United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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

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historic	Estate	La Reine		
and/or common	The Que	en		
2. Loca	ation		······································	
street & number	Nos. 20 Kings Quart	cer and 19 Queens (Quarter	not for publication
city, town Chr	ristiansted week.	_X_ vicinity of	congressional district	
state Virgin	Islands code	00820 county	St. Croix Hadred	code
3. Clas	sification			
Category district Xbuilding(s) Xstructure Xsite object	Ownership public brivate both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible X yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Proper	ty		
name	William F. Cissel			
street & number	P.O. Box B			
city, town	Kings Hill Post Off	fice vicinity of	state U.	S. Virgin Islands
5. Loca	ation of Lega	I Descripti	on	
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Record	ler of Deeds		
street & number	Government H	Iouse		
city, town	Christiansted, S	St. Croix	state U.	S. Virgin Islands
6. Repr	resentation i	in Existing	Surveys	
Virgin I title Historic	slands Inventory of Places	has this pro	operty been determined eleg	ible? <u>X</u> yes no
date June,	1979		federalX_ state	county local
depository for su	rvey records Virgin	Islands Planning (Office	
city, town			state	

7. Description

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<u>X</u>	good	_X_ r
	fair	u

	Check one
deteriorated	unaltered
unexposed	alleleu

Check one _X_ original site

moved date May, 1980

v 1980

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Estate La Reine is located approximately one-third mile north of Center Line Road, almost in the middle of the island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. One of about ten Cruzan plantations occupied continuously since its foundation , the estate, comprised of a great house, servants quarters, animal pens, the remains of a slave village and the scattered ruins of what was once thriving sugar industry, is situated along the outer periphery of a shallow bowl extending from the valley below. Now overgrown with brush, La Reine nonetheless preserves much of its earlier appearance, particularly in the form of its great house and subsidiary buildings to the west, all of which have been carefully maintained by the estate's successive owners. The original wind mill, factory, animal pens and slave quarters are less well preserved, but still provide an indication of their former extent and function.

The great house is unusual in having received the attentions of a professional architect, a William Wilkins, and date, 1859, both of which are recorded over the entrance. This was clearly not the date of the original building, however, and it is obvious that the structure was begun at a much earlier date, possibly as early as 1750.

The best indication of the property's origin and growth can be seen in the basement. Comprised of five separate rooms and at least two, possibly three crawl-spaces, its exposed stonework suggests that the building was gradually extended first to the east and subsequently to the west as new rooms were required -- or could be paid for -- by the owner and his family. Most of the stone, a soft easily-worked limestone, has been carefully cut and laid suggesting a building effort of unusual expense and ambition; simple random rubble walls, the building material for the rest of the building, are more usual. Whether this means in fact that the present great house incorporated the remains of an earlier plantation, the French estate and "castle" of "Baron", as the present owner suspects, cannot be said for certain.

The present great house is one story high, measures 72 by 50 feet and consists of some seven bays on the longer or east side and four, plus minor additions, on the north and south. Its interestlies primarily in its representative qualities. As with many other Cruzan plantation houses, its plan is simple, consisting of three principal rooms flanked by a gallery on the east and four small bedrooms (one of which is now a dining area) on the west; an original kitchen projects from the northwest corner. While each of the rooms have been expanded in recent years, they nonetheless convey a sense of what was probably the original layout. All three principal rooms were expanded into an earlier gallery space in 1928 when a new gallery was added, but otherwise preserve much of their original appearance, particularly in their decorative details. Window openings, fitted with both interior casements (three panes each leaf) and more recently introduced mechanical louvers, are splayed inward, providing more clues to the structure's growth. Several include wrought iron pintles and were no doubt originally fitted with double plank shutters as are most of the windows still opening onto the outside.

Present rooms are divided either by masonry bearing walls or by plank partitions. The latter are most evident in the central drawing room and in the dining room to the north; the south room is still divided longitudinally by the earlier north-south bearing wall, forming, therefore, two separate bedrooms. All threerooms of the central core of the house were once united beneath a single and expansive tray ceiling, also sheathed in pine planking. To insure the efficient flow of air, the frame partitions

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—C			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric		landscape architecture	religion
		conservation	law	science
1500–1599	<u>_X</u> agriculture	economics		sculpture
1600–1699	<u> </u>	education	military	social/
<u>X</u> 1700–1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
X_ 1800–1899	commerce	exploration/settlement		theater
1900–	communications	X industry invention		<pre> transportation other (specify)</pre>

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

As with several other previously nominated plantation sites on St. Croix. La Reine's main interest lies in its typicality or representative qualities. First clearly established in 1747 when Jens Hansen, a lawyer and then governor of the Danish colony, purchased the one and a half lots which eventually comprised the estate, there is some evidence to suggest that its history as a plantation site extends back to the period of French colonization when the estate known as "Baron" was established in the area. In 1754 the property, which had been improved by the addition of an animal mill and possibly the core of the present great house, was transferred to Christian Lebrecht, the Baron von Prock, who was soon to become governor of the new Royal Colony (Hansen had represented the Danish West Indies Company which had previously had jurisdiction). Von Prock subsequently improved his holdings together with the help of his friend and business associate Michael Lawien who appears to have managed the estate during von Prock's often less than popular administration. As a point of incidental interest, Lawien was the husband of Alexander Hamilton's mother and von Prock had been instrumental in preventing her divorse from his friend at the time of her liason with Hamilton's father.

By 1766 von Prock's tenure in office came to an end, largely due to the pressure of other dissatified planters, and shortly afterward the property was transferred to two brothers, Alexander and Colin Grant, who apparently added the 1769 windmill. Known variously as The Queen or La Reine, the latter name stuck and by the end of the century the estate was generally listed as such in the census records. The name probably was a measure of the success of their holdings, **and** within a few years they were able to sell out at a substantial profit to the Irish planter John Ryan, who operated it for several years. The pattern to note was not one of long-term investment and commitment, however; as elsewhere in the West Indies the eighteenth-century strategy was to make as much money as quickly as possible and then sell out.

This pattern changed slightly toward the end of the century as profits began to stabilize. By 1797, the property had been transferred to James Jorden who lived there with his wife, three daughters and 94 slaves. Thereafter transfers occurred less regularly. From 1802 to 1816 it was held by a second John Ryan; from 1816 to 1828, by Jane Rogers; from 1828 to 1845, by C.H. and William Kortwright; from 1845 to 1849, by James Yard Stevens; and beginning in 1849, by James Moorhead. In the latter part of the century the property became associated with the well known Cruzan families of the Balfours and the Flemings; Mrs Juanita Fleming, the grandmother of the present owner, still resides there.

Throughout this period the estate followed the standard pattern of success and decline. As sugar prices declined during the early part of the nineteenth century due to the introduction of beet sugar, the estate became increasingly less profitable. Between 1825 and 1845, in fact, its appraised value fell from 150,000 <u>rigsdalers</u> to less than 40,000. With emancipation of the slaves in 1848, productivity, even against declining sugar prices, fell as well. In 1857 only 115 acres were under cultivation as opposed to nearly 200, or most of the plantation, forty years before. This amount remained fairly constant during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Actual sugar production varied somewhat more. The introduction of steam machinery just as prices were beginning to decline helped forestall the trend for a time, but total production

9. Major Bibliographical References

	lishing Company, 1974		d States. Epping: Bowker	
			Florida: The Dukane Press	, 19
		ACREAGE NOT	VERIFIED	
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List all states and count	ies for properties overlag	pping state or county bou	undaries	
state	code	county	code	
state	code	county	code	
	oman, Architectural H slands Planning Offic		y, 1980	
street & number P.O. Bo	ox 2606	telephone	(809) 774–1730	
city or town St. The	omas	state ^{U.S.}	Virgin Islands 00801	
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12. State Hi	storic Prese	rvation Unic		
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originally rose only to the level of outer wall, the remainder of the space being filled with lattice work. This arrangement was altered in 1959 when the present owners extended the walls to meet the ceiling. At the same time arched openings were introduced between the central and northern rooms. This work was carried out in a sympathetic manner, however, and the original configuration is easily recognized. Moldings throughout are simple and asymmetrical with the exception of that of the later arched doorways which follow a more elaborate --although traditional -- symmetrical pattern. The traditional color scheme of grey walls and white woodwork has been carefully retained in both formal rooms and in the southeast bedroom.

Other bedrooms have been treated in a more modern fashion, particularly through the introduction of plywood wall-panelling, but still retain much of their period flavor. The bedrooms flanking the west side of the house were also extended in 1959 when other changes were introduced; new bathrooms were also added. None of these changes have significantly altered the overall appearance of the building either inside or out.

The original kitchen, appended at the northwest corner, is probably the least altered room in the building. As with the rest of the house it follows a standard pattern. The roof is gable-ended and the rafters, with distinctive colar beams, are exposed. A staircase, now covered by the 1959 extension of the westend, **desc**ended to **the cistern** below and was reached by a door, still visible, on the south.

The present gallery is probably the most deceptive feature of the house. Added in 1928, it includes a decorative bardgeboard more typical of buildings of a slightly earlier period. Presently screened above its panelled railing, it also partially obscures the **earlier** portico. The latter, apparently built in 1859 at the time of Wilkins' improvements, is in turn one of the building's more elaborate elements. Comprised of a simple molded pediment, suspended, in a sense, between two capped posts, the portico actually reduces in scale as in approaches the building; the quarter columns articulating the entrance are a full two feet closer to each other than are the outer columns or posts. The portico is further distinguished by two eliptical arches uniting the supporting columns with the facade and engaged quarter columns. Again, these splay inward to compensate for the discmpancy in spacing. Despite the addition of the gallery, the portico still serves as the principal entrance, a fact indicated by the still prominent stone staircase approaching from the garden side.

The exterior of the house has been carefully maintained. Plaster covered walls are painted ochre; double-plank shutters, dark green in accordance with traditional practice. The hipped roof of the central core and shed and gable roofs or the gallery, bedrooms and kitchen are all painted with a metallic paint, also a traditional treatment.

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Immediately to the north and west of the great house are the present servant's quarters. Again, the building follows a traditional pattern, consisting of a single-story "row", one bay deep and six bays long. Measuring 12 by 50 feet, it was probably once a home for several servant families, each being assigned a separate segment. The row is constructed of rubble masonry covered with lime plaster and is painted yellow in a manner reminiscent of the original ochre wash, much as is the great house. Again as with the great house, storm shutters are of double plank construction, but with single leaves; hardware is original, consisting of wrought iron strap hinges, pintles, hooks and eyes. The hipped roof is sheathed in corrugated sheet metal, again painted a metallic color.

Tangent to the servant's quarters and about 50 feet north of the great house is the still used open resevoir. Rising approximately ten feet above grade and measuring 25 by 50 feet, it too is constructed of rubble masonry covered with lime plaster and patched with cement. A shed, originally a stable and second servant's quarters, is attached to the north, and a more recent garage, ostensibly on the site of an earlier carriage house, is located along the east wall. A bell and castiron storage tank are arranged along the upper edge of the south wall.

Other structures associated with the estate are located across the bowl, approximately 500 feet to the northeast of the residential complex. The full extent of these remains have not been determined, but the site is known to include the remains of the original **sugar** factory, windmill, chimney for the no longer present steam-powered crushing mill, animal pens, and slave village. The site is presently overgrown and can only be visited with difficulty. Further investigation, including an archaeological reconnaissance, will be necessary before a complete inventory can be **established**.

From the existing survey, the most prominent feature of the remaining factory complex is the square-tapered brick and rubble masonry chimney located toward the east of the other remains. Measuring approximately 20 feet square at the base, it risies over 50 feet to make it one of the more striking features of the landscape. As with other similar chimneys located elsewhere on the island, it possesses as well a certain architectural distinction; corners are accented with brick and a brick cornice band and cap define and complete it.

The ruins of the factory begin about 20 feet to the northwest of the chimney. All that remains above-ground are a vaulted room, measuring approximately 10 by 20 feet and the walls of a second and parallel room of about equal size to the west. The original use for either is not known, although comparative evidence would suggest that they were once used for storage. A ground-level cistern and bearing wall, also part of the factory, are located just to the northeast. None of the original steam equipment is still on the site, having been removed early in the twentieth century as sugar production ceased. CONTINUATION SHEET

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The remains of the wind mill are located 100 feet southeast of the factory. In shape and construction it followed a standard design: a conical rubblemasonry tower with an arched opening for access to the crushing machinery long since removed. The mill was slightly unusual, however, in having a key stone inscribed with a date -- 1769; existing maps from the period would tend to bear this out. The key stone has since been removed for safekeeping to the basement of the great house. Various structural problems led to the collapse of the tower during the summer of 1979.

One of La Reine's two wells is located 275 feet to the southwest of the wind mill; the second was lost when the shopping center to the west of the designated site was built during the 1960s. Constructed of rubble masonry, the well is now overgrown and in disuse.

To the north of the factory are the remains of the animal pens. Comprised of a rubble masonry wall, capped and covered with lime plaster and rising six to seven feet above grade, the pens form a large rectangular area measuring approximately 115 by 90 feet. This space is further subdivided into two major sections, of about equal size, and two smaller containment areas, both of which are located in the western half.

The rubble-walled remains of a second masonry row, originally associated with the slave village to the west, are located 85 feet to the north of the animal pens. Now overgrown, this 50 by 12 foot structure obviously at one time approached closely to the other servant's quarters by the main house, at least in general form and appearance. Other cottages and rows are less well defined and in most cases consist of foundations only. At least ten have been identified, however, and one stillincludes a portion of a wall and window frame, suggesting that much of the village was in fact of masonry construction. Again, as with the well and longer row, access is difficult and the site is too overgrown to allow for photographs.

The boundaries as described are intended to adequately contain all of the remains, both above and below ground, associated with the estate. Examples of iron work, weapons and numerous pottery fragments have discovered throughout the area and there is little doubt of the site's archaeological potential.

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never exceeded 125,000 pounds in any given year. After 1878 as production began to shift away from individual plantations to the three central factories established on the island, La Reine began to send its cane to the nearby Central plant for processing. After the turn of the century an increasing amount of the land was used for grazing and by the 1920s sugar production had halted entirely. During the 1950s and 60s the property was leased as a dairy farm; since 1972, it has laid dormant.

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The buildings and other remains on the La Reine estate well document this pattern. While there is no evidence of the original animal mill (or mills) both the windmill and chimney for the later steam powered crushing machinery remain visible. The presence of the later factory ruins attests to the expansion of sugar production during the early part of the nineteenth century, just as its decay attests to the changing orientation and eventual decline of the industry toward the end of the century. The great house represents these changes in Starting as a simple masonry dwelling, apparently with three rooms microcosm. and a separate kitchen, it progressed through various building programs to become a building of considerable architectural pretention, as highlighted by the substantial portico and other improvements carried out during the Balfour family's tenancy. Fortunately too, unlike many other estates of similar calibre, La Reine's owners continued to maintain the building, thereby ensuring its present character. Other buildings on the estate have faired less well --only the foundations remain, for example, of the original slave village -- but La Reine nonetheless preserves much of its original appearance and general character, marking it as one of the best examples of its type still remaining in the Virgin Islands.

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- 1. J.M. Beck's 1754 map of St. Croix
- 2. J.M. Beck's 1767 map of St. Croix
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A great deal of information has been provided by the owner, William F. Cissel, who has also had access to further unpublished sources in the possession of Mrs. Rachel Armstrong Colby of St. Croix. Mr. Cissel has done considerable research on the property and has also carried out a preliminary archaeological survey. His manuscript, <u>A Brief History of Estate La Reine</u>, has been especially useful. FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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1000 feet. This is considered adequate to protect both the visual and archaeological integrity of the site.

Description: Beginning at point A (17 44'14" N.Lat./64 46'16" W. Long.) 1200 feet due south to point B (17 44'02" N.Lat./64 46'16" W. Long.) 1000 feet due west to point C (17 44'14" N. Lat./ 64 46'27" W. Long.) 1200 feet due north to point D (17 44'02" N. Lat./ 64 46'27" W. Long.) 1000 feet due east to point A A/GREAT HOUSE B/SERVANTS OTRS. C/RESEVOIR D/CHIMNEY E/FACTORY RMNS F/WINDMILL G/WELL. H/ANIMAL PENS I/ SLAVE VILLAGE

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