

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: WOOLWORTHS BUILDING



Top left: corner Jeppe and Rissik Streets.

Top right: corner Joubert and Kerk Streets, with the *third Anstey's Building*, clearly visible in the background.

Bottom left: close-up view of corner entrance, Jeppe and Rissik Streets.

Bottom Right: Jeppe Street elevation.

Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : corners Eloff, Commissioner, Rissik and Jeppe
 Street number :
 : [55, 57 Eloff; 45, 47, 49, 51, 53 Commissioner;
 : 58, 60, 62, 64 Rissik; 154,156, Jeppe]
 Stand Number : 5268
 Previous Stand Number: 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1121, 1123, 4532, 4839A, 4839B
 Block number : AF
 GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

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

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls:

Roof:

Windows:

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

INTEGRITY:

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

No record found 1998, January 2004.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans : (original plans not found)
Approval of plans :
Completion date :

BUILDING STYLE:

Post Modern Decorative, 1990s.

BUILDING TYPE:

Shops to street and warehouse building.

ENVIRONMENT:

Because of its unconventional form, scale, and materials used in its construction, this building does not fit in well with its surround.

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
- 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:

DEEDS INFORMATION:

Original ownership:

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

AMERICAN IMPORTING AND TRADING BUILDING:

This building previously occupied the corner stand at 45 Kerk and 58 Rissik Street.

In Johannesburg One Hundred (written by E. Palestrant), a detailed description of goods available by 1890 of the general dealers is noted. "Roll top desks, Amberg letter files, refrigerators, paper bags, canned goods, Fairbank scales, copying presses, Frazer's axle grease, wrapping paper, baking powder, rye whiskey, Pabst beer, Vallens cigars, Marvin safes and Columbia bicycles were all available at the American Importing and Trading Company Limited in Rissik Street." *Africa House* later occupied *The American Importing and Trading Building* site.

ANCHOR MANSIONS:

Anchor Mansions was situated at 49 Kerk Street. This 11-storey building designed by Obel & Obel in 1931 was completed during 1933. It was recommended from the June 1976 RAU Survey that the building should be cleaned up and be declared as a National Monument. *Anchor Mansions* was the property of SANLAM by 1976. Chipkin: "The architects of...were Obel & Obel, who designed a series of significant 1930s Art Deco buildings:...Anchor Mansions (notable for its chevron patterns and splayed Art Deco window shapes), the adjacent Africa House (which had a superb, luxuriating set of main entrance stairs and Art Deco Skyline)...Marc Obel once recalled: 'We were considered the first architects of that period...'" (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...)



CRITERION HOTEL:

The *Criterion Hotel* designed J.C. Cook & Cowen and completed during 1939, was situated at the corner of 64 Rissik and 154, 156 Jeppe Streets. A tenant during 1954 was 'Criterion Trixie'.

Left: Jeppe Street, 1956 – looking west: just visible is *Manners Mansions*; across Joubert Street is *Anstey's Building*; almost hidden is the *Heritier Building*, and on the Rissik Street corner, stands the *Criterion Hotel*. Across Rissik Street is the *Plaza Theatre*. (Photograph: Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years...).

AFRICA HOUSE:

The architects Obel & Obel designed *Africa House*. Completed during 1939, this building occupied the 45, 47 Kerk and 58, 60, 62 Rissik Streets portion of this site. During 1976, *Africa House* was the property L. & F. (Pty) Ltd. The RAU June 1976 Report recommended the retention of *Africa House* as the fabric and design of the building was complementary to that of *Anchor Mansions*, also designed by Obel & Obel.

Tenants by 1954: one of the better-known tenants of the building during 1954 was Uniewinkels Beperk, a gent's outfitters; 2nd floor - Johannesburg Book Club, A.S.A. Seeds – note that the firm was in close proximity to Kirchoff & Co, the wholesale and retail Seeds company - forming a small seed district.

RUSKIN HOUSE:

Before 1955, the *Ruskin House* extended over three properties; the first, at 57 Joubert Street, was occupied during 1931; the second, at 51 Kerk Street, was occupied during 1934; during 1936, the Kerk and Joubert Street premises were linked by the occupation of the building on the corner of 53 Kerk and 55 Joubert Streets. Norman Anstey Limited - the owner of the adjacent *Anstey's Building* (see AF-2), bought these properties in 1955. The Ruskin Fashion Salon relocated to 205 Bree Street during 1956.

Stark, 1956: "N. Kobrin & Co.

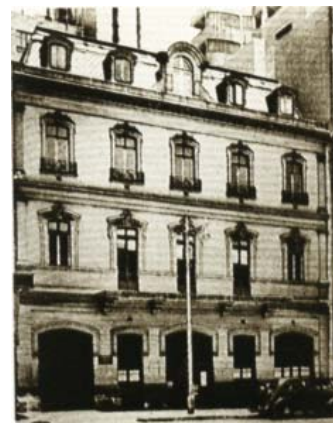
Ruskin Fashion Salon. History at a glance

- 1909 Commenced trading as Wholesale Merchants in Johannesburg.
- 1924 Entered the Retail Trade as 'Jobs', 94a Eloff Street.
- 1927 Opened Fashion Branch, 'Cobryn's', at 65a Pritchard Street. (See *St. Mary's Mansions* PRE-HISTORY AD-5)
- 1931 Founded Ruskin Fashion Salon at 57 Joubert Street.
- 1934 Extended Ruskin Fashion Salon by addition of (51) Kerk Street property.
- 1936 Kerk Street and Joubert Street premises linked up by inclusion of corner property.
- 1955 Premises sold to Messrs. Norman Ansteys (sic.) Limited.
- 1956 Established Ruskin Fashion Salon at 205 Bree Street." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

HERITIER BUILDING:

The four-storey *Heritier Building* with gabled dormer windows, stood at 158 Jeppe Street. The building (plans dated 20 September 1896) was also known as the *Old Customs House*. The building was listed in a 1954 Street Directory, and was occupied at the time by the Department of Immigration & Asiatic Affairs. Standard Bank occupied the building at a later stage, when the building was known as the *Standard Bank Building*.

Right: Photograph taken from Van Der Waal, G-M.: *From Mining Camp to Metropolis, The buildings of Johannesburg 1886-1940*.



HISTORY:

GENERAL NOTES:

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

CURRENT TENANTS:

Woolworths; Discom.

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.

RECORDED BY:

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Unless otherwise indicated photographs by Catharina JM Bruwer.

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