

# 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 ."**















ISMAIL STORE



# 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 Rockey 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

1990s)



**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**

# Jeppie, east Johannesburg , inhabited houses







**Need a haircut? Jeppe, east Johannesburg,  
inhabited houses**

# Jeppie, 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.**



















