

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: TRUWORTHS BUILDING



Above: Close-up view of main entrance at corner of Eloff and President Streets.

Right: Eloff Street elevation.

Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : President
 Street number : 70
 : [67, 69 Eloff; 68, 70 President]
 Stand Number : 5253
 Previous Stand Number: by 1976 - 544, 4466F
 Block number : AB
 GIS reference :

ZONING: Current use/s :
 Previous use/s :

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height :
 Levels above street level :
 Levels below street level :

It is clear from the following description by Chipkin that the building is of architectural interest: "At Truworths corner Stauch brought in vertical fins from the Meat Board building as well as deep-blue ceramic glazed tile (with handcraft variability) to cover large blank wall surfaces, where air-conditioned showroom floors occur...In this context we shall concentrate our attention on the Eloff

Street buildings – example of a light, elegant architecture, an alternative to the heaviness and seriousness of purpose of the skyscraper style...” (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...)

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls:

Roof:

Windows:

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

No record found (January 2004).

INTEGRITY:

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

Stauch, Vorster, Watson & Przybylski.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans : 1968 (RAU Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg);
: original plans not found (January 2004).
Approval of plans :
Completion date :

BUILDING STYLE:

Late Modernist.

BUILDING TYPE:

ENVIRONMENT:

CONDITION:

Good.

URGENT ACTION:

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

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

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
| General protection: | Section 34(1) structure/s | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Formal protection: | provincial heritage site | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | national heritage site | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | provisional protection | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | heritage area | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | listed in provincial heritage resources register | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Relevant Gazette Notice:

Gazette description:

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

NOTES:

DEEDS INFORMATION:

Original ownership: Truworths.

By 1976: Stand 544 – Stanlen Building Johannesburg Ltd.; Stand 4466F – Trueloff (PTY.) Ltd.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

HATFIELD HOUSE:

By 1904, the *Hatfield House* - designed by J.A. Moffat - stood at 69 Eloff Street and 68, 70 President Street. Interesting aspects of this four-storey Neo-Queen design building was the covered balcony; the plastered sections and brick planes; and gables and Victorian corner turret.

According to Van Der Waal, there “was another variation of the closed wall plane approach, which was set apart from the other in that the underlying grid structure of the face was sections (or pilasters) and string courses. All facades designed using this approach lacked the articulation of mass and the only punctuations were those of the roof silhouette – either gables of a corner turret. This implies that this group was closer to Late Victorian revival styles and may be regarded as a continuation of that mode...J A Moffat...designed *Hatfield House* (1904), 68, 70 President Street...(This)...building apparently reflected a personal style – the grid structure was accorded the same prominence in...(this building)...” (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

Hatfield House was demolished to make way for the existing building.

J. FORREST BUILDING:

The immediate neighbour of *Hatfield House* was the *J Forrest Building*. This building was completed in circa 1906, and stood at 67 Eloff Street.

By 1910 this three-storey verandah building was known as the *CTC Building*.

HISTORY:

The *J Forrest Building* – as described under PRE-HISTORY – was known by 1910 as the *CTC Building* and by 1954, as the *CTC Bazaars Building*, by which time one of the tenants of the building was Truworth's Fashion House. This building was demolished to make way for the *Truworths Building* – the owners now being Truworth's, i.e. who was a tenant during 1954!

Helen Grange in a most informative newspaper article titled “Graceful old stores have all gone” (date of publication not known) on department stores in early Johannesburg, writes as follows: “Of all the character changes which have left their mark on Johannesburg none has been more noticeable than the disappearance, in the 1970s, of the graceful old department stores. Its contemporaries – Ansteys, Belfast, Ackermans, Paramount and Stuttafords went too. So complete was the rout that Stuttaford's building in the city remained derelict for years. Some would even remember the firm of Blinman, Holwell and Islip – a department store with style and panache in the British manner in Eloff Street on the site now occupied by the OK. The OK was one of the stores which stayed – and flourished. Historically, these stores all stood relatively close to each other, in the city's prime spots. Their siting was considered to be of huge significance in terms of fashion appeal – and only very few streets were regarded as fashionable. These streets were all north of Commissioner Street – that part of the city which the Transvaal Republic auctioned to the public in 1886 when Johannesburg was born. South of that street on what historically mine-owned land, are the grandiose old mining and financial houses. John Orr's had been a pioneer department store. Stuttafords had also been a household name since early in the century. But when Sam Cohen launched the cash-and-carry store called OK Bazaars in 1927 he was told it would fail – it was, people said, on the ‘wrong side of Eloff Street’. Not only did the Eloff Street store do a roaring trade, it triggered a new age of cash stores and remained a powerful force even when similar cash stores were foundering. Instalment credit Because large department stores occupying four to five floors presented management difficulties, speciality

department stores emerged – and quickly grew. One of the earliest speciality stores to open its doors was Hepworths, a menswear [sic.] retailer launched in 1894 in Harrison Street [on the corner of Eloff Street]. Edworks, the country-wide shoe chain opened its first Johannesburg shop on the corner of Joubert and Pritchard streets in 1924 – Foschini’s clothing outfitters started in 1925 (in Pritchard Street) and Truworthis opened soon afterwards in 1926 (on the corner of President and Eloff). But the most noteworthy speciality store was Edgars, which started in 1939 as a tiny business specialising in giving instalment credit to typists and shop assistants when John Orr’s was serving the upper end of the market. Since then, Edgars has established the largest and most successful speciality department store in Market Street (where the Belfast used to be) while also spreading its chain into shopping centres and other central areas nationwide. Its subsidiaries [sic.], Sales House and Jet Stores are major chains in their own right, each aiming at identifiable segments of the market. It was management difficulties which saw the closure of the old-timer, Greatermans, in 1982. The space vacated was promptly taken by Dions, a very successful speciality store dealing in furniture, sporting and photographic equipment and appliances....While some department stores went to the suburbs some, like Ansteys whose tall stepped building was the city’s highest for years, and the bargain-basement shop, Paramount, simply disappeared. Ackermans, a giant in the 1920s, was bought out by Pep stores and today exists only as a supplement to Pep.”

See also *Foschini Building* (Joubert Street), Document AC-9.

It was highly fashionable in the Seventies to collect trousseau and I still possess some of the articles collected during those years; a wooden cutlery-holder bought at the main OK as it was known then; pieces of a dinner-set from *Greatermans* with the words ‘Microwave oven safe’ printed on the bottom – keeping in mind that microwave ovens were not a household name in the 70s in South-Africa; a rose-pattern stainless steel kitchen utensil set from *John Orr’s* at a sale price of R25.00 – remember the rose-pattern, it was on everything such as glasses, dinner sets, carving sets and cutlery. Every Easter season a special stand was allocated for Easter eggs in Greatermans at the entrance on Rissik Street, the eggs I remember were the size of an ostrich egg, hand decorated with icing sugar and by special request, a name was iced on the egg. The best place to have breakfast on a Saturday morning was at the restaurant located on one of the upper floors in *Greatermans* – their scrambled eggs and toast was well known. My first account was opened at Edgars, the manageress was a Mrs. Van Den Heever, and with her help the account was opened without the permission of my parents, keep in mind that during the 70s women had fewer rights than now! The amount I could buy for was a staggering thirty rand! *John Orr’s* had a Jucy Lucy bar and it was very vogue to say ‘O, I went to John Orr’s today.’ The clothes sold at *Foschini’s* and *Truworthis* were more expensive but their window dressing was always very tasteful and nice shops to do window-shopping at. Catharina JM Bruwer.

GENERAL NOTES:

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

A branch of Truworthis was situated in the *Corporation Building* (see H-1). The earliest date with reference to this is 28 May 1963, when plans for alterations to the basement and ground floor by the architect F. Harling, were approved. It is also interesting to note that the original architects of the *Corporation Building* were subsequently appointed as architects for the extensive work on the ground floor of the building for a new shop for *Truworthis*; these plans were passed on 22 December 1975.

CURRENT TENANT/S:

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
- Important example of a style or period
- Fine details, workmanship or aesthetics
- Work of a major architect or builder

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
- New, rare or experimental building techniques

RECORDED BY:

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Unless otherwise indicated photographs by Catharina JM Bruwer.





TRUWORTH

17 8 2011

TRUWORTH



11 6 2003

TRUWORTHS

TRUWORTHS

TRUWORTHS

No Left Turn

No Left Turn



TRUWORTHS

TRUWORTHS

17 8 2013



17 8 2003

TRUMORTHS



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