

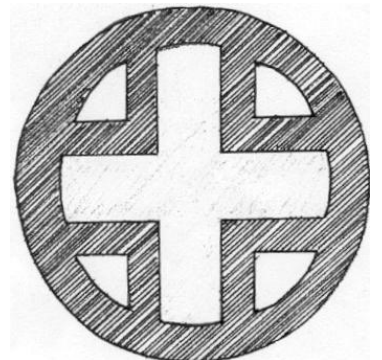
Brief Overview of Church Square –Pretoria



1 Church Square

1.1 Introduction

- Church Square was laid out in the **form of a mandala**.
 - ✓ The most basic outlay of the city is in the form of a square, with the sacred site in the centre. This idea of a cross, diamond or mandala, has been known since 6 000 BC as a city model. Mandala is a Hindu term for circle. It is a virtual geometric diagram, corresponding to a divine attribute or to some form of enchantment (Mantra), which is given visual expression. The mandala is always the squaring of the circle, including all the various elements enclosed in a square or a circle. The square within a circle symbolizes perfection and the cosmos. When the round order of heaven is brought down to earth, it assumes the shape of a rectangle with the sides oriented to the cardinal directions. It is the ordering of a certain area, to bring order to chaos.
 - ✓ The **mandala** always refers to the centre of the circle. The circle is a symbol of wholeness. It is the most important of all geometric figures. Cities laid out in this form tend to have regular geometric outlines oriented to the cardinal directions (N,S,E,W), or to the position of the rising sun. The circle, divided into four sectors by two axes (like the Mandala), symbolizes heaven. Planning a city within the four sectors was tied to the art of reading omens. In a depiction of a real world, Plato noted that the city should be placed at the centre of the country. The city must radiate from the temple that is in the heart of the city. Within the squaring of the circle (the Mandala), the building at the centre dominated the city and symbolically, the world.



1.2 Lay out of Church Square

- The southern half of Church Square is now semi-circular with a masonry balustrade and stone steps flanked by sculptures and massive pillars that give access to the square. Church Square is bisected in an east-west direction by Church Street, reputedly the

longest straight street in the world which bears the same name from beginning to end and north-south by Paul Kruger Street. Buildings were placed strategically on the four corners representing: State (Raadsaal), Justice (Palace of Justice), Trade (Reserve Bank) and Banking (Standard Bank).

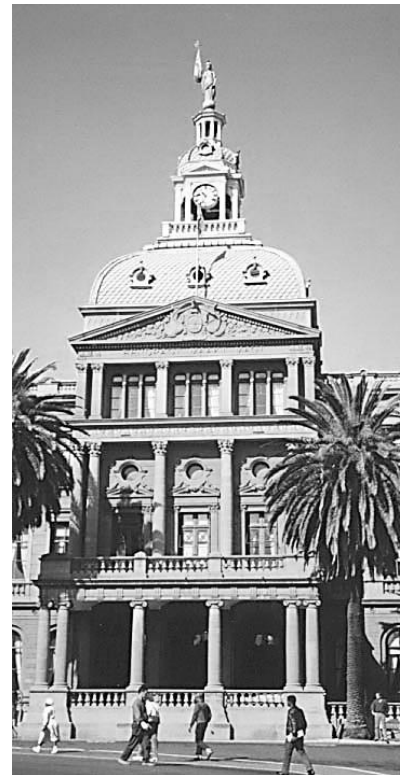
1.3 Church

- The original church which started the founding of the city was built here, but was demolished in 1904 by the British, who were conscious of its symbolic power. The first simplistic building was replaced by a church in the form of a cross, designed by William Skinner and Edward Lewis Devereux and which resembled the one at Graaff-Reinet. The gables were crow stepped, each step having the decoration of a squat obelisk. This church was replaced by a church with a Gothic tower. It was demolished in 1904. Since that time, there has not been a church on Church Square, although the name stuck and it stayed the centre of the city. Both the church and the pedestal of the statue of Paul Kruger, which now stands on the site of the old church, are placed on imaginary lines forming a cross that corresponds with the lines formed by the city layout.



1.4 Raadsaal

- It is the symbol of the economic progress and independence of the ZAR (Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek), and was erected on the south-western corner of the square twenty-five years after the first thatched roof building in 1867. It was designed by Sytze Wierda during 1887-1888 and Paul Kruger laid the cornerstone on May 6, 1889. Wierda applied the axis system, and the site and design of all the buildings around the square are symmetrically along these lines.
- The Raadsaal is a tasteful interpretation of the early Renaissance or Italian style. When Wierda designed the Raadsaal, he tried to refer to an ancient castle type with four strong corner towers and an entrance with a main tower in the centre in front of the building. It is also a representation of masculinity, depicted in the verticality of the tower. The gable pediment with pillars beneath it is typical of another ancient type of the Greek megaron or mansion. This ancient architectural type is copied by the ancient Greeks from pre-historic buildings. They revered the megaron as a temple. An important aspect of the temple was the fact that the gable side or front view was also the entrance. The triangle inside the gable is called the pediment. The point Wierda tried to make was that this was the building with the highest authority in the country.
- The two central domes behind each other and the main dome over the Volksraad Hall, is a just expression of the dualistic relationship that existed between the Government system, the ruling President and the Volksraad. The dome is a typical expression of the feminine, protecting and encircling the central theme like a womb. Directly underneath the central dome is the Raadsaal where all the meetings of the Volksraad were held. The room just behind the important balcony, underneath the main tower, holds a representation of "heaven on four pillars". This was called the "conversatiekamer" (conversation room).



1.4.1 Minerva statue on top of the Raadsaal

- There is a female figure on top of the Raadsaal, called Minerva or Athena. She holds a shield and lance in her hands and has a helmet on her head. This figure atop the central tower of the Raadsaal was associated with idol worship and when the Voortrekkers protested against it, it was renamed a statue of liberty (Victoria). Pres. Kruger said that she could not stand bareheaded and had a helmet nailed onto her head. The helmet on her head, similar to the red caps worn during the French Revolution, became the symbol of freedom. During the restoration period, this woman was placed on a ball, to make her an allegoric representation of Fortuna, the precarious luck that stands upon her wobbly, dangerous base over the world.
- Minerva is an ancient Italian goddess that was known to the Etruscans as Menrva, and who became totally equalled with Athena, the Greek goddess. She was honour-ed in the temple on the Capitolina, together with Jupiter and Juno, with whom she formed a triad. Minerva is the protectress of art, science and craft work and, like Athena, she is honoured as goddess of war.
- Athena (the Greek goddess) was born from the supreme god Zeus. She is the goddess of war who led the battle to protect her homeland and brought victory. She wears a helmet, lance and a shield called Aegis. She is also the queen of peace, wisdom, prosperity and justice. As the ancient Egyptian goddess, she was known as the mother of the sun god.
- The Capitolina was situated on one of the four hills in Rome. It was called the Republican Forum. The assembly, where the senate would meet, was the central building, and the most important place. These buildings represented the development of steadily increasing political power. This inspired the Capitol Theatre on Church Square to the left of the Raadsaal in Parliament Lane.
- After renovating the Raadsaal, the statue of Minerva was renamed Fortuna, who was the Roman goddess of luck. Fortuna Publica Populi Ro mani was revered as the state goddess. Fortuna is represented as standing, clothed in very rich cloth. Her signs are the horn of abundance, a rat (symbol of the precariousness of luck) and a sceptre.
- The first meeting of the Volksraad, inside the Raadsaal, took place on 5 May 1890.



1.5 The Netherlands Bank Building

- This was a symbol of prosperity that followed upon the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886.

1.6 Reserve Investment Building

- The architect was Frans Scoff and the sculptor of the art on the outside of the building was Anton van Wouw. He designed the owl and the relic of Mercury (Hermes), with the word "commerce" written at his feet. Hermes was the Greek god of travellers and roads, tradesmen and trade and the messenger of the gods. His cult centres were Pheneos or Arcadia. His Roman counterpart was Mercury.
- Owl: The owl symbolizes death, night, cold and passivity. It also pertains to the realm of the dead sun, that is, the sun which has set below the horizon and which is crossing the lake or sea of darkness.

1.7 Post Office

- The big clock on the east wall nestles between two naked figures, those of a man and a woman.

1.8 De Nationale Bank en Munt der ZAR

- It was established on April 20, 1891. The mint was the first in the southern hemisphere.
- Image of the goddess Juno Moneta can be found depicted on the building.

1.9 **Palace of Justice**

- It occupies the plot exactly opposite the Raadsaal on the north-western corner of the square, where MW Pretorius had his first dwelling. It was designed and built on exactly the same axis system as the church and Raadsaal. The cornerstone was laid by President Paul Kruger. It later served as school, magistrate's offices, parsonage and government offices. The building was of Italian Renaissance style and designed by Sytze Wierda in 1895. During the war the Palace acted as a hospital.
- For 50 years the Transvaal Supreme Court and Headquarters of the Dept of Justice were situated in this building. It was from here that the State President spoke to the nation when South Africa became a Republic on 31 May 1961.



1.10 **Reserve Bank**

- On the front entrance to the Reserve Bank is a sculpted face of Moneta (Juno Moneta), the spirit of the mint. Juno was the ancient Italian light or moon goddess, and also the protectress of women. She had several titles: Virginalis (virgin), Matronalis (married woman) and Lucina (bringer of light). As protectress of Rome she was called Regina (queen). A temple dedicated to Juno Moneta is situated on the Arx close to the city mint.
- The architects were Emley and Scott. At the back entrance on the eastern side is a zodiac on the ceiling with four figures, Hercules (SW), Centaur (NW), dragon (NE) and Pegasus (SE), in the quarters formed by the zodiac. On the floor of this entrance is a mosaic outlay of a ship under the flag of the Netherlands.

1.11 **Tudor Chambers**

- Eastern side of Church Square. Neo-Gothic style. In 1960 it lost its cupola (dome) with the bronze dragon that acted as a weather vane. Several obelisks are visible as part of the architecture of this building.

1.12 **Standard Bank**

- Now occupying the whole of the south-eastern corner of the Square.

1.13 **Standard Bank, previously the Grand Hotel**

- It was destroyed in a flood. The Standard Bank now occupies this area as well. It was first the house of John Lys and later became Lys' Building. During the time it served as a hotel, a Masonic Lodge used to meet in the main hall led by Lys, who started Freemasonry in Pretoria. The hotel was also known as the President Hotel.
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