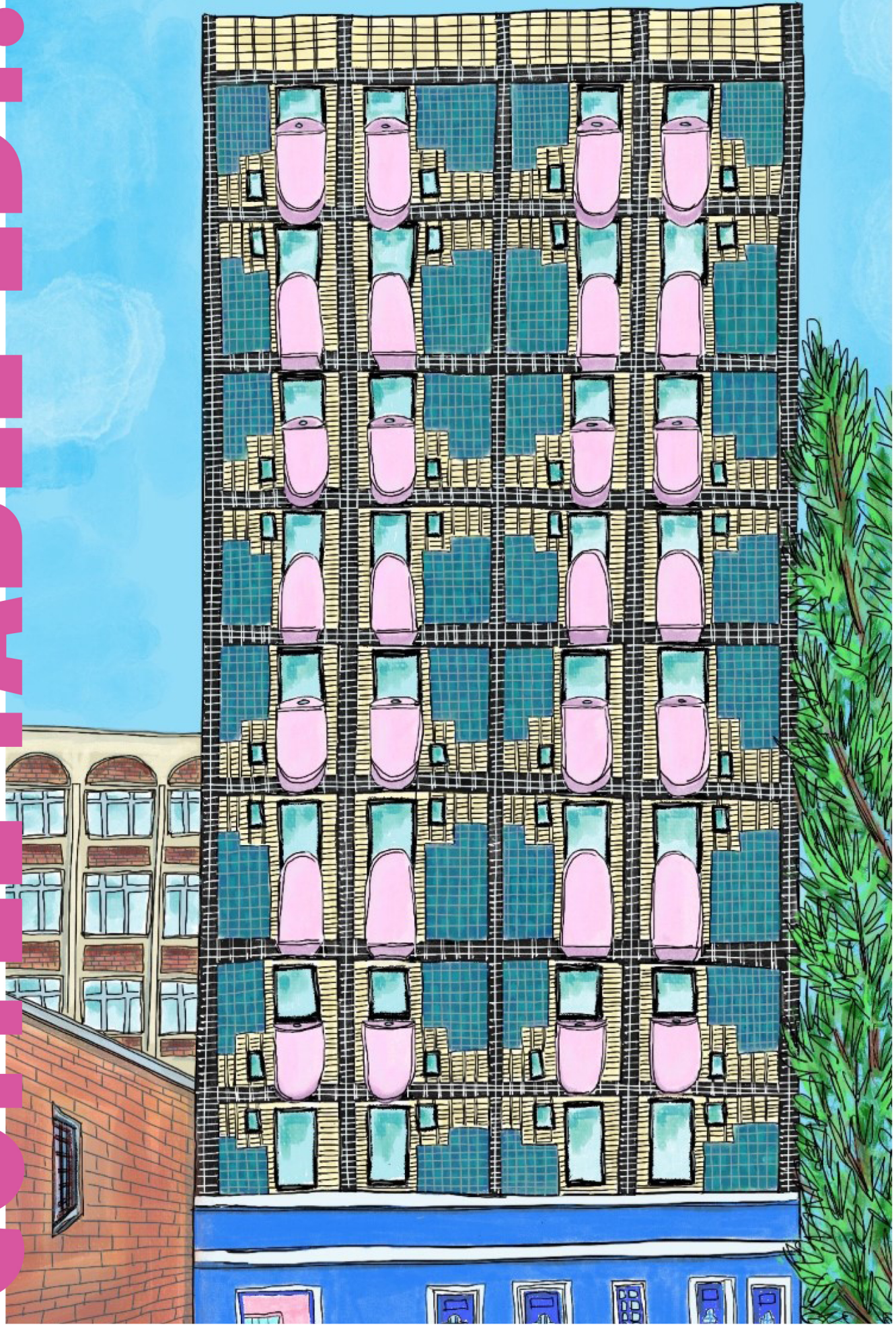


COFFEE TABLE EDIT.



UXOLO

MICRO APARTMENTS



Location: Cape Town, City Centre.
Size: 1,306m²
Completed: December 2020

Uxolo is a contemporary micro-apartment project by Two Five Five Architects and proves that small spaces can be as practical as they are beautiful. The tapestry-inspired exteriors of Uxolo have garnered much attention from designers and passers-by alike, as they brighten up Cape Town's CBD with iconic flair.

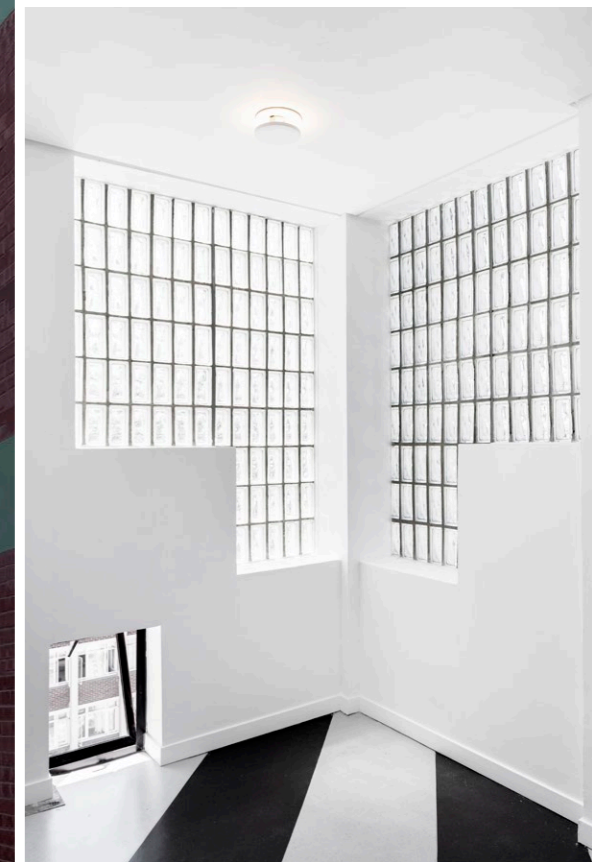
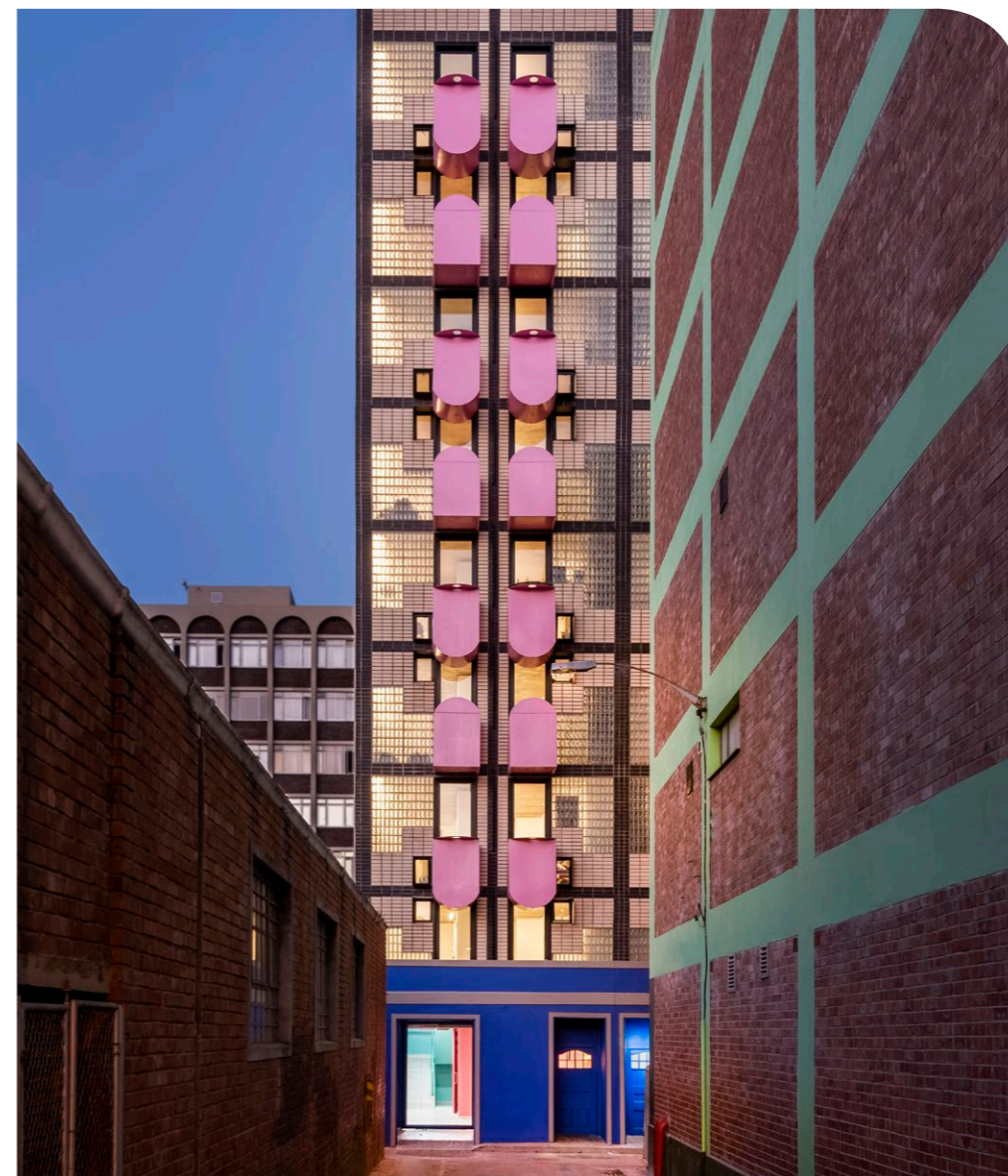
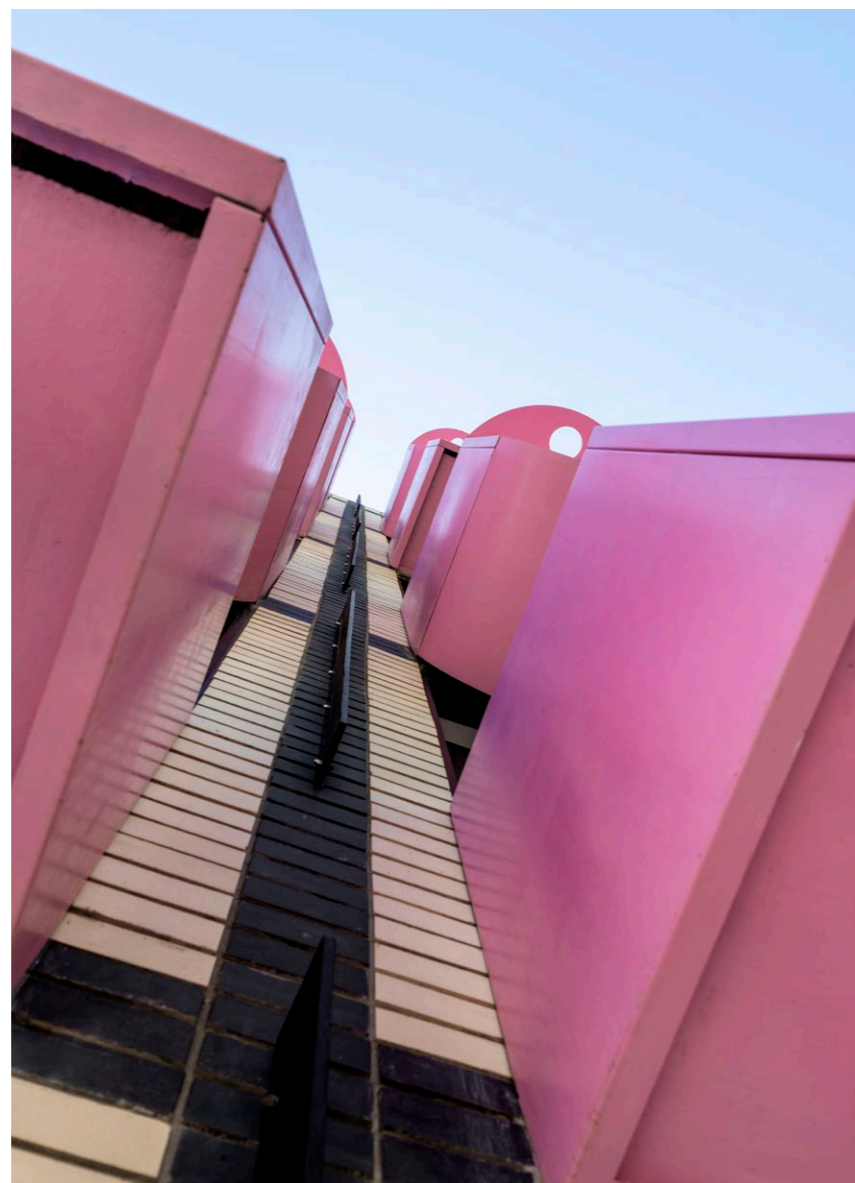
Uxolo's micro apartments are located at 4 Vredenburg Lane, down a narrow alley. The client's brief to Two Five Five Architects was complicated. The key concept was to design an apartment building that speaks to its local context, that of the inner city of Cape Town, but relates to the world as something truly African. The block's target market is the city dweller, and it was to have no on-site parking and feature micro-units with ample common spaces, bicycle storage and a coffee shop.

About Uxolo

Excitingly, Uxolo Apartments is the first completed micro-unit residential development located in the Cape Town CBD. The project consists of 35 residential units ranging between 24m² micro studio units and 40m² loft units, as well as a lobby and retail area on the ground floor. Quite impressively, all of this exists on a stand of only 195.5m².

The initial development's intention for the project was to create an iconic short-stay accommodation destination in Cape Town, with some long-term tenants, in the same way that Tokyo has the Nagakin Capsule Tower and Rotterdam has the Cube House. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a re-evaluation of this approach, focusing on longer-stay tenants. This resulted in units that were far more complex in design to meet the considerably more extensive requirements of a permanent tenant. The change in focus required some additional planning but resulted in a building that arguably better responds to a need in the South African housing market.

For residents of South African cities there are currently few 'curated' and cost-effective alternatives to the South African norm of urban sprawl and long commutes. The project located on Vredenburg Lane, an alley joining Long Street and within walking distance of Kloof and Loop streets, is within easy reach of offices, eateries, transport routes and amenities. The relatively



small size of the units ensures that they are affordable to a large section of the market.

In order to successfully accommodate a long-term tenant in the micro-units special attention was paid to detailing the interior of the units. A single joinery-unit, almost stretching the length of the unit, accommodates all the possible daily needs and activities of a resident. The joinery installation was designed, manufactured, and installed by Kink Design, a branch of Two Five Five Architects. The fact that the joinery installation was conceived and managed efficiently in the same office ensured that the language of the project stayed coherent.

The design of the unit simultaneously accommodates a fully kitted kitchen, built in cupboard, slide out study desk, abundant concealed storage as well as a murphy bed that stows away to reveal a sofa for the lounge. In the kitchen each drawer contains custom-made

laser-cut steel dividers to simplify storage. All of the fittings by Kink were made and installed by the Two Five Five team.

There are four of these studio units on each of the eight floors, along with a loft unit on every second floor. To accommodate these units the small site area available had to be used efficiently, with the building built right up to the Om building lines. Too allow for natural light in the units' glass blocks were used, instead of stepping the facade back for windows.

The resultant flat facade was treated just as that, a flat plain on which a tapestry can be laid. The design takes inspiration from traditional patterns as seen in the work of Esther Mhlangu, as well as contemporary textile design such as rugs by Ninevites. The glass bricks on the facade were combined with different face-bricks by Corobrik to create a 'tapestry' that is low in maintenance and should age well.

MEET THE TEAM:

Client:
Vredenburg Properties

Architects:
TwoFiveFive Architects

Structural Engineer:
MISC Engineering

Fire Consultant:
De Villiers & Moore

Mechanical Engineer:
De Villiers & Moore

Electrical Engineer:
Frame

Facade Engineers:
Sutherland Engineering

Quantity Surveyor:
Peregrine

Photographers:
Paris Brummer - www.parisbrummer.com
Carel Nicolaas Smit

Drone Photos:
André Krige



The tapestry facade is punctuated by bright pink 'marshmallow' balconies on the street facade. These balconies create a valuable added footprint to the units from which the residents can look over the city to the iconic Table Mountain. At the same time, the balconies also hint the 'iconic' image that that was part of the developmental brief.

Uxolo is one of the first local developments to really take the concept of micro-living seriously, with micro apartments sitting at 24m². During the building process, one of the directors of Two Five Five, Theo Kruger, found himself living and working out of the building, this allowed him to consider everything that a potential tenant would need during their stay. Seldomly do architects live in their own builds, let alone buying a unit. "Uxolo" means peace in Xhosa and the building reflects wild colours against neutral flooring and finishes. These apartments are move-in ready for tenants who only have a mattress, some crockery and the clothes on their back.

SUPPLIERS:

Facebricks:

Corobrik - 021 888 2300

Glass bricks:

Aluglass Bautech - 011 451 8400

Vinyl flooring:

Gerflor - 010 753 2332

Polyflor - 011 609 3500

Steel kitchens and cupboards:

Kink Design

Sanitary fittings:

Geberit - 021 555 0651

Taps and mixers:

Hansgrohe - 021 447 7144

