



National Trust Statement on the proposed development of the north side of Smith Barcadere (also known as Smith Cove)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organisation whose mandate under Law includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Islands and the conservation of lands and features of historic or environmental importance which the Trust may have acquired through gift, bequest, purchase, lease or other means.

Where a property has been acquired by the Trust, its mandate requires that it be conserved. In instances however where land is privately owned, the Trust is not in a position to ensure its conservation. Similarly, if the Trust is not an adjacent land owner to a property slated for development, it has no legal standing to object and can only comment publicly on the application, and which may or may not be taken into account by the Central Planning Authority when considering an application for planning consent.

The Trust is aware of the application recently submitted for the development of the North side of Smith Barcadere (also known as Smith Cove). The Trust is also aware of, and sympathetic to, the public outcry regarding the proposed development. Smith Barcadere is a beloved area of great historic and cultural significance. It is one of the few remaining public swimming places in George Town and a true icon of the nation's capital.

With the increasing pace of development in the Cayman Islands, it is now ever more important that proper steps be taken to ensure conservation of areas of beauty and historic and/or environmental importance. The sustainable development of our coastline is also of paramount importance and particularly in the case of Smith Cove, a culturally and environmentally significant site.

There is a rare plant on the Smith Cove site (*Trichilia havanensis*), almost extinct on Grand Cayman and considered critically endangered, growing on the wooded section of the lot that is slated for development. This plant is protected under Schedule 1 Part 2 of the National Conservation Law. It is common elsewhere in the Caribbean and was probably once quite common in the area south of George Town between Walkers Road and South Church.

This site is effectively where the Turtle Farm began as Dr. Schroeder and Jim Daly used a shed on land owned by A.L. Thompson (where his current home is now located) to keep turtle eggs before releasing hatchlings at Smith Barcadere.

The sea was an intrinsic part of life for early Caymanians and for two hundred years just about every male was making his living from the sea. They would have begun their voyages at one barcadere or another and would have returned there to clean or butcher their catch of fish or turtle. Caymanians became world renowned mariners and shipbuilders, constructing their vessels at barcaderes or 'landing places' in order to facilitate an easy launch once completed.

Smith Barcadere is one of these public landing places and as such plays an important part in the history of the Cayman Islands.

For the environmental, cultural and historical reasons outlined above, the National Trust will be nominating Smith Barcadere to its Heritage Register with immediate effect and encourages the Central Planning Authority to consider these important factors when making its final decision so that endangered plants remain protected and that locals and residents continue to enjoy the public access to which they have historically been privy.

We would ask that any consideration by the CPA of this development application include a discussion on adequate conditions to ensure the protections mentioned above.