

# New Vision for Nassau

## New Home for the Central Bank



April 5, 2018

85475



## FOREWORD

The opportunity to transform the City of Nassau is one which is not taken lightly, but one that our collaborative team is eager and well equipped to envision. We have developed a master plan which will reinvigorate a large swath of the downtown district while improving transportation and traffic in the downtown area.

We imagine a design concept that is walkable, refreshing, and bolsters wayfinding and pedestrian avenues, while mitigating vehicular traffic congestion and meeting the needs of the Central Bank of The Bahamas for decades to come. Our vision establishes a public, performance, retail and institutional hub for both visitors and citizens of New Providence Island.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The building that houses the Central Bank of The Bahamas was built in July 1973 to coincide with the inauguration of the independence of The Bahamas from Great Britain. The bank was established a year later to carry out the independent monetary policy and financial sector supervisory functions mandated as an emerging nation. The bank experienced rapid growth over the past 43 years, both in terms of its responsibilities and manpower. As a result, the board of directors has deemed it necessary

to expand the premises bearing in mind the safety and security of it as a National Institution; hence this Master Plan proposal of the Urban Planning and Architectural Design Competition is the first venture into this much needed expansion.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

For decades, the City of Nassau has been considered the financial hub of the Bahamas, and the presence of Central Bank is a testimony to this. It has long enjoyed a vibrant history due to its ideal location near the harbor, which brings in millions of tourists through its maritime cruise ship port of entry. Each who visit love the abundance of rich Bahamian history and hospitality and enjoy a walkable city with a plethora of souvenir and high-end boutique shops, cafes, and the world famous Straw Market. It is for these reasons that our nation must make every effort to revitalize the city to keep up with current demands. Firstly, the acquisition of the historic British Colonial Hilton Hotel was the much-needed catalyst in moving toward rebranding and refurbishing the city's edge. Within the past few years there has been further major expansion west of the British Colonial and the city's edge to include a mega luxury mixed-use development. Secondly, the relocation of the shipping terminals has attributed to the forward path of revitalizing the core of the city. Thirdly, the United States Embassy Nassau has purchased approximately five acres of land for the relocation of their Nassau operations. Finally, and most importantly, Central Bank recognizes that the time has come for them to once again delineate a turning point in celebrating its four plus decades of existence.

Our team of local architects and urban planners have embraced the opportunity to participate in this most significant and prestigious assignment which will not only mark a turning point in Bahamian history, but that of a landmark institutional presence which represents the financial backbone of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and the Bahamian people.

Our team recognized the need to capture as many significant stakeholder groups' input as possible in the overall Planning and Design, thus, as a complement to the information provided by the Competition Brief, the team's strategy was to commence an extensive and intensive physical

analysis of the entire surroundings of the Bank's existing property, together with neighboring properties such as the existing Post Office Complex, the Royal Bahamas Police Force Compound and The Royal Victoria Hotel. Our surveys of the area led us to deduce that reconstruction of the Police Compound is essential, and to that end we have included a new building in our proposed plan.

Our investigations were most helpful in understanding obvious challenges for the Police Force and the compound, but, more importantly, it provided insight on how to incorporate this complex in the overall design scheme.

Our team was also mindful of the Nassau Harbor and Bay Street Renaissance Program report prepared by the Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams Group (EDAW) in the Summer of 2004, along with information that was provided by the National Museum of The Bahamas Antiquities, Monuments & Museums Corporation. Both documents provided

useful information in helping to guide the creation of the vision for the team's Proposed Master Plan. Weeks of extensive ground surveys found the team physically walking the city, which was necessary to fully understand the City's context to create a diligent and thoughtful design.

### **3.0 A NEW VISION FOR DOWNTOWN NASSAU**

Currently, Downtown Nassau, filled with historically significant buildings, is a disorganized convergence of vibrant retail and other services focused on cruise ship tourists, the Bahamas' central government institutions, and cruise port-related local tour operations. The main East-West vehicular connection of the City appears to be Bay Street, which is also where the most attractive shopping opportunities are located. Historic institutional buildings located in *Parliament Square*, such as The House of Parliament, The Senate, and The Supreme Courts, are located on a North-South corridor between Parliament Street and East Street, but they are no longer large enough to satisfy the needs of the institutions they host.

Large numbers of visitors arrive each morning through the cruise port. Some intend to embark on a smaller vessel for a snorkeling or dive trip, while some intend to take a city tour on a local tour bus. Others quite often choose to look for a taxi to take them to a specific destination or an island

tour, while some prefer to rent scooters. Some simply wish to wander around historic downtown Nassau and hopefully enjoy some shopping. All of them, however, face a single congested and somewhat confusing point of connection to the city. Our new vision is based on three main objectives and number of actions in support of the objectives which are as follows:

#### **3.1 OBJECTIVE 1, TOURIST DISTRICT REVITALIZATION**

Consolidate a pedestrian-friendly retail and entertainment district in historic downtown Nassau, roughly delimited by Woods Rogers Walk, Cumberland Street, Duke/Princess/Shirley Streets, and East Street. The retail heart of this district would be a revitalized and reconfigured Bay Street, initially limited by the British Colonial Hotel to the west and East Street to the east. However, the expectation is that because of these actions, the vitality of Bay Street will extend to the east.

#### **3.2 OBJECTIVE 2, HISTORICAL BUILDINGS**

Repurpose the historic institutional buildings in *Parliament Square* and the surrounding area into a public, pedestrian-friendly, high-end restaurant and entertainment cluster along the North-South axis (between Parliament and East Streets), connecting the *horse and carriage* at the port to the south to the historic prison building converted to a museum. Visitors disembarking from cruise ships will encounter a progression of public open pedestrian spaces starting at the *horse and carriage*, flanked by new welcome pavilions, the market plaza (between Woods Rogers Wharf and Bay Street), the historic government buildings now housing high-end restaurants and entertainment venues, across Shirley Street to a new Civic Greenway with entertainment uses facing the new Parliament and Supreme Court buildings. The greenway continues south and further up the hill between these government buildings and across East Hill Street, by the existing post office building (also repurposed for government offices), into an open market surrounding the historic buildings currently used by the Royal Bahamas Police Force, converted into Arts and Crafts studios for local Bahamian Artists and entrepreneurs. The traversed path climaxes at the top of the hill, at the Historic Prison building which will be converted into a Museum.

## 1. TOURIST DISTRICT REVITALIZATION

- ① Welcome Center
- ② Churchill building to be replaced as a new market building
- ③ East Street drop-off point
- ④ Convert buildings to high-end retail and restaurants
- ⑤ Entertainment-related attractions

## 2. NEW CIVIC/ GOVERNMENT CENTER

- ⑦ New Supreme Court
- ⑧ New Parliament Building
- ⑨ New taxi area
- ⑩ Use existing Post Office site for Government Offices
- ⑪ Arts & Crafts Studios
- ⑫ Historic Prison New Museum
- ⑬ New multi-story underground parking structure
- ⑭ New Police Headquarters

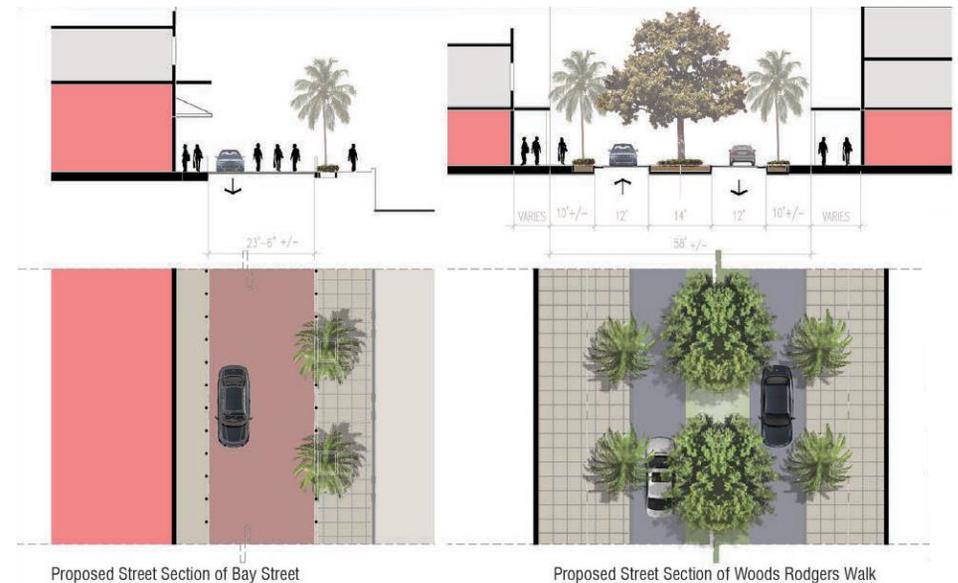
## 3. ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN SPACE ALONG BAY STREET & WOOD RODGERS WALK

- ⑮ Proposed Boulevard with tree canopy changed to two-way traffic
- ⑯ Extended commercial use of Bay Street beyond East Street
- ⑰ Enhanced pedestrian promenade



## 3.3 OBJECTIVE 3, NEW CIVIC CENTER

Consolidate a Civic and Governmental area at *the top of the hill* facing the port to act as a backdrop for the revitalized historic downtown, while separating government-related traffic from the primarily pedestrian traffic at the waterfront retail and entertainment-oriented district, all while placing the new government buildings in locations adjacent to available government-controlled land that will allow for future growth of government facilities and further consolidation of government functions to this location. This district would be roughly delimited by the East-West connectors (consolidated West Hill/Duke/Princess/Shirley corridor and the new proposed School Lane corridor), between Bailou Hill Road and East Street. East Hill Street will become the main communication axis between components of the central government, between the Governor's Residence to the west and the new government center to the east (by East Street), where it intersects the civic greenway connecting to the port.





### 3.4 SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Create a new EAST-WEST primary vehicular connection through the consolidation of the West Hill/Duke/Princess/Shirley corridor and the extended School Lane and its conversion into a second corridor, in order to reduce pressure from local traffic on the waterfront historic district, allowing it to evolve into a pedestrian-friendly environment that will invite disembarking visitors to spend more time in these retail and entertainment areas, which will translate into increased retail revenues and the extension of the Bay Street retail corridor to the east.

- (1) Change the street profile of Bay Street into a Boulevard with a tree canopy. Maintain limited two-way vehicular traffic, but remove on-street parking to provide wider sidewalks that would allow for the placement of urban furniture and pedestrian enjoyment of the enhanced space.
- (2) Change the profile and minimize vehicular traffic flow along Woods Rogers Walk. Convert it to a waterfront tourist attraction by elevating the entire street to make it continuous from the building facades to the

water's edge, where visitors can enjoy bay and ship views and embark on local water based tours, supported by the following:

- o (3) Consolidate a vehicular loop that services the port accessing through Charlotte Street and departing through Parliament Street, to eliminate the need for vehicular traffic along Woods Rogers.
- o (4) After replacing the Churchill building with an open market building, use the space between the new market building and East Street as a taxi and tour bus drop-off so the traffic coming north on East Street returns south on the same street and does not need to enter Woods Rogers. This is of critical importance because it allows for a wide, safe and inviting connection between the port's *horse and carriage* and the North-South Civic Greenway.
- (5) Remove the public restroom building on the corner of Wood Rogers and Parliament to allow a visual and pedestrian connection across Wood Rogers into the Civic Greenway.
- (6) Repurpose the historic House of Parliament, Senate and Supreme Court buildings into high-end retail and restaurant spaces.
- (7) Convert the open space between East and Parliament Streets, south of Shirley into an active attraction garden area.
- (8) Build new Supreme Court and Parliament buildings on the north side of East Hill Street between East and Parliament Streets.
- (9) Repurpose the existing Post Office Building for government support services, generate a taxi area in the south-east corner of East Hill and East Streets, and build a structured parking garage (partially or totally underground) to the southwest of the Post Office building, to serve the government complex.
- (10) Convert the historic buildings currently used by the Police into a series of arts and crafts studios, where visitors can see the artists in process and purchase their works as they meander through a revitalized open space surrounding the group of buildings.
- (11) Convert the Historic Prison building into a Museum that will inform visitors on essential elements of the history of the Bahamas, its culture and its people.
- (12) Design and construct a new police headquarters facility to the west of the Historic Prison Museum.



# The Central Bank of the Bahamas

## New Home

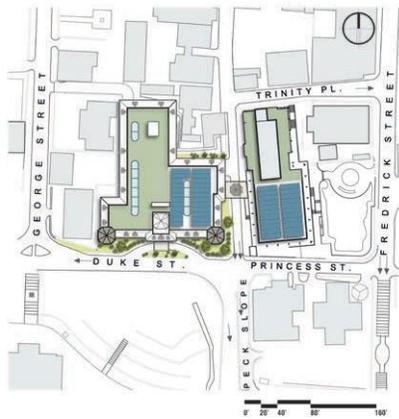


## 4.0 A NEW HOME FOR THE CENTRAL BANK

### 4.1 DESIGN CONCEPT AND DESCRIPTION

As the *financial hub* of Nassau and the Commonwealth, our overarching design concept was based on constructing the new Central Bank while maximizing utilization of and reinventing the current site. The location continues the historic landmark presence of the current Central Bank in the heart of Nassau, and the new building and underground parking provides the required flexibility and expandability. Adjacency to other important buildings such as the Government House continues uninterrupted.

### 4.2 SITE CONCEPT



The design of the Central Bank creates an area of both prominence and, most importantly, security. The building setback for the proposed new bank is recessed, which enhances security through the placement of discrete yet effective barriers, bollards and curbing. The placement of the building allows for the development of formal approaches and entries, befitting of dignitaries and the public at large.

The site is efficiently composed, and a connecting bridge will join the new and the existing banks.

While our team considered an above grade parking garage during our concept effort, we felt it important to utilize the topography of the site and to fulfill a desire for the bank to serve as an aesthetic landmark. This deliberation led us to construct an underground parking garage. This garage also allows for direct access into the new Central Bank, providing an additional layer of convenience and security for those who enter.



### 4.3 CAPTURING THE SPIRIT OF THE BAHAMAS THROUGH DESIGN

The design of the new Central Bank is based on establishing a landmark building on a landmark site. In taking design cues from traditional Bahamian architecture, the team has added new textures, materials and finishes to advance Bahamian design to parallel the vision and forward motion of the new Central Bank.

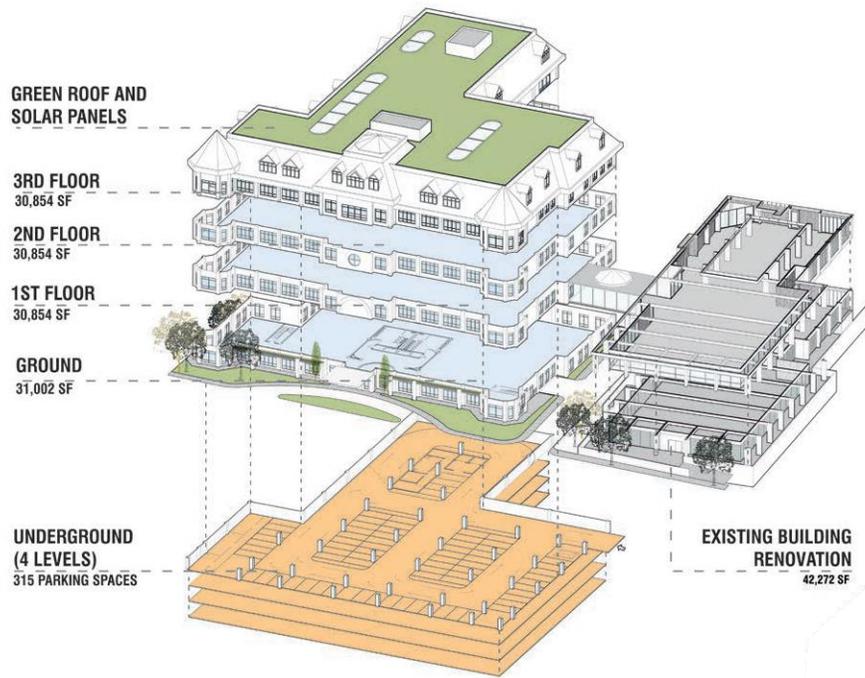
The building is organized around a formal entry, with public functions occurring on lower floors and executive, governmental and ceremonial functions located on upper floors, where unparalleled views will be found. Two building cores provide vertical transportation, a public core and a second secured core to the 315-car parking garage.

Much of the lower floors in the new building will be dedicated to public use, including museum and performance spaces.

### 4.4 REPURPOSING THE CURRENT BANK

Our design concept celebrates the history of the current bank by refurbishing it to retain many of its more secure functions. We believe that it is programmatically appropriate to retain these departments in place. This concept provides additional capacity and flexibility within the new bank building, complying with the goal of future expandability.

## 5.0 COST, PHASING AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



### Building Areas:

New Central Bank Building	123,564 Square Feet
Repurposing of Former Bank Building	42,272 Square Feet
	<hr/>
	165,836 Square Feet
Parking Garage	315-Car Capacity

See separate cost estimate for additional information and cost clarifications

### 5.1 COST STRATEGY AND BUILDING GROSS AREA TABULATIONS:

With our design, we recognize that there are a myriad of construction elements and phases, which is expected of such a far-reaching and regional planning solution. For the purposes of our construction

estimate we have preliminarily developed construction estimates for the totality of the Central Bank, the underground Parking, and refurbishment of the former bank. Other remaining scope can be addressed as the design unfolds. A preliminary estimate of construction cost is provided under separate cover.

### 5.2 PROJECT PHASING AND DESIGN/ CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

As the recommended site for the new Central Bank is secured by the Central Bank, we anticipate that design and construction can proceed at once, potentially on a “fast track” schedule, where the garage, core and shell are developed while intensive stakeholder input is received for the interior construction of the bank. We believe that this strategy will accelerate time to occupancy.

Our phasing intent is to construct the new building, and as departments decant to the Central Bank, we will provide targeted refurbishments to the current Central Bank building

For the other components of our comprehensive plan, i.e. roadway and sidewalk improvements, Governmental center and retail components, and repurposed buildings, we will work closely with the Government and stakeholders to develop a logical and effective series of discreet projects.

Our intent is to commence further design immediately upon announcement of the winner on May 11 and successful negotiations as to terms. We believe that the design process for the bank can be completed to tender documents within eight months of notice to proceed, and that other elements of the concept design can be completed as negotiations and financing allow.

Ultimately, we envision that occupancy of the bank can occur by Spring 2021.

### 5.3 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Our team, many of whom are LEED-accredited, fully support and appreciate the foresight of the Central Bank in commissioning a building which is LEED Platinum. As architects and stewards of the environment, we believe that every project should be as sustainable as possible. This includes careful attention to operating and energy costs, which reflects the mission of the Central Bank to best represent the investments of the Commonwealth.

As local architects and designers, we have spent our professional lives understanding both the joys and the hardships of our local climactic conditions. Our design product includes not only energy-efficient and sustainable buildings, but ways in which to actively reduce energy consumption through capturing solar energy and other sustainable solutions. Our design concept includes ways in which to improve vehicular traffic and to enhance pedestrian pathways, and will include sustainable elements wherever possible.

### 6.0 THE PATH FORWARD

As with any competition submission, development of the design is limited to a snapshot in time. Our concepts and ideas, while groundbreaking, do not reflect the entirety of a diverse and engaged stakeholder and citizen group.

Accordingly, should we be the selected team, we fully appreciate and look forward to collaborating with stakeholders including the Bank, the Owner's representatives, and external experts, along with other groups such as governmental and citizen committees and advocates, to refine our design concept and to collaboratively evolve the design process.



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION