



# CONTEMPORARY





**The brief to Evolution Architects was to design a chic industrial office building for Network Configurations to accommodate their young and dynamic expanding team. From the inception of the project, focus was placed on the sustainability of their new contemporary office, located in Essex Terrace, a prime location which was previously a residential site in Westville, KwaZulu-Natal. It is centrally located and highly visible from the M13 freeway.**

## **RY, INDUSTRIAL CHIC**

**W**hen approaching the main entrance to the building, the off-shutter double volume tower, with diagonal concrete and glazing, creates a bold statement. Smaller rectangular feature windows punch through the concrete and the corner glazing appears to hold up the concrete structure. Curved landscaped planters and paving leading up to the entrance add a playful element to contrast with the straight lines of the architecture. The combination of juxtaposed materials includes off-shutter concrete, facebrick, living walls, timber, stainless steel and galvanized steel. Vertical living walls (landscaping) add softness to the façade as well as provide the benefit of improving the air quality. The arrangement of various plants creates a visually striking pattern.

A 3m high timber entrance door leads into the double volume reception area. Internal raw recycled facebrick and polished concrete contrasts with vibrant splashes of colour on certain feature walls. Exposed services and funky industrial light fittings add to the chic industrial feel of the interior space. A glass server room in the reception area showcases the core of their business and the server becomes an exposed feature.



It was important for all teams to communicate and have visual connection with each other. The double volume spaces and open plan office design encourage this, creating a light and open feel with transparency between departments and a sense of community.

To assist with visual interaction and communication between staff within the building, the 620m<sup>2</sup> building is focused around a central courtyard. The courtyard forms the heart of the building and offers a recreational space for staff to have their lunch breaks and provides views and natural light from all sides of the office space. There is a curved void in the timber deck and lawn courtyard, which allows a tree to grow through from below. The tree offers shade while the void allows for natural light and ventilation into the parking area below. A lawn area is provided outside the back of the building with a vertical living wall. This green area provides a relaxing pause and entertainment area.

The design incorporates insulation, shading devices and high performance glazing to help thermally regulate the building. Openable windows allow for natural ventilation and an abundance of natural light, which reduces energy usage. A timber-slatted pergola provides shade to the glazing on the north façade. Indigenous landscaping is used throughout to conserve water and wherever possible, plants were kept and re-planted after construction. Ultimately, the new office building provides a healthy, high quality work environment. **AD**

## PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT:** Evolution Architects

**DEVELOPER/OWNER:** Altix Holdings

**STRUCTURAL & CIVIL ENGINEER:** Linda Ness Associates

**QUANTITY SURVEYOR:** MHS Consulting

**CONTRACTOR:** Betts Construction

**MECHANICAL:** Roux Air

**ELECTRICAL:** KGH Electrical

