

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: RAND CENTRAL BUILDING



Top left: view of south elevation and southwest corner of building. Top right: view of the west façade; in the left foreground can be seen the *School Clinic*, with the *Steadman Mansions* to its right, on the southeastern corner of Jeppe and Joubert Streets. Bottom right: seen on the right, is the neighbouring *Temple Court*, on the southeastern corner of Eloff and Jeppe Streets.

Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : Jeppe
 Street number : 165
 : [163, 165, 167 Jeppe; 64 Joubert]
 Stand Number : 4846
 Previous Stand Number:
 Block number : AS
 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:

Oscar, Harwitz & Murray.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans :
Approval of plans :
Completion date :

BUILDING STYLE:

Johannesburg Late Modernist.

BUILDING TYPE:

Shops to street and 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"/>
	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: Cyril Hofman.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

PATLANSKY'S CORNER BUILDING:

By circa 1915, the *Patlansky's Corner Building* occupied the 163 Jeppe and 64 Joubert Streets corner of this site. See photo below. By 1954, the building was known as the *Patley's Building*. The combination of the names is fascinating, as it is directly associated with the firm of Patlansky Bros. And Patley (Pty) Limited.

Tenants by 1954: Putzy's Exclusive Gowns; Bijou Shoe Store and Len's Domestic & Electrical Appliances; Stanley & De Kock, opticians.

"On the corner of Jeppe Street is the Pavilion Bar, subsequently the site of the Waldorf Café, with the Orpheum Theatre directly opposite. On the right corner is the Universal Lubricating Oil Co. owned by Patlansky Bros. Continuing on the right is Mappin & Web, silversmiths in Norfolk House. At the bottom end of Joubert Street is the first Telephone (1894) and on its right the prominent dome of Park Synagogue (1892). To the left is the CSAR Building and beyond it the early railway station and in the distance the Wanderers Club. To the right is the large TUC College and across the corner is the gabled Victoria Mansions." (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 140).



THE BIJOU THEATRE:

Situated at 165, 167 Jeppe Street was the *Bijou Theatre*. Completed during 1910, this building was demolished to make way for the *Rand Central Building*.

Clive Chipkin describes the theatre as follows: "Further to the north there was a scattering of medium and large cinemas: the Bijou on Bree Street (west of Eloff), two blocks away from the Plaza on Rissik Street [see Pre-History: AG-6]...The name 'bioscope' was a distinctive South African term for the cinema, which persisted well into the late sixties when its use began to pall. But the term resonates with its own culture not unrelated to the Café Bioskoop designed by Rietveld in Amsterdam. The Bijou was a long-lived Moorish cinema, built in the first decade of the century, a clear offshoot of the more celebrated Alhambra in Cape Town." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

It is explained by Van Der Waal that theatre and cinema buildings "occurred in two groups in the city centre. One was in Jeppe and Bree Street, and the other in Commissioner Street. The *Bijou Theatre*...just north of the shopping district and near the *Orpheum*, was rebuilt in 1931 and given a new façade while the interior was also refurbished. The interior and exterior decoration was reminiscent of Oriental architectural styles. Nearby the *Plaza Cinema*... was built in a bolder, more experimental form." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...). See AG-4 for a description of the *Plaza Theatre*.

In modern times, according to Van Der Waal, one "had grown accustomed to identifying a theatre building immediately. Prior to 1900 a theatre was concealed behind a distinctive theatre front, but

after 1902 the theatre space was integrated with the surrounding support rooms to such an extent that the structure was no longer readily identifiable as a theatre from the outside. The older theatre buildings had a tall front gable in the classicist style and the entrance was distinctive. Later theatres were distinguished from commercial buildings only by large billboards announcing current and future attractions. During this period Johannesburg's theatres did not develop a distinctive identity of their own. This is probably partly explained by the fact that theatres then began to provide for cinema shows as well, and that there was still some uncertainty about the future of these film shows...The most significant theatre building of this period was the five-storey *Orpheum Theatre* (1912), 160/2 Jeppe Street ...The *Orpheum* was the second theatre (after the *Bijou* of 1910) to be built in this area where the *Plaza* [at 150, 152 Jeppe Street] would also be erected in 1930. [The *Royalty* - also erected during 1930 - at 68 Pritchard Street also falls in this category and is longer used as a theatre.] Thus there emerged a second concentration of theatres after those in Commissioner Street – on the boundary between the commercial district and residential area and close to a number of club buildings. After 1910 this area must have been particularly lively during the evenings...The theatres were a popular form of relaxation where residents sought respite from the tensions brought on by feverish business activities. The fact that the theatres were located so close to the financial and business districts would seem to indicate that the former were regarded as a perfect foil for the latter. Compared with the hierarchical and insulated formalism of the banking and office buildings, the theatres represented a democratic and integrated approach to architecture." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

"The town prospered and by 1923 was the biggest in southern Africa and the largest mining centre in the world...*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* drew huge crowds to the Bijou... Locust invaded the suburb of Houghton Estate...There was so much to do, so much to enjoy, so much entertainment. Advertised in *The Star*, 29 May 1945...and at the Bijou, *Three Men in White* featuring Lionel Barrymore, Van Johnson and Marilyn Maxwell was the latest in the *Dr Gillespie* series." (Palestrant, E.: Johannesburg One Hundred).

There is a song 'Video killed the radio star' – I think the Boomtown Rats recorded it –which is an apt description of the demise of a large number of cinemas in South Africa. The video machine is connected to the television set and the arrival of television in South Africa during 1976 started a downhill period for the cinema and theatre industry. Out of own experience I remember going to the theatre at least once a month and to the cinemas once a week. The television changed that for a while and a large number of South Africans remained glued to their television sets during the evenings. It is also interesting to note that at least three of the above mentioned theatres (*Carton Theatre*, *Gaiety Theatre* and the *Palladium Theatre*) were in one way or another were connected to the I.W. Schlesinger organisation, the destruction of these buildings left a void of night life. Another factor is the demolition of a large number of residential buildings in the inner city. This started a vicious circle – the number of inner city residents was systematically reduced – this meant an automatic reduction of patrons to the cinemas and theatres – leading to less people during the evenings in the city and as we all know; safety in numbers – an important factor – as this could have saved the heart of the city from a slow death and all the crime that followed. This is a leading factor making Johannesburg the capital city of crime in the world at one stage and sadly this city rot has filtered through to the areas adjacent to the inner city, making a place like Hillbrow for example an almost no go area for tourists. A huge abandonment of buildings followed this crime wave leading to the building boom in Sandton. This notorious title is still taking a toll on the inner city - and it is taking a lot of hard work from various people and organizations to make Johannesburg once again the glorious City of Gold. (Catharina J M Bruwer).

HISTORY:

The following is an extract from an internet article:

"History of the Gallery 101 Group, Johannesburg, 1961-1973 - Mme. Fernande Marie-Louise Haengggi (1904-2000) emigrated from Switzerland to South Africa in 1954 and was between 1959 and 1961 one of three partners in the Queens Hall Art Gallery, Johannesburg (*her partners being Rosa Lipschitz, later known as Rosa Lipworth, and Frankie Rubenstein*). In Johannesburg's then prime commercial city centre, long before regional shopping centres had been built, Cyril Hofman had just completed his new multi-storied building Rand Central at 165 Jeppe Street, off Eloff Street. On 5th April, 1961, Gallery 101 opened their doors on the first floor of Rand Central, in room 101 and 103. Adjoining its premises was the Head Office of the Progressive Federal Party with constant to and fro by all PFP leaders. On the ground floor was the Chesa Coffee Bar, well-frequented by artists, critics and passers-by, next to it Percy Tucker had just started his Computicket show services. The first three equal partners of Gallery 101 were Mme. Fernande ML Haengggi, her eldest son Fernand F. Haengggi, and Heidi Güttinger, a silent partner who by the end of 1961 was paid out. The gallery activities expanded

at such a rate that by September 1965 a ground floor and basement gallery were added, designed by Lionel Crawford, as well as a boutique facing the arcade, presenting specifically fine crafts, such as ceramics by Esias Bosch, gold jewellery by H Peter Cullman, silver jewellery by Margaret Richardson and Tessa Fleischer, batiks by Louis Steyn, articles in mohair and karakul from the Transkei Hilmond Weavers and others, as well as fine paintings and graphics by artists from South Africa and Moçambique. Fernand F. Haenggi, who until now had only been involved part-time in running the gallery's administration and finances and doing related work, such as calling on artists around the country, became fully involved in all gallery aspects, as from 1st January, 1966. In February, 1969, Gallery 101 extended their premises on the first floor to rooms 105 and 106 bringing the total space covered on the first floor alone to 2500 sq. feet. In addition, there was a large storage and framing department on the second floor, as well as administrative offices...Gallery 101 had thus operated as one of Johannesburg leading galleries from 1961 till 1973, under the original management. The remaining Rand Central gallery was now owned by Rex B Grey, a well-known U.S. businessman and collector, and was managed by Gia Lindstam until its final closure on 31st March, 1977." (Information sourced from http://www.pelmama.org/Johannesburg_artscene_Gallery101_history.htm.)

GENERAL NOTES:

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

Biographical notes on the original owner of the building, Mr Cyril Hofman: "Cyril Hofman, son of the late Ludwick Hofman was born 20 August 1911. He matriculated at the Commercial High School, Johannesburg. During the Second World War he served with the South African Air Force. During 1943 he married Elvira daughter of the late S. Wilken, two sons and a daughter were born to the marriage. He was the founder, Chairman and Managing Director of Hofman Properties Development Company, its subsidiaries and associate companies. By 1973 he was member of the Killarney Club and Glen Country Club, Camps Bay and his residential address was 15 Third Avenue, Lower Houghton, Johannesburg". (Roberts, T. [Managing Ed.]: Who's Who of Southern Africa...).

PREVIOUS TENANTS:

By 1961: Head Office of the Progressive Federal Party - First Floor.
Percy Tucker in this building started the first Computicket office in South Africa.
Gallery 101 Group, First Floor - room 101 and 103.
Chesa Coffee Bar.

By 1965: Gallery 101 Group – studios on Basement, Ground and First Floor - room 101 and 103.
Boutique.

By 1973: Gallery 101 Group.

CURRENT TENANT/S:

Russels.
Room 915 - Swaziland Trade Mission.

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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