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WHAT'S NEW

Building for the Future



Despite these economically uncertain times, throughout Grand Cayman there are signs of life, with numerous projects in various stages of development and construction. And the new buildings cover an impressive diversity of sectors - from government to tourism to commercial to residential.

Right outside town, the new Government Administration Building is going up next door to the old one, popularly known as the Glass House.

The \$85 million, 230,000-square foot government headquarters will cater to 900 civil servants and be capable of withstanding Category Five hurricanes, earthquake forces, and floods up to 12 feet. The exterior shell is expected to be completed or nearly completed by July this year. And barring any major setbacks caused by the upcoming two hurricane seasons, the building is on schedule for a January 2011 completion.

In addition to its own new home, government is proceeding with several other major projects.

Though budget constraints have postponed construction of a new secondary school campus in West Bay, work on two new high schools has started. The \$56.7 million construction of the Clifton Hunter Campus in Frank Sound is progressing and features such as the technology building are taking shape. The \$58.9 million rebuilding of the John Gray Campus in George Town is also coming along. The projects had been slated to begin in January

2008, with the schools open in time for the start of the September 2009 academic year, but both schools are now expected to be ready in the summer of 2010 and will open to students that September.

Land has also been purchased for construction of the new George Town Primary School. The site has been cleared and site works have been completed in readiness for the next stage of development.

Though much delayed, the redevelopment of Owen Roberts International Airport is still set to continue, but the start date is contingent on when financing is secured. Work is planned on such projects as expanding the ticketing hall, constructing international and domestic arrival and departure halls, and installing four jetways to take passengers directly from the airplane to the terminal building. So far, the road network surrounding the airport has been improved and the car parks expanded.

Within the private sector, projects both large and small are in various stages of construction or recently completed. Just down the road from the under-construction government building, Walkers will later this year move into its new corporate headquarters, an impressive structure embracing green technology.

"The construction and fit out of our new office building on Elgin Avenue has provided us with the opportunity to ensure the project is as environmentally friendly as possible," said Diarmad Murray, partner with overall responsibility for the new building.

To make the building energy efficient, Walkers incorporated solar water heating panels, rainwater cisterns for flushing toilets, Lutron lighting controls including dimmers and light and occupancy sensors, and special insulation for the walls.

"Other green aspects to the new Walkers building include low-emission, energy-efficient printers and office equipment, as well as the provision of showers and bike racks to encourage staff to ride to work," Murray added.

Over by the Esterley Tibbetts Highway, Landmark Square officially opened in March, across from The Strand. The environmentally friendly, hurricane-resistant building has offices for lease or sale.

In addition, the development offers the use of virtual offices, whereby business owners who do not want to invest in a bricks-and-mortar site can nevertheless take advantage of many corporate amenities. These include use of a professional business address for mail and package delivery, a dedicated phone number with 24/7 voicemail, live reception during business hours, and various administrative services.

On a grander scale, one development continues to expand while the design for another evolves. Camana Bay has already established itself as an entertainment, office and retail hub, but the plans have always called for a residential component. Towards that end, apartments at The Terraces, some of which have views to the North Sound, are almost fully leased, with the first tenants expected to

move in this summer. The 60 one- or two-bedroom units range in size from 840 sq ft to 2,400 sq ft.

Below these apartments are places for six restaurants, covering a variety of cuisines and price points. These establishments line The Crescent and look out over the water.

By the end of the year, a new office block, 89 Nexus Way, is set to come on stream, with anchor tenants Citco and Ogier. The building comprises 129,000 square feet of available space and by July 2009 was already more than 60 percent leased.

But perhaps the most interesting architectural feature, which is expected to be open to the public this summer, is the Observation Tower. Rising 75 feet and adorned with individually placed floor-to-ceiling mosaic tiles depicting scenes from a scuba dive from the sea bed to the surface, the tower offers 360-degree views of Grand Cayman, from the Caribbean Sea across the North Sound to Rum Point.

In keeping with the water theme, Dragon Bay, the brainchild of Michael Ryan, owner/developer of The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman, is envisioned as a growing community running from the North Sound through to the Caribbean connected by a series of canals.

And then there is The WaterColours, the latest luxury residential project from noted Seven Mile Beach developer Fraser Wellon, whose most recent developments including The Pinnacle and Water's Edge. Construction of the high-end condominiums is slated to begin in the autumn of this year, on the site of the Beach Club Colony.

Owners of the three- and four-bedroom residences will enjoy such amenities as a state-of-the-art fitness studio, beachside infinity pool, private massage room, concierge service, and guest suites.

On the tourist front, visitors to

Perhaps the most interesting architectural feature, which is expected to be open to the public this summer, is the Camana Bay Observation Tower.

A ceremony was held in March 2009 to commemorate Cayman's first solar-powered home being hooked up to the CUC grid as part of the company's Consumer Owned Renewable Energy program.



PHOTO BY IRIS STONER



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Cayman have two relatively new, albeit similar, attractions to check out: Dolphin Discovery and Dolphin Cove. The former is located right across from Boatswain's Beach (formerly known as the Turtle Farm) and houses the dolphins in a special pool. At the other facility, also in West Bay by Morgan's Harbor, visitors interact with the dolphins in an enclosed area of the North Sound. The two parks,

which opened within a month of each other, starting in December last year, offer activities including swimming with the dolphins.

In addition to these tourist draws, West Bay offers a new boutique resort.

Cotton Tree, which sits by Barkers Beach, is a purposefully small,



"Cotton Tree marries privacy and solitude with signature services and amenities; tastefully appointed living spaces with panoramic views complemented by an eclectic selection of local art and artifacts from around the world."



The beautiful interior of the new downtown Butterfield building.

secluded property of just four cottages.

Owner and developer Heather Lockington describes the concept behind her hotel, which opened for its first guests in April.

"Cotton Tree is a world apart from the busy scene usually associated with Grand Cayman. We provide our guests with secluded privacy and a world-class concierge service, allowing them to do as much, or as little, as they please. With just four cottages, Cotton Tree marries privacy and solitude with signature services and amenities; tastefully appointed living spaces with panoramic views complemented by an eclectic selection of local art and artifacts from around the world."

On the other side of Grand Cayman, a private home in South Sound, though not quite brand new, made history this year. Frank Banks, a retired senior partner at Walkers, moved into his home with his wife and family in December 2006. His dream was to live in an energy-efficient home; Banks wanted his house to be solar-powered, but at the time the technolo-

gy was not yet up to speed, and there were no mechanisms in place enabling Caribbean Utilities Company (CUC) customers to connect their renewable energy source to the grid.

By 2008, however, legislation was in the works to govern how residences could send their excess electricity to the CUC grid and build up credit to be used when they needed the extra power. In addition, solar technology had advanced to the point where the energy-capturing panels were smaller, stronger and more efficient.

Banks and builder Lindsay Scott then set to work to transform his home into a solar-powered residence. Unfortunately, Banks took ill and was never to see his dream fulfilled. On his behalf, however, a ceremony was held in March 2009 to commemorate Cayman's first solar-powered home being hooked up to the CUC grid as part of the company's Consumer Owned Renewable Energy program. Banks died the following day.

Government officials and friends were on hand for the switching-on ceremony. Scott recalled Banks's vision for his home and the community. He told those gathered that Banks said: "I don't want to be a burden on the environment or a burden on the community."

He also told Scott: "I want to be the Johnny Appleseed of solar energy in Cayman," and as Scott said to the people witnessing that small but significant event: "[This house] stands here as a testament to Frank." ✨