

Executive Summary

A brief review of Bahamian Monetary Regulatory Management of the 1919 Currency Board, from the establishment of the Central Bank of the Bahamas in 1974 suggests a common thread of change and futuristic ambitions.

This report supports our design submission for a contemporary home for the Central Bank, which has outgrown its existing premises between Frederick and Market Streets. In addition, and in support of the building initiative, a rejuvenation exercise is included to reimagine the urban areas surrounding the proposed East Hill Street location of the new bank building.

The report is laid out in two broad areas as follows:-

- The Urban Design Project
- The New Central Bank Building (CBOB)

URBAN DESIGN

Cities are never finished. They are in an ongoing state of evolution and change and Nassau is no different. We consider it our mission to bring fresh eyes to issues facing development, circulation, and public open space to help Nassau find and act on opportunities for positive change that may have otherwise been overlooked or taken for granted over time. We hope that some of these ideas will fuel future discussions and an evolution of Nassau that continues to strengthen ties to its history while raising excitement for future possibilities. This proposal for positive change in Nassau on East Hill Street is the first draft of a design that would take months of on the ground observation, testing, face to face engagement, and negotiation between stakeholders.

The East Hill Street Master Plan has been designed with the following 10 Principles mind:

1. Take advantage of the existing topography to create a reinvented public place along ridge that is East Hill Street.

Topography plays such a strong role in the urban fabric. It leads us down to the waterfront and creates a ceremonial ascension to significant places that orient and structure our routines. At the human scale, we experience the effects of topography in dense urban conditions every time we pass a retaining wall or notice that shop fronts and addresses vary in elevation from the spaces within their buildings.

2. Promote the New Hill Streets Space will be the premiere address for Government and Culture in Nassau.

Day to day operations within Government Systems often face challenges of coordination and communication. Silos that contain each arm federal and municipal agencies can operate

much better if they are able to share space in the city where informal collaboration can occur.
+The New Hill Streets Space would be that type of environment.

3. Encourage development programming along the New Hill Streets Space that defines the ridge as a destination that unites the life of the harbor with the communities to the south. The mixed population that this strategy would promote would help strengthen the visitor, government, and community ties and would yield a more resilient socio-economic condition.
4. Protect and Preserve sensitive landscapes while promoting integrated landscape/infrastructure strategies.
While new planting strategies would be introduced into the public realm throughout the district, respecting the existing and working to strengthen its role in open space is critical. We recommend developing a permaculture approach to the New Hill Streets Space and other areas influenced by growth and development.
5. Vehicular movements that once moved through the Hill Streets will now loop around the New Hill Streets Space, keeping it predominantly car free.
Across the world pedestrian environments where are emerging where they were once unthinkable. This strategy creates a great public space while simultaneously organizing and improving circulation in the district. We have seen this strategy lead to a higher quality of life in the public realm and higher property values in adjacent plots.
6. Develop street-end parklets on north/south streets that terminate at the New Hill Streets Space such that they help orient and attract pedestrians to the ridge.
Parklets serve to visually draw pedestrians up the hill to the New Hill Streets Space and given that they are many, they can carry individualistic features that make each one unique to its location and the community it welcomes.
7. Develop green infrastructure solutions in the streetscapes leading to/from the New Hill Streets Space.
The landscape of Nassau is indicative of its climate, yet along some routes in the district, the streets are often left hard and uninviting. Introducing green infrastructure into the streetscape would soften its visual impact, mitigate heat gain, and help cleanse stormwater as it runs off away from the ridge in both the north and south directions.
8. Feature the natural stone walls as a unique part of the landscape, and not just dividers between topographically challenged conditions.
Not one piece of natural stone is exactly like another. The walls required throughout the district are part of its defining characteristics. We would like to re-think the walls wherever possible to create opportunities for engaging them in a tactile way throughout the areas associated with the New Hill Streets Space.
9. Plan development opportunities in sites adjacent to the New Hill Streets Space to promote the Government and Cultural mission of the Bahamas and the Central Bank of the Bahamas.

Zoning the areas that will benefit most from investments into the New Hill Streets Space will help support its vitality and will ensure that it promotes the highest quality of life for its properties.

10. Establish a clear phasing strategy that allows for positive change with minimal disruption to existing operations in the district.

Change needs to be embraced as a positive event in the lives of those in the community affected by construction. Far too often, it is overlooked that businesses and peoples' daily routines suffer during long periods of construction. We propose strategies for the event of construction that we hope people will miss once the projects are completed.

Circulation

The governing orders of our cities are our streets, and they are the lifeblood of our economy, culture, and communities. They are our busiest public places and they define the character and quality of our addresses. If there is a desire to improve the city, it must first address how we move through the city. Our proposal considers East and West Hill Streets as one New Hill Streets Space. It is shaped to become Nassau's most prominent and diverse public place. We plan to honor historic places such as Gregory's Arch and the Queens Staircase while adding new places to complement new development and its demands. It is intended to dramatically increase the green landscape of New Hill Streets Space, move cars from the uphill side of development to the down=hill side and take advantage of falling topography for structured parking.

Open Space

There are few cities in the world as fortunate as Nassau when it comes to climate. The ability to seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor life blurs the line between public and private and allows for endless opportunities in the public realm. While the governing order of our cities are formed by our circulation networks, the value that a well-defined open space network gives to a city pays back on both social and economic terms. The natural ridge that runs east to Fort Fincastle is host to East and West Hill Streets. We propose that a lush, accessible, art-filled pedestrian corridor, the New Hill Streets Space, replace the vehicular right of way, becomes the spine of the district. This newly designed public place will honor and preserve history while taking advantage of new opportunities driven by new and infill development along its edges. It will feature many small nuanced spaces and moments that take advantage of each natural and built condition that is unique along the way. We foresee the New Hill Streets Space as a destination that unites visitors, local employees, and the communities to the south. In order to do so it must feature authentic offerings that satisfies a diverse population of users. Parklets, small plazas, paths, and green infrastructure will define the character of the long green movement that runs along the ridge.

New Development Opportunities

Development drives economic growth and prosperity and allows municipalities to re-invest in their local seats. Planning development in historic places is a sensitive task. Preservation requires higher up-front costs, but integrated adaptive re-use and infill development among authentically Bahamian context will pay off in the long term by preserving the unique qualities of place that Nassau has become known for. We expect the bigger programs that are being developed during this design stage to serve as icons in the near term. If we're successful at creating an environment that balances the excitement for the new with the honor of the past, we can continue to add to the timeless qualities of Nassau. We see opportunity east of Market Street and north of Gaol Alley to consolidate and improve grounds currently used for municipal purposes. As those properties are re-planned, we will attempt to free up properties immediately adjacent to the New Hill Streets Space so that high valued real estate can pay the city back for its services and contribute to overall improvements in the built fabric of Nassau.

THE NEW CENTRAL BANK BUILDING (CBOB)

The design, bank and urban project area plays to this perceived change and futuristic energy by imaging a new East Hill Street destination as noted in the urban design segment of this report, with great public spaces, mixed use, and numerous development opportunities. One look at the design of the new CBOB building confirms that a serious effort is about to begin to achieve these objectives and the building design is intended to create momentum for urban renewal and enthusiasm to jumpstart the re-birth of its location. It was this consideration that drove new CBOB design intended to raise excitement and expectations for possibilities as an instrument of positive change.

This first draft of the conceptual design of the CBOB building and the wider project area once accepted would obviously require further consultation with the various stakeholders and property owners during the design development of the project.

The new CBOB building will occupy the site of the existing Post Office building which is set to be demolished to accommodate the new building. The project consists of the main bank building. The building which encompasses seven floors, including a basement intended to accommodate executive parking, and high security areas dedicated to the armoured and other security vehicular traffic required for the operation of this highly specialized project.

The top floor of the building is occupied by management executives of CBOB.

Three example floors including the basement are set out to demonstrate the functionality of the floor plates.

Support functions are housed in an Annex wing next to the main building.

Employees parking is to be accommodated in a three story parkade located at the southern boundary of the site. It is intended to provide operational power for the garage and annex buildings via an array of solar panels mounted in the top parkade deck of the garage

The building is oriented to embrace the encompassing views out and over the downtown areas towards the harbor and ocean beyond.

A low energy glazing system is used to bring this incredible view in sharp focus to the building users.

This glazed north facing facade is energy enhanced by incorporating a metal sunscreen into the glazing mullions.

It is suggested that the site opposite CBOB be given consideration to the location of a new Parliament building, and the historic, ancient gardens of the old Royal Victoria Hotel be restored to provide one of the many green spaces in our urban design section.

To accommodate the expected influx of people visits to this re-energized area of the city it is suggested that a transport terminus be provided East of CBOB and is shown in our design document.

The design had two main objectives: -

- To conceptualize a building with a unique and arresting design ethos, while offering an exciting, pleasant and functional work environment for the end users of the project.
- A visual announcement that this area is about to experience epiphany and re-birth.

The resulting 150,000 square foot facility will feature state-of-the-art and energy efficient modern mechanical and electrical systems. All main systems will be housed in the basement below six floors of office space and totally concealed. The facility designed for 250 plus employees will feature low energy lighting connected to motion sensors which will automatically shut down the lighting in unoccupied areas and ventilation in place and some parking in the basement, will be fitted with best-in-industry smart building technology. All electrical and mechanical systems will be designed in accordance with ASHREA, NFPA and the Bahamas Building Codes most recent requirements and shall be the most modern and cost effective systems available to date. This building will be operated by efficient systems.

Lighting systems will be best-in-industry approved. Automated light controls will be Lutron based. With a methodical energy management system, lighting in unoccupied spaces will automatically turn off.

This management will also monitor air condition and solar systems ensuring maximum efficiency of the Central Bank building. In addition, HVAC, the cooling systems will be Geothermal based with all indoor air quality and fresh air requirements being met. The system will be VAV based and shall be managed by an energy management system.

Water will be treated, pressurized and supplied to the various facilities. Hot water will be available in washrooms and various offices. The hot water will be generated from solar or Geothermal processes from the air-conditioning. All pumping systems will be located in the basement and in the mechanical spaces. All equipment will be air-conditioned to ensure longevity of all mechanical and electrical systems.

All waste management systems will be done by a NUDisk and waste will be processed to use the grey water for irrigation system and others. All storm drain water will be managed and stored and where practical, use for irrigation to minimized water use.

Life safety systems, complete fire suppression will cover the offices as well as car parking garage areas. Smoke controls and alarms will be installed where appropriate. The fire alarm and security systems will be throughout.

It is suggested that the existing Central Bank building should be reused as the new National Library and Museum of the Bahamas.

Statement of Probable Cost

Given the proposed scope of work and the unknown offices and departmental adjacencies and flow, the cost of this project is estimated to be in the range of forty million dollars.

While there have been governmental announcements of the intention to demolish the existing Post Office Building to accommodate the new CBOB, which currently occupies the proposed site it is noted that demolition costs of the building are not factored into the construction budget estimate.

Due to the fact that, the building will be a purpose built structure solely for the Central Bank of the Bahamas, there are certain construction and design guidelines that must be adhered to, in addition to the specialized equipment and fit out required. Based on the complexities of the project, it that the total construction schedule from groundbreaking to completion will be a minimum of 24-months.

The overall construction cost of this project is as follows:

General Requirements	\$ 4,500,000.00
Sitework	\$ 1,050,000.00
Concrete	\$12,850,000.00
Masonry	\$ 850,000.00
Metals	\$ 785,000.00
Wood and Plastic	\$ 540,000.00
Thermal and Moisture Protection	\$ 2,450,000.00
Doors and Windows	\$ 3,220,000.00
Finishes	\$ 2,740,000.00
Specialities	\$ 3,000,000.00

Equipment	\$ 1,200,000.00	
Furnishings	NIC	
Special Construction	\$ 310,000.00	
Conveying Systems	\$ 95,000.00	
Mechanical	\$ 3,500,000.00	
Electrical	\$ 3,050,000.00	
BUILDING COST:	\$40,140,000.00	

Whilst pricing for the proposed urban redesign initiative has not been formally priced due to the many unknowns, i.e stakeholders participation, a preliminary budgetary estimate for this portion of the development would be in the range of fifty to eighty million dollars.

Obviously these numbers are very preliminary, and more reliable figures emerge as the design is fleshed out.

End CBOB Preliminary Design Report.