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National Museum of Bermuda

The Government of Bermuda has transferred the Casemate Barracks (“Casemates”) and its adjacent buildings and fortifications to the Bermuda Maritime Museum (BMM). The transfer creates a new National Museum of Bermuda on 15 acres of land.

Speaking of the creation of the new museum, Premier Dr. Ewart Brown said: “With a 99-year lease granted to the Museum by the West End Development Corporation, this is another example of how public / private partnerships can benefit Bermuda. Cabinet considers our 400th anniversary year an appropriate time to establish the National Museum of Bermuda.”

Mr. Robert Steinhoff, Chairman of the BMM said, “I am extremely proud of the creation of the new museum and I look forward to continuing our leadership in the preservation of our national treasures and serving Bermudians and visitors, alike.”

Dr. Edward Harris, Executive Director of the BMM, said, “The physical expansion of the Maritime Museum underscores its stature as a national institution. The Museum was established in the 10-acre Keep in 1974 and has successfully restored the great Commissioner’s House and other historic buildings of the Keep since then. I am delighted that Cabinet has acknowledged the evolution of the Maritime Museum into a National Museum.”

In addition to restoring Casemates and its associated buildings and forts, the Museum will expand its range of exhibits, and the nature of its research, publications and other programmes in order to help make Bermuda’s history and heritage accessible to the public.

In recognition of its national status, the Museum will admit local residents free of charge in December and January every year. Children will be admitted free of charge all year-round.

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Some subjects of interest for museum exhibits and collections, expanding on areas already covered by the Maritime Museum:

Decorative Arts: e.g. furniture, local crafts, kite-making

Architecture: all aspects of Bermuda's unique architecture.

Archaeology: research, publication and display of land sites.

Transport through the ages: e.g. carriages, trains, bikes, mopeds.

Music and Dance: entertainment and performance history, including instruments, Gombey costumes and traditions.

Agriculture: history, equipment and life styles.

Postal History: making a national stamp and postal cover collection.

Sports and Recreation: history and memorabilia on cricket, football, running and other sports; highlighting people who have achieved excellence in those fields.

Settlement: immigration histories and personal possessions.

Education and Schools: history and mementos of education.

Religious Institutions and Community: story of religion in Bermuda over the years.

Dockyard defences: the evolving role of the Keep, Ramparts and Casemates Barracks, including interpretation of the building during its time as a prison.

International Business: collection of artifacts relating to international business and its effect on Island.

Civil Rights: histories of women and people of African and Portuguese descent and newer immigrants.

Domestic Life: how Bermudians lived through the centuries; household artifacts.

Bermuda's Contribution to World Heritage: the outstanding Bermuda rig and sloops, marine science discoveries, Bermuda onions, cassava pie, Bermuda shorts and last but not least, the Bermuda Triangle.

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