Steeped in history, the site forms the north-western end of the Grand Parade (where some dilapidated trading structures and associated facilities are currently located), Cape Town's primary central public square and the oldest urban public open space in the country. This 1 ha plot forms part of the larger Grand Parade, which in times past was used to host a military parade ground for garrisons stationed at the abutting Castle. Surrounded by prominent heritage buildings like the Castle of Good Hope, the City Hall and the Cape Town Central Library, the Grand Parade fulfills a variety of functions, from open air concerts, events and festivals, a civic demonstration space to conventional day-time car parking. It also hosts significant market and informal trading activity.

Located directly alongside Cape Town's primary multi-modal public transport interchange (ie Cape Town Station), the site is centrally situated and enjoys high levels of accessibility. It also lies at the confluence of two key accessibility corridors linking the sea with the mountain and District Six with the CBD and eventually the Bo-Kaap.

The grandness of the larger space - needed to express society’s concerns and accommodate its social interaction -, is in conflict with its daily functions. This is one of the main challenges to be addressed by bidder teams. This north-western edge of the Grand Parade presents a high potential to be redeveloped in a more appropriate mixed use medium density scheme that better frames and supports this important public space. The precinct’s local, provincial and national historical significance should be sensitively treated and celebrated while making it cleaner, healthier and more sustainable, in order to catalyse the improvement of this unique and wonderful place as part and parcel of life in Cape Town.

**Expected program:**
Proposals for redevelopment and upgrading (of this part of the Grand Parade) should involve new (medium height) mixed use development in and around the area where current dilapidated traders’ structures are located, with active ground floor interfaces. In addition, the City has defined important aspects that bidder teams need to address.

**Plot area:**
Approximately 1ha

**Type of property transfer intended:**
Considering the historical significance of the site, the property transfer intended for the site’s redevelopment is a long-term lease arrangement that can be discussed with the developer / operator.

**Owner:**
City of Cape Town
Presentation of the site and expectations for its redevelopment

Steeped in history and with formal heritage status, the site forms the north-western end of the Grand Parade, Cape Town’s primary central public square and the oldest urban public open space in the country (originally a military parade ground for garrisons stationed at the abutting Castle). Surrounded by prominent heritage buildings like the Castle of Good Hope, City Hall and Cape Town Central Library, the Grand Parade fulfils a variety of social and economic functions, from open air concerts, events and festivals and a civic demonstration space (accommodating political rallies) to conventional day-time car parking. It also accommodates significant market and informal trading activity. Whilst this mostly happens out in the open, the north-western end of the square, which constitutes the site, currently accommodates a collection of dilapidated trading stalls, kiosks and other structures and facilities. The site also contains and abuts a number of mature trees (Ficus Natalensis).

Located directly alongside Cape Town’s primary multi-modal public transport interchange hub ie Cape Town Station (accommodating rail, city and long distance bus and minibus-taxi services), the site is centrally located, enjoying high levels of accessibility. Vehicular access to this part of the Grand Parade is off Lower Plein Street. A BRT feeder route passes the site along Darling Street on its south-western side, while a bus terminus is located in Castle Street on its north-eastern side. The Grand Parade lies at the confluence of two key accessibility corridors linking the sea with the mountain and District Six with the CBD and eventually the Bo-Kaap.

The central city CBD, where the Grand Parade is located, is Cape Town’s primary urban node where the highest density of development and widest range of higher order uses and facilities occur, but is also subject to severe congestion. To counter this and stive towards more balanced and efficient travel patterns across the city, residential intensification in the CBD is strongly encouraged.

The plan below shows the site’s location and context within the greater metropolitan Cape Town, whilst the aerial photograph shows some of its current uses and the existing buildings.

Some of the uniqueness of the Grand Parade, specifically this part, is however lost in the shadow of the abutting old Post Office building and the tired, single storey retail facilities that are trying hard to attract adequate footfall despite previous landscaping upgrades in the area. Amongst others, this gives a sense of inadequate safety and security and a general sense of ‘lost space’, reinforced by the size of the overall Parade itself. The grandness of the space (needed to express society’s concerns and facilitate its social interaction) is in conflict with its daily functions. Both important, this locality could offer an opportunity to redress historic inequalities, sustain day-to-day functions (eg formal and informal trading), while offering innovative solutions and not neglecting the Parade’s grandeur. It is therefore a space that has to be many things to many people while remaining overall a space that brings people together.
In context of the above, there are a number of processes and initiatives currently underway to upgrade and improve the wider precinct and the Grand Parade’s immediate context that need to be taken into account. Some of these involve surrounding heritage assets such as the upgrade of City Hall, the City Library and Granary. It also includes improving the pedestrian and movement linkages and networks though and around the precinct, including better integration with the abutting Cape Town Train station and the MyCiti bus station at the Civic Centre. Its local, provincial and national historical significance should be sensitively treated and celebrated while making it cleaner, healthier and more sustainable. Innovation and a growing green economy are critical to its long term success and care should be taken to increase mobility (advocating walking, cycling and public transport) for all through sensible urban planning. Also critical to its sustainability is its management and maintenance. This should be addressed in all proposals for this area to ensure long-term sustainability and effective usage of this valuable resource.

To these extents, this underutilised and dilapidated but prominent part of the Grand Parade has the potential to be redeveloped in a more appropriate mixed use medium density scheme that better frames and supports this important public space. In a rapidly growing and expanding urban environment, the opportunity exists to create a resource that will respect the precinct’s unique character and unlock energy and sustainability features that can once again establish this space as the unique and wonderful place it should be.

Detailed urban design and development proposals were previously produced for the Grand Parade precinct as a whole in 2007 (by ARG / Urbanscapes), but these did not go into much detail in respect of the possible redevelopment of the north-western edge of the square. The City (AFM Department through consultants UrbanEcon) is currently busy doing an overall market study to determine needs, priorities and opportunities in and around the Grand Parade, the outcome of which should be available over the coming weeks and months to inform bid proposals.

Proposals for redevelopment and upgrading of this part of the square should involve new (medium height) mixed use development in and around the area where the current dilapidated traders’ structures are located, with active ground floor interfaces, to better frame the rest of the square.

The following aspects are important and will need to be addressed in particular:

- Development proposals for this site will need to illustrate how it responds to, incorporate and contribute to the various other initiatives in and around forming part of the Grand Parade precinct. This implies the need for an updated wider precinct plan, which will give a clear indication of the use and treatment of the subject area (western edge). This should include, amongst others, how the proposed development would interface with the rest of the Grand Parade, the adjacent streets and the cluster of heritage assets in the area. It would also need to include landscaping and surface treatment proposals. All existing mature trees would need to be retained and protected.

- A new development scheme will need to include appropriate retail / trading (formal and informal) and commercial accommodation and other facilities on ground level to ensure an active and supporting interface with the rest of the square. Current traders need to be accommodated in the new development and rentals should be kept affordable to not displace this sector from the current socio-economic opportunities.

- As the Grand Parade is a very busy and popular economic and tourist centre and attraction, redevelopment proposals should also include a small tourist information outlet, public ablution facilities and accommodation for law enforcement services at ground level.

- Particular attention would need to be paid as to how the development integrates with surrounding pedestrian and other non-motorised movement networks. Development in this part of the city does not require the provision of any car parking space (in fact, it is strongly discouraged). Development should thus be people and pedestrian orientated and the car should be secondary to all other uses. Creative solutions and promotion of public transport is instead encouraged. Heritage features and attributes in the vicinity should be protected and celebrated as part of the wider Grand Parade precinct. Heritage impact considerations would thus need to inform any redevelopment proposal. Height of a new development should be respectful of...
the City Hall to complement its central location.
- Water sensitive urban design principles should be employed alongside the other prescribed sustainability requirements as set out in the General regulation document.
- Development proposals should consider operational management and maintenance requirements and illustrate how this is addressed in the design. Servitudes will need to be registered to protect water and sanitation infrastructure traversing the site.

Subject to the procedures mentioned elsewhere in this document, there are no obstacles to releasing the site for redevelopment purposes in accordance with a wider vision and framework for the square.

Property reference: Portion of Remainder Erf 4651

Specific planning rules and regulations regarding the development of the sites

Current zoning: Open Space Zone 2 (OS2)

An extract of the zoning map showing the site appears below. Further zoning information is available at:

The site is subject to the City of Cape Town Development Management (Zoning) Scheme and the over-arching Municipal Planning By-law, 2015 (as amended), copies of which are available at:

Depending on the nature and extent of proposals, there might be a requirement to rezone the subject portion to an appropriate zone. This will however need to be confirmed first. Separate heritage impact approval will also be required in respect of any development proposal. Being the responsibility of the successful bidder, these applications would have to commence after awarding of a bid and might take several months to complete. The City is however committed to working with bidder teams to assist and facilitate the expeditious processing of required development applications as far as possible as part of this initiative to enable successful implementation of approved proposals.

An extract of the Table Bay District Spatial Plan which covers the area, is provided below, in respect of which more information can be accessed at

Implementation would also need to be preceded by building plan approval in terms of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, No 103 of 1997, more information in respect of which is available at

Building plan and development applications (such as for example rezoning) can be submitted online at
The inclusion of the site as part of this initiative is subject to in-principle approval of its release for redevelopment by the City Council, as required in terms of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003, the Municipal Asset Transfer Regulations, 2008, as well as the procedures in the City's own Supply Chain Management Policy, 2017 and the Management of Certain of the City of Cape Town's Immovable Property Policy, 2010. This is currently being considered by the City Council and more information in this regard is available on request.

Subsequent to conclusion of the Phase 1: Expression of interest phase process, the City Council will be requested to confirm such release for redevelopment purposes. The detailed (Phase 2) bidding phase will include bid approval by the City's Immovable Property Adjudication Committee (IPAC).

Asset occupation normally occurs upon development rights falling in place (ie land use approval).

Specific climate or environmental issues regarding the development of the site

Besides the general imperative to pursue lower carbon, more resilient and resource efficient forms of urban development, and the required heritage attention, there is no specific climate or environmental issues regarding the development of this site.

It is important to note that the site forms part of a very sensitive social and historical precinct and proposals will have to undergo a rigorous process to ensure it responds appropriately to this context. Development proposals would amongst others need to respond to heritage informants and requirements, and proponents would need to pro-actively engage with the relevant stakeholder bodies, user groups, role players and communities (such as the Traders’ Associations and Heritage Western Cape), who hold this very special place dear as part and parcel of life in Cape Town, in order to inform the design process.