

**JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM**

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

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**NAME OF PLACE: THE [Fourth] CORNER HOUSE**



Top left: corner, Sauer and Commissioner Streets. Top centre: Commissioner street, looking west with from left to right, *Clegg House*, *SARB House*, the *Goldfields Building*, and in the far background, the *fourth Corner House*. Bottom centre: view of Fox Street elevation. Bottom right: Commissioner Street elevation.

Previous/alternative name/s : *The New Corner House; The Corner House*

**LOCATION:** Street : Commissioner, Fox and Sauer  
 Street number :  
 : [58, 60, 62, 64 Commissioner; 57, 59, 61, 63 Fox;  
 : 25, 27 Sauer]  
 Stand Number : 1151  
 Previous Stand Number:  
 Block number : BA  
 Suburb : Marshallstown  
 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:**

Gardens.

**ALTERATIONS:**

**INTEGRITY:**

**INSCRIPTION:**

**ARCHITECT:**

No plans record found (1998).

**BUILDER:**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :  
Approval of plans :  
Completion date : 1965

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Johannesburg Late Modernist, 1970s.

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Office building.

**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"/> |



Relevant Gazette Notice:

Gazette description:

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

**NOTES:**

**DEEDS INFORMATION:**

Original ownership:

**PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:**

FIRST CENTRAL HOTEL:

The first *Central Hotel*, designed by Reid, Arthur Henry in ca. 1887, was situated at 62, 64 Commissioner Street and 27 Sauer Street.

The dining room of this building seems to have been better known than the Hotel itself being, having been used as a gambling hall, sleeping room and even a church hall! Built by Edgson, the first Central Hotel," as recounted by Neame, was "a corrugated iron structure with three or four bedrooms. Visitors who could not find accommodation were allowed as a favour to sleep in the dining-room, thought the concession had its drawbacks for Ikey Sonnenberg ran a faro table in the centre of the apartment and it was sometimes kept going until three or four o'clock in the morning when the men who were not gambling were trying to sleep round the sides of the room with their heads to the wall. Rhodes sometimes stayed at the Central Hotel and used to sit on the stoep with an open-necked shirt and slouch hat pulled over his eyes and give money to many of the loafers who approached him. (Authors' note: it is uncertain whether the legendary Cecil John Rhodes stayed at the first or the second *Central Hotel*). A journalist who visited Johannesburg in 1887 wrote: 'The billiard room [this could be the dining room] at the Central Hotel is a sight to see. It is packed like a herring barrel with all sorts of persons, many of whom could not handle a cue for the richest claim on the Rand. How play goes on is a mystery as the crowd surges close to the table. It is all for shelter and company, for the young digger is very gregarious". (Neame, L.E.: *City Built On Gold*).

"Early in November [1886], Bishop Bousfield, the Anglican Bishop of Pretoria, conducted the first religious service on the Rand in the dining room of the [first] Central Hotel, a wood and iron structure, Ferreira's Camp [now known as Ferreirasdorp]. At the end of the service a subscription list was opened for the erection of a church and Mr Ross, the manager of the Standard Bank, was appointed Honorary Treasurer. Later in the month the Bishop applied to the Government for a church site at Randjeslaagte. His letter was signed H. B. Pretoria, a signature the Authorities refused to recognise. Nevertheless, he was informed that the Government would grant this request and in the following year the foundation stone of St. Mary's Church was laid in Eloff Street [see Pre-History: AD-5]." (Shorten, J.R.: *The Johannesburg Saga*).

Neame: "Edgson, who had opened the first store in Ferreira's camp, built the [first] Central Hotel in Commissioner Street which was for many years one of the prominent hostelrys in the town. He leased it to Frank Howard Bussey..." (Neame, L.E.: *City Built On Gold*). (For more information with regard to Bussey, see *Bussey's Building*, Pre-History: F-5)

Right: the Hotel by 1892. Photograph (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).



SECOND CENTRAL HOTEL:

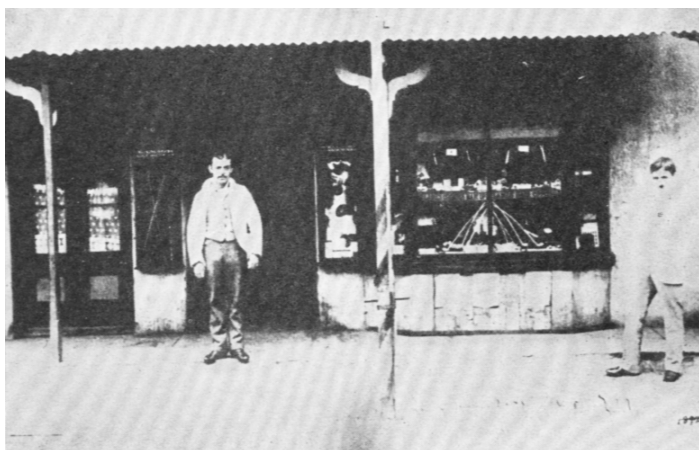
The second *Central Hotel* – a New-Baroque style double storey building with saddle roof; cast iron verandahs and plastered façade – was situated at 60, 62, 64 Commissioner Street, 27 Sauer Street, and 59 Fox Street. This building was designed by A.R. Reid.

"By 1890 the Central Hotel had been rebuilt, and in the hands of Mr. Gosch boasted of a dining-room that seated two hundred people and of having fifty bedrooms. It still [i.e. 1956] stands on the same site." (Neame, L.E.: City Built On Gold).

"To compensate for their tough life in the mining camp, the more resourceful diggers", according to Van Der Waal, "improvised all sorts of games and recreational activities. Bars, horse races and athletic meetings were so well patronised that these activities became an integral part of general camp life. In fact, they helped to imbue the community with a striking vitality. There were bars – some rather minute – on virtually every street corner south of Market Square..By September 1887 there were no less than 90 liquor licences in Johannesburg...They were distinguished from the other businesses by signboards and a lamp above the door. These lamps not only served as effective advertisements but also constituted the only street illumination until 1890. The hotels played a more important role. *Height's Hotel* on the corner of [48] Commissioner and Ferreira Streets [see Pre-History: BA-1] was built of brick, and the [second] *Central Hotel*, 62/4 Commissioner Street, of brick and hewn stone...This dressed stone was supplied from the quarry on Doornfontein...More comfortable accommodation was to be found in the hotels, of which the most important were the enlarged [double-storey second] *Central Hotel* (1889), 62/4 Commissioner Street and the *Grand National Hotel* (1888-91), 50/2/4 Rissik Street [see Pre-History: U-1]. Many of these early buildings were constructed in great haste and with limited skills. For instance, in January 1889 the *Central Hotel* collapsed while a second storey was being added. The foundations proved quite inadequate. So a new two-storey building with sandstone facing and a cast-iron verandah was erected according to plans drawn up by the architect A H Reid. Together with *The Arcade* [see Pre-History: G-7], this probably represented the earliest application of finely embellished cast iron in the mining camp. While the *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...).

A photo appearing in *Seventy Golden Years* (Stark) published in 1956, to celebrate Johannesburg's 70th year of existence, is captioned as follows: "The Central Hotel, one of the few early hotels still in existence on the same site. The building, as depicted here in 1892, has been considerably altered and stands on the south-west corner of Commissioner Street." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years*...).

By 1954 tenants of the second *Central Hotel* were: 60-62 Commissioner Street - Central Furniture Mart; 60 Commissioner Street - L Goldberg; 64 Commissioner Street – H Waldman.



58 COMMISSIONER STREET: Barbershop:

The first Barbershop on the Rand was situated at 58 Commissioner Street. See photo on left taken in 1892. (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years*...).

58 COMMISSIONER STREET: Building:

By 1954 tenants of the building situated on the 58 Commissioner Street portion of this stand were:  
M Kupshik; SA Auctioneers (Pty) Ltd; WG Gordon and Anglers Den (Pty) Ltd.

JURRJENS SERVICE STATION:

By 1954, Jurrjens Service Station was located at 57, 59, 61 Fox Street.

**HISTORY:**

For information on the history of the Central Mining-Rand Mines group of gold mines on the Witwatersrand (popular name: the *Corner House*), see *third Corner House*: E-1.

**GENERAL NOTES:**

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

**CURRENT TENANT:**

Department of Development Planning and Local Government, Gauteng Provincial Government.

**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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25. 6. 2003



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