MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST QA-143

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
James K. Harper House

AND/OR COMMON
Dr. Franks' Residence

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
303 North Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN
Centreville ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Ann D. Tamlyn

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER
305 North Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN
Centreville ___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21617

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: MWM 156
Folio #: 213

STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN
Centreville

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-143

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The James Harper House is located on the west side of North Commerce Street one-half block south of Academy Lane and almost directly opposite Turpins Lane.

The house is of brick construction, built in at least two major parts and with a later frame addition to the rear. The original house was three bays wide, two stories high, and two rooms deep, with a side hall, double parlor plan and a pitched gable roof. This early 19th century dwelling was enlarged to three stories in the third quarter of the 19th century. The pitched gable roof was replaced with a shed roof with a bracketed cornice. The one story frame addition to the rear probably dates to the early 20th century.

The front facade faces east to Commerce Street. The front entrance is in the north bay on the first floor, fitted with a 6-panel door and trimmed out with a five-light transom, paneled soffit and jambs, and a granite sill. There are two 6/9 windows to the left of the door, three 6/9 windows on the second floor, and three 6/6 windows on the later third story. Two cellar windows pierce the

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

foundation directly below the first floor windows.

The brickwork on the front facade is laid in Flemish bond above a three-course bond foundation. The window openings have splayed jack arch lintels one brick high. On the first floor the window openings have been enlarged approximately two inches on each jamb. The brickwork of the original building is quite similar to that found on other brick dwellings constructed in the first two decades of Centreville's existence. The bricks are somewhat larger than usual, and the coursing is very precise, bearing comparison in particular to two houses constructed on South Commerce Street in the mid-1790's (see QA-150 and QA-151).

The added third story is also brick, laid in six-course bond with smaller, machine-made bricks. The eaves are trimmed in with scrolled brackets applied to a plain frieze board below a box cornice with a deep soffit.

An entrance porch with square, chamfered posts and a standing seam hip roof protects the front door.

On the south gable wall, there are no openings on the first floor. Tall narrow 4/6 windows pierce the second story at the extreme left and right. A bricked-up opening in the center of the third story was evidently an attic window in the upper gable of

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

the original building. When the third story was added, 6/6 windows were positioned directly above the two second story openings. The original brickwork is laid in three- and five-course bond with numerous randomly placed glazed headers. The approximate outline of the original gable remains visible, with the east section of the added third story laid with later machine-made brick, and the west section laid with reused hand-made brick. The chimney stack has been rebuilt and painted, now forming a single long, low stack in the center of the gable wall. The bracketed cornice is carried across the entire gable wall, passing in front of the chimney.

On the north gable wall, there are two 6/9 windows on the first and second floor and one 6/6 window in the center of the later third story. An original bulkhead cellar entrance is centered below the east window on the first floor; a six-light cellar window is centered below the west window.

The brickwork is laid in five-course bond with random glazed bricks. The upper gable was evidently demolished when the third story was added, and the entire upper story is laid with machine-made brick in common bond. The bracketed cornice is carried across the gable wall.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

A one story frame addition covers the first floor of the rear facade. The original rear door and two 6/9 windows remain in place on the first floor, but now open into the rear wing. On the second story, the north window is down-set over the stair landing, and has been reduced to a single six-light opening due to the roof of the later wing. The original 6/9 window remains intact in the south bay. There are two 6/6 windows on the later third story.

The original brickwork is laid in five-course bond. On the third story, early bricks from the demolished upper gable of the north wall have been reused to within six courses of the eave. Above that point machine-made brick is laid in common bond. The bracketed cornice is carried across the rear facade.

The first floor plan consists of a side hall along the north gable and two parlors to the south. The hall is nominally divided into a front entrance and a rear stair hall by a simple pilastered arch. The rear hall is about eight inches wider to allow more room for the stairway. The stairs rise against the north wall to a landing on the rear wall. It is an open-string stair with square balusters and a simple molded walnut rail. The stair ends are decorated with simple scrolled brackets and the area below the carriage is paneled.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

A four-panel door under the stair landing opens onto an original cellar stair. A handsome hand-wrought thumb latch survives on this door.

The arched opening in the hall is framed with paneled pilasters below a simple cap and a plain arch with a plastered soffit. Blocks in the center of the arch suggest keystone blocks, and it is possible that molded keystone blocks and a molded architrave have been removed. In general, the arch has a distinctly Greek feel to it, in contrast to the Federal woodwork evident throughout the house.

The window openings on the north wall of the hall have splayed reveals but are not paneled. The door and window architraves consist of a beaded, broken-field fascia with a cove/fillet backband. A two-piece chairrail with a broken-field fascia and a beaded baseboard encircle the room.

The original rear entrance remains intact, with fully fielded 6-panel door, paneled soffit and jambs, and a granite sill.

Fully fielded six-panel doors with Carpenter Company box locks open into the two parlors to the south of the hall. A large door opening joins the two south rooms. In the front parlor, the fireplace is offset slightly to the right of center, flanked by

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

recessed alcoves. The mantel is a large board surround with plain pilasters, sideblocks and center block below a complex Federal shelf that breaks forward above the blocks.

The front window openings have been enlarged and the original splayed jambs replaced with plain jambs and mid-19th century architraves. The door to the hall is framed with the same Federal architrave found in the hall. The large opening leading to the rear parlor has a Federal architrave with broken-field fascia and ovolo backband.

In the rear parlor, the fireplace is offset to the left of center. The mantel is a relatively small board surround with a cove/astragal backband framing the opening, and plain sideblocks and frieze below a molded Federal shelf that breaks forward above the sideblocks. To the left of the fireplace is a tall, narrow built-in cupboard with a single three-panel door framed with an ogee/astragal backband. A simple cupboard has been constructed in the alcove to the right of the fireplace utilizing three raised panels across the top of the opening, evidently all that remains of an original cupboard. The original 6/9 windows survive on the rear facade, now opening into the rear wing. These windows have plain splayed jambs and Federal

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.6 DESCRIPTION

architrave trim with an ovolo backband. It is interesting to note that the six-panel door to the hall has a more elaborate panel mold profile and is set in an architrave with the same ogee/astragal backband found on the small cupboard next to the fireplace.

The second floor stair hall is partitioned to form a small chamber at the east end, now utilized as a modern bath. The stair is identical in detail to the front floor stair but without decorative brackets on the stair ends. The original frame for the window over the stair landing remains intact, but the lower 9-light sash has been blocked due to the roof of the rear addition. All of the second story windows have plain splayed jambs and beaded architrave trim with an ogee/astragal backband. A simple two-piece chairrail encircles the hall, but the chambers evidently never had a chairrail. The beaded baseboard has survived in all four rooms.

In the southeast chamber, the fireplace is offset to right of center, with an original two-door built-in cupboard to the right. The mantel is a simple board surround with an unusual ogee/astragal backband framing the opening, a plain frieze without sideblocks and a relatively simple molded shelf. The cupboard is fitted with one large 2-panel door above a smaller single

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.7 DESCRIPTION

panel door, framed with a rabbeted architrave and cove/astragal backband. The six-panel door to the hall is fitted with an early metal box lock with small brass knobs but no makers marks. Peeling paint on the front window frames has revealed early if not original grey-green paint.

In the rear or southwest chamber, the fireplace is offset to left of center. A tall narrow cupboard to the left of the fireplace is fitted with a three-panel door, similar to the cupboard in the corresponding position on the first floor. The mantel is a board surround with an ogee/astragal backband framing the opening, which is now blocked up. Plain sideblocks are positioned at either end of a plain frieze, below a simple molded shelf. The door to the hall has a more elaborate panel mold identical to the hall door on the first floor rear parlor, and is fitted with a metal box lock with brass handles. The architrave trim in this room is the same cove/fillet profile found in the first floor hall.

The third story flooring and the trim framing the stairs survives from the original house, but the partitions and exterior walls date to the later alterations. The floor plan is similar to the second floor, with two large unheated chambers to the south

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.8 DESCRIPTION

and a small unheated chamber at the east end of the hall. The trim and doors are typical of the post-Civil War period. A trap door in the ceiling of the hall has been sealed permanently.

The cellar is divided into two rooms by a brick partition parallel to the front facade. The rear chimney base has a large cooking fireplace with one ring fitting for an iron crane. The chimney base in the front room has a relieving arch but no fireplace. The ceiling joists are hewn and whip-sawn and are set parallel to the gable walls below the two parlors and parallel to the facade below the hall. The front and rear joists are joined with an unusual pegged scarf joint just east of the center partition wall. The joists and floorboards above are whitewashed; the ceiling has never been plastered. From the cellar stairs, it is possible to observe double-struck nails in the framing of the first floor stairs.

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This brick Federal house was constructed circa 1820 on a quarter-acre lot purchased in September 1819 by Dr. James K. Harper. It was enlarged from two or 2 1/2 stories to three stories in the latter half of the 19th century, by the Duhamel family, which owned the property from 1856 until 1908.

The interior of the original house is relatively untouched, with the majority of the original trim intact, including four Federal mantels, an open-string stair, three built-in cupboards and most of the architrave trim, baseboard and chairrail still in nearly pristine condition. Early six-panel doors with early box locks also survive, and several interior openings are trimmed with paneled soffits and jambs. When the third story was added, the pitched gable roof was replaced with a shallow pitch shed roof. The third story

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

is relatively plainly decorated with stock Victorian trim.

The house stands on a quarter acre lot purchased by James Edmondson from Elizabeth Nicholson in 1794 for £12.10.0.[1] Edmondson, a cabinetmaker, did not build on the lot, selling it to Thomas Wickersham of Chester County, Pennsylvania for £20.[2] Wickersham is listed as the owner of an unimproved quarter-acre lot on the 1797 tax assessment, valued at $16.[3] Wickersham also failed to develop the lot and evidently failed to attract the attention of the tax assessors, for his name drops from the assessment lists and the lot also disappears until 1821. In September 1819, Thomas Wickersham sold the property to Dr. James K. Harper for $50. In 1821, Harper appears at the bottom of the assessment list as the owner of 1/4 acre of Lot 33 North improved, with a value of $1400 and a second 1/4 acre of Lot 33 improved and valued at $150.[4] There seems little doubt that the first entry refers to the recently completed brick house. In 1832 a valuation was filed for Christopher Cox Harper, a minor child, presumably indicating that Dr. Harper had died. This valuation includes the following description of the property:

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

> "...We value the lot of ground in Centreville on front street containing one-fourth of an acre at $90 (per annum) on said lot there is a two story brick dwelling house 23 by 30 feet with a back framed shed room 15 by 16 feet in good repair, a framed smoke house 10 by 12 feet in good repair and a small framed privy, the garden enclosed with post and rails except on one side, which is open to the adjoining lot. We estimate the lot of arable land near the academy containing one acre at eight dollars, the enclosure very indifferent. We estimate the lot of arable land at the south end of the town containing 1 3/8 acre at ten dollars enclosure indifferent...(5)

In 1840, the property is assessed to Christopher Cox Harper, valued at $1500.(6) In 1851, Dr. James K. Harper and Dr. C. Cox Harper joined in a deed conveying the property to William H.D.C. Wright of Baltimore for $1500.(7) Two days later William Wright deeded the property to Alphonso Wright(8) and in 1856 Alphonso Wright sold the property to Margaret C. Duhamel, again for $1500.(9)

The house and property remained in the Duhamel family until 1908, when the heirs of Margaret Duhamel sold it to W.F. Anthony for $1600.(10) The property has passed through a number of owners since that time.(11)

Footnotes

(1) Deeds STW 3, folio 99. October 11, 1794.

(2) Deeds STW 3, folio 510. March 7, 1796.

(3) Proceedings of the Centreville Town Commissioners, 1797-1876. The tax list describes the lot as "half of Lot 33 North, 1/4 acre unimproved". According to the deed, Wickershams Lot was part of Lot 34 North. This seems to be an error on the part of the tax assessors and there is little doubt that this is the same lot.

(4) ibid.

(5) Valuations WHN 4, folio 402, Sept. 6, 1832. (Hall of Records).

(6) Centreville Tax Assessments 1820-1860. (Hall of Records).

(7) Deeds JT 6, folio 628. May 28, 1851.

(8) Deeds JT 6, folio 632. May 30, 1851.

(9) Deeds JP 2, folio 507. January 1, 1856.

(10) Deeds SS 5, folio 565. December 31, 1908.

(11) See Deeds JFR 3, folio 241. November 5, 1919.
ASG Jr. 1, folio 464. Aug. 17, 1939.
ASG Jr. 14, f. 341. July 17, 1946.
BP 61, folio 318. July 17, 1961.
CWC 11¼, folio 265. Nov. 3, 1976.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE
10/13/81

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN
Centreville

STATE
Maryland

Field Notebook QA-XIX; Recorded October 9, 1980.

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

QA-143 Dr. Franks Residence
303 North Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout 1981
Front facade from Northeast

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Dr. Franks Residence
303 North Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout V 1981
Rear facade from West