

Striving for maximum community involvement

GIBB wins SAHF's Housing Project of the Year award

GIBB, one of South Africa's leading multi-disciplinary engineering and science consulting companies, is proud of their involvement in a joint venture for low-cost housing development with M5 Developments Cape (Pty) Ltd, which recently won the Housing Project of the Year award from the Southern Africa Housing Foundation.

The project was nominated by the Overstrand Municipality and comprised a low-cost, 88-house development in the small town of Overstrand, just outside Hermanus. It came out tops in the category for low-cost housing under R80 000 per unit. The aim of the award was to identify, encourage and promote housing design, development and management. Submissions were evaluated on the innovative use and management of human resources, financing options and technologies, as well as the contribution to community management and the sustainability of the development.

GIBB was appointed by Overstrand Municipality as the project managers and consulting, civil and electrical engineers on the project. Sean Molloy, project manager at GIBB, comments on the planning and design of the house: "The design of the house incorporated the economic use of cement blocks, with T-blocks and corner blocks being specially manufactured to suit a modular design. This resulted in very little wastage and therefore extra spend for other pertinent products, such as concrete-frame windows with aluminium closures, which are of a higher quality than previously used steel products. Additionally, a specially designed window-sill block and a Meranti back door with a recessed glass panel were used to provide more natural sunlight inside the house."

The completed product was a 40m² house, built with a practical layout on a ground with challenging soil conditions, with aluminium windows, a bathroom with high-quality fittings and maximum use of natural light.

Although the project originally commenced

on 4 May 2009, with the contracted completion date being 31 August 2009, due to red-tape and the 14 rain-day delays the completion date was rescheduled for 30 September 2009.

However, thanks to the combined expertise of M5 and GIBB, the project was ultimately completed a full five weeks before schedule, with all 88 houses being handed over to the mayor and provincial government MEC's on 26 August 2009.


Significantly, especially on a project of this scale and with such a short construction span, all NHBRC and building control requirements were met and there was not a single non-compliance issue on the whole project.

"What was unique about this project and very rewarding to GIBB, who always strives for maximum community involvement was that the intended beneficiaries of the project had direct involvement, via an organisational structure coordinated by the municipality. That meant that 60% of the labour and subcontractors used in the construction phase were from within the



local community, with only 40% outsourced," says Sean. "The environment and quality of life of the community was sustainably uplifted and at the end of the project, all parties were exceedingly happy with the high quality of the house and the ongoing benefits to the community. GIBB is incredibly proud to have brought happiness to 88 families in such an inclusive, collaborative and sustainable way," he added.

The houses were integrated into existing suburbs, which also have bank financed houses, enabling the new residents to integrate and harmoniously co-exist with other families and avail themselves of existing facilities such as parks, schools, crèches, libraries and sport facilities. Sean concludes, "This is a prime example of a successful integrated human settlement that is fully aligned to our ethos, namely

that 'GIBB changes lives'". As an integrated group of multi-disciplinary professional engineers, scientists and project managers with a history of over 53 years in South Africa, GIBB is renowned for providing consulting, design and management solutions to the built environment, public, parastatal and private business sectors. 

For further info, please visit: www.gibb.co.za.