

ComBank Wins Green Building - Platinum Award



Commercial Bank's Assistant General Manager Services Mr Chinthaka Dharmasena (second from right) receives the award from GBCSL Chairman Prof. Ranjith Dissanayake in the presence of the Bank's Chief Manager - Premises Department Mr Tilak Wakista (extreme left) and Engineer - Premises Department Mr Ravindra Kumara.

The heritage building, which is home to the Galle Fort branch of the Commercial Bank of Ceylon won a Platinum award from the Green Building Council of Sri Lanka (GBCSL) for its eco-friendly features after it was restored last year to its original grandeur by the Bank. The Platinum award is the highest rating achievable based on a set of performance standards used to certify the operations and maintenance of a building.

Key aspects taken into consideration by the GBCSL to bestow this rating on a commercial or institutional building includes management, sustainable sites, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation and design process, and social and cultural awareness. The Bank's pivotal features of a Green Building, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, water efficiency, environmentally preferable building materials and specifications, waste reduction, toxics reduction, indoor air quality, smart growth and sustainable development were focused on during the restoration. The building consists of the Commercial Bank's Galle Fort Bank branch, the Bank's Regional Office and a holiday home. It also houses a mini museum containing archives and items used since the inception of the branch, which has now become a popular tourist attraction.

The Platinum rating was accorded to the building for the restoration process that included the recycling of all imperishable material in an environmentally friendly manner, using only locally sourced, specified green rated raw material in the renovation, disposal of debris in compliance with the Department of Archaeology and the Galle Heritage Foundation, installing a 15kW rooftop solar energy generation system, installation of a rain water harvesting system and eco-friendly food recyclers for all meal rooms, and the fitting of a fire protection system, back-up generator, energy efficient Variable Flow Refrigerant (VFR) air conditioning system, and a LED lighting and electrical system to complement the state-of-the-art banking operations of the branch. The building has achieved 45 percent energy saving compared to the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard baseline and consumes minimal portable water with the use of a tube well and a pump powered by solar energy, the harvesting of rainwater, and the installation of efficient sanitary fittings. The mechanically ventilated areas of the building are fitted with energy-efficient air conditioners and the carbon dioxide levels of office area are continuously measured to maintain a healthy indoor environment for its occupants.

Commenting on the renovation that earned the building the GBCSL Platinum Rating, Chinthaka Dharmasena, Assistant General Manager - Services, Commercial Bank said: "Sustainability is one of the key pillars of the Bank's corporate agenda, while the preservation of heritage sites and traditions is one of the causes we support through our CSR Trust. Both these aspects were addressed in the renovation of our Galle Fort branch as one of the initiatives to celebrate our centenary year in 2020."