GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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Contract Signing Ceremony for the Design Consultants for Estate House #2 and the National Cultural Arena

Release Date: 10 March, 2026



Remarks by Premier and Minister of Finance

Honourable Doctor Natalio D. Wheatley

on the Occasion of the

Contract Signing Ceremony

Design Consultants for Estate House #2 and the National Cultural Arena

10th March, 2026

Good morning to each and everyone.

Today marks another meaningful step in our Government's commitment to building a stronger, more resilient, and more culturally vibrant Virgin Islands. We are here to formalise the engagement of design consultants for two important projects - each different in purpose, but both deeply connected to our vision for a modern, sustainable, and forward-looking Territory.

The first project is the design for the reconstruction of estate house #2, also known as Oleander House, formerly the chief minister's house, located at Macnamara. This initiative forms part of our wider effort to revitalise public estates in partnership with the office of the Deputy Governor. For many years, this property has remained unoccupied, and the devastation of the 2017 hurricanes only worsened its already fragile condition. Today, we turn the page toward renewal.

The restored facility will be used to ensure that all who work in service to the Territory have safe, functional, and dignified workspaces.

I am especially pleased that this project will incorporate green building principles and energy-efficient systems. as a Government, we are serious about sustainability. every step we take toward reducing energy consumption, lowering operating costs, and protecting our environment is a step toward a more secure future for the Virgin Islands. Oleander House will stand as a model of how heritage, functionality, and environmental responsibility can coexist.

The second project we are advancing today is the architectural and engineering design for the national cultural arena, to be developed behind the R. T. O'neal administration complex. since the area's first use, it has proven its value as a venue for major public events – from concerts in to the Carilec Lineworkers rodeo in April 2025.

Its proximity to the Cyril b. Romney Tortola Pier Park, the cruise pier, and ample parking makes it an ideal location for large gatherings.

But today, we begin the transition from temporary use to long-term vision.

The proposed National Cultural arena will be a purpose-built facility designed to support performances, festivals, cultural showcases, and community events. it will include permanent utilities, flexible public-use spaces, vendor stalls, sanitary facilities, security features, and all the supporting infrastructure needed for a safe, accessible, and durable venue.

This project is about more than infrastructure. It is about identity. It is about giving Virgin Islanders a dedicated and fit-for-purpose space to celebrate who we are - our music, our creativity, our traditions, and our shared story. Once realised, the national cultural arena will strengthen opportunities for cultural engagement and deepen our sense of national pride.

Together, these two projects reflect the broader direction of our government: modernising public infrastructure, supporting the work of our institutions, investing in culture, and building sustainably for the future. They demonstrate what is possible when we plan carefully, collaborate effectively, and remain focused on long-term development.

I thank all our partners - the Recovery and Development Agency (rda), the design consultants who will be signing contracts today, the public officers, and the many individuals who continue to contribute to the progress of our Territory. your work is helping to shape a Virgin Islands that is more resilient, more inclusive, and more prepared for the opportunities ahead.

I look forward to seeing both designs come to life, and to the positive impact these projects will have on our people and our future.

Thank you.

Gallery





Additional Documents or Media

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