

Precast slabs from Elematic ideal for social housing

Delivering social housing projects for the public sector is different from delivering private sector projects, as deadlines are driven by political imperatives rather than programming. Construction products which can be installed quickly and accurately, like precast hollow core concrete floor slabs from Elematic South Africa (ESA), therefore make a great deal of sense when it comes to meeting those looming deadlines.

ESA is currently supplying some 10 000m² of hollow core concrete slabs to City Deep Green, a social housing project that is currently underway in City Deep, Johannesburg. City Deep Green is being developed by the Johannesburg Social Housing Company, Joshco, and is one of several similar projects that are underway at the moment.

As Gauteng continues to expand and people come to the province in search of jobs, the need for decent accommodation keeps increasing. Many old hostels in and around the city have been converted into social housing to provide accommodation for families coming from other areas, but the shortage has still been dire. The City Deep area in particular has always been a central node for labour and there continues to be a shortage of housing there. As a result, Joshco has been developing properties owned by the City of Johannesburg in the area to create additional rental housing stock. Families earning less than a stipulated income per household then qualify for a subsidy to rent these homes, which will not be sold and will remain the property of Joshco as rental properties.

The Motheo Construction Group – an established BEE construction company, which generates some 90% of its turnover from government work – is the main contractor at City Deep Green. Completion of 328 units is set for May 2015. The project, which is situated on Greatermans Street in City Deep, has been constructed in phases as funding has become available from various donors. The current phase requires the delivery of 220 housing units by June 2014.

Units are being constructed in four storey, walk-up blocks and will be one and two-bedroom homes with basic finishes. Highly engineered raft foundations have been used because of the specific ground conditions on site. These have been followed by structural brickwork and then precast Elematic slabs on three levels. Finally, the structures will be topped by IBR roof sheeting.

John Whiteman of Motheo Construction Group explains that the project engineer specified precast hollow core concrete slabs as they are faster to erect than the traditional cast in-situ concrete floor slabs. “ESA was appointed on its known ability and its price. Quality and efficiency of erection are the deciding factors on a job such as this,” he says. He adds that the accuracy of the slabs and the finish are always good, saying that the slab soffits are neat and the v-joints fit together without gaps, resulting in a good quality, aesthetically pleasing finish.

ESA and Motheo have worked together on several projects before, and are also currently working together on another Joshco project in Soweto, so reliability and an open working relationship have been key to doing business.

ESA manufactures its hollow core concrete slabs at its ISO 9001 accredited facility on the East Rand. “Our in-house engineers ensure that the product specifications meet the correct requirements for each project and the slabs are manufactured accordingly. Dedicated installation teams transport the slabs to site and install them. Our SABS certification assures clients of the quality of our products,” says Craig Webber, director at ESA.

Although labour complications, rain and year-end pressure at the end of 2013 combined to put a great deal of pressure on the team, the Motheo Construction Group and ESA agree that they have worked well to overcome these challenges as a team and to keep the project on track.

Ends

About ESA:

Elematic South Africa (Pty) Ltd manufactures precast hollow core concrete slabs for the South African market. Elematic is a well established international brand. The company was established in Finland in 1959 and has since set up precast production plants in more than 70 countries worldwide. As part of the Consolis Group, which focuses on research and development in cement and precast concrete products, Elematic is backed by extensive knowledge and experience. Elematic South Africa supplies the latest available technology in precast concrete products. Its state-of-the-art production facility on Gauteng’s East Rand is ISO 9001 certified and all its products carry the SABS mark of quality.

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