**PRESS RELEASE**

Hatfield Square design provides ideal social-distancing solution for students

**Forward-thinking design by Paragon Architects allows for a variety of options in terms of gathering spaces at mixed-use student accommodation development in Pretoria**

**6 October 2021:** When [Paragon Architects](http://www.paragon.co.za) designed the facilities at the Hatfield Square mixed-use student accommodation development in Pretoria for owners and developers Respublica and Redefine, it had a variety of social and study options in mind. “Little did we know that this would provide an ideal social-distancing solution during the ongoing pandemic, as the students have a variety of options in terms of the spaces they can occupy,” comments Senior Associate **Antoinette Kloppers**. These range from reading a book on a hammock to having a small social get-together outdoors, using a small study room, or simply sitting far apart in the study centre.

Catering for 2 200 students in a variety of unit types, Respublica Student Living manages the development. It extends over 51 000 m2 (excluding basement levels), with 3 500 m2 of retail space and a mix of restaurants and line shops facing Burnett Street. With the retail industry and especially restaurants hardest hit by the pandemic, it is anticipated that Hatfield Square will benefit from more foot traffic during the summer months to come.

“As with all buildings besides healthcare facilities and our own homes, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the development and occupation of buildings. The education sector suffered greatly with lockdown, and most students resumed their studies from the comfort of their homes, just as we had to redefine the home-work balance. The facilities were unfortunately not fully occupied during these times,” explains Kloppers.

Looking back, Kloppers says the entire project was such an incredible team effort. “I am very proud of the beautifully functional end result. It really has taught me that immense budgets do not make successes of projects, but great teamwork does.”

The project was completed in three phases. Blocks A and B are located closest to Hatfield Square, followed by Blocks C and D; the latter being the tallest building in the precinct, and completed last. In order to enhance the sense of micro-communities the four blocks were colour-coded, with each building’s unique colour repeating throughout its floor plates as well as on its façades.

With accessibility as the key driver, pedestrian walkways were introduced on either side of Block D, seamlessly connecting Hatfield Plaza and the Hatfield Gautrain Station. These thoroughfares feature both stairs and ramps, and are therefore also wheelchair-friendly.

“We shaped the space to cater for both students and the general public, encouraging flow and interaction,” highlights Kloppers. For example, the line shops were leased to tenants addressing student-specific needs, together with a few restaurants. This mix resulted in an extremely inviting and welcoming frontage.

While student accommodation in the Hatfield area is quite saturated at the moment, Kloppers points out that there will, however, always be a need for student accommodation where education facilities expand. In terms of the way forward, post Covid-19 there will be an increased demand for facilities that provide comfort and a variety of functional spaces.

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Paragon Group link to view its press office.

**About Paragon Group**
Paragon Group, established in October 1997, is an internationally-active design business, based in Johannesburg. We deliver commercial architecture, masterplanning, interior design, and space planning to visionary clients in all property sectors, from retail to residential and education.

We are committed to global urban development. We are able and agile. Paragon is flexible and diverse in its approach to design. Each project is unique and not driven by style, but by lifestyle and a response to user needs. Elegant and efficient planning form the core of our designs. We understand the needs of our clients, and know how to generate ever new architectural forms in a competitive property market.

We are known for hands-on engagement with all opportunities present in the modern global building industry. The true measure of our skill is our ability to engage at all levels and with all players that make up the colourful world of construction and property development. Our buildings look forward. We embrace the future, because we will be a part of it – part of its problems and responsibilities, and part of its great freedoms and achievements.

**Paragon Group Contact**

Cindy Faux

Director

Phone: (011) 482 3781

Email: cindyf@paragon.co.za

Web: [www.paragon.co.za](http://www.paragon.co.za)

**Media Contact**

Emma Anderson

Account Executive

NGAGE Public Relations

Phone: (011) 867 7763

Fax: 086 512 3352

Cell: 078 028 3553

Email: emma@ngage.co.za

Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za/)