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APPENDIX B
REEF BAY GREAT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION

The site of Reef Bay Great House Historic District is on a small spur extending into Reef Bay Valley from Bordeaux Mountain to the east, approximately 1,000 yards inland from the shoreline of the bay. The district contains the Great House, a servants house, a stable, a privy and a well. The elevation is about 250 feet above sea level and it is reached by a trail that branches off the Reef Bay-Lameshur Trail.

The Great House is still partially roofed but several bearing masonry walls show signs of failure and on the interior all woodwork is badly deteriorated as are exterior and interior masonry finishes. The masonry walls of the servants quarters and the stable still stand to plate height in a deteriorated condition. The cookhouse, the privy and the walls of the semi-circular terrace on the north side of the Great House have collapsed as has the once roofed terrace to the south of the Great House.

Reef Bay Great House is the most important architectural monument within the Virgin Islands National Park and a significant example of West Indian architecture. Considered in connection with the remains of Reef Bay Sugar Factory and its historical association with the various ruins within the confines of Reef Bay Valley, it ranks as the most complete exhibit of the plantation economy of the West Indies within the Virgin Islands. Its spectacular and well-planned setting makes it a noteworthy example of historic landscaping, both for the quality of the design and its rarity. Reef Bay Great House was originally the Great House of Par Force. The existing building dates from the early 19th century but it contains within its shell the masonry base of an earlier wood building.

In its present form the Great House is an excellent example of a severely formal classical revival design with well conceived and sophisticated detailing that is carried through on the service buildings and in the retaining walls and fences. The incongruity between the formality and controlled symmetry of the architecture and the irregular topography of the setting has by the builder or the designer been turned to an advantage. Retaining walls, fences and steps direct the approaches and provide changing views of both the buildings and of the surroundings that soften and enrich the severity of the architecture. The original planting of the terraced landscaping has been choked out by bush and can only be guessed at, but sufficient remains of the terraces to provide an idea of the formalized landscape intended.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Reef Bay Great House complex is significant as a distinguished architectural expression in a neo-classical manner, that within a time frame of contemporary buildings, is of a highly sophisticated design as well as a true adaptation to the West Indies and to its setting.

Acreage: 5 acres

Latitude
18° 19' 54"

Longitude
64° 44' 25"

There are no UTM references on any published maps of the U.S. Virgin Islands

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Except for a small flat approximately 150 feet by a 100 feet northwest of the Reef Bay Great House, the terrain around the complex is very steep and without any distinctive natural or man-made features. As it is located in a protected area the boundaries of the Historic District have been arbitrarily set as the area bounded towards the west and east as longitude 64° 44' 23" and 64° 44' 27" and towards the north and south as latitude 18° 19' 56" and 18° 19' 52".

the classical revival cornice. The parapet wall above the cornice is divided into panels by stucco banding and the corners carry acroterions. The flanking galleries have stucco banding of corners and base, stucco panels above and below the arches, keystones, spring mouldings, parapet mouldings and on the parapet, domed finials and acroterions. A similar detailing is given the porches. The plaster work is well executed and the design very sophisticated. The interior has trim around door and window openings and cornice mouldings in plaster.

The Great house is still under roof and with all walls standing. All woodwork, however, including rafters and beams have deteriorated beyond repair and within recent years, structural failure of the masonry can be observed in the front and south section of the building. Finishes inside and out are fragmentary only. Roofing throughout has deteriorated.

Latitude $18^{\circ}19'54''$ Longitude $64^{\circ}44'25''$



Reef Bay Great House

Historic Name: Reef Bay, Par Force House

Common Name: Reef Bay Great House

Reef Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing date of photo August, 1970

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

Reef Bay Great House (H-15-1) viewed from the west with the remains of the cook house (H-15, 2) in the foreground.

(VI National Park Multiple Resource Area)

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Great House

Historic Name: Reef Bay, Par Force House

Common Name: Reef Bay Great House

Reef Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing date of photo August, 1970

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

Entrance gate (H-15, 6) to front yard of Great House
viewed from the northwest.

(VI National Park Multiple Resource Area)

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Servants Quarters

Historic Name: Reef Bay, Park Force House

Common Name: Reef Bay Great House

Reef Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing date of photo August, 1970

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

East wall of Servants Quarters (H-15, 3)

(VI National Park Multiple Resource Area)

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