

# JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYING FORM

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

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NAME OF PLACE: WALTER SISULU HOUSE



Top right and bottom right: the *Walter Sisulu House* and its neighbours, i.e. *Victory House* (nearest to camera) and the *third Rand Club*, east of the *Walter Sisulu House*.

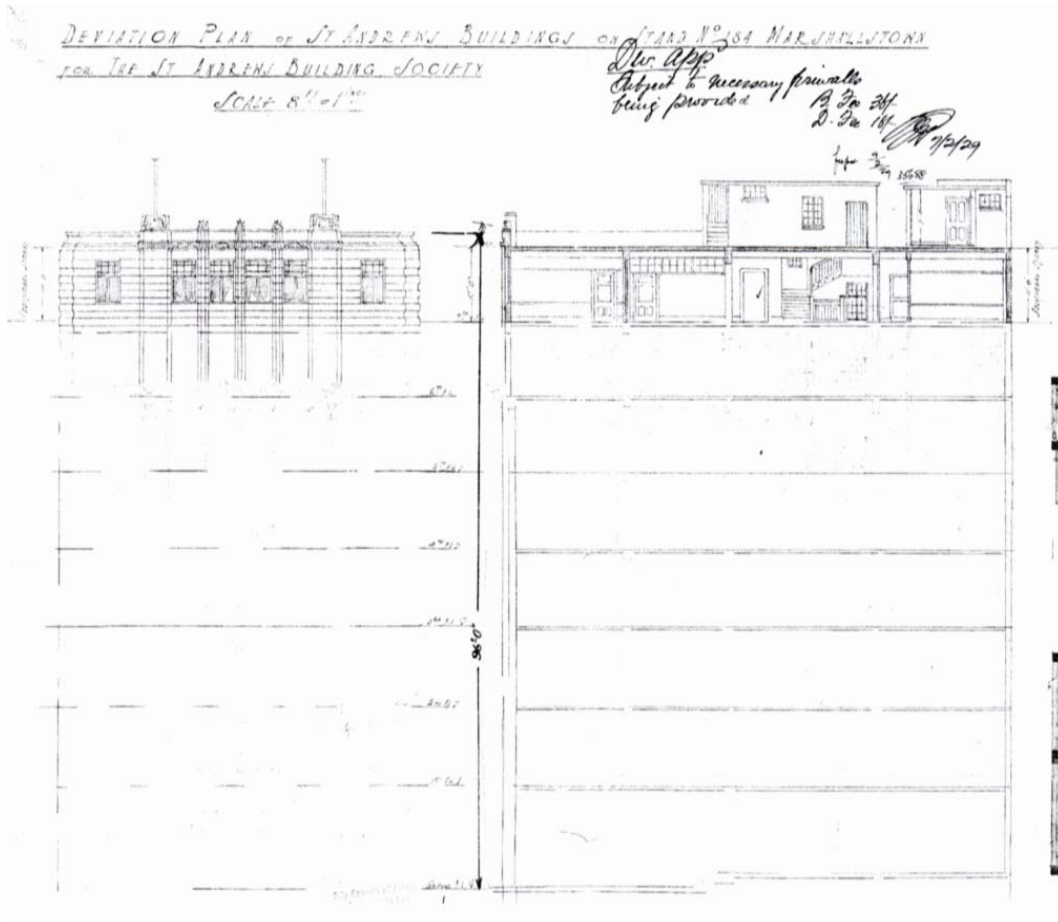
Previous/alternative name/s : originally *St. Andrews Building Society Building*  
 : By 1941 *Century Buildings*  
 : by 1953 *London Assurance House*  
 : by 1969 *Protea Assurance Building*  
 : by 1993 *The London Assurance Protea Assurance House*  
 : by 1998 *The Insurance Institute Building*

**LOCATION:** Street : Commissioner  
 Street number : 94  
 Stand Number : 184  
 Previous Stand Number:  
 Block number : BD  
 Suburb : Marshallstown  
 GIS reference :

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

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:**

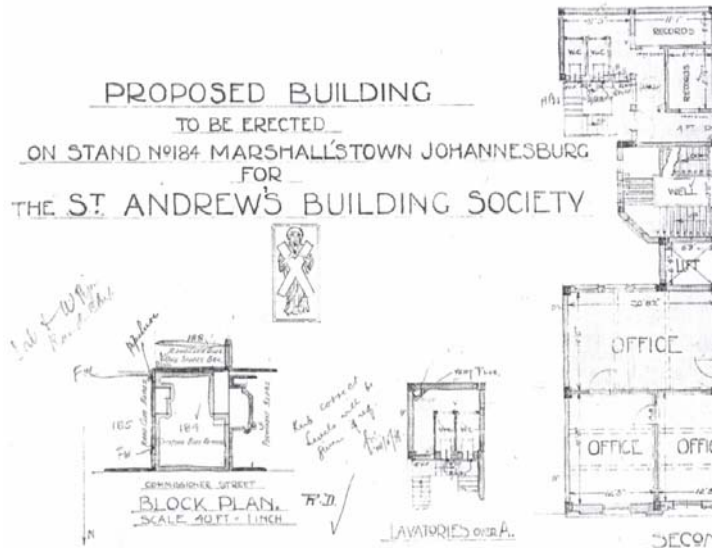
- Height :
- Levels above street level : originally seven; eight to front and nine to back of building
- Levels below street level : one
- On-site parking : none



Unfortunately the original elevation plans of the building have disappeared; a predisposition if a building was designed by eminent architects. The copy of the plan on the right is the elevation plan for a proposed addition of an extra storey to the front of the building and two-storeys to the rear of the building.

The original building was designed with a single lift and two sets of stairs; the main staircase is sculptured around a well; the building was designed with office space as a priority and minimum space was used for landing and passage areas.

Top: copy of original drawings showing new storey to be added. Right: portion of copy of "Proposed Building...The St. Andrew's Building Society."



**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:**

- Foundation: brick and concrete.
- Walls: reinforced concrete with textured plate cladding; stock brick.

Roof: flat, concrete.  
Windows: steel-frame.  
Foundation: brick and concrete  
External as well as internal walls: brick

**SITE FEATURES:**

**ALTERATIONS:**

Deviation plan: additional storey built with stock brick; approved 6 February 1929; estimated cost – building £3000; drainage £150; added value £3100: architect - JA Moffat & Harvey.

Addition: proposed extension to Tea Room; approved 18 October 1930; estimated cost – building £250; drainage £5; architect – JA Moffat & Harvey.

Addition: approved 5 April 1933; estimated cost – building £40; completed 15 May 1933; added valuation of £50; architect – JA Moffat & Harvey, National Mutual Buildings.

Alterations: approved 8 November 1949; estimated cost - building £50; drainage £25.

Alterations: approved 16 July 1952; estimated cost – building £150; drainage £20.

Alterations: approved 21 January 1953; estimated cost – building £50; drainage £20.

Additions: approved 28 August 1953; estimated cost – building £300.

Alterations, additions: approved 25 July 1961; estimated cost – building R2 400; Nurcombe, Summerley, Ringrose & Todd, 301 Portland Place, Jorissen St, Braamfontein.

Alterations: approved 1 February 1966; estimated cost – building R650; drainage R100; architect – A.H. Smith.

Alterations: approved 10 July 1969; estimated cost – R1 000; architect – Montie, Simon, Claser & Isserow, 500 Kelhof, 112 Pritchard Street.

Alterations: approved 29 January 1975; estimated cost – building R12 000; drainage R6 000; architect – Mallows, Louw, Hoffe & Partners, No 7 Pritchard Street.

Alterations: approved 12 November 1993; estimated cost – R100 000.

**INTEGRITY:**

**INSCRIPTION:**

**ARCHITECT:**

Original building:  
Moffat, John Abraham.

Additional storey:  
J.A. Moffat & Harvey.

“John Moffat was one our prolific fore fathers that significantly affected this city.” (Johannesburg Building, Space & Urban Feature Classification, 1998: Inner City).

**BUILDER:**

Structural Engineers: The Reinforcing Steel Co. Ltd. (By March 1941, this company had their offices in this building.)

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:**

Original building:  
Date on plans : February 1928  
Approval of plans : 3 September 1928  
Completion date : 17 September 1930

Additional storey:  
Date on plans :  
Approval of plans : 6 February 1929  
Completion date : 22 June 1931

**BUILDING STYLE:**

Art Deco - New York, 1920s.

Urban Features: "Architectural Merit: A more international Art Deco building in Johannesburg, well executed and detailed."

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Shops to street and office building; class 1.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

"Ofskoon hoër as Rand Club en Victory House besit Protea Assurance-gebou se fasade enkele bou-elemente wat in die ander twee fasades voorkom waardeur dit eenheid gee aan die straatblok (byvoorbeeld die simmetrie in die komposisie, die swaar kroonlys.)" (RAU Opname Historiese Geboue In Johannesburg).

**CONDITION:**

Good.

**URGENT ACTION:**

**SAHRA RECORD REGARDING ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, RESTORATION:**

**PROTECTION STATUS:** (under National Heritage Resources Act, 1999)

General protection:	Section 34(1) structure/s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Formal protection:	provincial heritage site	<input type="checkbox"/>
	national heritage site	<input type="checkbox"/>
	provisional protection	<input type="checkbox"/>
	heritage area	<input type="checkbox"/>
	listed in provincial heritage resources register	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant Gazette Notice:

Gazette description:

**FORMER PROTECTION STATUS:** (under National Monuments Act, 1969)

**NOTES:**

**DEEDS INFORMATION:**

Original ownership: St. Andrews Building Society  
By August 1939: Anglo French Consolidated Investment Corporation S.A. (Pty) Ltd.  
By 1976: Protea Assurance Co. Ltd, 94 Commissioner Street, Marshalltown, 2001.  
By 8 November 1949: A & M Investments, JH Isaacs, 104 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg.

## PRE-HISTORY OF SITE:



## MARAIS COURT:

The three-storey *Marais Court*, a Neo-Queen style building with brickwork façade, and completed in 1894, previously occupied this stand. This building was designed by Emley & Scott, the Emley being the famous Frank Emley. The Argus Company was a tenant of the building.

From left to right: *third Rand Club*, *Marais Court* and *Victory House*. (Norwich, O.I.: A Johannesburg Album; Historical Postcards, postcard 53).

## HISTORY:

The second *St. Andrews Building* is currently situated on the corner of 99 Commissioner and 37 Rissik Street. For further information on this building, see G-4.

As the building was recently renamed as a tribute to the late Walter Sisulu, it is fitting to acknowledge his role and contributions as one of South Africa's greatest sons.



"Walter Sisulu fondly remembered

*May 12, 2003*

By Lucille Davie

IN a rousing memorial at an almost-full Johannesburg City Hall on Friday, Walter Sisulu was fondly remembered and his life celebrated. The podium was a celebration of colour, strewn with ANC, SACP, ANC Women's League and Youth League banners, and sitting formally behind a long table were the dignitaries. And sometime amongst the many songs, former president Nelson Mandela made his way into the Hall and took his seat alongside his wife, Graca Machel, and various members of the Sisulu family, in the front row. So surreptitious was his entry that MC Vincent Smith had to apologise halfway through the proceedings for not noticing and announcing Mandela's entry, which was greeted with much applause and cheering. But this was not a real distraction from a ceremony that was sprinkled with praise for Sisulu: "an extraordinary man", "a giant amongst giants", "his spirit lingers on", "utter selflessness", "sharp mind and quick thinker", "a child of our struggle" and "last one of our great leaders". He died at the age of 90 on Monday, 5 May, in his Linden home, surrounded by his family. He encouraged Mandela to become a lawyer in the 1950s, and their friendship of 62 years has left Mandela grief-stricken. Sisulu, from humble beginnings and with only six years of formal education, distinguished himself within the ANC as the first secretary general, and continued to be an inspiration for many others, even while serving 26 years on Robben Island, from which he was released in 1989. There was a long list of speakers at the event. Johannesburg speaker of the council Nandi Mayathula-Khoza talked of how Sisulu "lived an ordinary life" but how he would now join heroes like Oliver Tambo and Albert Luthuli. Lallo Chiba, who spent 17 years on Robben Island with Sisulu, described him as "simple, modest and dignified" and a "father, friend and comrade". Cosatu General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi described him as an "unassuming, ordinary person". He called on management across the country to allow all workers to join hands and bow their heads for five minutes of silence on Wednesday, 14 May, as a respectful gesture in memory of Sisulu. Women's League member Bertha Gxowa described how she started working with Sisulu in 1952 when she joined the Defiance Campaign. She said that the Women's League would not exist today if it hadn't been for the support that Sisulu gave it in its early days. "The atmosphere around the country now since his death is like that when the Freedom Charter was being organised [in 1954/55]," she said, to many cheers. She described how everyone was talking about Sisulu and his legacy, like the excited buzz that was created in the build-up to the signing of the Charter. She concluded by saying that "we must never allow anyone to be suppressed again". The ceremony was concluded by tributes

from two cabinet ministers. Minister of Safety and Security Charles Nqakula said what many people seemed to be feeling in the Hall: "We are celebrating the life of this great leader, not mourning his death." Minister of Justice Penuell Maduna echoed these sentiments: "There is a sense of loss shared by all of us. This is not a moment for mourning, but rather for celebration, reflection and thanksgiving." Maduna said of Sisulu: "We are eternally grateful to you for having made the choice



that you did." The two-hour ceremony was interspersed with the audience standing, clapping and singing praises to Sisulu. One of them was: *Walter Sisulu, Walter Sisulu, ha ho na ya tshwanang le wena Walter Sisulu, Walter Sisulu, there is no one like you.*" (Information sourced from [http://www.joburg.org.za/may2003/Walter\\_Sisulu\\_fondly\\_remembered/stm](http://www.joburg.org.za/may2003/Walter_Sisulu_fondly_remembered/stm).)

Top: Photograph taken from [http://www.joburg.org.za/may2003/Walter\\_Sisulu\\_fondly\\_remembered/stm](http://www.joburg.org.za/may2003/Walter_Sisulu_fondly_remembered/stm).

Left: Photograph taken from [http://www.joburg.org.za/may2002/happy\\_birthday\\_Walter\\_Sisulu/stm](http://www.joburg.org.za/may2002/happy_birthday_Walter_Sisulu/stm).

#### GENERAL NOTES:

Estimated cost of building : £21500  
 Estimated cost of drainage : £500  
 Accommodation approved : two 'Europeans' and two 'Natives'  
 Valuation at completion : original building – £19500  
 : one storey added - £3100  
 Occupied : yes

#### PREVIOUS TENANTS:

By 1941: The Reinforcing Steel Co., Ltd. See extract from copy of letter dated 3 March 1941 below.  
 By 1954: Guildhall Insurance Co Ltd; Industrial Council for the Canvas & Allied Trades Industry.

#### CURRENT TENANT:

**THE REINFORCING STEEL CO., LTD.**  
 REINFORCED CONCRETE SPECIALISTS.  
 GEWAPENDE BETON SPESIALISTE.

P.O. Box } 1158.  
 Posbus }  
 TEL. ADD.: "ZONATURA."  
 TELEPHONE } 33-7007. DDT/MM  
 TELEFOON }  
 AND AT/OOK AAN  
 CAPE TOWN,  
 DURBAN,  
 EAST LONDON.  
 PORT ELIZABETH,  
 SALISBURY,  
 BULAWAYO.

DIRECTORS:  
 L. S. SLOMAN, CHAIRMAN.  
 L. EDWARDS, MANAGING DIRECTOR.  
 J. A. D. GILLESPIE, R. STUBBS.  
 W. S. V. STUDHOLME.  
 Alternate to L.S. SLOMAN - FREDK. KNIGHT.

CENTURY BUILDINGS,  
 (SIXTH FLOOR).  
 94, COMMISSIONER STREET,  
 JOHANNESBURG.  
 3rd March 1941

Ref. No. 1659

#### 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.

25 1 2004



WEEK  
16:00-08:00

**P**  
60 MIN

WEEK  
08:00-16:00  
SAT  
08:00-13:00

Walter Sisulu House









25 6 2003



27 8 2003

25 1 2004



Walter Sisulu House



WEEK  
16:00-08:00

P  
60 MIN

WEEK  
08:00-16:00  
SAT  
08:00-13:00





**Walter Sisulu House**

