

Thought Leader

19

It's rocking in Joburg's Rosebank

Ask Ash
Ash Müller

There's money pouring in amid a residential boom, as well as all the retail, commercial and hotel action

Located just north of Johannesburg's downtown, Rosebank is a lively suburb that mixes business, leisure and residential charm. It's a compact, energetic spot with a cosmopolitan feel, sitting between the city's historic core and the sleek Sandton district.

This prime location, paired with its easy access — the Gautrain connects it to Sandton, the city centre and the airport — makes it a magnet for professionals and residents.

Rosebank streets, shaded by trees and lined with a blend of modern towers and elegant Art Deco buildings, pulse with a unique vibe. It's a growing business hub, home to big names like Coca-Cola, Sappi, Pepsi, De Beers, Anglo-American and Standard Bank, with new office blocks and upscale apartments reshaping its skyline. Yet it retains a down-to-earth feel that sets it apart from the flashier Sandton, especially when the jacarandas burst into purple bloom each spring.

With millions of rands splashing into every corner of Rosebank, it's no wonder the precinct has experienced a revival over the past 10 years — a glow-up in more ways than one.

Anyone watching this transformation unfold can agree that it's wild to see how this once quiet spot is now buzzing with life, new buildings and an air of elegance.

Living in Rosebank appeals to a wide crowd — young go-getters who work in nearby office blocks, families and retirees find a home here. The housing scene leans toward sleek apartments and townhouses, with standalone homes tucked away in quieter corners.

The Rosebank Management District keeps things tidy and safe, making it a walkable haven.

Residential development that has caught my eye is The Hive Oxford, situated at 39 Ashford Road. Developed by Craft Homes in partnership with TriColour Investments, it consists of 292 apartments and has been under construction since January. Completion is set for December 2026.

The apartments have private balconies, and there are 18 layouts from which to choose. Residents also have access to a clubhouse, coffee shop, business centre, swimming pool, laundry facilities, gym and secure basement parking.

Studios start at 25m² and are priced from R999 000. One-bedroom units start at 39m² and are priced from R1 499 000. Two-bedroom units start at 54m² and are priced from R2 299 000. Last, three-bedroom units range 75m² to 85m² and are priced from R2 699 000. Levies start from R900 a month.

At these prices, this development is attractive to first-time home buyers and investors seeking tenants, in particular for corporates to provide accommodation for their employees.



Comfort: The Hive Oxford offers residents of its luxury apartments amenities such as a clubhouse, coffee shop, swimming pool and a gym. Photo: Supplied

Granel Property Group is heavily invested in Rosebank. The group has been involved in the suburb for more than 25 years as investors and developers. At the beginning of 2014, Granel kicked off construction on a tall apartment complex called The Vantage, featuring 165 apartments that were sold out (off plan at the launch) in just one month.

Following that success, the company rolled out another project in Rosebank in early 2015, this time with 219 apartments, which also took off without a hitch. The Tyrwhitt in Rosebank was 70% sold off plan.

Prior to these developments, the most recent batch of apartment blocks developed here would have been circa the 1970s.

Since then, Tricolt — a luxury property developer — has gone on to develop The One Rosebank residential development at 37 Cradock Avenue.

Phase one has 396 apartments. Handover of the apartments began on 1 April. Phase one did more than relatively well with 160 apartments sold in the first four days after launching. The total cost for this project is R414 million.

Phase two of the development has 169 apartments. To date, 65 apartments have been sold. The cost of this development comes in at R255 million.

As of 2 April, sales figures for Phase 1 of The One Rosebank are at R545 611 558 while Phase 2 is at R116 850 700. This is impressive.

Surrounding these developments is a premier retail and cultural experience. For those who love to shop, eat or simply soak in the scene, Rosebank delivers.

The Rosebank Mall, The Zone @Rosebank and The Firs offer a mix of retail therapy, from chic boutiques to tech stores. Art lovers flock to the Keyes Art Mile, where galleries thrive alongside cafés. Foodies are spoiled for choice too, with everything from laid-back bistros to fancy spots dishing up global eats — think spicy South African dishes, Italian classics or Asian fusion. When the sun sets, the nightlife kicks in, with bars and clubs.

With top-notch schools, fitness centres and the Netcare Rosebank Hospital, the suburb ticks a lot of boxes. It's a place that feels alive — less polished than some neighbours, but all the more real for it.

Then there are the business districts offering smart office space. We have seen the demand in Rosebank for premium-grade retail and office space over the past few years. As more leading businesses set up shop, the demand for office space complements rising residential demand. Rental rates for office space are on the higher end of the scale and surpass the rental rates of certain nodes nearby in Sandton and Melrose.

When renting office space in Rosebank, the prices are about R250 to R270 per square metre for premium-grade spaces, R180 per square metre for A-grade spaces and about R100 per square metre (all excluding VAT) for secondary office spaces, which are less modern and more difficult for landlords to lease.

Premium grade office spaces are the most stylish and contemporary options available, while the quality decreases with each grade — moving from premium to A grade, B grade and C grade. These grades help determine the rental price per square metre and ensure that office rentals remain competitive.

At 2.1%, the South African Property Owners Association numbers for Rosebank Q4 2024 show low vacancies in premium grade offices, with higher vacancies in other grades: 15.9% in A grade, 19% in B grade and 14.5% in C grade.

Anglo-American's head office, situated at 144 Oxford Road, is premium-grade office space. The 35 000m² office development consists of two interlinked towers with glass façades — each 17 500m² in size. It was developed by Growthpoint Properties. Since then, Growthpoint has not developed anything close to this scale in this suburb.

Anglo-American is located directly across from the Hyatt Regency Hotel. I have discussed this controversial hotel and the reasons it

remains closed in a previous Ask Ash column in the *Mail & Guardian*. Its closure remains a significant loss to the area.

Besides the mothballed Hyatt, hotel hype in Rosebank is growing. Check in on the trend by looking at the first-ever Radisson Red Hotel in Johannesburg that was built in the 350 000m² mixed-use Oxford Parks project. This 222-room hotel, worth R385 million, brings that arty vibe that I adore.

Then there's The Capital on Bath, adding 52 apartments and 100 hotel rooms, and a Voco Hotel tucked into a mixed-use building with offices and retail. These spots are perfect for business travellers or anyone wanting a fancy staycation. With green building ratings and cool amenities, it's clear Rosebank's aiming to be the go-to spot for visitors and locals alike.

So, what's driving all this? It's the perfect combination — excellent transport, a compact layout that's easy to walk around and a mix of leafy charm with city energy. Rosebank is outshining Sandton in the coolest way. Unlike Sandton, which gets bogged down with traffic and oversupply, Rosebank's keeping it fresh and manageable.

One of the questions one has to ask as far as price per m² goes is whether Rosebank has the potential to become another Sandton. Potentially. For now, no, because I see a lot of older stock going at discounted rates so that landlords can get it let. It seems the supply is steady for the time being.

Sure, the infrastructure's feeling the strain with all these high-rises, but the city's betting big on this node, and I think they're onto something.

Whether you're grabbing a coffee on your way to work, eyeing a penthouse that screams "I made it" or checking into a fancy hotel, Rosebank steals hearts. Here's to the suburb's revival, and cheers to the next decade of growth.

Ask Ash examines South Africa's property, architecture and living spaces. Continue the conversation with her on email (ash@askash.co.za) and X (@askashbroker).

25 YEARS AGO

South African palaeontologists have notched up another world first with the discovery of the most complete skull of an extinct species of pre-human.

The discovery of the most complete australopithecine skull yet excavated was made by Dr Andre Keyser of the University of the Witwatersrand.

At the time this kind of australopithecine lived, about 1.8 million years ago, it may have shared its habitat with a variety of other hominid species, including early *homo sapiens*.

The skull is believed to have belonged to one of the primitive bipedal hominid species that did not evolve into modern man but became extinct.

The skull was found in a new hominid site in the Sterkfontein valley, near the caves where Dr Ron Clarke found the skeleton of "Little Foot", which lived about 3.3 million years ago.

Keyser is a retired geologist [and] his find is the culmination of a life-long passion for fossils.

The Sterkfontein valley is rich in fossils because the dolomite caves are slightly alkaline, which preserves bones by encouraging calcification. — *Mail & Guardian*, 20 to 27 April 2000

VERBATIM

● "It seems to me that the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] is carrying out pointless actions that have nothing to do with the return of the hostages. I don't want to be a part of this — and I'm not the only one. I will never again wear a uniform under this government." — Yuval Ben-Ari, 40, a reservist in the IDF.

● "Israel's soul is being ripped out. The inclination to avert our eyes is strong, as what is happening is unbearable, but our Jewish values compel us to stand up and to speak out." — Thirty-six members of the British Jewish Board of Deputies who signed a letter published in the *Financial Times* criticising Israel's 18-month war in Gaza. The 36 members are to be subjected to a disciplinary procedure.

● "The 13.1-mile racetrack had a dedicated humanoid-only lane — which is probably a good idea, given that the robot contestants regularly fell over, lost their heads or even spun out of control (with at least one taking its operator down with it)." — Margherita Bassi, *Smithsonian* magazine, reporting on the world's first humanoid half-marathon that pitted human runners against human-like robots.

● "I'm a three-time Olympic champion. I've achieved world championship titles. I thought: 'What else?' And I told myself: 'If you believe in yourself, and your team believes in you, you can do it.'" — Kenyan athlete Faith Kipyegon, who will try to be the first woman to breach the four-minute mile barrier.

● "Here in France, research is a priority, innovation a culture, science a limitless horizon. Researchers from all over the world, choose France, choose Europe!" — President Emmanuel Macron in a post on X. He did not mention US President Donald Trump's funding cuts for universities and research institutions that have resulted in hundreds of academics being dismissed.