

A modern tribute



The Afrikaanse Hoër Seunskool in Pretoria, known as Affies, required a new extension, recently built on what was once a dusty open playground. The extension can be seen as a mix of modern and classical design so, although the original buildings on the grounds are traditional, the addition represents the current school-going generation.

A cafeteria and a first floor learning centre make up a double-storey centre, named 1920 in honour of the year the school was founded. The cafeteria is a stylish, modern area. Apart from being a space for dining, architect Riaan Visser, from +27 Architects, created the area to be multifunctional.

Upstairs is a state-of-the-art learning centre, which acts as a reading and study area with an integrated library and computer centre. After hours the building is used to host both internal and external events. The back of the building, which faces the parking lot, is notable for a custom-designed concrete seating area, which the children use as a waiting zone after school.

The use of brick

While the new structure maintains elements of the 94-year-old buildings around it, Visser wanted to ensure that it

still had a modern twist. “When I started working on the design I took inspiration from the English brick style in the original building, and also followed the initial design with the gables of the new centre.”

Visser says that it isn’t often that facebrick is used in his projects as it is perceived as an expensive material. “Yet the long-term low maintenance issues offset any additional cost,” he notes. Contractor Hansie du Toit from Van Rensburg Building Contractors was awarded the tender for the job primarily because the company had previously demonstrated that they could lay facebricks.

The selected facebrick from Corobrik was used as it was the closest match to the original red bricks used in the other buildings on the grounds, and it complements the red corrugated iron roof

Galvanised aluminium sun screens were positioned to shade the dark aluminium windows of the cafeteria in summer while planter boxes soften the area. The boundary walls were constructed with pillars and wrought iron in the facebrick, while vertical breaks in the wall offer openings to add interest and glimpses of the outside through the walls.