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Cover illustrations by Hugh Floyd:

Front: Two cell houses compared.
Back: Typical developments from basic 3 cell house.
Revel Fox
Revel Fox

Nicolas Baumann

At one o’clock on Monday afternoon 13th December Revel Fox passed away. He died with great dignity. His passing provides time for us, his family, friends and colleagues, to pause and ponder the nature of his contribution to the built environment, and especially the humanity and social concerns that he expressed in his life and work.

Revel presented a remarkable fusion between an intellectual disposition towards cities and buildings and how they grow, a passionate care and concern for the people who inhabit them, a sensual delight in the art of design and creation and a concern for timelessness and what can be learned from the field of vernacular architecture. A firmly held and finely honed attitude towards architectural and urban aesthetics and history was balanced by an empathy for the social problems caused by the Apartheid City and a considered approach to the ways in which the architectural and planning professions could possibly contribute to a more humane and equitable city. Underpinning this all were qualities of integrity, care, consideration and a gentle courtesy.

His legacy is marked, as Neville Dubow stressed in his tribute at the memorial service to Revel, by the pursuit of excellence. This was reflected in the quality of his design approach, the rigour with which he applied his principles and the way in which he treated each new project as a particular challenge. In all the years I worked with him, which started as an office messenger as a schoolboy in the 1960s, I was never aware of a standard or routine approach to a project, whether it be a domestic interior or a major urban intervention. There would always be continuous debate, interrogation, design and redesign until a degree of satisfaction was achieved. Never total satisfaction. There was an enormous energy surrounding Revel; an aura that infused all those who worked with him. An energy and delight in the art of creation, the study of the vernacular tradition and how it could be expressed in a multicultural environment, in building and design and in the making of spaces that respond to their context.

His considered and highly articulate approach to design and his continuous questioning and interrogation of design principles is reflected in his finest works. His domestic buildings such as the Deanery, Vlaggemanshuis and House Robinson still stand as timeless masterpieces, unencumbered by the vagaries of fleeting architectural fads. Institutional buildings such as the Ballet School at UCT (1960s) and the latest work at the International Conference Centre and gym at the Vineyard Hotel reflect a consistency of approach characterised by a classic simplicity of form, clarity of line and a sense of buildings firmly grounded and yet touching the ground lightly. An understanding of history. Always graceful. While his work may be termed modern classicism or classic modernism, Revel always eschewed architectural isms and strove after the heart of the matter; the essence of what a building needed to be, how it could respond positively and creatively to its context.

Context and continuity are consistent themes that are evident in his work, whether they be new buildings, restoration projects or major urban interventions. Continuity is evident in the consistent thread that runs through his work, from the classic simplicity of line and elegance of form that evolved from his early days in Sweden to the extension and adaptation of the pioneering work of the South African modernists such as Eaton, Martienssen, Stauch and Hanson to his own particularly innovative design approach. A respectful and inspired adaptation of this early body of work established the intellectual and aesthetic basis for his ever searching quest for what constituted our own southern African heritage. Integral to this was a continuous interrogation of what this meant in a society characterised by a multiplicity of value systems often in conflict.
Context and continuity can also be traced back to those early formative years in Sweden where an integrated approach to contemporary design philosophy became articulated. Design thus extended from the smallest artefacts, through to furniture, colour and texture, buildings, landscape and urban design. Consistent across all these scales was the sense of clarity and simplicity of form, and a contemporary approach which always managed to reveal a respect for precedent and continuity. With particular regard to his work in the field of conservation, expressed at different scales; the broader city context, the farm werf, and individual structures such as at Morgenster, Meerlust and Groot Constantia, there was always a critical approach to the conventions and questions of the time; when is a strictly preservationist approach applicable, when is it appropriate to contribute a new layer, when is it necessary to undo some of the damage of the past? An architecture always characterised by conviction and passion. An architectural and urban aesthetic always grounded by a deep humanity and care which expressed itself in many, mostly unheralded forms.

His increasing passion and conviction relating to urban issues, and his holistic, integrated and forthright approach inevitably resulted in him taking a principled stance on a variety of issues which make him a credit to his profession. His withdrawal from the Technikon project in District 6, his pioneering work on low-cost housing for the Shelter organization in the late 1970s, his participation in the delegation to meet the African National Congress in 1987 and his contribution as an ANC councillor to metropolitan planning issues all bear witness to the principled integrated approach to his profession.

It is this sense of wholeness for which Revel will be remembered. Wholeness in terms of a core set of uncompromising principles with which he approached his work and his dealings with clients and colleagues and which found its fullest and richest form in the love and devotion he had for his family.

He was a man who will always be remembered for the extraordinary clarity of his thinking, his insights and his pursuit of perfection. His design skills, imagination, application, understanding of precedent, enthusiasm and his enduring courtesy is made manifest in the shape and form and light of his buildings and in the dignified city spaces to which he made such a substantial contribution.

He was my paterfamilias, mentor, care-giver and friend. A man of passion, integrity and conviction. We mourn his passing but cherish, celebrate and honour his legacy.
A brief resumé of the achievements and contributions of Revel Fox

Qualifications:
1948  B.Arch (war modified thesis) University of Cape Town.
1969  MURP (with distinction) University of Cape Town.
1993  D.Arch (hc) University of Natal.
2001  D.Arch (hc) University of Cape Town.

Heritage-related awards:
1977  Institute of South African Architects:  Gold Medal for an outstanding contribution to architecture in South Africa.
1982  South African National Monuments Council:  Appointed as honorary curator, “in acknowledgement of the fine services… rendered to this Council”.
1983  The Cape Times:  Centenary Medal  “to recognise outstanding achievements in the field of conservation of Cape buildings, historic precincts, or the natural environment
1987  Cape Tercentenary Foundation:  Award of Merit “for outstanding services to Architecture in the Cape”
1994  National Monuments Council:  Gold Medal “in recognition of dynamic and ongoing efforts in the interests of conservation and in setting such high standards for the architectural and planning professions”.

Experience:
1948 – 1951  Assistant and associate, Ayers Wilson and Parker, Bulawayo and Gwero, Zimbabwe
1951 – 1952  Assistant, Professor Ivar Tengbom and Anders Tengbom, Stockholm.
1953 – 1956  In private practice on own account in Worcester, Cape.

Heritage projects completed during this time:
1959  Restoration of Meerlust historic homestead at Faure Cape.
1961  Restoration of “Rust and Vreugd” town house, Cape Town.
1970  Recycling of industrial building (former headquarters of African National Congress) at 117 Waterkant, Cape Town, for use as offices and studios for Revel Fox and Partners.
1972  Restoration of Rhenish Parsonage, Stellenbosch, Cape (Carried out in association with Henry Villet).
1973  Renovation of Kanetvlei homestead, Sandhills, Cape.
1975  Conversion of barn at Morgenster, Somerset West, to glassblowing studio and workshop.
1979  Restoration of Jonkershuis at Morgerster, Somerset West.
1981  Ashbey’s Galleries, Cape Town:  Restoration of the façade of 43 Church Street, an eighteenth century town house in use as antique and fine art auctioneers rooms.

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1 With thanks to Lorna Hansen, partner of Revel Fox & Partners, who worked with Revel for 41 years.
1982 Conversion of barn at Morgenster, Somerset West to a dwelling.
1982 Fleur du Cap Manor House, Somerset West, additions.
1982 Lorraine Homestead, Rawsonville: restoration
1982 Dreyersdal homestead, Tokai: restoration (project)
1982 The Lodge, Rondebosch: Recycling of former private hotel for use as offices for a firm of consulting engineers.
1982 Wavecrest, Kalk Bay: Restoration of an early Victorian house in Kalk Bay, now a national monument.
1982 and 1997 All Saint’s Church, Durbanville: restoration and enlargement of a church attributed to Sophia Grey, subsequently declared a national monument. After a fire in 1996, rebuilt the church with the addition of a gallery.
1983 72 Loop Street, Cape Town: restoration of a former town house which was being used as a warehouse, and refurbishing it for use as offices for a firm of consulting engineers.
1983 Fairview, Simon’s Town: alterations and additions to 19th century holiday house.
1984 New office building, Long Street, Cape Town, for the Provincial Administration. This commission included for the retention of the existing nineteenth century buildings on the Long Street frontage of the site, and for their renovation for continued use by previous tenants.
1984 Bertram House, Cape Town: restoration of late Georgian town house, for use as a museum.
1984 71 Hout Street, Cape Town: restoration of a former town house, which was being used as a warehouse, and refurbishing for use as professional offices.
1984 The Residency, Simon’s Town: renovation and recycling of old Magistrate’s Courts for use as a museum.
1984 Maturation Cellars, Meerlust: new maturation cellars built in the context of an historic national monument farmstead.
1984–1987 Simon’s Town Municipality: planning consultancy which included the formulation of urban development guidelines, including strategies to preserve the nature and character of the town and ensure that ongoing development is sympathetic to the terrain and the existing development.
1986 House Rupert, Onrus: refurbishing of historic Cape House.
1987 Parel Vallei, Somerset West: renovations to a Cape Dutch Homestead.
1988 Groot Constantia, Cape: new master plan for this historic homestead and wine farm, provision of accommodation for Bertram’s Winery on the estate, restoration and refurbishing of Jonkershuis, also restoration of wine cellar, including Anreith pediment.
1990–2004 Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town: Special consultant to the Board of Directors, advising inter alia on the suitability of developments within this historic working harbour.
1991 University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business: conversion of former Breakwater Prison, and additional new accommodation for Graduate School of Business at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town.
1991 Victoria and Alfred Waterfront: Amsterdam Battery and upper and lower and tank farm precincts: conservation study.
1992 Port Louis, Mauritius: urban design and conservation study.
1992 French Embassy, Cape Town: alterations to existing historic townhouses to accommodate French Embassy and Consulate.
1992 Victoria and Alfred Waterfront: location and design of historical interpretation panels.
1993 House Moodie, Oranjezicht: Refurbishing of early Table Valley homestead.
1993 Rondebosch/Claremont Conservation Study for City of Cape Town
1994 Culemborg conservation study, Cape Town.
1995 Albion Spring housing and office development: architects for the successful project in the proposal call for this sensitive precinct.
1995 Victoria and Alfred Waterfront: Silo Quay precinct conservation study
1996 Former YMCA building, Queen Victoria Street: winners of limited competition for refurbishment (project).
1996 Morgenster farm, Somerset West: renovations to manor house and jonkershuis and extensive alterations to various outbuildings.
1997 Valkenburg Hospital: proposed upgrading of facilities, including refurbishment of historic farmhouse on property for use by the hospital (project).
1997 New Zealand House: refurbishing of art deco city building.
1999 Robben Island Museum: Survey of built environment, carried out in association with Nicolas Baumann and Lucien le Grange.
2000–2004 Vineyard Hotel: Ongoing developments on this historic site, including advice on previous buildings, and strategies for their rehabilitation.
2002 Vlakkeland Manor House: restoration and redevelopment for use by the Ikwehzi Trust.
2003 Lifecare Properties: Advice regarding redevelopment of New Kings and Majestic Hotel sites in the sensitive village area of Kalk Bay (ongoing).
2003 Houses of Parliament, Cape Town: Refurbishing of historic former Senate Chamber for use by the National Chamber of Provinces.
2003 Luthuli Museum, Kwa Dukuza: restoration of the home of the late Chief Albert Luthuli for use as a museum (ongoing).

This drawing of the façade of Bertram house was done by John Rennie when Revel Fox & Partners did the restoration of Bertram House in 1984 (Lorna Hansen).
Publications and Reports:

1968 ‘The Preservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings in South Africa. A symposium edited by RFM Immelman, and published by AA Balkema, Cape Town. Served as chairman of a committee which arranged the exhibition and symposium, and was subsequently chairman of the sub-committee of the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects responsible for the publication of the book.


1974 ‘Conservation in the City, the Historical Process, Conservation of Urban Artefacts: The Methods and the Results’: talk to a seminar on planning in the Cape Metropolitan Region, arranged by the Cape branch of the SA Institute of Town and Regional Planners, and published in the proceedings of the seminar.


1978 ‘The Buildings of Central Cape Town, Volumes One and Two’: chairman of a committee of the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects responsible for the preparation and publication of these books.

1980 ‘The Recycling and Reuse of Old Buildings’: lecture to University of Cape Town extra-mural course on “The Visual Impact of the Mother City”.


1990 ‘New Buildings in Historic Contexts’: talk to urban conservation symposium.


1994 ‘Is there a future for our past?’: article for Restorica magazine.

1999 ‘Urban Conservation’: talk to Cape Natural History Club.

2000 ‘Heritage issues in Mossel Bay’: talk to Mossel Bay Heritage Society.

2001 ‘Conservation and Development in Montagu’: remarks at presentation of Cape Technikon exercise in the adaptive use of the KWV cellars in Montagu.

Membership of organisations involved in heritage related issues:

1966–1973 Member, Provincial Committee of the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects
During this period, held the post of Chair of sub-committee dealing with preservation and conservation.

1967 Consultant to advise on work being done on the redevelopment of the Bokaap by the Cape Town City Council.

1975–1987 Chair, Architectural Heritage Committee of the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects.


1986–1987 Representative of Architectural Heritage Committee of the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects on Simon’s Town Architectural Advisory Board.

1987–2004 Member, Board of Trustees of Cape Town Heritage Trust.

1989–2004 Member, Heritage Committee of the Cape Institute of Architects.
Doornboom
(‘Auld House’ Heidelberg CP)

André Pretorius

The picturesque village of Heidelberg, Cape Province, lies at the foot of the Langeberg mountains between Swellendam and Riversdale, just off the N2 highway (Fig.1). It was laid out in 1855 on the farm Doornboom though which the Duivenhoks River flows. Plots sold well and already by 1866 the new community had attained municipal status (Fig.2).

The village was named after the German city where the Heidelberg Catechisms were drawn up. To avoid confusion with a like-named town proclaimed in the Transvaal in 1862, vain attempts were later made to rename the Cape village De Waalville, after the local Administrator Sir Frederick de Waal.

The Doornboom homestead, which had been home to many generations of Fouries, was incorporated into the new settlement. The Fouries moved to the remaining portion of their farm, on the eastern side of the Duivenhoks River.

Figure 1. Heidelberg lies at the foot of the Langeberg mountains between Swellendam and Riversdale just off the N2 highway (Trig. Survey 1:50 000 3420 Riversdale, 1987).

The Fouries of Doornboom

The story of Doornboom, and by inference Heidelberg, is that of the Huguenot family Fleury / Fleurij / Florit / Fourie. The stamvader, Louis, arrived in the Cape in 1688 and in February 1699 settled on the farm Slange Rivier in the Wagenmakersvallei (Wellington) for which the official grant was belatedly made in 1706 by Governor Willem A. van der Stel. It was Fourie’s son, Louis II (1703) who first established the family’s presence in the Heidelberg region. This lasted for four generations.
Until 1745, when Swellendam was proclaimed a District, the Stellenbosch Drostdy’s jurisdiction encompassed the entire eastern region of the Colony. In 1721 the Stellenbosch list of ‘unmarried persons (eenlopende personen) not owning property’ records that de jonge Louis Fourie boven aan het duivenhoks Rivier aan de sekoegat wonen [which is just north of Doornboom AP]. It is surmised that in the early 1720s Louis II, son of the stamvader, was employed as a kneg or herdsman by a fellow Huguenot, Andries Gous, who had obtained grazing rights to Zeekoegat.

The first official reference to Doornboom is dated 23 January 1725, when Governor Jan de la Fontaine allowed Andries Gous to also graze his livestock aent de duijvenhoksrivier aent de dorenboom. In 1726 the name of Louis II is omitted from the Stellenbosch Drostdy list of dragonders (cavalry) and in 1730 it is entered under ‘Kommando Overberg’. This confirms that he had relocated east of the Hottentots Holland mountains. In 1732 Andries made his last payment of rent in respect of Doornboom and on 15 October 1733 the rights to this grazing were registered under the name of Louis Fourie II (RLR 9/3 p.212-4).

From a humble beginning Louis II was in time to become one of the most respected and prosperous farmers in the region. In 1744 he was appointed wagmeesgter of the Overberg District dragonders and between 1751 and 1758 he served as heemraad of Swellendam. Already in 1747 he had made a loan towards the construction of the new District’s drostdy and, according to the opgaaf of 1762, Louis II was the second most wealthy man in the area.

After Louis’s death in 1767 his wife Susanna le Riche farmed the property and she was the ‘widow Fourie’ to whom Thunberg (1773), Swellengrebel (1776) and Governor van Plettenberg (1778) referred in their journals. After sixty years on Doornboom, Susanna Fourie died in 1788 and in September the following year the farm passed on to her fifty-nine year old son, the Burger Cornet Louis III.

In 1796 Louis Fourie III passed away, leaving the old family farm teen ‘n bemakingsprys van f3000 to his eldest son, Louis. On 1 September 1823, Louis IV obtained full title to the property when it was granted to him on ewigdurende erfpag (Sw.Q.4A-19). It was a typical early circular farm (Fig.3). He passed away in 1836 after which his eldest son, the fourth generation of Louis’s to reside at Doornboom, continued the dynasty (Louis Johannes 1797-1876).
It was at the time of Louis V that the town of Heidelberg came into being. On 14 September 1855 he sold a portion of the farm on the western side of the Duivenhoks River to be sub-divided into plots for a new community. The old T-plan pioneer house, which had served as the Fourie’s dwelling since the early 1700s and which has survived to this day, became part of the new village and occupied erf 199 (Figs. 4 and 5). Louis and Alida his wife set up home on the eastern side of the river, where Louis died in 1876. Thereafter his widow, together with a large number of the family, settled in the eastern Orange Free State. Thus ended the Fourie presence of nearly one hundred and fifty years on Doornboom.

Figure 3. Doornboom was a typical early circular farm. A beacon (ordonnatie), usually the intended site of the homestead, was established. From there the farmer walked for say half an hour in each direction. A roughly circular outline of the property was thereby defined. (Swellendam Quitrent Grant Sw.Q 4A-19, 1 September 1823 of the “loanplace Doornboom” to Louis Johannes Fourie: Cape Archives M2/1105).

Pieter J. Uys bought the farm from the Fourie estate. His daughter Sara (1857-1942) married Henry Charles Hopkins. They became the grandparents of the NG Kerk historian the Reverend Charles Hopkins, who was born in the ‘Auld House’ (Doornboom). In 1948 he recorded the history of Doornboom and the Fouries. In 1997 the story was elaborated upon by another descendant and man of the cloth, Reverend Willie Fourie.

In May 1992 the Heidelberg Municipality resolved that the historic Doornboom homestead should be acquired as a gemeenskapsbesit and be restored. The property was eventually bought from Christine Steyn in July 1994 for R35000. The aforementioned Reverend Willie Fourie purchased the ‘Auld House’ in November 1998 with the intention of restoring it to reflect the lifestyle and farming activities of the early settlers, as a living museum.
With the Reverend Willie as driving force, the support of the Fourie clan members country-wide was elicited for this project. It got off to a good start with the establishment of the Louis Fourie Trust Fund and received a further boost when Doornboom house was provisionally declared a National Monument on 6 September 1996.

After much research and ‘cleaning up’ of the neglected old dwelling, enthusiasm regrettably waned, and in 2004 this important vernacular structure was in a state of semi-repair.

*Figure 4. Detail of survey diagram 1823. The homestead and irrigation channels are clearly marked.*

*Figure 5. Plan of Heidelberg by Engineer W.A. Sollner 1912 (Cape Archives M2/2448).*
Figure 6. A modern survey diagram of Heidelberg showing the Doornboom homestead on the corner of Fourie and Rall Streets.

**Doornboom house (‘Auld House’)**

As with so many pioneer structures, the date when the first abode was erected on Doornboom cannot be accurately determined. The house, in which four generations of Louis Fouries lived, is east facing and positioned at an angle to the corner plot formed by present-day Rall and Fourie streets (Figs. 6 and 10). It is on the west bank of the Duivenhoks River from which an irrigation channel runs past within a few metres of the front door.

The Stellenbosch Drostdy register, *Alphabeth van eenlopende Persoonen*, is a list of young men not residing on their own property but who are eligible for *krygsdiens*. In the 1720s the son of the Huguenot stamvader, Louis Fourie II (born 1703), lived *boven ann het duivenshoks rivier aan de seekoejagt*. We also know that in 1725 Andries Gous was permitted to graze his livestock *aent de duyvenhoks rivier aent de doornboom*.

The young Louis II, as non property-owner, in all probability for a while tended Gous’s livestock at both *dorinboom* and *seekoejagt (gat)* which is just to its north. In 1732 Louis was permitted to graze his own sheep at *Zeekoejagt* (RLR 9/3 p.731) and in October of the following year Governor Jan de la Fontaine granted *de Heemraad Louis Fourij om voor den tyd van een gehaal jaar met Zijn Vee te mogen blijven en Weijden onder aan de duifvenhoc Revier aent de doornboom synde de verlaaten plaats van Andries Gouts* (RLR 38/2 p.301-2).

However humble the first dwelling was, Louis II must have provided accommodation for his family on either Seekoejagt or at Doornboom, especially after his marriage to a fellow Huguenot, Susanna le Riche. In all probability it was on the latter, as this was the farm which became synonymous with the Fouries of Heidelberg.
Figure 7. A sketch plan of the layout of Doornboom, by Charles Hopkins circa 1935.

Figure 8. Reconstructed layout of Doornboom, by Brink, Stokes, Marais & Moolman in 1966 (scale 1:200).

Pioneer dwellings were seldom more than a two room cottage which over time evolved to become a T-plan dwelling. Because of all the alterations and additions made to Heidelberg’s oldest house, it is virtually impossible to plot its evolution from a cottage to the homestead of a
leading local family. One would like to think that, encapsulated in the surviving dwelling, is the house that Louis II built in about 1728. The restoration architect Dirk Visser, who inspected the building in 1995, concluded that the present building dated from the early 1800s. However, the most recent edition of *The Old Buildings of the Cape* (Fransen & Cook 2004: 471) agrees that “on all available evidence” it is the original Doornboom homestead, and the house is “certainly much older than the town, possibly even pre-1800”.

Doornboom’s older walls are of layered clay (*dagha*) and sun-dried bricks (Figs. 14 and 17). The roof was once thatched, part of which is still visible under the present covering of corrugated iron (Fig. 13). A reed ceiling (*sparretjiesriet*), topped with clay to create a *brandsolder*, is still visible in the main bedroom; the other reed ceilings were later boarded over (Fig. 16).

The beams in the kitchen are open to the roof and consequently do not carry the traditional *solder* for storage (Fig. 15). The wall separating the kitchen from the *voorhuis* has a triangular gable (now concealed in the roof) and some of the kitchen walls are built of layered clay (*opgekleide mure*). This could be the oldest part of the house.

Figure 7 is the earliest known drawing to show the layout of the ‘Auld House’, but it is not to scale. It was done in 1935 by the mother of Hanna and Charles Hopkins. In January 1996, when Ds Willie Fourie and fellow clan members enthusiastically set out to restore their ancestral home, a ground plan was made showing the layout of the ‘original’ Doornboom, as far as could be ascertained (Fig. 8). Three years later, the author made a rough sketch (with notes) of the old house as it remained after most of the ‘modern’ appendages had been removed in preparation for the final restoration.

Sadly, the ambitious plans of the Fouries did not materialize, and in 2004 the property was in a state of collapse (Fig. 18). Fortunately, Jan Geldenhuys, Jurie Uys and Henk Rall have come to the rescue of the old house with the establishment of the Fourie Huis Trust in December 2004. We hope that their efforts at restoration and reconstruction will at long last be successful.

![Figure 9. The back of Doornboom homestead as seen from Fourie Street. Note the lean-to additions. (AP 1997).](image)
Figure 10. This is the back view, as seen from the corner of Fourie and Rall Streets. The bathroom leads out of the main bedroom and is obviously a later ‘improvement’ (AP 1997).

Figure 11. A side view. Note the brick wall buttress and the steps to the attic (solder). To the right is an obvious later addition (AP 1997).
Figure 12. A front view. The additions to the right (see above) have been demolished. The water tank remains (AP 1998).

Figure 13. The corrugated iron roof was laid over the thatch. At this time the house was to be re-thatched. Sadly this never materialized (AP 1998).
Figure 14. The plaster at the front door collapsed revealing the various types of building material used, i.e. rubble, raw bricks and clay (AP 1998).

Figure 15. The kitchen is open to the roof with the thatch clearly visible under the corrugated iron. Note the triangular gable separating the kitchen from the voorhuis. Was the house originally a rectangular building, to which the kitchen was later added to form a T-shaped dwelling? (AP 1998).
Figure 16. Roof of storeroom at the back of the kitchen. In the main bedroom the reed "brandolder" is still visible (AP 1998).

Figure 17. The house is showing signs of being ravaged by the elements. With the plaster removed, the layered clay wall (opgekleide muur) is visible (AP 2000).
Early visitors to Doornboom

1698 Ensign Isaak Schrijver led an ambitious expedition which took him as far as Aberdeen to barter cattle in the eastern districts. On 17 January 1689 his diary records that “we came at about 11 o’clock in the forenoon to the drijenhock and have camped on the far side of the river”, where eight eels were caught and eaten “with relish” (Mossop 1931: 215). This crossing of the river was most probably near the present-day town of Heidelberg, on the site of the future farm Doornboom.

1752 Ensign August Friedrich Beutler was sent on an expedition to the Eastern Cape by Governor Ryk Tulbagh, to investigate development possibilities. Beutler ventured as far as the Xhosa territories and crossed the Kei River in July 1752. As the drift through the Duivenshok River at Doornboom had become a recognized crossing, he too in all probability navigated the river near the dwelling of Louis Fourie II, who had acquired grazing rights to the farm in 1733 and took up residence there.

1768 Jan Willem Cloppenburg, Secunde (vice-Governor) at the Cape in 1768, accompanied by the Surveyor Carol F. Brink, undertook an expedition. In his *Joernaal van mijn reis in Afrika* he describes Doornboom as *een seer hebbelyk huishouden* (a well run household). As Louis Fourie II had died the previous year, his widow Susanna was the hostess.

1773 Carl Peter Thunberg, the Swedish botanist, is possibly the earliest traveller of eminence to mention the widow Fourie by name. On 10 November 1773 he arrived at the “widow
Fore, near Duyvenhocks Rivier”. On the following day, his thirtieth birthday, the party taking “an early leave of our worthy hostess, we went down to Duyvenhok’s River, which was a short distance from the farm”. Thunberg nearly drowned when crossing the full river at a drift pointed out to him by one of widow Fourie’s slaves, “which either from ignorance or malice” was the wrong spot, landing Thunberg up to his ears in a deep “sea cow” hole.

1775  **Anders Sparrman**, a talented and adventurous young Swede, journeyed to the Eastern Cape. Vernon S. Forbes, who edited his journal, expressed the opinion that he probably journeyed over Mardieshoogte and then down the Doorn (Doring) River Valley, to cross the Duivenhoks River near the house of the widow Fourie (who, however, Sparrman does not mention).

1776  **Hendrik Swellengrebel**, son of a former Cape Governor, spent the night of 10 December at the “widow Fourri” at Duivenshoksrivier on the return journey of his second expedition to the Easter Districts (Forbes 1965: 79).

1778  Governor Joachim A. Baron van Plettenberg, on returning from an expedition to the Eastern region in November, crossed the Duivenhoks River on the farm of the widow Fourie. During his very brief stop, *een halfure daar meede was toegebragt*, a fresh span of trek oxen were obtained before proceeding to the property (Tradou) of the old heemraad, Jacobus Steyn.

1778  **Colonel Robert Jacob Gordon** was Commander of the VOC garrison at the Cape from 1780 until its capitulation to the British in 1795. He was a versatile man who undertook numerous expeditions into the interior, and drew or caused to have drawn by his draughtsman, by far the most detailed and accurate map of southern Africa then available. His “great map” was huge, measuring over four metres. Among others, the dwelling of “Louis Vorie” is marked on the western bank of the “Duyfenshoksrivier” where the recognized ford is specifically indicated (Fig.19).

![Figure 19. Sketch of the Gordon map of circa 1790. The property of ‘Louis Vorie’ is already sited on the bank of the ‘Duyfenshoksrivier’](image)
François le Vaillant, the youthful French naturalist and traveler, explored the Cape between 1781 and 1784. His attempts to add lustre to his name and exploits through exaggeration, florid verbiage and vanity aside, his books rank among the classics of eighteenth century works on South Africa. In January 1782 he made a sketch of his camp at the Duivenshoksriver (Fig.20). As the route to the east was by then well defined, this was most probably at the ford on Doornboom. Le Vaillant preferred not to stay over at farms as he felt that it would occupy too much of his time. Furthermore, he would not have to share his brandy! (Le Vaillant 1973: 39).

Figure 20. François le Vaillant’s camp on the Duivenhoks River, most probably at the ford near Doornboom (original in Library of Parliament).

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RLR 9/1 p.107, 23 October 1730. grazing rights for Andries Gous to Doornboom on the Duiwenhoks River; RLR 9/3 p.731, 6 October 1732, grazing rights to Louis Fourie II to Zeekoejagt on the Duiwenhoks River; RLR 38/2 p.301-3, 15 October 1733, grazing rights to Louis Fourie to Doornboom, vacated by A. Gous.
Inherited characteristics of the Cape Vernacular

Hugh Floyd

HUGH FLOYD (1920-1985) graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Cape Town and then taught there for 45 years. He was also external examiner to the University of Natal. Floyd served for almost as many years on the Executive Committee of the South African Institute of Architects and was at one time President of the Cape Institute of Architects. He qualified as a Town Planner and represented the Institute on the Townships Board, and ran a small private practice. In 1956 he convened the Institute’s exhibition, ‘Cape Town Your City’, opened by Bill Holford. The associated discussions and debates resulted in getting rid of unsightly overhead wires and advertising, and initiated pedestrianisation in the city. When nearing retirement Floyd became interested in vernacular architecture. This article was based on his last sabbatical thesis in 1982. After retiring from UCT he undertook consulting and mediation work. Floyd had a considerable influence on developments to the built environment and the restoration of cultural landscapes on the Peninsula.

This paper results from many years of delving behind the cosmetics of the Cape vernacular tradition and climbing the branches of many family trees other than those of our immediate Dutch architectural relatives.

The underlying characteristics that have been sought are:

- Plan-form: in layout and in individual buildings;
- Structural techniques: particularly roof structure.

Plan-form

Simple rural buildings in Europe can, in basic terms, be classified into two main families:

- Long Houses
- Halled Houses

By ‘Long Houses’ is meant a single room or row of rooms of constant depth and standard cross section. This is a much looser use of the term than that of Dr Gwyn Meirion-Jones (1973a) who defines it as a “rectangular aisleless dwelling in which man and beast are housed at opposite ends, under one roof, with entry by a common lateral doorway”. However, it suits our present purposes.

By ‘Halled Houses’ is meant a large central room, hall or barn, with individual cells, usually in side aisles, leading off therefrom. As Meirion-Jones says, “Long Houses are almost invariably entered through one or both of the long side walls whereas the Halled House is typically entered through the short (gabled) end wall” (Fig.1).

Looked at in very general terms it becomes quite apparent that the Rural Cape House belongs to the family of ‘The Longs’ and not to ‘The Halls’ (Bos & Klijn 1973; Meirion-Jones 1973a; Walton 1952). I know of no Cape farm house of the Halled Type, and the theory that our grand farmhouses evolved from simple single and two celled ‘Long’ houses has a general

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2 Reprinted from Architecture SA, Journal of the Institute of South African Architects, September/October 1983, pp 28-31, with grateful acknowledgement. With thanks also to Mary Floyd, Hugh Floyd’s widow and VASSA Honorary President. Corrections and minor editorial amendments have been made, particularly to the references.

3 This paper was written before the archaeological excavation of late 17th century outbuildings at Vergelegen, which were designed on the ‘hallehuis’ model (see A.B. Markell, ‘Building on the past: the architecture and archaeology of Vergelegen’, The South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series: Historical Archaeology in the Western Cape, vol.7 June 1993, pp 71-83).
acceptance. There is also a lot of circumstantial evidence to show actual growth from a primitive single row to a grand ‘T’ and grander ‘H’ and ‘TT’ plan-forms (Fig. 2).

Where does this way of building stem from? It has been loosely recognized as “Cape Dutch”, the implication being that Dutch settlers with memories of home would have built buildings as like as possible to what they knew at ‘home’ within the limitation of materials and techniques in those pioneering conditions. There are several objections to this thesis.

In the first place the clearly recognizable Dutch features, such as gables and sliding sashes, did not become prevalent on rural buildings until some time had elapsed and were generally added during the eighteenth century to unadorned ‘Long House’ plan-forms quite foreign to anything to be found in Holland.

Secondly, the assumption that the Dutch East India Company was manned exclusively by Dutchmen is quite incorrect. In fact, it recruited its servants from a wide field of coastal countries from Brittany to Denmark making up the Hanseatic League. They were sailors and artisans and those who did the building were probably ship’s carpenters and a selection of semi-skilled mercenaries. In fact, in the original band of people that Van Riebeeck brought with him to develop the Cape station, Dutchmen were in the minority. Thus one fact is quite clear: Cape farmer settlers did not build houses in the pattern of the farm houses of Holland. As will be shown, they built more like the farmers and fishermen of other Western European countries.

This paper sets out to show a series of similarities, which, while they do not give firm answers nor prove any theories, surely raise some questions.

Figure 1. Characteristics of ‘Long Houses’ and ‘Halled Houses’ compared.
Figure 2. Typical developments from basic 3 cell house.

Old primitive dwellings are best preserved where the economy is depressed and the lifestyle remains unsophisticated. These conditions exist in areas like the Outer Hebrides, the Isle of Skye, the West Highlands and Ireland (McCullough nd; Fenton & Walker nd; Lewcock 1963). Coincidently, these areas were the source of considerable emigration to the New World and the Colonies encouraged by two historical events, the terrible depression following the Napoleonic wars and the ‘clearances’ in the late nineteenth century. The Moodie family’s exodus from the Orkneys to Southern Africa with 200, mainly lowland Scottish artisans is an example of this (Hutton 1975; Moodie 1835).

In the Hebrides the crofting system was evolved from prehistoric settlement patterns and conditions of land tenure that developed from there. The most important condition affecting the
architecture was (and still is) that the crofter was required to build his own house up to a certain agreed standard. If he left or ‘welshed’ on his contract the house became the property of the laird (McCullogh nd; Fenton & Walker nd).

The early prototype has become known as the ‘Black House’ because the open hearth peat fire would blacken the whole interior of the house filling the space with smoke which had to percolate through the thatch. A few of these Mark 1 ‘crofters’ houses are still lived in, some with ‘modern’ conveniences added. Evidence of the layout patterns of older villages using the ‘runrig’ system of agricultural allotments can be seen all over the Isles of Skye and Lewis (Fenton & Walker nd) (Fig.4).

There is evidence that Long Houses proper were prevalent in mediæval rural villages and their distribution has been plotted through Ireland, The Hebrides, Wales, England and Northwestern France. (The works of Fox & Raglan, Jones & Smith, Mercer, Worth Alcock, Chesher, Brunskill, Rousseli, Walton, Aalen, Evans Danachair, Peate, Hurst, Meiron-Jones, all serve to confirm this thesis). Similar Long House type farm houses can be found in Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark and the Faroese (Fig.3). They are virtually unknown in Belgium, Holland, and Friesland.

Figure 3. Typical long houses.
Before jumping to hasty conclusions about any similarity between these plan-forms and those to be found at the Cape, the sequential metamorphosis of the Hebridean Long House into the two-cell Crofter’s house of today, should be examined. A remarkable correlation with that of Brittany and the Cape will be seen (Fig.5).

There is much evidence to indicate that rural long houses proper started becoming outdated and unfashionable in the early nineteenth century and that in the Hebrides, as in Brittany, long houses were converted into two cell houses. New houses built in this two cell pattern persisted, and in some isolated cases it does so to this day. In a little village called Tremeurs near Morbihan, Southern Brittany, I found such a place, a long house (Fig.3) which has remained unchanged in format and image to this day. Cows and pigs occupy one end and the owner lives in the other. The two sections are separated by a boarded partition. Out of the corner of the byre rises the stair to the loft. This may well be the last or one of the last, surviving genuine long houses in use today.

In the meantime over the last century its family and relatives had undergone significant changes. Farms and farm-yards became bigger and the functions differentiated. The cattle were taken away from individual houses and grouped into larger units. The houses themselves started differentiating their functions and the two-celled house became the norm, with the General Living Room on one side of a central entry and the ‘Parlour’ on the other side (Fig.4).
Figure 5. Two cell houses compared.

Figure 6. Three cell houses compared.
In the Hebrides a similar process was associated with changes in agricultural methods and in the system of tenure of the crofters. The traditional crofter’s house of Skye was constructed by the crofter in an accepted fashion which became the standard way of doing things. It was geared to available material and techniques; stone/rubble walling, straw thatch; all dependent on subsistence farming with cattle, vegetables and cereal crops. Most crofting agreements carried with them peat cutting and shielding (transhumance) rights (McCulloch nd).

With the ‘clearances’ and the ensuing economic plight of the crofters the system changed to a mainly sheep-keeping and to a more individual land holding pattern. This and the Royal Commission of 1884 rendered the traditional format of House and Croft redundant and new formats developed. The houses, like those in Brittany, became more specialised for human habitation and started to take on some of the characteristics that we can readily recognise - a settled domesticity with a proper ‘houselike’ look. This was not just an accidental ‘organic’ evolutionary process. It was consciously promoted by standard ‘pattern book’ plans, in some cases provided by the Scottish agricultural commission that became involved in the relationship between Laird and Crofter after the 1884 commission. Two main plan-forms evolved: the two-cell single-storeyed house, and the two up - two down versions. In many cases the former was adapted to become the latter (Fenton & Walker nd) (Figs 5 and 6).

The rounded roof hips gave way to gabled ends and eventually the thatch gave way to imported slates or sheet material.

Some of these common characteristics in Skye, Brittany and the Cape may be attributed to the use of the materials available - stone, thatch and weak mortar - but these are about the only common factors. Climate and life style are so different that one would have expected a greater variation from this norm.

In the Isle of Skye we have seen the transition from a rather random distribution of façade elements to one of order and above all symmetry (Fig.4). This axiality became fashionable during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was no mere accident. The Classical Revival and its concept of order and symmetry filtered down from the grand gestures of the gentry finally to the peasant crofter. This was further reflected in the layout and order of subdivision and landscaping; if one compares the original settlement with its ‘runrigs’ with that of the nineteenth and twentieth century land pattern, the desire for order and symmetry become apparent.

Of course this was not confined to the areas we are looking at, it was the minds of everyone who could see or read and follow the general fashion of the times. For instance, Benjamin Moodie, a man making the big decision to leave his family estate in the Orkneys, emigrate to the Cape Colony in 1817 with a whole settler-group of Scottish artisans, and to set up his own little empire in the Overberg (Moodie 1835), thought he needed a textbook on architecture to guide him in this venture. None other than the Five Books of Palladio! Beautifully engraved.

Not only did this fashion for classical symmetry show itself in street patterns and the geometry of subdivision, but in the grand gesture of every homestead from W. Adriaan van der Stel’s Vergelegen to the modest Elim house (Fig.5), Briere farm house (Southern Brittany) and the farm labourer’s house at Melkhoutfontein near Stilbaai (Figs 5 and 6).

**Concern for detail**

One of the factors influencing simple semi-skilled settlers to build in the ‘Long House’ format was the ease of spanning the short constant width with a simple system of Rafter Couples made up of easily obtained and easily portable lengths of timber. The consistency of ‘truss’ form between the cottages of the Hebrides, Brittany, Jutland and the Cape is quite astounding. Rafter couples carrying purlins and their common rafters and thatching laths were to be found in
almost every instance. In addition, the traditional Cape method of supporting the \textit{brandsolder} or loft floor on beams independent of the roof trusses prevailed.

In detail, techniques in jointing reveal some interesting comparisons. For example the standard Cape method was to cross the rafters over one another, pin them with wood pegs at the ridge and to the collar. Purlins are supported on the collar extended beyond the rafters and the ridge is supported on double purlins. In the Lothians in Scotland, The Borders and North Yorkshire the system is generally to use sawn timbers and to halve and cross them at the ridge to support a single Ridge Pole (Walton 1952).

When Benjamin Moodie arrived in this country he brought with him about 200 indentured Scottish artisans mostly from the Lothians and bought his first home at Grootvadersbos near Heidelberg (Moodie 1835). It is probable that the original house was a row of three rooms and it is known that he extended from this and renewed some of the roof. If one examines the roof timbers it is perhaps significant that the trusses of the extended wings are made in the Scottish manner described above.

But even more significant is the consistent influence of roofing techniques on plan-form and its dimensions. If one examines the statistics and the frequency of common span widths one finds the figure of 6 metres measured over walls to be a very wide-spread module. In areas such as Villiersdorp and Riversdale the dimension seldom varies by more than 150 mm from the norm, and this tallies fairly closely with Isle of Skye and Brittany examples (Fig.5).

Adherence to the ‘Long House’ plan of a row of cells of equal span simplified the roofing geometry and avoided the more advanced techniques of making junctions, hips and valleys. In fact, both in the Cape and the European countries visited, there are many examples where all kinds of ‘tricks’ were used to avoid facing up to making such junctions. Even the addition of fashionable central gables in Cape farmhouses often had to await the availability of skilled roofers and thatchers who could do the job that the individual farmer found beyond him.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.png}
\caption{Distribution of European vernacular with observed affinities with the Cape.}
\end{figure}
When we put all these elements together we can assemble a great deal of ‘look alike’ comparisons. But to draw dogmatic conclusions, like saying “these building forms must have come from Scotland, Brittany or Denmark”, would be presumptuous. What we can say with some confidence is that there is a strong probability that eighteenth and nineteenth century Cape settlers brought with them memories and skill of building form and techniques from all the coastal and seafaring areas of Northern and Western Europe (Fig.7). Some of the hidden elements not normally associated with façadal typologies substantiate this probability. In addition the fact that the extant European examples are to be found in economically depressed areas suggests that the correlation would have been even more marked in the contemporary seventeenth and eighteenth century, when the movement of people from Europe to the Cape meant the movement of ideas and techniques which resulted in some of these family resemblances that we have been looking at.

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Further Reading