

DISCOVERY OF HISTORICAL DUNGEON AND TUNNEL AT HCL COMPOUND

On April 17, 2023 The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago, in partnership with the Idakeda Group, embarked on a site visit to the HCL Property Management offices, formerly known as the Orange Grove Estate in Tacarigua, to investigate a claim of a historical find on the premises. What they discovered was a hidden tunnel and dungeon dating back to the era of slavery.

Professor Selwyn Cudjoe, an expert on the Burnley estate, confirmed the existence of the tunnel and gave some insights into its possible purpose. According to Professor Cudjoe the dungeon, served as a place where enslaved individuals endured punishment during the era of African enslavement. This explanation was borne out by the presence of cast iron bars, a gate, and lime mortar construction on the dungeon walls, all indicative of the harsh realities of estate life. The tunnel, which had been sealed for several years, is believed to have played a significant role in the history of the Orange Grove Estate allegedly transporting the enslaved from one building on the estate to another.

Plans for a second site visit by the National Trust and Idakeda Group in July are underway. They expect to be accompanied by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation and a representative from the Ministry of Planning and Development. The National Trust hopes to make this significant site accessible to the public and future generations.