

# Village Walk unites retail precincts in Pretoria East

Village Walk, Atterbury's latest retail development in Pretoria East, opened to the public last week after much anticipation. Village Walk connects two of Atterbury's already successful retail precincts in the suburb of Hazelwood: The Village - an eclectic food, drink and leisure hub - on 16th Street and The Club precinct which sits between Hazelwood and Dely Roads.



Source: Supplied.

This exciting development seamlessly links two thriving retail destinations within the Hazelwood neighbourhood: The Village, a diverse hub for dining, beverages, and leisure activities located on 16th Street, and The Club precinct, nestled between Hazelwood and Dely Roads.

The R52m development has introduced 1,495sqm of new gross lettable area (GLA), of which 595sqm will be restaurants and 900sqm retail, as well as additional parking bays.

## A grand opening to remember

Festivities for the grand opening began at 9am on 2 November, and continued well into the evening, with retailers being open for trade until 9pm. A variety of fun activities were presented throughout the day, including giveaways, a photo wall and GrootFM broadcasting from the Village Walk until 6pm, and then a resident DJ kept the celebration going into the night.

Generous prizes were up for grabs throughout the day. A grand prize of R45,000 was awarded to one lucky winner,

selected from the various competition boxes that were placed throughout Village Walk. A wide range of gift vouchers and parking vouchers, worth a further R45,000 in total, were also handed out to lucky winners.

A formal ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Friday, 3 November. This was attended by the development team and stakeholders, as well as members of the press. Speakers included Louis van der Watt – Atterbury group chief executive officer, Cilliers Brink – executive mayor of Tshwane, and Angus Taylor – the artist whose rhino sculptures form beautiful focal points along the Village Walk route.

Van der Watt thanked the project team for its dedication in bringing this visionary project to life, saying: “What we have achieved with Village Walk is more than just another retail project – it highlights the importance of creating quality urban environments. It is a celebration of the unique personality of the Old East Precinct, and an encouragement to shoppers to use and enjoy that environment, rather than just passing through it.”

He added: “Village Walk not only offers users an enhanced experience with the addition of a new restaurant, two cafés and several niche retailers. It also adds badly needed new parking, which contributes to easing a challenge for the area.

## Urban experience enhancement achieved

Village Walk is as much an urban intervention as it is a retail precinct. The aim of the project has been to create a connected urban retail experience with unique appeal in this popular location. The project fits into a greater master plan to connect the shops and restaurants within the precincts via attractive open-air pedestrian routes, allowing patrons to experience the characterful urban surroundings.



Source: Supplied. Angus Taylor's sculptures.

The heart of the Village Walk is the pedestrian walkway linking The Village to The Club. This has opened up easier and more fluid movement between the two hubs via a journey that creates a conceptual and a physical link between the rustic and organic Village feel and the more structured Club Precinct.

The broader Old East Precinct is collectively made up of The Village, The Club retail centre, Die Klubhuis and Club One office buildings, The Club Surgical Centre and the Advocate Chambers. As such, it creates a greater mixed-use precinct. The development of Village Walk has also provided much-needed additional structured parking. The link will make it safer for the public to park in a secure area with easy access to The Village and The Club.

## Public space, art, history and authenticity

In contrast to the ultra-modern shopping environments of the malls, Village Walk is a celebration of public space, art and curated experience, inspired by the unique personality of the neighbourhood. Its primary inspiration is the Old East

Precinct, which combines the best of urban and suburban life with unique charm and 'village' feel, within an urban setting.

In linking Village and Club precincts, the design style makes reference to both, blending inspirations from the two but with the final product having its own character. The public pedestrian route, aside from linking the various components, offers a journey in itself – featuring seating areas, courtyards between the buildings, and public art.

The composition of Village Walk's spaces affirms the value of public art in public spaces. The main courtyard along the walkway features exquisitely crafted bronze rhino calf statues, created by artist Angus Taylor, as a key focal point.

The sculptures evoke the kind of humility and peculiarity that Taylor finds in his more frequent subject matter (domestic animals such as donkeys), and are a poignant reminder that these creatures now depend on man for their continued survival.

The Village Walk project acts as the final piece in a puzzle, decisively knitting together the different parts of the Old East Precinct with a design, tenant mix and overall user experience that sets it apart from other offerings.

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