



# *new* school

To meet the challenges of modern education, some of South Africa's premier schools are erecting remarkable buildings. We take a few lessons from five top designs...

WORDS GRAHAM WOOD STYLING LEANA SCHOEMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS AUBREY JONSSON, SUPPLIED

## HOËRSKOOLO WATERKLOOF

The space reserved for Pretoria's Hoërskool Waterkloof's new student dormitories and dining hall was on a raised section of ground, prominent at the school's entrance and also visible to passersby. As such, it had to serve as an emblem of the school's values as well as fulfill its practical functions.

'School buildings often suffer from a bland sameness, yet a school is a space where design can nurture and encourage, the creativity of the next generation,' says architect Pieter Mathews of Mathews and Associates Architects, which was commissioned to design the building. The school has 'modern attitudes and aspirations' and an 'open-minded attitude towards design' according to Pieter, so it was an opportunity to make something special. '[It] had to be iconic in shape, being the new public face of the school,' he says.

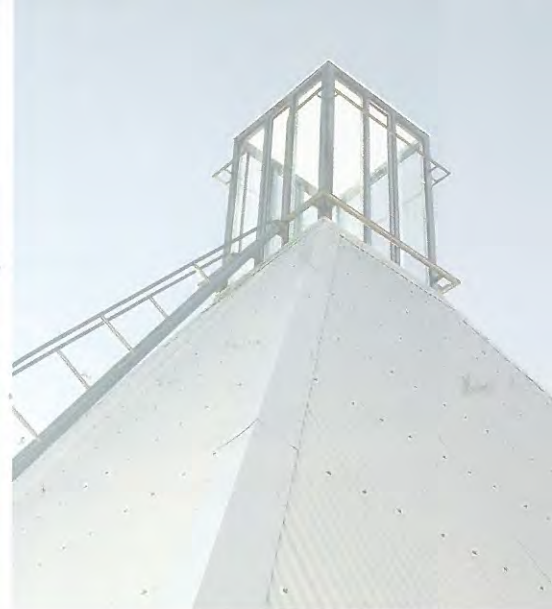
A large central staircase leads up to the main entrance, framed in an off-shutter concrete wrap. This creates a sense of arrival and impact, while a series of courtyards between the buildings ingeniously form communal gathering



spaces for functions and watching sport as well as private areas for the students. To top it off, a large sculpture donated by Angus Taylor, 'Stick Lady on a Donkey', adds another layer of art to the design-wise environment.

[klofies.co.za](http://klofies.co.za)

**ABOVE** The roof and ceiling slant up, opening up the space for additional height and natural light while leading the eye to the courtyard and sports fields. **BELOW** 'Stick Lady on a Donkey' by Angus Taylor.



## ST CYPRIAN'S SCHOOL

Architect Jo Noero of Noero Architects has been responsible for a series of updates to St. Cyprian's School in Cape Town, part of an ongoing plan to modernise the school, but at the same time respecting its century-long heritage. The school had grown in fits and starts, resulting in a somewhat higgledy-piggledy arrangement of buildings and spaces. Jo says, 'The tendency in these instances is to bring order.' He chose instead to respect the way it had developed like a city with 'insertions and adjustments rather than major changes'.

So far the changes have included a New Knowledge Centre placed inside the historic gym, a Life Centre, various extensions, some remade classrooms and a loggia. 'Stylistic imitation mummifies the past, and violent disruption is harsh,' he says. 'Our approach was about finding a nice gentle way of adjusting to the present.' Jo designed his interventions to be able to adjust to the future, too.

'Our strategy was to use precise, well-proportioned geometry,' he explains, which proved historically the most versatile and lasting. The adaptable, multifunctional spaces not only allow the new buildings to adjust as teaching does, but also encourage the children to engage with the spaces imaginatively, making them their own. [stcyprians.co.za](http://stcyprians.co.za) ▷

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** The steeply pitched roof and skylight of the Life Centre; a series of circular timber booths have become highly popular spaces used for everything from impromptu theatre to quiet reading; the loggia is a multifunctional shelter that has become possibly the most used space in the school; breeze blocks create dappled light in the Life Centre; the new buildings have been created to make a gentle aesthetic transition from past to present.