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NATIONAL TRUST OF GUYANA
Safeguarding and Promoting Our Heritage

GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING HERITAGE BUILDINGS, SITES, AND AREAS OF NATIONAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

National Trust of Guyana

Guidelines for Preserving Heritage Buildings, Sites and Areas of National Heritage Significance

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I. PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

(a) These guidelines are required by **National Trust Act, Cap. 20:03 (1972) (last amended 1997)** PART V, Cap. 4, Sec. 55; and by the **Town and Country Planning Act, Cap. 20:01 (1946) (last amended 1996)**, SECOND SCHEDULE PART V AMENITIES Sec. 3. "Providing for the preservation of buildings and objects of artistic, architectural, archaeological, or historical interest";

(b) These Guidelines apply to projects funded wholly, or in part, by the State, and works funded by private; non-profit, or not-for-profits;

(c) These Guidelines consist of two sections, the previous Part One: **Guidelines for the Protection of Monuments and Sites** found at https://ntg.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Guidelines-for-Protection-of-Monuments-Sites.pdf and this additional Part Two: **Guidelines for Preserving Heritage Buildings, Sites, and Areas of National Heritage Significance.**

(d) These Guidelines are intended to provide information about the development of the built heritage of Guyana and the important character defining elements of this heritage to local planning authorities working to harmonize local planning policies with heritage management protocols

across Guyana's Local Government system. This document will support the identification of a historic site (s) and the important character defining elements warranting the preservation of Guyana's built heritage.

II. INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Goal 11 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals calls for countries and communities to 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.' Among the targets to be achieved under this Goal is Target 11.4 'Strengthen Efforts to Protect the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage'. In 1977, Guyana became a signatory to the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention). As a State Party to the Convention, Guyana has committed to identifying, preserving, and promoting World Heritage Sites. Additionally, and in keeping with policy directives, Guyana continues to expand national expenditure on the preservation and promotion of local heritage sites and monuments. Contemporaneously, as Guyana continues its path of unprecedented economic growth as an oil-producing nation, new heritage sites are being researched and designated as cultural resources of significant national value, honouring aspects of the nation's shared, diverse and contested past. It is envisaged that, as the processes of identification and documentation of heritage resources continue, there will be need for special planning controls for the new resources, as well as regulations to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the character of special areas yet containing examples of Guyana's built heritage. It is now imperative that these areas and character

defining elements be identified and practical measures be instituted to ensure their preservation for current and future generations.

III. IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE IN GUYANA

Guyana's building traditions are firmly anchored in its Indigenous (Amerindian) traditions of optimizing local resource utilization and its recent past as a colony of first, the Netherlands from the 1580s, then of France, briefly in the late eighteenth century, and finally, of England to 1966. Six of ten main population centers - Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Anna Regina, Corriverton, Rose Hall, and Mabaruma are located on flat, coastal and estuarine, agricultural lands. Two municipalities, Linden and Bartica - are elevated on higher, upriver terrain, while the townships of Lethem and Mahdia are sited on inland riverine plains. Lethem is located on the eastern bank of the Takutu River in the South Rupununi near the border with Brazil, and Mahdia lying within the Potaro and Siparuni watersheds in the hinterland of Guyana are both prone to flooding during periods of heavy rains.

Georgetown, Guyana's historic capital city, and its sister towns are built up around historic wooden cores, though the use of concrete as a building material grew exponentially throughout the country, particularly from the closing decades of the twentieth century . Georgetown and New Amsterdam comprise the earliest urban settings and, while New Amsterdam has lost much of its wooden character, Georgetown retains distinctive character defining elements of its peculiar urban morphology. Guyanese Architect Orin Hinds identifies four main factors influencing Guyana's architectural traditions, **availability of materials, climate, location and site conditions.**

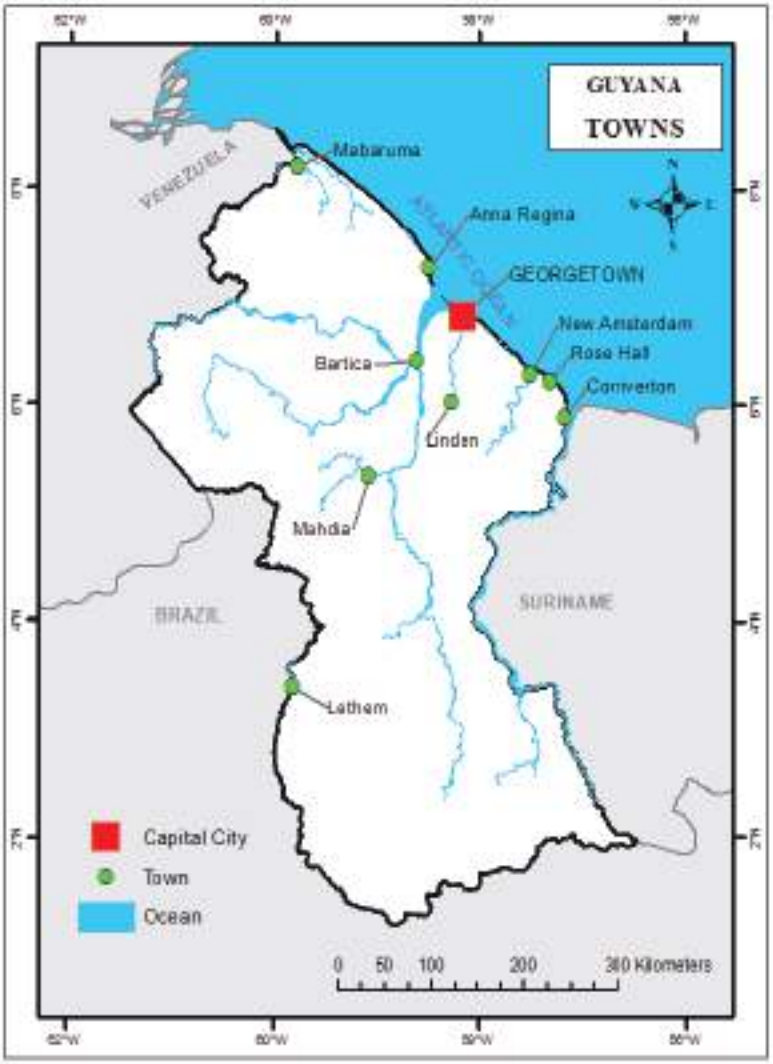

FIGURE 1: MAP SHOWING GEORGETOWN, THE CAPITAL CITY, AND THE NINE TOWNSHIPS OF GUYANA

IV. CLIMATE

The hot, wet, equatorial climate of Guyana's coastlands meant that buildings –residential, commercial and industrial had to be elevated and equipped to take advantage of the prevailing and cooling northeast trade winds while keeping out much of the heat and humidity. All areas of settlement continue to suffer the vagaries of limited availability of and access to building materials, a dearth of skilled construction labour, the ravages of the local microclimate, the scourge of fire, and the advent of modern styles using non-timber materials. Georgetown, the capital city, is particularly vulnerable due to its coastal location on low-lying land beset by a high water table. A majority of the country's urban areas are also prone to floods and waterlogging due to high humidity and seasonally heavy rainfall levels, in excess of 200 inches, per annum, in several locations.

V. BUILDING MATERIALS

Building traditions that predate European settlement on the Guyana coast derive from construction techniques perfected by the Indigenous People (Amerindians) whose occupation of the immediate Atlantic coastal zone was seasonal. Their utilitarian structures of wood and thatch were set up primarily for the purposes of intermittent resource exploitation in the tidal swamplands and mudflats adjoining the Atlantic Ocean. Following this lead, colonial era builders followed the Indigenous tradition of sourcing materials from the dalibana, manicole, tooroo, ite, troolie/truli, cokerite/kokerite, and mucru palm from nearby lowland forests.

Local timbers – hard and softwoods – and thatch thus comprised the main building fabric of the early settlements

but the absence of local wood processing mills at that time led colonial builders to depend on timber imported from the United States and Canada. Pitch pine (Pinus rigida), Nova Scotia and American White Pine, dressed and undressed were available at local hardware stores that also supplied cedar (Juniperus virginiana), wood shingles, cement, corrugated iron sheets, bricks, paints and painters' supplies, and builders' supplies.

Permanent settlement and the start of large-scale building efforts coincide with the era of European colonization of Guyana's Atlantic coast. Dutch settlers established colonies on the Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara rivers circa 1580, 1627, and 1746, respectively, and constructed rudimentary administration buildings of brick imported as ballast in the holds of sailing ships. The capture of the three conjoined colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice alternately by the English and then French towards the end of the 18th century brought multiple European influences to the small urban hub of Stabroek and impelled its expansion as the nucleus of today's city of Georgetown. The remains of brick structures (all National Monuments) date to the early period of Dutch colonization in Guyana – ca. 1600 to ca. 1750 – and remain visible at Fort Kyk-Over-Al at the junction of the Cuyuni, Mazaruni and Essequibo Rivers, at Fort Nassau on the upper reaches of the Berbice River, and at the Fort Zeelandia Complex, on Fort Island on the Essequibo River. The ruins of a brick and granite sugar windmill remain on Hog Island also on the Essequibo River.

Occasionally, the remains of brick foundations are seen in the urban areas of Guyana, evidence of the early colonial tradition of building in brick and in granite brought from the upper Essequibo/Mazaruni quarries.

Forced into rudimentary housing themselves, and surviving congested and segregated living conditions, the enslaved built as they could and with materials at hand.

Local timbers – first with White Pine and Pitch Pine imported from North America, and later, as local woodcutting and sawmilling businesses were established and expanded, greenheart, mora, and other woods sourced from the tropical forests in the Guyana hinterland. The Guyana timbers were supplemented with locally-made brick and refractory brick.

Refractory brick, brought to Guyana as ballast in the holds of cargo ships, was the building material of convenience during the 17th and 18th centuries, the early Dutch colonial period and is still seen in the ruins of the fortified complexes at Fort Nassau, Berbice River, at Fort Zeelandia and the Court of Policy Hall on Fort Island, Essequibo River, and at Kyk-Over-Al at the junction of the Essequibo, Cuyuni and Mazaruni Rivers. Some bricks were also made locally on the plantations - Steenbakkeri (Brickery), a 250-acre plantation on the East Bank of the Demerara River, was the site of the Thomas Cuming and Company brickworks in 1798. Another brickworks was located on the 400-acre combined plantation of St. Eustatius, Metzelaars Welvaaren (Masons Prosperity), and L'Esperance (Hope) on the West Bank Demerara.

Cast-Iron, appears on 19th and 20th century residential and commercial buildings with featured decorative and utilitarian cast-iron elements modeled on Victorian ironwork designs in pattern books from foundries in England and Scotland, and by local foundries, including the Demerara Foundry Company, Sprostons Dock and Foundry Company with its own Pattern Shop, Robert Buchanan & Co. Engineers and Iron Founders, and the Berbice-based Brass and Iron Founders.

VI. THE BUILDERS

Little is known of those who erected the first buildings in colonial Guyana, nevertheless, each plantation and estate had its cadre of skilled carpenters, joiners, coopers, masons, and other tradesmen who designed and built the residential and industrial structures required.

VII. GUYANA BUILDING STYLES

Guyanese Architect Rory Westmaas described 'a distinctive architecture of Guyana', attributing the development of the 'traditional domestic house' style to anonymous craftsmen who had 'completely mastered the art of achieving composition in scale, massing and harmony and created buildings which were completely functional for their time and which are, even today, undeniably pleasing to the eye.' Architect Westmaas also located the origins of the distinctive building style in the work of various ethnic groups who settled in Guyana but was unsure of the extent and precise contribution of each group.

Of the Madeiran Portuguese who settled in Guyana from 1834, he saw the possibility of their influence in the verandah, the 'fretwork panels over the entrance doors, gallery window-heads, the spandrels in the angles of timber 'arches' to the drawing room and on porches. English Georgian touches and 'Victorian exuberance' in the decorative finishes of the traditional house are also acknowledged as are imprecise stamp of the East Indian and Chinese Indentured immigrants, as well as the Dutch, French, German and English colonizers. The oppressive system of enslavement, as existed in Guyana up to 1838, was a major factor influencing the traditional house form, according to Westmaas.

VIII. HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

Georgetown began as a port, strategically sited at the junction of the Demerara River and the Atlantic coast. Gaining city status in 1912, historic Georgetown owes its distinctive urban plan to its beginnings as a settlement built up on plantation land carved out in the eighteenth century on a polder system of Dutch design. The City's grid plan mirrors the footprint of the polder blueprint from which the early plantations emerged. The purpose of the plantations was commercial agriculture – cotton, coffee, cocoa and sugar cultivation and processing, which meant that the sea had to be restrained behind walls. The dense, estuarine clays reclaimed from mangrove swamp forest retained the tendency to waterlog and, with a high water-table, flooding remained another trait that forced early builders to adapt by building on stilts. Frequent sea water intrusions were controlled in drainage trenches and forced out by sluices (kokers). On the other hand, crops require fresh water which meant wide, interlocking irrigation canals that yet crisscross the City, and on which the road system was installed by the British in the twentieth century. High humidity and seasonally heavy and prolonged period of rainfall are characteristic of the prevailing equatorial microclimate along the Atlantic coast where a majority of the urban centers are located.

The distinctive wooden architecture of Guyana together with its underlying plantation substructure exemplified in historic areas of the city of Georgetown, in particular, is described as Cultural Property worthy of inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List. In December 2000, a Preparatory Assistance mission by the World Heritage Center assessed the feasibility of a nomination for 'Historic Areas of Georgetown' to the List. A second mission in October 2001, focused on the identification of cultural property and the

justification for its inclusion on the World Heritage List. The missions surveyed potential heritage sites and properties and identified specific areas in Georgetown possessing a collection of buildings of outstanding architectural value surmounting a distinctive drainage and irrigation pattern derived from former plantation structures, described in the Draft Nomination Dossier of December, 2001.

The Dossier identified the Cultural Property as "Georgetown's Plantation Structure and Historic Buildings" and the boundaries of the Property as the northwest corner of the (Kingston) Sea Wall at Camp Road; the northwest corner of the (Kingston) Sea-Wall at Water Street; the intersection of Hadfield and Water streets in the southwest; and the intersection of Hadfield Street and Austin Place to the southeast.

FIGURE 2: COMMERCIAL GEORGETOWN, THE STABROEK AREA, 1934

IX. HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Architect Lennox Hernandez notes that the architecture of Guyana is distinctive in its expressive use of local timber, in its interpretation of the styles and decorations of the settlers' homeland architecture. The 19th century European revivalist trends +coalesced in Gothic Revival and Neoclassical, Romanesque interpretations which materialized in Guyana's grandest historic buildings, its Parliament Buildings, the Georgetown City Hall, the majestic St. George's Cathedral, and the eclectic Stabroek Market. Regarding the particular significance of Georgetown's historic 19th century architectural style, the UNESCO Dossier finds that:

> The buildings, in addition to the urban plan, refine Georgetown's distinctive character: a mostly coherent scale and a typical style and colour setting. These characteristics depend very much on the most common building material, timber, which was always easily available and a light material well suited to the low bearing capacity of the soil. The architectural heritage is a blend of styles and a true example of 'mutual heritage'. The main style is British Colonial, Victorian that is, with important influences from the West Indies in response to the particular climatic conditions in Guyana, supplemented sometimes by Italian Renaissance elements, as the architect's fingerprint, with Creole craftsmanship as a finishing touch – the interpretation given by the [enslaved], being the local carpenters, in the construction of the building. The image resulting from this is, in general, one of wooden buildings on brick stilts, with steep roofs, wide eaves, verandahs, roof overhangs and open staircases in the front of the houses.

GREAT AND SMALL HOUSES OF GUYANA

Domestic architecture in Guyana traces its origins to the building traditions that began on the plantations during the early European colonial period. Today's distinctive wooden styles are, essentially, refinements of utilitarian plantation and estate structures, refined and ornamented for urban living.

i. THE GREAT HOUSE

Spacious residential and commercial lots in the urban areas measured approximately 18.83 metres wide (frontage) and approximately 30 metres in length (depth). As a response to the low-lying, perpetually flooded land on which it was built, the traditional Guyana house is constructed on brick columns, averaging 4 to 7 feet for a Small House and between 10 and 18 feet for a Great House.

On a rectangular plan, the large urban form of the 'Great House' comprised two or three storeys, the first floor divided into kitchen, living room, pantries, and spacious living areas. An internal staircase connected the first floor with the upper (second) storey that was reserved for bedrooms and a bathroom. Occasionally, the ground floor was enclosed and used as a storage area, or as separate housing for household help.

FIGURE 3: TYPICAL URBAN GREAT HOUSE, WITH GROUND FLOOR ENCLOS ED AND SHOWING THE COVERED EXTERIOR GALLERY/ CORRIDOR WITH SUPPORTING COLUMNS (LOGGIA), ORNAMENTAL SPANDRELS AND PIERCED, CARVED BRACKETS

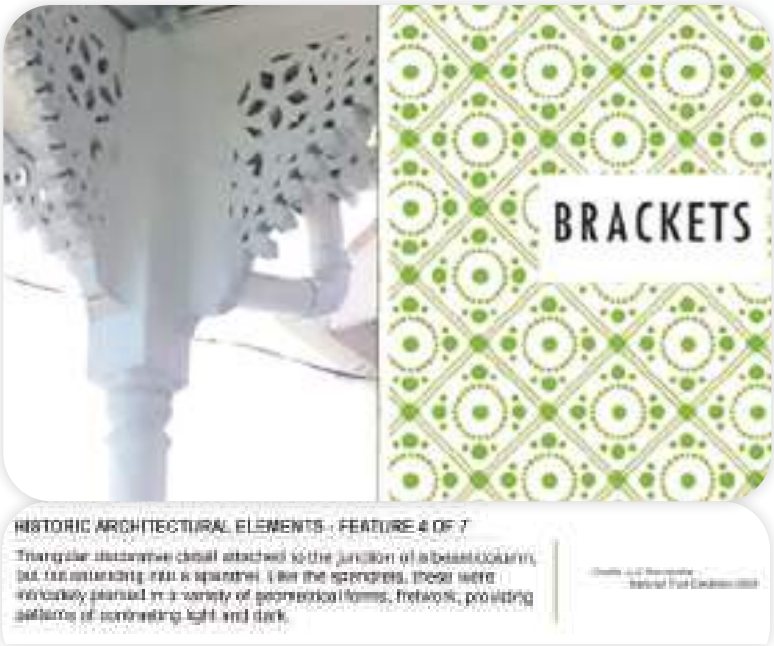

FIGURE 4: HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS: DETAIL OF ORNAMENTAL BRACKETS

FIGURE 5: TYPICAL RURAL PLANTATION (ESTATE) GREAT HOUSE IN BERBICE, WITH HIPPED ROOF AND ON BRICK PILLARS, BUILT EARLY 20TH CENTURY

FIGURE 6: A RURAL WOODEN 'GREAT HOUSE', LATE 19TH OR EARLY 20TH CENTURY, EAST COAST DEMERARA

FIGURE 7: HISTORIC PLANTATION 'GREAT HOUSE', CORENTYNE, BERBICE

ii. THE VERNACULAR COTTAGE OR SMALL HOUSE

The typical cottage or 'Small House' traces its roots to small, box-like structures built and owned by free people of African descent in Guyana after the end of enslavement in 1838. Borrowing from the architectural vocabulary of the larger mansions, cottages began as a simple, rectangular 'body house' that evolved over time as the family unit grew and as the budget of the working family allowed for enlargement of their simple home.

At the onset, the outbuilding used for meal preparation comprised a rudimentary raised, roofed platform enclosed on three sides to protect the cooking hearth from wind and rain and distanced from the main body-house to lessen the fire-risk, especially as both structures were built of wood. Sanitary facilities were located in other small outbuildings in

the family's yard, as was the family's supply of rain water redirected from gutters along the edges of the steeplly pitched roofs and reserved in covered wooden 'vats', mosquito-proofed and capable of storing between 1,500 and 8,000 gallons each, all aback the 'body house'. The wood vats had replaced brick and stone cisterns by the start of the 20th century, though small households relied on small iron tanks or cisterns partly submerged in the ground, with an average capacity of 400 gallons. [ii] As the family's fortunes improved or following the expansion of the family unit, the main room of the 'body house' was divided into two, in order to provide separate sleeping quarters for a new couple. Sanitary spaces were brought closer to the main body house and, eventually, added as extensions at the rear of the 'body house'.

FIGURE 8: GREAT HOUSE WITH GREEN-PAINTED WATER VAT IN GEORGTOWN

FIGURE 9: LARGE WATER VAT OUTSIDE STABROEK MARKET IN 1832

FIGURE 10: WOODEN COTTAGE ON MOULDED CONCRETE BLOCKS, MID 2OTH CENTURY, GEORGETOWN

FIGURE 21: RURAL COTTAGE, EAST COAST DEMERARA, GUYANA

ROOFING

Eighteenth and early 19th century houses featured double hipped or double pitched roof, clad in slate, with small eaves projections built as was common in Europe. However, by the end of the 19th century, the steeply-pitched, side or front gabled timber roof of the typical Georgetown house was usually close-boarded to insulate the interior from the tropical heat and, likely, to muffle the sound of rain on the cladding. Hipped roofs existed early in the development of Guyana's building style but were not as common as the simpler gabled version. The roofs of the earliest Great Houses were capped with imported slate tiles but these were costly to import and maintain. Further, the slate material was heavy, requiring extra support provided by hammer beam trusses inside. The use of slate tiles was discontinued by the mid-20th century, replaced by corrugated, iron sheeting, usually painted red or green. The roofscape were often enhanced by the addition of decorative finials at each gabled end. Dormer openings appeared on a few buildings, testimony to the Dutch influence but were generally not widespread.

Iron-work cresting was applied to the roof ridges, typically, and served both a decorative and utilitarian function: the distinctive cresting added touches of Victorian ornamentation to the elegant Georgetown Houses and also discouraged birds from roosting on rooftops and fouling the rainwater collected in vats for household usage, especially before the introduction of piped water.

FIGURE 32: BUILDINGS AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE DEMERARA RIVER 1830S

FIGURE 43: IRON CRESTING AND DORMERS ON THE STEEPLY PITCHED ROOF OF JENMANS HOUSE IN GEORGETOWN, 2020

TOWERS AND WIDOW-WALKS

Towers and 'widow-walks', as ornaments to the Colonial Vernacular Great House, appeared in the nineteenth century. Three-storey buildings, especially with wealthy owners, featured small, square towers said to have been introduced by ships' captains who wanted a vantage point from which to monitor nearby harbours. The term 'widow-walk' refers to the narrow walkway surrounding some towers and from which, it is said, women whose menfolk were at sea, kept vigil for their safe return.

FIGURE 54: WIDOW'S WALK AND TOWER ON A GEORGETOWN HOUSE

FIGURE 43: IRON CRESTING AND DORMERS ON THE STEEPLY PITCHED ROOF OF JENMANS HOUSE IN GEORGETOWN, 2020

FIGURE 16: EXTERNAL IRON STAIRCASE, HISTORIC HOUSE, GEORGETOWN

THE VERANDAH AND STAIRCASE

The local climate dictated another element of the typical Guyana House. The intensity of the sun required that shade be provided and local builders responded by adding, first, an open verandah that extended along the front of the house accessed by a staircase, bifurcated for the Great House or straight for the Small House or cottage. Often, in the Cottage or Small House setting, this verandah was later enclosed as a utilitarian extension of the interior living room to meet the family's need for more room.

Oriented to catch the prevailing northeasterly trade winds, a typical Great House verandah was an eight-foot wide loggia added to the front of the main body house and decorated with ornamental brackets, spandrels adding ornamental and eye-catching detail to the façade. In a plantation setting, the elevated verandah often encircled the body house on two or three sides and served a dual purpose as a point from which the industrial functions of the plantation and its attendant workforce were under constant surveillance.

FIGURE 17: BIFURCATED STAIRCASE, HISTORIC HOUSE, GEORGETOWN

FIGURE 18: BIFURCATED STAIRCASE, HISTORIC HOUSE, NEW AMSTERDAM

FENESTRATION

In Guyana, fenestration (the arrangement and design of windows, doors and similar openings in the building envelope) was responsive to the local equatorial climate mitigated by prevailing and cooling northeast trade winds. The Demerara Window is a readily distinguishable feature of the typical colonial era vernacular building in Guyana. Prior to the development of air cooling technologies and their introduction into Guyana, the Window had evolved as a response to the hot, humid climate fulfilling the need for shade while allowing cooling breezes to enter the building and keeping out heavy rain. Pitch-pine or 'American Pine' was the wood of choice for the construction of the Demerara Window which comprised a top-hung, louvered shutter or 'jalousie', set an angle (sloping) in front of a Georgian twelve or six-paned sash window. A utilitarian 'box' was formed by

constructing side boards and a slotted bottom 'ledge' supported by decorative brackets around the sash window. A solid block of ice could be placed on the ledge and the interior cooled by the action of incoming air flowing over the ice and moving into the room. Pitch-pine or 'American Pine' was the wood of choice for window construction in early Guyana.

Coloured glass imported from the United Kingdom or North America, was used to add distinctive detailing to Great and Small houses. Also, stained or coloured glass was sometimes custom made for church interiors.

Doors were also distinctive and detailed, brightly painted and broken up into a series of vertically arranged spaces with a centrally placed turned wooden boss or other wood detail.

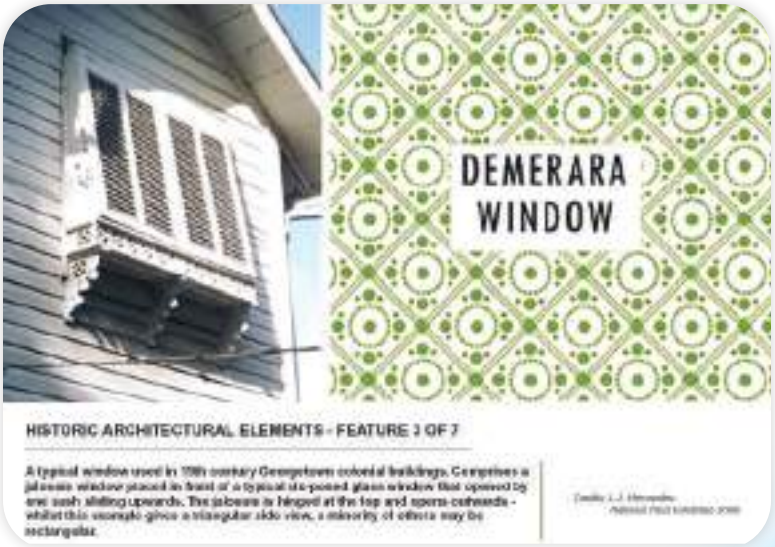

FIGURE 19: EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL DEMERARA WINDOW (LENNOX HERNANDEZ)

FIGURE 20: ALTERNATING JALOUSIE SHUTTERS AND 8 AND 12-PANED SASH WINDOWS, HISTORIC GEORGETOWN GREAT HOUSE

FIGURE 21: COLOURED GLASS WINDOW OF HISTORIC HOUSE, GEORGTOWN

FIGURES 22L, 23R: COLOURED GLASS WINDOWS OF HISTORIC CHURCHES –ST. PETER'S LEGUAN & ST. ANDREWS KIRK, GEORGETOWN


FIGURES 24L, 25R: COLOURED GLASS WINDOWS OF HISTORIC CHURCHES – ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, NEW AMSTERDAM & ST. GEORGES CATHEDRAL, GEORGETOWN

ORNAMENTATION

Decorative elements abounded on the facades of Guyana houses, both Great and Small. External walls of white pine on older houses were easily worked by hand tools with the result that the areas below the window cills were divided, typically, into rectangular spaces by a series of facings and mouldings, also of pine, often with a turned wooden boss added to the center of each panel created by the facing work. Architect Westmaas saw this ornamentation as a translation of Georgian interior paneling into exterior timber detailing.

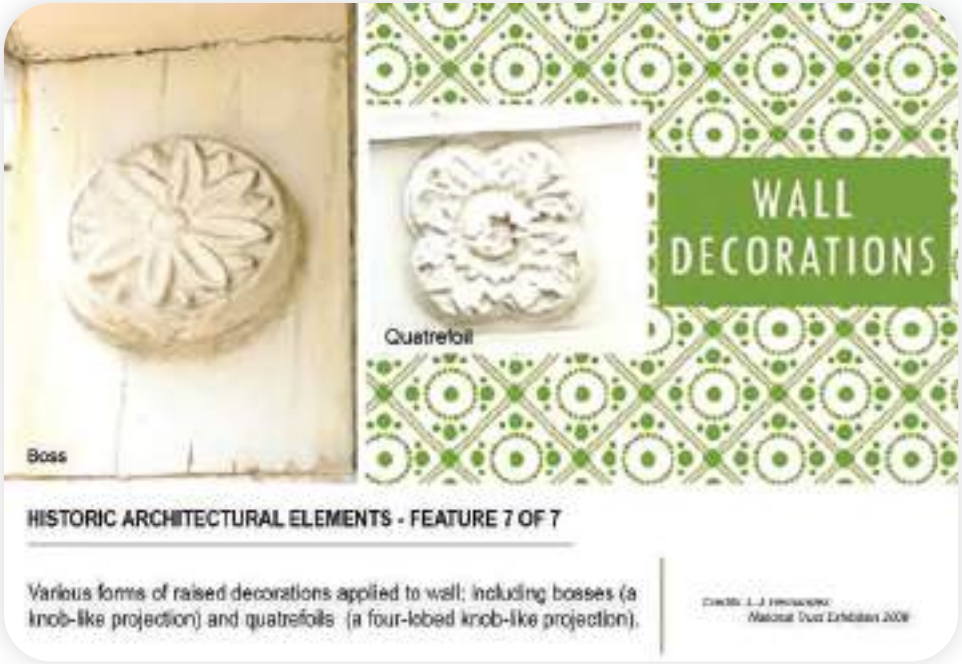

FIGURE 26: EXAMPLES OF TURNED WOODEN BOSS DETAIL ON THE EXTERIOR WALL OF A HISTORIC HOUSEGEORGES CATHEDRAL, GEORGETOWN

FIGURE 27: SKYLIGHT, WOOD GABLE POST, ORNAMENTAL TURNED BOSSES AND PIERCED BARGEBOARD DETAIL ON A HISTORIC GEORGETOWN HOUSE

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