

Addendum to:

**Archaeological and Architectural Assessment of Charles Fort, St. Kitts,
West Indies**

Charles Fort Archaeological and Historical Project Report No. 3

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Introduction

An assessment of the architecture and archaeological deposits at Charles Fort, St. Kitts, West Indies was presented in Schroedl (2000a). Schroedl describes 38 individual buildings identified during field work conducted in May and June 2000, and he illustrated these in a photo catalog of the site (Schroedl 2000b). Most structures are associated with the use of the fort as a leper asylum between 1890 and 1996. Upon reviewing photographs casually taken at Charles Fort in 1997, it was discovered that five hospital buildings that were badly damaged or even collapsed in 2000 were either still standing or retained important architectural features 3 years earlier. The purpose of this report is to provide additional information about Structures 7, 11, 16, 34, and 36 based on the 1997 photographs. Comparison of the photographs taken in 1997 and 2000, show that considerable damage can occur over a comparatively brief time, thus emphasizing the need to initiate efforts to preserve and protect the buildings at Charles Fort.

Structure 7 (Figure 1)

Structure 7 is the administrative structure built atop the entrance gate to the fort. This structure has porches along the length of the east and west sides. In 2000 the porch on the west side had been completely lost except for a remnant of a shake covered wall at the south end of the porch (Schroedl 2000b: Figure 22 and 24). The complete porch is clearly shown in Figure 1. It confirms that the design and construction of the west-side porch was essentially identical to the east side porch, but that it did not have a dormer as found on the east side of the building. A further difference between the two porches is that the west side porch has cross pieces in the hand rail between the porch

support posts. The 1997 photograph also shows all the shutters and doors intact, while most were missing or badly damaged when the site was visited in 2000. In addition, Figure 1 shows that Structure 7 was covered with a corrugated metal roof that was missing in 2000.

Structure 11 (Figure 1)

Structure 11, a two story building, is immediately south of Structure 7 and is shown to the right of it in Figure 1. It was used as living quarters for nurses and orderlies. When recorded in May-June 2000, Structure 11, except for the foundation, stairways, and north first floor wall, was completely destroyed (Schroedl 2000: Figure 37,38, and 39). Details of the lower story construction are indiscernible in Figure 1, but most of the second story is visible. It was previously hypothesized (Schroedl 2000: 18) that construction of the second story was similar to Structure 7, and Figure 1 shows that this is the case. The construction of the west elevation includes door and window openings, shutters, hand railings, and porch support posts virtually identical to Structure 7. As shown in Figure 1, by 1997, the roof of Structure 11, had been entirely removed from the west side of the structure.

Structure 16 (Figure 2)

When recorded in 2000, Structure 16 consisted of the ruins of a post and beam building constructed on an elevated stone foundation (Schroedl 2000a:20-21; 2000b: Figure 50). Few architectural details were determined from the building's debris, except that it had been a detention building as evidenced by the vertically barred windows. As seen in the photograph of the structure taken in 1997, there is a porch running the length of the north facade; the roof of the porch is missing and the roof covering is completely gone. No porch railing is evident in the 1997 photograph too, although it seems likely there once was one. Figure 2 shows three entrances and three barred and

shuttered windows. Their positioning suggests that the structure may have been partitioned into three rooms, each with its own entrance and window.

Structure 34 (Figure 3)

Structure 34, located on the north side of the fortress, was used to house hospital patients. Structure 34 is one of three buildings shown in the V.E. John picture postcard of the fort's interior taken in the 1920s or 1930s (Schroedl 2000a: Figure 3). When observed in May-June 2000, the structure was barely standing. The porch on the south side of the building was completely collapsed, the rear or north wall had fallen, the roof was almost completely missing, and the building was leaning precipitously to the north (Schroedl 2000b: Figures 83, 84, and 85). The photograph taken in 1997 (Figure 3) shows that the overall condition of the building was comparatively good at that time, and that particularly, the porch was standing and the corrugated metal roof was still in place. The decorative fascia board below the roof line of the porch is clearly visible in Figure 3. Similar decorative pieces occur on Structures 16 and 18 (Schroedl 2000a: 20-21, 22-23) and are visible on both Structure 34 and the kitchen building (Structure 4) in the V.E. John photograph.

Structure 36 (Figures 4 and 5)

Structure 36 is a multi-room, two story patient dormitory, located on the north side of the fortress adjacent to the defensive wall (Schroedl 2000a: 33-34). The walls and support piers of this structure were collapsed with the roof resting on the debris in 2000 (Schroedl 2000b: Figures 88, 89, and 90). Figures 4 and 5 are from the visit in 1997. While vegetation obscures most of the structure in Figure 4, the porch posts and the undecorated trim between them are visible. It is also clear that the principal gabled roof covers the porch on the upper story. This type of porch construction occurs on other buildings at Charles Fort such as Structures 7, 11, 16, and 18 shown in Figures 1

and 2, but that secondary or extended porch roofs also are evident as in Structure 34 (see Figure 3). The view of Structure 36 shown in Figure 5 is from outside the fortress wall. The northeast bastion shows at the left and Brimstone Hill is in the background. Five shuttered windows are visible on the structure's north elevation (a probable sixth window is obscured by vegetation). This photograph shows that part of the wood shingle roof had already been lost on the this side of the building in 1997, suggesting rapid deterioration after the hospital was closed or alternatively indicating that the building had been abandoned prior to this event.

Summary

Photographs taken of five buildings at the Charles Fort leper asylum in 1997 add important details to observations of these same buildings made in 2000. The photographs show architectural characteristics of the west elevation, porch, and roof of Structure 7, the hospital's administrative building, and show adjacent to it Structure 11 when it was still standing. Similarly, the photographs show details of the north elevation of Structure 16, a detention building, suggesting that this building may have been divided into three rooms. In 1997, the roof and porch of Structure 34, a building used to house patients, were comparatively well preserved , as was Structure 36, a patient dormitory, that has since collapsed. Overall the pictures illustrate how fragile the buildings at Charles Fort are, and how much damage occurred to them within a few years of their abandonment. This demonstrates how important it is to monitor, repair, and maintain the structures, if they are to be preserved for future use.

References Cited

Schroedl, Gerald F.

2000a. Archaeological and Architectural Assessment of Charles Fort, St. Kitts, West Indies. Charles Fort Archaeological and Historical Project Report No. 1.

2000b. A Photographic Catalog of Structures and Architectural Features at Charles Fort, St. Kitts, West Indies Charles Fort Archaeological and Historical Project Report No. 2.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Structure 7, administrative building, at center; Structure 11, nurses quarters at right; Structure 8, assembly building, at left, view to the north-northeast.

Figure 2. Structure 16, detention building, north elevation, note the barred windows; Structure 18 is at the right, view to the south.

Figure 3. Structure 34, patient housing, note decorative porch trim, view to the north-northwest.

Figure 4. Structure 36, patient dormitory, note wood shingle roof, view to the north-northwest.

Figure 5. Charles Fort north defensive wall and northeast bastion, Structure 36 shows at the right; roof of Structure 3 is visible at the center; Brimstone Hill Fortress is in the background, view to the south-southeast.



Figure 1. Structure 7, administrative building, at center; Structure 11, nurses quarters at right; Structure 8 assembly building at left; view to the north northeast



Figure 2. Structure 16, detention building, north elevation, note the barred windows; Structure 18 is at the right, view to the south.

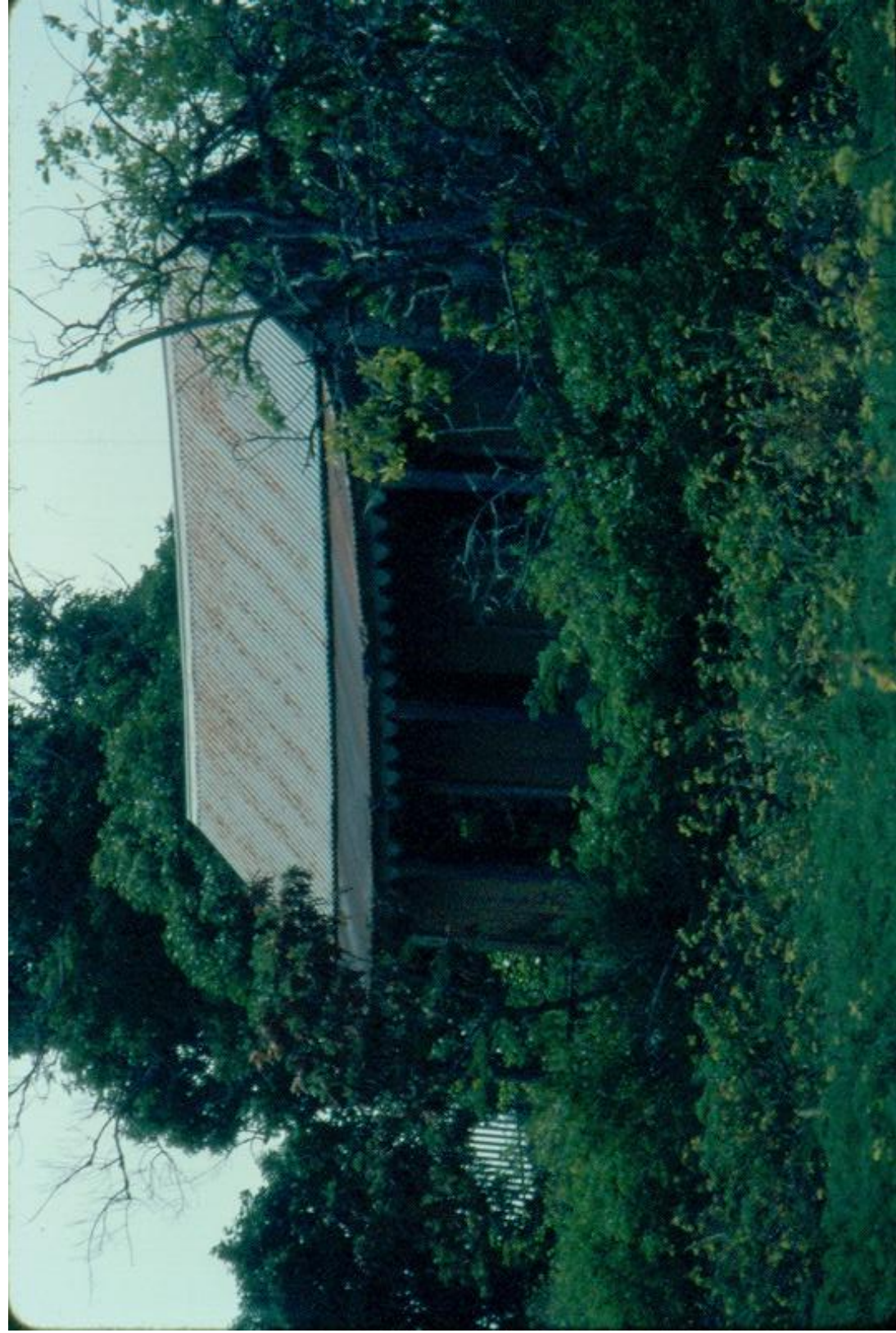


Figure 3. Structure 34, patient housing, note decorative porch trim, view to north-northwest



Figure 4. Structure 36, patient dormitory, note wood shingle roof, view to north-northwest



Figure 5. Charles Fort north defensive wall and northeast bastion, Structure 36 shows at the right; roof of Structure 3 is visible at the center; Brimstone Hill fortress is in the background, view to the south-southeast.