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DAINFERN SQUARE MIDRAND



PROJECT FEATURE

DAINFERN SQUARE

DAINFERN SQUARE

Midrand

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Wieland Gleich

Dainfern Square is a new retail destination situated on the corner of William Nicol Drive and Broad Acres Drive in northern Johannesburg, designed by dhk for Abacus Asset Management. The mixed-use development includes retail, banks and restaurants on the ground level with offices and a gym on the first floor. There is surface parking on the ground level as well as two levels of basement parking.

Location

Dainfern is, primarily, an upmarket residential area in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg and the site is located at a main intersection of Broad Acres Drive on William Nicol Drive. The landscape undulates gently and the building clearly makes its presence felt when approaching this major intersection - which has recently been upgraded to deal with increased traffic flow in the area. The development effectively turns its back on William Nicol Drive but creates a very powerful and striking façade facing this street. The heart of the development is contained in the centre of the site, slowly revealed when turning into Broad Acres.

The Site

The site is accessed off Broad Acres Drive and this set the datum for the ground floor. The shopping centre forms the perimeter of the site with a strong focus on the arrival experience. The site gently slopes six metres down from Broad Acres Drive on the south side to the north. The slope allowed for two floors of basement parking on the northern half of the site.

Design

Dainfern Square is a neighbourhood shopping centre with a village square atmosphere executed in a very modern aesthetic. The building mass has been broken down to create a varied and rich shopping experience with a decidedly human scale.





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The building footprint follows a traditional retail model of placing the anchor tenants in the corners of the site and introducing walkway links between, along which the smaller retail offerings are placed to create a continuous shopping experience and work environment.

The Dainfern Square development, however, introduces three further layers to the strip mall typology, making the project's arrangement quite

unique. The first is the surface parking square which pulls all the building elements together. An open mall link is introduced behind the first layer of retail which complements the traditional covered mall and creates a more vibrant outdoor shopping and dining experience. With no entrance doors, consumers move unobstructed from the square of surface parking into the heart of the centre which flows into both open and internal mall areas. Lastly,





the office component on the first floor gives scale to the buildings and creates large double volume entrances as well as animating the area with constant activity.

The design is clean and contemporary yet inviting, and the distinctive layout creates a vibrant shopping experience.

During Dainfern Square's incubation, the site size increased and a residential component was

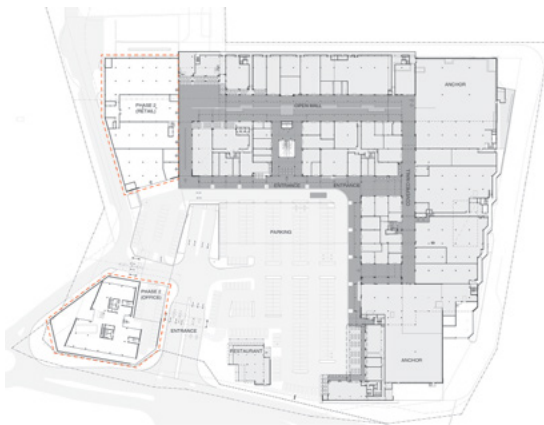
introduced on an adjacent property which required access through this site. This somewhat tricky link was resolved with the ramps which lead down through the basement parking.

The most critical design challenge was the building's eastern façade which addresses William Nicol Drive. This elevation is, effectively, the back of the building, housing services and back of house areas. It has been carefully considered to reducing

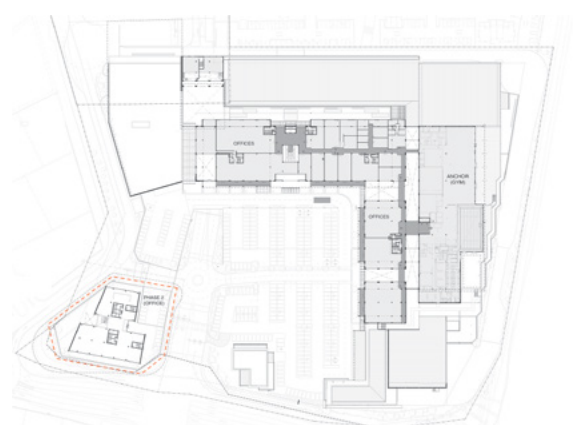




GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



the apparent bulk and creating a feature façade. A floating screen over 100m long was introduced along the length of the façade, which hovers and steps to create a dynamic but honest façade which reveals the services, walkways and other functional elements.

The final phases of development will include additional retail and office space completing the western edge of the site.

Detailed Description

The main entrance to the site is from the south via Broad Acres Drive, arriving at a large square

of surface parking. The square of surface parking in the heart of the site is surrounded by several building typologies. To the immediate east, is a stand-alone restaurant pavilion and a glazed fast food pavilion while, to the north and east side, there are three 2 storey blocks with retail on ground level and offices or medical suites on first floor.

The gaps between the blocks form double volume entrances which allow shoppers to move effortlessly into the shopping centre. The west side of the square is earmarked for a future office development.





At present, two anchor tenants, Pick n Pay and Woolworths, are located on the north and south-east corners respectively, in red brick box structures that are linked by an internal mall. On the first floor, a further anchor tenant, a Virgin Active gym, links the two structures in the form of a glass box with large projecting metal roof.

Behind the two storey blocks is the covered mall to the east and open mall to the north, which has a retail strip on the north side with softer feel and lower façades, giving a more intimate shopping experience. The open mall terminates in a covered square that will be completed in the final phase of the development.

Uniquely, in security-conscious Johannesburg, there are no entrance doors to the mall. This simple gesture allows ease of movement from the parking into the mall and creates a seamless approach and entry. The different spatial qualities of the various elements of the mall - the open and covered malls, squares and active entrances - provide an interesting and fresh shopping experience.

Tenant Mix

As a neighbourhood mall, Dainfern Square provides a varied tenant mix and range of facilities that activate the mall around the clock. The large anchor food

tenants have been discretely positioned so as not to dominate and the centre includes small coffee shops, salons, banks, a dry cleaner, a flower seller and a travel agent. The varied restaurant, café and fast food offering enlivens the square and parking square. The first floor comprises offices and medical suites, as well as a large gym with swimming pool and outdoor training area. Parking is provided for 279 cars at ground level with a further 864 basement parking spaces.

Traffic Flow

Traffic flow into the site is very clear and either through the main front-of-house or back-of-house entry points. Vehicular traffic is predominant and there is good access to the ground level surface parking. Basement parking is also accessed via the square and by the secondary/goods entry point. Pedestrian traffic flows follow the vehicular routes and the site is well serviced by minibus taxi routes on William Nicol.

Materials

A carefully considered palette of materials has been used. The white two storey plastered blocks which form the square are modern and light with glass balustrades and floating steel roofs. Between the blocks, the grand steel and glass canopies clearly





denote the entrances. In contrast, the anchor tenants are housed in red brick buildings.

Internally, luxurious finishes include marble tile-clad columns and rich grey tiled floors in a double volume space with contemporary chandeliers. The open mall and pavement around the square introduces polished concrete underfoot and a hint of the Cape with rich terracotta coloured klompie brick cladding. Timber cladding accentuates

the building corners and allows signage to be contained and controlled. Signage has been carefully considered and the guidelines rigorously adhered to.

HVAC

HVAC is located to suit the various tenant locations and is generally taken directly to the outside as quickly as possible to either roof mounted areas





discreetly behind screens or parapets or onto external faces and screened. Some HVAC plants have been discreetly placed in the basement.

Sustainability

The design of Dainfern Square is driven by a sustainable ethos which carries throughout the workings of the centre. With the public spaces of the centre open to the environment, there is

less internal space requiring air-conditioning and artificial lighting which keeps energy usage low. Projecting balconies and overhanging roofs are used extensively as design features, but also act as passive shading control to the glass façades. The landscaping makes use of indigenous plants which require less watering. The centre is fully accessible with level access throughout and conveniently located lifts.

