

BLUEPRINT

Ship shape

144 Oxford Road, with its distinctive 'catamaran' configuration designed by Paragon Architects South Africa, has become the new gateway to Rosebank's CBD.

PHOTOGRAPHY SUPPLIED

144 Oxford Road, which is a flagship project for both its developers and architects - Growthpoint Properties and Paragon Architects South Africa, respectively - was conceived of as a landmark at the gateway to Rosebank's CBD.

Although it went through various concepts and design iterations, and was initially designed to incorporate a hotel and office component, this nine-storey development found its ultimate incarnation as a multi-tenant office building in response to the demand for premium-grade office space in the burgeoning business precinct.

Positioned as it was on the edge of the Rosebank CBD along Oxford Road, and in keeping with its premium-grade status, 144 Oxford was designed to make an architectural statement and act as an urban landmark.

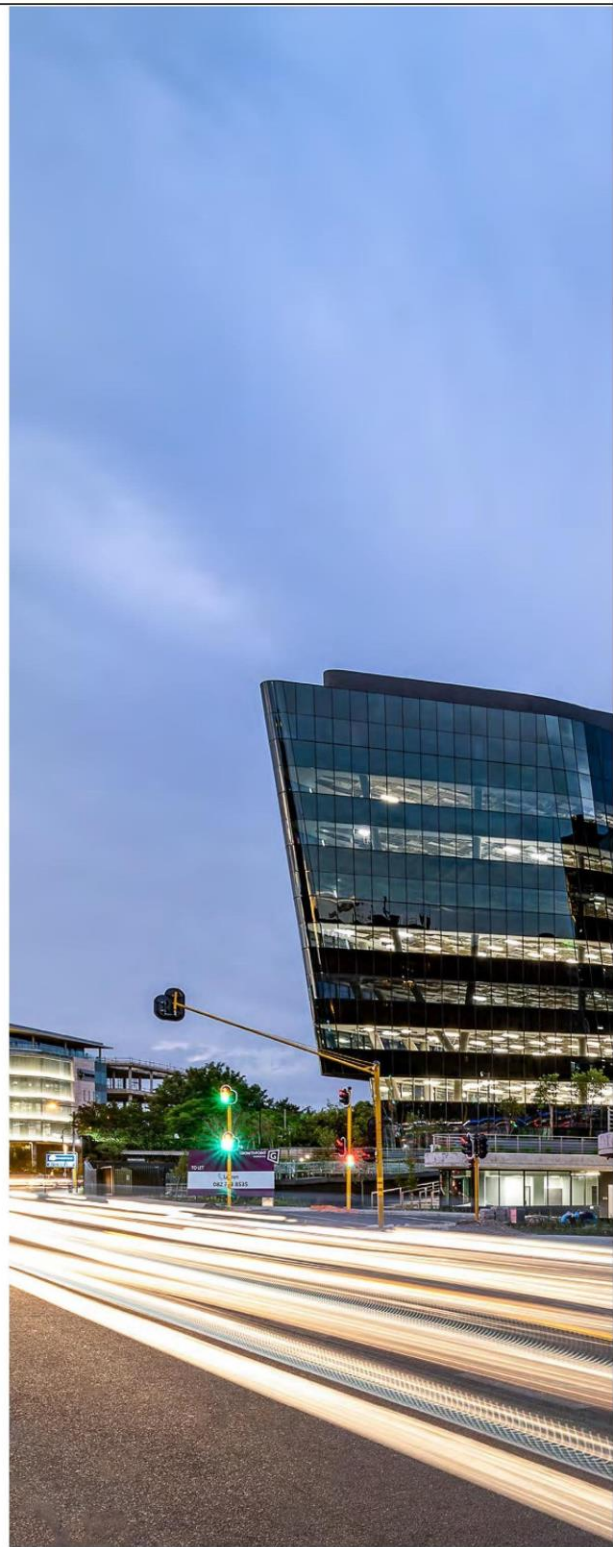
Immediate design challenges, however, included the Gautrain servitude, which cuts through the site and restricted the allowable construction methodology to be used. Further to this, Oxford Road sits within the site boundary. All these factors contributed to a long and intensive design process that took into account site-specific parameters, together with stakeholders' particular needs and requirements.

The building's distinctive design features two curved towers, like the twin prows of a pair of ships, leaning outward towards the 'nose' at its pinnacle. These elongated, protruding towers are linked by a central atrium that is open all the way to the top storey, creating a vast, unifying volume at the centre of the building that lets light deep into the interior spaces.

This bespoke shape, wrapped in high-performance glazed façades, mirrors the bustling traffic of Oxford Road to the west of the development. The main façade consists of double-glazed unitised façades, incorporating a dark grey glass. The outermost façade of the northern building features a secondary offset glazed 'skin' with raking sides - a nod to the fast-paced vehicular movement on Oxford Road.

The 'prows' leaning out towards Oxford Road to the edge of the Gautrain servitude, suggesting velocity and movement, engages with the thoroughfare and the urban nature of the CBD (and offering views of Johannesburg's other business districts, Sandton and the main city centre). Its eastern façade, or the 'back' of the building, is much quieter, in response to the treetop

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PROJECT #1 **144 OXFORD**

The design of 144 Oxford Road, on the edge of the Rosebank CBD, features two curved towers, like the twin prows of a pair of ships, linked by a central atrium with a raked glass façade.



views of the city's urban forest, stretching all the way to OR Tambo International Airport.

The entrance courtyard and atrium create a 'front door' or street-side pedestrian entrance for the building, acknowledging the pedestrian life and walkable character of the surrounding suburb with its proximity to the Rosebank Gautrain Station, gyms, hotels and shopping malls. Water features and landscaping soften the entrance, creating a tranquil exterior space not only to enhance the entrance experience, but also offering sheltered spill-out spaces under and around the building for tenants and their employees who work in the building.

The raked glass façade in the

front of the atrium adds to the 'wow factor' of the atrium. Quite a feat of architecture and engineering, it is tied to the building's central structure - two cores that run from the ground all the way to the roof and create the main structure of the building. The glass is suspended from the girder that spans the width of the atrium, connected to the structural core by a combination of tension rods and a bonding structure of beams.

The architects worked closely with Aurecon, who were appointed to provide mechanical and Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) services, as well as Growthpoint Properties and the professional team through the various iterations to ensure that

all services and sustainability objectives were aligned seamlessly with the ultimate design.

The project secured a 5-Star Green Star Office v1.1 Design Rating and is targeting an as-built certification from the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA). Some of the sustainability features of the project included an energy-efficient air-conditioning system with a full economy cycle, meaning it supplies full fresh air to cool the space when external conditions are favourable; energy-efficient lighting throughout; water-saving sanitary fittings; a rainwater harvesting system; extensive high-performance glazing to maximise external views and natural lighting while limiting solar heat gain; and water-efficient

landscaping. A facilities manager was actively involved during the design phase to ensure that the operational intent of the sustainability initiatives was implemented effectively, following the commissioning of the building services.

One of the innovations developed by Aurecon, and implemented by the project, was to detect refrigerant leaks from the air-cooled chillers. The mechanism deploys weighing cells connected to the building management system to continuously monitor the weight of the chillers, enabling detection of even a minor refrigerant leak. This limits the environmental damage caused by refrigerants with ozone-depletion or global-warming potential.

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The entrance courtyard and atrium create a 'front door' or street-facing entrance with water features and landscaping, acknowledging the pedestrian life and walkable character of the area.

DEVELOPMENT

Right: The iconic development acts as a gateway to the Rosebank precinct while taking cognisance of the leafy residential suburbs that surrounds it.

Below: The landscaping on the ground floor slopes gently towards both Oxford Road and Tottenham Avenue, softening the interface between passers-by and the building.



The design language of organic curves that characterises the exterior architecture is sustained in the interior details of the lobby and shared spaces.

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The architectural language of organic curves and streamlined forms is sustained throughout the interior of the building, finding expression in the timber finishes in the atrium and a plethora of design details throughout the lobby and public or shared spaces. As such, it presents a coherent, unified design in keeping with its premium-grade offering, and provides an identity sustained all the way from its broader urban context to the interior details.

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The outermost facade of the northern building features a secondary offset glazed 'skin' with raking sides, a nod to the fast-paced vehicular movement on Oxford Road.

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

CLIENT: Growthpoint Properties **DEVELOPMENT MANAGER:** Growthpoint Management Services **ARCHITECT:** Paragon Group **CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Sutherland Engineers **QUANTITY SURVEYOR:** RLB Pentad, Farrow Laing Quantity Surveyors **ELECTRICAL ENGINEER:** Conscius Electrical Engineers, Claassen & Aurel Consulting Engineers **MECHANICAL ENGINEER:** Aurecon **WET SERVICES ENGINEER:** MG Building Services **FIRE ENGINEER:** Specialised Fire Technology **LIFT CONSULTANT:** Solutions for Elevating **MAIN CONTRACTOR:** Tiber WBHO Joint Venture **PROJECT MANAGER AND PRINCIPAL AGENT:** Origin Project Management **GREEN BUILDING CONSULTANT:** Aurecon **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Ochre Office