

# APEX STUDIOS

**APEX STUDIOS**  
Braamfontein

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**FIRE ENGINEER**  
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The use of concrete,  
facebrick and colour create  
a sophisticated yet playful  
new architectural language

**A**pex Studios is a student housing facility situated in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Developed by Growthpoint Properties, the development houses 901 students over 13 storeys in a new residential building which consists of a variety of unit types, each with private shared bathroom and kitchen facilities, lending itself to an apartment style of living. The units range from 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms with minimal shared rooms in the overall scheme. In this regard the students connect with fellow roommates whilst benefitting from a more private communal area.

## The Design

Designed by GASS Architecture Studios, the existing heritage building has been restored externally and extensively refurbished internally to house all the unique common spaces such as study centre, lounge areas, games room and gym. The raw, modularised materials of the existing building influenced the new residential building. The use of concrete, facebrick and colour create a sophisticated yet playful new architectural language, interpreting the geometry of the existing architectural style through a contemporary lens.

Connection to nature was of paramount importance in the design to allow students the opportunity to connect, learn and gather outdoors. The ground floor courtyards, a multi-purpose sports field to the north of the site and an entertainment zone on the









roof all aim to create an environment in which a student community can develop and thrive.

As the site is situated in a bustling, prominent location within the city, it was vital that the development engaged with and responded to its context, visually and physically, whilst maintaining a secure environment for the students. Stepping the building back to create ground level outdoor spaces, assists to scale the building in the context and soften the thresholds between the public and private.

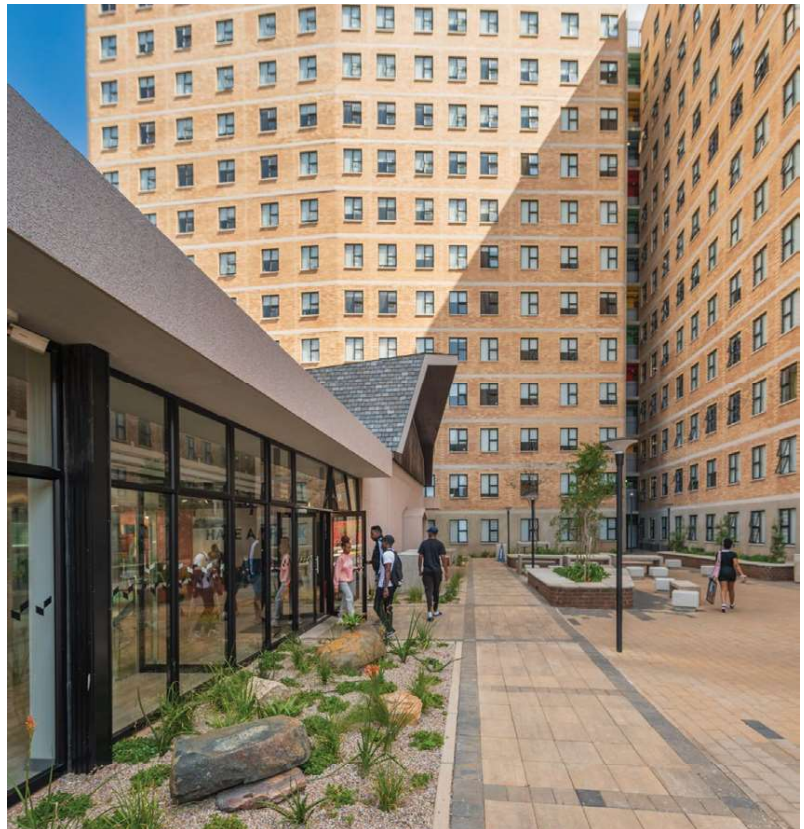
The existing building on the site, previously a Doves funeral home, was transformed to house the common areas for the new scheme. The design respects the old and reinvigorates these spaces by introducing new occupancies, colour and furniture to celebrate the existing textures and geometries.

The overall intent was to develop a scheme where a student community can be established and thrive, creating safe and vibrant spaces in which students can interact with their environment and with one another. Branding was also a key aspect to enhance the community lifestyle by providing students with a sense of place.

#### **Flexible and Multi-functional**

Flexibility within a student community is key to enable the students and operators to appropriate and customise their personal and common spaces. Fixed furniture is limited so that spaces can be easily transformed as needed. A consistent palette throughout means the

furniture can be repositioned in other areas and still look appropriate. The courtyard is also multi-functional with bench seating on the perimeter and a platform to the side creating a central events space.



Apex Studios is located 300m from the WITS University main entrance, makes it ideal from a safety point of view. The location also encourages an integration between WITS and the scheme and truly establishes it as a student centric node on the threshold of Wits.

“The location of a student housing residence is crucial for ease of access to campus but it is equally important to locate the residence in an area well suited to a student lifestyle. The aim is to

create an environment that allows for a community to develop, where students feel at home in their units and where communal spaces nurture learning, collaboration and innovation,” said Amogelang Mocumi, Fund Manager of Growthpoint Student Accommodation Holdings.

#### Award Winning Project

Apex Studios recently won the Student Accommodation Award at the SAPOA Property Awards



in Innovative Excellence. These esteemed awards by the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) highlight the ingenuity of the winners' vision, passion and dedication in South Africa's modernised property industry.

Apex Studios, along with Peak Studios, which was featured in the Sep/Oct 2023 issue of *Architect and Builder*, were Growthpoint's first foray into developing purpose-built student accommodation.

Estienne de Klerk, SA CEO of Growthpoint Properties, said, "We are delighted to be recognised for development excellence by SAPOA. The accolades underscore Growthpoint's ongoing commitment to providing space to thrive with innovative and sustainable solutions, and student accommodation development inherently contributes significantly to societal good. We have built our internal development expertise to deliver turnkey developments for Growthpoint,





the co-owned portfolios under management by Growthpoint Investment Partners and third-party owners. We believe this is a competitive advantage for both our clients and ourselves. These awards highlight the passion and commitment to excellence of everyone involved in the winning initiatives.”

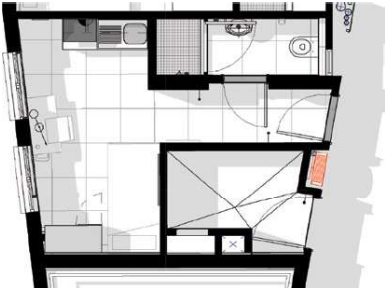
Both Apex Studios and Peak Studios are part of the Thrive Student Living by Growthpoint portfolio. They opened for the 2023 academic year and have surpassed expectations, achieving 100% and 98% occupancy rates respectively, demonstrating instant commercial success as well as quality development.



**Site Plan**

- A** De Korte Street
- B** M1 Highway
- 1** Pedestrian entrance
- 2** Piazza
- 3** Main reception entrance
- 4** Platform stage
- 5** Outdoor courtyard
- 6** Walkway (to be covered)
- 7** Outdoor break away
- 8** Existing courtyards
- 9** Basement vehicle entrance
- 10** Storm water discharge
- 11** Multi purpose field
- 12** External gym equipment
- 13** Bermed grass areas

**1 Bed Unit - 15m<sup>2</sup>**



**Bathroom:**

- WC, shower, basin

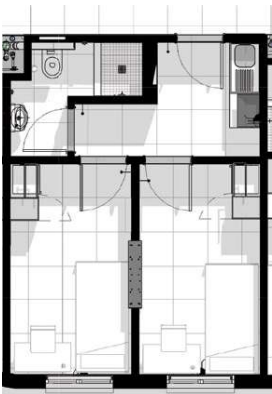
**Kitchen:**

- Sink
- Microwave & 2 plate stove
- Lockable cupboard
- Linear shelf with hooks

**Bedroom:**

- Bed and mattress
- Desk and chair
- BIC and fridge

**2 Bed Unit - 28m<sup>2</sup>**



8m<sup>2</sup> / private bedroom  
Shared entrance into unit

**Shared Bathroom:**

- WC, shower, basin

**Shared Kitchen:**

- Sink
- Microwave & 2 plate stove
- Lockable cupboard per student
- Linear shelf with hooks

2 x Private bedrooms:

- Bed and mattress
- Desk and chair
- BIC and fridge

**3 Bed Unit - 42m<sup>2</sup>**



8m<sup>2</sup> / private bedroom  
Shared entrance into unit

2 Shared Bathrooms:

- WC, basin
- Shower, basin

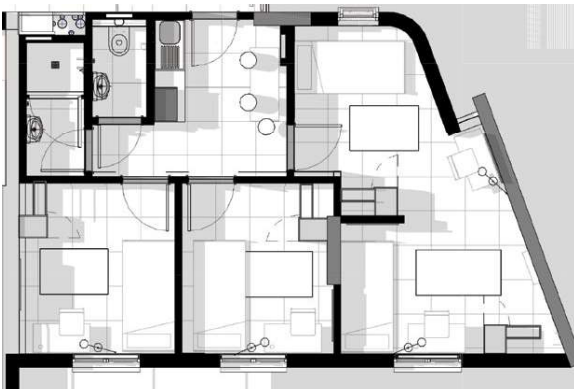
**Shared Kitchen:**

- Sink
- Microwave & 2 plate stove
- Lockable cupboard per student
- Linear shelf with hooks

3 x Private bedrooms:

- Bed and mattress
- Desk and chair
- BIC and fridge

**4 Bed Unit - 49m<sup>2</sup>**



8m<sup>2</sup> / private bedroom  
17m<sup>2</sup> / shared room  
Shared entrance into unit

2 Shared Bathrooms:

- WC, basin
- Shower, basin

**Shared Kitchen:**

- Sink
- Microwave & 2 plate stove
- Lockable cupboard per student
- Linear shelf with hooks

2 x Private bedrooms:

- Bed and mattress
- Desk and chair
- BIC and fridge

1 shared room

- 2 x Bed and mattress
- 2 x Desk and chair
- 2 x BIC and fridge
- Privacy wall between beds to demarcate area



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