



Walsingham Cottage, 6 Dolphin Drive



Walsingham Cottage in 1990 when it belonged to the T.H.H. Outerbridge Trust.

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By Linda Abend and Margie Lloyd, Bermuda National Trust

This is part of a series of architectural articles by the Bermuda National Trust that will highlight some of Bermuda's endangered historic buildings.

Walsingham Cottage is located in Blue Hole Park. Until it was purchased by the Bermuda Government in 1992, the cottage was part of the Walsingham property which included a main house now known as Tom Moore's Tavern. According to the late historian, Dr Henry Wilkinson, Walsingham was "scenically the most beautiful estate in the colony".

The small farmer's cottage is believed to date back to the early 1800s when the 48-acre Walsingham estate was owned by Perient Trott whose ancestor, also named Perient, was one of the original shareholders in the Somers Island Company and the largest landowner in Bermuda at the time of Richard Norwood's 1662/3 survey.

In 1821, when Walsingham was advertised for sale by order of the Court of Chancery, the large number of orange, lemon, lime and coffee trees was mentioned. A reminder of Walsingham's farming past are the sisal and indigo plants that today grow wild. Sisal was traditionally used for making rope and twine and indigo is a blue dye generally used for colouring cotton yarn. Arrowroot was also grown and a mill set up to grind the root.



The Walsingham estate was later owned by the Wood and Outerbridge families. In 1904 Walsingham Cottage and 12 acres was conveyed by Mary Everest Outerbridge to her son Thaddeus Hiram Hastings Outerbridge. In 1911 Thaddeus opened the three-chamber Castle Grotto Cave and its Blue Hole Natural Fish Preserve. Nearby were Crystal Cave and Cahow Lake opened earlier by Percy Wilkinson. Thaddeus Outerbridge died in 1940 and, although the Castle Grotto Cave continued for several years afterwards, it was the Blue Grotto Dolphin Show, opened in September 1971, that became a popular attraction for both locals and tourists.

During the 40-year tenancy of the Lindo family, Walsingham Cottage was kept in pristine condition with Mr Lindo adding an indoor bathroom and new wood flooring. He also kept the path clear to the Blue Grotto. In 1992 the property was purchased by Bermuda Government for \$2.8 million with plans to turn it into a nature reserve. The neighbouring 2.85 acres was purchased from Russell Dismont for use as a park.



Walsingham Cottage in 2007

In 2007 Bermuda Government sought a tenant for the cottage and less than half an acre. The offer of a 20-year lease and what was considered a 'fair amount' of arable land was thought to be enough incentive for a private tenant to restore the badly vandalised cottage. However prospective tenants, including at least one who would have also policed the surrounding park from miscreants who were stealing cedar trees and planting marijuana in the area, decided that a 20-year lease was not enough security for the amount which would have to be spent on the cottage even at that time. So no one stepped forward and the cottage, a Grade 3 listed building, was allowed to fall into further dilapidation. Surely this was not necessary and even now the cottage, on a wonderful



location for an environmentally minded individual, could be restored by a person given a more generous lease? Alternatively the cottage could be repaired as accommodation for a Parks Department employee who would maintain the trails and grounds in the Blue Hole Park and Nature Reserve and provide security.



Walsingham Cottage in 2021



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