

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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JUN 2 1976

DATE ENTERED

JUL 30 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

\*\* nlu

Christiansted Historic District

HAB =

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Christiansted

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

U.S. Virgin Islands

VICINITY OF

CODE

78

COUNTY

St. Croix

CODE

0800

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Government House

CITY, TOWN

Christiansted, St. Croix

STATE

U.S. Virgin Islands

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Select properties within the district have been surveyed by HABS.

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress and National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The visual and architectural character of the Christiansted Historic District is primarily the result of three historic factors: (1) that the grid street system was preplanned, (2) that most of the development of the town was concentrated in the last half of the 18th c. by the Danish West India and Guinea Company as the seat of Danish Government in the islands, and (3) building setbacks, materials and size were almost immediately governed by a building code imposed in 1747.

The site chosen in 1734 by governor-to-be Moth for the future town of Christiansted lies in a reef-sheltered harbor on the north side of St. Croix, east of the Columbus landing site. The town is situated on a low flat plain near the water, which forms the north and east edges, and rises in three separate ridges to the mountains forming the southern and south-western boundaries of the original settlement. The rigid application of the grid street plan over the undulating terrain, with the resulting NE-SW major axis of the grid, indicates that the plan of the town was predetermined and made to fit the selected site. The varying length of the blocks along the major axis was dictated by the three north-south ridges, but the depth of the blocks are constant, except for those which front on the harbor. Company Street was intended as the major street in the plan, on axis with the entrance to the fort and terminating at the large burial ground at the western border of the town. Two market spaces are located on or off this street: Market Square, a one block long, one lot deep open space between Company and King Streets in the western end of the town, and the Sunday Market, originally occupying both sides of Company Street (now limited to the south-side) in the middle of the block bounded by King's Cross and Queen's Cross Streets.

The first street of the town, Strandgade was laid out by Moth in May 1735 along the edge of the harbor, followed during the next decade by a number of parallel streets with slightly more narrow streets intersecting them. The early part of the grid plan focused on the recently rebuilt Fort Christian and the new buildings of the Danish West India and Guinea Company being erected in the north-easterly quadrant of the town. The settlement continued to grow outward from this area, with construction regulated by the building code of 1747 which specified among other things that:

1. New buildings were to be built in a straight line along the building line.
2. New buildings were to be constructed of masonry or wood with shingled roofs (later to be changed to tile).
3. If wood construction (except on Strandgade), to be built on masonry footings or foundations, and also

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	—LAW	—SCIENCE
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	—SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	—TRANSPORTATION
—1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)
		—INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Christiansted is of special significance for its well preserved architectural examples including Danish Neo Classic, Renaissance revival and Danish West Indian vernacular structures. Fort Christian dominating the the harbour, presents a typical 18th century fortification. The town has not experienced great physical damage from fire or hurricane. Modification have been made to several buildings and a few intrusions exist, however, the town retains the scale and feeling of a 19th century West Indian port and market.

Founded on the site of an older French settlement of Bassin, the town was laid out in 1734 by Frederik Moth, later the first Danish governor of St. Croix. Moth platted streets, subdivided the town into building sites, built an earth fort for protection and promulgated a series of exemplar building restrictions and codes whose effects are seen today in the town's attractiveness and visual order.

Prior to French occupation, Bassin was probably the site of an Dutch settlement that was contested by both the English and Spanish. The contest was settled in 1650 by a French military occupation followed by sale of St. Croix to the Knights of Malta. Bassin did not flourish and at best was a collection of crude huts when Moth and the Danes arrived.

Christiansted grew rapidly in the last quarter of the 19th century reflecting the general prosperity of the sugar industry and the towns displacement of Charlotte Amalie as the seat of government in 1755. The port flourished, shipping the many hogshead of sugar required to generate specie, much needed to pay plantation debts and to purchase imported luxuries.

By 1800 merchantile importance was at a peak with a population of 5,284 somewhat increased by wealthy planters who found it fashionable to own a townhouse in addition to a great house on their sugar plantation estate. The town became a flourishing center for plantation society.

A general decline in the sugar industry began after 1820 causing the town to remain static. By 1829 there were only 12 more buildings

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dookhan, Issac. A History of the Virgin Islands of the United States.  
 Epping Essex: Bower Publishing Company, 1974
- Gosner, Pamela. Historic Architecture of the United States Virgin Islands  
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 Historic American Building Survey

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 135.9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 17° 44' 57" N 64° 41' 57" W  
 B 17° 44' 43" N 64° 41' 57" W  
 C 17° 44' 25" N 64° 42' 35" W  
 D 17° 44' 57" N 64° 42' 35" W

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point which is the extension of Lobster Street at the edge of the harbor, then running southwesterly along the south side of Lobster Street to its intersection with Hospital Street, thence running east along the north side of Hospital Street to the intersection of New Street, thence running southwesterly along the south side of New Street to its intersection with Princess Street, thence running northwesterly along the west side of Princess Street to a

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Russell Wright, Thomas Richards, Virgin Island Historic Survey

ORGANIZATION

Virgin Island Planning Board

DATE

May 22, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2606

TELEPHONE

(809) 774-1730

CITY OR TOWN

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Thomas R. Blake*

TITLE Director of Planning

DATE May 25, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST  
 CLERK DEPUTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7-31-76

DATE 7-30-76

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U.S. Virgin Islands Inventory of Historic Places  
May, 1976 State  
Charlotte Amalie, U.S.V.I.

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7 PAGE

One

4. Prohibited thatched roofs in town, except for the "poorer class" who were restricted to the waterfront and the western section of town.

Two other factors that contributed to the original character of the town that obtains today were the long tradition that property owners built out over the public sidewalks, creating the impressive series of arcades and galleries, and a 1749 act which established a public cemetery at the western end of town, with all other burials prohibited except at the small cemeteries of the three approved churches.

By 1800, most of the part of town north of Dronningegade (Queen Street) was developed as the commercial and more pretentious residential quarter of the town, with parts of the hills at the end of Ostergade (East Street) and Bjerpegade (Hill Street) reserved for other prestigious residences. The remainder of the town, an 'L' shaped area below the mountains to the south and in the western half of the settlement, was developed as a residential section for the free-colored of which there were over 1,000 living in town by 1800. The land around the Market Place was developed as a commercial area to serve these families. This socioeconomic development pattern is reflected in the visual and architectural character and quality of these two distinct districts.

The commercial and governmental core area of the Christiansted Historic District is a six block section bounded by properties along the north side of Strand Street, Church Street, properties fronting the south side of Company Street, and by an arbitrary line drawn approximately in mid-block between Princess and King's Cross Streets. Kongensgade (King Street) is the most important street with many of the towns most significant structures located on or just off it, followed by Company Street, with the Sunday Market and rows of many fine residences. Almost all the original public buildings and many of the towns finest larger residences are located on these two streets, with the most important concentration occurring in the Government House area at the intersection of King and Queen's Cross Streets. Strangely, except for the area near the fort and vistas provided down King's Cross and Queen's Cross Streets, the harbor is hardly noticeable and has very little relationship to the core area.

Building heights in the core area are two and three stories with most one story heights limited to accessory structures. As required in the 1747 building code, buildings front on the sidewalk line and

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form almost solid rows for the entire length of the block, accented by the exceptional arcaded walkways with galleries projecting to the street line. Most of the ground floor of the structures are in commercial or office use with many of the upper floors used for residences. The predominant method of construction is masonry (brick and rubble, usually stuccoed) with a good number of the buildings having frame upper stories, entrance to which is either by internal stairway or through a rear courtyard. The presence of these courtyards reduces the overall density of the core area to an acceptable level. Virtually all of the buildings, except recent construction and the gable roofed churches, have the traditional West Indian high hipped roof. Building conditions are excellent.

Density of the residential areas to the south and west of the core area is considerably lower, except for the built-up sections along King and Company Streets. Although the buildings are situated along the sidewalk lines, many of which have suspended galleries, they are smaller structures with much larger side yards thereby creating a low density. With the exception of the King-Company Street tier, virtually all of the structures are one story in height, most are frame covered with shingles (earlier) or clapboards or novelty siding (later). Except for the areas around the Market Space, land use is predominantly residential with scattered convenience commercial uses and churches serving the residential community. Building conditions vary from good to poor, especially in the Water-Gut area. The residential area is one of small, detached hip roofed cottages in rows along narrow streets climbing the three hills in the southern section and spread out along the flat open land near the Water-Gut area, west of the core area along the harbor.

The Christiansted Historic District is set off from the surrounding area by the harbor along the south and east boundaries, by the largely undevelopable hills and mountain to the south, and by the change in land uses and visual character of the western ridge, which is composed of three cemeteries, newer residential construction and a large scale public housing project. The boundaries indicated on the accompanying map are those of the 1779 Oxholm map.

Pivotal buildings in the Christiansted Historic District, keyed to the map, include:

1. Fort Christian - a square citadel with bastions and gundecks at the salient angles, typical L 18th c. plan of island fort.

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Masonry curtains are one and two stories in height, surrounding one room deep wings which encloses a square court. The main entrance is protected by a ravelin, whose entrance gates are flanked by quoined masonry posts--all other openings are undecorated except the exterior facade of the sally port, which is pedimented and flanked by engaged fluted pilasters. There is a horse yard and stables to the south-east. The fort was constructed over the ruins of an earlier French fortification, completed in 1749. Part of the Christiansted National Historic Site.

2. Customs House and Post Office - two story seven bay wide, heavy masonry structure incorporating parts of a 1751-52 building in its first story, the remainder of which was built in 1805. The second story was added in 1828-30, and the entire structure rehabilitated in 1840-42. The building has a projecting entrance pavilion served by a long buttressed stairway. The arcaded lower floor has segmented arched openings with stuccoed keystones and decorative banding on the pilasters. There is a double belt course at the second level and a molded cornice below a stepped parapet wall which surrounds a later, low pitched hip roof. This building, part of the Christiansted National Historic Site, served as the Danish custom house from the 1760's to 1878.
3. Steeple Building - built 1750-53 by the Danish West India and Guinea Company as a Lutheran Church, Our Lord of Zebaoth. The original structure was a simple one story rectangular masonry block with a low hipped roof. The existing Georgian steeple, from which the building derives its name, was added 1793-96. The church was vacated by the Lutheran congregation in 1831, at which time it reverted back to the Danish government. The building was greatly altered in 1841-42 when the roof was removed, two walls extended and the other two lowered. The church was restored to its c 1800 appearance by the National Part Service in 1961-65 and is part of the Christiansted National Historic Site.
4. Government House - the large three story masonry structure occupies one-quarter of a full town block and served as the residence of the Governor and offices of the colonial government during most of the Danish era. The three story, highly decorated Baroque center section was constructed as a private residence in 1747. Flanking wings were added to this



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part c. 1800. A 1794-97 private residence along Queen's Cross Street was joined to the rest of Government House in 1830, at which time the monumental staircase was added to the eastern section. Much of the first floor of the central portion is arcaded while the upper stories are divided by heavy belt courses supported by a series of engaged pilasters with bases and capital bands. The entire building is surrounded by a molded cornice below a low stepped parapet wall with a shallow pediment over the center entrance.

5. 67 East Street - a two story masonry and frame structure on a terraced site with a double curved stairway (welcoming arms) ending in a drum shaped platform. The first story is solid masonry, while the upper story is frame with a combination of shingles and clapboarded sidings and an open gallery typical of much of the residential architecture of Christiansted. The house has a hip roof with a flat section over the drum like pavilion. (In poor condition).
6. Quinn House, 4 & 5 Hill Street - another hilltop, two story residence reached by a long flight of stairs from the street. The first floor is masonry (brick and rubble, stuccoed) while the upper floor is a combination of masonry and wood frame construction. Of special interest is the five bay gallery using three different sized arched openings with keystones, the central arch accommodating the entrance. The house has a hip roof with slightly projecting overhangs at the eaves.
7. Bjerger, 56-58 Hill Street - one of the finest town houses on the island, the house is a two story with basement rectangular block, with a six bay gallery running parallel to the street. Wall construction is stucco over brick and rubble masonry and the roof is the typical hip form. Four round arches with square columns support the projecting second floor gallery and two flanking arches with recessed columns complete the six bay facade. The four central arches are decorated with fluted keystones, panelled railings and capital bands on the columns. The central pavilion has a double belt course at the second floor level.
8. Markoe House, 17 Church Street - an unusual but important example of the large size town houses in the Historic District. Three stories in height with a steeply pitched

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roof, the structure is 7 bays by 4 bays with a low arcade at the ground level. The 7 bay facade is divided by 8 full height, engaged pilasters terminating in a continuous molded cornice. There are also molded belt courses at each floor level. All but one bay of the house is of masonry construction, and in the typical Christiansted manner it is sited at the sidewalk line with upper galleries projecting to the curb.

9. Pentheny Hotel, 45 A & B King Street - a 'U' shaped three story residence with inner courtyard, now used as a guest house. One of the finest remaining examples of the large residence in Christiansted, the building is of masonry construction, stuccoed on the front and side walls, with exposed brick in the courtyard. The stucco is scored to simulate dressed stone. The main block is 7 x 3 bays with a one bay deep projecting gallery supported by segmental arches with keystones, resting on square pilasters decorated with molded capital bands. There is a molded belt course at the second and third floor levels and a molded continuous cornice in the eaves below a low parapet which encloses a hip roof. The window openings in the upper floors are trimmed with molded castings. A two story wing to the north is brick on the ground floor with frame above.
10. Newton House, 56 Company Street - a two story, 'U' shaped masonry residence with an interior courtyard. The residence features an exceptional segmental arched arcade, the openings of which are reflected in the recessed ground floor facade. The second floor gallery is part of the original block of the house and is enclosed in the typical hip roof. The main wing of the house is 9 x 3 bays, with a belt course and a continuous molded cornice below the eaves of the overhanging hip roof. The courtyard is enclosed by a high masonry wall and contains a cookhouse.
11. Christiansted Lutheran Church  
Built prior to 1740 as the Dutch Reformed Church, the building was repaired in 1831-34 and reconsecrated as the Christiansted Lutheran Church in 1834. The church is one story cruciform plan with a later (1831-34) three tiered tower. The gable roof is enclosed in highly decorative, curved and parapet walls in Dutch Renaissance style. The

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lower section of the tower, which serves as the main entrance porch, has large arched openings in its three walls and exhibits much of the same detailing as the body of the church and may date from the original construction period. The upper portions of the brick tower are transitional Gothic Revival. The walls of the church are rubble masonry with brick linings at all openings and at the corners serving as quoins in the nave and as engaged pilasters at the transept and sacristy porch to the rear. The main block of the church is 7 x 3 bays with a side entrance centered in each long facade. Door and window openings are semi-circular except for the door to the sacristy which is elliptical. There is a molded cornice and each gable end has a decorative finial at the ridge line.

12. Lutheran Parsonage, 51 King Street - good example of a medium sized, two story 'U' shaped town house with an interior courtyard. The house is masonry rubble with brick linings at all openings and quoining at the corners, a molded belt course at the second floor level and a plastered cornice with dentils set below a parapet wall. The parapet extends over the three center bays and is decorated with tympanum. The main wing is 5 x 4 bays with a second floor gallery to the street line supported by an arcade of five keystone arcades on square pilasters. The pilasters have molded capital bands and plinths. The main entrance is centered in the street facade and is flanked by engaged Tuscan columns supporting a molded triangular pediment.
13. The Anglican Church - constructed in 1849 to replace a church of 1761 and restored after a fire in 1868. The church is a large 7 x 3 bay two story with 3 tiered tower structure of the cruciform plan. Built with dressed limestone and brick, the church exhibits many details of the English Gothic Revival-pointed arched windows and doors, three step triangular applied buttress piers, molded brick parapets with crenellations, and pinnacles with crockets at the gable ends. The tower is centered in the street facade and has a pyramidal roof, while the body of the church is roofed with cross gables.

The Christiansted Historic District includes all of the

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Christiansted National Historic Site and all of the Christiansted  
Historic and Architectural Control District.

The Federal government has custody over the following buildings  
in the historic district, all of which are owned by the Virgin  
Islands Government:

Customs House  
Old Post Office  
Library  
Government House  
Fort Christian  
The Steeple Building

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more buildings than the 664 which existed in 1796. Except for minor expansion, Christiansted remained within its 18th century limits. Present day expansion is, for the most, to the west and has not disrupted the integrity of the historic town.

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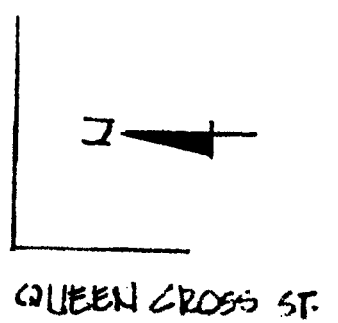
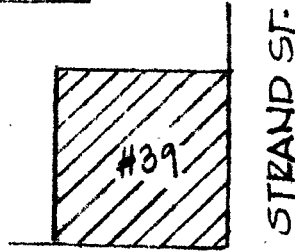
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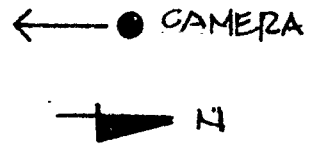
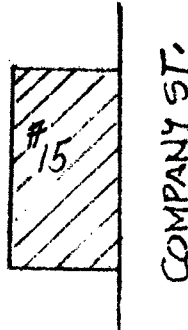
point 100' south of East Street, thence running parallel to East Street until this line intersects with East Street at a point 200' east of Peter's Farm Hospital Street, thence running south for a distance of 300', thence turning and running west for a distance of 200' parallel to East Street to a point which is the extension of Peter's Farm Hospital Street, thence continuing north along Peter's Farm Hospital Street to its intersection with Western Suburb Street, thence running east along ~~the north side of~~ Western Suburb Street to a point 100' west of West Street, thence running north parallel to West Street to a point 125' north of West Lane, thence turning and running easterly 100' to ~~the west side of~~ West Street, thence running along ~~the west side of~~ West Street to the harbor, thence continuing along the shoreline to the point of beginning.

# CHRISTIANSTED

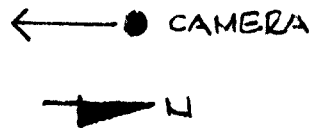
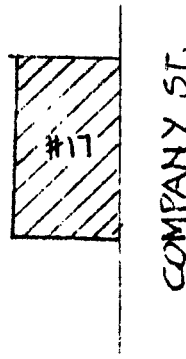
5. N<sup>o</sup> 39 STRAND ST.  
WEST & SOUTH FACADE



6. N<sup>o</sup> 15 COMPANY ST.  
NORTH FACADE

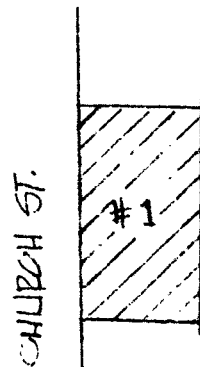


7. N<sup>o</sup> 17 COMPANY ST.  
NORTH FACADE



8. N<sup>o</sup> 1 QUEEN & 60 HILL  
EAST FACADE

CAMERA



QUEEN ST.

