



The National Trust of Georgia

SUMMARY
Set Up and Progress
as of
JUNE 2016

The NATIONAL TRUST of GEORGIA

In 2015 the idea was launched to establish a National Trust style of organisation in Georgia, following the successful British model. In the UK today the National Trust owns a large proportion of Britain's primary historic sites (with over 4000 registered properties) and promotes historic land and architecture preservation more effectively than any other organisation of its kind.

Georgia also possesses a large number of historic sites worthy of saving and promoting, either as tourist venues, or workable businesses that will pay for the structure's (or land's) upkeep. However currently the country has no national organisation that enables individuals to express their concern and affection for the nation's heritage. A National Trust of Georgia would provide this as well as a practical means of helping preserve buildings and land. It also gives individual Georgians a way to express their pride for their own nation – by joining as Trust members.

MEMBERSHIP BASED

As the first national organisation of its kind in Georgia membership would encourage the population towards an important heritage awareness. Many have expressed a keenness to join and contribute to such a collective cause, but have nowhere to direct their energies. The membership card and association with the UK National Trust would also link Georgians into a growing global trend of preserving historical property and landscape before it disappears.

ARCHITECTURE, LAND OWNERSHIP and BEQUESTS

The Trust would own buildings and land on the understanding it is never sold. The properties can be bought, bequeathed, and also administered by the organisation. Thus the Trust operates like a giant, living, heritage bank, independent of governmental control. In the UK it is seen as a reliable, non-corrupt, non-profit guardian of the nation's heritage. The same could be true in Georgia.

NON GOVERNMENTAL and NON POLITICAL

The Trust is not a campaigning organisation and will be careful to remain independent of national and local government influence. The Trust never associates itself with any particular political party, NGO, political grouping or individual. It stands as a unit in itself, fully independent of all others. Its executive Board is chosen purely on the basis of interest, concern and aptitude for historic preservation. This non-partisan quality and its highly transparent structure, allows members and donors to trust that the decisions of the Trust are in the interests of the nation as a whole on the long term, rather than specific individuals.

WORKS on a BUSINESS MODEL

Because the Trust owns property and land, it will generate income from its properties – through tourism, letting, entrance fees, etc. It operates as a non-profit business aiming to make most of its properties or bequests, self sustaining. Thus it will provide employment, as well as preserve historical memory and vital aesthetic values.

VOLUNTEERS and EDUCATION

To begin with the Trust would serve mainly as an educational and fundraising service. Volunteering would be encouraged, especially in those from overseas (as examples), and techniques of restoration taught. Exhibitions would be arranged showing locals how to repair their own historic properties cheaply and effectively, thus better preserving their market value than by the standard total rebuild.

Legal Definition

The National Trust of Georgia is a non governmental, non-commercial, property-owning charitable organisation whose aim is to preserve the unique cultural and natural heritage of Georgia for future generations. It is set up in association with the National Trust of Great Britain and follows a similar structure and ethos. In addition to protecting Georgia's historic architecture and landscape, it also sets out to educate and encourage the local population into the vital and ongoing processes of cultural preservation.

The Progress So Far (June 2016)

The international branch of the National Trust of Great Britain (INTO) have offered their guidance and experience in creating the Georgian Trust. A number of meetings and events have already taken place in the UK and Georgia, including participation at the international conference of INTO in Cambridge in 2015. Experience in other countries has shown that for a new Trust to work most efficiently it should appeal to people on all levels of society. It should be able to cooperate with, but not be a part of, any government, business or heritage NGO. Following this aim the new Trust is now taking shape with a Board of Directors, Charter and registration as a Not for Profit Foundation in Georgia.

In June 2016 the Trust was offered a very suitable and unique 18th -19th century property in the Metekhi area of Tbilisi. The owner has agreed that it could act as the Trust's headquarters on a permanent basis. See photograph below.



Our first property and soon to be headquarters, No 33 Metekhi Street, by Tbilisi's Avlabari district.

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