

PROPERTY



PARAGON GROUP REMAINS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING NEW TALENT

Bringing in new blood is important to ensure sustainability and creativity throughout the architecture profession. Over the past few years, the Paragon Group has committed itself to develop young talent by employing a number of new graduates each year and training them until they become fully-registered professionals.

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Thulani Sibande, Director of Paragon Architects South Africa (PASA).

“This facilitates their growth mindset and builds mental toughness. It assists in diversifying their goals, whether to become project architects, leaders in principal agencies, or design-orientated,” comments Thulani Sibande, Director of Paragon Architects South Africa (PASA).

As part of the Paragon Group design businesses, PASA shares the same sentiments about staff training. It always strives to ensure its staff members are fully trained in order to achieve the necessary compliance required by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP), the industry governing body.

“Most importantly, we ensure that all our young architects are given an equal opportunity to run and manage upcoming new projects, while enjoying full assistance from directors or senior colleagues to ensure deliverables and consistency throughout the duration of the project,” explains Sibande, who was a 2019 judge at the 2019 & 2020 Corobrik Student Architecture Awards, held in the form of a hybrid virtual event in early June.

The winners were announced at a first-ever hybrid event in Johannesburg on 10 June. The 2019 awards ceremony had to be postponed due to COVID-19, but Corobrik adapted and instead decided to host the 2019 and 2020 awards ceremonies together in a single exclusive event. “It has been a privilege to be part of the 2019 jury panel. It was such a great opportunity to see our upcoming young architects portray their talent and pave the direction in which architecture is heading,” comments Sibande. He adds that longstanding competitions such as the Corobrik Student Architecture Awards, which

has been running for over 30 years, are critical to nurturing young talent in the architectural community.

While COVID-19 has definitely resulted in the Paragon Group restructuring certain elements of its business, its mandate to mentor and develop new talent remains consistent in order not to disrupt day-to-day deliverables. Sibande adds that work exchange opportunities remain a challenge in the current economic climate, fuelled by the ongoing pandemic, but enquiries remain in place, which is promising.

“If such opportunities come our way, we would definitely love to see our young architects exposed to working in other parts of Africa so as to understand the dynamics of working on the continent. My advice is that they should go for it, as this is a rare career where one can solve problems by being creative. Architects are constantly solving problems, as it is such a challenge to consider all aspects of a building’s requirements, from the design to the structural elements, aesthetics and much more,” Sibande concludes. ©

