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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The large Greek Revival mansion that is Berry Hill actually incorporates an earlier red brick house. The exact form of the earlier house is difficult to determine, however portions of its fabric are extant in the rear of the present house. The result of James Coles Bruce's remodeling is apparent chiefly in the two-story stuccoed facade of five bays. The distinguishing feature of the facade is the great octastyle Greek Doric pedimented portico which stretches across the entire front. Flanking the principal building are two matching one-story outbuildings - the office and the schoolroom. These buildings are both temple-form and have tetrastyle Greek Doric pedimented porticoes.

The most important interior feature of Berry Hill is the entrance hall with its superb pair of stairs which curve after a long run and meet overhead. Directly behind the entrance hall is the dining room with its fireplace on axis. To the left of the hall is a pair of drawing rooms, both having deep Greek Revival cornices decorated with water leaf mouldings. The drawing rooms also contain fine marble Empire mantels with caryatid supports. An interesting feature of the house is the conservatory behind the second drawing room. This conservatory with its large windows is one of the earliest in the country to be built within the main mass of the house.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

James Coles Bruce inherited from his father a tract of land in Halifax County which was once owned by William Byrd of Westover. On this land stood a red brick house with two principal outbuildings. Bruce had the house transformed (circa 1839) into one of the greatest Greek Revival mansions in the country and certainly the purest in style of Virginia's surviving Greek Revival houses. Berry Hill is also one of the last large plantation houses to be built in Virginia. It is thought that the architect Bruce chose for this remodeling was John E. Johnson, the architect of Bruce's half brother's house, Staunton Hill. The great octastyle portico of the house was based on that of the Parthenon. William B. O'Neal noted of Berry Hill that "Its isolated site lends an almost overpoweringly romantic aura to the distinction of its carefully executed portico flanked by two small Doric pavilions. The entire composition is on as grand a scale as any of Virginia's domestic architecture, with the possible exception of the Governor's Palace at Williamsburg."

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nichols, Frederick D., "Mansions that Merchandising Built", <u>Arts in</u> <u>Virginia</u>, Vol. 6, No. 3, Spring 1966.

O'Neal, William B., <u>Architecture in Virginia</u>, New York: Walker and Company, 1968.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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NAME AND TITLE:

	Staff,	Virginia	Historic	Landmarks	Commission,	James	W.	Мос	ody,	Jr.,	Director
ORGANIZATION ·										5	
	Virgini	ia Histor	ic Landma	rks Commiss	sion				Anr	i1 25	1969

STREET AND NUMBER:

Date June 2, 1969

Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

	CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
	Richmond	Virginia	45
12	STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION	NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION	
	I		

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National X State Local Name Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Comm.

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

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Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

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ATTEST: Keeper of The National Registe NOV 7 1969 Date

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