

Play in Joburg (/play /).

DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH, FAIRVIEW, 1906

(/).

Dutch Reformed Church, Fairview, 1906



Pastor Mike Lwambwa started the Faith and Victory in Jesus Christ Ministries in Hillbrow in 1993; he was concerned with taking prostitutes and gangsters off the streets. His church was so successful that he had to find new premises and he now occupies one of the city's most beautiful churches – the Dutch Reformed Church in Fairview, which is a national monument.

It's a worthy national monument, declared in 1973 and built by architect Herman Kallenbach (and his partner, Reynolds) in 1906. The cornerstone was laid on 5 May 1906 by General Koos de la Rey and the church was consecrated on 26 January 1907.

The Dutch Reformed community established itself in the city in 1887, a year after gold was discovered, says Pastor Piet Smit, the minister for the past 31 years at the Dutch Reformed Church on the corner of Beit and End streets in the CBD.

Kallenbach designed Dutch Reformed churches across the country: Laingsburg, Barkly East, Hanover, Thaba 'Nchu, and Riversdale. He left his mark with other buildings too: the Benoni shul (1935), office buildings in downtown Joburg - the Lewis & Marks building (1937) and Arop House (1932), and office buildings in Durban and Pretoria. Kallenbach also designed an entire suburb of Soweto.

A town-planning competition for a "Model Native Township" of 80 000 people was held in 1931, and Kallenbach, Kennedy and Furner submitted the winning entry. The design was revolutionary for township areas, says Clive Chipkin in *Johannesburg Style, Architecture and Society, 1880s-1960s*.

"Their design comprised a Garden City layout with radials, neighbourhood squares, local parks as well as a major linear green belt in the valley along the banks of the spruit that flowed down to the Klip River ... The roads were kinked to avoid monotony and the focus of the scheme was a business district located on a major boulevard 200 feet wide and nearly a mile in length."

But the suburb was never built – the City could not provide the community services required and the government couldn't come up with the funding. So instead the Orlando community got the usual monotonous township houses, with no amenities.

The Fairview Dutch Reformed Church, on the corner of Op de Bergen and Corrie streets, makes a bold statement in a suburb notable these days for its neglect. Its tall steeple, beautiful recessed windows with white plastered edgings lie in contrast to its plain brick walls. The entrance consists of two solid wooden doors, in an arched frame with an inscription in Afrikaans and Dutch, a reminder that when the church was built Dutch was still spoken.

Kallenbach and Reynolds designed the church in the shape of a Greek cross, with equal length vertical and horizontal arms, to fit the square plot on which it is built, suggests Hannes Meiring in *Early Johannesburg, its Buildings and its People*.

Step inside and you'll feel your soul immediately quieten. The different shapes and recessed areas of the angled interior are intriguing, with stacked, wonderfully rounded long oak benches facing a raised, arched podium. Behind it sits the original pipe organ, below a large rounded window with four five-sided clovers filling the glass.

The dark wood struts of the roof draw the eye up to the angled, pressed steel ceiling and the two balconies, offering a lofty view of the bare wooden floors.

It's a cosy church, seating around 300, and enveloping congregants within its unusual shapes. At one stage it was served by three ministers, but the congregation gradually dwindled through the 1970s and in the 1980s the doors were closed. It still belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church and, says Smit, "we don't want to sell the church, but we are happy to have another congregation use it".

Lwambwa says he is hoping to open another ministry in Rosettenville this year.

HELP & SUPPORT

[Public access to information act \(/about_/Pages/About the City/Public-Access-to-Information-Act.aspx\)](#)

[A-Z \(/Pages/A-Z.aspx\)](#)

[By-Laws \(/documents_/By-Laws/Pages/By-Laws.aspx\)](#)

OTHER

[Public notices \(/Pages/2018%20Notices/City%20Notices.aspx\)](#)

[Key documents \(/documents_/Pages/Key Documents/Key-Documents.aspx\)](#)

[City services \(/services_/Pages/default.aspx\)](#)

STAY CONNECTED

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/CityofJoburg\)](https://www.facebook.com/CityofJoburg)

[Twitter \(https://www.twitter.com/CityofJoburgZA\)](https://www.twitter.com/CityofJoburgZA)

[Google+ \(https://plus.google.com/113141516135997356931\)](https://plus.google.com/113141516135997356931)

GENERAL QUERIES

[0860 562 874 \(General\)](#)

[011 375 5911 \(Ambulance, Fire and JMPD\)](#)

[0800 002 587 \(Anti fraud hotline\)](#)

© 2018 City of Johannesburg

[Terms of use \(/Pages/Terms-and-Conditions.aspx\)](#) | [Privacy Policy \(/Pages/Privacy-Policy.aspx\)](#)