

Randburg Square Mall upgrade attracts tenants, visitors

Randburg Square mall, owned by Vukile Property Fund and managed by JHI Properties, a member of Excellerate Property Services, has undergone a three-phase capital investment of approximately R207 million in upgrades.



The overall improved, fresh retail experience has seen the centre enter a new phase that is expected to translate into positive future growth. New flooring, new lighting, wider walkways and reconfiguration of central areas and some of the stores are just some of the modern enhancements that add to the appeal for shoppers and visitors to the centre.

The 35,818sqm (GLA) mall is conveniently situated in Randburg CBD, close to the intersection of Jan Smuts Avenue and Bram Fischer Drive, about 300 metres from the main Randburg taxi terminus north of Johannesburg. An office block of 15,127sqm and a multi-level parking garage completes the current offering.

New retail stores

"The redesign process has enabled us to attract 23 new retail stores to the centre and we now have a top quality tenant mix to cater for its diverse shoppers. We anticipate good growth in residential demand in Randburg going forward, which should augur well for the centre in the future. We have already seen footfall to the centre increase by about 20% since the main refurbishment work was completed in the last quarter of 2013," says Vukile CE Laurence Rapp.

Jaco Nel of JHI Project Management and project manager responsible for the refurbishment, adds, "This upgrade has enabled us to reposition 24 existing tenants within the centre and adjust the tenant mix to provide a vibrant, value-added shopping experience to the people of Randburg and visitors to the centre." He worked on the project under the guidance of Vukile Property Fund's Johan le Roux, senior manager - projects and Itumeleng Mothibeli, asset manager.

Launched in the late-1970s as Sanlam Centre Randburg, the retail areas had long been in need of an extensive revamp to enable the centre to compete successfully with contending centres that have since been developed in the catchment area.

"With almost 100% of the retail shops having been upgraded, the mall has attracted some of the major national tenants such as Shoprite (including OK Furniture), Woolworths, Edgars, Foschini, Jet Stores, Truworths, Nedbank, Pepcor, Mr Price

and Ellerines - and foot traffic has increased considerably," continues Nel.

He says the inspiration for the redevelopment was due to the commitment from retailers who needed a revised asset to take their businesses to greater heights seeing the promising potential of the centre. "The management team also saw an opportunity to strategically reposition the tenant mix to meet the needs of the changing and more diverse market for which the mall now caters. The current tenant mix caters for all these customers through a well thought-out redesign and re-tenanting process."

Scope of work

The scope of work carried out includes upgrading of the main entrance at the food court and the escalators connecting the two shopping levels have been realigned to allow easier flow from the entrance into the centre, thereby creating an ideal shopping environment. This has also created more space for the new banking mall on the lower level. FNB, an existing tenant, has relocated to this area while Nedbank, a new tenant, has also started trading here. In the food court, tenants have been relocated and new stores have been included.

There has been a major improvement of all mechanical, electrical and fire safety systems, including the implementation of green energy saving measures wherever possible. The public toilets have also been upgraded aesthetically. Modern alterations were made to the main entrance from Pretoria Street and the secondary entrances located along the pedestrian promenade in Hill Street. A new, unified signage has been proposed for the building exterior.

A complete overhaul included widening of the walkways, raising of the shop front heights to enhance the visual connection into the stores; raising of the ceilings and the introduction of feature bulkheads. Improved lighting levels, using energy efficient fittings, were implemented to make the mall experience brighter and more airy. In some cases, openings were cut into the floor of the upper level mall to create better visual connections between the two levels.

Engineered reconstruction

"Of technical interest is that multi-directional carbon fibre structural reinforcing strips were used in strengthening the existing concrete slabs where it was cut away to create space for the new escalators. This product was glued to the bottom of the concrete slabs with Prostruct 617 NS Structural Epoxy adhesive and bolted at the ends, to replace the steel that was cut out.

"In addition, some 14,000sqm was specified for the replacement of existing waterproofing membranes on the top roof slab, with Woolworths below this area. The finish on top of this is a protection layer of a thick geotextile, with sand and pavers as the trafficable surface."

The project management team took extra protection and care to limit the impact of the construction work on the tenants' trading activities and to minimise inconvenience to shoppers during this period. Hoarding was designed and the centre management branded it to keep customers informed and safe.

With an average foot count of over 800,000 customers per month, the mall plays host to commuters, professionals, families and friends. The local authority, together with property owners, has in recent years upgraded the public facilities in the surrounding area and made improvements to the traffic flow. The new Gautrain bus route and the incorporation of the Randburg CBD into the Bus Rapid Transport system have further improved access to the area.

Professional Team

Client: Vukile Property Fund

Main contractors: Legocon Projects (Phase 2 Level 5 and phase 3)

Boogertman Smit Building (Phase 1 and Phase 2 level 3)

Project managers: JHI Project Management, a member of Excellerate Property Services

Quantity surveyor: AfriQS

Architects: DBM Architects

Consulting electrical engineers: Quad Africa Consulting

Consulting structural and civil engineering: L&S Consulting

Consulting fire engineer: Building Code Consultants

Consulting mechanical engineer: Plantech Consulting Engineers

Consulting wet services: Wat-Sol Design Technology

Consulting vertical transport: Solutions for Elevating

Safety consultant: Comprac

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