

SACAP

NEWSLETTER

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South African Council
for the Architectural Profession



About SACAP

The South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) is legally charged to regulate the architectural profession in South Africa in terms of the Architectural Profession Act No. 44 of 2000 (the Act). The architectural profession includes professional *architects*, *senior architectural technologists*, *architectural technologists*, *architectural draughtspersons* and *candidates* in each of the categories of registration, all of whom are required to be registered with SACAP before they can practice architecture.

SACAP regulates the architectural profession by setting up standards for registration, education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance and ethics. SACAP also keeps a register of candidates and professionals who meet the standards; approve programmes at higher institutions of learning which persons must complete to register; and take action when professionals on our register do not meet the standards.

More information about SACAP is available on
www.sacapsa.com or call 011 479 5000.



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Editor's Note

As we present this edition of the SACAP Newsletter, we reflect on a period of growth, introspection, and transformation within the architectural profession. The themes explored in this issue speak to the realities shaping our industry, from graduate unemployment and shifting housing dynamics to evolving regulatory frameworks and the growing influence of artificial

intelligence. These conversations are not only timely but necessary, as they challenge us to rethink, adapt, and lead with purpose in a rapidly changing environment.

At the heart of this publication is a commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue, sharing knowledge, and strengthening the collective voice of the profession. As professionals, educators, and stakeholders, we each play a role in shaping a built environment that is responsive, inclusive, and forward-thinking.

On behalf of the editorial team, we wish to thank you once again for being an essential part of our newsletter journey. We look forward to another year of collaboration, innovation, and progress.

– **Brenda Phake:** Stakeholder Relations, Marketing and Communications

Feedback

To all readers, we want to hear from you!

As we reflect on recent developments and look ahead to new opportunities and collaborations, your feedback continues to play an important role in shaping the content of this newsletter. We value your input and remain committed to providing content that is relevant, insightful, and engaging to the profession.

If you have feedback, articles you would like to submit, or suggestions for future content, please contact the Stakeholder Relations Officer, **Ms. Manoko Makumula, at Manoko.Makumula@sacapsa.com**

Your contributions help us to continuously improve and ensure that this publication remains meaningful and responsive to the needs of the profession.



Mr Charles Nduku

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

WHY BUILDING PLAN APPROVAL CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED

As professionals and custodians of the built environment, we often speak about compliance, standards, and regulation. However, behind these terms lies something far more important, the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of the people who occupy the spaces we help shape.

Approved building plans are not simply a procedural requirement. They are a vital safeguard that helps ensure that buildings are safe, lawful, functional, and fit for purpose. Whether it is a home, office, school, clinic, or public facility, every building must meet certain standards before construction begins.

In South Africa, this process is governed by the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act 103 of 1977) and SANS 10400, which set out the technical requirements for the design and construction of buildings. In terms of the law, no building work may commence unless plans have first been submitted and approved by the relevant local authority. This requirement is in place to protect the public.

Approved plans help ensure that buildings comply with important standards relating to structural stability, fire safety, ventilation, accessibility, sanitation, energy efficiency, and many other aspects that contribute to safe and sustainable buildings. It is also important to recognise the critical role played by registered architectural professionals in this process. These professionals are trained to prepare compliant building plans, guide clients through approval processes, and help ensure that construction aligns with legal and technical requirements.

Their role is not only to design buildings, but to ensure that those buildings are safe, responsible, and appropriate for their intended use. Unfortunately, there are still instances where construction takes place without approved plans or without the involvement of suitably qualified professionals. This exposes property owners and communities to unnecessary risks, including unsafe structures, legal penalties, stop-work orders, financial losses, and in some cases, demolition.

We continue to emphasise that compliance is not a barrier to development. On the contrary, it is what enables development to take place responsibly and sustainably. It protects lives, preserves investments, and strengthens confidence in the built environment.

I would therefore like to encourage property owners, communities, municipalities, and all stakeholders to appreciate the importance of approved building plans and the value of appointing registered architectural professionals. By doing so, we contribute to a safer, more resilient, and more accountable built environment for all.

At SACAP, we remain committed to promoting professionalism, public protection, and compliance in the architectural profession. Together, let us continue to build a culture of accountability and excellence in the built environment.



Advocate (Adv) Toto Fiduli

FROM THE REGISTRAR'S DESK

ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES FOR 2026

Our priorities at SACAP are to serve both the public and the profession efficiently and effectively.

Set out below is a summary of the work undertaken over the past three quarters in pursuit of this mandate.

Over the past three quarters, SACAP's service environment has demonstrated strong performance. In Quarter 1, 93% of targets were achieved; in Quarter 2, 93.5% of targets were achieved; and in Quarter 3, 92.2% of targets were achieved. This reflects an overall average achievement rate of 92.9% across the three quarters.

These results demonstrate consistent organizational performance and confirm that all departments are functioning effectively, with each employee contributing to the achievement of SACAP's strategic objectives.

Our stakeholders, particularly registered persons, have high expectations of SACAP regarding accessibility and responsiveness. In fostering a service-driven culture, SACAP remains committed to delivering timely, efficient, and professional support, ensuring that calls are answered and email queries are addressed promptly. This culture of responsiveness underpins our regulatory mandate and strengthens stakeholder confidence in the organization. The statistics below demonstrate that SACAP operates as an efficient and service-driven regulator.

Over the three quarters, the service environment has remained consistently efficient. A total of 44,634 calls were processed, of which 40,598 were successfully answered, resulting in an overall answer rate of 90.9%, reflecting strong and stable operational performance.

Inbound calls accounted for 21,581 calls (48.3%), while outbound calls totalled 23,053 calls (51.7%), indicating a balanced operational model with proactive stakeholder engagement.

Although overall performance remained above the 90% benchmark, the 3,871 missed calls were primarily attributable to inbound traffic during peak demand periods. Outbound call performance remained consistently strong across reporting cycles.

In addition, a total of 26,476 email queries were received across Legal (1,405), SR (2,928), PSS (14,395), and Finance (7,748), all resolved on average within one working day, further demonstrating SACAP's commitment to responsive and effective service delivery.

During the reporting period, stakeholder engagement across digital platforms remained strong and consistent. A cumulative total of 1,424 engagements was recorded across all platforms, with quarterly totals of 505 (Q1), 595 (Q2), and 324 (Q3). Facebook recorded 323 engagements, X (Twitter) 296, LinkedIn 308, Instagram 293, and TikTok 206. The figures reflect sustained outreach and visibility, particularly in the first two quarters, with a noticeable dip in the third quarter. Overall, the data demonstrates meaningful digital interaction with stakeholders and highlights the importance of maintaining consistent content and engagement strategies across platforms to sustain momentum.

The Finance Department is tasked with the critical role of collecting invoices issued under the provisions of the Architectural Profession Act. Of 12,058 invoices issued, 10,782 were collected, achieving a 90% collection rate, which is essential for SACAP to fund its activities. The Finance Department continues to work diligently to ensure collections support SACAP's operations and also monitors that each department stays within its budget allocations. The processing of invoices and payments remained very efficient across the board.

The Secretariat Department is central to the effective functioning of Council, Committees, and all operational departments. A well-

functioning Secretariat is critical for good governance and for implementing resolutions passed by the Council and its Committees. In the 2025/26 financial year to date, a total of 40 Council and Committee meetings, four Appeals, and three Subcommittee meetings have been held, with agendas, meeting packs, minutes, and action lists prepared for each meeting to ensure proper documentation and follow-up. This performance is instrumental in maintaining an effective and efficient SACAP.

During the previous 3 quarters, the Legal Compliance Unit referred 130 matters to the Investigating Committee, 13 matters to the Disciplinary Tribunal, and 52 settlement agreements were concluded.

The work undertaken by the Legal & Compliance Unit team, the Investigating Committee, and the Disciplinary Tribunal is inherently complex, time-consuming, and legally sensitive, requiring meticulous assessment of evidence, adherence to procedural fairness, and strict regulatory compliance. The conclusion of 52 settlement agreements further reflects a sustained effort to resolve matters efficiently and responsibly, while maintaining the integrity of the profession and upholding statutory standards.

A total of 23 matters against unregistered persons were handled during the past three quarters. This work necessitated preliminary investigations, the gathering and careful assessment of evidence, and a determination of whether a prima facie case exists in respect of a contravention of section 26(3), as well as section 18(2) read with section 41, of the Architectural Profession Act.

The ability of the Legal & Compliance team to manage these matters with efficiency, diligence, and effectiveness is commendable. Their work reflects a strong commitment to upholding the integrity of

the profession, enforcing statutory compliance, and protecting the public interest.

Over the last three quarters, the Professional Statutory Services Department has processed 1,019 applications for new registrations, re-registrations, reinstatements, and upgrades. Of these, 90% were processed within seven working days, reflecting a high level of operational efficiency. This performance aligns with the constitutional principles governing public administration, which require that services be delivered in an efficient, effective, and responsive manner to meet the needs of the public.

Continuing Professional Development is a key regulatory instrument that requires professionals to continuously enhance and maintain their skills and competencies. Over the three quarters, the CPD team processed 31,426 CPD points, reinforcing SACAP's commitment to upholding professional standards and lifelong learning within the profession.

SACAP continues to use Recognition of Prior Learning as a tool to evaluate experience and recognize it with the profession. A total of 53 applications were processed across the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Special Consent (SC), and Special Candidacy Exemption (SCE) streams during the reporting period.

Of these: 29 applications (55%) have received outcomes. 24 applications (45%) have been assessed but are still awaiting outcomes of the Registration and Recognition of Prior Learning Committee. Among the concluded applications, 16 were successful, and 12 were not successful. The Special Consent stream accounts for the largest number of pending outcomes, while the majority of applications fall within the PAD registration category, with Western Cape and Gauteng being the most represented provinces.

GRADUATING INTO UNEMPLOYMENT: WHY ARCHITECTURAL GRADUATES STRUGGLE TO FIND WORK



By Kay-Lee Cupido

Sleepless nights. ✓

Research, crit after crit. ✓

Student debt. ✓

Portfolio polished to perfection. ✓

CV sent to prospective employers a hundred times. ✓

Graduation cap and gown. ✓

The walk across the stage. ✓

After party. ✓

And then... silence.

For many graduates, the high of graduating fades far quicker than expected. The belief that years of hard work, physical and emotional, guarantee employment is a common and understandable assumption. But then applications go unanswered. Internships are already filled. Interviews end in silence. One position attracts dozens, sometimes hundreds, of applicants. One employer I spoke with shared that by early January, 54 applications had already landed in his inbox for just 2 vacancies.

The narrative sold to students is simple: work hard, earn the degree, and opportunity will follow. The reality is far more complex.

To better understand the current graduate job market and as someone who has received a fair share of CVs myself, I took my enquiring mind to the profession. I spoke with graduates, employers, lecturers, SACAP, and voluntary associations to get a fuller picture.

Supply, Demand, and a Bottleneck at the Door

Architecture, like any profession, is governed by supply and demand. In South Africa, the need for registered professionals varies by region and sector. There is a genuine need for housing delivery, yet much of this work is serviced by Professional Architectural Technologists and Draughtspersons. Some registered professionals choose to set up small practices from home or work independently within this market.

One relatively new graduate took exactly this route. Unable to find employment, she approached a mentor, set up a small workstation at home, and created her own opportunity within the housing market.

Meanwhile, universities and private institutions continue producing graduates annually, many of whom require structured workplace experience to progress toward professional registration.

The numbers do not always balance:

- Too many graduates.
- Too few internships.
- Firms are cautious about hiring.
- Economic pressures limiting expansion.

This creates a bottleneck at the very entry point of the profession.

The Rise of Smaller Institutions and the Questions That Follow

A further layer to this conversation is the rapid growth of smaller architectural learning institutions. These schools often promise industry-ready skills and real-world exposure. On the surface, this sounds empowering: accessible education, career-focused training, and opportunity for all.

But difficult questions must be asked.

If the market is already saturated, what happens when more institutions produce more graduates each year? Are these institutions responding to genuine industry demand or to a viable business model for themselves? Education, after all, is also an industry.

The promise of an architectural career is compelling. It attracts creative, ambitious young people. But are all institutions equally transparent about:

- The competitiveness of the job market?
- The limited number of internship placements?
- The years required for professional registration?
- The realities of starting salaries?
- The growing gap between academic design and technical practice?

If students leave believing they will design skyscrapers and solve national housing crises immediately after graduation, that the glass corner office is just around the corner, are we setting expectations, or manufacturing illusions?

What Employers Are Saying

Employers add another dimension to the problem. Some argue that graduates today lack strong technical skills, practical detailing

ability, and documentation competence. Others raise concerns about work ethic, suggesting that some graduates expect rapid advancement and instant reward without putting in the time that good architectural practice demands.

Architectural firms are team-based environments. Projects involve regulatory compliance, financial accountability, safety, and multi-disciplinary coordination. Reliability is not optional. Trust is earned gradually, by consistently showing up and investing in your own professional growth.

There is also a perception that some graduates enter the workplace expecting a nurturing, flexible environment, with little accountability for deadlines or deliverables, as though firms need them more than they need the firm. Let us not forget: 54 applications for 2 vacancies.

Call it the “Molly Coddle Effect.”

Everyone is replaceable. The goal is to make yourself difficult to replace by leaning into your strengths, managing your weaknesses, and absorbing everything a practice and its collective knowledge has to offer.

Architecture remains a profession built on delayed gratification, patience, and time. Skills develop incrementally. Responsibility grows gradually. Learning architecture is much like the construction of a building, brick by brick, layer by layer. It is not built in a day, and it cannot be rushed.

Yet we live in 2026, a world shaped by speed, instant visibility, and the constant pressure to be relevant. If it is not immediate, it barely registers.

The Strain on Educators

Lecturers, too, feel the pressure. Students are described as “very 2026”, digitally immersed, outcome-driven, and at times less tolerant of prolonged discomfort or delayed results. Architectural education, however, has always demanded resilience. It is, by its very nature, an exercise in Continuous Professional Development.

Questions around institutional resources also arise. Do Architectural Learning Sites have adequate budgets to fund quality education? Opinions differ. And then there is another, less comfortable question: are students showing up truly showing up for the education on offer?

A further issue surfaces around educator experience. Is holding the correct academic qualifications on paper, without meaningful time spent in active practice, sufficient preparation to teach students about professional realities? If educators have had limited exposure to client negotiations, construction challenges, contractual responsibility, and the everyday pressures of running a practice, are students receiving the complete picture?

Strong theory and conceptual design are valuable. But if these projects are built around unrealistic briefs or technically advanced Alternative Building Technologies rarely used in practice, how well-equipped are graduates to navigate the design and construction realities of a developing, economically constrained country?

Particularly one in which the quality of construction work has been in steady decline, a reality the profession cannot afford to ignore.

The Bigger Questions

So, we must ask:

- Are we producing more graduates than the profession can absorb?
- Are smaller institutions capitalising on architectural aspiration without adequate accountability?
- Is education keeping pace with industry realities?
- Has the broader society created a generation that finds it difficult to integrate into environments that require patience and accumulated knowledge?
- Or is the profession itself resisting necessary evolution?

All of the above are valid. And all deserve honest engagement.

Architectural institutions benefit from growing enrolment numbers. Students invest financially and emotionally. Firms, meanwhile, operate under the pressure of shortened project timelines, discounted fees, and a constrained economy and expect graduates who are ready to contribute from day one.

Where Does Responsibility Lie?

This is not about blaming graduates. Nor about dismissing institutions. Nor about writing off employers. It is about alignment aligning the three.

Graduates must:

- Understand that competence and trust take time to build.
- Commit to developing strong technical and practical skills.
- Recognise reliability and teamwork as core professional assets.

Firms must:

- Invest in mentorship and structured professional development.
- Adapt communication styles to meet a changing generation.
- Take an active role in bridging the expectation gap.

Institutions must:

- Align curricula with realistic market demand.
- Integrate deeper technical and practical training.
- Be transparent about career pathways, timelines, and competition.

Perhaps graduates are not entering unemployment and nothingness. Perhaps they are entering a profession at a crossroads.

The question is not whether this generation is capable of building exceptional careers; they are. The question is whether universities, private institutions, firms, and society at large are responsibly preparing them for what the profession truly requires.

Because if we continue expanding educational pipelines without pausing to check in with reality, graduates may not just be entering unemployment. They may be graduating into disillusionment.

And that is a far heavier burden than an unanswered job application.

SHRINKING SQUARE CRISIS: OPPORTUNITY OR CURSE?

By Lodewikus Jacobus Bruwer (Rikus)



Tiny homes have been a staple of architectural trends, often showcased in magazines and replicated in container holiday homes. While they can be quirky and fun, they're often a solution born out of necessity – limitations on space, funds, or availability. But are they a sustainable solution for young families?

As a registered practicing professional in Cape Town, I've witnessed a concerning trend in the real estate market. Property prices are skyrocketing, while home sizes are shrinking. Young couples are sacrificing garden space, garages, and bedrooms for micro studio apartments. This phenomenon has become a pressing concern for many would-be homeowners, who are struggling to find affordable and comfortable living spaces.

Cape Town's natural beauty and urban sophistication make it a sought-after location, driving property prices to unprecedented

heights. The city's unique blend of urban and natural environments has attracted investors, tourists, and locals alike, creating a demand for housing that far exceeds supply. However, this popularity comes at a cost. Developers are prioritizing profit over people, opting for compact, high-density living solutions that sacrifice space and comfort for the sake of affordability.

The numbers are telling: the average new home size has decreased by over 20% in the past decade, while property prices have grown by over 10% per annum. This trend has resulted in homes that are poorly ventilated, inadequately lit, and lacking in basic amenities. The emphasis on compact living solutions has led to a decline in quality of life, as residents are forced to contend with cramped living conditions and limited outdoor space.

As an architectural profession, we should prioritize sustainable and responsible development practices, adopting design principles that prioritize functionality, comfort, and well-being. Young first-time buyers deserve designer homes that don't break the bank. It's time to rethink the notion that smaller is always better and focus on creating homes that work.

The consequences of this trend are far-reaching. The shrinking size of homes is contributing to a decline in mental and physical health, as residents are forced to contend with cramped living conditions and limited outdoor space. This, in turn, is affecting the overall quality of life, making it challenging for individuals and families to thrive.

So, what's the solution? Firstly, it's imperative that we prioritize sustainable and responsible development practices. This means adopting design principles that prioritize functionality, comfort, and well-being. We need to create homes that are not just functional but also provide a sense of community and connection to the natural environment.

Government and regulatory bodies must also play a role in ensuring that developers are held accountable for delivering quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of the population. This can be achieved through incentives for developers who prioritize sustainable design and penalties for those who fail to meet minimum standards.

Ultimately, the Cape Town real estate market is at a crossroads. We can continue down the path of prioritizing profit over people, or we can choose to create a more equitable and sustainable housing market that values the well-being of its residents. The choice is ours.

In conclusion, the shrinking square crisis presents both an opportunity and a curse. It's an opportunity for architects, developers, and policymakers to rethink the way we design and build homes, prioritizing sustainability, comfort, and well-being. But it's also a curse if we continue to prioritize profit over people, sacrificing the health and happiness of our communities for the sake of economic gain.

RETHINKING STANDARDS: SANS PART S AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL LEADERSHIP

By Architect Nadira Haripersadh in collaboration with Mandy Latimore

The recent publication of SANS 10400 Part S:2025 marks a significant shift in South Africa's regulatory landscape for accessibility in the built environment. Often seen as restrictive or minimal, building standards are now being reframed; not as constraints, but as opportunities. For architects, this shift calls for a reimagining of our relationship with regulation and a renewed focus on Universal Design as a creative and socially responsible practice.

This standard was shaped through the collaboration of a dedicated working group of Access and Universal Design Advocates. Among them were experienced Specialists like Mandy Latimore, whose contributions helped align technical precision with real human needs. I was honoured to be part of this process, alongside others who were committed to researching, comparing, evaluating, and justifying each clause until consensus was reached. It was an exhaustive journey, but one that was worth the wait. This process has resulted in a more extensive and practical standard. One that, while not yet fully comprehensive in terms of Universal Design, offers far greater guidance and clarity to support equitable, inclusive architecture.

Compared to many international codes, the new Part S introduces refinements that move the conversation forward. Provisions now offer clearer and more practical accommodations for diverse users, making them more applicable on the ground. In fact, some adaptations go further than equivalent requirements internationally, positioning South Africa to lead rather than follow.

One key area of evolution is how Universal Design opens up architecture to sensory experience. The focus on physical access alone is no longer sufficient. Today's design thinking must integrate how people feel, navigate, and engage with space using all their senses. This includes acoustic clarity, visual contrasts, intuitive wayfinding, and even emotional cues that support dignity and autonomy. Universal Design isn't just functional, it's fundamentally spatial and aesthetic.

The updated minimum standards offer a baseline. A strong foundation that architects can now expand upon creatively. Rather than asking "what must I include to comply?" we can begin to ask "how far can I go to include?" This reframing empowers designers to go beyond checklists and codes, and into the realm of innovation and user-centered excellence.



As professionals, we have the opportunity to not only apply these standards but to shape how they're interpreted, implemented, and evolved. Collaboration between the professional team is vital, not only to meet minimum requirements but to push the boundaries of what universal design can mean in the South African context.

Supporting the implementation of universal design goals requires intention, dialogue, and ongoing collaboration.



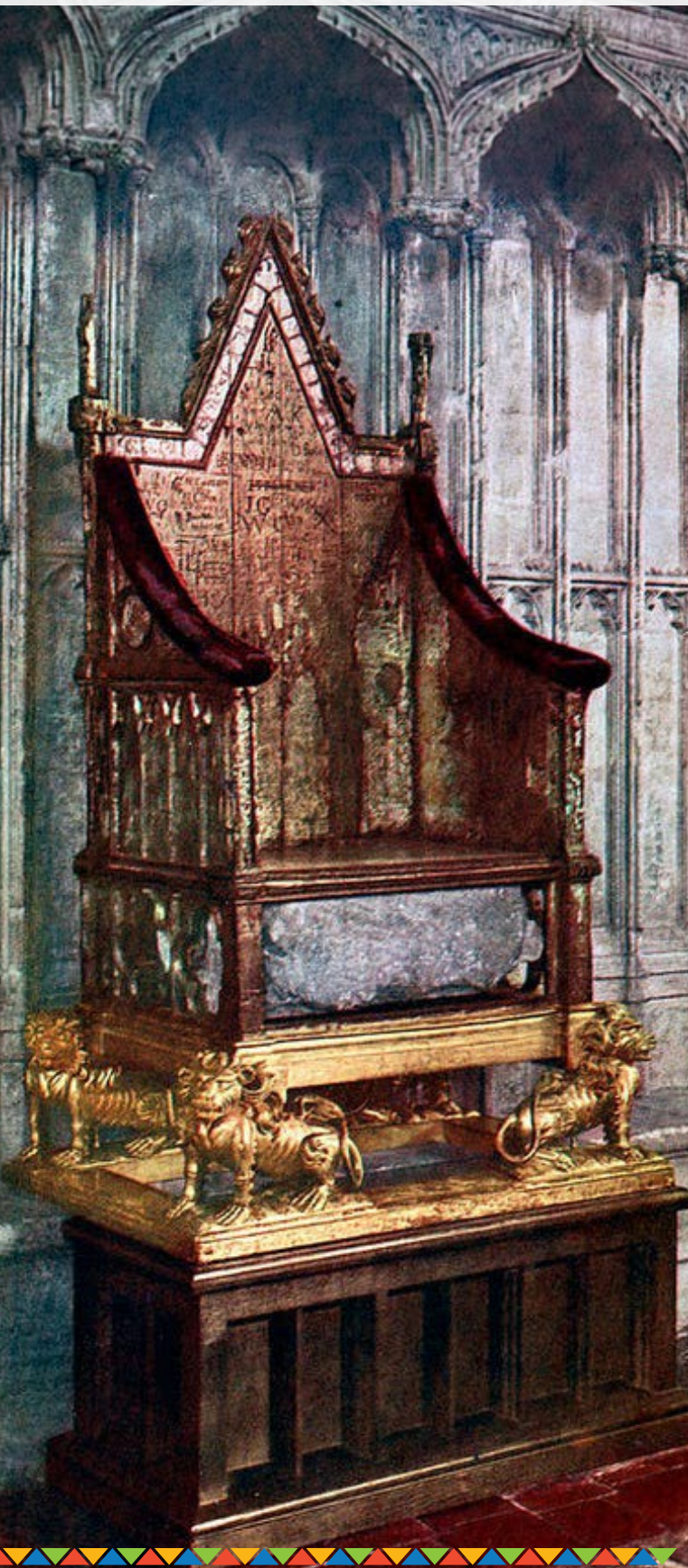
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INCLUSIVE GOALS

THE STONE OF SCONE AND BEING PRINCIPAL AGENT

By Richard Cook



Principal Agency and managing Site service is a craft that can be learned – it behoves us as Architects to master the art and become proficient. It provides an opportunity for us to harness our design skills and continue the design process throughout the construction phase of the project. The original design objectives and the aspirations of our client can be brought to fruition in the completed project with the uninterrupted participation of the original Architect.

When appointed as a Principal Agent (PA), we do not set about our task in pursuit of legal protection. We are not looking to carefully cover ourselves against any and all possible liability. Our objective first and foremost is to battle against the forces of nature and bureaucracy in order try and pull a complex structure out of the ground on time and for the agreed cost. This is an all-encompassing task that will test our resolve, challenge our creativity and require the utmost expediency.

Managing a site inspection and meeting can present Architects with enormous challenges. It is a volatile environment where tempers fray, accusations are thrown and conflicts can become physical. Decisions made in a site meeting may result in costs running into the millions for one or more of the parties. Condemning work, adjudicating contract increases and time over-runs can and will result in an a highly charged emotional and temperamental environment.

PRINCIPAL AGENCY AND THE STONE OF SCONE

The stone of Scone is a 152 kg lump of red sandstone that sits under the 'Coronation Chair'. All Kings of Scotland since 500 AD and Kings and Queens of England since 1296, when it was, err, borrowed by the Brits, have been crowned upon the stone. Its purpose is entirely ceremonial, in itself it has no special properties. But if you are sitting over it, and a guy in splendid dress is waving a sword (or an axe if you are a Scot) around your head and neck, then something very important is taking place. I use it as an analogy to understand the chair at the head of the site table, it comes with an enormous burden and invested responsibility, but equally with the untrammelled authority to undertake these tasks.

The skill set required to be a successful Architect is huge and diverse. Having hired and mentored many students and young architects over the years it has struck me that the qualities that create a good Architect often do not overlap with the natural skill of leadership. It is one thing to cobble together a complex brief with an austere budget to bring about something of relevance and beauty, it is another thing to then harness the diverse personalities of a site team to successfully bring it to realization.

However, there is a way to nurture and develop this elusive skill, and that is to build it out from the fundamental concept of authority.

THE JBCC AND THE STONE OF SCONE

Authority is different to leadership, in that designated authority forms the structural foundation of leadership. Importantly, authority can be cultivated through learning and preparation and is therefore available to all of us.

If you are designated as the Principal Agent in a Building Contract, then in effect the Stone has been placed beneath your chair.

- We are imbued with the responsibilities and duties of a broad reaching task.
- It is appropriate as we are the only person in the entire world who has walked the entire process through with the Client; we have a granular intimacy of the Clients requirements, preferences and aspirations, we have a highly detailed knowledge of the design, construction and all aspects of the scope of the project.
- We have a firm overview of the projects aims and objectives.
- We have a clarity of purpose that enables us to make decisions in a fluid environment that remain in harmony with the bigger picture.

THE DUTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL AGENT

It is not the participant with the loudest voice or the most money who carries the most authority. It is not the bully with a truckload of lawyers at his beck.

- Authority is a designated task and as explained, is by necessity and common sense designated to the Architect.
- The duties of the Principal Agent are covered at length in many CPD courses available on the various building contracts and are not the theme of this essay.
- These 'duties' as itemised in the building contract are our 'charter', the list of our responsibilities. It is this 'charter' that creates the context of our authority.
- The most important aspect of our duties is the ability to issue instructions. These are our armies and navies, the tools of our trade, the legal instruments by which we exercise our will, and they fall under our prerogative.

SITE MINUTES

Site minutes represent the printed 'Gazette' of our authority. Irrespective of how we may be silenced or intimidated in the meeting itself, our decisions and instructions as captured in the minutes will outweigh all dissent. We can employ them as deftly as a scalpel, they will be the means by which we convert our authority into firm leadership.

- Site minutes do not require a quorum, proposers or seconders, it is not a board meeting.
- They are the most appropriate format to issue site instructions and to state adjudications and contractual decisions.

- Site Minutes represent the written record of the decisions of the Principal Agent, so it is imperative that we take our own minutes and capture them ourselves – we should not pass this task to a subordinate.
- Like a Monarchy, a Site Meeting is not a democracy. The majority of those present have a very small or tangential relationship to the greater vision of the project, do not lend a disproportionate credence to the braying of the masses (sub-contractors). We should not be swayed by the wishes of a 'false quorum'.

AUTHORITY BECOMES LEADERSHIP

Everything discussed up to this point is merely the build-up to the ultimate objective; the ability to manage our tasks with an unambiguous purpose and harness the co-operation of all the parties involved. To vestige oneself with the mantle of Principal Agency in a confident and comfortable manner. It is at this point that our performance becomes a function of our personality and character.

Over-compensation:

Do not be a bully. I have worked with Architects who seem to take gratuitous pleasure in making the life of the Contractor unnecessarily difficult. At site meetings attended by the Client I have seen Architects feel compelled to show-off what a tough and ruthless operator they are.

Under-compensation:

We may compromise our effectiveness in performing the duty of PA by living in constant fear of causing offense or financial harm. The duties of PA require that we make difficult and complex decisions, and that those decisions may have massive financial consequences for the contracting parties.

Consequently, we find ourselves in constant danger of running foul of the Contractor or finding ourselves offside of our own Client's interests. We are trained and prepared for the task and we are obliged to fulfil our mandate; we need to remain resolute to perform our tasks as required by the Building Contract.

Managing The Client:

From my long experience as PA, I have found it is my own Client who tends to be my greatest obstacle. An aggressive employer will always feel that they could manage the professional team and the building contract better than their artistic, dreamy Architect.

- By the time our contract is on site, we should have determined the gauge of our Client and should from the outset devise a way to keep our Client meetings separate from official site meetings.
- We should try to keep the Client's participation to a minimum and exclude them from any decision making that does not directly involve them. We should not permit our client to hijack the meeting.
- We should never allow the Client to manage contractual tasks or decisions that they are paying us to undertake as their professional representative and legal agent on site. The Contractor would be well in their rights to contest any such involvement should it be prejudicial to them.

- Fundamentally, our Client is not a building industry professional and is not equipped to manage the contract on his own behalf, a task that he has legally delegated to the Principal Agent.
- We should do all we can to prevent the Client from issuing direct instructions to the Contactor on site. If this becomes a persistent problem, we may have to limit access to the site by the Client to those times we are present.
- Use the minutes as the only formal avenue to issue site instructions, pointedly excluding on-the-fly instructions issued by an exuberant Client on site.
- We should include decisions and duties required from the Client as an item in the minutes and the Client should be held accountable for his performance accordingly.

Managing The Contractor:

- The Contractor will always be our greatest resource on site. We should always keep that in mind and do our best to keep him onsite.
- If our Contractor feels he can trust us to play fair and be consistent, he will not balk at decisions that go against him.
- There is a great advantage in doing business with people we know.

Managing The Professional Team:

- A good professional team will work together to find solutions.
- At times it can be helpful to allow our ego to be relegated and pay attention to our fellow professionals.

CONCLUSION

Our professional attitude and general preparedness for our task as a PA will set the tone of how we deal with and manage the ‘Authority’ bestowed upon us by the Building Contract. How we perform these tasks and duties creates the basic building blocks of our on-site presence and effectiveness.

Converting our designated authority into a reliable role of ‘Leadership’ requires us to relinquish the personal construct we bring to the table. A good ‘leader’ is not an avatar of what one expects a good leader to be; a good leader brings authentic personal traits, departs themselves in a professional manner, and treats all around them with respect and empathy.

What is sought from a good leader is consistency. Those we work with or work for us are comforted by a leader who remains constant in their sense of justice and reasoned fairness, a good leader is trusted. Developing trustworthiness as a character trait requires a firm resolve and commitment to our task, a deep understanding of our role as PA, and a healthy dose of compassion.

Once we settle into our designated role as the Principal Agent, our ‘Stone of Scone’ as bestowed upon us by the Building Contract, our authority remains a fixed constant. Thereafter we have the opportunity to consciously develop our skills as a manager of people and events. The will to go about the task with this goal in mind is what matures us into a good leader.



WHAT TREE ARE YOU?

By Linke Ströhmenger – SAIAT President

I went for my morning run earlier this week, that quiet hour when the world is still stretching and the air feels unedited. Along the route stood a small tree, clipped into the unmistakable shape of a lollypop. A neat sphere perched obediently on a stick. Once fashionable, popularised during the Tuscan architectural era in South Africa, and somehow still with us.

What struck me was not the lollypop itself, but what was happening to it.

The gardeners had been away over the festive season, and the tree was beginning to remember itself. Wayward shoots were pushing through the perfect geometry. Little rebellions of life reaching out in unexpected directions. The tree was quietly undoing the rules imposed on it. And it made me smile.





Because this is what life does.

No matter how carefully we clip, trim, standardise and control, life insists on expressing its true nature. It grows where it wants to grow. It stretches, twists, leans, and reaches toward light in its own language.

And yet, how often do we force ourselves, and others, into boxes?

From a young age, we are taught what is acceptable, appropriate, normal. We learn how to behave, how to fit in, how to smooth off the edges that might make others uncomfortable. Over time, many of us become very good at being lollypops. Polished. Predictable. Safe.

Architecture in South Africa is no exception.

In fact, in many residential estates it may be one of the most tightly clipped environments of all. Pages of rules dictate roof pitches, window proportions, colour palettes, material choices and even the placement of trees. The intention is understandable. A cohesive aesthetic. A recognisable architectural language. Order.

It is, in a way, quite cute.

But it is also profoundly uninspiring.

When architecture is confined to narrow visual boxes, creativity becomes an exercise in compliance rather than exploration. Architectural professionals are not invited to imagine what could be, but rather instructed on what must be repeated. The result is neighborhoods filled with polite buildings that behave themselves, but rarely move the soul.

Uniformity replaces curiosity. Safety replaces boldness. And slowly, quietly, extraordinary thinking is pruned away.

The tragedy is not only what we lose as professionals, but what our built environment loses as a cultural record of who we are. Architecture is meant to be a reflection of its time, its place, and the people who shape it. When every house looks like the next, we are left with landscapes that tell very small stories.

So, I stood there, mid-run, looking at that imperfect lollypop, sprouting its wild little shoots, and I thought: what if we allowed ourselves to grow like that?

What if, instead of asking how well we fit the mold, we asked a different question altogether?

What tree are you?

Are you an acorn tree, slow-growing, deeply rooted, destined to become something powerful and enduring? Are you an iceberg rose bush, unapologetically romantic, layered, expressive, blooming in ways that refuse to be ignored? Are you something entirely unfamiliar, a species that does not yet have a neat label?

The built environment needs more than well-behaved lollypops.

It needs diversity of thought. It needs architectural professionals who are willing to question inherited rules, challenge aesthetic comfort zones, and design from a place of authenticity rather than approval. It needs courage to allow form to follow context, climate, culture and imagination, instead of a checklist.

This is not a call for chaos, nor a rejection of discipline or responsibility. Every healthy ecosystem has structure. But structure should support life, not suffocate it.

As we step into 2026, perhaps it is time to let a few shoots grow wild. To allow ourselves, and each other, the space to explore what our true architectural nature might be if it were not constantly trimmed back.

So, the next time you sketch, design, review guidelines or walk through an estate lined with identical forms, pause for a moment.

And ask yourself, quietly but honestly:

What tree are you?

And who decided you had to be a lollypop?



AI AND THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

By **Preven Naicker**

Managing Director – DPN Consulting (Pty) Ltd; SACAP – Pr S Arch Tech; Member KZNIA
SACPCMP – Pr CPM; Vice President ACPM; Associate AoA; Incorporate CIOB; Associate ICFP

Introduction

Architecture as a profession, has been formally acknowledged for over 200 years. The technical and practicality of architecture gives credence to its existence way before it was even formalised as a profession by formal learning institutions. The need for architecture is only evident when we realise the utilisation of a building or structure and give it thought. Architecture works in our subconscious, we interact and make use of spaces without thinking, however through the influence of a design architect, we can consider a few examples.

Architectural design considerations are the reasons behind why a kitchen countertop stands between 90cm-100cm typically or why doorknobs/handles are typically set at 100cm of the floor or why the minimum door head height is 210cm. Nobody thinks about these things, yet we use them daily, without even a thought. Would we manage with a door width of 50cm, definitely not, doors are typically 90cm wide for ease of use and an ergonomic practical design, and this then relates to the design of a wheelchair and or the height and width of beds and other furniture. It is all about architectural ergonomics.

The Design Brief & AI (Artificial Intelligence)

How would a person who is clueless about the design of a building give guidance to an AI platform in the form of a brief or scope of what is to be achieved, would the AI interpret the brief appropriately? Example: Typically, the brief stated, "I need an alteration to my home, I need a garage with modern design attached to the house." This is the result...



***Example of potential AI responses...**

An AI software response is determined by the quality of the information provided, remember the age old saying "Garbage-in Garbage-out," this is exactly how we need to see the intervention of AI. To reciprocate this, it also means if good quality information is fed into an AI platform, then the output is also likely to be correct or in keeping with the expected outcomes, however through strategic wording the response of AI can be manipulated to manufacture the desired response. There are advantages to the introduction of AI into the design space of architecture, however we must be incredibly careful on the management of Construction Detailing as this is where the practicality of application must take precedence. The human mind I believe is still the most practical applicator of solutions in general.

We must be mindful that human emotions play a pivotal role in the way buildings are designed and accepted, from the actual building design to the finishing elements. A building evokes one's emotions and state of mind, and a simple example of this is how one feels in different spaces. The way you feel walking into a shopping mall is very different to how a person feels when he/she walks into a hospital or a bank, it's all about the atmosphere and the look and feel that evokes this specific response to the emotional sub-consciousness.

Construction Methodologies in and AI environment

As with architectural design, AI has A PLACE and A PLACE for AI in the implementation of construction projects. Traditional building methodologies is something of the past, we need to start thinking about material sources, sizes, and applications. A simple issue of

the size and weight of a bag of cement or the length of a kerb will need reconsideration.

When we start the implementation of robotic controlled barrows for the carting of material on site, and the laying of bricks is done with AI controlled machinery, the programming and coordination of said machinery will be managed by a programmer and not a building contractor, so we can then ask ourselves the question, will the construction of buildings become the responsibility of a computer programmer who is managing an AI platform to co-ordinate many elements in the delivery of infrastructure. How realistic and or futuristic are these thoughts?

We must look back at history and the trend of infrastructure when buildings were erected without plans and from the minds of geniuses, without the use of rebar in gigantic structure of Rome to the meticulous artistry in the temples of India. These marvels of the modern world were created without all the rant and rave of design and construction methodologies and or even technology, yet they stand proud hundreds of years later.

Are we doing ourselves a dis-service by allowing the sector of infrastructure development to be influenced by that of AI? Or should we embrace the advancement of AI in the 21st century, as part of the 4th industrial revolution and lead by example. I believe we should consider the pros and cons associated with the utilisation of AI and use it where we believe it can add value.



***This image is AI generated.**

As humans, there is one definitive, and that is that we in most instances learn from our mistakes, let's take lead in the introduction of AI into the Architectural space, but use it not to do our jobs, but rather as an instrument to enhance what we need to deliver. A good example of how the sector has embraced AI technological advancement is in the use of (BIM) Building Information Management. This is a critical tool in project management and the built environment as it does save time and money in the implementation of a project, with us reviewing a multitude of services on a single platform and the introduction of clash detection systems, this allows the Project Manager and the Consulting Team to make informed decisions through effective communication and cross referencing before the project goes into construction.

AI & Construction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a way of the future. Marketing on recent platforms such as YouTube and Tik-Tok tells us to get on board with AI so as not to be left behind in this ever-changing world. We need to make informed choices on the what, when and why, but

most importantly on the how to install AI into the environment of Infrastructure Development.

We have a responsibility as professionals within the infrastructure space to ensure modern technologies and interventions do not create redundancies within the sector but rather assist in the enhancement and advancement to achieve better more efficient outputs and productivity. If the correct AI assistance is introduced at the right time and within the correct scope of the project, the benefits could be immeasurable.

We need to "think outside the box" and be the first to embrace advancements and interventions, AI is just that, an advancement that will create robust interventions at the right time in the right space. We must not allow AI to overtake the human element and stop us from thinking. The first consideration of an AI tool to cloud our minds is that of our cell phones. We must guard against AI taking over our thought processes but use AI to enhance our thoughts and methodologies, giving credence to the need for a parallel existence.

The Construction environment must not deviate from traditional tried and tested construction methodologies but look at AI to provide efficient robust solutions for the ease of delivery. The infrastructure sector by default will embrace AI, but in stages as AI is able to prove itself as being beneficial per sub-sector of the architectural design and construction elements, respectively. Design and Construction still need the human element because infrastructure is built to fulfil the needs of people which cannot be understood by artificial intelligence.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is without a doubt a way into the future. In recent AI endorsements, it is stated that the value of AI in a career can be more beneficial than a formal qualification, I would agree to disagree to this statement, as I believe the foundations of technical knowledge and understanding must still be taught. Even AI platforms must be taught in the correct manner, not via shortcuts.

The founding knowledge of Architecture, the response to a design brief as well as the construction methodology in response to a design brief must be taught. Feeding this into an AI platform may work, but there is no guarantee of the outcomes, as stated earlier, AI can only perform on the information it has in its database. This database is created and uploaded accordingly by a human and therefore will always rely on the human element.

Recommendation

I would recommend AI utilisation in the form of advancement in architecture in the generating of real size 3D projections of a building to virtually see and feel a space, rotate same to view a structure from all angles and interrogate the design elements between the design team by creating real time renderings and generate suggestions. Think of an architectural environment in a virtual space, where you can virtually experience a building before a spade touches the ground.

So the next time an AI platform pops up to try and be of assistance, embrace it, but be wary of what is fed into the AI, because it is bound to do one of two things into the future, either make the environment of Architectural Design and Construction Methodologies and Management more efficient or make us redundant by replacing us completely.....makes you think, doesn't it!



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE

Personal protective equipment (PPE) commonly known as PPE is legislated under the General Safety Regulations. Before an employer resort to supply personal protective equipment to his employees, it is important to understand the hierarchy of control in occupational health and safety which is:

- (a) Elimination
- (b) Substitution
- (c) Engineering Controls
- (d) Administrative Controls
- (e) Personal Protective Equipment

According to the hierarchy of control (which must be read in order) providing personal protective equipment should be the last resort. Under General Administrative Regulations 2 it is required that every employer make an evaluation of the risk attached to any condition which may arise from his or her activities. This is commonly referred to as a risk assessment, and it must identify which employees will be exposed to machinery and take step to make such conditions safe.

Where it is not practicable to safeguard the condition, the employer must take steps to reduce the risk and then only provide personal protective equipment to his employees. This personal protective equipment must be given free of charge and maintained in a good and clean condition.

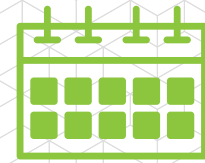
Considering the nature of the hazard that is to be countered the following examples of personal protective equipment are listed under the General Safety Regulations:

- (1) suitable goggles, spectacles, face shields, welding shields, visors, hard hats, protective helmets, caps, gloves, gauntlets, aprons, jackets, capes, sleeves, leggings, spats, gaiters, protective footwear, protective overalls, or any similar safety equipment or facility of a type that will effectively prevent bodily injury;
- (2) waterproof clothing, high-visibility clothing, chemical-resistant clothing, low temperature clothing, chain mail garments, waders, fire retardant or flame-proof clothing, ice-jackets, or any similar safety equipment of a type that will effectively protect the wearer thereof against harm;
- (3) belts, harnesses, nets, fall arresters, life lines, safety hooks, or any similar equipment of a type that will effectively protect persons against falls;
- (4) mats, barriers, locking-out devices, safety signs, or any similar facility that will effectively prevent slipping, unsafe entry or unsafe conditions;
- (5) protective ointments, ear-muffs, ear-plugs, respirators, breathing apparatus, masks, air lines, hoods, helmets, or any similar safety equipment or facility of a type that will effectively protect against harm;
- (6) suitable insulating material underfoot where persons work on a floor made of metal, stone, concrete or other similar material; and
- (7) generally, such safety equipment or facilities as may be necessary to render the persons

An employer shall take steps to ensure that no safety equipment is removed from a workplace except for purposes of cleaning, repair, maintenance, modification, mending or replacement. Employees must be given training on the proper use, maintenance and limitations of the safety equipment and facilities provided.

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SHOWCASING THE WORK OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSIONALS



ROELOF RABE
ARCHITECTS

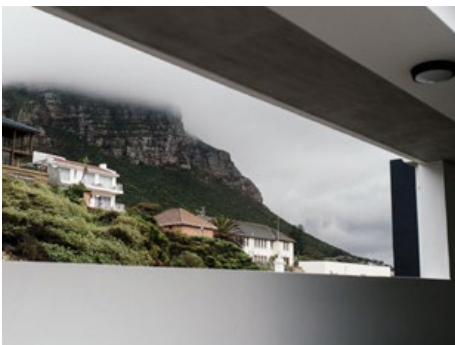
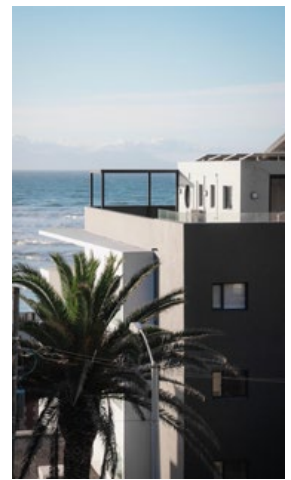
PROJECT WAVESCAPES

LOCATION: Muizenberg, Cape Town | **OUR PROFESSIONALS:** **Roelof Rabe** – Principal Architect, **Lafras Dunn** – Principal Architect, **Grant Gush** – Senior Architectural Technologist

PHOTOGRAPHER: Darren Bester



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D E R E K K O C K
A R C H I T E C T S

PROJECT GREEN POINT DOME

LOCATION: Experiential Education Garden in the Green Point Urban Park, Cape Town

ARCHITECT: Derek Kock – DK Architects | **CONTRACTOR:** Entsha Construction &

MEWA Engineering | **COMPLETED:** July 2024

The Green Point Dome, designed by DK Architects, is a striking new landmark in Cape Town’s Green Point Urban Park and forms the focal point of the City’s Experiential Education Garden. Inspired by traditional Khoi dwellings, the Dome offers a contemporary interpretation that combines cultural symbolism with innovative engineering and sustainable materials. Its curved laminated Poplar beams, and distinctive steel cladding, creates a

sculptural form that sits comfortably within the landscape. Inside, warm finishes, natural light from a central oculus, and flexible display spaces support educational workshops and multi-purpose functions. Surrounded by a garden of sensory planting, pergolas, and learning spaces, the project promotes biodiversity, cultural storytelling, and environmental awareness while showcasing advanced local craftsmanship.





PROJECT ENEO

LOCATION: Site B10, Tatu City, Nairobi, Kenya | **PROFESSIONALS TEAM:** **Elphick Proome Architecture** – Architects | **Hodari Africa** – Project Managers | **MaceYMR** – Quantity Surveyor | **Sutherland Engineers** – Structural / Civil Engineers | **Infraplus** – MEPF Engineer | **Sutherland Engineers** – Façade Engineer | **Greenscaff** – Landscaping | **GeoEarth Systems Ltd** – Land Surveyor | **Novospace** – Interior Designer | **Ark Construction** – Contractor

Located in the heart of the Tatu City commercial precinct on Nairobi's northern periphery, Eneo at Tatu Central is a landmark urban development that seamlessly integrates architecture, urbanism, and environmental design. Spanning an entire city block along a major arterial road, this mixed-use development exemplifies a bold vision for a modern African city. It serves as both a catalyst for growth within the precinct and a precedent for sustainable, vibrant urban environments in East Africa.



The project features two office towers rising above a meticulously designed retail podium. At its core, Tower One functions as the exclusive headquarters for CCI Kenya's regional call center, tailored to their specific operational requirements. In contrast, Tower Two offers sectionalized office spaces with flexible layouts, catering to a diverse range of tenants and fostering dynamic work environments. The integration of these towers with the vibrant podium creates a cohesive and multifaceted development.

The pedestrianized retail podium, elevated above street level, is a focal point of the design. Its sculptural form, clad in natural stone,

integrates angular planters and stairways that provide intuitive and seamless access from the street. The podium houses a large anchor retail tenant and smaller stone-clad retail pods, creating a lively and diverse commercial hub. Landscaped gardens and pedestrian-friendly pathways enhance the sense of place, making the podium an inviting and secure space for both visitors and occupants. Beneath the podium, a two-level subterranean parking garage ensures convenience and functionality without compromising the aesthetic or spatial quality of the precinct.

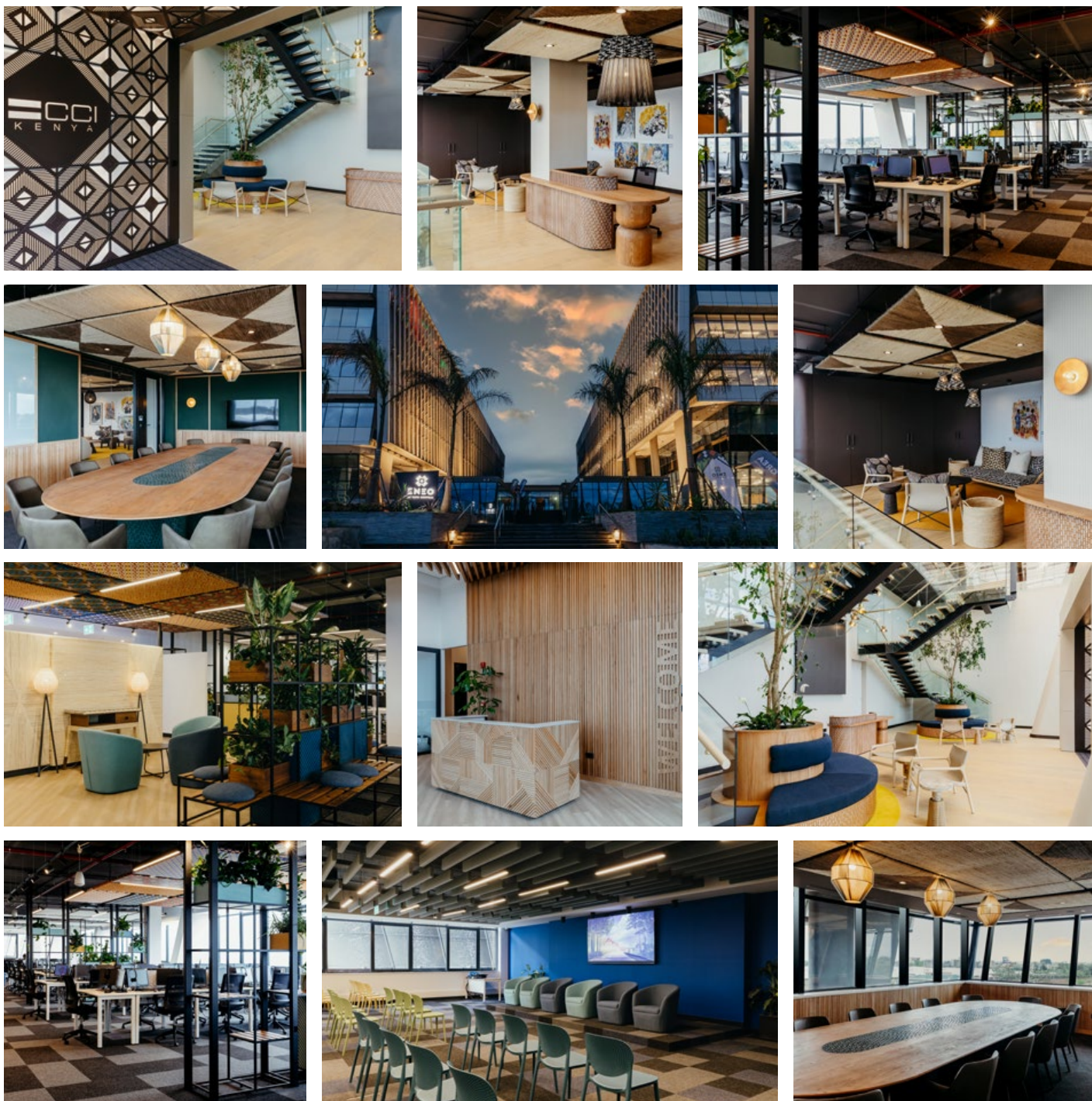
A defining feature of Eneo's design is its climatic responsiveness, reflecting the challenges and opportunities presented by its

equatorial location. The northern and southern façades of both towers are designed with self-shading stepped forms, which not only maximize usable floor plates at higher levels but also reduce solar gain, enhancing indoor comfort and energy efficiency. On the east and west façades, perforated aluminum screens with angular fins provide additional solar control, while their earthy grey tones transition from light to dark, creating a dynamic and elegant visual language. These design elements underscore Eneo's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Beyond its architectural and environmental innovations, Eneo is deeply rooted in its urban context. Thoughtful attention was given

to connectivity and materiality, ensuring that the development harmonizes with its surroundings while becoming a destination in its own right. The retail podium's deliberate interface with the street, moderated height transitions, and accessible passageways activate the site and integrate it into the greater Tatu City vision. The development fosters a sense of community and place, turning two iconic towers into an engaging urban landmark.

Eneo at Tatu Central is more than a commercial development—it is a statement of Nairobi's evolving urban narrative. By celebrating modernity, sustainability, and inclusivity, the project establishes itself as a vibrant, functional, and enduring addition to Tatu City.



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Please note that any enquiries relating to Professional Registration, including Annual Fees, Registration, CPD etc may be directed to the following email addresses:

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Email: accounts@sacapsa.com

IDOW - COMMITTEE

Identification of Work (IDoW) - Matrix and Exemptions

Email: idow@sacapsa.com

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Filing a complaint and lodging an affidavit

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