

APPLICATION
In terms of the
TOWN PLANNING AND TOWNSHIPS ORDINANCE
(1986)
FOR THE REZONING OF
THE FARM INTERPRETATION CENTRE 932 JQ

MOTIVATING MEMORANDUM

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 The Application

1.1.1 Application is hereby made for the rezoning of the Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ.

1.1.2 The purpose of this application is to increase the Floor Area Ratio in order to allow for extensions to the existing restaurant and to permit the erection of ablution facilities at a new picnic area, at a new amphitheatre and in the children play area and also to include a hotel as part of the zoning definition.

1.1.3 The proposed zoning is "Special" permitting exhibition areas, scientific research facilities, educational facilities, conference facilities, administrative offices, restaurants, shopping facilities directly subservient to the main use, banking facilities, transportation facilities, residential units, **hotel** and other uses deemed to be related and subservient to the main use.

1.2 Location of the Site

The property which is known as "Maropeng" is located on the Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ, located on the northern side of the R400, a short distance to the west of the R563 Hekpoort Road, in the Magaliesberg area, Mogale City.

1.3 Size

The Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ measures 100 hectares in extent.

1.4 Ownership Details

The Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ is registered in the name of **THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF GAUTENG** and is held in terms of Certificate of Consolidated Title N^o **T175678/2003**.

1.5 Existing Land Use and Zoning

1.5.1 The property is presently zoned “Special” permitting exhibition areas, scientific research facilities, educational facilities, conference facilities, administrative offices, restaurants, shopping facilities directly subservient to the main use, banking facilities, transportation facilities, residential units, other uses deemed to be related and subservient to the main use in terms of the Peri-Urban Areas Town Planning Scheme, 1975.

1.5.2 The site is presently developed with the Maropeng Exhibition and Conference Centre, a hotel, shops and restaurants.

1.5.3 To site is surrounded by agricultural uses on properties zoned accordingly.

1.6 Other Aspects

1.6.1 There are no conditions in the title deed pertaining to the site which are restrictive.

1.6.2 The Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ is not subject to a mortgage bond.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The Proposed Zoning

2.1.1 This application is made in terms of the Town Planning and Townships Ordinance of 1986, read with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 2013, for the rezoning of the Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ, from :-

“Special” permitting exhibition areas, scientific research facilities, educational facilities, conference facilities, administrative offices, restaurants, shopping facilities directly subservient to the main use, banking facilities, transportation facilities, residential units, other uses deemed to be related and subservient to the main use, subject to conditions,

to

“Special” permitting exhibition areas, scientific research facilities, educational facilities, conference facilities, administrative offices, restaurants, shopping facilities directly subservient to the main use, banking facilities, transportation facilities, residential units, hotel and other uses deemed to be related and subservient to the main use, subject to amended conditions including an increase in the permissible Floor Area Ratio.

2.1.2 The proposed controls are :-

- “Special” permitting exhibition areas, scientific research facilities, educational facilities, conference facilities, administrative offices, restaurants, shopping facilities directly subservient to the main use, banking facilities, transportation facilities, residential units, hotel and other uses deemed to be related and subservient to the main use.
 - Floor Area Ratio : 12 000m²
 - Other controls as per the existing rights for the property, as detailed on the Map 2 documents.
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2.2 The Proposed Development

- 2.2.1 It is the intention of the applicant, being the Province of Gauteng, to upgrade and enhance the facilities at Maropeng.
- 2.2.2 The present zoning permits 10 000m² of Floor Area plus 10%, being a total of 11 000m². This has been fully utilized by the existing development of the site.
- 2.2.3 It is proposed that the following new facilities be erected :-
- A new picnic area, with a toilet block.
 - A new amphitheater, with a toilet block.
 - Extensions to the restaurant.
 - A new children's play area, with a toilet block.
- 2.2.4 In addition, the present zoning stipulates what land uses may be erected on the site. A hotel is not mentioned as a primary land use and as such the existing hotel has been considered to be a "related" use.
- 2.2.5 Due to the fact a hotel presently exists on the site and is an important land use, it is appropriate that this rezoning should seek to regularise this.
- 2.2.6 It should further be noted that much discussion has taken place regarding a possible substantial expansion of the hotel at Maropeng. To this end, an EIA has been approved for extensions to the hotel. This rezoning application will not obtain rights for the proposed extensions to the hotel, but is only to obtain this very limited additional FAR for the specific uses stated, and to include an hotel as a primary land use right.
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3. MOTIVATION

3.1 Need

- 3.1.1 Maropeng, located on the Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JR, is the home of the official visitor centre of the Cradle of Humankind and means “returning to the place of origin” in Setswana. It is a major international tourism destination.
 - 3.1.2 The Cradle of Humankind was declared a World Heritage Site in 1999 because of the area’s exceptional contribution to our understanding of humankind’s history and development, over more than 3-million years.
 - 3.1.3 There are 15 major fossil sites in the Cradle of Humankind, including Maropeng, and of which the Sterkfontein Caves is the most famous. The fossils “Mrs Ples” and “Little Foot” were both discovered in the Cradle of Humankind, as well as thousands more fossils of hominids, plants and animals. The research work and excavation of fossils in the area is ongoing and is of international significance.
 - 3.1.4 Maropeng was developed by the Gauteng Provincial Government in a public – private partnership in 2004, after the rights in this regard were granted in terms of the Development Facilitation Act.
 - 3.1.5 The site has been developed with a world class exhibition centre/ museum which is housed in the Tumulus building.
 - 3.1.6 The Tumulus Building is evocative of a giant burial mound or perhaps an enormous buried fossil, with concrete “bones” sticking out the top.
 - 3.1.7 There is also a learner centre and a hotel inside the development, which are mostly hidden in the rolling hills. Other uses include restaurants, curio shops and a conference or functions venue.
 - 3.1.8 As with all such facilities, there is a need for Maropeng to constantly update, refresh and remain contemporary, thus ensuring that it retains its reputation of excellence in the field of education and tourism. There is thus a need for the development of new structures and for a certain degree of expansion.
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- 3.1.9 Maropeng is an important public resource which serves the broader community, schools and universities. It also compliments the museums at the Sterkfontein Caves and the University of the Witwatersrand's Origins Centre in central Johannesburg.
- 3.1.10 The Maropeng Management has recognised that there is a need for certain new facilities including a children's play area, picnic areas, an amphitheatre and more restaurant space.
- 3.1.11 The possible expansion of the hotel has also been explored, but this rezoning will not permit any expansion to the hotel. If that project were to proceed, it would be the subject of a further rezoning.
- 3.1.12 The hotel is presently a use which is viewed as being ancillary to the main use. This rezoning seeks to regularise this by acknowledging the existing hotel as an important land use on the site and including a hotel as a primary land use right. However, no extensions to the hotel will be permitted as a result of this rezoning.
- 3.1.13 There is a need for the rezoning of the site to increase the permissible FAR to allow for the erection of new toilet facilities and to permit expansions to the restaurants.

3.2 Desirability

- 3.2.1 The proposal to permit 1 000m² of additional Floor area for toilet facilities associated with a new children's play area, picnic area and amphitheatre and to permit expansions to the restaurants is desirable for many reasons.
 - 3.2.2 Maropeng is an important museum and community resource and is of national significance to the tourism industry as well as being the premier tourism point in the Cradle of Humankind.
 - 3.2.3 It is thus desirable that Maropeng should be located where it is and that it should be allowed to slightly expand as is presently proposed.
 - 3.2.4 Many tourists visit South Africa specifically to visit the Cradle of Humankind including the Sterkfontein Caves and Maropeng. Maropeng thus has a national and regional impact and importance.
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- 3.2.5 It is thus desirable that this facility should retain its important status in the region and should be upgraded, enhanced and expanded to do so.
- 3.2.6 The environmental impact of any new structures on the site is a critical component in determining the desirability of any planned extensions to the facilities on this site. Environmental issues are thus critical to the success of the project, and are the cornerstone of the desirability of any proposal for enhanced the rights.
- 3.2.7 The Town Planning application for additional rights is primarily concerned with the additional buildings proposed, as defined or limited by the permissible Floor Area Ratio. However, the Environmental Impact includes all disturbances to the natural environment, including picnic areas, play areas and the open air amphitheatre.
- 3.2.8 To this end, an Environmental Impact Assessment was conducted in this regard and the Department of Environmental Affairs granted approval on 4 September 2015 for the following facilities :-
- The expansion of the Maropeng Hotel.
 - Three new picnic sites.
 - Expansion of the existing amphitheatre with ablution facilities.
 - New café and new children's play area.
 - An alternative access road.
 - Expansion of the existing service infrastructure.
- 3.2.9 As such, the EIA approval allows for far more development than is envisaged in this rezoning. If and when it is proposed to expand the Maropeng Hotel, a further application for the required Town Planning rights, will be submitted and advertised for public comment.
- 3.2.10 The proposed limited increase in the FAR, of 1 000m² will permit only the small additions to the site as outlined which are clearly desirable and will ensure that this important facility continues to serve the needs of the visitors to the site.
- 3.2.11 The proposed rezoning as well as the controls as proposed are thus clearly desirable.
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3.3 Policy for the Area

- 3.3.1 The Mogale City Local Municipality assesses all applications for changes in land use rights in terms of the Spatial Development Framework and any other relevant policy directives.
 - 3.3.2 As this site is located in Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (CoHWHS), the CoHWHS Environmental Management Framework is an important guiding policy for the development that will be supported on the site.
 - 3.3.3 Furthermore, all conditions as laid down by the World Heritage Convention Act, 1999 and the National Environmental Management : Protected Areas Act, 2003 and the associated regulations, must be complied with.
 - 3.3.4 Through the gathering of comments from the various authorities, the Provincial Government as the owner of this land, will ensure that all such requirements are complied with.
 - 3.3.5 The site falls within the Hekpoort Precinct Plan 2020, an approved policy of the Mogale City Local Municipality. This report states that “all applications for land use change which is located with the Cradle of Humankind, are submitted to the Mogale City Local Municipality for approval. Such applications are submitted to GDARD for comment only. However, (such applications) must be strictly evaluated according to the Environmental Management Framework of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.”
 - 3.3.6 The Development Concept (diagram 20) of the Hekpoort Precinct Plan indicates Maropeng as the epicentre of the Tourism area within a conservation area band. The proposal to enhance and extend the tourism function on offer at Maropeng, is thus clearly in line with the Hekpoort Precinct Plan 2020.
 - 3.3.7 The Gauteng Environmental Management Framework, as approved by the Province of Gauteng, stipulates that this site is within the “Primary Zone” of the CoHWHS. It states further that “the need to protect and preserve the integrity of this zone is without doubt the prime management responsibility of the Management Authority in terms of its mandate to protect, preserve and present these elements.”
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3.3.8 The uses which are seen to be desirable in the Prime Zone include guided scientific tours, fossil research & associated infrastructure, Boutique hotels and nature & heritage trails.

3.3.9 It is clear that the proposed relatively minor extensions to the facilities on the site, comply with the aims of the various policies applicable to the site, and should thus be approved.

4. SERVICES

4.1 The proposed enhanced rights will not result in the need for any additional power being required to facilitate this development, as the existing power supply will be sufficient.

4.2 The existing water supply and sewerage arrangements will be adequate to deal with the additional usage, but if necessary, a report from the project engineer can detail this further.

4.3 Similarly, if required, traffic issues can be further addressed by the project Traffic Engineer.

4.4 All conditions of the Service departments will be adhered to.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This application is for the rezoning of the Farm Interpretation Centre 932 JQ. In order to increase the Floor Area Ratio, to allow for extensions to the existing restaurant and ablution facilities at a new picnic area, at a new amphitheatre and in the children play area and also to include hotel as part of the zoning definition.

5.2 The proposal complies with the Local Authority's policy initiatives as well as the Policy directives for the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.

5.3 The need for and desirability of the proposed rezoning has been proven.

5.4 It is thus submitted that this application should be supported and approved.
