

### 6.3.14. FNB Building.



Erf Number:	24460 (previously 746, 747).
Name:	First National Bank Building.
Architect:	Monte Sack.
Previous Names:	Colonial Bank Building, 1976 Western Bank Building and 1995 National Bank Building.
Approved / Existing Plans:	None.
Date of Construction:	1958 - 1960.
Architectural Style / Aesthetics :	Johannesburg Modular Regionalism - Pre Fabricated.
Historical Use:	Office.
Current Use:	Vacant.
Intended Use:	Office & possible ground floor retail.
Rarity or Technical interest:	None. The Edoardo Villa Panels at street level which have been vandalised beyond repair represented rare and conservation worthy artistic and technical merit. A section of these panels remains on the joint wall with the Volkskas Building.
Relationship to setting and place:	The excellent relationship between this building and the neighbouring Volkskas Building has been destroyed by addition of clumsy steel structure at roof height. All culturally significant aspects have been stripped / damaged beyond repair.

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Relationship to historical aspects:	Forms a built document of the development of Johannesburg in the latter part of the 20th Century.
Social Importance:	n/a.
Modifications:	The building has been vandalised and insensitively altered to the point of being unrecognisable from its original design.
Integrity of current Structure:	The structure has been stripped and severely vandalised.
Known lost aspects or changes made:	The Eduardo Villa Panels at street level which have been vandalised beyond repair represented rare and conservation worth artistic and technical merit. The excellent relationship between this building and neighbouring Absa Building has been destroyed by addition of clumsy steel structure at roof height.
Scientific or Research Potential:	Poor, all culturally significant aspects have been stripped / damaged beyond repair.
Other:	The building originally had a sculptural façade of deeply cut precast window panels with an ochre pigment contrasting with white marble facings in a narrow-width faggots on the columns and a white marble band on the column architrave. In addition, there was a white marble transom on the narrow-width shop-fronts, white onyx floor-tiles and wall panels at the entrance. Polished red granite occurs at the recessed skirtings and recessed capitals to the colonnade, an edging theme which continued at the red granite entrance steps and the imitation granite scoreboard risers, and which echoed the polished red granite on the historic Corner House complex opposite. The sculptural panels placed between the inter-columniations on the east pavement – terracotta in colour, with relief sculpture in faceted, triangular, pyramidal and wedge shape made up out of four or five basic mould forms re-arranged in endless permutations. This was the work of Eduardo Villa in his prime, and it formed an appropriate contrast to the crisp clean details of the marble-and-glass ground floor and an anticipation, too, of the upper-level modelling. Incidentally, those sculptured ground-floor patterns are the origin of hundreds of decorative relief panels that appeared on numerous Johannesburg buildings from the 1960s to the 1980s.
Protection:	No - structure is currently not more than 60 years old and therefore, not protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act.
2002 - 2015 Historical information:	Demolition proposed for 2002 Kopnong project. Granted by SAHRA. Apposed by public in 2005. Appeal upheld.
Significance:	The excellent relationship between this building and neighbouring Absa Building has been destroyed by addition of clumsy steel structure at roof height. All culturally significant aspects have been stripped / damaged beyond repair.
Section 3.3 of NHRA:	h - the other aspects have been lost.
Grading:	No cultural significance - grade to be confirmed following full heritage study
Current Condition - Exterior:	Poor.
Current Condition - Interior:	The interior is stripped, with no conservation worthy fabric remaining.
Recommendations - Exterior:	The exterior is stripped, only one small section of conservation worthy fabric remains - this is located on the edge where the building joins the Volkskas Building - a limited number of the Villa panels remain. These should be retained and incorporated into future proposed work.
Recommendations - Interior:	Interior does not warrant conservation.
NHRA Applications:	An application as per Section 34.1 of the NHRA is required if work is proposed to the building after 2018.

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##### Recommendations - Overall:

The building is currently severely vandalised, all aspects of significance have been compromised / destroyed. The building as a whole no longer merits conservation. The few remaining Eduardo Villa panels should remain (in-situ if possible) or be reused in a prominent position in the proposed new design. The height of the Volkskas building should be respected in the proposed new building. A heritage consultant should be employed to guide the design of the proposed new building or the redesign of the existing building façade. The proposed new building should take design queues from the Volkskas Building.

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Designed by the architect Monte Sack in 1960, First National Bank Building (former Colonial Bank Building) comprised ground floor entrance lobby, complete with Eduardo Villa relief panels, lobby mezzanine level, and an additional seven floors of office accommodation.

According to J. Bruwer in his 2002 - 2009 survey for City of Johannesburg, the following references to external finishes appear on the original plans:

*“(capping) faced in white terrazzo; pale blue terrazzo and adjustable glass louvres; bronze breast panels; white marble between ground and first floors; columns in pale blue terrazzo; tinted plate glass with adjustable louvres on the shop fronts (i.e. Market Street elevation); broken granite panels (i.e. Simmonds Street elevation). The Colonial Bank is a building that has a sculptural facade of deeply cut precast window panels with an ochre pigment; and elegant, closely spaced ground-floor colonnade on the pavement edge; a theme of white marble facings in a narrow-width faggots on the columns; and a white marble band on the column architrave forming a polished vertical surface for the freestanding name letters. In addition, there is a white marble transom on the narrow-width shop-fronts, white onyx floor-tiles and wall panels at the entrance. A sub-theme of polished red granite occurs on the recessed skirting’s and recessed capitals to the colonnade, an edging theme which continues at the red granite entrance steps and the imitation granite scoreboard risers, and which echoes the polished red granite on the historic Corner House complex opposite. There is a thread of slim anodised aluminium on the shop-fronts, and there are freestanding sculptural (roof) canopy panels placed between the inter-columniations on the east pavement – terracotta in colour, with*

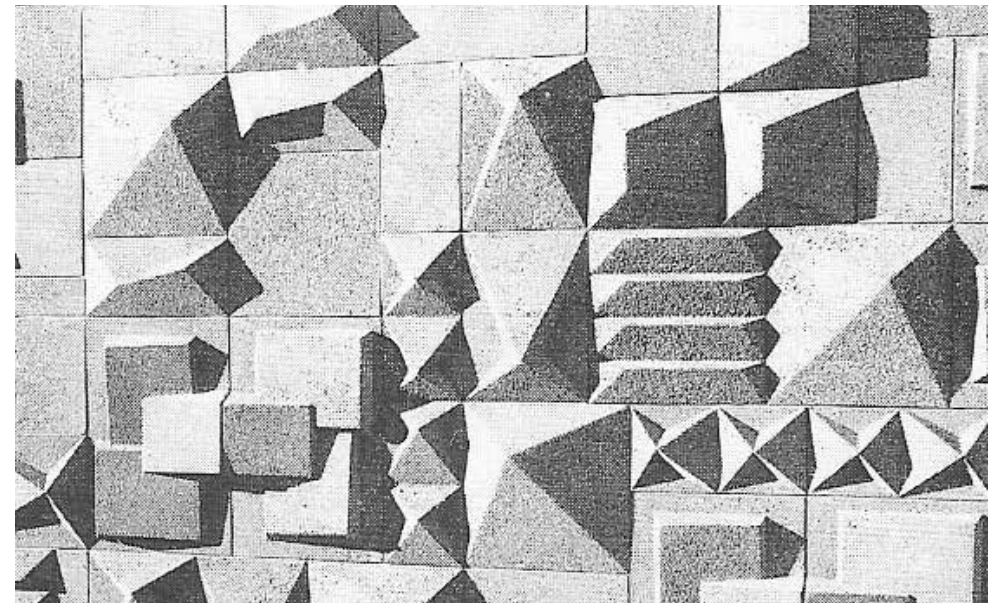
*relief sculpture in faceted, triangular, pyramidal and wedge shape made up out of four or five basic mould forms re-arranged in endless permutations. This was the work of Edoardo Villa in his prime, and it forms an appropriate contrast to the crisp clean details of the marble-and- glass ground floor and an anticipation, too, of the upper-level modelling. Incidentally, those sculptured ground-floor patterns are the origin of hundreds of decorative relief panels that would appear on scores of Johannesburg buildings over the next two decades.”<sup>61</sup>*

61. Bruwer, J.J (2009), First National Bank Building (D-2).





Historical image of facade - Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 313.



Historical image of Edoardo Villa panel - Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 313.



Historical image of Edoardo Villa panel - Bruwer, J.J (2009), First National Bank Building (D-2).





Historical image of building - Bruwer, J.J (2009), First National Bank Building (D-2).



Contemporary image - corner facade.

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





Contemporary image -remaining portion of Edoardo Villa panels.



Contemporary image -detail of steel structure on roof.



Contemporary image - bricked up Ground Floor.