

Updating Southdale Shopping Centre with R70-million revamp

Southdale Shopping Centre in Johannesburg is undergoing a complete revamp in order to realign it with the requirements and demographics of shoppers in the area. Completion of phase one of the project is scheduled for the end of 2014, while completion of phase two, comprising the revamp of the exterior and parking lots, is anticipated for the end of 2015.



Built in 1969, it has become outdated and its owners, 1Eighty - a member of One Property Holdings, have already invested approximately R28 million in phase one, with a further R10 million earmarked for the second phase and the entire refurbishment project amounting to approximately R70 million.

It currently comprises a gross lettable area (GLA) of 33,000sqm - incorporating 30,500sqm of retail space and a three-storey office block of 2,500sqm. It has approximately 877 parking bays and, as part of the revamp project, the entire parking lot will be resurfaced and upgraded and a further 113 parking bays added.

Chris van Reenen, CEO of One Property Holdings and a director of 1Eighty, which acquired the centre in July 2012, says the centre was in desperate need of modernisation, as it had become dated over the years. "While tenants have remained loyal, the centre was in dire need of an overhaul in order to significantly boost the appeal for shoppers and visitors and to attract new and national tenants, a factor which ultimately impacts positively on both existing tenants and shoppers. Key factors in enhancing the shopping experience include the integration of spaces in the centre, mainly with the use of increased volume, natural light, steelwork and colour for visual appeal, as well as improvements to flooring.

"Well positioned in a typical 'convenience' setting at the intersection of Alamein Road and Landsborough Street, it has always been a community centre, enjoying considerable local support from industries and businesses that have a strong presence in the area and from the highly populated surrounding residential areas, including Soweto. Of late however, there has been some 'leakage' of shoppers to other centres, emphasising the need for it to be improved on to make this a far more appealing community centre.



"Positively, market research reveals local demographics that indicate mainly a middle class income segment with a high percentage comprising a relatively young profile between the ages of 20 and 44 years - including families, which augurs well for the future of the centre and for potential inflows of additional shoppers. Having already implemented improvements to the fashion and food offering, we are already starting to see an influx of visitors to the centre, despite the revamp still being underway."

New retailer positions, new tenants



Van Reenen says repositioning of tenants in the shopping centre includes the expansion of added value retailers such as Ackermans, which has relocated into a new 600sqm store to its new specifications, with Jet Store now occupying the adjacent 600sqm shop, which is to be expanded by an additional 600sqm to a Jetmart store. The Mr Price store has been enlarged, while Fashion Express has relocated and Cash Crusaders has been moved into a new shop in proximity to Capitec Bank.

"We have also revamped a number of other smaller shops and are working with the tenants to get their merchandise, look and feel and general offerings up to our specifications."

A number of new tenants have already been signed up, with 800sqm to be occupied by Goldwagen (automotive parts), 450sqm for Affordable Tyres, 201sqm for Cre@tivity, 169sqm for Sheet Street, as well as other outlets such as Levingers Dry Clean & Shoe Clinic, The Fish & Chip Co, Chesanyama and other fast food offerings.

Refurbishing, recycling to profitable centres

"We own our own property assets, which are currently in excess of 60,000sqm, and are in the process of growing the fund. Our strategy is to acquire distressed centres, renovate and re-tenant them and completely turn the centre around. Successful projects to date include Sasolburg Junxion, Northmead Mall in Benoni and Megapark Mall in Kriel, Mpumalanga," adds van Reenan.



Werner Franck, MD of Vertias, One Property Holdings' Project Management division, says recycling is a key focus. "In taking over old buildings and renovating them, we aim to use as much of the existing material as we can, while retaining the history and elements of the property where possible.

"For example, in the office block in Southdale Shopping Centre, in redesigning the office lobbies we removed the wooden ceilings which formed part of the original building and are now using these panels in the ceiling of the stairwell of the offices. The stripped out steel is being reused as part of the columns and the metal sheeting is also being reused where possible. In the process of upgrading the floors throughout the centre, we are, where possible, donating existing paving brick to the community."

Energy saving features incorporated during the refurbishment project include raising the roof and ceilings to increase natural light and reduce electricity consumption, insulating all new areas and installing a solar system where possible.

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