

# The Death of Johannesburg

- Illustrating the collapse and physical destruction of Johannesburg in the "New South Africa" -- the things that tourists are NOT told about.

This is What Remains of the Wits Drill Hall....

When the Queen of England visited South Africa in 1947, the official reception for her was held at the Wits Drill Hall, 95 Anderson Street .

For decades, the Wits Drill Hall was a famous venue and even a tourist attraction in central Johannesburg .

The following pictures and commentary: *"95 Anderson Str, Joburg CBD has been like this for a at least a year. The Council has been informed and told us that they will be using it for Emergency Services but it's still standing (or barely)."*









- Bree Street, Johannesburg, Where Gold (Used) to Lie in the Street, Now, it's Just Rubbish
- Bree Street is one of the main thoroughfares running through the city centre of Johannesburg, from east to west. It runs right through the CBD, and used to be one of the major economic centre's, as well as being a residential area.
- Today, as you can see, it is a slum, another shattered, filthy, ruined monument to the "New South Africa ."













# A Visit to Yeoville



- Yeoville was one of the 'trendiest' places in Johannesburg . Its main thoroughfare, Riebeeck Street, was the place for a very late night out, and here one could find an eclectic mix of exotic shops, dining establishments, clubs and who knows what all else, if you really looked.

And today? Well, let's let the pictures do the talking. My visit to Yeoville:

Corner of Raymond and Rockey Streets, Yeoville.  
This used to be quite a famous restaurant, I can't  
recall its name offhand, but I am sure it was  
*Mama's.*





All that remains of the South Street cafe, Bellevue East, Yeoville. It's still open, but I didn't venture too close because of what appeared to be sewerage in the gutter, which really put me off a bit.



The corner of Rockey and Bezuidenhout Streets, Yeoville. There used to be a late night takeaway on this corner. It was a Kentucky Fried Chicken once upon a time as well.



# Looking down Bezuidenhout Street towards Rocky Street .





A little further up  
Bezuidenhout Street

...

The BP Garage on the north corner of the major Rockey and Bezuidenhout Street intersection. One of two petrol stations in Rockey Road , both closed down due to being continuously robbed out of business. It was confirmed that the last owner of this petrol station was shot dead with an AK-47 during a robbery. The station was just abandoned, hence the pump's pipes hang loosely there, normally BP would take their stuff away.

*(Next slide)*





A typical gutted house, corner of Muller and Bezuidenhout Streets. Even the roof has been stolen.

Smashed apartments, Saunders Road Yeoville.  
Currently inhabited by squatters. The stench is  
unbelievable.





Inhabited house, lower Rockey Street , towards Observatory. ALL of the houses here look like this. I recall that the chief photographer for Associated Press in 1990 telling me how happy he was to be buying a house here, and he looked at me all funny when I told him I didn't think it was a good idea. Like all "good" liberals, he has probably since voted with his feet.

*(next slide)*





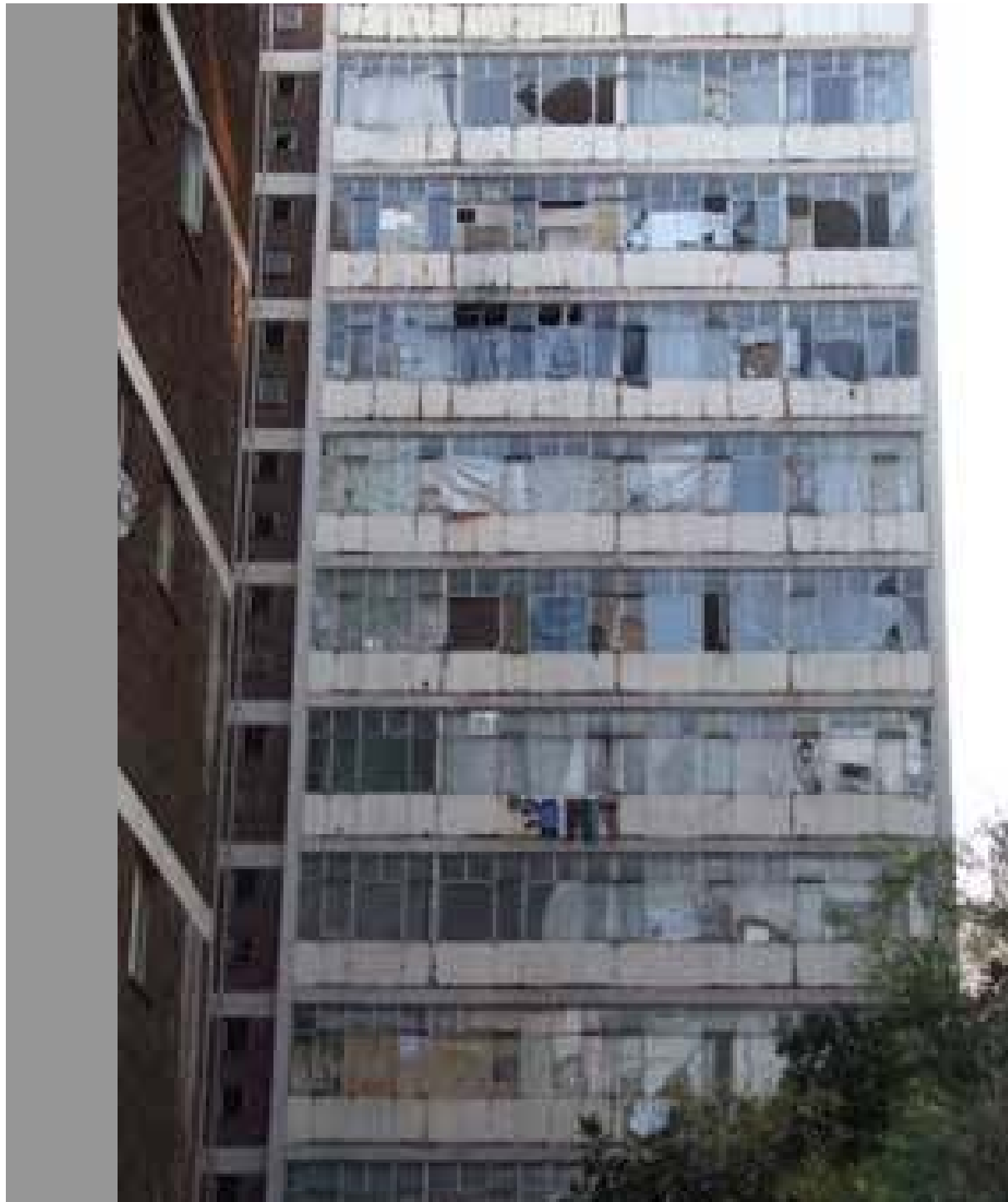
Typical filthy apartment block, Pope Street.

Street scene, Dunbar Street . Taken from my car while moving, as by now I had attracted attention and was being followed by an aggressive group of locals. It was time to leave Yeoville.



Joel Street ,  
Berea .





Apartments,  
Olivia Street ,  
Berea

Apartments, cnr.  
Lily Ave and  
Olivia Street ,  
Berea .





The ruins of the Sands Hotel, O'Reilly Street ,  
Hillbrow.



The main entrance to the Sands Hotel, O'Reilly Street , Hillbrow -- or rather should I say the ruins of the Sands Hotel main entrance





The ruins of the Mark Hotel , O'Reilly Road , Hillbrow. Incredible to think I actually stayed there while on holiday in 1984.



A close-up of the  
ruins of the Mark  
Hotel , O'Reilly  
Road , Hillbrow.

The corner of Catherine and Esselin Streets,  
Hillbrow. Trash is just everywhere, and the whole  
place really does stink to high heaven.





The main entrance to the old Hillbrow Squash Centre, Pretoria Street . The escalators have long since been smashed, and the one on the right is in such poor condition that it is dangerous, hence it has been blocked with an old car bonnet.

Smashed block, claiming to be home to a High School, corner Pretoria and Quartz Streets.





Parkview Apartment block, Lily Ave , Berea . Fairly typical state of the buildings in the suburb today. Inhabited.

A side view of the Parkview Apartment block, showing the equally typical street scene. What baffles me is the constant filth everywhere, even when trash cans are available, as one can see in the picture.







The bricked up remains of the Hatikvah Delicatessen, one of Hillbrow's more famous Jewish delis. Catherine Ave.

Burnt out and  
gutted apartments,  
Catherine Street ,  
Hillbrow



Corner Soper and Catherine Roads, Hillbrow. Fairly typical street scene.





A gutted and  
bricked up  
building, corner  
Claim and Kotze  
Streets, Hillbrow.

Gutted building and  
ruined furniture  
store, corner Edith  
Cavell and Kotze  
Streets, Hillbrow.  
No more *Big Deals*,  
in fact no deals at  
all.





A close-up of the bricked up *Big Deals*....

The Nedbank Plaza and the ruins of the Cafe Zurich, formerly a great late night hangout which used to serve the most wonderful Black Forest cake...  
Pretoria Street , Hillbrow





The gutted ruins of  
the Nedbank Plaza  
and the Cafe Zurich,  
Pretoria Street .





The Ruins of Cafe Zurich, Pretoria Street , another view.

The Harrison Reef Hotel...or what remains of it,  
rather.



The entrance to the  
Highpoint  
"shopping centre"  
on Pretoria Street ,  
as it looks today.  
Note the totally  
gutted building on  
the right. This  
seems to be a  
common pattern  
throughout the area.





The Highpoint apartment block: back in the 1980s, it was *the* place to stay -- if you had an apartment there, you really had arrived. Very popular with the rich students at Wits University , it was...

A close-up of a few of the windows in Highpoint today.



The destroyed building on the corner of Claim and Pretoria Streets, Hillbrow. Peter Rose used to publish the Hillbrow Herald from this building...I wonder what happened to him?





A close-up of  
the corner of  
Claim and  
Pretoria Streets.  
There used to  
be a dance  
studio and a  
fancy fashion  
outfitters there...  
I recall it was  
too expensive for  
me (mid 1980s).



Anyone remember buying records at the Hillbrow Record Centre, Pretoria Street , Hillbrow? Well you can't anymore. It's boarded and barred up, like many shops in the area.



Anyone remember the *Milky Lane* milkshake shop above Hillbrow Record Centre? Well, it's also gone, long time....





Street scene,  
Pretoria Road .  
Formerly one of the  
main shopping  
roads in Hillbrow.  
The mattresses and  
blankets are from  
locals who sleep in  
the streets.



Burnt out Apartment block, Goldrieck Street ,  
Hillbrow

Apartments, cnr.  
Claim and Van  
der Merwe  
streets, Hillbrow.

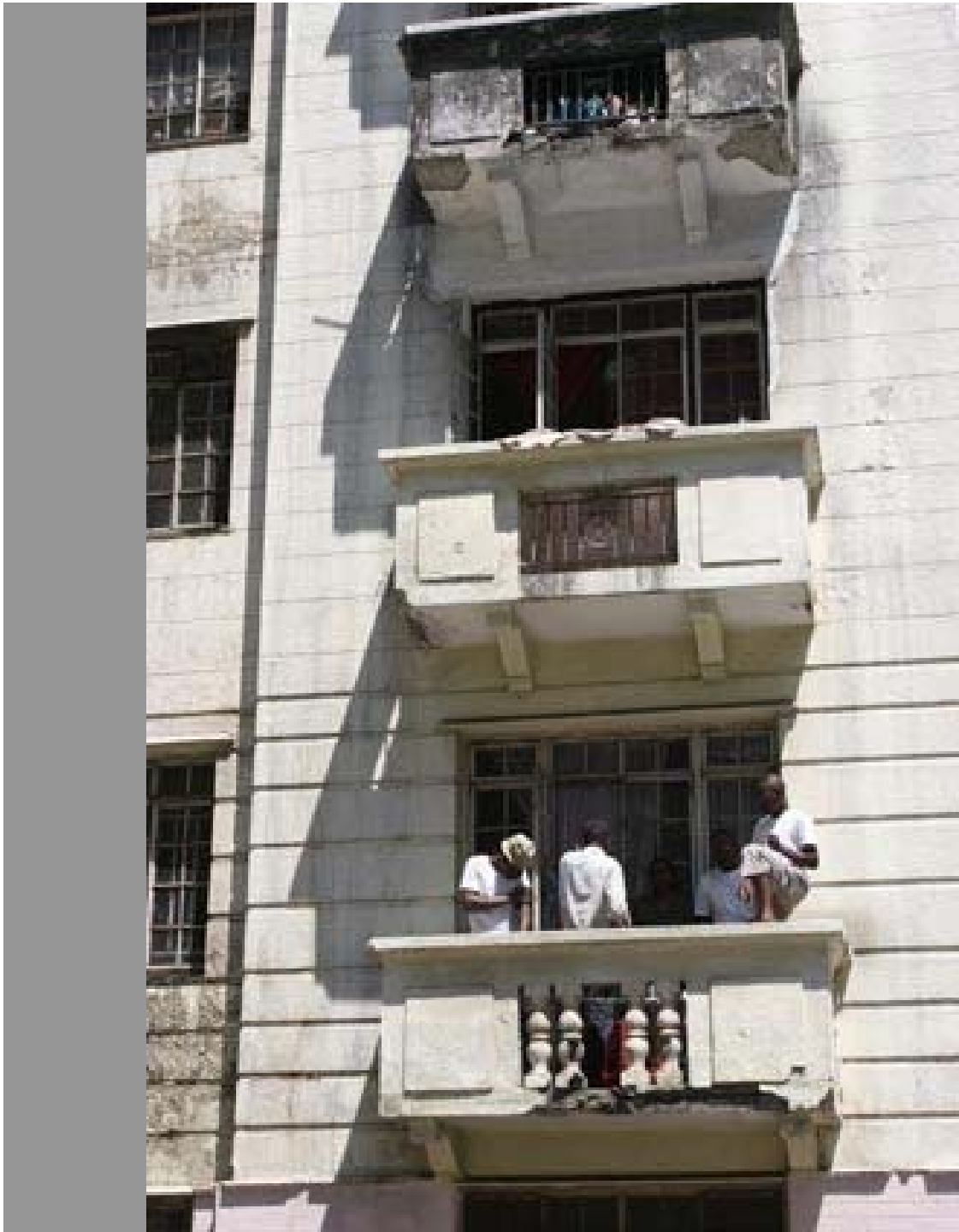


# Goldreich Street Apartments, Hillbrow





A car wash? Just mind the rubbish. Lower Claim Street , Hillbrow.



Apartment dwellers,  
Claim Street ,  
Joubert Park ,  
central  
Johannesburg

Apartments, Berea ,  
north eastern  
Johannesburg





The Rosa Hotel , Berea : boarded up and abandoned, but broken into by squatters and now occupied.



# The Ruins of Johannesburg . .



Jeppe, east Johannesburg , inhabited houses

# Jeppia, east Johannesburg , inhabited houses





Need a haircut? Jeppe, east Johannesburg,  
inhabited houses

## Jeppia, east Johannesburg, inhabited houses





Bree Street, Central Johannesburg

# The Chelsea Hotel , Hillbrow: a formerly popular hotel, now boarded up





"Air conditioned  
apartments" Berea ,  
north east  
Johannesburg  
Location: Awful  
Johannesburg ,  
Hellhole of  
Gauteng





The Three Castles Building , Marshall Street  
It was once a famous Marshall Street ,  
Johannesburg landmark, now it's just another ruin...







# The View From the Gauteng Legislature Building

It's a funny thing, the New South Africa . After taking over the old Johannesburg City Hall complex and turning it into the legislative assembly for the new 'Gauteng' province (essentially the old Witwatersrand region), presumably to make it pride of place for the province, they seemed to have forgotten what is all around them.. When one stands directly in front of the Legislature building, this is the view one has to the north (note the flagpoles!)





A close-up of the  
view:





this is view one has to the east, or directly in front of you (the old Rissik Street Post Office. In 2003, the building, which has been empty since 1996, had its clock hands, bell and the entire copper dome stolen.) Below, some close-ups;





This is the view one  
has to the south, I  
think it was a  
department store in  
the 'bad" old days,  
but now it's just  
another empty ruin,  
partially occupied by  
squatters.





## Joubert Park

Joubert Park was one of the first open spaces for Johannesburg's inner city, proclaimed in 1906 but planned in 1887 and named after Boer War hero, Commandant-General PJ Joubert. It used to be a place where the city council put up Christmas lights, where choirs would sing Christmas carols . . . nowadays it's just a slum with squatters living there...

First, a picture from the Old South Africa , showing  
what Joubert Park USED to look like...



And then what it looks like today:













All pictures taken from the Twist Street side.













All pictures taken from the Twist Street side.













# The Vanishing Impala



Oppenheimer Park, situated between President and Pritchard Streets, was a pleasant green spot in between the high rise commercial blocks of the old Johannesburg . Its central feature was a fountain, over which leapt a stunning piece of sculpture: a series of Impala, all linked. The statue was so marvelous that it was a tourist attraction in the official guides to Johannesburg .

Here is what it looked like then:



By the late 1990s, Oppenheimer Park had been trashed by the New South Africa . Bits of the statue were stolen by being hack sawed off, probably to be sold as scrap metal. Finally, the inevitable happened, and the entire statue was stolen, hacked off its pedestal. On the pictures below, the original mountings can still be seen. The council has placed a table where the statues and fountain used to be.













