



Housing after the World Cup

CSM started in 1994 when current managing director, Dolf Möhr, was unable to convince his employer to start a specialised housing division. His vision was to cater for the massive housing need in SA.

FOCUSING INITIALLY on providing project management and civil engineering services for mostly government-subsidised housing development, he remembers 1994 as “very hard on family life, but very exciting and promising at the same time”.

Although significant changes took place politically in South Africa, it took some time for role players to catch on, making it a difficult time to start a new firm. During that time, CSM managed to receive approval for South Africa’s very first RDP housing project in Worcester, Western Cape.

CSM grew steadily, with a growing portfolio of successful projects. In 2001, the team welcomed Douglas Ndawonde, now a director, who brought specific expertise with respect to the People’s Housing Process. Subsequently, expansion continued with the inclusion of professionals with a wide range of skills and experience. CSM now boasts experienced professionals in stadiums, harbours, bridges, hotels and offices, to name but a few.

Sixteen years on, with the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup over, CSM is a dynamic, innovative multidisciplinary consultancy involved in various fields in the built environment, with eight specialist disciplines: architecture, civil engineering, construction monitoring, electrical

engineering, project management, property management, quantity surveying and structural engineering.

Other than providing discipline-specific services to a variety of clients, having this array of professional disciplines under one roof is greatly beneficial in all building-related projects. These projects include low-cost housing, government-subsidised rental housing, social housing, upmarket residential developments, as well as hospitality and leisure schemes.

The inclusion of these specialist divisions has brought a new dynamic to CSM that not only strives towards excellence in creating quality infrastructure and building fabric, but brings a holistic approach to housing projects. The architects, for instance, have a focus on, and passion for, creating an environment that not only provides shelter, but also serves as a tangible symbol of social upliftment with an emphasis on the expectations of the end user. CSM strives to raise the bar in terms of the outcome of housing projects.

Housing-development knowledge gained is shared among upmarket residential, mid-range developments, and affordable subsidised and rental housing programmes. As a truly multidisciplinary firm, CSM is in a position to understand and implement different trends,

technologies, planning and design models with the benefit of capacity in construction programmes and costing models.

The full potential of this cross pollination of specialist disciplines has not yet been realised, and will increase as communities’ expectations are informed through their participation in the growing economy. In the landscape of diverse cultures lies a challenge, but through the company’s principles, skills, experience and knowledge, CSM aims to bring quality solutions that will be best measured in the increase in living standards enjoyed by beneficiaries of housing programmes.

Local knowledge, through involvement across South Africa, serves as a platform to understand the societies and cultures within which the company works. This, together with active research and involvement in international forums, places CSM in a position to seek and provide informed and innovative solutions. Archbishop Desmond

BELOW Community residential units, Kwezi, Estcourt, KwaZulu-Natal (2009): The need for more affordable housing within the community resulted in the construction of 1 004 ‘community residential units’ for the Municipality of uMthezi, Estcourt, Kwazulu-Natal. These include one, two and three bedroomed units. All the multi-disciplinary divisions of CSM were involved in the project



COMPANY PROJECTS



ABOVE Proposed Hotel, Pretoria (2010): The project consists of a 100 bed midmarket hotel that will be situated in the diplomatic quarter of Pretoria. CSM Architecture Division is involved in the project



ABOVE Macassar Water Main Link, Macassar, Western Cape (2009): The project entails the construction of a 1.9 km length of 250 mm diameter water main link in Macassar, Western Cape. The route consists of the crossing of a river, an environmental sensitive area and an existing township. CSM Civil and Structural Engineering Divisions were involved in the design of the water main and water crossing structure, and CSM Construction Monitoring Division was involved in contract administration and supervision of the construction



ABOVE Stormwater channel, Drommedaris, Drakenstein (2009): The project consists of the construction of a 1:50 year flood catchment channel for the Berg River that is situated between Paarl and Worcester which is the main feed to surrounding wine farms and vineyards. The construction of the channel was necessary in order to prevent the flooding of the Mbekweni Township as well as the new Drommedaris Development during rainy seasons. CSM Project Management, Civil Engineering and Construction Monitoring Divisions were involved in the project

Tutu pointed out that if South Africa could build stadiums to exacting standards and deadlines set by FIFA, and deliver a wonderful World Cup, then it has the ability to “build beautiful homes for our people”. This is no doubt a thought that has been in the minds of many still waiting for proper houses or other basic services.

Government-subsidised housing in South Africa has a huge emotional connotation as living conditions in most informal settlements are severe. Informal households are likely to lack water, sanitation, durable housing, sufficient living space or secure tenure, or a combination of these indicators. Perhaps the most significant challenge within South African informal settlements is the non-existence or dilapidated state of buildings and infrastructure. Even in areas with

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infrastructure that was previously in good repair, owing to poor or no maintenance, the services have in many places deteriorated to the point that these may have to be completely redone.

With insufficient funding, houses constructed, to a large extent prior to 2007, were not durable and lacked sufficient living space. A large number of developments completed were of a sub-standard quality owing to sub-standard services, poor workmanship and, in many instances, were left unfinished by housing contractors. Government will have to revisit such developments at some stage in the future to demolish and rebuild structures that do not comply with acceptable norms and standards.

Legislation after 2007 has brought in minimum standards, space increases and quality measures that allow “beautiful homes” to be constructed. Government has also placed renewed emphasis on service delivery, specifically in the qualification and experience of municipal officials responsible for service delivery. CSM welcomes the positive impact new legislation and policies are having on our industry.

South Africa has gone through enormous, positive transformation over the past 16 years. Not only have basic services and

housing been provided for millions of South Africans, but shortcomings and mistakes made are addressed.

CSM was one of the first companies to commence with the community residential units (CRU) programme. The CRU programme came into being in 2007 and aims to facilitate the provision of secure, stable rental tenure for lower-income earners. The greatest differences in this policy compared, to previous policies, are that size is not prescribed and a rate per square metre is approved rather than an upfront subsidy amount. The importance of adequate services delivery is stressed, and real emphasis is placed on good property management and a quality product, particularly with regards to future maintenance.

CSM is currently involved in housing projects in major centres across the nation. Clients include the Free State Provincial Government, together with Harmony Gold, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, the Department of Public Works, the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and larger municipalities such as Drakenstein, Mossel Bay, Knysna, George, uMvoti, and uMtshezi, with some smaller municipalities as well.

Quality management is essential in CSM’s operations and allows it to provide high-quality, cost-effective projects. CSM complies with the international code of quality management and is ISO 9001: 2008 certified.

CSM recognises its humble beginning and its roots are firmly set in the transformation objectives of government. CSM is currently a level 4 BBBEE contributor and complies with all BBBEE requirements set by transformation legislation. CSM has a strong social conscience and annually commits time and money specifically to the enhancement of youth in local communities in the form of various sports sponsorships and mathematics assistance for grades 10 to 12.

Internally, CSM complies with legislation and has a detailed skills development programme and continuously provides bursaries to students and learners alike. CSM participates in career days and aims to stimulate interest continuously in studying towards the built environment professions.

CSM exists to build better communities and to see South Africa grow in the 21st century as a leader in Africa and an example to all nations. **35**