



# Odeion Foyer

The Odeion Theatre is visited by many public audiences. The need therefore existed for a contemporary upgrade to portray and enhance the public image of the university positively.

The project primarily required the replacement of existing dated finishes with a new, fresh, contemporary image and the redesign of the communal gathering spaces. Subtle patterning and colours were engaged to give the building a new image, without compromising its original 1960s-designed character.

Due to the public nature of the foyer, a bit more freedom was allowed to utilise exceptional finishes and lighting design.

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PHOTOGRAPHS | Incline Architects

# Wynand Mouton Theatre

The Wynand Mouton Theatre plays a vital role in the reception and hosting of the public and guests to the university. The facility is used for staging presentations, public lectures, ceremonies and performances by the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts.

Its original design dates from the early 1970s and has since not undergone any major upgrade.

The project required the redesign of the foyer and all areas accessible to the public to enhance the public image of the university. The serving counter and hatch, use of colour, bathrooms, carpeting and seating in the auditorium were the

main areas that were addressed. More freedom was allowed in the installation of exceptional finishes and lighting design. The fresh, new character of the Wynand Mouton Theatre will propel it into a new era of the performing arts, locally as well as nationally.

ARCHITECTS | Incline Architects

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The volume and light quality were retained by building the walls only up to the truss soffit and placing glass in the trusses to divide the areas.

## Physical Planning

The brief for this project was to create offices for Physical Planning as economically as possible, yet reflecting that Physical Planning is the hub from where infrastructure development and progress are driven at the University of the Free State. Raw and natural materials were used to create the modern and contemporary feel of the building.

The aim was to work with the existing warehouse character of the building. This was achieved by retaining most of the existing structure. To enhance the character, the existing steel structure was painted a defining colour, while raw materials such as a detailed brick wall, concrete, bag-washed plaster and shutter board for the furniture and ceiling were used.

The volume and light quality were retained by building the walls only up to the truss soffit and placing glass in the trusses to divide the areas.

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# Chemistry Building

The Department of Chemistry boasts an entirely renovated building that meets the highest standards of safety and some of the best equipment money can buy.

The building houses an advanced crystallographic unit with temperature-dependent single-crystal and powder-diffraction equipment, as well as equipment for studying the rates of fast reactions with infrared, ultraviolet and visible light at high pressures. In addition, it also houses the newest-technology spectrometers and state-of-the-art electrochemistry and thermal analysis equipment as well as high-pressure reactor systems.

The department accommodates more than 800 undergraduate

students and 100 MSc, PhD and postdoctoral students doing interdisciplinary basic and industrial research. Seating space for each postgraduate research student is provided outside each individual's laboratory with a view on the laboratory where the research is conducted. The building has a private courtyard that is available for student relaxation.

ARCHITECTS | Goldblatt Yuill Architects







ARTIST | Thomas Kubayi  
*Walking fish (situated at the Red Square close to the fountain)*

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS |  
**OTHER  
DEVELOPMENTS**





## Main Entrance

The Department of Architecture organised a competition at third-year level to procure a suitable design for the main entrance of the Bloemfontein Campus.

The selected design by Michael Cronjé was presented to The Roodt Partnership, who refined and redesigned the entrance to render it feasible in terms of structure and functionality.

Conceptually the design accentuates the entrance by means of a traditional beam-and-post structure. The seven academic faculties at the university are portrayed by means of colourful columns spaced at regular intervals between the entrance and the security checkpoint.

The design comprises three diamond-shaped columns clad with mosaic in dark blue, reflecting one of the corporate branding colours of the university. The gateway is finished off with a “wing” constructed with a three-dimensional steel space frame clad with natural, anodised aluminium panels. The area in the immediate vicinity of the gateway has been re-landscaped extensively, with fountains, lighting and walkways.

ARCHITECTS | The Roodt Partnership





The vertical wall is used for lead-climbing and top-rope climbing.



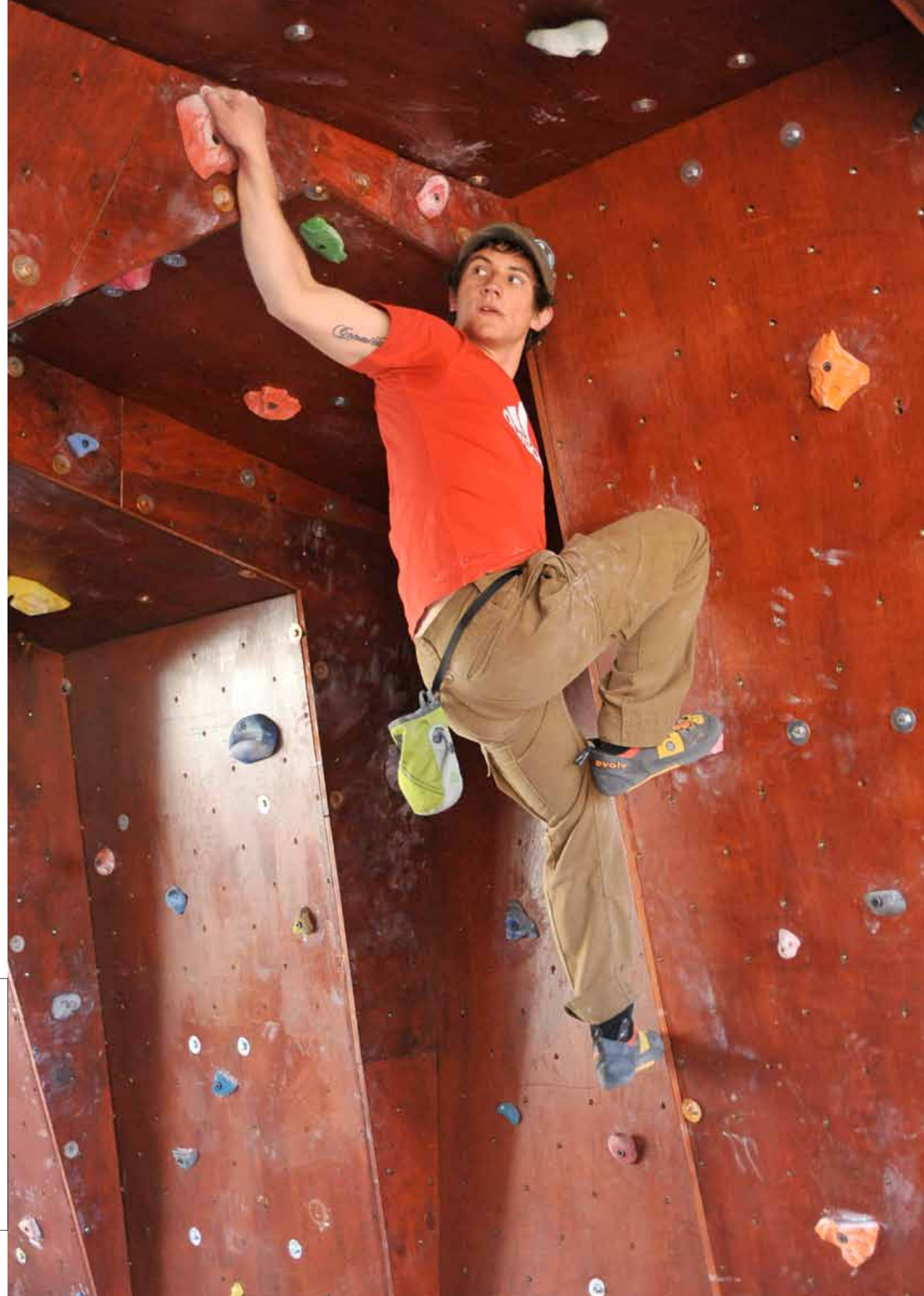
## Climbing Wall

The climbing wall consists of two parts – a vertical wall and a boulder cave.

The vertical wall is for lead-climbing (for experienced climbers) and top-rope climbing (for beginners). The boulder cave is intended for everyone. Here one can climb without a rope only a metre or two from the ground with mattresses to fall on. A large part of the design was concentrated on the boulder cave.

Since bouldering is a much more interactive sport than vertical climbing, it has been a huge success in terms of popularity.

ARCHITECTS | Goldblatt Yuill Architects





A hard concrete structure was combined with a strangler fig tree embedded in vertical planting to create a dynamic and evolving memorial.



## Memorial for Women and Botanical Garden

The Memorial for Women, situated behind the Main Building next to the Rindl Hall, consists of a botanical garden with more than 80 plant species. The memorial serves as a metaphor for the role and contribution of women in the growth and development of the University of the Free State over time.

The hard landscape materials used in the construction of the space were selected to complement the adjacent buildings, but have been utilised in a contemporary manner to form a series of interconnected spaces that range from public to semi-private. The combination of formal lines with flowing, organic shapes, together with the new university logo, collectively creates a sense of a formal, but unrestrained, creative and living memorial space.

A hard concrete structure was combined with a strangler fig tree embedded in vertical planting to create a dynamic and evolving memorial. Over time, the tree will increase in growth and the forces of the expanding and strangling roots will gradually crack

apart the concrete structure. The tree's numerous seeds represent unity and are an indication of real understanding, knowledge and faith – characteristics women at this university should pursue to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for the University of the Free State.

The exposed roots symbolise the often unrecognised contribution of those women who allowed all levels of society to be uplifted, prosper and grow. The installation affirms the identity of women and stands as a physical marker for their empowering role.

ARCHITECTS | **Habitat Landscape Architects**





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## Lecture Halls

Lecturing, research and learning is the core business of the university. Proper lecturing facilities provide the required platform to prepare our students for their careers and life in general. It therefore lies at the heart of daily activity on campus.

For this reason, the university decided to upgrade many of its lecturing facilities to the highest academic standards as well as to create additional facilities to make provision for growing student numbers. Not only has this project provided for the necessary infrastructure development, but it has also equipped the facilities with state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities to enhance the learning experience of students.

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Witthuhn Maree & Stevenson Architects

## Office Space

The work environment of its staff is very important to the University of the Free State.



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The appropriate investment has therefore been made to create office space that not only adds to the comfort of staff members, but also appears open and inviting to students and other visitors.







## Vehicle Depot

The vehicle depot was demolished to make space for new academic buildings.

The new vehicle depot was developed in two phases. The first made provision for 80 covered parking bays within a secured area. This area also includes space for a rental agency, small offices and a security office.

Phase two provided for a further 60 vehicles.

The design of the structures is unique in the sense that the steel roofs are supported on a single steel column with hangers to support the 4-metre cantilever of the roof. This provides a clear opening into the parking bay, with no columns that can cause damage to the fronts of the parked vehicles.

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## Accessibility

The Bloemfontein Campus of the University of the Free State includes many wonderful historic buildings that were neither designed nor built with the needs of students and staff members with disabilities in mind.

Many changes have been made to address the challenges that persons with disabilities face, but it remains an ongoing process. Some of the initiatives already completed or underway include the upgrading of buildings according to a prioritised strategic plan in cooperation with Physical Planning. Bathrooms are being upgraded to accommodate more facilities for people with disabilities. Specific locations for ramps have been identified and the

construction thereof is mostly completed. Several areas have been identified for dedicated parking spaces for the disabled. Elevators are also being constructed for increased accessibility to buildings.

The steel roofs are supported on a single steel column with hangers to support the 4-metre cantilever of the roof.



Elevators such as this one in the new Health Sciences Building are being constructed for increased accessibility to buildings.







## Security

As part of an overall endeavour to provide the best possible security on campus, security gatehouses have been constructed at all vehicle access points to the campus.

Video surveillance cameras and a control room as well as panic buttons on red posts have been established all over campus. Security personnel and vehicles are visibly deployed and provide the required security services on campus.



## Parking for Staff and Students

To solve the challenge of growing vehicular traffic on the Bloemfontein Campus of the University of the Free State, two new parking areas to the south and the west of the campus have been established. Ample safe parking now

exists on campus for the increased convenience of staff and students.







# Sports Facilities

The University of the Free State continues to expand its sports facilities to ensure the development of a well-balanced student community.

## Astro Hockey Pitch

The university added two Olympic-standard Astro hockey pitches to its already extensive range of sports facilities. The pitches are water-based and each has its own technical area required to host world tournaments. Included also in this development is a fully-equipped clubhouse.

## Hockey Pitch Lighting

The artificial lighting of the hockey pitch follows the guidelines of the International Hockey Federation for high grade national

club and international competition. Good and unobtrusive lighting helps players and referees to deliver their best performance.

## Swimming Pool

The new Olympic-standard swimming pool is equipped to accommodate water polo, underwater hockey, scuba diving and swimming events. Important for swimming events is the rim overflow that ensures smooth water, providing swimmers with the best swimming conditions for improved performance.











## New Student Housing

The student housing project at the Qwaqwa Campus comprises two phases, with the first phase making provision for 200 students, and the second phase for 250 students.

The new residences were realised in such a way to define meaningful social spaces, both internally and externally. The housing offers single, double and three-bed rooms, with facilities for disabled students. A separate wing contains single rooms for senior students. Services like kitchens are incorporated into the circulation routes, with bathrooms and laundry areas readily accessible. The complex also houses a new computer lab. The buildings are arranged in such a way to create multiple social spaces, including private courtyards, which can be utilised for studying or socialising; communal

covered areas where students can assemble and host social events; and a public, open square between the two sections for extracurricular events such as sport, games or rag activities. These spaces not only provide the students with a sense of community or shared identity, but also act as the generator of social interaction between the adjacent hostels. They could also become the heart of the student community, accommodating both social and academic programmes.

ARCHITECTS | **The Roodt Partnership**



Proposed Second Phase  
Student Housing





## Building for Teacher Education

All the education buildings on the Qwaqwa Campus are placed on a strong, vertical axis. The new building for teacher education is also placed on this axis, with an entrance to the complex in the middle, linking the existing with the new.

Upon entering the complex, one gets the feeling of an enclosed environment with a large courtyard surrounded with classrooms and some offices. The entire courtyard is also surrounded by a covered walkway. The purpose of the courtyard is a gathering space for students, as well as for informal lecturing. The buildings around the courtyard protect the courtyard against severe windy conditions.

The buildings exude a strong sense of symmetry and the use of roofs creates inside gathering areas.

The feel of the building is very 'school-like' in order to simulate the environment in which the students in training will mostly lecture in future.

ARCHITECTS | TVR Architects



## Renovated Laboratories

The existing Physics and Chemistry wet laboratories urgently needed refurbishment, leading to them being entirely upgraded.

New laboratory benches were installed with a seating capacity of 32 students in the Physics laboratory and 25 students in the Chemistry laboratory. In both laboratories, new fume cupboards were also installed.

On the ground floor (North Block) the existing third-year laboratory, as well as the offices and study area for postgraduate and Physics students (PC laboratory) were upgraded. A new scale laboratory was introduced with granite tops on all benches.

On the ground floor (South Block), the laboratories were repainted and all worktops and benches were sanded down and re-varnished.

ARCHITECTS | TVR Architects





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UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF THE VICTORIA

“A building not only signals value to the outside;

it also builds value on the inside.”



## A last word

Heading Physical Planning at the University of the Free State has been a great privilege during this time of unparalleled expansion and development.

The realisation of the dreams and aspirations of the university would not have been possible without the significant support and encouragement of the following persons and departments:

The senior leadership of the university, for providing the vision and funding to enable us to accomplish infrastructure development of this magnitude. Here I especially want to thank the current and previous Vice-Rector Operations, Profs. Nicky Morgan and Niel Viljoen, respectively. By providing the appropriate structures and allowing the correct procedures to unfold, they have enabled us to complete these projects successfully.

Furthermore, I want to acknowledge the entire team at Physical Planning for not only managing the projects themselves, but also for overseeing the office, contracts, finances and smaller projects. We also appreciate the dedication and commitment of the team at Physical Resources Maintenance.

To all the Deans and academic staff – we are grateful for your confidence in us and the projects, and especially for your cooperation and willingness to plan according to the budget,

in such a way that has allowed us to provide facilities of a very high standard.

We also have to acknowledge the contribution of those who work behind the scenes, including the staff at Finance, ICT Services and Security for their contributions to the successful execution of our contracts.

In closing, I want to honour the role played by all the consultants, architects, quantity surveyors and engineers whom it has been a pleasure and privilege to be associated with, even when we were demanding and frugal!

On a personal note, it has been an exciting and invigorating time to be associated with the University of the Free State. The last few years have been a period of growth, not only as a professional person, but also as a human being. May all that we have achieved so far attest to what is possible with God's help.

**Nico Janse van Rensburg**  
**MANAGER PHYSICAL PLANNING**

