

Albert Schaaffhausen: A German Architect in Samoa, 1901-1914

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Abstract

Albert Schaaffhausen was one of the few prolific architects in (Western) Samoa over the course of the twentieth century but has been largely overlooked, even by local historiography. Schaaffhausen, born in Germany in 1876, came to Samoa in 1900. He worked for the German Colonial Administration from 1901 onwards and became their de facto architect. He went on home leave to Germany in June 1914, where he was called up for war service. After his return to Samoa in 1923, Schaaffhausen worked for the New Zealand Administration of Samoa from 1931 until his retirement in 1946. He died in 1960, just before Western Samoa gained independence. During his life, Albert Schaaffhausen saw a multi-faceted political development in Samoa, and he actively contributed to the modernization and to the cultural heritage of the islands Savai'i and Upolu. The fascinating situation of his involvement with two colonial powers in Samoa opens up a multitude of questions yet to be answered. This paper focuses on the first decade of Schaaffhausen's architectural career in Samoa, which contains his first major contributions to architecture in Samoa and ended with the beginning of the First World War. However, beyond establishing an initial knowledge base about his early work, this paper attempts to outline Schaaffhausen's position and role within the German Colonial Administration and his contribution to the modernization of Samoa.

The German Administration in Samoa 1900-14

When the German Reich annexed the two Samoan islands Upolu and Savai'i in 1900, more than a decade of warfare and diplomatic intrigues temporarily came to an end. The islands saw a relatively prosperous and peaceful period under the rule of the German administration based in Apia, which ended at the outbreak of the First World War. The first Governor, Dr Wilhelm Solf, set the tone for an overall successful coexistence of Germans and Samoans, and his deputy, Dr Erich Schultz (-Ewerth),

when he took over in 1912, was able to continue and extend the generally good relationships with the Samoans, which was helped by his thorough knowledge of Samoan language and customs. During these fifteen years, Solf's administration was able to conduct a modest project of modernization of Samoa, if mostly of Apia. The administrative body was amazingly small and quite efficient for its size. It consisted of about 30 officials who, in many cases, occupied more than one, sometimes three different positions. The Department for Public Works and Surveying consisted of only four to five officials, with Albert Schaaffhausen in a key position over a period of ten years.¹

The Role of Architecture for the German Colonial Government

Governor Solf's general political aim was to respect and keep Samoan traditions:

We reject politics of exploitation of land and people, which only has in mind the interests of the colonizing country. Our aim is the elevation of the moral, intellectual and material position of the Natives and the utilization of the economic forces for the needs of cultured mankind, following reasonable principles which always seek a balance between the interests of both sides. This means: no militarization, no forced labour, no oppression, no abuse of force, but instead schools, doctors, education to work, fostering of agriculture, and railways, roads for opening up the country!²

Solf managed to introduce some – in terms of colonial rule – highly remarkable laws. In 1901, he declared Samoan to be the language of instruction in schools. In 1903, he agreed to the request of the Samoan leaders that Samoans should not be forced to work for the Europeans.³ On the other hand, Solf embarked on a number of projects that mark the beginning of modernity for Samoa – at least in infrastructural terms. Thus he would have faced the notion of a paradox: leaving the Samoans alone clearly contradicts the idea of modernization. How was this ambiguity played out, and what role did architecture play in this? This may be for a future paper to conclude, but here we can start by investigating what buildings the Germans constructed in Samoa, and what role Schaaffhausen played in this process. Because of the scarcity of material available, the subject of this paper, Schaaffhausen himself cannot get a chance to speak; only official sources or colleagues are available to comment on him and his

work. This is of course limiting and potentially distorts the view; the periphery will have to be used to describe the – empty – centre.

Governor Solf did not comment much on architectural questions. Therefore a letter, written to the Colonial Office in 1905 in support of Albert Schaaffhausen's request for promotion, is currently the only known document in which Solf clearly takes position regarding the architectural and urban development in Apia. He asserts that the hitherto prevalent 'construction methods using corrugated iron and timber ... gave the town the appearance of a gold-digger's town ready to be demolished', and added that the 'realization [of new building projects] had to take into consideration that these buildings naturally would have to satisfy the needs of the administration over a long period.'⁴ With these statements Solf argued for the solidity of the town and its proper appearance, and indicates how his administration had already begun to change the status quo:

Instead of the usual timber walls and primitive foundations walls were now made according to the ___[illegible] system or consisted of concrete masonry, and they had solid foundations. In addition, the exterior cladding as well as the arrangement of interior spaces and their execution demanded a lot more of the building overseer and the architect.... [Before, all] timber joints were done in the most primitive way by using nails. The locally available materials like sand, lime, coral, basalt and timber were not taken advantage of. Every bit of building material was imported.⁵

Later in the paper we will see how this translated into architecture. Solf also pointed out that he wished to educate the *colonists* (not the Samoans!) to copy the Government: 'The public buildings in their reasonable and practical construction technique were intended to serve as a model for the colonists and to inspire them to abandon the former construction methods' that made the town look so shabby.⁶ If the project of modernizing and 'solidifying' Apia was an educational project, it was meant to be so at least as much for the German colonists as for the Samoans. Schaaffhausen's opinion on any of these questions is unknown. From the sources available it appears that he never *led* any of these discussions. The direction of the town development and building projects must have been in Solf's hands.

The overall scale of infrastructural development in Samoa has been judged insignificant:

The relatively small Samoa did not bring about any larger scale infrastructural projects. At least the wooden bridges were replaced by iron ones, the harbour was extended, roads were widened – on Savai'i the first roads were set up at all, and in October 1903 public road regulations were introduced. Since 1906 a tramway for heavy goods existed in Apia that was drawn first by men, later by horses.⁷

This verdict is understandable in comparison to other colonies. Nevertheless, the German register of buildings and sites – in form of a report updated yearly by Schaaffhausen⁸ – records more than 80 buildings and infrastructural projects.⁹ Wilhelm Solf stated:

The continuous development of the colony and the needs of the administration soon brought about new tasks in the area of building. A new building for the regional court and the police, extensions to the hospital, new school buildings, and diverse other buildings became necessary within a short period.¹⁰

These projects had to be overseen – while at the same time Mr. Stünzner, who had been in charge of this job, left his position in 1903. Thus Schaaffhausen had the opportunity to grow into the position of the de facto Government architect, and he readily did so.

Schaaffhausen's Role in the Colonial Administration in Apia – The First Decade

Born in 1876 in Essen in Germany, Karl Otto Albert Schaaffhausen¹¹ left his home country in 1899, travelled to Africa, came to Sydney and, having heard that Germany had just annexed the two Samoan islands Savai'i and Upolu, as her *Schutzgebiet*, the protection territory, came to Samoa, where he:

... entered the employ of the D.H. and P.G., and shortly afterwards went to Tutuila, the principal island annexed by the United States, and superintended the construction of some houses on that island. On returning to Apia, he was engaged by the Government in the capacity of

inspector of roads and buildings, and subsequently he was appointed to his present position.¹²

His obituary in *Samoana* adds that 'German Governor Solf engaged him to look after his horses and to drive his carriage. When Dr. Solf found that Schaaffhausen possessed considerable technical knowledge, he transferred him to the Survey Office and to the Public Works Department'.¹³ This version, nevertheless, is not backed up by any other source.

By 1900, Schaaffhausen had finished secondary school and a *Baufachschule*, a special tertiary institution for the building trade. He had served in the army for three years – but why had he left Germany in the first place? The mention of Africa and Australia indicates that he must have been searching for something more than simply an occupation. This and many more questions about him cannot be answered at this stage. The best documented phase of his life covers the years between 1901 and 1914. Although Schaaffhausen's descendants form a large and indeed influential part of today's Samoa, unfortunately no personal bequest seems to have survived. Thus, too little is known about his personal life apart from recollections of members of the Schaaffhausen family, and any traceable knowledge about his life and work stems from public and official sources.¹⁴ Fortunately, the assessment of his contributions during this period is facilitated by the existence of a complete personal file, set up by the Colonial Government.¹⁵ Governor Solf noted:

The building overseer Schaaffhausen entered Government service on 15 April 1901; initially he was appointed as overseer of the construction of roads and buildings. Building work was not extensive those days, and the task of the overseer was mainly to supervise repairs and minor extension work.¹⁶

In 1903, Schaaffhausen signed a contract with the Colonial Government as building overseer (*Bauaufseher*) by which he became a civil servant in Imperial service.¹⁷ In 1904, he married Hannah Wallwork from Savai'i.¹⁸ She was from American and Samoan descent. Thus Schaaffhausen did not follow Governor Solf's rule that Germans should not marry Samoans,¹⁹ but this did not adversely affect his employment. More importantly it meant that, in the 1920s, as one of the very few

Germans he was able to return to Samoa – generally the New Zealand administration did not allow Germans who had to leave the islands in 1914 to return to Samoa.²⁰

As the documents prove, Solf and his administration were very satisfied with Schaaffhausen's efficiency and work ethic. As a result, both Solf and his successor, Erich Schultz (-Ewerth) (1912-14), tried their best to acknowledge his contributions to the development of the colony when possible. This should not be seen as something obvious – as if in the colonies any eager employee would have been able to be promoted if only they asked to. Schaaffhausen's successor as building overseer, Richard Schöneich, for example, was denied promotion after a similar period of service.²¹ In early 1905, Solf attempted to promote Schaaffhausen over several steps, to the rank of building technician, a *Bautechniker*.²² In his letter of justification, dated March 1905, addressed to the Colonial Office in Berlin, Solf went into details about Schaaffhausen's involvement in numerous building projects, thereby confirming that Schaaffhausen was indeed more than just a building overseer: although not trained as an architect, he was practically employed as one. This makes the document most valuable for judging Schaaffhausen's role within the Colonial Administration. Solf stated:

[It] was necessary to train younger professionals in [the new] building methods. Schaaffhausen has been working in this direction with good success, initially under the guidance of the land surveyors, later independently. Since the last one and a half years he has been in charge of the paperwork of building projects, which comprises the designs, estimates etc., as well as the carrying out of these projects which are partly contracted by tender, partly done under our own management.²³

Initially, Solf's six-page letter received no more than a brusque reply in August: before they would consider promoting Schaaffhausen, the Colonial Office wanted proof of his appropriate architectural training. This seems to have produced some difficulties, and the ensuing correspondence in Apia between Schaaffhausen and the local administration does not entirely clarify whether he was sufficiently qualified or not. But the next recorded step is his application for transfer to the German Administration of New Guinea, dated 9 October 1905. Obviously, he saw the development of his professional ambitions compromised in the small administration in Apia. He was accepted by the Government in New Guinea and therefore resigned in Apia on 30

January 1906. At this time, Solf was on leave in Berlin and Schultz acted as his deputy. But just three days later, Schaaffhausen – temporarily – withdrew his resignation in order to await a positive reply to Solf's attempts from Berlin regarding his promotion. An incomplete and undated letter in Schultz's handwriting supports the drama of the situation:

For Schaaffhausen the acceptance of the position [in New Guinea] means a significant improvement since life in Samoa is considerably more expensive and because the position in New Guinea is accompanied by a salary increase of 600 marks. Therefore he has resigned here in Apia. However, for the time being, I managed to convince him to stay until a decision regarding the requested promotion into class 10 had been confirmed.²⁴

Schultz went on to reiterate that Schaaffhausen was efficient and capable and had, even without having sat the relevant exams, always worked to the fullest satisfaction of his employers. On 20 February 1906, Solf wrote from Germany to Schultz in Apia:

In the cause of Schaaffhausen, I have managed to win with Councillor Spalding over Mr. Krüger. You won't believe how difficult it was to transfer this man from class 13 to class 10.... When Krüger would not give in, I finally applied for a decision with someone of higher rank, and the decision was favourable for us.²⁵

But this letter did not arrive in time, therefore, on 5 March, Schaaffhausen wrote to Schultz: 'Since with the latest mail no news has arrived, I have decided to take service with the Imperial Government of New Guinea. I have signed the offer and would ask you, Sir, to conclude the contract.'²⁶ This, Schultz did. And shortly afterwards, on 17 March, the *Samoanische Zeitung* reported: 'Herr Albert Schaaffhausen, who has been working as building overseer for the local Government, has left Apia last Friday to take up a similar position with the Government in New-Guinea.'²⁷ He had been bidden farewell by a number of friends in the Tivoli Hotel some days earlier. Solf's next letter to Schultz, dating 2 April 1906, shows Solf frustrated:

Some confusion seems to have happened with Schaaffhausen, since our telegram of acceptance was crossed by his departure to Sydney. I have

immediately sent a cable to Buri so that he could convince Schaaffhausen to return. But I think I know Schaaffhausen well enough to imagine that he will be satisfied to have left Apia. It will be extraordinarily difficult to replace him.²⁸

Buri was the German Consul in Sydney. And on it goes. A cable from the Colonial Office was received in Apia on 19 March: 'Schaaffhausen 4200 Mark from 1 April 1906 approved. Stay Apia.' But this was too late. Schaaffhausen was already on the boat. In order to get to New Guinea, he had to travel via Sydney. Therefore the cable to Consul Buri meant that Schaaffhausen could be 'caught' in Sydney. Buri asked him to return to Apia with the steamer 'Manapouri' on 3 April. Schaaffhausen returned, and stayed in Apia. However, Solf's successful attempt to keep his building technician who was so 'extraordinarily difficult to replace' did not last very long. Just two years later, during a home leave to Essen, Germany in 1908, Schaaffhausen turned to the Colonial Office with the renewed request for transfer to a position in New-Guinea: 'I feel urged to request this because it has been my wish for some time to transfer into the service of a larger colony. Also, a transfer to New Guinea would give me opportunity to be employed in a better position and therefore my financial situation would improve.' Colonial secretary Dernburg in Berlin added that he did not mind Schaaffhausen's application in principle.²⁹ But Solf would have been frustrated just once more – and, once more, he managed to keep Schaaffhausen in Apia.

Schaaffhausen's Buildings Before 1914

During these first fourteen years in Samoa, Schaaffhausen designed, and supervised the realization of, some 40 buildings and infrastructural projects. In 1910, land surveyor Lammert compiled a list of building projects that Schaaffhausen had been responsible for.³⁰ Although incomplete, this record is a very useful indication of the level and range of Schaaffhausen's involvement. It contains 30 buildings and built structures, amongst which are six major buildings or ensembles. Two Government schools were designed and built under Schaaffhausen's supervision, the European School in Ifi-Ifi (1905-06) and the School for Native children in Malifa (1907), both south of the centre of Apia, both with additional teacher's residence. Schaaffhausen carried out extensions to the hospital in Motoutua which had been donated to the Colonial Government by the German patron Gustav Kunst in 1902. From 1903 onwards, Schaaffhausen designed the Native Hospital, two hospital barracks for Chinese patients, a surgery building and a covered corridor between the European

and Native Hospital. Major extensions to the Court House in Apia, which had been built in 1903, were executed by him in 1907. Lammert noted 'extension to the Police Station', but he will have meant the Court House since the police was also located within this building. This is probably the most representative building dating from the German period, and it is also the best known one. Apart from its continued function as a court building, it also housed the Museum of Apia until 2008 (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Court House, Apia. Built in 1903, extension in 1907 designed by Albert Schaaffhausen. Photo by author.

Schaaffhausen also designed the Office of Native Affairs in Mulinu'u, built in 1909, and he drew the plans for the residence of the chief of police in Vaimea (date unknown, the building was later moved to Malifa). Fifteen more buildings of minor size were also listed by Lammert. They include a boat shed, storage buildings and sheds, barracks for Chinese labourers, and police and prison buildings. Apart from this, Schaaffhausen was involved with the construction of at least four bridges (Gase-Gase, Simuu, Potasi, Faleapuua – and Vaisigano, not mentioned by Lammert) and the wharf for Apia. The bridge projects were mostly supervised by Schaaffhausen, and the files indicate that he usually did not design the bridges himself but that he received tenders from American and other foreign companies to deliver them readily designed.³¹

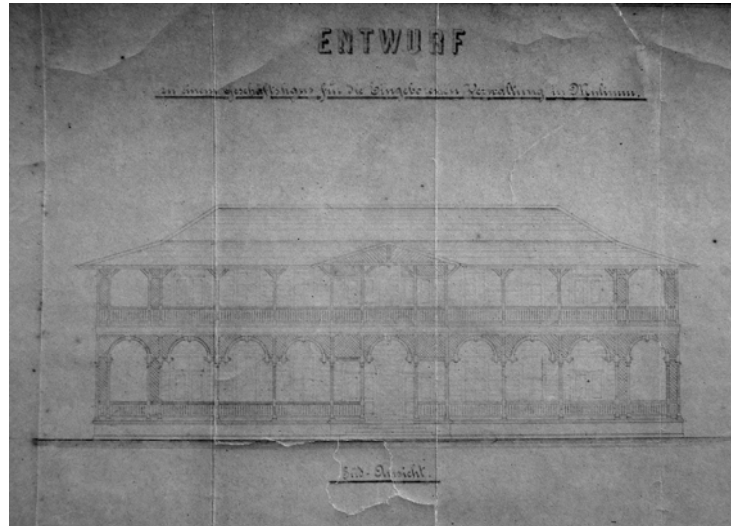


Figure 2 Albert Schaaffhausen. Design for the Office of Native Affairs in Mulinu'u, Apia, dated March 1908. Archives New Zealand, SEP 242.

From this period, drawings for nine projects by Schaaffhausen have survived, at least three of which were not executed in the way the plans indicate.³² Villa Dr. Schwesinger in Motoutua without date (ca. 1904), the boat shed (1905), a guard house (1905), plans for the Court House extensions (1907), a proposed alteration of the existing Market Hall as Custom's shed (1910), and an extension of Alamagoto prison (1911).³³ The design for a new Government building (1906) exists in two versions; the second was drawn up by Schaaffhausen's successor, Richard Schöneich, in 1912. Files also indicate that the later drawing might have been 'pre-designed' by the Colonial Office architects in Berlin, but it was never built.

In all their sketchiness, these enumerations may show that there is a considerable body of work, initiated by the German Colonial Government, in which Schaaffhausen was involved through various stages of design and realization. And these projects and buildings, either in the plans or in the realized form show a sober, utilitarian style of building, in which, to a varying degree, the ornament is developed through timber construction, bringing Pugin's dictum of 'decorating the construction rather than constructing the decoration' to mind. From the body of drawings it has been possible to identify Schaaffhausen's particular style of drawing as very clear, neat and professional, especially in comparison to the sketchy style of his colleague, Mr Stünzner. In his buildings, some stylistic constants appear, one being the re-occurrence of the aris or chamfer, an element which he even used in a concrete building in the late 1920s, in O. F. Nelson's workshop in Apia. Additionally, he used the

half-ornamental, half-structural device like a newel drop, combined with knee braces. A number of Schaaffhausen's buildings show these or similar characteristics: the bandstand of 1909, the Native Administration building in Mulinu'u, one the Ifi-Ifi School pavilions which is now the Museum of Samoa (Figure 3), and his original drawings for the Malifa Government School for Natives, which seems to have been executed differently to the drawings.



Figure 3 School Pavilion in Ifi-Ifi, Apia, before its conversion into the Museum of Apia, in 2006. Photo by author. Note the accentuation of the timber construction through chamfer and added knee braces.

Two Schools: Ifi-Ifi and Malifa

Two buildings need to be considered in some more detail, in order to identify elements of the relationship of the Germans towards the Samoans, or at least raise more precise questions about it: Ifi-Ifi School for Foreigners (i.e. Europeans etc.), and Malifa School for Natives, built 1905/06 and 1907 respectively.³⁴ It is documented that Albert Schaaffhausen designed the Malifa School, and it is very likely that he also designed the Ifi-ifi School. The latter was a simple spatial arrangement of two parallel one-storey buildings with a playground in between:

Whereas the old school building contained 3 classrooms, the new ensemble provides four halls with a floor area of 8.53 m x 6.09 m each. The pavilion system has been used by erecting two one-storey buildings with two classrooms each. Between two classrooms a smaller room is situated, which serves as storage space for teaching resources. The two buildings face east-west, with a spacious playground situated between

them. On their long side towards the playground, the buildings are equipped with a veranda, which gives space for cloakrooms and allows the children to stay dry in rainy weather. The whole ensemble has a quite plain, but practical appearance.³⁵

This school was designed to house the European and American children. Consequently, the *Samoanische Zeitung* reports that in using the 'pavilion-system', the school followed current models in Germany and in other countries in which for hygienic and educational reasons the classrooms were not stacked any longer as in the 'school barracks' (*Schul-Kasernen*), but situated next to each other, preferably each on their own. Nevertheless, the reporter comments critically on the 'practical appearance' of the ensemble and suggests that it would have been more picturesque (*malerisch*) if slates had been used for the roof instead of the corrugated iron, and if the façade had been articulated in some way. He acknowledges that a school is not a luxury piece and therefore this criticism might not be appropriate. Nevertheless it seemed unacceptable that the verandahs were clad in plain weatherboard, and the reporter hoped that this was only provisional and that a proper parapet would be added later.³⁶ From the documents available it is not entirely clear whether or not the decorative timber structure, visible in 2006 (Figure 3), was added following this criticism.



Figure 4 School Pavilion in Ifi-Ifi, Apia, opposite the Museum of Samoa (2006). This building has been altered since its construction in 1905. Photo by author.

With all necessary precaution, the building shown in Figure 4 seems to be the Eastern Pavilion of Ifi-Ifi School. The features described in the Annual Report are still visible,

although the verandah has been altered. The building opposite is captured in the drawing entitled 'Scheme for the enlarg[e]ment of Eastern School Pavilion' (Figure 5, also see Figure 3). This pavilion – actually not the eastern, but indeed the western one – was converted into the Museum of Samoa in 2008. The drawing most likely dates from the late 1930s and bears Albert Schaaffhausen's handwriting. These buildings may not look like pavilions to us, but as Solf's aforementioned letter to the Colonial Office of 1905 shows, it was fully intentional that they were constructed in a solid manner – in order to last longer and also to act as architectural role models for the colony.

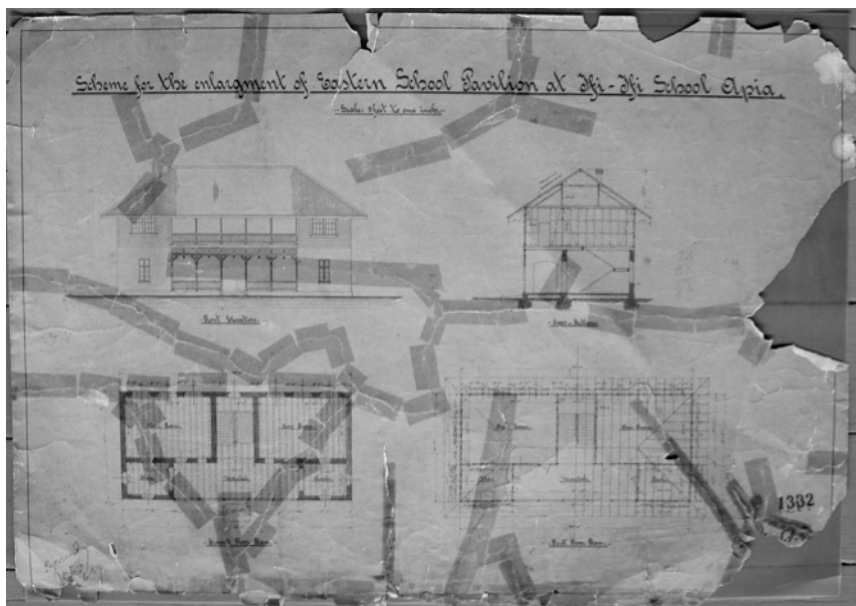


Figure 5 'Scheme for the enlargment [*sic*] of Eastern School Pavilion at Ifi-Ifi School Apia'. This heavily damaged drawing was found by the author and Wilhem Schaaffhausen, amongst much later drawings in the Public Works Department in Apia in December 2008. Since it shows the building which today houses the Museum of Apia, the drawing was donated to the Museum.

The Malifa School of a year later appears as an attempt of the Administration to take into account Samoan virtues of building. The newspaper reported:

In the New Year, the Native School in Malifa ... will be moved into. The building has been built according to the building technician Schaaffhausen's design in iron and concrete. Built in bungalow form, it will be quite pleasant for the Samoan pupils.... This school has given the Government welcome opportunity to quite substantially oblige the wishes

of the Samoans. Whereas in most Samoan schools the rooms are very low, the school rooms in the Malifa School are 14 feet high. Apart from the great hall there are two smaller rooms situated on the western end of the building, which will be used as storage for learning materials. Since the building has been erected in form of a bungalow, it will catch the well-desired sea-breeze to be enjoyed on the verandas which run all around the building.... The school hall is 50 feet long and 24 feet wide and comfortably offers space for 40 pupils. Ample ventilation will provide coolness and the room will be lighted fabulously by the windows and glass doors provided. Thus, all possible precautions have been taken to ensure the pupils' well-being, and we wish this enterprise, which clearly demonstrates German vigour and drive, all the best luck.³⁷

Obviously, the reporter was proud to state that the Administration tried to build to local climatic requirements. Apart from the obvious fact that this article sounds somewhat propagandistic, it also supports the idea that wishes and interests of Samoans were taken into account.³⁸ Unfortunately, no images have been found to date that identify this school unambiguously. Pringle shows a photograph which is dissimilar to the existing drawings.³⁹ Closer inspection of the drawings at hand suggest that plans and elevations for a Government School for Natives, to be located in Mulinu'u, were intended to be executed in Malifa, since they are filed under Malifa School; also, a handwritten comment on the blueprint indicates that this design by Schaaffhausen for a timber building surrounded by a verandah on all sides was to be executed in Ferro-concrete instead of timber. This concurs with the description given in the newspaper. The change of site may indicate that Solf's administration originally intended to cluster public and Governmental buildings for the Samoans in Mulinu'u, the peninsula north of Apia but later decided to group the two Government schools south of the town centre – Malifa and Ifi-Ifi School are situated just a stone's throw apart.

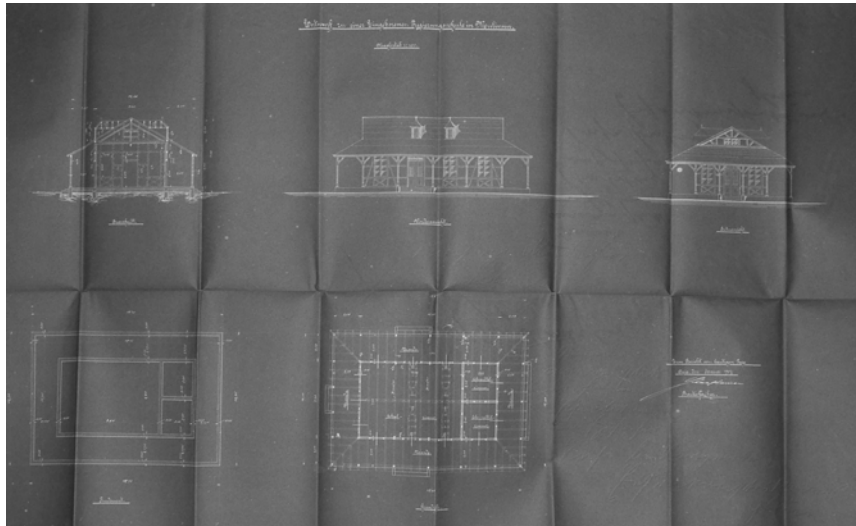


Figure 6 Blueprint, Design for a Government School for Natives in Malifa, Samoa, ca. 1906. Red handwriting over the drawing reads: '[] to Malifa School [] instead of in timber to be executed in ferro-concrete. [] attached construction drawings'. GCAS, Museum of Apia, Samoa.

The report on the Malifa School contained an important comment: 'Given the well-known thoroughness of the Governor and his deputy, the lay-out of the building ensemble was of particular importance. Indeed, it has turned into a model ensemble in its combination with the Samoan houses intended for the Samoan teachers and pupils.'⁴⁰ Here, and at the Apia Hospital, the German Administration had Samoan Fale built – for children or patients respectively, properly recorded in their annual register of buildings and sites.⁴¹ This remarkable proof indicates that there were – at least – three categories of buildings constructed by the Germans: those of European style and manner for Europeans, those of a possibly mixed style for Samoans – the main school buildings in Malifa – and those built for Samoans in their own manner, in all likelihood by Samoan builders (but this is not recorded).

Between 1912 and 1914: Changes and Promise of More Changes

After a phase of intense building activity up to 1909, no major building projects were initiated over a period of several years. But when dissatisfaction set in with the Colonial Office, two *Regierungsbaumeister* – Government architects – arrived from Berlin to investigate, to research, and to make suggestions for infrastructural projects in 1912. These projects were large, and so were the promises: general water supply, electricity for the township, a radio station, extensions to the port, and even a railway line to connect Apia with Mulifanua, the western-most point of Upolu.⁴² But the outbreak of the war would prevent most of this from happening, only the radio station

was put in operation in 1914. Thus, reality was much more sober: the first large wave of building activity had passed, and monetary supply from Berlin was sparse. Schaaffhausen must have felt this quite urgently: had he not repeatedly, and as early as 1905, applied for a job in New Guinea, with the argument that more opportunities to design and build would be found there? In Apia, however, he may have felt that there was not enough to do for an ambitious and industrious man who also needed money to build a home for his family.⁴³ This might be the reason behind the most surprising turn in Schaaffhausen's biography: his appointment as temporary Head of Police in 1911 and, in 1913, his official appointment as police inspector for the Chinese contract workers (*Chinesenkommissar*). There has been debate since the introduction of the Chinese workers in Samoa about the legitimacy of this practice, and it has been argued repeatedly that they were held rather as slaves, not as workers.⁴⁴ In some sense, *Chinesenkommissar* may have been the only politically contestable job in Apia. Schaaffhausen must have been aware of this difficulty, but it does not seem to have bothered him.⁴⁵ The few buildings to be constructed between 1912 and 1914 were drawn and supervised by Richard Schöneich, a draughtsman from Posen appointed as Schaaffhausen's replacement.⁴⁶

After 1914

From mid-1914 onwards, traces of Albert Schaaffhausen become increasingly sparse, but they indicate a situation which would have been a mixed blessing: he was granted home-leave to Germany for May 1914. What a time to leave Samoa! Since the Turkish-Bulgarian wars of 1912/13, even in Samoa, the newspaper was full of anxious anticipation of a Europe-wide war. Clearly, Schaaffhausen would have been aware of the imminent danger of his trip. His personal file shows that he took his eldest daughter of nine years with him, but left wife and son William in Samoa. Having left Apia in early May, he arrived in Germany on 7 June and was ordered to leave Europe by steamer on the 29th of September.⁴⁷ But on 29 August, New Zealand troops had marched into Apia. Schaaffhausen's obituary indicates that he was called up for war service in Germany almost immediately: 'He was a member of the German Field Police where he served under the command of a former District Judge of the Apia District Court, Dr. Imhoff.'⁴⁸ Thus, he was spared internment in New Zealand, unlike Governor Schultz who had been the first German official to be arrested and brought to Motuihi Island in the Hauraki Gulf, and the most of the remaining German civil servants who were interned on Somes Island in Wellington Harbour.⁴⁹ Clearly, as a Police

Officer, Schaaffhausen would have been in the same situation, had he been in Samoa at that time.

After the war, Schaaffhausen did not return from Germany for five more years. Only in 1923 did he arrive back in Samoa. There, he took up employment with O. F. Nelson and, in 1931, started working as an architect for the Public Works Department of the New Zealand Administration in Samoa. In 1932, he was appointed Head of Department and remained in this position until his retirement in 1946.⁵⁰ From 1942-44 he was interned as enemy alien on Somes Island in Wellington Harbour.⁵¹ During the 1930s and 40s he was able to design and oversee the construction of many important buildings in Samoa, including the new post office for Apia in 1931, several modern warehouse and storage buildings, the Tifaga Playhouse – a combined movie theatre and concert hall – and, apart from these public and commercial buildings, he was active in drawing plans for churches and church-related buildings both for the Catholic and the Anglican Church in Samoa.⁵² He died in December 1960.

Conclusion

While little is known of the real Albert Schaaffhausen, what the sources do convey is that he was someone who *wanted* to do things and to be useful: a 'maker'. The apparent simplicity of his buildings, e.g. the Ili-Ili School, is striking. His architecture remains strangely dispassionate, distant from the cross-cultural encounters. It is more characterized by a sober practical beauty, derived from the appreciation of craftsmanship, pursuing the needs for building in substantial materials like concrete so as to protect the buildings from the difficult climatic conditions in Samoa. He does not seem to have been a man of many words at all. In none of the documents at hand are there any long, circuitous applications or explanations by Schaaffhausen to be found. When he writes, he is usually factual and straight to the point. He was not a member of the Advisory Council, neither does he appear as a member of any of the clubs; was he a solitary man? He was also someone who puts up his hand to do the jobs, even the difficult ones, and when appointed, seems to have been good at them. His role was quite dissimilar to that of Solf – by necessity, but also by choice and fate. Through his marriage with Hannah Wallwork he became much more involved with Samoa than Solf had intended his officials to. Additionally, promoted to the politically highly delicate position of being in charge of the Chinese contract workers, being on home leave when war broke out, being able to return to Samoa, and being appointed by the New Zealand administration: all these events make Schaaffhausen's life unique in terms of

the various cross-cultural relationships that Samoa has encountered in the twentieth century, and he became deeply entangled with Samoa's ever-changing political fate.

Endnotes

¹ Cf. two diagrams called 'Administrative Organisation, 1905 and 1912', established by Peter Orlovich for the introduction to the Samoan archival material in Archives New Zealand, 1994. In 1905, the Department for Public Works and Surveying consisted of two Government Surveyors, Herr Haidlen and Herr Lammert, Albert Schaaffhausen as Government Architect and Draughtsman, and a Surveying Assistant, Herr Henniger. In 1912, only Lammert was left as Surveyor (Haidlen had been murdered in one of the few spectacular murder cases in Samoa), Henniger and two other assistants continued, and Schaaffhausen was replaced by building technician Richard Schöneich.

² Wilhelm Solf, *Kolonialpolitik. Mein politisches Vermächtnis* (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1919), 43. Translation by author.

³ The latter led to one of the most problematic decisions that Solf made for Samoa, the introduction of Chinese contract labourers for Samoa. Malama Meleisa (ed.), *Lagaga. A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva/Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 120; or: Hermann Joseph Hiery: *Bilder aus der deutschen Südsee. Fotografien 1884-1914*; with an essay by Antje Kelm (Paderborn etc.: Schöningh, 2005), timeline, 267-76.

⁴ Solf, letter of justification of 16 May 1905; GCAS (German Colonial Administration Files, Museum of Apia, Samoa), IG-9, n.p.

⁵ Solf, letter of 16 May 1905; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

⁶ Solf, letter of 16 May 1905; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

⁷ Hermann Joseph Hiery, *Die Deutsche Südsee 1884-1914. Ein Handbuch* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 673-4.

⁸ 'Gebäude- und Grundstücksnachweisung'. GCAS, IG-10, n.p.

⁹ In some cases, an entry just records the acquisition of a building rather than the construction of a new one, but in other cases, one entry number functioned as heading for a large number of building projects on one site, such as for the hospital.

¹⁰ Solf, letter of 16 May 1905; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

¹¹ The spelling of Schaaffhausen's own name is confusing for Germans: it is against normal practice to see a double vowel followed by a double consonant. Schaaffhausen was spelled with double 'f' during his lifetime, and so is the engraving on his tombstone in Apia. But his family has changed the spelling to single 'f', possibly spurred by his own tendency to blur the two 'f' into one in his signature. In earlier papers I tried to be consistent with the modernized spelling, but from hereon I will resort to the double 'f'.

¹² Anon., *Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands* etc. (Sydney: McCarron 1907; reprint Papakura, NZ: R. McMillan, 1983), 62.

¹³ 'Old Resident Dies', Obituary for Albert Schaaffhausen in *Samoaana*, 1, 16 (14 December 1960), 11.

¹⁴ The most relevant sources to date are the files of the former German Colonial Government, partly in Archives New Zealand in Wellington (on microfilm, AGCA), partly in the Museum of Apia, Samoa (not catalogued files, GCAS), Island Territories files in Archives New Zealand; also Gary Pringle, 'Heritage Assessment Apia, Western Samoa', Masters thesis, Sydney, 1989; and the *Cyclopedia of Samoa* (see footnote 12); together with the various Samoan newspapers: *Samoaanische Zeitung* 1901-1914, *Samoa Times* 1915-30, *Samoa Herald* 1930-6, etc.

¹⁵ His personal file consists of two parts, I/1901-09 and II/1909-14. The former is located in the Museum of Apia, Samoa, while the latter forms part of the microfilmed German Government files at Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

¹⁶ Solf, letter of 16 May 1905; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

¹⁷ The documents state the date of his swearing in as 4 February 1903: *Personal-Nachweisung* Albert Schaaffhausen, GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

¹⁸ *Samoaanische Zeitung*, 4, 13 (25 June 1904).

¹⁹ Cf. Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: traditional authority and colonial administration in the history of Western Samoa* (Suva (Fiji): Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987), 162. Also Hiery, *Handbuch Deutsche Südsee* (see footnote 7), chapter 'Die Deutsche Verwaltung Samoas' (649-73), 668: 'As long as he was in office as Governor in Samoa, though, Solf never seriously attempted to enact a law which would have forbidden European men to marry non-European women.'

²⁰ Papers of Gustav Klinkmüller, box 3/5, not yet catalogued, Museum of Auckland.

²¹ Personal file of Richard Schöneich – AGCA 6051, Archives New Zealand.

²² This promotion was from class 13 to class 10 of German civil servants, from 'Baufaufseher' – building overseer – to 'Bautechniker'. The latter title, directly translated, means 'building technician', but that hardly describes the position of responsibility pertaining to the job. Therefore the colloquial use of 'Government architect' for Schaaffhausen in the local newspaper and other contemporary sources is probably more accurate.

²³ Solf, letter of 16 May 1905; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

²⁴ Acting Governor Dr. Schultz, letter to Colonial Office in Berlin, without date, GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

²⁵ Wilhelm Solf, letter to Dr. Schultz in Apia, 20 February 1906, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, files N 1053/132, 42.

²⁶ Letter Schaaffhausen to Schultz, Apia, 5 March 1906; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

²⁷ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 6, 11 (17 March 1906).

²⁸ Letter Solf to Schultz in Apia, 2 April 1906, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, files N 1053/132, 53.

²⁹ Type-written copy of Schaaffhausen's application of 7 November 1908 and Colonial secretary Dernburg's reply 22 Dec 08; GCAS, IG-9, n.p.

³⁰ Reference letter for Schaaffhausen, 19 May 1910. AGCA 6051-130, 0024 – 26.

³¹ GCAS, IG-10, n.p.

³² They are accessible as so-called SEP-files (= separated from the original file) in Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

³³ The drawings for the bandstand, although quoted by Pringle, *Heritage Assessment* (see footnote 14), could not to be traced in Archives New Zealand.

³⁴ Remarkably, Solf insisted that the Germans, along with the other Europeans and Americans in Samoa, were called 'foreigners'. 'Natives' is a direct translation of the German term 'Eingeborene', which was used by the administration.

³⁵ Annual Report 1905/06, AGCA 6051-298, 144.

³⁶ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 6, 13 (31 March 1906), 2.

³⁷ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 7, 47 (23 November 1907).

³⁸ The concept and idea of the School for Natives would be important to research, also in terms of the local resistance met by the Catholic mission which felt threatened by this institution, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

³⁹ Pringle, *Heritage Assessment* (see footnote 14), fig. 32.

⁴⁰ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 7, 47 (23 November 1907).

⁴¹ Cf. Annual Building Report '6. Nachweisung der zum Kaiserlichen Gouvernement von Samoa gehörenden Gebäude und Grundstücke', under No. 26: 'Land in Motoutua'. AGCA, Museum of Apia, Samoa.

⁴² *Samoanische Zeitung*, 12, 32 (10 August 1912), 1.

⁴³ Schaaffhausen received permission from the Colonial Office to purchase land from the D. H. & P. G. in Magiagi in order to build a house for his family. AGCA 6051-130-0056ff., 6 February 1912.

⁴⁴ The *Samoanische Zeitung* repeatedly discussed critical reports from American newspapers on the treatment of the Chinese in Samoa, also cf. Hiery, *Handbuch Deutsche Südsee* (see footnote 7), chapter 'Die Deutsche Verwaltung Samoas', 649-73. Hiery claims that the difficult situation for the Chinese labourers was not made any easier under *Chinesenkommissar* Mr. Fries, Schaaffhausen's predecessor in this job; see Hiery, *Handbuch Deutsche Südsee*, 670.

⁴⁵ Family history knows him as a gentle man who never raised his voice. At this stage, our speculative guess is that Solf's successor Schultz would have wanted a careful, diplomatic personality in this difficult job.

⁴⁶ Personal file of Richard Schöneich, AGCA 6051. Already in June 1911, Schöneich was appointed as Schaaffhausen's replacement.

⁴⁷ Personal file Schaaffhausen. AGCA 6051-130, 099, 107, 109.

⁴⁸ 'Old Resident Dies'.

⁴⁹ The *Samoanische Zeitung*, 14, 38 (14 September 1914), 1, reports that ten main local Government officials had been deported to New Zealand on 12 September, but that a further ten or more civil servants and members of the DH&PG had been imprisoned overnight only and been set free the next day. Nevertheless, Hiery, in his *Handbuch Deutsche Südsee*, 833, maintains that all civil servants had been deported to New Zealand on 12 September.

⁵⁰ Archives New Zealand: IT 1, Ex 89/12 Part I, Staff Public Works Dept., Apia 1930-49.

⁵¹ Archives New Zealand, AD I 336 / 2 / 220.

⁵² Jacquie Schaafhausen to author in personal conversation, Apia, September 2006; Rev. Fr. Joseph Heslin, SM (ed. M. B. Tyquin), *A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Samoa, 1845-1995* (Apia, 1995), 79-82; and 'Old Resident Dies'.