

## **MARINDA SMALBERGER WINS THE COROBRIK ARCHITECTURAL STUDENT AWARD**

Marinda Smalberger of the University of the Pretoria has won the prestigious Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award for 2007. Her entry is Entitled "Portal to Pretoria, Establishing a Northern Gateway for the City"

Seven finalists from Universities throughout South Africa competed for this award at a function held in Durban on Friday 15 February 2008.

The judges felt that Marinda's thesis had sensitively addressed the revitalization of the Pretoria CBD through the construction of a mixed use public building which would allow retail and commercial facilities as well as offer education and training as well as offices on higher levels.

As the overall national winner she has received R35 000 from Corobrik to add to her regional winnings.

Speaking at the awards ceremony Mr. Peter du Trevou, Corobrik's Managing Director said, "Corobrik is pleased to see how these awards have helped establish the careers of past winners over our twenty one years of sponsorship and how past winners having gone on to achieve further accolades in the field of architecture."

"With growth and development being integral to South Africa's future I am sure this competition will provide this year's winner and future winners a wonderful springboard to their careers."

"We have been duly rewarded by the enthusiasm among students, lecturers and members of the architectural profession for this event. The attendance of so many students at this morning's exhibition of the regional finalists' thesis projects and the Corobrik lecture by Professor Kazuo Iwamura of Japan at the SAIA mini conference has been particularly gratifying."

Corobrik initiated this competition 21 years ago to promote quality design and to acknowledge architectural talent amongst students. Thesis students from Universities and approved Universities of Technology throughout South Africa are invited to submit entries for the various regional competitions and the winners of those go forward to the national competition.

Dr. Reuel Khoza, Chairman of Corobrik who was also present, said, "the architecture of the build environment has a major long term impact on all our lives and this sponsorship affords a platform for intellectual discourse on the kind of architectural solutions and materials that will add true long term value and sustainability to the built environment of tomorrow."

"In the words of Winston Churchill: 'We shape our buildings and thereafter they shape us'."

'Given that much talked about African Renaissance, it behoves us as South African students of Architecture to delve deep into the architectural monuments represented by the giant sculptured stones of Aksum of Ethiopia, the Egyptian sphinxes and pyramids, the Tunisian city of Carthage and the Zimbabwe Ruins, as well as the legacy of the ancient universities of Alexandria of Egypt, Fez of Morocco, Timbuktu of Mali, and Maphungubwe of South Africa.'

"From such a study may spring inspiration for twenty first century architectural designs of similar stature.

On Wednesday 13 February the seven finalists met at the International Convention Centre in Durban, where they erected scale models of their thesis. Judging took place on Thursday 14 February. The finalists individually presented their thesis to a panel of three judges in an hour-long interview during which all elements of the entry were discussed. The judges were Mr Hassan Asmal, President of the South African Institute of Architects, Ms Janina Masojada from OMM Design Workshop in Durban and Mr Babatunde Oluwa, from MMA Architects in Johannesburg.

The judges commented that this year projects show an admirable understanding of real issues faced by local architects and in particular our country as a whole.

During the morning of 15 February architectural students from the University of KwaZulu- Natal and Durban University of Technology visited the venue to view the thesis exhibits and discuss the architectural concepts with the finalists. They also attended the SA Institute of Architects mini-conference.

During the course of the year, the Universities hold their regional competitions paying tribute to their top three students.

“With in excess of two decades of sponsorship Corobrik has demonstrated its commitment to promoting excellence within the field of architecture. And by extension a better built environment for South Africa,” concluded Peter du Trevou. “Through this competition we have forged a strong relationship with the architectural community and assisted in bridging the gap between academic institutions and the architectural profession.”

Marinda Smalberger has won the 2007 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year competition on 15 February 2008. She is pictured with her winning entry “Portal to Pretoria, Establishing a Northern Gateway for the City.”



Marinda Smalberger (centre), winner of the 2007 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year is pictured with Ms Thoko Didiza, Minister of Public Works who visited the Architectural Student exhibition and Mr Peter du Trevou, Managing Director of Corobrik.



Additional information about the winning project.

Portal to Pretoria

#### **Establishing a Northern Gateway for the City**

The lack of orientation and the resulting frustration experienced by the unfamiliar city user, within the illegible Pretoria urban environment, was the urban problem which initiated the investigation. The project is to establish a point of orientation, a departure point when moving into the city. This takes form as a northern urban gateway, located on the corner of Paul Kruger Street [as significant city axis] and Boom Street [as visible natural-urban edge]. A unified design approach, including the provision of various types of public space, is to contribute to a significant sense of place.

The architectural component, as primary investigation of the proposal, is to facilitate user transition into the urban context. As city orientation centre, it informs users of the various public facilities available, assisting a more efficient use thereof. The designed client is proposed as a city vision department, established as public sector partnership within the department of public works. This department will be responsible for enhancing and developing the Pretoria urban character, as locally and globally relevant city.

The city orientation centre is a public mixed-use building. The provision of retail facilities on ground floor generates activity on street and square level. It encourages user movement up into the public facilities provided on higher floors. Here, information centres, training and interactive facilities aim to improve knowledge of public resources and integrate the public sector with its users. The provision of external walkways, which circumference the building, displays internal activity, lending a human identity to the project. This assists in developing an environment, accessible to all, transcending demographics, promoting a distinct urban culture.

This information has been circulated on behalf of Corobrik (Pty) Ltd

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