

Light Gauge Steel Framing Growing in Use in South Africa

Using light gauge steel frames and trusses as an alternative to traditional building in South Africa is growing year upon year. This method of construction has been used in Australia, New Zealand and the US for many years, but it is only in the last 7 to 8 years that it has become a viable alternative in the South African market, says Steve Cullender of Scottsdale Construction Systems.



Magaliesburg Bushveld Steel House completed in 12 weeks (Courtesy of InnoSteel)

Steve Cullender introduced Scottsdale Construction Systems Intelligent Steel Frame and Truss Manufacturing Technology into the South African market in 2004. Since the first plant was established there are now fabrication plants throughout the country.

Some of Scottsdale's main fabricators in South Africa include InnoSteel Building Systems in Johannesburg, Hazy Crest Steel Structures in Durban, Light Steel Frame Houses in Cape Town, Clyde Steel in Gauteng, and Tahzade Disaster Management in Richards Bay. They supply light gauge steel frames and trusses for the residential and commercial construction sectors.

In the early years Mr. Cullender would take interested parties to Australia and the US to see a volume production plant and construction sites, but now these can be viewed in South Africa. Tours for interested parties are held regularly by Scottsdale Construction Systems in South Africa, Australia and the US.

Neal Guenole, General Manager—Sales for Scottsdale Construction Systems (from New Zealand), says the market growth in South Africa is similar to growth experienced globally by Scottsdale. It's now being used in over 50 countries. There are also a growing number of plants in Africa, including Angola, the DRC, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Botswana and Zambia.



Saxton Hotel —Sandhurst, Johannesburg, completed for the Soccer 2010 World Cup (Courtesy of InnoSteel)



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Scottsdale Construction Systems is focused on research and the innovative development of light gauge steel frame and truss manufacturing technology for the house building and commercial construction industries. Scottsdale Construction Systems has been providing world leading solutions for the manufacture of steel frames and trusses for both the residential and commercial construction markets since its inception in 1995.

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Mr. Cullender says there are many potential applications in South Africa, with the Scottsdale Truss technology able to achieve clear spans of 30 plus metres and the Scottsdale Panel technology having both residential and commercial capability. Five storey apartment buildings are under construction in Ethiopia. Mr. Cullender says the roof trusses can be used on a variety of structures including block and brick structures.

Some of the key benefits to this method of construction are that all the designs are detailed in Scottsdale's ScotSteel virtual 3D design software. Once designed, the files are exported to a rollformer machine and assembled using low-skilled labour. Following assembly they are erected on the construction site. The framing for a standard house can be erected in as little as 3 days ready for cladding.



Saxton Hotel —Sandhurst, Johannesburg
(Courtesy of InnoSteel)

The design speed, manufacturing speed and construction site erection speed are the key advantages that light gauge steel framing has over traditional building methods. Mr. Guenole says that in Australia they have a customer that produces 25 kilometres of steel framing per day.

Scottsdale Construction Systems licenced fabricators are able to convert traditional building designs to light gauge steel, and this is

happening more often in South Africa with the homeowner demanding steel framed houses due to the energy efficiency from insulated walls and the quality finish of straight square walls.

Given the housing shortage in South Africa and Africa generally, the future is promising for light gauge steel framing.



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