



The Silo Hotel, Cape Town

Silo Hotel – Cape Town

Project name & location

Silo Hotel – Cape Town

Project details

Building Type: Hotel Building

Building Size: 5 500m²

Project Dates: March 2014 – March 2017

Project sector/s: Hospitality Sector

Professional team

Architects: Thomas Heatherwick – International
Rick Brown Architects – Local

Contractor: Scheltema



Project description

An extraordinary hotel setting a new standard in luxury travel with nothing quite like it in the Cape Town city skyline. The Grain Silo Hotel, with its unusual glass-bubble façade, is a towering landmark in the heart of the V&A Waterfront. The cylindrical silos have been converted into a functional space designed to experience the volume from within.

Project background

Due to the unique architecture of the silo, the rooms are more spacious vertically than horizontally. The space is enhanced with the ingenious design of the pillowed window bays, which bulge outward as if gently inflated. By night this transforms the building into an illuminating beacon in the harbour offering a rather unique experience to hotel guests. A combination of eclectic and contemporary interior features balances the stark industrial style of the architecture with aspects of classic glamour. By virtue of its size and special location, guests can expect the highest standard in luxury boutique accommodation.



From 1924, the grain silo operated as an international trade and export facility for nearly 80 years. Towering over the mixed-use V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, the hotel building is one half of a former grain silo which has been renovated to provide a unique experience for guests. This heritage structure required careful building renovations to retain its cultural significance and original features.

The hotel is accommodated within the grain elevator portion of the building where grain was once lifted. With six-floors and 28 individually decorated rooms across seven categories, the elevator tower has been magically transformed into a luxury space

Client brief and what makes this project unique:

The building required materials that would support unique construction specifications therefore light weight high-strength wall and ceiling materials that are visually appealing and add practical value were used.

Privacy within rooms, safety of guests, aesthetic appeal and reduction in maintenance were important features that were considered when specifying materials for this project. 15 different types of plasterboard were selected to provide the best solution for the hotel and Gyproc lightweight solutions were selected based on their sustainability, acoustic, fire resistance and thermal properties.

The materials and products specified for this luxury hotel resulted in an end-product which is not only sustainable, but encompasses the safety and comfort features it sets out to achieve. The unique window design provides enhanced views from the various suites and transform the upper part of the building into a glowing beacon at night.



Saint-Gobain products and systems used



Acoustic Insulation/Gyproc Acoustic Rigitone - 63dB (decibel) sound rating

- Study and private restaurant
- www.gyproc.co.za/systems/ceiling-systems/gyproc-acoustic-board



Excellent Surface Finish/RhinoLite Creststone Plaster - Smooth, seamless surface, ready to receive decorative treatment

- All rooms
- www.gyproc.co.za/systems/plaster-systems/skimming



Moisture Resistance/Gyproc Moisture Resistant - Water resistant

- Bathrooms
- www.gyproc.co.za/systems/wall-systems/gyproc-water-resistant

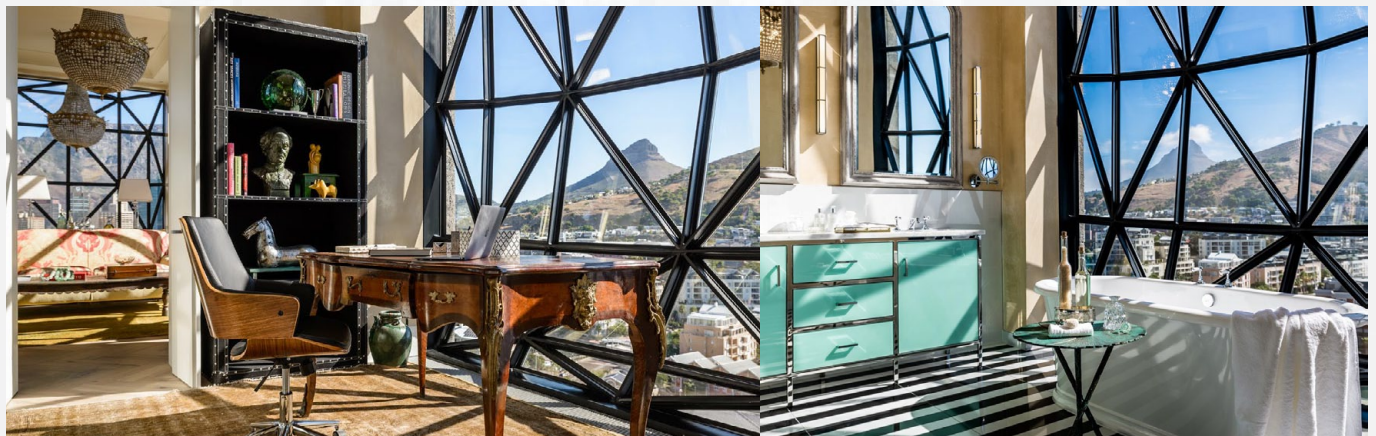


Fire Protection/Gyproc Fire Rated - 60 minute fire protection between floors

- All rooms
- www.gyproc.co.za/systems/ceiling-systems/gyproc-fire-rated

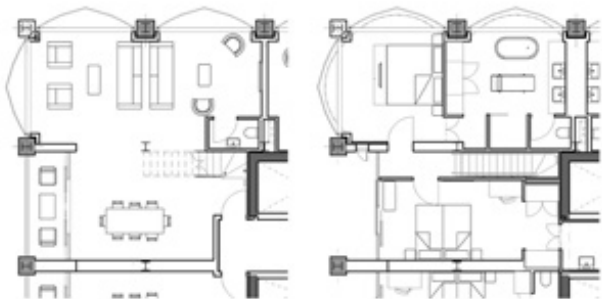
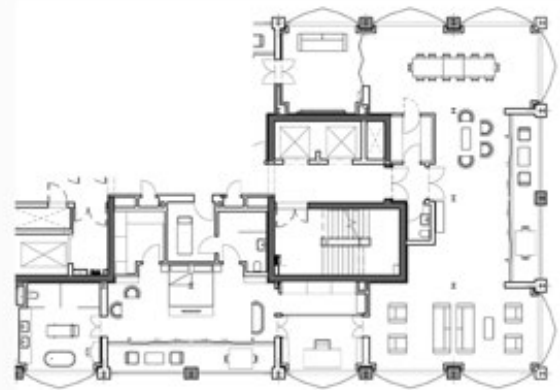
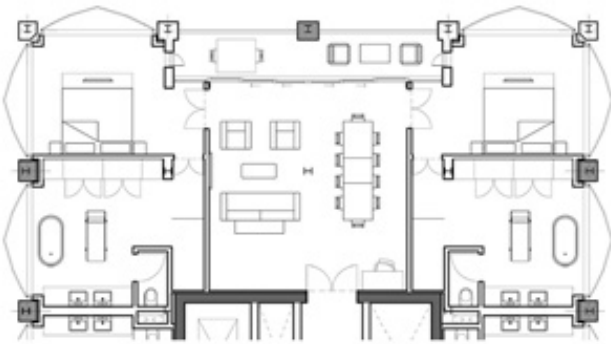
Key design challenges and elements

- ▶ Acoustics and light are the dominating elements in this project. The challenge was to allow maximal use of natural daylight using an unusually large funnel and integrating artificial lighting to complement natural light. The design however also had to provide an excellent level of acoustic performance in a challenging large open plan structure with high windowed ceilings. In addition to a combination of acoustics, sound absorption and light, there was particular emphasis on architecture and functionality to meet the rigorous project standards.
- ▶ The original Grain Silo building was a heritage site and because of this the developers at the V&A Waterfront required materials that would support the building's unique construction requirements.
- ▶ The project called for lightweight yet high-strength wall and ceiling materials that would enhance visual appeal while adding practical value.
- ▶ Challenging services specifications with push button window blinds, placed behind the bulkheads required intricate installation.
- ▶ Plastering at height provided a challenge which resulted in slow installation and safety considerations.

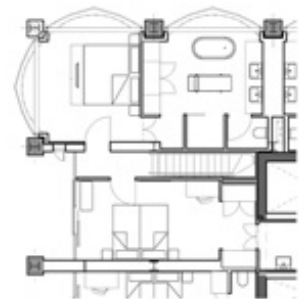


Key features on this project:

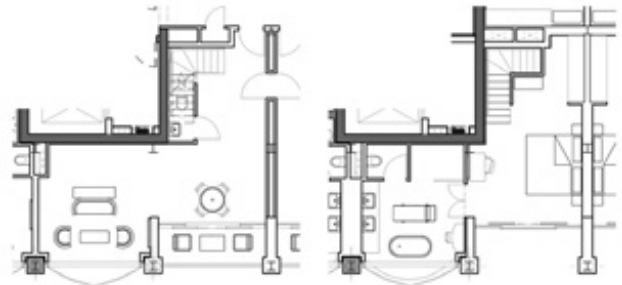
- ▶ The structure has two parts: the elevator tower, and the actual storage silos themselves.
- ▶ The hotel is sited within the tower and the biggest visible change to the original structure is the addition of glazing, which has been inserted into the geometry of the hotel floors. These pillowed panels bulge outward as if gently inflated.
- ▶ Amenities include a spa with five treatment rooms, a manicure and pedicure area, a sauna and a gym that rivals most.
- ▶ The rooftop restaurant and swimming pool on the sixth floor make for an exceptional guest experience.



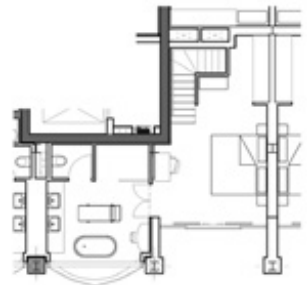
Level Z



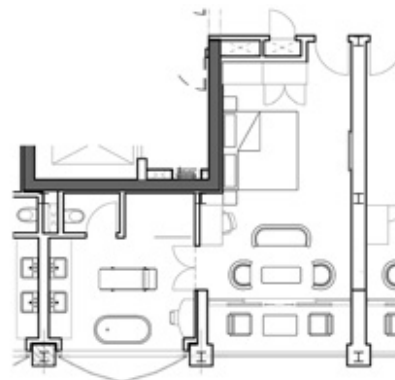
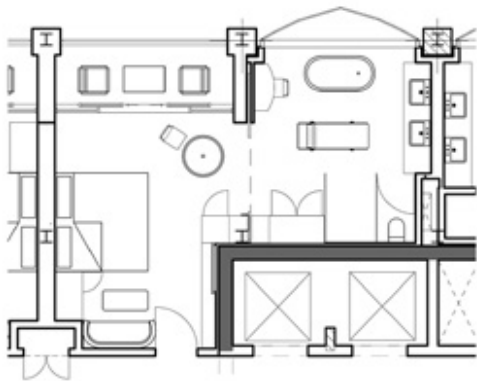
Level 7M



Level Z



Level 7M



Key achievements using SG solutions:

- ▶ The method of creating space by stripping parts of a building away was a new but welcome challenge for all involved. Because this project involved part deconstruction and part archaeology all teams had to work in collaboration to bring their experience and expertise into the finished hotel.
- ▶ The teams had to ensure that the building adequately reflects its history and surroundings, so designed the building around what was already there. This was done by chipping away at the original structure, revealing its bones and carving out spaces within the original building to show its history.
- ▶ Designing with the existing frame in mind resulted in bulging 56-panel windows which are a visual interpretation of the immense pressure of the grain that once filed the silos.
- ▶ Gyproc products are made using less water at factory level and require no water on site, which was a meaningful advantage considering the drought in the Western Cape region.
- ▶ The time and money-saving benefits of drywall construction was highlighted and there was a 17.5% structural cost saving as well as a significant time saving component resulting in the project being completed three months earlier than anticipated.
- ▶ Specifying the right materials for this extraordinary luxury hotel resulted in an end-product which is not only sustainable, but encompasses the safety and comfort features it sets out to achieve.

