

CS STUDIO ARCHITECTS

KLEIN SCHUUR: RESTORATION AND UPGRADING

LOCATION: GROOTE SCHUUR, CAPE TOWN

DATE: 2003-2007

BACKGROUND

Records indicate that in 1657 commander Jan Van Riebeeck build a store for the Company's grain being grown at Rondebosch. This was the first building to be erected at the place now known as Groote Schuur which at the time included the present Klein Schuur. In 1791 the post at "DeSchuer" was put up for auction. Over the next hundred years the property changed many hands, and this process is well recorded in the Cape Archives. In 1912 the Union Government bought the property.

Archival photographs show that in the early 20th century the view of the east façade with three wolfe -ent gables and striped iron corrugated curved veranda roof between the "stoepkamers". A road leads up to the house through a vineyard.

In 2003 when work commenced on the project it was found that the present Klein Schuur house is situated in the same position as the one indicated by Thibault in 1812 and is at present U – shaped.

DESIGN

It was agreed to restore the main house, which is being used as a ministerial residence, to its original state before 1912, where possible. Further to add the additional spatial requirements as a modern element juxtaposing the historical building, allowing it to be clearly identifiable. The old building is therefore separated from the new with a glass link.

Since 1940 many additions, internal changes and modifications have been made to the historical structure. The following were identified (See plan of layout 2003)

The old "stoepkamer" on the south side was sub - divided to form a bed room with a bathroom built onto the south side, and TV – room. We therefore re – instated the space and demolished the bathroom, stoep and store.

The old "stoepkamer" on the north side was extended to create a study while adding an en – suite bathroom to the main bedroom. This was redesigned to read as a modern element with an en- suite bathroom and courtyard.

The eastern verandah had been thatched. This was restored to the green and white corrugated iron striped curved roof. Outbuildings for staff, an electrical sub station and a double garage were built as rudimentary structures to the south. These were consequently demolished and a guest cottage built in its place.

With regards to dating and understanding the building in terms of its materials, one can distinguish the oldest walls of a house by the fact that they are usually 500 to 600mm wide. The building materials of the walls also give an indication of their age. In the experience of our restoration advisor Gwen Fagan, black friable mortar was used in the 18th century, whereas a yellow clay mortar was favoured in the 19th century.

The project could not have been realized and completed without the co – operation of the National Department of Public Works, and the valuable input from Gawie and Gwen Fagan.