



## EMAVUNDLENI CENTRE FOR HIV RESEARCH, CROSSROADS, CAPE TOWN

Architects: Anesa & Barbosa Architects | Quantity Surveyor: Laotoe Key Kotze cc Quantity Surveying Project Management | Structural Engineers: The late Rob van Loon, Moroff & Kühne Consulting Engineers | Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Element Consulting Engineers | Landscaping: Tirzah Stubbs with Schulzer and Watson Gardens | Land Surveyor: De Villiers, Reid, Chiddy and Murray Professional Land Surveyors | Contractor: Radyn Diamond Construction

The Emavundleni Centre for HIV Research, Crossroads, was established by the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation (DTHF). The DTHF is a registered non-profit organisation that consists of a team of over 100 dedicated doctors, nurses, researchers and community-trained field workers who are involved in research, training and treatment of HIV and related diseases. The DTHF is based at the Medical Faculty at the University of Cape Town and has established centres in Nyanga, Masiphumelele and other poverty-stricken communities in the Cape Peninsula hardest hit by the pandemic.

In 2004 the architects assisted the DTHF in the construction of the new 100m<sup>2</sup> research building attached to the Masiphumelele Clinic in the Southern Peninsula. They were subsequently approached by the DTHF in 2005 to report on two sites in Crossroads, selected by the Crossroads Community Advisory Board (CAB), for a new vaccine trials centre to conduct Phase III HIV vaccine trials.

Erf 27 in Crossroads was eventually selected by the Crossroads CAB as the most suitable site. The land belongs to the City of Cape Town and is leased to the DTHF. The site had an existing small hall that, after careful investigation, proved unsuitable for adaptation to the DTHF's requirements and was therefore demolished.

Construction started, but was soon brought to a halt by several residents who expressed concern over the legitimacy of the selection of the site by the CAB. Although this was amicably resolved through a series of meetings with the community, the ward councillor and a representative of the Mayor's office, the process nevertheless caused almost two months' delay to the construction programme.

The site is small and irregular in shape with nine boundary lines, eight of which border onto roads. The main portion of the building takes the form of a double-storey U-shape. It accommodates the public areas on the ground floor and the staff areas on the first floor. The remaining space beyond the U-shape, at the east end, is enclosed by a curved wall and accommodates the meeting room and waiting area. The waiting area opens onto a small paved entrance court containing a drinking fountain. The counselling rooms are clipped into the centre of the U-shape, in a corrugated iron clad box. The double-volume foyer is a major source of natural light for the building. The layout of the ground floor was critical to facilitate the process and flow of activities associated with vaccine trial participation. The mezzanine-like first floor allows aerial view monitoring by staff.

Elements from the Masiphumelele building were carried over to this building to give the two buildings a similar identity. One of these elements, the concrete pop-out window, was positioned in the curved wall to relate to an existing tree. (Unfortunately, the tree has since been blown over by a Cape winter storm.) The building is mostly naturally ventilated with corrugated canopies over the windows. Three areas required constant temperatures, ie the laboratory, pharmacy and phlebotomy room, and are thus air-conditioned. A generator has also been provided for emergency power.

The decorative plaster figure (developed from the DTHF's logo), together with the building's name, is used to create interest on the west elevation. The figure has taken on a life of its own with chalked-on bodyparts. Health messages in graffiti type artwork will be added to the curved wall in the future. ■

