

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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Cellphone: 082 325 5823

NAME OF PLACE: EMBASSY MANSIONS



Previous/alternative name/s : *Jaybee Buildings; Embassy Place*

LOCATION: Street : Bree
 Street number : 240
 Stand Number : 1/1255
 Previous Stand Number: by 1925 - 1017
 Block number : AR
 GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Height :
 Levels above street level : eight
 Levels below street level : one
 On-site parking :

A detailed architectural history of the building remains outstanding on account of the incompleteness of its plans record.



Top left and right: extracts from two different municipal submission drawings, showing the Bree Street elevation of the proposed building. Both drawings are dated March 1929. The drawing on the left was signed on 23 March 1929 and the one on the right, on 8 May 1929, by the City Engineer.. As no other elevation plan could be found, it remains difficult to confirm which of these elevation plans was eventually implemented.

The original owners first contemplated erecting a ten-storey building exceeding the 100 feet height restriction. James C. Cook, the architect placed the necessary advertisements in the Star (See GENERAL NOTES, letter 25th January 1929 and copy of newspaper clipping). The set of plans mentioned in the letter does however, not form part of the extant plans record of the building. Although these plans were submitted (their receipt on 19 January 1929 was acknowledged on the completed Application for Approval of Plans form), there is no indication that they were ever approved. See GENERAL NOTES for copies of letters dated 15 April and 4 May 1929). The design was abandoned, resulting in the development of new drawings, including elevation plans.

See INTEGRITY.

Basement: storage area.

Ground floor: large shop with stall board lights; separate entrance to residential floors with a generous vestibule; swing doors leading to a broad corridor and entrance hall, ending at a lift lobby (single lift) and stairs; the entrance to the rear of the building was located beyond the entrance hall in a narrow passage. Situated to the rear of the building was an ablution block with two W.C.s.

First floor: show room.

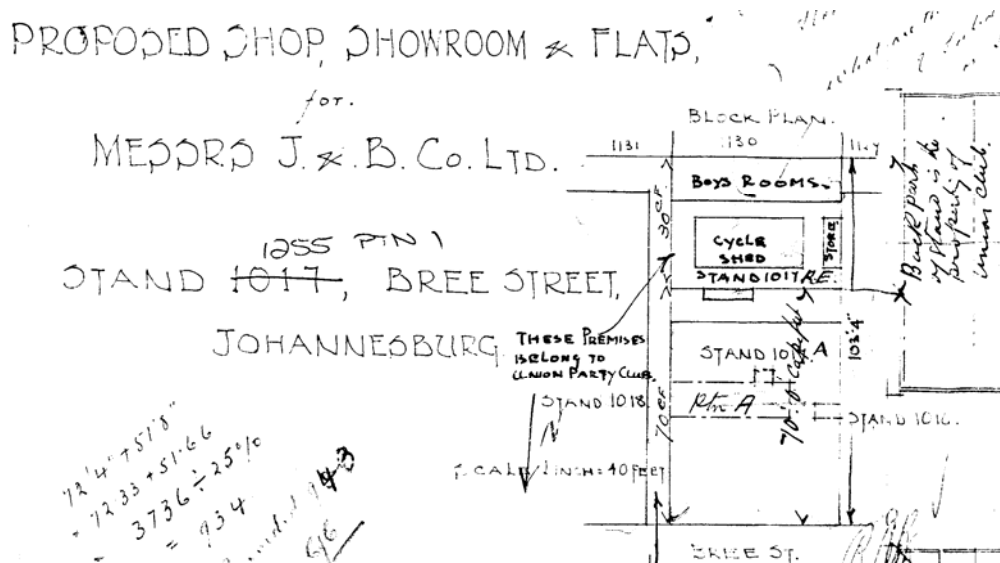
Second to sixth floor: residential area – four bachelor flats to front of building, two with bay windows and two with balconies; two bachelor flats to rear of building; Living Room, Bed recess all with wood floors, kitchen and bathroom with grano floors.

Roof: Motor Room; W.C. and shower; staff quarters and box room.

Below: extract from "Revised Plan of Cornice & Balcony" dated November 1929. Architects: J.C. Cook & Cowen, signed by John Shaw.



Below: extract from municipal submission plans (1929) showing the Block Plan to Bree Street, the back section formed part of the *Union Club Building*.



CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

- Walls: exterior and internal walls of hard-burnt brick.
- Roof: originally tiles and corrugated galvanized iron on king post with fink truss to main building, as well as queen post truss with tie beam in the west section of the building.
- Windows: steel frame with parliament hinges to all windows above ground level.
- Floors: granolithic finish to basement, ground and first floors; upper storeys unknown.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

Alterations and additions to the Basement, Ground and First Floor, these were converted to the *Embassy Club* for Messrs Landau Bros. See letter 30 November 1932.

Basement: converted to Dance Room; new wood stairs; new interior walls and new store.

Ground Floor: new recessed main entrance with three show cases; new Cloak Room with counter Flap and new steps; new office; new wood stair and turned baluster railing; doors to new positions; sections of floor removed; new Teak Kitchen with sink; new members Cloaks for gents.

First Floor: new partitioning; two large undesignated areas; one with a single general office with counter and brass grille and single private office.

Date on plan – November 1932; approved – 15 December 1932; estimated cost – building £400; drainage £25; architect – J G Carmichael (address 71-74 Winchester House, 2nd Floor, corner Loveday & Main Streets).

New interior partitioning to the First Floor for Jaybee Buildings (Pty) Ltd. This area now contains four small and one large Dance Studio; entrance lobby with corridor and Ladies Cloaks. Approved 28 January 1934; estimated cost – building £100.

Alterations for Nugget Piano Saloon: approved 20 September 1937; estimated cost – building £200; architects - J.C. Cook & Cowen.

It appears that major alterations and additions were carried out to the building between 1968 and 1970. The relevant municipal submission plans are missing. It is believed that these changes (see below) drastically affected the integrity of the building.

Approval of plans – 10 October 1968; estimated cost – building R7500; drainage R500; Authors A.R. Smith, Elk and Fisher.

Approval of plans – 16 April 1970; estimated cost – building R7000; drainage R1000; architect – S.J. Lees (address 211 Montrose House, 36 Pritchard Street).

INTEGRITY:

The removal of the gable roof to make way for an additional storey, as well as the removal of the balconies, ruined a once beautifully proportioned building. The building was left projecting a 'top-heavy' image – the result of the introduction of blatantly unsympathetic design elements. In an effort to 'modernize' the building, most of the original ornamentation was removed from the main façade, including the columns supporting the pavement hood.

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

J.C. Cook.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans	: March 1929
Approval of plans	: 8 July 1929
Phase One completion date	: 26 August 1929
Completion date	: 27 January 1931

BUILDING STYLE:

Johannesburg Late Modernist (1970s), i.e. subsequent to the alteration of the building during the latter part of the 1960s and early 1970s.

BUILDING TYPE:

Shop/s, club to street and residential building.

ENVIRONMENT:

“Thus, all buildings of this period were put up flush with the pavement and on a rectangular groundplan [sic]. Moreover, the economic interests of the individual were more important than the overall aspect, as was shown by the differentials of height and façade articulations of the buildings. The highly individualistic treatment of buildings was particularly disturbing in the case of tall buildings erected in a low-rise environment. Such buildings had unfinished lateral sides in which the light-coloured grid pattern of the reinforced concrete frame was in sharp contrast [sic.] to the filled-in unplastered red brick panels. These buildings not only betrayed a marked insensitivity to the visual aspect of the environment, but also highlighted the unilateral optimism of the owners (that other buildings constructed next door would soon make good the impairment of the general aspect) as well as their contempt for the historical building corpus of the city.” (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...). As shown by accompanying photograph, the *Embassy Place* is a typical example of Van Der Waal’s statement; this insensitivity is clearly visible on the lateral wall adjacent to the historical as well as architecturally important *Union Club Building* (see AR-5).

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: Messrs J & B Co. Ltd.
By 1932: J B Buildings Pty (Ltd).
By 1968: Jaybee Investment Pty (Ltd).
By 1970: SAMCO (Pty) Ltd.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

HISTORY:

GENERAL NOTES:

Estimated cost of building	: £21500
Estimated cost of drainage	: £500
Accommodation approved	: 60 ‘Europeans’ and four ‘Natives’
Phase One valuation	: £7000
Valuation at completion	: £23000
Occupied	: partially occupied

PREVIOUS TENANTS:

By 1937: Nugget Piano Saloon.

By 1954: Nugget Piano Saloon and Orpheum Club Billiard Saloon. The Orpheum Theatre was previously situated at corner 160, 162 Jeppe and 61 Joubert Streets - see Pre-History: AF-2.

By 1998: Solutions Business & Secretarial College.

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.

RECORDED BY:

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

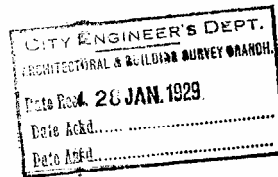
JAMES C. COOK
ARCHITECT,
PHONE 1220, ST. JOHANNESBURG.

NATIONAL MUTUAL BUILDING,
JOHANNESBURG,
POSTAL ADDRESS BOX 739, JOHANNESBURG.

AB/JCO.

25th January, 1929.

The City Engineer,
City Hall,
JOHANNESBURG.



Dear Sir, RE NEW BUILDING ON STAND 1017 JOHANNESBURG.

Herewith please find the cutting from the "Star" newspaper dated 17th December 1928, which is a copy of an advertisement inserted on three consecutive occasions in this paper.

I shall be much obliged if you will attach this advertisement to the plans already sent in for your approval.

Yours faithfully,

James C. Cook

A.B. 28/1/29
Mr. Micks
Please attach
28/1/29

A.E. ...
What is width of Bra St at this point please
B.S. 72-4
28/1/29
P.A. 10.2.29

72 1/3 x 1 2/3 = 20 feet

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that one month after the date hereof application will be made to the Council of the Municipality of Johannesburg for permission to erect a building on Stand Nos. 1017, Johannesburg Township, exceeding 100 feet in height. Any owner of adjoining property may inspect the plans of such proposed building at the offices of the Architect, James C. Cook, 33 National Mutual Buildings, corner Rissik and Market Streets, Johannesburg, any day between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Should any such owner have any objection to the height of the proposed building he shall lodge the same with the Town Engineer within one month of the date hereof.--J. & B (PTY.), LTD., R. JASPAN, Director, Owner of Proposed Buildings. Date, 17th December, 1928. 22409

CITY
Municipal Council
Municipale Raad



of Johannesburg.
van Johannesburg.

P.O. Box }
P.K. Bus } 1049.

Telephone: Telefoon:
Municipal Exchange
Municipale Oproepkantoor: No. 34.

Reference "C"—Referentie "C."

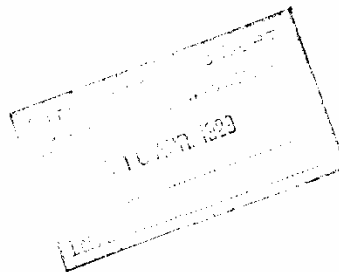
CITY
TOWN ENGINEER'S DEPARTMENT,
STADS INGENIEUR'S DEPARTEMENT.

Architectural and Building Survey Branch,
Arhitektonisch en Bouwopzicht Afdeling.

95, MUNICIPAL OFFICES,
95, MUNICIPALE KANTOREN.

16th April, 1929.

Messrs. J. & B. (Pty.), Ltd.,
c/o P. M. S. Dept.,
National Mutual Buildings,
Johannesburg.



Sir,

STAND 1017 ^{1255 P.N. 1} Johannesburg, TOWNSHIP.

With reference to the plans of the proposed building on the above property, and which were returned to you for alterations on the 15th ^{last} inst. I beg to inform you that it will be necessary for you to forward these plans to this Department with the amendment made thereon without any further delay.

Kindly give this matter your immediate attention.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
Cor. J. C. Cook,
TOWN ENGINEER.

JAMES C. COOK
ARCHITECT,
PHONE 17 CENT., JOHANNESBURG.

NATIONAL MUTUAL BUILDING,
JOHANNESBURG,
POSTAL ADDRESS BOX 739, JOHANNESBURG.

AB/JCC.

4th May, 1929.

The City Engineer,
City Hall,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Sir, RE MESSRS. J. & B. BUILDING.

With reference to the query on the plans that no pavement lights will be permitted to this building, I desire to bring to your notice these plans were submitted to your building department on the 17th January last for your approval. The plans had to be amended as my Clients abandoned the idea of a ten storey building.

Considering the date of our application for your approval I trust you will allow the pavement lights to go through seeing the Contract has been let and the pavement lights are an order.

Yours faithfully,

James C. Cook
B.C. Agreement in view of C. Co's objection in re Plans 1328/9 + 1434/5 Johannesburg "plans were in before the altered rule was made". In this case plans were in on 17/1/29 + rule was altered on 7/3/29. These are in Blue St. 15/5/29
Note No 19 on plans
app. sd 15/5/29

J. G. CARMICHAEL.

M.B.M., F.R.I.A.S., M.A.A.

ARCHITECT.

PHONE 33-5857.

RECEIVED
CITY ENGINEER'S DEPT.
71-74, WINCHESTER HOUSE,
2ND FLOOR,
COR. LOVEDEY & MAIN STS.,
JOHANNESBURG.
30th November, 1932.

City Engineer,
Building Survey Branch,
Room 95,
City Hall,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Sirs,

I lodged a plan on the 14th November last, with your branch, on behalf of Messrs. The Embassy Club, Stand 1017a, Johannesburg, the Owner being Messrs. Landsu Bros. (DSS PLAN)

I have had this plan returned with three objections. Objections Nos. 2 and 3 are minor and are now dealt with. Objection No. 1 appears to be more serious from your point of view.

The ground and 1st floors of this building, which is only about three years old, have been vacant for some time, and my client wish these aforementioned floors to be used as a club.

Your objection No. 1 says that (the premises now, if used as a club will require the open space specified in the Bye-Laws No. 99 for the Domestic Class). I submit to you that this club does not come under the Domestic Class and for that matter it is not defined or explained in any class, it is not a residence, and is only used by members in the evenings, no person sleeps on the premises, and it will be practically empty during the day. In your building Bye Laws, starting from page 1 to page 8, re Interpretation of Terms there is no interpretation of the meaning of the word "Club" anywhere within the Bye-Laws, and in my opinion it is unfair to object to a plan for which no ruling or guidance can be seen in the Bye-Laws by the Architect, therefore I am returning the plan with the amendments Nos. 2 and 3 dealt with and ask you to pass it. If you cannot, in your official capacity, I desire you to submit it to the works committee for them to approve of, and at the same time add the meaning of the word "Club" to the Interpretation of Terms of the building Bye-Laws, and so avoid future misunderstanding.

NR: [unclear]
11/30/11/32

Yours faithfully,

J. G. Carmichael.

17 8 2003





17 8 2003



17 8 2003



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IBIS

P
08:00-18:00

P
60 MIN
08:00-18:00

INVESTIG
SPECIALIST

ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE

SN

25 1 2004