

Cecilia Square in Paarl to open doors in August 2013

Cecilia Square, the new commercial office development adjacent to the Paarl Mall on the N1 in the Western Cape, is scheduled to open its doors on 1 August 2013, when anchor tenant BKB GrainCo, will move in to occupy the majority of the development's first phase.

Cecilia Square is a phased development consisting of two buildings linked by a raised parking deck. The first phase (Building A) is currently under construction, and has been bought by BKB, with their subsidiary, GrainCo, taking its place as main anchor tenant. Construction on the second phase (Building B), which is currently being sold off-plan in sections, is scheduled to start in February 2013.

Construction has now been under way for more than five months and, despite battling some very cold and wet conditions on site this winter, the main contractor, Isipani Construction, is making great strides towards meeting next year's deadline.

The design team is also celebrating the imminent submission of design documentation to the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA), which aims to achieve a 4 Green Star SA - Office V1 Design Rating.

A first for Lazercor

Cecilia Square is the first Green Building to be designed and built by Lazercor Developments, a well-known private property development company in the Cape Winelands. At the project's inception the directors felt that, in light of SAPOA and the GBCSA's drive to greening commercial developments in South Africa, the pioneering step of designing and constructing the first Green Building in Paarl would be the right thing to do. According to Mark Teuchert, Lazercor's proud tradition of retaining part ownership in their developments demands quality and a long-term approach to realising capital returns. In this case, the long term payback will be of both monetary and environmental value.

The main challenge was to find a way to design an energy-efficient building that would meet specific design criteria on a very tight budget. This was achieved by employing best practice environmental design from first principles, including a north-south orientation and pre-determined building width to allow for optimum sunlight penetration, and to minimise the need for artificial lighting, heating and cooling. Building materials were chosen for their insulation properties, including state of the art double glazing on south-facing facades, and concrete coffered slabs that improve the building's thermal mass.

Automatic light switches

Energy is conserved by using optimum lighting layouts with efficient fittings, and lighting, power and HVAC consumption is monitored and reported on monthly by means of an automated building management system. The building also boasts a state of the art DALI control system, which ensures that electrical lighting is not in use during hours where adequate daylight is available, and that lights switch off automatically when no motion is detected.

Water-saving strategies include a rainwater harvesting system that collects rainwater from hard surfaces to be re-used for irrigation and flushing, low-flow fittings and water meters that monitor and report on water consumption for all of the building's main water uses. Cyclist facilities include lockers, showers and bicycle stands, while designated bays are provided for low-fuel vehicles.

Next year holds great promise for all involved with Cecilia Square, as the project team anticipates the GBCSA design accreditation early next year, followed by the successful completion of Phase 1. Construction on the second phase of the development will commence as soon as enough sales have been secured to obtain funding from Nedbank early in February 2013. The developers expect that, when the development is completed and externally valued, the building will be worth much more than a non-green equivalent due to the lower operation costs and improved functioning expected, and that both owners and tenants will directly benefit from this.

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