

6.3.8.A. Annan House.



Erf Number:	140 & 144.
Name:	Annan House.
Architect:	Emley & Williamson (John Barrow builder).
Previous Names:	Second Green's Building.
Approved / Existing Plans:	None.
Date of Construction:	1935
Architectural Style / Aesthetics :	Art Deco (New York Style).
Historical Use:	Office / ground floor retail
Current Use:	Office / ground floor retail
Intended Use:	Office / ground floor retail

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Rarity or Technical interest:	Good example of Art Deco - New York Style within Johannesburg.
Relationship to setting and place:	Connects internally with 30 Simmonds Street. Forms part of the grouping of 1930s Art Deco buildings located along Commissioner street.
Relationship to historical aspects:	Forms a built document of the development of Johannesburg between the 1st and 2nd world wars. Part of the bigger and better skyscraper period in Johannesburg. Designed and built after South Africa left the Gold Standard. Designed like a ship – and the top like the bridge.
Social Importance:	When the premier moved into the building. It was a dramatic moment in Johannesburg’s history, when Johannesburg became the capital of Gauteng – Johannesburg was the focus point of the struggle. The building is like a ship with the premier sitting in the bridge.
Modifications:	Steel exterior windows replaced with aluminium.
Integrity of current Structure:	Exterior of the structure survives in relatively in-tact condition.
Known lost aspects or changes made:	Original steel window frames have been replaced.
Scientific or Research Potential:	Limited/Good example of New York Style Art Deco within Johannesburg.
Other:	None.
Protection:	Yes - structure is more than 60 years old and protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act.
2002 - 2015 Historical information:	Part of Koponong Project since 2002.
Significance:	Forms part of a cohesive collection of Art Deco buildings of a similar height, style and age along the Commissioner Street corridor. One of the buildings constructed following the departure from the Gold Standard. When the premier moved into the building. It was a dramatic moment in Johannesburg’s history, when Johannesburg became the capital of Gauteng – Johannesburg was the focus point of the struggle. The building is like a ship with the premier sitting in the bridge.
Section 3.3 of NHRA:	a; d; e; f & h.
Grading:	Culturally Significant - grade to be confirmed following full heritage study.
Current Condition - Exterior:	Fair. The building façade was refinished in Gamma-zenith at some stage previous. New aluminium windows retain the look and feel of the original. Original steel balustrade on the upper levels remains.
Current Condition - Interior:	Interior fit out is low grade contemporary office, not worthy of conservation.
Recommendations - Exterior:	The fine Art Deco facades of the building form part of the historic fabric of Commissioner and Fox Streets and should be retained and restored. See marked up façade image.
Recommendations - Interior:	Interior does not warrant conservation.
NHRA Applications:	An application as per Section 34.1 of the NHRA is required.
Recommendations - Overall:	The exterior architecture and facades of this building should be conserved and restored, the interiors are largely stripped and offer little in terms of cultural significance, conservation worthy fabric or provenance. The ribbon windows and the bridge of the ship (building set backs) should remain. Changes may be affected to the interior of the building. The external stone chip finish should be removed and restored to a smooth Marmoran.

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Annan House designed in 1935 by the prominent Johannesburg Firm Emley and Williamson, represents a good example of Art Deco architecture. Despite the replacement of the original steel windows and the addition of a Gamma Zenith type finish to the exterior, the building facades survives in fairly original condition. It forms part of the collection of Art Deco buildings found along Commissioner Street. The finely proportioned external form of the building, stepped zigurat type massing and carefully articulated roof plane are all typical features of Art Deco architecture.

*“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...albeit in a less integrated manner, while the treatment of the banded windows of Annan Building (1935-7). 86 Commissioner Street, was in much the same mould. In the latter building, however, it was ingeniously balanced by the recessed middle section with its narrow vertical concrete strips. In fact, this was a rather striking example of the stepped recession of the upper storeys in terms of the building regulations of those years.”*⁴⁸

*“The original plans record of the building is incomplete. The following, however, appears from this record: the Basement plan provided for a Boiler Room and Transformer Room and a staircase on each side of a lift tower located in the central section of the building, extending down into the Basement; located on the Ground Floor were six shops (with parquet floors), which included the Bank Bar, near the Main Entrance in Commissioner Street; extending all the way along the eastern section of the Ground Floor from the Main Entrance in Commissioner Street to Fox Street, was a wide corridor (flanked on the one side by show cases) providing access to an Entrance Hall (paved with marble slabs) flanking the Elevator Lobby; the office floor layout from First Floor up was distinctly symmetrical”*⁴⁹

48. Van Der Waal, G.M. (1987), Page 212.

49. Bruwer, J. J. (2009), Annan House (BC-2).

*“Renovations to Annan House for future offices of Johannesburg Mining & Finance Corporation (Ltd.): Approved by NMC during August 1988. This approval was given on the understanding “...that the north and south facades from the 1st Floor...(to) the recessed Floors (would) remain unchanged...that on the recessed sections the windows...(would be) enlarged and corners added, but (that) the proportions of the new fenestration...(would) relate to that of the mullioned windows below... There was (to be) a certain amount of remodelling on (sic.) the south façade’s upper elements to match those of the north façade...There...(would be) a small addition on the roof which could not be seen from the public areas.”*⁵⁰

All significant elements of the building were retained, and it was felt that the proposed changes to the windows would not destroy the ship-like quality of the superstructure of the building. The renovations included a new atrium feature with openable glass roof and a new porch façade on the 17th Floor; the renovation of existing windows to 1st to 10th floors; new terrazzo type stone chip finish to all exterior walls; the removal of existing mosaic from the vertical fins; the renovation of existing balustrades; the installation of new curved corner windows to the 9th Floor and above; the provision of new double outward opening doors, allowing access to the balconies at 7th, 9th, 11th and 13th floor levels.”

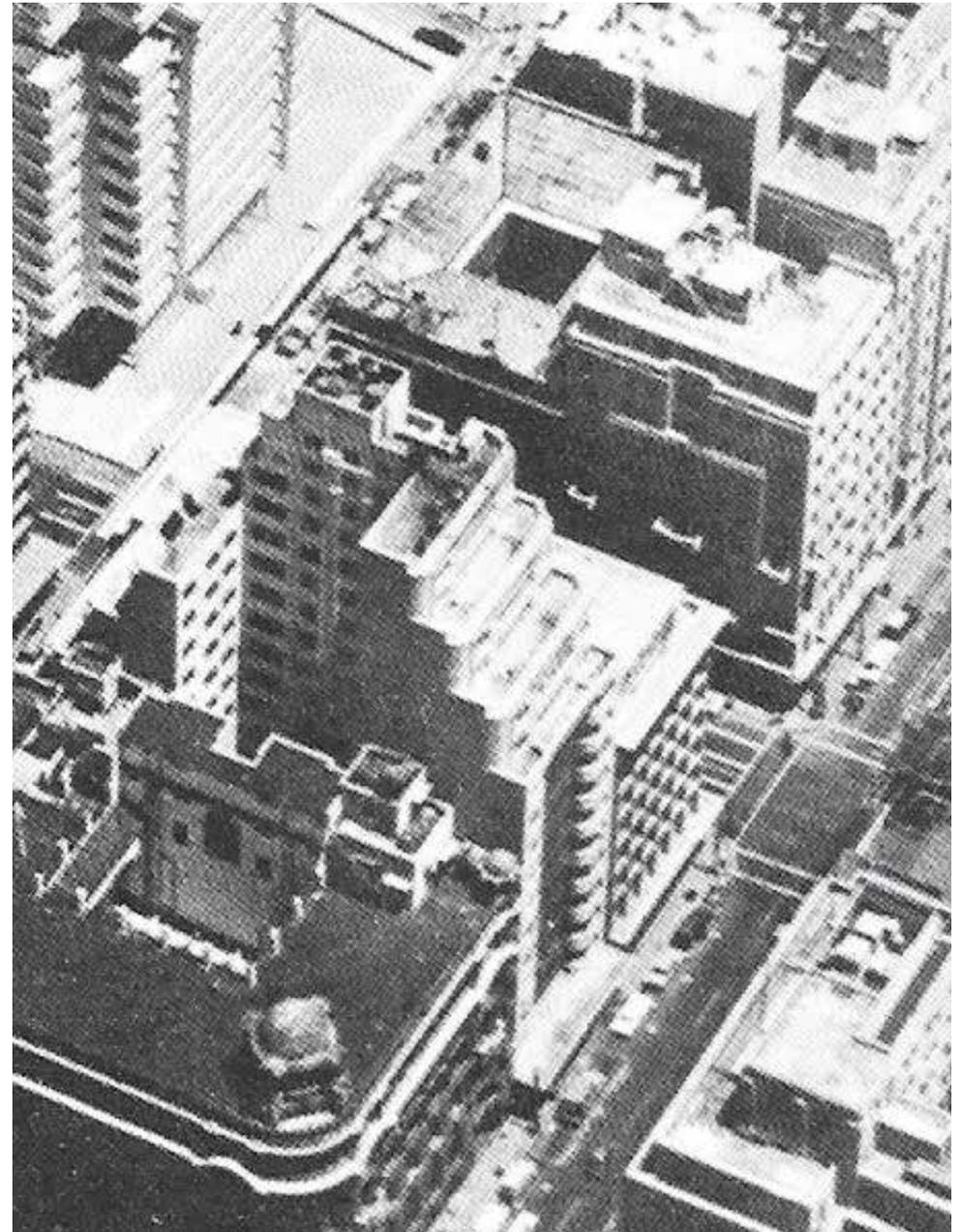
In a letter to the Mrs Flo Bird in March 1988, Marilyn Martin, then Honorary curator of the NMC notes, *“Annan House is a particularly interesting example of late Art Deco, the curves and exuberance of the style being termed by the influence of the Modern Movement. It makes a transition to the architecture of the 1940s and pre-figures the hybrid buildings which were to be erected in New York in the 1940s, such as Universal Pictures (Kahn and Jacobs) and Look Building (Roth and Sons). The crown and setbacks, characteristic of Art Deco echo the curves below... The building shows a kinship with Ansteys and Manners Mansions and it plays a particular part in the fabric of its site. It is proudly and unambiguously of its time and forms a subtle link between the older Standard Bank and its younger neighbour”*⁵¹

50. Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 313.

51. Martin, M. (1988), page 1



Historical image prior to 1950s - Bruwer, J. J. (2009), Annan House (BC-2)



Aerial view of Annan House - Chipkin, C. M. (2008), page 166.



Contemporary image - facade.



Contemporary image - facade and shopfront.

Gauteng Provincial Government Precinct, Johannesburg, Gauteng - Heritage Guidelines for Interested and Affected Parties - July 2017.