



# Accentuating shape and form

8 Melville Road, the head office of Stauch Vorster Architects (SVA), is a prime example of green building design principles. The double storey, energy-efficient offices – situated in Illovo Boulevard, an established office node located between Sandton and Rosebank – feature the green technology of a variable refrigerant volume (VRV) system, an efficient, reliable method that saves energy by using a flow rate of refrigerant accurately matched to the required heating or cooling.



The building also boasts rain water harvesting; a ventilated facade green wall; night purging through the atrium and a low energy lighting installation linked to a building management system. Lighting in Design spoke to Kevan Moses, a director of the Johannesburg branch of SVA, about his approach to lighting the company's new offices.

Architectural lighting focuses on three main areas; the amount of functional light provided for people who live or work in the environment; energy efficiency; and the aesthetic impact supplied by the lighting system. As Moses explains, good light is represented by ambient light that is fit for purpose and by feature lighting, which does a particular job at a particular time and transforms itself from day to night.

Light plays an essential role in guaranteeing the comfort of workers and the quality of their endeavours, particularly in an architectural office where

much of the work involves design and the attention to detail that goes with it. Kevan Moses' approach was to design light into the structure, using it to accentuate the interior by focusing on light rather than the light source.

The jagged shapes and forms of the exterior of the building are echoed in its interior and the lighting draws attention to these, from the appealing geometric line of light recessed into the floor of the atrium and vertically into the wall, which reflects off the glass doors to create the illusion of many lines of light, to the soft wash of light that bathes the wall in the cove above the receptionist's desk. Vertical and horizontal linear LED fittings form the bulk of the lighting theme in the building, making a refreshing change from the traditional rectangular light fittings so often found in offices. Suspended tubes of light reinforce the linear effect in the double volume space alongside the staircase as do



the vertical strips of light in the parking lot bollards. The appearance is striking, both during day time and in the evening.

The SVA studios encompass a deep space, with the atrium on one side and near full-height fenestration on the other. There is a high level of natural light that is supplemented by linear LED fittings mounted in a continuous line across the length of the studio. Task lighting is available to increase the lux levels, which are around 250, when necessary.

The same linear LED fittings are used in the meeting rooms – they are used throughout the building – with recessed LED downlighters on the perimeter. The artificial lighting in these rooms is seldom used as there is usually enough daylight during normal working hours to see comfortably.

The external lighting has been kept to a minimum but takes advantage of the green wall on the building's west façade where strip LED lighting, placed beneath all the planters, creates a prominent night time feature. The vertical form of the bollards in the grounds and in the parking areas replicate the thin lines of the architecture, and provide sufficient light to illuminate the exterior space without causing light pollution or undue spill light.

Regent Lighting supplied the lighting for this project. For Moses, one of the benefits of working with Regent is the collaborative approach both companies adopt when it comes to designing a lighting scheme. There is much discussion and experimentation and Regent is prepared to make a prototype of a luminaire before a final design is decided upon. All the light fittings were custom designed for the 8 Melville Road site.

Asked about his thoughts on LEDs, Moses feels that price is still an issue and that it is difficult to convince commercial clients to use LEDs for general lighting although they are quite happy to use them for feature light. Though he fully appreciates the benefits of LEDs, he is not certain that they are ideal for general application, at this stage.

Intaprop, the company that developed the property, is in the process of applying for a four star rating with the Green Building Council of South Africa. Green buildings offer substantial benefits including improved individual productivity, increase employee levels of health, energy and water cost savings and reduced capital and operational costs for HVAC and lighting.