

Long-lease deal sees R5.5m revamp of block for students

PROBABLY the first realisation of mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo's vision of introducing affordable housing to the CBD is a recently completed private student residence on Sir Lowry Road near the Cape Technikon and the Castle of Good Hope.

Monpak, a seven-storey commercial building built in the 1960s, has been completely redesigned internally by city architects Bam Zöllner to provide accommodation for 96 students at the technikon.

A long-term renewable lease negotiated by Annenberg Real Estate has been signed between the technikon and the building's owner, Monty Periman.

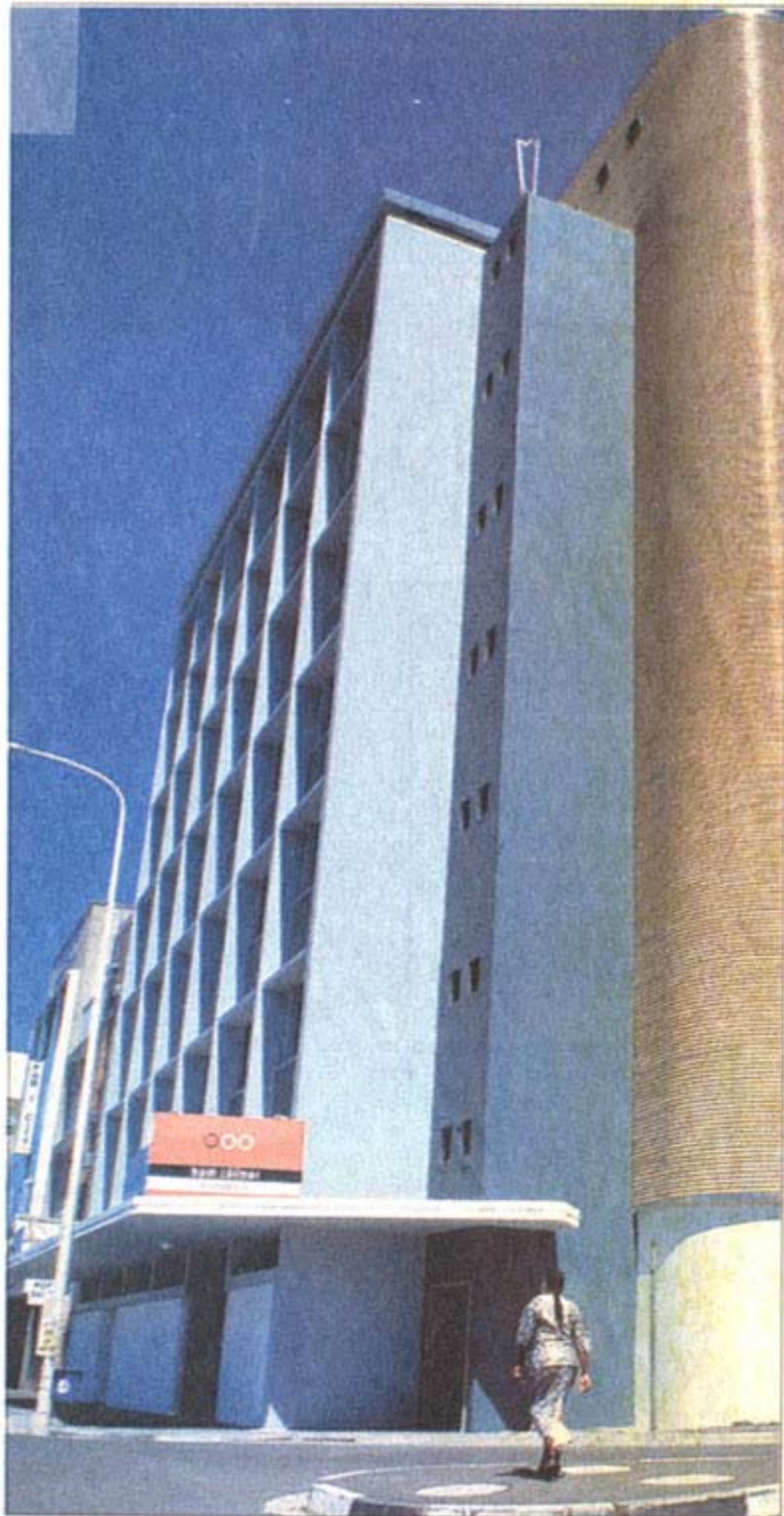
"While the mayor's declared intention to bring affordable housing closer to the mainstream is still in the planning stage following her budget this month, the Monpak project has, quite independently, come close to what will be the result of her vision," said practice partner Chris Bam.

Bam Zöllner also have another student apartment project completed in Rosebank. Both, they say, have given them keen insight into this residential sector and its very specific needs.

Project architect Heidi Zöllner said the R5.5 million refurbishment of the Monpak Centre had involved redesigning the interior to accommodate student rooms surrounding a common area, bathrooms and a kitchen on each floor. Alternate floors are for men and women and have, in light-hearted vein, been colour-coded to reflect the difference.

"The project is a good example of providing a purpose for a previously ineffective building. Putting students close to the Technikon is the very worthwhile result," she said.

One of the most rewarding of the changes had been the reorientation of the building, she said.



New use: the Monpak building has been redesigned for student accommodation.