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PROJECT THREE
TWO TOWERS:
140 WEST STREET

Size: 3600 m² Landscape Installation
(planting and paving build)

Development Construction Start - Finish:
Sept 2014 - December 2017

Cost: R5.3 million

Location: Sandton, Johannesburg
Client: Zenprop Property Holdings

Right in the heart of Johannesburg stands the commanding 140 West Street with its captivating exterior & two linked towers constructed on a landscaped podium. This building is situated diagonally opposite the Gautrain Station and directly opposite the entrance to the Michelangelo Hotel, Sandton City and Nelson Mandela Square. Everything about this build makes an impression on its inhabitants and visitors. Designed by Paragon Architects with landscape design by The Ochre Office, this inspired build recently and rightfully achieved a 4-Star Green Star SA Office V1 Design certification.



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140 West Street, in central Sandton, consists of a 10-storey North Tower and 14-storey South Tower, both rising over a subterranean, multilevel basement structure but tightly seated within a greened podium. Its tenants comprise several legal and corporate firms and the project, developed by Zenprop Property Holdings, incorporates sustainable design features such as rainwater harvesting, treatment and reuse. The building's highly-engineered, fully glazed facades and favourable orientation allow for the maximum natural lighting possible while restricting glare and heat transmission.

The Architecture

The architecture, put simply, presents two towers that are joined by a clear glass roof which appears to wrap down over the point of arrival and seamlessly envelop the central atrium and the sculptural bridges that link the said towers. The floor plates taper towards the east and west gable ends, enabling the building to lean outwards in a commanding manner.

Influence on the Landscape

The strong lines and curves of the building were

to formulate the base for the landscape design. With its impressive facades, shaped to create gentle bends in each face and further texturized by vertical metal shading fins, these forms effortlessly inspire the language of the gardens. The built planters rise and fall with gentle curves, with linear patterns reflected in the paving patterns and once again in the extrusions of the outdoor seating.

The Street Edge

At street edge, the development aims to enrich its urban environment. Because of its positioning, the building activates public usability by extending a popular coffee shop terrace out to the pavement; a convenient and beneficial addition to the bustling pedestrian route between the Gautrain Station and the hub of Sandton.

The coffee shop garden is quaint but effectively institutes the shop owner's vision and wishes. Between building and kerb, the pavement finishes tie in with the existing Sandton Precinct Guidelines.

SUPPLIERS

Consultant Team:

Paragon Architects
 Sotiralis Engineers
 Schoombie Hartmann Quantity Surveyors
 Savile Row

Contractors:

Main Contractor: Tiber WBHO JV

Landscape Contractor:

Countryline Africa - 011 021 5570

Paving:

Countryline Africa

Tiling:

Rudolph & Van Vuuren (RVV) - 011 618 1340

Water Features and Steel Sculpture:

Waterscapes - 011 440 7943

Pots:

Igneous Concrete - 011 827 7425

Steel Benches:

A&D Engineering - 028 212 1641

Decking:

Truestyle Hard Landscaping Solutions -
 011 768 1305

Paving Product:

Bosun Brick - 011 310 1176

Granite Tiles:

Mazista - 011 998 2600

Supergres Tiles:

Limegreen Sourcing Solutions - 011 325 2893

Irrigation:

Controlled Irrigation - 011 608 0767

Product:

Rain Bird - 011 608 0767

Synthetic Turf:

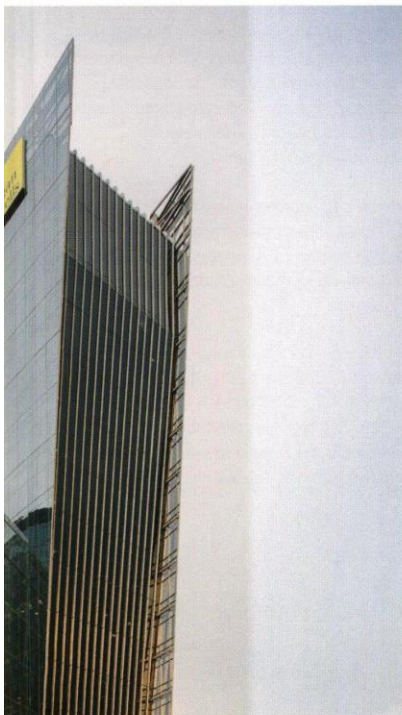
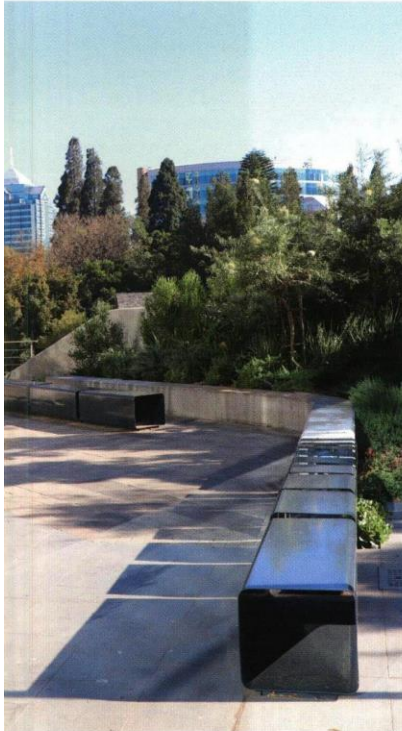
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The Ground Floor Landscape

The building welcomes users and visitors off the street over a cascading stepped water feature and onto a landscaped ground floor podium. The client wished for the energy that one experiences on the street to be brought through into the building, celebrating strong urban features and scales (lighting, floor finish etc.) but introducing a calm through planting and textures.

The ground floor podium hovers over the basement block, which is the parking area, presenting a thin cantilevering edge to the street view (West). The planted gardens are designed to cascade over this edge and allow the balustrade and hard surfaces to pull back away from this interface. The ground floor gardens then circumnavigate the building on this level weaving built-up off-shutter concrete planters and paved walkways into the narrow north and south boundaries and opening-up to accommodate a canteen spillout space on the eastern terrace as an extension to, and termination of, the "street" that pulls through from the atrium of the building.

Water Features

The Developer requested that water features be cleverly introduced to enhance the experience of entrance and of avenue. Paragon and Ochre worked closely to integrate a water element into the stepped entrance on the western approach. Water cascades down stepped levels below a series of crisscrossing floating ramps. The feature is naturally filtered and is intended to be planted in linear pockets that then integrate with adjacent built planters. The steps themselves were engineered to incorporate *Senegalia galpinii* (Monkey Thorn) trees which are planted into either built structures or suspended in troughs from the slab. These trees will eventually establish and form open canopies under which visitors will walk.

At the entrance to the building, another water feature has been introduced, this time a natural pond element with stainless steel pipes bent as vertical ribs, taking inspiration from the fins on the facades, and spilling water softly down into the naturally-filtered pool.

The third and final water feature is positioned on the eastern canteen terrace, aligned on the central axis of the building, and acting as a terminal focal point at the end of the avenue.

The feature has been designed to cascade towards the building, water rushing down a riven finish in vertical bands between precast concrete ribs – the aesthetic once again drawing inspiration from the vertical fins of the façade. A slight recess was designed into the base of the cascade to ensure that the soft and calming sound of water would be heard if one was sitting out on the terrace.

This water feature appears to back up against a retained berm but it in fact conceals a ventilation unit that stands 1.5m high and spans the width of the building. The landscape has been designed to completely disguise this structure and has been planted up with *Buddleja saligna* (False Olive) and *Dodonaea angustifolia* (Sand Olive) with the aim to screen any future developments that are due to rise on the neighbouring property.

The Benches

Linear themes were pulled through into the customized benches. Two materials were utilized, the first simply formulated as extensions of the concrete planters. These curve and stretch along the edges of the garden, functioning as both seating and retaining edges to hold soil volumes. The second bench typology is one of steel tubes, extruding in pieces along their length. Where possible, planting will grow between the openings in the tube segments and melt into the greenery.

The Planting

The planting palette is one of rich but muted contrast, with the decision to work with tones of greens and greys and allowing their leaf textures and colours to complement each other. As one moves around the building, the plant and tree selection differs to in response to the varied micro-climate pockets and light levels. Plants were selected for their durability, visual appeal and low maintenance requirements. All gardens are fully irrigated with a dripper system and installed with soil moisture sensors to minimize water wastage.

The Atrium

Inside the atrium, once again working within the brief to create an avenue feel, *Ficus benjamina* (Weeping Fig) and *Trichelia dregeana* (Forest Mahogany) trees are sunken into suspended planters. They act to scale the atrium space and introduce connection to the outdoors.

The walls backing to the scenic lift- which transports users between basement and the ground floor- have been dressed in strips of false silk planting which melt down onto the lobby floor. There was a wish to soften the user experience and bring greenery into the interior space, and the faux planting was found to be the most suitable alternative where a natural installation was not possible.

The use of tactile materials and the integration of planting and natural light throughout the building, aim to give users the feeling of being close to nature.

Upper Terraces

Further up the structure, exclusive landscaped roof terraces have been incorporated on the 8th, 9th and 14th floors, from which remarkable panoramic views across Johannesburg can be experienced. The 8th and 14th terraces were designed and adjusted in accordance with tenant requirements, with built-in roof structures, seating and specific deck or synthetic grass floor texture

The lines and materials of planters and paved areas replicate those of the ground floor design, and the plant selection again responds to the micro-climates experienced at high levels. On basement L1, a smoker's terrace extends to the eastern boundary. This area has been planted with a basic hardy mix and also accommodates a fire escape. This zone is allocated as servitude and will be reconstituted as neighbouring properties develop in the future.

When it came to sourcing materials for this project, the concept of sourcing as local as possible was employed. All roof gardens utilize a no-fines concrete drainage solution as specified by the Engineer.

140 West Street is certainly a signature development for the client & has been executed with no detail spared. It is a benchmark for design which sets the tone for future developments in this node and is a nod to the already thriving area of Sandton.

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PARAGON ARCHITECTS

ABOUT THE OCHRE OFFICE



OCHRE
THE OCHRE OFFICE (PTY) LTD
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The Ochre Office (Pty) Ltd is a professional design firm specializing in Landscape Architecture. Established in 2013, the company continually strives for excellence in design, planning and contract management, undertaking projects that vary in size and typology be they private, commercial, industrial, or recreational and community sites. We see our role as Landscape Architects firmly and fundamentally seated in the formulation of connections between people, their built environments and their natural surrounds – understanding the interactions between form, texture, space and function. It is within this notion of connectedness that we seek to design smart, sustainable, environmentally responsive and appropriately integrated landscape solutions.