

COTTON TREE

Boutique Cottage Hotel, Est. 2009

Barkers, West Bay, Grand Cayman



Design Excellence

Modernizing the Caymanian cottage for use by discerning travelers was the main design objective. The result is a quaint collection of cottages stripped of decoration such as fretwork but yet with strong massing and authentic design elements such as corrugated finished gable roofs and hinged shutters. Our client's wish was to create 4 unique cottages which would offer privacy and the feel of a home away from home to their guests. As a result the cottages all have different names and interiors all with a common thread of luxury and serenity while exceeding comforts found at one's home. The design process began by taking into consideration the importance of the site, the northernmost point of Grand Cayman and continued well beyond the construction phase. We were involved in the process throughout from site analysis to designing the cottages then onto the interiors where we not only designed all the custom built cabinetry but also selected furniture and accessories. The natural elevation of the land afforded us great views but raising the houses on piles had its benefits and felt more authentic.

Creativity & Innovation

As Cayman was still recovering from hurricane Ivan when approached by our clients, we were asked to design a cottage prototype that would be built as strong as a bunker. Under the zinc roofs are reinforced concrete slabs which would protect the interiors should the trussed roofs ever come off. The concrete slabs were raised in the Great Room to allow vaulted ceilings as would have been found in traditional Caymanian cottages. We used that as an opportunity to introduce false beams which would add to the overall warm and homey feel the client wanted us to achieve.

Beyond the innocent appearance of the shiplap board exterior finish are engineered reinforced poured concrete exterior walls where one would have found sturdy wattle & daub construction in the historical examples.

Floors are raised above natural ground level to allow for the movement of natural element below the buildings.

Title:

COTTON TREE

BOUTIQUE COTTAGE HOTEL

Name:

MJM DESIGN STUDIO

Project Team:

MJM Design Studio - Architects

Hue Lyew Chin - Engineers

Le Habitat- General Contractor

Mario & Son - Carpentry

East End G.G. – Landscaping

Housesmart Technologies – A/V

Description:

COTTAGES AREA 1,400 S.F.

RECEPTION BLDG. 1,500 S.F.

CONSTRUCTION COST:

C.I. \$2,900,000.00

COMPLETION DATE: JUNE '08

LOCATION: 375 CONCH

POINTE DR., WEST BAY

GRAND CAYMAN



Sustainability & Environmental

One of the challenges faced early on in the CPA application process was the disapproval of the use of Grasscrete for the driveway. At the time this material although used in residential driveways did not meet Planning standards and we had to apply for a variance which was granted after we demonstrated the benefits to the environment. As a result, Grasscrete is now an approved surface material to use for commercial driveways as well. This material is also great for drainage and controlling water runoff on the property.

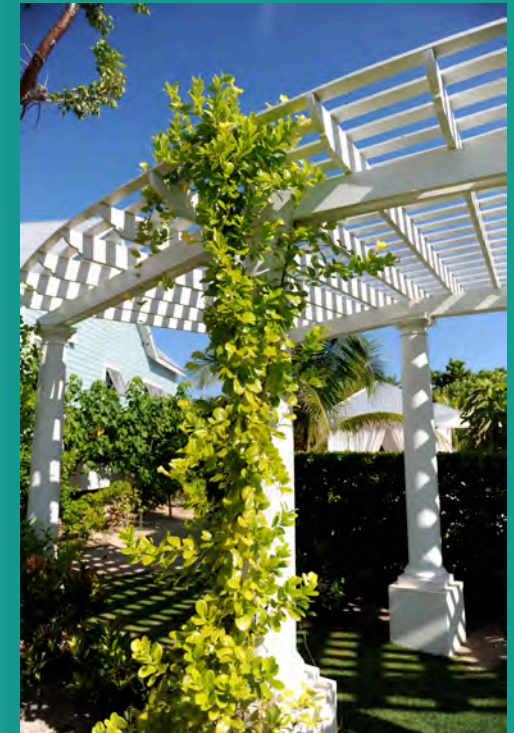
Use of recycled fiber cement board (Hardie board) replaced the traditional wood siding

Rain water is collected from the steep cottage roofs in a cistern forming part of the pool deck and is used for landscape irrigation purposes.

The look of traditional wood floors was achieved by using a porcelain tiles which imitates the characteristics of wood planks, while requiring less maintenance.

Value

This Caymanian owned and managed property was successfully completed under the careful direction of Caymanian architecture, engineering, and construction professionals over a 3 year period. Artwork by Caymanian artists are on display throughout the cottages and reception areas offering them a new outlet for exhibiting their work. Local artisans and craftspersons were engaged in the design and execution of works permanently displayed at this property. From inception, this project aimed to preserve and celebrate Caymanian architecture, design and natural environment.



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Buildability

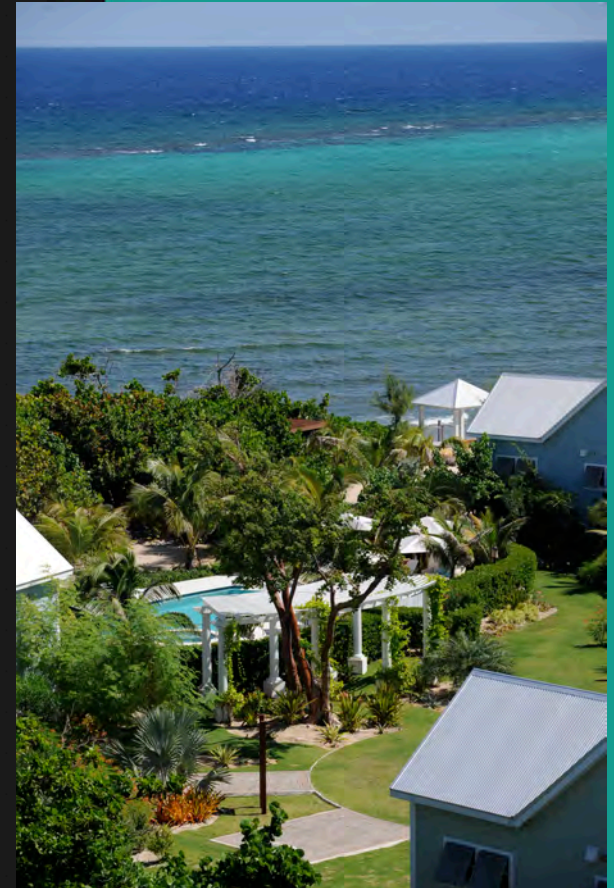
The design of this cottage colony was heavily influenced by location and proximity to the sea. One could employ differing structural and interior design strategies should the property and building design be utilised in an alternate location with differing contextual characteristics whilst respecting the historically established and influenced architectural design qualities.

Cultural Response

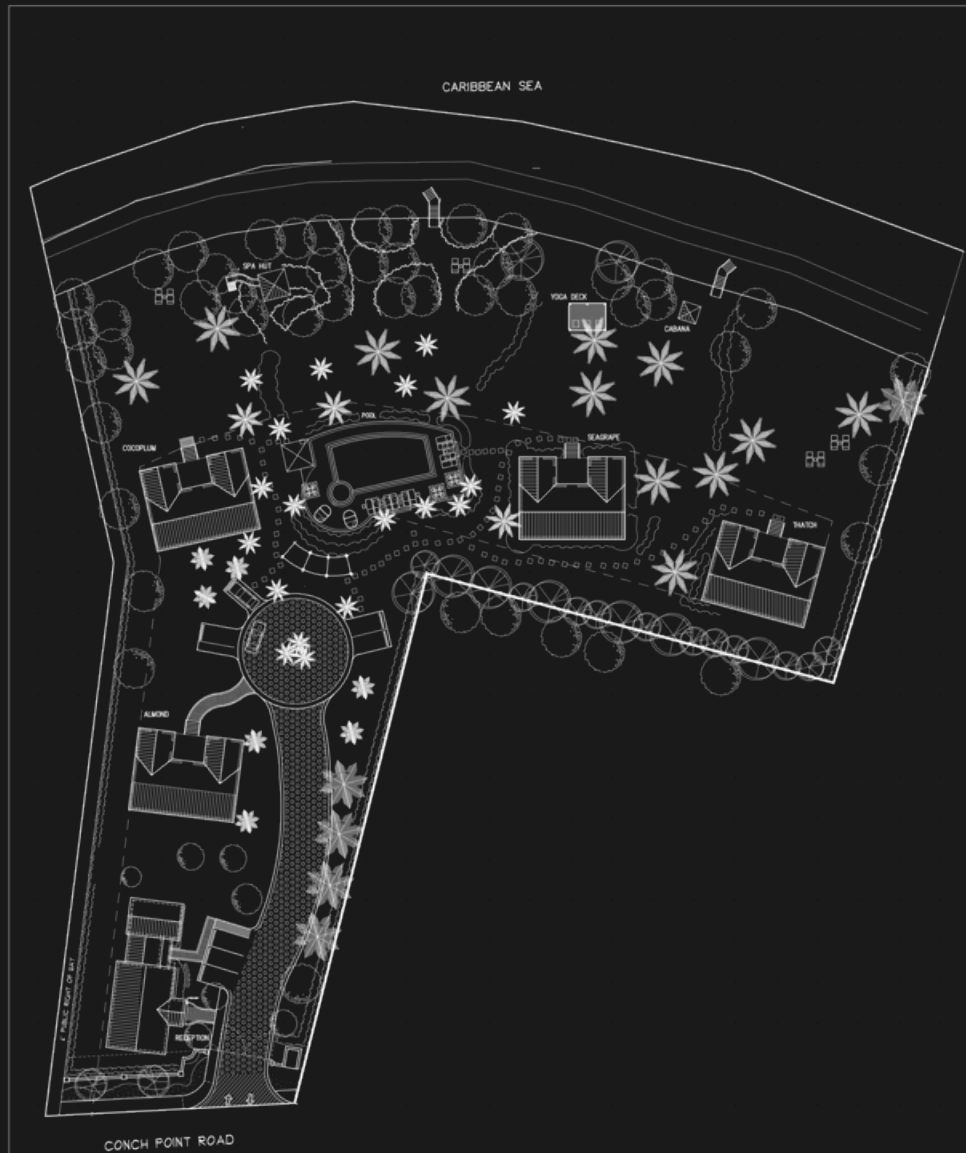
Located on the northernmost point of Grand Cayman. The cottages pay homage to Caymanian heritage by preserving the Caribbean style familiar to the islands while giving it a fresh new look. Typical building methods such as raising the building on pilasters were used as they were in days gone by. Through ventilation was also an important design element as it was in the past. Capturing the fresh ocean breezes is as important a feature today as it was in the days of before air conditioning.

The sea grape tree lined beach ridge was intentionally preserved and the building placed well behind this existing salt-spray filtering buffer. Only the underbrush growth within this grove of sea grape trees was removed, maintaining critical soil-retaining root structures. This has allowed for peaceful, shaded sanctuaries and resting places within the trees for guests to enjoy. Filtered views to the sea are achieved and the beach ridge preserved. The sounds of sea moving to and fro coral-lined shore is the relaxing soundtrack offered here.

At first glance, this property almost appears to have existed for many years. This is attributed to maintaining much of the existing traditional foliage.



SITE PLAN



The property consists of 4 seemingly identical cottages. They each bear the name of trees found on the property and command individual and unique garden and sea views.

The Reception building faces the road and welcomes guests into this private oasis.

Beyond this are the 4 cottages:

1. Almond
2. Cocoplum
3. Seagrape
4. Thatch

The sandy ground conditions are maintained and provide natural rain water drainage. Use of impermeable hard scape material has been avoided.

THE RECEPTION LOBBY

In the Reception, natural stone materials clad the wall and offer a warm background for the aged metal signage. Again a contrast between old and new.



TYPICAL COTTAGE FLOOR PLAN



A modest cottage on appearance offering all of today's modern conveniences. From a well appointed kitchen and Spa like bathroom to a surround sound system and Apple TV.

TYPICAL COTTAGE

Each cottage occupies an uncluttered space. Affording occupants privacy and the opportunity to interact with nature.



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GREAT ROOM INTERIOR

Sand colored walls are accented by warm wood tones and hues of Sunset bringing the outside in.



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GREAT ROOM VIEW



Wall sconces draw reference
to kerosene lamps of the old
days

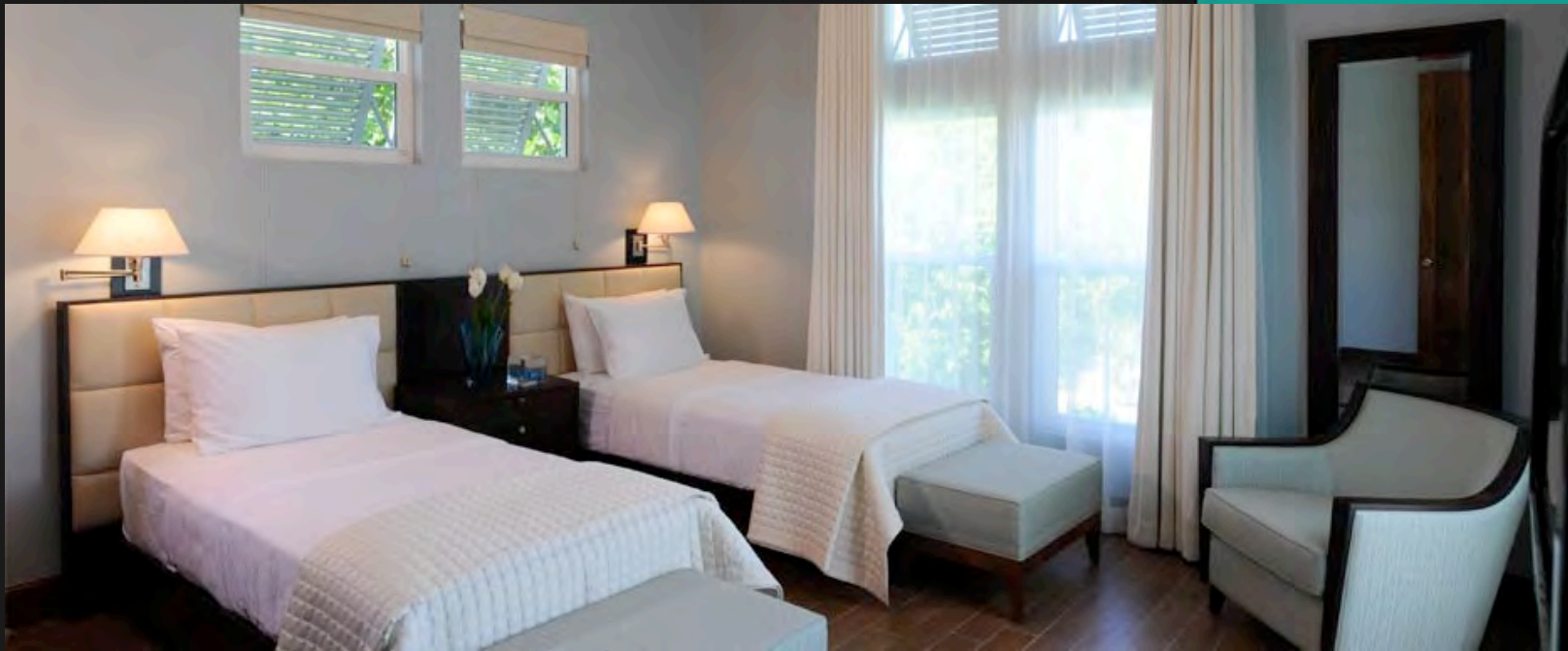
VIEW FROM MASTER BEDROOM

Pastel colors used in the bedrooms help bring a serene feel to the guests



SECOND BEDROOM

The second bedroom offers as much comfort and serenity as flexibility. The 2 beds can be converted into one by simply shifting the bed frames. The bridge board houses the TV and stereo system control panel.



SPA LIKE BATHROOMS

Bathrooms are appointed with recyclable glass and natural maple finishes.



VIEW FROM THE PORCH

North facing porches are covered with trellises allowing ocean breezes to ventilate the space.



DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Each cottage bears the name of local trees found on the property and throughout the Cayman Islands. The design of the signs is reminiscent of old construction technique with hardwood posts and wattle-like slats.



SUSTAINABILITY

Carefully carving out the existing sea grape buffer to create vistas out to sea.

Preserving the natural flora on the site has proven to assist with protecting new plantings and building exterior finishes from strong north east winds.



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LANDSCAPE/ OUTDOOR SPACES



Landscaping played an important role in the design. Lush landscaping using local indigenous trees was one of the design criteria. This was used to create privacy and as a cooling method by planting close to the cottages.

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THE SPA HUT



Reminiscent of an old hut, this modern spa sits in a sand yard, nestled amongst a grove of Seagraves. Few trees were disturbed in the building of this hut.

COTTON TREE BY NIGHT

At night, minimal lighting directs visitors across sandy paths and between trees.

On a moon-lit night, there is little need for other light as sandy site reflects the moon's light.



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