

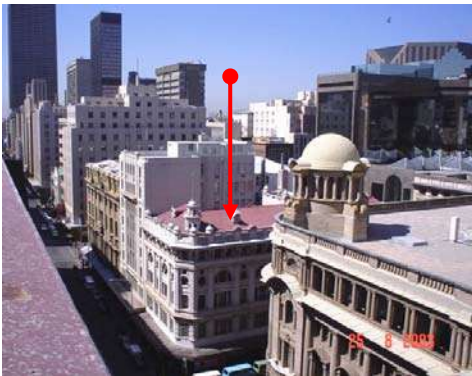
JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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Cellphone: 082 325 5823

NAME OF PLACE: VICTORY HOUSE



Top right: corner of Commissioner and Harrison Streets. Top left: a view of Commissioner Street - the building as seen from the *third Corner House*; nearest to the camera is the *third Standard Bank Chambers*; to the left of *Victory House* in the photo is *Walter Sisulu House* and the *third Rand Club* on the corner of Commissioner and Loveday Streets. Bottom left: corner of Harrison and Fox Streets - in the background from left to right is the *Kitchen Building* and the *third Rand Club*.

Previous/alternative name/s : originally the *first Permanent Building(s)*
: *South African Permanent Building Society Building*

LOCATION: Street : Commissioner
Street number : 92
: [32, 34 Harrison; 91 Fox]
Stand Number : 1098
Previous Stand Number:
Block number : BD
Suburb : Marshallstown
GIS reference :

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

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

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

Victory House (originally known as the *Permanent Buildings*) is not only the oldest remaining building in the part of Marshallstown laid out in 1886, but also the oldest extant building designed by the pioneer architect W.H. Stucke in Johannesburg. It was the first building in Johannesburg with a lift or elevator and cast iron staircase.

In 1896 W.H. Stucke designed this building for the S.A. Permanent Mutual Buildings Investment Society and Savory & Woodhouse. At completion in 1897, it was a large office building with shops on ground floor and flats on the fifth floor. The building comprised a Basement, Ground Floor and four floors up, with the lift and staircase located in the central section of the building. See copies of original Basement Plan, Ground Floor Plan, Third and Fourth Floor Plan below.

- Basement: the north section was to be used as a Billiard Saloon and the south section, as a Tea Room; provision was also made for various Cellars in the Basement.
- Ground Floor: originally comprised four shops (two, each with a separate entrance, in Harrison Street, and two, and each with a separate entrance in Commissioner Street); the entrance at the flattened corner in Commissioner and Harrison Streets, provided access to a Public Bar; the south section of the Ground Floor contained offices.
- Second Floor: plan not found.
- Third Floor: offices.
- Fourth Floor: single rooms and double-room units with communal bathrooms and Earth Closets.
- Sanitary arrangements: originally, Earth Closets with bucket lifts and Sanitary stair in rear of the building; urinals and iron enamelled baths emptying into waste tanks.

Of interest is the fact that a section of the basement of the building was converted into Turkish Baths during 1911. See ALTERATIONS.

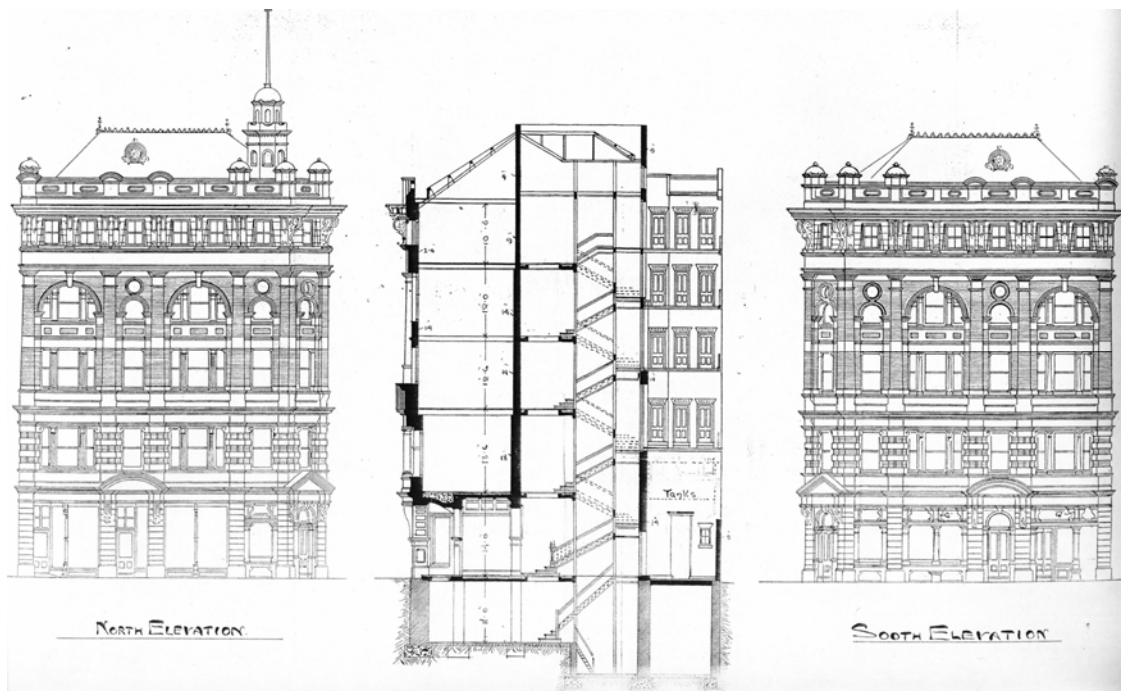
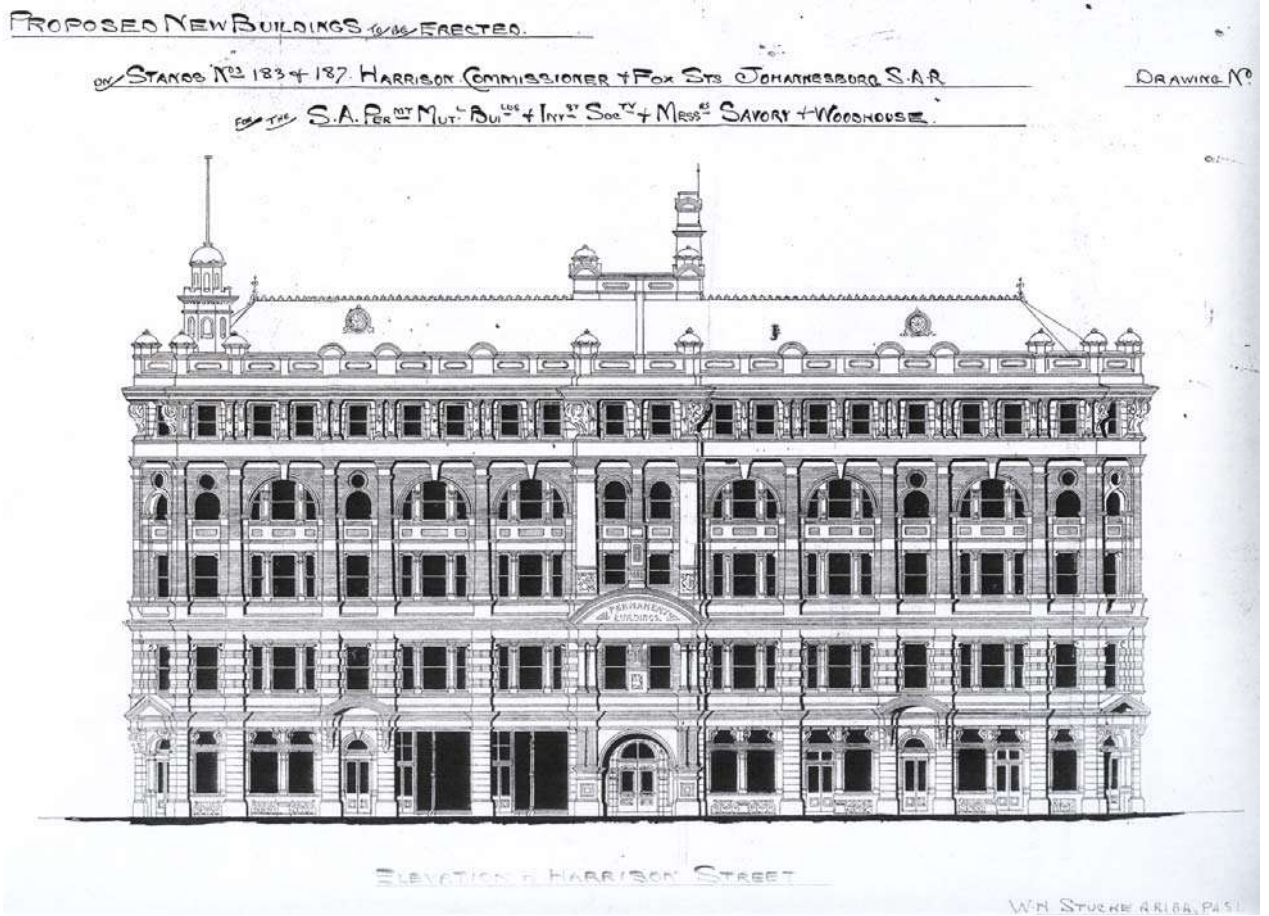
The South African Permanent Mutual Building and Investment Society occupied the *Permanent Building* as their headquarters till 1940 when they moved their headquarters to a new building, now known as the *first Peoples Bank Building* on the northwestern corner of Commissioner and Simmonds Streets. The Society was desirous to retain the name *Permanent Buildings* and with the owners' permission, this name was subsequently transferred to the new site. To commemorate the Allies' victory in 1945, the subject building came to be called *Victory House*. It appears, however, that the building was also known for some time as *Permanent House*, as it was retained as a branch of the South African Permanent Building Society.

"The relative freedom", according to Van Der Waal, "with which the schematic designs varied is never the less striking. For instance, who would have suspected that the middle pilaster of the central entrance party on the third and fourth floor of the *Permanent Building* concealed a dividing wall between two rooms. Also note the arbitrary positioning of the diving walls behind the wall ribs and the forced deformation of the walls of the backmost offices at the air vents and the passages where they abut on 'lavatories'...and it comes as no surprise that the creative W H Stucke used a frame construction for two of his most important designs...the *Permanent Building*...the *Exploration Building* constructed in 1896-8. [See Pre-History: BB-1] The *Permanent Building* focused attention on its frame construction, among other things, a minimum of mass articulation. The *Exploration Building*, on the other hand, attracted the attention by the suggestion of depth in the surface of the façade. On two storeys the frame was even demonstratively isolated as a detached screen in front of recessed balconies. From this one may infer that Stucke took the development of the visual structure of the *Permanent Building* a stage further. The load-bearing construction was given an expressive form by the high entrance arch and the unusually broad window arches on the ground floor as well as the three top storeys with their 'arcades'. This was an exceptional addition to Johannesburg's architecture which, as pointed out above, did not really favour this type of structure." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

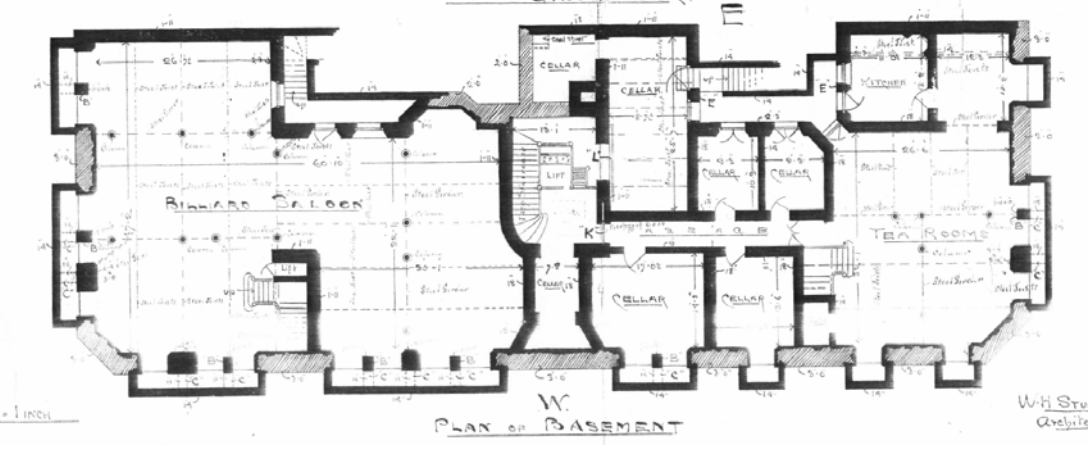
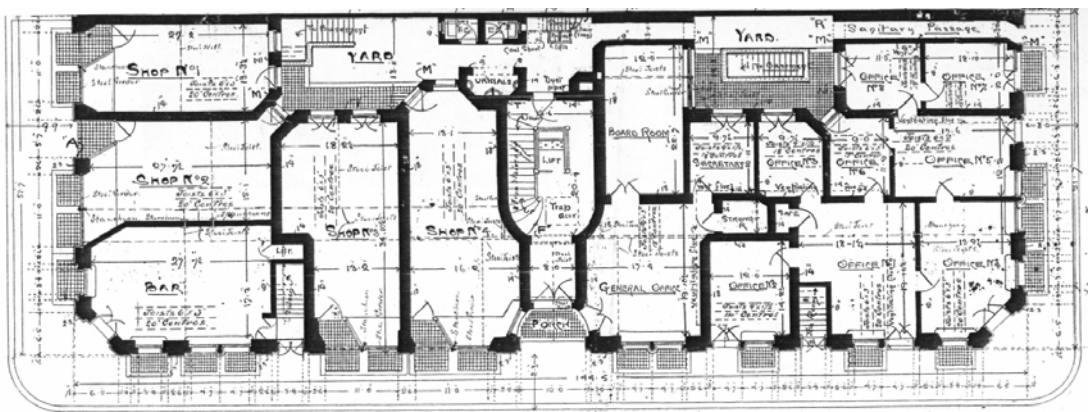
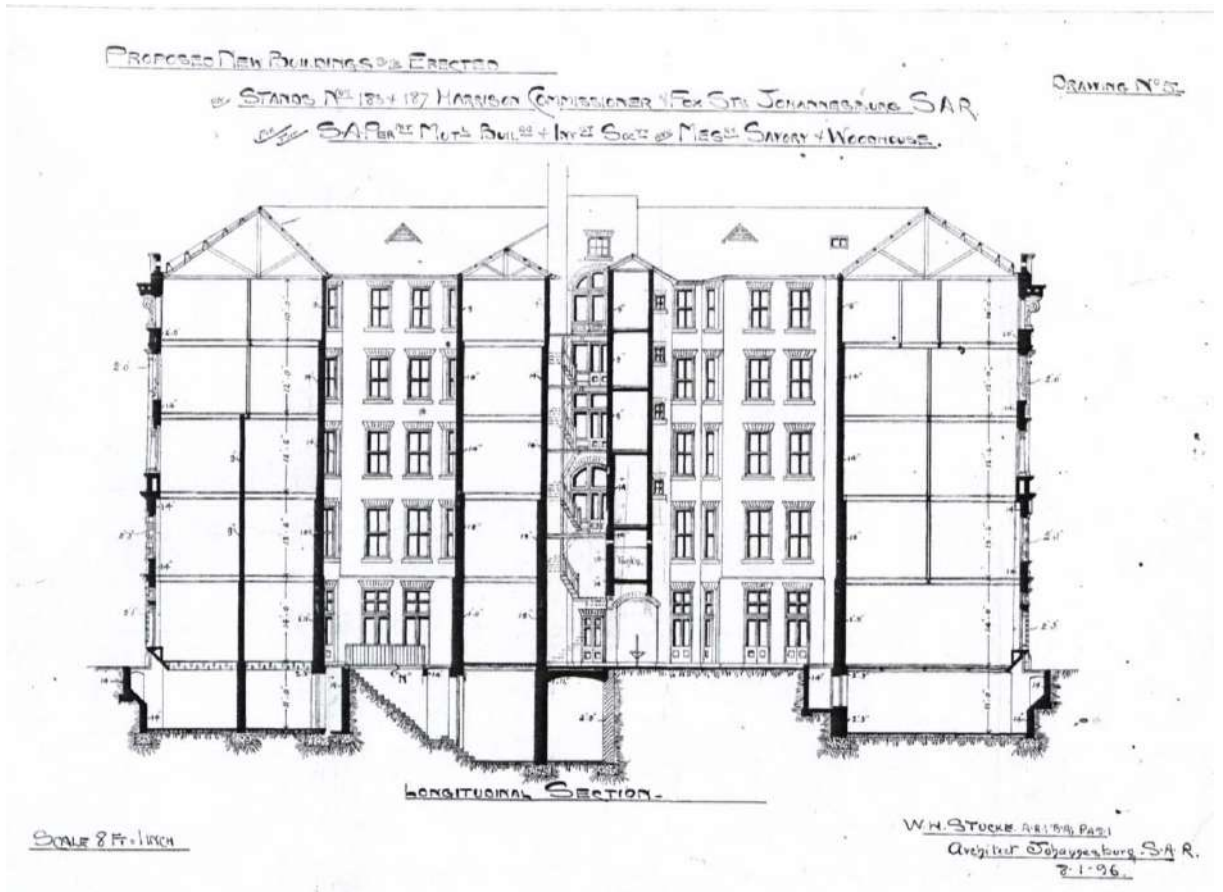
According to Marilyn Martin, *Victory House* "is one of the most charming buildings in the city. The interior of Victory House can best be appreciated by visiting Gallery 21: it is simple and without pretension, yet the spaces are varied, with corners that are cut, semi-circular windows (some are tripartite), portholes, old-fashioned heaters and glimpses of the decorative elements on the exterior." (Description by Marilyn Martin, circa 1987: SAHRA Archive File 3/3/3/Joh/4 Victory House, Harrison

Street 34, Marshalltown).

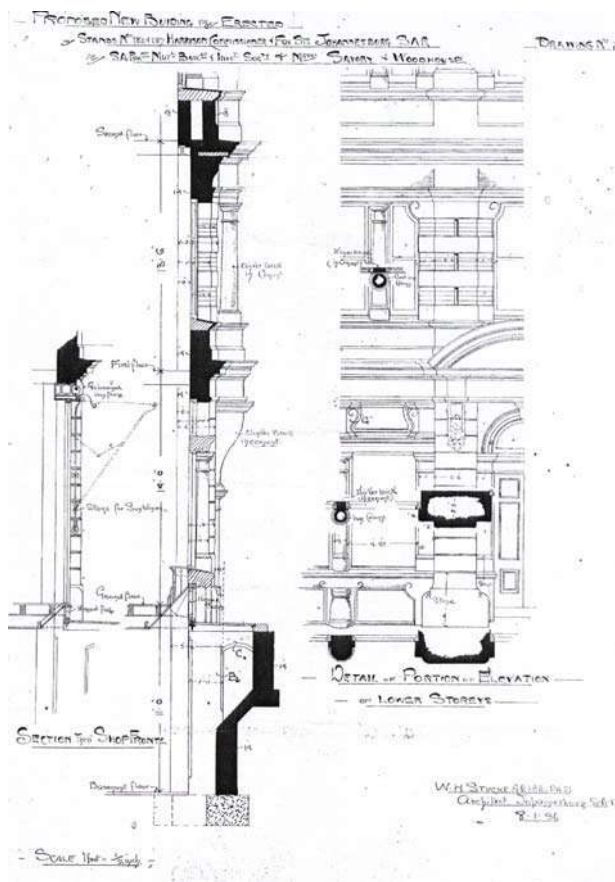
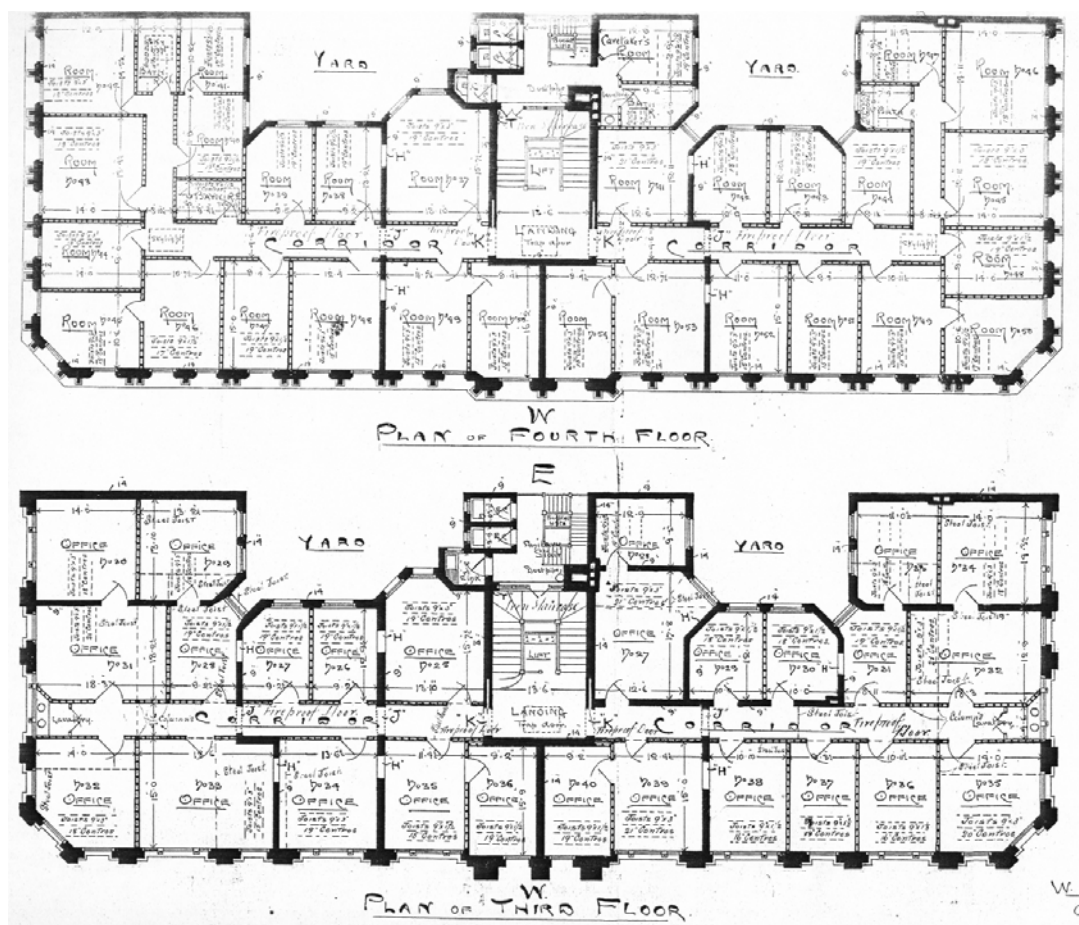
Below: copies of original (main) west elevation, and other elevation drawings by the architect W.H. Stucke, dated 1895.



Below: copies of original Section and Ground Floor and Basement plans.

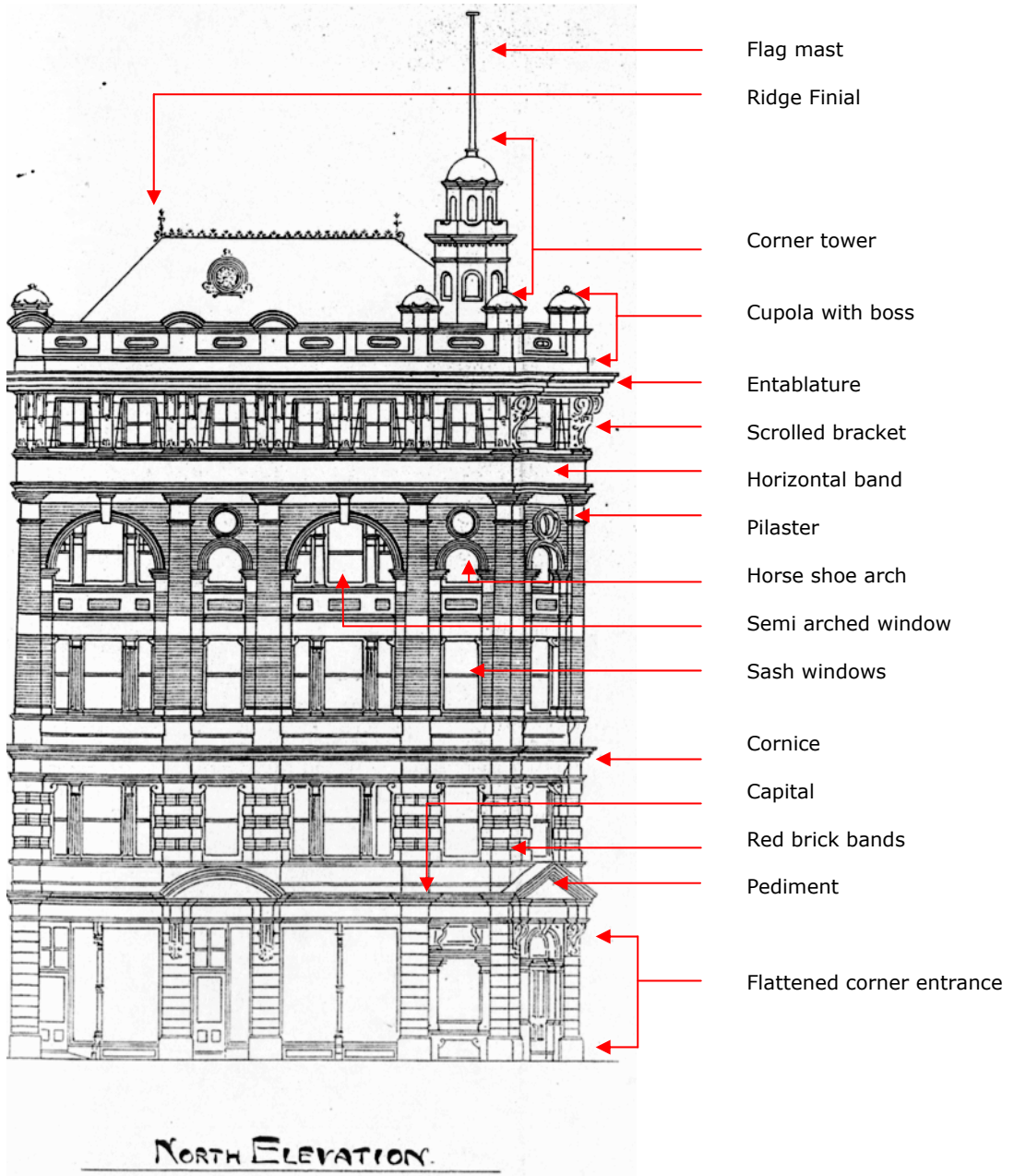


Below: copies of original floor plans: Third Floor and Fourth Floor.

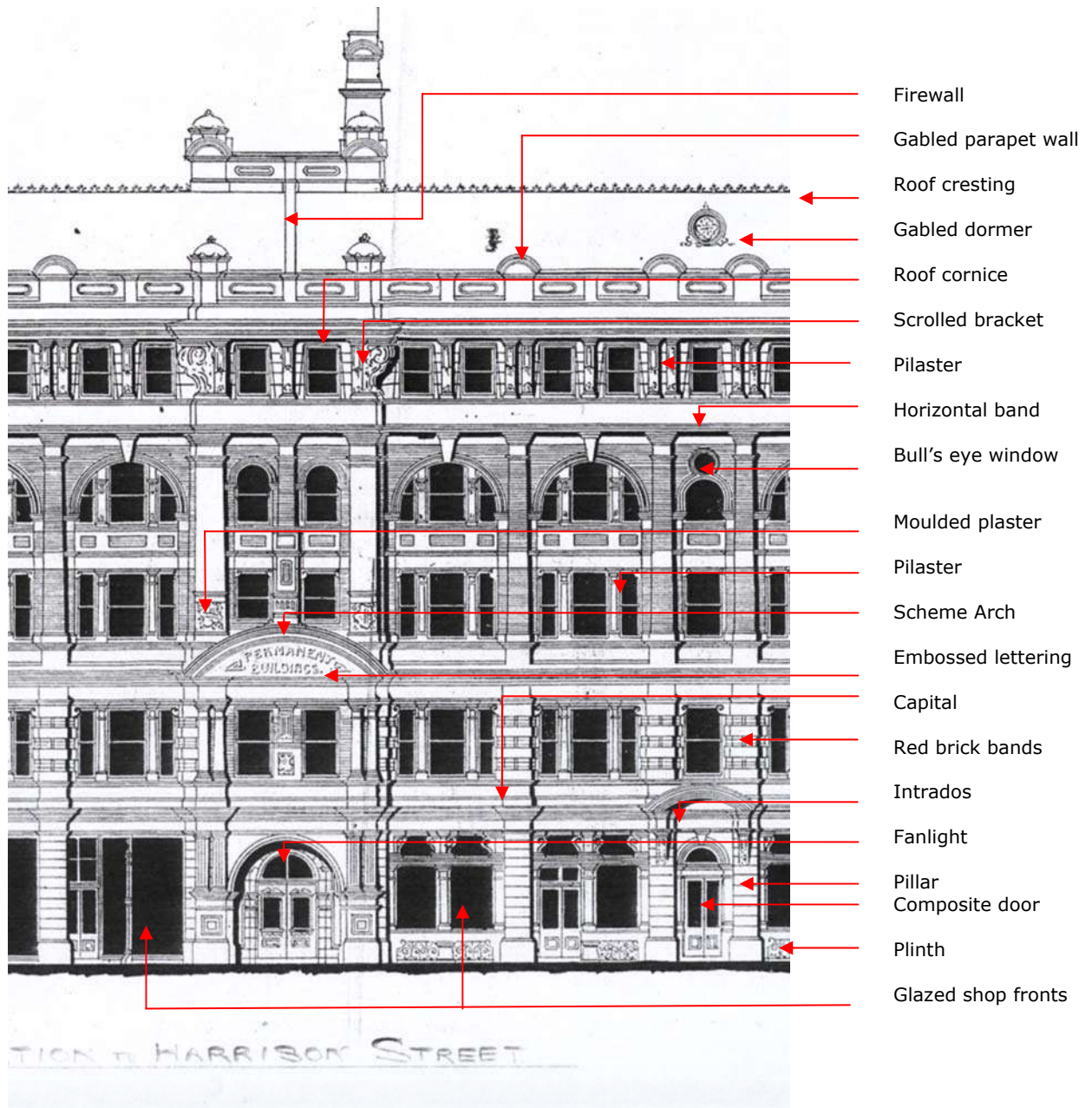


Stucke, a legendary architect in his own right, had a particular way of doing things, sometimes outside the sphere of standard practice. Thus, the architect I. Wayburne, remembers "...old Stucke drawing out classical details full-size on the workshop floor, where master craftsmen were preparing the moulds for one of his buildings." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...).

Below: copy of original north elevation with appropriate descriptions of notable architectural elements.



Below: copy of section of main elevation with appropriate descriptions of notable architectural elements.



- Firewall
- Gabled parapet wall
- Roof cresting
- Gabled dormer
- Roof cornice
- Scrolled bracket
- Pilaster
- Horizontal band
- Bull's eye window
- Moulded plaster
- Pilaster
- Scheme Arch
- Embossed lettering
- Capital
- Red brick bands
- Intrados
- Fanlight
- Pillar
- Composite door
- Plinth
- Glazed shop fronts

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

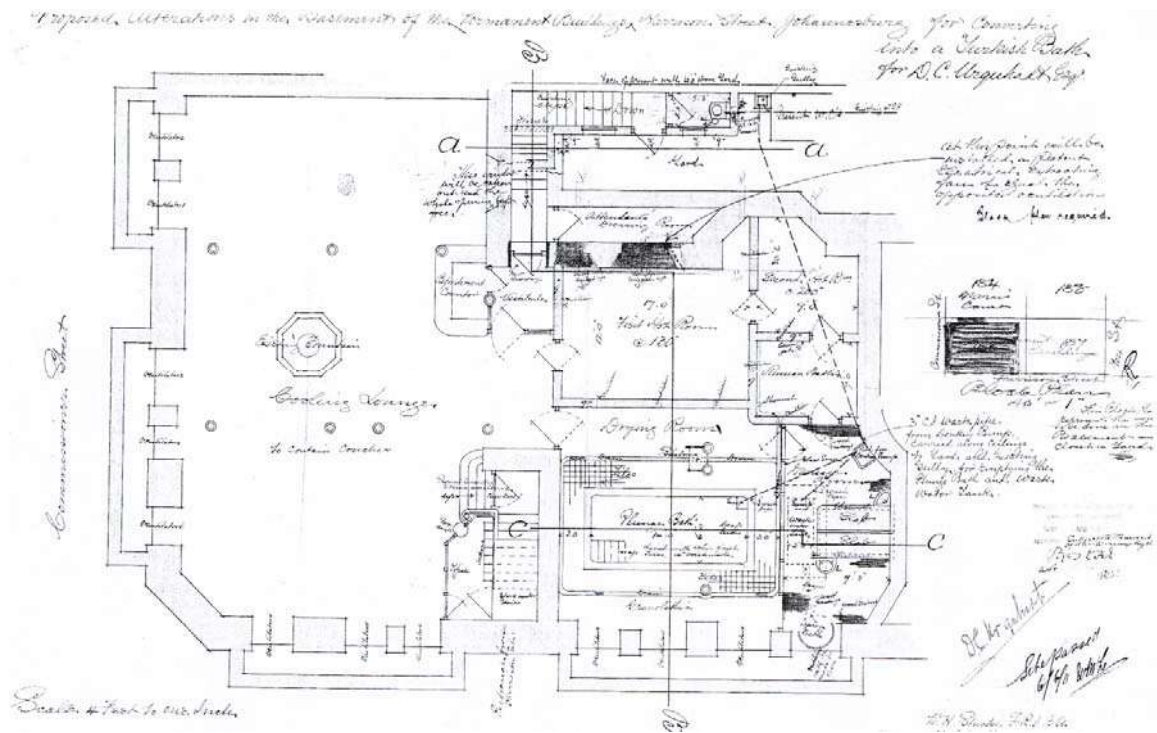
- Walls: burnt brick, steel I beams over openings in walls.
- Roof: hipped; corrugated iron.
- Corner tower: wood and iron.
- Windows: timber, sash; cast iron pillars on First and Second Floor, separate windows.
- Floors: wooden boards on timber beams and steel girders.
- Foundations: concrete.

SITE FEATURES:

ALTERATIONS:

Application for Approval of Drainage Plan and submission drawings passed on 5 November 1907; work completed on 6 December 1907; architects Stucke & Bannister.

Conversion during 1911 of the existing Saloon Bar and Cellars in Basement into Turkish Baths for D.C. Urquhardt Esq., comprising *inter alia* of a sizeable Cooling Lounge with couches and a central (existing) fountain feature, an office, an Attendants' Room, a separate room with Plunge Bath, a First Hot Room, a Second Hot Room and Russian Baths, and a Massages Room; submission drawings passed 6 June 1911; responsible architects W.H. Stucke & J.E. Harrison; estimated cost £500-00. See copy of relevant drawing below.



Minor internal alteration - removal of internal wall between existing offices on Ground Floor: municipal submission drawings passed on 17 2 1915; author unknown; estimated cost £20-00.

Minor internal alterations during 1916 - "Removal of Two Walls" indicated on completed Application for Approval of Plans form dated 9 December 1915: date of approval of plans 25 January 1916; no plans for this, however, could be found; architect Arthur H. Gibbs; estimated costs £100-00.

Minor internal alterations to "Fountain Bar" on Ground Floor - two new openings in existing wall: date on plan 11 June 1917; Stucke & Harrison Architects; approval of plans 10 July 1917; estimated costs £50-00.

Alterations during 1920 for the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy. Ltd.; no plans for this could be found; approval of plans 22 March 1920; architect Arthur H. Gibbs (address: 38 Aegis Buildings, Johannesburg); estimated cost £300-00.

Alterations during 1922: no plans for this could be found; approval of plans 5 July 1922; architect Arthur H. Gibbs (address: 38 Aegis Buildings, Johannesburg); estimated cost £200-00.

Alterations to Basement and Ground Floor: date on plan 16 August 1927; Stucke & Harrison Architects; approval of plans 5 December 1927; estimated costs £300-00. These alterations entailed the enlargement of the Tea Room in the Basement and a new stair between this section of the Basement and the Ground Floor; alterations to the corresponding section on Ground Floor (at the time, the offices of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy.) entailed the installation of new glazed partition walls, the widening of the corner entrance, the removal of the existing stair and

entrance from Harrison Street to the Tea Room in the Basement, and the installation of new windows in the relevant section on Ground Floor.

Alterations in 1928 to the Main Entrance in Harrison Street – this entailed a new Vestibule and the relocation of the existing double entrance door to a slightly forward position; date on plan 12 April 1928; Stucke & Harrison Architects; date of approval of plan 18 June 1928; estimated cost £50-00.

Minor internal alterations during 1931 to the offices on the First Floor of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy., and the Royal Insurance Coy: built-in cupboards (shelves and coats); Stucke & Harrison Architects; date on plan 12 November 1931; date of approval 16 November 1931; estimated cost £75-00.

Internal alterations during 1934 to south section of Basement and Ground Floor – the Tea Room and store rooms in this section of the Basement were converted to an Auditor's Room, a Strong Room, a public area with counter, an Arrears Clerks office etc.; this section of the Basement was therefore to become an integral functional facility of the corresponding section on the Ground Floor where alterations entailing the installation of new glazed partitions and the removal of sections of existing walling were undertaken; no date on plan; date of approval 11 December 1933; architect S.V. Mann (address: 36-37 Permanent Buildings, Harrison Street, Johannesburg); estimated cost £500-00.

Alterations during 1936 - no plans could be found for this; date of approval of plans 26 August 1936; architect S.V. Mann; estimated cost £1 400-00 (Drainage £100-00).

New shop fronts in 1939 to five shops (i.e. north section of Ground Floor) – plate glass shop fronts with new fanlights over and teak trimming – metal trimming to large plate glass panels; date on plan 30 July 1939; architects J.C. Cook & Cowen; date of approval 8 July 1939; estimated cost £1 000-00.

Internal alterations to offices on Ground Floor – new half and high partitions; date on plan July 1950; architects J.C. Cook & Cowen' date of approval 20 November 1950; estimated cost I: £150-00.

Internal alterations to one of existing shops in Commissioner Street: no date on plan; date of approval 19 July 1956; author unknown; estimated cost £150-00.

Internal alterations to office on Ground Floor (new door openings, new brick wall sections and new stair between this section on Ground Floor and First Floor) etc., for Alitalia Airlines: no date on plans; date of approval 20 December 1957; author unknown; estimated cost £175-00.

New canopy to northern section of *Victory House*: no date on plan; date of approval 5 October 1959; architect Manfred Hermer (address: 511 Volkscas Building, Market Street, Johannesburg); estimated cost not known.

New washbasins and work to drainage during 1962 – north western corner shop (Hairdresser's Shop): no date on plan; architect A. le Roux.

Alterations in 1968 to Basement (partitioning for Reception Area of Helio Print): date on plan November 1968; Interior Designers "Habitat"; date of approval 1 August 1968; estimated cost R600-00 (Drainage R500-00).

Major alterations in 1980 to shop flanking Main Entrance in Harrison Street: no date on plan; date of approval 22 October 1980; author R.W. Elliot. The poor standard of the relevant drawing and the nature and extent of the intervention to the existing fabric associated with these alterations, is an excellent example of work that should never have been allowed to a sensitive building such as *Victory House*! Of interest is the fact that these alterations were effected after the NMC had REPEATEDLY informed the owners of its wish to declare the building as a national monument! See NOTES.

INTEGRITY:

The canopy that was added to the building in 1959 is a reversible intervention. Sadly, the extensive changes to the original shop fronts are of a more permanent nature. The adverse effect of this on the integrity of the exterior of the building is of greater concern. Very little if anything remains of the original design and materials used in the construction of the shop fronts of the building. The integrity of the remainder of the exterior of the buildings has otherwise, remained largely intact.

It must additionally be pointed out that most of the changes done to the shop fronts of the building seem not to be included in the plans record of the building. This in itself is disturbing, as this implies that most of these changes were effected illegally.

The painting of the facades of the building is equally regrettable. As a result of this, the effect of what used to be intended as a picturesque visual contrast between the sandstone and red brick sections of the facades of the building, has been lost. This intervention continues to have a detrimental effect on the aesthetic qualities of the building.



Above – from left to right: as the modern canopy requires repairs, this might be the opportunity to remove this unsympathetic addition instead. Peeling paint on stucco plaster. One of the enclosed entrances in Harrison Street. A later addition (entrance) in Harrison Street.

INSCRIPTION:

ARCHITECT:

WH Stucke.

BUILDER:

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

Date on plans : 8 January 1896
 Approval of plans : 12 June 1896
 Completion date : 1897

Right: "There were scenes of tremendous enthusiasm in Johannesburg when the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated. This picture of the second Rand Club building shows a crowd outside the gaily bedecked Club." (De Villiers, R. and Brooke-Norris, S: The story of the Rand Club...). At the time of these celebrations, the construction of *Victory House* next to *Marais Court*, was well under way, as can be clearly seen in this photo.



BUILDING STYLE:

Victorian (pre 1900). 1890s.

"Architectural Merit and Workmanship of Merit: A very richly detailed building, with fine details." (Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

The building, according to Van Der Waal, represents one of Stucke's most successful designs in the creative-eclectic approach as a conceived form of expression. Here, Stucke incorporated elements in a single building that continue to carry different personal interpretations. It took a genius such as Stucke to make a success of this particular stylistic approach. (Van Der Waal, G-M.: Goudstad – Geboue 5 – Beeld, 21 March 1977; see also RAU Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg...).

Neo-Queen Anne mode: "The frame construction lost its popularity in England by the end of the century...however, especially since the advance made by the Neo-Queen Anne mode, with its largely

closed façade, in British city architecture during this period. The Neo-Queen Anne also predominated in Johannesburg from 1890 to 1900 so that architects had some difficulty in divorcing their work from these conventions, and it comes as no surprise that the creative architect W H Stucke used a frame construction for two of his most important designs." (Van Der Waal, G-M.: From Mining Camp to Metropolis...).

Victorian: "Permanent Building (1895-7), five storeys high with huge scrolled brackets to support the roof cornice, was a confirmation (both in its name and in the self-confident exaggerations of the Victorian detailing) of the permanence and solidity of the mining town. A mishmash of steep roofscapes with dormer windows embodied the influence of the French Second Empire: some, like the old Customs building, were authentic representatives of Paris street architecture; others, like Markham's tower or the old Stuttafords building, were muddled provincial versions of the Second Empire style, reaching the Rand third-hand via the Cape." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...).

BUILDING TYPE:

Shops to street and office building.

ENVIRONMENT:

Opposite *Victory House* in Harrison Street, is the *third Standard Bank Chambers*. These two buildings are the only extant pre-1910 buildings in the financial and business area of Johannesburg, designed by Stucke. Together with the *third Corner House* and the *third Rand Club* in Commissioner Street, their conservation value is immeasurably high.

"Norman Hanson, describing Johannesburg in 1952, wrote that there were 'no boulevards, no monumental approaches, no interweaving parks, no city squares'. He neglected to say, however, that by 1952 Johannesburg possessed one metropolitan thoroughfare in the central city portion of Commissioner Street. When His Majesty's was completed, it made this thoroughfare work visually: looking eastwards, its own vertical signage extended the thematic vertical illuminations of the lesser Broadway from Broadcast House in the east up to Joubert Street in the centre. In addition, from its central position, His Majesty's [see BG-1] looked westwards to the financial quarter that extended from Eloff Street as far as Sauer Street. Here a whole series of secular statements of material power occurred: two substantial Victorian finance buildings, Permanent Building (extant as *Victory House*) and Exploration Building; four major Edwardian blocks, the Carlton [the first *Carlton Hotel*; see Pre-History: AA-1], the Rand Club [see BD-3], Standard Bank [see BC-3] and the Corner House [see E-1]; and massive 1930s statement of financial power at the S.A. Permanent [*Peoples Bank Building*; see D-1], S.A. Mutual [see E-3] and Barclays Mutual and Barclays Commissioner Street [see F-4]. On this east-west axis of variable character there was one stepped infill skyscraper, Annan House, besides the verticality of the CNA Building [see BF-1] on Rissik Street corner, Cook & Cowen had contributed a substantial building to this block, Shakespeare House [see BF-3] (on the corner of Joubert), which picked up the verticality of the CNA headquarters in its own vertical modular treatment. The superblock [sic.] between Joubert and Eloff streets was the missing link, and it was here that Cook & Cowen would make connections and form the transition between the theatreland of the east and the financial sector of the west." (Chipkin, C.M.: Johannesburg Style; Architecture & Society...).

Right: Note the unpainted façade of *Victory House* on the immediate left. (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 53).



Johannesburg has never been a jealous guardian of its architectural heritage, rather like a bee, continuously disposing of one flower for another. The two substantial Victorian finance buildings have been reduced to one with only *Victory House* remaining. Of the former four major Edwardian blocks, only three remain. The first *Carlton Hotel* had to make room for yet another skyscraper. The *CNA Building* has been abandoned and left to rot with the vacant stand to its rear, having left the building standing 'naked' and no longer as appealing to the eye as it used to be. The

majestically His Majesty's has been partially 'dethroned' – her double crown – once a proud element in the Johannesburg skyline, has disappeared, and so also her original theatrical function. This building has in a sense, become just another 'ordinary' building in the environment. Commissioner and Fox Streets are no longer the socially vibrant streets of former times. (Catharina JM Bruwer).

CONDITION:

The exterior of the building is in a state of disrepair.

URGENT ACTION:

Every effort should be made to prevent the exterior of the building from again being painted!

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:

The building was recommended for declaration as a national monument in 1976 (RAU Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg).

In June 1977, the former NMC approached the then owners of *Victory House*, i.e. Permanent Buildings (Pty) Ltd., for permission to declare the building as a national monument. From a letter of reply dated 19 July 1977 from the Midland Investment Real Estate Group, it was clear however, that the owners were not in favour of declaration. Mention was made of the possible future demolition of the building: "We...must point out that the economics of keeping business premises as national monuments is beyond the means of any normal organisation. The City Council of Johannesburg has always prided itself in its rating system which by its nature has forced the city to re-develop itself continuously over the past decades. This system still remains today and as a result it is no longer economical to keep Victory House standing from a financial point of view. It stands on a highly valued piece of rateable ground and as a result must come down in the near future."

The owners were subsequently requested (in a NMC letter dated 24 November 1977) to reconsider their decision but without success. Thus, the NMC was informed that "the viability of Victory House is fast reaching a point when we (i.e. the owners) would need to rebuild on the site. We are obviously unable financially, to leave an extremely valuable business site idle by reason of your (i.e. NMC's) desires."

It was consequently decided by the NMC not to pursue the declaration of the building for the time being, but to merely erect a bronze plaque at the building, indicating the architectural and contextual importance of the building. The owners, however, were also opposed to this suggestion.

Not having forgotten about the owners' stated intention during 1977 to eventually demolish *Victory House*, the NMC in 1987 decided to provisionally declare the building as a national monument. The owners by this time had clearly reconsidered their former position and gave a written undertaking in 1988 that no alterations would be carried out to the building without prior consultation with the NMC. They also confirmed that it was no longer their intention to demolish the building.

This building was nominated as one of Johannesburg's top 100 heritage places in 1986.

DEEDS INFORMATION:

Original ownership:

Permanent Buildings (Pty) Ltd.

PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:

BARBERTON CHAMBERS:

See also HISTORY.

HISTORY:

The following extract on the history of the South African Permanent Building Society, titled "The Neighbourly Institution", comes from Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*, published in 1956: "On an April morning in 1896 the word went out from Tarry's Cottage 'Pay them out in gold'. In the late summer of 1896 Johannesburg was a place of rumours. The crisis precipitated by the Jameson Raid was still mounting. People began to leave the town, and there was a run on the savings banks. At the offices of the South African Permanent Building Society in Tarry's Cottage, at the corner of Simmonds and Main Streets, depositors streamed in to withdraw their savings. As a gesture of confidence and token of the Society's financial strength it was decided to pay all withdrawals in gold. The step was so effective that many, having withdrawn their savings, walked round the block and returned to re-deposit them! Johannesburg Branch opened in 1889. The South African Permanent Building Society was founded in Kimberley in 1883, and opened a branch in Johannesburg in 1889. It has thus grown up with the Golden City since mining camp days. The Society has made an immeasurable contribution to the growth of Johannesburg by assisting thousands of residents to acquire their own homes, and enjoy happy family life and stable citizenship. By providing safe, profitable investment facilities the Society has set thousand more on the road to financial security. Through the years the Johannesburg public has come to regard the South African Permanent as a trusted friend – where a neighbourly welcome awaits one and all and helpful advice on any building society matter is always available for the asking. From a tiny office in Kimberley the South African Permanent has, in 73 years, grown into a great nation-wide institution with assets of over £100,000,000." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*). See further information, see attachments.

In 1956, the Society had branch offices in the following buildings: *Permanent Building* or *Victory House*, *Castle Mansions* (AE-2), *Leisk House* on the corner of Rissik and Bree Streets, and at 124 Market Street.

FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY BUILDING:

The Society's first building was situated at 38 Harrison Street. This single storey building was erected during 1889 and was occupied by the Society up to 1894. See Pre-History: F-4.

"...Very different were the first four years of Johannesburg's existence, when there was a spate of surveying, laying out and selling of land; there was an astonishing urge among the newcomers to own land and build their dwelling. They were assisted at first by the South African Permanent Building Society from Kimberley which was then – and for fifty years remained – the largest building society in the subcontinent, before being outstripped by another. Their business in Johannesburg early exceeded in extent that of all their other offices. Soon they were followed by the establishment of Johannesburg's own societies, amongst which were the 'United', 'The Rand Provident', the 'Johannesburg', the 'Alliance' and others. Their history is closely related to the growth of the town." (Leyds, G.A.: *A History of Johannesburg*).

1894 – 1897:

During the period 1894 to 1897, the Society occupied temporary offices in the following two buildings:

BARBERTON CHAMBERS:

The *Barberton Chambers* – situated at 92 Commissioner and 34 Harrison Street – was completed during 1892 and was the first temporary office of the Society. This building was demolished during late 1895 or early 1896 to make way for the new *South African Permanent Building Society Building* or *Permanent Building* – now known as *Victory House*.

TARRY'S COTTAGE:

Tarry's Cottage on the corner of Simmonds and Main Streets, was occupied during 1896 to 1897 (i.e. till the *Permanent Building* was completed during 1897). *Tarry's Cottage* was demolished during 1904 to make way for the *Cullinan Building* situated at 71, 73, 75, 77 Main Street, corner of Simmonds Street.

PERMANENT BUILDING / VICTORY HOUSE:

Victory House was the Society's first multi storey building in Johannesburg. The society occupied this building as their headquarters up to 1940, when they moved their headquarters to a new building, now known as the first *Peoples Bank Building*. By 1956, *Permanent House* was a branch of the South African Permanent Building Society.

FIRST PEOPLES BANK BUILDING:

The date on plan for the *South African Permanent Mutual Building and Investment Society Building* is August and September 1938. Designed by Stucke, Harrison & Smail, the foundations of the building were laid during May 1938 and the building was completed in January 1941. The *first Peoples Bank Building* is situated at 73, 75 Commissioner and 33, 35 Simmonds Streets and is currently still occupied by the Peoples Bank.

NEW PERMANENT BUILDINGS:

"The architect's impression of the new Permanent Buildings, soon to be erected on a site opposite the [first] Carlton Hotel, corner Eloff and Commissioner Streets. The architects chosen for the new Permanent Buildings is the well established firm of Stucke, Harrison Ritchie & Watson, the firm that has been responsible for all the previous South African Permanent and Investment Building Society Buildings." (Stark, F. [Ed.]: *Seventy Golden Years...*).

The new *Permanent Buildings* is situated at 119, 121 Commissioner and 62, 64 Eloff Streets and was completed during 1957. By 1998, the building was known as the *second Peoples Bank Building*.

GENERAL NOTES:

Estimated cost of building	:	
Estimated cost of drainage	:	see ALTERATIONS (Approved 1907: £300-00).
Accommodation approved	:	
Valuation at completion	:	
Occupied	:	

The construction of the *Permanent Building* or *Victory House* was confirmation of the fact that there were many investors during the 1890s who believed in the future of Johannesburg. "...Just as the people of the town were uncertain," according to Leyds, "so the Government was uncertain as to the length of the life of the (gold mining) industry. Add to this the continuous lack of water, the dry and dusty climate, rainless for seven months of the year, the unmade street (why make them when the whole town might be deserted in a few years' time?) and there boiled up such a witches' cauldron of dissatisfaction that the Government was often at its wits' end; the cauldron boiled over more than once. Yet the big mining houses and the merchants, the people with capital, showed their confidence in the future, and each of the following occurrences brought new faith to the people: ...The erection in 1898 (should read 1897) by the South African Permanent Building Society of Kimberley of a five-storey building, which had the distinction of being the first building in Johannesburg with a lift or elevator. The building, now named *Victory House*, stands in Harrison Street, facing west, between Fox and Commissioner Streets. The lift-well (there was only one lift for the whole building) had a door on each floor, but the lift itself had no door, so the liftman on each trip called out "Stand well back, please". During the first weeks after the opening of the building there was a continuous stream of spectators to try or at least inspect the invention. I was one of them. This building also had the distinction of being the first to abolish wooden staircases (always deathtraps in old buildings) and replace them by cast-steel stairs, which have lasted sixty years." (Authors' note: the original drawings of the building by Stucke provided for iron and not wooden staircases).

Right: Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 55.

"Victory House, Fox and Harrison Streets was the building designed by W. H. Stucke in 1897 [sic.] for the Permanent Building Society, which had moved from Kimberley to Johannesburg. It was five storeys high and had its own lift and was supplied with current from the next-door Rand Club [see BD-3]. The Permanent Building Society sold this building which was then named Victory House." (Norwich, I.; Grant, B.L.; Saul, D.: Some Historic Drives & Walks...).



SOWETO ART GALLERY:

"The Johannesburg Art Scene from the 60's to the 90's. This section of the website has been put up as a research tool and for interest's sake. It also confirms that without galleries of repute, most artists would find it difficult to be recognised by a wider public, by institutions or museums. And yet, galleries have always been criticised on many fronts, certainly in South Africa, trials and tribulations notwithstanding. Brief Review. The 60's and 70's in particular were an exciting period in the Johannesburg art scene, with a number of new galleries appearing, galleries expanding, opening nights being a social event and exhibitions receiving good press coverage. Galleries in Johannesburg. The main galleries, in alphabetical order, were: Adler Fielding Galleries (*originally Lawrence Adler Gallery*), Egon Guenther Gallery, Gallery 101, Gallery 21, Goodman Gallery, Lidchi Gallery, Whippman's Gallery, and the Everard Read Gallery (*originally known as the Pieter Wenning Gallery*), the latter presenting the more traditional or classical art styles. All galleries exhibited works by both white and black artists, as well as international art, and saw visitors from all walks of life. In addition, there were a few private galleries owned by black artists, but generally they did not last long. These included the Stanley Nkosi Gallery in Katlehong near Johannesburg (opened in 1982), the Art Mart Gallery near the Carlton Centre, Johannesburg, opened by Joe Maseko in 1983, and the Soweto Art Gallery originally in Victory House, Johannesburg, run by Peter Sibeko. The first two mentioned showed works by both white and black artists from South Africa. To view the complete exhibition lists and some images of the [Adler Fielding Galleries](#), of [Gallery 101](#)'s three branches in Johannesburg and of [Gallery 21](#) Johannesburg and London UK, please click on the respective names (links to some of the other galleries can be found from the PELMAMA links page). If you require further particulars for research purposes, or any further images, please contact us at the address at the bottom of this page and we shall do our best to give you the required data." (Information sourced from The Johannesburg Art Scene from the 60's to the 80's victory house.htm).

PREVIOUS TENANTS:

1897: South African Permanent Building Society; Saloon Bar; Tea Room.

By 1911: Turkish Baths; Saloon Bar; South African Permanent Building Society; Tea Room.

By 1917: Fountain Bar; South African Permanent Building Society; Tea Room.

By 1920: Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy. Ltd.; South African Permanent Building Society; Tea Room.

By 1927: Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy. Ltd.; South African Permanent Building Society; Tea Room.

By 1931: Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Coy. Ltd.; South African Permanent Building Society.

By 1945: South African Permanent Building Society.

By 1954: J Maddison & Co; 92 Commissioner Street: President Building Society; 34 Harrison Street – Victory Hairdressing Salon; American Express Co Inc; Brown & Van Wyk, Loss and Accident Assessors; room 103 - Technical Drawing & Tracing Bureau.

By 1957: Alitalia Airlines.

By 1962: Victory Hairdressing Salon.

By 1968: Helio Print.

By 1983: Soweto Art Gallery.

CURRENT TENANT/S:

Victory Pharmacy; Egoli Take-Aways.

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

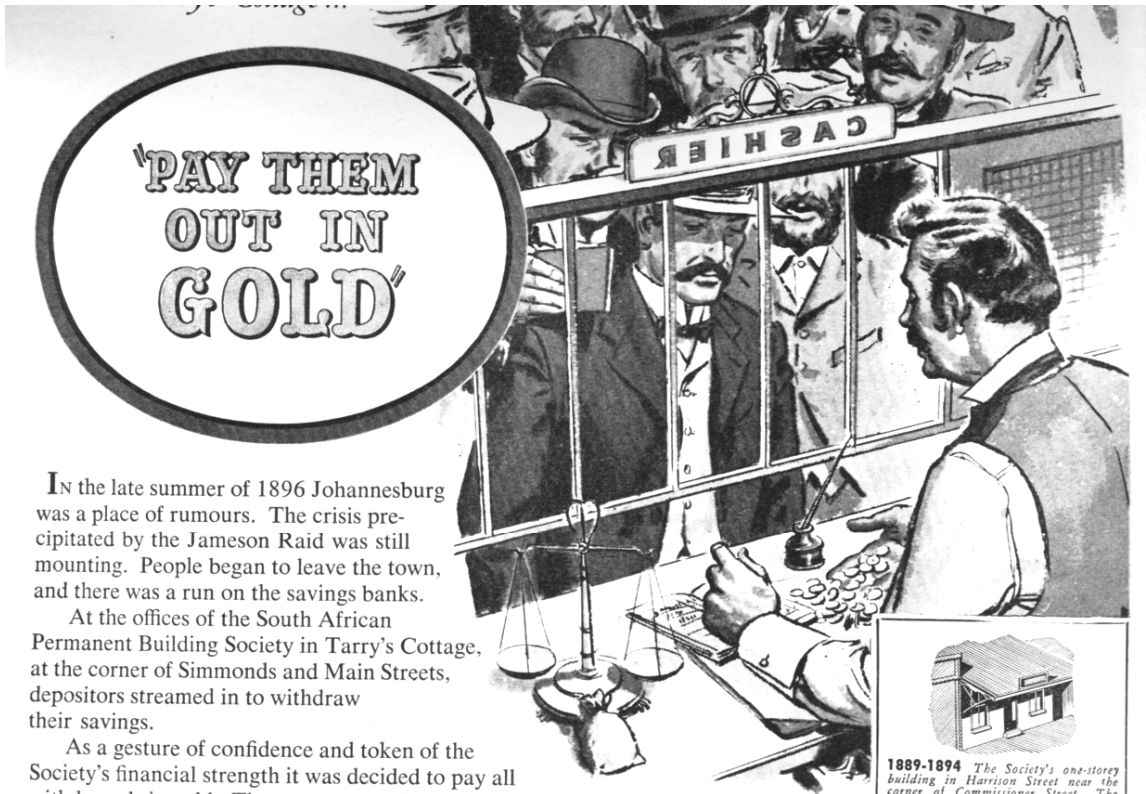
Scientific/Technological value:

- 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.

Below: extract from Stark, F. [Ed.]: Seventy Golden Years....



In the late summer of 1896 Johannesburg was a place of rumours. The crisis precipitated by the Jameson Raid was still mounting. People began to leave the town, and there was a run on the savings banks.

At the offices of the South African Permanent Building Society in Tarry's Cottage, at the corner of Simmonds and Main Streets, depositors streamed in to withdraw their savings.

As a gesture of confidence and token of the Society's financial strength it was decided to pay all withdrawals in gold. The step was so effective that many, having withdrawn their savings, walked round the block and returned to re-deposit them!

In every national emergency which the South African Permanent has faced in its 73 years of life it has kept faith with the public as on that April day. It has emerged from every crisis stronger than ever.

Johannesburg Branch opened in 1889

The South African Permanent Building Society was founded in Kimberley in 1883, and opened a branch in Johannesburg in 1889. It has thus grown up with the Golden City since mining camp days.

The Society has made an immeasurable contribution to the growth of Johannesburg by assisting thousands of residents to acquire their own homes, and enjoy happy family life and stable citizenship. By providing safe, profitable investment facilities the Society has set

thousands more on the road to financial security. Through the years the Johannesburg public has come to regard the South African Permanent as a trusted friend—where a neighbourly welcome awaits one and all and helpful advice on any building society matter is always available for the asking.

From a tiny office in Kimberley the South African Permanent has, in 73 years, grown into a great nation-wide institution with assets of over £100,000,000.

ASSETS OVER £100,000,000



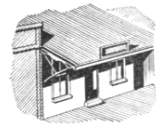
ESTABLISHED 1883

SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

"The Neighbourly Institution"

Permanent Buildings, Cor. Commissioner and Simmonds Streets; Castle Mansions, Cor. Eloff and Jeppe Streets; Leisk House, Cor. Rissik and Bree Streets, and 124 Market Street.

291 branches and agencies throughout the Union and South-West Africa all display the Society's pyramid sign.



1889-1894 The Society's one-storey building in Harrison Street near the corner of Commissioner Street. The site now forms part of Barclays Bank, Commissioner Street Central.

1894-1897 From 1894-97 the Society occupied temporary premises firstly at Barberton Chambers—on the site of the first Permanent Building—and later at Tarry's Cottage, corner Simmonds and Main Streets, Johannesburg, where Cullinan Building now stands.



1897-1940 The first Permanent Buildings, erected on the north-east corner of Harrison and Fox Streets, Johannesburg.



1940-1956 Present Johannesburg headquarters, familiar to everybody, corner Commissioner and Simmonds Streets, Johannesburg.



The architect's impression of the new Permanent Buildings, soon to be erected on a site opposite the Carlton Hotel, corner Eloff and Commissioner Streets.

JOHANNESBURG BUSINESS CONCERNS

**SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT MUTUAL BUILDING AND INVESTMENT SOCIETY,
Permanent Buildings, Corner of Harrison and Fox Streets. P.O. Box 819.**

THIS society was founded at Kimberley on November 16th, 1883, the object being to assist the man of small means to acquire his own property, and to provide facilities for the deposit of savings where they could earn a liberal rate of interest.

The society soon gained strength, thoroughly establishing itself in the confidence of the investing public, and is now one of the largest building societies operating within the Union. It is a mutual self-help institution conducted on co-operative lines for the benefit and advantage of all within its ranks.

In 1889 the first branch office was opened at Johannesburg and very soon the wisdom of the step was evidenced by the satisfactory returns. To-day this branch is one of the leading institutions of its kind in that centre.

The following branches have since been opened:—

1910	...	...	...	Pretoria
1918	...	...	...	Bloemfontein
1922	...	...	...	Durban
1927	...	...	...	Capetown
1930	...	...	...	Port Elizabeth

These branches are all thoroughly established, for the simple reason that the society is managed upon the only system that makes for permanent success in the business world, i.e., absolute straightforward dealing and unimpeachable business integrity.

The development of the business is indicated by the following:—

No restrictions had been placed on withdrawals, while at the same time strong cash reserves had been maintained in order to meet any possible contingencies. The Reserve Fund had been substantially increased, and was then equal to 7.6 per cent. of the members' and depositors' capital.

The society owns the buildings in each centre in which the branch offices are situated together with the head office property at Kimberley. Office property stood at £95,000 at the end of the financial year, May 16th, 1932.



Permanent Buildings.

The Reserve Fund Account stands at £294,624. Mr. C. Vincent Hartley, the General Secretary, has been with the society since 1893, and Mr. A. E. Cooper (Johannesburg Secretary) since 1892. Other branch Secretaries have also had

COMPARATIVE TABLE.

Year.	Paid upon Shares.	Savings Bank Deposits.	Amount of Loans.	Reserve Funds.	Total Assets.
1884	£ 5,545	£ 851	£ 7,033	—	£ 10,532
1914	269,194	167,381	339,740	20,958	468,051
1925	802,152	777,895	1,385,135	92,621	1,798,976
1930	1,640,332	1,700,599	3,029,002	231,650	3,734,159
1932	2,103,238	1,816,470	3,641,364	294,624	4,261,905

At the Annual General Meeting held in the society's head office at Kimberley during July, 1932, the Chairman reported that the increase in each department, as recorded in recent years, had, until September, 1931, been maintained; but owing to the financial stringency which had existed in the Union since that time, this progress was checked; thus in common with other financial institutions they had to record a curtailment of their business for loan advances. In order to conserve the cash resources the Directors decided to restrict new loan business.

considerable service with the society, namely:—

Mr. J. W. Salter (Durban Branch) from 1903; Mr. R. R. Harding (Capetown Branch) from 1914; Mr. A. McDonald (Pretoria Branch) from 1918; Mr. W. H. S. Van Blerk (Bloemfontein) from 1922; Mr. P. P. Cowie (Port Elizabeth) from 1922.

The Johannesburg Board comprises R. H. Henderson, C.M.G., M.P., Chairman; G. S. Burt-Andrews, Vice-Chairman; Ernest Lezard, W. M. Evans, S. V. Mann (alternate E. J. W. Henderson) with Alf. E. Cooper as Secretary.

PROPERTY

Preservation posers

Conservation of old CBD buildings about to cause a storm

Quite innocently, First National Bank (FNB) has bought what may well turn out to be the most highly priced national monument in SA. If the National Monuments Commission (NMC) has its way, FNB will not be allowed to redevelop a prime Johannesburg central city site for which it paid top dollar as part of its BankCity land assembly. Worse, if this action sets precedent, there are harsh financial ramifications for any number of property owners. It has nothing to do with whether certain buildings should be conserved; it has much to do with who picks up the tab for conservation.

In late 1987 FNB launched the land assembly for BankCity. At the time it also bought the balance of the block — bounded by Market, Harrison, Commissioner and Simmonds Streets — on which its HQ is situated. Price paid to Old Mutual for its building at the corner of Harrison and Commissioner Streets was R22.5m, representing R15 121/m² for the 1 488m² site.

Now the NMC won't let FNB use the site by knocking down the Mutual

building, notwithstanding that the building is neither historically important nor aesthetically attractive. This restraint can equally affect various other property owners in the neighbourhood.

Late last year local NMC and Sapoa representatives went walkabout in the part of the CBD around the former Mutual building. The Sapoa members were reacting to a proposal by the NMC that the blocks bounded by Market, Main, Simmonds and Loveday Streets, as well as the Johannesburg council's proposed civic spine (which includes the Library, City Hall, Rissik Street Post Office and the Oppenheimer fountains) be declared a "conservation area" under the National Monuments Act. NMC representative Flo Bird says that the NMC has written to Johannesburg council, proposing proclamation of the conservation area, and is awaiting its response.

She adds: "Excluding the civic spine, we have identified 14 buildings in the six blocks which are worthy of conservation. While individual buildings do not become national monuments, the

effect of the conservation area concept is identical. Building owners are not allowed in any way to alter, demolish or change the character of any building in the area without first consulting the NMC."

In any case, she notes, where a building is at least 50 years old (as is the Mutual building) the owner must obtain prior permission from the NMC to change or demolish it: "Where a building is less than 50 years old and is in the conservation area, the owner has to consult the NMC before making any changes whatsoever."

Property owners in the area are effectively hamstrung. There would naturally be public sentiment in favour of preserving old buildings with historical, architectural, aesthetic and cultural significance. And this is particularly so if the buildings fall conveniently into an easily manageable six-block area as in this instance. Properly handled, the conservation area could create an historic niche in the CBD. Bird believes that, with the support of building owners, an enclave could be created which in turn will create a desirable street address for tenants. If this happens, she reckons, over time the value of the buildings will increase; owners, tenants and the public at large will enjoy the benefits.

But the less romantic dimension relates to the rights of owners. Sapoa executive director Peter Erasmus argues: "While it is acknowledged that certain buildings should be preserved, the freezing of privately owned buildings is an economic restraint. If a building is to be declared a national monument, at least an owner has the right of objection to the Minister of National Education (who is in charge of national monuments). However, the NMC can place a building on a register without reference to the owner. The first step is to prepare a list of buildings as a precursor to registration. This is what the NMC is doing."

Erasmus maintains that by simply



Hands off please



Victory House: who will pay?

Continued from previous page:

registering a building its value in commercial terms is immediately reduced. Accordingly, he adds, because owners are defenceless Sapoa believes that "extreme circumspection" must be adopted in the compilation of the register. He maintains that the majority of buildings in the proposed conservation area do not meet the criteria by which buildings should be protected and contends that, by merely categorising buildings because they are old, the legislation is being subverted: "It must be recognised that the subjective opinion of too small a group of people should not hold sway in this matter."

By registering a building, Sapoa believes, the owner's right to develop it to its full economic potential is effectively expropriated. Nor is there any way by which the state can afford to compensate owners. A remedy which both Erasmus and Bird suggest is that, where there is unused bulk on a property earmarked for conservation, its sale should be allowed and the proceeds used to compensate the owner.

In the case of nearby Victory House on Harrison Street, for example, this magnificent but rundown old building the unused bulk could be sold

and the proceeds used for restoration. Bird adds: "Building owners are compelled by council by-laws to maintain their buildings. It's not fair to say now that because the building will be in a conservation area that the state should pay for its upkeep."

Erasmus counters: "The practical ramification of listing particular buildings means that it becomes uneconomic to maintain those buildings. Without some compensation, the likely repercussion is that there will be an increase in the number of under-maintained if not decrepit buildings, with a resulting deterioration in the quality of the whole area."

Could FNB demolish the old Mutual building and for example extend the stone facade of its HQ around an extension? Bird rejects the notion: "No way. The point of conserving historical buildings is to recognise a point in history. If FNB made the whole block identical to its original building, it would be falsifying history."

FNB GM Stan McDonald comments: "We were not aware of the proposed conservation area. Clearly we will have to discuss the matter with the NMC. Only then will we be able to decide what

action to take."

There'll have to be some hard talking. The NMC cannot simply deprive owners of their rights, particularly rights which in the FNB case were so expensively acquired, unless there is commensurate compensation. And it cannot talk theoretically of unused bulk being sold, for in practice there can only be commensurate compensation if a buyer is prepared to pay for it.

ANDRE VILJOEN

Berardo

Quick action to sell property

Apparently going all-out to dispose of some of its Reef property interests is Joe Berardo's Johannesburg Mining & Finance Corporation (JMF). One of the first to go will be the group's HQ in two buildings on the corner of Johannesburg's Simmonds and Commissioner Streets.

Two years ago JMF bought Annan House from Sage for R3m and the adjoining 30 Simmonds Street from Commercial Union for R6m (FW May 14-20

Below: extract from Itzkin, E.: Gandhi's Johannesburg; Birthplace of Satyagraha.



Victory House, where Johannesburg's first lift had crowds gaping for weeks

**VICTORY HOUSE
(ALSO KNOWN AS PERMANENT
BUILDINGS)**

34 Harrison Street, at the corner of
Commissioner Street.

THE LIFT at Permanent Buildings (now Victory House) was installed in 1898 and is believed to have been the first in Johannesburg. Other lifts had been tried in the new building, but this was the only one to give complete satisfaction. Not only a technological marvel, complete with a safety apparatus, it also boasted a polished oak cage.²

Historian Eric Rosenthal, whose father had his offices at Permanent Buildings, has written of his

father's first personal encounter with Gandhi on the day the caretaker-cum-lift operator in the building, an ex-policeman named Hallet, refused to convey him in the lift.³

Gandhi had probably gone to the building for an appointment with Mrs Carrie Chapman Catt, a prominent American suffragette. While visiting Johannesburg in 1911 Mrs Catt sent Gandhi an invitation to call at her hotel. She records their on-off meeting in her diary:

At the hour named a pretty, intelligent young Russian Jewess called and explained that she was Mr Gandhi's secretary and that no Indian

was permitted to enter a hotel to call upon a guest. A prominent lawyer to whom I told the tale offered the use of his office for the purpose of an interview, so again I wrote, stating the time and place when I would be glad to receive him. Again the pretty little Jewess came to the lawyer's office to say that Mr. Gandhi had come but the elevator operator refused to take him up and he would not so far demean himself as to walk when the European was carried. This challenged my curiosity and I told the young girl to tell him to go back to his office and that I would call upon him. Directly Miss Cameron and I, escorted by the secretary, were on our way. She took us into quarters apparently occupied exclusively by Indians ... We found the man seated behind an American desk – a small very black man with his head wrapped in a very white turban [my emphasis].⁴

2. *The Transvaal Critic* of 11 March 1898 reported on the splendid hydraulic lift at Permanent Buildings. There has been some controversy about whether this was the first lift installed in Johannesburg. *The Star* of 21 September 1936 conferred this distinction on a lift installed in Frazer Street in August 1897 for the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay Collieries Co.

3. *Cape Argus*, 25 April 1983.

4. Mrs Carrie Chapman Catt, 'Gandhi in South Africa'. In *The Woman Citizen*, March 1922. Reproduced in Blanche Watson, *Gandhi and Non-violent Resistance, The Non Co operation Movement in India: Gleanings from the American Press*. Madras 1923.

RECORDED BY:

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



VICTORY HOUSE

VICTORY APTEEK
TEL: 021 424 2728

Belagyn

CHEMIST APTEEK

VICTORY PHARMACY
& DISP.

25 1 2004







House

Hotel

19 8 2003



25 8 2003



25 8 2003

27 8 2003

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60 MIN
MON
08:00-18:00
TUE
08:00-13:00

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APTEEK

VICTORY
PHARMACY
TEL: 03 9246 1234

25 1 2004

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221



Handwritten graffiti in blue ink, possibly a stylized signature or logo.

Handwritten graffiti in green ink, possibly the word "turn".

Handwritten graffiti in green ink, possibly the word "312".

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VICTORY HOUSE

4



Blue street sign with illegible text.

Red sign with illegible text.





VICTORY HOUSE

ELECTRIC WIZARD
REPAIRS: MICROWAVES, OVEN, DISHWASHERS
SALES: HEATER, BAGS, APPLIANCE SPARES
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