

June 2007

“The housing backlog apex is broken” says Minister of Housing

In February this year when delivery his 2007 / 2008 Budget Presentation the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, highlighted the fact that the State's housing budget would receive a R2,7-billion boost over the next three years – effectively taking the total allocation over this period to R32-billion.

Manuel explained that the scale of increase could be illustrated through the comparison of the expenditure in 2003 / 2004 totalling R4,6-billion and the total in the 2009 / 2010 financial year being R12,5-billion.

On 8 June the Minister of Housing, Lindiwe Sisulu, delivered her Budget Vote to Parliament. She stated that for the current MTEF period, the housing budget will increase from R8,8-billion in 2007 / 2008 to R12,5-billion in 2009 / 2010. This represents a growth of R3,7-billion or 19.5%.

Commenting on the Minister of Finance's earlier presentation Sisulu said that although Manuel had publicly stated that the Housing Budget would triple she has realised that the actual increase of 19% does not equate to three times anything.

“The Minister of Finance said I was not ambitious to have asked him to double my budget because he had tripled it. Now I intend to show him what my ambition is and I intend to hold him accountable for his public statement. Because three times my budget is exactly what I might settle for,” highlighted Sisulu.

“The grant allocation for the last financial year was R6,8-billion and the allocation for the current financial year is R8,2-billion. The majority of the grant funding will be utilized for project linked subsidies in current commitments, including phased development approach subsidies, the informal settlement upgrading programme and the unblocking of currently blocked projects,” she continued.

“Although we appreciate the increase in the housing budget our projections indicate if we are to eradicate our backlog by 2014, a funding shortfall of R102,5-billion would exist, while if we attempt to eradicate the backlog by 2016 the funding shortfall would increase to R253-billion. In view of this I believe that the housing backlog must be eradicated within the shortest time possible and our cost projections indicate a doubling of costs for every two years delayed.

“Our housing delivery continues to uphold the tenets of the Comprehensive Plan and in our third year of implementing this strategy we continue to break new ground with the various role players, in terms of our Social Contract. My Department has worked to ensure that we have fulfilled the undertakings that I made to Parliament last year.”

HOUSING DELIVERY:

The Department of Housing has produced 2,4-million houses in the last 12 years – something which the Minister believes is a tangible achievement by any standard.

“To give an idea of the sheer impact of this, when you consider that the average poor household consists of five people, this would mean we have housed more than four times the population of Cape Town in 12 years,” highlighted Sisulu.

She added that the good news is not just these numbers and figures, but the fact that the Department has broken through the backlog barrier and has produced more houses than



The Department of Housing has produced 2,4-million houses in the last 12 years and has in the process dislodged the figure of the housing backlog from 2,4-million to 2,2-million. This is the first time in the history of the country that the backlog figure has been less than the number of houses produced.

there are people in our backlog (which has been dislodged from its 2,4-million mark) - and now stands at 2,2-million.

“This in effect means we are now over the apex; steadily we are overcoming our greatest challenge. This is the first time in our history that our backlog has been less than the number of houses produced. Put differently, we have housed more people than those needing houses,” pointed out Sisulu.

The annual production of housing has grown from 252 000 to 272 000, in the last 12 months.

“This is a unique achievement for us,” she added.

“Our commitment remains to remove previously impenetrable clouds in the form of the historical backlog and the deep seated challenges of intractable, somewhat insensitive state machinery.”

“The Department of Housing has responded to these challenges as they relate to the alleviation of poverty; access to land for housing development; access to housing finance; protection of housing consumers from sub-standard work; eradication of corruption or the possibility thereof from our system; the normalisation of the housing market to create a single residential property market and finally, the realisation of the asset we are creating.

“Although we have broken the back of our backlog, these challenges remain. Building costs have increased exponentially due to the increased demand for building materials as we approach 2010.

This has had serious implications for the delivery of housing and this will exacerbate our ability to deliver the projected number of houses at our current housing subsidy quantum of R38 984,” explained Sisulu.

BANK COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

During her presentation the Minister also expressed her gratitude to the banks “who have come to the party” with regards to the increased investment in affordable housing.

“In the last financial year there was an 8% increase in the rate of delivery from the previous year. Further it is anticipated, that as our momentum in housing delivery is up-scaled, our land facilitation machinery in place and more housing funds are provided, we will be able to

meet our commitment eradicate the current informal settlements, as required in terms of our pledge to the Millennium Development Goals, the Habitat Agenda and AMCHUD.

When you consider traditionally where the banks were a few years ago and where they are now in the housing process, you will understand why South Africa is called a ‘miracle country’. I am practically glowing with confidence that we are making it in our partnership with the banks,” stated Sisulu.

FINANCIAL SERVICES CHARTER:

The Minister said she was pleased to announce that through the Department's interaction with the Banking Association of South Africa, and in line with the Financial Services Charter and the Memorandum of Understanding between the four main Banks and the Department that to date and estimated R38-billion has been expended out of the R42-billion pledged.

“We now need to indicate to the Banks, that we would like to ensure that we can monitor that indeed such monies as they indicate, have been expended and expended on the right categories,” she pointed out.

She also reported that an Office of Disclosure, whose purpose it is to do precisely this, has now been established.

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING POLICY:

With regards to the Inclusionary Housing Policy the Minister stated that following extensive consultations with relevant and affected stakeholders the policy has been finalised.

“The policy is reasonable, has been tested and works,” maintained Sisulu.

The policy makes provision for the utilisation of government owned land and proactive engagements between the private sector and Government who will effect mutually beneficial Public Private Partnership arrangements.

While Provincial Authorities will largely be responsible for the implementation of the Inclusionary Housing Programmes, the National Department will articulate the desired outcomes, set direction, provide certain incentives and specify certain key parameters to be followed.

There are in essence two parts to the current policy. The first part is voluntary and the second compulsory. In terms of the voluntary

component all spheres of government will proactively enter into voluntary arrangements with the private sector to produce inclusionary housing projects.

In such voluntary initiatives the government will amongst other things bring state land into the equation. In the case where government is providing the land, it will be demanding in terms of achieving inclusionary outcomes.

The voluntary component of the policy will be applied immediately whilst awaiting the development of the necessary legislation.

“Several inclusionary housing initiatives have already been undertaken by private sector developers in collaboration with financial institutions and we can already see the positive integrative impact of the Inclusionary Housing Programme, for example, Olievenhoutbosch in Pretoria, Cosmo City in Johannesburg, Hlanganani in Springs and at Blythedale in KwaZulu-Natal, where integrated housing projects have been developed,” explained Sisulu.

THUBELISHA:

Thubelisha has been positioned to be a developer / project management company and its mandate has been extended to tackle the upgrading of informal settlements, the unblocking of housing projects affected by inflation and other related factors, the fast tracking housing solutions for people living in areas of stress by using the emergency housing circumstances programme (transitional housing) and to be a lead developer / contractor in mega-projects.

As a project management company, Thubelisha has been outsourcing most of its work to construction companies in terms of government procurement policy.

“It is envisaged that once the Housing Development Agency is established these functions will also be transferred to the Agency and Thubelisha will be merged into the Agency to provide its project management arm. An interim board has been established to ensure that Thubelisha is fully compliant with all governance requirements,” stated Sisulu.

THE NATIONAL HOME BUILDERS

REGISTRATION COUNCIL:

The NHBRC is required to step up its inspectorate to take greater care of the quality of homes at all stages of development to limit harm passed onto consumers.

“I have mentioned my concern regarding the threat posed by the shortage of building materials, especially cement. Fortunately, in this regard I can announce that the NHBRC is in process of establishing secure supply lines, specifically for government purposes,” stated Sisulu.

THE ROLE OF NURCHA AND

THE RHLF:

The government intends to upscale housing delivery and to prioritise mega-projects. To accomplish this it will need to recapitalise NURCHA and RHLF for them to play a greater role in bridging finance.

“We intend to remove unnecessary burden on the industry by de-linking the beneficiary lists from projects. And we have to cut down by at least 50%, the time that developers have to wait for any approvals from government. We have to set time frames and hold officials of government accountable, if not liable for any unjustified delays,” explained the Minister.

In conclusion of her presentation Sisulu also made mention that a national anti-corruption forum is being set up to co-ordinate cases of fraud, corruption and maladministration matters between the National Department of Housing and Provincial Departments of Housing, and that a whistle-blowing policy for the National Department of Housing is being finalised.



Delegates at National Rural Housing Indaba sign fast track housing contract

Delegates at the recently held National Rural Housing Indaba signed a partnership to fast track rural housing delivery without compromising traditional building methods, rural ways of life and not exposing family homes to financial risks that can lead to evictions.

The Indaba, hosted by the National Department of Housing and the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape was attended by government officials, academics, traditional leaders, members of both

houses of parliament, business community and different stakeholders in the housing value chain.

"Traditionally it is a man's role to build a house for his family, it is important that as we implement government housing programmes the beneficiaries are part of the building process. By being involved in the building process we restore their dignity and while they look after the house, we trust they will acquire skills and find employment," stated Nkosi Phathekile

Holomisa, a representative of the House of Traditional Leaders at the Indaba.

Opening the Indaba, the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Nosimo Balindela, said the integrated human settlement plan of Government will restore the dignity of rural communities.

"The Comprehensive Human Settlement Plan, known as BNG by housing practitioners requires that we build rural homes with gardens, space for children to play and also build them with both social

and economic amenities, this will give many of our people an opportunity to enjoy parks and to have access to basic social and economic amenities that are not there in rural areas," the Premier maintained.

All participants committed themselves to work towards eradicating informal settlements by 2014, working with traditional leaders to build sustainable integrated human settlements in rural areas with access to basic services.

They also agreed to engage in detailed proposal to have full cover insurance for government subsidized houses and call on the NHBRC to ensure that traditional rural housing method are researched and enhanced.

The Indaba delegates agreed that the Government housing programme guided by the principle of integrated human settlements can stop the movement of people from rural areas to cities as homes will be built with access to both economic and social amenities people seek in urban areas.

The Indaba resolved that housing delivery will also be supported by job opportunities and building of social infrastructure.

"If we build rural houses with all amenities in line with BNG, those who want to remain in rural areas will remain in rural areas as they will have access to all the things people in the city have," the National Housing Director General, Itumeleng Kotsoane concluded.



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Botswana Housing Corporation evolves into new role-player

Following on from a frank presentation made at the Housing Africa 2007 conference held in South Africa during April, the Botswana Housing Corporation's (BHC) chief executive officer, Reginald Motswaiso, has maintained the corporation has not abandoned its mandate as outlined by Botswana's Corporation's Act.

Motswaiso, who is known for his honest and direct approach to his task as CEO of the corporation, has acknowledged that the BHC mandate has evolved in recent times to respond to market changes experienced.

He is adamant that this response and redirection has not resulted in BHC losing its mandated focus.

Motswaiso has explained that BHC discharges its mandate against the background of a provision in the Act which calls for the corporation to be self-sustaining and operate on sound financial basis.

Motswaiso further explained that BHC approaches commercial developments as a means towards achieving the corporations' ultimate objective of providing housing.

"BHC mandate is further shaped by other imperatives such as provisions contained in the National Housing Policy, the goals of vision 2016 (as it relates to the provision of decent accommodation for all) and the national Development Plans," he adds.

He maintains the view that commercial ventures are more profitable in the long term and could provide the much-needed funds for the development of houses.

The declaration was inevitable as it follows a barrage of criticism that has been levelled against the parastatal every year-end when its balance sheet registers profits.



Housing In Southern Africa

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The Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, may find the Minister of Housing, Lindiwe Sisulu, knocking on his door with cap in hand in the near future.

This follows his announcement in February that the Housing Budget would receive a R2,7-billion boost over the next three years – effectively taking the total allocation over this period to R32-billion.

Sisulu must have made a note about Manuel's comment that this would triple the current budget allocation as she specifically referred to it in her budget presentation made on 8 June.

The Minister of Housing explained in her presentation that Manuel had commented, when asked to double the Housing Budget, that the Department of Housing was not ambitious in this expectation and that she may now as a result hold him to his statement made in February.

A full report of the Housing Budget is made on page 1 of this issue and it makes for interesting reading.



Innovative construction techniques are beginning to penetrate the local building industry.

We have a number of features in this month's magazine which includes a focus on bricks; kitchens and bathrooms and innovative building.

The innovative building feature which begins on page 10 highlights the significant impact that light steel framing construction is having on the local construction industry.

The Southern African Light Steel Frame Building Association (SASFA), the official custodian of this new industry, held a series of three seminars in May to explore the ins and outs of the construction method. These seminars were highly informative to those who attended. It will be interesting to see just how much this method of building will penetrate the South African building industry in the next 24 months.

Please take note that our features in the July Edition of the magazine will include Roofing; Low-cost housing; Precast concrete solutions; Affordable interior design; Energy efficiency and Site clearing and management.

Should you wish to participate in these features please contact either myself or Jackie Mwase at Tel: (011) 622 4770 or email housing@crownc.co.za or jackiem@crownc.co.za

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Corobrik and CETA build on skills training in Eastern Cape and KZN

Corobrik and CETA plan to join forces in a new nationwide skills upliftment programme to train artisans in bricklaying skills. The first intake of trainees will have instruction at the Corobrik Training Centre in KwaZulu-Natal.

"Over 1 000 people have so far been trained in three accredited Corobrik training centres in Gauteng, Western Province and KwaZulu-Natal, and this number will increase with the introduction of CETA-funded trainees," says CETA managing director Teboho Thejane.

Under a formal agreement signed between CETA and Corobrik, CETA will fund the training of candidates in bricklaying and paving at the Corobrik training establishments.

"Bricklayer training is part of our responsibility to community upliftment and empowerment," says Berkley Petty, Corobrik human resources development manager.

"We realized a long time ago the need to assist society by offering essential training skills in the industry of which we are a part."

"The skills development imperative is nothing new for Corobrik," says Thejane.

"It opened its first training centre back in 1995, its second in Western Cape in 1998, and the third at the Corobrik factory in Midrand in 2003."

Thejane says CETA's association with Corobrik fits in neatly with the CETA concept of Construction Centres of Excellence (CCoEs), envisaged as a nationwide network of skills development centres where candidates can receive training in

construction industry skills such as bricklaying, tiling, painting and carpentry.

"The inclusion of paving in the skills being taught at Corobrik's KZN facility is of particular importance," says Thejane.

"Unlike other construction skills, no formal qualifications are required for paving. One usually just picks up skills as one goes along, and anyone with a bakkie, a wheelbarrow, a few workers and a set of tools can set up in business as a paving contractor."

Petty is delighted at the prospect of CETA support, which would enhance the viability of the Corobrik training centres, which have played an important role in helping to channel badly needed artisan skills into the construction industry in recent years.

One notable Corobrik initiative was training for a Western Cape organization known as "Man by the Side of the Road" in which 12 'raw' trainees were picked from where they were sitting at robots looking for jobs to take part in a bricklaying training course. The Department of Labour, and other institutions, also chipped in with funding for tools and equipment, a daily travel allowance and a meal for each trainee.

Five learners from the rural Bizana area have recently graduated after completing a nine-week CETA approved Bricklaying Course at Corobrik's Avoca Training School in Durban.

"It is rewarding that the good reputation of our school is spreading. These delegates 'insisted' they wanted to be trained at Corobrik's Training Centre and



The graduates of the Corobrik Training course that was run at the Avoca Training School pictured after their graduation (from left to right): Back row – Bongani Mthembu, Themba Teto, Mbulelo Madula, Nkosikhona Fumba and Sonwabo Songca, the Building Controller at the Bizana Municipality. Front row – Andile Bhomela, Representative of Bizana Municipality, Corobrik instructor Derek Dimba and Khuthala Pepu.

successfully approached the Municipality of Bizana in the Eastern Cape to sponsor some of their expenses," says Petty.

"This is a real case of the business-public partnership in action" adds Petty.

Members of the Municipality attended the graduation ceremony.

Mr Songca, the controller of Building at

the Bizana Municipality says that the five graduates would all be employed to construct houses for the people in the area.

"In fact Mr Songca explained that there is so much work that they will be sending more people to be trained at the Corobrik Building Training School," highlights Petty.

Brick and block machine manufacturer sees in 28th year of business

Doubell Machines & Equipment (DME) manufactures and exports brick-making and block-making machinery, as well as allied equipment.

For many years Doubell Machines have been a prominent and integral part of South Africa through the helping of community upliftment and social improvement by empowering disadvantaged people.

For a small cost that Doubell Machines has kept as low as possible for many years, people can purchase a brick or block making machine that can be used to generate income, build a home and help remunerate a community.

What makes the company's product so attractive is that they have widespread

appeal to some who is looking to build or extend a house, an entrepreneur looking to make an additional income or a government department looking to accelerate material production while maintaining a low-cost outlay.

The original company, Doubell Machines, began in 1979 when inventor Clive Ivan Doubell entered the world of brick-making. Exposed to many costly large-scale machines, a need was identified and within a few years, the first prototype of a handheld brick machine was created.

The concept was born from the need for bricks and blocks in the rapidly developing environment of South Africa, where supply was short. It needed to be affordable equipment to allow the average person to make their own bricks with savings of up to 80%.

The idea was that any person could use this Doubell DIY (Do It Yourself) machine to stamp out their own bricks and blocks as needed, without having to wait for weeks for premium priced building materials.

Initially, the DIY method was frowned upon. The idea of a person making their own bricks seemed ludicrous and the market was hesitant. For years, the inventor, Clive Ivan Doubell, flew around the world and gave public demonstrations at trade fairs and shows. He proved without a doubt that these machines could produce bricks & blocks that met any building standard of any country.

It was around 1984 that Doubell Machines launched the Autobloc - another manual brick-making machine, but one that could produce more bricks or blocks at once. This machine was so successful that banks that were previously unwilling to loan venture capital to entrepreneurs starting



The Doubell Jumbo MK II (left) brick machine has a worldwide reputation for being easy to use while producing a quality product. The Doubell Jumbo MK III (right) has built on this reputation through been a larger machine thereby producing more product in the same amount of time. It can accept over 33 different interchangeable moulds as well as infinite custom built moulds that can be made to suit customer requirements. It uses the same basic principles as the MK II and thus has a cycle drop time of around 25 seconds.

their own brick-making businesses were now more open to the idea.

For years to come, the small enterprise brick-making market emerged as a lucrative starting point for entrepreneurs. The bricks could be manufactured at a fraction of the cost to buy at the market price, depending on the availability.

The success of the manual brick-making machine did not come without drawbacks for Doubell Machines - copycats surfaced in South Africa, mainly stemming from ex-employees of the company. The advantage over these companies has been the fact that they produce inferior products and service

and many copy companies have been bankrupted as a result of this.

It was difficult to mimic Doubell's experience in the field that has led to the current design of machinery, as well as reliability and robustness of manufacture. Finally, the streamlined production meant that the selling price of the machine undercut all generic copies in the market, locally and internationally.

At present day, Doubell Machines can be found exported all over Africa as well as around the world. The company has stated that in a few months time it will be ISO 9000 compliant.



The Hyperstat can manufacture stock bricks, maxi-bricks, face bricks, rock-face or patterned decorative bricks. It can produce solid blocks, cavity blocks of all shapes and dimensions, retaining wall blocks, curb stones, lock blocks, deck blocks, face blocks, interlocking blocks, as well as wind-blocks.

Laying a solid foundation

In full support of South Africa's national major objective to empower people through education and skills development, Corobrik, South Africa's largest brick supplier, allocates an annual education and training budget for projects and initiatives both within and outside the building industry.

STAFF We are committed to investing in employee development in order to help maximize their competence and enable them to fully realise their true potential. We are fully committed to the development of all our employees regardless of race, creed, colour or gender and in line with requirements of the

Employment Equity Act we

have placed additional emphasis on historically disadvantaged groups. Our commitment to further staff training and development has led to

the creation of a number of successful programmes like the production management trainee programme, technical training with on-site lecturers, In-Service training, management development through helping to further advanced studies at accredited institutions, employee bursaries, and a continued focus on educational grants for employee's children.

COMMUNITY We also have a commitment to community upliftment and empowerment with priorities in the assistance of education, training and job creation. Corobrik operates three building schools, which not only turn out fine craftsmen but also assist with economic development and job creation. Currently we are pursuing initiatives to train local Cape Town communities to help gear up the Mother City for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Further support in the development of disadvantaged communities is evidenced in the number of educational

facilities, health and community centers that have benefited from our initiatives. Over the years we have often pursued common interests with the architectural profession and in 1988 we were awarded the prestigious SA Institute of Architect's Patron of Architecture Award. For two decades we have also sponsored a competition that recognises top architectural students in South Africa. This commitment helps to promote excellence within architecture as well as contribute to a better-built environment.

ENVIRONMENT We support a number of environment programmes and activities. Corobrik pays

due diligence to mining its raw material in

a sympathetic way on the basis of considered extraction methods and land restoration concepts. Exhausted quarries are not just being returned

to their original state - in a

number of locations whole new eco

systems have been created providing places of solitude with excellent birding and fishing waters. At all factory operations we work hard to support the spirit and word of the Kyoto Agreement, ensuring that the stringent pollution regulations are met. Our environmental programmes also extend to the removal of alien vegetation like Syringa trees, Lantana and Oelander, alongside our commitment to the planting of indigenous fauna and flora.

In staff, community and environment, Corobrik is committed to building the future of South Africa.



For more information on Corobrik clay face bricks, contact your nearest Corobrik Office, e-mail intmktg@corobrik.co.za or visit www.corobrik.com



New facility unleashes potential of manufacturer

AGI Aluminium, a producer and distributor of value-added glass and aluminium components and products such as shower, sliding, folding and hinge doors, mirrors and windows, is benefiting from its newly built manufacturing facility in Roodekop, Gauteng.

"By setting up a vertical integrated supply model, we have created an in-house supply chain that boosts our efforts to be the lowest cost producer in this market segment," states general manager, Dawid Bisschof.

At more than 20 000 m² under roof, the Roodekop site has become the first in the industry to unite four main businesses into one building, namely glass processing, extrusion presses, powder coating and bulk finished products.

With separate distribution outlets near each business unit for trade and retail customers, as well as stockholding facilities that ensure the continued and reliable supply of both production materials and finished goods, Bisschof believes the facility negates the problems that typically face

their industry – that of inconsistent material supplies, long turnaround times and the resulting cost impact.

"We finalised the grand plan for this project in September 2005, moved into the building in April 2006 and are now 75% towards targeted turnover, with the final completion taking place in April this year," says Bisschof.

"The benefits are vast and far reaching," he continues.

"From giving us much greater control over our business as a whole, there will be



The company's Roodekop factory has united four main businesses into one building, namely glass processing, extrusion presses, powder coating and bulk finished products.



An example of one the company's products – a pentagonal pivot shower unit.

Below: The Tile Africa Contracts team recently completed the tiling of the newly built Lenasia Shopping Centre in Johannesburg.

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big cost benefits resulting from the reduced travel and shipping involved. This growth platform will also provide us with significantly increased capacity and allow much shorter delivery times, no matter how big or small the order."

In brief, the glass processing plant cuts and tempers local and imported glass for resale to both the internal process, as well as directly to customers. In the finished products plant, a variety of showers, doors, frames and mirrors are assembled and stocked, while the extrusion plant functions 24/7 to produce aluminium profiles ranging in length between 6 500 mm and 7 250 mm.

Finally, the powder coating plant includes an environmentally-friendly, chrome-free aluminium conversion process which incorporates degreasing, acid pre-treatment and Aludine conversion. The new powder booth can do a colour change in 12 minutes, compared to the 2 hours previously required. AGI Aluminium can now produce 120 000 m² of powder coated aluminium profiles a month, up from 30 000 m² prior to construction of the new plant.

With over 300 employees on site the company is well positioned to continue growing its business and help downstream markets from to develop.

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Light steel framing industry given a boost through seminars



The speakers at the SASFA seminars included from left to right: Alan MacQuoid (vice-president of the European Light Steel Construction Association); Pierre Bourrier (president of the European Light Steel Construction Association); John Barnard (SASFA director); Joe Kondos (national manager: valuation technology for ABSA); Brent Harris (managing director of Vela Steel Building Systems) and Rudzani Mamphaga (NHBRC representative and engineer).

The light steel frame (LSF) building method, which is making a significant impact on the South African market, is presenting a myriad of possibilities and raising interesting questions.

The Southern African Light Steel Frame Building Association (SASFA), the official custodian of this new industry, held a series of three seminars in May to explore these possibilities and to explain and demonstrate the process of the building method.

Dr Alan MacQuoid, vice-president of the European Light Steel Construction Association, provided detailed instruction on the technique and included a step-by-step explanation of the process of erecting LSF structures, based on his more than 40 years of experience in light steel frame building. MacQuoid covered:

Cold steel forming; shapes and profiles including studs, joists and rafters, tracks, U-channels, L-headers, C-shapes, furring and 'Hat' channels; accessories and tools required; fire and sound details; insulation (cavity and exterior); hybrid construction (using other materials in conjunction with LSF); accredited standards and building codes; prescriptive methods and the limits of their applicability; corrosion protection; holes and penetrations in LSF components; wiring; field inspections and floor, wall and roof framing processes.

John Barnard, SASFA director explained that the South African Institute of Steel Construction and Mittal Steel visited several leading world participants in the LSF industry and recognised the potential in the South African market. After liaison with the local industry participants they realised

that the South African market had limited knowledge of the building method. This in conjunction with a relatively low-barrier to entry could lead to poor building practices. As a result it was concluded that a formal building code was needed, and an industry development programme was initiated in June 2006.

The following has been achieved so far in terms of developing and regulating LSF construction:

An interim draft code, based on the approved Timber Code was compiled and accepted in principle by the NHBRC; active support has been obtained from the six major material manufacturers; the Light Steel Framing (SASFA) has been established as a division of the Institute of Steel Construction; a steering committee has been formed as well as technical and training committees with broad industry representation; a constitution and a code of ethics have been compiled and the SASFA website has been established (www.sasfa.co.za).

In order to maintain quality standards in the industry, the following steps are being taken:

The establishment of a SABS National Standard for LSF (based on the Australian model); the compilation of a quality checklist for builders; the establishment of an accreditation scheme for SASFA members; the introduction of training and education and the creation of an advisory service.

According to Barnard's presentation, at the end of May 2007, in terms of industry capacity there were:

18 profiling machines in the country operated by 14 profilers; these 14 profil-

ers have a combined capacity of 29 million linear m/year of light steel framing sections – they could process 25 000 t of steel per year which is enough for 1,65 million square metres floor area of LSF; 60% of current capacity is for trusses only and 40% for complete building systems; capacity is spread throughout the country (27% in KwaZulu-Natal, 18% in the Cape and 55% in Gauteng); Importantly – 83% of profiling capacity belongs to registered SASFA members while the estimated total for homes constructed using the LSF method this year is estimated at 3 000.

Brent Harris, managing director of Vela Steel Building Systems spoke at the seminar about LSF construction from a business perspective.

He said that adopting this technique would be beneficial in the South African market for many reasons.

"With the recent property boom, there has been an increase in building activity, but a shortage of materials and a lack of wet-trade skills, along with inflated prices. In addition, the government is experiencing a housing delivery backlog and banks have been mandated to spend R42-billion on housing. Technology is the driving force in all aspect so why not in building?"

Furthermore, Harris stated that this technique is expected to benefit South Africa through the creation of employment; technology advancement; new material requirements; new business opportunities; revenue increase (GDP); the creation of training academies; skills development; delivery of housing, schools and clinics and the creation of export opportunities.

Harris identified the following sectors in

which LSF building would be appropriate: affordable to mid-income residential; up-market residential; public sector; low-rise office blocks; light industrial, commercial and retail buildings; roof trusses; internal partitioning and external facades.

According to Harris the main cost reduction will rise from time saving when adopting the building method.

"A conventionally built 300 m² house can take up to six months to build, whereas an LSF house should take less than four months. The quicker turn-around time results in reduced overheads or P&Gs. Efficiencies on site are optimised and more units can be built using the same labour quotient. In addition, there should be reduced financial costs, far less wastage and fewer come-backs," he maintains.

National Home Builder's Registration Council (NHBRC) representative and engineer, Rudzani Mamphaga, discussed the role of the NHBRC, their challenges in housing, and the organisation's viewpoint regarding the LSF system – stating that the LSF building method has been approved in principle by the NHBRC.

A presentation by Joe Kondos, national manager: valuation technology for ABSA gave an outlines of the bank's requirements in approving funding.

"Funding approval is assessed in terms of housing requirements, fitness for purpose, delivery risk, financial risk and quality. Any new building scheme would be assessed on the same basis, he explained.

ABSA has formulated a policy dealing with innovative building methods.

Pierre Bourrier, president of the European Light Steel Construction Association discussed steel as a product and the architectural design possibilities of the material. He spoke about the Living Steel organisation and its function and benefits to members.

"Massive global urbanisation has led to major housing and land shortages. In addition, we now have the issues of environmental responsibility, the supply of basic services and the social balance to take into account," he stated.

"LSF building is not a new fad. It is a proven, sustainable, energy efficient and cost effective way of building that is new to South Africa. The method speeds up the building process and offers advantages in logistical costs, reduced wastage and enhanced quality. The local industry is gearing up systematically to provide an alternative way of building in South Africa," maintained Barnard.

Expanded polystyrene building system taken to market by supplier

Expanded polystyrene building system takThe TASS (thermal acoustical expanded polystyrene multi-storey slab system) which has seen growth in the local building sector over the last two years is now being taken to the market by the supplier, Automa Building Products.

The company is perfectly positioned to market this increasingly popular building system through a network of carefully selected licensed consulting structural engineers.

"This innovative TASS multi storey 'rib and block' floor slab system was developed by MRH Consulting Engineers after extensive research into alternative floor slab trends locally and overseas. To date, over 50 000m² of TASS slabs have been successfully installed in the Gauteng area through MRH alone," says Craig Paton-Ash, director of Automa Building Products (ABP).

"By licensing this proven system to consulting structural engineers, specification and control will be under the supervision of qualified engineers. This licensing arrangement also gives the engineering

fraternity the opportunity to re-claim a revenue stream that has been lost to turnkey concrete 'rib and block' system suppliers.

"With the trend towards more thermally efficient buildings, driven by rising energy costs and concerns over global warming, this insulating floor slab allows the reduction of air-conditioning capacity and with it reduced heating and cooling costs. This system also leads to more comfort through the moderation of internal building temperatures.

"From a design and building perspective, the TASS system also conforms with the general shift towards 'rib and block' slab systems. With all system components being lightweight, labour costs are reduced and heavy duty lifting equipment requirements for installation are minimal. This system is also much quicker and cheaper to install than conventional slab systems."

The TASS system comprises a patented expanded polystyrene void former that stays in place and a unique cold rolled lipped channel which acts as the 'rib'. This system is completed conventionally with a

reinforcement bar, mesh and concrete.

Once installed, this floor slab provides excellent thermal and sound insulation.

Ceilings under TASS floor slabs are finished with either a propriety expanded polystyrene plaster system, Polyplast, or suspending ceilings.

TASS blocks are available in four different depths to cater for different slab lengths and free spanning requirements up to 10,5 m.

Automa Building Products focuses on the development and marketing of expanded polystyrene building products and offers a range of building systems from insulated wall blocks,

to under floor and in roof insulating systems, as well as a full range of decorative products.



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