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the mesh solution

THE BEST OF THE BEST GET TOGETHER TO MAKE
BUILDING AND DESIGN PROJECTS MORE EFFICIENT AND LESS COSTLY

IF DEVELOPERS AND HOME-BUILDERS CREATED A WISH-LIST, IT MIGHT LOOK A LOT LIKE THIS:
A SEAMLESS BUILDING PROCESS.
FEWER ERRORS.
LOWER COSTS.
BETTER CO-ORDINATION AMONG ARCHITECTS,
CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS.

No need to wish any longer. This type of integrated project delivery is now a reality in the Caribbean.

Last year, acla:works—a Caribbean-based architecture and interiors firm with head offices in Trinidad and Tobago—realized that the answer to a rapidly declining economy was the opposite of the every-man-for-himself frenzy. With a “better together” outlook, the partners approached a group of companies they had faith in. These were companies with whom they had formed solid working relationships, whether through a shared use of building information modelling (BIM) to help streamline the construction process or

a common desire to see the principles of sustainable design put into practice throughout the Caribbean. Within months of the initial approach, a strategic alliance was formed.

Referred to as Mesh Caribbean, this team has roughly 200 years of combined experience in the design and construction industries. On the team are seven registered architects, four LEED professionals, nine civil and structural engineers, three landscape architects, eight mechanical and electrical engineers, two project managers, three quantity surveyors and two interior designers.

The range of work produced over the years by the firms that make up Mesh Caribbean is staggering in scope and as diverse as the Caribbean itself. Projects include traditional to ultra-modern private residences, “green” resorts to seaside developments, urban spaces to entire city plans. Civil works range from small bridges to expansive highways, power-generating plants

and distribution to sewage treatment facilities, and commercial and institutional buildings—from a stone-and-wood church to a hi-tech government office, like the proposed Environmental Management Authority headquarters in Trinidad, using innovative “green” technology.

Although this list impresses, Mesh’s true appeal lies in its one-stop approach for the client, which leads to money saved and better co-ordination. Typically, when developers commission an architect to design a project, they then have to look for an engineer, a quantity surveyor, a landscape architect, a project manager, and so on—which can lead to costly conflicts. By offering a team of consulting firms with specialists who cover the spectrum of what is needed, Mesh eliminates the hassle of sourcing innovative and capable people for the job. And, since team members are familiar with one another, and Mesh uses state-of-the-art conflict-checking software, many on-the-job conflicts disappear.





TALMA MILL STUDIO



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TALMA MILL STUDIO

Another conflict-busting technique is the use of the BIM design technology. With BIM, the entire building design is computerized from day one—a virtual model replaces a physical one. If one company within the Mesh group changes something on one of these models, that change automatically registers with all other members of the group. This leads to fewer errors and better coordination throughout the construction process, which can yield significant cost- and time-saving benefits for owners. BIM also has a 6D component—sustainability—which means that energy-saving or environmental factors, such as carbon footprint, energy costs, sun angles and building orientation, are considered from the first day of design.

Although Mesh relies heavily on innovation and technology to move projects forward, the personal

relationship with clients—no matter how large or small the project—remains crucial to the group's practice. Brian Lewis, a director of acla:works, noted that "The value Mesh brings is that it provides state-of-the-art project delivery services within the Caribbean."

Gary Turton, another acla:works director, said that "with several members of Mesh having recently won a commission to design new courthouses for the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, above several large international consultants, we feel confident that the future will bring us more successes."

Mesh strives to dispel the notion that beauty and technology; beauty and sustainability; or beauty and innovation are mutually exclusive concepts. Instead, they're better together. M

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THE MESH TEAM COMPRISES:

acla:works (est.1944)—architecture and interiors, LEED professional. acla:works offers innovative design for discerning clients. The firm has expanded to meet the demand of new design challenges and incorporates sustainable design, building information modelling, and integrated project delivery expertise gained through exposure to international contemporary architectural and planning practice.

BBFL Phillips Limited (est. 1992)—civil and structural engineering. BBFL Phillips Ltd is an engineering consultancy geared towards providing services for the purposes of design, supervision, project management and contract administration, and general consultation. BBFL Phillips specializes in large buildings, industries, commercial enterprises, and educational and medical institutions.

ENCO (est. 1970)—mechanical and electrical engineering. ENCO undertakes design services for electrical work, inclusive of all associated light current systems, and mechanical, inclusive of air conditioning, ventilation, plumbing, sprinkler systems and elevators.

idesign Limited (est. 2006)—interior design, LEED professional. idesign Limited prides itself on being a leader in environmentally sensitive and energy efficient design. idesign Limited achieves its clients' goals by designing distinctive interiors that successfully merge place with perception and people with productivity. The idesign portfolio includes residential, commercial, retail, and hospitality projects.

Prime Project Managers Ltd (est. 2000)—project management. Prime Project Managers Ltd is well balanced with sound theoretical, construction, and contractual expertise gained in both the local and international market. The company offers professional services in both project management and construction management.

Skinner & Joseph QS Practice (est. 1979)—quantity surveying. Skinner & Joseph QS Practice is a firm of chartered quantity surveyors. The firm has gained broad experience working on a variety of construction projects, e.g. schools, housing, courthouses, warehouses, churches, banks, office buildings, supermarkets, government buildings.

Talma Mill Studios (est. 1991)—landscape architecture, LEED professional. Talma Mill Studios is a leading Caribbean landscape architectural firm. Since 1991, the firm has been at the forefront of developing Caribbean landscape architecture with a global relevance. Talma Mill Studios specializes in regional projects with an emphasis on hospitality, commercial, and residential villa design.

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.