

## PHASE ONE OF KPMG'S PARKTOWN CAMPUS TAKES SHAPE

Barrow Construction is making good progress with the 7,000m<sup>2</sup> first phase of KPMG's new office campus being developed by Old Mutual Property Investments in the historically sensitive Parktown area of Johannesburg.

The South African Heritage Resources Agency approved the project which involved demolition of one building, the Kangra Building and the preservation and integration of another – the historic Wanooka House which has links extending back to the Boer war period.



*A visual of KPMG's new office campus incorporating the historic Wanooka House.*

The site of the new development is bound by the M1 Jan Smuts off ramps in the west, St Andrews Road in the North, Albany Road in the east and Girton Road in the south. Girton Road will be closed between Albany and Wellington Roads.

Dating back to 1902, Wanooka House is the most significant heritage asset on the site. The site was dominated by the Kangra Building constructed in 1980.

Although not protected, the Kangra Building was considered a Grade 1 building according to the heritage list of the Parktown Westcliff Heritage Trust.

One of the challenges to the design team was to link the proposed development with the existing KPMG campus - the expanded campus is divided by Jan Smuts Avenue and the two parts of the campus are located at vastly different contour levels.

Assessments and economic re-modelling to accommodate the KPMG requirements in the existing Kangra Building offered no solutions and it became clear that it had to be extensively re-designed if it was to serve the proposed new needs.

Another crucial issue was the accommodation of parking and of the several options investigated, the safest and most aesthetically acceptable solution was to accommodate the parking bays beneath the Kangra Building which meant that it had to be demolished to allow extensive subterranean excavations.

Old Mutual Investment Group Property Investments requested Impendulo Design Architects to consider several approaches to protect the assets on the site while also trying to serve the commercial and spatial needs of the tenant.

At the same time the needs of the residents who have been reluctant to allow large scale urban development had to be accommodated. Their main concern was that the character of the site – especially the ‘office park’ and ‘residential’ character be retained.

The design process and the finalisation of the design meant also the international corporate commitments of Old Mutual and KPMG towards sustainability and sustainable design had to be accommodated.

Moreover, the design of the new building had to take cognisance of the urban fringe in which the campus is located and it had to celebrate the new urban scale while also accommodating the historic park-like zone of Parktown.

Due to the uniqueness of the site, its exceptional location and relatively complicated configuration of heritage assets, the design approach regarding the eastern and north-eastern section of the building had to be sympathetic to the existing ‘office-park’ character of Parktown, while retaining the existing articulation with the Wanooka dwelling which will be used as an executive dining room and meeting rooms.

After an extensive consultancy and legal process with all stakeholders, The South African Heritage Resources Agency (Gauteng) duly approved the demolition of the Kangra building but its north elevation was re-designed and re-constructed with modern materials according to the original design aesthetics and incorporated into the new building.

To celebrate the more urban scale and character of the existing KPMG campus and core building, the western section of the new building has been designed on an urban scale creating a landmark and backdrop to the existing KPMG building.

The Wanooka dwelling will be retained and included into the functional zoning of the rest of the site development plan. The historic building will be celebrated by retaining the eastern part of the old garden and exposing the northern and north-western façade of the house by removing the brick boundary wall and erecting a more appropriate palisade fence that will complement the style and period of the old dwelling.

An assessment of the scale of the old Kangra Building and in particular its northern elevation contributed to the decision to replicate the character of this elevation in order to continue with what is perceived to be part of the office park character along St Andrews Road.

With the introduction of the new KPMG building and multi-storeyed parking garage along the western part of the site, a new urban scale was introduced.

As these buildings were set almost in the lowest part of the bowl-shaped landscape, they tend to fit into the setting while the area behind the KPMG building remains as a backdrop to the development.

The scale of the western section will not impact on the Parktown 'office park' character but will become a landmark and perhaps a more dramatic new urban element on a main arterial into the CBD.

The new building, facing towards Parktown and St Andrews Road, will replicate most of the architectural characteristics of the Kangra Building. These include retaining the same footprint, spatial alignment, set backs, height, scale, neutral backdrop, colour and texture.

All the spatial arrangements regarding the articulation and relationships between the old Kangra Building and Wanooka dwelling previously approved by the former National Monuments Council (now SAHRA) have been respected and retained.

The project presented some challenges says Barrow Construction director John Barrow. The building comprises three basement levels, ground and two upper levels with the entrance foyer facing St Andrews Rd. Finishes are of a high standard. Wanooka House required some lateral support to ensure that it was not compromised.

Enviro-friendly aspects are part and parcel of the project, illustrated by lightly reinforced post tension slabs using a special blast furnace slag concrete mix, thereby reducing the Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) content. Also, rubble from the demolitions has been used as backfill.

The project required upgrades to the Jan Smuts intersection, St Andrews Road, Girton Road and St Davids Road as well as widening of the access bridge across the M1 by an additional lane at a cost of some R11m, the contract for which has been awarded to Stefanuti Stocks.

As an existing site, all services were already available. Nonetheless in keeping with modern day realities, a standby generator has been provided for and a borehole has been sunk on site.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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