

--

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

NAME OF PLACE: Peoples Bank

Previous/alternative name/s : 1976 – SA Permanent Building
1993 – SA Permanent Mutual Building (Chipkin)

LOCATION: Street : Commissioner
Street number : 73, 75
Stand number : 4672 (previously 209-211)
Block number : D

ZONING: Current use/s : Business one
Previous use/s : 1984 – Offices NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/124

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Eleven storeys (i.e. ground floor and mezzanine, and nine floors containing offices) ; sub-basement and basement.

The building was designed to access the main banking hall and offices at ground floor, as well as the offices and upper part of the banking hall on the mezzanine floor, through the main entrance at the corner. It should be borne in mind that it was intended that the SA Permanent Mutual Building and Investment Society would merely occupy the ground and mezzanine floors. The entrance to the offices on the remaining floors of the building was at 73 Commissioner Street.

The SA Permanent Mutual “has a curvilinear Mendelsohnian corner – but not on the ground floor where the modernised classicism of the Banking Hall necessitated a rectangular shape and a Vierendeel truss to support the upper levels. The Banking Hall, with its high coffered ceiling, Art Deco column capitals and glasscrete saucer dome, constituted a major public space for orderly financial and loan transactions, and provided a metropolitan milieu for growing numbers of people entering the property-owning white middle classes.” (Chipkin)

Softly rounding the corner, perfectly closed on each end with another rounding and stopped with a projecting tower section, extending upwards to the second last storey. Crowned with a top storey and a jewel in the form of a round central top balcony. (cjmb)

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls : reinforced concrete structure, partially plastered.

Roof : flat, concrete.

Windows: steel frame, pivoting.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

Minor internal alterations to an office on the first floor.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison & Smail

Plans passed : 20 November 1943

New Roof over storage tanks on roof.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison & Smail

Plans passed : 27 April 1949

Internal alterations to the sixth floor and additional staff stairs between ground and mezzanine floors.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison & Smail

Plans passed : 31 January 1950

Internal alterations to first and second floors necessitated by office rearrangements.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison, Ritchie & Watson

Plans passed : 19 February 1954

Alterations (nature and extent unknown as only the approval documents for this exist).

Architect : Stucke, Harrison, Ritchie & Watson

Plans passed : 10 May 1964

Minor internal alterations to mezzanine, as well as first and second floors.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison, Ritchie & Partners

Plans passed : 27 September 1971

Internal alterations to ground and mezzanine floors (which *inter alia*, entailed the construction of additional mezzanine floor space and new surrounds in the lift lobby); externally, all existing doors, windows and facings along the full length of both street frontages (i.e. at ground and mezzanine levels) were removed, followed by the installation of anodised aluminium fascia between the mezzanine and the first floor, an anodised aluminium fascia canopy, as well as granite facings, electrically operated roller grilles at ground level, as well as magic carpet sliding entrance doors.

Architect : Stucke, Harrison, Ritchie & Partners

Plans passed : 2 March 1972

Upgrading and refurbishment of building: new finishes and upgrading of services to the eight office floors and conversion of the caretaker's flat and staff quarters into offices.

Architect : William Morris Associates

Plans passed : 31 October 1989

INTEGRITY:

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT/BUILDER:

Stucke, Harrison & Smail
(See GENERAL NOTES)

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Plans passed : August 1939
Foundations : May 1938
Completed : January 1941

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco – Exhibition Style (Urban Features)

BUILDING TYPE:

Bank and office building.

ENVIRONMENT:

Very little influence on environment (RAU Report – June 1976)

CONDITION:

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	<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:

By 1976: SA Permanent Mutual, Building and Investment Society
 By 1988: Registered Investments (Pty) Ltd (a subsidiary of Time Investments [Pty] Ltd)
 T46912/1989 Mine Employees Pension Fund
 VA836/1994
 T51150/2001 Growthpoint Prop Ltd

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

In 1887, Benjamin M. Woollan bought land at the north-west corner of Simmonds and Commissioner Streets, where he erected a building (a brick structure under iron) for a Stock Exchange which he proposed forming. Woollan was an enterprising man...He called a meeting of mining men and an Exchange was duly established. The architect was Fred Holman. This was the first Stock Exchange Building, a one-storey structure that was officially opened on 16 January 1888 by J.W. Sauer, who became Minister of Railways in the first Union Cabinet. Herman Eckstein probably knew that the Stock Exchange would be built here before he acquired the stands opposite on which his own offices were built. Woollan's Stock Exchange... was too small within a year after the first stocks were quoted, and another 'new' Exchange was built on the site of the old one. It occupied the whole southern section of the block in Commissioner Street from Simmonds to Fraser Streets. It was officially opened on 10 February 1890. This also only lasted ten years when this building also became too small...the hall of this building was subsequently used for various other purposes.

After the first building was put up by Woollan, the volume of share dealing continued to increase rapidly and eventually the traders sought permission to deal in the open air in a section of Simmonds Street between Market and Commissioner Streets. Chains were put up to keep this area free of traffic. Flanked on one side by the stock exchange building and on the other side by the early high-rise building called Corner House, this open air stock exchange was rafted to as 'between the chains'. It continued officially until the outbreak of the Second

Anglo-Boer War in 1899. See additional description by G.A. Leyds below. The third stock exchange was erected on a new Hollard Street site.

"When business was particularly brisk on the Stock Exchange, crowds used to gather in the short section of Simmonds Street between Market and Commissioner streets, and after the Exchange had closed its doors brokers, their clients and hangers-on would congregate in the street where share-dealing took place often until late at night. A policeman was stationed in Simmonds Street and the Mining Commissioner had post erected and chains hung between them in order to close the area. Hence the "open air Stock Exchange" and the phrase "Between the Chains" which is mentioned in every history of Johannesburg." According to Cartwright, this "was the very heart, and the news centre, of Johannesburg in the early years. Here the crowd gathered to find out the collapse of the share market when pyretic ore was struck, the arrest of the Reformers, the announcement of a record production of 100,000 ounces of gold in one month, the Republic's ultimatum to Britain in 1899, such were the events that brought a milling throng to Simmonds Street...From their windows Eckstein and Taylor could look down on the excited crowd in the street below. But they rarely had to do so to find out what was happening. They made it their business to be hours ahead of everyone else, to have their own information and to act upon it. As often as not they made the news that caused the excitement in Simmonds Street."

HISTORY:

At the time of its construction, it was estimated that the building would cost £128 000. During their preparation of the final plans of the building, Stucke, Harrison & Smail Architects applied to the City Council for permission to allow for the projection of the proposed building beyond the Zone Line on Simmonds Street with a tower which was to contain an office. "This" according to the Architects, "would enable us to achieve a perfectly symmetrical building, and the setting back of our building from the second floor upwards and the rounding of the corner would fully compensate for permission to project this tower portion beyond the Zone Line."

GENERAL NOTES:

Chipkin views the firm Stucke, Harrison & Partners as a "long-established practice...a household name in the 1930s and in the post-war years... The sheer professionalism of this solid, conservative practice is demonstrated by Maritime House, a 1936-7 building on that portion of Loveday Street where shipping, indent and travel agents congregated...This practice was responsible for a prolific output of banks and financial institution buildings as well as residences in the northern suburbs for bank managers and company chairmen."

SOURCES:

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

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/124

Photographs (coloured) ca. '88 : NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/123

Cartwright, A.P.: The Corner House; The Early History Of Johannesburg, Purnell & Sons, 1965

Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society, 1880s - 1960s, David Philip, 1993

Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg; The Early Years, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1964

Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, A.D. Donker, 1986

Van Der Waal, G-M: Die boukuns van Johannesburg 1886-1940; Van Mynkamp tot Metropolis, Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1986

City Engineering Department, Stand No. 4672, Township Johannesburg (Planning Department), City of Johannesburg

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

Registrar of Deeds, Johannesburg

RECORDED BY:

Johann J and Catharina JM Bruwer.
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