

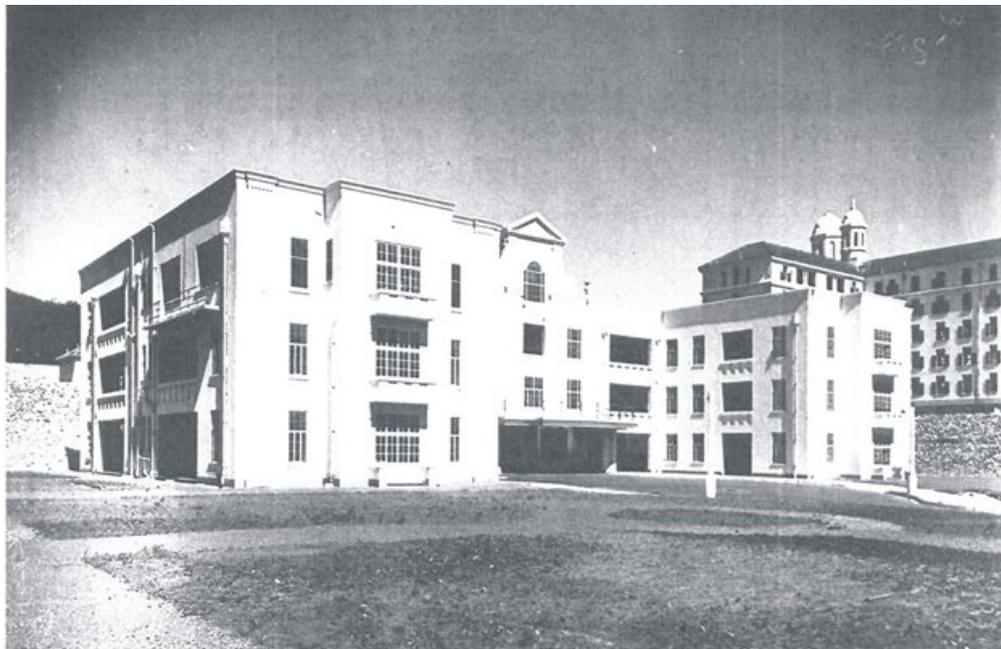
Turner & Townsend completes project management on active hospital site

Turner & Townsend was appointed as project manager and principal agent for the recently completed refurbishment and extension of the UCT Neuroscience Institute building on the Groote Schuur Hospital campus in Cape Town.



View of J-Block – the recently completed refurbishment and extension of the UCT Neuroscience Institute building on the Groote Schuur Hospital campus in Cape Town.

The three-storey, u-shaped Cape Dutch Revival building was constructed in 1934 as a 'Paying Patients' Block' ancillary to the main block of the hospital, and had become increasingly visually separated from the campus due to, among other things, the construction of the New Groote Schuur Hospital block.



J-Block as it was in the 1930s.

The project involved a combination of refurbishments, alterations and additions to the existing J-Block (Neuroscience building) of the hospital with a view to consolidating various neuroscience-related departments into a single integrated and inter-disciplinary facility known as the Clinical Neurosciences Institute (CNI), while facilitating the flow and interaction between the centre and the entire hospital.

One of the busiest hospitals in SA

Says Jerome Alexander, Turner & Townsend senior project manager: “We were appointed at stage 5 into the project, namely at construction commencement, taking over from the previous project management firm. As Professor Graham Fieggen, head of neurosurgery and director of the Neuroscience Institute pointed out, the single biggest challenge was undertaking a major construction project in the middle of one of the busiest hospitals in South Africa, on a building site surrounded by 24/7 ongoing clinical activity and patient care which could not be disrupted.



View of the excavation in progress, with J-Block on the left.

“Furthermore, access had to be provided to hundreds of workers, accommodating traffic and parking while maintaining security. All of this had to be done with as little noise and disruption as possible as construction continued apace in the middle of a typical cold, wet Cape winter. Despite all this, we delivered the project on time and within strict budget constraints, working long hours to achieve the tight timeline.

Managing underground services

“Being such an old precinct, we had no information regarding the underground services, therefore many trench excavations had to be done to identify underground services, resulting in the discovery of 11KVA electric cables, IT cables and water pipes. Without impacting the Radiology Centre in the building and the adjacent MRI building and maternity block – all with highly sensitive equipment and ongoing patient care, we relocated the exposed cables without a hitch – keeping them live in the process. Only once this was done could the lecture theatre be constructed. This involved excavations and lateral support about 7m down, removing 2,300 cubic metres of soil and materials. We also came upon asbestos, which had to be removed and disposed of following the correct protocols.”



View of the interior of the recently refurbished UCT Neuroscience Institute building on the Groote Schuur Hospital campus in Cape Town.

Alexander says the Neurosciences Institute is a grand design and the first of its kind in Africa in terms of consolidating the different fields in neuroscience and neurosurgery into an easily accessible single location. “The facility also provides suitable social space, general workspace, a canteen area, breakaway conference rooms and dedicated offices, as well as a newly-constructed 140-seater auditorium. The extra accommodation was created through the addition of a new, adjoining building to the rear, as well as a further floor added to the existing building’s flat concrete roof.”

Adds Alexander: “Further to this, we were subsequently asked by UCT to fasttrack an additional construction project on the site to accommodate a PET (positron emission tomography) scan facility, which was also delivered in record time. We are also appreciative of the contractor, GVK SiyaZama, for undertaking the challenge.”

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