

II. Physical Description

The Hunsicker House is a multi-additive building facing roughly west-northwest and oriented perpendicular to Heckler Road. It consists of a two-part main block with a two-part wing on the south end. The house has roughly 3,200 square feet of space: 1,664 on the first floor and 1,551 on the second floor plus additional basement and attic space. The ground rises to the west, allowing a basement door on the east elevation of the north section to open onto grade. A mound approximately five feet in diameter just west of the house indicates the location of a well, no longer in use.

In the following detailed description, the exterior of the Hunsicker House is described first, followed by a description of the interior. The exterior description begins with a general description first, followed by a detailed survey of architectural elements from the top down.



Photo 1. Hunsicker House, west elevation.

Exterior

The Hunsicker House is comprised of a two-part main block, a two-part south block, and a frame section (See Figure 1 and Photo 1). Its overall dimensions, including all sections and porches, are 69'x50'. The main block is comprised of a two-story, four-bay brick center section (c. 1834) and a two-story, two-bay stone north section (c. 1845). The south block is comprised of a two-story, two-bay stone south section (c. 1770) and a two-story stone section that

connects the core to the main block (c. 1845). Twentieth century alterations to the south section have obliterated many architectural details which would otherwise convey more of its history. The one-story frame section dates to the early twentieth century and is an enclosed portion of the porch on the east elevation. Interior modifications to the various sections have obscured or eliminated some architectural details, particularly in the south section.

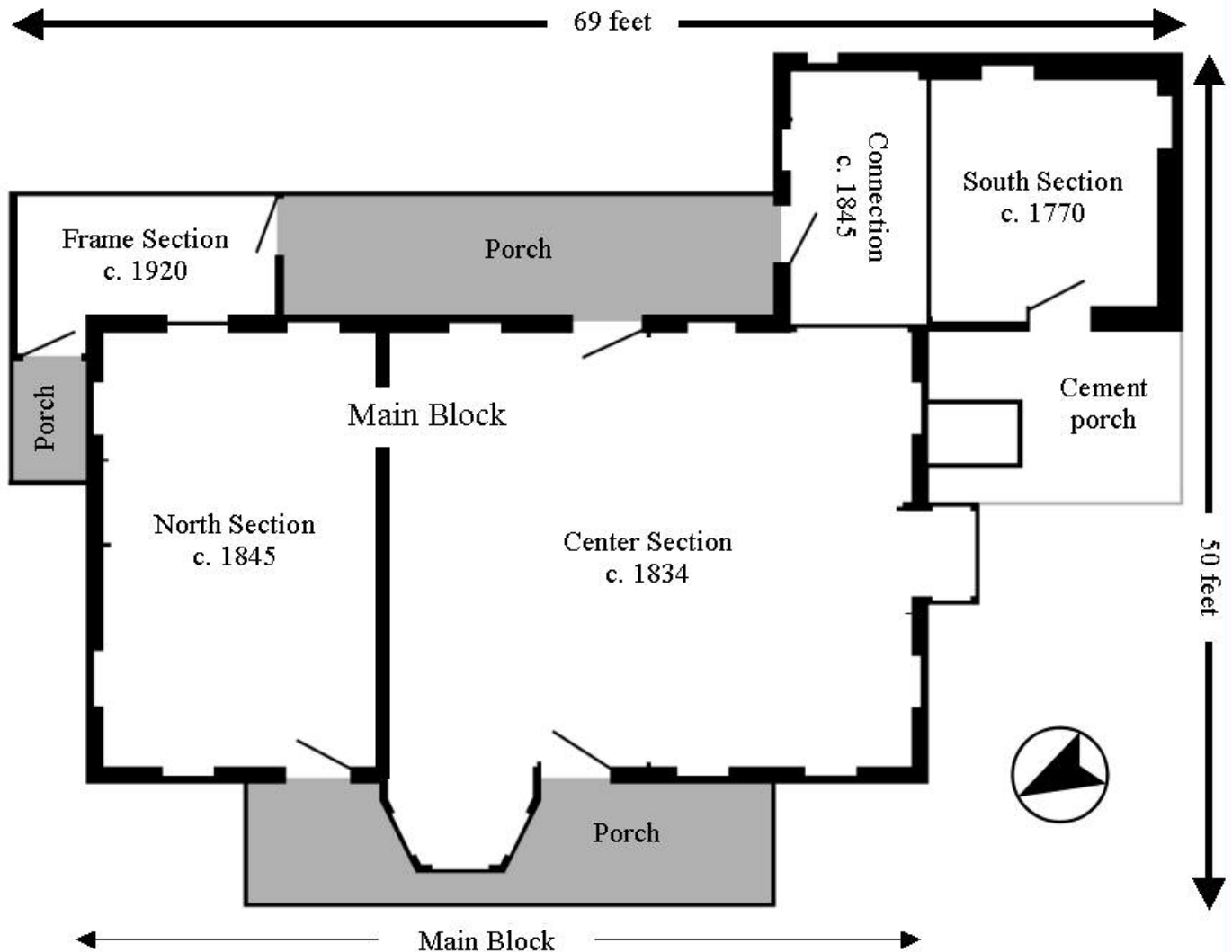


Figure 1. Footprint of the Hunsicker House. Open porches are shaded.

Main Block (c. 1834 and 1845)

The main block is the two-story, six-bay brick element facing roughly WNW and oriented perpendicular to Heckler Road. It is comprised of an Early Republican center section and the Penn Plan-like north section. The main block has an end-gabled roof clad with asphalt shingles. Three brick chimneys originally pierced the roof near the ends of the ridge and at the seam between the two sections; however, the end chimneys have been reduced below the roofline, leaving only the chimney marking the seam between the two sections still visible from

the exterior. The center chimney served an oil furnace that was installed in the early twentieth century. A molded cornice connects the roof to the wall surface, and the molding of the north section is identical to that of the center section. The main block has brick and stone walls. The center section has brick walls painted white, with the eastern elevation and the portion of the wall under the porch on the west elevation stuccoed. The north section has stone walls clad with a double layer of thick stucco. Windows are primarily 1x1 replacement units with a slightly protruding lintel and pintles for shutters. Boards nailed onto the sills have been painted black and provide some protection for the original sills. Each exterior elevation is described separately below.



Photo 2. West and part of south elevations of House.

West Elevation (Photo 2)

The west elevation is the historic “front” of the house (Photo 1). The center section and the north section together form a two-story, six-bay elevation with a bay window between doors on the front porch. The wall of the center section is painted brick. The brick is laid in common bond, with five courses of headers between each course of stretchers. Overall, the brick has a low-quality consistency; the patina has exfoliated in several places, allowing the brick to deteriorate. The brick wall was apparently painted white after the construction of the north section, based on the observation that the north wall (now the interior wall of the north section) is not painted. (Several reasons have been produced to explain the painting of the brick walls, including an attempt to imitate prevailing styles, matching the stucco, or protecting the already

deteriorating brick.) The wall surface under the porch is covered with stucco, scored horizontally and vertically to resemble ashlar masonry. This decorative feature, along with the thick base molding, was probably added in the late nineteenth century when the bay window was added. The wall of the north section is stucco over stone.

Fenestration is somewhat symmetrical, with most windows aligned vertically; the horizontal spacing is a little less regular. Windows are 1x1 replacement units, retaining the original double-beaded and pegged frames with shutter pintles. [The shutters associated with the house were stored in the barn and were lost when the barn was demolished and removed for the development.] A sill board was installed on the outside of the sill (probably early twentieth century), and most of these sill boards are painted black.

A dominant feature of the west elevation is the front porch. The one-story porch stretches along four bays of the elevation and has several important features, including the entrances and an octagonal bay window. The porch covers the northernmost three bays of the center section and the door in the southern bay of the north section. The porch has a hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles. (“Ghost” markings on the brick wall surface indicate that the porch was originally constructed with a shed profile and was later altered to a hipped profile.) Two pilasters and five columns form the support of the roof system. Each column or pilaster has a dossier six feet above ground level, with the shaft chamfered both above and below the dossier. The original base of each column has been removed. The concrete floor of the porch is a rectangular unit measuring 29’x7’4” which has suffered water damage around its entire aris.

The bay is a Victorian three-panel unit. It has brick walls and large 1x1 windows. These three windows do not have pintles for shutters, unlike the earlier window frames. The bay, like the wall surface under the porch, is stuccoed and scored.

There are two entrances on the west elevation of the main block. The primary entrance is located just south of the bay window (Photo 3). A Greek Revival Style door surround (consistent with the age of the house) consists of a bulls-eye in the upper corners, a fluted jamb and lintel board, and a simple base. A four-light transom is located over the door. The door itself has a window above the lock rail and two panels below.

The entrance into the north section is located near the north end of the porch. It, too, has a Greek Revival Style surround, with a set of bulls-eyes at the upper corners of the door and a second set at the upper corners of the transom. The jambs and the lintel



Photo 3. Main entrance, west elevation.

board are fluted like those on the center section. The architrave of the door has a mid-nineteenth century molded panel pattern found on some of the interior doors. The door has a large window above its lock rail.

Along the base of the wall surface under the porch, a late-nineteenth century spiked baseboard molding is installed on the exterior (Photo 4). The molding also runs around the bay window, and an area of failing brick on the bay window has an exposed nailing board in the brick wall, indicating that the molding was installed at the time the bay window was constructed.



Photo 4. Exterior baseboard molding on porch, west elevation.



Photo 4a. South elevation of house, showing the main block (L) and the south section (R).

South elevation (Photo 4a)

The south end wall of the main block (center section) retains many of the characteristics of the west elevation of the center section. The molded cornice is highly visible on this wall and features a cornice return (Photo 6). The painted brick wall has several areas of damage, with some brick in need of replacement. Fenestration is roughly symmetrical. The first floor has a rectangular bay window flanked by windows, and the second floor and attic level have two windows. The early twentieth century bay (Photo 5) is a 6'x3' element with a shed roof and a brick foundation. Below the window on each panel is an area of flush vertical siding. [Note: It is unclear what was originally located here. The presence of the chimney suggests that a fireplace was located on the first floor, but there is no evidence of a hearth support in the basement. It is possible that a heating stove was vented through a chimney corbelling out from the wall here. Markings on the exterior wall indicate that a porch was once located here, shading a door.] It has a large window unit on its south panel and smaller windows on the end panels. Windows on the first and second floors are 1x1 replacement units with the double-beaded frame and pintles. Attic windows are four-light units hinged on one jamb. The bulkhead to the basement is located east of the bay window.



Photo 5. Bay window on south end of center section.



Photo 6. Detail of deteriorating cornice on south end of center section.

East elevation (Photo 7)

The east elevation of the main block is somewhat less formal than the west elevation and is the historic “back” of the house. Due to the location of the Connection covering the southern bay of the elevation, the east elevation appears to be a two-story, five-bay section. Elements found on the west elevation repeated here include the roofing, cornice system, and brick and

stone walls. The wall is covered with stucco except for the painted brick of the center section. The wall openings visible on each floor are arranged more symmetrically than those on the western elevation. Windows are 1x1 units with the double-beaded surrounds and unused pintles. The door opening into the center section has a similar surround to that on the west elevation (bulls-eye in the upper corners, fluted frame, simple base) but does not include a transom. The door itself, which appears to be original, has two arched-headed windows above the lock rail and two panels below.



Photo 7. East elevation of House, showing south section (L) and main block (R) .

A one-story, full-length wooden porch is attached to the east and part of the north elevations of the main block. A portion of the porch attached to the north section has been enclosed as the frame section. Due to the slope of the grade away from the house, the porch floor is one foot above grade at its southwestern corner while it is seven feet above grade at its northeastern corner. The porch has a shed roof clad with asphalt shingles. Four



Photo 8. Stone wall supporting porch on east elevation; note structural failure.

chamfered columns support the ends of the roof, and the columns are connected by a series of four rails. The floor is narrow tongue-and-groove boards. A stone wall originally constructed as a foundation (Photo 8) is leaning to the north and no longer serves the purpose.

The basement level, visible mainly on the north section, has a historic Dutch door north of an intact 6x6 window. This door and window look out under the frame section, an extension of the porch on the east elevation.

North elevation (Photo 9)

The cornice retains the molding pattern of the center section and includes similar cornice returns on the north end wall. When the north section was constructed, the builders used the same cornice molding as that on the center section. The splice is visible on both east and west elevations. Windows are aligned on the first and second floors, and the smaller four-light attic windows (original units) are only slightly shifted to the center of the elevation. A portion of the frame section wraps around the northeast corner, covering a small part of the north elevation. Under the frame section, part of the foundation wall is visible (Photo 10). Here, a 6x6 basement window (which appears to be original) indicates the type of window probably found throughout the north section at the time of its construction. This window has an early-to-mid nineteenth century muntin profile.



Photo 9. North elevation of House. Frame section on left.



Photo 10. Detail of porch on north end of north section over original basement window.

South Section and Connection (Photos 11 and 12)

The south section (c. 1770) is a one-and-a-half story, two-bay stone section. It appears that this was the original section of the house, containing a single room measuring 16'x15'. The section was enlarged c. 1845 when the Connection was built to provide access into the center section. The two sections form a block and are described together here. The front-gabled roof is clad with asphalt shingles. Originally, the section had a symmetrical gabled roof; the construction of the connection caused the northern slope of the roof to be raised in order to provide headroom on the second floor. Another original feature was a chimney in the southeastern corner; it was entirely removed, leaving only a portion of the hearth support in the basement. The walls of the section are stucco over stone. The section has a simple bargeboard and cornice connecting the roof to the wall surface.

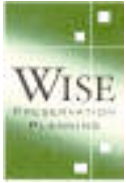


Photo 11. West elevation of south section.

Fenestration is asymmetrical due to the presence of the connection. Windows are 1x1 replacement units, as found elsewhere in the house complex. Window frames on the west, south, and east elevations have a decorative piece of quarter-round molding rather than the double-beaded frame, which is found on the window on the north elevation and on the windows on the center section and north section. A 1x1 window is located in the peak of the gable on both end walls. The current “front” of the section is



Photo 12. South section, facing northwest. The area under the flatter roof extent is the Connection.



the west elevation. Here, the door is located under a late twentieth century gabled hood and south of a paired window; the door is a replacement unit. The door has a simple, un-paneled architrave and opens onto a concrete pad one foot above ground level with steps leading to grade on the west and south elevations. A second door on the north elevation leads from the center section into the connection. This door has a simple architrave and a window above its lock rail. Note: This section has undergone many alterations from its original 1½ story, gabled roof appearance. The construction of the Connection and removal of the chimney has completely altered its c. 1770 appearance, yet these changes are quite old in and of themselves.

Frame Section (enclosed porch)

The frame section (c. 1910) is a one-story, two-bay section on the northeastern corner of the north section (see Photos 7 and 9). Piers support the eastern and northern edges of the section in order to maintain access into the basement of the north section. As such, the frame section is an enclosed extension of the porch on the east and north elevations. This section is the location of a kitchen for the north apartment unit. The 16'x10' section wraps slightly around the northeastern corner of the north section. It has a hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles and walls clad with machined shingles. The section has two exterior doors: one opening to the west onto a porch on the north side of the north section, and one opening to the south, onto the porch on the east elevation. The frame section has three windows, all 1x1 units: two on the east elevation and one on the north elevation.