

No Damsi

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**CARLTON CENTRE**

**JOHANNESBURG**

C A R L T O N   C E N T R E .

REPLY TO OBJECTIONS:

This Memorandum has been prepared in answer to the objections lodged with the City Council and with the object of meeting and disposing of those objections. It is suggested that none of the objections lodged give any good reason why the streets should not be closed and the Carlton Centre scheme proceeded with.

THE OBJECTORS:

The Objectors may be classified as follows:-

1. Neighbours who contend merely that they fear that the value of their property or the letting value thereof may be affected by Carlton Centre. Into this category fall:-
  - (a) Mr. Isaac Joffe, the owner of Stand 451 Marshallstown.
  - (b) Shellmay Investments (Pty.) Limited the owners of Stand 631 Marshallstown.
  - (c) Mrs. G.R. Taitz and Mrs. P.L. Machet, the owners of Stand 441 Marshallstown.

The objections for the above are lodged in identical terms.

2. Occupiers and owners of neighbouring properties, who give no reasons for objection other than that the closing of the streets is alleged to be likely to have an adverse effect upon their businesses through the diversion of traffic, but merely lodge claims in terms of Section 67 of the Local Government Ordinance.

They are the following:-

- (a) Latham House (Pty.) Limited, who state that they own Accountancy House.
- (b) Harris & Jones (Pty.) Limited, the occupiers of a portion of Accountancy House.
- (c) Trakmans Auctioneers (Pty.) Limited, the occupiers of premises in Fox Street, east of the proposed Carlton Centre.
- (d) Green's Buildings (Pty.) Limited the owners since 1930 of Stands 140 and 144, Marshallstown.
- (e) A. Harris & Co. (Pty.) Limited who are the occupiers of neighbouring property.
- (f) 372 Investments (Pty.) Limited who apparently own some neighbouring property.
- (g) B. Braude who states that he is a property owner in the area.

3. Persons who have lodged Memoranda but not objected. They are the following:-
  - (a) The Automobile Association, who have lodged a lengthy Memorandum, copy of which has not been furnished to Carlton Centre Limited.
  - (b) Trust Bank van Afrika Bpk., who own the block bounded by Eloff, Fox and Main and Von Brandis Streets, and who preface their Memorandum by the words "Ons het in beginsel nie beswaar teen die voorgestelde sluiting van die strate nie." It is pertinent to remark that the Trust Bank bought their property after the announcement in November, 1963, in which it is stated that application would be made for the closing of the roads, of the intended Carlton Centre.

Neither the Council nor the Administrator is under any duty at all to take any cognizance of these objections. No claim for compensation is made by any of them and they are not objections which should be considered in terms of the Local Government Ordinance. The points raised by the objectors are nevertheless dealt with in this Memorandum.

4. African City Properties Trust (1952) Limited, who base their objection upon the fact that they own substantial properties in Eloff Street and in particular Marlborough House. They allege, inter alia, that the values of these properties will be affected by the proposed scheme.
5. Die Nasionale Bouvereniging in their capacities as owners of the building known as Walbrook Building, which was bought on 28th August, 1964, for the purposes of building society activities and offices. It is again pertinent to remark that this Society bought the property after announcement of the Carlton Centre project and with full knowledge of its implications and of the intended closing of the roads.
6. C.J. and H. Spargo, residents of Johannesburg, who object on grounds of interference with the traffic.

OBJECTIONS AND THE COMPANY'S REPLY:

The Applicant has endeavoured to analyse the various objections, which have been raised by the objectors under various headings and to deal with them separately as follows:-

(a) Claims for Compensation:

It is alleged by all the objectors, save only those listed in 3 and 6 above, that they will suffer damage if the roads are closed. They claim compensation in terms of Section 67 (4) of the Local Government Ordinance.

For the reasons set out later in this Memorandum, it is apparent that the objectors fear on this score is completely unfounded. All the properties surrounding Carlton Centre will appreciate in value as a result of its construction. The surrounding shops and offices will enjoy increased

clientele from the people who will be housed in offices, shops and the hotel constructed thereon and those drawn by the parking facilities and piazza areas. Attached hereto Annexure I is a letter from Mr. Harry Gottlieb, a prominent estate agent with intimate knowledge of the area in question, which confirms this suggestion.

Assuming, however, that any of the objectors could prove that damage had been suffered by them by reason of the closing of the roads, Carlton Centre Limited have indemnified the Council against any amount which it may be called upon to pay in terms of Section 67(4) of the Ordinance. It stands by such indemnity and will meet any claims which may be awarded against the Council and which the Council is obliged to pay, together with all costs involved.

It requests the Council to proceed with the closing of the roads, notwithstanding those claims. The Council need not concern itself with the question of what amounts, if any, it may be called upon to pay to any of the objectors by way of compensation for supposed depreciation in value and should under no circumstances refuse to proceed in reliance upon the provisions of Section 67(4) (b) of the Local Government Ordinance.

(b) Bulk and Coverage:

It is alleged that Carlton Centre will acquire extra height and coverage by the incorporation of the streets and that this will be "unfair" to surrounding property owners (see Trust Bank Memorandum clauses 2 and 3 on page 4 and African City Properties Trust objection).

In regard to the existing coverage and height, Carlton Centre will give up to the Council certain surrounding portions of roads if Fox Street and Smal Street are closed. The total area of the roads to be closed is approximately 42,000 square feet, which is approximately one acre. The total size of the area, including the area of the roads to be closed, will be approximately five acres. Without applying for any concessions under the existing height and coverage regulations, Carlton Centre will provide more than the existing road area by way of pedestrian walkways, piazzas, gardens, and other open areas for the public amenity. The public will, therefore, gain from the closing of the roads in the area available for their use. When plans are filed for the building to be erected the Council will examine them and they will be subject to approval by the Council. The Council has no duty at this stage to take into account matters relating to town planning or passing of plans of buildings and at this stage the question of coverage, height, bulk, etc., are irrelevant to the matter before the Council, which is purely whether the streets should be closed or not.

(c) The Absence of a General Plan:

The Trust Bank (closing paragraph of their Memorandum); African City Properties Trust (1952) Limited (paragraph 11 of their objection) and the Automobile Association have urged upon the Council that the scheme should not go

forward, save in the context of an overall plan for the whole of the central area of Johannesburg, preferably with the assistance of overseas consultants.

- (i) The Council is referred to the time which it took to evolve its scheme of expressways. Overseas consultants took a year to make a recommendation. The Technical Committee took two further years to produce its expressway plans. Finance took a further six years. Any such plan, if and when prepared, would meet with a host of objections and would probably have to go before a commission of enquiry. The delays involved would be very extensive indeed. The Carlton Centre is able to budget for the normal delays to be expected in the closing of roads and financing a scheme of this kind. It cannot, however, be expected to hold over its scheme for a matter of years, so that a general master plan may be evolved. If it has to wait for such a plan, it will abandon its scheme and Johannesburg will have lost the opportunity of obtaining both a permanent architectural improvement to the city and a permanent amenity for its citizens.
- (ii) In discussion with the Council's officials, Carlton Centre has been informed that its scheme fits admirably into the traffic plan evolved by the Council, which contemplates the conversion of many streets into oneway streets.

(d) Enlargement of Size of City Blocks:

Nasionale Bouvereniging (2nd paragraph of their letter) complain that the enlargement of city blocks is undesirable and to its prejudice.

It is generally recognised in all town planning circles that the cause of Johannesburg's acute present traffic problems is its short blocks and it is desirable that blocks should be enlarged. African City Properties Trust in their objection (paragraph 11) recognise this fact.

(e) Public Interest:

It is contended that in closing the streets, the City is taking away from the public facilities available to them for exploitation by private interests and that the public will be prejudiced (Nasionale Bouvereniging objection page 2, 2nd paragraph; African City Properties Trust (1952) Ltd. objection, paragraph 3 (iv) and 13; C.J. and H. Spargo objection).

This is far from being the position. As already stated above, the open area to be given back to the public will exceed that taken away by the closing of the roads. In addition to this, the Carlton Centre scheme envisages underground parking for the benefit of the public, with gardens, pedestrian walkways, fountains and sculpture, all for the public benefit. The only effect is to exclude vehicular traffic: pedestrian traffic will be welcomed and actually encouraged, so that pedestrian

flow along the remaining portions of both Smal and Fox Streets, will be increased. It is pedestrians, not vehicles, that become customers and clients in shops and offices.

(f) Vagueness of Plan:

Trust Bank (see paragraph 1) contend that the Carlton Centre plan is at this stage vague and indefinite.

The only question before the Council and the Administrator is whether the roads should be closed. For the purposes of satisfying the Ordinance the Carlton Centre is obliged only to submit a plan of the streets to be closed. No application at this stage is made for approval of building plans or any variation in the town planning scheme. Carlton Centre has done more than it is obliged to do and has indicated in broad principle its propositions embracing open piazzas, gardens, pedestrian walkways, and underground parking. It is obvious that until Carlton Centre knows whether the roads will be closed or not, it is impossible for it to proceed further with its very extensive plans for its scheme.

(g) Prejudice to Neighbouring Owners, Offices, etc.

- (i) It is contended that there will be interference with the view and outlook of surrounding properties (see objection by Nasionale Bouvereniging). The Centre has in mind two or, at the most, three tall buildings surrounded by pedestrian piazzas, gardens, etc. The outlook from the surrounding buildings will be to a large extent on to these open areas: and the fact that the main buildings will be vertical and not horizontal will increase the vistas from existing buildings, not decrease them. This cannot fail to be an improvement upon the existing "concrete jungle" and will cause appreciation in value of the surrounding properties, by giving in this way both longer and more interesting views in all directions.
- (ii) It is contended that by reason of the change in traffic pattern, traffic will no longer flow past the buildings owned by the objectors and that dead-ends will be created (objections of Isaac Joffe, Shellmay Investments (Pty.) Limited, Mesdames Taitz and Mchet, Nasionale Bouvereniging, paragraph 1 on page 2 and African City Properties Trust, paragraphs 1 and 2).

Carlton Centre does not follow this argument. The objectors are not conducting drive-in cinemas or roadhouses. Passing vehicular traffic does not supply customers for their shops or occupants for their offices. The occupants and customers will park at the nearest available parking and come on foot to their destinations. The immediate effect of the provision of parking for 2,000 cars within at most two blocks of their various premises can only result in a greater demand for office facilities and more

custom for the shops in the surrounding area. Added thereto is the effect of a substantial office population in the new buildings which will be erected, not to mention the visitors in the hotel, who will, apart from patronising shops in the centre itself, undoubtedly increase trade for such shops round and about. Fox and Smal Streets on both sides of the Carlton Centre will carry greater pedestrian traffic.

- (iii) It is contended that the advertising value of a building in the neighbourhood will fall off (Nasionale Bouvereniging objection, page 2 paragraph 3). Apart from the fact that the Nasionale Bouvereniging bought its building with full knowledge of the intended erection of the Centre and the proposed closing of the roads, this argument is not understood. The Nasionale Bouvereniging will still front on to Commissioner Street and can erect signs there to advertise its business. It must draw increased custom from pedestrians using the Centre.
- (iv) It is contended that access to parking garages will be interfered with (Nasionale Bouvereniging objection). It is suggested that persons parking in the basement of Walbrook, who could previously have come straight up Fox Street, now have to employ a more devious route.

If the suggestion is that Walbrook would no longer be able to full up its parking spaces, this suggestion is rejected. There is a shortage of parking in Johannesburg and this shortage will probably continue, even after the parking facilities are made available by Carlton Centre. Commissioner Street has been designed as oneway westwards to take traffic away from Fox Street and this should give easier access to Walbrook. Egress from Walbrook will remain unchanged as Fox Street is presently a oneway street, leading into Eloff Street.

(h) Traffic:

It is suggested that the closing of the roads will aggravate and complicate the centre city traffic problem (paragraphs 3 (iv), 8, 9 and 10 African City Properties Trust objection, and objection by C.J. and H. Spargo).

- (i) The Council's officials have already advised it that the centre and the closing of the roads will in no way aggravate present parking problems. If anything, it will make problems easier by providing a vast amount of additional parking. This will enable the Council to reduce on-street parking in the neighbourhood and thereby increase the traffic carrying capacity of the streets.
- (ii) It must be pointed out that in the four blocks comprising the Carlton Centre site the conventional 100' x 100' city stands, each having its separate parking garage would have led to between sixteen and twenty garage access points instead of which in the Carlton Centre scheme only three or four are contemplated at robot controlled intersections. This, again, will tend to relieve vehicular traffic problems and lessen the inconvenience to pedestrians passing

such garage exits.

- (iii) Traffic congestion on the streets is often caused by cars queuing to enter parking garages and this will be eliminated by provision of substantial reservoir space on the first basement level.
- (iv) The scheme must be regarded in the light of the Traffic Department's overall oneway street plan trouble which will make Commissioner Street a oneway street from east to west. It is denied that Fox Street can, in any circumstances, carry an appreciable volume of traffic. It is blocked at the west end and therefore cannot contribute to through traffic. At present it is over-congested and carries a thin volume of traffic by reason of the double and parking taking place from Delters Street through to Loveday Street. This is caused by the P.U.T.C.O. depot and by a large number of auction rooms, furniture dealers and similar shops in the neighbourhood.

The result of the Council's one-way street plan will be that traffic will naturally prefer to flow in Commissioner Street and not in Fox Street.

(i) Routing of Streets Under Centre:

It is suggested that Fox and Smal Streets could be taken under the Centre (see African City Properties Trust objection, paragraph 12; objection by B. Braude).

The leading of the streets under the Centre is completely impractical, and this has been confirmed by the City Engineer. Allowing for a one in twenty decline down under the premises (a one in thirty is more usual) and in order to comply with the minimum 10'6" height required for public roads, the approaches at both ends to a subway under the Centre would have to go back more than a city block. If this suggestion were adopted, it would have the effect of closing Delters Street, Von Weilligh Street, Kruis Street and Von Brandis Street and would prejudice owners of property for a block and a half on each side of the Centre in Fox Street. Such property owners would look on to a subway ramp, would be robbed of road access and would suffer severe loss. A similar state of affairs would apply if Smal were to be taken under the Centre.

(j) Use Zones:

It is contended that the Centre will not fall into the present development of Johannesburg into zones for use by particular types of business (e.g. Eloff Street as a shopping centre) and that the area will be hemmed in by cinemas (see African City Properties objection, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6).

The following paragraphs (i) to (vii) have been contributed, in reply to this contention, by Professor E.W.H. Mallows, Professor of Town and Regional Planning of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg:-



(i) The specific areas of the city, namely those normally called "use zones" are nowhere defined but the analysis by Marshall (1950) is probably the best, having been derived from direct study of the city by its own officials. This analysis makes it clear that there are two dominant use zones:-

- (a) the shopping centre bounded roughly by Bree, Commissioner and Harrison Streets, including the main retail outlets;
- (b) the office centre bounded roughly by West, Commissioner and Anderson Streets. This area includes the financial, commercial and professional uses, except the medical profession and some legal.

Round these two main centres lie the subsidiary wholesale centres to the east and west of the shopping centre, a special medical centre along Jeppe Street and light industrial and warehouse to the east and south-east; motor town lies to the south. The entertainment zone, with the hotel zone is peripheral on the eastern border of the shopping centre and office centre. It is interesting to see that these uses are similarly peripheral at both Durban and Cape Town and into this pattern Carlton Centre, with its hotel and office accommodation fits well because of the trends of movement already apparent. The office zone has been moving east during the last five years and has already crossed Eloff Street with the building of Marlborough House and Walbrook and the proposed Trust Bank Building. The shopping centre has equally moved east. The location of Carlton Centre will therefore form part of the existing hotel zone which is on the eastern boundary of the shopping zone and will be equally accessible to all the chief shops and offices.

- (ii) Carlton Centre in this way is the natural development of these zones. It can therefore only help and not harm the already established areas, since it is immediately adjacent to them and therefore provides them with a natural expansion area. It can also direct the city in its growth and forward movement and, incidentally, assist the very persons who now object, in increasing the values of their property.
- (iii) Carlton Centre is based on analytical principles of sound economic growth and dynamic town planning, and any architectural merit is derived from these principles. The larger scale that Carlton Centre provides demands a bold and imaginative architectural approach if the full economic potential of the project is to be realised.

- (iv) One of the standard ways of improving traffic flow is to concentrate traffic in streets best adapted to continuous traffic flow and to close streets not so adapted. The narrow width of Fox Street coupled with the fact that it is closed at its west end makes it of little traffic use, while Commissioner Street, with its greater width and through connections at both ends, is far better suited for traffic flow.
- (v) It has already been pointed out that the hotel is correctly sited in relation to the other use zones of the city, being exactly peripheral to the hard core, high value area of main shops and offices. Carlton Centre lies on the borders of motor town to the south and light industrial and warehouse areas to the east and north, but Marshall's work in 1958 showed that these areas were on the retreat and field studies made within the last year show how remarkably accurate Marshall's forecast was. The warehouse zone has retreated eastwards; shops have moved eastwards from Von Brandis Street, and motor town, apart from its showrooms, has tended to retreat southward along Eloff Street and its extension.
- (vi) Carlton Centre lies within ten minutes walk of the Stock Exchange; within five minutes of some of the main department stores and close to the new "front doors" of the Johannesburg of the future. It is handy firstly to the new airport road on the east, which will feed directly from Jan Smuts Airport into Market and Commissioner Streets and, secondly, the exits from the new expressway on the southern fringe just south of the new East/West Expressways. It is, of course, designed for the future more than the present and not at all for the past.
- (vii) The shopping scheme of Carlton Centre forms a natural part of a combined hotel and office complex. The term "shopping centre" denoting something completely separate is not a term that should be applied to the central business districts. Shopping areas have to grow and move to keep alive, as the general development of the community and population increase proceeds and the shopping function that will crystallise around Carlton Centre is only the natural expression of this development. It cannot be described as artificial or unnecessary when it responds to new demands of growth which are already apparent.

CONCLUSION:

It is perhaps, significant that no objections whatsoever have been received from any of the property owners on the immediate periphery of the Carlton Centre site.

It is submitted that none of the objections raised show any valid reason for the Council to depart from its previous decision to close the roads. Indeed, Section 67 (4) (b) of the Ordinance permits the Council to reconsider its decision only if the claims for compensation are too great. Any legitimate claims awarded against the Council will be met by Carlton Centre, so that this question does not arise. Should the Council fail to allow this scheme to proceed, an asset of great benefit will be lost to the city of Johannesburg and its citizens. The Council is again referred to the Memorandum submitted by Carlton Centre to the Works and Traffic Committee, previously handed in and dated 17th September, 1964, a copy of which is attached for ease of reference. (Annexure II).

The many and long-term positive benefits that super-block development (i.e. development involving the closing of streets) confers on the city from a civic point of view deserve full consideration. None of the objectors have taken these benefits into account. They all assume that any change in street pattern is bad. This attitude is completely static and not dynamic. It will lead to the stifling of the central area of Johannesburg. It is in its dynamic aspect and in its capacity to initiate and to generate beneficial change that the great civic contribution of Carlton Centre lies.

JOHANNESBURG.  
19th February, 1965.

ANNEXURE I.

COPY.

J.H. ISAACS & CO. LIMITED.

Ref: Mr. H. Gottlieb/UMCC.

P.O. Box 5575,

JOHANNESBURG.

For the attention of Mr. D.B. Hoffe.

16th February, 1965.

Carlton Centre (Pty.) Ltd.,  
44/45 Main Street,  
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Sir,

As the consultant for Carlton Centre (Pty.) Limited, and having personally negotiated for the acquisition of four complete city blocks on behalf of this Company, I am now able to report as follows:-

The announcement that a consortium comprised of the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Limited and the South African Breweries Limited, had acquired four complete city blocks for the development of a complex of buildings which would include an international type hotel, created an enormous impact on the property market in general in this city. There is no doubt in my mind that investors, including institutions, regarded this as a tremendous gesture of confidence in the Johannesburg property market, particularly in view of the fact that it was announced that approximately 35 million rand would be invested in the development of the site.

It is a fact that shortly after this development was announced, there was a spate of activity for the acquisition of half blocks and, in certain cases, more than half blocks, for redevelopment in the central area of this city.

More particularly, however, in the immediate vicinity of the Carlton Centre development, a virtual enormous change took place and a large number of properties changed hands at prices which, prior to the announcement of the four-block development, would certainly not have been obtainable.

It is interesting to note that the Trust Bank had, for some considerable time, contemplated the development of their Head Office and were looking for a suitable site. I am personally aware that they were not interested in this particular area; however, it was not long after the four-block scheme was announced that the Trust Bank, in fact, bought an entire block bounded by Eloff, Fox, von Brandis and Main Streets.

There can be no doubt that they experienced great difficulty in assembling this block, as the price structure of property in the entire area had changed considerably. As

a matter of fact I would say, without hesitation, that all the owners in this particular block received prices far in excess of the market value prior to the announcement of the Carlton Centre development.

This office had a number of properties for sale in the area on our books and, again, since the announcement of the four-block scheme all owners concerned have increased their prices substantially. We are aware of the following sales in the area:-

The Salvation Army in Commissioner Street sold their property at R50 per square foot, and this was for an inside 50' x 100' site. I do not believe that any valuer would have valued this site - again prior to the four-block announcement - at more than R30 per square foot.

A little further East, at the corner of von Brandis and Commissioner Streets, a 50' x 100' site (which to all intents and purposes was site value only), changed hands at R60 per square foot. The inside site, also 50' x 100', was bought by a wellknown carpet company at R40 per square foot, and resold (less than six months later) at R60 per square foot.

Another example is the corner of Market and Smal Streets, a 50' x 100' property owned by The Lion Trading Company, which we had on our books for sale at R160,000. The owners have now refused an offer of R240,000.

In each of these cases, the buyers were aware that the Carlton Centre project involved an application for the closing of Smal and Fox Streets where they intersected the four-block site.

The above are illustrations of what has happened in the immediate vicinity, but the impact of the Carlton Centre development has also had its effect on the lower regions of Commissioner Street towards Troye Street where, again, several properties have changed hands, including one complete block.

The conclusion one must obviously arrive at from the above facts is that there can be no doubt whatsoever that the announcement of the proposed development of Carlton Centre in an area which was previously somewhat dormant, had the effect of making that area a most active and desirable area for property investors. It is my firm view that all existing owners of property in the area will benefit considerably from the establishment of the Carlton Centre, as this dynamic development will act as a magnet, and I believe that people from the suburbs will be attracted to the central area of Johannesburg far more than they were before.

Yours faithfully,

(SIGNED) H. GOTTLIEB.

# ANNEXURE II

## CARLTON CENTRE (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE TRAFFIC AND WORKS COMMITTEE, JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL, ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED CARLTON CENTRE AS A FOUR-BLOCK TRAFFIC-FREE, PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT:

This memorandum is submitted by Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, Limited, and South African Breweries, Limited, the owners of the four city blocks bounded by Commissioner, Von Weilligh, Main and Kruis Streets, in support of an application for the closing of portions of Fox and Smal Streets where they intersect these four blocks.

The memorandum sets out the following:-

- (1) The promoters' objects in securing such a development.
- (2) The architects' objects and civic obligations in designing the development.
- (3) The civic and urban advantages that flow from such a development.

Annexure I, prepared by Mr E.W.N. Mallows, head of the Town and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, sets out the urban objects of the proposed road closing.

#### 1. PROMOTERS' OBJECTS:

- (a) The four city blocks were purchased with the object of erecting a multi-purpose complex of buildings in spacious surroundings including shops, offices and residential apartments and having as its focus a new luxury hotel of international standards. The four city blocks were acquired at considerable cost after lengthy and complicated negotiations. The prime object of assembling these properties was to create, through the closure of portions of the roads in question, an harmonious and integrated complex of buildings in a traffic-free pedestrian precinct, incorporating pedestrian malls and open piazzas, with arcades, trees, pools, fountains and sculpture, thus establishing a new concept for central Johannesburg.
- (b) The conventional type of building development in Johannesburg consists of saturating the ground surface of the site with buildings, constructed up to the building line and converging on congested pavements and creating canyons on the streets, with dingy and dirty internal courts behind the buildings. These standards are aesthetically and functionally undesirable. In seeking to provide Johannesburg with an international class

luxury hotel and convention or conference centre, the promoters realise that the superior architectural design of buildings is not enough in itself, and that the standards now current overseas for such hotels require a generous and attractive setting back from conventional building lines, with the addition, where possible, of trees, fountains, or sculptures in the surrounding open spaces.

- (c) In addition, it is desirable that residents of the hotel should have at hand as many amenities and facilities as possible, including convention and conference facilities, department stores and a comprehensive range of specialist retail shops, parking facilities, restaurants, night club and other entertainments, etc.
- (d) In order to achieve a balanced socio-economic basis for the investment, it is essential, in our opinion, that the hotel and conference centre should form part of a multi-purpose development where all the buildings and the functions they perform are mutually inter-dependent. We have deliberately set out to design these buildings in such a way as to negate the image of the concrete jungle that is so often associated with Johannesburg.
- (e) In a multi-million rand venture of this kind, it is essential that we should be satisfied that the project will have a sufficient dynamic, both in terms of economics and aesthetics to justify the magnitude of the investment. Our assessment of the project leads us to believe that our objectives will not be achieved unless the roads intersecting the four blocks can be closed. If these portions of the roads are closed, we are willing to provide for increased width to the streets surrounding the total site area, to the extent already indicated by the City Council's officials.

## 2. ARCHITECTS' OBJECTS AND CIVIC OBLIGATIONS:

### (a) Freedom of Planning

If a complex of buildings of architectural significance is to be created, it is important that the planners should have as much freedom of planning as possible. This freedom would clearly be inhibited if the roads were not closed.

The objects of the promoters will only be achieved if the site is not over-crowded with buildings and, after a survey of the architectural possibilities made by our American

architectural advisers, it is apparent that the number of buildings on the entire site should probably be limited to three, in order to create satisfactory areas of open space for trees, fountains, pools and sculpture.

(b) Shopping

It is economically vital to the scheme that a sufficient shopping area be created. Architectural studies indicate that this can only be achieved by providing a substantial area of shops on the lower ground floor level, below the level of the piazza.

It has been conventional in Johannesburg to provide shops up to the perimeter of the street blocks. Development of this kind would not command sufficiently high rentals to make the project economically viable, having regard to the relatively depressed nature of the area surrounding the site, which is not yet a part of the retail core area of Johannesburg. In order to make the scheme economically viable, a new concept of shopping centre layout will be required. It is intended to develop shopping promenades at the lower ground floor level, immediately below the piazza level, with access to the surrounding streets and by means of large, open areas punched through the piazza.

(c) Parking

Sufficient parking facilities have to be provided not only for the parking requirements that will be generated by the project itself, but also by those citizens using the shopping, hotel and ancillary facilities. To meet this need, it is proposed to provide at least four basement parking levels, which if developed over the entire area of the four blocks including the intersecting streets, could accommodate 2,000 cars. This represents one car space per 600 sq. ft., of lettable space, instead of one per 1,100 to 3,000 sq. ft., or approximately double the rate formerly provided in Johannesburg.

To ensure easy ingress and egress from these parking basements, discussions have been held with the Chief Traffic Officer, as a result of which, it has become apparent that it would be essential to plan all movement in or out of the parking basements through robots at the existing street intersections.

Ramps of considerable length will be required in order to cater not only for the



difference in levels that would occur between the first parking garage level and the existing streets, but also to create "reservoir" space for cars awaiting parking.

(d) Possible lowering instead of closing of Fox and Smal Streets

The difference in levels makes it almost impossible to lower Fox and Smal Streets by taking them through below the piazza level. Moreover, this would completely frustrate the creation of a piazza which is level with Commissioner Street and of providing a shopping promenade level immediately below. In addition, it would render extremely difficult the effective staffing and operation of the parking garage and necessitate the construction of double the number of ramps to the lower parking levels, thus reducing the amount of parking which could be provided from 2,000 to 1,500 cars.

3. CIVIC AND URBAN ADVANTAGES FLOWING FROM THE CLOSING OF THE STREETS:

(a) Change in the Character of the City

The consolidation of four city blocks, together with the intersecting roads, into one site developed as a pedestrian precinct with a limited number of buildings, is likely to have a dramatic impact on the central city scene. It should provide a public amenity and a sense of space hitherto lacking in the city and it is hoped that other property developers might be encouraged to join in contributing towards the general uplift of the central business area.

(b) Increase in Value of Rateable Property

The portions of the roads closed would become rateable property. It is suggested that the architectural impact of the proposed building complex, and the business generated by the hotel, offices and shops in the complex will, during the course of time, result in improvements in the value of rateable property in the surrounding area. This should have a beneficial effect on the city's income from rates.

(c) Sun, Light and Air

Substantially improved light, air and sun will be available to the surrounding buildings and streets than would be the case if the four blocks were developed in the conventional piece-meal manner.

(d) Improvement in Traffic Flow

The reduction in the number of street intersections and the increase in the length of streets between intersections will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion substantially. City Council officials have advised the town planning consultants retained by the promoters that Fox and Smal Streets do not form part of the proposed system of one-way streets for the central business district of Johannesburg and all the indications are, therefore, that it would be beneficial to traffic circulation, and not detrimental, to close these roads where they intersect the four blocks.

(e) Increased City Parking

The provision of substantially increased parking facilities for office buildings, shops and related land uses on the south-east of the central business district, where such facilities are at present completely absent, will assist in balancing the development of the central area. It should materially relieve the present congestion caused by traffic cruising the streets in search of parking and reduce the strains imposed on the present street parking facilities.

ANNEXURE I.

MEMORANDUM ON THE PLAN OF CENTRAL JOHANNESBURG BY  
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The problems of the central area of Johannesburg are the problems of a plan\* being used for a purpose for which it was never designed. It is a case of the Metropolis of a sub-Continent having to grow up in the strait-jacket of a mining camp. Into the framework of this mining camp has been poured not only the activities of a great financial, commercial and business centre but also the traffic that today has to go with it. The result is that the plan of the central area is today completely unworkable, it is not only the caricature of a proper town plan but in fact a disaster and no one in their right senses would ever defend it.

What/...

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\* Historical evolution of central area plan, Johannesburg.

The plan of central Johannesburg i.e. the original plan on the piece of Government Ground (it was never a farm) called Randjeslaagte - was the plan of a diggers' village or mining camp. Under the old Gold Law of 1885 any digger, on any public diggings was entitled to rent a piece of ground (his "standplaas") not more than 50 Cape feet by 50 Cape feet on an area where there was no gold or precious stone and pay rent for it to the owner of the ground - in most cases the local farmer on whose farm the diggings had been proclaimed.

In the case of Johannesburg the place chosen by the Government (i.e. Randjeslaagte) was their own property so they laid out a miners' camp in the usual way here and the "standplaas" licences were paid to the Government. So temporary did the Government consider the whole operation that these licences as originally proposed were only for a five years' tenancy; as a result of protests this was extended before the sale of licences to 99 years: but in any case freehold was never for a moment considered. In this way originated the small 50' x 50' "stands" and to increase the rents the maximum number of corner stands were called for resulting in the very small blocks either 200' x 200' or 250' x 200'.

What has to be done is clearly to increase the size of the blocks - to do what the Transvaal Government of the day would undoubtedly have done if for a moment they had considered the founding of a town was required and not a mining camp - namely the establishment of much larger street blocks. The plans of the older towns all prove this : Potchefstroom with blocks 1200' x 600'; Rustenburg with blocks 600' x 300'; Pretoria with blocks 720' x 440'; all these and many others - Bethal, Nylstroom Carolina etc., - show the standard pattern. It is time the plan of Johannesburg was adjusted to get into line with this older Transvaal tradition of town planning which designed for an older and more gracious age is far better for modern large-scale development and modern traffic. One has only to go to Pretoria to see the enormous difference there will always be in visual dignity and urban character in a town based on a proper plan and the ugly appearance of the concrete canyons arising out of a mining camp. It is common cause among visitors and citizens alike that Johannesburg is not only one of the ugliest cities in the world but also one of the most unpleasant and inefficient to work in.

The present proposal is, for the reasons already stated, the first step - but only the first step - towards a solution. It is in fact a pilot study to show in detail how the mining camp can in time be transformed into a proper town. Some space to give dignity to buildings: some safe and quieter places for citizens to walk in and do their shopping: some sites where offices can be withdrawn away from the noise of the streets: and above all some reduction in the number of street intersections to permit both the free flow of traffic

in/...

in the town as a whole and some ease of access to multi-basement car parks to get the traffic off the streets. None of these benefits can possibly occur unless the street blocks are closed and blocks at least 400' x 400' - and probably much bigger - are formed. For this reason from the strictly town planning point of view the importance of the present proposals cannot be over-estimated: for on this type of proposal the future of Johannesburg will depend.

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JOHANNESBURG.  
17th September, 1964.

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