

APPENDIX B
L'ESPERANCE HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION

L'Esperance plantation is located on the high ridge land of St. John 1/4 mile south of Centerline Road on the east border of Cruz Bay Quarter. It was a choice site for agricultural purposes for its soil conditions, permanent spring and relatively high precipitation. As a plantation site, it is a small compact unit with fairly large buildings, that include two horsemills, a factory, a free standing cistern, a storage building, a great house, a cook house, a service building, a cemetery, a stone bridge as well as retaining walls, staircases and stone fencing.

It was developed early in the 18th century and has retained features of design and construction in its standing remains of interest for their age and for their variance from the generally accepted layout of plantation sites. The tight grouping of the different units that comprise L'Esperance centered around the Great House is exceptional and predates the pattern that characterizes the normal layout. Architecturally it is notable for, the high quality of workmanship observable in the Great House and Service buildings masonry as well as the use of volcanic sandstone as a building material. This exotic material to the Virgin Islands was probably imported from the Leeward Islands. The masonry remains of the Great House, the south Horsemill and the Service Building are in a fair state of preservation. All other structures are badly deteriorated.

L'Esperance produced sugar in the early 1830's but in the 1840ties discontinued cultivation of cane.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

L'Esperance Historic District is significant for its unusual layout as a sugar plantation and for its association with Governor Eric Bredal, who in the 1720ties owned the plantation and who in 1719 affected the Danish colonization of St. John in the face of British opposition.

	Latitude	Longitude
Acreage 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres	18° 20' 32"	64° 45' 32"

There is no UTM references on any published maps of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

L'Esperance Historic District is bounded to the West by the trail that from Centerline Road leads to Sieben plantation starting at a point on the trail 250 feet northwest of the storm bridge across Fish Bay Gut and ending 450 feet due

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south of the same bridge, then in an easterly direction for 300 feet across the gut to the bed of the intermittent stream on the east side of the site then following the stream bed in an north and easterly direction for about 700 feet to a point about 225 feet northeast of the oxpound and then westerly to the starting point on the Centerline-Sieben trail. The boundaries include all parts of the historic resource and enclose a natural topographical area between the two streambeds to the west and east of the district.

CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT

NPS ORGANIZATION

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NAME New Horsemill, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 1

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On the L'Esperance trail to Mollendal, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of
Centerline Road

UTM REFERENCE: CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district: _____ acres.)

A

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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Zone Easting Northing

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Circular raised earthfill platform retained by rubble masonry walls.

Physical Description: The circular horsemill has a diameter of 65'. It is located on the south and downhill side of the site. Approached from the north at grade level, the horsemill platform is supported and defined by retaining walls that, on the south side reached heights of 20'. These walls have partially failed towards the south and west, but are still in evidence. Fragments of the foundations of the grinding mechanism are still apparent.

L'Esperance Plantation was brought under cultivation early and was a well-developed sugar plantation by the 1780s. As a plantation site, it is a small, compact unit with fairly large building remains. The new horsemill probably dates from the early 19th century.

Latitude 18°20'33" Longitude 64°45'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent	☐	Good	☐	Fair	☐	Deteriorated	☐
Ruins	☐	Unaltered	☒	Altered	☐	Original Site	☒	Moved	☐

Appendix B, Historic District

REGION Southeast

PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park'

CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NAME Old Horse Mill, L'Esperance Plantation

STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 2

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐

State ☐

Local ☒

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollendal $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south CenterlineR

UTM REFERENCE:

A

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Zone Easting Northing

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district:
acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Roughly circular level area derived by digging into hillside and filling in downhill area.

Physical Description: The earlier horse mill of the plantation is located to the north of the site and is a platform with a diameter of 50', dug into the uphill north side and towards the southwest, defined by a retaining wall.. Now part of the access road to the newer horsemill and the Great House. The old horsemill can be assumed to date from the 18th century and the earlier period of sugar cane cultivation of L'Esperance Plantation.

Latitude 18°20'23" Longitude 64°45'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent	☐	Good	☐	Fair	☐	Deteriorated	☒
Ruins	☐	Unaltered	☒	Altered	☐	Original Site	☒	Moved	☐

Appendix B, Historic District

NPS ORGANIZATION

STRUCTURE NAME Factory, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 3

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

UTM REFERENCE:

A [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Zone Easting Northing

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district:
acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Rubble Masonry rectangular in plan

Physical Description: The remains of a rectangular masonry structure 60'x25' oriented east-west. Except for the west end of the structure, the walls have toppled entirely and provide only meager illustration of the former function of the building.

It does not have the characteristic "T" shaped plan of the conventional sugar factory of the late 18th century and early 19th century and can be presumed to be the remains of 18th century construction.

Latitude 18°20'23" Longitude 64°44'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐
Ruins ☒ Unaltered ☒ Altered ☐ Original Site ☒ Moved ☐

Appendix B, Historic District

NPS ORGANIZATION

STRUCTURE NAME Free-standing Cistern, L'Esperance Planta- STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 4

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollendal $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of Centerline
UTM REFERENCE:

A	[] []	[] []	[] []	[] []	[] []	[] []	[] []
	Zone	East ing		North ing			

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not part of a complex or district: _____ acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Plastered rubble masonry rectangular in plan and one story high.

Physical Description: The free-standing cistern is a small masonry structure immediately west of the factory measuring 16'x8'. It is divided into two equal sections - a small storage area and a cistern. The walls stand to their full height.

L'Esperance Plantation was brought under cultivation early in the 18th century and was well developed sugar plantation by 1780. Inadequate research prevents accurate dating of existing remains of its buildings. They probably range through the late 18th century and the early 19th century.

Latitude 18° 20' 23" Longitude 64° 4' 32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐
Ruins ☒ Unaltered ☒ Altered ☐ Original Site ☒ Moved ☐

Appendix B, Historic District

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park NPS ORGANIZATION
CODE NO. 5360

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

UTM REFERENCE:

A [][] [][] [][] [][] [][] [][]

Zone Easting Northing

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district:
acres.

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent	Good	Fair	Deteriorated
Ruins	X	Unaltered	Altered	Original Site	Moved
		X		X	

Appendix B, Historic District

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NAME Great House, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 6

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollendal ¼ mile south of Centerline

UTM REFERENCE:

A

Zone Easting Northing

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district:
acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Rubble and cut stone one-story masonry base
former wood building rectangular in plan.

Physical Description: The Great House ruin is the best preserved of all structures of the L'Esperance Plantation site. It is located 30' west of the new horsemill and 45' north and uphill of the factory. The considerable grade difference between the site of the latter and the Great House is regulated by a narrow terrace fronting the Great House, supported on a fragmented retaining wall and a steep bank. The house had a masonry ground floor measuring 46'x34' that supported a wood superstructure. The ground floor walls stand to their full height. The north and part of the west wall act as retaining wall for the level area that fronted the yard side of the Great House. The walls are rubble masonry with cut and dressed stone around openings and at corners and with articulated quoins on the free-standing exterior faces. In plan it is divided into an enclosed room 20' wide that runs the full length of the building and a 12' wide, partially open gallery on the south and factory side of the building. The east wall of the structure continues as a retaining wall for the terrace to the north and masonry steps along the west wall of the building lead up to this terrace level. The stonework is handsomely finished and the execution very workmanlike. Except for traces of beams and plates nothing remains of the wood superstructure. Probable dates of construction is late 18th century.

Latitude 18°20'23" Longitude 64°45'32" (continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent		Good		Fair		Deteriorated	
Ruins	☒	Unaltered	☒	Altered		Original Site	☒	Moved	

Appendix B, Historic District

NPS ORGANIZATION

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent	Good	Fair	Deteriorated
Ruins	☒	Unaltered	Altered	Original Site	Moved
		☒			

Appendix B, Historic District

NPS ORGANIZATION

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NAME Service Building, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 8

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollendal $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of Centerline

UTM REFERENCE:

A	[] []	[] [] [] []	[] [] [] []	
Zone .	Easting	Northing		acres.

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not part of a complex or district: _____)

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Rubble and brick masonry one story building
"L" shaped in plan.

Physical Description: The service building is an "L" shaped rubble masonry structure, measuring 30'x22' west of the cook house, and on the same level. It contained two rooms and another Dutch oven constructed in brick. The function of the structure seems to duplicate the smaller but more elaborate cook house and is not entirely understood.

Latitude 18°20'23" Longitude 64°44'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐
Ruins ☒ Unaltered ☒ Altered ☐ Original Site ☒ Moved ☐

NPS ORGANIZATION

CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NO. H-5, 9

National ☐State ☐

Local ☒ X

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollenburg, about south of center line

UTM REFERENCE:

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not
part of a complex or district:

Zone . Easting Northing

acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Arched stone bridge over gut that separates
plantation site from old cart road.

Physical Description: The entrance road to L'Esperance from the old card road that from Centerline Road leads to Sieben and Mollendal crosses a small gut. It is bridged by a small stone arch with a span of eight feet and a width of 6'6". Although still standing the bridge abutments towards the north show signs of failure and in their present condition are subjected to serious erosion.

Latitude 18°20'23" Longitude 64°44'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION:		Excellent		Good		Fair		Deteriorated	X
Ruins		Unaltered	X	Altered		Original Site	X	Moved	

Ruins ☐

Unaltered ☒

Altered	
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Original Site

☒ Moved ☐

Appendix B, Historic District

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park CODE NO. 5360

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

[illegible]

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☒
 Ruins ☐ Unaltered ☒ Altered ☐ Original Site ☒ Moved ☐

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(CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT

REGION South/East PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park NPS ORGANIZATION CODE NO. 5360
STRUCTURE NAME Oxpound, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5.11
ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On L'Esperance trail to Mollendal $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of Centerline

UTM REFERENCE:

A

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Zone				Easting				Northing			

CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not part of a complex or district: _____ acres.

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: A rectangular area enclosed by rubble masonry walls and their collapsed remains.

Physical Description: A rectangular oxpound is located north of the Great House and east of the cemetery. It is defined by breast high rubble masonry walls but has no visible traces of a roofed shelter for the cattle as is found in most oxpounds

Latitude: 18° 20' 23" Long.: 64° 44' 32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐
Ruins ☒ Unaltered ☒ Altered ☐ Original Site ☒ Moved ☐



Plantation House

Historic Name L'Esperance

Cruz Bay St. John, Virgin Islands

(VI Natl. Park Mult. Res. Area)

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing Date of photo April, 1973

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

West wall of Plantation House viewed from the north (H-5, 6).



Plantation House

L'Esperance

Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

(VI Natl. Park Mgmt. Res. Area)

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing Date of photo April, 1973

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

Window in south wall of PlantationHouse (H-5, 6).



Cook House

L'Esperance

Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

(VI Nat'l Park Mult. Res. Area)

Photo credit F. C. Gjessing Date of photo April, 1973

Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

Cook House (H-5, 7) viewed from the south.



Bridge

L'Esperance

Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands

(VI Natl. Park M.H. Res. Area)
Photo credit F.C. Gjessing Date of photo April, 1973
Negative filed at Virgin Islands National Park

Bridge to Plantation site (H-5, 9) from Mollendal Road
viewed from the south.