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ACTION STATION

Photography: Jan Ros

Boogertman + Partners has reimagined the forecourt of the landmark Cape Town Station as a vibrant new precinct including 6 700m² of modern retail space, a 3 085-bed student accommodation and a new public square.

The forecourt of Cape Town Station, a landmark in the Cape Town CBD, has been reimagined by Boogertman + Partners for the Eris Property Group as a new precinct that includes retail space, student accommodation and a large public square.

The new development was conceptualised to serve students at the nearby Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), but is open to students from any institution seeking quality affordable accommodation in the city. It has been designed and built according to Department of Higher Education (DHET) standards as NSFAS-accredited accommodation.

The development shifts Cape Town Station's character from a predominantly transport- and railway-related node to a vibrant mixed-use space that includes 6 700m² of modern retail space, 3 085 beds of student accommodation and a world-class public square.

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CAPE STATION 'MATERIALISING THE FUTURE'

Boogertman + Partners



Beyond this, however, the design of the precinct embraces the potential of the site to inject new urban life into this part of the city, and to strengthen and restore aspects of the urban design in the area while consolidating the nature of this historical precinct and creating a new urban landmark.

The site is uniquely positioned on the urban city edge as Cape Town steps down into suburban fabric, rather than slotting into an existing city grid with buildings surrounding it on all three sides. As a result, its design demanded a high degree of sensitivity to its urban context, but it also offered multiple opportunities to celebrate aspects of the city's heritage and enhance its functioning while managing an important transition in the evolution of the city.

The retail space is accommodated on the base level, while the student housing block (topping out at 20 storeys) rises above it, forming two L-shaped blocks that are tied together to form a large courtyard.

The 'massing' of the student block was carved out in response to complex heritage, urban and contextual drivers, which include the allowable heights related to the scale of the nearby buildings, as well as a careful consideration of the key views up and down the surrounding streets and vistas of Table Mountain. Thus, each elevation responds individually to its own specific parameters, while the whole is resolved into a cohesive, flowing, unified design.

Along the main urban artery of Adderley Street, the building echoes the horizontal



nature of the station concourse and reflects the scale of the buildings opposite. The northern façade relates to the height of the 60m Paul Sauer building and views of Table Mountain, while the southern façade steps down to relate to the buildings on Adderley Street. The eastern elevation is scaled according to the city blocks on the skyline, but also in relation to the large, flat expanse of the station platform and to the rhythm and proportions of the existing concourse building's sandstone façade panels.

From the ground to the fourth storey, the building creates a frame for the square.

Aesthetically, the design for Cape Station involves a contemporary reinterpretation of the predominant modernist face of the built environment in this area of the city, responding to the light material fabric of the surrounding buildings.

Its scale is sensitively broken down into smaller portions on the façade, with variations in pattern and colour articulated with seamlines. Parts of the building even appear to be floating as a result of cuts in the mass, which allow natural light into the courtyards.

The social breakout spaces and courtyards are encased in a figure-of-eight massing, which also helps to maximise the building's exposure to natural light.

From an urban design perspective, two historical city grids intersect at the station: the historic Dutch city grid, and the modernist layout of the Foreshore.

PROJECT #4 CAPE STATION PHASE 1, CAPE TOWN

CONSTRUCTION AND COSTING

Cape Station was, for a while, the biggest project ever awarded to construction company GVK-Siya Zama, a record that has since been surpassed in Gauteng. It remains, however, the biggest project the company has ever undertaken in the Western Cape.

GVK-Siya Zama Cape managing director Chris Maughan says that, despite construction taking place during one of Cape Town's wettest winters in more than 10 years, which affected the build process, the timelines for the project were met. "With all student accommodation-type projects there is only one milestone – completing before the annual intake, otherwise the building would be left vacant as students acquire alternative accommodation for the year," he says. This meant working out of sequence, seven days a week with extended daily working hours. "Being a building 20 storeys high, the 'Cape Doctor' made itself known," he says. "With over nine million bricks to transport vertically, [this] meant many extra hours of crane hook time and additional protection and resources."

Niel du Pisani, associate director of AECOM, the company responsible for fulfilling the role of quantity surveyors and overall cost management on the project, adds that from their perspective, "The biggest challenge on the project was the timelines and the multiplier, with 3 080 rooms, every cost variance had to be multiplied by 3 080, so the budget had to be managed very carefully." Nevertheless, "AECOM managed to deliver the project below budget," he says.



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The new building has been designed to moderate this transition. Among its priorities were an imperative to strengthen the street-facing edge along Adderley Street and its response to the surrounding city grid, and to reestablish a green link between Table Mountain through Gardens area and on to the sea, which had become tenuous in this area.

The new precinct was intentionally designed to facilitate pedestrian movement – opening two urban corridors that create ease of access for pedestrians – and to encourage the use of public transport.

The main link is the extension of Riebeeck Street into the galleria. Along the same axis a new bridge penetrates through the station concourse building.

Parking space was minimised, but, as a major transport interchange, the site has easy access to trains, buses and taxis.

The character of the precinct merges the public and civic nature of the station square with the more private and social nature of the student accommodation. The buildings wrap around to create a public square; its four-storey façade here imparting a grand civic atmosphere to the retail section.

While the shops and square are open to the public – the shops intend to serve the needs of the students who live in the building, as well as commuters and those who live and work in the city – the student accommodation is accessed via a lobby on the first floor, subtly distinguishing public and private realms, and supporting access control and the security of the residential units.



Two of the rooftop levels (level four and 14) feature roof gardens with sports facilities and breakout spaces. Large loose planters with trees and shrubbery echo the green spaces in the square.

Cape Station introduces a new civic icon and an important transitional architectural intervention into the evolution of Cape Town – densifying, diversifying and breathing new life into this part of the city. It sensitively navigates the relationship between heritage and contextual factors, while strengthening, reestablishing and restoring others, and forging an exciting future for the Cape Town CBD.

Professional Team

Developer: Eris Property Group Architect: Boogertman + Partners Client: SASAII Project manager: SIP Project Managers Quantity surveyor: AECOM Structural engineer: Shelly Maritz Consulting Civil engineer: Nako Iliso Electrical engineer: Spoomaker & Partners Fire and wet services: Triocon Landscape architect: OVP Associates



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NAKO ILISO is proud to be appointed as the Civil Engineers responsible for all site and bulk services of the Cape Station Student Accommodation & Retail Project



BUILDING STRENGTH

GVK-SIYA ZAMA
CONSTRUCTION

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