

Site Name: Hunn Jenkins House/Spruce Acres
HABS Number: DE-4
CPS Number: K-170

DATE OF FIELDWORK: OCTOBER--DECEMBER 1990

Threat: The current owners have put the property up for sale and are considering offers from developers that would call for the demolition of the dwelling.

Type of Documentation: Level II: Partial Intensive
 annotated field notes (6 sheets)
 4" x 5" black and white photographs (10)
 architectural data sheet

Significance: A large Greek Revival dwelling built circa 1850-51 by prominent local farmer and merchant Hunn Jenkins, the house is a well-preserved example of a rural Delaware interpretation of fashionable high-style architecture of the period.

Description: The Hunn Jenkins House, or Spruce Acres, in Camden, Delaware, sits on a large lot located on the northwestern side of a residential street near the northeastern edge of the town. Although houses of similar style and mass line both sides of the street near the property, the dwelling at 110 North Main Street sits considerably further back from the street and is substantially larger than its neighbors. Large spruce trees landscape the front of the lot and two small outbuildings, a wash house and a shed, sit behind the main house. A frame garage is located to the north and east of the house.

The five-bay, three-story, frame dwelling rests on a stone foundation and contains a central passage plan for a main block that measures 45 feet wide by 33 feet deep. A Period I three-story ell extends off the rear, or north, side of the dwelling, and measures 16 feet wide by 39 feet deep. A one-story porte-cochere to the east and a one-story enclosed porch to the west flank the main block. The following description will focus on the main block and then on the rear

service ell.

On the principal, or south, elevation, carved wood siding gives the illusion of stonework on the first two stories. Engaged Doric pilasters anchor the corners on the first two floors. Interior end chimneys pierce the low-pitched hipped roof of the building. Vinyl siding covers all elevations of the main block, porch additions, and rear ell, except for the primary elevation of the main block.

A one-story, flat-roofed portico covers the centrally located main entrance. Four brick steps lead from a small brick patio at ground level up to the portico landing. Fluted metal Doric columns support the portico's entablature, which features a cornice with mutule blocks, and a plain architrave and frieze. As part of the portico, a pair of built-in, vertical slat-backed benches extend from the columns to the wall of the house. Paired screen doors, embellished with tracery, open to reveal a pair of paneled doors. A transom sits atop the doors and is also protected by a stationary screen.

Six-over-six light double-hung sash windows exist on the first and second stories throughout the house. Paneled shutters frame the first story windows, while louvered shutters protect those on the second. The shutter hardware on both floors is a shell pattern. Two pairs of three-pane, single-sash pocket windows, that slide vertically into a recess in the wall, flank a centrally placed, stationary four-pane horizontal window on the third floor of the primary elevation. The three-pane, single-sash pocket windows continue around the building on the third floor. A box cornice also extends around the building.

In the 1930s the owners added the porte cochere on the east elevation and the enclosed porch on the west elevation. The porch was originally sheathed in glass on three sides. The cornice and fluted metal columns of the porte cochere mimic those on the entry portico.

The one-story enclosed porch contains three pairs of centrally placed french doors on the west elevation. Stained glass windows in a stylized tulip design occupy the paired transoms above these doors. Screens protect the french doors, and a pair of screen doors cover the center pair of porch doors. As on the front, corner pilasters frame the west elevation of the main block, terminating at the top of the second story.

On the east elevation of the main block sits the porte cochere. Four steps lead from the porte cochere to a twelve-light door, which is topped with a three-light transom. Three windows illuminate the second story of main block on the west side .

The north side of the main block contains the rear ell, which covers the second and third bays from the east. The easternmost bay probably contained a window in the original configuration but it was filled in during renovations in the twentieth century. Windows are still visible on the second and third floors in this bay. On the western half of the elevation sit an exterior door, slightly out of alignment with the front door, and two windows that align with the ones on the south elevation. The second and third floor windows align with those on the first floor. A window just below the second floor, above the door, lights the stair landing. A stained-glass transom tops the door leading from the porch to the stair passage.

While smaller in scale than the main block, the five-bay rear ell contains windows similar in size and design to those on the main block on the second and third floors. A low pitched gable roof tops the ell. An interior chimney is located near the middle of the rear ell. On the west elevation of the ell, a modern off-center door, flanked by two octagonal windows, provides access into the ell. An L-shaped one-story open porch, decorated with tracery and latticework in a Gothic pattern, extends along the west side of the rear ell and wraps around the north elevation of the main block.

The north side of the rear ell contains no windows or openings.

The east elevation of the rear ell displays five bays of windows on the second and third floors. On the first floor, the bays are unevenly divided due to twentieth-century renovations. An open cement porch leads to a door in the southernmost bay that accesses the kitchen, with modern windows in the two bays to the north. A modern door fills the fourth bay to the north, accessing the rear room in the ell. A bulkhead entrance to the cellar is located just north of the center of this elevation.

Interior. Inside the foyer, a pair of four-panel doors open into the central stair hall. A five-light transom tops the set of paired doors flanked with three sidelights. Small engaged Doric columns flank the doorway, and the ceiling boasts elaborate cornice and moldings. Swag and

bow stenciling pattern on the wall just below the cornice molding begins in the first floor hall and follows the stairs to the second floor. A second stencil pattern, a variation of a fleur-de-lis, follows the angle of the stair at chair rail height. The stair hall occupies approximately one-fifth of the width of the entire main block, and holds a double-run stair ascending along the east wall. An octagonal newel post anchors the stair, which rises seventeen treads to a landing, then turns and continues five treads to the second story. A closet fills the space below the staircase on the first floor.

The central stair passage plan of the dwelling contains a single room on the west side of the hall and two unequally-sized rooms on the east. Crossetted trim surrounds the eight-panel doors that lead from the hall into these rooms. This trim pattern continues throughout the first floor. The west room contains a fireplace with paneled overmantel on the west wall, flanked by shelves located in the recesses of the chimney breast. Like the other rooms on the first floor, decorative elements include baseboard, chair rail, and an elaborate cornice. The mantels and chair rail were added or modified as part of a 1919 renovation. French doors on each side of the fireplace lead to the enclosed porch.

On the northeast side of the stair hall, a paneled door with domed transom leads into a small room with a built-in china cabinet on the north wall and chair rail. A second built-in cabinet on the south wall contains three shelves and two doors. A door on the north wall of this room leads to the rear ell.

The east wall of the southeast room contains a fireplace with paneled surround and a door to the porte cochere. Two windows on the south wall and one on the south end of the east wall light the room. On the east end of the north wall is a door to the northeast room and a recessed china cabinet that aligns with the cabinet in the northeast room.

The second floor plan of the main block currently contains two equally-sized chambers on the west side of the central hall, a bathroom above the foyer, and a large bedroom with a bathroom and built-in closet on the east side of the hall. Crossetted doorways persist and the stencil pattern continues up the walls of the stair landing. A walk-through closet connecting the two west chambers contains three shelves with four drawers below. Neither of the west rooms

contain exposed fireplaces but chimney stacks with stove-pipe holes are centered on the west wall of each room. Ornamentation in these rooms is much less ornate than on the first floor with simple baseboards and trim, except in the southwest room, which boasts a decorative cornice and paneling below the windows. Each of these rooms contains a single window on the west wall, close to the central partition wall, and two windows on either the south or north elevation.

The southeast chamber boasts a fireplace with marble mantel flanked by two windows on the east wall, and two windows on the south wall. On the north wall there are two small closets in the west corner and a door to the bathroom at the east end. The northeast space on this floor, most likely an early bathroom, now contains a modern bathroom and a walk-in closet. A door in the north wall of this room, now sealed off, leads to a short flight of stairs connecting this room to the stair landing of the rear ell.

The staircase from the second floor to the third floor of the main block rises fourteen treads to a small landing, and then ascends another five stairs. Ornamentation is minimal on the third floor, but paneled doors open into each of the four rooms. Along the west wall of the hallway hang a series of servant bells, suggesting that the third floor was at one time used as service space. A single window lights the stairhall from the south wall. An open stair along the east wall of the hall displays a simple turned newel and rises nine treads to a door that accesses the roof. A small closet fills the space below the stair case and is accessed from the north side of the stair.

The floor plan of the third floor mimics that of the second floor, with two roughly equal-sized rooms on the west side of the hall and two unequal-sized rooms on the east side. The two rooms on the west side contain chimney stacks with no indication of openings for fireplaces. The stack in the northwest room shows evidence of a former mantle. The pattern of windows in these rooms is similar to those on the second floor. A narrow passage that accesses two closets fills the partition space between the two rooms.

The southeast room contains a fireplace on the east wall flanked by two windows. A closet fills the west end of the north wall in this room. A door in the east end of the north wall leads to the northeast room. Two windows light the room on the south wall. Random-width

flooring, probably earlier than the other flooring on this floor, survives in the southeast room. The northeast room does not contain a chimney stack and is lit by two windows on the north wall and one on the east wall. A door on the south wall of this room opens into a small hall that opens west into the main stair hall.

The rear ell accommodated the service functions of the house, including the kitchen on the first floor and rooms once used as servants' chambers on the second and third floors. The first floor is partitioned into two spaces: a kitchen with attached pantry and stairs, and a smaller room to the east of the kitchen, separated from it by a large chimney stack. Originally two staircases provided access to the upper floors of the ell. On the north wall of the ell a winder stair originally led from the small northern room to a second floor chamber above, terminating in that room. A second winder stair, located along the south wall between the main block and the rear ell, accessed the cellar as well as both the second and third floors of the ell. A six-panel door hides the boxed stair to the cellar. The southern stair survives but the northern one was removed in the twentieth century.

The kitchen, located in the southern end of the rear ell, has been altered at least twice during the twentieth century. Alterations include replacement of windows and exterior doors as well as the removal of the wall between the two rooms on the first floor of the ell. Major elements of the original kitchen design remain intact, however, including the pantry in the southwest corner of the kitchen (behind the stair) and the brick cooking space along the former partition wall. This chimney contains two cooking spaces--a small open hearth topped by a wooden chimney bar covered with tin, and a built-in oven. The oven, which faces into the kitchen, is engraved with the following: "M. Pond's...Boston Patent...Union...Range...1850." Modern counters and cabinets fill the central portion of the kitchen, but a set of early twentieth-century cabinets cover the south wall of the kitchen area. The pantry, accessed through a door in the west side of the south wall contains a counter at waist height that wraps around the east and south walls. Below the counter were a series of built-in storage bins, with four open shelves above allowing storage up to the ceiling.

In the small rear room, whitewash covers the arched fireplace that forms the rear of the

chimney stack. Modern renovations include a built-in closet and a bathroom as well as the removal of the original stair. A modern door opens to the exterior at the north end of the east wall. The only window in this space is a small modern octagonal window that lights the bathroom in the northwest corner.

The southern stair leads to a stair hall on the second floor that accesses the stair landing of the main block, the small northeast room in the main block, and the two rooms in the rear ell. The southern room of the ell contains a fireplace with marble mantle and a cast-iron grate in the center. The fireplace stands in the partition wall between the two rooms on this floor. The north room is accessible only from this space. The north room is plainly finished with a chimney stack protruding into the room but no indication of a fireplace opening. Originally the northern stair for the rear ell led to this room.

On the third floor the southern stair opens into a side-passage that runs along the west side of the rear ell. Two plainly finished rooms occupy this floor, neither containing fireplace openings. Shallow closets occupy the partition wall between the two rooms, on the north side of the chimney stack. Lath and plaster finishes the walls in these rooms. Four-panel doors cover the entrances to these rooms. There is no access to the third floor of the main block at this level.

In the attic of the main block, a ridge board running east-west supports the roof and is centered over a walled block. Rafters are angle cut.

The cellar, accessed only through the kitchen stair, extends below both the main block and the rear ell. The walls of the cellar exhibit evidence of earlier plasterwork over brick. The brick sits top an irregular stone foundation. Two walls, each containing four arched openings, support the two load bearing walls that support the partitions on either side of the center stair passage. Joists running east-west are notched over the sills and sit on the bearing walls. In the center of the space on the western side of the hall, plaster and lath ghosts on the underside of the floor joists extend across the full width of the building except for the center. This three-inch-wide line continues down the wall, suggesting an earlier partition.

The cellar space below the rear ell is partitioned only by the chimney stack. Evidence remains of a partition that once completely closed off these two spaces from the main block. In

the rear space a whitewashed plastered wall, herringbone brick paving, and ceiling lath and plaster ghosts survive. On the north side of the chimney stack a metal post sits between a pair of infilled squares, with fitted bricks nearby.

Outbuildings. The property contains three outbuildings: a wash house, a shed, and a garage/carriage shed all located on the north side of the house. A twentieth-century swimming pool is located northwest of the house, adjacent to the L-shaped porch that wraps around the north wall of the main block and the west wall of the rear ell.

A frame wash house sits about forty feet northwest of the house, measuring 10 feet square. A deeply overhanging hipped roof shades the walls, which are clad in horizontal siding. On the east, west, and south walls of the wash house, the siding consists of flush boards, while clapboards cover the north wall. The siding on all four walls ends in corner boards. The building rests on a brick foundation. On the south elevation, facing the house, vertical boards with a beaded edge characterize the entry door.

On the interior of the wash house, a cauldron measuring two feet in diameter occupies the northeast corner, resting on a brick foundation. Chair rail at a height of 2'8" separates a lower section of horizontal boards from the lath and plaster above. East and west windows are covered by two vertical boards with horizontal battens, metal hinges, and a metal latch. A board that rotates on a central point covers an opening in the ceiling.

A frame shed measuring 6 feet by 8 feet sits directly north of the rear ell. A frame garage/carriage house sits northeast of the house behind the driveway that accesses the porte cochere on the east elevation of the dwelling.

History: The property at 110 North Main Street belonged to Jonathan Jenkins in the 1840s. His Quaker family included younger brothers Hunn and George Jenkins, for whom he had served as trustee after their father, Jabez Jenkins, died in 1814.

Hunn Jenkins, who would eventually acquire the lot and build a three-story frame house on it, married Eliza Ann in 1832. The local Friends Meeting in Camden initially disapproved of the union, but soon reinstated Jenkins and his wife, who joined the Society. Over the next nine years, Eliza and Hunn produced four children: Cornelia, William Dolby, Ann Eliza, and Patience

Hunn.

In the winter of 1841, Hunn Jenkins and his family moved to Philadelphia, leaving Jonathan's family behind in Camden. Both families remained active with the Society of Friends. During Hunn Jenkins' absence, Jonathan Jenkins served on various business committees of the small Camden Monthly Meeting and was considered one of the church leaders. Upon moving to Philadelphia, Hunn Jenkins immediately transferred his church membership to the Cherry Hill Meeting of Friends. Another daughter, Rebecca, was born to Hunn and Eliza in 1849.

Hunn and his family returned to Camden after Jonathan Jenkins' death in 1847. Jonathan's widow, Ruth, sold two parcels to Hunn Jenkins, on which he constructed the Moldde Farm (Hunn Jenkins House). The 1852 tax assessment for Hunn lists "88 acres of land improved 20 acres in timber with a large three story frame dwelling new and in good repair, with buildings, barn, stables, carriage house & etc." This project coincided with the family's return to the Camden Meeting in August 1851.

The 1860 population census listed Hunn Jenkins as a farmer living in Camden with his wife Eliza and two minor children, Patience and Rebecca. Three Delaware natives served as house servants to the Jenkins: Elizabeth Townsend, a white woman age 25; Joshua Adams, a 12 year old black male; and Ann, a 40 year old black female.

The 1868 Beers' Atlas for Camden shows the house and one outbuilding situated on a large lot at the northernmost end of town and bounded to the northeast by Old North Road. By 1872, Jenkins and his wife lived elsewhere and rented out the house and its outbuildings to tenants.

When Hunn Jenkins died in August 1887, his trustees sold all of his property. One-half of the proceeds went to his daughter, Patience Needles of Philadelphia, and the other half was distributed among the children of his deceased daughter Cornelia J. Needles. Hunn left all household furniture and "household effects" to Patience.

As a result of the Jenkins' liquidation, the McBride family and Joseph Smith acquired the two parcels and sold them to Charles Lord around 1901. The property changed hands a number of times in the early twentieth century, and owners during this period include Charles Green, Anna

Brown and B.F. Hartman. Hartman was responsible for the construction of the enclosed porch and the porte cochere and the changes in the first-floor west room.

Sources: Physical description based on field work, including scaled field notes and photography, undertaken by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, October 1996.

Documentary research conducted by DESHPO, including Orphans Court Records, Deed Research, and Minutes of the Camden Monthly Meeting, 1830-1894.

Beers' Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868.

Kent County Tax Assessments, North Murderkill Hundred; 1845, 1852, 1860, and 1872; Delaware State Archives.

Kent County Probate Records for Jabez Jenkins (1845) and Hunn Jenkins (1887). Delaware State Archives.

U.S. Population Census, North Murderkill Hundred, 1850 and 1860.

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