

Creative use of Corobrik's product enhances Vredenburg high school

The inclusion of Corobrik's face brick and pavers in the construction of Louwville High School in the Western Cape was the perfect finish to the striking development which now makes up a vital part of the Vredenburg landscape.

Corobrik's Cape Stormberg Travertine face bricks were selected for the creation of a plinth on the 5 390m² development, with 134 000 plaster bricks for the remainder of the construction which was completed at the end of 2016.

Just under 98 000 Corobrik's Cape Stormberg pavers were selected to pave walkways and the courtyards.

The school consists of five blocks which includes 38 classrooms and eight offices, all situated around three courtyards.

"The use of our face brick range within the Louwville Primary School development was very cleverly done, offering an appealing aesthetic to inspire young learners," said Christie van Niekerk, Manager for Corobrik Western Cape. "The choice of face brick for school buildings remains extremely popular with government departments because of the superior quality, durability and low maintenance aspects that underscores the Corobrik range."

Van Niekerk said the non-slip, colour-fast pavers would always remain an ideal choice, particularly for school areas where children are at play.

According to architect, Wilhelm Louw, of 2AD Space Architects Inc., the face brick plinth was used to create uniformity within the building courtyards and the school as a whole.

"Finer face brick detailing was implemented around curved faces of the structure as well as planter boxes," explained Louw. "By cutting the brick into smaller pieces we managed to create a woven-texture finish."

The construction of the school around the courtyards provides children with a sheltered space from the harsh Vredenburg environment, offering relief from wind and sand. The junior and senior courtyards also have physical training slabs to accommodate activities and sports connected with primary school curricula. It is within the courtyards that further detailed brickwork – using Corobrik's Cape Stormberg pavers - can be found in the patterned pavements.

"The design of these courtyards contributes towards a favourable environment for the learners to spend their time," he explained.

Commenting on the choice of Corobrik's face bricks for the use within the R53.5m development, Louw said his first instinct was to select a material that is sustainable throughout.

"The Cape Stormberg face brick is manufactured at Corobrik's Phesantekraal Factory in the Western Cape, which means that transportation thereof to site is minimal," he said. "Maintenance and durability is another sustainable aspect to consider, which makes face brick a frontrunner. In addition, the thermal capacity of face brick is perfect for the hot climate of Vredenburg, as it has a good lag-time that allows for a more stable temperature within the buildings."

Despite having a limited budget for such a big project, Louw said they managed to keep the design 'alive and interesting' with several unique features.

"We cast playful holes into the roofs over non-habitable spaces, along with the drinking fountain nodes, mosaic beacons and intricate gable ends throughout the design," said Louw. "The classroom-façade pattern-blocks are a rhythmic joining element within the courtyards, along with the face brick band."

As well as receiving a new school, the development saw the upliftment of the Vredenburg community in general. Local community members were taken in on site and trained by Corobrik in brick laying and other construction skills.

Louw said that the achievements of the Expanded Public Works' Programme, as evidenced in the

development are exceedingly good. The target amount to be spent on local enterprises for this project was R2 060 000 while Tempani, the contractor, spent R4 800 000, well above the desired target.