

## JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

### HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

**NAME OF PLACE:** Provincial Building Society Building

**Previous/alternative name/s** : Provincial Insurance Building (?)  
Provincial Building (reference of 1976)  
Provincial Building Society Building (reference of 1995)

**LOCATION:** Street : Market  
Street number : 98  
Stand number : 182 (previously 762)  
Block number : G

**ZONING:** Current use/s : Business one  
Previous use/s :

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:**

10½ storeys; one basement level.

The covering of patterned concrete blocks on the façade of the building gives it a delicate and fragile appearance; the name of the building is displayed quite prominently high on the building and the emblem placed in a position to enhance and not to disturb from the appreciation of the building.

**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

Walls : reinforced concrete, decorative screen of concrete columns in front of building.

Roof : flat, concrete.

Windows: steel frame.

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

No documentation in respect of alterations/additions to this building, could be found.

**INTEGRITY:**

In 1989, the NMC stated that it would be preferable to retain all the existing buildings on this city block. "Unfortunately the buildings facing Market Street have already been altered/demolished so the value of the group on the southern half of the block is increased" (NMC letter, 16 August 1989).

The above-mentioned statement might be contestable in parts, in view of the fact that the exterior of the Provincial Building Society building appears not to have been altered significantly since the construction of the building.

**INSCRIPTION:****ARCHITECT/BUILDER:**

Abramovitch, Dawid Pinshow & Schneider

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

On plan : 18 August 1959  
Completed : 1960

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Brazilian Modernism (Urban Features).

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Bank and office building.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

In terms of its height, the building together with the old Arcade Building, forms an accentuating element in the street façade.

Despite a height difference, the design of the building joins quite well with the adjacent facades in Market Street. (RAU Report, June 1976) (See INTEGRITY)

The out of the ordinary blue emblem compliments the blue of the Old Arcade (Stand No. 181). Unfortunately the trees will obstruct the view to the building in years to come as in the case of the Natal Bank building (Stand No. 194).

**CONDITION:**

Vacant, secured.

**URGENT ACTION:**

**SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:**

**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: Provincial Building Society

T20763/1992 South African Mutual Life Assurance Soc  
T20763/1992 Old Mutual Life Assurance Co South Africa Ltd

## **PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:**

This stand was occupied, by two identical one storey shops by 1889. They were joined by an arched gateway. The western building was the *Loewenstein Chemist and Druggist* and the eastern building, Altenbach Watchmakers and Jewellers. In ca. 1894 rectangular display windows were added to the *Loewenstein Chemist and Druggist*. In 1897 these two buildings were replaced by the Loewenstein Building. W.H. Stucke designed this four storey neo-Renaissance façade building for S. Loewenstein.

## **HISTORY:**

## **GENERAL NOTES:**

Chipkin mentions that Sydney Abramowitch was one of the important architects who came out of Le Roith's office. He established his own private practice in Johannesburg, "and with the support of major property developers became a leading architectural presence in the City, in Hillbrow, Killarney and the suburbs. Abramowitch's work in Johannesburg...had a highly eclectic content...In early Abramowitch there were strong Brazilian influences at work...Cambridge, a mid-1950s warehouse cum office at the corner of Kerk and Sauer Streets was the clearest demonstration of those ideas...on the east, horizontal precast terrazzo louvres were devised to stop sun penetration at all times of the year...the east elevation of Cambridge is perhaps the most convincing early application of the *brise-soleil* used as an architectural form in Johannesburg." Then look at the Provincial Building Society (c.1962) - i.e. the perforated screens or grilles!

## **SOURCES:**

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

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/A : Johannesburg : General, III

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/124

Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society, 1880s - 1960s, David Philip, 1993 (included in this publication is a picture of the building)

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

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

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