

6.3.5. S.A. Permanent.



Erf Number:	4672 (previously 209 - 211).
Name:	S. A. Permanent.
Architect:	Stucke, Harrison & Smail.
Previous Names:	1976 - S.A. Permanent Building; 1993 - S. A. Permanent Mutual Building; also called Peoples Bank Building.
Approved / Existing Plans:	None.
Date of Construction:	1939
Architectural Style / Aesthetics :	Art Deco - Exhibition Style
Historical Use:	Office.
Current Use:	Office.
Intended Use:	Office.
Rarity or Technical interest:	Good example of Art Deco - Exhibition Style within Johannesburg.
Relationship to setting and place:	Forms part of a cohesive grouping of buildings of similar scale and mass within the city block.
Relationship to historical aspects:	Forms a built document of the development of Johannesburg between the 1st and 2nd world wars.
Social Importance:	n/a.

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Modifications:	Numerous alterations have been affected over the years, predominantly by the same architectural firm.
Integrity of current Structure:	Structure survives in relatively in-tact condition, with the exception of the ground and first floor podium which retains no resemblance to the original design.
Known lost aspects or changes made:	The ground floor podium was severely and unsympathetically altered, probably circa 1970 or circa 1980. The original double volume banking hall with corner entrance was also removed at this time.
Scientific or Research Potential:	Good example of Art Deco - Exhibition Style within Johannesburg. The curved steel windows on the corners remain.
Other:	The building was designed by a prominent Johannesburg architectural firm.
Protection:	Yes - structure is more than 60 years old and protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act.
2002 - 2015 Historical information:	Demolition proposed for 2002 Kopnong project. Granted by SAHRA. Appealed by public in 2005. Appeal declined.
Significance:	Forms part of a cohesive collection of Art Deco buildings of a similar height, style and age along the Commissioner Street corridor.
Section 3.3 of NHRA:	a; d; e; f; g & h.
Grading:	Culturally Significant - grade to be confirmed following full heritage study.
Current Condition - Exterior:	Fair.
Current Condition - Interior:	Fair.
Recommendations - Exterior:	The fine Art Deco facades of the building form part of the historic fabric of Commissioner Street and should be retained and restored. The original steel window sections, complete with curved glass corners are unusual in Johannesburg and should be retained and conserved. See marked up façade image.
Recommendations - Interior:	Interior fit out is low grade contemporary office, not worthy of retention.
NHRA Applications:	An application as per Section 34.1 of the NHRA is required.
Recommendations - Overall:	The exterior architecture and facades of this building should be conserved and restored, the interiors are largely stripped and offer little in terms of cultural significance, conservation worthy fabric or provenance. The ground floor and mezzanine levels are not original and can be modified. A heritage consultant must be employed in collaboration with the architect to determine the design of and proposed changes to the ground floor and mezzanine levels. There is an opportunity to reinstate the original banking hall to form the main entry point to a new super block. The roofline of the building needs to be respected. No additional bulk is permitted. No retail is permitted.

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The SA Permanent Building Society is a good example of Art Deco / Streamline Modern architecture in Johannesburg. Built in 1939 by the firm of Stucke, Harrison & Smail, the building facade survives in fairly original condition (save insensitive alterations to the ground and mezzanine floor). It forms part of the collection of Art Deco buildings found along Commissioner Street. The finely proportioned external form of the building, elegant steel wrap around window bands with curved corner glazing and carefully articulated roof plane are all typical features of Art Deco architecture.

After the First World War, traditional steel frame building methods were rapidly replaced by reinforced concrete, which made the construction of taller buildings possible. While steel framed buildings were characterised by load bearing brick facades, concrete framed buildings could accommodate larger windows allowing more sunlight to penetrate into the large interiors. *“These new building facades were characterised by large areas of glazing and an ahistorical architecture, almost entirely stripped of classical ornamentation.”*⁴⁴

Designed to stand on a prominent corner, the SA Permanent Building Society building is a reinforced concrete frame structure with granite and terrazzo faced brick infill panels and steel frame ribbon windows with curved corner glazing panels. The building comprises a Basement, Ground Floor offices and double volume banking hall (now offices), with nine floors of office accommodation above and a flat concrete roof.

*“The building was designed to access the main banking hall and offices at ground floor, as well as the offices and upper part of the banking hall on the mezzanine floor, through the main entrance at the corner. It should be borne in mind that it was intended that the SA Permanent Mutual Building and Investment Society would merely occupy the ground and mezzanine floors. The entrance to the offices on the remaining floors of the building was at 73 Commissioner Street.”*⁴⁵

44. Bruwer, J. J. (2009), S. A. Permanent Bank Building (D-4).

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The SA Permanent Mutual when constructed had *“a curvilinear Mendelsohnian corner - but not on the ground floor, where the modernised classicism of the banking hall necessitated a rectangular shape and a Vierendeel truss to support the upper levels. The banking hall, with its high coffered ceiling, Art Deco column capitals and glasscrete saucer-dome, constituted a major public space for orderly financial and loan transactions and provided a metropolitan milieu for growing numbers of people entering the property-owning white middle class.”*⁴⁶

46. Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 140.



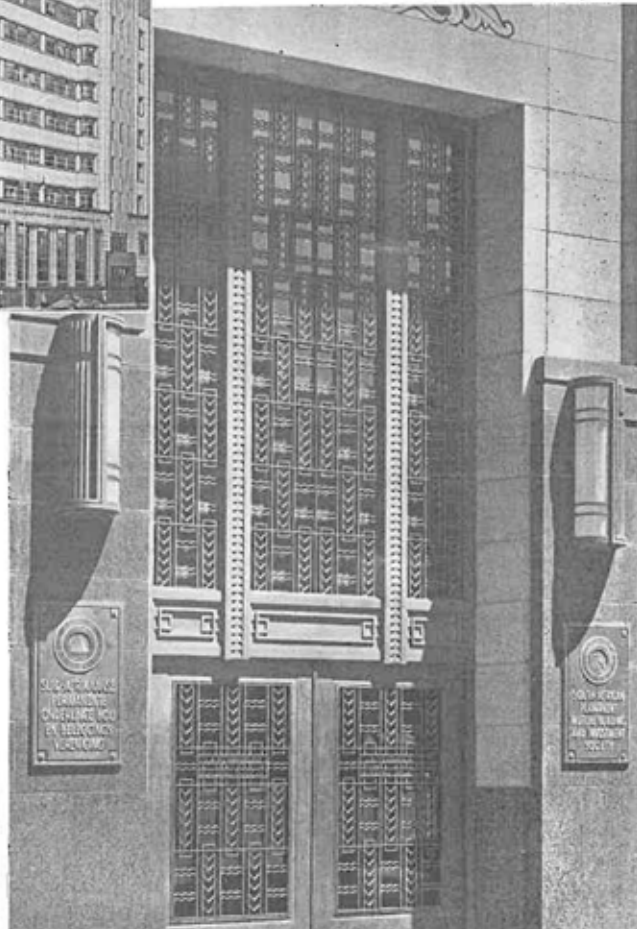
South African Permanent Mutual Building & Investment Society Johannesburg.

The whole of the Bronze Metal Grilles to the Main Entrance, Bronze Light Fittings and Name Panels flanking the Main Entrance, Facia Letters, Indicator Boards, etc., were fabricated in Johannesburg

by

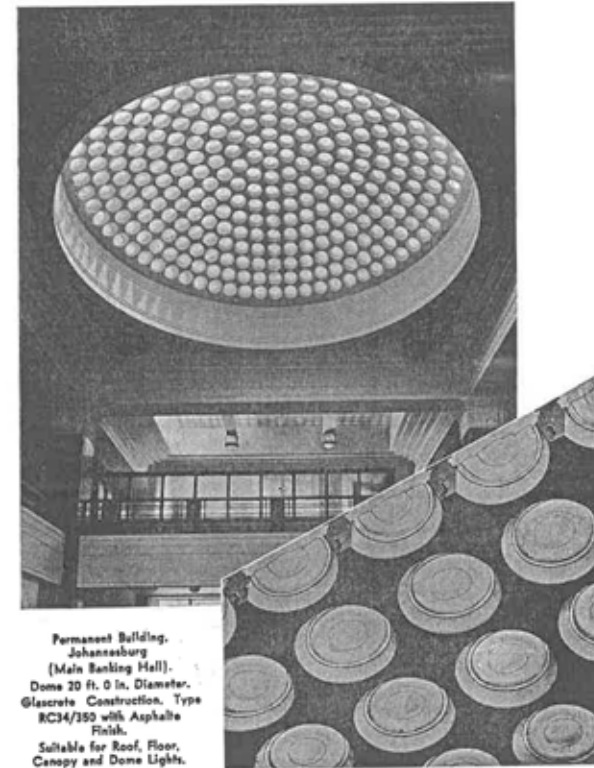
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SHOPFITTERS
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Manufacturers advertisement - S. A. Architectural Record (1941).

GLASCRETE



Permanent Building, Johannesburg (Main Banking Hall).
Dome 20 ft. 0 in. Diameter.
Glascrete Construction. Type RC34/350 with Asphaltic Finish.
Suitable for Roof, Floor, Canopy and Dome Lights.
A product of J. A. King & Co., Ltd. London.

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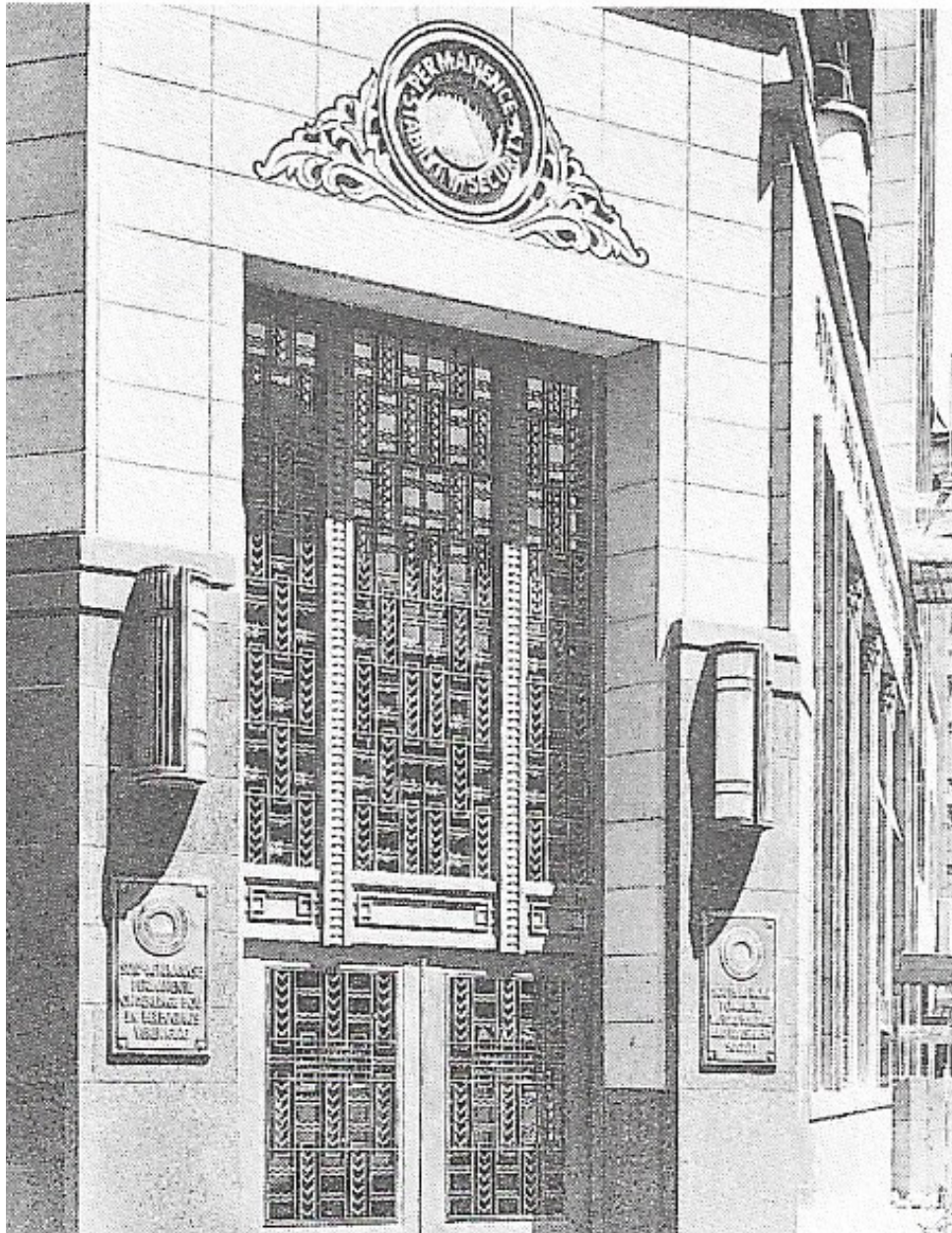
A. S. JOFFE & CO. (PTY.) LTD.
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P.O. Box 1225
Phone 20882.
22-34, Umgeni Road.

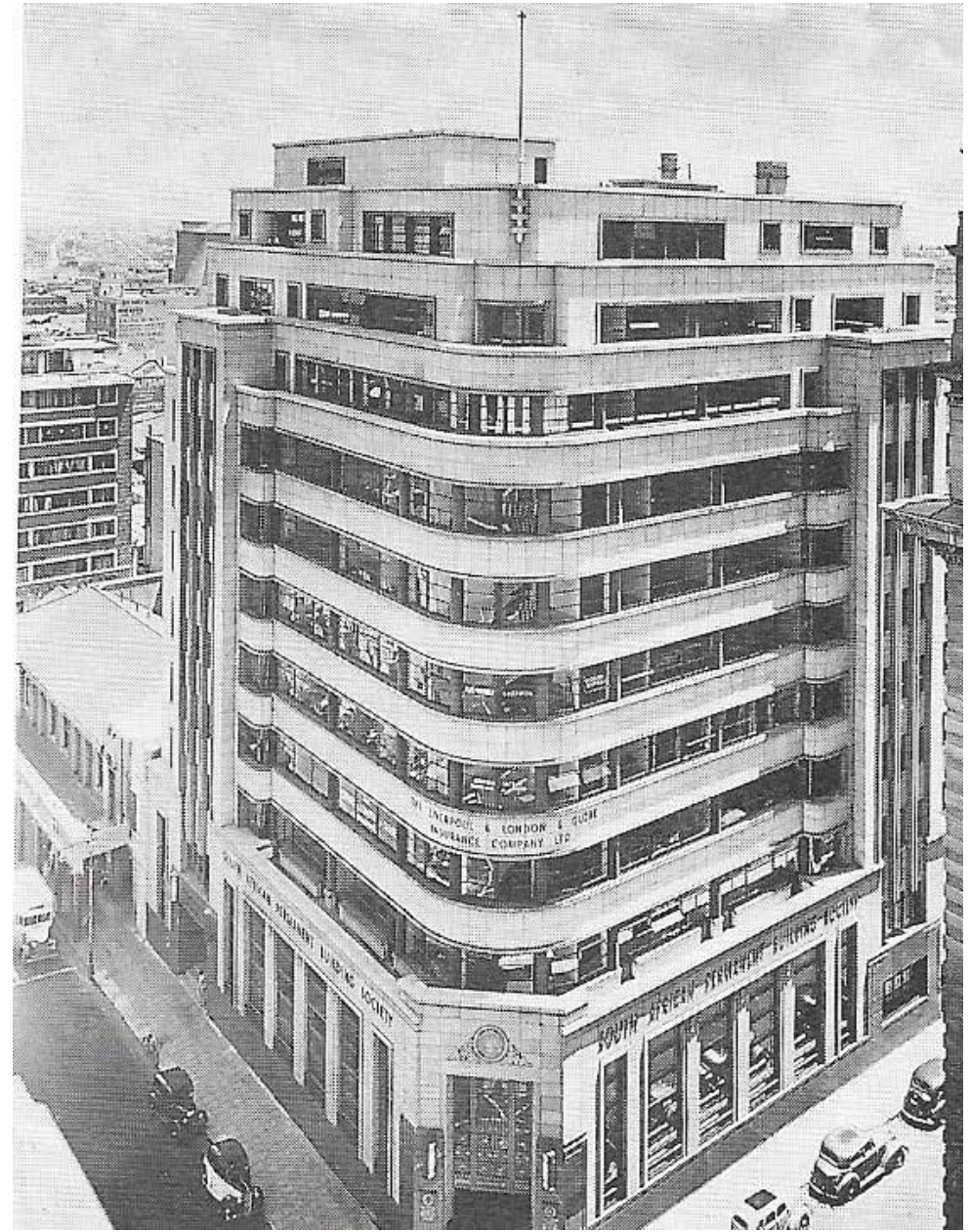
Johannesburg
P.O. Box 4147,
Phone 33-6294,
Winchester House.

Cape Town
P.O. Box 1693,
Phone 2-1276,
Geneva House.

Manufacturers advertisement - S. A. Architectural Record (1941).



Entrance doors to banking hall - Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 140.



Corner facade of building not original ground and mezzanine floor elevations. - Chipkin, C. M. (1993), page 141.



Contemporary image - corner facade of building.



Contemporary image - detail of rounded corner window and Art Deco fins.

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