

# U.S. EMBASSY HELSINKI, FINLAND

NEW U.S. CHANCERY AND CAMPUS RENOVATION FACT SHEET

APRIL 2014



**Design Architect** Moore Ruble Yudell

**Architect of Record** PAGE

**General Contractor** BL Harbert International, LLC

**Site** 3 acres

**Total Project Cost** \$ 114 Million

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- The U.S. Embassy campus in Helsinki has occupied a three-acre site in the historic Kaivopuisto neighborhood since the 1930's. It is located less than a mile from the heart of downtown with views of the Baltic Sea.
- The former chancery, a Georgian-style building, was designed by the Bristol Group in 1938. Construction was supervised by American architect Harrie T. Lindeberg. After World War II, the Embassy acquired an adjacent apartment building, built at the turn of the last century, and utilized it as an office annex.
- This new construction and campus renovation allows colocation of all Embassy functions and includes construction of a new chancery, access pavilions, and utility space; as well as renovation of the existing office annex to create the Innovation Center, renovation of the former chancery, and renovation of the chief of mission residence.
- The renovated Embassy campus and new buildings provide a secure, modern, and environmentally sustainable platform for diplomacy in Helsinki.

## DESIGN

- The design provides aesthetically contextual and humanistic elements recognizable to both Finnish and American cultures while also meeting all of the Department's security, technical, and functional requirements.
- The entrance lobby of the new Chancery building is a two-story high glass enclosed, light-filled space. It acts as the daily initial character defining space for staff and visitors as they enter either the new chancery or Innovation center. It can be used as representational space in conjunction with the new Innovation Center's Eero Saarinen Room - a multi-purpose meeting and/or conference room.

- The new Chancery's north, east, and south façade is clad with translucent and transparent glass of contrasting color and character. The glass allows natural light into the building and presents an open and inviting U.S. presence seen from the adjacent roads and water.
- The west facade of the Chancery is covered in white brick. The use of white brick in Finland has a high level of precedence, seen frequently in the work of the well know modernist, Finnish-Architect, Alvar Aalto. The random patterns of white brick and grey granite vertical bands create an artistic expression that reflects the adjacent birch grove landscaping. The stone which wraps around the lower level of the chancery and the site walls is seen on many walls around Finland.
- New pedestrian, vehicle, and consular access facilities were constructed to welcome visitors to the renovated campus. The new entry facilities are set-back from roads and walking paths to soften their appearance to the public. The transparent glass design of the pedestrian access facility provides dramatic views of the Gulf of Finland through the new chancery's lobby.



Moore Ruble Yudell

## CONSTRUCTION

- In November 2011, the project commenced with three phases of construction. The first phase, transformation of the existing office annex into the Innovation Center, was completed in January 2013. Construction of the new chancery in the second phase was completed in February 2014. Renovation of the existing chancery and ambassador's residence is underway with a scheduled completion of December 2014.
- A total of 940 workers, comprised of 16 nationalities (Finnish, Estonian, Swedish, Filipino, Polish, Ukrainian, German, Latvian, Norwegian, Dutch, British, Albanian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, and American) were involved in the construction and renovation of the Embassy campus.

## LANDSCAPE

- The site is landscaped to reflect the host country's natural beauty and appreciation for the land. The steep slopes are exploited in the site design to lead pedestrians along paths which capture dramatic and unexpected views of the water from elevated terraces.
- The paths lead Embassy visitors through a birch grove and to a new amphitheater which will be used for representational events.

## SUSTAINABILITY

- The Innovation Center is the first overseas U.S. diplomatic facility to become certified by the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) as Platinum.
- The Innovation Center is projected to reduce energy costs by 46% from a baseline case (ASHRAE 90.1-2007). This energy savings is accomplished through natural ventilation, double glazed windows, high-performing thermal roof insulation, city-generated hot water and chilled water systems, and energy efficient lighting systems.
- The Center is designed to reduce water consumption by 30% through the use of low-flush and low-flow plumbing fixtures.
- Plantings were carefully selected for the embassy grounds to eliminate the need for permanent irrigation and a substantial amount of the chilled water is sourced directly from the Gulf of Finland, which significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- The facility is the first U.S. diplomatic building to be equipped with 100% light-emitting diode (LED) and organic LED (OLED) for both interior and exterior lighting. These fixtures eliminate the need for replacing light bulbs for 10 to 12 years.

## ART

- The permanent art collection, curated by the Office of Art in Embassies (AIE), will include works by contemporary American, Finnish-American and Finnish artists for both the interior and exterior spaces. The art will incorporate a variety of styles and media: painting, photography, and textiles, as well as stainless steel, fiberglass and LED lights.
- The general themes are light and color, with cultural connections to Finland's textile and photography traditions, Eliel Saarinen's Cranbrook Academy of the Art and Marimekko.
- The collection also features two site-specific commissions by Katri Haahti and Stefan Lindfors.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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