

U.S. EMBASSY MEXICO CITY



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Detail of Pedro Reyes,
Tlacuilolli, 2022–2025,
oil on amate paper



The United States embassy in Mexico City represents far more than a diplomatic facility. It is a tangible expression of the depth of the U.S.-Mexico relationship, one of the most consequential bilateral relationships in the world, with a direct and daily impact on the lives of millions of Americans and Mexicans. The embassy is a place built for the work of modern diplomacy and the new era of U.S. foreign policy, one that is guided by clarity, cooperation, and results. From here, we advance cooperation, foster shared prosperity, and help shape a safer, stronger, and more prosperous future for our two nations.

Ronald Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, February 2026

The new U.S. Embassy Mexico City is a secure, modern, and highly efficient facility that reinforces a strong U.S. presence in Mexico while underscoring our enduring commitment to protecting U.S. interests and advancing diplomatic engagement. Designed to meet the complex operational demands of one of the largest and busiest U.S. diplomatic missions in the world, the embassy will bring together 39 U.S. government agencies and more than 1,700 personnel previously spread across multiple locations throughout the city. This landmark project is the result of the long hours, expertise, and craftsmanship of approximately 3,000 men and women, and it stands as a testament to the very best of American architecture, innovation, and partnership. The new embassy will serve the people of the United States and Mexico for generations to come.

James Feltman, Director, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, February 2026



CONTENTS

Architecture as Diplomacy	7
Local Influences	8
Project Overview and Design Vision	11
Site Plan	15
Consular Area	19
Chancery Area	20
Building Organization	25
Central Courtyard	26
Interior Gardens	29
Art in Embassies	31
Embedded Craft	37
Stone and Perimeter Wall	47
Screen	49
Building Performance	55



ARCHITECTURE AS DIPLOMACY

As neighbors and strategic partners, the United States and Mexico collaborate to ensure regional stability and shared prosperity across North America. Trade between the two countries—among the largest globally—supports millions of jobs, strengthens supply chains, and fuels growth in both countries. This scale of engagement requires a diplomatic presence capable of meeting modern demands. The former U.S. chancery, constructed in 1964 along Paseo de la Reforma—now a dense urban corridor—primarily housed central department personnel, with most other agencies located in nearby annexes. The distributed layout constrained operational efficiency, capacity, and technology, rendering it unsuitable for one of the United States’ most complex diplomatic posts.

Embassies are among the most visible representations of the United States abroad, serving as instruments of quiet diplomacy. Their design reflects American values, the host nation’s character, and the nature of the bilateral relationship. The new U.S. embassy in Mexico City expresses respect for Mexico through architecture informed by local context and heritage. Verdant landscapes, dignified civic spaces, and culturally resonant materials form an effective setting for diplomacy and a lasting symbol of the United States’ enduring partnership with Mexico.

New U.S. Embassy Mexico City in Nuevo Polanco. Above: original 1964 U.S. Embassy Mexico City in Reforma

LOCAL INFLUENCES

Informed by the building traditions of Mexico and the American Southwest, the U.S. embassy’s design responds to climate, altitude, seismic conditions, culture, and communal life. Features—including internal courtyards, shade-giving canopies, sun-screens, and thick masonry walls—provide thermal performance, security, and durability. The central courtyard, recalling patio houses of central Mexico and the civic plazas of pre-Hispanic cities, serves as the social and organizational heart of the building. The masonry walls, echoing the volcanic stone construction of ancient temples, are complemented by earth-toned stone and concrete, chosen for their resilience. Inside, filtered daylight, planted gardens, and cooling water features contribute to staff comfort, while decorative tile, handcrafted metalwork, and vibrant textiles reference longstanding craft practices, adding cultural artifacts to the building’s experience. The resulting architecture is climatically responsive, materially grounded, and uniquely of its place—functionally and aesthetically—while expressing the common bond between the United States and Mexico.

Facing page, clockwise from top: Zócalo (Plaza de la Constitución); Talavera tile at Casa de los Azulejos; stone wall construction at Teotihuacan; interior courtyard of Palacio Nacional; Casa Estudio Luis Barragán



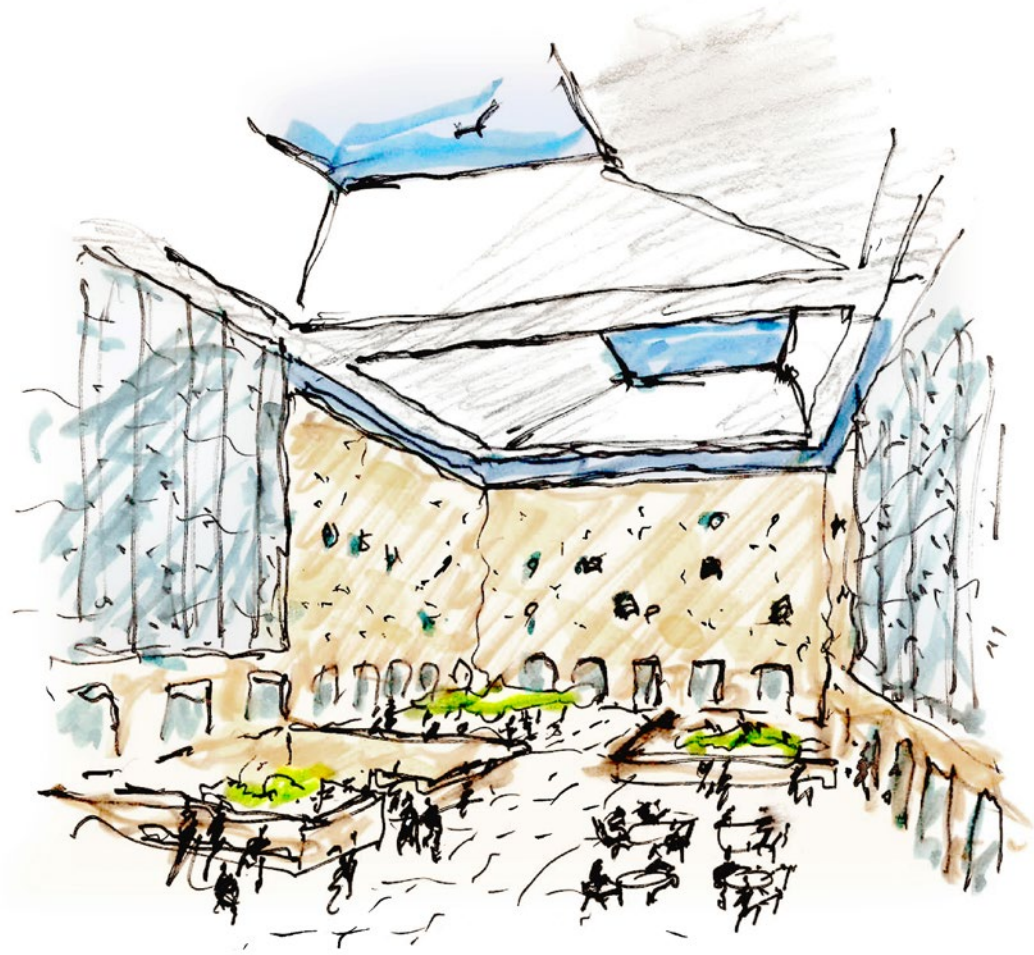


PROJECT OVERVIEW

The new U.S. Embassy Mexico City is among the largest diplomatic projects undertaken by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO). Situated on an 8.5-acre site in the Nuevo Polanco area of Miguel Hidalgo, the U.S. Embassy Mexico City consolidates diplomatic functions previously distributed across multiple locations into an approximately 1,000,000-square-foot facility. The project was designed through a joint venture of Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners and Davis Brody Bond Architects (now Stantec), with Spacesmith providing interiors, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates leading landscape design, and Grupo SACMAG serving as local architectural consultant.

DESIGN VISION

American values of democracy and openness are expressed throughout the U.S. Embassy Mexico City. Drawing on Mexican materials and building traditions, the architecture acknowledges the surrounding environment and the intertwined histories of the United States and Mexico. The embassy is organized around a covered open-air courtyard, referencing Mexican domestic courtyard traditions. Sandstone façades and a patterned perimeter wall exhibit strength and permanence. Sun-screens control solar gain, frame views and evoke Mexico's craft heritage, giving the embassy a distinctive presence.



Facing page, clockwise from top: aerial showing courtyards in Mexico City; site model; central courtyard sketch





SITE PLAN

Responding to the neighborhood's residential scale, the low-rise compound is set within an inviting landscape. As an expression of diplomatic welcome, visitors enter through a dignified sequence of plazas. Underground parking for 650 vehicles ensures efficient access without disrupting the landscaped grounds.

A central, monumental courtyard organizes the building, connecting multiple departments and providing a gathering space that fosters shared purpose. Interior gardens bring light, air, and greenery deep into the building, enhancing staff well-being.

Aerial view of embassy compound. Above: site plan





CONSULAR AREA

Designed to prioritize visitors, the consular area is the public-facing portion of the embassy. It houses consular services, with generous space to accommodate the large volumes of daily visitors. Passing through bronze-clad gates, users arrive in a large plaza, with a canopy that provides shade and benches for comfort. Along with interior and exterior waiting areas, the facilities include 71 consular windows across two levels, servicing both Mexicans and Americans. This area also provides access to the Benjamin Franklin Center, a resource for student research, cultural programming, and broader public outreach efforts.

Consular plaza with Ed Ruscha mural, *Extremes and in-betweens in Two Languages*, 2024 ©Ed Ruscha

CHANCERY AREA

The chancery plaza presents a distinguished arrival for embassy employees and official guests. Planted with succulents, cypress, and palm trees, the plaza includes a pedestrian portico and a vehicular turnaround for smooth circulation. A reproduction of Roy Lichtenstein's *Greene Street Mural*, donated by the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, lines the interior of the perimeter wall. This section of the building includes gathering spaces, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, and offices for more than 1,700 current and future staff.

Chancery plaza with Roy Lichtenstein, *Greene Street Mural*, 1983 / 2024







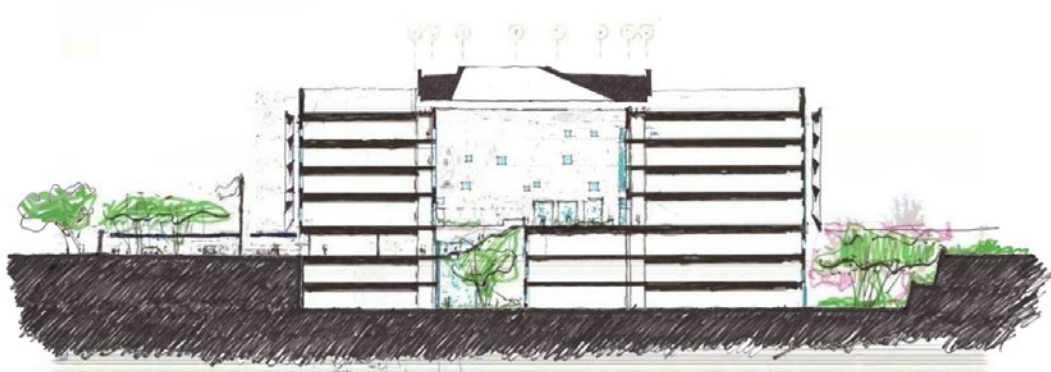
BUILDING ORGANIZATION

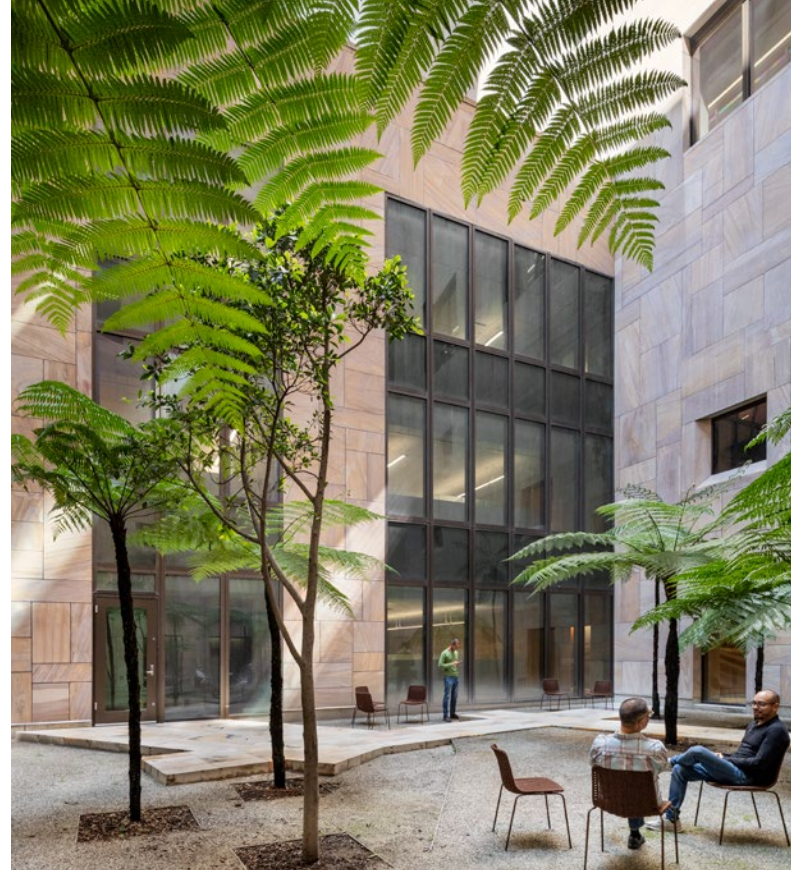
To lower its height and fit the residential scale of the neighborhood, the U.S. Embassy Mexico City is set two stories into the site. Excavating nearly 400,000 square yards of soil to accommodate lower-level programs keeps the building low-profile despite its substantial size. With seven levels—two subterranean and five above—the design balances programmatic scale with contextual sensitivity, creating a compound that integrates seamlessly into its urban setting. A large courtyard and several intimate gardens create a porous, human-centered facility that balances productivity with environmental performance and civic expression.

Above: sectional drawing. Facing page: interior garden

CENTRAL COURTYARD

Embassy employees and visitors enter the building and ascend one story into the central open-air courtyard, the compound’s key organizing element. With multiple entry points, the courtyard offers a communal space for gathering. Covering 23,600 square feet, the space can host up to 1,000 people for official meetings, presentations, and ceremonies. Fresh air circulates through the space while sunlight shifts across the interior like a sundial. A suspended, site-specific installation, *Vínculo*, by Alyson Shotz, reflects the changing light on the glass curtain walls. A canopy above mitigates sun glare while openings frame views of the sky and invites occasional rain to refresh the space.





INTERIOR GARDENS

Five interior gardens are connected to the central courtyard across multiple levels and are accessible from the lowest floor. Expansive floor plates support operational efficiency and connectivity among occupants, while the gardens bring daylight and views to foster a sense of openness, and support employee well-being. They create human-scaled outdoor spaces with serene environments and occasional water features. Each garden has a distinct character, featuring bold stone pavers, native plantings, cultural artifacts, and artwork.

Facing page: aerial view of lower courtyard



ART IN EMBASSIES

Curated by the Art in Embassies program, site-specific artworks are integral to the compound.

Visitors to the consular area are greeted by Ed Ruscha's *Extremes and In-Betweens in Two Languages*, painted on the ceiling of the entry court canopy. Known for his work with language and architecture, Ruscha deploys white block lettering across a burnt umber background, complementing the building's stone palette. The words, in English and Spanish, descend in size and meaning, beginning with "Galaxy" and ending with "Dot."

Omar Rodriguez Graham's painting *Echo Aurora / in hands of the dying day / the dream* dissolves draws visitors into the Multi-Purpose Room with its vibrant color, bold forms, and dynamic energy. Pedro Reyes' two-story mural *Tlacuilolli* transforms the double height gallery space with a transfixing series of painted forms on Amate paper.

In the central courtyard, Alyson Shotz's monumental sculpture *Vínculo* interacts with sunlight streaming through the canopy. The floating, partially transparent piece transforms depending on vantage point, time of day, or weather.



Facing page, top: Pedro Reyes with model. Bottom: Omar Rodríguez-Graham, *Echo Aurora / in hands of the dying day / the dream*, installation in the multi-purpose room

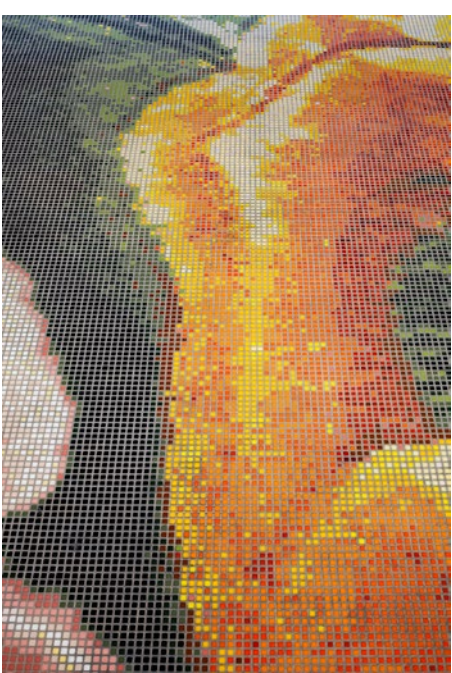




Clockwise from top: Alyson Shotz installing; Ed Ruscha painting in progress and final installation
©Ed Ruscha. Facing page: Shotz, *Vínculo*, 2024



Office vestibule floor mosaic. Facing page (left to right): Floor mosaic sketches, sourced from Mexican embroidery; Cafeteria floor mosaic; Mexico City textile market

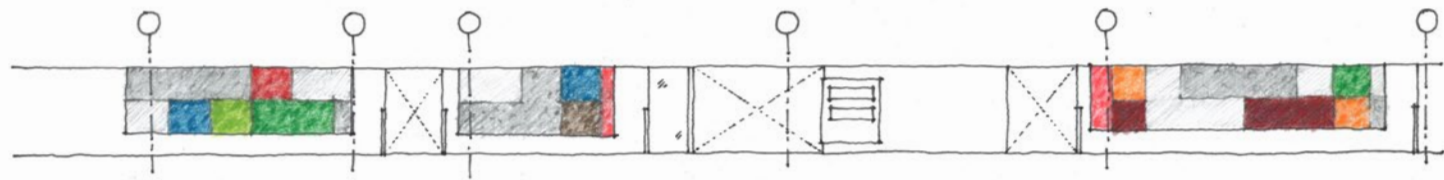


EMBEDDED CRAFT

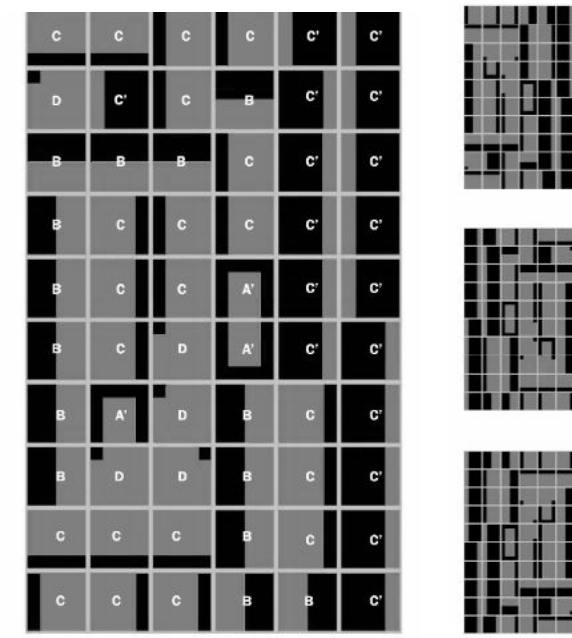
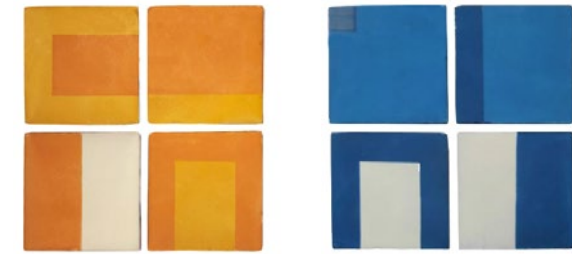
Furthering the design's diplomatic expression, the interiors of the U.S. Embassy Mexico City celebrates both countries' shared craft traditions. Material finishes imbue the spaces with warmth, texture, and character, creating a human-scaled environment within a large civic building. Mosaic floors and rugs draw inspiration from American and Mexican embroidery, while felt wall panels reference American quilting using colors found throughout Mexico City. Handmade tiles enliven stairwells, bathrooms, and consular areas, introducing vibrant patterns, texture, and the subtle imprint of the artisan's hand. These crafted materials were chosen not only for their cultural resonance but also for their durability in a high-traffic public setting.



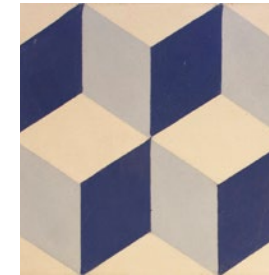
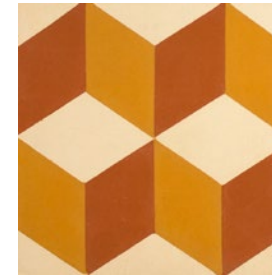
In the main lobby, the rug design references an American cross-stitch sampler. Combined with motifs inspired by Mexican textiles, it highlights the craftsmanship of both countries. Caroline Kent's diptych, *A Short Walk Through a Plaza, a Lifelong Reflection*, adds another layer of visual interest to the space.



Circulation areas throughout the building are lined with felt murals. Their patterns and colors help define spaces and orient staff and visitors. They provide tactile counterpoint to the interior stone and complement the artwork.

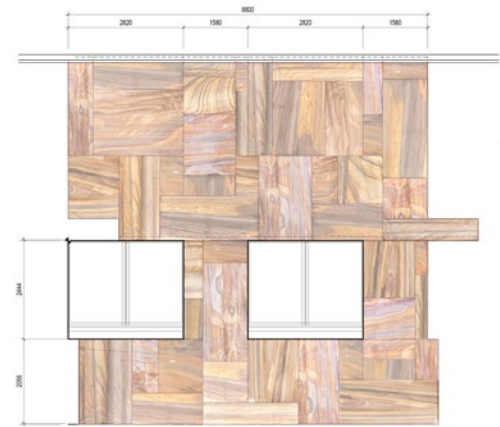


Custom hand-painted Talavera tiles, created in collaboration with local artisans, line two main stairwells—one in blue, the other in orange. Each pattern is a unique artwork, executed as a contemporary interpretation of a 16th-century Mexican decorative tradition.



Handmade American terracotta tiles clad the circular columns in the consular areas. The custom tiles' large scale, unique shape and metallic luminescent glaze, transform a structural component into a sculptural element.

Encaustic cement tiles, long used throughout Mexico, are given a contemporary reinterpretation to enliven the bathroom walls. They combine durability with a culturally resonant decorative element.

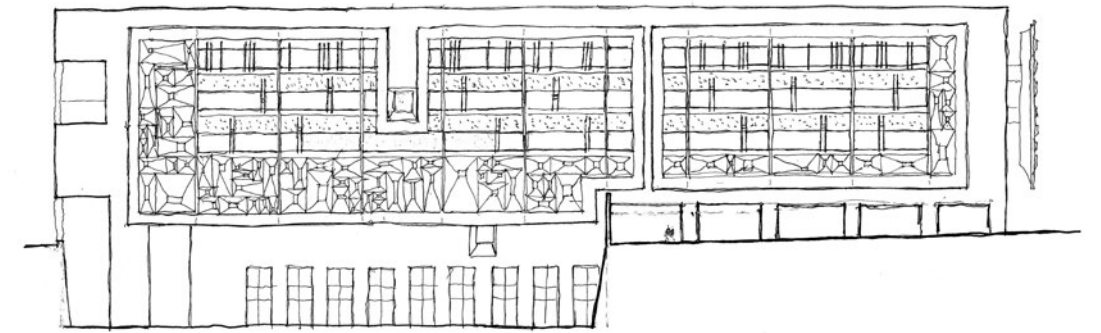
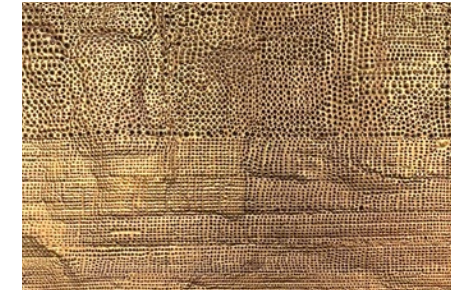


STONE

The embassy's broad massing and stone façades convey strength and presence. Solid exterior walls help the facility meet diplomatic and energy-performance requirements, while large sandstone panels pay homage to the weight and durability of indigenous construction. Long used in Mexico City and the American Southwest, warm sandstone, with hues of yellow, red and ochre, links the contemporary exterior to historic precedent. As light and weather shift, the stone changes in tone. Referencing both countries' textile traditions, the patterning of the panels form a quilt-like envelope that wraps the structure and lines the interiors. At the northwest corner, vertical stone fins and fifty brass elements provide sculptural relief, alluding to the stars and stripes of the U.S. flag. The resulting façade is dignified, dynamic, and unmistakably of its place.

PERIMETER WALL

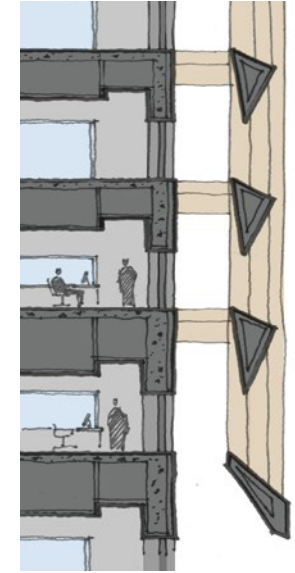
The perimeter wall transforms a utilitarian feature into an expressive architectural element. Inspired by Mexican textiles, it integrates sandstone and black basalt within a concrete matrix. Variations in color, texture, and scale break down its visual solidity, turning a protective device into a culturally informed expression.



SCREEN

The façade screen at the U.S. Embassy Mexico City masks the uniform fenestration required by the Embassy program while deflecting harsh sunlight and heat. Inspired by traditional Mexican metalwork, the screens are crafted from various brass alloys, combining textured cast panels with pyramid-like forms. These materials allowed for the sculpting of the screens while ensuring long-term durability. Over time, oxidation will result in a warm, timeless patina.

Detail of Mathias Goeritz, *abstracto en dorado*, 1968;
façade screen elevation sketch. Facing page: Façade screen



Suspended 4.5 feet (1.4 meters) from the stone façade, along the south, east and west elevations, the screens are structurally independent from the building envelope. Acting as a sun shading system, they modulate daylight, reducing glare and heat gain. The screens also frame unique views to the exterior while allowing daylight to reach interior spaces. Their large scale minimizes the visibility of smaller openings, providing a unifying element that gives the building a distinct civic presence for an American embassy of such importance.

Detail of façade screen assembly. Above: sketch showing relationship of façade screen to building



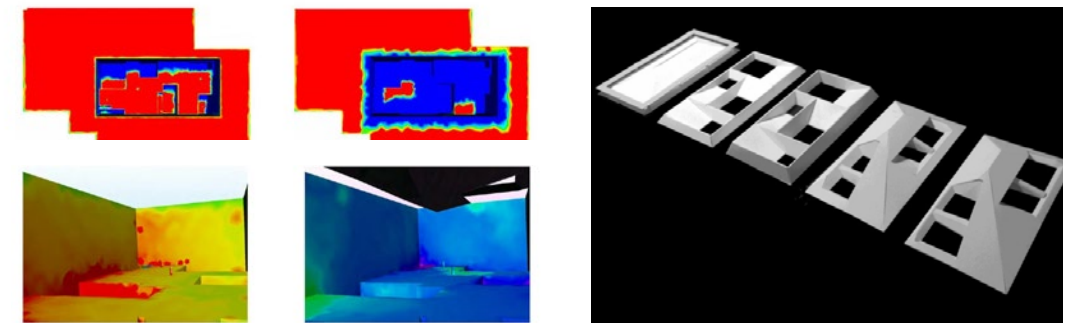


BUILDING PERFORMANCE

Mexico City's subtropical climate shaped the embassy's design to optimize performance and enhance resilience. The canopy above the central courtyard provides partial protection from the elements and reduces heat gain, minimizing energy required for cooling. Carefully placed openings allow natural light to penetrate, supporting an efficient daylighting strategy. The exterior stone envelope thermally insulates the building, while rooftop photovoltaic panels supply over 10% of its power needs. Combined, these measures cut energy use and costs by 32% compared with OBO building code standards.

Water conservation is equally integral. High-efficiency fixtures and a hybrid cooling tower cut demand by 51%. Rainwater collected from hardscapes and treated waste water support irrigation of the native and adapted plantings. By lowering the use of potable water, the building is able to achieve an 85% reduction in municipal water demand.

These strategies create a facility that maximizes energy and water-use efficiency, reduces resource demand, and ensures long-term resilience—supporting the mission of the U.S. Government for decades to come.



Courtyard canopy. Above: Courtyard thermal mapping; canopy study models





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF OVERSEAS BUILDINGS OPERATIONS

The planning, design, and construction of a U.S. diplomatic facility is made possible through the contributions of many. We extend our gratitude to the OBO staff and leadership, from real estate through operations, as well as to our partners in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, our dedicated contractors, and U.S. Embassy mission staff. An estimated 3,000 individuals contributed to the construction of the new Embassy, including roughly 1,400 local workers. The unwavering commitment, expert guidance, and diligent efforts of all involved were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition—an achievement that would not have been possible without their collective dedication.

James Feltman, Director, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, February 2026

Project Information

Location: 8.5 acre site
in the Nuevo Polanco District, Mexico City
Size: 1,066,940 gross square feet
(325,203 gross square meters)

Timeline

Design contract award: June 2012
Construction contract award: September 2017
Construction start: February 2018
Occupancy: November 2025

Image Credits

Building & aerial photography: Michael Moran

Drawings and additional images:
Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners

Page 40-41: Alyson Shotz. *Vínculo*. 2024.
Images courtesy of the artist and Derek Eller
Gallery. Photos by Ryan Fitzgerald (p. 40)
and George Lerner (p. 41)
Page 41: Ed Ruscha. *Extremes and in-betweens
in Two Languages*. 2024 © Ed Ruscha. Photos
and installation by Rockwell Artisan Studio Inc.
and IG Restauración y Conservación

Project Team

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners
Davis Brody Bond, now Stantec
Joint Architecture Team

Caddell Construction
General Contractor

Spacesmith LLP
Interior Design

Thornton Thomasetti
Structural Engineer

Langan
Civil Engineer

Acoustic Distinctions
Acoustic / Audiovisual Consultant

Jensen Hughes
Code / Life Safety Consultant

Propp + Guerin
Wayfinding / Graphics Consultant

Romano Gatland
Food Services Consultant

Grupo Sacmag
Local Architect

Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates
Landscape Architect

WSP
MEP Engineer / Sustainability Consultant

Security Design Consultants, LLC
Technical Security Consultant

Fisher Marantz Stone
Lighting Consultant

Heintges
Exterior Envelope Consultant

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.
Waterproofing Consultant

VDA and Lerch Bates
Vertical Transportation Consultants

CMS Collaborative
Fountain Design Consultant

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