

Gala event

The new swimming pool at Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool Pretoria, designed by Mathews and Associates Architects, is the first swimming pool in South Africa lined with a polyurea coating.

PHOTOGRAPHY ALET PRETORIUS; MAAA

The new swimming pool and cloakrooms at Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool Pretoria forms part of a sports node in close proximity to Loftus Versfeld Rugby Stadium on the north east of the site.

Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool Pretoria needed a new swimming pool that they could use and also rent out for swimming training, galas, water polo, underwater hockey and lifesaving. The school's previous pool did not comply with gala standards, so they called on Mathews and Associates Architects to design a 25m FINA-standard swimming pool and dressing rooms on the school grounds.

The location of the swimming pool and cloakrooms was decided by the proximity of Loftus Versfeld Rugby Stadium as a sports-node to the north east of the site, and the open space on site that the swimming pool required. Adjoining washrooms needed to be adaptable to accommodate either two different teams or to be expanded to become one large cloakroom during school hours.

The project made use of innovative materials to save costs during construction as well as for future maintenance. Instead of using conventional tiles, the concrete walls of the pool were lined with a polyurea coating. This is the first swimming pool in South Africa to make use of this product. The polyurea lining offered the client numerous advantages: It is more cost effective than tiles, application of the lining is faster than tiles, any damage can be repaired under water and the product is completely algae resistant.

Continued next page >>

The swimming pool has eight swimming lanes which are screened off on the northern and eastern sides from the nearby passing pedestrians and cars by a terracotta face-brick boundary wall which compliments the colour of the existing and new buildings on the site.

On the Western side, the pool is flanked by a concrete stepped pavilion with cloakrooms and a pump room situated underneath the seating. This structure forms a buffer between the pool and the school, creating a distinctly separate space for the swimming pool. A heritage building currently used as the school's music centre is located on the southern boundary, forming a focal point along the north-south axis of the pool while enjoying spectacular views of the pool.

The use of fencing around the pool is minimised through the use of these new and existing structures and, for safety reasons, access to the pool is controlled by a singular entrance in the centre of the pavilion structure which is demarcated by a circular shaped structure covered in a mosaic artwork depicting a girl doing a tumble turn. The artwork is by 'old girl' Isa Steynberg and made by Mosaic Arts. This organic shape protrudes out of the pavilion facade and articulates the entrance. Cloakrooms are accessed from behind the circular kiosk or alternatively, directly from the swimming pool on the southern side.

Apart from accommodating cloakrooms, the space under the pavilion seating also had to accommodate mechanical equipment including pumps and dosing machinery. This area had to

be well-ventilated but enclosed for safety and security reasons. The location for the machinery below the slanted seating soffit with clerestory windows has resulted in an unexpected architectural 'technical cathedral' space.

Excellent ventilation was achieved by a breezeblock wall on the western edge of the pavilion. The breezeblock application continues along the entire facade to allow natural light into the cloakrooms while forming the main articulation device on the facade. A steel roof also forms part of the original designed pavilion structure and will be added at a later stage.

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

ARCHITECTS: Mathews & Associates Architects CC **PROJECT TEAM:** Pieter Mathews; Carla Taljaard; Jan Hugo
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS: Ellis Engineers **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS:** CA du Toit Consulting Engineers **QUANTITY SURVEYOR:** Equate **CONTRACTOR:** Tundwe Construction



From top The school's old music centre, housed in a heritage building, has spectacular views of the new swimming pool; a mosaic designed by 'old girl' Isa Steynberg at the entrance to the pavilion depicts a girl doing a tumble turn; a concrete stepped pavilion houses cloakrooms and a pump room, which includes a breezeblock wall that provides excellent ventilation.



254 Muckleneuk Street
 Nieuw Muckleneuk
 Brooklyn, Pretoria, 0181
 Tel: +27 (0)12 460 3450
 Email: aerasmus@cadutoit.co.za

Mathews & Associates Architects cc
 P.O. Box 2676, Brooklyn Square, 0075
 Tel: +27 (0)86 111 6222
 Email: info@maaa.co.za
 www.maaa.co.za

The Willows Office Park, Block F4
 c/o Farm rd & Simon Vermooten Rd
 Tel: +27 (0)12 807 5421
 Email: ellis@ellisengineers.co.za
 www.ellisengineers.co.za

P O Box 92753 Mooikloof 0059
 Tel: +27 (0)12 997 3374
 Email: tinus@tundwe.co.za