

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

NAME OF PLACE: Custom House

Previous/alternative name/s : Rand Water Board Building

LOCATION: Street : Market
Street number : 68, 70
Stand number : 4508 (previously 229, 4421)
Block number : C

ZONING: Current use/s : Business one
Previous use/s : Office Block (1984 – NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/124)

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

At the time of the original submission of plans, it was proposed to only construct a five-storey building. These plans were approved.

It was subsequently decided to increase the height of the building to the maximum permitted and plans for an additional four floors were then submitted and approved.

The building comprises the following: two basement levels (with a through-connection from the first basement level to the basement of the adjacent Rand Water Board Building); double volume ground floor; fully reversible windows with bronze spandrels; noteworthy is the tall columns at ground floor level, as well as the large entrance hall and the use of marble cladding in the interior, with reference also the mezzanine floor (upper part of the entrance lobby); externally, the application of chocolate coloured granite facings to match the facings of the adjacent Rand Water Board Building, is also worth noting; so is the copper covered built-up coping above the pre-cast terrazzo cornice as well as the copper sheet (roof); caretaker's flat with lift room above roof level.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls : reinforced concrete, brick cladding.

Roof : flat, concrete.

Windows: aluminium frame (bronze coloured) fixed windows, flush with walls.

SITE FEATURES:**ALTERATIONS:****INTEGRITY:**

The 'wall-art' is relatively new to Johannesburg, bringing colour to an otherwise drab environment. Its location on the side of the building does not really impact on the appearance of the main façade of the building and one can still appreciate the building.

INSCRIPTION:**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:**

J. Fassler & W.D. Howie

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

On plan : 1965
Plans passed : final plans were passed in
October 1967
Completed :

BUILDING STYLE:**BUILDING TYPE:**

Office building.

ENVIRONMENT:

"Blends in with buildings to the East in Market Street with relation to height and façade-subject. There is also a connection with the Old Rand Water Board Building with regard to the lower floors. The upper floors have no connection at all." (NMC)

CONDITION:

Good.

URGENT ACTION:

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

In August 1989 Stauch Vorster Architects + Planners submitted an application to the NMC with respect to the proposed installation of three automated sliding doors (glass) at the main entrance. This was approved by the NMC.

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:

T10499/1989 Republic of South Africa

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

By 1889, this corner site was occupied by two low corrugated iron structures facing Market Square. The corner building had four small gables but by 1898, this building had been replaced by a three storey brick structure for J. Liddle. The architect was R.L.M. McCowat. The building was characterised by its pediment and balustrade and an entrance at its flattened corner. This presumably was the Lancaster Building. Its neighbour by 1900, seems to have been the Maurice Building which faced onto Market Square.

HISTORY:

The Rand Water Board was formed in 1930 to provide Johannesburg and the Chamber of Mines with water.

The estimated cost of the construction of the building was R990 000.

SOURCES:

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

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/124

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/A, Johannesburg General, II

"Goudstad-Geboue 24", Beeld, 22 Aug' 1977

The Johannesburg Historical Foundation (Norwich, I; Grant, B.L.; Saul D) Some Historic Drives & Walks of Johannesburg Framic, no date

The Market Square Of Johannesburg: Catalogue of buildings on and around the square till about 1920 (Compiled by G.M. van der Waal), Public Library, Johannesburg, 1971

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

City Engineering Department, Stand No. 4508, Township Johannesburg (Planning Department), City of Johannesburg

Registrar of Deeds, Johannesburg

RECORDED BY:

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Photographs by Chris JH Coxen (unless otherwise indicated).

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