

AfriLandscapes implements greening plan at V&A Grain Silo Precinct

AfriLandscapes, a division of AfriServ SA, was awarded the landscaping contract to develop and implement a greening plan at the Grain Silo Precinct at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.



AfriLandscapes greens V&A Grain Silo Precinct

According to landscaping manager Julian Bartels, all plant materials had to be hoisted to level seven using a tower crane to create what is essentially a giant rooftop garden. “We used a variety of measures to create a sustainable planted landscape solution that would accommodate instant indigenous shrubs and climbers to complement the character and feel of the precinct.

“The landscape architects, Planning Partners, specified lightweight soil mixtures and designed a specialised drip irrigation and drainage system which would ensure the plants’ best growing conditions.”

Suspended planters on stilts

In order to create this elevated landscape, estimated at 30m above ground, the architects designed suspended planters, placed on stilts, which have been water-proofed and which compare to an oversized swimming pool. The biome is supplied with water by means of an automated drip irrigation system, and excess water is collected and returned via the drainage system at the floors of these basins.

Specialist indigenous creepers were planted which were grown 12 months in advance of plantation. They will be shaped to grow downwards and into a courtyard on level six.

On the ground floor at the foot of the Grain Silo, the development of the landscaping plan has had to take the severe water restrictions into account, and for this reason the landscape architects advised on drought-tolerant, grassy-type landscapes, interspersed with a combination of succulent Aloes, Cycads, and yellow-stemmed Acacias.

Water-retaining polymers

In order to cut down on watering periods, and release water slowly back to the roots, water-retaining polymers have also been applied. As a further means of conserving the scarce water resources, only the core of the precinct has been landscaped. The periphery will be considered once alternative water supplies have been adopted.

Stainless trellising has been integrated on the residential balconies of Silos 3 and 4 which face the Zeitz MOCAA Museum. Says Bartels, "Here we imbedded succulent and indigenous creepers, with a combination of lush indigenous ground covers such as Pelargonium, which have been planted into grey chunky rectangular pots, manufactured by local suppliers.

A prominent element of the precinct is a natural water feature, which has been installed 30m above the ground on level 10, and is a natural pool which utilises a bio-filtration unit consisting of plants and stone.

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