

SEDAN CHAIR PORTICO

What is the Sedan Chair Portico

The Sedan Chair Portico is the actual front of a building representing the entrance and exit of the building. It formed part of buildings in Europe and Great Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries. The portico was opened on two sides to allow sedan chairs to enter and exit a building or a home without the persons touching the grounds of the home or the street or being identified.

What is a Sedan Chair

A sedan chair was a major mode of transportation in England throughout the 17th and 18th centuries and early part of the 19th century, used by the wealthy people of London to move through narrow streets and winding pathways faster than a carriage. The sedan chair was a portable covered chair with side windows and a hinged door at the front. The chairs had long poles inserted into brackets on either side of the chair and were carried by servants or “sedan carriers” along streets, up steps and through porticos into buildings.

Historical Cultural Significance of the Sedan Chair Portico to Grenada

The sedan chair was brought to Grenada in the 18th and early 19th centuries, during the early British colonial rule. The historical significance of the sedan chair portico is that it highlights a period in Grenada’s history when Church Street in St. George’s was called Government Street and was therefore the likely site of government buildings. Church Street stretched from Granby Street on one end up to the Roman Catholic Church at the other end. These heritage sites with sedan chair portico on Church Street were most likely government buildings. Another historic landmark, the St. George’s Anglican Church, has a fine replica showing an exact example of a sedan chair portico. As you climb the steps of the Anglican Church, which was constructed in 1785, you enter the portico before entering the main church. Both sides of the portico are open. The sedan chairs were used by the free colored Grenadians and the landed gentry, who entered the buildings by way of the porticos, and exited the buildings without having to walk in the streets or being identified.

These porticos have been designated as heritage/historic landmarks by Grenada National Trust, the Willie Redhead Foundation and the Grenada National Trust. It is also proposed that Church Street be declared a protected heritage site and that these buildings be registered in a National Register of Historic sites of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique soon to be established.

Plaques are to be erected on the Sedan Chair Porticos Historic Landmarks by the Washington Diaspora on August 8th 2012 during the Diaspora Homecoming.