**PRESS RELEASE**

Pecanwood College Hartebeespoort: Paragon Architects completes major upgrade and extension

**15 September 2021:** The recently completed Pecanwood College project at Hartebeespoort in the North West Province has allowed the school capacity to expand by an additional 350 scholars. Pecanwood College is a brand of [ADvTECH](https://www.advtech.co.za/), Africa’s leading private education provider. The upgrading of existing facilities and infrastructure has transformed the space into a welcoming and exciting learning environment ready for future generations.

[Paragon Architects](http://www.paragon.co.za) was tasked with the conceptual design of the new build at the end of last year. Construction commenced on 25 March 2021, with the project handed over for practical completion at the end of August, reports Project Lead **David Cloete**. The Paragon team included Director **Estelle Meiring** and Student Architect **Tayla Summerton**.

The project consisted of a newly-built preparatory school and ‘learn-to-swim’ pool, as well as renovation of the high school entrance, conversion of dormitories into new apartments and the upgrading of existing dormitory facilities. The development included 14 new on-grade parking bays and a drop-off area, a sportsfield, JoJo tanks and signage.

The design aimed to preserve the existing architectural aesthetic of the school, namely face brick band base, covered connecting corridors and tiled pitched roofs, while incorporating modern fixtures and finishes to create an enduring learning environment. The use of tactile materials and the integration of indigenous landscaping, surrounding views and natural light throughout the scheme creates a sense of connectedness to the outdoors.

**Pull Quote**

“The design aimed to preserve the existing architectural aesthetic of the school.” – David Cloete

“There were no real challenges posed by preserving the existing architectural heritage. However, due to the sloping topography of the site and design layout of the new preparatory school, which corresponded with the existing school’s layout, we had to break the new development up into different levels, and add gradual ramps between them. This, in turn, resulted in a stepping roof system as well,” explains Cloete.

The 2 085 m2 new preparatory school consists of 13 classrooms, all with storage facilities; a laboratory, entrance atrium, office spaces, staffroom, staff ablutions and ablution facilities for junior and senior boys and girls. Interconnecting covered corridors create central courtyard spaces. The entrance atrium is enclosed with performance glazing shopfronts with charcoal aluminium that demarcates the entrance of the new development.

The central 8-m-wide corridor extends from the entrance atrium towards the new sportsfield, accentuating views towards Hartbeespoort Dam and the mountainous landscape in the distance. The new structure is established along the street frontage for maximum exposure to any passersby.

The high school entrance renovation consisted of enclosing the entrance atrium space with high-performance glazing shopfronts and louvres for natural ventilation. The newly-enclosed area created additional waiting space for visitors. Placing illuminated signage featuring the school’s logo at the entrance of both the high school and new preparatory school clearly defines the structure’s entrances at night.

The new ‘learn-to-swim’ pool consists of a covered, 1.4-m-deep, 5 m x 10 m pool with a surrounding walkway, ablutions, changerooms and a pathway connecting to the existing pre-primary school area. A Clear-Vu fence surrounds the new development to ensure safety at all times.

On the ground floor of the boys’ dormitory building, the renovation saw construction of ten dormitory rooms housing 21 scholars, a collaborative study area, boys’ and girls’ ablution facilities and a connecting four-bedroom apartment. The renovation included an additional entrance, modern fixtures, finishes and joinery. On the first floor of the boys’ dormitory structure, the renovation saw the conversion of three existing classrooms to two apartments, namely a one-bedroom and a three-bedroom apartment respectively.

While the architecture and interior architecture firm is more widely known for iconic corporate offices such as 144 Oxford Road, Discovery Place and the new Sasol head office, Paragon Group has a number of educational facilities under its belt, such as the Torah Academy Girls High School in Johannesburg, as well as student accommodation projects like Hatfield Square in Pretoria.

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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.

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