

Corobrik's face bricks used to create homes in Roodepoort's Princess Plots Informal Settlement

The first phase of the Princess Plots Informal Settlement Upgrade Project has seen 281 homes handed over to residents in this Roodepoort-based settlement, with the construction incorporating Corobrik's dynamic Fynbos Geel and Fynbos Rooi clay face bricks. The project, which got underway in 2014, will eventually include 3 500 units within the mixed-density and mixed-land use, replacing informal shack dwellings and empowering residents with homes.

"When it comes to building homes, Corobrik understands that this is more than just a place to sleep and store one's belongings," explained Musa Shangase, Corobrik's Commercial Director. "A home is an extension of the individual and a reflection of their place within society, which is why quality products, such as the Corobrik's face brick range, are so important."

Corobrik's fired clay face brick is robust and extremely durable which means it will not require refurbishment and replacement at a later stage. The colourfast properties of clay mitigate the need for plastering and painting, making face brick one of the biggest cost-savers for long-term maintenance.

Michael Hart of Michael Hart Architects & Urban Designers, the company tasked with the project design, explained that the two face brick colours were chosen to create a subtle variety of natural tones: "The face bricks facades were contracts with vertical plastered panels, painted in a bright but limited palette of colours. Using Corobrik's face brick in load-bearing structures is a huge benefit due to the high compressive strength and durability."

Hart explained that the low-maintenance face brick option used for the majority of the external walling will serve the community in the long-term: "The face finish of the bricks was excellent value for money and provides a maintenance-free facade. The clay face bricks also achieved a very high rating of insulation required for external walling."

The project involves several stakeholders, including the Community of Princess Plots Informal Settlement; the provincial Department of Human Settlements; and the City of Johannesburg. It forms part of government's national policy to eradicate informal settlements and provide housing and dignity to all residents.

The Princess Plots Project will be implemented in six phases with the first phase the Show Village Development. This consists of 281 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) units, each 40sqm in size. These 2-bedroom apartments are located within four-storey blocks, found alongside a multi-purpose recreation centre and a variation of well-defined green courtyards. Security has been provided with the project surrounded by secure perimeter fencing as well as entrance gates and a guard house on site. Princess Plots is strategically located near economic opportunities and transport nodes, making access to school, work and retail centres convenient for residents.