

33-35 Strandgade (House)
33-35 Strand Street
Christiansted
St. Croix
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-41

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

33-35 Strandgade (House)

HABS No. VI-41

Location: 33-35 Strand Street, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The building is an unusual example of the Christiansted town house. Its roof and large dormers give the outline of the building a character allied to the Moravian architecture as found on the Virgin Islands and is very derivative of north European and Danish examples. Details and interior space distribution are characteristic of the architecture of the Virgin Islands. An unusual structural feature is the wood framing of the rear of the ground floor of the main section of the building. There are indications of several building periods and the present structure appears to be the result of early additions and revisions. Its present appearance probably dates from the early nineteenth century.
2. Condition of fabric: The complex is in poor condition. Although the masonry structure is intact, the wood rear wall, the floors, the windows, doorframes and the roof construction are in need of replacement. The interior partitioning and wall dressings are badly deteriorated and there are many makeshift subdivisions of the original rooms.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Orientation: In the description of this complex the following sections will be referred to:

Main building: five-bay front, three bays deep, built out to the street and facing southeast. This section is three stories, two of masonry and one of wood frame.

South wing: five-bay front, one bay deep, recessed one bay from the street, facing southeast and located immediately southwest of the main building. Two stories, masonry.

West wing: two-story kitchen, one bay wide, two bays deep. Joined at a right angle to the south wing and located on the southwest boundary of the site.

Outbuilding and cistern: one-story masonry outbuilding connected to the west wing by a property-line masonry wall with a large low cistern in the space between them. Both are located on the southwest boundary of the site extending to the northwest.

Other features: to the rear of the main building is a large masonry cistern with an arched roof, a round well, chicken coops and privies. The property on three sides is contained by a 6'-high beveled masonry wall with two gates on Strand Street, one to the northeast of the building and one at the entrance of the adjoining alley to the southwest of the property. On the north a corner is cut from the otherwise rectangular lot, and at each of the resulting corners of the wall there is a pier. The rear of the long lot has a makeshift wood and wire fence.

2. Foundations: The foundation is exposed on the rear where the wood frame wall rests on a masonry base. It is assumed that the foundations throughout are of the same construction as the masonry walls.
3. Walls: The building and wings are constructed of plain and stuccoed brick and rubble masonry. The openings are framed by flat brick arches. The rear wall is wood frame with exposed interior studs and sheathing covered on the exterior by wood shingles. The northeast gable end and the rear dormer have wood clapboard siding; the front dormer and southwest gable end are papered with imitation brick siding. The second floor, northeast end, has horizontal scoring and two openings that may indicate a now-demolished entry.
4. Openings:

Main building: The five front bays consist on the second floor of window-doors corresponding to the arches of the first-floor arcade. They have shutters, wrought-iron railings and panelled jalousie doors. The other faces of this structure have no evident regularity either in treatment or placement. Most openings have panelled shutters. Some windows in the rear have six-over-six-light double-hung sash. The northeast end wall has five window openings on the third floor. Other conditions include wood bars on windows and recent stock doors.

South wing, west wing, and outbuildings: The placement of openings in these wings is irregular except for the five evenly spaced windows on the front of the south wing. The same variations in window and door treatment are found. In general the condition of the shutters and other sash is poor, with many of the shutters either broken or missing.
5. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main building has a hipped sheet metal roof with jerkinheads at both ends, and a wood and sheet metal shed roof over the second-floor landing. The south and west wings have pitched roofs of corrugated metal. The outbuilding has a hipped metal roof.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The front of the main building has a large overhang and a cornice. Gutters are on the front of the south wing and along the rear walls. Leaders go to the cistern in the middle of the yard. On the north wall and court side of the west wing they go to the cistern adjacent to the west wing.
 - c. Dormers: The third floor main section has large hipped dormers, front and rear, with two windows on the front face and one each on the sides.
6. Chimneys: There is one on the north end of the west wing at the center of the end wall.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Main building: The first floor has four rooms. The second floor has a gallery area some 10' wide which extends across the front, rear and northeast side. The two center rooms are large, opening out onto the galleries.
 - b. South wing: There is a store on the first floor and living accommodations on the second.
 - c. Other areas: The west wing and the outbuilding have been divided into living quarters.
2. Stairways: In the southwest corner of the main building an interior staircase extends from the back yard to the third floor. It has two runs per floor, and is 5' wide of wood, with turned balusters. On the first run it is enclosed by wood sheathing. The front exterior stairway is of brick with panelled masonry balustrade and a half-arched recess underneath. A third stairway is situated in the junction of the south and west wings, starting in the southeast corner of the yard against the rear wall of the west wing. It is masonry, narrow, and ascends to the second-floor west wing in two runs.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls on the second floor, main building, have molded baseboards, chair rails, and wood casings around openings. The walls are plastered. The ceilings on all three floors are wood; on the first floor the beaded beams are exposed. The rear stairwall is papered. On the first floor the studs are left exposed in the rear wood wall. The other wings are assumed to be treated similarly to the main building.
4. Decorative features and trim: On the second floor the molded door frames, baseboards and chair rails are the only trim within the main rooms.
5. Hardware: The hardware is in most cases of recent design or completely lacking. Those shutters which retain early hardware usually have two strap hinges to a wing, with occasional hook or bolt. There is a wood box lock on the main door at the top of the stairway.
6. Lighting: The building has electricity.

D. Site:

1. Setting: The large yard extends from the corner of Strand Street and King Cross Street to the alley on the southwest side of the lot and back more than 100', with the northwest corner cut out. The land is overgrown and has a number of large trees.
2. Enclosures: The lot is enclosed on three sides by high masonry walls. A gateway gives access to the yard from Strand Street immediately north of the building. The gateway has a wood picket fence and is flanked by masonry posts with ornamental caps.

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June, 1960