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STAFFORD PLANTATION (~~Stafford Place~~) HISTORIC DISTRICT

C = N.S. AREA

Description:

The Stafford Historic District encompasses three sub-areas: (1) Stafford Place, consisting of the Stafford House, support buildings, and a small cemetery, (2) ruins of slave quarters known as The Chimneys, and (3) [redacted] location of archaeological site NPS 9 CAM 9. The district is part of a reserve life estate.

The present Stafford House (HS-185) was built in 1901 by Mrs. Lucy Carnegie for her son, William Coleman Carnegie, on the site of Robert Stafford, Jr.'s former residence which was destroyed by fire in 1900. It is said that the existing house may have been designed by William Carnegie. The two-story frame structure has a gable roof with three shed dormers and three chimneys. An open porch extends across the length of the first floor, and a gable roofed one-story portico with square columns projects from the center. A one-story addition extends from the rear, connected by a narrow breezeway. All exterior walls are stuccoed and painted. The house is in fair condition with considerable termite damage and is not presently occupied. The first floor is entered through a vestibule leading to the "great hall." Two front porches flank the great hall, with a living room and library to the rear. The great hall features exposed post and beam construction, a fireplace, elevator, and grand stair. A "gallery" leads to the rear wing which contains a dining room with dark wainscot, mural, and french doors, a pantry, scullery, kitchen, and servants' dining room. Upstairs are the master bedroom, encompassing 1/4 of the floor, five smaller bedrooms, and four bathrooms. The third floor contains three additional bedrooms and two baths.

Both the exterior design and interior finishes of Stafford are much less grand than those of Plum Orchard or descriptions of Dungeness, and illustrate its use as a vacation home rather than a primary residence. Some landscape features remain in the front and rear yards, including a fountain and a small pond. The main house and several outbuildings are enclosed by an extensive tabby wall which is in a poor state of repair.

Most of the outbuildings were constructed during the Carnegie period. They range from good condition to ruins and all contribute to the historic significance of the district. The Stafford Place outbuildings include:

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1. Golf House (HS-186) A long, narrow stuccoed one-story building with a corrugated metal gable roof and a chimney at one end, the building appears to have been doubled in length by a later addition. The unique feature of this building is its diamond-paned windows. The original part of this building may have stood during the Stafford period, and the William Carnegies occupied it while the main house was under construction. It is in good condition, but has undergone insensitive rehabilitation efforts.
2. The Pool (HS-187) A long, narrow brick building with a stucco finish, this building contains a pool and dressing area in one end. The building is one-story with a hip roof; skylights have recently been placed on the back portion. Several chimneys stand along the rear wall, suggesting that this building may have served an additional or prior use. The structure is in fair condition.
3. Outbuildings 1 and 2 (HS-188 and 189) These two buildings, approximately 12x25 feet, each have one corner abutting the end of the pool. Both are one-story, of brick construction with a stucco finish, and have 6/6 and 6/9 light windows. Outbuilding 1 has a shingled gable roof covered with metal; outbuilding 2 has a hip roof covered with metal.
4. Shed (HS-190) This 3-sided frame structure with a pent roof probably served as a storage shed, and is in poor condition with several weatherboards missing or damaged, and one of the support posts collapsing.
5. Servants' Quarters (HS-191) This substantial two-story house abuts the end of the pool building. It has a stucco finish with a gable roof, an undercut corner porch, a center chimney, and 6/6 light windows. The building is located outside the tabby wall, which adjoins it on two sides. It is in fair condition.
6. Water Tower (HS-192) A round wooden water tower and platform stands on a metal support system and four brick piers. It is in poor condition.
7. Outbuilding 3 (HS-193) Small brick building, approximately 10 x 12 feet with a stucco finish and a hip roof with louvered gable vent. It is in fair condition.
8. Outbuilding 4 (HS-194) This brick structure is similar to, and located adjacent to, Outbuilding 3. Lacking a stucco finish, and with the hip roof collapsing, it is in a deteriorated condition.

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[REDACTED] is the Stafford Cemetery containing the remains of Robert Stafford, Jr., his mother and sister, and Thomas Hutchinson, a professional golfer and friend of William Coleman Carnegie. Robert Stafford, Jr., who died in 1877, was the largest plantation owner on Cumberland Island. His father and uncle settled on the island about the time that General Nathanael Greene purchased Dungeness. The cemetery is surrounded by a 3½ foot tabby wall with a gate.

The ruins of the slave quarters [REDACTED] are commonly known as "The Chimneys", a designation acquired from the presence of the more than 20 upright chimneys, and a number of chimney ruins located in the brush. The standing chimneys and their fireplaces are in fair to poor condition. In 1978, several of the chimneys that were in danger of collapse were braced, but no further preservation work has occurred. The chimneys and fireplaces stand in three parallel lines. Two other chimneys with their fireplaces facing each other indicate the probable location of the hospital, a common structure found among slave quarters of the South. Although there is no written evidence as to when these quarters were built, in all probability they were constructed in the 1820s, at the time that Robert Stafford, Jr. began to enlarge his holdings on the island.

The third area in the Stafford Plantation Historic District is an archeological site (NPS 9 CAM 9) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Other portions of NPS 9 CAM 9 are under dense cover of grass, mixed hardwoods, pine, and saw palmetto. No accurate depth of midden measurement was made. Large portions of the area are dotted with small shell mounds approximately 7 meters in diameter and 50 centimeters high. Within the site is a sand mound, approximately 1.2 meters high and 38 meters in diameter. Present information suggests that it has been disturbed by treasure seekers.

Significance

The Stafford Plantation Historic District contains both Carnegie structures as well as some remains of the earlier Stafford occupation. Robert Stafford's holdings once stretched from the Greyfield area as far north as Rayfield. William Coleman Carnegie, resident of Stafford Place, built his mansion on the site of Stafford's house which burned in 1900, and constructed an airfield and golf course on the former plantation fields.

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Robert Stafford was born on Cumberland Island in 1790 to a carpenter who first purchased land on the island in 1800. In 1813 Stafford gained control of the family holdings and by 1853 owned approximately 8,000 acres. He acquired much of this land by lending money with property as collateral, then foreclosing for failure to pay. Stafford also owned most of the slaves on the island, reporting 348 in the 1850 census. Remnants of slave cabins are found at the "Chimneys" and at Rayfield.

Stafford divided his holdings into two separate plantations, one managed from Stafford Place, the other from Rayfield. By stimulating competition between the two plantations he was able to produce large and excellent cotton crops. Prior to the Civil War, Stafford was the major planter, exporter, and importer on the island.

After the Civil War Stafford returned to his ruined plantation, remaining there until his death in 1877. Thomas Carnegie purchased the Stafford property for \$40,000 in 1882.

The remnants of slave quarters, a prehistoric archeological site, and the Carnegie buildings establish the significance of the district in the areas of prehistoric and historic archeology, agriculture, architecture, and landscape architecture.

#### Archeology

One prehistoric site is present within the Stafford District. Though intensively used during past centuries, the site has not been thoroughly investigated and intact portions may yield useful information about local indigenous migrations, the estuarine subsistence economy, and the various social groups.

Further archival and archeological investigation may provide evidence concerning the establishment of the slave settlement at the Chimneys, its operation, and day-to-day concerns. This settlement provides a unique opportunity to furnish substantive data about chattel culture in the sea islands during the first half of the nineteenth century. Research potential exists in the areas of site interpretation, overall village layout, developmental sequences, slave behavior patterns, and intra-cabin/village variability. The availability of this complex of buildings with associated wells, trash dumps, etc., can provide worthwhile data to our knowledge of slave subsistence economics and slaves' relationship to the plantation. Ehrenhard and Bullard have chronicled Stafford's property and slave acquisitions on Cumberland, as well as the results of the excavation of one of the chimneys, in a report entitled The Chimneys (1981).

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Agriculture

The Stafford District includes portions of fields utilized by both the Stafford and Carnegie families. As Stafford was the major property owner and planter on the island prior to the Civil War, as well as a slave-owner, the district is significant as the site of Stafford's plantation house, slave quarters, and cotton fields. Further investigation is necessary to determine the extent of the Carnegie's cultivation and use of the Stafford plantation properties.

Architecture and Landscape Architecture:

The Stafford complex of Carnegie buildings stands out the least of the Carnegie estates on Cumberland Island. Nevertheless, the simple grandeur of the main house and the presence of servants' quarters and recreation-related pool building and golf house illustrate the wealth and social standards of the Carnegie family. Stafford Place particularly demonstrates their use of the island as a vacation spot, rustic, yet with such amenities as a golfcourse and pool. The mainhouse was appropriately landscaped with plantings, fountains, pools, and a gardenhouse. The tabby enclosure wall and the Stafford cemetery are other important landscape features.

Verbal Boundary Description

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

U.T.M. Coordinates

Eastings

Northing

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]