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YEARS OF TRUST AND
INTEGRITY

Google office design takes its inspiration from the vibrant city

Google SA head office in Bryanston is breathtaking. The office design takes its inspiration from the vibrant city it's located in. The design concept was developed from the cultural and urban fabric of Johannesburg, and developed into a visual language where all spaces showcase the local personality and unique flavour that makes Johannesburg a proudly mixed-and-matched melting pot, says Elené Olwagen, interior design team leader at Boogertman + Partners Architects

By Stanley Karombo

"It's a gathering place, a place of storytelling, a place of expression and, most importantly, a place where the cross-pollination of cultures and ideas takes place," says Elené Olwagen about Johannesburg.

The City of Gold is the heart of our culture, she says. It's a city where cultural matter is borrowed, mixed and matched; similar to the activity (cooking) that takes place in a kitchen. Google's head office sets new benchmarks in Green Star SA ratings, and Leadership in

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and healthy-materials targets, and celebrates local design and locally sourced materials.

Reception

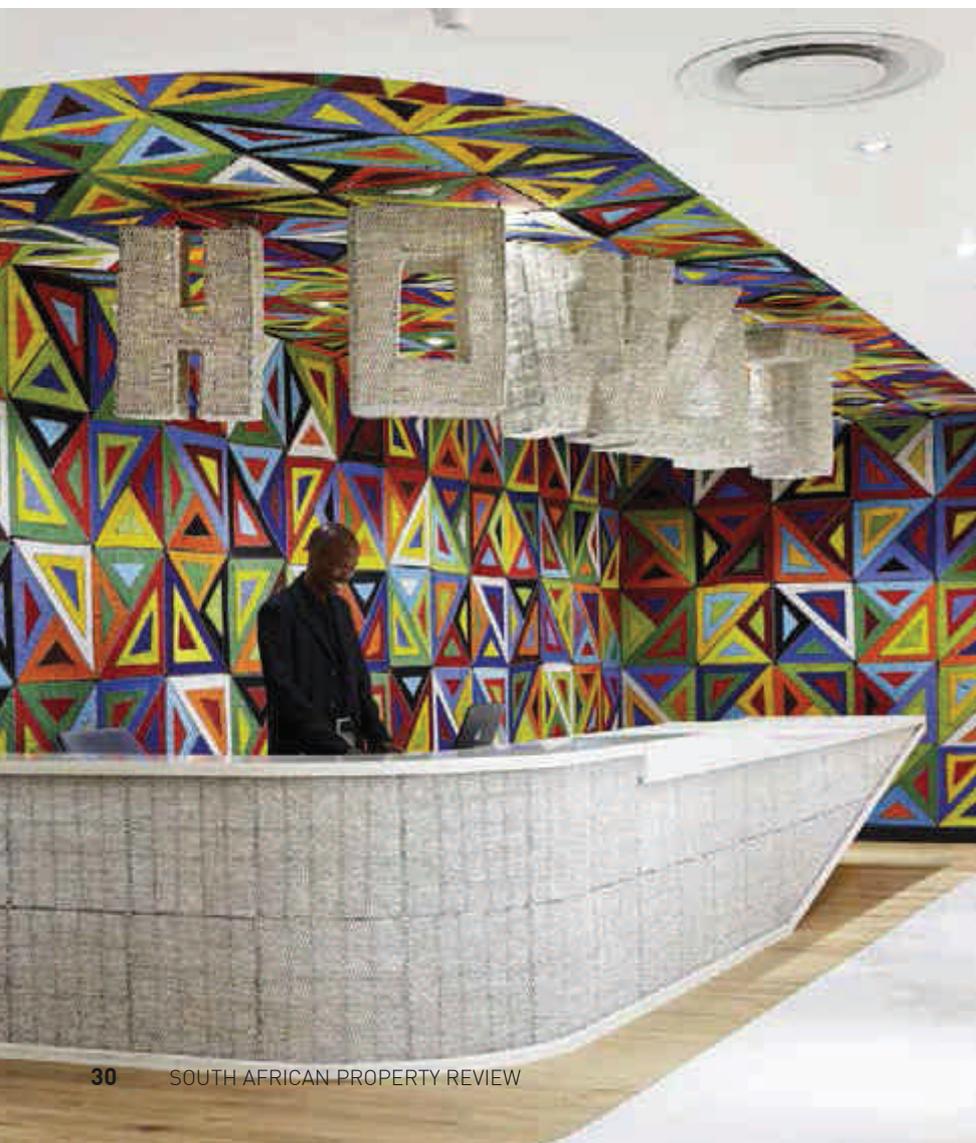
The Google reception was designed to give Google staff and visitors a big South African welcome when they enter the space. Olwagen says the beaded "Howzit" breaks the ice and makes people feel at ease. The chaotic beauty of the beaded wall represents the

softer side of Johannesburg, its people and its cultures.

"The contrast in finishes from sleek to rustic represents the juxtaposition between the business hubs of Johannesburg – such as Sandton and Fourways – and how they rub shoulders with townships such as Alexandra," she says.

The various break-out zones are developed around the diversity seen throughout the city. The "Book Nook" was designed as a creative escape from the digital work that Googlers perform daily, and boasts seating inspired by a set of punctuation marks (brackets).

The "Egoli" area was designed to showcase Johannesburg's industrial and financial diversity, while the conceptual design of "The Nest" was inspired by a weaver's nest and revolves



around creating a space where Googlers can relax or get some sleep. These spaces are only a few of those developed to give the Johannesburg Google office a cutting edge in its spatial experience.

The conceptual and design methodology were developed as an extension of the project's initiative to celebrate the way of life in Johannesburg, which has innovation and entrepreneurship at its core, says Olwagen. "This was achieved by including local artists, furniture and materials, as well as rethinking traditional ways of resolving spatial challenges."

The methodology of context-conscious design aligned the original concept with the implementation process through a particular mindfulness of sustainability and responsible development as an extension of the spatial design concept. This was achieved through the reuse of second-hand magazines, advertisement banners, crates, jeans, recycled timber and African beads, among other non-traditional building materials sourced from the city and used within the design.

The conceptual implementation and thoughtful approach to up-cycling, recycling and reusing materials, mediums and local talent was done in an innovative manner, celebrating Johannesburg in a unique and proudly South African way.

Interesting facts

The Google Jozi project boasts an accreditation of both a 5-star Green Star SA rating as well as a Gold LEED certification. In line with Google's drive to create a healthy and





- 7 500 recycled magazines were used for the cladding in the waiting nook
- Jeans were collected from staff members, converted into fabric and used as upholstery (all other upholstery material is recycled material)
- Furniture was made of recycled/up-cycled items (for example, old wheelbarrows were converted into chairs)
- Carpets used are a cradle-to-cradle product
- Crates from the city were reused as structural support for counters and stools
- 46km of glass beads were used in the cladding of the reception wall
- Local furniture was used, reducing the carbon footprint.

productive work environment to energise and inspire its employees, all materials on the project were required to conform to the company's Healthy Materials Programme.

- All internal building material (ceiling boards, partition boards, and so on) comply with the ISO14001 Certification
- 95% of all internally applied paints meet the total VOC limits
- 95% of all internally applied adhesives and sealants are less than the total VOC limits
- All timber used for cladding is reconstituted
- 3,1km of reconstituted timber were used to build "The Nest"

Google Jozi was the project of a lifetime. "It was an enriching experience for everyone involved, from client to contractor, because of the innovative nature of the space," Olwagen says. The innovation lies in its Green Rating, the creative use of recycled materials, the unique Jo'burg flavour, and the functionality and aesthetics of the space.



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who have a proven track record in the delivery of multi-level commercial fit-out projects, Trend Construction delivers projects ahead of schedule and within budget.

Since Trend Group's inception, it has worked for a number of key clients throughout South Africa. The group believes in a collaborating with other professionals to complete projects for key clients (such as Google and Booking.com) with best-in-class professionals such as Boogertman + Partners.

Having completed a number of office fit-outs for clients such as Bloomberg, Bidvest, King Price, South32, Motseng, Eli Lily and Etihad Airways, Trend Group has demonstrated its expertise across a number of industries and has proven to be a clear market leader within the industry.



"We hope that future interior designers will see how artisans and craftsmen add value and richness to interior spaces – a richness far greater than machine-made products," says Olwagen. "We also hope that unconventional use of recycled materials gains respect in terms of its industrial character and nature, breaking the stigma of recycled materials equating to low value."

Interior architects Boogertman + Partners Architects
Project managers Profica **Quantity surveyors** Turner & Townsend **Mechanical engineers** CKR Consulting
Principal contractor Trend Group **Electrical engineers** CKR Consulting **Fire consultants** CKR Consulting **Acoustic engineers** Linspace **Kitchen consultants** Talman & Associates **Green/sustainability consultants** Solid Green, Ecocentric, Ecolution **Wet services** CKR Consulting