

Identifying the Issues that Plague Historic Preservation in the Caribbean



Fig. 1 Downtown street in Frederiksted, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

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Fig. 2 Map of the Caribbean region, denoting island groupings

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The Caribbean, which spans over 1.063 million square miles, is made up of thousands of islands that make up this region, although only thirteen of them are independent nations, fourteen of them dependent territories and two of them overseas departments. These islands are home to about 39.17 million individuals¹, who are represented by Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean, Native Americans (Arawaks, Tainos, Caribs), European, Asian (West) Indian and Caribbean founded

¹ Central Intelligence Agency. "Country Comparison :: Population." Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html> (accessed February 5, 2014).

ethnic groups. Sounds of Dutch, English, French, Spanish and localized Creoles can all be heard from this region, as early colonial powers that ruled these islands left their mark creating these small melting pot societies. These islands are formed in a chain and grouped in the following order (Fig. 1): the Lucayan (Bahama) Archipelago, Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles (further split into the Leeward Islands, Windward Islands and the Leeward Antilles).

It is the goal of this paper to address the issues that have been a deterrent in the promotion of historic preservation within the Caribbean region through the exploration of post-colonialism, modern societal trends, government and legislation, public support, and the status of educational curriculums, and proposed ways and means to improve this situation. The islands that will be explored later in this paper, with regard to investigation of preservation endeavors, will be that of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands (Leeward Islands), Jamaica (Greater Antilles) and Grenada (Windward Islands). These three islands were chosen for their unique relationship and standing with preservation efforts; one which follows US historic preservation ruling through the National Park Service, another that has managed to organize a semi-functional national trust, and lastly one that has neglected the importance that historic structures play within their society.

When colonial powers began to take over islands in the Caribbean, they organized the island in such a way that they could function and carry out their objectives. Some islands were thoughtfully developed, while others were created more in a makeshift and temporary fashion. The use that the island supplied depended upon

the care and thought of the planning of infrastructure. As the original inhabitants were Native American groups (Arawaks, Tainos, Caribs), most of the structures were vernacular and constructed from locally derived materials. When the Spanish, English, French, Danish and Dutch came to the area, they brought with them the architectural planning and styling from their homelands. Due to changes in climate, terrain, available materials, and other region specific qualities, the architecture was slightly tweaked, making a similar yet completely unique style. Every island was different with relation to the influence that was introduced into the built environment.

“Cultural heritage is one of the many legacies left by colonialism worldwide.”² Because some colonies’ development was more thought out than others, it created differing outcomes for the cultural inheritance which was passed down from the colonial powers. Not always the case, but in some regard those ruling powers who took the time to properly design a functioning infrastructure left quite a legacy behind long after they left the islands. This can be observed through the remnants of key architectural elements such as government buildings, churches, original town planning, et al. Those islands, which were not fully developed properly by their ruling powers, were left without many key architectural buildings or much planning at all. Therefore, when independence was obtained or the chain of command was switched to a different ruling power, the planning had to be developed and realized at that moment, meaning they were missing these previous ties to their past and

² Oostindie, Gert. "Preface." In *Dutch Colonialism, Migration and Cultural Heritage*, vii. Leiden: KITLV, 2008.

heritage; there was nothing in their built environment or planning which could link them to that which came before.

The necessary framework of cultural and historical preservation is one that needs to be instilled from an early age. "Education starting with young children provides a foundation for an enlightened and informed citizenry."³ Those islands that were properly developed were literally developed from the ground up to include an expansive educational curriculum that would instill a cultural appreciation for the ruling colonial power. "Nonetheless, primary education remained the principal means and channel of acculturation for Afro-Caribbeans to the colonial Creole cultures that emerged after the abolition of slavery, and effectively ensured that the ex-slaves and their offspring simultaneously learned to accept the society and its culture, and their places within it."⁴ Those who were raised in this educational setting tended to have a deeper insight about their surrounding cultural resources; generally speaking, they were sensitized to these resources. In those cases where there was little thought and focus put into educational development or a devoid of architectural development from which to learn, this *sensitizing* never occurred. This colonial development or lack thereof would be quite influential on the government as well, especially in those cases where there was minimal development laid out by the colonial powers. It would simply solidify this idea of ignorance to the importance of cultural appreciation, as it had never been properly instilled.

³ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 156. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

⁴ Smith, M.G., Phillip Burnham, Jack Harewood, and Josep Llobera. "Introduction." In *Education and Society in the Creole Caribbean*, 10: CIFAS, 2008.

Those children who were educated about cultural resource appreciation were more likely to have a respect for those resources as they grew up to become active members of society versus their counterparts, as it became the norm for them to acknowledge these resources within their environment. Although it is likely that many of them may not have lived through the cruel realizations of slavery and the negative aspects of slavery, they could at least learn to see a building as a bookmark of heritage and appreciate it as such (side note: majority of these buildings were in fact built by ancestors). Unfortunately, this is a prime reason why many independent island nations today tend to lack sufficient government support for realizing historic preservation efforts. Many of those same individuals in government positions were not properly sensitized at a younger age and therefore cannot see the value these cultural resources play within their society. Many refuse to support these efforts because they believe it to be a deterrent to development for tomorrow. Another reason why many governments are not supportive of historic preservation efforts is that there is no push from the public, but this will be addressed at a later point.

Colonialism in the Caribbean tends to have a negative connotation as many vividly recount the slave trade and the abuse of colonial powers taking advantage of others' resources for their own benefit. Through the years there has been a backlash from *native islanders* who view colonialism as the downfall of their island and society. Those countries who went through the worst of times or relations with their former colonial rulers wanted nothing more than to relinquish themselves from their colonial past. This not only included how they were ruled but also how they felt

about the architectural heritage which was left to them, in those cases that there was an architectural heritage left. These architectural elements were painful reminders for some as they were physical reminders of a tumultuous past, although not everyone had this perspective. This has been the case in places like Trinidad and Antigua where much of the historic fabric has been demolished or neglected to its final demise and ruin. Culture transforms and the focus is highlighted on music, food and carnival instead of the cultural and historical resources of a place. "Values associated with heritage result in such notions as Afro-Caribbean is the "good" heritage, worthy of preservation, whereas vestiges of the colonial past constitute the "bad" heritage, deserving to be excised from the landscape and eventually from memory."⁵

It becomes impossible for many within later generations to disconnect from the post-colonial affects, despite the fact that they themselves never lived through those moments in time. They look down upon anything related to the previous colonial power and cannot distinguish between the resources and the power from which they were initiated. The majority of the historic fabric within these island nations were built and physically realized by the efforts of slave labor and "black artisans, many acting as independent contractors."⁶ Although they were built in colonial times, under colonial supervision, it was the slaves, artisans and the independent contractors who literally built these towns, buildings, and infrastructures. Leaving

⁵ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Preface." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, viii. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

⁶ Chapman, William. "Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values." In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 848. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

these resources to ruin or demolition is not in fact the degradation of colonialism's past but rather the blood, sweat and tears of forefathers' efforts. This is why education becomes the key to unlocking the misinterpretations of island nations' pasts and historical accounts.

The mainstream cultural environment within the Caribbean has sadly overlooked the value of cultural resources in society. It is considered old and lagging in a society who is so desperate to move forward and catch up with development and technology. This idea has been further commercialized as fast food chains have perverted the region, promoting a *fast food mentality* to cross all lines of societies. To keep up with mainland trends, these islands have favored to adopt a culture that is not theirs in the mindset that they are advancing with the times. Unfortunately this has affected not just a decline in food habits, but has further enforced a 'me' attitude amongst younger generations, where no one has time to think about anything but themselves. No one has time to think about ancestral heritage or cultural resources because it does not cater to this 'me' identity. This is starting to cause a serious problem for the future of these island nations; the greater the divide spans from where a society or culture is coming to where they are going is problematic. As Bob Marley's song so genuinely stated, "If you know your history, then you will know where you're coming from."⁷ Unfortunately if you do not know your history and past then you will have a more difficult time relating to your

⁷ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Patrimony or Patricide?." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 143. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

culture. Once cultural resources are left to ruin and squabble it is nearly impossible to bring them back.

US Virgin Islands

“Historic preservation efforts in the Virgin Islands began in the 1950s, largely as a result of National Park Service initiatives.”⁸ The US Virgin Islands, once the Danish West Indies, retain most of the Danish built heritage thanks in part to the proper development of the island and to efforts of

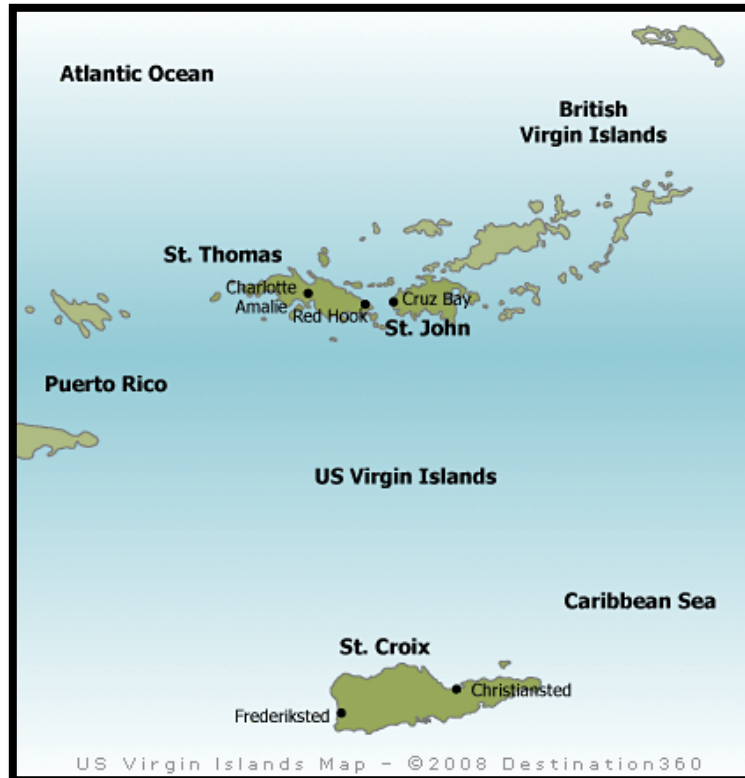


Fig. 3 Map of the US Virgin Islands (St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix)

the local State Historic Preservation Office (VI SHPO) that has worked very hard from its inception to “preserve cultural property for generations to come.”⁹ In 1976 the US Virgin Islands “took advantage of the 1966 National Historic Preservation

⁸ Chapman, William. “Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values.” In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 847. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

⁹ Tarr, Jashina Alexandra. “Virgin Islands.” In *A Collaborative Caribbean Preservation Strategy*, 80. Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1982.

Act, and established a separate state program.”¹⁰ The Antiquities Act, originally presented to the VI Senate years before, was not passed into action until 1998 and is also known as Act No. 6234, Bill No. 22-0112. It defined the role of the VI SHPO,



Fig. 4 Overview of the preserved town of Charlotte Amalie, capital of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.

finances and penalties, requirements for issuance of permits, rights of government with regard to cultural resources, research standards, and other policies regarding archaeology.¹¹ The mission statement of the VI SHPO states that the “preservation, study and interpretation [of historical, cultural, and archaeological properties both on land and in coastal waters] are vital to the self-understanding and self-esteem of the people of the Virgin Islands and to the interests of national and international science in a comprehensive understanding of the history and cultures of the people and the environment of the Virgin Islands.”¹²

Other organizations that support preservation endeavors of cultural resources within the US Virgin Islands are the St. Croix Landmarks Society (1950), St. Thomas

¹⁰ Chapman, William. “Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values.” In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 847. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

¹¹ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. “US Virgin Islands.” In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 63. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

¹² National Parks Service. “US Virgin Islands Preservation Plan Profile.” Historic Preservation Planning Program. <http://www.nps.gov/hps/pad/stateplans/virgin.htm> (accessed January 17, 2014).

Historical Trust (1964), St. John's Historical Society (1976) and Friends of the VI National Park (1988). These groups have been wonderful advocates in the promotion and importance of preservation of the US Virgin Islands' cultural resources. The St. Thomas Historical Trust was founded in 1964 and "has been responsible for the protection of several important buildings and participation in the establishment of the Virgin Islands inventory."¹³ The VI SHPO advocates preservation through "foster [-ing] relationships among property owners, real estate agents, contractors, architects and government agencies."¹⁴ The adoption of the NHPA and the Antiquities Act were a positive movement for the US Virgin Islands, but as with most Caribbean island nations, "the local law does not provide staff or adequate funding for the additional workload involved with implementation of the law; [both of these laws]



Fig. 5 Downtown , preserved street of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.

are subject to public manipulation, which often occurs."¹⁵ As the VI SHPO must situate itself within the local government there are many times the hierarchy of responsibility is not always clearly defined or understood. Since everyone in the

¹³ Tarr, Jashina Alexandra. "Virgin Islands." In *A Collaborative Caribbean Preservation Strategy*, 81. Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1982.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "US Virgin Islands." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 63. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

local government is not that versed on all the laws and regulations stipulated by the NHPA, Antiquities Act and especially Section 106, complications and miscommunications sometimes occur while realizing projects, which can put cultural resources at risk (and have been the cause behind the loss of some important cultural resources).

Despite the struggles faced, the US Virgin Islands has benefitted greatly from programs such as the St. Thomas Historical and the National Park Service. To date there are 5 national parks, 645,956 visitors to national parks (in 2012), \$65,000,000



Fig. 6 The Enid H. Baa Library, located on St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, was restored from its original use as a 18th century town house.

in economic benefits to the US Virgin Islands from national park tourism (in 2011), 88 National Register of Historic Places listings, \$426,759 of rehabilitation projects stimulated by tax incentives (from 1995), 7

National Natural Landmarks, 5

National Historic Landmarks, \$11,436,318 in historic preservation grants (since 1969), 183 places recorded by heritage documentation programs, 169 archaeological sites in national parks.¹⁶ As tourism is the main economic contributor

¹⁶ National Parks Service. "By The Numbers." Working with the Virgin Islands. <http://www.nps.gov/state/vi/index.htm?program=all> (accessed January 26, 2014).

in the US Virgin Islands, these initiatives have greatly boosted tourism numbers for the three islands.

The US Virgin Islands has long relied on support from US subsidies. Sources of funding have greatly improved from the early days; for decades grant money designated for preservation efforts was always quite small.¹⁷ Unfortunately as some

projects require the expertise of a professional cultural resources expert it is not always attainable on such a small island.

To obtain such an

expert the project's

profitability must justify

the expense. The government does not financially support research carried out and therefore when there is not a locally based expert to consult, complications can easily arise. Federal tax incentives have only recently started having an effect in the US Virgin Islands, but the amount of applications received is still a small number compared to the number of eligible properties. This tends to stem from inexperience in dealing with lender organizations and with construction projects.

There is a continual need for public awareness programs in the US Virgin Islands,



Fig. 7 Annaberg Plantation, a former sugar mill, is one of many plantation ruins that can be seen on St. John and the rest of the US Virgin Islands.

¹⁷ Chapman, William. "Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values." In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 847. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

although there are these wonderful and plentiful organizations; the public needs to be more involved in the process as many are simply indifferent to the preservation of cultural resources. “Older wooden buildings are reminders of the island’s past poverty [and] historic buildings are seen as a burden to be supported, not as something that might contribute to the future.”¹⁸

Jamaica



Fig. 8 Map of Jamaica showcasing its 14 parishes.

The beginning of historic preservation efforts in Jamaica can be traced to the 1879 founding of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ), which was the primary collector of all cultural resource materials nationwide. In 1909, a historian by the name of Frank Cundall, a member of the IOJ, took it upon himself to compile a list of national monuments and sites, which was later sent to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1912.¹⁹ There would not be any further advances until the Jamaica

¹⁸ Chapman, William. “Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values.” In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 847. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

¹⁹ Tarr, Jashina Alexandra. “Jamaica.” In *A Collaborative Caribbean Preservation Strategy*, 70. Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1982.

National Trust Commission was established in 1958, prior to Jamaica's independence from Britain. The Commission was responsible for "promoting the preservation of national monuments and objects of historic interest or national importance, for the benefit of the island."²⁰ This was put into effect as a law, fittingly referred to as the

Jamaica National Trust Law of 1958, which allowed for protective powers to be taken where needed for the maintenance or restoration work of historic properties.



Fig. 9 The Government Assembly Building, located in Spanish Town, Jamaica was originally built in 1762. Throughout the years it has been preserved, but needs continuous maintenance.

There have been many supportive organizations since the foundation of IOJ, these include the Jamaica Historical Society (1943), Georgian Society of Friends (1967), African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica (1972 – founded under the IOJ) and the Falmouth Heritage Renewal (2001). In 1985, the JNTC was revised and expanded under the JNHT Act of 1985; the name was changed to the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. The mission statement of the JNHT is "to inspire a sense of national pride through the promotion, preservation, and development of our material cultural heritage, utilizing a highly motivated and qualified team in conjunction with all our

²⁰ Ibid.

partners.”²¹ Both the IOJ and JNHT fall under the Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, but unfortunately there is a conflict over responsibility and obstacles in management of cultural resources as the legislative framework required to distinguish roles and responsibilities has yet to be realized.²²

The Falmouth Heritage Renewal has been a leading advocate for the actual and physical realization of preservation endeavors in the town of Falmouth (Trelawny). The group offers youth training programs, staff training programs, apprenticeships, internships, community programs, and field school opportunities with universities such as University of Virginia, Savannah College of Art and Design and Murray State University. This is an excellent



Fig. 10 Trelawny Parish Courthouse, located in Falmouth, Jamaica, was built in 1817 and was recently restored in 2011.

is unfortunate it is the only one of

its kind and limited to this one area, when Jamaica is as large as it is. JNHT fairs quite well in their advocating of cultural resources across the nation as they take advantage of tapping into the resources at hand, hosting seminars, conferences, special events and broadcasting radio series called “In Search of..” and “Radiocation”

²¹ "About Jamaica National Heritage Trust." Jamaica National Heritage Trust. http://www.jnht.com/mission_function.php (accessed January 26, 2014).

²² Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Jamaica." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 30. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

(which promote cultural heritage to the general public).²³ There is a good level of advocacy and awareness to the national promotion of cultural identity and heritage, but with regard to the historic built environment there is little to no shared information at the public level.

According to the JNHT, there are approximately 118 National Monument Buildings and Structures, 61 Miscellaneous National Monument Sites and Statues and 23 Protected National



Heritage Sites.²⁴ In 1994, JNHT collaborated with the

Fig. 11 Baptist Church of Savannah-La-Mar, Jamaica, was built in 1835, but destroyed by a fire and rebuilt in 1840. In 2010 a tornado destroyed the church and it seems no attention has been given it as it remains in the same condition.

Caribbean School of Architecture on carrying out a National Sites Inventory; only 1,500 sites were recorded out of 10,000. "Jamaica lags behind in its protection of material cultural heritage, particularly buildings. There are no coordinated attempts to preserve or restore important architectural resources."²⁵ Preservation efforts have, in a sense, been on hold, as legislation has not been updated with regards to current issues facing the state of the preservation of cultural resources. These issues

²³ "About JNH Trust - Communications." Jamaica National Heritage Trust. <http://jnht.com/communication.php> (accessed January 26, 2014).

²⁴ "Heritage Sites." Jamaica National Heritage Trust. <http://www.jnht.com/sites.php> (accessed January 26, 2014).

²⁵ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Jamaica." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 31. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

include: lack of maintenance of national monuments and sites, lack of maintenance of historic buildings and sites, lack of funding to stimulate any sort of progress and lack of power to realize these initiatives. In some ways Jamaica's "approach to [a] preservation program can be defined as half contemporary and half old-fashioned."²⁶ Funding for these projects is next to impossible to find, or at least little if any is allocated from the government. The government offers certain funds, such as the Culture Health Arts Sports and Education Fund (CHASE) and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF). In the past there have been international grants and funding supplied from the US, Canada, England and organizations' fundraising efforts, such as the Spanish-Jamaican Foundation, Friends of the Georgian Society of Jamaica, and the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.²⁷



Fig. 12 The former Attorney General Department building in Kingston, Jamaica, has been neglected for so many years to the point it has become a health hazard.

Initially when preservation efforts were just starting to take place, the majority of Jamaican society had a favorable outlook on the preservation of their

²⁶ Tarr, Jashina Alexandra. "Jamaica." In *A Collaborative Caribbean Preservation Strategy*, 72. Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1982.

²⁷ "Tourism News." Jamaica's Tourism Enhancement Fund Pumps Millions into Historical, Cultural Heritage Preservation. <http://www.caribbeannewsdigital.com/en/noticia/jamaicas-tourism-enhancement-fund-pumps-millions-historical-cultural-heritage-preservation> (accessed January 26, 2014).

cultural resources. Since then the government has made great efforts to promote cultural identity and pride not just at a national level but also within schools, which is very important, but there is still a great void, in that the built heritage of the island is not mentioned, discussed or promoted at these same levels. Local attitude is indifferent to their surrounding built environment; little respect is given to historic resources, primarily because there is no “concept of something having value simply because of age.”²⁸ The poverty rate is also high in Jamaica and people usually have more pressing matters than to get excited about raising funds for buildings when their children need shoes to go to school or a home cooked meal at some point in the day. There is still so much that needs to be addressed and realized at a national, parish and local level to further instill the promotion of cultural resources. There is a lot of potential for Jamaica considering they have a strong tourism industry; they could surely use their cultural heritage to their advantage. As it is, most tourists who visit the island remain locked within tourist-only boundaries and leave without learning much at all about the local culture and heritage.

Grenada

Regarding St. George’s, Grenada, “it is one of life’s unexplained mysteries why a city so beautiful, so historic and so richly endowed with so many pleasing buildings of architectural merit has not been preserved lovingly and meticulously, and recognized for the treasure it is.”²⁹ The first action made towards the realization of

²⁸ Chapman, William. “Preservation in the Virgin Islands: Problems in Translating Cultural Values.” In *Old Cultures in New Worlds*. 847. Washington: 8th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium. Programme report - Compte rendu, 1987.

²⁹ Mitchell, Norris. “Foreword.” In *Dynamics of Urban St. George*, 13. S.l.: Xlibris, 2013.

an organization to protect cultural resources was made in 1967, when Parliament enacted the Grenada National Trust (GNT). However, there is little to no history of much effort put forth from the GNT to realize any preservation of the island's cultural resources other than a couple individuals who have taken on the issue by doing what they can to raise funds and seek grants to realize projects here and there. Unfortunately it is not enough of a consensus to tackle the overwhelming and mounting list of resources that are falling into irreparable ruin.



Realizing the disparity of the **Fig. 13** Map of Grenada and Carriacou.

situation, it is nearly inconceivable that in 1998, the Georgian Society had nominated the capital town of St. George as “one of the monuments of the wider Caribbean.”³⁰

At this moment in time, Grenada is lacking a sincere vision with regard to their cultural resources, which is a problem that stems from a lack of a unified and an organized system or framework from both the local legislation and the National

³⁰ Mitchell, Norris. "Urban Challenges of an Evolving Society." In *Dynamics of Urban St. George*, 51. S.l.: Xlibris, 2013.

Trust. There is a vision held by some residents, but as a whole it is lost in translation. The government has made proposals for years, drafted lengthy and verbose strategic plans, they even signed an agreement with the World Heritage Conservation Convention in 1998, in complete “recognition and appreciation of their own natural and cultural heritage and that it intends to ensure their protection



Fig. 14 Overview of the town of St. George's, Grenada.

and enhancement.”³¹ As it stands to this day, all of these plans and proposals have yet to be realized, although they claim, “through professional collaboration, fund raising,

education, advocacy, public and private sector partnerships and nationwide community involvement [they] will identify, conserve and promote Grenada’s heritage assets for the continual enjoyment of our citizens and visitors.”³² There have been local, individual preservation advocates such as Willie Redhead, who was the inspiring force for the 1994 creation of the Willie Redhead Foundation (tWRF), fittingly named after the man who was most proud of his culture and built heritage. This non-governmental organization has been doing what they can on a piecemeal budget. This NGO “urges to protect and preserve the architectural and cultural

³¹ Ibid., 48.

³² "About Us." Grenada National Trust. http://grenadanationaltrust.org/?page_id=29 (accessed February 1, 2014).

heritage of St. George and Grenada as a whole.”³³ There is renewed promise that there could be some action in the near future through the leadership of the newly inaugurated Governor-General, Her Excellency Dame Cecile La Grenade. During her inaugural address, she declared her “commitment to the protection of [the] built heritage with special reference to the restoration of the Governor-General’s residence and York House, which were severely damaged by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and remain derelict to this day.”³⁴

Some of the same individuals who were responsible for the Willie Redhead Foundation have been the same forerunners in the promotion and advocacy of the preservation of Grenada’s cultural resources. One of the most vocal and influential of these individuals has been Norris Mitchell. He has



recently published the book, *Dynamics of Urban St. George*, **Fig. 15** Grenada's Public Library and the home of the National Archives, located in St. George's. It was constructed in 1720, and has been abandoned since 2011.

as a plea for the public and local leaders to take heed and make haste to save their built heritage. Mitchell has worked on nearly every design and planning board and position within Grenada resonating the same mantra, *save our heritage*. Other

³³ "About Us - The Willie Redhead Foundation." The Willie Redhead Foundation. <https://sites.google.com/site/thewrf/Home> (accessed February 1, 2014).

³⁴ "At Last! A Patroness For The Protection Of Our Built Heritage." Grenada Action Forum. <http://grenadaactionforum.com/2013/05/15/at-last-a-patroness-for-the-protection-of-our-built-heritage/> (accessed January 17, 2014).

organizations like the Grenada National Archives (no government affiliation) initiated the Heritage at Risk (HAR) program, to “provide a dynamic picture of the health of Grenada’s heritage – whether it be manuscripts, artifacts or buildings.”³⁵ In the past two years this program has been abandoned and no efforts have been made to update the information or the website. Another promising outlet for preservation awareness is an online forum, Grenada Action Forum, where updates are given on anything from preservation issues afflicting Grenada or courses of action taking place.

The tWRF completed an ‘unofficial’ listing of historic buildings within St. George’s in 1999 from funds donated by the French government. This list totaled about 215 historic buildings. The NGO has also managed to carry out various preservation endeavors including grade school lectures, restorations, assistance to National Archives, replacement of city town signs, etc. Grenada National Trust published their new five-year Strategic Heritage Plan in 2013. Their goal is to have 15 heritage sites vested with the Trust by



Fig. 16 The Anglican Church in St. Georges, Grenada, was built in 1825. It was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and remains neglected.

³⁵ "Heritage at Risk." Grenada National Archives.
<http://grenadanationalarchives.wordpress.com/2010/11/18/what-is-the-har-programme/#/caring/heritage-at-risk/industrial-heritage-at-risk/> (accessed January 26, 2014).

2017.³⁶ (The Tourism and Culture Board of Grenada has only five historic sites on



Fig. 17 Grenada's Parliament Building, an 18th century structure, was destroyed in Hurricane Ivan in 2004. It has since gone into ruin.

their listing of Historic Sites.) The 'national' symbol, the Parliament Building, York House, is facing irreversible ruin after the ravages of Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Considering Grenada lacks a local skilled work force with the necessary expertise to restore 18th and 19th century architecture, it is vital that "expert consultants be brought in to assist in the restoration and help in building a core of workers with the skills needed for the maintenance and preservation of the Parliament Building and other Grenadian heritage sites – and there are many."³⁷

Sources of funding for preservation efforts are difficult to obtain in Grenada, but there are ways and means which funds can be made available. The Willie Redhead Foundation is known to promote fundraising and seek possible grants or funds from interested donors. The National Trust receives a notional European Commission amount of €10,000 annually through the Ministry of Education, funding from private and corporate donations and national lottery contributions. As with any Caribbean island facing developmental issues, funding for these types of initiatives

³⁶ Grenada National Trust, *Strategic Heritage Plan 2013-2017*, 10. GNT: 2013.

³⁷ "Shame!." Grenada Action Forum. <http://grenadaactionforum.com/2012/03/10/shame/> (accessed January 26, 2014).

will be difficult to receive so readily, in the fact that poverty rates tend to be high and demand for development outweigh cultural burdens.

Many individuals from the older generations that left Grenada for work opportunities elsewhere and later returned in their older age see the need for cultural resource preservation on island. Their travels and time abroad sensitized them to what value these resources play not just to an identity of a people and place but for future generations to know more about their culture as well as highlighting the island's resources to increase tourism numbers and revenue. There are numerous letters which have been written from concerned Grenadians both abroad and on-island appealing to the government to promote preservation and save the built heritage of the island before it falls into irreversible ruin. "Greater concern is the attitude among certain developers and building professionals (both architects and engineers) that 'heritage buildings' referred to as 'old buildings; should be knocked down and be replaced by concrete and glass." The outlook that has spurred viewing anything 'old' as valueless is in a great part, due to the "educational structure which places low priority on [the island's] history, resulting in the lack of appreciation for our traditional and cultural mores, which are the glue that binds our society together and contributes to national identity."³⁸

Despite these islands' differences there are common issues at play that plague the advancement of the preservation of cultural resources (and they span across the Caribbean). These issues, as explored earlier in this paper, are 1) cohesive

³⁸ Mitchell, Norris. "Vision of the Town of St. George." In *Dynamics of Urban St. George*, 98. S.l.: Xlibris, 2013.

framework -- all of these islands had problems with the definition of responsibility and who was to be in charge of carrying out those responsibilities, whether internal or external; 2) government -- every island had a problem with local legislation and government, especially with regard to obtaining support to realize preservation efforts; 3) advocacy and awareness -- it is evident that further advocacy measures need to be taken to drive a deeper awareness into society about the importance of preserving the built heritage; 4) funding -- always a challenge to Caribbean island nations because development issues tend to trump preservation issues and there is never enough money to 'properly' address needs; 5) public mindset -- all of these issues are dependent upon society's outlook and as it stands every island has a nonchalant view, everyone seems indifferent to the importance and need for preservation measures.

It is pertinent for any functional organization (whether government affiliated, private or public) to have a properly organized framework established; only then is it possible to accurately realize preservation efforts most efficiently and effectively. This is one of the most important steps because it will be the measuring stick from which to advance successfully. Without a firm foundation it will be difficult for other organizations, government, sponsors, donors, and the public to support or take any initiatives seriously. In the same context, the individuals involved in these organizations need to be well versed, educated and trained in the fields that pertain to these cultural resources (ie: architecture, architectural history, historians, preservationists, archaeologists, et al.). There needs to be a partnership formed between local government and preservation organizations to support preservation

efforts. With the right support, legislative acts can be enacted to protect cultural resources and promote ways these acts can actually be enforced, and not just written down in the law books. It is also important that connections be made with developers, so that development endeavors have a chance to merge with preservation endeavors.

Advocacy and awareness efforts need to be advanced in the form of: education reorganization, tourism activities, media outreach, workshops, meetings, events, and planning ways to promote community involvement. Education reorganization includes the addition of local history, trips to local places organized for different age groups, talks hosted by community leaders and older community members to share through the exchange of oral histories, workshops to learn about historic building techniques, etc. Considering most Caribbean island nations have high unemployment rates, especially amongst the youth, it would seem a worthwhile endeavor to investigate opportunities for apprenticeships where a trade could be learned and preservation efforts could be realized. Tourism activities could include heritage walks and tours, to gain a deeper understanding of a place and society. Proceeds from these tours and walks could go back to support preservation efforts on-island. Media outreach could include public service announcements, forums, discussions, programs and competitions through TV, radio and the Internet.

With the right foundation, connections and an active voice, funding is more of a possibility. Government organizations may be more willing to designate money toward initiatives that are publicly supported and that boost the economy through

the support of tourism. If efforts can be realized to preserve the built heritage and boost the local economy and tourism, those things can help attract more attention from the regional and international communities allowing for possible donations, sponsorships and grants. The key to the success of any of these issues being resolved is the support of the public. "It is only through public demand that history will become a marketable commodity."³⁹ An appreciation for the past will need to be cultivated among society in order to obtain the necessary assistance to move forward and make positive strides in realizing preservation efforts. There is hope that through further investigation of these issues at a larger level the current outlook for preservation efforts can be reversed and that with public interest the cultural resources of the past can be saved for future generations. "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."⁴⁰

³⁹ Siegel, Peter E., and Elizabeth Righter. "Patrimony or Patricide?." In *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*, 150. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

⁴⁰ Native American Quote.

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