

PH0502537

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED AUG 15 1977
DATE ENTERED

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

Niesky

AND/OR COMMON

Nisky Moravian Mission, Estate Nisky

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Charlotte Amalie

VICINITY OF

1

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

U. S. Virgin Islands

78

St. Thomas

0900

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Moravian Mission, Virgin Islands Conference

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 148 Estate Nisky

CITY, TOWN

STATE

St. Thomas

VICINITY OF

U. S. Virgin Islands

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

No. 18 Kongens Gade

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

U. S. Virgin Islands

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virgin Islands Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

May 6, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virgin Islands Planning Office

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input 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

Estate Nisky, a working plantation, was purchased by the Moravians in 1755 to supplement its mission at New Herrnhut in the eastern section of St. Thomas. The estate continued in use as a plantation through the early part of the 19th century. Today the complex, which is located 1½ miles west of Charlotte Amalie off the Harwood Highway, consists of a manse, church, slave quarters and other outbuildings and a small cemetery. Nothing, with the possible exception of the stone walls dividing the site into planting plots, remains from the original plantation constructed in 1771.

The manse, now used as a school and offices, was largely rebuilt after a fire in 1971, but much of the exterior form of the original 1829 structure remains. The manse is two stories in height, with a tall attic created by the Jerkinhead roof design favored by the Moravians in their mission houses. Constructed of plastered rubble masonry, the first level has three bays in the north wall, with six bays in each of the east and west walls. The south wall is terraced into a hill rising to the south of the manse. The east wall has six windows, secured with square vertical iron bars. The lower level of the west wall originally had six full length door openings fronting on a brick terrace, laid in a herringbone pattern. The second, third, fifth and sixth doors have been shortened and replaced with windows. All openings on this level have brick linings with round headed arches. The board shutters are later, but they are hung on early wrought iron straps and pintles, probably reused from the shutters lost in the fire.

The upper level has five windows in the north end wall. There are six openings in each of the east and west walls, all later altered for the installation of windows in the east facade. The first, second and fifth openings in the west wall have also been made into windows, with the sixth changed to a low service door. The first bay at the north end has been enclosed with frame and shingle. The jambs of all openings are splayed and lined with brick. They have wood casings and panelled shutters. The upper floor of the west wall opens on to an arcaded gallery which extends the full length of the manse. Supported by six 26" x 26" brick piers with molded Doric capitals and bases at the lower level, the gallery has wood columns and balustrade, with a later tin roof. The upper level of this gallery is at grade at its south end because of the hill previously mentioned. There is a panelled belt course at the first floor level which extends across the end walls, and a molded three part cornice at the roof line. The cornice also returns across the end wall, creating trapezoidal attic walls, each with four rectangular windows and

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

Estate Nisky is historically significant because it was a principal Virgin Islands mission of the Moravian Church, which played a major educational and spiritual role during the 18th century. Nisky was the mission of Frederick Martin, called "The Apostle to the Negroes."

Frederick Martin, the leading religious innovator of the Virgin Islands, was responsible for establishing the mission on solid foundations during his 1736-1750 ministry. He sought to make the mission as self-supporting as possible by the purchase and development of plantations. By operating these, the Moravians ensured themselves of a livelihood and made pastoral work easier.

Count Zinzendorf, leader of the Moravian movement, asked the young teacher, Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, just three years after he joined the colony in 1733, to conduct 18 missions to the Danish Caribbean colonies. In 1755, the small plantation called Niesky, located along Mosquito Bay Road, west to Charlotte Amalie, was purchased for a mission, and Spangenberg preached the first sermon under a cottonwood tree. He subsequently established missions in Georgia, Pennsylvania (Bethlehem), and North Carolina. He also founded the "Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel" in England.

The Moravian missions were characterized by a concern for the negro slaves' moral and intellectual development, and whites were not actively recruited as converts. The mission directed its energies to instruction in both religion and general education. Slaves were encouraged to assume responsible positions within the Church and community. Many were trained as artisans. Special importance was placed on personal devotion and good conduct. The brethren taught that manual labor, freely undertaken, was not necessarily degrading and that such skills could bring economic security. The mission's example from 1732 to 1828 provided the foundation upon which emerging colonial social patterns were to be established.

Since the plantation owners were uneasy about slaves meeting together at night - even at church - the Moravians undertook

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dookhan, Isaac. A History of the Virgin Islands of the United States.
Epping, Essex: Bowker Publishing Company, 1974

McGuire, James William. Geographic Dictionary of the Virgin Islands.
Special Publication No. 103 (Serial N. 269), United States Coast and
Geodetic Survey, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., 1925

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12.12
UTM REFERENCES

18° 20' 18" North latitude
64° 57' 18" West longitude
08"

A

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							

B

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							

C

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							

D

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
The nominated property is located within No. 5 Estate Nisky in the Southside Quarter of St. Thomas, off the Harwood Highway.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Annie Hillary, Russel Wright, Philip Lader
ORGANIZATION
Virgin Islands Planning Office
DATE
June 6, 1977
STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 2606
TELEPHONE
(809) 774-1730
CITY OR TOWN
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas U. S. Virgin Islands

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL 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.

Thomas R. Blake
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director of Planning

DATE 5 August 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>Wm Wright</i>	DATE <u>8/29/77</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST <i>Chuck Sturving</i>	DATE <u>8.21.77</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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DATE ENTERED	AUG 20 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

sheathed with later novelty siding laid horizontal. The roof dates from the 1971 fire and is tin, supported by new steel trusses and columns. There is a single hipped dormer centered in the east and west planes of the roof. The floor and interior plaster walls in the upper level also date from 1971.

The ruins of a kitchen remain attached to the upper level of the south end wall, with part of the oven, fireplace and chimney visible above ground. A later cistern, 10x14' remains just beyond the kitchen ruin. A walled terrace runs perpendicular to the manse containing a 20x40' one and one-half story slave quarter and two bell towers, the eastern one early, the western 20th century. The slave quarter is built of brick and stone rubble, with brick linings at the corners and openings. There are five full length openings in each of the north and south walls, the end walls being blank. The openings have flat brick arches with wood heads and casings and board shutters on straps and pintles. The gable roof, now sheathed with corrugated tin, has been raised one-half story, as evidenced by a change in materials, from rubble below the original roof line to brick above, and by ghostings on the interior walls.

The present church, north of the terrace and west of the manse/school, dates from 1967, but is constructed on the foundations of a church dating from 1858. This existing foundation may include the remains of the foundation of the original 1771 church, and was rebuilt in 1867 and 1871 when the preceding churches were demolished by hurricanes. The 1967 church is 83x50'8", with a single high story set on the high foundation walls. The upper part is frame, sheathed with wood shingles, and has a corrugated tin roof. The foundation walls are plastered rubble masonry. The church has five bays in the long north-south walls, and five bays in the east end wall. The west end wall has a one story shed roof appendage. The openings in the foundation walls, originally full length, have been shortened for windows.

A one and one-half story 33x36' brick and rubble outbuilding is nestled into a hillside just north of the church. The roof is gabled at the south end and hipped at the north. There

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DATE ENTERED	AUG 29 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE two

is a window in the south end wall, and a door flanked by single windows in the east wall. The roof is corrugated tin, and the walls have been plastered. A later concrete and an early brick cistern are located just east of this outbuilding. There are also a number of stone walls forming terraces which surround the entire complex, and a small cemetery.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

private instruction. Diaries reveal counselor-teacher relationships as typical. The means of conversion was principally exemplary personal conduct by the missionaries. The missionaries taught themselves Creole and found the slaves eager to learn English. Physical punishment was abhorred and discipline was positive. Under von Scholten, the missionaries served as teachers and administrators in the schools the Government built.

By the late 18th century, most Virgin Islands planters were convinced that it was to their own advantage to educate negro slaves. Despite initial local opposition, but with the nominal Danish support, the Moravian Church became the religious institution most vitally involved with the well-being of slaves. Thus, in the islands, law and religion were aligned with plantocracy and interwoven with production, unlike the Catholic traditions of Cuba and Brazil.

The Moravian mission station and plantation were founded in 1755 at Nisky, probably named after a Polish church, on the northeast foot of the hill along side Mosquito Bay Road. The original 18th century church probably was a large, simple wooden building with a half-hipped roof and painted windows resting on a masonry basement. Its original date and style are unknown, but records exist for the new 1771 facilities. The hurricane of September 21, 1819 damaged the site, but the building stood. A new Mission house was occupied on July 17, 1829. The 1771 church was torn down and a new one consecrated in October, 1858, but it was destroyed by hurricanes in 1867 and 1871, each time being rebuilt on the old foundations. By 1852, the church had 464 communicants and a congregation of 1,316, served by a pastor, his wife and an assistant.

The manse at Nisky, while altered, is of architectural significance because of the typical Moravian plan and design, with the full width, two story fallery and clipped hip roof. The slave quarters are also of architectural interest.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE Four

Westergaard, Waldemar Christian. The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule (1671-1754), With a Supplementary Chapter, New York, 1917.

Maynard, Oliver. A History of the Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies. Province, Trinidad: Yuille's Printerie, 1969

Murphy, Patricia Shaubah. The Moravian Mission to The African Slaves of the Danish West Indies, 1732-1828. St. Croix, Prestige Press, 1969.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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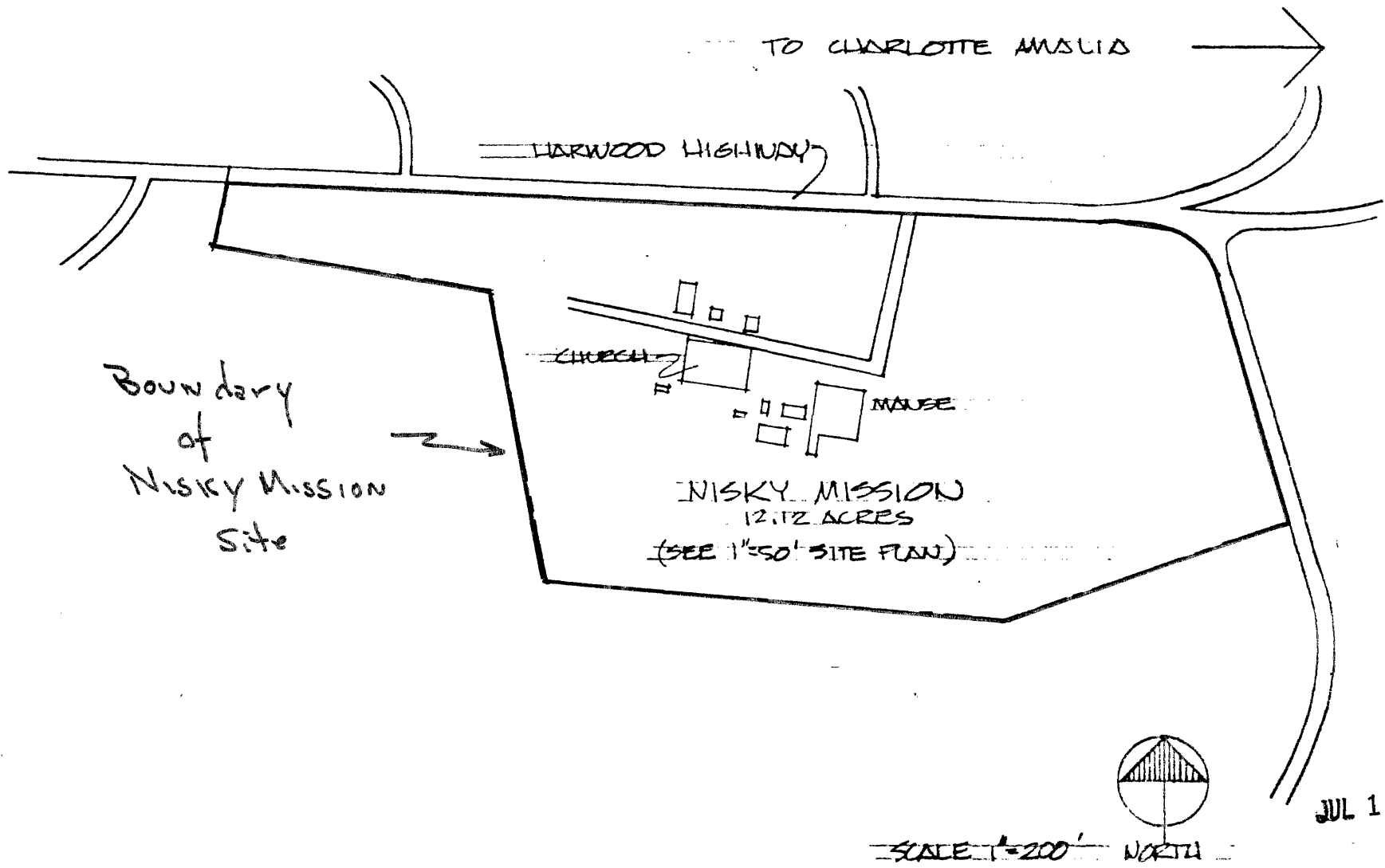
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED	AUG 29 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET Nisky Mission ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE four

Verbal Boundary Description:

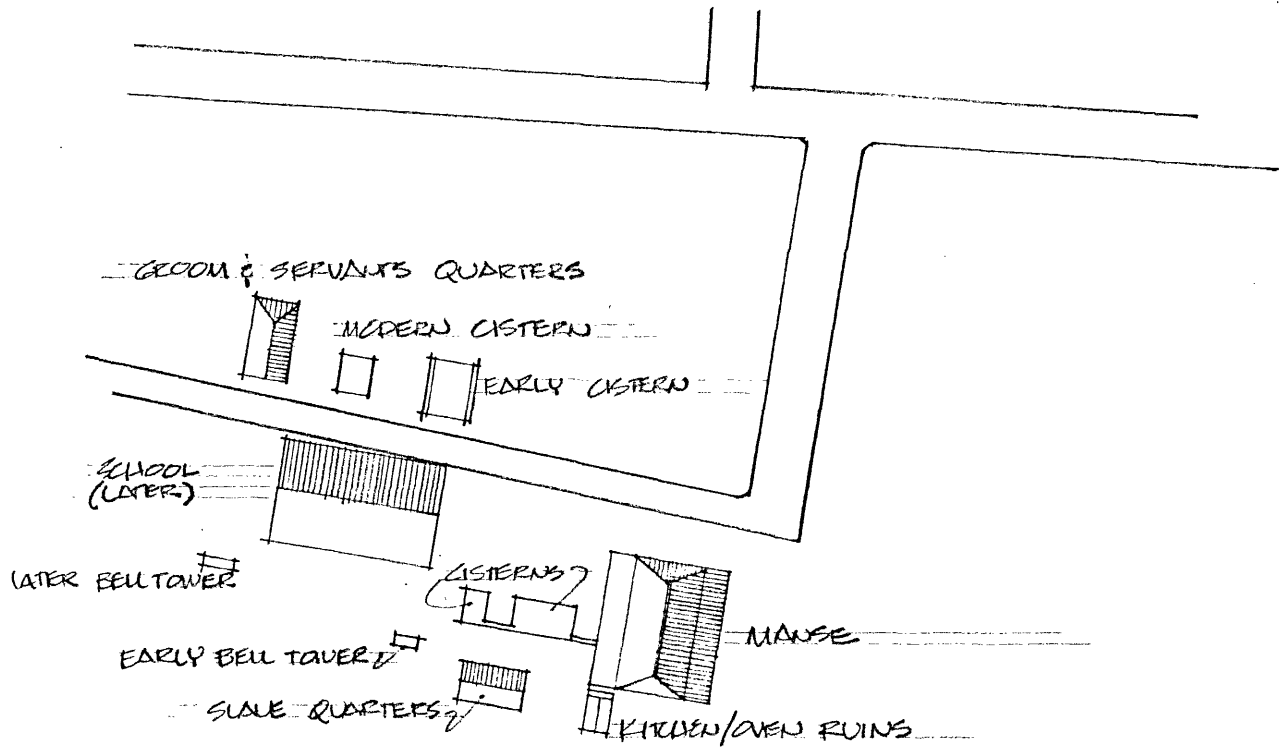
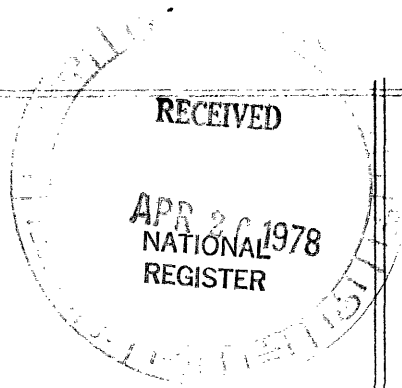
The boundary of the nominated property is that shown
in red on the attached map of the Nisky Mission site.



JUL 12 1978

SCALE 1"=200' NORTH

NISKY MISSION - SAINT THOMAS - U.S.V.I. - VIRGIN ISLANDS PLANNING OFFICE - 5/78



SCALE 1"=50'± NORTH