

Dr. Frederick Crounse House
Gun Club Road at Main Street/Opposite Danvers Road
Altamont, Albany County
May 2018

SYNOPSIS

Early Greek Revival-style timber-frame wood dwelling consisting of a two story gable-ended main block and a story-and-a-half rear ell, to which an addition was subsequently made. The three-bay façade of the main block retains its original entrance treatment and later historic-period 2/2 wood sash. Historic-era interior finishes in the main block include an original wood mantelpiece, moulded wood door and window architraves, wood flooring, and much of the original open-stringer staircase. Plaster on split-board lath survives in some areas but has failed in others. The ell is badly deteriorated with a substantial roof failure and may be a complete loss given the deterioration of the framing and continual water penetration.

A target restoration date, corresponding with what is termed the building's period of significance in the context of the National Register of Historic Places, should be developed. Any and all historic-era fabric which predates this target date should be retained or otherwise faithfully replicated, and all material post-dating it can be safely removed and disposed of. In the short term, efforts should be immediately made to limit further damage to the building from water penetration, particularly the main block roof.

EXTERIOR

Assess whether any exterior wood siding (mostly contained under later covering) is salvageable for potential reuse/consolidation;

The raking cornices with modillions (gable end elevations, main block) are an original ornamental detail and are an important character-defining feature; they should be salvaged if possible or otherwise faithfully replicated. There were likely also cornice returns on the gable ends and if so, these have been removed; "ghosts" would confirm their presence;

The 2/2 wood window sash, while not original, is nevertheless considered historic in the context of the house's historic evolution; they are likely later nineteenth or very early twentieth century in date;

Retain original recessed Greek Revival-style frontispiece with paneled pilasters, sidelights and transom; it and the six-panel wood door are original to the house's construction.

Retain foundation, repairing stone where necessary;

Consider retention of concrete steps from roadway; assess

INTERIOR MAIN BLOCK

The overall room layout is intact to the historic period and should be retained as part of any rehabilitation work. Secondary spaces such as rear rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms have a greater degree of flexibility when it comes to minor alterations or insertion of modern fixtures and appliances.

The entrance/stair hall retains the original open-stringer staircase alignment in addition to evidence of the original newel post/baluster/handrail configuration. The staircase should be retained in its original position and missing components should be faithfully replicated to the extent possible;

The front parlor (southwest room adjacent to hallway) was the house's principal formal space, and it retains areas of plaster on split-board lath finish (condition should be carefully assessed) in addition to wide-board wood flooring, a wood mantel of transitional Federal-Greek Revival style characteristics, and an arched aperture which leads into the room behind (original dining room?). The mantel, wood door and window architraves, and beaded baseboards are important historic-period features and should be retained. Original paneled doors should also be retained throughout;

The room behind the front parlor retains historic-period plaster and wood finish; retain all historic finishes where possible;

Second-story bedchamber, above the front parlor, has seen a major failure of its plaster on lath ceiling. It nevertheless retains original wood baseboards and door and window architraves, which should be retained.

The timber frame construction would also be considered a historic character defining feature. Any repairs should be done with traditional methods or with modern materials and techniques in a sensitive and minimally invasive way.

SITE: The site/situation of the building on the property and its immediate surroundings should be considered. Any additions, outbuildings, or other landscape features should be appropriately designed and located so as not to diminish the historic appearance of the building and its association with the immediate landscape and setting.