

Slave Housing Data Base

Building Name: Berry Plain – Frame Duplex Building

Evidence Type: Extant

County: King George

State: Virginia

Investigators: Andrew Stempel; Doug Sanford; Gary Stanton; Dennis Pogue

Institutions: Center for Historic Preservation – University of Mary Washington; Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

Project Start: 7/3/07

Project End: 7/3/07

Summary Description:

The Berry Plain duplex is a frame, 1.5-story, side-gable roofed building measuring approximately 15 ft. wide (north-south) by 29 ft. 9 in. long. The plan consists of two rooms on the first floor with two rooms above, each with brick fireplaces served by a central brick chimney. Each first-floor room has an exterior doorway on the front (south) façade, with a window positioned in the opposite wall. An interior doorway connects the two rooms through the frame partition on the north side of the fireplace, although this opening relates to a second period of remodeling. The roof has a standing seam metal covering, a later replacement. Dating evidence is based on the use of fully formed machine-cut nails, suggesting an antebellum period association, likely circa 1830s or later. Indirect, but not positive dating evidence derives from the absence of this building on fire insurance policies for the property dating to 1805 and 1816.

This structure underwent a variety of alterations that were carried out in the 19th and 20th-centuries, including repairs to the foundation, inserting an upstairs doorway and window in the west gable, and replacing the exterior vertical siding. Framing evidence on the interior suggests that this duplex originally had an unusual interior division consisting of four rooms, two to each side of the chimney, with only the inner rooms heated and measuring only 4.5 to 6 feet wide. Evidence for the partitions consists of empty stud mortises in the joists. In Room 1 the placement of the mortises and the presumed partition wall associated with them conflicts with the current location of the west exterior doorway. In the second period, the earlier side partitions were removed to produce the current two-room plan; the central partition was left largely in place. It is likely that the rear (north) windows were added in this second period and that the stairway was narrowed and enclosed. The upstairs flooring was altered at this time, with reused sash-sawn and gauged boards put in place. Scalloped trim boards along the eaves, at the gable ends of the roof, and at the top level of the first floor on the exterior end walls also likely date from the second period, marking a degree of Victorian styling that accompanied the vertical exterior siding. Interior spaces show brick nogging and whitewash. At present, there is evidence for only one staircase (in the eastern room) providing access to the two rooms in the garret.

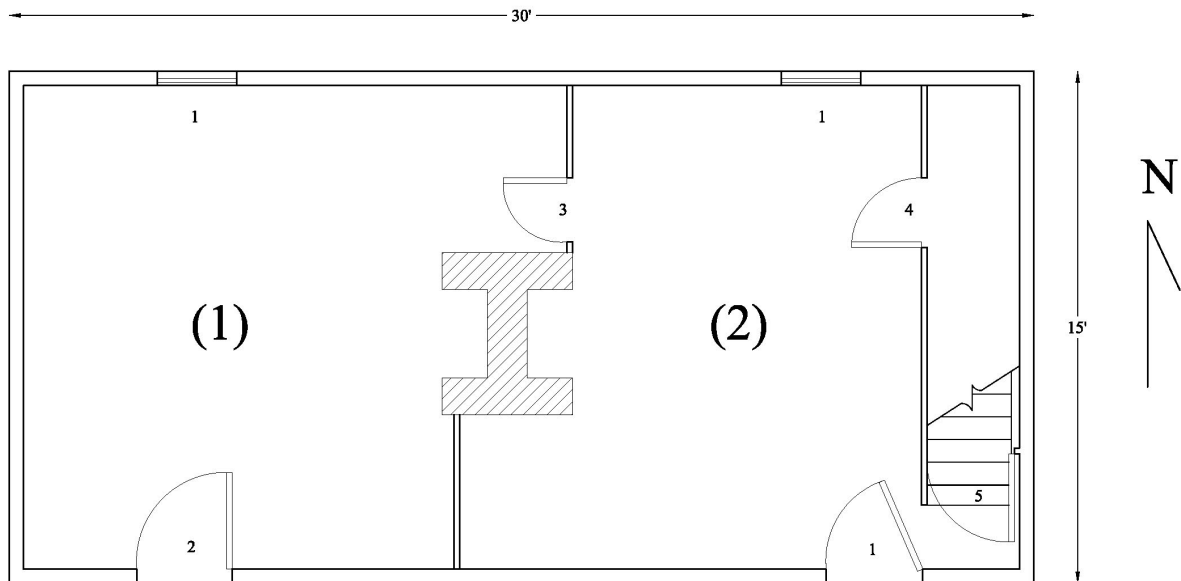
Notes:

The current owner replaced the vertical board siding and scalloped verge boards and trim with in-kind materials and at the same scale. Note open cornice at present, with evidence for earlier boxed cornice (nail holes and ghost marks). Distance of 69 ft. 2 in. from the SW corner of the “kitchen quarter” to the SE corner of this building.

There is evidence for interior partitions and doorways in each of the current downstairs rooms: Room 1 (west half of building) – from north plate to north edge of mortise in ceiling joist – 5 ft. 4 in; with mortise ~4 in. wide (north-south). Room 2 (east half) – from north plate to north edge of mortise in ceiling joist – 8 ft. 6 in; with mortise ~4 in. wide (north-south, w/square nail hole). From west end plate to joist indicating interior partition – 4 ft. 5 in. From east end plate to ceiling joist indicating interior partition – 6 ft. (possibly related to earlier, larger stair construction). Partition and current west doorway are in conflict. Current interior partition lumber and attic flooring look to be reused, gauged flooring boards. At west doorway – ghost marks indicated doorway originally ~3 in. lower in height. East room in attic has an exposed ceiling and interior whitewash, while the west room has been altered with lapped planking on walls and ceiling. West room is 6 ft. 8 in. high at center (under gable roof peak). Knee wall in attic is 2 ft. high.

Principal Construction Type: Frame

Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 4 (2 down, 2 up)

- Dimensions:** (1) West room (Rm. 1): 12 ft. 5 in. (E-W) x 14 ft. 4 in. (N-S)
(2) East room (Rm. 2): 12 ft. 6 in. (E-W) x 14 ft. 5.5 in. (N-S)
(3) East upstairs: 12 ft. 9.5 in. (E-W) x 14 ft. 3.5 in. (N-S)
(4) West upstairs: 12 ft. 8.5 in. (E-W) x 14 ft. 6 in. (N-S);
6 ft. 8 in. (H)

Period: I

Number of Rooms: 6 (4 down, 2 up) – based on assumption that two earlier, interior partitions existed

- Dimensions:** (1) 4'-5" x 14'-4"
 (2) 7'-0" x 14'-4"
 (3) 10'-6" x 14'-5 ½"
 (4) 6' x 14'-5 ½"
 (5) 12'-9½" (E-W) x 14'-3½" (east upstairs room)
 (6) 12'-8" (E-W) x 14'-6" (west upstairs room)

Doors: 6 (2 exterior, 4 interior); Door #6 is a modern insertion in the center of the west end wall (garret).

	(1) Rm. 2	(2) Rm. 1	(3) Partition
Type:	Vertical boards	Vertical boards	Vertical boards
Dimensions:	2 ft. 10 in. (W) x 6 ft. 9.5 in. (H)	2 ft. 10 in. (W) x 6 ft. 8.5 in. (H)	2 ft. 1 in (W) x 6 ft. 1 in. (H)
Hardware:	Modern butt hinges; hook/hasp	Modern butt hinges; hook/hasp	Modern butt wrought butterflyhinge; replaced nailed leather
Swing:	In	In	Out (into Rm. 1)
Replacement:			Insertion into interior partition

	(4) Stair closet	(5) Stairway	(6) East gable
Type:	Board & batten	Board & batten	Board & batten
Dimensions:	2 ft. 0.5 in. (W) x 5 ft. 6.5 in. (H)	2 ft. 0.5 in. x 5 ft. 2.5 in. (H)	2 ft. 10.5 in. (W) x 6 ft. 1 in. (H)
Hardware:	H/L & butt hinge	Wood latch; H-hinge & strap hinge on pintle	Modern butt hinge
Swing:	Out	Out	In

Replacement:			Modern insertion
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Windows: 5 (2 down, 3 up (attic)). Windows 1 and 2 likely are Phase II insertions, as is the attic window in the west gable end.

	(1) Rm. 1	(2) Rm. 2	(3) East attic
Type:	6/6; double-hung sash	6/6; double-hung sash	2/2; Fixed
Dimensions:	2 ft. 3 in. (W) x 2 ft. 10 in. (H)	2 ft. 3 in. (W) x 2 ft. 10 in. (H)	1 ft. 8 in. (W) x 2 ft. 0 in. (H)
Hardware:	None	None	None
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	N/A	N/A	N/A

	(4) East upstairs	(5) West upstairs
Type:	2/2; Fixed	2/2; Casement
Dimensions:	1 ft. 8 in. (W) x 2 ft. 0 in. (H)	1 ft. 8 in. (W) x 2 ft. 1 in. (H)
Hardware:	None	Butt hinge, simple metal latch
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	N/A	Swing in

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Continuous Masonry: Brick (largely replaced by concrete)
Thickness: Approx. 9 in.

Height: Less than 1 ft., only observable at SW corner
Bond: Insufficient courses observable
Mortar Type: Sand
Joint: Not observable
Repaired: Yes

Shed/Porch: No

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

Roof Covering: Metal – standing seam (modern replacement)

Roof Framing:

Exposed: Yes

Form: Common Rafters

Rafter Number: 8 pairs visible in upper east room. 1 pair from east end noted as lapped and pegged; others butted and spiked.

Rafter Dimensions: ~ 3 x 3.5 in. (2.5 to 3 in. x 3.25 x 3.5 in.). Pairs are 26 to 28 in. apart on center.

Collar Ties: Yes (largely removed)

Walls:

Frame:

Material: Wood

Cladding: Vertical (circular sawn)

Beaded: No

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1): Has 4 hearths (2 down, 2 up), simple molded cap. Rafter evidence suggests chimney was expanded, with 7th rafter pair (from east end) cut to accommodate larger stack. Note empty collars and collar fragment. Original stack approx. 22 in. wide.

Material: Brick

Location: Interior/Center

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Exposed – Nogged (with brick). Note later infilling with vertical boards to replace nogging.

Wall Finish: Whitewash (in both earlier and later periods)

Fireplace (1): Room 1 (west), Center - on east medial wall/partition.

Fireplace Material: Brick

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: Chimney base measures 3 ft. 6 in. (E-W) x 4 ft. 8 in. (N-S).

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 2 ft. 7 in. (W) x ? (H) x 1 ft. 1.5 in. (D)

Hearth Material: Other (mortar or cement)

Hearth Dimensions: 4 ft. 8.5 in. (L) x 3 ft. 9 in. (W)

Fireplace (2): Room 2 (east), Center - on west medial wall/partition.

Fireplace Material: Brick

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: (see above)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 2 ft. 6.5 in. (W) x ? (H) x 1 ft. 2 in. (D)

Hearth Material: Other (mortar or cement)

Hearth Dimensions: 5 ft. 11 in. (L) x 2 ft. 5 in. (W)

Fireplace (3): West upstairs room; Center – on interior partition wall.

Fireplace Material: Brick

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 2 ft. 6 in. (W) x 2 ft. 5.5 in. (H) x 1 ft. 1 in. (D)

Hearth Material: Brick

Fireplace (3): East upstairs room; Center – on interior partition wall.

Fireplace Material: Brick

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 2 ft. 5.5 in. (W) x 2 ft. 6.75 in. (H)
x 1 ft. 1 in. (D)

Hearth Material: Brick

Stairs: Yes – at east end of building, Rm. 2, against east end wall, starting from the SE corner

Type: Enclosed

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood

Dating: Based on fully formed machine-cut nails, suggests an antebellum period association, likely ca. 1830s or later.

Dendrochronology Date: none

Other Date: Indirect, but not positive dating evidence derives from the absence of this building on fire insurance policies of 1805 and 1816.

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Sash sawn on original material; circular sawn on replacements and additions

Nails: Machine cut in original members; wire nails in replacements and additions