

Largest 5-Star Green Star SA RATED BUILDING

The iconic new 112 000 m² Discovery Global headquarters in Sandton, Gauteng, recently received a 5-Star Green Star SA rating by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA), making it the largest new build project to receive this rating to date.

Global engineering and infrastructure advisory company Aurecon is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the developers' and Discovery's green intent for the building. The company tapped into its diverse range of expertise to demonstrate leadership, innovation and transformation in achieving the project's sustainability goals.

"Receiving a GBCSA 5-Star certification for the largest Green Star certified new building to date in South Africa is a significant achievement. The size of the building, coupled with the way that employee well-being and health was placed at the heart of all the design principles, makes this a landmark project," says Martin Smith, Aurecon Technical Director – Buildings.

In a property industry event organised by the GBCSA at the new building, the certification plaque was officially handed over to Discovery. Attendees at the function included the joint developers of the project Growthpoint and Zenprop, as well as sustainability and mechanical consultant Aurecon.

Greening a complex, mega precinct

Situated on the corner of Rivonia Road and Katherine Street, the building comprises three linked office towers which consist of a ground floor, eight office floors and an activated roof level with sports facilities. The design features an abundance of natural light with most of the building being wrapped around a series of sunlit

atria that illuminate the cores of the towers the cores of the building.

From its design to construction and operation, sustainable development has been a key priority for the developers and the tenant. Some of the green features of the building include optimally designed energy-efficient lighting, grey and rainwater harvesting systems, water-efficient sanitary fittings, as well as carbon monoxide monitoring in the basement. Aurecon also carried out in-depth analysis on the striking, swirling façade that draws light into the building and is critical to thermal heat control.

Spotlight on occupants' health and well-being

Yovka Raytcheva-Schaap, the Aurecon Associate providing environmentally sustainable design consulting and project management for the project, says the Discovery building creates an environment that is centred on occupants' health and well-being. The design was done in such a way as to provide an ample amount of fresh air, thermal comfort, daylight and connection to the exterior.

"It's a remarkable space for people: there's a fully equipped gym, yoga decks, a running track and multipurpose courts set in the indigenously landscaped roof. These facilities encourage an active lifestyle. An expansive ground floor includes staff restaurants and coffee shops, while office spaces were designed for activity-based working and enhanced staff collaboration," says Raytcheva-Schaap.

The vision for the Discovery building extends beyond providing IEQ (Indoor Environment Quality) for the occupants, to the integration of a building into a healthier, more desirable surrounding precinct. The spaces between the buildings and how the buildings connect to these spaces, creates a liveable, valuable precinct. The publicly accessible ground floor spills out into a landscaped podium and this will be extended as a 'precinct connector' to other developments in the area through innovative pedestrian links.

Growthpoint Properties Office Division Director, Rudolf Pienaar, says that they are delighted to have achieved the GBCSA 5-Star certification for this development, especially considering its scale and complexity.

"The new Discovery head office is now among the most environmentally sustainable and efficient buildings in South Africa. Green building plays a key role in providing spaces in which businesses can thrive," said Pienaar.

"Our collaboration with Growthpoint over the years has helped us reimagine what can be achieved when sustainability, wellness and community are the golden thread throughout each design decision. It's been a privilege to be involved in the project and I would like to congratulate Growthpoint, Zenprop and Discovery on creating such an iconic green precinct in the heart of Gauteng's economic hub," concludes Smith. ■

