

SANDTON GATE CENTRAL

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Sandton

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Sandton Gate Central is the second phase of the Sandton Gate Precinct on Winnie Mandela Drive on the outskirts of the Sandton CBD. The design of the precinct integrates residential, commercial and retail components within a connected, future-focused urban precinct.

Sandton Gate Central was the first development in South Africa to pilot and achieve certification under the GBCSA's Green Star Sustainable Precincts (SUP) tool, which evaluates environmental performance at a precinct scale rather than building by building.

Landscaped pedestrian walkways link the buildings, prioritising walkability, wellness and accessibility. This car-light framework encourages active living within a cohesive, human-scaled environment that caters to daily life within a five-minute radius. The precinct includes generous public spaces designed for everyday use and offers direct access to the Braamfontein Spruit greenbelt and its trails for joggers, cyclists and dog walkers.

Phase One of Sandton Gate, Sandton Gate Towers, launched in 2019 with 15,000m² of office space, a gym and a retail component, acting as an anchor to the precinct. It established a prominent landmark visible at eye level from the main arterial route along Winnie Mandela Drive. The Terrace at Sandton, the first residential component, added 136 residential units to the precinct.



Sandton Gate Central combines retail, restaurants and offices with landscaped pedestrian routes, creating a walkable extension of the mixed-use precinct



Phase Two, Sandton Gate Central, opened to the public in March 2026, introducing a 12,000m² retail centre flanked by two new office towers with 10,000m² of P-grade office space: 6,000m² in Tower A and 4,000m² in Tower B.

Design Concept

Sandton Gate Central bridges typologies, sitting somewhere between a mall and a convenience centre. It was conceptualised more as a high-street environment than a conventional enclosed

shopping centre, an approach that encourages movement, connection and interaction across the wider precinct.

The dual-level retail centre, comprising 5,942m² on the lower level and 5,207m² on the upper level, is bookended by restaurant nodes, with eateries Tightline, Tortellino D'Oro and Vlammo activating the outer edges. National retailers including Woolworths, Checkers and Dis-Chem anchor the retail offering, with boutique retailers and smaller shops interspersed between them.



Phase One and Phase Two of the precinct are unified through a consistent design language. Paving bands, materials and landscaping principles are carried through without interruption, creating a seamless relationship between the two and allowing movement to flow naturally between them.

Double-volume clerestories flood the centre with natural light, which is also drawn deep into the lower retail space through open edges and high ceilings, filtering through the parking level to reach the retail spaces below.

Three main entrances break up the retail corridor, providing convenient entry and exit points. One leads to the restaurant section and the connection to Phase One. A central entrance from the podium parking level draws visitors into the centre of the upper retail area, while a further entrance provides direct access to the anchor tenants.

A natural kink in the site, where two previously separate plots came together, helps break up the long, linear passage typical of large retail spaces. Instead, it creates a more comfortable, human-scaled environment that facilitates organic movement.

Form, Material and Detail

The interplay between geometric built form and softer, organic elements evident in Phase One, particularly around the large sculpture installation on the podium, Die Noute (The Narrowing) by Hannelie Coetzee, is reflected in the retail centre's curved edges and planters.

Paving bands and planters visually connect the spaces, while entrances are defined by curved forms and soft transitions that draw people inward.

The same principle applies to the connections between the lower and upper levels.

Subtle spatial prompts, such as directional tiling and colour changes, guide visitors intuitively, indicating seating areas and pause points without relying on overt signage.

The ceiling design echoes the forms and rhythms established at floor level, creating a cohesive relationship between the floor and ceiling planes and strengthening the visual and spatial connections. Changes in volume, visible





in section through the clerestory windows, add variation and contribute to the sense of openness.

This approach helps make what could otherwise be large, open spaces feel legible and approachable, allowing movement to feel natural and comfortable. It also encourages pausing and social interaction, with planters and seating positioned to create rhythm and rest points.

Brickwork and timber introduce warmth and texture. Upright 'stack bond' brickwork emphasises verticality and contributes to the premium character of the centre through refined detailing. This impression is enhanced by arched pillars that meet the ceiling, timber detailing and linear lighting designed to break up ceiling spans and create visual interest.

A feature lighting installation in a double-volume space subtly echoes the shape and form of the planters below, adding another layer of unity and cohesion. Together, these details create a consistent visual language in which elements at different levels of the building respond to and reinforce one another.

A Connected Precinct

Ultimately, the design of Sandton Gate Central reinforces the wider philosophy of the Sandton Gate precinct: to encourage walkability and an active lifestyle, enhance wellbeing and create an environment in which people can move, gather and interact comfortably. By extending these principles into the retail component, the project adds a new dimension to the precinct while complementing its existing residential and office components.

Digital Delivery

Sandton Gate Central was delivered through a fully connected, cloud-based construction process, with Boogertman + Partners' entire practice operating on Autodesk Forma in collaboration with BIM consultants Modena and developer Abcon.

Sandton Gate Central served as an important test case for the application of this approach on a project of significant scale and complexity. It demonstrated that a connected, data-driven

workflow can make project delivery more efficient and accountable without compromising creativity or design quality. Technology enabled the design team to explore ideas earlier, coordinate them more effectively and respond to challenges with greater accuracy and confidence.

The project was named Digitalization Project of the Year for the Integrated Digital Delivery of Sandton Gate Phase II at the Big 5 South African Impact Awards 2026.

A New Layer to the Precinct

Sandton Gate Central demonstrates how a retail development can become an integral part of a broader mixed-use precinct rather than operating as a standalone destination. Its high-street approach, pedestrian-focused planning and connection to the landscape reinforce the principles established in the earlier phases of Sandton Gate, while its architectural detailing gives the new phase a distinct identity.

The combination of retail, restaurants, offices, public space and landscaped connections creates an environment designed around movement and interaction rather than simply accommodating individual buildings. Supported by a digitally integrated delivery process, Sandton Gate Central brings together the physical and technological aspects of contemporary development to create a precinct that is connected, adaptable and firmly focused on the people who use it.

