



United States Embassy
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

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“The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations provides the most effective facilities for U.S. diplomacy abroad, and the new U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa is a prototype of an effective facility. This embassy demonstrates our dedication to sustainability with a variety of features tailored to the local environment that conserve water resources and reduce energy consumption. Featuring works by local and U.S. artists, the embassy’s permanent art collection celebrates the rich cultural heritage of both countries. I want to congratulate our OBO project teams, our contractors, mission staff, and the Honduran people on the new embassy.”

— **Ambassador William H. Moser**

Former Director, U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
October 2024

“Our state-of-the-art new embassy is a testament to the long-standing friendship and shared values between Honduras and the United States. This landmark symbolizes our commitment to deepening ties with the people of Honduras, fostering cooperation, and building a shared future together.”

— **Laura F. Dogu**

U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras
August 2024



Aerial view of the New Embassy Compound



United States Embassy Tegucigalpa, Honduras

PARTNERS

SHoP Architects
Design Architect

Jorge Caballero Arquitectos
Local Architect

BL Harbert International
Construction Contractor

PROJECT SCOPE

The new embassy is situated on a 9-acre site that contains the Chancery, Marine Security Guard Residence, Compound Access Control entrances, Recreation Building, Warehouse, Utility, and Service Buildings.



View of the Chancery from the CCAC entry court

STATISTICS

36,165 SQM
Gross Floor Area

9-acres
Site Size

\$429 million
Project Budget

\$42.6 million
Estimated Local Investment

1,000
Jobs created for Hondurans

TIMELINE

2018
Site Acquisition

2015
Design Contract Award

2018
Construction Contract Award

2019
Construction Start

2025
Ribbon Cutting and Move-in





Introduction

The U.S. Department of State's mission is to protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive. The mission of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is to provide the most effective facilities for United States diplomacy abroad.

OBO is the single real property manager for the planning, acquisition, design, construction, operations, maintenance, and disposal of U.S. governmental diplomatic and consular property overseas. Our facilities enable U.S. foreign policy through building technologies, sustainability, art, and culture.

The new U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa is an effective facility that will be a secure, resilient, and welcoming environment for visitors and mission staff. The embassy is a physical commitment to the U.S.-Honduran diplomatic partnership.

The new embassy is situated on a 9-acre site that contains the Chancery, Marine Security Guard Residence, Compound Access Control entrances, Recreation Building, Warehouse, Utility, and Service Buildings.

View of the Chancery from the Consular
Compound Access Control entry

Historical Context

The U.S. diplomatic presence in Honduras has evolved from modest beginnings to a robust partnership. Following Honduras' independence from Spain in 1821 and its subsequent separation from the Central American Federation in 1838, the United States recognized Honduras as an independent nation on April 19, 1853. Following Honduras' independence, the U.S. appointed Solon Borland as U.S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. In recent years, the U.S. and Honduras have collaborated on economic development, security, and migration. The U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa project builds on a history of shared goals and milestones and will foster deeper diplomatic engagement between our nations.

Aerial view of the new U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa



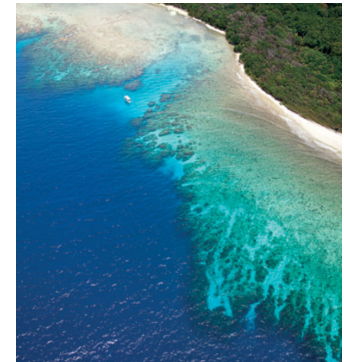


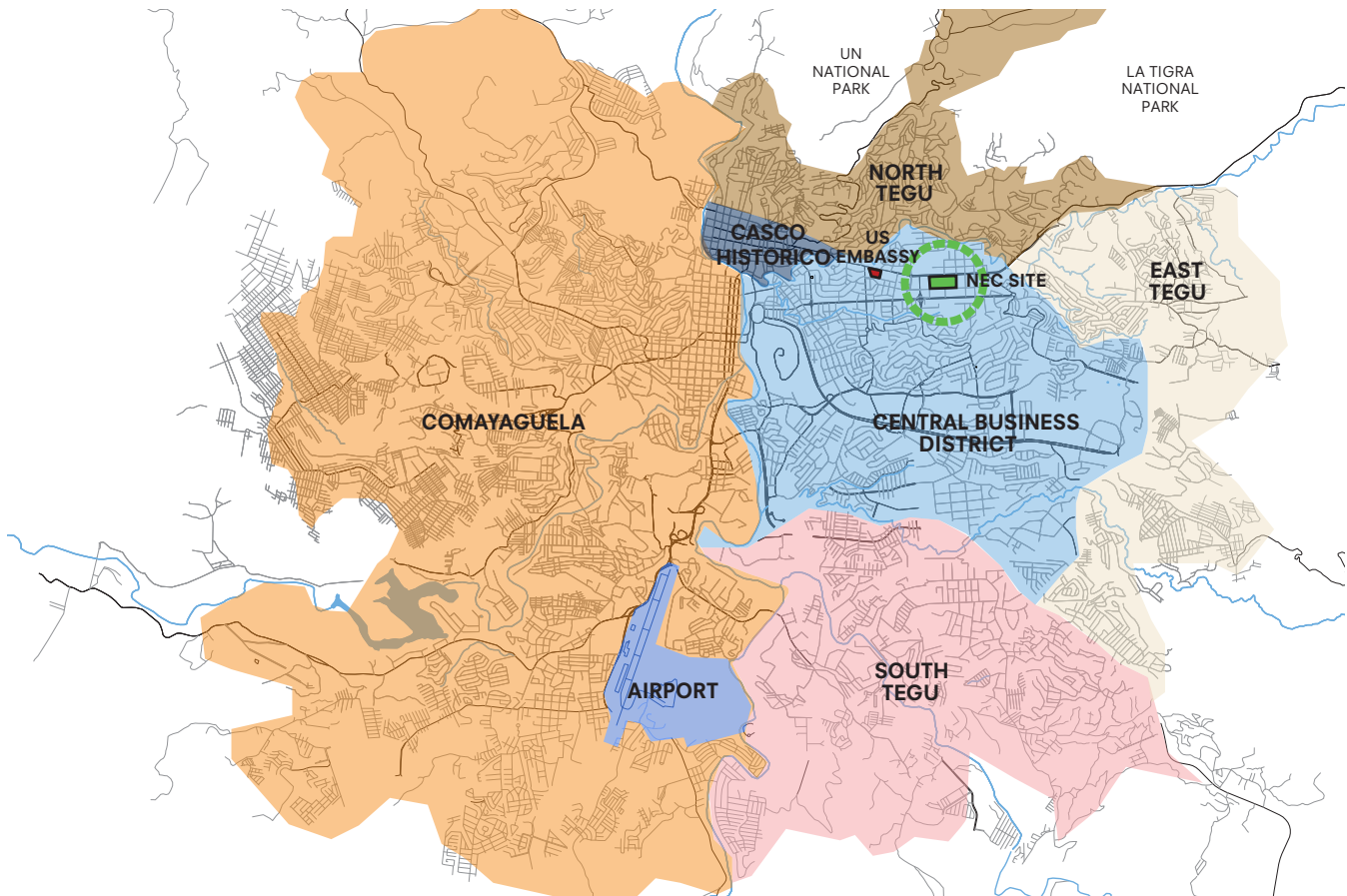
Location & Environment

The capital city of Tegucigalpa is located in the high central valley of Honduras, surrounded by a striking ring of steep, forested mountains. Though often partially veiled by low hanging clouds, the nearly complete circle of high, jagged mountains surrounding the city is among Tegucigalpa's most distinctive features. The peak of El Carrizal rises 3,000 feet above the city.

The capital region including Tegucigalpa is the nation's largest and most populous area and serves as the center of Honduran political life.

The new embassy is located approximately one kilometer from the existing embassy along Avenida Los Próceres in Tegucigalpa's commercial and administrative district. The neighborhood is bound on one side by the Chiquito River, one of several that combine within the valley to form the Choluteca River at the start of its 200-plus mile journey down to the Pacific.





Above Image: Location of the new embassy site in relation to the current U.S. Embassy in the northern part of Tegucigalpa.

Left Image: Aerial view taken from the south of site looking north before the start of construction.

Planning & Design

Vision and Objectives

The architectural design of this major new diplomatic facility, led by SHoP Architects and their local partners at the firm of Jorge Caballero Arquitectos (JCA), embodies the spirit of cooperation between the United States and Honduras. It took initial inspiration from the dramatic terrain of Tegucigalpa and, by featuring local materials and crafts throughout the project, the rich cultural history of Honduras.

Cultural Context

The Chancery's exterior draws inspiration from traditional Honduran craft pine needle cord basket weaving and triangular motifs of Lenca terracotta pottery. Stone retaining walls and terraced gardens mimic local craft patterns, providing both functional and aesthetic appeal. Art installations co-created and inspired by Honduran culture are integrated throughout.

Right Image: View of the Chancery from the Main Compound Access Control entry





Landscape Integration

The landscape architecture incorporates native Honduran typologies, a blend of woodland, savannah, and tropical forest representative of the diversity across the country from mountains to jungles and beaches. The site plan preserves the natural landscape, including the heritage Guanacaste tree, and maximizes views of the surrounding mountains.

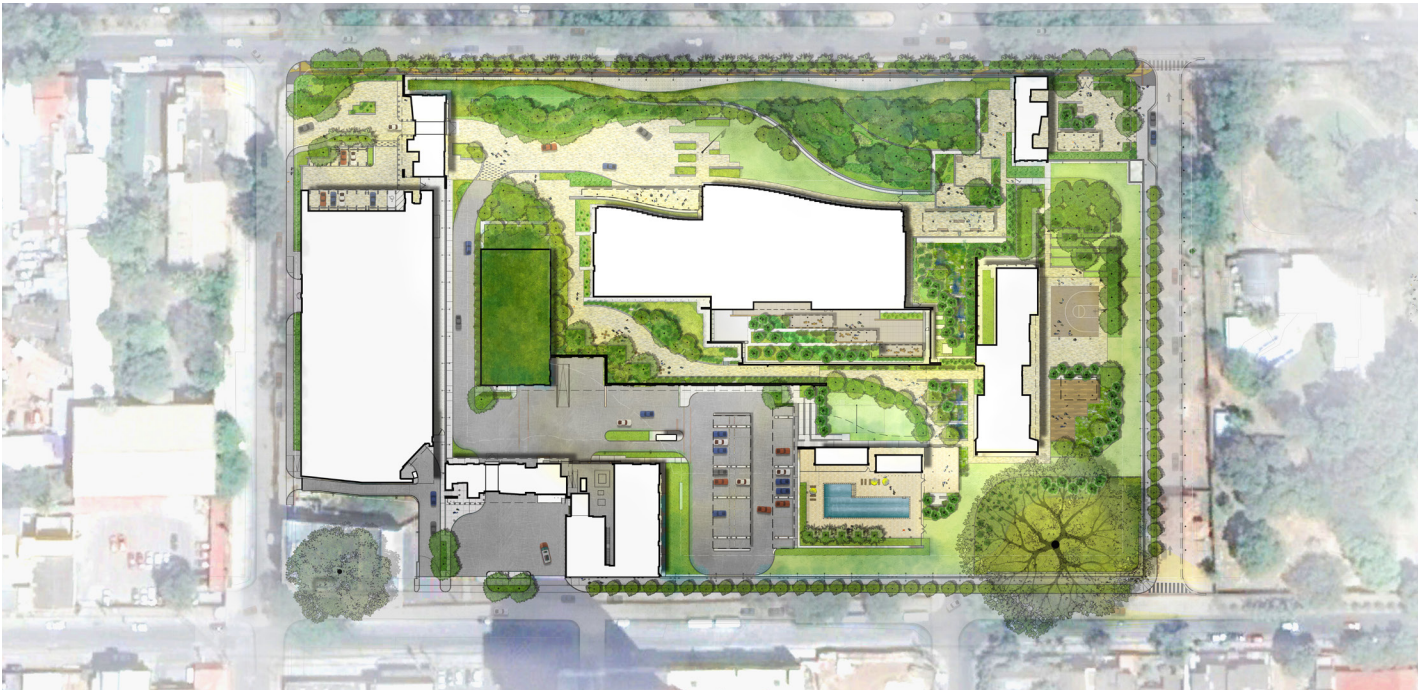
Materials

Earth-tone materials, such as warm woods and stone, are used throughout to create a cohesive and culturally resonant design. Limestone features prominently in the landscape design, forming large, curvilinear stacked-stone retaining and linear seat walls. The paving and site walls incorporate a blend of imported granites, travertine, and limestone.

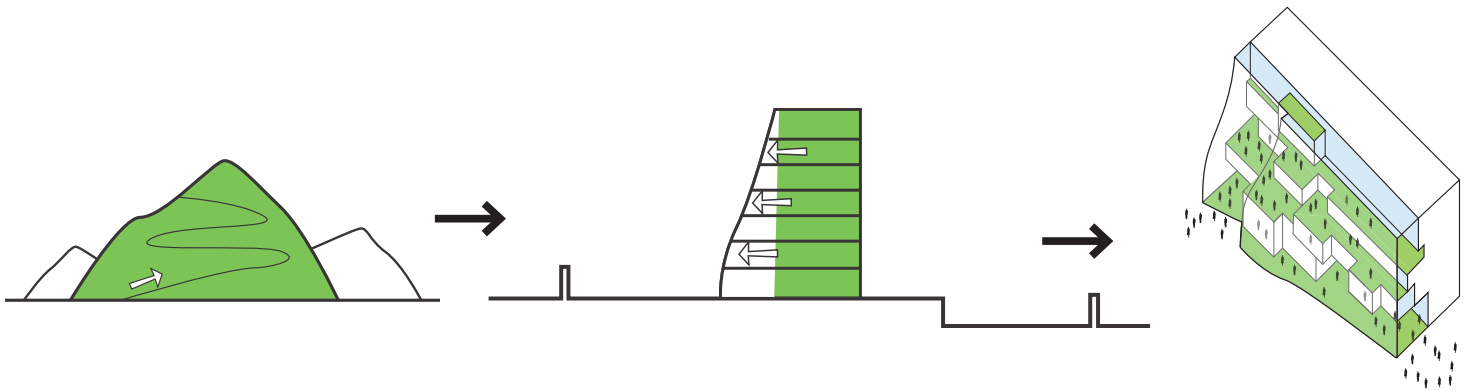
Interior

The interior design also features limestone and utilizes copper-colored anodized aluminum and richly-toned wood. Splashes of color from integrated finishes and commissioned artworks, especially blues that reflect the sky, rivers, mountains, lakes, and oceans of Honduras add color to the interior.

A standout feature is the use of local Negro Cacao marble, a distinctive Honduran mineral. The design team, contractors, and OBO staff worked closely with Mármoles de Honduras to maximize its impact, arranging the marble into a striking feature wall.



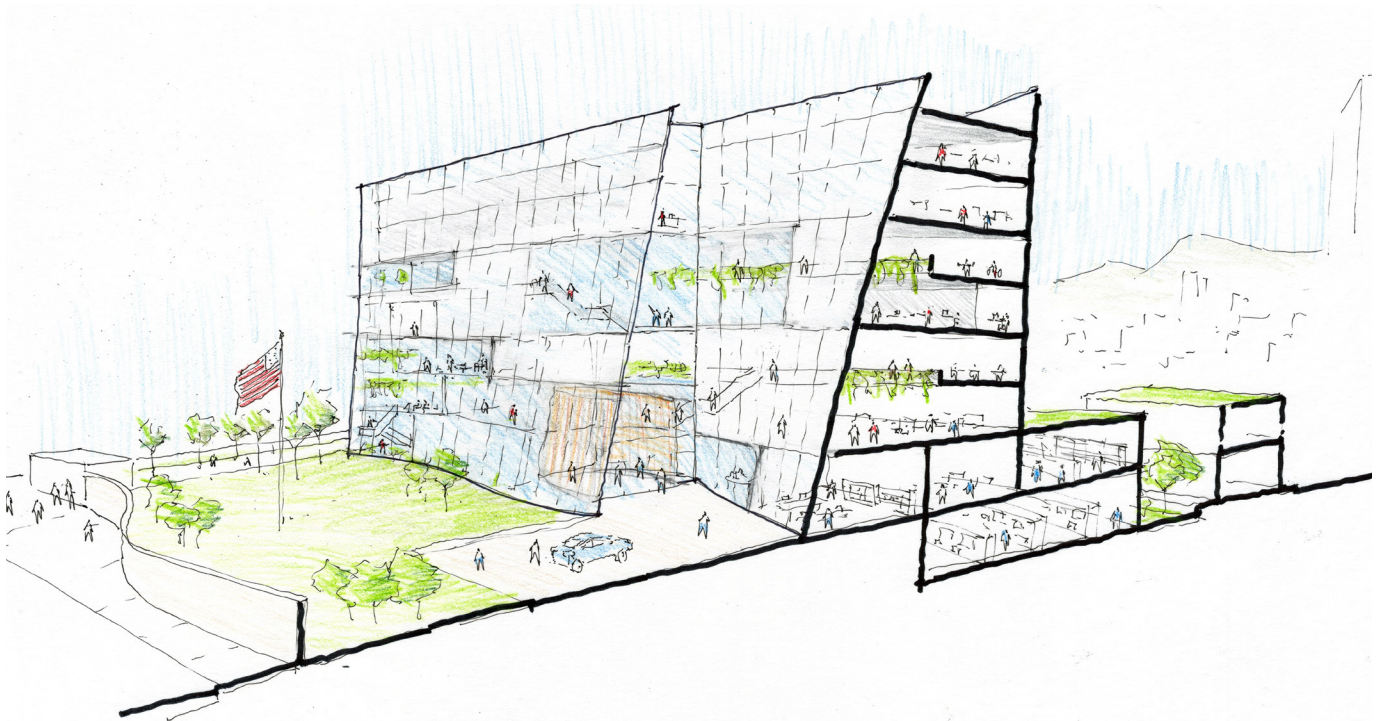
Above Image: Rendered Landscape Plan



MOUNTAINS

STACK PROGRAM VERTICALLY
AND GATHER AT THE EDGES

VERTICAL COMMONS



Above Image: Concept Diagrams of the Chancery

Below Image: Concept Sketch of the Chancery





Enabling Diplomacy

Visitor & Community Space

The design of the main public entrance is a balance between formality and warmth, welcoming all who enter while reinforcing the character and mission of the new embassy. An outdoor waiting area and consular courtyard with shade structures, benches, and art installations provide a safe and pleasant experience for the high volume of consular visitors to the site.

Inside the consular area, an increased number of consular kiosks is enhanced by Negro Cacao marble and curved slatted wood walls and a ceiling that offer views to the mountains.

View from outside the embassy at the
Main Compound Access Control Entry

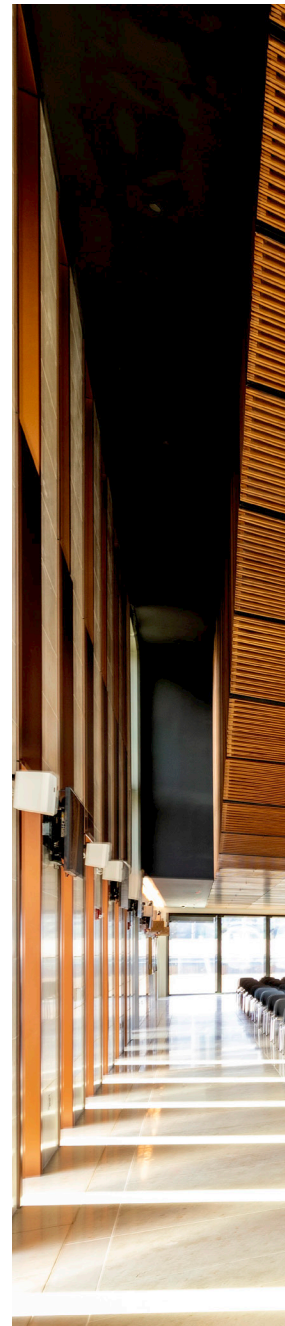






Left Image:
View from outside embassy
at the Consular Compound
Access Control Entry

Right Image:
Interior View of the
Consular Section





Wrapping the oval-shaped American Center, Multipurpose Room, and feature stairs is another representation of the Lenca pottery in a curved wall of custom glazed terracotta clay tile walls.

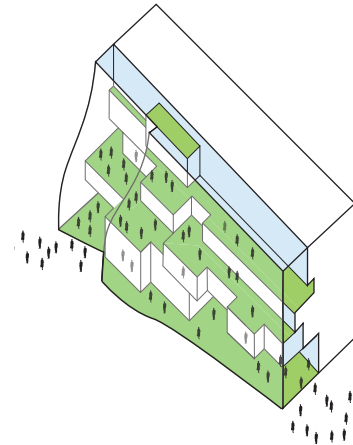
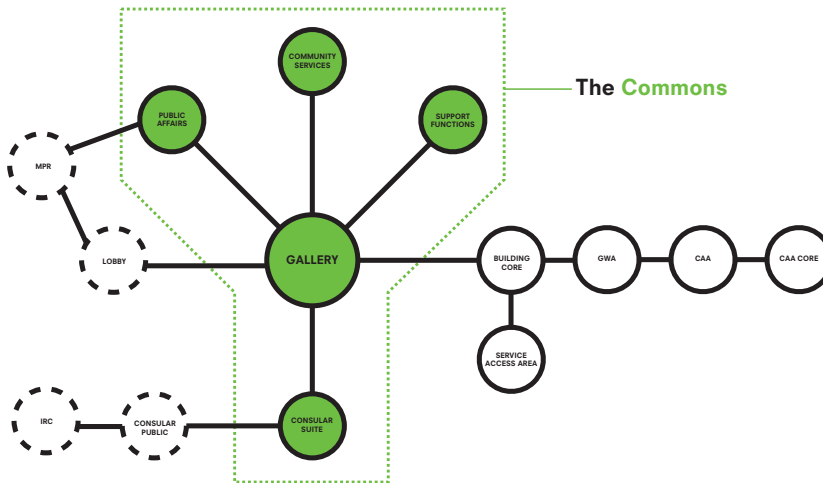


Left Image: View of the Interior Stairs
Right Image: Interior View of the American Center



Workspace

Consolidating programs into a single, central building with a compact footprint allows for an internal atrium gallery, conceived as a commons to connect embassy personnel. This space naturally organizes major community functions and serves as an informal, collaborative gathering area that ties the interior spaces together, akin to a central plaza typical to mountain communities of Honduras.



Above Image: Concept Sketch of the Chancery Interiors

Right Image: Interior view of the Main Lobby



EMBASSY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS



Located on Level Four, the Gallery is the central hub of the Chancery linking community and representational spaces with access from all office floors. The Gallery accommodates a range of activities, including informal meetings, all-hands events, conferences, and dining. It connects key community areas including the cafe, coffee shop, recreation, and clinic.

Collaboration spaces strategically project into the Gallery, creating a visually dynamic and connected environment. Similar structures with distinct functions extend to Levels Five and Six. Together, these spaces offer expansive views of Tegucigalpa's iconic mountains to the north.

Left Image: View of Gallery

Bottom Image: Interior view of common space
from inside a Gallery box (meeting room)



Operational Facilities

The facades of the Marine Security Guard Residence and Recreational Building are composed of a cream-colored limestone. The window-to-wall ratio of the Marine Security Guard Residence allows for natural daylighting while considering security needs. The Marine Security Guard Residence employs custom natural wood millwork and furniture. The deep blue and crisp white ceramic tiles pay tribute to the Marine Corps “Dress Blues.”

The Warehouse, Service Buildings, and Parking Garage blend into the landscape, built with the same stone as the perimeter wall and a unitized custom stainless-steel cable net screen on a galvanized steel structure supporting fiberglass planter boxes. Vines grow to cover the screen, creating a unified green facade.



Above Image: View of the Marine's Courtyard
Right Image: Detailed image of site material







Building Performance

The new embassy's design implements sustainability and climate resiliency consistent with United States goals.

Native Plants

The landscape design reflects the U.S. Government's eco-diplomacy goals and celebrates the unique relationship with Honduras. It incorporates native Honduran typologies, including woodland, savannah, and tropical forest, represented in gardens, courts, plazas, and terraces across the campus. Native trees and locally adapted plants, such as the Ocote Pine—the national tree of Honduras—are planted throughout to honor local ecology and minimize water use for irrigation.

Among the local plants, one uniquely stands out: a century-old Guanacaste tree. This tree, a silent witness to Honduran history and culture, has been carefully preserved, honoring its legacy and its crucial role in the surrounding ecosystem. Research teams mapped the structure of its roots to precisely adjust the design of the perimeter wall and excavate debris, ensuring the tree's protection and preservation for years to come as an act of public diplomacy. Native birds have returned to perch and nest. Standing beneath the canopy of this tree, approximately 22 meters tall, is an awe-inspiring experience.

View of the Guanacaste Tree



Resource Efficiency

Shade canopies on the top level of the parking garage are fitted with photovoltaic panels, contributing to the sustainability efforts. The north facade's prominent vertical fins and horizontal mullions provide shading during periods of direct sunlight, supporting energy efficiency. The east, west, and south facades, clad in a glazed terracotta rainscreen, prioritize environmental performance integrating energy efficiency with security.

Rain gardens at the Main Entrance Plaza, Consular Garden, and Recreation Terrace capture and store stormwater, which, along with rooftop rainwater collection, is recirculated through an efficient drip irrigation system.

Green roofs on the Warehouse, Chancery roof gardens, and Marine Security Guard Residence terraces enhance outdoor spaces and bolster the site's resilience.

LEED Certification

To ensure that Department of State facilities and operations advance the conservation of natural resources and highlight U.S. environmental technology and policy, OBO requires that all new office buildings on overseas diplomatic property achieve a minimum of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Silver Certification. The Tegucigalpa project is on course to achieve the distinguished LEED® Gold certification due to the integrated design process and collaboration of the project team from pre-design through construction.

Left Image View of the Chancery from the Marine's Courtyard

Bottom Image: View of the Level 2 Terrace



A sustainable approach started with the selection of a previously developed 'brownfield' site – which was the location of several operating businesses including a newspaper printing facility and a mechanic's garage – to create green spaces in urban areas. The urban setting allows connection with existing city utilities while minimizing environmental disruption. Extensive local landscaping restores habitats which were affected by construction.

The design of the embassy maximizes energy and water efficiency, which significantly reduces the dependence on Tegucigalpa's municipal electric and water supply. The new office building reduces energy consumption by 36% compared to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® baseline. Outdoor water use is reduced by 100% and indoor use by 35%. This approach helps conserve valuable resources, ensuring that the new embassy does not deplete the local community's supply.

Climate Adaptation Strategies

Incorporating adaptive strategies is particularly important for this project given its exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes and hurricanes which have strained Central America and the Caribbean coastline. The incorporation of U.S. building code requirements, supplemented with additional criteria based on the specific site's seismic rating, respond to the regional challenges. The facilities meet stringent seismic demands, detailing specifications, and security standards. Further, a hygrothermal analysis was performed to assess the impact of insulation reduction on moisture management, ensuring envelope design can sustain local climate conditions. All this, in concert with co-beneficial sustainable design elements of renewable power, shading, green roofs, and stormwater harvesting combined with a reduction in irrigation demands and water re-use create a resilient platform that demonstrates our commitment to sustainability.

View of the Chancery from the West





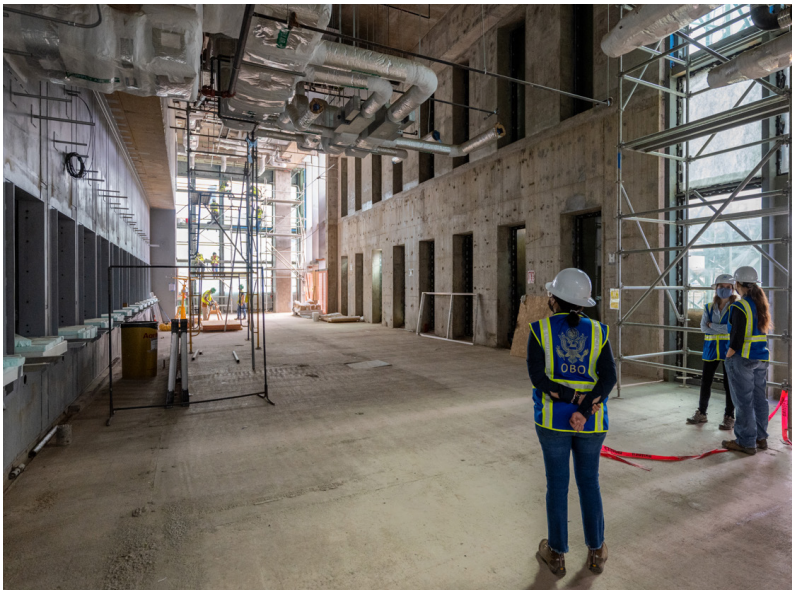
Construction

The new embassy has been a collaborative effort, with OBO, SHoP, JCA, and the construction team BL Harbert International. Challenges were solved through deliberate and intentional partnering between the various stakeholders. The relationship started long before the work began on site, with BLHI working closely with OBO and SHoP to fabricate the complex curtain wall facade according to the design intent. Mockups built on site and in York, PA at performance testing facilities allowed the team to address issues in fabrication before construction on site, saving both time and money over the span of the project.

The project began in 2019 and was in the midst of construction when the global pandemic began in 2020, leading to numerous challenges and the need for creative solutions. OBO and the US government, with BLHI's assistance, created an on-site vaccination program and within a week had managed to vaccinate over 800 workers on site. This was a monumental feat that allowed the project to continue with worker safety at the forefront.

Images of site construction & mock-ups







Art & Cultural Heritage

OBO's Art in Embassies program brings together U.S. and foreign-born artists to retain or create permanent special works worldwide through the allocation of project funds for site specific commissions. The new U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa provides an opportunity for works of art both indoors and out from American and Honduran artists of multiple scales and media.

A commissioned pair of tapestries by renowned American artist Sarah Crowner adorn the east and west walls of the American Center, reflecting her abstract interpretation of Honduras' natural world through vibrant color, line, and movement. In the double-height lobby, three stacked works by Honduran artist Adán Vallecillo feature abstract patterns crafted from recycled tires, blending art and sociology. Self-taught American artist Timothy Curtis contributes his graffiti art in office space in the Embassy as a nod to the dynamic street art traditions of both the U.S. and Honduras.

A coffee bar for mission staff is highlighted by a suspended ceramic sculpture by Annabeth Rosen, accompanied by a related series of seven oil on paper paintings. The sculpture is comprised of tangles of tuberous forms which serve as a contemporary foil to the indigenous Honduran crafts that inspired the embassy's architectural design. Ceramic tiles created by indigenous Lencan artisans are incorporated as a design element in the service space of the bar, so both contemporary and traditional, American and Honduran ceramic techniques are displayed together in the coffee bar. This location, adjacent to the terrace, is a tribute and reinvention of the cherished coffee cart from the embassy's former site.

The consular plaza and garden feature a large stone sculpture by Adam Silverman and a trio of stainless-steel sculptures by Lisa Williamson, representing Honduran ceramic traditions and the tropical landscape, creating a welcoming environment for visitors.



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations

Credits

The planning, design, and construction of a U.S. diplomatic facility does not happen without the contributions of many dedicated team members. We extend particular thanks to the OBO staff and leadership, from real estate through operations, and to our partners in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, our dedicated contractors, OBO's Industry Advisory Group Peers, and U.S. Honduras mission staff. This collaborative team contributed to making this a secure, functional, and resilient facility that enables U.S. foreign policy. Their unwavering commitment, diligent efforts, and expert advice have been instrumental in making this project a reality. Without their collective contributions, this achievement would not have been possible.

Patricia A. Lacina

Director, U.S. Department of State Bureau of Overseas
Buildings Operations

J. Douglas Dykhouse

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of Overseas Buildings Operations

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