
REINSURANCE



PAN-AFRICAN BY DESIGN

For WAICA Re's West Africa regional office in Accra, Boogertman + Partners has created an interior that is identifiably African yet tied to no single place – a workspace built for a company whose reach continues to grow across the continent.

PHOTOS: Tebo Pixels

Boogertman + Partners has completed the architecture, landscape architecture and interior design for the WAICA Reinsurance Corporation's West Africa regional office in Accra, Ghana.

WAICA Re is a leading pan-African reinsurance company with its head office in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and a presence in Zimbabwe and Kenya. Ghana is the newest regional office in that network, with the possibility of expansion into other regions in time.

As such, the design needed to reach beyond any single culture or location. The aim was an experience that would be broadly inclusive and welcoming – an identity accessible across the continent, yet identifiably African in character. That intent carries through every design element.

The building is a bold expression of WAICA Re's pan-African vision – supporting regional growth and contributing to Accra's emergence as a significant commercial and architectural centre.

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ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEXT

This office building adds a new contemporary landmark to the prestigious Airport Residential Area in Accra, Ghana, drawing on the city's local culture and fast-evolving urban context. As such, it is also envisioned as an urban intervention that will contribute to the development of the city around it.

The nine-storey building consists of two office towers atop a podium for above-ground parking. The office floors are defined by a thermally efficient glazed curtain wall shaded by vertical fins on the eastern and western elevations. Inside, a central multi-level atrium creates visual and social connectivity between floors. Landscaped terraces on the fifth and ninth levels – where WAICA Re's own office is located – provide outdoor breakout areas, extending from the adjacent auditorium and conference facilities. At roof level, a canopy fitted with photovoltaic panels crowns the building – a statement of both sustainability and architectural ambition.

The multi-coloured façade, inspired by African iconography, textiles, fauna and flora, wraps the structure in a vibrant skin, providing ventilation to the parking levels while framing a grand, public-facing entrance.











INTERIOR DESIGN

Boogertman + Partners' interiors team was responsible for the interior design of the main reception on the ground floor, as well as for the lift lobbies, bathrooms and reception areas in tenanted floors throughout the building. In addition, they carried out the full design and fit-out of WAICA's own offices on the ninth floor, as well as the fifth floor – home to an auditorium and training facility, plus the rooftop terrace.

The public areas, including the ground-floor reception, are welcoming, transparent, light-filled spaces with a strong visual connection to the city. The office podium floor accommodates a 200-seater auditorium, conference facilities and meeting rooms, which in turn spill out onto terraces that extend the event space into a flexible recreation area. These facilities double as rentable commercial space, making this an active, publicly accessible floor.

The interior design on the podium level takes its cue from the colours of the building's façade rather than patterning. A neutral base acts as a canvas for recurring accents of WAICA Re's signature brand red (including red marble for bathroom vanities). Key colours of the façade have been used to 'colour-block' different zones with furniture and rugs throughout the public office areas. (The auditorium has been designed to allow the option of letting in natural light though clerestory windows, which keeps it hospitable and flexible.) Planters with lush vegetation are generously deployed throughout, softening the interior and adding greenery and natural textures.

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WAICA RE OFFICE

WAICA Re's dedicated office space on the ninth floor is loosely divided into two wings – one for an open-plan modular workspace layout and the other for the executive suites. A vibrant and energetic interior palette was carefully crafted to blend the professionalism of a corporate environment with homely elements and the dynamism of social 'third spaces' to create a work environment in which collaboration, interaction, creativity and social engagement are enhanced for the wellbeing of staff and the organisation.

The overall approach blends a sophisticated, minimalist corporate visual language with recognisably refined African contextual elements and climatically appropriate finishes and materials to resonate with local concepts of comfort. Cooler finishes such as tile, linoleum and stone were preferred for flooring. Carpet was retained only in the auditorium and training rooms, where it served acoustic requirements.

A consistent signature taupe-grey base runs throughout this level as a unifying palette. Colours drawn from the façade have, once again, been used to 'colour-block' different zones in a manner similar to the podium floor, but more comprehensively and emphatically. In the open-plan staff areas, yellows and warm neutrals predominate. The main kitchen and staff pause area is red, while a variety of greens, corals and reds feature in various meeting rooms.



The straight-lined geometry of the base architecture is softened with curves at key junctions, facilitating the flow of movement and aiding visibility and orientation. Changes in the flooring – a 'racetrack' pattern in tiles, for example – reinforce wayfinding while also encouraging interaction. Four different colours of linoleum have been used across these areas, again adding energy and imparting a distinctive identity to each.



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The furnishings in general were curated to form a contemporary take on modernist aesthetics, which subtly hints at a lineage of 20th century African architecture reinterpreted for a progressive corporate context. Some were sourced internationally, based on accessibility, and many were sourced from South African designers, including the likes of Houtlander and X-furniture, who also manufactured many of the pieces custom designed by Boogertman + Partners.

The executive wing – which includes boardrooms and office suites for the chairman, group CEO and vice chairman – features a more refined and luxurious material palette in which, marble and oak veneer replace tile and laminate for the flooring. Deeper, richer colours from the façade were selected for these suites. The chairman's suite, for example, is deep emerald and black. These offices include large meeting tables, private dining areas, lounges, walk-in closets, dressing rooms and en-suite bathrooms.

CONCLUSION

The project was designed according to EDGE certification standards. Material choices – the linoleum flooring, which is near carbon-negative and recycled-content carpet tile – were selected in part for their sustainability credentials, which aligned naturally with the climate-driven material preferences.

Beyond its environmental credentials, the project supports WAICA Re's corporate identity and organisational culture, balancing its sophisticated pan-African character, contemporary local workplace culture, and contextual and climatic responsiveness. The result is a modern African workspace geared for productivity, wellbeing and growth.

Professional team

Interior design Julia du Plessis (Associate Director and Head of Interior Design); Esme Vos; Amy Avery; Rachel Neyt Base architecture Boogertman + Partners





