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a world class African city



**The New Council Chamber**

Johannesburg is ranked within the top 20 largest metros globally. Furthermore, the city is a world class city and is positioned to be a global destination. Hence, the City of Johannesburg is positioned to create the country's leading and iconic Council Chamber. The Chamber is the first phase of a broader future redevelopment plan for the Metro Centre. The Council Chamber is set to be the catalyst for the revitalisation and urban renewal of the precinct. The new Chamber is to be accessible and offer a world-class public viewing area.

### Urban Design Context and Urban Design Framework

A Conceptual Urban Design Framework for the core precinct has been developed. This framework sets out the development of 172 000m<sup>2</sup> of office accommodation in the precinct to provide accommodation for all Council and ME (Metropolitan Entity) employees who need to be centrally located. In terms of this framework, the development of a new iconic Council Chamber is proposed on the south side of the precinct, strategically located on a north-south axis aligned with Rissik street.



### Design Principles and Inspirations

The new Council Chamber has been designed based on the following design principles and inspirations:

- Circular, traditional, Afrocentric structuring of meetings (Lekgotla/ Kraal) which gives rise to a circular, inclusive and flowing structured chamber rather than a linear/ opposing arrangement.
- The African drum and drum beat as the rhythm of Africa, which inspires a drum-like structure to support the circular Council Chamber and which hints at a drumbeat to summon council meetings.
- The gathering of resources, inputs and participation from throughout the City as a symbol that the Council belongs to all citizens and had been made by all citizens. This will involve the mobilisation of artists, artisans and crafts people from all regions for the contribution of fittings and finishes to the Chamber. All wards of Johannesburg can also be acknowledged potentially in the incorporation of totems into the building.
- Transparency of the Chamber to represent openness and accountability through the use of see-through facades.
- Incorporation of gold colours/ elements into the finishes and fittings as recognition of the city's heritage and status of the City of Gold.
- The building will be the pinnacle of green building practice and will be the first publicly owned building to be Green Star rated. The building will be 5 star green rated.
- The building will be SMART with up-to-date technical infrastructure.
- The Chamber will integrate with its surroundings and connect to the city. This will be achieved both visually as well as via the broadcast of council events into the adjoining council squares and to all regional offices.
- The Chamber will be an iconic symbol for the City Council and will be a beacon for the transformation of the city.

### Designs

The designs make provision for the following accommodation:

- Seating for 361 councillors and officials on the ground floor.
- Provision for a second floor gallery of 158 persons ( including press and visitors).
- Generous circulation and informal caucus space behind the Chamber and Gallery.
- Large entrance foyer with amenities.



### The Totems Project Concept

- To adopt totem symbols based on the various wards that make up the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.
- Document the poetry/ narrative in a manner which represents and describes the diversity of Johannesburg as a world-class African city.
- Commission local artists to create hand-crafted totems that represent this inspiring African city – a city rich in culture and wealthy in ambition.
- The aim is for totems to tell a story of their own of the inhabitants/ artists of each ward.

**Definition of a ward:** Wards are geopolitical subdivisions of municipalities used for electoral purposes. Each metropolitan and local municipality is delimited by the Municipal Demarcation Board into half as many wards as there are seats on the municipal council (rounding up if there are an odd number of seats). Each ward then elects one councillor directly and the remaining councillors are elected from party lists so that the overall party balance is proportional to the proportion of votes received by each party.