

52 KATHERINE STREET, SANDTON

As if designing the award-winning Sasol Place on a curving site in Katherine Street, Sandton was not enough of a challenge for the Paragon Group; client Alchemy Properties tasked it to design a clearly-differentiated building at 52 Katherine Street, directly in front of the iconic Sasol headquarters.

The 5,251m² P-grade office development is located at the corner of Katherine Street and Albertyn Avenue in the Sandton CBD, which gives it the advantage of a strong street-facing presence. An integral part of the rapidly-developing Katherine Street Development Node, it enjoys close proximity to Sandton City, the retail floor at Discovery and several significant arterial roadways and highways.

The corner is dominated by Sasol Place, which has a high basement both to the west and south. "We had to create a design that was very different from Sasol, bearing in mind that 52 Katherine Street itself was only three storeys and has Sasol basements as its backdrop. Hence the main challenge was to design a building that did not, on the one hand, obstruct or take away from Sasol Place, but was able to have its own distinct identity," explains Paragon Group Director Anthony Orelowitz.

"It is a difficult piece of land to develop because it is quite a sloping site. We selected a pallet of materials, which were

quite different from the complex glass façade of Sasol Place. We chose to clad the façade with large porcelain tiles which were 3,000x1,500mm in size. These tiles look like *Blanco* and *Nero* marble, creating a contrast against the Sasol basements and differentiating the design," adds Orelowitz.

The marble and aluminium over-clad structure weaves at each storey, undulating and creating balconies and overhangs. Three landscaped courtyards allow light and air to

penetrate the floor plate. Large openable full-height windows allow user-driven habitation, natural ventilation and abundance of light into the workspace.

"The courtyards were planned specifically to maximise the light on the western and southern aspects," highlights Orelowitz. The result was a building that is quite distinctive from many of Paragon's designs.

The professional team includes Leadcon Civils, Orion Project Managers and Trencon Construction.

