

# JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

JJ Bruwer ©

Cellphone: 082 325 5823

NAME OF PLACE: [Second] SURREY HOUSE



Top left: Fox and Rissik Streets elevations. Top right: view of northwest corner of building and its Commissioner and Rissik Streets elevations. Bottom left: view of main entrance off Rissik Street. Bottom centre: view of Commissioner Street façade, including façade of the *Provincial Building*. Bottom right: Fox Streetscape.

Previous/alternative name/s :

**LOCATION:** Street : Commissioner  
 Street number : 102, 104, 106  
 : [33, 35 Rissik; 101, 103, 105 Fox]  
 Stand Number : 1263  
 Previous Stand Number: 230, 232, 233, 234, 736, 1178  
 Block number : BE  
 Suburb : Marshallstown  
 GIS reference :

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

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:**

Height :  
Levels above street level : nine  
Levels below street level :  
On-site parking :

At the time of its construction, this building was intended to be a speculative office building with an above-average standard of finishes. The main entrance to the building is on Rissik Street and access to and egress from the parking basements on Fox Street. The main entrance is via a barrel-vaulted triple volume space. A planted terrace overlooks the entrance "atrium". Numerous terraces are located throughout the building. Two levels of office accommodation are provided for in the podium and six in the narrow, winged, tower.

**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

Walls:

Roof:

Windows:

**SITE FEATURES:****ALTERATIONS:****INTEGRITY:****INSCRIPTION:****ARCHITECT:****BUILDER:****CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :  
Approval of plans :  
Completion date :

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Post Modern Eclectic, 1990s.

**FAÇADE on 104 Commissioner Street:**

"Architectural Merit and Workmanship of Merit: The remaining façade that was kept by the design team is very finely articulated with mouldings and fenestration. The new building is very eclectic (sic.) using the old façade but only superficially because the flavour is distinctly of late J.H.B modernism. The success of the building is primarily in the accommodation of the old façade in then (sic.) new." (Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Shops to street and 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	<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:

### PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

#### FIRST SURREY HOUSE:

The *first Surrey House*, designed by Gordon Leith with Burnet, Tait & Lorne and completed during 1936, occupied the corner at 106 Commissioner and 35 Rissik Streets. This building was demolished in 1990 to make way for the *second Surrey House*. The building was not considered to be of conservation value and its demolition was approved by the former NMC.



"Another indication of the variety of styles used during this period [1920 – 1940] was the streamlining of the salient series of balconies in some buildings. In this regard the most dramatic effect was achieved in *Normandie Court* (1937-8), 94/6 Kerk Street, where the rounded corners of the balconies were complemented and their effect reinforced by the cantilever concrete slabs at the corner of the building. Earlier the same effect was created in *Mackay Mansions* [see AQ-7]...albeit in a less integrated manner, while the treatment of the banded windows of *Annan Building* (1935-7). 86 Commissioner Street [see BC-2], was in much the same mould...Thereafter the proportions were made more dynamic by narrowing one of the façade planes and linking the windows in a continuous band...In *Surrey House* (1935-6), 106 Commissioner Street, the dynamic effect was strengthened by the rounded corner of the building around which the window bands were stretched, and by the cantilever concrete slabs extending over the upper balconies...". (Van Der Waal, G-M.: *From Mining Camp to Metropolis...*).

Above: Photograph from Van Der Waal, G-M.: *From Mining Camp to Metropolis, The buildings of Johannesburg 1886-1940*.

During 1954, tenants of the *first Surrey House* were Jooste & Bryant's; The Dress Box and Palliard Centre; Arthur Meikle & Co (Pty) Ltd, Auctioneers, Estate Agents, Sworn Appraisers, Bloodstock Salesmen "Specialists in all property matters for nearly 60 years"; Kenneth A Meikle, Government Sworn Appraisers; Country Permanent Building Society; Manson & Stevens, Government Sworn Appraisers; room 806 – Johannesburg Trust Co (Pty) Ltd, telegraphic address "Cecilsim"

#### 101 FOX STREET:

"In September, 1923, the Postmaster General granted a broadcasting licence to the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies at their club at 101 Fox Street. The first official broadcast was from the basement of the railway offices in Johannesburg on December 18, 1923, when General Smuts was

heard on the air for the first time and a concert was also broadcast.” (Neame, L.E.: City Built On Gold).

#### STUART CAMPBELL BUILDING:

According to Van Der Waal the *Stuart Campbell Building* stood at 105 Fox and 33 Rissik Streets.

#### EXECUTORS BUILDING:

The *Executors Building*, situated at 102 Commissioner Street, was also known as the *Johannesburg Board Of Executors & Trust Co. Building*.

#### ATLAS BUILDING:

The *Atlas Building*, designed by Mitchelson, Sydney Percival Hill, was completed in 1923. During the building's short life span of 32 years, it was at one stage occupied by the Johannesburg Board Of Executors & Trust Co. This building and the *Executors Building* were demolished in November 1955 to be rebuilt as a new building for the Johannesburg Board Of Executors & Trust Co. This building together with the other buildings occupying this site, was demolished during the 1990s, to make way for the *second Surrey House*.

#### 102a Commissioner Street – ATLAS BUILDING and 102 COMMISSIONER STREET:

The *Johannesburg Board Of Executors & Trust Co. Building* and the *Atlas Building* were occupied till November 1955, when the buildings were demolished and a new building was erected at 102 Commissioner Street.

“The Johannesburg Board Of Executors And Trust Company Limited - This Company, which was established on the 22nd March, 1888, is the oldest institution of its kind in the Transvaal and it has had a distinguished record of service to the public of Johannesburg. Its first directors were Messrs. Harry S. Caldecott (Chairman), Fred H. Barber, S.J. Wilks, Carl Hanau, G. A. Jones, E. J. Wicke, e. Hancock and W. H. Norton, and its first manager was Colonel Rowland A. Bettington, who founded and commanded Bettington's Horse at the time of the Jameson Raid. The Board has taken a prominent part in the history of Johannesburg and over the long period of its existence many well-known men have been associated with it. One of the best known of these was Mr. James T. Goldsbury, who joined the staff in 1893 and became the Company's manager in 1901. He retired from this position in 1938, when he joined the Board of Directors, Past Chairmen include Messrs. S. B. Harsant, S. J. Wilks, J. S. Parks, Llewellyn Edwards, C. H. Barclay, Walter S. Webber and B. H. Friel. All forms of the normal business of a trust company, including executorships and the administration of deceased estates and trusts are conducted by the Board. In particular it handles large sums of money for investment on behalf of clients. For many years the Board had offices in its building on the Commissioner Street side of the Old Arcade [see G-7], from where it moved in 1929 to new premises at 102 Commissioner Street. In order to cope with its continued expansion the adjoining Atlas Building was acquired in 1935. Both buildings were occupied until November, 1955, when it was decided to rebuild on these sites. A modern building, in keeping with the Board's position as one of the leading trust companies in the country, is in course of erection and temporary offices are being occupied at the New Marlborough House at the corner of Commissioner and Eloff Streets, Johannesburg...” (Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years...).

#### S.A. FIRE HOUSE:

This building stood at 33 Rissik Street and 103, 105 Fox Street (previous Stands 233, 234 and 736).

#### **HISTORY:**

#### **GENERAL NOTES:**

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

CURRENT TENANT/S:



# Surrey House Redevelopment, Johannesburg

*A commercial office building in the Johannesburg CBD which acknowledges its context*

Contextual architecture has come to be associated with surroundings of a clearly historical nature, such as that of the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. By way of a contrast, the context within which the Surrey House development has taken place is that of the retail heart of the Johannesburg CBD.

## Professional Team Architects

Portal Partnership Incorporated  
**Quantity Surveyors**

Walters and Simpson

## Town and Regional Planners and Land Surveyors

Osborne, Oakenfull and Meekel

## Structural Engineers

Kampel Abramowitz Yawitch & Partners  
CC

## Electrical Engineers

Chorn, Goldman, Wilkin & Associates

## Mechanical Engineers

Bakker, Van Rooyen and Partners

## Fire Protection Consultants

Bramley and Morgado CC

## Programme Consultants

Pro-Crit (Pty) Ltd

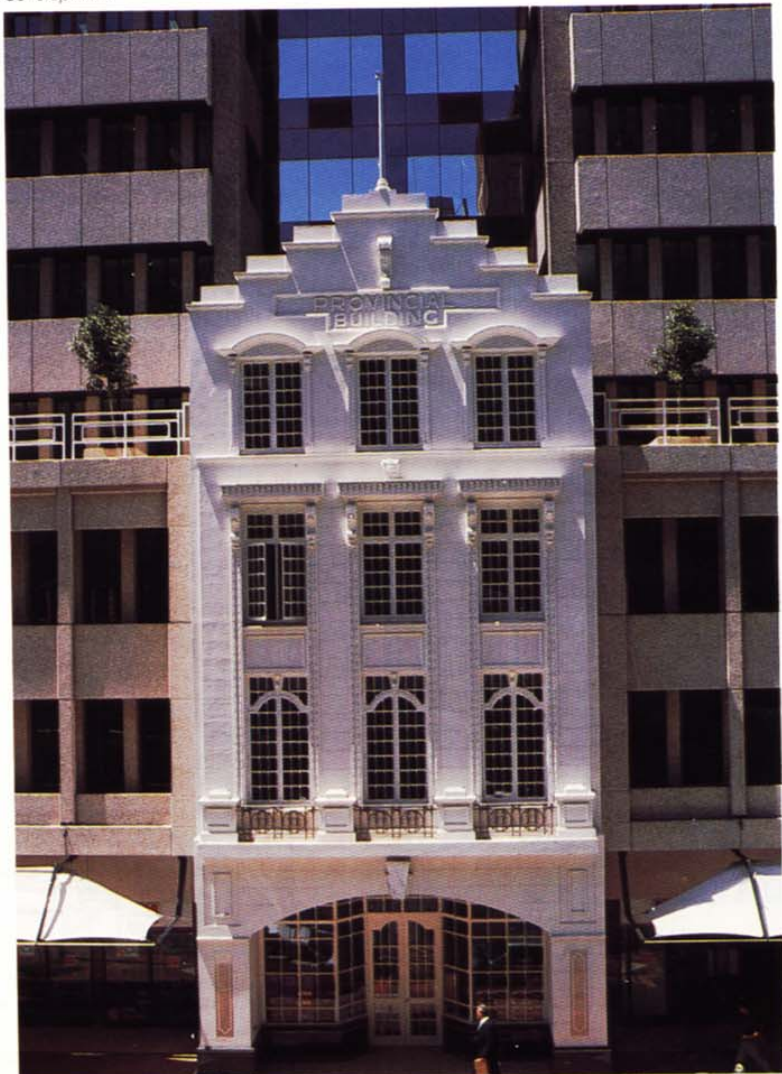
## Main Contractor

Giuricich Bros (Pty) Ltd

## Developer

Old Mutual Properties

Below: The facade of Provincial House has been restored, retained and incorporated in the Commissioner Street face of the new development



The site, bounded by Commissioner Street in the north, Rissik street to the east, and Fox Street on the south, is located in an area of medium-rise office buildings, some of which have an art deco "touch" in the details. The predominant characteristic of these buildings, however, is the vertically modulated facades which are the result of their fenestration. In contrast with the surrounding buildings, Provincial House, a diminutive building with a neo-classical facade, is located on the site itself. The National Monuments Council deemed the facade of this building, although in a state of disrepair, worthy of preservation.

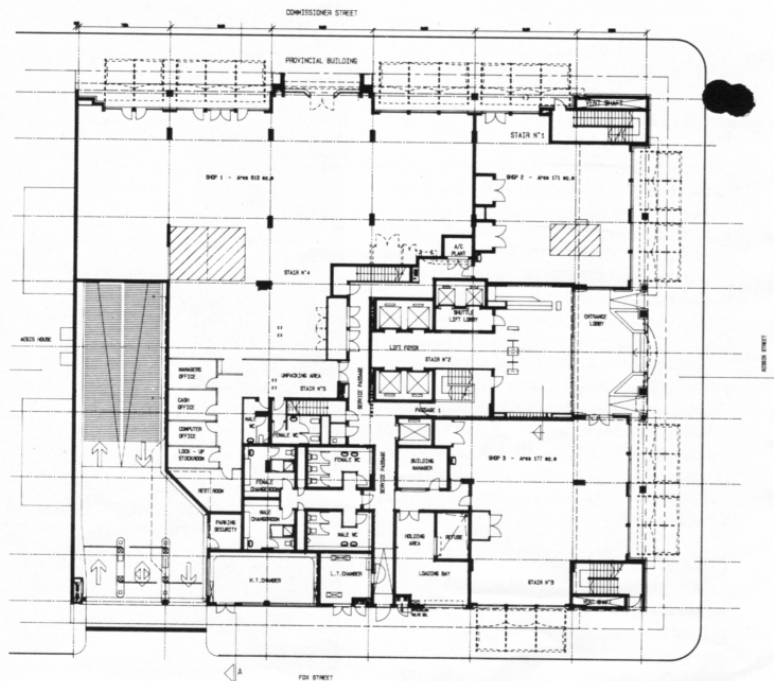
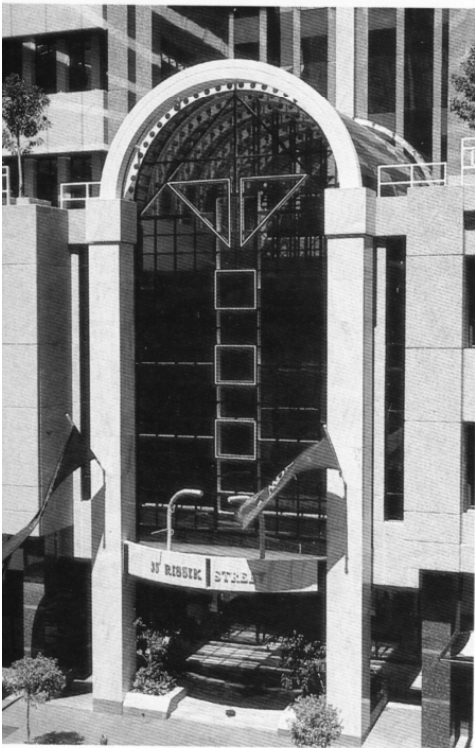
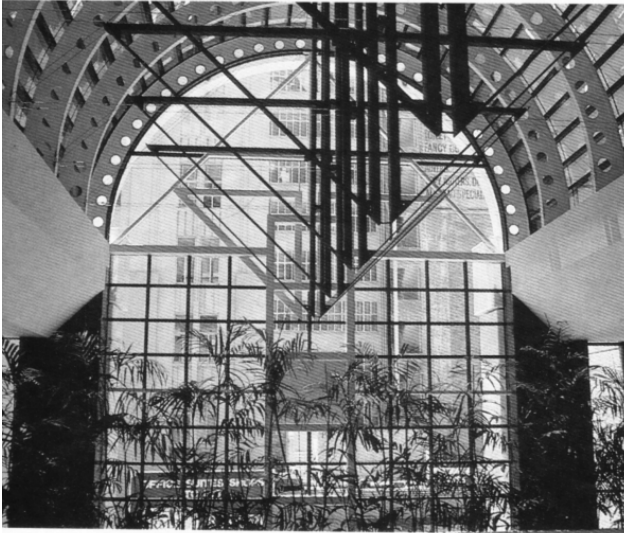
## Brief

The architects were appointed subsequent to demolition of the existing buildings on the block (with the exception of Provincial House). A speculative office building, with an

**Right:** The colouration, form and proportions of the facades are directly influenced by the adjacent building fabric

**Below:** The main entrance to the building is housed in a barrel-vaulted triple volume space

**Bottom:** The incorporation of a triangular motif in the main entrance is a refreshing departure from the pretentious norm which has been developed in recent years for 'features' of this nature



Opposite page, above: Second floor plan  
Opposite page, below: A typical upper floor plan  
Right: Ground floor plan



above-average standard of finishes, was to be constructed on the site. Retail premises were to be limited to the Rissik Street and Commissioner Street frontages. The main entrance to the office building was to be positioned on Rissik Street, due to its association with office buildings, as

opposed to Commissioner Street's "renown" as a retail precinct. Pedestrian activity along Fox Street is minimal by comparison with the other two thoroughfares: access to and egress from the parking basements are therefore positioned on Fox Street.

Bulk was to be fully utilised, although one parking bay per 100 square metres of bulk was to be offset against the total bulk in order to provide a ratio of 1.5 bays per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of bulk.

Two levels of deep-space office accommodation were to be provided in a podium, with the remaining space in a relatively narrow, winged, office tower.

Provision was made in the cost estimates for the retention and restoration of the facade of Provincial House.

### Configuration

The shopfronts along Rissik and Commissioner Streets are set back from the site boundary by 3 m. The consequently wider pavement provides for the comfort of pedestrians, and affords the opportunity of incorporating a distinctive canopy into the building at street level.

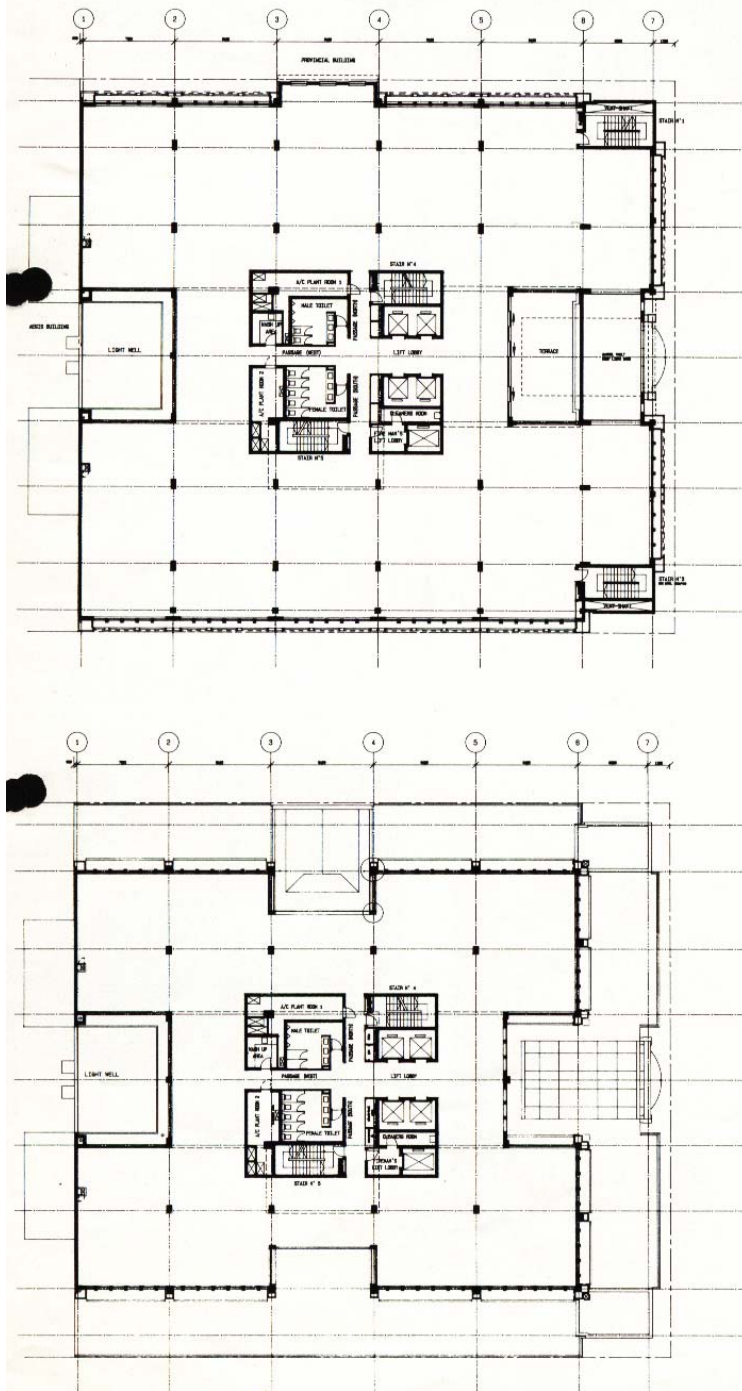
The main entrance to the building is via a barrel-vaulted triple volume space. A number of terraces, which can be planted and used for recreational and entertainment purposes, have been provided throughout the building. One of these overlooks the entrance "atrium". The structure comprises eight floors, in addition to the ground floor. The six office floors above podium level are configured to allow for multiple tenancies on a 250 m<sup>2</sup> module.

### Facades

The colouration, form and proportions of the facades are directly influenced by the adjacent building fabric. The effect of the masonry, with its vertical slots, is somewhat overwhelming at close quarters: this is offset by the overall impression gained of the building as an integral portion of the visual "fabric" of the locality. The podium is slightly lower than the gable of Provincial House, which makes for comfortable incorporation of this facade into the Surrey House development. The podium would give the impression of being somewhat squat, if it were not for the tent-like canopies above the shopfronts. The latter have the effect of fragmenting the building mass and providing visual interest — almost a distraction — which counteracts the stolid formality of much of the podium.

The main entrance, with its semi-circular capping, could be clichéd if it were not for the application of a triangular motif, which is a refreshing departure from the pretentious norm which has been developed in recent years for entrance "features".

The introduction of deep recesses in the office tower have the effect of modulating external forms and spaces. Despite the heaviness of the masonry elements, there is an element of transparency about the facades of this building — probably due to the





fact that "mini vistas" have been formed via various components of the superstructure. The use of clear (yes, untinted!) glazing contributes to a friendlier character and makes for a translucent effect, particularly by night.

Precast concrete panels, fabricated to fine tolerances, with an exposed aggregate finish in a sandstone colour, have been used to clad the major portion of the facades. Primary recesses are coloured in a darker shade. Granite cladding has been employed at street level.

The configuration of fenestration and masonry recesses makes for extensive sun-screening of glazed areas. This permits the option of naturally-ventilated offices around the perimeter and has the effect of reducing energy consumption in the building as a whole.

### Under-the-skin engineering

A conventional reinforced concrete frame construction has been employed, with flat slab post-tensioned floors. The latter make for speedier erection times.

A central air-conditioning system serves the two deep-space office floors, retail areas, and internal zones on the upper office floors. Allowance has been made for console air-

conditioning units on the perimeter of the upper levels. As already mentioned, air-conditioning can be omitted from these spaces entirely. This is a commendable option in that flexibility with respect to individual preferences regarding climate control has been built-in at the design stage.

The comprehensive fire protection system includes full sprinkler protection, smoke detection and evacuation systems and conventional fire hydrants and hoses. All systems are monitored at the main reception desk/security checkpoint in the office entrance foyer. Access to the office floors is controlled by means of turnstiles.

Power, data and telephone services are distributed via a three-compartment power skirting. Provision has been made for reticulation of these services in deep office spaces by means of the ceiling void.

A four-car group of lifts serves the office tower, with shuttle lifts between the basement and ground floors. A fireman's lift has also been provided for, with a separate fire lobby on each floor of the building.

### Synthesis

It is encouraging to encounter ongoing redevelopment in the

Johannesburg CBD which is contextually sensitive. The viability of this precinct is probably enhanced in the process, and redevelopment of blocks in the vicinity could also occur as a "spin-off" from this project.

The incorporation of the facade of Provincial House, and its restoration to what is considered to be its original form at ground floor level, has added visual interest to this building. It is also a reminder of the architectural history of the city (it is unfortunate that the national chain store which has occupied the major portion of the ground floor has, to an extent, devalued this portion of the building by dismissing its potential as the main entrance to their premises). With the possible restoration, refurbishment and change-of-use of the Rissik Street Post Office as a future option, as well as the proximity of the Rand Club and the relatively undisturbed architecture of Fox Street, a "trail" of buildings of historical interest in this portion of the CBD could become a reality.

What remains to be seen is the tenant profile which will be accommodated in Surrey House. This should give an indication of emerging trends in downtown Jo'burg which will, hopefully, bode well for the future of the metropolis. □





Below: Extract from brochure issued by Old Mutual Properties in 1994.

## *Surrey House*

**INCORPORATING PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
COMMISSIONER STREET, JOHANNESBURG**

*Concern for preserving Johannesburg's historical buildings was the motivation for incorporating the facade of Provincial House into a new eight-floor commercial building in Johannesburg's CBD on a site bounded by Fox, Rissik and Commissioner Streets.*

The building, Surrey House, was designed in harmony with the Provincial House facade which dates back to 1926.

Provincial House was designed by architect Hill Mitchellson and its elegant small-scale design with its distinct French influence is considered rare in modern Johannesburg.

The Provincial House facade has been preserved as the centre of the Commissioner Street frontage and the first three floors of Surrey House have been scaled in harmony with the old structure.

### **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.

### **RECORDED BY:**

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

1 2004 25





SURREY

FOR POLICE

17 8 2003



2 10 2003





2 10 2003

THE KISSLE





TO LET  
Property Solutions  
Commercial Real Estate

SURGEY  
Surgery

25 1 2004





ERLINGS

TO LET