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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box and entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name CHEEK-SPRUILL HOUSE  
other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 5455 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd.  
city, town Dunwoody (N/A) vicinity of  
county DeKalb code GA 089  
state Georgia code GA zip code 30338

(n/a) not for publication

**3. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

**Category of Property:**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	3	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	3	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

Name of previous listing: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Richard Coates 5-5-00  
Signature of certifying official Date

W. Ray Luce, Director, Historic Preservation Division and  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Ma J. Minney 6/19/00

( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet for \_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE/processing /storage

### Current Functions:

COMMERCE/trade/restaurant  
SOCIAL/civic

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

OTHER/gabled-ell type farmhouse

### Materials:

<b>foundation</b>	brick
<b>walls</b>	wood
<b>roof</b>	asphalt shingles
<b>other</b>	n/a

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

The Cheek-Spruill House is a two-story, wood-frame, gabled-ell house. It has a three-gable roof and two chimneys, one interior and one exterior. There is a screened porch on the rear. On the front facade is a porch on both floors, with the columns on the second floor porch being original. The projecting front-gabled ell is chamfered at both levels. The second floor interior is in original condition and before the recent rehabilitation contained original plaster walls now replaced with sheetrock and hardwood floors in all three bedrooms. There is an original stairway with balusters. The first floor contains two main rooms and a modernized kitchen. Original doors, door hardware, and wide baseboards survive on both levels. There are two historic outbuildings, a smokehouse and a corn crib, which have been relocated to within the present nominated boundary from their original locations just outside the boundary but on the original lot. The house lot retains several original trees and evidence of the railroad bed that once went in front of the house. The front and side yards are intact with historic landscaping that includes grass, shrubs, and mature trees. The house sits prominently at the intersection of two main roads in what was historically downtown or the center of Dunwoody. Due to rapid commercialization in this once-rural area, this is the only historic structure remaining at this intersection. The house has been rehabilitated for reuse as a meeting hall, historical organization facility, and a tea room. The rehabilitation was completed in 1999.

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### Section 7--Description

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#### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The house is two-story frame white clapboard with a three-gable roof. There are two chimneys, one interior and one exterior, and a screened porch on the rear of the house with a cement floor.

There is a front porch on the second and first floors. The columns on the second floor porch are original and are more detailed than the first floor porch columns. The house has a brick pier foundation.

The second floor was in original condition before the rehabilitation and included lath and plaster walls in all three bedrooms. These plaster walls were in very poor condition with plaster falling away from the lath, thus they had to be replaced with sheetrock. The original stairway with balusters is in excellent condition. The windows in the upper story are original 2-over-2. The top floor has three bedrooms and a small "extra" room which probably was part of an original porch. There is evidence that this entire second floor was the original first floor when the house was a one-story house.

The current first floor has been sheetrocked and some ceilings have been lowered. The 1969 kitchen equipment present in one of the rear rooms which originally was a bedroom was removed during the rehabilitation. The windows in this room have been replaced. The remainder of the windows downstairs are 2-over-2 sash.

The first floor walls are sheetrocked. There are hardwood floors in good condition downstairs. The top floor also has hardwood floors in very good condition.

The original doors and wide floor molding are all present on the first and second floors with the exception of the downstairs room which was formerly paneled. Original door hardware is present on all but two doors.

At the time of the rehabilitation, all the fireplaces were sealed. On the bottom floor there were gas heaters in front of the fireplaces. Upstairs, one fireplace has been completely sealed off. Other upstairs fireplace sites reflected evidence that there were stoves installed at one time. After rehabilitation the fireplaces consisted of two sealed and blocked with no mantels, with three open ones downstairs. None of them are now working fireplaces.

The house had no central heating or air conditioning system until it was recently added.

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The ½ acre now owned by the Dunwoody Preservation Trust, Inc. has several large historic trees including one large pecan tree. The DeKalb County Department of Transportation has restricted the owner of the adjacent, non-nominated property (formerly associated with this house) so that the roots of these valuable trees will be protected. A historic feature of this ½ acre is the deep cut in the front yard of the house which indicates where the old railroad bed once was located.

In 1997 Guardian Savings purchased the house and the 2.5 acre lot including the house and the three remaining outbuildings. When the lot was subdivided, the bank gave the Dunwoody Trust the half-acre lot which included the house. Two of the outbuildings, the smokehouse and the corn crib, were then moved onto the house lot. The remaining outbuilding, the barn, was torn down. Mr. Hugh Spruill, son of Mr. Carey T. Spruill, owner from 1945-1983, remembers the smokehouse and the corn crib being present during his lifetime, and he is 73 years old. Otherwise, their actual age is uncertain. The barn, which was lost, was dated at 1920. Over time, the corn crib was used for a chicken house and the smokehouse also was used as a tenant house for a worker who helped with the farming.

The general character and appearance of the property's surroundings is modern. The house sits on the corner of Mount Vernon Highway and Chamblee-Dunwoody Road. On the other three corners are two gas stations, a doughnut shop, and clothes cleaning establishment. Guardian Savings built a strip shopping center and bank building with a large parking lot immediately adjacent to the house. The Dunwoody Trust plans to retain the farmstead character of the Cheek-Spruill House as much as possible.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance:**

1907-1950

**Significant Dates:**

1907

**Significant Person(s):**

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation:**

n/a

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

unknown

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Cheek-Spruill House is significant in architecture because it is a good example of a gabled-ell type farmhouse. There is strong family and local tradition that the house had one floor built around 1907 and then raised up, possibly as early as 1909 or as late as 1921, and the second floor built underneath the first. Due to the house's expansion so close to its construction, it gives a unified appearance today, especially in the exterior walls, the interior stair, and other features. The house retains much of its original materials including doors, moldings, stairway, and porches. The gabled-ell house type is an important house type in Georgia identified in the statewide historic context "Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in their Landscaped Settings (1991)." Its character-defining features include a "L" or "T" shaped plan with a prominent projecting front-gabled ell and with three principal rooms on each floor. One interior chimney usually is located between the two rooms in the ell; a second exterior chimney is usually located at the end of the main gabled section of the house. A front porch usually extends from the intersection of the main house and gabled ell across the front of the house. A central stair hall is commonly found. The Cheek-Spruill House retains all of these important plan-form characteristics of the gabled-ell house type. Most of the gabled-ell houses in Georgia were built between 1875 and 1915, and most were built in cities and towns. The Cheek-Spruill House is somewhat unusual in having been built in a small rural hamlet. Gabled-ell houses are relatively rare in Georgia, constituting only one-half of one percent of all surveyed houses (unlike their much more common one-story counterpart, the gable-ell cottage, which accounts for 7% if all surveyed houses.) The Cheek-Spruill House is thus representative of a relatively rare form of vernacular house in Georgia. It should be noted that two-story house of any type are relatively rare in Georgia, constituting only about 10 % of all surveyed historic houses. In this context, the Cheek-Spruill House, standing two stories high at the center of the small Dunwoody settlement, would have been an impressive local landmark when built in the early 20th century, just as it remains a local landmark today.

The house is significant in community planning and development because it was built at a very prominent location, the very heart of where the town of Dunwoody began in the early 1880s, at a railroad and roadway intersection, and then grew into the suburb it is today. When the house was built, it faced the railroad leading from Chamblee to Roswell, with the depot being just northwest of and in front of the house. Most of the businesses were on the west side of the railroad, and to the south (across what is now Mt. Vernon Highway, then Lawrenceville Road) was the Joberry Cheek Gin and other enterprises as well as the Joberry Cheek homeplace. Joberry Cheek had long been one of the early settlers and land owners in Dunwoody. It was Mr. Joberry Cheek who bought this lot in 1907 and later in 1912 officially sold it to his daughter, Myra Cheek Crook and her husband John W. Crook, an international milling engineer. Immediately prior to Cheek's purchase, the lot and some 50 other acres in the intersection were owned by Perry L. Moss who ran a general store and was postmaster. Moss had owned this corner lot since 1891 and presumably rented out a small house

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that is indicated as being there in the 1900 Census. The Cheek-Spruill House is the only surviving historic house at the center of the formerly rural Dunwoody community. Standing as it does at the very center of the community, at the former intersection of the railroad and major county roads, it alone represents the early development of the Dunwoody community.

### National Register Criteria

The property meets National Register Criterion A because it is associated with the forming of a rural community at a crossroads, in this case Dunwoody which formed in the 1880s at this intersection with two roads and a railroad. While the intersection remains, this house is the only historic building in the area to reflect on the unincorporated farming community that arose here. The house's position at the intersection was set to face the railroad and the roadway. The Cheek family who built this and for two of whom it was a family home were deeply involved in the development of Dunwoody and this house also reflects their association with the town's development and transition from a very rural crossroads community to a modern, urban suburb.

The house also meets National Register Criterion C because it is an excellent and rare-in-this-area example of a gabled-ell house retaining virtually all of its character-defining features. It also is an unusual example of a house where the family stories and the house's materials and workmanship substantiate the claim that it was built as a one-story house and then "jacked up" and a second floor added on the lower level rather than on the top as one normally expects. This unusual form of construction is rarely seen in Georgia. It was not that unusual for the Cheek family, as another member reported the same thing had occurred in the family head, Joberry Cheek's own house across the street. That house is now gone. This house thus reflects the necessity's of a building program based on what one can afford and with a work crew already on hand, what one could do in a rural area as far as house construction or expansion is concerned. The house retains much of its original materials and workmanship and various clues within it to the changes made to the house when the first floor became the second floor.

### Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

### Period of significance (justification)

The period runs from the original construction date, c. 1907 through the end of the historic period (1950) because the house continued to be used as the main house on a farm at the center of a once-rural community in an increasingly growing urban area throughout that time period.

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

Contributing buildings: the main house (1)  
Contributing structures: corn crib and smokehouse. (2)  
total: 3 contributing

#### **Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

Major Charles A. Dunwody (1828-1905) (the modern spelling has an added an extra "o" for Dunwoody), who lived in nearby Roswell, Georgia, was engaged in manufacturing at the Roswell Mill until the Civil War outbreak in 1861. Major Dunwody built the first bridge across the Chattahoochee River from what became Dunwoody to Roswell. After the war, Major Dunwody built a house on land lot # 377 which he had purchased in 1862. On this property he began producing food, the paramount need after the Civil War. His homeplace was located southwest from the Dunwoody intersection, site of the Cheek-Spruill House. (This house, now known as "The Homeplace," still stands on Ashford-Dunwoody Road near Perimeter Mall, a short distance away. It is currently used as an art gallery).

#### The Formation of the Village of Dunwoody:

The village of Dunwoody began to develop after the Civil War (1861-1865). Even before the war, grading had begun for a short-line railroad from Chamblee to Roswell via Dunwoody. Major Charles Dunwody acquired the property for and built the Roswell Railroad which ran from 1880 to 1921 between Chamblee and Roswell. The community was situated five miles mid way between Roswell and Chamblee, the two towns the railroad connected. As happened in many railroad towns, the first houses and businesses sprang up alongside and facing the railroad in Dunwoody. The Cheek-Spruill House was built in 1907 directly on the corner of the major intersection in this railroad community.

The community of Dunwoody has never been incorporated. The first post office was established in 1881 and several of the early major landowners served as postmasters. Mr. C. Q. Trimble served from 1888 to 1889 and Mr. P. L. Moss from 1893 to 1906. Both of these men owned the land on which the Cheek-Spruill House was later built and were both fairly young when Dunwoody was growing, as was Mr. Joberry Cheek, builder of the house. The town plat with a large number of lots at an angle to the railroad corridor was dated September, 1884.

Early gazetteers give a profile of the small community. The 1886-1887 edition states that Dunwoody had 40 residents with two Baptist churches and a school. Joberry Cheek already had his cotton gin

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in operation then, as did a member of the Spruill family. By 1888 the population was 60. C. Q. Trimble operated a general store, and two doctors lived in the community.

The railroad ran directly in front of the lot on which the Cheek-Spruill House was built, and vestiges of the railroad bed can still be seen today in the front lawn. President Theodore Roosevelt rode the train past the Cheek-Spruill House location in 1905 and 1912 on the way to see his mother's girlhood home, Bulloch Hall, in Roswell. With the railroad, it was easier for farmers to send their produce to the Atlanta market.

During the late 19th century, a business center developed at this intersection which included Mr. P. L. Moss' general store, located in the general intersection area. Mr. Moss also dug a well for the public benefit. Mountaineers from North Georgia would stop by for water and bring apples, peaches, and other items from the mountains. The village blacksmith shop was operated by Mr. Cephas Spruill. Dr. Puckett ran both a livery stable, a feed and fertilizer store, as well as a pharmacy. His home was built on the premises of this business complex.

Three railroad section houses were built on Chamblee-Dunwoody Road near the Dunwoody Depot (now the Burger King location). These houses were used to house the work crew for maintaining the railroad bed. Two of the three were torn down to make way for a fast-food chicken restaurant. Only one railroad section house remains.

The Dunwoody Baptist Church and a "wagon yard" for maintenance of vehicles were also nearby. At the fork of Chamblee-Dunwoody Road and Roberts Drive was the home of Dr. Duke who maintained a medical office and pharmacy. Also on that property was the Dunwoody postoffice.

On the east side of Chamblee-Dunwoody Road where the Phillips 66 Station now stands, Mr. Joberry Cheek operated a cotton gin and a corn and flour mill. The gin was torn down in 1970.

The Cheek-Spruill House and outbuildings are one of the last remaining farmsteads in the Dunwoody area. During the 1990s the area lost many of the historic homes to commercial, apartment, and residential development. With rapid growth and encroachment thriving at the Dunwoody intersection, a local group was created, eventually formalizing as the Dunwoody Preservation Trust, to save the one last historic house at this intersection. This house, now known as the Cheek-Spruill House, is the subject of this nomination. The Dunwoody Preservation Trust, Inc. also has honored the other remaining historic properties in the Dunwoody area with signs (with the owners' permission), in an effort to raise community consciousness for preservation.

Due to the fact that the community had lost most if not all of its older historic buildings and houses, the facts surrounding this house had become a bit muddled with several attempts in print to date this house from the early 1880s and the creation of Dunwoody. As the material below will show, careful

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research has proven that was not the case. However, the house is clearly the oldest and only major historic house remaining today from the original town of Dunwoody.

Research was conducted to provide the best scenario for when this house was built, by whom, for whom, and recent speculation, some of which got in print, managed to diverge from the facts as remembered by family members and owners who recalled the house being built.

Scenario on which this nomination is based: The first part of the house (now the second floor) was built c. 1907 for Bunyan B. Cheek by his father Joberry Cheek and other family members.

The land consisting of three lots, nos. 20-21-22, some two and one-half acres, of Land Lot 366, District 18, in the northeast quadrant of the Dunwoody intersection, a key location, was bought on January 10, 1907 by Joberry Cheek, a 57-or-so-year-old farmer, saw mill and gin owner, as well as a corn and flour mill operator, who lived across the highway from lot 20. Lot 20 and contiguous parcels had previously been owned for 16 years by Perry L. Moss, another local entrepreneur and major property owner at the Dunwoody intersection. It would appear that Moss had built no major improvements on the property, since he sold it to Cheek for \$550.

Joberry Cheek and family ran a sawmill and other operations and would have been in a position to easily provide necessary materials and manpower for building a house on this site.

In looking at the Cheek family situation, as interviews with the three surviving children of Bunyan B. Cheek (by his second marriage) have revealed, not only did Mr. Joberry Cheek add to his own house c.1906, but there were two major family developments which would have led Joberry Cheek to find a house site for members of his family: First, his son, Bunyan B. Cheek, age 23, had hastily married on October 12, 1906, Miss Collie Evans, of Atlanta, and their first (and only) child, a daughter, Eloise, was born Feb. 12, 1907. The new couple needed a house. The lot was purchased barely a month before the daughter was born. Second, Joberry Cheek's daughter, Mrs. Myra Cheek Martin, had been widowed with two surviving children in the late summer of 1906. She would need to live closer to her father. As it turned out after she did remarry c.1908 to John W. Crook, she came to live in this house and appears there in the 1910 Census. She later was deeded the property on January 1, 1912 and owned it until 1933.

Another son, Will J. Cheek, died in 1906, and Joberry Cheek raised his son's two children.

The following three reasons to date the house at 1907 are based on the interviews and other sources:

(1). The 1975 DeKalb County Historic Structures Survey states (in an interview with then-owner C.T. Spruill or his wife, both of whom grew up nearby and were probably eyewitnesses

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themselves to the house's construction and expansion) that the "original owner" was Bunyan B. Cheek, and the house had one floor in 1906-07 with the other added in 1909. (The dates are not in The Story of Dunwoody which had just been published in 1975. The book does contain the following attribution to Bunyan Cheek on page 100:

"Across Mt. Vernon on the northeast corner of the intersection was the home of Bunyan Cheek, older son of Joberry Cheek and brother of Will Cheek. This house, originally a one-story bungalow, was later enlarged by adding a second story. The roof was simply jacked up "sky-high" and the upstairs rooms were built in between the roof and ground floor!..[sic].")

(2). Bunyan B. Cheek's hasty 1906 marriage quickly broke up and he was back living with his parents in the 1910 census. His sister Myra Crook, her new husband, and two children were living on lot 20, presumably in this house. But in interviews with the three surviving children of Bunyan B. Cheek by his second wife, they all said he built the house, one said he enlarged it for their mother (whom he married in 1916), another said about 1921, and the third said that she heard it was built by her father for his first wife. These comments came without prompting, other than to ask each of the children what they knew about the house and their father's role in its construction.

(3). Nothing appears to have been happening in terms of land development on the east side of Dunwoody in the late 19th century as compared to the west side where there were homes and businesses. This would explain why the price was low as late as 1907. The census indicates that in 1900, on the east side, there was possibly a small rental house on lot 20, north of that the home of Columbia Cheek (sister to Joberry Cheek), and north of that the home of L. E. Copeland, who also owned all the lots between Columbia Cheek's house and his own, some 16 lots.

#### Scenario that was discarded: That the house was built in the 1880s or 1890s.

Facts: Other than recent wishful thinking, there is nothing to indicate that this house, as it has appeared since the 1920s when the people being interviewed remember it, has any link to being built in the 19th century.

(1). The land appears to be speculation land from the first owner, W. J. Houston, to C. Q. Trimble, to P. L. Moss in 1891. Moss bought, in the purchase, three different sets of parcels, giving him in 1891 most of the land on the east, middle, and west sides of this intersection. He did not begin selling off parcels until 1902 on the west side. The 1907 sale of these three lots to Joberry Cheek fits into this pattern of land disposal. He may have tried to speculate, or to conjure up a development, but that did not seem to materialize.

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(2). Bunyan B. Cheek was not born until 1883, so any attribution to him as the builder or first occupant of the house, as found in the local history (1975), survey interviews (1975), and three family interviews not tapped by either of the earlier two sources (1998), have to take in consideration that he had to be old enough to be on his own and needing a house. Joberry Cheek, his father, already had his own house across the street, in which he lived from before 1900 until his death in 1935 and in which his daughter lived until her death (or shortly before) in 1978. The house was later torn down, although photos survive in the history and in the survey. One of the 1975 interviews was with the surviving daughter of Joberry Cheek.

#### The Cheek-Spruill House, a brief history of its owners.

Given the above conclusion that the house was built c.1907, and expanded between then and 1921, here is a short history of the house and people who lived there.

The house was built c.1907 for Bunyan B. Cheek and his first wife, of only a few months, Collie Evans. Their only child, Eloise, was born Feb. 12, 1907. Collie was from downtown Atlanta, where her brother was a policeman. The hastiness of their marriage and the difference of in-town living versus rural life in Dunwoody perhaps contributed to the early breakup of the couple. By 1910, each was back home living with their respective parents. Bunyan's occupation in 1910 and 1920 was that of farmer.

By 1910, Myra Cheek Martin, widowed in 1906, had remarried c.1908 to John W. Crook. Crook, born c.1865 in Ohio, was an international mining engineer, whose work often took him to South America, particularly Brazil. He built corn and flour mills. Thus during the 20 or so years they owned the property, which they bought in 1912 from Myra's father, Joberry Cheek, the couple were often gone for long periods of time.

While the ownership rested with Myra Cheek Crook, during one of her long absences Bunyan B. Cheek returned to live here. Bunyan had remarried in 1916 to Bessie Manning, and their first child, Anna Gladys, was born in 1917. Another daughter, born in 1921, said she was born in another house down the road (no longer extant). Around 1923 Bunyan had joined the Georgia Power Company, for whom he would work for several decades, and the family had moved to Morgan Falls further west in Fulton County where he was involved in the construction of the power plant at that location. His wife would run a hotel there. Without city directories or other sources to pinpoint when they lived here and when they left, the exact dates are unclear.

Bunyan B. Cheek died in 1957 in Atlanta.

Family members including the then three surviving children of Bunyan Cheek, the 1975 interviews with the Spruills, and the son of the Spruills, all indicate that the house was enlarged. During the

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period of 1916-1921, the first floor and the roof were jacked up. (The daughter born in 1917 had clear memories of it being jacked up with long timbers and of not being allowed to cross the street to watch this. Whether she really remembered it, or just heard people talk about it, is unknown.) The new first floor was then built underneath the original first floor. The family lived across the street at Joberry Cheek's house during the construction. In a 1998 interview, the older daughter, Anna Gladys, believed she was the only child born at that time.

While enlarging a house in this manner may seem unusual, there are several other factors to consider. The daughter of Joberry Cheek, Mrs. Lizzie Newhard, interviewed in 1975 about the then-surviving Joberry Cheek House where she lived and which she called a "mansion," indicated that this was what had been done to the Joberry Cheek house itself. The first story was built c.1885, and the second story, c.1906 and that it was "raised up." Obviously, if Mr. Cheek's team of sawmill workers could do one house they could do another. An architect on the Georgia National Register Review Board commented that the roof was the hardest part of any house to build and that it was much easier to jack it up and build another floor, if you had the means and manpower, to avoid rebuilding a roof. While the procedure of jacking up a house and adding a second floor below seems unusual to many people, it apparently was prevalent in other parts of the country. For example, Thomas C. Hubka, in his Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England (University Press of New England, 1984), on page 139, writes of the New England custom of converting outbuildings to houses and that "massive interior and exterior reorganization was clearly the accepted societal norm for these farmers. Figure 104 shows the raising and conversion of a small one-story house into a fashionable town house...While this project seems extreme today, it was actually a common one for New England builders, who had developed the custom of massive building alteration and remodeling. "

After the Crooks' final return from overseas work and travel, they lived in the house until they were forced to sell it in January 1933. Apparently right before they sold it, they had entertained the idea of subdividing the 2.5 acre tract into eleven lots and perhaps selling off lots to create a subdivision. With the onset of the Depression and presumably the loss of jobs or retirement for Mr. Crook, who was by then over 65 years old, the couple sold the property, all 2.5 acres, to a Mr. Gower, he in turn to a Mrs. Williams, and she to a Mr. Brannon who in 1934 sold the entire tract to William J. Church and Margaret Price Church. The Crooks had also owned much larger tracts of land nearby.

John W. Crook died in 1937 and Myra Cheek Crook spent her last years with her sister in the home where Joberry Cheek had lived until his death in 1935. It was located across the street from the Cheek-Spruill House. The Crooks and Mr. and Mrs. Joberry Cheek and other kin are all buried just up the road at the New Hope Church Cemetery.

Interviews with several of Mrs. Crook's nieces indicate fond memories of going to the house for Thanksgiving dinner, with the turkeys having been raised on the premises, and having fun in a house

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with so many rooms. They especially remember one upstairs room called the "Plunder Room" where all kinds of stuff was stored. Mrs. Crook's parrot, brought back from one of her South American trips, was also fondly remembered.

William J. Church and Margaret Price Church owned the property from 1934 to 1943. They used the house as a retirement home, having lived in Atlanta. William J. Church (1860-1940) had owned the Brookwood Grocery Company in Atlanta until his retirement and was active in the Methodist church. Margaret Price Church (1870-1943) was his second wife. She is said to have died in an upper room in the house.

During the two years after Mrs. Church's death until the house was sold to Mr. Spruill, the house had several intermediary owners. During this time, several people are said to have lived in the house including Mrs. Moulder, a school teacher, and Rev. C. C. Boynton, the Baptist preacher.

After the probate of Mrs. Church's will, the house was auctioned off in April 1944, and was purchased by several of her relatives. These women sold the house on March 14, 1945 to Mr. Carey T. Spruill for a reported \$3,000.

The house became known as both the Cheek-Spruill House and the Spruill Farm after the purchase in March 1945 by Mr. and Mrs. Carey T. Spruill. During the fifty years that the Spruills owned and lived in the house, they made few changes. The only changes made to the exterior of the house in 1945 were the addition of a metal awning covering the back entrance and a screened rear porch with a cement floor. The only other changes they made were in 1969, all of them interior changes to the kitchen.

The Spruill Farm, as this small 2.5 acre farmstead became known, was one of the last in an urban setting in DeKalb County. For many years, Mr. Carey T. Spruill farmed the land with his mule, Shorty. As recently as the early 1980s, he had a stand of corn on the corner of Mount Vernon Highway and Chamblee-Dunwoody Road. His continued farming reminded the newcomers to the area of the farming heritage and how recently the whole area had been rural. The 2.5 acres included a cornfield, barn, smokehouse, and corn crib.

Mr. Spruill, born in 1897, died on May 28, 1983. His wife, Mrs. Florence Warnock Spruill, born in 1899, lived in the house until her death November 20, 1994. Both of the Spruills were from families with deep roots in the area both then and now and both had lived near the house all their lives.

After the deaths of the Spruills, a major local preservation effort began whose goal was to save this last historic vestige of Dunwoody. A bank purchased the acreage, valued at 2.5 million dollars, from the family September 1997. The group that formed to save the house, the Dunwoody Preservation Trust, raised money through small donations totally over \$200,000 to try and purchase the house.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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After a great deal of negotiating and the grassroots local fundraising effort, the bank finally agreed to part with a half-acre portion of the property which included the house. The Guarantee Savings and Loan Association donated the house and half-acre grounds to the Dunwoody Preservation Trust, Inc., and made this donation known in a "surprise" announcement on July 4, 1998. The Trust promised the community that the property was to be used as a multi-purpose "Town Hall" to serve the community. Because the Trust was not able to raise enough money to buy the entire 2.5 acre farm, thus being able to keep the outbuildings where they originally sat, this necessitated the moving of the corn crib and the smokehouse onto this small acreage. The barn was lost since there was not enough room on the half acre for it. Advice was sought from the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office architects as well as from Norman Askins, a preservation architect in private practice, as to the best placement of these two outbuildings.

The Trust celebrated in the summer of 1998 when they obtained the deed to the property, a culmination of herculean preservation efforts. During 1999, rehabilitation of the house took place, and the trust was able to use all of the money they had collected for the rehabilitation. There was a formal celebration of the property's opening to the public on November 21, 1999 at which time the certificate for its placement on the Georgia Register of Historic Places was presented.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Byrd, Lynne B. Draft National Register application, 1998, and related materials. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta.

Cheek family interviews, December, 1998, and January, 1999 by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.

DeKalb County, GA. Deeds, Marriage Records, and Wills, in original and on microfilm.

DeKalb Historical Society: maps, DeKalb County Tax Records, newspaper clippings.

Dilbeck, Edwin 1998 Personal Communication with Lynne B. Byrd in regard to ownership of property by the William J. Church Family, of which he is a relative.

Garrett, Franklin M. 1954 Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle Of Its People and Events. Lewis Historical Publications, New York, N.Y.

Historic Preservation Division, DNR, DeKalb County Historic Structures Survey, 1975. Interviews by Randolph Marks, of owner of Cheek-Spruill House and of Joberry Cheek House, recorded on survey forms.

Spruill, Ethel W. & Elizabeth L. Davis 1975 The Story of Dunwoody. Williams Printing Co., Atlanta, Georgia.

Spruill, Hugh 1995-1998 Personal Communication in many different interviews with Lynne B. Byrd, et al. Mr. Spruill is a son of the last owners/occupants of the house, Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Spruill.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): ( ) N/A**

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:**
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register**
- (X) previously determined eligible by the National Register Sept. 13, 1978 in a Department of  
Transportation/FHWA Request**
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark**
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 9--Major Bibliographic References**

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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** Old DeKalb County, Georgia, Survey, Survey Form No. 18-366-06-005, dated June 20, 1975.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** one-half acre

### UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 746370 Northing 3759420

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is marked to scale by a heavy black line on the accompanying plat.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all the property remaining associated with the house after the sale and subdivision of the original farmland. It was all that was sold to the present owners in July 1998.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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### State Historic Preservation Office

**name/title** Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** March 15, 2000

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** (x) not applicable

**name/title** Mrs. Lynne B. Byrd, president  
**organization** Dunwoody Preservation Trust, Inc.  
**street and number** 4337 Village Oaks Lane  
**city or town** Dunwoody **state** GA **zip code** 30338  
**telephone** H-770-451-0230

**consultant**

**regional development center preservation planner**

**other:** Coordinator of effort to save the house, to secure its ownership by a non-profit organization; president of the newly-created non-profit organization which now owns the house.

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

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**Name of Property:** Cheek-Spruill House  
**City or Vicinity:** Dunwoody  
**County:** DeKalb  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** January, 1999

**Description of Photograph(s):**

NOTE: The house has been completely rehabilitated since these photographs were taken. These photographs show many of the interior changes that were not visible before the old plaster which had become disconnected from the lath was removed and has subsequently been replaced by modern sheetrock.

1 of 17: Cheek-Spruill House, front facade; photographer facing north.

2 of 17: View of house looking up Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd., old route of railroad; photographer facing northwest.

3 of 17: South facade and rear addition and porch; photographer facing northwest.

4 of 17: Rear facade, showing porch as well as rear lot line with construction still underway; photographer facing northwest.

5 of 17: Rear facade from former backyard, now parking lot of adjacent property with construction underway; photographer facing southwest.

6 of 17: Outbuildings, smokehouse on left, corn crib on right; photographer facing northeast.

7 of 17: Front facade with outbuildings on the left; photographer facing southeast.

8 of 17: Interior, first floor, foyer and stairway; photographer facing northwest.

9 of 17: Interior, first floor, stairway and foyer as seen from front "tea room"; photographer facing southeast.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Photographs

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10 of 17: Interior, first floor, front tea room mantel; photographer facing northeast.

11 of 17: Interior, first floor, former front parlor now "Dunwoody Fine Arts and Meeting Room"; photographer facing south.

12 of 17: Interior, second floor stair landing/foyer; photographer facing northeast.

13 of 17: Interior, second floor, tea room; photographer facing northwest.

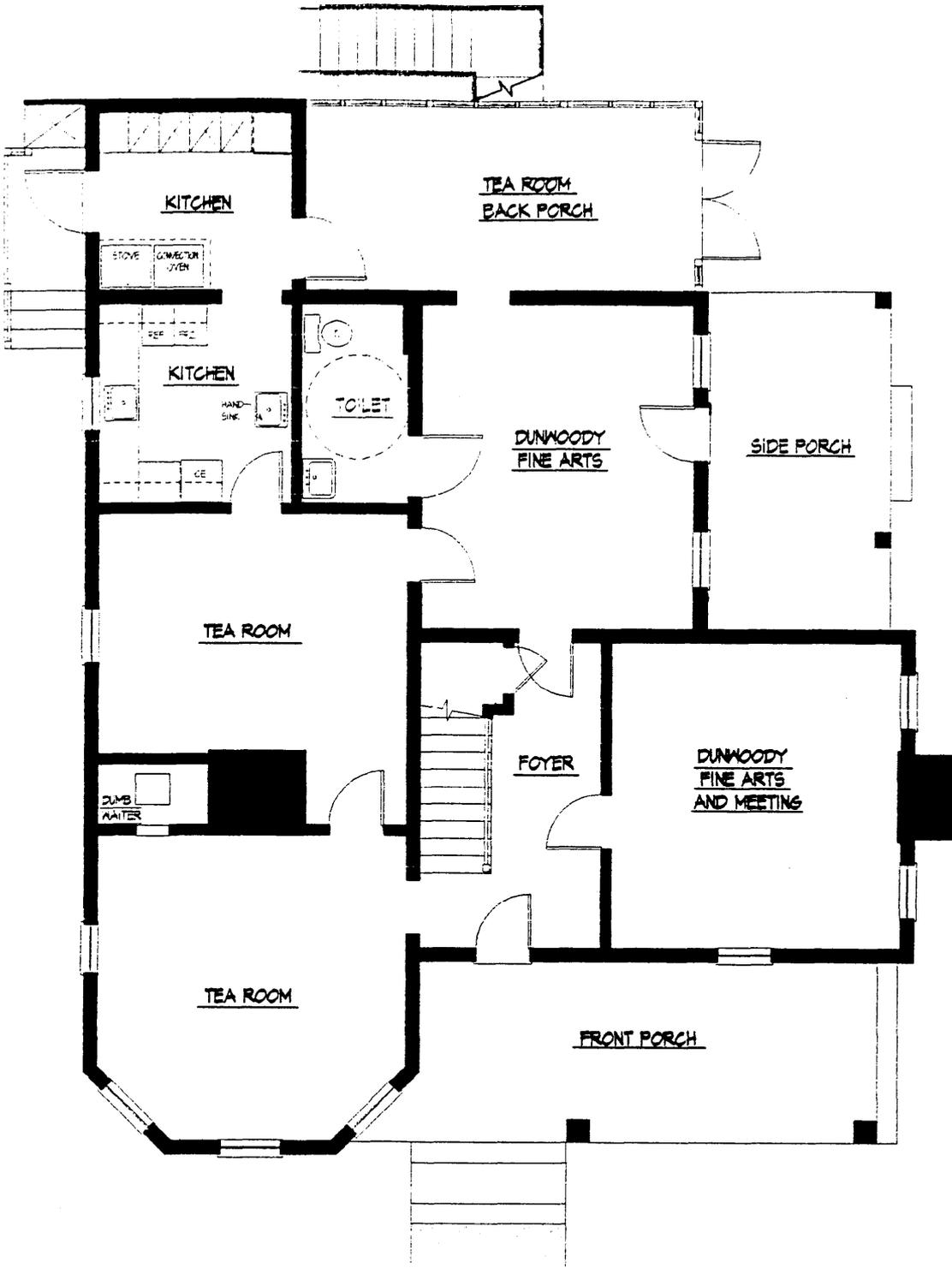
14 of 17: Interior, second floor, tea room facing former fireplace site, showing lathes closing it up before wallboards were replaced; photographer facing into stairway landing, southeast.

15 of 17: Interior, second floor, former bedroom now "Office of Dunwoody Trust", looking into original passageway/closet into new tea room; photographer facing southwest.

16 of 17: Interior, second floor, former bedroom now "Meeting/Exhibit Room"; photographer facing southwest.

17 of 17: Interior, second floor, former bedroom now "Meeting/Exhibit Room", door leading back into landing; photographer facing northwest.



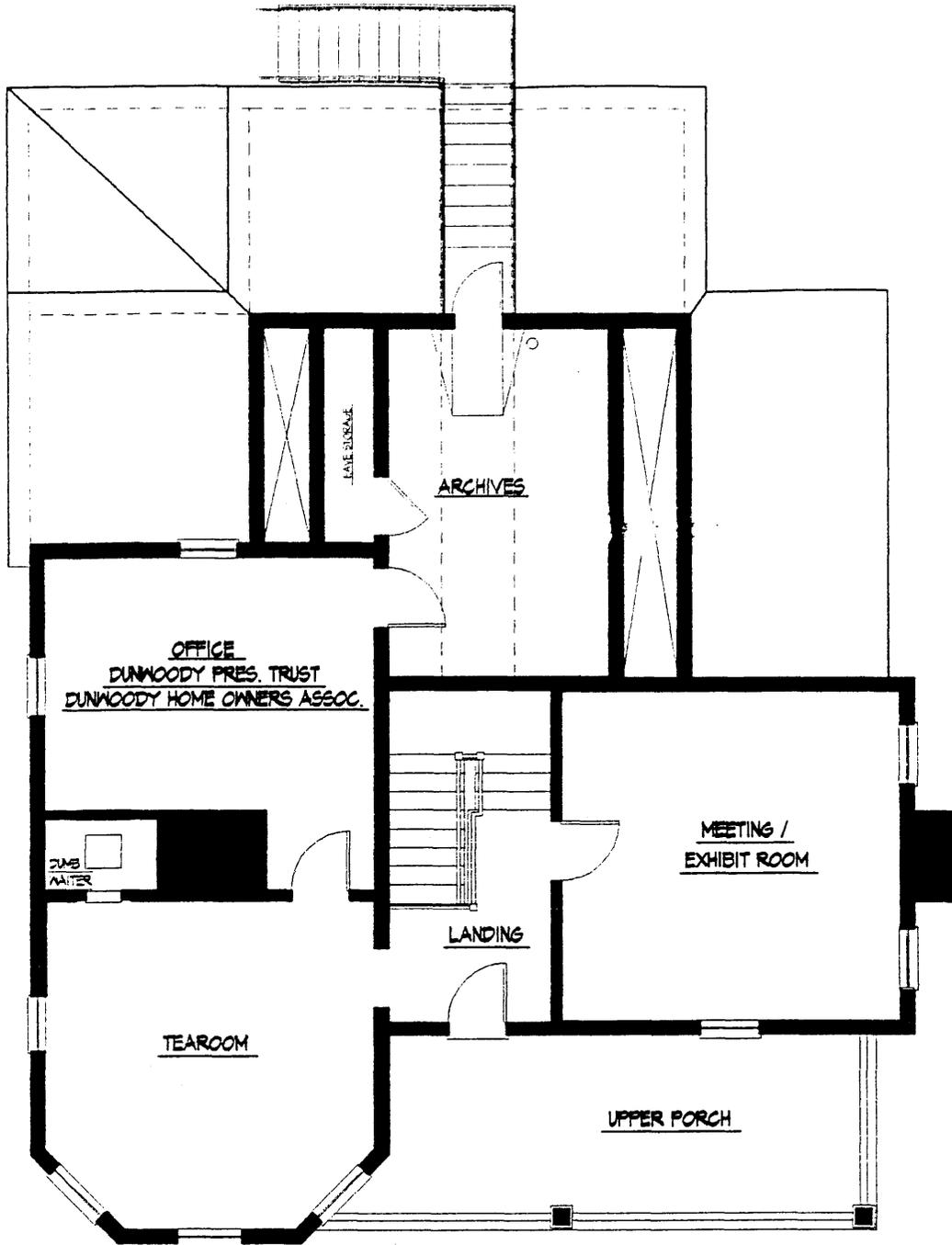


ALTERATIONS TO  
 THE CHEEK - SPRUILL FARMHOUSE,  
 Chamblee Dunwoody Rd. at Mt. Vernon Hwy.  
 Dunwoody, Georgia 30335

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

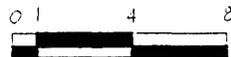


Cheek-Spruill House  
 Dunwoody, DeKalb County, Georgia  
 Floor Plan-First Floor with room uses marked  
 Drawn for the Dunwoody Trust  
 Date: c. 1999  
 Scale: As marked on plan  
 North: 



ALTERATIONS TO  
 THE CHEEK - SPRUILL FARMHOUSE,  
 Chamblee Dunwoody Rd. at Mt. Vernon Hwy.  
 Dunwoody, Georgia 30333

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Cheek-Spruill House  
 Dunwoody, DeKalb County, Georgia  
 Floor Plan-Second Floor with room uses marked  
 Drawn for the Dunwoody Trust  
 Date: c. 1999  
 Scale: As marked on plan  
 North: ↗