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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bonnet House Remains Threatened Despite Pending Settlement
Historic Property Still in Danger

FORT LAUDERDALE – Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, a property of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announced today that a settlement has been reached with Transacta Prive Developers, Ltd., and the City of Fort Lauderdale regarding its suit to prevent the development of a hotel near the designated historic site.

“We remain deeply concerned that Bonnet House will become overwhelmed by development that would tower over the property and destroy the ambience that is unique to Bonnet House,” said Karen Beard, Chief Executive Officer of Bonnet House Museum & Gardens. “While the settlement will provide funds for landscaping, our long-term fear is over-development that is not compatible with the surroundings.”

The settlement provides funding for trees and landscaping to partially screen the view of a high-rise structure, should it be built, near the south border of the Bonnet House grounds. While the litigation has ended, the issue of over-development surrounding the historical site continues.

According to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code and Ordinances, Bonnet House deserves special protection. In fact, Objective 1.15 of the Comprehensive Plan is titled, “Provide for the protection and preservation of the Bonnet House as a historic resource of the coastal area.”

The View Corridor of Bonnet House is specifically mentioned in the City of Fort Lauderdale ULDR Neighborhood Compatibility Requirements. “o) Defensible Space: Preserve view corridors. The City recognizes that existing and new views to and from the Intracoastal Waterway, Atlantic Ocean, Bonnet House and public parks are important to maintain.”

“The special nature of Bonnet House is mentioned 19 times in City planning documents, and its protection is critical,” said Beard. “Development of other properties nearby could cause a similar impact, so we will continue to work for stronger City Ordinances to safeguard Bonnet House.”

After the City’s Planning and Zoning Board as well as its Historic Preservation Board voted to deny the project, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission approved a development of 18 stories, to be constructed approximately 200 feet from the south edge of the Bonnet House gardens.

Bonnet House has state and national significance as an historic treasure. The danger to its integrity is appreciated by organizations dedicated to preserving historic sites. Owned by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, the 35-acre estate is considered a critical part of its mission of historic property stewardship.

About Bonnet House Museum & Gardens

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is a 35 - acre subtropical estate and historic house museum located in the heart of Fort Lauderdale on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Bonnet House, in addition to being open for guided public tours six days per week and open year round, offers a myriad of specially designed programs including school programs, adult programs and family programs. Bonnet House also has membership opportunities for local artists, emerging professionals and volunteers. Music students from nearby universities and opera companies gain experience through their performances on property in the Young Artist Music Series and orchid enthusiasts have an opportunity to see and buy an exclusive selection of orchids as well as learn how to grow and care for orchids in their own homes. The mission of Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is to preserve, interpret and share the unique and eclectic historical legacy – artistic, architectural and environmental - of the Bartlett and Birch families, inspiring in our diverse audiences an appreciation for creative expression, historic preservation and natural conservation, while enhancing the educational, cultural and economic growth of the community.

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