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REWARDSCO 2 UMHLANGA RIDGE



REWARDSCO 2

REWARDSCO 2 Umhlanga Ridge

CLIENT

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Karl Beath

The 29,000m² site owned by Zenprop Property holdings is located on the NE corner of the Ridgeside Precinct, holding arguably the most prominent site within the Ridgeside triangle

Ridgeside is a four precinct development that occupies the sea facing triangle created by Umhlanga Rocks Drive and two major highways, the M4 and the M41. The Ridgeside development supplements the uMhlanga Ridge Town centre and creates a mixed used environment along the primary transport route of Umhlanga Rocks drive.

The 29,000m² site owned by Zenprop Property holdings is located on the NE corner of the Ridgeside Precinct, holding arguably the most prominent site within the Ridgeside triangle. Uninterrupted views to the north and views back over the Indian Ocean to the NE and SE provide the tenants with a breathtaking outlook.

Sitting adjacent to uMhlanga Rocks Drive the new Rewardsco Building was constructed alongside their existing Head Office to the NE and ultimately this new facility will function as their central hub once linked to the soon to be constructed structure on the SW corner of the site. These three buildings effectively form a new micro precinct.

The Brief

Designed by Hilton Lawrence Architects, the brief was to create a contemporary A+ Grade building which complemented the existing Rewardsco building's aesthetic but forged a new design language which would ultimately be taken through to the final development phase.







This new building would serve as the central facilities hub, housing the large canteen and executive coffee shop along with their support facilities. Access to and from the existing building as well as the future development was critical and large staff compliments would require multiple entry points in order to meet rush hour demands.

Rewardsco had a clear vision that ultimately all three structures and the spaces which linked them created a micro precinct which would offer their staff and visitors a unique internal and external experience.

Given the shape and prominence of the site it was important that these buildings were stretched

out along the site and any links between each structure would complement the overall aesthetic once complete. As with their existing facility the consultant team was given the target of obtaining a 4 Star Green Star SA Rating to demonstrate a commitment to Environmental Sustainability.

Design Concept:

The concept was hugely dependant on three design items:

- Podium level micro precinct.
- A new architectural language
- High level linkage of all three facilities

Primarily there had to be a departure from the existing architectural precinct planning of the site. Areas once designated as parking nodes now became an opportunity for landscaped gardens, water features, curved paved walkways lined with trees and concrete benches ideal for outdoor meetings and lunch breaks.

The squarer building footprints of the original design intent became longer, more elegant structures running along the length of Umhlanga Rocks Drive. Access to the micro precinct parking was now limited to a single entry point with shaped planters creating a physical and visual barrier between the hardened parking areas and the softer landscaped environment which would interact with the reception entrance and the 360° ground floor canteen.

From a building aesthetic point of view the most difficult part of the brief was creating a new architectural language whilst complementing the very bold existing aesthetic. A strong emphasis was placed on the façade facing uMhlanga Rocks Drive and then the internal façade which interacted with the podium parking areas and arrival points.

Taking the building orientation and the final aesthetics into account the decision was taken to spend money on both of these primary façades.





A dark glazed unitised system with integrated white fins was proposed to the clients/tenants. The oblique views of the uMhlanga Rocks Drive façade meant that the swooping shapes created by these white blades were in strong contrast to the black glass and the aesthetic changed as you approached and passed the building. The swooping blades with taped edges allowed the opportunity for the architects to integrate the signage into the façade without creating a visual distraction. A similar aesthetic was applied to the podium façade but the blades were omitted as third floor balconies introduced on the sea facing side of the structure reduced the overall height of the façade.

Bridge Link

The task of designing a high level bridge link definitely proved to be one of the biggest challenges on the development. Designing a building with such a prominent position and successfully integrating a pedestrian link bridge at 3rd floor level needed to be carefully thought out and meticulously detailed. The splayed column on the bridge meant the illusion of a greater span between buildings could be created and also reduce the visual clutter underneath the structure. A steel and bond deck structure was framed with a series of steel ribs which carried the glazed roof and perforated aluminium side cladding. Glass







balustrades also help reduce the visual mass of the structure. A fritted glass roof helped reduced the heat load on the bridge and the swooping shapes created in the façades were carried through to the aluminium side cladding. The graded pattern created by the perforations in the side cladding also helped maintain a comfortable air flow across the bridge whilst shielding staff from rain during the wet days.

Fire Escape Access

Another big consideration, and one which was assisted by the revised shape of the building, was to remove all external fire escape stairs from the corners of the building. To have multiple corners of the building obstructed by large, mostly unused structures was not desirable. The longer narrower structure brought these corners closer together, providing an opportunity to remove as many as four corner escape points and consolidate escape routes in one central scissor staircase. Whilst offering four separate escape points from the office levels, the double staircase also functions as a key circulation route between office levels.

The Façade

There are a total of three primary façade systems which make up the various external façades on the facility. The Primary NW and SW façades utilise a unitised flush glazed system. The reception lobby employs a spider glazing system and the ground floor canteen, parapet wall strip windows and third floor balconies utilised a pressure glazed system.

Solar E Plus grey fully toughened glass was selected for both its aesthetic and performance abilities. The darker glass helps to create the contrast between the glass and the white powder-coated aluminium fins, whilst the high solar performance characteristics help to deal with the

high solar levels on the two fully glazed façades. A double glazed system on the viewing panels on the NW façade was also utilised to further reduce solar gains within the office space.

The darker and 'heavier' visual effect of the upper level flush glazed façades was then offset by choosing a lighter more see through glass on the ground floor canteen level. The entire ground floor space is set back from the upper floor edges, which provides the internal spaces with some shading from the overhangs. The Solar E Clear glass, whilst also having good performance



specifications, allowed for better views both into and out of the canteen space and created the visual effect of the primary structure 'floating' above the podium gardens. The exact same system was also utilised on the third floor balconies which had a better solar orientation and also allowed clearer views out of the executive canteen.

This left the reception lobby façade. Due to the revised shape of the building and unique shape of the reception lobby the façade system had to both make an architectural statement on approach and also complement the shallower lobby depth.

The design decision to move away from the more typical deep voluminous atriums of the surrounding buildings to a shallower more efficiently designed atrium meant that the glass needed to provide far more than weather proofing and complement the views from the lobby back out into the podium circulation and parking areas. The Spider Glass façades in a 12mm Cool-lite ST 167 Neutral glass, offered a slightly higher solar performance level than the Solar E Clear but still allowed for wonderful views both into and out of the atrium. The slight reflective nature of the external face of the glass also gave the entrance feature a bit of a silver sheen which makes it stand out from the surrounding façades.

Building Overview

The design and layout of the various levels were really dictated by the functions contained within

each level. The ground floor canteen grew from occupying around 50% of the usable space to occupying the entire 750m² area. Shifting the primary food production kitchen to the P1 basement level meant that the focus could be placed on the servery and seating areas.

The ground floor also has the primary reception area and particular attention was paid to the design and layout of the space. The 4-level volume with the sloped feature wall draws your attention down from third floor ceiling level to the custom designed reception desk. The white façade fins are integrated into the sloped wall to echo the external architectural language and also assist with the acoustic properties in the volume. A sealed white oak feature wall with aluminium linear graphics runs up behind the three suspended internal bridge links to create a warm colour pallet within the space.

The architects wanted to avoid the bridge links dominating the lobby volume so they worked with the engineers to ensure the structural steel and supports were as slender as possible. The ceilings where also floated off the steel and the linear recessed LED lighting complemented the horizontal strength of these structures. Glass balustrades also meant that when looking into the volume from the external podium area the oak feature wall was more prominent than the bridge links. Novospace was responsible for the interior design.





Three lifts on the northern wing of the office provide vertical access from all three levels of the basement up into the office levels. Ablution and service facilities are situated between the atrium and the scissor stairs and the aim was to keep this space as clean and free flowing as possible. The first and second floor areas of around 1,000m² function purely as office space and each level

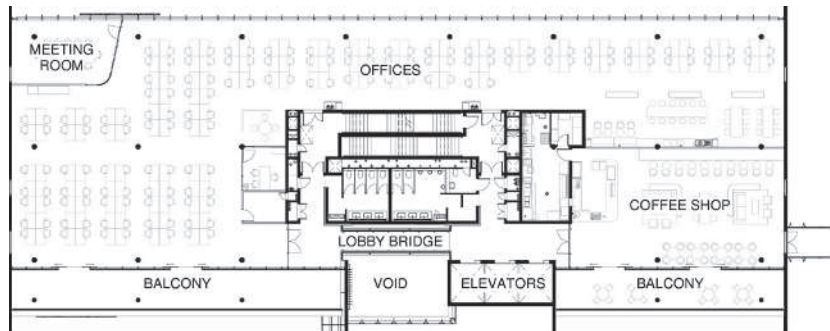
contains its own pause area with kitchen and seating areas. The bulk of the 900m² third floor has a similar office and pause area, but the feature of this level is the 200m² executive Café 99. With direct access to this space from the external link bridge and spill out areas onto the third floor balcony. This fully serviced facility offers a more personalised escape from the working day.



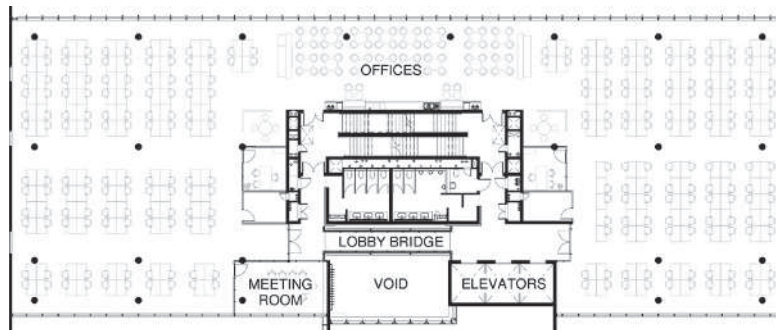
Structural Overview

The structural frame was conceptualised to allow rapid and cost-effective construction with a focus on simplicity of design. Flat plates were used for parking and office slabs and the column grid was work-shopped with the architect to attain a transfer-free concept. Some interesting structural moments were developed where

the structure meets the sloped embankments – these interfaces had to be meticulously planned to minimise the amount of costly lateral support piling and to allow pedestrian connections and thoroughfare. The clean straight slab edges, sloped concrete feature walls and canopy roofs utilise 'hidden' cantilever beams to enhance and support the aesthetics of the building and



THIRD FLOOR
PLAN



FIRST FLOOR
PLAN

GROUND FLOOR
PLAN

