

**JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM**

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

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**NAME OF PLACE:** [Third] YORK HOUSE



Top: taken from a position in Loveday Street, northwest of the building, this photo shows the prominent siting of the building and its domination, particularly in scale, over its neighbour in Kerk Street, i.e. *Budget House*.

Previous/alternative name/s :

**LOCATION:** Street : cnr Kerk, Rissik  
 Street number :  
 : [44, 46, 48 Kerk; 59 Rissik]  
 Stand Number : 4613  
 Previous Stand Number: 1448, 1449, 1450  
 Block number : V  
 GIS reference :

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

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:**

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

**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

Walls:

Roof:

Windows:

**SITE FEATURES:**

**ALTERATIONS:**

**INTEGRITY:**

**INSCRIPTION:**

**ARCHITECT:**

**BUILDER:**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :

Approval of plans :

Completion date :

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Johannesburg Modular Regionalism.

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Shops to street and office building.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

**CONDITION:**

Fair.

**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:

### YORK BUILDING:

The *York Building* was one of two buildings designed by John Begg in Johannesburg. This building was completed during 1898 and stood at 44 Kerk and 57 Rissik Street.

"Another striking group of buildings were conceived in the same style. They were either entirely or almost completely white and also more 'poetic' in design. The *Sacke Building* (1903-4), 23 / 5 / 7 Joubert Street, the most important of these, bears a strong relationship to the German-Swiss architecture of the time, as was evident from the application of a mansard roof (unusual for Johannesburg at the time), a particular type of window (almost square), organic Jugendstil ornamentation and the distinctive shape of the tower and gables. Indeed, the senior partner of the architects who designed the building, H Kallenbach, was trained in Germany. The design of the building was derived from a German model and was never again used in the city [see also Pre-History Document H-2 and H-3]...With some exceptions, like the gable of the [first] *York Building* (1898) 44 Kerk Street [and 57 Rissik], the Jugendstil or Art Nouveau was rarely applied in Johannesburg." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

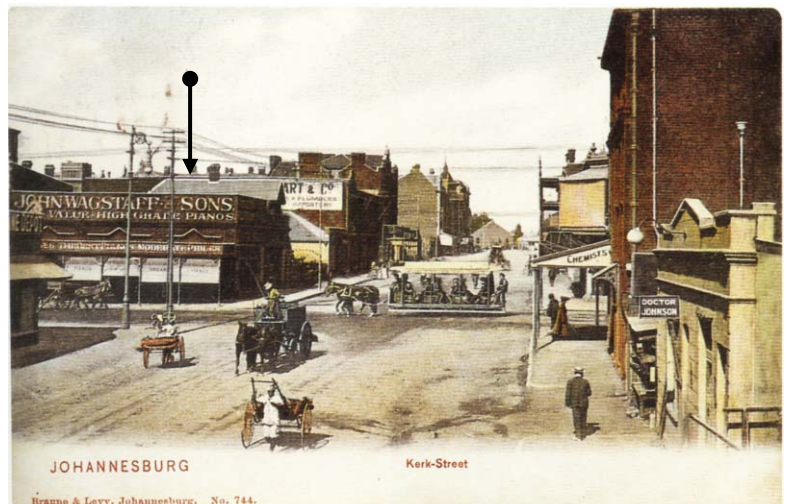
### OFFICES OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC, THE MAGDEBURG AND THE NORD DEUTCHE:

"Diering Street, Kenilworth, is named after Mr Louis Diering, a German estate financial and insurance agent, a pioneer who had his offices in Rissik Street (No. 57), opposite Lombardy House. He was highly respected, and became a burger of the Republic, and thus after the Boer War a British subject. During the 1914 – 1918 war, when German submarines had torpedoed the "Lusitania", serious riots broke out in Johannesburg. The houses and business premises of most of the Germans were burnt to the ground; notable cases were the liquor stores of Rolfes, Nebel, and Liberman and Bellstedt & Co., the Bristol Hotel, Rissik Street, and the house of Mr Piel of Anghern and Piel's Cold Storage Works. The Germans in Johannesburg were of course greatly frightened having lost all they had and being treated as outcasts by the population, and having received no police protection at the time of the riots. For them Mr Diering organised a 'Helping Hand' Society and he became their mentor, he himself being trusted by the authorities. The German insurance companies which he represented in 1897 (the Trans-Atlantic, the Magdeburg and the Nord Deutche) are no longer in existence." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg).

### HAMILTON HOUSE / JOHN WAGSTAFF & SONS BUILDING:

By circa 1900, the single storey brick building with concealed roof, the *Hamilton House / John Wagstaff & Sons Building* occupied the corner stand at 48 Kerk and 59 Rissik Street. This building was listed in a 1954 street directory, meaning the current building is a rare case of a second generation of permanent structures.

Right: "On the corner of Rissik Street, looking west. A horse-drawn tram is travelling southward along Rissik Street. On the south-east corner of Rissik Street in a single-storey building is the large piano establishment of John Wagstaff & Co., recorded in the Transvaal Directories of 1906...In Kerk Street are two richshas (sic.) and what appears to be an early horse-drawn watercart (sic.). The driver, by pressing on a pedal at the foot of his seat, was able to release streams of water from the water tank on the back of the cart and this helped reduce the dustiness of the streets." (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 123).



**HISTORY:**

**GENERAL NOTES:**

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

Undated newspaper article: "York House Gets New Lease Of Life" - York House, one of the newer additions to Old Mutual Properties' Johannesburg portfolio, is getting a new look as the revival of the city's CBD continues apace. It is on the corner of Rissik (sic.) and Kerk streets and one of the areas earmarked for mall status is the section of Kerk Street that runs from Harrison Street up to Von Brandis Street. This process should be completed within the next 18 months. York House consists of two wings, the first having been built more than 50 years ago and the second as recently as 1972. The original wing is an eight storey building which faces Rissik Street. The other newer half faces on to Kerk Street and is a storey higher. Old Mutual Properties bought the property two years ago and the decision to spruce up the street level façade was prompted by the likely transformation of Kerk Street into a pedestrian mall. Another motivating factor was the generation of renewed interest in the building's shopping potential. The architects responsible for the management and design work of the revamped structure were H Moross and Partners. The work entailed closing down Rissik Street entrance of the shopping mall to provide additional space for a new Wimpy restaurant and to allow for the expansion of existing shops. The remaining mall has been given a new ceiling. It is curved to create an arch-like effect and extends over the Kerk Street pavement as an attractive canopy. The 'bright and cheerful' look of the shopfronts that flank the entrance to the arcade, extends into the arcade itself. Anton Bieber, regional property manager, Johannesburg, says the revamped street façade of York House has given the building an upmarket appeal which will stand it in good stead when Kerk Street becomes a pedestrian mall."

**CURRENT TENANTS:**

National Union Of Metalworkers Of Sa (NUMSA): PO Box 260483, Excom, 2023.  
Municipality, Education, State, Health And Allied Workers (MESHAWU): 7th Floor. PO Box 11307, JOHANNESBURG, 2000.

**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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