

A WAVE OF CONNECTIVITY

The Ascent of Ballito Steps



Size: 3 588 m²
Completed: 2022
Location: Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal

Retail spaces and recreation go hand in hand, especially in the country's favourite surf spot - the beautiful Ballito. Malls and retail centres hold the potential to be vibrant hubs where communities unite to commemorate milestones, forge connections, and engage in meaningful interactions. These spaces serve as more than just places to shop—they become landmarks of safety and solidarity, intrinsic to the fabric of a community. The years of foot traffic might start to take their toll on these builds, but instead of abandoning them, we ought to revive these places where cultures come together to thrive. For Boogertman + Partners, Ballito Steps was an opportunity to lift up a shopping centre that had begun to slump, and in doing so, help lift the spirit of the Ballito community.

THE BRIEF

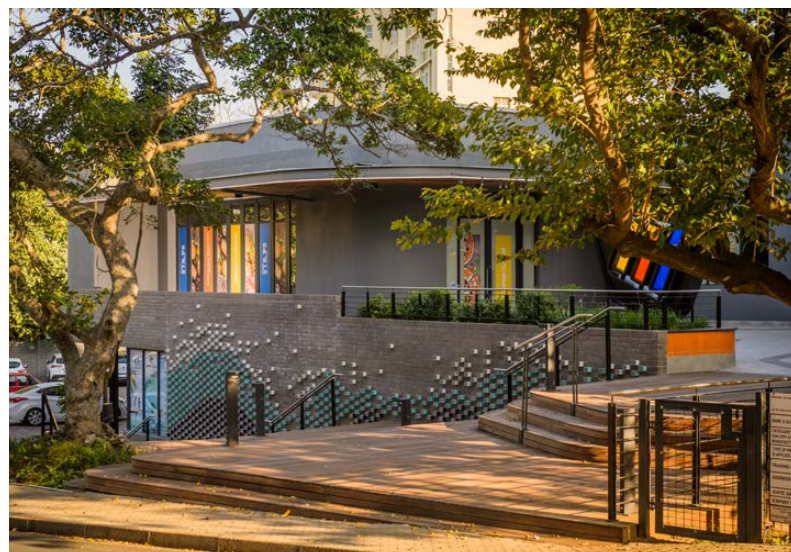
The task at hand was to refurbish an existing local convenience shopping centre in Ballito. The centre, although well known, had become run down and dilapidated over the years. The building was full of disused signage, the three retail levels were disconnected, and the structure had been modified in a piecemeal fashion, leaving it in need of a revamp.

THE SITE

Ballito Steps is a mall along the Dolphin Coast, in the rapidly expanding beachside town of Ballito. Designed to reflect and highlight its surroundings, it is a hub crafted distinctly to suit the setting, resonating with the surf culture of the KZN North Coast. Simultaneously, it considers the site's placement within the urban fabric of Ballito. The centre fosters openness and connectivity with the public, actively encouraging seamless transitions between street sidewalks and different levels of the development. This stands in stark contrast to the prevailing trend of creating self-contained developments that strictly delineate movement between private and public spaces.



ballito steps



SUPPLIERS

- Sculpture**
Rebcon Engineering (Pty) Ltd
031 705 5851
- Feature bricks**
Corobrik
031 560 3111
- Planters & bins**
Allsorted Designs
011 708 7550
- Signage**
Ascot Signs
086 108 8891
- Centre tile**
Tile Africa
011 455 2607
- Ironmongery**
dormakaba
031 880 1618



THE INSPIRATION

The use of vibrant paint colours, brick patterns, materials, artwork, and sculptures created a distinct beach holiday surf ambiance. The 'Wave Wall', constructed from painted bricks which jut out at certain points, transformed mundane objects into art, creating a sense of a moving wave as one ascends the stairs. The prominent Shaka sculpture became an Instagram-worthy spot, encouraging people to connect with the building through photographs. Local surfboard shaper Hutch crafted the three boards fixed to the restroom wall, further reinforcing the connection to the Ballito community and their culture. Finally, the lower ground level was opened up and the entrance to the anchor tenant was made more visible, resulting in a simplified and consolidated space. This created a contained area that allowed line shops to open and interact more effectively.

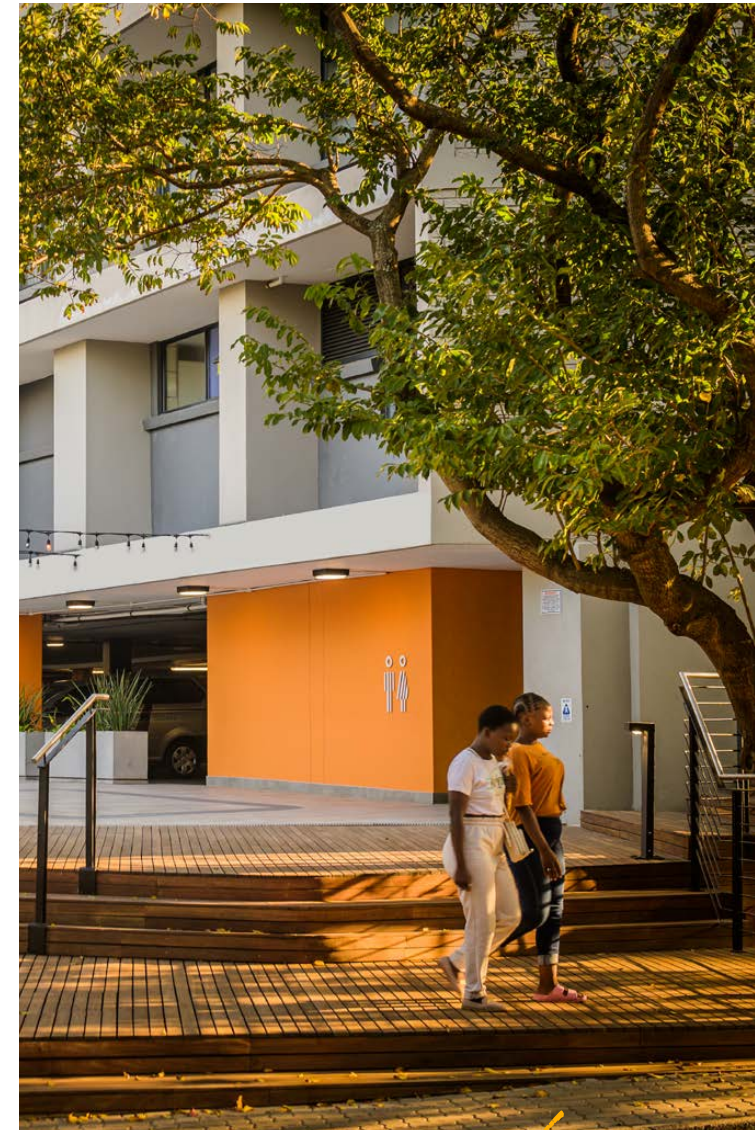


THE PROCESS

The refurbishment process began with stripping the building back to its original structure, removing all unnecessary cladding to provide a raw and clean canvas with which to work. To refresh the mood of the area, local art pieces, powder-coated steel, and planting were incorporated to the outdoor environment. Along with a revamp of the façade, the interior renovations to the food court bring a contemporary and fresh feel to the build. The interventions breathe new life into the shopping centre, transforming it into an energised and visually captivating destination that harmonises with Ballito's character and engages the local community.

The objective was to upgrade the entire centre and accommodate Checkers as the new anchor tenant on the lower ground floor. By implementing a few key architectural interventions, significant improvements were achieved. A lift and staircase were constructed centrally to create a vertical connection between all existing levels, enhancing accessibility to the Checkers and activating the parking level, as well as from outside to inside the centre. Timber steps were then added adjacent to Dolphin Crescent, reconnecting the three levels while integrating the centre with the surrounding streetscape, linking the retail and public realms. A restaurant was strategically positioned on the eastern edge, creating a sheltered courtyard between the building masses on the middle level, a space offering views of the street that serves as an ideal outdoor seating area for patrons.

By providing the centre with the chance to become something new and exciting, Boogertman + Partners created a community attraction with the refurbishment of Ballito Steps. Vibrant and welcoming, the space now values not only its own structure and foundation, but also the society it serves.



Community

MEET THE TEAM

- Architect:** Boogertman + Partners
- Developer:** Retail Africa
- Project Manager:** MDSA Project Management
- Quantity Surveyor:** SVR SA
- Structural Engineer:** Sutherland Engineers
- Mechanical Engineer:** Meccanitek Consulting
- Electrical Engineer:** Watson Mattheus Consulting
- Town Planner:** TC Chetty & Associates
- Photographer:** Chris Allan Photography


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