

Georgian Style Period at the Cape

The Second British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope (1806-1910) led to an ever-increasing British influence on tastes. The Georgian style elements in architecture are so named after the era of King George's reign. In the Cape this specifically refers to George the fourth. In Britain, the architect Robert Adam had influenced the style greatly, and this influence was also felt at the Cape. Adam's work exhibited a greater lightness of expression and a slenderness of proportion. These elements were also driven by the British Building Act of 1774, which involved measures of fire protection through the mandatory recessing of window frames from the front face of brickwork. This created an appearance of thinner outer frames, which ultimately translated stylistically into an overall reduction in all the parts of the windows. Windows became lighter, slenderer and more elegant. Later-on this translated into a higher proportioning of windows. The number and size of the window panes as well as their proportional relationship to the wall spaces between them was carefully considered. Fan light designs changed to reflect the overall new style. And, front doors became vertically divided instead of the former horizontally divided doors. (Lewcock1963:4-5,86-87)