

Setting new benchmarks in housing construction

SA Builder speaks to Deon Grimbeek, Project Manager of Renico Construction

The hallmark of any good professional is that they make the task at hand look easy. This is certainly the case with the Renico Construction team, and in particular Deon Grimbeek, Project Manager of Renico Construction.

In the past five years Renico has constructed a conservative estimate of 3 000 residential units ranging from affordable to upmarket. "This excludes over 900 student accommodation units constructed recently in Pretoria," says Grimbeek.

The company operates as smoothly as a well-oiled sewing machine, belying all the background work and administrative support work which makes it all possible, including its in-house town planning division which handles all property procurement, zoning and power requirements, and related preparatory work.

"Presently we have over 10 major residential projects concurrently in progress," continues Grimbeek. "And we have 16 site managers overseeing our full range of projects, which includes specialist commercial and industrial developments as well."

Of special interest is the company's Ponders End development in Helderkruijn, comprising 186 units in a 50:50 mix of



Deon Grimbeek, Project Manager of Renico Construction

2 bedroom and 2 bathroom and 3 bedroom and 3 bathroom units. As construction commenced at the site, which is adjacent to the Kloofendal Nature Reserve, the EIA (environmental impact assessment team) discovered that an endangered species of scorpion, the South African Flat Rock Scorpion, was resident in the area. Construction was suspended until such time as a "scorpion tunnel" was put in place to enable their free movement to and from their natural habitat.

Renico projects currently in progress, amongst others, are: Sharon Park Lifestyle Estate in Springs. The development comprises 153 double storey, full title units of which 147 have been built. The company also plans to explore the rental market in this area next year.

Dawn Park, near Carnival City, Brakpan. Construction is underway on the first of three developments in the area. Comprising 50 units of 47 m² to 57 m², these units are being built on a dolomite substrate, and therefore require raft foundations.

Protea Glen Manor, Soweto, in the affordable housing bracket, are sectional title houses of which 59 of 103 units are already completed.

In Potchefstroom construction of a sectional title residential development is about to commence, which will include construction of a nearby shopping centre. Renico has already prepared the property and installed the ground services.

A hallmark of Renico's housing projects is that almost all are constructed using face brick. "The advantage with this is that exterior is maintenance free," explains Grimbeek. "In the same vein we prefer tiled roofs due to their aesthetic appeal, strength and durability."

Renico's geographic operational footprint is expanding continuously. Besides Johannesburg, the West Rand, and Lanseria Corporate Park, the company has commercial and residential projects in progress in Pretoria, - Capital Park, a high density four storey residential development; Potchefstroom - Parys Eco and Golf Estate; Vanderbijlpark; and Crystal Park on the East Rand. ■

On suppliers:
 Besides bricks drawn from its own brick factory, Renico's main brick supplier is Corobrik;
 Roof tiles are supplied by Infraset and Lafarge (now Marley Building Systems);
 Precast hollow-core is supplied by Echo Precast and Elematic SA

The South African Flat Rock Scorpion, *Hadogenes gunningi* - adult female

(Photo: sareptiles.co.za/forum)



The "scorpion tunnel" at Ponders End



Ponders End in Helderkruijn comprises 186 units

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Special features: Tasol's Solar geyser systems on all houses.

Olivier Construction was established in 1983 by the entrepreneurial Dewald Olivier. Primarily set up for plumbing and plant hire, the growing demand for plant and reputable civil contractors spurred the company's growth over 30 years enabling a steady stream of plant acquisition as the company endeavoured to meet the demand. Olivier Construction managed to acquire 16 new Ready-Mix trucks and mobile batch plants since 2006. The new dimension secures a very high standard in concrete work. It also gave us the opportunity to start a new company, Olivier Beton CC, for the readymix trade.

It is against this background that the company has restructured and managed growth to shift primary business activities from plant hire to Civil and Building Construction, positioning Olivier Construction to confidently meet clients' requirements across the full scope of these disciplines.

Where possible, these properties have been constructed with the input of local service providers and materials suppliers, thus creating jobs in the construction sector and making a significant additional contribution to the local economy. Efforts have also been made to incorporate environmental considerations into house design, such as the installation of solar water heaters to improve energy efficiency.

Many of the group's employees are first-time home owners and would not necessarily qualify for mortgages if they were



to apply to conventional financial institutions. To address this challenge, the mines provide employee housing subsidies to the individuals that become part of the housing model and also offer a discounted interest rate to fund the housing loan whilst employed by Assmang.

Andre Olivier, project manager. ... to put the company's creed of 'doing good while doing business' into practice. ■

Assore's Integrated Annual Report states:
 In response to the Mining Charter requirements and the shortfall of housing in the Northern Cape, Assmang created the Khumani Housing Development Company (KHDC) to develop additional residential property that is affordable for employees in all income bands. By the end of 2012, a total of 349 Assmang employees have become home owners as part of the housing scheme.





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