

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: WALTER WISE BUILDING



Left: the *Walter Wise Building*, adjoined on the left in this picture by the *Glamo Building*, and on the right, by the *ABC Shoe Centre Building*. Above: view of the *Walter Wise Building* at the time of the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the City in 1956 (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : Joubert
 Street number : 50, 52
 Stand Number : 855, 860
 Previous Stand Number:
 Block number : AD
 GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

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

"Apart from asymmetrical façade articulations and window band, the Ahistorical Style also found expression in façades with stacked rectangular balconies. *Downing Mansions* (1913-2), 38 Plein Street, provided evidence that experimentation with this alternative had started early. In fact, the building stood out as one of the earliest attempts at innovation and renewal in Johannesburg's architecture, and was also a milestone in the work of architect Gordon Leith. Only the bay windows, which were grouped vertically, were reminiscent of the Traditional Style. A similar method was used in the *Walter Wise Building...and Denstone Court* (1937), c/o Fox and Von Wielligh Street, where the bay windows already reflected the greater abstraction of the Ahistorical Style." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls:

Roof: concrete, flat.

Windows: steel casements.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

INTEGRITY:

The enclosure of the balconies with modern glazing has compromised the three dimensional effect of the body of the main façade of the building, completely negating the original design intentions of the architects Robert Howden and A.J. Stewart.

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

Howden & Stewart.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans :
Approval of plans :
Completion date : 1935.

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco – Monolithic.

BUILDING TYPE:

Multi storey light industrial building.

ENVIRONMENT:

There appears to be very little if any interconnectedness between the *Walter Wise Building* and its neighbours in Joubert Street.

CONDITION:

Neglected. Cosmetic repairs required.

URGENT ACTION:

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

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

General protection:	Section 34(1) structure/s	<input checked="" 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: Walter John Wise.
By 1956: Walter John Wise.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

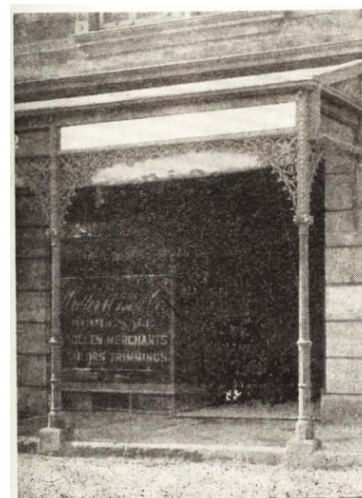
FIRST WALTER WISE BUILDING:

By 1903, the *first Walter Wise Building* - the property of Walter John Wise - was situated on the 52 Joubert Street portion of the site of the current building.

SECOND WALTER WISE BUILDING:

By 1916, the above building had become inadequate for the expanding business, and was demolished to make way for the construction of a new building, i.e. the *second Walter Wise Building*. The latter building was demolished to make way for the current building. It is not clear when the 50 Joubert Street portion was developed as part of the Walter Wise property.

Right: Main entrance to the original premises of Walter Wise & Company in 1903 at 52 Joubert Street, Johannesburg. (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*). Note the unmade street!



HISTORY:

“Walter John Wise, founder of the well-known firm of ladies’ and children’s outfitters whose modern premises are situated in Joubert Street, was born in England eighty one years ago. His father emigrated with his wife and infant son to South Africa in 1874, and worked for a number of years as a contractor to the railways in Queenstown. Subsequently, the family returned to England where young Wise completed his education, and it was not until 1893 that he again set foot on these shores. On the occasion of his second visit, he had reached the age of nineteen years, and during the succeeding ten years he set about learning his trade. In 1903 he founded the company which to this day (i.e. 1956) bears his name, and of which he is still the proprietor. Originally the firm operated as wholesale woollen merchants in the city and sold suit lengths to tailors. Its premises comprised a small shop situated on the same site in Joubert Street as that occupied by the present more modern and commodious building. About 1905 the Company reverted to retailing ladies’ and children’s wear on an entirely cash basis, which practice is continued to this day despite the widely-popularised systems of credit offered by other organisations throughout the country. In 1916 the premises were rebuilt to allow for the company’s expanding business, and further rebuilding took place in 1935. This gradual expansion of the Company was undoubtedly due in no small measure to judicious buying by Mr. Wise. The Company celebrated its Golden Jubilee in April, 1953, and although Mr. Wise is still in

active control of this old-established concern, he is to-day ably assisted by his son Mr. Norman Wise." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years...).

Right: "...on the corner the well-known Walter Wise Drapery Store in Watt's Building." Note the double storey *Walter Wise Building* (indicated by arrow) adjacent to the five-storey *Central City Building*. (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 82).



GENERAL NOTES:

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

By 1954 the building was fully occupied by Walter Wise & Co.

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 Bpuwer.



25 1 2004



OPEN
SUNDAY
2pm - 2pm
28 9 2003



KLEIN

28 9 2003

28 9 2003



P
60 MIN
MON-FRI 8.00-18.00
SAT-SUN 10.00-18.00

MK905 GP

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