

# PARAGON PUTS IT'S STAMP

## ON KWAZULU-NATAL HEAD-OFFICE PROJECT

Leading architecture, interior design, and space-planning practice Paragon of Sandton, Johannesburg is putting its distinct stamp on one of the last open stands in the premier Ridgeside Precinct business park near Umhlanga in KwaZulu-Natal.

*The site* has been developed as the head office of Shree Property Holdings (Shreeprop), as well as KPMG and an additional two tenants, which are yet to be finalised. Known as Pran Boulevard, the project has been designed to add a distinctive aesthetic to Ridgeside Precinct, Paragon Project Architect Junie Geldenhuys comments.

"Shreeprop contacted us to bring our distinctive vision to bear on its KwaZulu-Natal head-office project after being duly impressed by our work on iconic projects in Johannesburg such as the Norton Rose Fulbright Towers at 15 Alice Lane," Geldenhuys elaborates.

Renowned for its work on numerous distinctive projects in Sandton, Paragon saw the Pran Boulevard project as an opportunity to make its presence known outside of Gauteng.

The project comprises construction of two separate office buildings of three levels each above ground floor, linked together on each level by bridges. There are three basement parking levels providing about 300 parking bays, as well as a ground-floor podium level with walkways, landscaping, and water features. The total building area, including basement parking, is about 18 600 m<sup>2</sup>.

Paragon is the lead architect on the R220 million project, with Zadar Studios assisting with local requirements in terms of planning submissions and building requirements for the eThekwiini Municipality. The professional team included Brian Heinberg & Associates (quantity surveyor), Orion (project manager), L&S Consulting (structural engineer), Trencor (main contractor), and

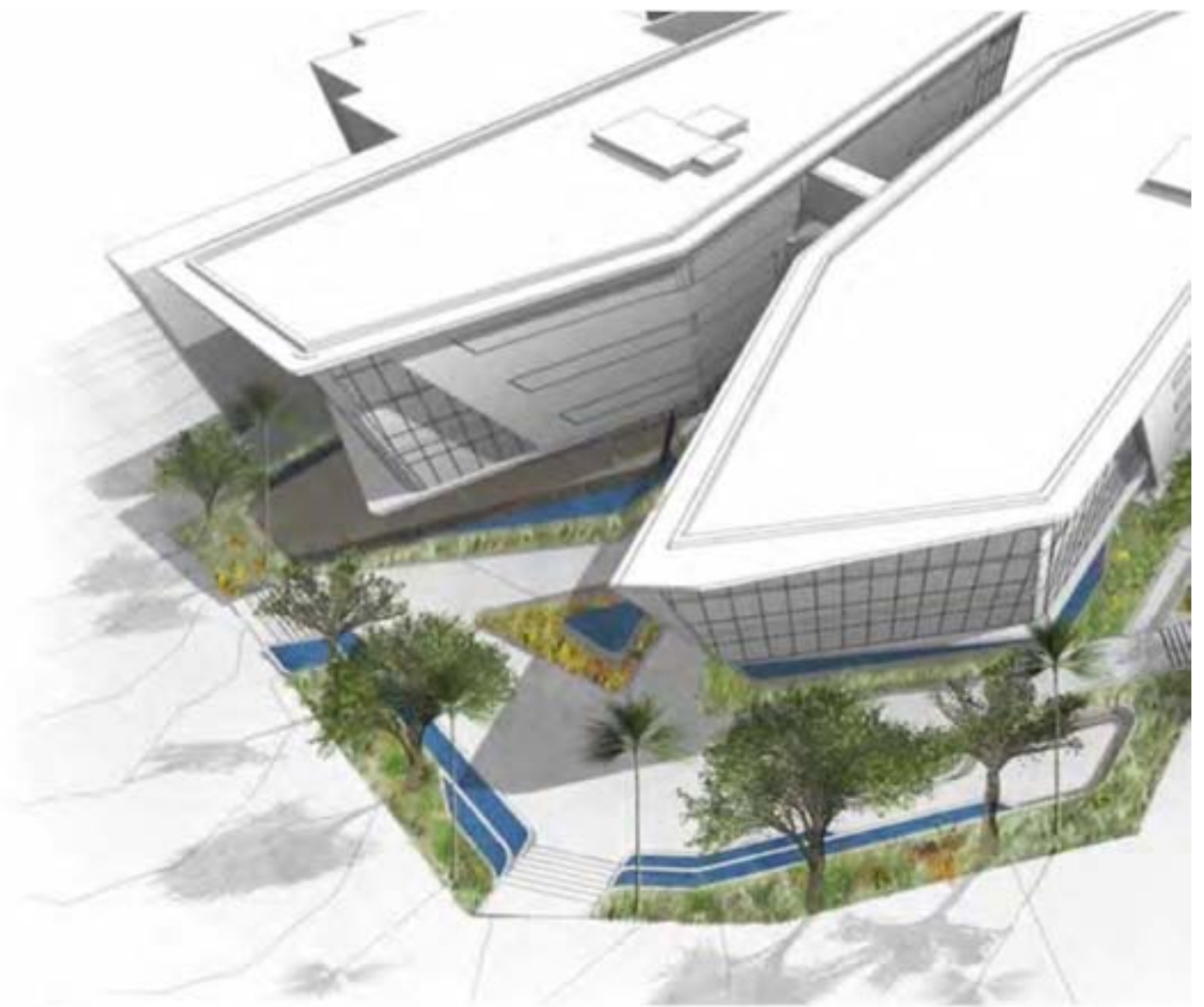
AECOM (green consultant).

"An interesting aspect of this project was that, because it consists of two interlinked buildings, it can either be multi-tenanted or occupied by a single main tenant, which maximises the lettable area of the floorplates," Geldenhuys points out.

A major challenge was posed by the steep site itself, which slopes from Umhlanga Rocks Drive down to Nokwe Avenue. This means that the building is approached on two different levels, from both the northern and southern sides.

Therefore the landscaping is technically on street level. The steepness of the site does guarantee panoramic views, even down to the sea itself. The building itself has slabs or overhangs that cantilever more than 3.5 m in some cases. In most instances, the high-performance glazed façade angles upwards, with curved glazing on the corners, a particular challenge in terms of detailing.

Brickwork was not an option in all



areas due to the cladded façade with full-length strip glazing angling upwards, and therefore alternative systems had to be investigated. It is speculated that aluminium composite, on top of an External Thermal Insulation Composite (ETIC) system, will be used for the external façade, but this aspect is still out on tender, and yet to be finalised.

According to Paragon Architectural Technologists Dipesh Dhaya and Justin Brien, some of the main architectural features of the project are the cantilevered corners, the fantastic panoramic view, the landscaped area with water features, an interactive floor area between the two buildings, and expansive timber decks under three of the cantilevered areas. The project is aiming for a 4-Star Green

Star Office Design v1.1 certification from the Green Building Council of South Africa, with the two-building structure in particular allowing for daylighting to be maximised.

Paragon's total solutions approach was showcased by the fact that it provided an interior design service for two floors of Building 2, namely the Shreeprop head office. The ground floor includes a meeting suite and restaurant, while the third floor boasts an executive suite and open-plan office area. "The brief was for an elegant, contemporary office space speaking to the Shreeprop brand, which is corporate, but with an edge," Kirstin Cavanagh and Meera Laloo from Paragon stress.

The project is also testament to Paragon's extensive use of Revit

Architecture's parametric modelling software to optimise the design and minimise any snagging. The generation of a fully-rendered three-dimensional model allows the entire professional team to make informed decisions prior to construction commencing, while also allowing for value engineering to optimise cost-savings.

Paragon began its scope of work in March 2016, with the project breaking ground in November 2016 with the piling and lateral walling. Current progress includes casting of the first-floor levels, with full completion anticipated by May 2018. The focus on KwaZulu-Natal is part of a larger expansion drive. "KwaZulu-Natal is the third most lucrative property market in the country, so we are keen to grow our position here," Paragon Founding





Director Anthony Orelowitz adds, "If we get a good response from the KwaZulu-Natal market, we would like to open an office there, too. Over the last five years, we have been diversifying our topologies to include residential, student housing, retail, offices, and related facilities," Orelowitz explains.

In the meantime, the Pran Boulevard project is being serviced from the Johannesburg head office, with biweekly site meetings, in conjunction with service coordination meetings. Project meetings are conducted by means of tele-conferencing, with the KwaZulu-Natal consultants convening at the Shreeprop office.

