

# Press release: British Embassy Bangkok moves to a new home for the 21st century

Diplomats and consular staff at the UK Embassy in Bangkok will move to new premises by 2019, following the sale of the existing site to a joint-venture consortium of Hongkong Land, a member of the Jardine Matheson Group, and Central Group for over £420 million.

This is the biggest land deal in Thai history and the FC0's biggest ever sale. The proceeds will be reinvested in the FC0's overseas estate and will fund 30-40 modernisation projects around the world that are necessary for security or health and safety reasons.

The new embassy building will be based in the AIA Sathorn Tower in the central business district from where diplomats will continue to promote UK interests in Thailand, a key partner on security and prosperity, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and wider region.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Britain is a leading player on the global stage and I'm determined to ensure that our diplomats have all the necessary tools to do their job effectively. This includes working in modern, safe, fit for purpose premises not just in Bangkok but around the world.

Our workforce in Bangkok will be moving into a state-of-the-art premises by 2019 and this can only enhance our trade links and bilateral relations in Thailand and throughout the region.

Simon McDonald, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office said:

In a tight fiscal environment, it is right that we take tough decisions to ensure that the UK can maintain a global presence while getting the best value for taxpayers.

This deal will ensure that we have a modern, state of the art premises in Bangkok, confirming our long-term commitment to our relationship with Thailand, while releasing much-needed funds to modernise other embassies around the world, including in Cairo, New Delhi and Washington.

The sale is part of the FCO's continual review of its global estate, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of a world-class platform from which to promote UK interests, and also deliver value to the British taxpayer.

The existing embassy building, which dated from the 1920s, required a significant upgrade and refurbishment to make it fit-for-purpose for a modern working environment, with large parts of the embassy building no longer usable.

After exploring all the options for the Bangkok estate, and conducting an independent valuation of the site, the decision was taken to sell the compound to the joint-venture consortium of Hongkong Land, a member of the Jardine Matheson Group, and Central Group following an open competition.

The new embassy will reaffirm our long-term commitment to our relationship with Thailand – a key partner for the UK's security and prosperity interests and a leading ASEAN nation.

We are also strengthening our trade links through the new the Thai-UK Business Leadership Council, and this is complemented by the strong collaboration on science and innovation through our £3 million Newton Fund for Thailand.

Our diplomatic staff are also working with the Thai authorities on preventing child exploitation, organised crime, money laundering and human trafficking. And we will continue to maintain our focus on supporting human rights defenders, promoting freedom of expression and encouraging full Thai cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review process.

## **Notes for editors**