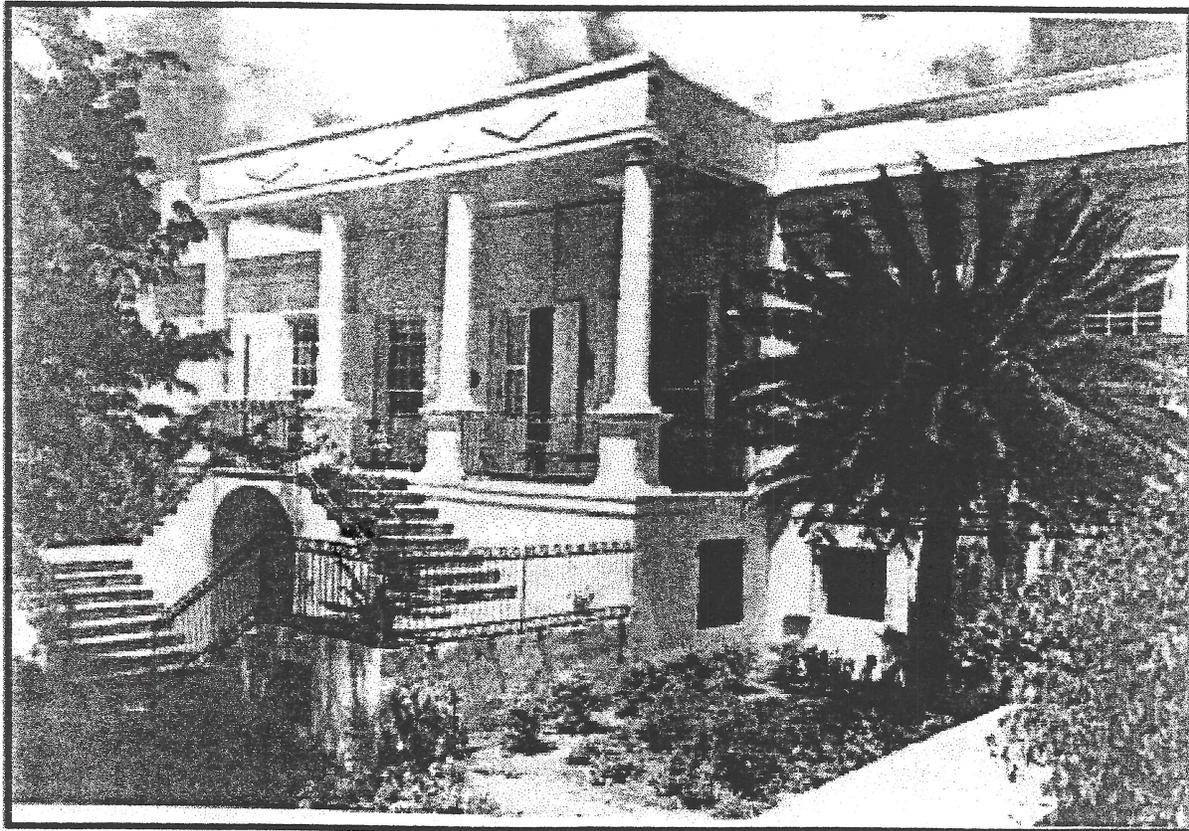


"Cathrineberg"



The Governor's Mansion

Situated on Denmark Hill



Description of Historic Site

The intent of the Danish West India Company when colonizing St. Thomas in the late 1600s was to create a plantation society. The colony was to meet the demands of Scandinavia and the Baltic states for sugar, cotton, tobacco, and other tropical produce so highly valued in Europe. It was for the same

purpose that the Company expanded into St. John half a century later and that it acquired St. Croix in 1733. All three islands were initially developed as agricultural communities.

The first settlers supplemented their modest harvests of tobacco, sugar, and cotton with tropical woods, indigo, and ground

provisions (tubers such as yams and manioc). For several decades tobacco was the most important crop and for years rolls of tobacco served as currency. As time passed and more land came under cultivation the main efforts of the planters went into the production of sugar-the most profitable of crops. The success of agro-industry became the gauge by which the economic viability of the colony was measured. Other crops besides sugar-cotton especially, because it could be cultivated in areas too dry for cane-continued to be important. It was sugar, however, which left the most lasting social and architectural legacies.

The production of sugar and its by-products, rum and molasses, was, and still is, a capital and labor-intensive enterprise in the Caribbean. Whereas tobacco, the original West Indian export crop, was often cultivated by individuals or families with small landholdings, sugar required a large labor force of slaves, substantial processing facilities and, to make it a viable operation, more land. The 'works' had to include at least a horsemill with machinery for pressing the cane, a factory with a boiling bench, a still, and curing and storage houses. These basic features were usually supplemented with a 'bagasse' shed (where pressed cane was dried before being used as fuel), shops, oxpounds, stables, cisterns and, where terrain and wind exposure permitted, a windmill tower. All plantations had a 'village', where the slaves lived, and most had a 'great house', their owner's residence. It is the remains of these large and well built facilities that are the most conspicuous reminder of past agricultural activities. Traces exist of the barns, sheds, and storage buildings utilized in the processing of tobacco and cotton, but these were of lighter construction and their remains are less apparent.

St. Thomas and St. John were brought under cultivation during the early decades of the colony's history. Their mountainous terrain and thin soil did not discourage early settlers, although the plantations proved to be susceptible to droughts and extreme rainfall-both regular occurrences-and intense cultivation in these islands required a disproportionate amount of labor to maintain it. By the mid-1700s, trade centered on St. Thomas's harbor, which became a source of revenue rivaling agriculture. Those planters with initiative became merchants and moved to Charlotte Amalie. Their plantations were left to overseers and occasional inspection visits. Plantations continued to be operated into the nineteenth century, not because they were economically viable, but because the status of planter added social distinction and often tax advantages. After 1848, when slavery was abolished in the Danish West Indies, the commercial cultivation of sugar cane and cotton was, to all intents and purposes, over on St. Thomas. On St. John, with its better soil and lack of other sources of revenue, such agriculture continued for a few more decades.

Farm buildings and structures including sugar factories are not highly visible on St. Thomas. Some have been preserved in a condition that still gives an idea of their original functions, but these are difficult to reach and on private property. The few that are both accessible and have been preserved have found other uses and conversion has obscured their original character.

Description of Building

Surprisingly, given its scarcity of farm buildings, St. Thomas has a great house

which is among the most architecturally ambitious in the Virgin Islands. Cathrinberg, of Denmark Hill as it is popularly known, was built in 1830 by Hans Henrik Berg, a landowner and government official. At the time, Cathrinberg was a plantation on the outskirts of Charlotte Amalie, a location which exempted him from the building tax which applied in town. Only cultivated portions of plantations were taxed, which in this case only applied to four acres of garden out of a total of 170 acres pertaining to the estate. The tax in town, on a comparable structure, would have been more than 20 times higher. Incidentally, Berg and his family of four required an overseer and family and 13 servants to maintain Cathrinberg. He also had four plantations on St. John; Annaberg, Leinster Bay, Mary Point, and Jossie Gut.

Cathrinberg is sited high above the town and faces east. It is a plastered masonry structure, U-shaped in plan. In true West Indian style, the ground floor, often referred to as the cellar or basement, is of secondary importance, and contained services, storage, and a stable. It is architecturally plain and is treated as a base for the second or main floor. Originally the main access road led up from the east to the impressive double staircase and columned portico that fronts the three center bays of the building. A widely projecting and elaborately moulded cornice is crowned by a panelled parapet wall that at the corners support acroteria of an unusual design. The details are classical revival in character and their execution and application skillful. Although a large building, it is only seven bays wide by five bays deep; the generous scale of its architectural features gives Cathrinberg a grander quality than that generally found in Virgin Islands architecture.

Introduction

Preliminary Assessment

Introduction: Preliminary Assessment

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings are intended to provide guidance to historic buildings owners and building managers, preservation consultants, architects, contractors, and project reviewers prior to treatment.

As noted, while the treatment Standards are designed to be applied to all historic resources types included in the National Register of Historic Places-buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects-the Guidelines apply to specific resource types; in this case, buildings.

The Guidelines have been prepared to assist in applying the Standards to all project work; consequently, they are not meant to give case-specific advice or address exceptions or rare instances. Therefore, it is recommended that the advice of qualified historic preservation professionals be obtained early in the planning stage of the project. Such professionals may include architects, architectural historians, historians, historical engineers, archaeologists, and others who have experience in working with historic buildings.

The Guidelines pertain to both exterior and interior work on historic buildings of all sizes, materials, and types.

The Standards for *Preservation*, require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, along with the building's historic form, features, and detailing as they have

evolved over time. The *Rehabilitation Standards* acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the building's historic character. The *Restoration Standards* allow for the depiction of a building at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods. The *Reconstruction Standards* establish a limited framework for re-creating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.

Wood

Wood has played a central role in American building during every period and in every style. Whether as structural members, exterior cladding, roofing, interior finishes, or decorative features, wood is frequently an essential component of historic buildings.

Because it can be easily shaped by sawing, sanding, planing, carving, and gouging, wood is used for architectural features such as clapboard, cornices, brackets, entablatures, shutters, columns and balustrades. These wooden features, both functional and decorative, are often important in defining the historic character of the building.

Problems

- The windows and doors of the entire structure should be stripped, sanded and repainted because layers of paint have obscured their architectural feature.
- Wood floors are susceptible to the following build up of finishes, stains and scratches, for it to be corrected it

needs to be sanded, stained and re-sealed.

- The same is true for the wooden railings.

Recommended

- *Identifying, retaining, and preserving* wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments; and their paints, finishes, and colors.
- Removing damaged or deteriorated paint to the next sound layer using the gentlest method possible (handscraping and handsanding), then repainting.
- Using with care electric hot-air guns on decorative wood features and electric heat plates on flat wood surfaces when paint is so deteriorated that total removal is necessary prior to repainting.
- Using chemical strippers primarily to supplement other methods such as handscraping, handsanding and the above-recommended thermal devices. Detachable wooden elements such as shutters, doors, and columns may-with proper safeguards-be chemically dip-stripped.
- Applying compatible paint coating systems following proper surface preparation.

Windows

Technology and prevailing architectural styles have shaped the history of windows in the United States starting in the 17th century with wooden casement windows with tiny glass panes seated in lead comes. From the transitional single-hung sash later in the century, these early wooden windows

characterized by small panes, wide muntins, and decorative trim. As the sash thickness creased, muntins took on a thinner appearance as they narrowed in width but increased in thickness.

As one of the few parts of a building serving as both an interior and exterior feature, windows are nearly always an important part of a historic building.

Problems

- The window opening for the kitchen and pantry should be upgraded to include windows and not shutters.
- The partial closing of windows, i.e. living room and dining room (where air condition unit is housed) need to be reopened.

Recommended

- *Identifying, retaining, and preserving* windows-and their functional and decorative features-that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. Such features can include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, hoodmolds, panelled or decorated jambs and moldings, and interior and exterior shutters and blinds.
- Conducting an indepth survey of the condition of existing windows early in preservation planning so that repair and upgrading methods and possible replacement options can be fully explored.
- Replacing in kind extensively deteriorated or missing parts of windows when there are surviving prototypes such as frames, sash, sills, glazing, and hoodmolds. The new work should match the old in material,

design, color, and texture; and be unobtrusively dated to guide future research and treatment.

Spaces, Features, and Finishes

An interior floor plan, the arrangement and sequence of spaces, and built-in features and applied finishes are individually and collectively important in defining the historic character of the building. Interiors are comprised of a series of primary and secondary spaces. This is applicable to all buildings, from courthouses to cathedrals, to cottages and office buildings. Primary spaces, including entrance halls, parlors, or living rooms, assembly rooms and lobbies, are defined not only by their function, but also by their features, finishes, size and proportion.

Secondary spaces are often more functional than decorative, and may include kitchens, bathrooms, mail rooms, utility spaces, secondary hallways, firestairs and office cubicles in a commercial or office space. Extensive changes can often be made in these less important areas without having a detrimental effect on the overall historic character.

Problems

- Existing drop ceiling in lower bedroom to be removed and its original ceiling restored.
- Existing carpet removed in lower bedroom. Floor member repaired or replaced with historically accurate floor finish.
- Tile pattern in lower bathroom inappropriate.
- Media Room-re-open space under archway.

Recommended

- ▶ Identifying, retaining, and preserving a floor plan or interior spaces that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the size, configuration, proportion, and relationship of rooms and corridors; the relationship of features to spaces; and the spaces themselves such as lobbies, reception halls, entrance halls, double parlors, theaters, auditoriums, and important industrial or commercial spaces.
- Identifying, retaining, and preserving interior features and finishes that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, including columns, cornices, baseboards, fireplaces and mantels, panelling, light fixtures, hardware, and flooring; and wallpaper, plaster, paint, and finishes such as stenciling, marbling, and graining, and other decorative materials that accent interior features and provide color, texture, and patterning to walls, floors, and ceilings.

Architectural Metals

Architectural metal features—such as cast iron, facades, porches, and steps; sheet metal cornices, siding, roofs, roof cresting and storefronts; and cast or rolled metal doors, window sash, entablatures, and hardware—are often highly decorative and may be important in defining the overall character of historic American buildings.

Metals commonly used in historic buildings include lead, tin, zinc, copper, bronze, brass, on, steel and aluminum. Historic metal

building components were often created by highly skilled, local artisans, and by the late 19th century, many of these components were prefabricated and readily available from catalogs in standardized sizes and designs.

Problems

- The metal railing at the main entrance is beginning to show signs of corrosion.
- The same for metal hardware.

Recommended

- Using the gentlest cleaning method for cast iron, wrought iron, and steel, hard metals—in order to remove paint buildup and corrosion. If handscraping and wire brushing have proven ineffective, low pressure grit blasting may be used as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
- Replacing in kind extensively deteriorated or missing parts of architectural metal features when there are surviving prototypes such as porch balusters, column capitals or bases, or porch cresting. The new work should match the old in material, design, and texture; and be unobtrusively dated to guide future research and treatment.

Masonry

Mortar is used to bond together masonry units. Historic mortar was generally quite soft, consisting primarily of lime and sand with other additives. By the latter part of the 19th century, portland cement was usually added resulting in a more rigid and non-absorbing mortar. Like historic mortar, early stucco coatings were also heavily lime-based,

increasing in hardness with the addition of portland cement in the late 19th century.

Concrete has a long history, being variously made of tabby, volcanic ash and, later, of natural hydraulic cements, before the introduction of portland cement in the 1870s. Since then, concrete has also been used in its precast form.

While masonry is among the most durable of historic building materials, it is also very susceptible to damage by improper maintenance or repair technique and harsh or abrasive cleaning methods.

Recommended

- Cleaning masonry surfaces with the gentlest methods possible, such as low-pressure water and detergents, using natural bristle brushes.
- Inspecting painted masonry surfaces to determine whether repainting is necessary.
- Repainting with colors that are historically appropriate to the building and district.
- *Repairing, stabilizing, and conserving* fragile masonry by using well-tested consolidants, when appropriate. Repairs should be physically and visually compatible and identifiable upon close inspection for future research. (See attached Preservation Guideline #3).
- Duplicating old mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture.
- Duplicating old mortar joints in width and in joint profile.

Entrances and Porches

Entrances and porches are quite often the focus of historic buildings, particularly on

primary elevations. Together with their functional and decorative features such as doors, steps, balustrades, pilasters, and entablatures, they can be extremely important in defining the overall character of a building. In many cases, porches were energy-saving devices, shading southern and western elevations. Usually entrances and porches were integral components of a historic building's design; for example, porches on Greek Revival houses, with Doric or Ionic columns and pediments, echoed the architectural elements and features of the larger building.

Roofs

The roof-with its shape; features such as cresting, dormers, cupolas, and chimneys; and the size, color, and patterning of the roofing material-is an important design element of many historic buildings. In addition, a weathertight roof is essential to the longterm preservation of the entire structure. Historic roofing reflects availability of materials, levels of construction technology, weather, and cost.

The use of metals for roofing and roof features dates from the 18th century; and include the use of *sheet metal, corrugated metal, galvanized metal, tin-plate, copper, lead* and *zinc*.

New roofing materials developed in the early 20th century include built-up roll roofing, and concrete, asbestos, and asphalt shingles.

Mechanical Systems

The greatest impacts of the 20th century on mechanical systems were the use of electricity for interior lighting, forced air ventilation,

elevators for tall buildings, exterior lighting and electric heat. The new age of technology brought an increasingly high level of design and decorative art to many of the functional elements of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

The visible decorative features of historic mechanical systems such as grilles, lighting fixtures, and ornamental switchplates may contribute to the overall historic character of the building. Their identification needs to take place, together with an evaluation of their physical condition, early in project planning. On the other hand, mechanical systems need to work efficiently so many older systems, such as compressors and their ductwork, and wiring and pipes often need to be upgraded or entirely replaced in order to meet modern requirements.

Energy Efficiency

Some features of a historic building or site such as cupolas, shutters, transoms, skylights, sunrooms, porches, and planting can play an energy-conserving role. Therefore, prior to retrofitting historic buildings to make them more energy efficient, the first step should always be to identify and evaluate existing historic features to assess their inherent energy-con-serving potential. If it is determined that retrofitting measures are appropriate, then such work needs to be carried out with particular care to ensure that the building's historic character is retained.

Problems

- Air conditioning systems which require large ductwork and have caused the removal or covering over of character-defining interior features should be removed.

Accessibility Considerations

It is often necessary to make modifications to a historic building so that it will be in compliance with current accessibility code requirements. Accessibility to certain historic structures is required by three specific federal laws: the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Federal rules, regulations, and standards have been developed which provide guidance on how to accomplish access to historic areas for people with disabilities. Work must be carefully planned and undertaken so that it does not result in the loss of character-defining spaces, features, and finishes. The goal is to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact.

Recommended

- Finding solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact on the historic building and its site, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts.