

## WSP achieves industry first custom Green Star certification for Menlyn Maine Central Square

22 August 2016, Johannesburg – WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff in Africa, one of the largest multi-disciplinary engineering consultancies on the continent, has achieved a Green Star SA Custom Mixed Use rating for Menlyn Maine Central Square. It is an industry first in South Africa, that a project has been certified using a custom tool – and a testament that the company is leading developments in the Green Building space.

According to Alison Groves, HOD: Sustainability Consultant, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff in Africa: “This is an exciting and important move for the industry towards having one overarching tool that can be customised and used to accredit all types of building models.”

Uptake of green buildings in South Africa continues to grow, driven largely by continuous and growing pressure on the ‘built’ space to consider and address inadequate energy resources, carbon reduction targets and revised building energy efficiency standards. The Green Star rating and accreditation system has provided excellent guiding principles. However, existing Green Star tools only allow certification of single building types – i.e. commercial office, retail, multi-unit residential, and public and educational buildings.

“Where before it may have been difficult to entrench sustainability into projects that did not fit into the Green Star rating criteria, this progression to having a customisable tool that enables mixed-use developments to use the Green Star rating accreditation will allow robust sustainability in the built space to be applied across the board,” adds Groves.

To achieve the Custom Mixed Use rating for Menlyn Maine Central Square, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff’s Green by Design team assessed all the current available ratings tools before deciding to make use of the Public and Education (P&E) Buildings Design Rating tool – as its structure offered the greatest semblance for what was required. The P&E tool offered added flexibility for adapting certain criteria to focus on different morphologies – and define how credit should be allocated for the Green Star rating that would more accurately reflect the building.

In addition to adapting the necessary criteria, the custom tool also allowed the company to incorporate aspects such as “green leases”

to ensure that tenants can be held responsible for their own energy use – and particularly where this may be outside of the landlord's control or influence. Groves says, "Green leases are growing in importance as the first step in changing mind-sets towards sustainability and getting buy-in from tenants for retail, commercial or residential use, alike."

"Green building design or building for sustainability has become integral in the design and construction of buildings – regardless of their use – and especially with the global design movement towards *new urbanism or green urbanism*," she continues.

"This progression towards having a custom tool will create so many more possibilities for different building models to be rated and accredited in the future, including things like: health facilities, hotels and/or conference venues, etc. which up until now - using existing tools - was thought impossible."

Each time the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) reviews the rating tools and identifies attributes that previously haven't been rated, and look to incorporate these, the criteria becomes harder.

"This also means that the industry is adapting and moving forward as it learns more. As such, I expect that the GBCSA will continue to review all the existing tools and available information to explore what is truly meaningful in the context of building for sustainability. In the next few years, it is likely the council will look to launch one custom tool that to be used across the board for different building models, different morphologies and different ratings. We are very proud to have lead the groundwork for the development of such a custom tool," concludes Groves.

For a 360° view of the Menlyn Maine Central Square development please see the below included links to YouTube. For a 360° viewing experience, please use your mouse cursor by dragging it across the YouTube screen to move the images around and see the model/construction of the development from different angles.

- Menlyn Maine Central Square Model - <https://youtu.be/K6cuy7DNOj4>
- Fountain view at Menlyn Maine Central Square - <https://youtu.be/LuSwyPIYyng>