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# thecornerstone

## Introduction

It's hard to believe that half the year has already gone by, but it's been an extraordinary time for RGM, having been awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification we worked so hard for.

Savannah East is officially the first green building in Trinidad and Tobago – a landmark accomplishment for RGM, as it sets the standard for our future commercial developments, and challenges both the local and regional construction industry to embrace eco-friendly building.

While much of our new flagship building is already tenanted, there is still some prime lease space available at Savannah East (as well as one of our other properties) – check out the details in the "We've Got Space!" section.

In keeping with the "green" building theme, we've done an article that explores living walls and how they benefit work spaces and the environment. And speaking of ideal workspaces, the one thing that can completely drain a corporate environment of its enthusiasm and morale is workplace accidents, so we point out a few of the most common causes of on the job injuries, and offer tips on how to avoid them.

As we embark on the August vacation period, we invite you to get inspired by the most awe-inspiring space of all – nature! We live in a beautiful country, so get out there and get revitalised!

## Savannah East: The First To Go Green!

**IN MARCH 2017, RGM'S FLAGSHIP COMMERCIAL PROPERTY, SAVANNAH EAST, WAS AWARDED ITS LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (LEED) SILVER CERTIFICATION, MAKING IT THE FIRST EVER GREEN BUILDING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, AS WELL AS THE FIRST BUILDING CERTIFIED AS LEED-CS V2009 (CORE & SHELL CERTIFICATION UNDER THAT PARTICULAR RATING SYSTEM) IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN.**



LEED is the internationally recognised, independent verification that a building was designed, built and will operate in an environmentally responsible way. Propelled in large part by the internationally accepted and well-respected LEED rating system, the green building approach has been garnering so much attention that it is widely viewed to be the way of the future.

When it comes to commercial development across the region, our team at RGM is nothing if not pioneering, so we jumped at the opportunity of designing and constructing a LEED-certified building. Why? We understood the countless benefits and were eager to pass them on to our tenant partners who would eventually occupy the space. Well-maintained LEED-certified buildings

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produce less waste, are more energy efficient (thereby cutting down utility costs), and boost productivity by creating better working environments.

Research shows that LEED buildings continue to have a tremendous impact on tangible aspects of a leased commercial space, including reduced utilities consumption (Savannah East will use 20% less water than a non-LEED building) and a smaller carbon footprint. Although the practice needs to be more widespread in order to significantly reduce the effect that construction has on global warming and climate change, every little bit counts – especially when it comes to the impact on small island states like ours.

In the meantime, RGM is proud to be at the forefront of constructing buildings that are rooted in sustainable communities. To us, one of the most important aspects of the LEED certification is that it speaks to corporate responsibility: Savannah East generates much less waste and has a smaller impact on the surrounding

community than a non-LEED building. Just as health and safety considerations are now the industry norm, all of us at RGM are hopeful that this example of sustainability will help to make environmentally conscious construction a priority in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider region.

For our part, we remain committed to sustainable development and practices for all our existing buildings, as well as for future developments. The proof is in the pudding – our Savannah East tenants are pleased with the space and the benefits they are already reaping from the energy efficiency and aesthetics of the building. From solar powered lighting and rainwater capture for irrigation, insulated glass windows that let in natural light while reducing heat, vertical gardens and green roofing that improve air quality, as well as other eco-friendly features, Savannah East is a living example of green building as a cost-effective, productive, efficient and sustainable commercial building option.

## Why **Green Walls** Should Get The Green Light

Some of the most stunning features of RGM's newest commercial building, Savannah East, are its living walls.

A major green feature of the building, these two vertical gardens – comprising a variety of local decorative plants installed on a special rooting media and irrigated by an intricate hydroponics system – are a nod to the sustainable ethos of Savannah East. The first is at the building's entrance and the other in its atrium.

Of course, you'd expect green walls in Trinidad and Tobago's first ever Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified building, but the feature is becoming more popular as the regional industry begins to realise the benefits of ecologically friendly construction.

From a purely aesthetic point of view, greenery softens a space. Many offices that do not have the horizontal footprint to spare for such a decorative purpose choose instead to go vertical. Green walls are relatively simple – basically a dense collection of indoor plants which get their sustenance from some type of support system, usually made from soil or foam, that offers both irrigation and drainage – but they do require proper planning and should be regarded as a long-term investment. This means going to an



expert to execute the work in the first instance, and not cutting corners on maintenance. It's easy for any green wall to look amazing upon installation, but if not properly cared for, it can become a real eyesore.

Quite apart from their stunning visual appeal, living walls offer other tangible benefits, many of which are related to wellbeing – psychological and otherwise. The presence of indoor plants has been proven to play a role in stress reduction, which in turn has a positive effect on mood, productivity, creativity and problem solving.



According to a new study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health's Center for Health and the Global Environment, SUNY Upstate Medical University and Syracuse University, employees who work in offices with lower levels of indoor pollutants, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) have much higher cognitive scores than those who don't. Plants are a critical tool in creating such environments, but of course, the ideal approach is to avoid using toxic materials in the construction of buildings in the first place.

Indoor living walls also dampen sound – a real benefit for businesses in Trinidad and Tobago, since our noise pollution laws are neither adhered to nor enforced. They are useful features for Caribbean territories in general, since they reduce heat and air pollution. A perfect example of this is the green wall at the

Savannah East entrance, which helps offset some of the exhaust from traffic around the Queen's Park Savannah.

Green walls are also great for biodiversity, since they can become habitats for birds and other useful insects – some living walls have also doubled as micro farms, since the plants used are edible and become a great organic food source, especially in urban settings.

Vertical gardens produce bottom line benefits – lowering energy costs, reducing absenteeism due to illness, increasing real estate value, enhancing productivity and boosting morale. If Albert Einstein was right about nature helping us to understand everything better, then being close to nature – even when you're at work – is a win/win situation.

## Accidents Waiting For A (Work)place To Happen

**CHANCES ARE, IF YOU HAVE A CHILD – OR KNOW A CHILD – YOU'VE SEEN EPISODES OF THOMAS THE TRAIN. IN THIS CHARMING SERIES, THE CHARACTERS ADMIT THAT “ACCIDENTS HAPPEN NOW AND AGAIN, JUST WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT...JUST WHEN YOU THINK THAT LIFE IS OKAY, FATE COMES TO COLLECT...IF YOU DON'T CONCENTRATE ON THE THING THAT YOU'RE DOING, ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN, JUST LIKE THAT.”**

Mindfulness is perhaps the most important factor in avoiding accidents – and accidents in the workplace are not only dangerous, they are costly. Quite apart from dealing with the resulting injuries, the cost of workplace accidents includes everything from reduced productivity to hiring temporary staff to do the job of the injured employee, which can significantly increase the cost of doing business.

Here are a few of the most common causes of workplace injuries, as well as some tips on how to avoid them.

- 1. Repetition.** That's right, just doing your job can be dangerous – if you do it over and over without taking occasional breaks. Sometimes the smallest, seemingly insignificant things can be the most harmful, so make sure you take mini-breaks from critical tasks (such as using a computer mouse or track pad, or looking at a screen for too long) to avoid conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome or eye strain.
- 2. Rushing.** Nothing should be so urgent that you hurry about the office at a pace that puts you in danger of tripping, falling or bumping into people or things.

- 3. Not paying attention.** A lack of awareness about your surroundings can result in all sorts of injuries, such as slipping on floors, tripping over a carpet snag, or getting pieces of clothing stuck in equipment.

- 4. Unsafe movements.** We often take it for granted that our bodies can do everyday movements. Sometimes, though, the most straightforward actions (stretching, bending, reaching) can result in injuries, so be mindful – squat to lift heavy objects, make sure tools like stepladders are sturdy before you climb them, and hold on to handrails when going up or down stairs.

- 5. Being unobservant.** You should always do a quick scan of your surroundings to assess potential dangers. Is an object positioned too close to the end of a shelf? Is an extension cord placed in a high traffic area? Correct the problem before it becomes an accident – for you or someone else.

- 6. Fatigue.** Overexertion at work creates conditions that make it easy for accidents to happen. If you are tired, you are automatically less alert; this can lead to errors in judgement, both in the office and in driving to and from work.



## Get Inspired!

It's vacation time – the perfect opportunity to get closer to nature!

“ Joy in looking and comprehending is nature's most beautiful gift.”

– Albert Einstein

“ In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.”

– John Muir

“ Green is the prime colour of the world, and that from which its loveliness arises.”

– Pedro Calderon de la Barca

“ Come forth into the light of things: let nature be your teacher.”

– William Wordsworth

## We've Got Space!

**This is the space to watch if you're in need of prime, Class "A" commercial space – and have we got some fantastic opportunities for you!**

### SAVANNAH EAST



Want the long-term benefits of occupying the first LEED-certified, green building in Trinidad and Tobago? This modern, energy-efficient multi-storey lets in lots of natural light, keeps out the heat, and delivers on the 'wow' factor! Moving in is stress-free, thanks to raised flooring for personalised data configurations, and top-notch support services – including meeting spaces, entertainment areas,

fitness facilities, safety and security. The clincher? You'll fall in love with the spectacular views – and Savannah East is close to everywhere you need to be.

- **4 Floors – 46,687 square feet, able to be subdivided (the 1st floor is already divided into two separate spaces of 5,595 and 3,915 sq. ft.)**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

### PRINCES COURT



At six storeys tall and with 64,000 square feet, this premier commercial lease space is a landmark property that acknowledges our country's colonial architecture in its

impressive glass etchings, mixing elements of historical Trinidad with the modern. The building is always in high demand, thanks to its convenient location, top class facilities, panoramic views of the capital city, and its focus on security and HSSE.

- **2nd Floor – 11,372 square feet**
- **5th Floor – 11,318 sq. ft.**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

All space for lease is rated as Class "A" office space, centrally located with underground parking. For further information, please contact:

- **Jean-Paul de Meillac at Terra Caribbean – 628.2391 or**
- **Bridget Jackson at Massy Realty – 628.0611**