



## Cayman Islands Judicial Administration

**Contact:** Patricia Ebanks, 244-3751/938-2209

**Date:** 21 October 2022

---

**Editors: Please note photo links and captions at the end of this release.**

### **Two New Courtrooms Become Operational**

It was congratulations all around on Tuesday (18 October 2022) during a visit by HE the Governor Mr. Martyn Roper to the Courts facilities at the former Bank of Nova Scotia Building where two new state-of-the-art courtrooms have been completed and will shortly become operational.

The courtrooms are located on the ground and second floors of the building, now under development as part of the Halls of Justice complex. The second-floor courtroom has been custom-built to accommodate the recently announced historic Privy Council session to be held in Cayman in November and thereafter the Court of Appeal (CoA), but will be otherwise used for Summary and Grand Court hearings. The ground floor courtroom will be similarly utilised.

The Governor was hosted by the Chief Justice, Sir Anthony Smellie; Court Administrator Suzanne Bothwell; and Judicial Administration's Deputy Chief Officer Natasha Scotland. The party was conducted on the tour by Senior Project Manager Simon Griffiths, PWD's Major Works lead officer, and Assistant Project Manager Colin Wilson. The courtrooms comprise Phase 1 of an expansion programme, the need for which was identified more than 20 years ago.

Mr. Roper complimented the Chief Justice and project managers for the "excellent" outcome of the project that, he said, had obviously progressed at an accelerated rate since His Excellency and other top Government officials visited in March this year.

Chief Justice Smellie, on the eve of demitting office late this month after more than 24 years as Chief Justice and 29 as a judge, expressed relief that the two courtrooms were completed, but is still hopeful that a comprehensive development plan would become a reality soon: "Cayman will need modern, state-of-the-art court facilities, in order to

remain at the forefront of the international financial world. A primary consideration for investors when deciding on a domicile of choice is whether, when disputes arise, as inevitably they will, the justice system will provide resolution in a timely and effective manner.”

In addition, the departing Chief Justice said that he was equally concerned that the people of the Cayman Islands have full access to justice: “Everyone living in Cayman must also be assured that they will have fair and timely trial of cases which affect their rights, property, and personal security. It should go without saying that our continued ability to deliver on all these assurances will depend on having suitable court facilities.”

The new courtrooms cater to the usual facilities required for a modern court—information technology, a conference room for attorneys and defendants, a sound-proof jury room, two sound-proof defendant holding areas, and a press room.

The two new courtrooms comprise the first real development of the court facilities since the current fit-for-purpose Grand Court was inaugurated in the early 1970s, Mrs. Bothwell said previously.

Tracing the history, Sir Anthony said that Sir Dennis Malone, as long ago as 1990 when he was Chief Justice, had raised with PWD the need for facilities expansion. This was confirmed by PWD in a late 1990’s report.

At the prompting of the current Chief Justice, a 2003/4 Ernst & Young proposal was commissioned, resulting in schematics for a new building at a Half Way Pond site. However, this was shelved when the effects of the 2008 world financial crisis reached Cayman.

In 2014, a team of consultants, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), in collaboration with the NORR Group—a fully integrated firm of architects, engineers, and planners—had been commissioned to develop a business case for a comprehensive plan to provide for the needs of a modern court, Sir Anthony said.

The team at first presented three alternatives, but a further alternative was requested and developed in 2018-19 for the building of a five-storey courthouse over the carpark behind the existing Grand Court building. Work on the project, which was suspended due to the onset of the pandemic, is due to be resumed now that Cayman has reopened for business.

—Ends—

**(Photo links and captions next page)**

[DSC\\_0720.JPG](#)

Mr. Simon Griffiths, PWD Project Manager, centre, describes the features of the new, state-of-the-art courtrooms. He is flanked by, from left, Chief Justice Smellie, and on right HE the Governor Mr. Martyn Roper and Court Administrator Suzanne Bothwell.

[DSC\\_0731.JPG](#)

Seated at the modern Appeals Court typically curved judges' "bench", Chief Justice Smellie, right, and Governor Martyn Roper are introduced to the new courtroom facilities. At left is Court Administrator Suzanne Bothwell, and to the right are, front, Project Manager Simon Griffiths, and at the rear, Judicial Administration Deputy Chief Officer Natasha Scotland and Deputy Project Manager Colin Wilson.

[DSC\\_0737.JPG](#)

Mr. Anthony Edwards, PWD's construction supervisor for this project, third from right, joins the group for a congratulatory moment at the conclusion of the tour. From left, are, Chief Justice Sir Anthony Smellie, PWD Project Manager Simon Griffiths, Deputy Project Manager Colin Wilson, Court Administrator Suzanne Bothwell, and, at far right, Judicial Administration's Deputy Chief Officer Natasha Scotland, and HE the Governor Mr. Martyn Roper.

[DSC\\_0742.JPG](#)

As he prepares to depart at the conclusion of the visit, HE the Governor Mr. Martyn Roper, left, and Chief Justice Smellie take a few moments to wrap up their discussions.

--End--