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ENVIRONMENTS FOR EDUCATION

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Architects a decade into independent practice

Office Units, 2 Corobrik Road, Riverhorse Valley



The Editorial Committee of KZNIA Journal has decided to promote the work of emerging practices by featuring a project by a practice in operation for less than a decade in every issue. KZNIA members who meet with this criteria, are encouraged to contact the KZNIA Executive Officer that coverage can be planned for. — Editor



Two on Corobrik is part of the Riverhorse Valley Business Estate and therefore needed to comply with Morelands design guidelines while fulfilling the requirements of the client's brief. The intention was to create a contemporary warehouse development comprising eleven units. The client, Maponya Developments, with their vast experience in developments of this nature, was forward thinking, in that they chose not to sacrifice valuable yard and vehicle manoeuvring space in order to maximise on bulk, a common occurrence in similar developments. The primary motivation for the site layout was therefore to create large yard areas for ease of access, and turning circles for vehicles commonly utilised in a development of this nature, while providing an appropriate amount of building area. In keeping with the Morelands guidelines, it was also essential to provide at least 15 per cent of the site area as landscaped zones. The landscaping effectively assists in softening the large expanses of hardened yard surfaces.

The site is positioned below the road level and it was thus important to create a building which was easily identifiable. The roof was

therefore an important aspect of the building as this would be the most visible component. Ridge ventilators were introduced to provide both practical and aesthetic functions in a cost-effective manner. In keeping with the Morelands ethos, the office and warehouse components needed to be integral with each other rather than two obviously distinguishable elements. In order to achieve this, the offices were recessed into the warehouse space allowing for one main roof structure.

The building is predominantly west facing, positioned lengthwise in an attempt to reduce the impact of the vast cliff running along the eastern boundary. In order to deal with solar control effectively, a combination of varying types of solar glazing were introduced to the office facades. This has proven to work successfully and has reduced the air-conditioning load of the building.

Louvers were used in the abluitions to maximise natural ventilation and daylighting to these areas. This assists in providing flexibility too, and balancing the facades, as well as providing a practical, secure and energy-efficient alternative to the conventional openable window.

Each unit has a small office module with a large warehouse attachment. The office components are framed with a concrete structure and are distinguished by a play of elements in a structural-geometric grid. This allows for flexibility within the office layout which is critical to this type of development where each end-users have their own specific planning requirements. The concrete-framed element is repeated in the roller shutter door surrounds. This provides continuity in the

design as well as the practical aspect of protecting the roller shutter doors. In addition these frames provide structural support for the canopies allowing for weather protection.

The construction materials used in the facades are reflective of its contemporary industrial nature. The intention was to create an interesting variation of textures and tones resulting in a cost-effective building without compromising on aesthetics. The primary elements comprise concrete, glass, aluminium louvers, face-brickwork and corrugated sheeting. The landscaping in front of these facades provides an effective visual contrast between the hard and soft elements.

The success of this development can be attributed to the combination of the sensible brief to create the correct ratio of building to yard areas. This has resulted in a practical, functional and aesthetically pleasing environment for the end-users.

Raewyn Govar

Raewyn Govar graduated at Natal in 1994 and worked with Michael Tod Architects until setting up her own practice together with Natal Technician graduate, Andrea van Dam, in Durban North in November 2005 under the title Archi Angels Architects. The practice is involved in industrial, retail and commercial projects as well as community buildings in residential estates and individual homes, and currently has a staff complement of six. — Editor

Client: Maponya Developments
 Architects: Archi Angels Architects
 Structural Engineers: WSP Africa
 Geotechnical Engineers: Drennan Maud
 Electrical Engineers: BFBA
 Contractor: Grid Construction
 Photographer: Craig Hudson



View from north-west.



Characteristic of this development, the ridge is capped with a continuous monitor and the entrances are framed.

