

Greenpoint offers commercial property opportunities

Upmarket, trendy space for office and retail accommodation is in demand in prime locations within Cape Town's vibrant Green Point and De Waterkant areas. According to Selwyn Sharon, leasing, sales and investment broker for JHI Properties, this node has become desirable 'lifestyle' destination to work in, with 15 coffee shops within a five-minute walk, including venues such as Origin Coffee Roasting and Truth Coffee Shop, as well as the Cape Quarter lifestyle shopping centre.

"Looking back over the past two decades, it's evident that requirements for office accommodation have changed considerably. Businesses want to be located in a pleasing environment with secure parking for their staff and clients. Features they look for include, for example, 'green' areas included in the workplace and generally maximum natural light - particularly for creative spaces, a spacious kitchen or recreational area where staff can relax and 'recharge', and perhaps even a gym for exercise," he says.

"Having the workplace located in appealing surrounds enables staff to enjoy the convenience of safely walking to coffee shops, retail outlets and the like. An advantage of new office buildings is that they can easily incorporate 'green', energy saving features, which further add to the appeal.

"Considering that these days, many people spend a great deal of time at work, often outside what were previously considered conventional working hours, these added comforts become even more important in retaining quality staff."

More office development

It is positive to see that developers, who are moving forward with projects such as Portside, 22 Bree Street and the Media Quarter, which is almost complete, have recognised the demand for P Grade offices.

"There has been a pent-up demand for prime office space, particularly when one considers that other than a few buildings such as The Hudson and the Cape Quarter, very few new buildings have been completed in recent years. Now we are seeing major tenants taking up space. FNB has taken half the office space at Portside - which is to become Cape Town's tallest building (on the corner of Buitengracht Street and Hans Strijdom), a large firm of attorneys is to occupy 22 Bree Street, while there is the new Allan Gray building taking shape in the V&A Waterfront. In addition to this The Atlantic building is being redeveloped in the Foreshore area. Importantly, these new developments or redevelopments further enhance the aesthetic appeal of Cape Town's central area."

Somerset Road

Sharon has recently concluded a number of commercial property transactions in these areas, including the sale of a sectional title unit in the landmark Victoria Junction in Somerset Road, Green Point, which was purchased by a decorating business for R2 million and a further unit which has been rented to a property company. "A large mixed-use complex with retail and office space, Victoria Junction has a low vacancy as it is ideally located within a thriving hub, which incorporates a variety of design, advertising and creative type businesses and is within walking distance of the V&A Waterfront and Cape Town central city."

At the nearby redeveloped 70 Prestwich Street, which includes office accommodation and where Vida e Caffè recently opened its doors, the company has concluded a transaction for the lease of office space. Sharon is also currently negotiating with a major retailer seeking to rent space in the Green Point area.

"We have a demand from international companies and diplomatic offices seeking standalone commercially zoned houses with grounds for parking. With hotels, the Cape Town Stadium, Green Point Urban Park and V&A Waterfront nearby, coupled with its atmosphere, this area is high on their priority list. At the V&A Waterfront's Clock Tower development, which is now almost fully occupied, we recently concluded a lease for office space for an international oil drilling company," he says.

Activity in CBD

Together with JHI Properties broker, Nicholas Fermor, he has concluded a number of transactions in Cape Town's CBD, including retail leases for coffee bars, shoe retailers and the like and some office rentals such as in 2 Long Street, mainly for professionals. He also negotiated a lease for a coffee bar in Mandela Rhodes Place in the heart of St Georges Mall, and he and Fermor are currently in the process of arranging other leases for office space from 200-500 square metres, mainly for corporates.

"While there is a high demand for retail accommodation, very little suitable space is available. There are, however good opportunities to rent office space in the CBD from R85 per square metre for B+ Grade accommodation," Sharon concludes.

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