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Johannesburg's Rosebank has long been known as a cosmopolitan, trend-setting district, but now, thanks to digital display services company Primary Colours, it's not just the street fashion that's turning heads.

Opposite the Gautrain station on the Oxford Road thoroughfare, the iconic Rosebank Link building features the future of display advertising. Billboards on the sides of buildings are nothing new, but in the past they have always been added after the fact.

Thanks to a unique collaboration between Paragon Architects, Redefine Properties (the building owners) and Primary Colours, the Rosebank Link now features a dramatic full-colour LED video screen that has been custom-designed and engineered to be an integral part of the building's fabric, and to contribute to the edifice's striking appearance.

Not only is Primary Colour's Rosebank screen one of the largest LED screens in South Africa, it is also the country's largest operational example of a strip screen display. The building's exterior lights – which, like the screen content, can be controlled and manipulated remotely, are not made of individual lights, but are in fact narrow strips of video screen.

"Using this new DigiLED technology, we've been able to create an exceptionally flat screen that offers maximum viewing angles to both pedestrians and drivers using this major city artery," explained Primary Colours directors Ashendra Singh and Grant Neill. "With no off-angle colour shift, this new screen offers advertisers a unique way to tell their stories in the most impactful way possible," they added.

With HD 720 resolution and the ability to display 16 million colours, the complete screen measures 18 metres wide and 7 metres high (1 728 pixels wide x 745 pixels high). Geometric-pattern cladding was used to underline the fact that the screen is an authentic part of the building's fabric.

While the screen itself represents cutting edge technology, it is arguably the building's strip lighting (attached to the Rosebank Link via watertight perforations in the building façade) that is the most exciting aspect of this project. Most impressive when viewed at night, the ribbons of coloured video displays are designed to reflect from the building's edges, giving a more harmonious "wash" effect. This "smart lighting" has a total length of 226 metres, and stretches across 15 floors of the building.