



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS TO PROTECT BUILT HERITAGE
(HISTORIC HOMES & OTHER SITES)**

14 October 2021 – In response to recent public discourse regarding the mandate of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (“National Trust”) in relation to the Islands’ built heritage, the organization wishes to share the following information with our community regarding our continued efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.

The Historic Programme of the National Trust has always been and continues to be of vital importance to the initiatives carried out including the Heritage Register for which it is responsible. This Register documents traditional Caymanian homes, based on their age, historical and cultural importance (who lived there and the role the home played in the community), as well as the materials used in the construction of the home. i.e. Ironwood, Wattle and Daub, Silver Thatch, etc.

This Heritage Register is updated every two years, using volunteers and a public record is subsequently published online for reference. The most recent update of the Heritage Register has just been completed and can be accessed at: <https://caymanislandsnationaltrust.pastperfectonline.com/photo>

The Heritage Register is also a crucial aspect of the National Trust’s agreement with the Cayman Islands Government (CIG), as it is part of the services mandated to deliver to the people of the Cayman Islands under the National Trust Law 1987.

Although the National Trust receives a Government grant, the costs of meeting its obligations under the Law significantly exceeds the grant. It is essential for the National Trust to supplement these funds, primarily by way of donations, grants and sponsorships from private individuals and the private sector. These supplemental funds are applied towards the various expenses incurred in connection with our major sites which is upwards of CI\$100,000 alone yearly to insure and maintain. Currently, there are 12 historic sites for which the National Trust has responsibility this includes insurance, restoration work, maintenance, staff and educational initiatives.

The challenges of funding for the National Trust are not new, but these have been exacerbated because of losing many of our tours and other fundraising activities, due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and the resulting significant drop-off in tourism.



The National Trust for the Cayman Islands was formed as a non-profit, non-governmental agency and the challenge in raising funds to purchase, restore and insure historical built properties has meant that we are not able to take on these properties without an endowment to help with the costs.

As such, in September 2021 at our Annual General Meeting, we briefly introduced to our membership the concept and launch of a Historic Preservation Fund which will give persons and organizations the ability to directly contribute to the preservation of built heritage. More detailed information about this Historic Preservation Fund will be forthcoming shortly, and the National Trust is looking forward to the support of all who are interested supporting this initiative.

When most people think of the National Trust, the general theme that comes to mind is one that speaks to a predominantly environmental focus and the environment. However, there is also great need for the same emphasis on Cayman's historical buildings and other cultural aspects of preservation from the community. This passion has not always been easy to elicit for buildings and structures until the imminent loss of one is felt.

A few years ago, a proposal drafted by Richard Mileham of the Planning Department in conjunction with the National Trust's Historic Advisory Committee was submitted to the Cayman Islands Government for consideration in relation to a statutory framework that will govern how the built heritage of the Cayman Islands can be protected by Law. Discussions are ongoing with the Government in this regard.

Overlays are currently in use that zone certain areas as, 'historic'. However, there are no specific statutes in Law that expressly prohibit the destruction of these structures once purchased.

The National Trust welcomes opportunities for interested parties to reach out and to discuss these issues further in a way that we can all effectively lobby for legislation to protect our built heritage.

The National Trust is grateful for those in the community who advocate for the protection of our national heritage treasures, and we encourage everyone from schools to local businesses to join us in the work of the Historic Preservation fund and in support of future legislation.

For more details on the organization's historic programme visit <https://nationaltrust.org.ky/our-work/historic> and contact us at info@nationaltrust.org.ky to learn more on how you can help.

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About the National Trust Historic Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' historic programme promotes an awareness and appreciation of Cayman's built heritage and brings our unique traditions and culture to life. The programme supports one of the primary goals of the National Trust, which is to safeguard historic sites for current and future generations.