



Bank of Botswana Headquarters Redevelopment Case Study

Author: Gorata Bontle Kgafela (GBK Architects)

The Transformation of a Central Bank Headquarters was a large-scale redevelopment of the 22,294m², five-storey institutional building in Gaborone. Originally constructed in the 1970s during the establishment of Botswana's independent currency, the campus carried deep symbolic value yet had become spatially and technologically obsolete. Rather than demolish, the client elected to refurbish, positioning sustainability as a first principle and targeting a 6-Star Green Building Council of South Africa rating: the highest possible certification and the first of its kind in Botswana.

The design team operated within fixed structural, mechanical, electrical and programme constraints, harmonizing design, cost, and time parameters already in place. The overarching design concept, *Pula le Thebe*, drew inspiration from Botswana's currency, translating institutional values—stability, reliability, democracy, transparency, and cultural pride—into spatial, material, and chromatic strategies. Floor-specific colour palettes derived from banknotes were applied to pause areas and collaborative zones, while marble, oak, and brass reinforced the gravitas of a monetary authority.

The spatial reconfiguration marked a decisive shift toward openness and operational efficiency. Managers and staff were accommodated in open-plan workstations, with enclosed offices reserved for senior leadership, supported by meeting rooms, shared print hubs, kitchenettes, and pause areas on each floor. Glazed partitions enhanced daylight penetration and literal transparency, aligning policy with architectural expression.

Sustainability and occupant well-being were embedded at multiple levels: non-toxic materials, access to natural light and outdoor views, acoustic treatments, water-efficient fittings, waste-separation infrastructure, and ergonomic sit-stand workstations. Integration of electrical, mechanical, audio-visual, and access-control systems into custom interior elements resolved technical constraints without compromising design integrity .

Cultural authorship was integral to the transformation. The project empowered local artists and designers through a structured art patronage strategy and the procurement of locally designed furniture, embedding national creative excellence within a prime-grade institutional setting.

The project was completed within programme and budget despite pandemic-era supply chain disruptions , demonstrating how adaptive reuse, sustainability leadership, workplace strategy, and cultural investment can converge to extend the life of a monumental building while redefining its institutional future.