

Elegant design solution makes Flamingo Shopping Centre stand out



The main architectural feature of the Flamingo Shopping Centre in Modderfontein, Johannesburg is a concrete ribbon undulating across the façade. This was refined during the design development and construction phases, resulting in a unique and elegant design solution compared to that of conventional strip-mall architecture.

Circulation and the location of different types of shops is a critical factor in strip-mall design, both for shoppers and tenants. Foot traffic between the anchor tenants, restaurants, and the circulation cores provides opportunities for smaller shops. Therefore, strip-mall design has to strike a careful balance between the need for different-sized shops.

Architecture and interior architecture company [Paragon](#) was able to achieve this at the Flamingo Shopping Centre. "The challenging nature of this project has allowed us to showcase our ability to be highly flexible and to accommodate different client

requirements, which applies across our entire range of projects,” Paragon Architect Preetya Bhikha comments.

“The Flamingo Shopping Centre has been an interesting experience due to its constantly-changing design. By making use of the different skills our team members have brought to the project, we rose to this challenge. Through close collaboration with our client and contractor, we have been able to develop unique design solutions to problems encountered on-site,” Bhikha highlights.

The Paragon team included Senior Project Architect Stacey Leader, Architectural Technologist Keron Muller, and Candidate Architect Justin James. The Nevada Group is both client and main contractor, with the professional team including MMA Posten Engineers, Fenco Fire Engineers & Consultants, CottonTree Landscape Architects, and BMS System Consultancy.

The Flamingo Shopping Centre is located at 36 Queens Street in Modderfontein, in a residential area. The site is situated adjacent to a forest, overlooking a lake and wetland. The shopping centre forms part of a larger neighbourhood development encompassing an outdoor park with new restaurants and recreational facilities. The project has been on-site for about three years, with Phase One opening at the end of August.

The client requested a two-storey strip mall with on-site parking, with the shopping centre servicing the neighbouring suburbs. The project was architecturally challenging due to the different design changes initiated throughout construction. During the initial construction phase, the client increased the scope to accommodate offices, restaurants, and a medical centre.

However, as Paragon had planned to future-proof the building to accommodate possible additions, these new building elements were absorbed easily within the main design. In addition, Paragon refined the different elements of the design together with the client, both for aesthetic and efficiency purposes.

The circulation cores had to be moved after the upper ground floor was cast as a post-tensioned slab, which posed an engineering challenge as voids had to be cut to accommodate the new positions of the lifts and stairs. The consulting team was able to resolve this through careful coordination of the structural and service routes.

In addition to her work on the Flamingo Shopping Centre, where she has been involved from design through to construction, Bhikha has also worked on the initial design for Katherine Towers, a multi-storey commercial building in Sandton. She has a Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Bachelor of Architectural Studies (Honours), Master of Architecture (Professional), and a Master of Philosophy in Architecture and Planning, all from the University of Cape Town. In addition, she is a Green Star South Africa Accredited Person for New Buildings.

“I have experience in retail, mixed-use, healthcare, commercial, and high-end residential architecture,” Bhikha explains. “My interest lies in the design and construction of complex, large-scale buildings, as these present a range of challenges that often have

unique design solutions. Working at Paragon has given me exposure to these kinds of exciting projects, which I have enjoyed immensely, as it has allowed me to develop both personally and professionally,” she concludes.