

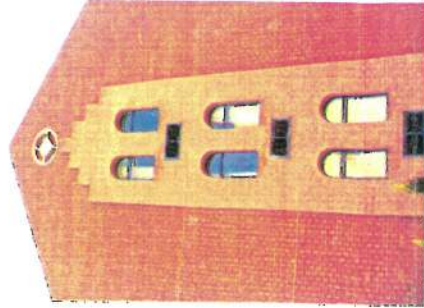
# Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria

## Re-evaluating the norm

Architecture around South Africa's established Universities is consistently eclectic and each building clearly reflects the architecture of the era in which it was built. When the University of Pretoria commissioned a building for its expanding Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the same was expected. This was not to be and it took some convincing before the University authorities decided to break from the norm and to accept, what was to eventually become, an award winning design.

### Professional Team

**Architects**  
Samuel Pauw Architects  
Quantity Surveyors  
CP de Leeuw (Pretoria)  
**Structural Engineers**  
Burger Pretorius & Partners cc  
**Mechanical Engineers**  
Watson Edwards Inc  
**Electrical Engineers**  
CA du Toit & Partners  
**Client**  
University of Pretoria  
**Main Contractors**  
Shoredits Construction (Pty) Ltd  
- Main Faculty Building  
P. Gerolomou Construction (Pty) Ltd  
- Conference Centre



Top: Architecture is a revision to Romanesque language

Above: The corridor between student residences and the west campus

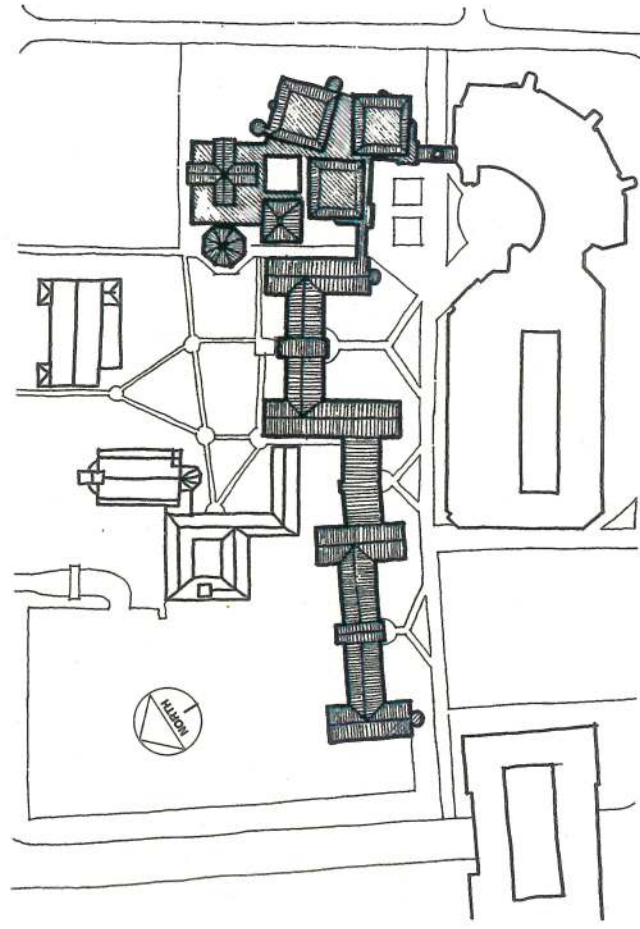
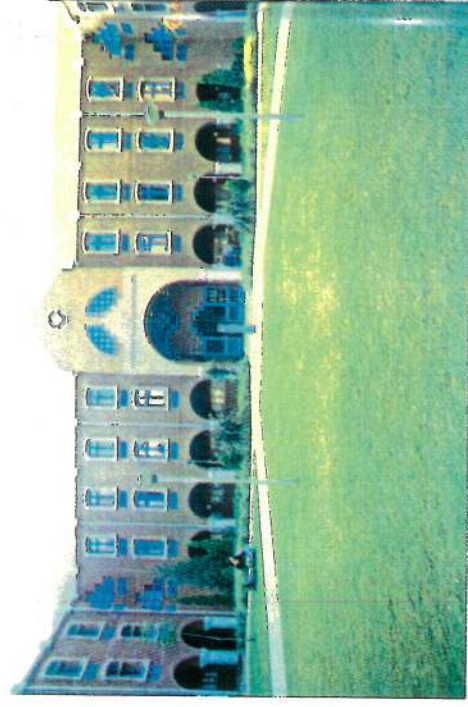
The initial brief to the Architect was for a tower-block to be erected on the north-eastern corner of the site, similar to the 20 storey Faculty of Human Sciences building which straddles Roper Street. This proposal was also in line with the ongoing development of the University's northern campus.

Architect Samuel Pauw identified a different area on the site, considered to be throwaway space, and suggested a development - in a sense a mini-urban

design proposal - which was more likely to interact with the movement of the students.

### Predominant "wedding cake" architecture

Foremost in Pauw's mind was to steer clear of what he terms, "The wedding cake architecture of the existing Modernist buildings." He insisted that the architecture had to be a dialogue - that the building should be a background



Above: Site plan

Left: The "plus" sign, synonymous with economics and business

Below: Shades of the modern juxtapose with the traditional



feature and balance the equation with the existing "impersonal" structures.

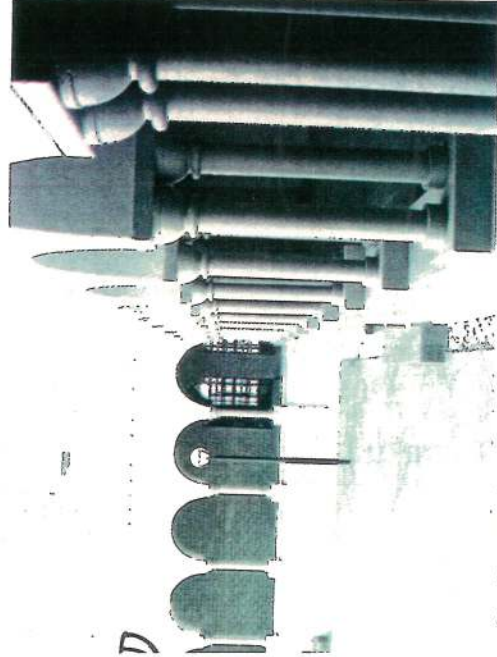
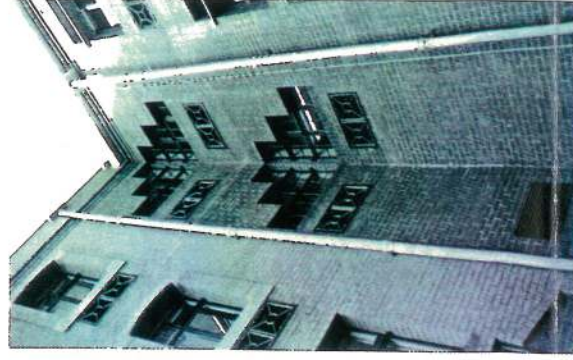
The old Christian Brothers College buildings shared the site and ultimately had an important role to play in the nature of the architecture. It was decided to stay away from the orthogonal grid,

letting the site dictate the shape of the structure and, at the same time, form a natural corridor for students who live in residence, on the eastern extremity of the campus, to filter into the academic, western end of the campus.

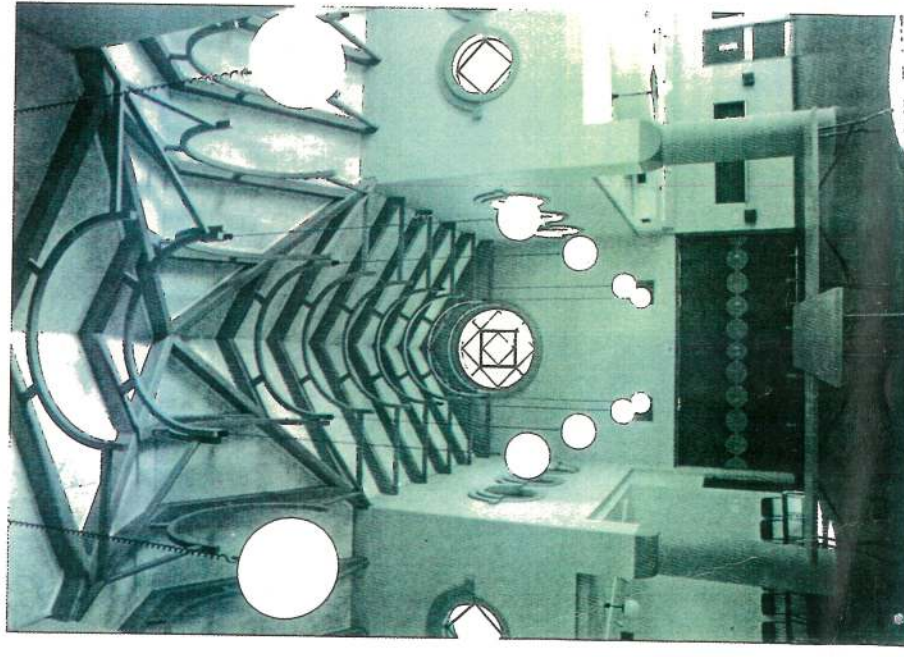
### Romanesque re-visited

The resultant structure is only four storeys in height, but stretches the length of the entire block, between the student residences and Roper Street, in a configuration of two, connected "H" shapes

The architecture is a reversion to Romanesque themes, providing a softer, more humanist tone and quite reminiscent of the traditional university feel. Squat columns with cushion capitals give rise to an arched ground floor, while the



Strong Romanesque themes in the cloister (above), the vaulted hall (below) and the squat columns (colour right)



entrances, centred in the crossbar of each "H," have a grand arch within an articulated gable. A prominent window feature on the gable entrances portrays a "plus" sign, synonymous with economics and business. Remaining gable walls have detailed, decorative brickwork as articulation, apart from the gables at the extremes of the building which feature stairwells, contained within circular apses.

### The Conference Centre and Lecture Halls

The strong Romanesque language remains evident in this facility and is accentuated through a double volume, vaulted hall with adjoining cloister, articulated brickwork facades and towers to the lecture halls and an hexagonal structure, strongly reminiscent of a cathedral baptistry. Entrance porticos and arched gables are consistent with those in the main faculty building.

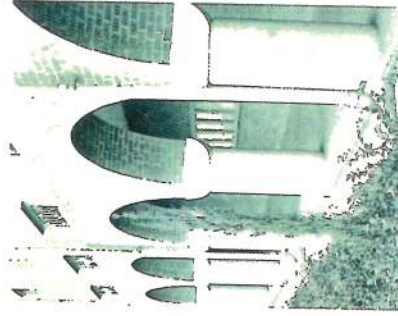
These conference and lecture amenities adequately complete the entire project in an unusual, but somewhat striking way.

### Finished below budget

Contrasting shades of face brick allow for a natural finish, as well as being low maintenance. The variation in colour is most effective on the gabling details and stairwell apses. Precast concrete lends a presence to window apertures as sills and lintels and gives the building verticality in its application as exposed rainwater goods.

Internal finishes are non-extravagant and functional as far as the faculty building is concerned. Ceilings, for instance, are painted off-shutter concrete and steel door frames abound in administration passageways.

Budget was less of a concern on the lecture hall and conference centre phase. All lecture theatres are fitted with the latest lighting, seating and audio-visual equipment, in keeping with a prominent



educational institution.

Detailing to the vaulted ceiling in the conference hall is exceptional and consists of intricate masonry work and suspended, bulbous light fittings.

### Award of merit

Although this building is far from the initial idea in the minds of the University authorities, it has no doubt opened the way for further designs to be integrated into the spatial make-up of the campus, rather than functional structures occupying isolated areas of the environment.

Sufficient lateral thinking away from these design norms has deservedly won this project an ISAA Award of Merit. □



Top, above and right: The architecture of the conference facility and lecture halls  
Centre right: A walkway links the new building to the existing