

Corobrik's face bricks and pavers enhance the green aspects of Menlyn Maine Central Square

Developed on principles of sustainability, the 65 000m² Menlyn Maine Central Square is a mixed-use project that forms the heart of the Menlyn Maine precinct situated in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria.

The R1.8b Central Square development, co-owned by Menlyn Maine Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and the Government Employees Pension Fund (represented by the Public Investment Corporation SOC Limited), is set to be Africa's first green rated city precinct. This mixed-use development will consist of 30 000m² of retail shopping, business premises and 14 500m² of commercial office space, as well as a 4-star, 240-room hotel, 4 500m² Virgin Active Classic Collection Health Club and a 2 500m² Bounce Trampoline Park.

"A variety of Corobrik's face bricks and clay pavers were selected for the construction of a large portion of the Central Square development which demonstrates the product's real value in terms of sustainability and aesthetics," said Corobrik's Commercial Director, Musa Shangase. "Fired clay is robust, extremely durable and meets all the requirements for healthy living. In addition, its colour-fast properties offset carbon debt associated with future maintenance as well as the costs that accompany such maintenance."

Shangase also noted that clay's natural thermal properties further added to the development's sustainability rating by largely reducing the need for artificial heating and cooling mechanisms.

"We are very excited that Corobrik was chosen for such a unique and ground-breaking development which is of a very high architectural standard, setting the standard for the latest, best practice environmental sustainability in construction while providing residents with user-friendly public spaces, fulfilling all shopping, leisure and entertainment needs," he said.

Construction of the development – which is contracted to WBHO – began in November 2013 with the official opening held on the 21 September 2016.

The property developers focused on four major areas to create sustainable buildings, which are energy and water consumption as well as transportation and waste management.

"All the current buildings within Menlyn Maine are 4-star, green-rated buildings except for Nedbank which has a 5-star rating," explained Henk Boogertman, Architectural Director of Menlyn Maine Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd. "Central Square has officially been rated as a 4-star mixed-use building and Menlyn Maine precinct will apply for a Green Star rating for the precinct as a whole. In the absence of a South African rating tool, the American LEED Neighbourhood Development (ND) rating will be pursued. This will make Menlyn Maine the first Green-Star rated precinct of its kind in Africa."

Some of the sustainable initiatives implemented include energy-saving lighting and HVAC systems, ground and rainwater harvesting, refuse recycling and waste management. A pedestrian-friendly design with the emphasis on public transport also contributes to less combustion pollution due to less dependence on privately owned cars.

These materials include several Corobrik's products including 216 000 Onyx Satin face bricks, some Country Meadow facebrick used internally with 290 000 65mm Nutmeg pavers, 10 000 Piazza Nutmeg pavers and 68 000 Piazza Onyx pavers.

Explaining the incorporation of Corobrik's range in the construction, Boogertman said the Onyx face bricks were used extensively for all external walls on the ground level as well as some feature walls while Country Meadow pavers were used in the main piazza, external walkways and other paved areas.

"The architectural colour scheme was conceived as a mixture of three main materials; roof and side cladding, made up of rheinzink - which is charcoal grey - and black onyx bricks which offset the beige-coloured limestone cladding for the walls," said Boogertman.

He said all three of these base elements used for the external facades are accredited, sustainable products.

“These materials add a unique combination with other rich colours and natural materials which enhance the boutique-style luxury mall that we have envisaged architecturally,” he said. “The new urbanism principles of an integrated design approach, which Menlyn Maine adopted from the onset, has, at its essence, a green agenda, not just for the individual buildings, but the precinct as a whole. It will ultimately develop into a new, decentralised city centre with an emphasis on working, living, shopping and leisure complemented with exceptional entertainment facilities comparable to international standards.”