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Umhlanga development is one of SA's first Green Star pilot projects

SUREN NAIDOO

THE new R110 million Lincoln on the Lake office development in the burgeoning Umhlanga Ridge precinct is set to be among South Africa's first Green Star rated buildings when complete in 2009, according to developers Growthpoint Properties Limited.

The group – a Founding Platinum Member of the pioneering Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) and touted as South Africa's largest JSE-listed property company – has earmarked the 6 600m² Lincoln on the Lake development as its first, new building project in the country to be developed with the aim of being one of the first to get the GBCSA's new Green Star buildings rating.

The move comes in the wake of the GBCSA launching its new Green Star rating tool for the South African property industry at the inaugural GBCSA convention in Cape Town this week. As part of Growthpoint's commitment to the GBCSA, besides committing funding to the start-up of the organisation, it has also provided a sample of its properties as pilot cases for green development in South Africa.

"As an industry, the South African property sector has embraced the drive to green and Growthpoint is committed to sustainable building practices," said Tyrone Govender, Growthpoint divisional director and its representative on the GBCSA.

"In terms of new developments,

Growthpoint investigates all elements to assess opportunities for increased energy efficiency and compliance with green building principals and regulations. Our new Lincoln on the Lake office development in Umhlanga Ridge, KwaZulu-Natal, is part of the pilot project for the Green Star SA Office Rating Tools system ... We are also considering retro fitting our existing buildings, which will be assessed on a cost-to-value ratio," he added.

Said Greg de Klerk, who heads up Growthpoint's Durban offices: "We are approaching the Lincoln on the Lake development in such a way that it complies with, or exceeds, the new pilot ratings. We are going all out with this development, aiming at achieving as high as possible Green Star rating.

"The development is undergoing thorough scrutiny by the professional team, which is identifying measures that can be implemented in terms of energy, water and other efficiencies," he said.

Rudolph Pienaar, Growthpoint's Commercial Director, said Lincoln on the Lake would be one of South Africa's pioneering new green building projects and was "quite a special project for the Growthpoint group from a new development perspective".

"As a matter of fact, we even delayed the start of construction of the project in order to include green building requirements that were being finalised by the GBCSA. Now,

with the launch of the Green Star SA rating tool, we will endeavour to make this building as green as we can and hope to have it complete by June next year," Pienaar added.

He said Lincoln on the Lake – which is part of Tongaat Hulett's Parkside development in the Umhlanga Ridge precinct – represented a total development cost of some R110 million.

"We have purchased an entire block in Parkside overlooking the new Chris Saunders Park and boulevard. At approximately 6 600m², Lincoln on the Lake is the first phase of our development here in Parkside and when it is complete we will move Growthpoint's KZN regional office to this new building.

"Our other planned developments next to this in Parkside include the Mayfair and The Boulevard projects, which together with Lincoln on the Lake will represent some 123 000m² of space and a total development value of some R400 million," said Pienaar.

"It is great to see this type of green building initiative and the support of Growthpoint is invaluable. The property industry has a huge impact because, apart from the direct impact of its own initiatives, it creates a chain effect," said Bruce Kerswill, Executive Chair of the GBCSA.

According to Govender, the green building rating tool sets standards and benchmarks for green building, and enables an objective assessment as to how "green" a building is. The

rating system sets out a "menu" of all the green measures that can be incorporated into a building to make it green. Points are awarded to a building according to which measures have been incorporated, and, after appropriate weighting, a total score is arrived at.

The GBCSA has developed the Green Star SA Rating Tools, based on the Australian Green Building Council tools, to provide the property industry with an objective measurement for green buildings and to recognise and reward environmental leadership in the property industry.

Applying green building principals is not new to Growthpoint. It already has a number of waste, water and energy efficiency initiatives in place across its national portfolio of 430 office, retail and industrial properties.

In fact, Growthpoint is striving to develop the first carbon neutral industrial estate in South Africa, an initiative it is so proud of that it has put its name to it – the Growthpoint Industrial Estate, located in the Route 24 node in Meadowdale, Gauteng.

Govender points out that at the moment it is more expensive to be green building compliant than using old methods. "We believe that as more and more environmental materials and practices come on stream, this will drive down the cost, as has happened in Australia and the UK," he said.



AN ARTIST'S impression of the new R110 million Lincoln on the Lake office complex being developed by Growthpoint Properties Limited in Umhlanga Ridge as one of the first new Green Star rated buildings in South Africa.

All news, views and other information on the KwaZulu-Natal commercial and industrial property scene can be sent to Suren Naidoo. He can be contacted on 031 308 2167 or e-mail: suren.naidoo@inl.co.za
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