

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **MAY 22 1978**
DATE ENTERED **OCT 10 1978**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Hamburg-America Shipping Line Administrative Offices

AND/OR COMMON
United States District Courts Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
48B Tolbod Gade

CITY, TOWN
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

STATE
U. S. Virgin Islands

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
VICINITY OF
Virgin Islands Delegate
COUNTY
None
CODE
None

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 AGENCY General Services Administration

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

STREET & NUMBER
18th & F Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN
Washington

STATE
District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Recorder of Deeds, Lieutenant Governor's Building

STREET & NUMBER
28 Kongens Gade

CITY, TOWN
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

STATE
U.S. Virgin Islands

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE
--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN
STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> _UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> _GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> _RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> _MOVED DATE_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> _UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The District Courts Building, originally the Hamburg-America Shipping Line Administrative Offices, is located on the west side of Tolbod Gade, slightly to the north of Veterans Drive. Designed by the German architect, Fritz Klein, the building was completed in 1914. Two storeys above grade, and approximately 82 feet long by 75 feet wide, the building has eight bays on the east and west facades and six on the south facade. There are galleries on three sides on both the first and second storey levels.

The building is constructed of reinforced concrete and bears on a reinforced concrete foundation platform three feet thick. The foundation platform is set on driven concrete posts and a three foot deep sand and cement bed.¹ The roof is composed of structural I beam rafters spaced approximately six or seven feet on center.

The principal (east) facade fronting Tolbod Gade consists of eight unequal bays defined by concrete piers, two storeys high, 28 inches wide and 16 inches deep. The two exterior corners of the piers are chamfered. The six northernmost bays are almost symmetrically placed, while the second bay from the south is the widest and the southernmost the narrowest. Together the two southernmost bays are of approximately the same width as the two northernmost. Behind the southernmost bay is the gallery of the 1st storey southern facade. Behind the wide bay are two windows, with twelve over twelve double-hung sash windows. Metal-clad wood blinds painted dark green flank the windows. Behind the first of the regular bays is a modern wood door, surmounted by a fifteen light transom. Surmounting the door is a sign reading "Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service." In the next bay to the north of the door is a window with fifteen over fifteen double-hung sash flanked by blinds. The remaining bays contain transomed double doors. All the transoms except that of the northernmost bay have air conditioning units, and all the doors are flanked by metal clad wood blinds painted green. The blinds match the others and can be closed to cover the doors entirely. The northernmost bay contains the entrance to the interior stairway ascending to the second storey. Above it is a sign reading "United States District Court of the Virgin Islands." The sign above the next door to the south reads "Department of Justice, United States Marshal."

The first and second storeys are divided by a concrete beam at the perimeter of the second storey concrete slab. The beam intersects the columns and the chamfers so that three sides of the pier are exposed. Between the piers is an iron railing with vertical bars. The two bays at both the north and south ends of the second storey gallery are enclosed, leaving a reveal to which the railings are attached. On the second storey

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Gallery, each open bay except the second bay from the south contains a window with a fifteen over fifteen double-hung sash unit surrounded by shutters similar to the others. The second bay from the south contains a door with a sixteen light transom and full length shutters. Above the second storey the piers abut a continuous rectilinear concrete beam which, along with a simple roof flashing, functions as the only cornice element. The corrugated metal splayed hip roof is visible above the building.

The south and west facades are similar in character and detail to the principal facade. The south facade, fronting Veterans Drive, is composed of six bays. Although each outermost bay is smaller than the others, the six bays are bilaterally symmetrical, as opposed to those of the principal facade. A free-standing, one-storey annex built by the Virgin Islands Public Works Department stands immediately to the south of the building and blocks the entire first storey of the south facade. On the second storey the railing continues between the piers. Though not enclosed on the first storey, the easternmost bay is enclosed on the second storey. A small door leads from the west wall of the enclosure to the gallery. The two easternmost open bays each contain two windows with twelve over twelve double-hung sash units. Each window is surrounded by a pair of blinds so that the adjacent blinds in between each pair overlap. The next bay to the west contains a single window with a fifteen over fifteen double-hung sash unit flanked by matching blinds. The western bay of the wall contains double doors, each with six lights and surmounted by a fifteen light transom. Matching shutters flank the aperture from the top of the transom to the bottom of the doors. A gutter pipe runs the length of the concrete beam above the piers. Over the second pier from the west the beam is slightly recessed and the flashing is slightly pinched forward to accommodate a downspout. The center column and that immediately to the west of it support the antennae that rise above the roof.

The west facade is composed of eight unequal bays identical in columniation to that of the east facade. Due to neighboring structures and landscaping, the western facade, especially the first storey, is less visible. An exterior iron staircase has been attached to the southwest corner of the perimeter of the gallery. The three northernmost bays of the second storey gallery are enclosed; a modern door on the south wall of the enclosure leads to the gallery.

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The north facade of the building is a blank unfenestrated concrete wall. The building's exterior is painted yellow with white painted piers, window and door trim, and cornice flashing.

A sixty-one foot high reinforced concrete water tower originally rose above the southeast corner of the building, extending 30 feet above the cornice and thirteen feet above the roof peak. The three tiered tower began at the cornice level and included three vertical slit openings at each side of the middle tier.² A fan-aerated tower cistern and additional attic storage tanks provided a total capacity of sixty tons of water.³ The tower was removed at an unknown date.

The building's interior at the first, second, and attic levels has been substantially modified to accommodate a wide variety of U.S. Government offices. Consequently, the present interiors consist of hardboard paneled walls, suspended ceilings and tile flooring. The original interior plan is not discernable. Documentary sources indicate that the original interior spaces which housed the shipping offices for the Hamburg-American Line included wood jalousie windows which were painted white as were the wood ceilings. The wood trim was of pitch pine and oak, and the flooring was of ornamental tile and linoleum.⁴ The jalousie windows have been removed. The original ceilings remain beneath the acoustical tiles; however, due to the extensiveness of the remodeling it is unlikely that much else has been retained.

1 St. Thomas Tidende, Saturday, November 8, 1913.

2 Luther K. Zabriske, The Virgin Islands of the United States of America. (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918).

3 St. Thomas Tidende, Saturday, November 8, 1913.

4 Ibid.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The District Courts Building was originally built in 1913-1914 by The Hamburg-America Shipping Line (die Hamburg - Amerikanische Packetfahrt Aktien Gesellschaft) to house its administrative offices. The Hamburg-America Line was then the largest commercial steamship line in the world, and the building contained offices for the Superintendent Consul and the Imperial German Consulate.

Because of the need to defend the eastern approach to the Panama Canal during World War I, the U.S. purchased the Danish West Indies in 1917. The following year the Hamburg-America Line was required to sell its West Indian interests, including the administrative office building in Charlotte Amalie, to the United States. It now houses the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Marshal Service, and the U.S. District Court.

Designed by a German modernist architect, Fritz Klein, the building is an early example of modern architecture in the Virgin Islands. Its reinforced concrete structure was designed to resist earthquakes and to conform to the strict local fire code. The forthright expression of the building's skeletal structure creates a rhythm and scale sympathetic to that of Charlotte Amalie's traditional masonry structures.



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

St. Thomas Tidende. Edited, printed and published at No. 17 Norre Gade, Kings Quarter, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, by Leroy Nolte, Wednesday, October 8, 1913, Saturday, November 8, 1913, Wednesday, February 4, 1914, and Saturday, July 4, 1914.

RECEIVED
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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 229 Bilt 0970

UTM REFERENCES

A

2	1	0	2	9	5	9	1	0	1	2	0	7	9	1	0	1
ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING										

B

ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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
General Services Administration

ORGANIZATION
Historic Preservation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER
19th & F Street, NW

TELEPHONE
566-1370

CITY OR TOWN
Washington, DC 20405

STATE

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ___ NO ___ NONE ___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Michael J. Mulroy

TITLE Historic Preservation Officer - GSA

DATE 8-22-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST: William L. Scherich

DATE 10/11/78
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE Oct 4, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER