

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Concor Buildings Delivering Fast Track Student Accommodation Project

Concor Buildings is synonymous with delivering fast track projects to the desired quality, on time and most importantly within budget.

Martin Muller, contracts manager at Concor Buildings, ascribes this characteristic as one of the reasons why the company secured the contract to construct the new student housing accommodation in Streatley Avenue, Auckland Park.

Being developed by Century Property Developments, The Campus, when completed at the end of 2018, will provide accommodation for 800 students predominantly from Wits and UJ. This will mitigate some of the shortages being experienced with student accommodation close to the tertiary education institutions.

Construction work started in January this year and practical completion is targeted for November 2018. This will allow the finishing trades access to ready the apartments for occupation in early 2019.

Designed with an industrial look and feel, The Campus is a four and six storey building with two basement levels. The multi-storey structure will house several communal areas including study rooms, computer labs, conference rooms, a games room and a gym facility.

Significantly, The Campus will be pursuing an EDGE Sustainability Certificate through the Green Building Council of South Africa. This international rating system looks at three key areas being energy, water and materials.

Describing the construction methodologies being used, Muller says that an in-situ cast concrete base structure was cast up to the ground floor transfer slab and that everything above this level is a combination of load bearing brickwork with precast slab elements and various steel finishes.

The sections above the transfer slab vary from four storey to six storey structures with eight apartment blocks in total. The design of the complex features a central core area which will house

the access lifts, a pool and gym, a canteen and other services. The basement area will accommodate both parking and storage facilities for the students. All apartments will be fully furnished making it an easy rental for students.

Once the load bearing brickwork is completed, the precast slab elements which include floor slabs and staircases will follow.

An interesting challenge for the contractor is that the construction site is taking place within a residential area which is rich in heritage and care has to be taken at all times to adhere to the local bylaws and residents' requests.

Adding to this factor, there are additional logistical challenges as the site itself is spread over 235 metres with an extremely narrow roadway making access to site challenging. To mitigate materials handling activities, Concor Buildings erected two tower cranes which were strategically placed to service the entire construction site.

"Fast track projects are challenging at the best of times but with these logistical factors at play we have had to pay even more attention to detail in planning," Muller says. "It is critical that materials are delivered at the correct time to the correct location as there is no space for the stockpiling of materials on site. This means delivery of all bulk materials must dovetail accurately with the construction programme."

He explains that during the detailed planning process, the team used resource linking to the various activities to ensure sufficient resources are available when and where needed. In this manner, the company has been able to mitigate most issues.

"It is this level of planning and the control of information flow that makes a fast track project a success, and it also calls for close communication between the client, the professional team, us and the many sub-contractors that are on site," Muller says.

Majority of the finishing trades will be done by selected sub-contractors, and Muller says that the focus here has been on ensuring overall quality while controlling the cost. The polished concrete floor and ceilings will have an off-shutter finish from the slab elements above. The walls will be mostly whitewashed, and the furniture and finishes will be modular with a modern industrial look.

Safety, as always, is a non-negotiable on Concor Buildings' projects but constructing within a residential area has required an even more focussed approach. Maintaining absolute safety on the roadway is vital and additional personnel have been put in place to ensure this.

Another important factor is working at height, especially on a project which is fast track in nature. Skilled tower crane operators are essential and Muller says that they will play an important role when it comes to lifting and positioning the precast elements.

Concor Buildings' Visible Felt Leadership strategy can be seen on site, and management often takes part in the daily safety task instructions briefings showing solid leadership and commitment to the company's safety objectives.

"We are synonymous with delivering fast track projects on time, within budget and to the required specifications, and to be able to do this is all about team work and understanding what is required of each individual. We have a cohesive team and ongoing communication is vital. The team includes a lot of strong young professionals who bring energy to the project," Muller concludes.

FAST TRACK PIC 01 : Work is underway on Concor Buildings' contract to construct new student housing accommodation in Auckland Park.

FAST TRACK PIC 02 : Being developed by Century Property Developments, The Campus will provide accommodation for 800 students.

FAST TRACK PIC 03 : Designed with an industrial look and feel, The Campus is a four and six storey building being constructed by Concor Buildings.

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