

SCHALK BURGER'S

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IN AFRICA

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New nurses' homes and doctors' apartments for St Apollinaris Hospital

The 155-bed St Apollinaris District Hospital is located at Centocow (originally a Trappist missionary) in Creighton, KwaZulu-Natal. Following a multi-year plan prepared for the facility by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health in 2003, new nurses' homes and doctors' apartments were considered vital to the future longevity of the hospital.

From an early geological survey undertaken of the property, obstacles were heightened for any future development. This being the case, light-steel frame buildings (LSFB's) were proposed and adopted, which formed the basis of this development.

The nurses' homes comprise three 645m² nursing home blocks and a 550m² doctors' apartment cluster. The design is somewhat conventional, drawing influence from the existing hospital buildings dating back from the early 1900's. While LSFB appears to be in its infancy in South Africa, architectural detailing was drawn from as far afield as Florida in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, being interpreted to comply with South African

conditions, building regulations and green building aspects.

As with all projects, success is dependent on the entire team ranging from client, implementation agent, consultants and contractors to local labour. Having been given special provincial permission to fast-track the project, the development bears testimony of what LSFB offers, having the project well on the road to being completed within its 9-month contract period, which is set for 6 November 2011.

Walls & Roofs spoke to Steve Swanepoel, managing director of SMS Designs Architects cc, who played an instrumental role in this project.

Steve says: "From its inception, the urgency of the development was paramount to the outcome of the project." Put by Napoleon Bonaparte: "Victory belongs to the most persevering". Anything is possible. One only needs to educate the public on the merits of LSFB.

By elevating the building platform on piers and building LSFB's on top of a precast concrete slab, development could take place unhindered by the underlying founding conditions and at a much faster pace.

"As for all construction programmes of this nature, the outcome is dependent on the actions of all role players. Participation is vital to the project's overall success," says Steve.

According to Steve, the only minor disadvantage to this project was cash flow. "If one takes into consideration the somewhat shortened contract period with such a construction method, much larger payments needed to be made over shorter periods." Steve further adds that at first this seemed to be a problem, but it was addressed quickly and amicably.

Documentation also plays a massive role in any project. "When working at a pace like this, you need to know what you are doing," he says.

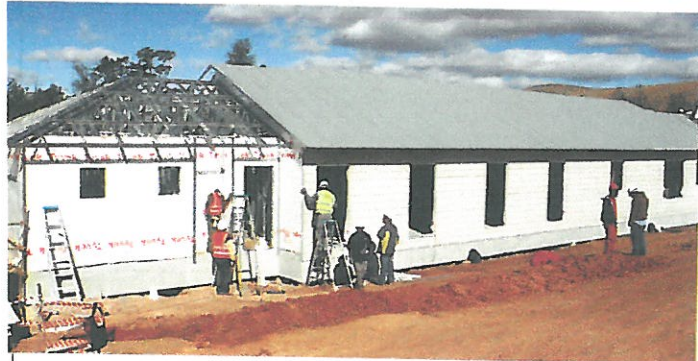
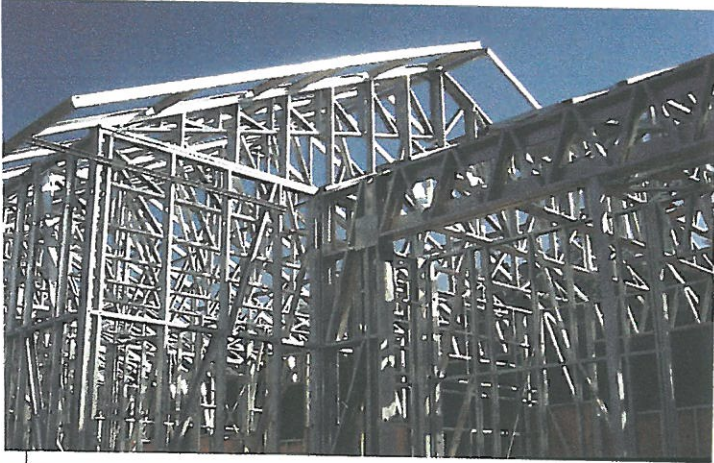
Steve is of the opinion that the benefits of LSFB's far outweigh its disadvantages. "When one considers the floods in Queensland, Australia, in 2010, in a geographical area about the size of Germany and France combined, and considering that buildings suffering the least damage were those of a steel-frame construction built on stilts, LSFB's are on the right track in South Africa. Even the ravaged east coast of Japan suffering from the earthquake and accompanying tsunami in March 2011, bodes well to this type of fast-track construction. The whole framing concept emanated from Florida in the USA in response to tornado disasters, but it was later adopted by both Australia and New Zealand and has developed to what we have available in South Africa today. What South Africans need to understand, is that success can only be determined by the level of the work ethics of its people. If we want LSFB's to succeed in South Africa, we need to work on it."

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Proud to be
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**St Apollinaris Hospital
Nurses Home complex**



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