

Corobrik's facebrick gives Century City Square a modern, natural look

A mixture of Corobrik's facebrick and paver range has been used in the construction of the vibrant Century City Square, a R1 billion project of mixed-use development that forms the heart of the Bridgeway Precinct in Cape Town.

Developed by Rabie Property Group, Century City Square forms the flagship project of the larger Century City development which is significantly expanding the residential, commercial and retail sector of the area.

Construction began in May 2014, with completion of the Square set for June this year. The area will comprise a 1200-seat conference centre as well as 12 meeting rooms situated around a business class lounge; a 125-bedroom hotel; The Annex which is 3 500sqm of offices over four floors above the conference centre; The Matrix, a mixed-use building with retail/showrooms, three-storeys of offices and 51 residential apartments covering another three-storeys; The Apex which is an eight-storey building made up of 7 900sqm of offices, restaurants, bistros and coffee shops as well as a six-floor structured parking building and basement parking garage for 1 330 parking bays.

Paolo Viotti, director of VIVID Architects, explained that the Century City Square would bring new energy and life to the entire Bridgeway precinct.

"This will be the driver and informant for the broader urban design framework which is set to be implemented by the Rabie Group, over the next few years as this precinct expands commercially," said Viotti. "It is envisioned that this will be a mixed-use area where there is a sustainable blend of commercial offices, retail, residential and hotels that will support a 24/7 active, vibrant community."

When planning the development, Viotti and his team opted for the Corobrik's range of timeless facebricks and pavers, because of their aesthetic qualities, as well as the economic benefits going forward.

"All the facebricks chosen were local, Western Cape bricks, which suited

the look and feel we wanted to achieve while being an economically viable option.”

Some 148 000 Cape Stormberg Travertine, 223 500 De Hoop Red Smooth and 296 500 Natural Earth Travertine facebricks were used in construction throughout the urban square.

“We wanted to identify the different buildings by the brick colour selection in order to provide architectural differentiation within the precinct,” he explained. “For example, we used the Natural Earth Travertine facebricks for both the conference centre and hotel to tie them together as one façade on the square. We then used the De Hoop Red Smooth facebricks for the Matrix mixed-use building to give that contemporary, industrial, warehouse building feel.”

The Cape Stormberg Travertine facebrick was used as an accent facebrick which revealed and recessed panels, to highlight the ‘floating’ lighter brick facades. For The Apex office tower, which was always seen as a slick, sheer glass façade, Viotti and his team wanted to offset the surrounding buildings in terms of architectural design so facebrick was selected to achieve this contemporary contrast.

“The architectural façade treatment and design is one of floating planes of facebrick that is supported off concealed steel angle supports, allowing for the contemporary nature of the design of all the buildings,” he explained.

To tie into the façade design, 19 500 Natural Earth 65 mm pavers were chosen, while 73 mm De Hoop pavers were used to connect the design with the rest of the Century City sidewalk specifications. A herringbone pattern was used for all paving to handle the constant movement.

“Facebrick is a maintenance-free façade which reduces costs down the line,” said Viotti. “It is also a wholly natural material which gives an honest, modern design that provides interest in terms of its texture and modulation. It is a respected and understood material in the building industry.”

He said the entire scheme has been conceptualised as an urban anchor, providing the type of modern architecture that prioritises the urban realm of street and square for pedestrians, rather than vehicles.

“The facebrick really lends itself to that vision, offering a tactile, warm material which provides a modern backdrop to streets and public spaces that people want to inhabit. The scheme is looking to bring facebrick back into South African architecture in a meaningful way, as a material that we understand and which also works with our local environment, budget and skill level.”

In addition to its modern architectural style, the Century City Square scheme is being submitted to the Green Building Council of South Africa for a Green Star rating and is in fact a pilot project for a new mixed use rating tool.

Corobrik Western Cape Manager, Christie van Niekerk, said the use of facebrick in this iconic development proved the product’s qualities of durability and aesthetics.

“This project is set to anchor the area for years to come which is why quality materials, that are both pleasing to look at, and proven to withstand harsh weather conditions, are essential. Corobrik’s facebrick range covers these two criteria while also providing enhanced thermal and sound insulation as well as superior fire resistance. These elements are vital for a development of this magnitude where outside noise needs to be dulled, allowing for a pleasant living and working environment, and safety is of the utmost concern.”

Van Niekerk said, in addition, the thermal qualities of facebrick further augmented the development’s environmental elements as it negated the need for artificial heating and cooling.

“For an area with an anticipated high foot-traffic, the choice of Corobrik’s clay pavers was a great one,” he continued. “They will continue to prove their worth for years to come because of the enhanced durability.”

He said the colour-fast, skid quality also ensured a year-round ‘new look’

while keeping pedestrians safe.