

## MALL OF THE NORTH



Mall of the North opened its doors on 14 April in Polokwane, Limpopo. The shopping centre is visually well located in a major hub and is a welcome addition for local shoppers, many of whom have had to travel over two hours for shopping trips in the past.

The R1.2 billion 75 000m<sup>2</sup> regional mall is jointly owned and developed by JSE-listed Resilient Property Income Fund, Flanagan & Gerard and Moolman Group.

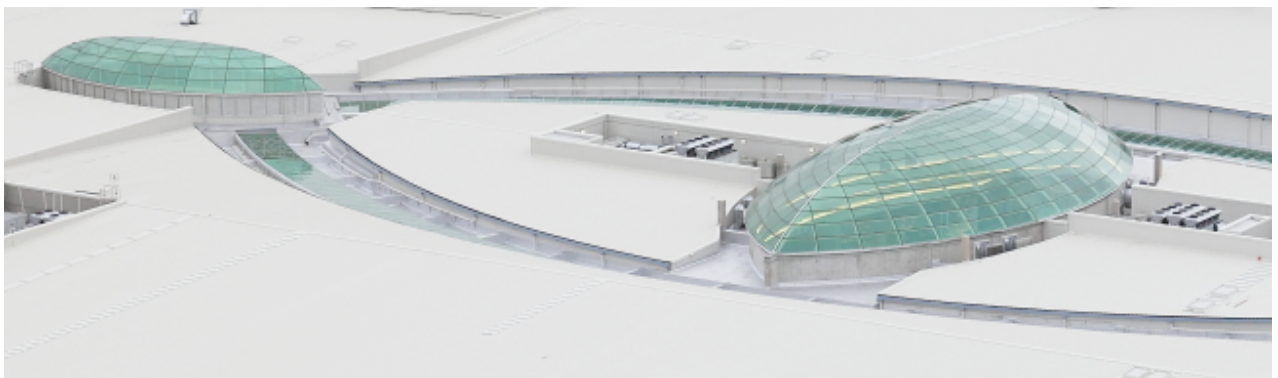
Designed by the established, award winning South African based firm MDS Architecture, the main focus of the centre's design was to contextualise the building in its environment and to give it a sense of place. "The most important aspect for us was to integrate the building into the landscape. Limpopo is characterised and known for its wildlife and bush atmosphere. This was to be emphasised, rather than overshadowed by the centre," says Mr Pierre Lahaye of MDS Architecture.

"We drew inspiration from the surrounding forests and mountains, and have placed strong emphasis on texture and colour. We have also stressed the importance of being environmentally respectful, and have re-used as much as possible from the site."

### **The brief**

The client's brief specified that the building should be of a contemporary design. As a result, MDS Architecture took design cues from the area. From a distance, the building seems to blend into the landscape, despite its size. Cost was also a major factor and all finishes needed to meet the client's sustainable requirements in a cost effective way.

### **Combination of organic curves and straight lines**



"The scale of the building is huge – although it is a split-level centre, it is akin to a normal 6 storey building in scale," explains Lahaye. "We broke down the scale by using diagonal lines, such as the grass-like feel of the mild steel fencing around the development," he says. As a result, Mall of the North seems to rise out of the earth.

The entrances are an area of focus, with porticos and water features evoking a sense of arrival. Latticing has been extensively used at the entrances in the design of the pergolas, suggesting the bushveld for which Limpopo is famous.

The experience inside the mall is connected to the exterior and it doesn't take long before one catches glimpses of natural light again. The large expanses of glass roof were used to create tangible connections to the outside. There are eight skylights, ensuring that the sky can be seen at every point of transition in the shopping centre. "The design of the skylights was a collaborative effort between the architects, structural engineers and glazing specialists, ensuring a very elegant solution," says Lahaye. Special performance glass has been used that is tinted and laminated and has a number of safety features.

The long straight lines of the standing seam concealed-fix roofing sheets in Clean COLORBOND™ steel "Cape White" allow for an attractive finish. Although not visible from the ground level, the 2800 tons of structural steel and 42 000m<sup>2</sup> of quality roof sheets plays an integral role with regards to the energy efficiency of the mall.

### **'Green' elements of the roof covering**

"I have always believed that many of the measures that are labelled as "green" really boil down to good design practise. The design of Mall of the North has incorporated a number of 'green' elements, which were boosted by a commitment from the developer to keep sustainability in mind," says Lahaye.

Mall of the North's design has incorporated insulation, solar reflective roofing, cavity walls and energy efficient glass to help thermally regulate the building. On the western side of the building, which receives the harshest rays of sun during the day, shading devices have been installed to prevent overheating. In the hot summer months, the light coloured Clean COLORBOND™ steel incorporating solar reflectivity particles will reflect energy away from the building, thereby reducing energy demand for internal cooling.

Remote metering of tenants' power consumption has been installed as well as a sophisticated Building Management System, a central network that evaluates energy usage throughout the building. Natural light is another key factor in energy efficiency. The region experiences an abundance of natural light and this has been used to its maximum capacity throughout the centre with the installation of the unique glass domes into the roof. During the day there is little need for artificial lighting in the mall.

In the long-term the clients will benefit from the low maintenance, energy efficient and long lasting Clean COLORBOND™ steel roof. The client have added comfort in the fact that all the benefits of Clean COLORBOND™ steel is comprehensively covered by the BlueScope Steel material warranty.

### **PROFESSIONAL TEAM**

**Developers:** Resilient Property Income Fund, Flanagan & Gerard and Moolman Group

**Architect:** MDS Architecture

**Quantity Surveyor:** Norval Wentzel Steinberg

**Structural Engineer:** L&S Consulting

**Main Contractor:** WBHO