

# POTCHEFSTROOM'S HISTORICAL STATION BUILDING



## Burns Down

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Compiled by  
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It was with utter shock and almost disbelief that Potchefstroom inhabitants woke up on Sunday morning to hear the tragic news that yet another of Potchefstroom's historical buildings had been burnt down on late Saturday night 19 September 2020. This happening so shortly after the stately old Victorian officers building at Witrand burnt down on 17 July 2020 gives reason for some to suspect foul play.

**Johan Wolfaardt** from Potchefstroom sadly says: *"The 1918 Potchefstroom Station Building is gone. Heritage Potchefstroom is angry and sad about the loss. It is time we as a community start to act, take hands and save our town's heritage.*

*We are tired of lack of political will and the lack of involvement from organisations in Potchefstroom, yet once there is a tragedy like this we get asked "Why?" Act now!"* Email us to join: [heritagepotch@gmail.com](mailto:heritagepotch@gmail.com)

**Elmarie Mattheus** from Potchefstroom also has misgivings and writes that arson is quite possibly the reason: *"Die bos by Dassierand is dieselfde. Die skade daar is in 2 maande gedoen. Meeste is uitlanders wat ons gevang het. Dit is ons buurt wat poog om dit te red. Ons wil Wasgoedspruit rehabiliteer. Soos gewoonlik 'n handjeweel wat die werk doen en 'n ton rugryers. Ek is*

*die enigste vrou wat ons vergadering bygewoon het. Dis altyd dieselfde gesigte by alles. En dit is wat my met ander oë na ons mense laat kyk. Is ons besig om ons waardes te verloor?"*

On two previous occasions **Venessa van der Westhuizen** has informed Transnet about the neglect of the station buildings which have been illegally occupied by various people. Up to date she had received no response from Transnet. Rumours that a child got burnt there on Friday have not been confirmed yet.

**Elmarie Weyers** feels that a comprehensive investigation should be launched by the Heritage Foundation and the J.B. Marks Municipality in order to plan for the safekeeping and maintenance of historical sites and buildings. Potchefstroom's heritage and history should not be allowed to deteriorate into oblivion.

## HISTORY

History concerning the station building was documented by **Geoffrey Jenkins** as follows: "for many years and during the Great War, the Potchefstroom Chamber of Commerce had agitated for a new railway station, and this request was finally acceded to by the Railway Administration in 1918. The building, which is of the old Cape Dutch architectural style, was commenced in that year and the foundation stone was laid by Lieutenant Colonel Creswell Clark, C.M.G., O.B.E., V.D., the Assistant General Manager, on May Day, 1918. There was no official opening ceremony when the building was completed. This building is most efficient for a railway station, and in time of Stationmaster W. U. Garden, it won third place for railway stations in the Empire for its architectural features and beautiful lay-out." (Jenkins:110)



## SOURCE

**JENKINS, Geoffrey. 1939.** 'A CENTURY OF HISTORY – THE STORY OF POTCHEFSTROOM' Chapter xiii p.110.

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BRON: GOOGLE-EARTH