

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: CLYDE BUILDINGS



Top left: South and West elevations. Top right: section of main elevation.
Bottom left: View of the building and the neighbouring *Kirchhoff's Building* on the northwestern corner of Jeppe and Loveday Streets. Bottom right: view of cantilevered verandah.

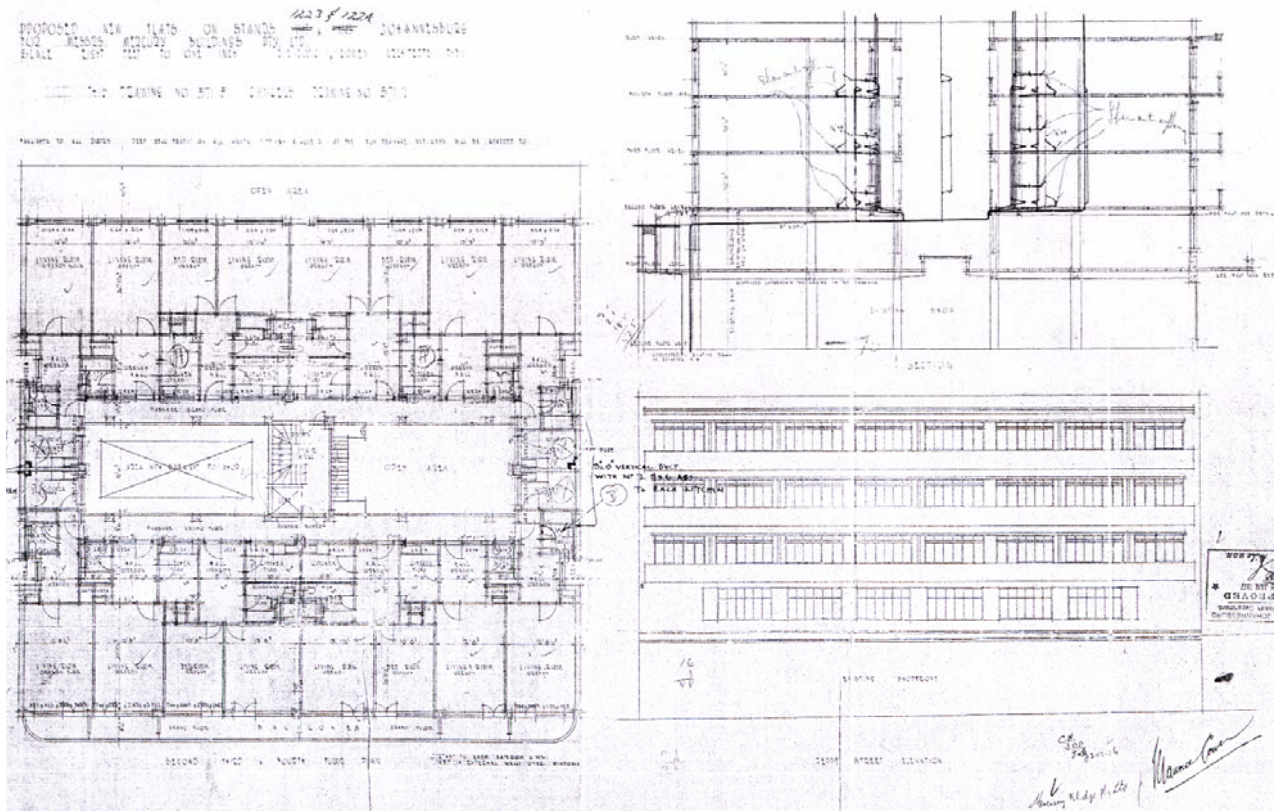
Previous/alternative name/s :

LOCATION: Street : Jeppe
 Street number : 139, 141
 Stand Number : 1223, 1224
 Previous Stand Number: 1117, 1118
 Block number : AP
 GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height :
 Levels above street level : six
 Levels below street level : none
 On-site parking : none



This multi-storey building with strong Art deco features is one of the most interesting remaining examples in the City of the apartment architecture of the 1930s produced by the J.C. Cook & Cowen. The intrinsic heritage value of the building lies in its phased development from a single storey motor repair shop at 139 Jeppe Street and adjoining double storey commercial building by the architects J.C. Cook & Cowen, at 141 Jeppe Street, into the existing shops and apartment building.

Noteworthy elements of the buildings include the strongly ornamented pavement hood with bearer beams on its underside and the continuous verandahs with accentuated rounded corner, leading to a strong emphasis of horizontal lines in the built form. The pavement canopy is of particular interest (it was typical of the practice of J.C. Cook & Cowen to add a distinctive feature such as this to their buildings) when assessed within the context of the following relevant description by Van Der Waal: "While the commercial buildings were vertically orientated, especially in the upper portions of their facades, they did not entirely escape the force of the strong horizontal lines and planes of the display windows and pavement hoods. Verandahs with their pillars began to be replaced by cantilever pavement covers in the early 1930s, but such hoods were first used in the *Paramount Building* [see Document AE-1] as early as 1911. In Johannesburg, this changeover was more gradual than in Sydney, Australia, where new building regulations introduced in 1912 banned verandahs altogether...Initially, Johannesburg's hoods were fitted with bearer beams on the underside. Later however, beams were placed on the upper side of the hood to leave an uncluttered ceiling over the pavement. The effect of this practice was that the hoods, together with the long bands of display windows, reinforced the suggestion of horizontal movement in the smooth street and pavement surfaces."

In order to contextualise the architecture and original function of the building, one need look no further than the following description, again by Van Der Waal: "Apartment living reflected a specific attitude and a preference for a particular lifestyle. Blocks of flats were built to be let (there was as yet no question of the sectional titles of today), so that occupation was always temporary. In addition, apartment buildings met the accommodation requirements of the lower to middle-class sections of society only. The most affluent and poorest sections preferred detached houses. At the same time

there was no concerted effort by friendly societies or any other agency to provide housing for the poorer sections of the community on the model of developments in Europe. By their location near the city centre, these buildings brought their middle-class occupant conveniently close to their places of work and relieved them of the bother of caring for either house or garden, so that they could devote their energies to earning a living. Since the apartment buildings were put up on or very near the street line and the busy streets afforded no place for children to amuse themselves, there was little opportunity to develop a healthy family life. Human interaction was also severely inhibited by the isolation of the flats as closed units next to or above one another, as well as the absence of communal social areas, such as recreation halls. Financial considerations were the only criteria applied in selecting tenants for the apartments. Thus personal income, not a propensity to fit in with a particular group, was the deciding factor. A prominent feature of apartment buildings was the general block form with a certain degree of mass articulation, mostly in the central sections, which suggested an illusion of depth. This treatment created an impression of friendly accessibility – probably a reference to domestic architectural styles, in which the function of the building was expressed in a traditional form. A second important common feature of these blocks was the use of balconies, by which these buildings came to be identified. Referring to the social aspect of flats, these balconies constituted a link between the interior and exterior and were reminiscent of the Edwardian verandahs. Built in the same materials as the face, the balconies were visually an integral element of the whole, but were at the same time more isolated in terms of function: only one balcony was allocated to each flat. This meant that the need for social space was gradually changed from the communal to the individualised. The balconies were not only inaccessible to neighbours but they could also be furnished to suit the taste of the individual tenant. It is interesting to note that the balcony appointment mostly contained arrangement of plants...in separate pots, which probably reflected a need to retain some kind of bond with the natural environment from which the tenants originated. The construction and provision of services in apartment buildings followed a course of development parallel to that of office and commercial buildings. After the late 1920s reinforced concrete frame constructions were used to an increasing extent, and in a few exceptional cases this permitted a free arrangement of interior walls. In most cases, however, one floor was usually an exact replica of the next, with rectangular rooms. Elevators were fairly common. They were linked to the lobby and the passages built on each floor on the longitudinal axis of the building. As was to be expected, property developers provided built-in cupboards and a bathroom for each flat only in the more luxurious blocks, which were also equipped with the most modern domestic appliances available at the time, including an electric stove and refrigerator...In some cases parking for tenants' cars was provided in the basement...However, the average block of flats supplied only the protection of a roof and walls and tenants had to make do with communal ablution and toilet facilities on each floor. Such social effects were common where the profit motive was the major determinant." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

It is clear from this description that the Clyde Building once, certainly qualified to be considered a luxurious apartment building, providing its tenants with such luxuries as separate bathrooms and built-in cupboards. Although there were no communal social areas, mention should be made of the fact that this building boasted a roof squash court, an exceptional characteristic for its time.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Walls: reinforced concrete frame structure; plastered brick.

Roof: concrete; flat.

Windows: steel casements.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

Minor alterations: construction of Mezzanine Floor in section of building occupying Stand 1224 for Mr Abe Gordon.

Architect: Stanley Gordon. Plans approved: 28 August 1952.

Alteration of shop front and internal alterations (additional storage rooms) to shop (Bakery) on Ground Floor on Stand 1224 for Shapil Investments (Pty) Ltd. (Tenant: Rolo Hot Bread Shops [Pty] Ltd). Adjoining the Bakery at the time was a Butchery.

Architects: Engelbrecht van Jaarsveld (P.O. Box 50082, Randburg). Plans approved: 18 January 1982.

Internal alterations to First Floor: partitions and drainage (Store rooms and work rooms for Barnetts Butchery). Draughtsman: T. Chuva. Plans approved: 13 September 1983.

New steel staircase between Ground Floor and First Floor in shop on Stand 1223 and minor internal alterations to First Floor. Plans approved: 22 January 1992.

INTEGRITY:

Alterations to mostly the commercial floors (i.e. Ground Floor and First Floor) of the building since its completion have had no or very little effect on the overall integrity of the building.

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

J. C. Cook & Cowen.

BUILDER:

Reinforced Concrete Engineers: A.S. Joffe & Co.

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

1930 Buildings:

Architect : J.C. Cook & Cowen
Date on plans : June and October 1929
Approval of plans : 10 December 1929
Completion date : 1930

Conversion of existing buildings into shops and apartment building:

Architect : J.C. Cook & Cowen
Date on plans : 1936
Approval of plans : 6 November 1936, 26 January 1937 and 5 March 1937
Completion date : 1937

Additional (Fifth Floor):

Architect : J.C. Cook & Cowen
Date on plans : 1937
Approval of plans : 6 November 1937
Completion date : 1938

BUILDING STYLE:

Art Deco idiom.

BUILDING TYPE:

Shops to street and apartment building.

ENVIRONMENT:

The *Clyde Building* was designed to human scale and in view of the horizontal accentuation of its built form stands in complete unison with both its neighbours, viz. the *Talekinsky's Building* on the northeastern corner of Jeppe and Harrison Streets, and the *Kirchoff's Building* on the northwestern corner of Jeppe and Loveday Streets.

CONDITION:

Fair.

URGENT ACTION:

SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:

PROTECTION STATUS: (under National Heritage Resources Act, 1999)

General protection:	Section 34(1) structure/s	<input checked="" 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:
 By beginning 1930s – Messrs Canin, Gold & Jackson
 1930s – Mercury Buildings (Clyde Trading Co. Ltd.)
 By 1952 – Mr Abe Gordon
 By 1981 – Shapil Investments (Pty) Ltd

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

One of the greatest standing attractions in early Johannesburg, no doubt, was the famous *Fillis' Circus* (1889). Also known as the *Fillis' Amphitheatre*, this amenity (also used as a community hall) with seats for 2 000 persons, was according to Van Der Waal, "a conical tent-shaped structure of wood and corrugated iron, 15 metres high and 47,23 metres in diameter." It was located on the block bounded by Jeppe, Harrison, Bree and Loveday Street. See below.



Left: Seen is this postcard in the right background is *Fillis Amphitheatre* (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 139).

MARKET STALL:

The first structure to be erected on the stand at 139 Jeppe Street in 1914 for Messrs Canin and Whitefield, was an open shed with corrugated iron roof, and a prominent finial at each gable end. This shed was to be used as a market stall.

OPEN MARKET (70 Harrison; 139, 141 Jeppe; 71 Loveday):

Situated near the above structure on the southwest corner of the adjacent stand at 141 Jeppe Street,

was an unknown structure of lesser floor coverage. According to a block plan dating from this period, the remainder of Stands 1223 and 1224, as well as Stand 1222 in Harrison Street (see Document AP-1), and the stand at 71 Loveday Street, adjoining the Kirchoff's Building, were at that time used as an open market place.

CANIN'S HARDWARE STORE:

In May 1918, a single storey wood and iron building, to be used as a hardware shop, was constructed at 139 Jeppe Street. A portion of the existing shed was incorporated into this new building. The then owner of the property as shown on the associated municipal plans approval form was Mr A. Canin.

JACKSON'S HARDWARE STORE:

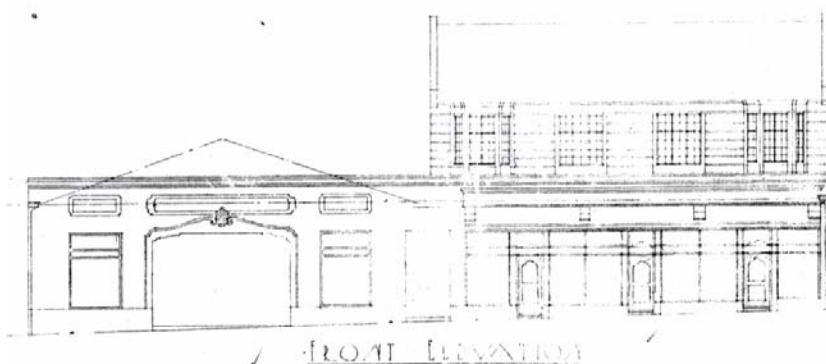
In 1920, approval was given for the erection of a wood and iron building (also to be used as a hardware shop) for Mr R. Jackson on the rear portion of Stand 1223 [139 Jeppe Street].

VACANT STAND:

The stand at 141 Jeppe Street appears still to have been vacant by the end of the 1920s.

HISTORY:

The existing building was developed in phases, starting in 1929 with the construction (and completion in 1930) for Messrs Gold, Canin and Jackson, of a single storey hipped roofed brick building (shown as a Garage, i.e. a motor repair shop on the original drawings) on Stand 1223. The 1918 hardware shop was incorporated into this building. The design of the main façade



and main entrance (also for vehicles) in Jeppe Street (see copy below of South Elevation of the Building: extract from original municipal submission drawings by J.C. Cook & Cowen) was conspicuously ornamental considering the intended use of this building.

On the adjoining stand at 141 Jeppe Street since 1930 stood a double storey brick building comprising three elongated shops on Ground Floor and two interconnected First Floor showrooms. Noteworthy elements of this building were its cantilevered canopy, cornice, gable ends, as well as two large bay windows on First Floor. A prominent coping extended over the full length of the buildings' combined frontage.

In January 1930, permission was given for the installation of firstly, two underground fuel tanks inside the building (then shown on the relevant municipal submission plans as being the premise of Kenneth Corder's Garage) at 139 Jeppe Street, as well as two kerbside fuel pumps inside the building line, flanking the vehicle entrance to the building.

In 1934, an application was submitted by The Shell Company of SA Ltd. on behalf of Messrs Edward and Ruben Rose for permission to install an additional Shell underground fuel tank and kerbside pump at the premises at 139 Jeppe Street, then known as Rose's Central Garage. See copy right of sketch of kerbside pump submitted as part of the application.

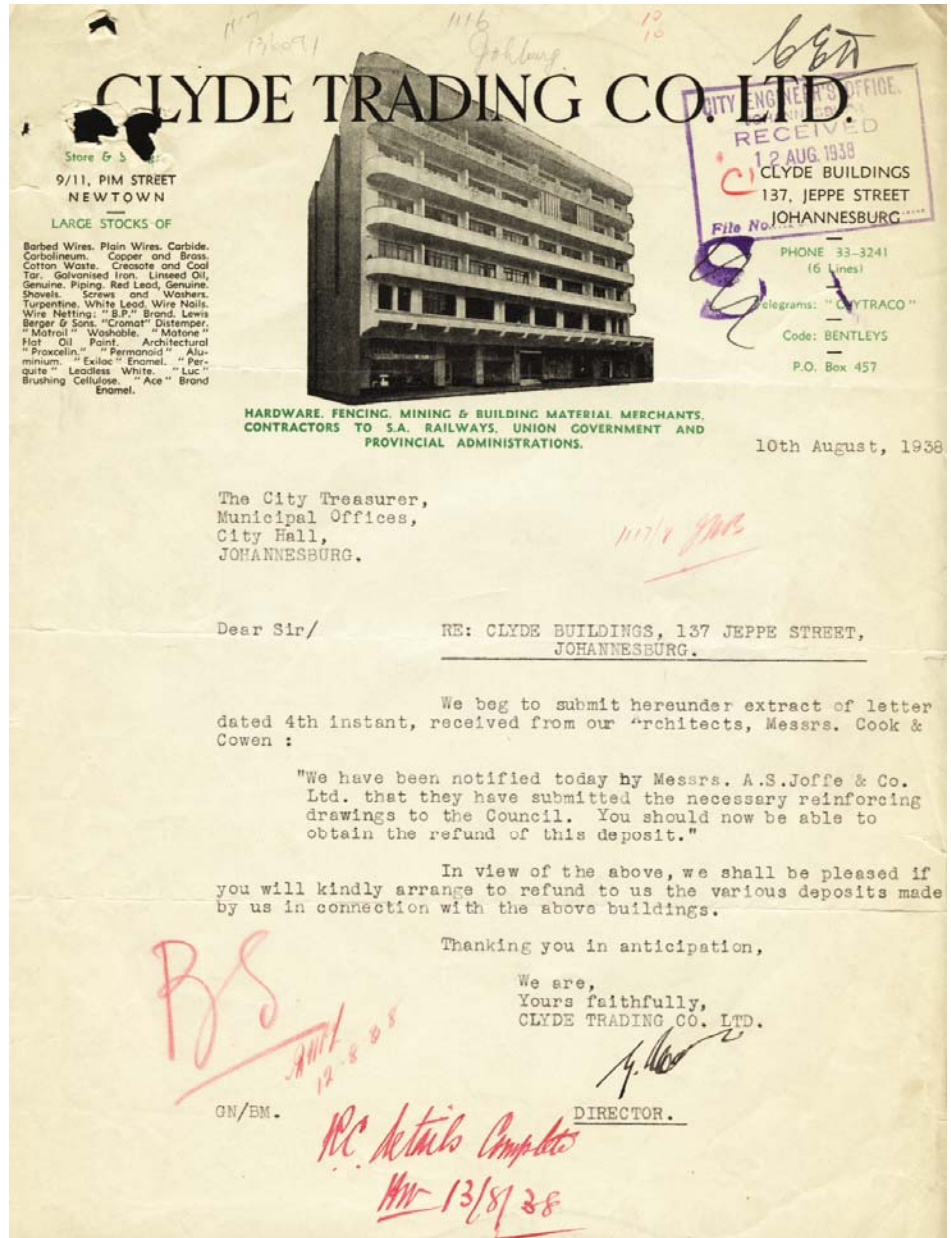


In 1936, the architects J.C. Cook & Cowen were commissioned by the new owners Mercury Buildings (Pty) Ltd to attend to the conversion of the Garage to a shop with new ground floor and shop front. Later during the same year, J.C. Cook & Cowen submitted an application and associated submission drawings to the Council on behalf of Mercury Buildings (Pty) Ltd (also Clyde Trading Co. Ltd.) for the conversion of the existing buildings at 139 and 141 into a five-storey shops and apartment building. The First Floor of the building accommodated four large Show Room areas that were accessed from the stairs and a lift located in the centre of the building. Flanking the Stair Hall and Lift Lobby on an East-West axis were two large

roof lights to the First Floor shops areas of the building. The remaining floors (i.e. three floors) of the building comprised separate apartments, each with a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom/toilet. The floors of the bedrooms and living rooms were of Oregon Pine. Council approval was given late in 1937 for the construction of an additional floor, which was completed in 1938. A Squash Court (with hipped roof and roof lights) was also constructed at the time on the northeast section of the flat concrete roof of the building.

Evident throughout in the development of the Clyde Building was the practice of racial segregation. This is illustrated *inter alia*, by the separate toilet facilities provided for "Natives" in the free-standing outbuildings at the rear of the 1937 additions.

On the right is a copy of a letter dated 10 August 1938 from the owners Clyde Trading Co. Ltd. (Hardware, Fencing, Mining and Building Material Merchants) to the City Treasurer, showing the Clyde Building at the time of its completion during 1938. It is interesting to note that the firm had a store (at 9-11 Pim Street), as well as a private railway siding in Newtown.



GENERAL NOTES:

1930 Buildings:
 Estimated cost of building : £600
 Estimated cost of drainage : £150
 Accommodation approved :
 Valuation at completion : £9 075 (16 September 1930)

1937 Additions:

Estimated cost of building : £20 000
Estimated cost of drainage : £720
Accommodation approved : 72 "Europeans and 16 "Natives"
Valuation at completion : £42 000 (additions)

Fifth Floor addition (1938):

Estimated cost of building : £7 200
Estimated cost of drainage : £360
Accommodation approved : 24 "Europeans"
Valuation at completion:

Occupied : yes

CURRENT TENANT/S:

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.

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:

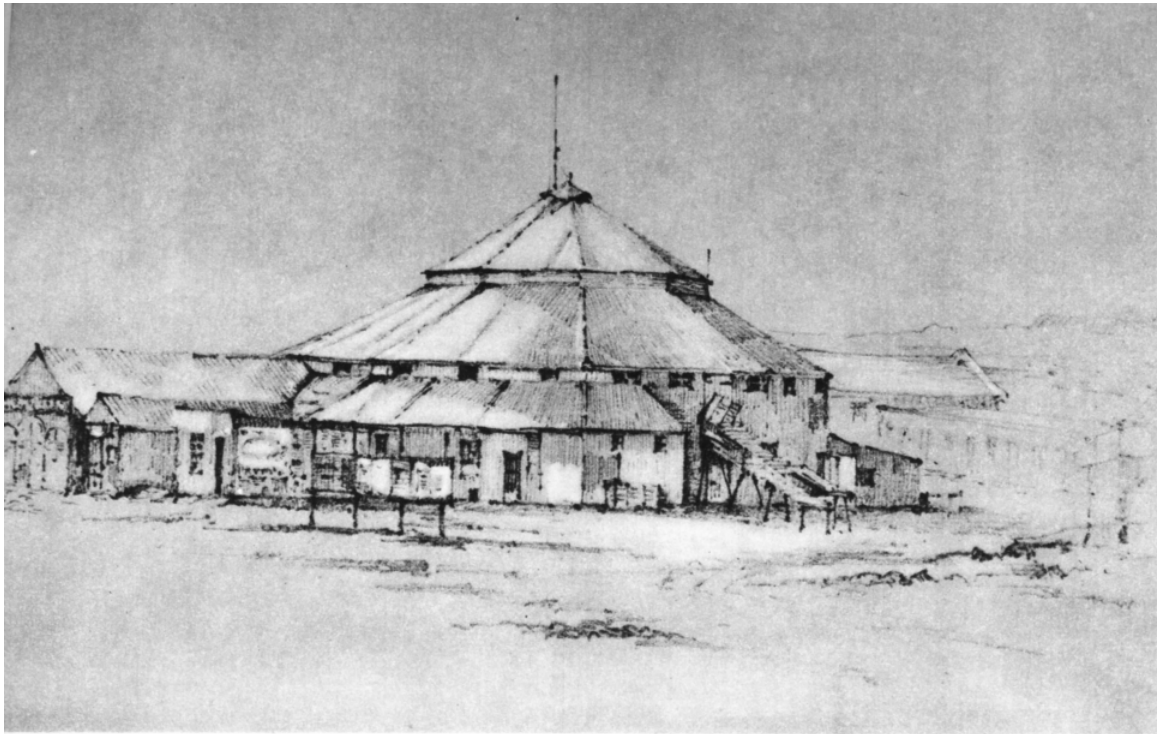
- Example of industrial, technical or engineering development/achievement
- New, rare or experimental building techniques

RECORDED BY:

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

FILLIS' AMPHITHEATRE:

Below: (Smith, A.H.: Pictorial History of Johannesburg...).



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It is noted in *Payable Gold* that Fillis' Circus gave the first professional performance in Ferreira's Camp about the middle of September 1886. The *Transvaal Mining Argus* on 21 September 1887 records that on 24 August 1887 Fillis' Circus opened on Marshalls' Square for a fortnight, and that "the support tendered surpassed the utmost expectations; and led to a scheme for the erection of a permanent Circus building, which will shortly be started upon". The *General Directory of Johannesburg* (of which the preface is dated 31 January 1890) contains a picture of this building not very different from that depicted in this pencil drawing by H. Clayton, dated 17.11.90. It is stated that this

building was erected by W. J. Symons at a cost of £8,000 and was situated in Bree Street on the site partly occupied by Paddy's Market.

For more information on *Fillis Circus*, see Pre-History: AI-1.

Below: advertisement of 1956 - Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years....

CLYDE TRADING
COMPANY LIMITED
(ESTABLISHED 1918)

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**MERCHANTS**  
AND  
STOCKISTS OF  
**BUILDING MATERIALS**

~~~~~

**HIGH GRADE STEELS - BUILDING
EQUIPMENT - SANITARY WARE**

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**CLYDE BUILDINGS - 137 JEPPE STREET**  
PHONE 23-8501  
BOX 457                      TEL. ADD.: "CLYTRACO"  
**JOHANNESBURG**

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Warehouses & Workshops:-

9-11 PIM STREET		JUNCTION ROAD
NEWTOWN		GERMISTON NORTH
BLOCK SIDING		SIDING No. 1715
		PHONE 51-5492

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Meat Centre

ROYAL
Meat Centre

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FATT'S BOTTLE STORE
TEL: 8338-4081/2

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48FLATS-4SHOPS
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082-902-6002

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KAY'S
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Alice Wear
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