

### 6.3.16. The (Fourth) Corner House.



Erf Number:	1151.
Name:	The (Fourth) Corner House.
Architect:	Kennedy, Furner, Irvine-Smith and Joubert.
Previous Names:	The New Corner House and Corner House.
Approved / Existing Plans:	None.
Date of Construction:	1965
Architectural Style / Aesthetics :	Johannesburg Late Modernist.
Historical Use:	Offices.
Current Use:	Offices.
Intended Use:	Offices.
Rarity or Technical interest:	Fair example of Johannesburg Late Modernist.
Relationship to setting and place:	The building is set back from the street and has no direct relationship with the surrounding buildings.
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.

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Modifications:	The building exterior survives largely in-tact.
Integrity of current Structure:	Structure survives in relatively in-tact condition.
Known lost aspects or changes made:	None.
Scientific or Research Potential:	Fair example of Johannesburg Late Modernist.
Other:	None.
Protection:	None.
2002 - 2015 Historical information:	Part of Koponong Project since 2002.
Significance:	Fair example of Johannesburg Late Modernist Architecture.
Section 3.3 of NHRA:	a, d, e, f, and g.
Grading:	Culturally Significant - grade to be confirmed following full heritage study.
Current Condition - Exterior:	Fair.
Current Condition - Interior:	The interior is stripped, with no conservation worthy fabric remaining.
Recommendations - Exterior:	The façade appears to be in a fair condition and should be retained and restored.
Recommendations - Interior:	Interior does not warrant conservation.
NHRA Applications:	None - currently the building is not 60 years old.
Recommendations - Overall:	The building should be retained and its modernist facades restored. The gold sculpture should be reinstated.

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Corner House was designed in 1965 by E. W. N. Mallows and Kennedy, Furner, Irvine-Smith and Joubert. *“Factors which influence the design of this playful mid 1960s tower block were, “freedom from noise, good lighting, ventilation; a considerable degree of movement from the building to external destinations, chiefly the Chamber of Mines and the actual mines of the group, and finally a fair degree of continual rearrangement of offices to suit changing needs.”*<sup>62</sup>

The building is orientated around a central service core, surrounded by a flat open office plate - adaptable to changing organisational function. The open-plan spaces could be easily reconfigured to suit the requirements for open plan or cellular type offices, using demountable partitioning. The configuration of the floor plates around a central core led to the rectangular tower form of the Corner House building. The Modernist type trellis at the setback penthouse floor contributed to the Brazilian modernist aesthetic of the building, providing an elegant transition of building to sky.

The structural grid is designed on alternating beam spans, resulting in a play between narrow and wide windows on the building facade. This gives the building *“a richer, more characterful elevation than does the equal-spaced module’ which can be monotonous.”*<sup>63</sup>

The seventeenth floor penthouse accommodated the board of directors, consisting of a board room, waiting room, director’s dining room, private kitchen, conference room and a reception foyer. The penthouse floor was oriented south, with a view to the Rand Mines.

The set back of the tower from the surrounding streets provided a plaza type space for ground level fountains, paving and greenery. A covered porte-cochere to the entrance lobby could accommodate 10 motorcars in off street parking bays.

62. Bruwer, JJ. (2009) The (Fourth) Corner House (BA-3).

63. SAAR May 1965, page 11.



Contemporary image - exterior facade.