

BOEKBESPREKINGS/ BOOK REVIEWS

H. FRANSEN and MARY A. COOK. *The old buildings of the Cape*. A.A. Balkema: Cape Town, 1980. 456 pp. R40,00 (exclusive). ISBN 0 86961 123 2.

In 1965 Hans Fransen and Mary Alexander Cook's pioneering attempt to compile a full survey of early Cape architecture was published as *The old houses of the Cape*. This book went out of print many years ago, but it was systematically revised and augmented by the original authors and a new edition, now entitled *The old buildings of the Cape*, was published in 1980.

As the subtitles suggest, the latest edition has a much wider scope than the first, being a survey and description of old buildings in the Western Province over an area of about 230 000 square kilometres; this extends from Cape Town to Calvinia in the north and to Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg, and Uitenhage in the east. The 18th and 19th century buildings dealt with in this publication are mostly in the Cape Dutch, Cape Regency, Georgian, and Victorian Styles.

The introductory chapter deals with general subjects, such as the Cape Dutch ground-plan and the origin and development of the Cape gable; there is a most informative Glossary of eleven pages; and 32 chapters are devoted to an inventory of monuments, each chapter dealing with a specific area, e.g. Cape Town City, Paarl, Paarl District, Oudtshoorn, and Graaff-Reinet.

The monuments are divided into three categories, indicated as such in the text: *major monuments*, of which there are some 200, *monuments* (1 000), and *minor monuments* (2 000). Not all the buildings in the inventory still exist, but have been included to prevent often interesting information from falling into oblivion and to indicate the rate of destruction of old buildings.

The authors set themselves the goal of giving an architectural description of each building: its type, style, kind of ground-plan, outstanding architectural features, etc. These descriptions are augmented with at least 80 photographs. Major monuments such as Government House (Tuynhuis), have understandably been described in more detail than minor monuments such as 186 Buitekant Street.

Regional maps and town plans add to the usefulness of the publication to those who want to use it as a guide-book on a hunt for monuments.

The buildings are not listed in alphabetical order: in each chapter and sub-section public buildings are dealt with first; these are followed by private buildings arranged street-wise and according to street numbers. The somewhat exhaustive Index on architectural objects, streets, squares, towns, etc. is a valuable aid to those looking for something specific. The Bibliography, however, does not reflect all the sources consulted by the authors, as no unpublished records are listed.

Everybody interested in our South African heritage will derive as much pleasure from this beautiful publication as the serious researcher will gain information.

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