

# BlackBrick Bedford opens, reviving hospitality on JHB's east side

BlackBrick is expanding its footprint with a significant investment in Bedfordview, marking a major foray into Johannesburg's east side. This project marks the first new hotel opening on the east side of Johannesburg in years and is the inaugural BlackBrick apartment hotel in this area, introducing a refreshing and authentically African-designed option to the market.



Source: Supplied

The apart-hotel sector is experiencing a transformative shift, driven by the demand of millennials and Gen Z for immersive, sustainable accommodations. HTF Market Intelligence reports that the apart-hotel market is projected to grow at a staggering CAGR of 22.5% from 2024 to 2030.

## Embracing sustainability

BlackBrick has adopted a circular economy model, using recycled materials to construct the entire building. This method reduces environmental impact and appeals to eco-conscious consumers, as 70% of travellers indicate a preference for sustainable accommodations.

BlackBrick Bedford has transformed the former Airports Company South Africa (Acsa) head office into a new apartment hotel through adaptive reuse, reflecting a focus on innovation and sustainability.

Growthpoint Properties (JSE: GRT) took the lead as the primary developer, leveraging its cross-sector development expertise for the R200m residential conversion project. This initiative was undertaken in a joint venture with Setso Property Fund (49%) and in collaboration with BlackBrick Hotels, presenting a ground-breaking solution to the surplus of office space in the market and the scarcity of residential space.

BlackBrick Bedford spans 35,000 sqm and offers more than traditional accommodation by integrating a botanical forest setting. The site includes gardens, a koi pond, a sculpture garden in collaboration with Nirox, and an art collection featuring works by local artists like Naledi Modupi and Reginald Teys, providing a peaceful environment in an urban setting.

## Enhancing local employment

Furthermore, the hotel is creating new job opportunities for locals through the opening of the hotel, with plans to employ a new team of hotel staff, further enriching the socio-economic fabric of the community.

In response to the growing trend of remote working, particularly evident post-pandemic, BlackBrick Bedford addresses the surge in South Africa by offering its most expansive workspace yet. Designed for productivity and collaboration, this state-of-the-art facility caters to both full-time remote workers and those who, alternate between office and home environments.

BlackBrick Bedford's workspace accommodates the hybrid work model, where professionals often split their time between cities or travel frequently. It offers flexible seating, high-speed internet, and integrated technology solutions, facilitating smooth transitions between remote work and travel while maintaining productivity.



Source: Supplied

## Work and wellness balance

BlackBrick Bedford provides amenities that support both work and wellness. Guests can enjoy a variety of facilities, including a gym, padel tennis and volleyball courts, and a swimming pool, which help maintain their fitness routines. Additionally, there is a trail-running track through the gardens, offering a scenic environment for outdoor activities. Research indicates that properties with wellness amenities have experienced a 30% increase in bookings.

BlackBrick Bedford is located within a 15km radius of major business hubs like OR Tambo airport, Sandton City, Johannesburg City Central, and Rosebank, making it conveniently situated for business travellers. Its location facilitates easy access to business activities, city exploration, or travel connections.

Freedom's Kitchen, the flagship restaurant of BlackBrick Bedford, represents culinary mastery rooted in Johannesburg's vibrant culture. Headed by Kagiso Sebediela, a seasoned culinary professional and entrepreneur, this entirely black-owned establishment has flourished for more than three decades, operating in multiple locations across Johannesburg.

"Freedom's Kitchen is proud to be the restaurant partner to BlackBrick Bedford and we look forward to an exciting journey with the brand. As a young and agile business, we have always looked for opportunities that push our business into new frontiers. The restaurant's opening allows us to showcase to a broad spectrum of clientele what Africa on a plate tastes like.

"While the menu is continental we certainly look forward to introducing patrons to our fire-style cooking in the lush gardens which is both an ode and old-age preparation method of food in a more enhanced outdoor kitchen setup. Our motto 'Don't go home to feel at home' fits right into the DNA of what BlackBrick is about," says Sebediela.

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