

THE BEREJA STYLE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF WILLIAM MURRAY-JONES AND ARTHUR RITCHIE MCKINLEY INCLUDING THE BRAZILIAN JOURNAL OF MURRAY-JONES

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IN contemporary times, little attention has been paid to the early twentieth century architecture of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. This period of immense social and political change started with immigration at the time of the South African War, the move to Union, participation in World War I and political turmoil in the 1920s. At the same time, new technologies such as electricity and telephones needed to be incorporated into the existing infrastructure. Architects, particularly those working for the city, contributed substantially to the interwar urban environment. Their work displays an emergent regional character, as well as reflections of influences drawn from abroad. Largely founded on a substantial collection of drawings located in the Barrie Biermann Architectural Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, archived and scanned by Michele Jacobs, this book is a valuable contribution to the gap in knowledge of buildings of this period, and tracks not only the buildings specifically through their drawings, but also presents the background of the architects in particular, hoping to draw out the influences that drove the aesthetic production of their works.

The Bereja Style starts with a chapter introducing the rationale for the study, briefly describing the arrival of William Murray-Jones before laying out a series of sections discussing the works of some other architects of the period,

including Ing and Jackson and Clement Seneque. It then considers borough architects and surveyors, important for the author since these people contributed to the 'silent' built environment – bus and tram stops, telephone kiosks, electrical exchanges and public toilets. A significant section presenting the journal of William Murray-Jones during his six-year sojourn in Brazil prefaces the discussion about his approach to architecture, in the hope of connecting the strong Spanish influence on buildings constructed in Durban in this period. It also describes his previous experiences abroad, contextualising his designs for Nagle Dam with an engineering project he had worked on in Spain. Chapter 4 introduces the work of Murray-Jones specifically, describing projects as diverse as Nagle Dam (c.1942), Howard College and its associated Jubilee Park, and the Native Affairs Department administration offices. Each specific building (or structure) of interest is laid out with drawings and photographs, if available, and a closely detailed description of the building, typical of Kearney's work. Most importantly, the 'non' buildings are also documented: the Amphitheatre, urban plans, buildings that were never built, and big ideas.

Significantly, the connection between William Murray-Jones and Arthur Ritchie McKinley is referred to in the closing paragraphs of the section. It appears that Murray-Jones and Ritchie McKinley worked in close association

after Murray-Jones's work day at the City Engineers finished.

Chapter 5 considers the prolific work of the enigmatic Ritchie McKinley. His origins in Durban, the son of a builder, differentiate him from many architects of the period, most of whom were immigrant. McKinley's architectural dexterity is described, demonstrating his ability to work between his clear development of the Berea Style, Art Deco, and Arts and Crafts. McKinley turned his hand to designing homes, apartment blocks, large-scale urban developments, shops, offices and hotels before his sudden departure to Johannesburg,

after which he disappeared from the architectural record completely.

The Berea Style's authors trace a silent interwar period, explain significant parts of the built environment of Durban, and pepper the text with many snippets of information. They begin to explain how Durban struggled with its own regionalism, before the mainstream adoption of Modernism in the late 1950s. With a limited print run of only 200 copies, *The Berea Style* is a vital addition to the bookshelves of architects, enthusiasts and anyone interested in the history of Durban.

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