

A complex 'QUIET' CONTRACT

J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects had to employ tight planning and adapt quickly to the building site's surroundings when it recently successfully handled the expansion of the Information Management (IM) block at the Life Groenkloof Hospital (previously Little Company of Mary Hospital) in Pretoria.

> The project, undertaken on behalf of the owners, Life Healthcare, entailed adding two additional floors on top of the existing structure in George Storrar Drive in Groenkloof, to create 1 100 m² of additional floor space. In addition, J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects was tasked with constructing a new fire-escape for the historic Catholic hospital which opened in 1957.

While smaller than other healthcare projects previously undertaken, Arrie Venter, contracts director of J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects, says the expansion of the Life Groenkloof Hospital proved to be extremely

complex, considering the sensitive nature of the building environment and limited space available for the construction team.

"The floors directly below had to remain functional right from the outset during the extensive preparation works, which involved demolition and concrete sawing activities on the roof of the existing structure. We had to keep construction noise levels to an absolute minimum at the hospital, so this called for careful planning to keep to the strict project timelines and ensure a safe site throughout the duration of the build.

"Importantly, extensive preparations had to be undertaken well ahead of boarding the



Included in the contract handled by J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects was the installation of a new fire-escape.

site in July 2015, enabling the building team to pre-empt challenges before embarking on the project. In addition to constructing next to a live healthcare facility, we had to plan around an extremely congested site, bearing in mind that the busy hospital has only one access point," Venter says.

The tower crane – the vital component for the operation – had to be precisely placed next to a heli-pad to ensure optimal and safe materials handling on site, while avoiding disrupting hospital traffic and construction activities. With its ample 28 m radius, the crane was also used to assemble formwork on top of I-beams, which spanned sections of the existing structure's corrugated roof sheeting, to build the new façade.

Venter says critical materials, such as reinforcement and bricks, were delivered to site on a just-in-time basis as stockpiling space was limited. "Smaller trucks that could easily manoeuvre in and around the site were used to deliver the construction crew's daily requirements. Interestingly, a sizeable section of the façade and brickwork was substituted with space-frame walling."

However, even the tightest of planning cannot cope with unpredictable weather, and J.C. van der Linde and Venter Projects had to employ extra and extensive waterproofing to protect the exposed structure during the late and heavy rainfalls at the start of this year.

"The Life Groenkloof Hospital expansion project was a classic example of the challenges building contractors have to face in any refurbishment and upgrade project. Full credit must go to the experienced management team we had on site," Venter adds. <

26

Professional team

- **Client:** Life Healthcare Group
- **Main contractor:** J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects
- **Architect:** Origin Architects
- **Quantity surveyor:** Matla Quantity Surveyors

The J.C. van der Linde & Venter Projects team on site were led by Arrie Venter supported by J.J. Maree (site agent), and Martin Naudé (general foreman).

