



# A CULT FAC

**The National English Literary Museum was the first Public & Education (PEB) building in South Africa to achieve a 5-Star Green Star SA rating for its design in November 2013, and it can now add an impressive 5-Star Green Star SA PEB v1 As-Built rating to its list of achievements – a first for the Eastern Cape as well as South Africa.**

**Photography by Rob Duker for Intsika Architects**



# AURAL ILITY



**D**emonstrating ‘South African Excellence’, the project was constructed by the Department of Public Works for the Department of Arts and Culture. The total gross floor area (GLA) is 10 812m<sup>2</sup>, of which 5 851m<sup>2</sup> is office space. Construction started in February 2014 and was completed in June 2016 at a value of R145 million. Solid Green Consulting undertook the Green Star certification process, while Intsika Architects was responsible for the design.

As a cultural facility that houses scriptures of ideas and experiences captured through time, the project is influenced by context and global environmental issues and is therefore of great significance for South Africa and the international Literary sector.

Dr Een Greyling, Senior Project Manager for the Department of Public Works, congratulated the professional team, NELM personnel and WBHO Construction on their outstanding achievement, saying, “With this building, attributes beyond cost, time and quality became key measures, such as the achievement of social objectives through job creation, local SMMs’ and suppliers’ involvement, and the project being accepted by the broader community. Achieving this level of project success demanded a collective effort in producing a fully functional facility for future generations.”

The Museum is situated on the outskirts of a built-up residential area in Grahamstown, and is intended to be an upgrade to an existing park. The design brief called for the building to be a highly functional landmark that would fit the site context and building typology. Accordingly, the architecture takes a sensitive approach with massing and elements responding to the human scale. Key targets of the project are Cultural & Educational Significance, Informative Organization & Design, Social Upliftment, and Limited Environmental Impact.

The development enhances the area by introducing facilities such as a mini-theatre, outside amphitheatre, exhibition area, archives, library, and museum offices. The Museum will not be fenced off, and provides park-like areas for the surrounding community to enjoy. Courtyards and balconies make for enjoyable outdoor breakaway spaces for personnel; and 80% of the occupied areas have views to the exterior.

Located close to a variety of learning institutions and public amenities, which can make daily use of the Museum, the precinct is pedestrian friendly with walkways and bicycle routes. Shower and storage facilities for cyclists are available to encourage non-motorised commuting to the Museum. User health and well-being have been further considered by including large windows to the staircases with views to the surroundings, thereby encouraging occupants to use the stairs rather than the lift.

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