



### **Restoration and Resources on the way for historic Estate Whim Museum**

(Frederiksted, St. Croix – May 1, 2024) – St. Croix Landmarks Society announced today that two recent developments will put the iconic and historic Estate Whim Museum on a steady path towards full restoration. “As we at the St. Croix Landmarks Society work towards the full restoration of the buildings at Estate Whim Museum, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the Virgin Islands’ Office of Disaster Recovery which will expedite long awaited repairs to the museum properties,” said Board Chair Valencio Jackson. “At the same time, we welcome the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s designation as one of the *America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* which will bring national attention and resources to our efforts to restore Estate Whim Museum to optimal condition.”

Under the Memorandum of Understanding, the Office of Disaster Recovery will manage the restoration of the Whim Great House and all structures damaged in the Hurricane Maria disaster of 2017. According to the Memorandum, “Consulting Contractors, to be assigned by ODR” will manage “efforts related to the repair of the Leased Premises pursuant to federal disaster relief programs,” and “ODR will administer broad oversight of recovery efforts.”

On the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Landmarks, Governor Albert Bryan said: "I am deeply committed to the preservation and celebration of our rich cultural heritage. Estate Whim Museum is not only a treasured historical site but also a living testament to the resilience and spirit of our people. This collaboration with the St. Croix Landmarks Society and the Office of Disaster Recovery exemplifies our dedication to restoring and enhancing Estate Whim Museum so that it may continue to educate and inspire both residents and visitors about the profound legacy of our island. Let us move forward together, fortified by our past, as we rebuild and revitalize this cornerstone of Virgin Islands history."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s *America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* designation, “encourages all supporters of Whim Museum to coalesce around a strategy to repair buildings and ensure continued public access to the museum.” Under this designation which will bring national attention and the opportunity to access more resources, Landmarks may also be a candidate for support from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund to support organizational capacity building efforts and work to engage the descendant community.”

“Estate Whim Museum illuminates significant chapters of St. Croix history, providing island residents and visitors with opportunities to learn about and reflect on the lives of individuals enslaved by plantation owners and of the free people who worked at the estate following emancipation,” said Carol Quillen, CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “Unfortunately, without additional funding and support, the estate’s hurricane-damaged buildings and its important collections will continue to deteriorate. We urge all supporters of Estate Whim Museum to align around a preservation strategy that will allow the museum to be repaired as soon as possible.”

The Estate Whim Museum complex is a site of memory, history, and culture for the people of the Virgin Islands, many of whom have personal connections to the almost three-century old property. Since 1948, St. Croix Landmarks Society which leases the property from the Government of the Virgin Islands has worked to preserve and share this history, providing a community space for research, documentation, exploration, and presentation of the many aspects of Virgin Islands and Caribbean history and culture. “Our Library and Archives are a magical space where the past, present and future meet,” said Executive Director Sonia Jacobs Dow, “as current generations seek information about the past to share with future generations. At Landmarks Research Library and Archives, we hold space for our diverse community of many generations that live, work in, or visit St. Croix in search of precious connections,” she continued. “In this historical and cultural space, the people of St. Croix walk in the footsteps of our ancestors as we learn and celebrate cultural traditions, engage with exhibits, access invaluable archives, and participate in public programming.”

Landmarks Board Chair Valencio Jackson thanked all parties who have contributed to efforts to restore the Estate Whim Museum complex. “On behalf of our Board of Trustees, our staff, and volunteers, I would like to thank Governor Albert Bryan, and ODR Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien for their support which will accelerate efforts for the repair of this historic site at this critical point. Executive Director Dow noted that “a local nominating organization launched the process that resulted in the *America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* designation. We extend our gratitude for their efforts.” She welcomed the involvement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “We are delighted to have the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its President Carol Quillen and her team. We are most grateful for the continued and unwavering support of the community. We are on a steady path to full restoration of this important community asset,” she concluded.

For more information contact Landmarks Board Vice-Chair Duane Howell at 340-690-2597 or Executive Director Sonia Jacobs Dow at 340-277-5324 or by email at [sjacobsdow@stcroixlandmarks.org](mailto:sjacobsdow@stcroixlandmarks.org).