

# BIDVEST FINANCIAL SERVICES

INTERIOR ARCHITECT: PARAGON INTERFACE | PHOTOGRAPHY: SARAH DE PINA, CHRIS WESSELS

When Bidvest Financial Services decided to centralise its Braamfontein head office and satellite operations in the iconic Bidvest Bank Towers at 1 Park Lane in Sandton, it turned to interior architecture firm Paragon Interface to design, space-plan and oversee the fit-out. The Paragon Group was also responsible for the base-build architecture.

Located within the new Katherine Street mixed-use precinct, 1 Park Lane, which has a Gross Lettable Area (GLA) of 21,000m<sup>2</sup>, is a P-grade development within walking distance of Sandton City and the Sandton Gautrain Station.

It offers seven levels of parking and a ground floor, with Bidvest Financial Services occupying the building from reception to L4. The decision to move into a new premises was predicated on having all Bidvest Financial Services companies in one space in the financial heart of Sandton, explains Paragon Interface

associate Kirsty Schoombie. “The brief was to create an efficient open-plan environment that connected all of these business units together. The office interior was designed to promote collaboration between the different businesses,” Schoombie explains. This is also in line with the latest trend for agile or shared workspaces.

The building itself consists of two towers, with the four Bidvest floors linked by an internal atrium and bridges. A total of 705 employees occupy the Bidvest office space, which has a GLA of 11,275m<sup>2</sup>. There are seven ‘smart’ lifts, two of which are dedicated shuttle lifts from the parking levels to the reception floor atrium.

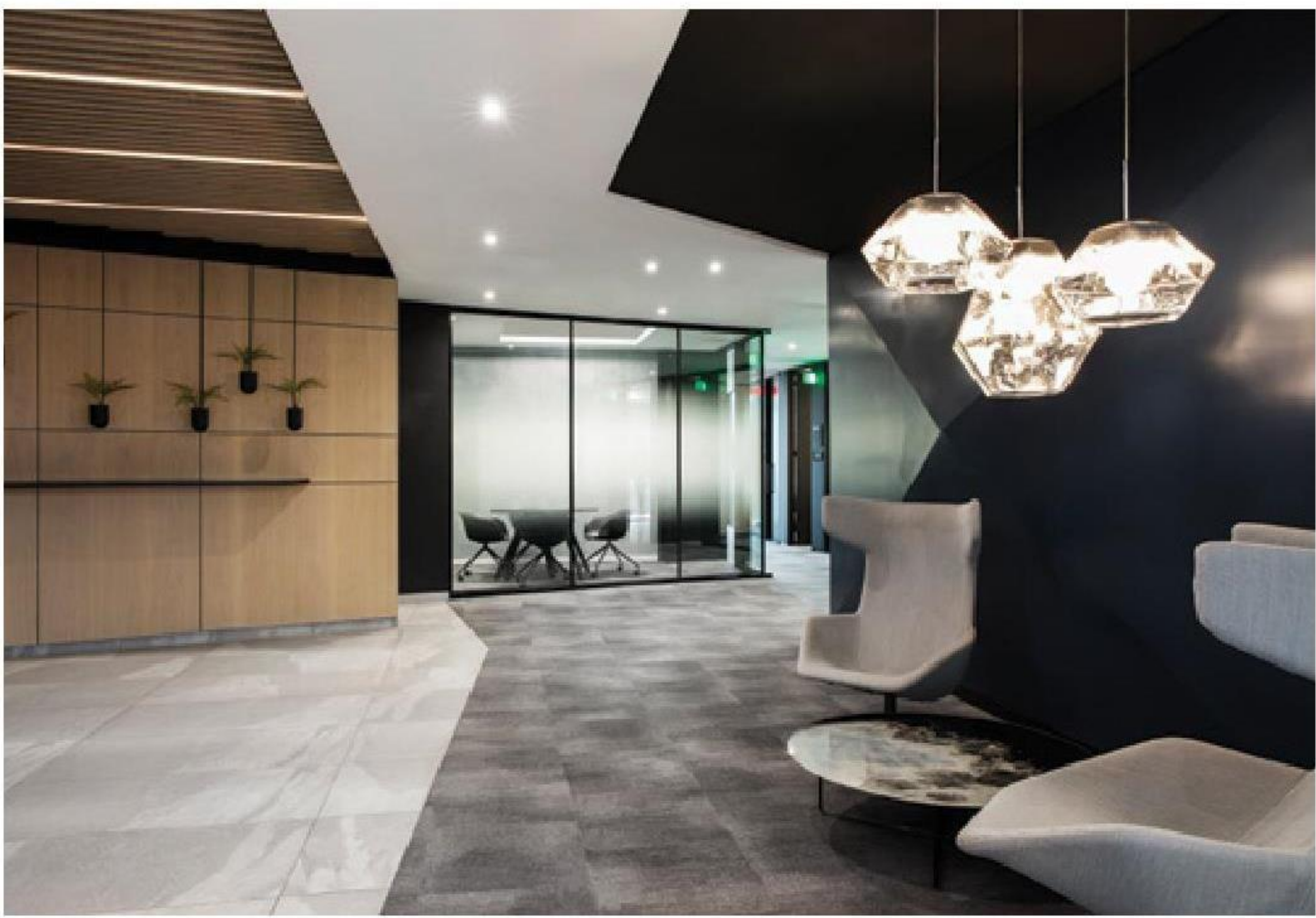
Paragon Interface strived to extend the Bidvest Financial Services corporate identity throughout the four floors by focusing on a corporate colour for each floor, drawn from the entity’s secondary colour palette of teal, yellow and oranges.









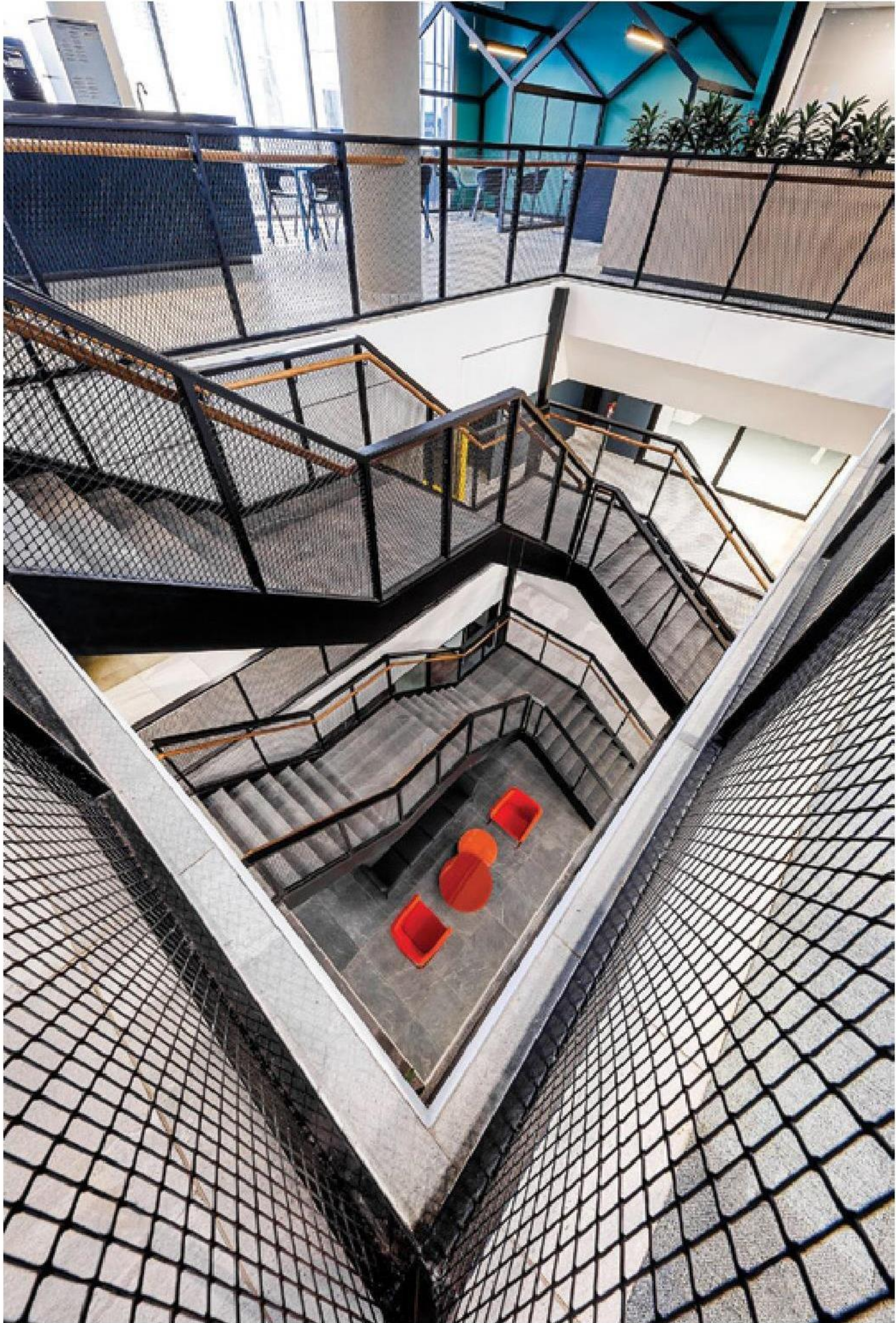


The 4-Star Green Star rating from the Green Building Council of South Africa means that the building boasts cyclist and running facilities, including 20 bicycle racks, four cyclist showers. Indoor planting is included on the reception floor and all office floor plates. Optimisation of natural light and views through the space-planning design is another key feature.

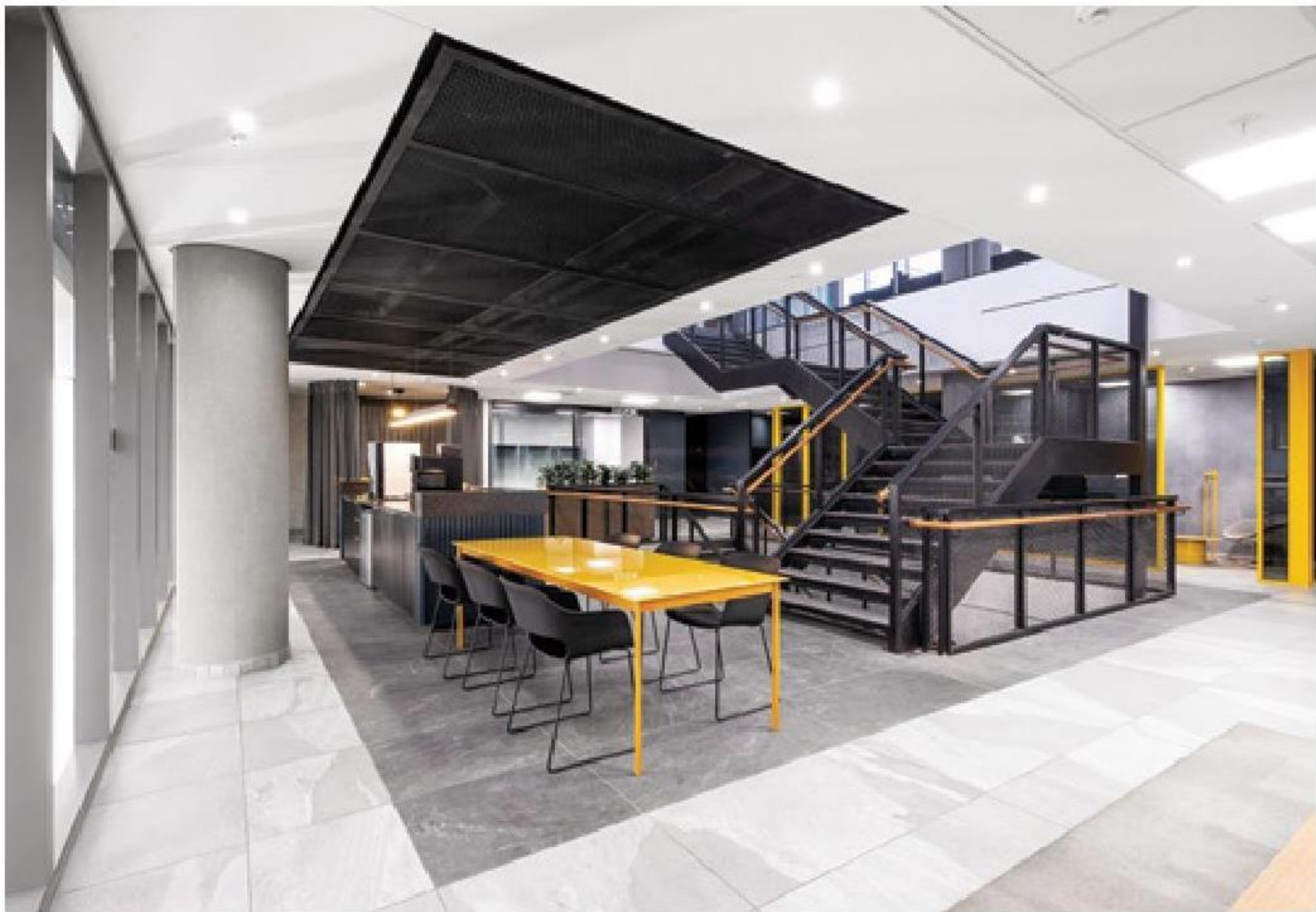
The visitor entrance is from Park Lane itself, into a common lobby and reception area that also features a coffee shop. Unique features of the lobby are the planted walls and the extensive use of planters and large, free-standing trees that effectively blurs the boundary between the interior and exterior, where streetscape

landscaping continues the lush theme. The reception floor accommodates a three-storey atrium that houses the reception, client suite, staff restaurant and the Bidvest Training Academy. The reception floor and fourth floors lead out onto landscaped roof gardens.

The working environment is designed to foster collaboration between all entities. The inclusion of a central communication stair surrounded by pause areas and a variety of different meeting spaces promotes movement between the different business units across the different floor plates. The space has also been designed with future growth in mind.







A central collaboration and coffee area is located on each floor, which is connected vertically by a communication stairway. Each floor offers different types of meeting spaces and work settings to encourage people to move between the floors, depending on the type of setting required.

“The company has seen an increase in collaboration between the teams and the different business units,” comments Schoombie. The overall design aesthetic is colourful and inviting, while still retaining a corporate feel. Inclusion of amenities such as a staff restaurant, training facility and client meeting area has been met with a very positive response.

Building commenced on the back of a commitment from Bidvest to lease 9,000m<sup>2</sup>. The rest of the development was done on risk by the developer, but mitigation steps in this regard included designing smaller floor plates for the speculative portion, ensuring sub-divisibility of the floor plates and providing at least two terraces per plate.

Employee satisfaction has also increased due to the design, largely due to the maximisation of natural light, collaborative coffee areas and the use of colour and natural planting on the office floor plates. Class A ceiling tiles enhance the acoustic quality of the office areas.

