

# JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: [Second] UNIVERSAL HOUSE



Top right: view of the *second Universal House* – the neighbouring double storey building with prominent green roof is the *School Clinic* – the building nearest to the camera is the *Steadman Mansions*. Bottom centre, and right: view of the pavement canopy with supporting columns; instead of repairing the existing cladding to the balcony and upper part of the main façade, it is recommended that the cladding should rather be removed.

Previous/alternative name/s : originally *second Universal House*;  
: by 1954 – *Dittmar's Building*; by 1996 – *Fontana Kwik Spar*

**LOCATION:** Street : Jeppe  
Street number : 157  
Stand Number : 1248  
Previous Stand Number: by 1925 - 1130  
Block number : AR  
GIS reference :

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

### DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

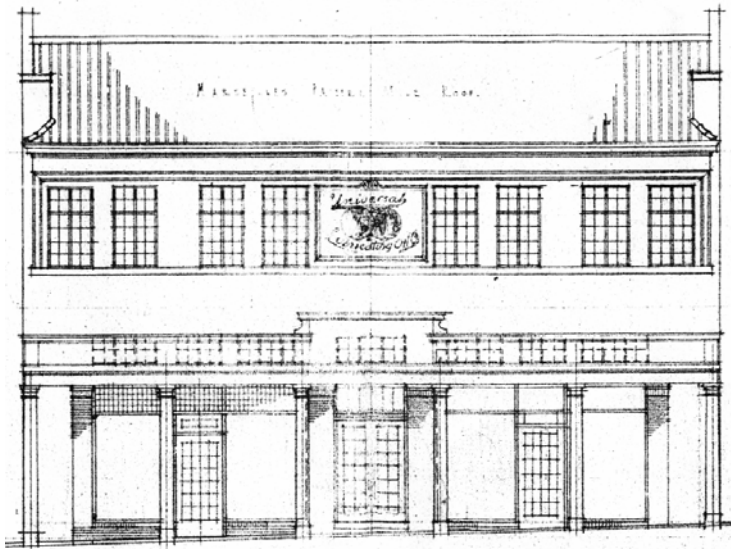
Height :  
Levels above street level : two  
Levels below street level : one  
On-site parking : none

The well-known architectural firm of Cowin, Powers & Ellis, and a firm associated with bank buildings and office blocks, designed this double storey building. Douglas M. Cowin was renowned for his independent approach towards the design of buildings. The sensitivity with which he designed the subject building is particularly noticeable. The result is that of a building standing in perfect harmony with the *School Clinic*, its eastern neighbour. The choice of materials used in the construction of the *second Universal House*, and the scale of this (type of) building, makes for a strong interconnectedness between the two buildings. The *School Clinic* was completed approximately six years prior to the erection of the *second Universal House*. Although of lesser height, Cowin's intention was clearly to design the building in such a way as to pay recognition to important features manifested in the street façade of the *School Clinic*. The front section of the roof, designed in the same style as the *School Clinic* (neo-Georgian hipped roof), was the result of a special effort to compliment the architectural language of the *School Clinic*. Of interest is the fact that the rear of the roof of the *second Universal House* was merely covered with galvanized corrugated iron! Ironically, however, is the fact that the tiled section of the roof of the *second Universal House* has remained intact, whilst the tiled roof of the *School Clinic* has been replaced with a galvanized corrugated iron roof! The cottage pane windows and the floor bands were other complimenting elements in the design.

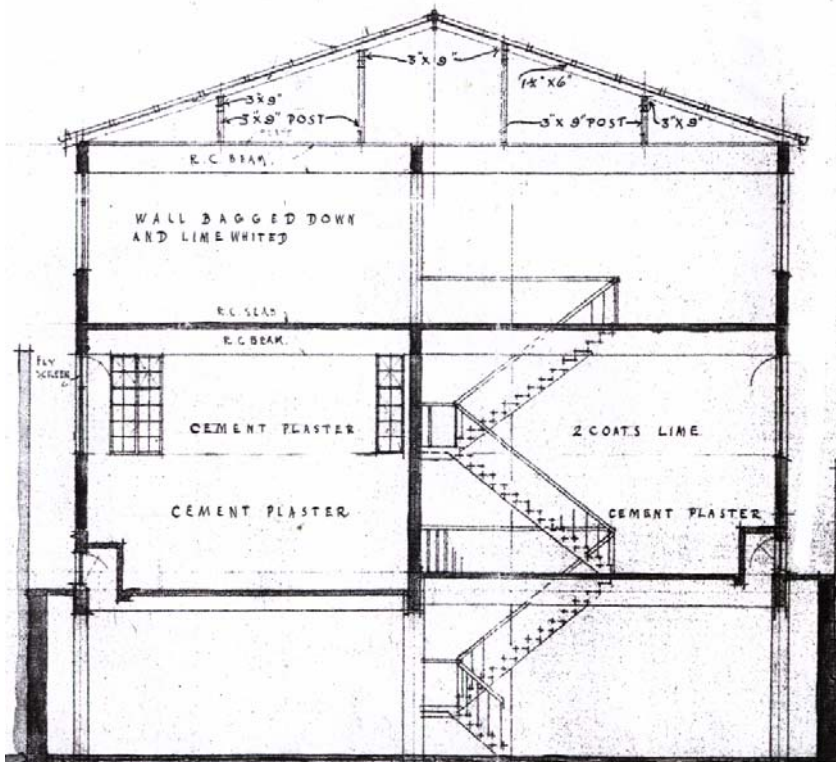
- Basement: four pavement lights; bakery store with winder stair, this storage space is isolated from the rest of the Basement; grano-paved warehouse with goods lift and single dogleg stair.
- Ground Floor: this floor were divided into three separate areas with no connecting doors; the western section with recessed entrance and marble steps, with a composite glazed door and fanlight, was part of the bakery section (known as Dittmar's); the front area was a bakery wholesale shop; a Ladies Lavatory & Cloaks was located in the central section with stairs to the Gallery and the bakery with grano floor to the back; large ovens were located to the rear of the building and fired form the back (that is from the yard). Access to the Universal Edible Oil Company's offices was through the main entrance with double composite glazed doors; located in the central section of the building was a dogleg stair, goods lift and door to the yard at the rear of the building; flanking the central section were two shops, each with a separate entrance in Jeppe Street.
- Mezzanine Floor: this was a single room referred to as the Gallery (Store) with windows and fanlights, and situated over a Ladies Lavatory on Ground Floor.
- First Floor: this was designated as a warehouse, which was accessed via a staircase from the Universal Edible Oil Company's offices.
- Yard: access to the yard was via a service lane on each side of the building; located in the northeastern corner of the property was a petrol store with sunken grano-floor; ovens of the bakery and winder stair to first floor of the ablution block.
- Ablution block: the double storey ablution block was accessed via the service lanes or from the main building; ground floor section - one Ladies and shop Ladies Lavatory; three Men's W.C.'s and two 'Native' W.C.'s; first floor - Men's restroom with two basins and 'Natives' restroom with single basin.

#### **CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

- Walls: reinforced concrete frame construction; brick infill.
- Roof: Jeppe Street elevation with Marseilles pattern tiles; empirical truss; remainder of roof - galvanized corrugated iron.
- Windows: cottage pane.
- Verandah: supported by six Tuscan columns on plinths.



Left and below: original main elevation plan and section. (copied extracts from original drawings dated 1925).



**SITE FEATURES:**

**ALTERATIONS:**

Additions and alterations: additional dogleg staircase to all floors; rat-proof Beaver Board partitioning to new sample room on ground floor; main entrance passage narrowed and internal wall on ground floor removed; a proposed new petrol storage tank in steel was not approved. Date on plan – January 1926; estimated cost – building £150; completed – 14 August 1926; architects – Cowin, Powers & Ellis.

Deviations from original drawing: a new drying chamber installed over existing oven. Application for Approval of Plans missing; date on plan – 22 June 1926; architects – Cowin, Powers & Ellis.

Alterations: municipal submission plan/s missing; approved May 1930; estimated cost – building £100; drainage £50; Author unknown.

Alterations and additions: municipal submission plan/s missing; see letter dated 20 March 1952 and extract from Application for Approval of Plans; estimated cost – building £750; drainage £25; completed – December 1952; additional value to building £500; architect Colly Segal.

Internal alterations: approved 20 December 1956; estimated cost – building £450; drainage £15; Author unknown.

Basement: existing - one large and one small storage area; new internal walls in small storage area, Asiatic male change room and 'Native' male change room.

Ground Floor: new glazed shop front to western shop and recessed entrance and internal wall removed, this space, was used at the time as a restaurant; new internal wall in storage area adjacent to the existing ovens; the main entrance was previously removed and incorporated in the eastern shop (confectionery), a new wall to isolate the shop from the rest of the building; the back of the eastern shop was adapted as a kitchen area with new sink and deep pot sink, existing staircase removed and new stairs provided.

Ablution Block: removal of external wall; the following is show as existing: two 'European' W.C.'s one with lobby, three 'Non-European' male W.C.'s and single new urinal "existing squat-pan to be replaced by urinal for use by 'Non-Europeans'", one 'European' male W.C.

Alterations for Stanton Furnishers: approved 21 August 1963; municipal submission plan/s missing; estimated cost – building R1 000; architect – B Prissman.

Major internal alterations for Le Bon Confectioners: all original internal walls and two existing stairs removed from Basement, Ground Floor and First Floor; the existing oven was removed after 40 years of service; new internal walls on First Floor. At the time of these alterations 12 'Europeans' males and 20 'Non-Europeans' were employed. Approved – 8 August 1966; estimated cost – building R8 000; drainage R300; architect Leslie Simon (address: 511 International House, Loveday Street).

Alterations, addition and drainage for Le Bon Confectioners: municipal submission plan/s missing; approved - 25 May 1969; estimated cost – building R2 000; drainage R200; architect Leslie Simon (address 511, International House, Loveday Street).

Alterations, addition and drainage for Le Bon Confectioners: municipal submission plan/s missing; approved 20 - June 1968; estimated cost – building R750; drainage R200; architect Leslie Simon (address 511, International House, Loveday Street).

New canopy for Fontana Holdings: municipal submission plan/s missing; approved – 13 May 1971; estimated cost – building R3 000; architects – Bentel & Abramson.

Alterations for Fontana Bakeries: municipal submission plan/s missing; approved 26 October 1971; estimated cost – building R150; architects – Bentel & Abramson.

#### **INTEGRITY:**

The obtrusive effect of the painted aluminium cladding to the main façade of the building, drastically affects the appearance of the building. This, however, is not of any serious concern, as the cladding could quite easily be removed. Regrettably, the changes to the shop fronts of the building would be more difficult to reverse. This, however, does not mean that the building is not worth preserving!

#### **INSCRIPTION:**

#### **ARCHITECT:**

Cowin, Powers & Ellis.

#### **BUILDER:**

Concrete engineers: The Steel Reinforcing Company.

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Date on plans :  
Commenced : 15 May 1925  
Foundations : 30 May 1925  
Approval of plans : February 1925  
First Phase : 2 March 1926  
Completion date : 25 August 1926

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Edwardian.

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Warehouse.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

From a NMC letter dated 30 May 1995, the building, at the time of this letter, was considered to form part of an important group of buildings: "The...(NMC's Northern Interim Plans Committee) is of the opinion that a number of buildings on the remainder of the city block in question were considered to be conservation worthy, ie. The Fontana building, the City Health building (*School Clinic*: AR-3), the building directly to the north of Anstey's (i.e. *Steadman's Mansions*: AR-4) and the Union Club (AR-5). The Anstey's building (AF-2) has recently been declared as a national monument and together with Manners Mansions (AE-3)...and the abovementioned buildings forms an important conservation area." (Authors' note: the area is not formally protected under the current heritage conservation legislation as a heritage area, previously called a conservation area).

It is clear from this that the building is located within an area, comprising numerous conservation valuable buildings. Currently, the aluminium cladding to the balcony and upper part of the main facade as well as the signage totally detracts from the quality of the streetscape and leaves the building standing isolated, preventing any form of visual harmonization with its immediate surround.

**CONDITION:**

Building needs cosmetic maintenance work to the exterior.

**URGENT ACTION:**

It is recommended that the responsible owners be requested to remove the existing cladding from the main facade of the building and to make use of signage, which should be in keeping with the character and scale of the building.

**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: Patlansky Bros. And Patley (Pty.) Limited.  
By 1930: Universal House (Prop.) Ltd. (J Hofman – Director).  
By 1956: Universal House (Pty) Ltd.  
By 1966: Le Bon Confectioners.  
By 1971: Fontana Holdings.

### PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

#### FIRST UNIVERSAL HOUSE:

During 1889 the headquarters of the firm of Patlansky Bros. and Patley (Pty.) Limited was established at 157 Jeppe Street. For further information in this regard, see HISTORY.

### HISTORY:

#### SECOND UNIVERSAL HOUSE:

*"Pioneers Of Edible Oils In The Transvaal...*For over sixty years the firm of Patlansky Bros. And Patley (Pty.) Limited have been supplying the Golden City and Environs with a wide range of continental delicacies. In 1889, three years after the proclamation of the goldfields [Johannesburg was proclaimed on the 8th September 1886], Mr. Bernard Patley arrived in Johannesburg with his brothers and founded what is recognised to-day as the oldest-established firm in the Transvaal specialising in edible oils. The headquarters of the firm of Patlansky Bros. and Patley (Pty.) Limited was established at 157, Jeppe Street [see Pre-History], where there marketed their brands of salad and cooking oils under the trade name of 'Universal'. These products soon gained popularity and have retained their reputation throughout the succeeding years. *Original Member of the Rand Pioneer Association...*An interesting item respecting the Company's founder is that with the formation of the Pioneer Association...Mr. Bernard Patley became one of its original members.<sup>1</sup> The Association is still in existence [i.e. 1956], and is the link between the pioneering families of those early days in the city. No doubt a large number of its original members have now passed on, but Mr. Patley is still active and recently celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday. He can still be found at his desk every working day of the week, where his stories of the very early days of Johannesburg are a never-ending source of interest to his many business friends. To-day, Mr Patley is content to leave the office of Managing Director in the capable hands of Mr. Wilfrid H. Patley. About twenty years ago<sup>2</sup> the original building in which the Company was quartered was rebuilt, and the firm moved to 132 Jeppe Street<sup>3</sup>. Then, as recently as two years ago [i.e. 1954], more comfortable and spacious premises were occupied at 126 Jeppe Street<sup>4</sup> – thus the Company has been established in the same street of the city for over sixty years...*Wholesale Food Dealers* - Although the original Company commenced with the marketing of oils only, its growth in the city as wholesale food dealers has been of considerable magnitude. For many years the Company have been one of the biggest importers of Dutch and Scotch herrings. The brand name 'Y M Holland' in respect of salt herrings has been well known for over forty years. Under the brand name 'Universal' the Company also markets a wide variety of additional oils to those mentioned above. These include, linseed, castor, coconut, sweet, neatsfoot, lard, whale, sperm and turpentine. Continental Delicacies are also imported which are calculated to whet the appetite of the most fastidious gourmet. Cheeses from Spain, Switzerland and Austria – anchovies – sprats – shrimps – sardines and tunny fish – pate de foie – olives and nuts of all kinds are but a few of the items available to the retail trade through this pioneer organisation." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

#### Notes:

1. Mr Bernard Patley's membership of The Rand Pioneers Association was indeed an honour. According to Leyds, the Rand Pioneers Association "was formed in 1903 with an initial membership of over 500. Copies of the first annual report are to be found in the Africana sections of most libraries. This report contains a list of members who were in Johannesburg in 1891; it also mentions recommendations made by the Association to the Milner Government for the better administration of the town. Judging by the names and titles of the members, the majority were British subjects, and no sooner had peace been restored to the Transvaal than Lord Milner himself experienced the spirit of discontent coupled with the extravagant demands which had made the town such a thorn in the side of the Transvaal Republican Government. An instance was that the Association at an Annual General Meeting advised the Government to prohibit miscegenation, which prohibition the Nationalist Government of forty

years later were to enforce so sedulously. In its early years the Association appears to have looked upon it as a duty to teach the new Imperial Administration of the Transvaal their business in connection with Johannesburg. A perusal of the membership list shows that the only qualification for membership was arrival before or during the year 1891. It would seem that about 95% of the members had done nothing of note, or performed any public service, but it must be admitted that the hardships and privations they had suffered in those early days were in themselves worthy of enlistment in a 'Roll of Honour', such as the membership of the Rand Pioneers suggested. In later years the date for enlistment was promoted to include the year 1898, i.e. ten years after the real foundation of the town. The membership is, of course, steadily decreasing and the association must cease to exist. Then a new association to be called 'Sons of Pioneers' or 'descendants' may be formed. The Annual Reports for the first ten years of the Association's life make it appear as if the mantle of the Reform Committee had fallen on its shoulders. The whole Boer War, ostensibly fought for the sake of Johannesburgers, apparently had no effect on their discontent. The strikes and revolts of 1913, 1914 and 1922 are seen to prove the point." (Leyds, G.A.: A History of Johannesburg).

2. This statement might be confusing; "About twenty years ago" should rather read thirty years, considering that the article was published in 1956;
3. "and the firm moved to 132 Jeppe Street" should read as having been a temporary move; the existing building at 156 Jeppe Street - designed by Cowin, Powers & Ellis and completed on 25th August 1926 - was the property of Messrs. Patlansky Bros. & Patley; the Company's move to 132 Jeppe Street was during 1958 and the latter premises as well as their temporary premises i.e. *Chester House* at 132 Jeppe Street - that were occupied by the company during 1925 and part of 1926, have since been demolished; *Chester House* was also designed by Cowin, Powers & Ellis.
4. The building situated at 126 Jeppe Street was known by 1954 as the *Moni's Building*; this building was also demolished.
5. In circa 1920s, the *Patlansky's Corner Building* occupied the 163 Jeppe and 64 Joubert Streets corner of this site; by 1954 the building was known as the *Patley's Building*; the combination of the names is fascinating as it is directly associated with the firm of Patlansky Bros. and Patley (Pty) Limited; this building is not mentioned in the *History of Patlansky Bros. and Patley (Pty.)*.

#### GENERAL NOTES:

Estimated cost of building	: £7 000
Estimated cost of drainage	: £200
Accommodation approved	: none
Valuation at completion	: £5 750
'European' males employed	: six
'Native and Coloured' males employed	: three 'Natives'.
Occupied	: yes

By 1954, the building was partly occupied by Dittmar's French Confectionery. This explains the name *Dittmar's Building*; their address was PO Box 4799, Johannesburg.

#### PREVIOUS TENANTS:

1926:	157a Jeppe Patlansky Bros. And Patley (Pty.) Limited.
157 Jeppe	Dittmar's French Confectionery Ltd.
By 1952:	157a Jeppe - Johnson's Confectionery.
By 1954:	157 Jeppe - Dittmar's French Confectionery Ltd.
157a Jeppe	Johnson's Confectionery.
By 1963:	Stanton Furnishers.
By 1966:	Le Bon Confectioners.
By 1971:	Fontana.

#### CURRENT TENANT:

Kwikspar.

Below are copied extracts from documents appearing in the plans record of the building. This clearly illustrates how the rules of racial segregation was vigorously applied in the administration of the City's buildings by the authorities.

29727  
 30 JAN 1952  
 17 DEC 1952  
 Building Drainage  
 750 / 25  
 215123  
 accommodation.  
 Mines.  
 Eur.  
 Nat.

External Walls to be built of brick - lime  
 Roof to be covered with corr. iron Means of Water Supply Municipal  
 Will the premises be a factory within the meaning of the Factories Act? Yes  
 Number of Europeans (Males) to be employed? 10 European Male  
 (Females) 0  
 " " Non-Europeans (Males) to be employed? 18 Native  
 (Females) 12 European  
 TRADE WASTES SCHEDULES MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL PREMISES.  
 Waste Water:  
 How disposed of To main sewer  
 Architect (if any) Collyer Will Architect supervise work? No  
 Address of ditto 719 albin elop  
 Owner's Name A. N. Johnson (Signature of Owner)

INDUSTRY - BAKING. 1248

Plans for alterations to first floor (change rooms and fire escape) of premises on Stand No. 1130 Johannesburg for Johnson's Confectionery (Occupier) and A.N. Johnson (Owner) NOT APPROVED for the following reasons: -

- (1) The window area and the floor area are not given: Window area must be equivalent to 10% of the floor area (pre 1941 factory).
- (2) The Native male change room is too small. An area of 216 square feet is required for 18 persons. The wash room can not be included in the change room area.
- (3) Grading of floors in the shower cubicles is not indicated.
- (4) The showers are not screened to prevent splashing the rest of the room.
- (5) No sanitary convenience are shown. Two W.C.'s and a urinal are required for the Native male employees and 1 W.C. and one urinal for the European male employees.

No door or window of any room in which articles of food are prepared or manufactured, shall be less than ten feet from any door, window or other opening of any water-closet or urinal.

- (6) Two wash basins must be provided in the workroom for the use of your European male and Native male employees respectively.

*A Murray*  
INDUSTRIAL INSPECTOR.  
(FACTORIES).

Plan No. 159/12,  
JOHANNESBURG.  
 20th March 1952.

**SOURCES:**

For additional illustrative information, see relevant supplementary photo album in electronic format.

See SOURCES DOCUMENT for information on sources consulted with reference to this document.



## 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

## RECORDED BY:

Heritage Resources Management team Johann J and Catharina JM Bruwer.  
Unless otherwise indicated photographs by Catharina JM Bruwer.



KWIKSPAR



fontana

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space  
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FRUIT & VEG  
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WHITE DIAM  
JEWELLERY SALES  
AND DESIGN

17 8 2003



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LOANS 337-8004



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