

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: TOWER HOUSE

Photograph: Catharina JM Bruwer.

Above: View of *Tower House* to the centre of the photograph with *Arop House* (AU-4) to the left, and part of the famous *Astor Mansions* (AU-5) to the right. (CJMB)

Previous/alternative name/s : originally known as Ranelagh Mansions
:
:

LOCATION: Street : Von Brandis
Street number : 75
Stand Number : 1093
Previous Stand Number: 1260
Block number : AU
Suburb : Johannesburg
GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height :
Levels above street level : twelve
Levels below street level : one
On-site parking : none

This is a reinforced concrete frame structure. The top three storeys of the building are set back. (CJMB)

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls: brick with smooth plaster as well as stucco work

Roof: flat, concrete

Windows: steel casements
(CJMB)

SITE FEATURES:**ALTERATIONS:**

New shop fronts. (CJMB)

INTEGRITY:

The metal cage above the main entrance of the building is a hostile but necessary intervention, as this building is/was invaded by squatters. (CJMB)

INSCRIPTION:**ARCHITECT:**

W. D. Gibbs

BUILDER:**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans : 24 March 1934
Approval of plans :
Completion date : 1935

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco – Monolithic. 1930s.

Architectural Merit: "Another fine art deco building."
(Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

BUILDING TYPE:

This is a shop to street and residential block. (CJMB)

ENVIRONMENT:

The area surrounding the building is neglected and forgotten by the owners and the fathers of the city. This neglected building impacts negatively on the image of the City of Johannesburg, as it is in the vicinity of the *Johannesburg Supreme Court*, which receives regular media attention. (CJMB)

"Sluit aan by reliëfkarakter van Astor Mansions". (see AU-3) "Ook ongeveer selfde hoogte."
Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg, Second Report June 1976, Inner City, RAU, unpublished.

CONDITION:

2006: this building is dilapidated and requires drastic attention. (CJMB)

Health Department definition: Bad 1.
(Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

Apexhi Prop Ltd. owns the following buildings situated on Block AU:

Arup House (AU-3) - (Registration Date: 2003-02-04).

Tower House (AU-4) - (Registration Date: 2003-02-04).

Astor Mansions (AU-5) - (Registration Date: 2003-02-04).

The three-abovementioned buildings are extremely neglected and after three years of ownership the situation have not been rectified in any way. (CJMB)

URGENT ACTION:

This building should be restored as it is part of the valuable Art Deco collection of Johannesburg. (CJMB)

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

PROTECTION STATUS: (under National Heritage Resources Act, 1999)

General protection:	Section 34(1) structure/s	<input checked="" 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: Ranelagh Mansions (Pty) Ltd.

By 1976: Tower Central Holdings (Pty) Ltd.
P.O. Box 9689, Johannesburg

Ownership: C B D Kerk Street (Pty) Ltd.
Document: T9146/1962
Amount:

Ownership: Tower Central Holdings (Pty) Ltd.
Document: T9146/1962
Amount: R4774 034.00

Ownership: Pangbourne Prop Ltd.
Document: T54664/2002
Amount: R739 236.00

Ownership: Apexhi Prop Ltd.
Document: T5684/2003
Amount: R24308 146.00

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

HISTORY:

GENERAL NOTES:

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

PREVIOUS TENANT/S:

By 1954:

75 Von Brandis – Reliable Dress Emporium.

75c Von Brandis – C. W. Cuanillion, Swiss watchmaker, jeweller and diamond merchant (home address – 19 Dunbar Street Yeoville).

(The Rand-Pretoria Directory 1954 (Comprising Complete Alphabetical And Trades Directories of Johannesburg, Pretoria And Reef Towns), Cape Times Limited, Cape Town, 1954.)

CURRENT TENANT/S:

Astor Jewellers
S.S.K Tradings

SOURCES:

Published Sources

The Rand-Pretoria Directory 1954 (Comprising Complete Alphabetical And Trades Directories of Johannesburg, Pretoria And Reef Towns), Cape Times Limited, Cape Town, 1954.

Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis, The buildings of Johannesburg 1886-1940, Chris Van Rensburg Publications, Johannesburg, 1987.

Unpublished Sources

Architects In South Africa 1780 – 1940; Draft manuscript, J Walker & G M van der Waal, 1992, HSRC, Pretoria.

Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City - Metropolitan Planning, Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (Cool Factory).

Plans records of surveyed buildings, Marshallstown and City of Johannesburg: Archives, Building Control, Development Management, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg, Second Report June 1976, Inner City, RAU, unpublished.

Van Der Waal, G-M.: Die Karakter Van Die Argitektuur In Die Binnestad Van Johannesburg Tot 1920, unpublished thesis, RAU, November 1972.

Van Der Waal, G-M.: Die Boukuns van Johannesburg, 1886 – 1940, unpublished doctoral thesis, RAU, November 1984.

Rand Township Registry Johannesburg.

ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic Value:

- Associated with historic person, group or organisation
- Associated with historic event or activity

Architectural/Aesthetic value:

- Important example of building type
- Important example of a style or period
- Fine details, workmanship or aesthetics
- Work of a major architect or builder

Social/Spiritual/Linguistic value:

- Associated with social, spiritual, linguistic, economic or political activity
- Illustrates an historical period

Scientific/Technological value:

- Example of industrial, technical or engineering development/achievement
- New, rare or experimental building techniques

RECORDED BY:



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Photographs (unless otherwise indicated) by Johann J Bruwer and Alezea Bruwer.