MR. RYAN THORPE (property owner)
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Historical Building: Voliet Bourne’s Bar and Andy’s Bakery & Deli
116 Roebuck Street
Bridgetown

Photo (before renovation)

This property was on the market for sale over 6 years (1999)

MY RECOMMENDATION TO THE BILL FOR

THE PRESERVATION OF PLACES, STRUCTURES AND RELICS OR OTHER OBJECTS
OF ARCHEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INTEREST

To: Permanent Secretary, Division of Culture and Sports, Ms Shirley Farnum

Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, the Hon Stephen Lashley

Deputy Permanent Secretary, Division of Culture and Sports, Ms Celia Toppin


**Site Description**

The subject site is one of the typical small urban lots on Roebuck Street. Roebuck Street is a Class 1 road according to the Town and Country Planning Development Order 1972. This street is one of the seven Cultural Heritage Conservation Areas identified within the Bridgetown Community Plan Boundary. The sites contain a two storey stone building that has been identified by the Barbados National Trust and UNESCO as a building for its historical and architectural value. The building on Lot 116, like most other heritage buildings along the throughfare of Bridgetown occupies the majority of the land space zero degree to the boundaries lines.

The property was formerly known as “V Bourne’s Bar” which was a popular Rum shop for liquid lunch, cutters, rock cakes, lead pipes and fish cakes in the 1970’s situated on the ground floor. The first floor was living quarters for the same shop keeper’s family and later in the 1980’s was a Tailors shop.

This property was renovated to almost the same architectural design alike the 1800’s, approximately six years ago by me (Ryan Thorpe) the owner and property developer resulting in a change of use to facilitate more up market retail space and corporate offices, harmonizing the old with the new designing. I have injected 40% physical labour and design into this project for this finial finish.

I have resided and worked in the United Kingdom for the past ten years as a Multi-Skill Engineer with a International Blue Chip Companies and the United Kingdom government.
I was very happy with the area as an investment, having done tremendous historical research about the area, which holds so much history for Barbados and the Caribbean trading communities. I had some costly delays and setbacks with the Chief Town Planner, since it took that Department one year before the approval of my building plans, and one of the main requirements was to locate twenty five (25) parking facilities in Roebuck Street to accommodate my business venture i.e Change of use to public entertainment and Sports Bar (2011). I believe the government of Barbados should pay more attention to the Town Planning Department as these delays can hinder Returning nationals and Foreign Investors from coming to Barbados to invest in our heritage.

Planning History

On 15th June 2006 permission from the Chief Town Planner (application No. 0850/03/05A) for the change of use of the subject property from rum shop on the ground floor and living quarters on the first floor to retail shop space on the ground floor and corporate office on the first floor was granted. Some 12 conditions were attached to that permission including the provision of ten (10) car park spaces, comments and approval from the Barbados Fire Service and the Ministry of Health Environmental Protection Department before construction could commence and which took month’s to be approved. Building construction commenced February 2007

Note: In order to secure duty free concession on furniture’s and building materials for the restoration of a heritage building, approved building plans and a list of the materials required would have to be submitted to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs for approval. This application approval was granted 13th February 2007 under Reference No. 5028/5/12 T10

To comply with the Road Traffic Act permission had to be granted from the Chief Technical Officer, Ministry of Transport and Works to erect a secure barrier against public liability in January 2007.

By letter dated 9th January 2008, the Chief Town Planner issued me with a Certificate of Compliance in respect of application No. 0850/03/05A. By letter dated 24th August 2006 approval was granted from the Ministry of Health Environmental Protection Department including three (3) conditions. By letter dated 25th January 2008 Certification of Inspection 2008 was issued by the Chief Fire Officer.

The current economic downturn resulted in the first floor office space being vacant for three years. Since no rental income was forthcoming my investment had to change accordingly.

A formal application was submitted to the Chief Town Planner on the 24th February 2011 for a change of use of the first floor from office use to entertainment / sports bar at Lot 116 Roebuck Street under Reference No. 0272/02/2011A. By letter from the Town and Country Development Planning Office dated 11th May 2011 the following additional requirements were requested (1) the provision of twenty-five parking spaces (2) the correct elevation plans for the western side of the property. The amendment for the
western side elevation plans was submitted on the 19th May 2011 and the following day the 20th May 2011, a letter was sent to the planning officer Mrs Stacey Bryan explaining the situation on the twenty-five (25) parking space and if any other alternative options could have been offered. No reply was given to my correspondence letter. By letter dated 29th June 2011 from the Chief Town Planner my application was refused since no parking spaces had been identified.

On the 28th July 2011 Droiterre Inc, Legal & Environmental Consultants (Mr. Derrick Oderson) acted on my behalf and submitted an appeal against the Chief Town Planner’s decision and asked for the matter to be referred to the Minister for review and four (4) reasons were set out in this appeal (1) The proposed development falls within an area where there are several public car parking areas (2) The proposed development falls within an area where surrounding land use provide no on-site parking or inadequate on-site parking (3) the proposed development will stimulate the re-development of a main urban street that is dormant. (4) The Chief Town Planner’s decision is unreasonable and fails or does not give sufficient weight to the economic benefits of the proposed development.

By letter dated 18th November 2011 from the Permanent Secretary Special Assignment at the Prime Minister’s Office. The Ministry advise that a written response should be made to the Minister through the Permanent Secretary, Special Assignments, Prime Minister’s Office with thirty (30) days of that letter, indicating the way we wish to proceed on the application quoting Ref No. 3064/19/54/11. By letter from the Prime Minister’s Office dated 25th November 2011. A hearing under the chairman of Mr. George Ramsey Snr was scheduled (at short notice) for Wednesday 14th December 2011 at 10:00am at Room 53 Prime Minister’s Office. This was due to correspondence letters requesting an early hearing date to facilitate a visit with my wife and family in the U.K for Christmas.

On the hearing date, permission was obtained from Big Time Car Park the operators of a car park facility on Magazine Lane for 20 car parking spaces, in addition to Big Time Car Park permission was promised for additional parking space at a site along Roebuck Street by Mcal Co. Ltd

A decision under these reference numbers TCDPO 0272/02/2011A, Appeal No. 3064/19/54/11 has not been concluded unto this present date.

Cash-in-lieu of parking district: an area designated by the Chief Town Planner, usually located in an older central business district of a community, where, as an alternative to constructing required parking spaces applicants may provide the government with a cash payment equivalent to the value of these parking spaces. This money is to be used solely for the purpose of providing communal parking facilities within the district. N.B. Cash-In-Lieu Of Parking is intended mainly for traditional urban areas where, due to small lot sizes, intensive development and fragmented ownership patterns, it may not be possible or desirable to provide on-site parking.
Note: Physical Development Plan Amended (2003) sets out the Cash –In-Lieu Parking district policy which states that: “as an alternative to constructing required parking space applicants may provide government with a cash payment equivalent to the value of these parking spaces.” The Chief Town Planner has failed or refused to implement this policy of Cash- In -Lieu Parking.

The Ministry of Transport and Works has designated signage reserving on-street parking facilities for The Urban Development Commission (Roebuck Street), The Royal Barbados Police Force (corner Palmetto and Roebuck Street), The Transport Authority (Magazine Lane).

The Physical Development Plan Amended (2003) Section 5.3.7 never sets out on-street parking facilities for Government interties only. Is this a “fair play society” in Barbados? What is good for the goose should be for the gander.

Section 6.3.4. of the PDP amended 2003 sets out the land use polices for the Roebuck Street area. Under this section the Bridgetown Community Plan (BCP) has identified five (5) commercial mixed use corridors included Roebuck Street. These corridors “play a key role in the urban economy by providing opportunities for shopping, working, entertainment and living.”

Section 6.3.4.6 of the PDP (amended 2003) sets out specific land use polices and urban design guideline for Roebuck Street is set out under section 6.3.4.6

The relevant policies are:

- Permitting a range of office, retail, institutional, recreational and residential use;
- Protecting and enhancing the architectural character of the buildings;
- Providing funding for restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures

Section 6.3.1.2 Policies of the PDP amended 2003 Bridgetown Community Plan

Transportation and Parking (xxiv)

The Government shall seek to preserve and increase the number and efficiency of on-street parking facilities. It is suggested that implementation and enforcement of stricter controls through parking meters would assist in ensuring that there is a continuous turnover of parking spots to further the convenience of shop patrons in Central Bridgetown

My recommendation to the Bill

Historical buildings and Conservation areas should have a separate Bill because

- A proper Building Code needs to be active.
- Waiver of Car Parking facilities to accommodate historic buildings planning approval, since most of these properties are in Bridgetown.
The installation of parking meters on Roebuck Street on the left hand side only east bound due to the area can facilitate this request (road wide enough). The will generate an income for this conservation area.

An amendment of the Physical Development Plan Amended 2003 to facilitate historic buildings.

Permission from the Ministry of Transport and Works providing on-street parking as a cash-in-lieu of parking (placing payment meters facilities for parking in these historical and conservation areas) to generate revenue for these historic building restoration, maintenance and upgrades etc.

A Fast Track Approval System for historic buildings renovations from the Chief Town Planner, Barbados Fire Service, Building Standards Authority, Ministry of Health Environmental and Protection Department and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, for the approval of building plans and duty free concessions. Such would go a long way in helping keep these buildings occupied and to make them financially viable, allowing for change and intensification of use over time to support the viability and urban character of mixed use corridors throughout the decades will be very important to gain rental income, as contemporary tastes and preferences demand.

Zero percent interest rates for 5 years on loans and mortgages for renovation and restoration. This would avoid bridging loans and interest re-payments over construction period, also generating a form of rental income reserving this for property maintenance. Most of these historic building are owned by persons who did not have the money to renovate or restore them back to its original architecture. As a result of finance these buildings are left to be vandalized and to decay.

Easement by adjacent property owner’s for the provision of fire evacuation routes, can be facilitated by means of an encroachment land rent or a land tax rebate (mandatory).

More renovation support for construction from local experts, international agencies (British Heritage etc.), a competent heritage building committee and a list of overseas building fabric suppliers for cornices, moulding, timber etc. For many owners of historic buildings there will be a challenge of affordable maintenance, competent contractors, sourcing building materials and financing for commercial construction rates.

Due to my delays and lack of correspondence with Government agencies, as a young developer and a love for historical restoration both in Barbados and the United Kingdom, It’s my pleasure to shown a break down of my planning history, knowledge and recommendation to the bill to the Minister, so that these costly proceeds can be avoided in the future with any other property owner, therefore giving the owners of such historic buildings motivation to get involved with therejuvenation of Barbados cultural interest.
properties. If a fast track system was in active, my approval process would have been easier for me to proceed with my investment and to return to the United Kingdom.

Once these provisions are in place, the Barbadian public and foreign investors will have more encouragement to get involved with purchasing properties, renovations and change of use of mixed corridors thus generating income from most of these dilapidated heritage buildings in Bridgetown.

The next page you will see an advertisement for commercial property for sale over 5 years, not listed as a historical building but can be considered as a relic due to the craftsmanship of the balcony and the doors. This property is identical to Lot 116 Roebuck Street providing living quarters and shop space. Building renovations and the sale of this property will create a task for the owner and developer if my recommendation is not considered as no parking facilities exist and complying with the Town and Country Planning requirements will be impossible, soon we will have another derelict dilapidated and rodent infested building. (shame)

Mr. Ryan Thorpe  
Property Owner (Barbados)  
Multi Skill Engineer (U.K)  
Health & Safety Operative (U.K)
A large 2-storey building consisting of 4 bedrooms 3 bathrooms, the location of this property makes it ideal for commercial use as it is in the heart of Bridgetown. It is located near public transportation, shopping facilities, dining and entertainment establishments, commercial activity and the many other amenities offered by the Downtown area. The property is also within minutes drive of lovely beaches and offers tremendous potential.