

### 6.3.2. South African Reserve Bank (SARB).



Erf Number:	25 and 26.
Name:	S.A.R.B House.
Architect:	J.C.Cook and Cowen.
Previous Names:	1934 - Transvaal House; 1951 - Eagle Star House; 1961 - J.I.C. House; 1976 S.A.R.B. House.
Approved / Existing Plans:	None.
Date of Construction:	1934
Architectural Style / Aesthetics :	Art Deco - Exhibition Style.
Historical Use:	Office.
Current Use:	Vacant.
Intended Use:	Office & possible ground floor parking.
Rarity or Technical interest:	Good example of Art Deco - Exhibition Style within Johannesburg.

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Relationship to setting and place:	Relationship to setting and place: Excellent relationship between SARB building and neighbouring Clegg House. Part of the “Commissioner Street Cavern” collection of similar height buildings along this artery. The building forms a pair with Clegg House and a gateway site to the city at the West entry.
Relationship to historical aspects:	Forms a built document of the development of Johannesburg between the 1st and 2nd world wars.
Social Importance:	n/a.
Modifications:	The building exterior survives largely in-tact, save the ground floor which is bricked up.
Integrity of current Structure:	Structure survives in relatively in-tact condition.
Known lost aspects or changes made:	None known, however, numerous changes have been made. The bronze panels on the vehicular door have been lost.
Scientific or Research Potential:	Limited/Good example of Art Deco - Exhibition Style within Johannesburg.
Other:	None.
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:	The interior is stripped, with no conservation worthy fabric remaining.
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 articulated roofline needs to be observed, should additional height be added this should be set back from the main facades of the building, not visible from the street. No pop out or clip on elements are permissible on the facade. The roofline needs to be observed. See marked up façade image.
Recommendations - Interior:	Interior does not warrant conservation.
NHRA Applications:	An application as per Section 34.1 of the NHRA is required.
Recommendations - Overall:	The exterior architecture and facades hold high heritage value and should be conserved and restored, the interiors are largely stripped and offer little in terms of cultural significance, conservation worthy fabric or provenance.

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SARB House is an excellent example of mid-1930s Art Deco architecture. Built in 1935 by the firm of J. C. Cook and Cowen, the building facade survives in fairly original condition (save the shops at street level which were removed in order to create parking space). It forms part of the collection of Art Deco buildings found along Commissioner Street. Together with the neighbouring Clegg House building, SARB forms a gateway to the financial and mining district of downtown Johannesburg. The finely proportioned external form of the building, elegant steel windows and carefully articulated roof plane are all typical features of Art Deco architecture.

SARB House is a reinforced concrete frame structure with plastered brick infill panels and steel frame windows, the building comprises a Basement, Ground Floor Shops (now parking), and eleven floors of office accommodation above, with a flat concrete roof. Notable features of the original design by Cook and Cowen included projecting plastered brick balconies supported by ornate brackets to the Third Floor. Additionally, articulated vertical Art Deco finials run the entire height of the building, accentuating the building's height – they enticing the eye to follow the central facade composition upwards to the articulated roofline. The symmetrical architectural massing and facade composition of SARB house is accentuated by the grouping of window bands and vertical fins.

*“The balconettes on the third floor, each with a set of ornamental brackets, are most attractive as they form a perfect end to the fins and add a special J.C. Cook and Cowen touch to the building. The prominent brackets placed under the (first floor) balcony are a rare example of a transition period between two verandah fashions - this would also apply to the (upper) balconies- especially when taking into account that the building was erected during 1934. It was typical of J.C. Cook and Cowen to have added a special design feature to their buildings.”<sup>40</sup>*

40. Bruwer, J. J. (2009), SARB (BB-2).



Image of SARB, circa 1950s - Bruwer, J. J. (2009), Clegg House (BB-3).



Contemporary image of SARB.



Detail of missing bronze panels on the vehicular entrance door.