



## Ministerial Statement

by

**Lt. Col. the Hon. David A. Burch, OBE (Mil), ED, JP, MP**

**Minister of Public Works**

**Bermuda's Schools - Not the Only Infrastructure in Need of Attention**

**(Supplementary Application to obtain UNESCO World**

**Heritage Site Status for Bermuda's Historic Fortifications)**

**October 6<sup>th</sup> 2017**

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**Mr. Speaker**, I rise to ask the House to take note that Bermuda's first observation of "Architecture Week" occurred this week from October 2 to today.

Although the Department of Planning and architects do not fall under my Ministry, the most beautiful examples of Bermuda's architecture are among the buildings held and administered by the Ministry of Public Works.

Government House  
The Sessions House  
The Cabinet Building, and  
Camden  
To name a few.

**Mr. Speaker**, I do think this is an appropriate time to ask each of us to understand the value of these buildings and their place within our society.

**Mr. Speaker**, we accepted the challenge of the Progressive Labour Party Government's plans for a "**Better and Fairer Bermuda**" and our first fifty-three days in office, were spent working diligently, together with the Ministry of Education, to have public schools ready for our students. And, we did it!

With the help of concerned citizens, parents, neighbours, teachers, school staff and friends; and the hard work of Ministry of Education Facilities and Public Works staff, our schools were cleaned of mold, made fresh and ready for the next generation of Bermudian students.

**Mr. Speaker**, it goes without saying, that we will continue to work to keep our schools in a healthy condition for all of our teachers and students, but there is more....much more...that needs to be done.

I have a list of my own.

Having held this post once before, I am aware that we seem to be largely unaware of the need for refurbishing our infrastructure from Dockyard to St. George's.

Like our buses, our bridges need attention. And, as a tourist destination in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, **we** must give some thought to what that means.

**Mr. Speaker**, our architecture, stately old Bermuda Buildings, our bridges, our historically unique forts are all in need of care and attention. We can't do it all at once – or, even, by ourselves.

But, I think that our seniors would remind us "*where there's a will – there's a way!*"

There is nothing like having a challenge to respond to. So, I have been considering what "*other way*" could we use to take care of our aging infrastructure?

**Mr. Speaker**, as a country, we are blessed with a rich history of fortifications built by the British and still standing today and; seventeen (17) years ago, in the year 2000, St. George's (*our living 17<sup>th</sup> Century town*) won the title of **UNESCO World Heritage Site!** Becoming one of only one thousand and seventy-three (1,073) such sites worldwide.

The St. George's designation reads as follows: "***Historic Town of St. George and Related Fortifications, Bermuda. The Town of St. George, founded in 1612, is an outstanding example of the earliest English urban settlement in the New World. Its associated fortifications graphically illustrate the development of English Military engineering from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being adapted to take account of the development of artillery over this period.***"

**Mr. Speaker**, this designation while recognizing "**related fortifications**" – recognized only those fortifications in the Parish of St. George's. However, in this island country, all fortifications – from St. George to Somerset – are related. Together, these unparalleled groups of fortifications graphically illustrate English Military Engineering from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

All such fortifications, especially the largest at the old Royal Naval Dockyard, are related to St. George's and thus, within the terms of the original designation of our World Heritage Site.

**Mr. Speaker**, I will bring forward a Motion that proposes that this omission be rectified with the inclusion of all remaining fortifications from Hamilton Parish to Sandy's Parish by way of a Supplemental Application to UNESCO, as the proposed additions fall with the terms of the original designation.

This addition will help foster Bermuda's Heritage tourism and underscore the cultural legacy and value of these built monuments to Bermuda and the world.

**Mr. Speaker**, Bermuda is unique in many ways – we often think that spending money on Parliament is actually spending money on the Members of Parliament – not so! We seldom think of such spending as maintaining our own architectural heritage. [*I must admit - some changes are for matters of health, and therefore may benefit our MP's.*]

Recently, the Cabinet Building was renovated. To say that the work was needed would be an understatement; but, it is not the only public building in need of attention.

Located in the beautiful Botanical Gardens in Paget, is **Camden** – the Premier's Official residence. While the Parks Department does a wonderful job of keeping the natural beauty of the plants and flowers, Camden itself stands as an example of neglect.

**Mr. Speaker**, this house, with its wooden upper verandah and beautiful vistas is a prime example of Bermuda's built heritage. The building, like the Sessions House, used to be a part of our visitors' heritage tours.

And, the Sessions House, with its beautiful Florentine finish, should not be left to fall apart bit by bit.

Located on the highest point in the City of Hamilton, and built in 1826 after the move of the Capital from St. George's to Hamilton in 1815 made its construction necessary.

**Mr. Speaker**, these buildings could increase our Heritage Tourism. Tourists would come to see the Jubilee Clock built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 and installed in 1893.

While the Ministry of Public Works will continue to take care of the more urgent items, I will create an avenue of outreach to the private sector by asking them to **Adopt A Public Building**.

Architecture, like everything else that attests to our history, has a place in our lives.

**Mr. Speaker**, like our children, they are a Bermuda treasure too, in need of care and attention.

Who among you is willing to 'Adopt a Public Building'? We will have a list of such properties, available for your information, on the Government website.

**Mr. Speaker**, we can do anything if we all work together!