

**JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM**

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

**NAME OF PLACE:** 'Grand Hotel - H Baker'



Jhb Metro - Cool Factory



Jhb Metro - Cool Factory

**Previous/alternative name/s :**

**LOCATION:** Street : Diagonal  
Street number : 12, 14  
Stand number : 324, 325 (originally 518, 519)  
Block number : N

**LOCATION:** Street : President  
Street number : 36, 38  
Stand number : 326, 327 (originally 520, 521)  
Block number : N

**ZONING:** Current use/s : General  
Previous use/s :

## DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Based on available information the building originally consisted of a single storey building and basement on part of Stand Nos. 324 and 325. The plans of this building show the ground floor with three shops (shops one, two and three) connected by means of arched doorways; trapdoors leading to basement storerooms; basement level with two fruit storage rooms (shops two and three) and stairs to two shops. Gable with distinctive coping and cornice on shop front.

On plan : 10 October 1925  
Architect : M.J. Harris

Walls : stocks burnt best, plastered.

Roof : sloped, corrugated iron.

Doors : double wood panelled.

Floors : reinforced-concrete, rough finished.

Windows: shop front openings covered with wire mesh and removable shutters (no glazing).

Foundation: concrete.

This information should be read based on the understanding that not all of the original plans could be found. This also applies to documentation in respect of new buildings and alterations /additions to the buildings.

Above-mentioned building converted to double storey building and connected to existing double storey corner building: Six rooms; corridor four foot six inches wide; new covered front balcony with ornamental verandah posts and brackets with richly patterned cast iron railing and handrail; back balcony with verandah iron posts and brackets with brick wall; new dog-leg stair at back of building; pitched corrugated iron roof. On same set of plans minor internal alterations were proposed to the existing corner building. Estimated cost £2,060 adding £1,600 to value of existing building. Accommodation for 18 'Europeans' were approved.

On plan : 3 December 1926  
Plans passed : 31 January 1927  
Completed : 7 February 1928  
Architect : M.J. Harris



On Stand No. 324 (Diagonal Street) the existing buildings were demolished and a new double storey buildings were erected:

Ground floor: five new shops (shops four, five, six, seven and eight); trapdoors leading to basement level with fruit storage rooms (shops four, five and six); basement level with fruit storage rooms and stairs to shops.

First floor: two flats each consisting of a back porch, lounge hall, single room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom.

To back of building new double storey building with single rooms; quarter-turn stair to side of building.

Pitched corrugated iron roof with open areas and chimneys.

Cantilevered balcony to front of building.

Windows and doors to match existing building.

On part of new building and the rear of existing buildings, verandah and balcony with cement columns. On same set of plans shop one altered to become new main arched entrance way with pilasters to building. The four existing rooms were converted to flats with same description as above-mentioned building.

Above the entrance on the roof, a stepped pediment gable with arched ventilator, an ornamental tower with dome and finial; at rear of building balcony roof with pediment.

On plan : 7 and 12 July 1927  
Architect : M.J. Harris

On Stand No. 326 (President Street) the existing building was demolished and a new double storey building was erected; this building, including its entrance and tower, is a carbon copy of the existing building on Stand No. 324 (Diagonal Street). The existing double storeyed rear rooms and ablution block remained; new staircase leading to balcony on ablution block. The front and rear verandah as well as the balcony were extended to connect to all existing buildings and new building.

Note: stairs were added to all new and existing shops at rear; shops two to eight are now shops 16 to 21; the existing double storey corner building, construction date and architect unknown, had five shops, four small and one large shop. These shops are numbered eight to 15. On same set of plans the large shop was divided into four shops (shops 10 to 13); new shop fronts; ground floor with trapdoor; new basement levels with storage rooms and stairs leading to trapdoor; new dog-leg stair leading to balcony at rear of shops.

On front and rear part of new building and the full rear of existing out buildings (these were upgraded): verandah and balcony with cement columns (to match existing). Estimated cost £4 700. Accommodation for 12 'Europeans' was approved.

On same set of plans new drainage to all existing buildings were approved.

On plan : December 1927  
Plans passed : 28 May 1928  
Architect : M.J. Harris



New addition to existing building on Stand Nos. 326 and 327 (President Street): interior of first floor altered; new kitchens; bathrooms converted to rooms; : three new flats (on first floor) added to back of existing buildings, connected by back verandah of existing building.

Corner Stand No. 325: two new communal bathrooms, six toilets (on first floor) and dog-leg stairs to back of building. Estimated cost £3,600 adding £3,200 to value of existing building. Accommodation for 22 'Europeans' was approved. Plans for ground floor not on record. On same set of plan minor alterations to existing building.

On plan : October 1928  
Plans passed : 24 January 1929  
Completed : 26 August 1929  
Architect : James C. Cook (signed by Maurice Cowan)

New addition at rear of existing building and external alterations to existing building on corner Stand No. 325: new stores with grano floors, stairs, rubbish box and suspended concrete platform on ground floor; existing rubbish box removed; entire yard covered with concrete; walls plastered internally and external face brickwork to match existing; stairs and floors in red grano. Estimated cost £550 adding £500 to value of existing building.

On plan : no date  
Plans passed : 6 April 1940  
Completed : 8 November 1940  
Architect : Ralph Green & Hermer

## **CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

See DESCRIPTION OF PLACE.

## **SITE FEATURES:**

### **ALTERATIONS:**

Revised plans for shops (section of roof replaced) and proposed rearrangement to enable cross-ventilations of shops.

On plan : 16 August 1927  
Architect : M.J. Harris

Internal alterations to existing shop on corner Stand No. 518 (facing President Street); doorway bricked up, removal of partitions, new fittings and new window on exterior to back of building (tenant – *Bhowan Bros*). Estimated cost £50.

Plans passed : 31 January 1927  
Completed : 30 June 1949

Internal alterations to shops on Stand Nos. 324 and 325: new hand washbasins; drainage and brick walls. Estimated cost £150.

Plans passed : 30 May 1951  
Architect : F.C. Meeser

New hand washbasin and drainage to shop of Mr Suggan Morar on Stand No. 325. Estimated cost £30.

Plans passed : 16 November 1951  
Completed : 21 January 1953  
Architect : F.C. Meeser

New hand washbasin (on podium with stairs) and drainage to fruit shop of Mr Galal Nowan on Stand No. 327. Estimated cost £50. Two 'Non-European' males to be employed.

Plans passed : 21 October 1953  
Completed : 3 June 1954

New hand washbasins and drainage to shops on Stand Nos. 326 and 325. Estimated cost £60.

Plans passed : 18 February 1954  
Completed : 30 October 1955

New ablution block and drainage with four toilets (for male use only) in yard of Stand No. 327. Single storey brick and corrugated iron sloped roof structure. Estimated cost £170 adding £120 to value of existing building.

Plans passed : 30 March 1955  
Completed : 5 August 1955

New hand washbasins and drainage to grocer shop on Stand No. 325 (Diagonal Street). Estimated cost £7.

Plans passed : 3 August 1955

Internal alterations to shops on corner Stand No. 325: internal wall between two shops (one on each corner) demolished; new wire mesh, wood and glass partitions for office with sliding door; mezzanine (for storage only) with ladder; new fanlight on existing door; internal partitions removed; to the fruit shop of Messrs M.G. Patel. Note on plan "to comply with Health Dept requirements". Estimated cost £40.

Plans passed : 22 October 1958

Internal alterations to shop on Stand No. 327 for B. Raina Esq (Soft Store); new mezzanine floor with cat ladder; new single board and glass partitions. Estimated cost £220.

On plan : 22 June 1958

Plans passed : 7 July 1959  
Architect : Bernard Janks & Partners

Hood (canopy) over doorway (on corner of corner Stand No. 325) for Mr C. Morar: "all construction to be in steel". Estimated cost R400.

On plan : no date  
Plans passed : 22 April 1966  
Architect : Leslie Simon



#### **INTEGRITY:**

The façade of the buildings was drastically altered with the removal of the original cantilevered canopy and verandah (on President Street); this was replaced with a colonnaded canopy and verandah prior to 1955. By 1967, the front balcony canopies, posts and brackets as well as the cast-iron railing on President and Diagonal Streets had also been removed. No plans of any of these alterations could be found. Considering the unsympathetic nature of these

changes, it might even be doubtful as to whether plans were in fact ever submitted. See GENERAL NOTES.

It also remains doubtful whether the interesting and richly embellished gables and towers with domes and finials, as shown on the early plans (above the entrances on President and Diagonal Streets) were ever constructed.

What remains of the corner gable is a 'sad memory' only of what this gable used to look like.

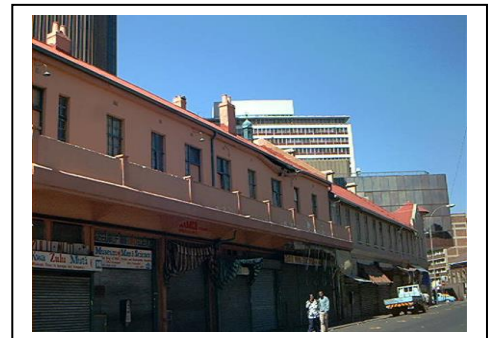
#### **INSCRIPTION:**

See DESCRIPTION OF PLACE.

#### **ARCHITECT/BUILDER:**

Architect : M.J. Harris

See also DESCRIPTION OF PLACE.



#### **CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

On plan : 10 October 1925

See also DESCRIPTION OF PLACE.

#### **BUILDING STYLE:**

Victoria / Edwardian

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Shops and residential building.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

The building forms an integral part of the proposed Diagonal Street heritage area and its contextual importance is there for obvious.



**CONDITION:**

This building complex is not in the best of conditions and it is evident that very little if any attention has been paid in recent times to the maintenance of the building. Urgent work is required to arrest the deterioration of various aspects of the historic fabric, e.g. damaged fascias, gutters and

down pipes, roofs.



**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: Mr H. Baker  
By October 1928: Mr H. Green & S & G Pty Ltd  
By 1954: President Trust

T15724/1983 Santosh Investment Holdings Pty Ltd

### PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

Stand No. 324: By 1926 a single storey buildings stood on this stand; October 1926 part of new building on undeveloped section of stand.

Stand No. 325: By October 1926 new building replacing shops to be demolished on portion of this stand; on remaining section a double storey building.

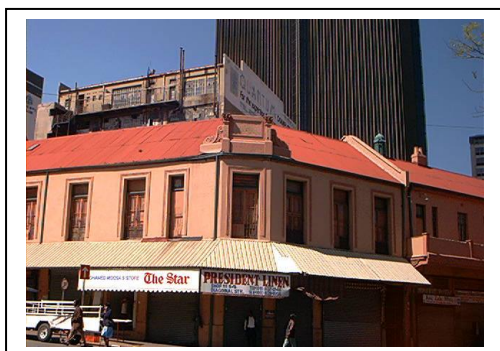
Stand Nos. 326, 327 : By December 1926, plans were drawn to replace main building on these stands. The ablution block and row of double storey buildings in the yard remained.

## HISTORY:

### GENERAL NOTES:

#### Stand No. 324:

"Quaint vents in roof & very picturesque. Shops on street level with colourful awnings. It closely resembles the adjacent & opposite buildings & would greatly benefit from the restoration of its original cast iron verandah. Probably originally a Victorian verandah building but cast-iron has been replaced by brick which completely alters the style." (NMC statement, 1988)



disappeared.

#### Stand Nos. 326, 327:

#### Stand No. 325:

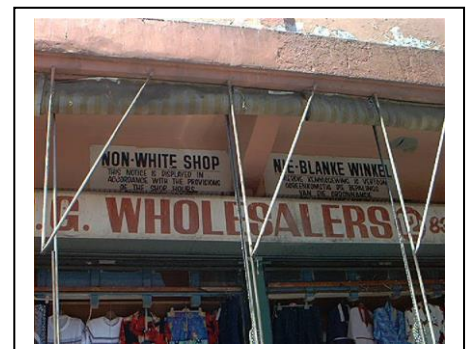
"Originally a beautiful Victorian Building with lovely cast-iron verandah. Interesting decorative gable with 'H. Baker' inscription remains...building remains but verandah is missing making the building non-descript." (NMC statement, 1988)

The above-mentioned winged gable was not shown on the original plans nor any following plans for additions / alterations, and sadly the lettering 'H. Baker' has also

"Present heavy balcony alters the appearance significantly. It probably would have resembled 314 in the following block. Is of the style & period of numerous highly characteristic buildings of this era, but the balcony gives it a misleadingly 40's look." (NMC comment, 1988)

By 1928, H. Green Esq and S & G (Pty) Ltd, the owners of this property also owned the properties next door i.e. the Rosenberg's Building (Stand No. 317).

Reporter Sally Dewar in The Sunday Star – 'Timeout' of 10 April 1988, reported as follows on her visit to the Diagonal Street precinct : "It is vibrant and alive, and colourful, peopled by a hotchpotch of many races, religions and cultures to whom Diagonal Street is a way of life: nothing special, just a few rows of shops that they and their fathers have always patronised for their daily needs...I spent some time there. I wondered down Diagonal Street...then back along Kort Street, dodging the stacks of tin trunks and pyramids of saucepans spilling out from doors of overstocked shops, stepping round neat piles of fruit on wooden trestles...In most of these little shops which sell just about everything, the precaution is with health. In the northern suburbs they have their health shops; here they have all the traditional remedies of the black culture, with a smattering of the old Afrikaans, and a little of the Oriental thrown in too...Over all hangs an aura of incense, which is sold in most shops and burns in many... Kitchenware comes high on the list, from small gadgets to great sets of enamelled or aluminium saucepans...I felt a flutter of anticipation as I walked into the cool depths of a shop stocked from floor to ceiling with bolts of cotton cloth – mostly African prints...I pass time in a wholesale and retail merchant's shop, in which the scene must be familiar to travellers from Hong Kong, Cairo...or Mombassa – wherever Asians ply their trade."



#### **SOURCES:**

NMC File 3/1/3/Joh/111 : App. Diagonal Street Conservation Area Johannesburg (including colour photograph)

City Engineering Department, Stand Nos. 324, 325, 326, 327, Township Johannesburg (Planning Dept., City of Johannesburg)

Registrar of Deeds, Johannesburg

#### **RECORDED BY:**

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Photographs by Chris JH Coxen (unless otherwise indicated).

#### **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