

**JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM**

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

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**NAME OF PLACE: 55 FOX**



Top: Fox Street elevation. Centre top: portion of Fox Street elevation. Top right: Commissioner Street elevation. Bottom centre: Fox streetscape. Bottom right: Commissioner streetscape.

Previous/alternative name/s :

**LOCATION:** Street : Fox  
 Street number : 55  
 : [50, 52, 54, 56 Commissioner; 49, 51, 53, 55, Fox]  
 Stand Number : 2, 11, 1255  
 Previous Stand Number: 1150  
 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:**

**ALTERATIONS:**

**INTEGRITY:**

**INSCRIPTION:**

**ARCHITECT:**

Richard Hamilton Architects.

**BUILDER:**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :

Approval of plans :

Completion date :

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Post Modern Eclectic, 1980s.

“Architectural Merit: The Fox Street façade has a very strong presence in the city.” (Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

**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
- 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:**

SECOND GLOBE THEATRE / FIRST EMPIRE MUSIC HALL:

Situated on the corner of Fox and Commissioner Streets (at 47 and 49 Fox Street), more than a century ago, was the famous *Globe Theatre*. "Of the three theatres which opened their doors in the 1890s", according to Van Der Waal, "the *Globe Theatre* (1891-2), 47/9 Fox Street, is the best documented and probably also the most important of the three. Not many fires broke out in the mining camp in those days and when they did occur, the new building regulations usually confined them to one building. Even though condition and equipment were rather primitive, the fire brigade was so efficient and quick that buildings often had to be only partially rebuilt. This was also the happy fate of the *Globe* which caught fire only a few months after its opening in 1889 but was reopened on 8 June 1892. The basic shape of the old building was retained in the new one, but the classicist gable was given a richer ornamental finish while the interior was appointed far more sumptuously. As was the custom in 19th century theatres...the 800 seats were arranged in the shape of a horseshoe, with eight boxes along the lateral walls. The seats were covered with velvet and leather and braided in gold. The stage curtain, described as '...the finest yet seen in South Africa', was designed by Johannesburg artist C H Maltby...The foyer was decorated by, among other things, a hothouse with lush plants which served to underscore the otherworldliness of the theatre. After 1894 the theatre was known as the *Empire Palace of Varieties*.



**The Globe Theatre, one of Johannesburg's earliest places of entertainment.**

Left: Photograph (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

The first Empire Music Hall was opened on the site of the earlier Globe Theatre on Saturday, December 1, 1894. This Empire Music Hall was used until 1906 when a second Empire was built on the site of the present theatre (i.e. 1959; the second *Empire Theatre*, 135, 137 Commissioner Street).

EMPIRE PALACE OF VARIETIES:

See the first and second *Globe Theatre*: "After 1894 the theatre was known as the *Empire Palace of Varieties*. The first *Empire Theatre* (originally the *Globe Theatre*) of 1892 was partly destroyed by fire the second time on 19 November 1903 and was again repaired. However, it finally shut its doors on May 1902 (sic) when the company moved to the second Empire in the eastern part of the city centre (Stoloff, May 1947).

"In the case of the second *Empire Palace of Varieties* (1905-6)...the commercial-residential impression was even more pronounced than that of the *Orpheum Theatre*. Indeed, the function of the structure was not readily inferred from its appearance. The low block form with the visible pitched roof, verandah and bay windows under the towers and gable were strongly reminiscent of an apartment complex. The rooms around the theatre hall were used as offices. Certain elements of the *Empire*, especially the bell-shaped towers with pinnacles, mirrored the French architecture styles of that period. The mass grouping and the articulation of the exterior were not very successful, but the theatre hall, which could seat 1 000 people, was most impressive. Architects McIntosh & Moffat went on a study tour of America, Europe and England to acquaint themselves with the latest developments in theatre construction...No wonder the interior turned out to be a spectacle of Edwardian luxury with 18 boxes, plush upholstery and drapes in green and gold. At that time it was described as 'the

handsomest theatre the in [sic. should read in the] subcontinent...Like the *Orpheum*, the *Empire* provided a focal point in its environment, in which several well-known theatres, such as the *Colosseum* and *His Majesty's* were destined to arise later." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

COMMISSIONER HOUSE:

By 1954, the *Commissioner House* was situated at 50 Commissioner and 49 Fox Streets. A tenant on the Commissioner Street side of the building was Progress Wholesalers and on Fox Street the New Yorker Restaurant.

DEVAN HOUSE:

By 1954, the *Devan House* was situated at 50a Commissioner Street.

GOKSON HOUSE:

*Gokson House* was located at 52 Commissioner and 51 Fox Streets, by 1954. Tenants of the building were: Commissioner Street - A Gokal & Sons and P. Bloch & Co.

DISPATCH GARAGE:

By 1954, the *Dispatch Garage* was situated on the 54 Commissioner and 53 Fox Streets portion of this site.

**HISTORY:**

**GENERAL NOTES:**

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

"City gives CIDA a financial hand *December 22, 2003* By Tshepiso Mogotsi: THE City of Johannesburg is to give CIDA, the community-based university, a financial hand by writing off the monthly rates the institution owes the city. At the last City Council meeting of the year a recommendation was made by the City's Finance and Economic Development Department to write off CIDA's monthly rates. This means that over a two-year period CIDA could save more than R1-million in rates. Although current legislation did not allow for rebates or rates exemptions for institutions, such as CIDA, that were registered as non-profit, private higher education institutions, mechanisms needed to be put into place to 'provide financial relief to such institutions', according to the council minutes. 'It is essential that the proposed rates policy for the city, as required by the Property Rates Bill, incorporates a mechanism to provide financial relief to such institutions.' The minutes of the City Council meeting noted that CIDA had also provided services to the City, such as the recent training of 350 informal traders. This, according to the council, was a major contribution to the Joburg 2030 strategy and to the regeneration of the inner city. The write off, however, will only cover those buildings actually registered in CIDA's name. Currently the university is the registered owner of two buildings, although it occupies a total of seven buildings in the inner city. CIDA's rates bill for one year comes to a total of R574 318. Executive director of CIDA, Thembinkosi Mhlongo, said the institution would consider taking ownership of the other five buildings once they had been refurbished, sometime next year. The city university, based in Joburg's CBD, offers tertiary level courses in business at minimal cost to students from financially or other disadvantaged backgrounds. CIDA, the Community and Individual Development Association, currently has 1 600 students. Mhlongo said the rates exemption would 'provide a real relief' and would help CIDA maintain buildings with 'less pressure on expenditure'." (Information sourced from CITY GIVES CIDA A FINANCIAL HAND.htm).

CURRENT TENANT:

Cida City Campus.

**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.

**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:**

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

## ATTACHMENT: HISTORY

### CIDA:

"South Africa's first ubuntu university

*December 5, 2001*

By Lucille Davie

A UNIVERSITY in the heart of Johannesburg's CBD that attracts students from around the country and costs students only R350 per year, compared to R15 000 per year in a conventional university? Sound impossible? Well, people at the Community and Individual Development Association (CIDA) like to make the impossible possible, says Nikki Behr, marketing and fundraising executive at the university. CIDA is a university in its second year that recruits students from disadvantaged communities nationwide, brings them to Johannesburg, charges them R350 in their first year of study for tuition and books (R1 200 for each subsequent year), finds them accommodation in the city and teaches them much more than what they need to get a degree. Students are also expected to participate in the daily running of the university. 'We have just received accreditation from the national Department of Education and operate as a private university,' says Behr. 'Last year we wrote to school principals around the country, and said that we were interested in learners who, despite severe disadvantages, had done well academically and who had found time to make a contribution to their communities in some way, in other words, a well-rounded learner with the right values,' adds Behr. The result was 10 000 applications for 2001. CIDA took 1 050 students. At the moment it offers one four-year degree - a Bachelor of Business Education. So how does CIDA make it work? With the very generous help of a number of corporates in the city. Investec Bank has donated their eight-storey office building in Commissioner Street, and they pick up the electricity, water, security and lift repair costs. Lecturing staff are volunteers from the private sector: Investment Solutions sends one of their team members to give classes on investment, PricewaterhouseCoopers does the same for accounting classes, and Investec supplies similar experts in banking. When those lecturers come in for a class, all 1 050 students attend that session. With structural changes to several floors of the building, the bulk of the students are housed in a lecture hall, but down the sides of the room are smaller groups of 20-30 students watching the lecture on a monitor, with a facilitator helping out with questions and the finer points of the subject. The facilitators are university graduates, who are either paid or working as volunteers. 'Facilitators also act as counselors [sic.], giving advice and talking through problems with students,' adds Behr. Costs are also saved in day-to-day maintenance and upkeep of the building. Students are actively involved in the running of the university. Committees have been formed and they delegate chores to groups of students, and everyone has a turn. The students are in charge of the cleaning of the building, electrical problems that arise, maintaining the indoor garden (they are growing vegetables in the rooftop garden), and repairing the computers. This is a component of their degree for which they are assessed. 'The idea is that the students own the campus. We want to inculcate a sense of pride. There are no handouts. We expect the students to dress according to business code, although we do help them with clothing donations.' And the costs of books, computers, desks, blackboards? "All are donated by corporates, who also give cash donations. We also have permission to print books which helps with reducing costs," says Behr. The only real cost is the executive and administrative staff, made up of around 30 people, in addition to some 30 facilitators. So who is responsible for this innovative model? CIDA's CEO is Taddy Blecher, who practised as an actuary for six years, then spent four years as a management consultant before deciding in 1995 that he 'wanted to do more to help the country. I spent three years working in the townships, helping improve standards in schools.' But this gave rise to further problems. By 1998 hundreds of students approached him saying they didn't know what to do after completing matric - they couldn't afford university and there were no jobs available. This gave rise to CIDA. In consultation with educational institutions across the country and experts in business, Blecher and his board established CIDA in 2000 with 350 students, with slightly more female students than male students. 'It is a very strong strategic model, with cutting edge qualities, using high tech and very relevant to today's student,' says Blecher. What gives him particular satisfaction in what has been achieved? 'The whole thing gives me satisfaction - working with students, they have great values, everybody is giving and not just taking. It really can be done although it seems impossible.' 'Sponsors include FNB, African Bank, Pure Gas, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Monitor Company and Corp Capital Bank,' says Blecher. Books in the library have been donated by a company in the US. The idea is to replicate the model elsewhere in the country and in southern Africa. 'We want the students to grow it,' says Behr. The students are accommodated in three residences: a block of flats in Yeoville and another in the CBD, and the now defunct Rand International Hotel in the city. 'Four students share a room and they save money by doing their own cleaning. They pay for their own accommodation and they catch a bus to CIDA,' explains Behr. The course is broken up into six components:

- knowledge acquisition - basic business knowledge, statistics, accountancy, etc

- skills development - teaching the fundamentals of getting a driver's licence [sic.], how to pay tax, how to get life insurance, etc
- action skills - running the campus, the costs involved and getting work experience (students are encouraged to go back to their communities and teach)
- values instilment - instilling dignity and pride, and ubuntu (those with part-time jobs pay into a fund to help others with food and transport costs)
- building the individual - through counseling [sic.], the student's confidence and well-being is boosted
- sports and recreation - students are offered 40-50 activities, from dancing, debating, cycling to cricket, cooking and choir

'I came across a group of students practicing [sic.] cricket in one of the rooms. They had no bat, no ball, but were painstakingly demonstrating the correct way to hold the bat,' adds Behr with enthusiasm. Msizi Mnyandu is a first-year student from KwaZulu-Natal who is in charge of the gardens in the building. He says: 'I feel involved here, we do things for ourselves which is good for young people. I don't like the city - there are muggers and pickpockets - but the environment here is the best.' But not all the students feel the same. Portia Makola from the Northern Province, is in her first year and says: "I don't like the cleaning but I do it because it is compulsory,' looking over as a pile of brooms are put down next to a group of students. 'I like the way the teaching is done, in four-week blocks, which we then write off with weekly tests.' They do care about people here. Makola has four brothers and three sisters and sometimes does not get her monthly payment from home. 'We have a system of sponsored meal tickets for students. Or they can get a meal for R3.50. We do offer student loans or help them arrange loans through the banks,' says Behr. The university has systems in place to help students from rural areas adjust to a very different environment. 'Each student has a buddie [sic.], and three buddie [sic.] pairs make up a syndicate, which works together. We also split men and women, we find that women perform better under those conditions.' 'CIDA has a holistic approach - we've built a quiet time into the day's routine: from 3.10pm to 3.30pm each day students have 20 minutes of reflective time.' There is a dedicated, friendly atmosphere in the building - there is no litter in communal areas and the cafeteria has chairs neatly pushed in under the tables. The last 18 months have obviously been hard work, which according to Behr, has certainly been worth it as she recounts an anecdote from the first year. 'Taddy had no computers and wondered how he was going to teach a computer course. He photocopied dozens of keyboards and took them into the lecture. He taught the students to touch type and by the time they got their computers, they were already typing 30wpm.'"

(Information sourced from SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST UBUNTU UNIVERSITY.htm).

"Oprah donates US\$1-million to CIDA

*December 5, 2003*

By Tshepiso Mogotsi

AMERICAN talk show icon Oprah Winfrey paid a surprise visit to the CIDA City Campus in downtown Johannesburg this week and handed over an unexpected gift - a US\$1-million donation towards a new residence. Staff and students were left speechless after Winfrey and her television crew dropped in at the campus on Wednesday 3 December. She had jetted into the country to attend Nelson Mandela's 46664 Aids concert in Cape Town on the weekend. News of her visit to the Johannesburg campus was kept under wraps and not a word of her donation leaked out ahead of time. Said executive director of CIDA, Thembinkosi Mhlongo: 'We only knew on Tuesday night she was coming the following day, and we knew absolutely nothing about the donation until she arrived at the campus.' Winfrey then presented CIDA directors with the first instalment (sic.), a cheque for R1-million. The money will be used to build an African style residence. CIDA City Campus is South Africa's first ubuntu university, offering tertiary level courses in business at minimal cost to students from financially or other disadvantaged backgrounds. CIDA, the Community and Individual Development Association, currently has 1 600 students. The residence was one of CIDA's most pressing problems, according to Mhlongo. 'Although the education is free, our financially disadvantaged students are required to pay for accommodation, food and transport.' She pointed out that with the large number of buildings in the inner city being closed down as part of the inner city rejuvenation programme many students had been left without accommodation. 'We have been planning to do something about this issue and we are delighted by Winfrey's boost. She even told us she had never come across students with such maturity and dignity as those in CIDA,' said Mhlongo. Third year Bachelor of Business Administration degree student, France Mashilo, said he sometimes watched Winfrey's television show and seeing her in person 'was the best moment of my life'. 'And then her announcement of the donation and comments about us - it just makes it so much better.' Winfrey and her crew were taken on a tour of the campus, filming lecture rooms, the computers and the cafeteria, so there's bound to be footage of CIDA on her show soon.

(Information sourced from OPRAH DONATES US\$1-MILLION TO CIDA.htm).

"CIDA postpones enrolments

*November 11, 2003*

By Tammy O'Reilly

STUDENTS hoping to study at CIDA City Campus next year are in for a disappointment. Enrolments for next year have been postponed to 2005. CIDA, the Community and Individual Development Agency, has postponed its 2004 student enrolments to give itself 'a breathing space', according to CIDA CEO Taddy Blecher. 'The year's gap will allow the institution, which has grown to 1 600 students in three short years, a breathing space.' The university plans to focus on staff development, working with the current student body, building the post-graduate programmes, and upgrading the IT systems, according to a CIDA statement. The institution is also in the process of refurbishing a building to be used as a second campus for the institution.

'CIDA City Campus will use this year gap to ensure that the 2005 intake will be offered the highest quality education,' the statement said. Over the next five years CIDA intends to have between 5 000 and 9 000 students at the campus in the centre of Johannesburg. CIDA City Campus is South Africa's first ubuntu university, offering tertiary education in business at minimal cost to students from financially or other disadvantaged backgrounds. Students who have already paid application fees for 2004 will be refunded in full, and are being asked to re-apply for 2005."

(Information sourced from CIDA POSTPONES ENROLMENTS.htm).

**SOURCES:**

SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST UBUNTU UNIVERSITY.htm.

OPRAH DONATES US\$1-MILLION TO CIDA.htm.

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**RECORDED BY:**

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