

Motswere building in Gaborone receives Botswana's first Green Star rating

The new Motswere building in Botswana - the first addition to Prime Plaza II in Gaborone's CBD, has been awarded a five-star Green Star Africa - Office Design v1.1 rating by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA).



Motswere building render. Source: Supplied

The Prime Plaza development, owned by PrimeTime Property Holdings, consists of four existing commercial buildings (Prime Plaza I), each named after a species of local indigenous tree. Motswere is the first of four commercial buildings which will make up Prime Plaza II, which will be developed in phases. The building's name derives from the Leadwood Combretum trees that still inhabit this piece of land.

PrimeTime invests in a diversified portfolio of office, retail and industrial properties throughout Botswana and Zambia. Motswere is the first of Primetime's large property portfolio to achieve third party green certification. "In a competitive market, PrimeTime's ability to offer a Green Star-rated building to an increasingly environmentally and ethically aware tenant base is a great advantage," notes Joe Simpson of PrimeTime.

The 2,780m² Motswere building, designed by Paul Munnik Architects, consists of three levels of A-grade office space and supporting facilities, and two basement parking levels, set among more open-air parking and waterwise landscaped gardens. The five-star Green Star rating signifies national excellence and requires a standard of innovative green design that goes beyond the basics of green building practices.



Courtyard Hotel Waterfall City earns four-star green rating

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Energy and water efficiency

Motswere features high levels of energy and water efficiency, as well as state-of-the-art mechanical ventilation and building management systems. Kagiso Sebetso, in-house green building consultant at Time Projects (PrimeTime's development and asset management arm), adds: "Botswana is a very hot country, for most of the year. Having a building so well oriented

with south and north facing glazing that is provided with optimum shading is quite an achievement when one considers the related reduction in energy consumption.”

The project was not without its challenges, one being hit with the 2020 lockdown during the design phase, which meant that all team meetings went online. “This was still a very new concept at the time,” says Sebetso. “Being a pioneer comes with multiple challenges, particularly with regulatory bodies, such as seeking approval for solar PV installation for a building that is not yet developed. Educating potential suppliers or subcontractors about the green practices that they are expected to price for, and therefore deliver on, is more challenging than one would anticipate, but is so worthwhile.”

It is hoped that the Motswere building is just the start of a new wave of green-rated developments for Botswana and other parts of Africa. Green Star-accredited professional on the project, Dash Coville from Solid Green Consulting, says that the green building movement is gaining momentum in Gaborone, with Solid Green being involved with the certification of three other projects (including one with PrimeTime).



Motswere building render. Source: Supplied

Sustainability features of the building:

- Optimal orientation of the building to suit the location
- Building tuning of the mechanical, electrical, wet services and irrigation services
- Efficient waste management during the construction phase

- On-site recycling facilities
- Maximising on daylight to lower electrical lighting, while providing daylight glare control
- Use of low Volatile Organic Compound materials indoors
- Low electric lighting levels and low lighting power density, along with lighting zoning controls
- A building users' guide helps building occupants to understand and maximise the building's sustainable features
- Preferential parking bays for fuel-efficient transport
- Cyclist's facilities for building users and visitors
- Water efficiency achieved using low flush rate sanitaryware and use of non-potable water in the irrigation system
- Use of solar PV for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

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