

GEORGETOWN'S HERITAGE TRAIL



A Brief History of The Garden City, Georgetown

Borsselen Island, one of three small islands located some twenty miles up the Demerara River near Timehri, was chosen by the Dutch for the establishment of the administrative headquarters for the colony of Demerara in 1753. In 1748, a Brandwaght or signal station was constructed at the mouth of the Demerara River. Along a small strip of land close to the river plantations were established. The Dutch also reserved land extending in an easterly direction from the brandwaght for public purposes.

In 1759, owing to the great number of plantations, it was agreed that Borsselen Island was unsuitable as the site for the capital as the area was overcrowded. The new location for the capital of Demerara was not agreed upon and whatever plans the Dutch had formulated ceased when the British gained control of Demerara in 1781.

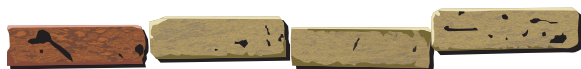
Under the command of lieutenant Colonel Robert Kingston, the British Lieutenant Governor, Fort St. George was constructed near the mouth of the river on the Company Path where the National Museum of Guyana is situated. He determined that the Brandwaght strip should provide the seat of the government and in that same year an office was established.



On 31 January 1782, a regiment of French men of war, allies of the Dutch, attacked Demerara, destroying Fort St. George forcing the English to surrender. On 22 February 1782 a proclamation 'to establish a Capital, which would become a business centre: where religion would have a temple, justice a place, war its arsenals, commerce its counting houses and industries its factories: where also the inhabitants might enjoy the advantages of social intercourse,' was issued by the French commandeur.

Enslaved Africans requisitioned from planters dug two canals running eastwards from the site of the brandwaght: one was called North Canal (Croal Street) and the other the South Canal (Hadfield Street). These produced two lines of lots facing a middle dam almost three quarters of a mile long. Under the French the town was known as Longchamps or La Nouvelle Ville.

In 1784 the colonies of Demerara and Essequibo were restored to the Dutch. Under the terms of a resolution dated 14 September 1784, the town was renamed Stabroek in honour of the President of the Dutch West India Company: Nicholas Van Gleevink; Lord of Castricum, Buckum and Stabroek. The fort, which the French had constructed at Plantation Eve Leary was renamed Fort Frederick William after the Stadtholder. On 5 May 1812, when the English, regained control of Essequibo and Demerara, Stabroek was renamed Georgetown in honour of George IV., then Prince Regent.





1. *Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel was the first international hotel constructed in Guyana. A plot known as King's land adjacent to the seawall was allocated to the British Overseas Airways Corporation to erect this structure. Built on a foundation of greenheart logs the hotel was opened in 1969.*



2. *The Immigration Agent General Building which houses the office of the National Centre for Education Resource Development was formerly the Office of the Immigration Agent General, where immigrants were registered upon their arrival in the colony of British Guiana. These immigrants provided the first successful substitute for the enslaved Africans after Abolition in 1834 and Emancipation in 1838.*



3. *The Umana Yana was constructed to host the meeting of Non - Aligned nations in 1972 by the Wai Wai. Poles straight as arrows, round wood saplings, vines and lush green troolie fronds culled from palm trees were used in the construction of this structure. In 1999 the Umana Yana was declared a National Monument by the Government of Guyana.*



4. *African Freedom Fighter's Monument was unveiled by former President Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham on 'Namibia Day', 26 August 1974. These four tall 'bullforehead' greenheart poles encased in a jasper stand on a granite boulder constitute a monument to those who have struggled and continue to struggle for the freedom from human bondage.*



5. *The Guyana Marine Turtle Monument which depicts a newly hatched Leatherback turtle emerging into the world from its shell, was erected by the Guyana Turtle Marine Turtle Conservation Society to sensitise the populace of Guyana's natural heritage in 2001.*



6. *The Lighthouse was constructed in 1830. Towering 103 feet over Water Street and the roofs of many civic and residential buildings, this imposing brick structure was erected by the British to replace a wooden lighthouse built by the Dutch..*



7. *The Canadian High Commission is a fine example of Georgetown's built heritage. It once housed the Sisters of Mercy from 1952 - 1978. In 1977 this edifice was acquired by the Canadian Government for the establishment of a permanent office for their diplomatic relations with Guyana. Demerara Windows, stained glass windows, louvered windows and a sky light window are noteworthy features of this building.*





8. *The Red House was once the residence of Sir Eustace Woolford (Speaker of the Assembly). It was acquired by the colony of British Guiana in 1925 and was also used as a residence by several Colonial secretaries. Former Presidents Dr. Cheddi Jagan and Mrs. Janet Jagan also occupied this edifice. Today this edifice houses the Cheddi Jagan research Centre.*



9. *Austin House was constructed circa 1842 this dwelling was known as Kingston House. In 1892 it was renamed in recognition of the tremendous contributions by the first Anglican Bishop of Guyana William Percy Austin.*

The original building was not always located on the present site but it was reported to have been closer to the street. However, the building was removed westwards to the present site because the Bishop's children often threw objects at passers by.



10. *Kingston Methodist Manse was most likely constructed around 1832, when the original Kingston Methodist Church was erected.*

The utilitarian Demerara Window and a skylight with louvered vents are noteworthy features of this building.



11. *The Inter American Development Bank was constructed in 1858 this edifice was the residence of J. Baptiste.*

In 1981 the office of the Inter American Development Bank was established in this three storey wooden structure.



12. The Demerara Locomotive Station was formerly the main office for the East Coast Demerara Railway. It was built on the site of a former burial ground, which was originally Company Path between Plantations Eve Leary and La Bourgade in the 19th century.

Joseph Bradshaw Sharples was contracted for the erection of this railway Station and others along the Georgetown- Rosignol railway for the sum of \$85,000.00.



13. The Prime Ministers Residence with its 'widow's walk' (small tower) and decorative cornices reminiscent of Italianate architecture was originally constructed for Mr. Sandbach in the 19th century.

In 1911 the residence was purchased by Booker Bros. Ltd and 1962 it was bought by the British Government and subsequently established as the home of the British High Commissioner. This building was designated as the Official Residence of the Prime Minister of Guyana in 1987, when the Government of Guyana acquired it.



14. State House which was formerly known as Government House has a rich and distinguished heritage. It was constructed circa 1820 on a plot of land belonging to William Percy Austin, the first Bishop of British Guiana.

It was the residence of the colony's Governors who leased the edifice at a cost of £240.00 monthly.

In 1852 and 1863 Ordinances were passed, legislating the purchase of the building to establish an official residence for the British Governors.



15. *Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology which houses the anthropological and archaeological aspects of Amerindian life in Guyana, was named in honour of an Australian, Dr. Walter Roth the pioneer for research in this area. In 2002 this edifice was restored by the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sport.*



16. *Universal Airlines, with its ornate fretwork, balus trades and timber shutters, this structure is a fine example of Georgetown's urban wooden heritage.*



17. *Ministry of Culture Youth & Sport was originally known as Avery House. Constructed around 1920 this edifice was the headquarters of the Bauxite Industry of Guyana 'BIDCO House'. Since 1999 this building has housed the office of the Ministry of Culture Youth & Sport.*





18. *The National Library was constructed in 1909. This endeavour was financed by Mr. Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish born American industrialist and philanthropist. Originally known as the Public Free Library, this edifice once housed the Economic Science, Anthropological and Historical sections of the Museum after the destruction of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society in 1945. In 1951, the Museum was relocated to its present site.*

19. *The Bank of Guyana was officially opened on 11 October 1966 by Governor General Sir Richard Luyt. It was constructed on the site of the Assembly Rooms, which was destroyed by fire in 1945.*

Designed by Watkins & Partners A.R.I.B.A. It houses the Guyana Central Bank and the Secretariat of the Caribbean Commonwealth Community.



20. *The Cenotaph was unveiled by Governor Graeme Thompson on 14 August 1923, the date of the ninth anniversary of the declaration of war with Germany.*

Built of marble it serves as a reminder to those Guyanese soldiers who died in service during World Wars 1 & 11.



21. *Guyana Stores Ltd., formerly 'Bookers Stores' was opened on 27 November 1950. Regarded as the showpiece of the business community this imposing concrete structure, built by John Mowlen contractors, was erected on the site of the Bookers Drug Company and Bookers Garage, which were destroyed by fire in 1945.*



22. *The Republic Arch made of aluminium, was erected in honour of the renaming of High Street the Avenue of the Republic in 1970.*



23. *The Non-Aligned Monument: was built to commemorate the 1972 Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned countries, which was held in Guyana, 8 - 11 August 1972. This monument was unveiled by His Excellency, Arthur Chung, the first President of Guyana in honour of President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Pandit Jawaharlall Nehru of India and President Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia the founders of the Non Aligned Movement.*



24. *The Hand-in-Hand Company Insurance Company Limited was constructed at a cost of \$37,700. This low building with its decorative cast iron arches and railings, reminiscent of the architecture of the Victorian and Georgian eras, was constructed during 1878 - 1879. This edifice once housed the Georgetown Municipality (1879) and the Consul of the United States of America (1920s-1930s).*



25. *Demerara Mutual Life Assurance Building, this graceful timber structure was once the residence of Sir Eustace Woolford, a speaker of the Legislature. On 17 September 1891 this organisation was established by several script holders of the Hand in Hand Fire Company.*



26. *Central Garage Building, this imposing wooden structure, with its high walled façade, was originally constructed with an indoor garden. Today this edifice presently houses the representatives for Mercedes Benz in Guyana.*



27. *The City Hall regarded, as the most elegant edifice of Georgetown was designed by Father Ignatius Scoles.*

It was officially opened on 1 July 1889 by Governor Lord Gormanston.



28. *The City engineers Department is a quaint wooden structure with ornate cast iron railings. It was constructed in the 19th century. It once housed the Fire Superintendent's Department and it was also the residence of the Town superintendent.*



29. *The High Court, originally the Victoria Law Courts was opened on 24 May 1887. This building was designed by Mr. Hutchins with titular assistance by a Dutch Hydraulics engineer Baron Hora Siccama and Caesar Castellani.*

This L - shaped structure is designed with elements Elizabethan and Tudor style on the upper floors with its structural timbers expressed externally.



30. *Demico House, formerly the property of Messrs Birch & Company and Charles J. Maquarrie, was purchased by the D'Aguir brothers in 1896 for \$50,000.*

During that period it was converted into a hotel and bar and was known as the Demerara Ice House.



31. *Stabroek Market covers an area 76,728 square feet. Designed and erected by an American engineer Nathaniel McKay this structure bears the former name of the city of Georgetown.*

On 1st November 1881 this market was officially opened by Governor Cornelius H. Kortwright.



32. *Parliament Building was designed by Joseph Hadfield. This brick structure, constructed from 1829 to 1834, rests on a foundation of greenheart logs.*

It is a model of 19th century architecture and is one of two domed buildings in the city. Today this building is home to the National Assembly.



33. *St. Andrews Kirk is the oldest church in Georgetown. On 12 August 1811 it was established by the Dutch. However, as a result of financial problems, the church was sold to the Scottish members of the congregation in 1813.*

After they completed the construction,



34. *The Georgetown Magistrates Court was built as an annexe of the High Court. This building designed by Caesar Castellani was officially opened on 1st September 1891.*

Ornate wrought iron rails and stairs are noteworthy features of this edifice.



35. *St. Stanislaus College was founded on 1st May 1866 when Father Langton opened school with two boys Marshall and Pairadeau. In the early years, the school was known as St. Stanislaus Grammar school and occupied various sites. In 1907 the name was changed to St. Stanislaus College when the present Brickdam site was acquired.*



36. *The Chinese Association was founded in 1920 to allow Chinese in Guyana to have a place for social interaction and to promote their development. The billiards room and Indigent Quarters were located on the first floor and the visitor's dormitories 3rd and 4th floors. In July 1982 a fire destroyed three storeys of this building. The hall and upper story were rebuilt and the building was formally reopened on Sunday, 12th August 1984.*



37. The Ministry of Home Affairs was constructed circa 1909. It was the residence of R. G. Woolford, J. P. Santos and the First federation Life Insurance Company. Today this edifice is occupied by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was

38. *The Brickdam Police Station was designed by Caesar Castellani. In 1839 an ordinance was passed legislating the Police Force and the erection of a station house, a watch house where a policeman would be present day and night.*



39. *Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was designed by an Englishman Mr. Leonard Stokes. It was constructed over a period from 1914 - 1931 to replace the St. Mary's Chapel which was destroyed by fire in 1913.*

Though incomplete the Cathedral was opened and blessed by Bishop Galton S. J. On 13th March 1921. The entire cathedral was opened On 8th December 1925.



40. *Smiths Congregational Church was named after Reverend John Smith who was imprisoned because it was alleged that he had incited slaves to revolt in 1823. He died of pneumonia in prison while awaiting his reprieve.*

This church was erected as a suitable mark of respect to the memory of this much-injured minister of Christ, and as indicating their full conviction of his entire innocence of the crimes laid to his charge.



41. *Guyana Telegraph & Telephone Company, this modern concrete building houses the main office of the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company, which is responsible for telecommunications throughout the country.*



42. The Ministry of Health was erected in the late 19th century. This three storey edifice designed by Joseph Hadfield was once an orphanage asylum and from 1918- 1951 the site for Queens College.



43. The Brickdam Independence Arch was handed over to Prime Minister Burnham by the managing director of the Demerara Bauxite Company Mr. J. G. Campbell as a gift to the people of Guyana on the achievement of their independence. Constructed of aluminium, made from Guyanese bauxite, this arch was designed by Canadian engineer Eric Flack. There are three arches each symbolic of the three counties: Essequibo, Demerara & Berbice.



44. The 1763 Monument was unveiled by former President Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham on Guyana's 10th Anniversary Independence celebrations on 23 May 1976. Designed by Philip Moore this sculpture was cast in bronze at the Morris Singer Foundry in Basingstoke, England.



45. The Presidential Offices, designed by George Henry, were constructed under the administration of the late President Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.





46. The National Art Gallery (Castellani House) was designed by Caesar Castellani. This edifice was once the residence of the Government botanist George S. Jenman. It was later occupied by successive Directors of Agriculture and the late President Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. In 1993 the National Art Gallery was established in that said year the building was renamed Castellani House in honour of its architect who was one of the most affluent architects in British Guiana during the 19th century.

47. The Botanical Gardens & Zoological Park was established in 1877 when the government of British Guiana purchased 276 acres of land for \$72,000. A portion of this land was reserved for the establishment of a garden, which had been mooted by the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society.



With the help of a botanist from Trinidad the dream of a garden was fulfilled. The Zoological Park was officially opened on 1 January 1952 at a cost of \$19,000.

48. The Ministry of Agriculture was constructed in the late 19th century. This stately wooden building is another excellent example of Georgetown's distinctive wooden architecture.

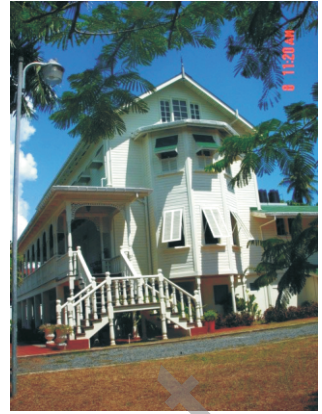


49. Bourda Cricket Club was established in 1885: this is the oldest cricket ground in the Caribbean. The ground has been the venue for many exciting games between international and local cricket teams.



53. *The Brazilian Ambassadors Residence was constructed by Charlestown Sawmills circa 1930 - 1940 as a wedding present by the De Freitas brothers for their sister.*

Acquired by the Brazilian government in 1971, this building is the residence of the ambassador. It was restored to its former glory in 2002.



54. *Camp Ayangana is a large complex which houses Guyana's military forces.*

55. *National Park, formerly the Demerara Golf Club renamed the Queen Elizabeth II National Park in 1965 in honour of the Queen's visit to Guyana.*

On Guyana's attainment of independence it was became known as the National Park.



56. *Georgetown Public Hospital which is bordered by Lamaha Street, Thomas Street and Middle Street, occupies 1-½ blocks.*

The oldest section, the Seamans Ward, was first built in 1838. Today this hospital is managed by the Ministry of Health and provides a variety of health services to Guyanese free of cost.



57. *The Georgetown Club was relocated to Camp Street soon after the destruction of the Assembly Rooms in 1945.*

This was the venue for gatherings of the crème de la crème of Georgetown Society.



58. *Colgrain (Caricom) House is another excellent example of Georgetown's distinctive traditional colonial style architecture.*

It is the Official Residence of the Secretary General of the Caribbean Commonwealth Community.



59. *Cara Lodge was originally a private residence known as Woodbine House. This dwelling was once the home of Governor George Anderson Forshaw and later Dorothy Tait.*

In the yard was a Sapodilla tree which had been planted by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, on a visit to the colony.



60. *Moray House which was constructed in the late 19th century is an excellent example of Georgetown's Timber vernacular architecture.*



61. *The Radha Krishna Mandir is an example of Guyana's diverse legacy. The main facade is graced with the sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses.*



62. *The Ursuline Chapel is home to the Ursuline Sisters who commenced their service in British Guiana during the 19th Century. The St. Ann's orphanage in Thomas Street is an example of the charitable work that they have undertaken in Guyana. Prior to the nationalization of schools the sisters also managed the St. Roses High School.*

63. *Indian Monument was erected in honour of the Indians who were brought under the scheme of Indentureship 1838 - 1917. The bronze sculpture is a replica of the Whitby, the vessel which transported the first batch of the immigrants to Guyana.*



64. *The Bedford Methodist Church is one of the oldest churches in the city.*

The present edifice was constructed on the site where William Claxton, a noted Methodist who arrived from the island of Nevis in 1801 preached, to the enslaved Africans under a tamarind tree.



65. *The Freemason's Lodge is the home of one of Guyana's oldest fraternities. As early as 1780, there was mention of a fraternity 'the Three Friends' on Fort Island and it is believed that the Endraght Society was connected to the Free Masonry. The present location was purchased in 1807 and the temple was erected in 1813.*



66. *St. George's Cathedral was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield RIBA was named after Saint George, a soldier saint who had been selected by the Norman Kings to be their patron. It is the mother of the Anglican Dioceses in Guyana and is reputedly the tallest timber church in the world.*



67. Christ Church, was constructed in 1836 by protestants who were opposed to the religious services conducted at the St. George's Cathedral in the 1830s. For over 166 years this quaint Church has graced the landscape of Cummingsburg.



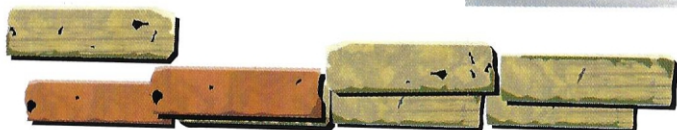
68. The Promenade Gardens: was established by the Town Council in August 1851.

Housed in the compound of the gardens are several monuments such as the bandstand, the oldest in the city and the bronze statue of Mahatma Ghandi.



69. Independence Park; this area which was originally known as Carmichael Square was purchased from the Thomas Cummings estate to be used as a parade ground for the militia and troops in 1812 at the instigation of Governor Carmichael. In 1851 this area was divided into a public promenade on the northern half and an open area on the southern half. The name Parade Ground was changed to Independence Park in May 1966 when Guyana achieved independence.

70. The National Trust Office, housed in this quaint 19th century timber structure is the headquarters of the state owned agency tasked with the conservation and preservation of the nation's patrimony. Demerara Window, timber louvers and Georgian six paned windows are noteworthy features of this edifice.



71. *Philatelic Museum: this branch of the Post Office at Carmichael Street was established in 1888 to disperse mail to outlying regions. The location was chosen on account of its nearness to the railway station. In November 2002 this quaint wooden structure was converted into an Internet Café.*



72. *Eve Leary Parade Ground: was established under the direction of Governor Durban in the 19th century to be used as a parade ground for military troops and militia of British Guiana.*

73. *St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital: in 1945 the first Catholic infirmary of Georgetown was established when the Catholic Central committee purchased a private nursing home from Dr. Romiti.*



74. *The Eve Leary Barracks: were built circa 1825 under the administration of Governor D'Urban to house the military forces. It is believed that the officers' quarters derived its name 'Eve Leary', from a young European girl who committed suicide in the area.*

75. *The British Military Cemetery: was established when the British government bought Eve Leary for 47,374 guilders in 1824. It became a custom to allow the burial there of any person holding military rank. Walter Rupert Durban, the son of one of Guyana's colonial Governors is buried there.*



76. *The Police Monument was constructed by the Guyana Police Force in memory of police ranks who died in the line of duty from 1900 onward.*



77. The YMCA building was founded in the early 1900s. It is one of the oldest organisations, which was established to foster the development of cultural and social activities in Guyana.



78. The sea wall was constructed to protect the low-lying coastal soils from the constant inundation from the Atlantic Ocean. This wall was constructed by the renowned Colonial Civil Engineer of British Guiana Baron H. T. Siccama.



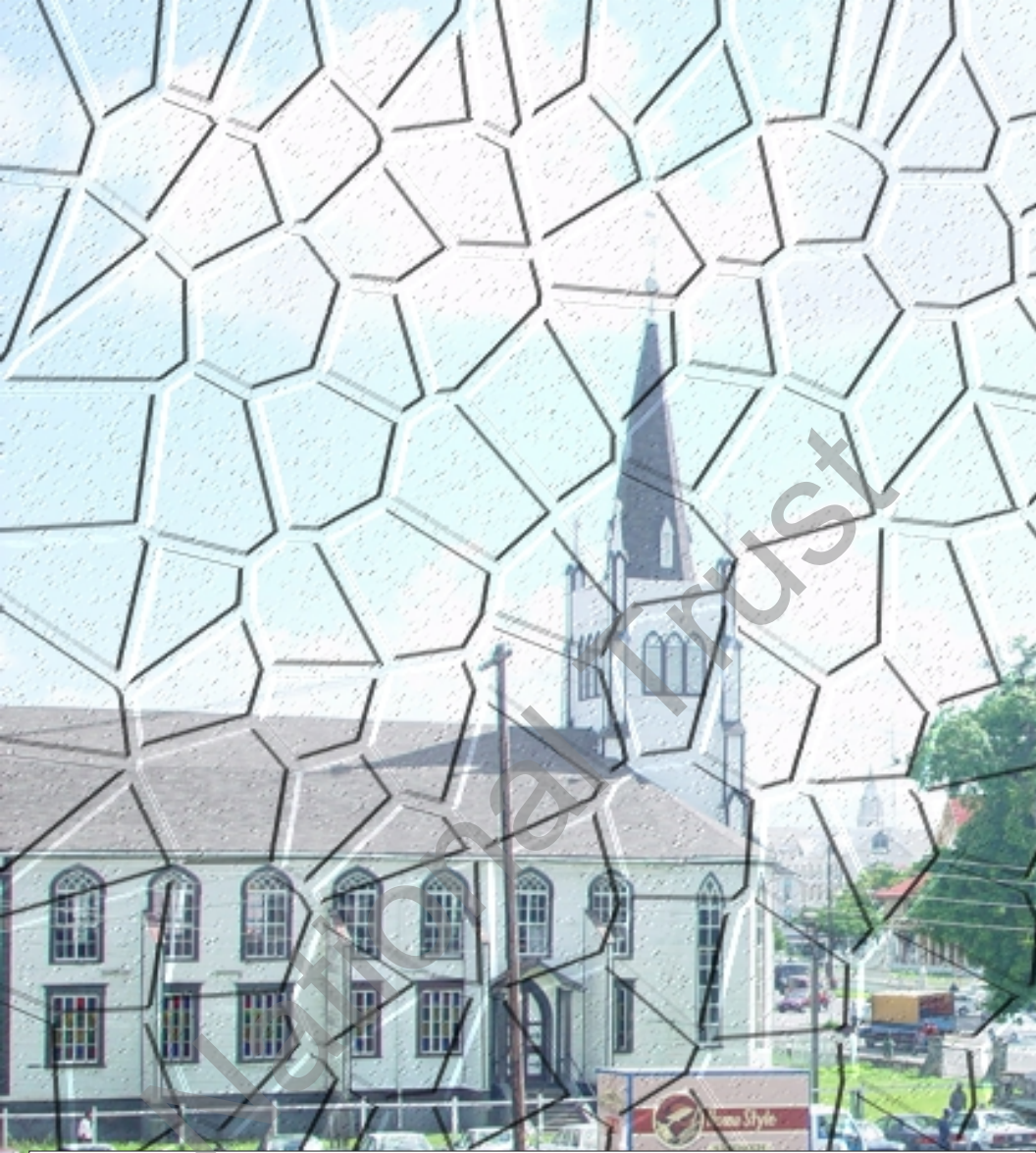
79. The Bandstand was erected in 1903 by a public subscription as a memorial to Queen Victoria who died on 22 January 1901.

It is one of three iron bandstands in the city of Georgetown and has become an important area for gatherings and social functions an integral part of cultural landscape of the area.



80. The Roundhouse was built in the 19th century to be used a point for the observation of ships and other vessels approaching Port Georgetown. It was built on the site of Camp House, which was swept away by floods in 1855. In 1995 this edifice was rehabilitated.





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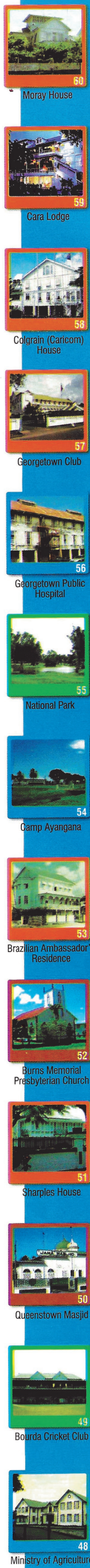
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Georgetown (2002)
Courtesy of Urban Development Project (UDP).

Legend:

- PRIVATE PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY
- RELIGIOUS BUILDING
- MONUMENTS
- SECONDARY ROADS
- PRIMARY ROADS

Map Labels:

Botanical Gardens & Zoological Park, Radaha Krishna Mandir, Ursuline Chapel, Indian Monument Park, Bedford Methodist Church, Freemason's Lodge, St. Georges Cathedral, Christ Church, Promenade Gardens, Independence Park, National Trust of Guyana, High Court, City Engineer's Department, Demico House, Stabroek Market, Parliament Building, St. Andrews Kirk, Georgetown Magistrates Court, Chinese Association Building, Ministry of Home Affairs, Brickdam Police Station, Brickdam Cathedral, Smith's Congregational Church, Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Company, Ministry of Health, Brickdam Independence Arch, The 1763 Monument, Presidential Offices.

