

Architectural Element: Interior Baseboard and Chair Molding

One element of the house providing information on the building / remodeling campaigns is the series of chair rail and baseboard molding. While the house has three different campaigns of baseboard molding, the only surviving chair railing is located in the north section. The earliest molding appears in the center section (c. 1834). The molding in several rooms in the house has been removed, including all molding in the south section.

The earliest molding is found on the first and second floors of the center section. This molding (see Molding 1) has a head but not a shoe. It is found on the first floor in rooms C1, C2, C3, and the entryway of the center section and in the two rooms of the north section. It is also found in some second floor rooms, including Room C5 (see Molding 2). The center section has no remnants of chair railing, and it is not known if it was originally used in the section.

Molding 1. Baseboard molding found in the center section.



Molding 2. View of the earliest baseboard molding, found on the first floor of the center section.



Molding 3. Chair railing found in the north section, first floor.

Molding 4. Baseboard molding found in the north section.



A type of chair railing was installed when the north section was added c. 1845. This chair railing consists of a slender element with a wider head than its foot (Molding 3). Chair railings provided additional protection against the scratching of the walls by the moving of chairs in rooms.

Later in the nineteenth century, portions of the interior were upgraded. At this time, a slightly more decorative baseboard molding was used (Molding 4). It consists of a semi-circular head and a quarter-round shoe. The molding is similar to Molding 1 except for the addition of the shoe. This molding is found primarily in the second floor of the center section and the north section. It appears likely that this molding was installed when some of the partition walls were relocated.

A spiked baseboard molding was installed in several rooms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Molding 5). This Colonial Revival Style of baseboard molding is similar to

Molding 4 but with a more detailed shoe and a spike over the head. It was used on the exterior of the porch on the west elevation, where it wraps around the bay window. On the interior, this molding type is found on several of the newer partition walls added when the house was divided into apartments (such as Rooms C5 and C8).



Molding 6. Spiked baseboard molding, found on the second floor of the center section.

In the early twentieth century, another type of baseboard molding was installed (Molding 7). It consists of a beveled head (rather than a beaded head) and a shoe. This molding is visible in the second floor of the south apartment unit, including both the south section and the room in the southeastern corner of the center section, where it is illustrated in Molding 8. This molding is much smaller than that found elsewhere in the building.



Molding 8. Junction of spiked baseboard molding and beveled molding, found on the second floor of the center section.



Molding 5. Spiked baseboard molding from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



Molding 7. Beveled baseboard molding from the early twentieth century.