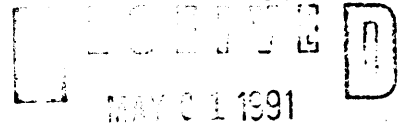


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 or by 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 Centennial House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 17-19 East Chestnut Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Merchantville

N/A vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ - 034 county Camden

code 007

zip code 08109

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 request for determination of eligibility 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 does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

(James Hall)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Acting Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

**Entered in the
National Register**

Andrew Byers

5/30/91

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic - Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic - Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Stick Style

foundation Stone

walls Wood

roof Slate

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Merchantville's Centennial House is located at 17-19 E. Chestnut Avenue, within a suburban neighborhood laid out in a grid pattern of 60 X 250-foot lots. The property, which consists of two such lots occupied by the house and two additional side lots, is oriented towards the south, facing the former station and tracks of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The property contains two contributing buildings: the twin residence at 17-19 E. Chestnut Avenue and a carriage house/garage at 19 E. Chestnut Avenue.

The Centennial House was erected circa 1877 by architect and builder John Crump, who combined a traditional mansarded double house form with the 1870s penchant for the Stick Style. The three-story house is built of frame on a stone foundation. The two halves are mirror images, each essentially L-shaped with a one-story rear kitchen wing. The building is clad with diagonal wood siding (replaced with aluminum diagonal siding on the front of #17) and crowned by a mansard roof shingled with patterned gray and red slate.

At the first floor of each house, a porch extends across the recessed front bay of the "L" and wraps around the side. Wood columns are tapered, resembling bamboo poles from the Japanesque influence, and are divided into two section by annulets. Small Corinthian capitals under incised blocks top the columns which support a roof of bowed rafters. The incised circular motif of these blocks is repeated in the bases which are tapered by chamfering that terminates in double quirk beads. Another interesting feature of the bases is a notched vent that serves both decorative and functional purposes. This attention to detail and ventilation is also evident on the porch skirting which is comprised of beaded boards with cut-out leaves at the joining seams. Underneath the porch are double glazed and paneled doors with heavy geometric moldings. The doors have a transom and door surround with pointed head.

A three-story, Stick Style composition dominates the main facade of each house. The first floor consists of a polygonal bay fenestrated by three 2/2 double hung windows. A beaded board parapet sets off the rectangular second floor bay, each 1/1 double hung window of which is separated by columns and blocks that are miniatures of the design found on the porch. This bay is topped by a bracketed cornice, above which the verticality of the Stick Style extends to the third floor front gables which feature horizontal siding, steep paired double windows with triangular sash in the upper light, incised vertical board siding under the main gable, trusswork with a pendant, and flanking "bamboo" columns. Another notable feature of the main facade is the mansarded tower that rises above the gabled dormer window of the entrance bay to each house. Shingled with slate, the slender mansard or "look-out" is crowned with cresting.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Period of Significance

C. 1877

Significant Dates

C. 1877

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Crump, John

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Centennial House, a legendary survivor of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, stands as a monumental example of Stick Style architecture in Merchantville, New Jersey. Constructed as a twin at 17-19 E. Chestnut Avenue, the house is located within the earliest subdivision of a borough that was to become a fashionable and desirable Victorian commuter suburb of Philadelphia. Originally owned by the Crump family, the architecture of the house is attributable at least in part to Philadelphia architect and builder John Crump, while according to other evidence, its provenance is also associated with the Centennial. Although the nature of the historical ties to the Centennial cannot be proved conclusively, the house merits significance for its architecture.

Merchantville, located five miles east of Philadelphia in Camden County, is a prototypical nineteenth-century suburb. As in many other communities of the period, the advent of the railroad ushered in a wave of speculative development that transformed farmland into subdivisions. In Merchantville, the era of speculative land acquisition first occurred in the 1850s, shortly after the new Moorestown Pike was laid and not coincidentally, shortly before the Camden and Pemberton Agricultural Railroad was chartered for construction of a line connecting Camden, Merchantville, and Moorestown. The four primary early land speculators, all Philadelphia merchants, gave Merchantville its name in 1857. Despite their foresight, no railroad construction ensued in the 1850s. By 1865, these early speculators sold most of their holdings to Alexander G. Cattell, who with his business partner and brother, Elijah G. Cattell, assembled approximately 79 acres or 1/5 of Merchantville's total area, just prior to the organization of the Camden and Burlington Railroad in 1866. This train line was to come to fruition: train service officially opened in 1867 and in 1868, the Camden and Amboy Railroad leased the line.

With the railroad in place, Alexander G. Cattell began the development of the residential community in which the Centennial House is situated. Cattell, a shipping and commission merchant and later a United States Senator from New Jersey, cleared the area north of the railroad, known as "Coopers Woods". In 1869 he filed his plan of building lots which were typically 60 feet by 250 feet in size. Between 1868 and the mid-1870s, Cattell sold several of the lots along East Chestnut, Park, and East Walnut Avenues for \$400-500. The first house in the Cattell Development was erected on East Walnut

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Architectural Files, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.
- Benenson, Carol A. "Merchantville, New Jersey: The Development of a Victorian Commuter Suburb." Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1984.
- Biond, Lawrence J. Widener University Old Main Historic Structures Report. Philadelphia: Cole, Rizzio, Cherry, Parsky, 1979.
- Building News (London), November 12, 1875.
- Cattell, Alexander G. "Plan of Building Lots in Merchantville, Camden County, NJ." Filed with Recorder of Deeds, Camden County, Camden City Hall, Camden, NJ.
- Centennial Exhibition Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

See continuation sheet

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Specify repository:
Merchantville Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre Camden NJ-PA Quad

UTM References

A 18 495 8310 442231010
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies two adjacent municipal tax parcels in the Borough of Merchantville. The western half of the Centennial House (#17) is located on Block 58 - Lot 17, which is 75.27 feet wide and 250 feet deep, while the eastern half (#19) is on Block 58 - Lot 17A, which is 59.73 feet wide and 250 feet deep.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the current municipal tax parcels on which the Centennial House and the carriage house/garage now stand.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Benenson & Ed Fox

organization Kise, Franks & Straw date September 5, 1990

street & number 219 North Broad Street - 9th Floor telephone (215) 561-1050

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

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The side and rear elevations are more regularly fenestrated by 2/2 double hung windows with pointed lintels and molded sills. At the second floor rear, these windows are paired. First floor windows on these elevations are flanked by paneled shutters while louvered shutters are in place above. Dormers on the side and rear elevations imitate the steep paired double windows of the principal gable on the main facade. A fire escape and paneled door were added to the upper floors of #19 for apartment conversion. The one-story, shed-roofed rears of each house, originally kitchen wings, form a gabled composition. The wing on #17 was renovated and resided with new diagonal wood boards in 1984.

In plan, the first floor of each L-shaped house is organized as a front parlor separated from a perpendicular dining room which is located on the far side of an east-west oriented stairhall. Behind the dining room is the kitchen wing. The second floor is divided into a master bedroom above the parlor and two smaller bedrooms above the dining room. The third floor contains small attic rooms.

The interior of the Centennial House displays a mixture of Rococo, and predominantly Eastlake-style finishes. In the main stairhall, the angular facets of the turned newel and balustrade reflect the geometry of the latter. In the parlor, the front bay is framed by an arch supported on freestanding columns. The use of carved and incised ornament on this surround is also Eastlake in its inspiration. The columns, which resemble the "bamboo" forms of the porch, rise from bases with quirk beads, and are divided at their half-way point by an annulet. Incised, fluted, and turned ornament enriches the shaft. Astragals, stiff leaf, and modified Corinthian capitals with acanthus leaves crown the columns. The arch itself is enlivened by horizontal guilloche, overlapping vertical guilloche, and carved foliation. The door surround between the parlor and stairhall consists of an inner surround with dog's ear molding (more typical of the 1850s to early-'70s Rococo) and an outer surround that is clearly Eastlake in style. This outer surround consists of vertical and horizontal members defined by a series of horizontal beads, stop fluting, and applied bosses. The vertical members rise to pointed corner blocks with incised trefoils; the horizontal member is slightly bowed at the center, with a flat center field flanked by bands of continuous fluting. A slightly modified version of this surround appears on the parlor windows. These features survive intact in both halves of the Centennial House.

While the mantel in the parlor of #17 was a later Colonial Revival replacement, the original dining room mantel in #17 and the parlor and dining room mantels in #19 are Rococo in style. Composed of marble, they feature rounded brackets and/or foliated keystones, unlike one of the second floor mantels in #17, which is incised with geometric ornament typical of Eastlake design. Period gasoliers, the geometry and tiers of which again recall the Eastlake influence, are present in the parlors of both #17 and #19. In #17, a softer, more curved chandelier, possibly predating the 1870s, hangs in the dining room where an Eastlake mirror over the mantel was an addition from another estate. Molded baseboards and crown moldings are found throughout the first floor of both houses.

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Access to the second floor was only available in #17. Here, the overall level of finishes is simpler than the first floor, as would be expected. Of note is the master or front bedroom, which has the same window surrounds with pointed corner blocks as the parlor. (Note: these have currently been removed for stripping and refinishing.) The third or attic floor rooms are also simply finished, one room having a winding stair leading to the tower "look-out".

Alterations to the interior of #17 have been minimal, the most significant being renovation of the kitchen. However, the principal spaces -- parlor, dining room, and stairhall -- maintain a high level of integrity. In #19, there has been partial infilling of the parlor door entrance, although the original surround is intact. A partition was added in the dining room as part of an apartment conversion, but again, important finishes such as the mantel were left in place. The upper floors of #19, also modified for apartment use, were not accessible to the surveyor.

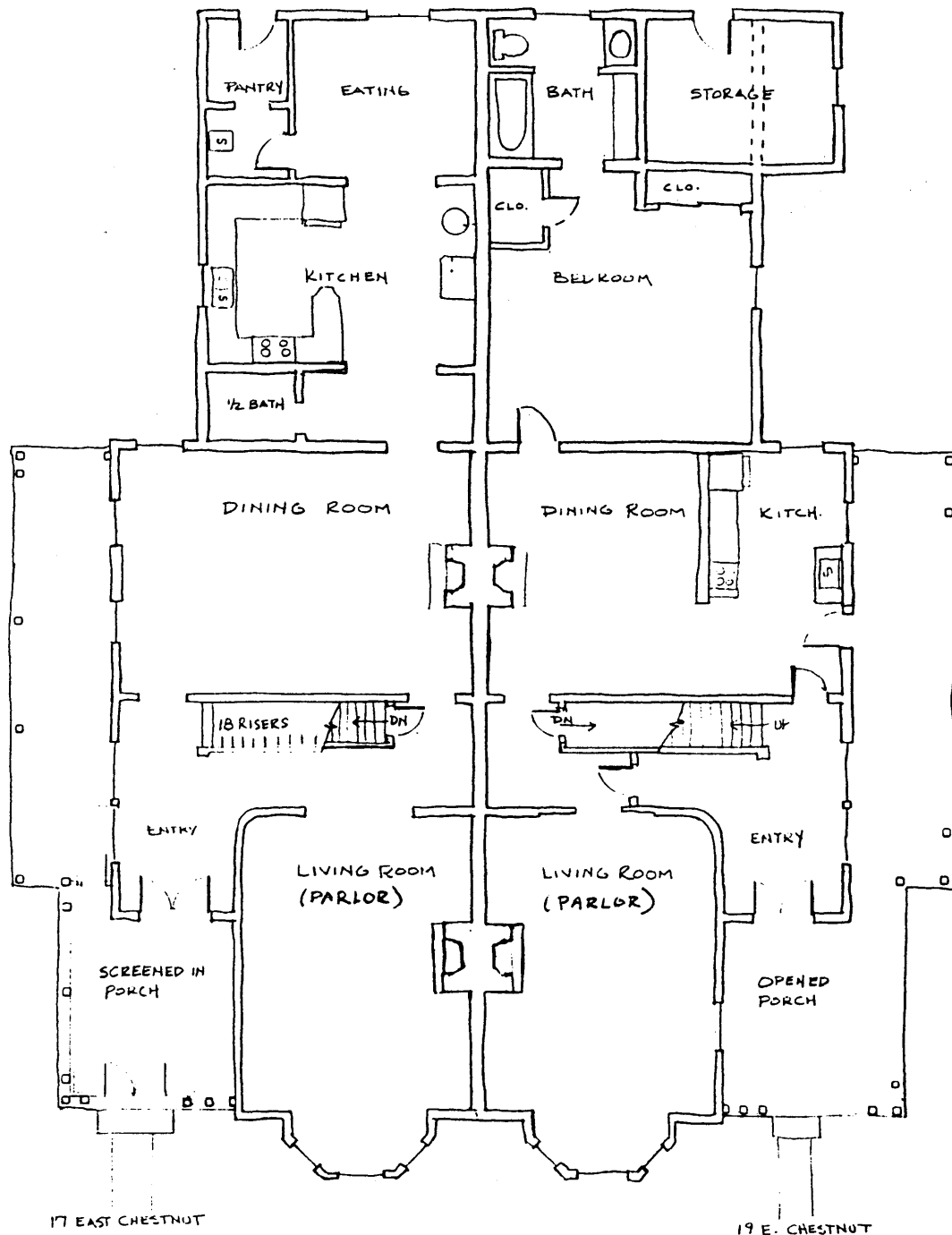
The property contains one outbuilding that is a two-story period carriage house with a one-story garage addition. The structure is of frame, mostly re clad with asphalt. The carriage house has beaded board swinging doors and six-light sash; the garage has flush board doors.

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(No scale provided)



17 EAST CHESTNUT

19 E. CHESTNUT

FIRST FLOOR

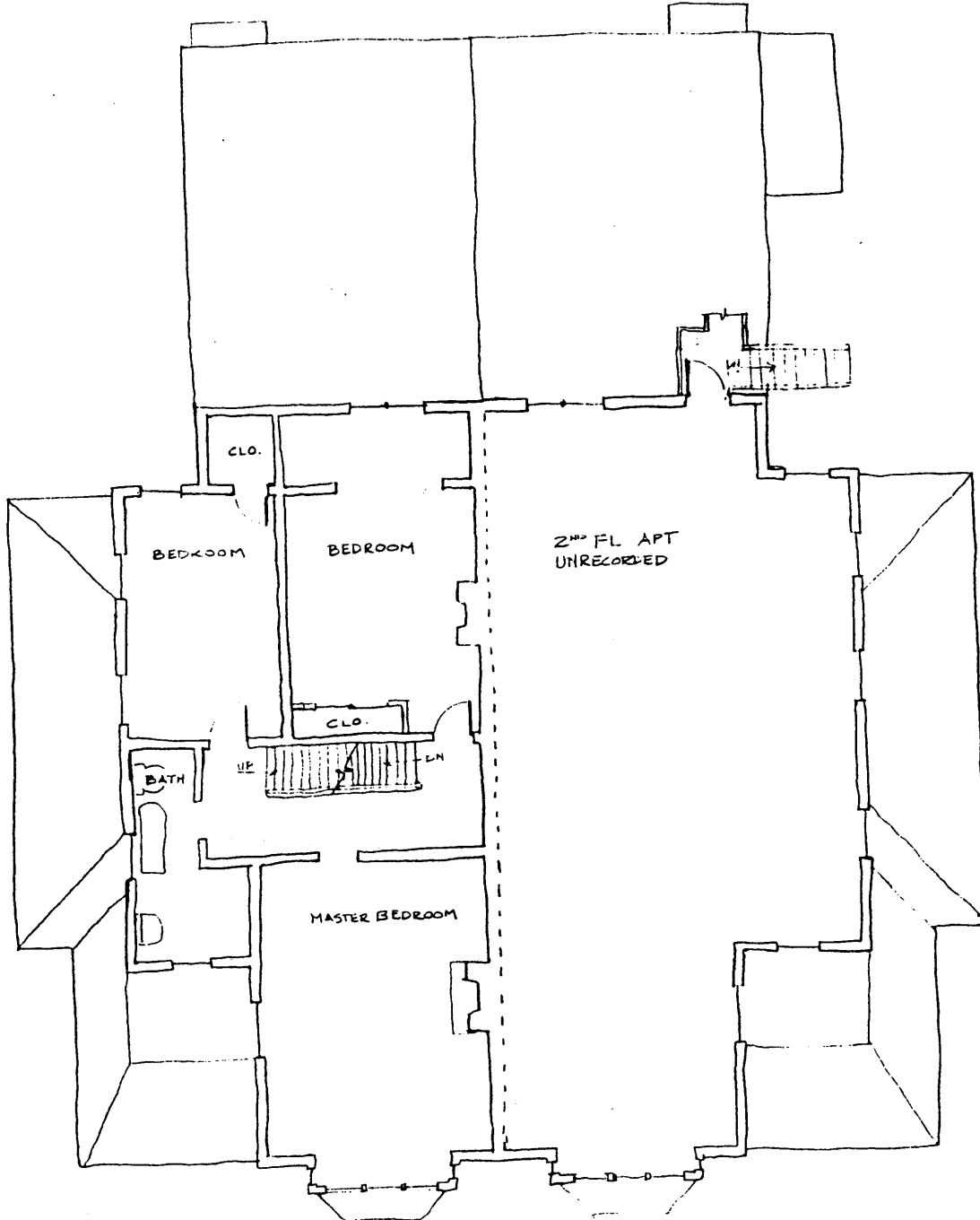
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(No scale provided)



SECOND FLOOR

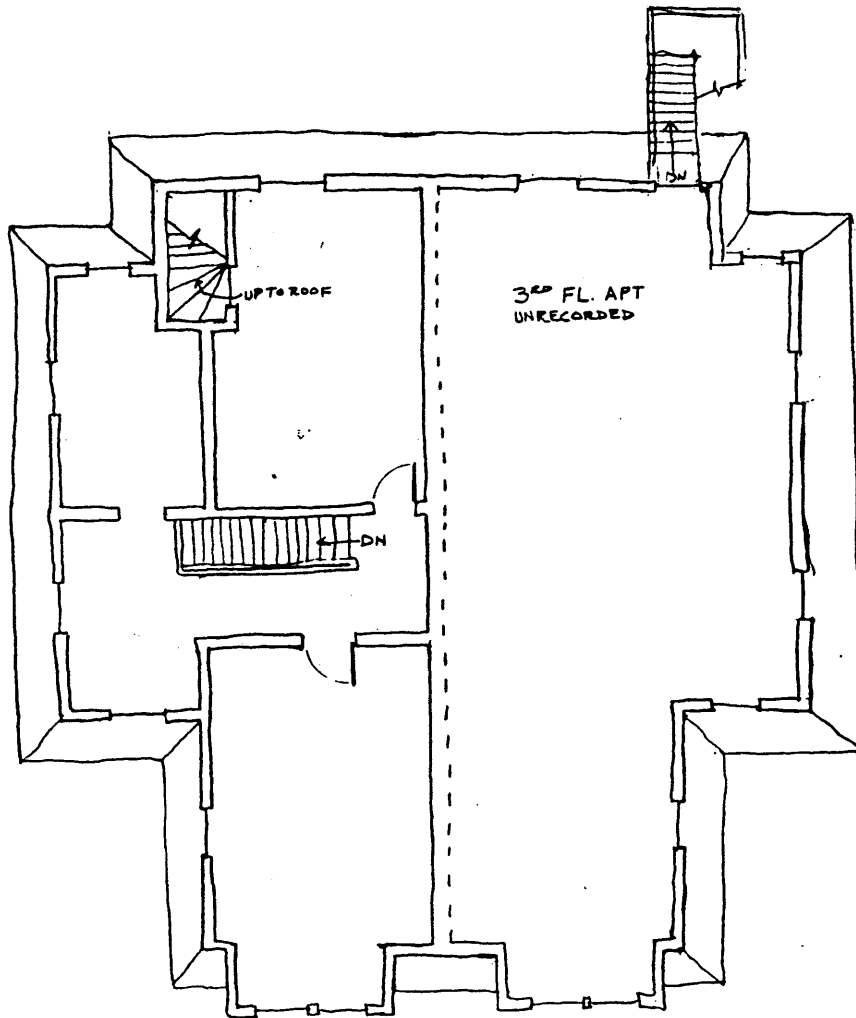
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(No scale provided)



THIRD FLOOR

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Avenue in 1869. Although 51 properties were sold by 1877, only 17 were built upon as indicated by the Hopkins atlas of that year. In fact, a significant period of residential growth did not occur until the 1880s, the decade after which many visitors to the Centennial stayed in Elijah G. Cattell's Oak Grove Inn, a summer boarding house. This post-Centennial burst of residential construction, typically of builder-designed houses, corresponds to the erection of the Centennial House at 17-19 E. Chestnut Avenue.

The Centennial House was erected circa 1877 on lots 5 and 6 of Alexander G. Cattell's 1869 "Plan of Building Lots in Merchantville." These lots, as well as adjoining lots 7, 29, and 30, were purchased from Cattell by John and Jane H. Crump. The Crumps acquired all but lot 5 in 1869, Jane Crump adding the last parcel to their holdings in 1875. John Crump (1827-1892) was a Philadelphia architect and builder whose better known commissions ranged from high-style commercial and institutional buildings to speculative residential developments in Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill section and Merchantville. Crump was the builder of the third Chestnut Street Theatre (1863), the Union League Club (1865), University of Pennsylvania Hospital (1873), the Commercial Exchange (1867), and the Bingham Hotel (1876) in Philadelphia.¹ He was also the architect for the Pennsylvania Military Academy in West Chester, PA, and the builder for the new wing of the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington, DC, experience which likely helped Crump to win the 1869 competition to design the U.S. War and Navy Department Building (never built).² As both architect and builder, Crump was well-acquainted with contemporary architectural taste, which at that time favored the mansarded Second Empire Style. His predilection for fashion may have influenced the final composition of the Centennial House, which is comprised of a typical mansarded form, updated with the Stick Style and Eastlake-style embellishments that were prominent on many Centennial buildings.

John and Jane Crump lived at the Colonnade Hotel in Philadelphia, which Crump built in 1868, owned, and operated. The Crumps resided there until 1880 when John Crump retired and they moved to Media, Pennsylvania,³ thereby indicating that the Centennial House served as a rental property. The Merchantville property was in Jane Crump's name upon her death in 1882, at which time her son, Henry J. Crump, acquired the property through sheriff's sale. He purchased the house (lots 5 and 6), as well as a side yard (lot 7) and adjoining vacant land (lot 8).

Henry J. Crump followed in his father's footsteps, both in the building trades and the hotel business. He was listed as an architect in Philadelphia city directories by 1872, and alternately as a builder. In 1880, upon his father's retirement, Henry J. managed the Colonnade hotel along with his brother, George A. Crump. He continued in this position until approximately 1896, at which time he returned to the architectural profession in the office of Arnold H. Moses, also a Merchantville resident.⁴ For a brief period between 1893-95, the Centennial House was held by George A. Crump. Henry J. Crump resumed ownership in 1895 and held the property until 1910. In the late 1890s, he is

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known to have resided at 19 E. Chestnut;⁵ the other half of the twin presumably was used as a rental property. The Centennial House remained in single ownership until 1928 when the first of the halves was sold, the other following in 1930.

The name for the Centennial House comes from local accounts that report that John Crump's brother, George, who was vice-consul to Great Britain during the Centennial Exhibition in 1876, requested that one of the British pavilion buildings be dismantled and brought to Merchantville at the close of the exhibition. When the fair ended on November 10, 1876, participants had until December 31st to remove their structures from Fairmount Park. At least two exhibition buildings are known to have been relocated to Camden County: the "Iowa House" which was moved to Mount Ephraim, and the "New Jersey House" which was moved to Haddonfield.⁶ Neither of those two houses remains standing.

Both George and John Crump were involved with the Centennial Exhibition, the former as a diplomat, the latter as a hotelkeeper and architect whose Colonnade Hotel was located within a few blocks of the Broad Street Railroad Station that provided transit to the fairgrounds. Crump also designed and built the Globe and the Atlas Hotels at the edge of the Centennial fairgrounds in 1875, the former in the Tudor Revival style, the latter showing classical influences. The idea of the Crump brothers relocating one of the British pavilion buildings to Merchantville appears plausible except for the fact that the house in Merchantville does not resemble any of the British buildings published in directories, visitors' guides, and catalogues of the Centennial⁷ which, according to architectural historian Vincent Scully, Jr., were "half-timbered, Old English cottage style."⁸ Plans and legislation describing the construction of the British pavilions also confirm that the Centennial House was not part of the British pavilions.⁹

Although clearly not one of the British pavilions, there is evidence to suggest that the Centennial House may contain elements of a building (or buildings) from the exhibition. On April 18, 1877, the West Jersey Press reported that "Mr. Crump's double cottages at Merchantville are putting in an appearance out of some of the Centennial debris." In addition, a board above a door jamb painted with the words, "Hotel at Exhibition Entrance," was discovered during renovation of 17 E. Chestnut. This signboard may refer to the Atlas Hotel or Globe Hotel which Crump designed, although the exteriors of these hotels did not resemble the Centennial House in Merchantville. It is possible that various interior finishes from the hotels or exterior features from other structures at the fairgrounds were salvaged and incorporated into the Merchantville twin house by Crump. The fact that Crump was a builder adds credence to the theory that the Centennial House was at least a partial reconstruction of exhibition architecture.

While the building's historical association with the Centennial Exhibition remains an attribution, its architectural qualities, which survive with a high degree of integrity, clearly

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make it an outstanding example of the Stick Style. This style evolved from the mid-nineteenth-century picturesque Gothic Revival and flourished until the 1880s when the Queen Anne was popularized. Intended to convey honesty of structure on the exterior, the Stick Style, typically interpreted in frame construction, actually emphasized patterned wall surfaces, angularity, and verticality. On the Centennial House, these characteristics are interpreted in the diagonally laid clapboarding, steeply gabled wall and attic dormers, and slender mansarded towers crowned with cresting. The Stick Style is also typified by the Centennial House's expansive verandah, bracketed cornice and dormers, and gable trusswork. Further attention to picturesque or decorative detail is evident in the porch skirting, vented with cut-out leaves, and the porch posts, tapering upwards from chamfered bases having Neo-Grec or Eastlake-inspired circles and quirk beads.

The level of architectural sophistication that gives the Centennial House distinctiveness on the exterior extends to the interior where the period's taste for Eastlake-style finishes is apparent. The style of ornament Charles Locke Eastlake fashioned was derived from a mixture of influences from Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc, and the Japanesque movement. This eclecticism is apparent in the door and window surrounds of the Centennial House. These elements, formed from incised and carved details, feature running guilloche, stylized foliage, fluting, bosses, trefoils, and pointed corner blocks. The presence of Rococo mantels and dog-eared molded door surrounds, more typical of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, suggests that the Eastlake-style finishes may have been added after the original construction, perhaps as part of the "debris" from the Centennial. Also of note in both 17 and 19 E. Chestnut are the surviving gasoliers in the parlors, both displaying the geometry and tiered design of the Eastlake style in comparison with the softer, more curved Rococo chandelier in the dining room of 17 E. Chestnut.

Within the context of other residences in Merchantville, no other structure of this scale, period, and style compares to the Centennial House. Handsome Victorian homes survive on Walnut Street, one block behind E. Chestnut Street, though none of this level of ornamentation or monumentality. On Maple Avenue, historically the boulevard of Merchantville's fashionable mansions, grand Shingle Style and Colonial Revival houses still stand. However, these reflect development after the borough's initial suburbanization, a period which the Centennial House documents.

In summary, the Centennial House is an important landmark in Merchantville, one which bears some degree of association with the 1876 exhibition in Philadelphia, but more importantly, stands as a unique architectural resource in the borough. In its exterior expression of the Stick Style and its interior interpretation of the Eastlake style, the building possesses high artistic value and distinctive characteristics that qualify it for the National Register under Criterion C.

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Footnotes

1. Sandra Tatman and Roger Moss, eds., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects (Boston: G.K. Hall Publishers, 1985), 176.
2. Lawrence J. Biond, Widener College Old Main Historic Structures Report (Philadelphia: Cole, Rizzio, Cherry, Parsky, 1979), 16.
3. Philadelphia Public Ledger, March 21, 1892, 2.
4. Architectural Files, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.
5. Merchantville Directory, 1898.
6. George R. Prowell, History of Camden County, New Jersey (Philadelphia: L.J. Richards & Company, 1886), 711; Haddonfield Historical Society, This is Haddonfield (Haddonfield, NJ: Haddonfield Historical Society), 42.
7. Centennial Exhibition Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
8. Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (revised edition) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 19-21.
9. Building News (London), November 12, 1875.

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- Hopkins, G.M., Atlas of Philadelphia and Environs. Philadelphia: 1877.
- Merchantville Directory, 1898.
- Philadelphia Public Ledger, March 21, 1892, 2.
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- Recorder of Deeds, Camden County, Camden City Hall, Camden, New Jersey.
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- Scully, Vincent J. Jr. The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (revised edition). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971.
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- West Jersey Press (Camden, NJ), April 17, 1877, 3.