

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: [Second] AEGIS BUILDING [ÆGIS]



Top centre: view of Commissioner and Loveday Streets corner.

Top right: Fox Street; west of the *second Aegis Building* in the distant background is the *third Rand Club*.

Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : Loveday
 Street number : 34
 : [100 Commissioner; 32, 34 Loveday; 99 Fox]
 Stand Number : 227, 231
 Previous Stand Number:
 Block number : BE
 Suburb : Marshallstown
 GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height : original plans not found.
 Levels above street level :
 Levels below street level :
 On-site parking :

External features of the building worth particular mention are as follows: the cantilevered canopy on Loveday Street; the strong definition of verticality and horizontality in the facades; the moulded plaster forms to the parapet wall of the main body and attic parapet wall. Particular attention was given to the glazed shop fronts with timber panelling above; vertical wood insets between the shop fronts, with relatively intact original recessed entrances. The generous Main Entrance in Loveday Street with polished marble floor and double glazed bronze door; magnificently polished bronze lift doors and Art Deco styled wall friezes above the lifts. The purely ornamental bracket insets defining the shop fronts are one of the most prominent features of the Ground Floor of the building. The flattened corner with all original trimmings to Fox and Loveday Street (see photograph: DSCO5660) is a notable feature of the original design and should be treasured.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls: reinforced concrete structure with imitation and rustic plaster work.

Roof: flat, concrete.

Windows: steel casements (side-hung, fixed pane and fanlight over).

Doors: composite wooden doors to shops.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

INTEGRITY:

INSCRIPTION:

"In March 2003 South Africa hosts the Seventh Annual World Congress on Art Deco. This will be held in Cape Town and to link into this, Jo'burg is erecting plaques on buildings evidencing the Art Deco theme. We start with the TOP TWENTY – great buildings in the Inner City will be identified by means of distinctive blue and white heritage plaques. A further forty buildings of similar merit will follow in the hall of fame. These include more in the centre of town but also those spread across Johannesburg, noticeably blocks of flats. Art Deco was not just the preserve of the wealthy corporates (sic.) - it belonged to everyone, and the purpose of this project is to highlight a period in the history of Jo'burg which created a valuable architectural and social treasure." (Information sourced from Art Deco Plaques\main.htm).

"AEGIS BUILDING.

The building was designed in 1934 by Emley & Williamson for an international insurance company. (to be continued)." (Information sourced from Art Deco Plaques\list2.htm).

ARCHITECT:

Emley & Williamson.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans : November 1934 (RAU Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg)

Approval of plans : original plans not found.

Completion date :

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco – Monolithic, 1930s.

BUILDING TYPE:

This is a shop to street and office building.

ENVIRONMENT:

It is stated in the RAU June 1976 Survey report that the building stands unsympathetic to its immediate neighbour the *Rand Club Building*.

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 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: AEGIS Building Company.

By 1976: AEGIS Building Company (Pty) Ltd., P.O. Box 9104, JOHANNESBURG.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:**JOHANNESBURG'S FIRST SOCCER FIELD:**

"Opposite the Rand Club, on the site of the Aegis Building, was Johannesburg's first soccer football field in 1887-1888. This is another historic distinction for Loveday Street." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg).

UNION BUILDINGS:

"In Loveday Street, opposite the Rand Club, the pioneers had known a long row of wood and iron offices called Union Buildings. They were pulled down to make room for a fine block of shops and offices named Aegis Buildings which in the great reconstruction of the town in the 1930s were replaced by a modern skyscraper." (Neame, L.E.: City Built On Gold).

FIRST AEGIS BUILDING:

The first *Aegis Building*, designed by AH & W Reid and completed during 1893 was a three storey building with verandahs and elaborate cast-iron balustrade, verandah pillars, brackets and frieze on all the storeys. Pediments, finials and turrets accentuated the roofline of the building. This people-friendly building presented an oasis amidst the strict office-building environment. This building was demolished during the mid 1930's and replaced with *second Aegis Building*. This point is also illustrated by Van Der Waal: "...By contrast, the more open façades seemed to indicate a projection of the buildings' functions into the community, in that the communal urban space was in turn extended partly into these buildings. Such an approach reduced the element of competition which was so marked in the case of the closed facades. This exposure to the community manifested itself in various

ways, the most common being the opening up of the façade by recessed or salient balconies and verandahs. Traditionally, balconies and verandahs are immediately associated with social functions by the way they relate to the traffic on the sidewalks and remind of residential architecture. This effect was achieved by balconies and a sculptured roof section in buildings such as *Ziman Building* (1895-6), 86 Market Street [see Pre-History: E-3], *Steytler Building* (1896), 96 Market Street [see Pre-History: G-5], and [the first] *Corporation Building* (1899), 101/3/5 Commissioner Street [see Pre-History: H-1]. Verandahs were used for a similar purpose, especially in the first *Aegis Building* (1893), 32/4 Loveday Street, and, to a lesser extent in *Winchester House* and the *Anglo Austrian Building* (1896), 64 Pritchard Street [see Pre-History: T-1]." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

HISTORY:

A tenant of the Aegis Building in its early days was The Equity Building Society: This is described as follows by Stark: "The Equity Building Society was established in February, 1939, and the initial capital contributed by some thirty odd shareholders for this purpose was £25,000. Of the original shareholders only 13 now remain out of a total of over 1,750 shareholders, whose investments with the Society now exceed £1,600,000. The first offices of the Society was established in Aegis Buildings, 99 Fox Street, Johannesburg, and was opened to the public on the 1st March, 1939. With the rapid increase in business, however, this office soon became too small and from 1st May, 1942, more commodious premises on the ground floor of what is now known as Equity Building, Cnr. (Nr. 88) Fox and Harrison Streets, Johannesburg, were leased..." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

GENERAL NOTES:

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

Note the long association of at least 50 years of the building with one of its tenants, that is Erlings.

PREVIOUS TENANTS:

By 1954: WJ Baker & Co Ltd; Winslow & Sons (Pty) Ltd.
 99 Fox – Erlings Outfitters & Stanley's Hairdressing Saloon; FO Blades & Co, Fire, Loss and Accident Assessors.
 First floor - Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada; Alpine (Barberton) Gold Mine Ltd: Town Buyers - Bewick, Moreing & Co; Dominion Reefs (Klerksdorp) Ltd: Local Secretaries, General Managers and Consulting Engineers - Bewick, Moreing & Co.

CURRENT TENANT/S:

Erlings Shoes, Cash Loans.

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:

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Unless otherwise indicated photographs by Catharina JM Bruwer.

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