U.S. EMBASSY MBABANE, SWAZILAND

GROUNDBREAKING FACT SHEET

APRIL 2014

Design Architect Karn Charuhas Chapman & Twohey

Architect of Record PAGE

General Contractor BL Harbert International, Inc.

Site 8.9 acres

Buildings Size Approximately 9,119 gross square meters

Background

- The 8.9-acre site is located in the Ezulwini Township, outside the main city about 20 km from the existing Embassy. It is near a shopping mall and a residential area.
- In 2012, the Department of State awarded a Design/Build contract for a new Embassy building to meet U.S. diplomatic needs and provide a safe, secure, modern, and functional Embassy in Mbabane.
- Construction by BL Harbert International is underway, with completion of the new U.S. Embassy anticipated in 2015.

Design

- The complex will include a new 4-story chancery; a support annex; main, consular, service compound access control facilities; a utility building; and a recreational facility.
- The architectural design emphasizes the use of regional materials and the building accentuates its presence on the gentle rolling terrain. The main representational façade portrays an open and welcoming feeling, while maintaining necessary security.
- Energy and environmental design issues have been balanced with the overall project goals of openness, diplomacy, functionality, security, and value, and will reduce costs and increase operational efficiency.

Landscape

- All of the plants used on the grounds are being sourced locally, within Swaziland, or in near-by South Africa.
- A row of mango trees will be preserved. These trees existed on the site prior to the U.S. government's purchase of the property.

Sustainability

- The project's goals include Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold certification. This will recognize the project's goals to minimize the Embassy's impact on local resources by conserving energy and reducing water consumption, as well as improving indoor air quality and utilizing more sustainable building materials.
- A 220 kilowatt-hour (kWh) DC photovoltaic system, located on the support annex roof and a parking canopy, will produce an average 853kWh/day (or an average of 311,488 kWh/year), reducing our use of local electricity and our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Regenerative elevators will harvest power into the system's motor. When the carriage travels down, the motor acts as a generator, transforming mechanical power into electrical power. When a cab goes up with a light load and down with a heavy load, the system generates more power than it uses. Over time, these small amounts of power add up to noticeable savings. These elevators also use less energy, reducing excess heat in the building.
- Light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures will be used throughout the building and grounds to provide higher efficiency and better quality lighting.
- Occupancy and daylight harvesting sensors will ensure that lights turn off in empty offices and will reduce the use of artificial lighting.
- The high solar reflectance—or albedo—of cool roofs will help reflect sunlight and heat away from buildings, reducing roof temperatures and decreasing the need for air conditioning, fuel consumption, and emissions of greenhouse gases and urban air pollutants. Cool roofs will also help mitigate urban heat island effect.
- Rainwater will be harvested and stored for site irrigation, further reducing the use of municipal water.
- Constructed wetlands will provide the final stage of treatment for wastewater generated onsite, which can then be used for irrigation.
- All of the chancery's hot water will be pre-heated by a solar thermal water heating system—utilizing free heating by the sun for greater energy efficiency—before passing through an auxiliary heater.
- Water-conserving low-flow plumbing fixtures will reduce use of potable water.
- Low-emitting paints, coatings, adhesives, sealants, flooring, composite wood, and agrifiber product will improve air quality and occupant well-being.

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