

THE CENTRAL BANK OF THE BAHAMAS
URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
COMPETITION BRIEF



COMPETITOR NO. 47852
APRIL 2018

URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL BRIEF

CONTENTS

- 1.0 OVERVIEW AND GOALS
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Economic Revitalisation
 - 1.3 Bahamian Heritage and Civic Pride
 - 1.4 Road Traffic Improvements
 - 1.5 New Buildings

- 2.0 URBAN PLANNING
 - 2.1 Prince George Dock
 - 2.2 Rawson Square
 - 2.3 Parliament Square Historic Centre
 - 2.4 Royal Victoria Gardens
 - 2.5 New Parliament Complex
 - 2.6 East Hill Street
 - 2.6 Over The Hill Development Area
 - 2.8 Performing Arts Centre
 - 2.9 Government House
 - 2.10 George Street
 - 2.11 Bay Street
 - 2.12 Fort Fincastle and the Queen's Staircase
 - 2.13 Former Central Bank Building
 - 2.14 Government Campus

- 3.0 CENTRAL BANK OF THE BAHAMAS
 - 3.1 Context
 - 3.2 Entrance and External Space
 - 3.3 Interior Space
 - 3.4 Construction
 - 3.5 Low Energy and Sustainability
 - 3.6 LEED Green Building Rating System

- 4.0 COSTS AND PHASING
 - 4.1 Budget Cost Estimates
 - 4.1 Construction Schedule and Phasing

1.0 OVERVIEW AND GOALS

1.1 Introduction

The urban design strategy aims to revitalise the economy and culture of Nassau on both sides of the Hill. It does this by developing and using the resources of the city: the historic buildings, the streets and spaces, and the harbour.

However, while respecting history, the master plan and proposed buildings would look to the future, and not the colonial past.

1.2 Economic Revitalisation

This project provides a grand opportunity to revitalise the area by bringing much-needed investment to stimulate economic activity and development south of East Hill Street. The area contains much empty land and derelict buildings which this scheme brings into use, thus allowing central Nassau to expand southwards and to remove the stigma attached to this area. Access is provided to landlocked sites to create conditions for development.

The aim is to make better use of existing resources for the benefit of all. In some cases this may require radical planning with the relocation of certain activities, and the possible demolition of buildings that no longer fit the current conditions.

1.3 Bahamian Heritage And Civic Pride

The story of the Bahamas is unique, and the aim of this project is to tell part of the story through the historic buildings of Nassau, to foster civic pride, and to set the stage for a vibrant economy and culture.

Historic buildings are important for Bahamians to understand their heritage, but they are also important for tourists to enjoy and understand the story of the Bahamas. We propose a looping walk of about one mile to pass by the main historic buildings of Nassau.

The proposed new buildings for the Parliamentary Complex and Central Bank reflect our history, but are also contemporary and forward-looking, emblematic of a country with a proud place in the modern world.

1.4 Road Traffic Improvements

The aim is to make the city of Nassau more pedestrian friendly and accessible. A proper traffic study should be implemented, but for this urban design we present ideas that we feel, intuitively, will work.

Most of the car parking would be removed from Bay Street, to be available in other locations nearby. Jitneys and taxis would also be stationed nearby.

The eastern end of East Hill Street would be closed, and an existing road would be extended to link East Hill Street to Gaol Alley, thus forming a new access road to East Hill Street, and to several sites that are currently inaccessible. Gaol Alley would be widened to improve east-west link between East Street and Market Street.

1.5 New Buildings

The goal of the project is for new buildings that not only fit into townscape, but are also efficient, sustainable, and economical to construct, maintain, and operate.

The Post Office is in dangerous structural condition and is to be demolished. The site would then be amalgamated with the southern half of the Royal Victoria site, which overlooks the centre of Nassau. This area would be ideal and appropriate for the future Parliament Complex. Furthermore, the new US Embassy site is nearby, on the east side of East Street, which will add further to the gravitas and general scaling-up of the area.

The site between the Post Office and the old East Hill Street Club, which is currently undergoing renovation, is proposed for the new Central Bank.

2.0 URBAN PLANNING

2.1 Prince George Dock

Prince George Dock is one of the first impressions of Nassau for thousands of tourists arriving by cruise ship. It is however, crowded, and more space would be made available by moving the eastern half of the Welcome Centre to the western half, and to the old Customs House adjacent. The space would be further opened up by the demolition and relocation of the Port Authority.

The proposal is for a more open space with dramatic views of the harbour, forming a hub for access to Woodes Rogers Walk to the west, the Boardwalk to the east, and Rawson Square to the south. Thus Prince George Dock would become a stronger focus of tourist-related activity.

2.2 Rawson Square

Rawson Square is a valuable public space, accommodating public exhibitions and performances. It is, however, too small and too enclosed, and this proposal demolishes the building to the north and the public lavatories, which will be relocated. The aim is to enlarge the square, and open it up to the north, thus reinstating dramatic views of the harbour. The planting and hardscaping would be completely renewed, and the bust of Sir Milo Butler moved to the proposed Bahamas Heroes Park at the top of Parliament Street.

The Churchill Building is in poor condition, and we feel that it should be demolished and replaced with a new building to match the scale of Scotia Bank opposite, which would reinforce the spatial integrity of the square. This new building could accommodate the Ministry of Tourism. The Adderley Building would stay.

2.3 Parliament Square Historic Centre

Parliament Square extends northward with several important historic buildings and monuments forming the Historic Centre of Nassau: -

- House of Assembly (1805)
- Senate (1813)
- Hansard Building (1805)
- Queen Victoria Statue (1905)
- Supreme Court (1921)

- The Cenotaph (1925)
- Garden of Remembrance (1950)
- Nassau Public Library and Old Gaoler's Residence (1799)

The House of Assembly and Senate Buildings are still in use, but are woefully inadequate for current needs, with insufficient accommodation for meeting rooms, Members' offices, staff offices, security, and the media. They cannot be enlarged, and so the parliamentary functions should be relocated to a new Parliament Complex.

We suggest that these buildings become the National Museum of the Bahamas. They would remain as at present, but accessible to the public, and with a permanent display describing the main events in the history of parliamentary democracy in the Bahamas.

We propose that the Supreme Court is extended and renovated to provide the additional space and reconfiguration that it requires. The lower courts would be relocated close to Fox Hill where prisoners can attend without the disruption of travelling into town.

The Nassau Public Library and adjacent Old Gaoler's Residence would be renovated and used for Archives, Reference Library, and Public Library. The old cells in the basement, with their early 19th Century graffiti, would be made accessible to the public.

The landscaped areas between these building would be renovated with new paving and planting.

2.4 Royal Victoria Gardens

A new public garden of about 2 acres will be formed on the northern half of the Royal Victoria site, adjacent to the New Parliament Square to the south. The historic silk cotton tree would be preserved, and the garden will bring greenery and tranquility into the centre of the city.

There are two historic buildings to be preserved, Zion Baptist Church (1835), and Curry House (1890). The remaining buildings have little practical or historic value, and would be demolished, providing more space for the gardens.

2.5 New Parliament Complex

The Post Office building is to be demolished, and by closing the eastern section of East Hill Street, the site would be amalgamated with the southern half of Royal Victoria site, thus forming a site of about 2.5 acres to accommodate the new Parliament Complex. The site is adjacent to the Police Compound, and is in a prominent position, on axis with Government House, and the historic government buildings on Bay Street.

The new Parliament Complex would accommodate: -

- House of Assembly and Senate
- Cabinet Office
- Offices and meeting rooms for the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Members and Senators, Chief Clerk, administrative staff and accommodation for the media.

We propose a square in front of the buildings large enough for the ceremonial State Opening of Parliament and other state occasions.

Car parking for members and senior parliamentary officials would be under the whole site, with access from East Street and Parliament Street, providing secure and protected parking.

2.6 East Hill Street

East Hill Street would form the northern edge of an area designated for development, with Government House to the west, the Parliament Complex to the east.

The eastern end of East Hill Street would be closed off and a new Bahamas Heroes Park built at the top of Parliament Street. This would display the busts of prominent Bahamians in a dignified setting, an oasis of shade trees and fountains.

The existing Post Office car park would be used to accommodate the Central Bank of The Bahamas. This is described in detail in a later section of this document. There is a BPL substation to the east of the old East Hill Street Club that will be relocated.

2.7 Over The Hill Development Area

A new link road would be built going south from East Hill Street to Gaol Alley, providing better access to East Hill Street, but also releasing extensive landlocked properties for commercial development.

The southwestern part of the site could be used for car parking, taxi parking and a bus station providing Park and Ride to downtown.

2.8 Performing Arts Centre

The Performing Arts Centre is located on the new link road with use of the Central Bank car park. The advantages of being located on a separate site are: -

- Avoids conflict with office users.
- Area for future enlargement.
- Access for servicing
- Space for storage and workshops.

2.9 Government House

The Windsor Wing on the west of Government House, was built in 1940 and is of great historic interest, and particularly as it relates to the romantic story of the Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Wallis-Simpson. It has, however, fallen into disrepair and we propose that it be refurbished and opened to the public, with a screened access from East Hill Street through Government House grounds.

From the Windsor Wing, the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas is a short walk along West Hill Street, which according to Gail Saunders in the book, Nassau's Historic Landmarks, was 'Once described as 'the most beautiful street in the Caribbean''. Unfortunately, it no longer deserves this accolade, but is nevertheless very pleasant and of much historical interest.

2.10 George Street

George Street is also very picturesque, except for two derelict buildings at the southern end, and makes an interesting route back to Bay Street from Government House, and past Christ Church Cathedral.

2.11 Bay Street

Bay Street will remain with two lanes for access to downtown Nassau and eastern New Providence from the west. We propose to make Bay Street more pedestrian-friendly, by reducing parking, widening sidewalks, and forming drop-off points for disabled access. This will retain the space for Junkanoo, and facilitate the erection of the bleachers.

The buildings on Bay Street are typically of two-storeys, once used by dockside enterprises, and they now provide space for different businesses and activities. These simple buildings, together with the colonnaded sidewalk, give Bay Street a unique and distinctive character that should be preserved. However, many buildings and sidewalks are in need of extensive maintenance and refurbishment.

The proposal includes new sidewalks and street furniture, extensive planting and shade trees. Park and Ride (or walk) from nearby parking areas will be provided. Jitney and taxis drive through Bay Street to pick up and drop off, but no waiting.

2.12 Fort Fincastle and the Queen's Staircase

This is a busy tourist area, with a street market at the base of the water tower. However, it is dirty and congested, with poor access and inadequate parking for jitney. This area will require a full study before planning proposals can be put forward.

2.13 Former Central Bank Building

The former Central Bank building could be refurbished for offices or civil courts. The car park on the western side of Market Street could accommodate a three-level car park for public use, with excellent access to Bay Street.

2.14 Government Campus

While the Government Campus could be located in the proposed Development Area, we feel it would be better located outside of the City, except for those functions essential for Parliament and perhaps the Chief Justice. Furthermore, the Government Complex will have offices for all Members, and therefore Ministers will no longer need to be close to their ministries when Parliament is sitting.

There is already an embryonic Government Campus developing on JFK, with Ministry of Public Works, Office of the AG and Ministry of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development. This area is also close to the current Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministries of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, and the University of the Bahamas.

There is plenty of land available off JFK and good access from East and West New Providence. We suggest that it is an ideal location for other government ministries.

3.0 CENTRAL BANK OF THE BAHAMAS

3.1 Context

The design for the new Central Bank building was articulated to reduce its apparent mass, and limited to three-storeys with pitched roofs. This respects the scale of the neighbouring East Hill Street Club, which will accommodate another government agency, Jacaranda House, and also Government House.

The Central Bank would be approached from Parliament Street from the North, and the new road to Gaol Alley will allow good access from East St. and Market St. to the south.

The façade has louvered colonnades to match the adjacent buildings, but uses these elements in a contemporary manner. The architecture of the buildings also expresses the authority and dignity of the Central Bank of the Bahamas, and conveys an image of forward-looking, security and constancy.

3.2 Entrance And External Spaces

The main elevations of the Central Bank are formed by louvered colonnades, providing shade while also allowing view out from the building, towards the city and the harbour.

The main entrance to the Central Bank Building is from East Hill Street through a forecourt that is large enough to display sculptures. From there, staff and visitors enter the Central Bank reception in a dramatic triple height, top lit atrium.

The forecourt also provides direct access to the Museum, Art Gallery, and other public facilities located in the northern wings of the building. The users of these facilities have no need to enter the Central Bank administrative areas.

Car parking is at a lower level to the south and under the building, with stairs and elevator to the main floor level.

3.3 Interior Spaces

There is an interior courtyard that will bring light and greenery into the center of building, with spectacular views to the south, and provide a quiet area adjacent to the offices. This enhances the office environment, and together with the shaded colonnade on East Hill Street, is part of the sustainable design strategy.

The interior spaces will use and display objects and artwork created by local artists and artisans.

The office areas are based on a 12.5 ft. grid, which allows flexibility for sub-division into cellular offices, meeting rooms, and open plan workstations. Internal partitions would be glazed, so that 90% of the office area has views to the outside. The two southern wings are link with a glazed corridor to facilitate good internal circulation

All areas would be wheelchair accessible, with doors, corridors and restroom facilities in accordance with the requirements of Bahamas Building Code.

There would be stacked interior cores for elevators, stairs, restrooms and plant rooms. Fire escape stairs and fire sprinkler systems will be provided as required by the Code.

3.4 Construction

The proposed construction takes into account of cost, speed and sustainable materials, which would be long-lasting and low maintenance.

Local material will be favoured, such as Abaco Pine for wood finishes and fixtures, and Eleuthera Limestone stone for internal feature wall cladding. We would also want to use local fabricators wherever possible for metal components and millwork.

A steel frame structure is proposed with permanent steel formwork and poured concrete slabs for sustainability, rather than pre-cast concrete planks.

The external walls are clad in limestone with aluminum framed windows and doors. The exterior columns and louvers would be marine grade aluminum for low-maintenance. The final choice of materials would be guided by LEED ratings.

3.5 Low Energy And Sustainability

The Building uses simple and effective means to reduce energy consumption, particularly relating to solar gain, such as high performance, insulated low-E external glazing, louvres and shade trees.

Solar panels will be integrated in the pitch roof covering, and the electricity generated will be used to run the building, with any surplus supplied to the main grid.

It is expected that the building will require little water from the city supply. Consumption would be minimized with water efficient fixtures, and there would be rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling. Planting would be mostly native, drought-tolerant, species, requiring the minimum irrigation.

Paper and plastic waste recycling systems are included.

3.6 LEED Green Building Rating System

We aim to gain LEED Gold Certification, with credits under the following topics: -

- Sustainable Site
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere
- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Innovation in Design
- Regional Priority

Furthermore, the design team will include a LEED Accredited Professional to guide all aspects of the project towards healthful, durable, affordable and environmentally sound practices in building design and construction.

4.0 COSTS AND PHASING

4.1 Budget Cost Estimates

A simple budget based on square foot rates: -

Urban Design	AREA		RATE	COST EST
Bay Street sidewalk and landscaping improvements (1,300ft)	26,000	sqft	\$50 /sqft	\$1,300,000
Prince George Dock renewal	45,000	sqft	\$25 /sqft	\$1,125,000
Rawson Square renewal	40,000	sqft	\$20 /sqft	\$800,000
Parliament Square refurbishments	40,000	sqft	\$20 /sqft	\$800,000
Royal Victoria Gardens	55,000	sqft	\$20 /sqft	\$1,100,000
Bahamas Heroes Park	20,000	sqft	\$25 /sqft	\$500,000
New road to Gaol Alley (750ft)	22,500	sqft	\$8 /sqft	\$144,000
Widen Gaol Alley (1,300sqft)	13,000	sqft	\$10 /sqft	\$130,000
Multi-storey car park opp Central Bank	70,000	sqft	\$100 /sqft	\$7,000,000
TOTAL				\$12,899,000
Central Bank of The Bahamas				
Main Building	135,000	sqft	\$300 /sqft	\$40,500,000
Fit out	135,000	sqft	\$125 /sqft	\$16,875,000
Open car parking	120,000	sqft	\$10 /sqft	\$1,200,000
Covered car parking	40,000	sqft	\$60 /sqft	\$2,400,000
Performing Arts Centre	15,000	sqft	\$300 /sqft	\$4,500,000
TOTAL				\$65,475,000

The construction of the proposed Parliament Complex is not included, as it would require further briefing and design beyond the scope of this project.

4.2 Construction Schedule and Phasing

Central Bank

The proposed site for the new Central Bank Building is unoccupied, and by fast tracking the project, we anticipate that construction could start on site within three months of appointment of the architect and consultants, and approval of the brief.

Based on a simple steel structure, the building is designed to be quick to construct. It would be fitted-out and ready of occupancy within 24 months of the site start.

The other parts of the project, i.e. demolition of the Post Office, new Bahamas Heroes Park, and road extension to Gaol Alley would be completed within this 24-month period.

Urban Design

Phasing and scheduling the Urban Design is more complicated, and there must be further discussions with various Government Departments and stakeholders.