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RADISSON BLU

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uMhlanga

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
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INTERIOR DESIGNER
Source IBA

MAIN CONTRACTOR
WBHO Construction

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY
Grant Pitcher

INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY
Patrick King

The exterior is clad in an azure blue performance glazed curtain wall, mimicking the colour of the ocean.

The uMhlanga precinct is a rapidly developing urban node which is endowed with an excellent and vibrant pedestrian environment lined with al fresco restaurants and entertainment venues; all in close proximity to the beach. uMhlanga is a truly unique environment and the best location KZN has to offer. The Oceans site is located at the gateway to this precinct, 100m from the ocean's edge.

The Radisson Blu is positioned at the pivotal focal point of the development bounded by Lighthouse Road and Lagoon Drive.

Brief

The brief from the client was to design an iconic building of high architectural sophistication; a landmark building reflective of the precinct's place as a premier destination. The hotel was to comprise 207 hotel rooms, 90 serviced apartments and ground floor reception area as well as a coffee shop. The podium was to contain all hotel service areas, restaurant, bar and sub-divisible function rooms with associated break-away spaces and caucus rooms. The hotel's podium was to provide a direct link into the state-of-the-art shopping centre. Integrated parking and drop off zones were to be provided. All rooms were to take advantage of the beautiful sea views.





signature
RESTAURANT

Radisson



Design Concept

In response to the brief, the architects sought inspiration in the context to generate the form and texture of the building. Inspiration was taken from the ocean itself, the azure blue East Coast sea, the fluid forms of water and waves, the sinuous nature of fish and the natural rhythm of the beautiful Durban sun in its journey across the skies. These were the inspiration from nature. From the technologies of the sea they took inspiration from sleek ocean-going yachts and the form and shapes needed to navigate the oceans.

The building plan form follows on with a curvilinear, fluid aesthetic which permeates the rest of the development - notably the shopping centre and yet to be constructed twin apartment towers. The Radisson Blu is housed in a stacked curvilinear tower 27 storeys in height.

Levels 1-7 are the podium which houses all the hotel reception and public spaces including a pool deck at level 7. Levels 8-16 comprise of the 207 hotel rooms in various configurations, stacked in plan around an internal circulation core, thereby facilitating maximum view potential for the rooms. Levels 17 to 26 comprise of 90 one and two bedroom apartments with continuous wrap around balconies. Level 27 houses two spectacular penthouses. The apartments are accessed separately at ground level with two dedicated panoramic glass lifts housed in a measured slot on the west façade.

Façade

In keeping with the desire to create a modern and sophisticated form, the exterior of the structure reflects a very limited material palette and is





precise and seamless. The exterior is clad in an azure blue performance glazed curtain wall, mimicking the colour of the ocean. It allows uninterrupted views from inside and reflects its setting as well as providing varying moods through its curved and faceted application during different light intensities.

The form is consistent in its entirety, with a solid, translucent seamless base housing the hotel component and slots cut out facilitating the balconies of the apartments above. This reductionist approach creates a solid legible tower devoid of applied decoration, expressive in its clarity of form and texture. The western façade houses the panoramic lifts to the apartment and is clad in aluminium panels, forming two 27 storey high blades reinforcing the solidity and gravitas of the building's form. This provides a visual anchor to the otherwise transparent, reflective primary form of the tower.

Interiors

Through the development of the hotel the client wanted to bring an atmosphere of glitz and high end glamour to the beachfront resort location, which uMhlanga had not really experienced before.

Interior Design firm Source IBA was guided by standards set by Radisson Blu, which included the use of the Radisson Blu blue and certain pieces of furniture, but each hotel under the brand retains an individual aesthetic influenced very much by location. As uMhlanga is situated on the coast with beautiful beaches and has always been a popular holiday destination, the palette and look and feel of the hotel incorporates the coastal and oceanic tones and textures. The hotel, as part of

the greater Oceans uMhlanga development, aims to elevate uMhlanga to the next level.

The design concept is inspired by the idea of moving through the different layers of the ocean and what you might encounter during that journey. The colour palette moves from the depths of the ocean with its rich, dark colours, up to the surface level which is typified by brighter colours and sunlit tones.

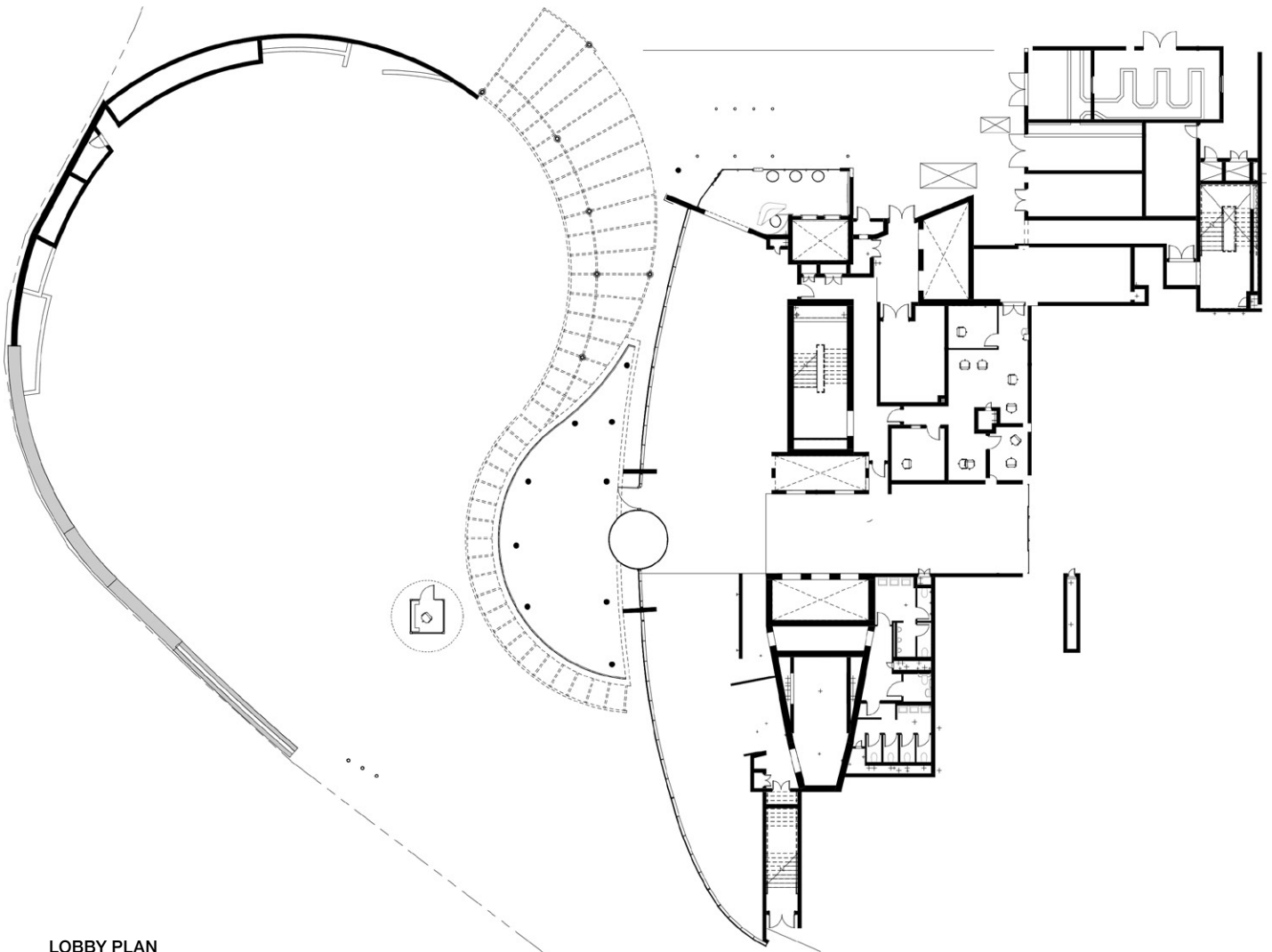
The design concept identified six levels of the ocean and translated that into the design language for various areas within the hotel. For example, the point of entry through the porte-cochère begins as a light and bright, sunlit area and the colour palette then moves through a graduation in tones up to the restaurant on level six, which consists of darker colours and deeper coppery highlights. Layered onto the calming base palette of neutrals





are darker accents along with metallics, glass and marble. The extensive use of art throughout the hotel also serves to add another layer of tone and texture to the design concept. For example, a striking installation of jellyfish hangs from the ceiling in the double volume space of the lobby. Another striking feature of the lobby is the layered timber slatted screens that drop from the ceiling, echoing the curves of the waves upon the shore.

The hotel room designs are influenced by the colour and textures of the shoreline. The pops of colour echo the Durban area's lush tropical vegetation and are emphasised by the choice of wallpapers and dark tiling in the bathrooms. The rooms have a luxurious feel, emphasised by the stunning ocean views. Curvaceous furniture pieces and rugs echo the organic nature of the shoreline theme.



LOBBY PLAN



Sustainability

Every hotel room and apartment has access to natural lighting and ventilation in addition to a fully functional, partitioned HVAC system.

Climate control is via a centralised energy efficient plant that balances the production of cooling medium during low electrical consumption times. These systems are linked to a BMS which controls the optimal functioning of all mechanical and electrical components in the building. A heat transfer system also assists in providing hot water which is stored in tanks. The hot water system is balanced, allowing for a constant circulation of hot water via insulated

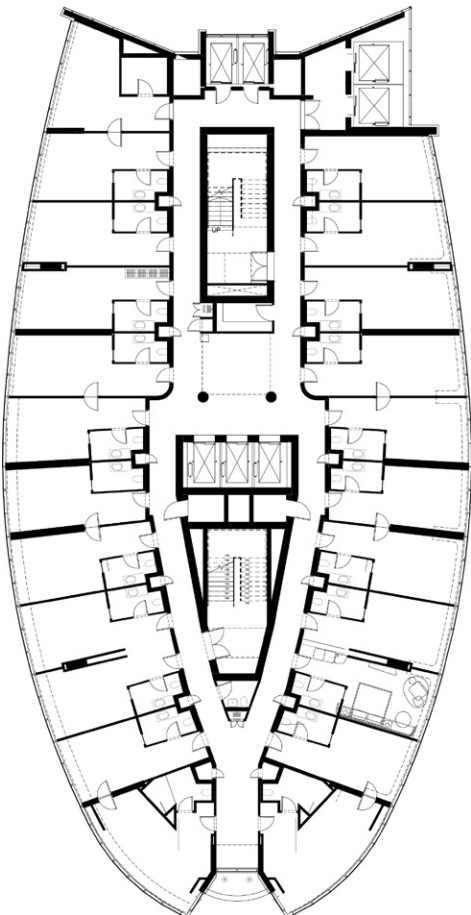
pipes, thereby reducing hot water lag and consequential wastage of cold water.

All light fittings are high efficiency LED's. Water efficient fittings are used throughout the building, resulting in a calculated saving of 28%. The building is designed to achieve an energy consumption efficiency of over a 42% saving when compared to a notational building.

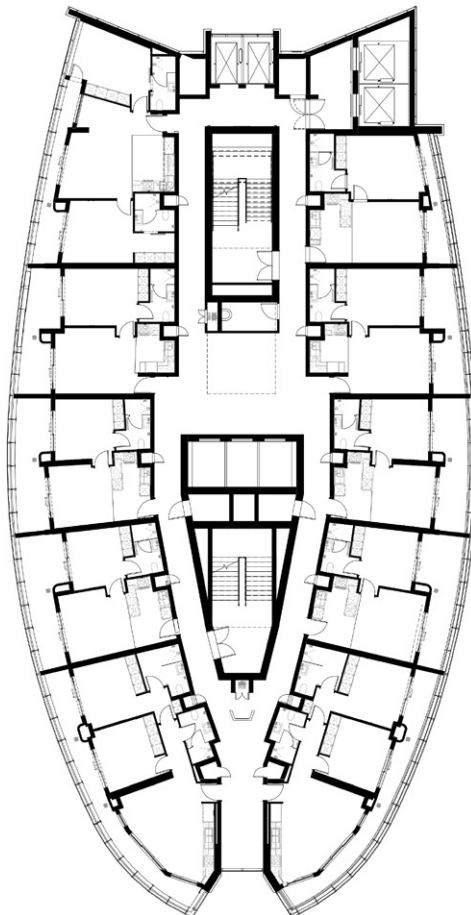
Conclusion

Radisson Blu uMhlanga and the subsequent completion of the Oceans uMhlanga complex heralds the beginning a new era for this coastal town.

TYPICAL HOTEL FLOOR



TYPICAL APARTMENT FLOOR





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