

**JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM**

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

JJ Bruwer ©  
Cellphone: 082 325 5823

**NAME OF PLACE: EDGARS CITY BUILDING**



Top left and bottom centre: corner, Joubert and Kerk Streets. Top right: looking west down Pritchard Street, in the distance can be seen the skywalk linking *Edgars City Buildings* and *Game*. Bottom right: the skywalk as seen from the southeastern corner of Rissik and Pritchard Streets.

Previous/alternative name/s : originally *Tony Factors In Town Centre*

**LOCATION:** Street : bounded by Joubert, Pritchard, Rissik and Kerk  
 Street number :  
 : [47-53 Joubert; 51-59 Pritchard; 50-56 Rissik; 50-56 Kerk]  
 Stand Number : 5244  
 Previous Stand Number:  
 Block number : U  
 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:**

Skywalk (see ENVIRONMENT).

**ALTERATIONS:**

**INTEGRITY:**

**INSCRIPTION:**

**ARCHITECT:**

**BUILDER:**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :  
Approval of plans :  
Completion date :

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Post Modern Decorative (1990s).

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Speciality department store.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

At completion, this building was a major attraction and the skywalk a novelty. Both the authors remember their first visit to the newly completed building and of crossing one of the City's busiest streets (Pritchard) totally unhindered from passing vehicular traffic.

**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: Anthony (Tony) Factor.

**PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:**

"Less important hotels were also located on the edge of the business district. This was in line with the tendency for residential buildings to be gradually crowded out of the city centre – a trend that was to be continued in later years. Indeed, this marked the beginning of the slow death of the city core, which would eventually contain only commercial buildings and lack all vestiges of night life." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

GRAND NATIONAL HOTEL:

The *Grand National Hotel* - designed by J.S. Donaldson – was erected at 50 Rissik Street and 51 Pritchard Street and on the adjacent stand at 52 Rissik Street during 1888-91. The hotel was one of the more lavish accommodations found in Johannesburg during that period. It was a double storey gabled building with shops located on ground floor.

Before the Second Anglo Boer War, the M.C.C. cricketers and visiting rugby teams stayed at the Hotel. "I remember the procession of one such team up Rissik Street, after the train had arrived at 8 p.m. Their line of horse cabs was preceded by a Scottish pipe band. This band also marched along Pritchard Street in Queen Victoria's Jubilee festivities in 1897, when my parents and I watched them from the Grand National Hotel Balcony. Mark Twain stayed at the Grand National in 1896 and was asked by the manager to write some remarks in the Visitors' Book. Mark Twain wrote: 'It is rude to make remarks'...Opposite our house, where the Grand National now stands, were houses, gardens, and bluegum trees." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg).

"More comfortable accommodation", according to Van Der Waal, "was to be found in the hotels, of which the most important were the enlarged [second] *Central Hotel* (1889), 62/4 Commissioner Street [See Pre-History: BA-3] and the *Grand National Hotel* (1888-91), 50/2/4 Rissik Street...While the [second] *Central Hotel* block shape and classicist ornamentation fitted in well with the form character of the office buildings in the area, the *Grand National* [Hotel] followed the picturesque approach of the shopping centre. Indeed, there were several shops on the ground floor of the hotel. As in the case of the commercial buildings, attention was focused on the roof line which was interrupted by broad classicist gables and many ornamented skylights." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

"In 1890, the Grand National Hotel was constructed in Rissik Street, by a Mr. A. Zoccola, an Italian restaurateur. New features for the mining camp were cast iron pillars and balustrading imported from England, and gabled attic windows...One of the first double storey hotels in Johannesburg...Mr. H.M. Stanley, the famous African explorer, stayed here on his visit to Johannesburg on November 18th, 1897, and Mark Twain was a resident for some weeks from May 18th 1896." (Stoloff, C.A.: The Historic Buildings of Johannesburg – 15 [Hotels, Clubs...]). The suburb Savoy Estate, proclaimed on the 27th October 1948, was originally the farm of Mr Zoccola.

During 1891, an addition to the *Grand National Hotel* was constructed. This addition stood at 53 Pritchard Street, 54, 56 Rissik Street, and 50, 52 Kerk Street, meaning that the whole western section of the city block was subsequently occupied by the *Grand National Hotel*.

Ellen Palestrant describes the *Grand National Hotel* as follows "The Grand National Hotel was the largest and most modern at the time and was the first to have hot and cold running water. It had more than one hundred and twenty bedrooms, special apartments for families, a banqueting hall, and both large and small dining rooms for private dinners. Furthermore, the cuisine and wines were 'unrivalled' and it was 'the most comfortable hotel on the Rand.'...Next to the Grand National Hotel was List Bros, 'the manufacturing jewellers of South Africa' who had 'every description of high class goldsmith's work done on the premises.'...The Grand National Hotel offered luncheons at four shillings and dinners at five shillings." (Palestrant, E.: Johannesburg One Hundred). (See Pre-History: A-1 for current currency values).

According to Neame, there “were even dress reformers in early Johannesburg. A newspaper paragraph on January 17, 1894, read: ‘Nearly every morning two young ladies dressed in ‘Bloomer’ costumes went their way up Kerk Street past the Grand National Hotel.’” Perhaps this should be clarified; ‘bloomer costumes’ are those worn by barmaids and ‘ladies of the night’ as seen in the American Cowboy Movies; one of the ‘houses of a lesser reputation’ or ‘red-light houses’ was situated not far from the *Grand National Hotel* and perhaps this article was directed against two of these ladies. This house, according to Neame, was the “expensive Sylvia Villa, at the railway end of Rissik Street, the front of which was partly hidden by two or three blue-gum trees down which its guests used to escape when there was a police raid, often figured in the newspapers. It survived into the British regime, but in the end the municipality bought the property and pulled down the double-storey dwelling, and a block of shops and flats covered the site.” (Neame, L.E.: *City Built On Gold*).

“By 1890 new buildings with more sophisticated architectural designs were appearing in Johannesburg...Hotels of a more dignified character and service appeared early on for example the Grand National Hotel in Rissik Street, which was run by an Italian hotelier, M. Zoccola, who previously had managed Height’s Hotel [see Pre-History: BA-1], one of the first hotels built in Johannesburg.” (Norwich, O.I.: *A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards*).



Left: “Grand National Hotel. A colourful two-storey building on the corner of Rissik and Pritchard streets. This popular hotel was started in the early nineties and, although not the oldest, it soon became one of the most fashionable hotels of early Johannesburg. It was managed originally by the well-known Italian hotelier, A. Zoccola, who came from Height’s Hotel built in 1888. The pioneer Turner’s Drug Store occupied the corner on the ground floor. The original building was subsequently altered and recently (sic.) demolished to become a part of the Tony Factor In Town Centre.” (Norwich, O.I.: *A*

*Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 78*).

Authors’ note: In early Johannesburg, people of colour were denied the ‘privilege’ to walk on the City’s pavements as can be clearly seen in the above postcard.

#### TURNER’S DRUG STORES:

“At all branches of Turner’s Drug Stores, one could (by 1897) purchase ‘surgical appliances, toilet requisites, patents and propriety medicines, perfumery and brushware in great variety.” (Palestrant, E.: *Johannesburg One Hundred*).

The *Grand National Hotel* was grand, it was luxurious and well known, and its rooms occupied by the rich and the famous. Sadly, by 1935, the hotel had outlived its purpose and had to make room for the ten storey *Grand National Building* – designed by the architects J.C. Cook & Cowen. This Art Deco building with tri-partheid middle section, occupied the northeastern corner of Rissik and Pritchard Streets. Clive Chipkin’s description of the latter building creates the impression of a building worthy of a long and prosperous life, but as with its predecessor and namesake, only pictures and memories remain of this building.

#### STABLES – GRAND NATIONAL HOTEL:

According to Neame, the stables building of the original *Grand National Hotel* was situated at 52, 54, 56 Kerk Street and 53 Joubert Street. (“Some of the hotels provided ample stabling for visitors. The first Grand National Hotel had its stables on the ground now occupied by Milan Court.”) (Neame, L.E.: *City Built On Gold*).

#### LIST BROS:

According to G.A. Leyds, the “oldest jewellery shop (facing Pritchard Street) in town was opposite

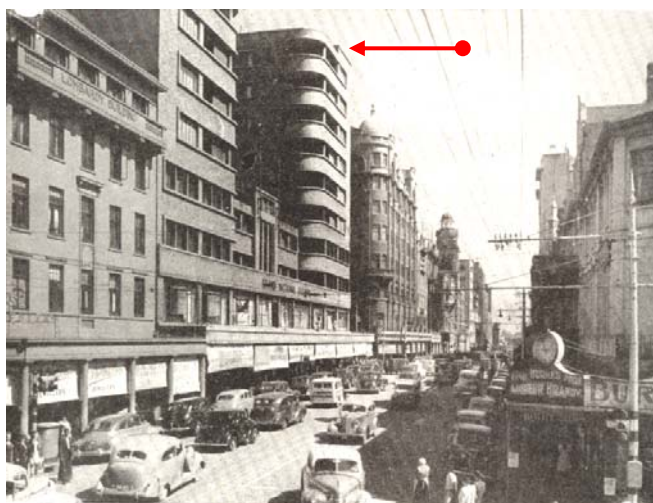
Stuttafords, named List Bros. and Collins, and occupied the same premises for over sixty years." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg). It is they who seem to have acted as the local agents for the clock and bells (since illegally removed) installed in the bell tower of the Rissik Street Post Office. "A copy of the original invoice from the manufacturer of the clock, dated 1902, is in the possession of the writer [i.e. Oscar I. Norwich]. It is made out to Mr H. Collins, 69 Myddleton Square (London), for List Bros., for the purchase of a quantity of opals, bells, and spare glass, with 2 gallons of clock oil at a price of £62. It is presumed from this and other evidence in some of the earlier views of Pritchard Street that Messrs Collins & List were originally separate firms until they amalgamated." (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 72).

#### GRAND NATIONAL BUILDING:

"Like the SAPM building, Grand National Building (1935-8) in Rissik Street – designed by the architects J.C. Cook & Cowen – is another example that grew out of a cluster of ideas imbued with strong Mendelsohnian influences. It was, as its name implied, a massive, stately facebrick town building with a strong symmetrical layout emphasised by semi-circular balconies at the upper apartment levels. This sculptural building form is thematic in many luxury apartment blocks in the upper-middle-class enclaves of Killarney and on the periphery of Houghton – areas that were wealthy counterparts to the crowded flatland of Hillbrow. (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...)

"We have met the Cook & Cowen partnership in a previous context as the architects of a whole roster of Art Deco blocks. Now they were responsible for Lusam Mansions (1933-5) on Eloff Street, Grand National on Rissik Street and Gleneagles in Killarney, a trio of projects that reveal a familial likeness and indicate that Cook & Cowen were moving outside the ambit of Art Deco sensibilities. These large apartment blocks used continuous facebrick spandrels on the exterior elevations to form bay projections: rhythmic and undulating at Lusam Mansions, semi-circular at both Grand National and Gleneagles." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...)

"...the proportions 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 [see Pre-History: BE-2], 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, but this building, as well as *Manners Mansions* (1937-9), 164/6/8 Jeppe Street [see AE-3] and the...*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...).



Left to right: 1956 - the *Lombardy Building*, *Grand National Building*, *Stuttafords* and the *Rissik Street Post Office*. (Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years...).

#### LOMBARDY BUILDING:

J.A. Moffat designed the *Lombardy Building* for Mr Zoccola at 50 Kerk and 56 Rissik Streets. The building was thus erected on a portion of the site of the former *Grand National Hotel* – the property also of Mr Zoccola. It is consequently believed that the building could have dated from the same period as the *Grand National Building*, i.e. 1935 to 1938.

Tenants by 1954: room 5, 7 - Witwatersrand Chamber of Reef Trade.

#### CASSEL BUILDING:

During the 1890's, the 53 Joubert and 58 Kerk Streets corner was occupied by the *Cassel Building*.

#### MORLEY HOUSE:

Fifty years later by 1954, *Morley House* occupied the 53 Joubert and 58 Kerk Streets corner.

#### LENNON BUILDING:

The first *Lennon Building* stood at 57a Pritchard Street during the 1890's.

#### LENNON BUILDING / WAREHOUSE:

The five-storey second *Lennon Building / Warehouse* replaced the first *Lennon Building*. The former building was designed by the architects W.C. & W. Reid during 1932 and the warehouse was completed in 1933.

#### HARVARD BUILDING:

Situated at 47, 49, 51 Joubert and 59 Pritchard Streets since its completion in 1927, was the *Harvard Building*, designed in 1926 by Kallenbach & Kennedy together with Stucke & Harrison, for Lewison & Ginsberg.

"During the 1920s", according to Van Der Waal, "the 'combination' type building was usually designed in the Traditional Style while more modern building concepts were incorporated in the following decade. *St Patrick Mansions* (1922-3), 323 Plein Street, still boasted detached Classicist columns, but in the *Harvard Building* (c. 1927-8), 47/9, 51 Joubert Street, and *Lucerne Mansions...*(1930-3), 46/8 De Villiers Street, both designed by Stucke & Harrison, historical references were limited to accentuated middle and corner sections, and mouldings and consoles under the balconies. In the same category were *Davidson's Mansions* (1924-5), 211/3 Bree Street; *Hi-Riagan Court* (1927), 22/4 Plein Street; *Tower House* (1929-30), 26/8 Plein Street: and *Stanley House* (1927), 89, 91 Commissioner Street." (See Pre-History: F-5). (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

#### MILAN COURT:

By 1940, the *Milan Court* stood at 52, 54, 56 Kerk Street.

#### BAYNES BUILDING:

By 1954, the *Baynes Building* was situated at 53 Pritchard Street. This building was also known as the *Trocadero Building*.

#### LINCOLN HOUSE:

Located at 57 Pritchard Street by 1954, was the *Lincoln House*.

#### **HISTORY:**

The original owner of this building was Anthony Factor better known as Tony son of Joe Factor. Factor was born on the 9th July 1939 in Johannesburg. During 1973 - according to the Who's Who – he was Managing Director of Down Town Wholesale Furnishers (Pty) Ltd.; Director of Associated Companies and Founder of the present company and Discount Outfitters (Pty) Ltd in 1960. He attended the Muizenberg High School and was also the Western Province Wrestling Champion in 1960 as well as Comat Karate Black Belt Champion in 1966.

"On the 6th September 1929, the first Edgars store opened in Joubert Street, Johannesburg. Over the past 73 years, the company has grown to six retail brands, over 720 facias in the 443 store locations throughout South Africa and the neighbouring territories of Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho. In August 2000, Edgars went live with the largest online clothing offering of any South African retailer....Our customers and staff are at the forefront of our corporate values, as we strive to be the stores of choice in our various market segments in Southern Africa for clothing, footwear, home textiles and accessories. We do this through our different retail formats. Edgars, incorporating the ABC shoe stores, is a department store, targeting the middle to upper market segments with a predominant focus in the larger shopping malls and downtown metropolitan areas. The middle to lower market segments are covered by the United Retail discount formats, trading as Jet, Sales House, Cuthberts and Smileys. We continue to align our retail brands and store sizes to meet the changing needs of our customers in the malls and on the high street. The company first began

trading on the JSE in 1946. In June 1999, Edgars Consolidated Stores Limited embraced the spirit of the new millennium and began trading on the JSE as Edcon." (Information sourced from [www.edgars.co.za](http://www.edgars.co.za)).

"From modest beginnings as a single basement shop selling women's fashions, the Edgars Group has become an internationally recognised organisation with over 730 stores, covering 680 791m<sup>2</sup>, throughout South Africa and surrounding areas. Founders Morris and Eli Ross would be proud of their creation. They would also be proud of the Group's modus operandi of making the customer king as well as creating a highly motivated work force. The Group was a subsidiary of South Africa Breweries from 1982 until January 1999. In June that year the Edgars Group, previously known as Edgars Stores Limited, began trading on the Johannesburg stock exchange as Edgars Consolidated Stores Limited - listed as Edcon in the retail sector - a name more accurately reflecting the function of the Group. The Edcon Group is comprised of the following companies: Edgars, Sales House, Jet, Cuthberts, ABC, Smiley's and the Manufacturing Division." (Information sourced from <http://www.profile.co.za>).

Helen Grange in a most informative newspaper article, titled "Graceful old stores have all gone" on the history of department stores in 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...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, Sales House and Jet Stores are major chains in their own right, each aiming at identifiable segments of the market."

The 1970s was a black period for buildings in Johannesburg as many valuable buildings were demolished. Lucille Davie in reporting on an interview on 4 October 2002 with Mrs Flo Bird, former NMC Councillor, wrote as follows: "Bird believes that the then National Party city council made a conscious effort to 'smash the heart of British liberalism in the city'". Van Der Waal remarked: "Johannesburg...has always striven for 'renewal'. In the course of the century most of the sites in the centre of this 'instant' city have been built upon at least three or four times. Although one's view of the city is therefore of necessity foreshortened, one is aware of particularly complex strata of development which may in fact compensate adequately for the city's lack of ancient history roots. The problem, however, is that very little has been salvaged in the city's present urban limits which could facilitate one's understanding of this fascinating process. The historically valuable city centre is, owing to continual 'renewal', disappearing at an alarming rate. (The cogent remark has made that, while Europe's cultural heritage was destroyed by bombs, in the Second World War, we have destroyed our own heritage through sheer ignorance.)" (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

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 *Truworths* 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 :

By 1954 Edgars had branches/ stores at: *Hannah Court*, 81 Eloff Street; first *Steytler Building*, 42 Loveday Street; Arop House; African City Buildings and the head office at 171 Marshall Street.

CURRENT TENANT/S:

Edgars.

**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:**

Heritage Resources Management team Johann J and Catharina JM Bruwer.  
Unless otherwise indicated photographs by Catharina JM Bruwer.





25 1 2004



17 8 2003

28 9 2003 6 02

Jet

SALES HOUSE

cutbacks

Edgars

City OPEN SUNDAY  
9am - 2pm

RE CS  
CITY





25 1 2004