

REDISCOVER CHURCH SQUARE



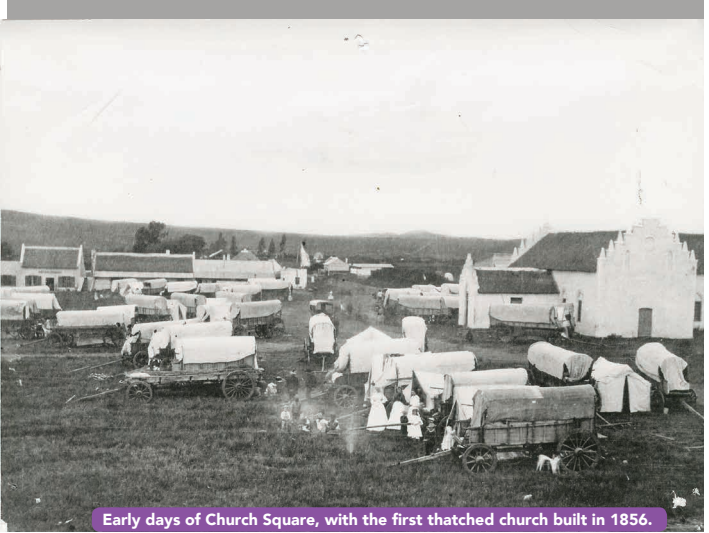
CHURCH SQUARE

Historical Background

Church Square is regarded as the cradle of the city that eventually developed into the capital of South Africa. At the beginning of the eighteenth century white missionaries and explorers visited the region north of the Vaal River. The Voortrekkers, after expelling Mzilikazi to Zimbabwe in 1838, were the first to lay out farms and settle here permanently. The first Voortrekker settler was Lucas Bronkhorst, who sold his farm to Commandant-General Marthinus Wessel Pretorius, son of the Voortrekker leader, Andries Pretorius. MW Pretorius was instrumental in establishing the settlement and named it Pretoria after his father.

Church Square was originally the marketplace where farmers gathered with their ox wagons and tenants to observe *nagmaal* or Holy Communion. In 1854, on the advice of Rev Dirk van der Hoff, MW Pretorius agreed to have a church built for the fifth Transvaal parish on the farm Elandspoort, which was his property. The first thatched church was built in 1856, a year after the new town was laid out, but it burnt down in 1882. The second church, built between 1884 and 1885, was designed by Thomas Claridge in neo-Gothic style, and came to be known as Franken's Church, its builder having been Marius Franken. This cruciform church had a tower surmounted by a steeple at the east end. To preserve the church-fort complex of the first church, a door faced each street entrance on the north, south, east and west. Franken's Church was demolished in 1904 and replaced by the Groote Kerk in Bo Street.

After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, Europeans flocked to Johannesburg. As a result, Pretoria prospered and many imposing buildings were erected over the years. Some of the historical buildings on Church Square, such as the Old Raadsaal, the Palace of Justice, the Law Chambers, the Old Nederlandsche Bank and the National Mint building, are a testimony to the prosperity of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR).



Early days of Church Square, with the first thatched church built in 1856.



The water fountain (donated by Sammy Marks) taking its pride of place in the Square.



The Statue of Paul Kruger, installed at its current site in 1954.

Law Chambers and Old Nederlandsche Bank buildings



The Law Chambers building is the oldest of the western façade buildings. Built for the African Board of Executors and Trust Company, it was built in Flemish style by Johannesburg architects, Phillip Carmichael and Murray. The cornerstone was laid by Commandant Piet Joubert, the leader of the opposition party in the ZAR government. With its three graceful gables and bacon stripes of red brick and ochre, this building forms a harmonious link between the Old Raadsaal and the Palace of Justice, and resembles many buildings of the ZAR period. The building was restored in the late 1980s. During the restoration, the whole façade was cleaned of a coat of plaster and paint that had been added. A unique clay layer was also discovered in the floor construction.

The Old Nederlandsche Bank building, originally the Nederlandsche Bank en Crediet Vereeniging voor Zuid Afrika, is an architectural gem designed by Dutch architect Willem de Zwaan. The red brick and sandstone building is in Flemish Renaissance style and was completed in 1897. The stepped gables are an unusual feature. The cast-iron gates and balustrades were manufactured in Delft in the Netherlands and were influenced by the Jugendstil (the German version of art nouveau), which was an innovation for Pretoria at the time. Material from the recently demolished old church on the square was used to build the bank. The bank was on the ground floor until 1953, and the offices of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Fabriken Voor Ontplofbare Stoffen – a dynamite manufacturing company – occupied the first floor. In 1914, the top floor was gutted by fire. During restoration in 1988, original stonemason's marks were discovered on top of sandstone blocks that had to be replaced.

General Post Office

The General Post Office is situated on the north-western side of Church Square. Its location on the main square is typical of many world cities. Postal services reached the Transvaal in 1850 and five years later Pretoria was included on the postal route when transport drivers were replaced by mail coaches.



The Post Office building as it looks today.

The present Post Office, a four-storey building with a plastered façade in the neo-Renaissance style, was the fourth for old Pretoria and was erected on the site of the previous one, a long, single-storey sandstone building. It was designed by William Hawke, one of Sir Herbert Baker's promising students. The design includes elements of art deco and classical orders such as Doric columns and the ornamental relief work of the façades.

The cornerstone was laid in 1910 by the British High Commissioner, Lord Selborne. The building contractor was William Nottingham. The sculptor of the naked couple in the sculpture next to the clock above the side entrance is unknown. Even though the man's face resembles that of one of the corner figures at the foot of Van Wouw's statue of Paul Kruger in the centre of Church Square, and the woman is said to depict Van Wouw's daughter, the sculpture does not resemble Van Wouw's work in other respects.

National Bank, Mint and Bank of Africa

The National Bank building, next to the Post Office, housed the first Transvaal Bank, which was founded specifically to administer the government funds of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. The Nasionale Bank en Munt der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek was established in April 1891, the main reason being that, as an independent country, especially one producing its own gold, the country had to have its own bank and its own mint. The Bank and Mint building was built in 1892. The Mint, which was temporarily housed in the Kimberley Hotel on the same site, was the first in the southern hemisphere. It is located towards the back of the Bank building. In 1899, president Paul Kruger gave his friend, Sammy Marks, permission to use the mint for one day to mint 215 gold ticks for his friends and family. Kruger did this to thank Marks for the statue of himself, which Marks had commissioned. The tall and narrow annex to the north of the bank was built in 1903 to provide extra office space for both the Bank and the Mint. The Jugendstil influence can clearly be seen. The Mint machine room was at the back of the building. On the inside, between the bank building and the annex, is a beautiful wrought-iron gate. The façades of the building were restored in 1986.



The National Bank building, which housed the first ever Transvaal Bank.

Palace of Justice



The Palace of Justice, where the Rivonia Trial of 1963 took place.

The Palace of Justice on the northern side of Church Square was designed by Sytze Wierda in 1895. In neo-Italian Renaissance style, it was his last masterpiece and shows interesting deviations from other buildings which he designed for the state. In virtually all his buildings he used one central tower to mark the entrance, whereas in this one he used two towers flanking the main entrance. The large horizontal, colonnaded balconies of the Church Square façade are representative of Wierda's innovative style (later copied by Sir Herbert Baker). The openness of the building's northern façade and its elegantly curved staircase also contrast with the solid style of most of his other buildings.

Mr Justice John Kotze was actively involved with the project to build the court building. Wierda reacted angrily to many of Kotze's suggestions, and the large double volume vestibule with its stained glass ceiling, sandstone columns and decorative tile floor was duly completed in spite of Kotze. Once again, as with the Old Raadsaal, Wierda was asked to add another storey to the half-completed building. All the façade drawings had to be changed, and items such as stairs and roof domes, which had already been manufactured, had to be adapted to the new design.

John Munro of Pretoria started the building operations in 1895 and president Paul Kruger laid the foundation stone on 8 June 1897. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the semi-completed building was used as a hospital for British troops. The building was completed after the war and much of Wierda's

design was not realised. The original plans show that the façade facing Church Square was to be richly adorned with statues. Wierda, however, saw the building as being “modern monumental” and was proud of it.

It was at the Palace of Justice that the Rivonia Trial took place between 1963 and 1964. Often referred to as “the trial that changed South Africa” the Rivonia Trial led to the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and ten other leading opponents of apartheid (Walter Sisulu, Denis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and others) who were convicted of sabotage and sentenced to life imprisonment. In what was arguably the most profound moment of the trial, Nelson Mandela made the famous three-hour “I Am Prepared to Die” speech in the dock in which he condemned the very court in which he was appearing as “illegitimate”.

The old Reserve Bank and Old Mutual buildings

Some buildings in Church Square date from the early twentieth century. The most important is the old Reserve Bank building on the northern side. It is one of Sir Herbert Baker’s last impressive buildings in South Africa. His colleague, Gordon Leith, assisted with parts of the design. Baker is best known for his design of the Union Buildings in Pretoria. He was born in England and came



The Old Reserve Bank, designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

to South Africa in 1892. After the Anglo-Boer War, Baker was asked by High Commissioner Lord Milner to come to Transvaal to monitor the quality of post-war architecture. His work in the arts and crafts movement greatly influenced South African architecture. The old Reserve Bank building is a fortress-type stone building with elaborate wrought-iron work on its northern façade. It was inaugurated on 27 July 1931. The walls of the building, which has three floors above ground level and two below, are of granite and sandstone. Above the bronze entrance is the head of Moneta, the mythological Roman goddess in whose temple coins were struck. The main hall is large and encircled by a gallery, which rests on black granite pillars covered with black Belgian marble. The seventeenth-century bell at the back of the hall was a gift from the Bank of England.

Ons Eerste Volksbank and First National Bank buildings



Ons Eerste Volksbank – built with the purpose of strengthening the Afrikaner economy and culture.

The *Ons Eerste Volksbank* (Our First People's Bank) building in Mutual Lane on the north-eastern corner of Church Square has elements of Cape architecture combined with Transvaal brick architecture. During the 1930s, a strong movement for regionalism in art, culture and architecture originated in Pretoria and spread throughout Transvaal. *Ons Eerste Volksbank* was established in the late twenties to strengthen the Afrikaner economy and culture. It would become *Volkkas Bank* in 1934, and later Absa Bank.

One of the first law firms to be established in Pretoria just after the Anglo-Boer War, Roux & Jacobsz (later Ross & Jacobsz), occupied offices in this building from 1932. The bank was on the ground floor and the law firm on the floor above. The First National Bank building (previously occupied by Barclays Bank), is situated on the north-eastern corner of Church Square. The building was designed by architect Gordon Leith, who was known as one of the masters of traditional-styled architecture in South Africa. He tried to combine the typical South African architectural idiom with the official British colonial styles of the early twentieth century. This building was enlarged on its northern side during the 1960s, maintaining the original style.

Tudor Chambers

Tudor Chambers is situated opposite the First National Bank building. It is the only central city building which has been preserved in its original condition. This richly ornamented neo-Gothic building was designed by John Ellis, an architect from Scotland. The five-storey building was completed in 1904 and was for many years the most imposing commercial and office building in Pretoria. It was built for the businessman, George Jesse Heyes, owner of Melrose House, who operated a mail coach service and had numerous other business interests.

To mark the opening of Tudor Chambers, Heyes hosted an exhibition of notable art - including Anton van Wouw's maquettes of the statue of Paul Kruger and the corner figures that were to be placed around it. The statue itself was still in Delagoa Bay (Maputo), having arrived there from Italy shortly before the war, but the four Boer figures had disap-



Tudor Chambers, built for businessman George Jesse Heyes.

peared. They were later found at the Military College at Chatham, England.

On the south-eastern corner of the square, directly opposite the Old Raadsaal, stands the Standard Bank building. This building was designed by William Henry Stucke and built by W Pattison between 1931 and 1934. It replaced the Grand Hotel, indicating the extent to which banking activities took over the social function of Church Square. It is typical of bank buildings in the neoclassical art deco style of the period, and strongly resembles Sir Herbert Baker's South Africa House in Trafalgar Square in London. Standard Bank still occupies the building. It also houses offices for advocates, as it is situated close to the Deeds Office and law courts. The Saambou building has a statue of a plasterer by the sculptor Hennie Potgieter, who is also associated with the friezes in the Voortrekker Monument.

Statue of Paul Kruger



Oom Paul Kruger's statue, the work of famous sculptor Anton van Wouw.

Church Square is today dominated by a statue of president Paul Kruger. The statue has, however, not always stood there. After the second church in the

square was demolished in 1904, an elaborate fountain donated by businessman Sammy Marks was placed in the centre of the square. The fountain now stands in the Pretoria Zoological Gardens. The statue – by the famous sculptor, Anton van Wouw – was commissioned by Sammy Marks towards the end of the 1890s. Kruger’s term of office coincided with the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, which led to an influx of foreign fortune seekers and miners, and eventually the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899.

The statue was completed in 1899 and only arrived in Lourenço Marques (Maputo) after the outbreak of the war, where it remained until after the war. It was eventually erected in Prince’s Park, Church Street West. In 1925 it was moved and erected in front of the Pretoria Railway Station. It was finally brought to Church Square in 1954, where it now stands on the site where the second church and Sammy Marks’s fountain once stood.

THE OLD RAADSAAL



The Old Raadsaal building, the first ever parliament of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

Since the first meeting of president Paul Kruger’s ZAR *Volksraad* in the Old Raadsaal in May 1890, this historic seat of government has seen all the central figures of South Africa’s vibrant story cross its threshold.

Sytze Wopke Wierda (1839–1911) was thoroughly grounded in both architectural and engineering skills that he acquired in Amsterdam where he worked. President Kruger appointed him as architect for the Raadsaal.



One of the Ou Raadsaal's many hallways are richly decorated, from the balustrades to the doorknockers.

Wierda was fortunate to have as his chief assistant in the Department of Public Works, Klaas van Rijssen, who had been his pupil in Holland and a skilled draughtsman. They were ably assisted by John J Kirkness, the building contractor and founder of the brick-making works, which supplied the bricks for many of Pretoria's buildings. It was remarkable what precise detail Wierda gave to his original drawings for the Old Raadsaal – from the woman's figure on the roof to the time on the clock in the tower and the scales on the roof to the pediment, Ionic and Corinthian pillars. In the classical tradition a building such as this should be rooted in the old order and elements of style handed down from Greece to Rome and from the Renaissance to the Neo-Renaissance.

Among the details which Wierda took into account when designing the Old Raadsaal, were the sturdy metal hooks for tethering the mounts of visitors to the seat of government. These can still be seen in front of the building's portico. Affixed into the sandstone according to the original specifications for the building, the hooks still invite four riders to leave their horses there.

Door furniture



The front door leading into the Ou Raadsaal building.

The bronze doorknocker mounted on the wall next the front door is cast in the form of a lion's head with a ring through the jaws. When the ring is pulled, the lion sticks out its tongue. This may be connected to the symbolism of taming a lion. Wierda and the people of the nineteenth century were fond of electrical gadgets according to Albrecht Holm and Diederé Viljoen in the book, *Mure wat Praat*, published in 1993, a year after the restoration of the Old Raadsaal was completed. The wires to the lion knocker were reconnected during the 1992 restoration.

All the woodwork of the Old Raadsaal's windows and doors was carried out in the Orkney Islands by the father-in-law of John J Kirkness, the building contractor. The wood was from Norway.

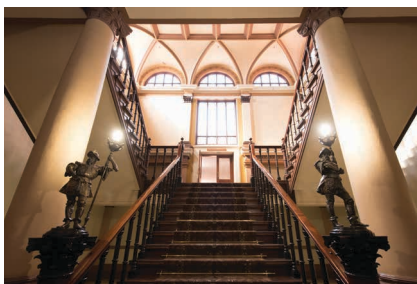
The imposing heavy front door, three metres high, is richly decorated and opens by means of a solid cast bronze handle. It is divided into ten square sections each with a centrepiece. In the middle row, the centrepiece is of glass.

Set back in a cool portico, the doorway itself has a high granite threshold that induces a sense of entering a special place. Once inside, the black and white marble-tiled floor in chessboard style, which Wierda often used in entrances to stairways, symbolises the

eternal struggle of life and death. In the specifications, Wierda also asked for red that represents past, present and future. However, it appears that red marble was not readily available at the time.

Stairways

The steep stairway flanked by massive Ionic pillars in the cool dimly-lit entrance to the Old Raadsaal draws one into the golden interior. The balustrades of the stairs are glossy from polish and use and reflect the light filtering through the stained glass windows of the second level. The balustrades are finished at the corners with wooden pedestals shaped like pillars with Corinthian capitals imparting harmony to the symmetry of the stairs.



The two bronze knights that flank the main entrance stairs.

At the top of the stairs in the entrance, two bronze knights clad in armour hold aloft their soft golden lights, enhanced by the earthy colour of the walls and the sandstone of the pillars. And as one passes, the floorboards creak and the knights rattle even without the swords they once held.

Wierda specified that each stair should have loose wooden coverings of ash or beech screwed in place. These may still be seen and there has been little wear in the hard wood because the stairs and passages have had protective coverings such as carpeting or linoleum. During the recent restoration, the passage and stairway carpeting was manufactured with the coat of arms of the ZAR as part of its pattern. The bronze rods that hold the stair carpeting in place were also specially made according to a pattern dating back to the nineteenth century.

The higher one climbs the steeper the stairs become. This is possible because the original design of the Old Raadsaal was for two storeys and Wierda may have been hard-pressed for space to accommodate the additional stairs.

Chambers

The heart of this stately building is the *raadsaal* or council chamber. Placed beneath the central dome, the massive chamber, now fully restored to its original glory, is impressive with its heavy walnut chairs covered with dark green Moroccan leather, contrasting with the patterned carpet specially woven according to old photographs and colours deduced from patches of paint here and there on the walls beneath many layers.



The Ou Raadsaal Chambers, which forms the heart of the stately building.

The chairman's chair with its intricately carved back has the ZAR crest in the middle. The curved tables and benches have been replaced in their original horseshoe shape. After 1900, during the time the British used this chamber, the walls were painted green from the windows down, a green carpet laid down the length of the room and the chairs arranged Westminster style, along the sides of the walls with two-seater desks replacing the curved benches.

From the public gallery on the west side, a narrow curved stairway once led to the public gallery of the chamber of the *Tweede Volksraad*. In 1906 this gallery was closed on the west side and opened on the east side, affording a view of the Raadsaal, then called "The House". This gallery has been closed at both ends, as the Tweede

Volksraad was not restored to its former state while the Raadsaal was restored to its original format of curved benches.

The west vestibule, the part of the building that has experienced the most change, is as it was in 1906. The original plans reveal a courtyard and cast iron gates where visitors could ascend a spiral staircase to the galleries. It has broad stairs and wooden panels in Burmese teak. In 1906 the wooden floors were refurbished in Oregon pine. During the 1992 restoration all these changes were left untouched to show the changes of 1906.

Tant Gesie's balcony



Tant Gesie's balcony, with hanging flags just above the building's main entrance.

President Paul Kruger's *Eerste Volksraad* held its sessions in the *raadsaal* or council chambers. On the east side of the Old Raadsaal, a steep flight of stairs leads up to the first floor where offices for lower ranking officials are situated. Here the passages have wooden floors and the walls are more simply decorated. Another half flight of even steeper stairs leads to the three balconies on the east side of the *Eerste Volksraad* chamber. The middle one was known as *Tant Gesie se balkon*.

In the original plans Wierda calls them *tribune voor rapporteurs* or the press gallery. It was from here that the famous Afrikaans poet and writer, Eugene Marais, wrote his acerbic reports for the newspaper "Land en Volk" making a nuisance of himself that resulted in his ban. He then simply moved to the public gallery and continued to write.

In the middle balcony, the President's wife, Tant Gesie (Gezina) would sit and listen to the debate in the *Volksraad* chamber. The only part of the original *Volksraad* which was not restored in 1992 because of costs are the two shell-shaped balconies on either side of Tant Gesie's balcony along the east wall.

Tower statue



The Tower Statue, situated on the pinnacle of the tower above the Raadsaal's clock.

There has been much speculation about the statue of a woman on the pinnacle of the tower above the clock of the Old Raadsaal. Resembling a ship's figurehead, the idea of having the figure of a woman on the government buildings rankled the conservative president. He claimed to have had enough trouble with his opponent, Queen Victoria. There is even a story that he was unhappy because her head was uncovered and so they allegedly screwed on a helm.

However, Wierda had no trouble explaining to the president that it was not her majesty. Some of the citizens then thought she might even be Mother Mary. This argument carried more weight because many Western artists have depicted Mary in classical garb. It would have been more difficult for Wierda to refute this argument were it not for her shield, spear and flag.

Indeed, these symbols were associated with the Greek goddess Athena or her Roman peer, Minerva, goddess of wisdom, industry and agriculture, and in the Roman pantheon, also of war. They even thought she might represent Britannia. This too was unacceptable and perhaps Wierda was simply carried away in a spate of Baroque enthusiasm. Some quick thinking won the day! The concept of freedom worked miracles with Transvalers ... and of course with the French too. And so she became *Die Beeld Van Vryheid* - The Statue of Freedom.

Minute detail

High up in the tower, at the top of the spiral staircase leading to the public gallery of both chambers of the *Volksraad*, there is a rain gauge, a striking symbol of the connection between the building and the welfare of the people of the Boer republic.

Wierda's specifications throughout reveal minute attention to detail. He was fortunate indeed to be associated with people of the calibre of John J Kirkness, the contractor, and Klaas van Rijse, his draughtsman. In spite of having to add a storey to the building because the president did not want the adjacent hotel to be higher, they delivered on time.

There is much proof of attention to detail in the finishes of the Old Raadsaal: from specifications about the type of paint to telephones, mantelpieces, friezes, sewer system and pits. Wierda's love of paint is typical of his time and of the seafaring nations, such as the Dutch and the English. He even specified the type of paint and how many coats for all items.

Silver telephones connected the Secretary of State, Dr WJ Leyds, to each of the 15 departments, fireplaces in almost every room had mantelpieces of wood (except for the three in the president's suite which were of black marble), and delicate friezes against the ground floor walls and passages emerged during the 1992 restoration after removing 80 years of paint.

The specifications for the stained glass windows seem simple but the work done was thorough as the intact complex designs in the *Volksraad* chamber, entrance hall and doors to passages testify. Little work was required to the glass in the passage doors while only the lead in the outside windows, and here and there a piece of glass, needed to be replaced. It is amazing how well the glass has survived Pretoria's fierce hailstorms of more than a century.

Clock tower and bells



The Old Raadsaal's Clock Tower, just below the Tower Statue.

Four bells were specially cast in Germany for the Old Raadsaal's clock and bell tower. Each of the bells was engraved. The first had the words: *Staatspresident Paul Kruger* (State President Paul Kruger), the second *Het recht den volkeren is aan onze zijde en hoe zwak wij zijn onze God is een rechtvaardig God* (The right of nations is on our side and however weak we seem, God is just), on the third *Onze leus is de leus onzer vaderen: Eendracht maakt macht* (Our watchword is the

watchword of our fathers; Unity is strength), and the fourth *Wij herhalen plechtig, onze leuze is: Eendracht en verzoening, onze vrijheid is orde en wet* (We solemnly repeat, our watchword is: Unity and reconciliation, our freedom is law and order).

They were made to tell the time in the Dutch way. At the half hour the bells would announce the coming hour and at the quarter hour. Thus when it was for instance half-past two in the afternoon, the clock would strike three because in Afrikaans (or Dutch) one says the time is *half drie* or half three.

The stairs leading to the bell tower housing the clock and its bells on the north side of the building had to be completely rebuilt during the restoration. Each week the weights are drawn up and if you happen to be there when the hour strikes there is a cacophony of rattling as winches, cables, chains, rods and levers are set in motion, which take you back to the past.

And so the building was slowly completed with German bells, a rain gauge from France, wood from Norway manufactured in the Orkney Islands, English stained glass and all put together by an architect from Friesland and a Scottish building contractor.

Paul Kruger's room

The door to the president's office is close to the front door and is in fact, the only door in the entrance hall. It appears to be made of dark walnut painted white before restoration. It also has a bronze handle and a threshold.

The room itself is medium sized and has fine proportions. It was here that the president spent most of his time, particularly during the last part of the Anglo-Boer War. It has a simple wooden floor of pine that contrasts with the delicate decorative painted finishes on the walls and ceiling in shades of deep red. There are "windows" to show what was underneath several layers of paint applied throughout the years.

Before restoration everything was painted white. This included the wood panelling which covers about a metre up from the floor. During the restoration the wood panelling and doors proved not to be walnut but expertly grain painted to resemble walnut.

A long search revealed the original wood grain paintwork. Layers of paint had first to be removed: white, green, grey and brown. The design was found on the back of two doors in a storeroom and a toilet that were closed off and thus never repainted. The discovery served as an example of this technique and was then used on the 675 doors throughout the building.

From president Kruger's office, a double door opens into that of Dr WJ Leyds who was the Secretary of State. This was also richly decorated but in shades of green. The third room in this suite, a conference room, was similarly richly decorated but in shades of brown. All three rooms had velvet curtains and black marble fireplaces.

Restoration

In 1956, a historian, HM Rex, dealt with the Old Raadsaal and its predecessors in his Master of Arts thesis, approaching the subject from a historical viewpoint and discussing links between architectural form and style with the history and politics of Kruger's time.

In 1958 when the Simon van der Stel Foundation was formed in Cape Town through the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, it soon became a countrywide organisation indicating that the time was ripe for rediscovering South Africa's architectural treasures.

In 1968 the Old Raadsaal was declared a national monument. This generated much interest in the old building and its historical worth, particularly in the study of cultural history. In 1985 another thesis, this time by Diedré van den Berg, focused on the social, political

and military aspects. This was a solid basis for further research and structural investigations to restore the building.

The architects appointed to undertake the restoration under Albrecht Holm in 1986 were as follows: Holm, Jordaan, Holm and Meiring, and Van der Lecq Thomas & Ronga. The building contractor was Vic Moore (Pty) Ltd, the quantity surveyors Norman and Siglé, the structural engineers Van Wyk and Louw, and the mechanical engineers Jordaan and Hayward.

A set of standard measures of volume made of solid bronze dating back to 1899, are among the many treasures in the Old Raadsaal. The largest of these is the peck, the second, the bushel and the third, the gallon.

Another standard measure was added to this collection in 1904 in the form of a chain to set a standard for land surveyors when measuring land. Brass hooks were affixed to the floor and grooves cut in the slate floor under the passage doors so that the chain could lie there unhindered when in use. The chain was used until metrification in 1971.

Pediment

The chunky front gable of the Old Raadsaal dominates the whole facade and faces the square. In his design Wierda intuitively embodied the old Voortrekker tradition that houses should face the street.

The gable pediment supported by pillars depicts an ancient form used by the Greeks for rulers' houses known as the megaron. This was later elevated and used in temples where the gable was always the entrance. The triangle inside the gable is known as the pediment and it was here that Wierda placed the ZAR's coat of arms.

Anton van Wouw (1862–1945), famous sculptor of that period, moved his entire studio and staff of stonemasons into the half-finished Old Raadsaal to fashion the

coat of arms for the gable. It is one of very few works in sandstone that Van Wouw made before becoming famous for his bronze figures such as those at the foot of Paul Kruger's statue on Church Square. To all appearances there was an excellent understanding between Van Wouw and Wierda.

Below Van Wouw's creation the words *Eendragt Maakt Magt* (Unity is Strength) were carved using the Afrikaans "g" instead of the Dutch "ch". The original specifications state that the statues were to be bronzed. It is uncertain as to whether this was ever done.

It was only with the first restoration of the building in 1962, when the Provincial Council moved into the old *Volksraad* chamber, that the ZAR coat of arms returned to a place of honour on the pediment after being copied by the sculptor Hendrikz. The British coat of arms was then carefully removed and stored.









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