


scape

SA'S HOME OF DESIGN, BUILD AND MAINTENANCE



STRIKING THE BALANCE.

APRIL 2022

RESIDENTIAL & ESTATES



Building Name: Agora
Location: Observatory, Cape Town
Size: ? m²

Agora, a new developer in the industry, wanted to establish the 'brand' within the market, as the development at 202 Lower Main, was their first. The expectation was a building that was contextually relevant and financially viable. It was important to deliver a product above the market 'norm' for the area not just to those who are familiar with Observatory, but to the broader city also. The developer intends to 're-establish' the 'Observatory' market offering and kicks off this sentiment with a bang offering, Agora.

The building needed to provide as many residential apartments as feasible and provide at least a parking bay per unit. The apartments are intended to be rented out, to a target market composed of 'Young Professionals'. Agora, the name, means 'NOW' in Portuguese. The brief was a building designed for the 'now'!

About the Project

202 Lower Main Road is in the heart of the complex socioeconomic suburb of Observatory, Cape Town. This suburb, steeped in history and cultural diversity, demands high levels of community involvement and public participation in the design process.

The surrounding context existed of predominantly one and two storey structures at the time of planning the development. The context has changed drastically over the past three years, and this played a vital role within the planning of the scheme.

To maximise the design feasibility and remain within the statutory development controls of the stand, the proposed scheme required nearly 6 levels above ground, built to zero-meter building lines on four boundaries. The following questions remained: How do you remain sensitive to the scale of the buildings in the area? And how do you relate to the context in a manner that is familiar but fresh at the same time?

It was evident that the scheme could not be made 'smaller'. The resulting design concept was simple: 'Let's hide it'. As a form of architectural camouflage, a drone was used to capture footage of the context from which contextual data was extrapolated. These photographs were aggressively pixelated and reduced to a base colour scheme. One facade contextually relevant in relation to the 'mountain' backdrop and the other celebrating the 'harbour' beyond. To further enforce the contextual recognition, every plaster technique found within a 1km radius of the development was introduced into the facade. This included everything from fish-scales through to banana plaster. This variety of 'old' plaster techniques required the involvement from local plaster artisans to train the young team on-site.

In order to activate the pedestrian edge on Lower Main Road, a retail space was introduced alongside the public entrance to the apartments. This along with new trees on the Nansen Road sidewalk softens the public engagement of the scheme. To further enhance the living quality within the apartments, setbacks were created (Some over kitchens and others recessed into the façade) for natural light and ventilation on the zero-meter building lines.

MEET THE TEAM

Architect & Principal Agent: Two Five Five Architects | info@twofivefive.co.za
Structural Engineer: MISC Engineering | mia@miscengineering.co.za
Fire Consultant: Frame | info@framegroup.co.za
Mechanical Engineer: De Villiers & Moore | admin@devmoore.co.za

Electrical Engineer: Frame | info@framegroup.co.za
Quantity Surveyor: Peregrine | dawie@peregrinepqs.co.za
Main Contractor: HFO | info@hfo.co.za





SUPPLIERS

Paint
Plascon - 021 505 2400

Tiling
Mazista - 021 511 6640

Lighting
Spazio - 011 555 5555

Aluminium windows and doors
Glassmen West Coast - 021 552 4862

Steel Kitchens and Cupboards
Kink Design - 083 463 8649

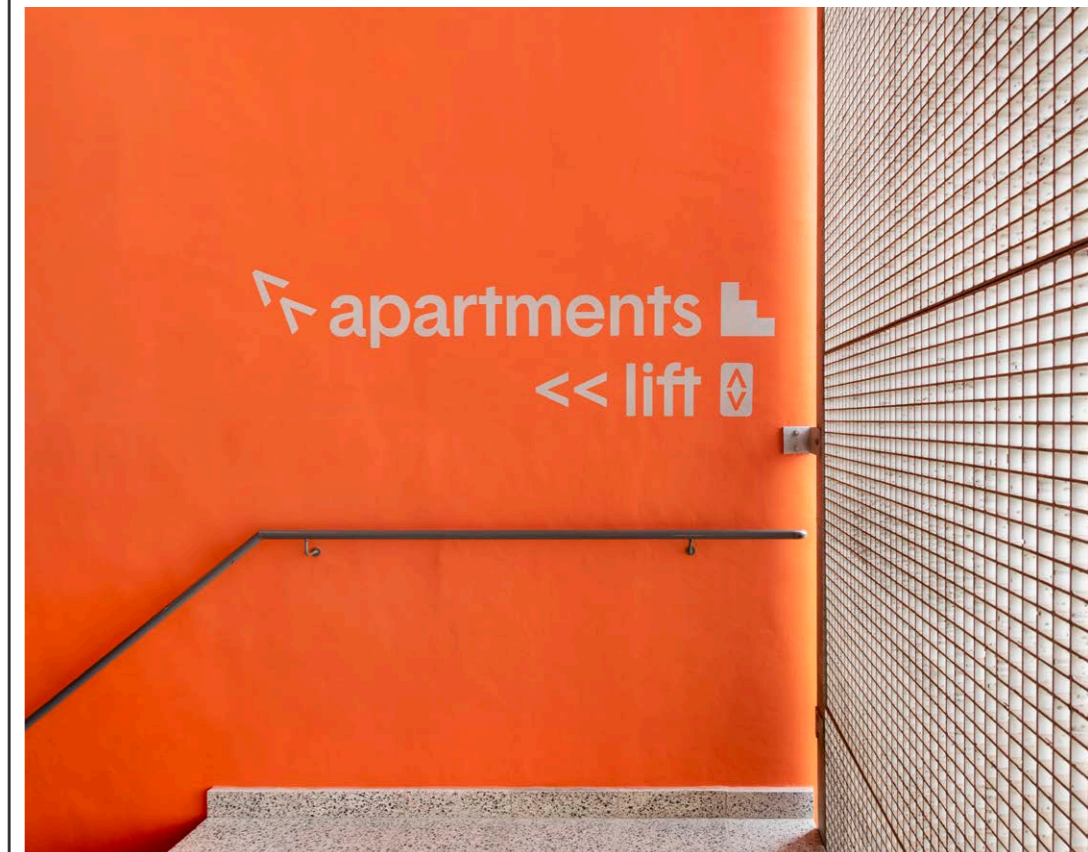
Custom-made counters
Notation Design - 079 772 9340

Sanware
Geberit - 011 444 5070

Taps and mixers
Hansgrohe - 086 1111 941

Ironmongery
QS Products - 011 792 3334

"To further enforce the **contextual recognition**, every **plaster technique** found **within a 1km** radius of the development was **introduced** into the **façade**."



scape
/ PORTFOLIO /

For the interiors, there was a specific interest in supporting local design. Custom light fittings were commissioned by designers like Joe Paine. Custom terrazzo tops, in a playful green colour, was manufactured by Notation Design. Custom made steel kitchens and lighting from Kink design was introduced. The brand identity was designed by Carina Comrie from Büro Comrie, and this in turn was introduced into the way finding and signage elements.

Furthermore, purpose made door handles with somewhat cheeky but ultimately positive messages throughout the building was introduced by the architects, there are many messages but for an example some say: 'Go get them' and others say 'hello good looking'.

This development has become an icon within Observatory and has been incredibly well received by the community and its new tenants.

