



Lighting for an atmosphere of comfort and ease

by Anthony Tischhauser, Pamboukian lightdesign

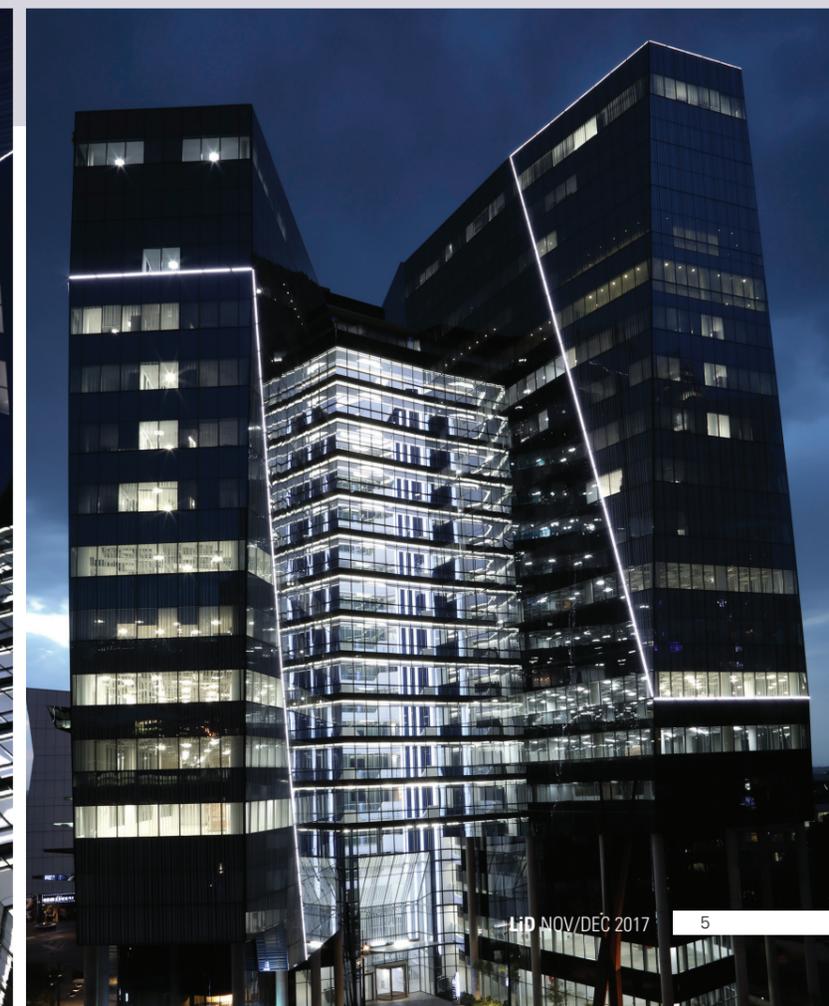
Alice Lane III is the final of three building complexes designed by Paragon Architects that surround and form a new 'green lung' and piazza in Sandton. Phase III, corner Alice Lane and 5th Street in Sandton, Johannesburg, comprises multi-tenanted office space and retail space at street level, with several cafes and restaurants.

The lightly terraced public space or piazza between the buildings links the three individual complexes that make up the Alice Lane Precinct on what was originally a steep site. It exploits the interstitial qualities that had been generated by the surrounding buildings (rather than enclose) to make the best of Johannesburg's fine climate. This

generous public gesture was planned with foresight from the outset and taps into the buildings at different heights, but always at 'ground level.' Phase II was opened in 2016 and Phase I in 2013. It houses Virgin Active's classic Alice Lane Health Club on the corner of 5th and Fredman Drive (see *Lighting in Design* 11/13).

With no residential space far and wide, the piazza is hailed as a counter-contribution to Sandton's hostile treatment of the pedestrian. It is the second public space, bar Mandela Square which is tucked away, in the confusing monolithic Sandton Shopping Centre built with its back to the would-be pedestrian and the motorist too. Alice Lane Piazza

Photographs by Natalie Payne.



of course serves corporate staff primarily, but it is destined to generate night life with its inviting atmosphere and beautiful evening views to the hills in the south. There is no doubt that it will become a favourite spot once Sandton eventually starts installing pavements and pedestrian ways.

Abland, the client, commissioned Pamboukian lightdesign to design the exterior lighting for Phase III. Planned on an H-like plan with the higher of the two towers, 18 stories on 5th Street, it occupies a key position on the Sandton skyline when viewed from afar and especially from the not too far off lower lying William Nicol Drive, a busy arterial road.

The inner lying tower is 16 stories high. This slender feature the clients wanted emphasised. They also wanted the viewer's attention bought to the two types of external glazing employed.

The fritted glass for sun control would be washed by horizontal LED strips supported on brackets fitted between the glass panes. The other glass panels are clear vision elements both designed to balance light control. Linear graphic LED strips mark the joints between the two. Owing to the gentle geometrical angling of the surfaces, at night the lines communicate the sculptural quality of the carved block-like towers and send signals

into the night sky. The surface wash was omitted for reasons of budget and complexity of installation.

The two towers are linked by an 18 storey entrance atrium. Over a cup of coffee with the architect, Paul Pamboukian sketched a lighting concept for the atrium which was executed by others. The floating but stacked horizontal sails of soft light and the irregular coves convey an atmosphere of ease and comfort, especially against the undisturbed sky.

The piazza, which extends under the buildings, is not flood-lit but given a feel of light filtering through trees. It complements the shadows of the trees by day. Nine metre high custom-made poles give the

necessary throw required to achieve the mottled gobo-effect and the custom made Linnebach Lanterns are cable-supported at 3.5 m.

The main approach to the piazza is from Alice Lane. A tall steel sculpture, Synapse, by Marco Cianfanelli marks it and the street entrance to the buildings. The steep flight of stairs from 5th Street, though closed at night, was turned into an artwork by Lorenzo Nassimbeni. Landscape architect Karen Marais designed the sculptural water feature which adds charm to the piazza. The sparkle of the trickling water at night adds to this truly urban privately owned public space. LID

