JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

Compiled by: Dr JJ Bruwer, 2002-07-29

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NAME OF PLACE: (Second) MANNERS MANSIONS



Main photo and bottom, right: view of the *second Manners Mansions* on the southeast corner of Jeppe and Joubert Streets. Top right: view of the Main Entrance area and edge of the Entrance Foyer with the 'island' shop, i.e. Smokers Corner, on the left. Bottom, centre: Jeppe Street, from left to right - *second Castle Mansions, second Manners Mansions,* and *third Anstey's Building.*

Previous/alternative name/s

LOCATION	Street number Stand Number Previous Stand Number:	 Jeppe 166 (60, 62 Joubert; 164, 166, 168 Jeppe) 5198 by 1930 - 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252 AE
ZONING:	Current use/s Previous use/s	

:

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height	:	
Levels above street level	:	14
Levels below street level	:	
On-site parking	:	

The second Manners Mansions was designed by Emley & Williamson, who also designed the *third Anstey's Building*, opposite the *second Manners Mansions* on the southeast corner of Joubert and Jeppe Streets. The *second Manners Mansions*, according to Chipkin, was designed "in a substantially different style. It ignores, in a quintessentially Johannesburg manner, any attempt at architectural compatibility with its Anstey's neighbour at an important intersection. One can imagine how this opportunity would have been handled in a great age of town building but this has little relevance to the Johannesburg situation. Anstey's is a skyscraper with basically cubic setbacks; Manners Mansions is a building with rounded Mendelsohnian forms and a very pronounced axial symmetry concentrated on a main tower splayed to the corner. Both buildings are set back from lower-level podiums (which respond to each other with rounded corners). It is these setbacks that open up the view of the sky in an extraordinary manner. At the pavement level on the Manners Mansions corner is Smokers' Corner, the rounded, island corner-shop that was the venue for generations of cigarette- and pipe-smokers. When Manners Mansions was in its pristine state, the main entrance foyer to the building contained important murals by Alfred Palmer, depicting the mine-dump industrial landscape of the Witwatersrand." (Chipkin, C.M. Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...).

Leyds also recalls the Palmer murals: "Alfred Palmer painted the friezes in Manners Mansions, Joubert Street; they are an interesting record of the town as it was before World War II." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg).

At the back of Manners Mansions there is a geometrical interplay of bulging Expressionist forms..." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...).

It is stated by Van Der Waal that from about 1933-34, "the proportions" in façade planes "were made more dynamic by narrowing one of the façade planes and linking the windows in a continuous band...In *Surrey House* (1935-6), 106 Commissioner Street, the dynamic effect was strengthened by the rounded corner of the building around which the window bands were stretched, and by the cantilever concrete slabs extending over the upper balconies. A similar effect was created in the *Grand National Building* (1935-8), 50/2 Rissik Street [see Pre-History; U-1], but this building, as well as [the *second*] *Manners Mansions* (1937-9), 164/6/8 Jeppe Street and the aforementioned *Anstey Building* [see AF-2], constituted an exception in the usual street aspect, in that the building mass was treated in a sculptural fashion. The recessed section above the main entrance imparted a dramatic effect to the whole." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

Many aspects touched on in the following general description by Van Der Waal, are of relevance to an appreciation of the characteristic design features of the second Manners Mansions: "In a certain group of buildings, those designed in the so-called Modernistic Style...the horizontal and vertical accents were combined in order to reinforce the impression of dynamic movement in all directions. Long window strips, rounded corners in buildings and bay window sections and, incised windows at the corners of buildings, were used to create a streamlined effect and demonstrate the recent independence from load-bearing outer walls. Examples were Anstey Building...and the Cleghorn & Harris Building (1939), 68 Kerk Street. While the severe lines of the Woolworths Building [65, 67 Kerk Street] projected a very modern image, Boustred Building [130 Fox Street], Cleghorn & Harris and John Orr Building (1934-6), 73/5 Pritchard Street, were streamlined in the Modernistic Style. The rounded street corner of the latter building was a good manifestation of how the dynamics of spatial articulation at street corners was perceived. A similar effect was created in Ansteys Building, where the contrast between the massive proportions of the charcoal-coloured lower five storeys with rounded corner and the recessed corner of the off-white higher storeys made a forceful statement in the street aspect. This was also the only commercial building without a severe upper termination. The top storeys were systematically stepped back to end in a tower with a flagpost." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

According to Chipkin, the "tallest buildings in the Johannesburg of the 1920s were ten storeys high; the addition of pinnacles, roof accruements and flagmasts made them appear even higher. By 1938 there were four real skyscrapers in the city centre: Anstey's (1935-9), at 17 storeys [see AF-2], Lewis & Marks (1935-7) at 14 storeys [see P-6], Escom House (1935-7) at 21 storeys, and Chrysler House (1936-8) at 16 storeys." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...). The *second Manners Mansions* at 14 storeys, therefore also qualified to be called a skyscraper.

In 1989, the NMC was approached by Sanlam properties regarding the latter's proposed redevelopment of the city block on which the *third Anstey's Building* is situated. In a report, titled "Report On The Important Architectural Features Of 'Ansteys' And 'Manners Mansions' Cor Joubert And Jeppe Streets, Johannesburg", compiled by the architect William Martinson, and dated 11 September 1989 (SAHRA Archive File 3/1/3/Joh/154, Ansteys- & Manners Mansions, h/v Jeppe- & Joubertstr, Johannesburg), the NMC was at pains to also confirm the architectural significance of the *second Manners Mansions* (see relevant extract below from the above-mentioned report) and the special attributes of interconnectivity between this building and the *third Anstey's Building*.

3. MANNERS MANSIONS (Circa 1938)

The important features for retention are:

- 3.1. <u>PODIUM</u>
- 3.1.1. the horizontality created by the cantilevered concrete canopy and the secondary smaller projection at first floor level.
- 3.1.2. the duality of the public entrance at the street corner and the manner in which it is articulated around a circular "island" shop (Smoker's Corner) leading into the entrance foyer a feature of which is an interesting open stairwell rising the full height of the building.
- 3.1.3. the original "International Style" lettering of the "Manners Mansions" sign both on the external corner and at the entrance to the foyer.
- 3.1.4. the remaining original shopfronts which echo in smaller detail the larger rounded features found in the planning.
- 3.1.5. the grooved/fluted wall texture (see 3.2.3.)
- 3.2. <u>SUPER STRUCTURE</u>
- 3.2.1. the two rounded bays not quite symmetrically placed terminated by the first setback forming a semi-circular balcony at the 7th floor.
- 3.2.2. the profile of the irregular setbacks at the upper levels forming balconies (from the 10th floor and above).
- 3.2.3. the vertical grooved/fluted texture of the external wall-cladding panels in what appears to be a "re-constituted" stone finish.
- 3.2.4. the thin "floating" oval-disc at the top-most level pierced through with a free standing flagpole. This device creates an element of tension at the apex of the building. The disc (supported on columns) forms a small covered pavillion with access by way of a cat-ladder.
- 3.2.5. the scale, proportions and finishes of the existing window openings.

3.3. INTERIOR FEATURES

- 3.3.1. the fine semi-circular open stairwell rising the full height of the building.
- 3.3.2. the light-fittings and light switches, doors and door furniture, and other fittings that are original and sufficiently intact.
- 3.4. CONCLUSION

This is a fine building which in juxtaposition to Anstey's makes it an indispensable part of Johannesburg's cultural and aesthetic development and the external features of the building defined on the diagram attached, may not be altered.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls: fluted cladding to the exterior; glazed mosaic tiles to main entrance.

Roof: concrete, flat.

Windows: side-hung casements with ventilators over.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

INTEGRITY:

The notable exterior features of the building have been retained and remain largely intact.

INSCRIPTION:

"In March 2003 South Africa hosts the Seventh Annual World Congress on Art Deco. This will be held in Cape Town and to link into this, Jo'burg is erecting plaques on buildings evidencing the Art Deco theme. We start with the TOP TWENTY – great buildings in the Inner City will be identified by means of distinctive blue and white heritage plaques. A further forty buildings of similar merit will follow in the hall of fame. These include more in the centre of town but also those spread across Johannesburg, noticeably blocks of flats. Art Deco was not just the preserve of the wealthy corporates [sic.] - it belonged to everyone, and the purpose of this project is to highlight a period in the history of Jo'burg which created a valuable architectural and social treasure. Some of these buildings are, sadly, deteriorating but dilapidation and decay cannot conceal their glorious and exuberant architecture." (Information sourced from Art Deco Plaques\main.htm).

The information appearing on the Art Deco heritage plaque at *second Manners Mansions*, reads as follows: "This 14-storey building was designed in 1937 by Emley & Williamson, who also designed Anstey's Building opposite, thus creating an impressive corner. The two rounded bays are not quite symmetrical and are set back to allow maximum exposure to the sky and light. The rounded island corner shop was Smokers' Corner, the venue for many generations of smokers." (Information sourced from Art Deco Plaques\list1.htm).

ARCHITECT:

Emley & Williamson.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans	:	
Approval of plans	:	
Completion date	:	1937

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco - New York.

"Architectural Merit: Manners Mansions is one of Johannesburg's best Art Deco buildings, responding well to the corner position so common in Johannesburg." (Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

"A landmark in Johannesburg, both because of its impressive size & of its exemplary exhibition of the International Style. Seen together with its neighbour Anstey House (sic. should be *Anstey's Building*: AF-2), it forms a corner stone of Johannesburgs (sic) architectural heritage & history." (NMC survey form, undated: SAHRA Archive File 3/1/3/Joh/A – Johannesburg, General).

BUILDING TYPE:

Shops to street, office and residential building.

ENVIRONMENT:

A year after the declaration of the *third Anstey's Building* as a national monument, the NMC indicated (i.e. in a letter dated 30th May 1995), that there were numerous conservation valuable buildings in the area of the *third Anstey's Building* –the area was therefore considered to have special heritage qualities. Mention was made of the *School Clinic* (see AR-3), the *Union Club Building* (see AR-5), the *second Universal House* (see AR-2), and *Manners Mansions* (AE-2).

CONDITION:

Fair. Owners should be advised not paint the building as it was designed with natural finishes and painting the main façade would ruin the original design elements of the building.

URGENT ACTION:

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

PROTECTION STATUS: (under National Heritage Resources Act, 1999)

General protection:	Section 34(1) structure/s	
Formal protection:	provincial heritage site	
	national heritage site	
	provisional protection	
	heritage area	
	listed in provincial heritage resources register	

Relevant Gazette Notice:

Gazette description:

FORMER PROTECTION STATUS: (under National Monuments Act, 1969)

NOTES:

This building was nominated as one of Johannesburg's top 100 heritage places in 1986.

DEEDS INFORMATION:

Original ownership: African City Properties Trust.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

FIRST MANNERS MANSIONS:

The first *Manners Mansions* – completed in circa 1913, stood at 164, 166, 168 Jeppe Street and 60, 62 Joubert Street. "In a third group identifiable within the sculptural approach to design, the façade was conceived in an even more pronounced three-dimensional manner. Balconies and gables, sometimes even a tower, feature prominently. In the case of [the first] Manners Mansions (c. 1913), 164/6/8 Jeppe Street, a lively effect was created with projecting balconies and eaves, relieved by flush sections topped by Neo Cape Dutch gables. In this manner a rather homelike aspect was attained. The same kind of pitched roof and gables, albeit in a more 'Baroque' fashion, were to be found in the first Lewis & Marks Building (c. 1914, 63/5 President Street) [see Pre-History: P-6]. Balconies were recessed on the corners of the building to give the whole a more restrained effect. In fact, for a very long time this represented the first experimental application of the Neo-Cape Dutch mode in commercial buildings within the city centre. Due to its location on Market Square the Lewis & Marks Building was ideally situated to bring this building style to the attention of the public. Nevertheless, it was never positively applied in the cental [sic.] business district, probably because at that time Afrikaner sentiment was not yet established firmly enough in the mining city to promote the development of this style to a viable alternative. Moreover, it was probably felt that a domestic style was not entirely appropriate for commercial buildings."

HISTORY:

The Smokers' Corner brings back immediate memories of the wonderful combination of a vast array of tobacco and coffee aromas. The shop was always busy, people enjoying their coffee, others smelling

the tobacco that was displayed in containers or clients waiting to be served. The best time of year to visit the shop was in winter; it was always warm and inviting, a calm and hushed atmosphere prevailed. The huge range of cigars in their colourful boxes - neatly stacked in display cabinets on the wall - provided an interesting view to those who were in the shop. (Catharina JM Bruwer).

Right: view of the prominent street corner of the building with the circular 'island' shop – i.e. Smokers Corner. Note also the extant 'International Style' lettering of the name of the building on the smaller circular projection above the Ground Floor.



Van Der Waal: "The repeal of the restrictions on building heights allowed owners to give full vent to their search for vertical effects. Several buildings, such as *Escom House, Ansteys* and *Chrysler House,* were prime examples of the extent to which this new licence was exploited. Obviously, no account was taken of the possible effect of these high new facades on the perception of street spaces. After all, these tall buildings virtually obliterated all street spaces, and there was no relation at all between the steep street walls and life on the streets. The city fathers came to realise the adverse affects too late and an amended regulation introduced in 1937 (paragraph 2.3) served only to prevent further damage by new buildings. The new regulation restricted the number of storeys...not the cubic capacity of the building. The upper sections of many buildings erected before 1937 were already stepped back, so that the amended regulations effected no noteworthy change in the cityscape before 1940, as was evident from *Manners Mansions* (1937-9) [AE-3] and the *S A Mutual Building* (1937-9) [now Mutual Building: E-3]. The probable explanation for this development is that the buildings were cast in the mould of the New York skyscrapers which were obliged to be stepped back at the top by a regulation promulgated in 1916." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

"Apartment living reflected a specific attitude and a preference for a particular lifestyle. Blocks of flats were built to be let (there was as yet no question of the sectional titles of today), so that occupation was always temporary. In addition, apartment buildings met the accommodation requirements of the lower to middle-class sections of society only. The most affluent and poorest sections preferred detached houses. At the same time there was no concerted effort by friendly societies or any other agency to provide housing for the poorer sections of the community on the model of developments in Europe. By their location near the city centre, these buildings brought their middle-class occupant conveniently close to their places of work and relieved them of the bother of caring for either house or garden, so that they could devote their energies to earning a living. Since the apartment buildings were put up on or very near the street line and the busy streets afforded no place for children to amuse themselves, there was little opportunity to develop a healthy family life. Human interaction was also severely inhibited by the isolation of the flats as closed units next to or above one another, as well as the absence of communal social areas, such as recreation halls. Financial considerations were the only criteria applied in selecting tenants for the apartments. Thus personal income, not a propensity to fit in with a particular group, was the deciding factor. A prominent feature of apartment buildings was the general block form with a certain degree of mass articulation, mostly in the central sections, which suggested an illusion of depth. This treatment created an impression of friendly accessibility – probably a reference to domestic architectural styles, in which the function of the building was expressed in a traditional form. A second important common feature of these blocks was the use of balconies, by which these buildings came to be identified. Referring to the social aspect of flats, these balconies constituted a link between the interior and exterior and were reminiscent of the Edwardian verandahs. Built in the same materials as the face, the balconies were visually an integral element of the whole, but were at the same time more isolated in terms of function: only one balcony was allocated to each flat. This meant that the need for social space was gradually changed form the communal to the individualised. The balconies were not only inaccessible to neighbours but they could also be furnished to suit the taste of the individual tenant. It is interesting to note that the balcony appointment mostly contained arrangement of plants...in separate pots, which probably reflected a need to retain some kind of bond with the natural environment from which the tenants originated.

The construction and provision of services in apartment buildings followed a course of development parallel to that of office and commercial buildings. After the late 1920s reinforced concrete frame constructions were used to an increasing extent, and in a few exceptional cases this permitted a free arrangement of interior walls. In most cases, however, one floor was usually an exact replica of the next, with rectangular rooms. Elevators were fairly common. They were linked to the lobby and the passages built on each floor on the longitudinal axis of the building. As was to be expected, property developers provided built-in cupboards and a bathroom for each flat only in the more luxurious blocks, which were also equipped with the most modern domestic appliances available at the time, including an electric stove and refrigerator...In some cases parking for tenants' cars was provided in the basement...However, the average block of flats supplied only the protection of a roof and walls and tenants had to make do with communal ablution and toilet facilities on each floor. Such asocial effects were common where the profit motive was the major determinant." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

"African City Properties Trust (1952) Ltd. One of the modern romances of big business that will one day take up an important chapter in the history and development of Johannesburg lies behind the story of the emergence of the African City Properties Trust 1952 Ltd. as the largest property-owing concern in Southern Africa today. Originally established in London in 1894 with the object of acquiring properties in the Union, A.C.P.T. Limited, amongst other valuable holdings, owned six of the highestvalued properties in Johannesburg, facing on Eloff Street. On these sites there existed buildings which in their day were looked upon as the last word in modern architecture but which had long been outmoded by the fast pace of the city. In 1940 there came into being a company called Controlled Investments Limited, owned and operated by two brothers, Mr. Samuel L. Glazer, J.P., who came to the Union in 1926, and Mr. Bernard Glazer, who came to Johannesburg in 1930, and who were mainly responsible for the development of Hillbrow. The company built the Skyline Hotel and a new block of shops, Hillcrest Buildings, on an adjoining corner, which will eventually rise to eleven storeys. In 1947 the Glazer brothers realised that Eloff Street - South Africa's most valuable strip of land - was lagging far behind in the meteoric progress and growth of the country. The story of how the Glazer brothers made successive trips to England, wooed the shareholders of African City Properties Trust, and finally managed to purchase a controlling interest in the company, is one that will be discussed in financial circles in South Africa for years to come. At that stage the company owned the following properties: Castle Mansions, of 10 storeys, on the corner of Eloff Street and Jeppe Street; [second] Manners Mansions, of 13 storeys, on the corner of Jeppe Street and Joubert Street; Davidson Mansions (now the famous Waldorf), of five storeys on the corner of Eloff Street and Bree Street; Walter Mansions, of four storeys, on the corner of Eloff Street, Bree Street and Jeppe Street, which had since been demolished, a modern skyscraper being erected in its place; Pollock Mansions, of four storeys in the heart of Eloff Street, now demolished to make way for African City - one of the landmarks of Johannesburg's commercial centre; [first] Marlborough House, of four storeys, bounded by the corner of Eloff Street, Commissioner Street and Fox Street, now demolished to make way for a modern skyscraper standing there today; St. James Mansions, of five storeys, on the corner of Eloff Street and Bree Street, and Norfolk House, of four storeys, on the corner of Joubert Street and Bree Street, which has since been demolished for the erection of the new Bosman Building [AS-4]; Lauriston Court, of five storeys in Louis Botha Avenue, Houghton; Stanley House, corner of Commissioner Street and Bree Street [sic. should be 89, 91 Commissioner and 37 Loveday Streets; see Pre-History: F-5], which was subsequently sold, and a subsidiary, Green's Buildings Limited, which owns 17-storey Annan House, Commissioner Street [BC-2], which today [i.e. 1956] houses the headquarters of African City Properties Trust. With complete control in their hands, the Glazer brothers and associates now turned to their second part pf their long-term programme. This was the organization and flotation of a public company known as A.C.P. Investment Limited, which acquired the total controlling interest in African City Properties Trust Ltd. This new company perfected the plans for the rebirth of Eloff Street, demolishing existing buildings and erecting gigantic modern edifices which today form new and progressive landmarks of the city's main shopping thoroughfare. At the same time the company gained further suburban interest by taking over Carnarvon Hotels Limited, owners of the Orange Grove Hotel, in Orange Grove, and a block of 14 shops next to the hotel. The company also bought out Stedelike Grondbeleggers Beperk, owners of bank premises in De Villiers Street, Johannesburg. The Organisation has since bought Mackay Mansions, of 11 storeys, on the corner of Rissik and Jeppe Streets [AQ-7], Ridgeway Court, corner of Bok Street and Nugget Street and Parkleigh Court, in Wolmarans Street. The Glazer brothers have always worked together. For more than two decades they have planned real estate and building operations with an implicit faith in the future of Johannesburg and the still greater future of the country where-in their interest now extends to Bechuanaland [now known as Botswana] and the Central African Federation. But the story does not end there. As South Africa moves forward in the face of inevitable progress, so African City Property Investment Limited and its associated companies will move forward with it, secure in the knowledge that its prosperity is intimately bound up in that of a progressive country." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years...).

GENERAL NOTES:

Estimated cost of building Estimated cost of drainage Accommodation approved Valuation at completion Occupied

PREVIOUS TENANTS:

By 1954: Sharp & Herman (Pty) Ltd. Room 11 – The Antique Parlour. Room 43 – Burroughs, Welcome & Co (SA) Ltd, Wholesale Druggists. Joubert Street: Criterion Trixie Florist; 60 - Martha Lane, ladies outfitters. Jeppe Street: 166 – Standard Furniture Co.; Winifred Fashions Ltd.; Elizabeth Gowns. 168 - Electrolux Showroom; American Shirt Waist Ltd.; Louise et Jenine.

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CURRENT TENANTS:

Western Radio. Las Vegas Factory Shop.

SOURCES:

For additional illustrative information, see relevant supplementary photo album in electronic format.

See SOURCES DOCUMENT for information on sources consulted with reference to this document.

ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic Value:



Associated with historic person, group or organisation



Associated with historic event or activity

Architectural/Aesthetic value:

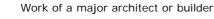


Important example of building type





Fine details, workmanship or aesthetics



Social/Spiritual/Linguistic value:



Associated with social, spiritual, linguistic, economic or political activity





Illustrates an historical period

Scientific/Technological value:



Example of industrial, technical or engineering development/achievement

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New, rare or experimental building techniques

RECORDED BY:

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