GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
4611 Tutu Park Mall
Suite 300, 2nd Floor
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 774-3320

45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted
St. Croix, VI 00840
(340) 773-1082
dpnr.vi.gov

Office of the Commissioner

Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-11, Application No. CCZP0090-26

Petition of applicant, Department of Property and Procurement, to amend Parcel Nos. 1 Crystal Gade and 3 Commandant O.V., Queen's Quarter, St. Thomas, from P (Public) to B-1 (Business-Central Business District). The purpose of the request is to allow a hotel/guesthouse and residential suites.



Site photos- Current condition of buildings on properties

Property Owner(s): Government of the Virgin Islands as evidenced by Warranty Deed dated September 11, 1920, recorded September 20, 1920, Page 112, No. 189, and Bill of Sale dated April 20, 1921, recorded April 25, 1921, Page 343, No. 61.

Applicant Representative(s): Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Property and Procurement.

Acreage: Approximately 0.12 acres combined acreage as described on the Measure Briefs registered June 26, 2026, and July 13, 2026.

Surrounding Uses and Zones: The subject property is located within a mixed-use area consisting of residential, business, and commercial uses.



MapGeo aerial view of properties (outlined in yellow)

The surrounding area is zoned B-2, B-3, and P (Public) with no prior zoning map amendments.

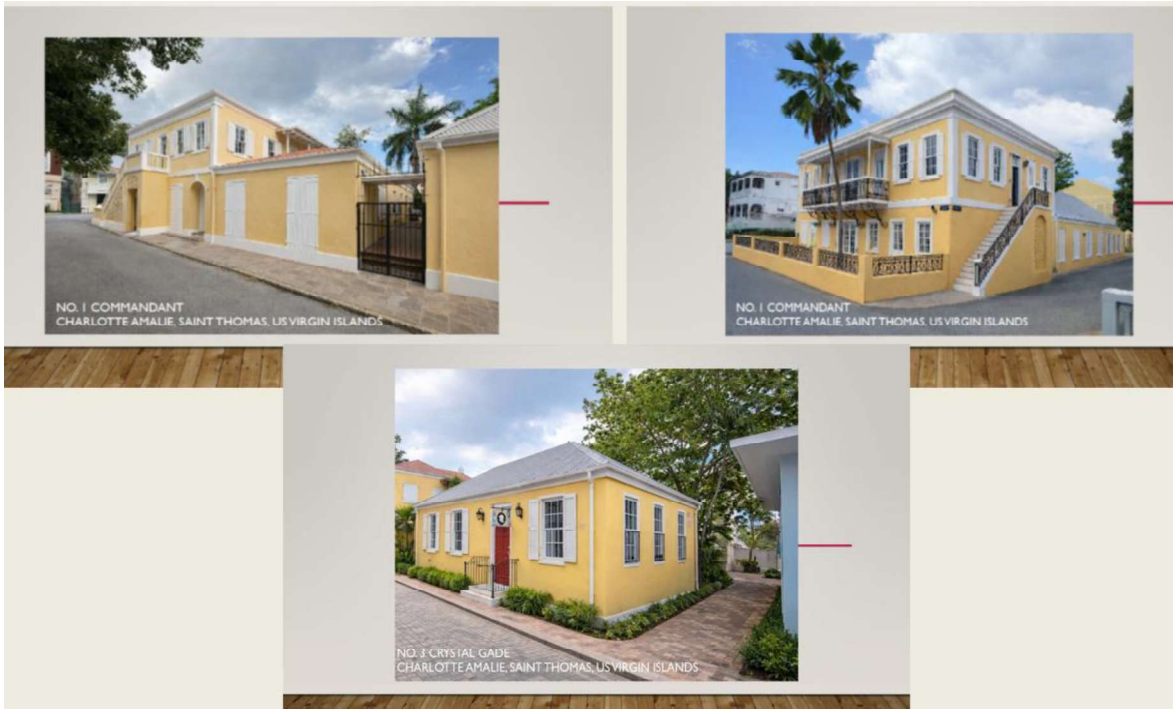


Official Zoning Map No. STZ-11 (property location indicated by red circle)

Infrastructure: Water will be supplied and sewage handled by the public lines.

Other DPNR Division reviews needed: State Historic Preservation Office and Permits for rehabilitation.

Project Summary: The proposal seeks to facilitate the adaptive reuse of a former Department of Education facility that has remained largely vacant and underutilized since Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Department of Property and Procurement proposes to lease the buildings to a private entity who will rehabilitate the existing historic structures and convert them into a small-scale guest house and residential suite development consisting of approximately three to six accommodations for short- and long-term occupancy. Planned improvements include roof, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and interior renovations while maintaining the existing exterior character of the buildings. The project is intended to return a deteriorating government-owned property to productive use, support ongoing revitalization efforts within the Garden Street/Commandant Gade area, and provide additional visitor and housing accommodations in downtown Charlotte Amalie.



Conceptual Rehabilitation Renderings

Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held September 21, 2026:
Public comments regarding the proposed rezoning generally reflected support for rehabilitation and reuse of the deteriorated former school building; however, commenters consistently expressed concerns about the operational impacts of the proposed guest house/hotel development on the surrounding neighborhood. The most frequently cited concerns related to parking, traffic, public safety, construction impacts, and neighborhood compatibility.

1. Lack of dedicated on-site parking was the dominant issue raised by residents, business owners, and representatives of the St. Thomas Reformed Church.

Concerns were raised that guests, service vehicles, and deliveries would rely on already limited public parking resources and further worsen existing congestion. Several commenters requested a permanent, legally secured parking solution before approval is considered.

2. Multiple commenters questioned whether the proposed use would function as a traditional hotel/guest house or as an unstaffed short-term rental operation similar to Airbnb accommodations. Commenters requested clarification regarding staffing, management responsibilities, security measures, and accountability for guest activities.

3. Traffic, Circulation, and Neighborhood Impacts. Residents expressed concern that additional visitors, deliveries, and service vehicles would increase traffic and congestion within the narrow residential street network. Concerns included impacts on pedestrian safety, emergency access, taxi circulation, and overall neighborhood mobility.

4. Commenters raised concerns regarding construction staging, worker parking, material storage, and construction-related traffic. Requests were made for a detailed construction management plan addressing noise, dust, debris control, runoff management, and protection of neighboring properties and church facilities.

5. Public Safety and Security. Residents expressed concern that the introduction of transient lodging could exacerbate existing public safety challenges in the area. Commenters requested information regarding security measures, on-site management, lighting improvements, emergency contacts, and ongoing property oversight.

6. Concerns were raised regarding increased waste generation associated with lodging uses and the potential for worsening existing sanitation issues. Commenters requested a waste-management plan identifying collection methods, responsibility, and maintenance procedures.

7. Neighborhood Character and Long-Term Zoning Implications. Several commenters emphasized that the rezoning should be evaluated not only for the proposed project but also for other uses that may become permissible under the requested zoning classification. Concerns focused on preserving neighborhood character and preventing future increases in traffic, parking demand, and commercial activity incompatible with the surrounding residential area.

The public record reflects conditional support for the rehabilitation and reuse of the existing structure, but significant concern regarding the absence of a dedicated

parking solution and the potential impacts of the proposed lodging operation on traffic, safety, sanitation, and neighborhood character. No comments opposed restoration of the building itself; rather, the concerns focused on ensuring that operational and infrastructure impacts are adequately addressed before approval of the rezoning request.

Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation: The subject properties are owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands and are currently zoned P (Public). While the Department supports rehabilitation of the currently underutilized structures and recognizes that the proposed use is generally compatible with the surrounding mixed-use downtown development pattern, the requested zoning map amendment is not consistent with the Department's Policy on Zoning Classification of Government-Owned Lands (P-Public Designation Policy) (attached as appendix, File Item No. 17B.). The policy establishes the P-Public designation as the preferred zoning classification for Government-owned lands and provides that uses not permitted within the P-Public District should generally be addressed through the use variance process rather than through rezoning to a residential, commercial, or business classification. The requested rezoning also conflicts with the intent of Title 29 V.I.C. §229(q), which recognizes that publicly owned land should be distinctly identified on the Official Zoning Maps and discourages assigning residential, commercial, or industrial classifications simply because surrounding properties contain those zoning designations. Retention of the P-Public designation more accurately reflects the public ownership and character of the property.

The Department finds that the proposed adaptive reuse is consistent with the 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, which supports adaptive reuse, reinvestment in developed urban areas, economic revitalization, historic preservation, and sound, consistent land-use decision-making. The proposed project also satisfies the principal considerations contained within the Government Lands Policy, including public purpose, neighborhood compatibility, minimal adverse impact, and support of Comp Plan goals. Public comments generally supported restoration of the deteriorated buildings but raised concerns regarding parking, traffic, construction impacts, sanitation, public safety, and long-term neighborhood character. The Department finds that these concerns relate primarily to operation of the proposed use and can be addressed through agency review and permitting requirements rather than through modification of the property's zoning classification. Accordingly, the Department finds that retention of the P-Public zoning designation and consideration of a use variance for Hotels & Guesthouses and Dwellings is more consistent with the

Comp Plan, the Government Lands Policy, and Title 29 V.I.C. §229(q) than the requested rezoning to B-1. Therefore, the Department recommends denial of the zoning map amendment and approval of a use variance for the proposed use.

Recommendation

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends the following:

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238a, a use variance be granted to the P (Public) zoned Parcel Nos. 1 Crystal Gade and 3 Commandant O.V., Queen's Quarter, St. Thomas, consisting of approximately 0.12 acres combined acreage as described on Measure Briefs registered June 26, 2026, and July 13, 2026, to allow Hotels & Guesthouses and Dwellings. All other requirements of the P-Public zoning designation continue to apply to the property.

_____ 10.8.2026

Jozette J. Walker, CPM Date
Assistant Commissioner

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner