

# Exclusive new Illovo development



**Illovo Edge, a new premium commercial development in Illovo, recently achieved the highest square metre sale price for commercial property in the country – a prized position that has been held by the Melrose Arch development for some time.**

This cutting edge development is taking shape on part of the exciting new Northern Precinct in Illovo, a prime piece of real estate at the north end of the Fricker Road spine bound by Fricker and Melville Roads on the east and west side, and Ferguson and Harries Roads to the north and south. The site's location is of strategic significance as it is situated within walking distance of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station in Illovo.

Developers Mont Blanc Projects and Properties (Pty) Ltd together with Seedstone Fund Advisors (Pty) Ltd have ensured that their clients are getting the very best in terms of the finished product. Mario Rocha and Adam Kane-Smith of Mont Blanc and Seedstone explain that the total development will consist of several phases over the next two to five years. Approximately 16 000m<sup>2</sup> of deluxe commercial office space will be created in the first three phases, while additional phases will form part of a mixed use development, currently envisaged to offer between 80 000m<sup>2</sup> and 100 000m<sup>2</sup>, depending on the feasibility and market demand. The first sectional title owners will be moving into their new premises in April 2010 and an overall project completion date is 2014. In today's terms the project is expected to cost upwards of R2 billion.

Interest in the development remains strong and sales are moving fast despite the damper on the economy. Phase one broke ground in January 2009 and 3 600 m<sup>2</sup> out of a possible 4 000m<sup>2</sup> of office space in this phase has already been sold, while the remaining 400m<sup>2</sup> is currently under negotiation. Phase two is expected to be completed in May 2010. An additional single tenant user is already in advanced negotiations with the developer on a further phase which will be released in 2010.

A development in a premium location requires top-notch design and finishes. Bentel Associates International (BAI) was commissioned to design Phase 1 and 2 of the project, and will also be one of its major tenants – BAI is relocating its head office from Sandton to Illovo Edge once Phase one of the building is complete.

Nick Kyriacos, MD of BAI, explains that the architects' brief was to design a building that would become the benchmark for office developments on Fricker Road and a landmark for the surrounding Illovo area. "The idea of the site being at the edge of Illovo Boulevard as a pedestrianised precinct was also central to the brief," he adds.

Extending the Illovo Boulevard into the site and flanking it with two separate buildings achieved both objectives. Premises were to be sold on a sectional title basis, which allowed BAI to split the development into a number of different buildings, thus providing each building with its own identity and its own "front door".

"The use of the diagonal of the boulevard across the rectangular site gave us two triangular edges, which helped inform the buildings aesthetic," Nick explains. By using this device, the forms of the buildings become statements in themselves, he says. In addition, the site slopes from its furthest end of the diagonal towards the corner at Fricker and Harries Roads. This gave the architects the opportunity to create buildings that appear to sit on podiums. "This further allowed us to emphasise the angular forms, allowing the sharp ends of the triangles to rise above the ground making the buildings appear to be pavilions. This also helps emphasise the areas of glazing and the pure forms of the buildings."

In terms of both the design and the materials used, one of the important aspects that the architects considered was the green agenda. "The essence of designing a good green building is correct orientation," Nick says. "We have included a lot of glazing but this is generally south facing, meaning that only secondary light will be penetrating the building, eliminating the possibility of heat build-up." Glazing facing all other directions has been kept to a minimum and carefully positioned to ensure the best possible balance between allowing for the best outward views and reducing direct sunlight into the buildings.



Artist's impression showing the central boulevard

Natural materials with a small carbon footprint, such as limestone, have been used extensively on the floors and external wall finishes. In careful consultation with the other professionals on the project, green principles for the heating, cooling and storm water design have been taken into account. The buildings incorporate storm water retention tanks in the basement area for reuse in irrigation and other similar requirements. Solar heating panels for heating of geysers have also been used, and other materials such as insulation, have been considered for their green properties.

Both buildings will have accessible roof gardens, which not only allow occupants to take in the spectacular views, but will drastically reduce the heat build-up on the roof.

Mario from Mont Blanc says: "One of our key objectives is to place responsible development first. This is one of the first projects in the city to be driven by Gautrain and BRT infrastructure policy as the site is ideally located between the Sandton and Rosebank Gautrain stations. The City of Johannesburg has agreed to fast-track the pedestrianisation of Fricker Road because of the site's link to the public transport route and the fact that this aspect has been incorporated as an integral part of the overall development." In addition, a section of the site on which Johannesburg Water's reservoirs reside, is envisaged to be upgraded as a public open space. The developers have also engaged some of South Africa's top urban designers who are working closely with the City. These include a green consultant who is advising them on achieving sustainable goals for the project. Adam and Mario both complement the City of Johannesburg on the pro-active and supportive role the City has played in realising a new flagship and for the creation of much needed work opportunities in SA.

The developers have no doubt that the location of the project in Illovo has everything to do with its achieving the highest sale price yet in South Africa. Not only is Illovo a popular and central node for business, but the site

is perfectly located to fit in with the new public transport systems which are taking shape. To add to its appeal, it is one of the highest natural points in Johannesburg and its position boasts spectacular 360 degree views of the surrounding areas including the majestic Magaliesburg Mountains to the north.

"We had a paradigm shift in the company about four years ago," explains Mario. "We looked at trends in Europe and the Far East and took a view that we needed to set about securing sustainable precinct development opportunities in the best locations possible. That was when we set about acquiring these properties in Illovo," he says. The Illovo Precinct is the most exclusive office node in the country and we will be enhancing that in our final built form. The interest in Illovo Edge is evidence that this bold, new approach to development has paid off. "In the market of two years ago, all available office space in Phase 1 and 2 would already have been snapped up," comments Joan Goldswain of Minenza Property Broking. Sales are certainly better than average for the times we are in and a number of large blue-chip companies will be occupying both phases upon completion.

Overall, the developers and professional team are working closely together with all stakeholders in the precinct to give the entire development a contemporary and upmarket look and feel. This will brand, and reinforce the Illovo Edge and Northern Precinct as a status, preferred development destination for both new and existing owners and occupants.

For enquiries regarding office space in Illovo Edge, please contact Steven Lukey of Seedstone Fund Advisors at 082 415 4099 / [steve@seedstone.co.za](mailto:steve@seedstone.co.za) or Tanya du Preez of Mont Blanc Projects and Properties at 082 603 1569 / [tanya@mbpp.co.za](mailto:tanya@mbpp.co.za).

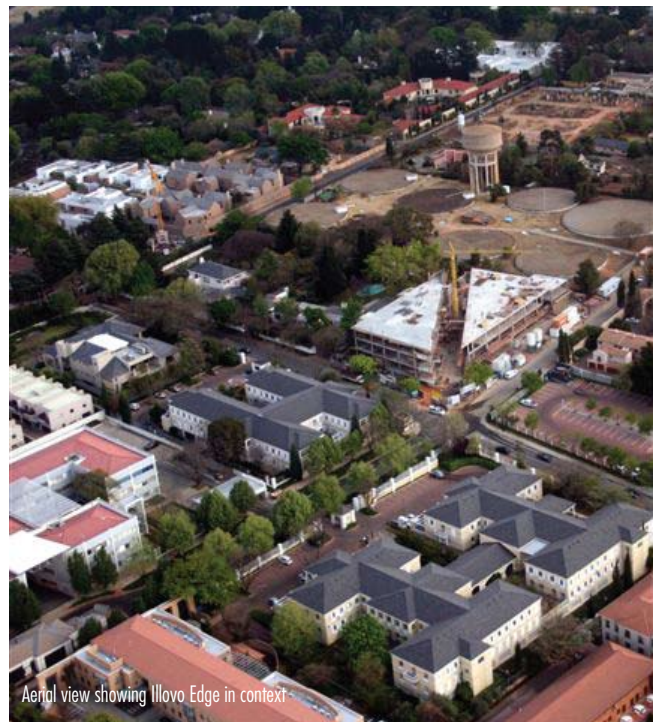
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Close up aerial view



Location map



Aerial view showing Illovo Edge in context