

*Property of Joan Fryer MacKenzie  
4827 Leesburg Drive  
West Bloomfield, Mi 48323*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** Herman Hill Historic District

historic Estate Herman Hill, Lillie

and/or common Herman Hill

**2. Location**

street & number Company Quarter

not for publication

city, town Christiansted XX— vicinity of

state US Virgin Islands code 78 county St. Croix code 0800

**3. Classification**

| Category                                     | Ownership                                   | Status                                       | Present Use   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure           | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress    | <input type="checkbox"/> educational                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object              | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted     | <input type="checkbox"/> government                   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted   | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial                   |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                  | <input type="checkbox"/> military                     |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                       |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> park                         |
|  |   |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|  |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                       |

**4. Owner of Property**

name

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street & number Government House

city, town Christiansted, St. Croix state US Virgin Islands

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Virgin Islands Inventory  
title of Historic Sites

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date February 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Virgin Islands Planning Office

city, town Christiansted, St. Croix state US Virgin Islands

ST. CROIX LANDMARKS SOCIETY  
RESEARCH LIBRARY  
FREDERIKS

# Description

Condition  
 excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

Check one  
 unaltered  
 altered

Check one  
 original site  
 moved

date 1984

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Herman Hill Estate is located in Company Quarter approximately one mile southwest of Christiansted. The site is located along the slope of the hill and is shielded from view by trees and underbrush. The rubble masonry remains consist of (1) cattle pens, (2) a mill, (3) stables, (4) cookhouse, and (5) great house. The latter three structures have since been converted to modern residences.

### (1) Cattle Pens (c. mid-nineteenth century)

Furthest east of the former plantation and north of the road leading to the estate are the cattle pens. The two to three feet thick rubble masonry walls stand seven to eight feet above grade. Other portions of the wall, particularly on the west side, have degenerated into loose rubble. The exteriors of the walls have been ashlar scored. The remains of lime plaster still exist on the walls, some of which have flat surfaces on top. Other parts of the walls are pyramiddally capped. Gateposts stand about ten feet away from each other. The three feet square columns have deteriorated and are overgrown with bush.

### (2) Windmill (c. 1780)

The conical mill 30 feet in diameter is located northwest of the pens on top of a slight rise. The three feet thick limestone block walls are plastered on the interior and unplastered on the exterior. A four inch ledge approximately half the height of the mill supports four two inch by four inch boards. Over the largest arch opening measuring five feet by 12 feet is a keystone, flush with the facade. A smaller opening, measuring two by eight feet further south and to the east has been filled with small rubble and brick pieces. Facing further east is a tall, thin opening measuring four feet by 26 feet. It too has been filled and covered more recently with cement. A keystone still protrudes above it. The mill is 30 feet high and has a rounded rim on top.

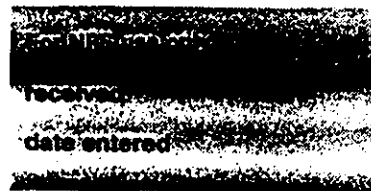
### (3) Great House (late 18th c.)

The great house, now a modern residence, is located north of the mill. It consists of two one-storied raked gable structures joined at the center by one corner. Both have north to south orientations. The hillside slopes downward on the east side. The structure furthest south measures 23 feet by 16 feet. Joined to its northwest corner is a larger, second rectangular building measuring 34 feet by 52 feet. A simple cornice band about one half feet wide is located two feet below the top of the plate level. It extends along the westernmost gable end.

Protruding elliptical molding extends over the flat arches. Above the window are protruding keystones lined in brick. Some of the brick sills are covered with plaster. Quoins are staggered. A watercourse can be seen at the first floor level on the east side, supported by a basement that extends three inches.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

Foundation remains eight inches high extend parallel approximately 20 feet to the west facade of the larger building of the greathouse. Between the foundation remains and the great house is a two and a half feet high rubble masonry wall punctuated by an opening in the center.

(4) **Cookhouse (late 18th c. with later changes)**

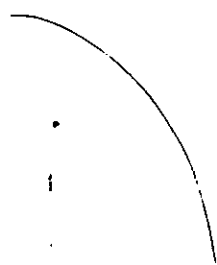
Attached to the north end of the former great house is a small, gabled cookhouse which measures approximately 15 feet by 12 feet. The opening of a hooded plastered chimney with a brick corbel has been filled in at the top. It now serves as the groundkeeper's residence.

(5) **Boiling House, later Dipping Pen (c. mid-19th century with later changes)**

West of the great house are the remains of the stables now a modern residence. It has a north to south orientation. The alterations are in keeping with the historic character of the estate. The overall dimensions of the two-storied rubble masonry building measure 56 feet by 40 feet. The walls extend up to ten feet high. Four keystones remain above the arched openings punctuating the east facade. It is covered by a gable roof and has shed roofs flanking the west and north facades. A two inch square wood opening covers a cistern on the northwest side of the former stables. An 11 foot by 17 foot platform is located over the cistern.

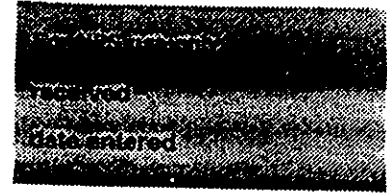
Herman Hill is a relatively small plantation site since converted to use as a modern residence. Its buildings and structures are relatively well-preserved and stand as representative examples of late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century buildings on St. Croix.

The site is relatively undisturbed and possesses considerable archaeological significance in understanding St. Croix's agricultural and commercial history. The boundaries have been drawn to adequately circumscribe all known structures associated with the historic site and demarcate the area of highest archaeological potential.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

3

SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION: ESTATE HERMAN HILL

Present Physical Appearance:

Estate Herman Hill is located one mile southwest of Christiansted. View of the site is obscured by trees and brush. Buildings and structures of the estate are spread along the slope of the hill overlooking the town and harbor to the northeast. The occupied rubble masonry remains include: (1) cattle pens dating to the mid-19th century; (2) a windmill built in 1766; (3) a late 18th century greathouse; (4) a late 18th century cookhouse; and (5) a boiling house, later dipping pens of mid-19th century origin. The site possesses much of its visual integrity and is free of major intrusive elements due to its relatively protected hillside location on privately-owned land. A systematic visual survey of the estate indicates Estate Herman Hill possesses other cultural materials of significance nearby historic buildings and ruins. These include fragments of tiles, European ceramic ware, agricultural tools, hardware and rubble masonry debris. The site appears to be relatively undisturbed. The incidence of cultural remains falls off at the edge of the nominated area.

Original Physical Appearance:

Estate Herman Hill was settled initially under the Danish West India Company in the mid-18th century. Originally a cotton plantation, the estate switched to sugar at a relatively early period. The 1754 Beck map indicates an animal mill used to grind sugar stood on the site by this time. In 1766, a windmill (still present on the estate) was built. By the 1820s Herman Hill was a complete sugar estate with a greathouse or main residence, cookhouse, windmill, animal mill, factory and still house and slave village. The animal mill, factory and still house and slave village are no longer visible on the estate. The existing buildings and structures, however, still convey a strong sense of the estate during the 18th and 19th centuries. The whole estate remained in use for producing sugar until 1900, when sugar cane was replaced by cattle grazing.

Boundary Selection/Justification:

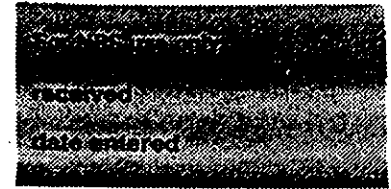
The boundaries of the nominated site have been selected to reflect land ownership and natural changes in topography, and in order to adequately circumscribe the known buildings, structures and other cultural remains associated with the historic estate as well as to provide an adequate visual boundary in the event that development occurs on adjacent land. Surface materials are concentrated within the boundaries of the area. Agricultural land connected with the estate have not been included to an extent beyond that required for an adequate, protective visual boundary. The existence of other remains or subsurface materials associated with the estate and lying outside the boundaries cannot be discounted, although comparative evidence and known documents suggest this is unlikely.

Alterations/Integrity:

Estate Herman Hill retains integrity of setting, materials and design. The site is relatively undisturbed and contains no obtrusive visual elements. The windmill and cattle pens remain intact. The cookhouse and greathouse presently occupied, preserve much of their original character and appearance, retaining their materials and exterior detailing as well as their original plan and interior woodwork. Features of note on the greathouse include a decorative cornice band, protruding elliptical molding extending over flat arches, protruding keystones lined in brick and staggered quoins. The cookhouse has retained its

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

hooded chimney. The stables have been altered to accommodate as a modern residence. The modern additions, however, are compatible in scale and materials.

Dates/Chronology:

Estate Herman Hill was occupied and used as a cotton plantation dating to the 1740s, early converting to sugar production in the mid-18th century. It continued to serve as a sugar estate through 1900, at which time sugar production ceased and the estate became a place for cattle grazing. The present buildings date from the 1740s to 1916 with later changes which do not detract from its original character and appearance as a sugar estate.

# Significance

| Period       | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below |                        |                        |                 |
|--------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| prehistoric  | archeology-prehistoric                        | community planning     | landscape architecture | religion        |
| 1400-1499    | XX archeology-historic                        | conservation           | law                    | science         |
| 1500-1599    | XX agriculture                                | economics              | literature             | sculpture       |
| 1600-1699    | XX architecture                               | education              | military               | social/         |
| XX 1700-1799 | art   | engineering            | music                  | humanitarian    |
| XX 1800-1899 | commerce                                      | exploration/settlement | philosophy             | theater         |
| XX 1900-     | communications                                | XX industry            | XX politics government | transportation  |
|              |   | invention              |                        | other (specify) |

Specific dates 1740's-1916 Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Estate Herman Hill was always a relatively modest sugar plantation by St. Croix standards. Located approximately one mile outside of the principal Danish settlement of Bassin, or Christiansted, it occupied the high ground, just north (and below) Herman Hill itself. From the estate's elevation of 257 feet, it commands an excellent view of the town and harbor to the northeast.

Originally, Herman Hill consisted of two plots, Number 10 and 11 Company Quarter. Plot Number 10 was never subdivided, however, so the overall acreage was slightly larger than that of adjacent plantages; the awkward hillside site may account in part for this. The plantage formed an "L"-shaped tract, with the longer part (Plot 10) extending to the east.

The estate's early history is unclear. The earliest records trace Plot 10 to Isak Evans, apparently a Scottish planter who arrived on St. Croix sometime after its initial settlement under the Danish West India Company in the 1740's. Plot 11 was possibly held by Fr. Francis and the adjacent Plot 33 (also including a part of Plot 11) was assigned to Thomas Lillie. The late geographer McGuire associates the estate with Lillie. And it is probably Lillie who was involved most closely with the estate's management at first. Beyond this, little is known.

Herman Hill was probably a cotton plantation during its earlier years. Company Quarter in fact possessed a number of cotton plantages: in 1742, there were 34 in all with only one sugar plantation listed for the quarter; in 1745, cotton plantations had increased by three. It was only in the succeeding decade that sugar began to be grown in the quarter in any great quantity; the dry climate no doubt had a part in the preference for cotton. However, as sugar prices rose, even relatively unproductive lands were turned over to cane. By 1754, there were at least eight sugar plantations. Ten years later, there was virtually no large scale cotton growing taking place in the quarter.

Herman Hill switched over to sugar at a relatively early period. The official surveyor Jens Beck's map of 1754 indicates an animal powered sugar grinding mill on the upper part of Plot 10. A windmill to increase productivity was added by 1766. Only the windmill can be identified presently.

Sometime in the early nineteenth century, the estate passed out of Lillie's hands and belonged to the Leidesdorf family. It was probably the Leidesdorfs who were principally responsible for expanding the estate's buildings and making improvements.

By the 1820's, Herman Hill possessed the full complement of buildings associated with the sugar industry. These included a greathouse, or main residence (Building #3), a separate kitchen (Building #4), a factory and a still house (no longer in existence) together with the two mills inherited from the eighteenth century. There was no doubt a slave village as well, although the remains of this can no longer be identified. Unlike many other Crucian estates, Herman Hill never constructed a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

Date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

masonry workers' village, depending instead, it would appear, on simpler, more temporary structures. The estate's relatively poor soil and location perhaps had a part in its building program.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Herman Hill was acquired by the Mackays, another Irish or Scottish planter family. The Mackays managed to keep about a third of the estate's lands in sugar, producing an average of about 100,000 pounds (70 hogsheads) during the 1870's and 80's.

Early on Herman Hill became linked with Orange Grove, another Mackay property, comprising of Plot 3, Company Quarter. After 1872, in fact, it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate Herman Hill's production from that of other Mackay holdings.

Luckily, Herman Hill was unaffected by the Fireburn of 1878, when rioting workers set fire to many of St. Croix's estates. Because of this, many of its buildings have survived up to the present time.

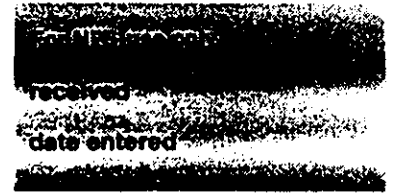
Nonetheless, Herman Hill's fortunes--never great in themselves--began to decline during the latter part of the century. In 1881, cane grown on the estate was carted to the nearby Christiansted Central for processing and Herman Hill's own equipment was sold off. As the century reached a close, sugar went out of production altogether.

In 1906, COE Ganneskor bought the estate from the Mackays and attempted to adapt it to cotton production again. Sea Island cotton had been recently introduced as part of an agricultural improvement scheme sponsored by the Danish government and it enjoyed a brief but moderate success. In 1913, Ganneskor sold out to another buyer, who promptly went bankrupt. It was then bought by Harry and Elizabeth Armstrong, descendants of one of the great merchant families of the previous century, who converted it to a place for raising cattle.

The Armstrongs had some success with this cattle venture, and the productivity of the estate is often commented on in contemporary accounts. As Robert Merwin, a merchant and the British consul or officer, in Frederiksted commented in 1922, the estate was "turned into a very remunerative one by the energy, thrift, and perseverance of the present owners".

The Armstrongs were responsible as well for altering the estate's buildings, including the adaptation of the old boiling house to a dipping station for sheep and cattle. Other buildings, including the greathouse (Structure 3), cattle pens (Structure 1), windmill (Structure 2), cookhouse (Structure 4) were retained and improved.

Unfortunately, the cattle success was a limited one. In 1916, the roof of the house was blown off by a hurricane. The Armstrongs never attempted to restore the building completely, moving instead to another property of theirs. The greathouse was converted to use as an overseer's house.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

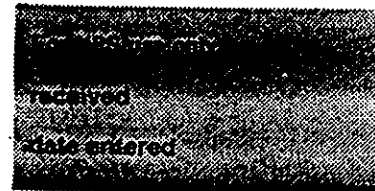
Page 3

Herman Hill preserves more features of an early sugar and cotton plantation on St. Croix. Its buildings are representative of vernacular architectural traditions and serve as an important document of the early building history of St. Croix. The conversion of the estate to cattle farming adds an unusual dimension in the estate's history and one worth examining in greater depth.

Historic figures associated with the estate include Thomas Lillie, an early Cruzan planter, and the well-known Armstrong family.

The boundaries of the site have been drawn in order to adequately circumscribe all of the known structures associated with the site. The area around these possesses considerable archaeological potential and should be protected from any unnecessary ground disturbances.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

**SUMMARY/SIGNIFICANCE:** ESTATE HERMAN HILL

Significance Summary:

Estate Herman Hill is significant as the remains of a cotton plantation (the visible remains no longer exist) that early became a relatively modest and not very productive sugar plantation of the late 18th century and 19th century that was converted for cattle grazing in the early 20th century. (Visible remains exist as converted sugar estate buildings.) The estate is located on a hillside site with a view of Christiansted and harbor to the northeast. The remains of its buildings and structures, which include: (1) cattle pens; (2) windmill; (3) greathouse; (4) cookhouse; and (5) boiling house, later a dipping pen, are representative building types on the island and are typical representative components of a late 18th and 19th century sugar estate that later converted to cattle grazing. The greathouse is unusually elaborate architecturally and preserves a number of decorative features, including window surrounds, cornice, protruding elliptical molding and staggered quoins. The whole estate is unusual for its well-preserved setting, and for its representative vernacular architectural traditions. The estate is also significant as the one-time property of Thomas Lillie, an early Cruzan planter, and the Armstrong family, important to the commercial and political history of St. Croix.

Applicable Criteria:

Estate Herman Hill's buildings, structures and other remains embody characteristics of building type, period and method of construction that are typical of Cruzan architecture, particularly masonry buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries (criterion C) and are likely to yield further information about agricultural development on the island and of the lives of the inhabitants throughout the period of occupation on the estate from the 1740s to c. 1916 (criterion D). It is also significant for its association with the broader patterns of St. Croix's early history (criterion A) and for its association with a number of figures important to the commercial and political history of the island including Thomas Lillie and the Armstrong family.

Areas of Significance:

Archaeology-historic: Estate Herman Hill preserves a number of buildings and structures that are important to an understanding of the organization and development of the sugar industry on St. Croix. Other areas to be understood better through information yielded by the estate include methods of construction, layout and design for estate buildings, the organization of the sugar manufacturing process and the locations of other buildings known to have been associated with the estate. As yet, no sugar estate on St. Croix has been fully excavated or studied. Herman Hill represents an important resource for further investigation. A systematic visual survey has verified a high concentration of cultural materials within the vicinity of the main structures. So far identified are fragments of tiles, ceramic ware, iron hardware and masonry debris.

Agriculture: Estate Herman Hill was a relatively modest sugar estate of the late 18th to 19th centuries, later converting to cattle grazing in the early 20th century. The estate's significance is in helping to document the history and development of the sugar industry on St. Croix.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

Architecture: Estate Herman Hill possesses a number of representative buildings as well as an unusually elaborate greathouse. All the buildings and structures on the site are fine examples of Cruzan masonry work and of vernacular architectural traditions. Over all, the remaining buildings are important documents of early building history that provide information on layout, materials, craftsmanship and construction techniques.

Industry: The production of sugar was the mainstay of St. Croix's economy throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, extending until the mid-20th century. Estate Herman Hill's buildings and other structures help to document the development of that industry particularly the remains of the boiler house and windmill. Estate Herman Hill is unusually significant for its successful conversion to cattle farming. The altered sugar estate buildings help to document that industry as well.

Politics/Government: Estate Herman Hill is significant for its association with a number of figures important in the commercial and political history of St. Croix. They include Thomas Lillie, an early Cruzan planter and the Armstrong family, important landowners on St. Croix.

Context:

Estate Herman Hill is one of a number of significant sugar estates on the island of St. Croix being nominated as districts, as parts of multiple resource areas or complexes. It preserves a number of representative building types, and is unusual for the relatively elaborate character of its greathouse, and its well-preserved setting. Its changing use from cotton farming before turning into a sugar estate, and then its conversion to cattle farming in the early 20th century adds to the unique significance of Estate Herman Hill.

# Major Bibliographical References

- Beck, L.M. S. Croix Map, 1754, 1767.  
 Børgesen, F. Map of the DWI Islands, 1898.  
 British Admiralty Chart 2019 of St. Croix, 1918.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property approximately 6 acres

Quadrangle name Christiansted

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References (A) 17°44'28", 64°43'05" (C) 17°44'25", 64°42'58"  
 (B) 17°44'25", 64°43'05" (D) 17°44'28", 64°42'58"

|   |                      |                      |                      |   |                      |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | B | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|   | Zone                 | Easting              | Northing             |   | Zone                 | Easting              | Northing             |
| C | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | D | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| E | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | F | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| G | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | H | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the northwesternmost point of the perimeter of the historic district Point (A), latitude 17°44'28", longitude 64°43'05", the boundary line follows south to Point (B),

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

|       |      |        |      |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| state | code | county | code |
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty Ausherman, William Chapman, Claudette Lewis

organization Virgin Islands Planning Office date 16 November 1984

street & number P0 Box 7818 telephone 809/774-7859

city or town St. Thomas state US 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

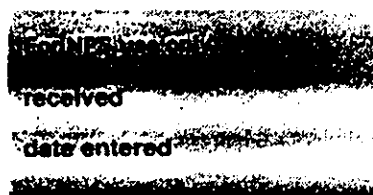
Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

latitude 17°44'25", longitude 64°43'05", then turns east to Point (C), latitude 17°44'25", longitude 64°42'58", then turns north to Point (D), latitude 17°44'28", longitude 64°42'58, returning west to Point (A).