

Morphosis Reaches Construction Milestones in Four Seminal Projects Around the Globe

*Commercial Tower in North Africa Tops Off; Government, Corporate, and Civic Projects
Break Ground in the U.S., Europe, and Middle East*

Los Angeles, November 16, 2017—This fall, four Morphosis projects in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. reach significant milestones in construction. From corporate headquarters and office tower to a U.S.-Canada border crossing, Morphosis' broad range of projects reflects the firm's innovative and visionary approach while responding to the needs of each project and its surrounding community.

The construction milestones include the topping off Casablanca Finance City, the first major financial tower in Casablanca, Morocco, catalyzing the Anfa District development into a financial district for North African investment; the groundbreaking of the U.S. Land Port of Entry at Alexandria Bay that will provide a vital connection in Northeast travel and commerce; the initial construction phase of a new corporate headquarters in Milan for Eni, one of the leading energy companies in the world; and the groundbreaking of the new campus for the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon.

"With projects across five continents, the scope of work we're engaged in continues to expand," said Morphosis Founder and Design Director Thom Mayne. "While these four projects are vastly different in terms of type and scale, they are all representative of our approach to work, addressing the unique challenges of each site while remaining focused on sustainable, innovative design."

Casablanca Finance City; Casablanca, Morocco (scheduled completion: 2018)



Casablanca Finance City Tower, a 25-story building, marks its topping off this fall in Morocco and will be completed 2018. Inspired by the La Défense business district in Paris, the Casablanca Finance City initiative transforms a previously unexplored space—a razed airport southwest of the city center—into a new business district and special economic zone inviting global firms to Morocco.

"The Anfa District development defines the new 21st-century gateway into North Africa and the African continent as a whole. The Casablanca Finance City Towers brings together, for the first time, global industries to the doorstep of the great African continent," said Morphosis Principal Ung-Joo Scott Lee. "The Finance City district places spark international investment in North Africa."

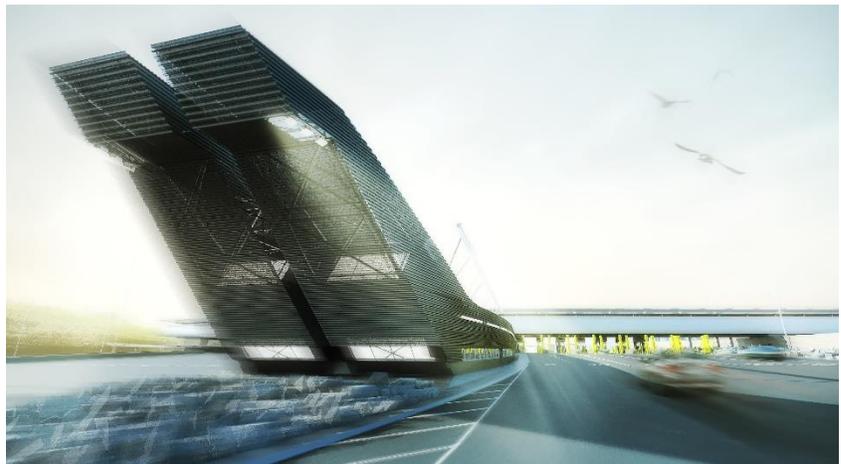
The open site creates an unusual opportunity in otherwise dense Casablanca to highlight the figurative and sustainable relationship between building and the natural environment, an example being the brise-soleil system that will wrap the building against the desert sun while offering views of the city. A tapered crown capping the 398-foot (121-meter) structure creates a new icon for the city; mirrored at street level, the building engages the lower urban landscape with communal programming and distinctive public space. This double crown allows the building to simultaneously serve as a symbol of the city's development and as a social hub that nurtures an active street life in the district, complete with distinctive public space and communal programming.

The first tower in the Finance City project plays a critical role in the ongoing development, symbolizing Morocco's vision for the future and setting precedents in building performance, scale, and style for a part of the city that does not yet exist. Working with the climate and minimizing the ecological impact, the tower sets a standard for future projects to emulate in their designs.

U.S. Land Port of Entry at Alexandria Bay; Wellesley Island, New York (phase one scheduled completion: 2019)

Officials celebrated the groundbreaking earlier this fall for the new U.S. Land Port of Entry at Alexandria Bay, one of the busiest border crossings between the United States and Canada. The new port is located on Wellesley Island, New York, at the northern terminus of Interstate 81, a vital artery for commerce arriving from Canada to the Northeast. Morphosis is working with the artist Ann Hamilton on a site-specific commission for the Art-in-Architecture component to the Land Port of Entry. The first phase of the project will conclude in 2019, with the final phase anticipated for completion in 2022.

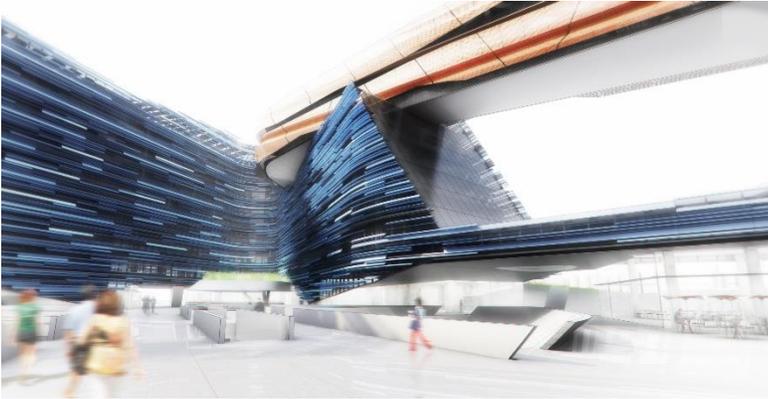
"The Port of Entry border crossing presents a unique set of challenges, from the functional requirements of the building, to the need to streamline the border crossing experience, to the nature of the site itself," said Morphosis Principal Ung-Joo Scott Lee. "Our design addresses all of these concerns while creating an iconic new gateway to the United States."



The Main Building of the Port of Entry features a prominent, elevated prow marking entry into the United States, as well as several other buildings for a variety of inbound/outbound inspections and hazmat containment. An elevated 162-car parking facility spans east-west across the site, connecting each of the major buildings. Below the parking deck, seven lanes of commercial traffic and eight lanes of non-commercial traffic provide inspection and entry into the United States. The canopy above allows for photovoltaic panels providing 150KW per year to the new port. Occupying the breadth of the port, this parking structure allows for future infrastructure to flexibly integrate into the existing site.

Eni Headquarters; San Donato Milanese, Italy (scheduled completion 2020)

Eni, one of the world's leading energy companies, began construction in October on its new Exploration & Production Management Center, scheduled for completion in 2020. Eni played a pivotal role in the country's renewal and post-war economic boom after the Second World War. The company's founding director, Enrico Mattei, built a utopian community revolving around the company and its employees, with housing, recreation, and cultural facilities set within a campus of idyllic gardens and parkland. Designed in 1952 by architect Mario Bacciocchi, Mattei's hamlet "Metanopoli" remains the base of Eni's international operations. The Morphosis design integrates the new Center with the historic buildings, creating a new corporate campus that favors landscape and a central piazza.



“The new Center builds upon Eni’s long history and commitment to the community of San Donato, by repurposing an historic building as the new entry to the campus and framing the buildings around a central piazza and landscaping,” said Morphosis Principal Arne Emerson. “Our design will encourage community engagement and establish a new model for a sustainable workplace environment that promotes employee health and well-being.”

A restored grand entry through the preserved historic Eni building will create a symbolic link with the company’s legacy, leading guests to a public Exposition hall and the historic Grand Court, which has been reimagined as a semi-public plaza. A ribbon of interconnected office buildings will frame an open central piazza, to place multi-level gardens and a shared social and outdoor dining space at the heart of the campus. The whole collection of buildings will be defined by striated facades that reference the tectonic, geological conditions through which energy is produced, an expression of Eni’s relationship to natural processes.

The Center is designed to meet Classe A energy requirements and achieve LEED Gold Italia, with various strategies employed to reduce overall energy consumption, preserve natural resources, and create a healthful and productive working environment for employees through biodiversity, solar-powered temperature control, and renewable water sources. The new campus will establish a benchmark for sustainable design and social responsibility that champions Eni’s role as a steward of the environment.

United States Embassy Campus; Beirut, Lebanon (scheduled completion 2023)

Officials from the U.S. Department of State broke ground earlier this year on the new 43-acre U.S. Embassy in Lebanon. Located in the suburb of Aaoukar approximately 10 miles northeast of Beirut’s historic district, the design strategy for the new U.S. Embassy draws from local building practices adapted to the site’s dramatic topography, using hillside planning techniques that integrate architecture with the landscape to inform security, function, and performance. Buildings are clustered on the eastern half of the site to promote walkability, with recreational open space and flexibility for future expansion to the west. Blending with the medium density and character of the neighborhood, the campus maintains a low profile along Aoukar Road, culminating in the symbolic rise of the Chancery, consulate, and public function areas at the highest point of the site. Consular services and areas dedicated to public diplomatic functions are designed to enhance the visitor experience, with comfortable waiting areas, shaded gardens, and an art program featuring site-specific commissions from local and international artists. Extending from the Chancery, ribbon-like residential buildings frame the campus’ central service and circulation corridor, a community “main street” with outdoor plazas and dining for Embassy staff.



“The new campus for the U.S. Embassy in Beirut represents the latest in innovation for safety, security, and sustainability, while integrating with the surrounding community and natural landscape,” said Morphosis Principal Arne Emerson. “The design is a manifestation of the spirit of cooperation and partnership between the United States and Lebanon, and we look forward to working with the OBO and the U.S Embassy in Lebanon to complete this landmark project.”

The design for the new Embassy pursues rigorous energy-saving and sustainability goals, aiming to reduce environmental impact, optimize building performance, and enhance the self-sufficiency of the campus. The sustainable design strategies include LEED Neighborhood Development; a LEED Platinum and net zero energy for the Chancery; net zero water for site irrigation; a full waste-water treatment facility on site; rainwater reuse for toilet flushing; and a majority of building heating supplied through heat recovery systems. Taking advantage of the mild Mediterranean climate, natural lighting and airflow are used whenever possible to reduce energy usage and improve interior ambience. Landscaping and green roofs across the Embassy use water-saving native plantings, while significant habitat regeneration throughout the site will preserve the local ecosystem. Durable, locally-sourced materials, such as cast in place concrete facades and precast concrete floor tiles, are used to improve longevity and reduce the energy footprint during construction.

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About Morphosis

Morphosis is a global architecture and design firm, creating compelling work that is intelligent, pragmatic, and powerful. For more than 40 years, Morphosis has practiced at the intersection of architecture, urbanism, and design, working across a broad range of project types and scales, including civic, academic, cultural, commercial, residential, and mixed-use; urban master plans; and original publications, objects, and art. Committed to the practice of architecture as a collaborative enterprise, founder and Pritzker Prize-winning architect Thom Mayne works in tandem with principals Arne Emerson, Ung-Joo Scott Lee, Brandon Welling, and Eui-Sung Yi, and a team of more than 60 in Los Angeles, New York, and Shenzhen. At the root of all Morphosis projects is a focus on rigorous research and innovation, prioritizing performance-driven design that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. Through its research arm, The Now Institute, the firm collaborates with academic institutions to create design-based solutions for the pressing issues of the day, from mobility, urban revitalization, and sustainability to public policy, planning, and community outreach. For more information, visit www.morphosis.com.

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