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— — — — — >> growth of site — — — — —
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Strijdom Square has always functioned as an open public space. Strijdom Square has always been an open plot of land allowing for the gathering of people. Church Square is the historic birth place of the city. In 1857 President Pretorius erected a church on the site and it was known as "Kerkplaats". From this an east-west corridor formed as people came to the church square for the church services. As the services lasted for a couple of days this allowed people to trade and this created movement patterns of how people approached the city and also how they exited it (PIENAAR: 03-05). This led to the development of the main roads used to enter or exit the city, namely Paul Kruger Street (north-south direction) and Church Street (east-west direction). The site of Strijdom Square lies directly east of Church Square along Church Street where the majority of trading occurred and became known as the *Markplein* (market square). The site was used to trade cattle and produce. The buildings that use to exist on the site when it was a market square remained there up until the construction of the State Theatre.



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- Fig 3.1 Church street looking west at the second church built in Church Square (1885)
- Fig 3.2 Church Street looking east (date unknown)
- Fig 3.3 Church Street looking west from the corner of van der Walt Street, Markplein directly behind view of photo (1880)
- Fig 3.4 Markplein during morning trade (1911)
- Fig 3.5 Markplein (unknown date)
- Fig 3.6 Corner of van der Walt & Church Street, Markplein to the left of the photo (date unknown)
- Fig 3.7 Corner of Church Street & Prinsloo looking west, Markplein to the left of photo & George Kynoch building in the right of photo which still stands today (1897)
- Fig 3.8 Sammy Marks photo taken from where the ABSA building stands today looking north (1922)



3.9

In 1970 construction began on stand 2909 on the State Theatre as well as an underground parking lot. The State Theatre was design by Walter Smith and Hans Botha (STAATSTEATER: 32). The architects were influenced by the architecture they witnessed while researching foreign examples of theatre, but especially the Japanese "Mega-Structures" they saw while traveling. Theatres (like churches, town buildings and government buildings) all over the world are designed as a sign of power of the person or institutions that are governing the country at the time. These buildings were designed to exercise control and power and were massively monumental structures dominating the surrounding urban space in order to make a statement of glamour, affluence and desirability (MCAULEY 1999: 52). The State Theatre exercises the same type of character and is definitely a dominating presence in the urban space. The left-over space on the western side of the State Theatre, remainder of stand 2909, was converted into public square but on a much more civic scale. It was named after JG Strijdom, a former Prime Minister of South Africa.

Before the State Theatre was finished a new building was commissioned for the south-west corner of the site, portion 1 of stand 2909. The Volkas Bank high-rise building (currently known as the ABSA building) was built. One of the architects, Samuel Pauw, said in an unpublished document that the building was to represent solidarity and security. He described the building as: masculine; strong; solid; robust and a sculptural structure. The ABSA building is a landmark in Pretoria, and is still the second tallest building in the city after the Reserve Bank.



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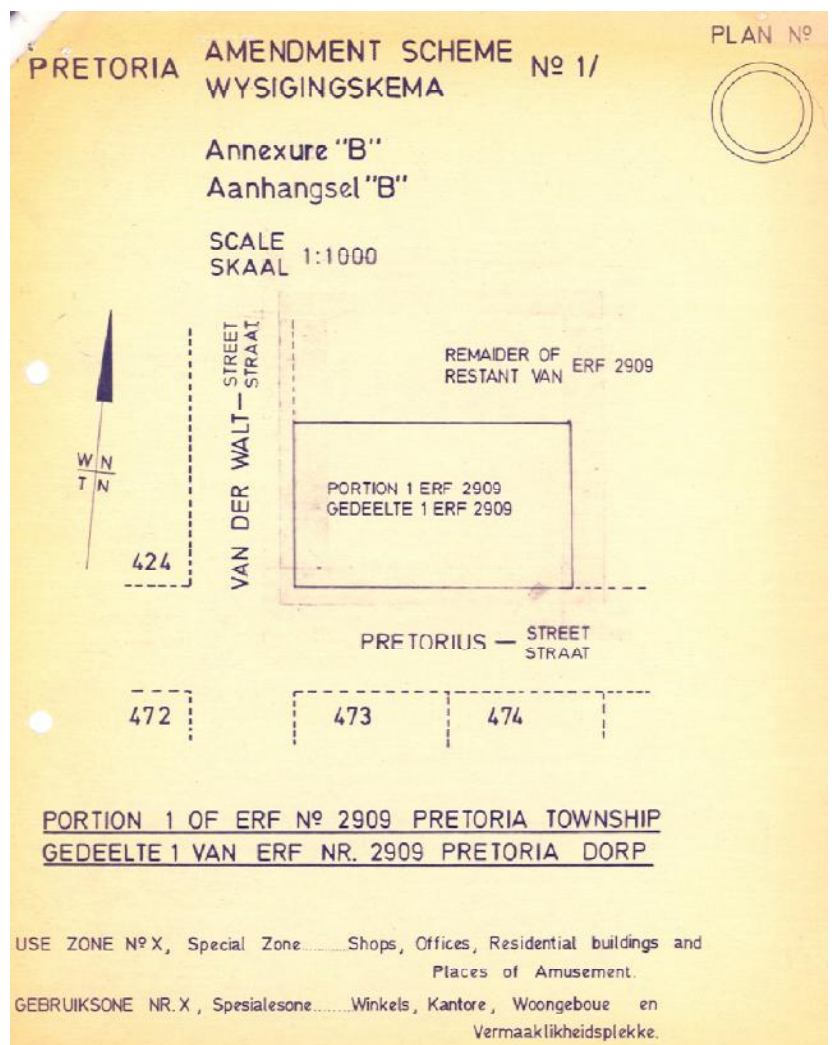


Fig 3.9 Un-used & dilapidated Markplein (1966)

Fig 3.10 Excavation of site in 1970

Fig 3.11 Construction of basements in 1970

Fig 3.12 Site information for stand 2909

3.12

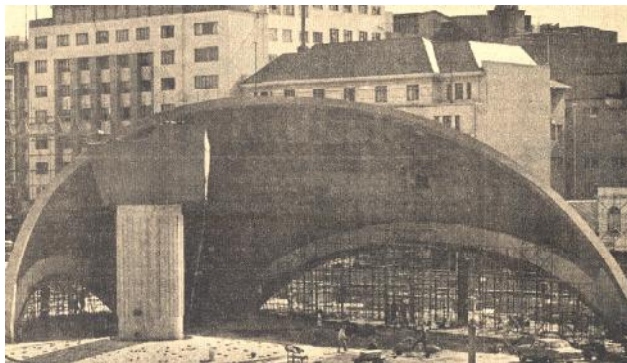
DETAILS OF RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY PRETORIA
AMENDMENT SCHEME Nº 1/

BESONDERHEDE VAN REGTE EN VOORWAARDES OPGELEË DEUR
PRETORIA WYSIGINGSKEMA NR. 1/

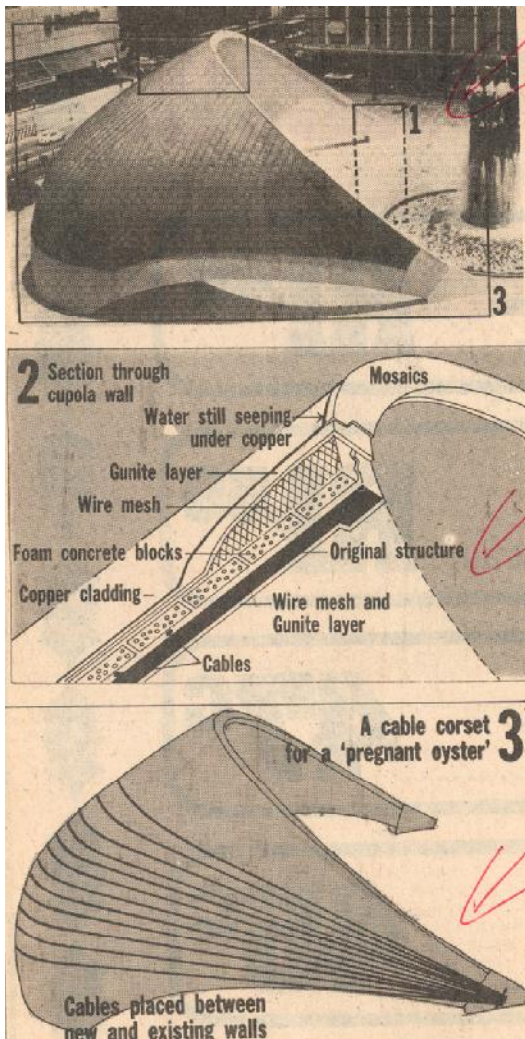
COVERAGE	As determined by the Administrator.
DEKKING	Soos bepaal deur die Administrateur.
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	475 English feet (excluding machine rooms).
MAKSIMUM HOOGTE	475 Engelse voet (masjienkamers uitgeslote).
PARKING	Must be provided to the satisfaction of the Administrator.
PARKERING	Moet voorsien word tot bevrediging van die Administrateur.
BUILDING LINES AND SET-BACKS	
BOULYNE EN TERUGSETTINGS	
(1) Ground and mezzanine floors (double-storey height)	
Grond - en tussenvloere (dubbelverdiepinghoogte)	
22 English feet from van der Walt street	
10 English feet from Pretorius street	
22 Engelse voet vanaf van der Waltstraat	
10 Engelse voet vanaf Pretoriusstraat	
(2) First and second floor	
Eerste en tweede verdiepings	
On the street boundaries of van der Walt and Pretorius streets	
Op die straatgrense van van der Walt - en Pretoriusstrate	
(3) All further floors	
Alle verdere verdiepings	
22 English feet from van der Waltstreet (excluding machine rooms)	
On the street boundary of Pretorius street	
22 Engelse voet vanaf van der Waltstraat (masjienkamers uitgeslote)	
Op die straatgrens van Pretoriusstraat	

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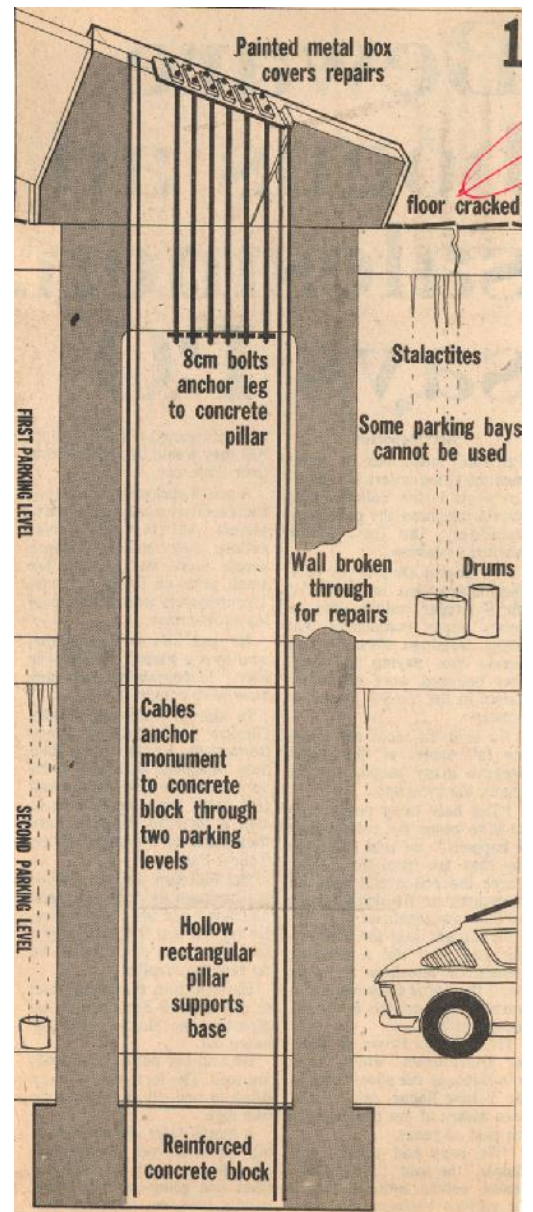
Over the years, the area surrounding Strijdom Square received much criticism. The huge concrete cupola was erected on the square in 1972. From its completion it was criticized as being a direct copy of the Oscar Niemeyer monument in Rio de Janeiro dedicated to a Brazilian politician (MEYER 1979: 5). When the supports were removed the two front legs crawled 80mm. Cracks began to appear and engineers said that the cupola was completely unstable. The dome cost R80 000-00 to build and cost R90 000-00 to repair. Over the years, Strijdom Square also went through many changes with continual repairs and re-designs (BEELD 1985: 15).



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Fig 3.13 zoning information of stand 2909 in 1970

Fig 3.14 construction of the concrete cupola (date 10 February 1972)

Fig 3.15 diagrams indicating the various repairs needed on the cupola (date 23 November 1979)

Fig 3.16 section through the foundations of the cupola indicating how repairs were done (23 November 1979)

Strijdomplein kry nuwe lewe

RESTOURASIEWERK aan Strijdomplein loop steeds volgens plan en Pretorianers behoort teen vroeg aanstaande jaar weer oor die plein te kan loop – dalk self vroeër.

Daar was 'n verrassing op mense wat altyd oor die "koudheid" en "doodheid" van die plein gekla het. Die TPA, wat vir die instandhouding van die plein verantwoordelik is, het die klages ter harte geneem.

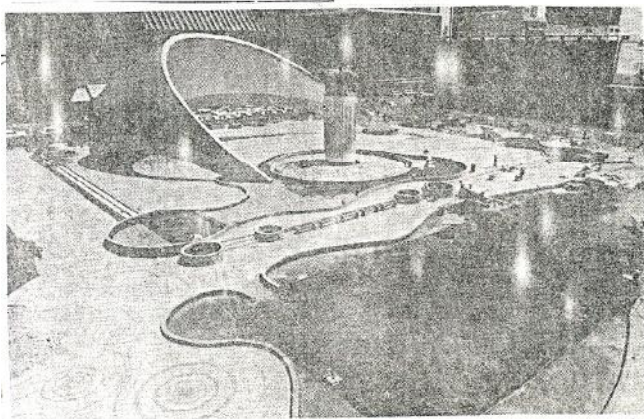
Hulle het die argitekte geander en daar is besluit om die plein met behulp van steenwerk op te kikker.

Verskillende sirkelpatrone is met die stene uitgewerk en daar is heelwat ekstra blombakke van verskillende hoogtes gebou om die eenomligheid en strak lynie te breek.

Mnr. Steyn glo nie die nuwe versierings doen afbreuk aan die standbeelde op die plein nie.

"Ons het die ontwerp aan verskeie mense voorgelê en almal het gedink dit is 'n goeie idee. Die stadsraad van Pretoria was in sy noppies met die steenwerk," sê hy.

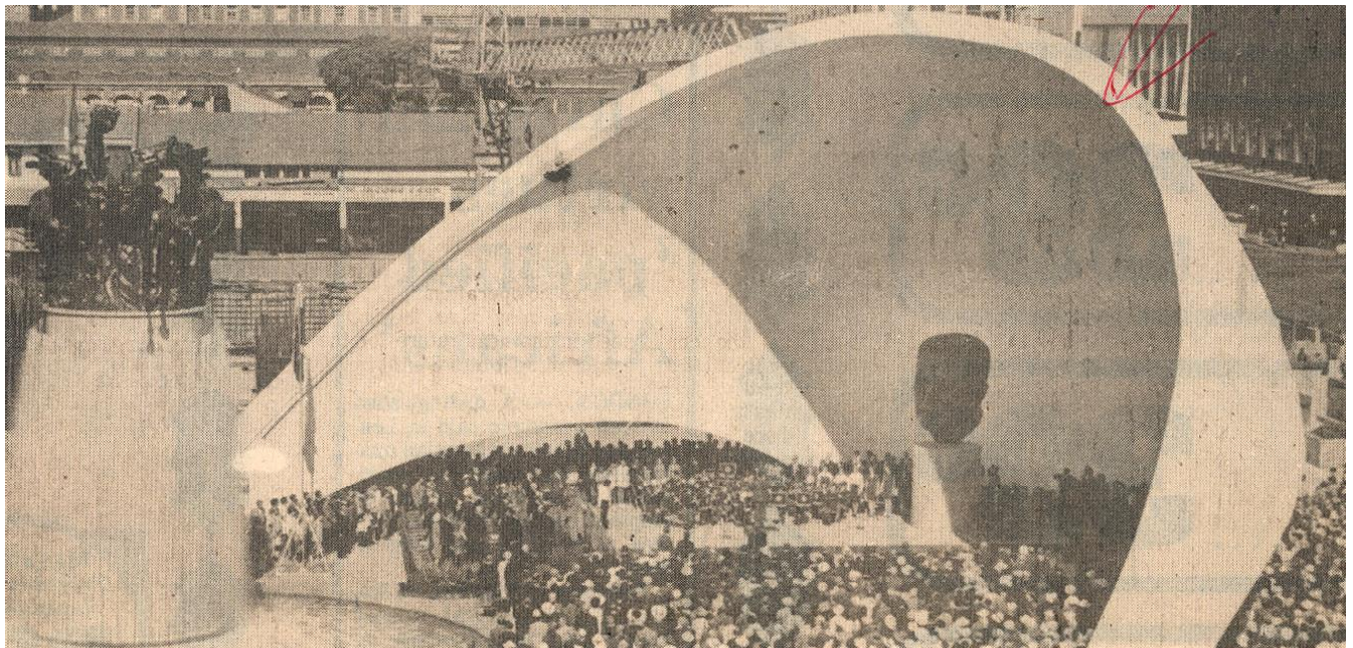
Die beraamde koste waarteen die plein gerestoureer word, is R2 miljoen. Volgens mnr. Steyn is die departement nog heeltemal binne sy begroting.



WANNEER die restaurasiewerk aan die Strijdomplein voltooi is, wag daar 'n verrassing op almal wat gekla het die plein is te koud en dood.

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Criticism came for the architectural fraternity as well. Alan Konya who was part of the University of Pretoria's Architectural Faculty at the time, commented that "The entire city block is just a jumble of concrete. Ten years ago it was a charming market square with cobbled alleys and little stalls of life." (MEYER 1979: 5). There was a big uproar at the time about all the older historic buildings being demolished and replaced with high-rise structures of steel and glass. The inner city was being criticized for becoming one of the ugliest cities in the world. Professor Dieter Holm of the Architectural Faculty of the University of Pretoria stated that: "Too many of the modern buildings are being built on the false assumption that only the inside of the building is important. Only a few hundred people have to work inside, but hundreds of thousands are confronted with its ugliness. Also, diversity is being built out of the city centre. The small business man who could afford the rental in the older buildings is being forced out because of the high rentals in the skyscrapers. With its attractive surroundings, its out-of-doors climate and its old buildings, careful re-use and restrained but imaginative urban planning could have made Pretoria one of the most beautiful cities of the world. Instead it is becoming one of the ugliest- lifeless and cold, forgetful of its past." (MEYER 1979: 5).



3.18

Pretoria's heart is ugly and cold, say architects

By WILLIAM SAUNDERSON-MEYER
Pretoria Bureau

PRETORIA'S obsession with towering concrete, glass and steel monoliths has given it one of the ugliest city centres in the world, an architect claims.

Mr Alan Konya, of the University of Pretoria's architectural faculty, said that after eight years' travel in the United States and Europe he was shocked at the deterioration which had taken place in the city's architecture.

"Pretoria's architects and town planners have identified closely with the brash and discredited US architecture of the 60s — and this has led to the raising of almost all the old buildings of the turn of the century.

"Many of the modern developments, like Strijdom Square, seem hell bent on destroying the city centre for people," he said.

The square is dominated by what is snidely referred to by locals as the "pregnant oyster" — a cupola enclosing the massive carved head of J G Strijdom, 12 times life size. In front of the cupola is a marble column surmounted by a herd of galloping horses.

The chairman of the committee in charge of the design, Dr Hendrik F Verwoerd, promised that it would be "more than a mere statue".

When the design was unveiled there was an immediate public outcry that it was a copy of a monument in Rio de Janeiro, designed by Oscar Niemeyer, in honour of a Brazilian politician.

Others warned gloomily that the cupola's design was structurally unsound and that it



Water seepage from the cracked floor in front of the legs had caused stalactites like this one in the parking garage.

would collapse.

Despite the outcry, work started on the R80 000 cupola in 1970. Since then it has cost more than double that amount to prevent its collapse. Structural difficulties delayed the completion for two years and work was done in secrecy. It was not until May 1972 that it was unveiled.

When supports were removed from the shell in December 1970, the two front legs "crawled" and the one lifted 8cm. Large cracks appeared in these legs and the engineers commissioned to repair it said the shell was "completely unstable".

They wrote in an article for an engineering magazine that the supports had rotated when the shattering was removed from the concrete, deflecting the dome and causing cracks throughout the structure.

To prevent it from toppling, they braced it with two jacks. After much head-scratching, they decided that if the cupola wanted to take off, the best solution would be to moor it.

Cables were fixed to the cupola frame and anchored to foundations below the two-tier underground parking garages. Total cost of repairs — R90 000.

City architects critical of Square project

COR UYS, Municipal Reporter

PRETORIA architects have described the city council's Verwoerd Square project as not utilising a "wonderful opportunity" to create a "really imposing city square".

However, according to the deputy mayor, Mr Bob Zylstra, the council has a developer and an architect and "should get on with the job".

The Pretoria Architectural Society says in a report on a meeting it held concerning Verwoerd Square that circumstances had changed since the project was mooted in 1965.

It said a new political climate, talk of privatisation, an increase in population and the planned city lake project invalidated earlier criteria.

It questioned whether a centre city square was the best place for a clinic, because the users — young Pretoria and poor Pretoria — lived the furthest away from the city centre.

Others asked whether it was justified to place the city library — described as a depot supporting suburban libraries — in the city centre.

Speakers also said insufficient parking would be provided and questioned whether there was justification for a new mayor's suite and more reception facilities.

The meeting was "fairly unanimous" that the scheme would not succeed in creating a "so-called people's place" in the city centre.

The city council has accepted an offer from Murray and Roberts Properties for the redevelopment of the terrain — on the block bounded by Church, Van der Walt, Vermeulen and Prinsloo streets — and demolition of buildings has actually started.

The project, which is the first step in the council's ambitious city core scheme, should be completed in 1993.

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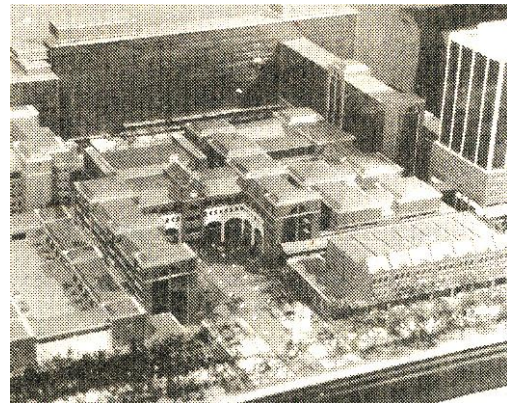
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- Fig 3.17 article of the re-design of Strijdom Square (date 8 October 1985)
- Fig 3.18 completed cupola (date 23 November 1979)
- Fig 3.19 article criticizing Pretoria's built environment (date 23 November 1979)
- Fig 3.20 article criticizing the proposal of Verwoerd Square (date 12 July 1990)

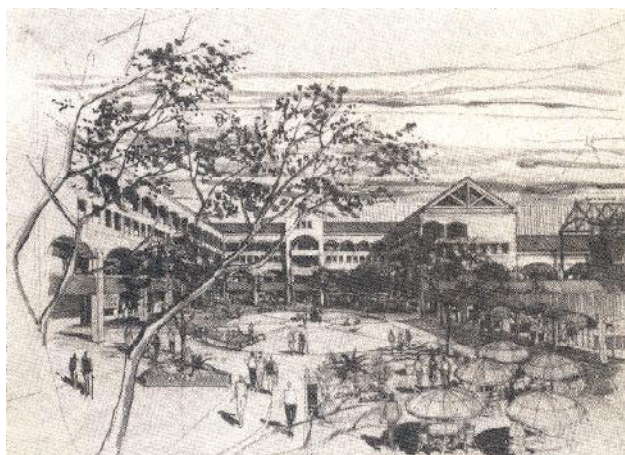
There was controversy over 'Verwoerd Square Project' (now known as the Sammy Marks Square). It was meant to be designed as a "people's place" and the money to be spent was enormous at the time. The city architects were very critical of it at the time. They said that the square would become a privatized space and would not benefit the people of the city (UYS 1990: 2). Later, when the square was finally to be built, there was again controversy as Verwoerd Square was not to be named after Hendrik Verwoerd but rather after Sammy Marks, a Jewish man, who was an entrepreneur (VAN DER LINDE 1991: 13).



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Fig 3.21 Model of Verwoerd Square (date 30 July 1987)

Fig 3.22 Architect's model of Verwoerd Square (date 14 May 1990)

Fig 3.23 Artist impression of Verwoerd Square (date 13 February 1991)

Fig 3.24 Article reporting that Verwoerd Square's name to be changed to Sammy marks Square (date 22 February 1991)

Nou druk 'n Jood Verwoerd van sy plein af!



Verwoerd as 'n jongman

3.24

SAMMY Marks, pionier-sakeman in die dae van die ZAR, en nogal 'n Jood, het nou byna vir Hendrik Verwoerd van die plein in die middestad afgedruk.

Die Verwoerdplein sou eers die hele straatblok oorkant die Strijdomplein beslaan het, ingevolge 'n 1966-besluit van die Stadsraad. Dié besluit is enkele dae na die moord op Verwoerd geneem.

Maar intussen het 'n konsortium sakemanne sowat twee derdes van die straatblok gekoop en besluit om dit liefste vernoem na 'n pionier-sakeman van Pretoria, Sammy Marks. Die mooi baksteen-gebou reg op die straatfront in Kerkstraat, staan ook bekend as die Sammy Marks-gebou.

Hier gaan 'n kompleks van R215 miljoen opgerig word.

Van Verwoerdplein het nou net 'n derde oorgebly, op die hoek van Prinsloo- en Kerkstraat. Dis die grootte van 'n klein agterplaasie en gaan deur die Stadsraad ontwikkel word saam met die res van die terrein.

Die Hendrik Verwoerd Monumentfondskomitee, met dr Willem Cruywagen as voorsitter, lyk vasberade om ten spyte van die omstredeheid, voort te gaan met die plan om 'n gedenkteken, hetsy 'n monument of 'n beeld, op die lappie grond aan te bring.

Die gedagte was vroeër dat 'n drietal monumente in die middestad die totstandko-

ming van die Republiek moet gedenk, het Cruywagen vandeeweek gesê. Dit sou uit drie pleine bestaan, waarvan die eerste Kerkplein ter herinnering aan die ou Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, 'n plein vir JG Strijdom omdat hy die gedagte van 'n Republiek lewend gehou het, en dan Verwoerdplein vir die man wat Republiekwording verwesenlik het.

Oor die monument wat 'n simbool van onderdrukking vir baie sal wees, sê Cruywagen: "Daar is baie goed waarin mense baie dinge kan lees. Jan Smuts se standbeeld staan in Pretoria en daar is baie mense vir wie dit aanstoot gee, maar daar was nie 'n plan om dit om te stoot nie. En wat van koningin Victoria...

After the huge cupola dome collapsed, the appearance of the square remained unchanged. The square has always been of significance to the city but has generally been seen in a negative light. Since the completion of the State Theatre the square has been a very barren and unwelcoming space and that is how it has remained to this day.