

HOUSING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
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BRICKS AND PAVING

Retaining blocks for informal settlements

Retaining block manufacturer, Terraforce and Requad Construction are up-grading and making the Kayamandi informal settlement area suitable for building low cost housing.

"The Terraforce retaining blocks provide a cost effective and durable platform for roads and sidewalks in the farmland which has been earmarked to provide homes for 380 families," says Henk van Renssen, project engineer from Arcus Gibb.

"The Temporary Relocation Area 2 forms part of the bigger Watergang Housing Project and will soon be home to 100 permanent houses. The goal is to provide more formal housing in the long run, while improving the general environment."

The retaining blocks used at the Kayamandi site were pioneered by Terraforce, and Jeremy Leighton of licensor, Cape Retaining Systems says, "What makes this product so popular in the industry is that the blocks require low hardware input for manufacture, low transport costs and low inventory requirements at sales outlets. They are hollow but strong enough compared to solid block systems."

The concrete retaining walls constructed using the Terraforce system are easily formed into complex curved shapes or into walls in which the upper and lower profiles are continuously changing, while the system also allows you a choice between round face or flush face to suit specific requirements. The system offers a closed vertical surface structure that provides maximum amount of soil mass within the wall, which prevents

backfill spillage, while at the same time offering uninhibited permeability."

The first concrete foundations were laid during November 2009. Each of the three walls is fitted with a 110 mm subsoil drainage pipe that runs along the entire length of the wall and exits through weep-holes cut into individual blocks at regular intervals. As the walls were built up, a sand drainage layer of 500 mm was filled to the top to prevent possible damming up of water.

