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The large Greek Revival mansion that is Berry Hill actually incorporates an earlier red brick house. The exact form of the earlier house is difficult to determine, however portions of its fabric are extant in the rear of the present house. The result of James Coles Bruce's remodeling is apparent chiefly in the two-story stuccoed facade of five bays. The distinguishing feature of the facade is the great octastyle Greek Doric pedimented portico which stretches across the entire front. Flanking the principal building are two matching one-story outbuildings - the

office and the schoolroom. These buildings are both temple-form and

have tetrastyle Greek Doric pedimented porticoes.

The most important interior feature of Berry Hill is the entrance hall with its superb pair of stairs which curve after a long run and meet overhead. Directly behind the entrance hall is the dining room with its fireplace on axis. To the left of the hall is a pair of drawing rooms, both having deep Greek Revival cornices decorated with water leaf mouldings. The drawing rooms also contain fine marble Empire mantels with caryatid supports. An interesting feature of the house is the conservatory behind the second drawing room. This conservatory with its large windows is one of the earliest in the country to be built within the main mass of the house.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

James Coles Bruce inherited from his father a tract of land in Halifax County which was once owned by William Byrd of Westover. On this land stood a red brick house with two principal outbuildings. Bruce had the house transformed (circa 1839) into one of the greatest Greek Revival mansions in the country and certainly the purest in style of Virginia's surviving Greek Revival houses. Berry Hill is also one of the last large plantation houses to be built in Virginia. It is thought that the architect Bruce chose for this remodeling was John E. Johnson, the architect of Bruce's half brother's house, Staunton Hill. The great octastyle portico of the house was based on that of the Parthenon. William B. O'Neal noted of Berry Hill that "Its isolated site lends an almost overpoweringly romantic aura to the distinction of its carefully executed portico flanked by two small Doric pavilions. The entire composition is on as grand a scale as any of Virginia's domestic architecture, with the possible exception of the Governor's Palace at Williamsburg."

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Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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6. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory 1968 Federal

Library of Congress

Washington, D. C.

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Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #41-4 1968 State Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building Richmond, Virginia 23219 Code: 45 Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Berry Hill

Berry Hill

Statement of Significance: NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Berry Hill, located in the rural seclusion of Halifax County, Virginia, achieved its present form between 1835 and 1840 when the owner, James Cole Bruce, completely redesigned and greatly enlarged an earlier brick house. The result, possibly the work of John E. Johnson, the architect of Staunton Hill, has come to be regarded as the quintessence of domestic Greek Revival architecture in the United States. The main two-story house faces a large rectangular grassed forecourt. Flanking the main house and some distance in front of it are two identical service pavillions which face each other. Across the entire front of the main house is a monumental octastyle Greek Doric pedimented portico in imitation of the Parthenon. The full Doric entablature continues around the other three sides of the house. The service pavillions have tetrastyle Greek Doric porticoes that echo that of the main house. The interior of the house has an unusual double stair in the front hall. However it is the exterior design of the three buildings and the perfectly balanced relationship of their scale and placement that raises Berry Hill to the level of a masterpiece.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Berry Hill property description:

Bounded on the north by intersection of Rt. 682 and Rt. 659. Bounded on the east, from the intersection, by Rt. 682 and the western city limits of South Boston. Bounded on the west, from the intersection (of Rt. 682 and Rt. 659), by Rt. 659 until longitude 78° 57' 10". Bounded on the south by Dan River.

Form 10-301 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STATE (Dec. 1968) Virginia COUNTY NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Halifax PROPERTY MAP FORM FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER (Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map) Z I. NAME COMMON: Berry Hill כ AND/OR HISTORIC: Berry Hill 2. LOCATION STREET AND NUMBER: .6 mi. S of Rt. 659, 1.5 mi. S of intersection of Rt. 659 and Rt. 682. CITY OR TOWN: ∞ STATE: COUNTY: CODE CODE Virginia Halifax 083 S 3. MAP REFERENCE Z SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 15', quadrangle South Boston, Va. 1:62500 SCALE: ш 1957 DATE: ш 4. REQUIREMENTS TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS 1. Property broundaries where required. 2. North arrow. 3. Latitude and longitude reference.

