



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 081-0169

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Seeking recordation and recognition of the property's historical significance.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No x

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes No x

1. General Property Information

Property name: Madison Dunlap House

Property address: 3162 W. Midland Trail

City or Town: Lexington

Zip code: 24450

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Rockbridge Co.

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building x Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 2.34

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural x

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

April 2018 site visit (M. Pulice): Located about 12 miles northwest of Lexington, the Dunlap House is set back about 100 feet on the north side of W. Midland Trail (Rt. 850), the main east-west route through the area historically. W. Midland Trail is intersected by Millers Mill Way (Rt. 638) about 300 feet south of the house. The driveway approaches from the west, leading to the house situated on a steep bank overlooking Midland Trail. Distributed throughout the curtilage surrounding the house are a diverse variety of mature trees. About 70 feet east of the house's rear ell is the sunken site of the log smokehouse, demolished after 2005 by the previous owner. Photos of the smokehouse are on file in the DHR archives. About 300 feet northeast of the house is a modern barn. Although no historic secondary resources remain extant, the archaeological context where domestic outbuildings once stood, behind the house, likely remains largely undisturbed. Recently, a buried, intact brick walkway to the smokehouse was unearthed by the new property owners.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Greek Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: n/a

If the builder is known, please list here: Unknown

Date of construction (can be approximate): c. 1847-1848

Narrative Description

By Mike Pulice, based on April 2018 site visit:

Exterior

The Dunlap House is a two-story, double-pile brick structure with a side-gable roof and an original 1 ½--story brick ell. It has a symmetrical three-bay façade and chimneys built into the end walls of the two-story main block. The centered front entrance lacks sidelights, but has a lighted transom with grid-tracery muntins. Over all of the doors and windows are prominent heavy timber lintels with plain corner blocks, painted white. The house is set on an embanked brick foundation incorporating a full basement that can be accessed via two extra-wide front doorways beneath the front porch, with identical, presumably original batten doors. The one-story, full-width, shed-roofed front porch, set on brick piers, is an early 20th-century replacement of the original porch or entrance portico. The porch, with its square columns, simple entablature and balustrade rail, and all that can be seen of the entire house in the 1936 Virginia Historical Inventory photograph look the same as they do today.¹

The side elevations are nearly identical, each with six apertures—two six-over-six double-hung sash on the first and second stories, and two hinged, six light sash at the garret level. There is a barred vent in the basement east end wall and a hinged nine-light window in the west basement wall.

The brick masonry of the façade and west side elevation is laid in well-executed Flemish bond, one of the hallmarks of quality brick construction during the period. The bricks of the east elevation, generally not seen by passersby or approaching visitors because of the site topography, are laid with comparatively less precision and care, in common bond with header courses at intervals of every four to six courses. The rear elevation of the main block and all sides of the ell are also laid in common bond. See continued masonry discussion below.

Interior

With very few historic-period modifications, the house interior has remarkable integrity. The floorplan consists of a narrow center passage flanked by front and back rooms on each side, however, the main block extends further toward the rear to encompass two more small rooms flanking the largest room in the house—a first-floor family room that occupies the rear central part of the main block as well as the southern half of the ell. Most double-pile houses had wide center passages and four equal, or nearly equal sized rooms on each floor; in contrast the Dunlap House has a center passage which is exceptionally narrow (and somewhat congested by staircases continuing from the basement to the garret), large rooms in the front of the house, but multiple smaller rooms to the rear. The rear rooms on the second floor were divided again into two small rooms on each side of the passage.

The single-flight, closed-stringer center-passage stair has a slender turned newel and curved railing of natural finish Walnut, and painted rectangular balusters. The interior doorway and window trim consists of architrave moldings or symmetrical fluted moldings with turned corner blocks typical of the Greek Revival style. Most

doors have four panels, with the upper two panels taller than the lower panels, and original knobs and hardware. Fireplace mantels generally match the trim, with fluted or plain pilasters and plain friezes on the first floor, and peaked pilasters and friezes on the second floor. Notable examples of craftsmanship include the built-in chimney presses with glazed folding doors and Mahogany faux-graining in the first-floor rooms. Crown molding was added to some of the rooms in the late 20th century. All of the rooms exhibit presumably original, well-preserved heart-pine flooring except the first-floor southwest room, in which the original floorboards are covered with early 20th-century flooring.

The basement has the basic center-passage plan and two equal-sized front rooms with brick floors and exposed brick walls, and a small interior room lined with shelves for food storage. The storage room has a four-panel door with one hand-forged H-L hinge and one hand-forged strap hinge.

Within the second-floor center passage is an original enclosed stair leading to the garret, which is in uncommonly original condition. It has a single large room with little head space due to collar ties on each rafter pair, exposed brick end walls, and wide floor boards. The rafter pairs and collar ties consist of vertically mill-sawn lumber pegged together and scored with the usual Roman numerals. The original wide sheathing boards laid across the rafters were replaced with narrow purlins during the latter 20th century.

Possible Schoolroom

According to Rockbridge County real estate records and corroborated by other sources, the house was built in 1848 for Madison Dunlap who was a farmer with other diversified interests. Madison may have had a hand in the design of the house, which has a number of uncommonly thoughtful custom features and an unusual floor plan that includes a large second-floor room in the ell, above the kitchen, with innovative sliding windows and a small, connected private bedroom. The homeowners believe that the large room was used to educate Dunlap's ten children and the connected bedroom was occupied by Joshua Monroe, a teacher by profession who lived in the Dunlap household at the time of the 1850 census. The bedroom is elevated four steps higher than the larger room and has a very low ceiling, which allows for a taller ceiling downstairs in the family room. Between the four-step flight of stairs and the full staircase leading to the first floor is a solid balustrade made of wide hand-planed boards. It provides a handrail leading up to the bedroom and protection against falling down the stairs to the first floor. There is a partition of similar wide, hand-planed boards next to the bedroom door, over the staircase.

Other Notable Features

There were relatively few double-pile houses built in Rockbridge County in the nineteenth century, and most had hip roofs rather than gable roofs. Furthermore, most houses built before the Civil War had exterior end chimneys projecting from the end walls, whereas the Dunlap House has more sophisticated chimneys built within the end walls of the main block and projecting into the rooms. Moreover, instead of having four chimneys serving eight fireplaces, as was more typical for double-pile houses, the Dunlap House main block has only four fireplaces (two on the first floor and two on the second floor). The ell chimney, located in the center of the ell, serves three fireplaces (two back-to-back on the first floor and one on the second floor) including a large cooking fireplace in the kitchen (first-floor north room).

Brickmasonry Distinctions

In a county where elegant brickwork by local masons was commonplace throughout the nineteenth century, the Dunlap House brick masonry epitomizes the plain-and-neat aesthetic of the mid-century period when the influence of Greek Revival pattern books prevailed in vernacular architecture. The bricks of the front façade and the west elevation of the main block were manufactured and laid with great precision, and the masonry joints were given more attention than was typical. Only the façade and west elevation bricks were evidently re-pressed with a portable, manually operated brick press, a few of which were locally invented and manufactured in small quantities. The use of the contraption resulted in frogged bricks with near perfect uniformity and straight edges, which together allowed for uncommonly straight and narrow mortar joints. The joints were finished with a

locally rare beading technique and penciled white as was typical. Brickwork of this quality had become common in larger cities, but was by no means ever common in areas such the rural, though affluent County of Rockbridge. Standing on the front porch of the Dunlap House one can read the signatures and dates written in gray lead pencil on the white background of the white-penciled joints. Such graffiti on mortar joints of brick houses, usually found near the front entrance, are quite common and usually date to between the 1880s and the 1920s. The practice does not appear to have been limited to children.

Endnote

1. James W. McClung, "Old Home of Madison Dunlap." Virginia Historical Inventory, 1936. Library of Virginia.

4. Property's History and Significance

By current homeowner Lei Hillier

Whether it was his role as one of seven Whig delegates representing Rockbridge County at the State Convention in Richmond in 1843 (footnote 1) and then participating two years later in the process of deciding whether to amend Virginia's state constitution, Madison Dunlap was more than just a first-generation American of Scots-Irish descent who came to Rockbridge in 1830 and became a successful farmer and businessman in Lexington's Kerrs Creek district. As described in a real estate announcement published in the "Roanoke Times" on September 1, 1891, page 2, (citing "Rockbridge County News" as its source), Madison Dunlap was "long one of the leading farmers and citizens of Rockbridge." And in this article describing the sale, the Madison Dunlap estate was listed as "252 acres" and a "large brick residence." A price of \$8,500 was paid by the purchaser and new resident of Rockbridge County, Captain McNeel.

Madison was born on September 29, 1808 in Augusta County, Virginia. His parents were Robert Dunlap and Margaret Kerr. Robert had emigrated with his parents and siblings from Campbeltown, Argyllshire, Scotland and first settled in the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania area around 1775 before eventually moving to Augusta County. Margaret Kerr is believed to have been born in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Robert and Margaret had ten children, with Madison being their tenth and last child. Madison married Martha Hanna McKee on January 18, 1834 in Rockbridge County. Martha was the daughter of John Telford McKee and Agnes Nancy Hanna.

In 1837 Madison and Martha made their first purchase of land in Rockbridge: 31 acres on Kerrs Creek. In 1847 they built their two-story brick residence, and over the years they raised a family of ten children, some of whom attended Washington College. According to the 1850 census, Madison, at the age of 42, owned real estate valued at \$13,000. On the same census there is a male, Joshua Monroe (from Massachusetts) listed as school teacher living with the Dunlap family. It is probable that Joshua taught the Dunlap children in the second floor room that has an adjoining bedroom area. As written by Cornelius J. Heatwole in his work "A History of Education in Virginia," (published in 1916). Extract from pages 56 and 57: "This tutorial system of instruction, so popular in England, seems to have been held in the same high esteem in Virginia, particularly among the planters. A tutor was engaged under contract to be furnished 'meat, drink, lodging, and washing,' and sometimes it was stipulated that he should have a few acres free of rent upon which to plant tobacco and vegetables. In addition to this he was to receive a stipulated fee which usually amounted to about twenty-five dollars a year for furnishing tuition to the children of the family."

During the Civil War three sons of Martha and Madison fought in the Confederate Army, one of whom (John McKee Dunlap, a member of the 1st Virginia Cavalry) was mortally wounded on July 3, 1863 at the battle of Gettysburg. John is buried next to Madison and Martha at the McKee Family Cemetery, located approximately one mile east of the Dunlap home on Midland Trail. Ironically, only a month before the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, the "Richmond Enquirer" reported on March 7, 1865 that "On Saturday writs were awarded upon the petitions of the following, who claim a discharge from the military service because detailed farmers: James T. Black, James Borden, William D. Mills, C.J. Fuller and Madison Dunlap." Madison was fifty-four-years old at the time.

Endnotes

1. Article in the "Richmond Whig" newspaper of February 21, 1843, page 2, entitled 'Public Meeting.' Excerpt includes "Gen. Dorman offered the following resolution: Resolved, That the Chairman appoint seven delegates to represent the Whigs of Rockbridge in the Convention to be held in the City of Richmond on the 22nd instant. The resolution was adopted, and the following gentlemen were appointed in accordance therewith: --Robert White, Esq, D.E. Moore, Esq, Gen. C.P. Dorman, Col. S McD. Reid, S. McD. Moore, Esq, Dr. A. Leyburn, and Mr. Madison Dunlap."

2. Article in the "Richmond Whig" newspaper of August 19, 1845, page 3, entitled 'Convention Meeting.' Excerpts include: "The following gentlemen were appointed a committee to circulate the above memorial ("...the question of calling a convention to amend the constitution of this State") and obtain signatures to the same, viz:" among a list of some twenty-five men was named Madison Dunlap.

