

Paragon Group Wins GIfA Award Of Excellence 2019 For 140 West Street



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The Paragon Group emerged a winner at the Gauteng Institute for Architecture (GIfA) 2019 awards ceremony held at Wits University on the evening of 25 October 2019. The architecture and interior architecture company won a coveted Award of Excellence, one of only two awarded by GIfA, for its work at the iconic 140 West Street commercial development in Sandton.

There were 38 entries, with a wide range of building types. Only seven awards were made, which will be forwarded to the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA), the national body, for evaluation in 2020. The team was led by Paragon Group Director Anthony Orelowitz, who received the award together with Project Architectural Technologist David Cloete, a member of the design team.

Developed by Zenprop, the 27 000 m² of P-grade office space comprises two linked towers on a lush landscaped podium, namely a ten-storey North Tower, a 14-storey South Tower, and eight parking levels. The project achieved a 4 Star Green Office Design V1 from the Green Building Council of South Africa.

“This is a complex building that has been designed to look really simple,” Project Architect Kay Hausler comments. Taking four years in total, of which the construction phase was two years, the aim was for an iconic building that would function as a head office, while still being considerate of its inhabitants and context.

This was achieved by incorporating natural elements, planting, designing for human scale, creating a landscape deck on the ground floor, landscaped roof terraces, break-out spaces, and spaces that encourage interaction and the awareness of others in the building.

The main architectural feature is the angled, curved-glass atrium enclosure connecting the two towers, allowing for breathtaking views from inside and outside. Effectively an internal street, the atrium connects the pavement, entrance, and landscape deck. The internal space hosts large trees, planting, sculptural lighting, and informal canteen seating.

The bridges fan away from one another, so that each is lit naturally from the glass roof above. These are large concrete beams that structurally tie together the two shear structures of the towers. The cladding and elongated lighting makes them appear slender and elegant. The long, narrow floor plates curve away from one another. Orientated north to maximise light into the work space, they also maximise views from each floor.

By using post-tensioned slabs and larger perimeter columns, all of the internal columns on the floor plates could be removed, creating large open spaces to maximise tenant flexibility. The east and west ends incorporate impressive cantilevers, allowing the building to ‘lean’ outwards. This is enhanced by the façade wings extending past the ends of the building.

Paragon Group Director Henning Rasmuss highlights that the award is testament to the company’s ethos of designing iconic buildings that take their surroundings into account. “The best designs maintain a careful balance between the internal user experience and the urban environment, and 140 West Street is a prime example of this.”

Established in 1900, GIfA is one of the oldest architectural organisations in the country. It is affiliated to the South African Institute of Architects, and endorsed by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession. With almost 500 members, it aims to promote a better built environment and a greater awareness of architecture. ■



Anthony Orelowitz and David Cloete receive the gifa award of excellence for 140 West Street