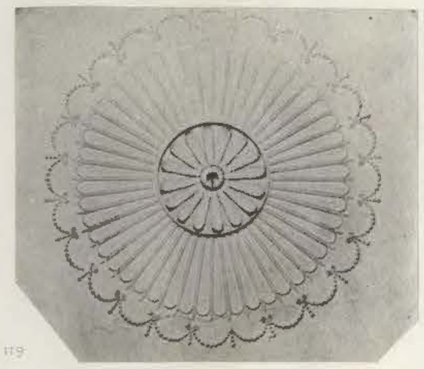
Wall-papers were imported from England and the Continent, especially from France, and were often very expensive. (In 1826 the wall-papers for Government House were shipped from Bourbon at a cost of nearly £508, a phenomenal sum for those days.) [4] Because of this, wall-papering was often restricted to the best rooms of the house. [5] The paper usually came with its own borders, a 'frieze' strip which fitted under the cornice, and a 'base' strip above the skirting. In addition, edging pieces sometimes framed doorways and windows. An interesting list in the 'Government Inventory of Stores' for February 1828 tells us something of the wall-papering in use:

'79 pieces of Hanging Paper : white ground, blue & gold star.
9 pieces of Frieze Bordering for do.
2 " Base " " "
39 Pieces of Egg and Tongue Edging.
33 Pieces Crimson and Gold Papers.
3 Pieces Edging for do.
11.1/4 Pieces Yellow & Gold Papering
22 Yards China Hanging Paper
4 Pieces Pink Hanging Paper
2 Pieces 'Newlands' Library Paper
2 Pieces striped Green and Lilac Paper
1 Piece Pink Plaid Paper
1 Piece Light Blue & Yellow Paper.' [6]









115,116. Lead ceiling roses in 'Newlands'.

117. Ceiling rose in the hallway of 'Bertram House', Cape Town.

118. Page of designs of ceiling roses in 'papier mâché, from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1833.

119. Ceiling decoration in moulded plaster surrounding the ceiling rose in the Nathaniel Russell house, Charleston, South Carolina; a type that was once often seen at the Cape.

120. The ballroom of Government House, showing the ceiling roses and cornice surviving from the redecoration of 1824-5.

121. Lead or zinc cornice in 'Newlands', 1819-23.

122. Col. John Bell in the Drawing Room of 'Hope Mill', 1832 (drawn by Charles Bell?). A typical late Georgian Cape interior.

When walls were painted or distempered instead of being papered, lines were often painted on the wall below the cornice and above the skirting and around openings to duplicate these edging strips.[1] Sometimes the bottom part of the wall was painted dark and the upper part whitewashed.[2] Mock skirtings in black or dark paint were often painted round the walls in the least important rooms.[3] When walls were painted, patterns could be stencilled on to them to simulate wall-paper.[4]

Architraves and skirtings were richly moulded, at first in delicate relief, but with increasing boldness as the period developed (Plate 126A). A moulded chair-rail or 'sur-base' was often introduced to protect the wall finish from damage by chair-backs.

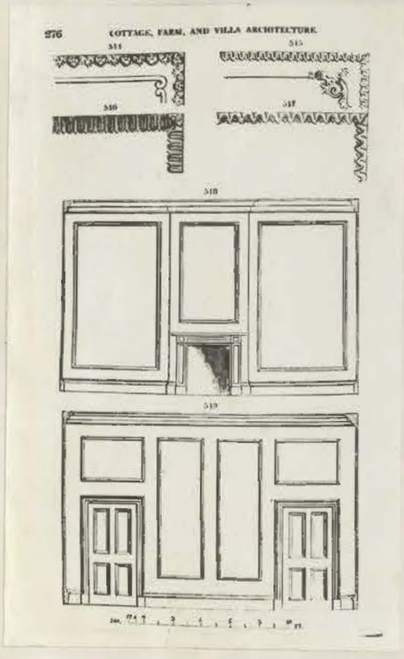
Woodwork was generally oil-painted, and frequently artificially grained to simulate expensive furniture wood such as was used for doors in expensive homes in the eighteenth century. Loudon, in 1833, goes as far as to insist that 'all woodwork, avowed as such, should, if possible, be grained... not with a view to having the imitation mistaken for the original, but rather to create illusion to it, and, by a diversity of lines and shades, to produce a kind of variety and intricacy, which affords more pleasure to the eye than a flat shade of colour.'[5]

Doors were still eight-panelled in the best houses, or six-panelled for lesser work. Four-panelled doors were reserved for utility purposes, such as the Uitenhage School[6] or the Port Frances Harbour Master's House.[8] All the panels of the door were raised and fielded in expensive work,[7] otherwise the lowest pair of panels were made flush. Bolection mouldings came into more general use in the 1830s as the taste for high modelling spread.

1. e.g. C.O.321/37, 21st April, 1827. 'Interior walls, where distempered, to have a line painted around the walls above skirting, below cornice and around openings.'
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia'..., 278.
5. Loudon 'Encyclopaedia'..., 277.
6. C.O.2734/5, 7th Jan. 1832.
7. e.g. Cape Town Observatory.
8. C.O.285/6, 30th Jan. 1826.

123,124,125. Late Georgian grand staircase in 'Roodebloem', Woodstock.

1. e.g. C.O.321/37, 21st April, 1827. Government House, CapeTown. and C.O.2671/172, 17th June, 1824. Drostdy, Grahamstown.
2. C.O.2645/97, 8th July, 1822.
3. C.O.425/13, 18th January, 1834.
4. See Chapter 7, page 180.
5. C.O.2645/97; 8th July, 1822.



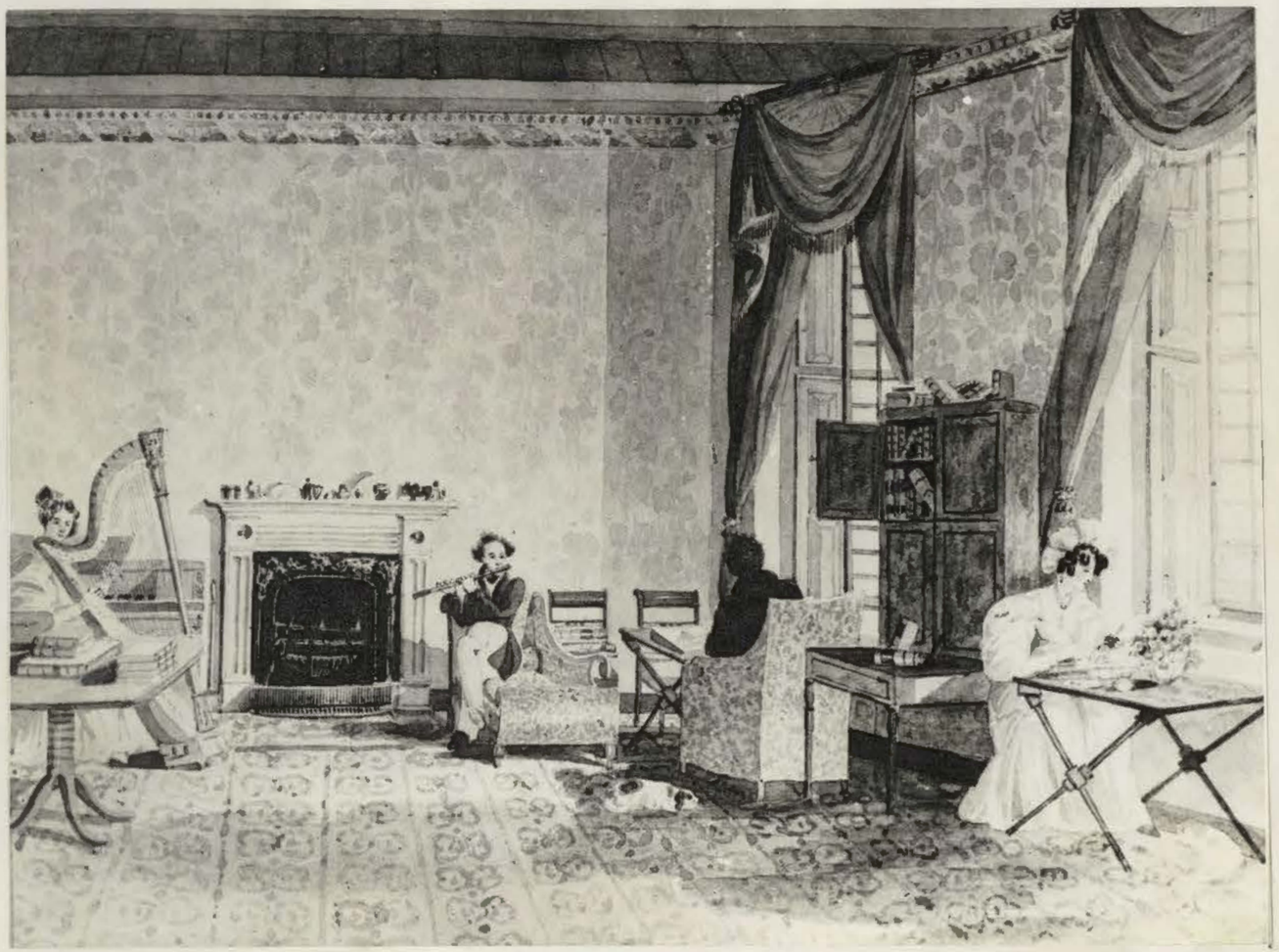
126. Late Georgian interior decoration:
A. Internal door in 'Hazendaal', Orange Street, Cape Town.
B. Cupboard head in 128 Hatfield Street, Cape Town.
C. Wall mouldings from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia'.London,1833.

Door furniture consisted of hinges, handles and finger-plates of polished brass.[1] Finger-plates, which were included in the estimate for the Grahamstown Drostdy in 1822, were of two kinds, the short, which was separate from the handle, and the long, which presumably served as a base plate for it.[2]

A dominant characteristic of the rooms of the late 1820s and 1830s was the great role played by drapery, which so enveloped the windows that it tended to muffle their boundary lines in a most un-architectonic way (Plates 127-30). This fashion originated in the French Empire, when over-elaborate interior decoration seemed to have been evolved to bolster the morale of Napoleon's 'nouveau riche' regime. Sometimes curtains at the Cape were of calico, hung from large rings, and controlled by a thick tasselled cord. Or the curtains might be of chintz,[3] densely swathed across the curtain rod, to hang down in daring loops, folds and side-pieces across the window opening. Double and treble fringes added weight to the imposing mass of drapery. Here, in curtains, one sees more clearly than anywhere else the first signs of that decay in taste which was to lead eventually to the debacle of 'Victorian'.

Fireplaces rapidly became more sophisticated during the period under review. Being of cast-iron, they were almost indestructible and form in volume the largest survival of late Georgian into modern times - many Cape houses retain them to this day.

Whereas Mrs. Eaton in 1818 could say that 'not above one sitting-room in the house has a fire-place in it'[4] by 1822 the specification for the Grahamstown Drostdy called for all the rooms to be furnished with fire-places, 'fitted with Chimney pieces, hearths, grates, Bells etc.'[5] Before long they were so common



127,128,129. Curtaining patterns from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London,1833.

130. 'Music in a drawing room' by Sir Charles D'Oyley.1832. (Cape Archives).

131. Fireplace in an inn on the road between Grahamstown and Fort Beaufort; a Victorian design which demonstrates clearly where the trend away from the relative restraint of Georgian Neo-Classicism - shown in the lower two examples - was to lead.
~~132. Fireplace in Government House.~~
133. Fireplace in a house in Charles Street, Somerset East.

they were even being put in school rooms.[1] The cast-iron grates, always imported, generally from England, were larger and more comprehensively designed than those of the earlier period. Hob grates were now replaced by a type in which grate, enclosing frame,and back were integral.

The designs for grates reflected all the winds of fashion in Britain. Besides Classicist and Mediaeval, there were Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo - and a number one can only describe as 'Picturesque' (Plate 149). But in this, as in buildings, the Classical predominated, and soon a definite preference established itself for grates with a semi-circular headed surround, embellished by restrained egg-and-dart and acanthus mouldings (Plates 135, 141, etc.). This type seems to have persisted, with only slight modifications, until the end of the century.

The fireplace surround followed the style set by the grate. Ideally of stone (marble) it was, in fact, generally of wood at the Cape until the end of the period we are considering. The earliest type was patterned on one of the common Adam designs, with the two vertical side panels meeting the horizontal ledge in a 'bull's-eye' moulding; under the mantel-shelf there was often a raised centre panel. (Plates 134, 136, 138, etc.). A later classical type (Plate 146) had the mantel-shelf supported on ancones. But the most classical of all had a complete Ionic order, fluted columns and entablature, forming the surround (Plates 133 and 144).

An extraordinary fashion of the Regency was the dilettante interest in the Rococo of Louis XV. We have already seen that Lord Charles Somerset imported two original French marble fireplaces for 'Newlands' in 1822 (which survive in the house),[2] and it was not long before iron grates appeared in the same style: a curious contrast to their Georgian contemporaries (Plate 137).

1. One was fitted to the Girls' School Room of the Free School in 1824 (C.O.221/71. 9th November, 1824), and one to the school room at Cradock in 1829. (C.O.2713/146. 10th July,1829).

2. Chapter 8, page 215.

134. Fireplace in 'Hazendal', Orange Street, Cape Town.

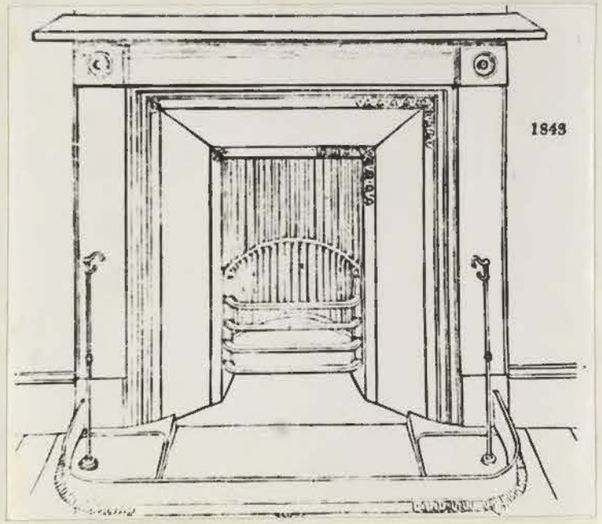
135. Fireplace in 'Oatlands', Simonstown, 1824.

136. Fireplace in Somerset East Drostdy.

137. Fireplace in Somerset East Drostdy.

138. Fireplace in 'Dryfe House', Orange Street, Cape Town. (cf.Plate 139).

139. Fireplace from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1833.



140. Fireplace in 'Glen Avon', Somerset East.

141. Fireplace in a house in Durban Road, Wynberg.

1. C.O.344/16, 21st February, 1828. Eleven are listed in the Inventory of 'Newlands'.

2. According to Laidler they were advertised in the Cape newspapers in 1836. P.W.Laidler: 'Growth and Government of Cape Town.' (Cape Town, 1939), 344.

3. Generally dating from C.1850, although introduced in Singapore in the early twenties. c.f. T.H.H.Hancock, 'Coleman of Singapore', 'Architectural Review', March 1954, 170.

142. Fireplace and mirror in 'Hazendal', Cape Town.
143. Fireplace and mirror in 'Government House'.

By 1830 stucco and marble composition fireplace surrounds were already in use. Genuine marble made its appearance a few years later in the more elegant houses.[1] Gothic firegrates and surrounds remain in such buildings as 'Selwyn Castle' Grahamstown, c. 1835 (Plates 43 and 44 on page 479 and Plate 151).

Associated with the fireplace surround there was generally a large vertical mirror, the full width of the mantel-shelf. Known as 'Chimney-piece mirrors'[2] they were especially shaped and framed as part of the design of the fireplace. A number of fine examples survive in Cape Town (Plates 142-3).

The streets of all the major towns were now lined with shops. Generally the shop front consisted of two show-case windows flanking the entrance doors. As the construction of the buildings was load-bearing the shop windows were generally not much larger than the windows of the dwellings overhead. (Plates 152-4). Occasionally, elegant shop-fronts with glass extending the full width of the facade were built, the upper storey being supported on cast-iron columns. But on the whole shops such as these were rare. The glass area was always subdivided by glazing bars into numerous small panes, and the shops shuttered at night with removable framed solid shutters which fitted over the outside of the shop windows.

The pavement was seldom shaded, except by an occasional awning, but one or two of the dwellings were built projecting out over the shop front in the manner of mediaeval half-timbered houses (Plate 132 on page 370). The use of verandas to shade pedestrians and shop fronts seems to have been a later conception.[3]

In the late eighteen twenties, especially in the more British towns of the

144. Fireplace in a house in 'Somerset East'.

145. Fireplace in the same house as that in Plate 144.

146. Fireplace in a house on the corner of New and Somerset Streets, Grahamstown.

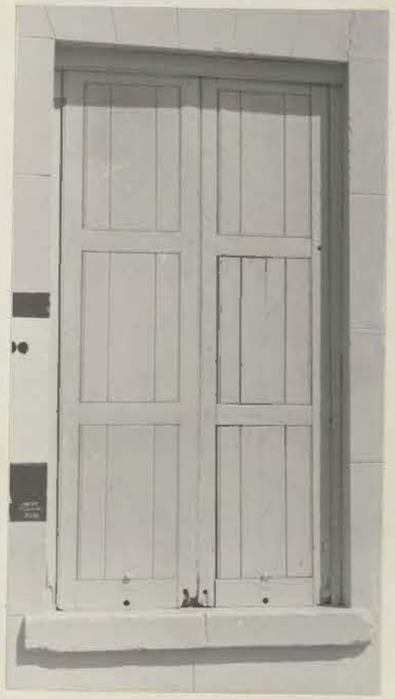
147. Fireplace in 56 Beaufort Street, Grahamstown, with 'Chinese' ornament.

148. Fireplace in 56 Beaufort Street, Grahamstown.

149. Fireplace in 'Hazendal', Cape Town.

150. Fireplace in a house in Beaufort Street, Grahamstown.

151. Fireplace with a 'Gothic' character in 'Glen Avon', the 'Retreat', Somerset East.



Late Georgian shops in Grahamstown.
152. Beaufort Street.
153. Beaufort Street.
154. Church Square.

Eastern Cape, wrought iron brackets were used to carry sign boards in a fashion which had been everywhere common in England in the previous century. Some fine brackets of this type survive in Grahamstown (Plates 155-9), and a number of the decorative ones were to be met with in the back streets of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth until recent years. The signboards carried symbols and images rather than words and numbers, and occupied a familiar place in the late Georgian street scene.

Iron, the material of the Industrial Revolution, had been steadily increasing in use since 1800.

With the end of the Napoleonic wars the iron founderies of England found themselves in serious economic straits. Production fell away, and the value of iron plunged from £20 to £8 per ton.[1] New fields for the use of iron were urgently needed, and the manufacturers found them in the building industry. During the preceding years experiments in the use of cast iron in columns, arches and trusses had been steadily carried on. We have seen how Adam introduced the concept of mass-produced ornament in railings, balconies and fireplaces. After 1815 a large part of the war-production was turned onto the output of building components, and in a short time manufacturers were looking overseas for the exploitation of new and wider markets.

At the Cape, cast iron columns were already being imported by 1820. (They were used among other places, at the Lutheran Church in Strand Street and the portico to Government House.[2]) Thereafter they were commonly used in verandas and porches. They were generally cast with classical capitals and bases and had fluted shafts. It will be remembered that the design for the new St.

1. Slater, G. 'The Growth of Modern England' New York, 1933, 250.
2. C.O.247/37, 24th May, 1825. They were by this time relatively cheap. v. Turpin Bannister, 'The First Iron-Framed Buildings'. 'Architectural Review'. April 1950.

157

Wrought Iron Brackets.

155,156,158,159. Brackets for Hanging Signs in High Street, Grahamstown.

157. Bracket for Lamp in a lane off Main Street, Port Elizabeth.

1. C.O.247/10, 28th Jan. 1825.

2. Notably in the farm 'Oakwell' near Grahamstown. c.1835.

160. Doorway of a house in Wynberg.
161. Internal doorway of 128 Hatfield Street, Cape Town.

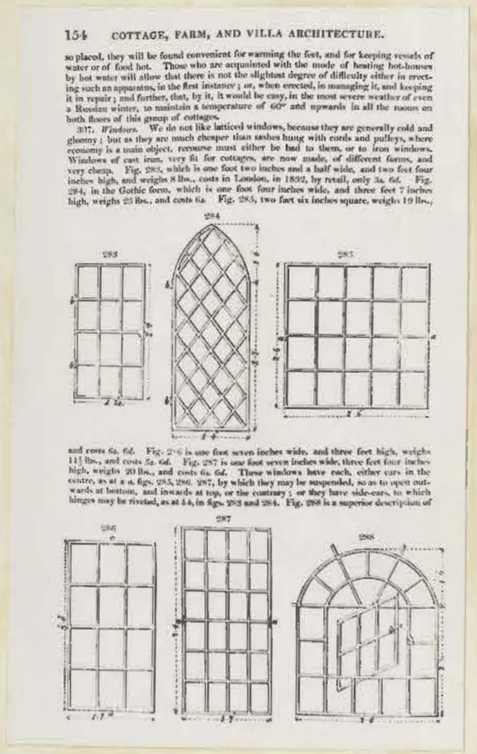
George's which was prepared by W.Jones in the Gothic style in 1825 included Gothic cast iron windows, cast iron columns and even a prefabricated 'very light Cast iron roof'.[1]

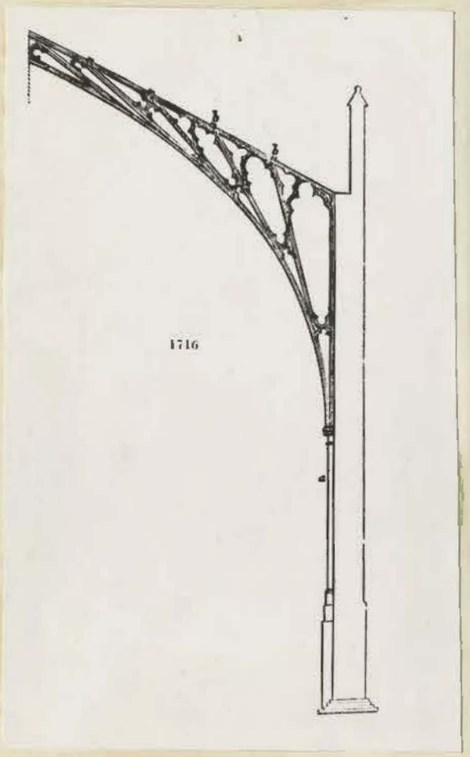
Cast iron windows (Plate 167) appear to have been available at the Cape for domestic use by the early 1830s. (A few isolated examples remain to this day.)[2]

Thereafter the presence of cast iron in building became even more common until in 1835 we find Thomas Hunter advertising the establishment of a foundry at the Cape in Longmarket Street at which he was prepared to make cast iron railings, balcony pieces and machinery, and to undertake all kinds of work in wrought iron and other metals.

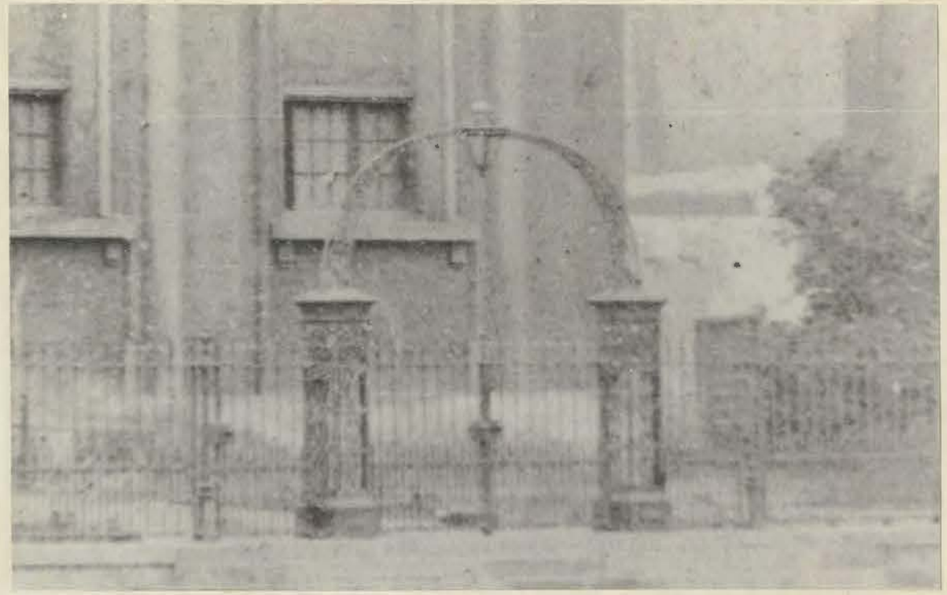
It seems to have been a highly profitable undertaking, for by now wrought and cast iron railings on stoeps, balconies and verandas were common hall-marks of elegance (Plates 162-6). Cast iron street lamps were also making their appearance and wrought iron lantern stands formed arches onto every stoep.

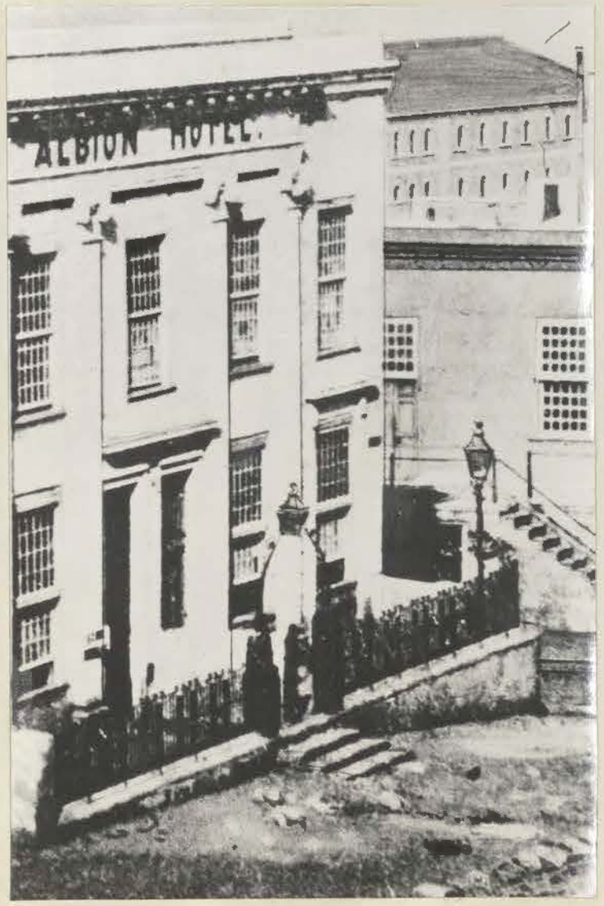
Already iron was achieving a position of some aesthetic importance in the townscape; and this was but a foretaste of things to come.

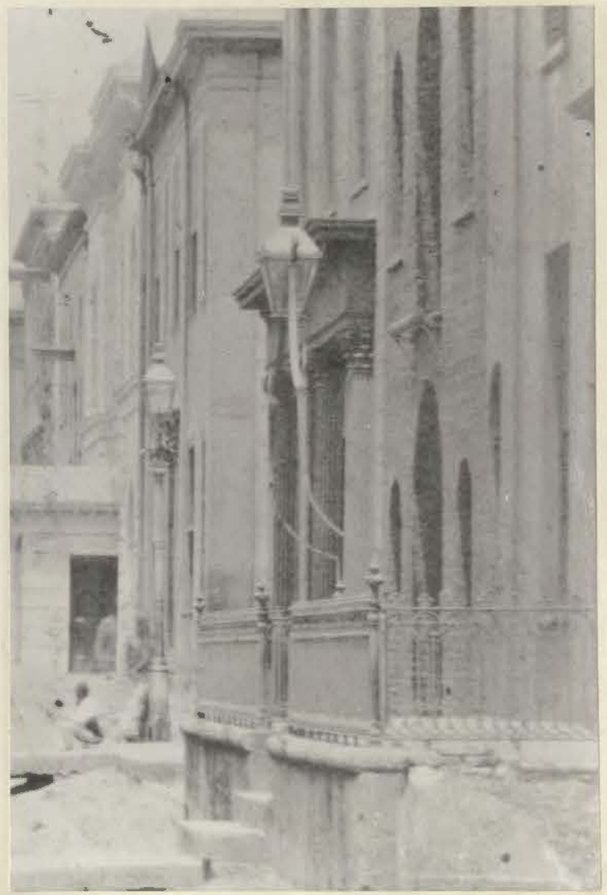




167,168. Cast Iron Windows and Trusses; from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia', London, 1st Ed. 1833.







Wrought Iron Lamp Arches.

162. Nuwe Kerk, Cape Town.c.1844.

163. Groote Kerk, Cape Town.c.1841.

164. Building in Strand Street, Cape Town. (Africana Museum).

165. 'Laborie', Paarl. (Elliott).

166. House in St. George's Street, Cape Town, from a photograph c.1860.