



Architecture - South Africa

This office building in Johannesburg reflects South Africa's cultural history and economic status. Though the ancestors of white South Africans came to Africa centuries ago, they retain a cultural identity with Europe. South Africa is also the most economically developed nation in Africa; many global corporations have branch offices there. Although whites constituted only 14% of the population, they controlled the government of South Africa until 1994. They still, however, dominate the economy (even though their percentage of the population today dipped below 9%). As an advanced economy, South Africa needs office space for its domestic and multinational companies and banks. Those in control of the economy turned to the West for the design of multi-story buildings suitable for corporate offices, given the West's extensive experience in this area. This building reflects contemporary office design by adding architectural embellishments to soften the building's blockishness.

ART: Question 1

What architectural aspects of this office building are modern?

Question 2

Why is South Africa, of all African nations, most likely to have large office buildings?

Question 3

Why was South Africa the most likely African nation to turn to the West for building designs?