No. 36

Mediclinic Muelmed - Lifespan composite architectural beams

Pretoria, South Africa, 2025

LIFESPAN
COMPOSITE ARCHITECTURAL BEAMS

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PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name
Mediclinic Muelmed

Project Type
Hospital

Description
Exterior façade cladding

Date of Installation
November 2025

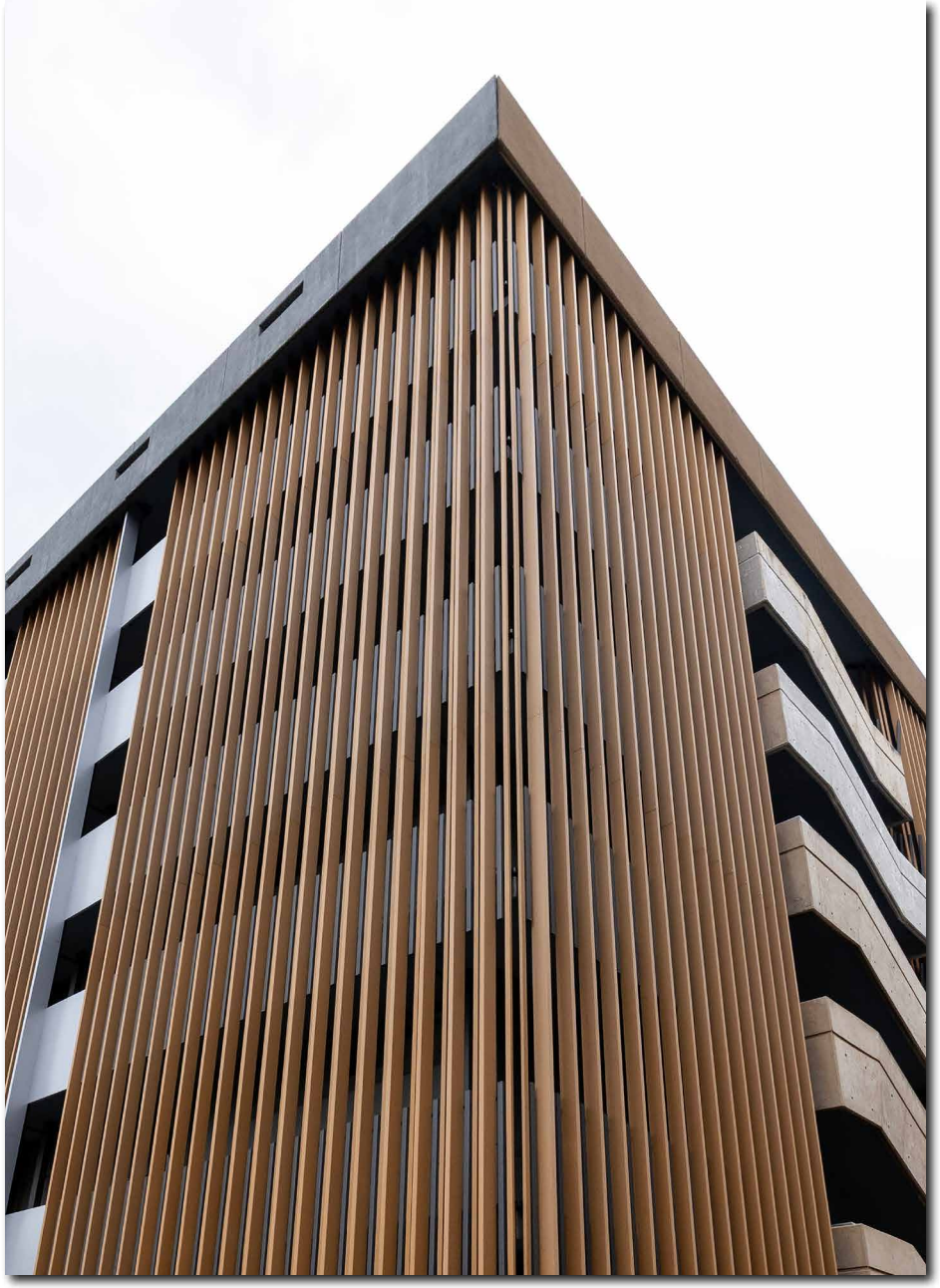
Main Quantity Surveyor
JC van der Linde Venter (Pty) Ltd, Lourens Swanepoel

Architect
Hugo Oosthuizen, Graceland Architects

Size
2115m2

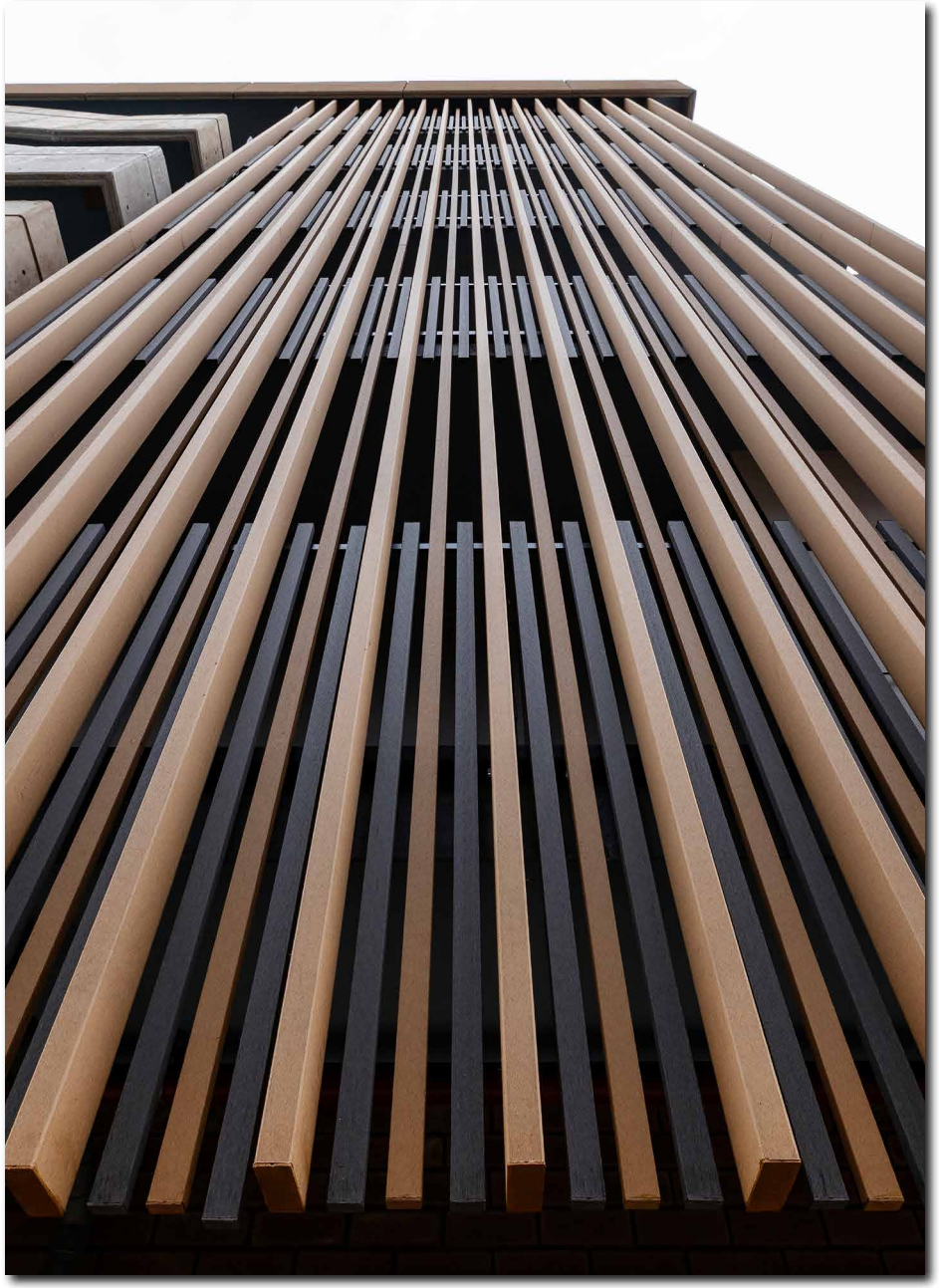
Project Location
Pretoria, South Africa

Product Used
Lifespan composite architectural beams in Savanna & Xavia



MUELMED MEDICLINIC, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

The Muelmed Mediclinic in Pretoria is a multi-disciplinary hospital which opened the first private trauma unit in the city in 1993. The healthcare facility is renowned for its specialist medical care and management believed it was time to upgrade the late 70's modernist or 'brutalist' concrete façade to reflect a softer, more caring, contemporary corporate image. Its heavy horizontal concrete structure with precast concrete stairways and balconies formed an oppressive façade that had started deteriorate and required urgent treatment for a refreshing facelift to redefine the organization's identity.

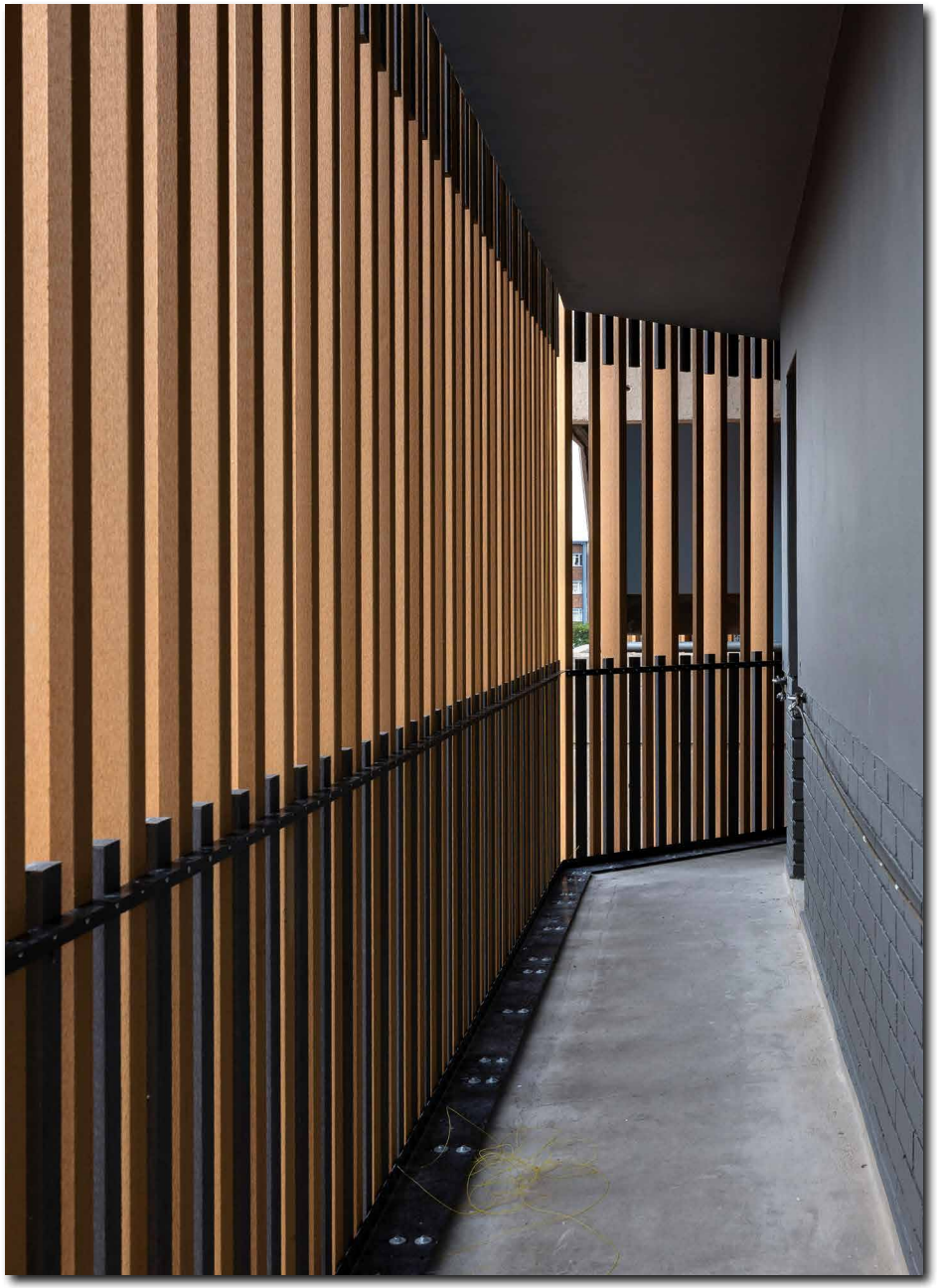


SCREENING FOR A COMPLETE FACELIFT

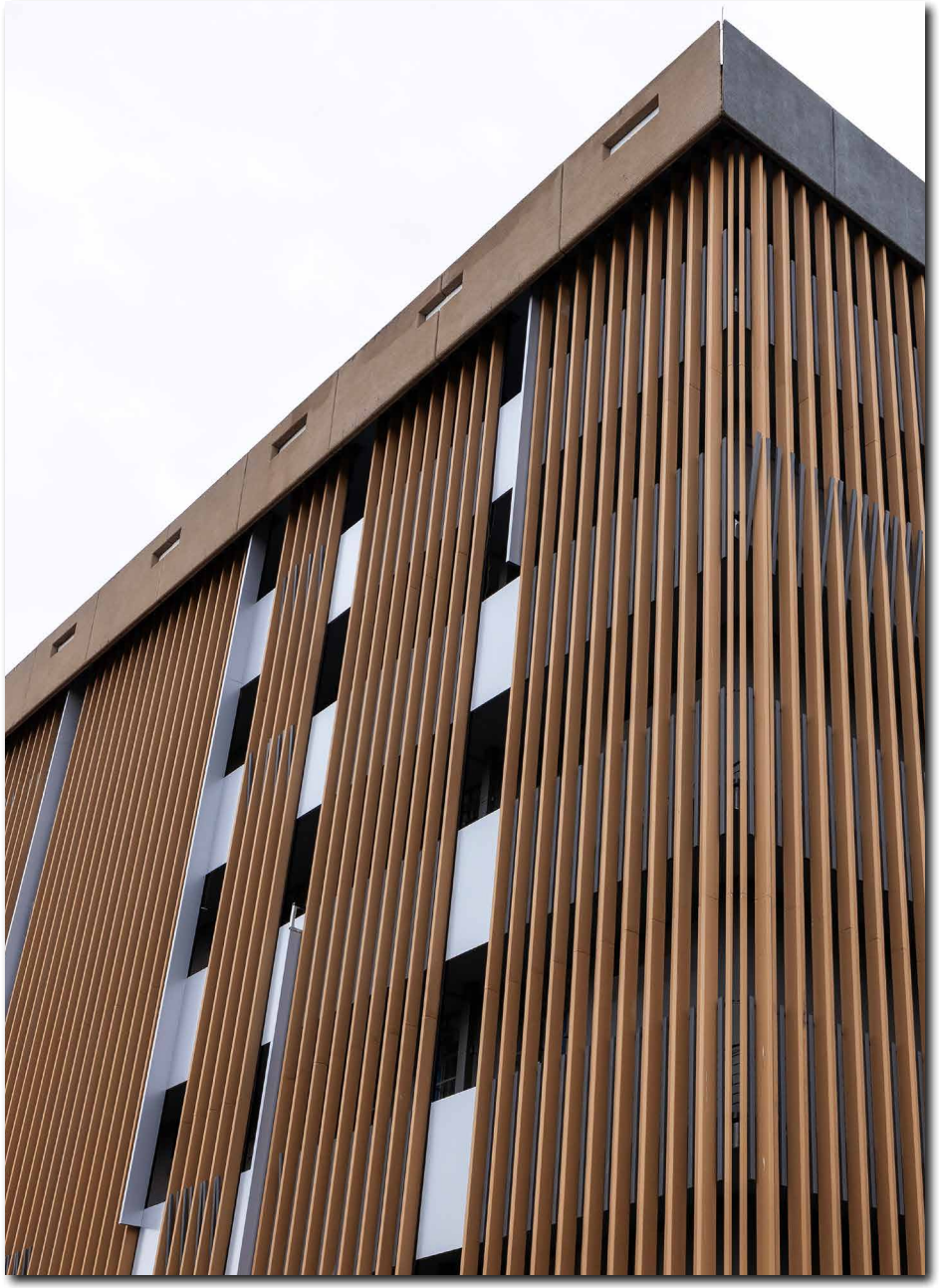
Mediclinic management appointed Hugo Oosthuizen of Graceland Architects to revitalize the building's exterior. Graceland's experience in designing healthcare and natural healing environments conducive to patient wellbeing added a whole new perspective for a complete facelift.

Oosthuizen introduced long vertical slatted screens running from floor to roof, made from lightweight Lifespan bamboo composite beams, in the Savanna colour which gives a light, timber tone effect to the building. This functional but fresh finish draws the eye vertically, away from the heavy horizontal plane and lends a warm, organic element to the cold concrete exterior. In addition, it also hides the casting imperfections of the concrete slabs, providing an unexpected cost-saving benefit for the operation, as opposed to other possible solutions.

Strategically placed Lifespan beams of different sizes, either 150 x 50mm, in contrasting Savanna and Xavia colours in 50 x 30mm, are alternated to create a screening that is not only striking to look at but effectively hides unsightly features such as extractor fans, while enhancing safety on the balconies and providing privacy for patients without obstructing their view.



The screens also provide protection against the sun and wind for enhanced comfort and useability of the space. Even the orientation of individual composite beams was carefully planned – large, long light profiles with the thinner edge protruding followed by two shorter consecutive profiles in contrasting colours with the wider flat surface facing up create clever shadows, depth and decorative designs. Fitted from the first floor to the rooftop, these screens form a unified building envelope. The natural duo-tone aesthetic creates a dynamic visual effect that reads as a solid surface when viewed at oblique angles from afar, while up close, their slatted structure is revealed.



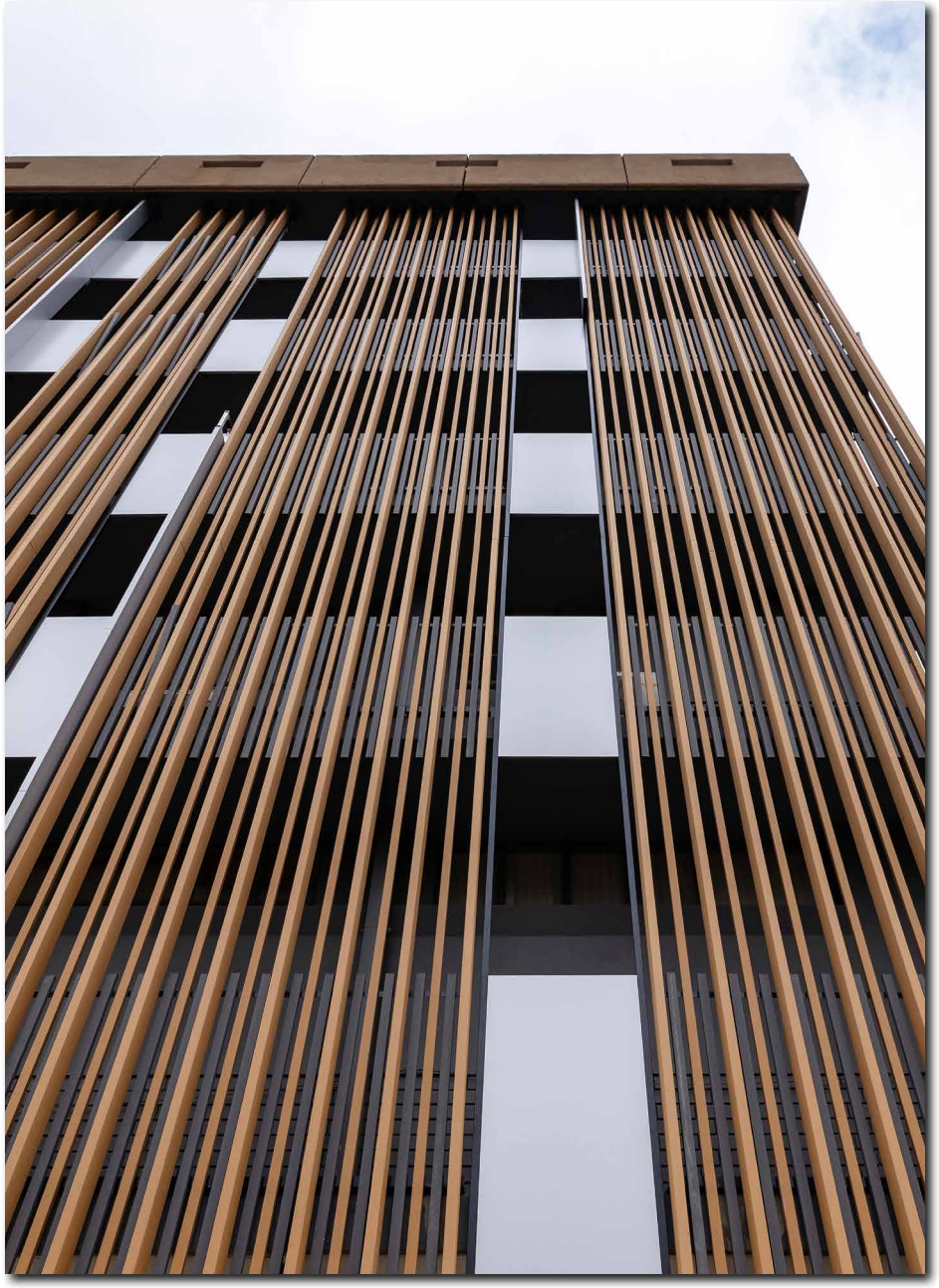
BRACING FOR THE ELEMENTS

The facelift was not only intended to lighten and enhance the exterior, more importantly, it needed to create a façade to meet the demands of the elements without disrupting hospital daily operations. Water run-off on the balconies, rain, heat and UV-exposure can all potentially damage certain materials, and wind tolerance or flex were the most critical factors.

"Our biggest concern was the wind-load that the façade would be subjected to," explained Oosthuizen.

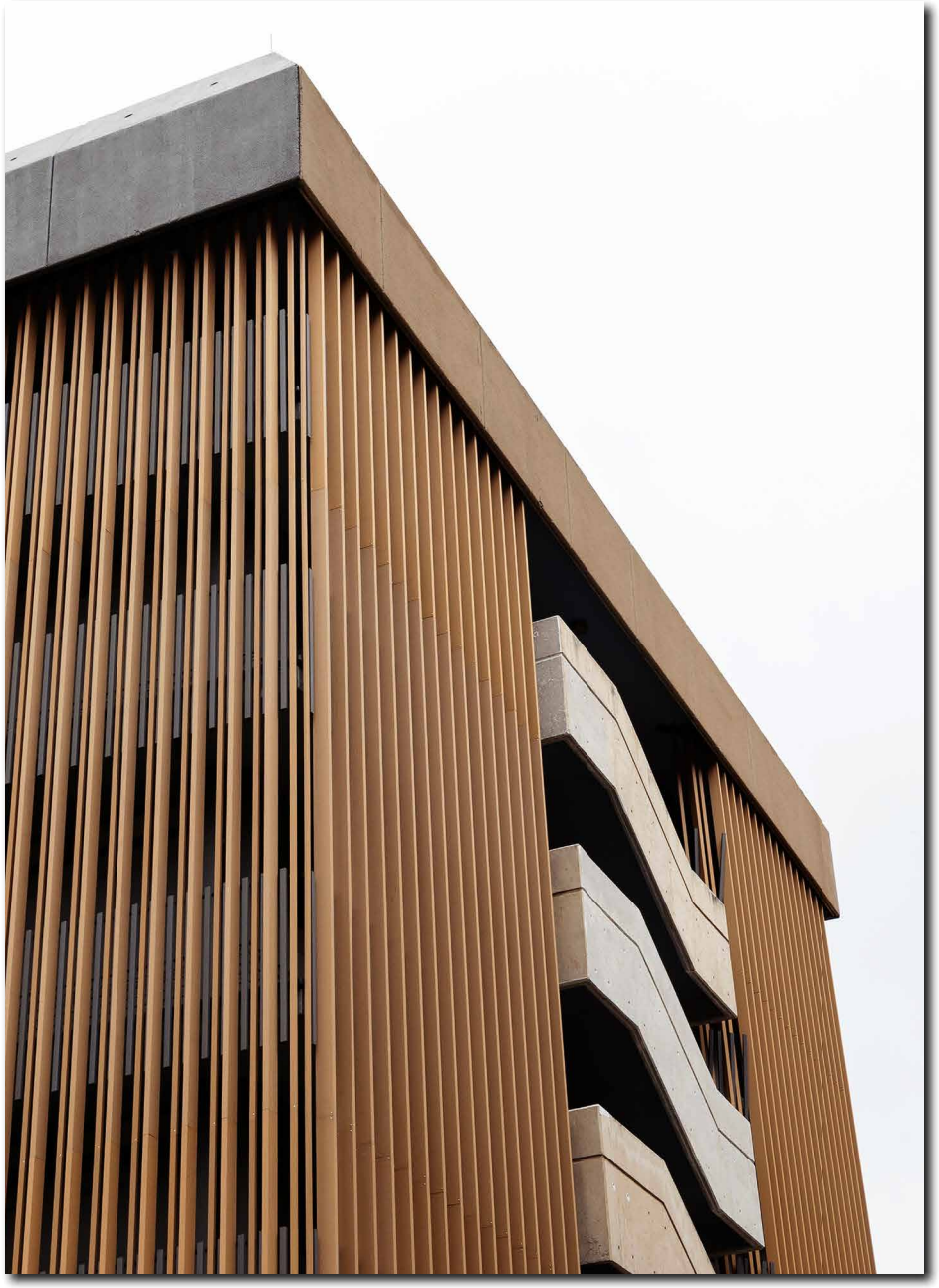
He opted for the tensile strength and lightweight convenience of Lifespan's hollow-core aluminium composite profiles in 5.8m lengths. These could be securely fastened to a bracket on the underside of each concrete slab across two floors at a time, ensuring an almost-flawless timber texture with no obvious joints and fastenings.

"After careful calculation and consideration of material tolerance and installation guidelines, I was confident they would tolerate the stress and withstand any expansion and contraction on the concrete sub-structure," he added.



KEY INFLUENCER QUOTE

"By using Lifespan architectural beams from Eva-Last we managed to adapt to the challenges of this concrete construct. We were able to combine the versatility of the composite profiles and utilize the confines of the concrete to our advantage and still achieve our goal of softening the lines on its face without compromising on safety, longevity or attractiveness," explained Hugo Oosthuizen of Graceland Architects.



SUMMARY

Muelmed Mediclinic needed a complete facelift to soften the harsh horizontal lines and brutal block shape of the building's exterior. Lifespan's lightweight aluminium-reinforced profiles added attractive natural timber tones and texture forming duo-toned decorative vertical screens that enhanced and reinforced the facility's appearance as well as safety and functionality.

ABOUT US

Eva-Last is a globally reputable brand that utilises a solution driven business model to create innovative, sustainable building materials and systems that add value to customers' lives. At the heart of Eva-Last is a team of highly capable, creative specialists united by a passion to promote environmental consciousness through eco-friendly building products and operations. By embracing low environmental impact manufacturing and cutting-edge composite technology, Eva-Last is revolutionising how building can be done. We design and deliver beautiful, long-lasting green alternatives that make our customers' lives easier, healthier, and just plain better.

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