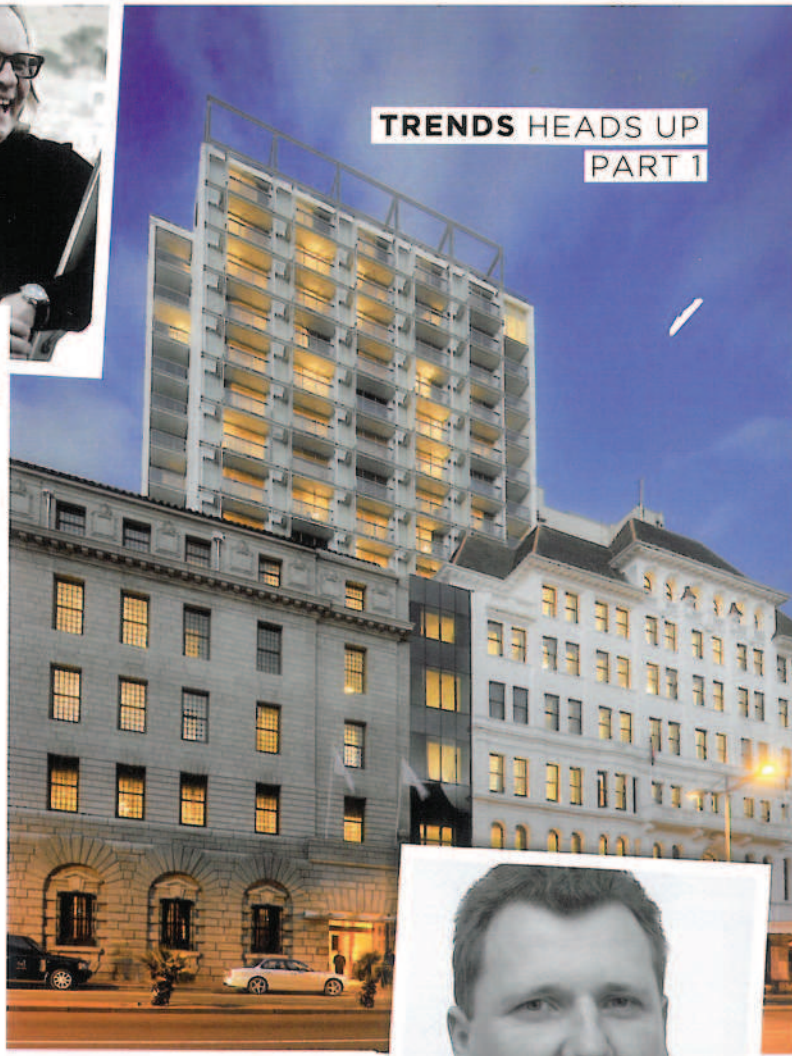


**the dhk group  
(derick henstra)**

With architecture – and specifically what principal designer Derick Henstra calls ‘good honest design’ – at its core alongside urban-design and interior-architecture divisions, the dhk Group has been responsible for several high-profile projects that have had a considerable impact within their urban contexts – and precisely because of their sensitivity to the sites on which they have been built. When Cape Town’s former Dutch Reformed Church Synod Hall was partially demolished, the city might have forever lost a significant part of its architectural history; yet that imposing building’s ‘memory has been preserved’ in the 15 on Orange Hotel that takes its place and in which key elements of the original structure were retained. For Derick, conservation is ‘very important’. Yet the buildings in question ‘have to work – we can’t just make museums; if you can’t find a function for an old building, it must make way for a new one’. In the case of conversions such as Mandela Rhodes Place and the Taj Cape Town hotel (pictured, right) – a melding of two historically important bank buildings with a third contemporary structure – the firm ‘has taken the old fabric of the city and given it a new lease on life’. Among several redevelopment projects on the cards (Jozi’s Newtown, Cape Town’s Culemborg), the Mother City is set to gain an interesting addition to its skyline – and its tallest structure – when dhk starts building environmentally sustainable skyscraper Portside. **dhk.co.za**



urban landscapes

**grosskopff lombart huyberechts & associates architects (xavier huyberechts)**

G LH is responsible for designing South Africa’s only GBCSA Green Star-certified building (it has a four-star design and As Built ratings). Nedbank Phase II on Maude Street in Sandton (pictured, left) is an example of corporate architecture that has raised the bar for sustainable architecture in South Africa. Principal architect Xavier Huyberechts says, ‘This building was an opportunity to make a statement and create a landmark.’ The GBCSA Green Star rating is extremely stringent, taking in everything from the more obvious ‘green’ factors such as materials and energy consumption to the quality of the working environment. Inside Nedbank Phase II there is a large central atrium with trees. ‘Everyone has contact with the greenery,’ says Xavier. The building saves almost 30 per cent of the cost of cooling and boasts significant water savings compared to other buildings. It also has future-proofing facilities such as bays for bicycles, electrical and hybrid cars. It adds positively to the broader urban environment by animating the street with pedestrian access to shops, and its positive ripple effects have even led to the building of the first plant in South Africa to create low-VOC paint. The smallest details have been considered: the cleaning products used in the building are bacteria-, not detergent-based. It’s the kind of building that will affect the way other buildings are made from now on. As Xavier puts it, ‘A project like this has the muscle to force the whole industry to change.’ **glh.co.za** □

