

to speak about his iconic work as it lay in that Province^{xv}. He placed Welkom-Wes in the company of not only Wright's Unity Temple but also San Vitale in Ravenna, San Lorenzo in Milan and Santa Maria di Carceri in Prato. All of these buildings are similar in that they have centralised plans in which the main space is 'wrapped' in several layers and top-lit to create an inwardly-focussed and tranquil space. Furthermore, he spoke at length about the continuities of architectural principles across time and space and placed Welkom-Wes in what was for him the realm of 'timelessness in architecture', the title given to his lecture, and consistent with the position he took throughout his career in architectural and urban issues.

Whether Minnaar ever returned to pastoral work, let alone to construction, could not be established, but Uytendogaardt's work continued to court controversy, none more so than over the Werdmuller Centre in Claremont, Cape Town, 1973.

While architects and students of Architecture might form the largest contingent of admirers of the extremely bold step of Minnaar and Uytendogaardt in realising a monumental design situated on the border between architecture and sculpture for a conservative congregation in a mining town, Welkom-Wes is one of only three surviving NGK congregations of the ten once there. Of course this could be associated with the difficulty of disposing of a building without obvious church symbolism, but it was also interesting to learn that fifty years after its design, given the many points of access and entry including descending from the *konsistorie*, the sacral space has been discovered as a venue of choice for conducting wedding ceremonies and, with that, perhaps, the beginning of a new appreciation entirely.

Uytendogaardt recalled that he was aware during the design and construction of Welkom-Wes that he could during his career be involved with either a single church or with many^{xvi}. As it turned out, this was his only church, making it even more remarkable in his substantial *oeuvre*. He also said that for truly exceptional creations, "time took willing detours" (allegedly adapted from Walt Whitman).

In this instance that might just happen, taking into account the perception of the current congregation and the architectural profession's long-standing fascination and interest in Welkom-Wes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Curtis, W (1998) *Modern Architecture since 1900*. London: Phaidon.
- Elliott, J (1987) Uytendogaardt, RS, Morgan, A & Naylor, C (Eds) *Contemporary Architects*. Chicago: St James Press, pp928-930.
- Gedenkblad*. 25 Jaar van Genade, 1963-1988 [1988]. Nederlandse Gereformeerde Gemeente Welkom-Wes.
- Koorts, J (1974) *Beginsels van Gereformeerde Kerkbou*. Bloemfontein: Sacum.
- Krige, N (1967) Hier staan Welkom-Wes se NG Kerk. *Huisgenoot*, 10 Feb, pp. 28-29.
- Le Roux, S (2008) Die Soeke van drie Argitekture na 'n Planvorm vir Afrikaanse Gereformeerde Kerkbou. *South African Journal of Art History*, 22(2), November, pp. 20-44.
- McCarter, R (2005) *Frank Lloyd Wright*. London: Phaidon.
- Murray, N (2010) Architectural Modernism and Apartheid Modernity in South Africa. A Critical Inquiry into the Work of Architect and Urban Designer Roelof Uytendogaardt, 1960-2009. Unpublished PhD thesis in African Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town.
- Notule van Kerkraadsvergaderinge. Nederlandse Gereformeerde Gemeente Welkom-Wes [1963-66].
- Nuttall, J (1993) Roelof Uytendogaardt. *Transcaal Provincial Institute of Architects' Journal*, November, pp12-16.
- Nuttall, JC (2005) The Dutch Reformed Church, Welkom West, 1964. *Architecture SA*, July/August, pp64-67.
- Riley, T (Ed) *Frank Lloyd Wright Architect*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994.
- Roelof Uytendogaardt Papers, University of Cape Town Libraries, BC1264.
- Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (1974/5) Vol 11. Cape Town: NASOU.
- Theron, D (1969) Contra Mundum. *CREDO*, No 19, October.
- Uytendogaardt, R (1965) Shop at Paarl, Cape of Good Hope. Donat, J (Ed) *World Architecture 2*. London: Studio Books, 178-183.
- Vio, G (2006) *Roelof Uytendogaardt. Senza tempo / Timeless*. Padua: Il Poligrafo.
- Williams, R (1991) First Unitarian Church and School. Brownlee, D & De Long, D (Eds) *Louis I Kahn. In the Realm of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, pp 340-345.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Tenders varied from R67 784 to R81 000 (*Gedenkblad* [ix]).
- ⁱⁱ W De W Hartman, Kroonstad; Leon Roodt, Welkom; and Uytendogaardt & Pelser, Cape Town (*Gedenkblad* [ix]).
- ⁱⁱⁱ Simultaneously with two other South Africans, WO Meyer and Ian Marshall who graduated from the master class of Louis Kahn.
- ^{iv} The identity of Pelser, the reasons for the formation of the practice and the choice of practice style could not be established.
- ^v Uytendogaardt was not the only Kahn graduate to draw on precedents of Wright. For the rectory at RAU (unexecuted project,

1968), WO Meyer chose a centrifugal cruciform plan, a plan type associated with Wright, and in particular with Wingspread, the house designed for Herbert Johnson of Johnson Wax, north of Racine, Wisconsin, 1937-8, which Meyer conceded as the progenitor. See Peters, W (Rand Afrikaans) University of Johannesburg, Kingsway Campus. *Architecture SA*, September/October 2011, p57.

^{vi} This position is unusual. At Unity Temple the organ pipes complete the backdrop of the liturgical centre as was the case in older churches of the NGK. Alternatively a side wall or rear gallery, but it is known that an organ can better complement singing if placed within sight and more central to the worshipping community, possibly the reasoning of Uytendogaardt.

^{vii} Made possible by the development of construction in reinforced concrete. It should be noted that due to heaving clay, the church at Welkom-Wes was founded on piles, and the engineers, Kantey & Templer, Cape Town, even appointed supervising engineers in Welkom, SS Mostert & Ptnrs "as the structure is rather intricate" (UCT Uytendogaardt Papers. Letter of 14 May 1964).

^{viii} The date, 31st October, marks the beginning of the protestant Reformation in 1517 and is commemorated by reformed churches annually (SESA).

^{ix} Personal communication, Minnaar to Kotze.

^x This is a reference to the Book of Revelation 21:6 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End'.

^{xi} A photograph of the panel was kindly made available by Kobus du Preez, University of the Free State.

^{xii} It is known that Uytendogaardt suffered from dyslexia.

^{xiii} Letter, quantity surveyor Slingsby to Minnaar, dated 24 Jan 1966. "Roelof has told me of the wonderful opportunity you have [been] offered to go on this American trip" (UCT Uytendogaardt Papers). This 'trip' was, in fact, an opportunity for Minnaar to undergo a mentorship with evangelist Dr Billy Graham, sponsored by Uytendogaardt himself (personal communication, Minnaar to Kotze).

^{xiv} With a significant increase of members after World War II, the NGK in what was considered South Africa's 'fifth Province', now Namibia, constituted itself as an independent synod in 1957 with Secretariats for mission, poverty-relief and evangelisation based in Windhoek (SESA, 1974, Vol 10, p193).

^{xv} A copy of the handwritten manuscript headed 'Sophia Gray 1990' is held by Kotze.

^{xvi} Related by Kotze, who also recalls that Uytendogaardt expressed the wish to visit the church once more, a wish which remained unfulfilled due to his untimely death in 1998.

Walter Peters is Professor of Architecture at the University of the Free State and Visiting Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand. Paul Kotze, a Professor in the School of Architecture & Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, studied Urban Design under Uytendogaardt with whom he developed a life-long friendship.

This work is based upon research supported by the National Research Foundation. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and therefore the NRF does not accept any liability in regard thereto.